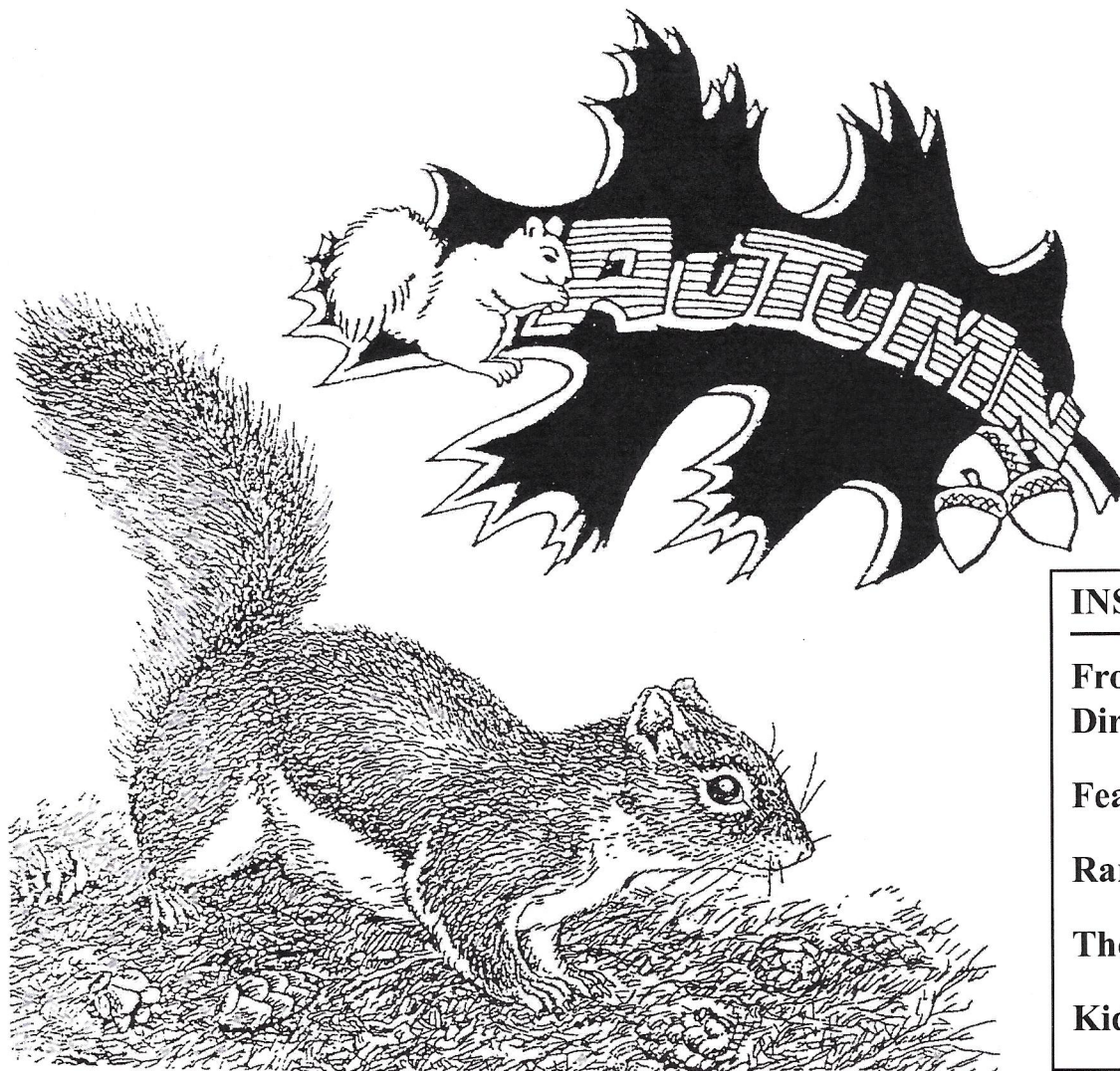




# *Keokuk County Conservation Board News*

## *FALL 2015*

*Serving through education, recreation, and conservation of our natural resources*

