



# Riffler and Eddies

603 N. APPLETON RD

BELVIDERE, IL 61008

(815) 547-7935

Volume XXXV

Fall 2009

## Chronic Wasting Disease - What You Need to Know!

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was first discovered in Boone County in 2002. Since that moment, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has been challenged to develop an appropriate response. No small task given the fact that in 2002 there was very little known about CWD or its' potential affect on the Northern Illinois deer herd.

IDNR biologists developed a strategy to collect and analyze data about the disease and deer population in and around the affected area. IDNR scientists and policy makers needed to learn this information quickly and decide what strategies, if any, would be most effective in curbing the spread of this disease.

To begin, IDNR scientists initiated discussions with scientists working on this disease in South Central Wisconsin. CWD was discovered in the deer population there first, and the Wisconsin DNR and other agencies were already working on the problem. The BCCD has cooperated with the IDNR biologists and the research strategies they have implemented.

Now, seven years later, scientists remain committed to developing a better understanding of CWD and its' effect on the deer populations. Studies are beginning to show that deer populations in the Western States are becoming infected with the disease in unsettling numbers with corresponding declines in deer populations appearing to be directly linked to the spread of this disease.

Deer are an important part of the local ecosystem and nearly everyone appreciates seeing them. But, the public needs to do its' part to control the spread of this disease. CWD is spread by deer to deer contact through the exchange of saliva. To help reduce the spread of this disease, it is now illegal in Illinois to feed or bait deer. Salt and mineral blocks are also banned for deer because the deer group up to lick them. Infected deer can contaminate such sites leaving the prions that cause the disease to infect other deer. Prions are malformed proteins and are not living things, so you can't kill the disease to prevent it from spreading.

So what can you do to help reduce the risk of spreading this disease? If you or someone you know is feeding or baiting deer with salt or mineral blocks - stop the practice immediately. The disease causing prions can remain viable for a long time. Salt can leach into the soil below the salt block and deer may return to lick the salty earth for years after the salt block is removed. Next, if you have bird feeders, move them to a location where they will be out of reach for deer. Deer can easily stand on their hind legs and stretch their necks up to lick at a bird feeder. Keep the area around the base of platform feeders clean and free of loose bird seed. IDNR research suggests that CWD infected deer will seek food and shelter around homes and back yards. Take a look around your home and yard - have you observed deer using a bird bath as a water source or licking birdseed from your feeders? If so, then you should move the feeder or bath to a location where it is not accessible to deer. We know this may seem harsh - but deer are wild animals adapted to surviving in a rigorous natural setting.

Residents need to stay informed about this disease. Everyone enjoys watching wildlife with deer ranking at or near the top of our list. You can help reduce the risk of spreading CWD by making a few changes around your yard. To learn more, visit the websites below.

Wisconsin DNR: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/whealth/issues/cwd/>

Illinois DNR: <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/cwd/cwd.htm>

Center For Disease Control (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/cwd/>

Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance: <http://www.cwd-info.org/index.php>





## BOONE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Mission of the Boone County Conservation District is to preserve and manage natural areas and open spaces for ecological, educational, and recreational benefits of present and future generations.

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Riffles & Eddies is a free newsletter published quarterly. If you know someone who would like to receive this publication, or has an address correction, please call our office - (815) 547-7935

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**Update** The BCCD is excited for the release of a brand new website. While this has not been unveiled yet, staff and volunteers are working hard on a new, streamlined website that will highlight conservation areas, encourage outdoor opportunities at District sites for people of all ages through downloadable, hands-on activities,

keep patrons up-to-date on the current and exciting restoration work throughout the county, and promote the various school and public education programs throughout the year.

The Natural Resource staff has been diligently working at one of our newest conservation areas, Piscasaw Fen. While we are still readying this conservation area to be open to the public soon, the staff has been working on natural resource management, identification and inventory of the unique and abundant plant and animal life, plus many other projects too numerous to list. The Education staff has been working on converting a barn on the Piscasaw Fen property into a useable space for educational and recreational opportunities for children and adults. A lot of work is still to be accomplished, but the finished product of this 80 acre site will be something the entire community will enjoy for many years to come.

New public programming is also underway with the installation of a new Forest Fitness series. This series began in the summer, and will transition from yoga to trail hiking in the fall and cross country skiing in the winter.

## Our New Restoration "Staff" Needs Help

The BCCD has spent this past growing season using goats to help with weed control in habitat restoration projects. Weeding can be very labor intensive and tedious work. The BCCD thought using livestock to help would cut down on labor costs and save the district some of its valuable funding.



Why goats? Goats are considered browsers. They have far ranging diets that consist mainly of broadleaf plants which include anything from thistles, wild parsnip, burdock, garlic mustard, to even small trees and brush. These are all things that the district fights when trying to develop a prairie, savanna, or wetland. The thought was, why not try to use that natural instinct to our advantage? This past spring we purchased four goats and were amazed by the types and quantity of plants that they ate. I was sold when I saw them fight over a 10ft by 10ft patch of Canada thistle. How can anything put that in their mouth and digest it? You can't even pick that plant with leather gloves without it biting you and usually drawing blood, amazing!

We feel that the experiment has been a success and will continue it in the years to come. One problem is that when winter comes and the weeds stop growing the goats still need to eat and have shelter. The district does have a barn where they will spend their winters. We have bedding, but need hay and grain.

