

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Spring 2010

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

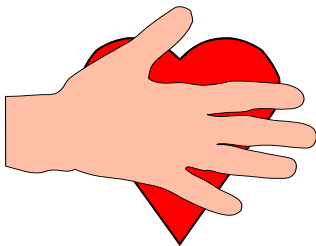
by Dave Murcia, Director

Spring is Green!

Calling all stewards, please visit our website www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation.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 ~ (563) 328-3286.

Sustainability - Scott County Goes Green!

The Scott County Board of Supervisors has taken steps to lay the path of a sustainable government including a dedication to the environment through a **"Green Pledge"**. Scott County takes PRIDE in supporting community leadership in sustainability as a member of the **Bi-State Region Clean Air Partnership**.

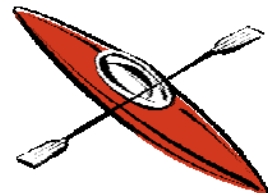


This commitment specifically supports and promotes cleaner air by continuing the best management practices as well as implementing other cost-effective practices. The pledge takes into consideration transportation, energy and emissions reductions, operations and maintenance, and particulate matter. Examples of current practices include: conducting energy audits, reducing waste, recycling and purchasing environmentally-friendly products to name just a few.

The Scott County Conservation Board and staff are proud to support these practices and encourage you to become stewards of Scott County in promoting an active and healthy community through a **sustainable lifestyle!**

Fire and Water Programs in the Parks

Join myself and staff for public programs at **West Lake Park** and **Scott County Park** this season. **Canoe and kayak clinics** are scheduled on May 14 and June 4 at West Lake Park's Lake of the Hills and on July 16 at Scott County Park's Pride Lake. All programs will begin at 6:00 P.M. and include instruction and equipment including life vests. You need not be a registered camper to attend these free programs though space is limited, so please call (563) 328-3286 to reserve your fun.



Look for upcoming prescribed R_x fire courses and trainings as the season dictates in cooperation with local partners. Last fall a national wildland firefighter certification course was held including I100, L180, S130 and S190. Dozens of local stewards in government, non-profit organizations, as well as local landowners completed the course to support habitat management with fire.

School and Public Programs

From September-February of this school year, 2,494 students, teachers and parents participated in 37 field trips at the Wapsi River Center. A total of 41 public presentations were attended by 673 participants on-site; while 463 participants attended 15 programs off-site.

Our **Winter Fun Day** was a success with about 26 participants taking advantage of cross-country skiing, woodland crafts, a snowshoe hike and winter bird feeding.

During the event, Pack 199 of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School won the **3rd Annual "Chili Cook-off"** as a new entry – Congratulations! For the second year, I was invited to participate in the **Bettendorf Community School District's Science Fair** and gave presentations on birds of prey to just over 100 participants!



The Wapsi River Center takes an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education. The Center's staff can help plan your field trip to meet educator needs.

Visit our website and view/download our **Field Trip Planner**. 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.

Quad City Bald Eagle Events

The QCCA Expo Center held its annual **Bald Eagle Days** event January 8-10 with 1,159 students attending on the Friday school



program day! Visitors to the booth were able to see native animal specimens including fox, beaver, woodpeckers, frogs and a live great horned owl! **Thank you** to all our volunteers who assisted at the booth.

The **Mississippi Valley Welcome Center** also held its annual Bald Eagle Days Watch January 30 and 31 in cooperation with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Wapsi River Center. About 198 visitors took advantage of a film on bald eagles and then learned about birds of prey with live specimens including an Eastern screech owl, great horned owl and American kestrel. The Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. received a substantial donation for our participation in this event.

In Appreciation of Your Support of the Wapsi River Center



Carol Rogers
Hetty & Chuck Volt
Erma Wiszmann
Connie Huber
Ingrid Bogdanowicz
Bill Robbins
Cecilia Braam
George & Helen Bentrott
Rosie Dressen

Carl Gerwulf
Dave Huber
Lucia Dryanski
Illene & Dick Luthanen
Darlene Koberg
Jackie Stepaniak
QC Audobon Society
QC Women in the Outdoors Club
QC Convention & Visitors Bureau



EDIWILD 2010

WHERE THE WILD WOODS ARE -
DISCOVERING IOWA'S WOODLANDS

MONDAY, JUNE 21 - THURSDAY, JUNE 24



EDIWILD (Educators in the Wild) is a 4-day workshop (including evening activities) to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum. The workshop will use an interdisciplinary approach of teaching and will emphasize Iowa's woodland habitat.

