

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

SPRING 2018

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi

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

Wapsi Happenings

By: Director, Dave Murcia

Wapsi Center Receives Award

In February, the Center was selected as a *River Action Eddy Award* honoree for "going against the current", and exemplifying excellence in education on the riverfront. Through the



environmental/outdoor education programming and curriculum offered through the Center, many participants have gained awareness on water issues, been educated about them, encouraged to improve lifestyles, and become



The "EDDY AWARD" stewards of our sacred waters.

Winter Events 2018

Quad City Bald Eagle Days was successful in educating about 900 students, teachers, and parents on the education day, and our booth saw about another 650 public visitors over that weekend! This year our booth theme was winter animal tracking and furs, and showcased our live eastern screech owl. **We would like to thank our Friends members, and all the volunteers for assisting with the booth.**



Winter Fun Day saw sixty-one participants starting with a nature hike, followed by wild edibles and fire starting. There was a three member team that won the traveling



Chili Cook-off trophy, congratulations to Nasaih Kolwey, Nasir Kolwey, and Eli Benson! Thank you to our volunteers and *Friends* members for supporting the event!

Chili cook-off winners with Smokey.

New Raptor Mount Donated

The Center is again, very thankful for a new **snowy owl** mount that was graciously donated by world-class taxidermist Kent Reedy of Dixon, Iowa. This year there were several sightings of snowy owls throughout the state, including here in eastern Iowa. Locals, including Wapsi naturalists reported snowy owls near the local areas surrounding Walcott, Eldridge and Bettendorf.



SNOWY OWL ~ Kent Reedy

Scott County Conservation Board at the Quad Cities Outdoor Show

The SCCB attended the 2018 QC Outdoor Show held at the Quad Cities Expo Center this February, and had many visitors at our booth. Thanks to an all SCCB park staff effort, many questions were answered about our park system including: new cabins, fishing/hunting, and program opportunities. The wildlife tracking board was “abuzz” with the kids, young and old alike!



Scott County Park Ranger, Tanner guides another “tracker”.

School and Public Programs

During the first quarter of this year, our staff provided programming to about 729 participants on-site, and approximately 3174 explorers off-site. Programming included students, teachers, parents and the general public at the Wapsi River Center as well as satellite sites in the Quad City region.

The Wapsi Center takes an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education and maintains **100% satisfaction ratings** through comments cards and evaluations. The Center also meets at least one **Iowa Core** requirement for all Iowa school programs surveyed, while current efforts are now focused on **NGSS/STEM** standards. 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.



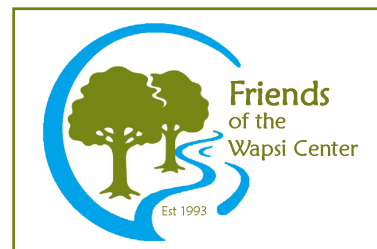
“BECOME A WAPSI RIVER CENTER FRIENDS MEMBER TODAY!”

www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/Wapsi-friends

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 (563) 328-3286.

YES! I want to join the Friends’ Group.

Enclosed is my contribution to the Friends of the Wapsi Center.



Name _____ \$10.00 newsletter
 Address _____ \$20.00 contributing member
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ \$30.00 supporting member
 Phone Number _____
 Email Address _____

