

The W.R.E.N.

Wapsi River Environmental News

Summer 2007

Scott County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Newsletter

www.scottcountyiowa.com/conservation/wapsi.php

The Wapsi River Center is owned, managed and operated by the Scott County Conservation Board with programming and development assistance from the Clinton County Conservation Board.

Wapsi Center Happenings

by Dave Murcia, Director

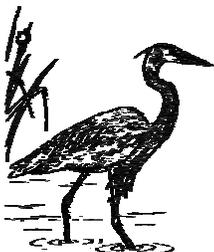
School and Public Programs

During this 2006-2007 school year, approximately 5,033 students, teachers, and parents participated in 84 field trips. A total of 168 public presentations were attended by 2,053 participants. This was one of our busiest springs considering May and June were fully booked. At our Earth Week Fair booth we saw 1,995 school participants and about 1,500 public visitors.

If you would like to schedule a field trip next year, schedule as far in advance as possible. Keep in mind that school programs are not scheduled on Mondays, so that staff may work on administration and resource management. And don't forget ~ *the Wapsi River Center is a place for all seasons.* We would like to see more schools taking fall and winter field trips. This would allow more schools to visit the Wapsi River Center.

EDIWILD 2007 Teachers' Workshop

The EDIWILD Teacher's Workshop (June 18-21) was hosted by the following partnerships: Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, Scott, Clinton & Jackson County Conservation Boards, Nahant Marsh Education Field Station and River Action Inc. plus the following supporters: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Natural Resources & Conservation Service. This year's theme was "Aquatic Education & Recreation ~ Discovering Iowa's Wetlands." The workshop uses an interdisciplinary approach to facilitate the incorporation of environmental education into the school curriculum. Thirty-four educators completed the workshop where staff development and graduate credit were available through AEA 9 and Drake University. The workshop is an annual event and will be offered again next year.



Scott County Conservation Board Seeks Candidates for AmeriCorps Program

AmeriCorps, the domestic Peace Corps, has engaged more than 70,000 Americans in community service each year. Most AmeriCorps members are selected by and serve with local and national organizations.

The Scott County Conservation Board (SCCB) is currently a participating member of the Eastern Iowa Conservation Alliance (EICA). The EICA has been awarded an AmeriCorps grant through the Corporation for National Service and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. A full-time enrollment period is September through August, and currently we are authorized for two AmeriCorps members.



Full-time AmeriCorps members receive a modest living allowance, health insurance, student loan deferment, and receive a \$4,725 education award, upon completion of 1700 hours, to help finance or to pay back student loans.

SCCB AmeriCorps members serve as naturalists at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and assist with the educational programming, resource management, and maintenance of the Center. They have played an instrumental role in the Center's increased educational programming and attendance.

The AmeriCorps program is a great way for college graduates to get a start in the field as well as gain valuable experience. If you would like to get more information on applying for the positions, contact Dave Murcia, Wapsi River EE Center Director, at (563) 328-3286. To learn more about the AmeriCorps program visit www.americorps.org.

Volunteer Stewardship Workdays

The Wapsi River Center will host two workdays (weather permitting) with support from Keep Scott County Beautiful on Saturday, August 25 and Saturday, September 29 (National Public Lands Day), from 9:00

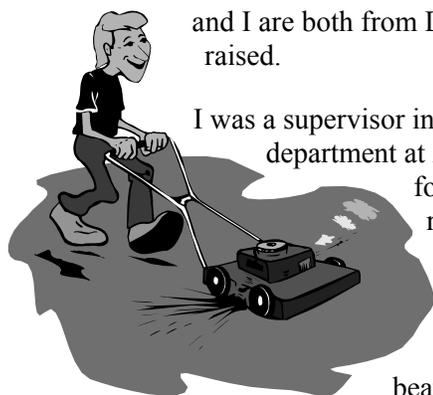
A.M. to Noon. Potential projects include prairie brush removal, trail maintenance, landscaping and other projects as needed. In appreciation for all the hard work and dedication, lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center after the event. To volunteer or learn more about the Friends group, please call the Wapsi River Center at (563) 328-3286.

Scout Opportunities

The Wapsi River Center continues to support the Scouts of America by providing limited camp space to local troops. Scouts may use Elm and Vincent sites in return for service projects ranging from habitat/wildlife management to trail maintenance. Please call in advance to reserve sites and register through the Illowa Council for official tour permits.

Hellos & Goodbyes

Mark Cox ~ Hello, I am the new caretaker for the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center. My wife Janet and I are both from Davenport born and raised.



I was a supervisor in the maintenance department at Augustana College for 18 years and retired in 2007. We are looking forward to meeting all of you and maintaining this beautiful site.

Mark Stepaniak ~ I will be an intern at the Wapsi River Center this summer. I am a rising sophomore at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. I plan to double major in biology and environmental science.

I am interested in ecology, conservation biology and evolutionary biology. Eventually, I would like to get a doctorate in one of the three or a related area. As of now, I'm not sure if I'd like to go into the research, conservation, or education field so I hope my internship will give me some insights which will make that decision easier.



