

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

SUMMER 2018

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

www.scottcountyjowa.com/conservation/wapsi

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

Wapsi Happenings

By: Director, Dave Murcia

Annual Friends Meeting

Our annual meeting recognized outstanding skills, knowledge, and abilities that members brought to the Center and the wide variety of programs they support.



A total of **816** hours were volunteered by all, including **582** hours by the *Friends of the Wapsi Center* at an enormous value of **\$20,159** of support! The following members specifically recognized were:

Norn Nichols as *Volunteer of the Year*, including most shifts hosted and hours volunteered, and **Joy Sheeley** (Treasurer) for most meetings attended. On behalf of the Wapsi River Center Director and staff, the Scott County Conservation Board, and Scott County, we are grateful and appreciate your continued support! *Go Team Wapsi!*



Volunteer of the Year
Norm Nichols

Earth Day Stewardship Workday

Spring workday this year was a success due to 25 **volunteers** including our own *Friends of the Wapsi Center* members! The day included: an insect hotel installation, gardening in the produce garden, clearing brush at the Eco Center, and garlic mustard pulling for a total of 75 volunteer hours! Following the event was our annual volunteer round-up with new volunteer candidates learning about opportunities and the Friends group.



Volunteers: Bill Robbins, Joy Sheeley, & Tom Schwake

Spring Events 2018

It was another busy spring season with over 70 public programs including: **paddling**, **Earth Day Volunteer Stewardship Workday & Volunteer Round-up**, **Wildflower Hike**, **Wild Edibles & Archery** programs, **Pollinator Workshop**, and our **Annual Friends of the Wapsi Center** meeting! We also presented for 35 school experiences including Pre-K, elementary, middle, and high school! As a



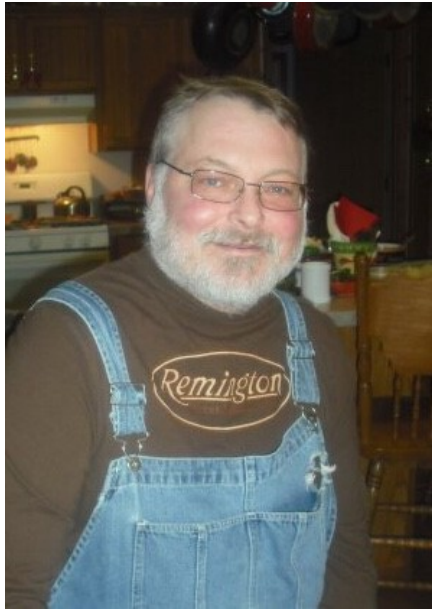
Insect hotel installed at new office

regional environmental education center, we were scheduled by schools in Scott, Clinton, Cedar counties of Iowa, and Rock Island and Henry counties of Illinois.

Behrens Memorial Fund Received

The Wapsi Center is grateful for the kind memorial fund in Terry Behrens' name, which was donated to the Friends of the Wapsi Center.

His wife Bobbie writes, "Terry was a true outdoorsman he enjoyed fishing, hunting, camping canoeing and had a great love for nature. Many years ago he took your Master Conservationist



program. It was a title he was quite proud to hold. We attended the wreath making classes in recent years and came out several times a year just to enjoy your surroundings. I'm sure he is pleased we made this his memorial. I will find comfort in the many memories our family made there." The funds will support a projects at the Center that will continue Terry's interest and love of nature through our education program. On behalf of the Wapsi staff and the SCCB, we thank you Terry Behrens family!

A special thankyou to our volunteers & contributors!!!

Friends of the Wapsi Center, Eagle View Eco Center hosts, Heather Ballou of ATECC, Dr. Mitchell & St. Ambrose University & the Quad Cities Astronomical Society, QCBC, USFWS, Terry Behrens Family Memorial, CR Hanna Grade School (IL), Hillcrest Elementary (IL), Eric Cassling (WIU intern), Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the QC, Jolinda Burr, Rene Robinson Morford, Cindy Flockhart, Tim Garner, Kali Peterson, Kathy Peterson, and Mark Fenner.



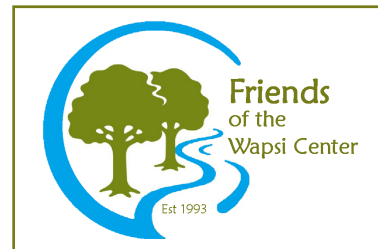
"BECOME A WAPSI RIVER CENTER FRIENDS MEMBER TODAY!"

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.



