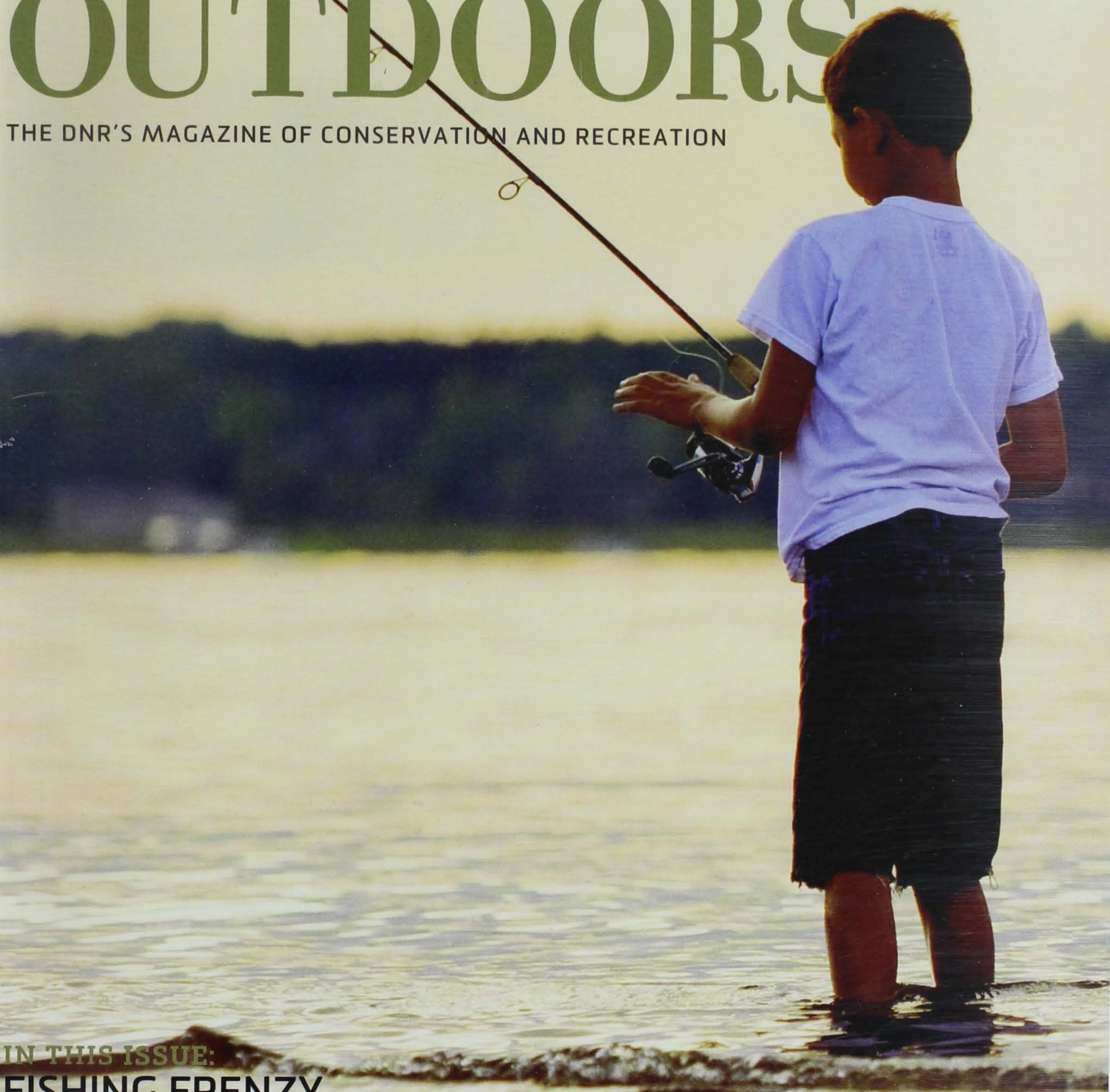


MARCH / APRIL 2013

IOWA OUTDOORS

THE DNR'S MAGAZINE OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



IN THIS ISSUE:

FISHING FRENZY

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To conserve and enhance our natural resources in cooperation with individuals and organizations to improve the quality of life for Iowans and ensure a legacy for future generations.

EDITORIAL MISSION

We strive to open the door to the beauty and uniqueness of Iowa's natural resources, inspire people to get outside and experience Iowa and to motivate outdoor-minded citizens to understand and care for our natural resources.

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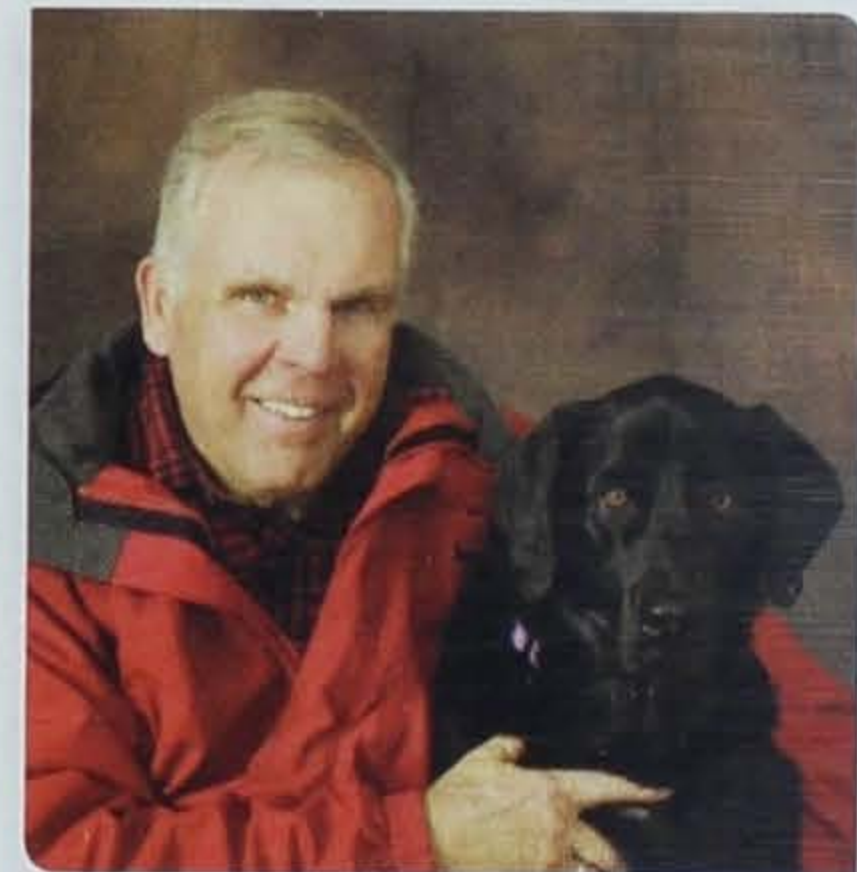


Contributors



TIMOTHY KEEN

Skilled athlete and climber **JEFF GREWE** of Omaha ascends and trims trees by day as owner of Arbor Aesthetics and photographs Folsom Point Preserve by night where he volunteers caring for trees and photographing. "It is imperative that each tree cut is made with precision and accuracy. That is why we climb," he says.



RON HUELSE of Knoxville has spent more than 10 years photographing wildlife, insects and birds near Lake Red Rock when not cycling, hiking or volunteering. An avid paddler, he also helps find sponsors to introduce osprey locally and raises awareness of siltation at the reservoir.



JEN WILSON is a travel and features writer based in Des Moines. Her work appears in *National Geographic Traveler*, *Frommer's Budget Travel*, *Midwest Living* and *Esquire*. Her first book, *Running Away to Home*, is available online at www.jennifer-wilson.com.

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38 Master Mousers

Tag along as researchers go afield in quest of an animal rarely seen in three decades— western Iowa's endangered plains pocket mouse.

BY MINDY KRALICEK PHOTOS BY CLAY SMITH

46 Warmwater Fly Tiers

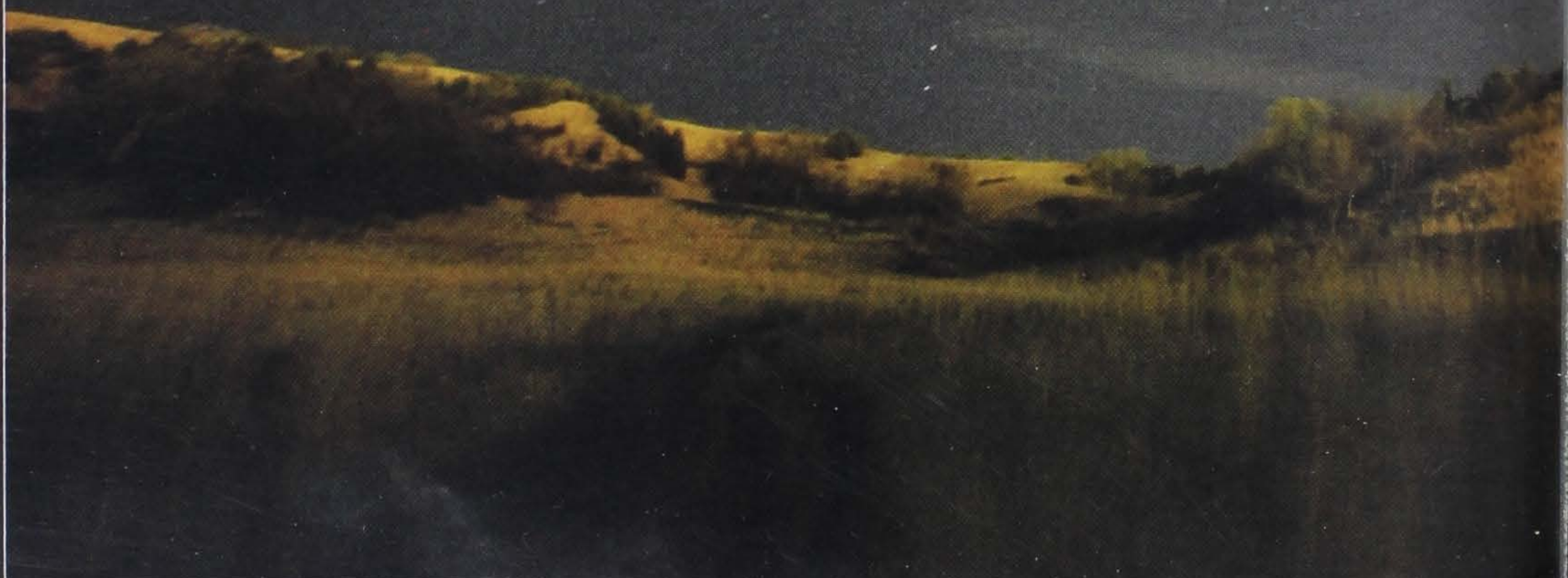
Fly fishing isn't just for trout. Sit alongside the tying benches of these avid warmwater fly anglers and get stirred to start tying your own flies.

BY MINDY KRALICEK PHOTOS BY CLAY SMITH

52 America's Darling

Jay "Ding" Darling was a Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist, conservationist and icon. Now, a new film chronicles his life achievements to reacquaint new generations to this legendary Iowan.

BY JOE WILKINSON



ABOUT THIS PHOTO

Omaha photographer Jeff Grewe created this night image of Folsom Point Preserve in Pottawattamie and Mills Counties. The Nature Conservancy property is the largest remaining contiguous prairie remnants in the southern Loess Hills and hosts numerous rare species. For Grewe, the area is great for night photos. Two large industrial sites across the road light up the area. "It creates a diffuse, even light. It makes a great place for a photographer," he says. Learn more about the rare species research on page 38.

ABOUT THE COVER

Anglers young and old are ready to line the shores for another great year of fishing. Recently renovated lakes are poised to break out this year. Others are currently undergoing watershed and habitat work and will be future go-to spots. Trout stocking is at an all-time high. Iowa's rivers should once again be angler magnets come spring and summer. Get the fishing forecast on page 28. Photo by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation.

DEPARTMENTS

11 Together

Get inspired by two women who have walked a half-million miles at Lake Keomah State Park. Find a fishing clinic for family angling excitement, gear up to tie your own flies and find out where to rent a cabin for \$50 a night anytime of year.

10 Myth Busters

Can you really smell an impending snowfall? Protect water quality by properly disposing of unused medications.

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66 Flora & Fauna

Go face-to-face with this shy but imposing ancient reptile feared for its bite.

Myth Busters

BY SHELENE CODNER PHOTOS BY ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

GOT A QUESTION?

SEND TO: AskTheExperts@dnr.iowa.gov

SMELLING SNOW

A flurry of inquiries surrounds the myth that humans and other animals possess the ability to smell an impending snowfall. According to chief meteorologist Mark Schnackenberg of KWWL television in Waterloo, those claiming to smell looming snowfalls are not flakes.

Reports indicate that chemicals such as dimethyl sulphide, dimethyl sulphate, formaldehyde, nitric acid, nitrogen dioxide and methanesulfonate in various quantities may be in the air prior to a snowfall event. Those that are sensitive to these chemicals may indeed possess their own "smelldar" and thus are able to forecast an impending snowfall.

In addition and according to Schnackenberg, some people are more sensitive to weather changes. For some, joints may be affected due to changes in atmospheric pressure, and for others, their sensitivity may result from a heightened sense of smell. We don't mean to snow off here, but it appears crystal clear that the mythic ability to smell an impending snowfall is true for some savvy sniffers, but those of us who are olfactorily challenged may be left out in the cold.

Ask The Expert To Flush or Not to Flush?

While flushing unused medications may have been the past disposal protocol, recent studies show these human pharmaceuticals are making their way into our drinking water.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey and EPA, a broad range of pharmaceutical chemicals are found in low concentrations in American lakes, rivers and streams. Even trace amounts have the potential to cause adverse environmental effects on aquatic habitats, and little is known about potential long-term, low-dose exposure on human health.

There are better options for disposing unused medications. Simply take unwanted and expired medications in their packaging to one of 440 Iowa pharmacies participating in the TakeAway program. Pills, capsules, ointments, creams, powders, inhalers and liquid medicines are accepted. Medications are then shipped for incineration at approved waste-to-energy facilities to ensure they do not enter water supplies.

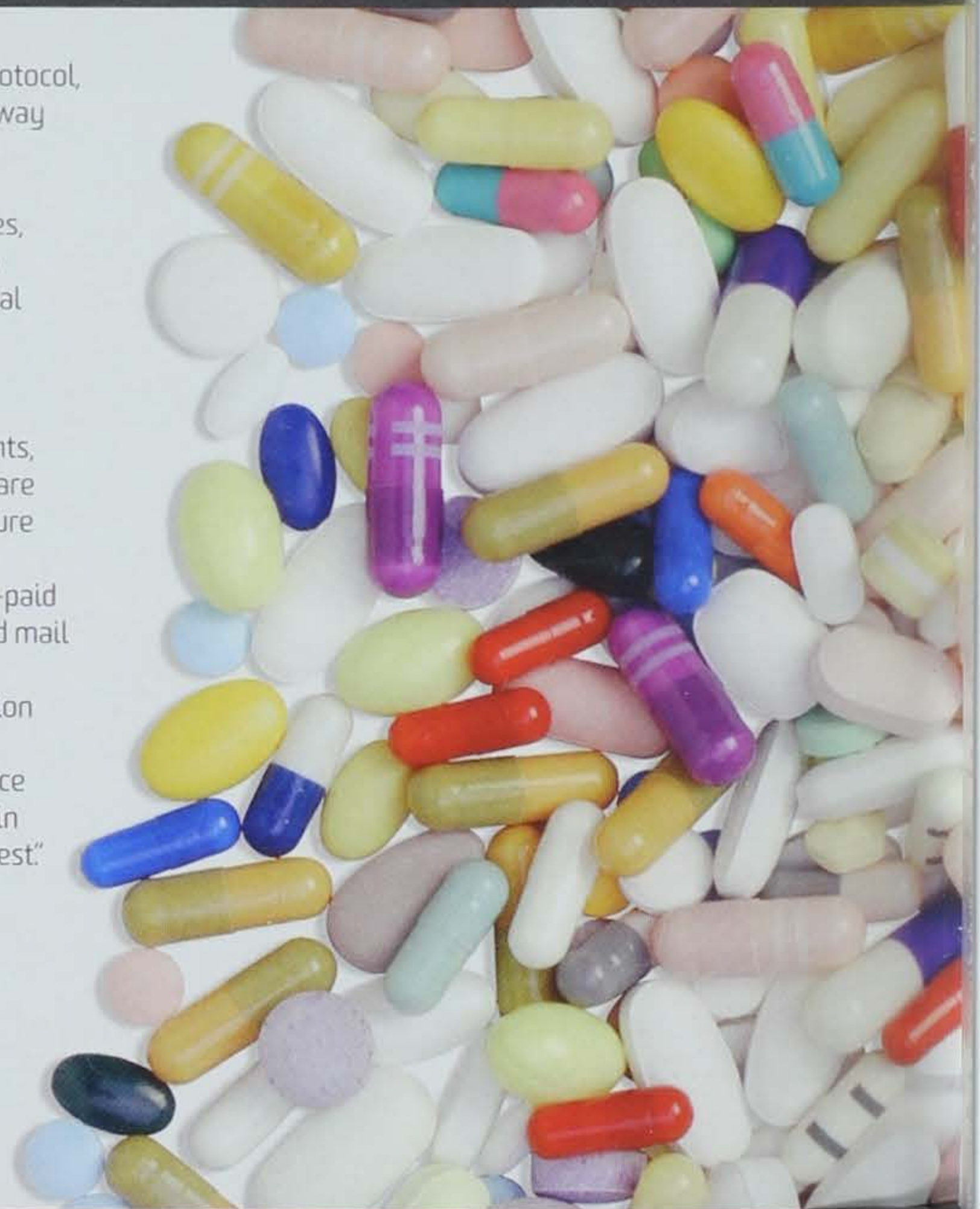
Some participants also sell TakeAway mailers—pre-addressed, postage-paid large envelopes to take home and fill with unused and expired medicine and mail to disposal facilities.

Iowa's TakeAway program was initiated by the Iowa Pharmacy Association as a DNR Solid Waste Alternatives Program pilot project in 2009.

According to Tom Anderson with DNR's Financial and Business Assistance group, "The TakeAway program was the first statewide program of its kind in Iowa. Before then, safe and proper disposal opportunities were limited at best."

To find a list of nearby participating pharmacies, visit iarx.org/takeaway or inquire at your pharmacy.

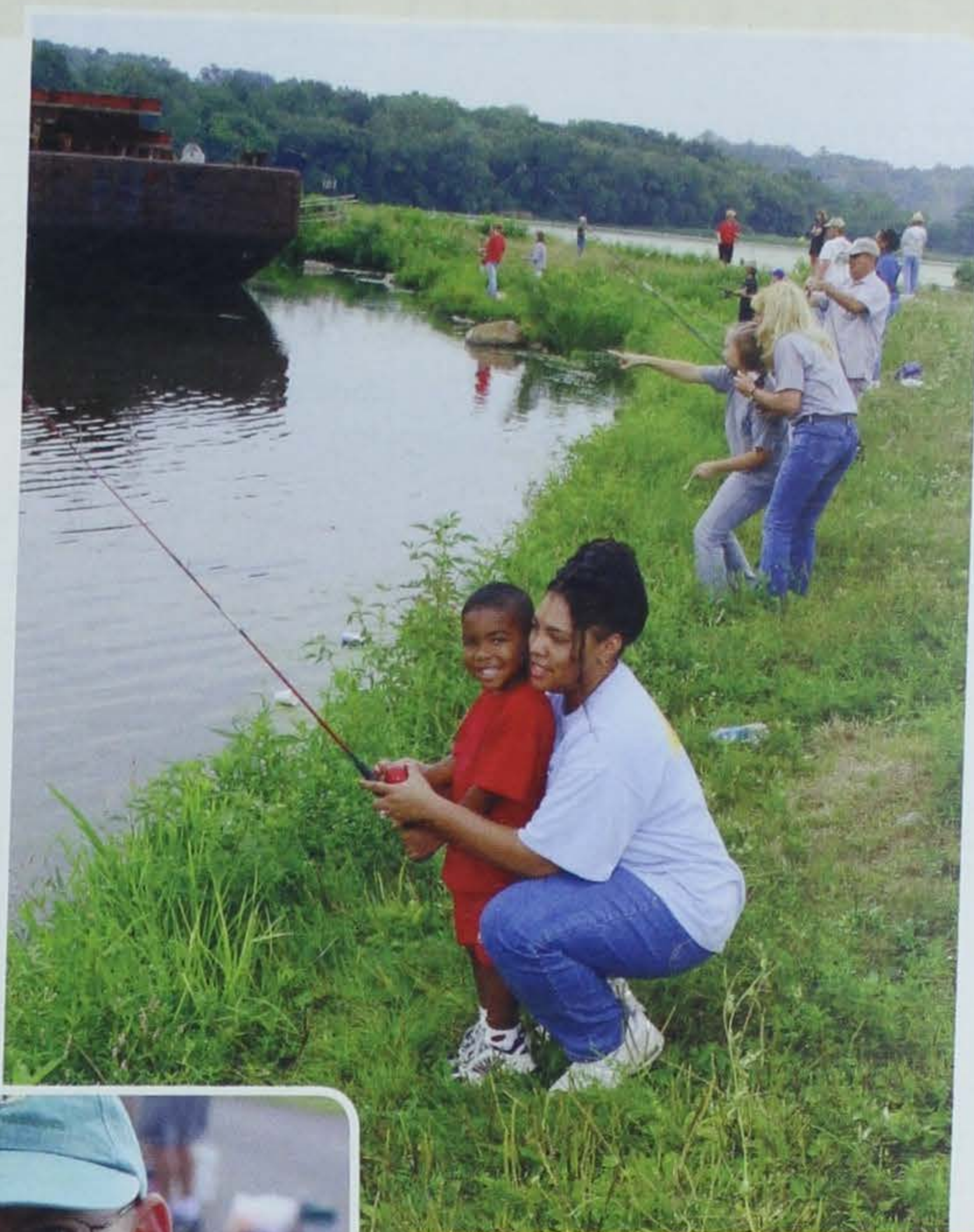
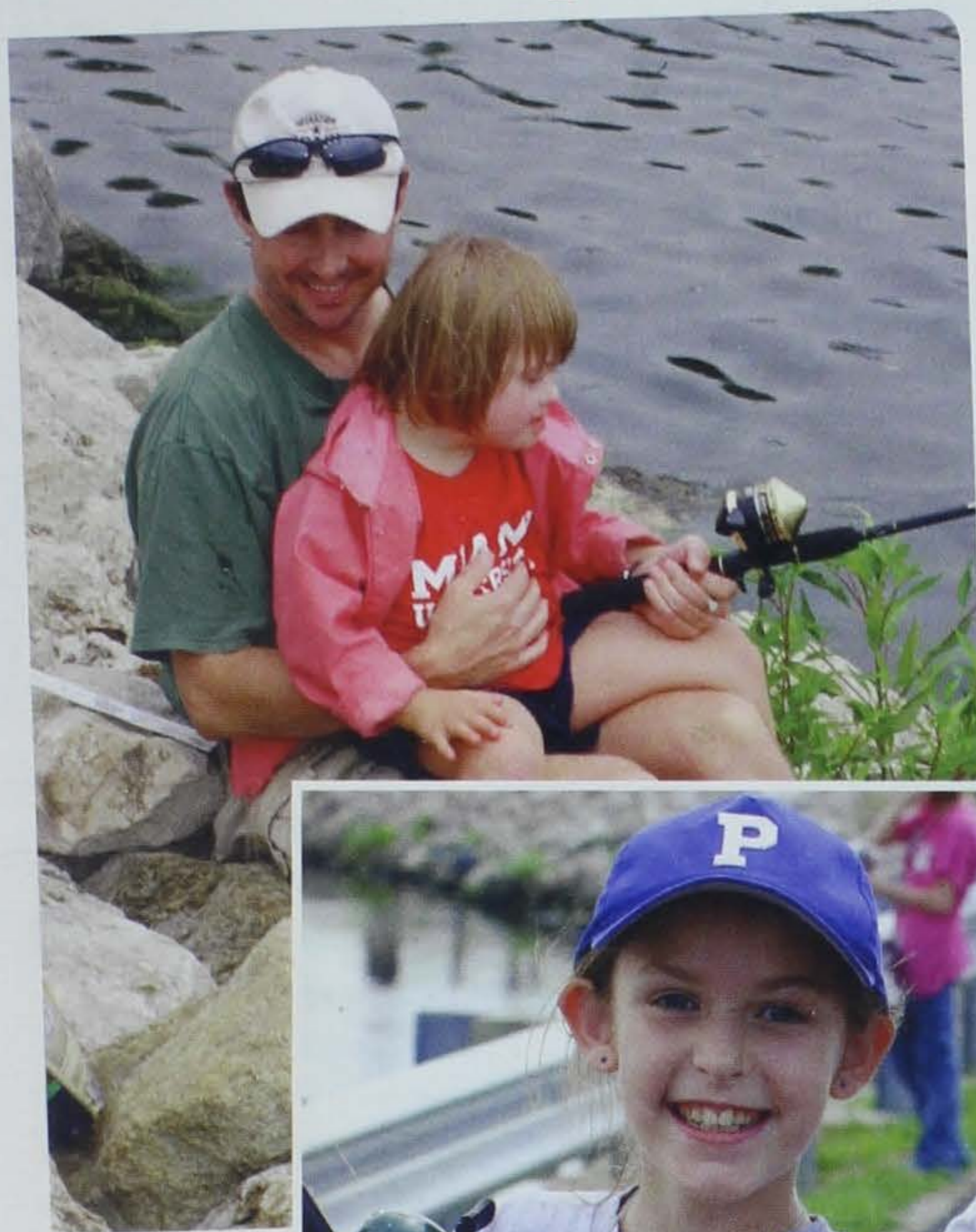
To learn more about the Solid Waste Alternatives Program, contact Tom Anderson, 515-281-8623 or visit www.iowadnr.gov/FABA.



ACTIVITIES, TIPS AND EVENTS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Fishing Clinics

Share the magic of angling



Organizers will want to ensure they register their event with the DNR. Doing so has perks, like free publicity and a clinic kit containing two fishing rigs, *Fish Iowa!* visors, fishing towels, floating pliers, fishing nets and customizable banners along with 25 *Take It Outside/Fish Iowa!* window decals, bags, bobbers, sinkers and hooks. To register, or find a clinic near you, go to programs.iowadnr.gov/specialevents.

It's summertime, the kids are already bored and the family has a free weekend. What to do? Head to any one of more than 100 fishing clinics held across Iowa each year.

Clinics can last a couple hours to half a day. Although clinics are scheduled throughout the year, the majority are held during Free Fishing Weekend, usually the first full weekend in June. That allows the entire family—moms and dads included—to fish without a license.

"It's a great time to schedule an event, and an even better time to attend one," says Barb Gigar, who heads the DNR's aquatic education program. "License requirements are waived for the entire weekend, and bluegills are often close to shore spawning, making them easier to catch."

Clinics are family friendly, and filled with tips, tricks

and instructions on how to get the most out of your fishing trips. Some may provide a light lunch or drinks and snacks, and some may offer door prizes or fishing gear for participants. DNR fisheries staff are often there lending expertise. Regardless, there's enough to keep the whole family entertained.

One bit of advice: find out as much about the clinic before heading out.

"Make sure you read what the event offers before you decide on one," says Gigar. "There are clinics and there are derbies. Clinics always have an educational component. Derbies may or may not, but they will always have an element of competition, so if you are not into that, pick another. Check with the event sponsor if you have questions."