Renae Hanson ~ Well, I say goodbye to all that has become familiar and to the children and adults who have visited and really made my experience as an AmeriCorps naturalist fun, adventurous and rewarding.

I have certainly grown since my first day here; knees trembling, brow sweating at the thought of conducting a program amongst dozens of children and adults. A little over 2 years later, I still fell that adrenaline racing through me. Now, it's due to the confidence and

excitement of being able to inspire and share with others all the exciting things about our environment.

If only AmeriCorps would allow me to volunteer forever! Unfortunately, that isn't realistic and it certainly wouldn't pay the bills. So, for now my journey is soon to expire at the Wapsi River Center. My time spent here has introduced me to so many new things that I know I will take part in for the rest of my life.

I thank those of you who have sent fantastic letters reminding me that what I did here impacted you in some way. If you have visited the Wapsi Center, then you must know that my experience here has been just as rewarding for me as it was for you.



Paula Mullin ~ Finally, I say goodbye. Just kidding! My year and a half at the Wapsi River Center, through two terms of AmeriCorps, has been a great experience. A person can learn a lot through 2,600 hours of National Service when working with knowledgeable staff. In addition, I had the pleasure to meet many of you, which made my time here all the better. There is no doubt that I will take a lot with me.

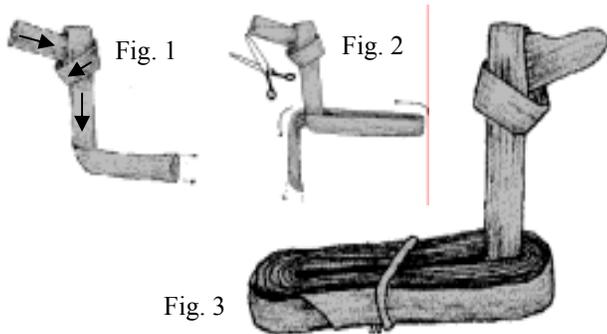
Aside from the experience itself, I have an agate from Mike, who said "carry it with you young grasshopper". Since it is the smallest I have ever seen, I may just store it in my purse which Lisa taught me to make from "recycled stitches". Renae did not have enough time to teach me horseshoes, because we were always working so hard. Dave Murcia may not believe that, since Mark Cox does not often share the mower and Mark Stepaniak



has joined in the fun. I would not have been here so long if it were not for Bob Bryant and Jessica Steines. Thanks for everything!

Kids' Corner ~ Making Cattail Ducks

1. Collect dry cattail leaves by cutting them above the water line leaving the root intact.
2. Soak the leaves in warm water for 30 minutes.
3. Make 3 folds to form a knot which is the duck's head. (See figure 1)
4. Two inches below the head fold a 90° angle.
5. Begin wrapping the leaf around and around to make the body. (See figure 2)
6. Tie the body tightly with a thin strip of the cattail leaf. (See figure 3)
7. Trim "nose" with scissors. (See figure 2)



In Appreciation of Your Support of the Wapsi River Center

Marilyn Andress
Ingrid Bogdanowicz
Rebekah Cox
Lucia Dryanski
Carl Gerwulf
Dave Huber
Chris, Maya, Clare & Lizzie Murcia
K.J. Rebarcak
Bill Robbins
Carol Rogers
George & Doris Straetker
Ruth Treftz
Dottie Wala
Jean Wistedt
Erma Wiszmann
Dav. West High Environmental Club
Natural Area Guardians
St. Paul Lutheran Church

17-year Periodical Cicada

by Renae Hanson, AmeriCorps Naturalist

It was all over the news in May that the long awaited emergence of the 17-year periodical cicada, *Magicicada septendecim*, was due to occur in this area. Emergence was scheduled to happen in late May and into early June. Most people I spoke with had seen no evidence of the periodical cicada in their yards or neighborhood during those months. It's a mystery to me why, but I can tell you that it did happen at the Wapsi River Center.

What entomologists find so interesting about the 17-year periodical cicada is their life cycle. For seventeen years the periodical cicada nymph spends its' life underground. It all begins when the adult female cicada makes several Y-shaped slits on the branches of a tree or shrub, then uses an ovipositor found at the rear of her abdomen to deposit eggs in each slit. Each Y-shaped slit may contain up to 20 eggs. One female will deposit approximately 600 eggs.

After a period of 6-10 weeks the eggs will hatch, then drop from the trees and burrow underground where they will attach to the roots of the tree. The sap from the tree is the nymph's only food source for the next 17 years. It's possible that this lack of nutrition may explain the cicada's long life cycle. Over this period of time the periodical cicada will go through 5 juvenile stages, each ending in eclosion (shedding of its' old skin). Once it has completed the final stage underground, it begins to burrow toward the surface, making a chimney-shaped exit hole.

