

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Summer 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

School Field Trips

Approximately 5,020 students, teachers and parents attended 85 field trips during the 2005/06 school year. This was one more field trip than last year. This was one of our busiest springs; however, fall and winter were slower than past years. We had quite a few schools that held off for spring field trips or were schools that were used to going to Nahant Marsh, and we were already booked up for the spring when they called. We did have one cancellation of a very large school due to bad weather. The number of students per field trip continues to show a decline.

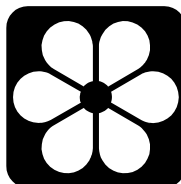
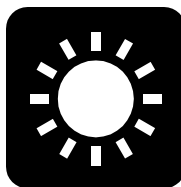
If you would like to schedule a field trip next school year, schedule as far in advance as possible. And don't forget — **The Wapsi River Center is a place for all seasons.** We would like to see more schools take fall and winter field trips. This would allow more schools to visit the Wapsi River Center.

Nahant Marsh Educational Field Station

A lot of people have been asking about the status of Nahant Marsh Educational Field Station. Due to the lack of funding, naturalist resignation and the withdrawal of the Putnam Museum as the administrative agency, there

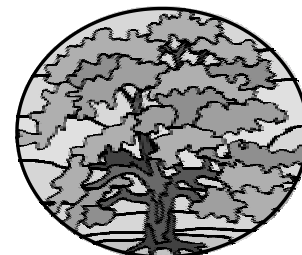
have not been any school field trips conducted at the Nahant Marsh since last fall.

The Friends of Nahant Marsh has been very active in continuing non-school activities such as volunteer workdays, toad and frog surveys and opening the Nahant Center on Saturday mornings. The Wapsi River Center continues to be very active at Nahant Marsh, providing technical assistance with resource management and serving on the Nahant Marsh Committee. Nahant Marsh also plays an integral role in the EDWILD Teachers' Workshop. The Nahant Marsh Committee is working to secure a new source of funding for the naturalist and educational programming there. The committee hopes to have a new naturalist hired by September.



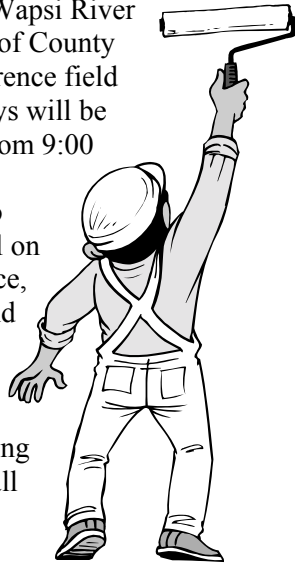
EDIWILD 2006 Teachers' Workshop

The EDIWILD Teacher's Workshop (June 19-22) was sponsored by the following partnerships: Wapsi River Center, Scott and Clinton County Conservation Boards, Nahant Marsh Educational Field Station and River Action, Inc. This year's theme was "Branching out your knowledge ~ Discover Iowa's Woodlands." The workshop uses an interdisciplinary approach to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum. Thirty-nine teachers and educators completed the workshop. Staff development and graduate credit were available through Area Education Agency 9 and Drake University. The workshop is an annual event and will be offered again next year.

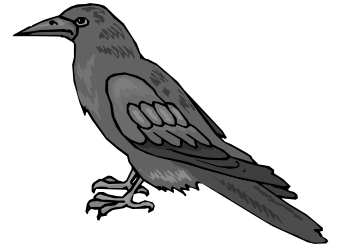


Volunteer Workdays

The Wapsi River Center will hold two volunteer workdays to help spruce up the Wapsi River Center for the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards Fall Conference field trips in September. The workdays will be on August 5 and September 9, from 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Projects may include landscaping, laying patio stone for benches, brush removal on prairie, painting, trail maintenance, work on backyard landscape pond and other projects as needed. In appreciation of your hard work, lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center during both workdays. To volunteer, call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.



states. The virus is spread by mosquitoes. Mammals, including humans, are susceptible to the virus. People 50 or older are at the greatest risk. Birds are especially susceptible. Crows and blue jays have been the most affected. We have seen a major decline in the number of birds in the last three years at the Wapsi Center. This year, we have been seeing a dramatic increase in the numbers of birds we are seeing and hearing. However, the numbers of crows and blue jays are still very low. It is also interesting to note that a house sparrow or a starling are now a rare sighting at the Center. It was predicted by most biologists that many bird species would initially decline in numbers. Birds that were immune or developed immunity to the virus would pass it on to their offspring, and numbers would rebound over a period of time. Even though we have a greater number of birds at this time, we still have the main season for West Nile virus to go through. It will be interesting to see how the numbers are next year. But things are looking up for the birds at the Wapsi Center at this time.



