

The Nature of Things

THE BENTON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 6 WINTER 2014/15

A Memorable Bachelor Party *By Zach Parmater*

My youngest brother was going to be married in a few months; since he was the youngest it seemed only fitting that he would be the last to be married. Months before the big day of his bachelor party he had expressed interest in having a party that wasn't necessarily of the traditional kind. There would be no wild party, just a group of friends and brothers enjoying each other's company. The day would begin at a local paint-ball park just outside of Vinton. Ten friends, running around shooting each other with paint-balls for hours, might sound a little crazy, but it's actually a lot of fun.

After the chaos and excitement, everyone showered and prepared for the next event. Now this is what I was really looking forward to - fishing on the Cedar River up near Lime Creek and the Tobin's Cabin area. For those that are not familiar with the northern part of Benton County this is also known as Winegar Park. The Red Cedar Cabin was still undergoing renovations but we decided to use the location as our "home base". We were going to be running bank-lines into the night, and the location of the cabin was perfect.

I had caught the bait for the lines the night before, but much to my dismay, it had fallen victim to a greedy snapping turtle. So my friend and I started fishing to catch enough bait for the evening. When I set my bank-lines I usually use four-inch or smaller bluegills as bait. For those who don't know what a bank-line is, it is a stick or pole that is placed in the bank with a line and a baited hook and then tagged with the owners information. Often times they are referred to as "trotlines" or "diddy poles"

The law states that a valid sport fishing license is needed to use bank-lines, up to five total per license. All the lines you are using can have a total of 15 hooks combined. For example: You can have one bank-line with 15 hooks or 5 lines with three hooks each.



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www.bentoncountyparks.com
or call us at:
319-472-4942 to be added to our mailing list.



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Ode to the Opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) By Aaron Askelson, Naturalist

Karen and I were taking our lunch break at the Nature Center and we were looking out the back windows, as we often do, to enjoy some of the wildlife that happen by. Normally we focus on the bird feeders because that is usually where most of the action is. On this day there were dark eyed juncos working the ground and the blue jays were working the feeders; being vigilant at scaring off any other competition from trying to enjoy the feeders. Those Jays can be downright mean, but they didn't seem to mind the Juncos as they scavenged off the ground.

Karen noticed him first as he made his way into our "beaver lodge". He poked his head out from a gap in the lodge and checked to see if the coast was clear. Seeing nothing to be concerned about it waddled over to one of our pumpkin feeders that the Benton County home-schoolers made to help feed the wildlife around our Nature Center. They had cut open several pumpkins that we had purchased from a local farmer, then added many different types of bird seed and peanuts to help the critters out during the winter. The kids loved getting to use the knives to cut open the pumpkins and scooping up seed and peanuts to add to the inside of our homemade feeders. The opossum was enjoying the fleshy rind of the pumpkins. This omnivore moved about slowly but he certainly must have liked what he was eating because he attacked those pumpkins with quite a bit of enthusiasm. Karen pointed out that the opossum had black ears so it was over a year old. Opossums do not have a lot of fur on their ears so they can be susceptible to frostbite, so if you see an opossum with black ears you know it is at least a year old and has lived through an Iowa winter. Younger opossums will have grayish pink ears since the flesh has not been frostbit yet.



In addition to being my wife's least favorite wild animal due to an encounter she had with one while cross-country skiing around our property, North America's only marsupial is a very unique character. The females of the species have a marsupium, or a pouch, to serve as a way to raise their young. When they are born they can have a litter with as many as 25 babies, all of which are about the size of a bumblebee or navy bean. Most litters only have seven to eight young. Once the baby opossum finds its way into the pouch, they need to attach to one of the 13 teats the mother opossum has to receive the nourishment it will need over the next 55-65 days that it will spend in the pouch. It will then spend the next month and a half riding around on mom's back. The opossum has been on this earth for at least 70 million years and is considered one of the oldest surviving mammal species.

