



THE STEWARD

Protecting and Preserving the Ohio River Corridor

www.westernwildlifecorridor.org

Fall 2013



PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL



By Tim Sisson

What's Happening in the Corridor (or State of the Corridor)

It has really been an eventful year – and it's only half over!

This spring we added two more key properties to our list of protected areas:

Buckeye Trace, our new preserve in Saylor Park. This property has a beautiful mature forest and a ready-made trail leading to the meadow on top.

Sister's Hill parcel. This protects another 600 feet of frontage on old Delhi Pike, giving assurance that this popular walking route will provide a serene, natural experience in the future.

As you probably know Western Wildlife Corridor isn't content with just protecting property in a legal sense, we are also dedicated to creating "natural" nature preserves through the removal of invasive alien plant species. The effort to do this has continued unabated. Our fabulous volunteers have cleared the dreaded honeysuckle from virtually all of our Delshire, Turkey Haven and Anders Court Preserves. We have cleared almost half of Whitetail Woods and large portions of Story Woods and the Shady Lane Preserve that we manage for the townships.

We are also happy to announce that through a generous donation from Walt McBeath, we have been able to hire Matt Fitzpatrick to clear honeysuckle from Bender Mountain. Matt is the fellow who, as a college intern, cleared much of the honeysuckle from Bender two years ago. As I write this, Matt is making great headway on the remaining plants and should have them cleared by the end of the summer.

Another major activity we embarked on this year was to reduce the damage due to an alien bug – the Emerald Ash Borer. This small Asiatic beetle (about one half inch long) is well on its way to killing all the ash trees in the region – except the ones that have been treated. John Klein and I injected a special insecticide into a large number of ash trees in our preserves this spring. WWC felt that it was important to preserve a sample of these beautiful species of trees (both blue and white) so that visitors to our preserves in the future could see what they looked like and to provide seed stock if the Emerald Ash Borer dies off in the future.



Brand new Luna Moth

Of course an article on the state of our corridor wouldn't be complete without a mention of the latest plant and critter sightings. See these in the photos in this newsletter - in living color - thanks to a grant from the SC Ministry Foundation.

So, you see that the state of our corridor is quite robust. With the continued support of you, our members and volunteers, we expect it to remain so well into the future.



Tim Sisson



UPCOMING EVENTS - Enjoy the Western Wildlife Corridor - Learn why it's so important!



Saturday, September 28, 9:30 am and 10 am Great Outdoor Weekend

For this annual fall event, WWC is hosting two hikes at **Bender Mountain** – strenuous and moderate. The strenuous hike will start at 9:30 am with a climb through a beautiful forest on our Eagle Scout Trail. At the top we will be treated to a spectacular view of the Ohio River Valley. We will then hike along the ridge top trail to Paw Paw Gap for the return to the trailhead. The moderate hike will start at 10 am and will meander along the slope of Bender Mountain through an equally beautiful forest. We will also hike at Paw Paw Gap and with a little luck we will be able to sample that delectable fruit.

For both hikes meet at the gravel parking area on Bender Road about ½ mile from Hillside.

Contact Bruce 513-452-5549 or corts5097@aol.com or Tim 513-922-2104 or tsisson@fuse.net for details.



Sunday, October 20, 2 pm Fall Color Hike Delshire starting from Hillside

The trees should be at their peak of color, so this will be an enjoyable hike.

Contact John 513-941-4877 or john.kleinp2@aol.com.

Join us for Habitat Restoration!

Why habitat restoration?

Many times 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 7, 9 am – noon Habitat Restoration

Our new Sister's Hill property

Contact Greg 513-404-5250 or gfl2376@gmail.com.

Saturday, September 21, 9 am – noon Trail Construction Bender Mountain

We will work on the Bender Valley trail (on the slope from the Eagle Scout trail to the Paw Paw Gap trail).

Contact Tim 513-922-2104 or tsisson@fuse.net or John 513-941-4877 or john.kleinp2@aol.com.

Saturday, October 5, 9 am – noon Habitat Restoration Whitetail Woods

Contact John 513-941-4877 or john.kleinp2@aol.com.

Saturday, October 12, 9 am – noon Habitat Restoration Buckeye Trace

Contact Tim 513-922-2104 or tsisson@fuse.net.



Tim Sisson



Tim Sisson



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TOP LEFT PHOTO: *Nodding Wild Onion*

BOTTOM LEFT PHOTO: *Baby Box Turtle* - This brand new Box Turtle is the size of a quarter. Note that there are no rings on the scales, showing that it hatched this year.