Wapsi Bird Numbers May Be On The Rebound After West Nile Virus

In 1999, the first case of West Nile virus was reported in the United States. The first case in Iowa was found in a dead crow in eastern Iowa. By 2002, the virus had spread all the way to the west coast and was found in 40

In Appreciation of Your Support of the Wapsi River Center

Jeanne Bryant
Ingrid Bogdanowicz

Carl Gerwulf
Elizabeth Heston

Charles Heston
Bill Robbins

Hillcrest School
Orion School

St. Paul Lutheran Church
James Morris

Erma Wiszmann
Dottie Wala

Lucia Dryanski
Carol Rogers



Hellos & Goodbyes *by Greg Wolf, Interpretive Naturalist*

Well, it has been almost seven years since I started with the Clinton County Conservation Board (CCCB). Now it is time for me to say good-bye. I left at the end of May to start a new chapter in my career. I have accepted a position in the City of Davenport's Park and Recreation Department as the environmental education specialist. The position is newly created in the city, and I am up for the challenge.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the schools I have been involved with in conducting programs and the teachers taking interest in bringing their students to our areas. It has been a pleasure to work with all of you, and I hope you continue to strive to include environmental education in your classroom curriculum.

The Wapsi River Center has been a big part of my career. I developed and created the team building course, helped with maintaining the bluebird trail, and worked on the trumpeter swan and turtle displays. Along with Bob Bryant, Wapsi Center Director, I also was an instructor for the EDIWILD teachers' workshop. I will be still having a presence at the Center through the Friends of the Wapsi Center as a board member. I cannot forget about the Wapsi River Center staff. Thank you for the great times, and I wish everyone the best and hope to continue to work together in the future.

Even though I will be moving on, I will remember the people I have been involved with and I am sure that I will run into again in Davenport. I will never forget the good times I have experienced in Clinton County and at the Wapsi River Center.

GROVE-to-GROVE

Lower Wapsipinicon River Cleanup Project

A SPARK FROM THE WATERS

by K. J. Rebarcak and Melisa Petersen, Grove-to-Grove Chairpersons

Once upon a time in 2000, two women went on a Clinton County Conservation Board canoe trip. It was only 5.5 miles of the Wapsipinicon (Wapsi) River, from Syracuse to Sherman Park, but we both fell in love that day with canoeing. We took the CCCB Canoeing 101 class a month later. This experience changed both our lives in many ways, and the chain of events it set in motion continues to have a positive effect on our lives to this day. We are both avid paddlers, enchanted by rivers and everything about them.



Well, not quite everything.

Unfortunately, many people enjoying our rivers stray far from the “leave-no-trace” ideal. Discarded food and beverage packaging, fishing gear and styrofoam coolers litter sandbars, banks and logjams. There are also large pieces of trash, such as old appliances, vehicles used as unsuccessful bank stabilizers and farm equipment, which have blighted the rivers, sandbars and banks for many years.

We could not, in good conscience, sit back and do nothing. So we began to get involved in river cleanups around the state of Iowa. We participated in many successful events such as a morning cleanup on the Mississippi with Chad Pregracke’s crew, the one-day Upper Iowa River Cleanup, and Project AWARE (a week-long IOWATER/Iowa DNR event). It didn’t take long before we began to dream of a cleanup right here on the Wapsipinicon, where our passion for rivers was first sparked.

People love to paddle, fish and even camp on the Wapsi, as it is a meandered stream. Because of the heavy usage and the number of homes along its banks, it suffers the same damage as many of our other rivers. This river is an important fishery and supports a wide variety of animal and plant life. It needs to be cared for, to keep it healthy, beautiful and safe, now and in the future.



Our dream of a cleanup sat on the back burner for a while as we asked other groups in the area to individually adopt the idea of a Wapsipinicon River cleanup. In December 2005, we were sharing a conversation about our concerns and dreams for the Wapsi. One thing was certain; the river wasn’t getting any help with this waiting game of “someone ought to” thinking. Then it struck us - why were we looking and waiting for someone else to do the cleanup? It was as much our responsibility as anyone’s. We decided it was time for stewardship and action, and we would be the coordinators of our dream – to be the change we wanted to see. And the Grove-to-Grove Lower Wapsipinicon River Cleanup Project was born. We would adopt the Wapsi as our own project,

create a sustainable effort and work on a different section of the river each year.

We believe, and intend to prove, that small grassroots efforts like LWRCP truly can make a difference in this area, as the other river cleanup events have shown. We intend to give local citizens the opportunity to experience the unique camaraderie and feelings of accomplishment that accompany a canoeing- and camping-based river cleanup.

Most of all, we intend to bring people together, get them involved, and help them discover that every one of us can have a positive impact. We hope they will take what they have learned from their experience and apply it to other streams near them (even the tiniest neighborhood creek is important!), inviting the help of neighbors, friends and others from their communities. In the end, we hope to foster the same stewardship we found in ourselves.

The part of the Wapsi we are focusing on this year is a popular section of river for individuals and families to enjoy. In 2006, Grove-to-Grove LWRCP will cover Walnut Grove near Toronto to Allen’s Grove near Donahue.



We are now cheerfully volunteering our time, knowledge and enthusiasm to make our dreams come true by coordinating this cleanup. We are both proud and thankful to have such major supporters/sponsors as Clinton County Conservation Board, Clinton County Pheasants Forever, Alliant Energy, Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and its Friends Group, G. Baker Distributing, Paul’s Discount, Clinton County Area Solid Waste Agency, IOWATER, REAP and Allied Waste Systems.

That spark from the water, that simple adventure of 5.5 miles, has become a flame shining bright with our passion and concern for rivers. We invite you to help us make this event the very best it can be. Please come join us in August!