Everyone has heard of the phrase "Playing 'possum" but what is the opossum really doing and how does this unique trait work? This is an involuntary state that occurs when the opossum feels threatened. It will actually appear dead to predators and humans alike. They will roll over, become rigid, their breathing will become shallow and slow, and they will appear to be in a coma-like state. Excessive drooling is another technique they use to make the predators think they might be a diseased animal. Most predators react to this by thinking the animal is diseased or sick and will leave it alone. Most predators are programmed to want to kill and this stimulates their appetite. If there is nothing to kill, their appetite is not stimulated and the predator walks away a little confused. I have witnessed this behavior several times when my dogs have interacted with various opossums. This technique has worked many times, but that is not to say it is foolproof, or dog proof, for that matter. Sometimes the opossum, even in its coma-like state, still becomes a chew toy for an excited dog. It is often thought that the opossum will sleep hanging from its tail, this however is not true. Their tails are not nearly strong enough to hold their entire weight for that long. Their hairless, prehensile tails, however, can be used for gripping, balance and wrapping around things.

The Whispering Pines at Hannen Lake, Part 2 *By Logan Hahn, Park Ranger*

A few months ago, I submitted an article to the newsletter about my appreciation for the vast and charismatic stands of pines throughout Hannen Lake Park. Over the last couple of weeks, it has occurred to me through observation and discussion that while some of these stands are healthy, others are in critical need of improvement.

Achieving and maintaining optimal ecological health throughout these areas is important for the park, the people who enjoy it, and the wildlife that call these habitats home. However, there are several troubling truths that I have come to know through my short, but growing, history with organizations that are dedicated to the protection and promotion of healthy habitats. One of these truths is that sincerely healthy “habitat management” can at first appear to be something more sinister, like “reckless destruction”. Over the next several years, portions of Hannen Lake Park will be undergoing projects that appear to be the latter, and this article is my attempt to assure the reader/campground visitor that they are indeed the former.



Trail through White pine stand at Hannen Park

Shortly after Hannen Lake Park was purchased and established, efforts were put towards turning the property into a more nature-friendly area. One of these efforts was the row-planting of pine seedlings that slowly grew into the towering trees that can be enjoyed in the park today. Several stands grew up healthy, with proper tree density and dispersion. Other stands did not fare as well in the ruthless tree-eat-tree death-match for sunlight and nutrients.

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Conservation Receives Anonymous Gift From Donor

The Benton County Conservation Foundation has received a \$31,000.00 donation from an anonymous donor. The Foundation wishes to thank this donor for their commitment to the future of conservation in Benton County.

This is one of the larger gifts the foundation has received to date. This donor has a long-standing commitment to the outdoors as a hunter and outdoor enthusiast, which led them donate to the Benton County Conservation Foundation. The foundation cannot be more thankful for that fact. They hope to honor the donor’s passions and use the donation to enhance natural areas in ways that show true devotion to conservation.

Executive Director Purdy said: “Donations like this, personally give me the inspiration to remain focused on our long term goals and strive for things beyond our current grasp. Thank you for all that you have done for conservation. You will always live within the expanse of our parks and the hearts of those who visit them.”

The donation follows in the steps of past Benton County residents, who have chosen to make the difference in our children’s future through conservation donations. Parks live in the memories and the hearts of every person in Benton County. This type of support cannot be measured when planted in trees, prairies, and wildlife habitat that will be available for everyone to appreciate for many years to come.

The Fall issue of “The Nature of Things” incorrectly spelled the name of the St. Clair/Radcliffe family.
We apologize for the oversight.

Volunteers and Donations Help Build New Shelter *By Jon Geiger, Park Ranger*

Benton County Conservation is proud to announce that the new pavilion at Wildcat Bluff is now open for rentals. Construction and planning for this project was started 3 years ago with fundraising events such as haunted hay-rack rides held in the fall, a spring garage sale held in Urbana, donations from park users, and our disc golf course volunteer group.

