

Come discover “our neck of the woods”

Bear Creek Cabins. Highland General Store and Campground

By: Meagan Moellers

“If we don’t have it, you don’t need it!” claim Bev and Gary Stortz, owners of the Highland General Store. “We have something for everyone in our store.” Fishing and hunting supplies, groceries, gifts and collectibles, feed for cattle, movie rentals, hardware, Avon supplies, and there is even a post office for the 29 residents of Highlandville. When Gary and Bev Stortz purchased the property in 1988, they kept the store the way it had been for many years but added their own finishing touches. The building has been around since the 1930’s, when it was a John Deere implement and then a co-op country store for over 45 years.

If you have ever been through Highlandville, which is only 15 miles northeast of Decorah, you might wonder how this little ‘village’ thrives. Perhaps it is related to the fact that the area has the two top ranked trout streams in Iowa, providing excellent trout fishing. The streams do not freeze in the winter and are stocked weekly April through October. Thanks to the South and North Bear Creeks, the Highland General Store, along with their Cabins and Campground, the Old Hospital Lodge, the Old Highlandville store, the Northeast Iowa DNR office, a mechanic and



an appliance repair man all make their living right in the heart of Highlandville. Only 18 people actually call their home Highlandville as many residents just have summer homes there.

“It’s amazing that tourists from all over the country and world find their way to us.” says Bev. “We once rented a cabin to a family from Japan and someone from Western Australia wanted to buy a fishing license.” Not only do people from far away find their way to the store, but a group of locals come every morning to enjoy their daily cup-of-joe. Free coffee, hot chocolate or cappuccino are also

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“As of September 1, 2007 Hawkeye is no longer providing security and environmental monitoring services. All accounts were sold to Hawk Alarms, a company in Minnesota.”

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Bear Creek Cabins...

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offered to the campers.

The store was featured by artist J.D. Speltz on the 1999 Iowa Fishing Regulations booklet and trout stamp. "This was a great honor, especially when visitors from all over the country vacation here to fish and hunt, coming to the store to purchase their license" explains Gary. There were only 150 numbered prints made and they hang their proudly in the store.



Painting by J.D. Speltz, Iowa wildlife artist.

Cabins and Campground

There are 25 permanent sites and 20 electric and primitive sites to choose from at the campground. If camping is not your preference, make a reservation to stay in one of the Bear Creek Cabins. The cabins are available year-round. Construction has started on a third cabin that will hold 10-12 people, a perfect location for family gatherings or just a weekend get-a-way. With the holidays coming up, a gift certificate would make a great present for the avid hunter, angler or for someone who just enjoys the beauty of Winneshiek County. Visit www.bearcreekcabinsia.com for more information and rates. Hawkeye REC is proud to "keep the lights on" for the guests.



A playground in memory of their grandson Brady, is a hot-spot for the kids. Mark Borreson, Gary and Bev's son-in-law, welded a toy excavator for kids to operate.

Why not visit?

If you can't stay the night, how about just a quick peek at what a modern version of an old time general store looks like? Or, have a cup of coffee and chat with Gary and Bev. Whatever you decide, you'll be glad you made the time to visit the Highland General Store!



Highlandville Post Office.

