

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Winter 2008

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi.php

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 Dave Murcia, Director

The WREN has Gone Green!

Please remember that you may now visit our website and sign up to get the WREN in an effort to *protect, conserve, and preserve our vital resources*. Please contact us if you require a mailed version.

You can also find a **NEW SITE MAP** to find your way around our 225 acre preserve including our building facilities, trail designations, and outdoor recreation sites. Just go to our conservation website, click on Wapsi Environmental Education Center, and view or print our "Wapsi Site Map" from the link in the column to the right.

Fall Field Trip Attendance

Approximately 2,246 students, teachers, and parents participated in 26 field trips this fall. Attendance was up as local schools took advantage of larger school trips. We now offer programs Tuesday-Friday.

If you are an educator and would like to schedule a winter or spring field trip, we recommend that you call well in advance if possible. **To set up a field trip**, you may download a **Field Trip Planner** from our website: http://www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi_education.php and contact us at (563) 328-3286.

Wapsi Center Deer Hunt

The Wapsi Center deer hunt, held during the 1st regular shotgun season, Dec. 1-5, offered 27 permits to 12 hunters who harvested 10 deer.

The deer hunt at the Wapsi Center along with the Scott County Park deer hunt was designated as a Special Deer

Management Zone by the DNR. Successful applicants who passed the shooter's proficiency test and attended the hunter safety session were offered 30 licenses for the Wapsi hunt and 100 licenses for the Scott County Park hunt. The Scott County Conservation Board is managing the population in order to balance plant and animal communities and the special deer licenses were for antlerless deer only.

The Center had 3-4 hunters a day on average with all but one hunter showing up on the first hunt day where 5 deer were harvested even though the weather was bad. The second day of the hunt had low temperatures, wind gusts with rain, and no sign of deer until the end of the day when one deer was harvested. The rest of the season went slow with not many deer showing their faces and a final harvest was recorded on the last day.

We will be tracking the deer population and harvest records to better manage populations and seek to offer more quality hunts in the future.

Need A Guest Speaker?

The Wapsi River Center has its own PowerPoint projector and laptop computer. PowerPoint enables us to update and develop new presentations to compliment or add value to your program and organization. Most presentations work well in a 30- to 45- minute time frame.

If you are looking for a speaker for a club, business, civic organization, school in-service, banquet, etc., in Scott or Clinton Counties, give the Wapsi River Center a call at (563) 328-3286. We do not charge for speaking engagements, but are more than happy to accept donations on behalf of the **Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc.**

Wapsi River Ecology Day- Insects

Eighteen people attended the day's activities that started out with a **Emerald Ash Borer** program covering life cycles, identification, and transportation of the invasive species by humans. Late morning and afternoon programs included: **Lessons on Lepidopterans** or "beautiful butterflies and moths", the **Iowa State Insect Zoo**, a Dutch oven demonstration by the **Quad City Natural Area Guardians**, **Aquatic Insects**, and the **Eastern Iowa Star Party** wrapped up the end of the day.

Eagles Are Back

The first adult bald eagle was seen at the Wapsi River Center on the second week of November. This past June, our national symbol was removed from the threatened and endangered species list as estimates show 9,789 breeding pairs up from 417 nesting pairs in 1963. Although the bald eagle is not protected by the *Endangered Species Act* now, it still retains protection under both the *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act* and the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act*. This protection prohibits the "taking" – killing, selling or otherwise harming eagles, their nests or eggs.

The best times to view eagles are December through March. On most occasions, the eagles return to the night roost from 3:30 P.M. to dusk. As many as 50 eagles have been observed at one time on the roost. It is located within 250 ft. of the Eagle View Eco Center where spotting scopes are available for indoor public viewing when the Center is open. Please be quiet when approaching the Eco Center!! *Winter hours for the Eco*

Center and its displays are Saturdays, 12:30 - 4:30 P.M. Admission is free.

Wild on the Wapsi

Are you looking for a unique location for your next meeting, training, office or civic gathering? Have you considered the remote and wild seclusion of the Wapsi River Center's facilities? We offer rentals including dormitory and cabin lodging along with meeting and eating amenities. Please visit our website and click on facilities for more information.

Upcoming educator and professional workshops are being planned for spring; please look to our **Events Calendar** on our website and local media for notices.

Wish List

A few items we are currently seeking are roasting forks, a crock pot, flash lights, and any craft materials. If you would like to donate items to the Wapsi Center, please call us at (563) 328-3286 for a detailed list.



Volunteers Needed at Bald Eagle Days!!

The Quad City Bald Eagle Days at the Q.C.C.A. Expo Center is quickly approaching, and we need volunteers to help run the Wapsi River Center booth. Below is a list of times, how many individuals are needed and what day your assistance is needed. Call (563) 328-3286 to volunteer.

