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IOWA OUTDOORS

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

www.iowadnr.gov

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March 6, 2007

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LOOK FOR TREE DAMAGE WHILE CLEANING UP

Many Iowans are cleaning up broken branches and damaged trees from the recent storms that impacted a good portion of the state. While clearing broken limbs and trimming branches from damaged trees, examine each tree carefully, looking for any sign the tree has been damaged. Damaged trees could lead to future damage to the property.

"The additional weight of ice and heavy snow caused limbs and branches to break, but it may also have caused cracks in larger branches and even tree trunks that should be examined," said John Walkowiak, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources forestry bureau and certified arborist. "As the ice and snow comes off the branches, the branches should start returning to their normal position in the tree canopy, but if the branch continues to sag, it might have additional damage."

Walkowiak advises property owners to look carefully at joints where major branches meet the main trunk of the tree, and especially look at multi-forked trees where more one main stem is close with another. "Multi-forked trees often have ingrown bark that are weak points," he said. "If these weak points were damaged from the recent storms, they could cause future damage to the tree or to the property during our upcoming spring and summer wind storms."

Walkowiak urges property owners not to panic over tree damage, but to be systematic in examining the tree from the top for hanging broken limbs, to possible trunk

damage right down to looking at the root collar of the tree for possible leaning that could indicate root damage. "If you suspect structure damage to your tree, contact several local tree care companies for a quote to repair," he said.

Walkowiak reminds homeowners to not try to repair tree damage from a ladder or do it with inadequate tools. "Major tree work needs to be completed by a qualified tree care company," he said.

For more information, contact Walkowiak at 515-242-5966 or john.walkowiak@dnr.state.ia.us

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AUCTION, ART SALE TO BENEFIT WETLANDS

CORALVILLE - More than 40 renowned Iowa and Midwest nature and wildlife artists will combine their talents to conserve wetlands at the 20th Anniversary Iowa Nature and Wildlife in Art Exhibition and Sale. Proceeds from sales at the March 17 and 18 show will go to support wetland projects in Buchanan, Jasper, Johnson and Linn counties.

The Coralville Marriott Conference Center will host the two-day event that will include the art show, Wetlands Classic Dinner/Auction, environmental education seminars and the Conservation Corner featuring booths with information on everything from mushrooms to whitetails.

The guest speaker at Saturday's dinner, Liz Christiansen, deputy director of the Iowa DNR, will present a program titled "Sustainable Funding for Iowa's Natural Resources." The auction follows the program. More than 30 donated items, ranging from canoe/cabin weekend getaways to Larry Zach prints, will be sold to the highest bidder. Proceeds from the dinner/auction also support wetland projects.

New to the show are the environmental education seminars. Speakers include prairie restoration pioneer Carl Kurtz, Larry Stone, author of "Listen to the Land," and Anita O'Gara of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. Other highlights will include a live bird exhibition and talk by the Macbride Raptor Project and an interactive water quality demonstration by Kaylene Carney of the United States Geological Survey.

There is something for the whole family. Sale hours are Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission to the art show is $3 for adults, $1 for children and tickets are available at the door. Dinner tickets are $75 per couple or $50 single. Dinner ticket holders may attend the art show beginning at 5 p.m. with dinner following at 7 p.m. Call Steve Atherton (319) 398-5441 for more information or to order dinner tickets.

The show and sale, directed by volunteers and students from Kirkwood Community College in conjunction with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), offers all media types from woodcarving to paintings and photographs to stained glass. Since its inception, the art exhibition and sale has raised more than $100,000 to restore and protect the wetlands that naturally clean our water and protect our environment.

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POST SNOWMELT OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED FOR VOLUNTEERS

DES MOINES — Iowans everywhere are anticipating the coming of the great March melt and the Keepers of the Land Volunteer Program, at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, offers many post-melt opportunities for Iowans to lend a hand to natural resources.

