

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Summer 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

Another Successful EDIWILD 2009

This year's (June 22-25) theme was "Rivers Run Thru It" and included such subjects as anatomy of a river, Mississippi River tours, flora/fauna of a river and canoeing/kayaking. The workshop uses an interdisciplinary approach to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum.

Thirty-seven educators completed the workshop where staff development and graduate credit were available through Area Education Agency 9 and Drake University. The workshop was sponsored by the following partnerships: Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, Scott and Clinton County Conservation Boards, Nahant Marsh Education Field Center, Eastern Iowa Community College District, River Action Inc. with support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Scott County Conservation Board Seeks Candidates for AmeriCorps Program

The Scott County Conservation Board (SCCB) is currently a participating member of the Eastern Iowa Conservation Alliance (EICA) and once again has been awarded an AmeriCorps grant through the Corporation for National Service and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. The SCCB is seeking 2 full-time members, please see the following information:



POSITION: The AmeriCorps Member(s) selected for this position will assist the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center (Center) staff in development and implementation of environmental education programs and activities including volunteer coordination, as well as development and maintenance of a 225-acre residential

environmental education center. To learn more about the Center please visit: www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi.php

DESCRIPTION: The AmeriCorps Member(s) will serve in planning and conducting programs for schools, youth groups and the general public, as well as all other aspects of environmental education including interpretive displays, exhibits and events. Service will also include assisting in development and maintenance of the Center including facility and trail maintenance, landscape maintenance, natural resource restoration projects, animal care, etc.

QUALIFICATIONS: Successful candidates must: be a U.S. citizen, be at least 17 years of age, certify that he/she has a high school diploma, GED, or agrees to obtain one while under service, possess an interest in the outdoors and natural resources, have the ability to work outside in all weather conditions in a variety of work schedules and possess a valid driver's license. The member must also have the ability to work with people of all ages including staff from a variety of County departments. Post high school education/ training in education, natural resources, or related field preferred but not required.

ENROLLMENT TERM: 1700 hours beginning Sept. 1, 2009, option to renew term.

BENEFITS: A 1st term full-time Member receives a living allowance of \$1,000/month; while a 2nd term Member receives an allowance of \$1,275/month. Full time Members receive a \$4,725 education award upon completion of the term, student loan deferment, health insurance, training, travel, safety equipment funding, AmeriCorps gear and real world experience while serving your community. Members will also have opportunities to participate in a variety of trainings/conferences including but not limited to: EICA monthly service days, the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service Conference, first aid/CPR, IAN (Iowa Association of

Naturalists) conferences, IACCB Winterfest Conference and various trainings in support of program mission.

TO APPLY: Send application letter and résumé to: Dave Murcia ~ Wapsi River Environmental Education Center ~ 31555 52nd Avenue ~ Dixon, Iowa 52745 or email to: jmurcia@scottcountyiowa.com. To learn more about AmeriCorps visit: www.americorps.org.

New Summer Program ~ Quad City Enviro-Kids

Join local environmental education agencies in a new summer program geared towards getting kids outdoors while learning about the environment! Activities include: GPS scavenger hunt/ compasses, farm to farmer's market, creek stomping & bug catching and a season ending family overnight camp-out!

Please call (563) 468-4218 or visit: www.ilivehereqc to register or for more information. All activities are weather dependent.



Programs of the Wapsi River Center

During this 2008-2009 school year approximately 5,598 students, teachers and parents participated in 108 field trips. A total of 276 public presentations were attended by 2,707 participants and kept staff busy considering May and June was fully booked. At our Earth Week Fair booth we saw a total of about 3,322 visitors.

If you would like to schedule a field trip, please schedule as far in advance as possible and visit our website to

view/download our **Field Trip Planner**. School programs are not scheduled for Mondays so that staff may work on administration and resource management. Don't forget – **The Wapsi River Center is a place for all seasons!!**

Volunteer Stewardship Workday

The Wapsi River Center will host a "Garden Party" workday (weather permitting) with support from the **Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc.** on Saturday, September 12 from 9:00 A.M. - Noon. An emphasis will be on planning and constructing a Native American and pioneer garden for future program needs. Other potential projects include prairie brush removal and transplanting/ landscaping. In appreciation for all the hard work and dedication, lunch will be provided by the **Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc.** after the event. (Hang around for the **Beautiful Butterflies** program at 1 P.M.!) To register and volunteer or learn more about the Friends group, call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.



Scout Opportunities

The Wapsi River Center continues to support the Scouts of America by providing limited camp space to local troops. Scouts may use Elm and Vincent campsites in return for service projects ranging from habitat/wildlife management to trail maintenance. The former Camp Minneyata is ideal for an **Eagle Scout Project!** Please call the Illowa Council at (563) 388-7233 for official tour permits and the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 for project proposals.