This year's activities, tours and topics include: Iowa's woodlands past, present and future, history of Arbor Day, participate in a tree planting, tree personality test, grist mill tour, fern hike, timber management, woodland systematics, tree & leaf ID, woodland flora & fauna, orienteering, Bats-Moths-&-Owls-Oh-My!, woodland invasive species, native woodland cultures, woodland soils, Project Learning Tree activities, The Lorax-based curriculum 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 send to you which includes a registration form, daily activities and locations; plus other details.



Terrific Terrariums

by Amy Newman, AmeriCorps Naturalist



A terrarium is a transparent container, typically glass or plastic, that contains an assortment of compatible plants. The container can be either tightly sealed, to lock in moisture and act like a mini greenhouse (or biosphere), or be open at the top in order to display plants in a unique manner. A closed-lid setting creates a humid environment that holds in water, gases and nutrients. Growing plants indoors can be difficult due to dry air, neglect, or over-watering, but a covered terrarium works well because of its ability to thrive on its own. Terrariums then provide a great way to enjoy and grow plants indoors without much care.



Historically, Greeks were growing plants in transparent containers as far back as 2,500 years ago. In the United States, constructing terrariums was a common practice by early pioneer housewives who planted squawberry (partridge berry) in hand-blown glass bowls. Terrariums as we know them began with the work of Dr. Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward of London. In 1842, his ideas and theories of growing plants in sealed containers were published in the book, On the Growth of Plants in Closely Glazed Cases. These containers became known as Wardian cases and were the precursor to the modern-day terrariums. Wardian cases were often used as an elegant way to accent a Victorian drawing room. Wardian cases also allowed for an increase in transporting plants across the globe because plants and

seedlings were protected in their very own biosphere. As a result, Wardian cases are credited with having a considerable impact on the expansion of agriculture and trade.

Before constructing a terrarium, there are a few things one should know. Traditionally, terrariums are made using a closed container that is made of clear plastic or glass. For example, you can reuse a fishbowl, aquarium, jars, bottles or even a brandy sifter. The cover must also be clear and transparent in order to let light in and to create a humid environment. Open terrariums (like a fishbowl) are best for plants that don't need high humidity and tend to be drier and less subject to disease. When it comes to soil, use a sterile, pre-packaged, peat-like mix. This kind of general potting mix can be found in most garden centers. In order to prevent disease in a closed-top terrarium, place a layer of pea gravel and charcoal granules prior to adding soil. The gravel and charcoal will aid in drainage and also clean the air of fumes when organic materials begin to decompose. An optional step is to add a layer of sphagnum moss on top of the gravel to prevent soil from sifting into drainage area.

When choosing plants, be sure that they are compatible to the type of environment you desire. Environments that work best in a terrarium are: woodland, desert and tropical. A woodland theme will do fine at the standard room temperature and moderate light. A desert theme works best in an open container, since maintaining high humidity is not an issue. Temperatures and light conditions are similar to a tropical landscape. A tropical environment should have a temperature of about 75°F during the day and 65°F at night with high to moderate light. A useful addition would be to attach a humidity gauge inside the terrarium if your terrarium has a tropical theme.

Modern Wardian Case



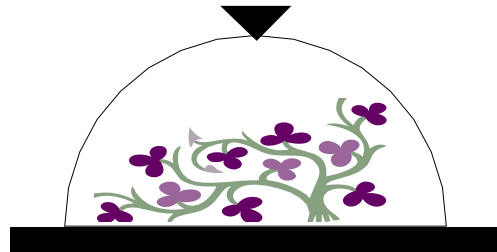
Kids' Corner

How to Create a Terrific Terrarium?

A terrarium is a great way to bring the outdoor beauty of nature indoors. They require little to no maintenance and can be constructed from a variety of materials. Not only do terrariums show off the beauty of nature, but they also teach important environmental lessons like the water cycle; which makes all life on our planet possible. This project can be enjoyed and appreciated by people of all ages; younger children would appreciate the assistance of an adult.

Materials:

- Clean, clear, large glass or plastic container with lid
- Small stones or pebbles
- Charcoal granules
- General peat-like, potting mix
- Wooden spoon
- Small plants like ferns, ivy, violets, pothos and moss
- Spray bottle of water



How To:

1. Mix pebbles and charcoal granules together and place a layer 1 inch thick on the bottom of your container.
2. Add approximately 3 inches of soil, depending on the depth of the terrarium.
3. Using wooden spoon, dig pockets and insert small plants, leaving a few inches in-between each.
4. Firmly pack soil around the plants and make sure that all roots are buried.
5. Mist plants and soil lightly; be sure not to add too much water which can cause root rot.
6. Place lid on container.
7. Place by a sunny window and enjoy!