- **Bald Eagle Observation Opportunity:** DNR officials are looking for volunteers to assist with a statewide bald eagle nest observation project. This opportunity starts immediately and is ongoing. For more information on this opportunity contact Stephanie Shepherd or Ron Moore at (515) 432-2823, ext. 102.
- **Air Quality Administrative Opportunity:** DNR officials are looking for volunteers to help with sorting, updating, and organizing of various Air Quality Bureau projects. This opportunity starts immediately and is ongoing until completion. For more information contact Jason Marcel at (515) 281-4873.
- **Local History Artist Opportunity:** Officials at the Wildcat Den State Park Pine Creek Grist Mill are looking for an artist to draw a historic scene based on historical accounts. This opportunity starts immediately and is ongoing until completion. For more information contact Ken Hyman at (563) 262-9040.
- **Restoration Opportunity:** Officials at Wildcat Den State Park are looking for volunteers to help with repairing various parts of the Pine Creek Grist Mill, which dates back to 1848. Opportunity starts April 3 and continues until Oct. 30. For more information contact Ken Hyman at (563) 262-9040.
- **Butterfly Garden Opportunity:** Officials at Bellevue State Park are looking for volunteers to assume the position and responsibility of a butterfly gardener. This opportunity begins April 1 and is ongoing until Oct. 15. For more information contact Ron Jones or Shannon Peterson at (563) 872-4019.
- **Prairie Maintenance Opportunity:** Officials at Springbrook Conservation Education Center are looking for volunteers to assist with clearing invasive species as part of a prairie maintenance project. Opportunity starts immediately and is ongoing. For more information contact David Messinger at (641) 747-8383.
- **Bird Nest Monitoring and Frog and Toad Surveying:** DNR officials are preparing for volunteers to help with bird nest monitoring surveys and frog and toad surveys

that will take place in the spring by offering training workshops throughout the state during February and March. For more information, contact Stephanie Shepherd at (515) 432-2823 ext. 102.

Visit the Keepers of the Land website at www.keepersoftheland.org for information on these and more volunteer opportunities. For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or at Merry.Rankin@dnr.state.ia.us.

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NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION MEETING CHANGED TO DES MOINES

DES MOINES - The Natural Resource Commission (NRC) of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will meet at 8:30 a.m., March 8, in the fourth floor conference room, Wallace State Office Bldg., in Des Moines. The meeting was scheduled for the Bedford City Hall, in Bedford, but changed to Des Moines due to recent snowstorms.

Commission members and DNR staff will meet in the fourth floor conference room, in the Wallace Building at 3 p.m. on March 7 for a presentation on the improvement project at Lake of Three Fires. The meeting and presentation is open to the public.

Members of the NRC are Joan Schneider, Carol Kramer, Richard Francisco, Janice Marcantonio, Lennis Moore and Elizabeth Garst. Richard Leopold is the director of the DNR.

The following is the agenda for the March meeting.

- Approve Agenda
- Approve Minutes of Feb. 8 Meeting
- Director's Remarks
- Construction Projects
  - Lake Icaria State Park, Adams County – HMA Paving
  - Harper's Ferry, Allamakee County – Walkway and Floating Pier
  - Big Creek State Park, Polk County – Trail Program Building
  - Lost Grove Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Scott County – Five Sediment Basins
  - Prairie Rose State Park, Shelby County – PCC Paving
  - Fort Atkinson, Winneshiek County – Replace Steps and Trail
  - Red Haw State Park, Lucas County – HMA Parking Paving
  - Riverton WMA, Fremont County – Pump Replacement
  - Riverton WMA, Fremont County – Electrical System
  - Riverton WMA, Fremont County – Structure Reconstruction