Gear Up to Start Tying Flies

Get inspired by our warm water fly tying feature on *page 54*, then use this list to start tying flies.

To join the myriad of Iowans making warmwater flies, check page 59 for a list of fly tying and fishing resources.

A VISE. Don't get the cheapest because they won't last. Avid fly tier James Barnhart bought one for \$120 and has been using it for 10 years. It should be easy to use, hold the hook securely and adjust easily to a wide range of hook sizes. They come in clamp and pedestal models. Clamps are portable. Pedestals need to be heavy enough to stay in one place as you work.

MEDIUM AND LARGE HAIR STACKERS. You can buy these later when you're ready to try flies that use deer hair.

BOBBINS WITH CERAMIC TUBES. Bobbins dispense thread with controlled tension. Curved bobbins sit well in the palm of the hand and have a more relaxed feel, but standard bobbins work great too. Use multiple bobbins to cut down on time used to change thread.

THREAD. Most fly tiers use synthetic threads. The largest diameter thread is 1/0. The smallest is 12/0. Use the finest-diameter thread that is comfortable without breaking.

HALF HITCH TOOL. Metal tube placed over hook eye used to tie off a half-hitch knot.

BODKIN OR DUBBING NEEDLE. Used for combing out underfur, applying head cement and other tasks.

WHIP-FINISH TOOL. Used for tying secure finishing knots at head of fly.

HACKLE PLIERS. These simplify the job of winding hackle.

NEEDLENOSE PLIERS or small pliers to bend or debarb hooks.



BEFORE PURCHASING feathers, fur and man-made materials, study the patterns for the flies you plan to tie and become familiar with the materials you'll need.

HOOKS. Hook sizes are expressed by number; the larger the number, the smaller the hook. Hooks larger than a size #1 are expressed as a number followed by a slash and a zero, such as "2/0." Popular sizes are 18 to 4. Midge imitations use hooks smaller than 18.

SCISSORS. These should be very sharp with a fine point for close-in work. If you buy small scissors, make sure they have big finger holes.

HEAD CEMENT. Applied to finished flies, it helps secure knots. Many tiers use Hard as Nails from the cosmetics aisle.

HOOK LENGTH is expressed as standard, short or long. Standard is "x." The higher the number, the shorter the hook shank. **HOOK WEIGHT** is standard, heavy or light. Anything other than standard is labeled an "x." **THERE ARE MANY HOOK STYLES.** The proper one for the pattern is indicated in pattern instructions. **HOOK EYES** are either turned-up, turned down or straight. Fish don't seem to have a preference. The choice depends on personal reference.

Beloved Backbone Cabins Improved



Eight 1930s-era cabins built for Civilian Conservation Corps workers received some much needed TLC over the offseason. All of the affordable rentals will reopen this spring, refreshed with extensive renovations. For the first time, these forested cabins at Backbone State Park in Delaware County will be open year-round to offer magic winter escapes.

To increase comfort and expand their use into frosty winters, the cabins were stripped down to studs and encased in airtight Tyvek wrap, with walls insulated with closed cell foam. New flooring features cozy radiant heating. The shell was sprayed with foam and attic insulation bolstered to R-49 values.

Tightening the structures for comfort rids past problems with insects, mice and moisture while maintaining the desirable elements of history—the original front doors are still in place. The welcoming hand-hammered steel door hinges, handles and square-headed bolts maintain the F.D.R.-era charm.

The upgrades will make cleaning and housekeeping easier. Dust and

mud from the gravel parking lot is history too with new pavement.

Much of the cabins' charisma is their simplicity and small size. At 300 square feet, the original snug footprint is unchanged, but they will live larger with removed interior walls, larger windows and expanded kitchen counter space. New patios add space for grilling, relaxing and stargazing. Bathrooms and kitchens feature all new fixtures. New interior lighting brightens while using less energy.

Sultry summers are tackled with improved air conditioning. Larger, durable Pella Impervia casement windows offer better lake views, natural lighting and replace smaller screen-less windows for insect-free cool breezes.

"People are connected to these simple, old cabins," says Kevin Szcodronski, parks bureau chief, who notes there was brief thought to razing them and starting over. A survey of park users, however, showed deep love for the structures, so DNR staff opted to renovate.

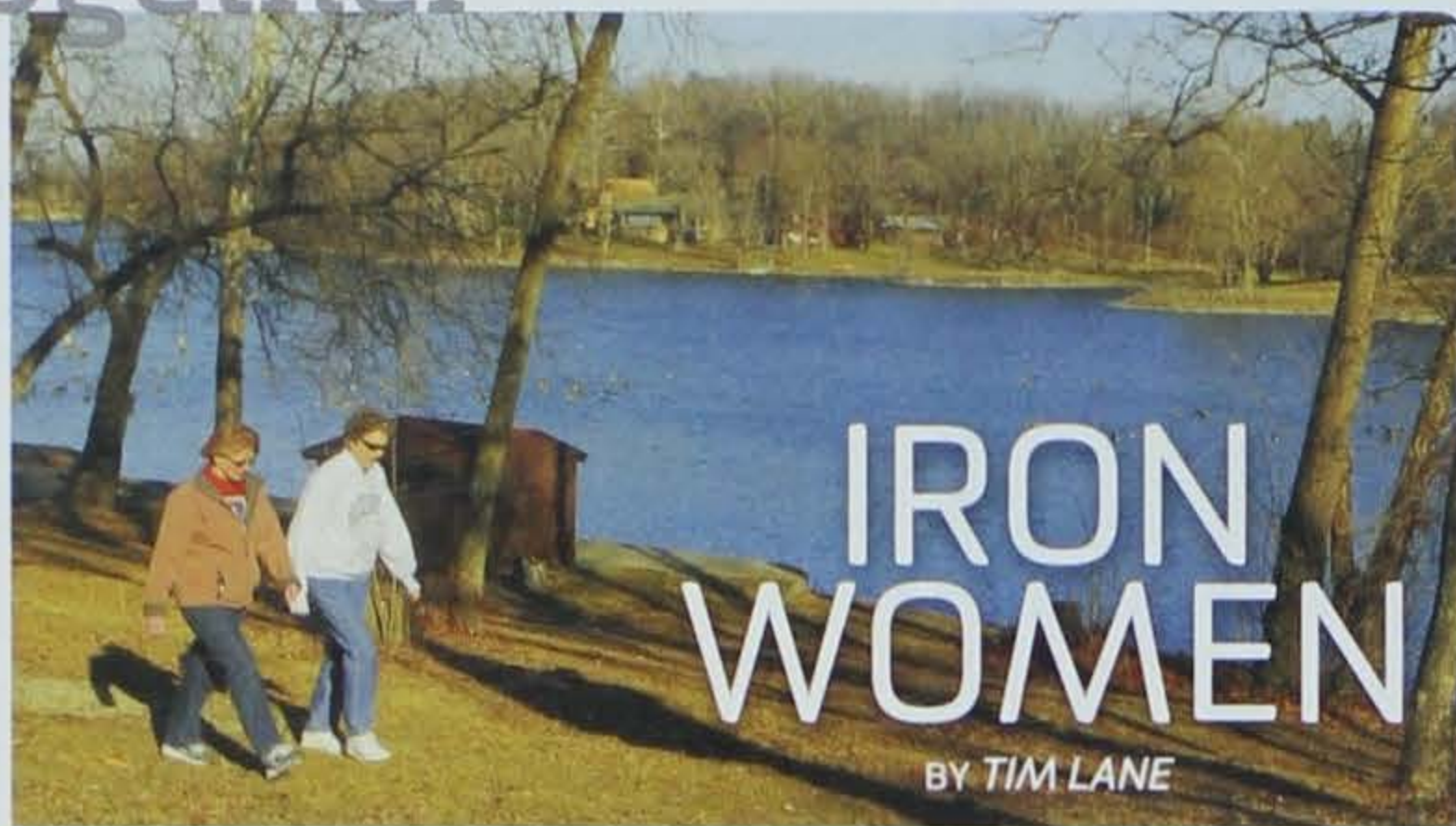
"They are going to be popular. They are priced right. Part of the reason to renovate them was to keep small cabins available in our parks and keep prices low" compared to large, modern cabins, he notes. "They will be popular in winter and no doubt bring more people into the park." They remain pet-friendly.

Indeed, many survey responses lauded the cozy size, affordability and quiet ease of the cabins and specifically asked that they be kept. "I love these cabins. I've been staying in them for 30 years and love to go back as often as I can. Their funky WPA charm is a big part of what I love," says one survey comment.

Modernization and woody escapism have their compatibility limits, however—televisions and Internet were shunned in favor of unplugged togetherness, trout fishing and hiking.

Cabins will re-open by Memorial Day with possible openings as soon as April and still a bargain at \$50 per night or \$300 per week. Reserve at <http://iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com> or 1-877-427-2757.

Together



During the first week of June in 1925, New York Yankees manager Miller Huggins replaced his slumping first baseman, Wally Pipp, with a rookie named Lou Gehrig. Gehrig went on to play in the next 2,130 consecutive games. A record, as you may know, that lasted 56 years until Cal Ripken, Jr. broke it in September 1998.

For his effort Gehrig was given the moniker of "The Iron Horse" and Cal Ripken was in turn dubbed "The Iron Man" as he accumulated 2,632 consecutive starts.

In Iowa we treasure the memories of our own Iron Men, but it is time to pay tribute to our Iron Women. My nominees are Elaine Shrader and Sally Malloy of Oskaloosa.

Back in the late 1970s the two would often enjoy Lake Keomah. It was close and their kids loved to swim, skate and sled there. But around 1980 these two long-time friends decided they no longer wanted to talk to each other over the phone. Instead, they wanted to talk in person as they walked the various park roads and trails. And so it began. Since that date the two have been wearing a groove in the place. For more than three decades they teamed up to walk and talk on average four times a week.

Let's do the math. That is 384 months, 19,968 weeks and an estimated 79,872 walks, or about a half-million combined miles and a half-billion calories. And a lot of talk.

The most recent related research that has crossed my desk is from Dr. Cyrus Raji of UCLA and it details how active individuals have younger looking, and thus healthier, brains. Medical scans of the cerebral cortex from 876 subjects indicated a direct correlation between activity and retained brain matter. I am thus guessing Sally and Elaine have the brains of 20-year-olds. I mean that in only the most positive way.

Now an obvious assertion would be that folks with healthier brains put two and two together and walk. Thus the big brain results in walking rather than vice versa. But the preponderance of research does seem to detail a very strong and direct correlation between caloric output and better brains.

In talking to the two I was struck by the soundtrack. I had already pictured the images of eagles, deer and trees in various shades of seasonal color, but they were as enthused about the cacophony of bird sounds on early walks and the sounds of leaves underfoot during the fall.

For the record, Gehrig was the first professional athlete to have his jersey number retired. Today I suggest the DNR retire the numbers of Sally and Elaine. What is their number you ask? Well, number 1 of course. For their feat of feet, perhaps their shoes can be displayed in the Lake Keomah lodge.

It's valuable to point out that over all those years the cost of their walking amounted to zero. So there you have it...friends...activity...nature in all its glory...younger bodies and brains...better health...quality of life...and no fees. Let me know if there is some news out there better than that.

TIM LANE is a nationally recognized authority on public health and physical activity. In 2010, he and his buddies rode bicycles across Iowa, river to river, in 21 straight hours. He resides in Des Moines.

But Why?

Helping adults answer children's nature questions

BY A. JAY WINTER

A. Jay Winter educates up to 20,000 Iowa children each year as the DNR's training specialist at the Springbrook Conservation Education Center.

COOPER, AGE 7, IN POLK COUNTY ASKS:

Are slugs snails looking for a shell?

While slugs are pretty much snails without shells, they don't seem to be jealous of their cousins' houses on the go.

It's true that snails use their shells for protection—from other animals and from drying out in the sun. But that doesn't mean slugs are helpless. They can hide in small spaces that a snail can't, and that protects them from predators and the sun, and even gives them a good place to lay eggs. They can escape harsh weather by burrowing into the ground during hot, dry spells and to hibernate in the winter.

Slugs live on land, in the sea and in freshwater. Many have colors that blend into the background or bright colors that warn other animals that they're not a tasty snack. Banana slugs cover themselves in mucus that can numb a predator's mouth.

Some researchers even suggest that slugs once had external shells, as they evolved from snails and lost their shells over time. Today, most slugs have a remnant of a shell, although it's usually internal.



SLUG PHOTO BY ISTOCKPHOTO.COM; SHRADER/MALLOY PHOTO BY CLAY SMITH

Find a volunteer project or post your own event at www.KeepersOfTheLand.org or call 515-281-0878.

Admiration & Legacy

BY JESSIE ROLPH BROWN



PARK LIFESAVER

GUS STANGL, DES MOINES

Teen raises funds for first aid in park

Gus Stangl knows a lot of Iowans enjoy Big Creek State Park, and he wants to make sure they stay safe. Because of his efforts, two new automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, sit at the ready to assist during cardiac arrest. "You never know when someone's going to have a heart attack, and an AED can increase

their chances of survival," Stangl says. The recent East High School graduate from Des Moines started volunteering at the park in 2011. While his parents were fishing, he picked up trash, and things went from there, he says. "I had started accumulating money from cans and bottles and I had to have a day off to get my CPR certification renewed, which included training on automatic defibrillators. That is when Park Manager Chad Kelchen mentioned that the park did not have an AED. So the project began," Stangl says. In addition to cans collected at bins in the park, the Big Creek Marina donated cans left on rental boats. A newspaper story caught the eye of aed.com, which donated an AED, and of AEDprofessionals.com, which offered a big discount. The Polk City Chamber of Commerce chipped in too. One AED stays at the beach and the other goes with on-call park staff. Stangl's done cleanup on the bike path and fishing trails, groomed the beach playground and painted, too. "Gus and his family represent the type of park user that every manager dreams of. They noticed a need and were willing to put their time and efforts in to meet those needs. The AEDs are the kind of item that we know are needed, but hope we never use," says Kelchen.



STARTING AT HOME

D.G. AND ROSIE PARTRIDGE, BRED A

Sac County family embraces conservation

D.G. and Rosie Partridge started out 34 years ago with a small family and three acres. Today, their kids, grandkids and great-grandkids work to protect 100-plus acres, Carnarvon Creek and Black Hawk Lake. "We grew up on farms with so much talk about

conservation that it was just instilled in us," says Rosie. Through the Black Hawk Lake watershed project, other programs and their own pockets, they've planted native grasses, filter strips, buffers, windbreaks and riprapped streambanks. "We saw the need and we just enjoy it," says Rosie. The Sauk Rail Trail, a multi-use trail reaching from Lake View to Breda, runs along 42 acres that the Partridges placed in a conservation easement, protecting it from future development but keeping it in the family for their use. It also shows trail users how conservation helps the creek and lake. "We've always been interested in water quality and have seen that creek take some hard hits," says Rosie. "Our kids played down there and caught frogs. I think it can be a clean creek again." Family has always been a part of caring for the land, and Rosie and D.G. see it as a family legacy. The grandkids

help remove invasive plants, plant and water trees, and hunt and fish. "We try to get their hands on the land, and it's rewarding to see them appreciate it too," says Rosie. The family's conservation work creates wildlife habitat and another 73-acre easement protects the North Raccoon River. Rosie and her daughter, Liz Partridge Blessington, volunteer as IOWATER water monitors. The family built their office building in Breda sustainably and added native plantings, a rain garden and a wetland so that others could learn about the practices. "They're very conservation-minded people and had a lot in place prior to the project," says T.J. Lynn with the Black Hawk Lake watershed project. "They're very willing to do whatever we've asked to take care of the lake. They don't hesitate."

IT TAKES A NAVY

JIM COLBERT, AMES

Professor leads cleanup of Story County streams

It began with a claw-footed, cast-iron bathtub upside-down in the Skunk River staring down angler and Iowa State University professor Jim Colbert. He needed a service project for his biology students, and now he suddenly needed a way to get a bathtub out of the river. So, with 15 students and some canoes, Colbert launched the Skunk River Navy in 1998. Since then, he and about 1,900 volunteers have walked the 25-mile length of the Skunk, plus a few miles on Squaw and Clear creeks, removing 68 tons of trash. There's "legacy trash," old wagon wheels and farm implements, always tons of tires, but also new items, like a stackable washer and dryer. With no water to hide trash in a stretch of drought-stricken Squaw Creek last year, the Navy took out everything other than some cars. "We had never gotten to the bottom of the pile before," Colbert says. While a lot of sweat goes into removing trash, students also do IOWATER biological monitoring, looking for insects, snails, crayfish and more. "At Iowa State, 75 percent of our students are from Iowa and the vast majority has never done anything like this. They've spent their whole lives with these things in their backyards and never had a chance to see them," Colbert says. Creating that opportunity makes Colbert a great teacher, says the DNR's Brian Soenen. "Jim's ability to connect people with science is extraordinary. Just being around the guy makes you want to learn more about our natural world." Colbert's happy to see less junk on fishing trips, but he's satisfied more with what his students are learning. "These kinds of experiences are so powerful that nobody forgets them. Really, rivers face larger problems. But trash is a barometer of how we value our rivers. We're developing people who understand Iowa's rivers are important"



TIPS, TRICKS AND MUST-KNOWS TO ENHANCE YOUR OUTDOOR FUN



Spring Turkey Tips

It's opening day in the woods. A turkey gobbles. Now what?

A successful day in the turkey woods may end with a gobbler in the bag. It might mean calling in a big tom, even if you get no shot. You know you can do it again. Success is often measured in degrees.

If you're one of the hunters snatching up 45,000 spring season tags in Iowa, you probably know planning starts well before opening day.

"Turkeys are creatures of habit. Using aerial photos and other technological advances are fine. Turkeys are finicky about ravines and fences. It helps to get out there on the ground," stresses Jim Coffey, from the

DNR's wildlife research office near Chariton.

Scout Early

"You want to go see what's up with the acorn crop. You can get that in the fall while squirrel hunting. It's the same skill set. You sit very still. You sometimes stalk. It's done in the same habitat," explains Coffey, who uses that analogy in his seminars. "Squirrels rely on their eyesight, their hearing. They just don't gobble."

Winter Scouting

Winter is a great time to track turkeys in the snow. However, cold weather turkeys are bunched up. Come

spring, they split up. They will not be clustered, feeding in open fields. And don't barge in days before the opener. "I stand on hilltops; I listen. I figure out where roost trees are and where turkeys want to go," outlines Coffey. Opening day, "I put myself in between. I emphasize the biology of the bird. Why does he do what he does?"

Which Season

Iowa offers five seasons for spring turkey hunters, including the popular early youth season. With a working knowledge of the big bird, change your strategy and techniques as bare vegetation and even occasional late snows of early- to mid-April yield to



the green-up, sunshine and biting mosquitoes of mid-May.

Early Versus Late Season

In early season, “vegetation is open. That gobbler can see a hen through several hundred yards of woods. Be in place and concealed. Get into thicker cover, a tree blowdown. Break up your pattern,” says Coffey. “Later, when it is green, you can move a little; adjust your position. Turkeys will more likely “sneak” the call. So be ready.”

Calls to Use

“It is similar to bass fishing lures. You can buy a lot, but you may not always need it. I’ll have a couple mouth calls,

a box call and owl hooter. I might not use them each time, but they are there when I need them,” says Coffey. “But be confident with what you use.” Know when to use a box call. Or that mouth call? Practice to build confidence or it won’t work. The same goes for your gun. Be confident with what you are shooting.”

Crack of Dawn

“Everybody loves going out at “0-dark-30.” Yet, there is nothing wrong with heading out at 10 or 11 a.m.,” suggests Coffey. “That turkey lives where you hunt. They are still there. That being said, though, you don’t kill a gobbler when you’re lying in bed!”

Hunt late Season

By the end of third season, hens are starting to nest. Toms don’t often reply to calls. “There can be a lot of sneaking. That’s often the sub-dominant tom. He’s the 2-year-old bird. He’s tired of being beaten up by the big three or four year old boss tom. That can still be a very nice turkey,” reminds Coffee. Late seasons run longer, the days are longer to hunt and weather is more stable.

2013 Spring Turkey Seasons

Apr. 6-14 Youth
Apr. 15-18 First
Apr. 19-23 Second
Apr. 24-30 Third
May 1-19 Fourth

Outdoor Skills



Renew Dry-as-Bone Leathers

Faded, stiff boot leathers are signs of dryness. To restore, first clean with a soft brush, then apply a natural or silicone-based treatment. Natural treatments often darken the leather as oils are absorbed, but they will lighten over time.

Two Hook 'Bama Rig

A new fishing lure is hooking converts across Iowa, but has many anglers snagged on legality. The Alabama Rig is an umbrella setup with a weighted head and five trailing wire leaders. Attaching lures to leaders simulates a school of baitfish. Iowa rules allow two hooks per line. Iowans can use this popular setup provided only two of the five lures contain hooks.



LEFT: 5 lure, 2 hook, 'bama rig setup



BOOT PHOTO BY BRIAN BUTTON. 'BAMA RIG ILLUSTRATION BY JAKE ZWEIBOHMER



Keep Iowa Beautiful[®]

Calling All Iowans to Keep Iowa Beautiful!

As Iowans, we are proud of our great state. Consider getting involved to ensure that the beauty and quality of life in Iowa continuously improves for our children and grandchildren. April 2013 is Keep Iowa Beautiful month, why not plan to take action? Here are ways you can:

- ▶ Enroll in the Iowa Department of Transportation's Adopt a Highway program. It's easy and rewarding. Visit www.iowadot.gov/maintenance/adopt_a_highway.html for more information on how to get started.
- ▶ Do something about littering! Report littering at 1-888-NOLITTR (1-888-665-4887).

Visit the Keep Iowa Beautiful web site at www.KeepIowaBeautiful.com for additional information.

EXPLORE THE WILD SIDE NEAR BURLINGTON

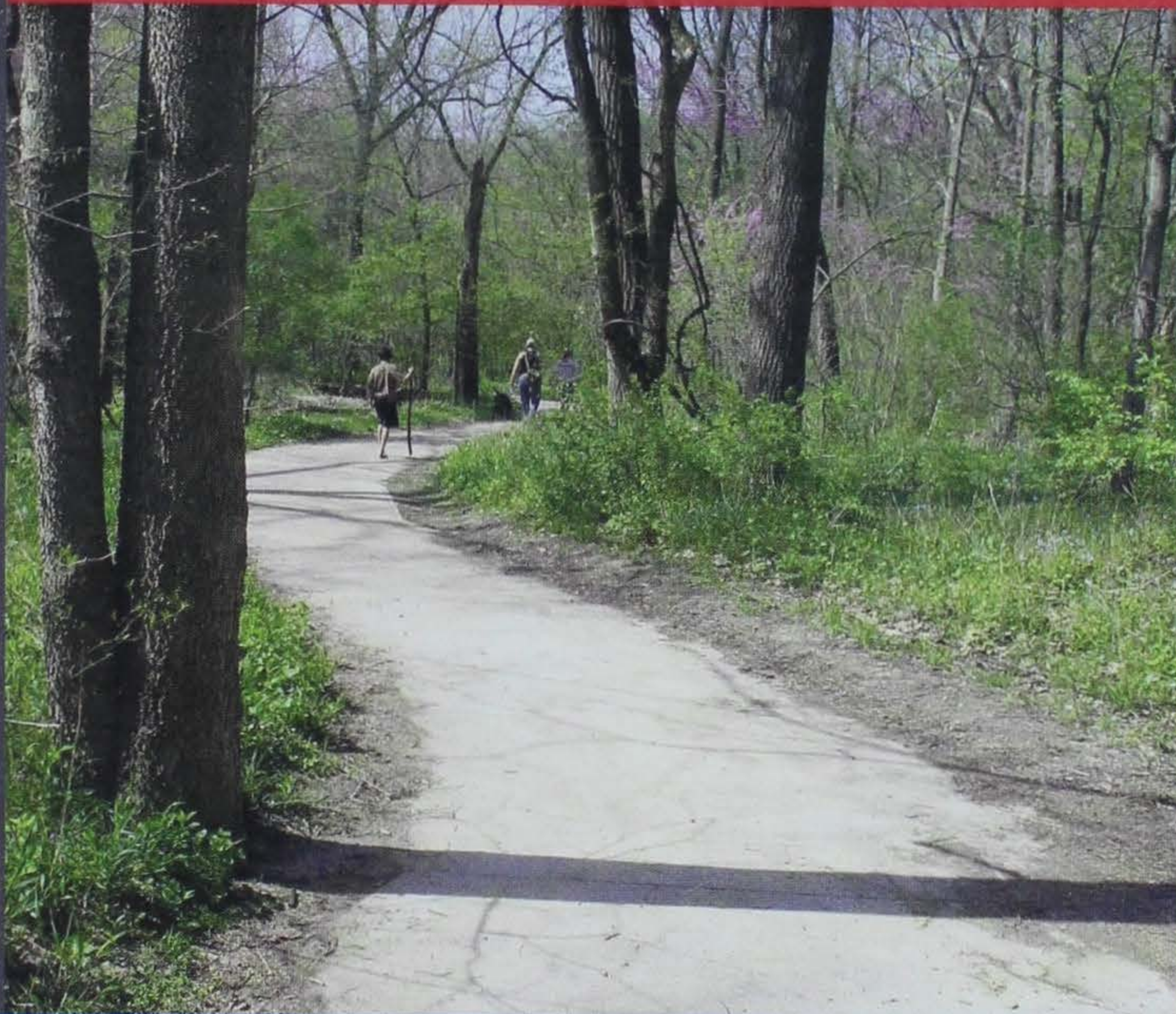
The 178-acre lake at Big Hollow Conservation Area in Des Moines County was created four years ago and stocked with crappies, bluegills, bass, muskies and catfish. By now, they've reached impressive sizes. From boat or shore, test your line strength against big fish, then stay at one of 16 secluded and forested primitive campsites, a rustic cabin or at one of 32 RV sites. Then explore and cast on numerous ponds that dot the park.

Test your marksmanship at a shooting range or 3-D

archery range, then return the first and third Friday nights each month to gawk at the heavens from the observatory. With family in tow, hike 8 miles of trails, swim and bask at the non-alcohol beach or ride bikes on the new 6-mile leg of the Flint River Trail. Eventually, the trail will span 20 miles to connect Burlington to Big Hollow. The model airplane field is a hit with families, too.

Learn more at dmconservation.com or 319-753-8260

Burlington/West Burlington



Lost In Iowa

BY JENNIFER WILSON PHOTOS BY CLAY SMITH AND JAKE ZWEIBOHMER



CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: Wide open water is good stuff for summertime studies on skipping rocks. The trail in the park is short and sweet, good for entry level explorers. Beachfront dining at PM Park: kids can kick off the flip-flops and build castles while the folks recap the day. The playground at McIntosh Woods State Park is a great place for kids to burn off energy.



PHOTO, UPPER LEFT, BY CLAY SMITH; REMAINING PHOTOS BY JAKE ZWEIBOHMER

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Ancient fossils, prairie remnant, natural lake, forward-thinking restoration: Ventura's McIntosh Woods State Park on Clear Lake reads like pages of Iowa history, and a hopeful glance at the future.

It's Friday night, and you're settling in for a weekend at McIntosh Woods State Park, one of two state parks on the 3,684-acre natural body of water called Clear Lake.

You've taken a short trail walk from the campground to soak in the scenery. The sun is setting.

You note that the trail has risen to a mellow hill. Campfire smoke hangs on the air, tendrils like gray ghosts bending and stretching toward the water. Here, you tread on the same dirt as the Ioway, Meskwaki and Sioux peoples that shared this neutral ground, their scouts ducking low to scan the north central Iowa landscape from this same hill.

