



THE STEWARD

Protecting and Preserving the Ohio River Corridor

www.westernwildlifecorridor.org

Winter 2011

Calendar of Events

Sunday, January 23, 2 pm

Winter Adventure Hike
Bender Mountain

Saturday, February 19, 9-am-noon

Great Backyard Bird Count
Bender Mountain

Tuesday, March 1, 7 pm

Winter Membership Meeting
EarthConnection

Saturday, March 26, 10 am-noon

Habitat Restoration
Whitetail Woods

Saturday, April 9, 9 am-noon

Habitat Restoration
Bender Mountain

Sunday, April 10, 1 pm

Wildflower Hike
Delshire Preserve

Saturday, April 23, 9 am-noon

Habitat Restoration
Shady Lane Preserve

Saturday, May 7, 9 am - noon

Habitat Restoration
Bender Mountain

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

By Tim Sisson

WHAT A GREAT YEAR!

With key properties protected and lots of enjoyable events, 2010 was the most active year in Western Wildlife Corridor's history.

Let me start with Bender Mountain - one of the most dazzling of the gems in our emerald chain of nature preserves in the Ohio Valley. As I reported in the summer Steward, this year we officially took over management of a nature preserve here with 55 acres of incredibly beautiful forest. Then, in October, we closed on land along the flank of the mountain, thereby doubling the amount of property we own near the old roadway (known as Sister's Hill).

But we didn't stop there. We made great progress with our ambitious plan to link these properties with a network of trails. Helped tremendously by an additional Eagle Scout project and a super volunteer day involving an Elder High School father and son group, we just about finished a trail to the top of the mountain from Bender Road. On the other side of the mountain, our volunteers cleared the route and built dozens of stone steps for a trail coming up to the top from Hillside Avenue. In October and November we tried out this new network of trails with fall hikes attended by almost 100 people. They found them to be rugged, and very enjoyable.

As you have no doubt heard, we believe that legal protection of the property does not automatically create a quality nature preserve. For that, the aliens also have to be removed - alien plants, that is, such as the dreaded honeysuckle and garlic mustard. Once again we excelled, with honeysuckle and mustard cleared from large portions of the Whitetail Woods, South Road and Bender Mountain preserves. Right up to the end of the year, large groups of enthusiastic volunteers helped with this. On our last project day in November, where the temperature didn't exceed 40 degrees, we had 20 people helping to clear honeysuckle on Bender Mountain.

And then there were those events I mentioned. Here we excelled as well.

Our Wildflower Festival was a great success, with the parking lot overflowing throughout the entire evening. The native plant vendors were especially happy as mobs of people collected around them to snap up those prize plants. The Flower-a-thon was attended by the usual enthusiastic crowd. Luckily the thunderstorms held off until the end of the day, so we were able

Continued on p. 2



The dirt really flew as the Elder students and their fathers worked on the trail.

SAVE THE DATES!!

Friday, April 1, 6 pm to 9 pm

Fifth Annual Wildflower Festival
Delhi Senior Center

Saturday, April 30, all day

7th Annual Flower-a-thon Fundraiser

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL, CONTINUED FROM P. 1

to get in a full day searching for elusive plant species. The storms didn't dampen the spirits of the crowd that celebrated at the banquet that night.

At the Great Outdoor Weekend event in September, we had the largest crowd ever - about 200 people. The children especially enjoyed the displays and demos. An added attraction this year was the hooting of owls and calling of coyotes during the night hike. A really good time was had by all.

And last, but not least, we added a new event this year - Go Native - in October. Again, the parking lot was overflowing with the vehicles of people who enjoyed the scavenger hunt, hike and plant sale.

If you attended our events, and/or helped with our projects in 2010, you know how enjoyable they were. If you weren't able to get to any of them, there's always next year. Check out our event calendar for listings of activities coming up in the first part of 2011. I hope you can join us to take advantage of the great times we will be having. In addition, if you aren't a member, please consider joining. Your membership will help us as we raise funds for that next purchase of land. 🦋



This is part of the volunteer group celebrating a great year at the first (annual?) WWC tailgate party.



These kids listened intently as Ros described some of the artifacts in our display.



We're On facebook!

By Jeff Doering, Web Administrator

Facebook has become the premier social networking site across the entire planet. The numbers are staggering - 500,000,000 active users, (that's half a billion people!), with over half of them logging in on any given day! Personally, I use facebook daily to keep up with 206 of my closest friends and family (ok, so some of those friends and family are closer than others). In addition to millions of people, there are facebook pages dedicated to corporations, everyday products, musicians and bands, celebrities, communities, and of course, non-profit organizations much like our own WWC.

