

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Spring 2009

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!

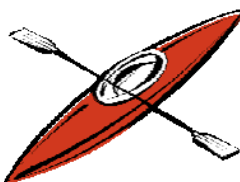
Calling all stewards, please visit our website www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wren.php and sign up to get "The W.R.E.N." electronically in an effort to **protect, conserve and preserve our vital resources**. Please contact us if you require a mailed version.

Visiting the Eagle View Eco Center

The Eagle View 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. Friends of the Wapsi Center meet monthly at the Eagle View Eco Center every third Thursday.

Water Programs in the Park

Join Wapsi River Center Director Dave Murcia, and staff, for public programs at West Lake Park and Scott County Park this season. A **canoe and kayak clinic**, with a tour of Lake of the Hills, is scheduled for 6:00 P.M. May 15 and June 5 at West Lake Park. Another clinic with a tour of Pride Lake is scheduled for 10:00 A.M. on July 11 at Scott County Park. Clinics will include instruction and equipment, but if you have a properly fitting life vest, feel free to bring it. You need not be a registered camper to attend these free programs, though space is limited. Please call (563)



328-3286 to reserve your spot.

School and Public Programs

From September - March of this school year, 3,370 students, teachers and parents participated in 64 field trips at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center.

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 www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation.php and view/download our **Field Trip Planner**. If you are an educator 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.



A total of 85 presentations were attended by 1,375 participants during September - March. Thanks to the Iowa winter weather, the Winter Outdoor Sports Day at Scott County Park and Winter Fun Day at the Center were cancelled due to unwinter-like conditions and severe cold. On May 16, please plan to attend our spring stewardship workday and after volunteering on a variety of projects, join us at the **2nd Annual "Chili Cook-off"** to vote for your favorite chili. Come support the **Friends of the Wapsi Center** and see if last year's winner, **Connie Huber** can hold on to the title for her championship chili.

Quad City Bald Eagle Days

The QCCA Expo Center held its annual Bald Eagle Days event on January 9 - 11 with good attendance; including 1,785



students on the Friday school program day! This year's theme was "How Animals Survive Winter". Visitors to the booth were able to feel native animal pelts, look into a bluebird house at a hibernating mouse, see real over-wintering insects and "catch" fish in the ice-fishing shelter donated by our friends at Gander Mountain. **Thank you** to all our volunteers who assisted at the booth!

Fire & Water in Scott County

The Wapsi River Center staff held two successful courses this past month with our partner the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IADNR).

On March 17, twenty-five participants completed the **8 Hr. Prescribed (RX) Fire Course** in cooperation with the IADNR Forestry Fire Program. Those in attendance included professionals, student interns, educators, landowners and local land stewards who were instructed in the mechanics of prescribed fire as a management tool. The course covered history, weather, equipment, burn plans, safety, resources available and a demonstration burn used to stimulate native prairie growth and set-back invasive species. Look to the future for more professional- and career-oriented fire courses in Scott County.



On March 26 and 27, certified Recreational Boater Safety Instructors from the Wapsi Center along with Clinton County Conservation naturalists conducted the **IADNR Boater Safety Course** at West Lake



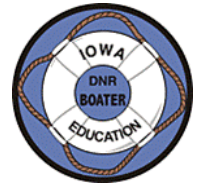
Park. Fifteen participants learned about responsible boating practices including equipment needs, boat operation and navigation, laws and regulations, emergencies and enjoying the water safely. Upon passing the certification exam, participants are issued a boater education certificate from the IADNR

that provides proof of certification as required for recreational activities in many states. Many boating raffle items were also given away; including two life vests donated by the IADNR!

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 River Center's facilities? We offer rentals including dormitory and cabin lodging along with meeting and eating amenities. Please visit our website and click on facilities for more information.

Upcoming educator, professional and citizen workshops are being planned for the year including an **IADNR Boater Safety Certification Course** scheduled for May 28 and 29 and an **American Red Cross Wilderness First Aid Course** on June 27 and 28. Plus, the ever-popular EDIWILD (Educators in the Wild) workshop is scheduled for June 22 - 25. The theme this year is "Rivers Run Thru It". Please look to our **spring events** calendar and local media for more information.



