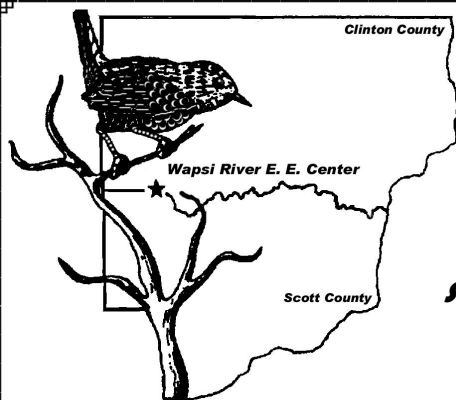




The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental Newsletter

SPRING 2026

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

www.scottcountyjowa.com/conservation/wapsi



www.facebook.com/scottcountyconservation



<https://www.instagram.com/scottcountyconservation>

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

Wapsi Happenings

By: Director, Dave Murcia

Wapsi/Sherman BioBlitz 2026

The 2026 BioBlitz, spear-headed by Bi-CAN (<https://bi-can.org/>), was hosted and conducted at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center (WREEC) with highly anticipated success. Sherman Park was also surveyed as an important area of the overall 432 acre native ecosystem complex. At this time, 1378 observations and 775 species have been submitted!

The BioBlitz was an intensive 24 hour survey with the intention of identifying as many species as possible. The secondary purpose was to educate our community about our native species within the native habitats found in Iowa: forest, prairie, and wetlands. There were many education opportunities during the event including education stations and live presentations.

WREEC is managed as a preserve with limited impact to the natural resource, allowing for as much biodiversity as possible. The site has been identified as an **Important Bird Area** by The Audubon Society and has been named in the *Iowa Wildlife Viewing Guide* as one of 77 areas in Iowa for premium wildlife viewing. Several species on the Iowa threatened and endangered species list have been identified. Results of the survey are compiled using the iNaturalist application with final results taking up to 2 weeks to reflect.

Considering Iowa's landscape has lost over 99.9 % of native tallgrass prairie and 88% of the land is now agricultural, natural and wild places are critical for biodiversity. Please consider supporting any of the partners that made the BioBlitz a huge success (see our Thank You section).



**Friends
of the
Wapsi Center**

Friends Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting recognized outstanding skills, knowledge, and abilities that members brought to the Center and the wide variety of programs they support. Current membership includes 41 members with nine new members this year!

A total of **789 hours** (increase of 80 hours from 2025)

were volunteered by the *Friends of the Wapsi Center* at a value of **\$28,505** of support! Additional support by other volunteers and Green Iowa AmeriCorps Members reflected a total of **2151 hours** at a value of **\$77,728!**



Photo: Bill Robbins- Lucia Dyanski (Middle)



Photo: Lucia Dryanski – Linda Puls (Middle)

The following *members* specifically recognized were: **Lucia Dryanski** as **Volunteer of the Year**, **Susan McPeters** (not present) for **most support of programs and projects**, and **Linda Puls & Jessica Gilmore** for most volunteer host shifts supported. 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!**



Photo: Lucia Dryanski – Jessica Gilmore (Middle)

Earth Day Stewardship Workday

Nine stewards braved the blustery Spring workday this year including our own **Friends of the Wapsi Center** members! The day included: gardening, brush clearing and invasive species removal, along with spring butterfly garden preparation, for a total of 27 volunteer hours!



Wapsi Updates

The Wapsi River Learning Center and Lorenzen Hall have final touches updated including bird diversion

What's with the windows?



We love birds!



Scott County Conservation is doing our part to protect local avian species. This protective film was installed to make windows more visible for birds, thus reducing fatal collisions.




HUMAN VISION **BIRD VISION**

While you may have to look hard to see the dots, they are very visible for birds because their vision is different than humans'.



BIRD/DIVERT
THE CLEAR CHOICE FOR PREVENTING BIRD COLLISIONS

Product installation by




window treatments, and signage on order. New exhibits also include two exhibits donated by Johnson County Conservation: Iowa's Tall Grass Prairie and Soil: A Precious Resource. St. Ambrose University continues to improve the Menke Observatory site and has added viewing sights. There have been many wildlife sightings and native flora continues blooming as the season continues.



