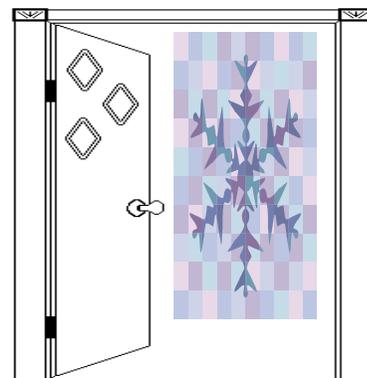


# “Looking OUT THE BACK DOOR...”

## The Sac County Conservation Board’s Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2013

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**Our Mission: “To initiate an awareness and foster stewardship of nature’s rewards.”**

### Where do they go?

In the summer Iowa is home to about 100 breeding species of butterflies. Where do they all go come the winter? The Monarch Butterfly gets a lot of deserving attention due to its amazing journey to Mexico, but what about the rest of them? Where and how do they survive the winter? Before diving into this subject lets first review the life cycle of a butterfly. They start off as eggs, turn into larvae called caterpillars, then enter a “resting” state called a pupa. During that time they are in their chrysalis and they are going through the process of metamorphosis. Once completed they will emerge from their chrysalis as an adult. Different butterflies over winter in different stages. But all will enter into a state of suspended animation called diapause. In general butterflies will overwinter in the same area that they lived in the warmer seasons. They also seek out protected areas like crevices in trees, under bark or in nooks in buildings. They may utilize hibernation boxes or use log piles— especially if they are made with logs that are 3-6 feet long and piled 3-5 feet high. It is best if the pile is in a protected location and provide some sort of water proof cover. Even a small box filled with leaves will work as long as it has a waterproof roof. Although these structures will provide some protection from the elements it cannot keep them from freezing. There are two ways that they can deal with these temperatures without perishing. One way is to accumulate a lot of sugar in their blood. The sugar acts as like antifreeze and keeps their blood from be-

coming solid. (For those of you who like pure maple syrup, keep your syrup in the freezer and it will stay fresh longer and due to the high sugar content it will pour every time.) Otherwise the water in the cells can be forced to the outside of their bodies. This allows the water to freeze without injuring the butterflies cells. Last winter I thought of this topic when I noticed a small brown shape on the outside of my house. Upon closer inspection it was a Black Swallowtail chrysalis. It was not too far from where I had had dill growing. I was very excited and found it amazing that such a small fragile creature could withstand our winters. The vast majority of our swallowtail butterfly species (Black, Tiger, Giant, Zebra and Spicebush), over winter as a pupa.

Image from Wikipedia



The Morning Cloak is a unique butterfly as it is the one you can see flying around before the snow completely melts. I have seen these butterflies visiting snow trillium in the early spring on a warmer day. They can do this because they



Image from Wikipedia

overwinter as an adult. They find protected crevices such as loose park, log piles on in the crevices of buildings. Continued on pg 6

Fact Files.....	Page 2
Programming.....	Page 3
Kid’s Korner.....	Page 4
Eyes to the Skies.....	Page 5
Cont.....	Page 6



## Directors Notes

As Thanksgiving has come and gone by now, it is hard to believe that Christmas is just around the corner. Although, how could one forget with all the decorations up, TV advertisements and shows in full swing and just that festive feel in the air.

When the calendar turns to December is always a time for me to reflect on the past year and to look forward to the next as well. Usually I am in a deer stand or looking for a rooster pheasant when I do my best thinking! After a dry 2012, this past spring looked promising to return to a "normal" year as far as rainfall was concerned. But, once again Mother Nature turned off the water faucet as the summer turned dry again and remains that way now. Hopefully 2014 will be that "normal" year for once.

The Sac County Conservation Board was very fortunate this year to receive a donation of approximately 25 acres of property from LaDon and Pat Grotjohn. This land is directly adjacent to the existing Eden Prairie Area along the Boyer River. This gift of property was planted to trees over 20 years ago and will make altogether now 42 acres of county owned public land in the northwest part of Sac County. Many thanks to LaDon and Pat for their very generous gift to the people of Sac County!

As the Conservation Center now has been open for 3 years we are constantly looking for new exhibits and displays that we can provide to you, the public to enjoy. We presently are proud to have the "Listening to the Prairie" exhibit from the Smithsonian Institute that examines agricultural alternatives on the North American prairie. If you haven't visited this exhibit yet it will be here until the end of the year and is very worthwhile. Be sure to make a point to stop out to the Conservation Center on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 pm for our Holiday Open House. There will be "make and take craft" making as well as refreshments available. It would also be a good time to pick up some Christmas gifts from our gift shop.

From all of us here at the Sac County Conservation Board and staff, I would like to wish you and yours a safe and happy holiday season!

## **Looking into the fact files!**

### White Footed Mouse



*(Peromyscus leucopus)*

- Not a creature was stirring except for the mouse, as these mice are nocturnal.
- Their tail is over half as long as their bodies which aids balance.
- They are good climbers and swimmers.
- Prefer wooded habitats but they are found in many habitat types.
- Nests are made with leaves, grasses, feathers, hair, cloth, milkweed silk, shredded bark and moss.
- In nature they play an important role as they are eaten by many predators.

