

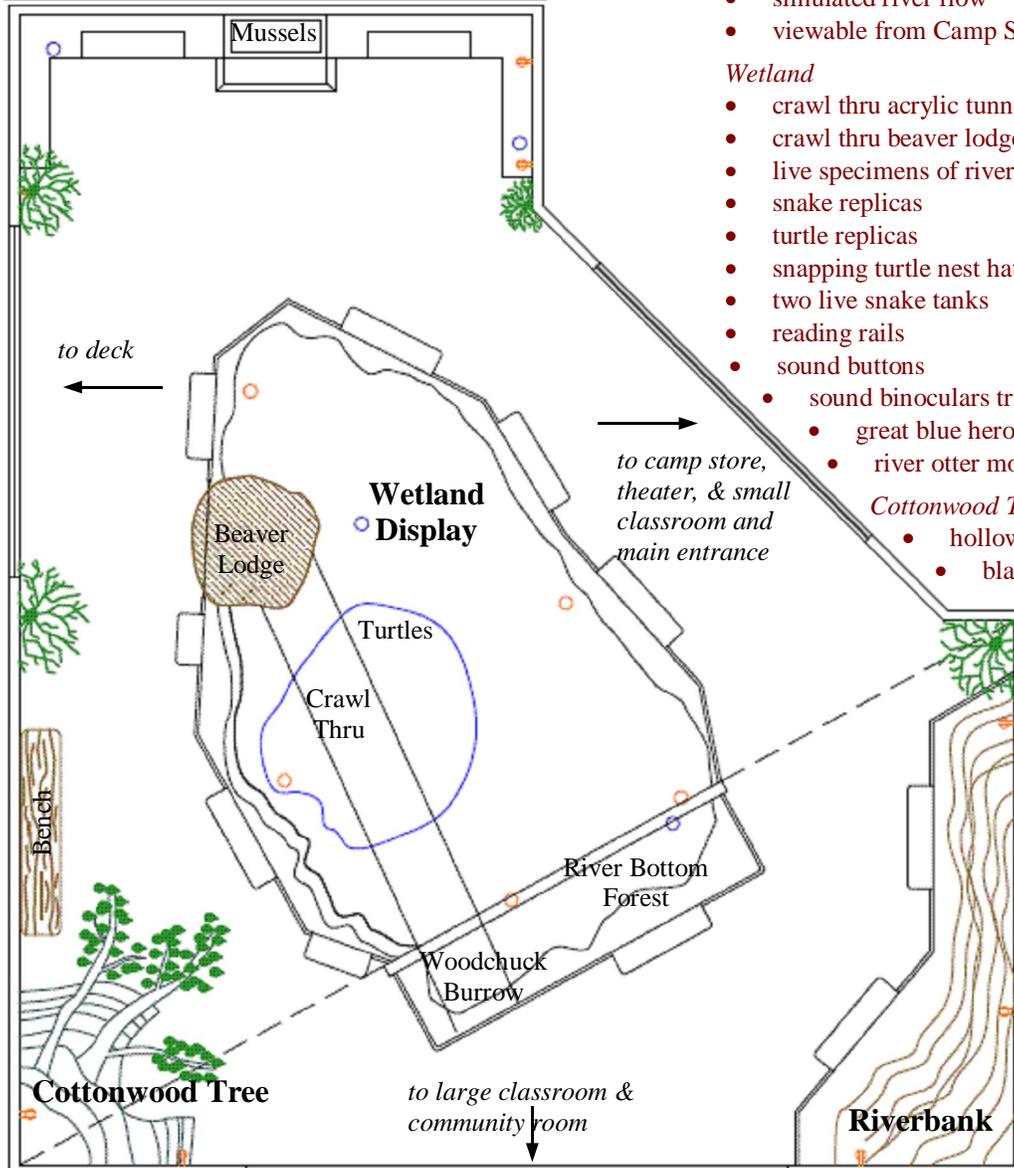


The Heron

Quarterly Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation
Volume 33 Number 3 Summer 2011

Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center ~ Nature Gallery Exhibits Floor Plan

Construction of the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center at Rock Creek is under a full head of steam. With recent grants from the Clinton County Development Association (\$150,000) and the Howe Foundation (\$250,000), the interior displays have the funding to begin to take shape. Working with Midwest Exhibits of Mt. Joy, we have some fun and spectacular ideas for the Center.



Gallery Features

- murals throughout room
- 'grass' carpet and 'stone' trails
- log bench

Aquarium

- large specimens of river fish
- tank divided—2/3 & 1/3 to keep small fish from large
- live freshwater mussels touch tank
- wing dam replica
- simulated river flow
- viewable from Camp Store and Gallery

Wetland

- crawl thru acrylic tunnel
- crawl thru beaver lodge
- live specimens of river turtles
- snake replicas
- turtle replicas
- snapping turtle nest hatching replica
- two live snake tanks
- reading rails
- sound buttons
- sound binoculars trigger sounds when focused on mounts
- great blue heron mount
- river otter mount

Cottonwood Tree

- hollow so people can enter
- black rat snake nest
- American bald eagle's nest
- bat roost

River Bottom Forest

- crawl thru woodchuck borrow
- red-tailed hawk mount
- songbird mounts
- barred owl mount

Riverbank

- bank swallow nests
- state record white-tailed deer
- snake & lizard replicas
- two live snake tanks

Camp Store

- Replicas of 32 species of Iowa's state record fish

A Pre-History View of the Mississippi River

by Chuck Jacobsen, Interpretative Naturalist

The Mississippi River is a major ecosystem, waterway and transportation system that is affected by 31 of our lower 48 states and their residents. It has a rich history and this article will briefly cover its creation and early colonization. So let's take a few minutes to explore it and how it has affected the human populations.

The mid-American river system began to form more than 100 million years ago during the late Cretaceous period when the Rocky Mountains were forming in the west. This lifted the central plains above sea level and the shallow inland sea that dominated the area for several hundred million years was drained. With the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, mammals and birds began to evolve and assume their niches on land and in the oceans. At the same time, rivers would have begun to form. The world climate was also changing becoming cooler and by the beginning of the Pleistocene 2.5 million years ago, the polar caps had formed along with glaciers in mountainous regions. Sheets of ice and snow also began to form at lower altitudes and the Ice Age had begun. Rivers would now be reshaped and redirected by advancing and retreating glaciers over the next 2.5 million years.