Saturday, January 12

9:30 - 11:00 A.M.	1 person
11 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.	2 people
1:00 - 3:00 P.M.	2 people
3:00 - 5:00 P.M.	2 people
5:00 - 7:00 P.M.	2 people

Sunday, January 13

9:30 - 11:00 A.M.	1 person
11 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.	2 people
1:00 - 3:00 P.M.	2 people
3:00 - 5:00 P.M.	2 people

Winter Sports Opportunities

Wapsi River Environmental Education Center
The Center's 1/5 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails provide the perfect opportunity for wildlife viewing. Cross-country ski and snowshoe equipment is available during Center hours on Saturdays from 1:00 - 4:00 P.M., free of charge.

Scott County Park

The park's 4 miles of cross-country trails provide a journey rich in scenery. The trails are not groomed; however, they will be cleared of debris.

West Lake Park

Trails are open to cross-country skiing; however, they are not groomed. The park's four lakes are the perfect location for the ice-fishing enthusiast. Be sure to check ice conditions before venturing out!

Living Green...By Renne Lietz, Biology teacher at Davenport West High School

The leaves have fallen, crops are being harvested, and the days are getting shorter. It means winter is coming, and with it, the busy winter holidays.

Last year, I made a New Year's resolution to not purchase anything for six months. I made it through with only a few "slip-ups", and became more conscious of not purchasing items I "wanted", rather than needed. It was a rewarding experience, one that I am trying to continue. An organization called Adbusters promotes "Buy Nothing Day" on the Friday after Thanksgiving. Their website states, "Driving hybrid cars and limiting industrial emissions is great, but they are band-aid solutions if we don't address the core problem: we have to consume less. Buy Nothing Day isn't just about changing your routine for one day. It's about starting a lasting lifestyle commitment. With over six billion people on the planet, it is the responsibility of the most affluent – the upper 20% that consumes 80% of the world's resources – to set out on a new path." When planning our holiday purchases, we often tell ourselves that we should cut back on gift purchases as our family really doesn't need so much "stuff". Buying fewer "wants" can make our holidays simpler, less stressful, and easier on the environment.

Making your personal environment a little more "green" doesn't have to be a big deal this winter--doing a few little things can help.

Don't hibernate during the winter! Turn off that television, and bundle up the entire family for a walk. Mother Nature provides plants and animals interesting to observe in any season. You will not only feel better, but studies show that exercise strengthens our immune systems to help us fight off those winter viruses!

Curl up with a good nature-themed book or magazine. There are several great adventure/nature writers. Check your local library for suggestions.

For a great cup of coffee, look for "Shade-grown" on the label. These are grown in a sustainable manner that protects our migrating songbirds.

If you want to ensure that we have a clean environment for the future, speak up! Iowa's caucus system is a very unique way for everyone to participate when it comes to choosing our country's leadership. Do your homework, read up on the candidates, listen to the debates, go to the local caucus of your choice and let your voice be heard.

Have a peacefully simple holiday!

"Too many people spend money they haven't earned to buy things they don't want to impress people they don't like."

- - Will Rogers

THE W.R.E.N. IS GREEN & IN COLOR!

In order to provide a more environmentally-friendly way of distributing our newsletters, new color editions of the W.R.E.N. will be available on our website. You can help us by downloading our latest newsletter straight to your computer and printing at your own convenience. Please visit our website to join our e-mail list and receive notifications of new publications and up-to-date program information. If you require a mailed copy, please contact the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.



January

Cross-country Skiing and Snowshoeing ~ As weather conditions allow, check the local media for cross-country skiing and snowshoe outings throughout the winter. Or, for those with e-mail addresses, write clintonccb@yahoo.com and place yourself on our handy new adventurers list (last year's list was lost due to e-mail fraud). Adventurers will receive a short message whenever snow events are planned.

5th ~ The 24th Annual Bald Eagle Watch ~ 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ Clinton Community College ~ Speakers, exhibits and parking will be at the Clinton Community College. The exhibits and speakers will be there from 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Courtesy transportation will be provided by MTA from the college to the viewing sites along the Mississippi River. Participants should dress for the weather and bring binoculars. For more information, call Jim Kelley at (815) 259-3628.

9:45 A.M. ~ On the Wings of the Wind ~ Video

10:15 A.M. ~ Eagles of the Upper Mississippi ~ Pam Steinhuis, USFWS Ranger

11:15 A.M. ~ Birds of Prey ~ Brian Fruechtenicht, Naturalist, Rockford Park District

12:45 P.M. ~ Capturing Moment in Nature ~ Stan Bousson, Nature Photographer, Moline, Illinois

1:45 P.M. ~ Falconer Program Between Programs ~ Nature Music & Songs Inspired by Wilderness ~ Chuck Jacobsen, Naturalist, Clinton CCB

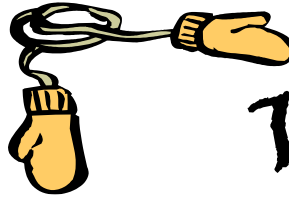


6th ~ Sharks & Rays of Monterey Bay ~ 1:30 P.M. ~ Hurstville Interpretive Center, Maquoketa ~ Mark Roberts participated in a study of sharks and rays with Earthwatch this past July. Mark will talk about the study and show pictures of his wild adventure. You won't want to miss hearing about how our actions can affect the inhabitants of Monterey Bay. This event will be repeated February 21st at the Wapsi River Center.

