

## PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL A Special Sunflower by Tim Sisson



The Special Sunflower

Tim Sisson



The pollinator garden and viewing window are very popular

Tim Sisson



New display in education room

Tim Sisson

Seeing a single sunflower in the prairie at the Kirby Nature Preserve was really special for me. I guess it was because it was a symbol of one more success to top off a long list of successes for WWC this year.

You've read about our project to renovate the house at the Kirby nature preserve – well, that's finished and the result is really awesome! I know I'm biased, but everything looks incredibly nice and works well too. From the special mobile table that Jeff Doering built, to the custom kitchen cabinets, to the picture window and pollinator garden provided through two Girl Scout Gold award projects and the special displays in the education room built by Dave Might and Kevin Kunz of the Cincinnati Museum Center; it all really came together.

Finishing our nature center was a big deal so, of course, we had to celebrate. Mark Rudemiller and his crew put together a super grand opening party in combination with the celebration of our 25th anniversary. The day was filled to the brim with a picnic, hikes, presentations and a banquet with the always entertaining Jim Scott as MC.

We have had lots of other things to celebrate this year too. Our Flower-a-thon and Wildflower festival both were very enjoyable and had lots of attendees. An initial trail system was completed at the Kirby Nature Preserve (with the help of 4 Boy Scout Eagle Scout projects) and Denis Conover completed a plant survey at Bender Mountain. He identified 431 species of vascular plants there! See the article in this newsletter for more details on the plant survey. We are also in the process of acquiring several new properties in the corridor. These will add a section of beautiful forest to a current preserve and will allow us to protect many other nice properties.

We also completed the construction of a prairie at Kirby, which brings me back to my beginning sentence – the first flower, a stiff leaved sunflower, bloomed in the prairie in July. To me this was a very satisfying symbol of our progress these past two years. I can't wait to see what other symbolic flowers bloom for WWC. I have this strong feeling that we're beginning a very exciting journey where a lot more flowers will be blooming for us in the future.



Young hiker enjoying a new trail

Tom Malone



Joyce really enjoyed the interview by Jim Scott

Tim Sisson



The custom table Jeff built for the kitchen

Tim Sisson

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

**Jeffrey Ginter** I'm a lifelong Westsider who first developed an appreciation of nature when playing as a kid in the woods in Price Hill (those woods are now managed by the environmental group Imago). As an adult, I've been a supporter of environmental groups for more than 30 years, especially the Nature Conservancy, whose approach I've always admired. When I learned of the WWC during a hike in 2009 with my daughter's Girl Scout troop, I was enamored both by Bender Mountain and by the WWC, and quickly became a member. My volunteering efforts for the WWC include membership on the Land Stewardship Committee, helping to organize the holiday party and winter membership meeting, and most enjoyably, cutting honeysuckle during habitat restoration events. My passion is hiking and I typically hike the Bender Mountain Nature Preserve four times a week. (If I've never previously seen you on a Bender trail, don't be shocked if I ask if you want a trail map.)

Professionally I'm a programmer by training and today work for one of the largest software companies in the world; however, I don't program any more, but instead am a people manager and operations specialist. I look to apply my passion for the environment along with my experiences with management, organizing, process improvements, contracting and operations, to benefit the WWC.

**Debbie Lutkenhoff** I am from Louisville originally and have lived here for 40 years. I am a social worker and for the past 18 years, I have worked in Cincinnati public schools doing various things but mainly counseling at risk students. My interests include recycling, worm composting, native gardening and being a new grandmother of a 6 month old girl. I am a master gardener, a member of the Wild Ones and have co-chaired the native plant booth at the Civic Garden Center's annual plant sale for the past decade. As soon as I retire, I can devote more time volunteering with Western Wildlife Corridor.

**Gary Rapien** Most of my early childhood was spent living in Price Hill. My early love of nature came from hiking and bird watching with my dad and brothers there. I graduated from Roger Bacon High School and the University of Cincinnati, then married Norma in 1975. We raised our children, Michelle, Erik, and Paul, while living in Miami and Green Townships.

After working in various supervisor jobs, mostly at General and Children's Hospitals, I became an independent sub-contractor at Rumpke Waste Inc. (actually getting paid to work outdoors!). Unfortunately raising children and working long hours resulted in my outside interests being severely neglected for many years. I retired last year, ending my 34 years at Rumpke. I am very much enjoying my volunteer work with the Western Wildlife Corridor where I am finally spending time doing things I truly enjoy.