Black Eyed Susan, Wapsi Prairie; Photo Michael Granger

We are also excited for a new traveling exhibit coordinated by PSMC Treasurer Art McBreen. The **Fungarium** installation is planned for the August 30, with a kick-off presentation and foray the following day



on Saturday, and loaned to us by the Prairie States Mushroom Club. See calendar of events for details. (<https://www.iowamushroom.org/>).

Bumble Bee Training Conducted

The Wapsi River Center hosted a Bumble Bee Atlas field training day in cooperation with the Iowa DNR. (<https://www.bumblebeeatlas.org/pages/iowa>)

IOWA
BUMBLE BEE ATLAS



Project Partners:



“The Iowa Bumble Bee Atlas is a state-wide community science project aimed at tracking and conserving Iowa's native bumble bees. The 2026 field season of the Iowa Bumble Bee Atlas starts June 1.” Please visit the website or call staff at (563)328-3286 to assist with surveying local grids!



School of the Wild

Dave Murcia and the folks at Scott County Conservation supported the largest district School of the Wild (SOW) program to date. Over the course of 3 weeks, more than 700 6th graders from Davenport Community Schools participated. All students explored wetlands, woodlands, prairies, and outdoor skills at West Lake Park.

School of the Wild is a statewide initiative to increase outdoor learning experiences for elementary and middle school students across Iowa. The University of Iowa's College of Education, in partnership with Iowa schools, the Department of Natural Resources, County Conservation Boards, and many other local

conservation organizations across the state, all work together to bring School of the Wild to students. School of the Wild strives to provide all students with a meaningful outdoor learning experience that develops a sense of awareness and appreciation for the natural world and, in turn, leads them to act as positive stewards of all things wild. For more information on SOW and how you can help get a local school started, visit <https://wild.education.uiowa.edu/school-wild> or contact Gus.Elliott@dnr.iowa.gov.

Scott County Conservation Staff Recognized

The Wapsi River Staff and Adam Ohsann has been recognized by the Iowa County Conservation System for education efforts! This past May, the Iowa's County

Conservation System (ICCS) newsletter highlighted Wapsi River Staff for supporting the largest district School of the Wild to date for over 700 Davenport 6th graders! Adam was recognized for attending the National R3

Symposium and supporting shooting sports. Thank you to the Iowa DNR for supporting Scott County Conservation and recognizing our dedicated staff.



National R3 Symposium - Des Moines

Adam Ohsann, Scott County Conservation, recently had the opportunity to attend the National R3 Symposium on a scholarship from the Iowa DNR and the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports, which was held in Des Moines from May 4-6.

“The conference was a great networking tool that provided insights into other states’ and NGO methods on providing outdoor recreation opportunities locally in their communities. It highlighted the importance of introducing youth and adults to the outdoors. Not just for their personal reasons but for wildlife management techniques.” – Adam Ohsann

This year's symposium featured 56 speakers who shared practical insights, research findings, and field-tested strategies related to recruitment, retention, and reactivation. Sessions explored a wide variety of timely topics, including participation trends and public attitudes, effective program design, shooting sports resources, and strategies for responding to criticism of R3 efforts.

To view the presentation archive, visit:

<https://cahss.org/news-events-overview/archive/>



Recruit | Retain | Reactivate

FRIENDS PROFILE: JESSICA GILMORE

By Friends Secretary Lucia Dyranski

Vital Statistics Name: Jessica Gilmore

Friends Member Since: 2025

Favorite Plant: Felted Peperomia

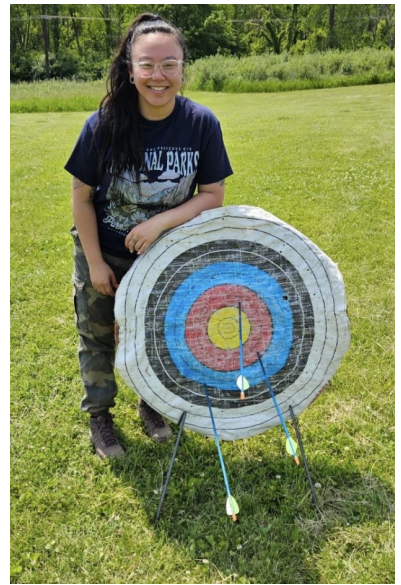
Favorite Bird: Shoebill Bird (native to East Africa)

