

# The Jasper County Jewel

Jasper County Conservation Board Quarterly Newsletter Winter 2018

## Caring For Conservation Auction Benefitting Environmental Education Center

**Saturday, February 23, 2019, 6:00pm**  
**Sugar Grove Vineyards and Gathering Place**  
**6602 Ginger Ave., Newton**

Jasper County Conservation staff and volunteers assist more than 20,000 people annually, providing outdoor learning experiences to students of all ages. The Environmental Education Center will be a hub for those learning experiences as well as a significant tourist attraction and welcome center for Jasper County. The Environmental Education Center will be a state of the art, LEED Platinum Certified facility that will provide an extraordinary location for research, education, and family enjoyment.

Fundraising for this learning center has begun, and money raised from the Caring for Conservation Auction on February 23 will go towards this facility.

The doors at Sugar Grove will open at 6:00pm, the silent auction begins at 6:30pm, followed by a live auction. There is no charge to get in, free appetizers and music are provided, along with a cash bar. Many items and experiences have already been donated for this great cause. There will be something for everyone!

We are still looking for donations of a product, service or sponsorship. All donations are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible. Your donation can be something as simple as a gift

certificate to your business, cash donation or an item to contribute to a gift basket. If you have a special skill to offer that could be shared with someone as an unique experience, please consider donating your time. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at the Jasper County Armory/Annex Building in Newton. Contact Jade Read at [jread@co.jasper.ia.us](mailto:jread@co.jasper.ia.us) for information about making auction donations.

More information about the project can be found at [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com). If you have questions please contact Keri Van Zante, Director, at [kvanzante@co.jasper.ia.us](mailto:kvanzante@co.jasper.ia.us) or call (641)792-9780. We hope to see you at this exciting event!



*Above and Below:* Illustrations of what the new Environmental Education Center will look like, facing from the north and south. It will be located just south of Newton.



## Volunteers Recognized at Annual Dinner

On November 27th, Jasper County Conservation volunteers were recognized and thanked for their efforts at a dinner in the Jasper County Community Center building. This is the third year a volunteer dinner has been organized.

A meal was prepared and served by Jasper County Conservation staff members for about 50 attendees. Conservation board members in attendance were Calvin Winn, Andy Stone and Carol Kramer. Conservation staff present were Keri Van Zante, Jade Read, Katie Cantu, Greg Oldsen, Ethan Vander Pol and Dennis Cooling. Special recognition was given to Janet Rinehart, who retired earlier this year after serving over 10 years as the conservation department's Office Manager.

Volunteers were thanked for helping to make the conservation department's events run smoothly and be successful, including large family programs such as the Off the Beaten Path Trail Race, Fall Festival, and Halloween Hike. Volunteers also helped on school field trips, at hunter education courses, with park maintenance, and other projects. According to Katie Cantu, Naturalist with Jasper County Conservation, staff members see almost 20,000 people annually at programs and manage over 3,000 acres of public park land. "Certainly, not enough good things can be said about everyone who gives so much to help our communities, county parks and wildlife, and they are appreciated immensely."

Special awards were given out to several outstanding volunteers. "Volunteer of the Year" went to Bob Christian for helping at many events including youth summer camps, hunter education



*Above:* From left to right, Katie Cantu, Cindy Healy, Craig Armstrong, Bob Christian, and Greg Oldsen.

classes and family programs. Cindy Healy received the "Pioneer Award" for her 14 years of involvement with the annual Halloween Hike events. Stacey Wilson was given the "Environmental Educator of the Year" award for her assistance with school field trip groups, hunter education classes and other events.

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 Craig Armstrong, who promoted conservation events on the radio, attended event planning meetings and helped at the Off the Beaten Path Trail Race and Fall Festival. Lastly, a very special person was recognized as Jasper County's "Friend of Conservation." Gayle Uhlenhopp and Andrew Uhlenhopp accepted an award on behalf of the late Elliott Uhlenhopp, who has given his beautiful 250 acre arboretum, located in eastern Jasper County, to the conservation department to manage and open for public use. The Conservation Board is grateful for Elliott's passion and commitment to conservation and natural resources, and his willingness to leave this very special piece of land for all to enjoy.



*Above:* Keri Van Zante presents Gayle Uhlenhopp and Andrew Uhlenhopp with the "Friend of Jasper County Conservation" Award in memory and honor of Elliott Uhlenhopp.



*Left:* Stacey Wilson with ISU Extension receives the "Environmental Educator of the Year" award from Katie Cantu.

## 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. 9—The Cats of America: Ancient History and Modern Conservation**

William R. Clark, Professor Emeritus of Wildlife Ecology at Iowa State University, will present a natural history program on cats—from sabertooth cats that once roamed North America to bobcats which are common today. Pumas that occasionally show up in Iowa will also be discussed. Learn about conservation challenges including habitat loss, climate change, conflicts, and hunting.

