



WITTENBACH / WEGE CENTER

AGRISCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
LOWELL AREA SCHOOLS

11715 VERGENNES, LOWELL, MI 49331 (616) 987-2565

Email questions to Courtney Cheers - ccheers@lowellschools.com

Find us on facebook!

Volume 11 , Issue 7

MARCH 2016

CALENDAR

March

6	WWC Open 1-4 pm Snowshoe Rentals 1-4 pm
10	MISIN Reporting Techniques Training 6:30-8:30pm Free @ Bunker Interpretive Center
10	Pesticide Training Workshop 8:30-3:30 by Kent Conservation District @Blanford Nature Center
13	WWC Open 1-4 Snowshoe Rentals 1-4 pm
19	MAPLE SYRUP DAYS @WWC 9am—1pm PANCAKE BREAKFAST 9-12
20	Garden Class—Seed Starting and Getting A Smart Start 1-3 pm @ WWC (New Date!)
20	WWC Open 1-4 Seed Swap 1-3 pm (New Date!)
26	Lowell Community Expo 9am—3pm
27	WWC Closed—Trails Open Easter

April

1-11	WWC Closed—April 1-11 Spring Break—Trails Open
3	WWC Closed—Trails Open Spring Break
10	WWC Closed—Trails Open Spring Break
15	Tiny Trekker Spring Series Registration Due!!
17	WWC Open 1-4 pm Guided Walk @ 2 pm
18	Tiny Trekker Spring Series Begins!
23	Celebrate Earth Day 10am—1pm @WWC
24	WWC Open 1-4 pm Guided Walk @ 2 pm

May

1	WWC Open 1-4 Guided Walk @ 2 pm
7	WWC Fun on the Farm Day Family Fun from 9am—12pm
8	WWC Closed—Trails Open Mother's Day
15	WWC Open 1-4 pm Guided Walk @ 2 pm
22	WWC Open 1-4 Guided Walk @ 2 pm
29	WWC Closed—Trails Open Memorial Day

Maple Syrup Days & Pancake Breakfast Fund Raiser

Saturday, March 19th 9am—1pm



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

◆ **On The Trail—2 Sugar Bush Camps ...** 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: 616-987-2565 ccheers@lowellschools.com

Stop and see us at the Lowell Community Expo

March 26th, 9 am—3pm, Lowell High School LAS Hall of Excellence



Tiny Trekkers

Spring Nature Series

Mondays or Thursdays

April 18th-May 12th

Tiny Trekkers is a nature program for children 3-6 years old and their parent, grandparent or care-giver. It includes a series of four 1.5 hour classes every Mon or Thurs for four weeks. Each class will have a different nature-related topic, include a story, exploration hike and art project!

Cost is \$20 per child for the 4-week series. Children older than 6, under 3, and families are welcome to attend. There is a \$10 per child fee for additional siblings 3 years and older.

Spring Series Topics:

**Gobs of Galls **Get Growing

**Magic Pond **Turtles at Home

10 spots available per morning session - 10:00-11:30 am

10 spots available per afternoon session - 1:00 - 2:30pm

Please RSVP by calling

616-987-2565 or email rjohnson@lowellschools.com.

Registration deadline is April 15th!

Space is limited, Register Early!

**TT Summer Series will run June 13th—16th!

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

For the preservation of our plants and animals and everyone's enjoyment: Please respect these rules.

- ⇒ Stay on the trails
- ⇒ No bicycles or motorized vehicles
- ⇒ Respect all living things, Do not pick wildflowers and plants
- ⇒ 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. Waste bags are available at trail head.
- ⇒ 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

Find us on facebook!

Around the Center...



Garden Class

March 20th 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. 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 20th 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??



Community Garden Plots For Rent!

Since its birth, the Wittenbach/Wege Center's Community Garden has been sowing friendships, growing community involvement and raising an appreciation for the land. It's become a place for those without sunny backyards or balconies to still enjoy the benefits of gardening. Network with other gardeners, relax from the day's stresses and get active all while enjoying the benefits of being in the out-of-doors

Your Plot Is Waiting...

The WWC is pleased to be able to provide members of the Lowell Community the opportunity to rent a Community Garden plot. Plots are available in two sizes. Half plots are 10 feet by 12 feet (120 square feet) and are available for \$20. Full plots are 10 feet by 25 feet (250 square feet) and are available for \$35.

Each plot will be tilled at the beginning of the year when weather permits and has access to water. Gardeners are encouraged to provide their own tools but tools will be available during open garden hours.

Plots are limited. For more information, or to reserve your plot, please contact Courtney Cheers, WWC Director and Community Garden Coordinator, at 616-987-5-2565 or ccheers@lowellschools.com.

MANY THANKS...

—Ron and Lois Horstman—Thank you for donating some spectacular tree and nature books to our library!

—Thank you to all our parents and chaperones who helped with the winter study trips! We so appreciate you braving the cold to come learn with us!

—Thank you to Lowell Community Wellness & Fortune Bay Expedition Team for partnering with the WWC for their Fullish Moon Night Hike & Owl Prowl! It was a ton of fun!



Nature News: Be In The Know

The Stewardship Network:
West Michigan Cluster
<https://www.stewardshipnetwork.org/>



The Stewardship Network—West Michigan Cluster was formed in 2006 and is a collaboration of environmental groups, educational institutions, governmental organizations, and private citizens working to conserve and enhance our natural communities through ecosystem restoration and public education.

