

# The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Spring 2014

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

[www.scottcountyjowa.com/conservation/wapsi.php](http://www.scottcountyjowa.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 Happenings

By: Director, Dave Murcia



### Quad City Bald Eagle Days 2014

This year's BED were held January 10 – 12, and had a crowd of about 17,000 with good viewing of eagles along the river due to the cold weather. During the school day, the booth saw approximately 1,450 students, teachers, and adults from all over the Quad City area including both Iowa and Illinois schools! This year our theme was, "Color in Nature", and showcased our great horned owl. We would like to thank all the volunteers as well as Clinton County Conservation Board for assisting with the booth.

### Winter Fun Day 2014

This year 76 participants enjoyed activities, thanks to Mother Nature and all the snowfall she offered! The annual event started with X-C- skiing followed

by snow shoeing, winter bird feeding, furs of Iowa, and the Chili Cook-off! Voting this year gave the traveling Chili Cook-off trophy to Cub Leader Jamie May of Cub Scout Den 515, congratulations! Thank you to our volunteers and Friends members for supporting the event!



THE COVETED CHILI COOK-OFF TROPHY

### Wapsi Center Improvements

New construction of the cabin is underway with an anticipated opening in spring! Currently, the cabin is enclosed, has energy efficient windows/door, and a "maintenance free" metal roof. The Eco Center restrooms had new water lines installed to better serve our visitors, especially during the cold winter. We also have a new display in the live animal room so come check out the Center after a long winter of cabin fever.

### Need a Guest Speaker?

Please feel free to call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286 if you are in need of a speaker for your club, business, civic organization, school in-service, or event. We do not charge for speaking engagements and come equipped with our own PowerPoint projector and laptop in needed.

### School and Public Programs

From September-February of this school year, 5174 students, teachers, and parents participated in 27 field trip days at the Wapsi Center. A total of 21

public presentations were attended by 348 participants on-site while approximately 1575 participants attended programs off-site that included Bald Eagle Days.

The Wapsi Center takes an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education and maintained **100% satisfaction ratings** through comments cards. The Center also met at least one **Iowa Core** requirement for all Iowa school programs surveyed.

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.

