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March Brings Maple Sugar Days

Are you tired of winter yet? Do you have the wind chill willies and the gray skies blues? Don't despair! March is coming and with it the first harbingers of spring; Red-winged Blackbirds, woodpeckers drumming and sap rising in the maple trees. Collecting that sweet sap and transforming it into sticky, warm syrup is a wonderful first ritual of spring. Come join in this Wisconsin tradition at one of Wehr's Maple Sugar Programs.

DIY Workshop- Maple Tapping

Sunday, March 1, Noon - 2 pm,

[See page 9 for details](#)

Maple Sugar Days for Scouts

Saturday & Sunday, March 28 & 29, Noon - 1 pm

Pre-registration Required- [See page 10 for details](#)

Maple Sugar Days for Families

Saturday & Sunday, March 28 & 29, 1 - 4 pm

[See page 10 for details](#)

NEW PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS



What is DIY?

DIY (Do It Yourself) has grown to become quite the 21st century phenomenon. DIY is a hands-on approach to learning, making and experiencing. Wehr's twist on DIY will take the shape of hands-on workshops where staff or local experts share their trade and work with attendees to sample, create, and enjoy. All DIY Workshops include refreshments, materials and take-home items. Bring your friends or come to meet new people.

Join us! **Upcoming DIY Workshops: Jan. 8, Spa Night;**

March 1, Maple Tapping; Sept. 24, Harvest Soiree; Dec. 5, Paint & Pour



What is a Nature Hangout?

Nature is a place to learn and explore, but it is also a place to have fun and gather with friends. Wehr is the perfect place to enjoy the outdoors just minutes from the city hustle. Bring a group of friends or come to meet new people who enjoy hanging out in nature. Fun, outdoor adventures will be the perfect chance to discover nature in all seasons. All Nature Hangouts include refreshments, activities and outdoor gear. Join us for an experience you won't forget!

Upcoming Nature Hangouts: February 14, I♥Winter;

May 2, Choose Your Own Adventure; October 30, Haunted Whitnall Park

Owl Prowl For Families:
January 9 & 10, 6:30-8:30 pm

Owl Prowl For Adults:
January 16 & 17, 7-9 pm

Owl Prowl For Scouts:
January 24, 6:30-8:30 pm



Center News

Looking Back at 2014, Goals for 2015

The year 2014 saw some changes to our Wehr family. Naturalist Emily Brown's twin sons Oliver and Lucius were born in January and Naturalist Howard Aprill was deployed to Afghanistan as part of his Army Reserve duties. We are all counting on his safe return in a few months. Also in January, we added Ken Keffer to our staff as a temporary naturalist to fill in during Howard's absence. Ken is a great asset and in addition to his teaching skills and birding expertise, he also writes books. Look for these in the Nature Store.

The year saw record crowds at our events throughout the year and in June we celebrated Wehr's 40th anniversary with an open house and staff reunion.

The Friends of Wehr finished their window replacement campaign, so the Center now has more energy efficient windows that are also safer for the birds. New window coverings were also installed thanks to the generosity of our wonderful supporters. Milwaukee County worked late summer and fall to replace the exterior siding on the Gardner Room and the fascia around the entire building. New windows, new siding, new edging...the building looks almost like new! It shows what the county and the community can do when they work together.

The outpouring of support for Wehr Nature Center and Nature in the Parks this fall was truly humbling for the entire staff. Times of challenge bring out the best in good people and I have to say that our Friends of Wehr, volunteers, and visitors are great people. Phone calls, e-mails, and letters came not only from our local communities but from around the state and even across the country. You made the difference and Wehr and Nature in the Parks will be able to continue to provide the great programming that the people of southeastern Wisconsin deserve.

To make a multi-week saga short, voices were heard and the UW Extension contract and positions at Wehr were saved for 2015. The Parks Department has made a commitment to hold quarterly meetings throughout 2015 with all parties involved to find a win-win solution to the creation of a new division in Parks. This Division will combine natural areas and trails with Wehr Nature Center and environmental education. By moving these two areas to division status they become more important and central to the mission of Milwaukee County Parks. The founding fathers of the Parks system would be proud to know that today's Parks Department is carrying on its tradition of access to natural areas, nature education, and providing volunteer opportunities on county lands.

