

**Friends of the Wapsi Center Minutes**  
Thursday, March 21, 2019  
Wapsi River Environmental Education Center

Attendees: Naturalist Becky Baugh, Bill Robbins, Lucia Dryanski, Jim Ross, Eliza Ross, Erma Wiszmann, Carol Rogers, Norm Nichols, Bob Bryant, and Joy Sheeley.

The treasurer's report was approved. The current bank balance is 13,665.17. We have recently received a \$1,000 donation from the Quad City Women's Outdoor Group, along with bird sponsorships and membership renewals which are not yet included in that amount.

**Staff news:** Interviews for the two 4H AmeriCorps members will begin this week. Staff members attended the spring Iowa Association of Naturalists meeting in Polk County this month.

**Facilities:** The furnace in the Eco Center lab needs to be replaced. Space heaters are being used in the meantime. Becky asked Saturday hosts to remember to turn off the one in the reptile room before leaving for the night, and to be sure the doors between the lab, reptile room, and foyer are kept closed.

Construction on the dormitory will begin this summer.

**Education:** Last month 15 groups, including 367 individuals, attended on-site programs. An additional 9 groups, including 401 individuals, participated in programming off-site. Three programs were cancelled.

On April 8, the Center will host an IADNR Frog and Toad Survey training. So far eight people have signed up for this.

**Old Business:** The annual Volunteer Stewardship Workday will be held from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 20 in honor of Earth Day. We will provide a lunch for the event, with menu details to be decided at the next meeting. Volunteer Orientation will follow from 12:30 to 2:30.

Sept. 14 is the tentative date for the Monarch Festival. Decisions about which sessions to offer need to be finalized by the end of June so that the event can be advertised in the fall WREN. The Friends group may make and sell a kit for raising monarchs as a fundraiser.

The Friends will provide hot dogs and s'mores for Bat 101, a new workshop tentatively scheduled for the evening of June 29. Participants will build bat houses, and then hike in the woods with a device called an Echometer Touch 2. This device connects to a smartphone and uses an app to record and display bat calls. It also can help to identify bat species that are calling. Becky said data collected during the event can be used later on with school groups. Scott County will apply for grants to purchase the Echometer Touch 2 devices, which cost about \$180.

Paint by Nature canvases are now for sale in the gift shop for \$10.

**New Business:** The bird bath heater trips any outlet where it is plugged in. Jim will check with Wild Birds Unlimited to see if it is under warranty or whether they might offer some other remedy for the situation.

Norm asked whether we are still planning to replace the trail signs, put up a metal map in the kiosk, and paint footprints on the sidewalk to guide visitors to various buildings. Becky said she would look into it.

Becky asked whether the Friends might want to purchase a laptop to use while hosting at the Eco Center. We will discuss this next month.

As part of an effort to limit the Eco Center animals to native species, the anole and scorpions have been relocated to other homes.

Becky thanked hosts and program volunteers, as well as those who have renewed their memberships, made donations, or sponsored Eco Center animals.

The annual meeting has been set for June 20 at the Lakeview Shelter, West Lake Park.

**Sharing from Friends:** Bob offered to lead an Owl Prowl session. He also will talk to Dave about finding a permanent space to establish a memorial garden.

The Friends group will meet next at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 18 at the Wapsi River Center.