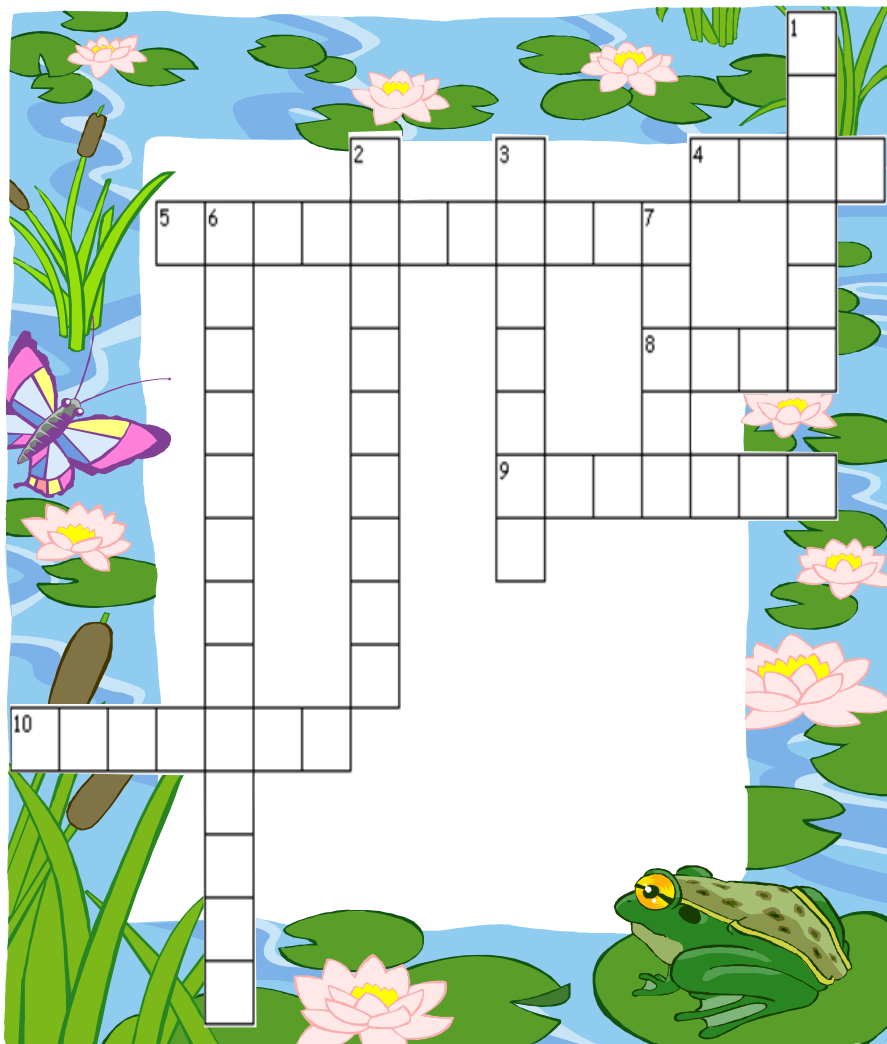


## International Migratory Bird Day

Do you believe that birds matter? How do birds benefit humans, wildlife, or the ecosystem? If you have an interest in birds, then join staff at this year's IMBD event on **May 10 at 10:30 a.m.** in the Eagle View Eco Center. IMBD theme this year is, "**Why Birds Matter**". This year's family oriented event includes migration basics, live raptors, and a "flight" through a migration activity. The Wapsi River Center is recognized as a premium wildlife viewing area and offers a chance to get on the trails and see a variety of birds. Please visit <http://www.birdday.org/> to learn more about IMBD and events around the U.S. and even the world!



# SPRING CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

4. Precipitation in the spring.
5. The larval stage of a butterfly.
8. What starts to show up on trees when the weather starts to warm up?
9. When the sun is shining during a rainstorm, it creates a what?
10. Small bodies of water created by rain storms.

### DOWN

1. Baby birds.
2. The shadow of what mammal do we look at in February to tell us there are 6 more weeks till Spring?
3. April showers bring May. . . .
6. The first day of April is called what?
7. What backyard bird is a common sign that spring is on its way?

Across 4. Rain 5. Caterpillar 8. Buds 9. Rainbow 10. Puddles  
Down 1. Chicks 2. Groundhog 3. Groundhog 4. Chicks 5. Puddles 6. April Fools Day 7. Robin

# MARCH

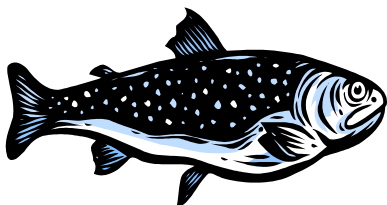
## 1<sup>st</sup> ~ Maple Syruping Demonstration ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~

Join Tom Greene as he discusses the history and procedure of tapping trees for syrup. Handouts and where to find tapping equipment will be provided to participants. Please call (563) 328-3286, if you are interested in attending.



## 7<sup>th</sup> ~ Trout Release ~ 10:30 A.M. ~ West Lake Park

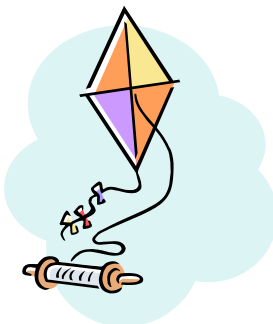
~ Join members of Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Scott County Conservation Board to release 2,000 rainbow trout at Lake of the Hills, Gate #1. A hole will be cut through the ice to drop these fish in for the upcoming season.



