

THE WARBLER

A periodic newsletter of the Friends of the Welty Environmental Center, Inc.

volume 13, issue 1

Upcoming Events

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FEBRUARY

- Thurs. 21** Owl Hoot
Sat. 23 Welty Whimsies:
A Women's Retreat
Mon. 25 Full Moon Hike and Owl Prowl

MARCH

- Sat. 2** Taste for Nature
Thurs. 7 Green Fire Movie
Mon. 11 Maple Sugaring Mania
Tues. 19 Maple Sugaring Mania
Sat. 23 Maple Sugar Festival
Sat. 30 Welty Whimsies:
Women's Rustic Art Party

APRIL

- Sat. 6** Scrap Metal Drive
Fri. 12 Nature Rocks:
Skydance - Woodcock Walk
Fri. 19 Beloit Bird Bonanza Live Raptor Show
Sun. 21 Annual Meeting, Friends of Welty Envir. Center Art of Birding
Mon. 22 Mystery Evening Earth Day Hike
Sat. 27 Between Earth and Sky
Sat. 27 Time to Bloom
Sat. 27 Welty Whimsies:
Spring into Garden Art

MAY

- Sat. 11** Leafing Out:
A Tree Adventure
Sat. 11 Getting Buggy
Sat. 18 Bench Building Workshop

President's Message

Nature Year in Review

By Jan Knutson

In 2012, Welty Environmental Center worked across the community pursuing solutions to the ongoing conservation challenges. Your support made this work possible. Here are some of nature's success stories. See how nature matters to us all.



In 2012, WELTY completed its third consecutive year with increased program revenue which inspired and networked more than 6,600 Stateline residents...of whom 3,593 were children.

WELTY continued to expand its community influence by again working with Beloit Memorial High School Environmental Club to co-sponsor a very successful LIVE animal program for Stateline families. A great program was presented by Dan Nedrelo and his cold-blooded critters. We also held a Meet and Greet with Dan @ The Rock prior to the program. Thanks to The Rock for sponsoring this program. All enjoyed the LIVE amphibians and reptiles!!

This year, WELTY launched a total re-do of the web site, improving its look and employing more sophisticated web tools for tracking the efforts to leave no child inside. Thanks to Rick and Ana McGrath for their help and continuing web site support.

WELTY broadened its mission statement, "connecting people with nature", by utilizing art as a medium for re-purposing and recycling. Kelly Washburn, our volunteer coordinator, launched a series of innovative classes called Welty Whimsies, providing a broad spectrum of art activities connected to the environmental principles of re-use and recycle.

We firmly believe that WELTY's personal and electronic network, and the information, education, initiatives and leadership it provides, is essential as the Stateline moves forward to create a lasting environmental ethic. We're thankful for the support and personal engagement that many of you have shared in 2012.

Like most non-profits, we navigated through some tough economic challenges, but because of the help of individual donors, foundation support, and corporate support, including Genencor and ECOLAB,

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Reflections

By Lena Verkuilen, Director

The Subtle Colors of Winter

White, grey, or maybe the dark outlines of trees - this is what comes to mind first when people think of winter colors. For those who are attentive there is a rainbow to see in this subdued time of rest.

Red and blue are the colors of excitement in the winter. This is the flash of a blue jay disturbed from raiding a cache of nuts. It is the hint of a male woodpecker as he ducks to the other side of the tree. It is the bright cheerfulness of a male cardinal at the feeder on a snowy morning, and the strong orange of his mate's bill.

Dark green is the color of hope for life returning in the spring. We bring this in our home as wreaths and trees for the holiday season. The color and scent remind us that life may be more

quiet and deliberate in winter, but it is there. Evergreen trees also offer the active wildlife cover in a storm, keep the winter winds away from our homes, and bring comfort when growing in a cemetery.

Black is the big, bold crow that finds its bounty in winter from the loss of other life. These smart birds will pull road kill in the path of cars to help break it up and make the meal easier to eat. Black is also the stately silhouette of bald eagles perched above the river or soaring overhead, also on the lookout for a meal.

A winter sky on the coldest days is often so bright a blue you must shield your eyes a bit. Deep violet is the color of the sky on a clear



night just before darkness really sets in. Then it is replaced by the piercing light of dramatic winter constellations. As the sun rises again watch the pinks and oranges give way to the full daylight.

A glowing red in the lowlands gives away the location of dogwood bushes. Come closer and you will see this is the deep maroon bark on the newest branches preparing for budding in the spring. Also in the low areas you will see a golden to light green tint where the willows are ready to bud new leaves and flowers.

