



Riffles and Eddies

603 N. APPLETON RD

BELVIDERE, IL 61008

(815) 547-7935

Volume XXXV

Winter 2010/2011

Winter - A Time For Hibernation

According to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary to hibernate is "to pass the winter in close quarters in a torpid or lethargic state."

The definition as such cannot help to bring the manner in which some people approach the long winter months in our region. Hibernation is very common and practical for many of our animal neighbors but is not natural for human beings. However, almost every creature reduces its' activities during the colder months in one way or another. At a time when the human world is becoming increasingly concerned with energy conservation we might take a look at some of natures' methods.



Let's take birds. Talk about some smart little creatures - most of them just up and "split" to a warmer climate. Of course, they have the ability of rapid flight. It is a little hard to imagine that most of Boone County's winter birds have moved from up north to a "warmer" environment, but basically that is what happens.

But what about those that stay? If you have ever looked at a bird in the winter you may notice a thick layer of very fine feathers laying very close to the bird's body. This call "down" and provides an excellent heat retention barrier for the bird which does not interfere with its' movements. In addition, while at rest or perched, the bird has the ability to fluff up its' no-down feathers which captures thousands of little pockets of air, thereby providing more "insulation". Of course, when the bird takes flight it loses the additional energy conserving method and must use more energy to maintain its body heat.

Our furry cousins do not have the ability to move about quite so readily, so other methods are employed. There are those animals (fox, mice, etc.) that continue to be active throughout winter the methods of "down" and food supply and the fluffing of the fur also apply. However, as an additional measure some of the animals (raccoons, skunks, and opossums, etc.) will go into a semi-hibernation state during the coldest weather when they "sleep." During this time the metabolism is slowed which produces less energy but in turn requires less. This would be like a person reducing their body temperature to around 80 degrees F or less, crawling into bed and sleeping for about a month or so.

A large number of furry (warm-blooded) animals go into a true state of hibernation where the sleep lasts completely through the cold weather period (ground squirrels, chipmunks, etc.).

Among those animals which must pass the cold months in hibernation are the cold blooded creatures (snakes, turtles, frogs, toads, etc.). Being completely governed by the temperature of their environment these animals sometimes hibernate deep in the soil structure. Since no added body cover is prepared for them the only possibility is to "go down" where the temperature will not fall near freezing. With the coming of the warmth of spring their body functions increase to a point of movement and they resume their warm weather activities.

When you go about your activities during these cold months, be it x-country skiing, hiking, sledding or going to school or work, think about the other inhabitants of our very unique planet and what they do for energy conservation.



**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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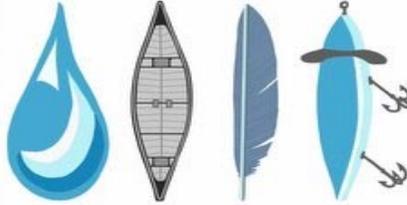
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A River Gathering

June 16-19 2011 Rockford, Illinois
education, recreation, preservation, history, stewardship



*Celebrate
the beauty,
ecology, and
recreation of
our region's
greatest
natural assets.*

RockValleyCollege

FOUR RIVERS
ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION

Mark your calendars...Registration begins in March!



**Schoolhouse
Construction
Begins**

Construction has begun on the schoolhouse located on the Festival Grounds. Donations are still being accepted.

**People's
Choice**

The BCCD won the "People's Choice" award at the 2010 Harvest Festival with our scarecrow Ash, the Prairie Super Hero



Boone County Conservation District
Phone 815 - 547-7935 Fax 815 - 547-7939
Web Site www.BooneCountyConservationDistrict.org

What's Happening

BCCD Receives Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation Grant

The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation has awarded the Boone County Conservation District an \$801,810 grant toward the purchase of 186-acres of conservation land along the Kishwaukee River. The project also has received grant support of \$385,742 from the Vital Lands Grant Program of the Grand Victoria Foundation. The project involves other partners including the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (WCFPD) and Openlands. The total project costs are \$1,486,902 with WCFPD funding \$243,632, Openlands contributing \$12,531, and the BCCD providing \$43,187.