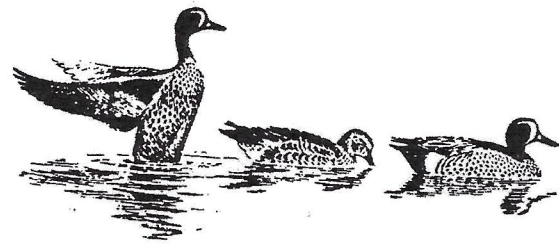


INSIDE...	Page
From the Director's Desk	... 2
Feature Animal	... 3
Ranger News	... 4
The Wonder Fish	... 6
Kids Page	... 7

*From the Director's desk....*

Not long ago I stopped to talk to a local gentleman that I had never seen in Belva Deer Park before. In making conversation, I asked, "What was he up to today?" He replied, "He was just looking at what all his tax dollars were paying for." Not knowing if he was joking or serious, I tried to explain that all of the recent developments including the paved roads, campsites, parking lots, shelters, cabins, office, playgrounds, and restrooms were all funded through park generated revenue or donations. I will never know if he believed me or not. However, it got me thinking. Does the general public have the same views as this gentleman? Obviously this person was misinformed about our department or he just assumed the tax payer was footing all the bills.

The fact of the matter is, excluding salaries, office expense, and electric bills; the conservation board pays for all other expenses with park generated revenue. This includes land acquisitions and development, vehicle and mower purchases, water, septic, fuels, hardware, gravel, and everything else but the three items listed above. I want to stress that this is a situation unique to Keokuk County. Most conservation



departments in the state do not operate this way. Most conservation boards do not have a 260-acre lake that draws people from all over Iowa and other states, generating the revenue to offset the tax asking budget. However, we have made it our goal since the beginning that the lake project at Belva Deer Park would not be a burden on the tax payer. I think we have proven over the past fifteen years that we have kept our word. Below is the last year's revenue for you to view.

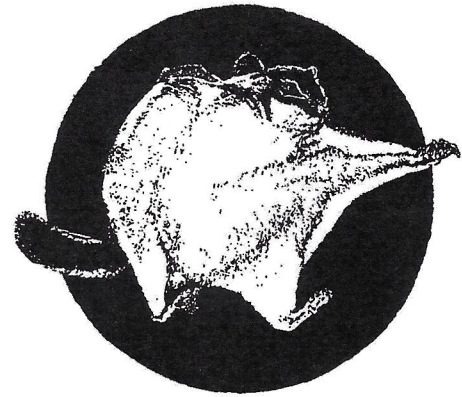
I hope this article clears up any confusion or misunderstanding of how the projects at your county parks are funded.

<b>Camping:</b>	<b>\$73,200.00</b>
<b>Cabins:</b>	<b>\$55,990.95</b>
<b>Rent of Land:</b>	<b>\$95,881.90</b>
<b>Equestrian Trails:</b>	<b>\$1,226.00</b>
<b>Shelter Reservations:</b>	<b>\$620.00</b>
<b>REAP:</b>	<b>\$13,001.68</b>
<b>Donations &amp; Misc:</b>	<b>\$5,800.70</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$245,721.23</b>

## SOUTHERN FLYING SQUIRREL

*Glaucomys Volans*

Yesterday we removed a large oak tree at the cabins which had died as a result of oak wilt. Once felled, we found that a hollow in the tree's main body was inhabited by three flying squirrels. While uninjured, being nocturnal they were obviously confused by the situation they found themselves in, on the ground in broad daylight, and had to be physically herded off the roadway to the timbers edge where they immediately sought refuge up the nearest trees.



