

Central Iowa SIERRAN



Winter 2010/Spring 2011

Central Iowa Group Newsletter

DART's New Transit Hub Symbolizes Environmental Stewardship

by Gunnar Olson, DART Public Information Officer

The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) is poised to break ground in early 2011 on a new, \$21 million Transit Hub in downtown Des Moines.

The new facility will replace the transit mall along Walnut Street as the primary pick-up and drop-off point in the entire bus system. The new Transit Hub, south of Chery Street between 6th Avenue and 7th

facility is being designed by **substance** Architecture to be as "green" as possible, earning as high as a LEED Gold rating. LEED is the U.S. Green Building Council's internationally recognized system of certifying that buildings have been constructed to maximize energy savings, water efficiency and reduced carbon emissions, among other things.



Central Iowa Sierra Club backed the development of Dart's Transit Hub in an Aug. 19 letter to their General Manager. A clear connection was found by the National Sierra Club between investment in public transport and cleaner air.

Street, will feature 15 bus bays under a covered canopy, indoor waiting areas, public restrooms, and a customer service desk where passengers can buy bus passes or speak with DART staff.

In addition to providing benefits to passengers, the Transit Hub will serve as a symbol of environmental stewardship for central Iowa. The

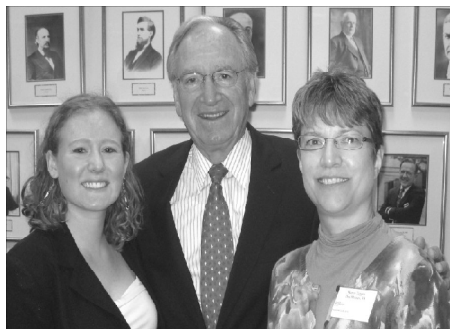
Transit Hub will be a showcase of many green technologies. Approximately 70 geothermal wells will help power the facility, as will solar panels built into the roof. Rain will be retained in cisterns on site and the water used to flush toilets and wash bus lanes. The building is designed to maximize daylight indoors to minimize the use of light fixtures.

Wilderness Week in Washington

by Karen Tigges

A few hundred environmental activists gathered in Washington, D.C. this September to lobby Congress on behalf of wilderness. Among them was a contingent representing the Alaska Wilderness League, of which Sierra Club is a member. I was part of a team organized by the League's Upper Midwest director, Lois Norrgard.

Together with several activists from Minnesota and one from Alaska, I met with members of Congress from Iowa and Minnesota to petition for protection of a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge known as the Coastal Plain. Our request was to have the member join as a co-sponsor on bills which would designate the Coastal Plain as wilderness. Such a designation would protect the Coastal Plain from oil and gas development and preserve its pristine character. As of now, the Plain is left open to possible development by a section of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. Wilderness status would prevent such development from occurring.



Central Iowa's Karen Tigges (right) and Alaska lobbyist, Jenna Hertz, with Senator Harkin at Wilderness Week last month in DC. They are working to protect the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, another of our environmental gems under threat.

The Arctic Refuge is home to vast numbers of caribou which migrate from elsewhere in Alaska and Canada to bear their young on the Coastal Plain. The caribou are the livelihood and the very cultural essence of the Gwich'in in nation, a North American Indian tribe, who rely on the caribou to provide their subsistence each year. The Coastal Plain also provides prime land denning habitat for the polar bear, as well as nesting grounds for birds from all 50 states and six continents. Those birds include those that use the Mississippi flyway for their migration route, and thus could be ones we see in our own backyards during Iowa winters.

While visiting with the Congressional members, we also asked each to co-sign a letter addressed to President Obama, asking him to do all he can to protect the Refuge, especially this year, in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the Refuge. Part of the letter quotes activist Margaret Murie, "The Arctic Refuge stands as the commitment of the past generations to all succeeding generations - that America's finest example of the world we did not alter or control will be passed on, undiminished."

The site of the future Transit Hub currently contains parking lots and a building being used for storage and office of Polk County. The building will be torn down, and much of the construction waste will be reused in the construction of the new facility, primarily as part of the concrete.

