

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Spring 2005

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

www.scottcountyjowa.com/conservation/wapsi.html

The Wapsi River Center is owned, managed and operated by the Scott County Conservation Board with programming and development assistance from the Clinton County Conservation Board.

Confessions of a Rockhound

by Michael Granger, Naturalist

Let me introduce to you a hobby which has brought me much excitement, delight and plenty of thrills: hunting for Lake Superior agates. The birth of this indwelling passion had its beginnings several years ago while spending a hot summer afternoon at a local swimming pool. While a pool check was in session, several children were looking at the beautiful landscaping stones underneath one of the giant waterslides. The "inner child" began to burst forth as I joined in the treasure hunt. I found a most peculiar stone which had a glassy appearance, making it stand out from the other rocks. The color of the stone was reddish-brown and several bands of



light and dark lines encircled it. The stone even had a point where the rings were arranged in a circle and formed an "eye". I speculated and with further research proved the stone to be a Lake Superior agate!

Agates can be found around the world and originate from volcanic regions. Long ago when molten magma erupted from a volcano, gas bubbles became trapped in the cooling lava. As the lava cooled, cracks occurred in the newly formed igneous rock (basalt or rhyolite). Water then seeped through the cracks into the petrified air bubbles, bringing with it microscopic minerals. With each flush of water, a new band of minerals was formed inside the air bubble until the bubble became an agate. One reference pointed out that 99% of all agates are

microcrystalline quartz (quartz, "silicon dioxide", is the most common mineral on planet earth). A Lake Superior agate's reddish color is from iron which has "rusted" when the agate was exposed to air. Agates are extremely hard, being only second in line to diamonds, which is great news to the agate hunter.

Why do we have Lake Superior agates in Iowa? Long ago, ancient glaciers, some of which consisted of a sheet of ice a mile thick, scoured the land, breaking up, transporting, polishing and depositing agates along the way. An agate's hardness prevented its destruction by the glaciers.

Agates can be found along Iowa's rivers, sand pits and rock quarries. One of my favorite places to search is business parking lots which have



decorative landscaping stones (be sure to ask permission before hunting – wherever you are looking). Several books have been published on Lake Superior agates, and you also may view some incredible agates on the Internet. Many people sell their agates, but I have vowed never to sell mine, for each one has a different story, adventure and memory behind it.

Wapsi Center Happenings

by Bob Bryant, Director

Quad City Bald Eagle Days

Bald Eagle Days were held at the QCCA Expo Center on January 7-9. The QCCA said the attendance was 18,868. We had approximately 13,600 stop by our booth. Sunday was especially busy. This year's theme was wetlands, and our main display featured our turtles. Our booth is one of the more popular booths because of our hands-on activities and we have a new theme each year. It takes a lot of work to develop and set up our booth and staff it. The staff is very appreciative of the positive feedback we receive. Even before we were finished setting up, one person stopped by and said, "You outdid yourself again." As in past years, we helped with the school programs (1,106 attended) on Friday. We would like to thank all of our volunteers who helped us on Bald Eagle Days.

School Field Trips

From September-February of this school year, 2,743 students, teachers and parents participated in 45 field trips at the Wapsi River Center. As expected, this is less than last year at this time due to the 2 large schools which alternate coming to the Wapsi Center every other year. However, there was an additional drop of approximately 400, and 11 less field trips than expected. Not taking in consideration the above two large schools, the average number of students per field trip increased by 6.



In the last issue of *The W.R.E.N.*, I mentioned how some environmental education programs have experienced a decline in field trips because of No Child Left Behind's emphasis on reading and math. Some schools across the state have eliminated E.E. field trips because they are science-oriented. Are we experiencing the same thing? Or could this be a result of budget cuts, school closings and consolidations?

The Wapsi Center takes an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education. The Center's staff can help plan your field trip to meet the state standards. As in past years, we 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) 328-3286.

Wapsi Center Deer Hunt

The Wapsi Center deer hunts, held during the regular shotgun seasons last December, were not as successful as hoped. Only 8 deer (4 each season) were taken by 13 hunters. Each hunter could take two deer, with the first one having to be an antlerless deer. We really expected a higher success rate. With only 7 hunters allowed per season and the acreage of the Wapsi Center, the deer were able to move around the hunters and stay out of range or hide in the dense autumn olive thickets. The hunt was still successful, and we are not seeing deer as frequently now. We will also compare this spring's grazing patterns and damage with last year's. We will be evaluating how the hunt went. Is there a need for a hunt next year? If so, what needs to be done differently?



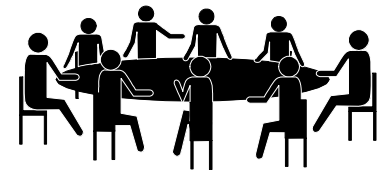
Eco Center Hours Change

The Eagle View Eco Center and its interpretive displays will be open (free of charge) on Saturdays from 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. through March. Beginning April 2, it will be open on Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. through October 30.

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 rest room 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 rest rooms. The Eagle View Eco Center has a kitchen, meeting room (capacity: dining, 70; meeting, 100) and rest rooms. 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.

