

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Spring 2006

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.

Wapsi Center Happenings

by Bob Bryant, Director

Scott County Conservation Board to Celebrate 50th Anniversary

The Scott County Conservation Board is proud to be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2006. As a way of promoting and recognizing the efforts of the Conservation Board, our loyal supporters and the Quad Cities, the Conservation Board will be hosting the 47th Annual Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards Conference, September 21-23, 2006. The theme for this year's conference is: "Celebrating the Past – Visioning the Future". The Board anticipates 400+ attendees will be coming from all corners of the state. One day of the Conference will be tours of the Conservation Board's areas and facilities.



Summer Volunteer Workdays

With the upcoming I.A.C.C.B. Conference in September, we will not be having a spring or fall volunteer workday as in past years. Instead, the Wapsi River Center will have two summer volunteer workdays to help spruce up the Wapsi Center prior to the conference. The dates for these two workdays will be Saturday, August 5, and Saturday, September 9, from 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. In appreciation of your hard work, lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center during both of these

workdays. To volunteer, call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.

Quad City Bald Eagle Days

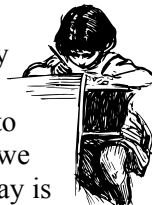
Bald Eagle Days were held at the QCCA Expo Center on January 6-8. The QCCA said the attendance was 18,389. We had approximately 5,900 stop by our booth on Saturday and Sunday. This year's theme was "How Nature Works". Our most popular display was the large bat ears. Our booth is one of the more popular booths because of our hands-on activities and having a new theme each year. As in past years, we helped with the Friday school programs (1,559 attended). 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, 2,902 students, teachers and parents participated in 46 field trips at the Wapsi River Center. This was more than last year at this time due to the 2 large schools which alternate coming to the Wapsi Center every other year. However, it was approximately 570 less than expected due to another large school going to every other year and one cancellation due to bad weather.

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.



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 1 - October 29.

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.

IN APPRECIATION OF YOUR SUPPORT OF THE WAPSI RIVER CENTER

Ken Wilkison

Ingrid Bogdanowicz

Jeanne Bryant

Becky Birks

Peter Tofilon

Mary Tofilon

Nancy Dean

Brecan Dean

Bill Robbins

Lucia Dryanski

Carl Gerwulf

James Varcho

Jan Varcho

Jim Gruntorad

Caralee Gruntorad

Dorothy Rhea

Gene Rhea

Gordy Axt

Jane Axt

Jerry Wala

Dottie Wala

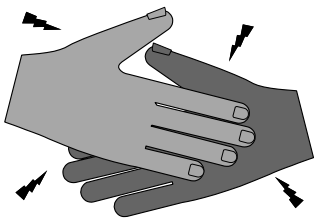
Terry Winter

Carol Rogers

Erma Wiszmann

Cecilia Braum

Dav. Unitarian Church



New Dioramas Donated

In early February, the Family Museum of Arts and Science (Bettendorf, Iowa) graciously donated two dioramas to the Wapsi River Center. The encased dioramas are of a mounted beaver in a wetland scene and a running turkey in a winter woodland scene.

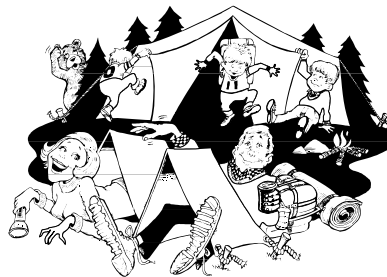


Turkey Inhabits Woodland Display

Thanks to the taxidermy skills of Clinton dentist Terry Winters, the Wapsi River Center's woodland display is sporting a new turkey mount in full strutting plumage.

Hellos & Goodbyes

Paula Mullin: Hello! I recently joined the Wapsi River Center staff as an AmeriCorps Naturalist. While I graduated from the University of Iowa in May of 2005, I recognize that I have much left to learn. I am both excited and thankful for the opportunity that working alongside the knowledgeable staff here will bring. I also look forward to meeting many of you along the way.



