

The Steward

Protecting and Preserving the Ohio River Corridor

WesternWildlifeCorridor.org

Winter 2023

Great News—The Kirby Native Pollinator Prairie Trail is Completed!

Mary Perkins

Dear Friends of The Western Wildlife Corridor,

We are proud to announce that the Pollinator Prairie Trail at our Kirby Nature Preserve in Addyston, Ohio, is finished. The trail is free and open to the public. We cordially invite and encourage you to visit.

The Prairie Trail is the First Step of Our Children's Early Education Nature Playscape Dream Plan

Do you recall a lovely childhood moment seeing a bee busily collecting pollen alight on a garden flower, or a hummingbird or butterfly swiftly probing each flower for delicious nectar? We at Western Wildlife Corridor wanted to recreate such a magical moment for today's children, as well as natureloving children of all ages, in

a richly educational environment. The Prairie Trail is a first step in our larger plan to create an Early Education Nature Playscape (Figure 1, next page). To begin this dream project, we consulted with an early childhood education expert at the UC Arlitt Center (Leslie Kochanowski, Ph.D). Luckily for us, Leslie worked on the Cincinnati Nature Center Playscape, so she was a real find. Leslie shared her expertise and knowledge about the huge benefits-mental, physical, and even spiritualthat young children can derive from being deeply immersed in our natural environment. Our Prairie Trail and Nature Playscape are designed to provide children these important benefits. The Playscape targets children ages 2-10 to enjoy hands-on experience by exploring and learning in a mostly self-guided educational environment. Children will be playing, but also learning about our local native wildflowers, plants, trees, birds, fossils, creeks, and many other features of our precious local natural environment. Children's senses will be heightened and stimulated by touching, hearing, smelling, feeling, and even tasting nature (ever try a yummy pawpaw?). Instilling love of our beautiful natural world in young hearts will hopefully create a next generation of nature lovers, protectors, and preservers.

The Dream Begins...The Local Native Plant Prairie Trail Story



 ${\bf Butterfly\ on\ Thistle-Kirby\ Nature\ Preserve\ Prairie}$

Our Pollinator Prairie was designed and installed by our board member, John Klein, and his hard-working volunteers. John and his team created a beautiful and colorful prairie by planting a diverse array of local native pollinating flowers and plants. Easy access to the prairie was a problem, so in November 2022, we broke ground on a six-foot-

wide crushed gravel trail. Our vision for the prairie trail was to provide an easily accessible vantage point where native insects, birds, and plants could be examined up close. The Prairie Trail more than delivers. We carefully planned this trail to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The trail will benefit wheelchair users, visitors with visual and mobility impairments, and other challenged individuals. The trail is easily accessible, of very low difficulty, and encircles our existing Prairie. The over-arching Nature Playscape design, with Prairie Trail, was created by Rachel Robinson, a local landscape design architect recommended by Leslie. Rachel led our ad hoc volunteer committee and translated our ideas/dreams into an amazing design (Figure 1, next page), with the Pollinator Prairie trail as a significant first step. We were very fortunate that Rachels' team helped create a playscape at the Cincinnati Nature Center, so we knew we were in very good hands.

continued next page

The Kirby Native Pollinator Prairie Trail is Completed!

continued from previous page

Who Will the Prairie Trail and Nature Playscape Serve? Everyone!

The Prairie Trail and playscape complex is targeted to accommodate, attract and serve a diverse community in the tristate area. Some of our local communities are underserved in nature exposure and amongst the poorer areas of the tri-state region. Our target populations for



Overview Of Prairie Trail And Barn.

enriching children educational experiences include local grade schools, Scouts, and the physically challenged, but will also welcome all of the greater Cincinnati area children of all ages in its scope, particularly in the Western Wildlife Corridor of the Ohio River.

Can You Help Us Continue our Dream?

The Nature Playscape is being built incrementally, based on availability of grant funding and donations, and we are always looking at new

sources of revenue. Happily, it is members and donors like you, and other friends of WWC, who are starting to make the dream come true. A generous grant from a sister organization, the Oxbow Inc., funded hiring our landscape expert. Other grants and our members' generosity have funded the

construction of the Prairie Trail. We are so very grateful to all of you, and we genuinely thank you for helping us make our dream come true. We particularly want to give a very special and grateful shout-out and thank you to our Board member, Debbie Lutkenhoff, for leading this project

to completion. Of course, as with any very ambitious dream, much more needs to be done to complete the Children's Nature Playscape. If you are interested in volunteering or donating to the Nature Playscape, we would really appreciate your help. Once again, I thank each and every one who contributed to this worthy project.