At this point, the periodical cicada has one more stage before adulthood begins. After emerging, the nymph climbs to a suitable place to molt its' final skin. The cicada is completely white, except for the red eyes, and quickly begins turning black while its skin hardens. The cicada does not begin its adult behavior until the drying process is complete; which can take up to six days.

Adult males then begin calling out to the females. Beneath the hind-wings of the male periodical cicada are a pair of tymbal (sound producing organ) that are located on the first segment of the abdomen. Females lack this organ. The male uses the tymbal to attract a female; keeping in mind that there are thousands of males calling at once. The call from the periodical cicada is much different than that of the annual cicada that we are familiar with. After the emergence in early June, it was my experience that the calls of the periodical cicada were quite chorus-like.

At first, I thought the high pitch twirl was the mating call of the American toad, but then I quickly realized it was non-stop, all day long, which was not typical of any toad. After a few days the calls became louder and surrounded the area. It reminded me of the wave done commonly at a high school basketball game only a high pitched sound would be inserted along with the hand movement. It was hard to imagine how many cicadas had to be out there to create that consistent wave of noise. Unfortunately, if you didn't get the chance to hear it, you probably won't as the adult stage only lasted 4-6 weeks. One thing's for certain, the school groups that visited the Wapsi River Center in June had an earful of enjoyment; along with their first-time experience of the 17-year periodical cicada.

July

6th ~ Campground Program ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ West Lake Park ~ Join a naturalist for a *Birds of Prey* program and learn about native predatory birds of Iowa – including live raptors! Participants need not be registered campers to attend this free program.

7th ~ Summerfest Disc Golf Challenge ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ Westbrook Park, DeWitt ~ Two rounds of 18 holes. \$15 Beginner, \$20 Intermediate & \$25 Advanced Open. For registration contact Todd Seifert at (563) 659-9590. All players receive a nice gift package and a T-Shirt.

9th - 13th ~ Native American Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Visit the Hauberg Indian Museum., discover Indian sign language, make an Apache scroll and dream catcher, plus many other crafts. Learn what the Indian's wore and face painting. Take a canoe ride at West Lake Park (life jackets provided)! This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information

14th ~ Crossroads Triathlon ~ 7:30 A.M. ~ Killdeer Recreation Area ~ Clinton County's only triathlon will be a great event! Participants will start with a 500-yard swim in Lake Killdeer, then bike 15 miles, and lastly run 3.1 miles. Contact race organizers at (563) 349-1136 or visit www.topshelfraceproductions.com.

14th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ 9th Avenue Boat Ramp, Clinton ~ Join a Clinton County naturalist on-board the Blue Heron for an Eco Cruise down Beaver



Channel through the heart of Clinton's industry. Kids will also take a walk along the bike path to Willow Island learning about river life. Life jackets provided and required to wear. Call Ashley at Clinton Co. Extension, (563) 659-5125 to register. Deadline for registration: July 6. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!

14th ~ Monsignor Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

16th - 20th ~ Laura Ingalls Wilder Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Learn what life was like for Laura Ingalls. Experience how she lived by spending time in an 1830s cabin and a one-room schoolhouse. Enjoy making crafts such as soap decorating, candle dipping and much more. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

19th - 21st ~ Clinton County 4-H Fair ~ 1:00 - 7:00 P.M. Daily ~ Clinton County Fairgrounds, DeWitt ~ Visit the CCCB booth.

20th ~ Campground Program ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Scott County Park ~ Join a naturalist for a *Birds of Prey* program and learn

Summer

about native predatory birds of Iowa – including live raptors! Participants need not be registered campers to attend this free program.

20th ~ Wilderness Music ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Thomson Causeway ~ Chuck Jacobsen, a local folk musician and Clinton County Conservation Board naturalist, invites all ages to enjoy "Wilderness Music", the music of John Denver, Charlie McGuire and others.

20th ~ Public Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. If cloudy or raining, there will be a slide show in the observatory.

21st ~ Iowa Native Plant Society ~ Fern Workshop ~ 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ See special ad at end of calendar for more details.

21st ~ Free Canoeing ~ All Day ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Rent the canoes, free of charge, for use in the Rock Creek area all day.

21st ~ Canoeing the Mississippi Backwaters ~ 8:00 A.M. ~ Thomson Causeway ~ Join Chuck Jacobsen for basic instruction, followed by canoeing. All canoeing gear will be supplied.

21st ~ Beaver Island Canoe Float ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Swan Slough Boat Ramp, Camanche ~ Float the inside channel through Beaver Island. Join us afterwards at Rock Creek Marina and Campground for campfire, stories and music.

23rd - 27th ~ Frontier Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Enjoy a week doing what the pioneers did in the 1800s. Enjoy many activities such as a wagon ride, frontier cooking, pioneer games and much more. This week, we will visit the Niabi Zoo and learn about animals. This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information.