RIGHT PHOTO: *False Indigo bush*

Saturday, October 19, 9 am – noon Habitat Restoration Shady Lane

This will be a big project with lunch provided by the Miami Heights Civic Association.

Contact Tim 513-922-2104 or tsisson@fuse.net.

Saturday, November 2, 9 am – noon Habitat Restoration Our new Sister's Hill property

Contact Greg 513-404-5250 or gfl2376@gmail.com.

Saturday, November 16, 9 am – noon Habitat Restoration Buckeye Trace

Contact John 513-941-4877 or john.kleinp2@aol.com.

Saturday, November 30, 9 am – noon Habitat Restoration Voss property

Contact Greg 513-404-5250 or gfl2376@gmail.com.



Happy hikers=pulling garlic mustard too!

Pam Pitre

Purple Coneflower - A Medicinal Plant



By Sally Sisson Anderson - Artist in Residence WWC

For many years we have had a large bed of purple coneflowers on our back hill. We only cut this hillside once a year. It is basically a prairie, and the coneflower is a prairie plant.

The Plains Indians used purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) to treat snake bites and poisonous insect bites. They also used the juice of the plant to treat burns and heal wounds. The roots have been found to contain glycosides, which in folk medicine were thought to cure a wide variety of ailments such as rheumatism, tumors, syphilis, gangrene and eczema.

Throughout the development of this country, the pioneers used *Echinacea* as an antiseptic and a blood purifier. In the 1920s, *Echinacea* was sold as a popular drug by a company in Cincinnati. However, with the advent of new anti-infectives in the 1930s, *Echinacea* fell out of favor. But to this day herbalists grow and use *Echinacea* for its healing properties. I have found that chewing the buds or the leaves relieves canker sores and colds.



Purple coneflower is in the Aster family. It starts blooming in early summer and continues well into the fall. It is a perennial plant with a lavender flower, and it grows to about two feet tall. The coneflower is native to Michigan through Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and most of the mid-west. It will spread on its own as long as it is not cut down regularly. Each flower head contains a prickly rising dome. The seed heads are a favorite food of the American Goldfinch. Butterflies love to frequent the flowers for their nectar.

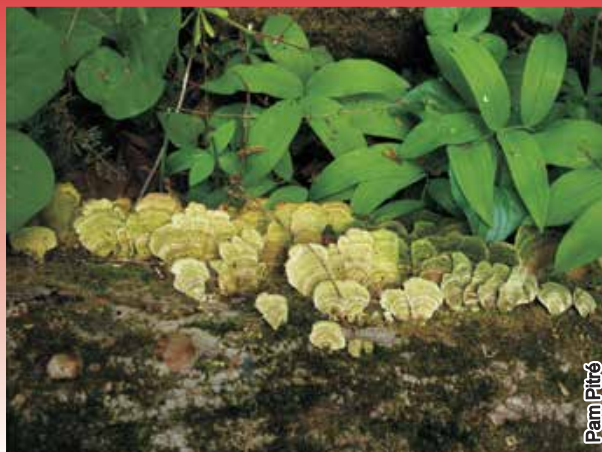
This is a great plant to bring into your flower beds. It is drought-resistant, and deer do not eat it. Wait until late October to collect the seed heads. However, it may be tough to find heads that have not been destroyed by goldfinch. Collect the seed heads in a bag, and then shake vigorously to loosen the nutlets. Seeds can be sown immediately in an outdoor seed bed, and seedlings should appear the following spring.

If you wish for an easier route, you can dig up a plant. Plants can be propagated from root cuttings in the spring or in the fall. Set plants 18 inches apart. Rework the soil by adding organic matter and sand. Many nurseries carry coneflowers, making it easy to either send for them or buy them locally.

Coneflowers are tough plants that can handle a dry sunny hillside as well as light shade. Good drainage is essential for them. These plants survive with very little attention. When I was planting my coneflowers on a chigger-infested hillside, I simply threw the seed heads up there! And we ended up with masses of coneflowers!



Tim Sisson



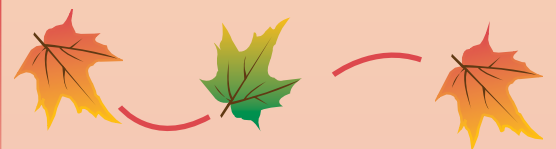
Pam Pitre



Pam Pitre



Tim Sisson



TOP LEFT PHOTO: Tall Bellflower

TOP RIGHT PHOTO: Fungus with Solomon Seal and Ginger

BOTTOM LEFT PHOTO: Dwarf Larkspur

BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTO: Uncommon Northern Ring-Necked Snake



The Controversial Coyote



Ever see a coyote in the Western Wildlife Corridor?

