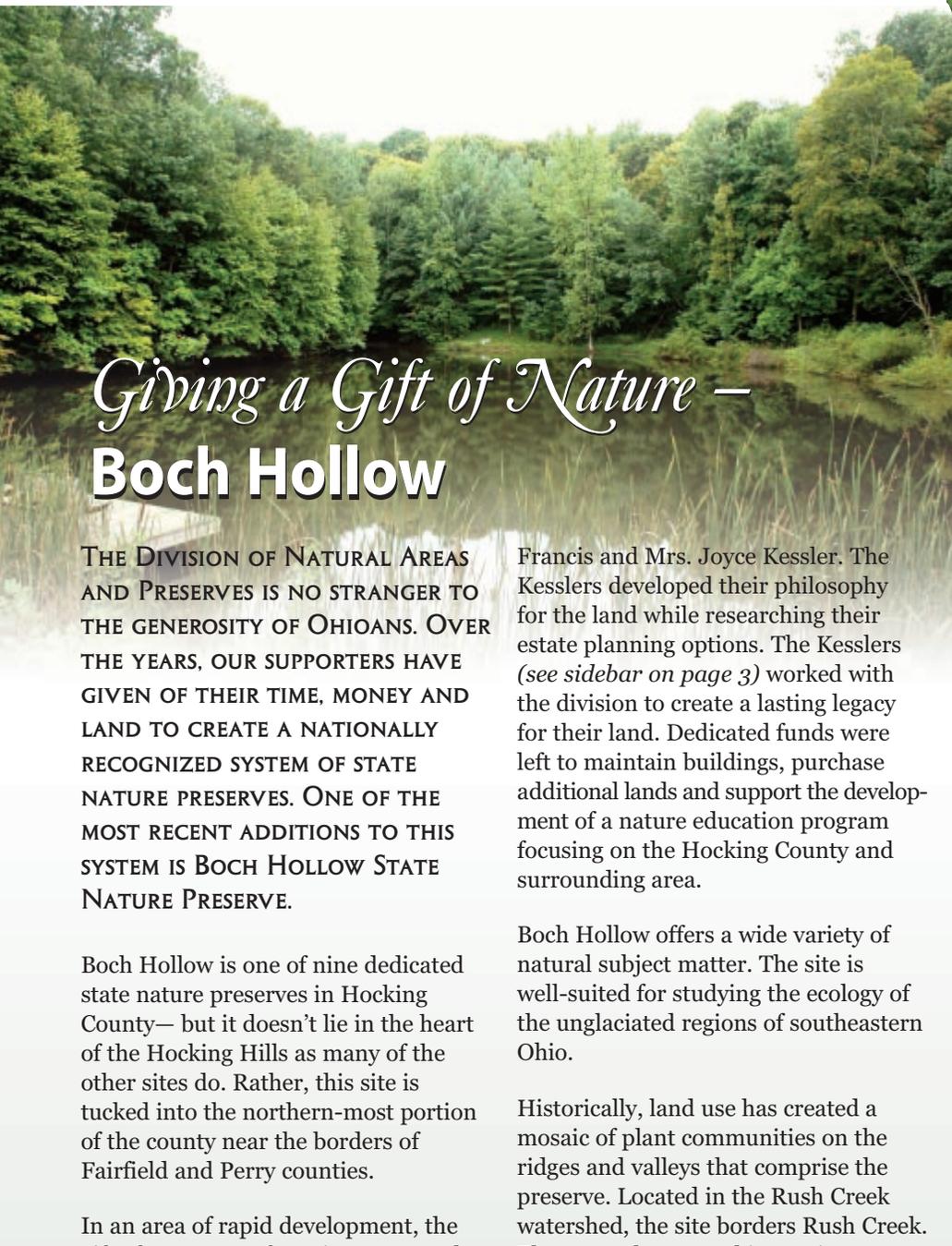


Natural Ohio

Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

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Giving a Gift of Nature – **Boch Hollow**

THE DIVISION OF NATURAL AREAS AND PRESERVES IS NO STRANGER TO THE GENEROSITY OF OHIOANS. OVER THE YEARS, OUR SUPPORTERS HAVE GIVEN OF THEIR TIME, MONEY AND LAND TO CREATE A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SYSTEM OF STATE NATURE PRESERVES. ONE OF THE MOST RECENT ADDITIONS TO THIS SYSTEM IS BOCH HOLLOW STATE NATURE PRESERVE.