Note: By adding other natural materials like bark, scrap wood, pebbles or small figurines you can make a pathway or a mini scene. This can add character to your terrarium by giving it your own personal flair. For a desert terrarium, substitute sand for soil and cacti or other succulents for green plants. For a tropical terrarium, use orchids and other plants suited for high temperature and high humidity.

Delicately Flavored Preserves

by Tammy Andrew

Violet jelly provides a practical use for flowers and a lightly flavored preserve to serve with saltine crackers or walnut bannock bread. Though some care must be taken when harvesting violets due to the use of pesticides and herbicides.

Preparation ~ The best time to pick violets for use in food is in the morning. Wait until the dew has evaporated and the petals are fully open. Pick the entire flower only; as the stem may add a slightly bitter flavor to the jelly.

Carefully wash the flowers in cool water, so as not to bruise them. The flowers do not have to be dried before continuing.

Creating the "Juice" ~ Tightly pack the violets in a one quart jar and fill with boiling water. Tightly cover the jar with a lid and allow the flowers to steep overnight. Pour off 2 cups of "juice" and discard the flowers.

Preparing five, half-pint Jelly Jars ~ Wash jars, rings and lids in hot soapy water. Place jars in large pot and cover with water. Place rings and lids in a small pot and cover with water. Boil jars, rings and lids for 10 minutes. Remove jars, using sterilized tongs, and place them on a cooling rack to dry. Remove rings and lids from heat, but leave in hot water until ready for use.

Cooking the Jelly ~

Ingredients:

- 2 cups violet flower "juice"
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 package powdered pectin
- 4 cups sugar

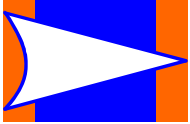


How To:

1. Mix flower "juice", lemon juice and pectin in a saucepan.
2. Heat until boiling and add sugar.
3. Stirring continuously, bring the mixture to a boil again and allow to boil hard for 1 minute.
4. Turn off the heat and skim foam from top. The foam can be placed in a small bowl, and once cooled, poured into jelly jar.
5. Use a ladle to fill each jar to the fill line - just under the threads. If there is not enough to fill the last jar, this one can be left unsealed, refrigerated and used once cooled.

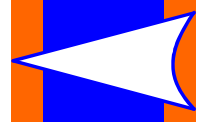
Sealing Jars ~ Once the jars are filled the lids and rings are placed on top and screwed down tightly. Be careful, the jars will be very hot! Set the jars to the side and they will seal themselves as the jelly cools.

To test for a seal, press on the top of the lid. If it makes a popping sound, the jar is not yet sealed. If a jar does not seal after 2 hours, place it in the refrigerator and use within one month. Sealed jars can be stored in a pantry or cool, dry cabinet for up to one year.



Plant Profile ~ Common Blue Violet

by Mike Granger, Naturalist



Let me introduce to you a common spring wildflower most people are familiar with, the violet. Violets are small plants with heart-shaped leaves growing no more than ten inches tall. The common blue violet (*Viola pratincola*) is found across the state of Iowa and throughout the eastern half of the United States. Worldwide there are some 500 species of violet and 60 of these can be found in the United States. Iowa's species of violets can be found in a variety of settings including prairies, woodlands, meadows and even moist lawns. Up to 26 species of *Viola* occur in the state and identification is at times difficult due to color variations, hybridization and the variety of violets found in non-native garden plantings. Here at the Wapsi River Center, violets may be found along the wooded trails overlooking the Wapsipinicon River. The common blue violet is infrequently found, but if you look you may find a few



Photo by Bob Bryant

other species growing amongst them like the downy yellow violet (*Viola pubescens*) and the hairy blue violet (*Viola sororia*). I have also seen a white- and lavender-colored violet known as the confederate violet (*Viola sororia f. priceana*);

although many sources believe it is a color variation of the common blue violet. For the sake of simplicity, I will focus on the common blue violet.