Family Overnight Camp

Summer Family Fun at the Wapsi River Center on July 22 & 23

Bring the whole family for an outdoor weekend getaway at the Wapsi River Center. On Friday evening (beginning at 6:00 P.M.), come learn about the nocturnal creatures inhabiting the Wapsi River Center during a night hike – no flashlights allowed. Afterwards, snuggle up around a campfire for some delicious S'mores. Lodging will be in the Owl's Nest Dormitory. On Saturday, learn how to build a birdhouse or bug cage, visit the Osprey Aquatic Lab for some "frog-catching fun" and make your own kite. The day's events will close at 4:00 P.M. with the ever-popular "Water Balloon Olympics". The cost for the camp is \$25/person and is limited to 40 participants with children being 10 years old. Call the Wapsi Center at (563) 328-3286 to reserve a spot for your family.

SPRING EVENTS

April

1st ~ Nahant Marsh Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Join the volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and to wear sturdy shoes or boots. Nahant Marsh is located off Interstate 280, following Hwy. 22 to Wapello Ave. (toward Davenport), and then turning left before the railroad tracks. For more details, please call Ginger Molitor at (309) 235-0012.

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.



8th ~ Running in the Wild ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Spring is the best time to explore the trails at the Wapsi River Center. The air is warmer, the birds are chirping and the most beautiful flowers are blooming. There's not a better time to get together with a group to start walking, jogging or running. This program will be offered every Saturday through June and all ages are welcome; even Fido, on a leash, can come. Jessica Steines, seasonal naturalist, will be your guide and will have a suggested route marked on the trail map for you to follow. So bring your own water bottle, and she will see you soon. Feel free to contact her at (563) 328-3286, or email at jchuff99@yahoo.com for more details.

8th ~ 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 kite. After construction, participants will launch their creations on a test flight. Interested participants are asked to pre-register by April 5, (563) 328-3286. Supply cost is \$2.00 per kite.

8th ~ Horseshoe Tournament ~ 11:30 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Draw for partners, 40-foot regulation rules apply. Entry fee is \$5, double elimination. Payback is 100% toward 3 places, includes trophies. Feel free to bring your own shoes; however, shoes will be available for those who do not have them. Participants must be at least 18 years old to play. B.Y.O. lawn chairs. Please contact Renae at the Wapsi River Center regarding any questions; (563) 328-3286.



8th ~ 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!

8th ~ Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. If cloudy or raining, there will be slide shows and talks in the observatory.

9th ~ River Cities Rumble ~ 7:00 A.M. Registration/Players Meeting at 8:15 A.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ Attention all disc golfers! Join members of the Quad City Disc Golf Club for a PDGA B-Tier Disc Golf Tournament at West Lake Park. The tournament will feature 2 rounds of 24 holes with \$2,000 minimum added cash. Register online at www.qcdiscgolf.com or for more information; call Chad Eng at (309) 786-0926.



11th ~ 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 21st year watching the woodcocks' courtship "Skydance", and they have always treated us to a good show.

13th ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Whittier Elementary ~ (April 20 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. Whittier Elementary School is located at 100 North 13th Street in Clinton, Iowa. Please call (563) 847-7202 for more information.

18th & 22nd ~ Hunter Education Course ~ 6:30 - 9:00 P.M. (Tue.) & 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. (Sat.) ~ Arrowhead Hunting Club, Goose Lake ~ Call Loren Zaruba at (563) 659-5383 for required sign-up.

19th ~ 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.

22nd - 30th ~ Earth Week ~ Find your personal way to show the earth you care and celebrate the 36th anniversary of Earth Week. 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/nationalwildlifeweek. Educators, be sure to check out the information regarding Carl Hiaasen's Newbery Honor-winning book Hoot! Earth Day is April 22.



22nd ~ Earth Day Expo ~ 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ QCCA Expo Center ~ This free event is open to the public and will feature booths and displays from regional environmental based groups and organizations. Interactive games and activities will be going on throughout the day. The CLIMB Theatre will do a performance at 11 A.M. and 2 P.M. called "Flashback: Reduce,

Reuse, Recycle". Delmar Kiefer, a local magician, will do a performance at noon and 3 P.M. For more information, contact Erin Robinson, QC Earth Week Co-Chair at (563) 386-9575.



