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Winter 2014-15

## William T. Hornaday

### *A Passionate Defender of Wildlife*

**By Dorothy Wedgewood**

Administrative Assistant

William T. Hornaday (1854-1937) was a well-known pioneer for wildlife conservation in the United States. He spent part of his life's journey for a short time in Mahaska County.

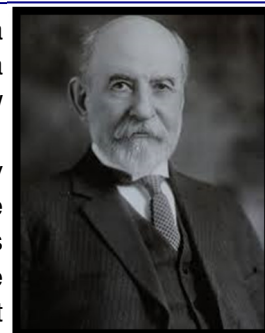
Hornaday was born in Indiana and in 1856 his family moved to a farm located in southern Mahaska and northern Wapello Counties that was surrounded by rolling prairie and wildlife. His childhood experiences on the farm ignited his passion for native wildlife. In

1871, he attended the Oskaloosa College and then went on to Iowa State Agricultural College (now Iowa State University).

While at Iowa State, Hornaday served as a taxidermist for the college museum. In his sophomore year, he left to pursue an opportunity to travel and hunt wildlife for taxidermy displays for the Henry Augustus Ward's Natural Science Establishment in Rochester, NY. Hornaday's work with Ward not only gave him the opportunity to travel, sending him to the Caribbean, West Indies, South America and Asia but, also broadened his knowledge, and proficiency in taxidermy. He used his new found knowledge to refine his techniques mounting the animals in poses as they would appear in nature and exhibiting them in displays similar to their natural habitat.

In 1882 Hornaday was named Chief Taxidermist of the U.S. National Museum. It was in this role he was able to travel to the American West and observe the plight of the bison. Witnessing the near elimination of the bison population sparked his fifty year journey dedicated to the preservation of wildlife and educating the public about the conservation of wildlife.

In the late 1880s, with the vision of preserving and protecting wildlife, Hornaday lobbied for a bill that



**William T. Hornaday**

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eventually established the National Zoo in Washington. He played a major role in the design of the zoo; following his vision for captive breeding programs for endangered species. He resigned in 1890.

After a six year absence, Hornaday returned to the zoo field. In 1896, he created the New York Zoological Park (aka the Bronx Zoo). Here, he changed the way the public viewed a zoo. The zoo evolved from an amusing pastime to becoming educational centers; teaching the public about wildlife and their need for protection.

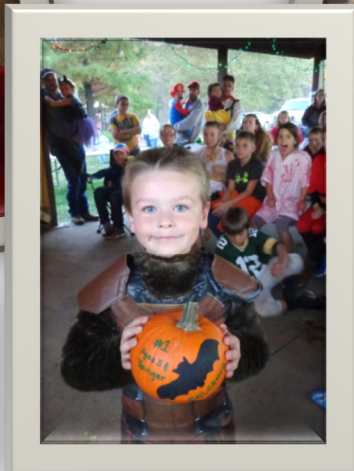
To encourage others to embrace the conservation of wildlife and to recognize people that continued service to this purpose, Hornaday created the Wildlife Protection Medal. After his death and to this day, the Boy Scouts of America carries out his tradition by presenting the prestigious William T. Hornaday Awards for "distinguished service towards conservation and environmental protections". This awards program was established to recognize Scouts who undertook and completed truly exceptional conservation projects.

Hornaday's innovation created a new outlook on the preservation and conservation of wildlife. His dedication to educating the public on the plight of the bison generated a new outlook on the care and regeneration of endangered species. Hornaday is one of our country's and Mahaska County's pioneers in early wildlife conservation.



**William T. Hornaday was dedicated to educating the public on the plight of the bison.**

## Fall Snapshots with MCCB





# Nature Notes

## Bald Eagle Nests

By Laura DeCook, Naturalist



During the first part of winter, Bald Eagles can be found fishing in unfrozen waters. Then as mid-winter approaches, the eagles return to their home territories to prepare for another nesting season. An eagle pair's home territory is an area of 10 to 15 miles of wooded terrain, rivers and lakes. During this part of the season, they work on building or rebuilding a nest and feed on fish in any open areas of water they can find. They will also feed on the remains of deer and other animals that did not survive the winter.

