



The Web

Newsletter of the Iowa Association of Naturalists

There are “Soccer Moms,” but no “Nature Moms: Building Identity with Nature and Nature Centers

by Rob Bixler, Associate Professor at Clemson University

Soccer moms; adults dressed up as Darth Vader at Star Wars conventions; rowdy college students painted head-to-toe in their school colors cheering at a football game; World War II veterans being photographed at the USS Wisconsin; \$275 Nikes; and a Playboy air freshener hanging off the rear-view mirror of a Hummer. What can these tell us about growing, diversifying and retaining our nature center members? Such examples illustrate the concept of “Identity”, people publicly displaying an interest, attitude, or preference. Their choices communicate to others their interests and help them find, and further develop rewarding social relationships with like-minded people—or places, or organizations.

A robust identification with a thing (person, place, organization or idea) forms inside a person after considerable experience, reflection about the meanings of those experiences, and feedback from others. But once formed, identities create remarkable shortcuts in decision making as these examples illustrate:

“So, I’m a birder and it’s May. Well...I’m headed out to look for warblers.”

“I’m a mushroomer and it’s three days after a heavy rain—time to grab the basket and head to the woods”

“I’m a greenie, well duuh..of course I am going to buy a Toyota Prius.”

“I can’t imagine not renewing my nature center membership, those are my people.”

In the above illustrations, there is no careful collection and evaluation of alternative choices, deep thought or

gnashing of teeth. Identities tend to be robust and hard to give up. Abandoning an identity means loss of valued social relationships, future opportunities, a sense of belonging, and the investment a person has made in material goods associated with the identity. Marketers long ago realized the power of persuading consumers to identify with their brands. I’m still amazed that people will pay premium prices for a t-shirt sporting a Coca-Cola or Nike emblem that turn the owner into a walking billboard for the company. Those of us with more “noble” motives have stuck with education and reason. Maybe we need more “I Love Biodiversity” t-shirts as a complement.

Before jumping into environmental and place identities, let’s go through some basics. There are two broad types of identities: personal and social. In 1972, after many trips past the enticing dessert counter in the university cafeteria, Daryl Bem offered us “self-perception theory”. Only after choosing pecan pie a dozen times did he come to view himself as a pecan-pie kind of guy. He theorized that in many situations repeated behaviors and self reflection precede forming ideas about who we are. That is, behavior comes before attitude—the exact opposite of environmental educators’ knowledge--attitude—behavior models. A sense of self is composed of “personal identities”.

In 1902, Charles Horton Cooley argued that we view ourselves as being what our friends, communities and society tell us to be. He termed this process the “Looking

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Glass Self” as if society holds a mirror up to us and we come to see ourselves as others see us. Being told by others that we are white, male, tall, geeky, a tree hugger, a skilled ukulele player and so on results in the formation of these “social identities”.

We can develop an identity with anything we can imagine and experience--with a little help from our friends. We can also be “The Friend” that encourages others to better understand themselves from a perspective involving nature. Given all this, what are the implications of identity theory for nature center operations?

Junior ranger programs are an obvious example of an identity strategy in programming. But many other programs can include an identity building strategy. Program titles can be changed from “Bugs for Kids” to “Becoming a Bugologist”. An entomology program could include providing patches or certifications patches (Joey James is a Certified Jr. Entomologist), bumper stickers for the parents’ car, or posters (Bugs don’t bother me!) for the bedroom that announce to the world an interest and competency with a topic. One indicator of identities is what marketers call “side bets”. Side bets include the material goods owned by a person associated with an identity. Clothing and equipment are typical examples. They are functional but also have display value. Children who return home from a program with their own insect net have the opportunity to continue a newfound interest. Repeated and extended experiences is an important part of identity formation. But the presence of the net (and poster) in the child’s bedroom is also a display of that interest to her friends. Some of her friends may join her with her interest, creating an additional social reward.

Social relationships are an important part of identity formation and maintenance. The use of social media in particular has possibilities for keeping participants in a programming interacting after its end and becoming “bug friends”. Reunions of previous Bugologist classmates with opportunities to interact with each other and nature center staff, go back out in the field, or acquire more equipment from the nature center gift shop are also possibilities. A field trip to a natural history museum to view a large study collection and meet (senior) entomologists might also be well received.

