

## National Recognition for Western Wildlife Corridor

Congratulations to Western Wildlife Corridor (WWC) and our hundreds of members and other supporters for earning the prestigious Land Trust Alliance's Accreditation status in 2021. Foundations and other patrons can rest assured that WWC, as an accredited land trust, meets national quality standards for the protection of important natural places, now and far into the future.

WWC very much appreciates the support of our members and patrons. WWC uses the resources they provide to further its mission to protect, restore and preserve natural habitat and to provide education to foster connections with nature. Our volunteers contribute thousands of hours of their considerable talent towards these goals each year.

In our community, people strongly support saving the open spaces they love. Since 1992, WWC has been doing just that. Now, WWC has achieved national recognition – joining the network of accredited land trusts across the nation that have demonstrated their commitment to professional leadership and to maintaining the public's trust in their work. The Bender Mountain Preserve earns regional and even national praise from knowledgeable hikers and has attracted record numbers of hikers during the pandemic.

"Accreditation demonstrates WWC's commitment to permanent land conservation in the corridor from western Cincinnati to the Great Miami River," said Jeff Ginter, President. "We are a stronger organization for having gone through the rigorous accreditation program. Our strength means special places, such as the Kirby Nature Preserve, will be protected forever, making our community an even greater place for us and our children."

### Strong Commitment to Public Trust and Conservation Excellence

"It is exciting to recognize the Western Wildlife Corridor with this national mark of distinction," said Melissa Kalvestrand, executive director of the Land Trust Alliance Commission. "Donors and partners can trust that accredited land trusts across the country are united

behind strong standards and have demonstrated sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship."

WWC provided extensive documentation and was subject to a comprehensive third-party evaluation prior to achieving this distinction. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded accreditation, signifying its confidence that WWC's lands will be protected forever. Earning accreditation means the WWC organization has committed itself to excellence by adopting and implementing Land Trust Standards and Practices, the ethical and technical guidelines for the responsible operation of a high quality land trust. The standards apply to: Board development and Board oversight of operations; careful and thorough financial

management; exacting land transaction requirements; and sophisticated land stewardship practices.

### Volunteers Make It Happen

Some of our volunteers have become experts in land trust activities by attending Land Trust Alliance workshops and applying those lessons locally. Others clear honeysuckle and other invasive plants, allowing a plethora of beautiful wild flowers to thrive. Volunteers also lead hikes in all seasons, drawing community members to discover and enjoy our preserves. Expertise in land transactions and negotiations is a hallmark of WWC. More mundane but necessary tasks, such as cleaning tools and accounting for the funds generously donated, are also accomplished by skilled volunteers. WWC became officially accredited through the efforts of volunteers, especially Tim Sisson and Molly Hunter.



Mark of Distinction

# A Warm Welcome to Our New President and Secretary



**Jeffrey Ginter, President** – A 27-year employee of one of the largest software companies in the world, Jeff first learned of the WWC when he joined a hike at Bender Mountain in 2008, and he has been a dedicated volunteer ever since. Jeff became a member of the board in 2017 and has served as Secretary, Vice President, and chair of the Events Committee. He currently serves on the Executive, Nominating, and Land Stewardship committees, and he is often to be found hiking Bender Mountain with his family, usually with a saw in hand to clear any fallen branches from the trails. Jeff has some (metaphorically) big hiking shoes to fill as he takes the reins from our past president, Tim Sisson, but his optimism, people skills, and passion for the WWC ensure that he's well suited for the task!



**Steve Johns, Secretary** – A resident of Cincinnati's East End, Steve is the Assistant Director for the Hamilton County Department of Planning + Development. He recently served as the Sustainability Coordinator for Cincinnati's Office of Environment and Sustainability, and as the Executive Director of Citizens for Civic Renewal (CCR), a non-profit organization that seeks to empower citizens to engage in civic action. As the WWC takes on big projects, Steve contributes his professional background and volunteer experience as well as his sense of community, and the board is grateful for his attention to detail as he takes on the role of Secretary.

