

Central Iowa SIERRA



Summer 2008

Central Iowa Group Newsletter

Land of Restorative Powers

by Cathy Engstrom

Communications Director, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

Wading through the tall Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), admiring purple spikes of prairie blazing star (*Liatris aspera*), spooking a buck and noting signs of recent prairie fire, it's easy to imagine the landscape that greeted Iowa's first white settlers.

It's much harder to imagine the landscape that greeted three prairie enthusiasts when they purchased this Iowa County farm just 10 growing seasons ago.

Never mind that, at 480 acres, it was larger than they had planned to buy. And further from their Iowa City homes than they wanted to drive. That its pastured slopes were grazed nearly down to the soil. That they found only a few signs of native plants—some leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*) and a few sprigs of Indian grass and pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*) hiding under an invasive, skin-slashing overgrowth of multi-flora rose.

And never mind that, despite extensive volunteer work on prairies, none knew how to operate a chainsaw or apply herbicides or mend fences. That only one had ever driven a tractor—and only as a kid. That they were making this substantial financial and time commitment after knowing each other only a few years.

Like those early settlers, they took a leap of faith. If you ever doubt that a few people can make a difference, or question whether Iowa has any natural resources worth saving or need courage for your own leap of faith, drive by those prairie-covered slopes today—or read on.

Restorative powers

Judy Felder, Mary Brown and Richard "Sandy" Rhodes met in the mid-1990s while volunteering at prairie projects. Each had discovered prairie restoration at mid-life—and each quickly developed a fascination and then a passion for it.

Convinced that a number of Iowa farms harbor dormant prairies, they looked at many sale lands until they "fell in love with the rolling hills" of a farm west of Williamsburg. They did research



As they have for the past 10 years, Mary Brown and Judy Felder devote many hours each week to the hard, physical work of prairie restoration.

"Each growing season we found new things, especially after we burned. ... It's the surprise and the marvel that keeps us going."

You hear hints of their restoration successes and love for the land in their affectionate nicknames for seemingly every rise or dip in the landscape: Yellow Warbler Draw, Cup Plant Alley, Liatris [blazing star] Slope, Spiranthus [ladies tresses] Slope, Sunflower



In 1997 Mary Brown, Richard "Sandy" Rhodes and Judy Felder (pictured left to right) purchased 480 acres of the site now called Indiangrass Hills—hoping to restore its overgrazed pastures to native species. Today native prairie and oak savanna cover many of its slopes.

Slough, Sunset Ridge, Woodcock Badminton Alley, Turkeyfoot Draw and many more.

Group effort

Despite occasional clashes of opinion, the partners shared labor and management decisions. For example, Sandy researched the ATV purchase, Mary the tractor selection and Judy the pole barn construction. They made sure all three learned to operate each piece of equipment. Together they read manuals, took lessons from local experts and learned by trial and error.

"Some of my favorite memories are times like when the tractor would break down out in the field and we'd all have to figure out how to fix it," says Judy.

But mostly, they put in hours and hours of labor—aided by volunteer support from friends and neighbors. For example, Ellen Hartz has been a regular volunteer, tour guide, donor and cheerleader since the beginning. Meanwhile, Bill and Barby Buss purchased 160 adjoining acres in 1998, and the group agreed to manage the 640 acres as a unit. In 2005, the Busses donated a conservation easement to the Iowa DNR and sold their land to the original three partners, but they remain actively involved in the restoration effort.

Change in plans

Everything changed—yet didn't—in 2005, when Sandy was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer. Limiting pain medications to keep his mind sharp, Sandy set about putting his affairs in order—especially the future of Indiangrass Hills.

Sandy died in November 2005, just weeks after the partners donated a conservation easement to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. At the same time,

they donated the land with individual Reserved Life Estates to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. This protection option technically transfers land ownership to INHF but allows donors to maintain typical landowner uses, rights and responsibilities until their deaths. Sandy also gave INHF a substantial bequest, the largest INHF has ever received, to fund long-term site management and similar prairie projects.

Though it was a difficult time for all, Judy and Mary are comforted that their original goal of permanent protection is already assured and pleased that the organizations involved helped the process go quickly and smoothly. "The whole thing just felt right," says Judy.

"We want this land to honor Sandy's dream—he had the vision," says Judy. "But it's not to be maintained as a museum."

With that in mind, they are generous about allowing others on the land. They have invited local hiking, prairie and birding groups. They permit hunting by request. They've hosted research projects on native species.

