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March 4 Iowa Outdoors

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IOWA OUTDOORS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | CONSERVATION AND RECREATION DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARCH 4, 2014

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STATE ARCHERY TOURNAMENT

State tournament means lots of cheering, face paint and noise...usually. In the upper reaches of the venerable, but revamped and renamed, Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Des Moines, parents, neighbors and classmates do break out in a round of applause as participants walked off the floor, during the Iowa

Department of Natural Resources archery in the schools program state tournament.

During the actual competition, though, the crowd is quiet. More than 800 high school, middle school and elementary students tend to business; filing in to their assigned lanes and standing by for the short verbal commands and series of whistles. There will be congratulations, hugs, selfies taken and score sheets checked outside in the lobby...when they are done.

"They are well trained. They move across the range on the same whistle commands. All the etiquette, the discipline; that's a testament to the coaches and all the hard work that's gone into this," assesses Ben Berka, DNR shooting sports coordinator.

Safety is the first consideration, with 40 archers on the firing range at any one time. But discipline, muscle memory and repetition are critical for success here. It's much like that free throw in the last seconds of a one point basketball game. Here though? It is like that, *every* shot.

"It's kind of like those movies when the whole crowd goes silent," relates Whitney Brown; a senior at Mount Vernon High School. "You see the crowd cheering but you can't hear anything. Once you release, it all comes back to reality. It's a great feeling."

"What you see here is a small percentage of what is out there, across the state," explains Berka. "We had almost 2,000 try to qualify, as part of a club activity. That club activity grew out of participation by close to 200 schools in the National Archery in Schools Program (NASP)."

Upwards of 100,000 school kids take part in archery in-school; typically through physical education class. They learn the basics; stance, anchor point, release, safety. As they progress, they might choose club archery, outside the school day. Coaches work with them on muscle memory and concentration. A December through February league schedule sharpens the competition.

"Most archers will tell you, there are really two things you need to do. Number one? Learn how to shoot a '10.' Number two? Learn how to do that over and over," emphasizes Berka. "The mental toughness is really the same skill you take and apply to other parts of life."

Participation depends on local buy-in. Last year, Bellevue qualified for the national tournament; eventually moving on to the international championship in South Africa. Yet, seven years ago, there were only 18 club members, who did not enter a meet in that first year.

"In the second year, our only regular season meet was snowed out. Our first competition was the state tournament," recalls coach Gary Purtilo. We've grown since; taken on middle school kids, now the elementary. We had 152 on the team this year. I've got some great coaches."

Woods—from Mount Vernon—has her archery future mapped out, too. She's handled a bow since sixth grade and has hunted as well. It is not something she will walk away from, as graduation nears.

"It is something I can do with my family, with my kids someday, when I am older," she says. In the near term, she plans to start a shooting club when she shows up at Central College next fall.

Results from Iowa's March 1 National Archery in Schools Program are available at www.iowadnr.gov/Recreation/shootingsports. Click on Archery in Schools, then on NASP Events and Results to find a link to individual and team standings for high school, middle school and elementary school competitors.

HONEY CREEK HOSTS SPRING OUTDOORS WOMAN WORKSHOP

The popular Iowa Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program is adding a spring workshop and a new location this year. The two-and-a-half-day event will be held at Honey Creek Resort, March 28-30.

"We are inviting women to welcome spring with some new-found outdoor skills they can learn at our workshop," says Julie Sparks, coordinator of the Iowa BOW program.

Participants can select from a menu of classes that include introduction to firearms, biking, fishing, kayaking, Dutch oven cooking, geocaching, archery, basic shooting, birdwatching, motorboating and landscaping for wildlife.

"We are also offering a wild game cooking class taught by Honey Creek Resort's own Chef Bob and have two opportunities for participants to learn about wild turkeys and turkey hunting," says Sparks. "The area has historically been an excellent location for spring turkey hunting and participants can learn more about the sport and maybe even call in some gobblers."

Honey Creek Resort is located on the shores of Lake Rathbun in Appanoose County and offers spacious guest rooms, scenic nature trails, an indoor waterpark and whirlpool, Rathbun Lakeshore Grille & Lounge, and other amenities associated with a quality resort experience.

Cost of the spring workshop is \$250 for a single occupancy room and \$200 for double occupancy. The fee includes instruction, program materials, equipment use, meals and lodging. Registration is limited to 50 participants and some classes are beginning to fill. Sparks encourages women to get registrations in as soon as possible. The deadline for registration without a late-fee penalty is March 14. Registration materials and more information can be found at www.iowadnr.gov/bow

Contact: Julie Sparks, BOW Coordinator, Iowa DNR, 515-281-6159 or julie.sparks@dnr.iowa.gov

OUTDOOR NOTES

The prairie chicken festival at the Kellerton Grasslands Bird Conservation Area is April 5.

The DNR will stock **trout** on March 7 in Davenport at Lake of the Hills; March 22 in Iowa City at Sand Lake and in Marshalltown Sand Lake (yes, two Sand Lakes); March 28 in Muscatine at Discovery Park and in Fort Madison at Wilson Lake; March 29 in Cedar Rapids at Prairie Creek Park and in Ottumwa at Ottumwa Park Pond; and April 12 in Cedar Falls at North Prairie Lake.

Announced trout stream stocking begins April 1. A stocking schedule is available online at www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/TroutFishing.aspx.

Iowa's 2013 harvest for **bobcats** was 950 and for **river otters** was 1,122.

In 2013, 49 percent of Iowa's deer hunters obtained one deer license; five percent obtained more than 5 deer licenses.

The season on white and blue phase snow geese and Ross' geese runs through April 15.

Iowa's spring **turkey** hunting season begins with a resident youth only season April 5-13. Turkey season one is April 14-17, season two is April 18-22, season three is April 23-29 and season four is April 30-May 18.

Campsites with electricity available for reservation for the **Memorial Day Weekend** in have filled for Brushy Creek, Dolliver, Elinor Bedell, Fairport, George Wyth, Green Valley, Lake Ahquabi, Lake Anita, Lake of Three Fires, Lewis and Clark, Maquoketa Caves, Pleasant Creek, Viking Lake, Walnut Woods and Waubonsie. State parks with all electrical sites except the handicap only site(s) reserved include Lake Macbride, Ledges, Prairie Rose, Rock Creek and Springbrook.

State parks with nearly full reservations are Black Hawk, Backbone, Wapsipinicon, McIntosh Woods, Nine Eagles, Emerson Bay, Union Grove, Volga River, Palisades and Stone.

To find an available campsite, go to <http://iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com/>. Once reservable sites are filled, only walk up sites will remain. Plan to arrive early.

The last **passenger pigeon** died in 1914 and to mark centennial anniversary, noted conservation biologist Dr. Stanley Temple will give a presentation in the Great Hall of the Memorial Union on the Iowa State University campus at 7 p.m., on March 6.

Dr. Temple is an emeritus professor of conservation biology with the University of Wisconsin, Madison and a senior fellow and science advisor with the Aldo Leopold Foundation. Dr. Temple uses the case of the passenger pigeon to call attention to the world's ongoing extinction crisis and our relationship with other species.

Landowners who **donated land** or land value totaling more than 2,800 acres valued at more than \$6 million will be honored during a ceremony on March 11 at the Iowa State Capitol. The ceremony is hosted by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

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