



Waterloo News

April, the "Cruellest" Month?

*April is the Cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.*

The Waste Land: The Burial of the Dead
T.S. Eliot 1922

For those who enjoy spring flora, we understand that April is anything but the cruellest month, and that it is verily the time of earthly awakening. It is the month when we celebrate harbinger of spring, skunk cabbage, false rue anemone, and the promise of all of our favorite spring ephemerals. We rejoice at the sound of buzzing pollinators, croaking frogs, and song of returning migratory birds. It is the time to stretch our limbs and saunter down a woodland trail in search of the "grand flowered trillium".

Obviously, the narrator in Eliot's "The Waste Land" was a hopeless depressive, an inveterate *couch potato*, who never took Spring Botany from Professor Warren H. Wagner or engaged a field trip at the Eddy Discovery Center. Professor Wagner would have said that April is the time of pollination, cross fertilization, and reproduction! Indeed, and April is the time to dust off Fasset's Spring Flora of Wisconsin and go *a-wandering*.

The term "spring ephemeral" refers to small woodland perennial herbs that take advantage of a period of high light intensity to complete their life cycles. They are dormant through the winter as modified underground stems including bulbs, corms, rhizomes, and tubers. When the soil warms, and is moistened by spring rains, these structures quickly send up leaves, form flowers, and set fruit all before the development of heavy shade from the forest canopy.

An uncommon native spring ephemeral, found in the deciduous swamps around the Discovery Center is the Cuckoo Flower (*Cardamine pratensis*) (Fig. 1). It may be seen on logs and hummocks in marshy areas and in shallow vernal pools. Like all mustards, the flower is four-parted (four petals and four sepals); and in this case it is white and about one-inch in diameter. The upper and lower leaves are divided (pinnately compound), with round to kidney shaped leaflets.

Cuckoo flower is somewhat similar to our native spring cress (*Cardamine bulbosa*) which is also be found in heavily shaded, wet woodlands. However, spring cress has round to kidney shaped basal leaves and upper stem leaves are simple, not compound (divided). The alien and invasive bittercress (*C. pensylvanica*) does have divided leaves like Cuckoo Flower, but its flowers are much smaller, 1/8 to 1/4 inch across, and is a much more robust.

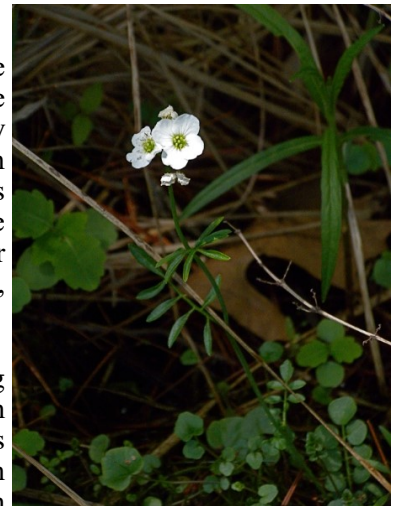


Figure 1. The Four parted white flower of *Cardamine pratensis* (Cuckoo flower). The linear leaves are pinnately divided (Ron Schipper).

For more on spring ephemerals, and other spring flora, consider attending the WNHA sponsored field trips, along the trails of the Discovery Center, scheduled for May 5 and 6. Stay tuned for details!

Robert Ayotte, Trustee

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Discovery Center

Building Hours

Summer

Monday-Saturday

10am-5pm

Sunday

Noon-5pm

Closed Mondays until Memorial Day

Waterloo Recreation Area
Trails and Grounds open
From Dawn to Dusk Daily

An \$13 annual Recreation Passport is required for entry in the Waterloo Recreation Area. A self-pay station is located at the upper parking lot of the Discovery Center or at the Secretary of State with license plate renewal. * See Pg 3

Waterloo Natural History Association Programs

April-June 2023

Advance Registration Requested at 734-475-3170



NIGHT OF THE AMPHIBIANS

Saturday, April 1
8:00 – 9:30 p.m.

