

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

FALL 2016

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

www.scottcountyjowa.com/conservation/wapsi.php

The Wapsi River Center is owned, managed and operated by the Scott County Conservation Board

Wapsi Happenings

By: Director, Dave Murcia

Center Improvements

The Center has completed new projects and currently working on a **new office** that will improve service for staff and public. Thanks to the dedicated **Eagle Scout candidates Sam McCammant and Nik Raue**, and Wapsi staff, the Center has new program additions.

Sam represented Boy Scout Troop 203 of Long Grove, and planned/installed a new **outdoor raptor enclosure**. The enclosure allows our program birds an additional wellness opportunity by enhancing their life here at the Center.



Photo: Naturalist Emily Santiago

Nik represented Life Scouts, Troop 89, from Bettendorf, and planned/installed a **raised garden bed**. The garden will allow for seasonal garden beds in support of program themes while supporting pollinators. Best of all, it is protected from our hungry native friends!



Photo: Naturalist Emily Santiago

The **Wapsi River Center** staff has constructed and installed a outdoor **Monarch rearing cage** in an effort to educate, promote, and conserve this North American iconic insect. During this migration season thus far, the Center has reared 66 Monarchs from a range of instar stages. The Monarchs have all been tagged in support of the *Monarch Watch* program (www.monarchwatch.org), sampled for parasites in support of *Project Monarch Health* (www.monarchparasites.org/), and finally, released. A big thank you for Scott County Park Manager



Photo: Naturalist Emily Santiago

Dave Ong and staff, for initiating a new rearing cage at the entrance station. Dave was able to rear, tag, and release 5 monarchs late this season.

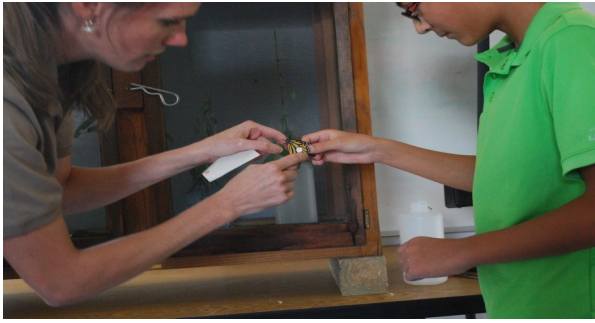


Photo: Brian Horton

During the **Citizen Science Monarch Watch** program this year, participants tagged, sampled, and released 8 Monarchs. The program focused on awareness, education, and direct support of current research going on, not to mention having fun getting dirty, making “seed bombs”.

Thanks to our SCCB staff at Headquarters and West Lake Park maintenance staff, a **new office** is planned and construction underway. The current office space was donated many years ago by our partners at the *Quad Cities Conservation Alliance* and has served us well.

Bald Eagle Viewing

Bald eagles will start arriving in November along with migrant waterfowl. The stretch of the Wapsi River below the Center supports dozens of eagles in the night roost.

The best viewing will be at the Center from December through early March, one to two hours before dusk. During Center hours scopes are available to view the birds along with other wintering songbirds. Don't forget to visit the other program raptors housed in the Eagle View Eco Center too!

Fall and Winter School Field Trips

If you would like to **schedule a field trip**, we encourage educators to schedule as far in advance as possible and taking an active role. Our programs are focused on supporting the **Iowa core** curriculum, including **NGSS** and **STEM** elements for Iowa schools. School programs are not scheduled for Mondays so that staff may work on administration and projects. ***You may download our field trip planner from our website to better plan a trip!***

New Education Animal

The Center welcomed a new educational specimen this August.

The juvenile **eastern hognose snake** (*Heterodon platyrhinos*)

was donated by Don

Becker of Linn County, Iowa. These snakes are common in Iowa sand woodlands and are recognized by their upturned nose and flat head. Come visit if you dare, and see whether this snake will play dead for you!

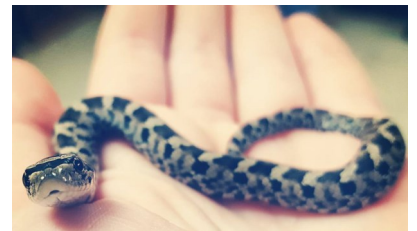


Photo: Naturalist Emily Santiago

·BECOME A WAPSI RIVER CENTER FRIENDS MEMBER TODAY!·

The Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc. organized in 1993, is a citizens' support group dedicated to encouraging the public use and enjoyment of the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and to the preservation of the Center's natural resources for present and future generations. Please contact the Wapsi River Center for more information.