24th - 26th ~ Middle School Summer Camp ~ CCCB Headquarters, Grand Mound ~ Middle school students (going into grades 6-8) are invited to spend 2 days of adventure and investigations in the great outdoors. As part of our "Rewilding Iowa" efforts, registered teens are invited to take a 48-hour trip with naturalists Jessica Steines and Chuck Jacobsen down the Wapsipinicon River; canoeing, swimming, camping, fishing, fossil & rock collecting and water testing tributary streams. Participants must be registered (please indicate "tent" if you have one) by July 19. Each will need a sleeping bag and mat, flashlight, sun screen, insect repellent, rain gear and small tent (optional). A \$25 fee will be collected at time of registration to cover food expenses. Participants must be dropped off at the CCCB Headquarters by a parent or guardian no later than noon on July 24 and picked up there no later than noon the on July 26.



Events

26th ~ Poisonous Plants ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come learn about plants that can harm you, from poison ivy to wild parsnip. Learn how to identify them and what remedies can help after exposure.

28th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Lyondell Plant Tour ~ Tour Lyondell to see how plastic is made, check out the Lab, and enjoy a pizza lunch. Call Ashley at Clinton Co. Extension, (563) 659-5125 to register. Deadline for registration: July 20. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!

29th ~ Village Alive! ~ 1:00 - 5:00 P.M. ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ See the village come alive as "The Friends" of the village reenact life as it was on the 1890s Iowa prairie. Enjoy folk art demonstrations throughout the day. Admission is FREE! For further information, call (563) 328-3283.



30th - August 3rd ~ Mark Twain Week ~ 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Explore and learn what life was like for Mark Twain. Enjoy paddle boating at West Lake Park and a tour of Lock & Dam 15 on the Mississippi River. Hike trails, carve soap and much more! This day camp is geared for children 6-11 years of age. Call (563) 328-3283 for registration information

31st ~ Diggin' Up the Roots of Root Beer ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Soaring Eagle Nature Center ~ Come and enjoy a cold one, root beer that is. Before the tasty treat, we will "dig up" the history of root beer, experiment with a homemade brew and experience a delicious root beer float. Please call Jessica (563) 847-7202 to register by July 25.

August

1st ~ Canoeing 101 ~ Noon - 6:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Beginners, canoeing is a great sport that everyone can enjoy. Join us for this A-to-Z class. Participants will learn the canoe safety rules, various paddle strokes, canoe style choices, how to right a tipped canoe (yep, we're gonna tip 'em) and will sample some freeze-dried wilderness food. We will also be taking a canoe trip through backwater wetlands of the Mississippi River, complete with portages and obstacles. Bring a sack lunch, a change of clothes and be ready to participate with gusto. Call (563) 847-7202 to reserve your spot.

3rd ~ Campground Program ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Buffalo Shores Recreation Area ~ Join a naturalist for a *Birds of Prey* program and learn about native predatory birds of Iowa – including live raptors! Participants need not be registered campers to attend this free program.

4th ~ Which Way Did They Go? ~ 2:00 P.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Mother Nature's math comes to life in this exciting, hands-on, beginners' look into the world of orienteering. Join naturalist Lisa Gerwulf for an afternoon of getting lost –

comfortably! Participants will learn how to use a compass to navigate their way through different courses and use a map and compass together to find specific locations. Pre-registration is required by calling (563) 328-3286 by August 2.

4th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Clinton Izaak Walton League ~ Participate in a nature/prairie walk with the Izaak Walton League, followed by a hot dog lunch. Call Ashley at Clinton Co. Extension, (563) 659-5125 to register. Deadline for registration: July 27. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!

4th ~ Herb Faire ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Bickelhaupt Arboretum ~ Learn about herb lore as well as growing, preserving and cooking with herbs.

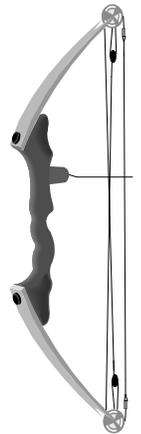
7th ~ Mussel Cruise ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ The Blue Heron will take participants out to learn about and wade for freshwater mussels. Freshwater mussels are the most endangered group of animals on earth; find out why. Call (563) 259-1876 to sign up.

11th ~ Free Canoeing ~ All Day ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Rent the canoes, free of charge, for use in the Rock Creek area all day.

11th ~ Monsignor Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

15th ~ Bear Creek Stomp ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Bring the kids to a wet and wild exploration of Bear Creek in Eden Valley. Catch critters with dip nets, test the waters, learn to throw a casting net, run a seine, check traps and have a blast in the shallow water. Water shoes, old tennis or boots are recommended. We will have life jackets available for little ones. Meet at the nature center.

