

Park Rx

Dennis Goemaat, Deputy Director

Did you know that there is growing evidence that using parks leads to better health? Well, recent research proves this contention. A growing body of evidence suggests that parks may in fact be good medicine. The recent issue of the National Recreation and Park Association magazine highlighted a number of interesting medical findings related to parks.

The idea that parks are good for people has been around for some time. Well known landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead urged the creation of New York City's Central Park in New York, Niagara Falls, the Emerald Necklace in Boston and many other parks and parkways. He strongly believed that parks and green space could provide benefits to people's physical and mental health.

Of course, Olmstead wasn't the only person to have suggested the

connection between nature and health. Physician Dr. Edwin Eldridge built a park in Elmira, New York so his patients would have a place to exercise. John Muir wrote "Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul."

Today, researchers are finding hard evidence to support Olmstead, Eldridge and Muir's belief in the healing power of interactions with nature. Studies have shown that exposure to nature results in lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, increased survival rates following a heart attack, quicker recovery following surgery and fewer medical complaints. In general, researchers have even shown that merely being able to see trees from the hospital leads to quicker recovery.

The Japanese Forest Agency (the Japanese equivalent of the US Forest Service), along with scientists and medical doctors, has started a trend called Shinrin Yoku or "forest bathing." When I first heard this term, the mental image I had was of a hot tub in the woods. Of course, that is not an accurate representation.

Actually, forest bathing encourages people to make a deeper connection to nature by focusing on the sights, sounds, and movement around you

as you walk through the woods. The concept is that the mind and body start to calm down during this experience. These are worthwhile and desirable results for people to escape for a time from the hectic and sometimes grueling pace of most people's lives.

Physicians are beginning to use the benefits of exposure to nature with their patients. Doctors are beginning to write "prescriptions" to patients to use trails and parks more often. The benefits patients experience from their time in nature include increased ability to focus, lower rates of depression and anxiety and better sleep quality.

Dr. Sabgir from Mount Camel Clinical Cardiovascular Specialists created a program called Walk with a Doc to encourage his patients to get out in nature. When talking about this program he said, "Personally, I believe a 30-minute walk in the park is likely the single best thing you can do for your short and long term mental and physical health."

Want to hear from a doctor closer to home? Read Dr. Suzanne B. Bartlett's blog entitled Ditching the Doctor's White Coat at the Nature and Forest Therapy website. Dr. Bartlett is Director of the Mercy Integrative Medicine Center in Cedar Rapids. Her blog can be located using your favorite search engine.

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LINN COUNTY'S WATER AND LAND LEGACY

RESOLUTION

The Linn County Conservation Board passed a resolution at its July 25th meeting asking the Board of Supervisors to place a bond referendum on the November 8, 2016 ballot in the amount of forty million dollars for the purposes of providing funds for protecting sources of clean drinking water; protecting natural areas for purposes of storing floodwaters and to help prevent future flooding; protecting natural areas for wildlife habitat; and parks, outdoor recreation and water and land conservation.

Over the past two years, the Conservation Board has studied and engaged the general public in developing new park master plans and have identified future water, land, park and outdoor recreation needs. Several areas of focus include protecting and improving water resources and improving water quality, protecting natural resources and natural habitat, expanding park and outdoor recreation

experiences, emphasizing sustainable green design, and highlighting that interaction between people and nature is important.

In April 2016, at the request of the Linn County Conservation Board and Board of Supervisors, the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) completed a feasibility study (at TPL's expense) that considered financial options for Linn County to provide these improvements. The TPL study also commissioned, at its expense, a public opinion survey of Linn County voters the following month showing support for these desired needs, as well as supporting a forty million dollar, 20-year general obligation bond, costing the average homeowner \$2.25 per month.

At the time of printing this edition of the Oak Hickory, the Linn County Board of Supervisors has not discussed or decided on the resolution.



