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SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2016

# IOWA OUTDOORS

THE DNR'S MAGAZINE OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



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## Where Colors Meet the Sky

*Head northeast and explore the rugged driftless area*

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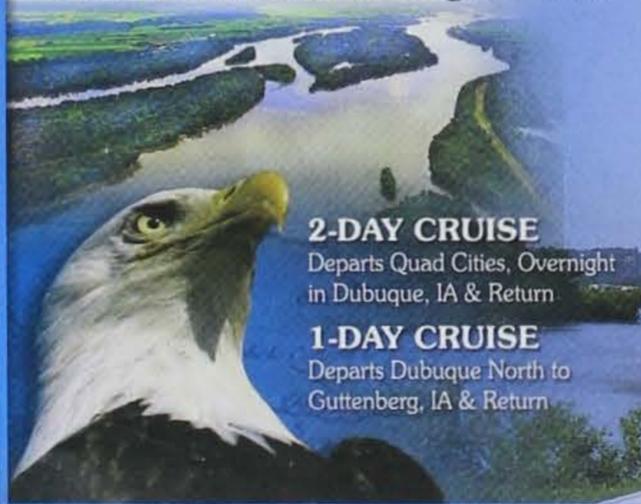
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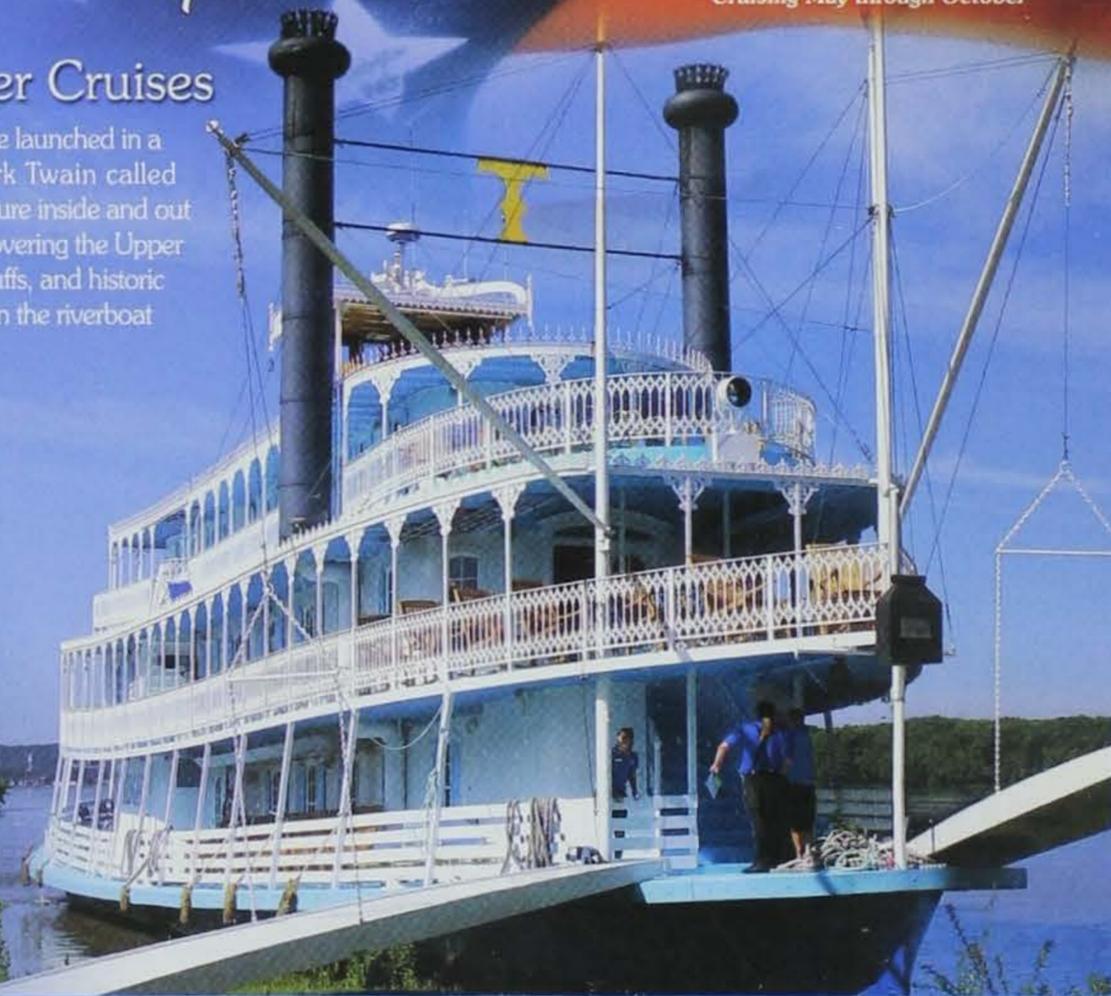
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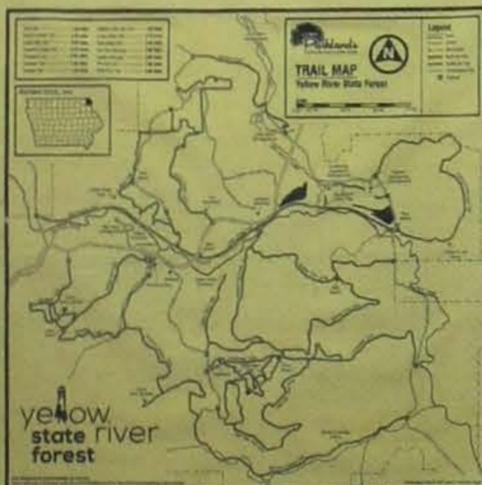


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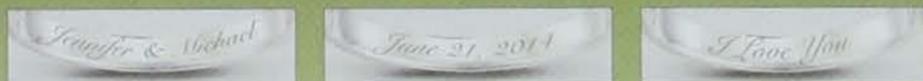
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SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2016 • VOLUME 75 • ISSUE 5

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To conserve and enhance our natural resources in cooperation with individuals and organizations to improve the quality of life in Iowa 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



**KEN WEST JR.** is a fourth-generation photographer. In the master apprentice tradition, Ken learned the principles of photography from his grandfather and father. Applying these principles and using today's digital technology, he captures the dynamic range of light and color present in Iowa's landscape. His work has been exhibited at the National Center for Nature Photography, America's first and only center devoted exclusively to nature photography. One of his landscape photographs appeared on the cover of Pulitzer Prize-winning and international best-selling author Marilynne Robinson's newest book, *Lila*. One of America's oldest running Public Television shows, Market to Market, redesigned its set incorporating his landscape photographs. View his work at [sweetlightgallery.com](http://sweetlightgallery.com)

**EDITOR'S NOTE**, the March/April issue in which his work appeared contained an incorrect biography. We regret the error. His photos from that issue appear below.



## BRIAN GIBBS

Clayton County naturalist, has been addicted to wild places ever since his father first took him trout fishing in Yellow River State Forest. His passion for teaching others about enjoying and conserving natural beauty has led him to work in such scenic places as Glacier National Park. When not teaching, Gibbs is exploring the natural beauty hidden among the bluffs and valleys of northeast Iowa.



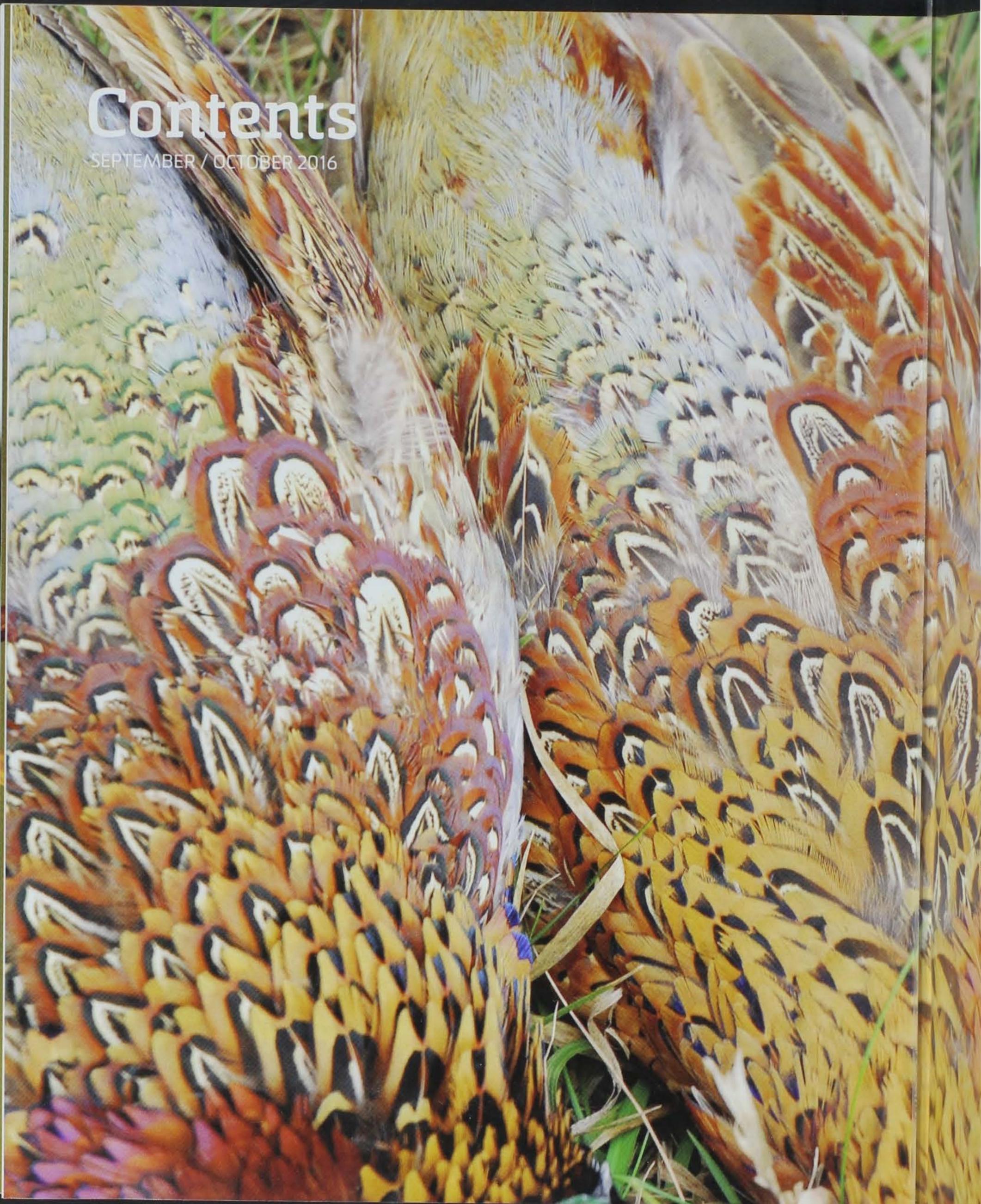
## DAN MAGNESON

grew up in the southwest Iowa towns of Red Oak, Shenandoah and Clarinda, and today works as a fisheries biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Washington state's Olympic Peninsula. He believes the 1950s and 1960s were the absolute golden era of being a kid, and that nowhere on earth was this more true than in Iowa.



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## FEATURES

### 24 The Perfect Day

When the stars align, weather shines and pheasants cooperate, you end up with The Perfect Day.

BY DAN MAGNESON

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Celebrate 125 years of conservation law enforcement and follow some of the trials and tribulations officers endured in the name of protecting the great outdoors.

BY MARIAH GRIFFITH

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Take a cathartic stroll through the Driftless Area and marvel at unique geological features found nowhere else in Iowa.

BY BRIAN GIBBS

### 50 Bullseye Boys

Take aim with two stars that have risen from Iowa's archery in the schools program, and see what's in their sights for the future.

BY MARIAH GRIFFITH

#### ABOUT THE COVER

Early one October morning, writer and photographer Brian Gibbs scrambled 250 feet above the Mississippi River floodplain to a narrow ridgetop prairie at Turkey River Mounds State Preserve. "It was incredibly eerie as the fog was so dense that only the brightest colors were illuminated. Then, as if a fan switch was flipped, the fog blew out and this spectacular medley of color burst all the way down to the Turkey River." Learn more about this region on page 42.

PHOTO BY BRIAN GIBBS

#### ABOUT THIS PHOTO

Author Dan Magneson vividly recounts a late-season pheasant hunt where the day ended with a limit of roosters tucked snugly in the back of a game vest. A light blanket of snow on the ground, a slough of ragweed, knotweed and foxtail grasses surrounded by a freshly-picked cornfield, a Thermos full of rich, creamy cocoa and a favorite lunchtime sandwich—The Perfect Day. Walk alongside Magneson on page 24.

PHOTO BY LOWELL WASHBURN

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*Get your hunt on while exploring new lands and improved habitat through the Iowa Habitat and Access Program.*

### 14 Lost in Iowa

*Northeast Iowa may get all the attention for fantastic fall colors, but these lesser-known locales feature fantastic fishing, prime paddling—and fall colors to boot.*

### 61 Flora & Fauna

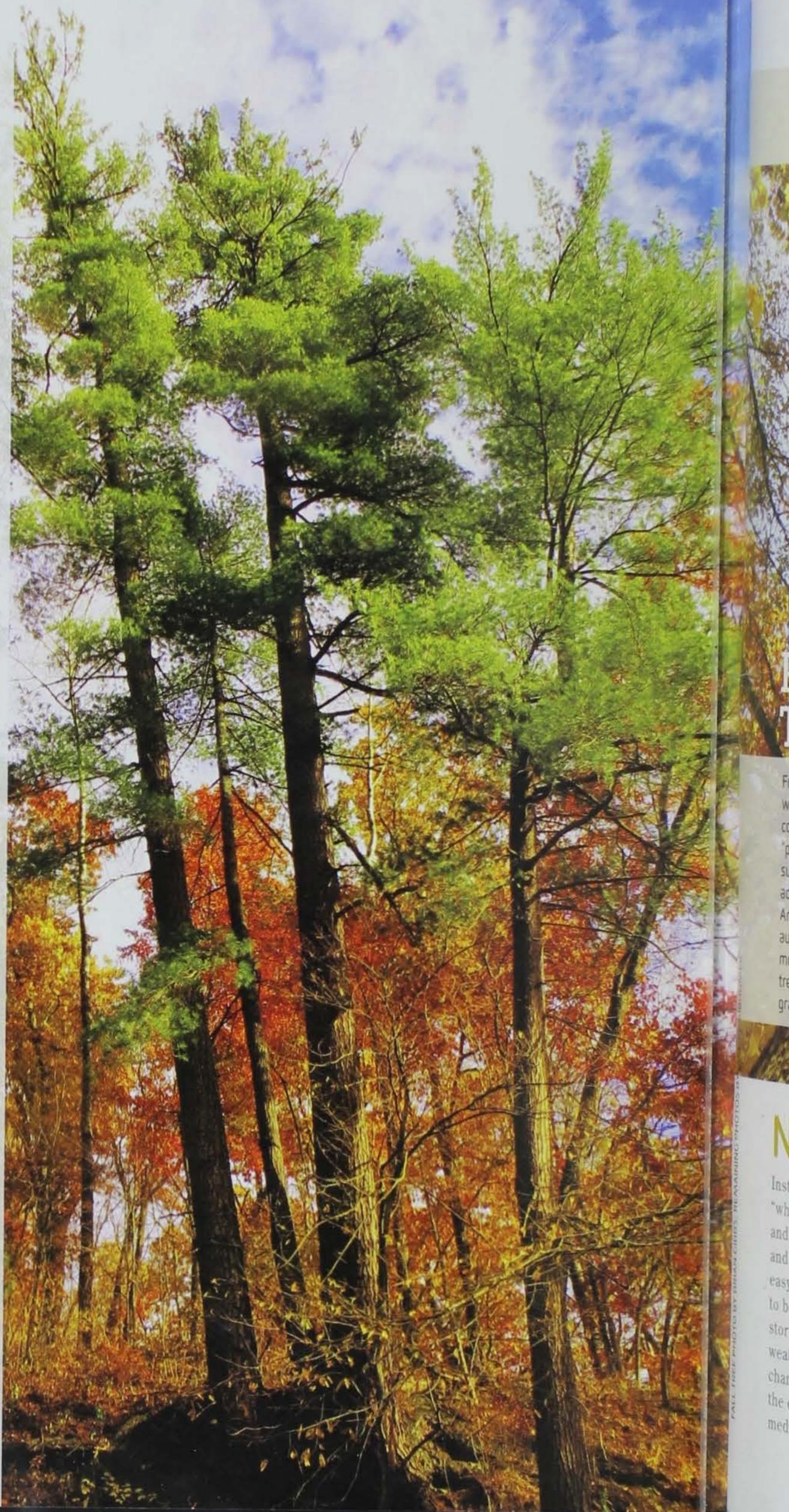
*What's ghost-like, parasitic and fleshy, and lives in the darkest corners of the woods? The Indian pipe wildflower, of course.*

### 62 Wild Cuisine

*Sugar, spice and other things nice come together in this German-inspired Dutch oven breakfast.*

#### ABOUT THIS PHOTO

Saved from the icy plows of the last glacial movement some 12,000 years ago, the Driftless Area of northeast Iowa is an ancient landscape characterized by rugged topography, sinkholes, springs and caves. Explore this unique, geological phenomenon on page 42. **PHOTO BY BRIAN GIBBS**



FALL PAGE PHOTO BY BRIAN GIBBS; REMAINING PHOTOS BY

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

## Fall Photography Tips

For best photos of fall colors, shoot on overcast days when lighting is even, soft and won't wash out the bright colors. In fact, the warm colors of fall leaves contrast and "pop" against softer light. For best photos during brightly sunlit conditions, shoot early and late in the day to take advantage of a warm sidelight beaming through the trees. And don't just focus on trees—the forest floor come late autumn is strewn with colorful leaves juxtaposed against mossy rocks, calm water and gnarled tree roots. Besides trees, look for mushrooms, bright colored shrubs and tall grasses as they take on warm hues.

FALL TREE PHOTO BY BRIAN GIBBS; REMAINING PHOTOS BY MIKE ZWEIBOHMER

## No Poppin' Bottles

Instead of bringing 20 tiny bottles of medicines for all the "what-ifs" of camping, get a weekly pill organizer or two and label the days with the medicines you want to bring and their expiration dates. This keeps all your remedies easy to find, and you can easily see when any slot needs to be refilled. Just don't store it in the garage, as weather and humidity changes can lower the effectiveness of medicines over time.



## Clean Hands MAKE Warm Hands

Hand sanitizer, now a staple item for many campers, also makes a convenient fire starter. Add a few squirts of sanitizer to tinder or kindling at damp, dewy times to help get a campfire started.



## Toothpaste Buttons

Another full-size thing you don't need to bring— toothpaste. Make single-serving toothpaste buttons by squeezing out the amount you regularly use on a plate and sprinkling it with baking soda. Let dry overnight and store in a waterproof container. To use, simply pop a button in your mouth and allow it to rehydrate, then brush. This only works with paste varieties, not gel.



## MY IOWA FISHING LICENSE IS SUSPENDED, BUT I CAN STILL FISH IN OTHER STATES?

**Most likely not.** Iowa is one of 45 members in the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, which allows states to recognize hunting, fishing and trapping suspensions committed across the country. Of the five states that have not yet joined, Delaware, Hawaii and Massachusetts are in the process, New Jersey introduced legislation to join earlier this year and Nebraska reciprocates other states' license suspensions regardless of compact membership status.

"When someone gets their license suspended in Iowa, we send them a letter," says conservation officer Aron Arthur. "With that, we include a notice that the person may be suspended from hunting or fishing in other states, and a list of contact information for authorities in those states who can tell them more. From there, it's that individual's responsibility to obey state laws."

While the compact attempts to penalize violators at a consistent level across the nation, Arthur says it's

important to check a state's rules if you're unsure. Some have higher penalties, such as revoking multiple privileges for a single suspension or revoking hunting and fishing privileges for littering.

In Iowa, hunting, trapping and fishing licenses are treated separately, so even if someone who commits an offense has a combination license, they are only suspended from one section of privileges. Most suspensions are for multiple offenses, liquidated damages, or failure to appear in court, and last one to three years. To lift the suspension, a violator can pay the fees for damages or failure to appear in court, but in a multiple offense case, a violator must simply wait out the suspension.

"The compact helps to link enforcement efforts nationwide, and it keeps people accountable," Arthur says. "But most importantly, it protects our wildlife by preventing people from visiting and committing violations without any repercussions when they get home."



## Ask THE Expert *How do monarchs know which way to go during migration?*

It's no secret monarch butterflies migrate more than 2,000 miles to the warmth of central Mexico. While researchers know from previous work that monarchs factor in time of day and sun's position to find their southerly route, how the butterfly's brain receives and processes the information was unknown.

Now, scientists think they have cracked the secret of the internal, genetically-encoded monarch compass, thanks to a University of Washington study.

Monarchs use their large, complex eyes to monitor the sun's position, which alone is insufficient to determine direction. Each butterfly must also combine that with the time of day to know where to go. Fortunately, like most animals, including humans, monarchs possess an internal clock based on the rhythmic expression of key genes. For the study, published in the journal *Cell Reports*, researchers recorded signals from antennae nerves in monarchs as they transmitted clock information to the brain as well as light information from the eyes.

"We created a model that incorporated this information—how the antennae and eyes send this information to the brain," says Eli Shlizerman, a member of the study team and the report's lead author. "Our goal was to model what type of control mechanism would be at work within the brain, and then asked whether our model could guarantee sustained navigation in the southwest direction."

In their model, two neural mechanisms—one inhibitory and one excitatory—controlled signals from clock genes in the antennae. Their model had a similar system in place to discern the sun's position based on signals from the eyes. The balance between these control mechanisms would help the monarch brain decipher which direction was southwest. Based on their model, it also appears that when making course corrections, monarchs don't simply take the shortest turn to get back on route. Their model includes a unique feature—a separation point that controls whether the monarch turned right or left to head in the southwest

direction. Additional studies would need to confirm whether the researchers' model is consistent with monarch butterfly brain anatomy, physiology and behavior. So far, aspects of their model, such as the separation point, seem consistent with observed behaviors.

Their model also suggests a simple explanation why monarch butterflies are able to reverse course in the spring and head northeast back to the United States and Canada. The information about the clock and the sun's position would simply need to reverse direction.