Mary Ann Perkins

Western Wildlife Corridor—Board Vice President e-mail: zozo5629@gmail.com



Prairie Trail rock features provide visual delight.



Figure 1. Kirby Nature Playscape Phase One Design by Rachel Robinson Design. We thank Rachel Robinson so much for a great design and her knowledge and generosity in all she does.



Prairie View Bench. A very special thanks to Jeffrey Allen Corporation and a great crew for going above and beyond in constructing our trail.

Upcoming Events

Winter Adventure Hike

Saturday, January 28 — 2:00 p.m.

(Rain Date Sunday, January 29 - 3:00 p.m.)

Kirby Nature Preserve

Join us for a Winter Adventure Hike at Kirby Nature Preserve! The hike will begin at 3:00 p.m. through our pairie and into a beautiful cedar glade. Then we'll hike up a creek valley through an equally beautiful forest. Meet at Kirby Nature Preserve, 2 East Main Street in Addyston, Ohio.

Winter Bird Walk

Wednesday, February 15 - 9:00 a.m.

Kirby Nature Preserve

The focus will be on Sparrows, as well as any other birds we might find! Join Kathi Hutton, a Cincinnati resident for over 35 years. Kathi started birding when she identified her first White-Crowned Sparrow in her backyard in 1994. She currently has a life list of 430 species in North America and over 500 worldwide. Beginners are welcome! Dress for the weather; binoculars/camera, sturdy shoes, and water recommended. Meet at Kirby Nature Preserve, 2 East Main Street in Addyston, Ohio. Cost: Free. RSVP Kathy at events@westernwildlifecorridor.org.

Winter Membership Meeting

Tuesday, February 28 - 7:00 p.m.

via Zoom

Updates on what is happening around WWC with a presentation on Riparian Ecology by Dr. Kendra Cipollini. This talk will give some interesting information about the unique habitat found in most of the properties in the Corridor. Cost: Free. RSVP at https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/wvomw1qjGOuX38KIzMrUHq

Invasive Plants Blitz

Saturday, March 11 - 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Kirby Nature Preserve

Everyone is welcome to join in to help WWC remove invasive species from our beautiful Kirby Nature Preserve. Keeping native species out of these areas benefits the ecosystem and local wildlife by giving native vegetation a chance to emerge and create much needed biodiversity. A simple lunch of soup, bread, and desserts will be provided for your efforts. This is a good chance to learn from experts about invasive species, how to identify and eradicate them successfully. Cost: Free. RSVP at https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/TRYsPVIw6_YHx80YvR7Hzg

Spring Wildflower Walks

Wednesday, March 29 - 11:00 a.m. Bender Mountain

Saturday, April 1-10:00 a.m. Delshire Preserve and Bender Mountain

Saturday, April 8 — 10:00 a.m. Delshire Preserve and Bender Mountain

Sunday, April 16 - 10:00 a.m. Bender Mountain

Saturday, April 29 - 10:00 a.m. Kirby Nature Preserve

As Spring approaches and nature brings new life to our landscapes, most of us will be ready for a hike or two. We are offering a series of wildflower hikes on properties owned and managed by Western Wildlife Corridor, an organization with a mission to protect, restore, and preserve natural habitat, and to provide education to foster connections with nature. WWC nature preserves offer some of the best places in Hamilton County to view our spectacular native Ohio wildflowers. We could see Cut-Leaved Toothwort, Sessile and Drooping Trillium, Wild Ginger, Woodland Poppy, Blue-Eyed Mary, Greek Valerian, Dutchman's Breeches, Wild Hyacinth, Miami Mist, Fernleaf Phacelia, and many more. In addition to wildflowers, as a result of the good work WWC has done to remove invasive species, our native trees and shrubs will be leafing out among an abundance of wildlife. You will likely see a migrating warbler or two! Cost: Free. Registration link wil be on our website events page in February.



Columbine - Bender Mountain Nature Preserve



Rue Anemone — Delshire Nature Preserve



Virgina Bluebell —Bender Mountain Nature

The Eastern Chipmunk

Sally Sisson Anderson — Artist in Residence, Western Wildlife Corridor

Isometimes have a chipmunk visit under the bird feeder in the spring. It also comes to our to our patio looking for food. I once found a buckeye well chewed and scraped that it had left behind. The chipmunk is a member of the squirrel family, though it is much cuter than a squirrel. It is believed that the word chipmunk was derived from the name *chetemnon*, the name given to the animal by the Chippewa tribe.