Not being a group to sit still long, the staff and Friends of Wehr are already full speed ahead with plans for the future. The Friends have launched a multi-year accessibility fundraising project with the goal of making Wehr the most accessible nature center in southeastern Wisconsin. The initial phase is to fund the reconstruction of the asphalt walks and amphitheater with permeable pavers. A "Buy a Brick" campaign kicked off at Cider Sunday and will help fund the accessibility improvements. For more information on this exciting project, see the article below -

We thank you for all of your support, your monetary donations, your volunteer hours, and your handshakes and hugs. We are looking forward to an amazing 2015 and beyond.

Help Wehr Become **A Place For All Seasons AND A Place for Everyone.**

The Friends of Wehr are working to make Wehr the most accessible natural area in southeastern Wisconsin. Please help us give visitors of all abilities the opportunity to explore the beauty of nature. We are currently raising funds to build accessible walkways that will link to the 1,300 feet of accessible boardwalk that already exists along our Wetland trail. Commemorative permeable paver bricks and new boardwalk will replace the asphalt areas around the nature center building and the adjacent amphitheater and will provide visitors with wheelchairs, strollers, and walkers more options for exploring the natural areas of Wehr Nature Center. In addition to making these walkways safer for all visitors, the permeable bricks will improve the water quality flowing into Mallard Lake.

Commemorative permeable paver bricks are now available for purchase. These bricks can be inscribed with personalized messages and make a unique and lasting way to honor a family member, memorialize a loved one, celebrate a special group or event, or just show you care for Wehr. Visit <http://www.friendsofwehr.org/brick-campaign/> to learn how you become part of this important project.



Brick Size	Cost	Engraving
5" X 10"	\$60	3 lines
10" X 10"	\$180	8 lines
12" X 12"	\$1000	logo

Paver engraving:

Upper case and centered
Maximum of 14 characters per line
including spaces and punctuation



Friends Of Wehr

Thank You!

Your contributions to the Friends of Wehr are appreciated and always used with careful consideration.

DONATIONS

Gary Smieja
Kohl's
Anonymous
Mike and Judy Vogl
Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society
Anonymous
Patricia Casillo

MEMORIALS/DONATIONS

In Memory of Mary Schutz
Mary Eichelberger
Barbara Nickel
James and Laura Heldt
Candice Koehn
Eileen Allen

In Honor of Betty Gilbertson
Gerald Gilbertson
In Memory of Terry Leonard
Angela Leonard

In Honor of Robert Garrison
Tom Garrison

ACCESSIBILITY PROJECT

Thomas McGovern

ENGRAVED PAVER

In Honor of Kelly Olson
Fred Benka
Larry and Jennifer Schmitt

BENCH

In Memory of Carol Bull
Friends of Wehr Board
In Memory of Mary Kay Koebert
Robert Koebert

WINDOW/BUILDING REPAIR

Thomas and Debra McRae
Lynda Chase
Paul and Patricia Brings

IN-KIND DONATION

Cynthia Greiner
David Stokes
Mike Doyle



Thank you to
Jackie Crivello's
Wild Birds
Unlimited
for their continuing sup-
port in keeping our feeders
full and our birds happy.
Please support their
business located at
4454 S. 108th St.
Greenfield.

Mother's Day Plant Sale

Saturday & Sunday, May 9 & 10, 9 am to 3:30 pm

Pre-order Forms Due By Thursday, April 23

The Annual Native Plant Sale and spring are right around the corner. Preorder forms will be coming out around the third week in February and will be available for pick-up at Wehr or for download at: <http://www.friendsofwehr.org/spring-events/mothers-day-native-plant-sale/>. Pre-ordering gives you the best chance at getting the plants you want. Contact Mark at mark.verhagen@ces.uwex.edu if you have questions or would like the order form emailed to you.



