

Natural Ohio

Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

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Conneaut Creek *a state wild and scenic river*

“STATE SCENIC RIVER STATUS FOR CONNEAUT CREEK IS A TRUE ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE MANY STATE AND LOCAL PARTNERS WHO HAVE WORKED SO LONG TO PROTECT THIS EXCEPTIONAL WATERWAY,” GOVERNOR BOB TAFT SAID. “BY HELPING TO EARN THIS DESIGNATION FOR CONNEAUT CREEK, THESE PARTNERS HAVE GAINED AN IMPORTANT NEW TOOL FOR PROTECTING ONE OF NORTHEAST OHIO’S FINEST NATURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES.”

The Conneaut Creek designation brings the total of protected waterways in the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program to 12, totaling 722 miles. Only two other Ohio rivers have received the “wild” designation—the Grand River, also in Ashtabula County, and Little Beaver Creek in Columbiana County.

Three categories are used to describe the natural attributes of a designated

stream: wild, scenic and recreational. The Conneaut Creek’s wild designation runs for 16.4 river miles, from the Ohio-Pennsylvania line to the Creek Road bridge crossing. The 5.3 mile scenic designation runs from the Creek Road bridge to the Penn Central Railroad bridge crossing, locally known as “the arches.”

Wild rivers exhibit superior natural conditions, excellent water and aquatic habitat qualities and are surrounded by at least 75 percent of forested corridor to a depth of 300 feet. Scenic rivers, while retaining much of their natural characteristics, may exhibit minimal signs of human activity.

The outstanding water quality of the river has been classified by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency as exceptional warmwater habitat, seasonal salmonid habitat and outstanding

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Nature’s Late Bloomers

The brevity of the spring wildflower season—the time between the freezing conditions of late winter and the full leafing of the forest trees in early May—prevents many from seeing their favorite wildflowers. It is during this time that hundreds of beautiful spring ephemerals grow, bloom, set seed and disappear until the next year.



white aster

If one is unable to get into the woods in late April or early May, many of the most beautiful wildflowers will not be seen for another 12 months. Wildflower lovers need not despair because all plants do not bloom in the early spring, some bloom throughout the growing

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From the Chief

SCENIC RIVER—THE WORDS CONJURE UP A VISION OF DEEP POOLS REFLECTING THE EMERALD LEAVES OF FORESTED BANKS WITH THE DAPPLED BARK OF OVERHANGING SYCAMORES HIDING THE SECRET LAIRS OF BRONZE-BACKED SMALLMOUTH BASS.

Ohio's scenic rivers are the best of the best—whether it be the deep valleys of Little Beaver Creek or the bucolic landscapes found along the Kokosing or Stillwater rivers. Each of Ohio's scenic rivers are unique, but their biological integrity, superior quality riparian habitats and undisturbed channels connect Ohio's designated scenic rivers to each other.

As our front cover proclaims, Conneaut Creek became Ohio's 12th state scenic river. With the Conneaut Creek as a backdrop, the designation celebration featured Governor Bob Taft, State Representative George Distel and many other local supporters of the Conneaut Creek and Ohio's Scenic Rivers Program.

The division's Scenic Rivers staff, led by Bob Gable, review hundreds of public projects each year to ensure that protecting these important resources remains a priority. Scenic Rivers staff have conducted numerous public canoe floats, introducing hundreds of people to our scenic rivers system. Stream quality monitoring coordinators and thousands of volunteers actively monitor more than 150 sites along the scenic rivers. The data collected by volunteers is critical to monitoring the water and habitat quality of each river.

Credit for the strides made by Ohio's Scenic Rivers Program belongs to all current and former staff, however, the exceptional efforts of former Division Chief Stu Lewis cannot go unmentioned. The work that he and his staff did during his 30-year career created a scenic rivers system which is quite possibly the nation's best.