10th ~ Ice Fishing Clinic ~ 6:30 - 7:30 P.M. ~ West Lake Park Campground Office (Gate #5) ~ Come learn the basics of ice fishing. Join Gary Jantz from Gander Mountain to learn about the latest in gear, tackle and techniques. This special event is limited to 25 participants, so call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 to pre-register.

12th (Tentative) ~ Trout Release ~ 10:30 A.M. ~ Lake of the Hills ~ West Lake Park (Gate #1) ~ Join personnel from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Quad Cities In-Fisherman, Gander Mountain and the Scott County Conservation Board to release rainbow trout at Lake of the Hills, West Lake Park.

12th & 13th ~ Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days ~ The Quad Cities Conservation Alliance, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Army Corps of Engineers are sponsoring this huge event. There will be a wildlife art show, information booths and of course, viewing of our national bird, the American bald



Winter

eagle. The event is held at the QCCA Expo Center at 2621 4th Avenue, Rock Island, from 10:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, January 12, and 10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. on Sunday, January 13. Come see us at the Wapsi River Center display.

18th ~ Kindernature ~ Hibernation! ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ DeWitt Community Center ~ This nature program, which builds on awareness of the environment, focuses on our youngest county residents, 3 to 5 year-olds. This Kindernature class will be on hibernation. The class will have hands-on activities and will create a fun learning experience. It will take place at the DeWitt Community Center, located at 512 10th St. in DeWitt, IA, right across from the library. Please register at the Clinton County Conservation Boear office by calling (563)-847-7202; there will be a \$2 charge for supplies. Deadline for registering is January 16th. Any further questions please call Jessica Steines at the conservation office.

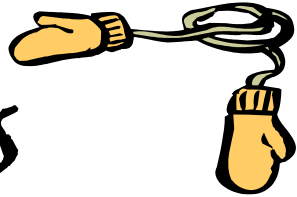
19th ~ Cross-country Ski Clinic ~ Noon to 3:00 P.M. ~ Eagle Point Park ~ Come out and enjoy a wintry day with the family! An informational cross-country ski clinic will begin at Noon at the main lodge. Skis and snowshoes will be available for use from 1:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M. Eagle Point Park is located off Highway 67 and North 3rd Street at the north end of Clinton. Contact the Clinton County Conservation office to reserve a set of skis, (563) 847-7202. If there is no snow, this event will be cancelled.

26th ~ Snowshoe Tracking ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Mike Granger, Wapsi River Center Naturalist, as he takes participants on a stroll through the Wapsi woods. While making tracks of their own, via snowshoes, participants will have the opportunity to search for animal tracks and other signs of animal activity in this winter wonderland. **BYOM ~ Bring your own mug.**

26th ~ Recycled Card Crafts ~ 2:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Did you know that during the holiday season we generate 5 million tons of trash? Recycling is the key! By attending this fun afternoon program, participants will learn to make gift boxes, decorative tags, ornaments and much more from recycled holiday cards. Scissors, glue, rulers and pencils will be provided; participants need only to bring cards. Pre-registration is required by calling (563) 328-3286. **BYOM ~ Bring your own mug.**

26th ~ Educators Certification GPS Workshop ~ 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ This workshop, conducted by I.S.U. Extension personnel, will teach you the basics in orientation, from the use of a compass to the latest in GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) technology. Participants will learn to navigate through a standard GPS unit, set and find way-points, and upon completion, be certified to check out the

Events



county extension's GPS kit so that they may instruct others in the use of this ever-popular technology. There is a \$15 fee for the workshop. Call (563) 847-7202 to reserve your spot.

27th ~ Snowmobile Radar Run ~ 10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ The Scott County Sno-Seekers snowmobile club will once again hold this annual event on the backwater ice at Rock Creek Marina, ice permitting. Anyone is welcome to race their snowmobile against a radar gun. Donation suggested per run, with all proceeds going to the Spina Bifida Foundation of Iowa. The club also holds a wheelie contest. Registration will begin at 11:00 A.M. Hot food, drinks and snacks will be available for purchase on-site. Spectators are welcome. Watch local media for details or call Joel Purcell at (563) 529-2586 for more information.

February

Cross-country Skiing and Snowshoeing ~ As weather conditions allow, check the local media for cross-country skiing and snowshoe outings.

2nd ~ Counterattack; Invasive Species Removal ~ 9:00 - 11:00 A.M. ~ Sherman Park ~ We are going after them! The invaders and usurpers of our native plant kingdom. Bring yourself and any manual trimmers (we will supply some of these), loppers, and/or saws and join others in beating back woody invasive species at Sherman Park. Armed or unarmed, with your help we can lick them back a good one and provide space for the natural return of native species. We'll take regular breaks and enjoy home-baked goods with coffee, cider and hot chocolate. **BYOM ~ Bring your own mug, refreshments will be served.**

2nd ~ Skate Sherman's Woods ~ 1:00 P.M. - Dark ~ Sherman Park ~ Glide over a frozen pond protected from the biting wind by the surrounding forest of Sherman Park. We will clear the snow from the ice, provide a warming fire and roasting forks should you bring along weenies or marshmallows. If you don't have skates and we have snow, you may check out a pair of snowshoes or cross-country skis and explore the park's many trails. Equipment will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Sherman Park is located 5 miles south of Calamus, Iowa, at the corner of 270th Street and 160th Avenue. If there is no snow or ice, there will be a nature hike.