WHAT: Grove-to-Grove Lower Wapsipinicon River Cleanup Project

WHEN: August 25-27, 2006

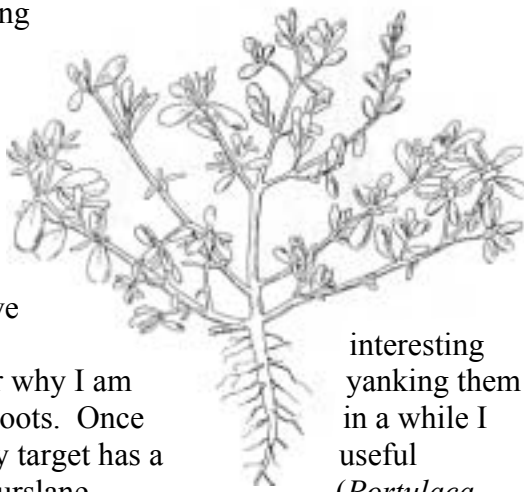
WHERE: From Walnut Grove Park in Toronto, Iowa, to Allen’s Grove Park north of Donahue, Iowa; total distance 22 miles. Base camp is at Sherman Park.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED: You can paddle the river and clean it up or assist with land-based operations. Call Melisa at (309) 737-9016, e-mail K. J. at rebar@netins.net, write to Grove-to-Grove LWRCP at P.O. Box 333, Long Grove, IA 52756, or visit us online at <http://showcase.netins.net/web/kjr/cleanup.html>. (All information, including downloadable/printable registration forms, is available at the website.)

Plant Profile ~ Purslane

by Chuck Jacobsen and Michael Granger, Naturalists

While pulling weeds from my flower beds, I sometimes find plants that I feel are attractive or at least interesting and wonder why I am out by the roots. Once I find that my target has a purpose. Purslane (*Portulaca oleraceae*), sometimes called little pig weed, is just one of those.



interesting yanking them in a while I useful

(*Portulaca*

I'm sure you've seen it creeping across your garden or lawn, but its origins are from the other side of the world. It is actually native to India and Persia, where it has been a source of food for 2,000 years. During the colonial period, it was brought to North America for food. It was reported to be in Massachusetts in 1672, and then in Canada in 1863. Currently, it is found in all 48 states, and its distribution is worldwide.



Purslane is a low-growing succulent plant with juicy leaves and stems. The leaves are paddle-shaped, plump and can be as large as ½ inch wide and up to 1½ inches long. The succulent stalkless leaves may be alternate or opposite along the plant's reddish stem. The

stem, too, is succulent, branching and creeping along from 4-10 inches long. Its tiny yellow flowers are inconspicuous and only 1/5 of an inch wide, blooming between the base of the leaf and stem. They have two sepals, five yellow petals and eight or more stamens. It blooms mid-summer to fall and develops fruit up to ¼ inch long, filled with round, black seeds which are not much bigger than a grain of salt. One plant is estimated to produce up to 240,000 seeds! Each seed may remain viable in the

soil for forty years, ensuring future plant production. The plant also has another defense against its eradication – if it is uprooted, the plant will quickly use the remaining moisture in its stems to produce seeds before it



withers and dies. Purslane's only limiting factor is that it is not shade-tolerant, and will only thrive in open, sunny growing spaces.

It is readily apparent that we must co-exist with purslane. Many groups of people throughout history have relied on purslane as an important supplement to their diets. It is eaten throughout Europe and Asia. It is commonly dried and canned in Russia. In Mexico, purslane is referred to as “verdolago” and is used in omelets, tortillas, soups and stews.

Purslane is a rich source of vitamins E and C, beta carotenes and proteins. They are also high in iron. Recent research has shown that the plant is rich in omega-3 fatty acids (also found in freshly harvested walnuts, or freshly caught salmon) which prevent heart attacks and strengthen the body's health as a whole.

The stems and leaves of purslane have a mild, sort of lemony green bean flavor and a chewy texture. These plants are great raw in salads, steamed or added to soups, stews and other vegetable dishes. The plant will stay fresh if you wrap it in a moist paper towel, place it in a Ziploc bag and refrigerate.

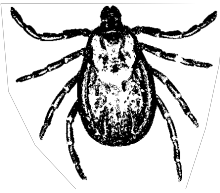
Henry David Thoreau summed up the desirable qualities of purslane when he wrote in 1854: “I learned from my two years' experience that it would cost incredibly little trouble to obtain one's necessary food, even in this latitude; that a man may use as simple a diet as the animals, and yet retain health and strength. I have made a satisfactory dinner ... simply off a dish of purslane which I gathered in my cornfield, boiled and salted ... Yet, men have come to such a pass that they frequently starve, not for want of necessaries but for want of luxuries”.

Wildlife Profile ~ Dog Tick

by Paula Mullin, AmeriCorps Naturalist

Being that it is July, the months of both April and May are not too far in our past. These are the favorite months of many, as they provide wonderful opportunities to enjoy the out-of-doors. Thoughts of chasing turkeys through the woods, running into morel mushrooms in their extraordinary abundance, and checking out the wildflowers in bloom are still vivid memories of mine, as I suspect for many of you. There are, however, less pleasant creatures especially active during late April through May, that are also hard to forget. The ones that specifically come to mind are the blood-feeding external parasites, dependent on blood/tissue fluids, that we call ticks.

