President’s Column

By Mark Madsen

The Johnson County Heritage Trust is moving a big step closer to accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission as is discussed in James Fluck’s article in this month’s issue of the Heritage. The accreditation application represents a real commitment by our Executive Director and the entire Board of Directors to make Johnson County Heritage Trust a solid and secure organization so that our mission to preserve our natural heritage through protection and management of land and water with significant environmental value will endure. Special recognition should be given to James Fluck for his energy, organizational skills, and dedicated effort that has made the application process possible. Also to be congratulated are the members of the Accreditation Committee—Tammy Richardson, John Van Rybroek, Sharyn Reitz, and Brenda Nations—who put in countless hours gathering and organizing files along with other information. They were supported in this effort by Jake Hart, who put together the property management plans, and Kate Georgen, our intern from the UI College of Law, who developed a tool for calculating easement stewardship funding.

More than anything else, the accreditation process has illuminated our need to develop support to meet our conservation obligations. Through a generous grant from the Land Trust Alliance, we have been able to secure the services of David Allen, who has more than 25 years of experience in conservation fundraising and development. Working together with Judy Mauseef and the other members of the JCHT Resource Development Committee, Mr. Allen has provided an in-depth plan for gathering the support needed to sustain our conservation efforts. At the last Board of Directors meeting, this plan was approved and will be implemented in stages over the next five years. At the same time, the Board of Directors will be generating a comprehensive strategic plan that will serve as a roadmap for future activities. Although the future holds many challenges for JCHT, we remain optimistic because of the enthusiastic dedication of our Board, Executive Director, volunteers and members, and the certainty that what we do is important.

First Annual Spring Membership Drive

Thank you to the more than 40 volunteers who participated in our First Annual Spring Membership Drive held in April during Earth Week. The seed for this “phone-a-thon” was planted and as it was nurtured, it grew into something wonderful. Welcome to over 90 new members! These members provided $5,660 that quickly became $11,320! How did this number double? We had generous members who agreed to donate matching funds for the new memberships we received. Even better news is that memberships are still being received as a result of the phone-a-thon. If you know someone who would enjoy becoming a member of JCHT, please feel free to share our information with them. If you would like us to send them information, call 338-7030 or email info@jcht.org. We appreciate your assistance.
Executive Director’s Report

By Tammy Richardson

Hello JCHT Members and Friends!

I trust that you all are enjoying this warm and dry summer. Just when I think things are going to slow down a bit – SURPRISE. Most exciting and new is the acceptance of our Accreditation Pre-Application. Not that I was surprised at all with all of the work that our magnificent Accreditation Team has put into this process. We are SO fortunate to have so many wonderful and dedicated volunteers. Now we continue with assembly of our application, which is due next month. Go team!

As always, a lot has happened since our last edition of “Heritage.” . . . a successful Family Day was hosted at Turkey Creek. Our Belgum Grove Family Day will be held Sunday, September 16, from 1–3 p.m. Children of all ages are welcome and encouraged to attend. A big thank you goes out to our Family Day sponsors.

Also in the planning stages is our 6th Annual “Under a Cider Moon . . . a Celebration of Autumn” event to be held Friday, October 19, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at “The Celebration Barn” off Sugar Bottom Road near Solon. Can you believe it’s been SIX years? We’ve come a long way from that first event. If you have any time or items you would like to contribute, our committee would welcome your time, talents, and treasures. It’s not too soon to purchase your $50 ticket, of which $30 is tax deductible. Invitations will be arriving in your mailbox soon.

Don’t forget, this year you have an opportunity to become a table sponsor. For $500, you will receive eight reservations and a reserved table with signage and your individual or business name in the program.

Family Day at Belgum Grove Sept. 16

Join JCHT members for the third annual Family Day at Belgum Grove, Sunday, Sept. 16, from 1-3 p.m. Move through different learning stations for fun, hands-on activities that teach about our natural prairies, streams, ponds, wetlands and woodlands. Bring your boots, so you can explore the creek, stroll through the orchard and enjoy all the wild beauty these natural areas have to offer. Belgum Grove is located four miles west of Hills on F62. The event is free– rain or shine– and all are welcome.

A Time for Celebration and Fun

Join us for fun and celebration at the Johnson County Heritage Trust’s annual fundraiser, “Under a Cider Moon . . . A Celebration of Autumn,” on Friday, October 19, at Schwab’s Celebration Barn, 2501 Sugar Bottom Road, Solon.

Be sure to get there when the doors open at 5:30 p.m. A drawing for a fantastic prize will be at 6 p.m. You must be present to win, so be sure to arrive in time! The live auction will begin promptly at 7 p.m.

