

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Spring 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

Spring is Green!

Calling all stewards...remember that you may now visit our website and sign up to get "The W.R.E.N." electronically in an effort to *protect, conserve and preserve our vital resources*. Please contact us if you require a mailed version.

Eagle View Eco Center Hours Change

The Eco Center and its interpretive displays will be open (**free of charge**) Saturdays from 12:30 - 4:30 P.M. year-round. If you would like to host or become a Friend of the Wapsi Center, please call (563) 328-3286.

Programs in the Park

Join Director Dave Murcia for public programs at West Lake Park, Scott County Park and Buffalo Shores Recreation Area this season. A **Birds of Prey** program is scheduled on May 23 at West Lake Park, on June 27 at Scott County Park and on July 18 at Buffalo Shores Recreation Area. All programs will begin at 7:00 P.M. and include **live raptors**. You need not be a registered camper to attend these free programs.

Spring Volunteer Stewardship Workday

The Wapsi Center will host a spring workday in support of **Keep Scott County Beautiful** on Saturday, April 26, from 9:00 A.M. to Noon. Following the workday, there will be a kite program from 1:00 - 3:00 P.M. To volunteer or learn more about the Friends group, please call the Wapsi Center at (563) 328-3286.



International Migratory Bird Day

Join Director Dave Murcia on Saturday, May 10, from 10:00 A.M. - Noon in celebrating annual migrants and the natural phenomenon of migration. This year's theme is, "*Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats and People*" and will include a **live Birds of Prey program**, family-oriented activities, and great birding opportunities as you hike the trails. The Wapsi River Center is recognized as a



premium wildlife viewing area and will offer many a chance to get wild! Previous Director Bob Bryant will lead a **Night Shift program** at 7:30 P.M. to celebrate our nighttime visitors, so bring a flashlight and pack a picnic for a day at the Wapsi! Visit the IMBD website for more information at: <http://www.birdday.org>.

National Archery in the Schools Program



This past year, the Scott County Conservation Board at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center was awarded a NASP equipment cost-share grant by the **Iowa Archery in the Schools Foundation**. The grant provides for a full range kit including: 11 Genesis bows, five-80cm targets and stands, 5 dozen arrows, 1 safety backstop net and an equipment repair kit to the Wapsi River Center. The program is a joint venture between the **State Department of Education** and **Department of Wildlife (IA DNR)** to promote and conduct student education and participation in the lifelong sport of archery.

The Wapsi River Center boasts 4 certified **Basic Archery Instructors** to support student education while 2 of the members are certified as **Basic Archery Instructor Trainers** to train educators at all levels. Training opportunities may include teachers, Scout leaders, naturalists, school archery clubs, YMCA programs, or church groups. Please call the Center with questions or to schedule training. Keep your eyes open for upcoming trainings sponsored by the Wapsi River Center. For more information on NASP in Iowa, please visit: <http://www.iowadnr.com/law/shootingsports/ais.html>



Wild on the Wapsi

Are you looking for a unique location for your next meeting, training, office or civic gathering? Did you know we have a **Teams Course** for your next team-building activities? Have you considered the remote and wild seclusion of the Wapsi 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, professional and citizen workshops** are being planned for the year including a *Women in the Outdoors* program sponsored by the Wild Turkey Federation on April 5,

a citizen science *NatureMapping Level 1 Workshop* on May 17 (see **calendar of events** for details), *EDIWILD 2008* on June 23-26 and an *IOWATER Level 1 Workshop* on July 30 & 31.

“Re-discovering Our Biodiversity”

EDIWILD (Educators in the Wild) is a 4-day teachers’ workshop to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum. The workshop will use an interdisciplinary approach of teaching and will emphasize the biodiversity of local ecosystems.



This year’s activities and topics include: Wapsipinicon River ecological float, endangered flora and fauna, interpretive hikes of rare oak woodlands/savanna remnants and sand prairie, Iowa State University extension GPS certification training, historical and ecological aspects of river life and invasive insects.

Cost for the workshop is \$75.00. If you are interested and would like to register, contact the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286. A brochure will be send to you which includes a registration form, daily activities and locations; plus other details.

IOWATER Level I Workshop

Join Wapsi River Center staff and IA DNR staff from 6:00 - 10:00 P.M. (each evening) at the Wapsi River Center to be trained in topics such as starting a monitoring plan, the "why-tos" and "how-tos" of water monitoring, what to do with the data, networking with others concerned about water quality and some muddy fun! By monitoring the water resources in our backyards, we can ensure the protection, longevity and productivity of high-quality water resources, as well as evaluate, assess and improve those of lower quality. By becoming an **IOWATER** volunteer, you are not only provided with monitoring equipment, but you are also given the freedom to monitor wherever and whenever you choose.

For **registration information**, contact Dave Murcia at (563) 328-3286, at jmurcia@scottcountyiowa.com or visit the IOWATER website at: <http://www.iowater.net/Workshops/LevelIWorkshops.htm>. Upon completion of the workshop, you will be a certified Level I IOWATER Citizen

Monitor. Workshop cost is \$25.00 per participant, which includes all program fees and testing equipment material.

***Group registration** fee is \$35.00 for up to three people; ten dollars for each additional person (please send everyone’s name and contact information with the registration form). Each group receives only one set of equipment to share. Note if you are a state employee you must register as an individual if you are attending for work.

Winter Fun Day

This year’s Winter Fun Day on Saturday, February 9, was a great success and had good participation all day long. Participants enjoyed a cross-country ski clinic, a program for the very young, a family snowman contest, a winter scavenger hunt and a snowshoe hike. The “Radish” magazine was also

present and offered information on geocaching while participants wandered the Center’s exhibits and voted for “Best Chili” in the Chili Challenge Cook-off held by Center staff to recognize the **Friends of the Wapsi Center**. We would like to thank the Friends group once again for the hearty and warm food and congratulate **Connie Huber** for her “Championship” chili.

Quad City Bald Eagle Days

The QCCA Expo Center held its annual Bald Eagle Days event on January 12 & 13 with great attendance. The attendance numbered 13,481 for the weekend and a **record 1,919** on Friday’s school program day! This year’s theme was “Everything Underground”. Visitors to our “hands-on” booth had a chance to experience what happens underground including: learning about bats, a fox snake, how rock is formed, how fossils are created, a “dig pit” and the **extremely** popular “cave” that kids actually crawled through. **Thank you** to all our volunteers who assisted at the booth!



