



## Kirby Nature Center PlayScape

by Mary Perkins

*Your Support Will Help  
Serve the WWC Core Mission!*



The Kirby Nature Center PlayScape is planned to be an exciting new addition to the Western Wildlife Corridor's assets. Currently our volunteer committee members have been working intensively to create a design that will offer many diverse opportunities for nature-based education and exploratory play. Our hope is to inspire in local children a deep love of nature and a desire to protect our local habitats, wildlife, and resources.

Through an initial grant from Oxbow Incorporated and money from donors we were able to hire Rachel Robinson, the landscape designer who created the Cincinnati Nature Center's Nature Playscape. We are so fortunate to have Rachel's expertise to bring our vision into reality. With this play complex we hope to accommodate, attract and serve a diverse community of tri state citizens with activities and educational exhibits focused on 2-10 year olds. We plan to follow ADA standards and offer some special features for disabled users. We also plan to connect the PlayScape to the Kirby Nature Center's trail system for older kids and teens to enjoy. We want to provide spaces for adults/parents to interact with the children. Our target groups include: Scouts, homeschoolers, Boys and Girls Clubs (minority focus), the disabled (esp. blind and deaf), school groups, neighboring towns/villages and really "Greater Cincinnati" residents.

We are designing a wide range of activities to encourage play, learning, and socialization. Our playscape will have a goal to help improve children's gross motor skills with features that encourage climbing, swinging, jumping, running, crawling and balancing. Other planned areas of specific interest are a wildlife observation area, bird blind, a butterfly garden, pollinator prairie and a water garden all planted with native plants trees and shrubs.

As much as possible we will use nature sourced materials like rocks, logs and stone, and create Tarzan ropes, tunnels, observation decks and maybe

even a zip line! We will supply materials to elicit creative play and socialization by creating teepees, a fort building or a large scale "bird's nest". We hope to install a small amphitheater for meet-ups, nature talks and story telling and musical events. Features may include nature based musical instruments, an artificial stream constructed for play and scientific discovery.

The playscape will include trail and site maps, a topography model, watershed maps and a ground compass We hope to provide materials to study meteorology, local geology, astronomy, archeology and local history and Native American cultures. We will provide fossil and artifact digs, local limestone samples, Native American cultural artifacts and themes incorporating history of the area and the river.

This as you can imagine is quite an ambitious project, so we would love your help. If you are interested please call Mary Perkins at 513-941-7098.

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**The average American child can recognize 1,000 corporate logos, but cannot identify 10 plants or animals native to his or her own region.**

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# Volunteers Corner

## Featured Volunteer

Even before Kirby Nature Center was developed, Chris Sweigard from Wild Birds Unlimited was enthusiastic about Western Wildlife Corridor's mission for the local community. But when a local Girl Scout was vying for her highest rank, he donated the birdfeeders and seed to establish a wonderful bird watch area at the Nature Center as her service project.

He has been helping out ever since with supplying Kirby with bird food. He described his involvement in WWC as "a good partnership in a local organization and one of my favorites."

We offer him our heartfelt thanks! Wild Birds Unlimited is located at 6496 Glenway Ave. 45211.

## 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, March 16, 9 am to 12 pm**

Habitat restoration at Kirby Nature Preserve. Leaders: John 513.304.2310 and Ed 513.919.5186.

**Saturday, March 30, 9 am to 12 pm**

Habitat restoration at Bender Mountain Nature Preserve. Leaders: Jeff 513.451.1737 and Bob 513.476.3274.

**Saturday, April 13, 9 am to 12 pm**

Habitat restoration at Whitetail Woods. Leaders: Gary 513.941.5414 and Tim 513.922.2104.

## 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](mailto:hikertim419@gmail.com) to be added to the distribution list.



Looking at lichen at Bender Mountain

Tom Malone

## Community Volunteers

Boy Scout Eagle Scout candidates' service projects  
Girl Scout Gold Award candidates' service projects  
Elder High School father and son teams.  
Elder High School  
Mount St. Joseph staff  
Mount St. Joseph students

## Partnering Organizations

Miami Township  
Delhi Township  
Oxbow, Inc.  
Hillside Trust  
Great Parks of Hamilton County  
Imago  
Village of Addyston  
Cincinnati Wild Flower Preservation Society



Fall Color Hike at Kirby Nature Center

Tom Malone



Old Man's Beard lichen at Bender Mountain

Tom Malone

## Upcoming Events: January – April, 2019 Enjoy the Western Wildlife Corridor by Various WWC Volunteers

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/>.