They too explored the nearby Winnebago River, its rocky outcrops bristling with ancient fossils. They hunted on the prairie that once covered most of the state, and you can still see rare remnants patching the dirt around here. Clear Lake's shallows trill with amphibious life as it did

back then, night noises that follow you back to your tent or your RV or one of McIntosh's two yurts.

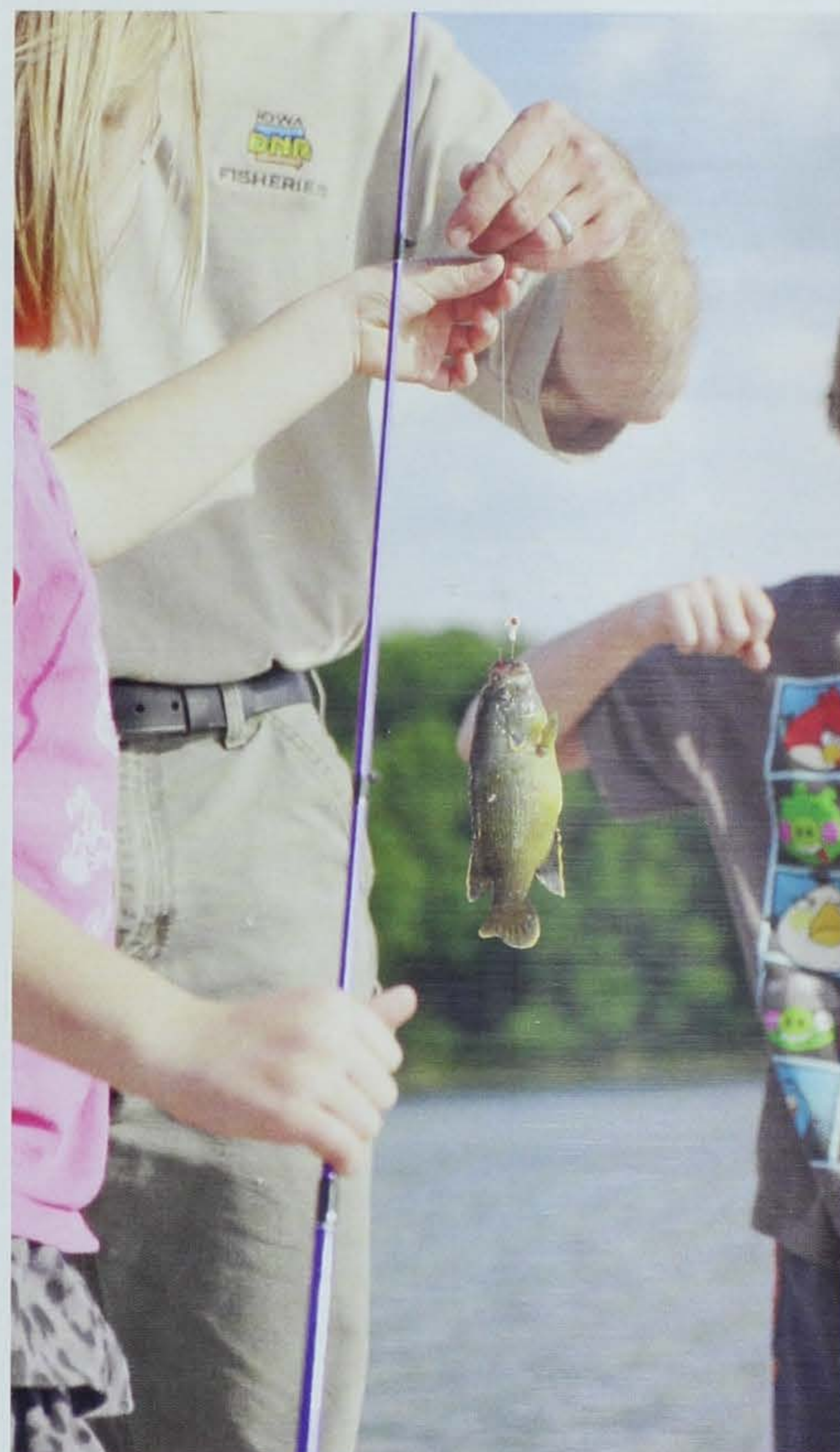
This vibrancy—a hint of what once was—wouldn't have been possible without a recent decade-long lake renovation that should keep the area vital for years to come.

In a weekend, you can witness it yourself. Maybe catch a fish or two while you're at it.

A lake with a past

Just a few decades ago, the name "Clear Lake" seemed an ironic joke—a silted-in mud hole full of carp, the lake wasn't great for fishing, and tourists couldn't see more than a few inches into it. (See sidebar.)

But the people of these lake towns, residents and weekenders alike, wanted their Clear Lake back. The DNR wanted a healthy fishery again. A robust lake association wanted all those things.



Lost In Iowa



They banded together, worked in the watershed and lake and revived the water. Now Clear Lake is a deep forest green, clear for several feet down. Even a little kid with a cheapie rod can pull out a yellow bass on the first cast, or reel in bluegills while waiting for the boat to dock or dance with a big catfish on shore. The lake smells like fish, because it's full of them—walleye, muskie, panfish and catfish—like it was 100 years ago. Even a thousand.

The joint effort speaks to a tradition of moderate preservation in this corner of Cerro Gordo County. The people like their lake, and they've developed some of it. But lake pioneers also set out to preserve its natural beauty and its more nuanced details, such as its breeze.

"The pioneers of this area established Clear Lake State Park in 1941," says 18-year park manager Tammy Domonoske, pointing to McIntosh's popular sister park

along the southwest shore. "But it was on the wrong side of the lake."

Domonoske, an avid distance runner with a hands-in-pocket shyness about her, says the lake association (the same one that helped along the recent lake renovation) wanted a park on the northwest side, too—because it had the best breezes.

"There were about 60 acres on the northwest side of the lake, owned by a Rose McIntosh, part of a family who were pioneers to this area," says Domonoske.

Rose's land is now McIntosh Woods State Park. Domonoske says Gov. George Wilson dedicated it on Aug. 12, 1944, a petite woodsy refuge where gooseberry and raspberry bushes brush the short campground trail. Its marsh observation blind is popular with wood ducks, mallards and other migrators, as well as campers in

PHOTO BY CLAY SMITH



search of the perfect early-morning coffee perch.

“Governor Wilson called this park a ‘delightfully cool spot,’” Domonoske chuckles. “They got those southern breezes they wanted.”

A gentle wind kicks up, like the park is showing off a little.

Tiny worlds

It’s a mystery why Iowa’s parks don’t have more yurts like the two in McIntosh. Really it is. Soft-sided like a tent, roomy like a cabin, Iowa’s park yurts help modern travelers appreciate the wild side of Iowa’s protected areas (from the comfort of a decent bed). The sky dome, while covered, makes good bedtime stargazing. The windows zip open, so you can catch those coveted breezes and the hoot of owls. Bathhouses just a few feet away. Dock even closer.

Here in Ventura, the floors are made of reclaimed wood from a church in Des Moines: holy ground of sorts.

“I like the seclusion,” says Kim Gibbs, who lives in Mason City but takes the short drive with her husband Joe. “It’s sheltered from wind and rain, but not as sheltered as a hotel.”

It’s that slightly wild feeling in a tame setting that makes McIntosh a good weekend escape from the usual wheel ruts. Just southwest of nearby Nora Springs, Bird Hill State Preserve and Claybanks Forest State Preserve provide some of the best fossil collecting in the United States, where anyone can pick up 375-million-year-old remnants of Iowa’s history as an ancient tropical sea. Just about a mile north of the park lies Hoffman Prairie, a Nature Conservancy-owned pothole marsh and a tall grass prairie remnant.

Lost In Iowa



Zadie Hoff, 7, reels in her first big catch—a mighty catfish she learned to catch and release herself.

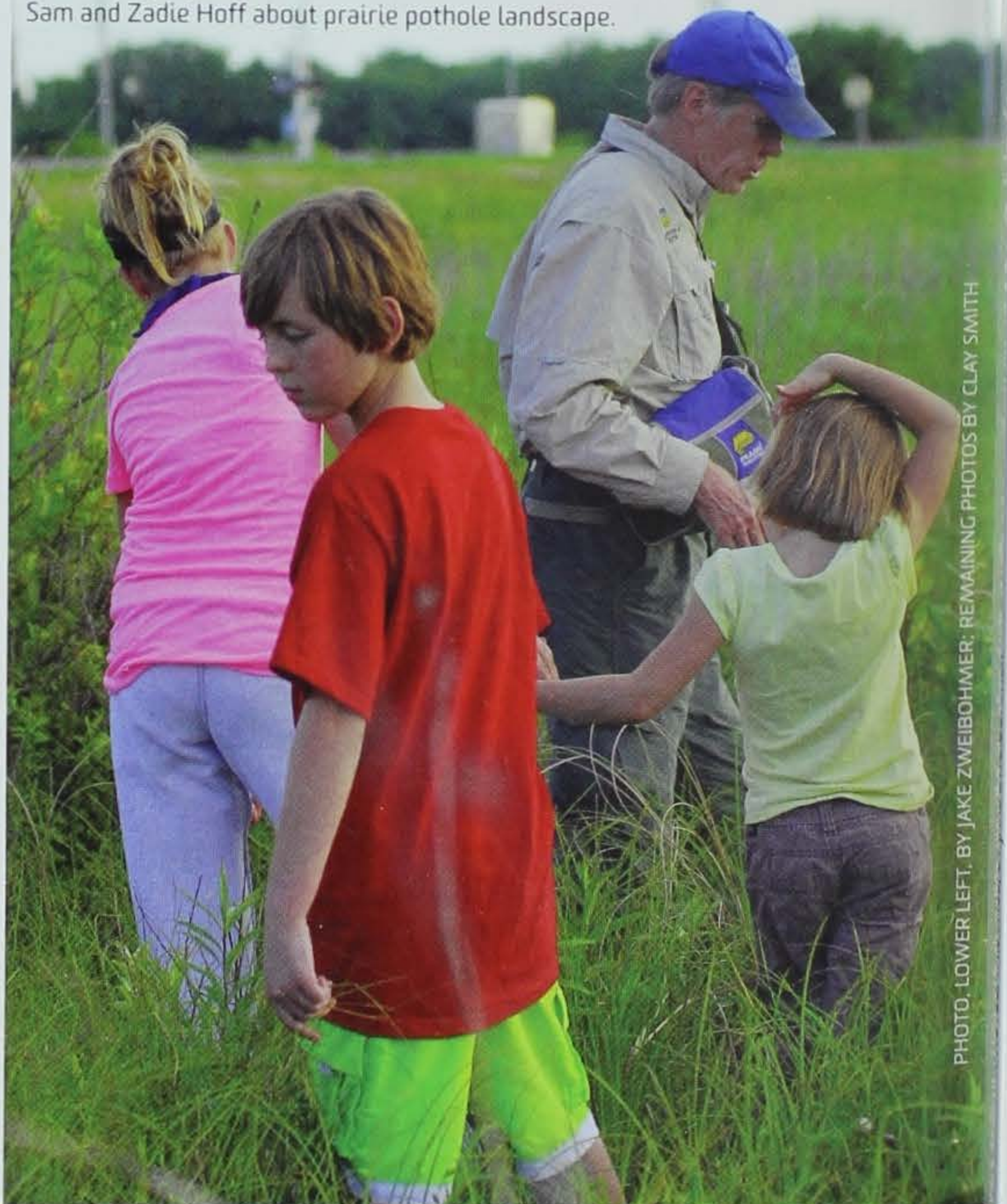


Dick and Jean Bruner's 1955 Century wooden boat recalls Clear Lake history.

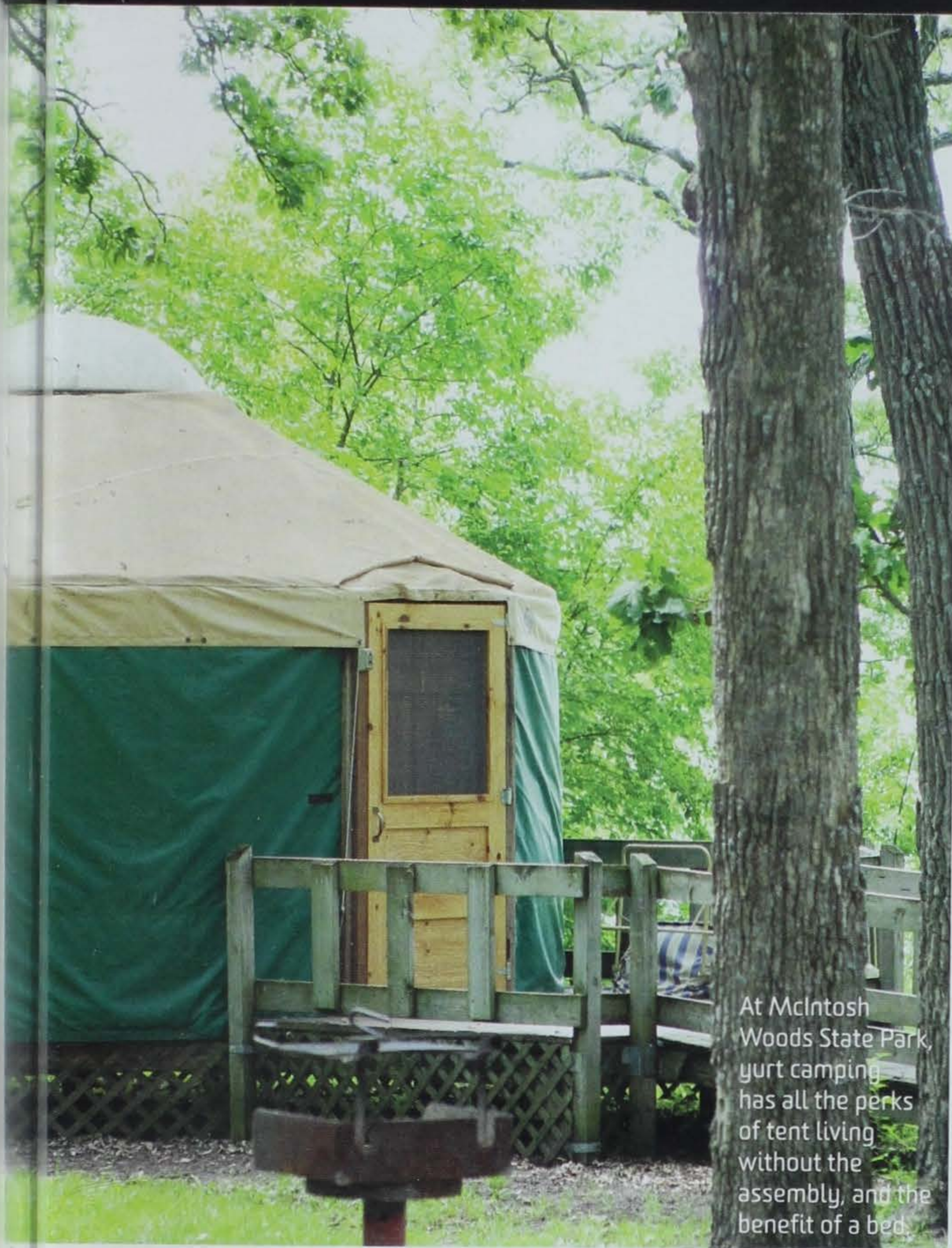
Two public fishing jetties in Ventura make for easy angling for the family, with little to snag on, plenty of room and lots-o-fish.



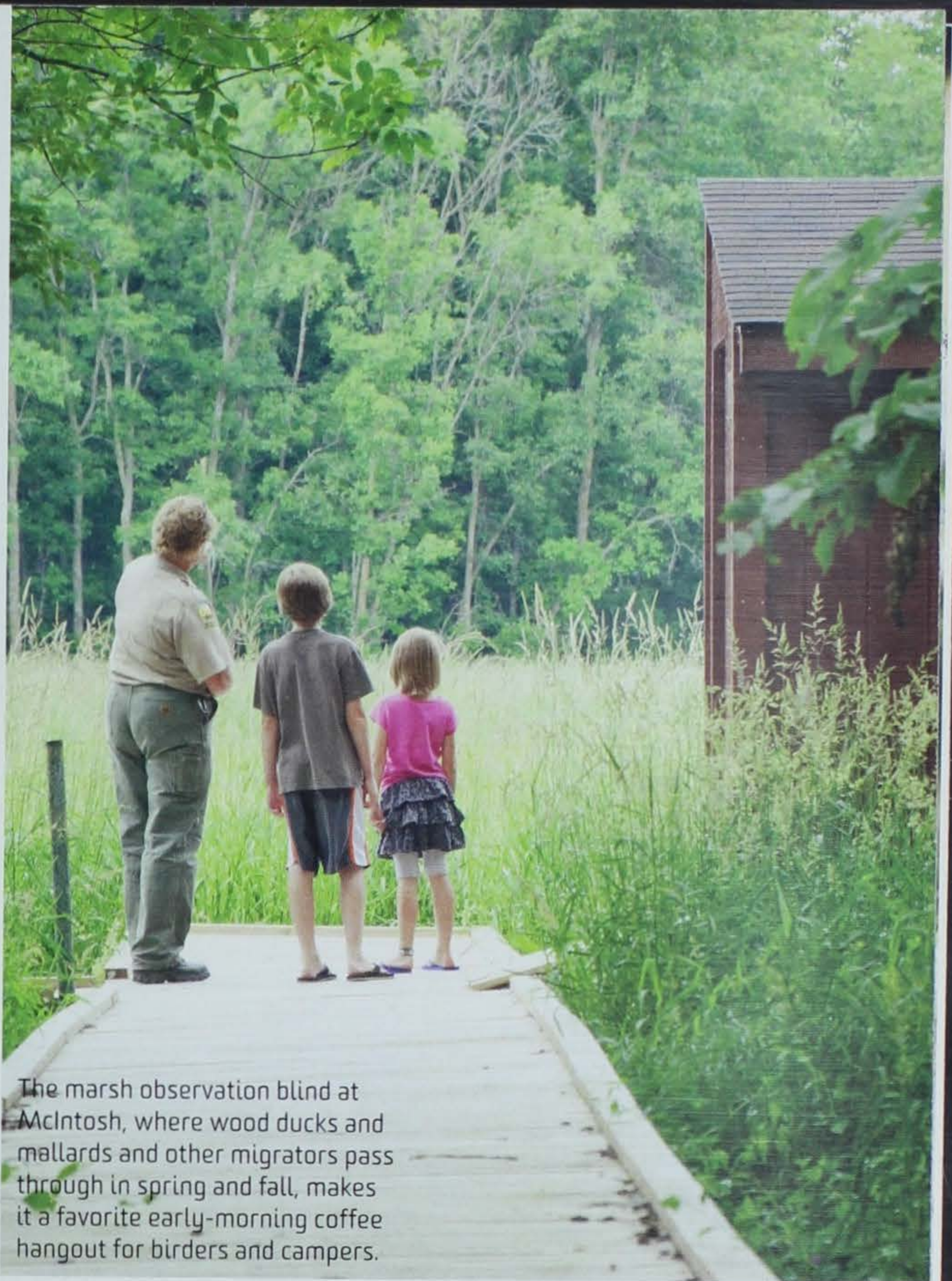
DNR biologist John Pearson teaches Ries Wilson and Sam and Zadie Hoff about prairie pothole landscape.



PHOTO, LOWER LEFT, BY JAKE ZWEIBOHMER; REMAINING PHOTOS BY CLAY SMITH



At McIntosh Woods State Park, yurt camping has all the perks of tent living without the assembly, and the benefit of a bed.



The marsh observation blind at McIntosh, where wood ducks and mallards and other migrators pass through in spring and fall, makes it a favorite early-morning coffee hangout for birders and campers.

The DNR's state biologist, John Pearson, drifts slowly through long grasses brushing his legs like flames. He points out rare prairie plants to a group of children. They've moved no further than 10 steps in 20 minutes, yet they're rapt.

The prairie plant names sound so untamed. Yarrow, lead plant, hoary puccoon that flowers yellow in early spring. Prairie dropseed, which looks like someone dropped a wig on the ground each fall. Yellow parsnip. Rattlesnake master, its leaves like yucca, only dwelling on natural prairie like this. Mountain mint, wild rose, sawtooth sunflower, covered in ants. Wild iris. Prairie sagewort. Prairie coreopsis. Compass plant. Golden Alexander.

"Why does it shiver?" asks a little girl, pointing to a meadow rue's fuzzy pink flowers.

Pearson brushes his fingertips over it. "That's the wind blowing the anthers—the pollen-bearing part of the flower."

A pothole marsh is rife with plant life, waterfowl and migrators. These depressions in the land left by glaciers—with high spots called hummocks and massive divots from the wake of ancient ice floes—have mostly been drained or farmed over. Few remain, so they're worth noting when you find one.

"It's a rumpled landscape," explains Pearson.

The group still has barely moved. "It's common for a tallgrass prairie like this one to have 25 different species in a square meter."

He points out a gall in goldenrod. "That's a little baby fly in there," he shows around the swollen gorge in the tall plant, the result of a fly inserting an egg into the stem. "It'll spend its summer and winter in there and come out next spring. That's unless a wasp comes along." Tiny parasitic wasps often lay eggs in the same gall, and their hatchlings then attack the fly's larva.

He holds up a baby katydid. "All these critters in here are just millimeters in size."

A modern history

In 1909, Bayside Amusement Park opened, establishing Clear Lake as one of Iowa's good-time destinations. Then 1933 positioned it as a place of legend with the opening of the Surf Ballroom, a rock'n'roll danceatorium that became the site of the last concert given by Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper, before their fatal plane crash on Feb. 3, 1959 outside Clear Lake. It was the Day the Music Died, and The Surf is still a pilgrimage for rock fans everywhere.

Back in those days, large commercial wooden tourist

Lost In Iowa

A Lake Revival

Beginning with a reduction in water quality, Clear Lake experienced heavy algae blooms that gobbled up its nutrients in the 1980s, followed by beach advisories for swimming and poor clarity. The lake's filters (a marsh and a smaller portion of the lake in Ventura, locally known as the "Little Lake") had become so muddy that the water turned from clear to turbid.

Many things can kick a lake out of balance, and Clear Lake had been slowly silting in since the glaciers. But Scott Grummer, DNR fisheries biologist, theorizes that the clincher here happened in the late 70s, when a massive winter fish kill gave the carp population the upper hand. "The desirable fish anglers like are always the first to go," says Grummer. Heavy snowfall, and a drought that year, all contributed.

Soon Clear Lake was far from clear.

According to Grummer, there are two different tactics for lake management:

- **LAKE RESTORATION**, which restores and preserves water quality, including a lake's drainage area.

- **LAKE RENOVATION** uses a toxicant (poison) to remove fish and start with a clean slate.

The Clear Lake Enhancement and Restoration Project (CLEAR) began in 1995, and mobilized a full and impressive restoration. The CLEAR Project consists of a dozen-plus partners, all working together to improve lake water quality. Lead sponsors include the DNR, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the EPA, as well as local partners such as the Association for the Preservation of Clear Lake, the Hancock and Cerro Gordo soil & water conservation districts and the cities of Clear Lake and Ventura.

Everyone wanted their recreation and tourism back, which meant a lake in its healthiest state.

Together, in this public-private partnership, they launched a \$20 million restoration project of scope and scale that's "pretty much unprecedented in the state," says Grummer.

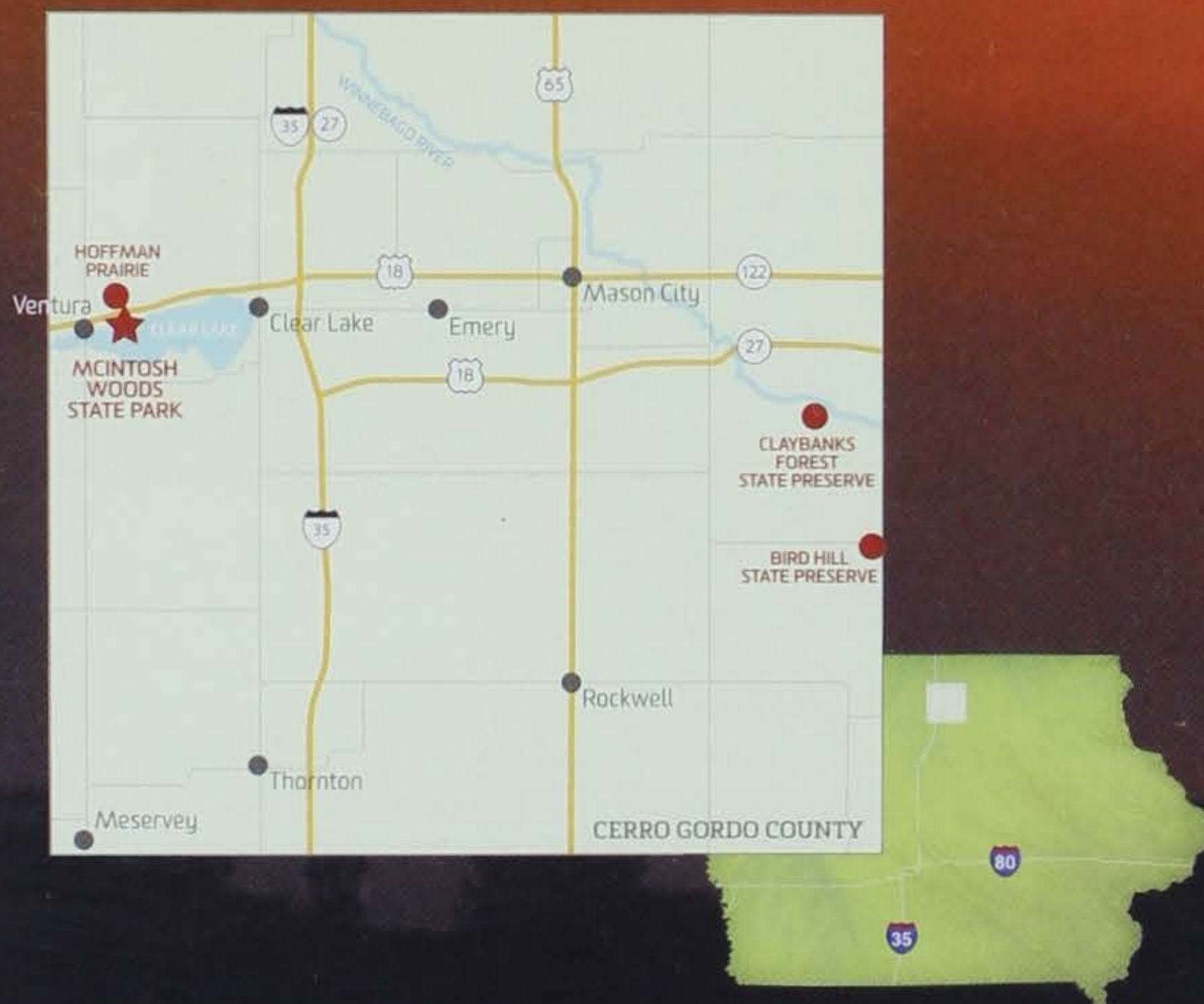
Initial water quality testing identified

ways to improve the lake. CLEAR has been implementing those changes in the past 10 years, including agricultural and urban watershed improvements, Ventura Marsh restoration and lake dredging. Lands are better managed to reduce and filter runoff that enters the lake. Dredging increased the depth of Little Lake from an average of 4 feet to between 10 and 30 feet deep now.