Hellos & Goodbyes

Cassie Druhl ~ Alas, my second term as an AmeriCorps Naturalist is coming to an end. I seriously can't believe I've been here as long as I have. I am really going to miss working at the Wapsi River Center because I've learned so much in my time here. I came in as a new college graduate with a Communication Studies degree (not your typical new naturalist) not knowing exactly how this job would relate to my major. However, I was pleasantly surprised at how much of my schooling really was put to use doing programs and writing for The W.R.E.N. I have been trained in things I never would have imagined, such as chainsaws, canoeing/kayaking and fire fighting – just to name a few. I learned to appreciate getting my hands dirty, in certain situations like mussel cleaning and pond studies, something I hastily avoided two years ago. This has truly been a life-changing experience; one that I hope to use as a springboard into a new career. No plans for future employment yet, but I'm keeping my hopes up as I apply for jobs related to conservation. I would like to thank the Wapsi

staff for being so encouraging and patient as I shed my girly side, and for being such great teachers who have really opened my eyes to the possibilities a career in conservation has to offer. It's been great!

Mary Johnson ~ How lucky I am to have been a part of something that makes saying goodbye so hard. Since April of 2008, I have been an AmeriCorps naturalist here at the Wapsi River Center. It has been an awesome and life changing experience full of new and exciting adventures! I want to thank everyone who has made it so wonderful. The memories and lessons that I have learned while working throughout Scott County and throughout the state of Iowa are ones that I'll carry with me for the rest of my life. Although I'm not sure exactly where I will go from here, I have great hopes to continue in the field of environmental education. I also plan on continuing on with my own education in the coming years. Thank you again for this amazing experience! Good-luck to the new AmeriCorps naturalists who will be starting in the fall. My advise, enjoy every moment – I did!

In Appreciation of Your Support of the Wapsi River Center

*Cecilia Braam
Rosie Dressen
Maraget Paulos
George & Helen Bentrott
Mary Rourke
K.J. Rebarcak
Nick Johnson
Carl Gerwulf
Jen Owens
Bill Robbins
Lucia Dryanski
The Cleve Family*

*Linda Gerwulf
Erma Wiszmann
Pamela Ellis
Carol Rogers
Deana Alden
Ingrid Bogdanowicz
Vivian Norton
Bob Bryant
Dave Huber
Jacqueline Stepaniak
Dottie Wala
Robert Fisher*

*Audrey Hines
Murcia Girls & Charlotte
Mr. & Mrs. Varcho
Mark Stepaniak
Matt Gebhart
East Central Elementary
Ridgewood School
Hillcrest Elementary
Blackhawk Hiking Club
Girl Scout Troop 2558
Camp Conestoga
Gander Mountain*

Kids' Corner

Try to find the following birds of prey in this word puzzle. Look forward, backward and diagonal:

Accipiter
American Kestrel
Cooper's Hawk
Crested Caracara
Northern Goshawk
Prairie Falcon
Mississippi Kite
Northern Harrier
Red-tailed Hawk
Swainson's Hawk
Golden Eagle
Gyr Falcon
Bald Eagle
Merlin
Osprey



Answers at end of
Summer Events.

R E I R R A H N R E H T R O N W M A V C
A M E R I C A N K E S T R E L N I O R D
J P C Z R P A S T R Y E R P S O S E K A
K N O A E V L W K Z A I O D B R S T G C
A O O I D T G A F E J U F K O T I U O C
R C P O T V Y I Y E R A S O E H S B L I
K L E N A V R N O I L N O D X E S L D P
E A R A I E F S J C I T C A R R I C E I
A F S L L L A O O L D A A W Y N P A N T
G E H R E G L N M E R L I N P G P T E E
R I A E D A C S I A M A N D D O I A A R
R R W M H E O H C N E Y R I E S K L G K
N I K D A D N A R S R Y O Z Z H I O L T
Y A I R W L R W F A L K O N S A T N E R
D R N G K A R K D A I C I D E W E S O T
M P Y C N B F W I R O T P A R K D M A G

Volunteer Voices

A page dedicated to the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. – a citizens support group of the Wapsi River E. E. Center

Volunteer Profile - Dottie Wala

Dottie Wala, a retired library media specialist, grew up in suburban Philadelphia, PA as one of four siblings. She came by her love of nature honestly, describing her family as “rabid outdoor enthusiasts.” During her growing up years, she recalls the family taking drives in the country every weekend. Her parent’s dream was to own a piece of land with woods and water. Eventually, her parents found and bought a piece of land that fit the bill, and the family named it “Three Corners,” due to its triangular shape. Thereafter, the weekend trips were to their land – with her parents working on the land with saws and loppers and Dottie and her siblings exploring the stream, woods and adjacent farms.