Why I Enjoy Being a Friend

by Ingrid Bogdanowicz

A few years ago, I visited the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center for the first time. It was Earth Day and a good way to discover how beautiful it is there. The focus was on the history of the area when only North American Indians lived here. I learned a lot then and met some wonderful people. The highlight was a walk through a small part of the prairie to look at a variety of celestial objects through telescopes at the Menke Observatory.

Since then, I have joined the Friends of the Wapsi Center, come out to the Wapsi River Center and hosted the Eagle View Eco Center on several occasions. I made friends with the kestrel, maybe the screech owl and the other creatures there. It is never lonely out there when I host because of all the birds outside and the deer wandering the woods. A favorite spot is the view out the back window of the Center.

Perhaps you should consider becoming a Friend of the Wapsi Center, too. My experiences have been the main reason behind *why I enjoy being a friend*.



IN APPRECIATION OF YOUR SUPPORT OF THE WAPSI RIVER CENTER

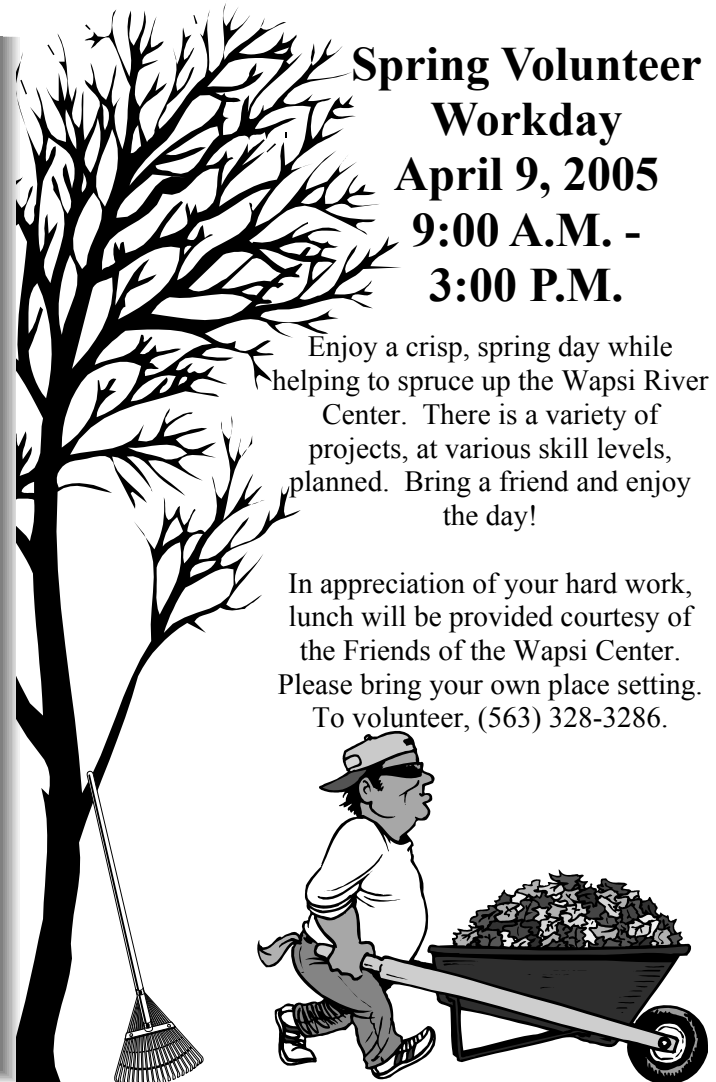
**MR. & MRS. VARCHO
NANCY DEAN
MELANIE KRUSE
ERMA WISZMANN
MARCIE MINNICK-HEARD
CECILIA BRAUM
BECKY BIRKS
CAROL ROGERS
DAVE HUBER
INGRID BOGDANOWICZ
CARL GERWULF
BRECAN DEAN
JANE & GORDY AXT
TAIT STEINES
JEANNE BRYANT
PETE & MARY TOFILON
DOTTIE WALA
CARLA DACON
DOROTHY & GENE RHEA**

Spring Volunteer Workday

**April 9, 2005
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, planned. 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, (563) 328-3286.



Wildlife Profile ~ Western Painted Turtle

by: Greg Wolf, CCB Naturalist

Walking down the river trail at Rock Creek Marina and Campground and seeing different signs of wildlife or viewing the wildlife itself is always a thrill. Looking over the water on a sunny day, you are bound to see turtles basking in the sun. I find myself amazed by these reptiles. The turtle that most people see is the western painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta bellii*) the most common turtle found in Iowa and the only painted turtle subspecies in the state.

The western painted turtle is found in diverse aquatic habitats, such as shallow streams, lakes, rivers, farm and park ponds. Ideal habitat for this species of turtle is slow-moving water with a soft, muddy, vegetated bottom and submerged logs. The main reason most people see the painted turtle is that it is a basking turtle. Since reptiles are cold-blooded (ectotherms) and need an outside heat source, basking is the best way to warm their bodies. Basking also allows turtles' bodies to produce vitamins and help kill fungi.

