

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Summer 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

EDIWILD 2008 Educators' Workshop

The EDIWILD Workshop (June 23-26) was sponsored by the following partnerships: Wapsi River Center, Scott and Clinton County Conservation Boards, Nahant Marsh Education Field Station, River Action Inc. and supported by the Iowa State University Extension. This year's theme was "Re-discovering Our Biodiversity" and included such subjects as land stewardship, fauna management, sustainability and "No Child Left Inside". The workshop uses an interdisciplinary approach to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum. Twenty-eight educators completed the workshop where staff development and graduate credit were available through Area Education Agency 9 and Drake University. *The workshop will celebrate its 10th year and will be offered again June 2009!*



Wapsi Center Awarded National Grant

The Scott County Conservation Board was selected as one of 30 national Take Me Fishing™ Anchor Agencies by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) this past spring. The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF), in partnership with the NRPA, has awarded the Wapsi River Center \$10,000 in an effort to reconnect youths, ages 6-15, with nature. The Wapsi River Center will serve as a community leader and partner with local agencies, school districts, Scouts and youth organizations to ensure that recreational boating and fishing are sustained in the community. The grant funding will enhance existing programs available to youth in the community. An emphasis on best practices for boating, fishing and aquatic stewardship education will promote, engage and introduce these environmentally-sound life skills for a lifetime. Please contact the Wapsi Center for more information on educational opportunities including workshops, clinics, programs and other events or visit: www.nrpa.org.



Wapsi Center Hosts 1st Leadership Summit

The Wapsi Center was host to Scott County's 1st Leadership Summit this June and focused on preparing selected employees as leaders within their respective departments. This dynamic, over-night opportunity included leadership assessments, training, coaching, action learning, as well as giving our conservation department an opportunity to showcase the facilities available to our own employees and public visitors. The next summit is scheduled at the Wapsi Center for this fall where graduates can share the experience (wildlife) and knowledge (how to pick a blind partner) they have taken with them and where new nighttime fireside tales of owls can be heard!



Mountain Lion Exhibit to Visit Center

The Wapsi Center will be host to a traveling mountain lion exhibit from September 16 through November 22, 2008. The exhibit has been displayed at various other county facilities throughout Iowa for the past two years. It is on loan from California and funded by a REAP-CEP grant. This exhibit will be of great value to visitors who will learn about North America's largest cat!

Programs of the Wapsi River Center

During this 2007-2008 school year, approximately 6,526 students, teachers and parents participated in 93 field trips. A total of 239 public presentations were attended by 2,828 participants and kept staff busy, considering May and June were fully booked. At our Earth Week Fair booth, we saw about 1,800 school participants and about 4,500 public visitors.

If you would like to schedule a field trip next year, schedule as far in advance as possible. School programs are not scheduled for Mondays so that staff may work on administration and resource management. And don't forget ~ *the Wapsi River Center is a place for all seasons*. We would like to see more schools take winter and early spring field trips, as this would allow more schools to visit the Wapsi River Center.

Volunteer Stewardship Workdays Scheduled

The Wapsi River Center will host two workdays (weather-

permitting) with support from *iLiveHere* and *Keep Scott County Beautiful* on Saturday, August 30, and Saturday, September 27 (*National Public Lands Day*) from 9:00 A.M. to Noon.



Potential projects include prairie brush removal, trail maintenance, landscaping and other projects as needed. In appreciation for all the hard work and dedication, lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center after the event. Sign-up to volunteer or learn more about the friends group by calling the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.

Friends Experience a Changing of the Guard

During the June meeting of the Friends of the Wapsi Center, the offices of elected officials were decided. Erma Wiszmann ~ secretary, Carol Rogers ~ treasurer and Mike Granger ~ vice-president all sought re-election and won. Longtime president Dottie Wala, did not seek re-election and leaves behind a legacy worth honoring. K. J. Rebarcak announced interest in the position, was nominated and elected the new president of the Friends of the Wapsi Center. **Congratulations, K.J.!**



If you are interested in becoming a member of the Friends of the Wapsi Center, they meet the third Thursday of the month at

various locales. Call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 for the time and location of the next meeting.

Scout Opportunities Available

The Wapsi River Center continues to support the Scouts of America by providing limited camp space to local troops. Scouts may use Elm’s and/or Vincent’s camp sites in return for service projects ranging from habitat/wildlife management to trail maintenance. Please call in advance to reserve sites and register through the Illowa Council for official tour permits. **Plans are being made for a Camp Minneyata Scout Reunion, so keep an eye to the newsletter for details.**

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* is 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 and submission information, contact the Wapsi Center at (563) 328-3286.