Fungi — Kirby Nature Preserve

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

by Jeff Ginter



Zebra Swallowtail

Tom Malone

The WWC is on the move! We've accomplished so much recently, yet there is so much more to do. Here is a quick run-down of some of the ways we could use some additional volunteers. These functions are currently covered by existing volunteers but in a somewhat haphazard way. We look to put some structure and organization into these functions and expand our capabilities.

**Event Coordinator:** The WWC Event Coordinator will be focused on scheduling events and managing the calendar for the new Kirby Nature Center. Our intention for the nature center is to open our doors to the community as a location for environmentally related activities, for example fun workshops and one-time education events, perhaps a meeting space for local groups to hold recurring meetings, and so forth.

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Volunteers are truly the foundation of our success! We have a number of lists of volunteers and several folks who are separately managing those lists, but we're not as organized as we could be. We are thinking that a Volunteer Coordinator could help knit our teams together. As a start, we're looking to keep complete and updated lists of our volunteers and to maintain better communications with them.

**Webmaster / Website Coordinator:** Our current Webmaster is very dedicated to the WWC but is stretched thin. Let's help him out! If you have the necessary tech skills and an interest in applying them to the benefit of the WWC, you could make a big difference in a very visible way. The Webmaster / Website Coordinator will work with the WWC Board and other volunteers to get our content posted and looking good. We may also tackle a refresh to our website.

As a general observation, as volunteer positions, to a degree the roles can flex towards the interest and passions of the volunteers who fill the position. In other words, make it your own! Can you help or know someone who can help? For more information, contact Jeff Ginter at 513.451.1737. Thanks!

## Upcoming Events – Enjoy the Western Wildlife Corridor

See full list of events online – [WesternWildlifeCorridor.org](http://WesternWildlifeCorridor.org)

### Mothing at Kirby Nature Preserve

Friday, September 15, 8 pm to 10 pm

Moths far outnumber butterflies and are much more varied, but most people don't notice them since they're usually active at night. Join us for a look at these nocturnal beauties – and bring your children or grandchildren, they will really enjoy it. We recommend bringing a camp chair and a flashlight. This event is free and no registration is required. Please contact Kathy at 513.748.0281 for details.



Tim Sisson

With a little luck, we'll see a Luna like this at the Mothing Event!

### Adventure Hikes on Bender Mountain

Saturday, September 23, 9:30 am and 10 am

For this annual fall event, WWC is hosting two hikes at Bender Mountain – strenuous and moderate. The strenuous hike will start at 9:30 am with a climb through a beautiful forest on our Eagle Scout Trail. At the top we will be treated to a spectacular view of the Ohio River Valley. We will then hike along the ridge top trail to Paw Paw Gap and beyond for the return to the trailhead. The moderate hike will start at 10 am and will meander along the slope of Bender Mountain through an equally beautiful forest. We will also hike at Paw Paw Gap and with a little luck will be able to sample that delectable fruit.

For both hikes meet at the gravel parking area on Bender Road about ½ mile from Hillside. Contact Tim 513.922.2104 for details.

### Fall Color Hike at Kirby Nature Preserve

Sunday, October 22, 1 pm

The trees in our successional and mature forests at the Kirby Preserve will be at their peak, and our new meadow should have some nice color too. Moderate and strenuous hikes will be available. Contact John at 513.941.4877 or Jack 859.750.1608 for details.

### Fossil Hunt at Kirby Nature Preserve

Saturday, November 11, 2 pm

The Cincinnati area is famous for its fossils. We will hear all about the fossils that occur here from experts and then will go on a guided hike as we search for them at this preserve. Please contact Kathy at 513.748.0281 for details.

Hikers enjoying a fall outing at Bender Mountain



Tom Malone

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### Habitat Restoration plus:

Saturday, September 9, 9 am to 12 pm

Habitat restoration at Kirby Nature Preserve. Leaders: Tim 513.922.2104 and Robert 859.572.9661.

Saturday, September 16, 9 am to 12 pm

Habitat restoration at Kirby Nature Preserve. Leader: Bruce 513.451.5549.

