



EarthBeat

EMBRACING NATURE • ENGAGING MINDS



Annual Spring Open House

**Saturday, April 30, 2011
10:30 a.m. 'til 3:30 p.m.**

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the Ebersole Center's annual Spring Open House. This is a unique, fun-filled day of FREE activities for visitors of all ages. Spend the day walking on the Center's miles of trails, or down on Jackson Lake canoeing or catch and release fishing (bring your own rod and bait), you can also try out archery and make some unique nature crafts. Our mascot Ebby Bear will be on hand to participate in the fun and all children who participate in the scavenger hunt will have a chance to win a plush Ebby Bear of their own. Refreshments and souvenirs will be available for purchase and donations to the Center are always welcome.

Free transportation for Lansing area residents is generously being provided by Dean Transportation. Call the Center at 517-755-5000 to reserve your spot on the bus. Reservations are on a first come first serve basis so sign up early!



Incredible Acrobats: Ruby-throated Hummingbirds



*Spring at the Ebersole Center is a very magical and exciting time. Plants and animals are waking from their long winter slumber, birds begin to migrate north, and the whole property seems to burst into life! One creature you might see buzzing around the Center is the amazing Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*).*

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird is the only hummingbird species found east of the Mississippi River, with the exception of an occasional stray. These tiny birds occur in deciduous woodlands of eastern North America as well as across the Canadian prairies. They are commonly associated with old fields, forest edges, meadows, orchards, stream borders, and backyards. On their tropical wintering grounds, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds live in dry forests, citrus groves, hedgerows, and scrub habitats. Hummingbirds live wherever there are flowers and they are especially attracted to edge habitats including parks, gardens, backyards and woodland edges.

As with most bird species, the male is the most colorful of the two sexes, with a fiery red throat, iridescent green back, black chin and a noticeable forked tail. The female is pale by comparison and lacks the red throat and instead has a whitish throat, with grayish white underparts and a buffy wash on its sides. Instead of a forked tale like the male, the female has a blunt tail with white spots on the outermost tail feathers. The young, immature birds resemble the adult female.

In the spring, the male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds arrive first on the breeding grounds, well before the females, and establish prime breeding territories. Males give a courtship display to females that enter their territory, making a looping, U-shaped dive starting from as high as 50 feet above the female. If the female perches, the male shifts to making fast side-to-side flights while facing her. (continued on page 2)

Cool Hummingbird Facts

- The Ruby-throated Hummingbird beats its wings about 53 times a second.
- Scientists place hummingbirds and swifts in the same taxonomic order, the Apodiformes. The name means "without feet," which is certainly how these birds look most of the time.
- The Ruby-throated Hummingbird does not show a strong preference for any particular color of feeder. Instead, it prefers specific feeder locations.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbirds prefer to feed on red or orange flowers. Like many birds, they have good color vision and can see into the ultraviolet spectrum, which humans can't see.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbirds normally place their nest on a branch of a deciduous or coniferous tree; however, these birds are accustomed to human habitation and have been known to nest on loops of chain, wire, and extension cords.

Source: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Rubythroated_Hummingbird/lifehistory

Thanks for the Support!

A very special thank you to the many schools and groups who are attending or have already attended Ebersole Center this year:

- Cadillac/Mason Soccer Conditioning Camp
- Hackett Catholic Central Band Camp
- Hastings High School Band Camp
- Everett High School Band Camp
- Eastern High School Band Camp
- Beekman Center
- Lowell-Cherry Creek
- Immaculate Heart of Mary
- Holt High School
- DeWitt Junior High
- Wainwright Elementary
- Lyons Elementary
- Lowell-Murray Lake
- Resurrection School
- Gardner Middle School
- Cumberland Elementary
- Woodcreek Science Magnet School
- Pattengill Middle School
- Wexford Elementary
- St. Gerard School
- Bath Elementary
- Elmhurst Elementary
- Fairveiw Elementary
- Lewton Elementary
- Attwood Elementary
- Mt. Hope Elementary
- Sheridan Road Elementary
- Post Oak Elementary
- Riddle Elementary
- North Elementary
- Detroit Garvey Academy
- Mt. Zion All Nations Bible Church

If your school or group is not listed here it should be! Call us to book a date for this fall/winter or next year in 2012.

