

## One Heck of a Cleanup!

by Tim Sisson



Is it a tractor?

Tom Malone



It is a tractor!

Tom Malone



It looks free now

Tom Malone

They said it couldn't be done — dig the tractor out of its resting place in the mound of dirt in one morning. When we got there, they said that even if we freed it from the dirt, we would never get it down to the parking lot that day! And you know, I wasn't too sure we could do it either, but I knew what industrious volunteers we had so I said, "We've got to try — maybe we can."

How did we get into this fix? Well, when I first explored our Buckeye Trace property in 2013, I quickly noticed the large mound of dirt in the meadow at the top of the hill. Then I discovered the steering wheel sticking out of the top of the mound. It sure looked like the steering wheel of a garden tractor, but how and why could that be in our meadow?

So the day came when we were going to learn just what in the world was in that mound. In the parking lot we loaded up shovels, a Pulaski and mattocks along with a rope and come-along and up the hill we went.

As we dug along the top of the mound we quickly

verified that it was a tractor! We also discovered another problem, a tree had grown into the tractor during its time in the mound. How could we possibly get it freed and down the hill that day?

But with the usual WWC volunteer tenacity, we dug in and within a couple of hours had cut the tree away and cleared almost all of the dirt from around the tractor. Now, would we be able to pull it loose? We hooked the come-along up to it and by golly, we soon had it pulled from its resting place!

We hooked up the rope and tugged at the tractor to pull it down the hill and soon discovered a *BIG* problem. The mower deck was still attached and it dragged on the ground making movement very difficult. We tried to unhook it, but everything was rusted solid and would not budge. I then remembered that I had a Sawzall in my car with a steel cutting blade! It meant a trip down the hill, but when I got back with it and tried it on the steel links, the mower deck was freed in no time. *(continues next page)*



Free from its tomb

Tom Malone



Here are the triumphant excavators with the tractor on it's side to gain access to the deck

Unknown Passer-by



The tractor is on it's way!

Tom Malone

# One Heck of a Cleanup!

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By then it was after lunch and we were hungry so we really pulled on the rope and across the meadow we went. It was such a relief when we finally reached the parking lot at the bottom of the hill. The major part of the project was finished.

Of course, the image of a rusty worn-out old tractor sitting in our parking lot just didn't fit our idea of a beautiful wooded setting for Buckeye Trace. We quickly started discussing possible approaches for removing it. We finally decided to load it into Gary's truck so he could haul it away; that way we would get some money out of it too. I brought my engine hoist to the parking lot about a week later and soon we had the tractor hooked up. A bit of pulling on the chain

hoist and maneuvering of Gary's truck and it was loaded! When Gary took it to the scrappers, we finally learned just how heavy it was – 520 pounds, which netted us \$54.60! So, we had not only been able to remove the rusty old tractor from Buckeye Trace, we made some money to boot.



Sitting by our sign at the parking lot

Tom Malone



Ready to load into Gary's truck

Tom Malone



Loaded and ready to hit the road!

Tom Malone

## Habitat Restoration plus:

What's our habitat restoration all about? It's one of the most important things we do! If you've never done one of these before, we encourage you to join us, as it doesn't require any special skills. No registration is necessary, but please contact a project leader to make sure it hasn't been cancelled. For more information, please go to <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/habitat-restoration/> and read the document *Habitat Restoration Frequently Asked Questions*.

**Saturday, September 4, 9:30 am to 12:00pm**

Habitat restoration at Kirby Nature Preserve. Leaders: Tim 513.922.2104 and Matt 513.604.6728

**Saturday, September 18, 9:30 am to 12:00pm**

Habitat restoration at Delshire Preserve. Leader: Molly 973.342-7921 and Jeff 513.600.7520

**Saturday, October 2, 9:30 am to 12:00pm**

Habitat restoration at Buckeye Trace Nature Preserve. Leaders: Gary 513.304.4303 and Tim 513.922.2104

**Saturday, October 16, 9:30 am to 12:00pm**

Habitat restoration at Shady Lane Preserve. Leaders: Ed 513.919.5186 and John 513.304.2310

**Saturday, November 6, 9:30 am to 12:00pm**

Habitat restoration at Whitetail Woods. Leaders: Gary 513.304.4303 and Tim 513.922.2104

**Saturday, November 20, 9:30 am to 12:00pm**

Habitat restoration at Bender Mountain. Leaders: Tim 513.922.2104 and Jeff 513.451.1737

For the locations and directions on where we will meet for the habitat restoration projects, please check the WWC calendar: <http://westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar/>

## Mid-week hikes

Did you know that Western Wildlife Corridor volunteers do a mid-week hike almost every week? This is where we might do some light habitat restoration or trail building. Email Tim Sisson at hikertim419@gmail.com to be added to the distribution list.

