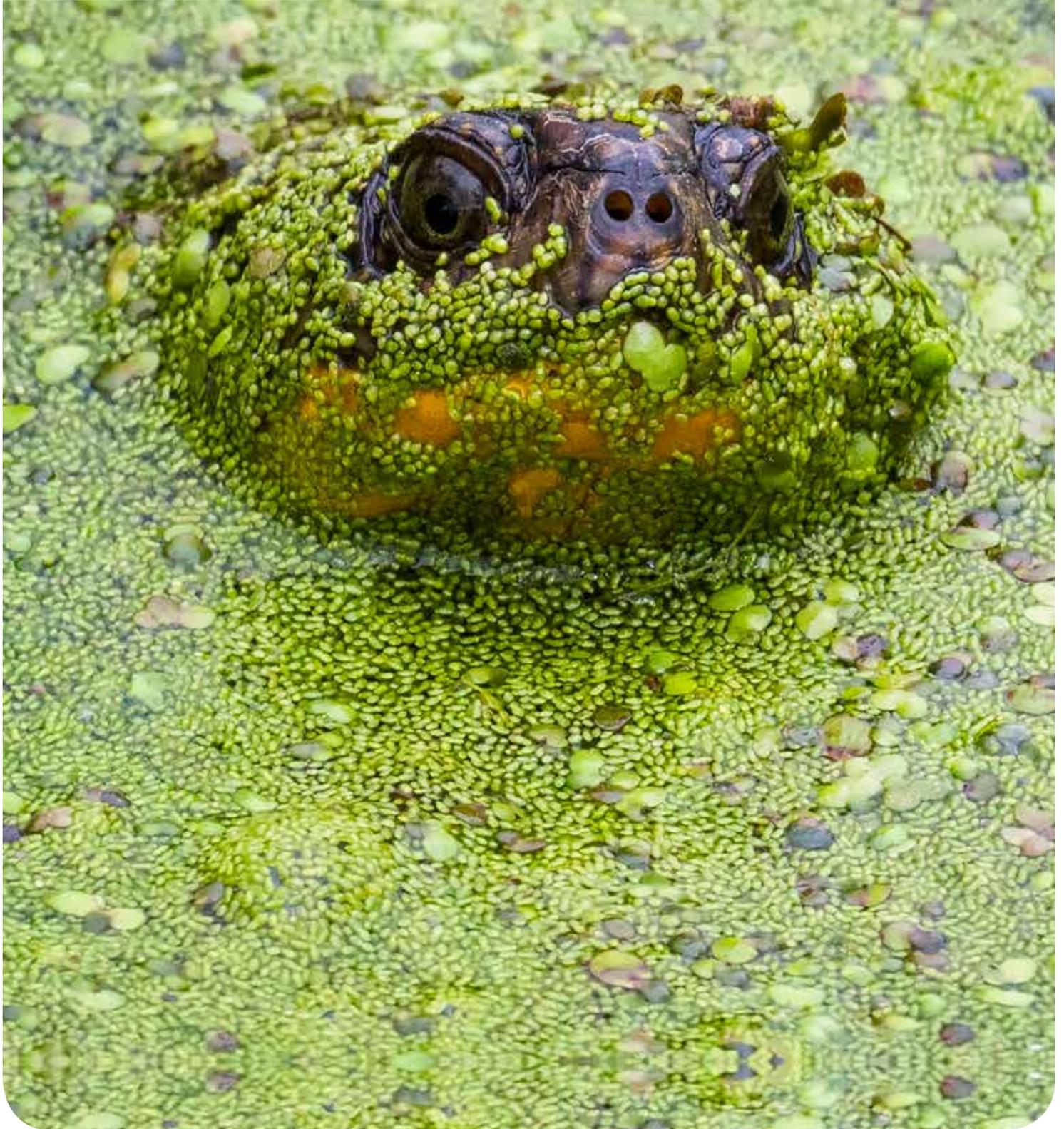




The **Rookery**

SPRING 2018



Imagine walking through native woods, meadows and prairies leading to vistas of the Sandusky River and a riverside cliff, all just outside of Fremont, Ohio. A beautiful place with easy access to the river for fishing and boating, as well as being a convenient stop-over for migrating birds and waterfowl.