Hellos & Goodbyes ~ Mary Johnson: Hi! I have recently joined the Wapsi River E.E. Center team through AmeriCorps as an assistant naturalist. I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, and although there weren’t a ton of “wild” areas around me, I had amazing parents who tried to expose me to nature every chance they had. I received a bachelor of science degree in biology followed by a master of science degree in entomology from Iowa State University. My love of working with kids and the environment has grown through the many awesome opportunities I’ve had over the last few years. I spent some time working with the USDA, Iowa State University Insect Zoo, Bettendorf Parks and Recreation, Fejervary Children’s Zoo and now the Wapsi River Center. I love to learn and everyday I come out here I’m exposed to something new and fascinating! I am looking forward to sharing my experiences here with all of you and hearing about your adventures as well. Thanks for welcoming me in!

KIDS’ CORNER ~ BIRD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to form the name of a bird.
Answers are found at the end of the calendar.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. obbthiew | 11. abelrrw |
| 2. diigrbnk | 12. ceedkooprw |
| 3. eebhop | 13. hhrstu |
| 4. accefhrlrty | 14. adenpprsi |
| 5. cdfhignlo | 15. aecukpsr |
| 6. ahkwitihgn | 16. bidgikmnroc |
| 7. acegklr | 17. cjnou |
| 8. achhnttu | 18. abbcdiklr |
| 9. arprsw | 19. abcdirt |
| 10. eiorv | 20. accdiheek |

In Appreciation of Your Support of the Wapsi River Center

- Karen Brix
- Jeanne Bryant
- Carl Gerwulf
- Janet Cox
- Erma Wiszmann
- Carol Rogers
- K.J. Rebarcak
- Ingrid Bogdanowicz
- Nick Johnson
- Maya Murcia
- Tristan O’Harrow
- Lucia Dryanski
- Bill Robbins
- Davey Tree Service

Living Green ~ Green Building, Part II

by Cassie Druhl, AmeriCorps Naturalist

In the previous Living Green article of *The W.R.E.N.*, I discussed the many ways that large buildings and businesses, which normally have a devastating effect on the environment, are using new technology to run “greener” and more efficiently harnessing their energy and building needs. Some examples included sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

Highlighted in the article was the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system, which ranks a building according to how it is following steps to reduce its negative environmental impact.



As you were reading, you probably were thinking that these ideas are great, but you couldn't possibly go to these extremes to apply these methods to your own house, let alone pay for it. Well, good news – there are, indeed, some ways that you can achieve similar environmental goals with your home, just on a smaller scale.

First of all, replacing some of your building and decorating materials in your home can make a big difference while still being cost-effective. A major improvement in the air quality involves getting rid of old carpets. Carpet can collect many airborne toxins and bacteria that can be harmful not only to the environment, but to your family's health as well. Replacing your carpet with recycled tile or natural linoleum reduces these harmful chemicals in the air because they have nowhere to settle. It's also much easier to clean and disinfect floors without carpeting. Natural fibers like hay and newspaper can be used for your home's insulation. Using these materials instead of fiberglass reduces chemicals like asbestos which has been linked to health problems like cancer.

However, if you still want to have carpeting, there are eco-friendly options. Carpets made from natural materials like wool, silk, or natural grasses (hemp or jute) are not treated with chemicals during manufacturing and are less likely to collect bacteria and dust that causes many household allergens. It's always a good idea to try to buy locally and reduce gas emissions produced during shipping. Iowa Carpet One (www.carpetone.com/commercial_flooring/index) is one company that is making an effort to use recycled materials in their carpeting.

Another easy way to make your home more environmentally friendly is to change the type of paint used both inside and outside of your home. Many paints,

finishes and adhesives commonly used in home decorating produce a heavy odor as well as volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These are harmful toxins that contribute to poor air quality. Purchasing paints with low VOC levels greatly reduces your impact on air quality, and many of these are readily available at your local hardware stores – just look for the “low/no VOCs” label on the can.



There are several easy ways to reduce energy and water consumption in your home appliances by making a few changes. A very simple change would be to install ceiling fans in several rooms in your home. Keeping your home cool with fans instead of air conditioning makes a huge difference in your energy consumption, as well as in your monthly bills.

