

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Spring 2002

Wapsi River Environmental Education Center

Plant Profile ~ Bloodroot

by Michael Petersen, AmeriCorp Naturalist

April showers bring along some of spring's most anticipated coloring, reminding us that summer is almost here. These showers, added with warm sunshine, allow our native poppy, bloodroot, to spring to life.



Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) is one of spring's earliest wildflowers. It appears before leaf buds come to life and block sunshine from the forest floor. A true poppy, with flowers not lasting more than a day, thrives in timbers of well-drained soil in the eastern half of the United States. The rhizome (underground stem) of bloodroot sends up several flowering stems enveloped in a single leaf. The flower stem eventually extends much higher than the leaf, reaching heights of 6" to 14" – still relatively short.



The bloodroot's flower center is yellow with white petals extending outward forming somewhat of a square shape, with some petals longer than others. The flowers of bloodroot are a welcome sight against the dullness of fall's fallen leaves.

On woodland hikes, one may realize that this herb is only visible for a short period. Soon after blooming, March through May, this beautiful spring flower reduces itself again to the rhizome and awaits next year's spring rains and warm sunshine. By early summer, this perennial has

saved enough energy to lay dormant for another year, just beneath the oak and hickory leaves.

Bloodroot is named after the juice found in its rhizome. The juice is blood-red in color with about the same consistency as blood. It will even coagulate like blood when the rhizome is punctured or cut. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration lists bloodroot as "unsafe" because of its caustic (poisonous) properties and ability to chemically corrode and destroy tissue. Since it is a member of the poppy family, this herb also contains alkaloids that closely resemble morphine, a chemical composite of opium poppy. Therefore, internal use is dangerous.



Although the U.S. Food and Drug Administration lists bloodroot as "unsafe", the Native Americans found numerous uses for it. Their use of this herb varies greatly. A simple use was chewing the root and using the spittle on burns. A couple of drops of bloodroot juice on hardened maple sugar were used to cure sore throats by sucking on it. Internal uses were the making of a tea from the rhizome to relieve stomach cramps, as an emetic to induce vomiting, a laxative and a digestive system stimulant. External uses include treatment for warts, ringworm, fungal infections and surface cancerous growths. Bloodroot worked very well on skin ailments because of its ability to destroy and corrode tissue. After all the pros and cons of this herb, its safest use is as a natural dye, coloring objects on contact.

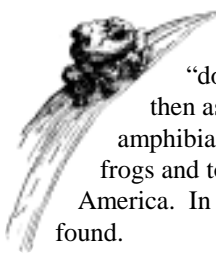


To experience this spring wildflower is truly wonderful. Its clumps of shimmering white petals will surely brighten your mood from the extent of winter's gloom.

Wildlife Profile ~ Unknown Songs of Spring

by Greg Wolf, Interpretative Naturalist

When people think of spring, the first things that come to mind are budding trees, spring wildflowers and birds returning from the wintering grounds. The appearance of frogs also provides a sure sign that spring has arrived.



Frogs are amphibians, which means that in the course of their life span they lead a “double life”, first in the water as tadpoles and then as adults on land. Frogs make up 85% of all amphibians. Today, there are 3,800 known species of frogs and toads in the world, 82 of which live in North America. In Iowa, 16 species of frogs and toads can be found.

Frog and toad choruses can be heard in our ponds, marshes or most bodies of water that stay wet. A frog's call is the first thing that will tell you it is around. March is the time to start listening for frogs as long as the temperature stays above 50°F or higher. As an exothermic (an animal that gets its heat from the environment), the temperature must be warm enough for the frogs to have enough energy to call. Calling continues well into July and even as late as August. The main reason for frogs to call is to set up territories and attract females for breeding.

Male frogs and toads sing. One male has three kinds of calls: “advertisement calls” to alert females of their presence, “aggressive calls” to defend their territory and “courtship calls” to attract females within their territory.

How does a frog make its call? The secret is in the frog's vocal sac(s). Males push air from the lungs over the vocal cords and into the vocal sacs. True frogs (bullfrogs, leopard frogs, green frogs and pickerel frogs) have two vocal sacs, one on each side of the throat, while tree frogs and toads have one vocal sac under the chin.

Vocal sacs assist in amplifying the song (call) so it can be heard from a long distance away. Loud calls are a sign of strength to which the females are attracted. When frogs call, they expend a lot of energy. A male frog may lose up to 1/3 of its body weight while calling during the breeding season.