Incorporating the green technology into the new Transit Hub is important for DART, not only because it is the right thing to do as a steward of the environment, but also because it invokes a message DART wishes to project to all who see it: Like this building, public transit is good for the environment. Many residents know to switch to energy-efficient bulbs and turn down their thermostats, but how many realize that taking public transit can be 10 times more effective at reducing harmful greenhouse gases? According to the American Public Transportation Association, a single commuter who switches from driving to riding public transit can reduce his or her carbon emissions by 20 pounds daily or about 4,800 pounds in a year. Last year, DART gave 4.5 million rides.

But DART is positioned to reduce the region's carbon emissions even further by growing ridership. Which is why, as residents become increasingly conscientious of preserving the Earth, DART is building its brand and marketing effort around environmental stewardship. The Transit Hub will be a centerpiece in that branding effort, and is itself expected to increase ridership by an estimated 5 or 6 percent by offering new amenities to customers.

The project is fully funding through local, state and federal investments, including the donation of the site by Polk County and the City of Des Moines. The Transit Hub received a \$4 million I-JOBS grant from the State of Iowa, a \$6.5 million Bus and Bus Facilities State of Good Repair grant from the Federal Transit Administration, and a \$10 million TIGER II grant, also from the FTA.

DART anticipates breaking ground on the project in spring 2011. The Transit Hub could open as early as the fall of 2012.

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Central Iowa Group Winter 2010/2011 Calendar Of Events

PLEASE CALL THE OUTING LEADER IF YOU PLAN TO GO ON ANY OUTINGS. This helps the outing leader plan and alert you to possible changes. Everyone, including non-members, is welcome to attend programs and outings. Children are also welcome to attend with their parents or caretakers unless otherwise indicated by the outing leader. In order to participate in an outing, you (or your parent or guardian if under 18) will need to sign a liability waiver. To read a copy of the waiver, please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415-977-5630. Carpooling on outings is encouraged. However, it is strictly a private arrangement among participants, and participants assume all risks associated with such travel. All telephone numbers in this listing are area code 515 unless otherwise indicated.

DECEMBER EVENTS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4: 7:00 p.m. Sierra Holiday Party

Join us to celebrate the holidays as another year of conservation efforts, learning, and outdoor enjoyment draws to a close. Mark your calendar and plan to bring your favorite holiday treat or beverage to share. Contact Jane at jrclark@radiks.net or 223-5047 for information about the location.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16: NO PROGRAM IN DECEMBER

JANUARY EVENTS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11: 5:30 p.m. Planning Meeting

The Executive Committee of the Central Iowa Group of the Sierra Club will meet at 5:30 p.m. All members are welcome for quarterly planning of outings and activities. Contact Jane for location of meeting at jrclark@radiks.net or 515-223-5047.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15 Snowshoe Hike

Meet at 12:30 p.m. at Jester Park Headquarters to rent snowshoes—rental is \$7.00. Wear warm clothes and socks and suitable boots. RSVP is required by January 13th so we can be sure there are enough snowshoes available for rental. If you have not snowshoed before, basic instructions will be given. Bring a hot beverage for an after-hike warm-up. Contact Donna at 285-7787 to RSVP and for questions.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19: 7:00 p.m. Northwest Community Center DEMOCRACY CRISIS And its impact on the environment

DEMOCRACY CRISIS is an animated PowerPoint presentation which is part history and part call to action. It discusses how corporations procured so much legal power to themselves, gaining more rights than human citizens, and then used those rights against the rest of us mere mortals. The presentation also concentrates on the ties between corporate power and the environmental disaster in Alaska after Exxon Valdez. It is authored by Riki Ott, a PhD toxicologist and marine biologist who was living and working in Cordoba, AK, at the time of the Valdez spill. Ott describes in detail how Exxon Corporation promised restoration for fisherman and residents but actually did little to clean up Alaska's coastline. The presentation demonstrates how corporate rights trump the rights of communities and environmentalists in working for environmental justice. Marybeth Gardam will be giving this presentation to Sierra Club. Marybeth represents WILPF (Women's International League for Peace & Freedom... www.wilpf.org) on the national Steering Committee for Move To Amend (www.MoveToAmend.org), a grassroots campaign to protect our democracy by rolling back the rights of corporations to contribute to elections and influence elected officials. She is a member of the Des Moines branch of WILPF, which has been active on environmental, peace and justice issues since the 1960s. Central Iowa Sierra public programs are now held at Northwest Community Center, 51st Street and Franklin Avenue in Des Moines. Contact Jane at 223-5047 or jrclark@radiks.net for more information about the program.

