

OHIO STATE

Nature Preserves

Annual Newsletter 2016

THE BEST RARE *Plant Finds*

**NATURE PRESERVE SYSTEM
GROWS WITH PARTNERSHIP**

FEATURED PARTNERS

FEATURED PRESERVE



Ohio Department of
NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF NATURAL AREAS AND PRESERVES

naturepreserves.ohiodnr.gov

from THE CHIEF



Ohio State Nature Preserves are special places where the state's endangered species thrive, and unique landscapes are open for the enjoyment of all. Thanks to the support of people like you, we have 136 nature preserves, totaling more than 30,000 acres across Ohio.

Each year we strive to protect more of Ohio's lands and waters, to preserve places that showcase the natural treasures of the

state and leave a legacy of natural diversity for future generations.

Partnerships in preservation are paramount to the success of Ohio State Nature Preserves, and we celebrate working with corporations, volunteer groups and individuals alike to help us reach greater goals in rare species protection, preserve stewardship and educational opportunities.

For example, we are excited to learn of a state endangered species discovery of bushy broomsedge, found on American Electric Power's (AEP) Gavin Power Plant in Gallia County, and we look forward to working with AEP to monitor the population and ensure its persistence.

It is also our privilege to partner with many volunteer groups who provide countless hours to remove invasive species, repair boardwalks and bridges and improve access to our preserves. Recently, the Buckeye Trail Association and Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve staff worked to construct 4 miles of public trail, allowing exciting new opportunities to see this beautiful preserve. We also want to thank our longstanding partners, the Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association and Columbus Audubon, for their ongoing work throughout the year volunteering with intrepid enthusiasm to improve and protect our natural areas across the state.

These are but a few examples of how strong conservation partnerships can ensure effective protection of Ohio's natural treasures. As spring awakens in 2016, we thank you for your investment in protecting the natural beauty of Ohio.

I hope you take advantage of the warm weather to enjoy a visit to a new state nature preserve with friends and family.

Gary Obermiller
Deputy Director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio State Parks and Preserves



▲ Hairy wild petunia clings to a precarious existence in the shallow, rocky soils of Pride-of-Ohio Prairie.



▲ *Pride-of-Ohio Prairie in Whipple State Nature Preserve. The Ohio Heritage Naturalists, a group of volunteer botanists, found more than 200 vascular plant species during an outing in August. (Front row, left to right): Natalia Nekrasova, Gina Patt, Rick Gardner and Andrew Gibson. (Back row, left to right): Bobbie Sue Grenerth, Josh Deemer, Brian Cartwright, Ben Malone, John Howard, Brian Gara, Bill Schumacher and Tanner Morris.*

▼ *Robinson-Rago tract. Hemlocks, ferns, mosses and lichens cover the rocks of this Boch Hollow gem.*





NATURE PRESERVE SYSTEM

Grows with Partnership

By Tom Arbour, Researcher

The Ohio State Nature Preserve system is growing! The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Natural Areas and Preserves added two additional parcels to the system in 2015—a beautiful xeric limestone prairie in Adams County and a stunning sandstone slot canyon in Hocking County.

The Pride-of-Ohio Prairie, named after the beautiful spring wildflower *Dodecatheon meadia* that dots its spring landscape, is the latest addition to southern Ohio's Whipple State Nature Preserve. This 10-acre parcel was acquired by conservation partner the Arc of Appalachia through a Clean Ohio grant, with the division covering the required 25 percent match with funds donated by Ohioans through the Ohio State Nature Preserves income tax refund program. The division will manage the property as a component of Whipple State Nature Preserve.

The 10-acre sloping parcel contains several magnificent dry, shallow soil, xeric limestone prairies and cliffs. The area is somewhat unusual as it rests on the Lilley and Fisher formations while most Ohio xeric limestone prairies are found on the Peebles Dolomite. These shortgrass prairies are dominated by the grasses little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and sideoats gramma (*Bouteloua curtipendula*). Forbs such as slender blazing star (*Liatris cylindracea*), narrowleaved mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*) and orange coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida*) provide splashes of summer color. On a recent botanical survey led by chief botanist Rick Gardner, volunteers documented more than 200 species of vascular plants on the parcel, which is a high number for such a small area.