Eastern Chipmunks are found in the United States east of the great plains, north to Maine,

and south to Florida. They are found in all of the preserves of Western Wildlife Corridor. They are common in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. We used to see them often when we vacationed in the upper peninsula of Michigan. They like to forage for food in leaf litter in the woods. as well as in suburban yards, and in parks. They are diurnal (meaning active during the day). Most of their time is spent gathering and storing food

in their burrows.

Chipmunks have short,
dense fur that is reddish brown in color, and
there are five black stripes separated by white,
brown, or grey colors on their backs. There is one
white stripe above and below the eye. They are
about one third to one half the size of a squirrel.
Seeds, nuts, berries, and fruit are what they like
to eat, but they also eat insects, slugs, snails, and
earthworms. Sometimes they will eat eggs of
small birds. They will also eat frogs, and small
snakes.

Chipmunks have cheek pouches in which they can store up to seventy sunflower seeds or other seeds and nuts, before depositing those foods in their burrow for winter.

Eastern chipmunks usually mate a twice a year. The female rebuffs the male after mating, and he does not share in rearing the young. A litter of two to five tiny, hairless young are born after a gestation period of thirty days. They are no more than two inches long.

In about six weeks, they began to take short trips out of the burrow under the supervision of their mother. At eight weeks, the mother prepares for their independence, and two weeks after that, she denies them access to the burrow, and the

young are forced to find homes of their own before winter.

Chipmunks are not true hibernators. They enter a torpid state during which their body temperature decreases, but they awaken often to feed and defecate. They enter their burrows in late October for the winter, but they may come out during warm spells.

Achipmunk digs an amazing burrow. First they dig an entrance hole going two feet, then they dig a sleeping chamber, followed by a hallway to a

food storage area, a chamber for giving birth, and finally an area for defecating. Once the rooms are complete, they plug up the entrance hole and make a new entrance that is in a hidden location (like under a fallen tree or under rocks) that is unseen by predators.

Chipmunks pose no threat to people; however, they can disrupt a garden. They do not do structural damage to your home. In most cases they can be enjoyed or tolerated.

The world is full of peril for chipmunks. Birds of prey are after them, and snakes, weasels, coyotes, and especially foxes like to hunt them. So let's enjoy them and help them to have a happy, safe life.



Volunteer Extraordinaire

by Debbie Lutkenhoff



Don Horak— Volunteer Extraordinaire!

Don Horak has been volunteering at various locations since he was a teenager. He will soon be 89. His mind is still guite active, but his body is slowing down. He started volunteering at the Cincinnati Zoo while still in high school. He continued to volunteer there until very recently. He has been a Master Gardener for 12 years. He provided helpful information and expertise at the "Ask The Expert" booth at the Civic Garden Center's annual plant sale for many years. He was an active member of Cincinnati's WildOnes chapter and promoted the use of native plants well before it was fashionable. He helped with the native plant sales at the Zoo's Bowyer Farm in Mason, Ohio, for many years as well. But most importantly, he has been an avid member of Western Wildlife Corridor for 11 years. Just recently, when he found out about our newest planned property acquisition (Muddy Creek) and the need to plant 100 trees, he quickly and unselfishly donated many of his potted-up pawpaws, white pine, red cedars, and red maples for us. He also allowed me to dig up some bald cypress, oaks, and sweetgums from his vast woodland yard.

He ever so graciously donated several paintings and prints, including a Ruthven painting, to be used at our discretion. It is with pleasure that we at Western Wildlife Corridor honor his generosity for all that he has done in his many years of service. So Thank You, Don!!!! You are the "bee's knees"!

Started New Metal Bridge at Kirby



Barn Renovation Completed



Prairie Trail Completed



Your Donations Were Hard at Work in 2022

Thank You!

PLANNED PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS

- Rapid Run, 11 acres
- Muddy Creek Wetland, 11 acres
- •75 acres planned donation in the Corridor



Rapid Run



Thanks to Our Great Volunteers Too!