**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Hunter Education Class ~ 9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park (Old Nature Center) ~** Scott County Park Rangers will be teaching a Hunter Education Online Field Day at the old nature center. Participants must be 16 years old or older and have completed the online hunter safety training at [www.HunterExam.com](http://www.HunterExam.com) or [www.hunter-ed.com/Iowa](http://www.hunter-ed.com/Iowa); participants must bring voucher to class. This is a review class with no firing. Participants will need to bring a sack lunch and beverage. Please call (563) 328-3282 to register.

**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Inc. Meeting ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Join us at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center to learn about current events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Center.

**29<sup>th</sup> ~ Kite Flying 101 ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** "Up, up and away!" Nothing can make your spirits soar like building and flying your very own kite. Using sticks, string, paper and glue, create a



# SPRING

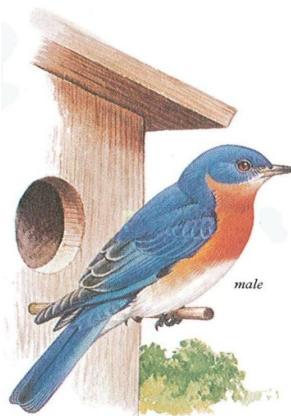
traditional diamond bow kite. After construction, participants will go outside for a test flight. Interested participants are asked to pre-register by March 22, (563) 328-3286. Supply cost is \$1.00 per kite.

# APRIL

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village** opens for the 2014 Season. Visitors may tour the site from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. through October 31<sup>st</sup>. Call (563) 328-3283 for more information.

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Buffalo Bill Cody Homestead** opens for the 2014 season. Visitors may tour the site from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. through October 31<sup>st</sup>. Call (563) 225-2981 for more information.

**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Wapsi Work Day ~ 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 your family (563) 328-3286.



**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Beautiful Blue Birds ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Come join Wapsi

River Naturalist, Michael Granger to learn about the amazing blue bird. Learn about their habits, life cycle, and nesting behavior. Participants will then learn how to make a blue bird house to attract them to your area (10 houses are available). Please reserve your spot soon by calling (563) 328-3286 as space is limited.

**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Inc. Meeting ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Join us at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center to learn about current events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Center.

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation Board offices are closed in observance of Good Friday.**



# EVENTS

**24<sup>th</sup> ~ Plant Some Shade ~ 4:00 - 6:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park** ~ The Scott County Conservation Board is pleased to announce that we are hosting the Plant Some Shade Program. MidAmerican Energy company customers in Iowa are eligible to purchase trees for \$30 each. Tree purchase is initially limited to 2 trees per household and advanced purchase is recommended as quantities are limited. (Credit card orders are not accepted). Tree species available will be determined soon. If you have questions regarding this, call (563) 328-3280.

**24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> ~ 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Quad Cities Earth Week Fair ~ 8:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M. ( for local area 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students) and 3:00 – 7:00 P.M. Thursday (open to the general public) ~ Quad Cities Expo Center** ~ The Quad Cities Earth Week Coalition invites you to attend the eleventh annual



Earth Week Fair at the QCCA Expo Center in Rock Island. Fair goers will visit over 50 booths with hands-on, educational activities, teaching about different aspects of the environment. They will also participate in a live animal presentation by Pella Wildlife Company with a focus on biodiversity and human impacts on ecosystems. Admission is free, although registration is required for schools by registering online at [www.qcearthweek.org](http://www.qcearthweek.org).

## MAY

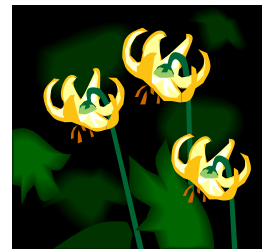
**3<sup>rd</sup> ~The Great Garlic Mustard Challenge 2014 ~ 9:00 A.M. - 11:30 A.M. ~ Quad Cities** ~ Garlic mustard is an invasive, noxious plant that threatens our native woodlands, natural areas and wildlife habitat. Help us control it in our community by participating in The



Challenge! Your team could win the coveted Garlic Mustard Trophy for your efforts. Various agencies will be holding garlic pulling events throughout the Quad Cities. Call to register at one of five locations: Black Hawk State Park - Rock Island, IL ~ Heather B.(563) 949-6656, Bettendorf, IA sites, ~ Patty at (563) 344- 4084, Nahant Marsh - Davenport, IA ~ Brian at (563) 323-5196, Sunderbruch Park - Davenport, IA ~ Greg at (563) 328-7275, Fairmount Wetlands Davenport ~ Dan McNiell (563) 391-1403 X 3 and West Lake Park - Davenport, IA ~ Dave at (563) 328 – 3286.