The western painted turtle is the largest of the four subspecies of painted turtles found in North America. *Chrysemys picta bellii* is the scientific name for the western painted turtle. "Khrysos" meaning golden, yellow or light green; "emys" meaning turtle; "picta" meaning painted or embroidered; and "bellii" honors Thomas Bell for describing the subspecies.

The head, neck, legs and tail have yellow stripes. The carapace (upper shell) is smooth and a dark green to an olive color. The plastron (lower shell) has red, yellow and black. The western painted turtle has a distinct pattern outlined in black that other subspecies do not have on the plastron. The closest similarity would be the midland painted turtle which has a very faint pattern, but is not outlined in black. The females can range from five- to eight-inches long, while the male rarely exceeds five-and-a-half inches long. Another difference between males and females is the males will have longer front claws than the females. Since they are an aquatic turtle, all feet are webbed.



In the spring, the western painted turtle, along with other reptiles, awake from hibernation. They begin to burrow up through the mud at the bottom of the pond. During hibernation, the blood changes and acts as an antifreeze. This allows the turtle to withstand very cold temperatures.



As soon as the turtles come out of hibernation, they must eat. Natural foods include aquatic plants, snails, crayfish, insects and fish. Young turtles will eat larger amounts of animal food, but as they get older, plants increase in their diet. Since they do not have teeth, they will swallow the food whole or tear it with their "beak" or claws.



The breeding season for western painted turtles begins in April and continues into June. After the female breeds with the male, eggs will start to develop. She will venture on land to find a place to lay her eggs.

This is usually when people see turtles on the road. The female is either heading to or returning from a



traditional nesting site. Once the female arrives, she will dig a nest four- to six-inches deep and lay between four to twenty eggs. She may have two clutches in a season. As soon as she is done, she buries the nest and packs the soil down with her body. As she leaves the nest site, she will pack down soil in several areas. This behavior is used to confuse predators from finding the nest. The eggs will hatch in about two to two-and-a-quarter months. The incubation temperature of the eggs determines the sex of the turtle hatchlings. About two-thirds of the hatchlings will be males if the eggs are kept at 82 degrees Fahrenheit, two-thirds of the hatchlings will be females if the eggs are kept above 86 degrees Fahrenheit, and a temperature between 82 and 86 degrees Fahrenheit will produce mixed male and female clutches. If the eggs are laid in late summer, hatchlings may not emerge until spring.

When the turtles hatch, they are the size of a quarter. Once the turtles are out of their egg shell, they climb up through the soil or sand to the surface. They set out to find water, and even if they cannot see the water, they seem to know instinctively which direction to go. Predators are on watch when this happens. Hawks, gulls, raccoons, skunks and even fish will eat the little turtles. For those that survive, the males will reach maturity in two to five years and females in four to eight years. Western painted turtles may live up to twenty years.

The western painted turtle is a quick and agile swimmer. The smooth, flattened shell allows the turtle to swim through the water with ease. Another adaptation is the ability to slow their heart rate down so their bodies need less oxygen and they can stay underwater for long periods of time.

The *2005 Iowa Fishing Regulations* tell us that with a valid sport fishing license an individual can possess a maximum of 100 pounds of live turtles or 50 pounds of dressed turtles, but you must have a special license to sell them. Residents can take painted turtles and other common species by hand, turtle hook, turtle trap or hook-and-line. For more information on the regulations, visit www.iowadnr.com.

The western painted turtle is a colorful animal for all to enjoy. They are easy to see, but is also easily spooked. Blue Heron Eco Cruises can give you an opportunity to see western painted turtles and much more. Get yourself and your family outside and find this beautiful turtle.

Plant Profile ~ Mayapple

by Jessica Steines, AmeriCorps Naturalist

Before college, I had never really cared about the names of flowers, I just enjoyed their beauty. This changed last spring when an assignment for my plant taxonomy class insisted that I find and identify ten different families of flowers. At that time, I knew many scientific names of what I saw in the classroom, but out in the “real” world, I only knew a few common names. So one day I took a notepad, pencil and plastic bags into the woods to find my specimens. I started collecting the flowers I knew: including violets, phlox, and spring beauties.

While wandering around looking for the “easy” flowers, I continuously found myself in patches of 20-50 plants. At the time, they were not ready to bloom, but I found them interesting and was a little desperate to find different flowers. After some deliberation, I decided to cut the stem and dissect the flower bud. I scribbled in my notebook; 6 sepals (green and petal-like to protect developing flower), 6 petals (larger than sepals), 12 stamen (male part of flower, pollen), and a superior ovary (female organ that is part of the carpel). Once I got home, it didn’t take long to find out that it was a Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), also known as American mandrake, duck’s foot, raccoon berry, umbrella plant and wild lemon.