Grey may be a color associated with winter, but I do not think of it as drab. The tone of grey in a cloud can indicate if snow is imminent. The arrival of a junco with its slate-grey back brings on winter, and its departure lets us know spring is truly coming. This grey is not dull either. It is a soft, feathery grey - the kind that reminds me of a soft blanket. When the vibrant colors of spring and summer return, this sentinel of the cold follows it back north.

Spring, summer and fall are colorful to most people. I hope you are able to find color in this darkest of the seasons.

Friends of the Welty Environmental Center Annual Meeting

Sunday, April 21 ❖ 2 p.m.

Weeks Lounge ❖ Pearsons Hall ❖ Beloit College Campus

Program: The Art of Birding

As a tribute to world renowned ornithologist, Carl Welty, local experts will share techniques on the art of birding. The general public is encouraged to attend. Information for both novice and experienced birders will be shared. At the conclusion of the program, participants will be encouraged to join in the Urban Bird Survey sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



Welty enjoys a fantastic fall

By Lena Verkuilen, Director

As fall turned to winter here at the Welty Environmental Center we just changed our programming. Many school groups came to us to experience natural beauty in the fall. School District of Beloit 2nd graders experienced how forest ecology works at Big Hill Park, botany students from Beloit Memorial High School learned about tree identification and physiology with an afternoon trip outdoors, students from the Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Impaired had the chance to experience prairie and wetland life up close and personal at Beckman Mill County Park, and Rock County Christian School students had a fall life scavenger hunt out at the Welty Environmental Center.

Welty and Beloit College worked together to educate students in different ways. Students from the museum studies program learned how to apply interpretation techniques in different settings, and education students got the chance to lead a field trip first hand with 4th grade students from Beloit's McLenegan Elementary School. Our Duffy intern and education student, Steffany Streb,

learned all aspects of leading environmental education during her tenure with us.

Public programs gave any interested party the chance to experience and learn about nature first hand. The Welty Environmental Center worked to provide diverse programs such as nature hikes in collaboration with the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District in Illinois, present family programs like learning about homes for wildlife and reading the night sky, and a new nature and recycling crafts series from Welty's talented Volunteer Coordinator, Kelly Washburn. Scouts came to earn their Webelos Geologist badge, work with how to perform first aid in nature, and identify and read tracks. Several people attended a program around Halloween, Stories in the Sky, where we learned and heard folklore about constellations, took a night hike looking for animal eyeshine and enjoyed conversation and refreshment around the campfire. Children enjoyed all day programming around Christmas and during the holiday for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Welty gets wired

We aren't trying to cyber-stalk any of you, but we now have many ways to keep you informed and up-to-date with what is going on at the Welty Environmental Center. We would love to add you to our online family (in a totally non-creepy way).



- **Facebook**

"Like" us on Facebook to receive updates on events & fun tidbits from Lena.

- **Warbler on the web**

Email Lena, info@weltycenter.org to let her know you'd like to save both Welty's and the world's resources by reading the Warbler on the web instead of receiving a paper copy through the mail. We'll then send you an email announcement when there's a new newsletter.

- **Email reminders of upcoming events**

Email Lena, info@weltycenter.org, to let her know you'd like to receive these. Never again miss a Welty event that you saw in the calendar but forgot to write down!

- **Web site www.weltycenter.org**

Our web site has a calendar of events, information about local flora and fauna and a photo gallery.

We wish we could help you with remembering your spouse's birthday but you're on your own there.

Volunteer Corner

By Kelly Washburn, Volunteer Coordinator and Office Manager

As I look back at my accomplishments from last year's resolution list and consider what goals I should set for the year ahead, I feel I did a pretty good job. My 2013 year's goals are a continuation of what I did not accomplish this past year. First on the list? Spreading the word as far as possible about the wonderful programs and opportunities at the Welty Center. I love the phrase "cashing in on collaboration". The volunteers making up the Welty Environmental Center know no bounds. Each person brings their own creativity, knowledge, physical capabilities, and kindness in ways that I am unable to express in this paper. The larger the resource pool of volunteers, the easier it becomes to ensure program needs are met. Thus, the stronger we are as a Center, the larger we can grow. I am inviting you to join us by becoming a volunteer as we move forward toward fulfilling our future goals by "cashing in on collaboration".

Thanks also go to Ed Grutzner and Dick Newsome for helping deliver the baskets and Jason Washburn for cleaning up and taking down the tables! The event was such a great success the Center will be repeating it next year.