Want to learn more about Ohio's scenic rivers? Check out our website at www.ohiodnr.com/dnap. Next spring, as waters warm and trees green, choose any state scenic river to visit—you'll quickly realize these places showcase nature's finest. 🌿



Tom Linkous, Chief
Division of Natural Areas and Preserve



Scenic Rivers staff also participated in the 25th anniversary celebration of the Little Miami River, as a component of the state and national scenic river systems. The river was Ohio's first designated waterway and led to many more important state and national designations on other high quality streams. It was a unique privilege to meet the key figures behind the river's 1980 national designation.

Conneaut Creek

(continued from page 1)

state water based on exceptional ecological value. In addition, the river supports an exceptional steelhead fishery.

“The highly aesthetic and pristine qualities of Conneaut Creek make it a tremendous addition to the Ohio Scenic Rivers system,” said Tom Linkous, chief of the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves.



With little evidence of human activities, Conneaut Creek offers an exceptional diversity of aquatic and terrestrial habitats supporting exceptional wildlife populations including 78 fish species, 32 species of amphibians and reptiles, and many breeding bird species. The Great Lakes crayfish, also found in the watershed, is a species of special concern.

The Conneaut Creek watershed is home to more than two dozen state-listed plant species including state endangered species, such as striped maple; threatened species, such as leathery grape fern and several sedges; and potentially threatened species, such as round-leaved dogwood, woodland horsetail, wild lupine, small fringed gentian and several rare grasses.

Also, two rare plant communities, hemlock-hardwood and hemlock-swamp hardwood, can be found thriving in the river's surrounding floodplains. Examples of these special habitats are protected at Conneaut Swamp State Nature Preserve and several sites owned by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

Robert Marcy, former president of the Friends of Conneaut Creek, and other local residents led efforts to designate the Conneaut Creek as a state scenic river in 1999. Following local support, the city of Conneaut and Kingsville Township signed resolutions also supporting the designation process. Earlier this year, Monroe Township added its support.

“There are many residents, landowners, local officials and conservation organizations who have contributed to the designation of Conneaut Creek,” said Chief Linkous. “We appreciate the hard work of all of our private and public partners.”

The Ohio Scenic Rivers Program identifies and protects those rivers and streams possessing important natural or historical characteristics of statewide significance. Scenic river designation provides increased protection and stream quality monitoring for the river. It is a locally driven process which relies on the support and participation of local governments and landowners. Scenic river designation does not affect private landowner rights.

To learn more about Conneaut Creek State Wild and Scenic River, please visit our website at www.ohiodnr.com/dnap. 🌿



Director Sam Speck is joined by Governor Bob Taft, Bob Best, president of the Friends of Conneaut Creek and Chief Tom Linkous during the signing of the official journal entry, declaring Conneaut Creek a state wild and scenic river.

Common and Cut-leaved Teasel

Dipsacus fullonum (sylvestris), D. laciniatus

Description:

Teasels are non-native, biennials or short-lived perennials, which grow as a rosette for a minimum of one year. Sending up a tall flowering stalk, they die after setting seed. During the rosette stage, teasels develop a large taproot that may be more than 2 feet in length and an inch in diameter.

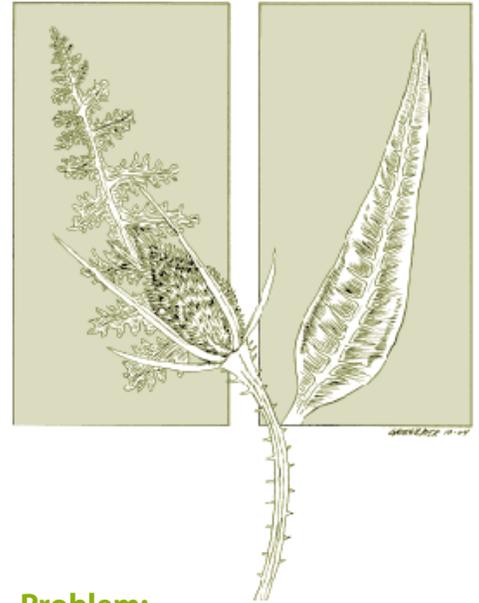
When flowering, teasels can reach a height of 7 feet. Both species have flowers packed in a dense, oval-shaped inflorescence on top of a spiny stem. Common teasel has pink or purple flowers, undivided leaves and bracts which are longer than the flowering head. Cut-leaved teasel has deeply lobed leaves and white flowers. A single teasel plant can produce about 3,000 seeds.

