



# The Jasper County Jewel

Jasper County Conservation Board Quarterly Newsletter Winter 2019

## Volunteers Recognized at Annual Dinner

On December 3rd, Jasper County Conservation supporters were recognized and thanked for their efforts at a dinner in the Jasper County Community Center building. This is the fourth year an appreciation 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 Robyn Friedman, Andy Stone and Carol Kramer. Conservation staff present were Keri Van Zante, Jade Read, Katie Cantu, Greg Oldsen, Jerry Ratliff, Ethan Vander Pol 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 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. Jasper County Conservation staff members see over 15,000 people annually at programs and manage over 3,000 acres of public park land, much of what is accomplished with the help of volunteers and special donors.

After each staff member gave an update from the past year, special awards were given out to several outstanding volunteers. "Volunteer of the Year" went to Marti Davis for helping at many events including the Caring for Conservation Auction and Fall Festival. Carol Kramer received the "Pioneer Award" for her lifetime of involvement with conservation and environmental education. Mark Law was given the "Environmental Educator of the Year" award for his work on 5th grade field trips at Ashton Park and his efforts to promote the importance of environmental education at the middle school level.

Jasper County Conservation staff recognize new volunteers who really jump in with both feet, and this year there were two! The "Fledgling Awards" were given to Joyce Finch and Kaylene Rinehart, who have been involved with many programs and have provided staff with an immense amount of support. Lastly, a very special group of people were recognized as Jasper County's "Friends of Conservation." The Emerson Hough Chapter of the Izaak Walton League was awarded this honor for all their support for conservation programs, especially the hunter education classes, summer youth camps, and the Halloween Hike. The Conservation Board is grateful for this group's passion and commitment to conservation and natural resources, and their willingness to partner for large public events.



*Above:* Volunteers recognized at the JCCB Appreciation Dinner (from left to right): Todd Pierce, Jo Johnson, Kaylene Rinehart, Marti Davis, Joyce Finch, Carol Kramer, and Mark Law.

## Caring For Conservation

### Auction Benefitting Environmental Education Center

**Saturday, March 28, 2020, 6:00pm  
Sugar Grove Vineyards and Gathering Place  
6602 Ginger Ave., Newton**

Fundraising for the Environmental Education Learning Center continues, and money raised from the Caring for Conservation Auction on March 28 will go towards this state of the art, LEED Platinum Certified facility which will be located south of Newton.

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@jasperia.org](mailto:jread@jasperia.org) 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@jasperia.org](mailto:kvanzante@jasperia.org) or call (641) 792-9780. We hope to see you at this exciting event!



Above: For a unique gift, JCCB t-shirts, blank greeting cards from our photo contest and monarch ornaments are for sale at the conservation office.

## Celebrate your Love of the Land

### Make a Gift to Jasper County Conservation

Since 1962, Jasper County Conservation has protected over 3,000 acres of local prairies, woodlands, wetlands, lakes, rivers and streams, and has created almost 40 miles of trails. Our dedicated education staff meet with over 15,000 children and adults each year to teach about the outdoors. At the heart of our mission are people who love the outdoors. People like you.

Whether your gift signifies your love of land and nature, or is a way of remembering a loved one, it will support the ongoing protection, restoration and exploration of special places right here in Jasper County. You can even choose to direct your gift to a specific project or program. Our Environmental Education Center Project is nearing \$750,000 in donations and your gift could help get us to \$1 million! Build on the legacy of the nature lover in your life by protecting more of the places you both love - for the land, water, wildlife, education, and future generations of outdoor enthusiasts.

Want us to notify your honoree? Include your honoree's name and address and we'll mail them a card sharing your special donation. Your honoree's name will also appear in The Jasper County Jewel newsletter.

For more information, contact the Jasper County Conservation office at (641) 792-9780 or stop by and see us at 1030 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. S. in Newton.

## Upcoming Maple Syrup Season

Our staff is excited for next year's maple syrup season. Last year was the first season in our new sugar shack at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve and we learned a lot along the way. This year we look forward to expanding the operation from around 80 taps to our goal of 150.

