



# THE STEWARD

Protecting and Preserving the Ohio River Corridor

[www.westernwildlifecorridor.org](http://www.westernwildlifecorridor.org)

Winter 2010

## Calendar of Events

### January 31, 1 pm

Winter Adventure Hike  
Bender Mountain

### February 13, 9 am to noon

Great Backyard Bird Count  
Sisters of Charity Motherhouse Grounds

### March 2, 7 pm

Winter Membership Meeting  
EarthConnection

### March 13, 9 am to noon

Habitat Restoration Project  
Whitetail Woods

### March 27, 9 am to noon

Habitat Restoration Project  
Whitetail Woods

### April 3, 10 am and noon

Habitat Restoration Project and  
Sign Dedication at Shady Lane Preserve

### April 9, 6 to 9 pm

Fourth Annual Wildflower Festival  
Delhi Senior Center

### April 10, 10 am to noon

Habitat Restoration Project  
Bender Mountain

### April 17, 8 am

Early Spring Birds and Blooms Hike

### April 18, 1 pm

Wildflower Hike  
Delshire Preserve

### April 24, all day

Sixth Annual Flower-a-thon

### May 1, 9 am to noon

Habitat Restoration Project  
Shady Lane

## PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

By Tim Sisson

### Western Wildlife Corridor to Expand Bender Mountain Preserve

Bender Mountain is the name of the majestic forested ridge that sits between Bender Road and Hillside Avenue in Delhi Township. It is completely covered with mature hardwoods including oaks, hickories, maples and ash. We are happy to announce that Western Wildlife Corridor recently signed an agreement to buy another important property on the "Mountain."

The new property sits at the end of the ridge, adjacent to a nature preserve owned by Delhi, and includes a vantage point that gives a sweeping view of the Ohio River and Rapid Run Creek valleys. By the time you read this, funding should be completely in place to finalize the purchase - thereby protecting another superb crown jewel in our emerald chain of nature preserves in the Western Wildlife Corridor.

Western Wildlife Corridor, as a result of an agreement with Delhi (and with the previous owner, Hamilton County Park District), has been clearing invasive alien plants from the preserve next to the new property for several years. Most of this is now very high quality forest. This effort will be extended onto the new property after the acquisition is complete, transforming it too into a very special place.

Our vision is to have an exceptional nature preserve here in the future; a place with hiking trails that will give people vibrant displays of wildflowers in the spring and spectacular views of forested valleys through-

out the year; a place where everyone who loves nature can truly enjoy the Western Wildlife Corridor far into the future. ✓



*This Sharp-lobed Hepatica is one of the many wildflowers that thrive on Bender Mountain.*

Tim Sisson

# Enjoy the Western Wildlife Corridor

**Sunday, January 31, 1 pm**  
**Winter Adventure Hike**  
**Bender Mountain**

The "Mountain" will warm you up for sure on this winter day. We'll meet on Bender Road at the gravel pulloff, 1/2 mile from River Road then wander up its side to the top where the view of the Ohio River valley is spectacular. Signs of the meanderings of wildlife in winter will probably be found - especially if there's snow on the ground! Hike will be strenuous. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy hiking boots. Contact Tim at 513.922.2104 or [tsisson@fuse.net](mailto:tsisson@fuse.net) for meeting place and other details.

**Saturday, February 13, 9 am-noon**  
**Great Backyard Bird Count with**  
**Audubon Society**

For information, see page 3.

**Tuesday, March 2, 7 pm**  
**Winter Membership Meeting**  
**EarthConnection**

Have you ever been hiking through the beautiful forests in the Western Wildlife Corridor and wondered what life was like for the earliest inhabitants of our area? Dr. Kenneth Tankersley, the speaker at our annual membership meeting, has been researching the ar-

His work has been featured in international, national and local television programs, radio, newspapers and magazines. He will discuss the results of recent excavations and surveys in the Shawnee Lookout area. He is familiar with the Western Wildlife Corridor and will answer questions we have about prehistoric people who lived where we live now.

A brief review of Western Wildlife Corridor's plans for the coming year will also be given. Light refreshments provided. Contact Leesa at 513.941.1628 or [momshine2000@yahoo.com](mailto:momshine2000@yahoo.com) for more details.