One misconception of ticks is that they are disgusting insects. While it would be hard to dispute that they are disgusting, they are not insects. Ticks are rather arthropods, having eight legs as adults and two body segments. They share the class arachnida with such things as mites, chiggers and spiders. Out of the blood sucking arthropods, ticks hold the record for transmitting the widest variety of pathogens, and furthermore, are second only to mosquitoes as vectors of disease to human kind. However, not all ticks carry disease.



The most common tick found in Iowa, the one you likely see crawling up your camouflage, is the American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), otherwise known as the wood tick.

This species, unlike the deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), is not known to carry Lyme disease. American dog ticks can, however, carry bacteria known to cause Rocky Mountain spotted fever and are actually the main carrier of the disease in the Midwest states. The disease may develop after a tick infested with the causal bacterial organism *Rickettsia rickettsi* inserts mouth parts into your skin. Fortunately, this disease is rare in Iowa. According to the Center for Disease Control, there was an average reported annual incidence of 0.1 to 1.0 per 1,000,000 persons per year from 1997-2002 in this state.

The American dog tick, along with others in the family Ixodidae, has three specialized mouth parts which are visible from a dorsal view. The center structure, which contains many beak-like projections and actually penetrates the skin of a host, is known as the hypostome. It is protected by paired chelicerae, which are in turn



surrounded by highly mobile jointed parts known as palps. In addition to the projections of the hypostome, many hard ticks secrete a cement-like substance which essentially glues them in place and does not dissolve until the completion of a blood meal. Therefore, it is often difficult to remove the mouthparts of an attached tick.

American dog ticks typically use their hypostome to penetrate the skin of three separate hosts of whose blood they depend on to complete each life cycle. Put very simply, ticks emerge from eggs as larvae, obtain some blood from a vertebrate host, molt to the nymph stage, obtain blood from a second host and molt into adults. An adult female requires a third blood meal in order to lay eggs, of which she does only once before dying. An adult male, on the other hand, attaches to a third host but does not take a third blood meal (meaning an adult male does not transmit disease). The male also dies once he has reproduced.

Other adaptations of ticks in the family Ixodidae include a thickened plate on the body region, called the scutum, which provides a possible reason they are referred to as hard ticks. Also, these ticks are able to ingest a large volume of blood because the outside surface, or cuticle, actually grows to accommodate their increased body weight.

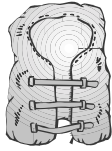


Engorged tick

Knowing where to pick up ticks, and consequently how to avoid them, is a good way to prevent becoming the next blood meal. Ticks are commonly found in grassy, brushy, wooded and shaded areas, likely because they thrive in areas of high humidity. They crawl up stems of grasses or shrubs and are usually found from ground level to three feet above the ground. They use carbon dioxide, scent, body heat and other stimuli to find a host, and position themselves with their front legs extended in order to feel or grab the host as it brushes against them. In other words, that ticks fly or jump from trees is another misconception, but one I admittedly once believed. Walking in the middle of a mowed trail, covering as much skin as possible (especially near your ankles), wearing light-colored clothing, and doing a tick check on the way out of the woods are all means to avoid tick problems. Finding a tick before it has become attached will preclude the problem of removing mouthparts and lower your chance of developing Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

If you find you are still a tick magnet, and chemical use seems in order, you may want to try Permethrin. I heard from my favorite outdoor enthusiast, who reportedly has not had a tick in three years, that Permethrin applied to clothing is quite effective. Do not, however, apply Permethrin directly to your skin. Whatever your method of avoiding ticks, have a safe and tick-free summer!

JULY



15th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Join a Clinton County naturalist on-board the Blue Heron for an Eco Cruise. Life jackets provided and required to wear. Call (563) 243-4749 to register. Deadline for registration: July 7. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!



15th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Movies & popcorn are free at the nature center's outdoor screen.

17th - 21st ~ Laura Ingalls Wilder Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Learn what life was like for Laura Ingalls. Experience how she lived by spending time in an 1830s cabin and a one-room schoolhouse. Enjoy making crafts such as soap decorating, candle dipping and much more. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

20th ~ Poisonous Plants ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come learn about plants that can harm you, from poison ivy to wild parsnip. Learn how to identify them and what remedies can help after exposure.



21st & 22nd ~ 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. The cost for the camp is \$25 per person and is limited to 40 participants with children being at least 10 years old. Call the Wapsi Center at (563) 328-3286 to reserve a spot for your family.



22nd ~ Canoeing the Mississippi Backwaters ~ Noon - 4:00 P.M. ~ Thomson Causeway ~ Join Chuck Jacobsen for basic instruction, followed by canoeing. All canoeing gear will be supplied.

22nd ~ Voices of the River ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Thomson Causeway ~ Chuck Jacobsen, a local folk musician and Clinton County Conservation Board naturalist, invites all ages to enjoy "Voices of the River", the music of John Denver, Charlie McGuire and others.



SUMMER

22nd ~ Hayrack Rides ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Good times aboard this 1/2-hour, ranger-guided hayride around the park. Continuous rides offered until dusk.

25th - 29th ~ Frontier Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Enjoy a week doing what the pioneers did in the 1800s. Enjoy many activities such as a wagon ride, frontier cooking, pioneer games and much more. This week, we will visit the Niabi Zoo and learn about animals. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.