FIND WHAT INSPIRES YOU, PUT YOUR SPIN ON IT, AND TRY TO CREATE IT

New and exciting adult programming has begun at the Welty Center with our Welty Whimsies! HERE'S THE THING...if you're like me, there's something you've wanted to do but haven't. Maybe you're afraid you'll fail or embarrass yourself; maybe you think you are too old (or young); maybe you have not found the courage to try something new. The past is here to stay! Just like pieces of fabric are sewn into a patchwork quilt, pieces of the past can be worked into our lives. "Up cycling" "repurposing" and "recycling" can be fun when we are able to make something lying around the house into a beautiful work of art. Some of the recent winter classes such as painting barn quilts, soap making, decoupage planters, fashioning jewelry, basket weaving and garden art filled up fast. Watch for upcoming Welty Whimsies classes on our website and take the plunge to try something new!

SAYING YES! The maple sugar season is fast approaching. As March blows in, the Center will once again be recruiting volunteers to guide second graders through the process of making maple syrup. Lena will

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Kris Grutzner and Shirley Newsome inspect Welty's offerings at Holidazzle.

Thanks to some of the Welty Center's great volunteers, the Center put together forty three beautiful "Second Time Around" gift baskets to sell on December 7th at downtown Beloit's "Holidazzle" in Bushel and Peck's Market. The fundraiser was a huge success with all proceeds going toward environmental education programs. A huge "thank you" to volunteer Kris Grutzner who spent many hours collecting items for the baskets, putting them together and selling them at the event.



Painting barn quilts at Welty Whimsies.

Volunteer Corner

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be in need of two volunteers both in the AM and PM. Additionally, Big Hill Park is the place to be on March 23rd as the Maple Syrup Festival has expanded this year to include many new opportunities. Help is needed with the breakfast and outside activities. Call soon so I can get you signed up in the area you are interested in!

RANDOM SCRAPS

Cleaning out that closet or garage? Having a garage sale? Want to get rid of all that pile? The Welty Center is looking for light gauge wire, beads or old jewelry, any type of dishes or glassware, high strength glue, plywood scraps, clay pots, tiles, exterior paint and plants you may have separated. The Welty Whimsies Rustic Art/Nature Craft classes thank you. Pick up can be arranged!



Wow! - We made these!

Wishing you butterfly mornings and wildflower afternoons.....Kelly

Phone: 608-314-4340

e-mail: volunteer@weltycenter.org

President's Message

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Welty is still working in the Stateline area as the best source for environmental education for adults, families, children and nature.

Looking for a way to make a difference in the New Year? Make a resolution for Welty Environmental Center's continued growth in 2013. You can be at the center of our conservation successes in 2013 by becoming a regular supporter and by volunteering to take actions to help our planet.

This is an invitation to walk the path towards an intimate connection to the wonders of nature.

And...while you are walking down the path...be sure to stop and look at all the wondrous overlooked tokens of the natural world that so many of us rush by: the acorns, the dandelions, and the small rocks with three different layers of colors. And...by the way... don't just look...stop, pick them up... and pass the environmental ethic on to somebody else.



Maple Sugar Fest

Saturday, March 23

9 a.m. - Noon ❖ Big Hill Park

A day of outdoor fun for the whole family!

- Tours of the sugar maple grove
- Demonstrations on the evaporation process
- Fun games for the kids
- Fresh-cooked brunch with *real* maple syrup
- Horse-drawn wagon rides between the meal and the sugar bush

Cost: Event is free.

**Meal: \$6 per adult, \$5 per Welty member,
\$3 children under 10.**

Spotlight on Members

Our Welty Family

By Brenda K. Plakans with Eamonn and Alec Rougvie

Of everyone in our family, Eamonn, the eight-year-old, is the most experienced with Welty Environmental Center (although his five-year-old brother, Alec, is soon to be a close second). He has spent two summers at the Young Explorers day camp, attended many weekend workshops, and even celebrated his seventh birthday party there hunting for crayfish with eight of his closest friends. Perhaps he is best equipped to sing its (and Ms. Lena's) praises:

Q. What are some of your favorite activities to do at Welty?

Eamonn: I liked in day camp when we hiked to the end of the boardwalk and made forts alongside the trail, pretty close to a dead deer (my friend got to keep one of the vertebrae). We built the fort—kind of a teepee, really—against a tree all the way around it with sticks and vines.



Fort Eamonn

Another time we saw an ant war when one group of ants went into another group of ants' hill. We buried the dead ants and used wood chips for graves.

In the winter, I like breaking the ice on the mill pond by throwing rocks and sticks onto it (but not too close to the fishermen).