PLEASE SEND MEMBERSHIP FORM TO:

~~~Friends of the Wapsi “Treasurer”~~~

31555 52nd AVENUE, DIXON, IOWA 52745

Contributions to the Friends are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

# PLANT PROFILE: MOSS

By Naturalist Michael J. Granger

Let me introduce to you a plant whose beauty rivals the tallest trees, even though it is less than a few inches tall. You can find in any woods, and it grows on rocks, fallen trees, tree bark on living trees and even bare soil. I usually can look on any fallen tree in the woods and usually find it. It is small and delicate, preferring shady and moist growing conditions. Can you guess what this primitive plant is? I commonly refer to it as “Mother Nature’s Carpeting”. On nature hikes I invite the students touch and feel this plant. It is moss.

Mosses occur in most moist wooded habitats. They are not found in salt water conditions, but readily inhabit freshwater habitats. Mosses are primitive, non-vascular plants which do not produce seeds. They are classified as bryophytes. Bryophytes include liverworts, hornworts and mosses. All of them, once again, lack true vascular tissues, thus limiting them to moist environments. There are 12,000 different species of moss, and identification of different species is associated with their spore producing structures. For simplicity we won’t learn to identify different species, but focus on mosses in general.

The spore producing structure of a moss is known as a *sporangia*. Mosses do not produce seeds but spores. Their life cycle is complex. The diagram below shows the life cycle. Spores emerge from the moss sporangium and germinate. The spores grow into *gametophytes*, which are either male or female. The female gametophyte or produces eggs or *archegonia*. The male gametophyte or produce a sperm producing structure called *antheridia*. Upon the right conditions fertilization occurs and the female plant produce the mature moss plant known as a *sporophyte*.

Mosses serve important roles in the environments where they are found. They assist in breaking down substrates which release nutrients which can be utilized by more complex plants succeeding them. Though they are small they provide

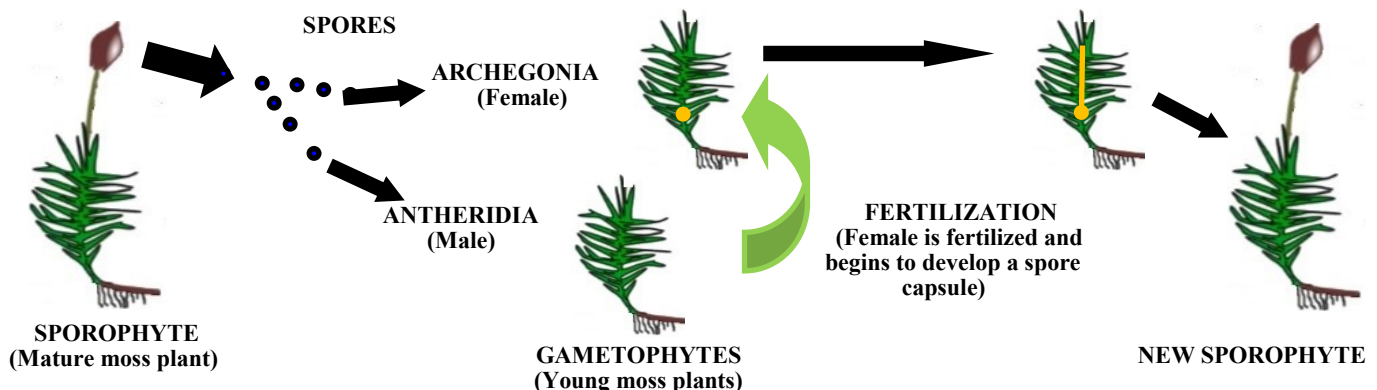
erosion control on bare soil and absorbing and holding water. Many creatures also find the wet dark environments that mosses prefer ideal for existence. Pill bugs, beetles, spiders, millipedes, centipedes, snails and other creatures may be found in mossy habitats. A microscope reveals a “micro universe” of strange creatures living in moss. Nematodes, rotifers and tardigrades love a mossy environment.



For those with a “Green Thumb”, mosses do wonderfully in dish gardens and terrariums. Terrariums are a great way to bring moss into a living space. A closed terrarium provides a constant supply of moisture and protection from the surrounding unsuitable growing environment. Mosses also do well in minute fairy gardens which are quite popular. Your local garden supply store may have a whole section for fairy gardening. Little figurine’s may be added to make your own beautiful, enchanting world.

Moss is fairly easy to transplant and propagate. Sheets of moss are fairly easy to collect by carefully peeling it off in sheets. These sheets can be tucked in rocky moist landscapes. Propagating moss is also easy. Put a handful of moss in a blender along with a cup of buttermilk and a cup of water. Blend the ingredients into a slurry. Pour or paint this slurry over the rocks or in between chunks of transplanted moss to fill in the empty spaces. The spores in the slurry will form moss as long as you keep the area moist to allow it to grow.

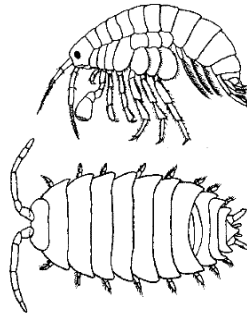
Next time you are in the woods enjoying nature see if you can find some moss, kneel down, feel and touch the moss. If you are lucky you may see some of its spore capsules developing. You might even see some creatures thriving on it. Happy exploring!



# ANIMAL PROFILE: PILL BUG

By Seasonal Naturalist Christian LaCarte

Let me introduce to you an amazing creature that can be found in your backyard, the pill bug, also known as the roly poly. We all remember digging in the dirt as kids, and playing with these amazing arthropods. More specifically, the pill bug is a terrestrial crustacean in the order Isopoda. Most species of Isopods are marine, but this group evolved to live on land. The 'pill bug' is not considered an insect. Interestingly enough, they're actually much more closely related to crustaceans like the shrimp and crayfish, than to any kind of insect.



When it comes to physical characteristics they are somewhat flattened, and several times longer than wide. The top and sides of the pill bug are covered by a row of tough plates. Underneath they have 7 pairs of legs. On the head there is a pair of antennae. Pill bugs breathe through gills. Very similar to their marine cousins, terrestrial pill bugs use gill-like structures to exchange gases. They require moist habitats to breathe, but won't be able to survive being submerged in water. These arthropods can be found in much of the U.S.