Join naturalist Carol Strahler this evening for a lively presentation featuring frogs, salamanders and quivering masses of eggs from local ponds. Find out how you can recognize frogs by their calls. The program will be followed by a walk to a nearby pond to see and hear frogs singing in the night. Bring a flashlight and dress for the weather.

STRANGE CREATURES OF THE SPRING POND

Sunday, April 16
2:00-3:00 p.m.

Meet the many fascinating and little-known creatures that live in our spring ponds – from delicate Fairy shrimp to ferocious diving beetles. No boots required, as we will be viewing these in our special “pour-a-ponds” outside on the deck. Wildlife educator Megan Lotz will provide magnifying glasses to help you identify these tiny animals.



NATURE’S NIGHTLIFE

Sunday, April 30
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Find out what happens after the sun goes down in this exciting exploration into the world of nocturnal animals. Leslie Science Center will bring live animals, such as bats, owls, and arachnids, to show you why these creatures choose to work in the dark and how they are adapted for life at night.



Program limited to 50 participants. Call to reserve a space at 734-475-3170.

WHY PEAS NEED BEES!

Sunday, April 23
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Join Becky Green, Beekeeper and Certified Pollinator Champion to learn about pollinators. Becky will explain how pollination works, and why it is so important to all of us. She will introduce you to our pollinators, and discuss what challenges they are facing. You will take home ideas of what you can do to help pollinators, including instructions on how to build a Bee Hotel for wild bees in your neighborhood. Becky will also have some of her local honey available for sale.



INTRODUCTION TO SPRING WILDFLOWERS

****Saturday* May 6***
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Here is your opportunity to learn about the wildflowers popping up in our local forests right now. After a short program indoors where you will find out why these plants produce flowers in the spring, Robert Ayotte will lead a walk along the Discovery Center trails to see what is budding and blooming. Hand lenses will be useful.

Program limited to 20 participants. Call to reserve a space at 734-475-3170.



SPRING FLORA OF WATERLOO

*Sunday May 7
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.*

Forest ecologist Robert Ayotte will lead wildflower enthusiasts on a hike to view the spring blooms found on herbs and trees along the Discovery Center trails. Previous knowledge of flowering plants will be useful. Bring your loupe!



Program limited to 20 participants. Call to reserve a space at 734-475-3170.

A WORLD OF ANIMALS

*Sunday, May 21
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.*



Join us for an entertaining, hands-on program presented by Brendan Finerty from Jackson's Wild World Zoo. You will get a close-up look at a wide variety of live animals from around the globe – from the hottest desert to the deepest jungles to the highest mountains.



EDIBLE PLANTS FORAGING WALK

*Sunday, June 4
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.*

Find out what Mother Nature has to offer as we join Rachel Misfud from Will Forage for Food on a walk to look for edible, medicinal, and otherwise useful plants and mushrooms on Discovery Center Trails. The walk will be leisurely, but participants need to be able to handle uneven, shrubby or muddy ground, as we may leave the trail to search for these plants.

CUELLAR'S CRITTERS

*Sunday, June 11
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.*

Join us for an educational and entertaining program with live animals from around the world brought to you by Joby Cuellar. Learn about the lifestyles, habitats and traits that make these animals unique as you view them up close and personal.



Advance reservations are requested for all programs!

To make reservations call the Discovery center at 734-475-3170 and leave a message with your name, phone number, number in your party. If unable to attend after making reservation, please call to cancel so those on the waiting list may be admitted to the program.

*A Recreation Passport is required for entry into the Waterloo Recreation Area where the Discovery Center is located at 17030 Bush Road. The passport can be purchased with your license plate registration renewal for \$13 annually. A \$5 convenience fee is added when purchased at the self-pay station rather than the secretary of state, located in the upper parking lot at the Discovery Center. To reach the Discovery Center from I-94 take exit 157, go north and follow the signs.

**All WNHA sponsored programs are \$2 per person or \$5 per family.
WNHA members are admitted Free.**

Please check our website @ wnha.org for additional information about us!



**Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Marketing and Outreach Division**

WATERLOO RECREATION AREA EDDY DISCOVERY CENTER

Geocache Egg Hunt. *New Egg Locations!* Saturday April 8, 11am-12:30pm or 1-2:30pm. Learn how satellites communicate with GPS receivers, find out how to use a handheld GPS unit and discover hidden caches of candy filled eggs in the Discovery Center woods. All Ages!

Arrows Away. Saturday April 15, 29, May 13 or May 20, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Learn the traditional outdoor skill of Archery through fun, safe instruction. All equipment provided. Age 8 and up. Cost: Free

Tree Science Tools for Arbor Day. Saturday April 22, 1-2:30pm. Learn to use scientific tools like a diameter tape, increment borer and GPS unit. Help determine the health of Waterloo's forests. For ages 8-12. Cost: Free

Fight Back Against invasive Species at Waterloo and Your Own Backyard. Sunday April 23, Noon-1pm. Join Kelsey Dietz from the Michigan DNR's Stewardship Unit for a talk on identifying and removing invasive plants. Kelsey will cover invasive shrubs such as buckthorn, autumn olive, and honeysuckle as well as herbaceous invasive plants like garlic mustard. She will also invite you to be part of the stewardship unity volunteer steward program and share with you how you can help eradicate invasive species from high quality ecosystems at Waterloo Recreation Area. Cost: Free

Hike to the Bog. Saturday May 27, 2-4pm. Hike with a guide along the Bog Trail through different forest and wetland habitats formed on Waterloo's pitted outwash glacial topography. Along the way we will take time to look for salamanders, crayfish, snakes, and other wetland dwellers. We will learn about the specially adapted plants that live in these varied environments. 1.5 miles, round trip on rugged terrain. Cost: Free

For more information visit Michigan.gov/EddyCenter.

***Thanks to all who helped make the Maple
Syrup Festival a Success!!***

Jennifer Koppin, Chair

Kathy Claflin
Jennifer Puntenney
John Lixey
Andy Ford
Carol Strahler
LouAnn Eder
Bill Wells

Erik, Erin, Felix & Violet Zempel
Patrick Muldoon & Megan McCall
Gary Koppin

Waterloo Farm Museum-Arlene and Ron
Kaiser

H & H Sugar Bush Farm
Discovery Center Staff: Doug Jackson,
Clare, and Jenny

Toni Brinker and the rest of the Waterloo
State Recreation Area DNR staff



Online at wnha.org

Facebook @ [Friends of Waterloo Recreation Area](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfWaterlooRecreationArea)

Instagram @ [WaterlooNHA](https://www.instagram.com/WaterlooNHA)

Email: waterloonha@gmail.com



A Message from the Chair

Last month, I was finally able to attend the Michigan DNR Volunteer Group Summit. For the past several years this event came at a time that conflicted with my schedule, so I was excited to attend. Overall, it was an invigorating experience. The presentations were excellent, informative, and gave me lots of ideas to take back to our next board meeting. The best part was getting to connect with representatives from several friends' groups across the state in the beautiful RAM center. Across the board we are all wondering "who will replace us when we're gone?" Outdoor recreation is at an all-time high, so why aren't young people participating in volunteer organizations devoted to preserving those outdoor spaces and activities?

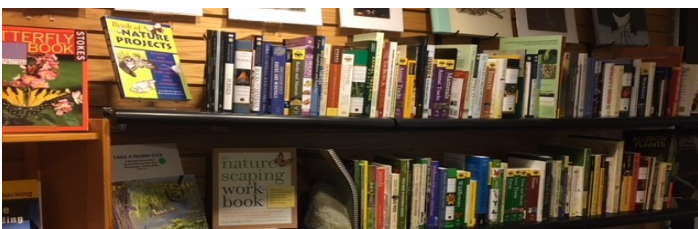
Well, none of us have figured it out yet, but I do think one piece in this puzzle is *traditions*. Traditions have incredible power to keep an idea alive through the generations. Like our Maple Sugar Festival, which started way back in 1981 - the same year as the founding of this organization. Working the evaporator station for the last couple years, I have seen several families who make the festival an annual tradition. One family came last year to learn the process of tapping trees and making maple syrup, and this year returned, happy to report on the fruit of their labors – a measly half-pint of syrup that they cherished to the last drop. No one *needs* to tap trees in their suburban backyard and go through the laborious process of boiling it down to syrup, but we do it because it's tradition and it connects us to the past.