17th - 19th ~ Hunter Safety Education Camp ~ 6:00 P.M. (Fri) - 4:00 P.M. (Sun) ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Standard hunter safety courses are 10 hours long. In this event, we will go far beyond the basics. In addition to all of the hunter education standards, we will be teaching advanced shooting techniques, bowhunter safety, trapping, waterfowl, turkey & raccoon hunting, dog training, caring for game in the field, first aid, wildlife ID, calling and a whole lot more! All these activities will allow students to actually participate, not just listen to speakers or watch films. The course is open to kids, age 11-16, whether or not they have received the Hunter Education Certificates already. Cost per student is \$25 for meals. Clinton County students are free thanks to a donation from Clinton County Pheasants Forever. Clinton Area Whitetails Unlimited will be providing monetary support to cover the cost of lodging, ammunition and targets for the participants. Overnight chaperones will be provided by participants' parents. Space is limited to 40 kids, so sign up early by calling (563) 847-7202.



18th ~ X-stream Cleanup: Nahant Marsh ~ 9:00 A.M. ~ Nahant Marsh ~ Join the Friends of Nahant Marsh to help clean Nahant Marsh. Groups will also be removing invasive species at

the marsh. Gloves, grabbers, and trash bags will be available. For more information please call Sheri Colman at (563) 786-8504 or log on to www.cleanup.org.



18th ~ Clinton County EnviroKids ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Bickelhaupt Arboretum ~ Discover the world of butterflies and tag your own butterfly at the Arboretum. Call Ashley at Clinton Co. Extension, (563) 659-5125 to register. Deadline for registration: August 10. Participation is free and kids get a souvenir T-shirt!

18th ~ Five Island Canoe Float ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Float past Swan, Turtle, Camanche, Coes and Adams Islands up into the mouth of the Wapsipinicon River. Stay afterwards for campfire, stories and music.

18th ~ Public Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. If cloudy or raining, there will be a slide show in the observatory.

21st ~ Voices of the River Cruise ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Chuck Jacobsen invites all ages to enjoy "Voices of the River", the music of John Denver and others aboard a special Eco Cruise.

23rd ~ Spelunking ~ 6:30 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Take a wild cave tour at Werden's Cave with a naturalist. Meet at Eden Valley Nature Center; pre-registration is required, (563) 847-7202.

24th - 26th ~ Lower Wapsipinicon River Clean-up Project ~ Rock Creek ~ Please join us again for another canoe trip to clean up the Wapsi. The 2007 section will be just downstream of the one we cleaned in 2006. We will begin Saturday morning at Allen's Grove Park near Donahue, IA, and end Sunday afternoon at Walter's Landing near McCausland, IA. This 21-mile trip will run through both Clinton and Scott Counties. You can paddle the river or assist with land-based operations. Check out www.lowerwapsicleanup.org for registration information.

25th ~ Volunteer Stewardship Day ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The Wapsi River Center will host a workday. Support will also be provided from Keep Scott County Beautiful. All skill levels are welcome, so bring the whole family and invite a friend to enjoy the day! In appreciation of your hard work, lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center. To volunteer, please call (563) 328-3286.

25th ~ Butterfly Fest ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Bickelhaupt Arboretum ~ Learn about the monarch butterfly. Watch us tag and release them.

28th ~ Bats, Bats, Bats! ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Learn about the bats that call Iowa home in the pavilion, then take a short walk to observe a stream of bats pouring out of their daytime roosts into the Mississippi River bottoms for a night of bug feasting!

30th ~ For Goodness Snakes ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Snakes, snakes, snakes! Learn more about snakes, local and some not so local. Have the opportunity to see 10 species of live Iowa snakes. Meet at the nature center.

September

3rd & 4th ~ Village Fall Festival ~ 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Daily ~ Dan Nagle Walnut Grove Pioneer Village ~ Come and enjoy that old-fashioned, fall harvest, festival atmosphere at the Village! "The Friends" of the village, dressed in period dress, will demonstrate crafts, sell their wares and share the fruits of the harvest. Come spend the day and enjoy the food and music. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children under 12. Any questions, call (563) 328-3283

5th ~ KinderNature: Majestic Monarchs! ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ DeWitt Community Center ~ Come and bring your three- to five-year-olds to learn why monarch butterflies are so majestic. Not only will your kids learn a thing or two, they will be helping me, Jessica Steines, tag live monarchs for the North America monitoring program www.monarchwatch.org. The kids will learn a boy from a girl, name the monarch, tag it, and then release it for someone else to find along its migration route to Mexico. To help the monarchs, come to the DeWitt Community Center located at 512 10th St., right across from the library.

13th ~ Monarch Tagging ~ 6:00 P.M. ~ Malone Park ~ The monarch migration is in full swing and so is a national tagging program. The CCCB tagged almost 200 monarchs last year before the insects headed to Mexico for the winter. We will hopefully tag several monarchs and release them during the presentation. Meet at the picnic shelter.

15th ~ Beautiful Butterflies ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come discover the wonderful world of butterflies. Learn about their amazing life cycle, catch some monarchs and make a butterfly craft to take home with you.

15th ~ Public Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. If cloudy or raining, there will be a slide show in the observatory.

15th & 16th ~ Overnight Canoe Float ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Participants will canoe from the McCausland boat access to Rock Creek Marina & Campground. This 12-mile float trip will be like no other this season. Participants will need to provide everything they need for meals (cooking and food), drinks and camping gear with them in their canoes! We will camp out on Kingfisher Island and rough it, continuing on the next day. Call (563) 847-7202 to sign up by Sept. 7.