Calling All Chili Lovers! Saturday, January 31, 6-8:30 pm

Don't hibernate this winter! Join other chili enthusiasts for the Friends of Wehr Third Annual Groundhog Day Chili Cook-off. Be a chili contestant or simply come taste and enjoy a variety of chili and vote for your favorite. The top-rated chili cook will take home the coveted, traveling Groundhog Trophy! The meal includes assorted side dishes, breads, corn muffins, chili condiments and delectable desserts. Bring your wallet and bid at the Silent Auction. All funds raised by this event will support Wehr's Accessibility Renovations.

Chili Cooks Wanted

Call Wehr at (414) 425-8550 by Friday, January 23 to register as a chili cook

Bring six quarts of your recipe ready to serve to Wehr by 5:30 pm on January 31
Chili Cooks receive their meal FREE.

\$20 per person

\$5 upgrade gets you an extra beer or wine token

Reservations guarantee a seat. Walk-ins welcome as space allows.



Nature Volunteer News

Upcoming Opportunities for Current Volunteers

Dotty's Crafters: Wednesdays, January 7, February 4, March 4, 1 – 3 pm

Maple Sugar Days: Saturday & Sunday, March 28 & 29; shifts between 11 am and 5 pm

Volunteer Training and Brunch: Saturday, March 28: Training at 9 am; Potluck Brunch 10 am

Volunteers helping with the Maple Sugar Days event are encouraged to attend the training and stay to share some of Wehr's homemade syrup at the potluck brunch.

Teaching Naturalist Trainings:

Possum's Adventures and Starlab:

Tuesday, January 26, 9 am - Noon

Maple Magic Training:

Tuesday, February 24, 9am - Noon

New & Ongoing Opportunities

Ongoing Phenology, Wheel n' Chip, Critter Care, Teach School Groups, Trail Patrol
New volunteers are always welcome!

New Volunteer Opportunities

Deliver flyers and newsletters to schools and libraries

Needed: Once or twice each quarter

Cleaning the Popcorn Machine

Needed: Week after a special event

Updating the "What's In Bloom Board"

Needed: Twice a month during growing season

Contact Mary Gaub today at mary.gaub@ces.uwex.edu and make an appointment or call 414-425-8550.

Burn Training

Tuesday, March 3 1-4 pm

Wehr volunteers who intend to help with prescribed burns at the Nature Center are required to attend this classroom training session. An outdoor training session will be held on a future date to be announced. For further information call Mark Verhagen at (414) 425-8550.



Top volunteers Barbara Nickel and Barb Nellen

Celebrating 40 Years of Volunteers

On November 6th we gathered to honor our volunteers who have helped build Wehr since 1974. Nearly 85 volunteers joined us at the 40th Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner. John Dargle, Milwaukee County Parks Director, Steve Taylor, District 9 County Supervisor, and Paul Brings, President of the Friends of Wehr welcomed and thanked the volunteers for their unwavering support of the Nature Center. During the 2013-14 year, over 250 individual volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours to the Center. Barbara Nickel (398.5 hrs.), Barb Nellen (365.5 hrs.), and Jim Rieck (336 hrs.) received honors as the top volunteers of the year.

Because of the special anniversary celebration, there were several unique touches at the dinner. China place settings and linens donated by Jim and Kathy Wroblewski from their business, Wisconsin Rentals, gave the evening a special ambience. Emily Brown created a window cling for each volunteer to show off their pride in volunteering at the Nature Center. Taylor York, longtime volunteer and artist, presented several other long time volunteers with pen and ink drawings of themselves working at Wehr. Bev Bryant and Ken Keffer created an I-movie showcasing 40 years of volunteer memories here at Wehr. The I-movie will be made available on YouTube and DVD in the near future if you missed it.