*Together, we can
save a life!*

Wapsi Staff Casts to Hundreds

Thanks to the National Recreation and Parks Association's **"Take Me Fishing"** grant awarded last year, many local youth were offered and enjoyed recreational boating and fishing opportunities. Approximately 1,814 youth ranging in age from 6-15 were given instruction in fishing; including safety, habitats, techniques and fish identification. Boating programs included safety, laws, techniques and awareness. The **"Take Me Fishing"** initiative offered staff training to promote, encourage and conduct 27 stewardship programs and encourages the sustainable actions of our youth regarding outdoor recreational activities.

Thanks to our next generation of stewards!



TAKE ME FISHING

LIVING GREEN - GREEN PETS

by Cassie Druhl, AmeriCorps Naturalist

It's no doubt that readers of *The W.R.E.N.* are environmentally conscious. Many of you volunteer at the Wapsi River Center; reduce, reuse and recycle; find creative ways to use old things; and do home composting. These are all wonderful ways for people to GO GREEN. But, have you ever thought that there are ways for your pet to GO GREEN, too?

Now, you might be thinking, "what kind of impact could my pet possibly have on the environment?" Even though pets are animals, just like the ones living in your backyard, they can make quite an impact on the environment. Mostly based on the choices their human companions make about their food, toys, litter and accessories.

First of all, think about your pet's food. Buying in bulk can benefit your pet as well as your wallet. Food can be repackaged into smaller, air-tight containers and then used over a longer period of time while maintaining freshness. Many pet foods are made with chemicals and preservatives that not only have an affect on the environment (during production), but sometimes are unhealthy for your pet. Next time you're grocery shopping, try out some organic pet foods, made from food sustainably grown free of pesticides. However, with all new foods, it might take a week or two for your pet to get used to it, so gradually mix it in every other day.

Of course, what comes out of your pet is just as important as what goes into them. Cat litter is a huge contributor to landfills and don't biodegrade very quickly since we bag up the feces when we scoop them out of their box. Also, many litters are clay-based rendering them non-flushable and non-treatable through local sewage treatment plants. However, there are now more options available when it comes to your cat's litter. Many organic litters are plant-based and made of wheat, pine needles, or corn. They clump just as well and last much longer. Some other bonuses to the organic litter are that it's practically odor-free, chemical-free and in some cases (be sure to read the label) – flushable. Try using biodegradable bags when picking up after your canine friends. They are

convenient for both pick-up and disposal; plus break down later to allow the waste to decompose.

We all love to spoil our pets with toys and accessories that keep them busy and happy. But many toys are not very durable and could potentially contain hazardous chemical components which can have a price, both to the environment and our wallets. Many things found in our everyday lives will provide hours of entertainment for your pet. Making your own toys for your pet is a great way to get creative and reuse some things around the house that you previously might have thrown away.

Here are a few ideas for eco-friendly, homemade toys: take a sleeve from an old fleece shirt to make a pull toy or a ribbon toy, fill an old sock with catnip (preferably organic) then tie the end shut, or re-stuff a de-stuffed animal with old socks then sew the holes shut. Empty toilet paper and paper towel rolls make great chew toys for rodents; plus they'll make their own bedding. Natural items, such as pine cones, can provide hours of "bat-able" fun.



Going green for your pet isn't as hard or inconvenient as one might think. Now more than ever, organic foods, litters, and accessories are available in stores all over the country. I did some research locally (two pet stores and two discount stores) and found all had green options for your pet. All four stores carried the environmentally-friendly cat litter brands of Feline Pine, World's Best Cat Litter, Special Kitty and GPC. They also carried Newman's Own and Iams organic food. One discount store carried natural hemp collars and leashes, as well as organic pet shampoos and stain removers. The other carried biodegradable poop bags and a special pet bed made from banana leaves and organic cotton. One pet store carried organic cat litter, small animal bedding and toys.

For more information about greening your pet, visit these websites: www.ecoanimal.com and www.planetgreen.discovery.com/go-green/green-pets-stuff-resources.html.

ANIMAL PROFILE - EASTERN MOLE

BY MARY JOHNSON, AMERICORPS NATURALIST

Mention the word “mole” to your friends and family, and see what type of reaction you get. My guess is they’ll react the same way I did when I decided to write this article, “Grr, those darn things! Moles drive me crazy! I HATE MOLES!” In reality, it isn’t the moles that everyone hates; it’s the unattractive tunnel lumps created throughout our yards, gardens, parks and golf courses. Hopefully after you’ve read this article, you’ll see these unique creatures in a different light, and maybe their good qualities will outweigh their negative.