7th ~ Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center, Taking Flight ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ The Clinton County Conservation Foundation is raising funds for a new attraction for Clinton County. The two-million dollar project will serve as a tourism center, aquarium, nature theater, camp store and meeting space at Rock Creek. Learn more at this brief informative program following the 5:30 P.M. Nature So-

ciety Meeting.

9th ~ Winter Fun Day ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come to the Wapsi River Center for a fun-filled day of winter activities. This is an event the whole family can enjoy, so plan to come out and discover winter at its best. A limited number of skis and snowshoes are available, so please call to reserve equipment (563) 328-3286. **BYOM ~ Bring your own mug.**

9:00 A.M. ~ Cross-country Ski Clinic ~ Come learn the basics of cross-country skiing and tour the Wapsi Center trails. Participants may bring their own equipment.

10:00 A.M. ~ Budding Interests: Nature for the Very Young ~ Join Americorps Naturalist Amber Barr as she debuts this new program. The first in the series will be "I Love Snow!" For pre-schoolers and their parents. Pre-registration required.

11:00 A.M. ~ Family Snowman Contest ~ Work up your appetite for lunch by letting your creativity loose and building the most unique snowman. Bring your own snowman apparel and accessories.

11:00 A.M. ~ Winter Scavenger Hunt ~ Participate in a wintery trek through the wilderness in search of natural treasures and signs of life.

12:00 P.M. ~ Chili and Soup Lunch (First come, first served)

1:00 P.M. ~ Snowshoe Nature Hike ~ Join Michael Granger, Wapsi River Center Naturalist, on this excursion into the Wapsi River Center's woodlands. We will be traveling the way of the Native Americans and early pioneers, looking for signs of life in the still, winter woods.

16th ~ Maple-Syruping Demonstration ~ 11:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Tom Greene as he discusses the history and procedure of tapping trees for syrup. Handouts and where to find tapping equipment will be provided to participants. Please call (563) 328-3286, if you are interested in attending.

16th ~ Birdhouse Workshop ~ 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ You can build your own bluebird, wren, bat, robin, kestrel or woodduck nest box from a kit. You will also learn about placement and maintenance of the boxes. The kits will be available for a small donation to cover materials. Fees are \$5 for a wren, robin or bluebird, \$7 for a bat house and \$20 for woodduck and kestrel boxes. You must call (563) 847-7202 before March 15 to order your kits. **BYOM ~ Bring your own mug.**

16th ~ Counterattack; Invasive Species Removal ~ 9:00 - 11:00 A.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ We are going after them! The invaders and usurpers of our native plant kingdom. Bring yourself and any manual trimmers (we will supply some of these), loppers, and/or saws and join others in beating back woody invasive species at your local nature center. Armed or unarmed, with your help we can lick them back a good one and provide space for the natural return of native species. We'll take regular breaks and enjoy home-baked goods with coffee, cider and hot chocolate. **BYOM ~ Bring your own mug, refreshments will be served.**

16th ~ Winter Tree I.D. ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come to the Wapsi River Center to be a winter tree detective. Learn how to identify trees by looking at the bark, buds, and needles. Please call to register (563) 328-3286.

16th & 17th ~ Winter Camp for Adults ~ 1:00 P.M. (Sat.) - 11:00 A.M. (Sun.) ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Camp is not just for kids anymore. Create your own camp memories and make some new friends that love the outdoors as much as you do! Some of the featured activities will include: maple-syruping, night hike with owl calling, music around the fireplace, eagle watching, ice skating, cross country skiing, GPS training, and an invasive species counterattack. Activities will vary depending on weather. Cost is \$20 per person, which includes lodging in the Owl's Nest Dormitory and meals. Pre-registration is required; call (563) 847-7202.

21st ~ Sharks & Rays of Monterey Bay ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Bettendorf Library ~ Mark Roberts participated in a study of sharks and rays with Earthwatch this past July. Mark will talk about the study and show pictures of his wild adventure. You won't want to miss hearing about how our actions can affect the inhabitants of Monterey Bay.

23rd ~ Winter Open House ~ 3:00-7:00 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. ~ *Eden Valley Nature Center Open* ~ Stop by to see our many displays. We will have hot cocoa and cookies for park goers to warm up with at the nature center. If we have snow, we will have some of our cross country skis and snowshoes available for loan within the park. 5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. ~ *Owling & Winter Tracking Hike* ~ Take a naturalist-led hike into the back valley looking for animal tracks and signs, predator calling and owling. Flashlights recommended.