Each year, during the summer, her father had a one-week vacation and her mom would plan a family trip to a different Pennsylvania State Park. When Dottie was in 10th grade, the family took their “USA Big Parks Tour,” seeing the California Redwoods and the Dakota Badlands, among other places.

Dottie went to college in Ohio, studying education, and then met and married her husband Jerry. Jerry’s first teaching job was in Alaska, a place Dottie always wanted to explore, so the couple packed all their belongings into their used Chrysler and hit the road. On the way to Alaska, they went through the Canadian National Parks of Banff and Jasper, where Dottie

saw her first elk. Her biggest disappointment in Alaska was the amount of land covered by muskeg (a peat bog consisting of dead plants in various stages of decomposition and a water level near the surface), which really cramped her style when it came to hiking! After two years in Alaska, Dottie & Jerry moved to Seattle (where they climbed in the Cascades and hiked Mount St. Helens with their young son before the eruption), and then to Iowa.

Dottie has been a member of the Friends of the Wapsi Center since its beginnings in January of 1993. She saw a newspaper item about the first Friends’ meeting, and thought, “that’s something I need to be involved in.” There were 6-8 people at that first meeting, organized by Bob Bryant (then Director of the Wapsi River Center). In the early days, Dottie was at the Center almost every week, working on buildings that were under renovation and clearing trails. In the years since, Dottie has been involved in a myriad of activities, including hosting the Center on weekends, Winter Fun Days, volunteer workdays, staffing the Center’s booth at Bald Eagle Days, helping with visiting school groups and youth groups during the summer.

When asked why folks should join the Friends’ group, Dottie replies, “You just learn so much from the other people in the group, and it’s a fun group of people to be with.”

Vital Statistics

Friend Since: January 1993

Favorite Plant: Lily of the Valley (cultivated)
Bedstraw (wild)

Favorite Bird: Cardinal

Favorite Animal: Squirrel

Favorite Tree: Burr Oak

Favorite Book: *Stewart Little*

Favorite Nature Book:

A Walk in the Woods

Favorite Movie: *Never Cry Wolf*

Attention, Friends Group Supporters!

Thanks to the efforts of our AmeriCorps Naturalist Cassie Druhl (2007-2009) and the support of our own **Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc.** (501 3c) members, a new community fundraising opportunity has now been established! In recognition and support of the efforts and commitment made to environmental education at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, **Schnucks** will contribute a percentage of your purchase to the Friends Group every time you shop, just present your card to the cashier. This community effort is just one way the **Scott County Conservation Board** has initiated sustainable practices within the workplace to improve the quality of life within Scott County!



Ask for an eScrip Community Card at the Schnucks service

counter and follow the instructions on the front sticker. When calling to activate your card, state you are supporting the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. in zip code 52745 with ID# 500021569. It is that simple and the cards come in two convenient sizes – one for your wallet and one to attach to your key ring.

You can read more about the Friends Group and their environmental education efforts on their webpage at: www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi_friends.php and to learn more about the eScrip Community Card program go to: www.schnucks.com and click on the eScrip Community Card link.



Living Green - Ready, Set, Compost!

by Mary Johnson, AmeriCorps Naturalist

Are you someone who makes a New Year's resolution every year, but have a hard time sticking with it? I was that way too, so this year I wanted to try something different. Instead, I decided to try a "green resolution." This past Earth Day I made a goal for myself – learn how to compost. Although it's taken me awhile to get going, I've discovered that composting can be a really easy and economical activity that everyone can do. Here are some tips and tricks to help you get started.

Compost 101

Composting is the process of turning organic plant and animal material into useful, nutrient-rich, decomposed matter a.k.a. "black gold" or humus. It is a natural process in the environment; however, people have utilized composting since before biblical times. Composting can be done large scale, as community compost sites, or small scale with backyard bins and even kitchen countertop units! By composting kitchen scraps and yard clippings, you help reduce the amount of solid waste that ends up in landfills. It can also give your garden or house plants a healthy, chemical-free boost.

Getting Started



For those who are new to composting or those who live in an urban area, container composting is an easy way to get started. Many internet sites have directions on how to build your own outdoor container; however, many garden stores also sell a variety of different sizes and types of composting containers. A simple coffee can makes a nice indoor/countertop compost container.

First, choose a location to set up your compost bin. Two basic types of bins are open container and closed container. There are benefits and drawbacks to each, so you'll have to decide what works best for your needs. Both can produce amazing compost, if you add the right ingredients. Two chambers are better than one when using a compost bin. It will help you produce more useful compost quicker. Other tools that may be useful in the composting process are: a shovel or trowel, pitchfork, garden cart or wheelbarrow and a compost thermometer.

