

JULY/AUGUST 2004

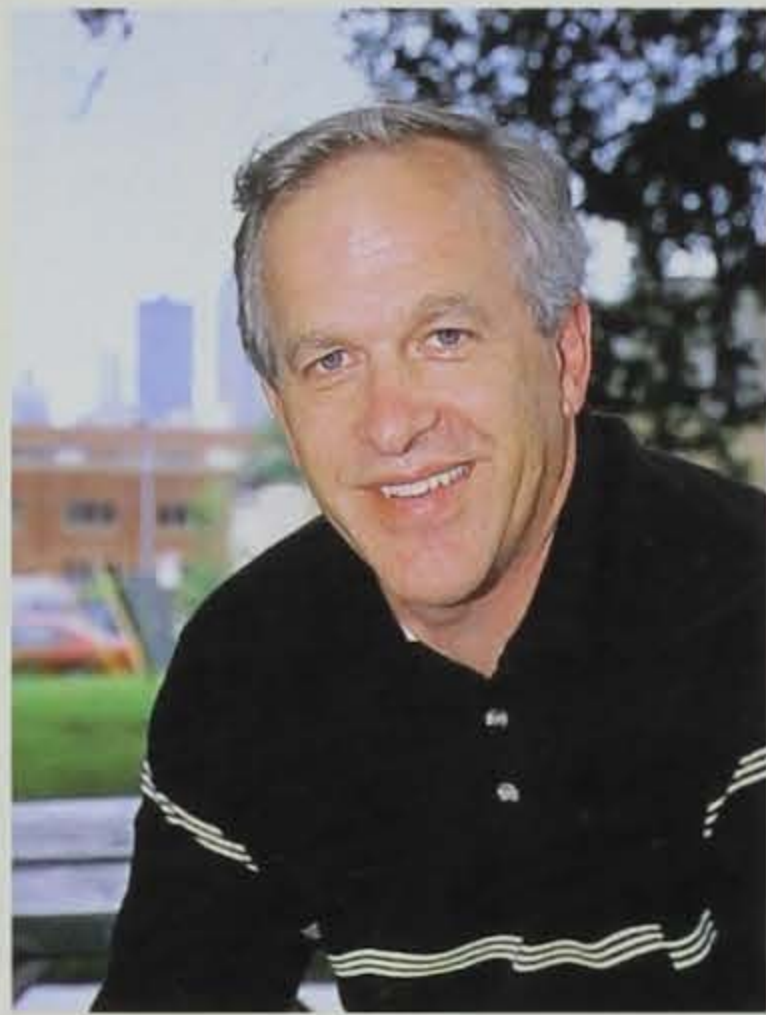
CONSERVATIONIST

IOWA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



FROM THE DIRECTOR



Bob Castelline

They're called the "dog days of summer" that period from July to early September when our weather is often the hottest and most humid. It's a challenge even for those of us most avid of outdoor enthusiasts to resist the cool temptation of air conditioning sometimes.

But it is also a time of excitement and high expectations for many of us here in the DNR. It's show time, a fast-paced period when we get ready to converse directly with many of Iowa's citizens at fairs and other events across the state.

Three of the biggest opportunities we have to interact with the public coming in the span of just a month starts with the Iowa State Fair, followed by the Farm Progress Show. Our big month culminates with the Clay County Fair in Spencer where we couldn't be more pleased about having established a partnership with area county conservation boards last year. The partnership

has resulted in moving a rustic log cabin to the Clay County Fairgrounds to serve as a headquarters for sharing our conservation messages with the public.

Events like these are perfect venues for us to share our message with citizens, but, more importantly, to hear from them as well.

Walk through the front door of the DNR's Iowa State Fair building this year and you will quickly get an idea of what our top priority is — water quality.

As you make your way to the back of our building you'll understand why. It's all about quality of life.

At the State Fair, we will once again feature a working watershed display designed to highlight bad land practices that affect our water quality and good land practices that can be used to protect and improve our soil and water resources. This display was a big hit at last year's fair and will have even more improvements this year.

Working to the back of the State Fair building — past the historic fish aquarium, a must-see tradition for many fairgoers — our Conservation and Recreation Division will feature outdoor recreational opportunities in Iowa, the kind of activities that so many of us enjoy, but often take for granted. There will also be a number of stage shows throughout the fair in our outdoor courtyard area.

The Farm Progress Show near Alleman and the Clay County Fair

give us opportunities to converse more directly with landowners about the many opportunities to not only improve the environment, but in most cases, their farming operations and bottom line as well.

As director of the DNR, these events are particularly satisfying because it gives many Iowans the opportunity to witness something I get to see everyday — the dedication, the knowledge and the professionalism our people provide to this state in protecting our natural resources and providing outdoor recreational opportunities that mean so much in enhancing our quality of life.

* * *

Okay, I have to admit that if there is a downside for our staff to working at these events, it's having to answer — maybe deny is the better word — a topic that just never seems to die.

Yes, we're talking about cougars and if we had any luck at all, this would be last time we would have to address some of the stories that I'm sure well-meaning citizens like to throw at us each year.

For the record:

- The DNR does not release cougars.
- The DNR does not own black helicopters.
- The DNR does not release cougars using black helicopters.

Director's Message

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COVER: PELICAN BY LOWELL WASHBURN.
 Visit the Pelican Festival at Jester Park, Polk
 County, Sept. 12.
 BACK COVER: WHITETAIL BY ROGER A. HILL



Clay Smith

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Director's Message

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* * *

There were two things that occurred during July that have convinced me that the link between economic development and natural resources is resonating across a broader audience.

One of the speakers at the REAP assembly was Doug Gross who presented a study done by a group known as the Committee of 82 which was formed to look at improving the economic vitality in Iowa's 82 most rural counties. One of the key findings is that counties with outdoor recreational

amenities have an economic advantage over those that don't have such resources. The study also points out that the traditional agricultural model we've been using of corn and soybeans actually hurts rural economies, even with the assistance of federal farm studies. In fact, Mr. Gross was highly critical of federal farm policy, saying the programs have done more to harm rural economies than to help them. Mr. Gross's presentation was a very powerful argument for looking at management of our natural resources not only from an environmental standpoint, but from an economic development standpoint.

We also saw an article about lakes, including references to the value of clean water, in the Des Moines Register on July 18. What was intriguing about the story was not so much that people place a high value on being able to locate close to clean water, but that it was the cover story in the business section — another strong indicator that outdoor recreational amenities are being viewed more in terms of economic development potential. It's indicative at least some in the business community are recognizing that money spent on enhancing our natural resources can be viewed more as an investment for our state rather than a cost.

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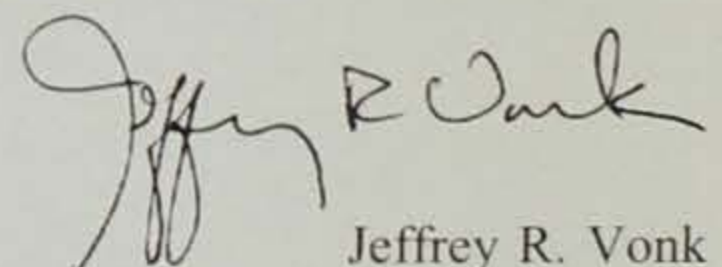
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Jeffrey R. Vonk



Outdoors- Woman

September 10-12

Springbrook Conservation Education Center
Guthrie Center, Iowa



Becoming an Outdoors-Woman

is a workshop aimed primarily at women, but is an opportunity for anyone 18 years or older to learn outdoor skills usually associated with hunting and fishing, but useful for many outdoor pursuits. For more information about BOW and the workshop, visit www.iowadnr.com

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Coming Attractions

Article by Doug Harr Photos by Ty Smedes and Doug Harr

All across the nation, an interesting phenomenon is taking place. People are turning out in crowds, just for the pleasure of observing our diverse wildlife resources. Some conduct this activity through the windows of their homes, observing birds, butterflies and other easily attracted creatures. Others enjoy stopping to view wildlife as they travel across the state or nation on vacations and business trips. Still others spend thousands of dollars on equipment, travel and lodging annually, in pursuit of a rare bird or a close-up photo of elk or other charismatic animals. Bed-and-breakfast businesses are thriving in areas near wildlife refuges or other good birdwatching sites. Across the continent, "birding festivals" turn out thousands of participants for one- to three-day events, and so-called "birding trails" lure tourists seeking to hike, bike or drive mapped routes depicting good bird viewing opportunities.

Birders enjoy watching greater prairie chickens (above) from a DNR viewing platform at the Kellerton Bird Conservation Area near Mount Ayr.

So, what exactly is the cause of this seemingly sudden interest in wildlife observation, and is there some way that Iowa might benefit from the trend?

As America has gradually evolved from a mostly rural to a mostly urban/suburban populace, interest in types of outdoor recreation has changed. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) *2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*, traditional outdoor





Ty Smedes

hunting and fishing sports remain popular, averaging approximately 13 million and 34 million annual participants respectively. These numbers are dropping slightly, but more significantly, the participation rate as a percentage of total population has fallen in recent years.

The same national survey reveals “wildlife observation” now exceeds both hunting and fishing combined. In Iowa alone, the 2001 survey showed more than 1 million participants (both resident and nonresident) engaged in wildlife viewing, while hunting and fishing totaled about 785,000 participants.

Some might question just what constitutes wildlife observation, since many hunters and anglers indicate they also enjoy watching wildlife while they pursue their primary sports. However, the 2001 survey separates “non-harvesting” activities – wildlife observation, feeding and photography – from hunting and fishing. According to the survey, 66 million people nationwide constituted this non-harvest group, or roughly 22 percent of our nation’s population. Add the anglers and hunters who also participate in watching wildlife, and the wildlife observation category grows significantly.

This and other recent surveys all indicate a very real trend – wildlife observation is fast becoming one of America’s most popular outdoor leisure-time activities. One subset of wildlife observation alone, birding, or birdwatching, is growing at a breathtaking pace, with some surveys showing it expanding more rapidly than golf, the previous record holder.

As our nation continues evolving to an increasingly urban population, traditional fish and wildlife harvest activities will probably represent an ever-smaller fraction of outdoor recreation. Wildlife observation, on the other hand, promises to continue

its current growth trend. That's because residents of cities, suburbs and towns, ever more removed from their ancestors' hunting and fishing interests or skills, still seek the non-harvest pleasures wildlife can offer. Nowadays, the simple opportunity to observe wildlife in a natural setting is taking the place of sport or subsistence hunting. Those who grew up in a time when hunting and fishing

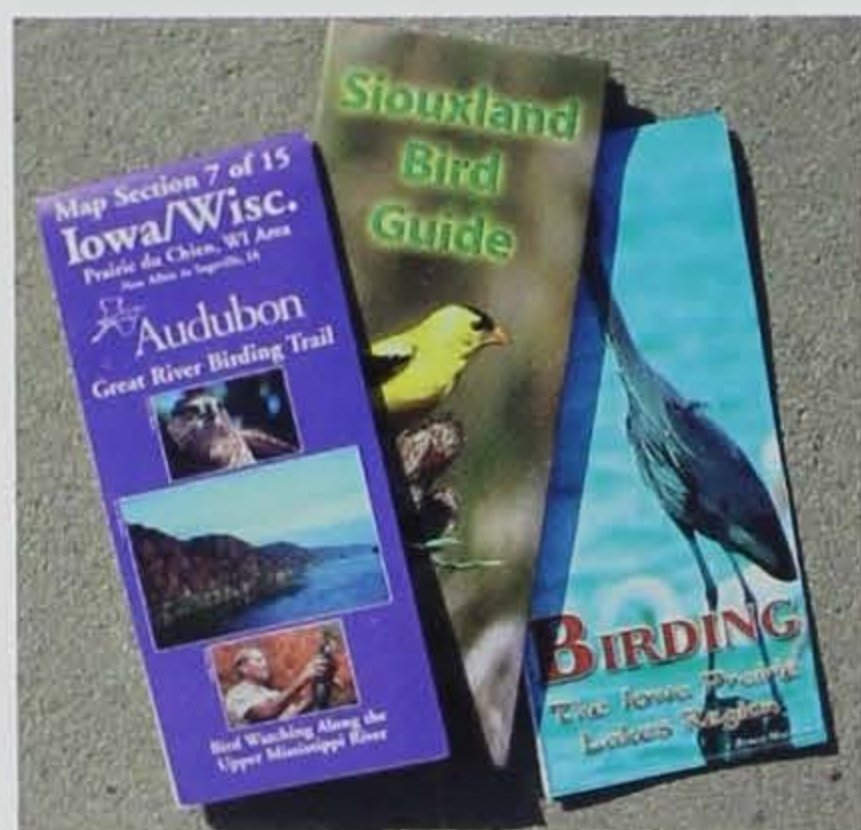
was widely practiced might not care to admit they are now in the minority. Those pursuits are always likely to have a place in American culture, but the future of wildlife may reside in the hands of those who prefer to simply watch. This growing population base is where the nation is finding its future — and Iowa has good reason to get on the bandwagon.

BIRDS BRING BUCKS

Wildlife tourism — also called nature tourism, ecotourism or green tourism — is opening doors for some struggling communities. Defined by travel opportunities for people to view and enjoy wildlife (who also spend money on food, lodging and supplies as they go), the largest subset of this growing industry most certainly is birding tourism. As a result, many

Great Iowa Wildlife Viewing Opportunities

Here is a short sampling of some varied opportunities for watching wildlife in Iowa. Some are specific sites, other are events at specific times of the year.



Places

Kellerton Bird Conservation Area

(2 mi. W of Kellerton on Iowa Hwy. 2, 1 mi. S on county road) — Many species of grassland birds may be viewed year-round, greater prairie-chickens on “booming” grounds each March-May (near sunrise and sunset). Elevated observation platform and telescope are available for ease of viewing this ancient and elegant mating ritual.

Great River Birding Trail (follows Mississippi River along Iowa’s entire “east coast”) — A driving route has been mapped by the Audubon Society’s Upper Mississippi River Campaign and features great sites for bird viewing at many locations. (Maps available from Audubon Society and at various tourist sites along the river.)

DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge (6 mi. W of Missouri Valley on U.S. 30) — The refuge hosts spectacular snow goose concentrations each November and features other wildlife viewing all year. It’s also a good place for fall and spring eagle watching.

Ledges State Park (4 mi. S of Boone on Co. Hwys. R23 or R27-E52) — White-tailed deer are easily viewed along park roads at dawn and dusk (drive *carefully*). This is also one of central Iowa’s best locations for viewing a great variety of forest birds.

Wapsi River Green Belt (from Iowa Hwy. 93 N of Tripoli to Co. Hwy. 56 east of Readlyn) — Sandhill cranes nest here during summer. Waterfowl and other aquatic wildlife viewing is generally excellent from spring through fall.

Events

Keokuk Bald Eagle Appreciation Days (Keokuk, 800-383-1219) — This “granddaddy” of Iowa birding festivals provides great viewing of winter roosting and feeding bald eagles below Lock & Dam 19, usually the third or fourth weekend of January. Indoor educational events and booths at a local mall are part of the festivities and often feature programs with live captive eagles.

states are exploiting Americans' willingness to travel far and spend much in pursuit of their recreation. Texas, Arizona, California, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Virginia are good examples of states where birding tourism is booming. Birding trails, field trip or guide services, equipment supply retailers and the hotel/motel industry (especially bed-and-breakfasts) help lure birders. Likewise, more local

businesses are finding ways to connect with this segment of our traveling population. In some communities, efforts have been so overwhelmingly successful that otherwise dying rural towns are again thriving.

America's increasingly affluent lifestyle contributes to this phenomenon, according to the USFWS survey. Average birders are middle-aged, slightly more likely to be female

and have an average annual household income between \$60,000 and \$100,000. Other surveys, by private birding organizations, indicate birders like to travel, prefer finer food and wine, enjoy historic sites, frequently buy art or antiques and are likely to seek out quiet, quality lodging such as bed-and-breakfasts. Communities that capitalize on their area's birding opportunities have found

Wings & Wetlands Weekend

(Iowa Great Lakes Region, 712-837-4866, or at www.paccb.org) — a five-county region hosts numerous birding field trips to forest, prairie and marsh lands the second weekend each May. Special events, kids' nature hikes and other activities occur throughout the "Iowa Great Lakes Region," centered in the Spirit Lake and Spencer vicinity.

Saylorville Pelican Festival (Jester Park, near Granger, 515-323-5300) — Saylorville Lake is one of the

Midwest's most important fall migration stopovers for American white pelicans. Usually the second Sunday of September, this event treats visitors to views of hundreds or even thousands of pelicans. Interpreters assist viewers with spotting telescopes and binoculars, while educational booths and special programs offer information about pelicans and other birds.

HawkWatch (near Marquette, 563-873-3491) — Held in late September at Effigy Mounds National

Monument, visitors can view migrating hawks, falcons and eagles as they follow the Mississippi River bluffs,

riding the rising air currents as they head southward. Wildlife specialists count the migrating birds and assist visitors in hawk identification. Additional indoor and outdoor programs offer much more information about birds of prey.

Lansing Birding Festival (Ric or Betty Zarwell, 515-538-4991) — The Mississippi River near Lansing hosts more than 10,000 magnificent tundra swans stopping to feed and rest on migration from Canada to Chesapeake Bay. Swan watching and other bird tours are offered, along with some "down-home" opportunities for food and entertainment on the first weekend of November.



Each fall, birders journey to Lansing to view huge flocks of migrating tundra swans.



their restaurants, antique and art stores, museums, historical sites and lodging facilities realizing increased revenues. Those revenues translate directly into more jobs, better tax base and increased local pride, among other benefits. In short, birds bring bucks to cities and towns willing to showcase their wildlife and other natural resources. For decades, South Dakota has seen similar results. Businesses have capitalized on the state's amazing pheasant numbers with aggressive advertising and offers to far-traveling hunters. Their successful formula is being replicated by other states and communities where good bird watching has similar prospects for economic health.

There's little doubt wildlife viewing has a much bigger economic

impact than most people realize. A recent report from Southwick Associates, a firm specializing in examining economic values of wildlife-based recreation, indicates in Florida, the money people spend annually on watching wildlife is double the value of that state's annual orange harvest. In Colorado, annual wildlife viewing expenditures exceed the value of all snow ski equipment sales nationwide. Although Iowa may not be in quite the same league for total wildlife resources as Florida or Colorado, that doesn't mean we don't have something unique to offer.

WILDLIFE TOURISM IN IOWA?

When people think about good wildlife viewing opportunities, Iowa

probably is not a place that pops to mind. That's unfortunate – and something that needs to be changed – because Iowa's wildlife viewing opportunities are almost unexcelled. While much of the state may resemble a vast corn and soybean factory, there are certain places where birds and other wildlife can be observed more readily than in many other states. In part, that's due to a generally open landscape, where views of everything from deer and ducks to prairie chickens and trumpeter swans can be seen unhampered by dense forest, rugged terrain or sprawling cities. It's also due to efforts by the DNR, county conservation boards, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers and many private

conservation organizations managing limited habitat so wildlife concentrates at these protected sites. This makes wildlife observation a relatively easy task in Iowa.

For example, consider the concentration of thousands of migrating tundra swans on the Mississippi River near Lansing each autumn o

Saylorville Lake is a major fall stopping point for the American white pelican. This year's Pelican Festival will be held Sept. 12 at Jester Park in Polk County.



Ty Smedes

the half-million snow geese seen easily along the Missouri River in southwest Iowa. Bald eagles gather by the hundreds in winter foraging roosts near Keokuk, Dubuque, Davenport, Burlington, Des Moines and several other cities, allowing unparalleled opportunities to observe

America's national symbol. Central Iowa's Saylorville Lake hosts up to 10,000 migrating white pelicans each September. At places like Ledges State Park near Boone or Kent Park near Iowa City, white-tailed deer can be viewed and photographed in some of the state's most natural settings.

A new system of bird conservation areas, currently being designated by the DNR's wildlife diversity program, and the Audubon Society's new Iowa Important

Bird Areas, will focus state and national attention on sites or landscapes of critical importance to birds. Many of Iowa's individual county conservation boards have developed premier wildlife viewing areas and facilities, often staffed with enthusiastic naturalists to help visitors identify or interpret what they are seeing. The National Audubon Society and some of its many chapters in Iowa have developed maps of birding trails – routes that can be driven to connect some of the best birding areas in various regions of the state.

