

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Spring 2011

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



Eagle Scout Project Complete

This March, Kevin Knirr of Troop 82 completed his Eagle Scout project at the Wapsi Center. Kevin and his troop installed 12 wood duck nest boxes and 4 bat houses in an effort to encourage these wildlife species to nest, produce and roost in the natural areas provided by the Wapsi River Center.



parents participated in 35 field trips at satellite areas. A total of 52 public presentations were attended by 616 participants on-site; while 2,453 participants attended 47 public presentations off-site.

Our **Winter Fun Day** was a success with about 67 participants taking advantage of x-country skiing, snowshoe hike, winter bird feeding, owl presentation, star party and a folk concert to end the day's events. A big thank-you to the Friends of the Wapsi Center who supported and sponsored the event including the **4th Annual Chili Cook-off!** As a new entry, Lisa Cawiezell won the traveling trophy for best chili, **congratulations!**

Wapsi Center Webcams Are Up

In cooperation with the Scott County IT Department, the Scott County Conservation Board has installed two webcams for viewing of wildlife. The first webcam is located within the great-horned owl's enclosure, one of three educational birds, and the second is positioned at the outdoor birdfeeder.

The webcams are intended to be an extension of education to allow viewers to watch wildlife including those who may not be able to get out in nature. Future additions related to the webcams include links to support viewing (identification, habitat/feeding needs, ecology, etc.). You may find webcams at:

www.scottcountyiowa.com/webcams. Be advised, when viewing the owl webcam you may not spot the owl; as it is "on tour" visiting others in the community, **give a hoot!**

School and Public Programs

From September-March of this school year, 1,868 students, teachers and parents participated in 33 field trips at the Wapsi Center; 1,095 students, teachers and

I presented a program on the **Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)** for the March District Conference of the Lions Club with approximately 52 participants learning about this invasive species. Participants learned about how the EAB came here, how it travels, lifecycle, potential preventive practices and alternative tree species.

The Wapsi Center takes an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education. The Center's staff can help plan your field trip to meet educator needs. Visit our website and view/download our **Field Trip Planner**. 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.

Wapsi Pond Restoration Moves Forward

The old pond at the south end of the Wapsi River Center is being restored in an effort to maintain a watershed for wildlife and educational/recreational opportunities. The pond site has never held good water levels though scouts have canoed on the pond in previous years when it was Camp Minneyata. Restoration will include improvements to the dam as well as educational structures like a platform and shelter.

Green Kids' Workshops with New Partner

If you haven't heard, there's a new "green-conscience" business in town. **Reusable Usables** of LeClaire repurpose recyclable materials for creative learning and believe in engaging a mind to save a landfill! Lisa Gerwulf, assistant naturalist at the Wapsi River Center and Angela Mapes of Reusable Usables teamed up over spring break, to provide area children with boredom-busting, environmentally-enriching activities.

The **Green Kids' Workshops** went on throughout the week, and all participants (young and old alike) enjoyed the activities. On Monday, flowers were definitely in bloom! Created from egg cartons, toilet paper tubes and a stamped flower garden made from the bottoms of plastic beverage containers. On Tuesday, signs of spring were visible with the creation of egg carton greenhouses and owl scarecrows to keep the seedlings safe. On Wednesday, it was all about games! A modern twist on an ancient Chinese puzzle (tangram) incorporated repurposed vinyl sample books and a Tic-Tac-Toe game was made from pop bottle tops and pop carton cardboard. On Thursday, it was all about music! Eco Green and the Rhythmic Recyclables made an appearance and the participants made 3 types of musical instruments from unlikely sources. On Friday, mail order "I-Spy" playmats were the order of business. We are looking forward to an expanding and enriching partnership!

QC EarthWeek Fair – Another Success

This year's EarthWeek Fair was another success, with

approximately 1,400 students and educators attending the April 15 education day. Close to 300 scouts attended the Saturday event; with 100 scouts attending the merit badge workshop. About 800 visitors came to the booth.