Silent partners

Like Sandy, the land itself has a continuing presence and partnership here.

"Sometimes it's like the land is listening, like it's doing things for us," says Mary. "Like one time Judy said she wished she could find an orchid growing here, and soon after we did. And that's just one example."

"It often takes two or three burns to see what's there," says Judy.

Both are disturbed that many landowners, too impatient to let dormant species return on their own (restoration), seek instant gratification by plowing natives under and replanting from scratch (reconstruction). The Indiangrass Hills partners believe in giving the land time.

"The land is restoring itself," says Judy. "We're just removing what mankind has done to it. The land does not belong to us; we belong to it."

"We're just the caretakers," adds Mary.

Judy quickly agrees. "That's why we gave it away."

This article first appeared in INHF's Fall 2006 magazine.

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PLEASE CALL THE OUTING LEADER IF YOU PLAN TO GO ON ANY OUTINGS. This helps the outing leader plan and alert you to possible changes. Everyone, including non-members, is welcome to attend programs and outings. Children are also welcome to attend with their parents or caretakers unless otherwise indicated by the outing leader. In order to participate in an outing, you (or your parent or guardian if under 18) will need to sign a liability waiver. To read a copy of the waiver, please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415-977-5630. Carpooling on outings is encouraged. However, it is strictly a private arrangement among participants, and participants assume all risks associated with such travel. All telephone numbers in this listing are area code 515 unless otherwise indicated.

THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER

Anyone interested in Nature Photography events/classes/outings, please contact Mary Ann Hynes at mahynes@crosspaths.net. (Please use Sierra Club Nature Photography in the Subject line.)

Tuesday Weekly Hikes

Sierra Club *Tuesday Evening Hikes* continue through August 26. Hikes are held at a different location each week around the Greater Des Moines Area, begin at 6:30 p.m., and end around 8 p.m. This is a great way to get to know hiking areas you may have never visited, or to revisit old favorite trails. All the sites chosen are tried-and-true hiking areas, but at some points we'll get off the main trail. Wildlife, wildflowers, the views and the fellowship will make it well worthwhile! For each week's location, difficulty level, and whether pets are allowed at the site or to get further details, please contact the hike leader to sign up each week so you can get directions and be notified if there is any change in plans. You may request to be placed on an email list to automatically be notified of each week's hike and any changes. **Difficulty level is easy to moderate on most hikes. Water, hiking boots or sturdy walking shoes are recommended, as are lightweight long pants and mosquito repellent. Bring rain gear whenever the weather suggests a chance of rain.**

JUNE EVENTS

TUESDAY, JUNE 3: Polk City Bridges Hike

Meet at 6:30 p.m. at Casey's on the south side of Polk City just east of the Mile Long Bridge at Saylorville Lake. We will travel to the entrance of Big Creek State Park where there is a parking lot. From there we will get on the recreation trail, which has 5 wooden bridges, running along Big Creek Lake and State Park and Saylorville Lake. The trail is paved and mostly wooded and the hike will take about 90 minutes. Contact Jackie at 515-577-0375 to let her know you're coming. Difficulty level: easy.

TUESDAY, JUNE 10: Trestle to Trestle Trail

Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Trestle to Trestle trailhead public parking lot just west of Bob Lenc Landscaping on Lower Beaver in Des Moines to hike south through the Des Moines River Greenbelt toward the old Target Store on Euclid and return. If time permits, then we'll hike north toward Johnston—with this leg, the entire hike will take about two hours. Hiking on this trail depends on conditions so be sure to check with Jackie at 515-577-0375 for information, directions and to sign up. Difficulty level: easy.

TUESDAY, JUNE 17: Brown's Woods Preserve

Meet in the Brown's Woods parking area at 6:30 p.m. to hike the long loop. To reach the park, take 63rd Street south in West Des Moines till you reach Brown's Woods Drive, turn west and go about a half-mile, turn right into the parking lot. Difficulty level: Easy to moderate. Contact Doug at 515-277-1263 or dra427@mchsi.com.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18: PROGRAM—NOTENEW LOCATION

Northwest Community Center, 50th & Franklin Ave. Fighting Goliath—Texas Coal Wars

Narrated by Robert Redford and produced by Alpheus Media, this film follows the story of Texans fighting a high-stakes battle for clean air and centers around the unlikely partners—mayors, ranchers, lawyers, cities, citizens, green groups, and CEO's—that came together to oppose the construction of 18 coal-fired power plants that were slated to be built in Eastern and Central Texas and being fast-tracked by the Texas Governor. Learn how this fight relates to how Iowans can also fight coal plants. Our public programs are 7:30-9:00 p.m. in Des Moines. This meeting will be held in the Northwest Community Center at 50th & Franklin Avenue. Contact Jane at 515-223-5047 or jrlark@radiks.net for more information.

