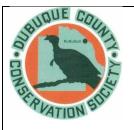
Winter 2025



# **DCCS** Newsletter

Dubuque County Conservation Society "Organized in 1933 for Protection of Soil, Forests, Waters and Wildlife"

P.O. Box 645 Dubuque, IA 52004-0645



In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks. John Muir

## **First Day Hikes**

Iowa officials invite people to start the new year on the right foot with the return of the annual First Day Hikes event.

The event invites people to a variety of guided and/ or self-guided hikes on New Year's Day at parks across Iowa. Over 40 parks are participating statewide — including several local preserves and nature areas.

For guided tours, people can stop by Backbone State Park near Dundee or Mines of Spain State Recreation Area near Dubuque. The Backbone State Park hike will meet at 9 a.m. Jan. 1 at the old shop near the east park entrance, and the Mines of Spain crew will leave at noon from E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center.

Hikers also can participate in self-guided hikes at Bellevue State Park or Maquoketa Caves State Park.

Details about all statewide hikes can be found online at iowadnr.gov/firstdayhikes.

## A Visit from Will Dilg & Songs from Our Mighty Mississippi

Minnesota Opera baritone, American Cruise Lines actor, and "riverlorian" (river historian) Steven Marking brings to life the true and inspiring story of Will Dilg in a multi-media show you won't soon forget. Will Dilg is the singular driving force behind the formation of the Izaak Walton League and the formation of our Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

In "A Visit from Will Dilg", Steven Marking plays environmental leader Will Dilg, sharing the story of grassroots activism that led to the protection of America's first Fish and Wildlife Refuge. A civic engagement success story, the performance showcases the transformation that can happen when people work together for conservation and environmental protection for future generations. The 50-minute multimedia performance is followed by an interactive discussion by Riverlorian Steven Marking. After a 15-minute intermission, Steven will share songs and stories from another of his creations, Our Mighty Mississippi - from the Headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico.



A century ago, Will Dilg was the driving force behind our nation's first successful large scale grassroots environmental movement. After Dilg's only son drowned in the Mississippi River, he rose up from the depths of depression and mourning to become a tireless, fanatic firebrand – leading an extraordinary national crusade to form the Izaak Walton League and save a 261 mile stretch of Mississippi River backwaters we now know as the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. While his life was cut short, his accomplishments are still legendary, and we all will benefit by

hearing from him a century after this monumental achievement.

This show is a must-see performance if you treasure beautiful views of the Mississippi River backwaters, or if you enjoy birding, fishing, boating, or hunting in those fish and wildlife-rich backwaters. Because one hundred years ago all of that was about to go away as wetlands throughout the upper Mississippi were being drained to satisfy the insatiable demands of settlers for factories, farms and towns. In "A Visit from Will Dilg," Steven Marking as Dilg recounts how he rallied the nation in two short years to stop what he called the "drainage crime of the century" and create the Upper Mississippi Refuge, protected 100 years ago, in 1924.

Steven Marking holds a Master's Degree in Vocal Performance from the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Maryland, and a Bachelor's Degree from Viterbo University in his hometown of La Crosse, Wisconsin. He brings more than three decades of professional production and performance experience to his latest creation, A Visit From Will Dilg, and his ongoing masterpiece, Our Mighty Mississippi.

Sponsors include Dubuque Audubon Society, Friends of Dubuque County Conservation and Dubuque County Conservation Society

#### **Locher Property**

We are looking forward to the purchase of land in Dubuque County. DCCS board member Matt McQuillen has been working with other conservation groups to secure funding to purchase the Locher property which is located north of Cascade. The transfer of ownership should be completed early next year and open to the public in 2026. The approximate 100-acre property which includes a lake is located at 7572 Macomber Rd. The public will be able to access the property for hunting and fishing.