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Walnut Grove Soda Fountain Opens! ~ The fountain will be open every Saturday and Sunday 11:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. through September 28<sup>th</sup>.**

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Wildflower Hike ~ 1:00 P.M.** ~ 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.



Please call to register (563) 328-3286.

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Moonlight Frog Chorus ~ 6:00 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. Please call to register (563) 328 -3286.



**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Monsignor Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a celestial tour of the spring sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing. 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](http://web.sau.edu/astronomy/menke/default.htm) for upcoming dates.

**10<sup>th</sup> ~ International Migratory Bird Day ~ 10:30 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come celebrate International Migratory Bird Day at the Wapsi River Center. Join naturalist Emily Warren for Migration

## Calendar of Events Continued:

101. We will cover the basics of migration in one fell swoop! The program will include live birds, a round of "Migratory Mayhem", (a Wapsi River original board game), and handouts for which migratory birds to look for will be provided to all participants. Stick around afterwards to explore the hiking trails and see how many different species we can spot! Please call to register (563) 328-3286. Check out more information on "IMBD" at [http://](http://www.birdday.org/birdday/explorer-map)



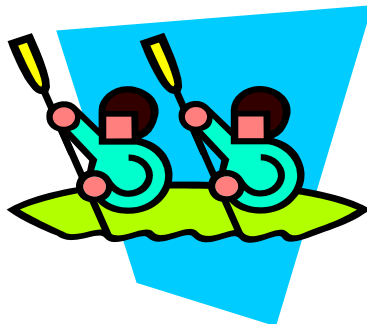
[www.birdday.org/birdday/explorer-map](http://www.birdday.org/birdday/explorer-map).

13<sup>th</sup> ~ **Scott County Snapshot ~ See local listings for details** ~ Snapshot sampling consists of volunteers collecting samples and running IOWATER tests during a window of time -- usually a few hours on a designated morning. A local snapshot coordinator will assign you a few sites to sample in the watershed and away you go! By channeling the energy of dozens of volunteers, we are able to get a snapshot picture of an entire watershed in a short period of time.



15<sup>th</sup> ~ **Friends of the Wapsi Center Inc. Meeting ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join us at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center to learn about current events, happenings and volunteer opportunities at the Center.

17<sup>th</sup> ~ **Kayak Experience ~ 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park** ~ Come learn about kayaking and tour Lake of the Hills (Gate 1). This program is weather dependent and a limited amount of equipment including vessels, PFD's, paddles, are offered (you may bring your own vessel if properly registered). Please call (563) 328-3286 to register.



17<sup>th</sup> ~ **"EPIC" Nature ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Do you believe in things unseen? Come to the Wapsi Center and join us on an epic adventure in nature! We will be showing the movie EPIC, released May 2013, and then taking an exploratory nature hike ending in making toad abodes for participants to take home! Family fun for everyone! Please call to pre-register your family (563) 328-3286.



22<sup>nd</sup> ~ **Davenport Horticulturalist Society Meeting 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. ~ Duck Creek Park Lodge** ~ Join Michael Granger, Wapsi River Center Naturalist, for a "Walk in the Woods" at the Duck Creek Park Lodge located at 3300 East Locust Street, Davenport, Iowa. For more information on the club please call Dennis Derer at (563) 391-1599.



25<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> ~ **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 a 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.