22nd ~ 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.

22nd ~ 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. 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.



22nd ~ 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.

22nd - 30th ~ Earth Week ~ Find your personal way to show the earth you care and celebrate the 36th anniversary of Earth Week. 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/nationalwildlifeweek. Educators, be sure to check out the information regarding Carl Hiaasen's Newbery Honor-winning book Hoot! Earth Day is April 22.

27th ~ 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.

27th ~ 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.

28th ~ 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.



May

6th ~ Nahant Marsh Cleanup ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh and surrounding areas ~ Join the volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and to wear sturdy shoes or boots. Participants are asked to meet at the picnic tables in front of the Nahant Marsh Educational Center. Come with lots of energy and be prepared to spruce up this natural area. For more details, please call Ginger Molitor at (309) 235-0012.



6th ~ Wildflower Walk ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Greg Wolf on a walk to appreciate the spring woodland wildflowers of the area. Participants should meet at the Eagle View Eco Center.

6th ~ 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 April 29 by calling the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286. Materials fee - \$2.

11th ~ Manikowski Wildflower Hike ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Manikowski Prairie ~ The beautiful pale pink, purple and white hues of the shooting stars are in abundance during this time of the 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.



13th ~ Beginning Nature Photography ~ 9:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ Nahant Marsh Education Center ~ Bob Bryant, Wapsi River Director, will share his experiences taking nature photos with both film and digital cameras. The class will emphasize close-up

nature photography, along with landscape and wildlife photography. Topics to be covered will be: digital vs. film, camera types, accessories, lighting and exposure, tips and tricks, digitizing your slides, etc. Participants are encouraged to bring their cameras, as well as any prints or digital photos on a disk that you would like to share. Pre-registration is required, limit of 12 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, and then turn off on Wapello Avenue. The entrance to the marsh is on the east side of the road at the railroad tracks.

13th ~ 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.



13th ~ Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. If cloudy or raining, there will be slide shows and talks in the observatory.



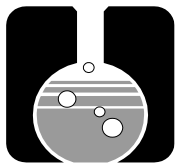
18th ~ Blue Heron Eco Cruises ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina and Campground ~ Every Thursday evening through October, the Clinton County Conservation Board will be offering naturalist-guided eco cruises aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat on the Mississippi River in the Rock Creek area. Please call (563)

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.

20th ~ Maquoketa River (Hwy. 62 to Iron Bridge) Canoe Float ~ 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ Hwy. 62 Access ~ Join Clinton County naturalists for an 8.5-mile float in search of riverside spring wildflowers via canoe. The spring woodlands will be bursting forth with beautifully arrayed patches of white, yellow, purple, pink and blue. You will be provided with a map and a trash bag for river cleanup. Please register and reserve a canoe by calling (563) 847-7202.

20th ~ 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.

21st ~ Scott County Watershed Sampling ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Surrey Heights Fire Station, Bettendorf, Iowa ~ Join area environmentalists and volunteers to sample Scott County streams for an ongoing effort to survey the region's water quality. Field kits will be used at the stream to measure pH, nitrate/nitrite, chloride, dissolved oxygen, phosphate, water temperature and transparency. Please call Sara Klindt at (563) 391-1403 ext.3 if you are interested in participating.



27th ~ 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!

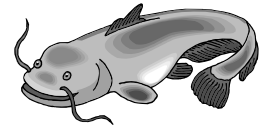
28th & 29th ~ Heritage Days ~ 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of yesteryear! The past will come to life at the Village as interpreters and actors recreate pioneer life. There will be pioneer craft demonstrations, folk music and a gun 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

2nd - 4th ~ Free Fishing Days ~ Let's go fishing! During these three days, Iowa residents may fish and possess fish without a fishing license.

3rd ~ 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!