TUESDAY, JUNE 24: Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge

Meet at the McDonalds parking lot in Pleasant Hill on Highway 163 (University) just west of the Highway 65 bypass at 6:30 p.m. to carpool. Bring binoculars for bird-watching. Contact Peggy at peggybrownm@yahoo.com or 515-285-6864. Difficulty level: easy.

JULY EVENTS

TUESDAY, JULY 1: Neal Smith Trail at Sycamore Landing

Meet at the Sycamore Landing on NW 66th Street east of Johnston at 6:30 p.m. We'll start at the parking lot south of NW 66th on the east side of the Des Moines River for a hike about 90 minutes. Difficulty level: easy. Contact George at 515-745-7563 for questions and directions.

TUESDAY, JULY 8: Jester County Park

We will take advantage of several of the 8 hiking trails that Jester County Park in northwest Polk County has to offer. Meet at the parking lot just inside the park entrance at 6:30 p.m. Contact Ginger at soelbergv@dwx.com or call 515-253-0232.

TUESDAY, JULY 15: Yellow Banks County Park

Meet at 6:30 p.m. in the parking lot by the ranger's office/maintenance shop. We will hike the Savanna and Lake Trails. Difficulty level: Easy to moderate. Contact Doug at 515-277-1263 or dra427@mchsi.com.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16: No Public Program This Month—See You in September!

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16: Planning Meeting

The Executive Committee of the Central Iowa Group of the Sierra Club meets from 6-9 p.m. All members are welcome for quarterly planning of outings and activities. Contact Jane for location at jrlark@radiks.net or 515-223-5047.

TUESDAY, JULY 22: Raccoon River Park

Meet at the Raccoon River Park in West Des Moines off Grand Avenue at 6:30 p.m.—at the fenced dog-walk park, near softball fields. This hike will take approximately 90 minutes on a gravel trail. Difficulty level: moderate. Contact George at 515-745-7563 for questions.

TUESDAY, JULY 29: Sunnyside State Park

Meet at Sunnyside State Park south of Des Moines at 6:30 p.m. To get to the park, travel five miles south of Des Moines on Highway 69—there is a posted sign pointing east. Meet at the public restroom just inside the park gates. This hike will take approximately 60 minutes on a level trail. Difficulty level: easy to moderate. Contact George at 515-745-7563 for questions.

THURSDAY, JULY 31: Hot Air Balloons—Indianola

Join us at 5:00 p.m. for an evening of hot air balloons, kites, bubbles, and Frisbee golf. We will be at Pickard Park (across from the Indianola Balloon Field). Come early to avoid the traffic and get a good spot. Bring a picnic dinner, if you like. For more information, contact Mary Ann at mahynes@crosspaths.net (Subject line: Sierra Club Hot Air Balloons). <http://www.nationalballoonclassic.com/>

AUGUST EVENTS

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5: Chichaqua Bottoms, Sand Hill Prairie

The Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt stretches for almost ten miles along the Skunk River in northeast Polk County. We will hike Chichaqua's sandy upland hills with reconstructed prairies and native prairie remnants at 6:30 p.m. For the meeting place to carpool, and for

questions, contact Ginger at soelbergv@dwx.com or call 515-253-0232.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12: Maffitt Lake

Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the west entrance to Maffitt Lake for a hike through the park and around the lake. As always, boots, water and bug repellent are recommended. Difficulty level: moderate. Contact Jane at jrlark@radiks.net or 515-223-5047 for directions.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 19: Walnut Creek Trail

Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Q-Trip gas station at the northeast corner of the intersection at SW 63d Street and Railroad Avenue. We'll walk east toward the Bill Riley Trail for an evening walk through bottomland forest of approximately 90 minutes. Difficulty level: moderate to high difficulty. We'll travel east and south across the Raccoon River on the bridge and perhaps to a river beach. As always, boots are recommended, as are water and bug repellent. Sorry, no pets on this hike. No need to register, but call George at 515-745-7563 for questions.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20: No Public Program This Month—See You in September!

