

The W.R.E.A.

Wapsi River Environmental News WINTER 2023

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

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

Wapsi Happenings

By: Director, Dave Murcia

Naturally....Healthy

"Two years into the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, one thing is clear: parks and recreation is essential. Each year, 260 million people across the United States visited a park, trail, recreation center or other park and recreation amenity at least once." -2022 National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Agency Performance Review. While parks and recreation opportunities are essential, it is the right and choice of every citizen, explorer, and family, to choose how they keep well, naturally. Our way of living, plays the most significant role in our wellness. Our biomes within our bodies, are directly associated and linked, to the natural world biome. That is to say, what we put into our bodies is directly affected by what we put into our environment.

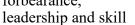
"Indeed, these dedicated people at the more than 10,000 local park and recreation agencies support services and facilities that offer rewarding recreation opportunities, deliver vital emergency services, and promote better physical and mental health"- NRPA. Getting outdoors, connecting and grounding ourselves to nature in meaningful ways is a mindset we should embrace. In an age of intensive conventional farming, chemical dependency, soil degradation, deforestation, impaired waters, and climate change, it is time to revive our communities by using fundamental patterns in nature.

Successful agencies tailor program opportunities to support local needs. Here at the Wapsi River Center, seasonal programs include healthy indoor and outdoor programs in support of healthy outdoor exploration, improving our natural resources, and a deeper understanding of nature in our lives. You can call (563)328-3286 to register for upcoming programs, and remember, *keep well, stay wild!*

Iowa 4H AmeriCorps Positions

The Wapsi River Environmental Education Center of the Scott County Conservation Board is seeking qualified individuals to serve as a temporary AmeriCorps 4-H Environmental Education Member. The <u>positions</u> require the successful completion of service hours by term ending November 30, 2023.

The Member will receive: a <u>living</u> allowance to be distributed equally by month over the term of service, a <u>Segal</u> <u>Education Award</u> upon completion of the term, student loan forbearance,





Environmental Education

development, as well as hands-on experience. The Wapsi River Center seeks a motivated, outgoing person with a background in natural resources, biology,

parks/recreation, community organizing, communications, or administration. The candidate should have strong communication skills, a desire to serve with youth and diverse groups of people, and a passion for community stewardship. This is an excellent opportunity for an individual to gain valuable experience in educating about the importance of Iowa's native resources and conservation practices.

Under general supervision of the Naturalist/Director, the An emphasis on supporting the Iowa Care and Next Member will: assist in developing/conducting interpretive and educational programs for community outreach including school and public groups by:

- Expanding outreach programs with focus to foster awareness and appreciation for Iowa's natural resources, designed to promote stewardship of local youth (K-12).
- Educating on low-impact, healthy lifestyles (outdoor recreation/activities).
- Teaching science/technology/engineering/math (STEM) concepts within Iowa's natural world.
- Partnering/networking with schools, individuals, groups, and volunteers in the community for environmental education outreach. Develop and grow leadership skills that advocate for citizenship/ stewardship through natural resource education, volunteer recruitment/management, training, and philanthropy.

Partners of Scott County Watersheds



Partners of Scott County Watersheds Seek Members

Becoming a Member shows that you value healthy watersheds in your community and beyond! With your annual membership, you will receive a PSCW water bottle and logo decal, be recognized in our annual newsletter and at PSCW events, and receive guidance to water quality ideas, resources, projects, and funding assistance. For info visit: https:// www.partnersofscottcountywatersheds.org/ membership.

Please contact the office at (563)328-3286 or wapsicenter@scottcountyiowa.gov for more

information or to apply visit: https://serviceyear.org/ iwaamericorps4-h/.

Field Experiences

Generation Science Standards will enhance programming for school and pubic both. If you are an educator and would like to schedule a winter or spring field trip, we recommend that you call well in advance if possible and contact us at (563)328-3286.

Sponsor an Animal

If you are interested in sponsoring an educational animal, please contact us at (563)328-3286 for details.

Winter Outdoor Recreation



Photo: Wapsi Center

The Wapsi River Center invites you to get outdoors this winter and get active by snowshoe or ski. Our crosscountry ski/snowshoe trails are open for use when snow depth allows. Adventurers are encouraged to call ahead of time to check conditions at (563)328-3286. We will be offering programs at various SCCB locations, please check our calendar and Winter WREN for dates and locations.

All programming is weather dependent

We require a minimum of 4" of base and reserve the right to any loan, depending on conditions

You will be required to render your license to hold any equipment while on loan

You must remain on SCCB park property

Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult and children and waterproof boots are suggested.