Entertainment will be provided by the Guy Drollinger Trio. Locally-prepared food and refreshments from area wineries and brew pubs will be available. Also, you can bid on and select your favorite sweet treat during our dessert auction.

Ever dream about a vacation in the Cayman Islands? Need some landscaping help or stone work? Maybe handmade furniture or a piece of art or jewelry is more your style. All of this and more will be waiting for you in our silent and live auctions. A list of auction items will appear on our website soon, so keep checking the site at www.jcht.org. Additional items are welcomed until October 1. We appreciate our local merchants, businesses, artists, and friends who have been so willing to provide donations.

The event is also made possible by our sponsors through their financial and in-kind support which help defray the costs. Event sponsors are listed in this publication.

Tickets are $50 per person ($30 is tax deductible). Space is limited to the first 200 people, so make your reservations now by calling Tammy Richardson at the JCHT office (338-7030) or by e-mailing her at info@jcht.org.

The annual “Under a Cider Moon . . . A Celebration of Autumn” event has been the most important fundraiser for the Trust, generating more than $120,000 over the past five years. Proceeds from the event help make it possible for the JCHT to continue its mission: To preserve our natural heritage through protection and management of land and water with significant environmental value.
Property Update
By Jake Hart, Property Stewardship Specialist

This summer has been a hot one, but despite the heat, we have still been able to round up a few volunteers to get some work done. A group from Reclaiming Roots came out in July to help install a fence at Belgum as well as water the pawpaws we planted last year and the oaks that were planted this spring. These volunteers were amazing, and despite the hot weather, they completed the fence installation and made sure all of the new plants were adequately watered. We hope to have them back again next year.

The grant we received from the Community Foundation of Iowa City has really been helpful. We have been able to purchase quite a bit of equipment to aid us in the management of all of JCHT’s properties. The latest implement we obtained was a pull-behind brush mower (below). This mower is fully adjustable and can even cut small saplings. The mower can easily be pulled by our ATV and will work great to maintain trails, mow invasives, clear brush, and make fire breaks. The mower has already been used at Belgum Grove to mow around the pawpaw planting and to clear an area to be planted this fall. So far it has worked great and I am sure it will continue to come in extremely handy.

We have two EQIP “Environmental Quality Incentive Program” contracts that we need to fulfill by the end of this year. The contracts are for clearing the understory of a few acres at both Shimek Ravine and O’Mara Newport Woods. We have already started on O’Mara Newport with some volunteers. We will need your help in getting all this work done before the end of the year so look for upcoming workdays at these properties. As always, we would love to have your help.

Be sure to get out and explore one of the properties. You never know what you may find!
Progress Toward Accreditation: [Help Wanted!]

By James Fluck

JCHT has achieved a second major milestone on the road to Accreditation. On August 7, 2012, we were notified that the Land Trust Accreditation Commission accepted our Pre-Application materials. The Pre-Application consisted of documentary evidence of our meeting the prerequisites for application, including a certificate of existence; articles of incorporation and by-laws; tax forms; and inventories of easements, properties, and reserved funding.

Acceptance of the Pre-Application means we are authorized to submit our full application in September. Acceptance of the Pre-Application also triggers two additional activities in preparation for the final submission as detailed below.

Now that we know we will be submitting a final application, we are required to notify key stakeholders of our application and of the opportunity to submit comments about the application directly to the Commission during a Public Comment period. Comments to the Commission must relate to JCHT’s compliance with the national standards against which we are being judged, and must be attributed, though the identity of a commenter may be withheld from the applicant trust upon request. Comments can be submitted through the Commission website or in writing. The Public Notice and Public Comment Contact information are listed in the accompanying sidebars.

The Publicity Committee will be coordinating a campaign of public awareness of the Comment Period, including press releases, direct contacts, our website and Facebook pages, distributions by other conservation organizations, and a last-minute reminder in the Cider Moon program.

Members and friends of Johnson County Heritage Trust, as well as members of the public, are invited and encouraged to submit comments directly to the Commission. Please take advantage of this unique opportunity to support JCHT by submitting your own comments and by encouraging others to do the same. Your encouragement of public officials, civic leaders and others involved in land conservation activities will be especially helpful, and their comments will be very meaningful.

To stimulate your thinking about JCHT Accreditation, here are just a few of the standards and indicator practices: Mission and ethics of the organization; Volunteers, Staff and Consultants, with respect to capacity to carry out the mission; Evaluating and Selecting Conservation Projects, including the selection process and criteria, and the public benefit of transactions; and Monitoring and Stewardship of easements and fee lands. All constructive comments will be welcomed and considered by both the Accreditation Commission and JCHT.