21st - 23rd ~ Bike Ride Across Clinton County (B.R.A.C.C.) ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ Co-sponsored with the RiverBend Bicycle Club ~ Join fellow bicycling enthusiasts for two days of cross country touring. Cyclists will start at Eden Valley Refuge and travel 50 miles kitty-corner across the county to Rock Creek Marina & Campground. We will haul all your camping gear to Rock Creek for the night, then back to Eden Valley the following day on an alternative 50 mile route. Evening activities offered at Rock Creek are a free Eco Cruise on the Blue Heron, free canoe

rental and wilderness music around the campfire. We will offer free primitive group camping and three meals, and a commemorative T-shirt. Cost \$30. Call Chuck at (563) 847-7202 to register.

22nd ~ Monsignor Menke Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Join Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Monsignor Menke Observatory, for a tour of the summer sky. Please call (563) 333-6141 on the day of the event to find out if the weather conditions will permit viewing.

29th ~ Volunteer Stewardship Day ~ 9:00 A.M. - Noon ~ Wapsi River Center ~ The Wapsi River Center will host a workday. This workday is in cooperation with National Public Lands Day. Support will also be provided from Keep Scott County Beautiful. All skill levels are welcome, so bring the whole family and invite a friend to enjoy the day! In appreciation of your hard work, lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Wapsi Center. To volunteer, please contact us at (563) 328 - 3286.

29th ~ Youth Disc Golf Tournament ~ 1:00 P.M. ~ Malone Park ~ Play for fun! Play for health! Play for life! Kids can compete in two age divisions for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place trophies at Malone Park's new 12-hole disc golf course. They will also have the chance to win golf discs as door prizes. Senior division ~ ages 15-17 and Junior division ~ up to 14 years. The tournament is free. Parents must accompany children under 16.

October

5th - 7th ~ Escape from Mars – Return to Venus ~ 6:00 P.M. (Fri) - Noon (Sun) ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ This is a weekend



get-a-way for women only! Explore the ins and outs of one of Iowa's jewels, Eden Valley Refuge. This is a high adventure weekend that includes a hayrack ride, stargazing, rock climbing, spelunking, stream stomping, geocaching and nature photography. Activities will depend on weather. To be amongst the limestone bluffs, you can stay in the bunkhouse or bring your own tent. Cost is \$15 per woman to include all meals. To pre-register call (563) 847-7202.

6th ~ Clinton County Chapter of Pheasants Forever Banquet ~ 5:00 P.M. ~ Millennium Ballroom ~ Pheasants Forever's Clinton County Chapter is holding its annual fund-raiser at the Millennium Ballroom in Goose Lake, IA. The group provides funds to local landowners and agencies for the establishment of wildlife habitat. Call Mark Roberts at (563) 659-2422 for tickets.

6th ~ Sixteenth Annual Ecology Day ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Mark your calendars and come join us for a wonderful learning experience for the whole family. Watch the local media for more details.

13th ~ Eden Valley Bluegrass Jam ~ 1:00 - 9:00 P.M. ~ Eden Valley Refuge ~ It will be a toe-tapping time as musicians from the surrounding areas gather to bring the bluegrass sound to listeners of all ages. The 25th Annual Bluegrass Jam will be held at the Eden Valley Refuge campground along Bear Creek. If inclement weather, the program will be held in the nature center. A potluck and chili dinner will start at 4:00 P.M.; bring table service and your lawn chair. This event is free and open to all. For more information, call Mary McAndrew at (563) 343-7002.

20th ~ Everything Cattail ~ 10:00 A.M. ~ Wapsi River Center ~ Come learn about the amazing cattail with this hands on workshop. Learn how they grow and make an awesome cattail crafts to take home. Call to reserve a spot (563) 328-3286.

Fern Workshop Planned

Fern expert Bob Bryant, author of the e-book, [An Interpreter's Guide to the Ferns of Iowa](#), will conduct a workshop on the identification, distribution, uses, folklore and photography of Iowa's ferns. This workshop will be appropriate for everyone from novice to those with a hearty familiarity with Iowa's ferns.

The workshop will be held in east-central Iowa, in Scott and Clinton Counties, at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center (eastern Iowa's premier environmental education facility; 225 acres) and Sherman Park (231 acres). These tracts, located across the Wapsipinicon River from each other just north of Dixon, together form a 456-acre complex rich in plant and animal diversity. The Center is predominately upland timber, with some bottomland timber, open grassland, shrubs and rock outcroppings. Some of the open grassland has been planted to prairie. Over 290 species of plants have been identified at the Center. Sherman Park is predominately upland timber with sand prairie remnants, prairie plantings, sand oak savanna, upland pothole marshes and a rock bluff. Over 360 species have been identified here, including five species of plants that are on the Iowa threatened and endangered list (royal fern *Osmunda regalis*, daisy-leaved moonwort *Botrychium matricariifolium* and others).