# Upcoming Events

## Transforming Farmland to Native Habitat

with Brian Jorg

Tuesday, August 24; 7:00pm – 8:00pm

Zoom Event

Join us for a presentation from Brian Jorg, the Manager of the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden's Bowyer Farm. The Zoo's farm is a 600+ acre property donated to the Zoo, and is actively being restored to wetland and prairie. See how this land has been returned to its natural state, and since restoration, has attracted 197 species of birds to the property. Bowyer Farm is also home to the Native Plant Program, that grows native plants for the Zoo, sale to the public, and for use in the restoration of the farm.

**Cost:** Free, but registration is required at <https://www.westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar/>

## Great Outdoor Weekend Adventure Hikes

Saturday, September 25 — Kirby Nature Preserve

Sunday, September 26 — Bender Mountain Preserve

Please join us at **10:00 am on Saturday, September 25th for an Adventure Hike at Kirby Nature Preserve!**

A moderate hike will begin through our prairie and into a beautiful cedar glade. Then we'll hike up a creek valley through an equally beautiful forest. A strenuous hike will also begin through our prairie and cedar glade, then we'll climb through a very nice mature forest to a hillside limestone quarry where you'll be treated to a view of the Ohio River Valley. Meet at Kirby Nature Preserve, 2 East Main Street in Addyston, Ohio.

**Cost:** Free, no registration is required.

Please join us at **1:00 pm on Sunday, September 26th for an Adventure Hike at Bender Mountain Preserve!** A

strenuous hike will start 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 and beyond for the return to the trailhead. A moderate hike 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. Meet at the gravel parking area on Bender Road about ½ mile from Hillside.

**Cost:** Free, no registration is required.

## Those Amazing Monarchs with John Klein

Saturday, October 2, 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Kirby Nature Center

Join John Klein for an informative presentation about monarch butterflies. John has been providing habitat for and tagging monarchs for nearly 40 years. Learn about the unusual life history of these amazing butterflies and what you can do to help increase their numbers. You may even have a chance to tag one for yourself! Meet at Kirby Nature Preserve, 2 East Main Street in Addyston, Ohio.

**Cost:** Free, but registration is required at <https://www.westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar/>

## Fall Foliage Fest Hike

Saturday, October 23, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Kirby Nature Preserve

Join us on Saturday October 23 for a day of hiking, education, and fun at the Kirby Nature Center! Enjoy the trails, and learn to identify the trees and wildflowers of Western Wildlife Corridor. Meet at Kirby Nature Preserve, 2 East Main Street in Addyston, Ohio.

**Cost:** Free, no registration is required.

## Fall Foliage Fest Nature Art Show

Saturday, October 23, 11:30 am to 2:00 pm

Kirby Nature Preserve

We will host a nature art show at the Western Wildlife Corridor's Kirby Nature Center. Exhibitors include Sally Sisson Anderson, Jessee J. Smith, Mary Ann Perkins, Lori Vogel and David Garza. Bring your friends to enjoy some early holiday shopping and see some great art reflecting our natural environment. Light refreshments will be served. See the article on page 7 for more information. Call 513-921-9453 for questions. Location: Kirby Nature Center is located at 2 Main Street, Addyston, Ohio.

**Cost:** Free, no registration is required.

## The Controversial Coyote with John Klein

Wednesday, November 10, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Kirby Nature Center

The Roadrunner Cartoons made Wile E. Coyote look really silly. In reality, that could not be further from the truth. Learn about how cunning and highly adaptable these animals are and what allows them to live almost anywhere! After an indoor program, we will go outdoors and try to "talk" to them.

**Cost:** Free, but registration is required at <https://www.westernwildlifecorridor.org/calendar/>

## Fossil Hunt with Jack Berninger

Saturday, November 13; 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Kirby Nature Center and Preserve

Get ready for some family fun with WWC, where your family will go on an adventure discovering all the interesting fossils in our dry creek bed at our Kirby Nature Center. This outdoor program will start with a short explanation by Jack Berninger, and each child will be given a special fossil at the start of the program! Admission is free. Location: Kirby Nature Center is located at 2 Main Street, Addyston, Ohio.