The southern flying squirrel, also known as the assapan, is one of two species of flying squirrels found in North America, the other being the slightly larger northern flying squirrel. They occur in the eastern half of North America from southeastern Canada to Florida. They are the smallest of the tree squirrels measuring seven to ten inches in length and weighing four to eight ounces. Their fur is gray brown on top with darker flanks and a white or cream colored belly. The eyes are large and bulging, enabling them to forage under cover of darkness.

Flying squirrels are not capable of flight like birds or bats rather they glide (volplane) from tree to tree. Glides have been recorded to reach 295 feet! The front arms and rear legs are connected by a furry membrane called a patagium which is used to glide through the air. Direction and speed in midair are controlled by changing tautness of this natural parachute through positioning of the arms and legs. They show great maneuverability in midair, making 90 degree turns around obstacles if need be. It is believed that they use triangulation to estimate distance of the landing area as they often lean out and pivot side to side prior to jumping. Their fluffy, flattened tail aids in flight control and is abruptly raised to change trajectory upwards just before reaching a tree. This enables them to extend their arms and legs forward, creating a parachute effect to reduce the shock of landing. Immediately upon landing they scurry to the other side of the trunk to avoid potential predators. Although graceful in flight, they are clumsy walkers who if caught on the ground in the presence of danger, prefer to attempt to hide rather than flee.

Flying squirrels are extremely social and an area might contain a large number of individuals provided suitable habitat exists. They are also the only nocturnal tree squirrels. Almost completely dependent upon oak/hickory forests, they require mature trees with classic understory containing fallen, rotting logs for nesting and food source. The most carnivorous of the tree squirrels, the Southern Flying Squirrel feeds upon nuts, acorns, seeds, berries, fungi, lichens, birds and their nestlings and eggs, insects, and at times other vertebrates and carrion. In warm months, nests constructed of leaves and twigs will be utilized much like grey and fox squirrels but for the rearing of young and protection from the cold of winter, woodpecker holes and hollows in the tree are used for nesting. In the wintertime, large groups can be found piled together in these cavities to conserve warmth.

The Southern Flying Squirrel is listed by the state as a species of special concern. Flying squirrel populations in Iowa are declining due to the loss of mature mast producing trees in stands of timber and the cleaning up of timber through the removal of fallen and rotting logs. These logs provide a fungus which is an important food source. The maintenance of older wood lots through reduced tree harvest and the leaving of rotting material and snag trees will ensure that future generations are afforded the opportunity to enjoy these little daredevils of the timber.

## Notes from the Ranger.....

Well at the end of the spring newsletter I ended with, "Go Cubs, this is the year", little did I know that they would be playing for the pennant and a chance to go to the World Series. All hope was swept away when the Mets did the sweeping in a straight four game's to win the National League Pennant. We'll go back to the old saying of, "There's always next year". I really think things are going to be good for the Cubbies in the next few years as long as they don't run into any snags. The mentioning of snags brings to mind a very important part of Iowa's timber habitat.



Most folks use the term "snag" to refer to the dying or dead nature of a tree that is in their yard, woodlot, or favorite tract of timber. Most people cut and clear these trees from their yard due to a falling hazard or to the negative visual effects it has on their property. I myself had a dead blue spruce in my yard that was left for habitat, which I had planned on leaving for quite some time. After a summer of looking at that haggard old dead tree it had to come down. Although it was a great snag to leave for the wildlife it just wasn't conducive for eye appeal sitting in my front yard. I have ten acres of property where I live and about three of it is timber ranging from mostly hickory, birch, and soft maple. I personally leave all snags within my boundaries unless there is a chance of one falling on a fence or onto a neighbor's property. Even if I have one next to my hay ground I leave it standing and if by chance it falls into the hay that's when I will clean it up. It was once believed that snags were a threat to living trees; however biologists and foresters now realize they are an important part of timber health. Snags pose little disease threat and do not compete for sunlight, water, or nutrients against live and healthy trees. Once snags have fallen they become logs, and return nutrients to the