**Saturday, April 3,**  
**10 am & noon**  
**Habitat restoration &**  
**Sign dedication**  
**Shady Lane Preserve**

Last year we signed an agreement with Miami Township which allows Western Wildlife Corridor to establish a nature preserve on their property on Shady Lane. We then cleared the trash from near the road on two very successful volunteer outings (we managed to squeeze in some garlic mustard pulling, too). Now we start in with the heavy lifting - clearing the dreaded Amur honeysuckle! We will clear honeysuckle from two areas near the road and install signs indicating that Western Wildlife Corridor is now managing the property. Sign dedication is at noon.

Contact Tim at 513.922.2104 or [tsisson@fuse.net](mailto:tsisson@fuse.net) for details on this major event.

**Friday, April 9, 6-9 pm**  
**4th Annual**  
**Wildflower Festival**  
**Delhi Senior Center**

This family event will feature nature games and activities, a wildflower plant and seed sale, a painting class, wildflower educational material, food, presentations by local environmental organizations and educational games for children. Contact Rebecca at 859.746.8671 or [rsisson654@fuse.net](mailto:rsisson654@fuse.net) to learn more about this enjoyable event or to inquire about participating.

**Saturday, April 17, 8 am**  
**Early Spring**  
**Birds & Blooms Hike**  
**Bender Mountain**

By mid-April, songbird migration will have begun, although it will still be far from its peak. But we will have a good chance to find early migrants such as Eastern Phoebe, Brown Thrasher, House Wren and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and a few warblers and vireos should also have returned.

We will walk out the trail to Bender Mountain. This trail follows the ridge top, and gives

easy views of treetop birds. There will be plenty to see looking down, too, as the trail passes through a mature forest with a carpet of spring ephemeral wildflowers. The first part of the walk is fairly level, but it becomes quite steep later on. You will have the option to walk the whole trail, or just part of it, as you prefer.

Directions: Take Delhi Road to where it dead ends, past Bender Road, west of the College of Mt. St. Joseph. Take the last driveway on the left, and follow it past the Sisters of Charity motherhouse to the large parking lot.

For more details, call Ned Keller or Kathy McDonald at 513.941.6497, or email one of us at [keller@one.net](mailto:keller@one.net) or [kmc@one.net](mailto:kmc@one.net).



archaeology of the Ohio River Valley for more than 30 years. He is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Cincinnati, and has conducted archaeological investigations across North America and Eastern Siberia.

## Learn why it's so important!

**Sunday, April 18, 1 pm**  
**Wildflower Hike**  
**Delshire Preserve**

If you want to see wildflowers, this is the time and the place. The hillsides here are covered with many species of beautiful spring wildflowers. For more on this event, which is also a "tune-up" for contestants in our Flower-a-thon, contact Tim at 513.922.2104 or [tsisson@fuse.net](mailto:tsisson@fuse.net).

**Saturday, April 24, all day**  
**6th Annual Flower-a-thon**

In this exciting event, participants compete to identify the wildflowers of the region and learn more about them. It begins with a breakfast around the fire at Embshoff Woods Park. Teams will then set off to explore the Ohio River valley, to search for and identify wildflowers. Flower-a-thon participants will also receive a gift and an awards dinner with a prize raffle to cap off the day. The team identifying the most wildflowers will receive the event's coveted Golden Trillium Award. To register, (fee of \$10 per person required), contact Tim at 513.922.2104 or [tsisson@fuse.net](mailto:tsisson@fuse.net).

## 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](mailto:tsisson@fuse.net) for more information.

**Saturday, March 13 & 27, 9 am to noon at Whitetail Woods**

Last year we made great progress clearing honeysuckle from this new preserve in Sayler Park. On March 13th and 27th, we will continue with this.

**Saturday, April 10, 10 am to noon at Bender Mountain**

Help us as we start clearing a new area on the "mountain" that WWC just purchased.

**Saturday, May 1, 9 am to noon at Shady Lane Preserve**

In addition to honeysuckle, the Shady Lane Preserve is being invaded by the dreaded garlic mustard. Today we will be fending off attacks by both of these!

