



Natural Ohio

Bob Taft, Governor • Sam Speck, Director
Vol. 27, Issue 2

Spring 2005



rhododendrum

Ohio Historical Society site joins state nature preserve system

It's hard to believe that the landscape surrounding Ohio's 129th state nature preserve began as a farm complete with a hog barn and plenty of acres, all cleared for farming. Today, Wahkeena State Nature Preserve is a testament to the vision of the Ohio Historical Society and the site's former owner, Carmen Warner.

In 1931, Mrs. Warner received 94 acres of old farmland in southern Fairfield County from her husband, Dr. Frank Warner. She named her estate Wahkeena, an Indian word meaning "most beautiful."

In the years after the Warners acquired the site, they tore down old buildings, built new ones and planted more than 10,000 trees on the hillsides surrounding their lodge. The cornfields surrounding their lake and two other ponds were created. After acquiring additional acreage, the site grew to 150 acres. Wahkeena became a popular attraction for birders, garden clubs and other nature enthusiasts.

Wahkeena was bequeathed to the Ohio Historical Society in 1957 "to be used for nature study and as a preserve for birds and other wildlife." The site has been returned to its natural state.

Located on the southeastern boundary of glaciation in the state, Wahkeena hosts an abundance of plants and animals typical of the unglaciated Allegheny Plateau. On the north, the last glacier stopped about a half mile from the preserve. The site's Black Hand sandstone cliffs are forested primarily with tulip trees and oak.

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Best Plant Finds of 2004

Ohio's botanists had another productive year in 2004. Last year's seek-and-find activities resulted in finding one new species, two presumed extirpated and many new sites for some of Ohio's endangered and threatened plants.

Many of last year's exciting rare plant finds occurred in Ohio's botanical hotspots, such as the Oak Openings. Located in Lucas County and stretching into neighboring Fulton, Henry and Wood counties, the area is arguably the most floristically rich in our state.



Fern-Small Grape

Many finds occurred at the site restored from a former pig farm within The Nature Conservancy's Kitty Todd Nature Preserve located in the Oak Openings region of Lucas County. DNAP botanist Rick Gardner and (TNC) Kitty Todd Preserve Manager Gary Haase found

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From the Chief

As I write this, spring has arrived and the annual renewal of the botanical world is evident all around. In mid March, I began to fulfill my wish to spend time in the field, seeing our sites and getting to know the staff who manage Ohio's state nature preserves and scenic rivers. (Those river visits will have to wait until the water warms a bit.)

One of my first trips was to Miller Nature Sanctuary in Highland County, where snow trilliums were just



snow trillium

beginning to bloom. What a spectacular welcome to spring!

While I was visiting the preserve, Martin McAllister, who manages the preserves of our South District and serves as regional manager for all of southern Ohio, and conservation workers, Mark Lewis and Dan Joyce were fighting

one of our most challenging invasive species, garlic mustard. This garlicky-smelling weed threatens native spring wildflowers in many preserves and on private lands across Ohio. Later, Martin and I visited a site close by which is being considered for protection. It was a great early spring day.

I look forward to getting to know more of our knowledgeable field staff. One day in the field more than makes up for the rest of the week spent on administrative activities.

Somewhat less scenic, but no less productive, was the day I spent at the division's annual Botanical Symposium on April 1. The event drew more than 260 botanists, naturalists, biologists and other plant enthusiasts. It was a day filled with meeting new faces and catching up with old friends. The division was well represented—talks included Ohio's Rare Plant Finds, the biodiversity of Crane Hollow State Nature Preserve and the liveliest session by far, by Martin McAllister, on the restoration of Chaparral Prairie State Nature Preserve.

I look forward to meeting more new faces as I attend the division's Natural Areas Discovery Series in the coming months.

Hope to see you on the trail or along the water,

Tom Linkous
Chief, Division of Natural Areas & Preserves

Rare Plant Finds

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18 state rare plants including four endangered species—spatulate-leaved sundew (*Drosera intermedia*), tall grass-like beak-rush (*Rhynchospora recognita*), twisted yellow-eyed-grass (*Xyris torta*) and northern appressed club-moss (*Lycopodiella subappressa*). The latter species is globally threatened, meaning there are less than 20 occurrences worldwide.