Like any good tradition, the Maple Sugar Festival baton has been passed down to the next generation. With Jennifer Puntenney's retirement from the board, Jen Koppin took over organizing the festival this year. She left behind the most wonderfully organized set of notes containing everything you need to run the festival, which as I understand originated from Carol Strahler before that. With any luck, Jen will someday pass this on to someone else, and on and on. Thank you to those keepers of the flame.

Member Feedback Wanted!

Interested in joining a nature book club?
Have suggestions for books you'd like to see stocked in the Gift shop?
Interested in learning about volunteer opportunities?

Email us @ waterloonha@gmail.com



On more serious note, Park Manager Toni Brinker recently shared news of a serious poaching operation going on in Waterloo. The poacher's target? Black Walnut trees, which can be found throughout the park and can be worth thousands of dollars in the lumber market. The poachers are proving difficult to catch – often felling the tree one day and coming back later to pull it out as to minimize the risk of being caught. As a reminder, the only people allowed to remove wood from Waterloo are DNR staff, who drive marked trucks and wear DNR-badged clothing. If you see anything suspicious, report it immediately to park staff!

Finally, I wanted to share my gratitude to our two newest members of the board. Both Robert Ayotte and Patrick Muldoon have been incredibly engaged since joining us about a year or so ago. Robert has been helping Kathy with programming and is now leading his own talks and hikes. Patrick is helping Wendy with some of our finances, is leading vernal pool initiatives, and I heard he even cleared the snow from the sidewalk at the Discovery Center on a recent Sunday. They are welcome additions to our board and bring a great energy! We still have one opening on our board, so if you want to join the fun, don't hesitate to reach out.

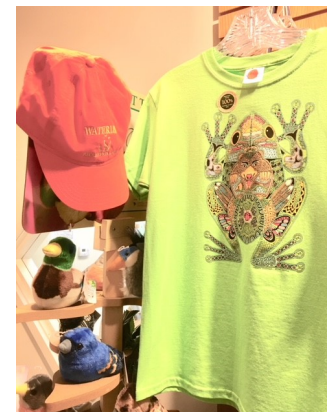


Erik Zempel
WNHA Board Chair

Gifts of Discovery!! Treasures await you at the Discovery Center Gift Shop

New Items arriving in
the Gift shop this
Spring!

Stickers
Tshirts
Medallions
Stuffed Animals
Nature books for Kids
and Adults



Waterloo Natural History Association
PO Box 504
Chelsea, MI 48118



Official Newsletter of the Waterloo
Natural History Association



MEMBER'S CORNER The Waterloo Natural History Association gratefully acknowledges the support of the following new members and those who have recently renewed their memberships.

Individual

David Shaw
Jenny Miller
Robert Ayotte
Julie Mariouw

Family

Ann Brothers
Kristan Davis
Julia & Doug Jackson
Amy Steffey & Porat Erlich
Brattin Family
Chris Coon & Christina Snyder
Brian Mattison
Faye Stoner & Ron Gamble
The Bean Family
Karrie Clapp
Julia Hettich
Stephen Jerant

Karen & Michael McMahon
Edward Tuczak
Sara Wellman

Senior

Robert Clayton
Larry & Cecilia Robinson
James Eyster & Diana Newman
Deborah Yeary

Sustaining

Jane Randolph
Karen & Michael McMahon
Angela Menegay

Benefactor

Kathy & Lathe Claflin
Jim & Pam Rossman
Wolter Family

Donations

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Diana Newman & James Eyster

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Deborah & Bruce Oakley
Sue Phare
Dave & Joanne Rowe
Sally A. Stommen D.D.S.
Carol Strahler
Mary Waldyke
Walter Wojtysiak

Special Thanks

Susan Jacobs, CPA for use of her office window display space.

*Is it time for you to renew your membership?
Your address label will show your renewal month!
Save Postage! Join, donate, or renew your membership online through our secure website!
Wnha.org*