



THE STEWARD

Protecting and Preserving the Ohio River Corridor

www.westernwildlifecorridor.org

Fall 2010

Calendar of Events

September 18, 9am - noon

Habitat restoration at Bender Mountain

September 25, 5:30 - 8:30pm

Great Outdoor Weekend

Whooo's Watching Whooo?

Story Woods Park, Delhi

October 2, 9am - noon

Cleanup and habitat restoration

Shady Lane Preserve

October 9, 9am - noon

Trail construction at Bender Mountain

October 17, 12:30 - 4pm

Family Scavenger Hunt,

Hike and Native Plant Sale

Bender Mountain (Meet @gravel pull off)

October 30, 9am - noon

Habitat restoration

Sister's Hill

November 7, 2pm

Hike at Sister's Hill and Bender Mountain

November 13, 9am - noon

Habitat restoration

Whitetail Woods

November 27, 9am - noon

Habitat restoration

Bender Mountain

Other community event:

October 9, 10 - 4pm

Sayler Park Harvest Festival

Nelson Sayler Park Square

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

Sister's Hill Remembered

By Tim Sisson

The first place I walked in Delhi after moving here in 1984 was Sister's Hill, the closed off portion of Delhi Pike that used to go down to Hillside Avenue. I even cross-country skied on it when I could. Sister's Hill was convenient, had lots of parking and was easy (it had a paved surface and a gentle slope). Back then a few of us took pruners along to trim back the vegetation (mostly Amur honeysuckle, even then) that was encroaching on our "path". A sort of hedge of honeysuckle eventually evolved along the path - that is until Bruce got after it with his chain saw. Now the old road is completely open.

When I became active with WWC, I found out that we actually owned part of the land along Sister's Hill; in bits and pieces along the south side. These parcels had been bought at the Auditor's foreclosure auction by Don Patrick and donated to WWC. Eventually I bought some at the auction and donated them myself. Other parcels have been donated to WWC by the owners, creating overall a significant, but scattered, fragmented area.

Over the years I have met many people walking Sister's Hill (and have recruited many as members of WWC). It has become a regular walking place for neighbors and students and faculty at the college. Many teachers use "the hill" for field trips for their students. WWC has "restored" a chunk of our land along the old road by removing the alien species, Amur honeysuckle and garlic mustard, to show hikers what the original forest in Delhi (sort of) looked like when the pioneers arrived. Recently one of the walkers exclaimed to me that it was such a treat to see the larkspur on our cleared area. It was a great contrast to the honeysuckle crowding along the road everywhere else.

Sister's Hill is different from our other properties in that it has a fairly flat paved trail, so it can be used by people who want an easy place to walk. Each year more native wildflowers have appeared in the areas that WWC has cleared. It is a much nicer place than when I first saw it in 1984. 🐦



This was the crowd that joined our hike down Sister's Hill last November.

Enjoy the Western Wildlife Corridor

Saturday, September 25
5:30-8:30pm
Great Outdoor Weekend
Whooo's Watching Whooo?
Story Woods Park
694 Pontius Road, Delhi

WWC partners with Delhi Township Parks and Recreation to offer a family outdoor educational program and night hike opportunity. Children can make bird feeders and plaster casts of paw prints. There will be educational displays. Hot dogs, popcorn, veggie trays and drinks will be available for sale. Once it is dark, leaders will take hikers into the woods to listen for sounds of wildlife. It's a fun evening for all.

Great Outdoor Weekend is an initiative of Green Umbrella, a regional nature alliance. There are programs at various times both Saturday and Sunday. All are free and open to the public. Go to www.cincygreatoutdoorweekend.org for an easy to use schedule of all the interesting activities.

Sunday, October 17
12:30pm-4pm
Go Native
at Bender Mountain Preserve
Family Scavenger Hunt, Hike
and Native Plant Sale

Last year's attendance blew us away, so we're doing it again, with even more planned. Families want to get outdoors and into the woods. Come explore the preserve at your own pace or join a guided hike scheduled for 1:30 pm. Then take home some native plants from our native plant sale fundraiser. Brian Jorg will share his native plant knowledge throughout the sale at 1, 2, and 3pm.

The scavenger hunt is for all ages; children must be accompanied by an adult.

Hop rocks to cross the creek, look for animal signs, see how many different nature items you can find and check out the fall colors up close. Just wander around and get in touch with our local native ecosystem.

The guided hike will be strenuous uphill walking. Sturdy shoes are a must. The plant sale benefits Western Wildlife Corridor.

Rain or shine. Park at the gravel pulloff on Bender Rd, 1/2 mile from River Road.

Call 513.284.1046 or momshine2000@yahoo.com with questions.



Paw paws and cicada shell on Bender Mountain.

Tim Sisson

Sunday, November 7
2pm
Hike at Sister's Hill
and Bender Mountain
Meet at the barrier at the end of Delhi Pike near the College of Mount St. Joseph

Hike the part of Delhi Pike that was closed years ago due to hill slippage, but still makes a nice hiking path (commonly called Sister's Hill). We'll then climb a strenuous new trail we've recently blazed up from Hillside Avenue to the top of Bender Mountain to reach old-growth forest and a nice view of the Ohio River.