The ground work for this facility began in 2011 by deciding the location for the pavilion and the leveling of the site with the placement of fill dirt to obtain a level base. In 2012 construction of the building began with the placement of the support poles, underground electrical wire, rafters, and the placement of steel on the roof of the building. In 2013 electricity was ran throughout the building, steel sheeting and lights were placed in the ceiling, and a new breaker panel was placed inside of the pavilion. The concrete floor was then poured and a landscape block retaining wall was placed on the north side of the structure along with a landscape paver sidewalk, bridging the gap between the concrete floor and the retaining wall. The landscape pavers were donated by the Wildcat disc golf volunteers, obtained from the renovation of their new tee pads.



The project's funding was broken down to approximately 65% from fund-raised dollars and 35% from the Conservation board's working budget. The labor required for this project was entirely volunteer. Both the Wildcat Bluff volunteers (mostly campers) and the Wildcat disc golf volunteers dedicated many hours to the construction of this facility.

A sign has been placed at the site to recognize all who helped with this project. Folding cafeteria tables that were donated by the Clear Creek/Amana School District have been placed inside the pavilion for the public to use. This pavilion will benefit the park immensely by providing a place to host weddings, family reunions, a possible movie night, and future park fundraising events. We had two rentals this past fall; a wedding and a fundraising event held for the disc golf course. The facility can be rented for \$25.00/day. Reservations can be made by contacting the Park Ranger at (319)560-9802.

All of our parks offer various amenities to help make your time in our parks enjoyable. The river parks include: Wildcat Bluff, Minne Estema, Hoefle Dulin, Benton City Fry, and the Tobin Cabin Area near Winegars. To reserve a shelter at any of our river parks, please contact the park ranger at 319-560-9802.

Rodgers Park near Vinton, offers an enclosed shelter as well as an open-air pavilion. We will be adding two yurts - canvas cabin-like structures - for rent this summer. The Nature Center at Rodgers Park is also available for rentals. Contact the park ranger at 319-560-9803 for shelter and yurt rental.
Contact the Naturalist at 319-472-4942 for Nature Center rental.

Hannen Lake Park offers two open-air shelters and one modern cabin for rent. Contact the park ranger at 319-560-9804 or the conservation technician at 319-560-9807 for more information.

Creating a New Level of Service for Park Patrons *By Matthew Purdy, Director*



Exterior view of a similar yurt coming to Rodgers Park.

In the 2014/2015 Fiscal Year, the Benton County Conservation Board has done their best to concentrate on redeveloping the existing amenities in the parks to better serve the patrons of Benton county. We have also focused on the development of wilderness areas and their habitat diversity. Projects in the past year have ranged from the following:

Designing and implementing a plan for Yurt/Cabin rentals at Rodgers Park. These facilities will provide a kitchen, full shower, bathroom, and have the ability to sleep 6 people in an environmentally controlled setting.

We remodeled and opened the “Red Cedar” cabin in the Tobin Cabin Area at Winegar Park. The former St. Clair/Radcliffe cabin has a kitchen, full shower and bathroom, with the ability to sleep 8 people in an environmentally controlled setting. An electric fire-place is located in the open living area, adding to the overall charm of this increasingly popular cabin. Plans are also underway to update the existing cabin at Hannen Lake. This cabin does not have full amenities, but does sleep up to six people.

