

STEWARD

Protecting and Preserving the Ohio River Corridor

www.westernwildlifecorridor.org

Calendar of Events

December 11, 2007, 6:00 pm

Holiday Member Party EarthConnection

December 23, 2007, All Day

Christmas Bird Count Bender Mountain

January 12, 2008, 1:00 pm

Snow or Shine Hike & Sign Dedication Addyston Preserve

February 12, 2008, 7:30 pm

WWC Board Meeting EarthConnection

February 23, 2008, 10:30 am

Invasive Plants Presentation Delhi Branch Library

February 28, 2008, 7:00 pm

Leap Into WWC Annual Meeting And Herpetological Presentation EarthConnection

March 1, 2008, 1:00 pm

Hardy Hikers Only Hike Bender Mountain

April 19, 2008, 1:00 pm

Tune-Up Wildflower Skills Hike & Sign Dedication Delshire Preserve (Hillside Ave. entrance)

April 25, 2008

Wildflower Festival
Delhi Senior Center *note new location

April 26, 2008, All Day

Flower-a-thon

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PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

Winter 2007-08

By Tim Sisson

Western Wildlife Corridor Offers to Create Nature Preserve in Miami Township

Western Wildlife Corridor has offered to clean up the litter and remove invasive alien plants on property that Miami Township owns. Why would we make such an offer - why would we want to assume this kind of responsibility for property we don't have any control over?

The answer is quite simple. A main goal of Western Wildlife Corridor is to create protected nature preserves in the Ohio River valley (and vicinity). I call these our *Emerald Gems*.

We ordinarily do this through acquisition of the property or a Conservation Easement on it followed by restoration of the property to a natural condition. However, this is not possible here. The property in question is owned by Miami Township, with a deed restriction specifying that it be a public park. It sits on Shady Land Road just north of Route 50 (see map on p.3 where the property is outlined). Most of it is heavily wooded with mixed hardwoods. There is a power line right-of-way across it that is a meadow. The size is approximately 60 acres.

The Township (and surrounding home owners) do not want a full blown park - you know, bike paths, shelters, ball fields. They are concerned about the potential disruption of their privacy, and the noise that such a public facility could cause.

So, what do you do with it? Well, we see it as the perfect opportunity for a natural nature preserve; an area with habitat restored to a natural condition that is a refuge for wildlife. In short, an Emerald Gem in the Ohio River valley corridor. This is why we at Western Wildlife Corridor feel that this project would fit our mission perfectly.

But what about the community? What would they get out of it? Experience in other places has shown that a nature preserve such as this is a real asset to the community. Quoting from a recent issue of a national magazine for land trusts, "Increasing evidence suggests that parks and natural areas are an investment that yields important benefits, such as fiscal relief, improved public health, strengthened neighborhoods, environmental protection, and preservation of natural beauty - all of which makes communities more livable." We all want Miami Township to be a better place to live in. A nature preserve on Shady Lane would do just that!

What happens next? Western Wildlife Corridor is currently preparing a written plan for the project. This will outline activities for the coming year that will give us a start on restoration of the property to a natural, litter-free condition. This plan will soon be presented to the Miami Township Trustees for consideration. If approved, we will draw up specific plans for work on the property (to start, hopefully, in the spring).

You have the rare opportunity to get in on the ground floor of this exciting new venture - a venture that could give us a beautiful new gem in our corridor and a greatly enhanced asset for the community. If you would like to help with this, please contact us at wwc7@yahoo.com or 513-921-9453

NATURALIST'S CORNER

Pickin' Up Pawpaws, by Leesa Miller

There's a children's singing game about "Pickin' up Pawpaws, put 'em in your pocket," yet a surprising number of people who played it as youngsters have no idea what a pawpaw is. Some even think it's another name for a papaya it's not

Pawpaws are found in much of the Western Wildlife Corridor area. The wooded hillsides provide preferred habitat for pawpaws to grow. Bender Mountain has a number of pawpaw stands, especially located along creeks scattered over the hills and at least one Hamilton County Park, Shawnee Lookout, has large areas covered in pawpaws, and smaller stands are located in other preserved areas.