Q. What are some of the most interesting things you've learned?

E: One thing was that the little green grubs that grow inside galls [formed by the Goldenrod Gall Fly on the stems of Goldenrod] are good for ice fishing. Also that if you spit on the ice, after about ten minutes, you will melt a little hole.

Another time, we found a gigantic bee hole at the base of a tree and Ms. Lena told someone to run to the cabin and get a flashlight. She shined it into the hole and we saw all kinds of cool bugs and spider webs, but no bees.

Q. What is the grossest thing you've ever seen or done at Welty?

E: I ate poop...well, it wasn't really poop but can you guess what it was? I'll tell you at the end of the interview...

Q. What advice would you give to a kid who has never been to Welty?

E: I'd warn them about the dead deer, because if you go off the trail you should watch out so you don't step in it, like my brother did, and smell like rotten deer.

Are you still wondering what the poop was?

Q. What was the poop?

E: Chocolate! The deer poop was cocoa puffs, the bunny poop was chocolate-covered raisins, and the fox poop was chocolate melted over nuts and shredded wheat and rolled into logs.

Q. Alec, do you have anything to add, besides to watch out for decomposing wildlife?

Alec: My favorite thing (about Welty) was camping overnight, constellation stories, and roasting marshmallows, but

I don't like to put my marshmallow in the fire and get black stuff on them. That's yucky.



Alec enjoys s'mores at a Welty event.

Our family has many fond memories of various Welty programs. The boys come home bursting with observations about the natural world, both inspiring and, sometimes, a bit stomach-turning (it took a while to get Alec's boot clean after the deer encounter). We are very lucky to have this resource so close to Beloit with the wonderful programming for school children. Next summer, they will both be at Young Explorers camp, so I'm sure the stories will continue...

Recipe for Coyote or Fox Scat

from the Winter Tracking Workshop

Predators, like coyotes, have scat that is twisted on the end like an ice cream cone. For a fun coyote scat treat: melt together a 12oz bag of chocolate chips, a 12 oz bag of marshmallows, and 3 Tbs. of butter together. Mix in crushed shredded wheat cereal for hair, and chow mein noodles for bone. Form into scats and add the twist!

What Went On at Welty in 2012?

6,621 People Participated in Welty Programs in 2012

2012 Participation	# CHILDREN	# ADULTS	TOTAL # PARTICIPANTS
School groups	2,322	511	2,833
Outreach programming*	597	260	857
Scout groups	40	13	53
Public programs	207	214	421
Special events and expos**			2,355***
.TOTAL	3,593	3,028	6,621***

*For example public library programs

**Examples include: Maple Sugar Festival, Leap Day at Rotary Gardens, Evansville Energy Fair, Cold Blooded Critters Event, Little Plants on the Prairie, Rock County Fair, Heritage Days, Four Rivers Environmental Coalition Bioblitz Event, Garden Party Dinner, Welty Nature Rendezvous and Town of Beloit Wellness Fair among others.

*** Numbers recorded, although probably more people participated.



Heidi Andre, vice president, bonds with a bull snake at Cold Blooded Critters.



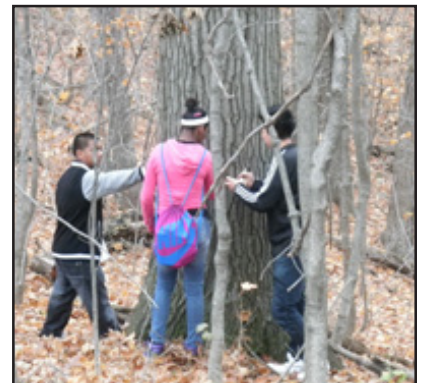
Eamonn, Alec and Jim Rougvie pitch their tent at summer camp's family campout.



Intern Stephanie Streb leads a nature hike.



Children show off their catch in the Evenstart fishing program.



Beloit Memorial High School's botany class study trees at Big Hill Park.

Welty Spring Events

For all Welty Center events, you can call 608-361-1377 or email info@weltycenter.org for information and registration.

FEBRUARY

Thurs. 21 - Owl Hoot

No school in Beloit on Friday, so stay up late to call for owls. Owls nest in late winter, so it's a great time to catch them out and about. Start by learning amazing facts about owls, then head out to call a few. Common species include Great Horned, Barred, and Screech Owls, but more may be visiting.

When: 5:30-7:30pm
Where: Big Hill Park
Age: Designed for Scouts, but all welcome
Cost: \$5 per person
Register by Tues. 19



Barred owl

Sat. 23 - Welty Whimsies: A Women's Retreat.

