



THE STEWARD

Protecting and Preserving the Ohio River Corridor

www.westernwildlifecorridor.org

Fall 2014

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

By Tim Sisson

Bender Mountain Praise

I've written many times about our preserves – how they have become really spectacular natural areas. But in this issue of the Steward, I'm going to do something a little different. I'm going to let others give their opinion of one of our preserves, Bender Mountain. Their words will describe better than I ever could what a special place it is.

For example, Meg Riesterberg, Associate Professor of Geology and Biology at Mount St. Joseph University said:

"I feel strongly that students should have a chance to go outside and immerse themselves in the natural world. Thanks to Western Wildlife Corridor, the Mount has Bender Mountain outside its door. Its spectacular biodiversity coupled with an awesome view of the Ohio River valley allows the natural science faculty to plunge students into one of the most botanically diverse and geologically exciting sites in the Greater Cincinnati area. We are grateful to WWC volunteers for their impressive labor in maintaining Bender Mountain as a critically important native plant preserve. It is a precious asset to our university, Delhi Township, and Southwest Ohio."

And then there's this quote from Denis Conover - Professor of Biology, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Cincinnati:

"In my opinion, Bender Mountain Preserve is one of the best places left in Hamilton County to see native wildflowers. This is largely due to the fact that Tim Sisson and other dedicated Western Wildlife Corridor volunteers have cleared away the Amur honeysuckle and other alien, invasive plant species. The diversity of native plants in the preserve is exceptional, which benefits the native wildlife that depend on these plants for their survival."

I'm no expert like Meg and Denis, but every time I visit Bender I see the vast number of native plants and understand too what an important plant preserve it is.

Then there's this wonderful quote from the heart by Nancy Bain, retired school teacher and wildflower enthusiast:

"Bender Mountain is a spectacular landscape. Now that I'm reading John McPhee's Annals of the Former World, a Pulitzer Prize-winning survey about geology, I would like to know more about its formation. I had to pinch myself the rest of the day as I drove back to Dayton (from hiking there) thinking about where I'd just been--the mind boggles at the beauty and complexity of it."

Bender Mountain was at its best during Western Wildlife Corridor's 10th annual Flower-a-thon in April. Over and over people told me what a great place it was and how much they enjoyed seeing it. This comment by one of our hikers that day, Maureen Conner, is typical:

"What a fantastic day! All your hard work to remove honeysuckle and make trails is really appreciated by so many, especially our 4-legged friends! Thank you WWC."

I'm highlighting Bender Mountain here, but WWC has many other fabulous preserves such as Delshire and Turkey Haven plus several in process like Buckeye Trace and Whitetail Woods. These gems in our corridor also provide enjoyable hiking, bird watching and photography as they preserve irreplaceable natural areas.

This is just a start for us. We at WWC have our sights set on additional properties that promise to become sparkling gems in their own right. I hope you can join us as we fulfill our vision of a beautiful natural corridor running through the Ohio River valley.



Tim Sisson



Leesa Miller

Here is a picture of Denis during a visit to Bender Mountain.

Meg gave a very interesting presentation to WWC about the geology of our corridor.



Pam Pitre

This group is checking out Bender's flowers at our Flower-a-thon.



Tim Sisson

Dwarf Larkspur and the quite uncommon Blue-Eyed Mary delight the eye at Bender.

Calendar of Events

Sept. 13, 9 am - noon

**Trail Work
Bender Mountain**



Sept. 27, 9:30 am & 10 am

**Great Outdoor Weekend
Trail Hike
Bender Mountain**



Oct. 4, 9 am - noon

**Construct A New Trail
Bender Mountain**



Oct. 18, 9 am - noon

**Habitat Restoration
Cookout At Noon
Shady Lane**



Oct. 26, 2 pm

**Fall Color Hike
Delshire Preserve**



Nov. 1, 9 am - noon

**Habitat Restoration
Buckeye Trace**



Nov. 8, 9 am - noon

**Habitat Restoration
Buckeye Trace**



Nov. 22, 9 am - noon

**Habitat Restoration
Whitetail Woods**



Upcoming Events - Enjoy the WWC - Learn why it's so important!

