

You are invited this Friday, May 25, 2012, to a 5:00 pm picnic dinner at Whiterock Conservancy, to hear a talk on the historic 1959 visit of Nikita Khrushchev to Coon Rapids, IA, and to meet and mingle with our latest Eastern European delegation from Tajikistan.

Whiterock is a non-profit land trust created to steward a 5,000-acre river-valley land donation from the Garst Family of Coon Rapids. Whiterock also rents lodgings at the historic Garst Farm that hosted Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in the middle of the Cold War.

Whiterock Conservancy is involved in environmental restoration, outdoor recreation, and sustainable agriculture, and hosts visitors from around the state, nation, and world. To learn more about Whiterock and its lodging and recreation options, please visit www.whiterockconservancy.org

The Tajikistan delegation includes agricultural producers from Dushanbe (the capitol) and from Tajikistan's fertile agricultural Sughd Region. The delegation is joined by an English-speaking facilitator, Shurat Shamsiev, with the US Embassy in Dushanbe. This visit is sponsored by the Open World Leadership Center of Washington, D.C., and hosted by Creating Great Places of Coon Rapids, IA.

The Tajikistan group is in Iowa for a week-long program to promote mutual understanding between Tajikistan agricultural specialists and their U.S. counterparts. The goal of this international exchange is to support economic development in Tajikistan by strengthening agricultural diversification.

Since arriving May 19th, the Tajikistan delegates have been meeting with Iowa agriculture leaders and producers, with visits to the Drake Agriculture Law Center; Practical Farmers of Iowa; The Berry Patch Farm; Iowa State University and its Horticulture Station; Grinnell Heritage Farm; Kalona Cheese Factory; ISU Dairy; The Office of the Secretary of Agriculture; the Offices of Senator Tom Harkin, the Iowa Farm Bureau; and Whiterock Conservancy near Coon Rapids, IA.

On Friday evening, May 25, the Whiterock event will begin at 5:00 pm with a History talk by Liz Garst, who was present at the Khrushchev visit as a young girl, and still has vivid memories of that event. She will talk about the role of Roswell Garst as an agricultural innovator and citizen diplomat, and the importance of agriculture for increasing international understanding.

At 6:00 pm a picnic dinner will be served on the lawn of the beautiful Whiterock River House. If you wish to attend, please RSVP: rachelg@creatinggreatplaces.org by Thursday afternoon, so we can calculate the food. The event is free, but free-will donations of \$7-10 per plate are encouraged.

Directions: On Highway 141 between Bayard and Coon Rapids, turn south on Fig Avenue (a gravel road) and go 2.2 miles until you reach the Middle Raccoon River. Please park at the campground on your left, just before the river bridge. The event will be held next to the historic dance barn on the north side of the road.
Hoping to see you there! Sincerely,

Rachel Garst

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