To see a copy of the resolution, logon to www.LinnCountyParks.com



Park Rx (continued from front page)

I'm reminded of an advertisement that was on television in my youth. In the commercial, two young boys are looking at a box of cereal. One of them says, "It's supposed to be good for you." The other boy asks, "Have you tried it." Suspicious of something that is supposed to be good for you he says, "I'm not going to try it, you try it." Finally, they decide to give it to an even younger sibling – Mikey. Their rationale is that if Mikey likes it, it must be good because "he hates everything." It turned out Mikey liked it!

I want to urge you to visit your local parks often this summer and spend some quiet time there soaking in the experience. The benefits are real, have been scientifically proven and who knows, just like Mikey, I'll bet you'll like it. Besides, they don't say it's as easy as a walk in the park for no reason. I hope you enjoy your walk. See you in your Linn County parks this summer.

Oxbow at Morgan Creek to undergo reconstruction

Linn County Conservation is working with the Nature Conservancy and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reconstruct an oxbow at Morgan Creek Park. Oxbows are old meandering stream segments that have been cut off from the main channel. These features were once abundant in Iowa's native landscape providing a multitude of benefits including backwater habitat for fish and wildlife species, floodwater storage, and water quality enhancement.

"A combination of extreme flooding, stream channel modifications and agricultural activities have reduced the prevalence of oxbows in the floodplain," said Nick Longbucco, TNC Cedar River Freshwater Manager. "The Nature Conservancy is working across the state to restore oxbows and the benefits they once provided."

The Nature Conservancy is bringing restoration experience as well as private funding to share in the costs of this project at Morgan Creek Park. The work will consist of removing sediment from an approximate ½ acre area to depth of 4-6 feet. "This will create fish habitat and help improve water quality in the Morgan Creek and Cedar River Watershed area," said Dana Kellogg, Linn County Conservation Natural Resource Specialist. "While this is a very small project, it will also serve as a demonstration site and educational area to show landowners and the public the benefits of wetland restoration." The University of Iowa intends to install monitoring wells to study the effects of the wetland on water quality.



Cedar Valley Trail to undergo more paving



The Cedar Valley Nature Trail will soon be paved from 3 miles south of Center Point to the city limits. Starting the second week in August, the trail will be closed for final preparations to start asphalt paving that trail segment (Phase 4) from Schultz Road to Iowa Street in Center Point. If time allows this fall for the contractor, concrete surfacing will take place along the trail route through the city of Center Point to near the Grubbs Creek Bridge by Ash Lane. The project includes drainage improvements and seal coating the crossing at intersecting county roads. Vieth Construction Corporation from Cedar Falls was awarded the project with its low bid of \$958,000. The project is funded through a variety of sources including Linn County Conservation reserve funds and some local option sales tax dollars. Private funds/donors include Linn County Trails Association, the Jan Teeter estate, the City of Center Point, Center Point Economic Development Alliance, ITC, Dr. Kenneth Andersen memorial, and other miscellaneous contributions. A \$600,000 IDOT State Recreation Trails Grant was also awarded to Linn County Conservation.

We apologize for the temporary closures.



Check back at www.LinnCountyParks.com for more updates as they become available.



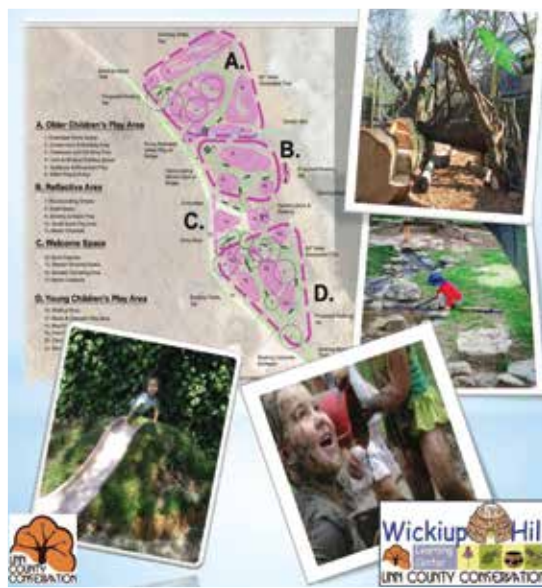
Good Luck, Steve! We'll miss you!