The Mayapple is a perennial that prefers the moist soil of woodlands, growing in patches by developing rhizomes which are extensions of stems along or under the ground to produce another plant. In early spring, the Mayapple shoots up a stalk with leaves that are gathered along the stem resembling a folded umbrella, and then the leaves begin to stretch out like an open umbrella. Some plants will not have a flower and it will only have one leaf. The two big leaves have deep sinuses with a single white flower in the “Y” of the leaves. When the Mayapple blooms in May, it loses its six sepals, leaving creamy white petals with a waxy appearance. Then when the flower is fertilized, it withers, producing a berry that is green. Late in the summer, the leaves turn brownish-yellow and disappear, leaving a foot-tall stalk with a single ripe yellow fruit resembling a small lemon.

Though this plant looks harmless, every part of the plant is poisonous except the fruit when it is RIPE. The fruit can be eaten and recipes are available to make preserves and pie, but intake should be limited. To some people, just touching the stem can cause adverse dermatological reactions. The Mayapple resin is easily absorbed through the skin and be careful to not get in mucous membranes, washing hands immediately after handling.

Ingesting this plant has also been documented to cause death, leading the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to declare Mayapple is unsafe to be used orally. Though Mayapple can be very dangerous, the toxicity of this plant makes it useful for pesticides and some medications.

Pesticides made from natural herbs were important to native tribes to protect their crops from pests that could harm their winter food supply. Many tribes boiled the roots of the Mayapple, then soaked the corn seed prior to planting. The Menominee tribe boiled the leaves of the Mayapple to spray on their potatoes to protect their crop. European settlers used it for eliminating chipmunks.

Medication is usually developed by using the roots and rhizomes. The roots and rhizomes contain a resin called podophyllin, and due to its high toxicity, it should only be given in small amounts. This resin was first used by the Native Americans as a purgative and for wart removal and intestinal worms. When introduced to settlers, it was used to stimulate glands for gastrointestinal disorders and rheumatism. Tonics were also created to treat liver, lung and stomach ailments. With much success with the humans, settlers would also use the Mayapple to treat chickens with diarrhea. Today, the medications treat warts and certain forms of cancer. Mayapple resin creates an antimiotic effect that interferes with cell division and prevents the growth of cells, including cancer cells. Scientists are hoping that the synthetic derivatives developed from the Mayapple will inhibit the developing cancer cells while not affecting important cell production in the body. With this treatment, Mayapple plants may become more valuable than anyone could imagine.

I find this plant extremely intriguing. The history of its uses is baffling at times (chicken diarrhea), but now it could become an epic with its cancer treatments. It is hard to believe this innocent-looking plant in the spring woods can cause mild to severe reactions and even death.

Thinking back and knowing what I know now from this article, I don’t think I would have touched the plant even if I needed it for my assignment.



Photo by Michael Granger

March



12th ~ Recycled Stitches ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come join naturalist Lisa Gerwulf as she shows you how to create a versatile "shopping" bag with recycled shopping bags. Participants will spend an afternoon in the relaxing atmosphere of Redtail Lodge creating plastic "yarn" out of recycled shopping/grocery bags. Then you'll see how to create a lightweight, durable bag using simple knitting and crocheting techniques. You don't have to be a knitting or crocheting expert to enjoy this program. Each participant needs to bring the following items: 5 plastic shopping/grocery bags and a pair of sharp scissors. If you have access to a quilting tool called a rotary cutter and mat, consider bringing these. Pre-registration is required, so call (563) 328-3286 to reserve your spot.

12th ~ Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky.



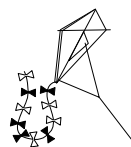
19th ~ GPS Workshop ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based navigation system made up of a network of 24 satellites placed into orbit by the U. S. Department of Defense. GPS was originally intended for military applications, but in the 1980s, the government made the system available for civilian use. GPS works in any weather conditions, anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. There are no subscription fees or set-up charges to use GPS. Instructor Jay Staker, Director, Extension-Science, Engineering, and Technology, at Iowa State University, will conduct the session. Register by March 12, (563) 242-9088.

19th ~ Birdhouse Workshop ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Come build a home for our feathered friends choosing from several designs: bluebird, kestrel/screech owl, or even a martin house. Kits range in cost from free to \$75. For more information and registration, call (563) 847-7202.

29th ~ 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. Join Clinton County naturalists for a glimpse of migrating ducks, geese and other waterfowl inhabiting Goose Lake. Participants are asked to bring binoculars, field guides, and meet in the west-central parking lot for viewing.

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 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.



2nd ~ 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 a traditional diamond bow

SPRING

kite. After construction, participants will launch their creations on a test flight. Interested participants are asked to pre-register by March 30, (563) 328-3286. Supply cost is \$2.00 per kite.

2nd ~ Whitetails Unlimited Banquet ~ 5:30 P.M. ~ Millennium Ballroom, Goose Lake ~ Help provide public hunting, wildlife habitat and support the future of the hunting tradition. Also see the largest trophy deer display in the county. Children are encouraged to attend and each will receive a special prize. Tickets are \$40. Spouses and kids are \$20. Call Mark at (563) 659-2422 for tickets. Come join the fun!

7th ~ 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 20th year watching the woodcocks' courtship "Skydance", and they have always treated us to a good show.

9th ~ 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) 328-3286 to volunteer.