To date, few Iowa communities have realized the potential gold mine at their doorsteps, if they would only use nearby wildlife attractions to lure tourists from around the nation or world. The

opportunity is just waiting for those cities and individuals bold enough to take the first steps. To help them along, a national Watchable Wildlife Conference will be held in Dubuque this October (see sidebar article). This annual conference, initiated by Watchable Wildlife

wildlife tourism concept and benefits are accruing. Local birding festivals have taken off at several locations, and these are serving to initiate both hosts and participants into the world of wildlife tourism.

One of the most popular festivals, the HawkWatch, celebrates its 20th anniversary this September 24-26. Based near the northeast Iowa town of Marquette, the main event is actually held at nearby Effigy Mounds National Monument. Assisted by experienced volunteers with binoculars and spotting scopes, visitors can view the annual migration of up to 17 varieties of hawks, falcons and related raptors, sometimes totaling in the thousands, soaring above magnificent autumn scenery.

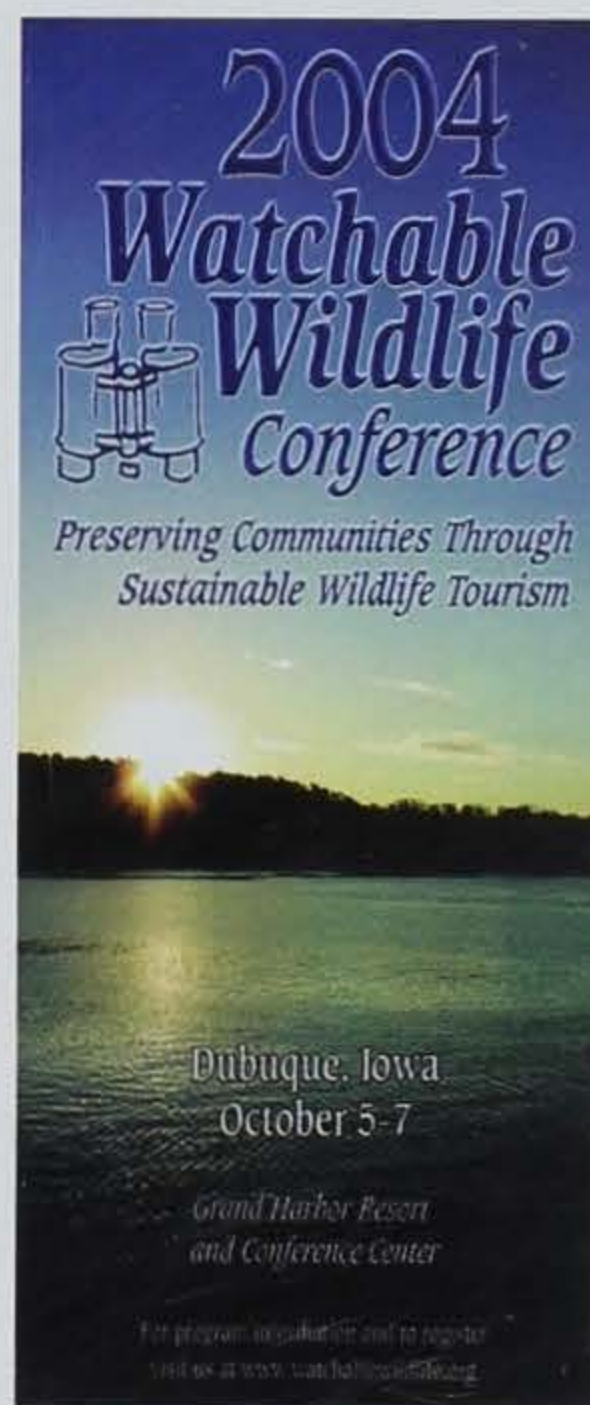


The newly designated Union Hills Grassland Bird Conservation Area, south of Clear Lake, is expected to bring many wildlife observers to the area.

Incorporated, a nonprofit organization, selected Iowa's portion of the Upper Mississippi for the conference, because of the river's great scenic and wildlife values. Using Dubuque's blufflands and the Mississippi as examples, this conference will demonstrate to business leaders, tourism agencies, natural resource professionals and others, how to build a strong economic base using wildlife observation as an important component. The conference will stress protecting natural resources while developing ways communities and the public might benefit from them.

OFF TO A GOOD START

At least a small number of Iowa communities have jumped on the





Ty Smedes

"We usually get about 1,500 [people] or so," says Ken Block, with the National Park Service. He said the HawkWatch has to compete with a lot of other recreation in the area but still does well. Demonstrations of hawk banding and wild releases are featured, along with kids' activities, birding hikes, various program speakers, concessions and evening music or special festivities. Local motels, restaurants and shops all realize additional business during this busy weekend.

Several cities now host annual bald eagle watching events during the winter months. The oldest, celebrating its 25th anniversary last January, is Keokuk's Bald Eagle Appreciation Days, featuring hundreds of eagles below the Mississippi's Lock & Dam 19. The event has an annual economic impact of \$150,000 for the town. Kirk Brandenberger, director of the Keokuk area tourism bureau, says the event is becoming more of a tourist attraction. Visitors come from the Chicago area, St. Louis, Des Moines and even Kansas City.

"It's a good time, it's three weeks after Christmas, a lot of people are using it as a get away," Brandenberger says. "The event seems to be getting stronger and stronger every year."

Annual attendance at Keokuk's Bald Eagle Appreciation Days now exceeds 3,000, with more than 1,000 local students participating in related school activities, and nearly 2,000

During the winter months, concentrations of bald eagles in open water areas create excellent viewing opportunities for many communities.

visitors. Eagle watching and associated programs, displays and special events have made this weekend the single most important midwinter contribution to Keokuk's tourism economy.

Further up river, Guttenberg

welcomes 1,500 to 2,000 visitors for its Eagle Watch Weekend each winter. The out-of-towners fill the area motel rooms and eat in local restaurants. The event lasts two days and this coming year will mark its 10th anniversary.

Connie Backus, secretary for the civic and commerce club and a chair of the eagle watch club, says people have come from Nebraska, Wisconsin, the Chicago area, Indiana and Ohio.

Across the state, DeSoto Bend, along the Missouri River, hosts 300,000 to 400,000 migrating snow geese each year which in turn, attracts from 20,000 to nearly 50,000 visitors each November.

The newest addition to the more than 20 annual birding festivals in Iowa may be a prairie chicken day. This past April, the neighboring towns of Kellerton and Mt. Ayr, in southern Iowa, and the DNR hosted birders who came to see the spring "booming" (mating) rituals of the greater prairie chicken. Featured activities included birding tours, a prairie restoration project, pancake breakfast and, of course, viewing the fascinating prairie chickens.

This is just the start of what could bring some economic relief to struggling Iowa communities, while increasing public awareness of our wondrous wildlife resources. Besides helping develop wildlife tourism through annual festivals or events, the DNR hopes to explore ways of improving or expanding current birding trail maps to include historic sites, restaurants, lodging and other recreational opportunities. Making such trip planning resources available on a wide scale might help Iowans find more ways of enjoying their home state, while also opening new tourism doors to visitors from around the nation and the world.

Doug Harr is the department's wildlife diversity program coordinator.

Watchable Wildlife (WW), Inc. has been working to help communities and wildlife prosper for 15 years. Through conferences, publications and on-the-ground projects, WW, Inc. is one of the nation's leading promoters of sustainable wildlife viewing programs. These programs help communities protect and maintain wildlife habitat, identify and develop accessible viewing



sites and assist in building the community support necessary to become a successful nature tourism destination.

The 2004 Watchable Wildlife Conference will be

held Oct. 5-7 at the Mississippi River Education and Conference Center in Dubuque, Iowa. The Grand River Center is the latest addition to a riverfront rehabilitation program that includes boardwalks, wetlands and the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. This project has helped the community reidentify itself by embracing its colorful heartland heritage, wild and scenic beauty, and the rich wildlife diversity of the surrounding area.

Communities across the country interested in developing sustainable, low-impact economic growth while maintaining undeveloped natural areas are considering wildlife viewing activities. This year's conference has been tailored to help community leaders, wildlife professionals and private business owners better understand the techniques and resources needed to achieve their goals.

Additional information on the 2004 conference can be found at www.watchablewildlife.org

Port of Dubuque – Dubuque's new Grand River Resort/ Convention Center and National Mississippi River Museum – is the site for the October 2004 Watchable Wildlife Conference.



Dubuque Convention and Visitors Bureau

Channel Catfish: The Pride of Iowa

Article and photos by
Mick Klemesrud

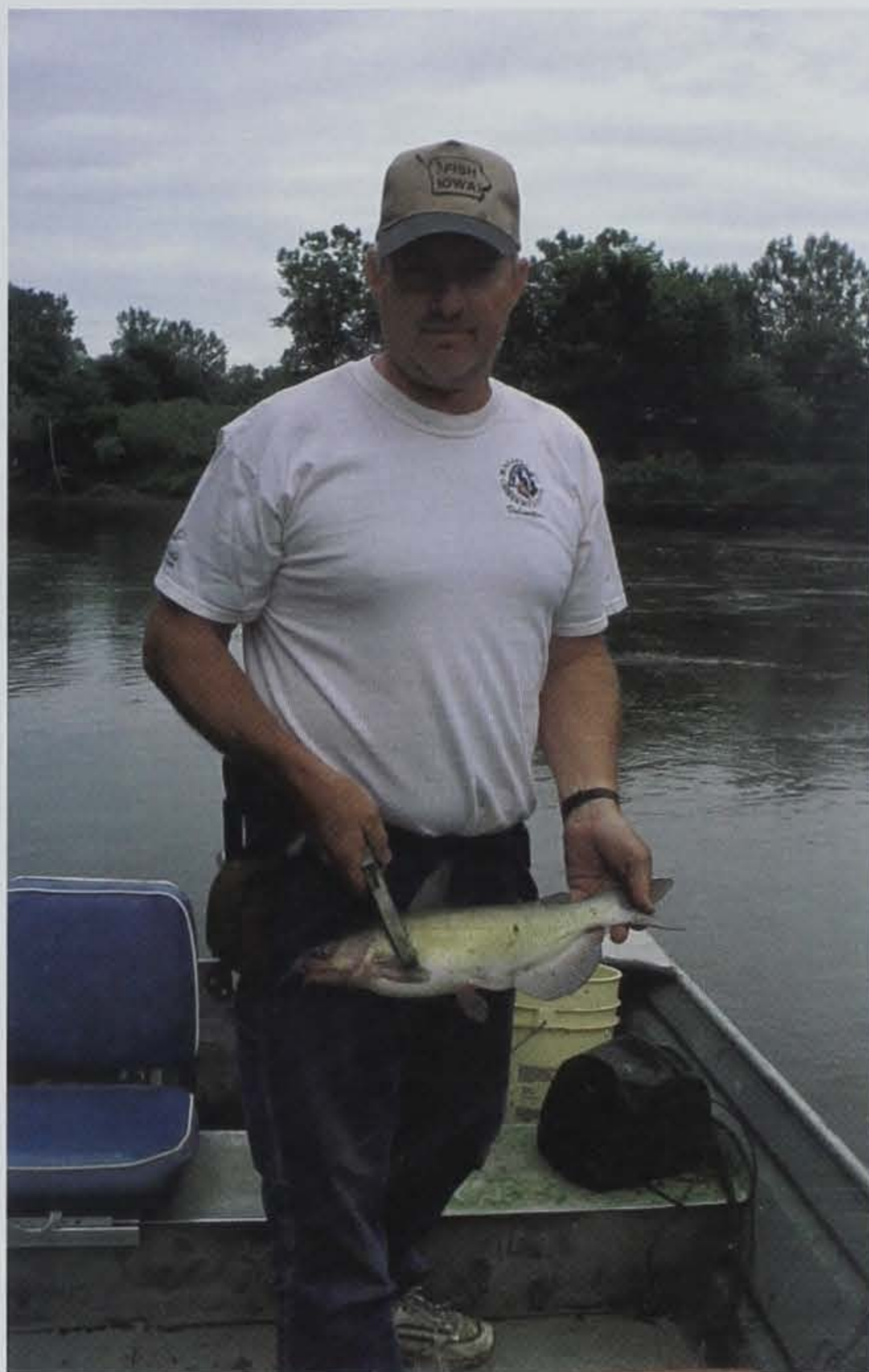
The channel catfish has pushed, pulled and bullied its way to the top of the class of Iowa fish. Its powerful body and willingness to eat almost anything is attractive to anglers. Plus, Iowa rivers are channel catfish factories, making it available across the state.

Fishing for channel catfish is not an effort in sophistication, in fact, it's quite the opposite, which is part of the attraction. Anglers do not need a boat or expensive equipment; it can be done from the shore; and they can grow quite large. In fact, anglers probably have a better chance to catch a 10-pound channel catfish than a 10-pound walleye. Plus, these fish fight hard, really hard. Hang around some experienced anglers and when the boasting begins, the catfisher will undoubtedly say he would rather catch a 20-pound flathead (or northern, or muskie, or...) than a 10-pound channel.

"If you look at our part of the state, catfish is probably the most



Ken Formanek



sought after fish,” said Jim Smith, who along with his wife, Shelly, opened Big Creek Outdoor Supply southwest of Mt. Pleasant. A quick glance around his store reinforces the point. Nearly everything in the store fishing related is for catfish. Big hooks, sinkers, different types of special worms to hold the prepared baits, heavy line, big live baits...and on and on.

The Smith’s started Big Creek Outdoor Supply from scratch and cater to catfish hunters on their way to the nearby Skunk River.

Barry and Virginia Versteegh, from Cedar, know all about big catfish. They go to Kentucky every year to fish for massive blue catfish. But their home court is a stretch of the South Skunk River upstream and down from Rose Hill, in Mahaska County.

So, based on all his experience, what factors should someone consider when deciding where to fish? Versteegh said he looks for areas in the river that are out of the current, or where a creek enters the river, or larger snags. In the heat of the summer, look for the deeper holes, or around rock jetties or bridge pilings.

Versteegh uses a number of different baits, too, including bullheads, green sunfish, leeches, crawdads, cut shad, night crawlers, liver or a variety of prepared baits. Frogs are popular in some circles.

“Shad works good too, but it’s not for the faint of heart,” said Virginia Versteegh. Shad is the first bait they use right after the ice goes out. After about a month, as the water warms, they switch to the other baits.

In catfishing circles, the type of bait used says a lot about the angler.

Smith said he places customers in one of two categories. If they are buying stink bait, they are just looking to catch fish. If they are buying larger live bait, like sunfish or creek chubs, they are looking for larger fish.

Mike Morgan, from Winfield, has a

The Versteeghs, Virginia (above left) and Barry (above) are regulars on the South Skunk River. “Every day you fish doesn’t count against your life expectancy,” says Barry.

cabin on the Skunk River below the Oakland Mills Dam. He said there are a lot of ways to fish for channel catfish.

"I have caught just as many on worms, stink bait and dead worms," Morgan said. "They call me Snag, cause if it's in there, I'm gonna catch it." He also likes to fish areas in the river that are out of the current.

Back upstream, the Versteeghs have nestled their flat-bottom boat just below a large pile of downed trees. The tackle of choice is heavy. They are using the rods usually reserved for the blue catfish in Kentucky with 68-pound braided line. Each has a different type of cheese bait and 1-1/4 ounce walking sinkers to hold it in place against the current. For most anglers, though, a heavy action rod with at least 10-pound test line and heavy sinker will do just fine.

"Everyday you fish doesn't count against your life expectancy," Barry



Where are some of the better places to fish?

For lakes, Rathbun, Coralville, Storm, North Twin, Darling, Geode, Big Creek, West Lake (Osceola), Little River, Prairie Rose, Clear and Pahoja top the list.

Some of the better rivers include the Des Moines, Boone, Skunk, North Raccoon, Iowa, Cedar, Mississippi, Little Sioux and Wapsipinicon.

Tackle for channel catfish is heavy, to keep the bait in place, and strong, to land the fish. Oh, and since catfish feed by smell, it stinks.



Versteegh said. "For me, it's not the catching, it's the fishing."

His rod had a quick tug downstream. One minute later, a nice plump 1-1/2 to 2 pound channel catfish is in his net.

"Cardinal rule – you always keep the first fish – big or small," Virginia Versteegh said.

The day wasn't too productive, but the conditions were not good. The June rains have made fishing difficult not only on the South Skunk, but in many other rivers and lakes. The river was back in its banks, but was still a perfect chocolate milk color and moving quite fast. Throw in a steady light rain and cool temperatures and most people would probably rather be doing something else.

"Any day is a good day on the river," Virginia said.

Mick Klemesrud is an information specialist for the department in Des Moines.



Are Iowans Ready For An Official State Fish?

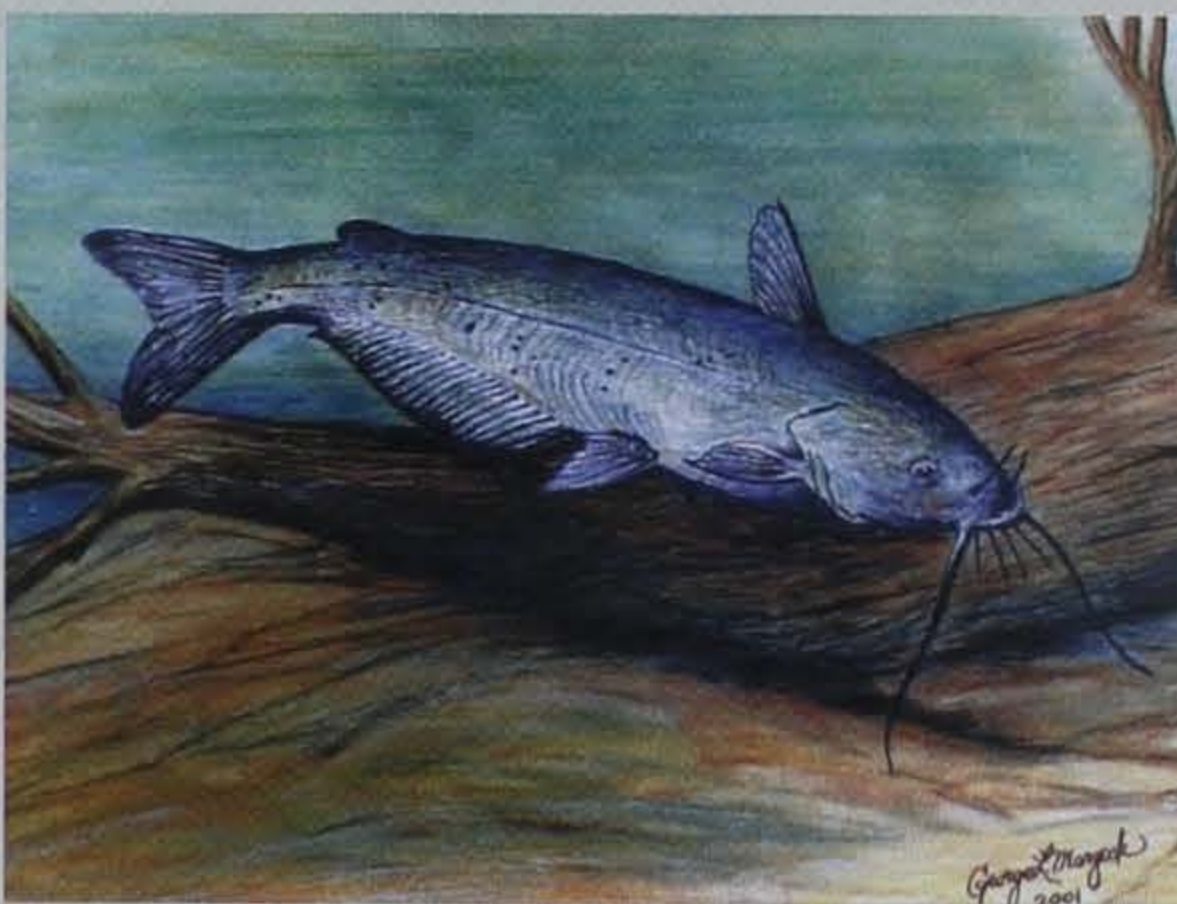
George L. Marzeck Sr., from Burlington, is probably known more for his work to get the channel catfish named the official state fish of Iowa, than his three decade career as an outdoor writer or his service in the navy during WWII. And he is probably okay with that.