    - Prairie Rose State Park, Shelby County – Campground Improvements and Water System
    - Dolliver State Park, Webster County – Riverbank Stabilization
- Land Acquisition
    - Missouri River, Pottawattamie County – Gibson Bend/Interagency Transfer of Jurisdiction
    - Loess Hills State Forest, Harrison County – Miller
    - Sandy Point Bend WMA, Harrison County – Papio-Missouri River NRD
    - Little Sioux Bend WMA, Harrison County – Papio-Missouri River NRD
    - Waterman Creek Prairie, O'Brien County – The Nature Conservancy
    - Sweet Marsh WMA, Bremer County - Sauerbrei
- Conservation Easements
- Art in Public Buildings Project – Honey Creek Resort State Park
- Management Agreement, Black Hawk County Conservation Board – Rahn
- Agreement with Iowa State University – Lake Restoration Diagnostic and Feasibility Studies
- Agreement with Iowa State University – Effects of Common Carp and Zebra Mussels on Clear Lake
- Culture Resource Investigation Retainer Contract
- 28E Agreement with Keokuk Yacht Club, Inc.
- Concession Contracts – Pine Lake State Park and Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area
- Concession Contract Renewal and Assignment – Lake Macbride State Park
- Water Trail Grants – Fiscal Year 2008
- Fisheries Habitat with Local Entities Program Grant Review
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 51, Game Management Areas
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 52, Wildlife Refuges
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 91, Waterfowl and Coot Hunting Seasons
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 95, Game Harvest Reporting and Landowner Tenant Registration
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 98, Wild Turkey Spring Hunting
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 99, Wild Turkey Fall Hunting by Residents
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 106, Resident Deer
- Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 107, Rabbit and Squirrel Hunting
- Immunocontraceptives
- General Discussion
- Items for Next Meeting, April 12, Wapsi Environmental Center, in Scott County

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PUBLIC MEETING SCHEDULED TO DISCUSS MOUNTAIN LION SIGHTINGS

WEBSTER CITY - The Hamilton County Conservation Board and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will hold a meeting to discuss mountain lion/cougar sightings at the Hamilton County Conservation offices, at Briggs Woods County Park, a few miles south of Webster City. The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m., on March 7, and is open to the public.

The purpose of the meeting is to inform the public about mountain lion/cougar reports in the area, throughout the state and nation. Since 2000, three mountain lions have been killed in Iowa, including one road-killed near Harlan, one shot near Ireton and one shot in south central Iowa, near Chariton. Hundreds of other sightings have been reported.

Ron Andrews, furbearer resource specialist with the Iowa DNR will present the program, along with local DNR and Hamilton County Conservation Board staff. Topics will include verifying mountain lion/cougar sightings, what to do if you encounter a mountain lion/cougar, what is happening in other states and other related topics.

One point Andrews stresses is, the Iowa DNR has not, did not, and will not release mountain lions/cougars in Iowa.

There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion following the formal presentation. The public is encouraged and invited to attend this meeting and to invite other interested people to attend.

For more information on cougars, contact Andrews at 641-425-5088 or by email at Ron.Andrews@dnr.state.ia.us.

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[Please hold this story until March 8]

ANTLERS; SCORING EM, FINDING EM

By Joe Wilkinson
Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Face to face with the big buck, I could see it's massive antlers inches away; main beams as big around as my wrists...

Oh, sorry; no moment of truth or deep woods showdown here. I was at the Iowa Deer Classic over the weekend, watching as another big rack was measured. And another. And another. Over 330 were scored, with most entered in the various categories; shotgun, muzzleloader, bow season kills, in either typical or nontypical rack categories.

"This one is a nontypical. It has some good circumference—mass--on the main beam," points out official scorer Larry Briney. The 'Mingo Buck,' as it is known, had

been shot by Paul Deaton last December during second shotgun season. “I measure the circumference on four spots (on each antler’s main beam),” says Briney. “Most deer will run 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 inches. This one is running high six to seven inches on circumference. That’s what really made it.”

So did the sticker and drop points; smaller tines (usually) that do not grow straight off the main beam. It resembled a tangle of driftwood on the head of the big buck. Still, it was an impressive tangle, measuring 227 7/8 inches.