The Wapsi River Center emphasized a sustainable lifestyle at the booth including aquatic stewardship of wildlife and recreation (paddle sports). This year, naturalists Lisa Gerwulf and Amy Newman planned, created and delivered about 30 "**Recycled Curriculum-Sustainable Subjects**" kits to registered schools of the education day. This kit offered curriculum support by using various recyclable items incorporated into the teaching of subjects including: math, social studies, P.E., science, English, art and music!

Downed Trees Receive New Life – Update



Following the article from winter, the tool shed at the **Cody Homestead** is constructed and will offer a long lasting building to compliment the site.

Staff from Scott County Park harvested oak logs from last winter's storm-damaged trees and used the wood to construct the shed. Locally milled, this project is a great example of conservation efforts within our department. Such sustainable practices reflect the commitment to our resources, **thank-you SCP staff!**

EDIWILD 2011

WHERE THE WILD WOODS ARE - DISCOVERING IOWA'S WOODLANDS

MONDAY, JUNE 20 - THURSDAY, JUNE 23



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, tree personality activity, introduction to keying, grist mill tour, fern hike, woodland management, woodland systematics, tree & leaf ID, woodland flora & fauna, orienteering/GPS, woodland invasive species, native woodland cultures, plants & the pioneers hike, 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.

Hello & Goodbyes

Aaron Askelson: As the May apples begin to show, with their leafy green umbrellas, I am starting a new position at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center. I am thrilled to say I am the new seasonal, assistant naturalist. I have experience as a naturalist intern in two other counties – first Cedar and most recently Clinton. After completing two internships with Cedar County, while attending the University of Iowa, I graduated and began an internship with Clinton County. While working with Clinton County, I had the opportunity to work with the staff here at the Wapsi River Center. I have had the pleasure of working with great naturalists in these counties, and look forward to working with the naturalists of Scott County.

A little about myself, I live outside of Tipton on five acres with my wife, two dogs and two cats. We are

expecting a baby boy by the middle of May, so I am very excited about becoming a father!

One of my favorite hobbies is oil painting. I have been selling my work at local art fairs for several years now. I plan on incorporating some of my artistic talents into some future programs. I enjoy canoeing and kayaking whenever possible; usually on the Cedar River. I love almost any outdoor activity. The problem being finding the time to fit them all in! This interest in nature was nurtured by many years of camping in the outdoors while I was in the Boy Scouts of America. So, it seems fitting that I can continue my career as a naturalist at the site of once was an old boy scout camp.

So many exciting things are happening here that I can't wait to jump in and experience them all!



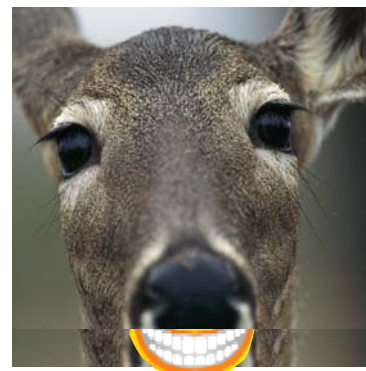
Annual Friends' Meeting

June 16, 2011
7:00 P.M.
Wapsi River Center

Barbeque is the main order of business! The election of officers and a discussion of future projects will also be on tap! Anyone interested in becoming a Friends member is invited to attend.

In Appreciation of Your Support of the Wapsi River Center

Mary Johnson
Lucia Dryanski
Ingrid Bogdanowicz
Cecilia Braam
K.J. Rebarcak
Lisa Cawiezell
Mona & Cassie Druhl
Dottie & Jerry Wala
Nancy Wolber
R.I. Environmental Action Club
Kori & Erin Jorgensen



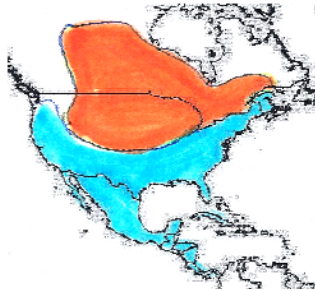
Pack 430
Kevin Knirr
Bill Robbins
Shelli Tague
Angi Black
Bill Collett

Thanks!