Favorite Animal: Moose

Favorite Book: The Lantern of Lost Memories

Favorite Movie: Kung Fu Panda 2

Jess grew up in Rock Island, IL. She has a background in working with children. Her time in nature started as a child, looking for a tree to climb and cartwheeling her way through her backyard. Her time outdoors was also fostered by her mother, where they spent time together at National Parks and Preserves and traveled to see nature in different places. Her time with nature now is spent connecting with nature through art, hiking, and attending events held at the Wapsi. Jess attended a morning Wild Edibles program at the Wapsi, and when told the afternoon program that day was for the Friends group only, she immediately signed up! As a Friends member, she has hosted the Learning Center, assisted with programs, helped out at work days, done gift shop inventory, and is currently the co-president of the Friends' group. Jess's favorite thing about the Wapsi is the community here who create and invite others to engage with nature in different ways. Jess believes that environmental education is essential. "It's empowering to learn about nature. It causes you to connect to yourself as well as connecting and taking care of what takes care of us and gives us life. Though nature education we can adventure, create, and connect."



WELCOME SAM!

Hello my name is Sam Miller. I am happy to introduce myself as the new Caretaker here at the



Wapsi Environmental Education Center. I married to my wonderful wife Amber and we have 4 children. I grew up in Muscatine, Iowa, but my family has been part of the North Scott School District for 18+ years and love this community. We are the owners of 4R Ranch and love to share our

knowledge of therapy and mental health awareness with the community with the use of the animals on our ranch.

Prior to starting my position here I worked as a police officer for the City of Davenport for 19 years where I retired in 2023 and moved to a maintenance position at the Grand Haven Retirement Community in Eldridge, Iowa. Outside of working here I enjoy hiking, cycling, canoeing/kayaking, and spending time outdoors. I have been involved with Boy Scouts of America for over 10 years with Troop 203 in Long Grove, Iowa. I continue to mentor youth in 4H, FFA, Girl Scouts, St Ann's Church, and Coaching Freshman Volleyball at the North Scott High School.

I am excited to add knowledge of the environment and conservation to my toolbox while working here with this wonderful staff.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Attention visitors: The Wapsi River Center moved to online registration. Unless otherwise noted, registration for our programs can be completed by visiting: <https://web2.myvscloud.com/wbwsc/iascottcitywt.wsc/splash.html> and clicking on Public Programs. If you have any questions during the registration process, please call the Wapsi River Center at (563)328-3286.

JULY

3rd ~ HOLIDAY ~ County offices are closed in observance of the Holiday.

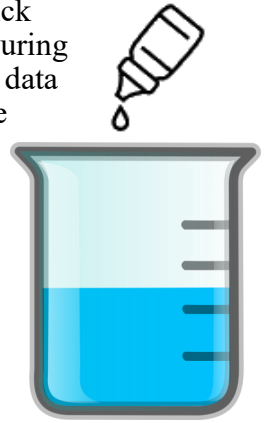
8th ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park (Gate # 3) ~ The Scott County Conservation Board normally meets the second Wednesday of every month at the West Lake Park Headquarters office, 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804. The public and press are encouraged to participate. Please call (563)328-3281 for more information.

10th ~ Birds of Prey Library Program ~ 2:00 – 3:00 PM ~ River Valley District Library – Port Byron, IL ~ Plant a seed of environmentalism! Get ready for a wild, up close encounter with nature! Join the River Valley District Library and the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, along with their incredible feathered ambassadors, for an unforgettable adventure into the world of Birds of Prey. Come face-to-face with owls, eagles, hawks, and more as you discover what makes these hunters of the sky so extraordinary. Learn how they live, how they hunt, and why protecting them, and their habitats, matters more than ever. Kids of all ages are welcome! Please call (309)523-3440 for more information. To register, go here: <https://www.rivervalleylibrary.org/events/wapsi-river-ed-center-presents-birds-of-prey>

11th ~ Summer Water Quality Snapshot ~ 8:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. The Summer Snapshot is a great way get involved and take action in our community. Join Partners of Scott County Watersheds for a day of citizen science. Volunteers will start the day off at the Eldridge Regional Innovation Center for a brief

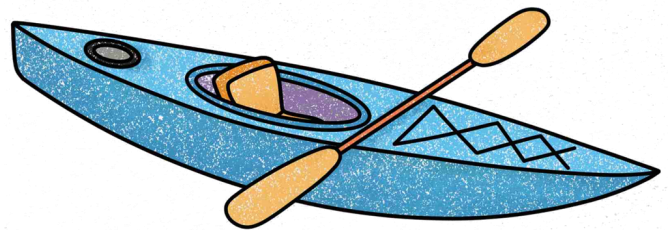


overview about water quality and quick training on how to collect the data. During this time, you'll be able to meet your data collection group while enjoying some coffee and donuts! After training, you and your group will take off to collect data from 5-7 sites around Scott County. After collecting data from each site, groups will meet back at the community center for free swag and pizza! Register and details at: <https://xstreamcleanup.org/event/summer-snapshot-volunteer-water-quality-monitoring-event-july-11-2026>.