Boch Hollow is one of nine dedicated state nature preserves in Hocking County— but it doesn't lie in the heart of the Hocking Hills as many of the other sites do. Rather, this site is tucked into the northern-most portion of the county near the borders of Fairfield and Perry counties.

In an area of rapid development, the gift of 570 acres of contiguous, mostly forested land, represents a complete conservation package for the division. In addition to high quality landscape, it boasts several buildings, which will serve as maintenance and interpretive facilities, and a generous endowment.

The division benefited from the vision of Boch Hollow's former owners—Dr.

Francis and Mrs. Joyce Kessler. The Kesslers developed their philosophy for the land while researching their estate planning options. The Kesslers (*see sidebar on page 3*) worked with the division to create a lasting legacy for their land. Dedicated funds were left to maintain buildings, purchase additional lands and support the development of a nature education program focusing on the Hocking County and surrounding area.

Boch Hollow offers a wide variety of natural subject matter. The site is well-suited for studying the ecology of the unglaciated regions of southeastern Ohio.

Historically, land use has created a mosaic of plant communities on the ridges and valleys that comprise the preserve. Located in the Rush Creek watershed, the site borders Rush Creek. There are also several intermittent tributary streams on the property, creating riparian zones with typical floodplain ecosystems.

Forest communities of oak-hickory and beech-maple can be found throughout the site. On some of the ridges, past

(continued on page 2)

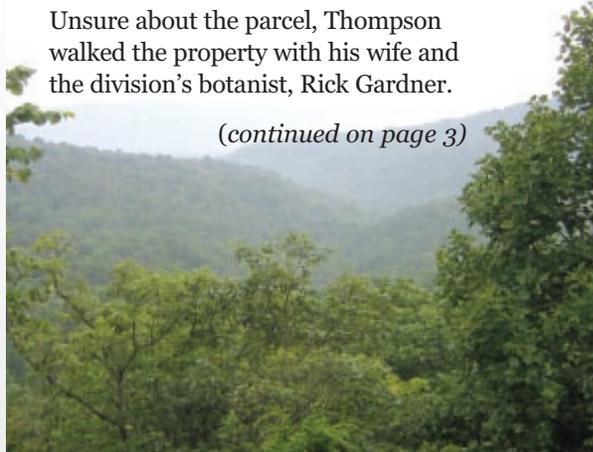
Treasure trove of rarities protected by conservation easement

Chris and Jennifer Thompson dreamed of owning a piece of nature in southern Ohio. They searched for several years for a parcel of land with a little something extra, such as waterfalls or a prairie. They found their dream parcel—73 acres with springs, sinkholes, rare species and dolomite cliffs. Their parcel was located adjacent to Whipple State Nature Preserve in Adams County.

“Even before we purchased this property, we knew we were going to place it in a conservation easement,” explained Chris Thompson. After discussing possibilities of protecting land in Adams County with DNAP staff, Thompson and his wife looked at what would become their new property.

Unsure about the parcel, Thompson walked the property with his wife and the division's botanist, Rick Gardner.

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FROM THE DESK OF ACTING CHIEF ANTHONY CELEBREZZE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

There are few Ohioans who have not felt the impact of today's economy. For the State of Ohio and the Department of Natural Resources, these are extraordinary times. Because of the state's loss in revenue, the department's budget has been reduced by nearly 30 percent compared to the previous biennial budget. The budget decisions we have had to make in response to these reductions have been both unprecedented and extremely difficult.