9th ~ Spring Pheasant Festival ~ 5:00 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 pork chop dinner. Cost is \$15.00 for adults and \$10.00 for kids under 16; people need not be members to attend. Call Mark at (563) 659-2422 for tickets.

9th ~ Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky.

12th & 16th ~ Hunter Education Course ~ 6:30 - 9:00 P.M. Tuesday & 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. Saturday ~ Arrowhead Hunting Club, Goose Lake ~ Call Loren Zaruba at (563) 659-5383 for required sign-up. Our Enhanced Hunter's Safety Camp is scheduled for August 19-21.

12th ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Lake Malone ~ (April 19 is rain/wind date) ~ Pyro-botanist Andy Friederichsen 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, Andy will explain the how, why and when of prairie burns. Lake Malone is located 4 miles east of DeWitt on Highway 30.



14th ~ A Prairie Ablaze ~ 8:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ (April 21 is rain/wind date) ~ Join Pyro-botanist Andy Friederichsen for another lesson



EVENTS

on using fire for prairie management. Come learn the why and how of prescribed burns as we light up the night sky with last year's prairie. An indoor program will precede the burn. Please call (563) 847-7202 for more details.

16th ~ Earth Day Expo ~ 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ QCCA

Expo Center ~ This free event is open to the public and includes a special interpretative presentation by John Wallace, an educator from Southern Illinois-Carbondale, who gives a realistic performance of John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club. Other interactive games and activities will be going on throughout the day.



17th- 23rd ~ **Earth Week** ~ Find your personal way to show the earth you care and celebrate the 35th anniversary of Earth Week. This year several local agencies are planning activities during this week. Contact Jody Patterson at (563) 323-5196 or go to www.QCEarthweek.org for a listing of local events. Ideas for celebrating Earth Week can also be found at the National Wildlife Federation's website: www.nwf.org/national_wildlifeweek/index.html. Earth Day is April 22.

20th ~ **Trumpeter Swan Release** ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ **Crystal Lake and 11:00 A.M. ~ Gomer's Marsh** ~ Young trumpeter swans will be released into the wild this spring. Join Clinton County naturalists and the Department of Natural Resources for this special event. Crystal Lake can be found 2 miles west of DeWitt on 252nd Street, then north on 262nd Avenue, following the signs. Gomer's Marsh is on the Mississippi north of Clinton. Take Highway 67 to 142nd St., then east to the river.

20th ~ **Nahant Marsh Friends Workday** ~ 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ **Nahant Marsh** ~ Get fired up to celebrate Earth Week by getting your hands dirty with other volunteers at Nahant Marsh. Call Jody at (563) 323-5196.

21st ~ Master Conservationist Program ~ 6:00 - 10:00 P.M.

~ The first in a series of classes to become a master conservationist. Participants will become certified master conservationists at the completion of these programs. Classes will be every Thursday evening through June 2 with one Saturday class to be announced. For location information and to sign up, call Ed Askew at (563) 326-7965, (563) 262-9412, or e-mail him at efa@ci.davenport.ia.us.

21st ~ **Float Goose Lake** ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ **Goose Lake Wildlife Area** ~ Really get into the marsh with a canoe for great birding and a sunset on the water. The frogs should also be giving quite a chorus. Call (563) 847-7202 to reserve your canoe.

21st ~ Keeping Your Green Spaces Truly "Green" ~ 6:30

P.M. ~ **Wapsi River Center** ~ Renne Lietz, author of *Living Green*, will present a program on the environmentally friendly home garden.



23rd ~ **Beginning Digital Nature Photography** ~ 9:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ **Nahant Marsh** ~ Digital cameras are not just for the usual family, landscape and vacation photos. Nature photography with a digital camera is not quite as simple as with a standard 35mm single lens reflex camera, but has advantages over the standard point-and-shoot camera. Bob Bryant will share his experiences taking nature photos with a digital camera. Items covered will be: digital camera's advantages and disadvantages, camera types, megapixel size, accessories, image resolution and compression, exposure, close-up photography, tips and tricks. Participants are encouraged to bring their cameras and a sack lunch. Pre-registration is required, limit of 10 participants. To register, call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286. 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.

23rd ~ Earth Day Celebration! ~ 11:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Bickelhaupt Arboretum, Clinton

~ This annual event is a collaboration among the Bickelhaupt Arboretum, Iowa State University Extension and the Clinton County Conservation Board. The Arboretum, 340 S. 14th St., Clinton, will host speakers on ornamental grasses, creative creatures, endangered Iowa species, composting, butterflies and a tour of the new garden at the Bickelhaupt, healthy gardening and container gardening. Other events include a daffodil counting contest, booths for popcorn, seed planting, lemonade, color-ons and seeds. A hot air balloon, children's crafts and spring bingo, as well as ongoing tours. All free! No need to pre-register. Call (563) 242-4771 for information.



23rd ~ 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. 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.

23rd ~ Wildflower Pressing ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River

Center ~ Decorating with pressed leaves and flowers is a fun and inexpensive way to bring the beauty of the outdoors into your home. Join AmeriCorps naturalist Jessica Steines to learn some simple and attractive craft ideas and discuss ethical guidelines for plant collection. All participants will build their own plant press. Participants are asked to pre-register by calling the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286. Materials fee - \$2.

