

Friends of the Wapsi Center Minutes
Thursday, August 15, 2019
Wapsi River Environmental Education Center

Attendees: Naturalist Becky Baugh, Bill Robbins, Lucia Dryanski, Jim Ross, Julie Ross, Ingrid Bogdanowicz, Jolinda Burr, Bob Bryant, Carol Rogers, and Joy Sheeley.

Staff news: 4H AmeriCorps member Alexis Azure completed her 300-hour internship at the Wapsi Center on August 10. Faith Heinrichs will continue her internship until November. Becky said Scott County has been approved to employ a full time Americorps member and it's possible that Faith may move into that position. Center Director Dave Murcia will attend 4H Americorps Supervisor training in Ames next week. The AmeriCorps supervisor has completed a site visit at the Center recently,

Grounds: The Menke Observatory plans to partner with the Quad City Astronomical Society to move an existing observatory from Sherman Park to the Wapsi Center site, along with adding one new building and concrete pads at its present location.

Becky asked that hosts weed the garden during their shifts if possible.

Facilities: Dorm renovations haven't begun yet, so the dorm is still available for use during programs, but not for rentals. A door has been ordered for the old pole barn, but it has not arrived.

Education: In July, onsite programs were given to 10 groups totaling 281 people, and off-site programs were given to 31 groups totaling 1128 people. Three programs were cancelled.

The mammal skulls have arrived. They will be displayed without their bottom jaws because the jaws are not attached and are very fragile.

Eight multi-meters have been delivered, and the wind turbine kits should arrive soon.

A Monarch BioTent has been purchased from the Monarch Research Station near Cedar Rapids. The BioTent will be set up next to the pump house in time for the Monarch Fest on Sept. 14. Some of the monarchs that eclose in the Center lab before that time will be kept in the BioTent for tagging and release on that day.

Old Business: The group continued to discuss plans for the Sept. 14 Monarch Festival. There are 115 people signed up so far. The group agreed to prepare enough tacos to feed everyone who is registered. Preparations for the meal will begin the night before in the Kestrel Cabin, where the tacos will be served on the following day. Becky will send out an email to help volunteers coordinate plans for the meal preparation.

New Business:

The Friends agreed to allocate about \$160 to buy Wild Edible books for the gift shops, as these have been a popular item during Becky's Wild Edible workshops. We also approved spending \$400-500 on other gift shop items before the Monarch Festival, along with purchasing two educational kits for Center staff for about \$200. One Acorn Naturalists kit features bats, the other features monarch butterflies.

The group discussed ordering t-shirts that pair monarchs with the Wapsi Center logo. Julie will check on prices, and whether they could be ready before the Monarch Festival.

Becky suggested that we might make a set of bat models with wing lengths and weights that correspond to the bat species found in Iowa. The bat echometer is not yet up and running.

Becky thanked Wendy Stolley, who recently donated a large aquarium and stand. It will be moved to the dorm building once renovations are complete. Becky told the group that a thank you letter has been sent to Caroline Kimple for her \$400 donation towards the feeding of wildlife. The donation comes to us through the Quad Cities Community Foundation—Caroline Kimple Charitable Endowment. Becky also thanked the Friends group

for funding the yoga instructor for the upcoming Grounded in Nature program, and again thanked hosts and program volunteers for their help.

The Friends group will meet next at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 19 at the Wapsi River Center.