The modern Mississippi settled into its present day course when the Wisconsin glaciations, the last glaciers, receded. At this time huge glacial lakes would suddenly release large volumes of melt water. Lake Agassiz, located in the center of North America, was one of these. Its area was larger than all of the modern Great Lakes combined. It held more water than all the freshwater lakes in the world today. These torrents, channeled by the glacial river Warren, eroded the surface and cut a deep gorge creating the Minnesota and Upper Mississippi River valleys. About 9,400 years ago, Lake Agassiz found a new outlet and the River Warren was no more. Downstream, eroded material, or sediments, were deposited along the Mississippi's lower length as its currents slowed. These alluvial deposits formed the river's flood plain and a large portion of the lower United States. Its hard to imagine, but the delta of the Mississippi was once located at the southern tip of present day Illinois and has crept south to its present location.

The terms Native American and Indian have long been used by others to describe the indigenous people of the North American continent. These people today find neither term acceptable. After all none of our extreme origins are here in North America and anyone born here is a native. Even the earliest inhabitants of North America have been shown to have traveled here from Asia. According to the latest discoveries, man was present in eastern North America as many as 50,000 years ago. Humans have witnessed the last 40,000 years of the Wisconsin glaciation and the effects of the River Warren including the 175 foot high and 2,700 foot wide

River Warren Falls where present day St. Paul is located. The Horseshoe Drop of the present day Niagara Falls is three foot shorter and 100 feet narrower. What a sight that must have been!

Mississippi comes from the Anishinaabe and Ojibwa peoples word Messipi which in their Algonquin tongue means "Great River". The French pronounced it Misi-zibi which stuck and brought us to our present pronunciation. Each tribe had its own name for the section of river they knew, which made things difficult for European explorers of the river. The Ojibwa called Lake Itasca "Omashkoozo-zaaga'igan" (Elk Lake) and the river flowing out of it Omashkoozo-ziibi (Elk River). But after flowing into Lake Bemidji, it became Bemijigamaa-ziibi (River from the Traversing Lake). After flowing into Cass Lake it changed to Miskwaawaakokaa-ziibi (Red Cedar River) and Gichi-ziibi after flowing into Lake Winnibigoshish. You get the picture. The river was not known as the Mississippi, as a whole, until much later.

European exploration of the North American interior began with the Spanish back in 1539 when Hernando de Soto landed nine ships with over 600 men including some of their families. His expedition was a mobile community of priests, craftsmen, engineers, farmers and merchants, most from Europe and Africa, but some from Cuba. Few of them had ever traveled outside of Spain, or even their home villages. His encounters with indigenous people were less than friendly as he meant to steal any precious metals or gems they possessed. This led to an encounter in 1540 when de Soto's men were attacked as the natives gained the release of their chieftain Tuscaloosa whom the Spaniards were holding for ransom. De Soto's hopes of riches had been dashed by the lack of such wealth in North America. His men managed to fight their way out, but lost around 200, with 150 more badly wounded and 20 more dying of complications. Thousands of Native American warriors were said to have died. Even though the Spaniards won the battle, they had lost most of their possessions and many horses. On May 8th of 1541, Hernando de Soto became the first recorded European to reach the Mississippi River, though I'm sure his scouts were actually first. He gave it the name "Rio de Espiritu Santo" (*River of the Holy Spirit*). They crossed the river into present day Arkansas but soon returned. De Soto died of a fever along its banks in 1542. Because the Spaniards had passed themselves off as immortal, his death was kept secret and

his body sunk into the river to hide the fact from the natives. The survivors of the expedition escaped down the Mississippi River to the Gulf Coast and ultimately to Mexico by the spring of 1543.

If you're interested in reading more, pick up a copy of John Madson's book "*Up On The River*". Or watch the fall issue of "*The Heron*" for more from me on this subject.



Niagara's Horseshoe Drop

River Warren vs. Minnesota River

A-ticket, A-tasket, A Bird Making A Basket

by Jessica Steines, Interpretive Naturalist

This spring my email was buzzing with messages from two different listserves talking about the astounding number of not only the bright orange with a black head Baltimore orioles, but also the smaller, brick red and black orchard orioles at feeders. Not only was I hearing about it, I was living it at my feeders. How about you?

So why all the excitement for these relatives of meadowlarks, blackbirds, bobolinks and grackles? A member of the Icteridae family, the oriole gets its common name from the Latin word, aureolus, which means golden. Now the name Baltimore oriole may cause some



confusion. The name northern oriole may seem more familiar to some of you. The Baltimore oriole, which is found in the east, and the western Bullock's oriole were thought to be the same species. But genetic studies have shown them to be separate even though they do breed and produce fertile young where their ranges overlap.

I always enjoy the return of Baltimore orioles. I always hear them first. To me, it sounds very "fluty" but others describe it as "bright, slurred whistles" or "rich, piping, whistling notes". Then, after I hear the unmistakable sound, my eyes search the tall trees around the immediate area. They are usually found in parks and yards because of their preference of open areas with tall trees.

A few years ago my husband gave me a oriole feeder that skewers an orange. I tried it a few times and it never worked. After hearing the buzz, this year I bought a bag of oranges, low and behold I couldn't keep up with them...till now. And last year Mark came to work with a neat contraption to feed jelly to orioles. It has a flower shaped perch that hangs on to the tree and a jelly jar attaches right to it. I thought it was great until I set it out and all it attracted was ants and flies. But this year I put it up earlier and again, I could hardly keep up with them...till now.

This is what I mean. I went on vacation and not wanting to bother anyone with one more thing to do for me while I was gone, I figured the birds would just have to fend for themselves. Well, when I got back and started feeding the birds again, most of the birds "came back" to eat their treats I just bought on the way home, except for the orioles. I put out oranges to no avail. After talking to Chuck Jacobsen about my displeasure in the decrease number of birds, I found out that he and his father-in-law have had the same experience. After digging a little bit on *enature's* "Ask an Expert", George H. Harrison answers a similarly distressed lady, reassuring her that, "all orioles stop eating oranges for some unknown reason, after the nesting seasons starts, but they should continue to feed from the nectar feeder into September." In my case, the jelly seems to be snacked on, but not devoured, like before.

So what happened to my beloved orioles? Many speculate with the below average temperatures this May (can you believe the number of nights there was frost on the ground!), it slowed down the migration of many birds and held them here in Iowa where they were refueling to the pleasure of many birders watchers.

Even though they are the state bird of Maryland, orioles travel from as far south as Florida, Bahamas, Central America and even South America and will travel as far north as central Canada. Orioles migrate at night and in fact, many parish from collisions with buildings and communication towers. Can you believe these birds may start the migration south again in July but it really picks up by August. It feels like they just got here! That is a lot of work for a little bit of time up north. With the strenuous migration and all of the obstacles facing these birds, I was surprised to see that the oldest banded oriole was nearly 12 years old!