School and Public Programs

From September-February of this school year, 2,569 students, teachers and parents participated in 44 field trip days at the Wapsi Center. A total of 62 presentations were attended by 1,099 participants.

The Wapsi Center takes an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education. The Center’s staff can help plan your field trip to meet educator needs. Visit our website and view/download our **Field Trip Planner**. There are days open in April, but May is filling up fast. If you are a teacher who wants to schedule a field trip or take advantage of our dormitory and schedule an overnight field trip, give us a call at (563) 328-3286.

Invasive Species Cleared

This year, Scott County Park staff cleared more **autumn olive** (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) and brush along the south trails, boundaries and a few spots in the prairie. A new trail was also cleared in anticipation of completing a trail around the “lake” at the southern end of the preserve. Management of the area will be needed and may include mowing, hand cutting, chemical treatments and fire – so volunteers be ready!

A Place for All Seasons ~ Photo Contest

To celebrate the beauty of our local wild places, the Wapsi River Center will be holding its second annual photo contest. The selected photos will once again be published in a calendar for next year (2009). Three photos will be selected by volunteer judges to represent each season of the calendar year.

All calendar proceeds benefit the **Friends of the Wapsi Center**. *The Friends* are a citizens’ support group who provide assistance to the Wapsi River E. E. Center in the form of volunteers for programs, technical assistance, financial support and guidance in fulfilling the Center’s goals.

To receive a flyer of contest rules & submission information, contact the Wapsi Center at (563) 328-3286.

Living Green ~ Green Building, Part I by Cassie Druhl, AmeriCorps Naturalist

Green building is a trend that is becoming increasingly popular in North America and Europe. As we are exposed to global issues such as pollution and global warming, more and more people are realizing the practicality and benefits of “going green.” During the last few years, green building or “sustainable design” has become a part of mainstream practice for new and existing buildings.

So, what exactly is involved in green building? When most of us think of green building, we probably think more of big companies and businesses reducing their carbon emissions and waste, but green building is much broader than just prevention. Rather, it is also about re-using and renewing valuable resources. It’s true that large businesses need to do their part in protecting the environment, but smaller companies and even individual homes can also play a big role in green building.

According to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), a national green building rating system used in the design, construction, and operation of high-performance green buildings, a green building recognizes performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. These steps can be taken in many different ways using many different approaches. And, as you would have guessed, the cost of taking these steps varies as well. In part one of this two-part series of Green building, you will learn about the many different ways green building can make large-scale differences.

When a larger budget is available in creating a green building, the possibilities are endless. The Vermeer Science Center located on Central College’s campus in Pella, Iowa, cost around \$3 million to build, but its green features made it the first LEED-certified building in the state. Some of the features included double-passed air and reheat recovery systems, reflective roofing materials, day lighting, furniture and carpet made from recycled materials, and a solar-powered outdoor fountain. This building is also home to study rooms and offices decorated with environmentally-themed artwork, a greenhouse and a museum display area. Central College also designed Iowa’s first “eco-dorm,” which is also a LEED-certified building made of recycled building materials, chairs, desks, and carpet made of recycled materials, “double-flush” toilets, an energy-saving washer and dryer, motion-sensed lighting that shuts off when no one is in the room, and water-efficient sinks and showers. The residents of



the dorm are required to participate in the campus recycling program and used green cleaning products in exchange for living in the newest residential area on campus. I was able to live in this dorm for a year, and it is truly what opened my eyes to living a greener lifestyle. Other LEED-certified buildings in Iowa include the Iowa Laboratories Facility in Ankeny, the Davenport Federal Courthouse, the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque, plus several more.

The features in these LEED-certified buildings can range from middle-of-the-road technology like Central College’s buildings, or they can even be more on the high-tech side, which involves not only constructing the entire building from ceiling to floor with green materials, but also by using some very innovative techniques that take green to the next level. Some buildings are constructed from pressure-treated wood, which is a chemical process done by professionals, protecting the wood from damage caused by insects, moisture and decay fungi. Also in constructing the walls, natural materials can be used in the insulation to reduce chemicals in the air, as opposed to fiberglass insulation that leads to asbestos poisoning. Finally, the walls (indoors or outdoors) can be painted using paints, finishes and adhesives with low or no VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds), which are hazardous air particles to humans and other organisms. The floors can be laid with carpet made from recycled or natural materials, recycled tile, or natural linoleum. This reduces emitting harmful chemicals into the air that are normally applied to many carpets and floor coverings. In bathrooms, composting toilets that use foam instead of water to flush drastically reduce water waste from a facility, as well as provide compost for outdoor landscaping.

Moving out of the building, green building can also mean improving the surrounding areas of the facility. Using pervious materials in place of cement or asphalt on sidewalks and parking lots permit water to enter the ground because of their porous nature. Examples of these materials are gravel, crushed stone, or open paving blocks. This reduces runoff from harmful materials like automotive oil.

Green building is definitely a phenomenon that isn’t going anywhere in a hurry. In fact, we will hopefully see more and more of it as time progresses.

As you can see, there are many different options when deciding to build green. Although you have only seen what large-scale companies and businesses have done, in our next issue of the W.R.E.N., you will be able to explore ways in which you can make a difference in your very own home. Stay tuned!



Plant Profile ~ Sugar Maple

by Michael Granger, Naturalist

Spring is a time of renewal and rebirth. During the winter months, Iowa's deciduous trees had entered into a time of rest from the growing season. As the days grow longer and temperatures begin to rise, the trees have begun to awaken. A tree known as the sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) is one of the first to spring to life. Though appearing withered and lifeless, life-renewing sap begins to flow upwards through dormant tissues. It is this time of year when the sugar maple is sought after to produce one of nature's sweetest treats.



During the winter, the sugar maple is easy to identify. First of all, all maples have opposite branching and buds (see picture). The tree has smooth, light-grey branches and its twigs will be a shiny, reddish-brown color. Each twig will contain several light-colored lenticels (small pores). A sugar maple will develop new leaves in about 3-4 weeks after the buds swell in the springtime. Maple leaves are dark green above and a paler green below with 3-5 lobes. Each leaf has five lobes and will measure 3 to 5 inches long. In the fall, these leaves will turn yellow, red or orange, making the

sugar maple one of the more colorful trees to look at.



