



THE STEWARD

Protecting and Preserving the Ohio River Corridor

www.westernwildlifecorridor.org

Calendar of Events

September 2, 8am

Fall Warbler Walk
Meet at Story Woods Parking Lot
694 Pontius Road

September 7-9

Harvest Home Fair
WWC Booth

September 8, 9am

Habitat Restoration
Bender Mountain

September 22, 9am

Habitat Restoration
Sister's Hill

September 29

Great Outdoor Weekend

Saturday, 5-6pm
Animal Tracking Introduction
Followed by Cookout at 6pm
Night Hike, 7-8:30pm

October 6, 9am

Habitat Restoration
Delshire Preserve

October 9, 7:30pm

WWC Board Meeting

October 13, 1pm

Fall Color Hike
Bender Mountain

October 20, 9am

Habitat Restoration
Story Woods

October 21, 3pm

Animal Tracking Class
EarthConnection

Land Trust Alliance

Accreditation Program... What Is It?

By Leesa Miller

Accreditation is a vital opportunity to be offered to land trust organizations by the Land Trust Alliance. It is the result of several years of hard work by the Land Trust Alliance, the national supporting organization for land trusts. A few years ago, when charitable donations of conservation easements to land trusts were being scrutinized by the IRS, all land trusts were in danger of losing one of their most important tools in land preservation, due to some abuses of conservation easements. The Land Trust Alliance learned that an accreditation program for land trusts would prove their legitimacy and sincerity.

In the near future, Western Wildlife Corridor will have the opportunity to show the Land Trust Alliance that our organization is operating within their guidelines and is worthy of accreditation. Here is where the help is needed. One or several volunteers are needed to research this process to ensure that Western Wildlife Corridor completes all the paperwork needed to document that it meets guidelines for accreditation. Check out www.lta.org to learn about the Land Trust Alliance, or call Tim Sisson 513-922-2104 with questions. ✓

Breaking News!!

Land Donated to WWC

We have just learned that Mrs. Patti Hicks has donated property in the Riverside area of Cincinnati to Western Wildlife Corridor. She is thrilled that this property, given to her by her grandfather, will now be protected forever as a natural area.

The entire area is heavily wooded (mostly hardwoods) and contains a number of large chinquapin oaks and shagbark hickories. It is situated on a small ridge in the steep hillside facing the Ohio River and is a classic example of wooded land in the Western Wildlife Corridor.

We thank Patti Hicks very much for this generous donation of land that will form an important link in our "Emerald Chain" in the Western Wildlife Corridor. ✓



Flower-A

Wildflower Festival Entertains and Educates Over 200!

This year's festival was another success! We would like to say thank you to the many volunteers; they may have had more fun than the visitors! This was truly an enjoyable event to plan.

Goals for next year are to increase corporate sponsorships for the festival and to increase Flower-a-Thon pledges from local businesses. Please contact Rebecca Sisson at 859-746-8671 or Joan Key at 513-451-6756 with any ideas you have, or to join the fun for next year's festival.

We'll let the pictures do the talking...

**Thank you for supporting
Western Wildlife
Corridor's
Wildflower Festival and
Flower-a-Thon 2007!**

Lustran Polymers

PNC Bank

Hamilton County Park District

Delhi Township Parks
and Recreation Dept.

EmbroidMe

Gordon's Food Service

Riverview-Delhi Hills Kiwanis Club

Avril Bleh Meats

Cianciola's Main St. Market

Vine Street Florist

Esquire Theatre

Chamber's Restaurant

Linda Thielen

Wild Mike's

Robben's Florist & Garden Center

Al Duebber Automotive

Washington Platform Restaurant

T.G.I. Friday's

Frisch's Restaurant

UDF

Allison Landscaping

Buster's Ice Cream

Cleves Drive In Restaurant

Empress Chili Parlor on Rapid Run

Siemer's Jewelry Store

Perk On The Pike

Front Porch Coffee House

Phillips Swim Club

Healthy Habits Café

Montego Bay Tanning Salon

Bob Castellini

Parnell's Hardware

NKU Center for Environmental Education

Riverview Nursing Home

Vitor's Bistro



Exploring leaf textures and identifying leaves in the kids' area.