Other lands that we partnered in purchasing are open to the public and most are open for hunting as seasons permit. The McCormick addition to the Hale Wildlife Area is managed by Jones County Conservation and is less than an hour drive from Dubuque. Other properties open to the public include the Leifker Recreation Area in Jones County, an addition to Ram Hollow Wildlife Management Area east of Colesburg, Peterson Wildlife Area in Jones County south of Baldwin which is adjacent to Eden Valley, and Duling Farm-Oxford Junction property which is just north of the town of Oxford Junction. Both the McLaughlin Wildlife Area and Hafeman Wildlife Area are properties in the Dubuque/Jones County area.

#### Fun Fact - Dick Van Dyke celebrated his 99th birthday in a music video

British rock band Coldplay helped Dick Van Dyke celebrate his 99th birthday in a sweet new music video released a week before the legendary actor kicked off his landmark year.

The video, directed by Oscar winner Spike Jonze and Mary Wigmore, opens with Van Dyke walking out to a courtyard where frontman Chris Martin sits at a piano.

Martin then serenades Van Dyke with a rendition of Coldplay's recent single "All My Love," parts of which the two sing together through laughter. Van Dyke remains the picture of youth as he dances to the tune in a moment reminiscent of his famed routines from 1964's "Mary Poppins."

The reason I'm old and wise, is because God protected me when I was young and foolish.

#### Stay Safe On Ice

The DNR recommends a minimum of four inches of clear ice for fishing and at least 5 inches for snowmobiles and ATVs. Ice forms at different rates on each body of water depending upon the size and water depth. Once frozen, conditions change constantly and ice thickness can vary across the lake. Rocks, trees, docks or other things that poke through the ice will conduct heat and make the ice around it less stable. Trust your instincts – if the ice does not look right, don't go out. A blanket of snow on top of an ice covered lake insulates the ice, slowing the growth of ice and hiding potential hazards or weak spots. River ice is 15 percent weaker than lake ice. Ice with a bluish color is safer than clear ice. Avoid slushy or honey-combed surfaces and stay away from dark spots on the ice. Don't walk into areas where the snow cover looks discolored.

#### Safety Tips

- No ice is 100 percent safe.
- > New ice is usually stronger than old ice.
- > Don't go out alone if the worst should happen, someone will be there to call for help or to help rescue.
- > Let someone know where you are going and when you will return.
- > Check ice thickness as you go out there could be pockets of thin ice or places where ice recently formed.
- > Avoid off-colored snow or ice. It is usually a sign of weakness.
- > The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process.

Bring along these basic items to help keep you safe: hand warmers, ice cleats to help prevent falls, ice picks (wear around your neck) to help you crawl out of the water if you fall in, a life jacket, a floating safety rope, a whistle to call for help, a basic first aid kit and extra dry clothes including a pair of gloves.

Use extreme caution when snowmobiling on ice. Snowmobiles can be difficult to steer and take a long time to stop with limited traction on ice. Slow down and avoid heavy braking. Courtesy Iowa DNR

#### **Trout Fishing**

You can catch trout all year around, and with few exceptions most of Iowa trout streams have fish long past the usual stocking schedule. Besides stocked fish, Iowa has more than 80 trout streams with consistently naturally reproducing brook trout and brown trout and another 27 streams where natural reproduction of brook trout, brown trout or rainbow trout occurs, but not consistently.

Sign up for free weekly fishing information from Iowa's fisheries experts. Learn the best hot spots and latest news about Iowa's fishing opportunities from region to region. This weekly fishing forecast will be emailed directly to your inbox every Thursday! https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/IACIO/subscriber/new?topic\_id=IACIO\_427

Iowa DNR's weekly fishing report is broken down by counties or regions – northwest, northeast, Mississippi river, southeast and southwest. You can check the activity of your favorite lake or stretch of river within each region, including which species are being caught, a rating of the bite (slow, fair, good or excellent), as well as a hot bait or lure pattern.

Fishing reports may include information on stream or river flows (and if it is rising or dropping), ice conditions, depths that fish are biting (watch for trends if this changes), or safety issues like if the water suddenly becomes shallow in spots.