26<sup>th</sup> ~ **Scott County Conservation Board offices are closed in observance of Memorial Day.**

# ANIMAL PROFILE: COOPER'S HAWK

By Seasonal Naturalist, Becky Horton

The Cooper's hawk, *Accipiter cooperii*, is a crow sized, stealthy bird of prey found all over the U.S. throughout the year. They are one of the most skillful fliers among the bird world. Like all accipiter's, it flies with a flap-flap-glide style. It is native to mixed and deciduous forests and woodland habitats. Lately, it has been common in leafy urban and suburban neighborhoods. This is



Picture by: <http://hawksaloft.org>

because its main food source is medium-sized birds such as mourning doves, starlings, rock pigeons, jays, and American robins which can be found at your backyard bird feeder. At one time the Cooper's hawk was wrongly persecuted as a "Chicken Hawk". It seems as larger birds of prey were the culprits but remember all birds of prey are protected by Iowa law. Still today you may hear this bird referred to as the "Chicken Hawk".

Identifying this bird can be very challenging as it has a smaller look-alike, the Sharp-shinned hawk. Like all accipiter's, the Cooper's hawk silhouette has broad rounded wings and a long narrow tail. Other features for the Cooper's hawk include a large head, rounded tail, broad shoulders, thick legs, and big feet. The Sharp-shinned hawk, on the other hand, is much smaller in size similar to that of a pigeon, has a small head, thin legs, small feet, and a square-tipped tail. The adult Cooper's hawk and Sharp-shinned hawk are both steely blue-gray above with red-orange bars on the chest, and red eyes. Both the adult and juvenile of both hawks have thick dark horizontal bands across the tail. Juvenile Cooper's hawks are brown in color above with their chest being white with brown crisp streaks on the upper part of the chest, giving them a more hooded look. Juvenile Sharp-shinned hawks are also brown above,

but



Cooper's



Sharp-shinned

have the brown streaks diffused throughout the entire chest. Juveniles of both hawks have yellow eyes.

As mentioned above, the main prey of the Cooper's hawk are medium-sized birds. They also enjoy small mammals such as chipmunks, mice, bats, and baby squirrel and rabbits. When they catch a bird or other small mammal, they hold their prey away from their body and squeeze it repeatedly until it dies. Sometimes they even hold their prey underwater until they go motionless. This is unlike other falcons and accipiter's who usually bite their prey until they die.

Cooper's hawks are monogamous and many pairs mate for life. The mating season for the Cooper's hawk begins as early as March. They usually have 3-6 eggs per season which hatch after 32-36 days of incubation. They are sexually mature around 2 years of age. During the mating season, the male is the one who builds the nest with little help from the female. They are also responsible for finding food for the female and the hatchlings while the female defends the nest and young. This can be difficult at times for the male as he is smaller in size to the female.

Predators of the Cooper's hawk include Great Horned owls, Red-tailed hawks, raccoons, Northern Goshawks, and American crows. The oldest known Cooper's hawk was 20 years 4 months old, but in the wild, most live to be about 12 years old. Just like the Bald Eagles, the Cooper's hawks population suffered in the 1940's and '50's due to the pesticide DDT. Now, the population has bounced back and is a Least Concern on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List. If you would like to see a Cooper's hawk, put up a bird feeder to attract its prey or come out to the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center. Happy bird watching!!

"Facts and information provided by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Animal Diversity Web."



Snow angel created by a Cooper's hawk after catching its prey at our bird feeder at the Wapsi Center.

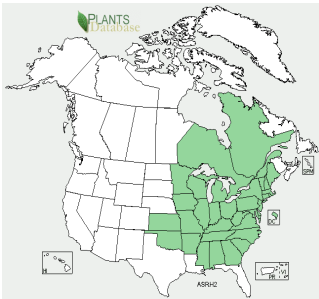


# Plant Profile: Walking Fern

By Naturalist, Michael J. Granger

While exploring along the bluffs of the Wapsi River you may see a variety of new growth this spring. Down along the river there are limestone outcroppings covered in lush green moss. It is here in this “micro” habitat where you find the Walking Fern, “*Asplenium rhizophyllum*”.