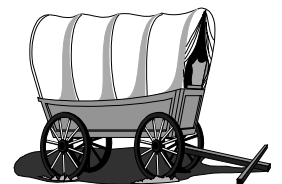
3rd ~ Nahant Marsh Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Join the volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and to wear sturdy shoes or boots. For more details, please call Ginger Molitor at (309) 235-0012.

3rd ~ Hayrack Rides ~ 5:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Good times aboard this ½-hour, ranger-guided hayride around the park. Continuous rides offered till dusk.

3rd ~ Monsignor Menke 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.

3rd ~ 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.

5th - 9th ~ 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 Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for registration information.



10th ~ Horseshoe Tournament ~ 11:30 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Draw for partners, 40-foot regulation rules apply. Entry fee is \$5, double elimination. Payback is 100% toward 3 places, includes trophies. Feel free to bring your own shoes; however, shoes will be available for those who do not have them. Participants must be at least 18 years old to play. B.Y.O. lawn chairs. Please contact Renae at the Wapsi River Center regarding any questions; (563) 328-3286.

10th ~ 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.

10th ~ North Fork Maquoketa River Canoe Float ~ Noon - 6:00 P.M. ~ Hwy. 61 to Hwy. 62 ~ Explore the North Fork of the Maquoketa River from its most spectacular drop at U.S. 61 to its confluence with the South Fork. We will visit the Hurstville Interpretive Center to study some of the area's natural and historical features. This 10.9-mile stretch of the Wapsi features wooded bluffs, farmland and occasional beaches for a stretch of the legs. Please call the Clinton County Conservation Board, (563) 847-7202, to register and reserve a canoe.



10th ~ Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. If cloudy or raining, there will be slide shows and talks in the observatory.

12th - 16th ~ 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 Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for more information.



13th & 17th ~ Hunter Education Course ~ 6:30 - 9:00 P.M. (Tue.) & 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. (Sat.) ~ Clinton County Izaak Walton League ~ Call Loren Zaruba at (563) 659-5383 for required sign-up.

17th ~ 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.

17th ~ 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.

19th - 22nd ~ EDIWILD 2006 ~ Educators in the Wild Workshop ~ See special section for more details.

19th - 23rd ~ 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 Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

20th ~ Kids' Fishing Tournament ~ 5:30 - 8:30

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.



24th ~ And They're Off! ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Bring your turtles and frogs for an exciting morning of racing! Refreshments will be available, along with placement prizes. Admission is free. Pre-registration is required by calling (563) 328-3286 by June 23 – ask for Renae or Jessica.

24th ~ Hayrack Rides ~ 5:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Good times aboard this ½-hour, ranger-guided hayride around the park. Continuous rides offered till dusk.

24th ~ 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.



26th - 30th ~ 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 Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for more information.

July

1st ~ Monsignor Menke 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.

5th ~ Maquoketa River Canoe Float ~ 1:00 - 7:00 P.M. ~ Royertown Access to Joinerville Park ~ Meet at Joinerville Park off of Hwy. 64 west of Maquoketa and cool off with a 10.5-mile trip down the scenic Maquoketa River as we drift through wooded bluffs and farmland. The stream bottom is generally sandy, allowing for good swimming and splashing around. We'll be looking for the possibility of bald eagle nests in the area and doing a river cleanup/scavenger hunt. Our canoes are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and you may register by calling (563) 847-7202.

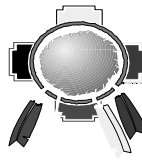




8th ~ Fern Hike ~ 9:30 A.M. ~ Wildcat Den State Park ~ Bob Bryant will share his knowledge of these interesting plants on a hike through Wildcat Den State Park. A variety of ferns can be found here, including maidenhair, Goldie's, lady, Christmas and walking ferns. Participants are asked to meet at

the Pine Creek Mill's parking lot. Wildcat Den State Park is located north of Hwy. 22 between Montpelier and Fairport.

8th ~ Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. If cloudy or raining, there will be slide shows and talks in the observatory.



