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Visit us at our website:
www.nahantmarsh.org

Includes:

- Educational information
- Photos
- Marshy Facts
- Marsh Blog
- Calendar of Events
- Newsletters
- Sign-up sheets for events
- And much more!!!

New at Nahant By Brian Ritter

Summer 2009 was a very busy and successful season at Nahant Marsh. Thanks to the Friends of Nahant Marsh and other dedicated volunteers, the summer "Iowa at Work" crew and supervisors Mike and KJ, our creative interns Ryan and Amy, and our resource manager, Bob Bryant, Nahant Marsh is looking better than it has many years. In addition, several new and exciting things have begun this fall at Nahant.

On the education front, Eastern Iowa Community College district has recently re-instated the Conservation Technology Program. This is a 2-year A.S. program and the college is in the process of developing articulation agreements with other area colleges. The majority of the core courses will be taught here at Nahant Marsh; three of these core classes are taught at Nahant this fall.

In addition to the "new" Conservation program, Western Illinois University and St. Ambrose University are both teaching courses on site at the marsh this fall. Research that is done as part of these courses will help to improve

our knowledge of how nature functions here at Nahant.

Also on the education front, Nahant has recently started offering monthly programs for home-schooled children. These classes are broken up by grades K-3, 4-7, and 8-12 and will cover a variety of topics including water quality, reptiles, mammals, seed harvesting, and cider-making. October's programs will be on the 13th and 16th. Please feel free to call the marsh for more information. (Further information on pg. 6)

Outdoor improvements, aside from all the invasive species removal that occurred this summer, include a new boardwalk that has been designed by the city of Davenport and is being constructed by volunteers from the Rotary Club, which is led by Chris Townsend. The boardwalk will be fully accessible and will provide a route to the dock, even during times of higher water.

In other trail news, further expansion of the eastward trail heading away from the center was started this summer and will continue as time allows. This trail will eventually allow easier access to unique parts of the preserve that are rarely seen by the public. We continue to seek ways that will

allow for maximum protection of the natural resources at Nahant while still allowing the public to enjoy the beauty that the area has to offer.

In other news, Resource Manager Bob Bryant spent part of his summer and fall doing plant inventories at Nahant Marsh. During that time, he was able to add over 100 new plants to the previously existing list. In terms of recorded plant species at Nahant Marsh, the list now includes over 360 plants! This includes the re-discovery of the State Protected Ear-leaved False Foxglove (Further information on pg. 4).

With the addition of our two new interns, Mike and Kelsey, we are off to a great start for a productive fall and winter season.



Monarch Caterpillar
(Photo taken at Nahant Marsh)

Meet the Intern: Mike McKean



Hello, my name is Mike McKean and I will be one of the interns this coming fall. I was born on the other side of the Mississippi in Rock Island and grew up in Moline. When growing up, the two things I really enjoyed were cooking and

playing in the woods. After high school I pursued a cooking degree through Scott Community College's culinary program. I didn't see much sun working in a restaurant so after working in the kitchen for more than 10 years I realized I would like to try a new career path in the outdoor world. In 2005 I took the summer off and went on a 2 ½ month trip in the backcountry of the Yukon in Canada with the National Outdoor Leadership School. There I backpacked, camped and canoed with 11 other students from all across the country. I came back motivated to go back to school. Currently I am attending Western Illi-

nois University-Quad Cities majoring in their recreation, parks, and tourism administration program. Since I am making a major career change I was directed to Nahant Marsh to get my feet wet in more ways than one. Over the summer I was one of the crew leaders on our conservation aide crew here at Nahant. During this time I became very familiar with Nahant and some of the problems it is facing. I look forward to once again working with Bob and Brian and to help develop continued programming for our many visitors. See you at the Marsh.

Meet the Intern: Kelsey Feiza

As a college student nearing graduation, I applied to Nahant marsh for an internship position, hoping for the opportunity to work in nature to protect and restore it. So far, that is precisely what I have discovered here.