100 Trees for Muddy Creek Preserve!

Debbie Lutkenhoff



John Kleir

Tim Sissor

On December 3, a very dedicated group of volunteers/board members gathered together to plant over 100 trees in the crisp sunshine. Having to traverse steep, treacherous hills up and down, the group transported the various plants, shovels, bamboo stakes, fencing, and water to complete the task. Board members John Klein donated 25 trees and 400 acorns he meticulously, scientifically prepared; Tim Sisson donated 4 trees; Mary Jo Bazeley donated 5 trees she received from Cincinnati's Urban Forestry department, and Debbie Lutkenhoff donated 97 trees from various locations including the Civic Garden Center and Taking Root Foundation. The enthusiastic volunteers included Roger Auer, Tim Sisson, John Klein, Debbie Lutkenhoff, Ted Ridder, and Greg Lang. The tree species planted included spicebush, buttonbush, bald cypress, sweetgum, tupelo, red maple, red oak, white oak, swamp white oak, persimmon, pecan, sugar maple, pawpaw, and wafer ash. These wonderful volunteers did a fantastic job, and WWC is forever grateful for all their efforts for this project.

We didn't plant all the plants on Saturday, so we got together today to plant the remaining (18) plants along with stakes and fencing and marker tape. Today's crew consisted of Tim Sisson, Ted Ridder, Debbie Lutkenhoff, and Tom Malone. The final count of total trees planted was over 130. Way to go, WWC!!!



Ted Ridder



Greg Lang



Tom Malone



Membership Donations — Thank You!

Black Walnut Tree of Honor

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of

\$1,000 or more:



Red Oak Tree of Honor

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

Joe & Trish Baker
Jaqui Brumm
Bill & Beth Burwinkel
Tom & Mary Croft
Diane Gerwin
Connie & Bob Heintz
Mary Elizabeth Huey & Dan Hadley
Richard & Marie Jones
Deborah Jordan & Bill Calahan
Robert Streicher



Bluebells - Delshire Nature Preserve

Beech Tree Steward Recognition

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

Jennifer & Scott Brown Robert & Mary Lee Busam Tanya Carter Matthew Cornell Frank Davis Stuart Golder & Margaret Rhein Sherry & Brett Goodson Timothy Halpin Don Horak Molly Hunter Ed & Judy Krautter Kathy & John Labmeier Tom Malone James & Kim Neil Kathy Nienaber Gary & Norma Rapien Howard & Karen Rechel Jim Scott & Donna Hartman Roselyn & Stuart Schloss Keith Schutte Robert Temple Wayne Wauligman DDS Millie Schafer Larry & Jan Tepe Scott Thierauf

Fungus — Bender Mountain Nature Preserve

Paw Paw Steward Recognition

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

Marc & Barbara Alexander Clay & Kathleen Beekley Bill Berger Jim & Kay Bono Ken & Bonnie Borisch Louise & Gary Bruemmer Judy & Bill Chamberlain JoAnn Dirr Al & Debbie Duebber Nancy & Charlie Fehr Mary Finn Debra & Bob Fox Susan Frede Lisa Garofalo Chuck Geraci John Getz & Jo Anne Gibbons John Getzendanner Cindy & Roger Grant Judy & Bob Helmes Carolyn Hughes & Arthur Lee Imago Cathy Kappa Kiwanis Club of Riverview -Delhi Hills John Klein

Ron & Kim Kruse

Betty & Lou Mersch Marty & Robbie Michels Tom Murphy Ann Oliver Andy Patton Mark & Eileen Rechtsteiner Dusty & JoAnn Rhodes Ted Ridder L. Richard Roedersheimer **Bob Schaefer** Jim Schenk Jon & Jacqueline Seymour Rebecca Sisson John & Carole Snape James Nathan Spencer Matt & Jeanne Taylor Mary Tenoever Robert & Pam Thomas Scott & Paige Thomas John Toerner Bill & Janet Torok Heidi & Gary Voss Michael & Susan Walpole Mary Jo Wittrock Mary Wolterman William & Denise Zumvorde



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!

Enclosed is my tax deductible donation: New Member Renewal

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION \$25 Individual Hiker \$35 Family Pathfinders \$55 Organization Trailblazer \$75 Mountain Climber	Add My Additional Donation for Land Acquisition: \$ Total charges to be made to my account: \$ Name: Signature:
WWC STEWARD RECOGNITION ☐ \$100—\$199 Paw Paw ☐ \$200—\$499 Beech	Email:
TREE OF HONOR \$500-\$999 Red Oak \$1,000 and up Black Walnut	☐ Check enclosed (make payable to Western Wildlife Corridor) ☐ Visa/Mastercard Number: Name on Card: Expiration Date: / Zip CSV\$
Volunteer! May we contact you w	vith volunteer opportunities?
Donate online	at www.westernwildlifecorridor.org
Mail to Western Wild	dlife Corridor, P.O. Box 389077, Cincinnati, OH 45238-9077
Thank you for supporting the	Western Wildlife Corridor's mission to preserve the scenic beauty

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

Thank You, Richard Stoll!

and natural resources of the Ohio River Valley!