"And when that happens, their compass points northeast instead of southwest," says Shlizerman. "It's a simple, robust system to explain how these butterflies—generation after generation—make this remarkable migration."



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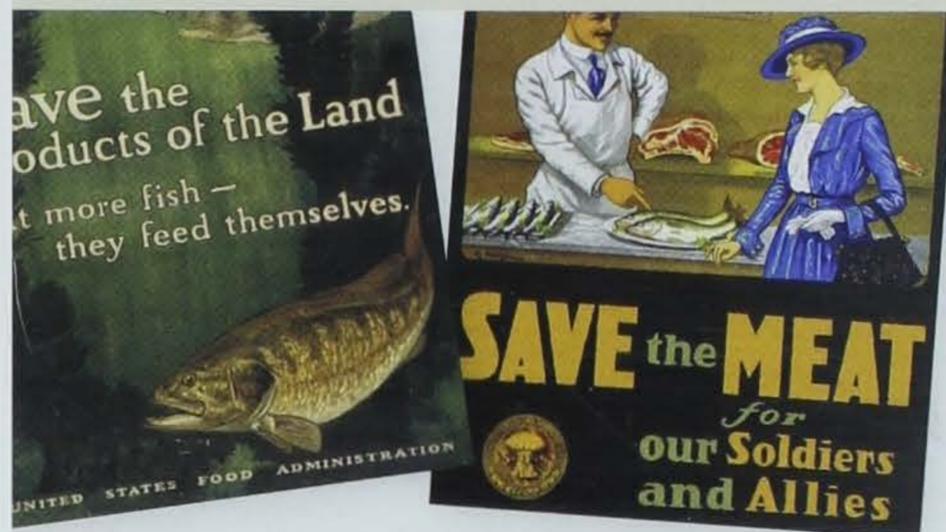
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UL6A

## Together OUTDOOR FIT

BY TIM LANE

### AND EVENTS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



outside Yellow River State Forest in Allamakee County. It was hit and killed by a car a week later.

awake in some and fear in others. While we no longer have

breeding populations of these species, expanding populations in neighboring states increase the chances of receiving visits from these wanderers. Able to cover great distances quickly, they typically move on.

In the case of bears, most confirmed sightings have been of 2- to 3-year-old males, according to DNR biologist Vince Evelsizer, who tracks large furbearing visitors. While other large carnivores—like mountain lions and wolves—wander into the state after being kicked out of their habitat or rejected by their pack—black bears are simply nomadic animals out for an adventure or new food source.

“It’s natural for them to pioneer a new area,” Evelsizer says. “Food is also on their agenda.”

With bear populations expanding in Minnesota and Wisconsin, northeast Iowa’s hilly woods are just like home. Sightings the past three years have risen to five or six a year. Although there is no evidence of breeding populations in Iowa, that could change.

“Of the three large visitors, black bears are the most likely to establish a small breeding population in Iowa,” he says.

BEAR PHOTO BY BRIAN GIBBS

As I write this, the city of Orlando and the nation mourns. In the previous week a stalker killed a talented 22 year-old singer (Christina Grimmie), another deeply disturbed individual attacked hundreds in a night club. I mention this because during that same week, I was contemplating a new study that indicates city dwellers have a higher risk for anxiety, depression and other mental illnesses than people living outside urban centers. The study measured interactions with nature and indicators of stress, anxiety and mental illness and found evidence that a walk in the park may soothe the mind and, in the process, change the workings of our brains in ways that improve our mental health.”

I in no way wish to say nature could have intervened in these extreme cases of alienation, hate, despair and lack of empathy. I do suggest that the environment I find myself in as I contemplate the study could not avoid contemplating the nature of such heinous acts.

As our culture becomes more and more urban and time outdoors evaporates, there is also a growing body of research detailing a direct correlation between access to green space and mental health. Gregory Bratman, a graduate student from Stanford, and his colleagues found that “volunteers who walked briefly through a lush, green portion of the Stanford campus were more attentive and happier afterward than volunteers who strolled for the same amount of time near heavy traffic.”

Such studies do not examine or explain why. So we do not fully understand the neurological mechanisms that are at work or play here. But we do know nature matters. And not only does it matter...it is also patriotic.

In addition to reading the aforementioned study I am currently mesmerized by a stunning collection of WWI American posters displayed in the book *Wake Up, America!* A century ago the poster took on some of the heavy lifting now done by Facebook and other social media. These visual pieces of art are still inspiring, informative and amazingly vibrant. I expected all of that, but I was surprised that the first one I came to deal with was about fish and fishing. As it turns out fishing was a very patriotic thing to do. I have to admit I have never had the patience required for fishing. But then I never knew that it was vital to the national interest.

Other posters celebrated gardens, eating less fat and meat and avoiding waste. Everyone it seems was very directly engaged and everything counted. In fact, a federal agency, the U.S. Food Administration, was created and run by Herbert Hoover that encouraged more fruit and veggies and less sugar and fat. Still good advice, and as we learn more and more about just being in nature, so is fishing.

**TIM LANE** is a nationally recognized authority on public health and physical activity. He is past president of the Iowa Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

# Myth Busters

BY MARIAH GRIFFITH

## MY IOWA FISHING LICENSE BUT I CAN STILL FISH IN

**M**ost likely not. Iowa is one of 45 members in the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, which allows states to recognize hunting, fishing and trapping suspensions committed across the country. Of the five states that have not yet joined, Delaware, Hawaii and Massachusetts are in the process, New Jersey introduced legislation to join earlier this year and Nebraska reciprocates other states' license suspensions regardless of compact membership status.

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# IOWA OUTDOORS

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## Ask THE Expert *How do monarchs*

It's no secret monarch butterflies migrate more than 2,000 miles to the warmth of central Mexico. While researchers know from previous work that monarchs factor in time of day and sun's position to find their southerly route, how the butterfly's brain receives and processes the information was unknown.

Now, scientists think they have cracked the secret of the internal, genetically-encoded monarch compass, thanks to a University of Washington study.

Monarchs use their large, complex eyes to monitor the sun's position, which alone is insufficient to determine direction. Each butterfly must also combine that with the time of day to know where to go. Fortunately, like most animals, including humans, monarchs possess an internal clock based on the rhythmic expression of key genes. For the study, published in the journal *Cell Reports*, researchers recorded signals from antennae nerves in monarchs as they transmitted clock information to the brain as well as light information from the eyes.

"We created a model that incorporated this information—how the antennae and eyes send this information to the brain," says Eli Shlizerman, a member of the study team and the report's lead author. "Our goal was to model what type of control mechanism would be at work within the brain, and then asked whether our model could guarantee sustained navigation in the southwest direction."

In their model, two neural mechanisms—one inhibitory and one excitatory—controlled signals from clock genes in the antennae. Their model had a similar system in place to discern the sun's position based on signals from the eyes. The balance between these control mechanisms would help the monarch brain decipher which direction was southwest. Based on their model, it also appears that when making course corrections, monarchs don't simply take the shortest turn to get back on route. Their model includes a unique feature—a separation point that controls whether the monarch turned right or left to head in the southwest

direction. Additional studies would need to confirm whether the researchers' model is consistent with monarch butterfly brain anatomy, physiology and behavior. So far, aspects of their model, such as the separation point, seem consistent with observed behaviors.

Their model also suggests a simple explanation why monarch butterflies are able to reverse course in the spring and head northeast back to the United States and Canada. The information about the clock and the sun's position would simply need to reverse direction.

"And when that happens, their compass points northeast instead of southwest," says Shlizerman. "It's a simple, robust system to explain how these butterflies—generation after generation—make this remarkable migration."



## ACTIVITIES, TIPS AND EVENTS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

### 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.

LUKE FROM LANSING ASKS:

*This summer, my social media feeds were swamped with pictures of a bear spotted in Iowa. Where are bears coming from?*



Photographer Brian Gibbs was on assignment for *Iowa Outdoors* magazine when he captured this photo of a bear wandering just outside Yellow River State Forest in Allamakee County. It was hit and killed by a car a week later.

Large mammals once native to Iowa have been gone from our landscape for close to a century and a half. Occasionally, they show up on our "doorstep," instilling awe in some and fear in others. While we no longer have

breeding populations of these species, expanding populations in neighboring states increase the chances of receiving visits from these wanderers. Able to cover great distances quickly, they typically move on.

In the case of bears, most confirmed sightings have been of 2- to 3-year-old males, according to DNR biologist Vince Evelsizer, who tracks large furbearing visitors. While other large carnivores—like mountain lions and wolves—wander into the state after being kicked out of their habitat or rejected by their pack—black bears are simply nomadic animals out for an adventure or new food source.

"It's natural for them to pioneer a new area," Evelsizer says. "Food is also on their agenda."

With bear populations expanding in Minnesota and Wisconsin, northeast Iowa's hilly woods are just like home. Sightings the past three years have risen to five or six a year. Although there is no evidence of breeding populations in Iowa, that could change.

"Of the three large visitors, black bears are the most likely to establish a small breeding population in Iowa," he says.



As I write this, the city of Orlando and the nation mourns. In the previous week a stalker killed a talented 22 year-old singer (Christina Grimmie), and another deeply disturbed individual attacked hundreds in a night club. I mention this because during that same week, I was contemplating a new study that indicates city dwellers have a higher risk for anxiety, depression and other mental illnesses than people living outside urban centers.

The study measured interactions with nature and indicators of stress, anxiety and mental illness and found evidence that a walk in the park "may soothe the mind and, in the process, change the workings of our brains in ways that improve our mental health."

I in no way wish to say nature could have intervened in these extreme cases of alienation, hate, despair and lack of empathy. I do suggest that the environment I find myself in as I contemplate the study could not avoid contemplating the nature of such heinous acts.

As our culture becomes more and more urban and time outdoors evaporates, there is also a growing body of research detailing a direct correlation between access to green space and mental health. Gregory Bratman, a graduate student from Stanford, and his colleagues found that "volunteers who walked briefly through a lush, green portion of the Stanford campus were more attentive and happier afterward than volunteers who strolled for the same amount of time near heavy traffic."

Such studies do not examine or explain why. So we do not fully understand the neurological mechanisms that are at work or play here. But we do know nature matters. And not only does it matter...it is also patriotic.

In addition to reading the aforementioned study I am currently mesmerized by a stunning collection of WWI American posters displayed in the book *Wake Up, America!* A century ago the poster took on some of the heavy lifting now done by Facebook and other social media. These visual pieces of art are still inspiring, informative and amazingly vibrant. I expected all of that, but I was surprised that the first one I came to deal with fish and fishing. As it turns out fishing was a very patriotic thing to do. I have to admit I have never had the patience required for fishing. But then I never knew that it was vital to the national interest.

Other posters celebrated gardens, eating less fat and meat and avoiding waste. Everyone it seems was very directly engaged and everything counted. In fact, a federal agency, the U.S. Food Administration, was created and run by Herbert Hoover that encouraged more fruit and veggies and less sugar and fat. Still good advice, and as we learn more and more about just being in nature, so is fishing.

TIM LANE is a nationally recognized authority on public health and physical activity. He is past president of the Iowa Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

BEAR PHOTO BY BRIAN GIBBS

# Together *HALF DAY ON \$50*

BY MARIAH GRIFFITH PHOTOS BY DNR STAFF



## GET YOUR HUNT ON

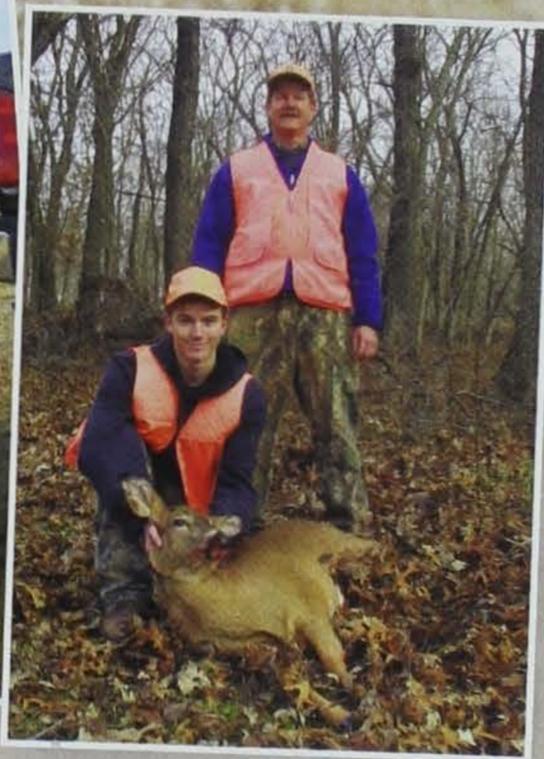
**H**unting can be a great family activity or a solo adventure. Stroll through tall grass, hear the explosive rising cackle of pheasants, thrill at the thunderous gobble of a male wild turkey, see a few majestic deer—and maybe get the chance to take one home. That opportunity already exists on scores of acres near you, thanks in part to landowners who open their property through the Iowa Habitat and Access Program, or IHAP. Through this program, landowners receive

funding for conservation projects that build better wildlife habitat in exchange for allowing public hunting from Sept. 1 through May 31.

“In a state like Iowa, which has so much privately-owned land, this idea helps with hunters’ primary problem—finding places to hunt,” says Jim Colbert of Ames. Colbert has been hunting IHAP sites since the project’s inception. “New sites are always worth checking out,” he says, “and from what I’ve seen, the habitat

### **The Iowa Habitat Access Program**

is continually working to improve and expand land available for public hunting, but at this time the program has obligated all available funding and cannot enroll more sites. Program coordinator Kelly Smith says enrollment could resume within the next few years if the program secures further funding, such as from a federal grant.



management means they just get better over time.”

The first 10 IHAP sites became available for hunting in 2011, and since then the number has swelled to 175 properties spanning more than 25,000 acres across 51 counties. Each site is a minimum of 40 acres, providing ample space for even large hunting parties, and maps of each are available online with notes about potential game species. Sites are

easily identified by an orange IHAP sign marking the walk-in area.

“We really want hunters to know we’ve created this opportunity,” says Kelly Smith, DNR private lands program coordinator. “We’ve got sites all over the state, and most people should be able to access at least one in an hour’s drive or less.”

To learn more, see maps and find locations, visit [iowadnr.gov/IHAP](http://iowadnr.gov/IHAP).

### 8 Tidbits for the Trip

**1. PAPERS READY:** IHAP sites are patrolled by state conservation officers, so be sure to have proper licensing and tags. Visit in season only.

**2. WEAR BOOTS MADE FOR WALKING:** All sites are walk-in only and fairly large, so wear good footwear to keep your feet warm and comfy.

**3. BRING THE DOG:** Animals trained to hunt pheasants or other upland game are allowed on IHAP sites. Untrained pets are not.

**4. LEADING THE BLIND:** Blinds may be constructed on IHAP property, but only from willows on that property. Use of an existing willow blind is first-come, first-serve.

**5. DITCH THE TRAPPINGS:** IHAP sites are open for public hunting only, so leave the fishing and trapping gear at home.

**6. LEAVE A NOTE:** Hunter survey cards and a collection box are prominently located next to the IHAP sign at each property. Fill out a card per site per hunting party per day to help the DNR improve the experience.

**7. SAFETY AND COURTESY:** Respect landowners and state laws by staying at least 200 feet from any dwelling or livestock structure on IHAP land. No weapon may be discharged in this area. However, if game you’ve wounded goes within this radius or to an adjoining property, you may follow its trail to recover the animal. Make sure to leave your gun or bow behind if crossing this zone or adjacent property.

**8. STASH THE TRASH:** Keep IHAP properties clean by picking up litter or spent ammunition shells. The landowner (and the next hunter) will appreciate it.

# Out of the Way Fall Color

Autumn brings a welcoming crispness to the air. It's officially fall in the Midwest, and fun abounds statewide for those in search of color and good times outdoors. Yes, northeast Iowa is the top hotspot for fall color, but here are some less trod places with everything from fishing to paddling and hiking. So get out—there is much to explore!



## Hike with Naturalists at Fort Defiance State Park

Burnt amber, succulent plum, deep mahogany—the vibrant tones of fall leaves jump off the trees.

Join the Dickinson County Conservation Board in a colorful view at Fort Defiance State Park. Meet at the Dickinson County Nature Center in Okoboji at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 27, and carpool to the park in Estherville.

Fort Defiance State Park is the perfect place to explore autumnal colors, with its 191 wooded acres full of a variety of trees, from hawthorn to plum to locust to oaks.

“It’s a hidden area that is close to the Iowa Great Lakes that has a good variety of trees and hiking trails,” says naturalist Charles Vigdal. “I like to go there in the fall because of the foliage and the colors.”

Dickinson County naturalists will take hikers along the park interpretive trail, which has stops focusing on different species of vegetation and trees at Fort Defiance. Hikers will learn how to identify plants, plus get a lesson on park ecology.

All ages are invited to tromp through the woods, breathe in the fall scent and watch for birds, deer, turkeys and other wildlife. You might even spot a pileated woodpecker, or a rarer avian species.

“Our Hike the Wild program gets people outdoors to areas that hikers may not have been to before,” Vigdal says, adding it allows people the opportunity to explore parks with professionals that can talk about the flora and fauna.

Hike the Wild is held year-round, with another fall hike set for 9:30 a.m., Oct. 25, at the Diamond Lake Complex, where shallow lakes restorations have created a birder’s paradise. Get all the details at [dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com](http://dickinsoncountyconservationboard.com) or 712-336-6352.

# Lost In Iowa

Two anglers ply the Mississippi River near Guttenberg in Clayton County. Fall colors are an added bonus for anglers. Autumn's cooler weather prompts fish to become active and begin feeding heavily. Farther downriver in southeast Iowa, find other great spots to fish (see recommendations at right).



# Five Fantastic Fall Fishing Spots

One of Iowa's best kept secrets is excellent fall fishing. Many anglers love to fish in autumn, simply because it's a relaxing time on the water with smaller crowds and picturesque views. Much of the intense summer heat and humidity has passed, but days are still warm, making time outdoors magical. But just as importantly, cooler temperatures trigger fish to actively search for food, and that means tons-o-action on lakes, rivers and streams. Here are five fall fishing destinations:

## 1. NW Iowa—West Okoboji in Dickinson County

West Okoboji Lake, a popular tourist destination during summer, becomes an angler's paradise in the fall. Catching a fish is truly a bonus while visiting this beautiful lake. It offers great opportunities for panfish, walleye, smallmouth and largemouth bass and muskie. Take advantage of incredible aquatic vegetation lines, many rock reefs, points and dropoffs.

**OTHERS TO CONSIDER:** Silver Lake in Dickinson County and Storm Lake in Buena Vista County, both for fall walleye fishing.

## 2. SW Iowa—Little River Lake near Leon

Just an hour south of Des Moines, Little River Lake is a gem for fall fishing. The lake was recently renovated and is now in its third year of producing healthy populations of walleye, bluegill, largemouth bass and channel catfish. The lake has a small campground along its shore and is on the outskirts of Leon for easy accessibility to convenience stores and eateries.

**OTHERS TO CONSIDER:** Twelve Mile Lake and Green Valley Lake near Creston for crappie and bluegill.

## 3. NE Iowa—Decorah

Check out Trout Run Trail near Decorah for several easy-access fishing spots. Start in Decorah at the Bow String Bridge Park along highway 9 and cast your way all the way to the trout hatchery. Bring the kids and take a walking tour to view tens of thousands of trout raised here for stocking area streams. Take along a pocket full of quarters so the kids can use the coin operated dispensers to get handfuls of fish food. Then they can watch the

water surface "explode" as trout hit the floating pelleted food. Various trout waters, city and private campgrounds, small shops, restaurants, bike trails and the hatchery are all located within a short distance.

**OTHERS TO CONSIDER:** The DNR stocks trout in 50 eastern Iowa trout streams in September and October. See the stocking calendar at [iowadnr.gov/trout](http://iowadnr.gov/trout).

## 4. SE Iowa—Mississippi River

Fall is a tremendous time for fishing anywhere along the entire 312 miles of Iowa's "east coast" formed by the Mississippi River. Although most sites require a boat, the diversity of fish makes outings worthwhile. A couple of perennial fall favorites are south of Muscatine near Lock and Dam 17 for a secluded place to cast for walleye, or Sylvan Slough at Lock and Dam 15 near Davenport. Boat ramps are available near both locations.

**OTHERS TO CONSIDER:** Lake Belva Deer in Keokuk County for crappie, bluegill and bass, and Lost Grove Lake in Scott County, a newly renovated lake aggressively stocked the last two years.

## 5. Central Iowa—Banner Lake South, Summerset State Park

Trout fishing is not just relegated to northeast Iowa. The DNR stocks trout in Banner Lake South in Summerset State Park north of Indianola come colder fall weather. About 18 other urban lakes across Iowa are also stocked during the fall and winter months as a way to introduce more Iowans to this enjoyable fish to catch. Banner Lake South is admired for its clear water and is located on Highway 65/69 between Des Moines and Indianola.

**OTHERS TO CONSIDER:** For complete cold-weather trout stockings across Iowa, visit [iowadnr.gov/trout](http://iowadnr.gov/trout). For a complete list of places to fall fish in Iowa, including lake maps, directions and amenities, visit [iowadnr.gov/fishing](http://iowadnr.gov/fishing). A 2016 fishing license is valid through Jan. 10, 2017, and is a bargain for your leisure time at \$19 for residents, \$41 for nonresidents. Three-year, seven-day and one-day licenses are also available. Purchase online at [iowadnr.gov/license](http://iowadnr.gov/license) or 700-plus vendors statewide.

FISHING PHOTO BY BRIAN BUTTON; FALL COLOR PHOTO BY BRIAN GIBBS

# Lost In Iowa

## Iowa City Area— More Outdoors in Fall than Football

If you enjoy the great outdoors, you can't miss Lake Macbride State Park, Iowa's largest park. Its 2,180 acres welcome outdoor activities from camping and hiking to outdoor games and picnicking. A 5-mile multi-use trail on the north side of the lake connects the park to Solon and another 7 miles of hiking trails await, including one especially scenic trail that extends 1.5 miles between the beach and the lake's dam. Iowa City, Coralville and North Liberty have bountiful parks in their own right—just pull on a sweatshirt and head out to find

a new favorite place to admire the fall colors.

