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For Immediate Release:

Maple Sugarin' at Wehr Nature Center *DIY Maple-Tapping Workshop & Maple Sugar Days*

Franklin, WI (Feb. 25, 2015) As temperatures begin to fluctuate, staff at Wehr Nature Center are preparing to present a Maple-Tapping Workshop and the annual Maple Sugar Days, in celebration of Spring. Wehr Nature Center is located in Whitnall Park at 9701 W. College Ave.

An expert maple-syrup-maker will lead the DIY (do it yourself) program's Maple Tapping Workshop, Sunday, March 1, from noon-2 p.m. In this workshop designed for adults, participants will learn how to turn backyard maple trees into "liquid gold." Instruction will include identification of suitable trees, the tools and tricks of drilling and tapping, techniques to store and boil down sap safely, and the processes of "finishing off" and storing syrup. The workshop fee includes a spile (the spout that is inserted into sapwood), a sap collection bag, and a holder for the bag. Also included is maple-syrup tasting (on pancakes) and instructional handouts. Participants are encouraged to dress for walking and working outdoors.

Later in the month, the 40th Annual Maple Sugar Days will return to Wehr. Saturday and Sunday, March 28 and 29, from 1-4 p.m. The family-friendly event will feature a hike led by a naturalist guide. The trek will wind through the woodland to the sugarbush, where event-goers will see tapped sugar maples and taste sap as it drips from a tree. Gathered around a campfire, visitors will take a trip through time, learning about the history of the sugaring process. The sweet aroma of maple syrup will lead visitors to the boil-down station, where clear sap will be boiled down to form dark syrup. Walks to the sugarbush will last about 45 minutes. Visitors are encouraged to dress in layers and to dress to keep feet warm. The first tour will start at 1 p.m.; the last tour, 4 p.m. Hikes will go on rain or shine.

Hands-on activities for young and old will include using a hand drill on a log, trying Native-American methods of boiling sap without metal pans, and making a craft. The sweet reward will be real maple syrup on a pancake and maple sugar on a stick.

Instructions and equipment for tapping maple trees as well as maple-candy treats will be on sale in the Friends of Wehr Nature Store. Food and beverage concessions will include popcorn, hot dogs, brownies, hot chocolate, coffee, soda, and made-on-site maple-sugar cotton candy.

Pre-registration is recommended for the DIY workshop, but is not needed for Maple Sugar Days.

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The fee for the DIY workshop, which includes the spile, sak and holder, maple tasting, and instructional handouts is \$25 per adult and \$20 per Member of Friends of Wehr.

Admission for Maple Sugar Days is \$6 per person age 3 and up; children age 2 and under are free.

The regular parking fee will be in effect for both events.

A free booklet, “Backyard Maple Sugaring, or, The Family Boils Down,” is available on the parks website.

For more information go to countyparks.com or call Wehr Nature Center at (414) 425-8550.

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