There is only one thing left to be said about the people who have chosen to give their time to and become part of Wehr Nature Center's family: **"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless."**

-Mary Gaub, Volunteer Coordinator

JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	 <p>Chili Cookoff Trophy</p>			 <p>1 Happy New Year! Wehr Nature Center is Closed</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 Dotty's Crafters 1-3 pm</p>	<p>8 Spa Night 6-8 pm</p>	<p>9 Family Owl Prowl 6:30-8:30 pm</p> 	<p>10 Wehr Camera Club 9-11 am Wild Ones 1:30-3:30 pm Family Owl Prowl 6:30-8:30 pm</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>12 Little Wonders Two Year-Olds 9:30-10:30 am Three Year-Olds 11 am-Noon</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16 Owl Prowl for Adults 7-9 pm</p> 	<p>17 Owl Prowl for Adults 7-9 pm</p>
<p>18 NatureNauts 1-2 pm</p>	<p>19 NatureNauts 9:30-10:30 am</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 Owl Prowl for Scouts 6:30-8:30 pm</p> 
<p>25</p> <p>For more information call 414-425-8550 All programs & events subject to change. Parking fees may apply.</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 Teaching Naturalist Training 9 am-Noon</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 GROUNDHOG DAY COOKOFF 6-8:30 pm</p>

FEBRUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Little Wonders 2 yr olds 9:30-10:30 am 3 yr olds 11 am-12 pm	3	4 Dotty's Crafters 1-3 pm	5	6	7
8 NatureNauts 1-2 pm	9 NatureNauts 9:30-10:30 am	10 Wehr Astronomical Society - 7 pm	11	12	13	14 Camera Club 9-11 am Wild Ones 1:30-3:30 pm "I ♥ Winter" 3-5 pm
15	16	17	18 Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society "Off Shore Lake Michigan Waterfowl" by Bill Mueller, Avian Ecologist 7 pm	19	20	21
22	23 Wisconsin Master Naturalist 5:30-8:30 pm	24 Teaching Naturalist Training 9 am-Noon	25	26	27	28 Camera Club 9-11 am
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MARCH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Maple Tapping 12-2 pm	2 Little Wonders Two Year-Olds 9:30-10:30 am Three Year-Olds 11am-Noon Wisconsin Master Naturalist 5:30-8:30 pm	3 Burn Training for Volunteers 1-4pm	4 Dotty's Crafters 1-3 pm	5	6	7
8	9 Wisconsin Master Naturalist 5:30-8:30 pm	10 Wehr Astronomical Society 7 pm	11	12	13	14 Wehr Camera Club 9-11 am Wild Ones 1:30-3:30 pm
15 NatureNauts 1-2 pm	16 NatureNauts 9:30-10:30 am Wisconsin Master Naturalist 5:30-8:30 pm	17	18 Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society "Common Nighthawks" by Jana Viel, UW-Milwaukee 7 pm	19	20	21
22	23 Wisconsin Master Naturalist 5:30-8:30 pm	24	25	26	27	28 Maple Sugar Days Volunteer Training 9 am Volunteer Brunch 10 am Maple Sugar Days for Scouts Noon - 1 pm Maple Sugar Days for Families 1-4 pm
29 Maple Sugar Days for Scouts Noon - 1 pm Maple Sugar Days for Families 1-4 pm	30	31				

For more information
call 414-425-8550
All programs & events
subject to change.
Parking fees may apply.



Nature Discovery For Children

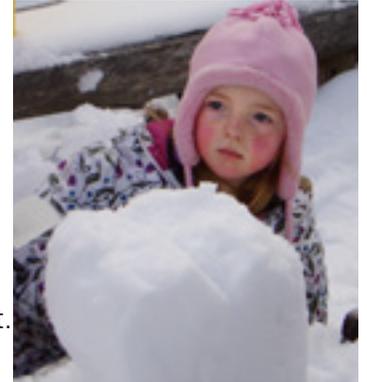
Little Wonders

A program for 2 and 3 year olds to share with their favorite adult

Times: 9:30 - 10:30 am for Two Year Olds 11am - Noon for Three Year Olds

Snowballs and Mittens Monday, January 12

Bundle up your tots in their snowsuits for some wintertime fun. We will read *A Snowy Day* by Ezra Keats and *Snowballs* by Lois Ehlert. Tots will create they own little snowman (weather permitting) and enjoy a snowy craft and snack.