11th ~ Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory ~ Join astronomers from the QCAS and St. Ambrose University for a lesson on the night sky. Please call Dr. Mitchell (St. Ambrose University) for current sky conditions, the day of the event (563)333-6141.

15th ~ Kayak Experience ~ 10:00 A.M. & 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park, Pride Lake ~ Join the Wapsi River staff for an adventure with kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques,

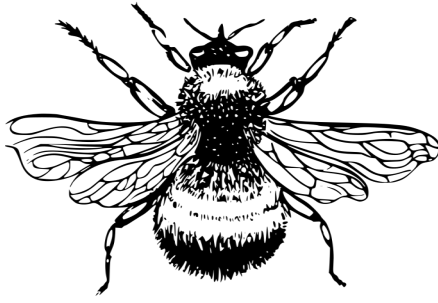


and taking a tour of Pride Lake. You may bring your own vessel/PFD, though it must comply with IADNR regulations. Reminder- this program is determined by weather and site conditions, weight capacity loads for kayaks are 250-300 lbs./solo and 425-475 lbs./tandem. Dress appropriately, bring water. Dress appropriately, bring water. Call (563)328-3286 with questions. Online registration is required.

16th ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Virtual Only ~ Learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. This meeting will be virtual only via Zoom. Please call for more information (563)328-3286.

25th ~ Pollinators of the Wapsi Center ~ 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Green Iowa AmeriCorps member, Rhiannon, and Naturalist Becky to learn about the pollinators of the Wapsi

Center. Learn about Rhiannon's current research project focusing on bumble bees at the Wapsi River Center and learn about other native pollinators and what you can do to support their populations.



Then go outside and participate in a photo and catch-and-release survey of our local insect species. We will introduce the Community Science Projects, Bumble Bee Atlas, and iNaturalist. Staff will reserve the right to limit any youth from handling the wildlife. Online registration is required.

29th ~ Kayak Experience ~ 10:00 A.M. & 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park, Railroad Lake (Gate #2)

~ Join the Wapsi River staff for an adventure with kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of West 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. Call (563)328-3286 with questions. Online registration is required.



30th ~ Birds of Prey Library Program ~ 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. ~ LeClaire Community Library ~ Grab the whole family for the library's big summer events! Visiting us this week is the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center with their presentation on Birds of Prey that you might see here in Iowa. They will also be bringing an ambassador owl for everyone to see up close! Call the library at (563)289-6007 for more information.

AUGUST

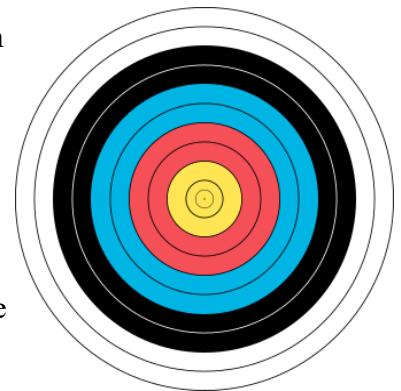
5th ~ Homeschool Day ~ 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park Beach ~ Once a month the Wapsi River EE Center hosts a homeschool program. Join us for immersive and fun seasonally-themed

programming led by our Naturalists! Most appropriate for K-8th grades, though all ages welcome. Program fee of \$3/person payable at registration. Please come prepared for the weather because much of the planned programming will take place outdoors. Please bring a lunch. Online registration is required for all attendees, including adults. Registration opens the 1st of each month. This month we will be discussing water safety.

12th ~ Kayak Experience ~ 10:00 A.M. & 1:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park, Pride Lake ~ Join the Wapsi River staff for an adventure with kayaks. Program includes all equipment use, covers safety, techniques, and taking a tour of West 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. Call (563)328-3286 with questions. Online registration is required.