Even though people feed these orioles sugary foods, they do search trees and other foliage for insects, caterpillars and spiders. Unlike other insect-eating birds they will eat spiny or hairy caterpillars, including such pest species as fall webworms, tent caterpillars and gypsy moths. These insectivores appear to be sensitive to the spraying of pesticides, with birds dying directly from the poison and from the loss of insects.

Like many other song birds, females have dull colors. Where the male has dark black, the female is a brown/olive color and where the male is bright orange, the female has a dusty orange color. Young males look very similar to females until their second fall. Young males have been known to breed before mature plumage is reached. This time of year, the nests have 3 to 7 pale grayish-white eggs, streaked and blotched with dark lines. The female incubates the eggs for 11 to 14 days. When the eggs hatch, the chicks are helpless and barely covered with down. Both parents will feed the young until they fledge in 11 to 14 days.

After the leaves fall in autumn, I am amazed at the number of nests you can see. One of the best nests to find is the Baltimore oriole's. It is amazing to see their hanging basket nest constructed by the female weaving hair, plant fibers and synthetic fibers (I have seen blue fiber that looked like it was from a tarp). In the late 1800's, the nests were made almost exclusively from horse hair. Ironic, since it is said that the Baltimore oriole received its name in the 1600's because the baron of Baltimore, George



Baltimore Oriole

North = Breeding

South = Wintering

Calvert, had a yellow and black livery stable. The nest is hung by the rim from thin branches or a fork in a tall tree. It is said that it takes females as long as 40 hours over the course of 12 days, 10,000 stitches and thousands of knots made with her beak to make this tisket, tasket, hanging basket for her family.

Park District Improvements

Walnut Grove Park ~ Up To Speed

by Chip Brown, Park Officer, West District

North of the small Iowa town of Toronto lies a campground along the ever-changing Wapsipinicon River. Walnut Grove Park's campground has seen many changes over the past seven years. It started with a new boat ramp. With more and more campers upgrading from tents to pop-up campers and trailers, we saw the need for electrical sites. When preparing the ground for these sites along the river, we dug a small pond that now contains many species of fish for young anglers who don't care much about what size or kind of fish they catch. This makes a perfect spot for kids to spend an hour or two.

When the sites were finished, we managed to fit 12 sites along the banks of the Wapsi. All 12 sites have 30 and 50 amp service, with plenty of length on the gravel pad for any size camper. With the upgraded sites came an influx of campers, thinking this was just the greatest thing. A year later, the campers were suggesting the need for a shower house. In the fall of 2008, the planning and construction started to take place. With the help of volunteers and some very dedicated and experienced employees, the shower house was finished in the spring of 2010. Last summer, when the campground wasn't under attack by raging flood waters, it saw a steady increase in campers.

This year, we saw the need for more sites, both primitive and electric. By the July 4th weekend we will have installed and finished 12 additional electric sites around the playground that was installed seven years ago. When all is said and done, Walnut Grove Park campground has been brought into modern time by a lot of hard work and a fair amount of money. Who knows what will happen in the years to come? We may add canoe rentals with shuttles up and down river, a boat ramp on south side, rip rap on

the ever-changing shoreline, rental cabins or even more campsites! The park has many possibilities and has space to expand, so when you are thinking of a place to camp don't forget about the small 30-acre campground located on the paved highway north of Toronto. The campground offers 24 campsites with water and electricity, 10 primitive sites, a dump station, shower house, boat ramp, basketball court and playground.



Rock Creek Progress

by Brad Taylor, Park Officer, East District

Big things keep happening at Rock Creek this summer. Construction is in full swing on the Mississippi River Eco-Tourism Center. Construction was a little delayed due to the high water but is going strong again. The foundation walls are all done and all 20 wells are drilled for the geo-thermal system. Even though construction is making things a little congested, the park is still running as it always has.

The flood water has receded and the clean up is done. The only thing left is to wait for some of the sites to dry out. All the sites should be in good order come 4th of July weekend. All of the boat docks are in and a few modifications have been made to the pontoon docks to allow access during high water. As the water drops more, some modifications may still have to be done.

We are also in the middle of building a new fish cleaning house. It will be a little bigger than the old one and a lot nicer. Construction on this should be done by the 4th of July.

I appreciate everyone's patience during the high water and construction.

Trumpeter Swans

by Mark Roberts, Education Coordinator

Even though the Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program is winding down across Iowa, we still have some activity here in Clinton County. On March 31st, five locally raised cygnets were released into the wild. Two at a farm pond near Clinton and three at Ringneck Marsh, north of Calamus. The Ringneck triplets took off down the nearby creek and as far as we know are doing great and the two near Clinton are doing fine and should grow in flight feathers soon.

We have only one captive breeding pair left in Clinton County and they had a productive nesting season. Last year the pair hatched the 5 cygnets I spoke of earlier. This May they hatched seven! That was great, however a coyote or dog attacked the group one night shortly after hatching. The male received serious injuries as did the female in defense of their young. The male seems to have recovered, but the female ultimately died from her injuries. All seven baby swans survive making the sacrifice of the protective parents, not in vain. We hope to introduce a new female to the male later this summer but it is a long shot that they will successfully mate.

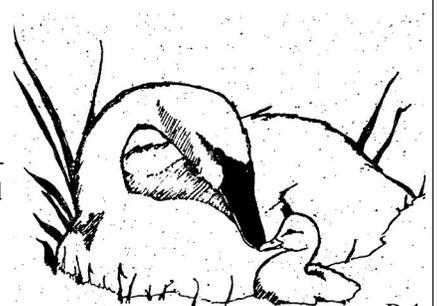
Wild nesting has been going on for the last decade and this year looks good for two of the two wild nesting pairs I know of. The

set at Bob & Mary Boock's Nature's Acres Farm north of Wheatland had a late hatching of two cygnets. The Boock's had very nearly given up that the swans would hatch any eggs until on June 20th, Voila! two little ones appeared.

The second wild nest is on a wetland near Lost Nation and boasts seven cygnets! They were hatched at the end of March and so far so good, the whole family of nine trumpeters is doing wonderfully. There are many more wild nests in the area. Thankfully, most are in remote areas and are difficult to keep track of.

Over 200 swans have been released in Iowa with a Clinton County connection. Next spring we will hopefully be able to relocate and release the seven cygnets from Clinton.

While the trumpeter swan may never be abundant, they are becoming a common site here. Mother Nature is set to take over and things are looking good for North America's largest bird.



Visit a Farmers Market Near You

by Walt Wickham, Executive Director

Want to help the environment, your health and the local economy all in one fell swoop. Shop your local farmers market. Many people are rediscovering the benefits of buying locally-grown foods. Farmers markets are a great source of fresh fruits and vegetables, locally-grown meat, baked goods and more. In most cases, the fruits and vegetables are picked just hours before you buy them. This means they are better tasting, more nutrient dense and better for you too. Nothing is better than a fresh picked ear of corn or an heirloom tomato!