Other finds at Kitty Todd included a new population of the endangered small purple fringed orchid (*Platanthera psycodes*) found by TNC's Terry Seidel and a new population of the endangered dotted horsemint (*Monarda punctata*) in an area being restored to oak savanna. Dotted horsemint was thought to be extirpated from Ohio until its rediscovery in 1996.

Nearby, Ted Witham, from Toledo Metroparks, found a large population of dotted horsemint on the Oak Openings Preserve Metropark. John Jaeger, also from Toledo Metroparks, found a large population of the endangered blue toadflax (*Linaria canadensis*). But Metroparks' staff wasn't done finding botanical goodies as Bob Jacksy found three populations of the threatened Gattinger's foxglove (*Agalinis gattingeri*). This species has been making a comeback in the Oak Openings with several new sites recorded in recent years.

The rediscovery of least grape fern (*Botrychium simplex*) was an exciting 2004 find. This tiny fern, about the size of a dime, is one of the hardest to find and was last seen in the Oak Openings in 1984. Former DNAP Botanist Jim McCormac led a group to search for this miniature fern. Those helping him included volunteer Ann Lighthiser, AEP biologist Ray Showman, Dennison University's Warren Hauck and Jordan Smith, plus DNAP staffers Barb Burkholder and Melissa Campbell. After hours of diligent searching, the group discovered a total of eight plants.

Other rarities found in northwest Ohio included a new population of the threatened three-bird's orchid (*Triphora trianthophora*) in Wood County by Robert Huber and Jan Hunter. Gardner and Marshal Moser, a biologist from Auglaize County, found the endangered inland rush (*Juncus interior*) in a small prairie remnant in Defiance County.

To those familiar with the extensive past finds of Jim Bissell, a botanist with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, 2004 was no different. Bissell had a day a botanist could only dream of in the field. Working with interns Ben Gaglioti, David Kriska and Loretta Neal at TNC's Crystal Lake Preserve in Portage County, Bissell found Torrey's bulrush (*Schoenoplectus torreyi*), which was presumed extirpated as it had not been seen in Ohio for more than 100 years.

Other Bissell finds at Crystal Lake included the endangered white-buttons (*Eriocaulon aquaticum*) and the endangered small bur-reed (*Sparganium emersum*) along the lakeshore. It was the third site ever recorded for white-buttons in Ohio and the scend in northeast Ohio. Overall, the rare species at this natural lake total eight—making it



prairie gentian

one of the most important natural lakes in the state. At another natural lake, East Twin Lake in Portage County, Gaglioti, Kriska and Neal found the state endangered western mountain-ash (*Sorbus decora*). This is the fourth site for this species.

Bissell found rarities elsewhere in northern Ohio. He and Rob Curtis, a biologist from Metroparks serving Summit County, relocated northern wood-reed (*Cinna latifolia*) at Gorge Metro park. This species was thought to have disappeared from the park, which was the last recorded site for it.

In central Ohio, McCormac found a new site for the globally rare spreading rock cress (*Arabis patens*) in Franklin County. This species has seen drastic reductions in populations, making new populations extremely important.

Adams County in southwest Ohio is the state's second-most diverse area. Larry Henry of Highlands Nature Sanctuary had one of 2004's best finds—he discovered prairie gentian (*Gentiana puberulenta*) at the Sanctuary's new preserve, Ka-ma-ma Prairie. This endangered species has never been found in the cedar barrens or xeric limestone prairies of Adams County before, although it occurs in similar habitats in Kentucky and further west. There are 43 state-listed plants growing at this 80-acre preserve.

Barbara Lund of Adams County, who finds something every year, found a large population of endangered Carolina leaf-flower (*Phyllanthus caroliniensis*). After discovering Ohio's first occurrence of twining screwstem

(*Bartonia paniculata*) in 2003, botanist Dan Boone of Hamilton County found another population at Stonelick State Park in Clermont County. Botanist Marjie Becus, also of Hamilton County, found yet another population at Indian Creek Wildlife Area in Brown County. This endangered species was added to Ohio's rare plant list in 2004.