# SUMMER EVENTS

## JULY

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

**7<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Observatory Star Party ~ Dusk ~ 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> ~ Canoe/Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 – 3:00 P.M. ~ Pride Lake (Scott County Park) ~** Join Wapsi River Center Naturalists for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Whether you are a beginner or regular boater, or just a beginner, come out to learn basics. 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.

**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Youthfest ~ 8:30 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. ~ Fejervary Park (Davenport, Iowa) ~** Join us for or a fun event for all ages! YouthFest is a yearly celebration sponsored by Davenport Parks & Recreation and Davenport Community Schools to encourage youth involvement in constructive summer activities. Each year over 2,500 young people participate in hands-on games, activities, and interactive displays at Fejervary Park (1800 W. 12th St., Davenport, IA).

**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation Board, 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> ~ Summer Wild Edible Workshop ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~** Join Naturalist Becky Baugh 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 Summer 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.



**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Birds of Prey ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ Bald Eagle Camp Ground, Scott County Park ~** Bring your lawn chairs and blankets and join a Wapsi River Center Naturalist for a program on native raptors. This presentation will include raptor ecology, biology, habitats, and **live birds of prey** including a falcon and owls.

**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> ~ Fishing 101 ~ 10:00 A.M. – Noon ~ Pride Lake (Scott County Park) ~** Come learn the basics of fishing at this hands on class. We will go over local laws, equipment, fishing techniques plus catching releasing fish. Great for young fishing enthusiasts and beginners alike. Please call to sign up you your family. You may bring your own gear or use one of our Fish Iowa (DNR) fishing poles. (Participants must have a valid 2018 Iowa fishing license if 16 years or older to fish). Please call to sign your family up soon! (563) 328-3286.



**23<sup>rd</sup> ~ Canoe/Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 – 3:00 P.M. ~ Lake of the Hills (West Lake Park) ~** Join Wapsi River Center Naturalists for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Whether you are a beginner or regular boater, or just a beginner, 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

## AUGUST

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ Bird of Prey ~ 3:00 P.M ~ Park Terrace Campground (West Lake Park)** ~ Bring your lawn chairs and blankets and join a Wapsi River Center Naturalist for a program on native raptors. This presentation will include raptor ecology, biology, habitats, and **live birds of prey** including a falcon and owls.

**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Canoe/Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 – 3:00 P.M. ~ Pride Lake (Scott County Park)** ~ Join Wapsi River Center Naturalists for an adventure with canoes and kayaks. Whether you are a beginner or regular boater, or just a beginner, come out to learn basics. 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.



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**16<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.

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Archery basics~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Naturalist Becky Baugh and learn how to use a bow and arrow in this 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 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above to participate and this program is weather permitting. Please call to pre-register (563) 328-3286.



**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Observatory Star Party ~ Dusk ~ 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.

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**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Monarch Workshop ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center** ~ Join Naturalist Becky Baugh for a workshop on monarch butterflies! During this program, participants will learn about monarch butterflies and why their population is declining. We will help the monarchs by making seed bombs which you will take home with you at the end of the program. We will also take a hike to the prairie and catch monarch butterflies to collect data for Project Monarch Health and Monarch Watch. It will be family fun for everyone! Please call to pre-register (563) 328-3286.



## SEPTEMBER

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Holiday ~ County Offices will be closed for the observance of the holiday.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Pioneer Village Labor Day Weekend Festival ~ 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (Daily) ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village** ~ Come celebrate the Labor Day weekend at Pioneer Village. Event features blacksmithing, spinning, weaving, music, kid's games & crafts, food & ice cream for sale, and Wild West shoot-outs. Family fun for all ages! (\$2.00 adults, \$1.00 children, under 5 free). For more information please call (563) 328-3281.

**10<sup>th</sup> ~ Kayak Experience ~ 1:00 – 3:00 P.M ~ Pride Lake (Scott County Park)** ~ Join Wapsi River Center Naturalists for an adventure with kayaks.

Whether you are a beginner or regular kayaker, come out to learn basics. 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 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.

**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Scott County Conservation Board, 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.

**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Cattail Duck Decoy Workshop ~ 1:00 – 4:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center**  
~ Come learn some cattail biology and then create a “decorative” native American duck “decoy” out of cattails. Please call to pre-register for this adult oriented workshop.



There is a workshop fee of \$5 per decoy, and space is limited to 10. Please sign up for this adult workshop by calling (563) 328-3286.

**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Menke Observatory Star Party ~ Dusk ~ 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.

**20<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.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**October 6<sup>th</sup> ~ 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Ecology Day** ~ Join us for a day of fun and learning here at the Wapsi River Center. Details to come in the next issue of the Wren.