"After 36 years of having fun in the parks, I plan to transition into civilian life," said Morgan Creek Park Ranger Steve Swenson, in announcing his retirement to Conservation staff this spring. The Ames native, who graduated from Oregon State University with a wildlife biology degree, returned to Iowa to serve as assistant Park Ranger at Pinicon Ridge Park for three months. He became Morgan Creek park ranger in the summer of 1980 until his retirement this past July. Swenson oversaw the management of 10 Linn County Conservation parks, preserves, or natural areas, including the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. Swenson endured the early conversations of the controversial talk of creating "some kind of trail from an abandoned railroad right-of way."

"The net result is a trail that is very popular now, even with most of our neighbors and is an important part of outdoor recreation in Linn County. Patience is a virtue in this business."

Swenson says working as a Park Ranger is more of a lifestyle than a job, living and working in the same space. You work odd hours and days when other people are playing, "...but burning prairie, opening a path after storm damage on a trail, and boundary patrols are a version of play for me. I am going to miss it. I plan on hanging out in all the Linn County parks now!"

Linn County Conservation awarded federal grant for playscape at Wickiup Hill



The Iowa Department of Natural Resources Commission recently awarded Linn County Conservation a grant request of \$70,000 from the U.S. National Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund. This grant will be used toward the \$153,500 construction costs of the Children's Outdoor Natural Playscape, which will be built near the Wickiup Hill Learning Center. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federally funded program through the Department of Interior for cities and counties in Iowa to assist with planning,

acquisition, and development of outdoor recreation. The grant, which is administered by the Iowa DNR, was awarded based on established scoring criteria.

This playscape will be an area, nearly one acre in size, that will allow children to discover the natural world, using their imagination and creativity...addressing the ongoing Linn County Conservation Board mission of keeping people connected to natural places. These areas include nearly 20 distinct features with natural materials found within Linn County Conservation areas. As part of the grant process, current site work can only continue after final reviews from the State Historic Preservation Office and approval from the National Parks Service. You may view concept designs inside the Wickiup Hill Learning Center.

Other contributors to the Outdoor Natural Playscape:

ITC: \$25,000

Alliant Foundation: \$5,000*

McIntyre Foundation: \$5,000*

Charlotte Brown, in memory of Kenneth Brown \$12,500

Michael Blin, Patricia Crawford, and Robert Blin,
in memory of Robert and Leslie Blin \$1,000

*donated to Friends of Linn County Conservation toward the Children's Outdoor Natural Playscape Project

If you would like information on how you can donate to Friends of Linn County Conservation, or directly to the Linn County Conservation Board toward these and other projects, contact conservation@linncounty.org



Changing your world one hike at a time

What local Hike
it Baby members
say about being
outdoors with
nature:

Not one to sit inside, but unsure about going out with a newborn, a Portland, Oregon parent asked participants of her new mom's group if they'd like to get outside for a walk or a hike. Within a few weeks there was a regular group of families meeting for walks and trail hikes all around the Portland area. Thus, Hike it Baby was formed. In the three years since its launch in Portland, Hike it Baby has grown to over 250 chapters nationwide with expansion into four countries. The Cedar Rapids chapter was formed in late February and now has 420 members. Emmaly Renshaw and Sarah Johnson are Cedar Rapids chapter leads for this group, which is dedicated to getting families together and out into nature with newborns and little ones.

"We wanted to start a group that supported parents while encouraging kids to get outdoors," said Renshaw. She is quick to point out that this is NOT a mothers group, as fathers, grandparents, caregivers and anyone who has a kid in tow are all welcome. Renshaw feels the group helps the transition into parenthood by providing social interaction and community, exercise, and getting out of the house to do it for free. "The goal is simple, bring families together to explore the world around them and teach children to love the outdoors."

