



Twinleaf

Tim Sisson

## PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL New Properties by Tim Sisson



Large-flowered Bellwort

Tim Sisson

**W**estern Wildlife Corridor is always looking to protect more greenspace in our corridor. This issue I'm bringing you up to date on the progress we've made recently in property acquisitions.

**Buckeye Trace Preserve** We signed a purchase agreement this summer to purchase an addition to the Buckeye Trace preserve. We will apply for a Clean Ohio Conservation fund grant to help with the purchase of this in the spring. The property will protect a large area of forest extending up to and over a ridge-top and will include a portion of the creek beyond that. The Chinquapin Oak trees here are phenomenal! Yes, it does have honeysuckle, but we are looking forward to clearing this to expand our existing cleared area at the preserve. I can't wait to see what native wildflowers, trees and shrubs pop up here once the honeysuckle has been removed.

**Kirby Nature Preserve** At the Kirby preserve we have a commitment for a donation of an important property in the valley of the creek flowing past the property. This will add to properties we already own there and will give us even greater protection of the watershed extending to the north of the preserve. Already in the limited visits we've made to the property we've seen many uncommon wild flowers including Twinleaf and the largest population of Large-flowered Bellwort we've found in the corridor. Also in Addyston we received the donation of a nice hillside property on Sekitan Avenue.

**Sisters Hill** On Sisters Hill we have received the donation of another property. We now own 48 properties on and very near this popular hiking route.

**Whitetail Woods** We also recently purchased a property from the Hamilton County Land Reutilization Corp that extends the area protected at Whitetail Woods. This property is on River Road and gives us

frontage on this highway which could prove important when we develop a parking area for this preserve.

**Riverside area** Along Hillside Avenue in Riverside we received the donation of three parcels with a commitment for three more next spring. We are steadily protecting land in Riverside with a total of 15 properties acquired so far.

We are always looking to protect more properties in our corridor, either through acquisition or through a Conservation Easement. If you have a property in our corridor or know of one that the owner would like to sell or protect as a natural area through a donation, please contact us.



# Why I'm so passionate about the WWC and why we really need your help.

by Jeffrey Ginter

As a long-time supporter and new member of the Board of Trustees, I thought I'd share some thoughts about the Western Wildlife Corridor and why we really need your help. Why am I so passionate about the WWC? Well, it's what we do and how we do it that I find so genuinely compelling.

*What* the WWC does is this: We improve people's lives by protecting and preserving natural areas along the Ohio River Corridor on the western side of Cincinnati. To my way of thinking, our mission puts people first. Why? Because people need mother nature. All of humanity on this planet fundamentally depends upon a complex web of life. Yet this biodiversity is greatly threatened for many reasons, including urban and suburban development, indiscriminate use of chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides, and the introduction of invasive species.

The WWC mission improves the natural world right here, right where we live! We are not focused on forested areas a thousand miles away (not that that is not important – it is!). But just as important is the habitat and biodiversity here, in our own backyards. Tens of thousands of people live just a short distance from one of our preserves. We maintain these properties in a beautiful, natural state, sustaining native habitat and its biodiversity, with all of us benefiting in many ways, both directly and indirectly.

For example, the trails at the Bender Mountain Nature Preserve are frequented by folks of all ages and types: dog walkers, single hikers in contemplation, friends and couples in conversation, families out for a relaxing nature stroll, laughing and enjoying the scenery. And every person out there is benefitting physically and psychologically from their hike in the woods. The Bender Mountain preserve is incredible, just incredible, and it's maintained by the volunteers from the WWC.

A different example is the Kirby Nature Center, which had its grand opening in 2017. Now we have a meeting space that can be used by and for the community to bring people together and improve environmental awareness. Already we've held a few talks at Kirby on nature topics, and we look to do a lot more.

*How* the WWC works is, to me, equally impressive. A non-profit land trust is a complicated organization, and there is a lot to do if you want to do it right. For example, working outside, we plant and garden, we monitor properties, we run frequent habitat restoration projects, we build and maintain trails, and we lead hikes. Working inside, we plan, we design, we organize events, deal with legal issues, take and make phone calls, maintain membership

and volunteer lists, edit the newsletter, stay in contact with members, and run a website. And now of course we have a building to maintain. Since our success requires collaboration, we align and partner with local governments and private entities. All this, and much more, is done by volunteers. Yes, this is an all-volunteer organization, meaning no one gets paid.