Nearby, Randy McPherren looks over a nice 10-pointer. “These are all typical points, rising upward...five of them (on each side); with the fifth being the main beam,” demonstrates McPherren. In this category, you’re looking for symmetry. The best score would come from a rack in which one side was the mirror image of the other. A six-inch brow tine on the left side looks impressive, but if the right one grows just three inches, that difference will be subtracted for the final score.

Add the inside antler spread and a couple other measurements and you’ll have your rack scored in anywhere from ten to 30 minutes. The longer jobs, obviously, are those with more tines...especially the thorny non-typicals.

As each rack was scored, it went up on the competition wall. There were prizes, after all for the biggest, the most unusual. “I’ve been coming here nearly every year since junior high. It’s been a dream of mine to have my name on the wall,” relates Seth Bartlett, of Solon. He got his chance, with his 184 7/8 inch bow season trophy on display. “I thought I had an outside chance for Top 5. He was for about ten minutes.”

That short stay at the top reflects all the entries; all the attention to the big racks that grow in Iowa’s cornfields and woods. To be sure, there are bragging rights to an extent. However, it is more than just a ‘bigger is better’ philosophy. For Bartlett, his deer represented years learning more about whitetail patterns, and how it all came together on a late October afternoon. “He was across in some timber, headed down to the field,” he recalls vividly. “I had a grunt tube, but before I could use it, he was walking on a line toward me from 25 yards. At ten yards, he gave me a broadside (shot). I bleated. He stopped and I shot. He ran into a nearby drainage and didn’t come out.”

“A trophy is in the eyes of the person who shot it. It doesn’t matter how big it is,” emphasizes Briney, who has measured whitetail racks since 1974. McPherren, who’s been at it for more than 20 years, isn’t shy about speaking out if some one demeans a smaller set of antlers. He emphasizes the original intent of people like Theodore Roosevelt, one of the founders of the Boone and Crockett measuring club a century ago. “It’s to recognize--to honor--the size of the animal,” stresses McPherren. “These measuring clubs give a lot back to conservation through their programs.”

And those antlers, head mounts, photos or other tangible mementos keep taking you back to that time in the outdoors...and how important it is.

Aging that Rack

Is that 12-point buck the ancient monarch of the forest? Will that little basket buck be a wall-hanger in a couple years? How do you age whitetails?

"The sure fire method is to cross-section an incisor tooth. It will show growth rings, just like the trunk of a tree," says long-time antler measurer—and DNR conservation officer--Randy McPherren.

Genetics determine size. It's awfully hard for a six-point buck to turn into a 10 or 12-point monster, if Grandpa Buck only sported three tines on each side, too. Even with good genes, a lot can happen to a whitetail rack as it develops. A hard bump while 'in velvet' may stunt growth of tines. Even after they have developed, one or two may break off and rub smooth by the time you harvest the buck.

"Circumference gives you an indication. The thicker the circumference of a rack, the more likely it is an older deer," says McPherren. "(However,) you can't age a deer by the number of points."

###

DNR TO HOST PUBLIC MEETING ARPIL 19 ON PROPOSED WILDLIFE RULES

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting a public meeting to discuss a number of new proposed regulations covering deer hunting, fall wild turkey hunting, and waterfowl seasons. The meeting will be conducted over the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) on April 19, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

"This is an opportunity for our hunters and people who support wildlife to give us some feedback on these regulations," said Dale Garner, chief of the DNR's wildlife bureau. "We will go over the proposed regulations and seasons, and take comments from anyone willing to speak, then, if there is any time remaining, we will open the discussion to other topics."

The proposed changes include reducing the number of counties able to participate in the January and November antlerless deer only seasons, eliminate the state forest zones for turkey hunting, and establish the fall 2007, spring 2008 hunting seasons and bag limits.

The DNR will have staff members from the wildlife bureau at each site to help with the meeting.