Habitat:

Teasels thrive in open sunny conditions in moderate to dry habits. Cut-leaved teasel is often found in wetter soils than common teasel, although both tolerate saline conditions. Teasels are commonly found in abandoned fields, along roadsides and in cemeteries. They can invade prairies, savannas, sedge meadows and moist forest openings.

Distribution:

Teasels are native to Eurasia and northern Africa. Introductions were probably made by early settlers deliberately as ornamentals or accidentally as toys made from the flowering heads. Teasels were also used commercially for combing wool. Common teasel is distributed throughout the United States (excluding the far north central states). Cut-leaved teasel currently has a more restricted range, primarily occurring in the northeastern and Midwestern states. Both species are found throughout Ohio, with the common teasel species being the more abundant of the two.



Problem:

Teasels produce massive amounts of seed which can remain viable in the soil for several years. They have germination rates as high as 86 percent. Additionally, the death of a mother plant leaves behind an excellent nursery for new seedlings, leading to a continuous population of dense monocultures. These traits enable teasels to successfully out-compete native plants.

Control:

Individual rosettes can be removed mechanically by using a dandelion digger. Removal of the entire root is essential to eliminate re-sprouting. Flowering stalks may be cut down once the plant has initiated flowering, but if cut too soon, plants may send up new flowering stalks. Seeds continue to develop and mature even after cutting. To prevent seed dispersal, remove cut stalks.

Application of herbicides is effective when mechanical treatments are not feasible. Herbicides should be applied to treat the plant in the rosette stage. In natural areas, application during the late fall or early spring will result in less harm to non-targeted species. 🌿

Ohio's "desert" prairie— xeric limestone prairies

Famous Ohio ecologist, Dr. E. Lucy Braun, was the first scientist to study the dry, open grasslands of southwestern Ohio. Her renowned work, *The Vegetation of the Mineral Springs Region of Adams County, Ohio*, published in 1928, remains the most detailed work on this special Adams County landscape and continues to be heavily referenced today.

Braun referred to these grasslands as xeric prairies. Today they are called xeric limestone prairies, a name recently recommended by experts to reduce the confusion because so many different names have been given to these grasslands.



Indian grass

Xeric limestone prairies occur mostly east of the Mississippi River in Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

In Ohio, these grasslands have been called xeric prairies, hanging prairies, limestone prairies, dolomite prairies, cedar barrens, dolomite barrens and cedar glades. Botanists have located more than 100 of these small prairie openings in Ohio, and more are to be found. Most of these prairies are located in Adams County with a few in adjacent Highland and Pike counties.

Generally these prairies cover a small area and are eventually closed in by woody vegetation. Most of the larger examples were developed for agricultural use and settlements. Grazing woodland bison, elk and white-tailed deer helped to perpetuate the prairie openings. In addition to large grazers, occasional wildfires pushed back the trees and shrubs from the openings.

Xeric is just a fancy word for dry and these prairies are indeed dry. Why are they so dry? One reason is the thin soils which lie from 0-30 cm over limestone or dolomite bedrock. In Ohio, almost all of the xeric limestone prairies are over dolomite and a particular type of dolomite, Peebles Dolomite. Peebles Dolomite is fossilized ancient coral reefs of a shallow sea from millions of years ago. This rock is calcareous, meaning it is high in calcium carbonates, making the bedrock alkaline. A few prairies occur on limestone.