#### 2025 Hunting Licenses

2025 resident hunting and fishing licenses are now available. Nonresident licenses go on sale starting January 1, 2025. Purchase your licenses online at gooutdoorsiowa.com or a local license vendor.

For residents and nonresidents, licenses purchased for the 2024 license year will expire on January 10, 2025.

A fishing or hunting license makes a great gift. To purchase, you will need the recipient's last name and date of birth along with one of the following pieces of information:

- Customer ID Number
- Driver's License Number & Issuing State
- Last Four of Social Security Number

Iowa DNR has released new hard card designs in preparation for the new license year! The hard cards feature artwork from local artists Eric Williamson and Modern Legacy. For \$6, you can purchase a collectible, credit-card-style license. The durable, waterproof material allows you to enjoy the outdoors without worrying about wear and tear.

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#### **Summer Opportunity For College Students**

Your chance to get hands-on fisheries career experience. Summer seasonal positions at Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) fisheries offices are open for applications until January 10.

Learn about fisheries careers and gain valuable experience while working alongside biologists and technicians. Positions are available in research, management, culture and aquatic invasive species. Six-month positions usually start at the beginning of April and three-month positions start the middle of May.

Get a glimpse into a seasonal fisheries position with the DNR YouTube video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToCokJuKF78

Learn how to apply online at www.governmentjobs.com/careers/iowa/jobs/4737143/fisheries-seasonal-worker-internship. Application deadline is January 10, 2025.

For more information about these positions, contact Ben Wallace at 712-657-2638 or ben.wallace@dnr.iowa.gov

#### Avian Bird Flu Resurgence

Avian influenza is a highly transmissible, naturally occurring virus found in certain waterfowl and shorebirds. There are various subtypes and strains, most of which cause limited harm to domestic poultry (low pathogenic) but some of which are lethal (highly pathogenic). Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza – (HPAI)

HPAI can also affect animals that consume infected carcasses, including other birds like eagles, and mammals, like red fox. Ruden said those who find five or more sick or dead flocking birds within a week should report their findings to their local wildlife biologist or state conservation officer. They are also interested in reports of solitary birds or mammals. Contact information is available online at www.iowadnr.gov under the About DNR tab on the homepage. (https://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/contacts/wildlife\_management.pdf)

(https://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/Law%20Enforcement/dnrlemap.pdf)

Waterfowl hunters can use these simple precautions to limit their exposure while field dressing and consuming wild game: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fsc\_hpai\_hunters.pdf. Cooking meat to an internal temperature of 165° F can kill the virus, if present.

While there is some inherent risk to hunting dogs given the nature of their interaction with carcasses, sick birds often become poor, uncoordinated flyers and so are less likely to be harvested. Hunters should prevent dogs from interacting with unknown carcasses, and avoid feeding them raw meat from harvested birds. More information is available online at https://www.ducks.org/conservation/waterfowl-research-science/waterfowl-hunters-and-the-avian-flu-what-you-need-to-know.

If poultry producers or those with backyard flocks suspect signs of H5N1 HPAI, they should contact their veterinarian immediately. Possible cases must also be reported to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship at (515) 281-5305.

Media Contact: Dr. Rachel Ruden, State Wildlife Veterinarian, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-823-8544.

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## **SAFE Shelters**

Heavy snowfall and wet springs which have an impact on Iowa's pheasant population prompted the Iowa Legislature to convene a pheasant study group to looking into ways to support Iowa's pheasant population. The group produced a habitat design recommendation, called Pheasant SAFE (State Acres For Enhancement), that was an amped up version of CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) combining winter cover, with food plots and nesting coverall on one field.

A piece of the Pheasant SAFE design that serves as a thermal escape during severe winters is a block planting of switchgrass or shelterbelts if landowners so choose.

Landowners interested in adding this pheasant friendly habitat can learn more by clicking the 100 Years of Pheasant Hunting graphic at www.iowadnr.gov/pheasantsurvey, and scrolling to the Helping Landowners with Wildlife Goals section. Links include information on technical assistance and local DNR and Pheasants Forever contacts.

