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Volume 11 , Issue 6

February 2016

## CALENDAR

	February
6	<b>WWC Winter Fest!</b> Family Fun from 11am—4pm!
6	<b>Stewardship Network Class</b> Winter Tree & Shrub ID 10am—1pm @ WWC
7	<b>WWC Open 1-4</b> Snowshoe Rentals 1-4 PM
12-15	<b>Great Backyard Bird Count!</b> Feb 12—15
14	<b>WWC Open 1-4</b> Snowshoe Rentals 1-4 PM
15	<b>WWC Closed—Feb 15th</b> Mid Winter Break-Trails open!
20	<b>NEW : Owl Prowl &amp; Full Moon</b> Hike—7:30 pm @WWC
21	<b>WWC Open 1-4</b> Snowshoe Rentals 1-4 PM
28	<b>WWC Open 1-4</b> Snowshoe Rentals 1-4 PM

## March

6	<b>WWC Open 1-4</b> Snowshoe Rentals 1-4 PM
13	<b>WWC Open 1-4</b> Snowshoe Rentals 1-4 PM
19	<b>MAPLE SYRUP DAYS 9-1</b> PANCAKE BREAKFAST 9-1
20	<b>WWC Open 1-4</b> Snowshoe Rentals 1-4 PM
26	<b>Lowell Community Expo</b> 9am—4pm
27	<b>Garden Class—Seed Starting</b> and Getting A Smart Start 1-3 pm @ WWC
27	<b>WWC Open 1-4</b> Seed Swap 1-3

## April

1-10	<b>WWC Closed April 1-10</b> Spring Break
3	<b>WWC Closed—April 3</b> Spring Break
10	<b>WWC Closed—April 10</b> Spring Break
17	<b>WWC Open 1-4pm</b> Guided Walk @ 2pm
23	<b>Celebrate Earth Day</b> 10am—1pm @WWC
24	<b>WWC Open 1-4</b> Guided Walk @ 2pm



# Winter Fest

## 2016

Sat., February 6th 11-4 pm

**JOIN US FOR A DAY OF HEALTHY, WINTER FUN!**

**\*\*CLASS: TREES & SHRUBS IN WINTER: (10-1pm)! Registration:** [www.stewardshipnetwork.org/westmichigan-cluster-events](http://www.stewardshipnetwork.org/westmichigan-cluster-events) OR Phone: 734-996-3190

**\*\*SNOWSHOEING & SCAVENGER HUNTING (11-4pm)! The first 100 snowshoe rentals will be half price (\$2) thanks to the generosity of Lowell Community Wellness. After that, snowshoe rentals will be \$4/person.**

**\*\*GENE'S WOODCRAFT KITS AND BIRDING! (11-3:00) Presenting @1:30**

Don't miss Gene Wasserman's interactive presentation about backyard birding and bluebirds. Learn to identify the birds at your feeders, about different types of feeders, and why bluebirds need your help. A great way to prepare for the Great Backyard Bird Count!



Afterwards, purchase and build your own hopper seed or suet feeder. Enter for a free feeder kit drawing!

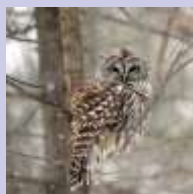


**Winter Fest is sponsored by the Generosity of:  
Lowell Community Wellness and  
All Weather Seal of West Michigan  
THANK YOU!**

### \*\*New Event\*\*

**Saturday, February 20th—7:30pm**

## Owl Prowl & Fullish Moon Night Hike



Join Lowell Community Wellness & Fortune Bay Expeditions & WWC for an evening with the owls. An interactive program will offer an exciting opportunity to learn about the owls that call Lowell home, their

fascinating lives, their habits and the amazing adaptations that make them terrific nighttime hunters. Then we will walk the woodlands of Wittenbach/Wege as we try to call in the Barred Owls and Great Horned Owls while, hopefully, listening to their hoots, wails and shrieks. Who knows what we'll find?