**Saturday, September 27,
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 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 Tim 922-2104 for details.

**Sunday, October 26,
2 pm Fall Color Hike
at our Delshire Preserve**



The trees should be at their peak of color, so this will be an enjoyable hike.
Contact Tim 922-2104 for details.

Great Outdoor Weekend



Pam Pitre



Tim Sisson

Tim Sisson

Habitat Restoration and Trail Work

Saturday, September 13,

9am – noon

Trail work at Bender Mountain to get ready for the Great Outdoor Weekend hikes

Leader Tim 922-2104

Saturday, October 4,

9am – noon

Construct a new trail at Bender Mountain

Leader Greg 404-5250

Saturday, October 18,

9am – noon

Habitat restoration at Shady Lane

Leaders Greg 404-5250 and John 941-4877

This will be a big project with a cookout at noon provided by the Miami Heights Civic Association.

Saturday, November 1,

9am – noon

Habitat restoration at Buckeye Trace

Leader John 941-4877

Saturday, November 8,

9am – noon

Habitat restoration at Buckeye Trace

Leader Tim 922-2104

Saturday, November 22,

9am – noon

Habitat restoration at Whitetail Woods

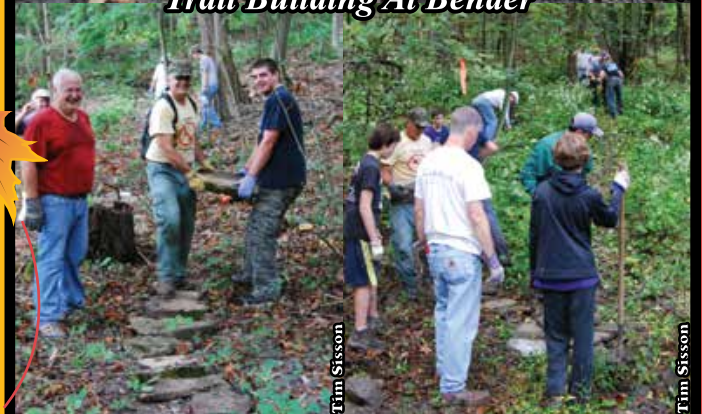
Leader Greg 404-5250

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 tssisson@fuse.net for more information.



Trail Building At Bender

Tim Sisson



Tim Sisson

Tim Sisson



Pam Pitre

Shady Lane



Pam Pitre



Tim Sisson

Habitat Restoration at Buckeye Trace

A Buckeye of a Different Color

By Bob Nienaber

Usually when you hear the term buckeye, the mascot of the Ohio State sport teams comes to mind, especially the football Buckeyes. However, when hiking in one of our preserves, you will soon become acquainted with the two native buckeyes present in our forest. They are the Ohio and the Yellow buckeye. Buckeyes are the only native trees that have compound leaves where the leaflets are arranged radially—like spokes on a wagon wheel. Buckeyes leaf out and bloom early in the spring before other forest trees, i.e. the oaks, giving us the promise of the coming spring.

There are several ways to distinguish a Yellow from an Ohio buckeye. The husks containing the nut-like fruit are prickly on the Ohio buckeye. On the Yellow buckeye, the husks are smooth. Yellow buckeyes grow to be larger, up to ninety feet, whereas the Ohio buckeyes top out at forty feet. Another simple method to identify which species you encounter is to snap a twig off the tree—if the odor is foul it is an Ohio buckeye—if not it is a Yellow buckeye. No doubt Michigan residents delight in an alternate common name for the Ohio buckeye, the Stinking buckeye.