This is where my pitch to you comes in. As much as we have accomplished in our first twenty-five years, there is so much more we can do! But we need help to do it. Donated land of course is foundational to our mission, and donated money can go towards land acquisition and keeps the lights on, but it's the donated volunteer hours that enables us to fulfill our mission. If you have not volunteered for the WWC, but you're tempted to join a group of quiet but dedicated enthusiasts, contact us! If you have volunteered before – thank you so much, and please next time perhaps invite a friend to join you. If you'd like to learn more, please call me at 513-451-1737. Thanks!

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## Habitat Restoration plus:

What's our habitat restoration all about? It's one of the most important things we do! Check out the Frequently Asked Questions article on page 5 for more information..

**Saturday, March 17, 9 am to 12 pm**

Habitat restoration at Kirby Nature Preserve. Leaders: John 513.941.4877 and Ed 513.919.5186.

**Saturday April 14, 9 am to 12 pm**

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

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Tim Sisson

Volunteers with a large pile of honeysuckle at Kirby Nature Center

## Upcoming Events: January – April, 2018 Enjoy the Western Wildlife Corridor

Mark your calendars! We have a very nice series of events planned to start the year. Highlights for some events can be found below. For details about these events, and more, check out website calendar: <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar/>.

### Winter Adventure Hike & Hot Cocoa

Sunday, January 28, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Kirby Nature Preserve

Don't let the cold weather keep you inside! Come join us for our annual winter hike at the Kirby Nature Preserve followed by hot cocoa, indoors at the (heated) Kirby Nature Center. This hike has been carefully scheduled for a Sunday when there is no pro football (so no excuses). There is no cost for this event and families are welcome. We describe this as a strenuous hike, meaning some people may find this strenuous. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy hiking boots. Contact Jeff at 513.451.1737, or John at 513.941.4877 for more information.

### Astronomy night: What has Happened to All of the Stars in the Sky?

Friday, February 16, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Kirby Nature Center

"Globe at Night" is a free, easy, web-based citizen science program for all ages. Similar to the Great Backyard Bird Count, its purpose is to track the visibility of stars from anywhere on the planet so that light pollution trends can be spotted, raising awareness of this growing problem and, hopefully, reduce or reverse the growth of light pollution through education about its effects on health, wildlife and safety.

Tom East, a local amateur astronomer, will make a brief presentation on the Globe at Night program inside our Kirby Nature Center, followed by outside viewing through telescopes, weather permitting. Tom will be assisted by members of the Astronomical Society who will bring additional quality night viewing scopes. There is no cost for this event.

### Winter Membership Meeting, with Guest speaker Dr. David Lentz

Tuesday, February 27, 6:30 pm – 8:15 pm

Kirby Nature Center

The University of Cincinnati Center for Field Studies, also known as the UC field station, was established in 2008 on a former Shaker farm. The overall mission of the field station is to bring about a greater understanding of the environment through research, education and outreach to the surrounding community. In his talk, David Lentz, UC professor of biological sciences, will give an overview of the

UC field station, its capabilities, why it is important to Greater Cincinnati and beyond, and educational offerings available at the field station, including offerings open to the public.

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

### "All About Owls"

Saturday, March 10, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Kirby Nature Center

Join us for a fun, educational evening with LIVE owls! We will start with a 45-60 minute presentation inside featuring 3-4 live native owl species. Up close and personal, you can see and learn about the adaptations which make owls supreme hunters of the night-time sky. The program will describe owl diets, habitats, nesting habits and their role in the food web, as well as other interesting topics. Artifacts (such as wings, feet, pellets, etc.) will be available for touching and raptor vocalizations will be played. An Owl Prowl will follow the presentation, where a RAPTOR Inc. educator will lead a hike along nearby trails and play owl vocalizations in an attempt to call in wild owls. We suggest bringing a flashlight for using during the hike. This event is free and families are welcome. Registration is required as seating is limited. Please go online to the WWC webpage at <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar/> to register.

### Fourteenth Annual Flower-a-thon

Saturday, April 28, 9:00 am – 8:00 pm

Kirby Nature Preserve and Bender Mountain

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

### Native Plant and Craft Sale and Fair

Saturday, May 19, noon – 5:00 pm

Kirby Nature Center

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

# Jerusalem Artichoke - An Edible Wild Plant

Sally Sisson Anderson - Artist in Residence, WWC

The Jerusalem Artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*) is a familiar wild plant or weed often seen along road sides in August and September. It is not related to artichokes or Jerusalem. It is our largest indigenous sunflower. The plant was cultivated by American Indians for its edible tubers which are as large as medium potatoes. Apparently, they used to leave them in the ground until mid-winter when they were getting low on food. Then they would dig them up.