A botanist for TNC, Dave Minney, and DNAP's Gardner found the endangered long-flowered alum-root (*Heuchera longiflora*) for the first time in Scioto County. Edge of Appalachia Preserve Manager Rich McCarty and Gardner found another population of this species in Adams County.

Not all of the best finds were plants—Mark Zloba of the Cincinnati Museum Center, found a new lichen for Ohio—the yellow-edged frost lichen (*Physconia enteroxantha*). Found in Adams County, this species occurs primarily west of the Mississippi River.

Moving to south central Ohio, University of Michigan's Tony Reznicek, a leading expert on sedges, found a new state record for frightful sedge (*Carex molestiformis*) in the Hocking Hills region. This sedge is found primarily in Missouri and adjacent states and was described to science by Reznicek in the early 1990s. He found it growing in a dry field at Crane Hollow State Nature Preserve with ecologists Gary and Holly Covert as well as McCormac and Gardner.

Naturalist Paul Knoop, Jr. of Hocking County made another great Hocking Hills find. He found the threatened yellow fringed orchid (*Plantanthera ciliaris*) for the first time in the county. This beautiful orchid is known from only a few sites in Lucas, Scioto and Washington counties.

Further south in Lawrence County, U.S. Forest Service's Cheryl Coon and Gardner found a new population of the endangered tubercled nut-rush (*Scleria oligantha*) at Wayne National Forest. Minney and Gardner found another site for this species in the same county.

The division relies heavily on the contributions from botanists around the state to keep Ohio's Natural Heritage Database current. The division thanks all of the botanists, naturalists and other professionals who contribute to Ohio's botanical knowledge. Good luck

finding more of Ohio's hidden botanical treasures in 2005!

Rick Gardner
Natural Heritage Botanist

More Noteworthy Plant Finds of 2004

ADAMS COUNTY

- Carolina shield lichen (*Canoparmelia caroliniana*—endangered)—Ray Showman
- Few-flowered nut-rush (*Scleria pauciflora*—threatened)—Dave Minney, Jennifer Windus, Warren Stoutamire, Marjie Becus and Rick Gardner
- Leafy goldenrod (*Solidago squarrosa*—threatened)—Rich McCarty and Rick Gardner

BROWN COUNTY

- Deam's three-seeded mercury (*Acalypha virginica* var *deamii*—threatened)—Rick Gardner

DEFIANCE COUNTY

- Yellow vetchling (*Lathyrus ochroleucus*—threatened)—Rick Gardner and Marshal Moser

GEAUGA COUNTY

- Small bur-reed (*Sparganium emersum*—endangered)—Jim Bissell, Rick Gardner, Judy Barnhart, David Kriska and others

HAMILTON COUNTY

- Running buffalo clover (*Trifolium stoloniferum*—endangered)— Dan Boone

HIGHLAND COUNTY

- Mountain-rice (*Oryzopsis racemosa*—threatened)—Dave Minney, Rick Gardner and Larry and Nancy Henry

MARION COUNTY

- Pale umbrella sedge (*Cyperus acuminatus*—threatened)—Jim McCormac

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

- Timid sedge (*Carex timida*—endangered)—Marjie Becus and Dan Boone

OTTAWA COUNTY

- Wapato (*Sagittaria cuneata*—threatened)—Bissell, Kriska, Garrett Ormiston and Windus

PICKAWAY COUNTY

- Carolina leaf-flower (*Phyllanthus caroliniensis*—endangered)—Rick Gardner

SENECA COUNTY

- Few-flowered spike rush (*Eleocharis quinqueflora*—endangered)—Rick Gardner, Walt Jinks, Melissa Moser and Greg Schneider

SUMMIT COUNTY

- Few-flowered spike rush (*Eleocharis quinqueflora*—endangered)—Rick Gardner and Melissa Moser

Ohio Historical Society site

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“With its wide variety of ferns and native wildflowers and the geological significance of the area, Wahkeena is a worthy addition to Ohio’s state nature preserve system,” said Tom Linkous, chief of the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves.

Rhododendron, mountain laurel, ferns and orchids are among the preserve’s showiest plant species. About 30 fern species and eight native orchids can be found, including pink lady’s slipper and showy orchis.