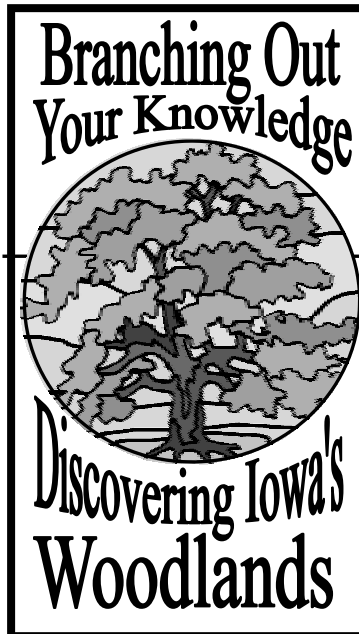
11th - 15th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Native American Week ~ Visit the Hauberg Indian Museum, discover Indian sign language, make an Apache scroll and dreamcatcher, plus many other crafts. Also take a canoe ride at West Lake Park (life jackets provided)! This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

22nd & 23rd ~ Family Overnight Camp ~ 6:00 P.M. (Fri.) - 4:00 P.M. (Sat.) ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Bring your family to the Wapsi River Center for an outdoor educational weekend. See special ad section, at the end of the Wapsi Center Happenings for more details.

EDIWILD 2006

Monday, June 19 - Thursday, June 22

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: Nahant Marsh Educational Field Station and the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center.

Activities and Topics include: tree identification, history of Iowa's woodlands, woodland systematic, growing healthy trees, woodland fauna, Iowa's woodland endangered species, *Project Learning Tree* curriculum training and much more.

Overnight Accommodations will be available at the Wapsi Center's Owl's Nest Dormitory. Participants are encouraged to stay overnight on Wednesday; however, participants need not

stay Monday or Tuesday 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.

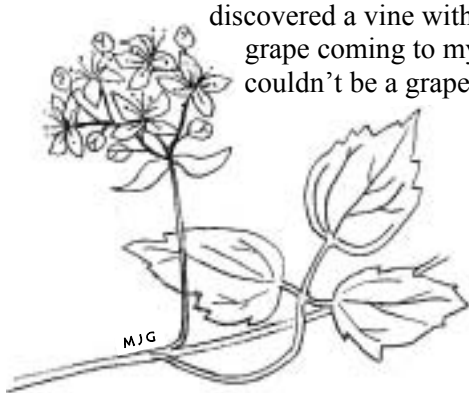
If you are interested, please contact the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286. We will send you an EDIWILD brochure, which will include a registration form, daily activities, and other workshop details.

Plant Profile: Virgin's Bower

by: Jessica Steines, AmeriCorps Naturalist

I have realized that everyone searches for a purpose, some might say a legacy, to their time here at the Wapsi River Center (WRC). Recently, I have heard my fellow AmeriCorps member say, "We can come back years from now and say we helped make that." Now that my term at the WRC is coming to an end, I find myself wondering what legacy I want to leave? Luckily, I stumbled onto something.

It happened on a nice winter day in January, while on a learning hike. We wandered through some brush along the fence line on the east side of the WRC's property, ending up at the electrical lines. There is a 20-foot width that is void of brush, creating a sunny forest edge. After looking around, I spotted a white fuzzy pouf that looked like a plant named prairie smoke. As I got closer, I



discovered a vine with tendrils, with grape coming to my mind. But it couldn't be a grape, since the fruit wasn't a berry; it had this feathery pouf with seeds attached to a central receptacle. No one in my search party knew what it was, not even a

guess. So I took a small sample back to the office, reasoning that Bob would know. Though he wasn't sure at first, he got to the bottom of it. He discovered that it was virgin's bower (*Clematis virginiana*), a plant that had not been documented at the Wapsi River Center.

Virgin's bower is part of the *Ranunculaceae*, or Buttercup, family. The Latin root *Clema* means "vine branch" to describe its growth. It has many common names, including old man's beard, devil darning needles, ladies' bower, love vine and traveler's ivy. However, the most popular common name is virgin's bower. The name "bower" is used to describe its habit for climbing up and covering other shrubs and trees in order to reach sunlight at forest edges and thickets, sometimes becoming a problem. "Old man's beard" describes the fall and winter feathery pod left to disperse by the wind, like the one I found. This plant is native to the United States, growing from Georgia to Canada and to Kansas.