Did you know that shopping at the farmers market is also a great way to help protect the environment? On average, grocery store food travels 1,500 to 2,500 miles before it is delivered to you, the consumer. Farmers market foods typically comes from a radius of 200 miles

or less. Less transportation distance means less vehicle pollution, noise and fuel use. In most cases, packaging and other waste is also greatly reduced. Shopping farmers markets also encourages the reduced use of pesticides and more diversity on the farm.

Iowa is well known for its corn and soy beans, but we can grow many fruit and vegetable crops as well.

Finally, shopping the farmers market helps the local economy. It has been estimated that more than 80% of the \$8 billion worth of food we consume annually in Iowa comes from out of state. Why send all your food dollars to a grower that lives hundreds or thousands of miles away when you can help a local farmer? When you shop at the farmers market, your food dollars go directly to the grower, instead of large corporations and freight companies. Local farmers spend the money they earn locally and pay local taxes, helping to make your community stronger.

Get to know your farmers market. You'll be glad you did.

Clinton County Farmers Markets

Camanche Farmers Market
Food Pride Grocery parking lot
9th St. and 7th Ave.
Tuesdays 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Clinton Farmers Market
Lyons Four Squares Park, Main Avenue
Wednesdays 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Saturdays 8:00 – Noon

DeWitt Farmers Market
Lincoln Park
Mondays and Thursdays 3:30 – 6:30 p.m.

There may be other farmers markets as well as the roadside vegetable stands that crop up very summer fit the bill. *Bon Appetit!*

Purple Heart Hunting ~ Now Taking Applications

by Mark Roberts, Education Coordinator

The Clinton County Conservation Board is offering permitted hunting in a portion Rock Creek Marina & Campground for US military veterans that have earned combat citations, been a Prisoner of War or are a Disabled American Veteran.

This is the Conservation Board's way of saying thanks to veterans who have made great personal sacrifices for our country. It will also allow handicapped-accessible hunting to a group of people who need and deserve it. We are also willing to open up permits to severely handicapped non-vets or groups like the *Make a Wish Foundation* if we have seasons unused by veterans. There is no charge for hunting privileges, however the hunter is responsible for the purchase of all required licenses and tags.

Rock Creek is currently not open to public hunting, making the area safe for the single permitted hunter and raises the odds of hunting success. The CCCB has handicapped-accessible facilities on site (cabin, campsites, restrooms, & camp store). The CCCB has staff on site that can render assistance and make

quick repairs to the trail or hunting blind. The hunting portion would be closed to all persons except the permitted hunter during the hunt.

The CCCB just received a \$1,000 grant from the American Legion of Iowa. The Conservation Board will use the money to purchase an electric golf cart for Purple Heart Hunters to use. We are looking for an inexpensive, but reliable, electric golf cart hunters may use to quietly get to the blind. Any help would be appreciated.

We are accepting applications currently for permits through the 2012 spring seasons. We will award permits on a first come, first served basis. We hope this will make the planning process easier on the hunters.

Contributing Organizations: *Clinton County Conservation, Illowa Marine of Clinton, American Legion of Iowa, Steel Tuff of Low Moor, Scott County Pheasants Forever, Scott County Waterfowl USA and Wapsi Bottoms Whitetails Unlimited.*

For information or an application for Purple Heart Hunting,



Hot Fun in the Summertime!



July

2nd ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Come tour the varied exhibits of this gem of a nature center. Indian, early settlement and natural artifacts fill the center and the live animal exhibits are always a hit with the youth.

7th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Take a 1.5 hour Eco Cruise on the Mississippi River. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. There is a \$5 requested donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund.

8th ~ Explore the Lost Lakes ~ 6:30 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Join us for a leisurely paddle on the quiet backwaters of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge. We will cover about 5.5 miles of wilderness viewing its flora and fauna as we go. Call 563-847-7202 to register today.

9th ~ Stream Stomp / Great Mississippi River Cleanup ~ 8:30 AM-12:30 PM ~ Clinton County ~ Join other environmental activists, both young and old, as they pick, pull, haul and drag everything from litter to tires to metal scrap from the shores of



our rivers, streams, backwaters and upland areas. Chad Pregracke will be joining us in our efforts this year with his fleet of flatboats on the Mississippi. To register contact Brad at Clinton Area Solid Waste by calling 563-243-4749. To contribute supplies or refreshments contact Melisa, Project Coordinator, at 309-737-9016.

9th ~ Free Paddling Day ~ 9AM-4 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Paddle crafts offer a unique mode of transportation for viewing area wildlife plus they are just plain fun. Rent boats free of charge (regularly \$5/hour), for use in the Rock Creek area.

9th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

9th ~ Hayrack Ride ~ 7 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Good times aboard this 1/2 hour, ranger-guided hayrack ride to the back valley of the refuge. Children must be accompanied by an adult..

9th ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi Center ~ The moon will be around first quarter phase,

making it the most prominent object in the sky all evening. This is the best phase for close-up views of our planet's natural satellite, since the angle of the sun makes the shadows of mountains and craters really stand out. The moon's light will wash out dimmer deep-sky objects, but Saturn will stand out to the southwest for most of the evening.



14th-16th ~ Clinton County 4-H Fair ~ 1-7 PM Daily ~ Clinton County Fairgrounds, DeWitt ~ Visit the CCCB booth.

14th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

14th ~ Moonlight and Music Cruise ~ 9 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Enjoy an evening on the moon-lit Mississippi while local minstrels play and sing. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations.

16th ~ Bird Craft ~ 10 AM ~ Rock Creek ~ Build a homemade bird feeder to take home and make other fun birdie crafts.

16th ~ 1st Annual Lumberjack Festival ~ Noon-10 PM ~ Sawmill Museum, Clinton ~ This will be a top-notch lumberjack event! Competitions: Single Buck, Underhand Chop, Bo-Saw, Standing Block, Spring Board, Hot Saw, Axe Throw, Jack & Jill Cross, and Jack & Jill Underhand. Also take a ride on a trackless train, experience lumber jacking at the Wii Station, adult bags tournament, pie eating contests and more! For more information go to www.thesawmillmuseum.org.



16th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

16th ~ And They're Off! Frog and Turtle Races ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Bring your own, or borrow turtles and frogs, and sign up at the nature center for an exciting evening of racing! There will be prizes given to the winner and a general raffle for participating.