26th ~ Folk Concert ~ 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi Center ~ Relax and enjoy an evening of acoustical guitar and vocal offerings of the music of Paul Simon, Peter Meyer, John Denver, John Prine and several others as rendered by local talents. You may participate by using one of our simple percussion instruments from our collection, bringing your own, singing along, slapping your knee, tapping your foot or just being a quiet listener. **BYOM ~ Bring your own mug, refreshments will be served.**

March

1st ~ Good Old Fashioned Toys ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ At this workshop, we will experience some of the various toys, and then construct an old-fashioned toy of your very own to take home.

8th ~ Recycled Stitches ~ 2:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come join naturalist Lisa Gerwulf as she shows you how to create a versatile "shopping" bag with recycled shopping bags. Participants will spend an afternoon in the relaxing atmosphere of Redtail Lodge creating plastic "yarn" out of recycled shopping/grocery bags. Then you'll see how to create a lightweight, durable bag using simple knitting and crocheting techniques. You don't have to be a knitting or crocheting expert to enjoy this program. Each participant needs to bring the following

items: 5 plastic shopping/grocery bags and a pair of sharp scissors. If you have access to a quilting tool called a rotary cutter and mat, consider bringing these. Pre-registration is required, by calling (563) 328-3286 to reserve your spot.

13th ~ Birdhouse Workshop ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ You can build your own bluebird, wren, bat, robin, kestrel or woodduck nest box from a kit to provide for wildlife in your world. You will also learn about placement and maintenance of the boxes. The kits will be available for a small donation to cover materials. Fees are \$5 for a wren, robin or bluebird, \$7 for a bat house and \$20 for woodduck and kestrel boxes. You must call (563) 847-7202 before March 6 to order your kits. **BYOM ~ Bring your own mug.**

15th ~ The Wild Blue Yonder ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ "Off We Go!" Soar with the eagles by building and flying your very own kite. Using sticks, string, paper, and glue, we will create traditional diamond bow kites. After construction, participants will launch their creations on a test flight. We will also demonstrate the building and launching of model rockets. Interested participants are asked to pre-register by April 5, (563) 847-7202. Materials cost is \$2 per kite.

15th ~ Spring Pheasant Festival ~ 5:00 PM ~ 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 pork dinner. Cost is \$10; people need not be members to attend. Call Mark at (563) 659-2422 for tickets.

20th ~ Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center, Taking Flight ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The Clinton County Conservation Foundation is raising funds for a new attraction for Clinton County. The 2 million dollar project will serve as a tourism center, aquarium, nature theater, camp store and meeting space at Rock Creek. Learn more at this brief informative program preceding the Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting.

22nd ~ Budding Interests: Nature for the Very Young ~ 10:30 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Amber Barr, AmeriCorps Naturalist, in the second session of her new program series intended for pre-schoolers and their parents. Theme: "Trees are Nice." Pre-registration required, (563) 328-3286.

29th ~ Whitetails Unlimited Banquet ~ 5:30 PM ~ 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!

April

3rd ~ Folk Concert ~ 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Relax and enjoy another evening of acoustical guitar and vocal offerings of the music of Paul Simon, Peter Meyer, John Denver, John Prine and several others as rendered by local talents. **BYOM ~ Bring your own mug, refreshments will be served.**

The Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. Seeks New Members

The purpose of the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc., is to support the ongoing activities of the Wapsi River Center. We do this by volunteering to help with school groups, interpretive activities throughout the year, donating maintenance skills and in hosting the Eagle View Eco Center on weekends. We operate a gift shop housed at the Eco Center which offers a wide variety of items ranging from books and other educational materials to home decorating items.

As a tax-exempt organization, we can raise funds which the Wapsi River Center uses for special projects and environmental education material purchases. The Friends Group also pitches in to help with special events like the Spring and Fall Volunteer Workdays, Ecology Day, Bald Eagle Days and various workshops.

The Friends are a small but enthusiastic group of citizens just like you. Will you join us? You are invited to attend our monthly meeting usually on the third Thursday at 7:00 P.M. The Eagle View Eco Center is the site for meetings during the months of March thru November, and an "in-town" location is designated for meetings December thru February. Drop-ins are welcome! Call the Wapsi River Center for more information, (563) 328-3286. You may join by sending the form below to: Carol Rogers, Treasurer ~ 1103 E. Garfield ~ Davenport, IA 52803.

YES! I want to join the Friends' Group.

Enclosed is my contribution * to the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc.

Name _____	_____ \$ 5.00 newsletter
Address _____	_____ \$15.00 contributing member
City _____ State ____ Zip _____	_____ \$25.00 supporting member
Email _____	

* Contributions to the Friends are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Photo Contest Calendar Now Available

"A place for all seasons" 2008 Calendar ~ Sponsored by the Friends of the Wapsi

Congratulations to the winners of the photo contest!

David Summers

Scott Clement

Deb Rowley

Delores Rohlf*

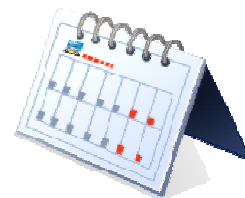
Dena Lyn Pickering

Neil Kuhlman

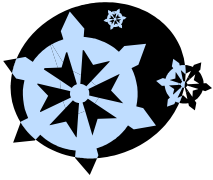
Patricia Meyerhoff

Each of the winners will receive one complementary calendar.