Diversifying the membership of nature centers can capitalize on existing identities that can be enhanced through engaging with nature. Historic textile enthusiasts might become involved in a nature center to learn about plants and plant propagation so they can do natural dyeing. Nature photographers might be willing to attend weekend workshops on the taxonomy, behavior and

ecology of mammals, birds or insects so they can be more effective photographers. Ancient (primitive) skills enthusiasts are another market. Going through lists of hobbies should produce many other ideas for making natural history part of people’s lives.

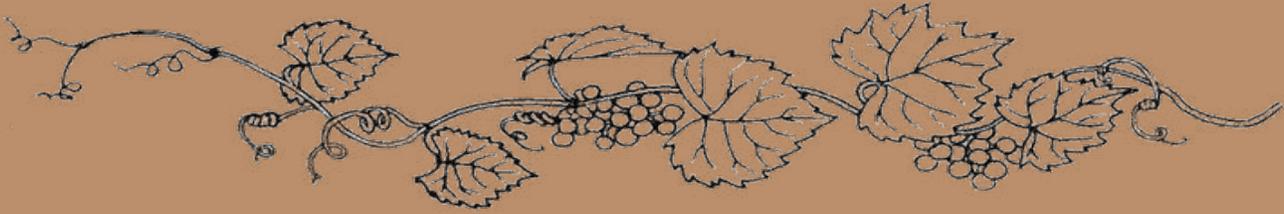
Finding ways to get members to publicly display their affiliation with their nature center is important. My impression of the constituents of nature centers is that they tend not to be boisterous people, and prone to being private. Some members refuse “gifts” given as part of membership benefits for reasons related to reducing consumption of natural resources. One response to this is providing branded “gifts” to members such as cloth grocery bags that they will associate with reducing consumption. Bumper stickers about your nature center may never go on a member’s car, but offered along with a suggestion to put them on recycling bins that go to the curb once a week might be accepted. Clever bumper stickers such as “My kid got dirtier than yours at Finch Nature Preschool” might be so well received that concerns about reducing consumption may be temporarily set aside.

Since rewarding social relationships are an important part of identity formation, nature centers should find every way possible to encourage interactions between members. In the social sciences, identity is associated with other variables such as “commitment”, “involvement” and “belongingness”. Don’t those sound like desirable mindsets for our members? An early morning bird walk followed by a pancake breakfasts, refreshments after programs, book clubs, casual hikes, special events, and a reading area in the nature center are all possibilities. Social media will become increasingly important in connecting and reconnecting members within a nature center’s milieu. Nature centers must be places where nature-oriented people will find each other—and value the nature center as the means to that end.

There are many other possibilities for using identity theory as a strategy to increase interest in nature and develop a sense among members that nature centers provide rich, rewarding experiences with nature in a socially comfortable situation. Marketers have long exploited identity theory—just look around! I would encourage nature center staff to spend some time playing with these ideas at programming and marketing meetings. Some identity-formation strategies require very simple no-cost changes, others require a significant investment in memorabilia, increased programming fees and prep time. Finally, because of the lack of funds for formal evaluation, sharing experiences with each other on the ANCA forum is essential to wise and diverse use of identity formation strategies.

Grapevine News

Congrats to Sydney Hiatt, the new Environmental Educator for Pottawattamie County Conservation!



IAN News

Traveling Exhibits- The Prairie exhibit is with Davenport Parks and Rec. There were issues with the roots mat. McCullough replaced it and the 2nd mat was falling apart also. We contacted Aramark out of the QC about doing a rug and they donated a rug that matched the roots. It was received July 15th, it looks good! Ann put it with the exhibit when she did her site inspection at Davenport Park and Rec.

Professional Development Committee- Reminder that the application deadline will be December 31st.

Wilderness Committee Report- We had two youth apply for the Wilderness Trips Scholarship money. Unfortunately our BWCAW trip did not go (too few kids signed up) so the one kid did not need the scholarship any longer. The other person received the scholarship (paid to Plymouth County Conservation) but did not end up going so Victoria destroyed the check after talking to Nathan.

We would love to keep the money available and hopefully next year we will have more people interested in the trips and applying for the scholarship. Katie Hammond will be asking everyone at the Fall meeting (or via email) to submit any trips that qualify for the scholarship so they can be added to next year's list.

Junior Naturalists- We will be ordering more patches to keep up with demand next year. Joel and Diane are looking at getting two patch designs printed.

Scholarships- Reminder that no scholarships are available to members at this time due to NAI in St. Paul in November.

Joe Halbur Scholarship Committee- The winner for 2011 is Roxy Gerard. She will be attending NAI in St. Paul. Below is a short write up she did about herself:

"I am a recent graduate of Kirkwood Community College with an Associate in Applied Science for Parks and Natural Resources. I will be leaving for the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point mid-August. While there I will study Wildlife Ecology with an information and education focus.