The nest site or eyrie will usually be found near water and in an older, dominant tree with strong branches that can support the weight of the nest. Both the male and female eagles work together to build the nest from scratch or add to an existing nest. They will work together for a few hours each morning and evening. Some branches they use in a nest can be six to seven feet in length. Gaps between the branches are filled with cattails, grasses and mosses. The platform of the nest may be six feet wide, eight feet deep and weigh a ton!

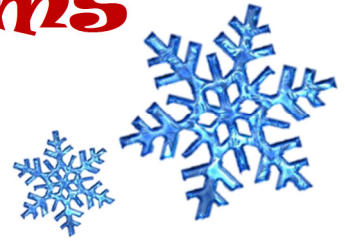
In late winter, eagles will feed, tend to their nest, participate in courting and mating, and prepare for egg laying. These activities take only a few hours of their day. The rest of their day is spent perched at the eyrie, scanning the area. The male and female eagle will face opposite directions to receive a 360-degree view of their territory. If a disturbance greatly upsets them, such as human activity, the eagles will leave the nest, possibly permanently. No human activity can be tolerated by eagles within one-quarter mile of the eagle nest sites during the late winter/early spring. These magnificent birds are enjoyable to watch, so this winter, remember to use a pair of binoculars or a scope to watch them from afar.



# Winter Programs



Looking for a healthy outdoor activity?  
Look for this symbol throughout the list of  
upcoming public programs.



## Winter Day Camp



**Tuesday, December 30**  
**1:00 – 4:00 pm**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



Come out and have fun on a winter day! We will learn about feeding birds in the winter and make our own bird food to take home. Then, we will top the afternoon off with popcorn and the movie “Yogi Bear”. *There is no cost and please dress for the weather. Pre-registration is appreciated. Call (641)673-9327 to sign up.*

## Pines Above the Snow



**Wednesday, December 31**  
**10:30 am – Noon**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



Aldo Leopold’s book, the *Sand County Almanac* will guide us on an exploration of pine trees. You will learn how to identify different species of pine trees and even hike to a nearby pine grove. It will be a fun and adventurous experience! *There is no cost and please dress for the weather. Pre-registration is appreciated. Call (641)673-9327 to sign up.*

## Weather Wizards

**Friday, January 2**  
**10:30 am – Noon**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



If you have ever wanted to learn about the weather through science experiments, then this is the program for you! We will discover cool facts about air pressure, clouds and snow. *There is no cost for this event. Pre-registration is appreciated. Call (641)673-9327 to sign up.*

## Animal Care & Painting with Snakes

**Friday, January 2**  
**1:00 – 2:30 p.m.**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



Come out and help Ranger Laura feed animals at the conservation center. Afterwards, we will paint a picture with the help of a snake. *There is no cost for this activity. Pre-registration is appreciated. Call (641)673-9327 to sign up.*

## Bird Food Giveaway

**Saturday, February 7**  
**9:00 am – Noon**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



Bring your buckets out to the conservation center to get free cracked corn for bird feeding. Each family will be limited to 10 gallons of cracked corn. Information about bird feeding will be available. *For more information, call MCCB at (641)673-9327.*

## Sugarmakers in the Sugarbush



**Friday, February 20**  
**8:30 – 10:00 am**  
**Russell Wildlife Area**



If you would like to help MCCB collect maple tree sap that will be made into maple syrup sampled at the Maple Syrup Festival, then come out to the conservation center on this morning. You can help us collect sap from maple trees in the park. *Dress for the weather and expect some hiking. Pre-registration is appreciated. Call (641)673-9327 to sign up.*



# Winter Programs



## Saw Whet Search



**Friday, February 20  
10:00 am – Noon  
Russell Wildlife Area**



The Northern Saw-whet Owl is a small, rare wintertime visitor that can be found in cedar tree groves. Once seen perched on a tree in the daylight, they will not move and allow you to look at them up close. Following an indoor talk about saw-whets, we will go hiking outdoors and search for them in the cedar trees around the Russell Wildlife Area. *Please dress for the weather. This event is for all ages. Pre-registration is appreciated. Call (641)673-9327 to sign up.*