"These SAFE sites are a great food source and minimizes bird movement when we have a bad winter," Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources said. "When pheasants are exposed, that's not good. SAFE keeps them in cover, allows them to walk in and out of the food plot and minimizes their exposure, which leads to better survival and better nesting. "And they're great places to hunt."

"Having quality habitat that includes food, nesting cover and thermal corridors allows for pheasants to survive harsh winters and wet springs, and to recover their populations in about half the time as areas with poor habitat," Bogenschutz said. Iowa has about 1.6 million acres of CRP, of which, 494,000 acres are enrolled in a SAFE practice.

Information on places to hunt, the August roadside survey results and more is available online by clicking the 100 Years of Pheasant Hunting graphic at www.iowadnr.gov/pheasantsurvey.

Media Contact: Todd Bogenschutz, Upland Wildlife Research Biologist, Iowa DNR, 515-979-0828.

### Iowa's Threatened and Endangered Species

lowa has changed greatly since becoming a state in 1846. The prairies that helped develop the highly productive soils have been reduced by more than 99 percent. About 95 percent of the state's prairie pothole wetlands have been drained. Over half of the original forest has been lost. These changes and other factors such as channelization of streams and rivers, soil erosion, development and urban expansion, and intensive row crop agriculture have contributed to the loss or degradation of suitable habitat for numerous plant and animal species.

Individual species of plants and animals may contribute to the survival of other species within a community. The loss of what appears to be an unimportant species may result in the decline or loss of species that we consider to be very important. If we ignore species that are in danger of being extirpated from lowa, we may be making decisions that cannot be reversed in the future. Conserving these species for future generations requires the coordinated effort by public agencies, private organizations, and property owners.

Iowa's endangered and threatened species law was enacted in 1975. The current law, entitled Endangered Plants and Wildlife is Chapter 481B of the Code of Iowa. The Natural Resource Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources are responsible for administration of Chapter 481B.

Current list of endangered, threatened, and special concern species:

- Animals -- https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/ACO/rule/571.77.2.pdf
- Plants -- https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/ACO/rule/571.77.3.pdf

Federal Endangered Species Program (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

#### DNR Sustainable Materials Management initiative releases economic, environmental impact study reports

Workers hand-sorted materials from landfills into more than 80 categories to analyze what we throw away.

MEDIA CONTACT: Tom Anderson, DNR, at 515-240-6059, or Tom.Anderson@dnr.iowa.gov

Laurie Rasmus, DNR, at 515-474-4921, or Laurie.Rasmus@dnr.iowa.gov

DES MOINES – The Iowa DNR's Sustainable Materials Management initiative is announcing the results of three studies examining the environmental and economic impacts of recycling in the state.

The initiative, which promotes finding new opportunities to reduce environmental impacts, conserve resources, and reduce costs associated with managing materials throughout their life cycle, has posted three materials management reports to the Sustainable Materials Management webpage at **www.iowadnr.gov/SMM**.

These reports provide insight into what is being recycled in Iowa, the value and environmental impacts of landfilled materials and the recovery rate of Iowa's deposit beverage containers.

#### Landfill Material Analysis Report

lowans landfilled over \$95 million of reusable, recyclable and compostable materials that could have been diverted through existing landfill diversion programs. The Landfill Material Analysis study investigated landfilled materials that could have been recovered for recycling, reuse, composting, and remanufacturing. The analysis includes material recoverability and impacts to greenhouse gas emissions and Iowa's economy through job creation and the value of materials lost to the landfill.

#### **Iowa Recycling Facility Report**

Ever wonder where your recyclables go after they leave your curbside or after you drop materials into recycling collection containers? This study documents the tonnages of traditional recyclables managed in Iowa and an accompanying interactive map displays the flow of these materials to accumulators and processors throughout the state for marketing.

#### 2022 Deposit Container Recovery Rate Report

States with beverage container deposit programs consistently show increased recovery and cleaner containers, compared to traditional curbside and drop-off collection programs. This report provides the methodology and calculated recovery rate of the state's beverage container deposit law, also known as the "bottle bill."