YES! I want to join the Friends' Group. _____

Enclosed is my contribution to the Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc

Name _____ \$5.00 newsletter

Address _____ \$15.00 contributing member

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ \$25.00 supporting member

Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

PLEASE SEND MEMBERSHIP FORM TO:

~~~THE WAPSI RIVER CENTER, 31555 52nd AVENUE, DIXON, IOWA 52745 ~~~ Contributions to the Friends are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.





# Thank You!

**Friends of the Wapsi Center Inc.**

**Don Becker**

**HQ & West Lake Park staff**

**Christian LaCarte - WIU intern**

**Pat Sauer Family , Blue Grass, IA**

**Nahant Marsh**

**Rich & Rhonda Miller**

**Trees Forever**

**Quad Cities**

**Astronomical Society**

**St. Ambrose University**

**E Resources**

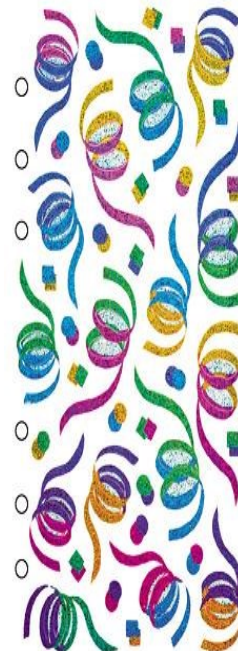
**Caroline Kimple**

**Joy Sheeley**

**Eagle Scouts: Sam**

**McCammant & Nik**

**Raue**



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## Fall Ecology Day

**Saturday, October 15th, 2016 ~ 10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.**

Join us for an exciting day of presentations, activities and crafts. This year's Wapsi River Center Fall Ecology Day's theme is "Wild About Nature". Activities are geared for all ages and abilities. Please call to sign up your family and friends (563) 328-3286.

**10:00 A.M. ~ Fall Tree Hike** ~ Learn about our local trees and what makes leaves change color in the fall. Collect some leaves and make a leafy craft.



**1:00 P.M. ~ Prairie Discovery Hike** ~ Join naturalists to learn about the Wapsi Center's amazing tall grass prairie. Grasses, flowers and a variety of animals inhabit our prairie ecosystem.



**11:00 A.M. ~ Fall Wall Hanging** ~ Make a fall inspired leafy painting to decorate your living space. Supplies are limited call to reserve your number of kits today!



**2:00 P.M. ~ The Great Pumpkin Atlatl Hunt** ~ Come and learn how ancient people hunted with the atlatl. An atlatl is used to help throw a spear or dart further than by hand. Pumpkins will be set out for targets. Plus larger targets will be available for beginners.



**Noon ~ Lunch** ~ Bring your appetites! A light lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi River Center Inc.,



# PLANT PROFILE: GOLDENROD

By Seasonal Naturalist, Kyle Moeller

As we transition into summer and ease into autumn, the plant I'm going to introduce to you becomes a very vibrant yellow in September all over the various landscapes that make Iowa unique. This plant can be found in areas such as road medians and ditches, to CRP, crop fields and woodland edges. By October the golden yellows of this plant will be faded out to brown by the chilly temperatures and frost that inevitably precedes winter. This vibrant yellow plant is called common goldenrod. It is scientifically known as *Solidago canadensis*, which is in the Aster family *Asteraceae*.



**Common Goldenrod,**  
Wapsi River Center

As one looks at this plant, it is quite noticeable how tall it is! Goldenrod is a very widespread perennial plant that grows anywhere from two to six feet tall with alternate leaves four to six inches long and one inch wide, getting smaller going towards the top of the plant. The leaves have small teeth along the edges.

The stems of common goldenrod, or Canada Goldenrod (hence the word *canadensis* in its scientific name), have lines of hairs white in color with leaves that are kind of hairy underneath. Additionally, many of the previously mentioned bright yellow flowering stems can be found emerging from roughly the top 1/4 of the plant in a panicle form. Each flowering stem contains masses of very small yellow flowers in compact heads up to 1/4" diameter with minimal fragrance.

When can the flowers of goldenrod be seen across our great state? Although it does depend on the overall weather patterns (cooler vs warmer summer; wetter vs drier summer; early fall vs normally timed), generally this will occur from late August to early October. An early frost will put an end to blooming goldenrod, and many other plants, too.

Now that you know when you can find common goldenrod it is important to know what conditions and habitats it can be found. Common goldenrod is a native nearly all of the 99 counties in Iowa and may be found in a variety of conditions and locations. Some of which include but are not limited to: vacant lots, cultivated and uncultivated fields, railroads, roadsides, power-line easements, along fences, CRP (conservation reserve program) fields, openings in upland and bottomland forests, brushy areas, savannas, around abandoned quarries and highway medians. This species of goldenrod will grow in prairies of varying soil moisture levels in sunny areas.

According to the USDA website range map for this species, it is found in all of the lower 48 states except Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Florida as well as Alaska and all Provinces of Canada. Seeds are dispersed via the wind, which is how they spread; this is more scientifically known as wind dispersal. Regardless of your location, common goldenrod does have an impact on humans.