27th ~ Diggin' Up the Roots of Root Beer ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come and enjoy a cold one, root beer that is. While you are here we will dig up the history of root beer, experiment with a homemade brew, and experience a delicious root beer float with homemade ice cream. Please call Jessica Steines at the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 to register by July 25.

29th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Lyondell Plant Tour ~ Call (563) 243-4749 to register. Deadline for registration: July 21. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!

30th ~ Village Alive! ~ 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ See the village come alive as "The Friends" of the village reenact life as it was on the 1890s Iowa prairie. Enjoy folk art demonstrations throughout the day. Admission is FREE! For further information, call (563) 328-3283.



31st - August 4th ~ Mark Twain Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Explore and learn what life was like for Mark Twain. Enjoy paddle boating at West Lake Park and a tour of Lock & Dam 15 on the Mississippi River. Hike trails, carve soap and much more! This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

EVENTS

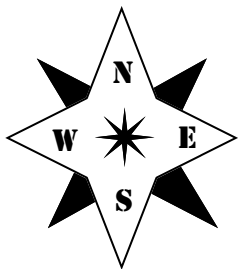
AUGUST

5th ~ Volunteer Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come spruce up the Wapsi River Center. A variety of tasks for all age levels will be accomplished during the day. Free lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. To volunteer, please call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.



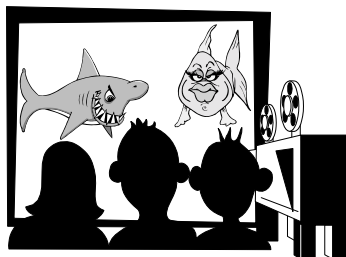
5th ~ Nahant Marsh Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Participants are asked to meet at the picnic tables in front of the Nahant Marsh Educational Center. Contact Sheri Colman at (563) 786-8504 for more information.

5th ~ Which Way Did They Go? ~ 1:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Mother Nature's math comes to life in this exciting, hands-on, beginners' look into the world of



orienting. Join naturalist Lisa Gerwulf for an afternoon of getting lost – comfortably! Participants will learn how to use a compass to navigate their way through different courses and use a map and compass together to find specific locations. Pre-registration is required by calling (563) 328-3286 by August 3.

5th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Nature movies & popcorn are free at the nature center's outdoor screen.



5th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Free movies are available for campground visitors.

7th ~ Mussel Cruise ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ The Blue Heron will take participants out to learn about and wade for freshwater mussels. Freshwater mussels are the most endangered



group of animals on earth; find out why. Call (563) 847-7202 to sign up.

11th ~ Canoeing 101 ~ 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~

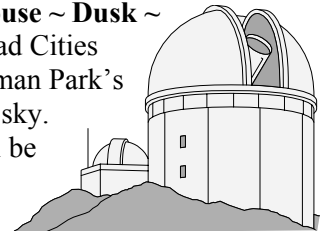
Beginners, canoeing is a great sport that everyone can enjoy. Join us for this A-to-Z class. Participants will learn the canoe safety rules, various paddle strokes, canoe style choices, how to right a tipped canoe (yep, we're gonna tip 'em) and will sample some freeze-dried wilderness food. We will also be taking a canoe trip through backwater wetlands of the Mississippi River, complete with portages and obstacles. Bring a sack lunch, a change of clothes and be ready to participate with gusto. Call (563) 847-7202 to reserve your spot.



12th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Clinton Izaak Walton League ~ Izaak Walton League participants will do outdoor activities and archery. ISU Extension will teach kids to use GPS. Call (563) 243-4749 to register. Deadline for registration: August 4. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!



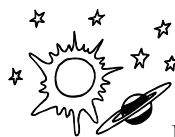
12th ~ Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. If cloudy or raining, there will be slide shows and talks in the observatory.



18th - 20th ~ Hunter Safety Education Camp ~ 6:00 P.M. (Fri) - 4:00 P.M. (Sun) ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Standard hunter safety courses are 10 hours long, with about five of those hours spent in the outdoors using various shooting equipment. In this event, we will go far beyond the basics. In addition to all of the hunter education standards, we will be teaching advanced shooting techniques, bowhunter safety, trapping, waterfowl, turkey & raccoon hunting, dog training, caring for game in the field, first aid, wildlife ID, calling and a whole lot more! All these activities will allow participants to actually participate, not just listen to speakers or watch films. The course is open to kids, age 11-16, whether or not they have received the Hunter Education Certificates already. Cost per student is \$25, for meals. Clinton County students are free



thanks to a donation from Clinton County Pheasants Forever. Clinton County Whitetails Unlimited will be providing monetary support to cover the cost of lodging (at the Wapsi River Center's dormitory), ammunition and targets for the participants. Overnight chaperons will be provided by participants' parents. Space is limited to 40 kids, so sign up early by calling (563) 847-7202.