In addition to teaching the workshop, Bob (retired director of the Wapsi River Center) will conduct a tour of the Center in the morning and an optional tour of Sherman Park after lunch.

CRUISES ON THE BLUE HERON: A variety of cruises are available. Please call (563) 259-1876 to make reservations. Cost: \$6/adult & \$3/child under 16.

Sunset Cruises ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Take an hour and a half Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Cruisers will learn about wildlife, commercial use, navigation and recreational use of the big river.

July ~ 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th
August ~ 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th
September ~ 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th

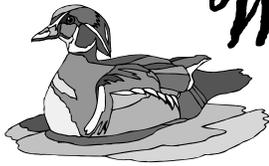
Moonlight Cruises ~ 8:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Enjoy a slow, after dark cruise under the full moon. Romance will be in the air!

August ~ 30th
September ~ 20th

Fall Color Eco Cruises ~ 5:00 P.M. ~ Rock Creek Marina & Campground ~ Take an Eco Cruise on the Mississippi to view wildlife and see the leaves changing color along the river.

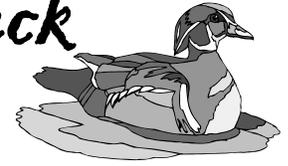
October ~ 4th & 11th





Wildlife Profile: Wood Duck

by Paula Mullin: AmeriCorps Naturalist



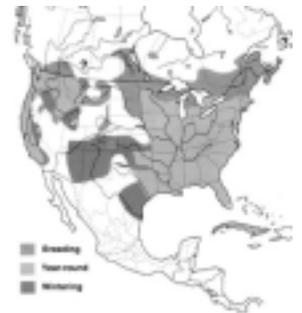
The site of young wildlife can brighten any day, and many opportunities present themselves this time of year. While quietly en route to the timber one June morning, I was interrupted by a loud splash in the woodland pond, followed by a shrill “*cr-r-ek, cr-r-ek*”. A frightened duck presented herself while her ducklings quickly swam to emergent vegetation across the pond, out of site. I had unintentionally scared a female wood duck and heard the resulting warning call. Her identity was unmistakable, even to a novice equipped with loppers and work gloves rather than a *Ducks at a Distance* waterfowl identification guide.

Wood ducklings eat a larger percentage of high-protein animal foods, such as insects and spiders, than adult wood ducks. Wood ducks are considered dabbling ducks, as they tip their head in shallow water and probe the bottom for vegetative parts and seeds. They also eat berries and nuts, especially acorns, hickory nuts and beechnuts, which are swallowed whole and crushed inside their gizzards. The hen and ducklings I saw, prior to scaring them, were under fallen trees along the edge of the pond, perhaps feeding or even resting.



The hen (female) wood duck has drab plumage with a combination of gray, white and brown. She has a white throat, a small head crest and a circle of white surrounding each eye. The scientific name of the wood duck (*Aix sponsa*) can be loosely translated as “a waterfowl in wedding dress,” and some even call the wood duck “the bride”. The drake (male) wood duck is more brilliantly colored than the female. His head is iridescent green, shading into blue and purple, and he also has a large head crest of feathers. The drake wood duck has a white chin bib, bright red eyes, a reddish-orange bill and yellow legs. His chest is separated from his golden-yellow sides by vertical bars of black and white. Only during eclipse (non-breeding season) plumage does the color of the drake wood duck appear less than exotic.

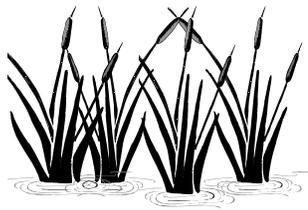
The ducklings could not yet fly; ability they do not achieve until the age of two months. They were not quite “sitting ducks” as they were excellent swimmers. Nonetheless, ducklings and adult wood ducks are preyed upon by mink, otters, raccoons, hawks and owls. During the duck season, the daily bag limit of six ducks can include no more than two wood ducks. The fact that their harvest is allowed and their population is plentiful is thanks to the efforts of conservation organizations in the early 1900s. Wood ducks are now found in all flyways and are a pleasure to see.



Drakes of nearly all species lose their colorful attire after mating, and for about a month look like adult females. Wood duck breeding occurs in late March and April, after an intense courtship. A tree nesting duck, the mated hen wood duck, with male following, seeks out a cavity in a mature tree, or a man-made wood duck nesting box. It is there that she covers accumulated wood chips with down from her breast, on which she lays 8-15 dull-white and unmarked eggs. The female incubates the eggs, which takes about a month. They do not stay in the nest much longer than that. The hatchlings, after one day, are enticed by soft calling of the hen to drop from the nest. If the hen had her nesting preference, the hatchlings will fall from a tree standing over water. If not, the hen escorts them to nearby water, where they can already swim.