A simple Google search led me to some information on goldenrod and its qualities as an allergen on Everyday Health's website. It said that, "goldenrod blooms at the same time that ragweed does, but it is insect-pollinated [as opposed to wind-pollinated] and is not a significant allergen for most individuals. The bright goldenrod flower, however, does alert everyone that the more inconspicuous ragweed is also blooming." So while it may seem that with as much goldenrod as there is it is thought it makes us snuffle and sneeze, it is actually the simultaneously timed peak of ragweed season. Goldenrod, like all plant material, is capable of making one sneeze when mowed – and I can vouch for that!



**Common Ragweed,**  
[www.forestryimages.org](http://www.forestryimages.org)

Last but certainly not least, common goldenrod does a lot more than just look neat! There are a respectable



**Goldenrod Gall**  
Wapsi River Center

number of insects that visit for pollen or nectar, such as: long- and short-tongued bees, butterflies, flies, beetles and moths. Without these insects visiting plant-to-plant cross-pollination would not occur to set fertile seeds. In fact, if you have ever seen a lump on the stem of the plant, you have seen the gall of Goldenrod Gall Fly, *Eurosta solidaginis*. Black Blister Beetle, Goldenrod Scarlet Plant Bug, Tarnished Plant Bug and many other beetles and leafhoppers eat goldenrod while larger creatures such as prairie chickens rabbits and

deer eat various parts of the plant. Beavers use the stems for dens and dams.

Time is now limited to view Common Goldenrod on fall hikes, so get out there and enjoy its yellow color as well as the beautiful fall colors of our many great species of trees! Happy hiking!

# ANIMAL PROFILE: BLACK SWALLOWTAIL

By: Seasonal Naturalist, Becky Horton

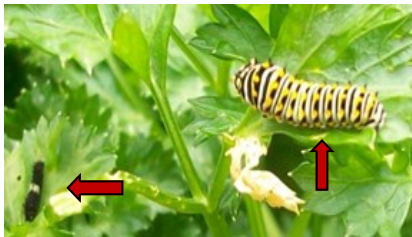
Every year, we always see a lot of swallowtail butterflies at the Wapsi River Center. Normally it is just the giant and tiger swallowtails. This year, we also saw a lot of black swallowtails. The black swallowtail butterfly, *Papilio polyxenes*, is a very common butterfly with a 3.25-4.25 inch wingspan. The female black swallowtail is typically larger than the male. Both the male and female have 2 rows of yellow spots on the upper surface of the wings and an obvious red spot with a black bulls-eye on the inner hind margin of the hind wing. The rows of yellow spots are larger and brighter on the males than the females. On the female's hind wings, there is a powdery



Male Black Swallowtail  
Photo: Emily Santiago

iridescent blue color between the rows of spots. The under sides of the wings are nearly the same on the males and females. The hind wings have two rows of bright orange spots separated by areas of blue and the forewings have two rows of light yellow spots. With the sex dimorphism of the male and female black swallowtail, the female is a Batesian mimic of the poisonous pipevine swallowtail when the wings are open. With the wings closed, both genders are mimics. Batesian mimicry occurs when a non-poisonous species (the black swallowtail butterfly) mimics a poisonous and distasteful species (the pipevine swallowtail) to help defend it against predators.

The larval or caterpillar stage of the black swallowtail butterfly also has defense mechanisms against predators. Young larvae resemble bird-droppings. They are mostly black with a white saddle. Older larvae are green with black bands that contain yellow spots. This makes them camouflaged when resting on the sun-spotted host plants. When the larva molts into the pupa stage, or chrysalis, it matches the color of the substrate to which it is attached. The pupa is usually green, yellow, or brown. All swallowtail larvae have another defense mechanism. They have a horn-like organ behind the head called the osmeteria that they can protrude and attempt to smear their predator with a chemical repellent.



Larvae: Photo Becky Horton

The black swallowtail butterfly is sometimes considered a pest in its larval stage. The host plants to the larval stage of this butterfly are in the carrot family, Apiaceae, and include: curly parsley, carrot, celery, caraway, sweet fennel, dill, Queen Anne's lace, poison hemlock, and wild parsnip. Most people with herb gardens do not like these caterpillars as they tend to decimate their parsley and dill plants. To help this issue, it is best to plant at least two parsley or dill plants; one plant will be for human consumption and the other plant for caterpillar consumption. It is best to hand-pick the caterpillars off of one plant and place them on the other plant. Make sure the plants are on opposite sides of the herb or vegetable garden.



Range : Black Swallowtail Butterfly;  
[www.gardenswithwings.com](http://www.gardenswithwings.com)

The black swallowtail butterfly is found throughout most of eastern United States west to the Rocky Mountains, north to southern Canada and south to northern Mexico. They prefer open areas including marshes, deserts, fields, meadows, suburban gardens, and roadsides.