TUESDAY, AUGUST 26: Red Feather Prairie

Red Feather Prairie, Saylorville Lake. Meet at 6:30 p.m. in the Saylorville Visitor Center parking lot. We will shuttle cars to the N.W. 90th Place trailhead and then hike back to the visitor center. Difficulty level: Easy to moderate. Contact Doug at 515-277-1263 or dra427@mchsi.com.

ALSO OF INTEREST AND LOOKING AHEAD

The following events are not sponsored by the Sierra Club but are listed because they might be of interest to members. The conduct of these events is the sole responsibility of the other organizations sponsoring them.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9 TO SUNDAY, AUGUST 10

Enjoy a float down the scenic Raccoon River in Dallas County. Lifejacket use is required. Canoe rental and shuttle can be arranged. You must contact Jim at jadriggs@iowalink.com to sign up and for details—reservations required.

Tentative Plan: Raccoon River Watershed Association overnight camping and a paddle trip from Spring Valley to Puckerbrush on the North Raccoon River. We may include the Sweet Corn Festival in Adel and overnight camping and a bonfire on the North Raccoon River. Details are not finalized, but let Jim Riggs (jadriggs@iowalink.com) know if you might be interested.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16: River Run Garbage Grab, Des Moines River -- Volunteers Needed

Meet at 9:00 a.m. to clean up the Des Moines River and adjacent trails from Saylorville to Yellow Banks County Park. Volunteers can register at www.riverstewards.org for one of seven sections of river. For more information, contact John at john@winninglistings.com or Robin at rbfortney@msn.com. **See article on page 3.**

Volunteers are also needed to assist the Central Iowa Sierra Club in hosting the Yellow Banks Park access site. Volunteers will greet and sign in cleanup volunteers, hand out trash bags and gloves, and receive and segregate trash. We have two shifts -- 8:30 to noon and noon to 3:30 -- and we need volunteers for each shift. Contact Jane at jrlark@radiks.net or at 515-223-5047 to volunteer. **See article on page 3.**

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, SEPTEMBER 7 PELICAN FESTIVAL, Jester Park. Email Phyllis at goodmanph@mchsi.com to volunteer for a shift.

Annual River Cleanup Event Coming in August

by John Wenck, event co-chair

On a Saturday in August 2007, more than 200 volunteers removed 24 tons of trash from the Des Moines River and adjacent trails. Garbage grabbers worked between the Cottonwood Access at Saylorville and the Birdland Access near Union Park, approximately 10 river miles. Polk County Conservation employed their heavy-equipment operators to remove five cars from the banks of the river, and even Conservation Director Pat Boddy spent the day picking up trash. The annual cleanup event, known as the River Run Garbage Grab, or R2G2 for short, was a huge success.

The Izaak Walton League started this event six years ago, but last year Robin Fortney from the Central Iowa Paddlers and John Wenck from the Iowa Whitewater Coalition, the co-chairs, wanted to broaden the event's reach. A committee was organized early and started advertising the event to the general public. Instead of just removing trash from the rivers, the committee decided to add the adjacent recreational trails to the grab, and this opened up the event to walkers, joggers, bicyclists, birders, or anyone who wanted to remove trash from the trails. T-shirts were designed, and a website was created with a registration page. In the last hours, a band was hired to provide entertainment for the volunteers while the Ikes served up burgers, dogs, chips, and sodas. This was also the first year efforts were made to recycle the garbage collected, and 47% of the garbage removed was recycled. Funds were raised from private donors and grants were written to cover the cost of recycling.

This year the event is scheduled for Saturday, August 16th, starting at 9:00a.m. The committee has added 10 miles to the length, and anticipates a turnout of 400 to 500 volunteers. All who want to volunteer can register at www.riverstewards.org for one of seven sections between Cottonwood Access and Yellow Banks County Park. Volunteers can work as long or as little as they like. Typically, the trail walkers finish before the paddlers and boaters. This year, canoes may be borrowed for the event with the completion of a moving-water canoe class offered free of charge by the City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation in July.

Instead of serving lunch this year at Prospect Park, we will all gather down by the riverside at 6:00 p.m. at the Simon Estes Amphitheater where volunteers will be served free food and enjoy live music from The Des Moines Community Steel Drum Band, Plymouth Church Chancel Choir, and Jon Stravers and the Big Blue Sky Band. A raffle and/or door prizes will be given at the gathering. Items include a one-night stay in a bed-and-breakfast, dinners for two, paddling equipment, and possibly a boat—we're working on it!