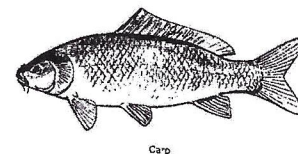
timber floor through decay. So why is it so important to leave snags? Many forest birds are dependent on snags because they only nest and rear young in tree cavities, they consist of primary & secondary cavity nesters. The primary cavity nesters consist of; red-bellied & red-headed woodpeckers, pileated woodpecker, northern flicker, hairy woodpecker, and downy woodpecker to name a few. They are referred to as primary nesters because they are the ones that excavate their own nesting holes. Secondary cavity nesters also rear their young in natural tree cavities or in holes that were left behind by the primary nesters. Secondary cavity nesters consist of; wood ducks, American kestrel, tree swallows, black-capped chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, house wren, eastern bluebird, chimney swift, and even the common house sparrow. So the list consists of some very important bird species that rely on snags for their existence. Snags also provide another very beneficial aspect and that is insect control, insects that live in and around snags are a major food item for most of these cavity nesters. There are many other types of wildlife that depend on snags or living den trees. Squirrels, raccoons, opossums, chipmunks all use the holes that are left in snags or in den trees for the raising of young and winter hibernation. Once the snag falls these logs are very valuable to all sorts of wildlife like amphibians, reptiles, toads, and a host of ground mammals that use them for shelter or dens. The most asked question concerning snags is how many should we leave in a standing timber? Most conservationists say to have at least 2-3 per acre of woodland and that is sufficient to supply the needs of most the wildlife using the area. So the next time you say, "Look at that dead old tree" just think of all the good it's doing for the wildlife that we enjoy watching.



Ranger Pie Reighard

## The Wonder Fish

By Vance Polton  
Iowa DNR Fisheries Management Technician



**1878** - "There is, in my opinion, no fish known the introduction of which into Iowa waters promises so much and such general good ..." "Their known ability to stand extremes of temperatures in water, to live in stagnant pools, even bury themselves in mud to withstand extreme heat or cold; eating any and all kinds of food, especially vegetable, upon which they are known to thrive when all other food fails, make them especially desirable for many of our waters." - B. F. Shaw, Iowa Fish Commissioner.

**1880** - According to Dr. Hessel, who was in charge of program for the United States Fish Commission, This species has been cultivated in Europe since 1227 where some of the hatchery operations cover an area of 20,000 acres and bring their owners an "immense amount of income". "From this long period of cultivation they have become thoroughly domesticated, and the families as diversified and well defined as the various breeds of cattle." At the time there were three varieties brought to the United States for propagation: the leather or scale less, the minor, and the scale. All three varieties were found to be fast growers in the United State that out grew those in their ancestral home the German States. Mr. Blackford, the New York Fish Commissioner, said of this fish: "It is hardy and prolific, and is as good, if not better, eating than any other fish we have." With glowing reports as these, how could the Iowa Fish Commissioners not bring this "Wonder Fish" to Iowa? And so in the spring of 1880 it was introduced into several specially built ponds at the State Fish Hatchery near Anamosa and by:

**November 5, 1881** - "The water in one of the State ponds has partially cleared up, and we were gladly surprised to find a few young ... from two and one half to three inches in length, in the pond." "How many may be found when a final examination of the pond is made, we cannot tell, but that these fish have bred is full of promise of future good. As far as known, these are the first ... ever bred in Iowa."

**1882** - By this time the State had been handing out these fish to private individuals as well as stocking them heavily in public waters.

**1883** - More acclaim for these "Wonder Fish": "They live to exceedingly great age, from one to two hundred years, and grow to from fifty to one hundred and fifty pounds." A Dr. George Wigg of Missouri claimed he had one of these fish in his office that had been frozen stiff six times and still showed no ill effects of the harsh treatment.

