



Newsletter of the Tallgrass Prairie Audubon Society

Fall 2008

Nature Center Open House:

Sunday, October 5, 1:00–4:00 p.m.
Sunday, November 2, 1:00–4:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 7, 1:00–3:00 p.m.

The nature center building at our Sugar Creek preserve west of Grinnell will be open and tended and there will be birds to watch at the feeders. Guided walks along the woodland trails will be available. For more information or directions call 641-236-7309 or 641-236-6600.

Waterfowl Viewing and Nature Hike at Rock Creek Lake Saturday, November 22 at 9:00 a.m.

Migrating waterfowl should be on the lake in large numbers this weekend. We will meet at the parking area just east of the causeway and north of the road (F-27) at 9:00 a.m. The parking area looks out onto the marsh. We will have spotting scopes and binoculars for participants to share. The outing will last approximately two hours. For more information, call Bob VanErsvelde at 641-236-6600.

"Off the Beaten Path" 6k Trail Race and 3k Fun Run/Walk Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve, Jasper County Saturday, September 20, Registration 8:00-8:45 a.m.

This is a fund-raiser sponsored by the Jasper Conservation Connection, a nonprofit whose purpose is to enhance the quality of parks, recreational opportunities, conservation, and outdoor education throughout Jasper County. Registration is at the Ahrens Access, the west parking lot. Immediately following the events, snacks and refreshments will be served and prizes will be awarded. For more information contact Keri Van Zante at 641-792-9780 or go to the website at <http://www.co.jasper.ia.us/conservation/>

Center Cleaning and Trail Clearing At Sugar Creek
 October 4, 9:00 a.m.

Help spruce up our nature center building for our first fall open house. Cleaning supplies will be provided. If you can help with trail work, bring work gloves. We will be finished by noon, at which time we will relax with our sack lunches. For more information, call 641-236-7309.

Prairie Seed Harvest
 A.C. and Lela Morris Prairie Preserve
 Saturday, November 8, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Help the Jasper County Conservation Board harvest prairie seed that will be used to establish new prairies in other county areas. Participants are encouraged to wear sturdy hiking shoes, and be prepared to get a little dirty. Hot apple cider will be provided. Morris Prairie is located about 1/4 mile south of Mariposa Recreation Area. Instead of turning north into Mariposa, turn south on the gravel road. For more information or directions, call (641) 792-9780.

Fortieth Anniversary Celebration, Conard Environmental Research Area
 Saturday, September 20, 2:00 p.m.

The public is invited to help celebrate the fortieth anniversary of Grinnell College's 365-acre biological field station. The event will include a short program with remarks from President Osgood, a brief history of CERA, and a question and answer panel with some of CERA's past and present stewards. Restoration, research, art, outreach activities, and alumni memories and photos will be highlighted in several displays. Visitors will be invited to tour our award-winning Environmental Education Center, learn about its energy efficiency and environmentally-friendly design, view the 50 kW wind turbine, and participate in guided tours of the surrounding landscape.

Transportation to CERA will be provided from Grinnell, with one bus departing at 1:30 pm from the Joe Rosenfield '25 Center and another bus departing at 1:30 pm from the parking lot behind the John Chrystal Center. Return transportation will be provided, departing CERA at 3:30 pm and 4:30 pm. Visitors are also welcome to drive on their own.

Event Schedule

- 1:30 pm - Buses leave Grinnell for CERA
- 2:00 pm - Special program in the Environmental Education Center (EEC) and refreshments
- 2:45 pm - Short field tour (about 30 minutes)*
- 3:00 pm - Deluxe field tour (about 60 minutes)*
- 3:30 pm - Early bus departs CERA
- 4:30 pm - Last bus departs CERA

*Golf carts will be available for both tours. Field tours will highlight our prairie and savanna restorations and prairie research plots. For more information contact CERA Manager, Larissa Mottl, at mottl@grinnell.edu or 641-269-4717.