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## Habitat Restoration plus:

What's our habitat restoration all about? It's one of the most important things we do! If you've never done one of these before, we encourage you to join us, as it doesn't require any special skills. No registration is necessary, but please contact a project leader to make sure it hasn't been cancelled. For more information, please go to <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/habitat-restoration/> and read the document *Habitat Restoration Frequently Asked Questions*.

**Saturday, March 12, 9:30 am to 12:00 pm**

Habitat restoration at Kirby Nature Preserve. Leaders: John 513.304.2310 and Matt 513.604.6728

**Saturday, March 26, 9:30 am to 12:00 pm**

Habitat restoration at Bender Mountain. Leaders: Jeff 513.451.1737 and Ed 513.919.5186

**Saturday, April 16, 9:30 am to 12:00 pm**

Habitat restoration at Whitetail Woods. Leaders: Tim 513.607.2599 and Gary 513.304.4303

For the locations and directions on where we will meet for the habitat restoration projects, please check the WWC calendar: <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar/>

## Mid-week hikes

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.

# Upcoming Events

## Winter Hike

Saturday, January 29 — 3:00 pm  
(Rain Date Sunday, January 30 — 3:00 pm)  
Kirby Nature Preserve

Join us for a Winter Hike at Kirby Nature Preserve! The hike will begin at 3:00 pm through our prairie and into a beautiful cedar glade. Then we'll hike up a creek valley through an equally beautiful forest. The hike will be followed by hot chocolate and s'mores around the firepit! Meet at Kirby Nature Preserve, 2 East Main Street in Addyston, Ohio.

**Cost:** Free, but registration is required at <https://secure.givelively.org/event/western-wildlife-corridor-inc/30th-wwc-anniversary-winter-hike>

## Members Meeting with Presentation by Jack Stenger "Restoring the History of Natural History"

Tuesday, February 22 — 7:00 pm  
via Zoom

The annual Members Meeting and Program will be held via Zoom again this year so we can keep everyone safe! The meeting will begin with an overview of 2021 and vision for 2022 by Western Wildlife Corridor's President Jeff Ginter. Following will be a program by Jack Stenger.



### Restoring the History of Natural History

What is natural? Addressing this question is central to both our enjoyment of nature and our efforts to conserve it. Definitions of "natural" are typically based on reference to historical benchmarks. But how do we choose these benchmarks? In this talk, Jack will attempt to answer these questions while using the habitat preferences of local bird species as the primary examples. Our modern ecosystems and their birds are the result of processes dictated by historical contingencies, historical constraints, and strange twists of fate. Only by a deep dive into their quirky histories can we make sense of our surroundings. Jack's talk will incorporate aspects of local birding, geological and cultural history, paleoecology and natural history to help us address this perplexing question. Adams County is a great place to do so,

as the rich avifauna of the area owes itself to a combination of human land use and "natural" processes, though you may be less convinced of this term after the talk.

Jack has been an avid birder for 21 years and has worked on various bird conservation research projects for Intermountain Bird Observatory, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Ohio State University, and University of Illinois. Jack was a Ph.D. candidate in Biology at the University of Cincinnati, where he has taught Ornithology for four years. He is currently working for Great Parks as a Conservation Biologist. He remains actively involved in the local birding community, having served on the board of the Cincinnati Bird Club and Ohio Bird Records Committee, and actively involved with Audubon Society of Ohio and Oxbow, Inc. He loves exploring the outdoors and sharing his passion with others.

**Cost:** Free, but registration is required at <https://secure.givelively.org/event/western-wildlife-corridor-inc/annual-members-meeting-with-presentation-by-jack-stenger>

## Thank You, Mary Ann Rozum!



Mary Ann Rozum stepped down from the WWC Board of Trustees effective December 2021.

Even before joining the Board, Mary Ann was a key driver in the setup and execution of our last Board retreat, held in 2019. That retreat led to several benefits, including writing our new mission statement and defining long-term, strategic goals for the organization.

As a Member of the Board of Trustees, Mary Ann's professional expertise in conservation, environmental research, and education helped inform our deliberations. She was always quick to volunteer for committees and to step up for needed tasks.