Hike hosts have organized hikes and creek stomps at several Linn County Parks, including Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Area on National Trails Day this past June. Cedar Valley Nature Trail, Grant Wood Trail, Morgan Creek Park, Pinicon Ridge Park,

and Squaw Creek Park are among the areas frequented, as are several parks and trails within the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area. As Renshaw points out, "The great thing about this system is everyone shares their favorite trails and activities, and schedules hikes that cater to the age of their kiddos so we see a lot of different parks, mileage and surfaces."

Johnson says the benefits to being outside are endless. "Seeing my three children (aged 16 months to 10 years old) enjoy the outdoors, get physical activity which in turn means better sleep, use their imagination, break away from the technology, and think creatively is one of my greatest enjoyments of being outside with my children. When on the trail we are able to discuss what we see in nature, talk about the history of the area, try and identify wildlife and plants, and just be in the company of each other with no distractions."

While the 0-5 year age group is the main focus, older kids are always welcome. Some hikes may be Adult Paced (no little walkers, baby in carrier) 3-5 miles on one-track dirt trail. Others will be Toddler Lead (under 1/2 mile at a toddler pace) or Big Kid (1 to 2 miles). Often times geocaching (such as the Linn Parks Challenge) or a creek stomp is organized.

Hike it Baby is open to all families and all communities, whether you want to bring Hike it Baby to your area, to lead or attend an event, and to share the love of the outdoors. They are not a guide service and hiking with them means you hike at your own risk.

"We love seeing the new parks/trails; being able to let the kids learn how to treat nature as well as being able to play in mud, being loud without having too many boundaries..."

— A.T.

"We love getting out because it helps the whole family de-stress. Our kids love looking for bugs or small animals, flowers, interesting rocks...plus both kids eat and sleep better on the days we get out for walks/hikes." — G.D.

"I personally feel this group helps the transition into parenthood by providing, social interaction and community, exercise, and getting out of the house and to do it for free (because diapers just become the new car payment)" — E.R.

"Getting outdoors and into nature heals the body and soul. My children enjoy exploring new hiking trails and seeing all nature has to offer..."

— L.F.



To learn more about the group, visit <https://hikeitbaby.com/find-a-hike/>

FALL PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Classes and Events are at Wickiup Hill Learning Center unless stated otherwise

10260 Morris Hills RD Toddville, IA 52341-9604

AUGUST

Hunter Education Class Series

Thursday, Aug. 25, 6:30pm - 10pm & Saturday, Aug. 27, 9am - 4pm

Are you a youngster who's interested in doing some hunting? Are you an adult interested in heading west for a hunting trip? If your answer was "yes," then you may be interested in attending these classes. If you want to obtain an Iowa hunting license and you were born after January 1, 1972, it's mandatory that you complete hunter education training. The class is free; the Iowa Department of Natural Resources provides all course materials. Attendance at both classes is necessary to receive certification. Participants must be 12 years old to use their certificates. To register for this training, go to the Hunter Education section and register on-line at <https://register-ed.com/programs/iowa> and look under the Iowa Hunter Education Classroom Course to find us and register.



SEPTEMBER

Monarch Tagging at Wickiup Hill

August 30, Tuesday, 5:00 - 7:00pm

This summer Wickiup Hill has participated with the Cedar Rapids Monarch Zone Project that has reared and released hundreds of monarchs. This program will discuss the Monarch Zone, and the multiple environmental factors that have affected monarch populations during recent years. Monarchs will be caught on site, tagged and released to continue their journey to Mexico. Cost: \$2.50/adult, \$1/child (16 and under) or \$5/family.