Xeric limestone prairies occur primarily on steep south and west facing slopes, which is why they've been called "hanging" prairies. They may also occur on gentle slopes and narrow ridge tops. Because of the south and west aspect, the landscape receives more sunlight, drying soils quicker. Temperatures in these openings can rise much higher than adjacent woodlands. Thin soils and steep slopes make it difficult for trees to take root, promoting the growth of grasses and other sun-loving plants.

Bedrock, slope and aspect are major factors in providing the habitat for unique plants. These openings are a botanist's paradise, with many attractive flowering plants and a number of rare plants both for Ohio and nationally.

More than 300 species of plants grow in these grasslands and many are on the state's rare plant list. Trees are scarce

but red cedar (*Juniperus virginia*) and Chinquapin oak (*Quercus muhlenbergia*) frequently occur in these openings.

Grasses are the dominant vegetation type making up the majority of the biomass. Species include big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), side oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), purple triple-awned grass (*Aristida purpurascens*) and Ozark dropseed (*Sporobolus ozarkanus*) to name a few.

Some of the more common wildflowers found in these prairies include prairie dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*), wild petunia (*Rhuellia humilis*), rough blazing star (*Liatris aspera*), hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*), skunk meadow-rue (*Thalictrum revolutum*), false boneset (*Kuhnia eupatorioides*) and green-flowered milkweed (*Asclepias viridiflora*).

Ear-leaf foxglove (*Tomanthera auriculata*) is a semi-parasitic plant, which is very rare throughout its range and found in a few Ohio locations. The American aloe (*Manfreda virginica*) is adapted to the "desert" conditions of these prairies with its succulent leaves. Michaux's leavenworthia (*Leavenworthia michauxii*), a small member of the mustard family, is only found in these prairies and is disjunct in Ohio's prairies from the heart of its range in the Ozarks of southern Missouri and northern Arkansas.

Small wet pockets within these dry prairies harbor a number of wetland plants, reaching the southern limit of their range. These seepages are unusual for xeric limestone prairies, making Ohio's prairies atypical. A few of these plants include little yellow sedge (*Carex cryptolepis*), cowbane (*Oxypolis rigidior*), swamp lousewort (*Pedicularis*

lanceolata) and fen beak-rush (*Rhynchospora capillacea*).

Plants are not the only things special about these prairies—insects, spiders, and reptiles make these grasslands home. During the summer, many butterflies and moths collect nectar from the flowers, including tiger and giant swallowtail butterflies. Dragonflies, such as the state endangered blue corporal (*Ladona deplanata*), can also be found hunting their prey in this specialized habitat.

Many lichens call this desert-like landscape home. The state endangered tar jelly (*Collema coccophorum*) and brown stipple-scale (*Placidium lachneum*) lichens only occur in Ohio in these prairies.

Braun spent most of her career studying these prairies and became an activist for protecting these unusual grasslands. In the late 1950s, she assisted a new conservation organization, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), in purchasing one of the best examples remaining in Ohio—Lynx Prairie. Resting within TNC's Edge of Appalachia Preserve in Adams County, Lynx Prairie has a trail and is open to the public.

I think xeric limestone prairies are one of the most interesting and rare plant communities types to be found in Ohio. We are fortunate to have protected examples for Ohioans to enjoy. 🌿