WILDLIFE PROFILE ~ PIED-BILLED GREBE

by Michael Granger, Naturalist

Let me introduce to you a delightful member of the Grebe family (Podicipedidae), the pied-billed grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*). There are seven species of grebe in North America and the pied-billed is fairly common throughout Iowa's wetlands. Pied-billed grebes are found year-round in the lower two tiers of states in the United States. Its summer range extends northward covering the rest of the United States and extending well into Canada.



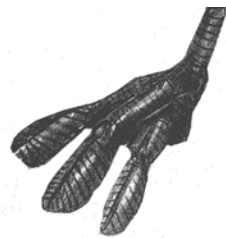
Recently, I have watched pied-billed grebes on backwater areas of the Wapsipinicon River. These birds are relatively small, being a little over a foot in length. Both males and females show similarity in plumage; however, their coloration changes between the seasons. In the winter, they are light brown overall with a black ring around the beak. The beak is definitely not "duck-like", but is pointed and would remind you of a chicken's beak. In the



summer, there is also a black collar around the throat and a white tuft on the rump. Plus, a distinctive white ring around dark-colored eyes.

As far as swimming, the pied-billed grebe is superb. They swim with their small heads undulating back and forth (very much like a chicken walking).

Grebes have modified toes which are lobed allowing them to be excellent divers. They are also masters of their own buoyancy whether still or moving through water. They can submerge at the blink of an eye; disappearing below the



surface and swimming to safety or in the pursuit of food. When danger approaches, they sink down in the water with only their heads above the surface; swimming completely confident that the danger will pass. Some references refer to the bird as the "water

witch" because of its incredible swimming ability. Rarely do you see a grebe in flight or on the land.

A pied-billed grebe is truly a specialist when it comes to feeding. A typical diet will include small fry fish, aquatic plant seeds, aquatic insect larvae, snails and crayfish. One reference pointed out their fondness for leeches during the mating season. All of these food items are either caught or gathered by submerging below the water's surface. An ideal habitat would consist of a pond or lake with large areas of emergent vegetation such as coon tail or pond lily.

A pied-billed grebe nest is made from decaying aquatic vegetation which the bird will pile on a mat of floating plant stems. Up to six eggs are laid on this floating mat. They are dull white and can be stained green. If the bird leaves the nest, it will cover the eggs with water soaked vegetation to hide them from predators. Predators include minks, fish, frogs, snakes, muskrats and birds of prey. After incubation, the eggs hatch. A young pied-billed grebe is one of the most unusually colored babies among aquatic fowl. The chicks have black and white striped backs, red beaks and a red eye-ring. For the first week, the chicks (which have not mastered



swimming yet) will ride on their mother's back sleeping underneath her wing. The mother is tender in her care and will feed them with food she will catch in the water. By four weeks, the chicks are mature enough to spend much of the day and night in the water alone. Young grebes are escape artists who avoid predators by diving to safety. At the end of the season, the grebes are large enough to migrate back to overwintering grounds in the southern portions of North America.

Upon researching this amazing bird, I have been further captivated upon seeing one. If I am lucky, I would love to see young birds this spring. Hopefully you too can see this amazing little bird in a waterway near you!

PLANT PROFILE ~ BUR OAK

by Aaron Askelson, Seasonal Assistant Naturalist

The mighty bur oak towers over the prairie, resistant to the fires that keep other trees out. The broad round top of this spreading tree would provide ample shade for the weary traveler across the sunny prairie. The great lower limbs often droop under their own weight. The leaves and acorns of *Quercus macrocarpa* are very distinct and separate it from other oaks. The leaves have one pair of



deep indentations that divide the leaves almost to the midrib. The undersides of the leaves are whitish and somewhat hairy. The acorn cups are bowl-shaped with a unique “mossy” fringe coming out of its elongated



scales. The acorns appearance gives rise to the other common name – mossy cup oak. The bark of the bur oak is light gray and shallowly grooved. It is thicker and has more cork than that of other oaks. This thick cork helps insulate the tree during prairie fires, keeping it safe, while other trees perish in the intense heat. This trait along with a really deep root system, allow the bur oak to be one of the native trees that dominate the prairies of the Midwest.