Coyotes are often heard and seldom seen, but can be found in or around any of our preserves. Coyotes howl for many reasons: pack solidarity, to find a mate, to celebrate a kill, to draw attention away from pups or apparently just for fun! A coyote's howl can stir the soul. A reminder that some "wilderness" can still be found close to home.

We are very lucky to be living in such exciting times. In the past 30 or so years, we have seen the return of many wildlife species once extirpated from our area. Some examples include: bald eagle, wild turkey, beaver, bobcat, peregrine falcon and river otter.

The coyote is perhaps the most controversial animal we have in the Corridor. Some people love them, while others hate them. Most adults grew up watching the Roadrunner make a fool out of Wile E. Coyote on Saturday mornings. Now that we know the real coyote better, it seems that their persistence is the only thing that was accurately depicted by Warner Brothers. The coyote is cunning, intelligent, adaptable, agile and fast. They are the ultimate survivor!

Coyotes are native to the U.S. but not to Ohio. Originally an animal of the western plains, they began moving east of the Mississippi River about 100 years ago. Nothing seems to stand in their way. They can cross busy roadways, climb fences and swim rivers. Despite the fact that our ancestors trapped, poisoned and shot more than 20 million of them in the past century, they have spread across our entire country. They now have a wider range than any other wild animal in North America! When the pioneers cleared the forests, removed the larger predators and planted (rodent attracting) crops, this became an open invitation for the eastern advance of the coyote.

From a distance, a coyote may look like an average-sized dog. One way to tell the difference is that a coyote walks with its tail held low, rather than high like a domestic dog. What makes the coyote so successful is its highly developed senses, adaptability, excellent parenting skills and varied diet. They are primarily solitary hunters, however depending on the prey they will occasionally hunt in small groups.

Coyotes in our area breed during February with the peak being around Valentine's Day. By mid-April an average of 6 pups are born blind and helpless like domestic puppies. Unlike its relative the wolf, the male and female coyote form a very close and faithful pair bond and are both very active in raising the pups. The den is used only by the mother to rear the young. The father keeps guard outside and if disturbed, helps to move the pups to one of a half dozen alternate dens built well in advance for this purpose.

At three to four weeks of age the pups emerge from the den and at 6 weeks old, have little use for it except during

inclement weather. A pack or family group normally consists of the mother, father and pups as well as two or three one year olds from the previous year's litter. These beta coyotes (usually females) also help to feed and train the young pups. The young males from the previous year usually travel great distances (up to 100 miles) in search of new territory, one way that coyote populations spread so rapidly!

Coyotes are adapting to life in urban areas and becoming much bolder due primarily to the lack of harassment.

Most farmers will shoot at a coyote that gets close to their house or livestock, and coyotes quickly learn to stay clear of humans. In urban areas, coyotes find few deterrents to living in or near our backyards. The biggest coyote conflicts in urban areas are with our pets. They see domestic dogs and cats as just another predator in their territory competing for food. A larger dog will often chase

a coyote away. Smaller dogs and cats, on the other hand, can be killed by a coyote protecting its territory.

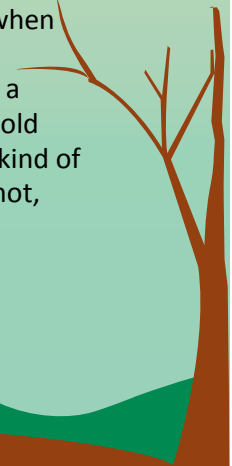
Coyotes are afraid of humans and attacks on people are very rare. In fact, you have a much better chance of being struck by lightning than being bitten by a coyote. However, small children should not be left alone outside in a coyote's territory.

Surprisingly, they are the fastest land animal we have in the mid-west, having been clocked at speeds of 43 mph. They are ranked the 9th fastest animal in the world, are extremely agile and are strong swimmers. While their preferred food is meadow voles, there is almost nothing they won't eat. Depending on where you find a coyote and what season it is, you could find him eating mammals, birds, insects, fruits, nuts, vegetation, amphibians, reptiles and garbage. While not a very effective predator of healthy adult deer, recent research suggests they can take 20 to 80% of the fawns born each year. While many deer hunters out there dislike sharing their game with another predator, there are still too many deer and the coyote is just filling a niche.

If you don't think you have coyotes in your neighborhood, guess again! They are watching and learning from us. They know when we set our trash out, how secure the lid is and when we feed other outside animals.

Experts say that if you see a coyote, take a picture and then throw a rock at it! How bold we let them become will determine what kind of neighbors they will be. Because, like it or not, coyotes are here to stay.