Rick Gardner
Natural Heritage Botanist



Lynx Prairie – Adams County

Toads beware – *the hognose is on your trail*

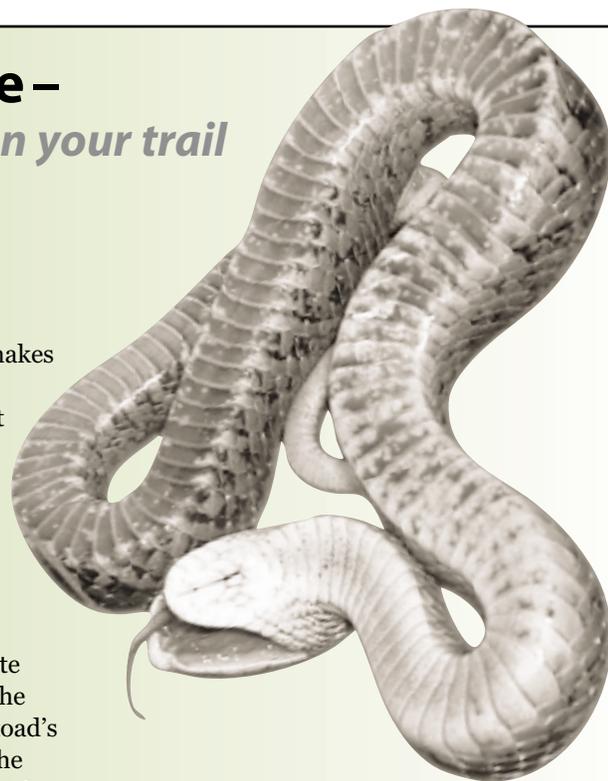
One of the most interesting snakes native to Ohio may be the Eastern hognose. This serpent is a *toad assassin*. Hognose snakes use their upturned snouts to burrow under the ground in search of toads—their main food source.

Most animals cannot digest toads because of their foul taste and toxic secretions, but not the hognose—it's immune to the toad's poison defense. In captivity, the hognose often refuses other food. Many zoo keepers rub mice on toads to trick the snake into feeding.

No easy food source, toads also have another defense mechanism; they can fill with air to make themselves too big to swallow. A formidable predator, the hognose contains two rear fangs on the sides of their jaw which allows them to puncture the air sacs of the toad. To make their meal easier to catch, its saliva contains neurotoxins which leave their prey, toads, too limp to struggle.

With its snout and flattened head, the hognose is hard to mistake. Adults are usually 20-33 inches long, but can reach lengths of 40 inches or more. Hognose snakes are usually yellow with brown/black blotches down their back, although some individuals are a pure slate color. They are most active in the spring and fall, but can also be seen at dawn and dusk during the hot summer months.

Harmless to humans, hognose snakes put on an elaborate defensive show for their two-legged predators. Once harassed, the snake will flatten its head like a cobra, hiss loudly and strike repeatedly. This hissing and flattening has given them the nickname, "spreading adder."



However, when they strike, they do not open their mouth so their strikes are harmless. The only time a hognose will bite, is if you have previously handled a toad and it picks up the scent.

Their teeth are located too far back in their mouth to be useful as a defense mechanism, so if hissing and striking don't work, hognose snakes have other defense options. By defecating on itself and regurgitating its last meal, the snake will make itself as unattractive a meal as possible. When all else fails, they will play dead by leaving their tongues out, mouths open and laying motionless. Pick them up, and they'll continue to play dead.

The hognose prefers the landscape of mixed hardwoods, oak barrens and prairies. Rare to the rest of Ohio, hognose snakes are common to the Oak Openings region. The best place to view an eastern hognose is at Irwin Prairie State Nature Preserve, Kitty Todd Preserve or Oak Openings Metropark in Lucas County. 🌿

Steve Harvey
*Northwest Ohio District
Preserve Manager*

Ohio's Native Pines



THE SEASON OF PINES—WINTER—IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. ONCE THE DECIDUOUS TREES LOSE THEIR LEAVES, EVERGREENS, WITH THEIR BLAZE OF GREENERY, DEMAND OUR ATTENTION. OHIO IS HOME TO FOUR NATIVE SPECIES OF PINE. OF THESE, WHITE PINE IS THE LARGEST, CAPABLE OF REACHING HEIGHTS OF ALMOST 200 FEET. IT IS A MAJOR TREE OF THE NORTHERN FORESTS, A SHORT SPUR OF WHICH EXTENDS INTO NORTHEASTERN OHIO.