*Watch our Facebook page
for details on a Fall Kayak Float*

Monarch Tagging at Lowe Park

Thursday, September 1, 4:30pm at Lowe Park

Gail Barels, Linn County Conservation Education Specialist, will provide tags and nets to collect monarchs to tag and release. You can help tag and release monarchs as part of a citizen science program through the University of Kansas' Monarch Watch program. Nets and tags will be provided. This program is free, but participants are encouraged to RSVP by calling the Marion Parks Department at 447-3590.

Science for Squirts - Treasure Hunt!

Thursday, September 8, 10-11am



Children enjoy a story, craft, or activities based on the monthly theme. Turn your young explorer into an archeologist as we dig in the sand boxes to find hidden treasures! Ages 3-6, but younger and older siblings are welcome.

Cost \$2/child. Please call 892-6485 at least 2 days prior to program to register.

Becoming an Outdoors Woman in Iowa

Friday - Sunday, 16 - 18 at Springbrook State Park, Guthrie Center Iowa

Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) is an international program aimed primarily at women, but is an opportunity for anyone 18 years or older to learn outdoor skills usually associated with hunting and fishing, and many other outdoor pursuits like wildlife photography or camping. Linn County naturalist Gail Barels will be teaching Dutch oven cooking. The workshop is for you if: you have never tried these activities, but have hoped for an opportunity to learn; you are a beginner who hopes to improve your skills; you know how to do some of these activities, but would like to try your hand at some new ones; or you are looking for the camaraderie of like-minded individuals. Please check out the Iowa DNR website, www.iowadnr.gov for details and to register.

Fall Bird Banding

Saturday, September 17, 9am - Noon

Rob Bradley will continue his citizen science project of banding birds at Wickiup Hill. These band numbers are sent to a centralized computer so any researcher in the US that collects a bird band will know where the bird was originally banded. What will we catch this fall? It is always a guessing game, but we will usually have a large contingent of either black-capped chickadees or American goldfinches, plus a few rarer birds. Cost is \$2.50/adult, \$1/child 16 and under, or \$5/family.

OCTOBER

Journey to Freedom

Saturday, October 1, 5:30pm - 8pm



Imagine you are a runaway slave traveling Iowa's Underground Railroad in 1853. On this journey, you will encounter slave catchers, farmers, and bounty hunters while trying

to navigate your way to Canada. Participants will be transported back in time to experience perils and triumphs on your escape from slavery. On this journey, you will learn to navigate using the stars and build a fire from a number of abolitionists "conductors" helping you along your way. You will hide from slave catchers in the Iowa terrain and encounter farmers and bounty hunters while trying to navigate your way to Canada. Who can you trust? Will your group make it to freedom? Or will they be captured and sent back into slavery? This program is cosponsored with the African American Museum of Iowa. If you are interested in signing up for this event, please contact Krystal Gladden at 319-862-2101 x 226 or kgladden@blackiowa.org. You can also find registration forms online at www.blackiowa.org.

Tri-State Custom Rod Builders Workshop

Saturday, Oct. 8, 9am - 3pm

The Tri-State gathering of Rod Builders will find itself back at Wickiup once again. We welcome builders new and seasoned to join us to share information about fishing rod building. There will be various instructors offering informative presentations that are still being set at this time. Possible topics are usually wide ranging and instructive, whether you are just getting started with custom fishing rod building or an old salt. Lunch will be provided and there will be a lot to learn and share. Bring some of your completed rod building projects along for show and tell.

For further details or to send an RSVP, please contact Chuck Ungs at chuck.ungs@linncounty.org or by calling 319-892-6485 in order to plan ahead for food. The workshop is free – good-will donations accepted for lunch. We could always use a few extra snacks or cookies if you wish to bring some to share.