## Thank You

All the wonderful volunteers who helped out with the Halloween Night Hike! We could not have done it with out your help!

To the many businesses and individuals that donated the Annual Pumpkin Carving Contest.

Pocahontas County Conservation Board, Little Sioux Spinners and Weavers, NRCS, Bill Brenny and Barb Bloom for helping with the Fall Prairie Harvest Event.

LaDon and Pat Grotjohn for land donation

Dan Ackerman for the telephone pole  
Sac County Secondary roads for grading services.

Campground hosts: Diane Page and Terry and Melissa Rath



# Kid's Korner- Be a Holiday Hero!!



Images from the Art of Simple

## Save the Earth and make holiday cheer!

Make the family wrapping paper to use this holiday season! If your parents usually use plastic bags to bring home the groceries and other items ask them to use paper during this month. Save all the brown bags. Cut off handles and the bottom. Cut down one corner and lay the bag flat. Try to flatten the bag by laying a heavy flat item on it. Then take it out and paint or decorate the bag. Also ask them to save any paper from work that only has a little bit of writing on one side. Use the empty side to draw or paint and decorate it for the holidays. Or save some of your art work from school and use it to wrap up your holiday gifts. Another idea for small trinkets is to save baby food jars, plastic containers like yogurt or cottage cheese. Wash them out and glue paper to the outside of the containers and on the lid. Decorate them insert your gift and you are done!

## Holiday Hero Gift Ideas

There is nothing quite as special as a homemade gift. Below are some ideas and the links you can visit to make some of these crafts:



Tin Can CREATURES

### Make these for your mother's garden.

You will need help from an adult if you make wire wings and to punch a hole for the stick. For directions go to: [www.myveryeducatedmother.com/2013/05/tin-can-creatures.html](http://www.myveryeducatedmother.com/2013/05/tin-can-creatures.html)

Personalize It: Collect bottle tops. One for each member of your family. Paint them and decorate. Have a parent help you get or print small pictures of your family. Cut out and glue the picture to the inside of the cap. Use old magnets (out of old fridge letters) or have an adult help you get new ones and use tacky glue or have a parent help you hot glue the magnet on.

Make Jewelry from old magazines: This would be great for a mother, grandma or sister. For directions go to: <http://spoonful.com/crafts/magazine-bead-bracelet>



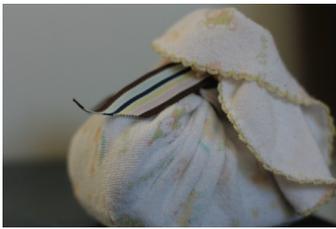
Metal Heads: Make these metal heads for anyone but dads or brothers sure might like it. You will need help getting magnets and using hot glue. Otherwise start collecting metal items to use for your sculptures. For more information visit: <http://spoonful.com/crafts/can-do-robots>



## Wrap It UP!

The holiday season is all about the gift of giving. This year give to your loved ones as you normally do but give a gift to the earth as well by using more eco-friendly wrapping paper. On average Americas throw out 38,000 miles of ribbon each year, that is enough to tie a bow around the Earth. Consider reusing bows and ribbons each year. According to Stanford University, Americans throw away 25% more trash during the Thanksgiving to New Year's holiday period than any other time of year. The extra waste amounts to 25 million tons of garbage, or about 1 million extra tons per week! If every American family wrapped just 3 presents in re-used materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields. So how do you wrap presents in re-usable materials?

Use Cloth– I bet you or someone you know has a stash of cloth around that is not being used. Use a nice ribbon and you can wrap up odd shaped presents in a jiff. Cloth is very nice for someone who is likely to reuse it.



It is best for adult or baby gifts. I wouldn't recommend it for kids because of the joy they get from tearing open paper.



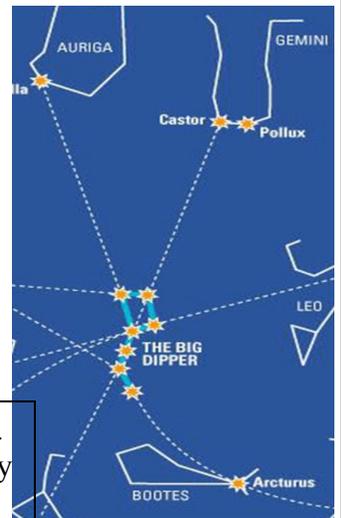
Images from the Art of Simple

Reused Paper– If you forget your cloth bags when you go to the store ask for paper not plastic. Save the paper bags and use the interior for wrapping paper. When you are at the office and you see paper that has barely any print on it grab that up and use the unprinted side for wrapping paper. The great thing with this wrapping is you can personalize it with writing or decorations. Even better is to have the kids decorate the paper. Lastly use the newspaper. Use colorful comics for kids and black and white print for adults. In any case have fun, get creative and feel good that you are making the holidays greener for everyone!