Moving to southeast Ohio's Hocking County, the division purchased a 35-acre parcel near Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve that will be managed as part of the preserve. Only 100 feet of private property separate this new acquisition from the main preserve. Purchased from the Rago-Robinson family, who wished to see the property preserved, the parcel contains a narrow slot canyon cut by an unnamed tributary of Rush Run. The rich soils around the gorge support a colorful display of spring wildflowers. The cool microclimate of the gorge provides a fine home for ferns. Botanist Rick Gardner has found more than 12 species thriving at the site. After the acquisition, our sharp-eyed botanical staff discovered a small population of the state-threatened downy white beard-tongue (*Penstemon pallidus*). The wondrous geology, consisting of a narrow water-carved canyon in the Black Hand Sandstone, is the real draw to this site. There's nothing quite like it in the Hocking Hills. This addition to Boch Hollow was made possible by funds endowed by the late Dr. Francis and Mrs. Joyce Kessler, the donors of the original Boch Hollow parcel.

Thanks to a strong partnership with the Arc of Appalachia, donations from Ohioans and the conservation vision of the Kesslers, we were able to acquire two significant natural areas in 2015. For the near future, both of these parcels will be accessible via a free permit due to the lack of a developed trail system or parking area. Visit naturepreserves.ohiodnr.gov/permits to learn more.

Pride-of-Ohio Prairie. Much of the property contains steep hills with several outcrops of dolomite.

Cover Photo: Louis W. Campbell State Nature Preserve

THE BEST

Plant Discoveries

of 2015

By Rick Gardner, Chief Botanist

It is time again to share the best rare plant discoveries made by plant enthusiasts around the Buckeye State. Best plant finds have been shared in the division's newsletter since 1990. There have been some amazing finds over the years, and 2015 was another great year.

There are a number of "botanical hotspots" around the state, and one place that always produces best finds is the Oak Openings area. The region is a sandy 5-mile wide by 22-mile long swath west of Toledo, stretching into Monroe County, Michigan. Its origins trace back 25,000 years ago to the last glacial advance into Ohio. The sandy soils are the key reason for the many rare species found in the region.



Ophioglossum pusillum, spotted by Fred Bess at Killbuck Marsh Wildlife Area.

Irwin Prairie State Nature Preserve is one of the preserves in the region. Northwest Preserve Manager **Ryan Schroeder**, who has a sharp eye for catching rarities on his preserves, discovered the endangered grass-like pondweed (*Potamogeton gramineus*) in a small, shallow pool within a sedge-grass meadow. Grass-like pondweed is one of five endangered pondweeds in Ohio. Many of these aquatic plants require clear, clean waters. These species disappear from lakes, ponds and streams once water quality starts to decrease from sedimentation, nutrient inflow and invasion by non-native aquatic plants.

Irwin Prairie produced another incredible find, the extirpated northern manna grass (*Glyceria borealis*). **Tim Walters**, senior botanist with EnviroScience Inc., discovered this northern grass growing in the wet meadow near the boardwalk. This species has only been collected once before in Ohio in 1925.

Metroparks Toledo has a very active volunteer plant monitoring program, and **Karen Menard**, a biologist who coordinates the program, has made fantastic finds over the past five years. In 2015, Karen found the endangered tall cinquefoil (*Drymocallis arguta*) in a high-quality alvar glade, a very rare habitat in Ohio. This is the only known population remaining in the state. The site has a number of other state-listed plants, including the threatened rock sandwort (*Minuartia michauxii*) and Philadelphia panic grass (*Panicum philadelphicum*).

It is always a joy to have a great find made by a young "budding" botanist. While monitoring a state listed species at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, **Ben Malone**, state nature preserves intern, found a sedge that was new to him. He called me over, and I was surprised to see the sedge was no other than the endangered reflexed bladder sedge (*Carex retrorsa*). It was the first record for the species at the refuge and in Ottawa County. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Biologists Ron Huffman, Jenny Finfera, Jennifer Windus and Charlie Allen were also present.

Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association volunteer **Fred Bess**, while assisting the ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves with monitoring the federally threatened eastern prairie fringed orchid, found the northern adder's-tongue fern (*Ophioglossum pusillum*) in Killbuck Marsh Wildlife Area in Wayne County. This small, inconspicuous fern is only known in Ohio from two other sites in the Oak Openings Region. **Andrew Gibson, Ben Malone, Jennifer Windus, Jan Kennedy, Jenny Finfera, Charlie Allen, Marci Leninger** and I were there to share in the discovery.

In northeast Ohio, botanist **Brian Riley** "has gone down the rabbit hole" into the world of blackberries and dewberries (*Rubus* spp.). He discovered a number of previously unreported species for Ohio in

this notoriously difficult group, including one that may be worthy of state status, Fuller's bristle berry (*Rubus fulleri*). He found this on the Camp Ravenna Training and Logistics Site in Portage County.

Cleveland Museum of Natural History Botanist **Jim Bissell**, with **John Reinier** and **Stanley Stine**, found a new population of the endangered brownish sedge (*Carex brunnescens*) surrounding a pool at Thompson Ledges Township Park in Geauga County. A couple of weeks later, Jim and John found another population in a swamp forest at Pymatuning State Park in Ashtabula County.

During a bioblitz sponsored by Kent State University and The Nature Conservancy at Herrick Fen State Nature Preserve in Portage County, Summit Metro Parks Biologist **Rob Curtis** found the threatened hooded ladies'-tresses orchid (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*) in a fen meadow recently cleared of non-native, invasive species by the ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves' northeast district crew.

At the other end of the state, **Diane Richards** and **Hugh Wilson** found a new population of the federally endangered running buffalo clover (*Trifolium stoloniferum*) in Jackson County. Diane is spending her retirement searching for rare plants in south-central Ohio and has found a number of other rare species populations in Jackson County.

It cannot be a best finds article without mentioning botanist **Daniel Boone**. Dan, along with fellow botanists **Dave Minney** and **Dave Nolin**, found a new population of the endangered roundleaf spurge (*Euphorbia serpens*) in Ross County.

Last but certainly not least, I'll share the best finds in the moss world. In the fall, southeast district preserve manager **Jim Osborn**, **Jason Duchon** and I accompanied bryologist **Dr. Barbara Andreas** on a survey for the extirpated moss Cumberland grain o'wheat moss (*Diphyscium mucronifolium*) at Sheick Hollow State Nature Preserve

in Hocking County. The group discovered a small colony of the moss in the same general vicinity where it was reported about 30 years ago. While walking up the main stream in the hollow, we spotted a plant looking very similar to quillwort, a fern relative. After closer examination, it was the state endangered Engelmann's quillwort (*Isöetes engelmannii*). While Jim, Jason and I were sharing in the joy of the discovery, Barbara walked up to a tree with a moss that looked like the presumed extirpated moss, *Neckera pennata*. She called out to us, and said, "I found *Neckera pennata*." The rest of us were in shock that we had yet another incredible find. We continued up to the falls and found dozens of quillwort plants in moist sandy soils around the pool. It was a day we'll remember for a long time.

About a month earlier, on an ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves volunteer biological inventory trip at Lake Katharine State Nature Preserve, Barbara found a new site for the Cumberland grain o'wheat moss. Back in the spring, Barbara found the *Neckera* moss on a tree along the trail to Cedar Falls at Hocking Hills State Park. Between these two mosses, Barbara had a great year.

The only thing better than reporting the year's best finds is actually being in the field discovering them. There is a lot to explore in Ohio, and I wish the best to our many plant enthusiasts who will be out 'beating the bushes' for best finds in 2016.



Jason Duchon, Rick Gardner and Barb Andreas pose with the tree covered with the previously presumed extirpated moss, *Neckera pennata*.

FEATURED PRESERVE

Louis W. Campbell State Nature Preserve A journey along the trails.