MAPLELAG SKI TRIP JANUARY 27-30

Enjoy cross-country skiing in this luxury resort near Duluth Lakes, MN. Gourmet foods, massages, and sauna are a few of the amenities in the resort voted No. 1 in North America. Knotty pine accommodations

are available for couples, singles, and families. Two departure options: Leave Thursday morning and arrive at Maplelag in the late afternoon, or leave Thursday evening (with a motel stay in the Twin Cities area Thursday night) and arrive at Maplelag Friday noon. Leave Sunday after lunch and arrive home Sunday evening. You may carpool if you wish. The \$313 fee (\$109-\$199 for children and teens) includes 2 nights lodging and 6 meals (Friday afternoon through Sunday lunch) and is payable to Maplelag at the end of your stay. You can add the additional night Thursday with three additional meals for \$80 more (\$15-\$45 for children & teens). There is an 10% additional discount for families. Cross-country ski and snowshoe rental, ski waxing, ski lessons, and massages available for additional charges. Space is limited to 16. A \$75 deposit per person is required (make check payable to Maplelag). The deposit is non-refundable but transferable. Skill level: None required. Difficulty level: Easy to strenuous, depending on trails selected. Contact Doug at (515) 277-1263 or dra427@mchsi.com to sign up. Go to www.maplelag.com as well for more information.

FEBRUARY EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16: 7:00 p.m. Northwest Community Center "Gladys Black: The Legacy of Iowa's Bird Lady"

The late Gladys Black of Pleasantville was widely known throughout Iowa as a conservationist, educator, and expert on birds. Larry Stone and coauthor Jon Stravers have written a book about Gladys and this program acknowledges this colorful woman's impact on so many Iowans. Gladys Black's newspaper columns and tireless work as an educator showed us the wonders of birds. Her message - whether aimed at kids or bureaucrats - was always the same: protect our birds and our planet. Larry Stone will share stories from "The Bird Lady" and from admirers and adversaries who made her an Iowa conservation legend. Central Iowa Sierra public programs are now held at Northwest Community Center, 51st Street and Franklin Avenue in Des Moines. Contact Jane at 223-5047 or jrclark@radiks.net for more information about the program.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19 Cross Country Ski/Hike

Meet at 12:30 p.m. by the waterfall just inside the Fleur Drive entrance to WaterWorks Park in Des Moines. Look for a red van near the waterfall and from there we will go to the ski/hike area. Bring a hot beverage for a warm-up after the hike. Call Donna at 285-7787 for more information.

MARCH EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16: 7:00 p.m. Northwest Community Center Climate Change and Iowa's Fish and Wildlife

Katy Reeder's presentation will focus on what the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) Implementation Committee's working groups have been doing to address the threat of climate change to Iowa's fish and wildlife. Iowa is planning to develop a climate change adaptation strategy in association with the IWAP; this talk will shed light on this effort. Katy works for the Department of Natural Resources as the Iowa Wildlife Action Plan Manager. The Iowa Wildlife Action Plan is a long-range conservation plan for all Iowa fish and wildlife. All states have a Wildlife Action Plan, and collectively, they are our most important tool for preventing species from becoming threatened and endangered. Central Iowa Sierra public programs are now held at Northwest Community Center, 51st Street and Franklin Avenue in Des Moines. Contact

Jane at 223-5047 or jrclark@radiks.net for more information about the program.

ALSO OF INTEREST

GLADYS BLACK: The Legacy of Iowa's Bird Lady By Larry A. Stone and Jon W. Stravers Book Review by Robin Fortney

Like so many Iowans, I first learned about Gladys Black through her columns in the *Des Moines Register* through the 1970's and 80's. For a biologist who had come to Iowa from Maryland, I was impressed that there was someone in the midst of corn country who paid attention to birds, their habits and habitat.

Larry Stone and Jon Stravers, both of whom had long and valued friendships with Gladys Black, have gathered in this book some colorful stories about her life, her contributions to the study of birds in Iowa, and how she shared her passion for the natural world with the people of Iowa. The authors provide a wide-ranging view of the person known as Iowa's Bird Lady.