The past two summers have been spent working at Johnson County Conservation Board under the guidance of Brad Freidhof. While there, my passions for nature and working with people have grown immensely. I knew almost immediately that was a job I could do for the rest of my life. Being outside playing in the dirt and teaching kids about nature, who wouldn't want to do that?

During one of our day camps I was leading some children to a pond so we could play with the eco-boats they just made. I stopped the group to talk about a tree and wait for some others to catch up. While we were looking back at the other children three white tail does ran between the two groups. I don't know what was more exciting, seeing the deer so close, or the look on the children's faces. That is a memory those children and I will never forget. That is why I enjoy environmental education and can't wait to spend the rest of my life working in the field."

Fundraising Committee- Due to the NAI this fall, IAN will not be having a full fall workshop. Because of this we will be having the auction and fundraising events at the spring workshop in 2012.

You could write for *The Web*!!

We are always looking for articles, book reviews and upcoming events that would be of interest and any member can submit something!! To submit send your submissions to *The Web* Editor Jacklyn Gautsch at j.gautsch78@gmail.com. Electronic submissions are preferred in word documents for text and jpeg for images.

IAN ExCom Nominees - Voting will be at the IAN meeting/swap on Nov. 18th in Newton or use the ballot below.

Kelly Dix, Pottawattamie CCB Environmental Educator

I have been fortunate to work as an Environmental Educator for Pottawattamie County for the past 8 years. I enjoy sharing my love of nature with others and have been a member of IAN since 2004. IAN is a great resource and it would be an honor to serve on the IAN ExCom and be able to give back to this wonderful organization. Thanks!



Chuck Jacobsen, Clinton CCB Interpretive Naturalist

- A 1975 graduate from Clinton High School.
- A long time volunteer working mainly through a non-profit group known as the Eagle Point Nature Society (EPNS) which has since 1973 operated a private nature center then known as Eagle Point Nature Center now Soaring Eagle Nature Center (SENC).
- Held seats on the EPNS Board for many terms including the offices of president and vice president.
- Continued volunteer work in the field at SENC including zoo and trails management.
- Attended evening classes at Kirkwood Community College in 1976 that included soils, greenhouse and horticulture studies with a emphasis on prairie species identification and propagation.
- Achieved an Associates Degree in Applied Science from Clinton Community College in 1981.
- Since then has worn a number of hats in his job experience including parks maintenance, sales, goldsmith and factory work.
- Raised a family through the next two decades but continued to volunteer in the field at SENC and on the EPNS Board. Began presenting to elementary school and public groups as well as carrying out various maintenance projects.
- In December of 2000 assumed the roll of Director of SENC and put his experience to work at building the membership and program there.
- Accepted a part-time naturalist position with Clinton County Conservation (CCCB) in 2003.
- Was made a full-time interpretive naturalist with CCCB in 2004 and has continued there until the present.



Jess Steines, Clinton CCB Naturalist

Back when I was a young sapling, just out of college, I had no idea that I was going to be a naturalist, I didn't know what we really did. As I was trying to figure out what I was going to do now that I had a degree and not a job, along came a chance for me to an Americorps Naturalist for Scott County's Wapsi River Center. I thought this was a great opportunity while I found a full-time job doing something else in natural resources. At that time I knew naturalists existed but it seemed more like a mythical creature, I never sought them out. Which I now understand is a daily struggle for naturalist, what do we have to do to get our name out there, get people to our events and have people remember us! Well a day came when I was asked me if I wanted to go to IAN, I had no idea what it was, I don't even think I asked what



I-A-N stood for, for goodness sakes I probably thought you said it like the name, Ian, but I said sure! When I arrived, I learned though we all have the same general career, "like-minds" and most of us have an address in the state of Iowa but we work for different counties with different natural areas, attributes, rules, funds and IDEAS. In those three days, I found out it was a great organization that helped people (like naive me) through scholarships, workshops, listserves that sparked ideas, interests and philosophies of like-minded people. Because of IAN we are able to come together to get things done and learn from each other! Now my career is an interpretive naturalist for Clinton County Conservation and since 2009 I have been the chair of the IAN Scholarship Committee that allocates funds for members to go to workshops to better themselves in the naturalist field. Presently, I would like to try serving you as part of EXCOM!