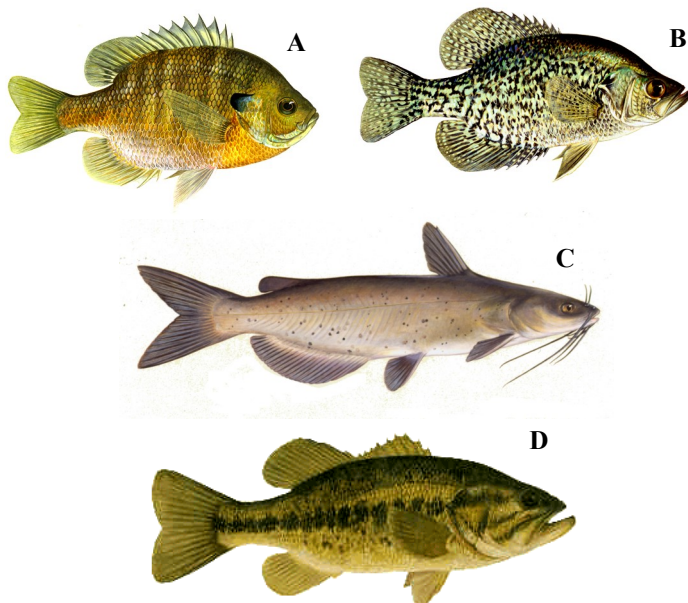
# HELLO ERIC CASSLING!



Hello everyone my name is Eric Cassling. I am the new Wapsi River Environmental Education Center intern from Western Illinois University. I am from East Moline, IL. I will be graduating in August with a degree in Recreation, Park, Tourism and Administration with an emphasis in natural resource management. I am an avid fisherman and love going down to Mark Twain Lake to Crappie fish. I also enjoy going to zoos and nature parks in my free time. I am looking forward to an awesome summer here at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center.

## KID'S KORNER:

**FISH IDENTIFICATION!** Can you name these fish which are frequently caught in Iowa.



Answers: A Bluegill / B Black Crappie / C Channel Catfish / D Largemouth Bass

# FUNGUS PROFILE: The Sulphur Polypore

By Naturalist Becky Baugh

When taking a hike through the woods during the summer and fall, I sometimes come across a bright orange and yellow fungus growing off the side of a tree. Getting a closer look at this

fungus, I notice that it is a shelf mushroom with pores instead of gills. This tells me that I am looking at a sulfur shelf mushroom,



[www.mushroom-appreciation.com](http://www.mushroom-appreciation.com)

*Laetiporus sulphureus*, also known as a Chicken of the Woods. This find is very exciting because they are edible and very tasty. A lot of people claim they have a lemony, meaty taste, or taste like chicken, which is how it got its name. These mushrooms are considered one of the 'Safe Six' mushrooms because they are easy to identify against toxic look-alikes and typically easy to find.

Chicken of the Woods mushrooms only grow on deciduous wood, favoring oaks. You will never find them growing from the ground. If you find them growing on eucalyptus, hemlock, and other conifer trees such as pine, cedar, fir, spruce, larch, or tamarack, they are not edible. Those mushrooms are a different species of sulfur shelf and have made many people sick due to their similar appearance to Chicken of the Woods.

Chicken of the Woods are found during the summer through fall on both living and dead deciduous trees. They are both saprotrophic (feed on dead trees) and parasitic. When they are found on living trees, it is a signal that the tree has been attacked by the mushroom's parasitic mycelium (threadlike fungal roots), and causes heart rot of the host tree. The mycelium can sometimes be seen as whitish fibers in the cracks of the wood.

These mushrooms are easy to find because of their bright yellow and orange colors. They are a polypore shelf mushroom that typically grow in large clusters of overlapping brackets ranging in size from 2-10 inches across and up to 10 inches long. They do

not have a real stem and the brackets are fan shaped. The caps are smooth to wrinkled and may be leathery but not hairy. The edges may be rounded or scalloped and range from flat to wavy. The underside of the cap is covered with tiny pores, not gills. When you cut them open, their inside color is similar to the outside skin.

As the mushroom ages, the color fades and the texture gets tougher. When harvesting Chicken of the Woods, don't be afraid to gather the entire mushroom. The mycelium of a mushroom spread for miles underground or may inhabit an entire tree. The part we see and harvest, the mushroom itself, is comparable to the fruit we pick from a tree. The mycelium remain and therefore produce fruit the following season. Usually young specimens and the outer edges of the older specimens are tender. The older center portion may require stewing. ALWAYS cook mushrooms before eating them. Go easy on the amounts of oil used when sautéing Chicken of the Woods. They are like sponges and will absorb a lot of oil if you let them. You can store them fresh in a paper bag in the refrigerator for no longer than a week. You can also freeze them for later. When sautéing them, you can use them in place of chicken or tofu in any recipe. They work well in curries, rice recipes, risottos, casseroles, or any egg dish. Word of caution: this is a type of mushroom that sometimes causes gastric distress in certain people, especially with the older specimens. It is advised to try a little portion the first time and see what it does.