"It's grown to the point where a lot of people in the state think I'm the only one who wants it [as the official state fish]," he said. "To me, it has become a matter of principle. I'd like to see the damn thing get done in my lifetime."

The issue began in 1969, when *The Burlington Hawkeye* held a survey/contest to see what the most popular fish was in the state. The survey/contest spread across Iowa through the newspaper association. A panel of judges was convened, votes were counted and the channel catfish was declared the runaway winner. Marzeck and six friends started the campaign the same year. "I'm the only one still living," he said.

Since the campaign began 35 years ago, Marzeck met with

politicians, written letters to political leaders, written articles and granted interviews promoting channel catfish as the official state fish. He



Marzeck's channel catfish art.

has been encouraged by Iowa governors from Hughes through Vilsack to stick with it and reassured that it will get done. He has seen the measure supported by a number of statehouse politicians, but the issue has not moved from its assigned sub-committee in either chamber. And after 35 years, he is getting a little frustrated.

Marzeck said if Iowans want this to happen, they need to contact their legislators, and the support needs to come from all parts of the state, not just southeast Iowa. Until that happens, he is not too optimistic.

The Iowa DNR has supported the legislation each time it has been introduced.

– MK



Big Muddy's
Serves Up

The House





A crisp, colorful salad . . . a cold glass of iced tea . . . a plump, hot baked potato . . . all surrounding the main attraction—a fresh, deep-fried channel catfish that hardly fits on the plate. Oh yes, and it's served with a view of America's most famous river.

Life's simple pleasures. That's what we found at Big Muddy's this summer. Dennis Standard, proprietor of the 17-year-old Burlington restaurant, shared his recipe for one of the house favorites—

Huck's Finn Catfish

According to Standard, the customer is given the choice of a whole or filleted catfish. The cleaned 12-ounce whole catfish (9-ounce fillet) is dipped in an egg wash (a little milk and egg beat together) and rolled in a dry mixture of Golden Dip, flour, salt and pepper. The fish is immediately deep fried at 375 degrees for 9 minutes (12 minutes for the fillet). Time varies with the size of the fish.

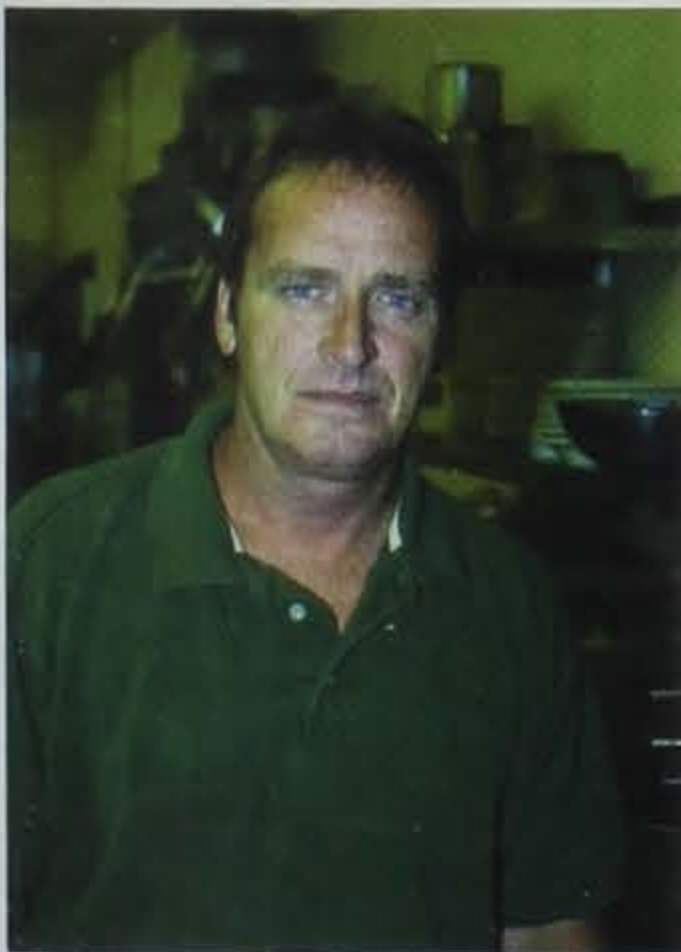
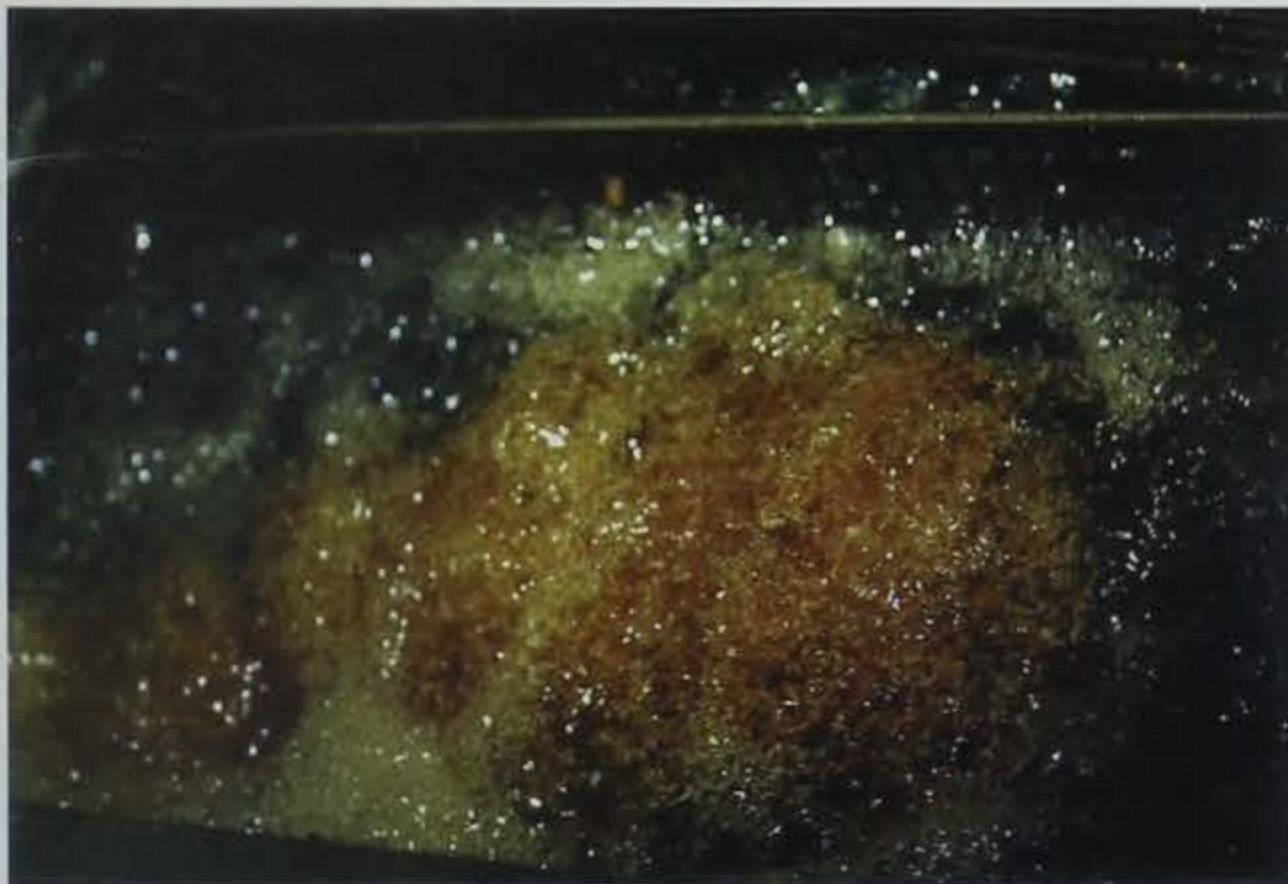
You can boat in or drive to Big Muddy's Bar and Grill on the Mississippi, located in the remodeled 1898 Rock Island freight house. The restaurant is open 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday—Saturday and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday. Big Muddy's serves steaks, seafood, pasta, a very popular grilled turkey sandwich and of course Huck's Finn Catfish.

Big Muddy's Bar and Grill on the Mississippi,
710 North Front Street, Burlington; phone: 319-753-1699

Dennis Standard (left) has owned and operated Big Muddy's since 1987.

se Favorite

Photos by Clay Smith



HYBRID

GASOLINE-ELECTRIC

Hybrid Hype Hitting On All Cylinders

Article and photos by
Brian Button

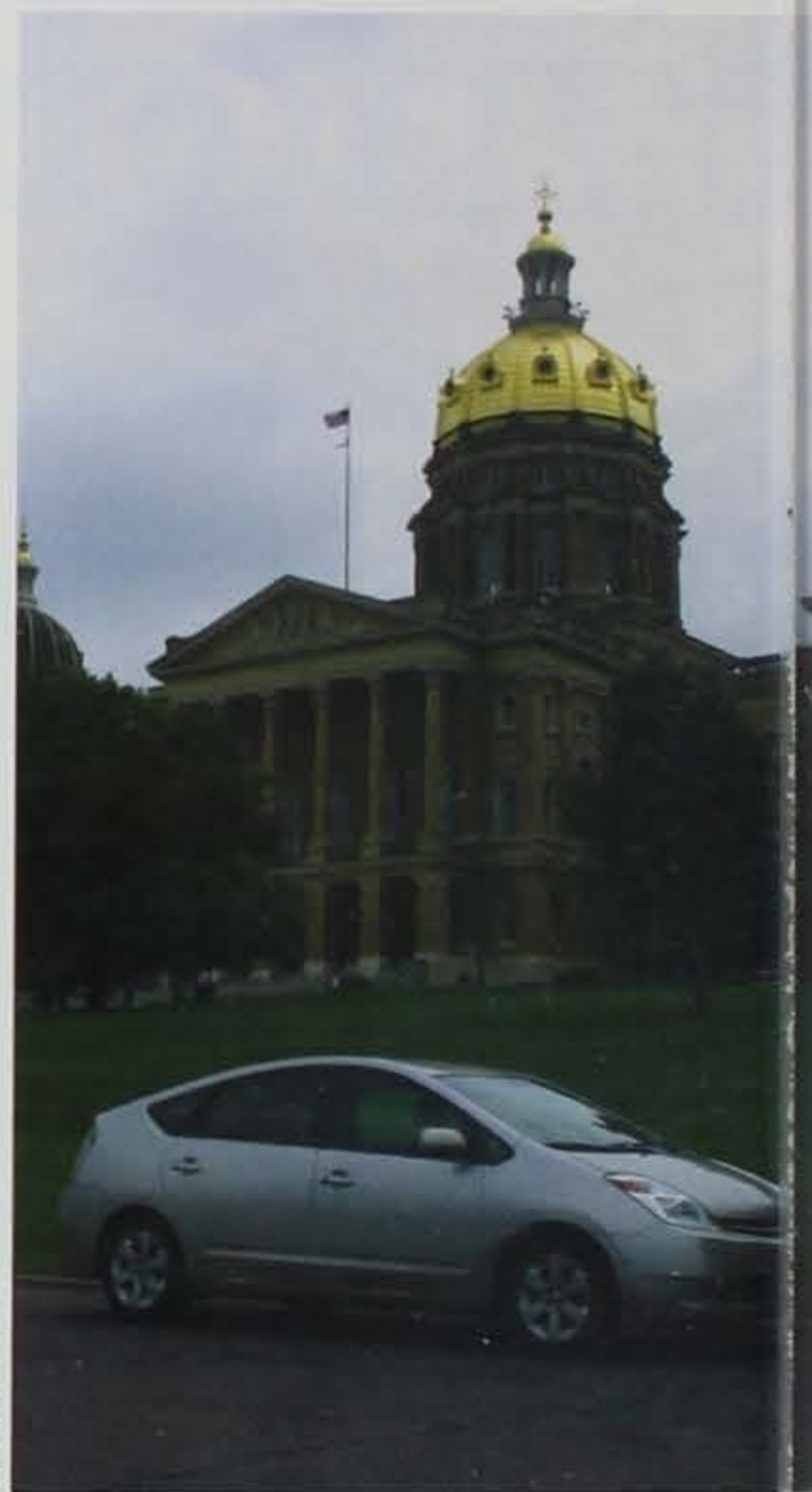
Bill Lloyd doesn't make his 90-mile-round-trip commute on his Gold Wing anymore—the 40-miles-per-gallon motorcycle is a gas glutton by his measure. “I have a car that averages 60 mpg and it has air-conditioning,” he quips. Lloyd is a proud owner of a Honda Insight gas-electric hybrid vehicle and wouldn't trade it for the world.

There's a national and local buzz about hybrid vehicles. And both hum loudly. Sure, the celebrities who own hybrid vehicles reads like a Tinseltown invite list—Meryl Streep, Cameron Diaz, Leonardo DiCaprio, Ted Danson and a dozen more. And sure, one hot item hybrid, the Toyota Prius, was listed as Motor Trend's Car of the Year and the North American Car of the Year. And yes, there are several more vehicles, including at least three SUVs soon to debut with a hybrid drivetrain. But that's all stuff you read in the papers and see on television. What counts is what people are saying locally and how owners feel about hybrid vehicles.

“I love it and I'd buy another in a heartbeat,” says Lloyd. For the past three years he's rolled nearly 71,000 miles without trouble. Lloyd commutes 45 miles one way from Guthrie Center to Urbandale on the metro's west side. Despite the daily

slog of a commute, he averages 60 mpg in his red, 5-speed manual hatchback. His best driving? “I got 73.3 mpg pulling out all the tricks to improve mileage,” he says, standing the glass atrium of his office, the sleek Insight visible and parked outside.

Formerly, he drove a Chevy S-10 pickup truck with 4-wheel drive. “I just got disgusted with the mileage one day,” he says. Lloyd decided to



Merry Rankin

Local dealers are having a hard time keeping up with the demand for new hybrids. One Des Moines Toyota dealership has more than 35 backlogged orders. Nationally, Toyota has more than 20,000 unfilled orders.

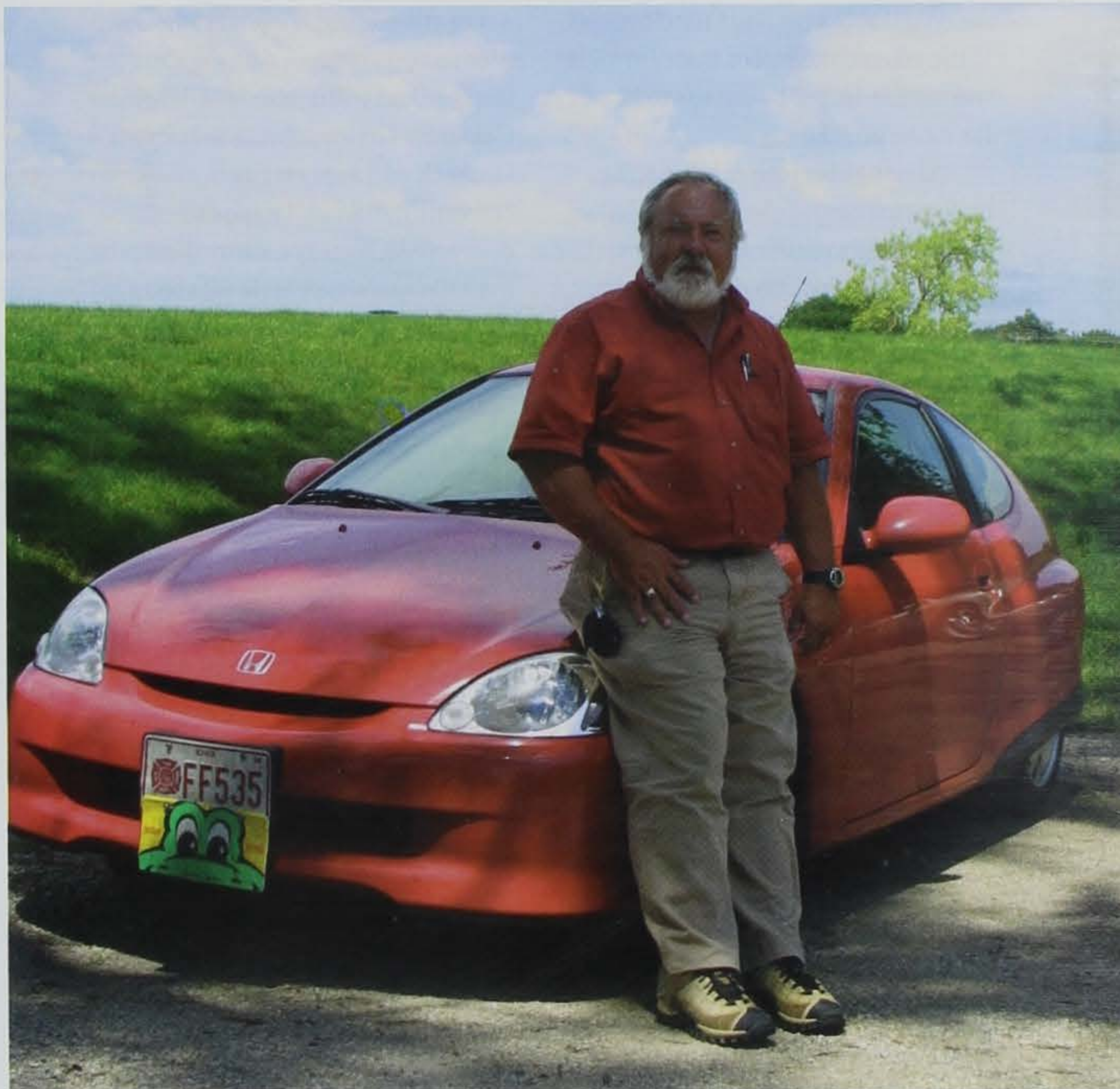
do something. "I used to spend \$15 every other day on gas, now I spend about \$15 a week," a nice benefit with gas prices hovering near \$2 a gallon.

His gas-stingy hybrid takes baby sips from a 10-gallon tank. He drove it to Colorado and home and averaged 55.5 mpg. (You may need to read that again. That wasn't average speed, but fuel use!) The super-sleek vehicle slices the air. "It's so aerodynamic that wind doesn't affect it like regular vehicles," he says.

Hybrids use electric motors to augment the gasoline engine when extra power is needed; the battery self-charges when braking or coasting to a stop. You don't plug them in. They drive without any detectable differences, they look like other vehicles. They don't cost a fortune; they don't make sacrifices. That's what the buzz is about and why manufacturers can't meet demand.

To date, a Des Moines dealership is backlogged 36 orders for the Prius — Toyota has 20,000 unfulfilled orders nationally. "Everybody loves them," says Joe Huber a sales rep at the Toyota dealership. "A guy with a 2004 Prius came in last week and ordered another."

This summer Ford will offer the best-selling small SUV, the Escape, in a hybrid model. "The response has been huge," says Jim Bintner with a metro dealership, who adds Ford is already increasing production because they won't meet demand.



Bill Lloyd, above, loves his Honda Insight, a gas-electric hybrid that averages 60 miles-per-gallon. The DNR continues to add a variety of hybrids to its fleet.

What about buying a used hybrid? Is Lloyd ready to sell or trade in? "I'll run it till it drops! I want to see how far it can go," he says.

Although his Insight hybrid, the undisputed king of ultra-high fuel economy, is a two-seater, he is unfazed. "It's just me riding 99.9 percent of the time," he says, "so that isn't a factor."

While the commuter guru Insight's two seats may be a drawback as a family vehicle, other choices are available. A seven-passenger Toyota Highlander hybrid debuts in February. The popular Ford Escape seats five, the Honda Civic has a hybrid option, and Lexus will unveil a luxury hybrid SUV, too. Evermore choices are on the way.

What about power and towing? February's release of the Toyota Highlander 4-wheel drive delivers 275 horsepower and tows 3,500 pounds. "Eight people are on the list already to buy," says Huber at the Des Moines dealership. And the Escape can tow 1,000 pounds, enough for a motorcycle or jet ski.