## Get Outdoors with the Great Backyard Bird Count

by Kathy McDonald

The 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, a joint project of Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, will be held from February 12 through February 15. Birders from across the continent (more than 90,000 last year!) will pool their observations to contribute to this detailed snapshot of our late-winter birds. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count birds at the location of their choice for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org). You can do the count on your own, or join a group if you prefer.

The Audubon Society of Ohio (the Cincinnati chapter of Audubon) will sponsor a count on the Mt. St. Joseph Motherhouse Grounds on **Saturday, February 13, from 9:00 am to noon**. Come on out and join us for all or part of the count. You can watch at the feeding station, or join in a short - or a long - hike. Western Wildlife Corridor will help to lead hikes throughout the surrounding woods. This is a great way for less experienced birders to learn from their more experienced counterparts.

So come on out and join us - it's free, and it's fun. Young Birders will get a certificate for participating. For more information, contact Kathy at 513.941.6497 or by email at [whocooksforyou@gmail.com](mailto:whocooksforyou@gmail.com). ♡

## Committee Chairpersons

**Land Stewardship:**

**Tim Sisson**

**513.922.2104**

**Outreach**

**Leesa Miller**

**513.941.1628**

**Fundraising**

**Rebecca Sisson**

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**Newsletter:**

**Mary Uhlenbrock**

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**Jennifer Doerger**

**513.469-6380**



# Where Are They Hiding?

by Bruce Cortright

As many times as we drive up and down Bender Road and enjoy the beautiful scenery, do you sometimes wonder what kind of wildlife lives among the trees? It takes a trained eye, patience, and a little luck to uncover many of the animals living in these woods.

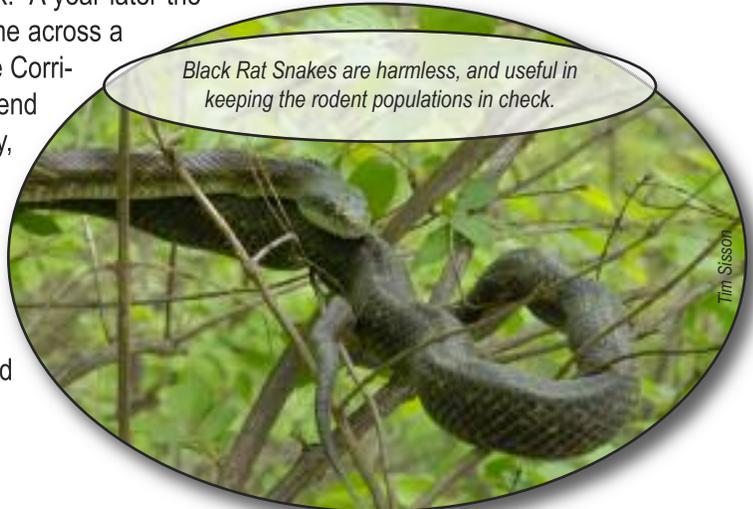
Some have been fortunate enough to locate the smaller creatures in the woods that call Bender Mountain home. Tim Sisson was lucky one day to find little Bambi bedded down on Bender Mountain. He might not have known that mother deer was watching him as he was taking the picture of her fawn. A hike down the Story Woods creek with Dean Alessandrini from the Herpetological Society resulted in finding two-line salamanders living under the rocks. While walking the many trails on Bender Mountain, my daughter Beth enjoys flipping over the dead wood lying on the ground to show me the many red-backed salamanders that call this area home. One day we saw a northern water snake catch a fish for dinner in Rapid Run creek. A year later the same water hole was home to a bullfrog! Tim happened to come across a black rat snake on one of his many hikes in the Western Wildlife Corridor. You just never know what wildlife you will find when you spend a little time looking in the right places. And if you are really lucky, you could uncover a cave salamander hiding in the Embshoff Woods creek just like my daughter Beth did.

So you see, the woods are full of life... from the small to the large... and it truly is a wonderful ecosystem for us to preserve and enjoy. 🐾



Beth Cortright

The Cave Salamander is an endangered species in the state of Ohio.



Tim Sisson

Black Rat Snakes are harmless, and useful in keeping the rodent populations in check.



Tim Sisson

This little fawn was a nice surprise for the trio of garlic-mustard pullers who were lucky enough to see her.