Wildflower Bingo was a big hit!



Thank you to all the volunteers, including this threesome that served food!



*Committee leaders
Rebecca Sisson and Joan Key
at the Flower-a-Thon dinner.*

-Thon 2007

FUNdraising

Mother Nature provided a beautiful Saturday in April and members brought their pledge sheets and off they went to the preserves. Some could tell the difference between squirrel corn and Dutchman's Breeches, while others were on their first walk in the woods with wildflower book in hand.


Many were old friends and some we met for the first time. Some searched from dawn until just before (or slightly after) dinnertime. Still others we suspect went home for a mid-afternoon siesta. But altogether, they had one thing in common-an appreciation for wildflowers and a desire to raise money for habitat protection.

See you next year. If you can't be there, be sure to make a pledge to one of the teams. ✓



Squirrel corn has heart-shaped flowers.

Thank you to the Wildflower Festival presenters:



Cincinnati Zoo Horticultural Dept.
Cincinnati Park Board
Museum Center Edge of Appalachia Preserve
Extension Educator of Development for Jr. Master Gardeners
Delhi Floral Paradise
Hamilton County Park District
Miami Group Sierra Club
Wildflower Drawing Class by Sally Anderson
Girl Scout Troop 915 Bake Sale
Cincinnati Wild Flower Preservation Society
Green Umbrella
Sisters of Charity
Art raffle donations by Sally Anderson, Charley Harper family and Peg Sisson
Oxbow, Inc.
Wild Ones
Imago
Northside Greenspace
St. Luke Episcopal Church Children's Wildflower coloring
Red Wolf Sanctuary
Scott Peak
WWC Educational Play area



Dutchman's breeches was named as such because of the resemblance to pantaloons hanging upside down.

Western Wildlife Corridor Board of Trustees

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Rebecca Sisson

Committee Chairpersons:

Land Stewardship: Tim Sisson 513 922-2104
Outreach & Newsletter: Leesa Miller 513 941-1628
Fundraising: Rebecca Sisson 859 746-8671

*Thank you to Leesa Miller and Jennifer Doerger
for their help with our newsletters!!!*

Fall Warbler Walk
Sunday, September 2, 8am
Meet @ Story Woods parking lot
694 Pontius Road

Find out what birds can be found in the Ohio River Corridor in the late summer or early fall. We'll also look for fall wildflowers along the way. Bring your field guides for either. Western Wildlife Corridor members Ned Keller and Kathy McDonald will lead the hike. Call them at 513-941-6497 for more info.

Harvest Home Fair
September 7-9, all day
WWC Booth

Visit the WWC booth at the Harvest Home Fair to learn more about WWC's mission.

Great Outdoor Weekend
Saturday, September 29
Animal Tracking, 5-6pm
Followed by Cookout, 6pm
Story Woods Park

What animals live in our forests and what clues do they leave behind? Discover the amazing variety of creatures that are found locally and how to recognize signs and tracks of even the most reclusive. After this introductory presentation by William Reichling of R&R Animal Trackers, stick around for food from the grill (\$2 donation per person for food), or bring your own picnic dinner.

Great Outdoor Weekend
Saturday, September 29
Night Hike, 7-8:30pm
Story Woods Park

Explore the nighttime wonders of Story Woods with a guided journey through the trails. Western Wildlife Corridor will provide a brief overview of land conservation and its value in providing natural habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species. Our journey continues through the woods with William Reichling, R&R Animal Trackers, searching for clues of wildlife. Two separate hikes will leave at the same time, one for families and one for the more adventurous. Be prepared for anything as we enter the mysterious nocturnal world of Story Woods Park.

WWC Board Meeting
October 9, 7:30pm

Fall Color Hike
Saturday, October 13, 1pm
Bender Mountain

Call Tim Sisson at 513-922-2104, for an exact meeting place for this popular WWC hike tradition.

Animal Tracking Class
October 21, 3pm

Take a Walk on the Wild Side!
Sunday, October 21, 1-3pm
EarthConnection
370 Neeb Rd.

