



# The Jasper County Jewel

Jasper County Conservation Board Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2017

## Volunteers Recognized

On November 28th, Jasper County Conservation volunteers were recognized and thanked for their efforts at a dinner in the Jasper County Armory/Annex Building. This is the second year a volunteer dinner was organized.

A meal was prepared by Janet Rinehart, Connie DeGreef, Betty Brodersen and Mary Altemeier for about 50 attendees. Conservation board members in attendance were Calvin Winn, Andy Stone and Robyn Friedman. Conservation staff present were Keri Van Zante, Janet Rinehart, Katie Cantu, Greg Oldsen, Jerry Ratliff and Dennis Cooling.

Volunteers were thanked for helping to make the conservation department's events run smoothly and be successful, including large family programs such as the Family Fishing Derby, Off the Beaten Path Trail Race, Fall Festival, Halloween Hike and the Mariposa Fish Fry. Volunteers also helped on school field trips, at hunter education courses, with park maintenance, and other projects. They are definitely an integral part of what Jasper County Conservation does!

Special awards were given out to several outstanding volunteers. "Volunteer of the Year" went to Mary Altemeier for helping at many events, community programs, and assisting with office work such as collating The Jewel newsletter. Darrell Batterson received the "Pioneer Award" for his many years of volunteering at events and helping with school field trips. Bob and Connie Van Ervelde were given the "Environmental Educators of the Year" award for their efforts to educate people of all ages about our native birds, inviting the public to help band birds at their rural Grinnell home, leading summer camp sessions, and after-school bird foraging programs. They do an amazing job of encour-



*Left:* Janet Rinehart presents Mary Altemeier with the "Volunteer of the Year" award.



*Right:* Keri Van Zante presents Darrell Batterson with the "Pioneer Award."

aging people to be more involved with conservation and their acreage/bird sanctuary is proof of their passion for the outdoors.

Jasper County Conservation staff wanted to recognize a new volunteer who really jumped in with both feet this year, and so the "Fledgling Award" was given to Bill Yeager, who helped at many of the JCCB events this year, including the Fishing Derby, Fall Festival and Fish Fry. Lastly, a dynamic couple was recognized as "Special Friends of Conservation." Doug and Cindy Smith are pioneers of many programs and projects, such as helping to start up the Jasper Conservation Connection nonprofit group and the annual Hal-

*Volunteers, continued on page 2.....*

*Volunteers, continued from page 1....*

loween Hike. The Smiths help out at the trail race, fishing derby, and Doug has worked with the naturalists for many years on school field trips at programs. We are grateful for all the Smiths do for conservation!

Volunteers were given t-shirts that they can wear at JCCB events. Certainly, not enough can be said about everyone who gives so much to help our communities, county parks and wildlife, and they are appreciated immensely. More photos and comments from the volunteers themselves will be shared on our Facebook page.

*Right: Katie Cantu presents Bob Van Ersvelde the "Environmental Educator" award. Granddaughter McKenley helps accept.*



*Right: Bill Yeager receives the "Fledgling Award" as a new volunteer who has been very active with programs and events.*



*Above: Doug and Cindy Smith were honored with the "Special Friends of Conservation" award for their many years of volunteering with JCCB events and projects.*

## Volunteer Spotlight

We would like to shine the spotlight on Darrell Batterson. Darrell was a DNR Conservation Officer in Jasper County for many years, and after his retirement, has been very involved with Jasper County Conservation projects and programs. Just this year alone, he has assisted with more than a dozen programs, including field trips, family events, and Hunter Education classes. Some of the events you may have seen Darrell at include our fishing derbies, trail races, Halloween hikes, hunter education classes, and the OWLS program. He helps with large field trip groups at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve and Wagaman Mill, and has helped with projects such as the installation of new playground equipment at Ashton and Mariposa Parks.

Darrell was awarded "Pioneer of the Year" at our recent volunteer dinner for his dedication and long-term involvement with Jasper County parks and programs. We greatly appreciate everything he does!



*Above: Darrell Batterson leads a group of 3rd grade students on a hike at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve.*

## **As the new year approaches, are you making resolutions to:**

- Get involved with a group that is making a difference locally
- Donate to a great cause
- Help protect wildlife and take care of the environment
  - Stay active and young at heart
- Learn new things
- Spend more time outdoors
  - Meet new people
  - Have fun!

Please consider volunteering with Jasper County Conservation! We would love to add you to our dynamic group of supporters. Contact our office by phone or email to learn more about the opportunities available.

## Older, Wiser, Livelier Seniors (OWLS)



Jasper County Conservation Office,  
1030 W. 2nd St. S., Newton

Come for coffee and a short presentation. All programs are from 10:00-11:00 AM unless otherwise noted.