## **Eyes To The Skies!**

- If comet ISON survives its encounter with the sun over thanks giving. It should be visible in the early morning or evening hours.
- December 3rd- New Moon
- December 13& 14- Geminid Meteor Shower– This is the peak of this shower. Meteors can be visible from December 7-17th. This is one of the bigger brighter shows producing up to 120 meteors of various colors during the peak. Meteors will radiate out of the constellation Gemini but can appear anywhere in the sky.
- December 17th– Full moon
- December 21st– Winter Solstice
- December 21-22nd– Urisds Meteor Shower– This is a very weak shower, only 5-10 meteors per hour. The third quarter moon will be bright enough to outshine the majority of these meteors. The shower radiates out of Ursa Major (AKA big bear or the big dipper) and meteors can be seen from the 17-25th.
- January 1st– New Moon
- January 2-3rd-Quadrants Meteor Shower–This shower will radiate out of Bootes and will produce up to 40 meteors per hour at the peak. A thin waxing crescent moon will allow for many meteors to be visible.
- January 5th– Jupiter in Opposition– Jupiter will be at it's closest approach. Using binoculars you will be able to see its 4 largest moons and using a medium sized telescope you can make out the cloud like rings.
- January 16– Full Moon
- January 30th New Moon
- February 14th– Full Moon–This moon is also known as the full snow moon as it is the time of year when the snow tends to be the heaviest.

\*\* For best viewing of the meteor showers find the constellation they are radiating from. Bootes is found by following the arch of the handle of the big dipper. Gemini is found by following a diagonal line from the handle to the bottom far star of the dippers cup.





Where do they go? Cont from page 1.—

On warmer days (about 60 degrees) they can reanimate to find food. In early spring the choice of fruit and nectar are limited so they will eat tree sap and scat. This is one of the longer lived butterflies up to 10 months, it is thought that they take a rest or aestivate in the summer then reemerge in the fall.

On of the more common butterflies of the summer are the Red Admirals. Their overwintering habits are somewhat disputed. These butterflies do not fly south for the winter but every spring we see migration from newly emerged southern individuals.



Some guides say they do not overwinter in Iowa. (e.g. Opler and Malikul 1998) While others imply that they overwinter as adults in crevices and/or die off during the

winter. (e.g. Stokes and Williams 1991) Yet according to Butterflies of Iowa book the first individuals of spring are unmarred and newly emerged. (e.g. Schlicht, Downey and Nekola 2007) This would indicate that they overwintered as a pupa and not an adult. Adults who overwinter like the Mourning Cloaks are tattered and well worn from their activity all fall when they emerge from hibernation. No matter how the residents deal with the winter they numbers are reinforced each spring from butterflies emigrating from the south.

For those Monarch chasers the next butterfly is one that you will know well. The Viceroy. This butterfly is an outstanding mimic. It has the classic coloration of the Monarch except for



Image from Wikipedia

the black stripe that extends through the hind wing. As you may well know it mimics the Monarch because they absorb the cardiac glycoside from the milkweed plants as caterpillars and keep this fowl tasting chemical compound in their bodies. Once a bird has tasted



Image from bugguide

a monarch it will associate the orange and black pattern with inedibility. Viceroys cannot eat milkweeds they eat leaves of willow, aspens, cottonwoods and fruit trees. They also do not migrate they overwinter in the larval form.

When it is time to overwinter the small caterpillars eat away the tips of a leaf on either side of the midvein. Then they curl the base of the leaf into a little tube and secure it with silk. The whole leaf is then reinforced and secured to the tree with silk. This is their tiny winter home called a hibernaculum. The hibernacula can be found on host trees.

During the depth of the winter they should be some of the only leaves left on the tree. Other butterflies such as Tawny Emperors and Hackberry Butterflies all overwinter in the larval stage. They bunch together in a rolled leaf that has been stitched together. Check in the trees and in the leaf litter for hibernacula. To see if you found a hibernacula look for silk. So this winter when you come to Hagge park for a walk or snowshoe or cross country ski look closely in the cracks and crevices of trees and logs, look within the leaf litter and look up into the trees and you just might see a winter butterfly or caterpillar. Always leave them as you found them but I would love some pictures if you take them! Have fun getting out and exploring this winter!!



Photo by: Michelle Smith of Shady Oak Butterfly

## Sac County Conservation Board

### Board Members

- Andy Meredith-Lake View-Chairperson
- Kenny Bentsen-Sac City-Vice Chairperson
- Barb Bloom—Odebolt—Secretary
- Dean Stock—Lake View—Member
- Rich Feilmeier—Early—Member

### Staff

- Chris Bass—Executive Director
- Sandi Huster—Secretary
- Rene Stroud—Naturalist

### Meetings

Regular board meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM at the Sac County Conservation Center. These meetings are open to the public.

Hagge Park Office Phone: (712) 662-4530  
Email: saccocon@frontiernet.net

The Sac County Conservation Board in the provisions of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age, or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Sac County Conservation Board Office or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington D.C. 20240