From last season we have added a new ventilation system, concrete sidewalks and loading pad, as well as a new 330 gallon storage tank and 35 gallon head tank. The Sugar Shack will be open to the public during operation hours for a short tour and explanation of the process.

Once production starts, Uncle Jake's Pure Maple Syrup will for sale at our office while supplies last. We look forward to another great year and hope to see you out there!



## 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. 8—Biking Alaska**

Ride along with Tesha & Larry Huffaker as they share their two week biking adventure through Alaska. Enjoy stories and pictures of this one of a kind trip!

### **Feb. 12—Organic Gardening**

Judy Bailey will be presenting on organic gardening. Judy will also explain different canning practices and touch on healthy eating.

## Ski & Snowshoe

Saturday, January 11, 1:00-3:00 PM

Saturday, January 18, 1:00-3:00 PM

Saturday, January 25, 1:00-3:00 PM

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

Saturday, February 8, 1:00-3:00 PM

Jasper County Armory/Annex Building  
1030 W. 2nd St. S., Newton

Try out the cross-country skis and snowshoes with Jasper County Conservation! We have equipment in all sizes, so bring the whole family. Check in behind the Armory Building for equipment and then spend the afternoon exploring Maytag Park in the snow.

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.

## Frozen Fins Family Ice Fishing Day

Sunday, January 26, 1:00-3:00 PM

Newton Izaak Walton League

889 Hwy. F-36 W, Newton

Jasper County Conservation and the Newton Izaak Walton League are partnering up to provide a FREE family ice fishing day at the Newton Izaak Walton League pond. We will have a short presentation inside about ice safety, equipment, and basic techniques before hitting the ice. All equipment and bait will be provided.



## Women in the Woods With Wine—Full Moon Snowshoe

Friday, January 10, 6:30-8:00 PM

Jasper County Armory/Annex Building  
1030 W. 2nd St. S., Newton

Take a snowshoe stroll through Maytag Park with the naturalist. We will have wine to taste and snacks to share at the Jasper County Armory/Annex Building. If there is no snow, another fun activity will be planned.

This program is for women ages 21+ who are interested in getting outside. Become more comfortable and knowledgeable about the natural world as you unwind and have fun. Pre-registration required; deadline to sign up is January 8. There is limited space. Fee: \$10, includes a complementary JCCB wine glass.

## National Hot Chocolate Day Celebration and Craft

Friday, January 31, 5:00-7:00pm

Jasper County Armory/Annex Building  
1030 W. 2nd St. S., Newton

Beat those winter blues with free hot chocolate and a craft! Join Jasper County Conservation to paint birdhouses that will be displayed in our NEW nature playscape at Mariposa Park opening June 6, 2020.



## Sweetheart Snowshoe

Friday, February 14, 6:00-8:00pm

Maytag Park, Newton

Registered participants can stop by the log cabin at any time between 6:00-8:00p.m. to learn how to snowshoe while exploring the outdoors under the moon. A fire and refreshments will make this hike extra special.

Registration is required by contacting Jasper County Conservation at (641) 792-9780 or [conservation@jasperia.org](mailto:conservation@jasperia.org) by February 13<sup>th</sup>. Fee is \$10/couple and includes snowshoe rental. Please wear warm boots that can get wet. If snow conditions are not ideal, registrants will be contacted prior to the event.



### 15th Annual Trail Race Results

Jasper Conservation Connection organized its 15th Annual Off the Beaten Path trail race and fun run at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve with about 80 participants competing on September 28th. 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 Nick Moorehead with a time of 24.07. Overall winner of the 3K fun run/walk was Harrison Laug with a time of 13.20.



### 5th Annual Fall Festival

In conjunction with the Off the Beaten Path Trail Race, 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 Storywalk through the prairie with the Newton Public Library, shoot arrows at zombie targets, have their faces painted, and taste freshly pressed apple cider. Rebekah Oleson provided a pumpkin patch.

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, Grinnell Fire Department for cooking pancakes, Newton Public Library for the Storywalk, Claire Breuer for face painting, the Oleson Family for bringing pumpkins and Bob Floss for the use of his apple press.