### **Jan. 10—Cabin Fever Movie: *Fly Away Home* SPECIAL TIME 9:00-11:00 AM**

Kick those winter time blues and join us for a fun movie, *Fly Away Home*, a tale of a girl and her father who stumble upon a collection of abandoned goose eggs. When the eggs hatch, they work together teaching the motherless birds to fly south for the winter. Starring Anna Paquin and Jeff Daniels.

### **Feb. 14—Backyard Bird Watch**

Feeding birds is a hobby second only to gardening in the US. Get some helpful bird feeding tips and learn about a nationwide citizen science project, The Great Backyard Bird Count, with local Audubon Society member Bob Van Ervelde.

### **Mar. 14—Gardening for Wildlife**

John Krzton-Presson, Horticulture & Local Foods Program Coordinator for ISU Extension Service in Jasper County, will help us kick off the gardening season with an informative program about what to plant in your yard for wildlife this year.

## Ski & Snowshoe

**Saturday, January 13, 1:00-3:00 PM**

**Saturday, January 20, 1:00-3:00 PM**

**Saturday, February 3, 1:00-3:00 PM**

**Saturday, February 10, 1:00-3:00 PM**

**Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve**

Spend an afternoon cross-country skiing and snowshoeing! Those interested in trying out skis and snowshoes for the first time are encouraged to attend, as well as the more experienced who want to hit the trails. We have equipment in all sizes, so bring the whole family!

There is a \$5.00 fee per person to check out the equipment and a limited number of skis and snowshoes. If there is no snow cover, the program will be cancelled. Call (641) 792-9780 the Friday before to check on conditions or watch our Facebook page for updates.

## Full Moon, Blue Moon, Super Moon, Lunar Eclipse!

**Saturday, January 27, 7:00 PM**

**Ashton Observatory**

A very rare occurrence will happen on January 31st this year. We will be seeing a full moon, which is the second full moon the month (called a blue moon), it will be considered a super moon (very close to Earth), AND early in the morning we will have the opportunity to see a lunar eclipse (Earth moves in-between the sun and the moon). On their own, they are not as significant, but happening all in the same night is a pretty big deal!

Learn more about the moon at a free, informative program presented by the Des Moines Astronomical Society. If there is snow, we will have the snowshoes available for rent (\$5.00 per person) for an optional family snowshoe hike under the bright moon. Warm treats will be served! Pre-registration is required by calling the JCCB Office at (641) 792-9780 or emailing at [conservation@co.jasper.ia.us](mailto:conservation@co.jasper.ia.us) by Friday, January 19.

## DIY Prairie Series at the Refuge

**All programs are Saturdays, 10:00-11:00 AM**

**Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge, Prairie City**

**January 13: Planting Seeds Outside**

**February 10: Garden Planning**

**March 10: Starting Seeds Indoors**

**April 14: Transplanting Seedlings**

**May 12: Preparing Your Site**

**June 9: Planting Your Garden**

**July 14: Caring for Your Garden**

Want to learn how to create your own prairie garden? From seed cleaning and planting to weed control and using for education, learn a new skill every month in this do it yourself series. Aspiring prairie gardeners of all ages and experience are welcome!

The group will meet at the Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge's Prairie Learning Center. Please wear comfortable clothing for indoors/outdoors. For more information, please contact Patrick Bryant at [patrick\\_bryant@fws.gov](mailto:patrick_bryant@fws.gov) or (515) 994-3402.





### 13th Annual Trail Race Results

Jasper Conservation Connection organized it's 13th Annual *Off the Beaten Path* trail race and fun run at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve with about 80 participants competing on September 23, 2017. Thank you to all of our volunteers and race participants!

Race times are posted on our website at [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com). We hope to see you all again next year!



*Above:* Overall winner of the 6K trail race was Craig Thompson with a time of 24.58. Overall winner of the 3K fun run/walk was Owen Hanson with a time of 13.58.

### Youth Mentored Hunt

The Jasper County Pheasants Forever Chapter held its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Mentored Hunt on October 14, 2017 at Wild Feather Hunt Club in Baxter. Twelve youth, who had completed the Hunter Education course, took part in the event. The day included safety and ethics training, a pheasant hunt, and lunch. Thank you to all of the volunteers who made this day a success!



*Above:* A mentor from Pheasants Forever helps with a successful first hunt.

### 3rd Annual Fall Festival

The weather could not have been any better for a great event at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve on the last day of September!

Participants got to taste and vote for their favorite chili, take a wagon ride down the trail, navigate a prairie maze, shoot arrows at zombie targets, have their faces painted, throw rings on elk and bison antlers, shoot prairie seed bombs out of an air cannon, and taste freshly pressed apple cider. The Central Iowa Freeskinners had a small camp set up and were demonstrating outdoor cooking, blacksmithing, and broom making.