While Lloyd continues to praise his hybrid, a man sitting in the office lobby chimes in, "I looked at a Toyota Prius last week." When strangers interrupt to share hybrid vehicle experiences, you know the buzz is real. He is Larry Taylor of Urbandale, who faces a new commute-heavy job. While on a test drive, he said his 6-foot, 4-inch brother-in-law fit comfortably in the Prius backseat, a car so spacious its classified as mid-size sedan with seating for five.

Taylor frequently drives to Minneapolis to see relatives. There, at

a recent wedding, a friend (who owns a Prius and averages 50 mpg) inspired him to think about a hybrid. Currently Taylor drives a Subaru Outback and a sporty Saab convertible. "I can't trade the convertible," he says, whose look made it clear the vehicle was too

much fun, especially since the top was down on a sunny 80 degree day

Now, his all-wheel drive Subaru that loves to wolf down fuel is the target. "If I really mind my [driving] manners, I can get 24 mpg," he says, noting the car is usually far less efficient. And when driving in states



Bank, Don't Tank Your Dollars

No matter what vehicle you drive there are many tricks to up mileage, save fuel and keep dollars in your bank from going in your tank.

You can cut fuel costs, reduce harmful emissions and improve resale value while getting better engine performance with these simple, money saving tips. Here's how.

Racing to a Standstill

Drive smart. Don't accelerate to stop lights and stop signs, instead coast to gradually slow down. By anticipating when the light may change to green, you may not have to

stop at all to maintain momentum, save brake wear and cut fuel usage.

Jackrabbit Starts

Fast, "jackrabbit" starts are tough on vehicles and waste fuel. Accelerate smoothly and evenly for fuel savings and less mechanical wear.

Running to Nowhere

Idling engines get zero miles per gallon. Turn off vehicles when not moving—even diesel engines do not need to be idled.

Relax

Driving a few extra miles over the limit doesn't get you there that much faster. Enjoy the ride, save fuel and travel at a reasonable speed.

with higher speed limits, "I can watch it suck gas on the fuel gauge," he says.

He hasn't yet decided which hybrid model to buy, but any is an improvement when you have a whirlpool in the gas tank. Based on \$1.85-per-gallon gasoline prices,

drivers who cruise 15,000 miles per year in a 16 mpg gas guzzler can save nearly \$6,000 over five years with a hybrid vehicle and nearly \$12,000 in fuel costs over 10 years.

Even the DNR is taking advantage of the vehicles, with several in the fleet, including a 2001

Toyota Prius and a new Honda Civic Hybrid that can cruise 650 miles on a 13-gallon gas tank. Another Civic is on the way.

There are other perks too, including a federal income tax advantage of \$1,500 for a hybrid purchase. Some in Congress are considering increasing the tax benefit to reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil, keep billions in the U.S. economy, and help clean the air. (The vehicles are the cleanest on the road. Since every gallon of fuel burned releases about 20 pounds of climate altering carbon dioxide, increasing fuel economy from 20 to just 25 mpg prevents 15 tons of the greenhouse gas from being released over the life of the vehicle. Thus hybrids could have an impact on reducing emissions.)

"The American public is ready for hybrids," says Taylor, "If you can get something for \$18,000 to \$24,000 that looks nice, is comfortable and that gets 40 or 50 miles per gallon — why not?"

Brian Button is an air quality information specialist for the department in Des Moines.

Check the Glove Compartment

Open the glove compartment and read the owner's manual! Following recommended maintenance helps prevent malfunctioning parts before they cause noticeable problems or serious and expensive damage. Some parts need routine checks, others such as filters and fluids, need routine replacement. If you don't keep service records, start now.

Inflation is a Good Thing

Keeping tires properly inflated can add an extra two miles to your efficiency. Plus it extends tire life. Next time you "fill 'er up," remember your tires too.

Huff and Puff

Dirty air filters are a common problem, despite the paltry cost (\$5) and a quick do-it-yourself job. Besides protecting your engine, replacing a dirty filter can improve mileage by 10 percent. Dirty, clogged air filters choke airflow to starve combustion and emit smoke you may not even see. This unburned fuel and extra emissions not only harms the environment and is unhealthy, it can damage valves and cylinders to steal even more power and fuel efficiency. Regularly replace air filters following the owner's manual and more often if you drive in dusty conditions.

The Big Engine that Couldn't

Paying for a big, powerful engine only to sacrifice horsepower and waste fuel is foolish! Get routine tune-ups for peak performance and fuel savings. Ensure fuel injectors are checked for efficiency-robbing deposits that increase emissions and make the vehicle harder to start and drive. Tune-ups pay for themselves in fuel savings and averted engine wear.

Oxygen Sniffing: An Exhaustive Effort

Ignoring your oxygen sensor is an economic double-whammy. The sensor checks oxygen levels in the exhaust, then onboard computers adjust the fuel mix—leaner or richer—in the combustion chamber for peak, efficient performance. As sensors wear, engines can burn excess fuel at your cost.

Repairing a faulty sensor can up mileage by 40 percent! Second, extra emissions work the expensive catalytic converter to death. Avoid this by changing the oxygen sensor following the owner's manual rather than waiting for the "check engine" warning light.

—BB



Harvesting History

Article by Joe Wilkinson
Photos by Clay Smith

Moving slowly through the muggy August heat, the combine strips seed from stem. Most of the plant remains rooted in the field. Seed and chaff roll through to the hopper as the specially fitted harvester rolls through the field. When full, the hopper is unloaded into a mobile drying station; basically a trailer-mounted generator and fan blowing through a box. The seed dries in minutes; ready to be de-bearded, screened and stored for the winter.

Just another day at the office for the prairie seed harvest team. That "office" might be on a state wildlife area, as employees harvest a mix of big bluestem and Indiangrass from a restored prairie. It could be on a prison farm, as inmates hoe between well-maintained rows of partridge pea, mountain mint and compass plants.

In another setting, volunteers fan across the countryside, locating remnant prairie plots in field corners or old cemeteries, harvesting seed by hand. The surplus goes to one of the state's largest restored prairies. That volunteer help, extra attention from landowners, conservation agencies, even corrections inmates has yielded thousands of acres of native grasses, dotted with a pallet of colorful wildflowers, taking root in 21st-Century Iowa.

There was a time when it didn't



take any work to grow a prairie. It just happened. As Europeans began trickling into the Iowa Territory in the 1830s, they were engulfed by 30 million acres of prairie grasses and forbs (flowers). Through the second half of the 19th century, that trickle grew to a flood as our ancestors literally plowed through the prairie



Spiderwort

landscape to set up a new life on the frontier. The same soil that supported these vast seas of grass and teeming wildlife also grew bumper crops to feed a hungry world – and still does.

In the 21st Century, their descendants now try to turn back the clock, restoring small swatches of

Iowa's native fabric and the wildlife and conservation benefits they offer. Students fan out across prairie remnants, sometimes even roadside ditches, to collect seed. Commercial enterprises have established a prairie seed foothold to help fuel the push. Efforts like the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' prairie seed harvest program fill in the gaps, planting seed and seedlings harvested from public land on still more public areas.

The major component is seed from the prairie grasses that fill those restored prairies. Warm-weather grasses like big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass and side oats gramma are staples for the harvest team. Canada wild rye does well in cooler periods. Prairie cordgrass takes to moist soils. Last year, the team harvested more than 20,000 pounds of pure, live seed from the six species. That became this year's seed stock, helping to restore or maintain hundreds of acres of prairie habitat.

And while the grasses supply the overwhelming majority of seed, the forbs provide the variety. "We want to get different species out there,"

explains DNR wildlife biologist Bill Johnson, who heads the prairie seed harvest team. "The flowering plants attract a wide variety of insects. That fills a niche in the food web. The more diverse the planting, the more diverse the wildlife we see."

Filling that niche, though, is labor intensive. "We're busy from early spring through the end of October, establishing stands and harvesting seed. We grow about 50 species," says Johnson. Early in the season, it means collecting June grass and prairie spiderwort. By September, the pale purple coneflower comes on. Even in late October, blue aster keeps collectors busy. In between, there is constant weeding to keep out exotic species that could choke the life out of the prairie stand. Don't say "thistle" to a prairie enthusiast and expect a smile.

"Last year we collected 900 pounds of wildflower seed," explains Johnson. That might not sound like much in Iowa, where a 200-bushel farm wagon can easily hold a ton of corn. But it carries no \$2-a-bushel price tag, either. "The black-eyed Susan seed goes for \$30 a pound. It'll go all the way up to \$1,000 a pound for something like heath aster," says Johnson. Just a couple years ago, the team's harvest yield was only 100 pounds. The seed

Bill Johnson (far left), head of the DNR's prairie seed harvest program, hand collects seed from plant beds at the Dallas County Home farm near Adel (left and page 26).





harvest is critical, since tight state budgets leave little room, if any, for buying seed to help restore prairies on public land. Now, with stands established, the team begins to see a payoff.

It is not just the plant community, but the whole environment that benefits. Various insect-attracting blooms in a stand of bluestem provide high-protein food to young pheasants and a host of other grassland birds. They, in turn, keep the next link of the food chain full. The deep prairie roots hold soil in place, greatly reducing erosion. Farm conservation programs encourage native species to be planted when fields are taken out of production. Birdwatchers, hikers, hunters and other outdoor recreationists benefit, too.

At the Ingham-High Wildlife Unit in northern Iowa, about 170 acres of prairie have been restored. "We are still in our infancy," acknowledges wildlife biologist Ron Howing. "But we do things now like matching soil types with seed, mixing seed that will grow best in an area. Some sites here have no tall grasses. Instead, we might go with side oats gramma or little bluestem. We are trying to mirror the original prairies, not just scatter seed."

With Iowa's mixed bag of soil types, weather and growing seasons, these prairie plants are raised close to home. At the North Central Correctional Facility in Rockwell City, species suited to northern Iowa's colder, drier climate are the specialty. Central-zone plants are raised at Brushy Creek State Recreation Area in Webster County and at the Dallas

County Home farm near Adel. Near Montrose in Lee County, southern ecozone seedlings from the Oakdale Medical and Classification Center in Johnson County are grown at the Iowa State Penitentiary Prison Farm Three.

"They are genetically adapted to thrive in the soils and climate of the different zones," says Johnson. "The tall coreopsis, for instance, grows as far north as southern Iowa. We don't want to introduce it in northern Iowa. Over the long term, it will not do well. There is a reason it doesn't grow there." Johnson says even plants of the same species have adapted to their zone's longer or shorter growing seasons, to early or later blooming periods.

Separating those different forbs is labor intensive at the harvest end, as well as at germination. That is where the "corrections connection" is invaluable. Anywhere from 10 to 30 inmates from Rockwell City are involved, depending on the season. A 100-by-200-foot pole building has become a greenhouse, as the prairie seed harvest effort takes root. "We sort the seeds here, store them, germinate them and transplant them," explains Rockwell City warden Jim McKinney. Inmates maintain the outdoor forb beds on a reclaimed landfill area on prison grounds. When needed, inmates are sent to Brushy Creek Recreation Area to work on prairie beds there. "We have year-round service and flexibility," emphasizes McKinney. "We would love to expand. It is amazing to think of what could be accomplished."

The prairie seed effort is just one component of the greenhouse program at Oakdale, which also grows hydroponic tomatoes and flowers. "An



Lowell Washburn

Educational Opportunities

Classes from West Delaware Middle School in Manchester take their learning outside each fall, culminating their science class prairie unit by harvesting seed in local remnants or restored prairie plantings. Students might be assigned specific plants to harvest. Some learn to recognize the spikes on the compass plant for instance, or the lemony smell left on their hands as they break off yellow coneflower heads. The seed collected is in turn used in small local prairie restoration projects.

In one collection area, teacher John Zietlow sweeps his arm over the adjacent crop fields, showing the students how the land drops into the two-acre lowland, too wet to plow.



Lowell Washburn

"They have to know about their roots," says Zietlow. "It's important that they know the prairie is why they're probably here. Their ancestors came because of the rich farmland, because of that prairie. There is a little bit of history – of appreciation for the native vegetation."

Program Grows Responsibility, Too

Iowa's Prairie Seed Harvest Program has helped blanket hundreds of acres with restored prairie in the last four years. With Iowa's corrections system playing a major role, it also has a human benefit. Inmates tackle a variety of roles, from pulling weeds to tracking germination data on a computer. Crews from Rockwell City to Oakdale to Montrose learn on the job. "We tell them they have a job and to be on time," stresses warden Jim McKinney, from the North Central Correctional Facility at Rockwell City. "They are developing basic life skills. They can't quit and walk away. We have seen a lot of guys really build better attitudes. And they see the benefit of what they did at harvest time. We have developed more than 200 Master Gardeners." At the Medical and Classification Center at Oakdale, greenhouse manager Larry Gilds sees the same thing. "It gives them a sense of pride, of giving something back to the community."

inmate arranges for all the materials, preparing the seed, refrigerating it until needed, as well as the germination itself and transplanting seedlings," explains greenhouse manager Larry Gilds, at the state Medical and Classification Facility at Oakdale. "He has to track the number of plants, the zone they come from and enter it all on a database." The Oakdale seedlings are shipped to the Montrose prison farm for further development. Because of the prison labor advantage, the state has an agreement with private seed suppliers that the plants will only be used on

public areas.

And the conversion from corn and beans to coneflowers and bluestem involves legions of volunteers, too. "We have seed team leaders – volunteers – who line up their own work schedule," says Pauline Drobney, biologist at the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge near Prairie City. About half the refuge's 5,600 acres has been planted to prairie. The volunteers are the backbone of that restoration. "Most started knowing little or nothing about prairies. Now, they know when certain species are ready to harvest and get word out to volunteers. They harvest it and sort it on their own free time and bring it in for us."

From that point, other volunteers help sow the seed, at locations designated by refuge staff. Special care is taken to spread seed on the soil type best suited for it. "For high quality ecological restoration, we have to continue introducing species. Some native prairies have up to 300 species," says Drobney. "Our



Pale purple coneflower

volunteers have found some rare species – yellow false foxglove, for instance." One couple is assembling a photo journal to show landowners and new volunteers.

Modern prairie restoration effort is still evolving. In the 1970s, much of Iowa's prairie restoration meant sowing switchgrass and watching it grow. It provided excellent early cover, crowding out invader species with its dense growth. "It lacked diversity, though," recalls Howing. "Now, it has evolved to where we can put better habitat out there. In a stand with big bluestem for instance, wildlife can move better, yet maintain overhead cover. The forbs attract insects the wildlife feed on. We would like to see 30 to 50 species in a prairie stand. We are succeeding at that."

Better prairies. Better wildlife habitat. And a better chance to recreate a small piece of that rolling sea of grass – and wildflowers – that greeted our ancestors.

Joe Wilkinson is an information specialist for the department in Iowa City.

Join the IPN, only \$10/year!
Write IPN, PO Box 572, Nevada, IA 50201
or see www.iowaprairienetwork.org

The Good Ole Days of Trout Fishing Are Now

Article and photos by Lowell Washburn

You've heard the claims. Some company advertising a line of products that, they say, offers "something for everyone." Rarely are the claims true. So much so, in fact, that most of us simply tune the commercials out.

Having said that, I'll make some claims of my own. If you're an Iowa angler who has an interest in trout, coldwater trout streams, and, of course, trout fishing, the DNR is currently providing a variety of programs that truly does offer something for everyone.

Perhaps no one is more passionate, or better versed, on the topic of Iowa trout and trout fishing than fisheries management biologist, Bill Kalishek.

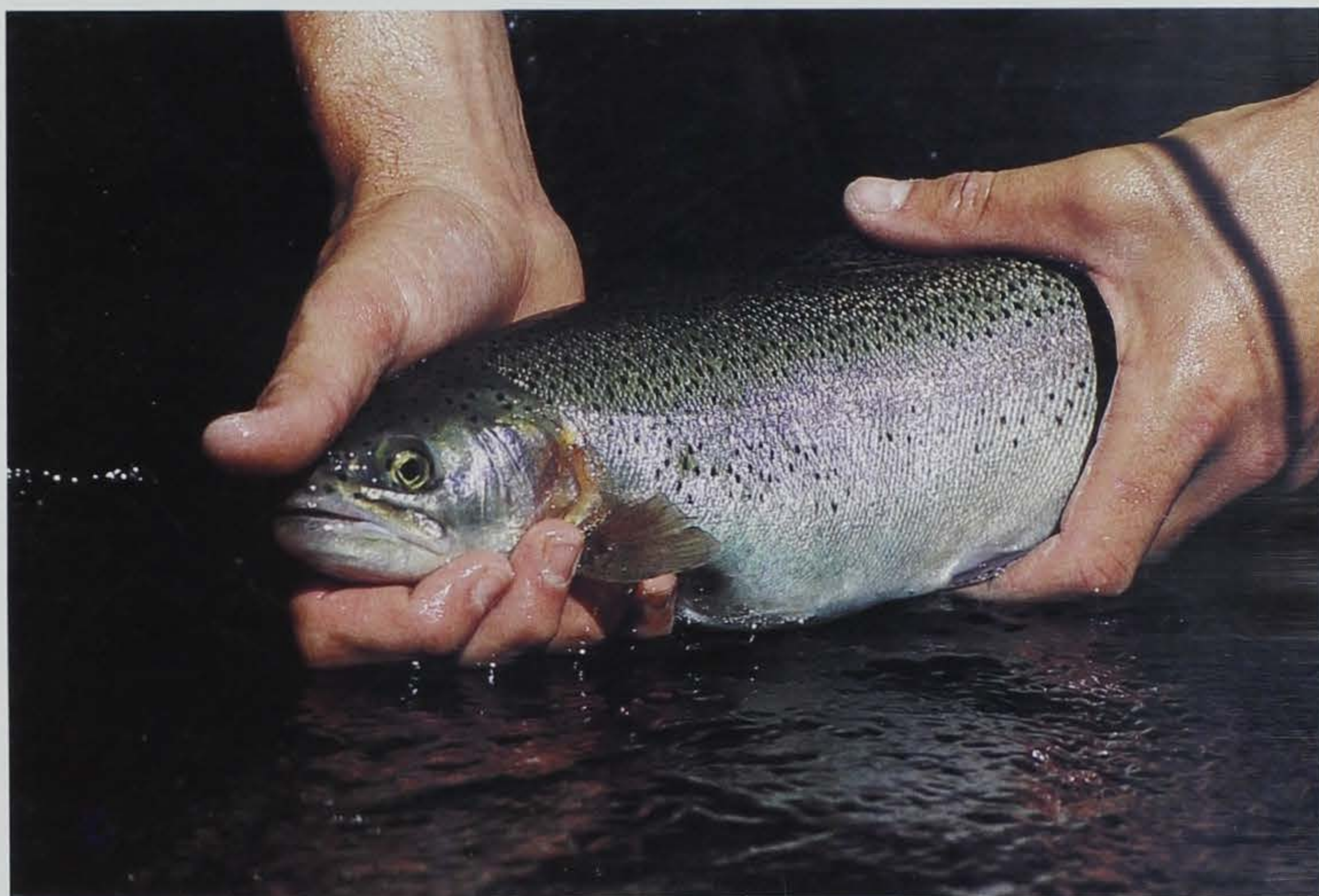
"I like to think that the 'Good Old Days' of Iowa trout fishing are not something that happened in the past, but rather is occurring right now," says Kalishek.

"That may seem puzzling to some people, but once you take a look at the

entire picture, it makes perfect sense."

Twenty-five years ago, angler success was totally dependent on

remain a vital component of Iowa trout fishing, today's program has broadened to include opportunities to pursue genuine stream-reared wild



weekly stockings of hatchery-reared, put-and-take fish. As recently as the 1980s, only about a half-dozen of the state's 105 coldwater trout streams enjoyed an appreciable level of natural reproduction.

Although put-and-take stockings

trout, trophy fishing along catch-and-release stretches of blue-ribbon grade streams, land acquisition, in-stream habitat improvements, watershed protection, and stockings of high quality put-and-grow fingerlings.

"It's really exciting to see how

much our program has improved and expanded during recent years," said Kalishek. "One of the most exciting things for me has been to see how private landowners and conservation groups have become increasingly involved in habitat improvement. We now have three Trout Unlimited chapters in the state (Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Decorah) and all three groups are very active in habitat work.

