Some people tend to travel far to seek out the feeling of being at home. Several have a tendency to trek out West to seek out the feeling of “getting back in touch with nature.” I am fortunate to have one of those places close by. This natural area is called Piscasaw Fen Conservation Area. Piscasaw Fen looks and feels like home because it is home. If you walked around this 177 acre area, you can associate the natural features of this site with some of the “creature comforts” and other familiarities found at home.

While visiting the namesake of the site, the fen, a unique organic-accumulating wetland, it feels like you’re standing on a water bed – you can actually feel that bounce-like squish beneath your feet.

This wetland area also serves as a stopover respite for migrating birds, providing a kitchen serving ample food and a nursery for young hatchlings. And for those ground nesters that would rather sleep on the floor, bobolinks and turkey can also be spotted around the Fen.

And what wouldn’t be just like home without the occasional uninvited guests? Garlic mustard has invited its pushy self in and has invaded Piscasaw Fen’s space. Multiflora rose, in her own prickly way, has also unpacked and overstayed her thorny welcome.

To help remedy those that have overstayed their welcome, you can find the goats, the designated clean-up crew, happily chomping away.

Even during the deep freeze of winter months, the fen is never hidden nor disappears under a blanket of snow and ice. The temperature at the fen is constant and just inviting enough to entice some to stick around. Skunk cabbage and leopard frogs, the springtime regulars, can be seen in January and February.

What some people would consider as seasonal occurrences is kept as year-round traditions at the fen. These traditions are what keep that familiarity alive to my frequent visits. Feeling comfortable in your own natural surroundings makes you feel at home. And it’s those feelings of familiarity, tradition, and being comfortable that make me feel right at home: in the fen.

Saying Good-bye…. Saying Hello

The BCCD would like to thank outgoing Board President John Todt for his 5 years of dedicated service to the District. Along with his board duties, John has lead owl, bird and wildflower hikes for the District. John recently become a new member of the BCCD Safety Patrol. Thanks, John.

The BCCD would also like to welcome Jan Soltys as the newest member of the BCCD’s Board of Trustees. Welcome aboard, Jan.
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.

**BCCD Board of Trustees**
Karl Winkler, President
George Thomas, Secretary
Dave Sliktas, Treasurer
Bill Wolf, Trustee
Jan Soltys, Trustee

**BCCD Staff**
Dan Kane - Executive Director
Mick Johnston - Director of Operations
Cathie Johnson - Office Manager
Tim Craig - Education Director
Tina Dawson - Environmental Educator
Valerie Coduto - Environmental Educator
Bev Kalas - Volunteer/Events Coordinator
Joshua Sage - Restoration Projects Manager
Aarron Minson - Restoration Technician
Mike Quigley - Crew Leader
Pat Lupont - Field Technician
Tom Berard - Field Technician

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 at (815) 547-7935.

The Boone County Conservation District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age or handicap in admission or treatment, or employment in programs or activities. In compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the U.S. Constitution. The Equal Employment Opportunity Officer is responsible for compliance and may be reached at (217)423-7708.

**BCCD Safety Patrol**

This is a brand new volunteer program at the District, and the people pictured above are the very first group to become safety watch volunteers. This group patrols Spencer Conservation area, the Festival grounds and Hammertime Unleashed Dog Park. If you meet them in the park, stop and say hi! They can help you if you can’t find your way, or if you have a general question concerning the area or the District. We are making plans to put together a safety watch group for the Long Prairie Trail, so if you are interested in being a part of that group or have any questions, call Bev at 815-547-7935. We will do the training when we have enough interested volunteers.

**Ice Cream Social**

The ice cream and pie social fund-raiser for the Dawson River Road School House was a success. We would like to thank everyone who helped, from the donations of water, ice cream, and pies, to serving up the delicious desserts. We are making plans for the 2nd annual ice cream and pie social and will keep everyone updated.

The District wants everyone to discover the benefits of recreation. For families considering any of our programs who have special considerations, such as diabetes, asthma or physical or cognitive disabilities, your participation is welcome too. The earlier you contact us so we can talk with you about how to make your experience safe and fun, the more likely it will be safe and fun!
### Monthly Meetings

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

**BCCD Board of Trustees**
*Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m.*, September 21st, October 19th, and November 16th.

**Gardeners of America**
*Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.*, October 25th. No meetings held at the District in September, November, or December.