Grummer and the DNR worked to bring back fish species that were historically present: largemouth bass, crappies, bluegills. Part of that meant habitat grooming, and CLEAR successfully upped aquatic vegetation from the less than 5 percent that existed in the Little Lake in the 1980s. Historically, this portion of Clear Lake had 80 percent coverage with aquatic plants. Water clarity, now reaching 4 to 8 feet, is aiding the vegetation recovery.

Walleye fishing bustles in winter and summer. Shoreline fishing should be robust by spring 2013.

And that enjoyment of a clear natural lake? From the looks of things on a late spring day: maximum success.





Public access is a primary feature of McIntosh Woods State Park, *says Park Manager Tammy Domanoske.*

- Ventura has two large wildlife areas: McIntosh Wildlife Area (219 acres for hiking, birding and hunting) and Ventura Marsh Wildlife Area (west of the lake, encompassing 782 acres for hunting, kayaking and canoeing).
- The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation protects Ventura Cove on the lake's southwest corner (20 acres of timber with a paved bike trail that eventually leads to the Sisters' Prairie Bike Trail). Woodford-Ashland Lone Tree Point just across the channel south of McIntosh Peninsula (101 acres and 4,300 feet of undeveloped shoreline for picnicking, hiking, fishing, snowshoeing, all along a 1.5 mile loop trail).
- The Nature Conservancy has a tract called Clausen's Cove that runs right up to the Lone Tree Point Tract (250 acres with 2,750 feet of shoreline for hiking and fishing).



LEFT: The lakeside outdoor dining and tiki bar at PM Park make it a popular stop for visitors. ABOVE: After a day of fishing or boating, the downtown Clear Lake antique stores, eateries and specialty shops are a must-visit.

boats with names like *The Princess* and *The Zephyr* crisscrossed Clear Lake. (A sternwheeler ferry called *The Lady of the Lake* gives scenic cruises now.)

You can almost hear echoes of those heydays when Dick and Jean Bruner rev up their 1955 Century wooden boat called *Happy Days*.

"Most people up here have their first lake memory on a wooden boat," says Dick. He brought Jean on dates in the *Happy Days*, which belonged to a friend who sold it to him in 1977. They married and had five sons, and, like many boating families on Clear Lake, *Happy Days* has seen more birthdays and rowdy cousins than Dick and Jean can keep track of.

"We had six votes for a boat and one for carpeting," winks Jean as Dick rockets from a lakeside dock.

They like to stop at one of two lake restaurants—Rich's Muskie Lounge in Ventura, or PM Park just outside of Clear Lake, a former amusement park and summer camp run by a branch of the Odd Fellows whose history-loving owner hangs wooden boat photos on the walls.

Jean points out the Iowa National Heritage Foundation land along the lake's south side. Natural wedges of shoreline make boating here such a pleasure, she says. (See Sidebar Two).

The abundance of public lands may be why Clear Lake is a mellower vacation than its harder-partying counterpart,

Okoboji. Plus, there's always some family-friendly fun going on, from a Fourth of July fireworks-and-parade extravaganza to Christmas by the Lake. The renewed interest in water quality only adds to the sense of vitality.

"Small town America still exists here," says Jean. As Dick slices through the water with the bow of *Happy Days*, an American flag waves from the stern.

They motor past that hillside trail in McIntosh Woods State Park, bending bulrushes and cattails in their wake, healthy waters churning quietly with life, stirring up traces of Iowa history.

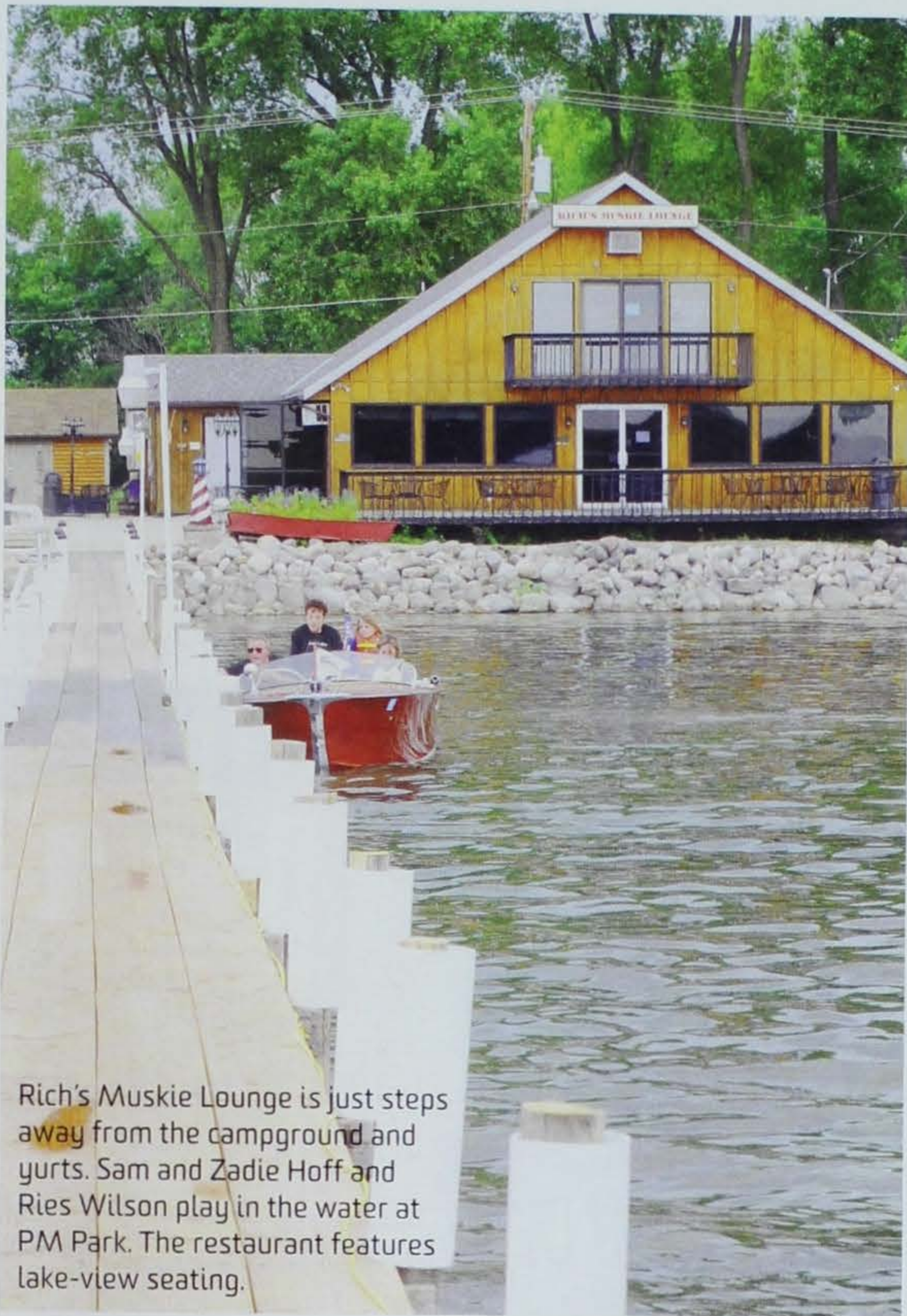
When you go

Food

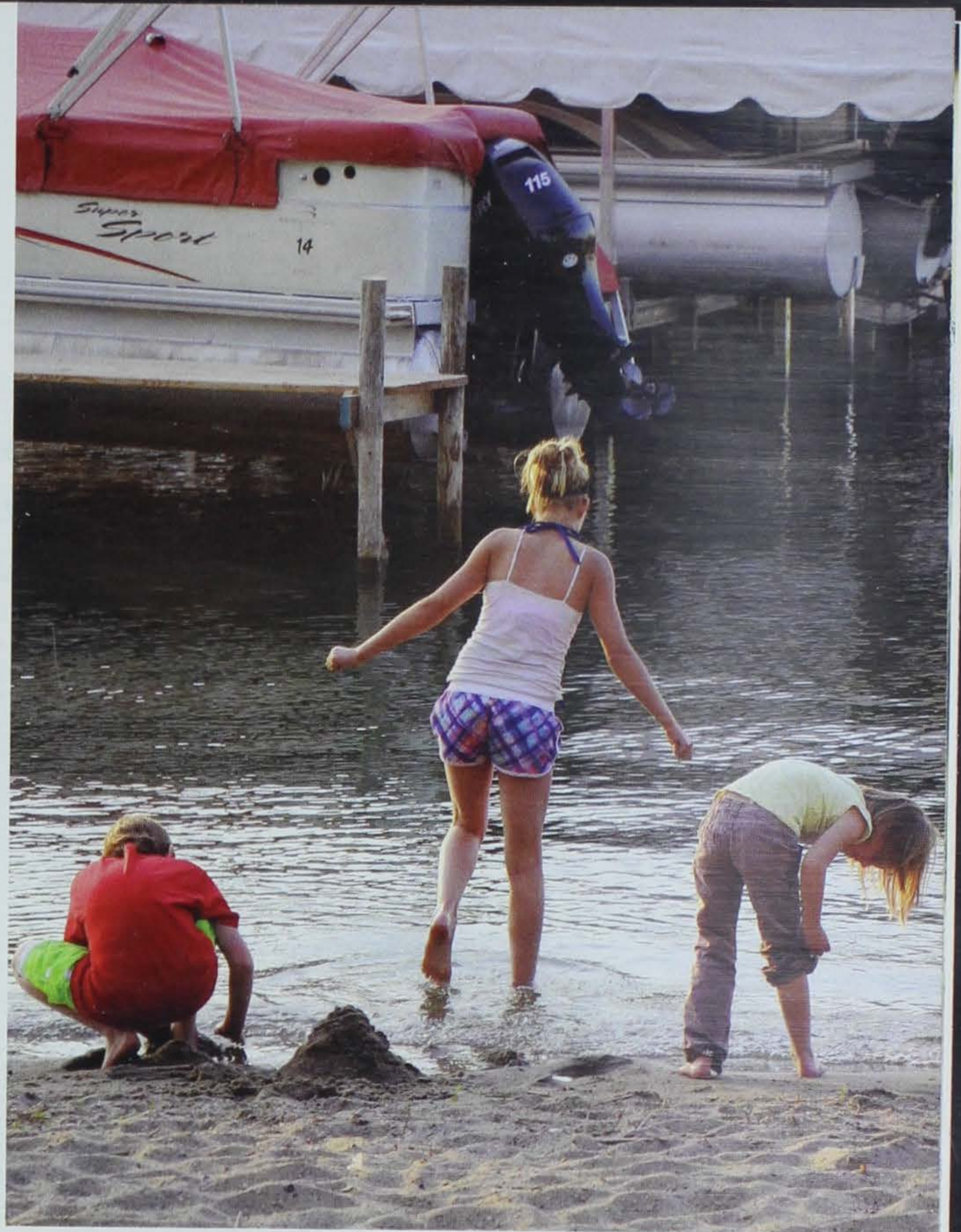
PM PARK. For the best lake ambiance, and a pretty sand beach to go with the history. Good eats. 15297 Raney Dr. May through Sept. call **641-357-1991**; Off season call **641-529-2222**. pmpark.net

GE-JO'S BY THE LAKE. In Clear Lake, an Italian restaurant overlooking the bandshell park, with an Astroturf dining area out front. 12 N. Third St. **641-357-8288**.

STARBOARD MARKET. A 13-year-old family-owned joint on



Rich's Muskie Lounge is just steps away from the campground and yurts. Sam and Zadie Hoff and Ries Wilson play in the water at PM Park. The restaurant features lake-view seating.



Clear Lake's Main Street, serving tasty sandwiches and soups, plus inventive sides such as cornbread salad with creamy sage dressing, or a simple strawberries and cream. Most things are house-made, and served on Fiestaware. 310 Main. [641-357-0660](tel:641-357-0660); starboardmarket.net

RICH'S MUSKIE LOUNGE. 702 E. Lake St., Ventura. [641-829-3850](tel:641-829-3850).

Activities

HOFFMAN PRAIRIE. Thirty-seven acres, off the shoulder of Balsam Avenue, two miles west of Clear Lake. Nature.org

BIRD HILL STATE PRESERVE AND CLAYBANKS FOREST STATE PRESERVE. A 56-acre forest with one acre of internationally known Devonian fossils in the soft limestone and shale along the Winnebago River. Some of the nation's best fossil collecting beds, and you keep what you pick. www.co.cerro-gordo.ia.us

WINNEBAGO RIVER PADDLING. Pretty paddling past ledges and limestone cliffs—some of which are right inside Mason City. In his book *Paddling Iowa*, waterways expert Nate Hoogeveen suggests paddling both the Winnebago and Shell Rock together in one weekend.

co.cerro-gordo.ia.us/Conservation/Conservation_recreational_FLYER_canoe_winnebago.pdf

RIVER CITY TOURS AND TAXI. Owner and U.S. Army Veteran James Kleven's pedal cab service offers an open-air ride through Mason City, highlighting Frank Lloyd Wright and Meredith Willson's "Music Man" history. A great way to see the area's hidden pleasures. \$20 per hour. [641-530-2067](tel:641-530-2067); facebook.com/RiverCityTourAndTaxi.

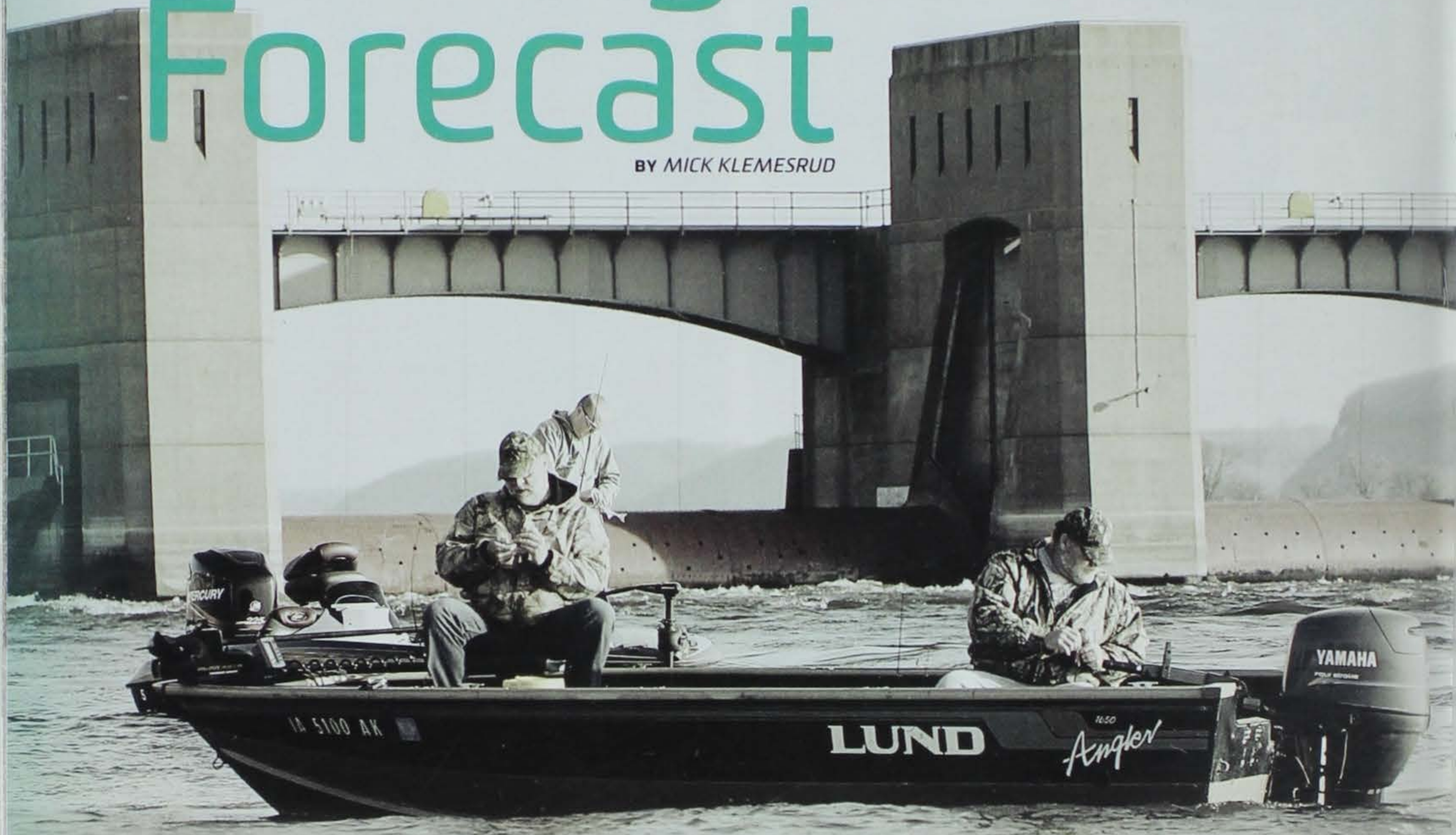
THE LADY OF THE LAKE. cruiseclearlake.com 🐾



Fishing Forecast

With renovated lakes, watershed improvements and excellent year classes, 2013 fishing will yield an angler's feast.

BY MICK KLEMESRUD



Mississippi River Fishing

You don't have to spend much time fishing in Iowa to understand that channel catfish are popular here, and that the Mississippi River is the best place to catch them.

The river has a huge population of channel catfish of all sizes, and fishing begins as soon as the ice goes out.

Catfish feed on shad that died in the backwaters over the winter. Dead shad drift out of shallow backwaters toward the main river making the mouth of the backwater a prime fishing location.

"Cut shad or sour shad is the best bait after ice out because that is what catfish are feeding on," says Bernie Schonhoff, fisheries biologist at Muscatine. "Then the

baits shift to night crawlers in the late spring, and then stink baits in summer."

In June, catfish spawn and associate with cavity areas, like cut banks, log jams or riprap. As summer rolls on, find catfish in log jams and stump fields.

As for equipment, Schonhoff says a medium heavy 6½ foot rod with 20 pound monofilament is a good set up for most channel catfishing situations.

"For the most part, catfish are not subtle biters, you know when you've got a strike," he says. "You need equipment that can get them out of stump fields or log jams."

PHOTO BY CLAY SMITH



Use the following charts to track the hot bite times of your favorite fish species by region. Make a photo copy of this collection of charts to keep with your fishing equipment.

LOCATION	FISH SPECIES	SPRING			SUMMER			FALL		
		MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Pool 9 <i>Harpers Ferry upstream to Genoa, Wis.</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Bluegill	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Crappie	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Pool 10 <i>Guttenberg upstream to Harpers Ferry</i>	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Sauger	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Black Bass	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Northern Pike	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Pool 11 <i>Dubuque upstream to Guttenberg</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Sauger	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Drum	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Bluegill	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Pool 12 <i>Bellevue upstream to Dubuque</i>	Bluegill	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Crappie	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Smallmouth Bass	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Pool 13 <i>Clinton upstream to Bellevue</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Crappie	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Drum	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Sauger	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Pool 14 <i>LeClaire upstream to Clinton</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	White Bass/Wiper	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Paddlefish	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Closed season. Only open from March 1 to April 15.					
Pool 15 <i>Rock Island, Ill. upstream to LeClaire</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Smallmouth Bass	Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Drum	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Pools 16-19 <i>Keokuk upstream to Rock Island, Ill.</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Crappie	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Sauger	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good

Excellent Fishing
 Good to Fair Fishing
 No Fishing

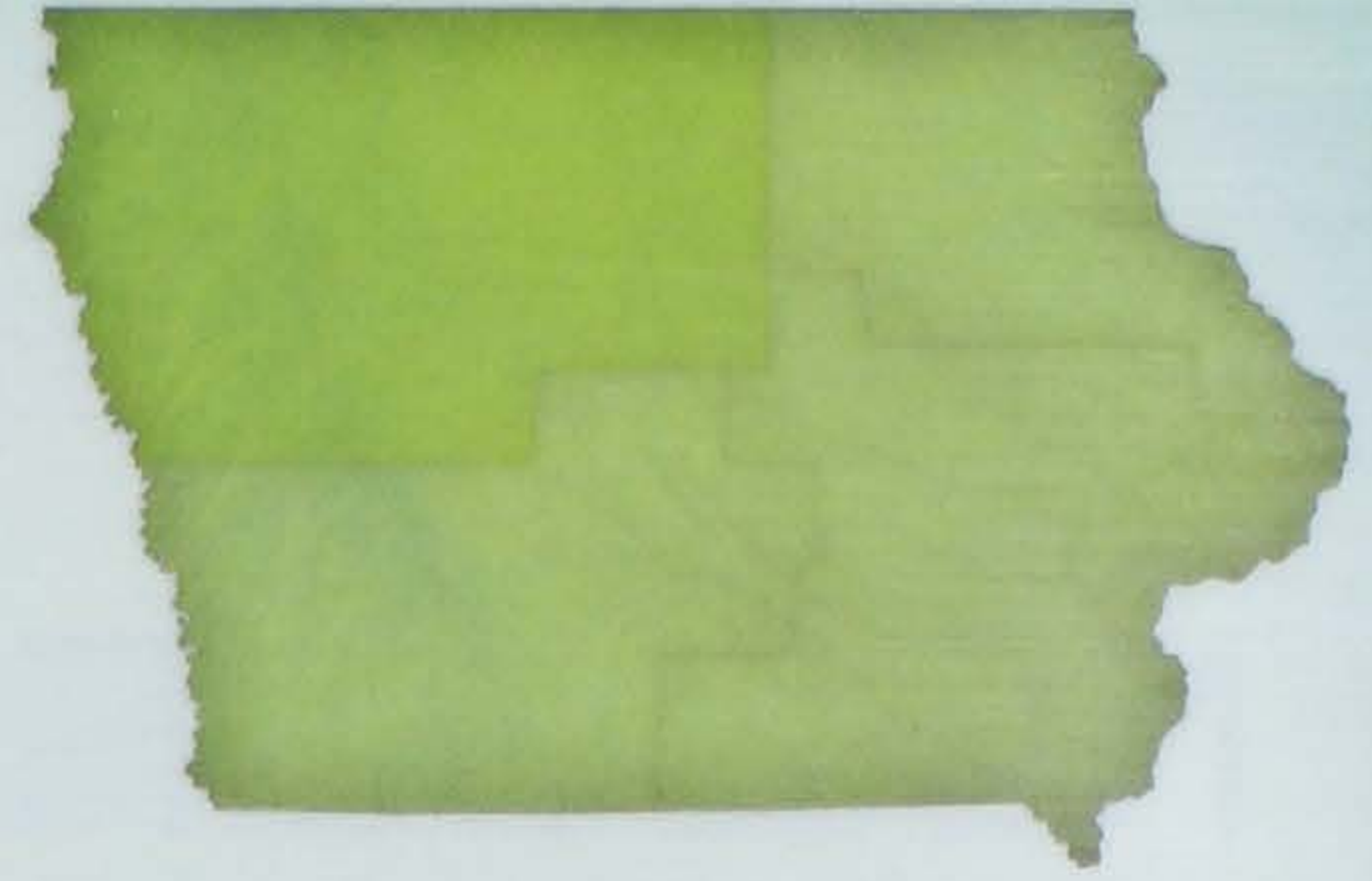
LOCATION	FISH SPECIES	SPRING			SUMMER			FALL		
		MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Clear Lake <i>Cerro Gordo County</i>	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Muskellunge	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Yellow Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Channel Catfish	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Lake Cornelia <i>Wright County</i>	Channel Catfish	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Yellow Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Crystal Lake <i>Hancock County</i>	Bluegill	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Largemouth Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Beeds Lake <i>Franklin County</i>	Black Crappie	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Largemouth Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Yellow Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

LOCATION	FISH SPECIES	SPRING			SUMMER			FALL		
		MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Storm Lake <i>Buena Vista County</i>	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Black Crappie	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	White Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Channel Catfish	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Browns Lake <i>Woodbury County</i>	Crappie	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Channel Catfish	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Bluegill	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Brushy Creek <i>Webster County</i>	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Largemouth Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Bluegill	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Crappie	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Little Sioux River <i>(near Linn Grove)</i> <i>Buena Vista County</i>	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Northern Pike	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Channel Catfish	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

LOCATION	FISH SPECIES	SPRING			SUMMER			FALL		
		MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Lost Island Lake <i>Palo Alto/Clay Counties</i>	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Channel Catfish	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Yellow Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Crappie	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Mill Creek Lake <i>O'Brien County</i>	Largemouth Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Bluegill	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Spirit Lake <i>Dickinson County</i>	Walleye	No Fishing	No Fishing	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Crappie	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Smallmouth Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Yellow Perch	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
West Okoboji <i>Dickinson County</i>	Walleye	No Fishing	No Fishing	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Bluegill	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Largemouth Bass	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	Muskellunge	No Fishing	No Fishing	No Fishing	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

■ Excellent Fishing
 ■ Good to Fair Fishing
 ■ No Fishing

NW Iowa Fishing



When a fish cleaning station can't keep up with angler demand, the fishing has to be hot. That's what Palo Alto County Conservation Board workers faced, who twice daily had to empty the 30-gallon barrel that served as the fish cleaning station at Lost Island Lake. The overworked station will be replaced this summer with one equipped with a grinder to meet demand.

Lost Island Lake is experiencing a surge in fishing as the lake responds to a \$1.2 million project that removed more than 1.25 million pounds of carp and buffalo, fixed the connected wetlands and installed barriers to keep them off limits to spawning carp.

With carp gone and wetlands working properly, the water quality improved and the fishery responded.

"People are no longer driving past Lost Island on the way to go fishing," says Jim Wahl, fisheries supervisor for northwest Iowa. "Our creel reports showed a significant number of anglers fishing the lake. The county conservation board is overwhelmed with the amount of recreation coming their way. They've had a 70 percent increase in campground receipts since the renovation, with visitors coming from 37 Iowa counties and nine states."

Lost Island Lake is becoming a player in the outdoor recreation field.

"We knocked the carp population back from about 400 pounds per acre to 50 pounds per acre and increased our walleye and largemouth bass stocking to feed on newly hatched carp to keep their numbers down," Wahl says.

"We are seeing aquatic vegetation return and as the

water continues to clear, we anticipate bluegills, crappies and largemouth bass numbers will increase as the lake continues to improve. It's encouraging to see how quickly water quality has improved and fish respond," he says. "We added a rock reef on the northeast side that has been a fish magnet. If you don't have a map, just look for the boats."

The 1,200-acre lake north of Ruthven is already producing excellent catches of yellow bass, walleyes, white bass and crappies.