Most trout anglers are aware of our trout stream acquisition programs. But I think many anglers are somewhat less informed about our private lands work which is also having a very positive impact on Iowa trout fishing." (See "One Man's Effort" at right.)

"In addition to the Trout Unlimited chapters, we're also partnering with groups like NRCS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to stabilize stream banks, build quality bank hides and make watershed improvements in the uplands. Some habitat projects have been as simple as adding large boulders to a portion of stream. Other improvements have been more complicated. The common denominator is that once a farmer sees a completed project, he gets excited. Word spreads, neighbors visit the stream and pretty soon you have more people asking how to make improvements on their land," Kalishek added.

One Man's Effort

by Kevin Baskins

Michael Osterholm's plan is straightforward, but he knows that he's going to have to take a crooked approach to achieve his goal.

In an agricultural-driven world that has long placed an emphasis on straightening streams to improve drainage, Osterholm wants to turn back the clock to a time when the spring-fed creek on his property charted its own course across a lush and picturesque landscape.

Osterholm's dream is to once again see the native brook trout thriving on the 98-acre property in Allamakee County, close to where he

grew up in Waukon.

To realize his dream, Osterholm is restoring his property to its native, tall grass prairie/oak savanna habitat and means re-meandering a stream that has long since been straightened for human convenience.

"The problem we have is that we have become too short-sighted in only valuing land based on its agricultural potential, when there are people who would pay much more an acre to have property like this – the way it once was. The land like mine that is best suited for recreational purposes is usually the most marginal from an agricultural standpoint. Restoring the marginal land to its original state is a win-win for the landowner and for the environment," said Osterholm.

"We are sitting on a crown jewel in northeast Iowa and people don't even realize it. Trout fishermen talk

about fishing the Madison River (Montana) which has 4,000 to 4,500 trout per mile. Waterloo Creek here is one-tenth to one-twentieth the width of the Madison River and also has 4,000 to 4,500 fish per mile. People just don't realize



Michael Osterholm

Osterholm's meandering stream

the potential we have in this region and the rich aquatic resources that are here," said Osterholm

Osterholm's property includes a 1,400-foot long, unnamed stream originating at the spring as well as the confluence of Waterloo Creek and Duck Creek, two well-known trout streams. By looking at aerial photos from the 1940s, Osterholm was able to see the faint outline of the original



Osterholm (top) hopes to stock his stream with South Pine brook trout fingerlings.

path in which water flowed from the spring to Duck Creek and now he wants to restore the original waterway, long ago channeled for agriculture.

The plan is to eventually stock the re-constructed stream with the South Pine Creek brook trout, a species native to northeast Iowa and genetically proven to be a wild. The conditions of the stream running from the spring to Duck Creek are nearly identical to the conditions of South Pine Creek, making Osterholm optimistic of a successful brook trout restoration on his property.

He plans to name the reconstructed stream Brook Creek.

Although native to northeastern Iowa, brook trout do not do well in water with fluctuating temperatures and turbid conditions.

"Even though I haven't owned the property all that long, we've had some extremely wet conditions and some extremely dry and the spring has never varied in its output, it's always been 1 cubic feet a second, about as steady as it goes," said Osterholm.

So with a steady, reliable source of water, Osterholm knows that the key to success will be to improve the landscape to establish a clean water environment that will allow brook trout to thrive.

Osterholm is the director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota and is a leading expert on issues relating to bioterrorism and public health preparedness. He serves as an advisor to U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson.

He brings the same scientific approach and attention to detail to his project in Allamakee County as he has to his professional career. Before even starting the project, Osterholm made sure a number of environmental tests and surveys were completed so the results of each change can be documented.

"I wanted to make sure we clearly established a baseline of where we started. I want to be able to document what we've done. I want this project to be almost a laboratory setting in terms of documenting what has been

accomplished after all the improvement have been made," said Osterholm.

But for Osterholm, this is also an experiment in economic impact, adding that the potential of building vacation homes in northeast Iowa is attracting the attention of people in Chicago, the Twin Cities and Madison, Wis. His thesis is bolstered by a recent Iowa State University study that shows rural counties with outdoor recreational amenities perform better economically than those relying more heavily on just agriculture.

"This doesn't have to be fly-over land. More people are going to discover it and want to enhance it. What we learn and document from this project will save others time and money," Osterholm said.

The project recently received a \$10,000 grant from Trout Unlimited's Embrace a Stream program ranking fourth out of 54 applications across the nation. Osterholm has also enlisted assistance from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Allamakee County Conservation Board, Luther College, the DNR and others.

Osterholm is going "above and beyond what I've ever seen any landowner do," said Bill Kalishek, fisheries management biologist for the DNR who has been assisting with the project.

"It's very rare that we ever have to follow a landowner rather than lead them and in this case, we're having to run awfully fast just to follow," Kalishek said.

Iowa's picturesque Waterloo Creek now produces wild self-sustaining populations of brown trout.



It is these sorts of habitat improvement projects that have allowed Iowa's trout program to expand. Today, in addition to put-and-take, anglers are presented with opportunities to fish for put-and-grow trout, fish quality stretches of artificials-only (no-kill) streams, or match wits with totally wild, naturally produced trout.

As water quality and habitat conditions have improved, the number of streams producing wild trout have jumped from six to 30. The opportunity for anglers to match their skills against naturally spawned, totally wild populations of brown trout is now available at 26 Iowa streams. Four streams harbor self-sustaining populations of brook trout. All told, wild trout currently inhabit 60 1/2

miles of Iowa's coldwater streams, and the 'Good Old Days' just keep getting better.

"One of the new things we're doing is going to the stream and collecting wild adult browns and then bringing them into the hatchery system as brood fish. Eggs from these fish are hatched, raised and then stocked as two-inch fingerlings. What we've found is that the offspring of these wild

trout survive up to four times better than fingerlings raised from captive brood stock," said Kalishek.

"Right now, we're annually stocking between 125,000 and 150,000 two-inch brown trout fingerlings. Our goal is to eventually have all of these fish come from totally wild parents. We're not there yet, but it's coming."

According to the results of an





Stream research and habitat improvement have paid off. Wild populations of trout can now be found in 30 of Iowa's coldwater streams – 60-1/2 miles total.



In 1975, back when Iowa trout fishing was still mostly a put-and-take proposition, the survey found that 74 percent of the state's trout stamp purchasers were "very satisfied" with the current program. By any measure, that represents a phenomenal level of popularity regarding a government activity. Even more incredible is that by 2001, the number of "very satisfied" respondents had leaped to 95 percent.

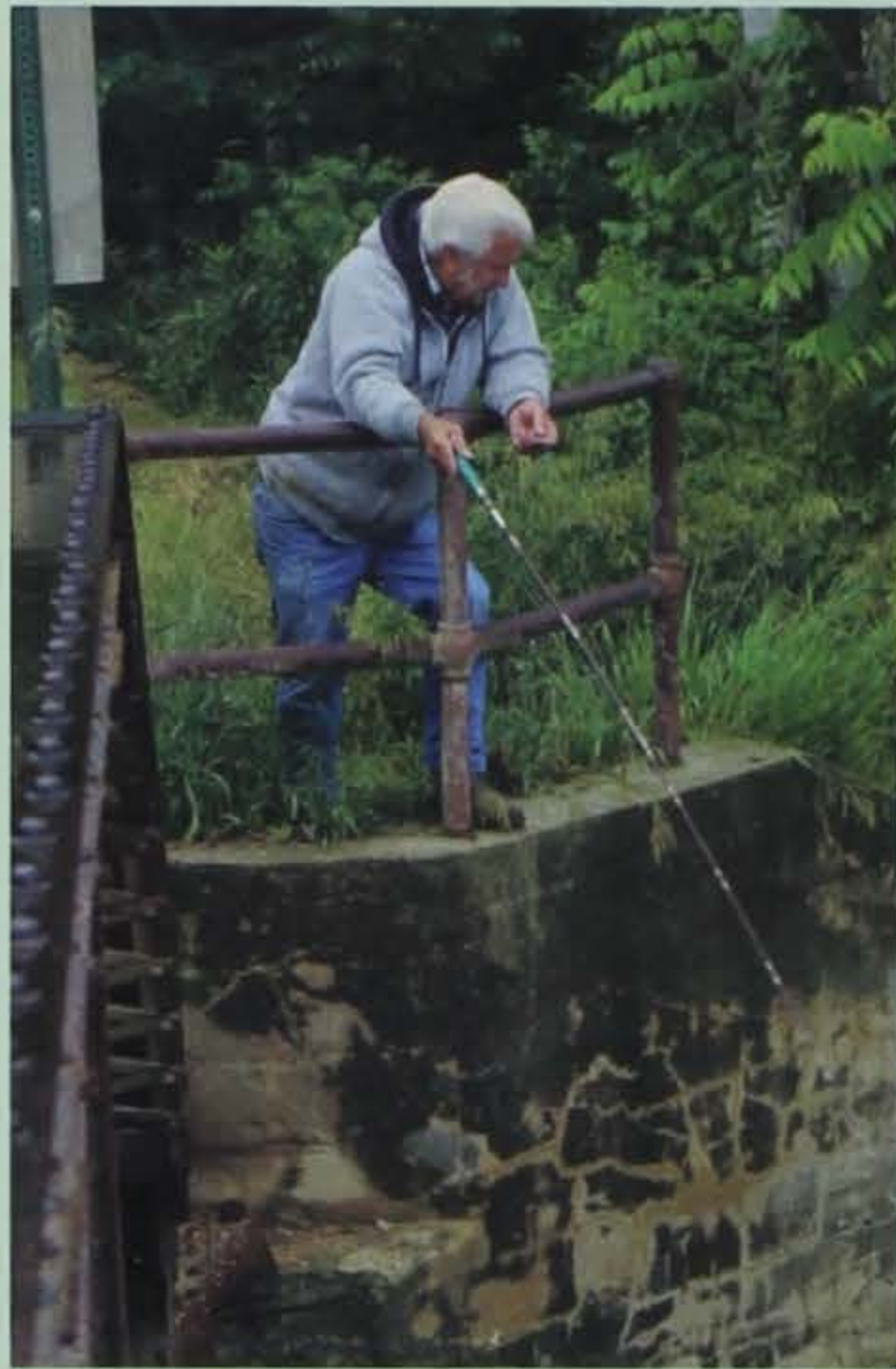
"To have almost everyone say they are very satisfied with our trout program is extremely gratifying," says Kalishek.

"I think that satisfaction simply reflects the tremendous diversity of our program. The behavior of our fishermen is clearly changing because our streams and opportunities have changed. Iowa trout fishing is just one of those things that truly does offer something for everyone."

ongoing angler survey, changes in Iowa's trout program has also created some interesting changes in public attitudes and behavior. In 1991, for example, 60 percent of anglers interviewed fished with bait, 33 percent used artificials (spinners), and 7 percent used flies. When asked the same questions in 2001, the number of trout-fishing enthusiasts using bait had dropped to 43 percent.

Those using spinners remained about the same (31 percent), while the number of anglers using flies increased nearly four-fold to 26 percent.

In 1996, 11 percent of the anglers interviewed said they released all of the trout they caught. In 2001, just five years later, the number of people who released all their fish had soared to 27 percent.



Levi Ackart

Levi Ackart fishes for trout nearly every single day. Although he doesn't necessarily catch his limit every day, he does manage to land more than enough to keep him happy.

"As a rule, I catch at least some trout every day," says Ackart. "I put most of them back, but every now and then I'll

keep a few. Some days I just enjoy walking and looking at the stream. It's good exercise."



For Robin Andera, Iowa trout fishing is a year round sport. During the warm-weather season, this Spillville resident hunts for trout on a weekly basis. She usually finds, and catches, some fish — mainly rainbows along with lesser numbers of browns and brookies. Smaller trout are released, while a few of the larger specimens are kept for the smoker.

When the snow flies, Andera still hits the streams. Although a lot of anglers think the fishing is all over by then, she still finds plenty of trout that are willing to hit.

"I use ultra-light tackle and artificial lures — mainly spinners, jigs,

and rooster-tails. My husband, Marty got me started on trout three years ago and now I love it," says Andera.

"I enjoy the solitude of trout fishing, so I'm looking for a place with less people. To find that I usually go to the unannounced streams. It's not that I'm anti-social. It's just that I don't care to be in a crowd when I'm fishing."

"There are always fish in the streams, and I like the quality [of the trout]. Sometimes I fish at streams



Robin Andera hunts for trout near Decorah.

near Highlandville. I like the remote aspects, the scenic beauty."



Steve Pecinovsky is a guy that Iowa trout fishermen love to see coming.

Based at the Decorah State Fish Hatchery, Pecinovsky drives a DNR stocking truck. Five days a week you'll find him threading his trout truck

To Each Their Own

A Visit With Some Iowa Trout Anglers

Article and photos by
Lowell Washburn

through a network of back roads, pasture trails and remote accesses in northeastern Iowa.

"I visit around 17 trout streams on a regular basis," says Pecinovsky. "Some of the more heavily used streams get stocked twice a week, others receive trout twice a month, and stockings on some streams are totally unannounced."

By the time regular stocking activities conclude in early November, fisheries workers will have placed nearly 400,000 catchable (put-and-take) trout in more than 50 coldwater streams. Put-and-take trout average around 11 inches and weigh about 1/2 pound. Smaller numbers of brood fish weighing up to several pounds each are also released.

"I get to meet all kinds of people," says Pecinovsky. "Most are really up beat, satisfied. A few complain that the fish we're stocking are too small or too few. We also get some out-of-staters that fish here, and I had some guys from Illinois tell me that our [Iowa] trout are bigger than anything

Fisheries worker, Steve Pecinovsky stocks a netfull of catchable rainbow trout into a Winneshiek County stream.



they've seen anywhere."

"After awhile you start recognizing some of the same people

using the same streams week after week. The trout stocking program is definitely a major component to their recreation. For some, trout fishing almost becomes a social event. Some of the older people meet here once a week, fish 'till noon and head back home.

They take a few fish with them and then come back again the next week."



Like most of us, Mike Callan of

Westgate doesn't get to go trout fishing quite as often as he'd like. So far this year, he's only been able to hit the streams about once every three or four weeks. But when he does, he makes the most of his day.

"Fishing has really been good this year," says Callan. "I've caught mostly rainbows and one really nice, 16-inch brookie."



Mike Callan

Callan fishes about a dozen different streams, and claims Grannis Creek in Fayette County as his personal favorite. Last summer, he caught his biggest trout ever there — a tackle-smashing 8-pound rainbow.

"I use ultra-light spinning tackle and artificial lures. Sometimes I'll keep a few or even a limit to grill, but I also do a lot of catch-and-

release," says Callan.

"Last year was great. I caught several 18- to 20-inch brown trout. Since there's no stocking where I was fishing, those browns were all natural. They were really challenging to catch."

"I really like what they [DNR] are doing to some of the streams," he notes.

"I see lots of habitat work. Things like riprap to stop [bank] erosion and the building of handicap accesses. I think they're doing their part to keep up the stream."



There are three places that Charles Ira, of Spillville, likes to wet a line. He likes fishing for jumbo yellow bass at Clear Lake; angling for bass, bluegills and crappies on the Mississippi River;

and fishing for rainbow, brook and brown trout at Winneshiek County's Bohemian Creek.

"Bohemian Creek is the only place I fish, and I've been here six times so far this year," he says. "Most of what I've caught have been rainbows."

"The first two times I caught limits here, then was skunked twice. Last week, I caught two and lost three. We'll find out how today goes," he grins.



Seventy-eight-year-old Charles Ira displays a 10 1/2-inch brook trout caught at Bohemian Creek.

"I'm 78 years old now and just can't walk anymore," says Ira. "I come here with a friend, we fish for an hour and a half or so, and go back home. Last week, we put our fish right on the grill with some onions and bacon. Two of us ate five of them. They were really good."



For Davenport fireman Tom Deckert, it takes about four hours to drive from home to Waterloo Creek, an area which ranks high on his list of favorite Iowa trout streams.

Without fail, the long drive is always worth the effort.

Like most fly-fishermen, Deckert is more interested in the quality of the experience than in the quantity of fish caught. What he's looking for is that unique blend of art, aesthetics and wild fish that are the essence of taking stream-wise trout on a dry fly. For Deckert, Waterloo Creek offers an opportunity to enjoy all three.

"The whole complexion of Iowa trout fishing is really changing," says Deckert. "I think more and more people are finding that you don't necessarily need to follow the stocking trucks to find trout. A lot of anglers are beginning to stretch and discover new options."

"There are a lot of approaches. My main interest is catching wild browns, and Iowa has a number of excellent streams for that. Many places, including Waterloo Creek, have excellent – almost daily – hatches of mayflies and caddis. At times, the hatches go on from dawn



Matching The Hatch —Tom Deckert ties on a new fly while his 9-year-old son, Nick, looks on.

'till dusk without much of a let up at all. Whenever that happens, there are trout feeding on the surface all day. It really is something to see."

"I think all the habitat work is really paying off," says Deckert. "Where there are good bank hides, the streams hold fish all year, even in the catch-and-take parts of an area."

"Everyone is looking for a little bit different experience. I like solitude. Sometimes I feel like I'm the only person on a stream. The further I walk, the better it gets."

Although I've heard of some real giants, I haven't caught any of those. What I catch are lots of fish of different sizes. That's really what I'm after."



For Davenport's Nick Deckert, most angling adventures take place close to home where the 9-year-old sets the hook on populations of bluegills and channel catfish found at a neighborhood fish pond.

Occasionally, he receives a major upgrade and gets to go trout fishing with his dad, Tom Deckert.

In spite of his tender age, Nick is a surprisingly accomplished angler. He's already fished his way through a number of quality streams in Iowa and Wyoming. Most of his trout have been



Nine-year-old Nick Deckert displays 10-inch brook trout.

taken on spinners or dry flies.

In late June, I caught up to the Deckert father/son duo along a stream near Decorah. Although his dad seemed to have plenty of time to stop and chew the fat, Nick was obviously impatient during our interview. He was clearly more interested in trout fishing than in stopping to talk with me. Go figure. He did, however, manage a couple of brief comments before continuing upstream.

"I like two things about trout," he says. "I like the colors and I like the way they fight."

As far as the concept of catch-and-release goes, Nick Deckert isn't much into that yet.

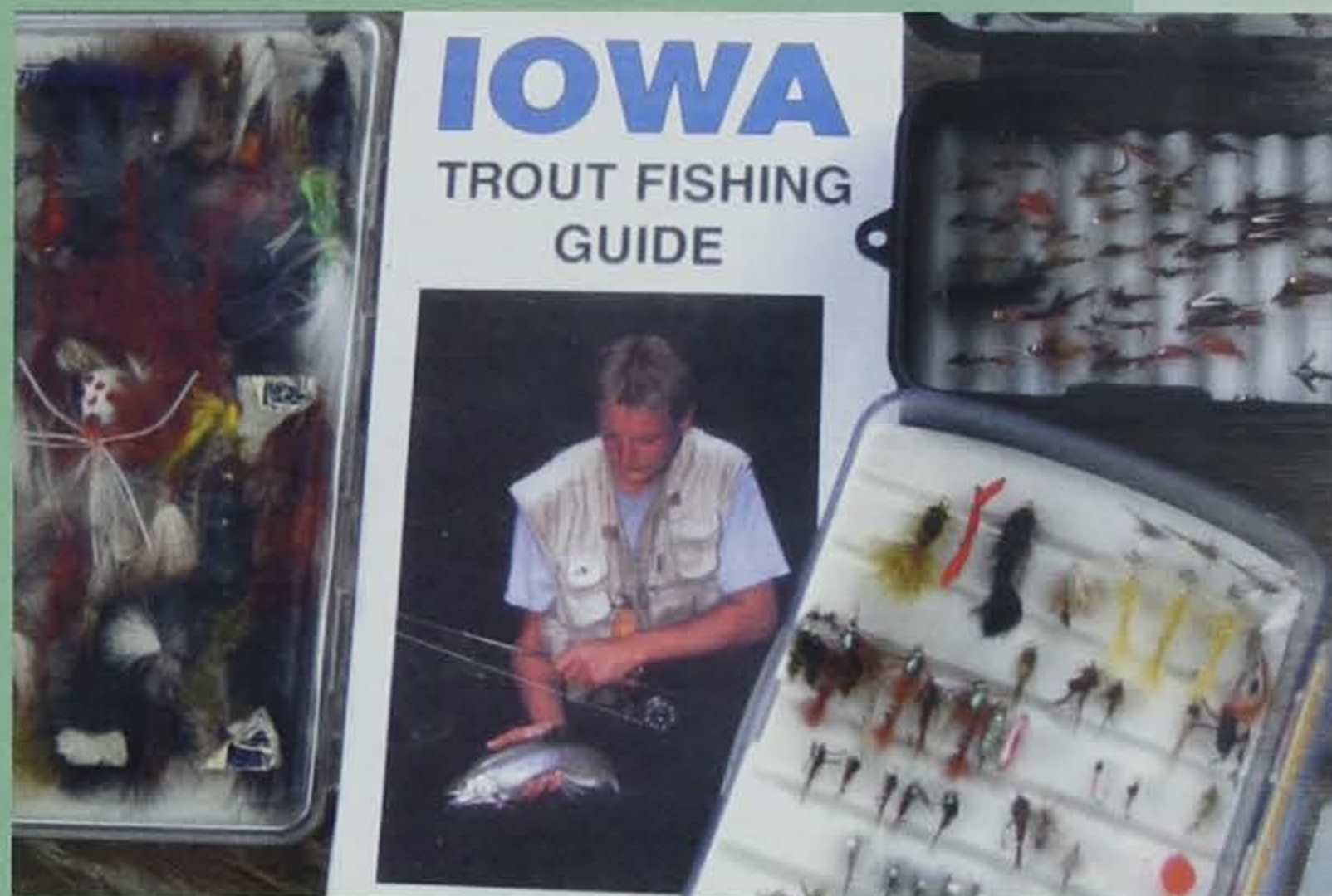
As far as he's concerned, trout fishing means "catch and keep."