There have been recent developments in how toilets are manufactured and operated. The latest eco-friendly toilet is also a home composter. Instead of using water to flush waste down, a soapy foam will flush the waste down instead, reducing the amount of water used. With the proper plumbing, this waste can actually be re-routed into areas of your yard where you need compost. It may sound gross, but it really is no different than using cow manure to grow farm produce. However, if you prefer another method of home composting, you can purchase home composters to discard your fruits and vegetables in. It looks like a little trash can, but it is sealed in a way that reduces odor while turning your leftovers into healthy compost for your plants.



If you want to reduce your water consumption further, there is a new water-recycling technology becoming more available called greywater irrigation. Greywater is the leftover water from baths, showers and clothes washers that can be stored and re-used for watering plants in your yard.

As you can see, when you think of “going green,” you don't always have to think of “going big.” There are many simple, small steps that can make a big impact on the environment by optimizing the quality of your indoor and outdoor environment, as well as lowering the long-term cost of operating and maintaining your home. Green technology is always growing and getting better; keeping yourself updated for any small changes you can make will definitely add up to something worthwhile!

Wildlife Profile ~ Western Fox Snake

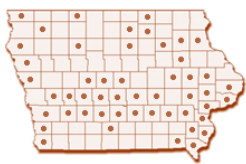
by Mary Johnson, AmeriCorps Naturalist

Snakes are some of the most feared and respected reptiles on the planet. The image of their long, scaly bodies slithering across the ground can give even the bravest person a shiver down their back. Snakes are a vital part of a healthy ecosystem and are a common sight when spending time outdoors.



Iowa has around 27 resident snake species. Of this group, only 4 species are potentially dangerous to people or pets through their use of venom/poison. Non-venomous snakes (also known as constrictors) can still bite; however, most would rather flee than attack.

The western fox snake (*Elaphe vulpina vulpina*), or pine snake as they are sometimes called, is the most common constricting snake in Iowa. One reason they are more abundant than other species of constrictors is due to their ability to adapt to human disturbances. Fox snakes spend most of their time concealed under brush and leaf litter, but they have been found in city dwellings. These snakes spend a lot of time on the move. They are slow and strong, traveling mostly along the ground, although they are excellent climbers and swimmers. Commonly seen along roadsides, they love to bask on the warm gravel. Unfortunately, many meet their demise along those very same roadways! Their home range is usually along woodland edges, rocky outcroppings, prairies and near

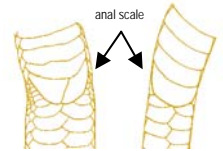
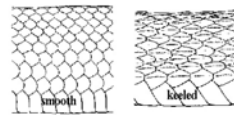


streams or river valleys. They can be found anywhere from Michigan to northern Missouri and from eastern Nebraska to western Indiana.

In Iowa, the western fox snake is a protected species, which means that it is illegal to kill or collect them. Although they normally have a passive disposition, the fox snake has adapted some unique actions for defense. When handled, a musky, oily chemical can be emitted from the base of their tail, giving this snake an odor similar to that of a red fox; hence, the name fox snake. When cornered, they softly hiss, coil and vibrate their tails against brush to imitate the behaviors of rattlesnakes.

These day-active (diurnal) snakes are often confused with other snakes due to their moderate size (36-56 inches long) and highly camouflaged coloration. Some distinct markings on the western fox snake are: the single row of

brown spots down its back, a dirty-yellow belly with black checkering, an unmarked head except for a line or small patterning between the eyes, a divided anal plate and weakly defined keels on the dorsal (top) side with smooth lateral scales.



From early spring through late fall, the fox snake is most active. Many female fox snakes can be found traveling during the summer months, especially June, when finding a spot to lay eggs is a priority. Females can lay up to 20 eggs in one clutch. In August or September, after a 60-day incubation period, the 8-12 inch long babies emerge. Once the eggs hatch, instinct immediately takes over and the hungry hatchlings must fend for themselves by eating as much as they can, as fast as they can in order to survive. Many young snakes will eat small mice and frogs. As they grow, larger mice, other rodents and small mammals make up the main portion of their diet.

As mysterious as they may seem, these often reserved creatures are excellent small game hunters and a welcome form of pest management. They consume anything from insects to birds (plus the occasional egg) and sometimes even other snakes. After suffocating their prey by slow constriction, their specialized hinged jaws open both vertically and horizontally, allowing them to eat prey two to three times the size of their heads. Depending on meal size, some can go weeks or even months between feedings!