**HIKING:** Squire Point Trail and Woodpecker Trail are hidden gems that only the locals seem to know about, but they provide spectacular views of Coralville Lake, particularly in fall. Access Squire Point from Dubuque Street near the construction of Liberty High School in North Liberty. Woodpecker is accessible from West Overlook, closer to I-80. Learn more at [lowacitycoralville.org](http://lowacitycoralville.org).

**BICYCLING:** The Iowa River Corridor Trail is the most heavily used and longest paved trail in Iowa City, totaling about 14 miles. The North Ridge Trail runs north and south from North Liberty to Coralville. Find these trails and more, plus get maps and details for paved, single track and other bike routes statewide at [lowabikeways.com](http://lowabikeways.com).

A photograph of a sunset over a lake. The sky is a gradient of colors from dark blue at the top to a bright orange and yellow near the horizon. Silhouetted trees and a line of land are visible in the middle ground. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the sky and the trees. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

The sun sets over Lake Macbride State Park, ending a busy day of hiking, biking and other outdoor pursuits on the multiple miles of trails and nearly 2,200 acres to explore.

# Lost In Iowa

## Hit Madison County for Fall Color Hikes, Paddling and Movie-Magic

Expect vivid views and historic surprises when you hop on the rock-strewn Middle River Water Trail that starts in eastern Adair County and ends at the Holliwell Covered Bridge in Madison County. The Middle River is a scenic, narrow stream that twists and turns through a mixture of lazy rolling countryside, densely forested hills and

limestone bluffs to create a moderately challenging paddle, especially at high or low water levels. It also provides an occasional exciting chute and ledge, navigated with reasonable effort.

Most paddlers opt for a shorter stretch from the Roseman Bridge to Pammel State Park—about 8 river miles. This section weaves and snakes through the most scenic river portion in Madison County. Expect a somewhat challenging paddle as you drop through numerous chutes and ledges. You will encounter more rock bluffs and longer fast-water chutes as you approach



The Roseman covered bridge, built in 1883, carried traffic for nearly 100 years. The site is also a designated put-in point for the Middle River Water Trail. If paddling, expect to meet a few people here from across the U.S. and Canada—there are usually a few fans of the movie, *Bridges of Madison County*, checking out this quiet, rural gem.

Pammel Park. The take-out is across the ford on river-left. (During periods of high water, the ford may be closed to vehicles.)

Along with the natural beauty found all around Middle River, you and your paddling partner will also enjoy historic man-made features that provide an unforgettable cultural experience. You might even feel like you've paddled into a romantic movie site, because spanning the river just happens to be two of the famous Bridges of Madison County—the Roseman and Holliwell covered bridges, both which offer convenient water trail access points.

#### **Picnic In Beautiful Pammel State Park**

When you get to Madison County's Pammel State Park, you'll have the perfect chance for a picnic after portaging around its historic river ford built in the early 1900s. After a picnic in a 1930s-era shelter built by the CCC with timber and stone on site, don't forget to inspect the Harmon Tunnel constructed in 1858 and later enlarged to become the first vehicle tunnel on a state highway in Iowa. Then hike above the tunnel and take in the fall color and woodland beauty highlighted by the park's signature limestone ridge known as the "backbone."

# Lost In Iowa

A person wearing a white cap and a dark jacket is kayaking in a red kayak on a river. The river is surrounded by trees with autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. The sky is clear and blue. The kayaker is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image, moving away from the viewer. The trees are dense and line both banks of the river.

The Middle River in Madison County offers fall color in central Iowa plus bluffs, limestone ledges and woods. Pammel State Park is a popular take out spot.

The park has been managed by the county since 1989. Get maps, directions and park amenities at [madisoncountyconservation.org](http://madisoncountyconservation.org) or call 515-462-3536.

Iowa's quaint small towns welcome visitors near and far for weekend festivals and outdoor adventures. Here is one fall expedition that mixes paddling, hiking and small town attractions found nowhere else. Head to Winterset to explore charming downtown shops, a cafe with the best blueberry crisp and a fall festival. But unlike other places, Winterset has a romantic touch of Hollywood wrapped around it.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Covered Bridges of Madison County feature six wooden bridges that were the prominent setting for the Robert James Waller novel *The Bridges of Madison County*, plus

the movie and now Broadway musical of the same name.

Constructed between 1870 and 1884 (yes, more than 135 years ago), the historic covered bridges have inspired professions of love, heartbreak and even rumors of ghosts. The "haunted" Roseman Bridge has various mysterious stories surrounding it, including a bride left at the altar and a jailhouse escapee's disappearance in front of two county sheriffs. Today, the bridge is a popular put in point on the water trail for paddlers heading downstream to take out at Pammel State Park. The Holliwell Bridge, the longest at 122 feet, remains in its original site over the Middle River. Seeing the bridge from the vantage of a kayak or canoe affords a unique perspective. The Cedar Bridge is the only one still open to vehicles. In the movie, it provides the scene



where Francesca (played by Meryl Streep) goes to meet Robert (played by Clint Eastwood) to help him take photos. After your paddle or hike, you'll be hankering for something to eat, so stop at the Northside Café for homemade lunch, dessert and a quick selfie where Clint Eastwood sat during the filming of the movie. It is on the town square.

A two-minute walk away you'll find the John Wayne Birthplace & Museum. The \$2 million museum opened in 2015 just steps away from his birthhome, an homage to the American icon, Academy Award winner and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient.

### **Colorful Fall Festivals, Wines and Ciders**

The annual Madison County Covered Bridge Festival

(Oct. 8-9, 2016) offers the perfect escape from big city life where you can slow down and appreciate the tart sweetness of a caramel apple on a stick. The festival features a parade, arts and crafts, vendors and more. ([Mccoveredbridgefestival.org](http://Mccoveredbridgefestival.org) or 800-298-6119 or 515-462-1185.)

The county is also becoming known for its wineries and hard cider. So after paddling or hiking, tour wineries such as the Madison County Winery, Covered Bridges Winery and Two Saints Winery. A new venture, The Cidery, is the first of its kind in Iowa built in a post and beam building adjacent to its apple orchard with more than 30 varieties of heirloom, cider and dessert apple trees used to make hard cider. (For locations and hours visit [Madisoncounty.com](http://Madisoncounty.com) or 515-462-1185). 🍷



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# THE PERFECT DAY

BY DAN MAGNESON

For a lot of hunters, there is one special time among all of your hunting trips that stands out as having been perfect, a day of pure bliss when all the stars line up just right and everything connects at just the right time and in just the right place.

During the 1976 pheasant hunting season, I first discovered and subsequently got permission to hunt a huge sprawling, swampy area bordering a small but very lengthy creek. It sure held a lot of pheasants. That mired and matted grass was heavily pocked with those telltale cozy, dropping-laden depressions that pheasants leave behind. While there were great numbers of birds, I had trouble connecting with the 20-gauge single-shot I received a few years hence. That gun must have fit me poorly, as it seemed for as much experience I was getting and for all the shots taken, more birds should have fallen than actually did.

The following spring marked my high school graduation, and based on a friend's enthusiastic endorsement, I pooled together all of my cash gifts and bought a Remington Model 870 Wingmaster pump action shotgun, also in 20-gauge, with a modified choke and a ventilated rib that provided a nice flat sighting plane.

The way this sleek little gun was balanced and just generally handled—coupled with an action that was simultaneously slick, smooth and solid—can only be described as absolutely exquisite. And just like my friend had promised, this particular make and model turned out to be the “hittingest” shotgun I could imagine, a sort of magic wand that instantly transformed me into a far better shot than I probably was. With it I leap-frogged right over my prior performance with the former single-shot 20-gauge.

Now I was finally ready for those pheasants!

There were flies in the ointment, however. Hunting trips throughout November 1977 yielded just a few birds here and there (but which I could thankfully now hit). Competition for hunting spots seemed especially fierce that autumn. Countless times I arrived at a favored location only to find someone already hunting (This was back when local restaurants were still jam-packed during the November portion of pheasant season, especially at breakfast time, and parking lots of local motels were chock-full of out-of-state license plates). And to top it all off, I didn't have a bird dog either.

That aforementioned area I discovered during the 1976 pheasant season had an ocean of corn surrounding it, and frustratingly, it still stood unharvested well into the 1977 pheasant season. This made hunting extremely difficult as pheasants simply slipped into the cover of the still-standing corn and ran down the rows to elude pursuing hunters.

And it was just full of pheasants, too. All the surrounding farms had completed their harvest much

## 1977-78 Iowa Hunting & Trapping Regulations



Respect private property; ask the farmer first.  
The State Conservation Commission of Iowa  
Certifies that Daniel Marlin Magnuson, Iowa, is hereby licensed to  
Street 1008 S. 21st St. City Clarinda  
County page 5 fish and hunt during the license year ending Dec 31, 1977, according to  
State law and departmental rules of the Conservation Commission.  
Occupation of Licensee Student  
Issued in page County, Date 1-10, 19 77  
County Recorder for Depository Helen James, Director  
I accept this license with the understanding that it is not transferable, under  
penalty. My signature certifies that I am a resident of the State of Iowa and  
that all statements contained herein are true.  
Age 18 Hgt. 5'4" Wgt. 105 Eyes Gray Hair Red Sex M  
Signature Dan Magnuson  
1977 ORIGINAL Res. Combination Fishing & Hunting License No. 03-110487 \$8.00



PHOTO: JEFFREY L. HARRIS

earlier, and those particular pheasants had simply piled on over into this giant and still-untouched corn.

Early in the morning of Thursday, Dec. 8, 1977, I awoke to find about 3 inches of snow had fallen overnight, the season's first.

It was also my day off, and reviewing my options, I decided what the heck, I'd go try that slough surrounded on either side by those gigantic cornfields anyway. Maybe the snow would help me because any pheasant tracks were certain to be fresh.

It was just getting light when I drove by that area, and to say I was ecstatic when I saw all that corn had finally been harvested was an understatement.

I was soon knocking at the door of the farmhouse where the owner resided. "I just finished up with that place yesterday," he told me.

Apparently reading my mind, he next said, "I don't think anyone else has been in there yet." Then, with a generous grin, he added, "Go ahead!"

I drove back toward that favored cover. It was lighter outside now and the heavily-overcast sky matched the mushy and sloppy gravel road beneath, both being about the color of an old lead fishing sinker.

That enormous swampy slough beacons like an oasis—a big mosaic of cane-like, rough-hewn and grayish-ivory-beige giant ragweed, with its texture like that of fine sandpaper. Interwoven were cinnamon hues of gnarly knotweed and the blond color of weather-worn foxtail grass. Little islands of cattails in marshy spots interspersed the scene, and the honey-amber glow of shattered cornstalks stuck out of the snow all around.

This sight stretched for hundreds of yards, but looking at it with my excited, youthful and thus magnifying eyes, it seemed like it stretched to the horizon.

I quietly eased the car door shut and walked in to begin my hunt, feeding those banana-yellow 20-gauge shells into the magazine.

It didn't take long to find pheasants. Most of the roosters were young-of-the-year birds and having never experienced snow, seemed a bit flummoxed. As I was elbowing through a dense thicket of giant ragweed, whose resistant stalks rattled and snapped quite noisily as I forcefully bulldozed my way, a cackling and coppery streak burst skyward, and he crumpled at my shot.

But the pheasant season had been open for a little better than a month, and it showed; the great majority of birds were flushing wild. Still, as morning wore on, it was quite a spectacle; for an ardent and passionate young pheasant hunter just burning with fire and fervor, an odyssey seems to more accurately describe the experience.

In terms of sheer numbers, I'd never before witnessed anything like it. All told, flushing pheasants likely numbered far into the hundreds that day.

And it marked the only pheasant hunt I've been on—



before or since—when roosters seemed to outnumber hens.

The hills above the northwesterly side of that slough were curvaceously lined with the weediest terraces imaginable; pheasants were periodically flushing from them that morning too. As those far-flying birds alternately beat their wings and then glided, the pumping wings made that characteristic squeaking-creaking-whistling sort of sound, like they had hinges in dire need of grease. Had it not been for that sound, I might not have seen as many birds, because most of them flushed without any vocal fanfare that a rooster so often exhibits when startled at close range.

Later on, during January and February, wind-whipped and drifting snow settling on the lower and sheltered leeward portions of those terraces developed great overhanging curls. They resembled something like whitened ocean surf from the sides and like goofy, leering and malformed grins when viewed from below.

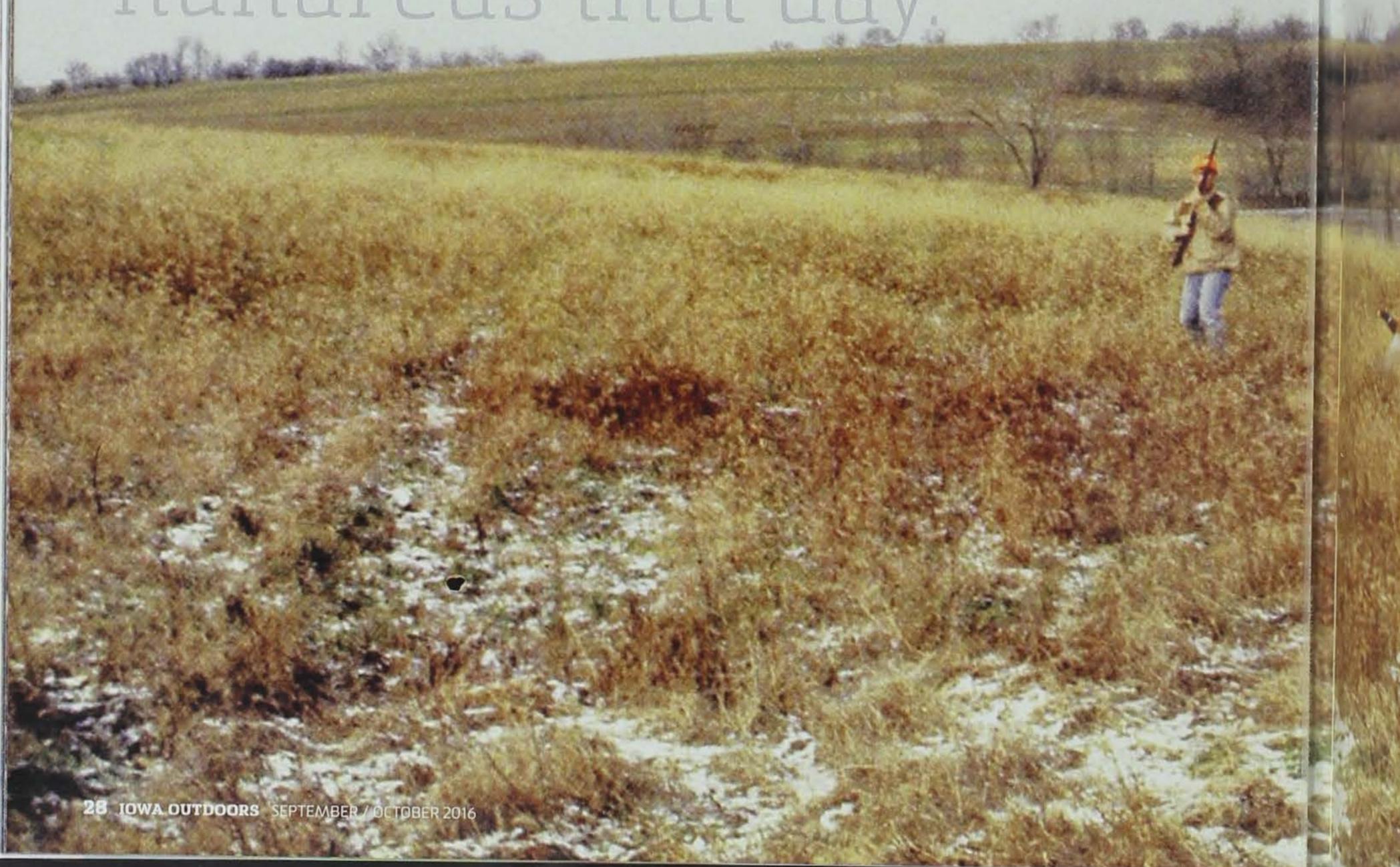
My second shot dropped my second rooster as it flushed from the far side of a small pocket of cattails.

The action slowed down as the morning grew late, though I still witnessed plenty of far-flushing birds. Way off in the distance, I saw still others on open ground, probably feeding, seemingly oblivious to my approaching presence. With a head and neck shorter than their long tails, they looked like little checkmarks on a white piece of paper.

The "noon whistle" sounded in Clarinda—a short blast on a rotating siren—and I stopped for lunch, opening the action of and propping my shotgun against an old lichen-freckled wooden fence post holding up some ancient rust-encrusted barbed wire. I never ceased to be astonished by how far into surrounding countryside that siren penetrated. I positioned the bead into a crack in the post to keep the gun from sliding sideways, and the butt of the stock made a squishing-groaning sound as I pushed it down into the snow to better secure it.

Quite inadvertently, but nonetheless fittingly—given what was turning into this most special of special days—I had packed my favorite lunch: a pair of tuna sandwiches. And not your typical tuna sandwiches, either, with the

"In terms of sheer numbers, I'd never before witnessed anything like it. All told, flushing pheasants likely numbered far into the hundreds that day."





little chunks of celery and pickle relish. I used water-packed tuna and mayonnaise per the standard practice, but then departed from the traditional recipe by instead substituting sliced black olives, sliced green olives and slivered almonds into the mix. When coupled with wheat bread, what a great-tasting sandwich.

And contained within a vacuum flask, my beverage of choice was just as yummy: rich, hot chocolate, so hot the marshmallows had melted and macerated their way throughout the liquid.

Evidently, I was the only hunter abroad that day. I had heard no shots at all save for my own.

When I landed my first post-high school job, I had looked at having only Thursdays off (instead of the usual weekend of Saturday and Sunday) as a true impediment to having fun. After all, you miss out on the camaraderie of the Saturday opening day and having a schedule that synchronizes with that of most of your regular hunting partners.

But it didn't take long to realize there were benefits to my idiosyncratic work schedule. For one, by later in the week, the birds had had time to settle down a bit after the disrupting influence of the previous weekend's hunters. While there were often some hunters afield on Fridays, not very many were out on Thursdays. This was especially true as the season wore on. And since my work schedule often left me hunting solo, I soon discovered that coupled with an area similar to that where I now found myself—far from roads and without livestock or buildings—the lack of hunting partners meant I could shoot at any time in any direction without danger, so long as it was a rooster during legal hunting hours.

The overcast day meant you could always tell roosters from hens, as there was no potential blinding effect caused by birds flying toward a low and horizon-hugging sun. And finally, the lack of combined tall and thick cover allowed for a shot so long as the bird flushed within shotgun range.

After my leisurely lunch, the afternoon wore on with most pheasants still flushing wild, far out of gun range. Winter solstice was just around the corner, and with daylight already short, I was worrying I might not get a chance at a third bird, a sort of feat dogless hunters don't enjoy as often as their canine-accompanied counterparts. And it represented a feat I had yet to experience. I had never before bagged my limit of roosters and was hopeful I would get to experience it at least this once, if never again.

Finally, as with the first bird I bagged that day, a third rooster flushed at the edge of a thick patch of giant ragweed, and like both previous birds, dropped stone-dead into the snow beneath at the shot.

Three shots for the day and three rooster pheasants to show for it—quite a good feeling.

While hunting, I used to carry a pocketwatch secured to a belt loop via a shoestring. Glancing at it, I realized shooting hours were drawing to a close, although there was still a chance to pick up a bonus bobwhite quail.

I trudged back to where I had parked that morning—a long hike—and my feet and leg muscles already had that tired feeling. But it was a pleasant feeling too, with a gamebag that carried a satisfying heft and the gratifying sight of pheasant tail feathers protruding out the sides.

It was already dark by the time I arrived at home and finished cleaning the birds under a porch light still equipped with a yellow bug bulb from last summer. The constant and powerful hum of distant grain dryers pleasantly permeated the air.

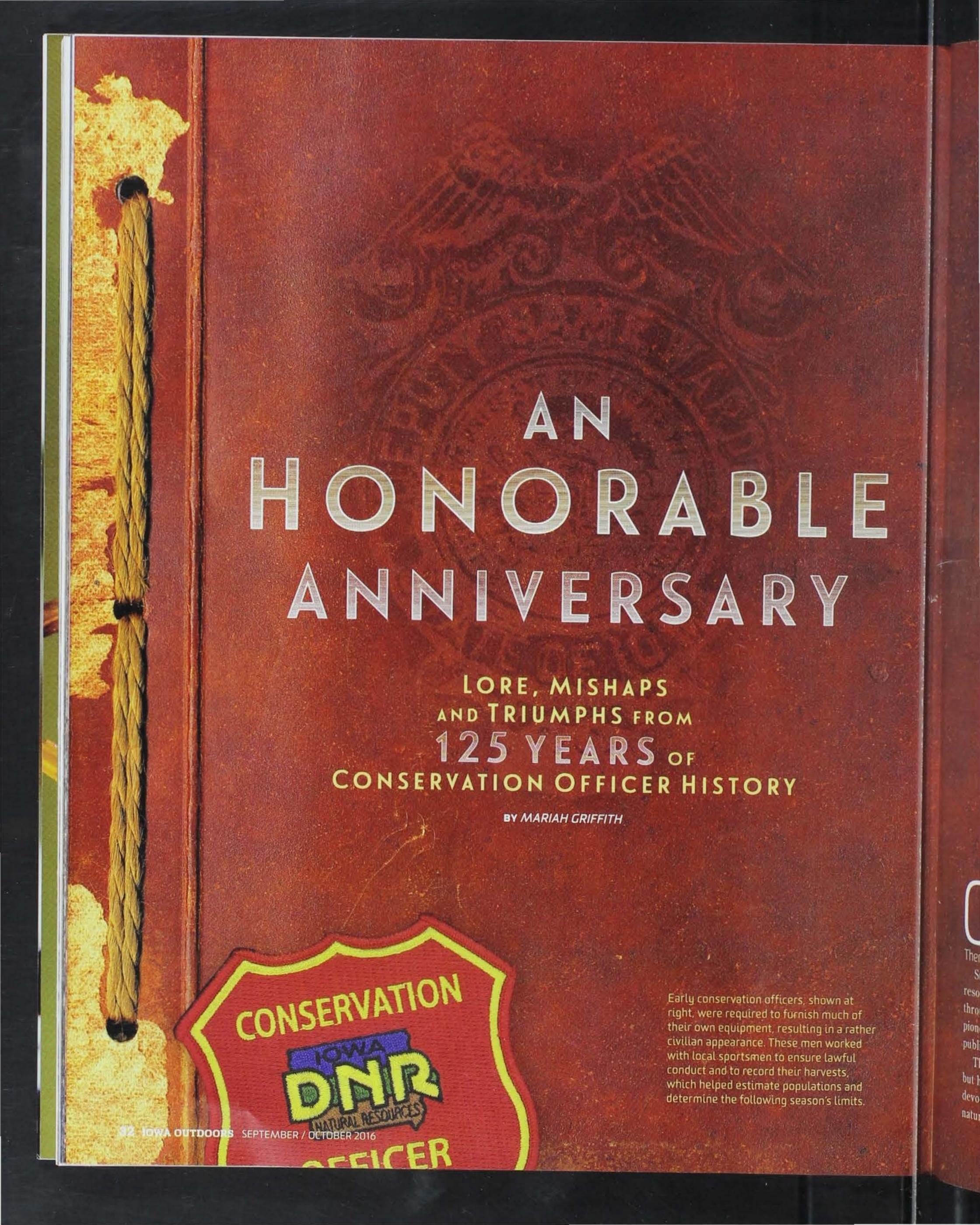
That day took place more than 38 years ago, but I knew then as surely as I know now that I'd never forget that singularly-perfect day. And while I have had many other great hunting trips since then, this one still stands as one of my very richest experiences and ranks among the most treasured memories of all my times spent in the great outdoors.