Contact Bruce Cortwright at 513.451.5549 with questions.



This visitor to last year's Great Outdoor Weekend event was amazed at the size of this deer antler.

Tim Sisson

Learn why it's so important!

Join us for Habitat Restorations!

Why habitat restoration? Sometimes the biggest threat to our preserves is invasion by alien plant species. Plants such as Amur (or bush) honeysuckle, euonymus and garlic mustard can produce such a dense cover of foliage that native plants cannot survive. We've been told that Amur honeysuckle even secretes a toxin that kills native plants! When we restore the habitat in one of our preserves, we remove these invasive alien plants so that native plants and animals can thrive.

Contact Tim at 513.922.2104 or
tsisson@fuse.net for more information.

Saturday, September 18

9am - noon
Bender Mountain

Saturday, October 2

9am - noon
Cleanup and habitat restoration
Shady Lane Preserve

Saturday, October 9

9am - noon
Trail construction
Bender Mountain

Saturday, October 30

9am - noon
Sister's Hill

Saturday, November 13

9am - noon
Whitetail Woods

Saturday, November 27

9am - noon
Bender Mountain

*A new trail allows hikers to enjoy an area of Bender Mountain
that has recently been cleared of invasive honeysuckle.*



Tim Sisson

August, 2010

Bender Mountain Preserve Trail has gotten off to a good start, thanks to Eagle Scout candidate Travis Holtman of Boy Scout Troop 418 located in Miami Heights, Ohio. Travis is in the process of earning his Eagle Scout Rank and decided to work on the trailhead and trailblazing work on the Bender Mountain Preserve Trail for his Eagle Scout Project.

Travis' project began with a meeting with Western Wildlife Corridor members Tim Sisson and John Klein to determine where to locate the trailhead and how best to build the trailhead and first quarter mile of trail on Bender Mountain. Travis's project included building and installing a bridge for easier access over the small creek at the base of the trailhead and building and placing a bench at the foot of the beautiful old pin oak tree located on the trail. His project also included cutting down all the honeysuckle located on and around the trail. He invited scouts, leaders and parents from his Troop 418 as well as friends and family to assist with the project. Through Travis' leadership, all participants learned about the native plants and the importance of removing honeysuckle. They also experienced some hard work while clearing out all of the invasive species!

Western Wildlife Corridor is happy to announce that the first piece of the Bender Mountain Preserve Trail is now open for members and guests! To celebrate, we had our first hike, open to the public, on July 31st. The hike was well attended and the trail was beautiful!

In addition, through the fundraising Travis did for his project, he not only paid all the expenses incurred to complete the project, but also made a donation of over \$700 to Western Wildlife Corridor. We appreciate the generosity of Travis and his donors!

We wish Travis much success as he finishes up the remaining work as an Eagle Scout candidate and we hope very soon to hear that he has achieved scouting's highest honor, the Eagle Scout Rank. Thanks, Travis, for your excellent work on the Bender Mountain Preserve Trail and your generosity to our group.

Adele Grout



Travis Holtman presents his donation to Tim Sisson of Western Wildlife Corridor.

Adele Grout

Here's Travis with a few of the hardy volunteers who help him construct the trail.



Tim Sisson



Tim Sisson

Volunteers Adele Grout and Deborah Scudder with the WWC display.

**WWC Booth
Volunteer Orientation**
Tues., Sept. 14, 6-7:30pm
We need YOU! Getting the word out about WWC is vital. Find out how to be a booth volunteer. We'll cover how to set up the display and materials, what to say and have sign ups for upcoming events. Have you wanted to help, but didn't know how? This is your chance. Light dinner provided. RSVP by Sept. 13 to Leesa Miller 513 284-1046 or momshine2000@yahoo.com



Special Sightings in the WWC, part 1

Bender Mountain makes a good nursery for a fox kit.

Photo courtesy Hamilton County Park District



As I sat down on the slope of Bender Mountain to take a banana break, I noticed movement below. Looking closely, I saw a red fox trotting across the hillside below me, stopping occasionally to take a peek in my direction. It then turned and trotted back the other way, disappearing into the forest. Now, I've seen red foxes in the forest before, but always in quick glimpses as they ran out of sight. It was quite unusual to have one stay in view for so long.

A movement to my right then drew my attention - and I saw the reason the fox didn't run away immediately. A "kit" fox was watching me intently. As soon as it realized I had noticed it, it too trotted off into the forest. I'm sure the fox below me was one of the kit's parents who was watching me (with concern) because I was near its offspring. That's why it hung around for so long.