As a result, the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves' general revenue budget was cut to zero beginning in July 2010. Without that funding, the

division can no longer serve as a viable and separate entity within the department. There are several options we are considering for the division, however, our priority is to ensure that the division's core programs remain intact. We are committed to preserving these programs and are looking for long-term sustainable options, as evidenced by the recent transfer of the Scenic Rivers Program to the Division of Watercraft.

This much we do know. Ohio's state nature preserves will continue to be protected and maintained. The Natural Heritage Program will continue to grow and provide valuable information for planners and researchers statewide.

Our staff, an extremely committed and talented group of natural resource professionals, will ensure that the transition of our remaining programs is seamless.

We are confident that by the time the new fiscal year begins, we will have successfully protected the mission of these valuable programs while recognizing the current budget conditions. As some of our biggest supporters, I look forward to sharing our plans with you in the next *Natural Ohio*.

In the meantime, I hope you'll choose to visit one of Ohio's special places and experience a great day in the outdoors.



(Boch Hollow, continued from page 1)

agricultural uses have left behind old field habitats, as well as areas harboring prairie species. One such corridor follows an electric transmission line, and warm season grasses and some common prairie forbs are found there.

The division has been managing the site as a state nature preserve for less than a year. Staff are beginning to explore and uncover all that is to be

found across the complex. Already staff have been surprised by the discovery of unknown natural features.

In May, Heritage Botanist Rick Gardner arranged for a group of botanists to do some preliminary botanical surveying. Previously, staff hadn't seen any significant species, however, more eyes brought new finds.

On the valley floor of one of the intermittent streams, just a few hundred yards from the office, Gardner's group found running buffalo clover (*Trifolium stoloniferum*), a federal and state endangered species. Unable to tolerate full sun or dense shade, the plant can be found in partially shaded woodlots, often along small streams and trails—exactly where it was found growing at Boch Hollow. The division will protect this rarity through targeted eco-management. A completely unexpected find such as this makes one wonder what else is waiting to be discovered within the preserve's scenic hills and ravines.

Before Boch Hollow can be opened for visitation—via an access permit process—much must be set right.

Buildings have stood empty for several years, the once extensive trail system is completely overgrown and boundaries need to be marked. The list of maintenance work is wide-ranging. Once completed, it will be followed by an equally long list of tasks to support the development of an interpretive nature program.

The division has already tapped into its network of volunteers to begin clearing trails and restoring buildings at the preserve. Recently, volunteers from the Columbus Audubon have worked to reestablish the trail system. A long-time partner of the division, the group's commitment to the land and the division has been remarkable.

At the heart of Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve lies a legacy of conservation and a commitment to sharing nature with future generations. The Kesslers join a long list of Ohioans who continue to support the preservation of Ohio's special places.



Jeff Johnson
Southeastern Ohio District
Preserve Manager

Remembering Boch Hollow's benefactors

Dr. Francis and Mrs. Joyce Kessler



THEIRS IS A LOVE STORY—
FOR EACH OTHER AND FOR
THEIR SPECIAL PLACE IN
HOCKING COUNTY.

Nancy Strayer, assistant chief of the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, was the division's real estate administrator when she first met Dr. Francis and Mrs. Joyce Kessler in 1994. They approached the division for advice in protecting their Hocking County property. Through the years Strayer worked closely with the Kesslers and remembers them fondly.

"They were a loving couple and their story is one I will never forget," said Strayer.

Dr. Kessler was serving in the military during World War II when a chance meeting on the streets of London brought them together. According to the couple, it was love at first sight and Kessler brought his bride back to the states.

In the 1960s, the Kesslers began acquiring land in the Hocking County region. Boch Hollow lies just two miles from where Dr. Kessler was born. In addition to Boch Hollow, the couple owned a 20-acre parcel which they donated to the division in 2002. Kessler Swamp State Nature Preserve is a high quality emergent swamp which protects a variety of wetland plant species and wildlife.

