



Virginia Bluebells — Delshire Preserve

Tim Sisson

## PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL Our Magnificent Preserves

by Tim Sisson



Fungus — Bender Mountain

Flower White



Fawn — Whitetail Woods

Tom Malone

As we finish up this amazing year for Western Wildlife Corridor, I thought it would be good to review what's going on with the main preserves we are creating: Bender Mountain, Buckeye Trace, Delshire Preserve, Kirby Preserve and Whitetail Woods. All of these natural gems are practically covered with mature hardwood forest and wild flowers, have views of the Ohio River Valley and are open to the public for hiking, birding or contemplation. But, each has its own special features to enjoy also.

**Bender Mountain** You've read about The Mountain, as I call it fondly, many times in this newsletter. I assure you that all the superlatives we use to describe Bender are true – it does have the best spring wild flowers in Hamilton County, super views of the Ohio River Valley and a forest where we have removed almost all of the invasive alien plants, resulting in what I consider a perfect example of what our preserves should be.

Bender's trail system has been completed and is ready for exploration. A good place to access it is to park at the Western Wildlife Corridor sign on Bender Road and follow the signs to the Eagle Scout trail. From here you can enjoy either moderate hiking

along the Bender Valley trail or strenuous hiking by going up to the Ridge trail.

**Buckeye Trace** Buckeye is a gem in the making - a trail system has been completed, we have made real progress clearing invasive plants and a driveway and parking lot are in place. But there are lots of honeysuckle left to whack and signage is still in the works. Even though it isn't as far along as Bender, it is still an enjoyable place to hike with its own complement of wild flowers, nice views and box turtles. In fact, we see so many turtles at Buckeye Trace, we named a trail after them. Also, Buckeye has two unique features: a meadow with ephemeral pond and, foundations of an incline that was used to transport sand from a mine on the ridge top. I invite you to join one of our guided hikes or projects there to learn what it has to offer.

**Delshire Preserve** This is our oldest preserve, having been acquired in 1996. It too has been virtually cleared of invasive plants and a trail is in place. Delshire has its own unique features: an area of old growth forest and two areas absolutely covered with a carpet of a single species of wild flower in the spring. *(continues next page)*



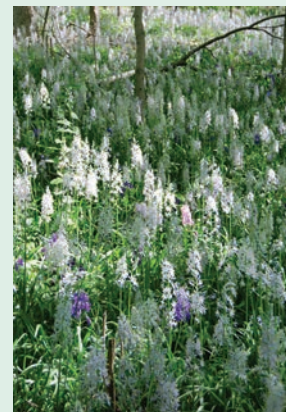
Violet — Bender Mountain

Tim Sisson



Turtles — Buckeye Trace

Tim Sisson



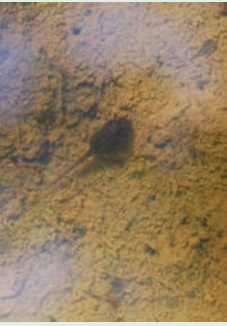
Wild Hyacinth — Delshire Preserve

Tim Sisson

## PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

### Our Magnificent Preserves

*continued*



Treefrog Polliwog in Vernal Pool

Tim Sisson



Fungus — Bender Mountain

Flower White



Oval Ladies' Tresses — Kirby Nature Preserve

Tim Sisson

The outstanding feature of the old growth area is the Burr Oaks which have to be at least 200 years old. The wild flowers are so stunning in one area that it is called Bluebell Hill after the carpet of Virginia Bluebells. Another area is covered with Wild Hyacinth.

There is a small parking area for Delshire and a trail up the valley, but as with Buckeye, it would be best to join a guided hike to learn about this preserve.

**Kirby Nature Preserve** You've heard a lot about the Kirby Preserve over the last year. Let me summarize briefly here by saying it has a nature center that is well on the way to completion, an extensive trail system and the beginnings of a prairie. The outstanding feature here is the nature center which will have our office and serve as a meeting place and a site for nature education. There are unique natural features too, such as a cedar glade and two populations of Oval Ladies' Tresses – the only orchid we have found in the corridor.

Stay tuned for more on the Kirby Preserve in the future as we develop it into a first class facility for nature education and enjoyment.

**Whitetail Woods Preserve** This is a gem that is being left in more of a natural state. A large portion of it has been cleared of Amur Honeysuckle and wild flowers are appearing in significant numbers. A special feature here is a deep creek valley we call Black Walnut Gorge. Hiking is possible, but there are no dedicated trails. Please watch for information or contact us about opportunities to join a group hike here.