Wahkeena’s 150 acres serve as an outdoor education area for nature study groups and school groups. The site regularly plays host to visiting biologists, botanists, naturalists and other natural resource professionals.

“Since 1957, the Ohio Historical Society has operated Wahkeena as a nature preserve and environmental education center,” said Tom Shisler, Wahkeena’s site manager. “Designation as a state nature preserve reinforces the importance of protecting the local plant and animal communities, as well as promoting the natural history of Ohio.”

Visiting hours from April until November are as follows: M-T, closed; W-Sunday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Entrance and parking fees do apply, with the exception of Ohio Historical Society members. To learn more, please contact (800) 297-1883.

*Heidi Hetzel-Evans
Public Information*

Volunteers help protect fragile habitat



Left to right—Chad Runyon, science teacher, and his student volunteers, Vanessa Gilbert, Tim Fultz and Kelsey Faber.

Members of the Earth Corps Club at Kettering Fairmont High School in Dayton spent a brisk morning cutting woody invaders at Zimmerman Prairie State Nature Preserve. This fen-marsh wetland is a remnant of a once much larger prairie complex that filled the soggy bottoms of Little and Beaver creeks in Greene County. Due to its small size, Zimmerman Prairie is especially vulnerable. Encroaching trees and shrubs threaten to shade out sun-loving prairie plants. By removing them, the Earth Corps volunteers helped to ensure that this fragile piece of natural Ohio remains for all to enjoy.

Nature Preserve Spotlight

Kent Bog State

where time

I first visited Kent Bog in June 1961. I remember seeing barked birch trees, and especially, the dense stand of tamarack. The bog is much the same as it was then. The population of tamarack trees, which continue to reproduce seedlings and saplings



Located at the southern edge of Kent in Portage County, Kent Bog was dedicated as a state nature preserve in 1987. Today, visiting the preserve is like taking a botanical trip to the north country. Tamarack and other boreal, or northern, plants of the bog, such as leather-leaf, small cranberry, tawny cotton-grass and few-seeded sedge also grow in Labrador and Newfoundland.

How did these northern plants come to find a home at Kent Bog?

At the end of the Ice Age, about 12,000 years ago, a large chunk of ice became separated from the glacier which covered this region. It came to rest at a site just south of what is now Meloy Road, in western Portage County. The huge ice block, about 45 acres in size, was quickly buried under enormous amounts of clay, silt, sand and gravel newly released from the melting glacier. When the buried ice eventually melted, its water formed a large kettle hole lake within a deep clay basin.

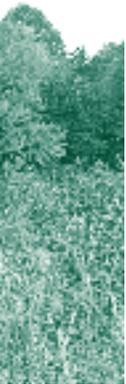
Boreal plants, such as tamarack and leather-leaf, that had moved southward in front of the advancing glacier colonized the area around the new lake. Following the Ice Age, in most areas these northern plants were displaced by plants more typical of today’s northeastern Ohio. However, in the bog that formed around the lake, the northern plants survived.

As individual plants in the bog died, they did not decay completely. Fungi and bacteria, the principal decomposers, were unable to function effectively in the bog conditions. Little by little the partially decomposed plant materials, called peat, accumulated, slowly the lake. Eventually the basin that held the lake was completely filled with water and tightly packed peat, much of which is derived from sphagnum moss.

The Nature Preserve.

has virtually stood still since the Ice Age

...ing the bed of green sphagnum moss, the clumps of white-
... of tamarack at the bog's center. Forty-four years later, the bog
... of tamaracks is the largest in Ohio, with more than 2,000 trees,
... S.



The last vestige of an open lake at the Kent Bog site probably disappeared prior to European settlement. Meanwhile, the northern plants had taken up residence on the peat substrate, producing the kettle hole bog we see today.

Boardwalk opens bog to more visitors.

In 1993, division staff and volunteers constructed a 2,600-foot loop boardwalk trail which enables visitors to see all parts of the preserve without getting their feet wet or suddenly sinking up to their knees in wet peat. The boardwalk was made from recycled plastic which was dyed to resemble weathered wood.