Since I found it in the winter, I will love going back to the site through the seasons to see the plant in its full foliage. Virgin's bower flowers in July through August, showing off clusters of four white petal-like sepals and many stamens. Its leaves are opposite from each other and have three leaflets looking similar to poison ivy. The petiole of these leaves form tendrils, to twist around to anything within reach.

Historically, the bark, leaves and blossoms were used as medicine because it contains alcohol and water. These parts are harvested when the leaves are fully grown and must be used fresh because drying or boiling expels its vitality. The alcohol extracted produces a green tincture that turns brown when exposed to light. It is said to have a peculiar, unpleasant odor, and is disagreeable to taste, like a dry, metallic-like roughness to the tongue and mouth. It is toxic, irritating skin and mucous membranes, and ingestion can cause bloody vomiting, severe diarrhea and convulsions.

Even with these adverse effects, virgin's bower is used in an ointment for skin afflictions to relieve itching. When taken orally, it is used as a diuretic and for inducing sweats. Historically, it was thought to help with chronic rheumatism, palsy and osteoporosis pain. Even now, it is also thought to treat insomnia, nervous headaches, nervous twitching and uterine diseases. Virgin's bower is not used in commerce, but is used in domestic practice and by homeopathic physicians.

Finding it as the "old man's beard" and hoping to rediscover it as full-fledge "virgin's bower" this summer, I will be able to see the whole plant cycle before I leave in August.

No, I will not be making my own concoctions at that time; I don't recommend using the plant in any way. Though discovering the virgin's bower is not monumental and maybe no one will say, "Hey, that's the plant that Jessica Steines found," I will always think of it as the special legacy I left at the Wapsi River Center.



Wildlife Profile: Tufted Titmouse

by: **Renee Hanson, AmeriCorps Naturalist**

Baeolophus bicolor, tufted titmouse, is commonly referred to as the crested titmouse or crested chickadee. The tufted titmouse belongs to the same family as the chickadees, the Paridae family. They are distributed mainly east of the Great Plains and prefer deciduous woodlands near swamp and river basins. Generally residential year-round, they have adapted well to small urban woodlands.



Photographed by: J.P. Myers
Animal Diversity Web
University of Michigan Museum of Zoology

Male and female alike, the tufted titmouse is gray above (wings and tail) and white below, with a hint of rust on its flank, or just below its wings. With dark eyes, eye rings and a patch of black just above its beak, the identifying characteristic of the tufted titmouse is its

crest of gray feathers on the head. Their call can be heard as a fast “peter, peter, peter”, or slow, drawn-out “peto, peto, peto”.

Although quite territorial during spring and summer when food is plentiful, the tufted titmouse will join mixed flocks of birds, such as the white-breasted nuthatch, black-capped chickadee and cardinal, during winter months in search of food. They are quite fond of birdfeeders and can often be seen hanging upside down collecting seed from the feeders. Here, they can be observed using their sharp beak, tapping vigorously on seeds held between their feet while perched on a feeder

or branch. The titmouse often hides its food in the ground or under the bark of trees. Sunflower seeds may be their favorite source of food in the winter; however, the tufted titmouse feeds on an array of insects, fruit and seeds from trees and shrubs during the warm season when food is not so scarce.

The tufted titmouse is solitary when breeding. They mate together for life. Breeding and courtship take place March through May. Males often feed females during courtship.

Tree cavities, abandoned woodpecker holes or any cavities of sort may be selected as a nesting location. They build their nest using what is available: wool, animal hair, grasses, leaves or twigs. They may even resort to plucking hair from live animals to build their nest.

Females lay from 5-8 eggs, up to twice per season. The eggs are white with brown speckles and are incubated by females for nearly two weeks. Both male and female tend to their young. Young stay with their parents up to 2 months, and often stay around to help with the next brood.