23rd ~ **Moonlight Frog Chorus** ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ **Wapsi River Center** ~ Experience the sounds of the season, in search of the frogs and toads which inhabit the Wapsi River Center. Please bring a flashlight and waterproof footwear.

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.



29th ~ Arbor Day ~ Planting a tree shows faith in the future! It's also a great way to commemorate a birth, death, anniversary or other special event.

30th ~ Nahant Marsh Cleanup Day ~ 8:30 - 11:30 A.M. ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Join the seasonal volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and to wear sturdy shoes or boots.

May

7th ~ Wildflower Walk ~ 10:00 A.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.

7th ~ Nature Writing & Journaling Workshop ~ 2:00 - 4:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ This workshop is designed for senior high school students and adults of all writing abilities. Joe Taylor, President/CEO for the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau, will facilitate the workshop. Participants will learn techniques for nature writing and journaling through hands-on writing exercises and explore the outdoors to gather information for nature writing. The workshop is free. Participants must provide notebooks, journals and pens. Please dress appropriately for the weather. Refreshments will follow the workshop. Pre-registration is required by calling the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.

7th ~ 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.

7th ~ Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky.

14th ~ Moth Hike ~ 8:00 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.

14th ~ Menke Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

19th ~ Investigating Insects ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come explore the miniature world of insects with naturalist Mike Granger. Learn how having 6 legs, three body parts, compound eyes and antennae make insects one of the most dominating groups on the earth. Participants will have the opportunity to create and decorate a make-n-take insect "hotel". Interested participants are asked to pre-register by May 13, (563) 328-3286. Supply cost is \$1.00 per "hotel".



19th ~ Blue Heron Eco Cruises ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina and Campground ~ Every Thursday evening through October, the Clinton County Conservation Board will be offering naturalist-guided Eco cruises aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat on the Mississippi River in the Rock Creek area. Please call (563) 259-1876 to reserve a spot, as space is limited to 20 people. Cost for the excursion is \$6 for adults, \$3 for children under 16 and free for children under 5. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

21st ~ Backwater Float #1 ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Bulgers Hollow Recreation Area ~ This is the first of four floats that will cover Clinton County's Eastern Shore from north to south. We'll meet here, then car pool to South Lake Park in Sabula for a canoe float down the Mississippi Backwaters back to Bulgers Hollow. We'll visit sandbars and islands along the way, including two bird rookeries. Participants are encouraged to bring along a late afternoon snack. Call (563) 847-7202 to register.



21st ~ Night Hike ~ 8:30 P.M. ~ 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.

28th ~ 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. There will be free canoeing for campers and park visitors. The camp store will have 25-cent hot dogs and chips available during the day and a fish boil that evening. Free movies will be held at dusk, at the pavilion, wrapping up this fun family event!

29th & 30th ~ 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

3rd - 5th ~ Free Fishing Days ~ Let's go fishing! During these three days, Iowa residents may fish and possess fish without a fishing license.

4th ~ Plant-a-Flower ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Gardening is fun for all ages. Bring your whole family to learn about how plants grow from a seed to a mature plant. Participants will be able to plant seeds, and create and decorate a plant journal. Please call the Wapsi River Center to pre-register at (563) 328-3286.

4th ~ Fishing Clinic ~ 8:00 A.M. - Noon ~ West Lake Park, Gate #1 - Rolling Hills Shelter ~ Kids, kindergarten through 6th grade, and an adult chaperone are invited to attend this event. Registration will begin at 8:00



A.M. at the Rolling Hills shelter. The individuals will spend the morning traveling to five different stations learning about fish identification, casting, fish cleaning and tasting, laws and ethics, and equipment. There is no charge for this family event!

4th ~ Backwater Float #2 ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Clinton's Riverfront Park 9th Ave. N. Boat Ramp ~ The second in our continuing trek along the eastern edge of Clinton County. We'll meet here, then car pool to Bulgers Hollow Recreation Area for a canoe float down the Mississippi Backwaters back to Clinton. We'll visit sandbars and islands along the way. Participants are encouraged to bring along a late afternoon snack. Call (563) 847-7202 to register.

6th - 10th ~ 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) 328-3283 for registration information.

11th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Equistar Plastics Plant Guided Adventure ~ This is a series of educational & fun events for kids in 3rd - 5th grades. We will meet every second and fourth Saturday now through October. Kids are encouraged, but not required to attend all sessions. Call Laura Liegois at (563) 243-4749 for more information and to sign-up.

11th ~ Free Canoeing ~ All Day ~ Rock Creek Marina and Campground ~ Rock Creek's 10 canoes will be available to use free of charge all day in the Mississippi Backwaters surrounding the park.

13th ~ Clinton Sesquicentennial Lock & Dam Eco Cruises ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Ninth Avenue Boat Ramp in Clinton ~ Every Monday evening through June, to honor the sesquicentennial, the Clinton County Conservation Board will be offering naturalist-guided Eco cruises aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat on the Mississippi River up to, and sometimes through, Lock & Dam 13. Call (563) 259-1876 to reserve your seat on the Blue Heron pontoon boat today (20 spots available). Cost for the excursion is \$6 for adults, \$3 for children under 16 and free for children under 5.