These included grant writing, evaluating properties being considered for donation or purchase, leading the Playscape Committee, leading the Events Committee, and contributing to the delivery of specific events, such as our participation in the Great Outdoor Weekend. And let's not forget all the invasive garlic mustard Mary Ann pulled at Bender Nature Preserve!

Among her diverse interests, Mary Ann showed a passion for K-12 environmental education with the goals to get children engaged with the natural world and developing the next generation of land trust stewards.

Thanks so much, Mary Ann—we wish you great fortune and success in all your future endeavors!

# THE EASTERN SCREECH-OWL

Sally Sisson Anderson — Artist in Residence, Western Wildlife Corridor

I learned to call the Eastern Screech-Owl at a workshop at the Natural History Museum. By using my hands and doing a soft trill I could call them. Sometimes one would answer me in the evening. These owls do not do a loud screech, as the name suggests; they do a soft trill or a tremulous, descending wail.

Most people do not know Eastern Screech-Owls are around because they are nocturnal and small, no bigger than a robin. They are common over much of the U.S., from east of the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic. They have red and gray color variations—rufous owls are more common in the east, but at the western edge of their range, the gray version is much more common. Eastern Screech-Owls live in all forest types, and prefer woodlands that are interspersed with clearings, meadows and fields. These are necessary for hunting. They inhabit wetlands, orchards, parks, gardens, and towns.

Eastern Screech-Owls do not migrate. They maintain home ranges throughout the summer and winter. During severe weather, they may move off their home range in search of food. They are mainly solitary, except during breeding, though pairs sometimes roost together during winter in hollow trees, trees with dense foliage, and in nesting boxes. Males and females look alike, but females are bigger. Eastern Screech-Owls are about eight inches tall, with yellow eyes. They have ear tufts, which are more noticeable when raised, and a light-colored beak.

Before breeding season, males will occupy an area containing several cavities. Females will select a nest from one of the cavities in the male's territory. She chooses a cavity well supplied with food by the male, maybe choosing a nest site that she has raised young in before. Courtship rituals include bowing, wing raising, and bill clicking. The male brings food to the female. Mated pairs preen each other's feathers, and call in duet. Nests are usually found in natural cavities, in abandoned woodpecker holes, hollow trees, or stumps and sometimes in nesting boxes. Eastern Screech-Owls lay three to four eggs in a clutch. The incubation period is 26 to 30 days. The eggs develop at different rates, and hatch at different times. The male brings food to

the female during incubation, then both bring food to the nestlings. The young leave the nest in about four weeks, and are fed by both parents for some time thereafter.

The diet of the Eastern Screech-Owls is one the most varied of all north American owls. They feed on insects, spiders, beetles, crickets, crayfish, earthworms, and all sorts of small birds or animals such as songbirds, frogs, reptiles, small fish, mice, bats, shrews, and voles.

Eastern Screech-Owls hunt from perches in semi-open landscapes. They prefer areas that contain old trees like oaks, these are home to their prey, such as small birds, bats, and so forth. Eastern Screech-Owls have a good sense of hearing, which helps them locate their prey in any habitat. They forage at dusk and at night swoop down to take prey from the ground or from foliage. They possess raptorial claws, and a curved bill, both of which help them to tear their prey into small pieces, making it easier to swallow. They usually carry their prey back to their nests to eat or feed to their young.



Eastern Screech-Owl



# Membership Donations – Thank You!



Tim Sisson

Snow –Kirby Nature Preserve

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

- Anonymous
- Fritz & Mary Jo Bazeley
- John & Betsy Betagole
- Joseph Hampel & Lynn Phelps
- Walt & Susan McBeath
- Helen Meyer

**Red Oak Tree of Honor**  
 Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$500 to \$999:

- Jaqui Brumm
- Bill & Beth Burwinkel
- Tom & Mary Croft
- Mary Elizabeth Huey & Dan Hadley
- Mary & Christopher Perkins
- Mark & Julianne Rudemiller
- Millie Schafer
- Robert Streicher