After Dr. Kessler retired as a faculty member of The Ohio State University, the Kesslers began splitting their time between their homes in Columbus and Boch Hollow. One of his many past-times was restoring vintage British cars in the 10-car garage he built at Boch Hollow.

"He was so proud of his property in Hocking County and his antique cars. I still remember the first time I walked into his garage and saw his collection. I remember sitting in a Rolls Royce—what a treat," said Strayer.

Nature preservation, however, was a greater passion. In the late 1990s, the Kesslers worked with the Columbus Foundation to set up an endowment to support their legacy. Through their estate planning, they established the Francis W. and Joyce D. Kessler Fund which will provide for facilities maintenance and the development of a nature program at the preserve.

In the spring of 2006, Dr. Kessler passed away. His wife of more than 60 years passed away later that year.

"Boch Hollow was the dream of Francis and Joyce," said Strayer. "And now it is their legacy to all Ohioans."

(Editor's note – Thanks to the Columbus Foundation for allowing us to excerpt a 2008 article, and to Annajean Bronson for lending a photo of her longtime employers, the Kesslers.) 

(Treasure trove, continued from page 1)

They soon discovered that the property included a cave, waterfall, extensive rock outcroppings and fantastic ridge top views of the Ohio River.

The Thompsons' parcel contains several small prairie openings or cedar barrens. The best prairie occurs on top of a large dolomite promontory— that wonderful view of the valley overlooking the Ohio River. In addition to two prairies, there are two small caves on the parcel which may offer hibernating habitat for bats.

Several botanical studies conducted this year found more than 200 species—10 plants are state listed and more are likely to be discovered. Some of the rarities found include false aloe (*Manfreda virginica*), slender blazing-star (*Liatris cylindracea*), wedge-leaf whitlow-grass (*Draba cuneifolia*) shale barren aster (*Symphotricum oblongifolium*) and milk pea (*Galactia volubilis*).



Ecologist Erin Hazelton surveys small cave openings.

When the Thompsons purchased their land, they intended to use it as a weekend getaway, leaving it basically untouched with the exception of some primitive trails and a basic campsite. They sold a conservation easement on the land to the division this year.

"It's a great partnership for us because we retain control of the land and have a great place to hike, camp and explore, but we also know the land will be protected in its natural state for future generations," said Thompson.

With the addition of the Thompsons' conservation easement, more than 400 acres is now protected at Whipple State Nature Preserve. To learn more about this southern Ohio site, visit www.ohiodnr.com/dnap. 

Baker Woods State Nature Preserve



**“ALL ARE BUT PART OF ONE
STUPENDOUS WHOLE,
WHOSE BODY NATURE IS,
AND GOD THE SOUL.”**

—ALEXANDER POPE

Landowner Lela Mae Baker used this quote when she wrote the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves in 1998 to express her gratitude to staff for conducting an inaugural field trip to Baker Woods State Nature Preserve in October of that year. No doubt, Lela Mae, who passed away in 2007, knew the value of the natural world.

The descendent of one of the first three settlers in Mercer County’s Butler Township, Lela Mae remembered the original lay of the land. Philip Baker, her great-grandfather, immigrated to Mercer County in 1836 with his son Jacob, her grandfather, joining him in 1840. Then, Ohio was about 90 percent forested and Mercer County was no different. The forested landscape would drastically change in the next 50 years, as forest cover dropped to 15 percent by 1900.

As others were busy maximizing their land for farming, the Baker family used

their woodlot gently, and avoided clear cutting. In 1992, Lela Mae and her sister, Rose Marie Baker York, donated their family forest to the division. They wanted the land to be used for the enjoyment and education of all Ohioans, but most especially by the youth of Mercer County.

Mercer County is uniquely situated along the southern edge of Ohio’s Black Swamp region. Baker Woods is an excellent example of a swamp forest.