By Ryan Schroeder, Regional Preserve Manager

Located southwest of Toledo in Lucas County, the Louis W. Campbell State Nature Preserve protects a piece of one of the most biologically rich areas in Ohio. A microcosm of the botanically significant Oak Openings region in northwest Ohio, Campbell is home to nearly 50 state-listed species. Encompassing just 170 acres, its diversity of habitats are home to a variety of species. High quality habitats include wet sedge meadows, swamp forest, sand dunes, sand barrens prairie and oak openings. There are 43 state-listed plant species recorded from the preserve including 16 listed as endangered. Rare wildflowers seen here include wild lupine, birdfoot violet, spathulate-leaved sundew, soapwort gentian, greater fringed gentian, plains puccoon and Missouri ironweed. The varieties of habitat provide a number of landscapes for endangered wildlife, including the frosted elfin and silver bordered fritillary butterflies.

Campbell lies in the sandy tract of land known as the Oak Openings region. Characterized by the presence of thick deposits of yellow-brown sand formed on the shoreline of ancient Lake Warren, the area is about 25 miles long and 5 miles wide. Lake Warren's water level rose as the Wisconsin glacier dammed its outlet. When the glacier retreated, the waters fell back to the present-day level of Lake Erie, leaving the sand behind high and dry. Where the sand is thick, subsurface drainage is excessive, and the dry soils support only scant vegetation. In other places, the sand is thin, and clay soil under the sand holds water at or above ground level. In these places, wet sedge meadows and swamp forests develop.

Along the lupine trail, heading west from the parking lot, visitors will find the boundary of two different habitats: swamp forest and sedge meadow. The swamp forest is an excessively wet area in spring with a canopy of pin oak, red maple and cottonwood. These wet areas are used by a variety of amphibians as breeding grounds, with the chorus of spring peepers, American toads, western chorus frogs, gray tree frogs and wood frogs filling the air.

The sedge meadow is home to many species of rare plants ranging from the nondescript field sedge (*Carex conoidea*) to the beautiful grass pink orchid. In early summer, watch for Ohio spiderwort, steeplebush, colicroot and Michigan lily blooming in the meadow. As summer progresses, ragged-fringed orchids, showy tick-trefoil and dense blazingstars begin to bloom. Autumn is the peak bloom time for many of the goldenrods and asters. Also, be on the lookout for fringed and soapwort gentian as well as nodding ladies'-tresses. Hikers may notice that the "wetness" of the meadow increases as one travels from east to west. Accordingly, there is a different assemblage of plants from one end of the meadow to the other.

The small parking lot can be found at 2742 South Crissey Road, Monclova. It is located just south of the Ohio Turnpike. Following the Lupine Trail provides a 2.3 mile round trip from the parking lot and back. Walking the Turkeyfoot Loop adds a ½ mile to the trip. For questions regarding this preserve, contact manager Ryan Schroeder at ryan.schroeder@dnr.state.oh.us or 419-445-1775.

The trail eventually comes to a small hill, where the sand is thick, and drainage is rapid. This small habitat is sometimes called an oak savanna or sand barren. The plant community is very different from the meadow surrounding it. This area is home to wild lupine, rough blazing star, birdfoot violet, western sunflower and wintergreen. These plants are adapted to the much drier conditions found on these barrens.

Across the bridge is the dominant habitat of the preserve, oak woodland. This section of trail is located on a beach dune that was deposited thousands of years ago from ancient Lake Warren. White and black oak are the most prevalent trees. Pin oaks and red maple are found in the wetter depressions. The forest floor includes shrubs such as blueberries, American witchhazel and spicebush. In the spring, look for large-flowered trillium, mayapple and Solomon's plume. North of the trail is a large swampy area that is carpeted with the unusual skunk cabbage. This plant's heat-producing flowers can be seen in late winter, and its giant leaves are visible through the summer. The trail will eventually loop around another oak savanna area. In spring and early summer, look for the blooms of wild lupine, plains puccoon, butterfly milkweed, goat's rue, mountain phlox and lyre-leaved rock cress here.