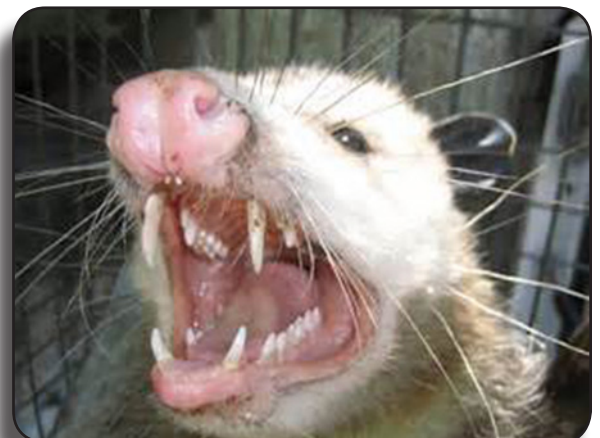
Our staff designed and created numerous museum-quality displays for the Benton County Nature Center. Normal hours of operation are now posted at the Nature Center. Special arrangements can be made for after hour visits as well as rentals. In addition, our staff resurfaced the 2013 flash flood-damaged Old Creamery Nature Trail that extends from Vinton to Dysart. A grant was awarded which will allow for further improvements to the trail and surrounding landscape in 2015. Finally we are recreating our strategic plan to provide an outline for all future development in the county parks. This will help to ensure that we meet our goals and provide the level of service and facilities expected by our residents and visitors for many years to come.

With all of these projects underway, you can understand why the Benton County Conservation Department is looking into the future with wide eyes. We feel that our department is providing a more family oriented range of facilities to cater to persons without camping gear but still want that rustic experience. Getting people outdoors is our main goal. We welcome any suggestions or assistance with future development.

Ode to an Opossum *Continued from page 2*

If you were to spot some opossum tracks you would notice a thumb like appendage on its rear feet. These opposable digits are referred to as a hallux, which they use to grip objects and tree branches.

These prehistoric animals are quite special and have learned to adapt well considering they have been around for so long - perhaps it is because of their beautiful smile of 50 teeth.



November 17, 2014
Bodeker Feeders
Benton County, Iowa

Fox Sparrow, Red Morph

Passerella iliaca

The first time I saw the Fox Sparrow was November 17th at my yard feeders. The unexpected snowfall from a couple days prior had sent every local bird for miles flocking to the nearest food source. It was only the second week of Feederwatch and I was overwhelmed by the vast sea of birds descending upon my yard.

In the Midwest, the Fox Sparrow is often a migratory fly-by. As their winter range pushes northward, some individuals are apparently deciding to stop and spend the cold months here, with many a tale to tell of their Arctic summer homes. Perhaps it was his oversized build that caught my attention or the vibrant ruddy hue that covered his body. As per his name, the fat little puffball sported a red more radiant than any fox. Or maybe it was just his gorgeously-streaked breast that I spotted first? Whatever it was, it wasn't long before I depicted the newcomer. He was centrally located among a healthy, feathered flood of House Sparrows. *Camouflaged among the commoners.*

From afar he could easily be mistaken for a Song Sparrow and although the two species look alike, the Fox Sparrow is much larger with a more blotchy face and breast. Also unlike the Song Sparrow, this pudgy sparrow scratches and digs at the ground and leaf decay with both his feet in search of insects or, in my sparrow's case, fallen seeds. It is intriguing to watch, a digging display very much like that of another bird, the Eastern Towhee.

A few more seeds and the Fox Sparrow was gone, perhaps to a warmer land.

The odds are I will
never see this Fox
Sparrow again.
His fleeting visit
reminded me
there is always
something new to
observe each
season.



BENTON COUNTY IRVM

Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*)

Prepared By:

Ben Bonar

Skunk Cabbage is a flowering perennial plant that is native to parts of the Midwest and Eastern United States. This species flowers appear before the leaves and have a distinct unpleasant odor. Skunk Cabbage gets its name from this odor.

Skunk Cabbage is remarkable in that it is able to generate heat when the ground is frozen. In fact, it's flowers can warm up to around 70° F. This allows the plant to emerge and bloom when most other spring blooming species are still dormant. After blooming, Skunk Cabbage emits an odor that smells similar rotting meat.

The odor travels easily on the warm air that rises from the plant. This attracts pollinators such as butterflies, beetles and bees.

Most animals avoid skunk cabbage because it emits a burning sensation when consumed. However, bears have been known to eat young plants.