Upcoming Events

- Michigan Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) Reporting Techniques Training
MARCH 10, THURSDAY
6:30 pm—8:30 pm
Bunker Interpretive Center
Grand Rapids, MI FREE

- Identifying Wildflowers Using Newcomb's **Wildflower Guide**
MAY 14, SATURDAY
9:30 am—12:30 pm
Hager Park, Jenison, MI
\$20 TSN Members, \$25 Non-members

- How To Design and Install A Rain Garden—A Hands-On Workshop
JUNE 18, SATURDAY
9:00 am—12:00 pm
Ken-O-Sha Park School
Grand Rapids, MI
\$10 TSN Members, \$15 Non-members

Kent County Conservation District <http://kentconservation.org/>

Their mission is to protect and enhance the natural resources of Kent County. We accomplish this with voluntary programs available for private landowners in rural and urban areas, such as: habitat restoration assistance, Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assistance (MAEAP) verification, Farm Bill Programs, and technical assistance to all landowners.

Upcoming Events

- Pesticide Training Workshop (Offering 5 continuing credits)
MARCH 10, THURSDAY
8:30 am—3:30 pm
Blanford Nature Center Red Schoolhouse
Grand Rapids, MI
\$45 including lunch
Call 616-942-4111 x 100 to Register

- Tree Planting & Selection Workshop
MARCH 22, TUESDAY
Kent Conservation District Office
3260 Eagle Park Drive NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Call 616-942-4111 x 100 Pre-registration requested

- Spring Tree and Shrub Sale
Tree pre-orders due 3/25/2016
- Spring Native Plant Sale
Native plant pre-orders due 5/6/2016

Along the Trail...



Celebrate Earth Day

April 23rd 10am—1pm

10:00 am—11:30 am Spring Nature Journaling & Phenology Observation Class Document the biodiversity of our nature preserve, practice sketching, make a phenology wheel and start recording your nature observations on Earth Day!

11:30 am—1 pm Steaking Plots for Invasive Species Removal & Garlic Mustard Pull The TEAM approach is encouraged for this event! Teams will be formed before we head out and can be Families, Scout Troops, or other interested community members. All materials and tools will be provided.

RSVP to ccheers@lowellschools.com!

SAVE THE DATE—SUMMER CAMPS

Stay Tuned...More information coming soon!!



JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER CAMP

- LEVEL 1— for campers entering grades 4, 5, 6 in the fall of 2016
- LEVEL 2— for campers entering grades 5, 6, 7, 8 in the fall of 2016
- THURSDAYS, June 16—August 11, 9:30am—3:00pm

JUNIOR MASTER NATURALISTS CAMP

- ACORNS—for campers entering grades 2,3, 4 in the fall of 2016
- OAKS—for campers entering grades 5, 6, 7, 8 in the fall of 2016
- TUESDAYS, June 14—August 9, 9:30am—3:00pm

General Information for Both Camps

- Each camp runs 8 weeks, hours are 9:30 am—3:00 pm.
- Camp fee is \$160 and include materials, supplies, and transportation to and from study trips.
- Campers will be responsible for bringing a sack lunch.
- Camp size is a maximum of 15 students per session with a minimum of 5 students per session.
- 4 points will be earned each week and 26 points will be required to earn a certificate of completion.
- No camp the week of July 4th
- Registration begins April 11th—Ends June 2nd
- Student Interns and Volunteers are wanted for Summer Camps and Garden/Trail Maintenance

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.

- **Barn boards or other building materials straight and in good condition**
- **Craft Supplies (paints, hot glue sticks, etc...)**
- **Tree Cookies (2-3" diameter)**
- ** Volunteers—for Junior Master Gardener and Naturalist Camps!**
- **Student Interns for summer camps and garden/trail development**

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

Along the Trail...

Maple Syrup Days & Pancake Breakfast Fund Raiser

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

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:

Saturday, March 19th 9am—1pm



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Check Out These Links about Michigan Native Plants!

- ◆ Michigan Flora Online (U of M) - michiganflora.net
- ◆ Michigan Native Plant Producers Association - www.mnppa.org
- ◆ Michigan's Natural Communities (MSU) - mnfi.anr.msu.edu/communities/
- ◆ Southern Lower Peninsula, Michigan Regional Plant Lists (MSU) - nativeplants.msu.edu/local_info/south_lower_peninsula

Community Event: Fun on the Farm!

Saturday, May 7th 9:00 am– 12:00 pm

Join us for a day of Fun on the Farm! Ever been eye to eye with a newborn calf? Want to pet a lamb? The Lowell High School FFA Chapter will provide you with these opportunities and more as you get a chance to get up close and personal with several of our barnyard friends. This FREE event is GREAT for families and all are encouraged to attend.



GET OUTSIDE!

Guided Sunday Walks—2:00pm—FREE!

Join our Naturalists on Sunday afternoons for a themed hike. Participants should meet at the center shortly before 2:00pm
Registration is not required.

March—Nature Games
April—Spring Arrivals



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.

WANTED ITEMS: 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 or fruit pouches (like Capri Sun & go-go squeeze, empty-lid attached)

Your next newsletter will arrive in April