16th ~ Campfire Cooking ~ 7 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ The monthly movie night at Eden Valley will be spiced up in July. Come to the movie screen at the Eden Valley Refuge campground to make some yummy snacks over the fire right before the movie. We will provide all necessary cookware and food.

16th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley ~ Movies are free at the nature center's outdoor screen.

19th - 22nd ~ EnviroKids Day Camp (3rd - 5th Grades) ~ 9 AM-3 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Youth will set up camp each day arranging their site. They will be introduced to backpacking and paddling including packing their gear into backpacks. They will learn leave-no-trace camping. Cost for this camp is \$10 per day. Participants may purchase an EnviroKids T-shirt for \$5. Sign-ups are limited, call 563-847-7202.

20th ~ Bee-Keeping Demonstration and Honey-Baked Goods Auction ~ 6:30 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Picnic at the one-room school! Gather in the Flannery Schoolhouse for a lesson in bee-keeping and honey production. Enthusiastic cooks may bring desserts and other food made with honey to be put up for auction.

Please print up the recipe (to tempt potential buyers!) and any history that makes it special to your family. Auction proceeds go to the Flannery School Fund. If you do not have a honey recipe you may bring a plate of cookies, so all will have a sweet taste to finish off the evening! Enjoy a family social event, like it used to be in simpler times.



21st ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

22nd ~ Our Bats ~ 8 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Come learn of the interesting and often misunderstood world of the bat. The program will include a collection of preserved bats, a short kids video, information on the progress of White Nose Syndrome, plans for building your own bat house and more.

23rd ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

23rd ~ Hayrack Rides ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Good times aboard this hayrack ride. An adult must accompany children.

28th ~ Beach Party ~ 6 PM ~ Malone Lake ~ We'll string up some lights and put out tiki torches so you can come for a fun evening at the beach with the whole family, just bring your suit. If you want, bring your own beverages and meat to grill or roast over the fire. There will be a fire with the equipment to make S' mores, lemonade, face painting and yard games.



28th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

30th ~ Kids' Fishing Tournament ~ 9 AM-Noon ~ Malone Park ~ Kids, ages 12 and under, are invited to test their angling skills. Sunfish are thick in the 10-acre lake, with bass, bullheads and catfish in good numbers. Plaques will be awarded for the greatest weight of fish in two age groups, ages 10-12 and ages 9 and under. There will also be door prizes for all. Registration starts at 9 AM, with fishing from 9:30-11 AM; weigh-in and casting contest will follow.

30th ~ Free Paddling Day ~ 9AM-4 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Paddle crafts offer a unique mode of transportation for viewing area wildlife plus they are just plain fun. Rent boats free of charge (regularly \$5/hour), for use in the Rock Creek area.

30th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

30th ~ Hayrack Ride ~ 7 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Good times aboard this 1/2 hour, ranger-guided hayrack ride to the back valley of the refuge. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

30th ~ Public Open House ~ Dusk ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. Star parties are dependent on the weather. To confirm a party will be held, check www.qcas.org, after 4 PM on the day of the party.

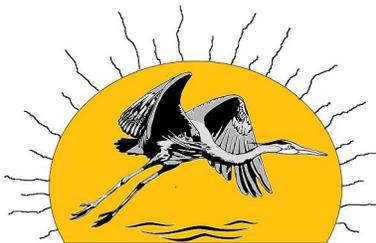
August

4th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

5th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise, Special Friday Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

6th ~ Crossroads Triathlon ~ 7:30 AM ~ 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 then run 3.1 miles. Contact race organizers at 563-349-1136 or visit www.topshelfraceproductions.com.

6th ~ 10 AM-2 PM ~ Mushroom Foray ~ Sherman Park ~ The Prairie States Mushroom Club, in partnership with Clinton County Conservation, will host a mushroom foray Saturday, August 6th, 10 AM at Sherman Park. CCCB canoes and volunteers will be on hand to ferry those foragers who wish to cross the Wapsi and foray in the woods around the Wapsi River EE Center.



Picnicking and fungi identification by knowledgeable PSMC members will follow the foray. Canoes will remain available during the afternoon for recreation on the river at Sherman Park if water levels and weather are appropriate.

6th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

6th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley ~ Movies are free at the nature center's outdoor screen.

11th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

11th ~ Moonlight and Music Cruise ~ 9 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Enjoy an evening on the moon-lit Mississippi while local minstrels play and sing. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations.

12th ~ Tubin' the Bear ~ 7 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Here's some fun for a hot, summer night. Slip on a PFD and grab one of our recycled inner tubes for a fun splash down Bear Creek. A ¼ mile stretch of the creek will be designated and the end clearly marked. When you've finished simply return your PFD and tube or jump in again if there isn't anyone waiting for a tube.



13th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

13th ~ Hayrack Rides ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Good times aboard this hayrack ride. An adult must accompany children.

18th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

19th ~ Evening Float ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Join us for a leisurely paddle on the quiet backwaters of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge. We will cover about 5.5 miles of wilderness viewing its flora and fauna as we go.

20th ~ Third Annual Rock Creek Catfish Classic ~ 7 AM-2 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ The Clinton County Conservation Foundation is hosting this tournament to raise funds to help build the Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center at Rock Creek. Costs are \$50/boat and \$10 for the Big Fish Pot. Prize money is to be determined by the number of entries with a minimum 70 percent payout guaranteed to the top 3 boats. There are door prizes for all contestants. Check-in will begin at 6 AM and weigh-in at 2 PM sharp. Up to a limit of 10 channel cats, at a 12" minimum length, will be weighed per entry. Sign-up and rules available at www.missecocenter.org. This is a WhereIFish.com Tournament Series affiliate tournament.

WhereIFish.com



The Fishing Community

20th ~ Allen's Grove to Wapsi Wildlife Area Float ~ Noon ~ Conservation Headquarters, Grand Mound ~ We will car pool to Allen's Grove Park and off-load boats for the trip. The county canoe rack and as many cars as possible will be shuttled to the take-out at the Wapsi Wildlife Area, 10.5 miles downstream. This is a pleasant trip and should show us plenty of public beaches for our enjoyment, as well as some wildlife, along the way.

20th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

20th ~ Hayrack Ride ~ 7 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Good times aboard this 1/2 hour, ranger-guided hayrack ride to the back valley of the refuge. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

20th ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi Center ~ The moon doesn't appear at all this evening, making the sky as dark as it ever gets and thus perfect for viewing deep-sky objects like star clusters, nebulae and galaxies in telescopes and the Milky Way will be brilliant to the naked eye. Saturn is still there, although it's now getting low to the southwest.

23rd ~ Mussel Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ 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 for reservations. There is no fee, but a freewill donation to the Rock Creek Education Fund will be collected.