12th ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park (Gate # 3) ~ The Scott County Conservation Board normally meets the second Wednesday of every month at the West Lake Park Headquarters office, 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804. The public and press are encouraged to participate. Please call (563)328-3281 for more information.

15th ~ Archery Basics ~ 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Learn how to use a bow and arrow in this fun, informative, and free hands-on class! You'll learn safety and proper archery techniques according to National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) guidelines. Children must be 9 years old or above to participate and accompanied by an adult. Adults are welcome to participate as well! Park in Parking Lot A and meet at the Observatory. Online registration is required.



15th ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center MEMBERS ONLY Event: Community Science Projects ~ 1:00 P.M. – 2:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Naturalist Becky to learn about some of the Community Science Projects being conducted at the Wapsi Center and in Scott County. During this program, you will learn how to participate in these community science projects, learn about the data

being gathered for them, and be able to discuss them and educate about them if the opportunity arises. The projects being discussed include: iNaturalist, eBird/ Merlin Bird ID, Project Natural Phenomena in Scott County, and possibly others. Registration for this Members Only event is required by CALLING (563) 328-3286.

15th ~ Menke Open House, Meteor Shower Party ~ Dusk ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory ~ Join astronomers from the QCAS and St. Ambrose University for a lesson on the night sky. Please call Dr. Mitchell (St. Ambrose University) for current sky conditions, the day of the event (563)333-6141. (Rain Date 8/22)

20th ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Virtual via Zoom ~ Learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. This meeting will be held in-person at the Wapsi River Center and virtual via Zoom. Please call for more information (563)328-3286.

22nd ~ Paint by Nature ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Naturalist Paige for a fun program on native prairie flowers, including a short hike in our beautiful prairie, then create a step-by-step painting of a purple coneflower! This event is family friendly! All ages and abilities welcome to come learn and paint. \$3/ canvas. Online registration is required for all painters.

22nd ~ Cattail Duck Decoy Workshop ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Naturalist Michael Granger for a lesson on Cattails. Learn about the biology and cultural significance of the plant and then create a life-sized cattail duck decoy. Materials will be provided. There is a workshop fee \$10.00 per decoy and supplies are limited. Online registration is required.



26th ~ Kayak Experience ~ 10:00 A.M. & 1:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park, Gate 2, Railroad Lake ~ Join the Wapsi River staff for an adventure with 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. Call (563)328-3286 with questions. Online registration is required.

29th ~ Fungarium Display and Mushroom Foray ~ 11:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Art McBreen, Treasurer of the Prairie States Mushroom Club, for a kickoff presentation and a mushroom foray hike. The **Fungarium** is a traveling exhibit on loan through November by the Prairie States Mushroom Club and highlights a variety of mushroom specimens. Please come prepared for an outdoor hike after the kick-off.



SEPTEMBER

6th & 7th ~ Pioneer Village Labor Day Weekend Festival ~ 11:00 A.M. – 4:00 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, Family fun for all ages! (\$2.00 adults, \$1.00 children, under 5 free). For more information please call (563)328-3283.

7th ~ HOLIDAY ~ County offices will be closed in observance of the holiday.

9th ~ Homeschool Days ~ 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Once a month the Wapsi River EE Center hosts a homeschool program. Join us for immersive and fun seasonally-themed programming led by our Naturalists! Most appropriate for K-8th grades, though all ages welcome. Program fee of \$3/ person payable at registration. Please come prepared for the weather because much of the planned programming will take place outdoors. Please bring a lunch. Online registration is required for all attendees, including adults. Registration opens the 1st of each month. This month the theme will be fungi!

9th ~ Scott County Conservation Board Meeting ~ 3:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park (Gate # 3) ~ The Scott County Conservation Board normally meets the second Wednesday of every month at the West Lake Park Headquarters office, 14910 110th Ave, Davenport, Iowa 52804. The public and press are encouraged to participate. Please call (563)328-3281

12th ~ Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory ~ Join astronomers from the QCAS and St. Ambrose University for a lesson on the night sky. Please call Dr. Mitchell (St. Ambrose University) for current sky conditions, the day of the event (563)333-6141. (**Rain Date 9/19**)

17th ~ Friends of the Wapsi Center Meeting ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Virtual Only~ Learn about the current happenings at the Wapsi River Center. This meeting will be virtual only via Zoom. Please call for more information (563)328-3286.