"I want to keep all the fish I catch," Nick says. "I like to clean 'em, and I like to eat 'em."

Our two minute interview might have lasted longer if Nick's dad hadn't matched the hatch well enough to hook a fish some 10 paces away. The trout, a plump 9- or 10- inch, broke the stream's surface, briefly walked on its tail, and then leaped skyward. The fish splashed back into the water with an audible "ploush."

That was all it took to wire Nick. Turning his attention back to me he gleefully shrieked, "That's what I'm talking about! Don't you just love it?"

It was the end of our conversation.



For more information about Iowa's trout program, visit the Iowa DNR website at www.iowadnr.com or write for a copy of the *Iowa Trout Fishing Guide*. The guide contains a detailed map of trout stream stretches as well as regulations for trout fishing. In addition to a legal fishing license, trout anglers 16 years and older are required to pay the \$11 trout fee for residents or \$13.50 for nonresidents.



Brook Trout



Brown Trout



Rainbow Trout

This past February, four Iowa businesses and organizations were recognized for their comprehensive environmental programs. Following is the second in a series featuring the four Governor's Environmental Excellence Award winners.

City of Coralville

Article by Jill Cornell
Photos by Clay Smith

A grass-paved parking lot, a roof that grows native plants and minimal mowing practices are all examples of the City of Coralville's leadership and creativity in sustainable resource management.

"The city council wanted to make a statement showcasing the possibilities for sustainable practices," said Juli Johnson, director of Parks and Recreation. The City's commitment to environmental sustainability has been demonstrated through a variety of projects and environmentally friendly practices.

North Ridge Pavilion

This 2,900-square-foot meeting and recreational facility, located on the

edge of North Ridge Pond in Coralville, opened to the public in June 2003. In the design phase of the project, city officials were determined to implement sustainable design and construction. One unique aspect of North Ridge Pavilion is its green roof, capable of growing native plants because of a base growing mixture of compost materials and slate.

"This type of roof provides added insulation to the building and catches

rainwater, requiring little maintenance," Johnson said.

North Ridge Pavilion also features a grass-paved parking lot and educational signage to explain the benefits gained by sustainable choices. The site recycled its construction waste, and used many recycled and local source materials for construction. Recycling bins are also located in the public meeting space.

Restoration and Protection

The City of Coralville has also been working toward establishing native vegetation along more than 19 miles of trails. These efforts in habitat restoration and development have helped provide better conditions for water infiltration and showcases the area's heritage.

The City's parks and recreation commission has established minimal mowing practices for all park land and most public areas are managed as restored prairies.

"The prairie grasses help prevent soil erosion and filter water as it enters the ground," said Johnson. "The

city has worked hard to educate our residents about the environmental benefits of restoring native plants."

City officials are also involved in a partnership to restore and enhance wetlands and riparian habitats along the Iowa River. This project has worked to naturally clean river water as well as



From the green roof that grows native plants (above), to the use of local resources (opposite page bottom), the City of Coralville chose sustainable design practices while building North Ridge Pavilion. Citizens can also take advantage of the city's extensive trail system (opposite page top).

control urban flooding.

Coralville is part of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfield program to identify and test soil sites that are potentially contaminated from industrial wastes. Through this program, several industrial sites were identified and efforts have been undertaken to safely clean and contain these areas.

Educational Opportunities

City officials have also committed to educating the community about sustainable choices. Educational signs along the trail system and in North Ridge Pavilion have permitted residents and visitors to learn how the city has worked to protect and enhance the environment.

"Citizens are much more accepting of our projects," Johnson said. "We had some misconceptions at first because people were concerned about the look of public spaces and restored prairie near their homes, but the results have definitely been positive."

In addition to use as a meeting and recreational space, North Ridge Pavilion is also a demonstration site for environmental stewardship.

"We present information to all users about our facility," Johnson said. "There is a lot of interest in what we have done here."

Along with receiving a Governor's Environmental Excellence Award, the city of Coralville has been honored with a first place award in the 2001 International Nations in Bloom competition, a second place honor for the National League of Cities 2003 Howland Award for Urban Enrichment and an All Star Community Award from the Iowa League of Cities.

Jill Cornell is a information specialist with the department in Des Moines.



stop by for a visit

Article by Kevin Baskins Photos by Clay Smith

August kicks off a month-long series of events that give Iowans an opportunity to discuss conservation and outdoor recreation topics with DNR staff.

Iowa State Fair, Des Moines Aug. 12-22

No Iowa State Fair visit is complete without a stop at the Natural Resources building. A visit to

the historic fish aquarium, highlighting Iowa species, has been a long-time State Fair tradition for many, but the DNR has added a number of displays dedicated to protecting and enjoying Iowa's natural resources.

An 85-foot-long model watershed, which made its debut last year, shows the impact—good and bad—human activity can have on a body of water. A number of both good and poor management practices are displayed on

the watershed, highlighting top issues and DNR programs relating to water quality.

As our spare time gets less and less, Iowans look for ways to spend time relaxing and having fun with friends and family. The DNR is inviting state fair visitors to explore Iowa outdoors at the fair. Exhibits will include:

- A small backyard habitat trail with tree and

prairie species that can be planted in any backyard.

- A life-sized replica of a bald eagle nest to let fair goers know what to look for and where to find these magnificent birds.

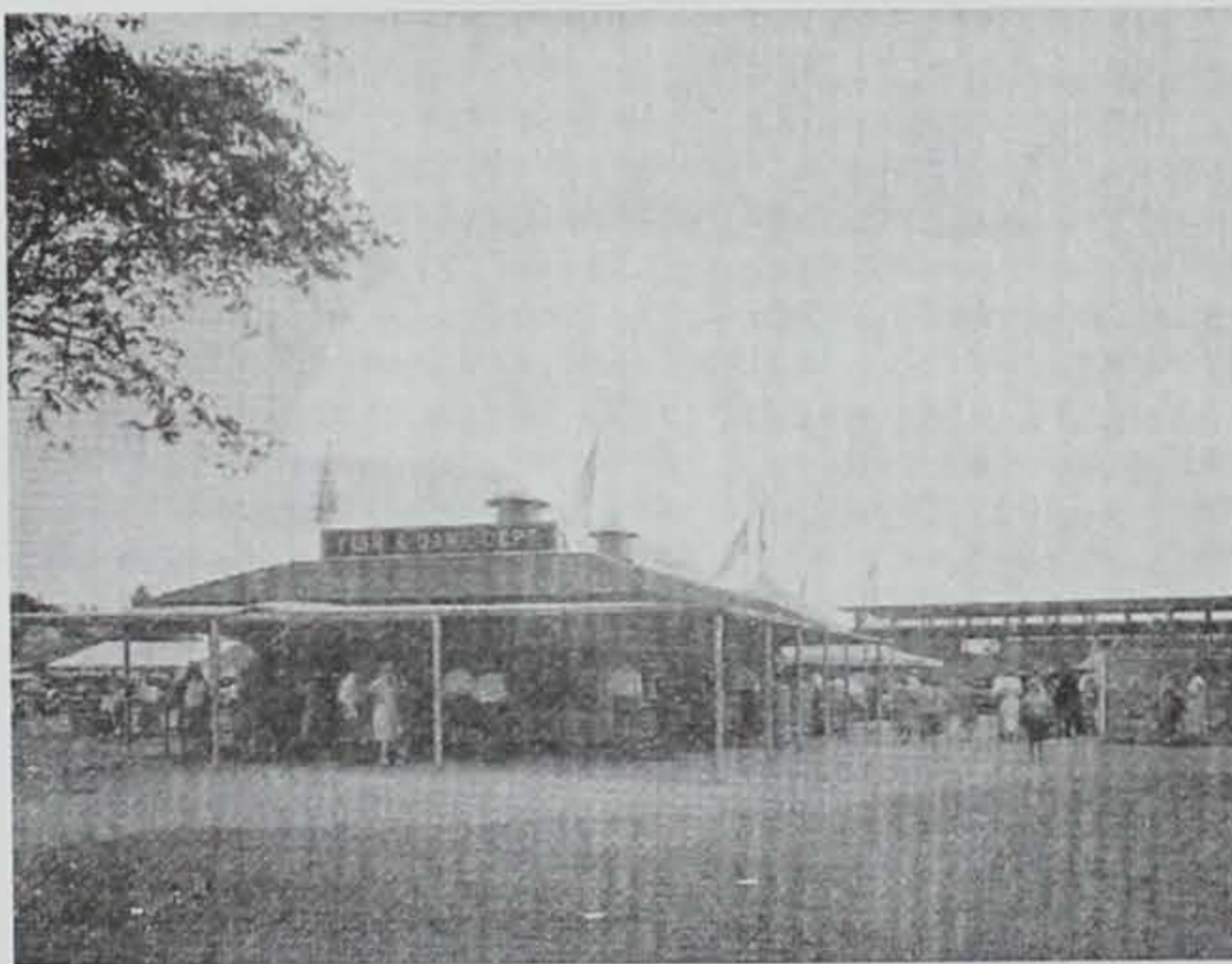
- Assistance from DNR staff, looking at map images of landowner's property, and answering questions from planting and wildlife habitat improvements, to hunting and fishing questions.

- Tips and tricks on family camping and fishing—from tents to cabins and shorelines to boating.

- Safety in the water. What personal flotation devices are the best to keep you and your family safe, while enjoying a day on the water.

- A historical look at our DNR building, aquarium, staff and recreation in our areas.

Three other temporary exhibits highlighting outdoor recreation will be in the building this year on a rotating basis. On Saturday, Aug. 14, the law enforcement bureau will bring a tree harness demonstration that will allow visitors to try on a variety of harness types and compare the protection they give from a tree stand fall. Sunday, Aug. 15 through Saturday, Aug. 21 our ATV and snowmobile program staff will have a tent in the courtyard and will answer ATV and snowmobile questions regarding new rules and regulations, grant



Although not quite as old as the State Fair itself, the DNR's aquarium has seen more than 80 fairs and continues to be one of the most popular attractions.



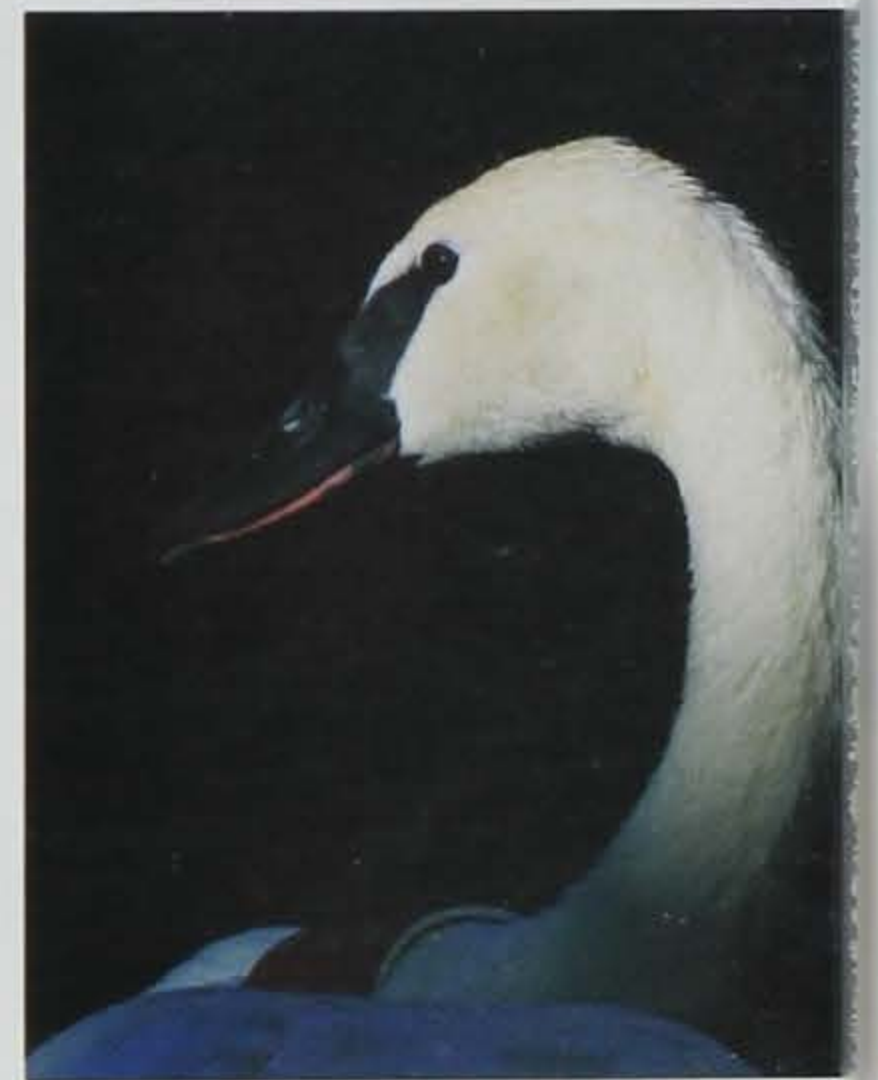


opportunities for clubs, and state ATV riding areas. August 16-19, the Friends of Pine Creek Grist Mill will demonstrate how the grinding wheel from the mill located in Wildcat Den State Park works. Finally, on Aug. 20 the law enforcement bureau will bring in the Huntmaster, a handicap-accessible lift that can be used for deer hunting by those with mobility impairments. Staff will demonstrate how the lift is used and how you can register for use during this fall's deer seasons.

In addition to the aquarium, the duck pond, water garden and courtyard stage will also be a great place to visit while at the DNR building. A list of courtyard stage programs will be available in the DNR building as well as on the DNR web site.



New to the DNR building last year, the 85-foot model watershed gives visitors a look at how human activity can impact a body of water.



The courtyard, adjacent to the DNR building, invites State Fair visitors to view native waterfowl species, including trumpeter swans (above right) up close, or relax in the shade and take in a demonstration on the courtyard stage (right).

Other opportunities to visit with DNR personnel this summer include the Clay County Fair (top right) and the Farm Progress Show (opposite page).



Clay County Fair, Spencer Sept. 11-19

The DNR will once again be sharing a conservation message with area county conservation boards at the Sundholm Environmental Education Center. The center is headquartered in a log cabin moved to the Clay County Fairgrounds last year.

At this year's fair, exhibits will highlight the economic value of Iowa's natural resources including clean water and outdoor recreation such as hunting, fishing, birding, parks, camping and trails.

Farm Progress Show, Alleman Aug. 31 – Sept. 2

Protecting Watersheds: Wat'er You Doing?

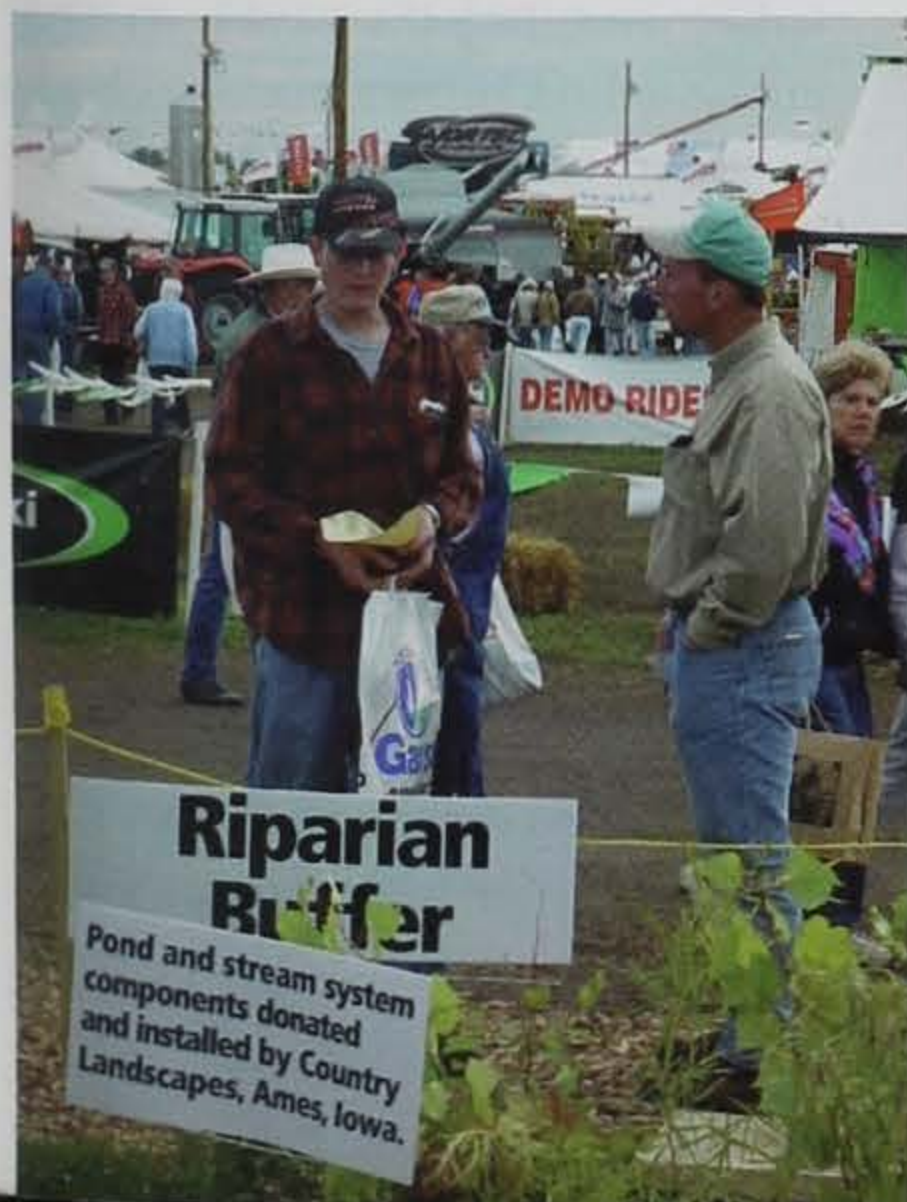
The DNR will highlight services and products that can help protect watersheds at the Farm Progress Show this year in Alleman.

As part of Conservation Central, the DNR will feature an outdoor area full of native plants used to solve conservation problems. Visitors can relax on a willow bench while testing their knowledge of trees, grasses and forbs (wildflowers) native to Iowa. Or stop by the DNR tent to talk with DNR biologists, foresters and water quality specialists about your needs for managing private lands.