ICN Locations:

Ames	Iowa State University 1, Lagomarcino Hall, Corner of Knoll Road and Pamel Dr., Room N147 (515) 294-4111
Burlington	Great River Area Education Agency 16, 3601 West Avenue (319) 753-6561
Calmar	South Winneshiek High School, 203 W. South St., Room 17(563) 562-3269
Cedar Falls	Area Education Agency 267, 3712 Cedar Heights Dr. (319) 273-8200
Cedar Rapids	Kirkwood Community College 5, 6301 Kirkwood Blvd. SW, Washington Hall, Room 104 (319) 398-5452
Centerville	Centerville National Guard Armory, Dewey Road, RR1, Box 125B (641) 683-9826
Creston	Green Valley Area Education Agency 14, 1405 N. Lincoln, Turner Room (641) 782-8443
Davenport	North High School, 626 W. 53rd St., Room 576 (563) 388-9880
Dubuque	Senior High School, 1800 Clarke Dr., Room A-123 (563) 552-5500
Fort Dodge	Fort Dodge High School, 819 N 25th St., Room 12 (515) 955-1770
Iowa City	Iowa City National Guard Armory, 925 South Dubuque St. (319) 337-7675
Marshalltown	Iowa Valley Community College District 1, 3702 South Center St., Continuing Education Center, Room 806 (641) 752-4645
Mason City	North Iowa Area Community College 1, 500 College Dr., Activity Center, Room 106 (641) 423-1264
Ottumwa	Ottumwa National Guard Armory, 2858 N. Court Road (641) 683-9826
Red Oak	Red Oak National Guard Armory, RR 1 Park West Road, Old Hwy. 34 (712) 623-2344
Sioux City	Northwest Area Education Agency 12, 1520 Morningside Avenue, Room 206 (712) 274-6000
Spencer	Spencer National Guard Armory, 11 East 23rd Street (712) 262-3904
West Des Moines	Dowling Catholic High School, 1400 Buffalo Road., Room 516 (515) 225-3000

For more information, contact Garner at 515-281-6156 or Willie Suchy at 515-281-8660.

###

PLANT NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS FOR BEST RESULTS

AMES - As the days begin to warm, Iowans start thinking about planting trees and shrubs. But what species of trees and or shrubs should you plant? While exotic non native trees and shrubs species may have an exciting appeal, using native trees and shrub seedlings from an Iowa grown nursery is best for all concerned.

"Native trees and shrubs are better adapted to Iowa's extremes in weather and to Iowa soils, providing superior native wildlife habitat," said John Walkowiak, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources forestry bureau. "Native plants have adapted

themselves over time with insect and disease issues, and they are less likely to be stressed than non-native plants during extreme weather events. Native trees are also a link to Iowa's heritage."

Prior to settlement, Iowa contained 6.7 million acres of forest with a mixture of oaks, hickories, maples and others.

"Today, with 2.7 million acres of forestland, Iowans can still take pride in growing some of the worlds finest hardwoods, like black walnut, oak, ash, cottonwood, sycamore and silver maple," Walkowiak said. "Whether you are planting trees to grow forest products, to increase or improve wildlife habitat, stop erosion or to improve the overall landscape, native trees and shrubs offer the best chance for success. You should pick and choose species according to your land management objectives and your planting site."

The State Forest Nursery, in Ames, produces hardy, native trees and shrubs at affordable costs. The State Nursery buys its native seeds from local Iowa seed collectors each year to ensure the planing stock will withstand Iowa's land and weather conditions. By providing a reliable source of suitable planting stock in large quantities, the State Forest Nursery produces four million bare root seedlings per year for sale to private landowners for reforestation, soil erosion control and wildlife habitat.

"Before ordering seedlings or gathering seed, take some time to decide what you want from your trees," Walkowiak said. Good sources of additional information are district foresters, County Conservation Boards or county extension agents.

The State Forest Nursery has a good supply of native shrubs and small trees perfect for wildlife habitat projects – for the backyard, small acreage or large planting. Call 800-865-2477 or visit www.iowatreeplanting.com for more information.

For more information contact Walkowiak at 515-242-5966 or john.walkowiak@dnr.state.ia.us

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