The common blue violet is easy to identify by its heart-shaped leaves which are lightly toothed. On a single plant the leaves will radiate out from the base of the plant. The plant is perennial and new leaves will originate from buried underground roots. Violets produce runners which help them spread along the forest floor often creating a dense violet vegetative mat. They also reproduce by flowering from the middle of April through June. Only one or two blossoms will be present on each plant. The flower, 3/4-of-an-inch wide, has 5 lavender or blue colored petals. The lowest petal has lines radiating out from the flower's center. These lines serve as a landing pad for insects which are directed to sweet nectar contained in a spur at the back of the flower. The spur points upward forcing small bees to turning upside down to obtain the sweet nectar. This ensures pollinators will be given a healthy dusting of pollen to be carried to the next flower visited. Upon pollination, the flower will develop into a capsule-shaped fruit. The

dried fruits split into three sections and each contains a row of minute seeds. Violets also produce flowers without petals (cleistogamous) that produce seeds without the aid of pollinators. This occurs mainly during the hot summer months when pollination is less frequent. The seeds are then dispersed as the tri-parted capsules dry and split open.

Many animals are attracted to violets for nectar and sustenance. Flies and bees are attracted to violets for their sweet nectar. Certain butterfly larvae prefer violets as a food source. Turkeys, bobwhite quail, mourning doves and white-footed mice feed on the minute seeds. White tailed deer, turkeys and rabbits will also consume violet leaves.

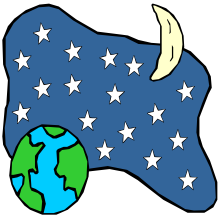
Violets have been used throughout history for greens, soup thickeners and teas. In Europe, violets are used regularly in salads and soups. The leaves are rich in vitamins A and C. Common blue violet flower blossoms are delicious in salads as well; however, eating yellow violets is not recommended. The blossoms can also be candied or jellied. It is also known that the Romans frequently enjoyed violet wine. Several books have great recipes for using violets in cooking. One book, Billy Joe Tatum's Wild Foods Field Guide and Cookbook, has an extensive section on cooking greens along with several recipes. To prepare violet greens; harvest plenty of leaves, pull off the course stems and wash in three rinses of water. The leaves can then be put in a sauce pan and barely covered with water. Cook over medium to high heat flipping them or stirring them with a fork for 10-15 minutes. Violet greens usually are an additive to a recipe, but small portions can be seasoned with salt and enjoyed. To make candied flower blossoms, the flowers are washed, painted with egg white and dipped into sugar. After the blossoms have dried, they can be added to cake decorations or eaten alone.

Upon researching and learning about the common blue violet, I am looking forward to seeing them on my frequent outings in the woods. I now have a new appreciation for this frequent forest inhabitant, and hope to try some recipes soon.



Photo by Bob Bryant

APRIL

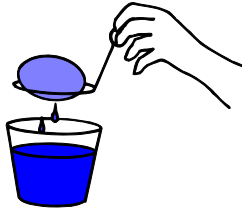


Monsignor Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a celestial tour. Monthly star parties are being planned for the summer and dates will be announced in early spring. Monitor St.

Ambrose's website at web.sau.edu/astronomy/menke/default.htm for upcoming dates.

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

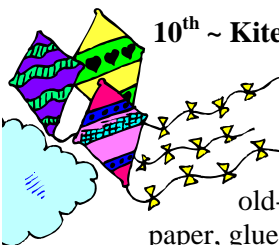
3rd ~ Natural Dyed Eggs ~ 1:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Just in time for Easter, this program takes a natural-spin to the centuries old craft of dying eggs. Bring a dozen hard-boiled eggs and the whole family for this history-rich how to. Walk-ins are welcome, but pre-registration would be appreciated by calling (563) 328-3286 by Thursday, April 1.



8th ~ Woodcock Watch ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Sherman Park ~ Come watch the dynamic display of the American woodcock at Sherman Park's north entrance. This is our 25th year watching the woodcocks' courtship "Skydance", and they have never failed to treat us to a good show.



10th ~ Spring Volunteer Workday ~ 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 sprucing up the facilities for upcoming field trips. All skill levels are welcome, so bring the whole family and invite a friend! Afterwards, enjoy a light lunch provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center. Call to register at (563) 328-3286.



10th ~ Kite Flying ~ 1:00 - 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Up, up and away! Come to the Wapsi River Center to learn how to create a two-stick bow kite the old-fashioned way. Using sticks, paper, glue and string make kites like your

SPRING

grandfather did. There is a \$2 material fee for each kite. Please call to pre-register and reserve your supplies; (563) 328-3286.

17th ~ Bends & Beaches Water Trail Dedication ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ Walnut Grove Park ~ Festivities will begin with a canoe float.