And for each and every yearning Iowa kid who, like I did, just lives for the hunt—you know, the type that can't sleep the night before opening day—I hope someday they will still have the opportunity to experience a very magical and magnificent day—just as I did way back when on Dec. 8, 1977. 🐓





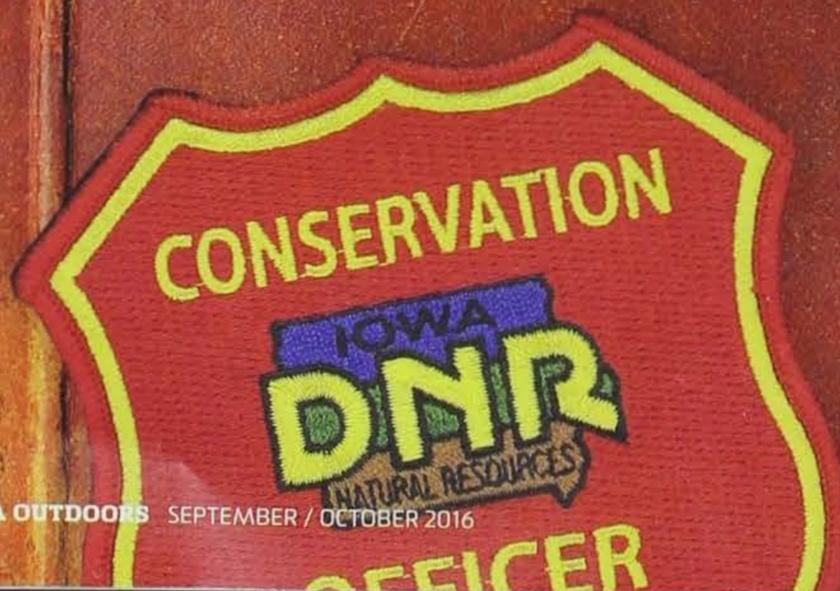
The writer, Dan Magneson, on Dec. 8, 1977 after bagging three birds on what is forever etched into his mind as "The Perfect Day." He is standing in front of his dad's 1970 Ford with custom pinstripes. While Magneson fondly recalls driving his black '67 Mercury Cougar to the hunt, he later purchased a similar truck and had the same pinstripes custom-painted.



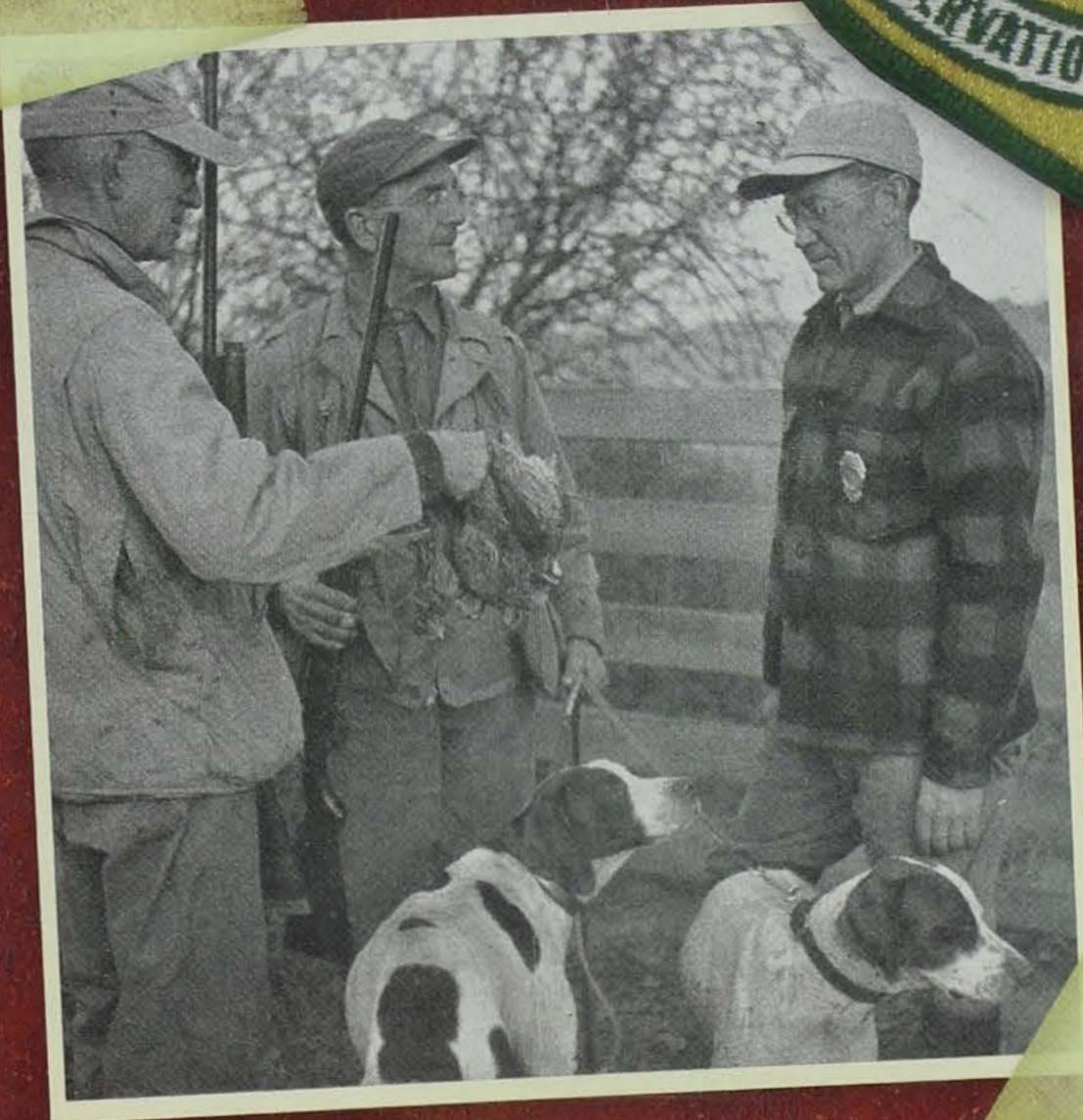
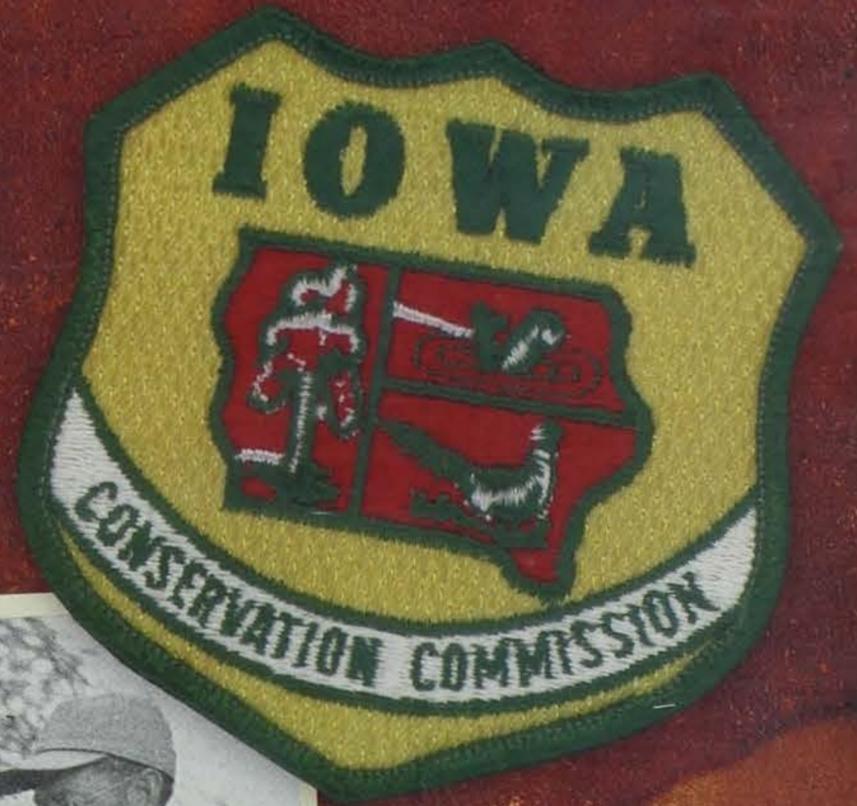
# AN HONORABLE ANNIVERSARY

LORE, MISHAPS  
AND TRIUMPHS FROM  
125 YEARS OF  
CONSERVATION OFFICER HISTORY

BY MARIAH GRIFFITH



Early conservation officers, shown at right, were required to furnish much of their own equipment, resulting in a rather civilian appearance. These men worked with local sportsmen to ensure lawful conduct and to record their harvests, which helped estimate populations and determine the following season's limits.



Conservation law enforcement can be a rewarding and enjoyable career, but it's rarely 9-to-5. As Warden Walter Harvey said in a 1954 letter, "We are charged with the responsibility of conservation... There's always something to do."

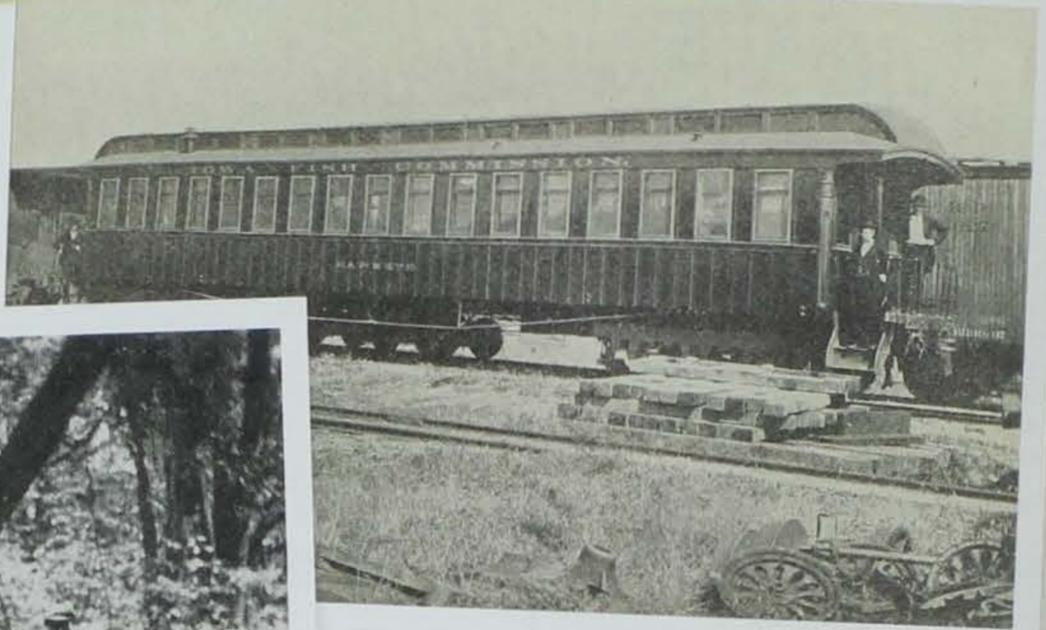
Such officers have been protecting Iowa's natural resources since 1891. For 125 years, they persevered through periods of no pay, public opposition and pioneering practices in everything from game laws to public relations.

The stories below can't encompass all officers' efforts, but hopefully they are reminders of the impact a few devoted people can have on fellow nature lovers and natural places.

### SETTING THE STAGE FOR A SUSTAINABLE HUNTING STATE

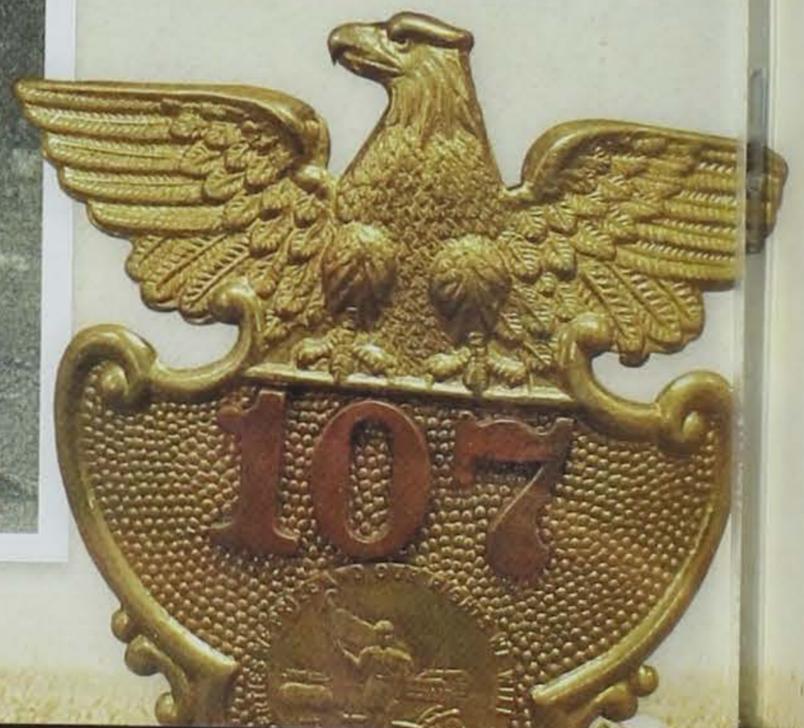
Iowa became a territory in 1838 and a state in 1846. One decade after statehood, citizens already showed interest in conservation—Iowa passed its first game law in 1857, restricting deer season to six months. Five years later—during the Civil War—Iowa passed its first fishing law, restricting trout harvest to fish taken with a hook and line. To oversee obedience of fish laws, the first Iowa fish commissioner was appointed in 1874, but he had no power to enforce.

Next, Iowa became the first state to place bag limits on game in 1878. This legislation was uncommonly foresighted—protecting common game birds like prairie chickens and passenger pigeons.



Conservation work has been a time-intensive, hands-on profession from the start. In a photo from 1898 (Top right), three deputy wardens are seen traveling with Hawkeye, the state fish car, to deliver and stock fish in waterways around the state. In 1928, another deputy untangled the antlers of two deer he saw struggling (Right). More deputies and local fish and game club members rescue fish trapped in shallow water after floods in the 1920s and '30s (Above and below).

These deer running at large in the state with horns locked would have perished had they not been found by a deputy game warden and released.



## THE FIRST ENFORCEMENT

In 1890, Russell K. Soper became the first Iowa fish commissioner with authority to enforce. He was granted \$1,500 and three assistants in 1891 (effectively the first conservation officers in Iowa's history), but ironically those positions were immediately cut due to budget constraints.

Money continued to be tight and the commission needed hands, so in 1893 Fish Commissioner T. J. Griggs established a deputy warden system. These men were volunteers, and at times their work was difficult because they had to cite friends and neighbors. Two years later, the Iowa commission budgeted just \$6,000 for enforcement of fish laws and purchased the train car "Hawkeye" to transport fish for stocking.

Citizens near stocked locations were so enthused, several wrote letters to the commissioner.

*"My Dear Sir... I wish to state that our people appreciate very highly the work that has been done here, not only in enforcing the law and protecting the fish in the lake, but also in restocking the lake... Bring us another carload is all we ask." —Yours very truly, F.F. Faville (Storm Lake, August 1899)*

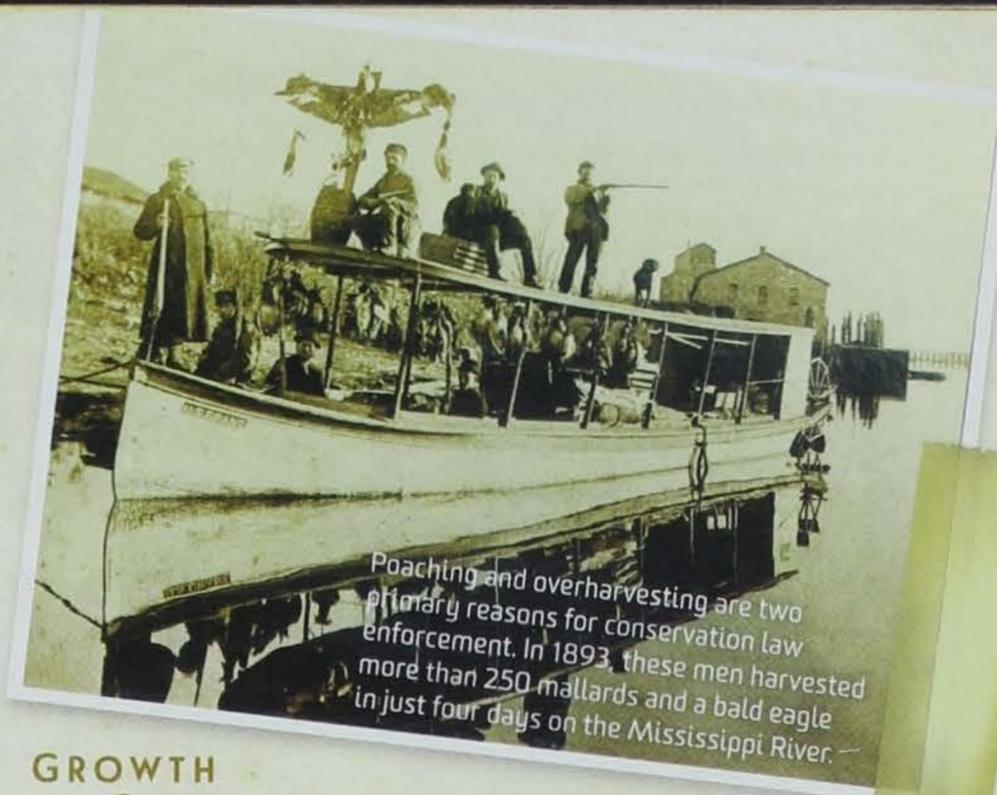
The commissioner and commission were esteemed by the public and pleased with their progress. But, as the following letter shows, satisfaction doesn't always equal good conservation.

*"I caught sixty-seven wall-eyed pike before 10 o'clock A.M. ... Next morning about 4 o'clock I went back, and I began from the very first to draw the pike out. I weighed my string of fish at noon in the presence of my wife and sister-in-law. It weighed 171 pounds. This is no fish story, for I am a preacher." —Rev. E. J. Bulgen, L.D. (Spirit Lake, 1898)*

Good conservation would also encompass game and habitat, but at the time the commission's power was limited to fish only. That limitation became glaring in 1896, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that fish and game belonged to state citizens. So in 1897, the warden's title became the Iowa Fish and Game Warden of the Fish and Game Commission.

Soon the state warden had a deputy in each county, but these men had no police power and simply noted violations. For this, deputies were to be paid an informant's fee of \$5 by guilty defendants. However, deputies had no power to collect and poachers learned to pay their fines sans informant's fee. Poaching was especially damaging to nearly-extirpated deer populations, and the commission officially closed deer season in 1898.

Deputy tensions peaked in 1899, when 79 deputy wardens went on strike over unpaid fees and lack of salaries. But the Iowa Attorney General upheld limiting deputies' powers, and a few months later a Hamilton County deputy was fined for carrying a revolver while arresting a poacher (who was found guilty), because without police power deputies were not allowed to carry concealed weapons.



Poaching and overharvesting are two primary reasons for conservation law enforcement. In 1893, these men harvested more than 250 mallards and a bald eagle in just four days on the Mississippi River.

## GROWTH AND CHALLENGES

Congressman John F. Lacey of Iowa authored the Lacey Act of 1900, which made transporting illegally-harvested fish and wildlife across state lines... well... doubly illegal. This allowed pursuit of violators across state lines and made the violation a federal offense. Still, wardens and sportsmen struggled to prevent wasteful practices, including fishing with explosives. Warden George E. Delavan wrote a suggestion in 1899, recommending, "mak[ing] the killing of fish, by an explosive, a felony... thousands of choice small fish have been killed in this inhuman (sic) manner in order that the perpetrators might secure a few large ones."

Delavan's successor, George A. Lincoln, secured backing for this in 1901, when Iowa passed a wanton waste law. It didn't make explosive fishing a felony, but anglers could be fined for unnecessary waste. Still, Iowa enforcement was lackadaisical—Lincoln blamed the informant's fee system and wanted to hire full-time wardens with authority instead of deputies.

Those desires came too late for at least one man. "In the case of Deputy L.C. Harper of Panora, who attempted to arrest two parties for unlawful fishing, and who resisted, one assaulted him, broke up his gun and left him unconscious to die on the ice," Lincoln wrote in 1907. The violators were found guilty of assault, but not resisting arrest, because Harper was not a peace officer and had no legal power to make an arrest.

Three more deputies were violently assaulted in 1909, so in 1910, fish and game wardens were finally granted legal power, albeit different from that of standard peace officers. Standard officers acted only under warrant and apprehended the person named, whereas wardens acted without a warrant but had to find violations, apprehend perpetrators and present sufficient evidence to convict them in court.

Over the next few years, conservation flourished despite World War I. Children across the nation were encouraged to be knowledgeable outdoors by the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, founded in 1910 and 1912 respectively. Wardens were paid \$2.50 a day starting in 1916, Iowa's first state park (Backbone) was dedicated in 1920, and the aquarium at the state fairgrounds was built in 1921.