**19th ~ Monsignor Menke
Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi
River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell,**

Director of the Monsignor Menke

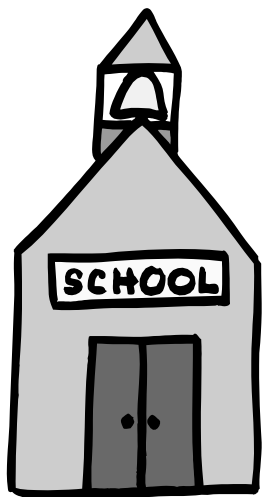
Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

21st ~ Trumpeter Swan Open House ~ 5:00 P.M. ~ Bob Boock Farm, Wheatland ~ Join the CCCB naturalists and Bob Boock for a quiet evening of waterfowl watching at Bob Boock's Nature's Acres Wildlife Refuge. Observe this year's trumpeter swan cygnets. This will also be a chance to observe the dozens of Canada geese and ducks which make the Boock ponds their home. The farm is 2 miles north of Wheatland on County Road Y32.



25th - 27th ~ Grove-to-Grove Lower Wapsipinicon River Cleanup Project ~ See special section for further details.

26th ~ Free Canoeing ~ All Day ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground



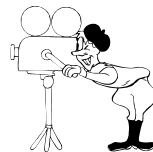
26th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center One-room Schoolhouse ~

Discover what it was like to go to school in the one-room school. The plan is to do one hour of clean up outside and inside with the kids, then spend the next two hours doing schoolroom activities and outdoor activities from that time era. Call (563) 243-4749 to register. Deadline for registration: August 18. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!

26th ~ Hayrack Rides ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Good times aboard this 1/2-

hour, ranger-guided hayride around the park. Continuous rides offered until dusk.

26th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Nature movies & popcorn are free at the nature center's outdoor screen.



26th ~ Eastern Iowa Star Party ~ 8:00 - 10:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The Quad Cities Astronomical Society will hold its annual Eastern Iowa Star Party and invites the public to join them for a celestial celebration.

SEPTEMBER



2nd ~ Nahant Marsh Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~

Participants are asked to meet at the picnic tables in front of the Nahant Marsh Educational Center. Contact Sheri Colman at (563) 786-8504 for more information.

3rd ~ 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 & 4th ~ Village Fall Festival ~ 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Come and enjoy that old-fashioned, fall harvest, festival atmosphere at the Village! "The Friends"



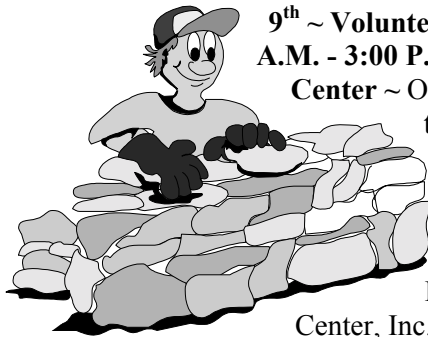
of the village, dressed in period dress, will demonstrate crafts, sell their wares and share the fruits of the harvest. Come spend the day and enjoy the food and music. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children under 12. Any questions, call (563) 328-3283.

5th ~ Monarch Tagging ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Sherman Park ~ The monarch migration is in full swing and so is a national tagging program. The CCCB tagged almost 200 monarchs last year before the insects headed to Mexico for the winter. We will hopefully tag several monarchs and release them during the presentation. Meet at the picnic shelter in the campground.

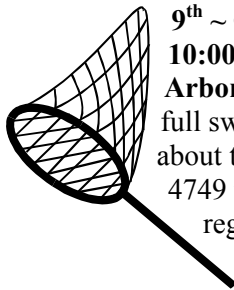
7th ~ Magnificent Monarchs ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come learn about the



monarch butterfly, from their life cycle to their incredible migration. Learn how you can help us gather information for the national tagging program by catching and tagging monarchs.



9th ~ Volunteer Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Once again a variety of tasks for all age levels will be accomplished during the day. Free lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. To volunteer, please call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.



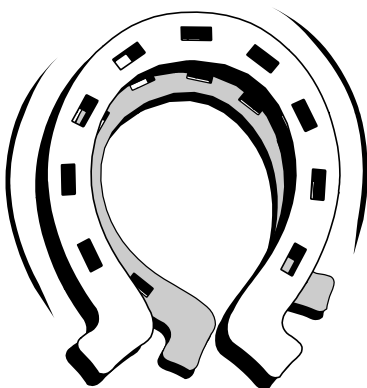
9th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ 10:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Bickelhaupt Arboretum ~ Butterfly Fest will be in full swing and the kids will learn loads about the beautiful insects. Call (563) 243-4749 to register. Deadline for registration: September 1. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!

9th ~ 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.

10th ~ Microscopic World ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Mike Granger, Wapsi River Center naturalist, for a microscopic discovery of the aquatic world. The Osprey Aquatic Lab is the location where participants will collect their own samples and learn how to observe them under a microscope.



16th ~ Horseshoe Tournament ~ 11:30 A.M. - Noon: Sign-up ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Entry fee is \$5.00, will



draw for partners, double elimination. Payback toward 3 places includes trophies (4-team min.). Participants must be at least 18 years old to play. B.Y.O. snacks and drinks. Contact Renae at the Wapsi River Center regarding any questions at (563) 328-3286, or (309) 631-3334.



30th ~ A Fun Introduction to GPS ~ 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ New global positioning system applications seem to be sprouting up everywhere – in our cars, boats, farm equipment,

bicycles and even our cell phones. So what's it all about? Would you like to know where you are, where you've been, what your elevation is, how fast you're moving, how long you've been resting, where your favorite fishing hole is, when the sun or moon will set or rise and more? GPS can do this for you. Use the CCCB's GPS units (or bring your own) and spend a fun afternoon exploring the back valley.