I grew up in a western Chicago suburb; as a kid I climbed (and fell from) many of the trees in my backyard and often kept pet toads. In my family I have two older sisters, plus a brother-in-law and an adorable nephew. Currently, I attend Augustana College in Rock Island as a senior Biology major with both Environmental Studies and Geography minors. Learning about the natural world through my classes, life experiences, and personal inquiries has propelled and reinforced my desire to preserve earth's resources. Not only am I passionate about nearly everything outdoors, but I am eager to teach others my passion.

In the field, I am drawn to animals and insects (perhaps a bit too strongly) and I enjoy observing and identifying them. If all goes according to plan, I will collect and catalog some local insects common at the Marsh before the first frost.

Beyond my natural interests, I am devoted to the arts as well. I have been a member of the Augustana Dance Company for the past four years, holding a Presidential position in the group for the past two years. In addition to performing and choreographing, I am also involved in teaching. From Hip Hop to Ballet to Jazz, I teach a variety of classes at a local dance studio in Bettendorf, as well as give private lessons on occasion. Other interests of mine include listening to folk music, running, traveling, and reading political and environmental literature.

My experiences at Nahant have already taught me so much about local flora and fauna, as well as conservation and restoration practices. I can only imagine the vast amounts of wisdom I will be carrying with me at the end of my internship in December. I absolutely can not wait to see what the fall season has in store for me here at Nahant Marsh!



‘Iowa at Work’ Comes to Nahant Marsh

By Mike McKean

Last summer, Nahant had the fortunate opportunity of having an AmeriCorps crew working on various conservation and construction projects around the marsh. With the success and amount of work that was achieved last year it was hoped that a similar crew could be put together this year. Originally a crew of 6, 2 being crew leaders, was planned for the summer of work. However, with the government passing the economic stimulus bill, Nahant had a unique opportunity to take advantage of a program called Iowa at Work. This program was aimed at young adults ages 17-25 in lower class families who needed work. The program had an emphasis on “green” jobs which Nahant qualified for.

Although I was new to the conservation field, I was familiar with Nahant and was fortunate enough to be hired as one of the crew leaders. The other crew leader hired was KJ Rebarcak. She has a special interest in environmental science, very active in river clean-ups, and is very passionate about preserving natural areas. Under the watchful eyes of Bob Bryant and Brian Ritter, our natural resource manager and naturalist, all we needed now was a crew to lead. The problem was we only had 1 person who had signed up to work. We received 5 more young men from a local work release program. So now we had our crew of eight which would be working together 32 hours a week for 10 weeks during the summer. We would work from the first week in June to the first week in August.

Our crew began by familiarizing itself with the areas around the marsh we would be working on and the many invasive plants we would focus a majority of our time trying to remove. At times we were nearly everywhere on the property but the areas we focused most of our time on were the prairies and woods near the education center, field #1, and at Carp Lake. We got a great many things done throughout the summer and I would like to highlight a few of them. First off, and possibly the most important, we continually removed invasive plants such as: Queen Anne’s Lace, Mare’s tail, curly dock, pale dock, sweet clover, musk thistle, wild parsnip, and dogwoods. Also we tried to limit the growth of Reed Canary grass by cutting the seed heads off. We did this in a majority of the area directly in front of the center as well as in field one. Aside from constantly fighting invasives, we removed the large brush piles by both the apple trees and near the turtle nesting area. We also cleaned up several fallen trees at Carp Lake, removed fencing and barbed wire in the Catalpa grove near field #1, created a new trail that had previously existed years ago but had since overgrown, chipped the huge brush pile over at Carp Lake, and removed a beaver dam under I-280. Around the center we rearranged the garage, made tree cages, and helped put up new shelving in the office.