Western Wildlife Corridor has arranged for experienced animal tracker, Bill Reichling, to make a presentation on the all-but- forgotten art of animal tracking. The skills of track casting, aging, and track identification will be taught and discussed. These skills are useful for taking wildlife photos or knowing what's in your attic, chimney, or woodpile. Take up the challenge! Slow down and step back into the skill of our Daniel Boone days. You won't believe what's out there! This hike is free, but participants must call to register: 513-451-1146.

**The first 25 participants pre-registered will receive either a fore or hind plaster casting of our most numerous critter returnee, the coyote.*

Habitat Restoration Continues
September 8, Bender Mountain
September 22, Sister's Hill
October 6, Delshire
October 20, Meet @ Story Woods

These are the projects we have scheduled this summer, for your future enjoyment!

Bring work gloves, plenty of water, Roundup squirters if you have one (we will provide the Roundup solution). Wear work clothes and work shoes. The projects will all start at 9am.

In addition, I usually go to a preserve a few mornings a week to walk and while I'm there, I just can't help whacking some honeysuckle. If you'd like to join me or need directions, please call 513-922-2104 or email me, Tim Sisson, and I'll let you know when I'll be doing it.

New Sign
Marks Nature Preserve

By Delori Hawkins

On April 21, a beautiful spring Saturday afternoon, about 30 people gathered near Sisters Hill in Delhi to help dedicate the new Western Wildlife Corridor sign designating our new wildlife preserve area. Located about halfway down the hill between Bender and Hillside, a pleasant half-mile stroll along the "old Delhi Road" adjacent to the Sister's of Charity property, this sign now marks the property owned by WWC which will be preserved for public enjoyment and conservation of native plants and wildlife.

Dozens of volunteers, including many Elder High School students, have been working hard over recent months to clear this area of invasive undergrowth, primarily honeysuckle and garlic mustard, which were choking off many of the native plants struggling to survive here. This effort has allowed native plants such as wild hyacinth, larkspur and buckeye, which were already evident on this sunny mid-spring day, to begin to flourish once again in the newly-cleared spaces.

Tim Sisson, summarized this recent volunteer effort and then proceeded to speak about future plans for the property, including his vision for establishing an extensive hiking trail linking this area with Bender Mountain and possibly encompassing Story Woods as well. (This prospective project was outlined in detail in the cover article of April 18th issue of the Delhi Press).

Tim then introduced special guest Dr. Gene Kritsky, professor of Biology at Mount St. Joseph. Dr. Kritsky gave an interesting overview of some of the native flora and insects of this area, having conducted numerous field studies with students here over the past several years. (He also provided some funny cicada anecdotes that brought back fond memories of 2004!)

The celebration concluded with a hike to cap off a very enjoyable afternoon. ✓



The group rests beside a large stack of garlic mustard removed this year.

Come to our Great Outdoor Weekend events on Sept. 29, 2007!

Presented by:
Western Wildlife Corridor
Delhi Township Parks & Recreation
Bill Reichling, R & R Trackers



Animal Tracking: Whooo's Watching Whooo in Our Forests??? **Saturday, Sept. 29, 5:00-6:00 pm**

What animals live in our forests and what clues do they leave behind? Discover the amazing variety of creatures that are found locally and how to recognize signs and tracks of even the most reclusive of them. After this introductory presentation by William Reichling of R & R Animal Trackers, stick around for food from the grill at 6pm (\$2.00 donation per person for food) or bring your own picnic dinner. Immediately after dinner, stay for our second program, an adventurous night hike led by Western Wildlife Corridor & R&R Animal Trackers.



Whooo's Watching Whooo In the Nighttime Forest??? **Saturday, Sept. 29, 7:00-8:30pm**

Explore the nighttime wonders of Story Woods with a guided journey through the trails. Refreshments and snacks served. Western Wildlife Corridor will provide a brief overview of land conservation and its value in providing natural habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species. Our journey continues through the woods with William Reichling, R&R Animal Trackers, searching for clues of wildlife. Two separate hikes will leave at the same time, one for families and one for the more adventurous. Be prepared for anything as we enter the mysterious nocturnal world of Story Woods Park.

Both events are appropriate for ages 7 and older. Events are free and will be held rain or shine.