Fall Mushrooms & Potluck

Saturday, October 15, 10am

Join the Prairie States Mushroom Club for a fall mushroom foray and annual meeting. We will gather at the Wickiup Hill Learning Center and then head into the woods. Dress for the conditions as we will be going off trail. We can expect to find fall edible mushrooms and a wide variety of colorful fungi. At about noon, we will all head back to the Learning Center for a pot luck lunch. If you bring a dish to share, it does not need to contain mushrooms. After lunch, the mushroom club will

have their annual meeting. There is no charge for the mushroom foray or the lunch, and all are welcome to attend. The meeting is also open to the public, but only club members can vote.



5th Annual Wickiup Fall Fest!

Saturday, October 22, 10am - Noon

Kick off the fall season and enjoy a morning of family fun at Wickiup Hill! Kick off the fall season and enjoy some family fun with our friendly trick or treat hike through the woods, pumpkin bowling, straw scramble, crafts, creepy critters, face painting (for an additional charge) and more! Aimed at ages 3-8, but younger and older siblings are welcome! Costumes encouraged! Cost \$3/child. No registration required.



Great Pumpkin Atlatl Hunt

Saturday, October 29, 1pm - 4pm

Come and try your hand at using an ancient hunting tool, the atlatl or spear thrower. We will provide the spears, darts and pumpkins – plus other targets too. Also, watch as college teams and others compete in a sanctioned atlatl competition. For more information, contact Gail Barels at 319-892-6485. This program is free and there is no registration.

NOVEMBER

Evening Prairie Burn

Tuesday, November 1 at 7pm

Natural resource specialist Dana Kellogg and other LCCD staff will light up the night sky with a spectacular prairie fire. Observe the dramatic management practice of prairie burning to renew the prairie at Wickiup Hill Learning Area. Before the burn, meet at the kiosk near the parking area to learn why this technique is used, how the area is prepared and what types of equipment are used. Cost is \$2.50/adult, \$1/child 16 and under or \$5/family.



Woodcarving Ornament

Saturday, November 5, 9am - 3pm



Learn the lost art of woodcarving. With the guidance of the Cedar Valley Woodcarvers instructors, you will learn basic tool handling and carving. Start a new holiday tradition by creating a beautiful hand carved holiday ornament. Perfect for gift giving or for starting your own collection. This program will be for adults only, no experience needed. Bring your own lunch and we will provide the holiday cookies, materials and tools. Register by October 28. Cost \$15.

Science for Squirts – Let's go Nuts!

Thursday, November 10, 10 - 11am

Ready for a scavenger hunt? See what it takes to be a woodland critter getting ready for winter. Children will enjoy a story, craft, or activities based on a hibernation theme. Ages 3-6, but younger and older siblings are welcome. Cost \$2/child. Please call 892-6485 at least 2 days prior to program to register.

Meet and Greet with Puddles the Skunk

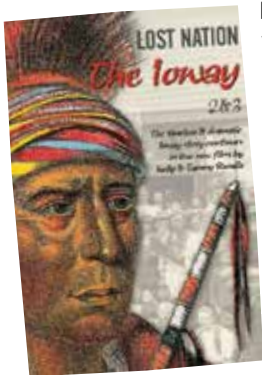
Saturday, November 12, 10am

Back by Popular Demand! The real Puddles the skunk, and her two little sisters, Gracie and Sweet Pea, will be doing a children's story time, skunk education and book signing. Listen to a fun filled story read by local author, Tina Wagner and have the opportunity to purchase the books and have them signed. Puddles hopes to see you there! Program is free, but donations are appreciated.



Movie Night - Lost Nation: The Ioway 3

Tuesday, November 15, 7pm



Participate in Native American Month by viewing an award winning film about the tribe that provided our state its name. As two separate Nations, the Ioway entered the 20th century amid American Indian policies aimed at Native American assimilation. From the Ghost Dance to the American Indian Movement, the Ioway experienced cultural disintegration and rebirth. Successful land claims in the 1970s propelled both tribes toward greater self-determination and a revival of time-honored Native traditions. The

award-winning documentary series Lost Nation: The Ioway 1, 2 & 3 was produced by Kelly and Tammy of Fourth Wall Films who will attend the viewing of this film. A question and answer time will follow the viewing. Popcorn will be provided. This program is free and there is no registration.