*Cover photo winner also receives a free two-night stay at the rustic Kestrel Cabin located at the Wapsi River Center.

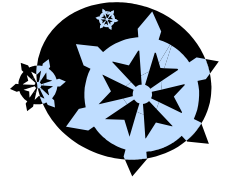


Calendars available for sale at the Wapsi River Center. All proceeds benefit the Friends of the Wapsi Center. Start taking photos for the 2009 calendar now! Details coming soon.



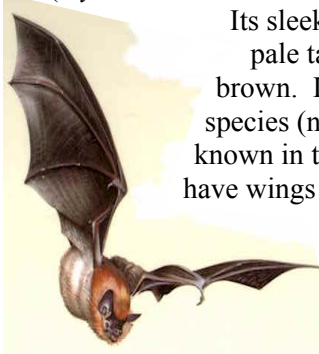
Wildlife Profile ~ Little Brown Bat

by Cassie Druhl, Americorps Naturalist



Winter is upon us, and a number of animals are going into hibernation. We, ourselves, are staying indoors and keeping warm from the intense cold. However, even without our shelters, we would not be able to survive long without our heating systems. But, did you know that one amazing Iowa mammal is able to adapt to the cold weather by adjusting its entire physiology? The Little Brown Bat, or less commonly known as *Myotis lucifugus*, is a familiar animal in Iowa that is able to inhabit our state all year long because of this phenomenon.

The ¼ ounce, 2 inch long Little Brown Bat is one of the most abundant bats in the United States, with populations covering about 1/3 of the country. Compared to many other bat species, this bat has relatively small ears (*Myotis* is Latin for “mouse-eared”) and larger feet.



Its sleek, glossy fur color ranges from pale tan to reddish brown to dark brown. Like all of the other 1000 bat species (nature’s only flying mammals) known in the world, Little Brown Bats have wings that span many times longer than their body length. Their wings are actually comparable to a human’s hand, with five digits on each side. These “fingers” are attached by a

thin wing membrane that is able to catch the wind, but is also lightweight. The membrane extends all the way down to the bats’ ankles, producing a parachute-like covering ideal for flight. Their legs bend backwards, like those of a bird, in order to hang upside-down from a variety of perches, as well as to help the bats feed themselves.

Little Brown Bats usually dwell in caves, but it is also not unusual to see them make use of many man-made structures, such as barns, peaks of house attics, mines, and the occasional nature center facilities (including ours!). It’s also not uncommon to hear their chirp-like sounds echoing throughout their location. Although their hibernation location may vary, bat colonies are almost always found near a water source, such as a lake, river, or stream. Little Brown Bats are usually in large groups, huddled together in order to keep warm and to keep a tight grip on their perches.

During the warmer seasons, the Little Brown Bats will leave their shelter and hunt for food, starting at dusk and going into the wee hours of the night. Like all other bats,

the Little Brown Bat has a unique way of hunting with the use of echolocation (emitting sound waves that are undetectable to the human ear). These sound waves bounce off of the targeted prey and give the bat its exact location. The Little Brown Bat can eat a variety of insects and eat large amounts at one time. In one hour, a single Little Brown Bat can eat up to 65 moths, 500 gnats, or 600 mosquitoes! It is able to catch insects with its wings, which have claws at the end of each digit, and slide its food into its mouth, all while trying to maintain flight.

Bats eat a lot of food during the warmer months because they must consume enough to store fat, which they will be able to use as fuel during their winter hibernation. During this period, the Little Brown Bat’s heart rate can drop significantly, from 400 beats per minute to only 25 beats per minute and leaving their body temperature only a few degrees above freezing. This slows down its metabolism, which also slows down the process of burning the fat that it has stored up from months of overeating. This process makes it possible for the bat to live for months without food or water. However, this fat storage contains just enough fat to survive the winter, so any overexertion during the winter months could possibly threaten the bat’s life.

The Little Brown Bat is a thriving species in the United States and throughout North America, but its habitats are gradually disappearing, causing drops in population compared to the endangered Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*). Many of this is caused by human activities, such as deforestation, disturbance of hibernating and maternity colonies, use of pesticides (covering food sources with chemicals), and other chemical toxin use. Once on the endangered species list, the animal is at great risk of becoming extinct. The greatest impact is made by disturbance of hibernation and maternity colonies. When bats are disturbed during this particular time of year, they try to fly away, using up precious fat they need to survive the rest of the winter (up to 2-3 weeks of energy). In this case, many bats will end up starving to death. Also, if this occurs, many baby bats (pups)



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can be dropped to their deaths as their panicked mother tries to escape. This is especially threatening to the population, as a mother only produces 1 pup each year. However, because of this low birth rate, the Little Brown Bat can live to be up to 33 years old! Along with human impact, the Little Brown Bat is prey to animals like minks, raccoons, snakes, birds, frogs, and even housecats.

The Little Brown Bat may be a reclusive animal that may unnerve some of us, but it is a very interesting animal with some unique and amazing characteristics. Remember, if you see a bat colony in your area, don't disturb their winter hibernation. If you have a concern about bats in your home or another structure, call the Wapsi Center for advice on ways to safely remove them.