Skunk Cabbage Quick Facts:

- Classification: Forb
- Life Cycle: Perennial
- Flower Color: Maroon
- Bloom Time: Late February through May
- Other Traits: Can reach 70° F in below zero conditions



More Interesting Facts

Habitat

Skunk Cabbage grows in woodlands, wetlands and near streams. The plant prefers saturated soils and will die if conditions become too hot or dry.

Determining Age

You can determine the age of Skunk Cabbage by the number of leaves the plant possesses. Young plants have few leaves whereas old plants have many. Some researchers believe that Skunk Cabbage can live for thousands of years under the right conditions!

Check that Chickadee: Support Wildlife Diversity



Since 1982, when the Iowa legislature created the Fish and Wildlife Fund Tax Check-off, Iowans have been able to bring a little wildness into the tax season.

The Fish and Wildlife Tax Check-off, affectionately called the Chickadee Check-off was created to allow people to make a charitable donation to wildlife conservation in Iowa out of their tax refunds or by tacking a few dollars on to any taxes owed. When filling out the state income tax form, just look for the contribution line (usually somewhere between lines 55-60) and write in any dollar amount next to Fish/Wildlife.

All the money contributed through the chickadee check-off helps support the Wildlife Diversity Program at the Iowa DNR. This program has statewide responsibility for all the wildlife that can't be hunted, fished or trapped from Peregrine Falcons to Poweshiek Skipperling butterflies.

You can learn more about the program on their website: www.iowadnr.gov/wildlifediversity.

***Please consider donating to the Chickadee Check-off this tax season
and supporting wildlife conservation in Iowa!***

Conservation Board Welcomes New Member

Hi my name is Dan Hill, I have been recently appointed to the Benton County Conservation Board and here is a little bit about me:

I am married to my wife Wendy of 16 years with 3 boys, Austin, Clint and Dalton. We live on an acreage south of Vinton. I work for Morton Building as a Field Service Specialist which puts me in charge of all repairs and remodeling for my company in Eastern Iowa.

I am also the Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 47 out of Vinton, an Eagle Scout, and a member of the Order of the Arrow (scouting's national honor society). I am also on the Howard H. Cherry Scout Camp properties committee, along with being an Izaak Walton League Member.

When I am not busy with these I am an avid outdoorsman. I enjoy hunting, fishing, backpacking, hiking, and cycling.

I look forward to working on the board

Thank you, **Dan Hill**



A Memorable Bachelor Party *Continued from page 1*

Each bank-line must have a tag attached, plainly labeled with the owner's name and address. You must check each line at least once every 24 hours. It is illegal to use bank-lines in a stocked lake, within 300 feet of a dam or spillway, or in a stream or portion of stream which is closed or posted against their use. One end of the line must be set from the shore and visible above the shore waterline. You cannot set the line entirely across a stream or body of water. Untagged or unlawful lines can be confiscated by any conservation officer. Make sure you check the fishing regulations before heading out, as certain bodies of water in different counties or other waterways have different regulations.



So back to my story: A short boat ride down stream seemed to take forever as my friend and I studied the river looking among log jams that may yield some monster catfish. By the time we were done catching bait, everyone else was already at the cabin, grilling brats and burgers. Everyone was hoping it would be a good night of fishing, but little did we know that we would catch something that we had never caught before, and hopefully, never catch again.

Sitting around a fire, eating good food, and telling stories would have been adequate enough for everyone there, but

we couldn't resist the urge to fish. About an hour before dark, with the two boats loaded, we set out to place our bank-lines. Now if you have ever ran bank-lines in the dark in a boat on moving water, you would know it can be quite a daunting task. We decided to only set out about ten lines per boat as some of the guys were inexperienced. After about an hour of navigating a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile stretch of the river, we had placed a total of twenty lines on both sides of the river.