Through the years, due to increased popularity of birdfeeders, the tufted titmouse has increased in numbers and moved farther north in the U.S. and Canada. Humans have impacted this bird’s survival and distribution simply by leaving seed out; in return, the tufted titmouse gives us viewing pleasure while decreasing insect populations.



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.

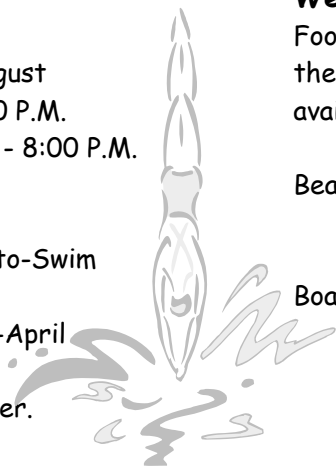
Boathouse & Concession:

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.



Living Green... by Renee Lietz

There are two "holidays" that environmentalists can celebrate in spring — Earth Day and Arbor Day. A perfect way to celebrate will be to plant a tree!

Prior to settlement, Iowa contained 6.8 million acres of forest, a number that is now reduced to 4.5 million acres. Planting a tree is an investment for the future, an act of stewardship for the earth. Trees help clean water, feed and shelter wildlife, and give us oxygen to breath. Trees can also reduce noise pollution. According to the Iowa DNR's Forestry Division, an acre of Iowa forest on a summer day can transpire over 1,600 gallons of water. This cools the surrounding area by as much as 5 to 15 degrees. This effect, when combined with the placement of trees around homes for shade, can reduce air-conditioning demands from 10 to 43 percent. In the winter, they reduce heat loss and serve as natural windbreaks.

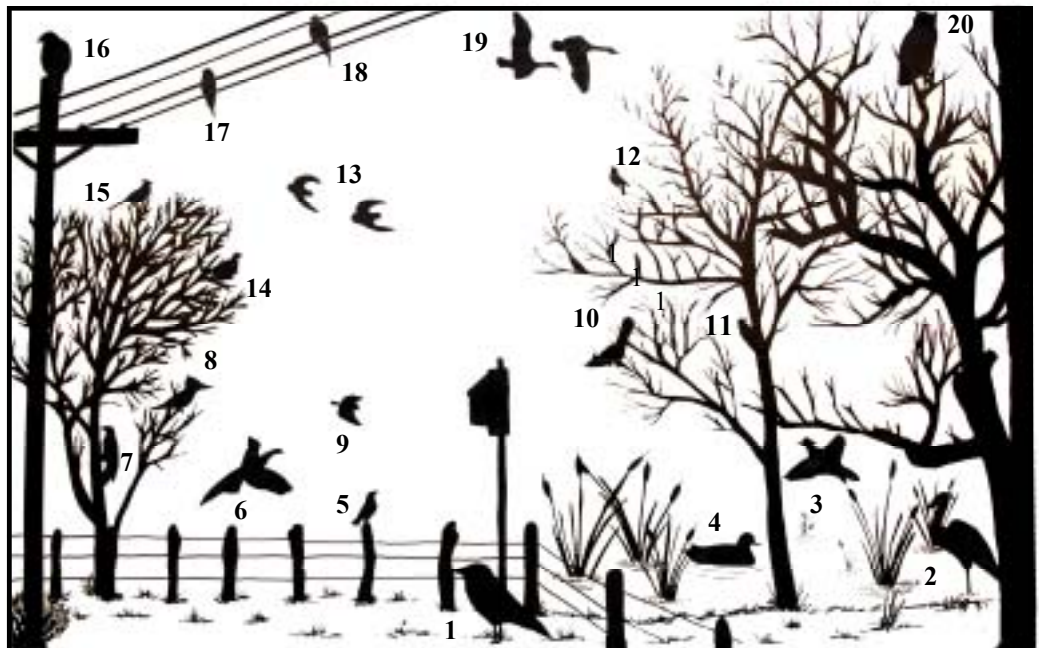
Iowa's soils and climate that are so good for crop production are also perfect for growing trees. To select the right kind of tree, find a nursery that carries plants native to Iowa. Native trees are better adapted to the climate and soils, provide better habitat, and are more resistant to insects and disease, in addition to being a link to our heritage. Try checking the website, Iowatreeplanting.com, for a list of native trees and nurseries where they can be purchased. Also, check with your local conservation board or ISU extension service for tree-planting information.