Nighttime Wonders Monday, February 2

We will learn about creatures of the night at this daytime program for tots and their grown-ups. After reading *Wake-up Kisses* by Pamela Edwards and Henry Cole, we will turn off the lights and pretend to explore the nighttime world. Children should bring a flashlight.



Maple Magic Monday, March 2

Bring your child out to discover the source of sweet maple syrup. We will hear a story called *Maggie the Maple Tree* by Karen Kerans, meet and hug a maple tree, and taste sweet maple syrup on a pancake.

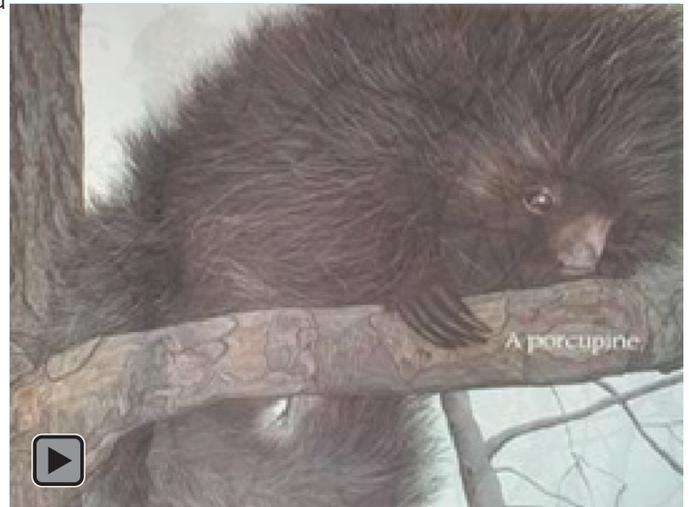
NatureNauts

A series of fun-filled programs for children 4-6 years old and their favorite adult

Times: 1-2 pm for Sunday Classes 9:30-10:30 am for Monday Classes

Snow Clues Sunday, January 18 or Monday, January 19

Children uncover animal tracks and other clues to see who has been out and about on a snowy day. We will read *In the Snow, Who's Been Here?* by Lindsey Barrett George, make a plaster animal track and go tracking in the snow.



Rascally Raccoons Sun., February 8 or Mon., February 9

Children will don a mask and a striped tail as we pretend to be rascally raccoons. We will learn how these backyard critters survive and hunt for raccoon dens and paw prints on a walk.

Rabbit Sunday, March 15 or Monday, March 16

Hop over and learn how rabbits can be cute and cuddly yet pesky. NatureNauts will make their own craft rabbit. Making a special appearance will be a real live bunny!



Pre-registration is required for all children's programs Deadline is the Wednesday before the program date
Fees: \$10 per child \$7 Milwaukee County residents \$5 Friends of Wehr members



Nature Discovery for Adults

Owl Prowl for Adults

Friday, January 16 and Saturday, January 17, 7-9 pm

Join a naturalist for an evening out with the owls.

An interactive program will highlight the habits and adaptations of our nocturnal neighbors. Then we will walk the woodlands of Wehr listening and looking for Great Horned and Eastern Screech Owls.

*\$10 per person, \$7 Milwaukee County resident \$5 Friends of Wehr members
Registration is required by January 15.*



I ♥ Winter



Saturday, February 14, 3 - 5 pm

Experience Wehr's Winter Wonderland on Valentines Day and see why we are so in love with nature! Explore the trails on snow shoes and test your sleuthing skills with animal tracking. Don't miss the ultimate team challenge, the 1st Annual Winter Wehrlympics including; fort-building, sled racing, snow painting, and a snow ball fight! Hot spiked cider and cocoa will be on hand as we warm up by the fire and watch the winter sun set. *For 21 & up.*

\$20 per person; \$15 for Friends of Wehr Members



Workshops For Adults

Spa Night

Thursday, January 8, 6-8 pm

Winter got you down? Need some warmth for your soul? For our bodies, simple is best. Learn how to use common ingredients to create natural spa products to rejuvenate your body and soul. Take home your made-from-scratch exfoliators and masques!