Each species has its own call. If you can learn to recognize bird calls, you can learn frog calls. The following list is of common frogs and toads in the area and how to recognize their calls.

- **Northern Leopard Frog** - resembles a long snore followed by a series of short grunts
- **Pickerel Frog** - snore similar to that of Northern leopard frog (steady low croak) though not as loud; they call under the water
- **Green Frog** - short series of low-pitched ‘clungs’ similar

to a clear banjo note repeated slowly and more softly each time

- **Bullfrog** - single reverberating strum on a bass fiddle; “jug-o’-rum”
- **Eastern Gray Tree Frog** - slow, musical, resonating trill
- **Cope’s Gray Tree Frog** - hearty resonating trill, similar to Eastern gray tree frog but faster
- **Spring Peeper** - short, loud, penetrating “peep” for one to two seconds
- **Western Chorus Frog** - noise similar to dragging your fingernail across the teeth of a comb
- **Cricket Frog** - bouncing of two steel balls together
- **American Toad** - loud, melodious trill lasting many seconds, sometimes half a minute

This may seem like a lot to learn, but take some time to listen to the frogs this spring. You will be surprised how fast you can pick up on the calls. If you are interested in experiencing a frog survey, call Jennifer Anderson, Nahant Marsh naturalist. She explores the marsh and researches the frogs every other Friday starting March 15 at sunset. Call her at (563) 323-5196 to let her know if you plan on assisting her, and want to learn more about the unknown songs of spring.

Recommended Listening Periods (with minimum water temperatures)

	1-50°F		2-60°F		3-70°F	
February	March	April	May	June	July	August
— Wood Frog —						
— Chorus Frog —						
— Spring Peeper —						
— Crawfish Frog —						
— Southern Leopard Frog —						
— Plains Leopard Frog —						
—Northern Leopard Frog —						
— Pickerel Frog —						
— American Toad —						
— Great Plains Toad —						
— Gray Tree Frog —						
— Cricket Frog —						
— Fowler’s Toad —						
— Woodhouse’s Toad —						
— Plains Spadefoot —						
— Green Frog —						
— Bullfrog —						

* The calling times presented below are typical of frogs in Missouri. Iowa frogs begin calling slightly later.

The Lost and Almost Lost

by Bob Bryant

Wapsi River E. E. Center, Director

The Lost and Almost Lost is a series of articles on Iowa's game animals and how they have fared during the settlement of Iowa. The series is based on "A Country So Full of Game" by James Dinsmore (1994). This book is a comprehensive history of the interaction of man with Iowa's wildlife. Find out what species of wildlife we have lost, what species we could lose, and what species were lost but reintroduced.

Even though many species have been extirpated from the state or their numbers drastically decreased, some species associated with the woodland edge or the deep woods have proven to be very adaptable to Iowa's changing environment in the 1800s. Fox, raccoons and skunks have proven to be some of Iowa's most adaptable, common and widely distributed wildlife.

The largest of Iowa's fox is the red fox. It is mostly yellowish-red, with dark, bushy, white-tipped tail and weighs 10-15 lbs. It prefers the woodland edge, open woods, fields and grassland. The smaller gray fox is distinguished by its pepper-and-salt color with buffy underfur, and a black-tipped bushy tail with a dark stripe running its full length. The gray fox is a true woodland species, preferring dense woods and brushy areas. Iowa's smallest fox, weighing only 4 -6 lbs., was the swift fox. It has large ears, pale buffy yellow coat and a black tip on its bushy tail. It is a fox of the open plains and desert. There are only a few records of the swift fox being in Iowa. These reports were from the western part of the state, the last being from the Spirit Lake area in 1882.

The red fox is the most-commonly-seen fox in Iowa now, for several reasons. They are very adaptable, and can be found in a variety of habitats, even in cities. Their yellowish-red color also makes them easier to spot in the open country. The gray fox is predominately nocturnal, prefers the dense woods, and will climb trees, especially when threatened.

In the early 1800s, it appears that the gray fox, in some areas of Iowa, was more common than the red fox. The gray fox was generally found in the heavily wooded areas of northeast Iowa and along many of the wooded river valleys, especially in east central and southern Iowa. In the Midwest, the red fox was found mostly in the Great Lakes states and into northern Iowa. Most of the early red fox records in the early 1800s did come from northern Iowa.

By the mid-1800s, there were signs of a shift in the distribution and the numbers of fox in Iowa. Just like the white-tailed deer, the red fox numbers increased and they expanded their range as the woodlands were logged, cleared and grazed to meet the needs of a growing state. This patchwork of open fields and woods created an edge effect, very favorable to the red fox. However, this gradually had a negative impact on the population and distribution of the gray fox, which prefers the dense woodlands.