Learn the art of preparing soaps, lotions and potions from natural ingredients provided by the mother earth. Indulgence is inherent and we all love a little pampering now and then. We relish the notion of using our creative spirit along with warm hands mixing up miracles to sooth our most sensitive skin.

When: 1:00-4:00pm
Where: Cabin, Big Hill Park
Cost: \$35
 Class full; call re. cancellations/possible additional class

Mon. 25 - Full Moon Hike and Owl Prowl

We'll hike the wetland boardwalk and north woods trail enjoying the moon and starlight, and calling for owls. Late winter is nesting season for owls, so come appreciate these tough birds on a magical winter evening.

When: 5:30-7:30pm
Where: Beckman Mill County Park pavilion
Cost: Welty members free \$5 for non-members
Register by Mon 25

MARCH

Sat. 2 - Taste for Nature

Chocolate, Cheese and Wine blended with other enticements to make for an elegant gala evening, with proceeds to benefit environmental education services of the Welty Environmental Center.

When: 6:00-8:30pm
Where: Bushel and Peck's, Beloit
Cost: \$40
 \$70 for 2 people

Thurs. 7 - Green Fire Movie and Discussion

Documentary about Aldo Leopold, the father of game management, a pioneer in prairie restoration, and a beloved writer, who lived a full life.

When: 6:30pm
Where: Hedberg Public Library, Janesville
Cost: Free
Co-sponsored with Rock County Parks & Hedberg Public Library

Mon. 11 & Tues. 19 - Maple Sugaring Mania

Enjoy a hands-on afternoon in the sugar grove learning about how maple syrup is made – from tree to table. Look at the biology of maple trees, the history of maple sugaring, and the science and art of cooking sap into syrup.

When: 4:00pm-6:00pm
Where: Big Hill Park, Beloit
Age: Grades 2-4
Suitable for: Scouts, homeschool, youth groups
Cost: \$5 per child
Register by Fri 8 & Mon 18

Sat. 23 - Annual Maple Sugar Festival

Has it been a long winter inside? Pack up the whole family for tours of the sugar bush to see maple trees being tapped, a look at the evaporator as the sap cooks into syrup, and fun games for the kids. Enjoy an all-you can eat fresh-cooked brunch served with REAL maple syrup.

Welty Spring Events

When: 9:00am-Noon
Where: Big Hill Park, Beloit
Age: Tots to Grandparents
Cost: Festival free
 Brunch \$5 Welty member
 \$6 non-member
 \$3 under 10 years



Welty volunteers show third graders how to tap maple trees.

**Sat. 30 – Welty Whimsies:
 Women’s Rustic Art
 Party – Scribble, Nibble,
 Live a Little**

Let’s make a vintage recipe book from rustic paper and share all our recipes with others, enter the world of decoupage and try our hand at covering jars and making pretty planters, try vintage jewelry, or a burlap rose cut from pop cans and painted.

When: 1:00-4:00pm
Where: Cabin, Big Hill Park
Cost: \$35
 Class full; call re. cancellations/possible additional class

Homeschool groups are welcome to attend any program. We can also design programming for your curriculum.

APRIL

Sat. 6 - Scrap Metal Drive

Bring all the old metal items you find while spring cleaning. Volunteers will unload your car, truck or trailer and recycle your metal. Accepted items include wire, fencing, grills, bicycles, barrels, appliances and more. Sorry, we are not able to accept electronic items or items with freon.

When: 9:00am-1:00pm
Where: Beckman Mill County Park

Fri. 12 - Nature Rocks Family Nature Club - The Skydance: Woodcock Walk

The woodcock, an odd-looking ground bird, has a magnificent spring ritual that happens at dusk. Woodcocks have been seen in the park before, so we’ll watch for their peenting (*that’s the noise they make!*) dance and spiral against the setting sun.

When: 6:00-7:30pm
Where: Beckman Mill Co. Park
Age: Tots to Grandparents
Cost: \$5 per person
 \$15 per family
Register by Mon. 8
Co-sponsored with Rock County Parks

Fri. 19 - Beloit Bird Bonanza Live Raptor Show

The show will feature live raptors from the Northern Illinois Raptor Rehab and Education Center. Learn how these animals fit into the local ecosystem. Come early for a family-friendly dinner and meet local student environmental groups.