But there was still animosity between the men

enforcing conservation laws and those breaking them. In 1922, a federal fish and game warden named Edgar Lindgren was working near Council Bluffs when he saw three men shooting birds out of season. Lindgren identified himself and asked to see their licenses. One man immediately shot Lindgren in the chest, and his companions shot him again as he lay on the ground. Lindgren died four days later—the first federal warden ever killed in the line of duty.

Despite this tragedy, Iowa continued to expand conservation law enforcement. In 1935, the Fish and Game Commission reorganized into the Iowa Conservation Commission, and deputy game wardens became conservation officers with peace officer authority. These positions were competitive—applicants had to pass a variety of demanding exams and requirements, after which a select few were chosen to serve the state.

The Commission lost 11 of these men to serve in World War II in the early 1940s, and materials and labor were scarce. Even Hawkeye the train car was scrapped for wartime metal. Still, the ICC could point to successes, including 86 state parks, 18 artificial lakes, 91 refuges, 86 public shooting grounds, 410 game management areas, 42 fish reproducing stations and two fish rescue stations (which helped relocate fish trapped in shallow water after floods).

Unfortunately, 1942 bore a new tragedy. Maurice Baggs became the first Iowa warden to die in the line of duty after he slipped and fell on a mossy stretch of rock in the Little Sioux River on the 4th of July. Baggs floated downriver, and was trapped below a low head dam, where he drowned. Baggs was a hard-working and well-liked warden, and over 700 people attended his funeral, 50 of them other conservation officers.

### A GOLDEN AGE

After the war, a growing middle class of Iowans with wealth and army surplus supplies fixated on the outdoors, and conservation officers were integral in public relations. Their efforts included thousands of public speeches and events, posters, TV and radio programs, and in 1947 the commission established a tremendously popular traveling wildlife exhibit. Conservation itself had become respectable and a popular career for young people, as remembered by officer Bill Fuchs of Van Buren and Lee counties in his memoir *Duck Fuzz*.

*"I knew that I wanted to have a life devoted to the out of doors and conservation... When the opportunity presented itself to take an exam for a State Conservation Officer, I jumped at it. The*

*state was hiring only a few men... required to furnish at their own expense, uniforms, sidearms, and all equipment other than automobile and boats and motors. An officer was allowed only one day a week off. By unwritten policy they worked Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. It was not a lucrative position but one that I wanted in the worst way."*

### ANOTHER IOWA STORY FROM DUCK FUZZ:

*"Once the weather warmed up, it was a weekly chore to run the local inland streams looking for the inevitable fish traps... on one of these routine patrols on the Des Moines River, I had located two large buffalo nets (hoop nets that were almost 5 feet in diameter)... The usual procedure in such cases was to return later by land and stake out the site for as long as it took to make an apprehension. I did this, constructing a "hide" for myself at the top of a rather steep bank directly over the nets... Just before dusk, two men appeared on the Missouri bank. They clambered into a johnboat chained nearby and proceeded to lift a couple of nets downstream of my vantage point. Soon they rowed to a spot directly under my location and picked up one of the large nets. Though it had a lot of fish in it, they were able to roll it into the boat and fold it over. The boat swung up against the bank and I slid down the bank landing feet first into the craft, shouting something like "Game warden, hold it!" When I hit the boat my momentum bent me forward and the pistol that I was wearing in a shoulder holster fell into the bottom of the boat and landed between the feet of a very startled fisherman! The two sat in awe for a moment, and then one fellow picked up my gun and handed it back to me. Two more surprised and crestfallen individuals you could never have imagined!"*

The demand for recreation opportunities continued. From 1950-1952, more than 1.1 million licenses were issued, conservation officers trained 70,000 youth in hunter's safety, and in 1953 the first Iowa deer hunt in

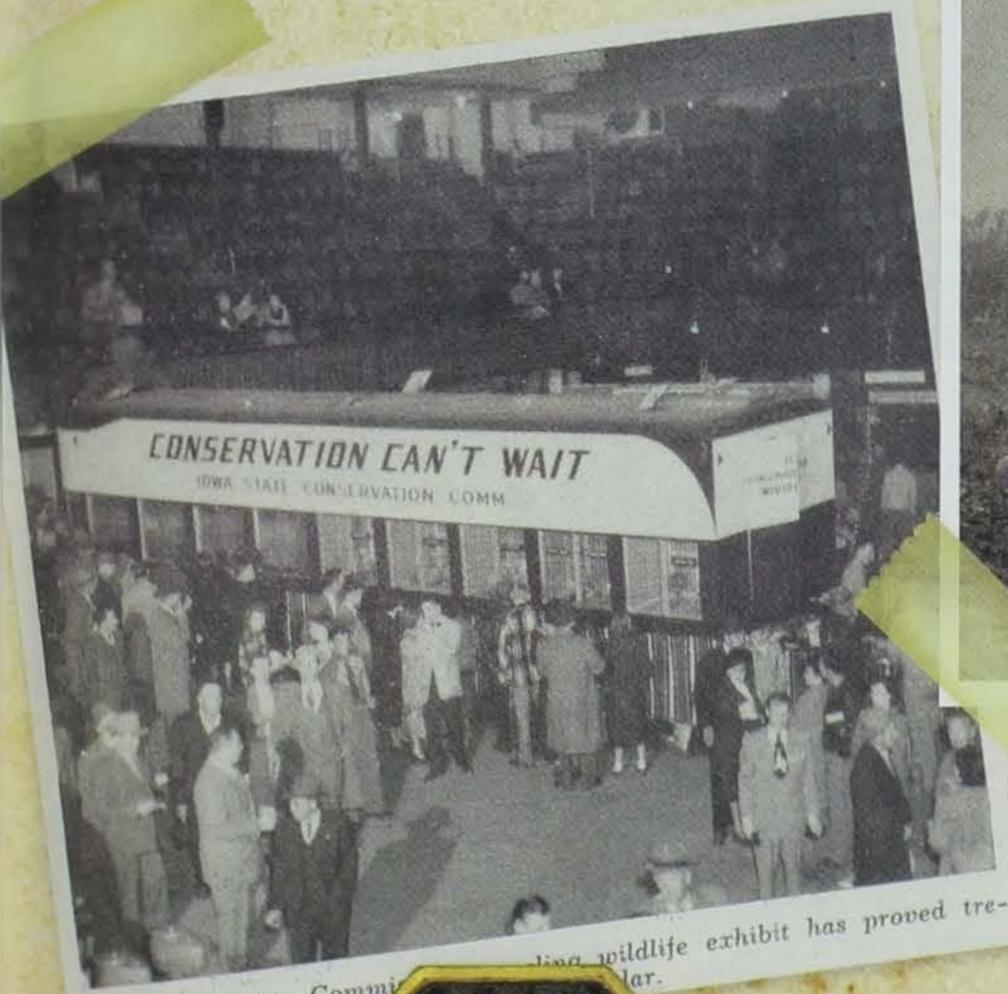
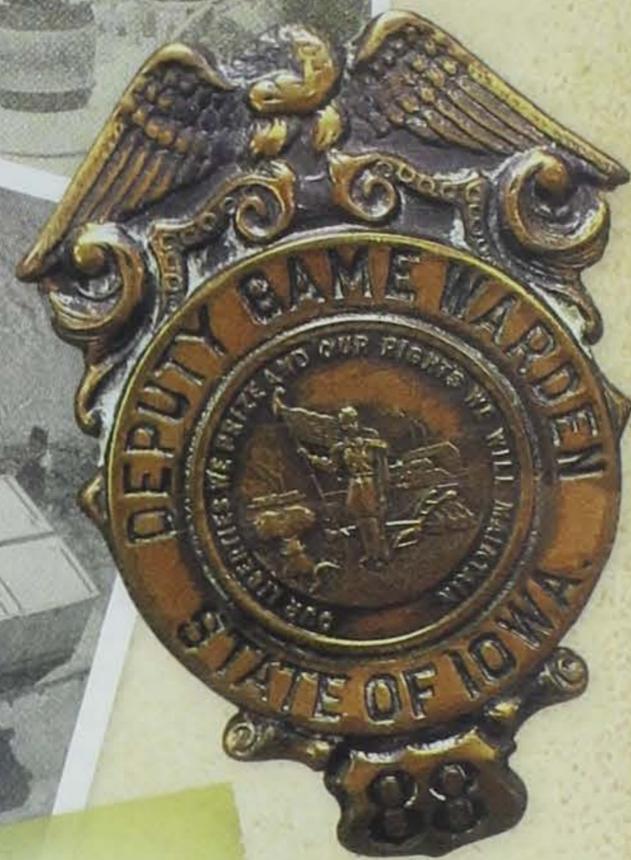
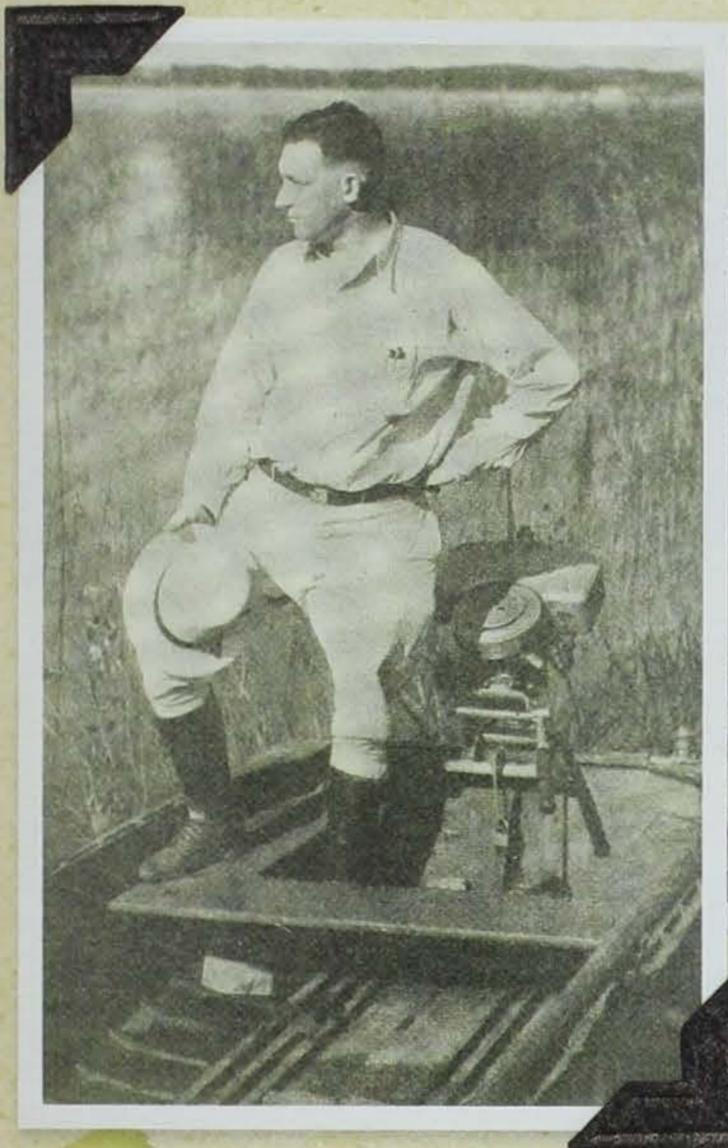
55 years drew 20,000 permits. Five years later, a waters section was established to enforce water safety, and quickly expanded to include seasonal officers called water aides. As successful as this period was, financial strain, inability to attract good seasonal labor and failure to maintain the growing number of parks were repeatedly noted.

The first standard uniforms for conservation officers were established and provided by the state in 1966, including the modified sheriff's hat, green pants and khaki shirt.

In the 1970s, the nation rallied around landmark legislation like the 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA), and four years later Iowa passed a state version. This kept conservation officers busy handling more prohibited activities related to game, along with pre-existing duties like facilitating hunters' safety education (which became mandatory in 1983).



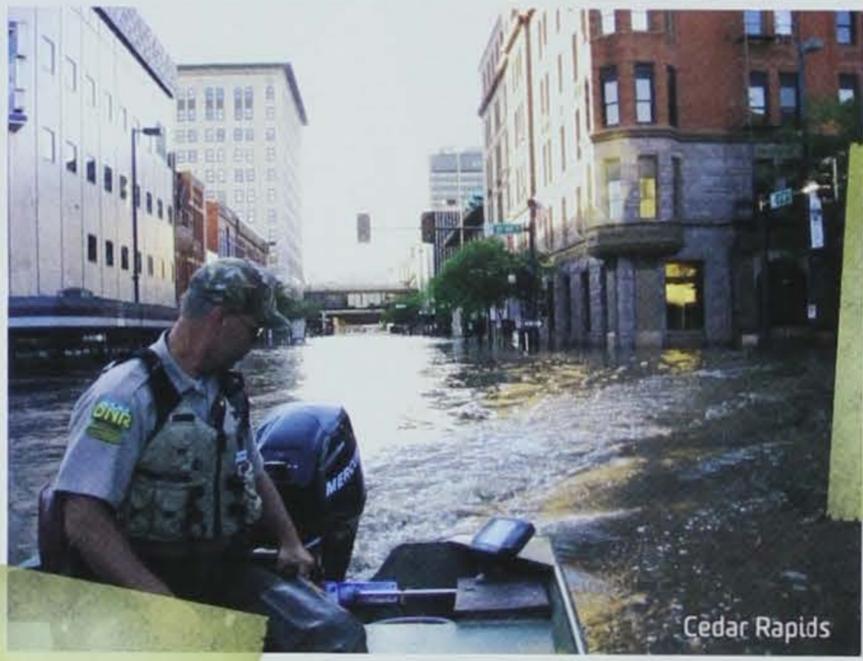
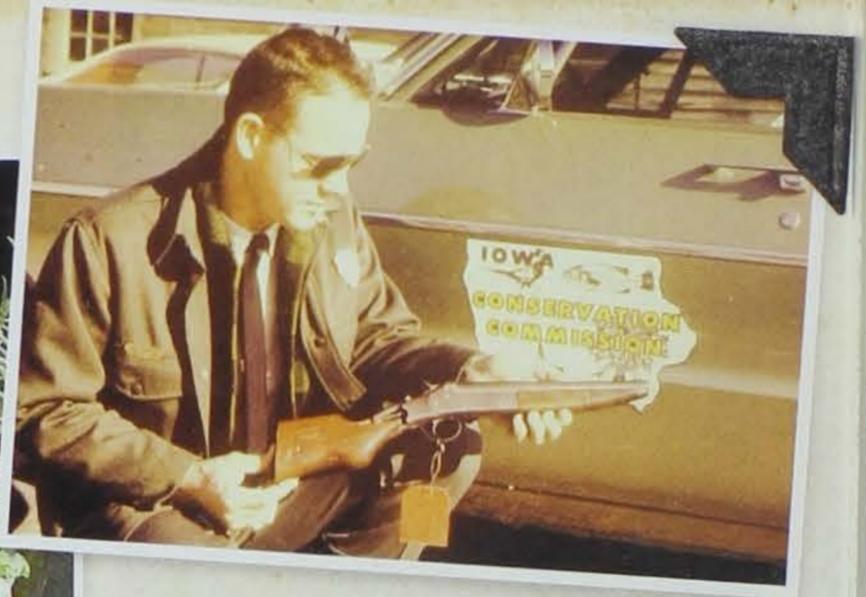
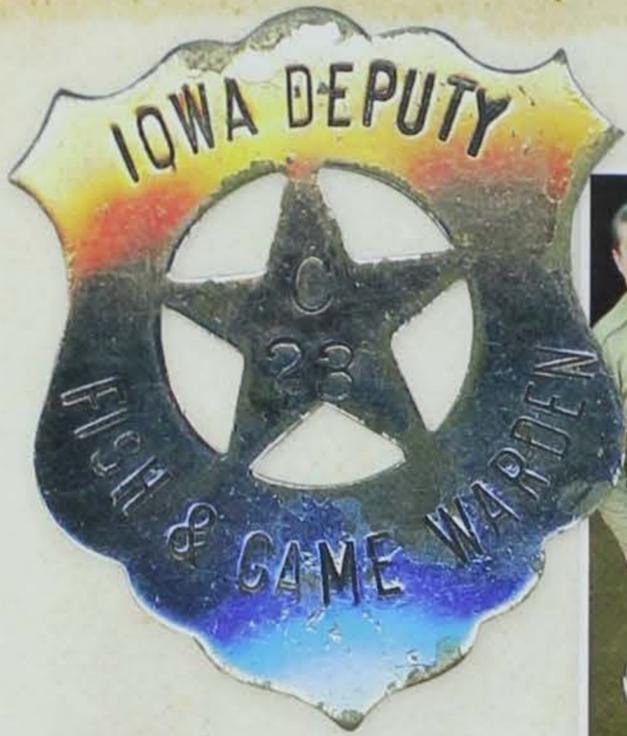
LARRY STONE/THE REGISTER  
Walter L. Harvey, 89, of Marshalltown, retired in 1973 after 41 years as an Iowa game warden.



85

# IOWA FISH & GAME COMMISSION

Officers like the one pictured (Top left) helped promote outdoor recreation and conservation to post-war families (Above right) and sportsmen (Bottom right) through habitat improvement efforts like fish stocking (Above center) and public outreach, like the travelling wildlife exhibit (Left).

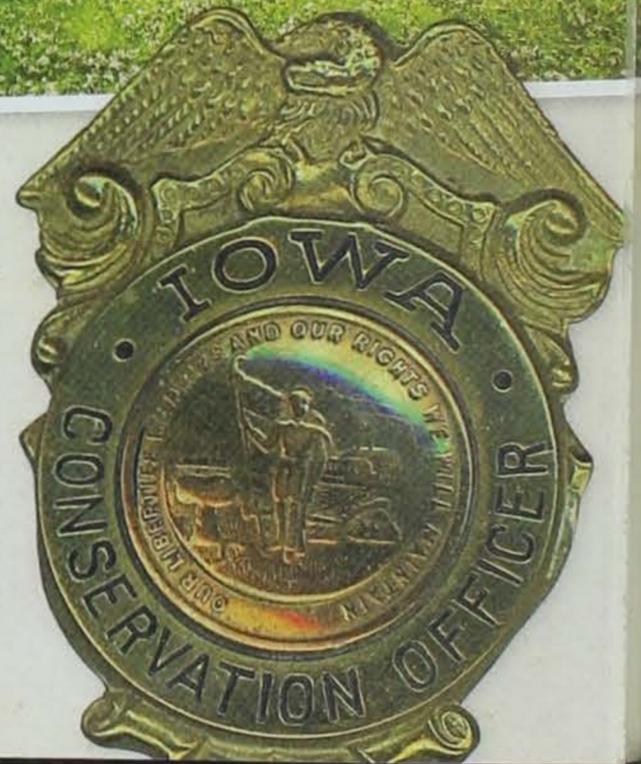


Cedar Rapids

Conservation officers do much more than hang out in the woods. They ensure safety of the public and wildlife by checking compliance with hunting and fishing regulations, educate the public on current conservation issues and assist other agencies in responding to natural crises like the heavy floods of 2008 (Above).



When violations of hunting and fishing laws or other regulations occur, officers may issue citations or, if appropriate, take further action like confiscating evidence (Left and above right). One of the most common offenses continues to be overharvesting, which can harm the quality of and hamper the continued existence of local wildlife populations.



In 1984, Jennifer Lancaster became the first female conservation officer in Iowa's history, serving Polk County. She went on to become the first female district supervisor, eventually retiring in 2014.

*"I felt like I was accepted and respected right away in the department... The only time I ever got any flak was when I was a new officer responding to a call from a guy in Des Moines with a dead possum in his driveway. When I got there, he puffed up and said, 'You can't be the conservation officer, you're too short!' He didn't care about me being a woman, he just cared that I was short because he had been rejected for being too short himself back when there was a height requirement!"* says Lancaster.

Other highlights of the mid-'80s included the introduction of recreational safety officers and the Turn In Poachers program (TIP) in 1985, and the merger that formed the modern Department of Natural Resources in 1986. Director Larry Wilson wrote that one DNR could address issues at a more comprehensive level than its four preceding agencies. Conservation officers continued strong hunter education, which earned recognition as one of the top 10 programs nationwide in 1987.

In 1991, Iowa conservation law enforcement celebrated 100 years of service. That year also marked the first youth deer season, and Muscatine conservation officer Tom Campbell received the Governor's Award of Valor for rescuing four duck hunters during a fall blizzard—when he wasn't even on duty. The rescues required Campbell to take a boat out into six foot waves twice over the course of several hours, but all four hunters were rescued and fully recovered. Campbell is the only officer to receive the award thus far.

In 1994, officers were assigned cell phones. While these bag phones were bulky and impractical in the field, they allowed unprecedented public access—which started a balancing act between officers' service to citizens and everyday duties. To prepare new officers, the DNR established a training coordinator position in 1999. This was filled by officer Joli Vollers, who established a precedent that prepared even seasonal officers through more than 60 hours of training.

Throughout the 1990s, people relied less and less directly on officers for information as the internet became accessible in homes. This hampered DNR community outreach, particularly with youth, which had been popular in preceding decades.

## A NEW MILLENNIUM OF PRESERVATION

In 2001, the DNR implemented an electronic licensing system, giving officers better access to hunters' and anglers' records. This let officers more efficiently identify inappropriate licensure or tags, as well as repeat violations. More tech became integral as phones kept getting smaller, laptops were issued in 2005, electronic licensing was updated in 2008 and electronic systems were implemented for time and activity reports, accident reports and citations in 2010. Computers have since phased into officers' vehicles.

While devices can be helpful, they also pose difficulties.

*"Technology adds challenges because people can get ahold of you all the time,"* says officer Lancaster. *"So you answer calls, it takes a while to get your field work done, and then at some point after all that you go back to your computer to send more emails."*

*"We're spending more time tied to our desks and phones,"*

agreed officer Burt Walters, based in McGregor. *"In the end it's a hard balance to strike because there are only so many of us to get the job done."*

That struggle isn't new. Half a century earlier, M.L. Hutton wrote, *"[T]he twenty-four-hour working day, if it were humanly possible to endure it, could often be utilized on account of the amount of work to be done and the limited personnel employed."*

Heavy flooding in 1993, 2008, 2010 and 2011 kept such limited officers busy with emergencies beyond their normal duties, and heavy damage to parks and

preserves. The floods also caused hunting and fishing license sales to drop significantly, which in turn lessened available funding for restorations. Further funding constraints reduced the number of seasonal positions and required training hours in 2016.