Although fox are valued for their fur, they were also considered a threat to small livestock and poultry by early settlers. Bounties were paid on red and gray fox from 1860 to 1897. A \$2 bounty on fox was reestablished in 1951. Through the 1950s, all 99 counties paid a bounty on fox. By 1960, half of the counties quit, and only one county was paying a bounty by 1977. As the Iowa's woodland acreage shrunk, so did the gray fox's habitat, making it easier for them to be hunted or trapped as compared to the red fox. The gray fox's habit of climbing trees probably made them easier prey, also, especially when they were hunted using foxhounds. Fox drives, where hunters would surround a field or a woodlot, were common practice well into the mid-1900s. It wasn't until 1969, that a fox season was established in Iowa.



Fox, despite being heavily hunted and trapped, have proven to be very adaptable and remained a common inhabitant of Iowa's natural environment. Fox populations peaked in the 1960s and then started showing a gradual decline. Fox populations fluctuate for a variety of reasons such as disease, food supply, loss of habitat, fur prices, etc. However, in the last 10-15 years, fox populations have shown a noticeable decline. This decline appears to be coinciding with the population increase of another member of the canine family, the coyote. Red fox and coyote prefer the same kind of habitat and find themselves in direct competition with each other.

In the next issue of The W.R.E.N., I will cover the raccoon, skunk and "Mr. Everywhere", the opossum.



Wapsi Center Happenings

by Bob Bryant, Director



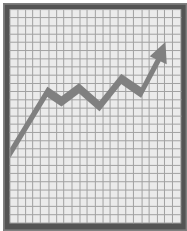
Quad City Bald Eagle Days

Bald Eagle Days, held at the QCCA Expo Center on January 11-13, had over 22,600 people in attendance. The Wapsi River Center participated by helping with school programs on Friday. Our booth's theme this year was the white-tailed deer. Our display's showpiece was the full-size mount of a white-tail buck that was found dead in Clinton County, August 2000. The antlers were in full velvet when it was found. We were very fortunate that the taxidermist was able to preserve the velvet. The cost of the taxidermy work was paid for by the Clinton County Conservation Board as part of their commitment to the Wapsi River Center.



Big Increase In School Field Trips

From September-February of this school year, 4,200 students, teachers and parents participated in field trips at the Wapsi River Center. This is 1,604 more than last year at this time, which amounts to a 61% increase. This tremendous increase was due to one large school (292) switching from spring to fall, 2 new large schools (751) and new smaller schools (561).



Four of the field trips were overnight trips (3 secondary schools and 1 elementary). There was also an increase in winter field trips and only one cancellation due to bad weather.

As in past years, we still have quite a few days open in April, but May is filling up fast. If you are a teacher who wants to schedule a field trip or take advantage of our new dormitory and schedule an overnight field trip, give us a call at (563) 843-2855.



Dormitory Use

So far this fiscal year (July-February), the dormitory has been rented 14 times (several were multiple-day rentals). The dormitory has been used for 2 workshops, 4 schools, 1 Boy Scout Troop, 2 Girl Scout Troops, 3 church retreats and by two private organizations.

Eco Center Hours Change

The Eagle View Eco Center and its interpretive displays will be open (free of charge) Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 - 5:00 P.M., April 6 - October 27.



Wapsi Center Rental Facilities

Dormitory:

The Owl's Nest Dormitory is divided into two large rooms, each capable of sleeping 26 people. Each section has its own shower and restroom facilities. Full dorm rental is \$300 per night. If you have a smaller group, you may rent sections of the dorm as needed. Partial rental options start at \$80. Kitchen and dining/meeting space are available in Redtail Lodge.

Meeting and dining facilities:

Rustic Redtail Lodge (capacity: 50) has a kitchen, meeting/dining room with gas fireplace, and restrooms. The Eagle View Eco Center has a kitchen, meeting room (capacity: dining, 70; meeting, 100) and restrooms. Meeting room fees are \$50/day and kitchen fees are \$15/day. The \$15 kitchen fee is waived for groups renting any part of dorm and a meeting room.

Cabin:

Kestrel Cabin has one bedroom with a queen-size bed and 2 cots, a combination kitchen and living room with a foldout couch, gas heat, air-conditioning and a bathroom with a shower. Rental fee: \$30/day.