Both events take place at Story Woods Park and are a collaboration between Western Wildlife Corridor, Delhi Township Parks and Recreation Department, and Bill Reichling of R & R Trackers.

Call 513 451-3300 or 513 921-WILD for more information,
or check our website: www.westernwildlifecorridor.org



R&R Animal Trackers' Puma Research Project

By guest writer William L. Reichling

What do an engineer, restaurant waitress, postman home appraiser, hair stylist, retired teacher, dentist, stream specialist, animal control officer, and CVG controls technician have in common? All are volunteer animal trackers participating in a local animal research project. The target animal of the study is *felis concolor*, AKA puma, cougar, panther, catamount, or mountain lion.

This more formal study, started in 2003, is headed by myself, Bill Reichling; and is a continuation of inquiries into local cougar presence which started around 1988. Our study documents local cougar presence by photo recording tracks, deer kills, and cougar scrapes. Endangered/Uncommon Species Observation Cards are distributed and collected from individuals who see the animal in the outdoors. These Division of Wildlife Cards are then sent to the Ohio Division of Wildlife Biologists in Athens, Ohio.

R&R Animal Trackers' most notable achievement so far has been the actual photographing of what we feel is a melanistic (all black) cougar above a deer it killed. The photograph was taken on 11/22/06. Following is the description of how this was accomplished.

On Saturday, 11/19/06, 12 PM. Dave Jones, Jim Wachter (Cincinnati Trackers) and Bill Reichling (R&R Animal Trackers) arrived at the scheduled search area. This transect is in Western Hamilton County, Ohio. Cougar sign had been discovered on this particular transect during two previous tracking outings. Dave Jones, the novice cougar tracker on this hike, was hoping this transect would once again be a fruitful learning site.

Jim and Dave turned left up a small inlet to the main creek, which is part of the headwater of Taylor Creek. I continued tracking the main creek.

Within 1-2 minutes Jim called out, "We've got a kill up here!", so I moved up to help with the kill investigation.

Jim and I discussed the marks on the deer carcass while Dave just listened and soaked up information during a "hands on" kill inspection. There is no better teacher than experience.



We both felt that the gouged out left eye, slashed off ear tip, claw/bite marks to neck, throat, and mouth areas screamed "big cat kill". The carcass body entry sites were also typical of cat rather than dog. The neatly shaved clippings of hair hanks around the carcass, giving the deer the appearance of being recently clipped in a barber shop, were consistent with a cougar's cleaning practices.

Moving our attention from the carcass outward, all three of us began searching for tracks or scats (droppings). Several tracks in the mud were found and photographed and I cast one crisp track with plaster. No scats were found.

All three of us noticed a faint decaying scent of the carcass which suggested it may already be abandoned by the cougar. Nevertheless, we thought it might prove interesting to place a trail camera on the kill area.

Therefore, on 11/21/06 Ray Westrich and I returned and positioned a Stealth Trail Camera to photograph the kill and a nice portion of the wall above it, if the camera detected motion or heat.

On 11/22/06, what appears to be a melanistic cougar tripped our trail camera and recorded itself in a crouched position above the deer. Now we had the deer kill, track and the animal itself photographically recorded.

Every tracker needs three credible clues to make a first identification of an animal. All three of our sign are first rate and we therefore make the call of danger.

Presently we are working to get additional photos of other cougars on different transects. Most of our transects are in Hamilton County, Ohio. A few are in Indiana. We are also using scent/rub posts to collect animal hairs and then have species of origin DNA analysis done on these hairs to further upgrade our identification evidence.

The "tracker: part of me thinks this additional proof is unnecessary; yet the "scientist " side realizes the need for positive DNA identification. Our research with one of North America's true megafaunas will continue.