After a tree's leaves emerge, the tree will soon produce flowers. Flowers can be perfect (having both female and male parts) or imperfect (having only female or male parts). Bees are the chief pollinators of the flowers. Once pollination is complete, fruits will begin to develop and ripen in September or October. The fruit consists of two separable samaras (winged seeds). The samaras are wind transported and may disperse far from the "mother tree". While a single tree will produce seed every season (a tree has to be 30 years or older to produce seed), massive quantities of viable seed are produced every 5 years. This cycle ensures future generations of trees.



Native Americans knew about the sugar maple throughout its range and referred to it as the "sugar bush" (see map illustration). During the spring thaw, with melting days and freezing nights in March and April, sap within the sugar maple tree begins to

flow. A diagonal slash was cut on the lower trunk of each tree. A hollow reed was inserted to funnel the sap into a small bark container. The sap was transferred to a large bark or log container. Fire-heated stones were then dropped into the vessel to boil the sap into dark sweet syrup. Young and old alike especially enjoyed making maple taffy or maple candy, a concoction created by drizzling the syrup onto a clean snowbank and then twirling the chilled syrup on the end of a stick.

Sugar maple trees provided the principle source of sugar for pioneer families. Originally hollow elderberry or sumac branches were inserted into the tree trunks to collect the sap. Metal spigots were then used to tap trees, allowing the sap to be collected in open metal buckets. Often a "sugar camp" was set up to process the sap. The milky-colored sap was collected in large vats and fed into evaporation pans. By boiling the sap, the process was sped up, concentrating the sweet maple syrup. A single large tree may produce 5-60 gallons of sap. Roughly 32 gallons of sap will produce one gallon of syrup or 4½ pounds of sugar. After 1940, plastic tubing allowed the sap to be collected from several trees at once, transporting sap from several trees to a central container, making collection easier. "Maple sugaring" has been a tradition for several generations. Vermont is known to produce the finest quality syrup, and is thus recognized as such by a great depiction of this on their state quarter.

The yellow-bellied sapsucker also knows of the tasty sap found during spring. This woodpecker drills a series of holes, moving horizontally around the trunk, creating holes side by side. A bird will then return to feed at each hole once the sap starts flowing. This bird may be viewed during its return migration north throughout our region from March-April. Squirrels and other birds have been known to feed on the winged samaras of the sugar maple.



Maple wood is one of the hardest and densest of the maples, and is prized for furniture and flooring. Bowling alleys and bowling pins are both commonly manufactured from sugar maple. Maple is also the wood used for basketball courts, including the floors used by the NBA, and it is a popular wood for baseball bats. It is planted as an ornamental tree and provides great shade. Upon venturing through the woods this year, see if you can discover the locations of the "sugar bush", a tree steeped in tradition and usefulness.

Wildlife Profile ~ Mourning Cloak

by Cassie Druhl, AmeriCorps Naturalist

I think we can all agree that this winter wasn't the most pleasant one. We were waking up every morning, just hoping that maybe some of the snow would melt, and our daily commute wouldn't be backed up with traffic or covered with ice. Then, as spring approaches, we start to hear the chirping of birds in the morning, see the sun come out a little earlier, and certain outdoor critters begin appearing. One of the first creatures you'll see come out, even before the winter is completely over, is a butterfly called the mourning cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa*).

The mourning cloak is a very common butterfly found all over the world, from North America to Europe and even parts of Asia such as Siberia and Japan. In England, they are commonly called the "Camberwell Beauty." This butterfly has also recently been named Montana's state butterfly. So, as you can see, these insects aren't picky about their habitats, which range from wooded areas to open fields, as well as suburbs and cities.

An adult mourning cloak's wingspan ranges in size from 2¾ to 3½ inches. It is a member of the family *Nymphalidae*, more commonly known as the "brush-footed butterflies." The front pair of legs are much smaller than other butterflies, often looking hairy and "brush-like." They also have short projections, or points, on their wings.

The mourning cloak has very distinctive markings that resemble a traditional cloak worn by those in mourning, which was sometimes draped over the casket of the deceased. The colors are mainly dark, but its upper wings have a broad yellow border on the outer edge, along with little blue spots running alongside it. The underside is dark, striated brown with pale yellow borders. The special patterns on the wings, both topside and bottomside, are important to the mourning cloak's survival. The top of the wings is dark to promote solar heating, which is crucial to its survival. All butterflies need heat in order to fly, which is why you will see them with their back toward the sun, gently flapping their wings. The bottom of the wings is near perfect camouflage for the tree bark that serves as its resting perch.

Mourning cloak caterpillars are velvety black and spiny, with rusty-red spots down their backs. When they emerge from their eggs, which are laid together on a single tree or shrub, the whole group of caterpillars (30 to 50) stays together on the same plant for about 10 days. They eat and grow very rapidly, shedding their skins up to four times. Willow, poplar, alder, cottonwood, white birch, hackberry, and elm make up the majority of their diet as larvae. They will rarely move away from each other during this 10-day period, and if disturbed, the mass of caterpillars will shake and vibrate all at the same time, which is how they try to frighten a potential predator. The bristling spines covering the



caterpillars also help protect them from predators.

When the caterpillars are about 1½-inches long, they will finally strike out on their own and find a pupation site. The pupa will grow and develop for about two weeks, then will emerge and immediately look for food once its wings dry. As an adult, the diet changes from tree leaves to tree sap and decaying fruit. Only very rarely will one see a mourning cloak eating flower nectar. In summertime, you'll often see them drinking the tree sap from fresh holes left by drilling yellow-bellied sapsuckers, a kind of woodpecker.

Depending on the location, the mourning cloak is one of the first butterflies to appear as the days start to lengthen at the end of winter, usually several weeks before spring when snow is still on the ground. The reason the adults appear so early in the year is that, unlike most other butterflies and moths that overwinter as eggs, larvae, or pupae, the mourning cloak overwinters, or hibernates, as an adult. The only reason that they are able to survive the frigid winters is by having very unique body chemistry. The problem with cold weather for most creatures is the formation of ice in body tissue and blood. The mourning cloak actually secretes chemicals that act as antifreeze to prevent ice formation. Sugars such as glucose and alcohols such as sorbitol, glycerol, and ethylene glycol are among the substances produced at the onset of cold weather for this purpose. However, this chemical change only happens as the weather begins to cool, so if a mourning cloak is captured and frozen during any other time, it will not survive. When the butterfly overwinters, it will choose a protected crevice or "hibernaculum" such as under loose bark, in log piles, or in the nooks and crannies of buildings. Because of this unique living pattern, the average lifespan for the mourning cloak is 10-11 months, when other butterflies' lifespan are only a maximum of two weeks.