Dan Behl
Tom Greene
Jeanne Knape
K.J. Rebarcak
Carol Rogers
Jessica Gobel
Jessica Topping
Chuck Wardell
JoAnne Denkleu
Mr. & Mrs. Varcho
Mary & Pete Tofilon
Credit Island Bait Shop
George & Helen Bentrott

IN APPRECIATION OF YOUR SUPPORT OF THE WAPSI RIVER CENTER

Mark Cleve

LeRoy Sowle
Dottie Wala
Mary Bryant
Stephen Bures
Jeanne Bryant
Glenn Drowns
Erma Wiszmann
Marialice Fecht
Justin Levetzow
Dave & Connie Huber
Arlene & Lorena Reisen
Mary Ann & Ken Wilkison
Becky, Bridget & Nicole Birks

Spring Volunteer Workday ~ Saturday, April 13

9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Enjoy a crisp, spring day while helping to spruce up the Wapsi River Center. There is a variety of projects at various skill levels. Bring a friend and enjoy the day!!

In appreciation of your hard work, lunch will be provided courtesy of the Friends of the Wapsi Center. Please bring your own place setting. To volunteer, call the Center at (563) 843-2855.



Scott County Pool & Beach Facilities

Scott County Park Pool

- Open: Memorial Day Weekend
- Re-open: Early June - Late August
- Hours: Weekdays: Noon - 8:00 P.M.
- Weekends: 10:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.
- Open: Labor Day Weekend
- Scott County Park Pool Learn-to-Swim Program
- Registration: Will start in mid-April and continue after pool opens ~ Call (563) 285-4968

West Lake Park Beach & Concessions

Food and beverages will be available at the beach and the boathouse. Paddle boats, fitness water bikes and 2-man fishing boats are available for rent at the boathouse. Bait is also available at the boathouse.

Beach/Concession: Open: Memorial Day - Labor Day
Hours: 11:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Boathouse/Concession

May 1 (weather permitting) - Memorial Day:
Weekends: 10:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.
After Memorial Day: Weekdays & Weekends:
10:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.



MARCH



16th & 17th ~ IMAX Theatre Opening Weekend ~ Putnam Museum ~ Visit the new IMAX theatre and catch the premiere film, *Journey Into Amazing Caves*. A regular schedule of public show times will begin on Monday, March 18, and are as follows:

Monday-Thursday	11:30, 1:30, 3:30
Friday	11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 7:30, 8:30
Saturday	11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 4:30, 7:30, 8:30
Sunday	11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 4:30

Tickets may be purchased by calling the Putnam Museum at (563) 324-1933, or log on to the Putnam's website at www.putnam.org.

19th ~ Nahant Marsh Teachers' Workshop

~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ A three-hour workshop for teachers and group leaders will be held to introduce the programs and equipment the Nahant Marsh Field Station has to offer. The marsh can be found by taking Interstate 280 south to Highway 22 east, then turn off on Wapello Avenue. The entrance to the marsh is on the east side of the road at the railroad tracks. A \$10 fee will cover wetland education materials and refreshments. Register by calling Jennifer Anderson at (563) 323-5196.



23rd ~ Nahant Marsh Field Station Open House ~ 9:00

A.M. - 12:15 P.M. ~ Nahant Marsh ~ This special day will include presentations on various research projects being conducted at Nahant Marsh. Come take a wetland hike and learn about such topics as: bird surveys, stream sampling, stream table analysis, reptiles and amphibians, bats and wetland furbearers. Please call Jennifer Anderson at (563) 323-5196 for more information.



23rd ~ Kite Flying 101 ~ 10:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ "Up, up and away!" Nothing can make your spirits soar like building and flying your very own kite. Using sticks, string, paper and glue, create one of the traditional kite designs. After construction, participants will go outside for a test flight. Interested participants are asked to pre-register by March 15, (563) 843-2855. Supply cost is \$1.00 per kite.

APRIL

1st ~ Season Opener ~ 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. ~ Buffalo Bill Cody Homestead ~ Today is the season opener for the Cody Homestead. The homestead is open 7 days a



SPRING

week from 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Admission fee is \$2.00 for adults and free to those 16 years old and younger. The homestead, 28050 230th Ave., is located west of Princeton, IA, off County Road F33.

4th ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ (April 11 is rain/wind date) ~ Roadside biologist Walt Wickham will light up the night sky during this educational program. Fire is a natural part of a prairie's life cycle. Along with a spectacular show, Walt will explain the how, why and when of prairie burns.

8th ~ Woodcock Watch ~ 7:30 P.M.