This event is important for a number of reasons. Cleaning up the Des Moines River and its trails in Polk County certainly has an immediate cosmetic impact, but, more importantly, this event reconnects people to an often overlooked resource, which has a much more lasting impact. For some volunteers it may be the first time they've been down to the river for an extended period of time. For others it's a chance to invest in a resource that's dear to them. I think all walk away with a renewed respect for the river and its greenway, and many realize for the first time how much the river needs our help.

Mike Delaney, president and founder of the Raccoon River Watershed Association says, "I speak for the Raccoon River because somebody has to." Let your actions speak for the Des Moines River this summer by participating in the 7th Annual River Run Garbage Grab event on Saturday, August 16th.



A Central Iowa Paddler spots a wrecked car on the riverbank. Photo by John Wenck.



Dave Kreamer (left) and Lyle Danielson of the Iowa Whitewater Coalition carry part of a culvert out of the river for removal. Photo by John Wenck.

Fen Dedication September 6

The Jasper County Fen near Engeldinger Marsh, formerly known to seed collectors as Triangle Fen, has been renamed Hartley Heritage Fen in honor of Les Hartley of Mingo, a former owner. The Central Iowa Sierra Club was pleased to support the purchase of this fen, now owned by Jasper County Conservation. Mark your calendar and plan to come if you can; details will be available later.

Interested in wildlife issues?

Please contact Mary Ann Hynes at mahynes@crosspaths.net (Please use Sierra Club Wildlife Issues in the Subject line).

Central Iowa Group Directory

(See directory in Chapter newsletter for state and national information)

Chair	Jane Clark, 223-5047
Vice Chair	Karen Tigges, 274-0545
Treasurer	Ginger Soelberg, 253-0232
Secretary	Phyllis Goodman, 274-4319
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	Sharon Johnson, 229-3133
	Maryann Hynes, 641-764-2689
Managing Editor	Jo Hudson, 276-6359
Layout Editor	Neila Seaman, 277-8868

Volunteers Needed for Two Events

The Central Iowa Sierra Club will host the Yellow Banks Access for the Des Moines River Cleanup Event

The 2008 River Run Garbage Grab cleanup (R2G2) on Saturday, August 16 has been extended from Cottonwood access at Saylorville all the way to Yellow Banks County Park. The Central Iowa Sierra Club Group will host the Yellow Banks access.

Host volunteers will greet and sign in cleanup volunteers, hand out trash bags and gloves, and receive and segregate trash from paddlers and people cleaning up the riverside in Yellow Banks Park. Polk County Conservation will assist with transferring trash to recyclers and landfill.

We will have two shifts—8:30 to noon and noon to 3:30 p.m.—and need volunteers for each shift. Come and join in the fun and excitement of being a part of this great event. Please contact Jane Clark at jrlark@radiks.net or (515) 223-5047 to volunteer.

Volunteers are invited to come to the Simon Estes Amphitheater downtown by the riverside for free food and live music.

Pelican Festival Sunday Afternoon, September 7

The Central Iowa Sierra Club has volunteered to help again this year at the Pelican Festival at Jester Park. There has been a change of venue this year, so we aren't sure yet what job we will help with, but we will appreciate your help for one of the shifts. You will see one of the largest flocks of American White Pelicans available for easy viewing. Put the date of this favorite event on your calendar and email Phyllis at goodmanph@mchsi.com to get your name on the volunteer list.

Central Iowa SIERRAN

Managing Editor: Jo Hudson
Layout Editor: Neila Seaman

The Central Iowa Sierran is published four times a year. We invite submissions of letters, articles, photographs and illustrations. Deadlines are February 1 for the Spring issue; May 1 for the Summer issue; August 1 for the Autumn issue; and November 1 for the Winter issue.

Preference will be given to articles relating to the Central Iowa Group. The editors reserve the right to edit for clarity, space and for libel reasons. All submissions must have name, address, and phone number.

Submissions may be sent to Jo Hudson. Call 276-6359 for submission address. Electronic submission of articles is preferred: johudson@qwest.net or neilaseaman2@msn.com. Hard copy submissions should be written neatly or double-space typed.



“Dream Lake” Rejection Saves Raccoon River Greenbelt

by Ray Harden

In March, the Dallas County Conservation Board heard a proposal from a Des Moines development company for what it called “Dream Lake” in the southwest part of Dallas County. A very large lake covering more than 3200 acres, (twice the size of Lake Panorama), and several smaller ones were to be created by the construction of two major dams on the Raccoon River. This project would have been the largest private lake development in the state, covering more than 13,000 acres of land and affecting 287 property owners. The proposal was brought to the Conservation Board because the dams being planned would have affected 359 acres in three county parks, including the flooding of Hanging Rock Park at Redfield and the lower areas of Kuehn Conservation Area.