Since snakes are cold-blooded, their body temperature reflects that of their surroundings. So by November, they will need to have stored up enough fat reserve to survive a long, cold winter. Although snakes are generally solitary animals, when the cold weather sets in, they will search for a hibernaculum. Here, many snakes may rest together to survive the winter. Some snakes will return year after year to the same hibernaculum. In some cases, you may even find aggregations or dense masses of multiple species of snakes resting together in what appears to be a state of suspended animation.

In my opinion, snakes are amazing creatures; however, they should never be handled in the wild. Instead, keep your eyes peeled and have a camera ready to preserve the memories of your wildlife adventures. You never know what you'll find as close as your own backyard!

Plant Profile ~ Bedstraw

by Cassie Druhl, AmeriCorps Naturalist

As you are hiking down the many trails of the Wapsi River Center, you can observe several different kinds of plants. Most of us would say that we notice the more showy plants like flowers or ferns, but there is a group of weeds found on the trails that, although not that showy, are some of the most interesting plants I have come across since working here.

Bedstraw, an annual, is a very unique weed that is found throughout North America, especially on rich, moist, sandy soil of low woodlands and prairies. Other common names for bedstraw are tagweed, stickywilly, catchweed and goosegrass. One can easily spot it on the river trail at the Wapsi Center. These plants bloom from May to August and are very thick and abundant; often rampantly growing wherever there is space for it to grow in the heavily-populated forest.



Bedstraw is a green plant with a square stem and many slender, pointed leaves arranged in a whorl pattern of 4 to 8 leaves. These leaf whorls sit in a shelf-like pattern on the stems, with heights that vary from a few inches to 4 feet or more. The plant has sparse and modest flowers with a width of just 2 to 3 millimeters across. The white or yellow flowers are usually arranged in loose clusters and each flower has 4 petals.

At the Wapsi Center, cleavers bedstraw (*Galium aparient*) is very common and my fellow naturalists and I like to call it nature's Velcro. This is because the entire plant (including the flowers) has fine hooked bristles or hairs that will stick like Velcro to almost any type of clothing, as well as animal fur.

This amazing ability aids in seed dispersal and gives the plant a very rough texture. Every now and then, we will secretly place a bedstraw stem on the back of an unsuspecting naturalist or



field trip participant to see when they will discover it! As you're hiking, you might find some on your clothing if you are walking too close to the trail's edge. The Wapsi Center also has shining bedstraw (*Galium concinnum*) which will not stick because it lacks the "gotcha" hairs.

There are many folklore stories about bedstraw. Legend says that the manger of baby Jesus was stuffed with bedstraw, so if a couple wanted many children, they should stuff their mattress with it. Many pioneers stuffed their home-made mattresses and pillows with stiff (*Galium tinctorium*) and sweet-scented (*Galium triflorum*) bedstraw because of their elasticity, resistance to collapse and also for their sweet smell which left the bed smelling fresh as well as flea-free.



The pioneers also used bedstraw for medicinal practices and in food. Bedstraw is rich in vitamin C. The plant itself is actually related to the coffee plant, so the seeds would serve as a coffee substitute, as well as a flavorful tea. When drunk, this liquid was used to ease childbirth, slow the flow of blood, increase urine flow, stimulate the appetite, correct vitamin C deficiency, soothe nerves, relieve head colds and to reduce fever. As a pulp, the plant could be used to treat skin rashes and insect bites, as well as sunburns. The Chinese used to use it as an antiperspirant. The genus name *Galium* comes from the Greek word for milk, so the pioneers use it to help milk curdle for cheese-making. The roots of bedstraw make a red-purple dye. The plant has a sweet taste, but is not usually eaten without being properly prepared due to its extremely rough texture.

Even though these species of bedstraw may look like an ordinary weed, they have some very unique features and an interesting past. Next time you're out walking the trails of the Wapsi River Center, go ahead and touch some if you come across it – just make sure it's not next to poison ivy!

July

12th ~ Fern Hike ~ 9:30 A.M. ~ Wildcat Den State



Park ~ Bob Bryant, Quad City Chapter of the Illinois Native Plant Society president, will share his knowledge of these interesting plants on a hike through Wildcat Den State Park. A variety of ferns can be found here, including maidenhair, Goldie's, lady, Christmas and walking ferns. Participants are asked to meet at the Pine Creek Mill's parking lot.