**Sign Up Here!** Space is limited to 40 participants  
<http://www.fortunebay.org/upcoming-events/fullish-moon-night-hike-owl-prowl/>

## CENTER HOURS

Mon – Fri 7:45-3:45pm

Saturday—Programs only

Sunday 1:00 – 4:00pm

(Some exceptions may apply.)

## Get Outside!

### TRAILS ARE OPEN!

...dawn to dusk, 365 days a year



## Trail Guidelines

A few simple rules will make every-one's trip to the WWC an enjoyable experience.

For the protection of the land and everyone's enjoyment, Please:

- ⇒ Stay on the trails
- ⇒ Do not pick wildflowers and plants
- ⇒ Do not use bicycles or motorized vehicles
- ⇒ Respect all living things
- ⇒ Water is OK, but please refrain from picnicking, eating or littering
- ⇒ **DOGS ARE WELCOME ONLY IF THEY ARE LEASHED AT ALL TIMES.** Please clean up all animal waste and dispose at trash bin by the barn.
- ⇒ Horses are welcome, only on the Corncob Corner Trail (prairie loop). Horse traffic is not allowed on the preserve or wooded trails.

⇒ **Remember...**  
You are nature's guest!

## **Thank You!**

### STAFF

Courtney Cheers—Director

Shelley Winkels—Naturalist

Susan Stanek—Naturalist

Nancy McIntyre—Naturalist

Shannon Goodwin— Naturalist

Shelia DeVries—Naturalist

Rachel Johnson—Naturalist

[ccheers@lowellschools.com](mailto:ccheers@lowellschools.com)

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## Around the Center...



## Garden Class March 27th 1-3 pm

Seed Starting & Getting A Smart Start - Purchase a seed flat with soil and start your own garden transplants. We will water and nurture them until planting time. Come learn to create a beautiful garden, work smarter not harder and grow the foods you love to eat! We will meet in the center but come prepared to spend time planting in the greenhouse!

If interested, please register by emailing: [ccheers@lowellschools.com](mailto:ccheers@lowellschools.com). This class is free but a donation of \$5/person is suggested. Seed flats w/ soil are available for \$5 each and limited seeds will be available for purchase from our donated seed bank. Each gardener is responsible for bringing your own seeds to start. Greenhouse space is limited so please register early. All donations and proceeds benefit the WWC Community Garden. Thank you!

## Seed Swap - March 27th 1-3pm

Bring out any seeds you have to swap (or donate!). Seeds can be up to four years old and please don't bring anything you know isn't viable. Make sure all packets are labeled with the type and variety name (original packets are appreciated but not necessary). Even if you don't have seeds to swap, come on out. The WWC will have heirloom and traditional varieties available for a small donation. We are looking for native landscaping seeds and heirloom vegetable seeds. What do you have to swap??

## Winter Study Trips in Full Swing...

We are busy learning, even in the winter! Mother Nature graced us with snow for our first day and now we are hoping it comes back! We love to play snowshoe games while we learn!

Here are the focus topics for each grade level:

- Preschool! Topics: Snow is My Home, What's in a Tree?, Bird Beaks and Songs, Bunnies & Bears
- Kindergarten: Snowshoeing & Animal Tracks and Signs in Winter
- 1st Grade: Snowshoeing & Animal Winter Habitats and Weather
- 2nd Grade: Snowshoeing & Winter Tree ID
- 3rd Grade: Snowshoeing & Animal Winter Survival—hibernation, migration, food sources
- 4th Grade: Snowshoeing & Bird Adaptations & Project Feeder Watch
- 5th Grade: Snowshoeing & Human Winter Survival—Shelter Building & Fire Starting

## MANY THANKS...



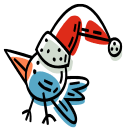
—Thanks to **Laurie Kuna** for donating two, very large bags of beautiful pinecones to use for crafts and projects. We can't wait to make something with them!

— Thank you to the **Hickman Family** for bringing in a near perfect bald-face hornets nest. Can you ever have too many? We say no!