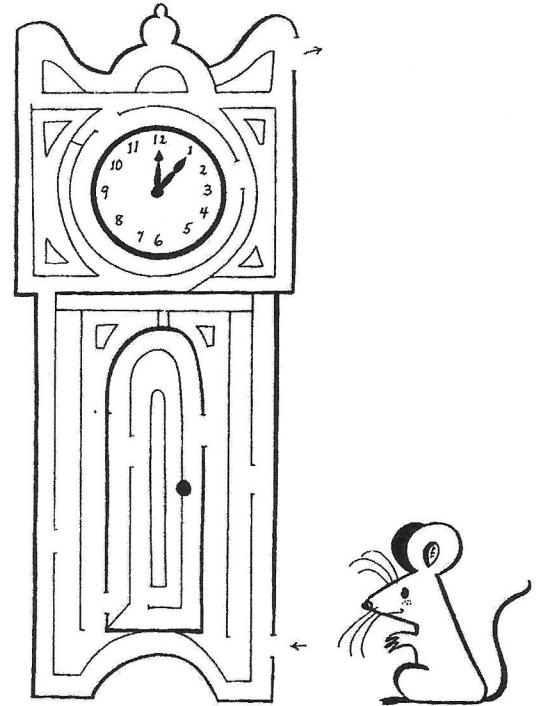
**1885** - "But one of the most notable recommendations of the ... is that it is possible for almost every farmer to have a fish preserve of his own in which he can grow fish for his family with less cost and trouble than he can chickens and turkeys."

**1911** - "Only a few years ago there was a demand for young **CARP** and they were supplied by the hundreds of thousands by the United States Government, and also by many state commissions. These fish did not meet expectations and were not approved as a table fish, and the culture of them ceased." "Pond culture ceased because of the abundance of carp in the rivers and open waters where they could be obtained with less trouble than they could be raised." "It is not a question of what to do with them, to rid our waters of them, for they are here and here to stay. The only question to consider is how we can make the most of its good qualities and lessen the damage done."

And so, to borrow a line from Paul Harvey, "And now you know the *rest* of the story."

# KIDS PAGE!

HELP THE MOUSE RUN UP THE CLOCK!



**CLEAN AIR**

CLEAR  
CODE  
CONTACT  
CRISES  
DATA  
DIRECT  
DIVERT  
DUTY  
EXACT  
FLIGHT  
FLOW  
GROUND  
GUIDE  
HEADSET  
HOLD

LAND  
LEVEL  
LIGHTS  
MONITOR  
ORDER  
PATH  
PATTERN  
PILOT  
PLANE  
RADAR  
RADIO  
ROTATE  
RULE  
RUNWAY  
SAFETY

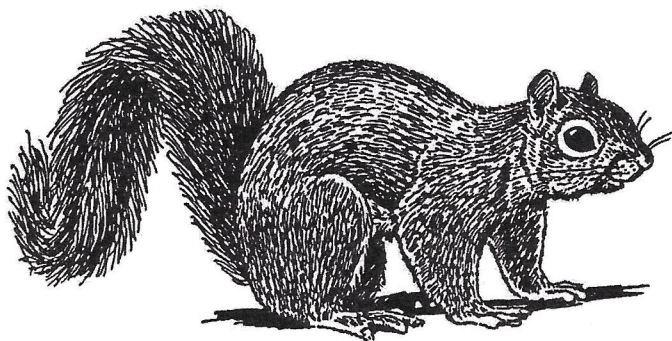
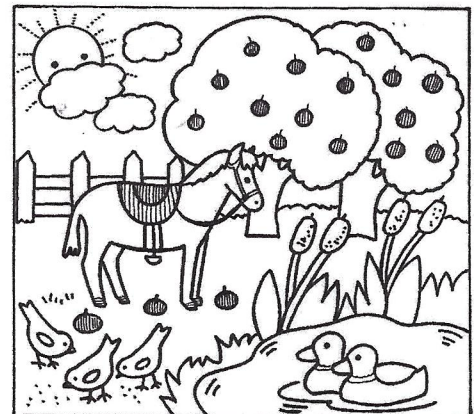
SCREEN  
SECTOR  
SHIFT  
SKILL  
SPEED  
SPOT  
STACK  
TAPE  
TEAM  
TENSE  
TOWER  
TRACK  
TRAFFIC  
VOICE  
WEATHER