The district will gladly accept donations to help feed the goats this winter. Donations of cash/check (the district would then purchase what is needed), grain, or hay will thankfully be accepted. If hay is donated, the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> cutting is preferred. Keep the high quality first cutting for your horses and cattle. One note, goats will eat a lot, but unfortunately wet and moldy hay is not one of them. Please make sure any hay donation is dry, thank you.

If you would like more information about the goat project or would like to make a donation please contact:

Joshua Sage, [jsage@boonecountyconservationdistrict.org](mailto:jsage@boonecountyconservationdistrict.org)

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View Camp photos at Facebook/ BCCD Summer camps

# Up Coming Events

## Monthly Meetings

(held at the Roger D. Gustafson Nature Center and open to the public)

BCCD Board - 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 16th

Wednesday, Oct. 21st

Wednesday, Nov. 18th

Garden Club - 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 27th

No meetings here at the District in Sept., Nov. or Dec.

## Fall Color Cruise

Saturday, Oct. 24th  
9:00 a.m.

Join staff for a trip along I.I. Rt. 2 and view the fall colors along the way! We will also be stopping at some of the state parks along the way. We will leave the Roger D. Gustafson Nature Center at 9:00 a.m. return at approximately 5:00 p.m. The cost of the bus is \$15.00 per person for in county and \$20.00 per person for out of county. This cost is for the bus ride only. Other costs include \$5.00 for entrance to John Deere's home, lunch and an afternoon ice cream stop (optional). To register or if you have any questions, please call (815) 547-7935. Space is limited.



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

## Heirloom Tomato

### Tasting

Wednesday, Sept. 9th  
6:00 p.m.

Sample more than 20 varieties of heirloom tomatoes. Participants will learn how to process and store seeds for next year's planting and also learn how to use their tomato bounty. Meet at the Roger D. Gustafson Nature Center. Cost is \$5.00 person and prepayment and preregistration is required. Space is limited, so call (815) 547-7935 to reserve your spot.



## Conservation Areas Closed

Please note that Kinnikinnick Creek Conservation Area, LI B Conservation Area, Distillery Conservation Area, Beaver Bluffs Conservation Area, O.O. Stimes Memorial Park, and Piscasaw Fen Conservation Area will be closed to the general public on Saturdays and Sundays on the dates listed below:

Oct. 3 & 4	Nov. 1	Dec. 12 & 13
Oct. 17 & 18	Nov. 7 & 8	Jan. 9 & 10
Oct. 24 & 25	Nov. 14 & 15	
Oct. 31		

These areas will be closed for archery hunting.



## Forest Fitness Series Trail Hiking

Sept. 3, 10, 17 (Thurs.)  
Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 (Thurs.)  
6:00PM-6:45PM

FREE

Bring a water bottle and comfy walking shoes. Dress for the weather. Ages 10 and up. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Feel free to participate in one or all of the sessions. You must sign up.

In September meet at the Roger Gustafson Nature Center. In October meet at LI B Cons. Area. *(No facilities at this site.)*

## November Night Hike

Friday, Nov. 6th  
6-8:30PM  
\$2/person

Join BCCD staff as they lead a night hike around Spencer Conservation Area. Night hike activities will include trying out Night Vision, learning about nocturnal animals and their eye shine, plus many more! We'll end our hike with a marshmallow toast. You must RSVP. Please bring your own flashlight (or 1 per family). Children 15 and younger need an adult.



## Wish List

We are looking for electric heating pads and a washer and dryer. If you have any of these items, please drop them off at the Roger D. Gustafson Nature Center or if you need help getting them to us, give us a call at (815) 547-7935.

## Grand Opening

Thurs., Oct. 15th  
3:30 p.m.



Come celebrate the grand opening Beaver Bluffs Conservation Area. This newly developed area includes an off leash dog park, picnic shelter and walking paths. It is located on Rt. 20, west of Belvidere.

## With our Gratitude

The BCCD would like to thank Jeri Daringer, for donating the cost of taxidermy work on an Orchard Oriole; the K-Kids Club from Seth Whitman, for building and donating birdhouses; and a great big thanks to all the people and organizations who donated to our summer camp program.

## APF Help Needed

The District is in need of volunteers to help during the Autumn Pioneer Festival. So if you like dressing up and talking to people, give Bev a call at (815) 597-1097. We also need people who are willing to come in before the festival and help with chopping vegetables, packaging beans, etc. If you can help give us a call.

## Office Closings

In order for the staff to prepare for the APF and then clean up afterwards, the District office will be closed on September 23rd, 24th, 25th and 28th. The office will also be closed on the following holidays: September 7th, and November 26th and 27th.

**Riffles & Eddies**



603 Appleton Road, Belvidere, IL 61008

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Belvidere, IL



# Autumn Pioneer Festival

Saturday, September 26

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 27

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



Travel back to the 1800's for a look at the lifestyles and crafts of the day. Talk to a flint knapper, watch a gun smith, visit a Scottish encampment. Eat buffalo stew, pioneer fries, homemade rootbeer, sample bean soup and apple butter. Visit the harvest table to purchase fresh vegetables or just wander through the 5 ethnic gardens.

*Admission is free,  
but donations are  
cheerfully accepted*



BCCD Festival Grounds

603 N. Appleton Rd., Belvidere, IL

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