The boardwalk isn't just environmentally friendly. It is wheelchair accessible and has several turnouts allowing chairs to pass. Benches along the way provide for rest and relaxing views of the bog. At places, a 360 degree sweep of the sky shows nothing but tamaracks.

Uncommon wildlife find home here.

Two of the bog's wildlife are noteworthy--the spotted turtle and the veery. Named for its bright yellow spots, the small and secretive spotted turtle is a scarce site in Ohio. Although I have been to the bog many times, I have seen the shy spotted turtle only twice. But the population is vital. Hatchlings have been seen twice in recent years.

The reery, a bird species, can be seen and heard in summer. In Ohio, veeries nest mostly in northern counties. Like the bogs they frequent, their general distribution is north of Ohio.

Seasons compliment Kent bog.

The first sign of spring in the bog occurs in April or May

when leather-leaf shrubs display thousands of small, dull white flowers. During the summer, the bog presents a panorama of various shades of green coming from the sphagnum moss and the leaves of leather-leaf, gray birch, tamarack and the abundant Virginia chain-fern and highbush blueberry.

Shortly after mid-October, Kent Bog reaches its peak in fall color. On the bank encircling the bog, the leaves of maples, oaks, sour-gum and other hardwood trees turn shades of red, orange and yellow. The birch leaves are yellow and the blueberry leaves are red, as are those of the stunted red maples that have moved into the bog.

Toward the end of October, the tamarack forest becomes a sea of gold. After two or three days of bright gold color, the needles turn brown and fall. Those landing on the boardwalk collect in temporary windrows on the gray planks while others settle on the peat substrate or the green sphagnum moss.

Kent Bog was purchased and preserved because of its scientific value and its role in Ohio's natural history. Today, students and researchers come to the bog to learn from it firsthand. The preserve is open to visitors daily. For more information, visit www.ohiodnr.com/dnap.

*Tom Cooperrider, Emeritus Professor
Kent State University*

(With thanks to Robert Climes, Mix Cooperider, Sue Cooperrider, Guy Denny, Heidi Hetzel-Evans, Linda Matz and Emliss Ricks. An expanded version of this article appeared in *On the Fringe* Journal of the Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio in September 2004.)

Learn more about Dr. Tom Cooperrider, one of Ohio's preeminent botanists. We will be profiling him in the next issue of *Natural Ohio*.

2005 Natural Areas Discovery Series

We love meeting our newsletter readers - so we hope you'll join us at one or more of this year's upcoming Natural Areas Discovery events. The series features guided hikes, interpretive activities and a chance to meet preserve and scenic rivers staff. Most of the events are great for the entire family.

Magnolia Madness

Jackson County

Here's your chance to see some of Ohio's rarest flowering trees in bloom. Lake Katharine State Nature Preserve is home to the state's largest populations of big-leaf and umbrella magnolias. **Two guided hikes (10 a.m. and 1 p.m.) on Saturday, May 21**, will give visitors the rare opportunity to see these beautiful magnolia blossoms gracing the preserve trails. For more information, call (740) 286-2487.

Kokosing State Scenic River Day

Knox County

Designed to appeal to all ages, this event features displays, stream activities, aquatic critters and other river-related festivities. The event will be held on **Saturday, June 18, 12-4 p.m.** at Kenyon College's Brown Family Environmental Center. For more information, call (614) 265-6422.

Sandusky State Scenic River Day

Wyandot County

Take a canoe trip along the lovely Sandusky State Scenic River in northwest Ohio. The **Saturday, June 25 canoe float will begin at 10 a.m.** at Indian Mill and end at Parker Covered Bridge. There will be a break for lunch (bring your own) and then the group will return to Indian Mill for stream quality monitoring demonstrations. The canoe float is free, but pre-registration is required by calling (419) 981-6319. Personal floatation devices are available for adults, but participants under 18 must bring their own.

Tale of Two Bogs

Portage County

Visit two jewels of the Ice Age representing two different eras of community succession—an open water lake and a more mature bog meadow. On **Saturday, July 9, after a 10 a.m. hike at Kent Bog**, participants will travel to **Triangle Lake Bog** around noon. After lunch (bring your own), a guided tour of Triangle Lake Bog will begin. For more information, call (330) 527-5118.