### **Feb. 13—Iowa Hunting Products**

What started as a hobby quickly turned into an obsession. Newton native Brandon Knopf will talk about how he got started making duck and turkey calls, which lead to the creation of his business, Iowa Hunting Products.



### **Mar. 13—Hiking the Appalachian Trail**

Newton native Doug Gibson hiked the entire Appalachian Trail in 2018. Listen to stories from his adventure on this amazing journey.

## Ski & Snowshoe

Saturday, January 5, 1:00-3:00 PM  
Saturday, January 12, 1:00-3:00 PM  
Saturday, January 19, 1:00-3:00 PM  
Saturday, February 2, 1:00-3:00 PM  
Saturday, February 9, 1:00-3:00 PM  
Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve  
15148 Jacob Ave., Grinnell

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.

## Caring for Conservation Auction

Saturday, February 23, 6:00pm  
Sugar Grove Vineyards and Gathering Place  
6602 Ginger Ave., Newton

Make plans to attend Jasper County Conservation's first-ever auction fundraiser, benefitting the new Environmental Education Center! Doors will open at 6:00pm and the silent auction will begin at 6:30pm, followed by a live auction. Many unique items and experiences will be up for bidding. There will be something for everyone, including free appetizers, a cash bar, music provided by The Jolt with Jamie and Lynette DJ Dance Service, and games, including a \$20 punch wall and a wine pull raffle. It is free entry for this event.

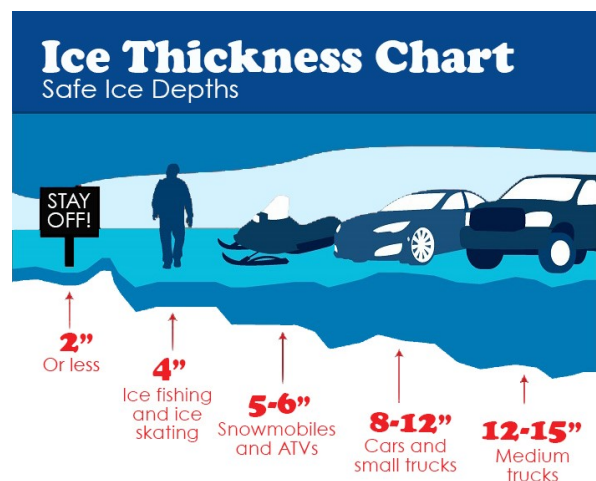
For more information about the Environmental Education Center project and the conservation department's fundraising goals, please contact Keri Van Zante at [kvanzante@co.jasper.ia.us](mailto:kvanzante@co.jasper.ia.us) or call (641) 792-9780.



## Ice Fishing Clinic

Keep watching for possible ice fishing clinic dates! Due to the nature of ice and the safety of everyone involved, a free clinic will be held only if conditions allow.

Information about an ice fishing clinic will be at [www.jaspercountyconservation.com](http://www.jaspercountyconservation.com) or on our Facebook page @jaspercountyconservation.



NOTE: These are rough guidelines for clear ice only.

Source: Ice Thickness Safety Chart  
The Old Farmer's Almanac [www.almanac.com](http://www.almanac.com)



### 14th Annual Trail Race Results

Jasper Conservation Connection organized its 14th Annual Off the Beaten Path trail race and fun run at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve with about 120 participants competing on September 29th. 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!

*Right:* Overall winner of the 6K trail race was Susie Duke with a time of 24.30. Overall winner of the 3K fun run/walk was Owen Hanson with a time of 14.16.



### 4th Annual Fall Festival

In conjunction with the Off the Beaten Path Trail Race, this year our annual Fall Festival was held immediately following the race and kicked off with an all-you-can eat pancake breakfast, served by the Grinnell Fire Department.

Participants also got to take a wagon ride down the trail, navigate a prairie maze, shoot arrows at zombie targets, have their faces painted, and taste freshly pressed apple cider. Rebekah Oleson provided a pumpkin patch. At the end of the event, there was a drawing for a kayak. The lucky winner was Avery Kuker, pictured below with her dad, Andy Kuker.

We could not have made this all happen without the help of so many volunteers and sponsors. We want to especially thank Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge for their booth, Mike and Joyce Castell for providing music, Grinnell Fire Department for cooking pancakes, the Oleson Family for bringing pumpkins, Denise Christian for taking photos, Scheels for donating the kayak, and Bob Floss for the use of his apple press.