Saturday September 30, 9 am to 12 pm

Habitat restoration at Buckeye Trace. Leaders: Gary 513.941.5414 and Tim 513.922.2104.

Saturday, October 21, 9 am to 12 pm

Habitat restoration and litter pickup at Shady Lane. We have a pizza lunch for the volunteers. Leaders: Ed 513.919.5186 and Robert 859.572.9661.

Saturday October 28, 9 am to 12 pm

Habitat restoration at Whitetail Woods. Leader: Gary 513.941.5414.

Saturday October 28, 9 am to 12 pm

Habitat restoration at Delshire Preserve. Leaders: Tim 513.922.2104 and Robert 859.572.9661.

# White Snake Root

Sally Sisson Anderson - Artist in Residence, WWC

We live on the edge of the woods, and there are tons of White Snake Root—*Ageratina altissima*, growing along that edge. This plant is a native of North America, and goes by a number of other names, such as Tall Boneset, Squaw weed, and Milk-sickness plant.

White Snake Root occurs north to Canada, and all over the eastern half of the U. S., except in the extreme south. It occurs everywhere in Ohio. The plant is two to three feet tall with showy white clusters of disk florets that are one to two inches across.

This is a weedy perennial that can spread aggressively. The blooms are often fragrant. Distinctive features of the plant include opposite leaves which are heart shaped, coarsely toothed and have a long slender leaf stalk. White Snake Root reproduces by many seeds and rhizomes. Flower heads are transformed in late October into black seeds with silken parachutes to carry them away.

This is a fall blooming plant. It is easy to spot in the autumn in many shady areas such as field edges, meadows, woods, road sides, and woodland edges. It is quite common; you probably have some in your backyard. This species grows best in basic soils, but does okay in clay and in dry areas or disturbed areas.

Native Americans used a decoction of the roots to cure snake bite- hence, the name of the plant. It is poisonous to horses and goats, but deer will not eat it. The leaves and stems of this plant contain tremetol, which is extremely poisonous.

Generally, cows will not eat it, but in over grazed pastures they will eat it. This gets in their milk, causing milk sickness in people. In

the 19th century there was an epidemic of milk sickness resulting in many deaths. Abraham Lincoln's mother was among those who died.

Insects are attracted to the nectar of the flowers. Bees, butterflies, moths, flies, and wasps feast on the nectar of the flowers of white snake root. The caterpillars of several moths will eat the foliage. Other insect feeders include borers, the larvae of flies, aphids, the leaf beetles, and leaf miners.

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**Native Americans used a decoction of the root to cure snake bite — hence, the name of the plant.**



# BENDER MOUNTAIN PLANT SURVEY SHOWS THAT RESTORATION EFFORTS REALLY WORK

by Jeff Ginter

The hits keep coming! Local nature supporters and plant enthusiasts will be excited to learn that a peer-reviewed research paper entitled [\*A List of the Vascular Plants of Bender Mountain Preserve \(Including Adjacent Parts of the Delhi Township Property and Sisters' Hill\)\*](#), was recently published in the Ohio Biological Survey Notes. The authors were Denis Conover, WWC President Tim Sisson, Dan Boone and Mary M. Riestenberg.

The survey has so far identified 431 different species of [vascular plants](#) (these are land plants which have tissues for conducting water and minerals throughout the plant). What's extra special about the Bender Mountain Nature Preserve is that this is a restored area. WWC volunteers have methodically worked to remove invasive plants species like Amur honeysuckle from Bender and our other managed properties. Honeysuckle is particularly bad, as the dense thickets eventually choke out practically everything except existing taller trees.

So how long have volunteers at the WWC been removing invasive honeysuckle? The first reference to honeysuckle control that I could find in archived WWC newsletters was from the [Summer 2002](#), where it states that "Bob Nienaber is researching the best way to remove the Amur Honeysuckle." (By the way, Bob is still a volunteer for the WWC and currently serves on the Board of Trustees.) It was in 2004 that WWC volunteers began removing invasive species at Bender.

So, what's the result of 13+ years of this work at Bender? The payoff is the return of native species, since native propagules (e.g. seeds, spores) are often still present in the ground. The spectacular diversity of species at Bender is evidenced by this research. To quote lead author Denis Conover, "I hope [this research] will encourage other groups not to give up on their nature preserves. Non-native invasive species can be controlled and native species can come back as long as native plant propagules are still viable."