On a seemingly unrelated note, I spent my entire childhood residing in Delhi. I have fond memories of playing, hiking, camping and building forts in the woods near the Rapid Run Creek. We spent hours, days, entire summers in the woods. We'd hike the creek from Rapid Run all the way down along Bender to the Ohio River. As children, it never occurred to us that these wooded areas might not always be there. Even as a young man, and lifelong Delhi resident, I was completely unaware that 1) some of these places could be in danger and 2) there was a group of dedicated people organized to protect this invaluable resource. For the majority of my life I could literally look out my window and see portions of the WWC. And even with all of that, WWC had been in existence for over 10 years before I had ever even heard of them!

My tangent does have a point. While the fine members of the WWC have been doing excellent and important work for our community for the past 18 years, they've done it relatively quietly (and often with little thanks). The township of Delhi (where a good portion of our protected property can be found) has a population of over 30,000. Addyston represents another 1,000 people. Miami Township has 13,000. Cleves another 2,700. North Bend 600. Riverside adds another 2,400 and Saylor Park adds 3,400. So, doing some rough math, that's over 53,000 people living in the communities in which the WWC works... and WWC has roughly 300 current members. You can see the disparity; certainly there are more people in our community who would proudly support the preservation of greenspace in our area, if they only knew.

While the WWC website is a fine resource for our current and future members, it simply cannot match the potential exposure that a site like facebook can offer. Facebook offers a place where those in the know can proudly display their association with our fine organization, and it offers the best and most efficient way to spread the word about what WWC does for our neighborhoods.

If you are already a facebook user, you've probably already discovered how many of your own friends and family are users; maybe you've heard from people that you haven't seen in years. If you haven't signed up yet, do it! All your friends are! And while you're there, make sure to search for us (or click the link from www.westernwildlifecorridor.org) and click the "Like" button. Tell your friends and neighbors about the fine work of the WWC.

Got E-mail?

If you get email from WWC, great!
If not, we'd love to update our records.
Please send your email address to momshine2000@yahoo.com with "update WWC contact info" in the subject line.

Enjoy the Western Wildlife Corridor Learn why it's so important!

Join us for Habitat Restorations!

Why habitat restoration?

Sometimes the biggest threat to our preserves is invasion by alien plant species. Plants such as Amur (or bush) honeysuckle, euonymus and garlic mustard can produce such a dense cover of foliage that native plants cannot survive. We've been told that Amur honeysuckle even secretes a toxin that kills native plants! When we restore the habitat in one of our preserves, we remove these invasive alien plants so that native plants and animals can thrive.

**Sat., March 26
10 am to noon
Whitetail Woods**

We will be clearing honeysuckle from this preserve in Sayler Park.

**Sat., April 9
9 am to noon
Bender Mountain**

Help us continue clearing a new area on the "mountain" WWC purchased last year.

**Sat., April 23
9 am to noon
Shady Lane Preserve**

In addition to honeysuckle, the Shady Lane Preserve is being invaded by the dreaded garlic mustard. Today we will be fending off attacks by both of these!

**Sat., May 7
9 am to noon
Bender Mountain**

Our first ever trail making project on the "mountain" was a huge success. The project today will focus on completing the trails here plus repairing any damage done by the winter storms.

Contact Tim at 513.922.2104 or tsisson@fuse.net for more information.

**Sun., Jan. 23, 2 pm
Winter Adventure Hike
Bender Mountain**

The "Mountain" will warm you up for sure on this winter day. We'll meet on Bender Road at the gravel pulloff, 1/2 mile from River Road then wander up its side on our new trail, to the top where the view of the Ohio River valley is spectacular. Signs of the meanderings of wildlife in winter will probably be found - especially if there's snow on the ground! Hike will be strenuous. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy hiking boots.

Contact John at 513.941.4877 or john.klein2@yahoo.com for meeting place and other details.

**Sat., February 19, 9 am to noon
Great Backyard Bird Count**

The Western Wildlife Corridor, Ohio Young Birders Club and Raptor, Inc. will sponsor the count on Bender Mountain and the Sisters of Charity Motherhouse Grounds. Come on out and join us for all or part of the count. You can watch at the Clifford Bird Banding Station, attend a Birding 101 class at 10 am or join in a short - or a long - hike. Western Wildlife Corridor will help to lead hikes throughout the surrounding woods. This is a great way for less experienced birders to learn from their more experienced counterparts.

So come on out and join us - it's free, and it's fun. Young Birders will get a certificate for participating.

For more information, contact Kathy at 513.941.6497 or by email at whocooksforyou@gmail.com

**Tues., March 1, 7 pm
Winter Membership Meeting
EarthConnection**

Guest speaker Peg Schmidt from The Delhi Historical Society will tell us about the history of Sisters' Hill before Delhi Pike was closed due to hillside slippage in the 1970's. She will also touch on the history of some of the other areas where WWC has preserves. While walking the old road or cutting invasive honeysuckle, have you ever wondered who or what used to be in these areas? Some old maps will be available to see.