We work continually to make our preserves the best natural gems you'll find. One way we do this is through our mid-week hikes. These combine a hike through a preserve with some type of work to improve it. If you can take time off during the week, this is an excellent way to learn about our preserves. We have events at all of these preserves presenting opportunities to see them. You can learn about many of them through our web site, FaceBook or newsletter (there are several in this issue).

However you arrange it, I know you will enjoy seeing all these preserves.

### Community Helping

There are some easy ways to help Western Wildlife Corridor just by going to the grocery store! **Kroger Community Rewards** and the **Remke Markets' Caring Neighbor Program** each offer a simple way to raise money for Western Wildlife Corridor.

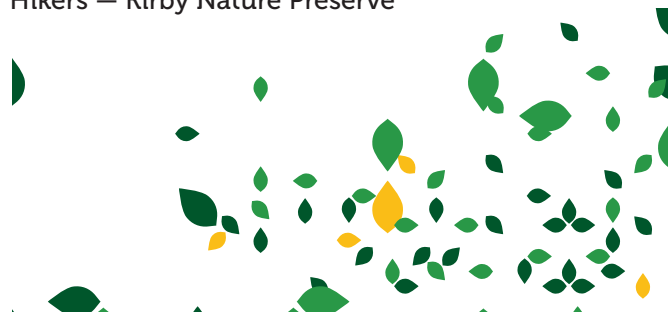
**Kroger Community Rewards** Annual online sign-up renews every April. Please sign in to [krogercommunityrewards.com](http://krogercommunityrewards.com) and select Western Wildlife Corridor to help us receive quarterly donations from Kroger based on your eligible purchases. Within ten days of registering, our organization's name should be listed at the bottom of your receipt.

**Remke Markets' Caring Neighbor Program** All someone needs to do is go to [www.remkes.com](http://www.remkes.com) sign in to their account and choose Western Wildlife Corridor. If you have a Remke card and have never registered the card, you can do so on the same page. Your spending will automatically be tracked and our organization will receive up to 2% of your purchase totals.



Hikers — Kirby Nature Preserve

Tim Sisson





## Upcoming Events – Enjoy the Western Wildlife Corridor – Learn why it's so important!

See full list of events online – [WesternWildlifeCorridor.org](http://WesternWildlifeCorridor.org)

### Winter Adventure Hike — Bender Mountain

Sunday, January 29, 2 pm

No need to stay inside all winter. Join us on our annual winter hike for some fresh air and exercise. Meet at the barrier at the end of Delhi Pike near the Mount St. Joseph University. The first part of the hike will be on the portion of Delhi Pike that was closed years ago due to hill slippage, but still makes a nice hiking path (commonly called Sister's Hill). Those who prefer moderate hiking can turn around at the end of this part and return to our meeting place.

Those who are interested in a strenuous hike can continue on a trail we've constructed up from Hillside Avenue to the top of Bender Mountain to reach old-growth forest and a nice view of the Ohio River. Signs of the meanderings of wildlife in winter will probably be found – especially if there's snow on the ground! Dress for the weather and wear sturdy hiking boots. Contact Jeff at 513.451.1737, or John at 513.941.4877 for more information.

### Winter Membership Meeting —Kirby Nature Center

Tuesday, February 21, 7 pm

Speaker John Klein will present a program entitled "Fascinating Flying Squirrels". Come learn Habitat Restoration plus: interesting facts about Ohio's most common, yet rarely seen squirrel. John Klein has been interested in these amazing animals for several years and has even designed special nest boxes and feeders to attract them.

Western Wildlife Corridor's plans for the coming year will also be discussed. Light refreshments provided. The public is invited.

### Thirteenth Annual Flower-a-thon

Saturday, April 29, 9 am to 8 pm

Meeting places Kirby Nature Preserve and Bender Mountain

The Flower-a-thon hikes will give you a great chance to learn about the wild flowers of our region. Experts will lead us on hikes through several preserves in the corridor, showing us the amazing variety of plants there (see more details in article in this newsletter). Contact Tim at 513.922.2104 for more information.

### Wild Flower Festival — Kirby Nature Center

Saturday, May 20

Have fun and learn about nature at the Kirby Nature Center. A native plant sale, hand-crafted items for sale, displays by local environmental organizations, and activities for children will all be included. Contact Rebecca at 859.512.1983 to learn more about this enjoyable event or to inquire about participating.