Toddler Toadstools Playgroup

Thursday, November 17, 10-11am

Need to get your little one out of the house and into nature? Come out to Wickiup Hill and experience our one of a kind nature center! This is an informal gathering for children ages 1-6. Naturalist Sarah will bring around a critter or two for the children to meet while they play in the Center. Cost: Free

Willow Orb Making

Saturday, November 19, 9am-1:30pm



Join Cedar Rapids willow artist Mary Kopecky for a fun day of creating with willow. Willow orbs are an attractive addition to the garden year-round. Birds perch on them; the breeze moves them in gentle orbits. They can be used as hanging ornaments or nestled on the ground to accent tall plants. Deck them with tiny lights for a holiday centerpiece or chandelier. Participants will leave with a completed orb and the skills to make many more! In this class you will make a simple frame and layer on randomly woven

willow to flesh out the shape. No prior weaving experience is needed, but participants need to have good hand and arm strength and the ability to pre bend the willow rods against your leg while you are seated. Bring a sack lunch, an old towel and sharp hand pruners. Cost is \$50. Please call 319-892-6485 to register or if you have any questions. Registration deadline is November 11.

Kayaking Session at Bender Pool

Sunday, Nov. 20, 4:30 - 6:30 pm

See the article on page 9 for more information.

DECEMBER

Snowshoe Building Class Series

Dec. 9 – Registration Deadline - Thursday, Dec. 15, 7pm-10 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 17, 9am - Noon, & Thursday, Dec. 22, 7pm - 10 pm, Wickiup Hill & Services Building

Join us for Snowshoe Building Classes. Build your own functional traditional snowshoes – with some time invested between the Holidays to varnish they should be ready just after the first of the New Year. See the article on page 9 for more information.

SNOWSHOE BUILDING CLASS



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This winter Linn County Conservation will again offer the opportunity to build a pair of traditional snowshoes. Conservation Education Specialist Chuck Ungs will guide participants through the snowshoe-building process. Those who have taken the class in the past have been very pleased with the finished shoes and have enjoyed the class. These sets would make a unique gift, functional tools or can be used as a grand decoration.

Participants should plan to attend the evening sessions on Thursday Dec. 15 and 22 as well as Saturday Dec. 17. The evening classes will run from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and the Saturday class will run from 9:00 - Noon at Wickiup Hill Learning Center, 10260 Morris Hills Road near Toddville. With some time invested at home kits can be completed around New Year's. Additional evenings will be needed to varnish the shoes in the evenings at the Conservation Department shop located on Hwy 13 and County Home Road, Marion, between the Holidays. For best results, a minimum of three to four of these evenings will be required to varnish the shoes properly.

Participants must pre-register and pay by Dec. 9, so we can order kits. The \$200 class fee includes the cost of a snowshoe kit, a binding set and varnish for each participant. To pre-register or for more details and options, call Chuck at 319-892-6485. Attendance at all three lacing sessions is highly recommended. Kit building typically requires the manual dexterity of someone high school age or older. Class size is limited to 10.

KAYAK/ CANOE PRACTICE *pool time!*



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As a way of practicing for the eventual open water season, a pool is a good substitute to the harsh conditions for boating in winter. It also works well to practice skills under a controlled environment rather than out on a river itself. This winter, Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation and Linn County Conservation are teaming up to invite you and to promote kayaking with pool time at Bender Pool in Cedar Rapids, located at 940 14th Ave SE. A drop-in pool sessions for kayakers is being offered Nov. 20 from 4:30-6:30 pm initially. We are working out details on when the other sessions this winter will be held. The fee is \$10 per person per time. Minimum age is 10 years and everyone will be required to be in swimwear and a lifejacket. A helmet is required for those practicing rolls. Youth must be supervised by an adult.