The next step is adding the key ingredients. Basically, food, water and air are what the microorganisms (i.e. bacteria, fungi and invertebrates) need to help you make compost. Water and air are the easy part, but a well

balanced diet of different food elements will require some consideration. The food portion consists of 1 part green (nitrogen) to 4-5 parts brown (carbon) by volume. Examples of greens are: fresh grass clippings, fresh manure, kitchen scraps (fruits, veggies, coffee grounds and tea bags), human hair and weeds/green leaves. Examples of browns are: brown/dry



leaves, dried grass, yard debris, dried corncobs, straw, sawdust and stale bread. The smaller your organic materials are, going into the bin, the faster it will decompose. There are some items that should not be added to compost bins.

These items include: meat, fish, bones, fats/oil, dairy/cheese, pet waste, plastic, metal or newspaper.

Commonly Asked Questions

Will it stink? No, or at least it shouldn't. Monitoring your bin and making sure that the ingredients are balanced will help insure low to no odor and will also help to avoid attracting pests.

How long does the process take? Results can vary. However, if you create a nice, "hot" pile of ingredients (95°-130°F +) and the materials that you added were chopped up nice and small, your compost may be ready in just a few weeks. Your compost is "done" when it has a crumbly texture, is a dark color and has a pleasant "earthy" smell. The temperature of the compost at that time will be right around air temperature. Try and use your compost as soon as it is ready, since it tends to lose some of its nutrients the longer it sits.

I hope that this short introduction to composting gets you as excited about it as I am. Making small "green" differences in your home can make a huge difference for the earth.

For more information about composting, head over to your local library. You'll be amazed how many books have been written about this topic. (For a more in depth look at composting, the Spring 1998 edition of The W.R.E.N. has an article available upon request. Contact the Wapsi River Center for a copy.) Listed below are some websites that helped me get started. Good luck and don't be afraid to get dirty!



www.howtocompost.org ~ www.compost.org/qna.html ~ www.rafb.com/pages/compost/Complan.html ~ www.gaiam.com/category/eco-home-outdoor/outdoor/composting.do

July

10th ~ Canoe and Kayak Tour ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Pride Lake, Scott County Park ~ Come learn the basics of canoeing and kayaking while you paddle around Pride Lake. Programming includes water safety, instruction and equipment (please bring your own gear if you wish). This event is **weather dependent** and pre-registration is required by calling (563) 328-3286. **NOTE:** this program

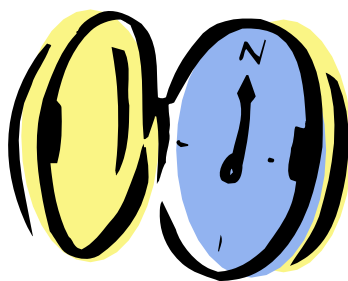


meets requirements for participation in the August 15 river float.

13th - 17th ~ 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 ~ Quad City Enviro-kids: GPS Scavenger Hunt and Compasses ~ 9:00

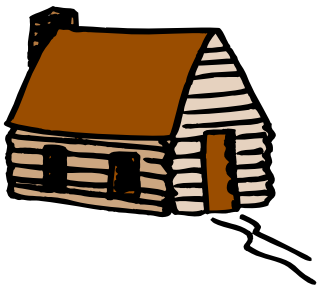
A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Sign up for this brand new summer program for 3rd - 5th graders. Learn about Global Positioning Systems and using a map and compass. Call (563) 468-4218 or visit www.ilivehereqc.org for more details.



18th ~ 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.

20th - 24th ~ 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

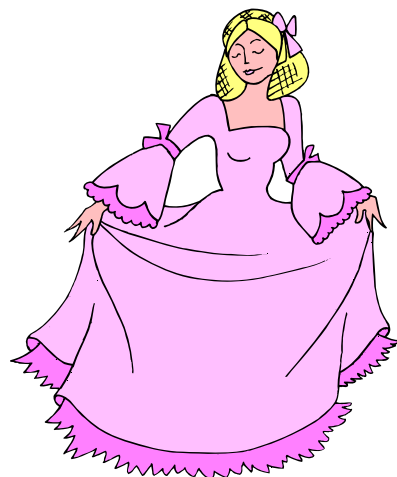


SUMMER

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.

25th ~ Canoe and Kayak Tour ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ Lake of the Hills, West Lake Park ~ Come learn the basics of canoeing and kayaking while you paddle around Lake of the Hills. Programming includes water safety, instruction and equipment (please bring your own gear if you wish). This event is **weather dependent** and pre-registration is required by calling (563) 328-3286. **NOTE:** this program meets requirement for participation in the August 15 river float.