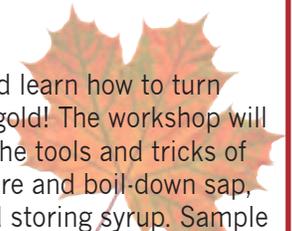


An Aesthetician will be in the house to advise us on proper skin treatment. Old fashioned drinks will warm the cold January evening while we relax with friends, old and new.

Maple Tapping

Sunday March 1, 12-2 pm

Join an expert maple syrup maker and learn how to turn your backyard maple tree into liquid gold! The workshop will cover how to identify a suitable tree, the tools and tricks of drilling and tapping, how to safely store and boil-down sap, and the process of "finishing off" and storing syrup. Sample delicious syrup on pancakes and take home a set of tapping supplies, spile, bag and holder.



Reservations guarantee a seat.

Walk-ins are welcome as space allows.

\$25 per person; \$20 for Friend of Wehr Members

Wisconsin Master Naturalist Training Series

Mondays, Feb. 23; March 2, 9, 16, 23; April 13, 20, 27 5:30-8:30 pm

Required Fieldtrips: Saturdays, March 21 and April 6

This statewide program is designed to provide a broad introduction to the natural history of Wisconsin and to train volunteers in Citizen Science skills. Topics will include Ecology, Plant Communities, Landscapes, Water, Aquatic Plants & Animals, Interpretation and Human Influences.

The course will include classroom instruction, activities and two off-site field trip sessions and a capstone project to practice skills and highlight ecosystem concepts. Participants earn Master Naturalist certification upon completion of their project and course work. Additional information will be available upon registration.

Contact patricia.fojut@ces.uwex.edu for more details.

FEE: \$250, which includes training binder Online registration is available at <http://wimasternaturalist.org>



Nature Discovery for Families

Maple Sugar Days for Families

Saturday & Sunday, March 28 & 29 1-4pm

Bring the whole family to celebrate the budding of spring and our connection with Wisconsin's past. The program includes a short walk to the Sugarbush, a visit to an old-time sugarin' camp, a boil down demonstration and hands-on activities for children. A pancake with real maple syrup will top off your day. The guided hikes begin at 1 pm and continue every 15 minutes until 4 pm. Maple sugar cotton candy, maple treats and tapping equipment will be for sale.

\$6 per person, payable at the door; Free for children ages 2 and under



Family Owl Prowl

Fri. & Sat., Jan. 9 & 10

6:30-8:30 pm



Join a naturalist for an evening out with the owls. An interactive program will highlight the habits and adaptations of our nocturnal neighbors. Then we will walk the woodlands of Wehr listening and looking for Great Horned and Eastern Screech Owls.

\$10 per person

\$7 Milwaukee County resident

\$5 Friends Of Wehr members

Registration required by January 8

Nature Discovery For Youth Groups

Owl Prowl for Scouts Saturday, January 24, 6:30-8:30 pm

Location: Ross Lodge in Whitnall Park

Scout and youth groups are invited to spend a night out with the owls. Children will learn about amazing owl adaptations and habits through fun activities and then head out into the woods to look and listen for owls.

Ages: In 2nd grade and older; One adult must accompany every 5 children

Registrations is required by Wednesday, January 21

Fees: \$10 per person, \$7 for Milwaukee County residents, \$5 members of Friends of Wehr



Maple Sugar Days for Scouts Saturday & Sunday, March 28 and 29

Reserved Hikes Start at 12, 12:20 and 12:40 pm

Youth and scout groups are invited to join in the Wisconsin spring tradition of Maple Sugarin'. This 2-hour program includes a guided walk through the Sugarbush, tree drilling practice, a visit to an old-fashioned sugarin' camp, activities that teach about the Native American origins of maple syrup, and a taste of real maple syrup on a pancake. Refreshments including popcorn and maple sugar cotton candy will be available for purchase.

\$6 per person Pre-registration is required and begins Monday, January 12

Optional Maple Sugar fun patches can be pre-ordered at time of reservation for \$2 a patch



Community Organizations

Wehr is fortunate to host several organizations who share their passion and knowledge about the natural world with the public. For more information about these organizations and details about their programs, please visit their web-sites or call Wehr (414) 425-8550.