Darby Plains Driving Tour

Madison County

Take your time and savor the beauty of Ohio's prairie past at two of central Ohio's finest prairie remnants—Smith Cemetery and Bigelow Prairie state nature preserves. On **Saturday, July 23, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.** naturalists will greet you at each site and conduct short interpretive programs for visitors. For more information, call (740) 420-3374.

Step Back in Time

Licking County

Visiting Blackhand Gorge State Nature Preserve is like opening a time capsule—it's a wealth of natural features and historical lore. A **10 a.m. canoe float on Saturday, August 13** features striking views of the narrow gorge through Black Hand sandstone. During the float, participants will stop for a short hike to the Ohio-Erie Canal's Lock 15. Bring along water. For more information, call (740) 763-4411.

The Best of Both Worlds

Warren County

This event lets you choose your adventure. On **Saturday, August 20**, you can choose to canoe along Caesar Creek, a tributary of the Little Miami State Scenic River, and before returning, take a short hike into Caesar Creek Gorge State Nature Preserve. Or, for visitors who prefer to stay on land, a 2-mile hike at 10 a.m. along the preserve's Caesar Trace Trail will highlight the preserve's unique natural features. The canoe float is free, but pre-registration is required. Personal floatation devices are available for adults, but participants under 18 must bring their own. To register or for more information, call (513) 934-0751.

Watch for more events in the summer issue of Natural Ohio!

Cranberry Bog Open House

Saturday, June 25,
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Postcard lottery held
during May 2005

Cranberry Bog State Nature Preserve is one of Ohio's most unique places. Once 50 acres, the island has eroded to less than 11 acres—and each year it continues to lose more of its fragile habitat. With the exception of the annual Open House, visitation to Cranberry Bog is limited to permit access only.

Located off the north shore of Buckeye Lake, the island contains unusual northern bog species, such as grass-pink orchid, large cranberry and carnivorous plants, such as sundew and pitcher plant.

To enter the Cranberry Bog Lottery, please submit a postcard (one per family) to:

Division of Natural Areas & Preserves
2045 Morse Road, Bldg. F-1
Columbus, OH 43229

Only postcards postmarked by May 31 will be eligible for the lottery. Please include the following information: contact name, street address, city, state, zip, daytime phone number, and total in your party (not to exceed four unless number of immediate family members is greater).

Successful lottery participants will be notified by mail in early June. Tours will be filled in the order of the cards drawn.

Transportation to and from the island is available from the Greater Buckeye Lake Historical Society for a donation of \$5 per person.

In the event of cancellations, walk-ins will be accepted at the Open House.

For more information, contact (614) 265-6453.

2005 Stream Quality Monitoring Workshops

Make a Splash in River Preservation— Volunteering is Fun, Free and Easy!

Stream quality monitoring (SQM) is a fun and easy way to help Ohio's state scenic rivers. The best part? It doesn't take a lot of time or experience to learn SQM and it's a great excuse to get your feet wet!

Free SQM training workshops are being held around the state. Remember to wear clothing appropriate for in- stream training.

CENTRAL OHIO (Events held rain or shine) (614) 265-6422

Big Darby State Scenic River
Franklin County

June 8, 6-8 p.m.
June 25, 9-11 a.m.,
July 13, 6-8 p.m.
July 28, 6-8 p.m.

Battelle-Darby Metropark,
Indian Ridge Bulletin Board.

Kokosing State Scenic River
Knox County

June 22, 6-8 p.m.
river access area at Mt.
Vernon's Riverside Park.

Olentangy State Scenic River
Delaware County

June 1, 6-8 p.m.
June 23, 6-8 p.m.
July 2, 9-11 a.m.
July 14, 6-8 p.m.

Highbanks Metropark
streamside study area.

NORTHEAST OHIO (Events held rain or shine) (330) 527-4184

Upper Cuyahoga State
Scenic River - Portage County
May 25, 5-7 p.m. Mantua
Village Park in Mantua.

NORTHWEST OHIO (Pre-registration required) (419) 981-6319

Maumee State Scenic River
Lucas County

June 11, 1-2 p.m.
Oct 1, 10-11 a.m.