It's important to recognize milestones and celebrate successes, of which this research is one important example. So a big shout-out of congratulations and thanks to the researchers and volunteers for the years of work behind this paper. All WWC members can take pride that their support of the WWC mission has contributed to this achievement. As Tim Sisson said, "It is very much the result of all our efforts to clear the invasives from Bender."



Tim Sisson

Lead author Dr. Denis Conover in action at Bender Mountain Nature Preserve





## Membership Donations –Thank You!

**Black Walnut Tree of Honor**  
Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their membership support of \$1,000 or more:

Cincinnati Wild Flower Preservation Society  
Walt and Susan McBeath

**Beech Tree Steward Recognition**  
Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$200 to \$499:

Tom Malone



Swamp Milkweed with Pollinator — Bender Mountain

Tim Sisson



Hibiscus — Bender Mountain

Tim Sisson

**Paw Paw Steward Recognition**  
Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$100 to \$199:

Judy and Bill Chamberlain  
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Richard Stoll

### WWC is grateful for the following Donors and their generous gifts:

In memory of Bob Maxwell and Paul Schuch — Donation by Bob and Judy Neal

In memory of Bob Maxwell — Donation by Joyce Richter

In memory of Dr. Terrence Wessler — Donation by Mary Perkins

Donation by Liz Maxwell



## Western Wildlife Corridor 2016–2017 Membership

All donations \$100 or more will receive a special recognition in *The Steward*.  
 \$500 or more will be prominently displayed on the Tree of Honor located in the Kirby House Great Room — A Lasting Memorial!

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### TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

- \$25 Individual Hiker
- \$35 Family Pathfinders
- \$55 Organization Trailblazer
- \$75 Mountain Climber

### WWC STEWARD RECOGNITION

- \$100 Paw Paw
- \$200 Beech
- \$300 Sycamore
- \$400 Sugar Maple

### TREE OF HONOR

- \$500 Red Oak
- \$1,000 and up Black Walnut

Volunteer! May we contact you with volunteer opportunities?  YES

Donate online with at [www.westernwildlifecorridor.org](http://www.westernwildlifecorridor.org)

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

WWC is an IRS certified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

## Recent Finds in Our Preserves



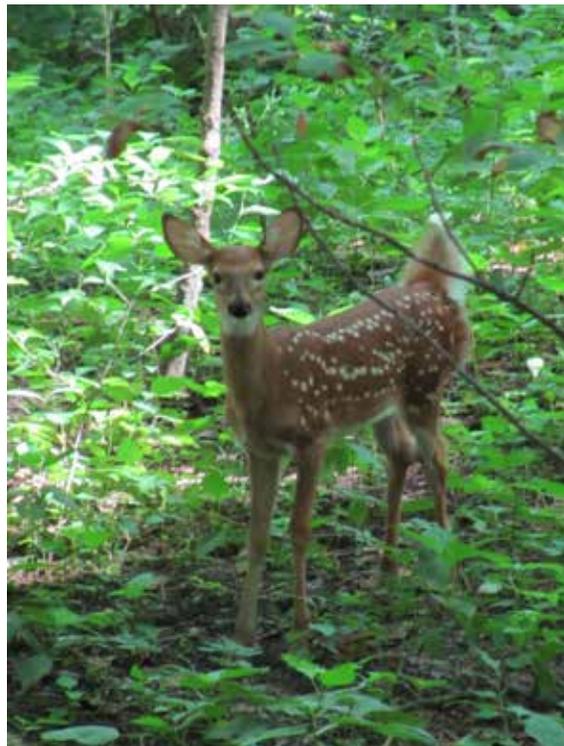
Tiger Swallowtail — Bender Mountain

Tom Malone



Fungus — Delshire Preserve

Tim Sisson



Fawn

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### Special Thanks

#### Thanks Leesa Miller

Leesa served on the WWC Board of Trustees for several years, putting heart and soul into the activities, bringing smiles and laughter to many people along the way. We appreciate all her efforts. Thank you very much, Leesa, for all you have done. The best of luck as you move on to new ventures!



Tired but happy after a morning whacking honeysuckle

Tim Sisson



Box Turtle

Jessee Smith

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