Center Updates



Photo: Wapsi Center

The old **Owl's Nest Dormitory** renovations continue to fly forward. The 1st phase is complete including the rear addition with a multipurpose education room and basement that incorporates a classroom, restroom, kitchenette, indoor archery range, and storage space.

Thanks to the RARE Group of Iowa City, our live animal ambassador program just added an new raptor. Here is the new outdoor mew for our injured raptor. The new raptor is identified in this edition!



Photo: Wapsi Center



Photo: Wapsi Center

The St. Ambrose University's Menke Observatory site is now home to a 2nd scope and roll-off building thanks in part from the QC Astronomical Society.

SPECIAL NEWS: Naturalist Paige is expecting! Littlest nature-lover set to join us in early 2023. While Paige is on maternity leave, expect certain programs like Cocoa Picasso to be on temporary hiatus.

THANKYOU!

Friends of the Wapsi Center
Wapsi River Homeschoolers
River Valley Library District
IA DNR – Smokey the Bear
Julie Wall & The Artist's Vault
Partners of Scott County Watersheds
The RARE Group
Muscatine & Louisa CCB
Nahant Marsh
Scott County IT Dept.
Sarah VanDeWalle Family
Victoria Graves
Betty Strom

Mark & Lisa Cleve
James & Jane Varcho
Jolinda Eggers
Megan Fahrenkrug
George Straetker
Bill Robbins
Lucia Dryanski
Jim & Julie Ross
Susan McPeters
Chris Neff
Lindsay Doyle
Emma Jacobs
Nick Buonauro
Darrell Thode



14th ~ Super Critters ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Iowa 4-H educator Emma to learn about different superpowers in nature! In this series

JANUARY

2nd ~ HOLIDAY ~ County Offices will be closed in observance of the Holiday.

 $6^{th} - 8^{th} \sim Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days \sim (see times$ for each day below) ~ Quad Cities Expo Center ~ The Quad Cities Conservation Alliance, Modern Woodman, Arconic, and Army Corps of Engineers are sponsoring this annual event. This event features live birds of prey, over 90 display booths, and of course, viewing of our national bird, the American bald eagle. The event is held at the OCCA Expo Center at 2621 4th Avenue, Rock Island, from 4:00 to 8:00 P.M. on Friday, 10:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. on Saturday, and 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. on Sunday.



the Wapsi River Center display. Please call (309)788-5912 for more details.

11th ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ The Scott County Conservation Board normally meets the second Wednesday of every month at the West Lake Park Headquarters office. The public and press are encouraged to participate virtually due to social distancing challenges. Please call (563)328-3281 for more information.

 $14^{th} \sim Winter Wild Edible Workshop \sim 10:00 A.M.$ ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Naturalist Becky to learn about the many wild edibles in your own neck of the woods. We will focus on foraging basics, foraging safety, identifying plants, and preparing wild edibles.

We will take a hike outdoors to identify some of the winter wild edibles available during this time. At the end of the program, you will get to sample some wild flavors! Space is

limited and



registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

we will explore a different topic or animal group each program and their SUPER ADAPTATIONS. Registration is limited and required by calling (563) 328-3286.

16th ~ HOLIDAY ~ County Offices will be closed in observance of the Holiday.

18th ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~1:00 P.M. ~ West

Lake Park (Lake View Shelter) ~ Join Wapsi River Center staff for an outdoor adventure on snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are Come see us at suggested. This program is dependent on weather/



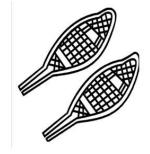
site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

 19^{th} ~ Homeschool Days ~ 10:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Once a month the Wapsi River EE Center will be hosting a day just for homeschoolers! Join us for themed programming led by our Naturalists! The goal of this series is to immerse children in the natural world and help them experience seasonal phenomena in a hands-on way. Most appropriate for K-6th grades, though all ages welcome. Suggested donation of \$1/student. Please come prepared for the weather because much of the planned programming will take place outdoors. Bring a lunch if you like. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286. Registration opens the first of each month.

19th ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Virtual Only ~ Learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. This meeting will be virtual only. Please call for more information (563)328-3286.

FEBRUARY

1st ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Wapsi River Center staff for an outdoor adventure on snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for



both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather/site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

4th ~Winter Fun Day ~ 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Wapsi Naturalists to discover the wonders of winter at the Wapsi River Center. Please dress accordingly, waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather/conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

9:00 A.M. to Noon ~ Cross Country Ski and Snowshoe: Come explore the winter wilderness on snowshoes or x-country skis.