Pill bugs live just about anywhere there is moisture and dead plants to eat, but they are most common in forests and other humid habitats. Some can be found living along the seashore, close to their marine relatives. They need humid conditions to survive. If you are looking for one of these little guy try searching under rocks, wood piles, fallen trees, and other moist places where decomposition is most likely taking place. Pill bugs will eat algae, fungus, moss, bark, and all kinds of decaying plant and animal material.

In the West, people call them sow bugs. In the Midwest you will most likely hear roly poly. Over in the East they are known as woodlice. They won't bite or sting, but when they feel threatened they roll up into a ball to try and protect their soft underbelly, head, and legs. This is why the pill bug is commonly referred to as the roly poly. Rolling up into the ball or pill shape can save their life.

Some known predators of the pill bug include; centipedes, spiders, ants, birds, and amphibians.



A "Roly Poly"  
Google images

A typical lifespan of a roly poly is roughly 2-3 years depending on their living conditions. When it comes to growing, they don't change shape or their structure much. Over their lifespan they just get larger as they periodically shed their exoskeleton.



Google images

Here are some Unique traits and characteristics of the pill bug (<https://www.thoughtco.com/fascinating-facts-about-pillbugs-1968438>).

The pill bug's blood is blue. Just like other crustaceans a pill bug has blue blood.

Pill bug mothers carry their eggs in a pouch. The mother also carries her young in the pouch until they can fend for themselves.

Pill bugs don't urinate. Pill bugs have an amazing ability to tolerate ammonia gas, which they can pass directly through their exoskeleton, so there's no need for pill bugs to urinate.

Pill bugs eat their own poop. Pill bugs munch on a lot of feces, including their own. Each time a pill bug poops, it will lose a little bit of copper, an essential element that it needs to live. In order to recycle this precious resource, the pill bug will consume its own poop, a practice known as coprophagy.

Pill bugs turn bright blue when they are sick. Like any other animal, pill bugs can contract viral infections. If you find a pill bug that looks bright blue or purple, it's a sign of an iridovirus. It is the reflected light from the virus that causes the cyan color.

Pill bugs can be reared easily in an aquarium. Just fill the bottom with a moist soil substrate, add some fresh moss, and dead leaves. You can feed them cut potatoes, carrots, grapes or apples. Spritz the tank daily with water to provide adequate moisture. This could provide children or students with hours of entertainment.

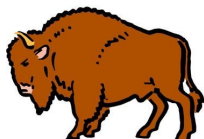
Next time you are working in your garden or taking a nature walk in the woods, take a moment to see if you can find the pill bug and I invite you to take a closer look at this fascinating creature!

# SPRING EVENTS

## APRIL

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village** opens for the 2018 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 2018 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.



**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Crafting for Conservation: No-Sew T-shirt tote bags and coasters ~ 10:00 A.M. – Noon ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Naturalist, Becky Horton, for our second installment of our Crafting for Conservation series. During this series, we will be making arts and crafts out of either natural or recyclable items. During this session, we will be making no-sew tote bags and drink coasters out of t-shirts. Please bring 2 old t-shirts and a sharp pair of scissors. All other supplies will be provided. There is no cost for this program. Registration is required. Please call (563)328-3286 to register for this program.



**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Becoming a Weather Scientist ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join National Weather Service Warning Coordination Meteorologist Donna Dubberke, for an informational Citizen Science program. The program will introduce and describe the various options available to people to be a weather "citizen scientist". You will learn general information about storm spotting, how to become a spotter, rainfall observers, Weather-Ready Nation, and more. Please call (563)328-3286 to register.

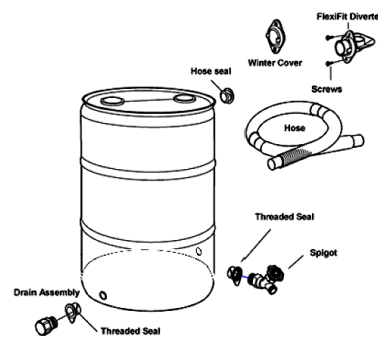


**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park (Gate #3)** ~ The Scott County Conservation Board meets monthly at the

West Lake Park Headquarters office, 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804.