When the spring is in full force, the males and females exhibit different behaviors. The males defend large territories for breeding, waiting for females to fly by as they watch from their roosts on tree branches. These territories can cover more than 300 square yards! The males are not only very territorial, they are very aggressive. They have been reported to chase birds and anything else that flies near them as they are watching for females. Once he finds one, they do a brief aerial courtship resulting in the female depositing eggs on a tree branch, and the life cycle starting over.

The mourning cloak is a very common butterfly seen all over the world, but this is definitely the only common trait they have compared to other equally common butterflies. This butterfly lives a very unique way of life and has a very distinct wing pattern, which makes it a greatly appreciated and admired species.

April



1st ~ Season Opener ~ 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. ~ Buffalo Bill Cody Homestead ~ Today is the season opener for the Cody Homestead. The homestead is open 7 days a week from 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Admission fee is \$2/adult and free to those 16 years old and younger. The homestead, 28050 230th Ave., is located west of Princeton, IA, off County Road F33.

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.**

5th ~ Nahant Marsh Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Join the volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and sturdy shoes or boots. Nahant Marsh is off Interstate 280, following Hwy. 22 to Wapello Ave. (toward Davenport), and then turning left before the railroad tracks. Contact either Brian Ritter (563) 323-5196 or Sheri Coleman (309) 786-8504.

7th ~ Woodcock Watch ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Sherman Park ~ Come watch the dynamic display of the American woodcock at Sherman Park's north entrance. This is our 23rd year watching the woodcocks' courtship "Skydance", and they have never failed to treat us to a good show.

10th ~ KinderNature: Tails! ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ DeWitt Community Center ~ This program, for three- to five-year-olds, is all about animal tails! An animal's tail is one of the first things a child notices; it maybe because they tell a lot about them and how they are feeling. So join us to play some games, sing songs, and have a snack to create a fun learning experience. DeWitt Community Center is located at 512 10th St., right across from the library. Register at (563) 847-7202. Deadline is April 7. For questions, please call Jessica Steines.



14th ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 8:00 P.M. ~ Lost Nation Public Hunting Area ~ (April 16 is rain/wind date) ~ Andy Friederichsen, Clinton County's Roadside Biologist, will torch the dry grasses during this educational program. Along with a spectacular show, Andy will explain the how, why and when of prairie burns. Follow the signs east off the Eden Valley Road. Call (563) 847-7202 for information.

17th ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 8:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ (April 21 is rain/wind date) ~ Pyro-botanist Andy Friederichsen will light up the night sky during this educational program following the Friend of the Wapsi Center meeting at 7:00 P.M. Fire is a natural part of a prairie's life cycle. Along with a spectacular show, Andy will explain the how, why and when of prairie burns. Please call (563) 847-7202 for more information.

19th ~ Earth Day Expo ~ 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ QCCA Expo Center ~ The Quad Cities Earth Week Coalition is hosting its 5th annual Earth Week Fair at the QCCA Expo Center in Rock Island, IL. This event is free to the public and will feature over 60 booths offering hands-on activities, demonstrations, make and take crafts, literature, videos, quizzes and other interactive projects. For more information, contact Erin Robinson, QC Earth Week Co-Chair at (563) 386-9575.

19th ~ Float the New Lost Lakes Water Trail ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Be some of the first to float the new 10.5 mile Lost Lakes Water Trail sponsored by the Clinton County Conservation Board, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Midwest River Expeditions. We'll paddle up Rock Creek, return and then into the Lost Lakes area. Be prepared to haul overland as some portages may be necessary. Participants will stay

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with the leader and wear PFDs at all times! Call (563) 847-7202 to register and/or reserve a canoe.

19th ~ Eden Valley Nature Center Opener ~ 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ The Nature Center will be open from 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. on Saturdays, now through October. Take a wildflower hike at 1:30 P.M. to explore the spring colors. As always, we are looking for volunteers to open the Nature Center on Saturdays. No experience is necessary. Call (563) 847-7202 for information.

19th - 27th ~ National Wildlife Week ~ Find your personal way to show the earth you care and celebrate the 38th anniversary of Earth Week. Go to www.QCEarthweek.org for a listing of local events. Ideas for celebrating Earth Week can also be found at the National Wildlife Federation's website: www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek. Earth Day is April 22.

22nd & 26th ~ Hunter Education Course ~ 6:30 - 9:00 P.M. (Tue.) & 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. (Sat.) ~ Arrowhead Hunting Club, Goose Lake ~ Call Loren Zaruba at (563) 659-5383 for required sign-up.

25th ~ Arbor Day ~ Planting a tree shows faith in the future! It's also a great way to commemorate a birth, death, anniversary or other special event.

26th ~ Volunteer Stewardship Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The Wapsi River Center will host a spring workday in support of *Keep Scott County Beautiful*. The workday will focus on habitat clean-up and erosion control improvements. All skill levels are welcome, so bring the whole family and invite a friend to enjoy the day!

26th ~ Kite Flying 101 ~ 1:00 - 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ "Up, up and away!" Nothing can make your spirits soar like building and flying your very own kite. Using sticks, string, paper and glue, create a traditional diamond bow kite. After construction, participants will launch their creations on a test flight. Interested participants are asked to pre-register by April 24, (563) 328-3286. Cost is \$2 per kite.

26th ~ Night Sky Viewing ~ 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 show and talks in the observatory.

27th ~ Water Quality? Talk to the Bug! Family Workshop ~ 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. ~ Putnam Museum/Nahant Marsh ~ Discover more about the rivers and wetlands of our area in a family-friendly atmosphere. Activities include exploration of the Putnam's latest exhibit, *Sacred Waters: Sharing the Source*, along with live aquatic animals and a close look at insects that are indicators of water quality. Activities continue at Nahant Marsh, a ten-minute drive from the museum, where families have the opportunity to perform a variety of tests to determine water quality as well as hike and explore the marsh. Call (563) 324-1054 #242 to register.