Gladys Black came from a long line of strong-willed, brilliant women, "most of whom were hellions," she noted. Her family shared their love of birds and the outdoors with young Gladys. She was a teenager in 1925 when John Scopes, a high school biology teacher, was prosecuted for teaching evolution. The publicity motivated her to study biology. Gladys received a nursing degree and eventually a bachelor's degree in public health. Through the 1930's and early 40's, she served as a public health nurse among poor communities in southern Iowa. She threw her energy and intelligence into efforts to help mothers and children deal with problems such as malnutrition, tuberculosis and whooping cough. Gladys married Wayne Black from Osceola in 1941 and they lived in Georgia until Wayne died in 1956. She was active in community affairs there, supported by a caring husband who felt she "owed a duty to the community" because of the education she had received.

Gladys returned to her home town of Pleasantville after Wayne died. The remainder of Gladys' life was filled with friends, hobbies and other interests such as bird watching, carving birds and bird rehabilitation. In addition, she was an avid reader, supported progressive education and participated in antiwar discussions during the Vietnam War years. The way she let her yard grow wild, what she chose to wear and her outspokenness about issues important to her reflected her priorities and independent nature.

Her legacy, however, evolved from her focused passion and support for education, kids and the natural environment. Gladys enjoyed sharing her curiosity about birds and other critters through outings with neighbor kids and school classes, regular birding expeditions with friends and colleagues, and sharing her knowledge about birds and conservation issues through public programs and her long-running column in the *Des Moines Register*. While these efforts inspired a new generation of conservation workers and educators, Gladys simply wanted kids and adults to notice and respect the world around them.

Her greatest impact on Iowa, however, was her tireless and out-spoken advocacy for the natural world. Gladys worked through her local Audubon Chapters and the Iowa Ornithologists' Union to educate and advocate for good conservation policy. She wrote letters to the editor, attended conservation commission meetings, contacted land and wildlife managers, promoted Iowa's "Chickadee Checkoff" which supported non-game wildlife programs, even walked in on the governor when she believed something needed to change. She raised the alarm about impacts of pesticides on bird reproduction, concerns about herbicides, destruction of habitat, lead shot, ruining rivers and floodplains with dams, mindless hunting regulations and the need for good environmental policy.

This book describes one of Iowa's best known characters and her long-lasting impact on the state. Though Gladys Black died in 1998, her story continues to inspire and her warning to be eternally vigilant on behalf of our environment remains critical.

Autumnal Equinox, 2010

by Ray Harden

The clouds were heavy in the eastern sky and I thought they would interfere with observing the sunrise of the autumnal equinox that marked the first day of autumn.

The Dallas County Conservation Department was holding an observation of the autumnal equinox at Hanging Rock Park near Redfield on September 23rd, and a half-dozen early risers were gathered to hear naturalist Chris Adkins explain this celestial phenomenon that civilizations have observed and studied for thousands of years.

The term equinox means equal amounts of daylight and night, and this happens when the rays of the sun are directly above the equator. It occurs twice a year, about September 23rd for the autumnal equinox and about March 21st for the vernal equinox in 2010.

As the group waited for the sun to appear, we discussed other objects in the sky. Although they were nearly obscured by clouds, the full harvest moon was setting in the west and near it was the planet Jupiter, shining brighter than any star. Ancient people made up stories about the planets, stars, and the constellations, and they also kept track of movement of objects in the sky with their primitive clocks and calendars. This was important to people in past ages so they would know when to plant and harvest, as well as giving them a sense of time. The Central American Mayan Calendar and Stonehenge in England are two well-known examples.

A similar kind of clock has been constructed at Hanging Rock Park. It is an elliptical arrangement of boulders on the top of a small hill. The rocks are placed in such a way that the equinoxes and solstices can be measured. Adkins pointed out a line of boulders that were oriented north and south and another line of rocks that would form a straight line with the rising sun as it appeared over the horizon at equinox.