**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Saving with Sustainability; Composting ~ 9:30 – 10:30 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come join us at the Wapsi River Center to learn the benefits of composting. We'll start off learning about what it takes to compost. Bring a small can, or bucket with a lid (roughly 1 gallon) and we will create your own DIY, beginner compost bin. Ice cream buckets or coffee cans work great. Please call to register (563) 328-3286.

**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Saving with Sustainability; Rain Barrels ~ 11:00 - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Do you want to learn about harvesting rain? This DIY program will give hands on experience into what it takes to begin this sustainable practice. We will be making a DIY rain barrel that you can bring home and begin to use the benefits it has to offer. Let's start saving with sustainability! The rain barrel program is limited and will be available to the first 6 paid registrants. \$30 per rain barrel. Please call to register as supplies are limited (563)328-3286.



**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Canoe/Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park (Gate #1) Lake of the Hills Boat Ramp** ~ Join Wapsi River Center staff for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of Lake of the Hills. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations. **Reminder-** this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress appropriately, bring water, and call to register for a seat at (563)328-3286.

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Plant some Shade ~ 4:00 - 6:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park** ~ MidAmerican Energy Company customers in Iowa are eligible to purchase trees for \$30 each, with the remaining cost funded through a grant from MidAmerican Energy. Advanced purchase is required and is limited to two trees per household. Trees



must be picked up Thursday, April 19, 2018, from 4-6 P.M. at West Lake Park. Any trees not picked up by 6 P.M. on distribution day will be considered donations to Scott County Conservation. Please visit the conservation board website for more information at [www.scottcountyiaowa.com/conservation](http://www.scottcountyiaowa.com/conservation).

**19<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come learn about the current happenings, and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.

**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Spring Volunteer Stewardship Workday ~ 9:00 A.M. – Noon ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Come celebrate Earth Day at the Wapsi River Center. Join the *Friends of the Wapsi Center* and Staff for a celebration of Earth Day for our annual Spring



Volunteer Workday. The workday will focus on sprucing up the facilities for upcoming events. We will also be filling and installing insect hotels! 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*. Please call to

register at (563)328-3286.

**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Volunteer Round-Up and Orientation ~ 12:30 – 2:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ The *Friends of the Wapsi Center* is looking for more volunteers! Will you join us? This is your chance to learn more about the Wapsi River Center and how to get involved. Share your passion for the environment with like-minded people. No experience necessary! Please call (563)328-3286 to register.

## MAY

**2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Canoe/Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park (Pride Lake)** ~ Join the Wapsi River Center staff for an adventure with canoes and kayaks.



Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of Pride Lake. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations.

**Reminder-** this program is determined by weather

and site conditions, weight capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress

appropriately, bring water, and call to register for a seat at (563)328-3286.

**5<sup>th</sup> ~ Wild Flower Hike ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join naturalist Michael Granger for a tour of the Wapsi woods in search of spring wildflowers. Wild Ginger, Geranium, Bloodroot and May Apple are just some of the flowers to be found. Please call ahead to register (563)328-3286.

**5<sup>th</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.



**5<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke



Observatory for a tour of the night sky. Call (563)333-6141 on the day of the event for a recorded message confirming whether the star party will take place or must be cancelled due to stormy weather. If the weather is merely cloudy, *the star party will still take place* with a tour of the observatory and an

opportunity for questions and answers with local astronomers.