Wehr Camera Club is dedicated to sharing a passion for photography and nature.

Visit <http://wnccameraclub.com/calendar.html> for program information. Public programs are held the second Saturday of each month, September to June, from 9-11 am.

Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society that encourages environmental stewardship through education and conservation. Public programs are held the third Wednesday of each month from 7-9 pm, September to May. Visit <http://www.wimetroaudubon.org/events2013.html> for program information.

Wild Ones, Natural Landscapers Inc. supports the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities by promoting the use of native plants in landscaping. Meetings are held at WNC from 1:30-3:30 pm the second Saturday of each month from September to April. Please call 414 299-9888 ext 2 for program information.

Wehr Astronomical Society is a group of amateur astronomers that promote the study of astronomy. Meetings are from 7-9 pm the second Tuesday of each month, September to June. Visit <http://www.wehrastro.org> for information.

Adventure Summer Day Camps

Give Your Child the Gift of Nature This Summer
Have your child join our professional naturalists for outdoor adventures that spark their curiosity, make memories and lead to personal discovery. For complete program descriptions and on-line registration go to: <http://www.friendsofwehr.org/childrens-programs/adventure-summer-camp/> or call Wehr at (414) 425-8550.



Nature Camps

Nature Detectives* Ages 6-9 August 11-13, 9 am-4 pm Wehr Nature Center	Kid Expeditions* Ages 7-9 August 4-7, 9 am-4 pm Wehr Nature Center	Pioneer Trails Ages 10-13 June 23 & 24, 9 am-4 pm Ross Lodge in Whitnall Park
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*Before and After Care available. \$10 per session, pre-registration required.

FRIENDS OF WEHR NATURE STORE

Gifts, resources and tools for the nature enthusiast
Supplies for the Backyard Maple Syrup Maker



Snuggly Nature Sweatshirts
Nature themed cards, jewelry and mugs
Nature puzzles, activity kits and books for children



Open 8:30 am-4 pm

SHOP IN THE BEAUTY OF NATURE

All proceeds go to Friends of Wehr to support the educational programs at Wehr Nature Center.

The Truth About Nature *Debunking Myths About The Outdoors All Year Long* By Ken Keffer

As a naturalist who has worked all over the country (and briefly in the Gobi Desert of Mongolia), I can tell you there are some pretty widespread nature misconceptions out there. Interestingly enough, there are also some very regionally specific ones. It is easy enough to see how these “facts” get passed down from generation to generation. They are often based on accurate information. Perhaps it has been oversimplified over the years, or like that classic game of telephone, the final thought is far removed from the original statement.

When I'm not a naturalist at Wehr, I write books with my friend (and FOW member) Stacy Tornio. Our most recent project is *The Truth About Nature: A Family's Guide To 144 Common Myths About The Great Outdoors*. Stacy and I were discussing the widespread notion that if you touch a baby bird the parents will totally abandon it. While there are lots of valid reasons for giving bird nests plenty of space, if you find a baby bird out of the nest, feel free to scoop it back up into the nest. Stacy and I got to talking about what other myths we have to debunk year after year. We ended up coming up with 36 myths for each season.

Not all myths are created equal. Some are completely false, while others are mostly true but there are some exceptions to the rule. We rated all myths with an illustrated scale on how true the myth really is (level 1 being mostly true and level 3 a complete myth).



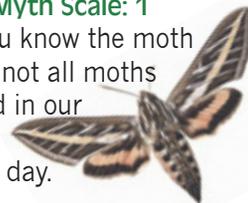
Spring #20: Bees Gather Honey From Flowers, Myth Scale: 3

This one is a bit of a trick question.

Bees are responsible for making honey, but they don't collect the honey from the flowers. They gather nectar and aide in the pollination of numerous plants.

Summer #66: Moths Are Always Nocturnal, Myth Scale: 1

If you've ever been to Moth Night at Wehr you know the moth action picks up after dark. But did you know not all moths are nocturnal? One example that you can find in our area is the sphinx moth, often mistaken as a hummingbird as it probes flowers during the day.