### Kirby Grand Opening and 25th Anniversary

Saturday, June 10

Starting at 10 am and running to 4 pm we will have hikes and tours, and a free lunch. Then for a fee, we will have cocktails at 6 pm, followed by dinner and presentations. Jim Scott will be the emcee.

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## Why 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 (or Winter Creeper) 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.

## **AMUR HONEYSUCKLE EVEN SECRETES A TOXIN THAT KILLS NATIVE PLANTS!**

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### Habitat Restoration plus:

Saturday, March 18, 9 am to 12 pm

Trail work at Kirby Nature Preserve. Leaders: John 513.941.4877 and Ed 513.919.5186.

Saturday, April 1, 9 am to 12 pm

Habitat restoration at Buckeye Trace Nature Preserve. Leaders: Tim 513.922.2104 and Robert 859.572.9661.

Saturday, April 15, 9 am to 12 pm

Habitat restoration at Whitetail Woods and Black Walnut Gorge. Leaders: Gary 513.941.5414 and Tim 513.922.2104 .

# Oval Ladies' Tresses

Sally Sisson Anderson - Artist is Residence, WWC

One needs a magnifying glass to appreciate the beauty of the tiny white flowers of this late-blooming orchid. It is called Oval Ladies' Tresses and the scientific name for it is *Spiranthes ovalis*. The Oval Ladies' Tresses are an uncommon wild flower and the only orchid we have ever found in our preserves. This perennial plant is four to twelve inches high, and looks like a small white popsicle from a distance. The leaves are linear with smooth edges and often wither away before the flowers bloom. Blooming occurs sometime between August through October. There is usually a mild floral scent to the flowers. The flower stalk is light green and hairy. Each flower emerges from an oval green bract. There are several ivory flowers clustered on a stalk in a loose spiral. The upper petals and sepal are fused together and form a fringed hood. The lower petals form a lip that hangs downward.

The root system is composed of fleshy roots, somewhat finger-like in shape. This orchid can reproduce from seeds or from rhizomes. Oval Ladies' Tresses occur in Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, and as far west as Kansas and Texas.

This orchid is found in partial sun, and in moist sandy soil. It can also flourish in thin rocky soil that is rather dry. More aggressive plants can out-compete this tiny orchid therefore it prefers open ground, not heavy woods. It is usually associated with an appropriate fungus in the soil, making it impossible to transfer to a new growing area.

Oval Ladies' Tresses are pollinated by bumble bees, also by long-tongued and short-tongued bees. The foliage is eaten by rabbits, groundhogs and deer. The fleshy roots are food for gophers, and voles.

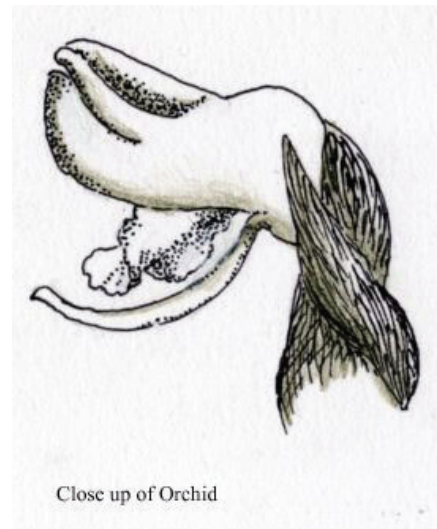
Though small in size the white flowers provide a contrast with the background vegetation, making the plant easy to spot. The lower lip has a crystalline effect that can vary from flower to flower, and probably needs a magnifying glass to see!

If you wish to have this orchid in your garden, there are cultivars available at nurseries.

The wild orchids have not been successfully propagated.



**The Oval Ladies' Tresses are an uncommon wild flower, and the only orchid we have ever found in our preserves.**



Close up of Orchid

## Flower-a-thon 2017 – Meet the Wild Flowers in our Corridor!

By Tim Sisson

The focus of WWC's annual spring wild flower event is education and fun. This year's event on Saturday, April 29, continues with last year's features and adds something new to make it even more enjoyable.