To attract these beautiful butterflies to your yard, plant both host and nectar plants. Popular nectar plants for the black swallowtail butterfly include: red clover, thistles, purple coneflower, Joe -Pye weed, butterfly bush, wild bergamot, zinnia, and milkweed. When planting host plants, stick with the herb and vegetable plants like parsley, dill, sweet fennel, or carrots. Queen Anne's lace is also a great plant, but can spread quickly. Stay away from poison hemlock and wild parsnip. Poison hemlock is very toxic if eaten and was used in ancient Greece to execute prisoners. It is also believed to be the poison taken by Socrates. Wild parsnip is a phototoxic plant, meaning that when the toxic oil from the plant comes in contact with skin and sunlight hits that oil, it causes a rash, blistering, burning, discomfort, and possibly scars. The young larvae's white saddle is due to uric acid deposits that function as an antioxidant to protect them from the phototoxic chemicals in their diet.

Make sure to look for these beautiful butterflies in the spring. They should start to emerge mid-April through May. (Facts and information provided by <http://entnemdept.ufl.edu> and [www.butterfliesandmoths.org](http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org)).



# FALL EVENTS

## October

**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Fall Trout Release ~ 10:30 A.M. ~ West Lake Park (Gate #1)** ~ Join us for a fall release of trout at the Lake of the Hills boat ramp. The Iowa DNR will be releasing trout into the lake. This is a non-event release meaning there will be no prizes or raffles. Spectators are welcome to attend.



**15<sup>th</sup> ~ 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Ecology Day ~ 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join the Wapsi team for a day of activities. This year's theme is "Wild about Nature". Please see special add for this event, and call to pre-register (563)328-3286.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ Glynns Creek Clubhouse** ~ The Board meeting is at the Glynns Creek Clubhouse. The address is 19251 290th Street, Long Grove, IA.

**20<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join the Friends of the Wapsi Center to learn about current happenings, public programs, special events and volunteer opportunities.

**22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Cocoa Picasso; Freaky Fungus ~ 1:00 P.M ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ In this kid-friendly class that blends nature and art, go on a mushroom hunt with Naturalist Emily! Then, enjoy complimentary hot cocoa while you learn how to paint a related picture on canvas in a guided step-by-step experience. \$5/canvas. Call (563)328-3286 to register



**22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Zombie Archery ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Learn how to use a bow and arrow in this Halloween themed, informative, and fun hands-on

class. You'll learn safety and proper archery techniques according to National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) guidelines. Children must be in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above to participate. Your target will be Zombies! Please call to pre-register (563)328-3286.

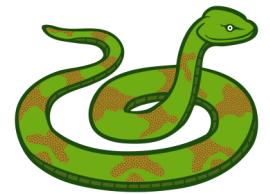
**22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Halloween Hike ~ 5:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come enjoy an outdoor fire for your cooking needs and then Join Naturalist Michael J. Granger for a spooky hike through the Wapsi Woods. Learn about owls, bats, and other nocturnal creatures. A campfire will be available at 5:00 P.M. for grilling; the hike will begin at 6:00 P.M., followed by a spooky scavenger hunt.



**31<sup>st</sup> ~ Happy Halloween**

## November

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Reptiles and Amphibians - 5:30 P.M. ~ River Valley District Library** ~ Join a Wapsi Center naturalist in Port Byron, IL at the River Valley District Library for a presentation on reptiles and amphibians. Live animals will be highlighted to help demonstrate their unique adaptations. Please call the library to sign up at (309) 523-3440.



**9<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park** ~ The Conservation board meeting is at the Main Office at West Lake Park (Gate #3). The address is 14910 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Davenport, Iowa 52804.

**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Veteran's Day** ~ Conservation Board Park offices in Scott County will be closed in observance of Veteran's Day.

**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Volunteer Round-Up ~ 12:00-3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ The *Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc.* is looking for more volunteers! Will you join us? This is your chance to learn more about the Wapsi Center and how to get involved. Share your passion for the environment with likeminded people. No experience necessary! Call (563)328-3286 to register.