Noon ~ Chili Cook-off: Join us for the chili cook off and a chance to win the chili cup. Participants are invited to bring a crock pot of their best chili recipe. The winning participant will get their photo taken with the coveted chili cup!



5th ~ Learn to Ice Fish ~ 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. ~ Pride Lake (Scott County Park) ~ Join our staff for a morning of ice fishing at Pride Lake at Scott County Park. Bring a bucket or chair to sit on and we will provide the rest! We will pre-drill the holes, provide bait, poles, and will discuss the types of fish you may catch and equipment being used. We welcome all ages and experience levels for this free event. (Please park in the parking lot a crossed road from Pride Lake (Sledding hill parking lot). For questions and to register please call (563)328-3282

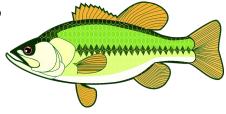
6th ~ Feeding Backyard Wildlife ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Davenport Public Library (Eastern Branch) ~ Would you like to feed the birds in your backyard but have questions on what to give them? Join Naturalist Becky from the Wapsi River Center to learn about feeding backyard wildlife and the Global Great Backyard Bird Count. Please call the library at (563) 326-7832 for more information.

8th ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ The Scott County Conservation Board normally meets the second Wednesday of every month at the West Lake Park Headquarters office. The public and press are encouraged to participate virtually due to social distancing challenges. Please call (563)328-3281 for more information.

15th ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park (Whispering Pines Shelter) ~ Join Wapsi River Center staff for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather/site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

16th – 19th ~Twenty First Annual Quad Cities

Outdoor Show ~ Quad Cities Expo Center (Rock Island, IL) ~ The event is held at the QCCA Expo Center at 2621 4th



Avenue, Rock Island, from 4:00-8:00 P.M. on Thursday, Noon to 8:00 P.M. on Friday, 9:00 A.M.-8:00 P.M. on Saturday, and 10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M. on Sunday. Come visit the SCCB booth to pick up the latest info or visit with other vendors and get outdoors! Please call the Expo Center for more details (309)788-5912.

16th ~ Homeschool Days ~ 10:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Once a month the Wapsi River EE Center will be hosting a day just for homeschoolers! Join us for themed programming led by our Naturalists! The goal of this series is to immerse children in the natural world and help them experience seasonal phenomena in a hands-on way. Most appropriate for K-6th grades, though all ages welcome. Suggested donation of \$1/student. Please come prepared for the weather because much of the planned programming will take place outdoors. Bring a lunch if you like. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286. Registration opens the first of each month.

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17th ~ Building Better Birders Citizen Science Workshop ~ 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River



EE Center - Join host Scott County Conservation for a citizen science workshop on building better birders. This workshop will be conducted by Kelly McKay (BioEco Research and Monitoring Center), with assistance from Mark Roberts (Clinton County Conservation), Brian Ritter & James Wiebler (Nahant Marsh Ed. Center). This workshop will include: "Common Feeder Birds of Iowa", "Rare and Unusual Species of Iowa", and an afternoon bird hike. The mission of the workshop is to create birders across Iowa, that contribute knowledge about birds through participation in Citizen Science programs such as Christmas Bird Counts, Great Backyard Bird Counts, Project FeederWatch, etc. Funding for this workshop was provided by the Resource Enhancement and Protection – Conservation Education Program (REAP_CEP). Please call the Wapsi River Center to register at (563)328-3286.

18th ~ Backyard Birds ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River

Center ~ Join Naturalist Becky to learn about the birds that can be found in your own backyard! You will also learn ways to attract birds to your backyard and will make take-home pinecone bird feeders. During this program, you will also learn



about the Great Backyard Bird Count. Bird watchers of all ages can participate in this free program. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563) 328-3286.

22nd ~ Snowshoe Adventure ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Wapsi River Center staff for an outdoor adventure in snowshoes. Snowshoes are weight rated for both adult/children and waterproof boots are suggested. This program is dependent on weather/site conditions. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

MARCH

4th ~ Super Critters ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Iowa 4-H AmeriCorps Educator Emma to learn about different superpowers in nature! In this series we will explore a different topic or group each program and their <u>SUPER</u>

ADAPTATIONS. Registration is limited and required by calling (563)328-3286.