### Winter Adventure Hike

Sunday, January 27, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm  
Bender Mountain

Don't let the cold weather keep you inside! Join us for our annual winter hike for some fresh air and exercise. Meet at the barrier at the end of Delhi Pike near the Mount St. Joseph University. The first part of the hike will be on the portion of Delhi Pike that was closed years ago due to hill slippage, but still makes a nice hiking path (commonly called Sisters' Hill Trail). Those who prefer a moderate hike can turn around at the end of this part and return to the meeting place.

Those interested in a strenuous hike can continue on a trail we've constructed up from Hillside Avenue to the top of Bender Mountain to reach old-growth forest and a nice view of the Ohio River. Sightings of the meanderings of wildlife in winter will probably be found, especially if there is snow on the ground! Dress for the weather and wear sturdy hiking boots. *This hike has been carefully scheduled for a Sunday when there is no professional football (so no excuses). There is no cost for this event and families are welcome.* Contact Jeff at 513.451.1737, or John at 513.304.2310 for more information.

### Winter Membership Meeting, with Guest Speaker Tara Poling

Tuesday, February 26, 6:30 pm – 8:15 pm  
Kirby Nature Center

The keynote speaker at the WWC Winter Membership Meeting will be Tara Poling, who is the Program Coordinator at the Marianist Environmental Education Center in Beavercreek, Ohio. She is a Certified Interpretive Guide, native plant gardener, beekeeper and amateur birder. She has more than 15 years experience as a program and workshop leader.

Tara will give a presentation entitled "Native Plants for Wildlife." Native plants can help you conserve water and energy, provide habitat and green your yard! Natives can support pollinator populations, add reliable blooms to a "problem area," help manage storm water, replace aggressive or invasive species, and prevent erosion. More importantly, native plants support our native insects, which in turn create oases for all kinds of wildlife. We'll cover everything you need to make your native garden a success, including selecting species that will thrive in any area of your garden for season-long color and winter interest.

We will also discuss Western Wildlife Corridor's plans for the coming year. Light refreshments will be provided.

The public is invited. There is no cost, but registration is required. Use the following link to register: <http://evite.me/ZkaZwRvV9K>.

### "Reading the Landscape: Cincinnati's Geology and Ecosystems"

Tuesday, March 26, 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm  
Kirby Nature Center

The Western Wildlife Corridor is pleased to announce that local natural historian Stanley Hedeon, Ph.D. and Professor Emeritus, Xavier University, will present "Reading the Landscape: Cincinnati's Geology and Ecosystems" to the WWC membership. Dr. Hedeon is the founder of Groundwork Cincinnati and author of the books *Natural History of the Cincinnati Region* and *The Mill Creek: An Unnatural History of an Urban Stream*. Dr. Hedeon will cover topics including the region's geology, glacial history, soils, streams and ecosystems, with special emphasis on the Western Wildlife Corridor. There is no cost, but registration is required. Use the following link to register: <http://evite.me/jp3uRjcJFh>.

### Fifteenth Annual Flower-a-thon

Saturday, April 27, Times TBD  
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. At the time of publication, we had not yet determined the exact start time for this year's Flower-a-thon. Contact Tim at 513.922.2104 for more information, or go to our webpage to learn more, and to register: <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar>.



Tara Poling will give a presentation entitled "Native Plants for Wildlife" at our Winter Membership Meeting

# THE BLUE JAY

Sally Sisson Anderson - Artist in Residence, WWC

The blue jay is a passerine bird in the Corvidae family, and is a native of North America.

It lives in the eastern and central United States and in southern Canada. Blue Jays breed in both deciduous and coniferous forests. They are common in residential areas as well.

The blue jays diet is composed of mostly nuts and seeds. The birds will eat corn, grains and seeds from bird feeders. The blue jays seek food both on the ground and in trees. They are known to eat other birds eggs and nestlings, but this is a rare occurrence. Their food often consists of beech mast, weed seeds, acorns, peanuts, bread, and insects. Blue jays will sometimes cache food for winter or for later.