Although people have used oak trees in many ways for thousands of years, they have been resistant to domestication. This is believed to be related to their slow growth period. Acorns from oaks have been a staple of the diets of many different cultures dating back to pre-agricultural times. But the tannins in the acorn have prevented it from being palatable for humans. After being collected, the acorns would have been leached of the bitter tannins. There were many ways in which Native Americans and other groups removed this tannic acid. Some would boil them with several changes of water; while, others would place them in baskets in streams and let the water slowly leech away the tannins. Once they were edible, they had numerous ways to prepare them. It was often used as flour in baking. This involved drying out the acorns and grinding them into a fine powder. This flour was usually combined with cattail pollen or wheat flour before baking. Acorn mush was a simple way to prepare a nutritious meal. This was accomplished by taking the boiled acorns (while still warm) mashing them, forming them into patties or cakes, letting them dry, and then baking or frying them. A drink was also made out of the acorns. Once they were lightly leached, they were then roasted until completely dried out and then ground. They would then add the grounds

to hot water for a beverage similar to hot chocolate or coffee.

Not only was the bur oak used as a food source, but it also was used by the Native Americans for its medicinal value. The Iroquois tribe used bark chips to relieve the symptoms of diarrhea. The Fox tribe used wood and inner bark of the tree to expel pinworms. The inner bark was used by the Chippewa as a pulmonary aid/heart medicine. The root of the tree was also used to relieve cramps. Other common uses were to use parts of the bark as an astringent to help close bleeding wounds. It was believed the tannic acid helped to constrict the blood flow to an area.

Early settlers and pioneers found that the tree provide them with excellent fuel for their fires and made strong rot resistant fences to keep their livestock in. The lumber from the tree was also prized for buildings and furniture because of its durability and tight grain. This tight grain also made it ideal for use in the making of barrels to hold various liquids.



Animals also enjoy the bounty of this mighty tree. At least twenty species of birds and mammals eat the acorns, including whitetail deer, bob-white quail, wild turkey, wood duck, crow, blue jay, chipmunk, squirrel and raccoon just to name a few. Many of these same animals use the trees for their homes or simply shelter from a storm.

Although this tree might seem almost invincible, it does have an Achilles heel – bur oak blight. This blight is a fungus that causes defoliation, leading to branch mortality and/or tree death. Symptoms of this disease include a V-shaped brown discoloration of leaves and browning veins in July or August. This form of blight is being studied by the state extension service and first started being documented in the early 2000s. They currently recommend trying to lessen the stress on the trees by watering during drought and mulching trees along their drip lines. Fungicides are being tested, but they currently don't know the effectiveness of them. It is believed that the fungus lays dormant in the affected leaves over the winter and will attack the tree again the next year. They have no active management strategies at this point, but hopefully the studies of the blight will help us find a way to counteract its affects and keep these wonderful trees around for generations to come.

MAY



14th ~ Iowa Museum Day ~ 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~



Governor Terry Branstad has proclaimed Saturday, May 14 as Iowa Museum Day. Bring your friends and family to celebrate this special day. Enjoy costumed tours of the Village and old-fashioned games for the kids. The soda fountain will be open for ice cream, sarsaparilla and popcorn. Admission is FREE!!

19th ~ Friends of Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come join us to learn about volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi Center and current projects planned.

20th ~ Kayak Tour ~ 6:00 - 8:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park, Gate 1 ~ Kayak around Lake of the Hills at West Lake Park. Pre-registration requested by calling (563) 328-3286.



21st ~ Spring Volunteer Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join the Friends of the Wapsi River Center and staff for some spring cleaning and tidying. There will be jobs to suit all ability levels. Enjoy light snacks and refreshments compliments of the Friends of the Wapsi Center. Please call to register yourself, your family, or your friends at (563) 328-3286.

29th & 30th ~ 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



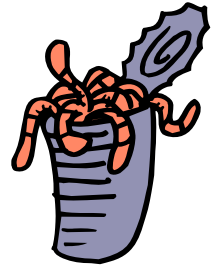
3rd - 5th ~ Free Fishing Days ~ Let's go fishing!