Start time is 9 am with Panera's bagels and coffee at the Kirby Nature Center, and 1 pm at the gravel lot on Bender Road. When we head out into the preserves, you join hikes led by experienced wild flower enthusiasts. You will have a chance to see uncommon flowers like Drooping Trillium, Blue-eyed Mary, Fern-leaf Phacelia and, with a little luck, the Green Dragon and federally endangered Running Buffalo Clover.

At the end of the day you will be treated to a lasagna dinner and discussions about wild flowers in our corridor. We will also have displays featuring native wild flowers and other plants to allow you to review what you learned through the day. There are sure to be tall tales about wild flowers to be enjoyed as well.

Per person fee is \$15, which includes breakfast and dinner. Attendees are encouraged to collect donations in advance just like we've always done, but it's not required. This is still our biggest fundraising event, after all! Donations enable us to preserve and protect precious hillside habitat along the Ohio River.

The Flower-a-thon is an excellent chance to have fun while increasing your knowledge and appreciation for wild flowers, no matter what your starting point is. Everyone is welcome. Please join us!



Tim Sisson

Hikers — Bender Mountain

## Special Thanks

### Thanks Mary Uhlenbrock

Mary's goal was always to find all of the errors in the newsletter from the smallest, like when the formatting of a calendar listing wasn't exactly like the others, to a big one like putting in the wrong date for an event. We could always count on her to be successful at that too.

She did more than find errors though. She made suggestions to improve the wording of articles as well – and her ideas were always good. Thank you very much Mary for all of those years editing the newsletter. We'll miss your careful attention which made it a much better publication.

The best of luck as you move on to new ventures!

### Thanks Mary Perkins

We could always count on Mary to follow up with anything she committed to do. Among other things, she wrote our grant applications, put together our tabletop display, got copies of brochures when we were about to run out and took a lead role in planning the children's playscape at the Kirby Nature Center. Even though Mary will not be able to serve on our Board any longer, I'm happy to say she will still be helping us with WWC activities, like the children's playscape.

Thank you Mary for your help with so many things. We really appreciate it!

### Thanks Katie Clark

Katie was the graphics expert who did the layout for our newsletter, but now she is moving on to other activities, like a demanding job. It was amazing how Katie could assemble all of those articles, pictures and various types of extraneous material into a coherent publication that always looked good. In addition we could count on Katie to do this in a timely manner so that there was never a problem getting the newsletter out on time.

Thank you very much Katie for all your work putting the newsletter together and good luck as you move on to other endeavors!

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## WWC is grateful for the following generous gift

In memory of Elda and Bob Wessler —  
Donation by Mary Perkins.





## Membership Donations —Thank You!

### Black Walnut Tree of Honor

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their membership support of \$1,000 or more:

Walt & Susan McBeath  
Mark & Julie Rudemiller  
Tim Sisson

### Beech Tree Steward Recognition

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of

**\$200 to \$499:**

Susan Auel  
Thomas Malone  
Mary Perkins  
Gary & Norma Rapien  
Elizabeth Rudemiller  
Roselyn & Stuart Schloss  
Robert & Pam Thomas

### Red Oak Tree of Honor

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$500 to \$999:

Jim Scott & Donna Hartman  
Don & June Reynolds  
Robert Schaefer, Jr.

### Paw Paw Steward Recognition

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$100 to \$199:

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Tim Sisson

**Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following for their generous support:**  
Sisters of Charity Ministry Foundation



## Western Wildlife Corridor 2016–2017 Membership

All donations \$100 or more will receive a special recognition in *The Steward*.  
\$500 or more will be prominently displayed on the Tree of Honor located in the Kirby House Great Room — A Lasting Memorial!

Enclosed is my tax deductible donation:

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

Add My Additional Donation for Land Acquisition: \$

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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### TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

- ☐ \$25 Individual Hiker
- ☐ \$35 Family Pathfinders
- ☐ \$55 Organization Trailblazer
- ☐ \$75 Mountain Climber


### WWC STEWARD RECOGNITION

- ☐ \$100 Paw Paw
- ☐ \$200 Beech
- ☐ \$300 Sycamore
- ☐ \$400 Sugar Maple

### TREE OF HONOR

- ☐ \$500 Red Oak
- ☐ \$1,000 and up Black Walnut

Volunteer! May we contact you with volunteer opportunities? ☐ YES

Donate online with  PayPal at [www.westernwildlifecorridor.org](http://www.westernwildlifecorridor.org)

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

WWC is an IRS certified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

## Holiday Party - Kirby Nature Center



Tom Malone



Tom Malone





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