### "Circle of Life" Hike

The 15th annual Halloween Hike, sponsored by Jasper Conservation Connection, was held at the Emerson Hough Chapter of the Izaak Walton League on October 18th. About 400 visitors came out on a beautiful night. The weather could not have cooperated any better and the attendance was amazing!

Hikers enjoyed six skits as part of the "Jasper Your Friendly Host and the Circle of Life" hike. Many of the performers have sang in productions at the Newton Community Theatre. They were: "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" by Katie Healy and Tom Healy; "The Circle of Life" by Sandy Olsthoorn; "The Bear Necessities" by Terry and Rachel Faidley; "How Bad Can I Be?" by Julie Goodman, Barb Hoover and Cindy Healy; "Up Town Skunk" by Kristine Perkins and Scott Schaeffer; and "Never Too Late" by Will Edgar. Special thanks to Cindy Healy for coordinating the performers, skits, and costumes!

Halloween Hike visitors also enjoyed hotdogs provided by the IKES, roasted marshmallows at the campfire, went blacklight tracking, and looked through the Des Moines Astronomical Society's telescopes to see Jupiter, Saturn, and many other objects 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.



*Above:* Halloween Hike performers put on another fantastic show at the Newton Izaak Walton League. Front row: Julie Goodman and Will Edgar. Back row: Katie Healy, Tom Healy, Cindy Healy, Barb Hoover, Scott Schaefer, Kristine Perkins, Sandy Olsthoorn, Rachel Faidley and Terry Faidley.

## Volunteer Spotlight

By Keri Van Zante

When thinking about an individual who is committed to Iowa's environment and the conservation of our natural resources, my mind immediately focuses upon Carol Kramer. Carol, a Native American originally from Minnesota, has been a member of the Jasper County Conservation Board since 1987 and is completely dedicated to educating our community about the beauty and importance of everything that surrounds us. Carol is a retired 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher from Newton, but retirement to her, never meant the end of teaching. Carol is actively involved with the Jasper County Conservation Board's outdoor education program and often delivers enthusiastic interpretations about the lessons that were instilled in her while "Growing Up Ojibway". Carol has also been proactive in the planning and fundraising for a new environmental education center in Jasper County. Carol played a key role as a long-time board member on the DNR Natural Resource Commission (NRC), as well as many local non-profit conservation groups such as Project AWAKE and Jasper Conservation Connection.

Carol has been involved in much positive change in Jasper County. The water quality at Mariposa Recreation Area has been discussed for years, and Carol played an integral role in keeping that conversation active and ensuring that a solution was reached. None of this project would have been possible without the continued support of Carol and her communication with the community and our legislators.

Carol has also played a key role in bike trail development in Jasper County. The Chichaqua Valley Trail is one of Iowa's oldest rail trails and a significant segment of the eastern loop of the Central Iowa Trail loop. The corridor links five communities and two counties which provides a regional trail experience for nearly 500,000 people. Carol has been involved with the Chichaqua since its initial development, as well as with the future extensions that are being investigated.

Carol has numerous park and recreation development credentials, from the 450-acre Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve, to the 250-acre Pheasants Forever Unit of the South Skunk hunting area, the 32-acre Hartley Heritage Fen, and the 180-acre Reimer Refuge. The acquisition and development of all of these areas was spearheaded by Carol's progressive attitude toward preserving wild areas and making them available for public enjoyment.

I often encounter former students of Carol Kramer's who are now parents or even educators, and I am immediately filled with stories about how Carol influenced their schooling, career choice, and even life direction. Only a truly amazing person can touch so many with her love and knowledge of our environment.



*Left:* Carol Kramer has served on the conservation board for over 30 years.



*Below:* Carol shares Ojibway stories with a group of students at Krumm 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.

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

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



**Jasper County Conservation Board**

M - F 8:00 - 5:00 (641) 792-9780  
email: [conservation@jasperia.org](mailto:conservation@jasperia.org)  
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, Fareway, Oleson Family, Claire Breuer, Phyllis Peter and the Newton Public Library, Bob Floss, Grinnell Fire Department 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