SPRING

During these three days, Iowa residents may fish and possess fish (within legal limits) without a fishing license.

3rd ~ Kayak Tour ~ 6:00 to 8:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park, Gate 1 ~ Kayak around Lake of the Hills at West Lake Park. Pre-registration requested by calling (563) 328-3286.

4th ~ 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!



6th - 10th ~ 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.

9th & 11th ~ Boater Safety Course ~ 5:00 - 8:30 P.M. (Thurs.) and 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. (Sat.) ~ Bellevue, IA (Bellevue City Hall) ~ Jackson County Conservation, in conjunction with the Iowa DNR and Scott County Conservation, is hosting a Boat Education Certification Course at Bellevue City Hall in Bellevue, Iowa. Any interested parties

EVENTS

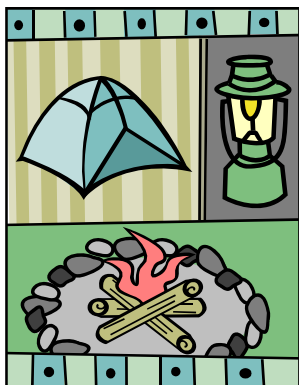


are welcome to sign up to attend. Information that will be covered includes: general information concerning boats and maintenance, navigation rules, boat safety, laws and regulations, as well as tips on how to be a courteous boat operator. To register for this class, go to www.iowadnr.gov/training. Registration is required by May 25. Limited space is available, so sign up soon – no late registrations will be taken. For more information contact Jackson County Conservation Board at (563) 652-3783.

11th ~ QC EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Nahant Marsh
~ 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. Nahant Marsh (4220 Wapello Ave.) is located off Interstate 280, following Hwy. 22 to Wapello Ave. (toward Davenport), and then turning left before the railroad tracks.



13th - 17th ~ 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 campout under the

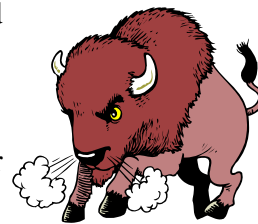


stars for one night! Enjoy lots of nature crafts, hikes and learn about deer from the Park Ranger. Plus, take a trip to the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for more information.

16th ~ Friends of Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come join us to

learn about volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi Center and current projects. This will be our annual meeting.

18th ~ Where the Buffalo Roamed ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come learn about the many uses the Native Americans had for this majestic beast, and sample some of its delicious meat. Please register by calling the Wapsi River Center by June 16; (563) 328-3286.



18th ~ Twelfth Annual Triathlon ~ 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 2011 registration is closed. For further details, visit www.qctriathlon.com.



20th - 23rd ~ EDIWILD 2011 ~ Educators in the Wild Workshop ~ Where the Wild Woods Are ~ Discovering Iowa's Woodlands ~ See *Wapsi Center Happenings* for advertisement. Contact the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 for registration information.

20th - 24th ~ 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; learn how to 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.



24th - 26th ~ Hunter Safety Camp ~ 7:00 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. They don't need to have received the Hunter Education Certificates already. Cost per student is \$20 for dorm stay, meals, ammo and targets thanks to donations from Clinton County Pheasants Forever (\$500), Scott County Pheasants Forever (\$500), Clinton Area Whitetails Unlimited (\$200); plus donations from Clinton CCB and Grand Mound Sportsmen's Club. Overnight chaperones will be provided by participants' parents. Space is limited to 50 kids, so sign up early by calling (563) 847-7202.

25th ~ QC EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Vander Veer Park ~ 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.

27th - July 1st ~ Young Pioneers Day Camp ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove

Pioneer Village ~ Ecology Week ~ Learn about the land, water and wildlife. An exploratory visit to the Maquoketa Caves will be included. Activities will include nature crafts, plant and wildlife identification, recycling and our role with nature. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Contact Jo Noon at (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

JULY



2nd ~ Wild Edibles ~ 11:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Summer is here! Its the perfect time to gather wild berries, purslane and other tender greens. Learn how to identify nutritious and edible plants that can even be found in your own backyard. This session will include a hike, taste testing and recipes. Please call (563) 328-3286 to register.