Their mating season starts in March and runs through April plus part of May. The bluejay builds an open cup nest in the branches of a tree; both sexes help with the construction. The female has two to seven eggs which she broods for eight to twelve days, while the male feeds her.

The plumage of the blue jay is blue to lavender blue in the crest, back, wings, and tail. It's underparts are white. The black bridle on the face, nape, and throat varies from bird to bird.

Their blue coloration is not derived from pigment, but is the result of light hitting the structure of the feathers. The bill, legs, and eyes are all black. The male and female are almost identical.

The blue jays range from Canada to all of the eastern United States, down to Florida and over to Texas. Thousands of blue jays migrate along the great lakes and Atlantic coast. Most of their migration remains a mystery. Some jays stay north through the winter. Some adults

migrate one year and not the next. The western expansion of the blue jay's range stops where the arid pine and scrub forests begin, which is the habitat of the Steller's jay.

Blue jays have been recorded in captivity to live to 16 or 17 years old. The life span for most wild birds is around seven years. A common cause of the blue jays demise is west Nile virus, but this does not seem to have hurt their numbers any. The oldest known banded blue jay was about 26 years old when it was found dead, caught in fishing gear. It had been banded in Newfoundland in 1989, and was found dead there in 2016.

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**Their blue coloration is not derived from pigment, but is the result of light hitting the structure of the feathers.**

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## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

**Connie Heintz** Growing up on Academy Avenue in Price Hill was an adventure. We were in the city but close to Rapid Run Park to enjoy nature. Having 4 brothers and 3 sisters also made life anything but dull. My father and mother both loved nature and instilled that love in the children. I graduated from Seton High School and then became a college drop-out only to return to college and graduate with a nursing degree in 1977. I married Bob in 1976, have one daughter and one grandson.

I have been a member of WWC for 10 years and have become more active as a volunteer since I retired in 2016. I'm working on the Grant Writing Committee and we hope to have a very successful year obtaining grants for some of WWC upcoming projects. I'm also babysitting my 2-yr. old grandson most days, retirement is anything but dull!

**Molly Hunter** I grew up in a rural area outside of Pittsburgh, PA, spending lots of time hiking and outdoors, generally. I went to college and worked there before living in Puerto Rico for four years and Northern New Jersey for 30 years. Outdoor activities, including removal of invasive plants and trail maintenance, were always part of my life.

When I moved here to be near family, the hills and great rivers warmed my heart, reminding me of my original home. Fortunately, I soon learned about the Western Wildlife Corridor organization, and it felt like a great fit with my interests. It is. Professionally, I was an accountant and, later, an attorney specializing in education law. Very recently, I have retired.

**Matt Taylor** I am from the Washington DC area. Lots of rock hounding, archeology, sports, science fairs, and exploring the woods and mountains in that area in my youth. We missed the first moon landing because we were camped on Old Rag Mountain in the Shenandoah National Park! Went to several schools, accumulating various animal mascots along the way: Virginia Tech (turkeys), Wisconsin (badgers), and Oregon State (beavers). Moved to Cincinnati almost 40 years ago to work for P&G. Worked as a food scientist and an environmental toxicologist (not much overlap there).

I absolutely love being active outside, and now get plenty of that. Frequently too much, followed by napping. Fell in love with the Kirby Preserve, and have worked many hours removing honeysuckle from Kirby. Expanded my contributions to the WWC, met many nice people, and they put me on the board. But I prefer my self-appointed title, Chief Honeysuckle Killer.

## Nature Education Resources

We have many options for education curricula to use at our Kirby Nature Center and other WWC properties. Help us reach out to the next generation of nature lovers!