4th ~ Maple Syruping ~1:00 P.M.~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Naturalist Mike for a lesson on maple syruping. Learn the history of syruping, tree identification, and then learn how to gather sap! Fun for the whole family. Space is limited and registration is required by calling (563)328-3286.

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(563)328-3286.

25th ~ 16th Annual Bettendorf STEM Expo ~ 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. ~ Bettendorf Middle School ~ Join Director Dave Murcia and learn about the lives of native raptors including where they live, how they hunt, and what you can do to support these beautiful predators. Live raptors will be presented!



KIDS KORNER: THE BALD EAGLE

America adopted the bald eagle as the national symbol in 1782. Forty-five years ago, our national symbol was in danger of extinction throughout most of its range. Habitat destruction and degradation, illegal shooting, and the contamination of its food source, largely as a consequence of DDT, decimated the eagle population.

The recovery of the bald eagle is one of the most well-known conservation success stories of all time. The ban of DDT, placing the bald eagle on the Endangered Species Act, and continued education about our national symbol have allowed the eagle to make a comeback. The US Fish and Wildlife Service continues to work with our partners in state and federal agencies, tribes, nongovernment organizations and private landowners to ensure that our nation's symbol flourishes.

Below is a list of bald eagle facts. See if you can match the correct answer to the question!

1. The correct term for an eagle nest is an	
2. An eagle's beak, talons and feathers are made of	CHOOSE YOUR
3. An eagle can lift up to POUNDS.	ANSWERS FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST:
To end the design of the second secon	7,000
4. An eagle has up to <u>FEATHERS.</u>	10 to 14
5. An adult eagle weighs POUNDS.	30 to 35
5. All adult eagle weighs	1 to 3
6. Eagles can fly MPH_during level flight.	4
	NATIONAL EMBLEM
7.Eagles lay from <u>EGGS</u> .	KETTLE
8. An eagles reaches breeding age inYEARS.	72 to 90
	400
9. The American bald eagle was declared ourin 1782.	100
10. An immature eagle hashead and tail feathers.	2,000
10. An inmature eagle hasnead and tall leathers.	FISH
11. A group of eagles soaring is called a	100
	KERATIN
12. An eagle has a <u>INCH WINGSPAN.</u>	AERIE
13. A hatchling eagle is called an	35
	4 to 5
14. Incubation lasts for DAYS.	FEATHERS
15. The American hald engle's professed food is	EAGLET
15. The American bald eagle's preferred food is	20
16. It is illegal to possess a bald eagle's	BROWN
17. Bald eagles may liveYEARS in the wild.	
18. A bald eagle nest may weigh as much as a TON (POUNDS).	
19. An eagle's talons produce POUNDS PER SQUARE INCH	of pressure.
20 An eagle can see a fish at VARDS	

ANIMAL PROFILE: RED-TAILED HAWK

By Naturalist Paige Owings

Guess what?? The Wapsi Center is now home to a new raptor! This brings our total to 4! To welcome our new friend. I thought I'd share some amazing information on her species! We received a Red-tailed hawk (Buteo *jamaicensis*) from the RARE Group in late October. The bird had a wing injury that left her unable to fly, and therefore unable to be



Red-tailed Hawk PHOTO: Becky Baugh

released. So, it is with great pride that we welcome her onto our Education Ambassador team!

Red-tailed hawks are the largest of the *Buteo* group of hawks normally found in Iowa and the most abundant in North America. Buteos are birds built for soaring. Their wings are very broad and rounded and they have a short, fan-shaped tail. Average wingspan for the red-tailed hawk ranges from 3.7 - 4.7 ft. With these large wingspans, they prefer to utilize open country. Red-tailed hawks can be found along field edges, near tree lines, and even along the sides of roads. They are often perched on telephone poles, road signs, or on the top branches of trees.

If you were standing on the ground and looking up at a large bird flying overhead, look for the hawk fun fact: their call is a thrilling, raspy scream.



-tailed hawk: when fully mature most are chocolatey brown on their backs and pale or white on the belly and chest, with a streaked belly and wing underside. The tail is cinnamon -red above with a possible dark stripe at the base and paler (almost slightly pink) below. There are times in flight when

Adult Red-tailed Hawk in flight: (https://ornithology.com/redhawks/)

the bird may shift or tilt the tail, providing even those viewing from the ground an

excellent view of the reddish color on the top of the tail, which is an excellent identification tool! Juvenile

birds are generally darker and much more streaked all over and can sometimes even look nearly black. Like eagles, these birds shift color as they molt and reach their final adult plumage.