On April 8th, the Conservation Board unanimously voted to oppose the construction of the dams for the development and also to reject any offer to buy Dallas County property for the project.

I have been a member of the Dallas County Conservation Board for five years. During that time and for many years before that, the Dallas County Conservation Department has been working to develop a “greenbelt” on the Middle and South Raccoon River. With the help of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, and some private landowners, we slowly have been achieving that goal. This greenbelt is one of the wildest natural areas in central Iowa; it is a riparian habitat, with floodplains, sand bars, and a river that has highs and lows during the year. The greenbelt serves as a migratory pathway for many species of birds and as a refuge for native plants. Two bald eagle pairs have nested there. The stream is home to smallmouth bass, catfish, and river otters, and it is the best canoeing river in central Iowa.

The proposed lakes would have flooded the area, destroying the river corridor and totally changing the surrounding ecosystem. The developers seemed to think that it was okay to change a riparian ecosystem to an artificial lake ecosystem because, they claimed, “they are the same.” They are not. The habitat along a river is much more complex and diverse than that along the shores of an artificial lake.

The proposal also raised water-quality concerns. Lakes that are formed by dams are more easily and quickly polluted than rivers. Lake water circulates much more slowly than river water, therefore chemical contaminants are held in the lake during low water flow and there is no way for them to be flushed. Smaller lakes, like the four that would have been part of the Dream Lake project, become polluted even more quickly than large ones.

After water pollution, the next greatest problems of rivers are caused by physical alterations such as dams, water diversion canals, channelization, and land development. These changes disrupt water flow patterns, increase sedimentation, and alter water temperature, and, with other factors, reduce water quality and destroy aquatic ecosystems. The Dream Lake proposal included two of these alterations that negatively affect a river’s environment.

The greenbelt is currently open to the public for many uses, such as canoeing, camping on sandbars, hiking, bird watching, and hunting. The Dream Lake project would have turned many acres of public land into private property and reduced the public’s ability to use the river for these activities. Public access to the largest lake would have been denied; this lake could have been used only by landowners along the lakeshore and members of the Lake Association.

The Dream Lake Project did not fit with the long-range plans and goals of the Dallas County Conservation Department, but its proposal has increased awareness of the greenbelt along the South Raccoon River. It is important that this beautiful area remains preserved and open to the public.

Ray Harden is a member of the Dallas County Conservation Board.



Hanging Rock County Park near Redfield. This sandstone formation would have been flooded by the Dream Lake project. Photos by Ray Harden.



This photo was taken at Highway 169 on the Raccoon River Bridge looking west, up stream, the site where the large dam and lake were planned. The river valley would have been flooded and the farm family there will have to relocate. Photo by Ray Harden.

Local Residents Fight “Nightmare Lake”

When Julie Turner learned about the “Dream Lake” proposal of the WestWolf developers, she was determined to fight it. She and her friends and neighbors along the Raccoon River in Dallas County organized the group they named Friends of the Raccoon River Valley. They developed a website, listed on it reasons to oppose the dams and lakes and contact information for the elected federal, state and local legislators and officials. They organized public meetings, they wrote letters, they spoke in opposition at the County Conservation Board meeting. They even blogged and sold T-shirts. They raised the awareness of Dallas County residents of the treasure they would lose.

When the Conservation Board voted to oppose the construction of the dams and refused to sell the developers any county land, the developers conceded they could not continue with their proposed Dream Lake project. However, until WestWolf drops any plans for a scaled-back project in Dallas County the Friends of the Raccoon River plan to continue their website, spread the word about any WestWolf effort to buy land for a project, and circulate petitions in continued opposition.

You can follow their efforts on their website, www.nightmarelakeowa.org.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



Friend or Foe?

America’s water, rivers and lakes are at risk from giant, corporate-owned factory farms which are fouling our water with pathogens and chemicals. The air around these farms is contaminated with suspended dust particles, which have been linked to bronchitis and other diseases. Our government wants to pass legislation which would allow factory farms to be free from health and environmental laws. Support Sierra Club’s effort to keep our water clean and our air friendly. The hogs have gone wild, now it’s our turn.

Cause a stink. JOIN Sierra Club.

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Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 57968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

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