"Budding Interests" Nature for the Very Young

After attending a related session at my first Iowa Association of Naturalists conference this fall, I became excited about the idea of nature education programs for very young children. Gaining an appreciation for Mother Nature and all she has to offer can never start too early in life. Providing children with an awareness of nature's gifts is an integral part in preserving our environment for the future.

I am thrilled to announce that I am starting a program series entitled "Budding Interests" Nature for the Very Young. Each session will have a different theme with activities ranging from games, songs, crafts, snacks, and stories. "Budding Interests" is geared toward children ages three and four with encouraged involvement from parents/guardians. Space is limited, so be sure to reserve your spot in advance.

The first session, "I Love Snow," will take place as part of the Wapsi River EE Center's annual Winter Fun Day in the Eagle View Eco Center's Assembly Room at 10 a.m. Please refer to the calendar of events for more session information.

~ Amber Barr, Americorps Naturalist

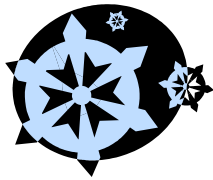


Winter Fun Day 2008

Come to the Wapsi River Center for a fun-filled day of winter activities. This is an event the whole family can enjoy, so plan to come out and discover winter at its best. Activities include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, a winter scavenger hunt, family snowman building contest, and a brand new nature program for pre-schoolers. A limited number of skis and snowshoes are available, so please call to reserve equipment (563) 328-3286.

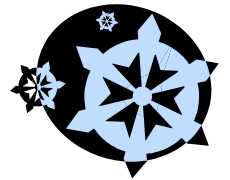
The fun begins at 9:00 A.M. and will run until 2:00 P.M. BYOM ~ Bring your own mug and enjoy some hot cocoa!

February 9th



Plant Profile ~ Red-osier Dogwood

by Amber Barr, Americorps Naturalist



The dogwood (*Cornus*) is one of the most diversified



plants consisting of about 40 species overall with 15 species specific to North America. Their size range varies widely; they are found in three sections of the Reader's Digest North American

Wildlife guide: trees, shrubs, and wildflowers.

Dogwoods have opposite leaves except for, fittingly, the Alternate-leaf dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*). The Pacific Dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*) and Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*) are two of the largest North American species, both producing four-part flowers in the spring.

The Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) is a shrub whose deep burgundy branches add lovely color to a winter landscape. It is found in Iowa, natively speaking, in the northern part of the state. It grows 7-10 feet tall and spreads horizontally 10-15 feet per plant. The leaves are smooth with a dark green color on top and a whitish color underneath. They turn purple in the fall. The Red-osier flowers in late May through June, producing dull white cymes, 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 inches in diameter.



The Red-osier Dogwood grows in soil that is saturated for at least part of the growing season and may be completely dry by the end of the summer. It is a thicket forming plant that is useful in preventing erosion on stream banks. Red-osier is often used in landscaping as an ornamental plant and to attract birds. Wildlife enjoys browsing the twigs, foliage, and fruits.

Native Americans have many uses for the Red-osier Dogwood. They smoke the inner bark in tobacco mixtures used in the sacred pipe ceremony. The inner bark was also used for tanning animal hides. The branches

and stems were used for making things such as dream catchers, arrows, stakes, and baskets.

Peeled twigs were used as toothbrushes, for their whitening effect on teeth.

Many tribes of Native Americans also used the bark of the Red-osier in remedies for such things including an anti-diarrheal, weak kidneys, children who wet the bed, headaches, sore throats, and a wash for ulcers.

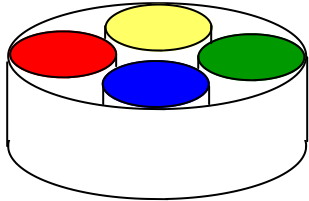


The Red-osier Dogwood produces white berries that are known to be tart and bitter, however many tribes ate them. They gathered the fruit from August to October. The berries were eaten raw, by themselves, or more commonly were mixed with other fruits. Sometimes the berries were mashed and dried in cakes.

During this winter season, here at the Wapsi River Center, we have been taking advantage of the vividly colorful branches of the Red-osier Dogwood to make twiggy deer. These decorations are fun to make using cutting tools, a drill, and a hot glue gun. By using the Red-osier Dogwood and some imagination, you too can add some natural décor to your home.



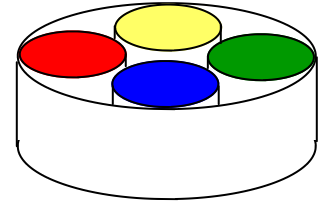
Above: Twiggy Deer made by Mike Granger, Wapsi Center Naturalist.



Kids' Corner

Wacky Watercolors

~ from DIY's Kid Concoctions T.V.



A trip to the recycle bin, a little kitchen science and you can create a rainbow of color on a cold, winter's day. First, raid the recycle bin for a tuna fish can and 10 bottle caps (all the same size). Wash and dry the bottle caps and ask an adult to check the rim of the can to make sure there are no sharp edges. Next, recruit the help of an adult or older sibling to help with the kitchen science part.