The pawpaw is a relative of the cherimoya and other so-called "custard apples" that have large seeds and can be eaten with a spoon. The pawpaw's delightful aroma is reminiscent of the may apples, its flavor sometimes like mango and pineapple. It grows well anywhere that peaches grow well. Pawpaws look so much like smooth, stubby, shiny, unridged bananas that in Indiana they call them "Hoosier Bananas."

Some varieties even turn from pale green to somewhat yellow as they ripen. The inedible seeds are chocolate-colored, lima-bean-sized and shaped, and stand crosswise in the fruit in a handsome double row.

When Columbus and his men sailed the Atlantic and inevitably, in time, ran into the Americas, pawpaws were the largest fruit native to what is now the U.S. The Native American Indians are credited with spreading the pawpaw across the eastern U.S, to eastern and Texas, and from the Great Lakes almost to the Gulf.



The light green immature fruits are borne singly or in fused clusters from the thin twigs, and ripen to a yellow-brown tasty fruit in late summer, often quickly consumed by wild animals.

With their large, drooping, shiny leaves and tropical appearance, pawpaws are good in the yard, also. They're small, about the size of dogwoods. They prefer to grow in partial shade, especially when young. They have an unusual compatibility with black walnut trees. The pawpaws thrive in the shade provided by the black walnut trees and are not affected by the walnuts' alleopathic properties. (A poison called juglone, produced by roots of the black walnut kills or sickens some other plants, but pawpaws are not affected.) A cluster of young pawpaws around a healthy

The dark green leaves of the Pawpaw have a tropical look, with their large, shiny blades that are distinctly obovate (widest just behind the



leaf tip). They often hang down like dog ears from the twigs, and may display a clear yellow or golden brown autumn color.

black walnut is a reward in beauty and harvest. Hiking at the beginning of November, I enjoyed how the ground and understory along Miami Fort Trail in Shawnee Lookout was bright green-yellow with the fallen and ready to fall leaves.

Pawpaws are reportedly very nutritious and some call them a miracle fruit. According to a USDA scientist's analysis, pawpaws are higher in unsaturated fats, proteins and carbohydrates than apples, peaches or grapes. Yet little has been done to make them popular, perhaps because they are poor keepers-only about two days. Pawpaws must be refrigerated because their skins bruise easily and their aroma attracts fruit flies.

If you are considering growing pawpaws, they require little attention. They need very little pruning and no protection from the weather. They do need some shade. In good locations they bear annually, and don't grow too large. Pawpaw trees will stand temperatures as low as -20(degrees F). They do best with 40 or more inches of rain a year. They'll form thickets from stolons (horizontal stems just under the soil, from which new plants arise.) In a yard, a tree could conceivably spread to half an acre if conditions were favorable. Stolons grow and feed from the roots of the parent plant until they form their own roots.

Pawpaws and a certain kind of soil fungi have a partnership: the fungi penetrate pawpaw root tips for nourishment; at the same time they supply protein material needed by the pawpaws for health. Thus when transplanting bare-rooted pawpaws it's advisable to include some of the soil in which the seedlings grew.

Pawpaws are difficult to transplant as stolons, as they have few roots of their own. Unlike most trees, pawpaws transplant best when new leaves are out. Pruning should be kept to a minimum, as the buds at the tips of the branches produce plant hormones that stimulate root growth.

Pawpaw pollen is too heavy to be distributed by the wind. The pollinator of pawpaws is the carrion or bluebottle fly. These flies are the only known pollinators and are most active between 1 and 3 p.m. it's believed the flies are attracted to the pawpaw because the blos-

The light green immature fruits are borne singly or in fused clusters from the thin twigs, and ripen to a yellow-brown tasty fruit in late summer, often quickly consumed by wild animals.



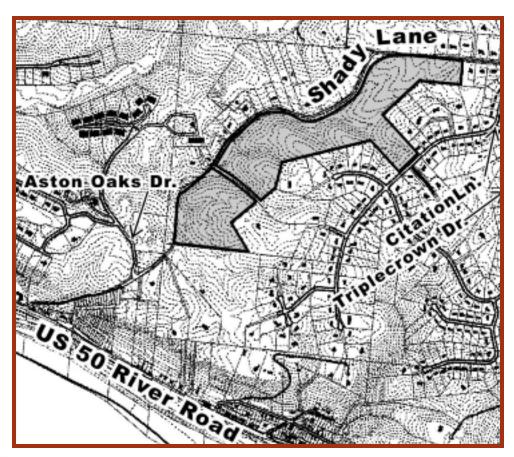
soms (if you bury your nose in one) have a faint odor of carrion. If you aren't getting a good fruit set it may be because there are no bluebottles around.

