



Iowa Association of Naturalists

Iowa Association of Naturalists / Iowa Conservation Education Council



Conservation and Environmental Education Excellence Awards Program

Nomination Form

Individuals may nominate themselves or another individual or organization for any award. Award forms should not exceed **three** pages total plus one support item (such as a guide, video, or photograph). The supporting item should not be a substitute for required information. Typewritten responses are appreciated. Materials will not be returned. Please submit a separate form for each nomination. All nomination information will be kept confidential except for winner notification and publicity purposes.

Name of nominee Clinton County Conservation Board

Agency/organization Clinton County Conservation Board

Address PO Box 68

City Grand Mound State Iowa Zip code 52751

Phone (work) 563-847-7202

Email conservation@clintoncountyiowa.com

Primary local newspaper or publicity outlet, name and address of contact person:

DeWitt Observer: observer@iowatelecom.net

Quad City Times: pressreleases@qctimes.com

Clinton Herald: chnews@mcleodusa.net

This nomination is submitted by Mark Roberts, Environmental Education Coordinator, Clinton CCB

Email: mroberts@clintoncountyiowa.com Address: PO Box 68, Grand Mound, Iowa 52751

Check category entered:

- Aldo Leopold Environmental Education Award
- Bohumil Shimek Environmental Educator Award
- Chris Holt Youth Environmental Education Award
- "Ding" Darling Environmental Education Award
- Sylvan Runkel Environmental Education School Award
- Outstanding County Conservation Board EE Program (pop.< 35,000)
- Outstanding County Conservation Board EE Program (pop.> 35,000)
- Frederic Leopold Environmental Education Award
- Ada Hayden Conservation Education Award

Submissions should be **postmarked by December 1** and sent to:

Heidi Anderson
 IAN/ICEC Awards Committee
 11407 NW Jester Park Dr.
 Granger, IA 50109
 Phone: (515) 323-5360 Fax: (515) 323-5354
 Email: handers@co.polk.ia.us

Outstanding County Conservation Board EE Program (pop. >35,000) - 2006

Excellence in EE Programming by a County Conservation Board Nomination: Clinton County Conservation Board

The Clinton County Conservation Board has been and continues to be a pioneer and a leader in interpretation in the State of Iowa. The CCCB started the third County Conservation Board Environmental Education Program in Iowa 30 years ago.

Tradition: The CCCB can boast 4 of the Iowa Association of Naturalist Founders. Bob Bryant, then Director of the CCB, now retired Director/Naturalist at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, and E. Lee Lee, Larry Dolphin, and Sharon Kaufman, all Naturalists in the early years of EE in this state. The CCCB helped launch their careers in the fledgling field of interpretation and they continue to influence the profession today.

Staff: The CCCB has sustained a high level of commitment and showed a steady increase in that commitment over the past 30 years. Today the Board employs 2 full time and one 4/5 time interpreter and has an internship program.

Professional Involvement: The CCCB continues their commitment to Environmental Education on a statewide basis by funding its employees' attendance to workshops and encouraging participation on committees for NAI, the Iowa Association of Naturalists, The Iowa Association of County Conservation Board Employees and local committees. Our EE Staff currently hold chairs on IAN's Website (Chair) and Awards Committees. Serving professional organizations help CCCB Staff grow within the profession and give the CCCB an avenue to influence interpretation outside their local area. The CCCB budgets for these activities and allows employees to use CCCB time to take part. The CCCB has also started to allow its naturalists to reach out beyond our borders and be involved in Earthwatch Research on a global basis. This past summer Mark Roberts spent eleven days in Monterey, CA studying sharks as a paid CCCB staff. More trips are planned in the future to other parts of the world.

Eden Valley Nature Center: The CCCB is involved in the operation of three nature centers. They own and operate Eden Valley Nature Center, a day-use type Interpretive Center located in Eden Valley Refuge. Located in the bluff-lined Bear Creek Valley, the center plays hosts to caving, IOWATER studies, rock climbing, hiking and other high adventure experiences.

Rock Creek Marina and Campground: Situated on the Mississippi River, this site has hosted teacher workshops, conservation board training and many field trips for local schools and interpretive programs for the public. The self-guided interpretive trail helps visitors understand floodplain ecology. We have 24 canoes that we use to teach canoe skills and to take floats on the Mississippi Backwaters and the Wapsipinicon River. We also take people onto the channel via pontoon for field trips teaching about the Mississippi as a recreational, commercial, and natural resource.

