



# THE Heron



By Jill Schmidt,  
Environmental  
Education Coordinator

## Finding Hope in All That We Do

For any of you who have been in the same career your entire life you can relate to the fact you slowly enter the mid-career crisis. Don't get me wrong, I love my career choice, I wouldn't have it any other way. But after 23 years of educating people about the vast world of Mother Nature I begin to question not where I've been, but where am I going? This past November, I had the pleasure of attending the Iowa Nature Summit. It's easy to get overwhelmed being surrounded by people who are so passionate about the outdoors and the natural wonders that live there as well as the environmental issues they face. I found myself questioning if what I do really has an impact on anything or anyone. With every new speaker I began to feel defeated until the word hope was brought up. I found myself asking myself, "what gives me hope?" Living the ultimate "good vs evil" career, I must have hope, otherwise why am I doing what I am doing?

It is naturally easier to look at all the serious environmental issues Iowans are facing but we must remember that the nature we have today is here because

someone out there cared before us. If we didn't have those people, we wouldn't be seeing an increase in the monarch population in this year's preliminary numbers. We wouldn't have public land for people to enjoy and for the wildlife to thrive. There are people who care, that is my hope. Nature is our original classroom. Being outdoors, for whatever reason, taught us patience, imagination, resilience, purpose and creativity. It taught us numbers, colors, smells and textures. We first learned from our natural environment and for that we need to continue to advocate for our first classroom. We cannot count on anyone to do it for us. It only makes sense to be passionate about what you care about. I see it in teachers, health care workers, small business owners...they constantly stand up for the people, their people. I find myself doing this for nature, for our state, our water, our animals, the land we use, and the land we take from. Just like the other 100 people I was surrounded by at the Nature Summit, I am not alone in this fight, but I do know we have to keep on keeping on.

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# Thank You

The Clinton County Conservation naturalists provide year-round nature experiences at the county's parks and in school classrooms. Our mission is to support these programs in any way possible as well help provide much needed updates overtime.

In year's past, your generous donations have allowed for additions to our Eden Valley Nature Center, and this spring we will showcase a complete remodeling of the nature center to enhance educational experiences for school children and adults.

With your generous tax-deductible support, environmental education programs and hands-on nature experiences like these will be able to continue and thrive throughout Clinton County, providing places where this generation and the next will learn and grow in their respect for nature.

Thank you for your generous gift.  
Clinton County Conservation Foundation



## Finding Hope

(cont. from front

page)

We cannot give up on our passions, we cannot trust the next generations will care as much as we do so we must show them. The nature that will be there when they are older is there because of us.

At one point in the conference, a young teacher in the crowd voiced his concerns about Iowa's environmental issues. He stated "youth in my class have resentment towards adults for not addressing the environmental issues" we are facing. How eye opening is that? Where is their hope? They clearly do not trust us to fix any of these issues, and I for one cannot blame them. I truly believe that what my coworkers and I do on an everyday basis is for the better good of Iowa and its people. It's difficult to describe it as life-changing but just like anything we do in life, we take the chance that it will be for something or someone. As we push forward recognizing the environmental issues Iowa faces, we need to be loud, we need to crystal clear on the changes that need to happen and we need to rally together to make those changes. We need to give our youth hope and although nature is resilient, it is fragile in the same sense. As soon as humans declared their dominance over the land, we are responsible for it. Let's do better, let's live out our **hope**.





# CALENDAR OF Events

## Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

As weather conditions allow, we will schedule some events at various locations throughout the county. Write to [jschmidt@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:jschmidt@clintoncounty-ia.gov) and place yourself on our "Adventurers" list. You will receive a short message whenever pop-up snow events are planned. Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center & Camp Store Winter Hours ~ 8 AM to 3 PM Wednesday - Saturday. We encourage you to call 563-259-1876 to confirm prior to making the trip.

## January Events

**1st ~ Happy New Year! ~ All Conservation Buildings are CLOSED.**

**3rd ~ Outdoor Exploration ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek**  
Check out ad for more info.

**3rd ~ Spin Though the Seasons: Phenology Wheel Journal ~ 12:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**  
Register at [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com)

**7th ~ Sourdough for Beginners ~ 5:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

Do you want to hop on the sourdough train but aren't sure where to start? Join us for a sourdough beginners' class. We will talk about all things sourdough, and you will even leave with your very own starter! Registration is required and limited. Registration is available on, [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com) and the cost is \$5/person. For more information, call or text Emma at 563-357-0759.