Emily Van't Hul, Lyon CCB Naturalist

I have been a member of IAN since 2006 and have come a long way as a naturalist due to the help of this organization. I have worked as the summer naturalist for Sioux County and for 4 ½ years in Madison County and am currently working as the Lyon County naturalist. I would love the opportunity to serve on the IAN ExCom and give back to the organization.



Jessica Wagner, Jackson CCB Naturalist

I am the naturalist for Jackson County Conservation. I started with JCCB right out of college in May 2007 as their summer intern, and then transitioned into an AmeriCorps position in the fall. And after a few months was fortunate to become their full time naturalist. I became a member of IAN right out of college and am glad to be part of such a great organization. I have served on the IAN Traveling Exhibits committee and am proud to have helped with the awesome tallgrass prairie exhibit that is currently traveling around the state of Iowa! I am also on the IAN Awards Committee. I have truly enjoyed and benefited from the great workshops IAN has put on and would like to give back by continuing to help keep this great organization going. I would be honored to serve on IAN Ex-Com. Thank you for your consideration."

IAN 2011 Fall Ballot

Please circle 3 you wish to vote for:

Jessica Wagner

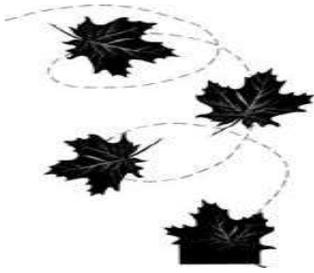
Chuck Jacobsen

Kelly Dix

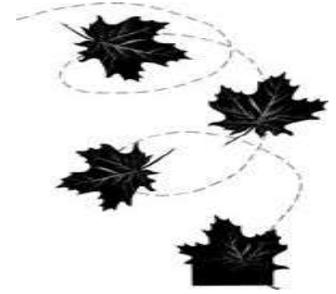
Emily Van't Hul

Jess Steines

Send Ballot by October 31, 2011 to Tina Popson IAN President Hitchcock Nature Center, 27792 Ski Hill Loop, Honey Creek, IA 51542



**Fall IAN Naturalist Swap
November 18th, 2011
Newton Arboretum, Jasper County**



What's it all about?

Due to the majority of IAN members attending the Fall NAI Workshop in the Twin Cities there will not be a 3 day Fall IAN Conference in Iowa, however there still is important business and fun to be had in this one day Naturalist Swap! The Naturalist Swap will take place on November 18th from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Newton Arboretum in Jasper County. As part of the grant evaluation process, anyone who attended the Fall NAI Workshop is asked to attend and share their experiences. If you did not attend, you are still invited to take part in the Business Meeting and Naturalist Swap.

What should I bring?

Bring your favorite naturalist activity or materials to share with the group. We will be ordering pizza for a noontime lunch so bring some cash if you are interested in pitching in. Also, a reminder IAN membership is renewed in the fall so please make your checks in the amount of \$20 payable to IAN and mail to:

IAN Membership Committee
ATTN: Missy Smith
15565 118th Avenue
Indianola, Iowa 50125

Agenda:

Friday, November 18th, 2011

10:00 - IAN Business Meeting/Election

11:00 - Break, Order Pizza!

11:15 - NAI Review

Noon - Lunch

12:30 - Naturalist Swap/Program Ideas

Directions to the Arboretum:

Take exit 168 (Iowa Speedway Exit) off of I-80. Turn north towards Newton on Iowa Speedway Drive. Continue on this road until N 4th Ave E (first road pass the stop light) and turn left. You will see the arboretum on the north side of the road. If you get lost, call the Newton Park Office at 641-792-1470.

For questions or more information please email the workshop coordinator at Brian_claytonccb@yahoo.com

Conservation & Environmental Education Excellence Awards Program

Have you or someone you know done something GREAT for conservation or environmental education in Iowa? If so, fill out the IAN/ICEC Awards application and turn it in by December 1. These awards are sponsored by Iowa Association of Naturalists and Iowa Conservation Education Coalition.



Award Categories:

Aldo Leopold Environmental Education Award *For Lifetime Achievement in EE Excellence and Leadership*

This award may be given to an individual or an organization. Provide a description of exemplary service in the field of environmental education including number of years, accomplishments, and service to community or state organizations. Award recipients in this category may receive this award once only.

Bohumil Shimek Environmental Educator Award *For Outstanding Efforts by an Environmental Educator*

This award will recognize a formal or non-formal educator for innovative EE programming beyond her/his job expectations. Describe overall involvement in EE

including innovative programming and how this individual has performed beyond job requirements. One reference letter may be included. Award recipients in this category may receive this award once only.