Blue Heron Eco Cruises: This is the CCCB's newest program and asset. In the past, groups that came on Mississippi River field trips at Rock Creek were limited to the backwaters in canoes, or very small groups in flat-bottom boats. The CCCB purchased a 30-passenger pontoon boat that serves as a vehicle to get groups onto the main channel as well as backwaters to get a much more com-



The Blue Heron Eco Cruise Pontoon

plete picture of the river ecosystem as it functions today. Commercial navigation and industrial uses along the river contrast with wildlife and riparian forest in the Mississippi. We teach people about the many facets of our lives the big river touches and how people try to balance all the purposes the river must satisfy. We have microscopes, binoculars, IOWATER test kits, sediment samplers, fish and plankton nets on board to help us investigate the river. We take groups as well as have weekly public cruises out of the marina. In 2008 the Board will launch a new custom-built boat with an increased capacity of 50%.

Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center fundraising is well underway on this state-of-the-art Center that will educate tourists as well as provide an excellent place for schools, clubs and retreats to explore our great Mississippi River heritage.

The Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center (8,400 sq. ft.) will have nature and environmental exhibits that include –

- A 5,000 to 10,000 gallon aquarium with local fish
- Live reptiles and amphibians
- Migratory birds (Mississippi Flyway)
- Freshwater mussels
- Local river history area
- Commercial shipping and industrial uses of river display
- Wildlife mounts
- Environmental education classroom
- Banquet facility
- Blue Heron Eco-Cruises launch
- Meeting space
- Clinton County tourism information center
- Camp store and café



Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center Floor Plan

Soaring Eagles Nature Center: The CCCB also has recently entered into a unique partnership with a local, private nature center in Clinton, Iowa, Soaring Eagles Nature Center. Eagle Point Nature Society manages the grounds and buildings and the Clinton CCB conducts the EE programs, creates displays and cares for the collections. The Center includes 3 miles of trails, an amphitheater, Clinton County's last one-room schoolhouse and remodeled 1938 barn known as the Nature Barn.



The Nature Barn

Wapsi River Environmental Education Center: The CCCB also co-manages with Scott CCB the Wapsi Center, a 225-acre preserve dedicated exclusively to interpretation of our natural resources. The cooperative effort stretches staff time, imaginative energy and limited funding. The Center features the "Eagle View Eco Center", *Osprey Aquatics Lab*, *Menke Astronomical Observatory*, two classrooms, and 6 different habitat types (upland, lowland and coniferous forests, riparian wetlands, ponds, prairie, and bluffslands). The Wapsi Center is currently making the transition to a regional residential facility, serving all of east-central Iowa and west central Illinois, with the first of two dormitories completed. This concept is unique among CCBs in Iowa. Another new asset is the Teams Course. Eleven permanent elements give groups an opportunity to learn how to work better together to solve problems. The elements boost self confidence and can be adapted to illustrate conservation concepts.

Smithtown Church Historic Site: The church has preservation, restoration and interpretation listed as its primary management goals. Children visit the church and cemetery on field trips to learn about the pioneers of our area.

Prairies for Schools: *Recently named one of Pheasants Forever's top 25 habitat programs of all-time!* This program is another innovative, cross-organizational effort in which the CCCB is involved. The program restores diverse tallgrass prairies on school grounds and at nature centers throughout the county. It is a cooperative effort between the CCCB, the local chapter of Pheasants Forever and our schools. The schools provide the ground, Pheasants Forever provides money for seed and the CCCB provides all labor and equipment for establishment. To date 19 such areas have been planted, 16 in school-yards ranging from 1/4 to 3 acres and 3 at nature centers, the largest being 6 acres in size. This past spring the CCB conducted a nighttime prairie burn at one of the schools and over 300 people attended.

Trumpeter Swan Restoration: The CCCB is the driving force for the Trumpeter Swan Restoration in eastern Iowa. To date the six adult pairs the Board has placed have produced over 150

young adults back into the wild. Trumpeter swan education and the "Trumpeting the Cause for Wetlands" theme plays a big part in many field trips.

Educational Publications:

Prairie Whispers, our quarterly newsletter designed for the public. All departments within the CCCB contribute as well as an extensive schedule of public activities.

In the Field is our teachers' newsletter that comes out each semester. It gives teachers ideas for field trips, in-class visits and EE activities they can do on their own. It also touts the "Teacher of the Semester" award winner. The \$50 award recognizes great local teachers that emphasize EE.