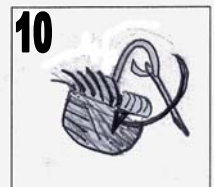
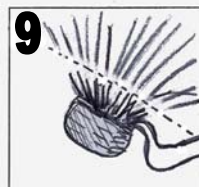
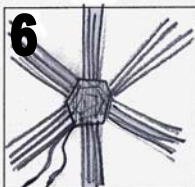
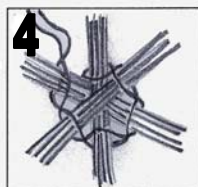
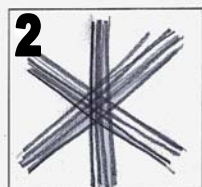
2nd ~ Woodland Terrariums ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come join in a “plant-tastic” project! Learn how to create a terrarium and take home your own “garden under glass”. All materials will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc., but if you have an interesting glass container; feel 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.

Kids' Corner ~ Cordage Basket

Long ago people made baskets out of cordage – woven rope made from natural materials such as nettle, cattail leaves, shredded basswood and willow bark. To practice, jute or sisal twine can be substituted. Another “green” substitution, is one-inch wide strips cut from plastic grocery sacks. These can easily be connected to form the length of cordage needed. While constructing the basket, a handful of clothespins are helpful; providing a second (or third) set of hands.



1. Cut 12 lengths of cord a forearm’s length. (Half of this length will be the height of the basket.)
2. Lay bundles of 4 cords as shown. (These are known as the warps or spokes.)
3. Cut a 6 foot piece of cord. (This will be used as the weft or weavers.)
4. Begin by folding the weft in half and loop around four of the warps. (This is called twining.)
5. Twist the weft once and pull the next warp (bundle of 4 spokes) through.
6. Keep going until you have created an 1½-inch base.
7. Next continue the pattern, twisting and pulling every 2 wefts through.
8. As the basket grows, finish off pulling every weft through individually.
9. Once the basket is as tall as you would like, cut off the ends of the spokes 1 inch long.
10. Take a plastic canvas needle, a long piece of cord and whipstitch around the spokes to make a rim.



Friends' Profile

Vital Statistics

Name: Bill Robbins

Friends Member Since: 2005

Favorite Plant: Rattlesnake Master

Favorite Bird: Bobolink

Favorite Animal: Turtle

Favorite Tree: Bur Oak

Favorite Book: Doubt - A History by Jennifer Michael Hecht

Favorite Nature Book: A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold

Favorite Movie: All the President's Men



Bill Robbins grew up in east Davenport, IA. He is a self-employed potter, living with his wife and pets outside of Donahue, IA on 40 acres of land. He first came to be interested in nature as a boy scout. He attended Camp Minneyata; the current site of the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center. He feels he's come full circle!

When he was in college, he worked for 3 summers in Estes Park, CO. After college, the service, and a stint working in Social Services, he returned to school at Iowa State and received a degree in Wildlife Biology. He then worked in environmental education at various sites, and as an interpretive ranger for the National Park Service for a number of years, before becoming a full-time potter. He's restored an 18-acre span of native prairie on his land near Donahue.

When asked why he joined the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Bill says, "I'm afraid that we're losing the battle with kids when it comes to the appreciation of nature. There's so much technology (cell phones, TV, video games) to divert their attention. I think the answer lies in environmental education, and the Friends support the work of the Wapsi River Center."

As a member of the Friends, Bill has participated in volunteer workdays, staffing the Center's booth at Bald Eagle Days and hosted the Center on weekends. Bill enjoys hiking the Center's trails with his friend Ingrid (also a Friends member) before Friends' meetings. Besides maintaining his prairie and land, he also enjoys other outdoor activities including: hiking, camping, backpacking, canoeing and most recently – kayaking.

The Friends of the Wapsi Center meet monthly every third Thursday at 7:00 P.M. The Eagle View Eco Center is the site for meetings during the months of March thru October, and Gander Mountain is the site for meetings during the months of November thru February. Drop-ins are welcome!

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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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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.

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