26th ~ 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.



27th - 31st ~ 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.

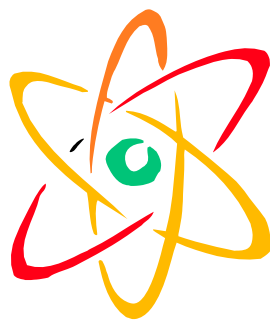
August

1st ~ Quad City Enviro-kids: Farm to Farmer's Market ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Freight House ~ Sign up for this brand new summer program for 3rd - 5th graders. Meet at the Freight House Farmer's Market, 421 West



EVENTS

River Drive in Davenport, to learn about natural homegrown produce and goods. Students will then visit "Miss Effie's" a farm near Donahue to see how a farm operates. Call (563) 468-4218 or visit www.ilivehereqc.org for more details.



3rd - 7th ~ Nahant Marsh Junior Conservationist Day Camp ~ 9:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M. ~ Nahant Marsh ~ This camp is for children ages 9-12 will allow kids to learn and explore the natural world, renewable energy and history as it relates to the environment. Lunch, snacks and beverages will be provided. Conservation field kits

will be given to each participant. Cost is \$60. To learn more about activities, scholarships or registration, call (563) 326-7812 or go to www.nahantmarsh.org.

8th ~ 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.



8th ~ Gander Mountain Outdoor Expo Day ~ 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ Davenport Gander Mountain Store ~ Come join Dave

Murcia, Wapsi River Center director, as well as other local partners in outdoor education for a fun day of activities for the whole family! Wapsi River Center activities will include water and boating safety. Call Gander Mountain representative, Adam Nupp at (563) 344-8880 for more details.

8th ~ The Madagascar Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Katie van der Linden will share her three week experience in Madagascar through photos. Amazing lemurs, chameleons and boa constrictors were a few of the natural highlights. This isn't like any *DreamWorks* movie you've ever seen!



Call to reserve a spot; (563) 328-3286.

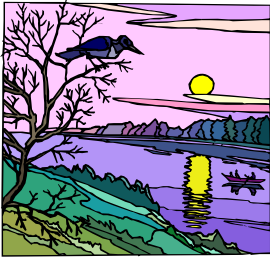
14th - 16th ~ Hunter Safety Education Camp ~ 6:00 P.M. (Fri) - 4:00 P.M. (Sun) ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Standard hunter safety courses are 10 hours long. In this event, we will go far beyond the basics. In addition to all of the hunter education standards, we will be teaching advanced shooting techniques, 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.



15th ~ Quad City Enviro-kids: Creek Stomping and Bug Catching ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Crow Creek ~ Sign up for this brand new summer program for 3rd - 5th graders. Join Amy Johansen, coordinator for the Partners of Scott County Watersheds, to learn about Bettendorf's Crow Creek. Learn about water testing and catch live critters which call the creek their home. Call (563) 468-4218 or visit www.ilivehereqc.org for more details.



15th ~ Wapsipinicon River Float ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. (approximate return time) ~ Wapsi River Center access to Allen's Grove Park ~ Join us for a 10-mile canoe trip down one of the last wildy scenic and free-flowing rivers left in Iowa. A minimal \$20 registration fee per canoe is required by Wednesday, August 12, so please register early as these floats fill quickly! Participants are required to have canoe experience and may attend the July 10 or 25 canoe/kayak



tours to meet this requirement. Register by calling (563) 328-3286 with names, phone number of where you may be reached on morning of float, and life jacket sizes needed (less than 50 lbs., 50-90 lbs. or over 90 lbs.).

Participants may bring their own life jacket, provided it is US Coast Guard approved. Each canoe holds a maximum of: 2 adults/1 youth, 1 adult/2 youth or 2 adults/2 smaller youths. Participants will meet at Alan's Grove Landing 4.5 miles north of Donahue, Iowa. Participants must bring: adequate water, sunscreen, appropriate clothing (clothes & footwear that can get wet/dirty), and a sack lunch. This canoe float is **weather and river dependent** and we will provide canoes, paddles, life jackets and coolers for lunches. For more info on this Iowa DNR Water Trail visit www.iowadnr.gov/watertrails/index.

15th ~ Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.



21st - 23rd ~ Fourth Annual LWRCP ~ Lower Wapsipinicon River Cleanup Project ~ 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Please join us again to clean up the Wapsi. We will begin Saturday morning at Walter's Landing near McCausland, IA and finish at Rock Creek. Base camp for Friday and Saturday nights will be at Rock Creek Marina. Tent camping is free; cabins and electrical sites are available at your own expense. Showers, flush toilets and running water will be available at the campground. Friday night is optional, but the community campfire is fun. You must be checked in prior to 8:00 A.M. Saturday morning. Saturday evening's naturalist lead programs will add to your knowledge of rivers and their inhabitants.