This 47-acre preserve protects a wet oak-maple forest. Two types of forest can be seen here. In the dryer areas of the site, you will find a white and red oak dominated canopy with significant numbers of shagbark hickory. The understory is composed primarily of beech and sugar maple suggesting a long-term transition to a beech-maple forest. The wet areas of the preserve are dominated by a canopy of swamp white and burr oaks and an understory of American elm. The uncommon pumpkin ash (*Fraxinus americanus*) is also found here.

The combination of poorly drained soils and shallow depressions creates a remarkable number of vernal ponds,

which provide excellent habitat for sedges and salamanders. It also greatly adds to the species diversity of the preserve. Baker Woods protects several interesting species including the elusive grove sandwort (*Moehringia laterfloria*) and Muskingum sedge (*Carex muskingumensis*).

Every season holds a surprise for the hiker at Baker Woods. In the spring, the forest awakens with a carpet of spring wildflowers. In the summer, a cloud of mosquitoes will faithfully follow you on your ramble. If you can tolerate them, it’s worth it. The fall, with its blaze of color and sweet, rich woody smell, will astonish you. Winter brings a beauty all its own—the quiet solitude of a sleeping forest with just footprints in the snow.

Formerly only open with an access permit, the site was opened for daily visitation this spring. Visitors will find a 1-mile trail which meanders through the forest interior. Baker Woods is located at 4316 St. Anthony Road in Coldwater. To learn more, visit www.ohiodnr.com/dnap. 

Michelle Comer
West District



(Butterflies,
continued
from page 6)

exsectoides) tend the young hairstreak larvae and protect them from small parasitic wasps. In return the larvae provide the ants with a sugary secretion called honeydew. These butterflies can be seen nectaring on butterflyweed at Adams Lake Prairie in late June and early July.

Chaparral Prairie was acquired by the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves in 1985 using funds from the newly created tax check-off program. This 66-acre site protects a xeric limestone prairie which is a dry area of native, mostly non-woody vegetation on limestone soil. Xeric limestone prairies are one of Ohio's rarest plant communities. Chaparral Prairie has been managed to promote and protect the rare prairie remnant, which has become popular with butterfly enthusiasts.

Winter may be around the corner, but in the meantime we can look forward to the colors of spring and the stunning winged creatures which will grace our gardens and natural areas soon enough.

To learn more about Chaparral Prairie State Nature Preserve, please visit www.ohiodnr.com/dnap.

Martin McAllister
Southern Ohio

Regional Preserve Manager

Nature preserves go public



The Division of Natural Areas and Preserves manages more than 30 sites which are accessible to visitors with an access permit. The reasons why some sites remain permit-only may vary, but most restricted sites protect the rarest and most fragile landscape and plant communities in the state's preserve system.

However, a small number of sites are closed because of access issues. Two sites, Baker Woods and Lou Campbell state nature preserves, were opened for daily visitation in 2009 after parking and trail improvements were made. In 2010, two more sites will open to the public—McCracken Fen and Owens Fen—both located in Logan County.

McCracken Fen, at 94 acres, is one of the larger known fens in Ohio. The preserve protects a number of rare plants including two orchid species, rose pogonia and grass-pink. Its ponds attract a number of waterfowl during spring and fall migration.

Owens Fen is a small but exceptionally fine example of a prairie fen. A variety of prairie flowers, such as spiked

blazing-star, queen-of-the-prairie and smaller fringed gentian, grow here. The site was named to honor David B. Owens, a naturalist and former volunteer who provided funds to the division to purchase a portion of this 19-acre site.

The best way to check which sites have "gone public," is to check the website before planning a visit. When sites change from permit-only to open daily, the division creates information pages which detail the facilities, natural features and location for each preserve. To learn more, visit www.ohiodnr.com/dnap.