## Maple Syrup Festival



**Saturday, March 7  
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
Eveland Access**



Throughout the afternoon, MCCB staff will demonstrate how to tap trees and boil it to make maple syrup. You can explore the black maple sugarbush, the old barn and a Native American sugaring camp. Park at the Eveland Access Campground and catch a hayrack ride up the hill to the sugar shack. The hayrack ride leaves every half hour. Bring your appetites for fresh maple syrup on ice cream! *This event is for all ages.*



## 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Mahaska County Pheasants Forever Banquet

**Saturday, April 11  
Center Court in Penn Central Mall, Oskaloosa  
Doors open at 5:30 p.m.**

Come support our local PF chapter on this evening at Penn Central Mall! For tickets and more banquet information, contact Jeff VanDerBeek at (641)660-2671 or go to the Mahaska County Pheasants Forever website at [www.mahaskacountypheasantsforever.org](http://www.mahaskacountypheasantsforever.org).

## Turkey Hunting & Safety Seminar

**Saturday, March 28  
10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area**



Are you or your children interested in learning about hunting wild turkeys this spring? MCCB is offering this seminar to help turkey hunters of *all skill levels* learn about turkey biology, turkey hunting laws and ethics, preparing for the hunt, calling, hunting techniques, field dressing and taxidermy. There is no cost to attend. Lunch will be provided through a free-will donation. Space is limited. *For questions and to sign up for this seminar, call MCCB at (641)673-9327.*

Like Mahaska County  
Conservation on



**facebook**

*Check it out to receive  
up-to-date information about  
MCCB programs!*

**Later this  
winter...look for  
these programs in  
the next newsletter!**

***Shed Hunting With Dogs  
Birding with Binoculars  
Bowfishing  
Kids Fishing Derby  
Summer Day Camps  
and more!***





# Friends of Mahaska County Conservation



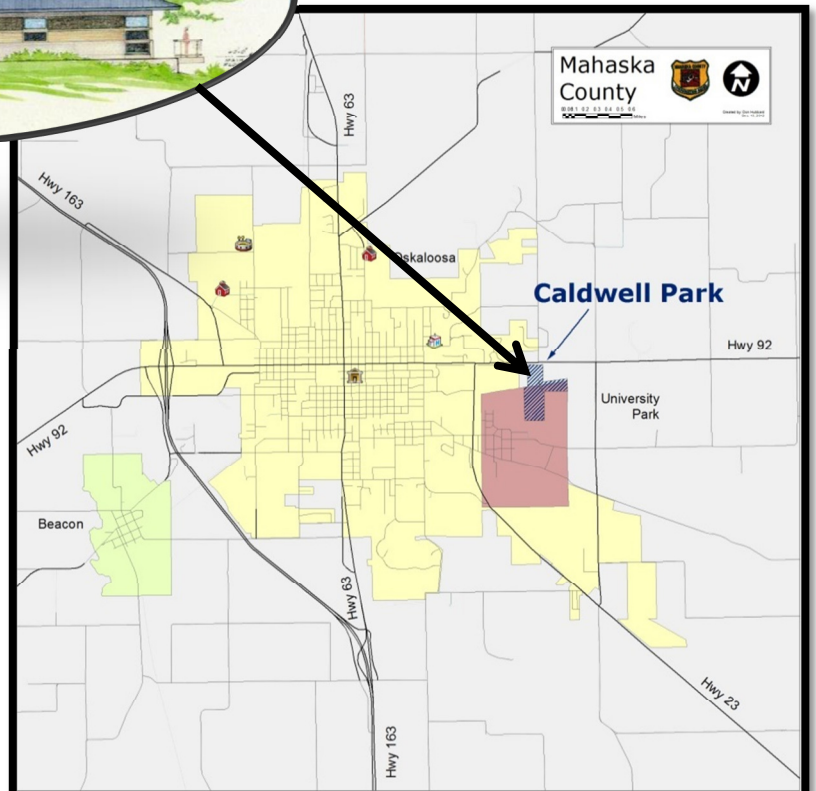
The Friends of Mahaska County Conservation is a non-profit organization created in 2011 with the purpose of raising money for a new Environmental Learning Center and other environmental education projects in Mahaska County. The Friends board consists of 10 board members who are committed to the betterment of outdoor education in our community. The Environmental Learning Center will be located at Caldwell Park, just East of Oskaloosa, on Highway 92.