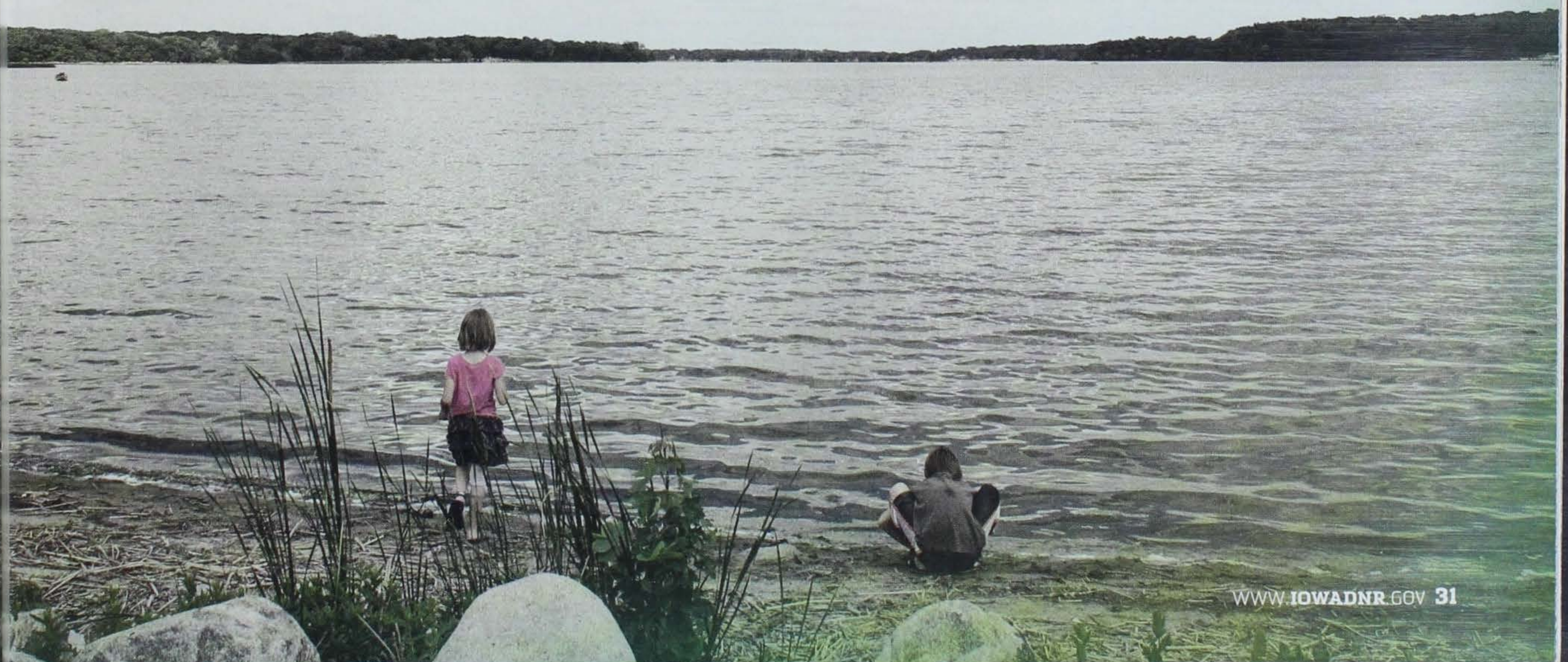
In April until early May, walleyes can be found close to the east shore in areas dominated by rock or cobble. Use a jig and minnow, lighted bobber or hair jig tipped with a minnow in the evening and fish shallow.

Mid-May means yellow bass start to feed. "Anyone can bring a five gallon bucket here, fill it with yellow bass and not feel bad about doing it," Wahl says. Use a 1/32 ounce jig with cutbait or a piece of night crawler on the bottom on the east shore in areas with rock, gravel or sand.

June is the best month for all species, but for walleyes, fish from a boat with a bottom bouncer and a spinner blade tipped with a crawler and either drift or troll.

Crappies get active in the small area west of the bridge and there are high numbers of 9- to 10-inch fish. White bass and northern pike round out the fishery.

The lake has two boat ramps, a campground and a local bait shop. A lake map is available at www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Wheretofish.aspx. More information is available locally at www.ruthvenlostisland.com and from Palo Alto County Conservation at www.paccb.org/



NE Iowa Fishing



Iowa's trout country offers fishing for all skill levels on streams that have wild brown trout and hatchery-raised rainbow or brook trout. And you will find scenery found nowhere else in the state with steep narrow valleys, forested hill slopes and clear spring creeks.

"The fractured limestone dominated landform in northeast Iowa is not one that supports lakes or ponds very well so we put a lot of effort into our streams and rivers," says Mike Steuck, northeast regional fisheries supervisor. "Our goal has been to enhance and expand fishable trout waters by improving water quality, upland land management and instream habitat."

The 11-county region is reaping benefits from work that began decades ago to help Iowa trout streams reach their full potential.

Partnering with private landowners, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, county conservation boards, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the EPA, and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship on farming and conservation practices has reduced sediment and nutrients entering streams.

Improving stream habitat with bankhides, streambank stabilization projects and improved stream flow structure was made possible by partnerships with Trout Unlimited, Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association, county conservation boards and private landowners.

Those past projects, coupled with continuing efforts, have expanded trout waters and increased the number of streams with self sustaining populations from six in 1980 to 36 today. Another 30 streams exhibit inconsistent reproduction that may be self sustaining as improvements are completed.

With excellent trout fishing available, Steuck offers a few streams that provide different fishing experiences.

He notes Ensign and Hewitt creeks, in the Ensign Hollow Wildlife Management Area, have naturally reproducing population of brown trout from 2 to 20 inches, and it has an artificial lure only restriction that makes the stream challenging to fish.

Bankston Creek in Bankston Park, Richmond Springs in Backbone State Park and Sny Magill in the North Cedar/Sny Magill Wildlife Management Area have wild brown trout and are stocked with catchable brook and rainbow trout. Sny Magill has several accesses for a solitary experience and a universally accessible fishing area for people with limited mobility.

Trout River, five miles east of Decorah, is a smaller stream that requires more technique for the fly or spinner angler, but there are no restrictions on live bait. It has naturally reproducing brown trout, and is stocked with catchable brook and rainbow trout.

North Bear Creek has high quality springs flowing into it and supports more than 1,100 fish per mile. It has naturally reproducing brown trout and a lot of public access.



Fishing techniques vary from small splitshot, plain hook and piece of night crawler (or marshmallow, corn or cheese) drifting in the current to 1/32 ounce hair-jigs in brown, olive, black or yellow, to spinners or flies.

Bait shops are available in the region and campers may set up in an established campground or grab their tent and head to any Iowa wildlife area for a really primitive and solo experience.

Iowa trout streams can be fished all year long and provide excellent fishing opportunities even when not stocked.



LOCATION	FISH SPECIES	SPRING			SUMMER			FALL		
		MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Lake Hendricks	Bluegill	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Lake Meyer <i>Winneshiek County</i>	Crappie	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Largemouth Bass	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Upper Iowa River <i>Winneshiek/Allamakee</i>	Smallmouth Bass	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Suckers	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Turkey River	Walleye	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Volga Lake	Channel Catfish	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
North Bear Creek	Brown Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Sny Magill Creek	Rainbow Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Trout River	Brook Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Casey Lake <i>Tama County</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Largemouth Bass	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Bluegill	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Crappie	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
George Wyth Lake <i>Black Hawk County</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Largemouth Bass	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Bluegill	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Crappie	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Northern Pike	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Cedar River <i>Multiple Counties</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Smallmouth Bass	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Walleye	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Northern Pike	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Suckers	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Shell Rock River <i>Multiple Counties</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Smallmouth Bass	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Walleye	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Suckers	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Fountain Springs <i>Delaware County</i>	Rainbow Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Brook Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Brown Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Ensign Hollow	Brown Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Spring Branch Creek <i>Delaware County</i>	Brown Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Brook Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Rainbow Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good

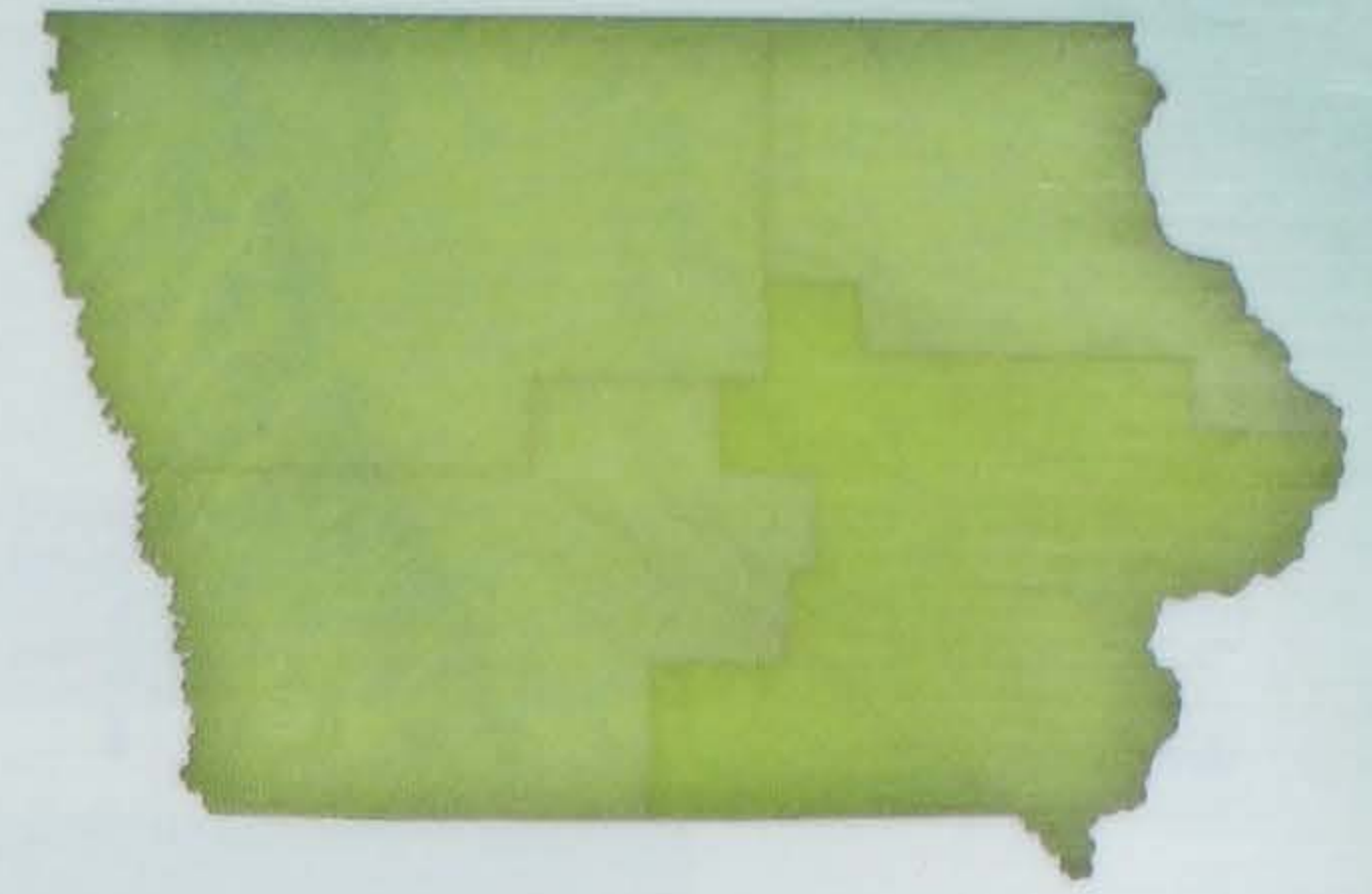
 Excellent Fishing
 Good to Fair Fishing

Lake Hendricks - *Howard County*, Turkey River - *Clayton County*, Volga River - *Fayette County*, N. Bear Cr - *Winneshiek County*,
 Sny Magill Cr - *Clayton County*, Trout River - *Winneshiek County*, Ensign Hollow - *Clayton County*

LOCATION	FISH SPECIES	SPRING			SUMMER			FALL		
		MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
SE Iowa Farm Ponds	Bluegill		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Largemouth Bass		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Channel Catfish		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Big Hollow Lake <i>Des Moines County</i>	Bluegill		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Crappie		Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Largemouth Bass		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Channel Catfish		Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Lake Belva Deer <i>Keokuk County</i>	Bluegill		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Redear Sunfish		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Crappie		Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Largemouth Bass		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Channel Catfish		Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Rathbun Reservoir <i>Appanoose County</i>	Walleye			Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Good
	Crappie		Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Channel Catfish	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Lake Macbride <i>Johnson County</i>	Walleye		Excellent	Excellent	Good			Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Crappie		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Largemouth Bass			Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Wiper					Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Coralville Reservoir <i>Johnson County</i>	Crappie	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Channel Catfish	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Wiper			Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Red Haw Lake <i>Lucas County</i>	Largemouth Bass	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Bluegill	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Lake Geode <i>Henry County</i>	Bluegill		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Redear Sunfish		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Crappie		Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Largemouth Bass		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Channel Catfish		Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Lake Odessa <i>Louisa County</i>	Bluegill		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Crappie		Good	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Largemouth Bass		Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Channel Catfish		Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Lake Wapello <i>Davis County</i>	Channel Catfish	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Largemouth Bass	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Diamond Lake <i>Poweshiek County</i>	Crappie		Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Bluegill		Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
	Largemouth Bass		Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Lower Albia Res. <i>Monroe County</i>	Bluegill	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good

 Excellent Fishing
 Good to Fair Fishing

SE Iowa Fishing



Parking lots are getting more crowded as word spreads about excellent fishing at Big Hollow Lake, five miles north of Burlington.

Construction on the 178-acre lake was finished in 2008. By spring 2009, it filled to full pool and was stocked with bluegill, largemouth bass, channel catfish and redear sunfish. Black crappies were added in 2010 and muskellunge in spring 2012.

"There's a lot of fish in there," says Steve Waters, southeast district fisheries supervisor. "The fish are growing like gang-busters and people are going to the lake in big numbers.

"This is a high quality system that will produce exceptional fishing for years and years to come," Waters says. "This is the type of lake we like to build—a smaller watershed, more steep lake basin, less erodible soil types and the local conservation board controls most of the watershed to protect the lake."

Those factors will lead to high water quality and better fishing.

"This lake is loaded with habitat. Lots of trees were left, and rock piles, spawning beds, armored islands with rip-rap, catfish hotels (pallet beds), culverts and brush piles were added," he says.

The lake fishery has quality sizes and lots of them, which is typical of a new lake. Bluegills are a robust 8 inches plus, crappies are pushing 10 to 11 inches, channel catfish are up to 18 inches and there are lots of 15-inch largemouth bass with some 3- to 4-pounders.

The lake has a few fishing jetties, but it is best fished from a boat.

"Shore fishing can be really good around the jetties, but a boat provides access to the majority of the lake and allows you to move to find active fish," Waters notes.

For bluegills and crappies, Waters says cast a 1/32-ounce bubblegum jig tipped with a 1-inch paddletail body around woody structure, allow the lure to slowly drop until just out of sight and then begin a slow and steady retrieve. Don't lift the jig from the water too early as fish will often strike next to the gunnels. Vertically jigging around woody cover can also produce fish.

To catch channel catfish, use chicken liver or night crawlers under a bobber. Channel catfish will come near shore in June to spawn so shallow areas next to brush piles are good areas to fish. There are numerous catfish hotels in 8 feet of water or less.

Big Hollow Lake offers two unique fishing opportunities—one for redear sunfish and the other for muskies. Although large muskies won't be showing up anytime soon, redears are turning up right now.

Redear sunfish are not as numerous as their cousin the bluegill, and need to be fished a little differently.

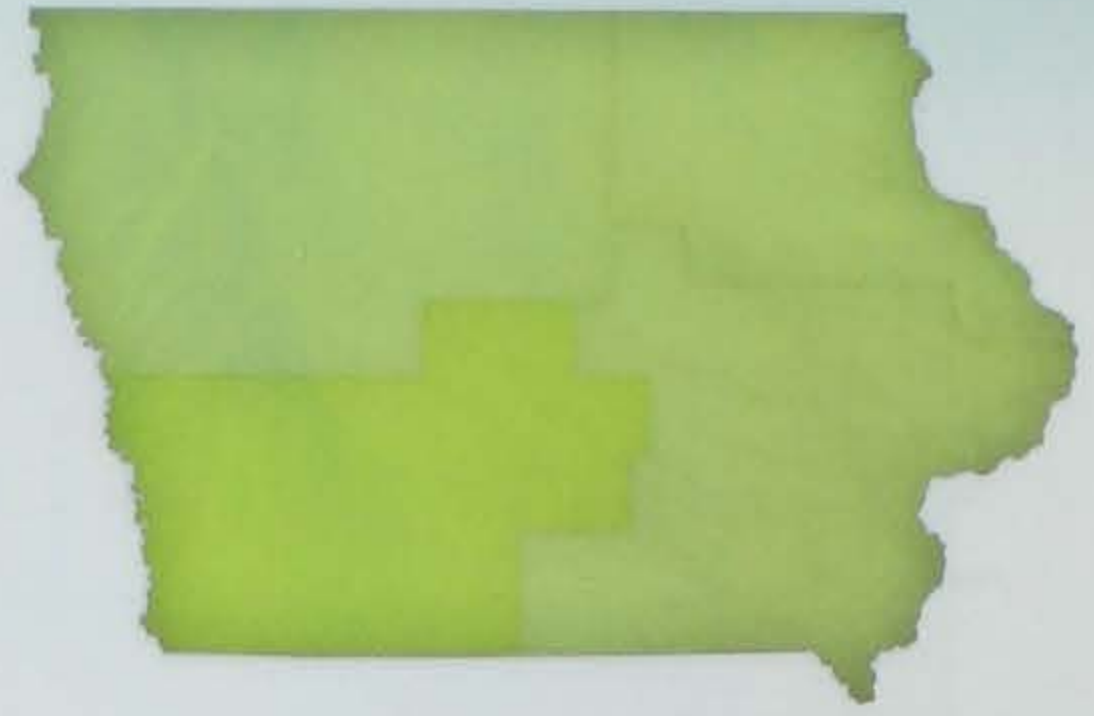
Redears are bottom oriented fish. Part of their diet is snails, so fish just off the bottom or in weed beds with ice flies, tipped with a small piece of worm or grub. Snails are not quick so don't move the bait much.

Big Hollow Lake is part of the larger recreation area that offers modern camping, a shooting range and hiking trails. Bait shops are available nearby in West Burlington.

More information, including a lake map with GPS coordinates for habitat, is listed on the Des Moines County Conservation Board at www.dmccconservation.com.



SW Iowa Fishing



Twelve Mile Lake will provide excellent overall fishing again this year, but 2013 will be the year of the crappie.

Seven years after the lake was drained to eliminate a stunted yellow bass and carp population, and to fix a water supply valve, Twelve Mile Lake has returned as the top lake in southwest Iowa for bluegills, crappies, largemouth bass, walleyes and channel catfish, plus master angler-sized bullheads.

But it's crappies are the main attraction.

"We are going to have absolutely phenomenal crappie fishing here," says Chris Larson, southwest district fisheries supervisor. "We had good numbers of harvestable size fish in 2012 and these have grown an inch since then. The best time to target crappies is during the spawn. Anywhere there is rock will hold spawning crappies."

The action peaks around May 15. After the spawn and continuing through fall, crappies will target flooded timber or brush piles.

Larson suggests either small natural colored feather jigs or tube jigs and only uses a bobber if it's windy. Keep the line at 4 pound test or lighter.

"Don't set the hook too hard. Just lift the rod tip. They're called papermouths for a reason," he says.

Twelve Mile Lake's 640 acres is heavy on habitat that was added during its renovation.

The lake received rock reefs, dirt mounds, brush piles, near shore spawning beds and rock fields that hold fish all year. Habitat is marked with GPS coordinates available on lake maps giving first time anglers an opportunity to catch a lot of fish.

Twelve Mile Lake is more than just crappies, it has a good population of walleyes measuring up to 25 inches and good fishing begins around the last week of March

during the spawn.

Rocks attract walleyes and the fish will be shallow. The face of the dam and rocky points attract the most walleyes.

Use a 1/16 to 1/8 ounce pink jig head and white twister or plain jig with a chartreuse body and fish in 2 to 6 feet of water. Another option is to pitch shallow running crankbaits parallel to the shore.

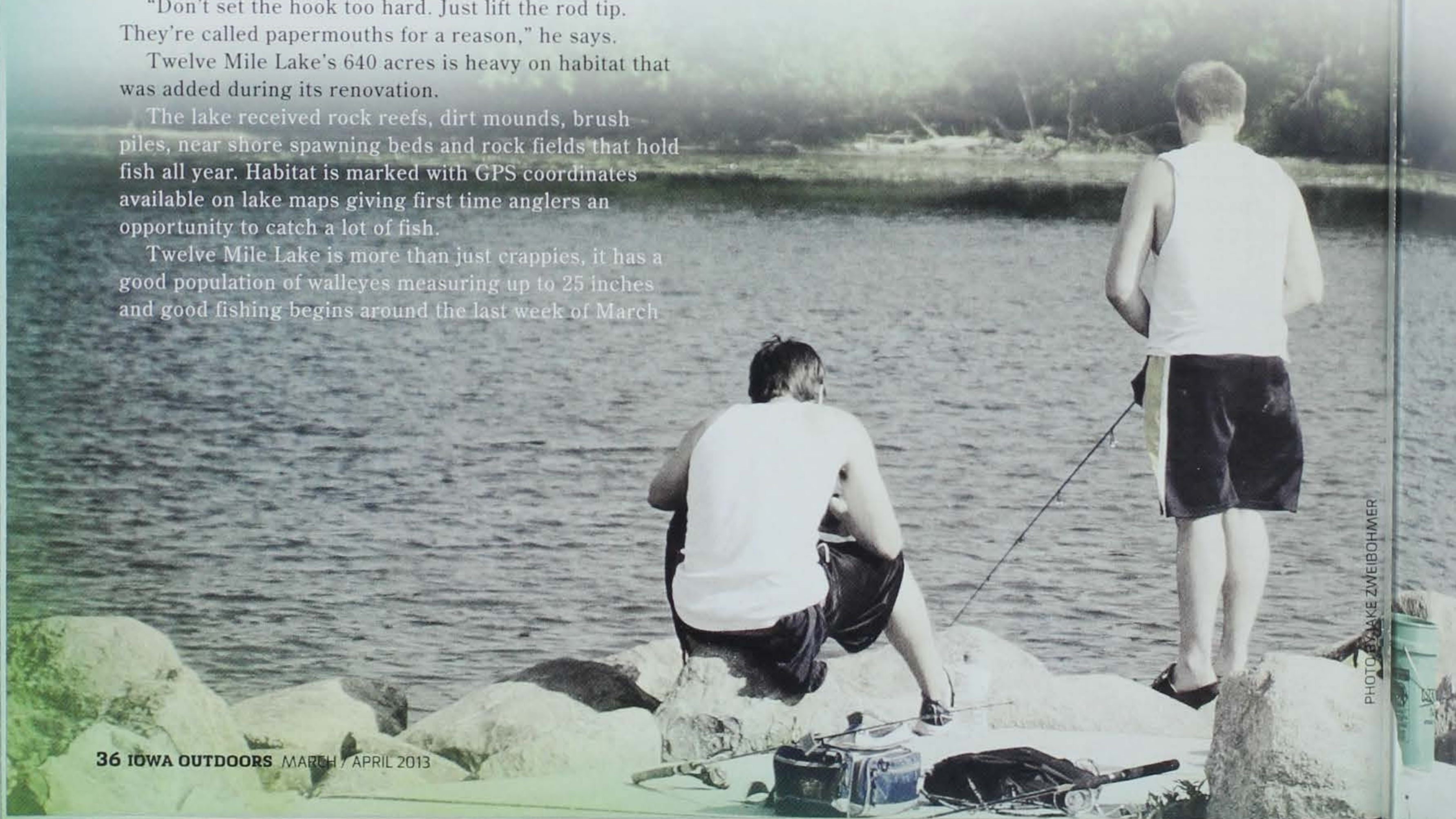
The walleye bite stops in mid April but returns in May when they can be found searching for a meal after resting up from spawning activity. Fish rock piles with a jig and either a crawler or minnow. In June, use a slip bobber over rock piles in 6, 10 or 15 feet of water.

If it's largemouth bass, channel catfish, bluegills or bullheads you're after, Larson says Twelve Mile is also the lake for you.

"The quality and abundance of all fish in Twelve Mile Lake right now is excellent," Larson said. "Structure will hold fish and we put all kinds of structure in the lake to provide lots of places to fish."

Bait shops are available in Creston and Afton.

Camp at nearby Three Mile Lake and Green Valley State Park. 🐾



LOCATION	FISH SPECIES	SPRING			SUMMER			FALL		
		MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Red Rock Lake <i>Marion County</i>	Crappie			Excellent	Excellent				Excellent	Excellent
	Channel Catfish				Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent		
	White Bass			Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent			
Roberts Creek Lake <i>Marion County</i>	Crappie		Excellent	Excellent						
	Largemouth Bass			Excellent					Good	Good
Saylorville Lake <i>Polk County</i>	Walleye			Excellent						
	White Bass			Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent			
	Wiper			Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent			
Beaver Lake	Crappie		Excellent	Excellent						
Des Moines River <i>Multiple Counties</i>	Walleye	Excellent	Excellent							
	Channel Catfish	Excellent			Excellent	Good	Good			
	Flathead Catfish	Excellent			Excellent	Good	Good			
	White Bass			Excellent	Excellent					
Big Creek Lake	Bluegill			Excellent	Excellent					
Hickory Grove Lake	Bluegill			Excellent	Excellent					
Lake Ahquabi <i>Warren County</i>	Bluegill			Excellent	Excellent					
	Redear Sunfish			Excellent	Good					
Ada Hayden	Trout	Good	Good	Good	Good					Excellent

Excellent Fishing
 Good to Fair Fishing

Beaver Lake - *Dallas County*, Big Creek Lake - *Polk County*, Hickory Grove Lake - *Story County*, Ada Hayden - *Story County*






Mighty Mousers

Plains pocket mice are among Iowa's smallest, but finding them is huge news. Listed as endangered in Iowa since 1996, they have only been seen sporadically in three decades, most recently at Folsom Point Preserve.

BY MINDY KRALICEK PHOTOS BY CLAY SMITH

MOUSE PHOTO, LOWER RIGHT, BY MINDY KRALICEK



Simply finding the endangered pocket mouse (below, right) for study is half the battle. More often, researchers catch the more common white-footed deer mouse (right), and western harvest mouse, similar in appearance to the pocket mouse.

“Plains pocket mice

get their name from cheek pouches in which they carry seeds back to their burrows,” says Jeremy White, assistant visiting professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. “The pouches are not inside the mouth cavity—they are dry, fur-lined pouches along the face. The food is isolated from the mouth, giving the mouse an advantage in a dry climate—no loss of moisture to the food it collects and stores for later use.”

White and his research students set traps at eight suitable sites in the Loess Hills and discovered plains pocket mice at three: Folsom Point Preserve just south of Council Bluffs, Hitchcock Nature Center in Pottawattamie County and Turin Preserve in Monona County. The largest population was captured at Folsom Point Preserve.

“This is the third year we’ve trapped pocket mice at this site,” explains White. “In 2009 we caught 16 pocket mice in three days, and I thought, ‘This is going to be easy.’ But since 2011, we’ve only caught one, two or three maximum at a time, making data gathering more difficult.”

Up until 2010, researchers have merely been trying to find pocket mice, *Perognathus flavescens*, looking for them in places where they had been seen decades before. With White’s find, he can turn his attention to other aspects of their behavior and natural history.

“After two years, we’ve figured out they like slopes where vegetation is sparse and patches of bare soil are present. I am interested in the distribution and natural history of these unique





Dr. Jeremy White, assisting visiting professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and research assistant Suzi Grotelueschen check traps and collect data on their captures in search of the plains pocket mouse. Now that a small population has been discovered in the Loess Hills of western Iowa, White now turns his attention from simply finding them to other aspects of their behavior and natural history (plains pocket mice have also been found at the Big Sand Mound Preserve in Muscatine County). The mouse is named for pouches located outside the mouth cavity, which gives it an advantage in drier times by preventing moisture loss to the food it collects and stores for later use. The pouch of the plains pocket mouse at right was filled with oats.

animals, and would like to investigate their food storage behaviors and how these behaviors might influence their habitat. Are they simply seed predators? Or, do they act as seed dispersers by storing seeds in scatter hoards and not retrieving all of the seeds—similar to kangaroo rats in western deserts and semi-arid grasslands? We haven't been able to catch many mice lately to start the research."

