



Harbinger-of-spring at Bender Mountain

Tim Sisson

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

Exciting Times in the Corridor

by Tim Sisson



Spring beauty at Bender Mountain

Tim Sisson

Early spring when the world is warming and life is coming back to the forest is very exciting for those people who love to hike the hills of the Western Wildlife Corridor. Many of us can't wait to roam the forest to see what has popped up and what is blooming. It's an exciting time for the wild flowers too – you can almost see them trembling with excitement as their blooms get ready to burst into the open.

You often see the wild flowers in full bloom, basking in the sun. I'm going to show you some of that, but something a little different too – the plants as they push into the open and blooms that have not quite opened yet.

First this year, as usual, was a harbinger-of-spring. I found it on Bender Mountain on February 25. I then found cut-leaf toothwort and Virginia bluebell on March 3 and spring beauty and purple cress on March 5. The purple cress was open, but just barely. Next I found bloodroot on March 6, sharp lobed hepatica on March 7 and false rue anemone on March 10. These were at three of our preserves, Bender Mountain, Kirby Nature Preserve and Buckeye Trace Preserve.

Then the weather turned chilly – remember that? We had snow three times, in March! The wild flowers went into hiding. Even though they can tolerate a little snow, it is no fun for them. It wasn't until March 26

that I found some more new bloomers – blue violet and wild blue phlox at the Kirby Nature Preserve. But that's not the whole story. Many other wild flowers without blooms were making an appearance, some in true "carpets"; broad-leaved waterleaf all over the slope at Bender Mountain, trout lily in large areas and the bright green patches of ramps. To me these, as much as the flowers themselves, show the exciting face of spring. They truly transform the forest floor into a vibrant place of green and show us the promise of the many wild flowers to come as spring unfolds.



Purple cress at Bender Mountain

Tim Sisson

Native Plants and Monarch Waystation 16752

by Jeffrey Ginter

The beautiful monarch butterfly is of course native to our area. As I imagine most members of the Western Wildlife Corridor know, the eastern North American monarch population is famous for its annual migration, which covers thousands of miles and takes multiple generations to complete. But the monarch is much less common than it used to be. By one authoritative estimate, the population of the monarch has declined in North America east of the Rocky Mountains by more than 90% in just two decades! Researchers state that a big reason for this massive decline is the **loss of habitat** where monarchs breed, as well as where they overwinter. Monarchs rely on **milkweed** as a place to lay their eggs, and the milkweed provides the food for monarch caterpillars. So when milkweed disappears, so do monarchs.

As a land conservancy, the Western Wildlife Corridor has a part to play in support of the monarch and other pollinators. First is through *protecting* land through donation, purchase or via conservation easements — that is foundational to our mission. Second is through *preserving* the land in a natural state, which of course for us includes removing invasive plants. Invasive plants, like Amur honeysuckle, are very effective at crowding out native plants, including milkweed species. We've been removing invasive plants from our managed properties for more than fifteen years. It's a big job, but slowly we are restoring local habitat which is crucial to native wildlife, as milkweed is crucial for the survival of the monarch. Monarchs also require nectar from flowers, and the native wildflowers which are coming back at our preserves provide those needed energy sources.

At our Kirby Nature Preserve, we are taking additional steps. At Kirby, we are **actively reintroducing native plants** as part of our restoration efforts. In June 2017 seeds from more than 45 different native plants were sown in the new prairie, and also along the edge of the adjacent forest. WWC volunteers John Klein and Tim Sisson have taken a lead on this, donating seeds from their own collections to help start a prairie on the property. These included native milkweed seeds and seeds for many nectar-producing plants. In January 2018, volunteers sowed seeds again from more than a dozen native plants, right before an expected snowfall.

Another important activity at Kirby relates to our choices in landscaping. The landscaping and gardening team, led by volunteers Debbie Lutkenhoff and Mary Uhlenbrock are using native plants in their landscaping. As part of this effort, they have created a "pollinator garden," where the volunteers care for and maintain native plants which are beneficial and attractive to butterflies and other pollinators. This

was initially planned and organized by Jillian Stetter as part of the requirement for her Girl Scout Gold Award. Jillian was helped by many friends as well as WWC volunteers Joyce Richter, Tom Malone, Bruce Cortright, John Obermeyer, John Klein, Tim Sisson, Vince Adwan and Marie Finn. Emily Corso had a picture window installed so that the garden could be viewed from inside the Kirby Nature Center. This was as part of her requirement for a Girl Scout Gold Award.

With that achievement, WWC member Kathy McDonald applied for certification for the Kirby pollinator garden as a *Monarch Waystation*, a nonprofit educational outreach program based at the University of Kansas, and part of a national, large-scale effort to preserve the monarch. Happily, we received this registration in June, 2017, and our Kirby Nature Center is now Monarch Waystation 16752. Congratulations to the team! This is great stuff, but we're not done yet! Many additional native plants will be added to the prairie this year. In addition, native plants that will benefit pollinators and provide food for wildlife are also being introduced along the edges of the prairie and lawn. So many thanks to the volunteers who are contributing to this developing success story. With the support of our volunteers and all the members of the Western Wildlife Corridor, we are doing our part to preserve and protect habitat for the monarch butterfly and other pollinators.