Archery in the Schools Grant Program

Thanks to the State of Michigan's Department of Natural Resources and the National Archery in the Schools Program, the Center has been able to secure an archery equipment grant. The National Archery in the Schools Program® (NASP®) brings the sport of archery to millions of students in schools across the United States.



The program at the Ebersole Center is aimed at teaching students archery in a safe, controlled atmosphere. Equipment used is state-of-the-art and designed to fit every student. Ebersole Naturalist/Planning Specialist, Jason Byler, recently attended an 8-hour Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) session. Since Jason successfully completed the BAI training, the Ebersole Center is now allowed to implement the Archery in the Schools Program and has qualified for grant funding for the program. The equipment grant is going to supply the Center with 11 adjustable weight compound student bows (10 right handed, 1 left handed), 5 dozen arrows, 1 stand to hold the bows, 5 targets, 1 backstop curtain (to stop arrows that miss targets) and 1 repair kit for bows and arrows. This is a very exciting program that will allow the Center to restructure the archery course to make it safer and assist in improving the archery curriculum for the students.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird (continued from page 1)

The hummingbird is the smallest bird species, and therefore has the smallest bird nest. Once mated, the female Ruby-throated Hummingbird builds the nest which is a tiny, lichen covered cup approximately 1 ½ " across by 1 ¼ " deep, about the size of a fifty cent piece. It's made of thistle or dandelion down held together with strands of spider silk and sometimes pine resin. The exterior of the nest is decorated (probably camouflaged) with bits of lichen and moss.

The female usually lays two eggs which are white and about the size of a pea. The female incubates the eggs all by herself for 14-16 days. After the young hatch they are completely dependent on the mother and will be raised for 25 days. After the 25 days, the immature hummers will then have to rely solely on themselves.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds feed on the nectar of red or orange tubular flowers such as trumpet creeper, cardinal flower, honeysuckle, jewelweed, bee-balm, red buckeye and red morning glory, as well as at hummingbird feeders and, sometimes, tree sap. Hummingbirds also catch insects in midair or pull them out of spider webs or from inside tubular flowers. Main insect prey includes mosquitoes, gnats, fruit flies, and small bees but they also eats spiders.

Like all hummingbirds, Ruby-throats are precision flyers with the ability to fly full out and stop in an instant, hang motionless in midair, and adjust their position up, down, sideways, and backwards with minute control. They dart between nectar sources with fast, straight flights. Male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds aggressively defend flowers and feeders, leading to spectacular chases and dogfights.

These tiny and amazing birds make incredible journeys during their fall migration. They winter from Mexico to Central America and Panama and many hummers will make the 600 mile trip across the Gulf of Mexico without stopping to rest!

If you keep your eyes open and your sense keen, you will see these incredible acrobats all around Ebersole Center property and maybe even in your own neighborhood or backyard. You can attract Ruby-throated Hummingbirds to your backyard by setting up hummingbird feeders or by planting tubular flowers. Make sugar water mixtures with about one-quarter cup of sugar per cup of water. Contrary to popular belief, food coloring is unnecessary and simple table sugar works best. Make sure to change the water before it grows cloudy or discolored and remember that during hot weather, sugar water ferments rapidly to produce toxic alcohol. Lastly, be careful about where you put your hummingbird feeders, as some cats have learned to lie in wait to catch visiting hummingbirds.

NOTE: The content of the preceeding article was gathered from multiple sources too numerous to list here.



Scholarship winners

Thanks to the generosity of the Lansing Education Advancement Foundation and the Ebersole Center Foundation, the Ebersole Center is once again able to offer scholarships to Lansing School District schools. This spring, eight schools were awarded funds to assist with trips to the Center. The winning schools include:

- Lewton Elementary
- Wainwright Elementary
- Woodcreek Elementary
- Cumberland Elementary
- Wexford Elementary
- Attwood Elementary
- Elmhurst Elementary
- Pattengill Middle School

Congratulations to all of our scholarship winners! We look forward to seeing you and your students at Ebersole this spring. More scholarships will be available for fall and winter 2011-2012. Check your e-mail and our website for more details.

Reminder: Earth Beat is going digital!

Earth Beat is continuing to make the transition from paper to pixels. To ease the strain on the Center's budget and the environment, we are encouraging you to request your issue of Earth Beat be sent to you online rather than in hard copy format. To be sure that you don't miss a "Beat", please send your current e-mail address to: ebersole.lansingschools.net.



