



The Rookery

SPRING 2017



Protecting the things we value

Saving land is about protecting the things that we value.

You may value river access or places your family can go to hike and observe wildlife.

Perhaps you value the water quality benefits that wetlands provide or having access to locally grown food.

Whatever it is that you value most; there is a good chance that the Conservancy's work is protecting it, now and for future generations.

This newsletter highlights just a few great things that you are helping make happen in our community.

Thanks to your support, public spaces are being created across northwest Ohio, family farms are being protected, wetlands are being restored, and more than 20,000 trees are being planted this spring.

And, this is just a small snapshot of the work Black Swamp Conservancy is doing to protect and improve our community.

This edition of The Rookery also announces some of the opportunities for us to spend time outdoors together this spring and summer.

I hope to see you at one of our upcoming nature walks, canoe paddles, nature photography

With warm regards,

Rob Krain
Executive Director



Cedar Meadow Preserve

Catawba Island's Sanctuary



Walk along the 3 miles of grassy trails at Cedar Meadow this spring, and you are likely to hear the bright song of the Northern Waterthrush, or spot the striking orange and yellow patterns on the Cape May Warbler as they refuel, getting ready for the last leg of migration and the long flight across Lake Erie.

An entire afternoon could be spent exploring the 64 rustic acres of wooded area and open vistas at Cedar Meadow. Two acres of seasonal wetlands provide safe breeding habitat for amphibians, surrounded by buttonbush, which provides habitat for the 23 species of butterflies identified by volunteer lepidopterists.

One of the last large tracts of undeveloped land on Catawba Island, the property's future was once in peril. In 2005 it had been purchased by a developer, who filed for a zoning change that would have allowed 122 homes to be built on the land.

Concerned citizens rallied around Cedar Meadow, voicing their objections to the development proposal and advocating the need to preserve open space on Catawba.

This outcry opened the door for Black Swamp Conservancy to negotiate the purchase of the property for use as a public park. A Clean Ohio grant was secured with matching funds provided by Catawba Island Township.

Now, more than a decade later, Cedar Meadow is a beloved community resource frequented by local residents and helping to attract tourism to the Lakeshore. Open year-round, Cedar Meadow welcomes on-leash dogs to accompany you on your adventure.



"If it weren't for the option to partner with Black Swamp Conservancy, we would not have this wonderful place", says Meridith Beck, a member of the Park Board, who was instrumental in the creation of the Cedar Meadow Preserve.

A Blue Trail on the Maumee

Black Swamp Conservancy is part of an effort, led by our partners at Toledo Metroparks and the Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District, to designate the Maumee River from the Indiana border to Maumee Bay as an Ohio Water Trail.

The goal of this water trail is to promote public access sites and information to provide a “one-stop shopping” experience for people interested in water recreation. Access points are being established at least every ten miles for the 108-mile length of the trail.

Last year, the Conservancy purchased the Forder Bridge River Access property, which is now included

as an official access point on the proposed water trail.

We are currently in talks with several landowners to create more river access for paddlers and fishermen along the Maumee, especially in the Upper Watershed - where those sites are few and far between.

Want to experience the river for yourself? Join us for one of the many paddles we’ll be hosting this summer.



Paddling is one of the fastest growing recreational activities in Ohio, with canoe and kayak registrations up 138% over the last decade.

Farmland Forever

The King Family Farm, shown below, is one of two Sandusky County farms recently protected by Black Swamp Conservancy through the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s farmland preservation program. The protection of these family farms adds to the growing conservation block in the county, where more than 3,000 acres of working lands have now been protected forever.



Restoration Nears Completion

Over the past several years, Black Swamp Conservancy has been working to enhance wildlife habitat and improve water quality through an ambitious restoration project at Forrest Woods Nature Preserve, funded by GLRI, NFWF, and Ohio EPA.

Through this project, more than a half mile of drainage ditches have been restored back to natural stream conditions with functioning flood plains, and 45 acres of wetlands have been re-created. So far 4,500 trees have been planted, and another 17,000 trees are scheduled for planting by the end of May.

Forrest Woods is one of the more than 130 special places in northwest Ohio now protected by Black Swamp Conservancy. This property,

which is a dedicated State Nature Preserve through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, is known to harbor more than thirty rare, threatened and endangered species.

We'll be hosting a tour of the restoration areas and a nature walk through the old-growth forest on May 20th, and we hope you will be able to join us! Please contact Aly Rumer at arumer@blackswamp.org for more details.

Though this exciting restoration project is coming to a close, our work at Forrest Woods continues.



The Conservancy has been awarded a Clean Ohio grant to purchase another 48 acres, containing a mile of frontage along the Maumee River – complete with an active bald eagle nest. We are already contemplating restoration activities on that floodplain property.

With the help of the Antwerp Conservation Club, we held several stewardship days over the winter to clear out woody invasive species ahead of the tree planting.



Aerial view of the restoration area pre and post construction



Notes from the Field

One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of a March thaw, is the ring.”

-Aldo Leopold“



This quote from Aldo Leopold’s A Sand County Almanac came right to mind while I visited Forrest Woods this spring. Throughout March and early April I had the opportunity to visit the preserve a few times, and even on the cooler March mornings it was obvious that spring had arrived.

Signs of spring were everywhere; from meadowlarks in the hay fields, to the deafening calls of chorus frogs, to the peenting of woodcocks and subsequently finding their nests, to even seeing one of Leopold’s favorite, the Canada Goose, flying over and resting on the preserve.