The buckeye probably got its name due to the appearance of its smooth nut-like seed that resembles the eye of a buck or a male whitetail deer. The seeds are poisonous causing symptoms including inflammation of the mucous membrane, vomiting, twitching, and paralysis. The seeds are also toxic to livestock causing farmers and ranchers to clear the trees where their livestock may encounter them.

Commercially, buckeyes have little importance, having the softest wood of any tree in our forest. Although artificial limbs have been made of buckeye due to its lightness, it is usually used for the construction of crates and pallets.

An attractive variety of Yellow buckeye, with purple or red flowers, was discovered near West Virginia University, by none other than George Washington. Since then these varieties have been found in Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia. They also can be seen at Washington's home Mount Vernon.

Buckeyes, with their unique foliage, are interesting trees that can be found in our preserves. During your next hike keep a look out for the buckeyes.

A Quick and Easy Way to Help WWC

Here's the *easiest* way to help Western Wildlife Corridor. Enroll in Kroger Community Rewards then every time you shop at Kroger, WWC gets a percentage of what you spend. It adds up, and helps us to purchase and preserve wildlife habitat.

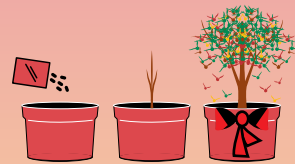
Here's how to enroll:

1. Visit Kroger.com/communityrewards
2. Sign in to your online account, or create an account
3. Find and select "Western Wildlife Corridor", then click "Save"

You need to re-enroll once a year, enrollment expires in April. Please take a few moments to enroll now. Every time you swipe your Kroger Plus Card, you could be helping to protect our beautiful nature preserves.

Create Your Legacy At WWC

Bequests – Simple and Safe Gift Planning



You may feel a strong desire to support Western Wildlife Corridor while not feeling comfortable making an outright gift.

Deferred gift vehicles such as bequests in wills or revocable living trusts, life insurance, deferred compensation plans, and other future gift commitments offer appealing alternatives.

Thoughtfully crafted gift plans offer benefits to the donor as well as to Western Wildlife Corridor.

For more information on how to accomplish your goals and leave a lasting gift for nature, please contact WWC at 922-2104 or tsisson@fuse.net.

Welcome to Our Newest Board Member Jessee J. Smith

As a Colerain native, I spent a lot of my childhood summers roaming the woods near the Newberry Wildlife Sanctuary and splashing about in Blue Rock Creek. Now that I've moved to Delhi, the Bender Mountain forests have become my favorite retreat. As a metalsmith, I find inspiration there for new jewelry designs, and I'm always on the lookout for interesting insects.

I'm a big believer that one person (or a few) can make a difference, and I've been amazed to see how quickly volunteer efforts have turned stands of honeysuckle into glades of wildflowers. I thank the Western Wildlife Corridor for the opportunity to help preserve our local forests, and for welcoming me to the Board of Trustees.



WWC 2014 Membership Renewal Alert

Memberships in WWC are up for renewals every October. Watch for the 2014 membership renewal letter being mailed in October or just fill out the membership form contained in this newsletter below.

Your membership contribution is vital to the mission of the WWC, protecting & preserving the Ohio River Corridor. Black Walnut Gorge Preserve, a mature hardwood forest, was added to the corridor in 2013 as a result of the financial support of our members ----- thank you.

WWC's conservation efforts and future is in your hands. Remember, WWC is an IRS certified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are fully tax-deductible to the extent of the law.

Don't delay your renewal; the Board is currently trying to purchase a very special property for the corridor.

Artist in Residence: Sally Sisson Anderson

Constant Contact Administrator: Joyce Richter

Facebook Administrators: Pam Pitré 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 Pitré, Mary Perkins and Tim Sisson

Website coordinators: Jeff Doering and Mary Perkins

Please indicate how you would like to help!

JOIN WESTERN WILDLIFE CORRIDOR 2014-2015

☐ 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!



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Take a look at these Western Wildlife Corridor photos!