**8th ~ Outdoor Exploration ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek**

**8th ~ Crafternoon at the Creek ~ 12:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

This week's craft is a tealight snowman magnet for \$5, register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com)! Or bring your own craft to work on all day if you want, for free!

**9th ~ Winter Walk ~ 9 AM ~ Eden Valley**

Grab a warm drink and join a naturalist for a winter hike through Eden Valley's beautiful winter landscape. We will take a leisurely walk through the park and see what wildlife is out and about. If the weather allows, we will have snowshoes to strap on to hike with. We will meet at the nature center parking lot.

**9th ~ Happening Hawks ~ 10:30 AM ~ Discovery Center**

Did you know that red-tailed hawks can spot a mouse from 100 feet in the air? There will be a story, real animal artifacts to hold and see a LIVE red-tailed hawk!

**10th ~ Nature's Gold: Crafting with Deer Tallow ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek**

From rendering fat to creating household items, deer tallow has many uses. During this program you will learn about

collecting the fat from the deer, storing it, rendering it and transforming it into items such as candles, lotion and bird suet for you to use at home. The cost for this program is \$25 and registration is required. Visit [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com) to sign up. Call Jill with any questions, 563-349-8680.

**22nd ~ Outdoor Exploration ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek**

**22nd ~ Crafternoon at the Creek ~ 12:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

This week's craft is a snowman wreath for \$10, please register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com).

**31st ~ Bald Eagle Watch ~ 9 AM-2 PM ~ Clinton Community College**

Join the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the 42nd annual Bald Eagle Watch. There will be various educational programs throughout the day starting at 9:30 am through 2 pm. You may also visit Lock 13 in Fulton, IL between 8:30 am-2:30 pm where representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the US Fish and Wildlife Service will be to tell you all about the Bald Eagles that congregate around the Lock and Dam system. This is a great community event for all ages!

## February Events

**At the beginning of Feb. through the second week of April ~ Hidden in Plain Sight**

This is an interactive hiking/hide and seek game played using shed deer antlers. Rules and clues will be posted on our Facebook page, and a prize will be awarded weekly. Rules and guidelines. 1. Shed antlers will be placed and clues posted on Facebook every Monday by 1 PM unless posted otherwise. 2. If not found by Friday of the week, another clue will post in the Facebook original post. 3. Shed antler must be returned to receive that week's prize. 4. Special rules may apply from week to week. Please respect the rules so the game can continue.

**5th ~ Outdoor Exploration ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek**

Check ad for details

**5th ~ Crafternoon at the Creek ~ 12:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

This week's craft is a finger looping winter hat for \$10. Please register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com).

**7th ~ Outdoor Exploration ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek**

**7th ~ Phenology Wheel Journal ~ 12:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

Register at [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com).

**7th ~ Clinton County Whitetails Unlimited Banquet**

Doors open at 4:30 PM, dinner served at 6:30 PM ~ Tilted Silo, Goose Lake C-Store ~ Contact Jeff Beckwith for tickets, 563-249-7358.

**9th ~ Ice Rod Building Workshop ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek**

Custom rod builder, Ryan Waltz, will be on hand to guide you on making your very own custom ice fishing rod, for only \$25. You MUST register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com).

**12th ~ Outdoor Exploration ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek**

**12th ~ Crafternoon at the Creek ~ 12:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

This week's craft is an arm knitted cowl for \$15, register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com).

**13th ~ Winter Walk ~ 9 AM ~ Sherman Park**

Grab a warm drink and join a naturalist for a winter hike through Sherman Park. We will take a leisurely walk through the park and see what wildlife is out and about. If the weather allows, we will have snowshoes to strap on to hike with. We will meet at the north entrance to the park.

**19th ~ Outdoor Exploration ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek**

Check ad for details

**19th ~ Crafternoon at the Creek ~ 12:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

This week's craft is shower steamers for \$15, register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com).

**21st ~ Winter Fun Day ~ 9:30 AM-12:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

We will be loaning our equipment and expertise for you and your family to ice fish, cross-country ski, snowshoe and ice skate! There will also be a warm fire and inside activities like crafts and live animals to continue the family fun, no matter what the weather! If there are not good snow/ice conditions, we will have other fun outdoor activities planned.