Save the date

2010 Ohio Botanical Symposium Friday, March 26 – 9 am to 4 pm

The 10th annual Ohio Botanical Symposium will be held March 26, 2010. Staff are finalizing program details but keynote speaker is Doug Tallamy, author of "Bringing Nature Home; How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in our Gardens." A long-time

educator and researcher, Tallamy seeks to better understand how insects interact with plants and how those interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. Registration information will be available on-line in January at www.ohiodnr.com/dnap.

The butterflies of Chaparral Prairie



FROM SPRING UNTIL AUTUMN, OHIO'S LIST OF BUTTERFLIES READS LIKE A 21ST CENTURY BOX OF CRAYOLA CRAYONS—SLEEPY ORANGE, CLOUDED SULFUR, OLIVE HAIR-STREAK, CABBAGE WHITE. OTHER NAMES ARE DESCRIPTIVE ENOUGH TO HINT AT THEIR ORIGIN—AMERICAN SNOUT, PEARL CRESCENT, QUESTION MARK, TIGER SWALLOWTAIL. THERE ARE STILL OTHER NAMES WHICH SEEM TO INFLATE THE IMAGE OF THESE WINGED CREATURES—SWARTHY SKIPPER, GREAT SPANGLED FRITILLARY AND OF COURSE, THE MONARCH.

Perhaps no other group of animals has risen in popularity in recent years quite like the Lepidoptera, or in the ancient Greek, “scale-wings.” The “leps” refer to butterflies and moths which have wings covered in tiny scales. These scales not only create colorful patterns or camouflage, but are also water repellent.

Although there are many interesting and colorful species of moths, butterflies have stolen the spotlight. Why do we

love butterflies? Perhaps, it's because like us, they are primarily diurnal, or day-active, or maybe it's because so many species are strikingly beautiful. Butterflies and their diminutive and nervous cousins, skippers, seem to magically transform themselves from crawling, camouflaged larva to colorful, graceful flyers.

Ohio boasts nearly 140 species of butterflies and skippers. Sixty-eight species have been documented at Chaparral Prairie State Nature Preserve in Adams County, one of the state's most diverse natural areas. It follows that a rich lepidopteron fauna would be found here since leps are closely tied to their host food plants.

Many species of butterflies will only deposit their eggs (and the larvae will only feed) on certain species of plants. The easily recognized monarch butterfly lays her eggs on milkweeds only. There are a great number of milkweed species, however, the monarch, like most butterfly species, needs only to land on a plant to identify it. Taste sensors located in her feet tell her if she has touched down on the proper buffet for her future offspring.

“Chaparral Prairie, with its incredible habitat diversity, is one of my favorite places to view and photograph butterflies. It is possible to see infrequently encountered species, such as the hoary edge, little glassy wing and Delaware skippers, along with all of the more common species normally found in southern Ohio,” said John Howard, an exceptionally skilled local naturalist.

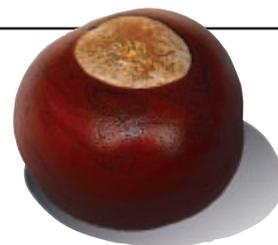
Prescribed fire has been a crucial tool in the restoration of the relict plant community at Chaparral Prairie. The result has been the dramatic expansion of the prairie over the past 20 years and the recovery of a number of rare or endangered plant species. In an effort to reduce potential impact to overwintering Lepidoptera species, Division staff has divided the preserve into 12 separate burn units. Only a few are burned each year and only then in a staggered pattern which should aid the rapid recolonization of burned areas. Balancing the management of rare species and rare habitats continues to be a challenge for managers of public lands.

The only rare species of butterfly known to occur here is the Edward's hairstreak. Never common, this butterfly is much more easily seen just a few miles away at Adams Lake Prairie State Nature Preserve. Dave Parshall, past president of the Ohio Lepidopterists, conducted surveys in the 1980s and found only 12 colonies of this rare species in Adams County. He considers the Edward's and the red-banded hairstreaks to be the most significant species at Chaparral for beginning lepidopterists.