~ Sherman Park ~ Come watch the dynamic display of the American woodcock at Sherman Park's north entrance. This is our 17th year watching the woodcocks' courtship "Skydance", and they have always treated us to a good show.



13th ~ Volunteer Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Looking for a cure for cabin fever? A little spring cleaning at the Wapsi River Center is sure to do the trick! The Wapsi Center staff will have a variety of tasks to suit all talents and skill levels. Tools and lunch will be provided. Please call (563) 843-2855 to volunteer.

13th ~ Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky.

15th ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 8:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ (18 is rain/wind date) ~ Roadside biologist Walt Wickham will light up the night sky during this educational program. Fire is a natural part of a prairie's life cycle. Along with a spectacular show, Walt will explain the how, why and when of prairie burns. The Soaring Eagle Nature Center is located adjacent to Eagle Point Park in Clinton, IA.

16th ~ Waterfowl Migration ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Goose Lake Wildlife Area ~ The marsh is a resting and feeding point along the spring migration route for many species of wetland birds. We will also hope to see and hear the Sandhill cranes



EVENTS



and trumpeter swans of Goose Lake. Meet in the west-central parking lot for viewing. After watching from the shore, we will paddle into the marsh with C.C.C.B. canoes to get a closer look. Bring binoculars and field guides.

20th ~ Nature Journaling ~ 10:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Experience natural wonders in a whole new way by keeping a nature journal. Learn how a variety of art supplies, techniques and methods can be used to enrich your trips into the field and strengthen your powers of observation. Participants will receive materials to get started with nature journaling. Cost for the workshop is \$4.00. This workshop is geared towards adults and youngsters 5th grade and up. Pre-registration is required, (563) 843-2855.



20th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Opener ~ 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ The Nature Center will be open from 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. on Saturdays, now through October. A wildflower hike will be held at 1:30 P.M. to explore the spring colors of the woods. Homemade ice cream will be served following the hike. As always, we are looking for volunteers to open the Nature Center on Saturdays. No experience is necessary. Call the Clinton County Conservation Board at (563) 847-7202 for information.

20th ~ Spring Pheasant Festival ~ 4:30 P.M. ~ Wheatland Community Center ~ The Clinton County Chapter of Pheasants Forever is planning a family night of fun at the Wheatland Community Center. They will have lots of games, door prizes, an auction and a butterfly chop dinner served by the Clinton County Pork Producers.

Cost is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for kids under 16; people need not be members to attend. Call Dan at (563) 659-9876 for tickets.

22nd - 28th ~ Earth Week ~ Find your personal way to show the earth you care and celebrate the 32nd anniversary of Earth Week. This year's theme is Explore Nature in Your Neighborhood. Ideas for celebrating Earth Week can be found at the National Wildlife Federation's website: www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek/index.html. Earth Day is April 22.



26th ~ Arbor Day ~ Planting a tree shows faith in the future!



26th ~ Spelunking ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Take a wild cave tour at Werden's Cave with the Clinton County naturalists. Meet at Eden Valley Nature Center; pre-registration is required, (563) 847-7202.

MAY

4th ~ Wildflower Walk ~ 1:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Bob Bryant on a walk to appreciate the spring woodland wildflowers of the area. Participants should meet at the Eagle View Eco Center.

4th ~ Moth Hike ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come and discover some of the amazing nocturnal insects of the Wapsi River Center. Join Michael Granger, Naturalist, for a lesson on lepidopterans. Lights, bed sheets and bait will be used to attract moths for observation and identification. Bring a flashlight and dress appropriately for the weather.



11th ~ Bird Hike ~ 8:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ This hike is in conjunction with the Iowa & National Bird Counts. We will be surveying the Wapsi Center and surrounding areas. Call the Wapsi Center if you would like to help, (563) 843-2855.

11th ~ The Night Shift ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The Wapsi Center is home to Iowa's three most-common owls – the great horned, screech and barred owls. Learn more about Mother Nature's night shift with us as we call the raptors. Participants should bring a small flashlight.



16th ~ Wildflower Walk ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Manikowski Prairie ~ The beautiful pale pink, purple and white hues of the shooting star are in abundance during this time of year. This shortgrass, limestone prairie provides an excellent opportunity to explore part of Iowa's heritage. Manikowski Prairie can be found by turning north from Highway 136 at Goose Lake onto A34 and proceeding north 1 mile, then taking 137th St. (gravel) ¼ mile east.

