



# Life on the Prairie

Newsletter of  
Webster County Conservation  
Fall 2010

## Iowa's Water and Land Legacy (IWILL)

Matt Cosgrove, Director

### On Your Ballot This Fall

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, Iowa's voters will have a historic opportunity to establish a constitutionally protected trust fund to protect and enhance Iowa's natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities. The proposed Natural Resources & Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund would create a reliable and consistent funding source for water quality initiatives, soil conservation practices on our agricultural lands, wetland restorations to prevent future flooding, and enhancement of Iowa's recreational opportunities.

The IWILL Ballot Issue is a result of several years of research and legislative work. A Legislative Advisory Committee was formed in 2006 to explore the current and future funding needs for conservation and recreation activities in Iowa. The committee estimated that it would cost approximately \$150 million additional dollars to meet Iowa's water quality and natural resource needs. In 2008 & 2009, over 90% of Iowa's Legislators voted in favor of allowing the constitutional amendment to be placed on the 2010 ballot for a vote of the people.

A vote for Iowa's Water and Land Legacy Amendment is a vote to establish a constitutionally protected trust fund – **it is not a vote for a tax increase**. If approved, funding will come from allocating 3/8ths of one cent from sales tax revenue **the next time** the Iowa Legislature raises the state's sale tax.

Iowa is blessed with a beautiful landscape of prairies, woodlands, agricultural lands, rivers, streams, wetlands and a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. Unfortunately, Iowa ranks 47<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states for per capita state funding for our natural resources. The creation of the Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund will provide a permanent and consistent funding vehicle for enhancement of Iowa's natural resources for many generations to come.

If the amendment is successful, Iowa will join Missouri, Arkansas, and Minnesota as states that have approved constitutional amendments to dedicate funding for natural resources.



For more info. on IWILL go to:  
[www.iowaConservation2010.org](http://www.iowaConservation2010.org)

#### Ballot Language:

Shall the following amendment to the Constitution be adopted?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

#### #1 Iowa's Water & Land Legacy Amendment.

*"Adopts Iowa's Water & Land Legacy amendment to the Iowa Constitution which creates a dedicated trust fund for the purpose of protecting and enhancing water quality and natural areas in the State, including parks, trails, and fish and wildlife habitat, and conserving agricultural soils in this state."*

# Calendar of Events 2010

## Nov. 7 Friends Banquet

5:00 pm at Kennedy Park's Heun shelter  
Enjoy the friendship of like-minded conservation friends at the annual banquet for the Friends of Webster County Conservation. The program will feature the Great Places project that became a new designation for Webster County this fall. A steak dinner will start the evening, followed with a program, a short meeting, and door prizes. Banquet cost is \$8 for the meal. Children 12 & under are \$ 4.



Friends members are encouraged (but of course).....to bring a friend!!! Anyone may attend; simply call or email so we have enough food. 576-4258 or khansen@webstercountya.org

## Dec. 4-5, 10-12, 17-19 Lights At Kennedy

6–9:30 pm at Kennedy Park campground  
Drive thru the Kennedy Park campground and enjoy Sertoma-sponsored lighting displays.



## Dec. 11 Winter Festival

5–8 pm at Kennedy Park's Heun shelter  
Ride a hayrack to the light displays in the campground, cross country ski or snowshoe around the park on groomed trails, and enjoy other fun activities. This event is geared for all ages and lots of family fun.

## Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

Saturdays— Dec. 18, Jan. 8, Feb. 12  
10 am – 3 pm at Kennedy Park

Enjoy a day of cross country skiing and snowshoeing on groomed trails around Kennedy Park.



**Ski & Snowshoe Rental policy**—To rent cross-country skis sets and snowshoes, renters must pick them up no later than 4:00 pm on Friday and returned no later than 4:00 pm the following Monday at the Kennedy Park Reception Center office. This period *may* be extended for long holiday weekends (Christmas, New Year's, etc.) Exceptions must be approved in advance by the naturalists.

Rental fees (paid at the time of check-out) are as follows:

Kids under 18 with a parent	FREE
Cross country ski package (skis, boots, & or poles)	\$ 10.00 / weekend
Snowshoes (pair)	\$ 10.00 / weekend

A deposit of \$100 per set of skis or snowshoes must also be paid at the time of reservation. It will be refunded when the gear is returned promptly, without damage and in clean condition.

No advanced reservations will be taken. All equipment will be loaned out on a first-come, first-served basis. WCCB staff has the right to refuse rental.



## **The Scenic River Valleys of Webster & Hamilton Counties are Recognized as Iowa's Newest Great Place!**

After ten months of hard work and collaboration of over fifty public and private partnerships, Webster & Hamilton Counties and Fort Dodge & Webster City have been selected as an Iowa Great Place!

The Great Places Program is a project developed by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. The program encourages communities to celebrate their unique aspects and to create projects that will enhance their area to promote tourism. Communities that are selected as "great places" celebrate diversity and work together to accomplish common goals.

The scenic Des Moines and Boone River Valleys have shaped the history and culture of the communities in North Central Iowa. Our Great Places Vision is about the celebration of the river valleys, the important role they played in shaping our communities, and the significant influence they will have on the future of our region.

Today, the landscape of our two-county region is dominated by intense, row crop agriculture. The common thread that links us together is the scenic river corridor. This corridor is a vital link for the citizens and visitors of Iowa to interact with our natural resources. Our projects will focus on the "quality of life" benefits that are associated with our rivers through recreation and environmental education.

Our ultimate goal is to encourage land stewardship and environmental awareness through recreation. We will accomplish this goal by shedding our "political boundaries" and market our river valley as a "recreation destination" for North Central Iowa. Collectively, we offer thousands of acres for public recreation, a wide variety of arts and culture, and entertainment for everyone to enjoy.

The region will be working on the following projects during the 3-5 year designation period: trail expansion along the Des Moines Riverfront, enhancement of the OHV Park, regional marketing of the areas recreational opportunities, a convention center at Briggs Woods Park, and Learning Center at Brushy Creek State Recreation Area.

Webster & Hamilton Counties join the ranks of Coon Rapids, Dubuque, Decorah, Spencer, Sioux City, Mason City and twenty other communities that share the designation as an Iowa Great Place.

Thanks to everyone that supported this process! The award is a great example of regional cooperation!!