*"We're charged with protecting the resources and the people using them... Sure, we're out there catching the rascals who don't follow the rules, but the majority of people are doing what they should be, and when you're out around those people you get to enjoy the resources too."* - Jennifer Lancaster

Despite these challenges, hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation in Iowa are all on the rise today. To support that trend, Iowa's conservation officers aim to protect resources in the best way for recreationalists and the environment—which isn't easy. So next time an officer asks to see your license, give them a smile, keep having fun—and follow the rules long after they leave. They're making sure there's a place for you outdoors. 🐾



Officer Tom Campbell (Left) receiving the Governor's Award of Valor in 1991 for rescuing duck hunters during a blizzard.

# BOBWHITE

BY MARIAH GRIFFITH PHOTO BY ROGER HILL

## QUAIL ON THE RISE IN IOWA

Loren Zaruba looked on in excitement—it was the wildlife identification section of the annual Youth Hunter Education Challenge. He and his wife, Ellen, had spent the last three months working with a handful of young competitors, so when the speaker played a familiar “bob-white” call, Loren beamed. But as the teenagers’ faces turned blank and unsure, he realized that question wasn’t easy anymore—hunter or not, none of the youngsters had seen or heard a bobwhite quail.

The northern bobwhite quail is the most extensively studied game bird on the planet, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. A North American native, their range stretches from the Atlantic Coast to Colorado and from the Gulf Coast to the Great Lakes—but they’ve struggled throughout that range due to habitat changes.

In Iowa, they’ve particularly struggled with changes in agriculture. Bobwhite quail are social, ground-dwelling

birds that eat insects and seeds, flourishing in disturbed fields with shrubby cover. Before Iowa’s settlement, this habitat wasn’t terribly common—quail lived in patches of recently-burned prairies and oak savannas. As settlement progressed, farm fields became perfect bobwhite habitat thanks to ample row spacing, lack of pesticides and the occasional fire—leading to a booming state population. But as farming expanded and modernized, the norm became tighter rows, more pesticides, insect-resistant crops and fire suppression—eliminating bobwhite habitat, food and causing widespread population crashes. Just between 1966 and 2014, the nationwide population is estimated to have declined by more than 85 percent, and Iowa’s population reached an all-time low in 2009.

As such, 25 states—including Iowa—are now part of the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, which encourages states to develop more bobwhite habitat and consistently measure its use.



# WWWHITE!

“Bobwhite quail are the primary upland game bird in southeastern states, which don’t have pheasants,” says wildlife biologist Todd Bogenschutz, “so their long-term decline really brought states together—it’s a national demonstration of the importance of good habitat.”

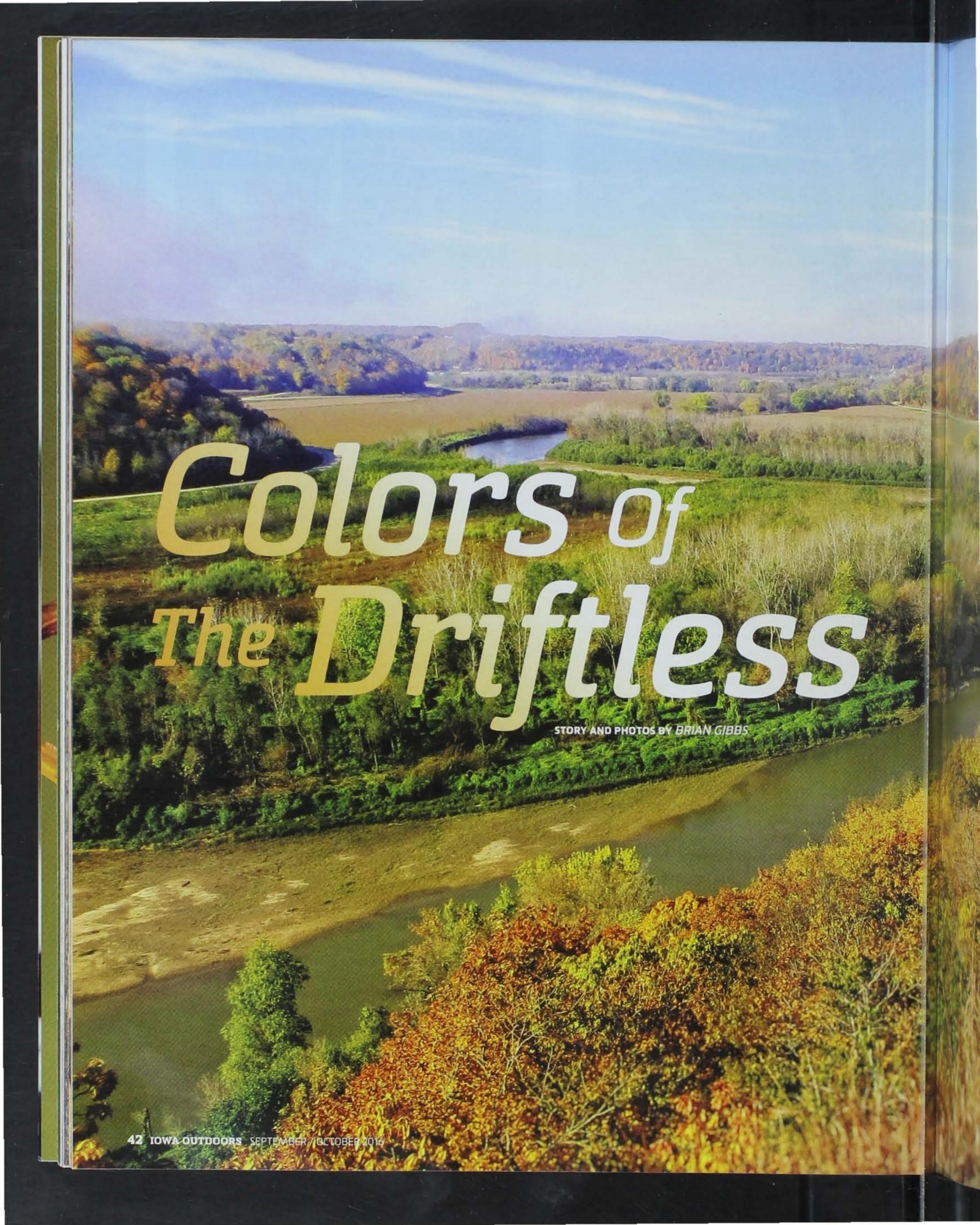
Bogenschutz says habitat can be especially rare in Iowa, where most bobwhite-suitable areas are privately owned.

“You don’t see quail north of the third tier of Iowa counties because we’re on the northern fringe of bobwhite habitat, so the increases in CRP strips and IHAP sites (see page 12) in southern Iowa are great. We’ve also had four very mild winters in a row, which I think helps even more,” Bogenschutz says.

Thanks to modern habitat management, including the reintroduction of fire, the bobwhite population is finally increasing. Harvest numbers from 2015 surpassed 28,000 birds, a 65 percent increase over 2014, and 2015 summer roadside counts were the highest since 1994.

Bogenschutz noted quail generally like shorter, less dense cover than pheasants, but management for one species is not exclusive of the other. “You can definitely have both birds in the same area,” he says. “Both need a food plot and cover.” Bogenschutz says pheasants stick to dense cover like cattails, whereas bobwhites like more space between things and even some bare ground, especially for nesting. “Bobwhite chicks are about as big as a bumblebee when they hatch, so even navigating through a mowed lawn can be difficult for them,” he says.

Add density—bobwhites live in social coveys and each hen may have upwards of 10 chicks per brood—and it’s easy to see why quail appreciate some open air. Bogenschutz says raspberry thickets, dogwood patches and moderately grazed cow pastures are particularly popular with quail, even in winter and even if located at the edges of towns. “The best thing we can do for bobwhite quail is make a lot of good habitat and hope they use it,” he says. 🐣



# *Colors of The Driftless*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BRIAN GIBBS



Iowa's Great River Road, also a National Scenic Byway, winds its way next to the picturesque Turkey River and the nearby Turkey River Mounds State Preserve. The Driftless Area supports rare communities of plants and animals within its slopes, including the endangered Pleistocene snail and threatened northern wild monkshood.

**F**ar up in the northeast corner of Iowa lies a tiny gem of a town called Marquette. The town proudly proclaims to be "Iowa's Best Kept Secret." In fact, if it wasn't for the

congenial welcome sign that reads "The People of Iowa Welcome You. Iowa: Fields of Opportunities," most Iowans would never know they were still in the Hawkeye State. Yet, in this area of Iowa, the sign almost seems like a misnomer as there are few fields to see.

Marquette resides on the corner of what is called the Driftless Area. The driftless is an ancient landscape characterized by its rugged topography, caves, sinkholes, springs and other unique geological features absent in the rest of Iowa. The term "driftless" applies to the general lack of "glacial drift" or glacial sediments in the area. Geologists estimate it has been nearly 500,000 years since the last glacier covered this area. For perspective, it was a mere 12,000 years ago when the last ice sheet in north-central Iowa

Mississippi bluffs, such as this one near Pikes Peak State Park, turn legendary with color in the fall. Try leaf peeping in the early mornings or evenings to get the best color effect.

*"The trees growing here have the audacity to try and grow on some of the richest farmland in the world."*

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The long absence of these ice bulldozers in far northeast Iowa has allowed the power of moving water to down-cut through softer underlying rocks, resulting in steep slopes that form gorges, canyons and deeply dissected v-shaped river valleys that turn legendary in the fall, which is the best time to discover why this area of the state is Iowa's best kept secret.

Every fall, I replay a driftless dream where I'm lost in the far reaches of a cathartic valley of autumn light. Beauty is trembling in the gold incandescence of zebra-barked aspens. Peace lingers in the russets and auburns of grizzled bur oaks. The kaleidoscopes of leaf color keep me awake to the contour of this landscape that is undulating like the flight of a flicker, pulsating like a cold-water spring. I dream out loud where spawning brown trout lay calmly with their bellies on their redds. Several eagles are perched downstream on veneer walnut trees. In the late tangerine sundown, tiny bubbles rise from the stream bottom, and, as I walk closer, two otters surface.

One of the otters swims within 15 feet of me, wafts, then dives underwater, only to rise again with a fish in its mouth. I try to capture the animal with a photograph, but am distracted by the whoosh of an eagle flying above. Continuing further downstream, brown trout and smallmouth bass swim at my feet until a crescent moon rises over the eastern bluff. The shadows of this canyon embrace the leaves that glow like red lanterns. The big trees always guide me back home. In the driftless, my dreams are as unique as these trees that grow from rocks.

### *Where there are rocks, there are trees.*

To learn more about the uniqueness of driftless forests, I tagged alongside DNR forester Bruce Blair. For the past two decades, Blair was district forester of the region before recently becoming forester at Yellow River State Forest.

As we walk through the forest, Blair points out several plant species growing on the forest floor and explains the forests of the driftless are unique in their soil composition. "The soil in the driftless is mostly silty loam in origin and is some of the richest soil in the world. The trees growing here have the audacity to try and grow on some of the richest farmland in the world," he explains.

Blair continues on with a discussion about climate—far northeast Iowa is an area that is more dominated by moisture coming up from the gulf as opposed to drier air out west that fosters prairie development. "Ultimately, many of the trees in the driftless are growing on lands too steep, rocky or wet to farm," concludes Blair.

At times during our amble, I feel like I'm walking on a sponge. The soil is extremely rich in thick layers of humus and the steep slopes of various aspects in this forest create a variety of micro-habitats that add up to an incredibly biologically diverse ecosystem. Eventually, we end in bottomland forest where a spring cascades from the rocks and a giant walnut tree towers overhead. I ask

Blair if it is the tallest walnut he has seen. Giddily, he responds with a magical story of a 130-foot tall walnut tree growing by Marquette that is valued at nearly \$20,000. "The driftless grows the best walnut in the entire world," exclaims Blair with a smile.

So what will the future hold for forests of the driftless? Blair describes a theory called habitat typing, coined by University of Wisconsin professor John Kotar. Kotar used the understory herbaceous vegetation as an indicator of the natural forest that a site wants to move toward. "Under his classification system, he calls most of northeast Iowa "Acer-Tilia-Desmodium," which means maple-basswood-pointed leaf tick trefoil. According to his understory plant indicators, most of northeast Iowa wants to become a maple-basswood forest type. It was only because Native Americans constantly tended the land, using fire as a tool, that we have all this abundance of oak-hickory forest the past several centuries," says Blair.

Without fire or some type of disturbance, the forests of northeast Iowa will continue their path of natural succession. Low-intensity fires, barely knee high, kept the forest understory open, allowing more light to reach the forest floor to help young oak trees reach skyward. I can't help but wonder, what did these forests look like thousands of years ago?

A fascinating University of Iowa study led by Dr. Richard Baker in the 1990s involved the collection of pollen and plant fossils from the Roberts Creek streambed in Clayton County. Study results suggest that from 9,000 to 13,000 years ago, the driftless area was largely a boreal forest dominated by pine and larch trees with populations of poplar and elms scattered in.

Mixed hardwood trees and willows slowly replaced coniferous trees until the tallgrass prairie established its roots into the driftless soil from 2,500-5,500 years ago. Yet, due to its rugged topography and moist gulf weather patterns, the far corner of northeast Iowa never fully transitioned into a sea of tall-grass prairie. Today in the region, many private landowners do their part to ensure area oak-hickory forests will be around for generations to come.

### *An Act of Stewardship*

In 1906, the Iowa Legislature approved a landowner property tax incentive known as the Forest and Fruit Tree Reservation Act to "reduce or eliminate property taxes to induce landowners to hold their poorer lands in timber not only as a source of farm income but also for erosion control, watershed protection and game cover." Today, this act is more commonly referred to as Iowa's Forest Reserve Program. (Learn more by searching "forest reserve" at [iowadnr.gov](http://iowadnr.gov))

In 2014, Clayton and Allamakee counties ranked first and second with a combined enrolled 94,573 acres in forest reserve. To qualify, a few simple requirements must be met, including but not limited to: the timber

### TREE COLOR KEY

**WALNUT:** Leaves turn bright gold and are often the first to drop in the fall.

**ASH:** Green ash leaves turn golden yellow, but white ash leaves have a purplish cast. Ash leaves fall after walnut trees, but earlier than those of oaks and maples.

**ELMS:** Elm leaves turn various shades of yellow. Some turn brown before falling, while others fall while still yellow.

**HICKORY:** Leaves turn yellow, then turn brown before falling.

**SILVER MAPLE:** The leaves of soft maples turn yellow but do not turn brown before falling.

**SUGAR MAPLE:** Brilliant flame-red hues are the signature of hard maple leaves. The red pigmentation of some leaves breaks down before falling.

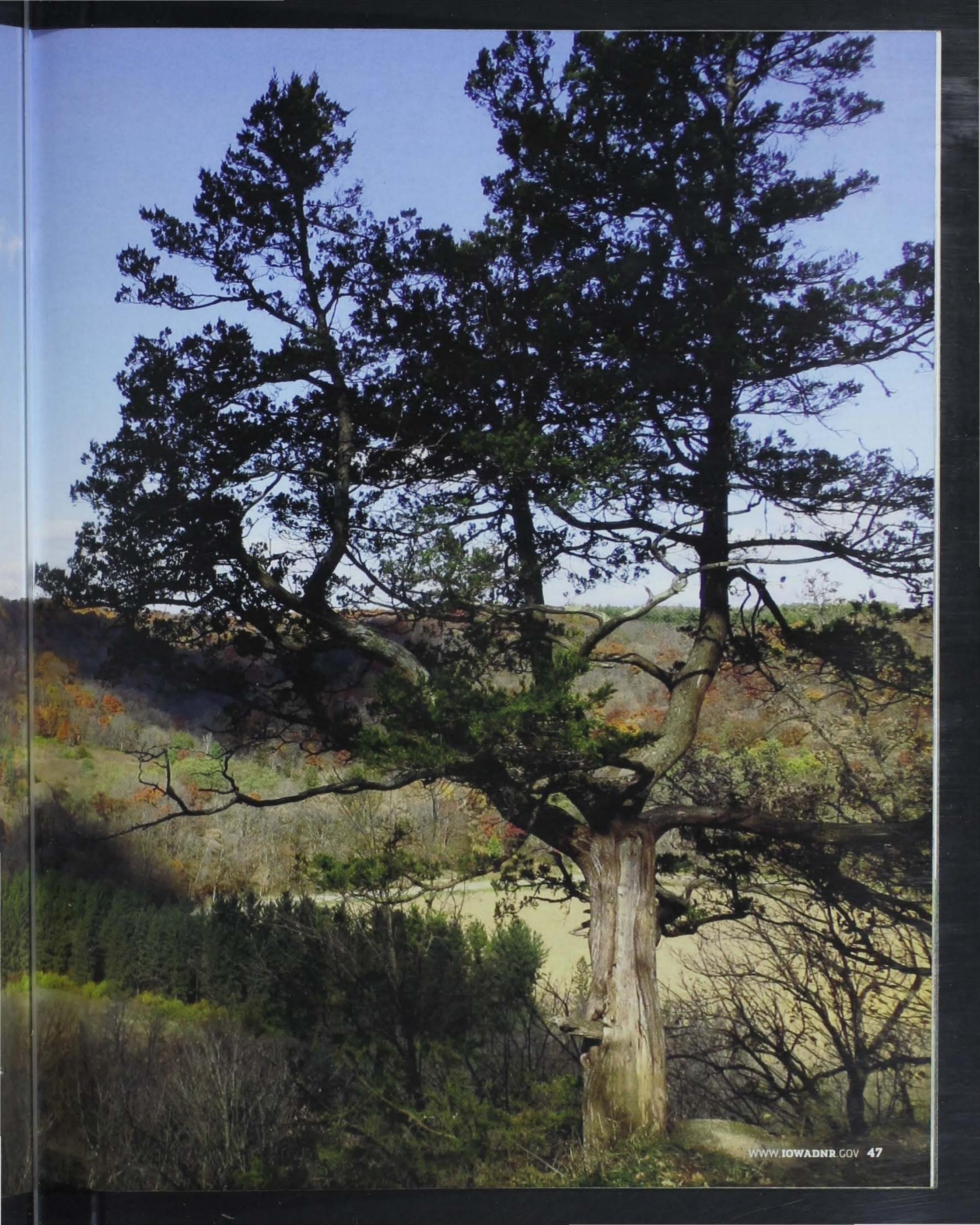
**BUR OAK:** Buff to yellow colors predominate. Leaves typically remain on the tree and turn brown before falling.

**RED OAK:** Red oaks have brilliant red leaves in fall and typically hold their color into early November.

**WHITE OAK:** White oaks have a more subdued, purplish fall color. Leaves then turn brown and often stay on the trees until new leaves begin to grow in the spring.



A gnarly sentinel cedar keeps watch over a valley full of color in Yellow River State Forest. Iowa's Driftless Area, or Paleozoic Plateau, is part of a region spanning roughly 24,000 acres in corners of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois known for its deeply carved river valleys. The unique terrain found nowhere else in the state is the result of having escaped glaciation in the last glacial period.





Streams in the Driftless often flaunt steeply sloping sides due to the power of flowing water which downcuts through the valley floor to often expose springs along the way. Be it trout fishing or simply wandering, these v-shaped valleys are excellent places to soak in the beauty.

must be greater than 66 feet wide, more than 2 acres in size and cattle must be kept out. The incentive for private landowners who put their land in forest reserve is tremendous and cannot be underestimated. Not only are forest reserve acres tax exempt, they also conserve areas of biological diversity, protect water quality, add timber value and promote the scenic beauty of fall color.

### *So just what makes all this beautiful color?*

The primary force driving the color change is a decreasing amount of sunlight in autumn. Shorter days and cooler nights signal a change in the leaf's biology and the fall mosaic of color begins to appear. As this change starts to take place, a few biological artists commence their work behind the scenes.

Chlorophyll is the compound that gives tree leaves their green color and is essential for photosynthesis. As the fall season grows near, trees produce very little chlorophyll, causing the green color to fade away. Another important element affecting leaf color are carotenoids—pigments responsible for producing yellow, brown and orange colors in leaf cells. In spring and summer these hues are masked by the green chlorophyll.

Lastly, as cool weather arrives, anthocyanins start to be produced in the leaf cells. Anthocyanins are pigments responsible for blue, red and purple colors. In foods such as blueberries and raspberries, anthocyanins are what give color to these tasty fruits. In trees, these pigments are produced primarily in the autumn and add the most vibrant colors to fall leaves.

### *How they all work together*

As the growing season ends in late summer, chlorophyll in the trees is mostly removed. The removal of chlorophyll allows the carotenoids and recently produced anthocyanins to show their true colors. The best set of circumstances for producing fall colors is to have clear cool sunny days and cool nights without freezing temperatures. In the driftless, the most opportune time to view the medley of fall colors is typically around Oct. 10.