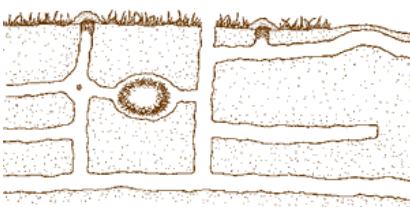
The eastern mole (*Scalopus aquaticus*) is the most common type of mole in Iowa. They belong to a group of animals called insectivores. You can probably guess from their grouping, that their favorite food is insects. Along with worms, snails, centipedes, millipedes, sow bugs and other invertebrates which make up 85-90% of their diet. The remainder of their diet consists of seeds and young plant shoots. Each day a mole can consume their weight in food. That’s a lot of bugs!



Eastern moles weigh about 2.5 ounces and are 4-8 inches long. Their short, soft, velvety fur is grayish in color and designed to allow unproblematic movement forward or backward within their tunnels. Their large front feet have five toes that are webbed. This, along with large claws that extend from their toes, allow for excellent digging. Moles can dig at a rate of 12-15 feet per hour!

Moles spend nearly their entire life underground and have several special adaptations to aide in their subterranean lifestyle. When you spend so much time in the dark, having good eye sight isn’t essential. Even though moles have eyes, they are permanently covered by their eyelids, allowing only the distinction of light and dark instead of actual images. Although their eyesight is poor, their fleshy snout allows for an excellent sense of smell and touch.

Moles dig two types of tunnels: shallow/surface tunnels and deep/permanent tunnels. Shallow/surface tunnels are the raised ridges you see on the surface of the turf. Surface runways are used while hunting for food. To some, the shallow/surface tunnels created by moles can be an eye sore, but the tunnels are



actually contributing to healthy, organic soil. As the animals move about, eat, and produce waste, they churn organic material, bring up moisture from the deeper layers and aerate the soil.

Moles also eat many of the destructive and harmful insects, grubs, and other larva that can overtake an area. Even during the cold winter months, moles will be active in their deep tunnels. Permanent tunnels are 6-24 inches below the surface, keeping them below the frost line. Nesting chambers are enlargements of the deep tunnels, which are lined with grass and leaves. These chambers are usually constructed below a protective structure such as a boulder, tree stump, or fence.

With all of this digging going on, you may be wondering what happens to all of the dirt? When doing deep excavation, moles will construct a volcano-shaped “molehill” that has no visible outlet or plug. Pocket gophers also make mounds of dirt and can cause similar damage to gardens and lawns, but their mound is flatter and possesses a visible outlet. Moles will not tolerate holes in their tunnels or hills and are quick to repair any damage that comes to them.



Gopher Mound



Mole Mound

In a good environment with moist, well-drained sandy soil, it may be very difficult to get rid of moles. However, moles pose no public health concerns to people. Even if you are able to get rid of the few moles that live on your property, more moles or other ground-dwelling animals will often move into the vacated space. If you are insistent on removing the moles in your area, first make sure that moles are actually the animals causing the damage. Second, check with your local government agency to make sure that removal is allowed in your area and whether you need to obtain a license. Third, really think about what you are doing. Moles contribute to a healthy ecosystem and can eat a lot of insect pests. So weigh your options carefully and make sure you are doing what is best for you and the environment.

If you still just can’t live with these grub-eating neighbors, figure out a reasonable removal method. Traps are the most reliable means of control for the eastern mole. Poisonous baits, gasses and ultrasonic devices are unreliable and may cause harm to other wildlife (not to mention domestic pets). You can also try live capture and relocation if you see active tunneling in progress. Simply dig up the culprit with a shovel, carefully place them into a large bucket and find it a new home. Any method you choose will require lots of patience, practice and persistence. If you choose to let them cohabitate with you and your yard, it may also require a bit of tolerance and change in perspective – like trying hard not to make mountains out of molehills.