Because of their color shifts, identifying a juvenile redtailed hawk can be slightly more challenging than the full -grown adults. Once they reach maturity (approximately 2-3 years old) there are naturally occurring different color variations of red-tailed hawks including "Rufous-morphs," which are reddish-brown on the chest with a darker-than-normal



Juvenile Red-tailed Hawk: Wapsi Trail Camera

belly. We believe ours to be a rufous morph! If you visit her you may notice that she's a bit different from the typical colors described above.

Red-tailed hawks are diurnal hunters and rely on daylight to locate prey. They have incredible eyesight and a sharp beak and talons that help them hunt. Favorite meals include snakes and small mammals such as voles, mice, rabbits, and squirrels. They will also scavenge off of carrion and are often seen visiting deer strikes on road sides eating their

I want to leave you with my favorite red-tailed following traits to identify a red It's so intense and exciting that Hollywood directors often use it whenever a hawk or eagle of any species

appears onscreen. This trickery has confused many students and naturalistsself included! I used to think the screaming call belonged to the Bald Eagle, but I was among the many to be tricked! I hope you enjoyed learning more about our new Ambassador

and I hope you'll get the chance to come visit her at the Wapsi River Center soon!

BREEDING YEAR-ROUND NON BREEDING Cornell Lab of Ornitholo-

gy

PLANT PROFILE: WHITE WALNUT

By Naturalist Michael J Granger

Recently on an outing I found an interesting tree walnut leaves have an noticeably with long compound leaves. The tree was over 50 foot tall with light grey smooth bark. The next step was to find the tree's seeds. Below the tree there were many oblong seeds that resemble little footballs. Some were dried and some still had green outer husk that is fuzzy and somewhat sticky.

The tree was the white walnut, Juglans cineraea, also known as a "butternut" tree. Members of plant family Juglandaceae have aromatic leaves and fruits. The group includes walnuts, pecans and hickories. Most of you may be familiar with the white walnut's cousin the black walnut tree, Juglans nigra.

White walnut trees may grow 66 to 170 feet tall. They prefer grow on well drained soils along creeks and streams. In the eastern United States white walnut

White Walnut Range Map: Wikipedia

trees grow well in rocky limestone soils, not preferred by black walnut trees, thus eliminating growth of black walnuts. White walnut trees may be found on high rocky ledges and talus slopes. The white walnut's range includes parts of Minnesota south to Arkansas, and as far East as Maine. White walnuts prefer cooler climates and are absent from the southern United States.

When you find a white walnut tree, some differences are quickly noticeable.

The white walnut has a leaf very similar to black walnut, but ALL of white walnut leaves will end with a

single terminal leaflet at the end of each leaf stalk (A black walnut will occasionally have terminal leaflets but not always). The leaf may be 16 to 28 inches long with 11 - 17 leaflets. A white walnut will have an odd number of leaflets. The leaflets are noticeably wide, measuring up to 2



White Walnut leaves: Wikipedia

inches. The whole leaf will be covered with downy pubescent hairs and may feel sticky to the touch. White bright vibrant yellow green color. A white walnut tree has smooth light grey bark. The bark may be furrowed with age.

While a black walnut has a round fruit, a white walnut has an oblong fruit which is more football shaped. White walnut fruits are produced in bunches of two to six together. The fruit has a somewhat sticky green husk and the nut will mature and drop in the fall. The butternuts are edible and were made into a butter-like oil by Native Americans for various purposes. The sap can be used to make syrup. White walnut hulls were also used to dye clothing a light tan during early American history. During the American Civil War Confederate soldiers were often called "butternuts" due to the color of their shirts! It is also known that the hulls have been

used to catch fish, which are



Wapsi River Center: Paige Owings

stunned by its toxins, but this method is illegal.

The white walnut has been declining in numbers in the United States, and the tree is considered endangered in Canada. The main cause is "Butternut Canker" which is caused by a fungus. Symptoms include dying branches and twigs. Diseased trees develop stem cankers within 3 years and trees may eventually die. It is

thought that the fungus is spread by rain water running from the outer branches to the main trunk. Single white walnut trees seem to survive this disease, whereas, a dense stand or a large grove of trees may be completely wiped out, as it is transmitted., from tree to tree.

Next time you are exploring you might be able to find a white walnut tree, which is truly a treasure. The best clue is to look for the football shaped fruits in the fall! Happy exploring.



White Walnut Wapsi River Center

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: Receive a copy of the WREN free of charge by sending a postcard to the address above.

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Roger Kean

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Environmental Education Member



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.