Special this year will be color infrared photography and interactive maps that help landowners target the hot spots for conservation treatment (or the best spots to find turkey or deer). Or check out how to prevent a fish kill or other water quality problem, while learning just how the DNR determines water quality.

Also new this year will be a series of mini-talks addressing everything from groundwater flows to how to handle a spill or make the most profit from your woodland. Short talks will be offered daily, on the hour, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Topics will be posted outside Conservation Central.

Inside Conservation Central's big tent will be participating conservation partners including the DNR, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Services Agency, Division of Soil Conservation-Iowa Department of Agriculture, Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund-Iowa Department of Transportation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Iowa Association of Water Agencies, Iowa Watersheds, Trees Forever, Pheasants Forever, Conservation Districts of Iowa and the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The big tent will feature three interactive games, including Conservation Spin and Win, a laser-shot hunting game and Score for Conservation basketball game.



Federal Study Examines Endangered North Iowa Rattlesnakes

Swamp Rattler

Article and photos by Lowell Washburn

It was everything that a prairie wetland should be. Hovering dragonflies, shallow clear water, lush marsh vegetation, singing bird life and, of course, your usual mix of massasauga rattlesnakes.

Rattlesnakes? Hold on a minute. Aren't rattlesnakes supposed to live in the desert in places like Nevada, Texas, or Arizona?

Yes, they are. But if you move very slowly and look very carefully, you might also find the massasauga species of rattlesnake inhabiting the soggy terrain of a north Iowa wetland.

Commonly referred to as swamp rattler, the massasauga is one of just four species of venomous snakes found in Iowa. And while all others — timber rattlesnakes, prairie rattlesnakes and copperheads — are in some state of decline, massasauga populations are just plain going down in flames.

Although biologists have advanced a number of theories, no one really knows why massasaugas are disappearing at such alarming rates. Reptile researcher Terry VanDeWalle is currently looking for answers.

During the past four years, VanDe

Walle has led a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service-funded study that is placing intense scrutiny on two groups of



An adult massasauga rattlesnake basks atop a clump of vegetation located on a wet prairie. One of only four species of venomous snakes in the state, massasaugas rely on subtle patterns of camouflage to escape detection from predators like raccoons or red-tailed hawks. Contrary to legend, massasaugas are relatively docile in temperament. Even when provoked, most are reluctant to rattle or strike. Instead, they remain motionless as they allow the danger to pass.

rattlesnakes still existing in northern Iowa's Bremer County. The most famous of the two populations is

located at Sweet Marsh, a 2,300-acre public wetland located near Tripoli. The second investigation is occurring a few miles away on an upland prairie and wetland area near the upper Wapsipinicon River. Only four massasauga populations are still known to exist statewide.

In late June, I joined VanDe Walle and fellow researcher Robb Goldsberry as they "touched bases" with rattlers living on both study areas. Finding the snakes

meant following the steady series of electronic "beeps" emitted by individual radio transmitters that have been implanted in 13 massasaugas during the past four years.

For me, the highlight of the day came as we tracked down a snake simply referred to as the "Sweet Marsh Female." Catching a glimpse of this formidable reptile isn't easy. For nearly 30 minutes the three of us negotiated our way through dense marsh vegetation, boot sucking mud and swarming clouds of hungry mosquitoes. Our insect repellent was



sweated off during the first five or 10 minutes and our dues were literally being paid in blood. The 93-degree temperature made matters even worse, providing a constant reminder that a cooler of ice water awaited our return.

The good news was that the “beeps” had gotten progressively stronger during our meandering trek. The signal was now literally pounding from the receiver box, which meant that we were closing in on our prize.

VanDe Walle suddenly stopped and pointed his receiver antenna at the ground. The radio signal went off the chart.

“OK, she’s right here,” VanDe Walle announced excitedly.

“Look around, but be careful. We don’t want to step on a snake,” he grinned.

The ultimate masters of camouflage, massasaugas are difficult to detect — even when placed against a contrasting backdrop. For three or four minutes no one moved much. We just stood there and stared, looking

for the telltale snakehide pattern.

“Oh yea, here she is!” — 10 feet distant, it was Robb Goldsberry who had discovered the snake.

I stepped closer, and there she was — the Sweet Marsh Female. Basking atop a bed of lime green vegetation, the reptile seemed unintimidated by our presence. Measuring nearly 30 inches from rattles to snout, the Sweet Marsh Female offered a complete picture of power and stealth. She was truly a creature to admire. In many ways, however, the moment was bittersweet.

For decades, the Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area has enjoyed statewide fame for its thriving population of massasauga rattlesnakes. Twenty-five years ago, rattlesnakes were a dime a dozen here. Whenever biologists, educators or scientists needed a live specimen, they simply stopped by and picked one up. It was that easy.

But times have changed. And for massasaugas, the changes have been

Tracking the Signal — Reptile researchers Robb Goldsberry (rear) and Terry VanDe Walle follow an electronic trail as they search for radio-implanted massasauga rattlesnakes on a northern Iowa study area. Massasaugas have declined dramatically during the past two decades. In Iowa, the species has been listed as endangered since the mid-1980s. Only four populations exist statewide.

Reptile researcher, Terry VanDe Walle examines an adult male massasauga rattlesnake found on a study area near the Wapsipinicon River in Bremer County near Tripoli.



Swamp Rattler — A massasauga rattlesnake assumes a defensive posture after being disturbed while basking on the edge of a wet meadow at the Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area. When this photo was taken in the fall of 1992, massasaugas (also referred to as swamp rattlers) were considered a dime a dozen at Sweet Marsh. During recent years, however, this famous population has declined dramatically. Scientists are currently investigating the crash.



for the worse. In spite of intensive search efforts under ideal conditions, the Sweet Marsh Female remains the only rattler currently known to exist on the entire Sweet Marsh study area. From a historic perspective, she is literally the last known remnant of what is perhaps Iowa's best-known population of living reptiles.

"We knew that massasauga populations were declining statewide, but we were really surprised at what has happened at Sweet Marsh," said VanDe Walle. "The decline here has been especially dramatic. For some reason, we've gone from a very healthy population to one that has all

but vanished. It appears to have happened so quickly, that no one really seems to have noticed what was occurring."

But even though scientists have only been able to locate and radio one specimen here, the Sweet Marsh Female is providing researchers with some extremely interesting as well as somewhat puzzling data.

"We captured and radioed this snake on September 14, 2003," said VanDe Walle. "What is most amazing is how far this particular individual has traveled. Within 24 hours of release, she had moved nine-tenths of a mile, and had traveled a total of 2.9 miles within 20 days. The big question is why did she feel compelled to move those incredible distances."

Researchers speculate those movements might be attributed to changes in habitat, lack of a sufficient small mammal prey base, or perhaps the Sweet Marsh Female was simply looking for a mate. By comparison, radio-implanted massasaugas located on the nearby, Wapsipinicon study area have occupied home range, core areas as small as 3 acres and may only travel a few dozen yards from day to day.

What scientists have learned with certainty is that massasauga rattlesnakes have some rather unique habitat requirements. For example, unlike their cousin the timber rattler, massasaugas never hibernate in communal rock dens. Instead, they choose to hibernate individually in crayfish burrows. Eliminate the wet,



sedge meadow habitat favored by burrowing crayfish and you also eliminate critical overwintering habitats for massasaugas.

"Only a certain part of the landscape offers the right hydrological conditions for burrowing crayfish," said VanDe Walle.

"To survive the winter, snakes must use those burrows to go below the frost line into soil that is totally saturated, or they may even hibernate below water. If a wet meadow is drained for agriculture, the crayfish leave and snakes lose vital habitat. If a wet meadow floods and remains covered by water, then that's just as bad. Without crayfish burrows massasaugas can't survive."

"Right now, the central focus of our study is to identify and evaluate the different types of habitats utilized year-round by massasaugas and to identify the activity ranges of individual snakes. We're also looking at behavioral and reproductive data, recording mortality and gathering thermo-regulatory information on the snakes which have radios.

Last Snake Crawling — The Sweet Marsh Female. This formidable, 29 1/2-inch reptile is the last known remnant of a well-known and once thriving population of massasauga rattlesnakes that inhabited Bremer County's 2,300-acre Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area. Researchers are currently trying to discover why massasaugas are disappearing statewide. To find answers, scientists are studying individual snakes that have been implanted with tiny radio transmitters.

Eventually, we hope this knowledge will enable us to develop specific management guidelines that will help these remnant populations hang on," said VanDe Walle.

"Where massasaugas are still found on private lands, the landowners have been very sympathetic. There is a lady here who owns one section of land where snakes occurred historically. She remembers her dad killing every snake he could find, and the pickup truck ash tray was always full of rattles. As a youngster, she helped fix fence in the cow pasture and remembers seeing rattlers there. The snakes are gone from that section now, and she would like to see the remaining populations survive," said VanDe Walle.

"There is another farmer that still has massasaugas using wet prairie habitats on his land. He has become very interested in the snakes and wants to know what he can do to help them. So far, not one single landowner has been against the snakes. That's very positive."

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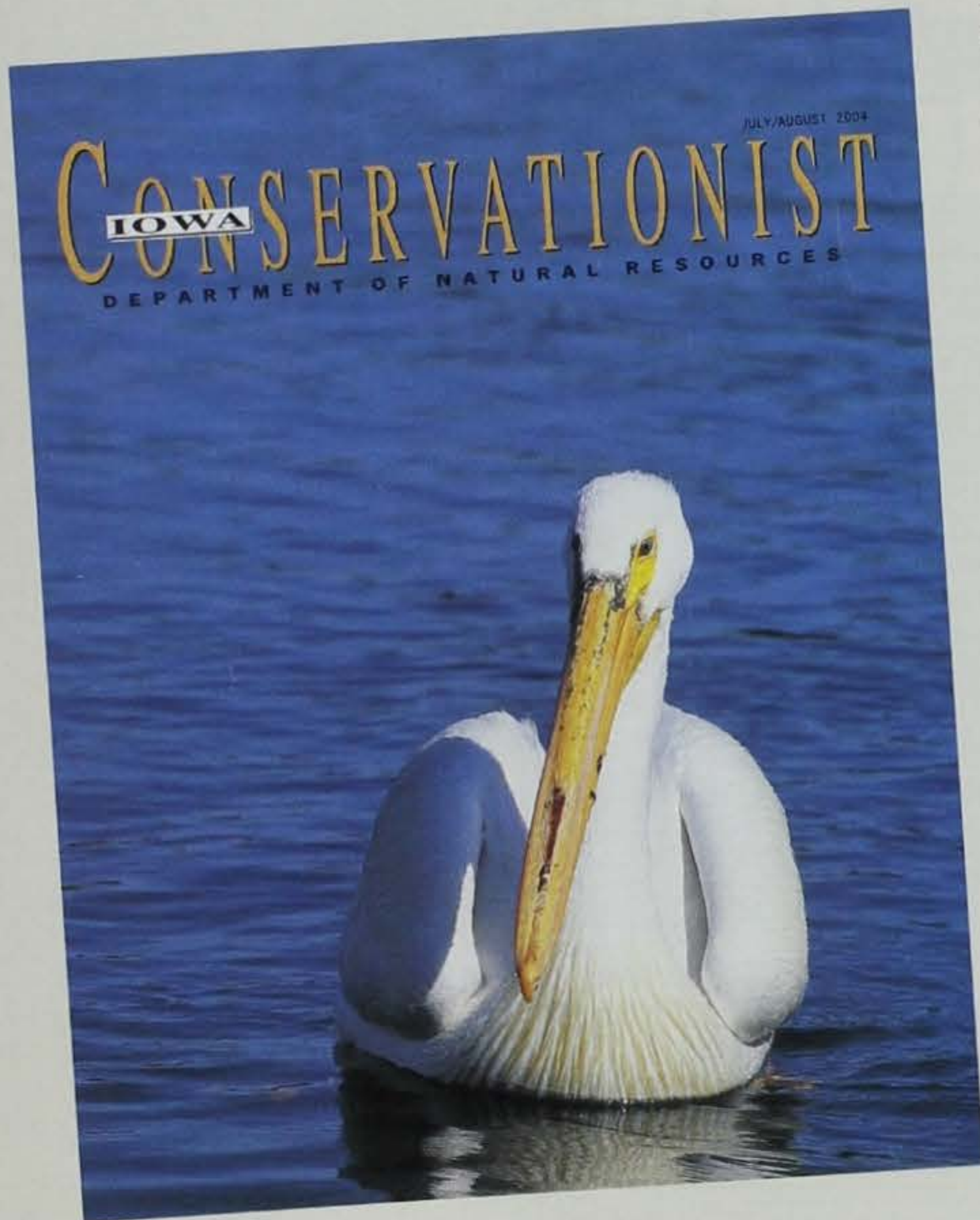
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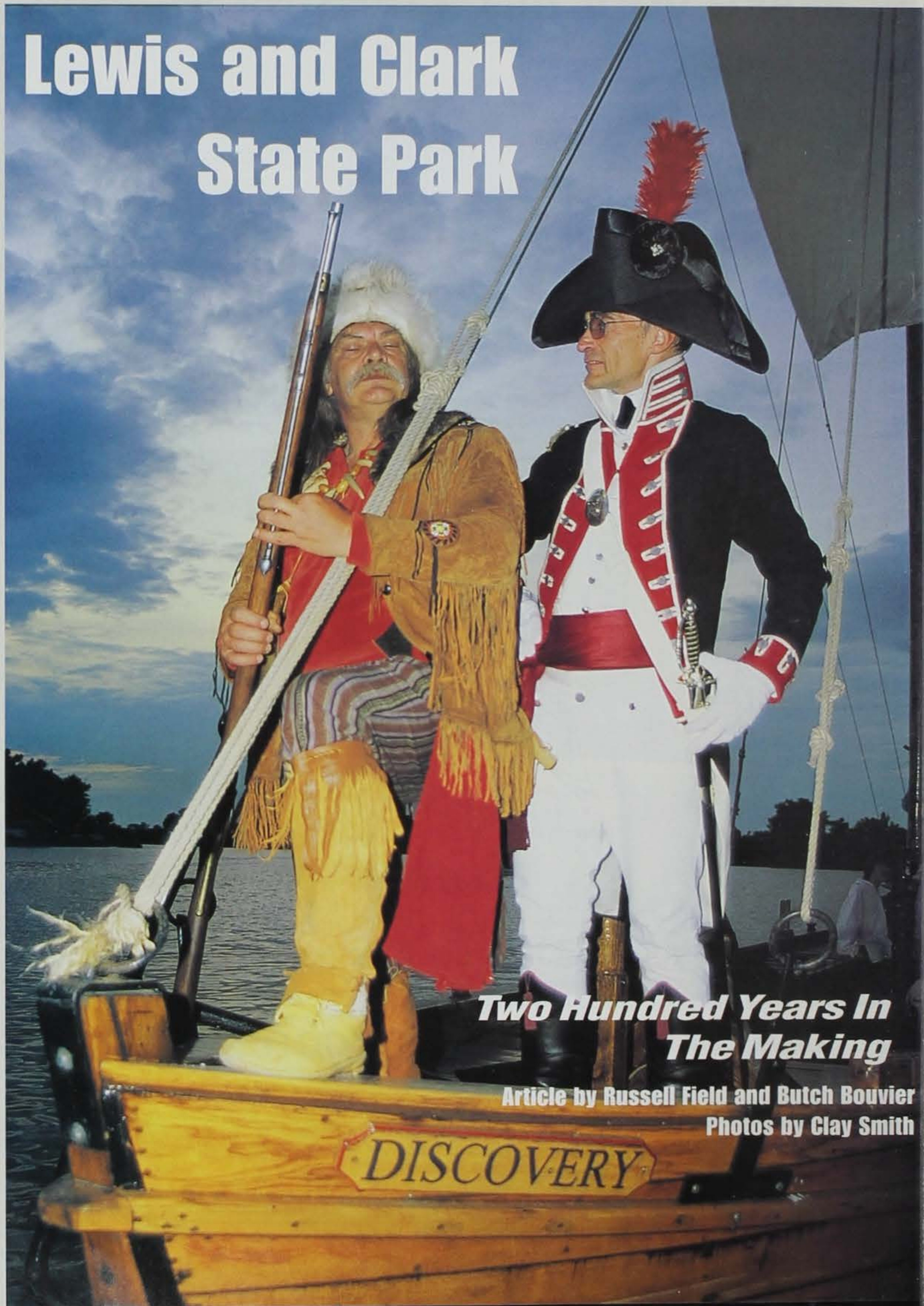
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PARKS PROFILE

Lewis and Clark State Park



*Two Hundred Years In
The Making*

Article by Russell Field and Butch Bouvier
Photos by Clay Smith

The year was 1985, and Lewis and Clark State Park was about to undergo a metamorphosis that would eventually put the western Iowa park on the map of historic attractions, and ignite a drive that would dramatically change the look and feel of the park.

That great transformer was the Lewis and Clark Festival, which has since become an annual celebration of the distinguished explorers' historic expedition up the Missouri River.

The event was the brainchild of then park ranger Ron Williams, and planned and organized by city fathers. Held the second full weekend of June each year, the idea was to celebrate the Lewis and Clark Expedition and our early American heritage, and where better to hold it than this historic site on the legendary Lewis and Clark trail.

Williams teamed up with many local volunteers to make the first annual Lewis and Clark Festival a success. One of those volunteers proved to be very influential in the future of the park. That person was Butch Bouvier, a historian and boat builder, who stepped forward to

lead a team of volunteers to build full-size replicas of the Lewis and Clark expedition fleet. With the full support and blessings of the DNR, Bouvier and his team did just that.

The success of the festival and the popularity of the boat replicas were the driving forces behind the construction of a \$4 million visitor center, which is nearing completion. It is expected



Thousands of visitors attend the Lewis and Clark Festival every year for a small taste of what life was like when the explorers made their historic voyage along the Missouri River. Some come in period dress (opposite page), some play games (left), some are lucky enough to catch a ride on a replica of the keel boat Lewis and Clark journeyed on (right), while some just come to relax.

PARKS PROFILE

to be an integral part of the park's future, and will focus on education and research of the pre-steam era of American river travel and also serve as an interpretive center for the Lewis and Clark expedition in Iowa.

Unlike many parks, which predominately serve Iowa residents, Lewis and Clark serves people well beyond the Iowa borders. The park has become the pivot point for the celebration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition



in Iowa, and is one of the key attractions on the trail, which stretches from coast to coast.

Currently, thousands of Lewis and Clark fans make the park a "planned destination" stop as part of their pilgrimage along this famous trail. It's seen as both an interpretive and educational center, not just a tourist attrac-

tion. The park has received national recognition for efforts in the fields of historical interpretation and education. Park staff give educational programs to school students from kindergarten to college level year round, and accommodate frequent tourist groups, which include motor coach tours and individual family

An estimated 20,000 to 25,000 people attended this year's four-day Lewis and Clark Festival, celebrating the 200th anniversary of the historic Lewis and Clark Expedition.



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PARKS PROFILE



OPPOSITE PAGE: The park has received national recognition for efforts in historic interpretation and education. Visitors get a great view of Blue Lake, an oxbow formed by the meandering of the Missouri River, from atop the lookout tower (left), while a young angler hopes for a willing largemouth bass, northern pike, crappie, bluegill or catfish to bite (below).



units. The number of people who visit this park simply for sight-seeing far outnumber those who come to camp.

One reason why so many people plan their trip around a visit to the park is the "hands on" living history programs. For more than 20 years the DNR has supported the concept. Nowhere else in the world can one step aboard a late-18th-century keel boat and, if lucky, ride aboard her as she creaks and moans under sail. It is the feel and touch of living history at it's best.

That experience is best illustrated by an incident that happened a couple years back. It

seems a history teacher and river craft buff stopped to visit. He indicated he didn't think there would be much to learn from the park, but out of curiosity he decided to pull in off the interstate and take a quick look. Three hours later, after exploring every inch of the boats, he was on his way out when he ran into Bouvier, still our resident boat builder, and stopped to thank him.

"I have studied these boats and river travel of this era for 20 years and didn't really feel that you folks had anything new to teach me," he told Bouvier. "I think now that I will have to rethink everything I thought I knew about it. I didn't realize, I

just didn't think that this was actually how it was."

He turned to walk up the dock, stopped, turned and said, "Thank you so much." He left, his life having been affected by this educational experience.