Spring #26: All Rivers Flow South, Myth Scale: 2

It's easy to picture the Mississippi River flowing south to the Gulf of Mexico, but do all rivers flow south? More locally, the “gathering place by the waters” includes the Milwaukee, the Menominee, and the Kinnickinnic Rivers. One of which, the Kinnickinnic, flows north!



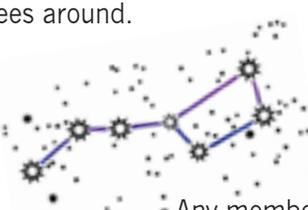
Summer #42: Touching A Toad Will Give You Warts, Myth Scale 3

This is a widespread myth, although in some regions the myth is that instead of touching the toad, you have to get peed on by the toad to catch warts. Good thing this one isn't true, because believe me, I get peed on nearly every time I bring the animal room toad out to share with a school group.



Winter #116: Owls Can Spin Their Heads All The Way Around, Myth Scale: 2

A whole program could be about the misconceptions surrounding owls. In fact Wehr is offering plenty of Owl Prowl events this winter. Come on out and learn the truth about owls, and maybe even hear one for yourself. And for the record, they can only turn their heads about 270 degrees around.



Winter #109: The North Star Is The Brightest Star In The Sky, Myth Scale: 3

Any member of the Wehr Astronomical Society can tell you this is a myth. They can also show you how to use the Big Dipper to locate the North Star, also known as Polaris.

Fall #84: You Can Tell How Old An Animal Is By Counting Its Antler Points, Myth Scale: 3

Everyone loves the deer of Whitnall Park. Fall is the best season to see the males, and there are some really large bucks around indeed. But you can't just count the points to age a deer.



The Truth About Nature is also sprinkled with hands-on ideas to encourage kids to get outside. In addition to myths, you will find “Be a Scientist” activities where you can try experiments and bust a few myths on your own, as well as “Stranger Than Fiction” sections highlighting unbelievable yet true nature facts.

Autographed copies of *The Truth About Nature* are available for purchase in the Wehr Gift Shop. I'd be happy to personalize them for folks, too.

At Wehr Nature Center
 9701 W. College Ave.
 Franklin, WI 53132 In Whitnall Park
 Open Daily 8-4:30
 (Check for holiday hours)
 wehrnaturecenter@milwcnty.com



Enjoy Spring Migration At Wehr



©Atlas Snubbed

Woodcock Walk,
April 11, 6:30-8:30 pm

Birding Beyond the Feeder: Basic Bird ID,
April 18, 9 am-Noon

Birding With Paul
May 3, 10 & 17, 7:30-10 am

[Learn more about activities and events throughout the Milwaukee County Parks](#)

Wish List

Contributions of any amount will be appreciated for:

- New or gently used large capacity Microwave Oven
- DR Field and Brush Mower, 14.5 HP Pro, Self-Propelled, Electric-Start
- Empty, frozen juice cans

If you are interested in donating any of these items, or would like to contribute money toward their purchase, please contact Deb at (414) 425-8550. Your contributions are tax-deductible when made to the Friends of Wehr.



LOOK FOR US ON [FACEBOOK](#)

FOLLOW US ON [TWITTER](#)

Membership Application: This is an annual membership from January - December
 Mail to: Friends of Wehr 9701 College Ave. Franklin, WI 53132 Make checks payable to Friends of Wehr or renew online at www.friendsofwehr.org

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY-STATE-ZIP _____
 PHONE (_____) _____ EMAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE		Individual	Family
Regular	\$25 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$35 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Senior (65)	\$20 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$30 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Supporting	\$100 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$100 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Volunteer (50 hrs)	\$20 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$30 <input type="checkbox"/>	

Payment Method Cash Check# _____ (payable to Friends of Wehr) Additional Donation \$ _____
 Charge (Visa MC Discover AE) # _____ Expires _____ Security Code _____
 Signature _____ Staff Initials _____ Date Received _____