As predicated, at 7:06 a.m. a bright orange ball peeked over the horizon and separated the clouds for a minute, allowing the group to see that it was perfectly aligned with the boulders and marked the first full day of the fall season. Adkins also pointed out that the sun rises and sets about thirty-five seconds faster at equinox than it does at solstices; this is because the angle between the earth and sun is more acute, which concentrates the waves of light.

The night sky is continually changing through the seasons. In early October the summer triangle, made up of the bright stars Denab, Vega, and Altair, will be setting in the west a few hours after sunset. In the north the Big Dipper will be very low on the northern horizon. The constellation Cassiopeia will be overhead; this group of stars looks like a sideways "W" or "M". The constellation Orion will be rising in the east at midnight. The planet Jupiter will be the bright "evening star" in the eastern part of the sky.

If you step outside on a clear autumn night, or any clear night, and observe the sky, you will see the same celestial objects that fascinated primitive people.

Central Iowa Ex-Com Biographies

Carol Grimm

Carol enjoys the outdoors, especially biking, paddling and camping. She supports the efforts of the Sierra Club and specifically the Central Iowa Group in its efforts to bring us programs and opportunities for advocacy to protect the natural areas that we enjoy. Carol has served for three years on the Central Iowa Ex-Com. She has been an active member since 1998.

Donna Balzer

Donna wishes to continue her service Central Iowa's Ex-Com. In 2009, she earned the Master of Conservation class. She has been an avid steward for birds as a loon watcher for the DNR for 18 years. She is a member of Alpha Delta Kappa, an honorary teaching sorority. Donna has been an active member since 1990.

Sandra Simmons

Sandra would like to serve on the Ex-Com of the Central Iowa Sierra Group as she values the natural world and believes Iowa is poorly represented in environmental spending and initiatives. Her personal interests include camping, hiking and biking. Environmental concerns are a long-standing passion. After years of career climbing, Sandra has the time and experience to turn towards her true love...our environment. Iowa is not just a place to grow crops and raise livestock; it is a place to cherish and renew. She hopes to use her organizational and leadership skills to contribute to Iowa's environmental growth. Sandra has been an active member since 2010.

Phyllis Goodman

Phyllis has served three terms on the Ex-Com for Central Iowa. She is interested in water issues. As a retired middle school science teacher, she recognizes the need for educating citizens about stewardship of Iowa's environment. She has served on the steering committee for R2G2 river clean-up for two years, representing the Sierra Club. She has also been an IOWATER water quality volunteer for many years. Phyllis has been an active member since 2002.



Central Iowa Sierra Group

Ex-Com Election Ballot

Vote for no more than four (4) candidates.

	Individual Member	Joint Member
Donna Balzer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phyllis Goodman	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carol Grimm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sandra Simmons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write-In	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BALLOTS MUST BE RETURNED BY JAN. 5, 2011

Ballot Instructions

1. Cut the ballot from the page and mark your votes. Vote for no more than four candidates. Ballots with more than four candidates marked will not be counted. Individual members mark their votes in the left-hand column. For joint memberships, one person must use the left-hand column to vote, and the second person must mark his or her vote in the column marked "joint member."

2. Be sure to write your name and return address in the upper left corner of the envelope. We need your name to check your member identification number and separate individual from joint ballots. The names will then be blacked out before the envelopes are opened.

3. Mail the ballot to:
Central Iowa Sierra Group
ELECTION BALLOT
3839 Merle Hay Road, Suite 280
Des Moines, IA 50310

Check out the Central Iowa Sierra Group calendar or our entire newsletter on the web at <http://iowa.sierraclub.org/ciag/>

Watch the Sunrise on Solstice and Equinox

The Dallas County Conservation Department has planned observations at Hanging Rock Park on each autumnal and vernal equinox and winter and summer solstice for several years. The next scheduled will be to watch the winter solstice morning sunrise on December 21st, at 7:37 a.m., weather permitting. The star of the show will be the sun, whose rays will reach us from its farthest point south of the equator.

For information, check the Dallas County website or call the administrative office at 515-465-3577, or contact naturalist Chris Adkins at 515-202-2552 or chris.adkins@co.dallas.ia.us.

Children Celebrate Arctic National Wildlife

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Avid Arctic activist Phyllis Mains has trekked through its vastness. She shared her love of this fragile ecosystem with schoolchildren at the May 2010 Earth Day Event, held at the Forest Avenue Library in Des Moines.