Wildcat Den State Park is located north of Hwy. 22 between Montpelier and Fairport.

12th ~ Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

14th - 18th ~ Native American Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Visit the Hauberg Indian Museum, discover Indian sign language, make an Apache scroll and dream catcher, plus many other crafts. Learn what the Indians wore and face painting. Take a canoe ride at West Lake Park (life jackets provided)! This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

18th ~ 10-Year Anniversary of Jennifer Anderson-Cruz's Frog and Toad Surveys and Nahant Marsh Open House ~ 7:00 P. M. - Sunset ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Nahant Marsh will sponsor an open house and biologist



Jennifer Anderson-Cruz will give a presentation about the status of frogs and toads, particularly in this area. Those who are interested can bring their flashlights and stay afterwards to participate in the frog survey. For more information, please call (563) 323-5196.

18th ~ Birds of Prey ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park ~ Join naturalist Dave Murcia at Bald Eagle Campground (weather-permitting) for this *Program in the Park* including live raptors. Participants need not be registered campers to attend this free program.

SUMMER

21st - 25th ~ Laura Ingalls Wilder Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Learn what life was like for Laura Ingalls. Experience how she lived by spending time in a 1830s cabin and a one-room schoolhouse. Enjoy making crafts such as soap decorating, candle dipping and much more. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

21st - 25th ~ Nahant Marsh Junior Conservationist Day Camp ~ 9:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M. ~ Nahant Marsh ~



This camp is for children ages 9-12. 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 and snacks will be provided daily. Cost is \$50. To learn more about activities, scholarships or registration, call (563) 323-5196 or go to www.nahantmarsh.org.

26th ~ Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky (weather-permitting).

27th ~ Village Alive! ~ 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ See the village come alive as "The Friends" of the village reenact life as it was on the 1890s Iowa prairie. Enjoy folk art demonstrations throughout the day. Admission is FREE! For further information, call (563) 328-3283.

28th - Aug. 1st ~ Frontier Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Enjoy a week doing what the pioneers did in the 1800s. Enjoy many activities such as a wagon ride, frontier cooking, pioneer games and much more. This week, we will visit the Niabi Zoo and learn about animals. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

EVENTS

30th & 31st ~ IOWATER Level I Workshop ~ 6:00 - 10:00 P.M. (nightly) ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Become a



steward of our most-vital resource and learn how to monitor water quality. To register and learn more visit: www.iowater.net.

August

2nd ~ Canoe and Kayak Float ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ West Lake Park, Lake of the Hills ~ Join Wapsi Center naturalists in an educational and fun introduction to canoeing or try a kayak. This program is part of the *Take Me Fishing* initiative, includes equipment and instruction, and participants are requested to register by calling (563) 328-3286 for this free event.

2nd ~ Nahant Marsh Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Participants are asked to meet at the picnic tables in front of the Nahant Marsh Educational Field Station. Contact Sheri Colman at (563) 786-8504 for more information.

4th - 8th ~ Mark Twain Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~



Explore and learn what life was like for Mark Twain. Enjoy paddle boating at West Lake Park and a tour of Lock & Dam 15 on the Mississippi River. Hike trails, carve soap and much more! This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

9th ~ Everything Cattail ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come learn about the amazing cattail with this hands-on workshop. Learn how they grow and make an awesome cattail crafts to take home. Call to reserve a spot; (563) 328 -3286.

9th ~ Monsignor Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event

to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

15th ~ Birds of Prey ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ Join naturalist Dave Murcia at Park Terrace Campground (weather-permitting) for this *Program in the Park* including live raptors. Participants need not be registered campers to attend this free program.

15th - 17th ~ Hunter Safety Education Camp ~ 6:00 PM (Fri) - 4:00 PM (Sun) ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Standard hunter safety courses are 10 hours long. In this event, we will go far beyond the basics. In addition to all

of the hunter education standards, we will be teaching advanced shooting techniques, bowhunter safety, trapping, waterfowl, turkey & raccoon hunting, dog training, caring for game in the field, first aid, wildlife ID, calling and a whole lot more! All these activities will allow students to actually



participate, not just listen to speakers or watch films. The course is open to kids, age 11-16, whether or not they have received the Hunter Education Certificates already. **Cost per student is \$35 for meals. Clinton County students are \$10** thanks to a donation from Clinton County Pheasants Forever. Clinton Area Whitetails Unlimited will be providing monetary support to help cover the cost of lodging, ammunition and targets for the participants. Overnight chaperones will be provided by participants' parents. Space is limited to **50 kids**, so sign up early by calling (563) 847-7202.