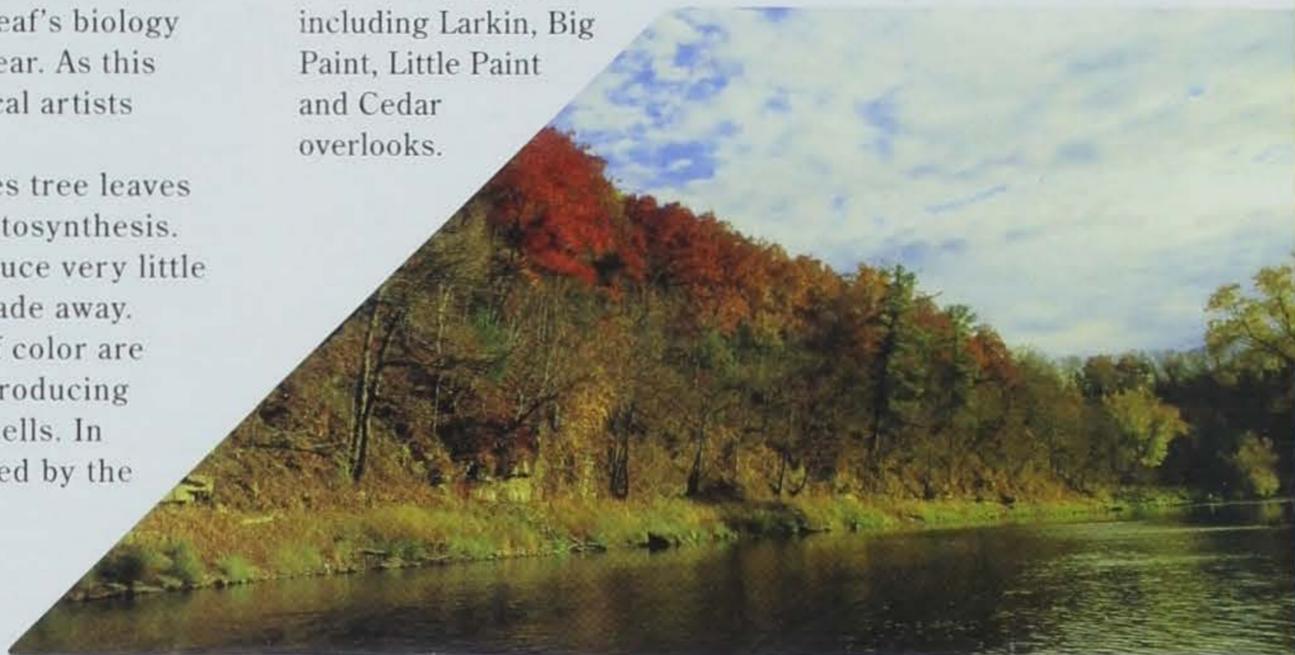
### *Easiest places to view fall color in the Driftless*

Travel the Great River Road in Guttenberg north to historic Pikes Peak State Park in McGregor. At the park, witness some of the most striking views of the Upper Mississippi, the highlight being Pikes Peak Overlook. From this vantage, 500 feet above the Mighty Mississippi, you stand in the location where French explorers Marquette and Joliet first saw Iowa from the mouth of the Wisconsin River on June 17, 1674. These two explorers were tasked with finding the "great water" that emptied into the sea and were credited with being the first Europeans to see Iowa.

The DNR's Pikes Peak park manager, Matt Tschirgi,

says one of his favorite parts of fall in the park is "seeing the reactions of friends and park visitors and the looks on their faces when they see the colors for the first time from one of the park's overlooks." Besides watching the fall color transition, Tschirgi enjoys witnessing the migration of waterfowl on the Upper Mississippi.

After Pikes Peak, take Highway 76 and travel the Driftless Area Scenic Byway into Yellow River State Forest. The 5,237-acre Paint Creek Unit has two trout streams that flow tranquilly through the park, and several gravel roads lead to scenic vistas including Larkin, Big Paint, Little Paint and Cedar overlooks.

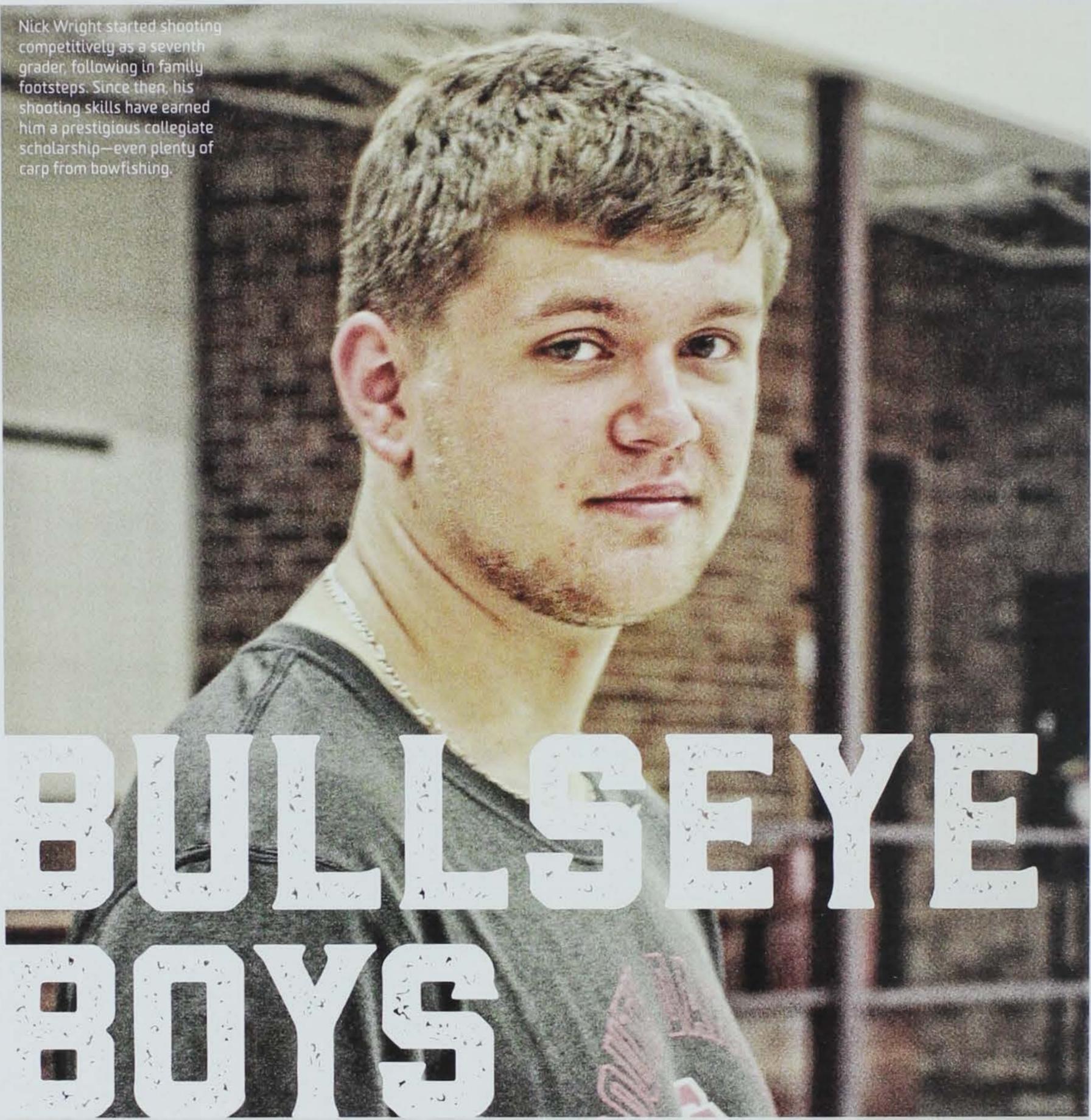


Venture the narrow fire tower road up to the state's only fire tower. Raised in 1962, the 100-foot unstaffed fire tower stands 1,047 feet above sea level. After touring Yellow River State Forest, take the Driftless Byway four miles north of Harpers Ferry until you arrive at Red Oak Road.

From Red Oak Road, enjoy uninterrupted views of the Mississippi River and dozens of migrating waterfowl resting in the shallow bays. Later in the fall, thousands of tundra swans congregate here before making their fascinating migration east to the Chesapeake Bay. Bald eagles frequently can be seen directly in the tree branches above the road.

For more excellent fall foliage and eagle viewing opportunities, take Chariot Road north of Elkader, which offers views of splendid bluff-side color while traveling alongside the beautiful Turkey River. This route allows the visitor to get a close view of two active eagle nests. According to DNR wildlife diversity biologist Stephanie Shepard, Clayton County ranks second with 70 eagle nests; Allamakee is first with 136. These numbers are even more staggering given that the once widespread use of DDT in the mid-20th century resulted in Allamakee containing the only active eagle nest in Iowa during 1974.

In the driftless, visitors experience a land long untouched by glaciers and feel a native landscape that still has an intact, wild heartbeat. The colors of the driftless are the legends for which Iowa should be remembered. The driftless, Iowa's last best place. 🐾



Nick Wright started shooting competitively as a seventh grader, following in family footsteps. Since then, his shooting skills have earned him a prestigious collegiate scholarship—even plenty of carp from bowfishing.

# BULLSEYE BOYS

Archery requires rigorous concentration and is steeped in history, but two Iowa teens are starting a new chapter—**Nick Wright** of Spencer will be the first Iowa archer from a national after-school program to receive a collegiate athletic scholarship this fall, and **David Machart** of Anamosa is the first Iowan, fifth in the nation, to score a perfect 300.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARIAH GRIFFITH



## **NICK WRIGHT'S CHILDHOOD INTEREST IN ARCHERY**

developed through watching his older cousin and brother compete in the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP).

This volunteer-run program was nationally founded in 2001, and provides archery opportunities for fourth through 12th grade students. In Iowa, the DNR coordinates both the in-school and after-school programs, with about 300 schools and 50,000 students participating during the school day.

"Nick's brother Jesse was only a year and a half older, and as they grew up, you'd swear those two were attached at the hip," says coach Teresa Ball. "When Jesse started shooting, Nick was already at every practice and knew how NASP shooting worked, so we handed him a bow."

Wright started competing in NASP tournaments as a seventh grader, consistently earning about 250 out of 300 possible points. On the side, he picked up bowfishing and continued to shoot through NASP with his brother, friends and classmates the next several years.

While he enjoyed competitions and continued to improve, Wright says he was surprised by his success. He finally realized his potential as a high school junior, but an accident nearly dashed his progress the following summer.

### Get Set...Shoot

According to the DNR's state archery coordinator Donise Petersen, starting an NASP team takes between \$3,000 and \$3,500 to buy starting equipment, and the volunteer coach must attend one of the approximately 15 trainings offered per year. Only one coach is needed to start, but schools must participate in the in-school program to be eligible to participate in the competitive after-school program. Some communities have been able to garner financial support from equipment providers and local non-profits, as well as fundraisers. To learn more, visit [iowadnr.gov](http://iowadnr.gov) and search "NASP" or call Petersen at [515-205-8709](tel:515-205-8709).



Wright was riding his motorcycle down a gravel road he knew well, coming up on an s-curve and a set of railroad tracks.

"As I came up to the turn I felt my bike sliding out from under me, and I realized oh man, this could end badly," Wright says. "I was just going too fast and came up on it strangely."

Somehow, Wright walked away from the 35 mph slide relatively unscathed. He had a broken pinky and some road rash, but no other major injuries. "I was still freaking out a bit," Wright says. "I was set to compete in the Iowa Summer Games three days later, and it was just up in the air whether I'd still be able to do that with a broken finger."

Wright refused to tell his coach or the event administrators about his injury, and was able to shoot a 263 despite significant pain in his hand. He was worried about his senior season at that point, but by winter everything was back to normal—he consistently shot within 15 points of perfection. Still, Wright was surprised

and elated to be recruited for the budding archery program at Union College in Barbourville, Ky., where he plans to study architecture in the fall.

Since graduation and NASP nationals in May, Wright says there haven't been scheduled practices, but he sets one up in the team's usual venue. In season, the elementary, middle and high school archers shoot there for an hour every day, staggering the age groups over the course of the afternoon. It's a small gym off what used to be a school, and now houses a senior center and apartments.

Inside, the lack of air conditioning and plentiful Iowa humidity immediately fogs up my glasses, but the eight archers there don't seem to mind. Some of the younger kids shuffle shyly around the plastic chairs in the back of the room as their parents prompt them to tell me their names and ages. Most of the parents present are also coaches. With two quick whistle blasts from mom and coach Stacey Robinson, the archers grab their bows and



Sarah Wilkerson, 8, and Noah Reiman, 13, shoot at a practice in Spencer. In competition, each archer shoots 15 arrows 10 meters away from the target and another 15 arrows 15 meters from the target. Each arrow scores up to 10 points with 300 total points possible.

line up facing targets across the room.

"NASP is really fun for students—which is why they come back year after year—but honestly if there's a word this program makes me think of, it's regimented," says coach Ball. "Everything is done according to whistle patterns, everything is predictable and that's part of the way this program can stay so safe."

Wright, one of the oldest in the program, stands next to an excitable 8-year-old named Sarah, who's one of the youngest. Dressed in a bright pink t-shirt and fiddling with her bow, she whispers someday she's going to try and beat her older sister's scores and maybe even Wright's. Wright cracks a smile, and one whistle later they're all shooting with surprising speed and accuracy. Wright's cluster of arrows is the tightest, with just one arrow straying toward the edge of the target's yellow center, but even Sarah's arrows nearly all connect.

"For some of the younger shooters, just hitting the target is a success and it's not about the points," says Ball. "But a

few tournaments or years later those same kids can improve by hundreds of points. By high school most of our shooters are very consistent and they still love doing it."

Three more whistles, and all archers walk down range to grab their arrows. Wright points out the target he shot, round with a yellow center so peppered there's almost more of the black under material showing than color.

"Those targets just got used by the high school team and were new a few weeks before nationals," he grins. There are decidedly fewer pockmarks in the rings further from the center. "But it's a lot easier to shoot perfectly in practice."

To change up the routine, Ball and Robinson explain a few games they've rigged up to help younger archers practice their aim. About once a week they print off images to put over the targets (the archers excitedly rattle off favorites like clowns, hearts, zombies and spiders), pick a spot on the target other than the yellow center ring to aim for or shoot the centers out of doughnuts. Another

David Machart shot a perfect 300 score the day before his 18th birthday at Anamosa's last home tournament of the year. Coach Sean Braden says Machart focused on the minimalist NASP-style bow in competition season instead of switching back and forth with his fancier hunting bow.



time, they tell me one of the shooters' dads came up with a vacuum contraption to make a ping pong ball float for a target. Back behind the shooting line, Sarah and another pink-clad girl named Kaylah rest their bows on the toe of their sneakers. Sarah spins her purple bow back and forth (it's nearly as tall as she is) but politely waits and says nothing as her coaches chat with me.

"Oh, are you waiting to shoot some more?" Robinson smiles, grabbing her whistle for another quick tweet. The kids hurry back to the line and another flurry of arrows launches down range.

Ball smiles at the younger kids maternally—she's already had a few children go through the program and has a few more that could join in the future.

"This program is really important to all the kids, but especially for some of the kids that struggle academically," she says. In order for Spencer students to compete, they must pass all classes and avoid behavior referrals. This isn't a nation-wide requirement of NASP, but many schools institute similar policies. "I've had parents call and say their children wouldn't have graduated without it," Ball smiles.

At the table next to us, Wright is packing up his bow and chatting with a friend about their afternoon bowfishing plans. They'll be looking for invasive carp in a nearby stream.

"Nick's been around forever, so the fact that he's leaving, it's kind of sad," says Ball. "But we're all really excited and proud of him. He'll do great, however long he wants to keep shooting."

## DAVID MACHART STARTED SHOOTING AS A CHILD ON FAMILY HUNTS.

"David was already shooting early in elementary school," says his mother, Sheila Machart. "We always encouraged our kids to enjoy being outside, and from the start David had a real passion and drive."

David recounts it more as childhood escapades.

"I remember going out with my dad and my younger sister and shooting for hours," he says. "It didn't really matter if I hit anything—I think it helped that the whole family was into it, but I've always liked being out there and walking around in the brush."

Anamosa also had a local NASP following, which David's older sister Mackenzie enjoyed, so when David got old enough he followed her lead and started competing. Almost immediately, his family knew he had potential—his middle school scores rivaled those of high school athletes in the program, even though the bow he shot with was very different from the hunting bow he used.

"He's been great all along," Sheila says. "But I don't think he realized he was part of an elite group until his junior year of high school."

By that point, David was consistently shooting within 5 points of a perfect 300, which earned him the titles of state champion in the Iowa NASP 3D and bullseye tournaments, second runner-up at the NASP national tournament and runner-up at the NASP world championship. With those titles came victor's spoils, including multiple bows and a \$10,000 scholarship from the national tournament. So he set his sights a little higher, planning to get a perfect score at least once during his senior year and to take first place at nationals.

In February, he was ready. It was the last home meet of the year, the day before his 18th birthday and he had just one arrow left. All the others had already landed neatly in the bullseye. As he drew the arrow back to his cheek, Machart says he tried not to overthink the shot.

"We tell the archers they want to shoot like a robot," says Sean Braden, head coach of the Anamosa NASP team. "Robots don't make mistakes, they don't change how they do something if someone is watching and they don't take too long thinking about things."

David's last arrow flew straight to the center of the target, and his mother burst into tears of excitement. Standing





"Some kids have a hard time staying positive and focused. If they shoot one arrow really well, they might forget about the next one, or if they shoot one arrow wrong they fall apart," says coach Sean Braden. "David has never been that way. He knows how to let it go and not live in the past." Braden added Machart consistently shoots perfect 300s in practice, and does his best when he's shooting with friends.

together, the arrow shafts looked like a feathery bouquet.

"I started crying because he just worked so hard," she says. "I'm so thankful that he was able to set a goal that high and accomplish it."

David shortly accomplished his other goal—taking first place in nationals last May—which earned him a \$20,000 scholarship. Another tournament, the Centershot Ministries Nationals, brought an even less expected prize—the opportunity to travel to South Africa with an all-star team of 16 archers to bowhunt and complete a service project.

"Honestly we decided to do that tournament as a warm-up—it was a Friday and there was another shoot on Saturday," says Braden. David says he didn't even know about the possibility of prizes going into the tournament. However, he and his dad are getting excited for the trip, and hope to take a few sustainably-harvested prizes home.

"David is really set on bringing home a porcupine," says his mother. "I don't really know what he wants to do

with it though!"

She says the family normally eats everything they harvest and surprisingly, the tastiest treat yet has been bear. David and his father went to Canada to hunt bears last year, and after three days of hunting, David managed to shoot a black bear with his bow in the afternoon and recovered it the next morning.

"I was actually a little disappointed with my shot because, in hind sight, I shot it like a deer," David says. It was still a good shot, but a great shot on a deer falls right behind the shoulder blade whereas a great shot on a bear is further back. "I was glad to bring it down because I wanted it to be quick and clean," David says. "That definitely won't be my last time in Canada, and now I know a bit more from experience."

He also called in and brought down his first turkey last spring.

"We go hunting in a lot of places near home," says David's father Chad. "David's very picky about his target and his shot, no matter what the season, but I told him to just go try it."



Machart had planned on turkey hunting with his dad, but ended up calling for them alone after school one day. He was busy trying to quietly battle a swarm of wasps in his blind when two toms walked up, gobbling. A little surprised, David drew his arrow and aimed at the bird still 30 yards away. He let it fly, and the bird came down quickly—a perfect bullseye.

“It was the first one I’d called in alone and I got a good shot on it, so I was pretty excited,” Machart says with a laugh.

David was right on target again at the 2016 NASP World tournament, where he placed third with a 297.

Despite his excellence, coach Braden says he’s going to miss David because he’s down-to-earth and genuine.

“In tournaments, archers shoot two to a target,” says Braden. “I remember one tournament where David was shooting with a young girl from another school — I think it was her first competition ever. David noticed her arrow rest was facing the wrong way, so before the

command to shoot he reached over, flicked it back into place and smiled at her before knocking his arrow. Later that night I had other coaches thanking me for how courteous he had been, but I said don’t thank me—that’s just who he is.”

David plans to attend Kirkwood College in the fall with scholarship money he’s earned from archery tournaments, and later transfer to Iowa State to earn a degree in agricultural business. While neither of these locations have a competitive archery team, David says he plans to continue shooting for fun with friends, bowhunt and join an archery club, if he has time. After graduation, he might pursue further competitions in Vegas or try to qualify for the Olympics, although he would have to learn to use a recurve bow, which is more physically demanding to shoot than a compound model.

“I’m sure I’ll always have a bow of some sort in the future,” says David. “I have at least 12 right now... I should really count them all sometime!” 🐻

## Fear Not, Evergreen Owner!

(It's probably just normal fall needle drop.)



When that beautiful backyard evergreen has yellowing needles that drop in the fall, it can be alarming. Rest assured, what is most likely happening is a natural cycle called autumn needle drop. Autumn is when white pines, for example, normally drop their oldest needles.

Though pines and most other conifers are called evergreens, needles do not stay alive and green forever. New needles are produced every spring as lush, light green-colored growth. Needles typically last two to four or more years. As the tree grows larger, new needles grow at branch tips and the remaining, older needles are farther back along the branch.

As needles age, they become less efficient at producing food for the tree. They also become shaded by newer needles. For these reasons, old needles finally turn brown and drop off. This doesn't hurt the tree, as several years' worth of newer needles are always there to replace older ones. It's best to leave fallen needles as nature intended—under the tree—as a good mulch to retain moisture and add organic matter to the soil.

However, if your tree is losing the younger needles found on the tips of branches, this may be due to disease or insects. It is easy to know if needle drop is normal or an early indication of something more serious. But, if needles turn yellow and drop in other times of the year, include the outer needles, or is sporadically across the tree, it might be something more serious.

Natural needle drop can also be more noticeable on trees that have experienced stress due to less than optimal growing conditions, such as summer drought or overly wet years in poorly drained, heavy clay soils. If the newest growth (this year's needles) appears green and healthy, then rest assured the yellowing phenomenon is natural.



## They May Be Nice on Your Wallet, but the Earth is Paying for Them

Disposable cups, specifically "Red Solo Cups," are a common staple at the Iowa State Fair, fall BBQs, state park picnics and tailgate parties, but they really came into the spotlight after Toby Keith's song, "Red Solo Cup." The song is humorous and light-hearted, however, the tone contradicts the impact plastic cups have on our environment after they're thrown away.

The lyrics say, "A Red Solo Cup is cheap and disposable, in 14 years they are decomposable." There are several factors that determine how quickly products decompose, and experts' opinions vary on how long it actually takes to break down, but they all agree it greatly exceeds 14 years—**it's more like 450 years!**

### The Break Down

The cup's chemical bond is responsible for making the product durable, but it also makes it resistant to decomposing. Over time, the cup breaks into smaller pieces and releases toxic chemicals into the environment and become more likely to get ingested by animals.

### Tips

- Take reusable cups and water bottles to events (e.g. the Iowa State Fair, parks, tailgates).
- If buying a disposable product, choose one in a recyclable container, such as beer and pop in cans and bottles.
- Ask to have your disposable cup refilled instead of getting a new one.

### Rates Other Products Decompose

- Apple core – 2 months
- Cigarette filter – 1-5 years
- Plastic bag – 10-20 years
- Aluminum can – 80-200 years
- Disposable diaper – 450 years
- Glass bottle – 1 million years

—Metro Waste Authority, [mwatoday.com](http://mwatoday.com)

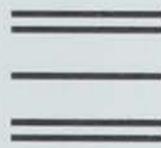
ecosystems are being destroyed for production.