If you are interested in learning how you can help the Friends of Mahaska County Conservation, contact:

**Friends of Mahaska County Conservation**  
**MaryJane Sullivan, Board President**  
P.O. Box 632  
Oskaloosa, IA 52577  
(641)660-7700  
[friendsmahaskacc@gmail.com](mailto:friendsmahaskacc@gmail.com)  
[www.friendsofmccb.weebly.com](http://www.friendsofmccb.weebly.com)

Meetings are held at 6:30 pm on the third Monday of each month in the conservation center at the Russell Wildlife Area.



## Statement

The primary mission of this organization shall be to create an awareness of our natural environment, encourage a state of harmony between people and their natural communities, develop and implement public conservation policy, maintain the public's investment in our natural resources, and strive diligently within the budget restraints to provide adequate services for the environmental education and enjoyment of the citizens of Mahaska County.

## The Prairie Star

The Prairie Star is the quarterly newsletter of the Mahaska County Conservation Board and is mailed to those persons on our mailing list. There is no charge for the newsletter, although contributions to help defray printing and mailing costs are greatly appreciated. Please help us keep our costs down by keeping us informed of any change of address or if you wish to receive the newsletter by email.

"A snowflake  
is winter's  
butterfly."

~ Author  
Unknown



# A Big Thank You!

The Mahaska County Conservation Board wishes to extend our deepest thanks to the following people and businesses for their donations and volunteer time.

### Halloween Bash

Eddyville Fire Department  
Doug McMillan  
Linda Fox  
Peggy Wright

### Hunter Education Classes

Skunk River Retriever Club  
John Steinbach, Iowa DNR  
North Mahaska School District  
Volunteer Hunter Educ. Instructors

### Mammoth Dig Crew

Dave Brenzel  
Jim Roberson  
Holmes Semken  
Denny White  
Jim North  
Lee Wymore  
Deb Waggett

### Iowa Ornithologists Union

Grant to purchase binoculars  
for education programs

### Winter Tales

Lyle Williams



## Warm up this winter in the Eveland Access Cabins



952 square  
feet of living  
space

Sleeps up to  
10 people!

The Apple and Birch Cabins at the Eveland Access are available for rent year-round. Rental rates are \$65/night (Fri-Sat), \$50/night (Sun-Thurs), and \$350 per week. A two night minimum stay is required. To view pictures of the cabins and to find more information on renting, go to [www.mahaskaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskaconservation.com).

## MCCB CALENDAR NOTES:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| January 8   | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| January 19  | <b>Friends of Mahaska County Conservation</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area    |
| February 5  | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| February 16 | <b>Friends of Mahaska County Conservation</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area    |
| March 5     | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| March 16    | <b>Friends of Mahaska County Conservation</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area    |



Dates and times are subject to change. Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 for more information.



## COUNTY CONSERVATION CENTER HOURS

12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday  
or by appointment.

The Mahaska County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public. Visitors are always welcome and encouraged to attend. The board meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Conservation Center. Please note: these dates are subject to change.

### A large-type version of this newsletter is available on request.

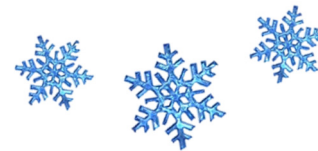
Mahaska County's programs and facilities are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on non-discrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, and handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Mahaska County Conservation Board or the office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington D.C. 29240.

## Mahaska County Conservation Board

<b>Peggy Wright</b> , New Sharon	Chairperson
<b>Curt Jager</b> , Eddyville	Vice Chairperson
<b>Linda Fox</b> , Rose Hill	Secretary
<b>Leroy Nugteren</b> , Leighton	Member
<b>Ross Nilson</b> , Oskaloosa	Member

### STAFF

Dave Sedivec	Director
Laura DeCook	Naturalist
Tommy VanRenterghem	Conservation Technician
Jason Ryan	Conservation Technician
Dorothy Wedgewood	Administrative Assistant



Winter 2014-15



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Website: [www.mahaskacaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskacaconservation.com)

Email: [mcbb@mahaskacaconservation.org](mailto:mcbb@mahaskacaconservation.org)

Phone: (641) 673-9327

New Sharon, IA 50207

2254 - 200<sup>th</sup> Street

Mahaska County Conservation Board



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