25th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 7 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

26th ~ And They're Off! Frog and Turtle Races ~ 7 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ Bring your own, or borrow turtles and frogs, and sign up at the nature center for an exciting evening of racing! There will be prizes given to the winner and a general raffle for participating.

27th ~ Free Paddling Day ~ 9AM-4 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Paddle crafts offer a unique mode of transportation for viewing area wildlife plus they are just plain fun. Rent boats free of charge (regularly \$5/hour), for use in the Rock Creek area.



27th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

27th ~ Saturday Night at the Movies ~ Dusk ~ Eden Valley ~ Movies are free at the nature center's outdoor screen.

27th ~ Public Open House ~ Dusk ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. Star parties are dependent on the weather. To confirm a party will be held, check www.qcas.org, after 4 PM on the day of the party.

September

1st ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

3rd ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

8th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.



10th ~ Youth Outdoor Skills Day ~ 8 AM-5 PM ~ Clinton Izaak Walton League ~ Looking for a way to open your child's eyes to a life of adventure in the great outdoors? Looking for a chance for your child to gain experience with a variety of outdoor skills? We have just the thing! Clinton County kids ages, 11-18, will learn about safety and skills at various stations staffed by various Conservation Organizations such as *Pheasants Forever*, *Harvester Bass Club*, *Whitetails Unlimited*, *Wild Turkey Federation* and *Clinton County Conservation*. All stations will involve hands-on activities designed to give kids practical experience while keeping safety at the forefront. Parents and younger siblings are encouraged to attend with students. They will be invited to eat lunch, free of charge, along with participants. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Each participant will be charged a non-refundable \$5 registration fee and receive a commemorative T-shirt. Call 563-847-7202 for sign-up.



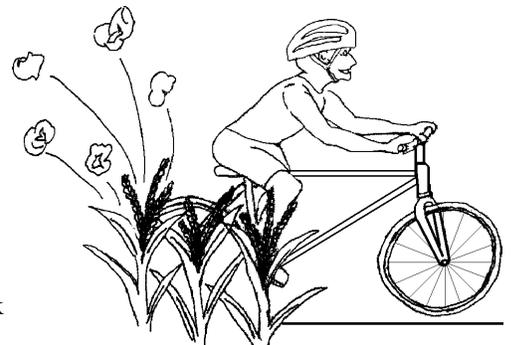
10th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1-4 PM ~ Eden Valley

15th ~ Vermicomposting ~ 6 PM ~ Wapsi Center ~ This is a popular program for all ages! The kids love the and the adults love being able to put food scraps to good use. Come to meet the creatures who do most of the work to make your flower or vegetable garden grow and then make your very own bin with worms and everything! If you choose to make a bin, the fee is \$10; if you do not, it is free of charge! Register by calling 563-847-7202.

15th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

15th ~ Moonlight and Music Cruise ~ 8 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ The last cruise of its kind for the year. Enjoy an evening on the moon-lit Mississippi while local minstrels play and sing. Call 563-259-1876 for reservations.

17th ~ BRACCII ~ 8 AM ~ Walnut Grove Park ~ This is our second **Bike Ride Across Clinton County**. It is a full-service, family-oriented ride that will begin with your registration by calling 563-847-7202 no later than August 17th. Upon receipt of your \$25/day/rider fee we will provide you with a ride packet including meal tickets and map. The fee will cover Support and Gear (SAG) service both days, refreshments offered at rest stops along the way, a fish boil for your Saturday evening meal at Rock Creek and a Sunset Eco Cruise on the mighty Mississippi River. Sunday morning begins with a pancake breakfast and refreshments along the route of your return trip to Walnut Grove Park, Toronto. A \$10 additional fee will be imposed for late registration. You are responsible for camping fees if using a campsite other than the group site. Sounds like fun, I'd better get training!

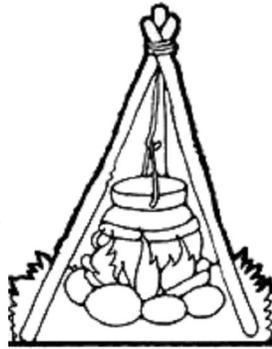


17th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1–4 PM ~ Eden Valley

17th ~ Monsignor Menke Observatory Open House ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi Center ~ Saturn is getting lost in the western twilight just after sunset by now, so the night will probably be exclusively deep-sky to start with. However, if you stay late enough, Jupiter and its four large moons will rise in the east. Stay even later and you might see our moon, near its last quarter phase, rising right next to the Pleiades.



21st ~ Cast-iron Cook-Off and Fall Farmer's Market & Craft Fair ~ 6:30 PM ~ Soaring Eagle ~ Set up your charcoal fire out front of the Flannery Schoolhouse and have your food item ready to sample by 6:30 PM. Be prepared to teach onlookers a bit about old-fashioned cast iron cooking. Attendees will be charged \$2/person for a tasting-kit; sampling bowls, spoons and napkins. Proceeds go to the Flannery School Fund. The Soaring Eagle Board of Directors will judge food from 4 different categories: Chili, Stew, Vegetable Dishes and Desserts (and unexpected categories, as needed!) Please print a "Contents" card, so people can avoid food allergies. Farmer's market and craft fair vendors will set up along the north side of the parking lot and lawn leading to the Schoolhouse. Vendors are asked to donate 10% of their sales to Soaring Eagle Nature Center for the Flannery School Fund. Enjoy a family social event, like it used to be in simpler times.



22nd ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

24th ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1–4 PM ~ Eden Valley

24th ~ Public Open House ~ Dusk ~ Jens-Wendt Observatory ~ Sherman Park ~ Join the Quad Cities Astronomical Society at Sherman Park's north end to explore the night sky. Star parties are dependent on the weather. To confirm a party will be held, check www.qcas.org, after 4 PM on the day of the party.

29th ~ Sunset Blue Heron Eco Cruise ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

October

1st ~ Annual Lower Wapsi Cleanup ~ 8 AM ~ Walnut Grove, Toronto ~ This year, river levels permitting, we hope to clean the final stretch of the lower Wapsipinicon, completing years of volunteer work that will have covered the river from Anamosa to the Mississippi and portions of the "Big River's" backwaters. Join us Friday night for early check-in and a community friendship fire or arrive early Saturday morning, to check in and find your ride to the put-in at Oxford Mills. Sunday's efforts will be focused on the river between Jungletown Access near Hale. For information contact Melisa Jacobsen, coordinator@lowerwapsicleanup.org



1st ~ Nature Center Open ~ 1–4 PM ~ Eden Valley

1st ~ Clinton County Chapter of Pheasants Forever Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Millennium Ballroom ~ Pheasants Forever's Clinton County Chapter is holding its annual fund-raiser at the Millennium Ballroom in Goose Lake. The group provides funds to local landowners and agencies for the establishment of wildlife habitat. Call Brad Taylor at 563-357-0465 for tickets.