**Walking Fern Range  
USDA Database**



Ferns have always fascinated me because they are among the non-flowering plants, which also includes mosses, lichens and liverworts. They have diminutive life cycles, and require moisture for reproduction.

Walking fern, as with most ferns will be found in wet mossy areas, on limestone. I have seen them here, along the ridges down by the river, and in other parks through out Iowa. There range includes much of the eastern United States. There is also a second species that inhabits eastern Asia, *A. sibiricum*.

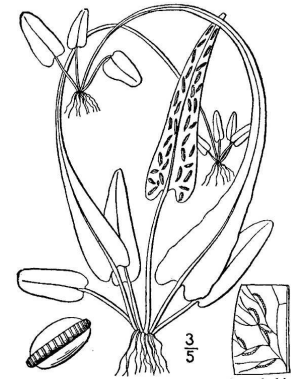
While it is relatively common here in eastern Iowa, the walking fern’s status is questionable, in certain locations. In the following states the plant has been given a federal status.

- Maine . . . . . Possibly Extirpated
- Michigan . . . . . Threatened
- New Hampshire . . . . . Endangered
- Rhode Island . . . . . Endangered

Walking fern is relatively easy to identify by its spear or lances shape leaves (fronds). Fronds will narrow down to a fine point. Fronds may measure 4 to 12 inches long. Many fronds will arise out of cluster, and may even be seen in winter, for they are evergreen.

Walking fern is named for its characteristic growing pattern, where young plants sprout from the tips of the plant’s fronds. The Walking fern, also in typical fern fashion, produces spores. Spores are produced from July—October.

The fern life cycle involves several major events. Starting with a mature fern plant (sporophyte) spore production occurs. Spores will create a heart shaped structure called a prothallus. Underneath of the prothallus there are male and female clusters of cells known as the antheridium (producing sperm) and archegonium (producing eggs). Once an egg is fertilized a young fern (sporophyte) will begin to develop, and the cycle will begin again.

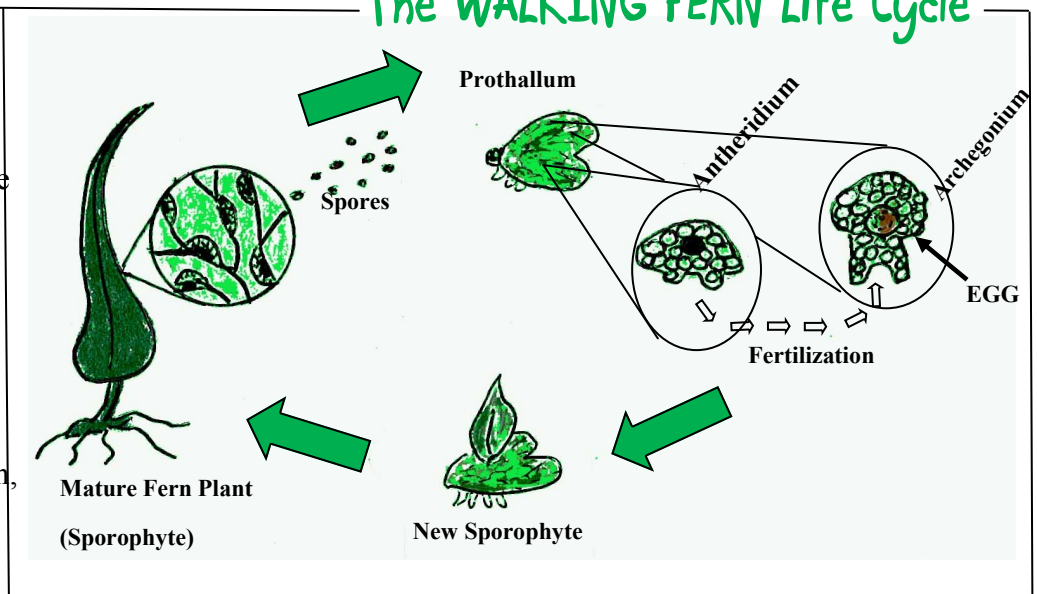


Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913

A second type of propagation involves the long walking fern leaf tips. If the tip of the leaf is in a suitable substrate, a new adult walking fern will start to grow (see picture above). The name “walking fern” refers to this method of propagation. It would be safe to say that a large colony of walking ferns may all be related to the original ‘mother fern’.