Our fleet of county canoes will be available free on a first-come, first-served basis, but may also be reserved by calling (563) 847-7202. Participants will be shuttled to the Massillon Park access (4.3 miles upstream) until 10:00 A.M. At noon, we will begin to serve brats and burgers from the shelter at Walnut Grove Park. During lunch, we've invited speakers from the Iowa DNR, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, surrounding County Conservation Boards, Coordinators of the Bends & Beaches Water Trail, the Lower Wapsipinicon River Clean-up Project and spokespersons from area paddling groups to address the assembly. Paddling will continue after lunch with canoe check-out and shuttle service offered until 4:00 P.M. downstream of Walnut Grove Park from the Muhl Bridge Site (5 miles) and Syracuse Wildlife Area (10.2 miles) accesses. Let's all hope for good river levels, but should this fail, an alternative date of May 22 will be observed. Even if you plan to use your own canoe, please RSVP by calling (563) 847-7202 prior to April 10.

17th ~ Earth Day Expo ~ 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ QCCA Expo Center ~ The Quad Cities Earth Week Coalition is hosting its 7th 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 ~ Plant Some Shade Initiative ~ 4:00 - 6:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ Find your

personal way to show the earth you care! The Scott County Conservation Board is sponsoring a *Plant Some Shade* initiative by providing 40 trees each of swamp white oak, red oak, black maple,

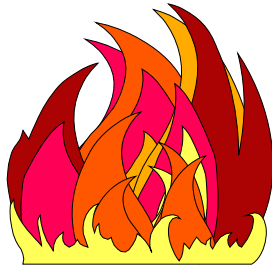


EVENTS

silver linden and Norway spruce. These trees were selected for their diversity and to help lower the percentage of any one species in an area. Order forms are available online and at Conservation headquarters (14910 110th Ave. ~ Davenport, IA 52804), and payment is to be submitted with order – two trees per household. Trees can then be picked up at West Lake Park between 4:00 - 6:00 P.M. on April 22.

22nd ~ Nighttime Prairie Burn ~ 7:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center

~ Join the prescribed burn teams of the Wapsi River Center and Clinton County Conservation and learn how fire is an important tool in managing prairie ecosystems. A portion of the Center's prairie will be burned to promote new growth. The rain/wind date is Tuesday, April 27.



8th ~ The Great Garlic Mustard Challenge 2010 ~ 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 six locations: Black Hawk State Park - Rock Island, IL ~ Marilyn at (309) 764-1486 ext. 3, Duck Creek Park - Bettendorf, IA ~ Patty at (563) 344-4084, Shuetzen Park - Davenport, IA ~ Brian at (563) 323-5196, Nahant Marsh - Davenport, IA ~ Brian at (563) 323-5196, Sunderbruck Park - Davenport, IA ~ Greg at (563) 326-7812 and West Lake Park - Davenport, IA ~ Dave at (563) 328-3286.

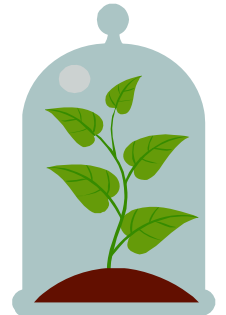


14th ~ Canoe and Kayak Tour ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park, Lake of the Hills

~ Join Wapsi Center naturalists in an educational and fun introduction to canoeing and kayaking. This program includes equipment and instruction. Participants are requested to register by calling (563) 328-3286 for this free event – weather dependent.

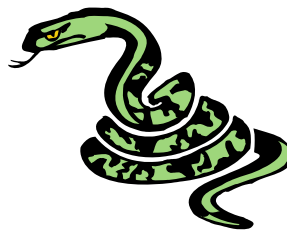
15th ~ Woodland Terrariums ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center

~ Come join AmeriCorps naturalist Amy Newman in a plant-tastic project! Learn how to create a terrarium and take home your own "garden under glass". All materials will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc., but if you have an interesting glass container; feel free to bring it. The whole family is invited to attend, but supplies are limited to 15 terrariums. To register for your terrarium, please call (563) 328-3286.



15th ~ Native Iowa Snakes ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center

~ Come learn all about Iowa's different species of snakes from Katie van der Linden, AmeriCorps naturalist. There will be many different live specimens available for viewing.



30th ~ Arbor Day ~ Did you know that Arbor Day is the only federal holiday that looks to the future? Planting a tree shows faith in that future! It's also a great way to commemorate a birth, death, anniversary or other special event.

MAY

1st ~ Wildflower Hike ~ 5:00 - 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center

~ Join us for a hike to identify some spring woodland wildflowers like rue anemone, hepatica, Dutchman's breeches, Jacob's ladder, spring beauty, dog tooth violet and many more.