**Heirloom Tomato Tasting**
*Wednesday, Sept. 7th 6:30 p.m.—8:00 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 how to use this year’s bounty. Cost is $5/person. Prepayment and pre-registration is required. Space is limited so call (815) 547-7935 to space your space. Meet at the Roger D. Gustafson Nature Center.

**Bird Feeding Workshop**
*Saturday, November 5th 10:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m.*

You’ll learn what types of seed and feeders to use, which birds you can attract to your backyard and how to become a citizen scientist for Project Feederwatch. Workshop will take place at the Roger Gustafson Nature Center located at 603 North Appleton Road Belvidere, IL. BCCD premium bird seed mixes will be for sale during the workshop. Workshop is free but participants must preregister by November 2nd. Call 815-547-7935 to register.

### Volunteers Needed for the APF

The District is in need of volunteers to help at its Autumn Pioneer Festival on September 24th and 25th. If you would like to be a part of the festival, call the Volunteer coordinator at 815-547-7935. Come alone or bring a friend.

### Fall

**Color Cruise**
*Thursday, October 20th 9:00 a.m.*

Join BCCD staff on a trip down IL. Rt. 2 to view the fall colors. We will be stopping to explore some of the state parks along the way. We will leave the Roger D. Gustafson Nature Center at 9:00 a.m. and return at approximately 5:30 p.m. The cost for the bus ride is $20.00 per person for in county residents and $25.00 per person for out of county residents. This cost is for the bus ride only. Other costs are a $5.00 entrance fee to John Deere’s home, lunch and afternoon ice cream stop (optional). To register or if you have any questions, please call (815) 547-7935. Space is limited.

**Harvest Fest**
*Saturday, October 15th 8:00 a.m.*

Enjoy a full day of activities. Beginning in Belvidere Park you can vote for your favorite scarecrow, shop at the vendor booths, marvel at the giant pumpkins and sunflowers, listen to music, hear a story and then as the day winds down, stroll to Spencer Conservation Area where there will be hayrides, singing around the campfire and of course, s’mores. Proceeds benefit the Riverfront Development Committee’s efforts to provide walking/biking paths throughout Belvidere.

### With Gratitude

The BCCD would like to extend a big thank you to all the people and organizations who donated to our summer camp scholarship program. You are awesome!!

### District will be Closed On

- **Sept.5th** Labor Day
- **Sept.20th, 22nd, 23rd, 26th, 27th** Autumn Pioneer Festival
- **Nov.24th and 25th** Thanksgiving
- **Dec. 23rd and 26th** Christmas
- **Jan. 2nd, 2012** New Years

### Conservation Areas Closed

Kinnikinnick Creek Conservation Area, LIB Conservation Area, Distillery Conservation Area, Kishwaukee Bend Conservation Area, Beaver Bluffs Conservation Area (dog park will be open) and Piscasaw Fen Conservation Area will be closed to the general public on the Saturdays and Sundays listed below for archery hunting.

- October 1st & 2nd
- October 15th & 16th
- October 29th & 30th
- November 12th & 13th
- December 10th & 11th
- November 26th & 27th
- December 17th & 18th
- January 7th & 8th

### Color Cruise Saturday, December 3rd 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

Stroll along a luminary lit pathway and visit our authentic log cabins, eat popcorn popped fresh over an open fire, and see how Christmas was celebrated in the past. There is no cost for the evening and it is held at the Roger Gustafson Nature Center Festival Ground. Call (815) 547-7935 for information.

### Master Naturalist Class

The Winnebago County Extension Service is offering its Master Naturalist Program beginning Sept. 14th. This excellent program is designed for adults of any age that desire the opportunity to learn about and positively impact our local environment. This innovative program combines classroom and field learning experiences. Participants must also complete 30 hours of volunteer service within the first year to become a Certified Master Naturalist. Registration is taking place now and space is limited to 20 participants. Visit Winnebago’s U of I Extension website or contact Jackie deBatista at jbatista@illinois.edu for more information.
Autumn Pioneer Festival

Saturday, Sept. 24th
9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 25th
10:00 a.m. to 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, eat buffalo stew, pioneer fries, sample bean soup and apple butter. Visit the harvest table to purchase fresh vegetables or just wander through the 5 ethnic gardens, the voyagers’ encampment, and 2 historic log cabins.

BCCD Festival Grounds, 603 N. Appleton Rd., Belvidere, IL
(815) 547-7935

Admission is free, but donations are cheerfully accepted