The second activity now receiving our focused attention is the preparation of copies of detailed property documentation for the Lust and Strub Prairie conservation easements and the Pappy Dickens and O’Mara-Newport Woods properties. For these representative conservation projects selected by the Commission, we are required to submit basically “everything we’ve got” in the files. We have done a lot of work on the property documentation for all 19 properties over the last year, so we have a very good start. Now we know which of those binders of documentation to double-check for completeness and convert to completely electronic form(s) for submission with the Application.

The final Application, with all attachments and accompanying materials, is due September 13, so we will ship it on Thursday or Friday, September 6 or 7. We expect JCHT to be notified of the Commission’s decision about Accreditation sometime during 2013.
Johnson County Heritage Trust
is grateful for the support of our donors

President's Message
By Mark Madsen

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend our sincere thanks for your generous support of Johnson County Heritage Trust. As a non-profit, community-based organization, we rely on your donations of time, effort and money to continue our mission of preserving our natural heritage through the protection and management of land and water with significant environmental value. Because of the unwavering commitment of our members, friends, and volunteers, together we can look back with pride in our accomplishments in conserving the natural wonders of our lands, and look forward to the promise of a brighter, healthier and more beautiful tomorrow for future generations.

Over $10,000
Holly Carver and Arthur Adkins
Dick Schwab and Katherine Burford
Gary and Sharon Lutz
Ann Mercer Feddersen and Dick Feddersen

$2,500-$9,999
John and Jean Van Rybroek
Robert and Hutha Sayre
MMS Consultants
River Products Company, Inc.
Adams & Baumbach Assoc.
Advanced Design & Management. LLC
Shamrock Construction Company LLC
Advanced Electrical Services
Station Construction Company LLC
Donald MacDonald

$1,000-$2,499
Robert and Cornelia Mutel
Quality Care
James Fluck and Julie Scott
Sharyn and John Reitz
Advanced Design & Management. LLC
Don Bolin and Liz Hall
Alan Nagel
Mark and Judy Madsen
Kathie Belgum
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MidWestOne Bank
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Dickel Construction Co. Inc.
Hills Bank and Trust Company
Don Merryman
MidAmerican Energy Holdings Co.

$250-$499
Art and Ginger Nowak
Thomas and Sue O’Dorio
Jim and Beth Peterson
Total Tree Care of Iowa
Paul Weller and Sara Rynes-Weller

$100-$249
Yvonne McCabe
Jeffery Schabiliion
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Philip Heckel
Hodge Construction
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City Sewer Service
Dave Collins
Virginia Hadley Hall
Mark Muller and Valerie Cool
Susan M. Shullaw
VJ Engineering

Up to $100
Doug Baynton
Kendall and Alice Atkinson
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Mark and Bonnie Penno
Johnson County SWCD
Pat and Erad Cancelli
Cook Appraisal
Nancy Jones and Michael Hovland
Ronald and Karla Puettmann
Patricia Schmidt
Diana Harris
Kevin Berbaum
Warren and Gail Bishop
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Elizabeth Hooley
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Robert and Claire Ashman
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David and Sally Diersk
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Environmenal Advocates
Toby Hyde and Nancy Feddersen Hyde
Michael Feiss and Cathy Cole
John and Randee Fieselmann
Forever Green
Joseph and Anne Frankel
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James and Karole Fuller
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Dick and Joyce Summerwill
Joan Summerwill
Elisabeth Swan
Ruth Swane
University of Iowa Press
Jim and Christine Walters
Michele and Larry Weber
Rendezvous at Redbird Park

September 23

Redbird Park is one of Iowa’s oldest green subdivisions. From its origins in eroding cornfields and overgrazed pasture in 1968, it has evolved into a beautiful, semi-wild landscape with pure water, abundant wildlife, and green living for its residents.

A habitat tour for a maximum of 15 people will be lead by Lon Drake, who has been a part of the Redbird Park landscape since 1971. The walking tour, about a mile on sometimes rough trails, will include Lon’s most recent projects with native bats, rare native butterflies, and rare native shrubs, plus an overview of his energy-efficient home built from recycled materials in 1976. The tour departs at 9 a.m. and will return at about 11 a.m.

Sign up by calling Johnson County Heritage Trust at 338-7030 or Bob Sayre at 338-1428 and they will provide directions to the location in western Johnson County. Carpool if possible. You need not be a member of JCHT to participate.
Become a fan of JCHT on Facebook … Johnson County Heritage Trust fulfills its mission through the generosity of its members and donors. Every gift to the Trust is respected and appreciated. Please think of JCHT for not only lifetime gifts, but also as a part of your testamentary planning. A gift to JCHT is a gift to your children and community.

Pick a membership level and renew (or become a new member).

Student Member _____ $10      Regular Member _____ $30
Family Member _____ $50      Sustaining Member _____ $50      Sponsor _____ $100
Benefactor _____ $250      Heritage Keeper _____ $500 or more