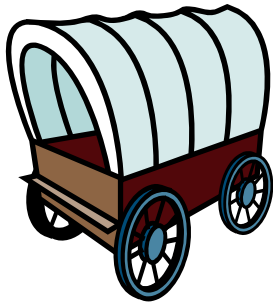
1st ~ BYOP – Bring Your Own Picnic ~ 6:30 - 7:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join us for an outdoor feast at the Pine Ring. Please bring your picnic food items and we'll provide the fire, forks and fun!

1st ~ 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.



22nd ~ Owls, Bats & Moths – Oh My! ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Learn more about nature's night shift as we look for nocturnal creatures at the Wapsi Center. See firsthand how owls, bats and moths survive and thrive in the woodlands along the Wapsipinicon River. Participants should bring a small flashlight.



30th & 31st ~ 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 performances by the Wapsi Wranglers and Kickapoo Indian Dancer. Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village is located on the north end of Scott County Park. Admission is \$2/adult and \$1/children.

JUNE

4th ~ 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.

4th - 6th ~ 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.



5th ~ 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 8:00 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!



5th & 6th ~ River Cities Rumble ~ 7:00 A.M. Registration ~ Camden Park ~ Milan, IL ~

Attention all disc golfers! Join members of the Quad City Disc Golf Club for a PDGA B-Tier Disc Golf Tournament. The tournament on Saturday, June 5 will feature 3 rounds (Middle Park - 18 holes - Bettendorf, IA ~ Camden Park II - 18 holes - Milan, IL ~ West Lake Park - 24 holes - Davenport, IA) and the tournament on Sunday, June 6 will feature 2 rounds (Camden Park II - 18 holes - Milan, IL ~ West Lake Park - 24 holes - Davenport, IA.). For more information, call John Resch at (563) 676-6686 or visit www.qcrumble.com.

7th - 11th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Laura Ingalls Wilder Week ~



This camp 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. Visit the grist mill at Wildcat Den State Park. Experience how she lived by spending time in an 1830's cabin and a one-room schoolhouse. Enjoy making crafts, taking hikes 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.

12th ~ QC EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Middle Park, Bettendorf ~ Kids, 3rd - 5th grade, are invited to participate in disk golf at Bettendorf Middle Park. For more information, call (563) 468-4218 or visit www.ilivehereqc.org.

14th - 18th ~ 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.



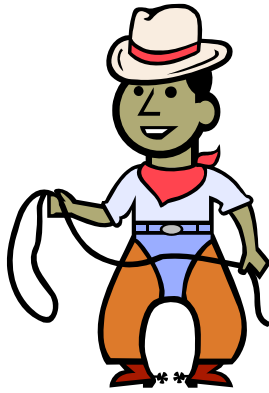
19th ~ Eleventh Annual Triathlon ~ 7:00 A.M. ~ West Lake Park - Beach Parking Lot, Gate 1 ~ Participants begin the day by swimming Lake of the Hills, then bike a 15-mile trek and return to West Lake Park to finish with a run. This is a spectator event only, as the 2010 registration is closed and there are already over 100 triathletes on the waiting list. For further details visit www.qctriathlon.com.



21st - 24th ~ EDIWILD 2010 ~ Educators in the Wild Workshop ~ Where the Wild Woods Are ~ Discovering Iowa's Woodlands ~ See *Wapsi Center Happenings* for details. Contact the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 for registration information.

21st - 25th ~ 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 a petting zoo and take a pony ride. Enjoy many fun crafts, make rope, 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.



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.

JULY

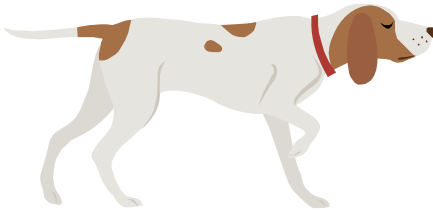
Summer Sneak Peak ~ more events to come in the summer newsletter.

10th ~ QC EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh, Davenport ~ Kids, 3rd - 5th grade, are invited to participate in a wild edibles/renewable energy program at Nahant Marsh. For more information, call (563) 468-4218 or visit www.ilivehereqc.org.



25th - 27th ~ Hunter Safety Camp ~ 6:30 P.M. (Fri) - 5:00 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

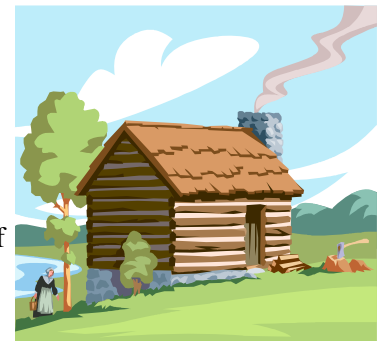


activities will allow students to actually participate, not just listen to speakers or watch films. The course is open to kids, age 11-16, whether or not they have received the Hunter Education Certificates already. Cost per student is \$10 for dorm stay, meals, ammo and targets thanks to donations from Clinton County Pheasants Forever (\$500), Clinton Area Whitetails Unlimited (\$500) and Scott County Pheasants Forever (\$500). Overnight chaperones will be provided by participants' parents. Space is limited to 50 kids, so sign up early by calling (563) 847-7202.