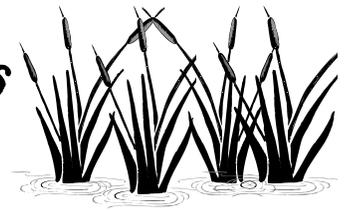
In the early 1900s, the wood duck population was thought to be near extinction. Much of their habitat, including woodland ponds, lakes, swamps, marshes and beaver ponds, was considered wasteland and consequently drained. Mature nesting trees were removed via widespread logging and wood ducks were over harvested. The construction and placement of wood duck nest boxes was just one of many efforts to increase the wood duck population, as hunting was banned for five years and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act ratified. Nonetheless, the nest boxes were found successful and are still used today.

Teachers participating in this year’s EDIWILD (educators in the wild) workshop had the opportunity to assemble nest boxes, which were placed at the Ben Martinsen Wildlife Area in Clinton County. The entrance holes to the nest boxes were cut small enough that hen wood ducks, not raccoons, could squeeze through. Perhaps they will be used by nesting hen wood ducks in years to come.



Plant Profile: Cattails

By Michael Granger, Wapsi Center Naturalist



Once upon a time there was a Coyote who loved to dance. One evening, while the Coyote was settling in for a night of rest, an eerie “swishing” sound came from a nearby swamp. Coyote wandered down the trail towards the noise. As he got closer he heard the sound of dance rattles playing a soothing music which irresistibly drew Coyote closer. He wandered into the swaying crowd and began to dance. Everyone was swaying back and forth in unison. Coyote danced into the night. By morning, Coyote became very tired, and even though he did not want to be the first to stop dancing, he collapse in exhaustion. As the sun began to rise, Coyote soon realized he had not been dancing with human dancers but the “Swamp Dancers”. This is the Native American name for cattails.

Throughout the region, in many marshes, road ditches, and backwater regions you can find cattails. Cattails are monocots belonging to the genus *Typha*. These amazing water loving plants provide food and shelter for a variety of animal species; and humans have utilized the cattail throughout time.

Four different species of cattails exist in North America. The broad-leaved cattail or common cattail (*Typha latifolia*), the narrow-leaved cattail (*T. angustifolia*) and a hybrid between the two (*T. glauca*) occur throughout Iowa. The southern cattail (*T. domingensis*) is common throughout southern United States. Narrow leaved cattails prefer deeper water than the broad leaved species.

All cattail plants have two growth forms. While the vegetative plant is made up of only leaves, a seed-bearing plant will have leaves as well as a flowering spike or “cat’s tail”.

Cattail leaves have tissues which contain large air-filled cavities. These tissues are known as “aerenchyma” (see illustration). Many aquatic plants contain these tissues, which support the exchange of gases between above-water shoots and below-water roots. Cattails have a root-like structure known as a “rhizome” which supports the plant and stores carbohydrates.



Rhizomes also produce new cattail plants by sending up vegetative shoots.

When conditions are right, a cattail will produce a flowering spike. Cattails are monoecious (having separate male and female flowers). The illustration shows that each spike will have a seed-bearing pistil (female flower spike) and above it, a pollen-bearing stamen (male flower spike). Cattails are wind pollinated and the male spike, when fertile, will release a yellow cloud of “dust” when touched. Upon fertilization, the staminate male flower dries up and forms the dried stem that protrudes from the top of the female flower. The female flower spike begins to swell producing the brown “cattail”. Eventually seeds will form. A single cattail spike may contain 250,000 seeds, which remain viable for up to 100 years! Seeds require ½ to 1 inch of water to germinate.



Many animals also use cattails for food and shelter. Muskrats feed on the cattails and use the leaves to create a lodge for raising young. Red-winged blackbirds, Yellow-headed blackbirds and geese use cattails for cover and nesting sites.

Native Americans and early pioneers used cattails in many creative ways. The fluffy seeds were used as a silky stuffing for pillows and bedding. Women and infants used the seeds for absorbent padding. The seeds also provide excellent tinder for fire production. Cattail roots are protein rich and have more carbohydrates than potatoes. The roots may be boiled or ground into flour when dry. The rhizome may also be mashed and applied as a soothing agent for stings, cuts and scrapes.

Cattail leaves have been used to create useful items such as sandals, hats and baskets. Woven cattail mats were used by women to sit on while doing chores. Cattail mats have been found in caves in Nevada which are thought to be 10,000 years old! Native Americans made very creative toys for their children out of cattails (see Kids’ Corner). For this year’s EDIWILD (educators in the wild) workshop, I created a full-size duck decoy similar to the ones used by Native Americans to lure in waterfowl.

You can find some great items and recipes to make with cattails on the internet. Just remember, if you plan on collecting cattails be sure you have permission if you are on private and public property. By far, the best way to learn more about this truly amazing plant is to spend some time investigating the “Swamp Dancers”.

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The Wapsi River Environmental Education Center is a joint project between the Scott and Clinton County Conservation Boards. "The W.R.E.N." is published quarterly by the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center and the Scott County Conservation Board.

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