John Klein



AT THE CREEK

AT THE CREEK

Luke Hastings

Bender Creek is where I go,
to see my favorite creek flow.
As the water rolls with rapid grace,
It puts a smile on my face.

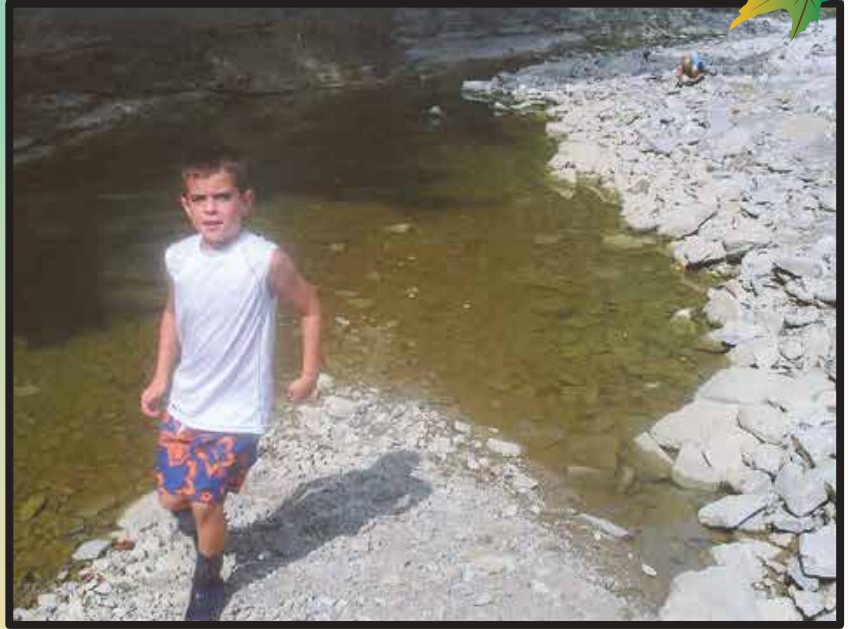
The summer is my favorite time to go,
because all the creatures are out.
It is the best, no doubt.

I have seen snakes laying around.
There once was a dead one I found.
At the bottom of the creek there is gravel and sand,
where I discovered a crawdad that pinched my hand.

It feels good to stick my feet in the cool water.
On one of my trips to the creek I saw an otter.
I enjoy catching fish in my net.
The fish felt slimy and wet.

I cherish the memories from over the years,
Some of them I hold very dear.
Most of my memories come from what I see,
waterfalls, flowers, fossils, and rocks covered in algae.

Now you know why Bender Creek
is my favorite place to go.
It's full of life, nature and the water has a perfect glow.



Luke Hastings is an eleven-year-old student at St. Williams School.
The photo was taken at Bender Mountain when Luke was nine.

Thank you Dr. Blaney

We sincerely thank Dr. Don Blaney for his service to Western Wildlife Corridor as a Board member for six years, and for his commitment to the cause of land preservation. You see, Dr. Blaney not only helped to advance land protection in our corridor with his input to the Board, he directly protected land by putting Conservation Easements on his own property.

We are grateful to him for his service and say goodbye – but only as a Board member. We hope to see him for many more years at WWC activities.

Welcome

Walter McBeath joined the Western Wildlife Corridor Board of Trustees in May 2013. A long-time west side resident, Walt graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a B.A. in Marketing.

He was Co-owner and President of nine La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries stores located in Cincinnati, Dayton and Columbus. The company was sold in October 2012, providing Walt opportunity to serve on the WWC Board.

He and wife Susan have been married for forty-three years. They are the proud parents of two daughters, and have two beautiful grandchildren and another due in December.

Preserving land and wildlife are a top priority for the family. The Western Wildlife Corridor is a great conduit to achieve that goal. They are also members of Oxbow, Inc. and The Nature Conservancy.



Tim Sisson

Artist in Residence: Sally Sisson Anderson

Facebook Administrators: Pam Pitre and Mary Perkins

Events: Roselyn Schloss and Rebecca Sisson

Fundraising: Greg Lang and Tim Sisson

Land Stewardship: Tim Sisson

Membership: Walt McBeath

Newsletter: Katie Clark, Bob Nienaber and Mary Uhlenbrock

Photographers: Pam Pitre, Mary Perkins and Tim Sisson

Website coordinators: Jeff Doering and Mary Perkins



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

___\$20 Individual ___\$30 Family ___\$75 Supporting
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☐ Help with Habitat Restoration ☐ Help with Outreach and other needs

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