The Guide to Interpretive Services in Clinton County is a 24 page booklet that outlines 78 different activities that the CCCB can lead for students. It also is cross referenced with educational standards for Iowa so teachers and their administrators can know their time will be focused and well spent.

www.clintoncountyiowa.com/conservation is a comprehensive website that disseminates information about the parks and programs of the Clinton County Conservation Board to county citizens and potential tourists. The site is wholly produced and maintained by the EE Program.

Alliances: The entire program is on a tremendous growth curve and the CCCB is responding to this increasing demand with a larger commitment to the EE program each year. They also have consistently reached out to partner with other private and public conservation agencies to help further the effort of conservation and education. Our alliance with Scott County Conservation Board, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and the Quad Cities Conservation Alliance to acquire, develop and operate the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center is a cornerstone of our program. The partnership with the Soaring Eagle Nature Society is unique in the state. The effort not only expanded the CCCB's capabilities in the city of Clinton, it also saved one Iowa's last private Nature Centers.

The Board consistently reaches out to its colleagues to band together for Environmental Education. In the past two years the CCCB has co-sponsored interpretive events with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Army Corps of Engineers, Clinton Community College, Bickelhaupt Arboretum, Scott County Conservation Board, Friends of the Wapsi Center, St. Ambrose University, Pheasants Forever, Clinton Izaak Walton League, Living Lands and Waters, Iowa State Extension, the Clinton Area Solid Waste Agency and a plethora of other groups.

Diversity: The strength of the CCCB EE Program lies not in its size or budget. It is the steady, continual support towards an ideal. The CCCB is not just about Environmental Education, as it manages 21 areas totaling over 8,000 acres. These sites include campgrounds, hunting areas, preserves, historic sites parks and county roadsides. Environmental Education is just a piece of this management matrix, yet support for EE seeps into everything the CCCB does. It involves not only the EE Staff, but Park Rangers, Roadside personnel and Board Members, who are called on as interpreters on a regular basis.

Conclusion: This top to bottom and side to side involvement sets the CCCB apart from many contemporary programs in Iowa and I ask that IAN and ICEC recognize this Excellence in EE Programming the CCCB demonstrates.

Significant Numbers for FY 2006

Population of Clinton County	50,149
EE Staff (salaries & benefits)	\$123,000
EE Operational Budget	\$13,000
Total Events F.Y. 2006	457
Total Presentations	2,134
Total Attendance	50,422
Total Contact Hours	56,161

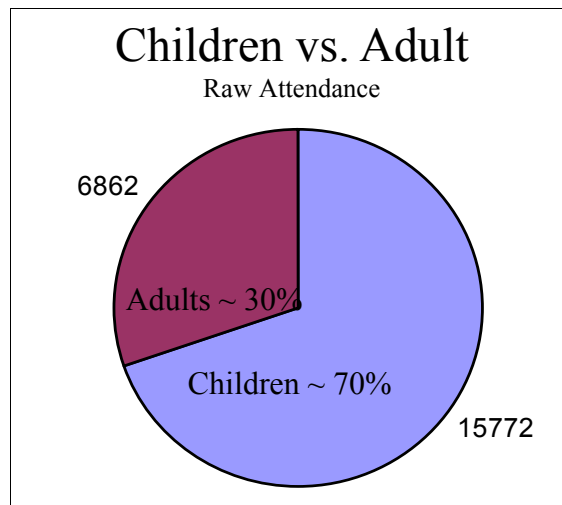
Group Type # Events # Presentations

Elementary	159	1,020
Public	172	386
Secondary	42	414
Youth	43	228
Private Org.	41	104

Presentation Sites – 2006

	# of Events
Wapsi River Center	156
Rock Creek Marina & Campground	84
Eden Valley Refuge	65
Soaring Eagle Nature Center	33
Other Parks	67
Schools	37
Misc. Other Sites	22

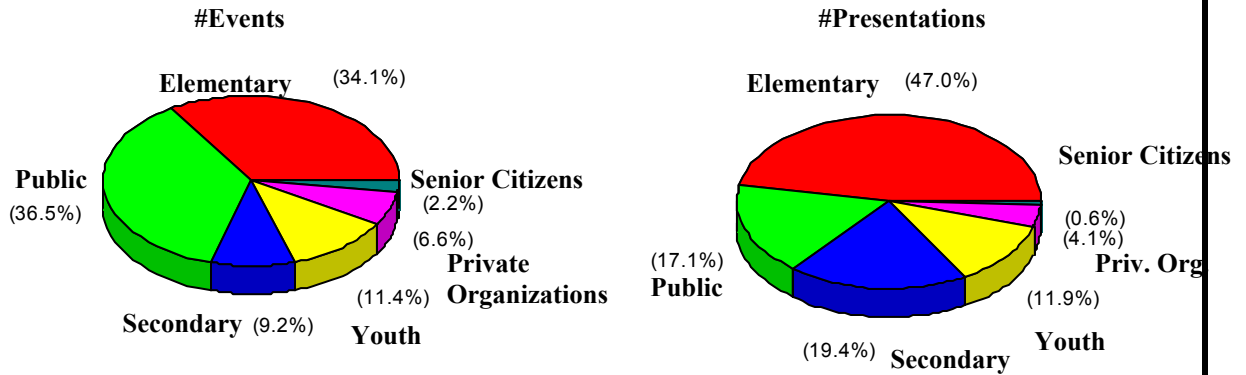
Blue Heron Cruises = 140 cruises for 3,263 people