L O W E R wapsipinicon



Participants may feed themselves or order catered meals in advance with their registration. This includes all three meals on Saturday, and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. There are also convenience stores and restaurants in the surrounding towns. T-shirts can also be ordered.

A limited number of canoes, paddles, and orange "keyhole" PFDs will be provided free though you may want to use your own. PFD's will be worn at all times while participants are on the river. For more information please contact Melisa Petersen at coordinator@lowerwapsicleanup.org.

22nd ~ X-stream Cleanup 2009 ~ 8:30 A.M. - Noon ~ Quad Cities ~ The X-stream 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.xstreamcleanup.org.

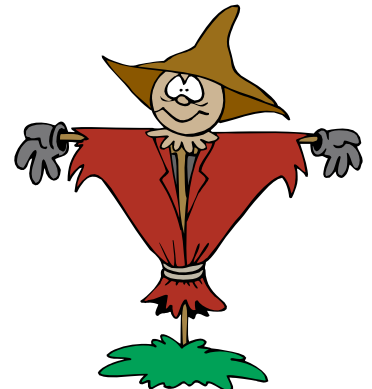


28th & 29th ~ Quad City Enviro-Kids: Wapsi River Center Family Campout ~ 7:00 P.M. (Fri) - 10:00 A.M. (Sat) ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join us as we conclude the summer's Environ-Kids

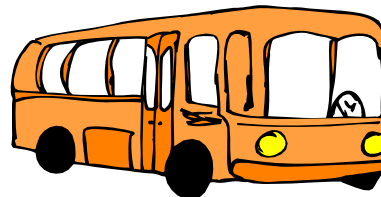
program with a good old-fashioned campout, complete with hiking, exploring and cooking over a campfire. Please bring your own tent – some tents are available upon request. Dormitory-style sleeping is also available for a nominal fee. Call (563) 468-4218 or visit www.ilivehereqc.org for more details.

September

6th & 7th ~ 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.



10th ~ Nahant Marsh Bus Tour ~ 8:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Meet at Duck Creek Lodge in Bettendorf ~ Join conservation experts and tour various sites to learn hands-on identification and best control options for invasive plants in the late growing season. As time allows, we will be touring areas of Duck Creek Park, Black Hawk Historic Site, Nahant Marsh, Fairmount



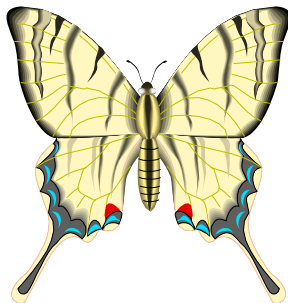
Cemetery and Sunderbruch Park. To register; call ISU Scott County Extension at (563) 359-7577.



12th ~ Volunteer Stewardship Day, "Garden Party" ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Wapsi staff in projects related to native plants including invasive species/brush removal, landscape transplanting and Native American and early pioneer gardening. An emphasis will be on planning and constructing a native garden site for future program needs. This event is **weather**

dependent and all ages are welcome. Register to volunteer at (563) 328-3286. In appreciation for volunteer efforts, lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center after the workday.

12th ~ Beautiful Butterflies ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come learn about those amazing butterflies. We will be catching and identifying butterflies on the prairie and make-n-take a butterfly craft. Call (563) 328-3286 to register.



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.

19th ~ Birds of Prey; Great Horned Owl ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Director Dave Murcia to learn about birds of prey that are native to our area. We

will also introduce our newest inhabitant – a great horned owl! A night hike after the indoor portion will finish out the program. Register for this program by calling (563) 328-3286



Answers to Kids' Corner

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House Cleaning on the Mississippi

by Mary Johnson, AmeriCorps Naturalist



On June 20, several of the Wapsi River Center staff joined in with a group from Exelon Nuclear to clean mussels in the Mississippi River. The group began just upriver from the Cordova boat ramp and visited three different mussel beds. Their goal was to find native mussels such as: pocketbook, wartyback, heelsplitter, pigtoe, sandshell and the endangered Higgin's eye. Once these mussels were located, participants removed the invasive zebra mussels by hand. Zebra mussels attach to various native mussels as well as virtually any stationary object in the water. They attach in such great numbers that they can inhibit natural movement and even suffocate their hosts. Overall, it was a successful event with around 40 lbs. of Zebra mussels removed! I hope this cooperative effort becomes an annual event.