May



1st ~ May Day Spelunking ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Enjoy a May Day basket treat on the way over to Werden's Cave for a wild cave tour with a naturalist. Meet at Eden Valley Nature Center; pre-registration is required, (563) 847-7202.

3rd ~ Nahant Marsh Spring Clean-up ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh and surrounding areas ~ Join the volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes

EVENTS

and sturdy shoes or boots. Please meet at the picnic tables in front of the Nature Center and help us spruce up this beautiful Marsh. Contact either Brian Ritter (563) 323-5196 or Sheri Coleman (309) 786-8504.

3rd ~ Wildflower Pressing and Hike ~ 10:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Decorating with pressed leaves and flowers is a fun and inexpensive way to bring the beauty of the outdoors into your home. Join us for a hike to collect some spring woodland wildflowers to put into your very own plant press. Then come inside to learn some simple and attractive craft ideas. Participants are asked to pre-register by calling (563) 847-7202. Materials fee is \$4.

3rd ~ Monsignor Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Mars and Saturn will be prominent in the sky, and there is a rare chance to see Mercury low in the western sky just after sunset. No moon tonight means excellent conditions for viewing deep-sky objects; star clusters, nebulae and galaxies. Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the spring sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

10th ~ Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats & People ~ 10:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Director Dave Murcia in celebrating annual migrants and the natural phenomenon of migration. A live birds of prey program, family-oriented activities, and great birding opportunities as you hike the trails will be part of the program. The Wapsi River Center is recognized as a premium wildlife viewing area by Falcon Publishing's Watchable Wildlife series.



10th ~ The Night Shift ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The Wapsi Center is home to Iowa's three most-common owls – the great horned, screech and barred owls. Learn more about Mother Nature's night shift with us as we call the raptors. Participants should bring a small flashlight.

13th ~ Scott County Snapshot Sampling ~ 8:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Call for Location ~ Join area environmentalists and volunteers to sample the various Scott county watersheds for water quality. Field kits will be used to measure pH, nitrite/nitrate, chloride, dissolved oxygen, phosphate, water temperature and transparency. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. Contact: Amy Johannsen at (563) 391-1403 #3 or Amy.johannsen@ia.nacdn.net for further details.

14th ~ Spring in the Marsh Family Event ~ 6:30 - 8:00 P.M. ~ Nahant Marsh ~ See what's blooming, croaking, singing and crawling at Nahant Marsh and learn about the importance and beauty of marshes in the spring. Participants should pre-register by calling Nahant Marsh at (563) 323-5196. Cost is \$3/person or \$8/family.

15th ~ Moonlight Frog Chorus ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Experience the sounds of the season, in search of the frogs and toads which inhabit the Wapsi River Center. Please bring a flashlight and waterproof footwear.

16th ~ Nighttime Canoe Float ~ 9:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Join us for a paddle in the dark on our canoe season opener. We'll explore the quiet backwaters of the Mississippi and Wapsipinicon under a waxing 90%-illuminated moon. Our senses will be on edge while we hear the night calls of birds and encounter other animal life at this very active hour of the day. All participating must have a white light that shines 360 degrees in their craft, wear life jackets and carry a whistle (for emergency use only). Call to register and/or reserve a canoe at (563) 847-7202.

17th ~ Iowa NatureMapping Level I Workshop ~ 9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Wapsi River Center staff and ISU Extension Coordinator Jason O'Brien for a workshop to provide hands-on environmental education specifically related to Iowa's wildlife populations. O'Brien states, "trained volunteers are a vital link in wildlife management efforts in Iowa. Currently, we are concentrating on amphibians, reptiles, mammals and birds of Iowa." Information is used by professionals in support of management and educators may use this valuable training to engage students in related lessons. For registration information, contact Dave Murcia at (563) 328-3286, at jmurcia@scottcountyiowa.com or visit the Nature Mapping website at: www.extension.iastate.edu/naturemapping/workshops/index.htm. Workshop cost is \$30 per participant, which includes materials and lunch.

17th ~ Float the Maquoketa ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Royertown Access to Joinerville Park ~ Meet at the Royertown Access north of Baldwin, Iowa, for a float down this 7.3 mile section of the scenic Maquoketa River. We'll pass Maquoketa Caves State Park and take water samples at the mouths of Raccoon, Bear and Pumpkin Creeks while making regular stops at beaches along the way. Our canoes are available on a first-come, first-served basis, so register by calling (563) 847-7202.

17th ~ Night Hike ~ 8:30 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ The Park Ranger will lead an after-dark hike to the Refuge's murkiest corners. Meet at the Nature Center and bring a small flashlight.



23rd ~ Birds of Prey ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ Interested participants meet at Summit Hills campground office. Participants need not be a registered camper to attend this free program including live raptors.

23rd ~ Frog and Toad Surveys ~ 7:00 P.M. - After dark ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Nahant Marsh is the location for this musical performance. Participants will join Jennifer Anderson-Cruz in compiling data for this annual survey. Participants are asked to bring a small flashlight and be sure to dress for the weather. Contact Nahant Marsh for more information (563) 323-5196 or www.nahantmarsh.org.

25th & 26th ~ Heritage Days ~ 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of yesteryear! The past will come to life at the Village as interpreters and actors recreate pioneer life. There will be pioneer craft demonstrations, folk music and a gun show performed by the Wapsi Wranglers. Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village is located on the north side of Scott County Park. Admission is \$2/adult and \$1/children.

29th ~ Blue Heron Eco Cruises ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Every Thursday evening through October, Clinton County Conservation will be offering naturalist-guided eco cruises aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat on the Mississippi River out of Rock Creek Marina. Call (563) 259-1876 to reserve a spot. Cost is \$6/adult, \$4/children under 16 and free for children under 5.

31st ~ Night Sky Viewing ~ 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 show and talks in the observatory.

June



5th ~ Blue Heron Sunset Cruise ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Call (563) 259-1876 to reserve a spot.

6th - 8th ~ Free Fishing Days ~ Let's go fishing! During these three days, Iowa residents may fish and possess fish (within legal limits) without a fishing license.

7th ~ Fishing Clinic ~ 8:00 A.M. - Noon ~ West Lake Park, Gate #1 - Rolling Hills Shelter ~ Kids, kindergarten through 6th grade, and an

adult chaperone are invited to attend this event. Registration will begin at 8 A.M. at the Rolling Hills shelter. The individuals will spend the morning traveling to five different stations learning about fish identification, casting, fish cleaning and tasting, laws and ethics and equipment. There is no charge for this family event!