17th ~ Frog Chorus ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Nahant Marsh is the location for this musical performance. Participants will be helping with the frog and toad survey that is being used to determine the population inventory of Nahant Marsh. The marsh can be found by taking Interstate 280 south to Highway 22 east, then turn off on



Wapello Avenue. The entrance to the marsh is on the east side of the road at the railroad tracks. Participants are asked to bring a small flashlight and be sure to dress for the weather.

18th ~ Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky.

18th ~ Night Hike ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Ranger Chip Brown will lead participants on an after-dark tour of the refuge's murkiest corners. Meet at the Eden Valley Nature Center and bring a small flashlight.



21st ~ Mississippi Backwaters Canoeing ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina and Campground ~ The Mississippi River is a great natural resource. Experience it firsthand in one of C.C.C.B.'s canoes. This trip will travel some of the backwater sloughs near the park. Call (563) 847-7202 to reserve a free canoe.

25th ~ Rock Creek Marina Spring Celebration ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ To celebrate a new season at the Rock Creek Marina & Campground, a variety of activities will be taking place this Memorial Day Weekend. There will be free canoeing for campers and park visitors. The camp store will have 25-cent hot dogs and chips available. Free movies at the pavilion will wrap up this fun family event!

26th & 27th ~ Heritage Days ~ 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Enjoy the



sights, sounds and smells of yesteryear! The past will come to life at the Village as interpreters and actors recreate pioneer life. There will be pioneer craft demonstrations, folk music and a gun show performed by the Wapsi Wranglers. Dan

Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village is located on the north side of Scott County Park. Admission is \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children.

JUNE

7th - 9th ~ Free Fishing Days ~ Let's go fishing! During these three days, Iowa residents may fish and possess fish without a fishing license.

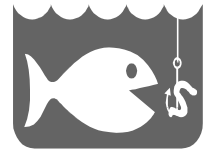


8th ~ Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky.

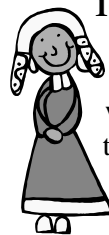
8th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden

Valley Refuge ~ The Nature Center at Eden Valley is having a series of nature movies shown on the big screen. Check the local media for details.

9th ~ Kids' Fishing Derby ~ 1:30 - 5:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ To celebrate Wal-Mart's "Take a Kid Fishing" Week (June 1 - 8), there will be a free fishing derby for kids ages 12 and younger at Lake of the Hills (Gate #1). The first 100 kids registered will receive a fishing "grab bag" made possible through the efforts of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation and Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. Additional prizes will be awarded for the most fish caught and the largest fish caught during the event. Registration will be from 1:30 - 2:00 P.M., with the derby starting at 2:00 P.M. (Participants must have their own equipment and bait, as well as adult supervision.)



10th - 14th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Laura Ingalls Wilder Week will kick-off eight, one-week day camps hosted by the Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village. Learn what life was like in the pioneer days. Experience how Laura Ingalls lived by spending time in an 1800s cabin and one-room school.



Enjoy crafts such as soap decorating, candle dipping and much more. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Tara Youngers at (563) 285-9903 for registration information.

15th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Family nature-theme movies will be shown. Popcorn is free of charge to guests in the pavilion.



17th - 20th ~ EDIWILD 2002 "Discovering Our Biodiversity" ~ Educators' Workshop ~ See special section for more information.

17th - 21st ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Ecology Week is next in a series of eight, one-week camps hosted by the Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village. Learn about the land, water and wildlife. An exploratory visit to the Maquoketa Caves will be included. Activities will include nature crafts, plant and wildlife identification, recycling and our role with nature. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Tara Youngers at (563) 285-9903 for more information.



Kids' Column

Spring Wildflowers

Spring is a perfect time to journey outdoors and look for wildflowers. Fifteen woodland beauties are hidden in the wordfind below.

Names can be found across and down, so grab a pencil and shade in the blocks to see how many wildflowers you can find.

DUTCHMANSBREECHES
OARIHCGNELUGHQJ AQ
GJIBKJODMIEPBRAFU
TZLHEPATICASFCEI
OYLXFJVITBNCOEOUR
OMILWKKUDLEGOKBBR
TBUTTERCUPMVDTSEE
HNMAYAPPLEEOSRDLLL
VMOPNITSPQNUOWALC
IWOPVQURZYE XORDWO
OQSPRINGBEAUTYDOR
LRXAYBWILDGINGERN
ETWBLUECOHOSHBR TC
TOOTHWORTCZDEK FHL



Bellwort
Bloodroot
Blue Cohosh
Buttercup
Dogtooth Violet



Dutchman's Breeches

Hepatica

Jacob's Ladder



May Apple
Rue Anemone
Spring Beauty

Squirrel Corn

Trillium

Toothwort

Wild Ginger



Living Green... by Renne Lietz, Assumption High School Science Teacher

Have you ever listened to a news broadcast or read a newspaper and got really angry about an issue? Whether it's drilling for oil in the Arctic or recycling cans, we often think, "I should do something about that!" You can! Think of the old proverb, "The squeaky wheel gets the oil." Speaking up and making your viewpoint heard is the oldest form of democracy.