PLANT PROFILE - EARLY BUTTERCUP

BY CASSIE DRUHL, AMERICORPS NATURALIST

After a dreary winter void of color, many of us are relieved when pops of color start appearing outdoors, particularly in the flowers. Yellow is one of the first colors to brighten our world and revive our appreciation for warmer weather to come. The early buttercup (*Ranunculus fascicularis*) is a wonderful flower to see as one hikes the Wapsi River Center's trails.

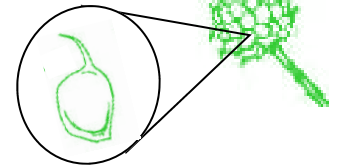
More than a dozen buttercup species are found in the state of Iowa (the state's most common wildflower species), but many are limited to certain counties. The early buttercup is one of the most prevalent in the state. The word "buttercup" is actually derived from a Latin word meaning "little frog," probably because certain species grow in wet areas where frogs are also found. This will give you a hint as to where to find these little beauties. The Wapsi Center's river trail is usually lined with buttercups, but some are also found further up in grassy areas. They will take the opportunity to grow anywhere, and are spread by pollination as well as simply dropping their seeds. Buttercups don't usually grow in a group, but rather grow scattered across low-lying woodland habitats.

The early buttercup gets its name from the time of year in which it appears – early April. However, other buttercup species can bloom from April through September. Buttercups are also "early" because they are one of the earliest flower structures observed in the fossil record. They have a very simple structure, which means that other plants could have been derived from it.

Buttercups are identified by looking at the petals. The flowers are about an inch across with five yellow petals and five green sepals (the green, leaf-like extensions under the petals). These special petals glisten in the sun as if waxed or varnished. In fact, they are shiny due to a special layer of reflective cells beneath the petals' surface cells. Their stems have alternate leaves that are divided into three sections,



and the flowers can grow up to six inches tall. Under the flower is a cluster of 20-50 green-beaked fruits; each containing a single seed.



In the past, early buttercups have been viewed as both helpful and harmful. Some Native American tribes pulverized buttercup roots, soaked the pulp in warm water, and used the resulting liquid as a wash for open wounds. A preparation of the roots was also used to stop a persistent nosebleed, and even treat rheumatism. Fisherman, of the 1800s, poured buttercup tea on the ground to bring worms to the surface. An old superstition originating in England says that if one holds a buttercup up to his or her face, and yellow light is reflected on their face (from the special reflective cells), it means that he or she likes butter.

Farmers have been known to rub the flowers on their cows' udders and hang them over their barn doors to make the milk rich with golden cream. When a cow pasture was gold with buttercups, it was believed to give the butter its golden color. However, the cows were not to eat the buttercups, since the early buttercup produces a poison that can be fatal to livestock and other animals – including people. The poison can cause a rash or blisters if one comes in contact with it, and can cause severe nausea and/or diarrhea if digested. However, the buttercup loses its poisonous property when cut or dried for hay. Some species of spring and summer buttercup are becoming more rare because people are constantly picking them or mowing over them, but the early buttercup's poison and bitter taste may be one reason why it is one of the least threatened species.

As you wander the Wapsi River Center's woods and marvel at the new spring wildflowers, be on the lookout for shiny, yellow petals that glisten in the sunlight. These early buttercups are truly unique and special flowers with an interesting history. They will most certainly take away your winter blues and fill your heart with sunshine.

APRIL

18th ~ Earth Day Expo ~ 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ QCCA Expo Center ~ The Quad Cities Earth Week Coalition is hosting its 6th 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.

22nd ~ Celebrate Earth Day ~ Find your personal way to show the earth you care. Go to www.QCEarthweek.org for a listing of local events.



23rd ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ (April 28 is rain/wind date) ~ The Wapsi River staff will light up the night sky during this educational program. Fire is a natural part of a prairie's life cycle. Along with a spectacular show, learn the how, why and when of prairie burns. Please call (563)328-3286 for more information.

24th ~ 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.