The next time you are out along limestone bluffs or camping, see if you can find the amazing walking fern. The plant is so distinctive and can not be mistaken for any other. Inspect these plants closely to see if they have produced spores or have started to sprout new plants at the tips of their fronds.

## The WALKING FERN Life Cycle



# Thankyou!

Wapsi River Center Friends Group  
West Lake Park Maintenance

Clinton County Conservation Board Education Staff      Mr. and Mrs. Varcho  
Christine Garrow      Jo Noon      Cassie and Mona Druhl      Kyle Moeller



## Local Teacher Retires



Let me introduce to you, Dave Langtimm, a local science teacher at the Pleasant Valley School district. Dave has been teaching science for 36 years, beginning in 1978. At Pleasant Valley, Dave developed and wrote the science program for 3-6<sup>th</sup> grade students, developed the science fair for K-6<sup>th</sup> grade students, began a 6<sup>th</sup> grade science camp, and started 5<sup>th</sup> grade cross country skiing unit.

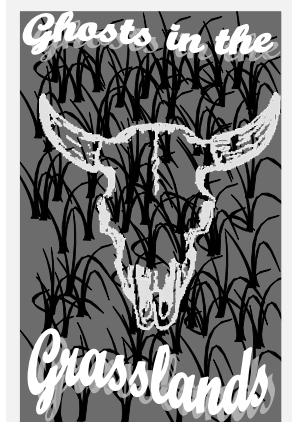
Dave has been bringing 5th Grade students from Pleasant Valley elementary schools to the Wapsi River Center for the last 13 years. While on field trips here, Dave taught Cross Country skiing to all of the 5th grade students from the each of the schools in his district, which includes Bridgeview, Pleasantview, Cody, Hopewell, and Riverdale. If you ask any elementary graduate from the Pleasant Valley School District, they will remember skiing at the Wapsi River Center, and of course Dave's expertise. Thank you Dave for all of the great experiences you have provided for your students, and for bringing them out to the Wapsi River Center!

**HAPPY RETIREMENT DAVE!    The Wapsi River Center Staff**

## EDIWILD 2014: Ghosts In The Grasslands, June 23rd - 27th, 2014

EDIWILD (Educators in the Wild) is a 4-day educators' 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 environmental stewardship and this year's theme is Prairie Ecosystems and Habitats. Teachers may take the course to receive 2 credits from Drake University. (Graduate or Re-licensure) or for audit.

**This year's activities, and topics include:** Goats on the Prairie, Prairie Insects, and Small Mammal studies, Project Wild Certification, Blue Bird house construction, Prairie Plant identification, Box Turtles in Iowa, Prairie Archaeology and Monarch Watch, just to name a few. **Look in the next issue of the WREN for further details or Call (563) 328-3286 for more details.**





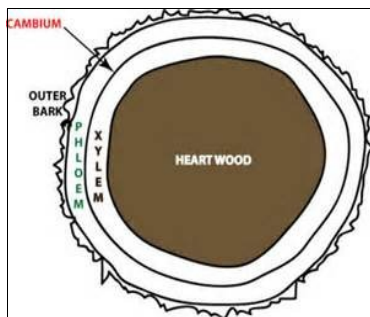
# Maple Syruping: A Springtime Tradition

By Naturalist, Michael J. Granger

As the snow, ice and cold begins to recede and temperatures start to rise, unseen changes are taking place in Iowa's woodlands. During the previous fall deciduous trees, once lush with greenery began to lose their leaves and enter into a winter dormancy. Very little happens within a tree during the winter months. Slowly when winter begins to release its icy grip, the tree sap begins to flow. To learn what happens within a tree we have to look closely at cross section of a tree.