1st ~ Eastern Iowa Star Party ~ Dusk ~ Wapsi Center (Monsignor Menke Observatory) ~ Come join representatives from the Quad Cities Astronomical Society and astronomy clubs from all over the midwest to view the heavens above. Primitive camping is available for \$7 per tent. More information can be found online at www.qcas.org.

6th ~ Fall Color Blue Heron Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

7th & 8th ~ Bluegrass Jam Noon - 9 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ On the 7th of October we will have a big jam around the campfire all afternoon and evening and then the stage show on Saturday the 8th. This will be the 29th year and it keeps getting better each year! Once you attend, you will never want to miss it again!

13th ~ Fall Color Blue Heron Cruise ~ 5 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ Call 563-259-1876 for reservations. \$5 donation requested.

Bickelhaupt Arboretum Events ~ visit www.bick-arb.org or 563-242-4771

July 9th Bus Trip: Morton Arboretum (Lisle, IL) and Distinctive Gardens (Dixon, IL) ~ 7 AM to 7 PM.

July 12th ~ Arts at the Arb, Travis Hosette Sings Sinatra ~ 7 PM ~ Bring a lawn chair and enjoy the outdoor performance. (Rain date July 14).

July 30th ~ Saturday at the Arb, Geocaching ~ 9 AM ~ Includes classroom instruction and outdoor activities.

August 6th ~ Saturday at the Arb, Leaf Cast Birdbath ~ 10 AM ~ You will make your own unique birdbath top in this hands-on workshop.

August 9th ~ Arts at the Arb, Al Ronek, The Pirate Over 60 ~ 7 PM ~ Bring a lawn chair and enjoy an outdoor performance. (Rain date August 11).

August 13th ~ Herb Faire ~ 10 AM ~ Learn about lore as well as growing, preserving and cooking with herbs.

August 27th ~ Butterfly Fest ~ 10 AM ~ Learn about the monarch butterfly. Join in tagging and releasing them.

September 10th ~ Saturday at the Arb, Pressing Flowers/ Natural Fall Decorations ~ 10 AM ~ Class includes arranging flowers, fall pumpkins and squash, leaves and other material from nature.

September 13th ~ Arts at the Arb, Fabulous Paul Brothers ~ 7 PM ~ Bring a lawn chair and enjoy an outdoor performance.

September 23rd ~ Autumnal Equinox ~ 5:30 PM ~ Mark the beginning of fall.



Watch Your Step!

Jessica Hepker, Intern Naturalist

Very few of us outdoorsy folk have been deprived the opportunity of becoming so absorbed by the beauty of nature that we do not care where our next step will take us... until we notice that we have just stepped through a patch of poison ivy.

Poison ivy, *Toxicodendron radicans*, an often feared, three-leafed woodland plant, can be found anytime between May and October crawling up tree trunks or hiding amongst other forest floor plants. Before I had led my first few hikes, I assumed that everybody knew what poison ivy looked like and why we had to watch out for it. It didn't take long for me to realize that a lot of people do not actually know how to identify poison ivy. Last week on a hike at the Wapsi River Center, before we even stepped foot on the trail, a mother in the group asked if we would run into poison ivy. I answered with "oh, probably." At that moment, she and about five other parents got a worried look on their faces and asked "What does it look like?" Surprised by her question, I decided to begin the hike by pointing out a few irritating plants, including poison ivy.

If you have ever brushed up against a poison ivy plant before, you may know all about the irritatingly itchy, red bumps and blisters that are difficult to ignore. This reaction is called "contact dermatitis" but most people just say they "got poison ivy". Poison ivy plants produce an oily chemical called *urushiol*. When a poison ivy plant is disturbed, this chemical leaks to the surface of the plant where it is readily available to come into contact with your skin. When the *urushiol* comes into contact with skin cells, it alters the healthy cells they are detected as foreign objects and are attacked by surrounding cells. This battle between healthy cells and "foreign" cells is what causes the irritating reaction.

I have heard many myths about the poison ivy plant and its effects on us. Some people claim that they contract a rash by simply walking near the plant without contact. This is simply not true since the only way to spread the rash is through direct contact with the *urushiol* chemical. Since poison ivy tends to grow in clusters, it is far more likely that this person simply did not see another poison ivy plant. Stay away from forest fires, direct burning or anything else that can cause the oil to become airborne such as a lawnmower, trimmer, etc. Another common myth I have heard is that the rash can spread by

scratching or coming into contact with an infected person. This is definitely not true. The only way a poison ivy rash can be spread is by direct contact with the *urushiol* chemical.

Yet another falsehood about poison ivy is that a person that has never broken out into a rash after contact is immune. This is not necessarily true. A first timer may not develop a rash as quickly, but after some time and more exposure, the effects may become more obvious. The more often a person is exposed to the *urushiol* chemical, the more likely they are to break out into a rash. Mark Roberts, Education Coordinator, told me that he was "immune" from poison ivy until he was 18 years old. Then, while catfishing along a riverbank he fell asleep in a patch of ivy and became covered in the rash. Today he is hyper-sensitive to it and last summer had rash he couldn't shake for nearly 6 months!

The Native Americans used the poison ivy plant for medical uses, but only by the most skilled medicine men of the tribe. Now, we wouldn't dream of purposely touching this plant.

What good is poison ivy? Believe it or not, poison ivy is an important part of the forest ecosystem. The plant provides white and greenish berries for over 60 species of birds! The berries are especially important for species of birds that do not migrate. Some birds, such as the Northern Cardinal and American Goldfinch, also use thread-like hairs from the poison ivy vine to build their nests. Poison ivy is also a food source for mammals. White-tailed deer, muskrats, and eastern cottontails eat the leaves and stems. Insects munch on the leaves. Poison ivy's foliage (leaves and stems) provides shelter for small animals. Bees also use the pollen to make honey. No matter how irritating this plant may be to us, it holds an important place in the web of life.

During the hike at the Wapsi River Center, after a brief introduction of the effects of poison ivy, everybody kept their eyes open, searching the forest floor for it throughout the rest of the hike. Needless to say, I had no trouble keeping everybody on the trail.



2011 Clinton County EnviroKids

This is a series of events for kids in 3rd to 5th grades, younger kids are welcome if accompanied by an adult. Clinton CCB partners with several other agencies on this award-winning program. All events are 9 AM – Noon unless otherwise noted. Direct questions to Judie Petersen, 563-357-6932. There is a one-time \$5 registration fee that covers all of the events.