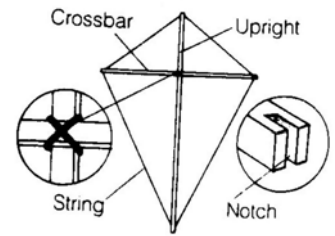
25th ~ The Great Garlic Mustard Challenge 2009 ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Quad Cities ~ Garlic mustard is an invasive, noxious plant that threatens our native woodlands, natural areas and wildlife habitat. Help us control it in our community by participating in The Challenge! Your team could

win the coveted Garlic Mustard Trophy for your efforts. Call to register at one of four locations: Black Hawk State Park - Rock Island, IL ~ Marilyn at (309) 764-1486, Duck Creek Park - Bettendorf, IA ~ Amy at (563) 391-1403 x3, Shuetzen Park - Davenport, IA ~ Brian at (563) 323-5196, and Sunderbruck Park in Davenport, IA ~ Greg at (563) 320-0384.

SPRING

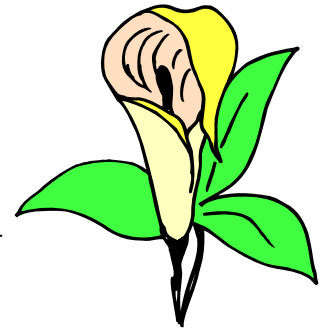
25th ~ Kite Flying 101 ~ 1:00 - 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ "Up, up and away!"

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.



MAY

2nd ~ Wildflower Hike ~ 10:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join us for a hike to identify some spring woodland wildflowers. Participants are asked to pre-register by calling (563) 328-3286.



2nd ~ 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.

2nd ~ Monsignor Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ 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.



3rd ~ Cache In Trash Out ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park's Rolling Hills Shelter, Gate 1 ~ Come to West Lake Park for this exciting new program! See special ad for more details.

EVENTS

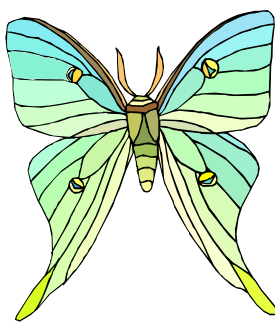
15th ~ Canoe and Kayak Tour ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park, Gate 1 ~

Canoe or kayak around Lake of the Hills at West Lake Park. Pre-registration requested by calling (563) 328-3286.



16th ~ Volunteer Stewardship Workday & Chili Cook-off ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The Wapsi River Center will host a spring workday. 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! Afterwards, enjoy several varieties of chili at the Chili Cook-off sponsored by the Friends of the Wapsi Center. Call to register at (563) 328-3286.

23rd ~ Owl, Bats & Moths – Oh My! ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center



~ Learn more about Mother Nature's night shift as we look for nocturnal creatures at the Wapsi Center. See firsthand how moths, bats and owls survive and thrive in the woodlands along the Wapsipinicon River. Participants should bring a small flashlight.

24th & 25th ~ 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 end of Scott County Park. Admission is \$2/adult and \$1/children.

28th & 29th ~ Boat Iowa: Safety Certification Course ~ 5:00 - 9:00 P.M. ~ Conservation Headquarters



- West Lake Park, Gate 3 ~ Participants will learn about navigating the water safely, properly maintaining your boating equipment, keeping up to date with Iowa boating laws, handling boating emergencies and more! Call (563) 328-3286 to register by May 22. Space is limited, so don't hesitate to take part in this opportunity!

JUNE

5th ~ Canoe and Kayak Tour ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park, Gate 1 ~ Canoe or kayak around Lake of the Hills at West Lake Park. Pre-registration requested by calling (563) 328-3286.

5th - 7th ~ 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.

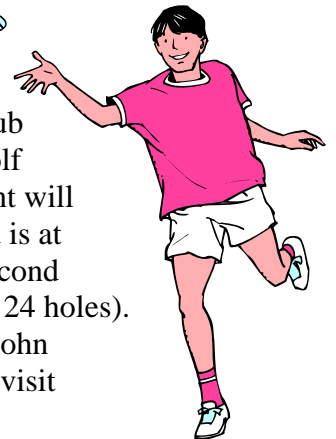


6th ~ Fishing Clinic ~ 8:00 A.M. - Noon ~ West Lake Park - Rolling Hills Shelter, Gate 1 ~ Kids, kindergarten - 6th grade, and an adult chaperone are invited to attend this event. Registration will

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

7th ~ River Cities Rumble ~ 7:00 A.M. ~ Camden Park Milan, IL ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park Davenport, IA ~

Attention all disc golfers! Join members of the Quad City Disc Golf Club for a PDGA B-Tier Disc Golf Tournament. The tournament will feature 2 rounds (first round is at Camden Park, 18 holes ~ second round is at West Lake Park, 24 holes). For more information, call John Resch at (563) 676-6686 or visit www.QCDGC.com



**8th - 12th ~ 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.



**13th ~ 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 - 19th ~ 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 and learn about deer from the Park Ranger. Plus take a trip to the Wapsi River 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.