Our other three species of pine are southern trees found in the southeastern quadrant of the state. They are the pitch pine, which is characterized by its bright green color, the Virginia or scrub pine, often found on eroded slopes, and the yellow or shortleaf pine with its dark blue-green foliage. All three species are small as trees go, ranging from 30 to 75 feet in height. They are rarely found on calcareous soils, preferring the acid ground on dry ridges of the Appalachian Plateau. There are other species of pine found within the state—red, Norway and scotch pines for instance—but they were all brought in from other places.

Pines, along with hemlocks and junipers, are part of the conifer group of gymnosperms. These are vascular plants without flowers that bear their seeds naked on a specialized leaf rather than enclosed within a pistil, as do angiosperms, such as apples.

The familiar pinecone is the gymnosperm's answer to flowers. The hard woody "shelves" sticking out from the cone's central post hold the developing seed. The pollen-producing cones of pine trees are much smaller, but are capable of releasing enormous amounts of pollen.

Since fertilization in pine trees is determined by chance, they literally blanket the region with wind-borne pollen, ensuring that some of it will find its way to the egg-bearing cones.

The most striking difference between pines and the deciduous trees of Ohio's woodlands is found in their leaves. Unlike the flimsy, water-wasting leaves of deciduous trees, the leaves of pine are adapted to conserving moisture. Their long, slender needles offer little surface area for water evaporation. A waxy coating further slows water loss. Since the greatest danger to plants in winter is not cold, but drought (most moisture is frozen and unavailable), these water-conserving adaptations allow pines to keep their leaves year-round.

White pine is one of the most important sources of lumber in the eastern United States. Shortleaf pine is also used for lumber, but the remaining two species found in Ohio are useful mostly in reforesting worn-out land in providing decorative accents to cliff-tops. Wildlife appreciates them for their seeds and twigs which provide food, and for their dense branches which offer protection from weather and predators.

One of the best places to see examples of Ohio's native white pines, as well as impressive hemlocks, is in Clear Fork Gorge State Nature Preserve in Ashland County. The other three pines can be seen at many southeastern state nature preserves including Conkle's Hollow in Hocking County and Lake Katharine in Jackson County. Take advantage of the upcoming season to get to know Ohio's homegrown pines. 🌲

Tim Snyder
Retired DNAP preserve manager

Nature's Late Bloomers

(continued from page 1)

season, particularly in late summer and early autumn as the days grow shorter again.

Spring flowers cover the forest floor, but the flowers of late summer and autumn are more likely to be plants of the field and roadside. They include the largest family of flowering plants, the composites, which are some of the showiest and most colorful flowers to be seen during any season. These include goldenrods, asters and sunflowers.

Can you believe more than 20 species of goldenrod occur in Ohio? From late summer until the killing frosts, goldenrods of every description can be found in fields, forests, wetlands and along roadsides. Terminal clusters of multiple flowers make for a brilliant display of yellow across the landscape, and mixed with ironweeds and asters, the color of early autumn is unbeatable.

Goldenrods can be found in bogs and fens too. Rare species, like the showy Ohio goldenrod (*Solidago ohioensis*), are found growing at Jackson Bog State Nature Preserve in Stark County along with the slender wand-like bog goldenrod (*Solidago uliginosa*). Common goldenrods (*S. canadensis*) can be seen in fields and along roadsides.

Another group of plants in the daisy family are asters. Asters of various sizes and colors begin to dominate the landscape in late September and continue through October until the hard freezes occur. From the tall stiff stems of the New England aster (*Aster novae-angliae*), with its brilliant blue petals surrounding a bright yellow eye on each flower head, to the tiny white florets from the small white aster (*Aster racemosus*) and calico aster (*Aster lateriflorus*), dozens of colorful species dot the Ohio landscape in all types of environs. Along with goldenrods, asters provide an important source of pollen for late season honey production by honeybees; sometimes considered the richest and tastiest honey of the entire growing season.