19th ~ Sixth Annual Monarch Migration Fun Run ~ 9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The 6th Annual Monarch Migration Fun Run will benefit the *Friends of the Wapsi Center*. This **self-timed 5k and 1-mile trail run** will take you through the upland and bottomland forests and the prairies of the Wapsi River Center. There will be one wave starting at 9:00 A.M. for both distances. This run goes until 11:00 A.M. giving you plenty of time to run or walk the trails! Check-in for the run starts at 8:30 A.M. The check-in table and run start/finish will be on our main prairie near the observatory. Registration costs **\$25 for children ages 16 and under and \$30 for everyone else for both distances**. Registration includes a t-shirt and refreshments. Registration closes at 7:30 A.M. on September 19th. Registration must be done by

August 30, 2026 to be guaranteed a t-shirt. If trail conditions are not favorable, the run will be cancelled and your registration fee will be considered a donation.



Registration must be done online by going to:
<https://raceroster.com/events/2026/139307/monarch-migration-fun-run>.

19th ~ Eighth Annual Monarch Festival ~ 11:00 A.M. – 2:30 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join the Wapsi River Center Staff and the Friends of the Wapsi Center as we celebrate Monarch Butterflies during this festival. There will be a monarch presentation at 11:00 A.M. followed by activities including butterfly crafts,

seed ball making, photo booths, education stations, and monarch butterfly catching, tagging, testing, and releasing from 12:00 to 2:30 P.M. Refreshments will be available courtesy of the *Friends of the Wapsi Center*

from 11:00 A.M. – 2:30 P.M. This event is **FREE** and fun for the entire family.

Freewill cash

donations are welcomed for the Friends of the Wapsi Center. Online registration is required for this event.



20th ~ Sound Bathing in Nature ~ 5:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center, Lorenzen Hall ~ Janel Wenndt (Sacred Sounds with Janel) is a local sound healing practitioner who provides sound baths throughout eastern

Iowa. While using singing bowls, gongs, chimes, drums and other vibrational instruments, she guides participants into a deeply relaxing experience that can aid in stress reduction, alleviate anxiety, reduce

depression, improve sleep quality and release tension and physical pain from the body. Join Janel and Wapsi Director Dave Murcia in connecting with nature during this relaxing (free) program. Donations are accepted. For registration information and program details, call Janel at (319)721-9559.



22nd ~ The Edge of Night ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Scott County Park, Whispering Pines Shelter ~ The Autumnal (Fall) Equinox represents the point at which the sun crosses over the Equator. In the Northern Hemisphere, many mourn this occasion as the end of summer and loss of daylight. But we need the night! Join Assistant Naturalist Brendan O'Brien as he talks about why, and what we can do to appreciate and protect night.

THANKYOU

Iowa Association of Naturalists
Iowa Conservation Education
Coalition

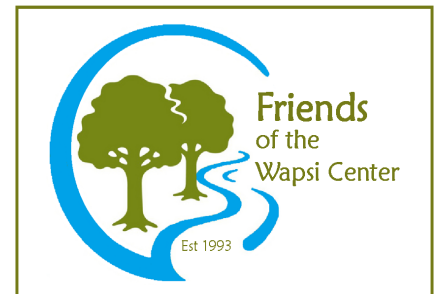
Green Iowa AmeriCorps
Caroline Kimple
Guardians of the Prairie and Forest
Leave No Trace
River Valley District Library
Stephanie Shepherd – IADNR
Wildlife Diversity

Quad Cities Women Outdoor Club
Scott County Library System
Grant Fessler
RARE
Jimmy Weibler
Amber Address
Angella Moorehouse
Brian Blevins
Bob Bryant
Denny Weiss
Bi-Can
Guardians of the Prairie & Forest
Nahant Marsh

Iowa State Extension
Niabi Zoo
Davenport Parks & Recreation
USFWS
Wild Ones
Partners of Scott County
Watersheds
Clinton County Conservation
WQAD TV
WHBF TV
QC Times; Alma Gaul
North Scott Freshman Shop Class
teacher Anthony Bielski.

FRIENDS MEMBERS: Thankyou for all you do!!