**17<sup>th</sup> ~Friends Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ (Site to be determined); call (563) 328-3286 to find out the meeting location ~** Join the Friends of the Wapsi Center to learn about current happenings, public programs, special events and volunteer opportunities.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Composting 101 ~ 10:00 A.M. – Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Join Seasonal Naturalist Kyle Moeller to learn about materials, cost, methods and the science behind composting! This fun and all-natural mixture can be made of waste product from around your lawn & garden and kitchen and applied to your garden in a matter of months. Fun for the whole family! Call (563) 328-3286 to register.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Cocoa Picasso ~ Migratory Mayhem ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** In this kid-friendly class that blends nature and art, learn about the dangers of migration for many Midwest creatures! Then, enjoy complimentary hot cocoa while you learn how to paint a related picture on canvas in a guided step-by-step experience. \$5/canvas. Call (563)328-3286 to register.



**24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> ~ Holiday ~** Conservation Board Park offices in Scott County will be closed in observance of Thanksgiving.

**27<sup>th</sup> ~ Christmas Walk at the Village ~ Noon - 4:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~**



Begin your holidays early with a historic walk through the beautifully decorated Village; complete with Friends of the Village in period costume. While there, enjoy craft demonstrations and sales, letters to Santa in the General Store,

refreshments at the soda fountain, holiday music, and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Admission is free with a donation of nonperishable goods for the North Scott Food Pantry.

## December

**(No Friends Meeting)**

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Cocoa Picasso ~ Winter Coats ~ 1:00 P.M. ~** In this kid-friendly class that blends nature and art, learn about how animals prepare for winter! Then, enjoy complimentary hot cocoa while you learn how to paint a related picture on canvas in a guided step-by-step experience. \$5/canvas. Call (563)328-3286 to register.



**8<sup>th</sup> ~ Winter Book Fair ~ 5:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. ~ Truman Elementary School ~** Join Wapsi River Center Director Dave Murcia, in supporting this year's Winter Book Fair at Truman Elementary with live bird of prey sessions! Come learn about these beautiful predators up close including owls and falcons.

**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Natural Wreaths ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Join Naturalist Michael J. Granger for a lesson on wreath making. Participants will be able to fashion a wreath out of grapevine and then decorate it with natural items. Visitors may bring evergreen tree trimmings, seeds, nuts or other natural items to make their wreath a "one of a kind". Please call to pre-register (563)328 -3286.



**23<sup>rd</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> ~ Holiday ~** Conservation Board Park offices in Scott County will be closed in observance of Christmas.

**Save the Date:**

**January 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 ~ Annual Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days ~** remember to save the date and sign up to volunteer at the Wapsi River Center Booth. Volunteer time slots are arranged in two hour shifts starting Friday (6<sup>th</sup>) 4:00 -8:00 P.M., Saturday (7<sup>th</sup>) 10:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M., and Sunday (8<sup>th</sup>) 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Please call to volunteer (563) 328-3286.



**WAPSI RIVER E. E. CENTER**  
**31555 52ND AVENUE**  
**DIXON, IA 52745**  
**Tel: (563) 328-3286**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



“The W.R.E.N.” is published quarterly by the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and the Scott County Conservation Board.”

**Mailing List:** To receive a copy of the WREN free of charge, please send a postcard to the address above.

## **Scott County Conservation Board**

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| Rich Mohr             | Doug Grenier |
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Director:

Roger Kean

## **Phone Numbers**

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(563) 328-3286

Scott County Conservation Board  
(563) 328-3280

## **Wapsi River Environmental Education Center Staff**

Scott County:

Dave Murcia, Director/Naturalist  
Mike Granger, Naturalist  
Emily Santiago, Naturalist  
Becky Horton, Seasonal Assistant Naturalist  
Kyle Moeller, Seasonal Assistant Naturalist  
Sean Santiago, Resident Caretaker

The Scott County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes they have been subject to discrimination, they may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Scott County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Interior, Washington D.C. 20240.