Anniversary for Sugar Creek Preserve

What is now our Sugar Creek Audubon Nature Sanctuary was Camp Hawikuh, used for decades by Camp Fire Girls of Grinnell. Eighty years ago, in the summer of 1928, the organization leased nine acres in "Vogt's Grove" and built and dedicated a large "cabin" for camping and other activities. In 1932 the land on which it sat plus forty more acres were purchased by a separately incorporated Grinnell Girls Camp Association for use by Camp Fire. The camp was used actively into 1980s. In 1997 the organization sold the property to our Audubon chapter at a bargain price on the condition that it be maintained in a natural state. We have happily done so. Thank you, Camp Fire for preserving it and passing it on to us.

Hartley Heritage Fen Dedication, West Jasper County
September 6, 9:00 a.m.

A fen is a type of wetland that hosts some of Iowa's rarest plants and animals. This new acquisition by the Jasper County Conservation Board includes a 6.5-acre fen and 26.5 acres of cropland that are being restored to wetland and upland prairie habitats. A complete species inventory of the property is not yet available, but a number of plants that are strong fen-indicator species have been found there, including turtlehead, flat-topped aster, Riddell's goldenrod and spring cress. Restoration and enhancement of the fen and surrounding upland prairie habitat has begun and will continue throughout the next several years.

The Hartley Heritage Fen is located at the intersection of N 59th Ave W and W 148th Street N/NE 120th Street, rural Valeria. Take I-80 to Exit 149 (Mitchellville). Go North on S-27 for 5.5 miles to NE 110th Ave. Turn East onto NE 110th Ave. Go 1 mile East to the next stop sign (NE 120th St). Hartley Heritage Fen will be directly to the Northeast. Turn North and go up the hill. Parking is on the right side of the road. A map to the event may be downloaded at www.jaspercountyconservation.com. Questions about the Hartley Heritage Fen dedication may be directed to Jasper County Conservation, 641-792-9780. Additional background information is available online at www.inhf.org.

Great Backyard Bird Count Results

Bird watchers outdid themselves during the 2008 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Participants submitted more than 85,700 checklists during the four-day event, February 15-18, and identified a record 635 species

In this year's GBBC, yellow-billed magpie numbers hit a new low. Magpies, crows, and jays are especially susceptible to the West Nile virus. For the past few years the population of yellow-billed magpies has declined following the spread of the virus to California. Nationwide, American crow and blue jay numbers appear to have stabilized somewhat, but bear continued monitoring as the populations of these birds continue to adapt to the presence of this new disease.

The GBBC charts the explosive geographic expansion of Eurasian collared-doves. The species has spread aggressively since it was introduced in Florida in 1980 and made new inroads this year. For the first time, GBBC records of this bird came from British Columbia, Manitoba, and Oregon. For an more detailed summary of this year's results, visit the GBBC web site at www.birdcount.org. The Great Backyard Bird Count returns February 13-16, 2009.

Top 10 most-reported birds in the 2008 GBBC:

- 1) Northern Cardinal
- 2) Mourning Dove
- 3) Dark-eyed Junco
- 4) Downy Woodpecker
- 5) American Goldfinch
- 6) Blue Jay
- 7) House Finch
- 8) Tufted Titmouse
- 9) Black-capped Chickadee
- 10) American Crow

Krumm Preserve Shelter House Dedication

The Jasper County Conservation Board and the non-profit Jasper Conservation Connection held a grand opening for the new shelter at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve on August 13. Through donations and grants, a shelterhouse with a flush toilet and lighting operated by solar panels was constructed.

Membership

Option 1: Chapter membership only. All funds used locally. Make donation check (\$10 minimum) payable to Tallgrass Prairie Audubon Society. Send to Russell Tabbert, 9 College Park Rd., Grinnell, IA 50112. You will receive the chapter newsletter but not *Audubon* magazine.

Option 2: Please enroll me in the National Audubon Society and the Tallgrass Prairie Chapter.

_____ \$20 :1-year introductory rate.
_____ \$30: 2-year introductory rate

_____ \$15: 1-year student & senior introductory rate.

Make check payable to and mail to:

National Audubon Society
Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 52529
Boulder, CO 80322-2529

___ Check here if you do not wish to receive *Audubon* magazine.

___ The National Audubon Society occasionally makes its membership list available to carefully selected organizations whose mailings you might find of interest. To have your name omitted from this list, please check here.

Name _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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