



## K60 CELEBRATION

The day started off with some worry—the hay bales and tables were set up outside but rain threatened. The speaker and a number of the Russian press planning to cover the event were delayed overnight in Chicago, and no one knew how many people to expect. But it turned out to be a beautiful day with a meaningful program for the 120 attendees.

Chuck Offenburger, summed up the day's events in a Facebook post:

"For those who are enchanted by storytelling," said Tim Naftali, a CNN commentator, to a big crowd outside Coon Rapids IA on Saturday, Sept. 28, "there is little sweeter than walking the grounds where something happened." Indeed, the opportunity to do that is what had drawn Naftali all the way from New York City, others from Russia, as well as people from all over Iowa.

It was the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of one of the biggest things that ever happened around here -- the September, 1959, visit by Premier Nikita Khrushchev, then the leader of the great enemy nation the Soviet Union, to the Coon Rapids farm of Roswell and Elizabeth Garst. It happened at one of the most intense moments of the Cold War, which threatened to become another world war. And the visit helped break some of that tension, at least momentarily, while an enemy leader and an Iowa farmer discussed how the Soviets might practice better agriculture and thus be more able to feed their people. It was a moment when at least a few swords were beaten into plowshares, an idea that goes back to Isaiah in the Bible's Old Testament.



Timothy Naftali, CNN presidential historian, addresses the crowd gathered on hay bales under the trees of the Historic Garst Farmhouse on September 28, 2019 to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Khrushchev's visit to Iowa. Naftali had the opportunity to read Khrushchev's private writings in Russia and remarked that Garst was one of the few American's referenced by name.



Elizabeth "Liz" Garst, granddaughter of Roswell and Elizabeth Garst, hosted the ceremonies at Whiterock Conservancy. She tells great stories of her memories of the big day of the Khrushchev's visit -she was 9 years old then.



Ivan Ponomarev, the Agricultural attaché from the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Washington D.C. greeted the crowd in Coon Rapids and told of his nation's continuing high regard for the Garst family and its 60 years of friendship with Russian agriculture.

Continued on page 4

## HONORING AND REMEMBERING SPECIAL PEOPLE

For the second year, friends of Whiterock Conservancy and Trees Forever gathered to spend a meaningful afternoon remembering and honoring loved ones who have passed at an annual tree planting ceremony.

Three bur oak trees were planted on the bluff overlooking a particularly beautiful part of the Middle Raccoon River valley. The oaks from last year are growing just down the bluff. Over the past four years, work has been completed on this land to remove invasive species and bring back the traditional oak savanna.

During the ceremony, the names of all those who were remembered or honored with a donation to either organization were read. Guests had the opportunity to write notes and place them in the holes so that they will become part of the tree as it grows.

Consider making a donation to Whiterock Conservancy in honor or memory of someone special in your life to be a part of the planting ceremony next year.



*“Like an old friend, trees hold the power to calm, to heal and to comfort. In times of loss, trees connect us to the infinite circle of life.”* -Anonymous



## GIFT CATALOG GOAT UPDATE

Thanks to the support of individuals who purchased goats from our gift catalog last year, Whiterock is wrapping up its first season of owning our own goat herd. After renting or borrowing goats for a couple of years, and having the fence and fencer equipment in place, in 2019 we began our herd of “invasive species fighters.” A recent article published by Practical Farmers of Iowa highlighted a variety of other terms used to describe goat herds that are used to manage problem areas: goat scaping, ecofriendly invasive clearing practices, prescribed or targeted grazing, contract or custom grazing, mowing without fuel or labor (while providing natural fertilizer) or double dipping on cash rent or yield.

All these terms just reinforce what we have observed this summer...goats like to browse and do a lot of good when used and managed correctly. Our goats have helped to manage and clear about 15 acres of overgrown land at Whiterock. If we had to rent goats for this purpose, costs range up to a \$1000 per acre for clearing service or \$5 per goat per day.

Along with a faithful guard donkey Raji, we now have 24 goats, 19 females, 3 wethers and 2 bucks. We just had two kids and are hoping for more kids in the spring. With the first frost here, we prepared a barn at the Garst Historic District to house and feed the goats over the winter. We are accepting donations of cash or goats if you know of anyone who may want to donate to help with goat related projects.

With any luck, in 2020 we might not only benefit from the clearing abilities of goats but we might see some income from goat sales as well.



# WHITEROCK GIFT CATALOG 2019

Show how much you care by giving a gift that brings people together and creates memories.