7th ~ Blue Heron Rides ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ We will be offering special 1-hour, naturalist-guided rides aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat on the Mississippi River out of Rock Creek Marina. First come, first served. Cost is \$4/adult, \$2/children under 16 and free for children under 5.

7th ~ Nahant Marsh Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Join the volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and sturdy shoes or boots. Contact either Brian Ritter (563) 323-5196 or Sheri Coleman (309) 786-8504.



7th ~ Monsignor Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ A crescent moon will be visible for the first couple of hours after sunset, after which Mars and Saturn will again be the most prominent objects in the sky, and the darkness will be perfect for deep sky objects. Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the spring sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

7th ~ Saturday Night At the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ The Nature Center at Eden Valley is showing family movies on the big screen for campers and park visitors. Free popcorn!

9th - 13th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Laura Ingalls Wilder Week will kick-off eight, one-week day camps hosted by the Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village. Learn what life was like for Laura Ingalls. Experience how she lived by spending time in an 1830's cabin and a one-room schoolhouse. Enjoy making crafts, visit a farm and much more. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

10th & 11th ~ Summer Day Camp ~ "Re-wilding" Kindergartners to 2nd Graders ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Through this *free* day camp, we hope to bring our children back to the wild spaces and away from activities that separate them from outdoors. Day camps are just that we will entertain and enlighten your young children for a matter of a few hours. They will be familiarized with the living world through hikes, a Blue Heron Eco cruise, collecting and other fun activities. Participants are asked to pre-register by calling (563) 847-7202 by June 3.

12th ~ Blue Heron Sunset Cruise ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Call (563) 259-1876 to reserve a spot.

14th ~ Free Canoeing ~ All Day ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Rock Creek's 10 canoes will be available to use free of charge all day in the Mississippi Backwaters surrounding the park.

14th ~ Clinton County Enviro Kids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Clinton County Area Solid Waste Agency ~ Explore the world with us this summer! Enviro Kids is a summer-long day camp program sponsored by many local agencies and industries. Call Judy at Lyondell, (563) 244-2531, to register. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!



14th ~ Float the Maquoketa ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Preston, IA ~ Mississippi River ~ Meet at the access just north of Preston, Iowa, on County Road Z34. We'll float to the access near U.S. Hwy. 52 and from there determine whether the current is slight enough to paddle back upstream from the Mississippi to the takeout. The mouth of the Maquoketa River offers a scenic view of the Mississippi and its adjacent landforms, which include some of the most impressive naturally-deposited sand

dunes along the river.

14th ~ Hayrack Rides ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Good times aboard this ½-hour, ranger-guided hayrack ride to McAndrews Wildlife Area. Continuous rides offered till dusk. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



16th - 20th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Nature Week ~ This is one week where you can actually camp out under the stars for one night! Enjoy lots of nature crafts, hikes; learn about deer from the Park Ranger. Plus take a trip to the Wapsi Environmental Education Center. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for more information.

16th - 20th ~ Junior Conservationist Day Camp ~ 9:30 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Activities include orienteering, hiking, water sampling, insect netting, nature survival skills, animal and plant identification, solar cooking, renewable energy, Native American home building, fun and a whole lot more! Conservation field kits will be given to each participant and lunch will be provided daily. This day camp is geared for children 6-9 years of age. To learn more about fees, activities, scholarships or registration, call (563) 323-5196.

19th ~ Blue Heron Sunset Cruise ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Call (563) 259-1876 to reserve a spot.

20th ~ Frog and Toad Surveys ~ 7:00 P.M. - After dark ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Contact Nahant Marsh for more information (563) 323-5196.

21st ~ Volunteer Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Call (563) 357-0759 to lend a hand.

21st ~ Kids' Fishing Tournament ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Malone Park ~ Kids, ages twelve and under, are invited to test their angling skills. Sunfish are thick in the 10-acre lake, with bass, bullheads and catfish in good numbers. Plaques will be awarded for the greatest weight of fish in two age groups, ages 10-12 and ages 9 and under. There will also be door prizes for all. Registration starts at 9 A.M., with fishing from 9:30 - 11 A.M.; weigh-in and casting contest will follow.

21st ~ And They're Off! Frog & Turtle Races ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Bring your own or borrow turtles and frogs to sign up at the nature center for an exciting morning of racing! Refreshments will be available, along with prizes. Call (563) 847-7202; ask for Jessica.



21st ~ Hayrack Rides ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Good times aboard this ½-hour, ranger-guided hayride around the park. Continuous rides offered till dusk

23rd - 26th ~ EDIWILD 2008 ~ Educators in the Wild Workshop ~ See Wapsi Center Happenings for details. Contact the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 for registration information.

23rd - 27th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Wild West Week ~ Spend a week doing what the cowboys and cowgirls did. We will visit the buffalo at Cody Homestead and tour the Buffalo Bill Museum in LeClaire, IA. Welcome a visit from D&J's petting zoo and take a pony ride. Enjoy many fun crafts, games, plus much more. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

26th ~ Blue Heron Sunset Cruise ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Call (563) 259-1876 to reserve a spot.

27th ~ Birds of Prey ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park ~ Interested participants meet at Bald Eagle campground office. Participants need not



be a registered camper to attend this free program including live raptors.

28th ~ Blue Heron Rides ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ We will be offering special 1-hour, naturalist-guided rides aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat on the Mississippi River out of Rock Creek Marina.

First come, first served. Cost is \$4/adult, \$2/children under 16 and free for children under 5.

28th ~ Clinton County Enviro Kids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ This will be a great morning! Kids will use GPS units to find their way around the forest and do some backwoods stomping into the hidden corners of the area. Call Judy at Lyondell, (563) 244-2531, to register. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!

28th ~ And They're Off! Frog & Turtle Races ~ 11:00 A.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Bring your own or borrow turtles and frogs to sign up at the park store for an exciting morning of racing! Refreshments will be available, along with prizes. Call (563) 847-7202; ask for Jessica.

28th ~ Clinton County Enviro Kids ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Alliant Energy Field, Clinton ~ Don't miss this one! Free tickets to the Clinton LumberKings vs. the QC River Bandits, the Enviro Kids will be introduced on the field, recycling relay race and post-game fireworks! Wear your T-shirt! Call Judy at Lyondell, (563) 244-2531, to register.