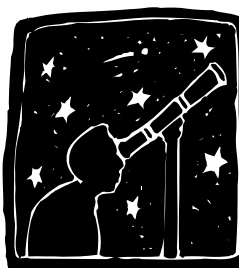
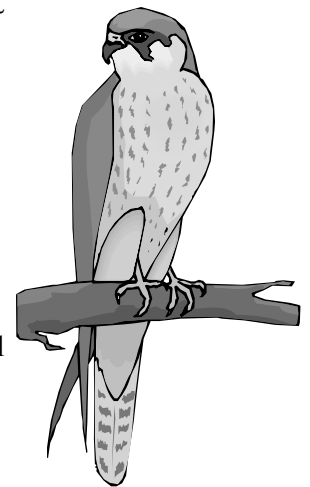
OCTOBER

7th ~ Nahant Marsh Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Participants are asked to meet at the picnic tables in front of the Nahant Marsh Educational Center. Contact Sheri Colman at (563) 786-8504 for more information.



7th ~ Fifteenth Annual Ecology Day ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Mark your calendars and come join us for a wonderful learning experience for the whole family.

14th ~ The ABC's of Birds: Art, Biology & Conservation Workshop ~ Drawn to Birds ~ Noon - 3:00 P.M. ~ Putnam Museum ~ Wapsi River Environmental Education Center will present live birds of prey and discuss behavior, habitat requirements and conservation of these majestic creatures. This will be paired with a biological illustration workshop led by artist Bill Hannan. This is the fourth program in a series, so call the Putnam Museum at (563) 324-0059 to find out about earlier programs (beginning September 21) and to register.



14th ~ 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.

Blue Heron Eco Cruises ~ Call (563) 259-1876 for reservations; costs are \$6/adult & \$3/child under 16.

Sunset Cruises ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Take an hour and a half Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Cruisers will learn about wildlife, commercial use, navigation and recreational use of the big river.

Scheduled Dates: July 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th August 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st September 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th.

Moonlight Cruises ~ 9:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Take a slow cruise on the moonlit Mississippi.

Scheduled Dates: July 6th August 10th September 7th

Fun Cruises ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Rangers will take people, first-come, first-served, on free 45-minute river rides leaving every-hour-on-the-hour until 8:00 P.M. These special cruises are just for fun and enjoyment of the river. Donations gladly accepted.

Scheduled Dates:
July 15th
August 12th



Kids' Corner: Tabletop Water Fountain

by Michael Granger, Naturalist

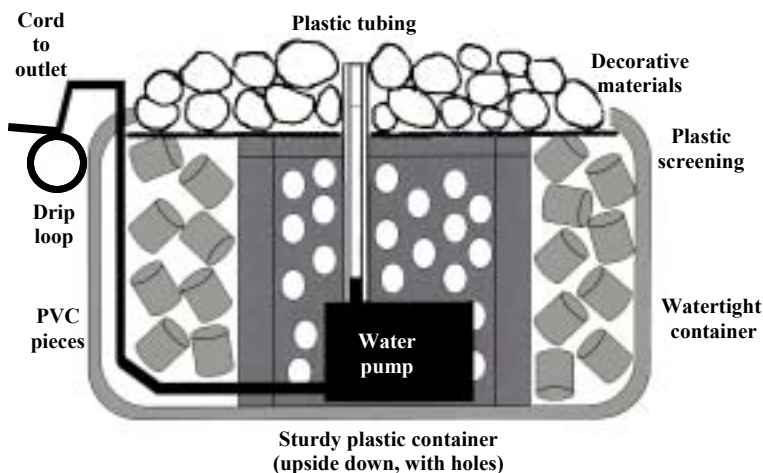
Whether observing and listening to a rushing river, a flowing stream, a gurgling brook or even raindrops dripping from a leaf, moving water captivates the soul and has a mesmerizing affect on the listener. Here is a fun way to bring those soothing sounds from nature indoors. With an adult's help, you can create a wonderful water fountain.

Every fountain begins with a submersible pump. These can be purchased at garden supply shops or any of the larger hardware stores. Be sure to obtain the smallest pump possible, which may run about \$20. The next main item is a watertight container. You can get some great bowls and containers at a Goodwill store near you. The container must be large enough to be able to hold the pump and stones you want to place in it. Here is a list of the other items needed to create your fountain: clear plastic tubing (diameter to fit over pump's water flow outlet), plastic container (to protect the pump), PVC pipe (½ inch in diameter, cut into 1½ inch pieces), scrap piece of plastic window screening, drill, drill bits (¼ inch and one large enough to make hole for plastic tubing), and decorative materials (stones, rocks, marbles, quartz, small figurines, etc.).

With an adult's help, begin by placing the pump in the bottom of the bowl. Add a length of tubing straight up from the pump. This must be long enough to reach the top of the fountain once all decorative materials are added. Next, drill several holes in the side of the plastic container, with the ¼ inch bit, to let water inside. Also drill a hole through the top, with larger bit, to let the tubing through. Surround the plastic container with the cut PVC pieces which act as filler. Cut a piece of the window screening to cover the plastic container and the PVC pieces (see diagram).