**9<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park (Gate #3)** ~ The Scott County Conservation Board meets monthly at the West Lake Park Headquarters office, 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804.

**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Spring Wild Edible Workshop ~ 10:00 A.M. – Noon ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Naturalist Becky Horton to learn about the many wild edibles in your own neck of the woods.

We will focus on identifying plants, foraging basics, and preparing wild edibles. We will take a hike outdoors to identify and harvest some of the spring wild edibles available during this time. At the end of the program, you will get to sample some wild flavors! Please call (563)328-3286 to register.



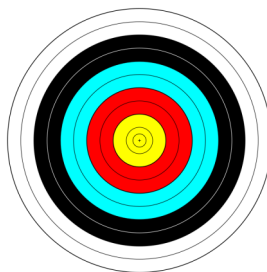
**14<sup>th</sup> ~ Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park (Lake of the Hills) ~** Join the Wapsi River Center staff for an adventure with kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of the Lake of the Hills. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations. **Reminder-** this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight



capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress appropriately, bring water, and call to register for a seat at (563)328-3286.

**17<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Come learn about the current happenings, and volunteer opportunities at the Wapsi River Center. Please call if you are interested in attending (563)328-3286.

**26<sup>th</sup> ~ Archery Basics ~ 10:00 A.M. – Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Learn how to use a bow and arrow in this informative and fun hands-on class. You will learn safety and proper archery techniques according to National Archery in the Schools (NASP) guidelines. Children must be in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above and accompanied by an adult to participate. Please call (563)328-3286 to register.



**27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> ~ Heritage Days ~ 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. (Daily) ~ 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.

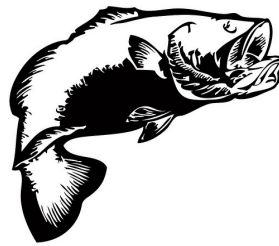
**28<sup>th</sup> ~ Holiday ~ County Offices will be closed in observance of the Holiday.**

## JUNE

**1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> ~ 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.



**2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Fishing Clinic ~ 9:00 – Noon ~ West Lake Park (Rolling Hills Shelter) ~** This program is



exclusively sponsored by The Quad City In-Fisherman and is part of the FISH IOWA angler education program. Open to Scott County residents grades K-6. Children under 9 must be accompanied by an adult, moms and dads are encouraged to attend. All poles and tackle

are provided. Registration begins at 8:00am.

**2<sup>nd</sup> ~ International Migratory Bird Day ~ 10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. ~ Quad Cities Botanical Center ~**

Come learn how to identify birds in your hometown or the Midwestern United States. Learn also how to make your backyard a safe place for migrating birds. This event will include bird watching hikes, featured speakers, and live raptors with Dave Murcia, Director of the Wapsi River Center. Please call the Botanical Center for more details (309)794-0991 or visit [www.qcgardens.com](http://www.qcgardens.com).



**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Birds of Prey ~ 2:00 P.M. ~ Eastern Avenue Library (Davenport, Iowa) ~** Join Director Dave Murcia for a **Birds of Prey** program in support of the Summer Reading program, "*Go Wild at the Library*"! Live raptors will be showcased with "stories" of their own to share. Please contact the Davenport Public Library with questions at (563)888-3393.

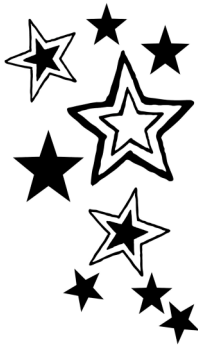
**8<sup>th</sup> ~ Canoe/Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park (Pride Lake) ~** Join Wapsi River staff Center for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour



of Pride Lake. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations.

**Reminder-** this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress appropriately, bring water, and call to register for a seat at (563)328-3286.

**9<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke



Observatory for a tour of the night sky. Call (563)333-6141 on the day of the event for a recorded message confirming whether the star party will take place or must be cancelled due to stormy weather. If the weather is merely cloudy, *the star party will still take place* with a tour of the observatory and an opportunity for questions and answers with local astronomers.

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park (Gate #3) ~** The Scott County Conservation Board meets monthly at the West Lake Park Headquarters office, 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804.

**13<sup>th</sup> ~ Canoe/Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park (Lake of the Hills) ~** Join Wapsi River Center staff for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Whether you are a beginner or regular boater, come out to learn basics. Program

includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of Lake of the Hills. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations.