28th ~ Night Sky Viewing ~ 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 show

and talks in the observatory.

28th ~ Saturday Night At the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ The Nature Center at Eden Valley is showing family movies on the big screen for campers and park visitors. Free popcorn!

July



3rd ~ Blue Heron Sunset Cruise ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Call (563) 259-1876 to reserve a spot.

5th ~ Nahant Marsh Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Join the volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and sturdy shoes or boots. Contact either Brian Ritter (563) 323-5196 or Sheri Coleman (309) 786-8504.

7th - 11th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Ecology Week ~ Learn about the land, water and wildlife. An exploratory visit to the Maquoketa Caves will be included. Activities will include nature crafts, plant and wildlife identification, recycling and our role with nature. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for more information.

9th & 10th ~ "Rewilding" 3-5th Graders ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ This free camp will delight your youngster! We are still working on the details, but here are a few planned activities: team-building, setting up camp, building a survival shelter, using a compass, canoeing, Blue Heron Eco Cruise and music. Call (563) 847-7202 and register by July 1.

Kids' Corner ~ Olympic Opener

"...the 8th year...the 8th month... the 8th day" - undoubtedly you've seen the commercial advertising the upcoming 2008 Olympics. Each sport has its own set of rules as well as vocabulary. In preparation for this year's Olympics*, see if you can match the activities below with a word from its corresponding vocabulary. *The following activities are not an accurate representation of the 2008 Olympic sporting events ~ but we can hope.



Activity

1. Fishing
2. Swimming
3. Snow Skiing
4. Backpacking
5. Rock Climbing
6. Birding
7. Photography
8. Snowshoeing
9. Biking
10. Canoeing
11. Archery
12. Spelunking
13. Frisbee Golf
14. Skeet Shooting
15. Orienteering
16. Kayaking
17. Diving
18. Hockey
19. Dressage
20. Cricket

Vocabulary

- a. Derailer
- b. Nock
- c. Clay Pigeon
- d. Wicket
- e. Flashlight
- f. Cockpit
- g. Gunnel
- h. Red-in-the-Shed
- i. Disc
- j. Springboard
- k. GORP
- l. Daisy Turn
- m. Belay
- n. Icing
- o. Pommel
- p. Rump Patch
- q. Snowplow
- r. Spoon
- s. Butterfly
- t. F-Stop

Answers: 20. d | 19. o | 18. n | 17. j | 16. f | 15. h | 14. c | 13. i | 12. e | 11. b | 10. g | 9. a | 8. i | 7. t | 6. p | 5. m | 4. k | 3. q | 2. s | 1. r

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

Scott County Park Pool

Open: Memorial Day Weekend

Re-open: Early June - Late August

Weekdays: Noon - 8:00 P.M.

Weekends: 10:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Open: Labor Day Weekend

Scott County Park Pool Learn-to-Swim Program

Registration: Will start in mid-April and continue after pool opens.

Call (563) 328-3282, to register.



West Lake Park Beach & Concessions

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

Beach & Concession:

Open: Memorial Day - Labor Day

11:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Boathouse & Concession:

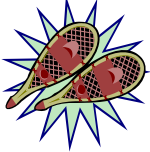
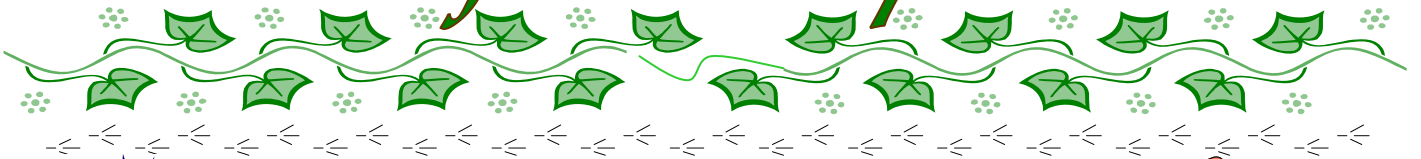
May 1 (weather permitting) - Memorial Day:

Weekends: 10:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

After Memorial Day: Weekdays

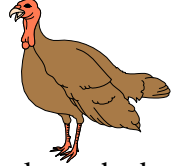
& Weekends: 10:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Friends of the Wapsi Center



Snowshoes for Turkeys?

by Erma Wiszmann, Friends of the Wapsi Center Volunteer



Saturday, February 22 was my day to host the Eagle View Eco Center. Earlier in the week, we had rain and snow. The gravel roads were ice-covered and deserved serious respect. The result of thawing and refreezing, the walks at the Center were snow and ice-covered as well. There were about 5-6 inches of snow covering the ground.

Because of the conditions, I didn't really expect many visitors. Whenever there are no visitors, I wander the building from window to window. I have to see what the wildlife is up to. As I was watching some turkeys walking around, I noticed one turkey which I thought was limping. I thought, "Oh, the poor thing."

So here I was feeling sorry for the impaired turkey, when I realized something odd – some of the other turkeys also seemed to be limping. Then the light came on! The turkeys weren't limping – occasionally they were sinking through the crust!

Now I'm wondering – can we fit the turkeys out with snowshoes?

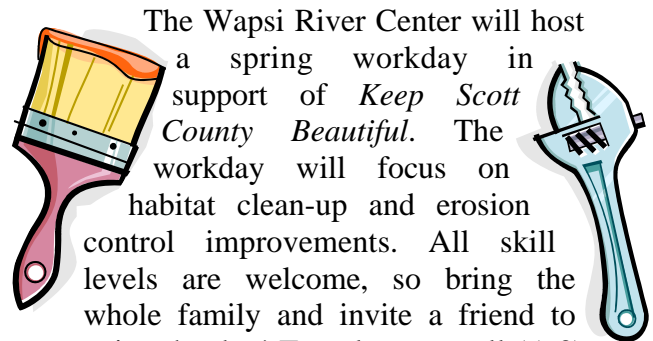
In Appreciation of Your Support
of the Wapsi River Center

James & Jane Varcho	Christine Kost
Colleen Schmidt	Carl Gerwulf
Bill Robbins	Mary Rourke
K.J. Rebarcak	Mrs. Stepaniak
Ingrid Bogdanowicz	Connie & Dave Huber
Lucia Dryanski	Erma Wiszmann
Janet Cox	Carol Rogers
Becky Birks	Liz Mink
Cecilia Braam	Bernice Perrin
Carl & Mary Steark	Donna Udehn
Bob & Jeanne Bryant	Arlene Phillips

Scott County Waste Commission



Volunteer Stewardship Workday
Saturday, April 26 ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon

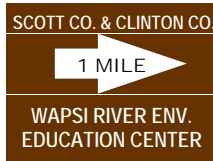


The Wapsi River Center will host a spring workday in support of *Keep Scott County Beautiful*. The workday will focus on habitat clean-up and erosion control improvements. All skill levels are welcome, so bring the whole family and invite a friend to enjoy the day! To volunteer, call (563) 328-3286. Plan to stay around for a kite program that will take place from 1:00 - 3:00 P.M.