Western Wildlife Corridor would like to say thank you and bid a warm goodbye to Richard Stoll, who stepped down as a member of the WWC Board of Trustees effective July 1, 2022.

Richard joined the Board in March of 2020. As chairperson of our Fundraising Committee, Richard brought a fresh perspective to the topic. For example, in 2020, Richard was a key driver in WWC joining the Community Shares of Greater Cincinnati, a non-profit federation which helps raise funds for member charities through coordinated annual workplace giving campaigns. In addition to direct fundraising, our participation as one of the member charities broadens the exposure of Western Wildlife Corridor in the Greater Cincinnati area.

Richard also organized WWC dinners (pre-pandemic) at 13 Below Brewery, which in addition to being a fun time to mingle with other WWC members, also was an excellent fundraiser and a chance to get the word out to non-members.

Richard continues to split his time between the west side of Cincinnati and his farm in Indiana, where he puts his knowledge and expertise in conservation to good use by restoring wildlife habitat.

Thanks, Richard, for your support of Western Wildlife Corridor; we wish you the best of luck going forward!

Welcome New Board Members!



Ernest Ciambarella: Born 1947, married to Jeanne, three boys and three grandkids. Have lived on Deer Run Lane since 1986 and enjoy hiking the WWC trails that are adjacent to our property. Community Pediatrician since 1980 with Queen City Physicians, Retired 2020. Besides the grandchildren, my main interests are hiking, biking, and a little astronomy.



Bob Bergstein: Bob grew up in the Cincinnati suburb Wyoming. He attended Lake Forest College, later received a Master's degree in Mathematics at the University of Cincinnati, and then worked in his family business. He has long been interested in all natural history (plants, birds, fossils) and outdoor activities. He has been involved in the Cincinnati Wild Flower Preservation Society (founded 1917) for almost 30 years, serving 6 years as President. This group provides public lectures and hikes, as well as doing invasive plant removals. Other groups he is currently involved in are as a board member of the Dry Dredgers (our local Paleontology Society), the Burnet Woods Advisory Council, and the Avon Woods Advisory Council.

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 11, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Habitat Restoration at Kirby Nature Preserve. Leaders: John 513.304.2310 and Matt 513.604.6728. Luncheon immediately following to be provided by Events Committee. See more information on our events page.

Saturday, March 25, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Habitat Restoration at Bender Mountain. Leaders: Jeff 513.451.1737 and Ed 513.919.5186

Saturday, April 15, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. 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. E-mail Tim Sisson at hikertim419@gmail.com to be added to the distribution list.



PO Box 389077

Cincinnati, Ohio 45238-9077

513 921 WILD (9453)

WesternWildlifeCorridor.org

E-mail: info@westernwildlifecorridor.org Copyright © 2023 Western Wildlife Corridor

WWC Board of Trustees

Jeffrey Ginter, President Mary Perkins, Vice President Molly Hunter, Treasurer Steve Johns, Secretary Roger Auer Mary Jo Bazeley Bob Bergstein Ernie Ciambarella Sarah Kent John Klein Debbie Lutkenhoff Gary Rapien Joyce Richter SC Tim Sisson Jessee J. Smith Matt Taylor

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

Address Correction Requested

WWC Committees

Events: Kathy McDonald (Coordinator), Joyce Richter SC, Debbie Lutkenhoffl, Mary Tenoever

Executive: Jeff Ginter (Chair), Mary Perkins, Molly

Hunter, Steve Johns

Fundraising: Steve Johns, Tim Sisson, Joyce Richter

SC, Walt McBeath

Grants: Mary Perkins, Tim Sisson

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, 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

WWC Leaders

The second second

Constant Contact Administrator: Joyce Richter SC Facebook Administrators: Jessee J. Smith and Kathy

McDonald

Gardening/Native Plants: Debbie Lutkenhoff

Habitat Restoration Project Leaders: 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

Editing, Design, and Production: Marie Finn, Jessee J. Smith

Photographers: Debbie Lutkenhoff, Tom Malone, Tim

Sisson, Jessee J. Smith, Joyce Richter SC