Lucia Dryanski (docent, program support)
Susan McPeters (docent, program support)
Bill Robbins (docent)
Linda Puls (membership renewal, docent, program support)
Julia Mussack & Family (membership renewal, docent, program support)
Chris & Mary Neff (membership renewal, venison and bird feeder donation)
Jim & Julie Ross (membership renewal, docent, program support)
Jessica Gilmore (docent, program support)
Caroline Kimple (membership renewal, animal sponsorship)
Victoria Graves (membership renewal)
Ingrid Bogdanowicz (membership renewal)
Rohin Deolekar (new member)



“BECOME A WAPSI RIVER CENTER FRIENDS MEMBER TODAY!”

www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/Wapsi-friends

www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheWapsiCenter

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.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone Number _____
Email Address _____

MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION LEVELS (PLEASE CHECK ONE):

\$10 _____ **KESTREL ~ Receive a Friend’s Newsletter**
\$20 _____ **RED-TAIL HAWK ~ Receive Newsletter and Wapsi River Center Magnet**
\$35 _____ **GREAT HORNED OWL ~ Receive Newsletter, Magnet and Wapsi T-Shirt at discounted price.**
\$50 _____ **BALD EAGLE ~ Receive Newsletter, Magnet, T-Shirt at discounted price, and 10 % Discount off of Gift Shop Purchases.**

PLEASE SEND MEMBERSHIP FORM TO:

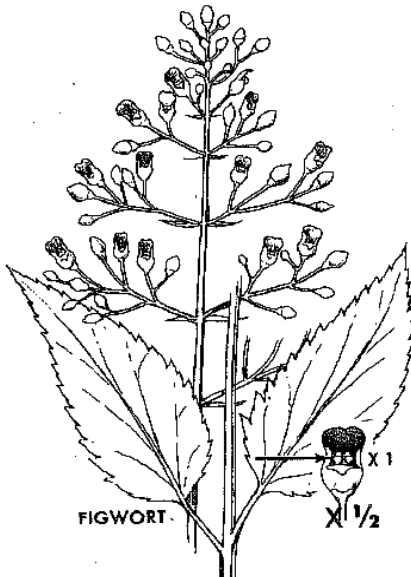
FRIENDS OF THE WAPSI CENTER - 31555 52nd AVENUE, DIXON, IOWA 52745
Contributions to the Friends are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Any memorial/honor donation can be made here: <https://iascottcityweb.myvscloud.com/webtrac/web/>

PLANT PROFILE: FIGWORT

By Naturalist Michael. J. Granger

Let me introduce to you some wonderful plants found in Iowa's woodlands and edge habitats, the



**Petersen Field Guides;
Wildflowers**

flowers are known as “honey pots” by bee keepers. Each flower is ½ an inch long and tubular. The outside of the flower is green while the inside is burgundy red to yellow in color.

Two native species of figwort grow naturally in Iowa: Early Figwort (*Scrophularia lanceolata*) and Late Figwort (*Scrophularia marilandica*). Early Figwort blooms between May and July, and Late



**Figwort Flower:
Photo Paige Owings**

Figworts. Plants of this species are commonly found along shaded woodland trails in Iowa. This plant belongs to the Snapdragon family (Scrophulariaceae). Figworts are readily identified by their square stems and paired opposite leaves. The leaves have a serrated toothed edge. Very small flowers are found at the top of the plant in a panicle (flowers that branch out from a center stem). The small

Figwort blooms between July and October. Both plants are tall, herbaceous perennials famous among local beekeepers and gardeners for producing massive amounts of nectar that attract hummingbirds, bees, and diverse pollinators.

These towering plants are highly prized by conservationists and insect enthusiasts for their pollen production. Known as “pollinator magnets, they are known for their abundant

nectar. Honey bees, native bees, wasps, butterflies and Ruby Throated Hummingbirds rely on their ample source of nectar. Since the plants are not showy, they are not commonly seen in wildflower gardens or landscaping. Seeds are readily available through seed companies. These plants are not browsed by deer because they contain chemical deterrents.

Historically figwort has been used as a traditional herbal remedy known for its anti-



**Figwort Panicle: Photo
Michael J Granger**



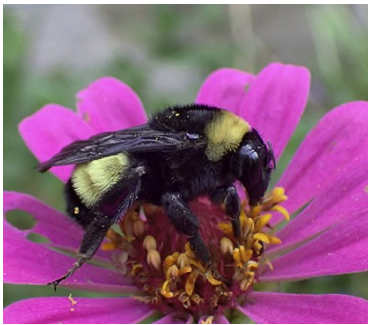
**Square stems and paired leaves:
Photo Paige Owings**

inflammatory and lymphatic-cleansing properties. It is primarily used topically as a salve or poultice for skin issues, to ease eczema, psoriasis, and itching. It can also be used to heal wounds such as burns, bruises and ulcers. The plant has also

been used internally as a tea or tincture to reduce swelling and support circulation. Always consult a profession when using alternative medicines. The next time you are out hiking or exploring look for a figwort, which is an amazing plant growing along Iowa's wooded trails.