Pawpaws can be eaten out of hand or used in recipes much as peaches are used. Some suggested uses are to can them, freeze them, dry them, make pawpaw ice cream, salads and cakes. To determine the right time for harvest, put your hand around a pawpaw and gently squeeze it. If it gives a little, it is ready to pick. For best flavor, let the fruits soften. Something to look forward to this spring; be sure to check a field guide for proper identification (See guest article on page 6.

Portions of this article reprinted with permission, from an article of the same name, by Tom Mansell, published in National Gardening Magazine, September 1986.

Western Wildlife Corridor Board of Trustees

Tim Sisson, President
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Joyce Richter, SC
Rebecca Sisson



Welcome New Board Members

Joyce Richter, SC is a member of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati and is a native Cincinnatian. She received an undergraduate degree from The College of Mount St. Joseph in Cincinnati and a master's degree from the University of Detroit. Her career has mainly been in education — teaching mathematics to grade school and high school students as well as serving as associate principal of a high school in Michigan. Closer to home, she has taught computer application courses (spreadsheets, web page design, presentations, etc.) at The College of Mount St. Joseph. Her hobbies often involve working with computers, such as designing web pages, creating graphic presentations or assisting someone with spreadsheets or a computer problem. S. Joyce is a member of the Sierra Club and has always loved walking in the woods and exploring the outdoors. She participated in all three wild-flower-a-thons sponsored by the Western Wildlife Corridor and also participated in their Wildflower Festival. She sincerely believes in the mission of the WWC and is impressed with their unyielding efforts in land restoration in the area.

Dr. Donald Blaney has protected several parcels of his wooded property with conservation easements. His experience with this process and his concern for the native habitat of the area will be valuable assets to the WWC Board.

Donation Request!

Used computer with Windows XP and Microsoft Office, with modem, to be used for increased communication and desktop publishing.

Call Leesa Miller at 513-941-1628.

Exploring the Corridor: PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Fall Colors Hike & Sayler Park Fall Harvest Festival

By Leesa Miller

The public's favorite WWC hike of the year didn't see a lot of color this time, but did see record attendance of at least 30. It was a beautiful early October day that started off cool and breezy and warmed up just in time for the afternoon hike. Hikers saw areas that have been cleared of invasive honeysuckle and were treated to access to areas not open to the public. Tim Sisson led the hike.

Meanwhile, Leesa Miller and Katie Scudder were telling Sayler Park residents about Western Wildlife Corridor at the first (maybe annual?) Sayler Park Fall Harvest Festival. This past summer, Sayler Park has had a farmer's market one day a week in Nelson Sayler Park in the heart of Sayler Park, and this was where the festival was held. This was an easy event to work a booth at, and being in my hometown, it was nice to see familiar faces. If you live in Price Hill, Delhi, Riverside, Sedamsville, Addyston, Cleves, or North Bend, and you know of a festival in your area, please let me know at 513-941-1628 so we can set up a booth there. Maybe you can even help!

Holiday Membership Party Dec. 11, 6:00 pm EarthConnection

Come share the evening with your WWC friends. If you are new, it's a great time to meet some new friends who care about protecting the Corridor as you do. We'll have some fun with the White Elephant Gift Grab so bring a wrapped item to re-gift. It's a potluck dinner this time, so bring your special dish. WWC will provide a ham and roast.

Call Joan Gillespie 513-922-5764 for details and to RSVP.

Christmas Bird Count Sat. December 23, all day Bender Mountain Preserve & other locations

If anyone is interested in participating in the Christmas Bird Count for the National Audobon Society this year, a group will be in the Corridor with WWC member Ned Keller. Cost is \$5 per person. Experienced persons will be paired with inexperienced. The count lasts all day. Call Ned Keller at 513-941-6497 for details, or email keller@one.net.

Snow or Shine Winter Hike & Sign Dedication Saturday January 12, 1pm Addyston Preserve

We'll meet at Addyston Preserve on Main St in Addyston to view a new sign, which should be installed by then. Then, depending on the weather, we will hike up into the preserve. If there is snow on the ground, maybe we'll see some animal tracks to investigate. The Muddy Creek Valley is only visible in the winter with the leaves down.