Where do you start? Write a letter or send an e-mail to your elected representatives. It can be a local official such as the Board of Supervisors, a state or federal legislator, or the President. The addresses can be found in the government pages of the phone book, or by calling the public library or county courthouse. On the internet, the address for the U.S. Senate is www.senate.gov and the House of Representatives is www.house.gov. A good Iowa website is the Iowa Legislative Information Office at www.legis.state.ia.us. Their mailing address is: Legislative Information Office ~ State Capitol Building ~ East 12th and Grand ~ Des Moines, IA 50319.

What follows are some tips for writing your letter:

- 1) Begin by telling who you are and why you are interested. (Be sure to give your return address; they may write back!)
- 2) Be courteous and reasonable; you can disagree and still be respectful.
- 3) Cover only one subject and come to the point quickly. Be brief, but write in your own words. It is more important to be authentic than polished. Speak and write from your own personal experiences and interests.
- 4) Identify the specific bill by number if you know it.
- 5) Let them know how you want them to vote.

The famous anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."



The Origin of Groundhog Day

by Lisa Gerwulf, Assistant Naturalist

With the passing of Groundhog Day, I started thinking about this holiday's origin. We all know the laws – shadow, six more weeks of winter; no shadow, spring is on its way. But how did it all start? Why do we put so much faith in the predictions of a rodent?

The origin of Groundhog Day spans centuries, and ties us to a past where our lives were mainly governed by nature. In fact, ancient civilizations often performed rituals, which were agriculturally based, to celebrate the increasing power of the sun. These rituals were often performed by farmers whose harvest yields hinged on the weather.

Groundhog Day has been referred to as the Feast of Lights, Imbolc and Candlemas. All these festivals had two things in common, predicting what the second half of winter was going to be like and celebrating with some form of light.

The Feast of Lights has connections with the Greeks. In Greek mythology, Ceres (goddess of cereals and harvest) searches for her daughter in the winter darkness by means of a candle-bearing procession.

Imbolc is celebrated at the mid-way point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. This festival commemorated the return of the sun and a reverence for the cleansing snow.

Candlemas is celebrated 40 days after Christmas and is the time when clergy blessed candles for use in the upcoming year's celebrations. They often distributed candles to people who burned them in their windows in hopes of lightening the mid-winter's darkness. If Candlemas was clear and sunny, at least 40 more days of severe winter weather was expected. If Candlemas was miserable, a prosperous and early summer was promised.

Candlemas was celebrated all over Europe, and each country had their own interpretations. An old English saying reads like this:

*If Candlemas be fair and bright,
Come, Winter, have another flight.
If Candlemas brings clouds and rain,
Go, Winter, and come not again.*

A Scottish couplet reads:

*If Candlemas Day is bright and clear,
There'll be twa (two) winters in the year.*

Another Scottish rhyme reads:

*If Candlemas Day be dry and fair,
The half o' winter to come and mair (more).
If Candlemas Day be wet and foul (pronounced fool),
The half o' winter's gone at Yule.*

The "Yule" reference comes from the English tradition of taking Christmas decorations down before Candlemas. Christmas decorations, at the time, were mainly plant material

and once removed were burned. Their ashes, along with the ashes from the Yule log, were spread on the fields to rejuvenate the earth and promote hearty growth in the spring.

The Romans passed on their beliefs to the Germans who not only embraced these ideas, but also added to them. The Germans relied on hedgehogs and badgers as their prognosticators of choice. They became the first to utilize an animal as a prognosticator, as well as make reference to the length of the shadow and its connection to the prediction.



A German verse reads:

*For as the sun shines on Candlemas Day,
So far will the snow swirl until May.
For as the snow blows on Candlemas Day,
So far will the sun shine before May.*

European beliefs finally made their way to America via the Germans – Pennsylvania's earliest settlers. Once arriving in the New World, German farmers relinquished the hallowed duty of prognosticator to the groundhog, for there were no hedgehogs in North America.