In my wanderings through the Corridor this year, I have seen many interesting, even rare sightings. I'd like to share these with you in the next couple of issues of our newsletter. Another one that was at first perplexing, but began to make sense after I thought about it was the swimming box turtle! All the box turtles I've seen in the past were nowhere



A box turtle took an unexpected swim at South Road preserve.

near water. This one, however, was in a basin just below a waterfall in a creek on our South Road preserve. Most of its shell was submerged - as I watched, it poked its head above water occasionally to breathe. At first I thought, "how novel, a box turtle that likes the water." As I pondered this, however, I began to believe that it was actually in trouble. It couldn't get up over the waterfall; the banks on either side of the creek went straight up, and there was a mass of large tumbled rocks below it. I believe it fell into the creek and couldn't get out. Based on that hunch, I picked it up and placed it well up the slope above the creek. I'll swear that it gave me a smile as I set it down.

Speaking of rare, I was pleased also to find during our Flower-a-thon that the population of fern-leaved phacelia (*phacelia bipinnatifida*) in our Delshire Preserve is flourishing. There were more of them at Delshire this year than we've seen at any time in the past. The fern-leaved phacelia is a state endangered plant in

State-endangered fern-leaf phacelia thrives at Delshire.



Tim Sisson

Ohio, so it's very good that it's doing so well. I'm sure the fact that we have cleared the alien invasive plants (amur honeysuckle and garlic mustard) from Delshire is the reason. If we hadn't done that, their numbers would certainly have diminished.

The Western Wildlife Corridor is a very diverse ecosystem just brimming with a great variety of plants and animals. Every once in a while I see one of its inhabitants that makes me smile or fills me with wonder. This is one of the reasons why I believe it is so important to protect it. I want to make sure that it is still there far into the future so that people at that time can enjoy it too. 🙌

PLANNED GIVING: SIMPLE AND EASY WAYS TO INCLUDE WESTERN WILDLIFE CORRIDOR IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING!

By Adele Grout

In the last two newsletters we have listed several ways that you can support Western Wildlife Corridor by including our organization in your estate plan. In this issue, we'd like to expand on the more advanced ways to establish planned giving in your estate.

Charitable trusts are a good way to leave funds to Western Wildlife Corridor. Two types of trusts, as well as gift annuities, are described below:

Charitable Remainder Trusts

A charitable remainder trust allows you and/or other designated beneficiaries to receive income from a trust for your lifetime(s), or for a designated period of years. At the end of that time, the balance of the trust is transferred to a charity that you have selected. You can take a charitable deduction for a portion of the gift you make to the trust in the year the trust is formed. (In some cases, additional funds may be added in later years.) The two most common types of charitable remainder trusts are annuity trusts and unitrusts, which differ in how the income you receive from the trust is calculated and distributed.

Charitable Lead Trusts

A charitable lead trust allows you to designate a charity to receive a regular, fixed amount from a trust for a specified time period or the lifetime of a designated person. At the end of that time period, the remainder of the trust passes to your designated heirs or other non-charitable beneficiaries.

Gift Annuities

A charitable gift annuity is a different way to give to Western Wildlife Corridor and it provides you with a lifetime income! To establish a gift annuity, you can contribute funds or assets to a nonprofit organization, such as The Johnson Charitable Gift Fund or The Greater Cincinnati Foundation (both located in the Cincinnati area) and those entities in turn make fixed annuity payments to you from its general assets for the rest of your life. You receive an immediate income tax deduction for a portion of the gift, and a portion of each annuity payment may be treated as a tax-free return of the investment. The portion of the gift not used for annuity payments will benefit Western Wildlife Corridor, the nonprofit organization, at your death.

All of the ideas touched on in this article should be discussed with your estate planning attorney so that you may receive the best advice possible for your personal situation. In addition, rules vary from state to state, so your attorney will be able to provide you with the information pertinent to the state where you reside.

Any gift in any amount that you make to WWC, whether a current gift or a future gift as indicated in the examples above, will be greatly appreciated and all donations are used toward our goal of preserving land for future generations. If you have any questions, please call Tim Sisson at 513.922.2104. 🦋

The Western Wildlife Corridor gratefully acknowledges the donation in honor of the 17 women celebrating their Golden Jubilee as Sisters of Charity this year.



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Tim Sisson

Sunset over the Western Wildlife Corridor.

Please indicate how you would like to help!

JOIN WESTERN WILDLIFE CORRIDOR 2010-2011

☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution at the following membership level:

___ \$20 Individual ___ \$30 Family ___ \$75 Supporting
___ \$50 Organization ___ \$100 Patron ___ \$500 Sponsoring
___ Other ___ / month Guardian

DONATE TO THE LAND ACQUISITION FUND

☐ Enclosed is my tax deductible donation for the land acquisition fund \$ _____

VOLUNTEER YOUR SERVICES

☐ Help with Habitat Restoration ☐ Help with Outreach and other needs

Name _____ Phone number _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City, State, Zip _____ Email _____

Please mail to:
Western Wildlife Corridor, Inc.
PO Box 389077
Cincinnati, OH 45238

*Thank you for supporting the Western Wildlife Corridor's mission
to preserve the scenic beauty and natural resources of the Ohio River Valley!*