Wildlife Profile - Green Hydra

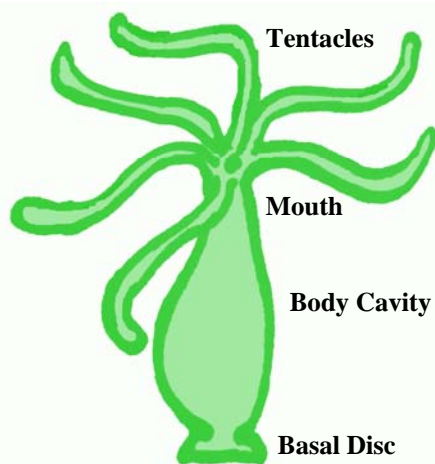
by Michael Granger, Naturalist

If you have visited the Wapsi River Center, formerly Camp Minneyata, you know that there is an old swimming pool which has been reclaimed by Mother Nature. The pool now contains a vast array of plant and animal species. A variety of frog species, dragonflies, water striders, whirligig beetles and spectacular fishing spiders are just some of the larger organisms inhabiting this watery world. With a microscope, this world can be explored even further. Let me introduce to you a habitat unlike any other, below the surface of this tranquil setting.

When conducting a pond study with one of the many school groups visiting the Wapsi River Center, a class discovered a truly amazing creature, the Green Hydra – *Chlorohydra viridissima*. Hydras are related to jellyfish, sea anemone and coral all of which belong to the phylum Cnidaria. This phylum has 11,000 saltwater species. Approximately 50 species are found in freshwater, making the hydra a unique find.

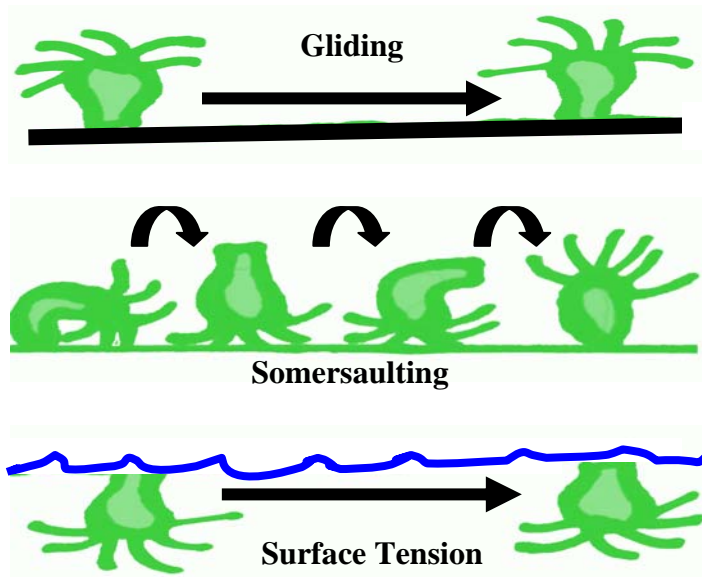
Hydras attach themselves to the underside of floating duckweed or other aquatic vegetation with a structure called the basal disc (see diagram). They have a simple bell or sac-like body with a mouth centered within the bell. Hydras have six to ten “oral arms” or tentacles which help them capture prey. The green hydra contains single celled algae known as chorella which give them their lime green color. The algae benefits by living in a safe environment and gaining nutrients from food eaten by the hydra.

Hydras which contain green algae, have been reported to live longer without food than hydras which do not contain the algae; therefore, this symbiotic relationship appears to benefit both species.



When attached, hydras are able to move their bodies by the use of muscles and hydraulic pressure. By drawing water into their digestive cavity, they are able to extend from 0.5 mm to 20 mm in length. Hydras have three modes of locomotion. They can glide across a substrate

via their basal disc, somersault towards their destination, or use an air bubble to rise to the surface, while suspended upside down, and be transported by the surface tension of the water.



Hydras are carnivorous and feed on small organism found in the water. As with their relatives, hydras have a number of different types of stinging cells called nematocysts on their tentacles. Coiled tubes are shot out at any passing prey which has had the misfortune to touch a tentacle. The prey gets all tangled up and unable to move. A second kind of nematocyst, which may have barbs or spines on it, is also fired into the prey. These release toxins into the prey which paralyze it. Once a nematocyst is fired, its existence is over, but hydras continually produce new ones in order to be ready for their next meal. These microscopic stinging cells have no affect on human beings, due to their minute size.

Hydras reproduce in two ways throughout the year. The first method involves a new hydra budding from the “parent” hydra’s body wall. The young hydra shares the same body cavity with its parent until it pinches off and begins a life on its own. This type of reproduction occurs during the warmer months of the year. Hydras are either female or male. As winter approaches, females will produce eggs and deposit them in areas which are then later fertilized by nearby males. These eggs are tough and can last through the winter months, ensuring future populations of hydras into the following year.