The next part is where you can be creative. Cover the screen with decorative stones, marbles, quartz or any hard material which will not break down over time. These may be stacked up or piled to hide the tubing. You might also add a small figurine (frog, fish, turtle or whatever you would like), to create a miniature natural setting. A piece of driftwood will also add to your scene. Finally, fill the container with water, almost full. Plug in water pump to start

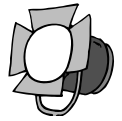
fountain, making sure to create a "drip loop" in the cord so water can't flow directly to the outlet. You may have to adjust the pump to increase or decrease the water pressure until it is just right (most pumps have a pressure switch to control the amount of water flowing out of the pump). If you want to create a waterfall, you can add a copper elbow onto the end of the tubing to direct the flow of the water.



Experiment with different containers and materials to see which ones work the best. Possibly the most rewarding aspect of making your own fountain is to see and hear the flowing water as it brings your creation to life.



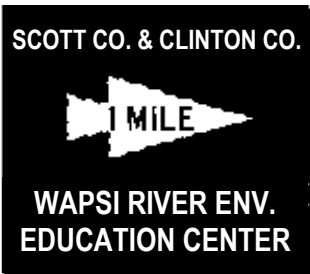
Volunteer Spotlight ~ K.J. Rebarcak



All From One Little Brown Road Sign and One Little Canoe Trip...

by K. J. Rebarcak

In late 1999, my husband and I were looking to buy a house out in the country. Our search led us to rural Dixon, where I spied one of those brown signs with a white arrowhead. It said



“Wapsi River Environmental Education Center.” I came back a few weeks later to investigate what this place was about, toured the Eco-Center, walked the grounds, and picked up the latest copy of *The W.R.E.N.* Little did I know my life was about to change forever.

The W.R.E.N. listed a whole bunch of public programs for the upcoming spring 2000 season. My first two programs were a trumpeter swan release at Goose Lake and the woodcock watch at Sherman Park. It was my first time at either of these awesome places, and the first time I’d ever been exposed to any programs of this kind. I was hooked! I kept going to lots of different programs, and was simply spellbound by each new thing that I learned.

In the spring of 2000, CCCB offered a canoe trip from Syracuse to Sherman Park, a distance of 5.5 miles. I asked my friend, Melisa Petersen, if she wanted to try it with me, and she agreed. We figured, what the heck, there’s no participation fee and we don’t have to buy any equipment, so if we don’t like it, we’re not out anything. We LOVED it and couldn’t wait until the next trip was offered. Next thing we knew, we were renting canoes on our own from Rock Creek Marina.

In 2002, I bought my first canoe, a tandem boat made of polyethylene. I took many adventures with various friends in that boat. It also helped me to become closer with my younger brother, as he and I went quite a bit.

I began to paddle more and more, and sold the tandem canoe in the fall of 2003 and bought a royalex solo canoe, which I still use. I joined the local paddling club and started going online to try to find even more people to go paddling with. I kept going new places and making new friends. But I never forgot that first trip with CCCB that started it all.

I paddled 615 miles in 2004. In 2005, I bought my first kayak, a plastic 12-foot recreational boat. I joined a few more clubs (in the Des Moines area), went even more places and made even more friends, and paddled 643 miles that year. By this time, I was joking with Mark Roberts and Greg Wolf that they had created a monster!

In January of 2006, I started going to whitewater kayak sessions at the pool at Iowa State University in Ames. In the process, I made even MORE friends. I rolled a kayak for the first time on February 26! I am now taking whitewater

kayaking lessons whenever possible, and hope to buy a whitewater boat of my own in late 2006-early 2007.

I now belong to four paddling organizations, and have ties to two more. I have a large and growing network of friends and practically live on the message board at paddlingiowa.com. My self-esteem and confidence have grown exponentially. I also became involved in river cleanups and became more concerned about the environment. My first IOWATER water monitoring workshop will be this July, and Melisa and I are coordinating our first annual Wapsi River cleanup, scheduled for late August.

This fall I am going back to school to learn even more about our environment and to develop my talents to make the world a better place. Many of my new paddling friends are quite well-educated and very knowledgeable about the environment, and they are using those tools to make a huge positive impact. I would love to be a part of that.

Over the past six years, I’ve been to many other events listed in *The W.R.E.N.* and *Prairie Whispers*. Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are two great winter pastimes. Spelunking (caving) I love and do whenever I can. I also enjoy catching and tagging monarch butterflies, and we put up a bluebird box in our yard and had our first successful brood fledge last year. Although the paddling thing just exploded from day one, these other programs have also introduced me to many other wonderful activities.

I hope that as many people as possible take advantage of the various programs offered by the Wapsi River Center and the CCCB. I will forever be grateful to those organizations and to Mark and Greg. I had absolutely no idea that one little canoe trip was going to lead to so many wonderful things, six years later and counting. Who knows, dear readers, what program YOU might attend that ignites a passion and changes your life and the world around you for the better?

Will you consider joining the Friends of the Wapsi Center? Membership is an opportunity to feel even closer to events at the Center and to lend your support. Just fill out the form below and mail with your (tax-deductible) contribution to: Carol Rogers ~ c/o Wapsi River E. E. Center ~ 31555 52nd Avenue ~ Dixon, IA 52745.

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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Mark Roberts, E. E. Coordinator
Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretative Naturalist

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.

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