The gentian family is another showy group with their deep blue flowers usually in a terminal cluster or a single large showy flower. Some of them, like the small fringed gentian (*Gentianopsis procera*), are rare and found in special places like fens and wet meadows.

Some, like the closed or bottle gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*), are more common and widespread. These can be found along the trails of Tinker's Creek State Nature Preserve in late September and October.

Some orchids bloom late in the season as well. Ladies'-tresses with their small inconspicuous spikes (6-18 inches) grow in a variety of habitats including fens. Both the nodding ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*) and the rare hooded ladies'-tresses (*S. romanzoffiana*) can be found in the fen meadows of Jackson Bog.

A number of colorful sunflowers continue blooming into the late summer and autumn season. These can be found in open areas, woods edges and along streams. Some of the showy species include black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*), tickseed sunflower (*Bidens aristosa*) and tall sunflower (*Helianthus giganteus*), which may grow as high as 8-10 feet tall.

Some late bloomers have interesting animal names, like turtlehead and horse-balm. A member of the snapdragon family, turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*) is a common sight along the trails from late summer to autumn. With its fleshy spike of greenish white flowers, it is quite striking and indeed each flower looks like the head of a turtle.

Horse-balm or richweed (*Collinsonia canadensis*) is a medium-sized plant with a loose terminal cluster of yellow, lemon-scented flowers that

can be found in damp woods and along stream banks.

The tall stately ironweed (*Vernonia gigantea*) is another spectacular flower of the late season. Its large purplish head can be seen in fields and open



small fringed gentian

areas, providing a stark color contrast to the yellow brilliance of goldenrods.

One of the great things about the late blooming season is that it is longer than the spring wildflower season and provides lots of opportunities for casual wildflower study. An added bonus—the season is relatively free from insect pests. So do not despair if you missed nature's spring show, there's always a chance to enjoy nature's second garden of earthly delights in late summer and fall. 🌻

Emliss Ricks, Jr.

Northeast Ohio District preserve manager

New book celebrates beauty of Jackson Bog

Celebrating the 25th anniversary of Jackson Bog State Nature Preserve in Stark County, nature photographer and author Michael Witt has created the first book of its kind. *Jackson Bog* combines more than 165 full-color photographs with interesting details about one of northeastern Ohio's most unique natural areas.

Witt, a local resident of Stark County, spent quite a bit of time at the preserve over the years. He said his time at the bog made him want to learn more about the fen plants growing there. After collecting an extensive inventory of photographs over the years, Witt thought it would be interesting to celebrate the preserve's anniversary while publicizing the division's conservation efforts.

Describing his book, Witt said, "It's not a how-to nature photography book and it's not a natural history text... it's different. It's a photo essay written in the first person to interest everyone."

Chapters cover a range of subjects including the flora and fauna of Jackson Bog. You'll find an array of information from lichens and mosses

to carnivorous pitcher plants and autumn's brilliantly colored sumac. An added bonus—a portion of the proceeds from the sale of *Jackson Bog* will benefit The Friends of Jackson Bog State Nature Preserve.

"We often forget that we, as humans, are as much a part of nature as all other life forms. We need to remember that our very survival is dependent on the natural world around us," said Emliss Ricks, preserve manger for Jackson Bog and other northeastern Ohio sites. "Photographs such as those in this book can perhaps make that connection."

Jackson Bog (ISBN 0-9771947-0-1) is available in selected local Stark County bookstores. Or, you can order a book for \$24.95 plus \$5 shipping and Ohio sales tax by sending your name, address, phone number and a check to Michael Witt c/o Bald Eagle Photo Publishing, 7200 Hills and Dales Rd. NW, Massillon, OH 44646.

Learn more about Jackson Bog State Nature Preserve, visit www.ohiodnr.com/dnap. 🌿



Preserving Nature Today for the Needs of Tomorrow

Mission Statement:

Administer a system of nature preserves and scenic rivers by identifying and protecting Ohio's significant natural features.

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