**Reminder-** this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress appropriately, bring water, and call to register for a seat at (563)328-3286.



**16<sup>th</sup> ~ Pollinator Workshop ~ 10:00 A.M. – Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~** During this workshop, you will learn about The Great Sunflower Project which is an ongoing summer citizen science project that helps better understand the cause and effect of the decline in bee



populations. Becky will show you how to get involved with this research project and how to do a pollinator count. You will also make insect hotels that you can take home and install in your own garden. Please bring empty 1 or 2 liter bottles or empty soup cans for the insect hotels. Registration is required. Please call (563)328-3286 to register for this workshop.

populations. Becky will show you how to get involved with this research project and how to do a pollinator count. You will also make insect hotels that you can take home and install in your own garden. Please bring empty 1 or 2 liter bottles or empty soup cans for the insect hotels. Registration is required. Please call (563)328-3286 to register for this workshop.



**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Friends of the Wapsi River Center ANNUAL Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Lake View Shelter (West Lake Park Gate #1)**

~ Join us to learn more about the Friends of the Wapsi River Center Friends group. Learn about current events and volunteer opportunities. A main dish will be provided. Please bring a side dish to share. Please call (563)328-3286 before the event, for more information.



**JULY ~ Sneak Peak:**

**4<sup>th</sup> ~ HOLIDAY ~ County offices will be closed in the observance of the holiday.**



**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Join

Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory for a tour of the night sky. Call (563)333-6141 on the day of the event for a recorded message confirming whether the star party will take place or must be cancelled due to stormy weather. If the weather is merely cloudy, *the star party will still take place* with a tour of the observatory and an opportunity for questions and answers with local astronomers.





# KIDS KORNER: DISH GARDENS

By Naturalist Becky Horton

Dish gardens are a fun way to liven up your room and make it unique to you! There is not much maintenance to dish gardens aside from watering it about once a week. If you like fairies or princesses, theme your garden using those figurines. If you like action figures, dinosaurs, or woodland critters, use those to theme your garden. If you want no figurines at all and just want a few plants, that is great too! The possibilities are endless. Use your creativity to create a dish garden that is as unique as you are!



To make a dish garden, you will need: a wide, low-sided dish (your local Goodwill or Salvation Army stores are a great source for these dishes), gravel, horticultural charcoal, plants, potting soil, decorative figurines, and moss or sand.

## DIRECTIONS:

Spread less than one inch of gravel and charcoal in the bottom of your dish. The gravel helps with drainage and the charcoal helps keep small amounts of water sweet and fresh.

Un-pot your plants and position them in your dish. Surround the root ball of the plant with soil.

Try to only have a thin layer of soil over the unplanted gravel areas. This will leave "trails" through your garden.

Add decorative figurines or objects to your dish.

Place them with a top-dressing of moss or sand so no bare soil is showing.

Water your garden with a watering can about once a week or when the soil feels dry. Try not to over water as it may kill the plants.

Place the garden indoors where there is bright, but indirect sunlight.

Most importantly, be creative and have fun!



[www.marthastewart.com/869996/how-make-dish-garden](http://www.marthastewart.com/869996/how-make-dish-garden)



# THANKYOU!

The Friends of the Wapsi Center, Inc.

Kent Reedy

Nicole Lauer, Radish Magazine

Bettendorf Public Library

WPQT, *Imagination Station & The Cities* with Jim Martens

WIU, RPTA program

Julie Ross, Bethel United Church

Heather Ballou, ATEEC

Black Hawk Hiking Club

QC Outdoor Women's Club

Clinton County Conservation Board

Rene Robinson, Morford,

Cindy Flockhart & Rob Gilmore

Tim Garner

Tom Schwake

Hedy Hustedde

Sherry Staub

Erma Wiszmann

Norm & Cathie Nichols

Joy Sheeley

Dr. Mark Kalarovich

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A  
P  
l  
a  
c  
e



*For All Seasons*

“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**

Members:

Rich Mohr                      Doug Grenier  
John “Skip” O’Donnell      Beth McAleer  
Carol Fennelly

Director:

Roger Kean

### **Phone Numbers**

Wapsi River Environmental Education Center  
(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  
Becky Horton, Naturalist  
Christian LeCarte, Seasonal Naturalist  
Brandi Turner, 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.