**21st ~ Freezin' for a Reason ~ Polar Plunge ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek**

Being outside and experiencing nature is a vital component for a healthy life! The Clinton County Conservation Foundation is a non-profit that supports environmental education for the people in our area! They provide bus scholarships to schools for field trips, help fund the Blue Heron Eco Cruise, enhance our nature centers and much more! Help us support this organization and keep nature in the lives of our children and neighbors by raising money and taking the plunge! Pledge to raise \$100 to be donated to the Foundation. Registration opens January 26th call or text Jill at 563-349-8680 to sign up! Check us out on Facebook for more details!

**25th ~ Earthbound Arts: Evergreen Salves ~ 5:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

Unlock the healing secrets of evergreen trees! Whether you're a complete beginner or a DIY enthusiast, this program will guide you step-by-step through creating skin-nourishing herbal salves using simple, natural ingredients you can find out in nature. Registration is limited and required by visiting [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com) and the cost is \$5/person. For more information, call or text Emma at 563-357-0759.

**26th ~ Outdoor Exploration ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek**

**26th ~ Crafternoon @ the Creek ~ 12:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

This week's craft is t-shirt rugs is \$5, register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com).

**27th ~ Slithering Snakes ~ 10:30 AM ~ Discovery Center**

Did you know that Iowa has 27 species of snakes? Some are quite small but a couple can get up to 6 feet! While none of the snakes we have are that big, we will try to bring 7 different live snakes for you to look, see and touch (and HOLD, if you want to!) We will also bring a variety of animal artifacts for your child to explore close-up.

**28th ~ Nature's Watercolors ~ 9AM-2PM ~ Rock Creek**

Use various inks made from nature to make your very own creations!

**Join the Friends of Rock Creek!**

Join this amazing volunteer group to help make a difference at Rock Creek! This group helps with many large events like Winter Fun Day, Spring Fling, Turtle Sunday, Trivia Night, Halloween at Rock Creek and many others! If you're interested, and would like more information, email [hedfors@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:hedfors@clintoncounty-ia.gov). Our upcoming meeting dates are January 20, February 17, March 17 and April 21 all at 6 PM inside the Eco Center.

**Spin Through the Seasons: Phenology Wheel Journal**

**Saturdays January 3, February 7, March 7 at 12:30 PM at Rock Creek**

Register at [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com) for \$15 to make a watercolor journal, it is free if you simply want a copy but please still register. Maybe your New Year's resolution is to be present and to find the beauty in the seasons or you just like nature. This fun activity will bring you closer to nature and have a whole month mapped out in front of your eyes. We will have monthly meetings to share if you want to or just to keep you accountable. New people can join anytime!

**Outdoor Exploration**

**January 3, 8, 22, February 5, 7, 12, 19, 26, March 7 at 10 AM at Rock Creek**

Back by popular demand and some Saturday dates from suggestions from last year! This is an informal program where we go out in the woods and have free play. Depending on the weather we may ice fish, cross country ski, snowshoe, ice skate, hike, build forts, etc. I will post on Facebook, the Monday before, what the intended activity will be. This is open to any age and all children must be accompanied by an adult. We will meet inside, then we will go outside for at least an hour, but you can leave as you want or go inside to warm up. Please register by texting 563-212-0955.

**Crafternoon at the Creek**

**January 8, 22, February 5, 12, 19, 26, 28 at 12:30 PM-3 PM at Rock Creek**

Fees range from \$5 to \$15, register at [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com)

Check the calendar of events for the craft that day. If you are a crafter and want some different scenery, feel free to bring the project you are working on for some fellowship and some warm beverages and cookies.



## March Events

### **4th ~ Turkey Feather Fletching ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek**

Interested in making your own arrows, but unsure of how to start? Join us as we go through the step-by-step process of creating arrow fletching's and placing them on the arrow. We will use real turkey feathers that were locally sourced. Each participant will be able to make 3 of their very own arrows to take home. The cost of this program is \$25, and you must register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com) by February 23. For any questions, please contact Hannah at 563-349-0956.

### **7th ~ Outdoor Exploration ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek**

### **7th ~ Phenology Wheel Journal ~ 12:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

Register at [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com)

### **8th ~ Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC) Practice Begins ~ 1-4 PM ~ Wapsi Valley IKES, DeWitt**

Children ages 11-18 are invited to practice for the state Youth Hunter Education Challenge (YHEC) competition that is held on May 31, 2025, at Rock Creek Marina & Campground, Camanche. Competition includes shotgun, muzzleloader, .22 long rifle, archery, wildlife ID, orienteering, safety trail and laws/ethics exam. All skills are coached during practices. For more information contact Jill Schmidt at 563-349-8680.