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

- Anonymous
- Jennifer & Scott Brown
- Louise & Gary Bruemmer
- Mary Lee Busam
- Frank Davis
- John Getzendanner
- Brett & Sherry Goodson
- Timothy Halpin
- Donna Hartman & Jim Scott
- Don & Betty Horak
- Ed & Judy Krautter
- Kathy & John Labmeier
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- Linda Maurer
- Joseph Phelps
- Steve & Darlene Radcliffe
- Gary & Norma Rapien
- Roselyn & Stuart Schloss
- James Nathan Spencer
- Robert Temple
- Larry & Jan Tepe
- Wayne Wauligman DDS
- Wild Birds Unlimited

## Paw Paw Steward Recognition

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

- |                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Marc & Barbara Alexander      | James & Kim Neil          |
| Bill Berger                   | Kathy Nienaber            |
| Jack Berninger                | John Obermeyer            |
| Jim & Kay Bono                | Nan & Mark Plunkett       |
| Ken & Bonnie Borisch          | Howard & Karen Rechel     |
| Allen & Katherine Borneman    | Dusty & JoAnn Rhodes      |
| Judy & Bill Chamberlain       | Ted Riddern               |
| Lisa Cochran                  | Thomas Richey             |
| Jane & Jeff Colarossi         | Marie Salem               |
| Nancy & Charlie Fehr          | Jim Schenk                |
| Mary & Bob Finn               | Keith Schutte             |
| Bob & Debbie Fox              | Jon & Jacqueline Seymour  |
| Ed Gemperle                   | Sisters of Charity        |
| Teresa Gilligan               | Tim Sisson                |
| Cindy & Roger Grant           | John & Carole Snape       |
| Connie & Bob Heintz           | Richard & Jennifer Stoll  |
| Judy & Bob Helmes             | Patricia & George Tenover |
| Deborah Jordan & Bill Calahan | Robert & Pam Thomas       |
| Ron & Kim Kruse               | John Toerner              |
| Joseph & Maria Link           | Western Hills Garden Club |
| Debbie Lutkenhoff             | Mary Jo Wittrock          |
| Montfort Heights Garden Club  | Beth Warmuth              |
| David & Denise Miller         | Pann & Terry Webb         |
| Tom Murphy                    | Alvin Wulfekuhl           |



Tom Malone

Deer – Kirby Nature Preserve



Jeff Ginter

Snow –Bender Mountain Preserve



## Western Wildlife Corridor 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—\$199 Paw Paw
- \$200—\$499 Beech

### TREE OF HONOR

- \$500—\$999 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 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 WWC at 513.921.9453 or [hikertim419@gmail.com](mailto:hikertim419@gmail.com).



Bender Mountain Nature Preserve

Tim Sisson

**For more information check out our website at [www.westernwildlifecorridor.org](http://www.westernwildlifecorridor.org) or email [staff@westernwildlifecorridor.org](mailto:staff@westernwildlifecorridor.org)**

## Bluebird Trail at Kirby Nature Center

In 2020, members of the Western Wildlife Corridor proposed installing a Bluebird Trail at Kirby Nature Preserve. This was met with a positive response, and avid volunteers and donors came to help get the trail off the ground. Chris Sweigard from Wild Birds Unlimited, donating bird houses and poles for the project. John Klein, retired Hamilton County Park District Land Manager, who spent close to 40 years managing Bluebird trails, donated more Bluebird boxes that he made, laid out the best route and installed all of the Bluebird houses on the trail. John also provided training for volunteer trail monitors. The first year monitors were Teri Gilligan, Mark Rudemiller, Gary Rapien, and Kathy McDonald.



The first year was a success, with three successful Bluebird nests, and a few successful Chickadee, Tree Swallow, and House Wren nests too. While we hope to attract Bluebirds, all native cavity nesters are welcome on the Bluebird trail.



The following year, 2021, was not as successful, with only one Bluebird nest. House Wrens, Tree Swallows, and Chickadees each had one or two nests, and again it was not as active as in 2020. We don't know what could have caused a decline in the number of nesting species. Some thoughts were high vegetation around some of the boxes and cyclical factors. All we can do is track the data, while continuing to monitor the trail again in 2022 so that we can track trends over time. For more information on Bluebird conservation the Ohio Bluebird Society, <https://ohiobluebirdsociety.org>. If you are interested in volunteering to be a monitor for this project in 2022, contact Kathy McDonald at [mkmcdonald@me.com](mailto:mkmcdonald@me.com).