**20th ~ Tenth Annual Triathlon ~ 7:00 A.M. ~ West
Lake Park - Beach Parking Lot, Gate 1 ~**

Participants begin the day by swimming Lake of the Hills, then bike a 15-mile trek and



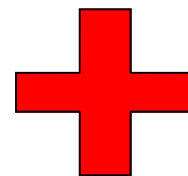
return to West Lake Park to finish with a run. Pre-registration is required. For further details contact Eric Sarno at (608) 848-7441 or (608) 209-1054 or www.qctriathlon.com.

**22nd - 25th ~ EDIWILD
2009 ~ Educators in the
Wild Workshop ~ Rivers
Run Thru It ~** See following page for details. Contact the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 for registration information.



**22nd - 26th ~ 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.

**27th & 28th ~ American
Red Cross Wilderness
First Aid ~ 8:00 A.M. -
4:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River
Center ~** Can you respond



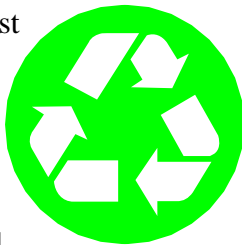
American Red Cross

Together, we can save a life!

to emergencies in a wilderness situation? Join a certified Red Cross instructor at the Eagle View Eco Center for this life-saving course! Objectives include learning to identify, prevent and give aid to injuries; respond in delayed help situations; experience simulated rescues; and much more. To complete the course, adventurers must attend both scheduled days. Call the American Red Cross at (309) 743-2166 to register. Cost for this wilderness challenge is \$80, which includes training and textbooks. Participants are asked to bring a sack lunch. Dormitory-style lodging is available at the Owl's Nest Dormitory for a minimal fee; call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 for reservations.

**29th - July 9th ~ Junior Conservationists Day
Camp ~ 9:30 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Nahant**

Marsh ~ The junior conservationist day camp, for 9-12 year olds, will allow kids the opportunity to learn and explore the natural world, renewable energy and history as it relates to the environment. Lunches, snacks and beverages will be provided. Call Nahant Marsh for more details at (563) 323-5196.



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.

11th ~ Canoe and Kayak Tour ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Scott County Park, South Entrance ~ Canoe or kayak around Pride Lake at Scott County Park. Pre-registration requested by calling (563) 328-3286.

JULY



6th - 10th ~ 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

18th ~ 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.



EDIWILD 2009 - "RIVERS RUN THRU IT"

MONDAY, JUNE 22 - THURSDAY, JUNE 25

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

This year's activities, tours and topics include: anatomy of a river; Carp Lake tour; pontoon float on Mississippi River with tours of Milan Bottoms, Credit Island, Smith's Island, Lock 'n Dam 13, Beaver Island and Joyce Slough; Army Corps of Engineers update on Navigation & Ecosystem Sustainability; Legislature on the Mississippi River, electrofishing, musseling; aquatic flora & fauna including invasives; fish tagging and aging with ooliths; water quality; impacts of flooding; canoeing 101 & kayaking with GPS; ecological float on Wapsipinicon River with IOWATER & Aquatic Wild activities and much, much more!

Cost for the workshop is \$65.00. If you are interested and would like to register, contact the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286. A brochure will be sent to you which includes a registration form, daily activities and locations; plus other details.



NAHANT MARSH WORKDAYS

Join the volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh Educational Field Station. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and sturdy shoes or boots. Workdays will begin at 9:00 A.M. and run to noon. Nahant Marsh is located 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 for more information.

APRIL

11th

18th

MAY

2nd

9th

16th

30th

JUNE

6th

13th

20th

27th

JULY

11th

18th

25th



CACHE IN TRASH OUT EVENT PLANNED

Heads up to all you geocachers out there! May 2 and 3 is the 7th annual international *Cache In Trash Out (CITO)* weekend. To celebrate, the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center is holding a free, outdoor event at West Lake Park's Rolling Hills Shelter (Gate 1) on Sunday, May 3 at 1:00 P.M.