When: 5:15 dinner & Expo
 6:30pm show
Where: Beloit Memorial High School
Cost: \$3 kid-friendly meals
 \$6 per person
 \$20 for 4 people
Co-sponsored with Beloit Memorial High School Environmental Club

**Sun. 21 - Annual Meeting of Friends of the Welty Envir. Center
 Presentation: The Art of Birding**

As a tribute to world renowned ornithologist, Carl Welty, local experts will share techniques for both novice and experienced birders. Participants will be encouraged to join in the Urban Bird Survey sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The general public welcomed.

When: 2:00pm
Where: Pearsons Hall, Beloit College

Mon. 22 - Mystery Evening Earth Day Hike

Carpool to a local mystery natural area for an evening hike. Pack along a picnic supper for a walk, meal, conversation and celebrating Earth Day in a quiet way.

When: 5:30pm
Where: Meet at Welty Envir. Center
Cost: Donations accepted
Register in advance



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Welty Spring Events

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Sat. 27 - Between Earth and Sky

We will use our senses to explore the natural world around us and the wonders of spring. We'll spend our time hunting down trees, flowers, seeds and more. Sneak a peek where secret critters roam!

When: 9:00-11:00am

Where: Welty Envir. Center

Age: Designed for Daisy Scouts, but all welcome

Cost: \$5 per child

Register by Wed. 24

Sat. 27 - Time to Bloom

Spring has sprung and the flowers are blooming. Find out why some flowers only bloom in the early spring, then disappear for the rest of the year. We may even find some rare flowers as we work on the Flowers Naturalist badge. Dress to be outdoors for this hands-on program!

When: 1:00-3:00pm

Where: Welty Envir. Center

Age: Designed for 4-5 grade scouts, but all welcome

Cost: \$5 per scout

Register by Wed. 24

Need a Program for Senior Citizens?

Welty offers programs specially tailored to assisted living centers, senior centers and the like.

Special price - \$25 per program plus mileage

Sat. 27 - Welty Whimsies: Spring into Garden Art!

Let's beautify our flowers and vegetable gardens with some repurposed art pieces. Ever wondered what to do with all that extra glass and ceramic dishes and what nots lying around the house? Turn recycled dishes into the most beautiful bird feeders, birdbaths and planters using dishes, wire, beads and other odds and ends.

When: 1:00-4:00pm

Where: Cabin, Big Hill Park

Cost: \$35

Class full; call re. cancellations/possible additional class

Sat. 27th Bloom

Watch for Welty's contribution

Where: Rotary Center, Riverside Drive, Beloit

MAY

Sat. 11 - Leafing Out: A Tree Adventure

How can you tell a deciduous from a coniferous tree? How many different types of oak trees grow in the area? Find out this and more as you explore the forest. Practice everything from tree identification to eating a tree and everything in between. We'll be outdoors for most of this hands-on program. Be ready to be an arborist by the time we're done!

When: 9:00-11:00am

Where: Welty Envir. Center

Age: Designed for Cadette-middle school scouts, but all welcome

Cost: \$5 per scout

Register by Thurs. 9

Sat. 11 - Getting Buggy

Work to earn your Bugs Naturalist badge as we learn the amazing truth about bugs of all kinds. We'll look for creepy crawlers with nets, BugZookas and magnifying glasses as we get down to their level. Search outdoors under logs, in the sky and even underwater to find these critters that outnumber people on the planet.

When: 1:00-3:00pm

Where: Welty Envir. Center

Age: Designed for 2-4 grade scouts, but all welcome

Cost: \$5 per scout

Register by Thurs. 9



Sat. 18 - Nature Rocks Family Nature Club: Leopold Bench Building Workshop

Aldo Leopold designed this comfortable bench you have seen in many parks. Come build your own bench to take home! All materials provided. No experience necessary.

When: 10:00am-Noon

Where: Turtle Creek Parkway, near Shopiere

Age: Tots to grandparents

Cost: \$40 per project

Register by Mon. 13

Co-sponsored with Rock County Parks

Rock County Parks Update

By Joleen Stinson, Rock County Parks Community Coordinator

While talking to acquaintances about working with Rock County Parks Division, the most frequent question that I hear is, "So, what do you do in the winter?" The answer is, quite a bit! The crew is busy staining and repairing picnic tables, signs, catching up on tree work, and plowing snow. I am busy too, finishing up projects from the previous year, writing grants, planning improvement projects for the upcoming season, renting snowshoes and leading guided snowshoe programs. Here is an overview of some of the current projects in a variety of Rock County Parks:

Turtle Creek Parkway: The newest Rock County Park, adjacent to the historic five arch stone railroad bridge spanning Turtle Creek, has undergone some major renovations this fall/winter. The building is nearly ready for public use; look for news of an "open house" gathering this spring.