It is possible that Groundhog Day already existed in the New World prior to the Germans' arrival. The Delaware, a Native American tribe who established campsites in the Punxsutawney area, believe their ancestors were once animals in Mother Earth and their ancestral grandfather was Wojak – woodchuck.

Once in America, farmers took a more practical approach:

*If the sun shines on Groundhog Day;
Half the fuel and half the hay.*

American farmers knew that no matter what the weather was on February 2, they were still in the grip of winter. So, if they didn't have half their hay remaining, it could mean lean times for the livestock, or half their fuel remaining, it could mean chilly times for the family.

I cannot end an article on the origin of Groundhog Day without coming full circle to present-day America. Clymer H. Freas, city editor of the Punxsutawney Spirit newspaper, is the man who put Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, on the map. Legend has it that Clymer was inspired, in 1887, by a group of local hunters and gourmets who held an annual groundhog hunt and barbecue. He dubbed this group the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club and promoted the Punxsutawney groundhog as the official weather forecaster of the "Weather Capitol of the World". Thus, Punxsutawney Phil, Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators and Weather Prophet Extraordinaire was "born".

What came next, one might say, was a lot of prognosticating propaganda. Soon visitors were coming from all over the



world to witness Phil's predictions. In 1992, Bill Murray, star of *Groundhog Day*, visited Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, to research the highly celebrated events of The Inner Circle. In 1997, four years after the film's release, 35,000 visitors descended upon the town. (Just in case you're wondering, this is five times the town's usual population!) Punxsutawney Phil has visited with President Reagan,

appeared on the Today Show and Oprah Winfrey, been broadcast on the JumboTron in Times Square and even has his own website.

Although Punxsutawney Phil is the most celebrated of the portly prognosticators, others across the continent vie for the position to be #1.

U.S.A.

Wiley William Woodchuck = (predecessor to Phil)
Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania

Octorara Orphie = Quarryville, Pennsylvania

Pee Wee = Miles Square Farm, Vermont

Staten Island Chuck = New York

Tennessee Groundhog = Silver Point, Tennessee

General Beauregard Lee = Official Weather Prognosticator of the State of Georgia

Birmingham Bill = Alabama

Buckeye Chuck & Holland Huckleberry = Ohio

Sun Prairie Jimmy = Wisconsin

Phoenix Phil = Arizona

CANADA

The Late Wiarton Willie = Wiarton, Ontario

Wee Willie & Wee Willie 2 = Wiarton, Ontario

Gary the Groundhog = Kleinburg, Ontario

Brandon Bob = Manitoba

Balzac Billy = Alberta

With all the pressure to be the top-performing predictor, one might wonder about accuracy. According to an extensive series of scientific studies, the average groundhog is accurate 28-39% of the time. Perhaps our pudgy prognosticators have lost their touch over the years?

According to Marc & Becky Weimer, participants at this year's raucous Gobbler's Knob festivities, Phil's prediction (eloquently spoken in groundhogese) went something like this:

The sky is light, the signal is strong.

My shadow I see,

So winter will be,

Six more weeks long.

Who would have ever guessed beliefs, centuries old, would forever immortalize a lowly rodent as an icon in America's culture?

EDIWILD 2002

“Discovering Our Biodiversity”

Monday, June 17 – Thursday, June 20, 2002

EDIWILD (Educators In The Wild) is a 4-day teachers' workshop (includes evening activities) to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum. The workshop will use an interdisciplinary approach of teaching and will emphasize the biodiversity of local ecosystems (rivers, woodlands, prairies and wetlands).

- ◆ Workshop sites include the Nahant Marsh Field Station, Putnam Museum and IMAX Theatre, Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, Eden Valley Refuge and Sherman Park.
- ◆ Activities include a Wapsi River stream study and float trip, Level I Nature Mapping Training (Iowa State University Wildlife Program), identification and history of Iowa's wildlife, teamwork training, the IMAX Theatre presentation of

“Journey into Amazing Caves” and the ecological exploration of a local cave.

- ◆ Overnight accommodations will be available at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center's dormitory. You do not have to stay overnight on Monday and Tuesday. However, participants are encouraged to stay overnight on Wednesday, since activities will last until 10:00 P.M.
- ◆ Continuing education credit or graduate credit will be available for those interested.
- ◆ Cost for the workshop will be \$60.

If you are interested, and would like to receive an EDIWILD 2002 brochure, which will include a registration form, daily activities and other details,

WAPSI RIVER E. E. CENTER
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DIXON, IA 52745
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If you would like to receive "The W.R.E.N." free of charge, please send a post card to the Wapsi River E. E. Center at the address above.

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