—Thank you to **Lowell Community Wellness & All Weather Seal** for sponsoring Winter Fest 2016!

—Thank you to **Lowell Community Wellness & Fortune Bay Expedition Team** for partnering with the WWC for their Fullish Moon Night Hike & Owl Prowl!

# Nature Discovery... Observations On The Trail...



## Christmas Bird Count Results

### from Grand Rapids Audubon...

It was a great day for birding at the WWC. 34 different species were counted at the WWC alone! Check out the species counts below. Be sure to look ground level, eye level, and sky level the next time you are on the trails at the WWC and count how many different birds you see!

- 1/ Wood Duck - 2
- 2/ Canada Goose - 15
- 3/ Mallard - 2
- 4/ Red-tailed Hawk - 1
- 5/ Rough-legged Hawk - 1
- 6/ Mourning Dove - 3
- 7/ Great-horned Owl - 1
- 8/ Belted Kingfisher - 1
- 9/ Red-bellied Woodpecker - 2
- 10/ Downy Woodpecker - 3
- 11/ Hairy Woodpecker - 3
- 12/ Pileated Woodpecker - 1
- 13/ Blue Jay - 9
- 14/ American Crow - 9
- 15/ Black-capped Chickadee - 11
- 16/ Tufted Titmouse - 7
- 17/ Red-breasted Nuthatch - 2
- 18/ White-breasted Nuthatch - 6
- 19/ Brown Creeper - 1
- 20/ Golden-crowned Kinglet - 1
- 21/ Eastern Bluebird - 3
- 22/ American Robin - 3
- 23/ Cedar Waxwing - 28
- 24/ E. Starling - 4
- 25/ Northern Cardinal - 4
- 26/ American Tree Sparrow - 12
- 27/ Song Sparrow - 4
- 28/ D.E. Junco - 24
- 29/ Y.R. (Myrtle) Warbler - 1;
- 30/ House Finch - 2
- 31/ Pine Siskins - 6
- 32/ American Goldfinch - 18
- 33/ House Sparrow - 15
- 34/ Northern Yellow Flicker - 1

Two Golden Eagles were counted in area C the same day, very exciting! Total species for the areas in Kent County were in the 50's. Results were tallied and shared by Tom Leggett, who organizes and facilitates the Christmas Bird Count for Grand Rapids Audubon. Thank you, Tom!



## Great Backyard Bird Count

### Feb 12—15th

- ◆ Count birds anywhere.
- ◆ Make your best estimate
- ◆ Enter your list(s) online at [BirdCount.org](http://BirdCount.org) for each new day, new location, or new time.
- ◆ EASY to participate in Citizen Science!

# Along the Trail...

## WINTER IS A STATE OF MIND...

Sure winter brings us frosty mornings and piles of snow, but it also brings a special kind of FUN! The winter months are only cold and bleak if you think that way. They will go much faster if you get outside and take part in a winter activity that helps you enjoy it. Some one once wrote, "When it snows, you have two choices: shovel or make snow angels." Remember the fun you can have in both. The list below will help you outwit the cold, plan your time outside, and enjoy the season!

### Week 1: Winter Bird Feeding and Recording.

Make your own feeder and pick a spot to watch. Observe and record who comes to your feeder. Collect information and make your very own field guide.



**Week 2: Winter Sun and Night Sky.** Look for sun dogs, sun haloes, and sun pillars. Study the starry night and identify the phases of the moon, look for shooting stars and constellations. Some constellations can only be seen in the winter sky.



### Week 3: Snow Day Workouts.

Grab a sled, skis, snowshoes, or just warm boots and head for the great outdoors. As long as your moving you'll stay warm. (You can rent snowshoes from the WWC!)

**Week 4: Be A Nature Detective.** Create a list of things you want to find. Then head out and try and find everything on your list. Do this as a group or individually and see who completes their list first.

**Week 5: Tracks & Signs.** What signs can you find? What story do tracks tell? Follow them and find out. Hiking with a purpose and curiosity keeps you going.