Chris Holt Youth Environmental Education Award *For an Outstanding EE Program for Youth or Conducted by Youth (Preschool-Grade 12)*

This award may be presented to an individual or a group. Describe the program's uniqueness, the benefits to youth and the community, and student involvement. Also considering uniqueness, level of student involvement, and benefits to the youth and community. Award recipients in this category may receive this award once only.

“Ding” Darling Environmental Education Award *For Outstanding EE Program or Event which Informs and Educates the General Public*

This award may be presented to an individual or an organization for an annual event, ongoing program, or one-time special event. Describe the program or project and how it was particularly creative and effective. Describe how the program/project was evaluated, including numbers of individuals reached. Award recipients in this category may receive this award once only.

Sylvan Runkel Environmental Education School Award *For Outstanding Whole-School EE Program*

Describe the overall program, including whole school involvement, cross-disciplinary approach, support by administration and staff, innovative uses of outdoor classrooms, how the program benefits the community, and student involvement. Student and parent comments may be included. This award is given to a traditional school (not an individual or special program sponsored by another entity, though the school may have co-sponsors). Award recipients in this category cannot reapply for this award for the following two years.

Frederic Leopold Environmental Education Award *For outstanding EE efforts by Business, Industry, or Labor*

Describe the EE efforts including benefits to the community, goals of the programs, and why the educational efforts were initiated. Consider also longevity of results, target audience, and that the efforts are above and beyond legal requirements. Project may receive this award once only.

Ada Hayden Conservation Education Award *For Outstanding Efforts to Educate About Preservation, Land Management, or Natural Resource Conservation*

This award may be presented to individuals or organizations. Describe the efforts involved in educating others (which may be conservation professionals or private landowners) including the purposes, future plans, and target audiences of the conservation education programs. Also should be above and beyond person's job, suited to audience's needs, longevity of effort, and a measure of effectiveness. Project may receive this award once only.

Outstanding Environmental Education Program (2 or less full-time equivalent naturalists) **Outstanding Environmental Education Program (3 or more full-time equivalent naturalists)** *For Excellence in EE Programming by an Agency or Institution*

Describe examples of effective programs uniquely suited to the local EE needs in your area. Other items considered for judging may include: brief history of the program, goals and evaluations of program; creative programming; staff size (include paid, full time staff & seasonal staff); numbers of

programs given and number of participants; passive interpretation efforts; and annual EE budget. Award recipients in this category cannot reapply for this award for the following two years.

Outstanding Volunteer

This award may be presented to an individual who has shown dedication promoting and assisting with environmental education efforts. Describe the person's willingness to serve, level of involvement, and accomplished projects or tasks. One reference letter may be included. Award recipients may receive this award once only.

Outstanding Interpretative Print Media

This award may be presented to an individual or an organization for the development of newsletters, brochures, or trail guides. Describe the goals and purpose of the project and how it was particularly creative and effective. Describe how the project was evaluated including the number of individuals reached. Please include an example of the project with submission. Project may receive this award once only.

Outstanding Interpretative Non-Print Media

This award may be presented to an individual or an organization for the development of websites, podcasts, or film/video. Describe the goals and purpose of the project and how it was particularly creative and effective. Describe how the project was evaluated including the number of individuals reached. Please include an example of the project with submission. Project may receive this award once only.

Who they were and the legacies left behind...

The individuals for whom the IAN/ICEC environmental education excellence awards were named made important contributions to the understanding of the wealth of Iowa's natural and cultural resources. Many had childhood opportunities to learn about and enjoy the natural world in the company of a parent or mentor. All set examples as intelligent stewards of the land worth emulating. These awards were named for them in order to honor their achievements and their memories.

Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) is considered the father of ecology, wildlife management, and modern conservation. He was the author of the environmental classic *A Sand County Almanac*. He was a professor, writer, forester, and field biologist whose collective contributions to conservation defy a one-paragraph description. His most important contribution to modern conservation was the incorporation of his understanding of the natural world into his personal values and beliefs. His "Land Ethic," a working definition of right and wrong, is now the philosophical foundation upon which environmentally sound decisions can be made.

Bohumil Shimek (1861-1937) was a professor of botany at the University of Iowa and the first director of the Lakeside Laboratory at Lake Okoboji. He was among the first to extend his educational goals beyond botany and nature study, to include appreciation, enjoyment, and the importance of acting to preserve and protect the natural world. For that reason, Shimek is considered Iowa's first environmental educator.