It’s always exciting to see spring breathe new life into the land after winter, but this year was even more exciting as a lot of the activity was happening in our restoration fields. Vegetation is sprouting in the new wetlands, and I can already see the positive effects of restoring these endangered habitats. As I took all of this in, I was reminded of

another Leopold quote from his essay The Land Ethic, “Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.”

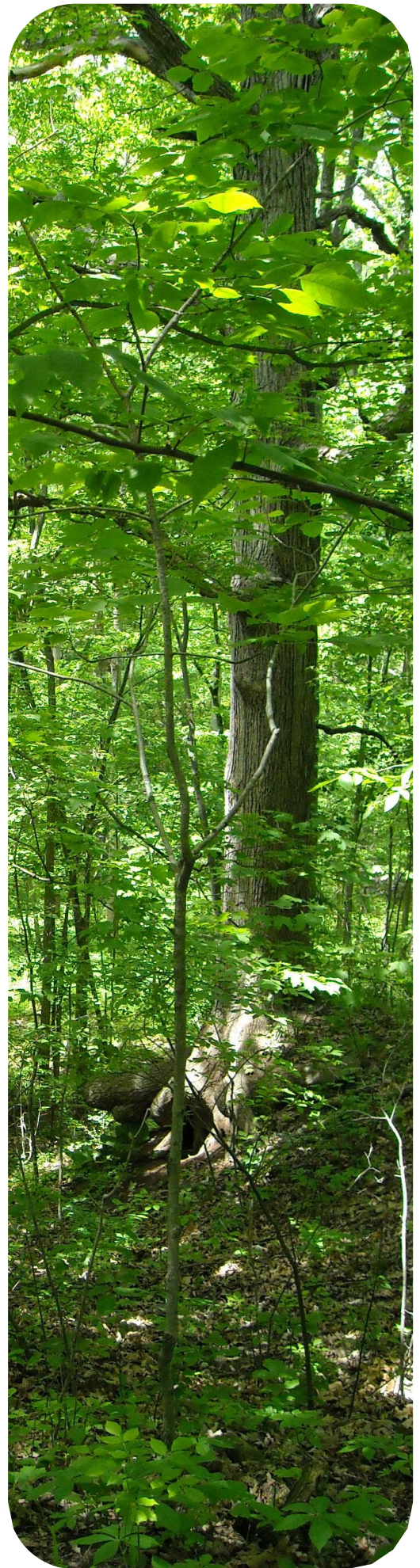
There are many examples across the world of this state of harmony not being reached, and it has become a painful reality that we have a lot of work to do to reach a balance here at home. The annual harmful algal blooms (HABs) in Lake Erie are the perfect example that we have a problem. That problem mostly stems from the loss of native habitats, especially wetlands. When we don’t value and protect the role of natural landscapes (and the benefits they provide) we experience issues like HABs, that threaten our economy, natural resources, and public health.

It is important that we have spring scenes, like what I experienced at Forrest Woods, to remind us of our connection to natural resources. The restoration project is not yet complete, and already we are seeing a number of species starting to call it home. Just think about how great the Preserve will be in the coming years when native communities become more established! Think about all of the great water quality benefits that will accompany the highly visible (and audible) benefits to native animal species!

I can’t wait to keep seeing the changes happening each year at Forrest Woods, and I hope that we start seeing more work like this as we strive for harmony between our communities and the land.

See you outside!

Chris





GET
OUTSIDE
WITH THE
CONSERVANCY

Upcoming Opportunities

Saturday, May 6
Nature Walk • 12 p.m.
Bell Woods, Pemberville

Thursday, June 8
Photography Field Trip • 6 p.m.
Cedar Meadow, Catawba Island

Saturday, May 20
Nature Walk • 10 a.m.
Forrest Woods, Paulding County

Thursday, June 15
Canoe Paddle • 5 p.m.
Missionary Island, Waterville

Thursday, May 25
Canoe Paddle • 5:30 p.m.
Decoy Marsh, Fremont

Thursday, July 13
Photography Field Trip • 6 p.m.
Sawyer Quarry Nature Preserve, Perrysburg

Programs are free and open to all Conservancy members. Not a member? Join today!
Space is limited - make your reservation by giving us a call at 419-833-1025

Volunteer
— With Black Swamp Conservancy —

Saturday, May 6th
9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Water's Edge, Fremont

FOR DETAILS, OR TO SIGN UP: e-mail Chris at ccollier@blackswamp.org or call 419-833-1025

Blue Grass & Green Acres - Thank You!

Black Swamp Conservancy's 6th annual Blue Grass & Green Acres fundraiser at the Carranor Hunt and Polo Club was filled with live music, great food and fellowship, with over 250 people turning out to support and celebrate land conservation in northwest Ohio.

Special thanks go to our event volunteers including; Steve Keller, Debbie Farley, Emily Nunn, Jan Dixon, Katie Rousseau, Ruth Whittington, Jake Rodriguez, Renee Tetreault, Jane Hopkins, Carol Lynn Wilson, Jessica Susser, Bob & Karen Lucas, Jeff & Kim Frazier, Tim & Sue Wiersma.

Thanks also to our generous sponsors, guest auctioneer, Jerry Anderson, and event chairperson, Virginia Keller, for helping to make this year's event our most successful yet!



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BLACK SWAMP
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P.O. Box 332
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At Black Swamp Conservancy...

We take direct action to permanently preserve northwest Ohio's natural habitats and family farms for the benefit of future generations.

By protecting our valuable land and water resources we are supporting healthy communities with strong, sustainable economies.

Our work ensures the diverse habitats of our region will be protected for generations and that our children and their children will forever be able to enjoy this special place.

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Cover photo of a Cape May Warbler
courtesy of Brian Zweibel

The
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or Current Resident



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