What is geocaching? It's a high-tech treasure hunting game played all over the world by outdoor enthusiasts equipped with a Global Positioning System (GPS) device. Basically, you locate hidden containers, called geocaches, that are hidden in outdoor, public spaces and then you go on-line and share your experiences with others. Geocaching is a fun, environmentally-friendly activity that people of all ages can participate in.

The day will kick-off with a short, interactive program about trash and recycling from AmeriCorps Naturalist Mary Johnson. Participants will then be given the opportunity to go geocaching, but this time with an extra purpose; to collect trash as they go. Gloves and trash bags will be provided; all you need to bring is a GPS unit and a desire to have fun. Don't have a GPS unit...no problem! Several units will be available for loan on a first-come, first-served basis.

There will be a chance to win several prizes, some that will be hidden within the geocaches themselves! Refreshments and assistance will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center, so come prepared to get a little dirty and know that you'll be making a big difference!

For more information and to register for the event, call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286. For more information on geocaching itself and to learn more about Cache In Trash Out activities, check the following website: www.geocaching.com. If weather becomes a concern, the event will be rescheduled.

HOURS SET FOR SCOTT COUNTY PARK POOL & WEST LAKE PARK BEACH

SCOTT COUNTY PARK POOL

Open: Memorial Day Weekend

Re-open: Early June - Late August

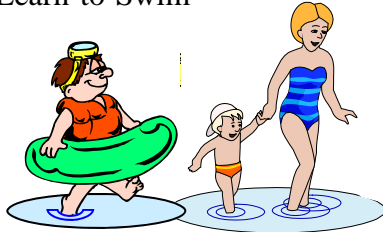
Weekdays: Noon - 8:00 P.M.

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

Open: Labor Day Weekend

Scott County Park Pool Learn-to-Swim

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.

KIDS' COLUMN

It's Spring! The official season to shake off the winter blues and have some fun! Here are some games to try out with your friends, family or students? *Steal the*

STEAL THE BACON

Number of Players

10 or more (plus a referee)

Alternate version (less than 10)



Equipment

Any object to represent the bacon.

How to Play

Divide group into two equal teams. The referee places the "bacon" in the center of the playing area. Each team should be on opposite sides of the area, about 20 feet apart. Have each team count off so that each player has a number.

The referee begins by calling out a number. The players from each team who have been assigned that number run to the bacon. The first one to grab it and cross over their own team's line without being tagged by the other player earns a point for their team. The first team to score 25 points wins the game.

Alternate version

Paired players sit on the floor, legs crossed, facing each other. The bacon is placed on the floor between the two players. The goal is to snatch the bacon before the other player and, at the same time, avoid being tagged on the arm/hand after grabbing it. The player snatching the bacon, returns to their spot, sits down and places bacon between their crossed legs.

Bacon can be played with a large or small group and really gets the blood pumping! *Odd Bean* is a fast-paced, fun guessing game for people of all ages. Both games require very little equipment, so gather some folks together and enjoy!

Each player that successfully snatches the bacon first, without getting tagged, gets one point. If a player tags their partner, before they are able to get back to their starting position, they get the point. The first player to receive five points wins.

ODD BEAN

Number of Players

Two or more

Equipment

Enough dried beans for each player to have 12

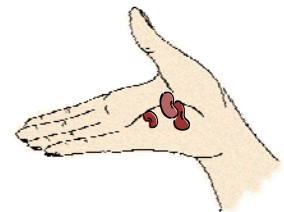
Small cups to hold the beans

Timer

How to Play

Set a timer to count down an agreed upon time limit. Each player is given a cup filled with twelve beans. "Holding" players hide a number of beans in one fist and ask a "guessing" player, "Odds or evens?" The "guessing" player must state their guess – odds or evens.

If the guess is correct, the "guesser" collects those beans from the "holder". If the guess is wrong, the "guesser" must forfeit the same number of beans to the "holder". Players cannot ask the same person twice in a row. The winner is determined by the most number of beans they have at the end of the time limit or when a player collects all the beans.



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A **Blue Violet** by Carl Kurtz

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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

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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.