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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Artist in Residence Program at Waubonsie State Park Awards Announced

Hamburg, IA (November 16, 2020) – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Golden Hills RC&D and the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway are excited to announce the Waubonsie State Park Artist in Residence awards for the 2019-2020 Program! The Artist in Residence program was created to help reach a broader audience of park-goers, thus increasing the number of visitors and ultimately educating more people about the Loess Hills ecosystem. The artists and visitors will engage with the natural resources of the park through an artistic lens. Many quality applications were received from artists representing a wide array of disciplines. Five artists were selected to fill residencies ranging from two weeks to six weeks long in November through April of next year. Those artists receiving the residency awards for the third season of the Waubonsie State Park Artist in Residence Program include Ben Holloway, Anna Stoysich and Jorge Chavez Colorado, Shelly Eisenhauer, and Ashley Pierce. The artists will use their time at Waubonsie to immerse themselves in the landscape as a source of inspiration and opportunity to intensely focus on their work. The artists represent a diverse array of media, including sound, painting, photography, digital media, mixed media, wood carving and wood burning.

Bringing the first non-visual art residency to Waubonsie, Ben Holloway of Omaha, Nebraska is interested in composing music that is bound to place and contains the sounds of the natural world. Ben will spend time in the park collecting sound, bringing it back to his workstation, and weaving those sounds into a piece of music or sound collage. “There are so many beautiful sounds we tune out or don’t realize are around us all the time. I seek to bring these sounds to the forefront and highlight their beauty.” In order to capture sounds at different times, Ben’s residency will be split into three separate sessions throughout the residency period, the first beginning on November 15.

Featured this year will be the program’s first collaborative residency, by artists Anna Stoysich and Jorge Chavez Colorado of Malvern, Iowa. Anna and Jorge are a wife and husband team, and the residency at Waubonsie is important at this point in their careers because for the first time ever they will be able to take time to intentionally create together. During their stay, Anna and Jorge intend to work on a series of paintings and digitally catalogue their portfolio as collaborators. About the relationship between their art and the park, they say “We are interested in highlighting the unique geological features of Waubonsie, the Loess Hills. This is a special attraction which brings people to the park year after year. We hope paintings of this subject would generate more interest for people to come and explore the hills.” Anna and Jorge’s residency will begin just after the first of the year.

This year the program will see its first artist returning for a second residency, Shelly Eisenhauer of Glenwood, Iowa. She specializes in photography and digital media. “I am excited to use my lens and lights to explore the details of plant life in the park during the winter. Last year, both color and texture provided beautiful photographic opportunities, and my priority was exploring the varieties of plants in the park; this year, I would



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focus on the details of shape and texture in individual plants, and plan to explore the possibilities of black and white photography of winter plant samples in a studio setting.” Shelly’s residency will take place the last two weeks in February.

The fourth artist selected for this year’s Waubonsie State Park Artist in Residence program is Ashley Pierce of Columbus, Ohio. She will work primarily in wood carving, wood burning and mixed media. Ashley says of the residency, “My work is based on my experiences, emotions and the people and places in my life. I have recently decided to dive deeper into how our environments shape us as individuals and how we in turn shape them. The residency will allow me to gain valuable insight through a rich ecosystem where I will expand my knowledge and ideas as well as how to translate these ideas artistically. This experience will elevate my work and get me to that next level of artistic exploration I have been searching for but have not yet been afforded the dedicated time and space to explore.” Ashley will reside at the park during the month of March.

One of the region’s ecological and recreational treasures, Waubonsie State Park’s 2,000 acres in the Loess Hills of southwest Iowa feature prairies, savannas, and woodlands which are home to diverse flora and fauna, not to mention breathtaking vistas. Park Manager Matt Moles has worked with Golden Hills RC&D Project Coordinator Lance Brisbois and Loess Hills National Scenic Byway Coordinator Rebecca Castle to develop and launch the project. While there have been other artist residency programs offered through the National Parks System and parks in other states, this was the first such program in one of Iowa’s State Parks. The program is loosely modeled after similar regional residency programs. The artists will receive lodging in a studio cabin and a primitive studio space in the park at no cost for the duration of the residency. In return, artists will deliver at least one public program during their residency and donate one piece of art to the park at the conclusion of their stay. Public program options have become more flexible due to Covid precautions, and may include virtual or self-led activities.

Waubonsie State Park is only about an hour’s drive from Omaha or Lincoln, NE; two hours from Kansas City; and 2.5 hours from Des Moines. It is located near the southern end of the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway. To learn more about the Artist in Residence program and the artists, visit www.goldenhillsrcd.org/artist-in-residence. If you are an artist and are interested in learning about how to apply, please email rebecca@goldenhillsrcd.org.