**Week 6: Winter Tree ID -** Investigate the tales of a tree... Learn how to be a twig detective...take a closer look!



**Week 7: Snow Forts, Snow Sculpting, and Survival Shelters.** Get out there and start building. There's nothing like a good old fashioned snowball war.

**Week 8: Winter Picnic & Plan an Excursion.** Throw in a winter picnic between activities to keep you going. Make your own trail bars or a thermos of soup for your pack. Spend a day at a local ski or sledding hill. Take a snow day and explore Michigan. Head to the lakeshore and check out Lake Michigan in the winter. The ice caves last year were mind blowing!

For more information, material, or direction on any of these activities, stop by the WWC during school hours or contact Courtney at [ccheers@lowellschools.com](mailto:ccheers@lowellschools.com). We are happy to help!

## Wants and Needs...

The nature center would greatly appreciate donations of the following items, for use in environmental education programs or community activities at the WWC.

- \*\*Bird Seed and Feed
- \*\*Display Cases or shelving units for nature items
- \*\*Barn boards or other building materials straight and in good condition
- \*\*Craft Supplies (paints, hot glue sticks, etc...)
- \*\*Tree Cookies (2-3" diameter)
- \*\*Hot Cocoa, Coffee, Tea
- \*\*Volunteers—always wanted and welcome!

Please contact the center at 616-987-2565 or email Courtney at [ccheers@lowellschools.com](mailto:ccheers@lowellschools.com) if you can help with any of the above wants and needs. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!**

# Along the Trail...

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## Maple Syrup Days & Pancake Breakfast Fund Raiser

Wittenbach/Wege Agriscience and Environmental Education Center  
11715 Vergennes, Lowell, MI 49331 616-987-2565

### Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>



As the snow begins to melt, the sap slowly starts to rise in the sugar maple trees. Maple syrup season is truly one of the first signs of spring and what better way to celebrate the coming of spring than to attend:

## Maple Syrup Days, Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>

◆ **Pancake Breakfast Fund Raiser...** served 9am-Noon  
(syrup donated by Jordan Valley Farm & Blis Gourmet Foods)

◆ **On The Trail...** Go back in time and learn how maple sap was harvested and processed by both Native Americans and early settlers with the Lowell Historical Museum and WWC Naturalists.

◆ **Cost...** \$5 adults, \$3 kids K-12, pre-K Free!

**We are in need of volunteers for this event. If you, your family, or your community group would like to volunteer for this event, please contact Courtney at: [ccheers@lowellschools.com](mailto:ccheers@lowellschools.com) or 616-987-2565.**

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## On-Site Snowshoe Rentals Available

Don't let the cold and snow keep you inside this winter. Come on out to the WWC to walk, snowshoe and ski our trails. Snow provides the perfect back drop for bird watching and animal tracking.



The WWC has snowshoes available for \$4 per person in sizes from preschool through adult. Snowshoes can be rented during our normal business hours of Monday-Friday 8-3pm and Sundays from 1-4 pm (some exceptions do apply). A minimum of 4 inches of snow is required for snowshoe rental. Cross country skiers are also welcomed but skis are not available for rent.



## Recycling Efforts Earn \$\$\$ for WWC

The WWC participates in two recycling programs that help us support and earn money for educational programming at the center:  
Planet Green & Terra Cycle.



**YOU CAN HELP! IT'S EASY!! IT'S GOOD FOR THE WWC AND THE EARTH!!!**  
Bring any of the following items to the WWC during our open hours and we will take care of the rest. We earn money for each box we collect and send. It is that simple. It directly impacts our nature preserve, our community, and our earth.

Ink jet cartridges, laser/toner cartridges, cell phones & accessories, GPS & radar detectors, calculators, ebook readers, ipods, mp3 players, digital/video cameras, PDAs, ipads/tablets, drink pouches (like capri sun), fruit pouches (like go-go-squeeze)

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Your next newsletter will arrive in **March**