

## **2014 SUCCESS STORY: WEEF UMBRELLA**

### **A place to learn and play**

Beaver Creek Reserve is an environmental center founded in 1947 by a group of county residents who were committed to providing conservation education to area young people. The Reserve has grown from a 160 acre "youth camp" to a multi-dimensional educational complex, which operates year around. Now the Reserve has 400 acres and includes the Youth Camp, the Wise Nature Center, Citizen Science Center and the Hobbs Observatory. This unique combination of facilities provides a special atmosphere where over 50,000 people a year, young and old alike, can discover, learn and appreciate nature.

Environmental education is a powerful tool and here at Beaver Creek Reserve we are continually amazed at all of the epiphany moments that happen. Teachers approach our naturalists and comment how a student has come out of their shell like they have never seen in their classroom environment. Naturalists recount hundreds of times when children exclaim that this camp or field trip is their favorite day of the year. Working in our butterfly house and watching a pair of eyes as an individual realizes that each butterfly has a its own host plant: Monarchs and milkweed, Cabbage Whites and cabbage, Giant Swallowtails and prickly ash; and with that, realizing that we are all a little more connected than we might have previously thought. Our mission is "connecting people with nature" and we enjoy doing that!  
*(Friends of Beaver Creek Reserve, Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation)*