This plant is found over the entire continental United States except for the desert southwest and Alaska. American pioneers learned of it from the Indians. They used it for food and to feed their animals. Though it is not a normal food of present day Americans, I have seen it for sale a few times in grocery stores.

Jerusalem Artichoke is said to taste similar to water chestnuts, and is good sliced in salads. It can also be used as a coffee substitute. Tubers can be cooked in ways similar to potatoes. However, eating this plant's tubers may cause digestion problems and wind!

Jerusalem Artichoke is most often appreciated for its golden flowers, which can be two to three inches across. The perennial sunflower grows from two to eight feet tall. The flowers appear in the axils of the upper leaves. The leaves are narrow, pointed and as rough as sand paper. Leaves are alternate or opposite on the lower and middle part of the plant, and alternate on the upper part of the plant.

Jerusalem Artichoke grows in moist soil especially along streams, in bottom lands, and along road sides. It is frequent throughout Ohio. Other names for the plant include sunroot, sunchoke, earth apple, and topinambour.

It is used as a folk remedy for diabetes. The plant contains something called inulin instead of starch. This is easily digested and safer for diabetics. Other folk remedies for Jerusalem artichokes are: as a diuretic, as a tonic, and for rheumatism. Jerusalem artichokes are easy to cultivate, which may cause gardeners to let them takeover. Even a small piece of tuber if left in the ground, will soon produce more plants. Perhaps it is best to leave them in the wild, and enjoy their pretty yellow flowers.

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**The plant was cultivated by American Indians for its edible tubers which are as large as medium potatoes.**



# WWC HABITAT RESTORATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

by Jeffrey Ginter

So...you've heard that the WWC is looking for volunteers for "habitat restoration" and while you're tempted to get involved, you're wondering what you're getting yourself into? Well, let's see if we can put your mind at ease with these answers to Western Wildlife Corridor habitat restoration Frequently Asked Questions.

**Give me the Cliffs Notes version: what are we going to do?** The typical WWC habitat restoration project looks like this. Everyone meets at the designated time and place. The group size can vary, say from 5 – 30 people. The WWC project leader (also a volunteer) gathers the group together, passes out a few spray bottles of diluted glyphosate (a herbicide) and some hand tools, and then the group walks from the meeting area into the woods (typically a 5-10 minute walk). The project leader will explain details of the project, for example what types of plants are being removed, and where in the preserve to work. Then the group splits into smaller teams, and begins working. Often we work to remove Amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*), a highly invasive alien plant species. This is done by cutting the honeysuckle as close to the ground as possible (with a saw or loppers), and then quickly treating the stump with glyphosate. The chopped honeysuckle branches are dragged to piles, where they will slowly decompose.

**Where will we go?** The project location varies, but it's always in the Western Wildlife Corridor. The WWC does these projects only on specific areas such as nature preserves that we own or properties that we have agreements to manage.

**What are the key tasks to remove honeysuckle? Is this hard to do?** No, this isn't particularly difficult but it is significant exertion. You should be healthy enough for outdoor physical activity for approximately three hours. While we get volunteers of all ages, many are sixty or older. Be prepared to hike and work over uneven ground as there may not always be a regular trail to the worksite. Many of our properties are on slopes. That said, this work doesn't require special skills. The key tasks are cutting/sawing branches, spraying the stump, and dragging branches to a pile. Volunteers can work individually or as a team of 2-4, taking turns or just doing some of these tasks. A more experienced volunteer can help you identify the honeysuckle, until you get used to what it looks like.

**Will I be muscle-sore afterwards?** Well, maybe. Depends upon what kind of shape you are in, your level of exertion during the project, and so forth.

**How should I dress and what do I need to bring?** Of course, wear clothes and footwear appropriate for the woods and the expected weather. If you have a favorite saw or loppers, bring it along; if not, we'll have tools you can borrow. Please bring a water bottle. Gardening gloves are also a good idea (we have spares you can borrow). We also have protective goggles that you can borrow. These can be a good idea to avoid a stick poking you in the eye.