No formal lessons are currently planned, but there will be lots of networking to enable you to improve your boating technique for next year.

In case of inclement weather, the City of Cedar Rapids weather/events line is (319) 286-5700 – listen for the prompt on Bender Pool. You also can consult the Linn County Conservation Facebook page and we will have that information updated as quickly as possible if it looks inclement. Information about Bender Pool can be found by dialing 319-286-5790. For further questions on the kayak/canoe sessions feel free to call us at Wickiup Hill at (319) 892-6485.

Linn County Conservation Board receives \$375,000 gift

Linn County Conservation Board has received a gift of \$375,000 from the Jan Teeter and Ruth Heinsius estate of Marion. Ruth died in 2012 at the age of 79, while Jan passed away at the age of 76 in 2014. The donation is to be used to benefit Squaw Creek Park, an area that Ruth and Jan had enjoyed throughout the years. The latest gift is in addition to the \$58,000 donation made by the estate toward the current phase of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail paving project, which includes hard surfacing from Schultz Road South of Center Point to Ash Lane on the northern portion of the city.



Red Cedar Lodge

After demolition of the 40 year old Red Cedar Lodge at Squaw Creek Park, construction continues on a new facility. Reservations can be made online now at www.LinnCountyParks.com for dates starting March, 2017, but check back later this fall in case the facility is able to open earlier.



Monarch Zones Project



Wickiup Hill has received 110 caterpillars from the Monarch Zones project to be raised into adult monarch butterflies. You may not be seeing as many monarch butterflies as you used to as populations are currently low. In addition, the storms that Texas and other Southern states received this spring and early summer have slowed the migration down significantly. Our caterpillars are an attempt to increase the population so that more butterflies can lay their eggs for that generation to make the treacherous journey back to Mexico.



The biotment that we are raising the caterpillars in is not open to the public. While we wish that we could share in this miraculous event, the chance of spreading disease and letting predators into the biotment is too great. In fact, the naturalist who transplanted the caterpillars could not touch them. Very scientific tools such as a plastic spoon and paintbrush were used to gently brush the caterpillars off onto their new milkweed homes.



The biotment, which we have begun calling the Monarch Nursery, are lined with signage indicating that quiet voices must be used. When scared by loud noises, the caterpillars (like any other infant!) get frightened. They begin to shake and fall to the ground. They then have to expend extra energy to climb back on to the plant, which inhibits their growth. We want them fat and happy on the milkweed, not working out!

11



Linn County Conservation
10260 Morris Hills Rd
Toddville, Iowa 52341
Phone (319) 892-6450

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Center Point, Iowa
Permit No. 4



BEE A PART, BEE TOGETHER

If you have made a visit to Wickiup Hill this year, you may have noticed the addition of four new beehives located just off one of the walking trails. The hives were placed in their new home on April 22 and the bees have been very busy over the last couple of months. All four hives have completed building their brood boxes (their home) and are now busy building honey supers (the boxes with flowers). Next year we will be able to offer a taste of their sweet success.

A quick introduction to the beekeepers at Wickiup Hill. Shane and Erin of Bee A Part, Bee Together currently manage 8 personal hives along with the 4 hives at Wickiup Hill. They often can be spotted working the hives on the weekends. If you spot them working the hives and have any questions, please stop and ask. They are happy to answer your questions. Some visitors have been able to sample honey and wax that has been removed!

If you are interested in becoming a beekeeper, Shane and Erin will be offering the most complete set of beekeeping classes found in East Central Iowa, all taught at the Wickiup Hill Learning Center. They are pleased to announce three levels of classes for next year: Beginner, Advanced, and Queen Rearing. All classes use methods and techniques that have been tried and proven to allow you the opportunity to work hand in hand with Shane and Erin in the hives located at Wickiup Hill. Bee A Part, Bee Together hopes to have the 2017 schedule out shortly, please email Shane and Erin today to be placed on their email list: honeybeeclasses@gmail.com.