Hydras are fascinating creatures and can be found in our local waters. Just learning about their mysterious ways makes me appreciate the lives they lead. I look forward to future visits to the Osprey Aquatic Lab and hope to find more amazing creatures below the surface.

Plant Profile - Wild Leek

by Cassie Druhl, AmeriCorps Naturalist

Every year, hikers can enjoy hundreds of species of plants found in woodland habitats and parks around Iowa. We use our sense of smell to soak in sweet perfume and take time to look at the bright colors and patterns. However, most people wouldn't think about tasting these plants. The wild leek, *Allium tricoccum*, is a wild edible found at the Wapsi River Center and other rich wooded areas in the Midwest and Canada. This plant, also known as the ramp, ramson, or spring onion in certain parts of the country, is a member of the lily family and a relative of the onion. It adds flavor to any recipe, while also providing certain health benefits.

Found in damp woodland habitats, the wild leek can reach a size of 6 to 8 inches tall. It has small, white bulbs with purplish stems from which wide leaves grow in large patches. The plant usually doesn't spread too far because of the prolific invasive species – garlic mustard. The leaves develop in late-March and start to turn yellow and wither away in early-July. Then, it develops a naked flowering stalk up to 1½ feet tall. The flowers are white



and are ¼ inch long with petals in spherical clusters. In mid autumn, the flowers are replaced with glossy black seeds. Every part of the plant is edible and has a distinct onion smell. However, most animals rarely eat them, with the exception

of bees who are also responsible for pollinating the plant. Wild leek contains large amounts of vitamin C and vitamin A, equal to other plants like oranges and spinach. It also can lower cholesterol just like garlic. Edible morel mushrooms are also commonly found growing around wild leeks.

Native American tribes all around the Midwest used the wild leek in recipes, replacing onions or garlic, and found that it was a nutritious complement to buffalo meat. It was also found to be very tasty on its own as a vegetable. The city of Chicago supposedly got its name from the Potawatomi word "Checagou" (Chick-Ah-Goo-Ah) or "Checaguar," that means "wild onions" or "skunk" because of the vast amount of wild leeks that used to cover the area and gave off a very strong odor.

In the present day, many towns in the United States host "Ramp Festivals" that celebrate the many uses of the wild leek. In Richwood, West Virginia's annual "Feast of the Ramson" (the ramp capital of the world), festival-goers share recipes and participate in ramp-eating contests; plus enjoy many dinners prepared with the wild

edible. Other states that participate in ramp festivals are Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, South Carolina and Pennsylvania. They are most commonly fried with potatoes in bacon grease or scrambled with eggs and served with bacon, pinto beans and cornbread. Wild leeks used to be just as popular in parts of Canada, but because they are not as prevalent as they once were, they are now a protected species (with only a certain number of plants allowed to be harvested every year) and are considered a rare delicacy.

Here are a few simple wild leek recipes (courtesy of [Minnesota Out-of-Doors Magazine](#)):

May Basket Salad

1 bunch leaf or head lettuce
Bulbs and leaves from 1 dozen wild leeks
1 cup violets, whole blossoms and leaves
2 cups whole watercress
A few additional wild leeks and violets to garnish

Tear lettuce into bite-size pieces. Slice bulbs and tear leaves of wild leek into pieces. Toss with whole violets and watercress. Garnish with additional whole leaves, bulbs and blossoms to decorate. Excellent with either creamy or tangy salad dressings. Serves 6.

Creamed Wild Leek Soup

2 cups wild leek bulbs, halved lengthwise
1 cup wild leek leaves, chopped
¼ cup butter
3 tablespoons flour
6 cups chicken or vegetable broth
2 egg yolks
1 cup heavy cream
Salt and pepper
Minced wild leek leaves



Sauté wild leek bulbs and chopped leaves in butter over low heat. When tender, stir in flour, mixing well. Slowly whisk in 6 cups of broth then simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Whisk together egg yolks and ⅔ cup cream until blended; slowly whisk mixture into soup, a little at a time, then raise heat and bring to a near boil. Stir until thickened. Salt and pepper to taste. Whip remaining ⅓ cup cream; top each serving with a generous spoonful then garnish with minced wild leek leaves. Serves 6.

The wild leek is definitely a "fleeting" spring and summer treat because there is a narrow window of time to harvest these plants in peak condition. Thus, many people around the country spend lots of hours hunting them. Remember, if you choose to gather wild leeks, make sure that it is permitted in the area you find them in. Happy hunting, and don't forget the breath mints!

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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.

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If you would like to receive "The W.R.E.N." and do not have internet access, please send a post card to the Wapsi River E. E. Center at the address above.

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