June 11th ~ Learn all about planting seeds and composting with the Clinton County Master Gardeners and ISU Extension at Soaring Eagle Nature Center in Clinton.

June 25th ~ Discover the fascinating world of trees and birds with a hands-on scavenger hunt at Bickelhaupt Arboretum.

July 15th ~ Enjoy a free Clinton LumberKings baseball game on "Going Green" night. EnviroKids will be given special treatment. Check-in at the park is 6 PM.

July 16th ~ Tour LyondellBasell

to see how plastic is made and do some fun experiments!

July 19th - 22nd ~ EnviroKids Day Camp ~ 9 AM-3 PM ~ Rock Creek ~ see earlier description in calendar of events.

August 13th ~ Have some fun on the pond at Clinton Izaak Walton League. Enjoy fishing, canoeing and a hayride. Lunch will be provided by the Ikes.

August 27th ~ Tour the Clinton Area Solid Waste Agency and learn about where trash goes and recycling.

September 10th ~ Hop aboard the Blue Heron pontoon boat at Rock Creek for a cruise and a beach clean-up. We will also be doing GPS geocaching and S'mores back at the park.



What's That Itch

by Darin Voss, Natural Resource Technician

Summer can be such a busy, yet fun time of year. This is when people are able to get outside and enjoy a number of out-of-door activities. These activities may include camping, fishing, canoeing/kayaking, gardening, picnicking or hiking to name a few. Many of us spend countless hours partaking in these activities and have a wonderful time doing so. However, we all know if we aren't careful while on our endeavors, we may get into some things that make the experience a little less enjoyable. These things that I'm referring to are those pesky things that make you itch. Some may only last for minutes and others for weeks. Most people automatically think of poison ivy, poison oak, stinging nettle or even mosquito bites to be the culprit of that irritating itch during this season. It is true that all of these do cause irritation and pain to one degree or another, but I have one plant species that I especially look out for this time of year. The plant that I am referring to is wild parsnip and is found in many of the areas that you visit during your summer adventures.

Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*): As you are driving around this time of year or walking to your favorite fishing hole you may want to take notice to the sea of yellow in many road ditches and open areas. Wild parsnip is not a true biennial, it is actually a monocarpic perennial. It is similar to biennials in the way that it is a basal rosette for the first growing season. However, it can remain in the rosette stage for up to four years until the conditions are favorable for the plant to bolt, flower, produce seed and then die. While a rosette, this plant is low growing with pinnately compound leaves with anywhere from five to fifteen leaflets that have saw-tooth edges. The rosettes are a very dark green and have a somewhat shiny appearance. When a mature plant bolts they shoot a single stem that supports many yellow umbellate flowers. I would say that they look like a bunch of little umbrellas branching off the top of the stem. Wild parsnip typically flowers between June and September and are two to five feet tall. There are a few native plant species including golden alexanders (*Zizia aurea*) and heart-leaved meadow parsnip (*Zizia aptera*) or the white cow parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*) that can be mistaken for wild parsnip.

Wild parsnip is an alien plant species that originated in Europe and Asia and is highly invasive to disturbed open areas. The plant has a large edible taproot and for this reason it was brought to the United States from Europe and Asia as a garden crop. However,

it has since become a nuisance as it has spread throughout the landscape. The most prevalent means of spread is by birds and mammals that eat the seeds. Mowing also spreads the seeds in roadsides. This plant is a serious nuisance for several reasons. It can be an aggressive invader of disturbed open areas and can also crowd out native vegetation. Not only is wild parsnip a nuisance



for the rate at which it spreads, but it can also cause irritation and great pain to skin. It is this topic that I hold



Wild Parsnip Rash, y-ouch!

near and dear to my heart due to the anguish it has caused me throughout the years.

Phytophotodermatitis...what a neat word! That is until you look up the definition in the Webster's Dictionary. By definition, phytophotodermatitis is "an inflammatory reaction of skin that has been exposed to sunlight and especially UVA radiation after being made hypersensitive by contact with any of various plants or plant parts and especially those (as limes and celery) with high levels of psoralens and that is typically characterized by a burning sensation, blisters and erythema followed by hyperpigmentation". I don't know about you, but that doesn't sound like any fun at all, and speaking from experience, it's not. All I can think about when I see the word phytophotodermatitis is the countless number of sleepless nights that I have spent tossing and turning from the pain caused by such a reaction. I also can't help but think about my legs and arms being all blistered up.

Many things that I have read claim that the plant tissue has to be damaged in order for the juices to get onto your skin. Once on your skin it takes UV from the sun to cause the reaction. I've also read that if you can get it washed off right away you may be able to prevent the reaction. I'm here to warn you that it is possible to get it on cloudy days and I'm also not sold on the plant needing to be damaged to get the juices on you. I have no scientific data to back up my belief, just personal experiences.

One thing to keep in mind is that wild parsnip affects people differently. Some people don't seem to have a reaction at all. I've seen people walk through patches of it in shorts and short sleeve shirts on a sunny day and have no reaction. I, on the other hand, as well as many others, are very susceptible to it. Once exposed, it usually takes a few days before a reaction occurs. The silver lining of the reaction if you suffer from one is that it doesn't last as long as poison ivy. It may only take a few days to a week or so for it to dry up.

There are several precautions you can take to protect yourself from the pain that this plant can cause. If you know you are going to be around it, dress appropriately or just avoid it all together... not always possible!! I suggest that you wear a long-sleeved shirt, pants, gloves, and shoes (nothing open toed). If bare skin is exposed to it, make sure to wash it off immediately. This is not always effective, but you're at least giving yourself a chance.

I'm not trying to scare anyone back indoors or discourage you from enjoying your favorite activities this time of year. I just wanted to inform you of one more thing to keep an eye out for while you are out and about. For those of you that were not aware of wild parsnip and the reaction that it can cause to your skin, I hope this article will make you more aware and save you from the pain that so many have learned the hard way. So get out there and enjoy the rest of summer while avoiding the itch.

Clinton County Conservation
P.O. Box 68
Grand Mound, Iowa 52751
Phone: 563-847-7202
Email: conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov
Website: www.clintoncounty-ia.gov or
www.mycountyparks.com/county/clinton

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If you'd like to get "The Heron" contact the CCCB. It is mailed to County addresses free. Others are charged \$5 annually or is on our website or emailed, free of charge.

The Clinton 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 he or she has been subject to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Clinton C.C.B. or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

BOARD MEETINGS

The Clinton County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board meets the second Tuesday the month, at 6 PM, in the Conservation Office, located 1 mile south of Grand Mound at 2308 255th St. Please note, this date can be changed.