The property is located between the LI B Conservation Area and the Newberg Village Conservation Area and provides seamless preservation of the south bank of the Kishwaukee River in this area. The acquisition also provides for public use of the river (water only as the north shore of the Kishwaukee is still privately owned) through this reach of the Kishwaukee. In addition, the purchase will allow the WCFPD the opportunity to provide public access to its' County Line Forest Preserve.

Public access will be off of Ipsen Road and a parking area is already being installed. Habitat restoration at this site and the Newberg Village Conservation Area has already been initiated to re-establish native plantings and enhance existing habitat. The 186-acre site has multiple wetlands, wet meadow, riparian corridor, wooded floodplain and other habitat types which provide a wide array of ecological functions and values. The site will be jointly owned and managed by the BCCD and the WCFPD.

The Boone and Winnebago County Communities will benefit greatly from the nearly \$1.2 million dollars of financial assistance provided by the two private foundations that have made this project possible.

Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

If you are interested in joining staff for a night cross country skiing or snowshoeing trek, please call (815) 547-7935 to have your name placed on the list. If the weather cooperates and a night trek is planned, you will be notified as to when and where. You must furnish your own skiing equipment or snowshoes.

Garden Seed Sale

Sat., February 19th
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Roger D. Gustafson Nature Center. Heirloom seeds will be available for sale.

Holiday Walk

Sat., December 4th
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.



Travel back in time for a glimpse of the holidays in seasons past. Luminaries will light the way to our log cabins where pioneer families will be celebrating. They might even be serving holiday goodies!! Stop by and share your holiday wishes with a Civil War era Santa. Enjoy freshly popped corn along the way and come inside the Nature Center to listen to the sound of music. Held on the Festival Grounds.

Thank You

The BCCD would like to thank all the volunteers who helped out at the Autumn Pioneer Festival. Also a big thank you goes to Susie's Garden Patch for their donation of produce for the harvest table and cornstalks used as decorations. Without volunteers and donations this event would not be possible.

Monthly Meetings

(Held at the Nature Center and open to the public)

BCCD Board - 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday - Dec. 15th

Wednesday - Jan. 19th

Wednesday - Feb. 16th

Garden Club - 7:00 p.m.

No Meeting in Dec.

Tuesday - Jan. 25th

Wednesday - Feb. 23rd

Conservation Areas Closed

Please note that Kinnikinnick Creek Conservation Area, LI B Conservation Area, Distillery Road Conservation Area, Anderson Woods Conservation Area, Beaver Bluffs Conservation Area, Piscasaw Fen, Kishwaukee Bend Conservaton Area and O. O. Stimes Memorial Park will be closed to the general public on Saturdays and Sundays Dec. 11th, 12th, 18th, 19th, and Jan. 1st and 2nd for archery hunting.

Eagle Watch

Sat., January 22nd
7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Join us for a day of eagle watching along the Illinois River at Starved Rock. There are programs featuring live birds of prey, nature seminars and exhibits. You can bring your own lunch or eat at the lodge. Bring binoculars if you have them. The cost to ride in our mini bus is \$20 for Boone County residents and \$25 for out-of-county residents. There is also a minimal charge to use the trolley at Starved Rock. We will leave the Nature Center at 7:30 a.m. Space is limited. Preregister and prepayment is required so call (815) 547-7935.



BCCD Office Closed

The office will be closed Nov. 25th, 26th, Dec. 24th, 27th, 31st, and Feb. 21st. Happy Holidays from the staff!

Riffles & Eddies



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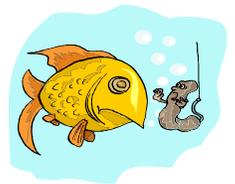
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Belvidere, IL

Kid's Ice Fishing Workshop

A FREE workshop for kids 5 -15 yrs. Lunch Provided.

Saturday, February 5, 2011

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon



Program is sponsored by the Coon Creek Casters
Special Appearance by Todd Todd, Ice Fishing Professional

Workshop will start at the Roger Gustafson Nature Center
603 N. Appleton Road , Belvidere, IL

Bring any ice fishing equipment you have, limited rigs available.
You must preregister for this program. Registration begins January 3, 2011 Call
the BCCD at (815) 547-7935 to register.