Magnolia Bluff Park: Rock County Parks was recently awarded a \$55,000 DNR Recreational Trails Grant to overhaul the trail system. This will make the trails more sustainable and user friendly. The project is currently

out for bid and work will start in the spring or early summer.

Royce Dallman Park : A new dock will be installed at our most popular boat landing on Lake Koshkonong. The Parks and Highway crew cooperatively built an ADA-compliant concrete ramp this fall in preparation for the new loading dock.

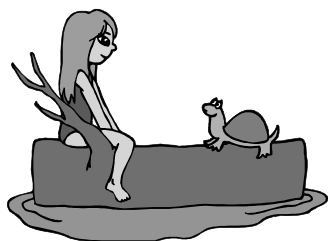
Wheel Against the Weeds: Rock County Parks is teaming up with the Town and Country Resource Conservation and Development Invasive Species Issues Team on a unique educational and recreational bike trip planned for May 11, 2013. Join biking enthusiasts and nature lovers for this 30 mile ride through rural Rock County, starting and ending at Magnolia Bluff! More information at: <http://www.tacred.com/wheel-against-the-weeds.html>.

For a full event calendar, visit: www.co.rock.wi.us, go to the parks page, and click "calendar of events" from the left menu.

For more information on any of these projects, please contact me at (608)757-5473 or stinson@co.rock.wi.us.

Welty Summer Activities for Kids

Call 608-361-1377 or email info@weltycenter.org for more information and registration materials.



Summer Camps

Ages: 6-12 years; 13+ volunteer as Junior Naturalists

Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-3pm

Friday Family Night at 6pm, with optional family overnight Camp-out

Cost per week: \$75 for Welty Envir. Center members; \$100 for non-members

Free for Junior Naturalist volunteers

June 24-28 - River Rat Summer Camp

Get up close and personal with Raccoon Creek and all the life it contains. We'll go fishing, creep after crayfish, make water art, and enjoy life beside the water.



Aug. 12-16 - Life in the Shire Summer Camp

Live close to nature this week, like a Hobbit! Make nature art, spend lazy days by the creek, explore the woods and prairie, and maybe even write your own adventure, like Bilbo.

Welty Wednesdays

Watch for Welty Wednesday adventures this summer! Each session will have a story, outdoor adventure, craft and snack.

When: 9:00-11:00 a.m most Wednesdays all summer

Ages: 5-10 years ; 4 years & under accompanied by an adult

Cost: \$8 for Welty members; \$10 for non-members

Adults free

Fun Fridays

All day adventures in fishing, survival days, and more.

When: 9:00 a.m-3:00 p.m most Fridays all summer

Ages: 6-12 years; 13+ may volunteer

Cost: \$15 for Welty members; \$20 for nonmembers

Landscaping with Native Wildflowers

By Corrine Daniels, Nursery Director, Applied Ecological Services, Inc., Brodhead, WI

Congratulations on considering a native landscape.

Choosing a native landscape is the right choice for the land—and will have lasting benefits for you and your community. Plant, sit back and enjoy the show of wildflowers, native grasses, songbirds and butterflies as the years progress.

Why Go “Native?”

In North America, we define a plant species as “native” if it grew here prior to European settlement. Native species are naturally adapted to local soils, climates and, as an added bonus, tolerate naturally occurring pests and disease. That means native landscapes thrive and bloom even with reduced maintenance, such as watering, mowing, and the application of pesticides and fertilizers—making them environmentally friendly and cost-efficient.

Throughout the year, native species provide food and habitat for beneficial wildlife. When you plant a native landscape, you may find that songbirds and butterflies prefer your yard over the neighbors’. That’s because they have been co-adapting for thousands of years

to feed and serve one another. They’ve grown up together.

What to Plant Out There?

The first thing you should consider is that all the “wildflowers” aren’t necessarily flowers at all! Your native landscape can become a healthy mini-ecosystem containing flowers, beautiful grasses and grass-like species. For a quick start, you may wish to start with native perennial live-plant plugs rather than seed. Seed is often, but not always, a more budget-friendly option. Work with a reputable provider of native seed and plants to help you decide which option best suits your goals and needs. Choose species which naturally occur in to your region.

What Should I Expect of my Wildflower Landscape?

For those used to turf grass lawns, a young native landscape may not look like much at first. But, in time, this planting will develop into a beautiful landscape of great ecological value that produces colorful blooms and textures throughout the year.