How you can help

WWC volunteers have made great strides in helping support native plants. But we need help! For example, we need extra hands this spring and summer for maintenance of the developing prairie: weeding, plantings and seed sowing. If you are interested in helping, here are some ideas:

1. Plant milkweed and native wildflowers in your own backyard.
2. Avoid the use of herbicides and insecticides.
3. Continue to support the Western Wildlife Corridor as a Member.
4. Participate in a WWC habitat restoration event and whack some honeysuckle.
5. Join the WWC Native Plant and Gardening team! Contact Debbie at 574-8921 for more information.

To learn more about the monarch:

Wikipedia:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarch_butterfly

Monarch Watch:

<http://www.monarchwatch.org/>

WWC on the web:

<http://westernwildlifecorridor.org>

To learn more about the importance of native plants:

Wild Ones: <https://www.wildones.org/>

Upcoming Events: April – June, 2018 Enjoy the Western Wildlife Corridor

Mark your calendars! We have a very nice series of events planned to start the year. Highlights for some events can be found below. For details about these events, and more, check out website calendar: <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar/>.

Fourteenth Annual Flower-a-thon

Saturday, April 28, 9:00 am – 8:00 pm

Kirby Nature Preserve and Bender Mountain

The Flower-a-thon hikes will give you a great chance to learn about the wildflowers of our region. Experts will lead us on hikes through several preserves in the corridor, showing us the amazing variety of plants there. Contact Tim at 513.922.2104 for more information, or go to our webpage to learn more, and to register: <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/2018-flower-a-thon/>.

“Backyard Herping”, with Dean Alessandrini

Friday, June 22, 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Kirby Nature Center

Over the past 4 years, Dean Alessandrini has converted his yard into a wildlife sanctuary, with emphasis on creating habitats for our native reptiles and amphibians. He now has 5 species of snakes, 2 species of salamanders, and 6 species of frogs and toads residing on his property. In this presentation, Dean will show us how he accomplished this, and discuss the habits and habitats of many of the “herps” that are native to the tri-state area. Go to <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar/> for more information and to register.



Snake at Kirby Nature Center

Tom Malone

Habitat Restoration plus:

What’s our habitat restoration all about? It’s one of the most important things we do! If you have never done one of these, go to <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/newsletter/> and see our *Frequently Asked Questions* article in the Winter 2018 newsletter.

Saturday, May 12, 9 am to 12 pm

Trail work and habitat restoration at Kirby Nature Preserve. Leaders: Matt 513.604.6728, Molly 973.342.7921 and Ed 513.919.5186.

Saturday, May 26, 9 am to 12 pm

Habitat restoration and other miscellaneous work at Buckeye Trace. Leaders: Gary 513.941.5414, Robert 859.572.9661 and Tim 513.922.2104.

Saturday, June 9, 9 am to 12 pm

Habitat restoration at Shady Lane. Leaders: Robert 859.572.9661, Ed 513.919.5186 and Matt 513.604.6728.

Mid-week hikes

Finally, did you know that Western Wildlife Corridor volunteers do a mid-week hike almost every week? This is where we might do some light habitat restoration or trail building. Email Tim Sisson at hikertim419@gmail.com to be added to the distribution list.



Bloodroot at Buckeye Trace

Tim Sisson

Fernleaf Phacelia

Sally Sisson Anderson

Artist is Residence, Western Wildlife Corridor

This attractive and rare little wild flower is in the waterleaf family. The round lavender blue flowers measure ½ half to one inch across. The light green leaves are divided into five deeply lobed segments, on a plant that is one and a half feet tall. The blooming period occurs in April and May. It can be found in the Delshire Preserve of Western Wildlife Corridor, and also at Buckeye Trace Preserve.

There are a number of different names for this plant: for instance, scorpion weed, spotted phacelia, and loose flowered phacelia. It might be best to look for the scientific name—*Phacelia bipinnatifida*. The plant can be beautiful when massed in the woods. Phacelia requires a shaded environment and rich soil. It is often found in low areas and along creeks.

One or two weeks after the flowers have faded, the round capsules of seeds ripen. About this time, too, the plant starts to deteriorate and by June has completely disappeared.

The nectar and pollen of the flowers attract many bees. Some other insects found enjoying the phacelia flowers are butterflies, skippers, and wasps. The foliage of the plant is eaten by the skeletonizing leaf beetles.

There are several different species of phacelia. There is a white flowering species called *Phacelia fimbriata*. It is rare and native to the mountains of the southeast. There is one other phacelia in the Kentucky and Ohio area. It is called Miami mist. This wildflower has fringed flower petals, and is found in cleared areas, woods, and road sides. On Western Wildlife Properties, it can be found in the Turkey Haven preserve.