Special Programs - 2007

<i>Program</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	Earth Week booth	2	Composting	Microscopic World
Field Trips	147	Earth, Sun & Stars	2	Creatures of the Night	Mississippi Blufflands Float
Blue Heron	140	Eco Tourism Center	2	Creepy Cave Crawl	Mississippi Explorers
EV Open House	26	Fall Hike	2	Crossroads Triathlon	Mississippi River Clean-up
Canoeing	16	Folk Concert	2	Eagle Watch	Old Fashioned Toys
Sunset Cruise	14	Fun Cruises	2	Eastern Iowa Star Party	One-room Schoolhouse
Movies	8	Geology Rocks	2	Eco Center Presentation	Owl Prowl
Furbearers	7	Grow Iowa Wild Train.	2	Eco Meet	Plant and Tree Hike
Birds of Prey	6	Horseshoe Tournament	2	Ecology Day	Plants
Dinosaurs	6	Leaves and Trees	2	Ediwild: four day	Pond Study
Bats	5	Maple Syruping	2	Teacher's Workshop	Recycled Card Craft
Free Canoeing	5	Menke Open House	2	Energy and the Sun	River Song
Bald Eagle Days	4	Nature Program	2	EVNC Opener	Rocks & Geology
Caving	4	Night Hike	2	Fabulous Fungi Hike	Roots of Root Beer
Cross Country Skiing	4	Nighttime Prairie Burn	2	Fall Fest	Snowmobile Safety Course
Fair Booth	4	Reptiles	2	Fall Leaves and Trees	Summer Kick-off
Hayrides	4	Skull Duggery	2	Fern Hike	Swan Open House
Insect Investigations	4	Snapshot Sampling	2	Fishing	Swan Release
Music	4	Wapsi River Cleanup	2	Frog Chorus	Turkey Talk
Mussel Cruise	4	Which Animal Where	2	Furbearers/Tracking	Turtle Races
Snowshoeing	4	AEA Training		GPS	Vertebrates
Star Party	4	Animal Defenses		IACCB Conference Tour	Voices of the River
Endangered Species	3	Apple Festival		Invasive Species Counter	Voices of the River Cruise
Fall Color Hike	3	Bald Eagle Cruise		Attack	Walnut Demo
Hunter Safety Camp	3	Bald Eagle Observation		Iowa Furbearers	Water Cycle
Into Winter	3	Basket Class		Kites	Which Way? Orienteering
Volunteer Workday	3	Bats and Schoolhouse		Klondike Derby	Wild Animals
RC Field Day	3	Bird Feeders		Lake Malone Kid's Fishing	Wildflower Hike
Adult Winter Camp	2	Birds & Feeding		Tournament	Wildflower Pressing
Birdfeeders	2	Blue Grass Jam		Lifecycles	Wildlife and Career
Birdhouse Workshop	2	Cal/Wheat Cross Country		Living and Nonliving	Winter Solstice
		Canoeing 101		Magnificent Monarchs	Winter Tree ID
		Christmas Bird Count		Manikowski Prairie Walk	Woodcock Watch

Types of Groups Using CCCB EE Program in FY 2007



Partial EE Equipment Assets

Dedicated EE Vehicles	3
Pontoon Boat	1
Canoes (two trailers)	26
Cross Country Equipment (sets)	45
Snowshoes (pairs)	60
Caving Equipment (# people can outfit)	30
Archery Equipment (compound bows)	12
GPS Units	14
Fishing Poles	48
Golf Discs (2 courses)	30
Rock Collections	3
Fossil Collections	2
Fur Collections	2
(common, endangered & extirpated species)	30
Native Artifact Collection	1
Animal Mounts	300+
Live Animals Collection (specimens)	40
(kestrel, screech owl, many snakes, turtles & fish)	

Contact Hours by Facility