13th - 16th ~ EDIWILD 2005 ~ Educators in the Wild Workshop ~ See special section for more details.

13th - 17th ~ 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) 328-3283 for more information.

14th & 18th ~ Hunter Education Course ~ 6:30 - 9:00 P.M. Tuesday & 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. Saturday ~ Clinton County Izaak Walton League ~ Call Loren Zaruba at (563) 659-5383 for required sign-up. Our Enhanced Hunter's Safety Camp is scheduled for August 19-21.

18th ~ Triathlon ~ 7:00 A.M. ~ West Lake Park, Gate #1 - Beach Parking Lot ~ Participants begin the day by swimming Lake of the Hills, then bike a 15-mile trek and return to West Lake Park to finish with a run. Pre-registration is required. Contact either Eric Sarno at (608) 848-7441 or (608) 209-1054, or Kirby Winn (Director of Public Relations at Augustana College) at (309) 794-7473.

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



20th - 24th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Nature Week is next in a series of eight, one-week camps hosted by the Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village. This is one week where you can actually camp out under the stars for one night! Enjoy lots of nature crafts, hikes, learn about deer and other wildlife in the park, plus take a trip to the Wapsi River Center. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Tara Youngers at (563) 328-3283 for more information.

25th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ Funtastic Fishing ~ 9:00 AM - Noon ~ Clinton County Izaak Walton League ~ We will provide poles and bait, or you can bring your own. This is a series of educational & fun events for kids in 3rd - 5th grades. Call Laura Liegois at (563) 243-4749 for more information and to sign-up.

25th ~ Menke Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

27th - July 1st ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Wild West Week ~ Spend a week doing what the cowboys and cowgirls did. We will visit the buffalo at Cody Homestead and tour the Buffalo Bill Museum in LeClaire, IA. Welcome a visit from the Wapsi Wranglers and take a pony ride. Enjoy many fun crafts, games plus much more! This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Tara Youngers at (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

30th ~ Kids' Fishing Tournament ~ 5:30 P.M. ~ Malone Park ~ Kids, ages twelve and under, are invited to test their angling skills. Sunfish are thick in the 10-acre lake, with bass, bullheads and catfish in good numbers. Plaques will be awarded for the greatest weight of fish in two age groups, ages 10-12 and ages 9 and under. There will also be door prizes. Registration starts at 5:30 P.M., with fishing from 6:00 to 7:30 P.M.; weigh-in and casting contest will follow.





EDIWILD 2005 “Life in the Tall Grass” Monday, June 13 - Thursday, June 16



EDIWILD (Educators in the Wild) is a 4-day teachers' workshop (including 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 environmental issues.

- Workshop sites include: Nahant Marsh Field Station, Putnam Museum, Wapsi River Environmental Education Center
- Activities and topics include: prairie tours, prairie restoration, prairie management, prairie flora & fauna, Project Wild, visit to Carl Kurtz's Iowa's Wild Places display and much more.
- Overnight accommodations will be available at

the Wapsi River Center's Owl's Nest Dormitory. Participants are encouraged to stay overnight on Tuesday; however, participants do not need to stay Monday or Wednesday night.

- Continuing education credit through Drake University and relicensure credit through the AEA 9 will be available for those interested.
- Cost for the workshop will be \$60. This does not include continuing education credit or relicensure credit costs.

If you are interested, please contact the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286. We will send you an EDIWILD brochure, which will include a registration form, daily activities and other workshop details.

Living Green ...

by Renne Lietz, Davenport West H.S. Science Teacher

Time — what an important commodity! We never seem to have enough of it, never seem to use it wisely, and curse ourselves for wasting it. Time is an important part of living well in our environment. It takes a commitment of time to recycle, to shop as an environmentally responsible consumer, and often time, to do things the "old-fashioned" way instead of taking shortcuts! One frosty morning last week, I was running late, didn't take time to warm up the car, and grabbed a spray can of something to defrost the windshield. I felt guilty all day! If I had just planned my time better, I wouldn't have used a chemical that is a potential pollutant. It would seem to be a very minor happening, but often the little things we do can make a big difference.

Time is often something we don't give back to ourselves. We need to take time to enjoy the coming spring — a beautiful, sunny day when the earth is warming, new green plants are peeking through, returning birds are singing. Wendell Berry's, *The*

Peace of Wild Things, will encourage you to take time to appreciate nature, and inspire you to set aside time to help protect it!