Not only did Nahant benefit from this crew, but the guys in the crew benefitted as well. For half of the guys this was their first job. They

learned to identify plants, work with both hand and power tools, how to hook up a trailer, and how to drive the Gator (though some still need work). Part of our responsibility as crew leaders through Iowa at Work, was to evaluate each person on their performance at work, accepting supervision, coming to work on time, and their relationship with other employees to name a few things. We then had to sit down with them once every two weeks and go over the evaluations with them and address areas of concern and ways they could improve themselves. KJ and I tried to stress how these evaluations were meant to help them in future jobs they would hold and explain to them what future employers would expect out of them. We rewarded the guys with a trip out to the Wapsi Center in the last week. Bob was pleased when on the way out there they were identifying many of the invasives we had been pulling all summer. It’s my belief that although there was a lot of hard work involved, Nahant provided a positive work experience and hopefully acts as a stepping stone for these guys in future employment.

Maintaining Nahant isn’t a job that can be done just during the summer, it depends on volunteers donating their time and effort year round. We very much appreciate these volunteers that come down and we hope we can help them by having another conservation crew next summer to tackle the major projects that still exist.



*Above: Queen Anne’s Lace,
an invasive species*

*Below: False Dragonhead Flower
(Photo taken at Nahant Marsh)*



No, wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit, and as vital to our lives as water and good bread.”

-Edward Abbey

Nahant Marsh Animal Highlight: Great Blue Heron

By Mike McKean

Great Blue Herons, *Ardea herodias*, are the most common of all herons in the United States. Here at Nahant they can be seen feeding near the water's edge for most of the year. Although they are a regular resident here they never lose any of their impressiveness.

Hérons are a family of medium to large wading birds that have long legs, long necks, and a pointed spear like bill. All herons share a similar characteristic in that when they are in flight their neck forms an "S" shape.

The Great Blue Herons name itself describes two obvious ways the bird can be identified. One part of the bird's name, "Great", comes from its size which makes it stick out among other birds. These birds can stand 3-4 feet tall weigh between 5-8 pounds and have a nearly a 6 foot wingspan. "Blue", refers to the color of the birds back and wings, which is a gray-blue color. Some

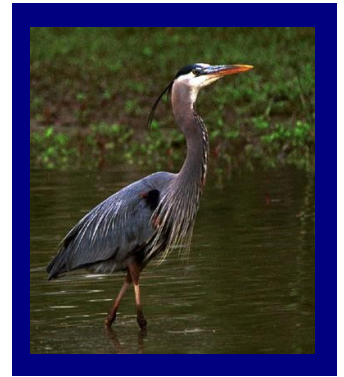
other identifying characteristics are a white crown stripe, a black plume that extends from behind the eye to the back of the neck and some adults can have a reddish-gray neck.

Being a wading bird, the Great Blue Heron has an ideal habitat and ample food sources in which to thrive here at Nahant. These large birds are excellent fishers, who stand patiently waiting to scoop up prey with their large beaks. Some of their favorite foods are fish, frogs, crayfish, aquatic insects, lizards, and have even been known to eat mice on occasion. They will swallow what they catch whole, which occasionally get them into trouble as they can choke to death if their catch is too large.

These birds live close to water, making their nests in trees and bushes. When they migrate often they will nest in the areas they did last migration sometimes even using the same exact nest. An

adult Heron will produce offspring once a year with the nest size usually involving 6 eggs. When the eggs hatch the parents will feed the chicks by regurgitating food. Chicks have many natural predators such as turkey vultures, hawks, and raccoons. Adult herons have fewer predators due to their size, but have been known to be taken by bald eagle

A larger problem is caused by human contact. Destruction of habitat is causing these great birds to abandon many of their nesting sites and migrate to other areas. Draining or filling in wetlands not only destroys nesting areas, but also limits food sources which can drastically affect population sizes. So far the Great Blue Heron population in the United States remains healthy as they have adapted to loss or change in habitat. This doesn't mean we don't have to worry about them. Al-



A majestic and fascinating bird, the Great Blue Heron

ready some of their cousins on the Pacific coast are on the "special concern" list produced by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. If further habitat loss continues the Great Blue Heron may one day end up on this list as well. This is a prime example of why areas like Nahant need to continue to be protected. For now, this bird can commonly be seen fishing here and it is always a sight to behold when in flight.