Most plains pocket mice are captured on slopes where burrows are observed, but they might burrow in other areas as well. One was trapped at the base of a hill. Sometimes researchers found oats from trap bait in their cheek pouches. Only one trapped individual had full cheek pouches—hers were filled with purpletop.

"That grass only grows at the base of the hills, so we know that pocket mouse left the slope to forage for food," says White.

Previous research had not touched on the autumn activities of pocket mice in this region. White's mission with his students in autumn 2010 was to find out their activities and when they become seasonally dormant—inactive on the surface and remain in their burrows—for the cold weather. During dormancy plains pocket mice likely hibernate, but rouse periodically to feed.

"We had 34 captures of plains pocket mice from September through Nov. 7 in 2010, and then the ground froze and our traps were empty after that. All the individuals captured in autumn were not reproductively active," reports White. "We concluded they were not mating in autumn, but focused on gathering seeds.

"Because their weight remained in the same range, despite the amounts of food they appeared to be harvesting, we think they cache seeds to eat when they wake up during their winter torpor.

"Our research, along with that of

researchers in nearby states, has led us to suspect that plains pocket mice continue to forage until the ground freezes and that is what triggers them to go dormant in northern parts of their range," finishes White.

First catch of 2012: Two males, May 10


Under a clear sky with temperatures in the mid-80s, White and Kelley Penney, a new graduate of the University of Nebraska's biology department, park their cars along a gravel road and pull on hiking boots. Juggling water bottles, a backpack and a 10-gallon terrarium, they climb over a gate and begin a quarter-mile walk to the southern edge of Folsom Point Preserve. There the loess hills rise 40 to 50 feet above the grassy floor.

"We are headed to a U-shaped ridge where we've had the best luck catching pocket mice in our traps," points out White.

White is in his mid-30s and wears a full beard, a bright red T-shirt, green cotton pants and a grey cap. His skin is bronze from research time spent outdoors. His jaunt is energetic and the camaraderie between he and Penney is evident in their chatter. Penney is trying for a graduate research position with hopes of conducting research in Australia. White has research ideas for her at Folsom Point. The laughter is easy as they relate past trapping experiences.

Climbing the west side of the loess hills at Folsom Point Preserve isn't easy. The steep slopes provide footing only on the occasional deer trail; the deep-rooted grasses are used for balance and to pull upward. Among emerging leadplant and a few stalks of purple-pink beardtongue, clumps of big and little bluestem grasses





swish noisily in the brisk wind. The wake of pant legs provides an opportunity for ticks to board a host.

Of 80 traps, 14 mice were caught during the night before: 12 western harvest mice (*Reithrodontomys megalotis*) and two plains pocket mice. One harvest mouse and the two plains pocket mice were held for release.

A hot pink flag marks the spot where the first pocket mouse was trapped with the enticement of oatmeal flakes. The mouse is weighed and measured and checked for sex and reproductive condition (this one is a male). White pushes back each cheek pouch to show its furry lining and reveal what may be stored there. Both pouches are empty.

Penney searches nearby for fresh burrows as White lines the terrarium with soil and pieces of leadplant and bluestem and then places the first pocket mouse inside it for photo opportunities.

The pocket mouse immediately begins to chirp—sounding more like a balloon being rubbed than a mouse squeaking. After checking out the perimeter of the terrarium, he tries jumping out, but falls far short.

Although about the same size as the western harvest mouse with similar proportions, the pocket mouse has small ears that lie against its head.

“The pocket mice here have darker fur with a lot of yellow-orange in their coats, more than that of other plains

pocket mice I’ve seen,” says White. “At White Sands National Monument in New Mexico, pocket mice are very white. In the Sandhills of Nebraska they are light-colored. Iowa is at the eastern periphery of their range.

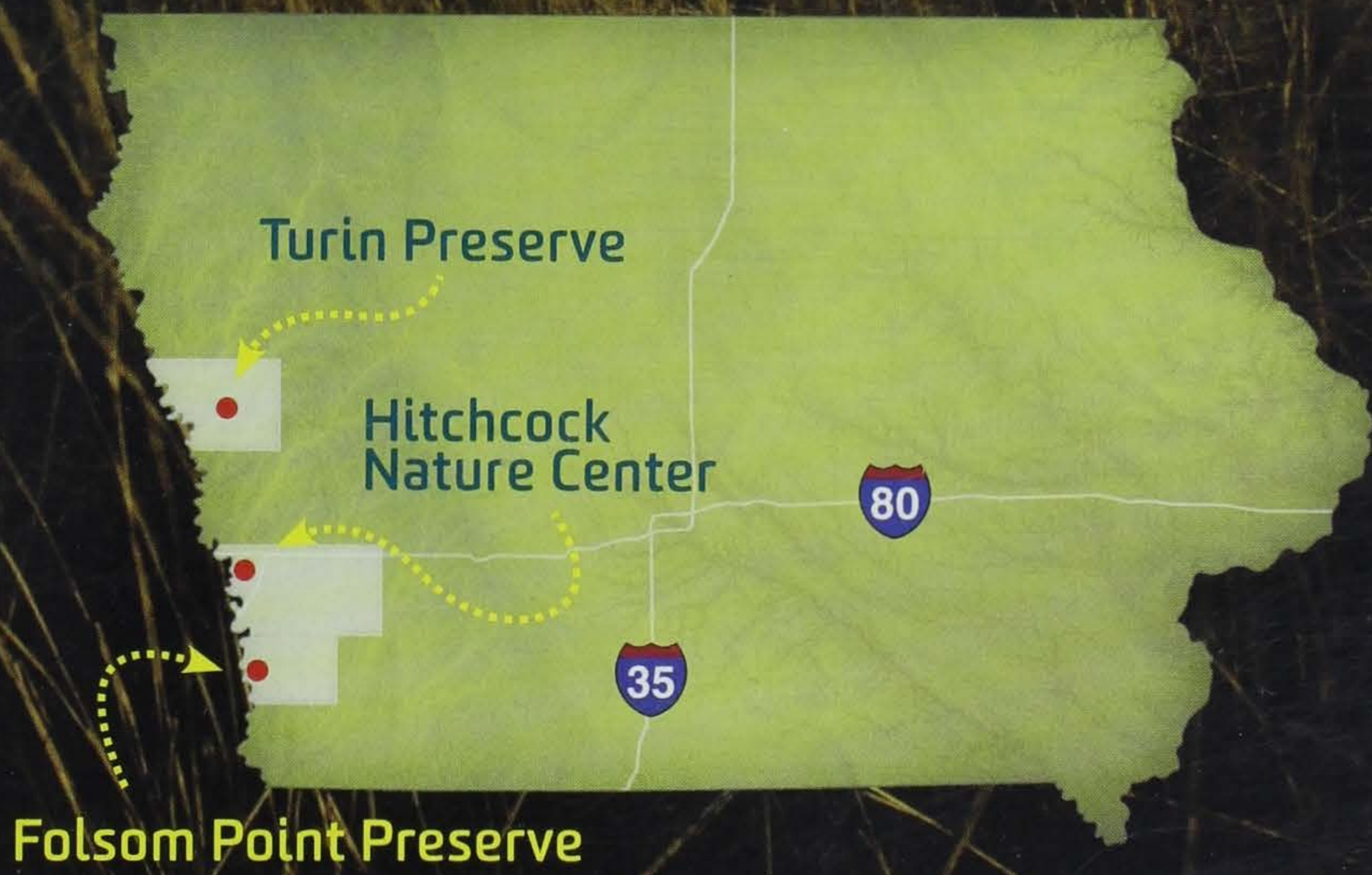
“A study that would be interesting to do in the Loess Hills is to put a fluorescent powder on the mice before they are released. Then researchers could come back at night with a black light and follow the fluorescent powder to see where the mice have been, what seeds they have been gathering, and where they have stored seeds,” he adds.

“I’d like to learn if populations of plains pocket mice are isolated at certain prairie sites in the Loess Hills or whether some of these populations are connected. Because they seem to use the bases of hills to some extent, perhaps they also use lowland prairies or agricultural fields as dispersal corridors to other upland prairie sites.”

The pocket mouse is photographed and released from the terrarium. With no persuasion, he immediately runs under a clump of grass and is gone.

White and Penney continue up the hill to a very narrow ridge less than a foot across. On the east side of the ridge, rough-leaved dogwood and sumac crowd their way to the top. The view is expansive and includes the

Folsom Point Preserve at twilight, April 2012. The largest population of plains pocket mice was discovered on the southern tip of the preserve.



Folsom Point Preserve

Bunge Oilseed Processing and MidAmerican Energy facilities, a line of railroad tracks, Interstate 29 transects the land and patterns of farm fields. A gray haze lingers across the far horizon.

Turning back to the task on the western slope, it's easier looking down to find the next pink flag that marks the location to release the western harvest mouse. Removed from the trap, this male's fur is much redder and ruddier than that of the pocket mouse. His large thin ears have an orange blaze at their base, characteristic of this species. White cups his hands around the mouse on the ground to calm him before releasing him. When the hands lift, the mouse poses quietly for 20 seconds or so and soundlessly slips away in the grass.

At the next release point, the other pocket mouse is noisy and jumpy. He jumps halfway up the terrarium sides, checks the perimeter for an escape hole and then digs in the dirt and hides dead-still under a leadplant. This time Penney has found a burrow nearby to watch to see if he will head in that direction upon release. But the pocket mouse skitters downhill with White fast on his tail. White loses him in an instant, but parts through the plants about 15 feet below Penney looking for a fresh burrow. None is found.

Do mice deliberately mislead predators and double back? Another possible research project might be pocket mouse survival strategies.

Pocket mice and prairie burns

Since the restored prairies and remnant prairies at Folsom Point Preserve are burned every three to five years in rotation to keep down woody encroachment, White is interested in finding out how fire affects small mammal communities.

"Will the pocket mice dig in or leave their burrows during burns? If they move, will they return when plants regrow or stay at the new location? Does fire have an important role in their habitat use?" ponders White.

The trail back

Leaving Folsom Point Preserve behind with its clear sky, steep hills and basic life struggles, White and Penney climb in their vehicles and return to their homes, spouses and children until their next academic pursuit. The small mammals that live in secret burrows behind a plug of friable soil will keep bringing White back and he'll entice more students to learn about and protect the creatures of the Loess Hills.

With Iowa at the eastern extent of their range, populations of plains pocket mice seem to be more uncommon and farther apart in the Loess Hills. Much of their prairie habitat has vanished. As people recognize the loss of rare landforms and the animals that inhabit

these, perhaps intervention to save these unique habitats will allow a revival of these creatures and a greater understanding of human responsibility in the web of life.

Other prairie animal catches

Another rare-to-Iowa species, the Great Plains skink (*Eumeces obsoletus*), calls Folsom Point Preserve home and the pocket mice researchers captured one in their traps in 2011. The skink has black and white dots on its lips, head and neck, and rows of dots along its body and legs. Juveniles have bright blue tails, but the captured skink does not have a blue tail, so it was an adult. Great Plains skinks are about 2.5 inches long upon hatch and can grow to 14 inches. Skinks, too, are burrowers, but prefer rocks or logs to dig under. They rely on speed to escape when they are out and about and can be mistaken for snakes as they move in a serpentine way when they run. They are not a threat to plains pocket mice as insects, spiders and caterpillars are their food of choice.

Snakes are plentiful on the floor of the Loess Hills. White picked up pieces of corrugated metal laying near the preserve entrance and found a ringneck snake (*Diadophis*





SNAKES, MOUSE ENTRANCE AND WOLF SPIDER
PHOTOS BY MINDY KRALICEK; MOUSE PHOTO
BY JEREMY WHITE; LANDSCAPE PHOTO BY JEFF
GREWE; SKINK PHOTO BY SUZI GROTELUESCHEN

While in search of the plains pocket mouse (left) White and his team have found plains garter snakes (far left), eastern garter snakes (middle), wolf spiders, ringneck snakes and Great Plains skinks (top), among others, at Folsom Point Preserve and other locations in the Loess Hills. The wolf spider is carrying its young on her back until they are old enough to hunt on their own. The plains garter snake is distinguished from its eastern cousin by the dark, vertical stripes on the lower jaw.

punctatus), a plains garter snake (*Thamnophis radix*) and an eastern garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*). The difference in garter snakes is easy to see by their markings. All three snakes were docile when held, but some eastern garter snakes can be aggressive. All three will release a bad-smelling odor if attacked, and the ringneck snake demonstrated that fact. Garter snakes catch and eat mice. The ringneck snake may eat newborn mice, but not adults.

Other species caught at Folsom Point Preserve during this research included prairie voles (*Microtus ochrogaster*), white-footed deer mice (*Peromyscus leucopus*), northern short-tailed shrews (*Blarina brevicauda*) and house mice (*Mus musculus*). 🐭




DING DARLING, Iowa Conservation Legend

BY JOE WILKINSON

Ding Darling's life was a rollercoaster—mostly up, seldom down. Perhaps the best known political cartoonist ever, Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling was awarded two Pulitzer Prizes during an amazing, influential career. He was also an extensive traveler, and was the image, the conscience, the life of conservation for half a century. Now—a half century after his death—people are asking who will be our next conservation giants, and when will they step forward.

Not bad for an Iowa boy. OK, he wasn't a native. Born in Michigan, his preacher father moved the family to Sioux City when Ding was 8. His formative years and his career, though, were based in Iowa—the Missouri River wetlands and later, in his downtown corner office at the *Des Moines Register and Leader*.

His accomplishments still raise 21st century eyebrows. He didn't just ruffle feathers. He could subtly yank out a few, but he kept his eye on the goal, be it wetlands for

A photograph of an artist's workspace. In the upper right, a spiral-bound notepad with a textured, light brown cover is open. Below it, several brushes with wooden handles and dark bristles are scattered. Two tubes of paint are visible: one labeled 'ULTRAMARINE BLUE' and another labeled 'GREEN EARTH'. The items are arranged on a light-colored surface, possibly a desk or table.

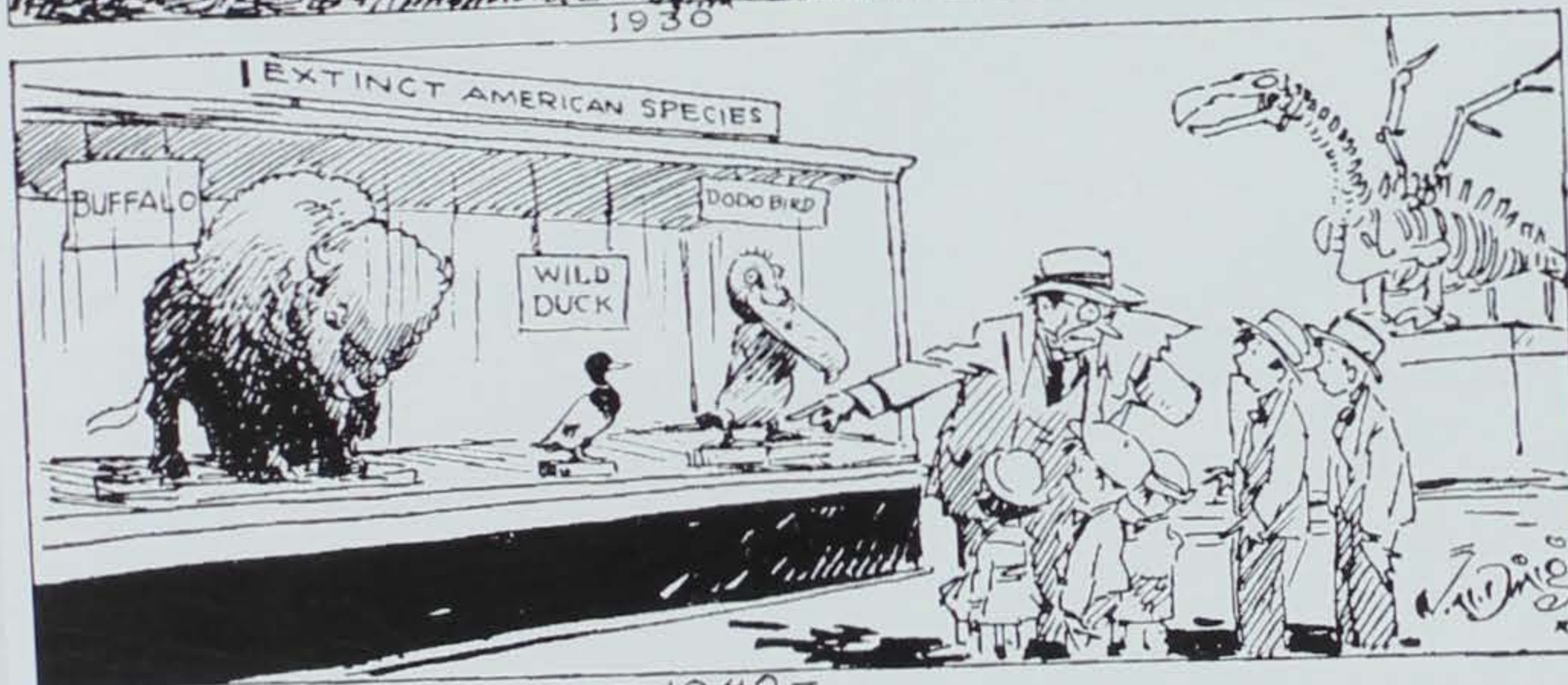
Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling's distinctive signature is shown with his set of brushes, notepad and inks. Rising from being suspended in college to twice winning the Pulitzer Prize, Darling's career had a profound influence on America's people and landscapes.



- 1920 -



1930



- 1940 -

© 1999 J.N. "Ding" Darling Foundation

ducks, attention to soil erosion or signs of war on the world stage.

He wasn't afraid to sit down with industry leaders and get commitments to back a nationwide wildlife conference or training program. He would dictate a fire and brimstone telegram to a politician about the need for—say—wetland refuges. He would often follow up with a knock on the lawmaker's door, with a pledge from private parties to go alongside what he sought from Congress.

Imagine that approach in today's national political landscape. Darling's passion, his drive and his results

Although Ding earned his living as an editorial cartoonist, his passion was conservation of natural resources. See more of his works online. Over 11,000 cartoons are online at <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/ding/> which is maintained by The University of Iowa digital library.



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inspire modern day advocates to look for the next generation of conservation leaders.

Oh, and that rollercoaster reference is real. In 1883, a family friend, building the first rollercoaster in Europe, mailed a postcard drawing of one to Ding's father. At 7, the boy was intrigued. He tried to replicate the weird looking machine. He began carrying a pad of paper and sketching...every day. His parents considered that a waste of time. "To my father and mother, artists who drew pictures were classed with the wicked playing cards, dancing and rum," recalled Darling in a letter years later.

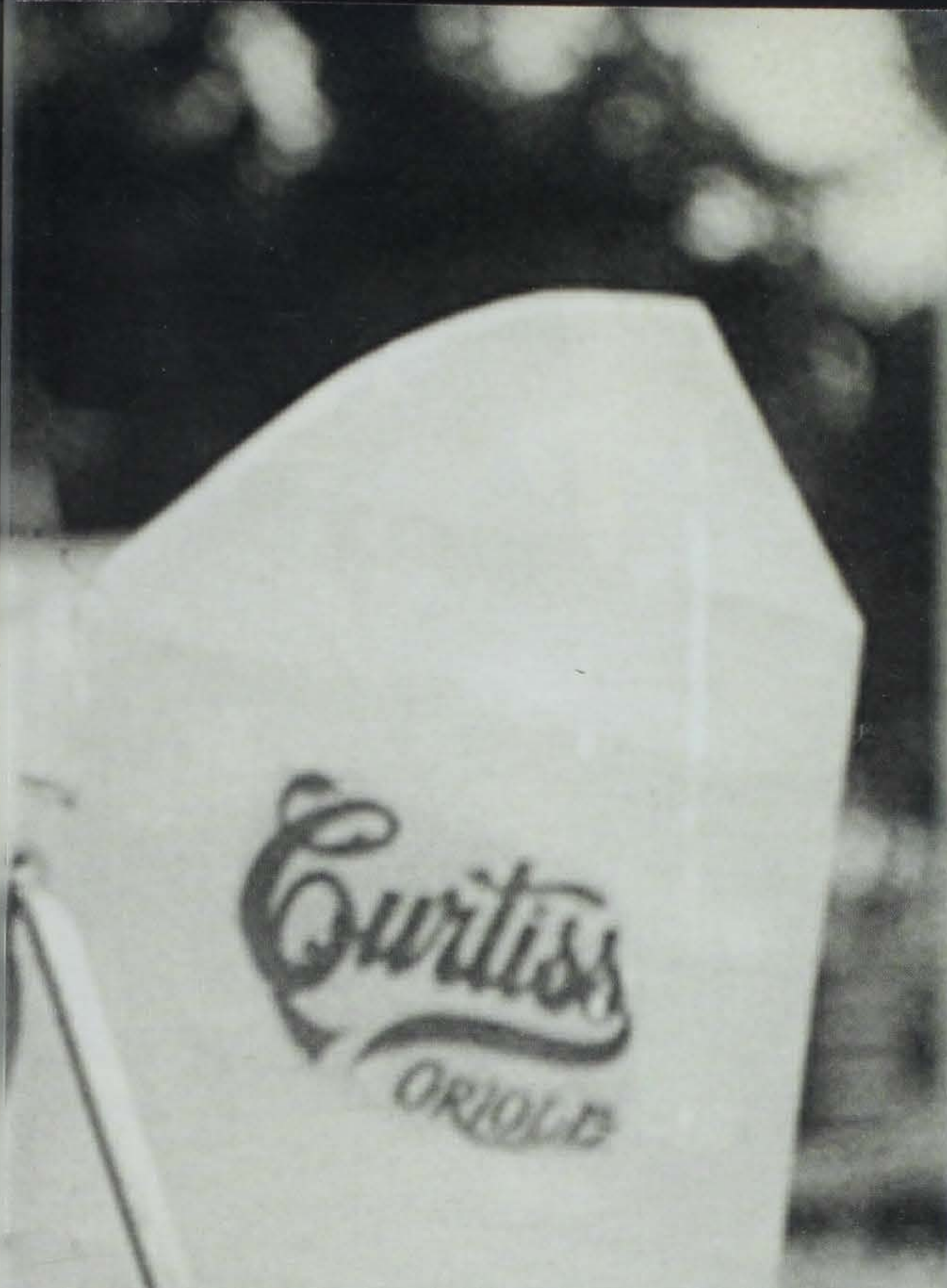


Ding Darling (1876-1962) devoted his talents, forceful leadership and conservation ethic to protect the environment and conserve resources. He created the Federal Duck Stamp Program, which restored thousands of acres of wetlands. In 1936, he founded the National Wildlife Federation.



LEFT: Shown in 1904, a young Ding began his storied career at the Sioux City Journal. His cartoons became "one of the most popular features of the paper." He reached syndication in 150 newspapers. ABOVE: A private pilot, Ding was a man of many talents.

AIRPLANE PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF IOWA SPECIAL COLLECTIONS; HAT PHOTO COURTESY KIP ROSS



The Ding Darling you might not know:

- Used his rich, bass voice to sing for college spending money.
- Kicked out of two colleges, not because of his caricatures of the college faculty dancing in a chorus line—including one in a tutu—but for bad grades.
- Finally graduated and worked at newspapers to pay for medical school. Never made it.
- Was constantly approached to run for federal office, but said no every time
- Warned of DDT dangers in the 1940s; equated it to the atomic bomb
- Knew Joseph Stalin; warned of global U.S.-Russia head-butting as WWII ended
- Often disowned programs he spawned, if not meeting his perfectionist standards
- Opposed Iowa's Red Rock and Saylorville dam construction, as well as most river dams
- Was a prime mover to establish the Des Moines Art Center
- Gave away his original cartoons when asked, even late in life
- Endured months-long bouts with ill health throughout his adult life
- Severe arm injury nearly ended his cartooning career, until diagnosed and repaired
- Sketched his own obituary cartoon; entrusting it to long-time secretary until his 1962 death

Still, that expertise came in handy as a young reporter at the *Sioux City Journal* in the early 1900s. Covering a trial, Darling was told to get a photo of the defense attorney. The uncooperative barrister jumped the rail and chased him. No photo. So, the cub reporter fished an earlier sketch of the man out of his desk. It ran alongside the story. His captioned sketches soon became a daily staple.

Within a few years, newspapers across the country wanted him. A series of moves took him from Sioux City to Des Moines and back and forth to New York, before settling in Iowa's capital city. Political finger pointing was as popular then as now. Most cities had competing daily newspapers. An eye-catching front page cartoon with a biting caption sold more copies than the competition. At the height of that career, Ding (an abbreviation of his last name) Darling's stuff was syndicated in up to 150 papers. He received not one, but two Pulitzer Prizes.

Remember, this was years before radio, decades before TV. You want news and commentary? You went to the newsstand. For a modern parallel, think of Jon Stewart and Rush Limbaugh, times 10. A scary image at best, yet Darling kept it up for 40 years. In his life, the only thing bigger than cartooning was his passion to protect the country's soil, water and wildlife. When he mixed the two, it was journalistic dynamite.

As a youth, Darling took off on his pony through wetlands along the Missouri River. He would hunt or trap. He sometimes hired out as a cattle hand. For several summers, he worked on his uncle's farm in Michigan. "Those were the days when the golden plover came in great flocks and moved across South Dakota and from early spring until the prairie chicken sought cover in the fall along the thickets bordering the creeks and marshes. My mind was filled with pictures which have never been erased," Darling wrote to an old friend, late in life. "It was the disappearance of all that wonderful endowment of wildlife which stirred the first instincts I can remember of conservation."

Darling's talent was simplicity. He started each day poring over a half dozen newspapers, then settled in at his easel to create. Usually, the basic cartoon came easily. Darling labored, though, to remove extraneous detail. That visual and a several word commentary had to catch a reader's attention in moments.

Darling's pen and passion ushered in his second career—politics. However, the two were never really separated. That was evident as he came up with the concept for duck stamps to help buy wetland refuges and, of course, he designed the first stamp.

At his peak of popularity, the country faced the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. Families lost everything. The land lost its soil. Wetlands disappeared. So did the ducks. Darling saw that as his impetus. A Republican, he had reservations about Roosevelt's New Deal. Yet, in 1934, when FDR asked him to take over the U.S. Biological Survey (now the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), he agreed—with conditions. He wanted no interference



The Darling family on vacation in Florida.

LEFT: Ding fishing in Florida with guide Belton Johnson. While head of what is now the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Ding initiated the Federal Duck Stamp Program, designed the first duck stamp and vastly increased the acreage of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, Fla., is named in his honor.

from the "hunting clubs crowd," and he wanted \$1 million to inaugurate a national wetlands refuge.

Darling was giving up a \$100,000 salary for the \$8,000 annual paycheck of a public servant. He felt, though, he could effect change on the front lines. Yet, asked to run for office several times, he declined.

In Washington, Darling huddled with a couple of trusted allies, then dismantled the survey's organizational chart, broke a few civil service regulations and shuffled staff. Perhaps most importantly, he hired technicians who knew about the land, not the political landscape. A Cabinet-level shouting match could yield results, though not everything he wanted. A savvy political animal, Darling knew that was good enough.

The highlight of this "results over protocol" approach came when he teamed with Sen. Pete Norbeck of North Dakota. Norbeck's thick Scandinavian accent was further obscured when he removed his false teeth and—on the floor of Congress—read an incomprehensible amendment into proposed legislation. It passed, FDR signed it and Darling had his federal duck stamp program. Millions of dollars were directed toward wetland refuges. Clearly, Iowa's golden boy knew how to play the game.