The Peace of Wild Things

*When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake rests
in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

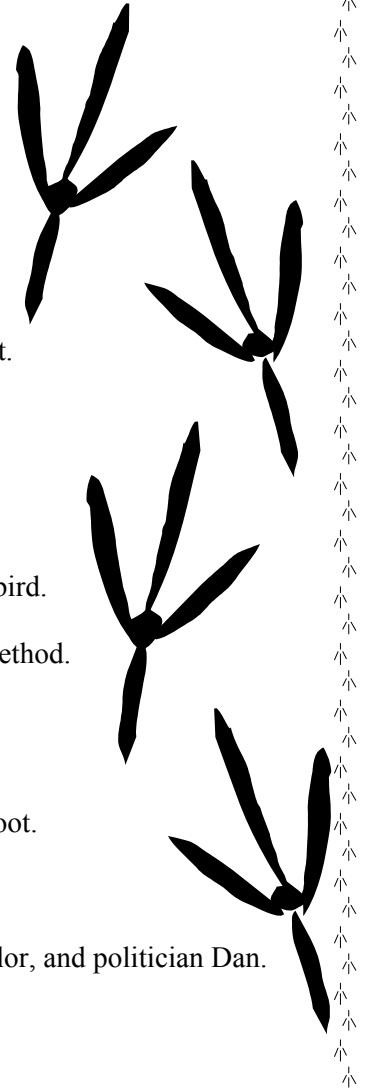
Today's Tip: Take time to think gardening! Think mulch - newspapers, grass clippings, even commercial mesh or plastic coverings. These will all save water, eliminate need for pesticides, and save you time. If you are interested in more green gardening tips, come to the Wapsi River Center on April 21 to learn more (see calendar of events for details).



Kids' Corner

The naturalists of the Wapsi River Center combined their creative mental juices to create these brain-bending bird riddles. Grab a pencil and gather around the kitchen table. This issue's kids' corner requires the brain-power of the whole family. Need a hint? Answers are on back page.

1. Opposite of western and complement of orange.
2. Complement of green, posterior part of a bird, and to peddle.
3. Mixture of black and white, divided hair, and a long line of hills.
4. Shared physical trait of Ann Margaret, Annie and Pippi Longstocking.
5. Used to hold pants up, a monarch, and an angler.
6. Short for Robert, an exclamation, and part of a chain.
7. Opposite of southern and a bird of imitations.
8. Coniferous tree, a honey bee product, and flight-enabling part of a bird.
9. Opposite of white, keeps head warm, a young fowl, and two letters of the alphabet.
10. United States of ... and Batman's sidekick.
11. Quad City hockey team.
12. Mixture of red and blue, and *West Wing's* famous Sheen.
13. Bark-bearing plant and rhythmic constriction of throat.
14. Phlegm-induced cough and awkward neck position.
15. Lower 48-states' northern neighbor and 'fresh' pinch.
16. Romantic flower, nutritious chicken part, 'icky' exclamation, and facial part of a bird.
17. Opposite of evening and a brand of soap.
18. Passionate color, organ attached to neck, product of a tree, and chicken feeding method.
19. Gem, pipe leading to stomach, and 'singing' without words.
20. The 'I' in ROYGBIV and an infant's hooded sleeping bag.
21. Follicle-challenged and loser of Super Bowl.
22. Faded black and feline.
23. Nationality of United States, precious metal, sixth letter of alphabet, and 12 in a foot.
24. Green minus yellow and current host of *Tonight Show*.
25. Thanksgiving scavenger.
26. Symbol of marriage, lasso target, and gourmet fowl under glass.
27. Compass always points, cremation vessel, boxer's head movement, absence of color, and politician Dan.
28. Tightly woven cloth formerly used for tents and the opposite of front.
29. Color of royalty, slang for 'her', colonial tavern, and apostrophized 'you will'.
30. Soot- and smoke-spewing column, and fleet of foot.



Hours set for S.C.P. Pool & W.L.P. Beach/Concessions

Scott County Park Pool

Open: Memorial Day Weekend

Re-open: Early June - Late August

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) 328-3282, to register.

West Lake Park Beach & Concessions

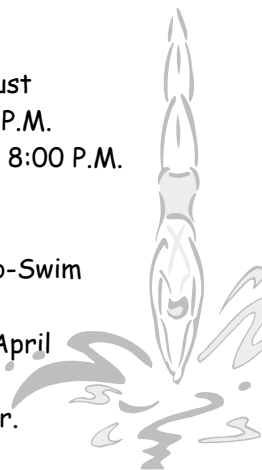
Food and beverages will be available at the beach and the boathouse. A variety of aquatic equipment is available for rent. Bait is also available.

Beach & Concession:

Open: Memorial Day - Labor Day
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.



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The Wapsi River Environmental Education Center is a joint project between the Scott and Clinton County Conservation Boards. "The W.R.E.N." is published quarterly by the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and the Scott County Conservation Board.

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Mailing List

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.

The Scott County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes they have been subject to discrimination, they may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Scott County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington D.C. 20240.

Kids' Corner Answers: Eastern Bluebird, Redtail Hawk, Gray Partridge, Redhead, Belted Kingfisher, Bobolink, Northern Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Mallard, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Whooping Crane, Canada Goose, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Mourning Dove, Red-headed Woodpecker, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Indigo Bunting, Bald Eagle, Gray Catbird, American Goldfinch, Blue Jay, Turkey Vulture, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Bobwhite Quail, Canvasback, Purple Gallinule and Chimney Swift