According to conservationist Aldo Leopold, "Acts of creation are ordinarily reserved for gods and poets. To plant a pine, one need only own a shovel." So this spring, take your shovel and plant something that can help our environment for many years to come.



Kids' Corner

Sit back and study the scene to see how many soaring and sitting bird silhouettes you can spot in this springtime, streamside scenery. Answers are found on the back page.



Days Spent Hosting at the Wapsi Center

by Erma Wiszmann, Secretary for Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc.

The Wapsi River Environmental Education Center is Scott County's well-kept secret. Visitors often will tell us they discovered it while driving around and saw the sign, or they happened across it on the county website. It is no secret, folks. The Center has been here for several years. I personally know of over 10 years. The old Boy Scout Camp, Minneyata, was purchased several years ago and gradually converted to a wonderful educational facility. It is a nice place to attend educational sessions, go on solo hikes, bird watch and identify wild flowers, trees and butterflies.

In the spring, one can learn to identify wildflowers. Some of the wildflowers can be seen by just looking out the window. When hosting on May 9, 2004, I identified 24 species of birds. Many of these birds are species I have not seen in the city. Can you identify a tree swallow, a scarlet tanager or an indigo bunting? What about a rose-breasted grosbeak, a wood thrush or a nuthatch? Can you tell the difference between a hairy woodpecker and a



downy? We see orioles, chickadees, cardinals, robins, blue jays, doves, etc. – many that we see in town. Bluebirds show up, but they do not come to the feeders. They are insect-eating birds, so you need to be out and away from buildings to see them.

In the winter, our Center is a wonderland when covered with snow. One lucky day while hosting with a 3- or 4-inch snow on the ground and no wind, we saw 8 deer up around our educational building. All were scattered out pawing through the snow cover, browsing on acorns. Winter also brings

eagles to roost in the trees sheltered near the Wapsipinicon River. As a host, I can sit inside in our nice warm building and see these magnificent birds. I love seeing our wild turkeys, too. But can you believe Ben Franklin suggested the wild turkey to be our national symbol? Regarding the eagles, they come to roost sometime after 3 P.M., and you can step on the porch and hear the eagles doing what I often imagine as arguing. "You are on my roost", "I was here first", "Move over", etc.

Summer is a great time, too. Wildlife is busy doing what they do. Watching chipmunks can be fun. We



in the city know them as nuisance critters. If you are lucky, you may see deer moving about, ground hogs munching greenery, turkeys, and all kinds of birds. At night, listen to the owls and keep your eyes open, for you just might see a wandering raccoon or opossum. One summer evening when leaving our monthly Friends meeting, just outside the Eco Center's front door, we heard a barred owl screech. Although we knew what it was, it still gave us goose bumps. What a neat experience!

Ever since I retired in 1995, I have been hosting and helping wherever I can. I have learned so much more about nature than I previously knew and keep learning. I have met and become friends with many nature lovers. I love hosting; besides what all I may see, I also love to discuss nature with our visitors.

Some people, to get in touch with God and themselves, go on formal retreats, and those are great. For me, an afternoon at the Wapsi River Center does the same thing.

Enclosed is my contribution to the Friends of the Wapsi Center (contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law):

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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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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.

Answers to Kids' Corner ~ 1. American Crow - 2. Great Blue Heron - 3. Wood Duck - 4. Mallard - 5. Eastern Meadowlark - 6. Ring-necked Pheasant - 7. Northern Flicker - 8. Belted Kingfisher - 9. Eastern Bluebird - 10. Blue Jay - 11. Downy Woodpecker - 12. Song Sparrow - 13. Chimney Swifts - 14. American Robin - 15. Northern Cardinal - 16. Red-tailed Hawk - 17. American Kestrel - 18. Mourning Dove - 19. Canada Geese - 20. Great Horned Owl