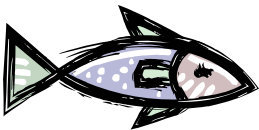
12th - 16th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Native American Week ~ Visit the Hauberg Indian Museum, discover Indian sign language, make a drum and a dream catcher, plus many other crafts. Learn about the Native Americans in the area. Take a canoe ride at Wet Lake Park (life jackets provided)! This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

16th ~ Canoe and Kayak Tour ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park, South Entrance ~ Canoe or kayak around Pride Lake at Scott County Park. Pre-registration requested by calling (563) 328-3286.

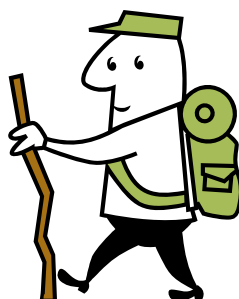
19th - 23rd ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Laura Ingalls Wilder Week ~ Back by popular demand! Learn what life was like for Laura Ingalls. Visit the grist mill at Wildcat Den State Park. Experience how she lived by spending time in an 1830's cabin and a one-room schoolhouse. Enjoy making crafts, taking hikes 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.



26th ~ QC EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Vander Veer Park, Davenport ~ Kids, 3rd - 5th grade, are invited to participate in fishing at Vander Veer Park. For more information, call (563) 468-4218 or visit www.ilivehereqc.org.



28th - July 2nd ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Ecology Week ~ Learn about the land, water and wildlife. An exploratory visit to the Maquoketa Caves will be included. Activities will include nature crafts, plant and wildlife identification,





24th ~ QC EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Kids, 3rd - 5th grade, are invited to participate in farm to farmer's market program. For more information and location, call (563) 468-4218 or visit www.ilivehereqc.org.

24th ~ Bends & Beaches Water Trail Float ~ 9:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ This is a continuance of the spring dedication float. Participants will meet at the Wapsi River Center where they will then be shuttled to Syracuse Wildlife Area. We will pick up the water trail at Syracuse Wildlife Area and float to the Wapsi River Center. At the Wapsi Center, participants will participate in a well-known canoe/kayak experience – the portage! In appreciation of your hard work, the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. will provide lunch. To reserve a spot/canoe, call (563) 328-3286.

25th ~ Village Alive! ~ 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ See the Pioneer Historical Village come alive as the “Friends” of the village re-enact life on the 1890’s Iowa prairie. Enjoy folk art demonstrations throughout the day. Admission is FREE! For further information, call (563) 328-3283.



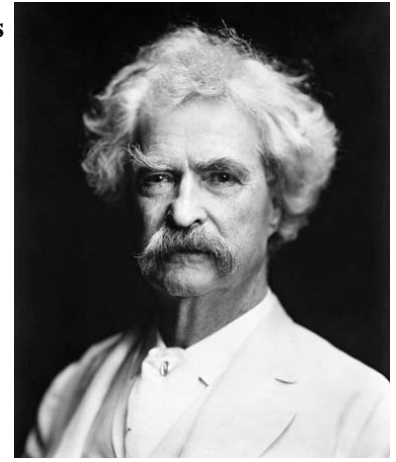
26th - 30th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Frontier Week ~ Enjoy a week doing what the pioneers did in the 1800s. Enjoy many activities such as a wagon ride, rope making, frontier cooking, pioneer games and much more. This week, we will 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

Summer Sneak Peak ~ more events to come in the summer newsletter

2nd - 6th ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Mark Twain Week ~ Explore and learn what life was like for Samuel Clemens aka Mark Twain. Enjoy paddleboating at West Lake Park and a tour of Lock & Dam 15 on the Mississippi River. Hike trails and do many crafts and activities! Go fishing at Scott County Park’s Pride Lake. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.



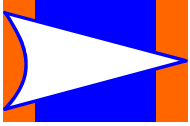
7th ~ Scholastic Recyclables ~ 1:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Going “green” when it comes to back-to-school supplies is easier than you think and very cost effective! Learn how to convert cereal boxes, chip bags, food wrappers, soda boxes, juice pouches and t-shirts into functional back-to-

school supplies. These trash treasures will be a guaranteed hit! This program will offer lots of fundraising ideas for scout troops, environmental clubs and church youth groups. Registration is required by calling (563) 328-3286 by August 5.