All trees are covered with a protective woody Bark, which prevents the tree from the elements and invasive animals. The innermost layer of bark is called the Phloem. The phloem transports nutrients and other products from photosynthesis to different areas of the tree. The phloem consists of living growing cells. Phloem transports sucrose, a plant sugar.

The Xylem layer is made up of mainly nonliving cells which are involved in the transportation of water. Water is transported through a tree primarily by cohesion.



H<sub>2</sub>O molecules adhere to one another due to their molecular structure. As water is released from a tree's stems and leaves water molecules flow into the area. If a tree is watered water also will be taken up by the roots through the same process.

Between the Xylem and Phloem is a layer known as the Cambium. This growing layer is responsible for the secondary growth of side branches and root branches.

Now that we know what goes on within a tree we can look at maple trees. Maple trees (*Acer* genus; of trees or shrubs commonly known as maple). Maple trees are readily identified by leaves which have 3 main leaf veins, and winged seeds (samaras). Most of us have played with these seeds as children and called them "helicopter seeds"

While there are several species of maple, we will focus on the Sugar Maple, *Acer saccharum*, which is common here at the Wapsi River Center.

In the springtime sap begins to flow upwards within a tree when day time temperatures rise but there is still freezing temperatures at night. To tell if syrup is flowing you can cut the end of a twig to see the sap dripping, and you will also see icicles hanging from the cut end in the morning.



Sugar Maple Leaf & Twig

Native American Indians from eastern woodlands discovered that maple sugar could be harvested by boiling the sap from trees in the springtime. There are many Native American stories associated with but this discovery may have arose by watching Red Squirrels, *Sciurus vulgari*, who are known to bit off the end of maple twigs and lick the sugary water in the springtime. The Yellow bellied Sap Sucker, *Sphyrapicus varius*, may have also given clues, with its habit of drilling rows of holes in trees while feeding.

Native American Indian tribes harvested maple syrup way before European settlers arrived in North America. In fact they would trade "sweet water" with the colonists. The colonists brought many new technologies, such as, metal buckets and troughs, which refined the procedure.

The maple syruping process involves gathering sap and boiling it to remove the water. Sap will have a slightly sweet taste that can just barely be detected. As the sap is being boiled, the color of the sap will turn from a clear to brown. Sap averages 2% syrup in Iowa. It takes 43 gallons of 2% sap to make one gallon of syrup. Producers of syrup use science to refine the process. Much of this information can be found online at <http://www.extension.iastate>.

## Making Maple Candy

A traditional Native American treat is maple candy. You can make this at home by cheating a little bit. Take %100 maple syrup bought at the store and put about 1 inch in a sauce pan on your kitchen stove. As you bring the syrup to a boil, it will begin to foam up. Be careful not to let it over flow. Stir the foam occasionally until very little liquid syrup is present in the bottom of the pan (just the brown foam). Pack fresh snow into a salad bowl. With a ladle drizzle the foam onto the snow. Instantly the foam will congeal and turn into a toffee, which can be grabbed and eaten with your fingers. It is an excellent way for kids to experience and learn about syruping.



Emily trying maple candy for the first time.

**WAPSI RIVER E. E. CENTER**  
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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



“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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**Wapsi River Environmental Education Center Staff**

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Dave Murcia, Director/Naturalist  
Mike Granger, Naturalist  
Ashley VanSpeybroeck, Seasonal Assistant Naturalist  
Becky Horton, Seasonal Assistant Naturalist  
Emily Warren, Seasonal Assistant Naturalist  
Leroy Haeffaer, Resident Caretaker

Clinton County:

Mark Roberts, E. E. Coordinator  
Jessica Steines, Interpretative Naturalist  
Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretative Naturalist  
Jill Schmidt, Interpretative Naturalist

**Mailing List**

If you would like to receive “The W.R.E.N.” free of charge, please send a post card to the Wapsi River E. E. Center at the address above.

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