Eared False Foxglove

Nahant Marsh Plant Highlight: Eared False Foxglove

By Kelsey Feiza

A fairly common flower blooming this fall around the marsh is a delicate plant called the slender leaved false foxglove. With pale purple petals, this herb is fairly simple to spot in the sedge prairie near the marsh waters. More tricky to find, however, is the slender leaved false foxglove's close relative, the eared false foxglove.

Agalinis Auriculata, commonly known as the eared or ear-leaved false foxglove, has a thicker stem and broader leaves than its cousin. The plant also flaunts a distinctive lobed leaf design, reminiscent of ear lobes—which is what gave the herb its odd name. It also displays numerous pale

Uniquely enough, eared false foxglove is considered hemiparasitic because, if given the chance, it will parasitize other plants using a modified root structure. Parasitism, however, is not necessary for the growth and reproduction of the plant, since it can live without a host. Here at Nahant, heath aster has become the foxglove's main target for parasitism, but it is also growing here without a host.

Another distinctive property of the eared false foxglove is its rarity, both locally and nationally. Here in Iowa, the plant is on the special concerns list, meaning that records of this plant are sparse. Over the river in Illinois, eared

false foxglove is on the threatened species list. In short, this herb is in danger of being extirpated unless conservation measure are taken.

Reasons for the species being so rare are habitat destruction and fragmentation, as well as overgrowth by woody plants due to botanical succession.

In order to preserve this rare species, as well as the diversity of plants in the Marsh, the germinated seed of the eared false foxglove will be harvested this fall. Once spring arrives, these annuals seeds will be planted so that future visitors to the Marsh can enjoy viewing its beauty and learning about its interesting lifestyle.

**The Marsh's NEW
homeschool programs run
twice a month! Check out
the details at our
website:**

www.nahantmarsh.org

Taking Action at The Upper Mississippi River Conference

By Kelsey Feiza

Twenty-five years ago, a non-profit group was formed in the Quad Cities whose goals aimed at protecting, preserving, and improving the Mississippi riverfront. Today, River Action remains an affluent organization with a long list of accomplishments including the lighting of the Centennial bridge, a Retain the Rain program which encourages the use of rain barrels, and the hosting of local events, most recently Taming of the Slough and the Upper Mississippi River Conference.

I attended this conference through Augustana College and by the encouragement of a professor there, Norm Moline, who is a thoroughly involved member of River Action. The conference began with a charismatic speaker named Jim Patchett from the Conservation Design Forum. Proceeding his opening keynote, the attendees of the conference shuffled into 3 separate rooms based on their topic of interest.

Of the sessions available, which were water quality, water utility, and water planning,

I chose the last of the three. Speakers were associated with both private organizations and government groups, creating an interesting mix of people. The topic most widely covered concerned revamping waterfront cites for aesthetics and improving a sense of community along the river. A few other speakers, in particular Dan Carmody of Eastern Market in Detroit, Michigan, discussed vital environmental improvements needed in riverfront areas.

Not only did the conference consist of lectures, but field trips as well. One group, in fact, toured Nahant Marsh on the locally-geared field trip. The Milan Bottoms and Lafarge Company were also included. Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve was the focus of the alternate field trip; this is the trip I attended.

Although most of the trip was spent driving to Muscatine, Big Sand Mound is a fascinating bit of land; stepping foot on the sandy dunes feels like you've stepped out of Iowa. Offering field trips gave the

conference attendees a chance to not only stretch their legs, but to actually view and experience a genuine waterfront.

The Upper Mississippi River Conference also hosted a 25th Anniversary Dinner to honor those involved in River Action. Most notably mentioned at this dinner event were the founders of the organization, the current president, and other contributors. Speaking that night was Mayor Joe Riley from Charleston, who is a charismatic speaker, as well as a determined man. In his 30+ years in office, he has executed well developed plans for sustainable and beautiful city design.

Overall, the conference offered networking, in addition to learning opportunities through lectures and field trips. River Action has helped restore and preserve Nahant Marsh, as well as other waterscapes; they provide an inspiring example of how one organization can bring so many groups of people together to restore and beautify a riverfront.

"Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, not in towns and cities, but in the impervious and quaking swamps"

-Henry David Thoreau

RIVER ACTION IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO FOSTERING THE ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL VITALITY OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND ITS RIVERFRONT IN THE QUAD CITIES' REGION.

Interested in River Action?

Check out their website at www.riveraction.org



(Left) The second longest river in the U.S., The Mississippi River, here viewed from the Davenport side.

Nahant Marsh

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www.nahantmarsh.org



Nahant Marsh is one of the largest urban wetland preserves on the Upper Mississippi River. It is comprised of marsh areas, both mesic and wet, as well as sand prairie, and bottomland forest. A spring-fed quarry, known as Carp Lake, and the surrounding grounds, is also part of the Nahant Marsh Preserve. Nahant Marsh was used for skeet and trap shooting from the 1960's to the 1990's. Because of the lead left behind, the marsh was declared an EPA Superfund site and was cleaned up and declared a preserve and educational center in 1999. The building and 78 acres of land is owned and managed by the City of Davenport, while the remaining land is held by the Nahant Board, a 501c3. The Educational programming is overseen by the Eastern Iowa Community College District. Additionally, River Action, Inc. is another critical part of Nahant Marsh.

Getting to Nahant Marsh...

From Davenport, Iowa:

Take Highway 22 South and turn left on Wapello Avenue (last left turn before the I-280 overpass). Follow Wapello Avenue and you will see Nahant Marsh to your left, just before the railroad crossing.

From Illinois:

Take I-280 to Iowa and take the Highway 22/Rockingham Road Exit. Turn right onto highway 22 and right onto Wapello Avenue. Nahant Marsh is on the left, just before the railroad crossing

Fall & Winter Events at Nahant Marsh

OCTOBER:

**Tuesday & Friday, the 13th & 16th—
Homeschool Program, 10:00-11:30am &
2:30-4:00pm; Nahant Marsh**

This month, the program offers apple cider making (K-3rd), tree identification, including why and how leaves change colors in the fall (4th-7th), and seed harvesting (8th-12th). \$6/child/session, \$50/child for all sessions, \$100/family (4 children or less) for all sessions. Call to register.

Thursday the 29th—Fall Night Hike, 6:15-7:30pm; Nahant Marsh

Come and enjoy this guided night-time hike in which you will experience the sights and sounds of Nahant Marsh in late fall. Participants should dress for the weather and are encouraged to bring a flashlight if they prefer. Please pre-register by calling (563)323-5196 or emailing Nahantmarsh@eicc.edu. Cost \$3 per person

NOVEMBER:

**Tuesday & Friday, the 3rd & 6th—
Homeschool Program: 10:00-11:30am &
2:30-4:00pm; Nahant Marsh**

Offered this month are programs on preparation of the marsh for the winter months (K-3rd; 4th-7th; 8th-12th). \$6/child/session, \$50/child for all sessions, \$100/family (4 children or less) for all sessions. Call to register.

**Saturday the 7th—Nahant Marsh Work-
day, 9:00am-12:00pm; Friends of Nahant
Marsh**

Join the volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and to wear sturdy shoes or boots. Brian Ritter (563) 323-5196 or Sheri Coleman (309) 786-8504.

DECEMBER:

**Saturday the 5th—Nahant Marsh Work-
day, 9:00am-12:00pm; Friends of Nahant
Marsh**

Join the volunteer effort to beautify Nahant Marsh. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, old clothes and to wear sturdy shoes or boots. Contact Brian Ritter (563) 323-5196 or Sheri Coleman (309) 786-8504 with questions.

**Tuesday & Friday, the 8th & 11th—
Homeschool Program, 10:00-11:30am &
2:30-4:00pm; Nahant Marsh**

Programs during this month include outdoor winter survival techniques. K-3rd; 4th-7th; 8th-12th). \$6/child/session, \$50/child for all sessions, \$100/family (4 children or less) for all sessions. Call to register

Coming in 2010...

January 8th-10th—Bald Eagle Days