Call Tim Sisson for details 513-922-4104.

Invasive Plants Presentation Why and How to Remove Woodland Bullies February 23, 2008, 10:30am Delhi Branch Library

Several species of invasive plants threaten the biodiversity in our local woodland areas. Tim Sisson, president of Western Wildlife Corridor, will present info about which ones to watch for and what you can do to help stop the spread of these herbaceous bullies. This is a topic that many of our supporters are already aware of, but the public needs to know about it and how they can help. Plan to be there to learn more, or just offer your support! Call Tim at 513-922-2104 with any questions.

"Leap Into Western Wildlife Corridor" Membership Meeting Thursday February 28, 7pm Location likely to be EarthConnection

We'll have a short annual membership meeting, then meet Dean Alessandrini of the Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society to learn about some of the reptiles and amphibians of the Corridor area. Maybe we'll even get to see some!

Call Leesa Miller for more info 513-941-1628.

Hardy Hikers Hike Saturday March 1, 1pm (Raindate March 8) Bender Mountain Preserve

The "mountain" will raise your heart rate for sure on this strenuous hike. After the hardy climb, a splendid view of the Ohio River Valley awaits at the top.

This hike is rewarding any time of year, but this time maybe some of the earliest spring wild-

flowers will be just emerging.

Call Tim Sisson 513-922-2104 for parking info and details.

Tune Up Your Wildflower Skills Hike & Sign Dedication Saturday, April 19, 1pm Delshire Preserve

The annual Wildflower tune-Up Hike will take place at Delshire Preserve's lower entrance. The hike will follow immediately after a sign dedication marking the new accessible entrance from Hillside Ave. The hike will be fairly easy with some hills and there will be frequent stops to look at wildflowers.

Call Leesa Miller 513-941-1628 for details.

Wildflower Festival April 25, 2008 Delhi Senior Center

*note new location
Now seeking event sponsors 513-921-WILD.

Flower-a-Thon April 26, 2008, all day

Who's Tracking?

This year, our Great Outdoor Weekend event was again a collaboration between WWC, Bill Reichling of R&R Trackers and Delhi Township Parks and Recreation Dept. The result was the highest attendance ever at WWC's Great Outdoor Weekend. About 60 attended the afternoon animal tracking class.

Bill Reichling had the kids mesmerized with his collection of animal track casts and molds. At least 130 came for the Whooo's Watching Whooo Night Hikes. During the break between programs, food from the grill was made available, thanks to Delhi Township Parks and Recreation Dept.

Bill Reichling returned in October to present an animal tracking program at EarthConnection in partnership with WWC. It was a good way to reach people in the Corridor area.

There were 34 in attendance.

From the Notebook of our Guest Columnist...

Selecting a Wildflower Field Guide

by Bill Edwards

Whether you are a novice or an experienced hiker, you cannot help but notice that wildflowers of all colors and types can be present many months of the year. You may have also noticed that some wildflowers seem to be blooming in different locales at different times of the year. Because there are many wildflower Field Guides available at book stores and park offices, it

may seem somewhat bewildering when shopping for an appropriate reference book to carry with you on your hiking experiences. In the following paragraphs, I will outline some factors you might consider before making your next purchase of a wildflower field

auide.

How do you intend to use the field guide? If you are hiking in an area you are likely to visit infrequently, like Mt. Denali National Park, you might want to consider the purchase of a geographically limited paperback that focuses on alpine-like wildflowers. If you are someone who frequently hikes around the state of Ohio, you will likely benefit from a more comprehensive field guide that includes wildflowers commonly found throughout the state, from the shores of Lake Erie to the north-central prairies to the Appalachian plateau found in the southeastern portions of the state. If you are someone fortunate enough to travel widely, I would suggest you utilize multiple regional field guides rather than attempt to carry around a heavy, bulky tome of North American wildflowers.

When do you intend to take your hiking opportunities? There are some of us who prefer the cooler spring trails more than the hot weather summer hikes. If you are a decidedly seasonal hiker, the purchase of a field guide focused on your choice of season is likely to be a more appropriate choice than one containing

wildflowers you are unlikely to see. If you are a year-round, experienced hiker, a more comprehensive field guide will likely be a wiser choice. Bear in mind, that the more comprehensive a book is, the more likely it is to be heavier and bulkier in your backpack.