Back at the cabin sitting around the campfire, we waited in anticipation of what we hoped to be a fruitful night. We grew impatient as the minutes past. It seemed like every five minutes somebody would ask if we should go check the bank-lines. Earlier, we promised ourselves that we would wait at least an hour before we went on our first run to check them. The hour was up and we were headed back upstream in the dark, guided only by the required after dark lights on our boats. As I was carefully navigating our boat to our first line, I heard the Bachelor who was driving the other boat, yell from across the river. I shut the outboard motor off so that we could hear him. "We caught a blue heron" he yelled. Now at first I thought to myself what do you want me to do about it? But then just as that thought passed I knew that I was the one to handle the situation as I work for the Benton County Conservation Department and have a fair amount of experience working with wild animals. As I started the motor up again, I was scanning the distant shoreline for their boat and I could faintly make out the shape of the big bird.

As I jumped out of the boat and on to the muddy shoreline, the bird tried to take flight again, I grabbed the head of the bird and quickly pulled the bank line out of the mud and stepped back into the boat. Returning to the boat, the force of my reentry pushed the boat from shore and now we were floating down stream in the dark without anyone driving the boat. I asked my older brother to secure the birds' wings and a buddy to hold its head.

So there we were, floating downstream, four guys and a great blue heron, who was surprisingly calm considering his situation. When we first started the expedition, I had grabbed a headlamp in case we lost any of the other half a dozen lights in the boat.

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A Memorable Bachelor Party *continued from page 9*

I turned the light on and requested someone hold the top beak of the bird. I didn't know what to expect, but was sure glad to see that the hook was within reach. I quickly scoured the front of the boat for a pair of needle nose pliers and a pair of side cutters so that I could carefully snip off the barb of the hook and gently pull the hook from the soft tissues of its throat.

Instead of basic fishing equipment, tonight these tools would be surgical instruments used on a bird that was just doing what it does - wading the shoreline catching fish for food. I carefully positioned my index and middle finger of my left hand down the bird's throat just below the hook. I cautiously applied pressure a little at a time to the shaft of the hook, careful not to allow the barb and point of the hook to fall into the bird's throat any further. Success! The tip of the hook fell between my fingers just as planned. I removed my left hand from the bird's throat, discarded the tip of the hook, and opened the birds throat again. I watched the remainder of

the hook slide out of the tissue in the birds throat, making sure that bleeding wasn't going to be an issue. To my surprise there was absolutely no bleeding. It gave me hope for this young bird that he or she would make a full recovery. When the hook was finally removed, audible sighs of relief from all of us were the only sound. I wish we would have taken a video of the occurrence, or at the very least, a picture with the bird after the hook was out. I instructed the others to let go of the bird as I stood with the bird in my hands for a few seconds. It did not appear to be afraid, nor did it struggle to get free. I believe the animal knew that



we were helping it. I then threw the bird up in the air out over the water, its wingspan was quite impressive as it pumped its wings hard against the air, never touching the surface of the water, off into the darkness of the night.

As I mentioned, we would catch something that we had never caught before, and never care to catch again. The evening was not over since we still had more lines to check and those lines provided us with four catfish, two flatheads, and two channel cats all averaging between four and eight pounds each. All said, we had a great time, and you can be sure that if we ever talk about that bachelor party again, we will think of that great blue heron - -and if we ever see a great blue heron, we will think about that party.

Ice Fishing: Winter Fun *By Scott Bahmann, Deputy Director/Ranger*

Have you ever been sitting at home on a cold wintery day and thought to yourself, "What can I do to have some fun". Well grab a bucket, bait, ice auger, and some poles and head out to one of Iowa's frozen lakes for a day of ice fishing. If you have never iced fished before, it is quite simple and the following steps will help to maximize your success: Before you venture out, take a look at the weather conditions. If it is a bright, sunny day and the temperatures are in the mid 20's, all you will need is a bucket and your fishing equipment. If it is cloudy and a little windy, then you may need some type of portable shelter and a heater.