*The Western Wildlife Corridor gratefully acknowledges the following memorials in memory of those who have passed on.*

**Memorials for Carl Ackerman:**

- Marlene Kassem
- Linda Ackerman

**Memorials for Patrie McBeath:**

- Carol and Elliott Hilsinger
- Walter and Susan McBeath

# WWC Partners With Dater Montessori

by Susan Vonderhaar

WWC has agreed to cooperate with the Dater Montessori School Community Learning Center to promote land protection and habitat restoration. Dater Montessori School has been housed at the old Roberts Academy on Grand Ave. for almost three years now. Roberts is in its new building behind it. During spring break this March, Dater Montessori will return to its home on Boudinot Ave. to a newly renovated building. As part of the Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) Facilities Master Plan, each newly constructed or remodeled school is expected to make plans and accommodations for a Community Learning Center (CLC). The primary purpose of the CLCs is to put the schools back into the center of the community where the building is open and available to the at-large community on evenings, weekends, and summers. This Center is to be whatever the school community identifies as the needs and desires of its constituency. For Dater Montessori School and the westside of Cincinnati, this is green and healthy living.

A partnership has formed between Dater and Imago to enhance the school's nature education, and extend the reaches of Imago's environmental programming. It starts with the building. A LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver Award building, it features daylighting, high-efficiency HVAC, rain barrels, grey water collection system and a bike path. The basement rooms (4 former classrooms, restrooms, an office, and a central community room) are the new CLC to house the Imago annex and host many of the events and activities. But much of the activity will take place outdoors in the Nature Center. The Dater Montessori Nature Center (DMNC) is a series of gardens and natural areas that include vegetable, woodland, butterfly and memorial gardens, an arboretum/orchard, compost center, and the Meadow Maze - 3000 square feet of Ohio native wildflowers and grasses.

The green and healthy living community programming will run the gamut of all things sustainable. The Five Pillars of Sustainability are Learning, Community, Health, Waste Reduction, and Habitat Restoration. The Health pillar includes gardening, food (production, cooking, storage), exercise and stress reduction. Community Garden plots will be the first project to open the school and the CLC to the surrounding community. This "community" has no boundaries. It includes anyone with an interest in all or part of the programming and opportunities for activity.

The Habitat Restoration Pillar will be enhanced through cooperation with WWC. These organizations will promote one another's events and give support where possible. WWC has invited Dater to participate with a booth at the Wildflower Festival and to sponsor a team for the Flower-a-Thon. A CD of the Curricular Activities Guide from the DMNC classroom program was given to WWC. Imago Earth Center has done native and invasive species work as well, so there should be plenty the groups can do together, including space for a native plant nursery at the school. 🌱

## WWC's Special Place on the Internet

by Jeff Doering, Web Administrator

My generation has no idea what the world would be like without color TV. The generation before me can't imagine a world without radio. The generation after mine has no idea what this planet would be like without the Internet. There are 220 million Internet users in the United States of America with a population of just over 300 million. Doing the math, that's about 73% of the population that has the Internet - something that was hardly commercially available just 15 years ago. These numbers came from, where else, the Internet.

Over the past couple of years, www.westernwildlifecorridor.org has been evolving into our own special place on the Internet to help us convey our identity and to share information with our members and the general public. It's a great place to see pictures, find the next WWC meeting or habitat restoration and view the properties that we protect.

The latest addition to westernwildlifecorridor.org is a "Resources" page. This new page is a good place to find local government contact info, VERY powerful (and free) mapping tools, and plant information. You'll also find links to valuable tools that you might not otherwise come across on the Internet if you weren't looking for them, like the Tree Owner's Manual or the Rain Garden Manual.

If you haven't visited the website lately, please do. We'll continue to develop this resource with information that we think our fellow current members will find useful and that our potential new members or contributors can use to identify with us.

*Editor's note: WWC is extremely fortunate to have such a skilled web administrator. Our website is beautiful and user-friendly. Check it out!*



- Tim Sisson, President**
- Bruce Cortright, Vice President**
- Robert Thomas, Treasurer**
- Leesa Miller, Secretary**
- Dr. Donald Blaney**
- Marianne Brater**
- Susan Frede**
- Joan Gillespie**
- Adele Grout**
- John Klein**
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- Joyce Richter, SC**
- Rebecca Sisson**