Ebersole Foundation is listed as a "Cause" on the social networking site, Facebook. "Fans" of the cause get regular updates on upcoming events at Ebersole, as well as photos and other information about our programs. Supporters can also add comments about the Center, post their own photos, and make tax deductible donations to Ebersole Foundation. So far, over 232 people have signed up as fans of the Cause! The Ebersole Foundation's cause page can be accessed at www.causes.com/causes/131234.

Ebersole Center has it's own Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/EbersoleCenter>

There is also a **Save the Ebersole Center** page at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=106594872716586>



News & Notes

The pressure is on school districts, local governments, state governments and the feds; scale back spending! Regardless of who or what gets hurt, the pressure is there to cut, cut, cut. So we shouldn't be surprised that in these hard times, the Ebersole Environmental Education Center is facing big challenges and the constant threat of closure, either seasonally or completely. But can we afford to let that happen? Short term savings at the expense of long term solutions. We need your help to save the Center. So here is a start and we are asking you to chip in with your thoughts as well. Let's shoot for a hundred or a thousand reasons to support and save the Center!

Why save Ebersole?

1. We only have one environment to lose. One chance and it is gone.
2. Our kids deserve to inherit a better world. Ebersole helps assure a better and healthier world.
3. Where else can our inner city kids learn about nature by studying in it and living in it?
4. Lansing School District will never be able to replace the Center once it is gone. Most districts would *love* to have such a resource.
5. We need scientists, biologists, zoologists, environmentalists, and a whole lot of other "ists" if we want to keep our planet healthy.
6. Ebby bear would be out of work. We can't have that.
7. Ebersole is a unique environment. Can you imagine it destroyed by development? What would be lost that could never be regained?
8. How many students would never go canoeing, shoot a bow and arrow, fish, hike in habitats like a bog or a fen, or even have the opportunity to see magnificent Lake Michigan?
9. How many students would never get the chance to dig through pond muck and look at the aquatic critters they discover under a microscope?
10. How many students would do worse on their MEAP tests because they didn't get hands on learning in a real environment?
11. How valuable is keeping kids interested in school by giving them real life learning experiences?
12. Consider the deer, the ducks, the frogs, the snakes, the water lilies, the forest, the rabbits, the fish, the bugs, the grasses and wildflowers that might lose their homes and the chance to be part of our student's lives.

That's my dirty dozen. And remember, dirt is a good thing. We need dirt!

So how can you help? Sign up and join us as a friend of Ebersole on our Facebook page by going to www.facebook.com and type in Ebersole Foundation. Then let the reasons grow like seeds in a garden. And if we get that garden filled with reasons to keep Ebersole open, then maybe we can really show the world what a valuable resource we have and that it is worth every penny of investment. We will start the list with the dozen above and add your thoughts to it. So let's all start thinking.

Thanks for your help, and let's "Go Green," Ebersole green that is.

Bob Harris, President, Ebersole Foundation Board of Directors



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TidBits

Advice from a Ladybug...



- Spot new opportunities
- Spend time in your garden
- Be well-rounded
- Enjoy the wonders of nature
- Don't let small things bug you
- Keep family close by
- Be simply beautiful!



Open Spring and Summer Dates

We still have open dates for your group to come to Ebersole – book yours before they're gone! We welcome all grades from all districts and all kinds of groups – family reunions, sports camps, boy & girl scout troops, retreats, women's & men's weekends, and others.

Make Your Reservations for Next Year Now!

Ebersole 2011-2012 program dates are filling up. Join the elite group of educators that have found the value of an outdoor environmental education program at the Ebersole Center. The 33 year spring tradition of teachers selecting a date for their class or school's program at the Ebersole Center is still going strong. If you haven't gotten your reservation for next year, give us a call or send us an email, we still have a few dates available. If you have never experienced an environmental education program with your class or school and would like to learn more please visit our website at <http://ebersole.lansingschools.net> or contact us at (517) 755-5000, (269) 792-6294 or ebersole@lansingschools.net.

New Prices

Due to ever increasing operating, fuel and food costs, Ebersole Center will be increasing prices for the 2011-2012 school year. This necessary step was taken in order for Center staff to continue to offer quality programming. As of July 1, 2011 new prices are in effect. This increase reflects a 5% increase over previous years fees. Prices are still a great value and the increase amounts to only a few dollars. Please contact the Center for new rate information. Thank you in advance for your continuing and ongoing support of Ebersole Center programs!



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