"Analyzing what we are landfilling and seeing the amount of recyclables that could have been recovered through existing collection programs, is eye opening," says Tom Anderson with the Iowa DNR Land Quality Bureau. "Data resulting from these reports provide valuable information guiding state and local planning and program efforts toward capturing additional, limited natural resources before they are lost to the landfill, and putting them back into the marketplace to

create new products and jobs, and reduce harmful environmental impacts."

The Iowa DNR Sustainable Materials Management program aims to protect human health and the environment through effective and efficient use of natural resources throughout the life cycle of consumer products. To learn more, visit www.iowadnr.gov/SMM.Media

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Maple Tapping<a href="https://www.inhf.org/blog/blog/maple-tapping/">https://www.inhf.org/blog/blog/maple-tapping/</a> By Josh Harris on February 15, 2023 in BlogFebruary is the perfect time to consider adding maple tapping to a shortlist of seasonal doings. First-time tappers willsurely enjoy participating in a practice that has resonated with various cultures through time. North American nativesand early settlers relished collecting maple tree sap and boiling it until it thickened into a syrupy sweet.

Optimal tapping conditions occur late February into March as sap flow reaches its peak when day temperatures in the low 40s and night temperatures below 20 degrees. Start the process as early as you can, as it will take many gallons (as much as 86!) of sap to produce one gallon of boiled-down syrup.

Although all trees can produce sap, the yield varies in appearance, texture and flavor depending on maple tapping the species. Identifying and selecting mature maples at least ten inches in diameter is key. Iowa has a selection of native maples including boxelder, silver maple and hard maples like sugar and black maple. Silver maples produce thinner sap with low sugar content and overall sap yield. For a sweeter taste, sugar maples, found mostly on Iowa's eastern edge in moist, wooded terrains, typically produce the best sap for syrup production as the yield is often plentiful, thick and sweet.

No need to hold back on making maple-tapping memories, so long as it's done correctly, tapping shouldn't harm the tree. Not ready to do this on your own? Stay on the lookout for various tapping events like the Annual Maple Syrup Festival at Indian Creek Nature Center in Cedar Rapids. This family-friendly function offers a great introduction to maple tapping, as syrup lovers of all ages are encouraged to come together.

Maple tapping is labor intensive but a straightforward process with few required supplies:

- drill and drill bit to accommodate spile size
- spile (or spout), either metal or plastic
- bucket with cover
- storage containers, such as plastic or metal trash cans (several gallons in capacity)

Want to learn more about maple syrup production in Iowa? Visit the Iowa State University Forestry Extension's website.

#### **BlueBird House Workshop**

Check our Facebook page for details on the spring Bluebird House Workshop to be held in March.

#### **Dubuque County Conservation**

- ◆ January 10 Illuminate the Night Hike (Swiss Valley Preserve) Whitewater Canyon. Reservations required
- Sanuary 11 @ 9am -- Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW). Swiss Valley Nature Center. Registration Required. \$5
- January March Various Dates/Times -- Forest School. Target Audience: Home Schooling Families
- January 18 @ 10am Timber! Iowa Rattlesnakes Swiss Valley Nature Center. Registration Required.
- February 6 @ 6pm Sustainable Landscaping. James Kennedy Public Library, Dyersville. Registration Required

#### Celebrate Winter and the Holidays at Mines of Spain

Winter Events:

- Sanuary 1 @ Noon First Day Hike Start the day off right and bring the whole family. Different hikes are planned.
- January 12, @Noon -- Gerda Preston Hartman Mystery of Finley's Landing
- January 26, @Noon -- Izzy Metcalf Bats of Iowa and their ecology
- February 9, @Noon -- Dr. Eugene Tesdahl -The Meskwaki Nation, The Mines of Spain, and Why You Must Know Indigenous History
- February 23, @Noon -- Iowa Raptor Project Live birds of prey.
- March 9 @Noon -- Exploring the Mines of Spain through the Lens Ron Tigges
- March 23, @Noon -- Bird Banding David Shealer More details on Mines of Spain website and social media

#### **Business Members**

Artístic Cleaners 109 Locust St.