After just 20 months in his post, Darling left. His idea of a wetland refuge system was established, as were duck stamps. He had other visions. One would establish a coalition of conservation organizations—from garden clubs to big game hunters—into a larger, collective voice to influence

PHOTOS COURTESY KIP KOSS

AMERICA'S DARLING: Film to Appear on Public Television

More than 50 years after his death, the legend of Ding Darling comes to life again. *America's Darling: the Story of Jay N. "Ding" Darling*, is featured this spring on statewide Iowa Public Television.

Produced by Samuel Koltinsky, it showcases Darling's larger-than-life life, from his childhood exploring the outdoors to discovering the power of the pen, through his careers—that's right, plural—as editorial cartoonist and conservation power broker.

Koltinsky discovered Darling while researching a TV series in Florida. One of those untold stories was Darling's involvement in establishing a national wildlife refuge at Sanibel Island, rather than to see it fall to developers. "I would open one door and 10 more would fly open...a wonderful journey," reflects Koltinsky. Here was "a person who had a vision, who stayed on track to achieve his goal. All his talents, he could utilize these gifts to bring people together...to achieve his vision."

Darling's grandson Kip Koss helped guide that journey. "It is really a story of a grandson and his love for a grandfather, keeping that legacy alive," stresses Koltinsky. That connection led to a treasure trove of stories, documents, sketches and more people connections to Darling. One was Koss's young grandson, Chris Steffen—Darling's great-great-grandson. Editing his onscreen interview, Koltinsky realized his host, his narrator, was right in front of him.

"I did not want to create a documentary without a connection to young people. That was very important," explains Koltinsky of that through-the-generations link provided by Steffen.

With release of *America's Darling*, that Iowa boy, that conservation legend, will reach a new audience, decades after he laid down his sketching pen and sent his last scathing telegram to a Washington politician. The producer hopes he can make that outdoor connection with kids and their families in a new century.

For viewing times, check your local listing or visit iptv.org. Find screenings, learn more about Ding or order DVDs at marvoentertainmentgroup.com.



legislation. It became known as the National Wildlife Federation. The wildlife cooperative program fell into place to put education of future wildlife scientists on the front burner. He established the American Wildlife Institute.

A return to the cartooning bench saw him through World War II, extensive travel to the Soviet Union and Venice; all the while his "impatient hands"—as granddaughter-in-law Andrea Koss referred to them—sketched what he saw. Many of these unpublished sketches surfaced, to the surprise of many, years later.

Darling's conservation advocacy continued, though he expressed disapproval with the direction some of his earlier efforts were headed. He was at odds with the National Wildlife Federation for two decades, prior to

a reconciliation just weeks before his death.

Whether the lucrative business of syndicating his work or butting heads with the editors over his subtle—yet moving—cartoons, Darling fought for "his way" at the art board. "I am rather proud of the fact that never once throughout my whole period of cartooning has any editor or any influence outside of my own conscience ever dictated to me what kind of cartoons I should draw," he wrote late in life.

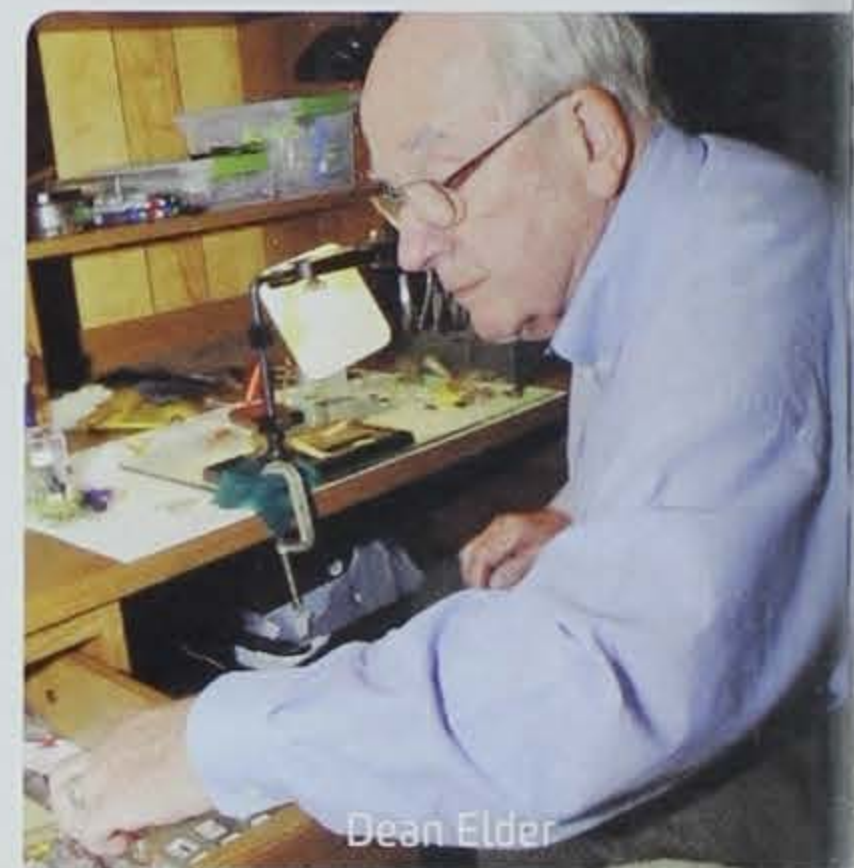
But what of Darling's lasting influence? Who can follow an act like that? Except for two world wars in Darling's day, climate change, the debt ceiling, political polarization—all rise as critical boiling points. Who can take on the environmental issues of today? 🐾

Razzle Dazzle

FOR Fish AND Fisher

Whether it's the flash of a shiner or the splat of a popper, these warm-water fishers relish tying and casting flies to catch plenty of fish.

BY MINDY KRALICEK PHOTOS BY CLAY SMITH



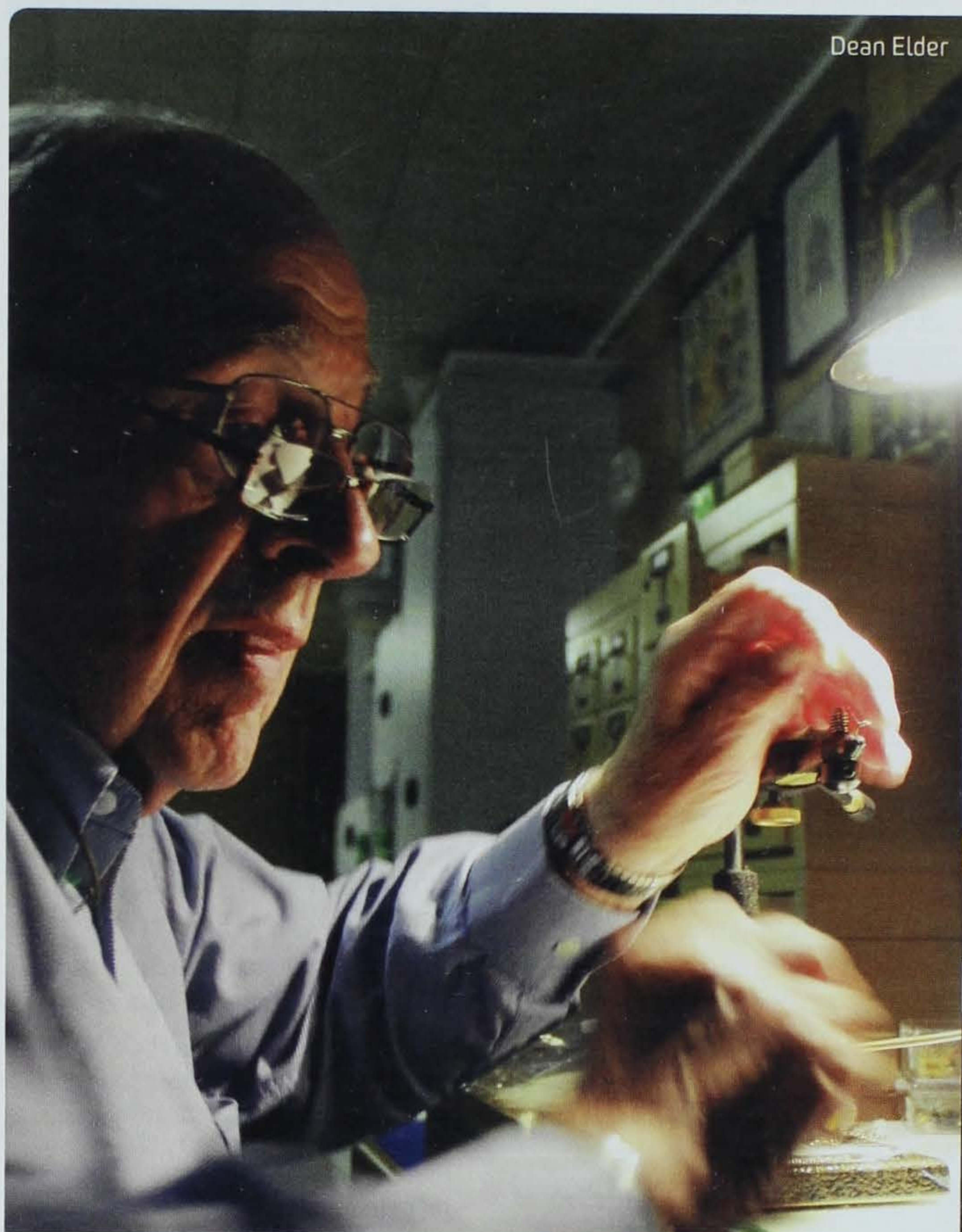
Dean Elder

RIGHT: Dean Elder of Marshalltown holds an imitation dragonfly that will be fished on the water surface. BELOW: A streamer is a wet fly, used below surface to imitate leeches and small fish such as shiners and minnows.



LEFT: Barbell eyes add weight to take a fly underwater and add realism, ABOVE AND RIGHT: Flies can mimic various life stages of aquatic insects. With a myriad of patterns available and the ability to devise one-of-a-kind creations, anglers are able to offer fish enticing choices for any situation. And with every catch, an extra benefit is knowing you fooled a fish with a home-crafted fly.





Dean Elder

Marshalltown's Dean Elder at his tying bench, and below, putting the final touches on an iridescent streamer. Unlike many forms of angling, fly tiers benefit from hours of creative fishing-related therapy when devising flies.



"...all men are equal before fish."

— Herbert Hoover

"There are flies tied for beauty and there are flies that catch fish," says Larry Young, who's taught fly tying at the Second Avenue Bait Shop in Des Moines and is a member of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association. "If you strictly want to catch fish, the wooly bugger brings them in every time. For simplicity, all-white or all-black shiners bring in the fish too. But poppers are the most fun."

Fly tying experts agree: the key to tying a successful fly begins with observing what the fish feeds on and how that food looks and behaves in water. Does your fly look and behave the same? Does it cast easily? Does it land upright? Is the fly durable so you won't have to stop fishing to tie on a new fly?

Visual, challenging and harmonious with nature
"Fly fishing is effective. It's an active way of fishing," says James Barnhart of Des Moines, a long-time member of

the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association and Central Iowa Fly Fishers. "You're always searching the water, looking for fish, rather than throwing a line out there and just waiting for the fish to come to you. You rarely ever get skunked."

Young was hooked on fly tying by a library book as a boy—Poul Jorgensen's *Modern Trout Flies*. "There is a visual component to fly fishing that makes it more exciting than angling," he says. "The fly patterns and colors fascinated me. All the variations. I liked small things. I looked through that book and thought, 'I have to do that some day.'"

That book is among many tying and fishing books on Young's shelf in his fly-tying studio.

Dean Elder, a long time fly tier and fisher living in Marshalltown says, "I've always admired people who do things with their hands. I enjoy tying flies. They're functional, the flies are pretty and the doing is expression. Fly fishing is great any time of the year."



MIDGES are tiny, gnat-like flies that imitate any part of the life of insects in the family Chironomidae. They are insects that resemble mosquitoes as adults, except they have fluffy antennae and no proboscis (the protruding mouth part that sucks blood). They are great flies to use anywhere, anytime with any warm water fish.



TERRESTRIALS imitate insects or mammals that live on land but accidentally fall into a stream or lake. Examples are grubs, caterpillars, sow bugs, worms, grasshoppers, mice, ants, cicadas and beetles.



Streamer



DEBARB, SNAG GUARD, OR BEND UP
Many fly fishers catch and release. If that is your goal, debarb (pinch) the hook. This also reduces catching on grasses or snags.

Larry Young debarbs hooks before he begins to tie a fly.

When fishing near sunken logs, brush and aquatic plants, a snag guard on the fly's hook will prevent problems. A snag guard is a loop, or two loops, of fishing line running from a hook's bend to its eye.

Another strategy to avoid snags is to tie a minnow fly with the hook facing upward. Then it can sink to the stream bottom and be raised with less chance of snagging.

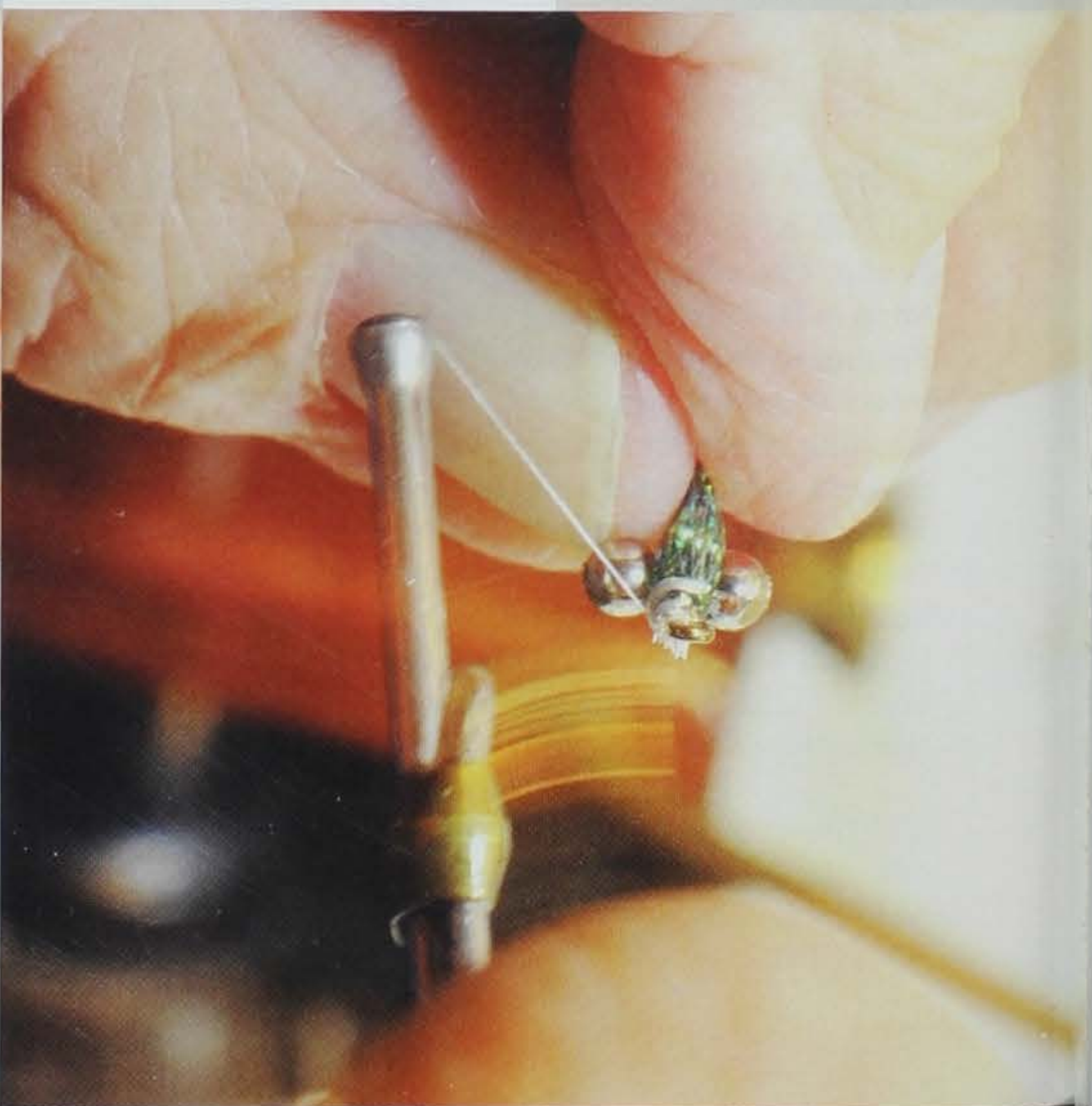
FLIES FOR EVERY APPETITE
The lingo of fly fishing is as colorful as the flies. Flies fall into two categories: dry and wet. Dry flies look and act like adult aquatic insects or terrestrials floating on the water. Wet flies resemble food under the surface.



Bleeding diver with foam head



Streamer



STREAMERS are fished by retrieving the fly in the current. They mimic shad, minnows, crawdads, leeches and scuds (freshwater shrimp) that swim in the water.



The sunsets in the fall, the colors of nature, the birds... everything about it is harmonious with nature and peaceful. Plus, there is the accomplishment of catching a fish with a fly you made."

Fly fishing and tying are often perceived to be expensive and complicated with a steep learning curve. That isn't the case. The perception comes from publicity about people really hooked on the sport and obsessed with trying more patterns, going to exotic locations and buying equipment and supplies for every situation.

Most fly fishers echo the point Elder makes: "You can make fly tying as difficult as you want to, or make it as fun as you want to. You're only limited by your imagination."

Warning: Fly fishing and Tying is Addictive.

Young likes to fish the white bass run on the Des Moines River, from below the Saylorville spillway to downtown. He has favored spots for white bass and gives one hint: "White bass use the current to herd shad. They pick up the stragglers and those that float to the top and corral the school. You find those places and you can take dozens of (white) bass in a day with shiners."

Young grew up in Hawaii, but that was before ocean fly fishing had caught on. A graduate of Drake University, he learned to fly fish in Des Moines after moving to Iowa in 1985.

"I took fly tying classes for three years at the Second Avenue Bait Shop and then took over teaching for seven more years.

"In the past I fished a lot for bluegill at Moffitt Lake. Bluegills are feisty and fun to catch. I also fish some good pockets in the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers for smallmouth bass, and I fish in farm ponds when invited. Since trout have been stocked at the DMACC ponds in Ankeny, I go there now, too. Fishing the cold water streams in northeast Iowa is great, but it's a seven-hour round trip, plus the expenses of being out of town. I made those trips more often when I was younger."

Young's hands fluidly tie an imitation shad fly as he talks. He massages it to the right contour, adds tinsel, and uses a magic marker for coloration specific to shad. He finishes the fly with sticky eyeballs that will later be glued on.

"One of my favorite flies is the wiggle bug. It swings in the current and wiggles like a crawfish. Poppers are fun. They make a 'blorp' when they hit the surface.

"The biggest problem is finding clear areas for casting. Lake improvements with jetties that stick out on the water away from trees are a great help."

Barnhart awarded himself a fly fishing pole and reel after graduating from college. He bought a fly tying book and

taught himself for a couple of years before getting involved with the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association.

"I like to experiment with fly ideas," he says, picking up a two-minnow fly. "This one works okay, but other flies have been more successful," he laughs.

Barnhart enjoys fly fishing for carp and has tied special flies to catch them. "Carp are fierce fighters and it takes a while to bring 'em in," he says. "Carp will take flies that look like dying baitfish, crawdads sliding along the bottom and leeches. They are also attracted to flies that look like larva and pupa of aquatic insects, worms and scuds."

He picks up a "mulberry" fly made of painted purple deer hair. "You can imitate anything a carp might eat," he smiles. "Even mulberries."

Some also rub newly tied flies with mud or algae so the fly smells natural. Carp are very sensitive to taste and smell.

Barnhart uses the Montana nymph for bluegill and an assortment of poppers for bass, but finds a frog imitation especially effective. He's made a shad imitation with an ear plug—he slips Mylar tubing over the plug and forms the plug to the shape of a shad.

"The bumble puppy is a killer trout fly." Once, fishing in full rain gear and unable to see more than 100 feet due to a deluge, "every 10 to 15 minutes a trout would hit the bumble puppy. Then came along this 16- to 18-inch brown trout and he takes it and swims to the surface and rolls over and it drops out of his jaw. I can still see it. It's the ones that get away that you remember the most."

He enjoys the scholarly aspect of tying, too, with more than 74 fly fishing and tying books on his shelves, including

BELOW: James Barnhart of Des Moines uses white rabbit fur topped with a bit of fox fur to imitate a bait fish with a darker dorsal fin. The red thread also attracts fish. **RIGHT:** The hair-like extensions on this fly are created by wrapping a neck feather around the hook shank then trimming excess of the top.



some classics. "It's fun to try flies that people a hundred years ago made. You feel connected to that history."

He uses those flies on the Des Moines River. "I've caught drum, carp and buffalo. In the spring on the spawning beds you can catch bluegill and largemouth bass. There's also smallmouth and white bass in the streams by Saylorville that are fun to catch," says Barnhart.

Elder learned to fly fish as a Boy Scout. "I wanted a merit badge in fishing, but the man in charge of the program used a fly rod. And, my barber was a fly tier. That's how it all began for me.

"Warm-water fly fishing is something you can do year-round, as long as there is open water," he champions. "Use midges in the winter—that's what's hatching then—and the fish are looking for them. In fact, that's what fly tying authors advise: match the hatch and take pride in crafting an accurate imitation of fish food.

"There are so many products for sale to make flies with. I have drawers full of them. You can tell who the fly fishermen are: you see them in craft stores and in the fly-tying sections of fishing departments. They're always looking for new stuff to tie a fly with.

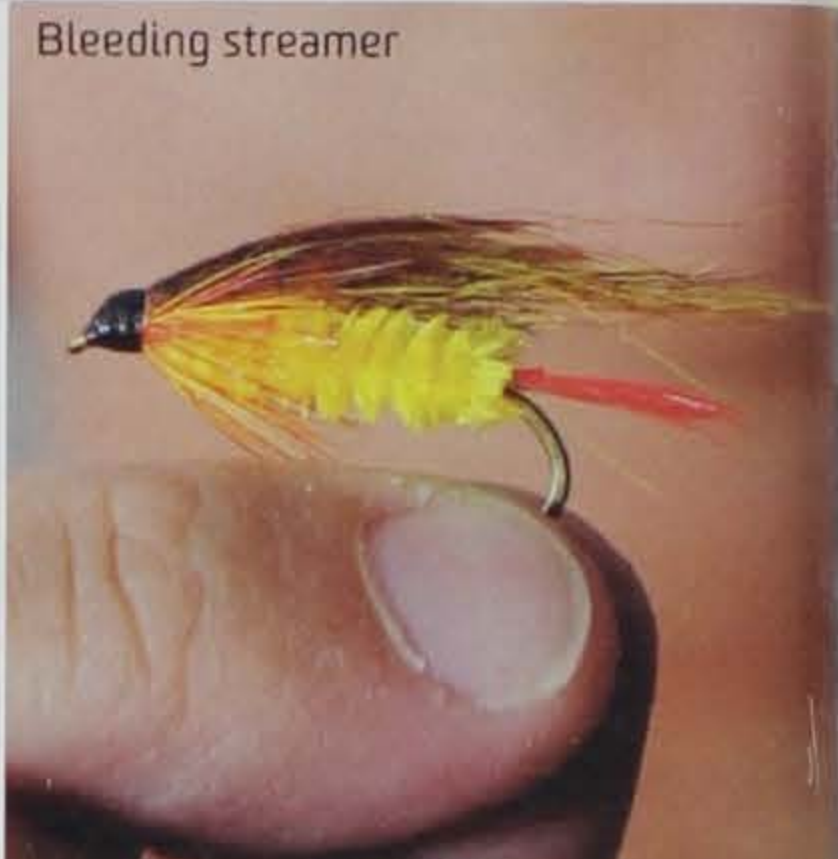
"I like to fish for bluegills and crappies," says Elder as he begins tying a streamer. He cuts beaded pull chains for the eyes, chenille for the body and tinsel for flash.

"I often fish in farm ponds, but I'm not telling where," Elder says with a smile. 🐱



James Barnhart

Bleeding streamer



OPPOSITE: Larry Young, has taught fly tying at the Second Avenue Bait Shop in Des Moines and is a member of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association. "If you strictly want to catch fish, the wooly bugger brings them in every time. For simplicity, all white or all black shiners bring in the fish too."



ABOVE AND TOP RIGHT: Some of Young's favorite poppers. His mouse imitations have plenty of flash and feathers to attract fish. NEAR LEFT: Some of James Barnhart's favorite nymphs, wooly buggers, poppers and streamers. Two purple mulberry flies in the top back row are used to entice carp.



Popper made with deer hair



TRANSLATIONS

BLEEDING STREAMER: red hackle feathers are placed under and just behind the head to give the effect of a bleeding baitfish.

BUMBLE PUPPY: tied on a wet fly hook in size 4 or 6. Usually a bumble puppy is tied with red hackle fibers, a white chenille body, ribbing of red yarn or flat silver tinsel, a single or double

wing, and strips of white swan or goose over white hair from deer with a black head. Bumble puppies are tied in many different forms.

DIVER: Name given to deer hair head flies (flat on top) that float until you give them a smooth draw on the leader to slide the diver quietly under the surface. As the fly is retrieved, it dives

below the surface and when it rises to the surface it creates a sonic signature (plop) that alerts fish that there may be food on the water's surface. If you give divers a strong strip (short tug), they will make noise like a popper.

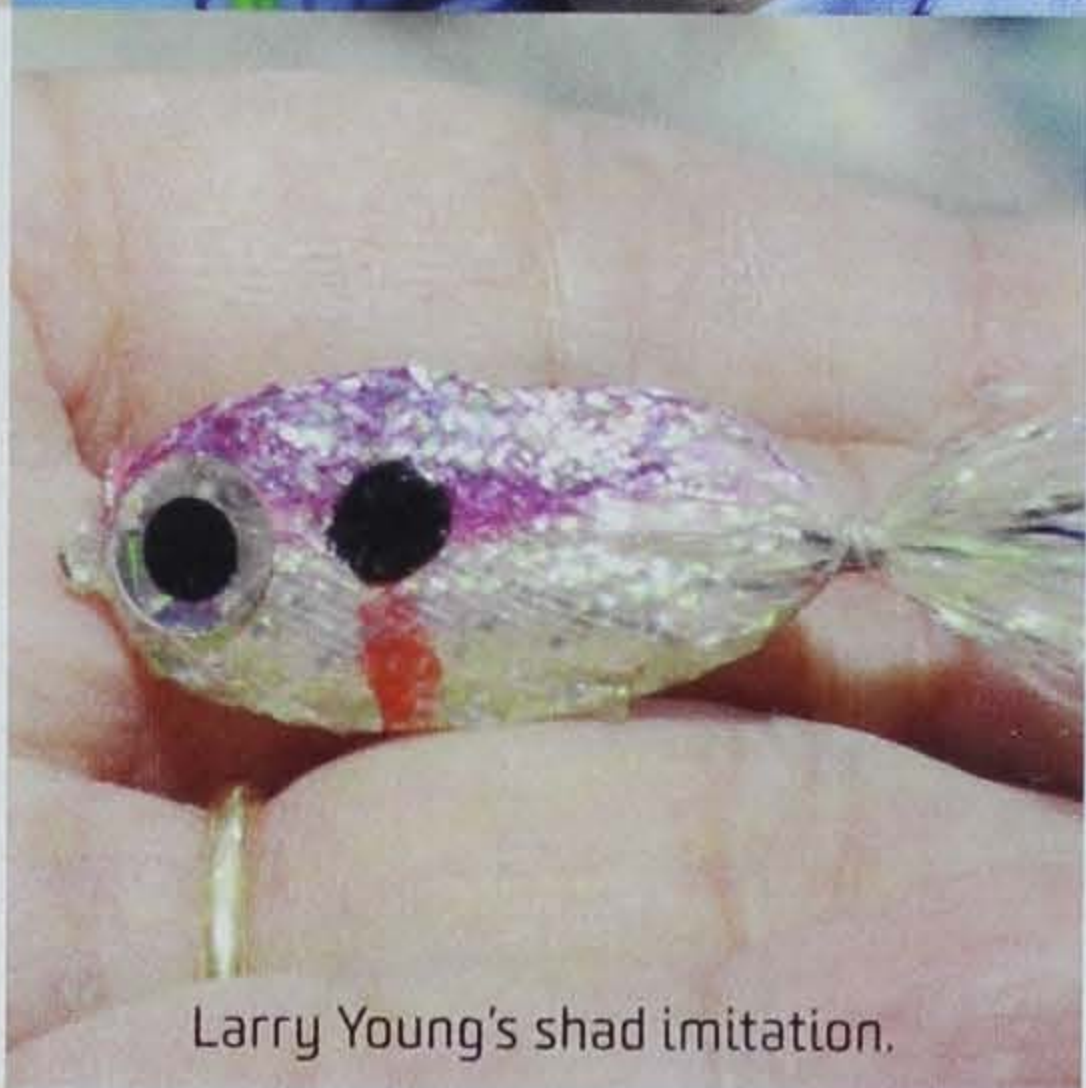
HACKLE: The terms "hackling a fly" or "wrap the fly's hackle" refers to wrapping a feather

around the hook shank of the fly. The hackle can be from either the neck or saddle (back) of a bird. Hackle size refers to the length of the hackle barbs. If you bend a hackle feather, the barbs will stick out. Wrapping it around a hook shank will give the appearance of legs or wings of an insect.