The turkeyfoot loop trailhead is located just west of this savanna habitat. Keep an eye out for muskrats, pied-billed grebes and turtles, both painted and Blanding's, in the pond. The loop will reach the western boundary of the preserve. The meadow in this corner is dominated by big bluestem, also known as turkeyfoot grass. With just a little bit of imagination, one can see how the dangling seed heads resemble the tracks of wild turkey in the snow. The trail then goes through another section of swamp forest before it reconnects with the Lupine Trail. People should watch their step, as the state endangered spathulate-leaved sundew does grow on the trail, taking advantage of the open habitat it creates.

Special consideration was given during trail planning and construction to highlight the preserve's multiple habitats while keeping disturbance as low as possible. Please wear appropriate footwear as sections of the trail can be wet.

Early May is a great time to visit the preserve when lupine are blooming, and the mosquitoes haven't yet emerged. Prairie wildflowers will bloom throughout the summer in the openings at either end of the preserve. The woodland in the center of the preserve is great for fall color, and during the winter, the trail makes for excellent cross-country skiing.





- ▲ *The gray treefrog is more often heard than seen.*
- ▶ *Colicroot does well in the open, sandy habitats of Louis W. Campbell State Nature Preserve.*
- ▼ *The preserve is named for Toledo naturalist Louis W. Campbell, author of "Birds of the Toledo Area."*



- ◀▲ *Plains puccoon and wild lupine are at peak bloom in early to mid-May.*
- ▼ *Butterfly weed dominates a big bluestem prairie in June.*



FEATURED PARTNERS

The Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association

By Jeff Johnson, State Nature Preserves Administrator

When I look back over the many accomplishments made in the past year at Ohio's State Nature Preserves, I am reminded of a quote from some long forgotten author. It has taken many forms for many groups, but perhaps in this form no truer words can be uttered. "Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer." It always seems that those individuals who have the most talent and energy use both prolifically, and they selflessly support the causes dear to their hearts. One group that matches that description is the Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association – more commonly known as ONAPA.

ONAPA, founded in 2012, was formed by individuals who saw the need for a statewide organization with the goal of promoting, protecting and improving Ohio's natural areas and preserves. Comprised of a veritable group of well-known land stewards, advocates, academics and community leaders, ONAPA has no fewer than six past Natural Areas and Preserves employees serving on the executive committee and board of directors – including two former division chiefs. But merely amassing an impressive roster of supporters isn't enough to garner much praise. Rather it is the efforts that are being made by this group that deserve recognition.

The ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves is in a rebuilding period. Field staff numbers are about half of that found in the early 2000s, while the acreage protected continues to grow, and the impact of invasive species increases. It is only with the assistance of volunteers that we are able to continue to protect Ohio's gems of the natural world.

The partnership between ONAPA and the ODNR Division of Natural

Areas and Preserves is entering the second year of its concerted effort to provide additional ecological management effort that is so needed across Ohio. Early on, ONAPA members began assisting the natural areas staff by submitting ecological management reports. As these volunteers visited preserves, they became additional monitors of site conditions. Issues with trails, locations of invasive species, reports of vandalism or just a report to let us know things looked good assisted staff with keeping tabs on preserves across the state.

Through the efforts of two ONAPA volunteers – both past natural areas staff members themselves – we are coordinating joint Ohio State Nature Preserves and ONAPA stewardship projects. With 18 such projects scheduled for this year, ONAPA is working alongside staff to organize volunteers to help tackle ecological management at many of our most threatened sites. Work will entail the often tedious tasks of cutting and treating woody invasive species such as buckthorn and bush honeysuckle or pulling herbaceous species such as garlic mustard or stiltgrass. But it's not all work and no play. We are also attempting to incorporate an interpretive aspect to each of these stewardship projects so those volunteers can see the features and ecology they are helping to preserve. I for one could not be more pleased with the skill and energy that these partners bring to our shared goal of protecting these most precious sites for generations to come. We at the ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves and ONAPA invite you to join us in the most worthy of causes. To quote one of my favorite authors, Dr. Seuss, in his book, "The Lorax," "UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." Here's to making Ohio State Nature Preserves better than ever before.