If you wish to grow this wildflower in your garden, see that it is planted in partial shade with good soil and sufficient moisture. Phacelia

is easy to grow from seed. The seeds can be gathered from the wild or you can buy them from a wildflower catalog. To harvest them from the wild, find a healthy colony in the woods. Mark a couple of blooming plants with a stake, then come back in two weeks when blooming is past. To collect seeds, simply cut off the plant, and place it in a bag. Removing plant tops does not harm the population. Note, only collect plant seeds with the permission of the land owner.

If you wish to grow this wildflower in your garden, see that it is planted in partial shade with good soil and sufficient moisture.

Allow the seeds to air dry at room temperature for a week, then plant the seeds. Either plant them directly in the garden or in a seed flat. If you do not plan to plant immediately, store them in a refrigerator until time to sow.



Registration for Western Wildlife Corridor 2018 Flower-a-thon April 28, 2018

Tax deductible contribution for Flower-a-thon (\$15 per person) Total \$

Name _____ Phone number (____) _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City, State, Zip _____ Email _____

Check enclosed Visa or Mastercard number _____

Name on card: _____

CSV: _____ Expiration: _____

Please return registration form and payment 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! WWC is an IRS certified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Create Your Legacy at WWC



Make Your Annual Gift Last Forever

Perpetuating your annual support can be as simple as adding a bequest to your estate plan, naming Western Wildlife Corridor beneficiary of a life insurance policy or of a deferred compensation plan, or via some other deferred gift vehicle that designates a certain amount or percentage from your estate to Western Wildlife Corridor.

Thoughtfully crafted gift plans offer benefits to the donor as well as to Western Wildlife Corridor.

For more information on how to accomplish your goals and leave a lasting gift for nature, please contact WWC at 513.922.2104 or hikertim419@gmail.com



Kirby Nature Center

Tom Malone



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:

- Anonymous
- Walt and Susan McBeath
- Jeff and Michelle Ginter

Red Oak Tree of Honor

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$500 to \$999:

- Thomas family: Scott, Molly, Piper & Paige
- Anita Gale
- Matt Taylor

Beech Tree Steward Recognition

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$200 to \$499:

- Sally Anderson
- Anita Buck and Stephan Pelikan
- James and Patricia Neidhard
- Jim Dolle
- Ron Kruse



Carpet of broad-leaved waterleaf at Bender Mountain

Tim Sisson



Wild blue phlox at the Kirby Nature Preserve

Tim Sisson

Paw Paw Steward Recognition

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

- Rita May Allen
- Jon Bender
- Tanya Carter
- Dave and Denise Miller
- Bob Streicher
- Bill and Janet Torok
- Heidi and Gary Voss
- Mark and Barbara Alexander
- Rebecca Sisson
- Mike Miller
- Wild Birds Unlimited
- David Rudemiller
- Robert Hampel

Special Thanks

Western Wildlife Corridor would like to give special thanks to Rebecca Sisson for all her efforts over the years participating on our Board of Directors. We wish her the best in all her future endeavors!



Western Wildlife Corridor 2017-2018 Membership

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

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

Enclosed is my tax deductible donation: New Member Renewal

Add My Additional Donation for Land Acquisition: \$ _____

Total charges to be made to my account: \$ _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Check enclosed (*make payable to Western Wildlife Corridor*)

Visa/Mastercard Number: _____

Name on Card: _____

Expiration Date: ____ / ____ Zip ____ CSV ____ \$ ____

Volunteer! May we contact you with volunteer opportunities? YES

Donate online with at www.westernwildlifecorridor.org

Mail to Western Wildlife Corridor, P.O. Box 389077, Cincinnati, OH 45238-9077

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

What is a Wildlife Corridor?

by Bob Nienaber

Wildlife corridors are links to fragmented habitats to allow wildlife to roam longer distances free of human development. This is important as development tends to break up large tracts of existing habitat. Benefits include genetic diversity being increased as previously isolated individuals meet new potential partners. Also additional feeding areas can become accessible to hungry wildlife.

The Western Wildlife Corridor is truly a wildlife corridor as properties linking preserves are priority one acquisitions. Whitetail Woods is now linked with Buckeye Trace. Another example is the link between the Kirby Nature Center and Turkey Haven.

Wildlife corridors are a worldwide phenomenon. Here are some examples:

In India, elephant corridors allow these giants access to wild areas. Currently there are 88 elephant corridors throughout the country.

The Paseo del Jaguar (The Path of the Jaguar) is a proposed system of preserves and corridors to run from the United States, through Mexico and Central America into South America to protect the jaguar.

You can see that the Western Wildlife Corridor is on the cutting edge of wildlife conservation.



Area of trout lily at Bender Mountain

Tim Sisson



Patch of ramps at Bender Mountain

Tim Sisson



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Tim Sisson

Trout lily almost open at the Kirby Nature Preserve so close to popping open



Tim Sisson

Drooping trillium at Bender Mountain getting ready to bloom



Tim Sisson

Dutchman's breeches almost open at Bender

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