New Land Acquisition

On April 15th, 2011 the Boone County Conservation District purchased 93.5 acres of land located along U.S. Highway 20 in Bonus Township. This property was once part of an historic Belvidere icon known as Rainbow Gardens. Rainbow Gardens was a popular tourist attraction that featured a dance hall, tavern, campground, playgrounds, and other amenities between 1925 and 1958.

Today, bottomland forest, wetlands and upland forest are the features one will find at this site. Situated along the Coon Creek, just upstream from its confluence with the Kishwaukee River, the setting creates ideal conditions for a very diverse ecology and a long list of natural functions including; storage of floodwater, nutrient absorption, filtration of sediment, groundwater recharge, and much more.

Grant funds from the Grand Victoria Vital Lands Grant Program ($120,000) as well as the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Open Land Trust grant award to acquire conservation lands in the Crow’s Foot Conservation Study Area ($264,816.01) made the purchase this property possible. Additional support for this project was provided by Openlands, an organization dedicated to protecting open space and natural lands in Northeastern Illinois, is an active partner in this project - assisting with grant funds, providing technical assistance and maintaining conservation easements on these properties. The Boone County Conservation District’s long term plans include restoration of upland and wetland habitats, improvements for public access to allow passive recreational activities such as fishing, wildlife observation, and picnicking as funds to develop the site become available.

Join Us for an Ice Cream Social

Saturday, June 25th
3:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.

Gustafson Nature Center—Festival Grounds
603 N. Appleton Rd.
Belvidere
Cost is $5.00 a person
(for pie, ice cream and drink)

Handmade Quilt Raffle

All proceeds will be used to finish the building of the replica 1865 School House
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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Raffles & 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.

A River Gathering
There's No Place Like Home
to celebrate the ecology, beauty, and recreation of the Rock, Kishwaukee, Sugar and Pecatonica Rivers

June 16-19, 2011
River cruises, exhibits, guided hikes, workshops, presentations, music

'No Frills' fee is $25, with additional fees for clinics, field trips, and dinners. Registration materials available March 1, 2011 at www.fourriver.org. For more information, 815/547-6100.

A River Gathering is made possible by support from Rockford College, Boone County Conservation District, Rockford Park District and Winnebago County Forest Preserve District.

An Evening Among the Gardens
Sunday, July 24th
5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Free Event

Join the BCCD Cultural Heritage Gardeners for a stroll through 5 Cultural Heritage Gardens, a Rain Garden, Butterfly Garden and the Boone County Master Gardener Demonstration Garden. Enjoy herbal refreshments presented by the Boone County Master Gardeners.

Garden interpreters in period clothing will be available for all your garden questions as you tour the Yankee, Scottish, German, Norwegian and Potawatomi gardens.

Members of the University of Illinois Master Gardener program will be on hand as you tour the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden.

The Boone County Garden Club of America's Butterfly Garden and the Boone County Conservation District's Rain Garden and Prairie Plant Identification area will also be included in the tour.

The Gardens are located at the BCCD's Roger Gustafson Nature Center, 603 N. Appleton Road, Belvidere, IL. For more information call 815-547-7935.

Introduction to Using the Hammertime Unleashed Dog Park
Tuesday, June 14 or Tuesday, July 12 or Tuesday, August 16
6:30 p.m.

Join Roger Tresmer for a brief introduction to the Hammertime Unleashed Dog Park. Learn the rules, get tips for successful use of the park, and general dog solutions.

Meet at the dog park and bring your dog. You do not need to have a tag for your dog to bring it to the meeting.

Cost is $2.00 per person and preregistration and prepayment is required. Call (815) 547-7935 to register or for more information.

Hammertime Unleashed
Off-Leash Dog Area

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., June 15th, July 20th, August 17th

Boone County Gardeners of America
Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m., June 28th, July 26th. No meeting at the District in August.

Camp Ducktails and Camp Redwing
June, July and August

Spots Still Available

Camp Redwing and Camp Ducktails are still accepting registrations until spots are filled. Call the office at 815-547-7935 for more details or stop in for a registration form or visit www.boonecountyconservationdistrict.org. Hurry!!