Our trackers realize that all people reading this account will not accept it as truth. This is fine. Disbelieve if you wish, but please begin carrying a stout walking stick. If it only serves to prevent a stumble or fall in the outdoors, it's worth it. If the stick is helpful in a more stressful situation, you'll be especially glad you have it! ✓

Bill Reichling, A member of WWC, is also a Field Researcher for the Eastern Puma Research Network and a Cougar Tracker/Member of the Michigan Wildlife Conservancy. He can be reached at 513-451-1146.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

WWC Offers Monthly Giving Option: Guardian of the Corridor

We invite you to join the Guardian of the Corridor Program, a monthly giving program started last year. Guardians are a special group of WWC members who provide critical support to WWC by making donations on a monthly basis. This reliable funding gives the WWC a predictable source of revenue, and you benefit by having your annual gift spread across 12 months.

Your monthly Guardian contribution gives WWC the resources it needs to operate efficiently in our work to preserve hillside habitat in the Ohio River Corridor. Becoming a Guardian of the corridor is a powerful statement of your ongoing commitment to Western Wildlife Corridor's mission.

Join the Guardian of the Corridor Program today and know that you are funding critical land preservation in the Ohio River Corridor.

Western Wildlife Corridor & Miami Twp property on Shady Lane

Driving up Shady Lane from River Road, you may have noticed the deep woods to your right just past the top of the first hill. WWC would like to ensure that this 60-acre wooded property owned by Miami Township remains in a natural state.

A public meeting to discuss this is scheduled for Oct 3 at 7pm at the Miami Township Hall in Cleves. This meeting is the result of Western Wildlife Corridor working with Miami Township Trustees. Please plan to attend this important opportunity to show your support, especially if you live in Miami Township.

Hikers Please Read: Trail Access Notice for Sisters of Charity Property

Many of us know that walking along old Delhi Road is an enjoyable, easy trek. So please note that the following information does NOT affect people that use ONLY the old road for a walking path. That is still OK. But due to concerns, anyone who wants to hike in the WOODS owned by the Sisters of Charity, needs to be accompanied by a Western Wildlife Corridor member or other approved group and the group needs to call ahead.

The Western Wildlife Corridor has led some wonderful hikes in this area and hopes to continue to do so. Please comply with this effort to monitor activity on the Sisters of Charity property, so that the Campus Security can discern between legitimate hiking and unwanted use of their property. We are looking forward to continued permission to hike safely in this awesome forest.

The Sisters of Charity property includes the entire hillside from Hillside Avenue to Bender Road, except for the old Delhi Road right of way.

WWC Members, here is the procedure that needs to be followed:

Stop by the Motherhouse office or call 513-347-5600, option #2, and leave message at the general maintenance office. Give your name and group name and # of persons, and phone number, and when you plan to be on the property. (Option #2 will not reach a live person, so just leave a message.)

Currently, it is requested that a member of Western Wildlife Corridor or other approved group, accompany anyone who wishes to walk on the property owned by the Sisters of Charity.

Please carry a cell phone. If there is an emergency or you witness any inappropriate activity while you are on the property, or a problem that needs to be reported immediately, call the same number 513-347-5600 and choose option #1, which is the emergency number. Option #1 connects you directly to the Mount St. Joseph police who regularly patrol the College and Motherhouse property.

To discuss any other permission for access, including GPS users, call Tom Heffernan, Executive Director of Campus Services at 513-347-5455.

This procedure does not apply to persons walking ONLY on the road (the old closed Delhi Pike starting at the guardrail). **Anyone can walk on the old road without gaining permission.**

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To find out how to meet up with a WWC member who may be planning to hike on the property, or to find out about property boundaries, call Tim Sisson 513-922-2104 or Leesa Miller 513-941-1628.



PO BOX 389077
Cincinnati, Ohio 45238-9077

Non-Profit
Organization.
US Postage
PAID
Cincinnati, OH
Permit #571

513-921-WILD (9453)
www.westernwildlifecorridor.org
Email: wwc7@yahoo.com



Mark your
calendar!

**September 2, 8am
Fall Warbler Walk**

Find out what birds can be found
in the Ohio River Corridor
in the late summer or early fall.
We'll also look for fall wildflowers
along the way. Bring your field guides.
Call 513-941-6497 for more info.

**October 13, 1pm
Fall Color Hike
Bender Mountain**

Please help the Western Wildlife Corridor
protect the Ohio River valley.

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

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

May we call you for active support? Yes
Would you consider donating land or a conservation
easement? Yes

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email address _____

Phone number _____

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