### **13th ~ Mighty Minnows ~ 10:30 AM ~ Discovery Center, Clinton**

This is my FAVORITE presentation for kids! We let them play with minnows! Come listen to a book, learn a little bit about fish and then we let them discover the joy of catching fish with their bare hands!

### **13th ~ Clinton County Ducks Unlimited ~ 5 PM ~ Buzzy's, Welton**

Contact Brian Huling at 563-357-8830.

### **18th ~ Earthbound Arts: Seed Paper ~ 5:30 PM ~ Rock Creek**

Learn how to reuse your scrap paper and turn it into plants! Your creation can be used as a gift or planted by you! Registration is limited and required by visiting [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com). For more information, call or text Emma at 563-357-0759.

### **20th ~ Spring Equinox Hike ~ Noon ~ Eden Valley Refuge**

Celebrate the first day of spring with a hike through the beautiful bluffs of Eden Valley.

### **21st ~ Trivia Night ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek**

Doors open at 6 PM, Trivia starts at 7 PM ~ Come for a fun night of trivia to raise funds for the Friends of Rock Creek and Fishing Has No Boundaries organizations. FORC are the eyes and ears of the visitors while promoting the park through volunteering and hosting events. FHNB now hosts two fishing events at the county parks for disabled youth and adults that might not otherwise be able to fish. Register your table of 8 for \$80 or \$15 for individuals, just call or text 563-349-8680 to reserve your spot.

### **25th ~ Woodcock "Sky Dance" ~ 7:30 PM ~ Sherman Park, north entrance**

We will look and listen for the courtship display and try to get up close to these unique critters! Wear long pants in case we need to go through brambles. Contact Jill Schmidt at 563-349-8680 with any questions.

### **28th ~ Clinton County Pheasants Forever Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Millennium Ballroom, Goose Lake**

Contact Brad Taylor at 563-221-1214.

### **29th ~ Build a Kokedama ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek**

Join a naturalist to build your own Kokedama! We'll go over the history of how they came to be and then you'll get to build your own to take home! This program will cost \$10, and you must register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com) by March 22. Space is limited so don't wait to sign-up!

## April Events

### **18th ~ Spring Fling ~ 10 AM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek**

Spend the day celebrating spring! At 10 AM there will be a FREE egg hunt for ages 1-12 in and around the Eco Center. Join Naturalist Jill Schmidt and learn how to make seed bombs to take home or disperse along Iowa's landscape. At noon, the Blue Heron Eco Cruise will venture out for a spring cruise. There is limited space, registration is required. Registration for this cruise will begin Wednesday, April 23 by calling the Eco Center at 563-259-1876. This day is always filled with fun things from crafts to live animals, celebrating spring with us at Rock Creek!

### **18th ~ Mushroom Foray with Prairie States Mushroom Club ~ Noon ~ Sherman Park, north entrance**

Hip-hip Foray! Explore one of the most extensive and essential parts of our ecosystem, FUNGI! Experts from the Prairie States Mushroom club will be available for identification help and to answer questions. This program is free and open to all! For more information, call or text Emma at 563-357-0759

### **22nd ~ Spring Ephemeral Hike ~ Noon ~ Eden Valley Refuge**

Celebrate Earth Day by taking a hike through Eden Valley and search for the wonderful and vibrant flowers of the spring.

### **25th ~ Trail to Table: Spring Foraging ~ 10 AM ~ Eden Valley Refuge**

Join a naturalist and learn how to identify common wild edibles, practice safe and ethical harvesting, and discover simple ways to enjoy your finds at home. Online registration is required. For questions, please call or text Emma at 563-357-0759



**Scan to Register for Events**

## Clinton County Conservation

P.O. Box 68  
2308 255th Street  
Grand Mound, Iowa 52751  
Phone: 563-847-7202  
Email: [conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov)  
Web: [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com)

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### ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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#### MAILING LIST

Clinton County residents may receive this newsletter at home, free.  
Others are charged \$5 annually. "The Heron" is on our website or emailed, free of charge.

#### BOARD MEETINGS

The Clinton County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board regularly meets the third Tuesday the month, at 6 PM, in the Conservation Office, located 1 mile south of Grand Mound at 2308 255th St. Please note, date and location may be changed.

Clinton County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subject to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Clinton C.C.B. or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