Chris Holt (1974-1995) was only a young man when he died, hardly old enough to leave an environmental legacy such as that of Aldo Leopold or Ding Darling. However, he did leave behind good memories of a young person who enthusiastically learned about the natural world with his family and shared that love of the outdoors with his friends.

Jay N. 'Ding' Darling (1876-1962) is most well-known among Iowans as a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist for the *Des Moines Register and Leader*. He was also influential in the creation of the Teacher's Conservation Camp in the early 1960s. His drawings often had ecological or conservation themes, and served to raise a new awareness of the fragile nature of such natural resources as Iowa's productive topsoil and its diverse abundant wildlife. Of his drawings, Darling once said, "The cartoon is the applesauce in which political pills were immersed and fed to unwilling children."

Sylvan Runkel (1907-1995) is remembered for his quiet humor, expertise on Iowa's natural history, and sweat-stained ranger's hat. He co-authored four books, including *Wildflowers of Iowa's Woodlands*, *Wildflowers of the Tallgrass Prairie*, and *Wildflowers and Other Plants of Iowa's Wetlands*. He was a fascinating individual, an interesting leader of nature hikes, and an insightful educator who believed strongly in the value of direct experience with the environment.

Frederic Leopold (1895-1989) was Aldo Leopold's youngest brother. He was a successful business professional and community leader who believed strongly in his company's motto, "Built on honor to endure." He applied the same values of honor and respect to the environment that he applied to his work and family. He shared his brother Aldo's gifts of scientific curiosity and enjoyment of the outdoors. In his spare time and in his own backyard, he conducted one of the world's most extensive studies of the mating and nesting habits of wood ducks. Around his home in Burlington, he is still remembered as "Mr. Wood duck."

Ada Hayden (1884-1950) was a professor of botany at Iowa State College (now Iowa State University). She was the first woman and one of the first four individuals to earn a Ph.D. from Iowa State. Dr. Hayden is considered the first voice for the preservation of Iowa's prairies. She did the pioneering research to locate and document Iowa's remaining tracts of native prairie. Today, nearly half of the acreage she recommended is protected by state and county agencies. She was among the first to recognize that many of Iowa's prairie species could be found in roadsides.

Nomination Form

Individuals may nominate themselves or another individual or organization for any award. Award forms should not exceed three pages total plus one support item (such as a guide, video, or photograph). The supporting item should not be a substitute for required information. Electronic submissions are required. Materials will not be returned. Please submit a separate form for each nomination

Name of Nominee _____

Agency/Organization _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (work) _____ (home) _____

Email _____

This nomination is submitted by _____

Email _____

Check category entered:

- Aldo Leopold Environmental Education Award
- Bohumil Shimek Environmental Educator Award
- Chris Holt Youth Environmental Education Award
- “Ding” Darling Environmental Education Award
- Sylvan Runkel Environmental Education Award
- Outstanding Environmental Education Program (2 or less naturalists)
- Outstanding Environmental Education Program (3 or more naturalists)
- Frederic Leopold Environmental Education Award
- Ada Hayden Conservation Education Award
- Outstanding Interpretative Print Media Award
- Outstanding Non-print Media Award
- Outstanding Volunteer Award

Submission should be e-mailed by December 1 and sent to:

Nathan Unsworth
IAN/ICEC Awards Committee
Newton Park and Recreation
3000 N 4th Ave E
Newton, IA 50208
Phone: 309-371-3365
Email: nunsworth@gmail.com

My Favorite Green Things!

By Sydney Hiatt Pottawattamie CCB Environmental Educator

I'm not an electronic kind of girl. I don't own a microwave or toaster, now accustomed to eating all of my leftovers at chillier temperatures; I don't use blow-dryers and have no lamps in my apartment, preferring to wander in darkness around the edges of tables and chairs with my arms outstretched, bracing for contact. It has become my personal duty and life goal to use as little electricity as possible, leaving only one outlet occupied in my entire home, reserved for the granddaddy of electricity—my refrigerator. Yet this responsibility doesn't always fly with family members and friends, who ask why my phone has been shut off for the past few days, why I can't just *plug it in*. Nor does it explain the sweltering temperatures in my apartment, a set of fans standing guard with their blades perfectly still, unable to move.