Next time you are on a hike through the woods, make sure to look for these brightly colored



[northernbushcraft.com](http://northernbushcraft.com)

mushrooms. Just remember, the Wapsi River Center is a nature preserve, so you cannot harvest anything from our property. You can, however, harvest from Scott County Park and West Lake Park. Good luck

# ANIMAL PROFILE: The Eastern Dobsonfly

By Naturalist Michael J. Granger

Recently on a hike along the Wapsi River one of our visiting students found an amazing creature in the wet grass. The creature was about 4 ½ inches long and looked like a segmented black worm. On its head it had large pinchers, which looked like it could bite. One of our hikers had a clear plastic water bottle which was empty so we quickly captured the creature. I knew right away what the creature was, but I had never seen one this large. It was a hellgrammite. A hellgrammite is an aquatic larvae which turns into the dobsonfly. Hellgrammites are found in rocky streams and rivers. The Eastern dobsonfly is an aquatic insect which is found along rivers or streams with rocky or gravel bottoms.



The Eastern dobsonfly is an insect which is noted as the largest winged insect in North America that is not a lepidopteran (a butterfly or moth species).



**Adult Dobsonflies**  
Male (right) Female (Left)  
[entnemdept.ufl.edu](http://entnemdept.ufl.edu)

There are 30 species of *Corydalus*, most of which occur in South America. The Eastern dobsonfly is by far the largest species. The dobsonfly is found throughout most of eastern North America east of the Continental Divide from Canada to Mexico near flowing streams which provide habitat for its larvae. The larvae of the Eastern dobsonfly is quite spectacular in appearance. Its body is segmented and overall light brown in coloration. Along its body there are feathery tracheal gills which absorb oxygen from its aquatic environment. There are also spiracles which allow them to breath in and out of water. There are two hooked appendages at the end of the abdomen which allow the hellgrammite to hold fast to rocks in fast moving streams. The larvae feeds on soft bodied insects such as blackflies and alderflies. They may take one to three years to pupate.

When ready to pupate the larvae leaves the

water and crawls to soft soil or rotten log. There the larvae digs into the substrate and creates a burrow cavity by pressing its body against the sides of its tunnel. After shedding its larval skin the pupa takes 7 to 14 days to transform into an adult. It then tunnels out to begin its adult life.

Adult male Dobsonflies can be fairly large, reaching 5 inches in length including their long mandibles. They have relatively soft fragile bodies. Female dobsonflies do not have large mandibles but are known to bite when handled. The adults are short lived. Males only live for 3 days while females live for 10. Mating occurs along waterways. The male's long pinchers are thought to be used to fend off rivals.

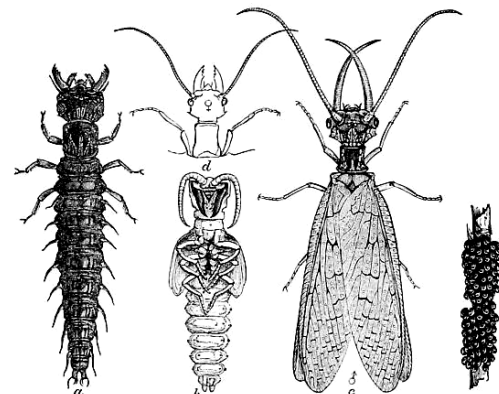
Egg laying occurs after fertilization. Eggs are laid on leaves or trees near waterways. Eggs are covered in a clear liquid, which turns into a hard white coating. Often legs masses are found in groupings suggesting multiple females depositing at a desirable location.



**Dobsonfly Egg Mass**  
[entnemdept.ufl.edu](http://entnemdept.ufl.edu)

Eggs hatch in one to two weeks. The young larvae crawl to the waterway and swim to faster flowing water with a rocky substrate.

The Eastern dobsonfly is a creature, which when found is looked upon with fear. It is a creature that looks like it came from the age of dinosaurs. Even though its striking appearance may frighten you, its



**Dobsonfly Lifecycle** Google images

lifecycle and habits are truly amazing. Next time I find another Eastern dobsonfly, I have a new appreciation for this amazing creature.

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

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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*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  
John “Skip” O’Donnell  
Carol Fennelly

Doug Grenier  
Beth McAleer

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 Baugh, Naturalist  
Eric Cassling, WIU Intern  
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.