### "Nature's Glow Show" Hike

The 14th annual Halloween Hike, sponsored by Jasper Conservation Connection, was held at the Emerson Hough Chapter of the Izaak Walton League on October 26th. Over 400 visitors came out on a beautiful night. The weather could not have cooperated any better and the attendance was amazing!

The location changed this year due to Mariposa Park being closed for the lake restoration project. Members of the Izaak Walton League were eager to offer their facilities and volunteer to cook hotdogs for hikers.

Hikers enjoyed six skits as part of the "Jasper Your Friendly Host and Nature's Glow Show" hike. Many of the performers have sang in productions at the Newton Community Theatre. They were: "Light My Fire" by Katie Healy, Tom Healy and Cindy Healy; "The Light in Your Eyes" by Sandy Olsthoorn; "A Whole New World" by Drew and Ellen Schumann; "Dancing in the Moonlight" by Julie Goodman and Barb Hoover; "I See the Light" by Kristine Perkins and Scott Schaeffer; and "You Light Up My Life" by Kate Fudge, with special guest Cody Snyder from the Newton Fire Department. "Jasper the Friendly Host" hike greeter was Bryan Friedman. Special thanks to Cindy Healy for coordinating the performers and costumes and to Denise Christian for photographing the event!



Halloween Hike visitors also roasted marshmallows at the campfire, went blacklight tracking, decorated a pumpkin gourd, and listened to campfire music performed by Colton Forck and Mike Wignall. Members of the Des Moines Astronomical Society were on hand with telescopes, although it was too cloudy to see much in the night sky.

Thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers and participants who make this event a success every year! If you would like to help with next year's event, please contact the JCCB.

## Volunteer Spotlight

We would like to shine the spotlight on Cindy Healy. Cindy helped the conservation department get the first Halloween Hike started 14 years ago. She recruited her group of Webelos Boy Scouts to perform, made their costumes and helped them memorize their lines! Over the years, the skits evolved into a more musical event, with talented local performers singing at each station. Our annual Halloween Hikes would not be as fun and educational without Cindy's involvement, and we are grateful for everything she does to keep this tradition going!

Cindy was given the "Pioneer Award" at our recent volunteer dinner for her dedication and long-term involvement with Jasper County parks and programs. We greatly appreciate everything she does!

*Right: Cindy Healy, along with her children, Katie and Tom, perform a skit about the benefit of prairie fire at the Halloween Hike.*



## Trees For Kids

We want to say a big thank you to the six students from the Newton High School Environmental Club who helped us plant 21 trees at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve this past October. This project was made possible by a Trees for Kids grant through the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Pecans, river birch, and two varieties of maple trees were planted at the east side of the preserve to be used in future maple syrup programs, and three varieties of oak trees were added to Skinner Ridge to create an oak-savanna area (pictured below).



## Central College Service Day

Nine students from Central College worked at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve at the end of October, painting the walls of the picnic shelter and harvesting prairie seed (pictured below).



## More Volunteers at Work

Volunteers from TPI Composites in Newton worked over several days on a new section of nature trail at Mariposa Park this fall, wood chipping the path and clearing invasive brush.

Jasper County Sherriff's Department staff helped cut down dead pine trees near the picnic shelter at Mariposa Park (pictured below).



## **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.



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

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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Newton, Iowa  
Permit No. 636



**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)

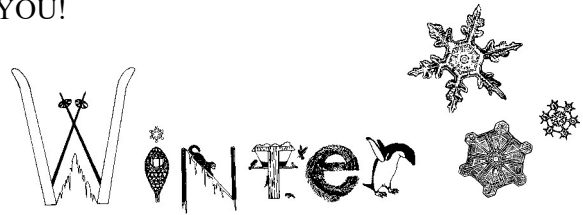
**BOARD MEMBERS**

Robyn Friedman Carol Kramer  
Calvin Winn Andrew Stone  
Chris Herbold

**STAFF**

Keri Van Zante.....Director  
Katie Cantu.....Naturalist  
Greg Oldsen.....Naturalist  
Dennis Cooling.....Park Officer  
Jerry Ratliff.....Park Officer  
Kent Dunsbergen.....Maintenance Technician  
Ethan Vander Pol.....Maintenance Technician  
Jade Read.....Admin/EE Assistant

**Special thanks this past fall for....**donations from Ina Heidemann, Gordon Brand, Clifford Simbro, Fareway, Scheels, Mike and Joyce Castell, Oleson Family, Bob Floss, Mike Castell, Jim LaPlant, Grinnell Fire Department, Marie Brown, and the Emerson Hough Chapter of the Izaak Walton League. Thanks to all our wonderful volunteers who presented for the OWLS group and who helped with the trail race, Fall Festival, Halloween Hike and many fall field trips! **THANK YOU!**



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