Last year, my mom decided that for all gift-giving occasions, she would only purchase “green” gifts, items that are sustainably manufactured or contribute to a healthier environment. For my recent graduation, my mom introduced me to SOLIO, a solar-powered battery charger that's as nifty as its name. Behold! A battery charger that requires zero electricity—no coal emissions here! On sunny days, I leave my little guy perched at the edge of a window or strap it to my backpack on long bicycle rides or hikes. It holds a charge that I can transfer to my cell phone and other small electronics, or I can charge my devices simultaneously. It holds up to 9 hours of charging power and fits any USB cord, meaning my cell phone, iPod, computer, and other compatible gadgets can drink up all of the juice they need for just the right amount of time.

What I love most about my SOLIO charger? It is renewable energy that's accessible and useful for an average girl like me. It's inexpensive and portable, not to mention fool-proof, meaning I don't have to be a physicist to know how to use it. It's the kind of gizmo that makes me excited about the future and hopeful for what's to come—renewable energy in the everyday that's affordable, effective, and way too easy.



COUNTY CONSERVATION

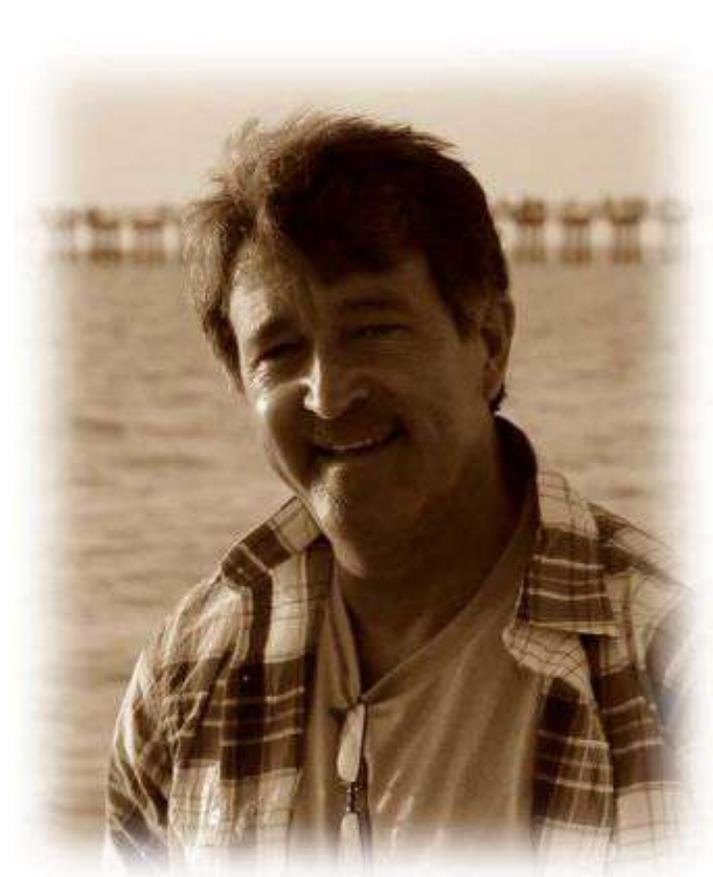
2020!

by Thomas F. Hazelton, IACCB CEO

GREETINGS from "the new kid on the block"....well, sort of. Despite several decades under the belt with Iowa's county conservation system already - sometimes, one just can't get enough - I retired my Linn County hat in April, and tossed on one as the IACCB C.E.O. on June 1st. It's been kinda one of those surreal experiences...., you know, did this really all just happen to me?! I could not be more ecstatic about our potential and what lies ahead for county conservation in Iowa, and I am most certainly very proud to serve our great "industry" in this capacity. Well..... August has rolled around and the honeymoon is over! We held our summer Board of Directors meeting in July, and commenced with crafting some new directions and statewide ambitions for our organization - this is where that "we're all in this together" scenario brings me to an article for the IAN newsletter!

The IACCB 2010-11 Strategic Planning initiative identified a strong need to expand our marketing & outreach endeavors. We discovered right up front that our first (and most important) task will be to develop information and data about our statewide system to initially utilize internally - bringing our collective staff and board members up-to-speed on exactly what the breadth of Iowa's county conservation system entails. We can then commence with the external outreach and education portion of the overall effort. Much of this information gathering is going to focus on user and visitor statistics from all facets of our county conservation system in Iowa. Once compiled, we intend to apply formulas to these numbers to establish the economic impact of your local CCB operations, as well as what our state system brings to the economic climate, quality of life and workforce of the state of Iowa.