We could not have made this all happen without the help of so many volunteers and sponsors. We want to especially thank Capitol II Movie Theatre and Uncle Bill's Pumpkin Farm for donating prizes for the raffle drawing, Matt and Carla Oleson for donating pumpkins, Mike Castel for providing music, Newton Noon Kiwanis for providing pizza, Denise Christian for taking photos, and Bob Floss for the use of his apple press. The following people donated apples for our apple cider: Steve and Bonnie Herrin, Brad Bestel, Ron and Ruth Graham, and Glen Vander Pol.



*Above, clockwise:* The blacksmith, music by Rearview Mirror, apple press ready to make cider, shooting prairie seed bombs, and pioneer dress-up at the Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve 2017 Fall Festival.

## New Pond at Nature Center Area

A \$25,000 Fish Habitat Grant was received by JCCB to create a new 1-acre pond at the Nature Center area (across from the former county care facility area). Central College students assisted JCCB staff to install habitat structures in the pool area of the pond as a part of their Service Learning requirements.

This improvement, along with the remodeled shelter house, pollinator planting, and hiking trail, marks the beginning of what is planned for this special area.

Funds are being secured from private donors, grants and businesses to complete the site developments and to construct the learning center. If you would like to be involved with the project, donate, or just learn more, please contact Keri Van Zante at [kvanzante@co.jasper.ia.us](mailto:kvanzante@co.jasper.ia.us) or (641) 792-9780.



## Mariposa Lake Restoration Project

About 70 people attended a Fish Fry at Mariposa Park on October 8th and learned about the upcoming water quality project at Mariposa Lake. JCCB staff and volunteers cooked and served fish (from Mariposa Lake), potatoes, baked beans and rolls while Luke Monat, the project engineer from Shive-Hattery, discussed Mariposa Lake Restoration project activities.

Earthwork will begin in December 2017 and is scheduled to end by September 15, 2018. Mobilization of equipment from Leffler Dirtworks from Oskaloosa will be one of the first things onlookers should expect to see, followed by the construction of earthen sediment holding structures in the bison pen area. The park will be closed during the project, but JCCB will create a safe viewing area for park visitors. Keep watch for progress at Mariposa and a new look in 2018!

## Invasive Species Removal at Ashton

Non-native, invasive species are a problem in most all of Iowa's woodlands. Non-native species have been introduced to the state for a number different reasons, including ornamental value, wildlife habitat, and even as a living fence. Many non-native plants are very aggressive and outcompete our native woodland species for nutrients and sunlight. They can invade a forest and become the dominant plant in the understory in a very short period of time due to their rapid growth and abundance of seed.

Ashton Park is not immune to these invasive plants. Jasper County Conservation, with the assistance of the Iowa DNR, has recently implemented a comprehensive management plan to increase woodland vigor and reduce the competition of invasives within our native Oak-Hickory forest. Our initial steps have been to reintroduce fire to the woodland and to actively cut and treat with chemical the primary invasive plants in the park, including Autumn Olive, Bush Honeysuckle, and Mulberry. By reducing these invasive plants, young saplings, along with woodland wildflowers, will be able to compete for sunlight and nutrients and flourish.

Conservation staff and volunteers have been very active at Ashton this fall with the hopes that our efforts will have a direct effect on the overall health of the woodland. As you explore the park, you will see several areas of blackened understory and stumps from cut vegetation. You may also come across some larger stumps from native trees that have succumbed to disease. It is a continuous process that we will be working on for several years to come. If individuals or groups are interested in helping with invasive species removal, give our office a call!

*Right: A controlled burn at Ashton Park.*



Jasper County Conservation Board  
1030 W. 2nd St. S.  
Newton, IA 50208

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**Jasper County Conservation Board**

M - F 8:00 - 5:00 (641) 792-9780  
email: [conservation@co.jasper.ia.us](mailto:conservation@co.jasper.ia.us)  
website: [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com)

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Greg Oldsen.....Naturalist  
Dennis Cooling.....Park Officer  
Jerry Ratliff.....Park Officer  
Kent Dunsbergen.....Maintenance Technician  
Rob Graham.....Maintenance Technician  
Janet Rinehart.....Office Manager

**Special thanks this past fall for....**donations from Ina Heidemann, Les and Lavola Trout, Fareway, Matt and Carla Olsen, Bob Floss, Capitol II Theatre, and Uncle Bill's Pumpkin Farm. Thanks to all our wonderful volunteers who presented for the OWLS group and who helped with the trail race, Fall Festival, Fish Fry, and many fall field trips! **THANK YOU!**

**Wanted:** an artificial, pre-lit Christmas tree in good condition.



Jasper County Conservation Board's programs are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, age and handicap. If anyone believes they have been subjected to discrimination, they may file a complaint with the Jasper County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, Washington, D.C. 29240