ANIMAL PROFILE: AMERICAN BUMBLE BEE

By Green Iowa AmeriCorps Member Rhiannon Crews



All native bumble bees are crucial for the ecosystem. They are pollinators of a large variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, wildflowers, and more. These fuzzy and buzzy pollinators belong to the *Apidae* family and *Bombus* genus.

Among other species, there is one Iowa native bumble bee in particular that is facing a decades-long

The American Bumblebee: Bumblebees of Wisconsin; University of Wisconsin, Madison

population plunge. This would be the American Bumble Bee (AMBB), or *Bombus pensylvanicus*. These bumble bees can be identified by their large size, short and even fuzz, thick yellow and black segments on the thorax, long tongue, and black head.

Bumble bees display an annual colony cycle, meaning that only the new queens survive the winter through a hibernation-like state called “torpor”. These



queens emerge between March and April, and begin searching and foraging for their new nests.

Bumble bees are cavity-nesters, and will begin a nest either above-ground

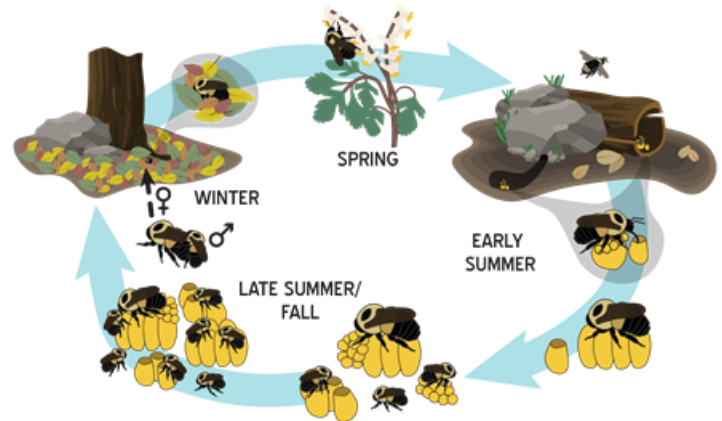
or below-ground, and in an abandoned rodent’s burrow, clumps of

The American Bumblebee Identification Pattern: Bumblebees of Wisconsin; University of Wisconsin, Madison

grass, leaf litter, or tree logs. The AMBB prefers to nest above-ground in open areas, such as grasslands and farmlands. They also prefer undisturbed locations in places with high plant biodiversity. If disturbed, this species has been known to display more territorial aggression to counteract the fact that their nest is exposed above-ground. Depending on the species, a single nest population can range from 30-400 with the AMBB’s nest population being smaller, ranging from 60-120.

The queen produces female workers between

May and June by fertilizing her own eggs with stored sperm from the previous fall. The queen is capable of



Bumblebee Annual Cycle: Bumblebees of Wisconsin; University of Wisconsin, Madison

choosing the sex of her offspring, with a fertilized egg producing a worker female and an unfertilized egg producing a male. The purpose of the males are for reproductive means only. The female workers are the only ones foraging for pollen and nectar while the queen remains in the nest, producing additional female workers, males (August and September), and new queens for the cycle to begin anew.

The AMBB is parasitized by the native Variable Cuckoo Bumble Bee, though this parasitism itself has little impact on the AMBB’s declining numbers alone. In fact, the Variable Cuckoo’s status directly relies on the AMBB’s status. This cuckoo is in such decline that there has not been a confirmed sighting since the 1990s, due to the declining numbers of the AMBB.

Why are native bumblebees at such risk? There are a variety of factors contributing to decline: pathogens (namely, from non-native honey bees), parasites (mites), invasive species, habitat loss, pesticide use, pollution, and climate change (just to name a few).

According to the IUCN, the AMBB is listed as “Vulnerable” on the Red List of Threatened Species. Populations have experienced an 89% decline in abundance compared to other native species in the US. While the AMBB is not yet federally listed, it is currently under review to determine whether the species fits the criteria for protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

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