- **Dater Montessori School** at 2840 Boudinot Avenue in Price Hill has developed a free online curricula called ENCASE or Enjoy Nature Center as School Extension. Their website is <https://datermontessori.cps-k12.org/about/nature-center>.
- **Project Wild** is one of the oldest national multidisciplinary curricula that meets state teaching standards with a wildlife and fisheries theme. It offers 4 different lesson plan books for individual lessons that teachers or camp directors can drop into their lesson planning to meet science, math, language, history, art and other lesson requirements. They now have added pre-school training that meets national Head Start teaching standards and includes features for healthy exercise and healthy snacks as well as music, math and art. The four books include: K-12 Project Wild, Growing Up Wild age 3-7, Aquatic Wild K-12, Flying Wild-bird study, age 6-8. All of these are offered as a training to get the manuals, and some lessons are online at <https://www.fishwildlife.org/projectwild>. Joyce Richter and Mary Ann Rozum have completed the Growing Up Wild Training and have the K-12 and age 3-7 curricula. These references can be used to host activities at Kirby Nature Center and other WWC sites.
- **Project WET, or Water Education for Teachers**, is a global curricula with a water theme and also meets U.S. state teaching standards for K-12. More details are online at [www.projectwet.org](http://www.projectwet.org). It also has multidisciplinary lessons like Project Wild. The next training will be at Fernauld on Saturday, February 23 at a charge of \$25. You will receive the full curricula and training to conduct several lessons. Register at <https://www.hcswcd.org/wet.html>
- **Project Learning Tree** is a similar multidisciplinary K-12 lesson plan with a forestry theme that meets state teaching standards. Their website is [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org). They also give out grants to help implement teaching activities. We are hoping to host a training for this or one of the other curricula at our Kirby center. If you know of teachers that are interested in this training or one of the other trainings, please forward their names and contact information so we can organize a group to [wwc7@yahoo.com](mailto:wwc7@yahoo.com). Most of these trainings include state continuing education credits that teachers may need and typically run a half day and includes copies of all materials.
- Other educational curricula are offered through the **Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4H, and Junior Master Gardeners**.



# 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:

- Liz Maxwell
- Mark and Julie Rudemiller
- Walt and Susan McBeath
- Tim Sisson

## Red Oak Tree of Honor

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

- John and Betsy Betagole
- John and June Reynolds
- Bill and Beth Burwinkel
- Jim and Kim Neil
- Robert and Pam Thomas
- Jim Scott and Donna Hartman
- Joe and Trish Baker
- SC Ministry Foundation

## Beech Tree Steward Recognition

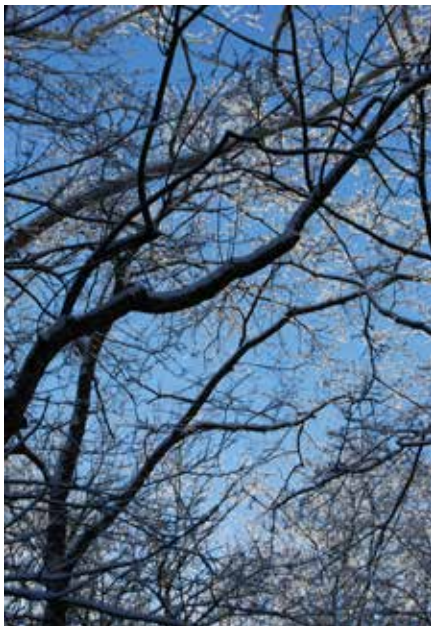
Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$200 to \$499:

- Randy and Jan Johnson
- Roselyn and Stuart Schloss
- Tom and Mary Croft
- Frank Davis
- Tom Malone
- Gary and Norma Rapine
- Alvin Wulfekuhl

## Paw Paw Steward Recognition

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

- |                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
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| Howard and Karen Rechel       | Richard and Jennifer Stoll      |



Beekley Snow

Tim Sisson

The Western Wildlife Corridor gratefully acknowledges the donation in honor of the women celebrating Jubilees as Sisters of Charity this year.



## Western Wildlife Corridor 2018–2019 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](http://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

## 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 Connie Heintz at 513-310-7219 or [heintzconnie@gmail.com](mailto:heintzconnie@gmail.com)



Hikers getting ready at Whitetail Woods

Tom Malone



Tim Sisson

### River Cane

"Dan Boone identified the river cane during the mid-week hike at our Whitetail Woods Preserve yesterday. This is the cane that the early pioneers reported covering large areas of bottomland in Ohio and Kentucky. It isn't a rare plant, but it is unusual – it's the first time I've seen it in one of our preserves." — Tim Sisson



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Holiday Party!

Tim Sisson



Chicadee on Bender Mountain

Tim Sisson



Antlers Found on Sisters Hill

Tim Sisson

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