What is your level of expertise? The targeted audiences of wildflower field guides range widely: from the very basic, requiring an ability to read; to the highly definitive, requiring knowledge of Latin and advanced botany. I would recommend one primarily organized by season and/or by color for hikers just becoming acquainted with the identification of wildflowers. Be careful not to purchase a highly technical book that requires you to know the approximate wildflower family before you can identify a certain species. For instance, to identify that pretty, little 4-petaled white flower found along the

trails in late spring, you must look in Brassicaceae to key through and find Alliara petiola.

Coming Attractions: In my next article, I plan to briefly overview the pros and cons of field guides that can be purchased locally and easily carried in your pocket or backpack. Absent specific alternative requests from WWC members, I plan to review the following books: Newcomb's Wildflower Guide: Peterson's FG to Northeastern Wildflowers; Tekiela's FG to Wildflowers of Ohio; Yatskievych's FG to Indiana Wildflowers; and, Barnes and Wilson's Wildflowers & Ferns of Kentucky. Did you recognize that pretty little 4-petaled white flower keyed as Alliara petiola? Itis also known as garlic mustard.

Three questions to ask about the Guardian of the Corridor Plan:

What if you only got one paycheck per year?
WWC has monthly bills just like you.

Remember that good feeling you get from supporting WWC?
Multiply that by 12.

Would you water a treasured plant just once a year?

Call Tim Sisson at 513-922-2104 to get started.

A bird that is now seen regularly in WWC, which used to be quite rare, is Bald Eagle.
They still don't nest here (although they do nest as near as Versailles State Park, Brookville Lake, and along the Ohio River at Brown County), but they are seen regularly in small numbers from mid-fall through spring.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Helping Hands

If you enjoy gaining an edge over the honeysuckle and garlic mustard, you've probably heard from Marianne Brater, who's been making reminder calls about restoration projects this summer.

When was the last time you attended a WWC event or helped out? It will be a breeze to find out, thanks to all the time that Greg Bishop is putting into a new database that will give access to membership, donations, and volunteer records all in the same program.

Later this year, volunteers will be better informed as a result of a volunteer manual that Deb Lutkenhoff will be assisting with.

Holiday party invitations are being designed by WWC member and artist Sally Anderson and helping to get them ordered and sent out is Barbara Smith.

Reaching out to real estate professionals is Barbra Druffel of Comey & Shepard Realtors. Barbra made a presentation to the Hyde Park office this spring.

Check out the new look of the WWC website, thanks to Kathy McDonald. It's easier to navigate and we look forward to including more info in the future.

Tim Sisson leads great hikes and knows the preserves better than anybody.

When Ned Keller and Kathy McDonald led the Fall Warbler Hike, it was a change of pace, literally. It was one of the longer hikes we've had and covered a shorter distance, which is probably because of the subject we were looking for-birds. We found many more birds than I thought possible in Story Woods, including a roosting Nighthawk, which I thought was the best part. We would love to have other volunteers step up to lead a hike to increase the variety of ways to explore the Corridor like this one did.

Last but not least, thank you to all the volunteers who helped this year in the Habitat Restoration work. You braved various weather conditions, varying from freezing with snow flurries, to 90+degrees with Cincinnatistyle humidity. Your efforts put the icing on the cake of greenspace protection. You help WWC go a step beyond land protection to actually restoring the native habitats we want to protect. Here is a partial list and many of these helped regularly. Please accept our apologies if you were there and we forgot your name. There were so many names!

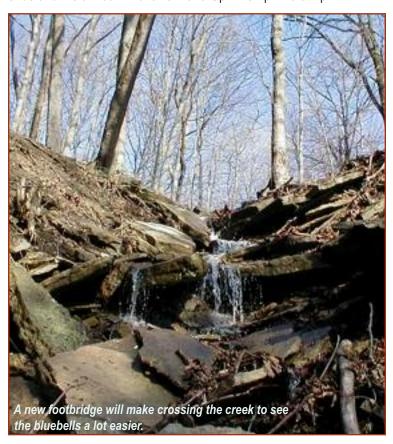
At the top of the list is Tim Sisson, who was probably at every single restoration workday this year. Besides that, he also works on the invasive plant infestation at other times on his own, also.