Larry Young

NYMPHS imitate immature insects that live below water. Check under streamside rocks and use flies that look like the most prevalent nymphs. Current washes nymphs into shallows where panfish gather to feed on them.



Larry Young's shad imitation.

GET INVOLVED

Teachers can introduce fly-fishing in physical education classes or with youth groups. Find teaching modules at www.iowadnr.gov/portals/idnr/uploads/education/flyfish.pdf or email

AquaticEd_Info@dnr.iowa.gov.

Learn more about warm water fly fishing at warmwaterflytyer.com

Two fly tying clubs that welcome new members are:

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Barnhart's two minnow fly.



WARM WATER FLY FISHING FUN

Largemouth bass, yellow bass, wipers (hybrid stripers), crappie, green and redear sunfish and walleye are also fun on a fly rod.

Walleyes will take streamers and poppers. Dawn and dusk are walleyes' prime eating times and are the best times to catch them. Their large, reflective eyes see especially well in dim light, even in full darkness. Flies must look alive to interest them.



Diver



Shiner

MATCH THE HATCH: Refers to using flies that resemble winged adult aquatic insects as they emerge from their pupa or cocoon, at specific times of year according to species. As these insects emerge from the water to take flight they are extremely vulnerable. Fish feed like crazy and are easy to catch if the fly pattern matches the hatch.

POPPERS: A surface fly designed to create a splashing commotion on the surface to draw strikes (usually from aggressive fish). The materials and shape of the fly affect how much disturbance it makes.

SHINERS: The tail and body of a streamer that is made of the same reflective material is

often referred to as a shiner. The shiner may be made with flash, fluorescent materials or tinsel and includes other materials such as hackle or fur.

WIGGLE BUG: Fly designed to sink at a slow rate to stay at a particular water depth for a long period of time to provide visibility to the fish. Carp are attracted to wiggle bugs.

WOOLLY BUGGERS: A wet fly or streamer fished under the water surface. Depending on the materials used and how it is fished, it will resemble large nymphs, baitfish, a leech, a drowning terrestrial insect, crayfish, shrimp or a crab. Olive, brown and black are good colors for freshwater use.

ECO COLLEGE

The Contagious Greening of Decorah



Last summer, Luther College in Decorah installed the largest solar array in Iowa to power Baker Village, an all-electric residence facility that houses more than 100 students in six buildings. Receiving all of its energy from the sun, it is the largest solar-powered, zero-emission facility in Iowa.

Besides powering the full kitchens, computers and lights in the Scandinavian-style architecture townhouses, solar energy drives the electric geothermal heating and cooling system. On low demand days, excess energy reverses the college's electric meter to save funds and power local homes and businesses. Beyond renewable energy use, Baker Village sits among restored flowering prairies and lush woods and features water-saving fixtures.

The college is leasing the array from Decorah Solar Field, LLC, owned by local resident Larry Grimsted. The college plans to purchase the array after seven years.

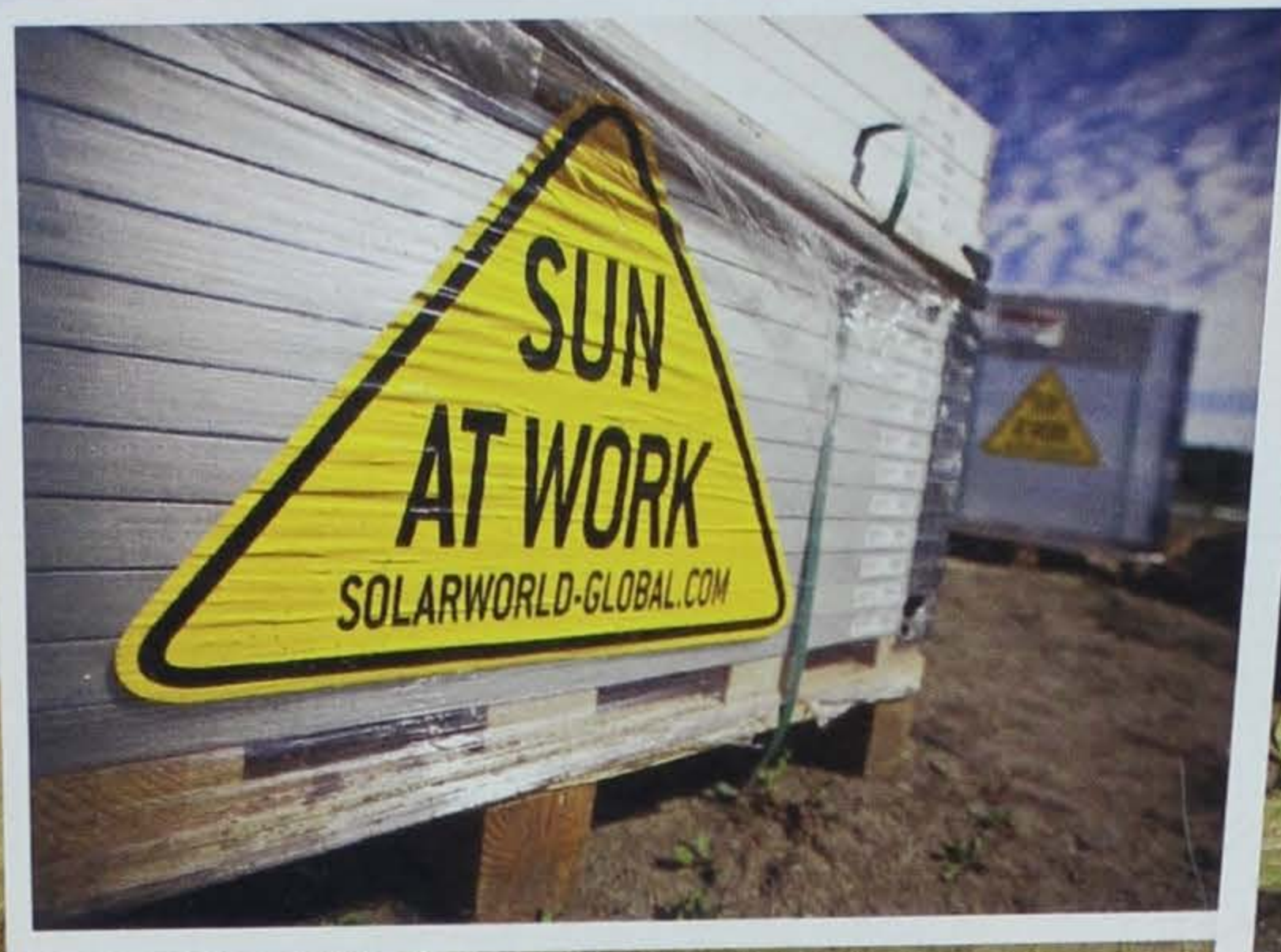
The Luther Board of Regents recently committed the school to cut its carbon footprint in half by 2015 and become carbon neutral by 2030. The college has already

cut its carbon footprint by 22 percent.

The "goal is to be a model for society, not a mirror," says Luther College president Richard Torgerson. "Advances in new technologies, coupled with conservation initiatives, will play a major role in achieving these ambitious goals."

Progress began in 2004, when Luther College invested in energy efficiency projects that reduced electricity consumption by 23 percent and the campus carbon footprint by 15 percent. Last fall, Luther installed a 1.6 megawatt wind turbine which generates enough electricity to power about 500 homes in town to reduce carbon emissions another 15 percent.

A new science building is Leader in Energy and Environmental Design gold certified and features a green roof with living plants to absorb rainfall, reduce runoff and cool the surface to reduce air-conditioning demands. The campus also uses electric and hybrid vehicles, has a bike share program for students, offers shuttles to downtown and shares campus energy use data online.



Facing a goal to cut its carbon footprint in half by 2015 and be carbon neutral by 2030, Luther College in Decorah installed the largest solar array in Iowa to power a residence facility that houses more than 100 students in six buildings. It also invested in energy efficiency projects, installed a 1.6 megawatt wind turbine and built a new science center that is LEED gold certified.

Local sustainability efforts extend beyond campus. Decorah is one of 34 Iowa communities to sign the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. City efforts include installation of LED traffic lights, energy audits of municipal buildings and use of energy-saving variable speed pumps at water and wastewater facilities. Decorah Bank and Trust uses rooftop solar panels and LED lighting. The city has three Energy Star certified buildings with more to come.

In 2010 the Winneshiek Energy District was established to help Decorah residents and Winneshiek County make investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy through quality energy auditing and energy planning.

The district was formed after a series of meetings between Luther College faculty, staff and local business leaders. It is modeled after the soil and water conservation districts found in almost every county in the nation.

In its first 18 months the Winneshiek Energy District

has helped more than 200 households and 50 area businesses invest approximately \$1 million in energy efficiency technology that will result in more than \$3 million in energy savings.

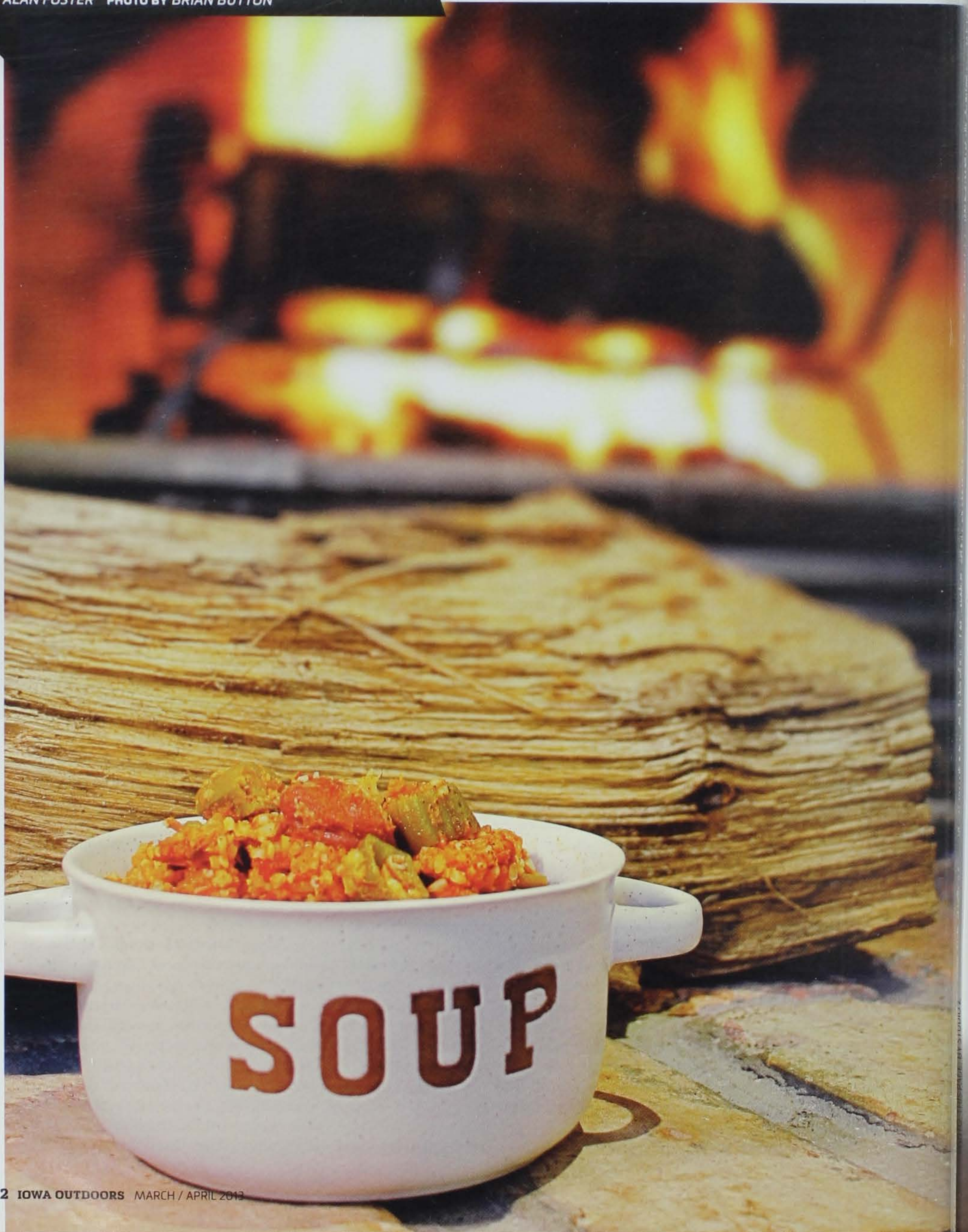
These investments have involved dozens of contractors, created 15 to 20 near-term jobs and should support 20 to 30 short-term jobs due to the cumulative impacts of the long-term energy savings, which will be recycled in Decorah and Winneshiek County.

The district works closely with the Decorah Chamber of Commerce to establish a Green Business Council and the Green Business Challenge, which helps area businesses track energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Several church congregations have invested in energy efficiency, and four have worked directly with the Winneshiek Energy District to do so. As a result, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and First Lutheran Church in Decorah both have a 96 EPA Energy Star rating, which means they are more energy efficient than 96 percent of all other houses of worship in the United States.

Wild Cuisine *KITCHENSIDE*

BY ALAN FOSTER PHOTO BY BRIAN BUTTON



Louisiana Jambalaya The Iowa Way

Turn up the heat on your favorite wild game meat for a tasty Creole treat

After years of painstaking research—and many trials and errors—to come up with the best jambalaya recipe, we at the *Iowa Outdoors* test kitchen think we have a winner. This traditional New Orleans rice dish—a spinoff of Spanish paella—is a version of Chuck’s Jambalaya with an Iowa twist—featuring catfish, wild turkey and venison. If you are short on catfish or wild turkey, substitute any firm, white fish, pheasant or chicken. Any spicy sausage, like Andouille, will do. This recipe may be a little more detailed than others, but trust us, it’s worth it.

IOWA JAMBALAYA

1 pound wild turkey, cubed
1 pound uncooked catfish, chunked
1 pound spicy deer sausage (optional)
4 or 5 celery stalks, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
1 bell pepper, chopped
10 ounces frozen, chopped okra
1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
3 6 ounce cans tomato paste
8 cups smoked turkey or regular chicken broth
chopped garlic to taste
3 tablespoons Creole seasoning

salt and pepper to taste
4 cups uncooked long grain white rice

If the turkey is uncooked, brown over medium heat, sprinkled to taste with creole seasoning. (If using leftover bird, simply season). Brown the sausage. Drain, remove and set aside. In same pot, sauté the “trinity”—onions, peppers and celery—until translucent, with chopped garlic to taste. Add tomato paste and cook several minutes until the sugars caramelize and the paste browns. Stir constantly to avoid burning. Once the paste has browned, deglaze pot with two cups broth, scraping the bottom of the pan to loosen browned bits. Add tomatoes, Creole seasoning and salt and pepper to taste and simmer over medium-low heat for 10 minutes. Add meat, excluding fish, and cook another 10 minutes. Add the rest of the stock. Add additional seasoning if desired. Add rice and cook 15 minutes. Add fish and okra and cook another 10 minutes until fish is done and rice has absorbed all the liquid. Turn to low and cook an additional 10 minutes to let sauce thicken. If using instant rice, you may need to reduce cooking time.

SMOKED TURKEY STOCK

Turkey carcass

4 celery ribs roughly chopped
2 carrots roughly chopped
1 medium white onion roughly chopped
6 whole garlic cloves

Place turkey carcass in large pot. Add remaining ingredients and cover with water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 2 to 3 hours. Strain. Roasted turkey carcasses will do, but smoked meats add depth to the broth. The darker, more intense the broth, the better the jambalaya. It’s also a good way to use some of the less desirable pieces like legs and thighs. The broth also makes a great soup base.



Warden's Diary

BY ERIKA BILLERBECK PHOTOS BY CLAY SMITH



Music To My Ears

I asked my friend to describe her “background music.” She lifted an eyebrow in confusion. I tried re-wording the question. How would she describe the “sounds” that color the backdrop of her day? For example, a farmer’s background music might be the constant drone of a tractor rumbling endlessly through a field; a cashier might hear the sharp beep of checkout computers long after closing his eyes at night; a day care provider could say her music consists of the squeals, whines and meltdowns of her charges (aka my 3-year-old). My friend nodded her head. Now she understood. She described her music as a confluence of physical sensations—a shift in air currents, the tympanic whump of loud bass music reverberating in her chest, a tremble of vibrations shimmying up her spine when her children run down the hall. My friend is deaf. And now she has convinced me that everyone has background music.

For better or worse, a significant chunk of my life’s music consists of the squawking chatter emitting from my police radio. Granted, most of the radio traffic doesn’t



pertain to my job. I may go a whole day without hearing my call number over the radio, but all cops listen for calls where they may be of assistance to another officer. I’ve helped with my share of car accidents, domestic disturbances, searches and other calls for aid. But, for the most part, I’ve learned to sift out calls that might have something to do with game warden work. Keywords scattered throughout the day such as: lake, river, deer, gun and hunters, etc. compel me to quickly reach down and turn up the volume.

My background music can be entertaining, scary, exciting, dull, sad and downright weird. One thing I know for sure, though, is

that folks don’t call the cops when they are having a good day. You never hear “My wife and I are having a great day—I’m lucky I married her!” Nope. Most people only call the police once or twice in their lives and it usually coincides with one of the worst moments of their lives.

At times I feel like listening to a police radio verges on voyeurism. It’s almost like I’m crouched behind

the bushes peeking under partially drawn blinds into someone's life—I'm there but I wasn't really invited. This feeling hits me when I'm driving along and discover that while I was enjoying a peaceful drive, someone else was simultaneously getting into a car accident, discovering their husband just drank toilet cleaner in a suicide attempt, coming home to find their house burglarized, getting beaten by their teenage son or one of myriad tragedies that happen every day. I must admit my music depresses me sometimes.

People who ride along with me for a day who aren't familiar with scanner-land are often obsessed with the radio. I think I might photocopy the 10-code translation so I don't have to constantly answer questions like, "What does 10-8 (or insert any 10-code) mean?" They want to be part of the "secret society." OK, the term "secret society" might be a hyperbole. How secret can it be when "10-11" is used to replace the word "dog?" A common 10-11 call might sound like this: "There is a missing 10-11 in Coralville. Described as gray with white spots wearing a red collar and answers to the name Rover." Or better yet, "A neighbor called about a 10-11 that has been barking all night. Complainant says the owners are on vacation and they left the 10-11 without any water." Is it not obvious that we aren't referring to the neighbor's houseplant? Who exactly are we protecting by using that code?

A new radio system is being implemented in my county, and I've heard there is going to be a push to get away from using the 10-code and instead use plain old English. On the surface this sounds like a good idea. As a novice officer, one of my fears was that I'd get on the radio and use the incorrect 10-code. What if

I meant to ask the dispatcher to repeat something and instead called him or her a 10-11? Not only do you have to remember the 10-code, but you also must remember to use the correct words when you are spelling out someone's name. I admit there have been times I was spelling a name and failed to remember the exact word assigned to the letter. Instead of saying, "T- Tom, I- Ida, M- Mary," for the name Tim, maybe I said, "T- Tom, I-... Um...uh...I- Itchy, M- Mary." Of course that would be the only time my supervisor was listening.

That being said, the 10-code does afford officers some protection. An officer listening to a bunch of 10-this and 10-that garble may learn that the guy standing next to him or her is wanted, has a history of drug possession and is known to carry a gun. I ran a hunter's driver's license one day only to find out that I was standing in the middle of nowhere with a person who had a federal warrant from Colorado. Colorado wanted him (or maybe his \$50,000 bond) really badly. It wasn't long before two troopers and three deputies arrived on the pot-holed, ice-covered dirt road to assist. Hopefully, if radio language is simplified, there will still be some kind of code for similar situations. As far as I'm concerned, I prefer that the bad guy not panic when he hears his criminal record recited for all to hear.

I suppose listening to a police radio all day isn't bad when compared with other people who must endure Muzak, jackhammers and automatic weaponry. Although I'm a teensy bit envious of my friend's silent music at times, in the end I'm thankful for my hearing. In any case, do me a favor. If you happen to be having an exceptionally great day, call the cops and let them know. 🐾



Common Snapping Turtle, *Chelydra serpentina*

Common snapping turtles are one of the largest North American turtles—second only to their cousin, the alligator snapping turtle. And like its larger relative, it is known for a large head, long tail and nasty disposition. But these imposing reptiles are very shy in the water and only become aggressive when confronted on land.

BACK OFF

Because the bottom shell (plastron) is small, snapping turtles cannot withdraw inside their shells like other turtles. They defend themselves by striking much like snakes, snapping their long, flexible necks at a speed that rivals rattlesnakes. While not potentially lethal like the rattlesnake, the two cutting mandibles and powerful jaws of a snapping turtle are designed to mangle tissue.

URBAN LEGEND?

Legend has it that the ability of snapping turtles to quickly find decomposing flesh once earned them the task of locating dead bodies in lakes. Tied to a rope and released under water, if the snapper stopped moving it signaled that a body had been found and the turtle had started to feed.

APEX OMNIVORE

Snapping turtles are the poster species for omnivores, eating anything it can put into its mouth. While a third of their diet is plants, the rest is made up of small aquatic invertebrates, crayfish, snails, fish, frogs, toads, snakes, bird eggs, small birds, mammals and carrion.

REVERED AND REVILED

In 2006 the snapping turtle was declared the state reptile of New York by a sweeping vote of the state legislature after being chosen by the state's public elementary school children. They are prohibited in Oregon and considered a nuisance, competing with native turtles for food, nesting and habitat. Anyone seeing or possessing a snapping turtle in Oregon is encouraged to report it to local fish and wildlife officials.

DID YOU KNOW

The largest snapping turtle caught in the wild weighed 68 pounds. Typically, snappers top out at 35 to 45 pounds.

HANDLE WITH CARE

Handling a snapping turtle without getting bit or hurting the animal is challenging. Because the long, flexible neck can reach back along the shell, holding one by the sides is not advised. Lifting by the tail can cause tail and vertebral column damage. The best way to hold them is by their plastron.

MORE FAMOUS THAN THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE

The common snapper was featured in a famous American political cartoon published in 1808, in protest to the Jeffersonian Embargo Act of 1807. The cartoon depicted a snapping turtle, jaws locked fiercely to an American trader who was attempting to carry a barrel of goods onto a British ship. It was one of the first works marking the beginning of modern political cartoons.

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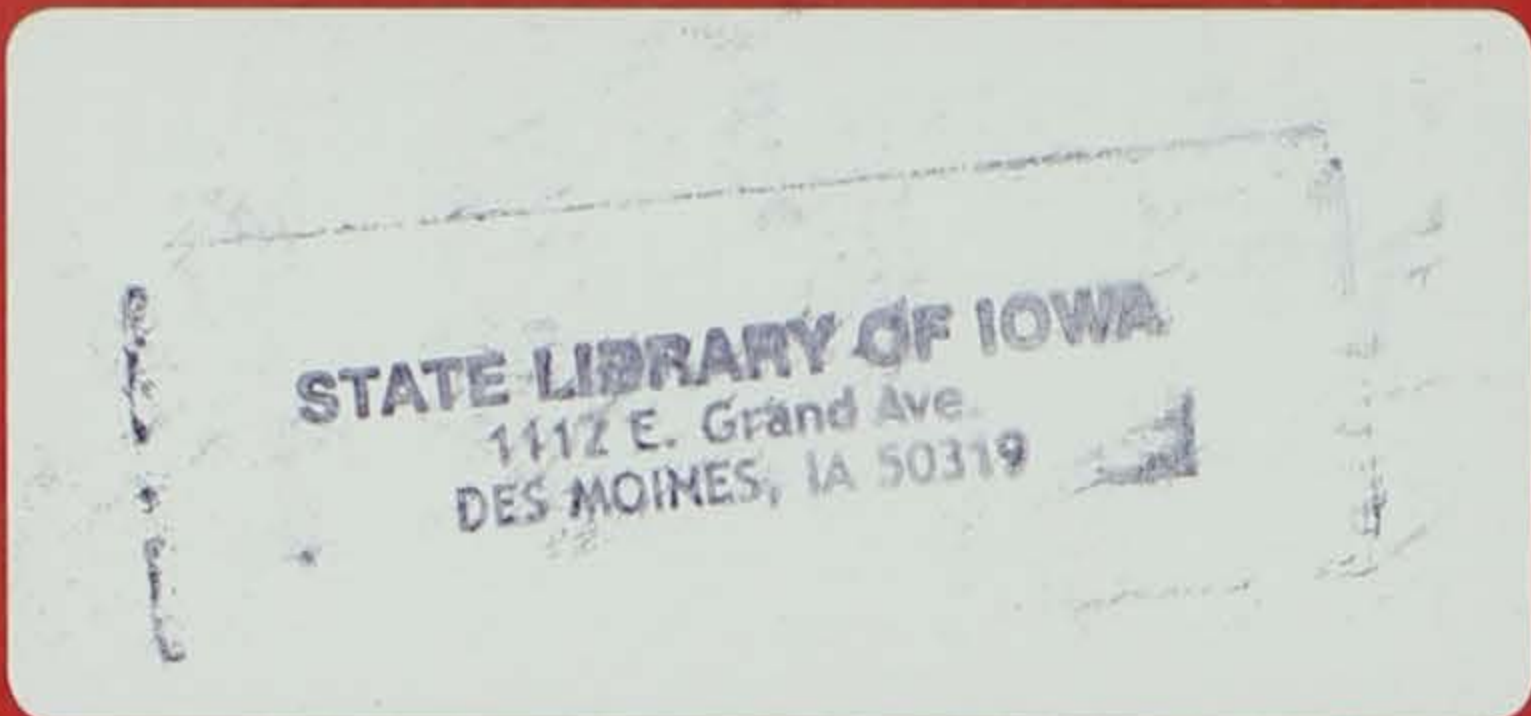
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