## GIVE AN EXPERIENCE

Gift Certificates can be purchased for specific activities or for a specific dollar amount by contacting the friendly guest services staff at 712-790-8221 or [guestinfo@whiterockconservancy.org](mailto:guestinfo@whiterockconservancy.org).



Give a cozy night in the Hollyhock Cottage, or any of five farm houses. Individual rooms start at \$63 or entire houses from \$95. Pick a specific place or pick a specific dollar amount.



Learn the history of Roswell Garst, hybrid seed corn, and the 1959 cold war visit of Soviet Premiere Nikita Khrushchev directly from Liz Garst, who can share her memories of the visit. \$100



2020 trail passes make for fantastic gifts that keep giving all year long. Bike passes are \$50 and horse passes are \$100.



Need a gift for the inquisitive type, always asking: Why? What? How come? This two hour tour can be personalized for your group to learn about the natural land and/or sustainable farming practices at Whiterock. \$150



See Whiterock from a different point of view—a leisurely float down the river or a 4 hour Gator rental . A canoe float, with shuttle and boat rental for two is \$45. A whole family can go for \$60. A 4-hour gator rental is \$80.



Introduce your RVing friends to Whiterock with a pass for two nights of RV camping and two buckets of firewood for only \$46. Primitive tent camping is \$34 for a two night stay.

## GIVE to HONOR or REMEMBER

If you just can't decide what to get for that hard to buy for person—give them a gift that will last a lifetime. Donations to Whiterock Conservancy, made in honor or memory of a special person, will help meet the mission everyday.

You will receive a notification you can provide to your honoree or family of the deceased.

In addition you will be invited to the annual tree planting ceremony to be held in the fall of 2020.

**Call Jan or Karla now to purchase your gift!  
712-790-8221 x1**

### DIRECTOR'S CORNER

By Daniel Gudahl

I got an unexpected phone call recently from Olin and Joann Cox. They live not far from Coon Rapids and had just read the most recent *Open Spaces* where we were asking for various gifts in kind. "Would we be interested in our older model Pontiac van?" she asks. They were headed to Arizona for the winter and were trying to down size. I said "Yes" with enthusiasm!

I met the couple for the first time at the local garage where the van was getting an oil change. They haven't visited Whiterock in a while, but have fond memories of riding their horses here and like to give local. We chatted a bit, and then they asked "could we use a horse trailer and some livestock feeding equipment?" Staff were happy to have a look around and picked up the trailer, a manure spreader and hay feeders.

In kind donations like these help us stretch our budget, keep staff motivated, improve our operations and may give a tax break to the donors!

If you think you can help, Whiterock is in need of: Flat screen TVs, twin bed frames, dressers, patio furniture, ATVs (2), Gator, farm equipment, tractor, pick up, tools, stump grinder, chain saws etc. Just give us a call and let us know what you have and we will let you know if we can use it.



Our housekeeping 1998 model van was in need of replacement. To avoid some large repair bills it was clear we needed something newer. And this donation from Joann and Olin was just right – their van is in great shape and, as a bonus, has all wheel drive. Housekeeping staff Marilyn and Marne say it feels safer on the gravel roads, is much easier to load, and much more comfortable.

### K60 continued from page 1

Saturday's "K60" celebration included the unveiling of a replica of the famous "Plowshares" sculpture that has been displayed at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. The replica is now in the side yard of the main Garst farmhouse. Recent house renovations are complete and you can stay with your family or friends and enjoy not only the beautiful natural surroundings of Whiterock Conservancy but also the fascinating history of the Khrushchev visit.



The sculpture, *Let Us Beat Swords into Plowshares* by Salavat Scherbakov is based on the 1959 work of Yevgeny Vuchetich. Dr. Valentian Fominykh and her son Vladimir Fominykh donated the statue.



John Norris, a well-known Iowa political leader delivered remarks on Saturday prior to the unveiling of a replica of the "Swords into Plowshares" sculpture in the Garst farmhouse yard. Norris was an admirer of banker John Chrystal, a nephew of Roswell Garst, who had commissioned the replica in Russia.