A brief review of Western Wildlife Corridor's plans for the coming year will also be given. Light refreshments provided. The public is invited.

Contact Leesa at 513.284.1046 or momshine2000@yahoo.com for more details.



**Fri., April 1, 6 pm to 9 pm
5th Annual Wildflower Festival
Delhi Senior Center**

This family event will feature nature games and activities, a wildflower plant and seed sale, a painting class, wildflower educational material, food, presentations by local environmental organizations and educational games for children.

Contact Rebecca at 859.512.1983 or rsisson654@zoomtown.com to learn more about this enjoyable event or to ask about participating.

**Sunday, April 10, 1 pm
Wildflower Hike
Delshire Preserve**

If you want to see wildflowers, this is the time and the place. The hillsides here are covered with many species of beautiful spring wildflowers.

For more on this event, also a "tune-up" for contestants in our Flower-a-thon, contact Tim at 513.922.2104 or tsisson@fuse.net.



**Saturday, April 30, all day
7th Annual Flower-a-thon
Fundraiser**

In this exciting event, participants compete to identify the wildflowers of the region and learn more about them. Each participant solicits pledges from friends, relatives, neighbors, businesses or corporations for each species found during that day.

The day begins at 8 am with breakfast around the fire at Embshoff Woods Park. Teams then set off to explore the Ohio River valley, to search for and identify wildflowers. Participants also receive a gift and an awards dinner with a prize raffle to cap off the day. The team identifying the most wildflowers receives the event's coveted Golden Trillium Award.

To register, (fee of \$10 per person required), contact Tim at 513.922.2104 or tsisson@fuse.net.



Winter Wildflower: *The Harbinger of Spring*

By Sally Sisson Anderson, WWC Artist in Residence

Have you ever been out hiking in the late winter woods, and come upon a tiny white wildflower blooming on a sunny hillside? This would be the harbinger of spring, or Salt and Pepper. The "salt" is the white petals, the "pepper" is the dark red anthers. (This is the part of the flower that holds the pollen.) These minuscule blooms hug the ground, hiding among last year's leaves. They are truly our first wildflowers, and have been found blooming in the snow. I go out looking for them in late February or March.

Harbinger of spring are found as far north as Ontario, Wisconsin and New York, as far south as Alabama, and west to the Ozarks. They are in the carrot family, and therefore related to Queen Anne's lace, parsley, and dill. This is a huge family that also includes poison hemlock, angelica, sweet cicely, golden alexander, and of course, carrots and celery.

This tiny plant is often over looked in wildflower books. But I wouldn't call it insignificant, just small. In fact, it is so small that you might wish to examine it through a 10-power lens to see its real beauty. It is also edible. If you were to pull it up, you would see a round bulb that is edible both raw and cooked. The Cherokee Indians were known to chew this bulb to ease a tooth ache. However, please do not pull it up or eat it, for it is a delight just to find it blooming after a long, cold winter! Then you realize with joy that Spring is just around the corner! 🐸



Greenspace Genes?

By Susan Frede

I think my love of open space is part of my DNA. I grew up on eight acres and enjoyed the room to run and play. We built forts in the woods, played baseball in the yard, and fished and swam in the pond. I remember big Easter Egg hunts and building Homecoming floats in the barn. In the winter we went ice skating and sled riding.

As an adult, I searched for property that would offer privacy and the opportunity to enjoy nature. We found that on four acres above Addyston and built our dream home. Western Wildlife Corridor clearly values greenspace, so it was a natural fit for me to join the organization.

In parallel to my work with Western Wildlife Corridor, my dad, Butch Roller, has also been pursuing environmental causes. After he retired, he became a tree farmer on 154 acres in Brown County. This led to his involvement at the state level in forestry on the Ohio Tree Farm Committee and with the Ohio Division of Forestry. The organizations promote responsible resource management by following Ohio's Best Management Practices for Erosion Control. Replanting for sustainability of native plants and animals is encouraged, along with controlling invasive plants and insects. He just won the 2010 Cooperator of the Year Award from the Brown County Soil and Water District for his commitment to these practices and for his volunteer work. My dad believes you can manage our forests in a responsible way while maintaining and improving the environment.

In addition to his work in Brown County, he is also working in Clermont County on the Pierce Township Greenspace Program. This program was established in 2007 to maintain what Pierce Township residents value- rolling hillsides, meandering streams, mature forests and scenic views. The mission of the Greenspace Program is the same as WWC: to preserve land with ecological or historical significance, natural corridor potential, aesthetic or scenic value, or inherent traits that contribute to the positive character of the Township. Protecting greenspace and the environment is truly a family effort for us. We will continue to work to protect property in Hamilton, Clermont and Brown Counties. 🐸

Committee Chairpersons

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Here's Matt demonstrating the approved technique for cutting honeysuckle.