8th ~ QC EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ West Lake Park ~ Kids, 3rd - 5th grade, are invited to participate in a canoe and kayak clinic at West Lake Park. For more information, call (563) 468-4218 or visit www.ilivehereqc.org.

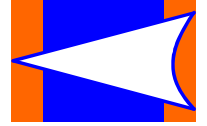
14th ~ Xstream Cleanup ~ West Lake Park ~ Come join the efforts of local stewards as West Lake Park is cleaned of its invasive species! Xstream Cleanup is a Quad City-wide cleanup of creeks, drainage ways and sections of the Mississippi and Rock Rivers. To learn more, visit www.xstreamcleanup.org.





Wildlife Profile ~ Northern Water Snake

by Katie van der Linden, AmeriCorps Naturalist



I have encountered many northern water snakes (*Nerodia sipedon*) in my short career as a naturalist and found them to be a very intriguing creature. During many canoe floats, boat rides and walks along the river, I have spotted them basking on logjams only a few feet from me, or swimming silently through the water, with their head sticking out and then disappearing under the water inches from my paddle. These experiences have prompted me to write on a subject that some may find “icky”.

The northern water snake is a heavy-bodied, medium-sized snake. They are 24 to 42 inches in length. They are darker in color on top usually a brown, reddish brown, or gray with banding of darker coloration of brown on the neck that turns into patterns of blotches down the back. The underside is white with red or brown moon-shaped blotches. Females are typically larger than



Photo by Jeff LeClere ~ www.herpnet.net

males. Patterns can vary greatly between individual water snakes. The young are typically gray or light-brown in color with black blotches. The crescent shapes on their belly are usually solid black or brown.

The northern water snake is often mistaken for the venomous cotton mouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorus*) commonly known as the water moccasin. Cotton mouths are not found in Iowa, their range extends up to central Missouri. The northern water snake is a non-venomous snake; however, they are known for their aggressive tempers. If disturbed, they will slide off their branch and into the water where they hide under logs or rocks until the danger has passed. If cornered, they flatten their bodies and strike. Their saliva contains anticoagulant properties which cause the blood at the wound site to not clot immediately and it may bleed excessively. They may also release a stinky musk and fecal matter; some snakes may also regurgitate their last meal.

The northern water snake is found statewide except the northwest part of the state. They inhabit most any body of water: ponds, streams, marshes and river backwaters. Their optimal habitat is anywhere with thick

vegetation, shrubs, and/or trees along the bank. This provides good basking locations. Northern water snakes are active both night and day. They hunt many different prey items that live in or near the edge of the water. Fish, amphibians, crayfish, small mammals, young turtles and other young snakes are all on the menu for this snake. Herons, minks, raccoons and certain species of fish will prey on water snakes. Bullfrogs will even eat young water snakes.

The northern water snake is not the only species of water snake in Iowa. The diamondback water snake (*Nerodia rhombifer*) and plainbelly, also known as the yellowbelly water snake (*Nerodia erythrogaster*), are the two other species found in Iowa. The diamondback water snake is a threatened species in Iowa. The diamondback water snake is brown- or olive-colored with brown- or gray-shaped blotches that are connected with bars. Their bellies are cream- or yellow-colored and checkered with half-moon shapes. The half-moon shapes are more prevalent towards the edge of the belly. Plainbelly water snake is endangered in Iowa. They are dark brown or black in color with a plain red or orange belly.

Water snakes are active April through October and hibernate during the winter in rock crevices. Mating takes place in the spring and the young are born in late June into early August. Anywhere from five to sixty young may be produced per litter. The young are roughly 6 to 10 inches in length and have the same aggressive temper as their parents.

Did you know that all snakes in Iowa are protected by law except the garter snake and the timber rattlesnake which is protected only in certain counties? This means that you are not allowed to collect or kill these species in the state of Iowa.



Photo by Jeff LeClere

I had another interesting encounter with one in late October of this past year. I was down at the Osprey Aquatic Lab, here at the Wapsi River Center, with a group of students doing pond study. In the middle of our study, I hear a student shout “snake!” Near the corner of the building in a small patch of sun, was a little water snake. I picked him up and showed him to the class. He now lives in the “herp” room at the Eagle View Eco Center, and I encourage you to come out and visit him.

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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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- Roger Kean



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- Jessica Steines, Interpretative Naturalist

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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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