Volunteer Voices ~ by K.J. Rebarcak, Friends of the Wapsi Center Volunteer

A couple of years ago, I wrote a column for the W.R.E.N. about the way that one little brown sign along Big Rock Road introduced me to the Wapsi Center back in 2000 and changed my life. One of the most important and enriching aspects of being involved with this place is my belonging to the Friends of the Wapsi Center. The Friends has given me priceless opportunities to volunteer, to be surrounded by nature, and to meet many wonderful people.



First, not only do I enjoy volunteering to assist with the Center's events and activities, but I love the feeling of having done something worthwhile to help adults and children learn to connect with, and care about, the environment. Volunteer Stewardship Workdays, Ecology Day and Winter Fun Day are just a few of the many excellent events to which the Friends lend a hand. There are also participation opportunities outside of the Center, such as manning a booth at Bald Eagle Days or, in my case, earning certification to help lead future canoe trips.

The Friends also volunteer to be hosts for the Eagle View Eco Center. Hosting is an incredibly serene way to spend a Saturday afternoon. The world moves at a slower pace out here, and I deeply appreciate the respite from my hectic life. Nearly all of the visitors share my adoration and respect for nature, and I take pleasure in showing and telling them about what the Wapsi Center has to offer. I remember my very first visit well, and I want other visitors, new and returning, to feel the same sense of wonder and joy that I did (and still do). There is much to marvel at and much to do at the Center. People can borrow snowshoe and ski equipment in the winter, learn about renting our facilities, peruse our gift shop items and information brochures, examine our many displays, and enjoy watching our live animals.

The live animals indoors are not the only ones the visitors and I get to see. Magnificent bald eagles come in to roost in the trees lining the Wapsipinicon River, and when the trees are bare, the eagles are easy to spot. Also, the bird feeders provide a constant source of relaxation and delight. In addition to all

the usual feathered friends, turkeys have visited during the last two times I have hosted. I had never seen live turkeys up close before, and it was a real treat! On one occasion, the day was filled with bright sunshine, and I was awed by the stunning iridescence of the turkeys' feathers. I did not realize until then that turkeys were such beautiful creatures! They are also quite funny. The largest seed feeder is just a bit too high for the turkeys to reach, so those big birds stretch out their necks and make ungainly hops in order to hit the feeder with their beaks and knock seed to the ground. I have also seen turkeys and black squirrels vying for space under the feeders until they finally have a brief spat, which results in both animals jumping straight up into the air and running away in opposite directions!

In addition to all the outdoor fauna, the plant life abounds. Whether I'm admiring the ferns near the Eco Center in summer or the snow on the pines in winter, there is always something to see when I'm driving onto the grounds, walking to the building, or looking out the window. The jewelweed lining the sidewalk up to the Eco Center is my favorite. From the first tiny pairs of leaves in spring, to the cheerful flowers in late summer, to the fun-to-see-how-far-you-can-shoot-'em seed pods in autumn, this plant always makes me smile.

The people who make up The Friends also make me smile! I am honored to know such friendly, caring, down-to-earth individuals. This group is a joy to volunteer with, and it's fun to chat with everyone. We share each other's triumphs and support each other in times of crisis. Also, I cannot even count the number of times that there was a Friends meeting scheduled on the evening of a day that had not been going well for me, and although I did not feel like going anywhere, I went anyway and was so glad that I did. Being around such positive energy makes it impossible to maintain a bad mood!

Between the volunteer opportunities, the nature experience as a whole, and the fantastic people I've met, I can definitely say that being a part of the Friends of the Wapsi Center has truly been a blessing! You, too, can enjoy experiences like mine. Please consider joining the Friends; we would love to welcome you into the group!

Attention! Attention!

Who: Friends of the Wapsi Center

What: Monthly Meeting & Program

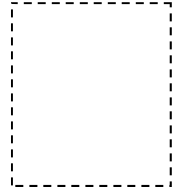
Where: Wapsi River E. E. Center
31555 52nd Avenue
Dixon, IA 52745
(563) 328-3286

When: Third Thursday of Each Month
7:00 P.M.



Connie Huber (pictured with trophy) was the winner of the Wapsi River Center's Chili Cook-off held February 9 during the Winter Fun Day. The "Chili Champion" competed against five other recipes created by members of The Friends of the Wapsi Center. Friends members pictured are (from left): Bill Robbins, Ingrid Bogdanowicz, Erma Wiszmann, Dave Huber, Connie Huber, KJ Rebarcak and Carol Rogers

WAPSI RIVER E. E. CENTER
31555 52ND AVENUE
DIXON, IA 52745
Tel: (563) 328-3286
Fax: (563) 843-2845



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For All Seasons

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Eagle View Eco Center Hours ~ Saturdays ~ 12:30 - 4:30 P.M. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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.

Scott County Conservation Board

Members:

- John "Skip" O'Donnell
- Carol Fennelly
- Beth McAleer
- Rich Mohr
- Gene Weis

Director:

- Roger Kean



Phone Numbers

- Wapsi River Environmental Education Center
(563) 328-3286
- Scott County Conservation Board
(563) 328-3280
- Clinton County Conservation Board
(563) 847-7202

Wapsi River Environmental Education Center Staff

Scott County:

- J. Dave Murcia, Director/Naturalist
- Mike Granger, Naturalist
- Lisa Gerwulf, Assistant Naturalist
- Cassie Druhl, AmeriCorps Naturalist
- Mark Cox, Caretaker

Clinton County:

- Mark Roberts, E. E. Coordinator
- Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretative Naturalist
- Jessica Steines, Interpretative Naturalist

Mailing List

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.

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