Help BCCD’s Send a Kid to Camp scholarship program. Mail your donation to BCCD, 603 N. Appleton Rd., Belvidere, IL 61008. Thank you.

Wildflower Hike
Saturday, July 30th
9:00 a.m.

Join Aaron Minson for a wildflower hike at the Distillery Road Conservation Area. Meet at the Gustafson Nature Center and ride our bus or meet the group at the conservation area. Space on the bus is limited, so call (815) 547-7935 to reserve your spot.

The trail is flat and approximately 1-1/3 miles in length. Area could be wet, so dress appropriately.

Conservation Site Tours
Tues., June 21st
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Wed., July 13th
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Join us for a tour of conservation area sites. On Tuesday, we will be leaving at 11:00 a.m. and stopping at one of the sites to eat lunch, so bring your lunch and enjoy a picnic. If you can’t make it on Tuesday, join us for an evening tour at 5:30 p.m. on July 13th. (no dinner stop). There is limited space on our bus, so call Bev at (815) 547-7935 to reserve your spot.

Summer of 2011 Small Group Garden Tours

Tour the 5 Heritage Gardens that are located on the Festival Grounds of the Conservation District. Visit the herb garden that is maintained by the U of I Extension Master Gardeners, the rain garden, the butterfly garden maintained by the Boone County Garden Club and visit the two historic log cabins. Guided tours available upon request. Call 815-547-7935 for more information.

Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet

Free
Belvidere Township Building
8200 Fairgrounds Rd.
Belvidere
Saturday, June 11th
9:00 a.m. - Noon

Accepting prescription and non-prescription medications, aerosol inhalers and veterinary medication

Not accepting needles and sharps, medical waste, biohazardous materials

Sponsored by Boone County Soil & Water Conservation District, Belvidere, Flora, Caledonia, Manchester and Spring Townships, O’Brien & Dobbins Snyder Pharmacy, Belvidere Police Dept. in cooperation with Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful.

Early Morning Yoga
Fridays starting
June 3rd
6:30 a.m. - 7:30 a.m.
Pavilion in Spencer Conservation Area

Join yoga instructor, Jeff Leaich, as he leads a gentle yoga class outside among the trees. Listen to the birds while you stretch yourself awake and commune with nature. Each class is $10, pre-registration is NOT required. Call Jeff with any questions 815-544-4169.

Volunteers Wanted Anytime

Do you like being outdoors and meeting new people? Volunteer and become part of the very first Conservation District in the state. Call the Volunteer coordinator at 815-547-7935.

Kishwaukee River Clean Up
Saturday, Aug. 20th
9:00 a.m.

Come help us clean up the Kishwaukee River. Participants must provide own canoe and equipment. Meet at Hickory Hills Island in Belvidere Park at 9:00 a.m. Volunteers will float down river pulling trash and objects from the river and banks. Pick up point will be at the Distillery canoe launch at approximately 1:00 p.m. Drivers will be shuttled back to the beginning. Call the BCCD office at 815-547-7935 to register, so we know that you are planning to attend; also if weather or river conditions are questionable, please call the office to see if the event has been canceled. This program is funded by a $500 grant from the Illinois EPA’s Streambank Clean Up and Lakeshore Enhancement Program.

Can You Help?
The BCCD is looking for volunteer(s) to help install used maple flooring in the District’s replica one room schoolhouse. If you can help, please call (815) 547-7935.
Hooked on Fishing
For Kids  (Ages 5—15)

Saturday, June 4th
9:00 a.m.

The Coon Creek Casters will be hosting the annual Kids Fishing Clinic in Spencer Conservation Area. Bring your pole and tackle for an instructional clinic, lots of fishing, and line-reeling fun. Lunch will be provided along with bait, and prizes will be given at 1:00 P.M. Pre-registration is required, because space is limited. The clinic is free. Call BCCD at (815) 547-7935 to register for this fun filled, fishing experience.

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.

Admission is free, but donations are cheerfully accepted.