The park recently underwent a well-designed and enthusiastically accepted campground expansion, which added 30 new sites with twelve full hookups. This along with the soon-to-be-completed interpretive center foretells a very promising future for this state park.

Russell Field is the park manager at Lewis and Clark State Park. Butch Bouvier is president of L&C Replicas and a longtime member of "Friends of Discovery" group.

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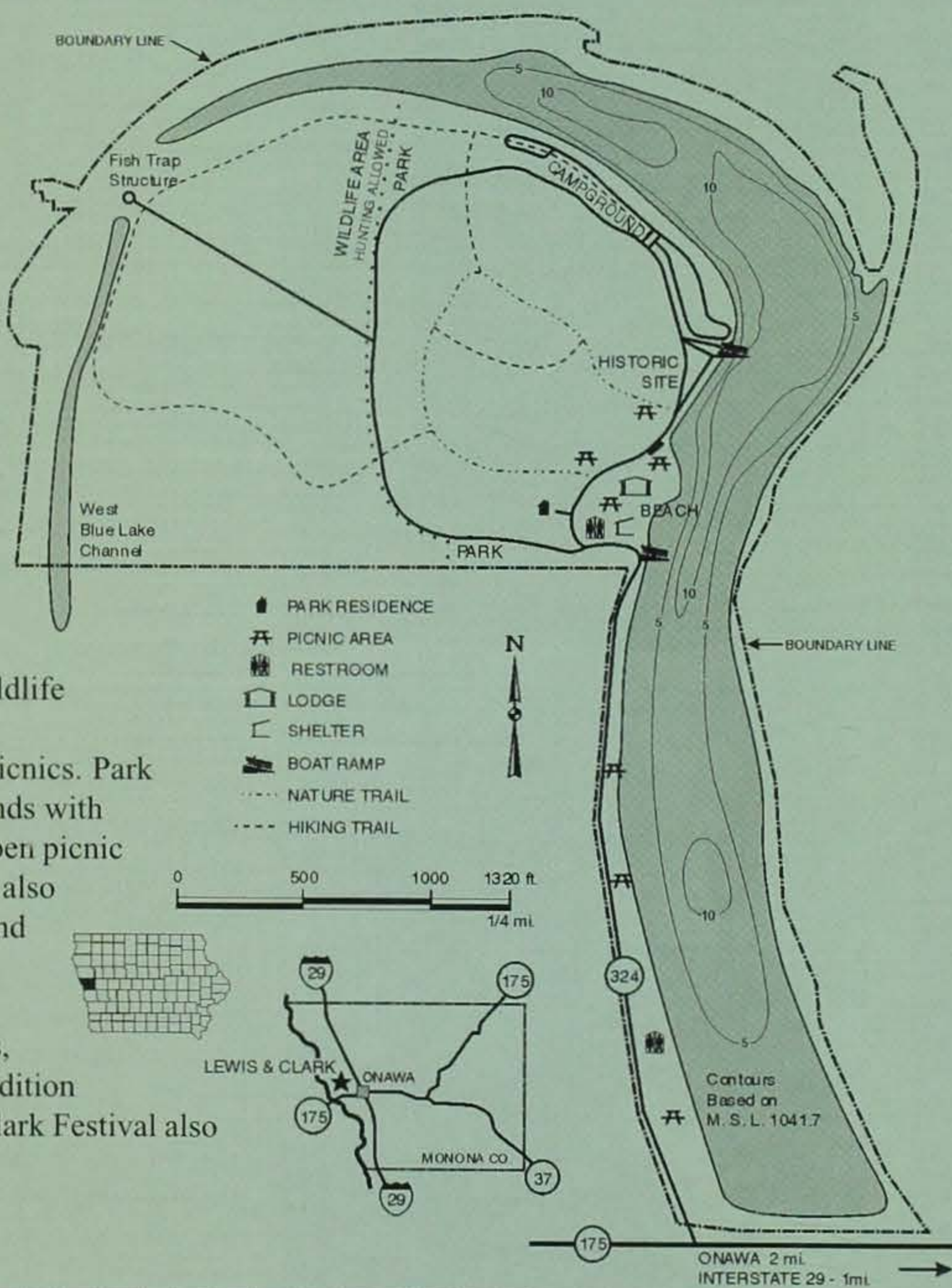
TRAILS: A variety of trees, plants and wildlife can be seen along the trails.

PICNICKING: Very popular place for picnics. Park features more than 30 acres of picnic grounds with tables, fireplaces and drinking water. An open picnic shelter is available for rent. The lodge may also be reserved for events such as weddings and family reunions through the park manager.

FUN FACTS: A must-see is the full-size replica of the keel boat, along with pirogues, Lewis and Clark used on their famous expedition up the Missouri River; annual Lewis and Clark Festival also a very popular event.

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CONSERVATION UPDATE

WILDLIFE HARVEST ESTIMATES ON THE RISE IN IOWA

Pheasant Harvest Tops 1 Million

More than 140,000 hunters harvested 1.08 million pheasants in Iowa last year, an increase of 48 percent over the 2002 harvest estimate of 729,000.

Todd Bogenschutz, wildlife biologist at the DNR's Boone Research Station, said the forecast of more pheasants last fall was not lost on the hunters.

"We saw a nice increase in the number of pheasant hunters and we also had an increase in the number of nonresident hunters," Bogenschutz said.

The number of Iowa pheasant hunters increased 11 percent and the number of nonresident hunters increased 12 percent. Iowa hunters spent an average of nine days hunting last fall and harvested an average of eight birds. Non-residents hunted an average of



Roger A. Hill

five days and harvested an average of seven birds.

Most other small game species also showed an increase in the number of hunters and harvest.

Bogenschutz said that nearly 25,000 hunters harvested more than 114,000 quail, which is a 79 percent increase over the 2002 harvest. An estimated 4,000 partridge hunters harvested 8,200 partridge, an increase of 60 percent over 2002, but still the sixth lowest partridge harvest in 40 years of keeping records. The rabbit harvest increased 46 percent over 2002. The 31,600 hunters harvested an estimated 244,000 cottontail rabbits. The number of resident rabbit hunters increased 18 percent, but nonresident hunters declined 35 percent.



Roger A. Hill

Deer Hunters Set Harvest Record

Iowa hunters harvested a record 182,000 deer during the 2003-04 Iowa deer season, breaking the previous record of 140,000 set last year. The increase was due in large part to hunters taking 34,000 more antlerless deer than last year.

The DNR had roughly 53,000 antlerless-only deer permits available and sold nearly all of them. Deer hunters will have the opportunity to harvest even more antlerless deer in 2004-05, when the DNR issues an additional 30,000 antlerless permits, bringing the total to 84,000.

"This harvest is having an impact on deer populations, understanding that it will take at least three years of increased harvest of does to see a significant reduction in deer numbers," said Richard Bishop, retiring chief of the DNR's wildlife bureau.

"We will need to maintain cooperation of hunters harvesting more does, as well as landowners insisting that hunters take additional does," Bishop said. "Landowners with deer problems need to have hunting on their land during all gun seasons, and they need to concentrate on harvesting does, if they want to make an impact.

"We need to have hunters and landowners as part of the solution," Bishop said.

HawkWatch Set For September 25-26; Events Celebrates 20th Anniversary

The annual HawkWatch weekend held each September at Effigy Mounds National Monument is celebrating its 20 anniversary this autumn. This year's event is set for Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 25 and 26.

The event is sponsored by the Iowa DNR's wildlife diversity program, along with the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Upper Iowa Audubon Society and others.

Wildlife professionals and amateur birders will assist visitors with spotting and identifying some of the dozen or more species of hawks, falcons, eagles and vultures passing over the Mississippi River bluffs during their fall migration. Daily raptor counts can reach into the hundreds of birds, sometimes even thousands.

In addition to hawk counting, other activities include live hawk banding and releases, educational programs featuring captive hawks and eagles, activities for kids and

birdwatching hikes on the trail system at Effigy Mounds.

Effigy Mounds is located three miles north of Marquette on Iowa Highway 76. For more information contact Effigy Mounds National Monument at (563) 873-3491, www.nps.gov/

efmo/home.htm; HawkWatch organizer Pam Kester at (563) 873-1236, email kestrel@alpinecom.net; or the DNR's wildlife diversity program at (515) 432-2823, email pat.schlarbaum@dnr.state.ia.us.

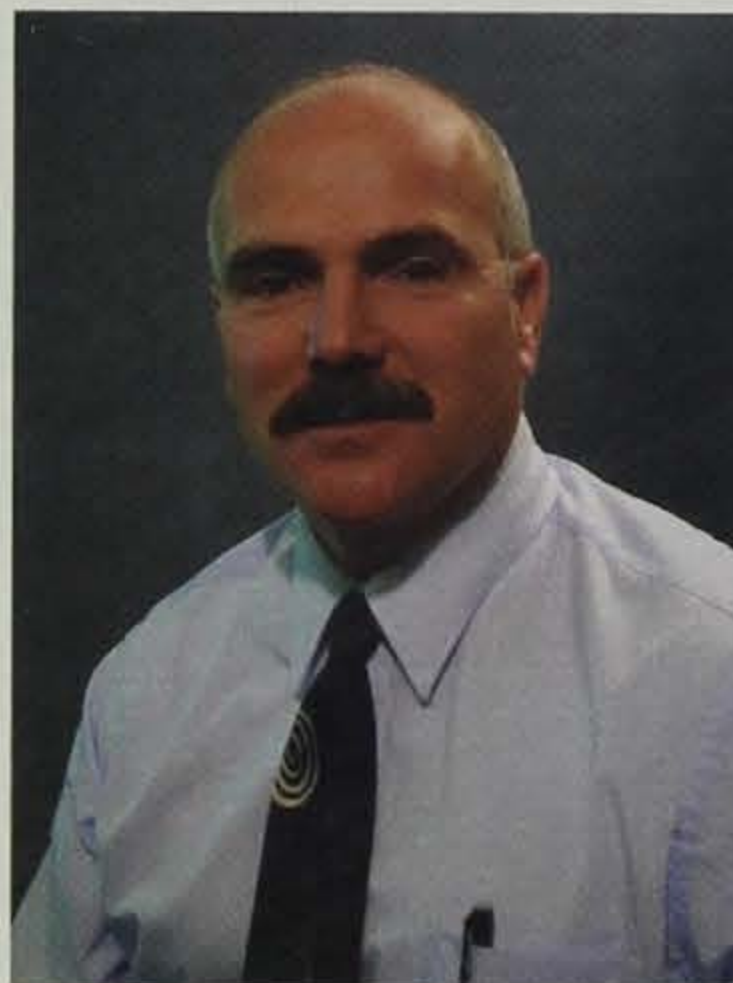
Longtime DNR Wildlife Bureau Chief Richard Bishop Retires; Dale Garner Named Successor

Dale Garner has been named to replace Richard Bishop as the head of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) wildlife bureau. Bishop retired in August after 37 years.

"Issues facing Iowa wildlife are complex and far-reaching, and we continue to uncover new challenges," said Mike Brandrup, administrator of the DNR's Conservation and Recreation Division, which oversees the wildlife bureau. "We feel fortunate in having someone with Dale's abilities leading the way."

Garner joined the DNR in 1995 as the forest wildlife biologist, working out of the Chariton Research Station. He then became the coordinator of the North American Wetland Conservation Act grant program in 2001 and other special projects, such as heading up the chronic wasting disease program.

Garner, 48, has a Ph.D. in environmental and forest biology from the State University of New York at Syracuse.



Clay Smith

Dale Garner



Clay Smith

Richard Bishop



DNR Photo

CONSERVATION UPDATE

Boaters Urged To Watch Out For 'Hitchhikers'

With the summer recreation season in full swing, the Iowa DNR is encouraging all boaters to do their part in protecting Iowa's water resources by checking for any unwanted hitchhikers on boats and trailers.

Eurasian watermilfoil, zebra mussels and other non-native aquatic species threaten Iowa waters. They can hitch a ride on boats, fishing gear, bait buckets and other items used in the water. When transported to another lake or stream, the aquatic invader can be released.

Aquatic invasive species can render waterbodies unusable by boaters, anglers and swimmers, reduce fish, wildlife and plant populations, clog water intakes and pipes, decrease property values, reduce economies of water-dependent communities and affect human health. Once a waterbody is infested, invasive species can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to treat and may be impossible to eradicate.

Boaters should follow a



Eurasian watermilfoil



Zebra mussels

simple set of procedures each time they leave the water, and know which lakes and rivers contain invasive species. Tips to prevent the spread include:

- Remove any visible plants, fish, animals or mud from the boat, trailer and other equipment
- Drain water from all equipment – motor, livewell, bilge, transom well
- Clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water, including equipment, boots, clothing and even dogs. Before transporting to another waterbody, rinse the boat and equipment with water 104 degrees or hotter. Spray the boat and trailer with high-pressure water at a car wash or dry the boat and equipment for at least five days.
- Never release fish, animals or plants into a waterbody unless they came from that waterbody. Empty unwanted bait in the trash.
- Learn to identify aquatic invasive species and report any suspected infestations to the nearest DNR fisheries station.

Hotline Established For Reporting Ag Odors

To assist rural Iowans in reporting agricultural-related odors, the DNR is offering a toll-free number as part of an ongoing effort to better investigate rural air quality.

The DNR is conducting a rural odor study and responding to odor complaints from persons who live or conduct business near large animal confinement operations. During periods of heavy odor, Iowans can call 1-800-961-ODOR to report ag-related odors from animal confinements, feeding operations or manure spreading.

The odor study effort is in addition to monitoring select locations for ammonia and hydrogen sulfide levels.

After an odor complaint is received, a trained and certified inspector will collect odor concentration data. This data collection study can help decision makers, researchers and others foster recommendations on how to better control odors and determine if odor control regulations are needed. The toll-free reporting number and data collection is not an enforcement effort and no action will be taken against the odor source.

**Report agriculture odors at
1-800-961-ODOR**



Scott (left) and Diane Kinseth (far right) accept recognition certificates from Barb Gigar (center), coordinator of the DNR's aquatic education program.

Kinseths Honored For Commitment To Aquatic Ed

Scott Kinseth, DNR conservation officer in Buchanan and Delaware counties, is the 2004 recipient of the Brass Bluegill Award. The award is presented annually to an instructor who has established an outstanding local program that exemplifies the goals of *Fish Iowa!*

Kinseth has been involved in youth education programs for more than 20 years. In 1999, he approached his wife and other fifth-grade teachers in Independence about including the *Fish Iowa!* program in their "Iowa studies" curriculum. He not only convinced teachers to use the program, he helps by teaching laws, tackle, bait presentation, lures and casting. He also established a loaner site for rods and reels in his area so they would be more accessible to the school.

The unit is taught over a six-to eight-week period and culminates in an all-day field trip. DNR

fisheries bureau staff, conservation officers and the Buchanan County Wildlife Association help with presentations, fishing and a fish fry. Students use a stream table to learn how land use impacts water quality.

Kinseth's wife, Diane, also was recognized for her contribution to the program. Pure Fishing donated 24 spinning rods and reels to West Elementary School in Independence in honor of the Kinseths' contribution to angling education.

The award has been co-sponsored by Pure Fishing and the DNR's Aquatic Education Program since 1997. Pure Fishing, headquartered in Spirit Lake, is committed to inspiring people to go fishing and helping them learn how to fish, where to fish and what tackle to use. *Fish Iowa!* strives to create safe anglers and responsible stewards of Iowa's aquatic resources.

Upcoming NRC and EPC Meetings

The dates and locations have been set for the following meetings of the Natural Resource Commission and Environmental Protection Commission of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Agendas are set approximately 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting date. For additional information, contact the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

Natural Resource Commission:

- August 12
Hancock County
- September 9
Lee County
- October 14
Allamakee County

Environmental Protection Commission:

- August 16
Ingram Office Building,
Urbandale
- September 20
Ingram Office Building,
Urbandale
- October 18
Ingram Office Building,
Urbandale

WARDEN'S DIARY



Labor Day Cruise

by Chuck Humeston

Labor Day weekend, for me anyway, is highly unpredictable.

Some have been so busy I didn't know what end I was on, while some seem to go by without much fanfare. You just never know.

I'll admit, years ago when I was a park ranger, I used to shut the park gate at 10:30 p.m. on Labor Day with a sigh of relief. By then it had usually been a long summer, and I was looking forward to things slowing down.

For conservation officers, the long weekend is typically filled with checking anglers and patrolling the lakes, as people take advantage of the traditional end to the summer outdoor recreational season and get in that last cruise on the lake.

So when it rained all day one Labor Day I looked at it with limited relief thinking, "More people will stay home, nothing will be happening."

Was I ever wrong.

I had taken advantage of the weather to go home a little earlier than usual, mostly because I don't often get that opportunity during a holiday. I was even slipping

into my, summer's-over-time-to-think-about-hunting-seasons thought mode. Then the phone rang.

It was the sheriff's department. "There's been a boat accident."

"You're kidding," I said. "What did it hit?"

"They hit each other," the dispatcher answered.

"They? You mean as in more than one? Is anyone hurt? Is there anyone in the water?" I asked.

"No one in the water, and one injured," they said. "A deputy is on the scene."

I slipped back into my uniform and into the car. I drove to the lake to meet with the deputy. By then the injured had been removed. It turned out to be a collision between two personal watercrafts, or PWCs, better known as jet skies or wave runners. It was the start of one of the more unusual boat accident investigations I've ever been involved with.

The deputy gave me the names and addresses. I made some phone calls, and set up times to talk to the operators and the witnesses. With nothing more to do at the time, I went home. The short Labor Day holiday was long gone.

The next day, I drove to look

at the PWCs. It was obvious there had been a collision. The steering yoke had been broken from the steering mechanism on one of the machines. A nasty gash on the sides of each machine painted a clear picture of where they had collided. I took pictures and measurements. So far it was looking pretty straight forward. Like other officers, I had seen more than one boat collision. Our training has prepared us to document everything, interview everyone and reconstruct what happened.

I decided first to talk to the operator who had been injured. I drove to his house, knocked on the door and was invited in.

By the looks of the nasty bruise on his side, it was obvious this guy definitely didn't feel very well. I started to ask the questions, and to write my report. The routine questions centered around names, water conditions, weather conditions and so forth. Finally, it came to how did the accident happen?

"Well," he said. "We ran into each other."

"No kidding?" I thought. "How did you do that?" I asked. I mean, this wasn't a small lake by any shade of the imagination.

"Well, we were racing and throwing water on each other."

I still wasn't surprised. We

see this in a lot of PWC collisions. It's prohibited operation — a recipe for disaster that has resulted in injuries and fatalities.

I continued to write.

"OK, let me make sure I've got this right." I said. "So it's your statement to me that you and your friend were running too fast and too close to each other, and you collided?"

"Yes," he answered.

It turned out he was injured by the handle grip of the passing PWC, which struck him in the ribs. You can't get much closer than that. In fact, it had knocked him out of the seat of his PWC — a perfect example of why life jackets are so important. It probably saved his life, considering the shock of the collision and being thrown into the water.

The force of the collision along with the operator's weight also tore the steering yoke loose

on the other PWC. We were definitely talking a little speed here. These were two very, very fortunate individuals.

Everything still seemed pretty ordinary. Keep in mind, I've investigated my share of boat accidents, many involving vessels running into each other or into fixed objects. I really wasn't surprised until I asked "What was the boat traffic like on the lake?"

"There wasn't any," he answered.

I looked up from the pad I was writing on. "What?"

"There wasn't any," he repeated.

"You mean on the whole lake, you were the only two boats out there?"

"Yeah, that's right."

Now the accident started to fall into my just-when-I-think-I've-seen-everything category. The first thing that popped into

my head was the old story from decades ago about there being two cars in the whole state of Kansas driving from opposite ends, and what happened? You guessed it. They ran into each other.

So now we're talking an entire lake. Not a pond. Not a stream. We're talking a lake here. No one is on it. The whole thing is open with plenty of room. Yet there's a collision and someone gets hurt.

It took a while for it to register. In the end, I cited each of the operators for operating too fast and too close to each other. The injured party really didn't think it was fair, since accidents happen.

They do. But most of the time they happen because of a bad decision. In this case, at least it didn't cost something much more precious and irreplaceable than a machine.

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