ONAPA volunteers assisted preserve manager Ryan Schroeder control invasive species at Irwin Prairie State Nature Preserve.

(Front row, left to right): Brenda Babcock, Dean Babcock and Bob Klips.

(Back row, left to right): Rick Bryan, Ryan Schroeder, Randy Haar, Rachael Patterson and Jennifer Windus.

Gavin Power Plant (AEP)

Our interest was piqued when American Electric Power (AEP) called us this past fall to inform us that consulting botanist Tim Walters had found Ohio's only known population of bushy broomsedge (*Andropogon glomeratus*) in an ash impoundment adjacent to Ohio's largest power plant. The power plant's fly ash impoundment, a place that stored ash from the burning of coal produced from power generation, was being modernized. At higher elevations of the ash impoundment, in areas previously strip-mined, wetlands had developed, supporting thousands of plants of the state endangered bushy broomsedge. In October, state nature preserves staff traveled to document the population and learn more about its habitat. We look forward to working with AEP staff in the future to monitor Ohio's only known population of bushy broomsedge.

Hocking Soil and Water Conservation District

The Hocking Soil and Water Conservation District continues to be an important partner for the southeast district of Ohio's State Nature Preserves. This collaboration has resulted in several high quality education programs for the youth of Hocking County. Most notable of these was doing inventories of hemlock stands and monitoring for hemlock woolly adelgid at Sheick Hollow. Students were taught forest inventory techniques and the potential threat this non-native invasive pest poses to our hemlock ecosystems. In total, 229 acres of hemlock forest were inventoried, with no hemlock woolly adelgid found.

Grants written by and awarded to the Hocking Soil and Water Conservation District allowed for the purchase of needed equipment and the transportation of four classes of students from Logan Hocking High School. Along with the grants, soil and water staff assisted with the surveying and monitoring work as crew leaders for the students. Several other organizations assisted with this project, but it would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the Hocking County Soil and Water Conservation District. We look forward to continuing this partnership for future educational endeavors.

Buckeye Trail Association

Over the last two years, Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve Manager Levi Miller has worked closely with the Buckeye Trail Association to construct approximately 4 miles of public trails on the site. Currently, the Buckeye Trail runs along the road around the preserve. This collaboration will allow another section of Buckeye Trail to be moved from the road and into the woods, which will place Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve along one of the longest loop trails in the world at more than 1,400 miles long.

The expertise of the Buckeye Trail Association and the thousands of volunteer hours made this project possible. The addition of this trail through Boch Hollow will allow increased opportunities for bird watching, wildflower viewing, nature observation and interpretive programming. We look forward to continuing this partnership in future trail renovations, enhancements and maintenance.



Related to the more common Virginia broomsedge, bushy broomsedge has a larger broom-like inflorescence.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT OF STATE NATURE PRESERVES EVERYWHERE, EVERY DAY.



When people purchase one of Ohio's State Nature Preserves license plate, they are protecting Ohio's natural areas, helping increase awareness of our work and sharing their love and support of nature.

Ohio State Nature Preserves receive \$15 for each plate purchased, and a \$15 donation is made each year when people renew their tags.

Funding from this program supports facility and trail improvements. It also provides educational and interpretive programming, signage and materials for visitors to the preserves.

Visit oplates.com to order your plates today.

Thank you for supporting Ohio State Nature Preserves.

Together, we can preserve Ohio's natural beauty, protect our lands and waters, give our children a place to experience nature's peace and leave a legacy for future generations.

Donations help buy new land and support ongoing stewardship of the rare plant and animal species that make the preserves their home.

Come and visit these beautiful places – preserved, protected and available for you to explore.

Join us in saving our beautiful, natural Ohio.



Please send this form with your tax-deductible check or money order made payable to "ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves" to: ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, 2045 Morse Road, Bldg. C-4, Columbus, OH 43229



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Thank You!

PRESERVE MANAGERS



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