The Edward's hairstreak is myrmecophilous, which means they are associated with or benefited by ants. The Allegheny mound ant (*Formica*

(continued on page 5)

Proud to be a Buckeye



AS ANY OHIOAN CAN TELL YOU, THE EMBLEM MOST ASSOCIATED WITH OUR FAIR STATE IS A TREE—THE OHIO BUCKEYE. FOR BETTER OR WORSE, WE ARE KNOWN WORLD-WIDE AS “BUCKEYES.” THE REASON IS ROOTED DEEPLY IN OUR PAST.

Its first use predates Ohio’s statehood. On September 2, 1788, the first court of the Northwest Territory was held in Marietta. The high sheriff, Ebenezer Sproat, led the procession of officials. His commanding figure so impressed visiting Indians that they called him Hetuck, or “big buckeye.” The name not only stuck, it grew to include everyone in the area.

Although Ohioans took the buckeye as its own, it did not attain national prominence until 1840 when it became an important part of William Henry Harrison’s presidential campaign. Back then, elections were verbal free-for-alls. A rival newspaper claimed that, if Harrison were given “...a barrel of hard cider and a pension of two thousand a year... he will sit the remainder of his days in a log cabin... and study moral philosophy.”

Harrison’s western supporters, many of whom had fond memories of living in log cabins while opening the West, made the intended insult a rallying cry. Log cabins and hard cider suddenly started appearing at their conventions. At that time, when Harrison was living in Ohio, buckeye logs were often used in building the cabins. Eventually buckeye canes, necklaces of buckeyes and decorative sprigs of buckeye leaves became part of the election scene. It was this contest which gave us “Tippecanoe and Tyler, too” as well as “Ok” and it permanently stamped all Ohioans as buckeyes.

The recipient of all this attention is a modest enough tree, usually standing

60-90 feet tall. The description of it as a “soft-wooded, foul-smelling tree bearing a worthless nut” gleefully bandied about by our northern neighbors is only partly true. The wood is soft, but it was ideal for settlers’ cabins because it was easy to cut and readily absorbed the impact of enemy bullets.

Cradles, spoons and bowls were carved from its wood, hats were made of its fibers and soap was made from the inner covering of the nuts. Buckeyes themselves, far from being worthless, provided a chemical used by Indians to stun fish as well as by weary militiamen flinging good-natured missiles to keep themselves awake during guard duty. The tree itself is named for the nut’s fancied resemblance to a deer’s eye.

There are actually two native species of buckeyes in the state. The official version (*Aesculus glabra*), the Ohio buckeye, can be separated from its cousin, the yellow buckeye (*A. octandra*) by the fetid smell of its bruised twigs and its slightly spiny fruit husks. Horse chestnut, which is often confused with the buckeye, is an import that has very spiny fruit husks and seven leaflets to each leaf, as opposed to the buckeye which has five. All three species have showy flower clusters.

Caesar Creek Gorge State Nature Preserve in Warren County is a great place to enjoy the fall colors of the Ohio buckeye. Its leaves are some of the first to turn, and once the leaves are gone, the tree leaves a plethora of buckeyes behind.

All in all, a very fine tree indeed for a very fine state.

Tim Snyder

Retired Preserve Manager

(Editor’s Note—If you’ve enjoyed reading Tim’s nature articles, you may enjoy his first publication, “Rainbows of Rock, Tables of Stone: The Natural Arches and Pillars of Ohio.” The book features a variety of geologic formations found in Ohio’s state nature preserves. To learn more, visit www.mupubco.com)





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With its brightly colored purple coneflower and majestic monarch butterfly, the division's new conservation license plate is a perfect symbol for the beauty found in Ohio's 134 state nature preserves.

Ohio's state nature preserves program will receive \$15 for every plate sold. These important dollars will support facility and trail improvements at

preserves like Clifton Gorge and Conkle's Hollow. Your generosity will also provide new education and interpretive programming, signage and materials for visitors.

The new Nature Preserves license plate is available now. To purchase your plate, visit oplates.com.



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