Be sure to check the ice conditions and thickness of the ice in your area and for the lake you want to fish. Contact your local conservation office that is in charge of that area or visit www.iowadnr.gov/fishingreport to check on current ice conditions. Remember: Safety first!

Whispering Pines, Part 2 *Continued from page 3*

The concerning results of over-competition for resources in many of the afflicted stands have manifested themselves in a variety of ways, including: large patches of trees dying off, poor tree diameter development, undesirable growth characteristics, inadequate foliage, and inadequate root systems. All of these factors, as well as others, can spell trouble for the future of many of the pine stands unless measures are taken to mitigate the problems. The intensity of the measures that need to be taken will vary depending on the existing health of the stand, which will be determined by a professional forester with an eye trained to make such a determination. Some areas will need to have a lot of trees removed, and some will need a little. Still other areas will be beyond maintenance, and will have to be replanted with a new generation of trees and vegetation.

Although change is hard, it is equally necessary. The management of softwood habitats at Hannen Lake Park over the next several years will be a long process, but with visibly rewarding results. I hope you will appreciate the developments over the years, and find fascination in the process that a young habitat undergoes to replace an old.

Ice Fishing: Winter Fun *Continued from page 10*



Try to obtain a map of the lake as this will help you find habitat structure. Structure in a lake is key to finding fish and often times deep areas of the lake. Structure can consist of rock ledges, brush piles, drop offs, weeds, and any man-made structure. Depth is also critical because it can indicate drop offs. As fish tend to congregate in these deeper and protected areas during the winter months, it gives an indication of where you may have success fishing.

Some essential ice fishing equipment you will need is an auger, tackle, bucket, shelter, heater, bait, and ice fishing poles. Ice fishing poles are considerably smaller than a standard fishing pole; generally less than 2 feet in length. Some additional equipment you may want to invest in is an underwater camera or sonar device. These will help you locate fish and structure so you are not fishing in an area that has no fish.

Okay, now that we have all of this, let's go fishing. Start by drilling a hole in a desired location. You may need to drill several holes to find structure and fish. Once you have found your spot, bait your hook and start fishing. Unlike summer fishing you will need to be more patient and jig slower. Jigging is the action involved in moving your bait up and down in the water to attract fish. Remember, fish are less active in the winter. If you don't catch any fish in a hole, try another one until you find fish.

Now that you have a basic understanding of ice fishing, you can start trying your luck at some local ice fisheries. At these fisheries, anglers have the opportunity to use their skills to catch fish and win prizes. At Rodgers Park, we hold one of these events each year. Join us this year and try your luck on January 31, 2015. The event runs from 8:00am to 2:00pm. You will have the opportunity to win prizes for the biggest fish and have a chance to win several raffle prizes. This year we will be hosting an ice fishing clinic during the event for the first time. If you want to increase your skills, or just learn a little bit more about this sport, please plan on attending. The clinic runs from 9:00am to 11:00am. You will learn about aquatic habitat, ice safety, use of equipment, and be given the opportunity to fish with some of the more experienced fisherman. Good luck and be safe! Enjoy the great sport of ice fishing!

Conservation Board Members

Dan Hill - Vinton, Member
Jean Ohlen - Blairstown, Chair
Mark Pingenot - Vinton, Member
Denni Randall - Belle Plaine, Member
Randy Scheel - Garrison, Member

The Benton County Conservation Board meets the second Monday of every month at 5:30 at the Nature Center. Meetings are open to the public.

Conservation Staff

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Matthew Purdy | Executive Director |
| Scott Bahmann | Deputy Director/Ranger |
| Karen Phelps | Interpretive Naturalist |
| Aaron Askelson | Interpretive Naturalist |
| Jon Geiger | River Parks Ranger |
| Logan Hahn | Hannen Park Ranger |
| Zach Parmater | Conservation Tech |

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***Please follow us on Facebook at Benton County Conservation
or visit us on the web at www.bentoncountyparks.com***

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