The materials you will need are: 3 T. baking soda ~ 3 T. cornstarch ~ 1½ t. clear corn syrup ~ 3 T. white vinegar

Mix these four ingredients together in a small bowl or 2-cup measuring cup. A chemical reaction will take place as soon as you add the vinegar, so don't be surprised! This mini "explosion" won't get you in trouble for blowing up the kitchen ☺.

Next, divide the mixture into the bottle caps (you'll have a little leftover that can be poured down the drain with plenty of water). Add 4 drops of food coloring to each cap. Once you create the standard red, yellow, green and blue; try to create orange (red + yellow), purple (red + blue), brown (green + blue) and other color combinations like yellow-green. Some food coloring boxes have "recipes" for other colors printed on the back.

Now, the fun begins! You can start painting right away and use these wacky watercolors as is, or you can let them dry into hard cakes. Just remember that you'll have to wet your paintbrush before painting. If you let the paint dry, you can store them in the tuna can. A butter dish lid and rubber band are all that's needed to keep your homemade watercolors securely in place. It has been our experience that the paints will take several days to dry.

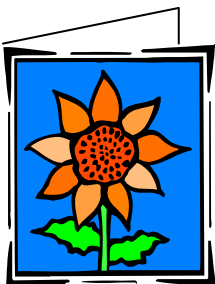
These homemade paints make great party favors; as well as a get-well/brighten-someone's-day present. Enjoy the crafting fun and the opportunity to bring a little color into an otherwise colorless winter day.

In Appreciation of Your
Support of the Wapsi
River Center

Rose Zemanek
Janet Cox
Lucia Dryanski
Connie Huber
Dave Huber
Erma Wiszmann
Maya Murcia

**THANK
YOU VERY
MUCH!**

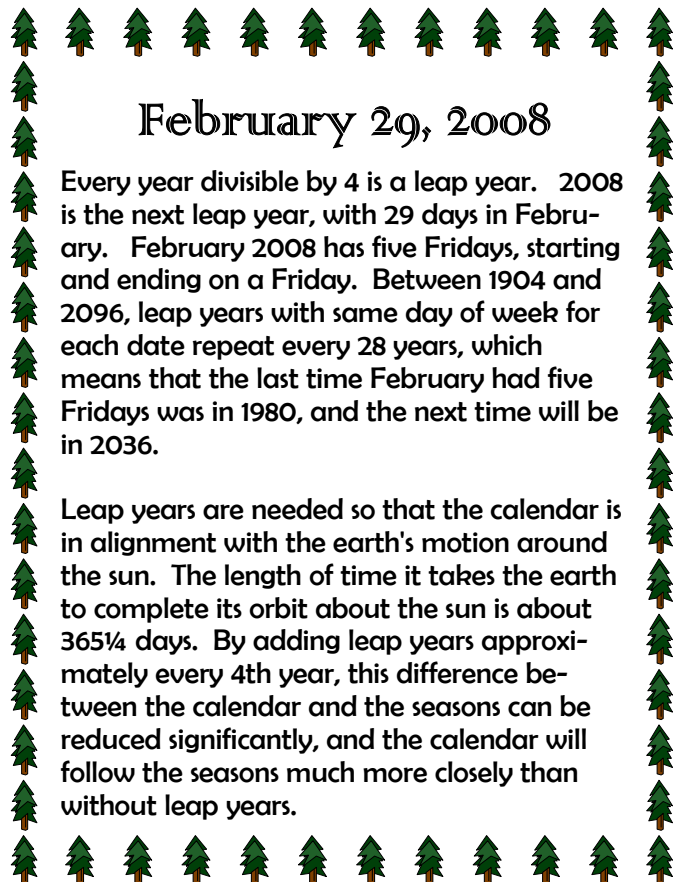
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Jeanne Bryant
Carol Rogers
K.J. Rebarcak
**Natural Area
Guardians**
Mary Rourke



February 29, 2008

Every year divisible by 4 is a leap year. 2008 is the next leap year, with 29 days in February. February 2008 has five Fridays, starting and ending on a Friday. Between 1904 and 2096, leap years with same day of week for each date repeat every 28 years, which means that the last time February had five Fridays was in 1980, and the next time will be in 2036.

Leap years are needed so that the calendar is in alignment with the earth's motion around the sun. The length of time it takes the earth to complete its orbit about the sun is about 365¼ days. By adding leap years approximately every 4th year, this difference between the calendar and the seasons can be reduced significantly, and the calendar will follow the seasons much more closely than without leap years.

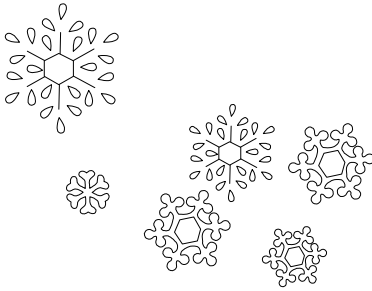


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For All Seasons

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." and do not have internet access, please send a post card to the Wapsi River E. E. Center at the address above.

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