### **BUILD A BETTER MULCH PILE**

Pull grass or weeds from around the trunk. Identify the dripline, located directly under the outer circumference of the tree branches, essentially where rain would drip from. That is where the tiny rootlets are located that take up water for the tree. For well-drained soils, apply a 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch at least as wide as the tree's drip line. Pull back mulch several inches from the trunk. The mulch ring should look like a donut, not a volcano. Count on 3 to 4 cubic feet of wood mulch per tree. If adding to existing mulch, rake or break up any matted material. Add mulch each year to maintain the 2- to 4-inch depth and widen the ring as the dripline extends. While adding mulch every year might take a little added time, the decomposition process improves soil quality.

# IOWA OUTDOORS

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protect roots from extreme seasonal temperatures. Mulch improves soil biology, structure and fertility, inhibits plant diseases and reduces the likelihood of damage from mowers and weed trimmers.

chips, pine needles, bark, cocoa hulls and leaves are best because they are natural and derived from plants. Avoid inorganic mulches that don't break down. They add nothing to soil quality. Also avoid cypress mulch, as these

A volcano-shaped mulch pile against the trunk is a no-no. Unfortunately, it is a common sight.



# My Backyard

## Fear Not, Evergreen Owners (It's probably just normal fall needle drop)

When that beautiful backyard evergreen has yellowing needles that drop in the fall, it can be alarming. Rest assured, what is most likely happening is a natural cycle called autumn needle drop. Autumn is when white pines, for example, normally drop their oldest needles.

Though pines and most other conifers are called evergreens, needles do not stay alive and green forever. New needles are produced every spring as lush, light green-colored growth. Needles typically last two to four or more years. As the tree grows larger, new needles grow at branch tips and the remaining, older needles are farther back along the branch.

As needles age, they become less efficient at producing food for the tree. They also become shaded by newer needles. For these reasons, old needles finally turn brown and drop off. This doesn't hurt the tree, as several years' worth of newer needles are always there to replace older ones. It's best to leave fallen needles as nature intended—under the tree—as a good mulch to retain moisture and add organic matter to the soil.

However, if your tree is losing the younger needles found on the tips of branches, this may be due to disease or insects. It is easy to know if needle drop is normal or an early indication of something more serious. But, if needles turn yellow and drop in other times of the year, include the outer needles, or is sporadically across the tree, it might be something more serious.

Natural needle drop can also be more noticeable on trees that have experienced stress due to less than optimal growing conditions, such as summer drought or overly wet years in poorly drained, heavy clay soils. If the newest growth (this year's needles) appears green and healthy, then rest assured the yellowing phenomenon is natural.



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### The Break Down

The cup's chemical bond is responsible for making the product durable, but it also makes it resistant to decomposing. Over time, the cup breaks into smaller pieces and releases toxic chemicals into the environment and become more likely to get ingested by animals.

### Tips

- Take reusable cups and water bottles to events (e.g. the Iowa State Fair, parks, tailgates).
- If buying a disposable product, choose one in a recyclable container, such as beer and pop in cans and bottles.
- Ask to have your disposable cup refilled instead of getting a new one.

### Rates Other Products Decompose

- Apple core - 2 months
- Cigarette filter - 1-5 years
- Plastic bag - 10-20 years
- Aluminum can - 80-200 years
- Disposable diaper - 450 years
- Glass bottle - 1 million years

—Metro Waste Authority, [mwatoday.com](http://mwatoday.com)

## Proper Mulching?

Mulching can be the best thing you can do to promote the health of trees, shrubs and plants. It can also be the worst, if done improperly.

Trees growing in a natural forest environment enjoy the benefits of nature's mulch—leaves, twigs, organic material and other organisms that replenish and recycle nutrients. They are often anchored in rich, aerated soil. In urban landscapes, compacted soil of poor quality, reduced organic matter and fluctuating soil temperatures and moisture content plague new plantings.

### THE GOOD

Done right, mulching can reduce moisture loss from evaporation and control weed germination and growth. It insulates soil to protect roots from extreme seasonal temperatures. Mulch improves soil biology, structure and fertility, inhibits plant diseases and reduces the likelihood of damage from mowers and weed trimmers.

### THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Improper mulching, like applying it too thick or building a "volcano" around the trunk, can lead to excess soil moisture in the root zone, which can stress the plant and cause root rot. Conversely, once matted, they can prevent moisture penetration. Piling mulch against the tree trunk can direct water away from the root system. Moisture stored in the pile can penetrate the bark and suffocate phloem cells, potentially killing the tree. It can also attract rodents that chew the bark, as well as insect and disease issues.

### CHOOSE WISELY

While there are many types of mulch material available, tree experts say organic mulches, like natural wood chips, pine needles, bark, cocoa hulls and leaves are best because they are natural and derived from plants. Avoid inorganic mulches that don't break down. They add nothing to soil quality. Also avoid cypress mulch, as these

ecosystems are being destroyed for production.

### BUILD A BETTER MULCH PILE

Pull grass or weeds from around the trunk. Identify the dripline, located directly under the outer circumference of the tree branches, essentially where rain would drip from. That is where the tiny rootlets are located that take up water for the tree. For well-drained soils, apply a 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch at least as wide as the tree's drip line. Pull back mulch several inches from the trunk. The mulch ring should look like a donut, not a volcano. Count on 3 to 4 cubic feet of wood mulch per tree. If adding to existing mulch, rake or break up any matted material. Add mulch each year to maintain the 2- to 4-inch depth and widen the ring as the dripline extends. While adding mulch every year might take a little added time, the decomposition process improves soil quality.

A volcano-shaped mulch pile against the trunk is a no-no. Unfortunately, it is a common sight.



# Admiration & Legacy

BY MARIAH GRIFFITH AND MICK KLEMESRUD



Kylie Hildreth, center, flanked by employees Christina DeVore, left, and Marci Howrey.

## A LABOR OF LOVE NICK HILDRETH MEMORIAL CLINIC, ROCKWELL CITY

Funding constraints can put the brakes on big demolitions in small communities. This was the case in Rockwell City, where derelict commercial buildings covered 10,000 square feet. Fortunately, these were demolished in 2012 with help from the DNR's Derelict Building Grant Program.

The program's goals are removing hazards and minimizing what's sent to landfills. Since 2011, environmental specialist Scott Flagg says the DNR project has put more than \$1.4 million into construction and demolition projects, diverted 400,000 tons of waste and properly disposed of 532 tons of asbestos.

Of the 800 tons of waste from the Rockwell City demolition, just 19 went to a landfill, and the rest went to local uses like filling in the old basement level and erosion control. Filling an now empty lot would take a lot of love.

Kylie and Nick Hildreth eyed the lot longingly. They wanted to build a low-cost health clinic that Kylie, an advanced registered nurse, could run. Nick was skilled in construction and promised he'd build a clinic for his wife someday.

Nick never got to fulfill his promise. The volunteer firefighter passed away last year.

Two weeks after, Kylie was driving home from the cemetery when she passed the lot and saw a "for sale" sign. She decided her clinic dream could honor Nick's memory. After explaining her plan, city officials sold her the property for \$1.

"It was a very difficult process for me," she says. "My husband was supposed to build me a clinic so we could do it together, but there I was—one young mom of four who knew nothing about construction. Luckily the contractor was excellent, and made the idea come to life."

After seven months of construction, the Nick Hildreth Memorial Clinic opened its doors last January. Kylie hopes to fund a free night clinic for those in need within the next year.

For more information, search "Nick Hildreth Memorial Clinic LLC" on Facebook, and for details on the Derelict Building Program, search "derelict building" at [iowadnr.gov](http://iowadnr.gov).

## VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR

RICK CERWICK

Rick Cerwick started hunting while cruising Webster County gravel roads in a '63 Ford Galaxy 500 with mom and dad up front and his brothers and sisters in back competing to see who could spot the most rooster pheasants and retrieve those shot by Dad.

That early exposure spurred his outdoor passion and future work with hunter education classes—helping 5,000 students learn about gun safety and become hunter education certified.

That journey paused May 25 to allow Cerwick, from Des Moines, to be honored as the Federal Premium Ammunition National Hunter Education Volunteer Instructor of the Year.

"I've been loving every minute of it. It's very touching to be recognized for doing something that isn't a lot of work, it's a lot of fun," he says.

He began helping Ray Thode and Jerry Keyes with classes around Des Moines. When Thode passed away in 2003, the Des Moines Chapter of the Izaak Walton League placed a help wanted ad for lead instructor in its newsletter. Cerwick responded.

"Ray was a very compassionate man, very patient and believed we were here to guide students," he says. He uses that style combined with many personal experiences to teach.

"Hunter education wasn't mandatory when I grew up, so I tell students I learned from the school of hard knocks and I don't want them to have to learn like I did. Do it right the first time."

Cerwick offers his phone number at the end of each class and says one call stands out.

A few days after a class ended his phone rang. "It was from a dad who asked if I said it was okay for a son to tell a dad that he was doing something wrong in the field."

"I said 'yes.' And the Dad said 'thank you.' He was proud we took a young, shy kid and gave him confidence."

As a child Cerwick hunted pheasants and ducks with his father and grandfather. Now he is the grandfather teaching grandkids how to shoot. And their Papa is the nation's top volunteer hunter education instructor.



Jon Zinnel, left, with Federal Premium, and Rick Cerwick



## SHARE THE SUNSHINE CEDAR FALLS

Solar energy can help reduce the need for environmentally-damaging energy sources like fossil fuels, but they're usually time- and cost-prohibitive to average citizens. Cedar Falls Utilities (CFU) is changing that with the Simple Solar project, which allows locals to purchase shares of energy captured at a community solar garden. CFU expected to sell its output at \$399 per share, but interest was so great 1,200-plus shares were sold at just \$270. Each share represents about 2.5 percent of the average home's daily energy.

"We honestly expected to have a couple large businesses be the staple subscribers to this service, but the driving force has really been private citizens," says Jim Krieg, CFU general manager.

The project makes solar energy accessible to those who can't put up their own panels, like renters and those with shaded roofs. Shares are predicted to pay back upfront costs within 15 years, and can continue to credit those changing residences, so long as they move locally.

If a share owner moves out of Cedar Falls, they can transfer their credit to another local resident or non-profit or sell their share back to the city. These shares become available to those on a wait list.

The solar garden started producing energy April 1. Located next to a park, it features 8 acres of solar panels and can produce 1.5 megawatts—enough to power about 275 homes.

"We've been aggressively promoting sustainable energy for a while, but solar is a new component for us," says CFU marketing manager Betty Zeman. "We can't guarantee something like this is right for every community, but you can make wind, solar and other sustainable energy sources work anywhere if it's a priority to people."

Simple Solar has the attention of other towns, like Ames, which is working on a similar project.

For details or real-time output statistics, visit [www.cfu.net](http://www.cfu.net) and search "simple solar."

# The Parasitic, Ghost-Like Indian Pipe

Often mistaken as a fungi, *Monotropa uniflora* is actually a wildflower. Known as ghost plant, Indian pipe and even the ghoulishly named corpse plant, this parasitic plant is found nationwide except in a few desert southwest states, South Dakota and Wyoming. *Monotropa* refers to its hanging, or nodding flower, and *uniflora* refers to each stem bearing one flower. This unusual perennial is normally found in high quality woodlands, and while geographically widespread, is generally a scarce or rare plant to come across. It is in the same family as cranberry, blueberry, rhododendron and heathers.

## PARASITIC PLANT

Lacking chlorophyll, photosynthesis is not an option—so it must live off others. Its hosts are tiny underground fungi that are in a symbiotic relationship with tree roots (The fungi help tree roots absorb minerals and water. In exchange, the tree provides sugars to the fungi). And that's where *Monotropa* steps in—its roots somehow tricks the fungi that another symbiotic relationship is to be had, but this bond is one way. It steals sugars from the fungi. So ultimately its energy comes from trees, but siphoned off the fungi.

## NOT A FUNGUS

Although white, translucent, fleshy and hairless, it is not a fungus or mushroom. The plant lacks chlorophyll which gives most plants their green hues and allows photosynthesis—the conversion of sunlight to energy. Since it doesn't rely on sunlight, it can survive in very dark forest understories and was first thought to absorb energy and nutrients from decaying organic matter. It is now known to survive as a parasite.

## DON'T PICK

Cultivating and propagating this plant is nearly impossible and attempting to transplant them from the wild will almost certainly kill them. Super rich humus and the right type of mycorrhizal fungus (which it parasitizes from) are needed to survive. When bruised, the plant turns black.



## FAVORED BY EMILY

Images of ghost plant graced the cover of the 1890 book *Poems* by the renowned Emily Dickinson. She described the flower as "the preferred flower of life," and in a letter reflected "I still cherish the clutch with which I bore it from the ground when a wondering child, and unearthly booty, and maturity only enhances the mystery, never decreases it."

## BEARS AND THE BEES

Not much is known about this plant and its interactions with animals. Long-tongued bees are thought to cross pollinate the flowers. Bears will eat the plants and Canadian grizzlies have been observed digging and eating its root masses.

## FLOWER AND STALK

Stems reach 4 to 12 inches high. Each stem ends in a single white flower. It may flower late spring or into the fall, but the plant blooms only one to two weeks. After blooming, the plant turns dark brown or black and the flower yields a half-inch long seed pod. Seeds are eventually dispersed by the wind.

BY ALAN FOSTER

## Go Dutch, Baby!

While the name may be misleading, the Dutch baby pancake is actually an Americanized knockoff of a traditional German breakfast treat called pfannkuchen. Legend has it Dutch baby pancakes were first introduced and coined in America at a family-run restaurant in Seattle, where one of the owner's daughters struggled with the proper pronunciation of Deutsch. Others label this treat the David Eyre pancake, whose recipe appeared in the *New York Times* in 1966. Similarly, The Dutch baby apple

pancake is an American version of apfelpfannkuchen, another German spinoff of pfannkuchen.

The ingredients for Dutch baby pancakes are essentially the same—milk, eggs, flour, sugar—and in the case of Dutch baby apple pancakes, that familiar fall fruit. But that's where the recipe similarities end. Some, like the recipe below, call for more eggs, which gives it a more custard texture. Some add more flour for a more traditional pancake. Higher sugar content recipes produce a more dessert-like

feel to the dish. Traditionally, Dutch babies were finished with powdered sugar and lemon juice. Others added cinnamon sugar at the end. Syrup was also a favorite. And don't be afraid to swap apples with fresh-picked wild or backyard fruit.

German apple pancake, Dutch baby, David Eyre pancake, apfelpfannkuchen, pfannkuchen, apples, no apples, raspberries instead—it doesn't matter. This sweet, hearty breakfast will please young and old alike. And just by chance, if you have a tiny slice left over at the end of the day, a scoop of



PHOTO BY ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

ice cream alongside, a dollop of whipped cream or a drizzle of chocolate makes a mighty fine dessert.

#### DUTCH BABY APPLE PANCAKE

- 2 large apples
- 4 tablespoons sugar, divided
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/3 cup unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup dark brown sugar
- 3/4 cup all purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 5 eggs
- Powdered or cinnamon sugar to garnish

This recipe works well in a regular oven or a Dutch oven. If using an oven, preheat to 400°F. If using a Dutch oven, light about 40 charcoals and burn until ashen. Preheat Dutch oven, placing eight to 10 coals underneath.

Peel, core, quarter and slice apples into medium slices, no thicker than 1/4-inch thick. You should have at least 3 cups of apples. In a small bowl, mix 3 tablespoons sugar with the cinnamon and set aside. Cut butter into chunks and place in a deep cast iron skillet, Dutch oven or 8-by-8-inch baking dish. Sprinkle brown sugar over melted butter. Spread apples on top of brown sugar and sprinkle with

cinnamon-sugar mixture. In medium size bowl, whisk flour, remaining sugar, salt and nutmeg. Gradually add milk, whisking constantly to dissolve lumps. When incorporated, whisk in vanilla and eggs, one at a time. Beat for two minutes, or until foamy. Let batter rest five minutes. Once apples and sugar are caramelized, pour batter over apples. If using a Dutch oven, cover and place 12 to 14 coals on lid. Bake for 20 minutes or until center is set and sides are lightly browned. The pancake will puff up dramatically but fall after a few minutes as it cools. Serve with powdered sugar or additional cinnamon sugar.



# Warden's Diary

BY ERIKA BILLERBECK



## IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE...

For the past two years my son, Silas, would not leave the house without his superhero garb. It seemed to be a never-ending obsession. I accompanied a fully-costumed Batman to restaurants. I voluntarily called Silas "Clark" (short for Clark Kent) for weeks at a time as requested. I can recite entire books about the Justice League. I held Silas' red cape so it wouldn't get caught in the wheels of the grocery cart. I listened to my son wax on for hours about Superman's freeze breath, Batman's batarangs, Green Lantern's power ring and Spiderman's web slinging skills. And I pondered evil while looking at comics filled with bad guys like Clayface, Lex Luthor and the not so evil, but not very good either, Bizarro. In other words, I went through vigorous training, and now consider myself an expert in all things SUPERHERO.

One day Silas asked me the inevitable question, "If you could be a superhero, which one would you be?"

I knew my answer immediately. "I would definitely be Wonder Woman," I replied.

"You are only saying that because you are a girl," he concluded, not exactly hiding his disappointment for my lack of imagination.

"Nope. That's not the reason—it's because of her Lasso of Truth," I said. "It would really come in handy at work."

Silas pondered my answer for a minute then wandered off to find his dad, who would likely give him a more satisfactory answer.

For those of you who didn't receive the same level of training I did, Wonder Woman is a member of the Justice League. Her alter ego is Diana Prince, a government employee. Coincidence? She has long black hair, and

wears a singlet (by the looks of which I assume she consumes far fewer cream-filled longjohns than I do) and a tiara. Among many things, Wonder Woman drives an invisible jet, can communicate with animals, wears indestructible bracelets and best of all, she has a golden Lasso of Truth.

I would give up the invisible jet if only I could keep the Lasso of Truth. Its truth telling powers would have come in handy as recently as yesterday, when I found myself sitting in the courtroom watching the defendant in my case lie through her teeth on the stand.

Sometimes people forget about this aspect of a conservation officer's job. The excitement of catching bad guys, or the satisfaction felt when a good case is made, can all fizzle out in a drab courtroom six months later. Testifying in court is definitely the least favorite part of my job.

This particular case was clear cut—a simple "Possession of Alcohol Under the Legal Age" citation. These are common during a busy summer patrolling Coralville Reservoir. The defendant was a 19-year-old girl (who first claimed to be 21, then 20 and finally 19.) The facts of the case were simple. She was underage, on a boat containing large amounts of alcohol, admitted to consuming alcohol and registered on my preliminary breath testing device showing alcohol in her system. Her boyfriend's mother (who was also on the boat), admitted to providing alcohol, nodded her head and said, "I'm not gonna lie," when I asked her if she knew the defendant was underage when she gave her beer, and told me that she did indeed watch the defendant drink alcohol. And,

like a cherry on top, the whole thing was recorded on my body camera.

When I arrived at court that morning, however, I found that the intern prosecuting the case hadn't loaded the video onto a CD to be admitted into evidence. Immediately, I felt the chance of winning the case deflate.

The intern insisted my testimony was all she would need because the case was clear cut. I agree with her... at least in an ideal world. But the sting of being burned in a court case the month before still hurt. A defendant in another "clear cut" case involving an overloaded vessel, raised his right hand, swore to tell the whole truth, and proceeded to tell lies. If video isn't admitted into evidence, it turns the case into a scenario of my word versus the defendant's word.

In years past, the word of a law enforcement officer actually meant something. Body cameras were not necessary because an officer's testimony was assumed to be the truth. Not so anymore. Unfortunately, it's likely an example of a small minority ruining it for the majority.

Cameras aren't fail-safe. My camera, as nice as it is, still fails sometimes. In my experience, batteries die during a shift, the camera locks up and starts chirping like a bird, the memory runs out, I forget to turn it on, or it doesn't capture the angle I need to record. When one of those mishaps occurs, the officer is sometimes blamed for attempting to "hide" evidence or "cover up" some kind of wrong-doing, when in reality, I am human too and equipment fails at inopportune times.

However, when all the stars align, I'm wearing my lucky socks, I've turned three circles and jumped up and down two times in my lucky dance, I remember to do everything right AND I press the record button in time, it sure would be nice if the video were used during trial.

As I sat watching the defendant testify, I cringed when she claimed to have never admitted to drinking alcohol. I pursed my lips when she lied about my actions during the stop. And I shook with frustration when the person who provided the alcohol testified in a blatant lie that she had never given beer to the defendant or watched her drink it. And I practiced meditative breathing when



the defendant looked across the courtroom at me and smiled smugly.

It was at that moment when I wished I were Wonder Woman. I would have stood up, grabbed my Lasso of Truth, tossed it right over the witness stand and cinched it tight. That is all it would have taken for the truth to come spilling out. In my daydream I see the judge standing up, thanking me and passing me the gavel. I take it from her and give it a sharp rap on the bench, while saying, "Guilty. Case closed."

Sadly, these days, Silas' superhero obsession is waning. He is more interested in *Star Wars* than *Superman*. And though I think having Chewbacca as a partner would be pretty cool, and un-holstering a light saber would catch people's attention, if given the choice, I still would stick with Wonder Woman. First I would toss my body camera, then I'd reach down to my duty belt, where I'd keep my coiled and beautiful, golden Lasso of Truth. 🦋

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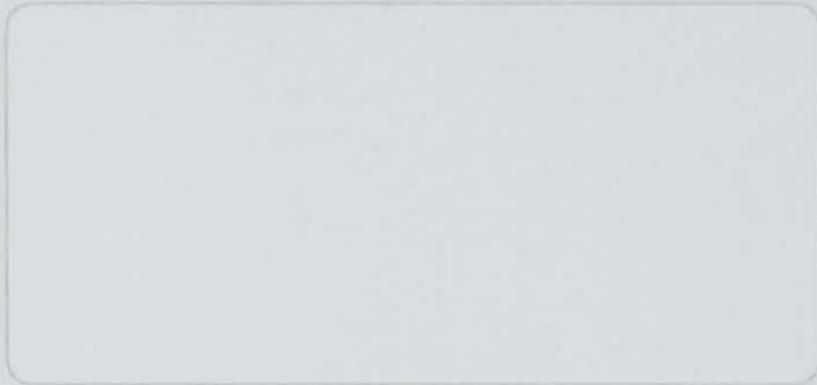
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