**Is it this work safe?** Over the course of nearly 15 years we've found these projects to be very safe, but of course everyone should use caution and common sense. Hand tools such as saws and loppers are very sharp and must be treated accordingly. Adults are expected to supervise any children they bring. Power tools are a special concern and WWC policy requires that any use of power tools (such as a chain saw) must be in an entirely separate location from other volunteers using hand tools. New volunteers should stick to hand tools and should not bring or use chain saws.

**Are there bathrooms?** Sorry, no toilets in the woods. For projects at the Kirby Nature Preserve, we do have bathrooms in the Nature Center, which is a short walk.

**Can I leave early if I need to?** Yes, and people do all the time, but be aware that our projects are in the woods, so it means hiking out. While I am not aware of cases of anyone getting lost, we suggest you hike out with someone.

**What does Amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) look like?** Check out the photo on page 8 – that's public enemy number one!

**Is this work really worth my time?** Oh, you bet it is! We cannot emphasize enough how important this is. We've seen an Amur honeysuckle bush well over thirty feet tall (!), and these plants live to be thirty years old or more. These invasive plants are extremely bad for our natural environment. In the eastern U.S., Amur honeysuckle can practically take over a forested area, forming dense thickets which crowd out everything else except existing tall trees. Native plant species are then gone, and unsurprisingly, animals which depend upon those native plants are impacted too, sometimes severely. But our habitat restoration projects change the narrative, and within a year or so native wildflowers and other native plants come back! After you've finished your patch, you'll be pleased with the visible progress. Personally, I find removing honeysuckle extremely satisfying, and often a decent workout, too. It's great for body and soul!

**Okay, you've convinced me. How do I learn about upcoming projects and sign up for one?** All our events, including habitat restoration projects, are posted at our online calendar: [www.westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar](http://www.westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar). Our WWC newsletter, The Steward, has the dates, times and locations of many upcoming habitat restoration projects, when known at the time of publication. A copy of our most recent newsletter can be found on our website, [www.westernwildlifecorridor.com](http://www.westernwildlifecorridor.com). To get on the email distribution list to be notified of future habitat restoration and trail maintenance projects, just send us a quick note at [wwc7@yahoo.com](mailto:wwc7@yahoo.com).

Individual participants don't have to sign up in advance. Just show up on time! However, we ask that volunteer groups contact us well in advance so that we can make sure that we can accommodate the group. The name and phone number for the coordinating Project Manager for each project is indicated in the calendar entries, the newsletter articles and the announcement emails.



# 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:

- Mark & Julie Rudemiller
- Tim Sisson
- Robert Schaefer, Jr.

## Red Oak Tree of Honor

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

- Mary Perkins
- Walt and Susan McBeath
- Bill and Beth Burwinkel
- SC Ministry Foundation

## Beech Tree Steward Recognition

Western Wildlife Corridor thanks the following individuals for their support of \$200 to \$499:

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- Robert and Pam Thomas
- Tom & Mary Croft
- Tom Malone
- Anonymous
- Elizabeth Rudemiller
- Injoo Kim
- Virginia Gilmore
- Sally Anderson
- Friends and family of Carol Herzog

## Paw Paw Steward Recognition

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

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Sweet Gum leaves at Buckeye Trace

Tim Sisson

The Western Wildlife Corridor gratefully acknowledges the donation by Jan Quatman, Elaine Westrich, Judith and David Mattingly, William and Lois Brauntz and Andrew and Mary Ann Deak in honor of Joann and Bill Reichling’s 50th wedding anniversary.

The Western Wildlife Corridor gratefully acknowledges the donation in honor of the women celebrating Jubilees as Sisters of Charity this year.



## Western Wildlife Corridor 2017-2018 Membership

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

### 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

Enclosed is my tax deductible donation:  New Member  Renewal

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Check enclosed (*make payable to Western Wildlife Corridor*)

Visa/Mastercard Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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Volunteer! May we contact you with volunteer opportunities?  YES

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

Mail to Western Wildlife Corridor, P.O. Box 389077, Cincinnati, OH 45238-9077

*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

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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 513.922.2104 or [hikertim419@gmail.com](mailto:hikertim419@gmail.com)



Hikers on Bender Mountain during Great Outdoor Weekend

Tom Malone



Deer eating from bird feeder at Kirby Nature Center

Tim Sisson



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Holiday Party!

Tom Malone



Amur Honeysuckle

Tim Sisson



Tree frog at Kirby NatureCenter

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