Tim Sisson

My Summer at Bender Mountain

By Matt Fitzpatrick

As part of the forestry program for Hocking College, students are required to complete an 80 hour practicum with an organization that relates to forestry in some way. I was clueless as to where I would do my practicum or even if I could manage to obtain one before summer. I put it off for most of the year and focused on my school work. When it became time to choose my practicum I was in a panic, I sent out tons of applications to far off places in Ohio with no response. I then remembered the place five minutes from my house that I would always hike and remembered that an organization called the Western Wildlife Corridor managed it. I decided that I would do my practicum with them; a little disappointed that I wouldn't be working in a "real" forest and convinced that there would be very little to learn.

Before I started any of this forestry stuff I had always seen the forest as some sort of permanent fixture that couldn't be changed, only observed. I saw the massive amounts of honeysuckle as an undying nuisance and could never imagine what an area would look like completely free of it. Sure I observed the dead piles of honeysuckle and garlic mustard throughout the preserve as I hiked and walked my dogs, but I never really connected that to anything. I was completely ignorant to anything forestry related; a buckeye was the same as a maple, honeysuckle was the same as any other shrub. I loved the forest just as much as I do now, but I never did anything to contribute to it.

I was also ignorant of what Bender Mountain really was. I had no idea of its back-story or how special and unique it is. I just assumed that every town had something like it, an area designated from development and maintained for the general public to use without taxes paying for it. An area where people can experience a glimpse of a forest in a place where there's nothing but concrete and buildings. An area where you can walk for hours on the most beautiful day you could ever imagine and not see one person. I took it all for granted.

I started out slowly cutting down a few honeysuckle here and there, but I was a little skeptical of what I was even doing, what this all would eventually become. There were times where I was completely exhausted and disheartened because my overall vision seemed like it would never come to fruition. Eventually I did start to see significant results and I couldn't help myself from hiking up the mountain as much as I could and cutting some honeysuckle. The main area where I worked is my favorite part of the whole preserve, an open area towards the end of the main trail complete with a stone bench and an amazing view. It was completely overtaken with honeysuckle. I spent hours upon hours repeatedly cutting and spraying and finally when I had cut my last honeysuckle I threw it on top of my mile high pile, crawled myself to the top of the hill, and realized that the amazing sight before me looked better than I could have ever imagined.

I learned a lot of things during my summer at Bender Mountain. Not necessarily the type of learning that would take place in my silviculture class at Hocking, but more subtle things that you can only learn by sitting down in the middle of the forest for a hundred and twenty hours. I learned that some of the most strikingly brilliant wild flowers grow in some of the most inhospitable soils. I learned that coyotes are completely fearless when you get in between them and their pups. I learned that ants aren't particularly fond of giants sitting on their homes and I learned that the most barren, lifeless place on the planet is the forest floor under a thicket of honeysuckle. The best part about cutting honeysuckle is that with each one I would remove, a little more light would hit my face and make the brown dirt glow with a golden hue. At the end of the day a once unfelt wind would stream through the area I had worked, giving me instant satisfaction for what I had just done. There are not too many things I'd rather be doing than clinging to a stump for dear life while trying to cut a honeysuckle growing precariously on an unstable cliff.

Saying that my practicum with the Western Wildlife Corridor was a positive experience would be an understatement. I saw firsthand the destruction that honeysuckle causes and also got to personally do something about it. I would greatly encourage everyone to hike Bender Mountain the next chance they get and see the beauty that my eyes have seen. Don't take this place for granted like I once did. If you do not visit this place you are squandering a great gift that many people have worked very hard to provide for you. I hope to never hike Bender Mountain and not run into someone, ever again. 🙏



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Please indicate how you would like to help!

JOIN WESTERN WILDLIFE CORRIDOR 2010-2011

New Membership Renewal

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution at the following membership level:

__ \$20 Individual	__ \$30 Family	__ \$75 Supporting
__ \$50 Organization	__ \$100 Patron	__ \$500 Sponsoring
_____ Other	_____ / month	Guardian

DONATE TO THE LAND ACQUISITION FUND

Enclosed is my tax deductible donation for the land acquisition fund \$_____

VOLUNTEER YOUR SERVICES

Help with Habitat Restoration Help with Outreach and other needs

Name _____ Phone number _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

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Please mail to:
Western Wildlife Corridor, Inc.
PO Box 389077
Cincinnati, OH 45238

*Thank you for supporting the Western Wildlife Corridor's mission
to preserve the scenic beauty and natural resources of the Ohio River Valley!*



Tim Sisson

Sunset over the Western Wildlife Corridor.