**Cost:** Free, no registration is required.

**Special Thanks to Our  
Volunteers Who Help to  
Make All This Possible!**

# The Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Sally Sisson Anderson - Artist in Residence, Western Wildlife Corridor

When I was young, my mother used to tell me, "Listen to the rain crow," thus I grew up saying "That's the rain crow" when I heard that certain cooing sound. This year I continued to hear it where I live now, and one day I decided to look the rain crow up in my bird book. I found out that there was no rain crow listed in the bird book! So we asked "Siri" our encyclopedia, what bird is the rain crow? The answer was the Yellow-billed Cuckoo. It's croaking calls are often heard on hot humid days, so people call this bird the rain crow, imagining that it is calling for rain.

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is often hard to see because it inhabits dense leafy woods and thickets. Its calls can be heard from a great distance. I am often more of a bird listener of the Cuckoo. I used to see it sometimes at the clearing in the preserve called Turkey Haven in Addyston, but that was a long time ago. The Cuckoo hides from its prey. This bird climbs and forages through shrubs and trees, gleaning insects from foliage. Caterpillars are the Cuckoo's favorite prey. They can eat thousands of them a season. Periodic outbreaks of tent caterpillars draw cuckoos to their tent-like webs where the birds may eat as many as one hundred at a sitting. They also eat the larva of fall webworms, gypsy moth, and tussock moth larva, also supplementing with beetles, ants, and spiders. They take advantage of annual outbreaks of cicadas, katydids, and crickets. They will hop along to chase frogs, and lizards. In summer and fall cuckoos forage on small fruits like elderberry and wild grapes. In winter fruits and seeds become a larger part of their diet.

Cuckoos may respond to the availability of food supplies rather than a set season to begin breeding. Just prior to mating a male cuckoo will snap off short twigs that he presents to the female as he perches on her back and, leaning over her shoulder, both birds grasp the twig as they copulate. Pairs may visit many nest sites before building a nest together. Nest heights can range from three to ninety feet, with the nest placed on a horizontal branch or in a fork of a tree. They often nest in oaks, beech, hawthorn or ash. In the north, they use pine and juniper. In the west, nests are often found in willows along streams or rivers while they use cottonwoods and shrubs to find food. The cuckoos will build a loose nest together. They construct a flat oblong platform of twigs five inches deep and eight inches in

diameter lined with strips of bark or dead leaves. The female lays one to five eggs which are bluish green in color. Cuckoos will sometimes lay eggs in the nests of other birds like the black-billed Cuckoo. Incubation is done by both parents for nine to eleven days. The young are fed by both parents. The chicks often leave the nest and climb about on branches, in that case both parents will attend and feed them. The little birds can fly in about three weeks.

The yellow-billed Cuckoo has brown wings and back. The bill is mostly yellow with some black on top. The sexes are similar in plumage, but female is slightly larger. The tail is long and dark with big white spots so that it can appear to have dark brown bars.

Yellow-billed Cuckoos migrate to South America for the winter. East coast birds travel via Central America and the West Indies. Western birds move down the western slope of Mexico and through Central America.

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo populations declined by almost 50% between 1966 and 2015 according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. In the west, much the Yellow-billed Cuckoo's habitat has been converted to farmland and housing. The Cuckoo was once common in California. Now their habitat has been confined to small numbers of birds along the river valleys. Sites replanted with cottonwoods and willows in southern California have seen a return of breeding birds within three years. It is important to preserve all of the woodland that we can for the on-going breeding health for this beautiful unique bird.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Sally Sisson Anderson



## Membership Donations – Thank You!

### Black Walnut Tree of Honor

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

Anonymous  
Linda Graviss  
Cecilia & Tom Kloecker  
Liz Maxwell  
Walt & Susan McBeath  
Mary & Christopher Perkins  
REI  
Mark & Julie Rudemiller

### Red Oak Tree of Honor

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

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Luna Moth — Kirby Nature Preserve

Matt Taylor

### Beech Tree Steward Recognition

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

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### Paw Paw Steward Recognition

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

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Jeff Shaw  
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Western Hills Garden Club



Indian Tobacco — Kirby Nature Preserve

Tim Sisson



Monarch — Kirby Nature Preserve

Tim Sisson

### Special Thanks

Western Wildlife Corridor would like to give special thanks to Dee Sizler in memory of Joan Linkletter; to Kathy Wohlfrom & Family in memory of Jim Wohlfrom; and to Emily Murray, Sarah Palmer, Elizabeth Pierce, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Mathes Jr. and Mary Ares in memory of Bob Nienaber.