A piece of this puzzle is going to be pulling together all the program and event numbers from all the great things that you do locally with your school programs (public & home-school), general public programs and events, bus trips, etc. We assume that most of you already capture this attendance and user data in some way, so perhaps it may not be too daunting a task to



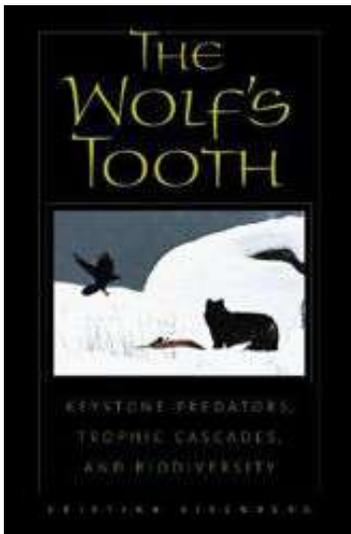
pull it together for this survey process. We will also be requesting similar statistics about facility usage (camping, cabins, shelters, lodges, nature center rentals, etc.) Again, we are making the general assumption that these numbers are already tabulated in some form within each county. One question that has already surfaced is that ofHow do you count those "repeat participants" - whether they are school students or patrons to your public programs? So that everyone is counting them all the same - we will assume you would count them as we will campers.....an individual participant is always counted, no matter how many different programs or events they attend throughout the year/season.

I just wanted to give you a "heads-up" that this survey will be coming to your CCB sometime this fall - the results will play a HUGE role in every direction we roll in the future. We thank-you in advance for your assistance on this project, and extend our appreciation for everything that you do for environmental awareness, outdoor education, natural resource preservation and community outreach! We look forward to working with you all in the months and years to come! Have a great fall season!!

Book Review

The Wolf's Tooth: Keystone Predators, Trophic Cascades, and Biodiversity by Cristina Eisenberg

Reviewed by Pete Eyheralde



Hey Naturalists, if you're looking for a great read that combines good storytelling with an important ecology lesson (and who isn't?), then check out "*The Wolf's Tooth: Keystone Predators, Trophic Cascades, and Biodiversity*", by Cristina Eisenberg. This book weaves stories of Eisenberg's own PhD field research on wolves and elk in the northern Rockies with many of the classic ecological papers that have shaped our world view (and textbooks) for the last half century. A fresh review of the basic science behind trophic cascades and keystone predators is laid out with examples from research in aquatic ecosystems and old-growth rain forests as well – systems that include

orcas, sea otters, sea urchins and kelp; sharks and scallops; planktivorous and piscivorous fish and algae; coyotes and songbirds.

While most ecological theory has focused on natural systems controlled by energy inputs from the bottom up (you know, the trophic pyramid you've shown to third graders dozens of times: solar energy converts to green plants, feeds the herbivores, feeds the secondary consumers, and on up the line), trophic cascade theory demonstrates that many ecosystems are governed from the top down, as in wolves not only directly control elk numbers through predation, but alter their behavior (landscape of fear) reducing over-browsing, changing the structure of plant communities, and creating habitat for other species, such as amphibians, beavers and songbirds.

This idea has important implications for conservation biology and the re-wilding of the North American landscape. Echoes of Leopold's "*Thinking Like a Mountain*" essay are felt as Eisenberg argues with new research that by maintaining large predators at the top of the food chain, a cascade of effects will be seen down all trophic levels, reverberating their presence throughout an entire ecosystem.

As wildlife management begins its shift from protecting only game species to maintaining biodiversity and landscape level ecological processes, the idea of conserving and re-wilding habitats to support keystone predators becomes crucial. Leopold and Thoreau said it best... "In wildness is the salvation of the world. Perhaps this is the hidden meaning in the howl of the wolf, long known among mountains, but seldom perceived among men."

Have you read a great book you would like to share?

We are always looking for reviews to include in The Web. Your review should give the reader an engaging, informative and critical discussion of the book.

Email your review to Jacklyn Gautsch at j.gautsch78@gmail.com.

Name that Nature Center Contest!

Submit your guess to IAN President Tina Popson at tina.popson@pottcounty.com; please use "Name This Nature Center" as the subject line. The sender of the first correct answer will win bragging rights in the next issue of The Web!



The Winner from the last round was Lisa Anderson with the correct guess of Annett Nature Center, Warren County Conservation.

Since we are not having a Fall Workshop this year here is a registration form for everyone to renew with:

IAN Membership Form

_____ New _____ Renewal

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Please enclose a check payable to IAN for \$20, or \$10 for full time students.

Mail to: IAN Membership Committee; ATTN: Missy Smith; 15565 118th Avenue
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Naturalists – planting the seed of environmental stewardship by communicating the meanings and relationships in natural, cultural, and historical resources.