Typically, it takes about three years for the wildflower landscape to fully develop. Perennials put most of their



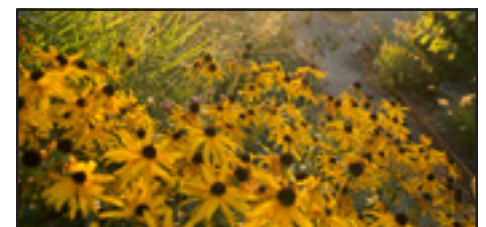
Monarch butterfly on the aptly-named butterfly weed.

energy into root system development in the early years. During the first year, you will see small plants, with a little color. Over the next two years, the plants will grow in size and become more colorful, eventually creating a natural landscape that provides form, color and habitat all year—grasses in particular add interest even in winter months. You will also see an increase in butterfly and bird visits and notice additional “ecosystem services” native species provide, such as habitat, cooling, erosion control and stormwater management.

It will take time – and a little patience – but the results and benefits of your native wildflower landscape are well worth the wait—trust us!

And, ENJOY!

Our thanks, also, to Susan Lehnhardt, Senior Ecologist, Applied Ecological Services, for assistance. Editor



WELTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

To provide leadership in environmental and ecological education to students, teachers and individuals of all ages so that residents of this region can make informed decisions leading to respect for and the enjoyment, preservation, and sustainable use of our natural resources.

We went wild in our backyard! You can too.

By Gill Batterman, Warbler Editor

Many individuals connected with Welty incorporate native plants into their landscaping. For example, my fellow Warbler editor, Linda Wendt, and I both have “prairie patches” in our typical Janesville and Beloit backyards, while Welty’s president, Jan Knutson, has planted an acre prairie behind her house in the country. Others simply add attractive native plants to their perennial flower beds, such as butterfly weed, black-eyed susan, bee balm, or a variety of asters. I encourage you to get started on gardening with native plants, if you don’t already, for we all derive great pleasure from watching our plantings grow and develop.

There are many local resources to help you, for example:

■ **Wild Ones** exists specifically to “promote establishment of communities of native plants around homes, schools and businesses, using ecological practices”. Its web site, <http://www.wildones.org/> has many interesting articles including Guidelines For Selecting Native Plants, Wisconsin’s Best Native Plants for Attracting Birds, and Creating a Bird-Friendly Yard with Native Plants.

■ **Taylor Creek Restoration Nurseries**, Brodhead, WI, a division of Applied Ecological Services, has helpful information including how to establish bee, bird, butterfly and rain gardens, as well as “The Native Planting Handbook” on their web site, <http://www.restorationnurseries.com/index.cfm> They sell native flowers, grasses and trees.



Prairie patch in Gill’s Beloit backyard.

■ **Prairie Nursery**, Westfield, WI, <http://www.prairienursery.com/store/> also sells a wide variety of native plants. Their catalog is inspiring, with photos and descriptions (including preference for soil type, sun or shade) of many native plants.

■ **Rock County Conservationists** hold a native plant sale each spring. Buying an exuberance of plants at their sale a few years ago is what got me started on my prairie patch! This year it is on Saturday May 11th, 8a.m. until all plants are sold, Rotary Center parking lot, Riverside Drive, Beloit. Contact Jan Knutson, for a list of species for sale, and to pre-order plants: jdknutson@netzero.net

Happy planning for planting season!



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Help support environmental education and programming in our region. Friends of Welty members receive issues of this newsletter and information about programming and events. We have 501(c)(3) tax exempt status and are solely a private, non-profit educational organization. Dues and contributions may be tax-deductible.

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Beloit Bird Bonanza

An Evening of Educational Entertainment

*Co-sponsored by the Beloit Memorial Environmental Club
& the Friends of the Welty Environmental Center, inc.*

Friday, April 19

Beloit Memorial High School

Nature Expo 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. • Cafeteria

See environmental and nature groups from southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.
Kid-friendly meals available for \$3.



**Feature Program 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Auditorium**

The Northern Illinois Raptor Rehab and Education Center will present a live bird of prey program.

Tickets \$6⁰⁰ each or 4/\$20⁰⁰
*available night of the program or in
advance at Welty Center
Auditorium doors will open at 6:15 p.m.*



Taste for Nature

Saturday, March 2

6 - 8:30 p.m.

Bushel and Peck's, 328 State St., Beloit

Chocolate, cheese and wine blended with other enticements to make for a gala evening, with proceeds to benefit the environmental education services of the Welty Environmental Center.

\$40⁰⁰ single

\$70⁰⁰ for two