## Western Wildlife Corridor 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*)

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Volunteer! May we contact you with volunteer opportunities?  YES

Donate online 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

## Create Your Legacy at WWC

### Make Your Annual Gift Last Forever

Perpetuating your annual support can be as simple as adding a bequest to your estate plan, naming Western Wildlife Corridor beneficiary of a life insurance policy or of a deferred compensation plan, or via some other deferred gift vehicle that designates a certain amount or percentage from your estate to Western Wildlife Corridor.

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 513.921.9453 or [hikertim419@gmail.com](mailto:hikertim419@gmail.com)



Bender Mountain Nature Preserve

Tim Sisson

**For more information check out our website at [www.westernwildlifecorridor.org](http://www.westernwildlifecorridor.org) or email [staff@westernwildlifecorridor.org](mailto:staff@westernwildlifecorridor.org)**

# In Memory of Bob Nienaber

by Jessee J. Smith

The Western Wildlife Corridor mourns the loss of one of its longest-serving members, Robert J. Nienaber, who passed away on July 18. Bob, a Vietnam veteran, worked as an architect for 10 years and as an exhibit designer at the Cincinnati Museum Center for 27 years. After retirement, he traveled extensively and continued to pursue his love of natural history, volunteering for the Museum Center, the Cincinnati Zoo, and (of course) WWC.

Bob joined the board of WWC in 2004 and served for a laudable 15 years, providing valuable guidance on construction and renovation projects. In the woods, Bob led volunteers during habitat restoration projects, coaching new recruits on the best methods of honeysuckle removal. His knowledge of local fauna was impressive; he was an avid birder and could identify almost any bird that happened to be calling nearby. Although Bob endured physical challenges during his struggle with Parkinson's disease, his chosen forms of therapy included hiking and invasive species control, and he was a regular member of the mid-week project crew. His kind, gentle spirit, friendly smile, and positive outlook made him an inspiration to us all.



Bob Nienaber at Bender Mountain in 2009

## WWC Art Show

As part of our Fall Foliage Fest, the WWC will be hosting a nature-themed art show on October 23 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Kirby Nature Center, located at 2 East Main Street, Addyston, near South Road and Cleves Warsaw. It will be a great opportunity to do a little early Christmas shopping and support the following local artists:

**Sally Sisson Anderson** has been drawing and painting all her life. She studied under Charlie Harper while attending the Cincinnati Art Academy, and she is the artist in residence for Western Wildlife Corridor. Earlier, she was the illustrator for the Great Parks of Hamilton County, and illustrated exhibits and signage for their Native American museum at Shawnee Lookout. Sally's illustrations have been featured in *International Artist* magazine. She has also illustrated a children's book, as well as a cover for *The Herb Companion*, a national magazine.

**Dave Garza** is a photographer with an interest in natural subjects and abandoned human-made objects and structures, which nature is quick to reclaim. Recently, he has been experimenting with homemade pinhole lenses. David has been a photographer for the local music scene for the last 20 years, getting much of his inspiration from the documentary end of the craft. His work has been used by musicians and bands for their album covers and promotional material.

**Mary Ann Perkins**, a graduate of the University of Cincinnati, worked as a research scientist at UC and P&G for 33 years before becoming an executive communications expert at P&G. When she retired, she became interested in gardening, watercolor, and jewelry making and volunteered at the Cincinnati Zoo and WWC. As a self-taught artist, Mary paints animals and flowers from her gardens. She loves to play and experiment with colors, exploring diverse media to create interesting, fun, and lively compositions.

**Jessee J. Smith** has been making jewelry of various kinds since she was 12. Jessee learned basic metalworking techniques in her courses at Mount St. Joseph University, where she double-

mailed in art and natural science with a focus on entomology. Most of Jessee's inspiration comes from the insects that she loves, and from the plants that sustain them. Jessee's work has been featured in the Lark book *500 Earrings*, juried shows, and *Ecllosion*, a special exhibit of the Art Science Gallery in Austin, TX.

**Lori Vogel** is a Cincinnati native who received her B.F.A. from Mount St. Joseph University. Currently living in Bright, Indiana, Lori paints and draws full-time, working in both acrylic and colored pencil. She depicts the local wildlife on wood, stone, and canvas. Lori hopes to bring a bit of nature into others' lives, and give them an appreciation of nature that many never see. Lori's work can be found at the Pendleton Art Center, the Cincinnati Nature Center, and in homes across the area.

A percentage of the proceeds will go to support the Western Wildlife Corridor!



Sally Sisson Anderson

Saw Whet Owl



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[WesternWildlifeCorridor.org](http://WesternWildlifeCorridor.org)

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