Dennís Baumhover Ins. 2615 Dodge St.

Behrs Funeral Home 1491 Main St.

Breitbach's Country Dining 563 Balltown Rd.

Cedar Cross Overhead Door 1040 Cedar Cross Rd

Cítízens State Bank P.O. Box 50 NewVienna

Copper Kettle 2987 Jackson St

Dubuque Arboretum & Botanical Garden 3800 Arboretum Dríve

Dupaco Credit Union P.O. Box 179 DuTrac Credit Union 3465 Asbury Rd.

Environmental Management Services - 5170 Wolff Rd #2

Sherry Horsfield Farm Bureau Ins 20214 E Pleasant Grove Rd

Home+Floor Show 1475 Associates Dr.

The Friedman Group 880 Locust St. P. O. Box 1780

Leo H. Frueh, Consulting Forester Email: fruehforestry@gmail.com

Hendricks Feed & Seed 2040 Kerper Blvd

Herbst Upholstery & Auto 76 Maín St

Kaufmann Painting 17368 S John Deere Rd.

Klauer Optical 1705 Delhí St

MídWest One Bank 895 Town Clock Plaza

Miller Flooring Box 125 New Vienna

Natures Way Inc. lancekirby1970@gmail.com

Oky Doky Food Mart P.O. Box 300 Dubuque

O'Meara Custom Products 8915 N. Badger Rd. East Dubuque IL

Orígín Design 137 Main St - Suite 100

Pfohl's Blinds, Drapes Inc. 335 West 1st Street

Pregler Electric 216th Ave LaMotte IA

Premier Bank 2625 Northwest Arterial

Schuster Tree Service 7273 Schueller Heights Rd Schustertree@gmail.com

Sisters of Saint Francis 3390 Windsor Ave.

Skip Breithbach Feed Balltown, IA

Spahn \$ Rose Lumber 250 Harríson St.

Stecklein Tree Service Epworth, IA

Steve's Ace Home and Garden 3350 JFK & 200 South Locust

Therapeutic Massage 2255 JFK Road

U.S. Bank 270 West 7th

White Front Feed & Seed 4290 Dodge St.

White Water Native Seeds Epworth, IA

#### **Board Members**

President: Paul Kaufmann 563.583.5030 Vice-Pesident: Mark Kaufmann 563.879.3452 Secretary: **Bob Walton** Treasurer: Connie Kintzle Facebook: Nick Kaufmann Newsletter: Connie Kintzle Website: Nick Kaufmann

Reach any board member by email at dbgccs01@gmail.com

Punkie Birkel Tim Fiedler tedfiedler@hotmail.com **Rich Fiedler** Gerda Hartman 563.588.0649 Pat Hayes 563.542.2960 Whitey Kemp 563.582.7752 Tom Klinge Matt McQuillen Bev Rettenmeier Dan Simon Jr. Dan Simon Sr. 563.583.0514

Dubuque County Conservation Society PO Box 645 Dubuque, IA 52001



# A Visit from Will Dilg & Songs from Our Mighty Mississippi

Date: Friday, February 28, 2025

Time: **7 - 9 PM** (with 15 min. intermission) Details in this issue *Tickets are on sale now!* 

**DCCS meetings** are held September through May on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. Next meetings: Tuesday, January 14. Check for location by emailing dbqccs01@gmail.com

Dubuque County Conservation events and projects:

https://secure.rec1.com/IA/dubuque-county-ia/catalog https://www.facebook.com/dubuquecountyconservation/ https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Jackson.aspx https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Jones.aspx

Dubuque County Conservation Society website: *https://www.dbqccs.org/* Conservation Society Facebook: *https://www.facebook.com/dbqcntyconsoc* DCCS online renewal link on website: *https://dubuque-county-conservation-society.square.site/*