16th ~ Xstream Cleanup 2008 ~ 8:30 A.M. - Noon ~ Quad Cities ~ The Xstream cleanup is a Quad City-wide cleanup of creeks, drainage ways, and sections of the Mississippi and Rock Rivers. For more information about volunteering, visit www.wstreamcleanup.org.

22nd - 24th ~ Lower Wapsipinicon River Cleanup ~ Please join us again for our third annual canoe trip to clean up the Wapsi. The 2008 section will be just downstream of the one we cleaned in 2006. We will begin Saturday morning at Allen's Grove Park near Donahue, IA, and end Sunday afternoon at Walter's Landing near McCausland, IA. This 19-mile trip will run through both Clinton and Scott Counties. Please contact:



Melisa Petersen:
[coordinator@lowerwapsi
cleanup.org](mailto:coordinator@lowerwapsicleanup.org) or K. J. Rebarcak:
[admin@lowerwapsi
cleanup.org](mailto:admin@lowerwapsi
cleanup.org), for registration
details.

30th ~ Volunteer Stewardship Day ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon

~ Wapsi River Center ~ The Wapsi River Center will host this workday. Support will be provided from *iLiveHere: Keep Scott County Beautiful*. All skill levels are welcome, so bring the whole family and invite a friend to enjoy the day! In appreciation of your hard work, lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center. To volunteer, please call (563) 328-3286.



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

13th ~ Canoe and Kayak Float ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ West Lake Park, Lake of the Hills ~ Join Wapsi Center naturalists in an educational and fun introduction to canoeing or try a kayak. This program is part of the *Take Me Fishing* initiative, includes equipment and instruction, and participants are requested to register by calling (563) 328-3286 for this free event.



30th ~ Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky (weather-permitting).

31st - Sept. 1st ~ Pioneer Village Fall Festival ~ 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. (Daily) ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Enjoy a fall harvest in the Village. Period dressed "Friends" will demonstrate crafts and sell their wares. Food, music, crafts and fun for all! Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children.

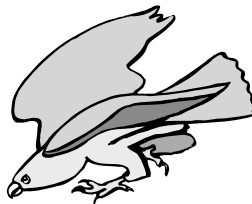
13th ~ Magnificent Monarchs ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come learn about the monarch butterfly, from their life cycle to their incredible migration. Learn how you can help us gather information for the national tagging program by catching and tagging monarchs.

20th ~ Candle Crafting ~ 10:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Participants will learn how to make naturally-scented candles using beeswax, candle-making history and newer techniques of candle making. All ages are welcome at this family-oriented program. Pre-registration is required for this event by calling (563) 328-3286.

September

Plan to visit the Eagle View Eco Center and learn about North America's largest native cat, the mountain lion (*Puma concolor*). The traveling exhibit is on loan from September 16 - November 22, 2008, and is free of charge to visitors.

5th ~ Birds of Prey ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Buffalo Shores Recreation Area ~ Join Naturalist Dave Murcia at the campground office (weather-permitting) for this *Program in the Park* including live raptors. Participants need not be registered campers to attend this free program.



24th - 29th ~ Wilderness Experience Canoe and Camping Trip on the Current River in Missouri ~ Come join us on this trip down one of Missouri's most scenic and wild rivers. We will explore caves, natural springs, wildlife, plants, history and geology of this well-preserved Southeastern Missouri waterway. For more information about cost and registration contact Brian Ritter at (563) 323-5196 or britter@eicc.edu.

6th ~ Nahant Marsh Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Participants are asked to meet at the picnic tables in front of the Nahant Marsh Educational Center. Contact Sheri Colman at (563) 786-8504 for more information.

27th ~ National Public Lands Day ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Potential projects include prairie brush removal, trail maintenance, landscaping and other projects as needed. In appreciation for all the hard work and dedication, lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center after the event. To register and volunteer or learn more about the Friends group, please call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.

6th ~ Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor

27th ~ Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky (weather-permitting).