Carl Ackerman, Sally Anderson, Greg and Justin Bishop, Don Blaney, Marianne Brater, Beth and Bruce Cortwright, Pam Dixon, the Durrells, Bill Edwards, Larry Feist, Joan and Patrick Gillespie, Brian Hensley, Jennifer Johnson, John Klein, Nick Ludwig, Debbie Lutkenhoff, Kathy McDonald, Leesa Miller, Tom Morin, Bob Nienaber, the Nurre family, Don Otten, Ethan Perry, Roselyn Schloss, Katie Scudder, Jake Sisson, Tim Smith, Robert Thomas, Janet Torok, Mary Uhlenbrock, Diana Veid, Josh Veldhaus and Mona Weiner.

And, a special thank you to Roger Auer for arranging the help by the Elder students, and thanks to all of the Elder students!

Eagle Scout Project in Delshire Preserve

Delshire Preserve will be a little easier to enjoy when Josh Veldhaus of Boy Scout Troop 350 is finished with his proposed Eagle Project. A short access trail linking the lower portion of the preserve with Hillside Avenue, and a footbridge leading to "Bluebell Hill" in the upper part of the preserve, will delight visitors in springtime. No date has been set for completion, but maybe the work will be done in time for a combined event at the site, which will include a sign dedication on Hillside Avenue and the annual Wildflower Tune-Up Hike April 19 at 1pm.



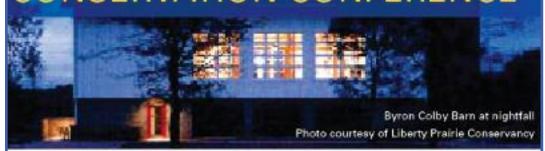
Committee Chairpersons

Land Stewardship: Tim Sisson 513.922.2104

Outreach & Newsletter
Leesa Miller
513.941.1628

Fundraising Rebecca Sisson 859.746.8671 The Land Trust Alliance is pleased to present the

7TH ANNUAL MIDWEST LAND CONSERVATION CONFERENCE



Cultivating Conservation Close to Home March 6 - 8, 2008 | Mundelein, IL

Conference Center at University of St. Mary of the Lake

Join your conservation partners from across the Midwest for a high-caliber training and networking conference.

- · Reconnect with your partners in conservation
- · Learn about important regional issues
- Join us at the Byron Colby Barn for a reception at the acclaimed conservation community Prairie Crossing

REGISTRATION WILL OPEN IN DECEMBER!

Questions? midwest@lta.org or 269-324-1683

www.lta.org/training



Non-Members on Temporary Mailing List

We've accumulated a large number of names of interested people over the past year and that's great! We've sent you some newsletters and maybe an invitation to an event or two. Now we could use some indication that your interest continues. Support in the form of volunteering or a membership donation (or both!) would be a welcome show of your interest. To be frugal, we will eventually need to discontinue mailing to persons we do not hear from at all.

Even if you do not wish to join WWC at this time, please just let us know that you are still interested so you do not get dropped from the mailing list.

See back page for membership form.

WANTED!



Corridor News, Stories & Photos

Deadline for articles for the Spring issue of The Steward is January 15, 2008

Contact Leesa Miller at 513-941-1628 or Momshine 2000@yahoo.com if you have something for the newsletter.

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac (1949)



PO BOX 389077 Cincinnati, OH 45238-9077

513.921.WILD (9453) www.westernwildlifecorridor.org Email: wwc7@yahoo.com Non-Profit
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Permit #571



Mark your calendar!

WWC Member Holiday Party Dec. 11, 6:00 pm

Leap Into WWC Membership Gathering Feb. 28, 2008, 7:00 pm

Please help the Western Wildlife Corridor protect the Ohio River valley.

Enclosed is my tax deductible membership contribution at the following level:
\$20 Individual\$75 Supporting
\$30 Family\$100 Patron
\$50 Organization\$500 Sponsoring
\$ Other donation
\$ Monthly Guardian of the Corridor
May we call you for support? Yes Would you consider donation land or a conservation easement? Yes
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Address
City, State, Zip
Email address
Please mail check to:
Western Wildlife Corridor PO Box 389077

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