In this photo, children pose as the animals inhabiting this area. The children also wrote letters to President Obama asking him to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and not allow drilling there. Phyllis mailed these outstanding letters marked "Letters from Children in Iowa." So far over 20 Arctic Refuge programs have been presented in Iowa. Karen Tigges is scheduling more at local universities and other schools. If you are interested in a program, contact Phyllis Mains at pmains@juno.com or Karen Tigges at kktigges@live.com.



Photo by Phyllis Mains

Annual Fall Fundraiser

by Ginger Soelberg, Treasurer

Thanks to all who participated in the Silent Action, our fall fundraiser.

When you support the Central Iowa Sierra Group, you support Sierra Club's work in your own back yard. This makes you an essential part of our work to protect wildness and wildlife, to improve air and water quality, and to promote the enjoyment of nature. With generous donations and enthusiastic bidding, over \$1,200 was raised. Proceeds from past auctions have supported many environmental projects, including the statewide campaign to approve a constitutionally protected source of funding for protection of Iowa's natural resources—which was on the ballot November 2nd.

To our members who donated our complimentary refreshments, created art work, and contributed other auction items, thanks! Your help and support are appreciated.

Please express your thanks as you patronize the following businesses that donated to our Silent Auction:

Active Endeavors
Back Country Outfitters
Big Sky Bread Co.
Sportsman's Warehouse
Isabel Bloom
Polk County Conservation Board
Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
Sun Pharmacy/Sarah's Hallmark
Johnston Ace Hardware
Papa John's Pizza
The Learning Post
Friedrichs Coffee
Larry Stone, photographer
Prairie Point Book Store,
Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge
Jim Riggs, Photographer
Starbuck's Coffee
Drake Diner
Ty Smedes, photographer
Famous Dave's Bar-B-Que
Panera Bread Bakery-Cafe
Raccoon River Watershed Assoc.
Des Moines Symphony
Des Moines Art Center
Earl May Garden Center
Rich's Coffee, Johnston
Campbell's Nutrition
Jimmy John's
Bandit Burrito
Buffalo Wild Wings
Chef's Kitchen
Border's Bookstore
Great Harvest Bread Co.
Tom Bockoven, Massage
University of Iowa Press

Getting to Know our Waterways: A New Task Force Seeks to Help Our River Corridors

by Ginger Soelberg

The Central Iowa Greenways Task Force is a multi-jurisdictional group going through a public planning process as we seek a common vision for the future of the Central Iowa Greenways system. We are looking at the Des Moines and the Raccoon River greenbelts and hoping to develop a sustainable system to protect and enhance the natural,



Experienced paddler and Sierra Club member, Ginger Soelberg paddled with "VIP Float" organizer and Des Moines Park and Recreation Planner, Mindy Moore, and her daughter. Mike Delaney, a Sierra Club member as well as president of the Raccoon River Watershed Association, gives them an assist. Photo by Jim Riggs

cultural, economic and environmental vitality of the rivers and their corridors. As a group, we felt it was important to invite community leaders to get a firsthand look for themselves, and so on October 22 a group of paddlers and community leaders spend a wonderful afternoon on the Raccoon River, paddling from Walnut Woods in West Des Moines to Water Works Park in Des Moines.

Volunteer Help Needed for Newsletter Layout

During a sandbar stop on the river, Mike Delaney described the geological history of the Raccoon and hydrologic changes brought on by intensive row crop agriculture in the Raccoon River Watershed. Sierra members Robin Fortney (DM/Polk County Trails and Greenways Chair) and Joe Galloway (Des Moines Park and Rec. Board Chair) also shared their knowledge of and passion for the area with the group. Sierrans who are members of the Task Force include Robin, Joe, Ginger, Mike, and Central Iowa Sierra Group Chair, Jane Clark.

Central Iowa Group is in need of a new layout editor for their portion of the IOWA SIERRAN newsletter. It takes a team of volunteers to produce this locally published newsletter. While members receive the national magazine, SIERRA, the IOWA SIERRAN keeps you on top of local issues. We would like to thank Neila Seaman for her years of service as our layout editor. However, she has had to resign due to her other responsibilities as our Chapter Director.

