Winamac Conservation Club Establishes Scholarship

After 85 years, the Winamac Conservation Club will close this year. However, it will leave a legacy through a new scholarship with the Community Foundation of Pulaski County.

Originally created in 1933, the purpose of the organization was to support conservation efforts in Pulaski County.

Charlie McKinley, long-time member and treasurer for the Club, can tell stories about various projects accomplished by the Club over the years. In 1940, a fish hatchery pond was built at the Winamac Town Park which was used for replenishing the Tippecanoe River fish supply, and during the winter months was used for ice skating. Financing of the pond was carried out by the club after receiving town board approval to use the city-owned land. Club members who assisted with the project included Lon McKinley Jr., W.E. Rust, Obed McKinley, John Delaney, Wallace Young, Clay Zellers and Charles Cramer, park custodian.

The Club built a bird sanctuary and observation hut in 1941 located north of the 4-H barns to provide a natural habitat for the study of bird life. The sanctuary included a 45 x 90' feeding area surrounded by a wire fence with a bench and feeders placed along the ground to attract wild birds. Other projects included construction of trap shoots for clay pigeons, built at their "club house" located near today's Knights of Columbus Hall. The club donated money and partnered with other organizations like the Turkey Tracks Hunt, Quail Forever (dedicated to habitat conservation), and the local Fish & Wildlife Area for youth outreach. Each year the club purchased 4-H animals to support youth in the community. Today the fireplace at the Winamac Town Park still displays a plaque dedicated to the club.

The **Winamac Conservation Club Scholarship** will be offered to Pulaski County high school students who will study in the field of Natural Resources and Conservation, which may include Ecology, Environmental Studies, Forestry, Wildlife Management or related areas.