*Photo of a Tree Swallow nest from inside the box and a male Bluebird defending his nestbox territory. Courtesy of Kathy McDonald.*

## Thank You, Jeff Doering!



After a full two terms (six years) as Trustee, Jeff Doering has decided to step down from the WWC Board of Trustees, effective November 2021. Jeff Doering's counsel has been both insightful and invaluable, and so many of our board conversations were enriched with the expertise he brought to a broad range of topics.

Jeff's ongoing contributions to WWC have been extensive and are far too many to mention here. But to highlight a couple, Jeff has been the WWC website manager for many years, and he drove our migration to DreamHost in 2020, leading the Website Committee and making the technical changes as we revamped the website.

Jeff Doering was the project leader on our successful effort to renovate the old farmhouse and turn it into the Kirby Nature Center, which opened for business in 2017. With his professional expertise in building design and construction, Jeff spearheaded the building conversion project from conception to design, through the bidding process and to execution. Furthermore, Jeff leveraged his carpentry skills in building the special mobile table for the kitchen, and later, designing and building the sign. And all the while, Jeff was keen to find the most cost-efficient way to get the jobs done.

While Jeff has stepped down from the board, happily he is staying involved with the work at the Kirby Nature Center and the WWC website on an as-needed basis. Thank you, Jeff, for all your efforts in support of Western Wildlife Corridor!



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### WWC Board of Trustees

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- Debbie Lutkenhoff
- Walt McBeath
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- Matt Taylor

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### WWC Committees

- Events:** Kathy McDonald (Chair), Joyce Richter SC, Debbie Lutkenhoff
- Executive:** Jeff Ginter (Chair), Molly Hunter, Steve Johns
- Fundraising:** Richard Stoll (Chair), Steve Johns, Tim Sisson, Joyce Richter SC, Walt McBeath
- Kirby Property Management:** Jeff Doering (Chair), Beth Warmuth, Debbie Lutkenhoff, John Klein, Tim Sisson, Jessee J. Smith, Matt Taylor
- Land Stewardship:** Tim Sisson (Chair), Jeff Ginter, Steve Johns, Roger Auer, John Klein, Gary Rapien, Joyce Richter SC, Jessee J. Smith, Richard Stoll, Matt Taylor
- Trail Construction and Maintenance Subcommittee:** John Klein (Chair), Matt Taylor, Joyce Richter, Roger Auer, Mark Rechsteiner, Tim Sisson, Bruce Cortright
- Membership:** Walt McBeath (Chair), Roselyn Schloss
- Nominating Committee:** Jeff Ginter (Chair), Steve Johns, Tim Sisson
- Playscape:** Debbie Lutkenhoff
- Website Coordination:** Jeff Doering (Chair), Jeff Ginter, Joyce Richter SC

### WWC Leaders

- Constant Contact Administrator:** Joyce Richter SC
- Facebook Administrators:** Jessee J. Smith and Kathy McDonald
- Gardening/Native Plants:** Debbie Lutkenhoff
- Habitat Restoration:** Tim Sisson, Matt Taylor, Molly Hunter, Jeff Ginter, Gary Rapien, Ed Lottman, John Klein, Jeff Shaw
- Human Resources:** Jeff Ginter
- LTA Accreditation:** Molly Hunter
- Mail Processing:** Roselyn Schloss, Molly Hunter, Marie Finn
- Preserve Monitors:** Matt Taylor and Tim Sisson at Kirby; Molly Hunter at Delshire; Joyce Richter, Jeff Ginter, Roger Auer, Jeff Shaw and Rich Helmchen at Bender; Tim Sisson at Buckeye Trace; and Gary Rapien at Whitetail Woods
- Welcomers Administrator:** Matt Taylor

### Newsletter Contributors

- Artist in Residence:** Sally Sisson Anderson
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