## ONE YEAR OF PROJECTS

By Penny Perkins, Conservation Lands Director

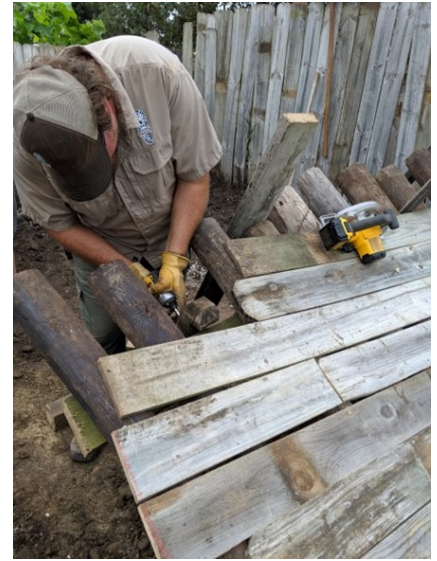
When I started a year ago, I knew my work here at Whiterock would be varied—and looking back at a year of projects, just how varied is very clear. Project lists include fencing and installing waterers for rotational grazing pastures, building bat houses, clearing 4960 feet of fire lines and burning over 300 acres of savanna to complete existing EQIP farm contracts to experimenting with new trail side vegetation to limit erosion. As varied as these projects are, most importantly they are linked together by being projects to move Whiterock Conservancy forward!



Volunteer Brian Kampling uses his chain saw skills to shape the log for a skinny log ride.

We could not accomplish any of these without dedicated Whiterock staff. Luckily, this year the team also included many volunteers including AmeriCorps NCCC, Polk County Youth Conservation, scout groups, high school and college groups, and individuals. These volunteers are both local and from far away but all bring with them a passion for adventure, conservation, sustainability, and learning. I'm happy to say, all of us at Whiterock have enjoyed working with these volunteers to accomplish many tasks on our lists.

One special project, funded by REI, was phase 1 of the Spinney Top Pump Track. Whiterock is excited to give one more opportunity to our visitors by offering this bike oriented skills course. We brought Peter Englund of Legacy Trails LLC on board to design and oversee the first phase of the project and planned to work with volunteers to extend the limited funding. Peter highlights "this pump track and bike park will provide the opportunity to try something different, building skills for all ages with their bikes." We are proud to say all ages have had their hands in the dirt making this project come to life. Early feedback has been positive. Stop by and give it a try. We would love to hear your ideas for phase II.



Peter Englund works on the banked corner wall for an adventurous transition

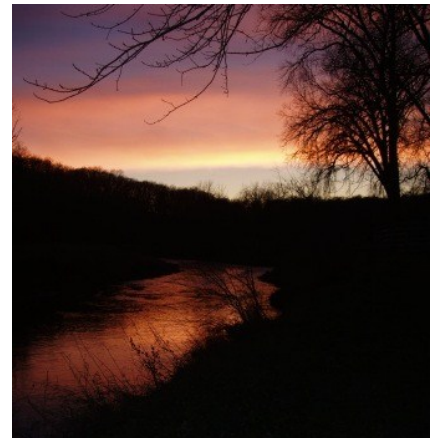


Volunteers Greyson Mehrhoff and Aiden Topalovich take turns testing out the rollers to be sure the track has the right flow.

## WHAT IS ON YOUR WINTER BUCKET LIST?

We asked around—and here are just a few of the answers:

- Find the first geology cache. Latitude: 41°49'34.61"N, 94°39'7.71"W
- Snow shoe or ski on the main loop trail
- See the valley covered in snow from the top of Red Rock Climb
- Look for river otter prints around the ponds
- Watch the sunset from the Visitors' Center





1436 Highway 141  
Coon Rapids, IA 50058  
(712) 790-8221

[www.whiterockconservancy.org](http://www.whiterockconservancy.org)

Help spread the word about Whiterock Conservancy. After reading Open Spaces, pass it on to a friend.

December 2019



## openspaces

### DID YOU KNOW?

Whiterock Conservancy is a non-profit that relies on donations to protect this land and keep it open for you to use.

User fees pay for only a small percentage of the cost of maintaining trails, improving buildings and hosting events. We receive no government funding for operations, and pay property taxes.

If you want this land to be around for generations to enjoy and learn from, please use the enclosed envelope to make a donation to help Whiterock Conservancy continue to care for this land and ensure it remains open to the public.

### MAKE PLANS for 2020

Staff and volunteers have begun planning the 2020 special event schedule for Whiterock Conservancy. If you have a wedding, special anniversary, or company celebration and want to hold your special event at Whiterock Conservancy, now is the time to plan. Call today to learn more about the opportunities to host events at Whiterock.

Here are just a few of the items already on the calendar:

February 8—Volunteer Recognition Potluck

July 4—Iowa Gravel Classic

July 11-12—Whiterock Ultra

September 19—Star Party (now on a Saturday!)