KIDS' CORNER ~ BIRD SCRAMBLE ANSWERS

1. bobwhite 2. kingbird 3. phoebe 4. flycatcher 5. goldfinch 6. nighthawk 7. grackle 8. nuthatch 9. sparrow 10. vireo 11. warbler 12. woodpecker 13. thrush 14. sandpiper 15. sapsucker 16. mockingbird 17. junco 18. blackbird 19. catbird 20. chickadee

Why IOWATER?

by K. J. Rebarcak

Back in July 2006, I went to Elgin, Iowa, for IOWATER Level I training. The two-day course taught me the basics of being a volunteer water quality monitor. The course was very informative, comprehensive and enjoyable. Every participant received an impressive array of testing materials that I am certain were worth far more than the registration fee (and the sampling tools are replaced free of charge when a volunteer runs out). After being trained, you may select any bodies of water that interest you (as many or as few as you like), get them registered on the IOWATER website and start monitoring. I chose four sites – two because my husband likes to fish them and the other two just because they looked interesting. I monitor them once a month and it's always a great time. I also participate in the local watershed snapshot events – more about those later. So, what is it about IOWATER that makes it so appealing?

First, it's yet another great excuse to get outdoors and enjoy nature (while helping to protect it). It doesn't matter whether you live in a town and just walk to a nearby creek, or whether you're like me and live in the country and drive to rural ponds and streams. For me, despite the gas prices, the drive is therapeutic. Sometimes I listen to music or a book on CD, but my favorite thing to do is just roll the windows down and enjoy the breeze when the weather permits. Always, I'm checking out the flora and fauna of the surrounding countryside musing about how good it feels to be alive. When I reach each sampling location, it gets even better. I'm serenaded by bird songs year-round, uplifted by the sight of new green plants in the spring, dive-bombed by dragonflies in the summer and amazed by the colors around me in the fall. Every third month or so, I take my



dip net (provided by IOWATER) along and see what sort of critters (benthic macroinvertebrates) I can find in the water. Some of them can only survive in high-quality water, so if I find them I know it's a very good sign. The findings are also reported to IOWATER online. Sometimes I get surprises in my net. I especially

remember the adorable baby crawdads and the inch-long baby largemouth bass I caught during my training course (of course, we released the little guys back into the water right away!).

Second, IOWATER is an excellent opportunity for learning. Many people get a kick out of being an amateur chemist, and I'm no exception. The testing set

provided is easy and fun to use. Each month, I test the water for pH, nitrites, nitrates, chloride, dissolved oxygen and phosphate. It's a privilege, in our hectic and nature-deprived world, to be able to simply stand outdoors and pause for two minutes to see what shade of blue a solution becomes. Doing IOWATER can also make a person start asking questions about water, about the testing kit, about insects, about plants, you name it. There are so many things to be curious about! Whenever a question pops into my mind, I go online or ask a knowledgeable acquaintance in order to find out the answers.

Third, IOWATER can help connect people or strengthen the bonds they already have. In the spring, summer and fall, there are local "snapshots" where IOWATER-trained individuals, members of the general public, school groups, environmental groups and others get together for one day to make a big sweep of approximately a county-sized area. This is a great way to meet new people, make new friends, share your knowledge with others and learn from those who are more experienced. IOWATER testing is also a family-friendly activity and a good way to bring everyone together to spend some quality time. You can also get your friends involved. Earlier this year, I took a good friend along and we had a (much-needed) wonderfully relaxing time just hanging out together and talking.

Finally, IOWATER volunteers are giving back by helping to maintain or improve the health, safety and beauty of our bodies of water which in turn has a positive impact on plants, animals and humans. This goes beyond just gathering, recording and sending the data. The very presence of an IOWATER volunteer can promote the public's awareness of the importance of having clean water. Whenever a curious passerby stops and asks what I'm doing, I'm always happy to tell them about the program and encourage them to get involved in keeping the waters clean. Something as simple as picking up litter during a short walk makes a difference.

As you can see, IOWATER is a win-win endeavor. It's a way to enrich so many aspects of your life and at the same time help to promote safe, healthy water in so many ways. And now, IOWATER Level I training is coming to the Wapsi River E.E. Center on Wednesday, July 30th and Thursday, July 31st (see calendar of events for more details). Why not consider attending the workshop and telling others about it? You'll be glad you did!



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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

The Wapsi River Environmental Education Center is a cooperative project, managed and operated by Scott County Conservation with programming assistance from Clinton County Conservation. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and Quad City Conservation Alliance assisted with the original purchase of the property and fund raising.

Scott County Conservation Board

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Rich Mohr
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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.