Farnsworth Metropark,
Roche de Bouf parking lot
near the main shelter house.

Sept 24, 10-11 a.m.
Sidecut Metropark,
river side parking lot.

Maumee State Scenic River
Wood County

June 11, 3-5 p.m.
Otsego Park, canoe livery
parking lot.

July 16, 10-11 a.m.
Weir Rapids Fishing Access
parking lot
beside main river rapid.

Sandusky State Scenic River
Sandusky County

June 4, 10-11 a.m.
July 30, 11 a.m.- 12 p.m.
Wolf Creek Park, canoe
launch parking lot—second
entrance to
Wolf Creek Park
from S.R. 53 South.

Sandusky State Scenic River
Wyandot County

August 13, 11 a.m.- 12 p.m.
Indian Mill, fishing access
(east) lot adjacent to main
rapids.

SOUTHWEST OHIO
To schedule a free
Stream Quality
Monitoring Workshop
for you or your
organization, call (513)
934-0751.



Divergence

While walking the familiar terrain of Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve on a winter's day, I came across a trail etched in newly fallen snow. Something with muddy feet—a raccoon most likely—had made several trips down the rocky bank from the upland to the river below and back again.

Fresh snow provides a clean tablet on which the travels of wild things are writ large and in this case, even the most inexperienced novice could follow them with ease. The track, stained with mud, ran purposely toward its goal, detouring now and then around some obstacle, but aiming always toward the water. For a time our trails joined, as we both used the easy way down a switchback trail. Then our paths diverged, as the muddy track veered off through a break in the rocks while I continued down the wider, more human-friendly trail.

Now another divergence looms. After 25 years with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, first as a ranger at Geneva State Park and for the last 22-1/2 years as manager of the West Central Ohio District of the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, I am retiring.

It has been a wild ride, full of the exhilarations and disappointments common to life, but colored throughout by the rich hues of Ohio's majestic outdoors. What a privilege it has been to protect and restore some of the finest remaining wild places in the state! What an honor to work with men and women of such high caliber and intense dedication. I can only hope my contributions have enriched their lives as they have enriched mine, and that the people of Ohio will consider the years I have given in their service as time well spent.

And so now fair friends, I bid you adieu. But not entirely. Just as I

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Divergence

continued from page 7

kept that muddy raccoon trail in sight after our ways parted and crossed it several times before leaving it entirely, so will our future paths meet now and again.

With more than 1,000 articles in the pot, I dare say you'll see my name in this newsletter a time or two more. I also hope to make whatever expertise I have gained over the years available to the division as a volunteer. But now more of my time will be given to writing and painting, to travel and learning, to delving more deeply into the mysteries of Ohio's natural heritage and sharing its wonders with all who will listen.

For me, this is not so much a retirement as another graduation. It is time to take what I have learned into the wider world and give it back on a broader scale. Watch for my tracks; you will cross them again.

Tim Snyder

West Central District Preserve Manager

Vernal Pond

these black and depthless pools
wreathed in silver snow and rime,
like dollops of mercury poured
among the gray and sleeping trees;
the first harbingers of things to come.

Where turtles and water boatmen sleep,
tiny unnamed forces move in and out
in that most ancient Terpsichore;
they wriggle and squirm,
twist and bubble,
and shout to the sullen skies
that life is yawning, stretching in its cradles
and is astir across the landscape;
while under a pale and still lethargic sun,
the fecund earth sweats and softly groans,
drawing cosmic strength and
preparing for the mad parade of life
that is spring...

Emliss Ricks, Jr.

Northeast District Preserve Manager

PRESERVING NATURE TODAY FOR THE NEEDS OF TOMORROW

The Division of Natural Areas and Preserves' Mission Statement
Administer a system of nature preserves and scenic rivers by identifying and protecting
Ohio's significant natural features.

Vision Statement
Leading Ohio in the stewardship of its natural heritage.

This newsletter is a free public service made possible through your contributions to the Ohio Natural Areas Income Tax Checkoff Program. If you are receiving duplicate newsletters, please contact (614) 265-6453.

Visit our website at: www.ohiodnr.com/dnap



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