This means that the next newsletter will need a new layout editor. Central Iowa's items cover four of the 12 pages, sharing news space with our Iowa Chapter and the Leopold Group. This job is for the Central Iowa pages only.

You would not need to find any of the articles or do any copy editing, as that is done by the Managing Editors, Phyllis Goodman and Jo Hudson. They would send materials to be laid out by our next deadline, March 5, 2011.

Requirements: You must know or be willing to learn layout software. We currently have PageMaker software available for use. This requires a platform of Windows XP or later. Layout experience would be helpful, but not required if one is willing to learn.

To apply, contact: Phyllis Goodman at 515-274-4319 or goodmanph@mchsi.com.

Remember the Chickadee Check-off

The Chickadee Check-off on your state income tax form is a way to support non-game wildlife in Iowa—everything from chickadees to eagles, bluebirds to otters and bats to butterflies. The funds raised by this tax check-off are protected in the Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund for the use of the Wildlife Diversity Program.

You will no longer see this perky little logo on your form, though. Instead, look for the place to check Fish/Wildlife on the contributions line.



CENTRAL IOWA SIERRAN

Managing Editors: Phyllis Goodman

Layout Editor: Neila Seaman

The Central Iowa Sierran is published three times a year. We invite submissions of letters, articles, photographs and illustrations. Deadlines are March 5 for the Spring/Summer issue; July 5 for the Autumn issue; and November 5 for the Winter issue.

Preference will be given to articles relating to the Central Iowa Group. The editors reserve the right to edit for clarity, space and for libel reasons. All submissions must have name, address, and phone number.

Submissions may be sent to Phyllis Goodman. Call 274-4319 for submission address. Electronic submission of articles is preferred: goodmanph@mchsi.com or johudson@q.com or neilaseaman@mchsi.com. Hard copy submissions should be written neatly or double-space typed.

The Wild Section of Your Tax Form

by Stephanie Shepherd, Iowa DNR

"Before the Wildlife Diversity Program was established, there were no staff or funds dedicated to the over 800 wildlife species in the state that weren't classified as sport fish and game," says Stephanie Shepherd, biologist with the Wildlife Diversity Program. "The fish and wildlife fund made it possible for the DNR to include all wildlife in our management efforts." Some specific programs the tax check-off funds have helped make happen have been the successful return to the state of peregrine falcons, ospreys and trumpeter swans, and much more.

Unfortunately, donations to this fund have been on the decline. "In 2008 we had the fewest people donate in the check-off's almost 30-year history, and the total amount donated was down by over 20% from what it was just 6 years ago," added Shepherd. She speculates that part of the cause may be that more people seem to be using tax preparers and electronic programs to do their taxes. "The contribution line on which the check-off is located is pretty well hidden. Since it is located at the end of the state's long tax form, usually on line 58 or 59, it is easy to pass over and forget, and many tax preparers may not remember to ask whether a client wants to donate. It may be up to the tax payer to remind the preparer or check out the completeness of the electronic program being used."

Once the correct line is found, donating on the tax form is extremely easy; simply write the amount you want to donate next to the tax check-off of your choice (there are 3 other options besides the fish and wildlife fund), and the sum is either automatically deducted from your refund or added to the amount you owe. In addition, there are no administrative costs so every penny donated goes to wildlife conservation in Iowa, and the amount is deductible from next year's taxes.

For additional information about the Fish/Wildlife Fund, please contact Stephanie Shepherd at 515-432-2823 ext. 102 or stephanie.shepherd@dnr.iowa.gov.

Central Iowa Group Directory

(See directory in Chapter newsletter for state and national information)

Chair	Jane Clark, 223-5047
Vice Chair	Phyllis Goodman, 274-4319
Treasurer	Ginger Soelberg, 253-0232
Secretary	Karen Tigges, 274-0545
Membership Chair	Jo Hudson, 276-6359
Conservation Chair	Jo Hudson, 276-6359
Fundraising Chair	Ginger Soelberg, 253-0232
ExCom Members	Donna Balzer, 285-7787 Carol Grimm, 278-4057 Carolyn Walker, 779-1680
Managing Editor	Phyllis Goodman, 274-4319
Layout Editor	Neila Seaman, 277-8868