S	E	S	I	R	C	I	F	F	A	R	T	C	A	T	N	O	C
T	K	R	E	D	R	O	D	G	J	D	M	C	F	P	S	V	L
H	Y	I	C	F	I	O	E	L	E	O	R	I	E	U	G	X	E
G	B	E	L	H	K	T	T	E	N	D	H	V	Q	R	T	W	A
I	D	Z	S	L	A	D	P	C	G	S	I	J	O	M	I	P	R
L	S	L	V	T	E	S	D	A	E	H	Y	U	C	I	F	D	A
E	I	L	O	O	A	R	R	U	X	S	N	B	G	T	C	R	D
V	E	R	H	H	K	C	N	E	Q	D	T	W	H	Z	E	E	A
E	D	G	T	J	K	Y	K	M	H	P	S	G	V	W	Y	C	R
L	S	F	I	C	L	O	T	R	O	T	I	N	O	M	R	U	A
X	B	N	A	E	A	H	K	E	N	L	A	T	Q	T	Y	W	D
E	Z	R	E	T	D	X	G	N	F	J	M	E	P	A	S	V	I
N	T	Y	O	T	R	C	E	F	I	A	L	O	W	R	T	U	O
A	X	L	B	N	R	E	T	T	A	P	S	N	E	O	H	A	K
L	I	N	Q	T	R	W	V	Z	D	G	U	H	J	M	L	P	D
P	A	S	V	C	Y	U	C	I	F	R	I	L	T	O	R	F	U
U	X	N	S	B	E	H	L	E	D	O	C	K	N	A	Q	T	T
W	Z	D	D	G	J	M	A	E	T	E	P	A	T	O	P	S	Y

**SHAPE FIND**

Can you find these shapes in the Fall picture below?

Color the ones you find.



**KCCB Board Members**

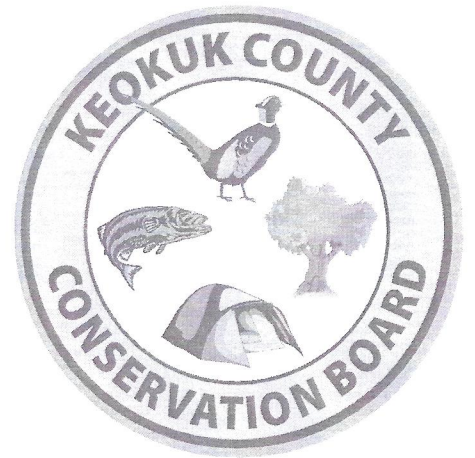
Tom Siskow ..... Sigourney  
 Jay Peiffer ..... South English  
 Greg Dyer..... Richland  
 Bob Mendenhall..... Sigourney  
 Sharon Lyle ..... Keota

**Staff**

David Long.....Director  
 Pie Reighard.....Ranger/Naturalist  
 Brian Ulin.....Maintenance/Ranger

*If you would like to receive the Conservation Newsletter, please send a postcard with your name and address on it to:*

**Keokuk County Conservation Board**  
**Attn: Newsletter**  
 P.O. Box 323  
 Sigourney, IA 52591



Keokuk County Conservation Board's programs are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, and handicap. If anyone believes they have been subjected to discrimination, they may file a complaint with the Keokuk County Conservation Board or the office of Equal Opportunity, US Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 29240.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Keokuk County Conservation Board  
 P.O. Box 323  
 Sigourney, IA 52591



Non-Profit  
 U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
 Sigourney, IA  
 Permit No. 17