Before 2017, the only way you could see this property was with a golf club in your hand. Now, it is becoming a part of the Sandusky County Park District for everyone to enjoy. The former River Cliff Golf Club was acquired by Black Swamp Conservancy in 2017 through the Clean Ohio Fund, and gifted to the Sandusky County Park District. The project will

"I'm so excited about this project. This will be a positive addition to our community." ~Danny Sanchez, Mayor, Fremont

return the fairways and greens to native habitats and river access, and restore floodplains along a mile of the river.

"I'm so excited about this project," said Fremont Mayor Danny Sanchez. "This will be a positive addition to our community. People of all ages will have much easier access to the river, and the

increased opportunities for fishing and boating will help to increase tourism in the region."

Access to the river has long been a problem for Fremont residents, with floodwalls along the river preventing access for fishing. Andy Brown of the Park District believes the restoration will



open many new opportunities to residents. “We’ll be able to teach our neighbors about nature and encourage them to enjoy what this river and park have to offer,” he said. In addition, the upcoming removal of nearby Ballville Dam will bring improved fishing throughout the area.

The engineering and design of this restoration project, now underway, are possible through support provided by The Nature Conservancy, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program, with Pittman Robertson Wildlife funding.



Together We are Making a Difference



After twenty five years of conservation in northwest Ohio, we have a lot to show for our work. This newsletter offers but a glimpse at what we have accomplished and the impact of our work on the quality of life in our region.

While the numbers are impressive (more than 17,000 acres are now under protection), it is the people behind them who really speak to the importance of Black Swamp Conservancy’s work.

I am moved by the landowners who choose to conserve their lands for future generations and by the dedication of our board members who give so much of their time and financial support. I feel privileged to work with such a talented and dedicated team of staff members, who inspire me on a daily basis. And, some of my best days are spent enjoying the outdoors with our supporters - whether paddling a scenic river, walking a conserved property or touring a wetland restoration project.

We are now working on three new restoration projects that will increase wildlife habitat and support cleaner water in northwest Ohio – each of these projects is on publicly accessible land either owned by the Conservancy or one of our park district partners. We have several exciting land protection projects in the works that will preserve even more of our region’s natural heritage. And, we are working to launch a new farmland preservation initiative focused on enhancing our local food system and providing land access to new and beginning farmers.

Thank you for helping to make this work possible. Together we are making a difference in the future of our community.

With warm regards,

Rob Krain
Executive Director

Enjoy



Black Swamp Conservancy by the numbers

- **136** properties protected throughout northwest Ohio
- **17,160** acres protected
- **8** miles of scenic river
- **15** public preserves

A RIVER That's Starting to

Some take the Maumee River for granted, and look the other way rather than consider an afternoon's paddle or a dip in the river. Sure, run-off from surrounding farms and roads has taken its toll; but the Maumee is still a special resource for our region.

like the Black Swamp Conservancy, Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Metroparks Toledo are participating in the effort. As partners, we all commit to mapping and maintaining our portion of the water trail, along with updating the signage along its entire length.

Among other spots, you'll be able to access the Maumee River Water Trail - at the 91.3-mile marker - by the Conservancy's Forder Bridge Access Site along Road 73 in Paulding County, adjacent to Forrest Woods Nature Preserve.

Now the Maumee is earning the recognition it deserves.

The 108-mile Maumee River Water Trail includes the entire river within Ohio, from the Indiana border to Maumee Bay. More than 30 local jurisdictions and partners

The year is off to a great start with Metroparks Toledo receiving funding to purchase initial signage and providing brochures of the route.

Forder Bridge was protected in 2016, thanks to community support, and provides strategic public access along the Maumee River in an area with almost 25 river miles without access points. It's a great spot to end a day-trip, launch your boat or stop for a snack or fishing break. It's about a 175 foot walk from the parking lot to the water.

This map of the Maumee River Water Trail illustrates all the many points where you can access this beautiful river, including at mile marker 91.3 - our Forder Bridge.



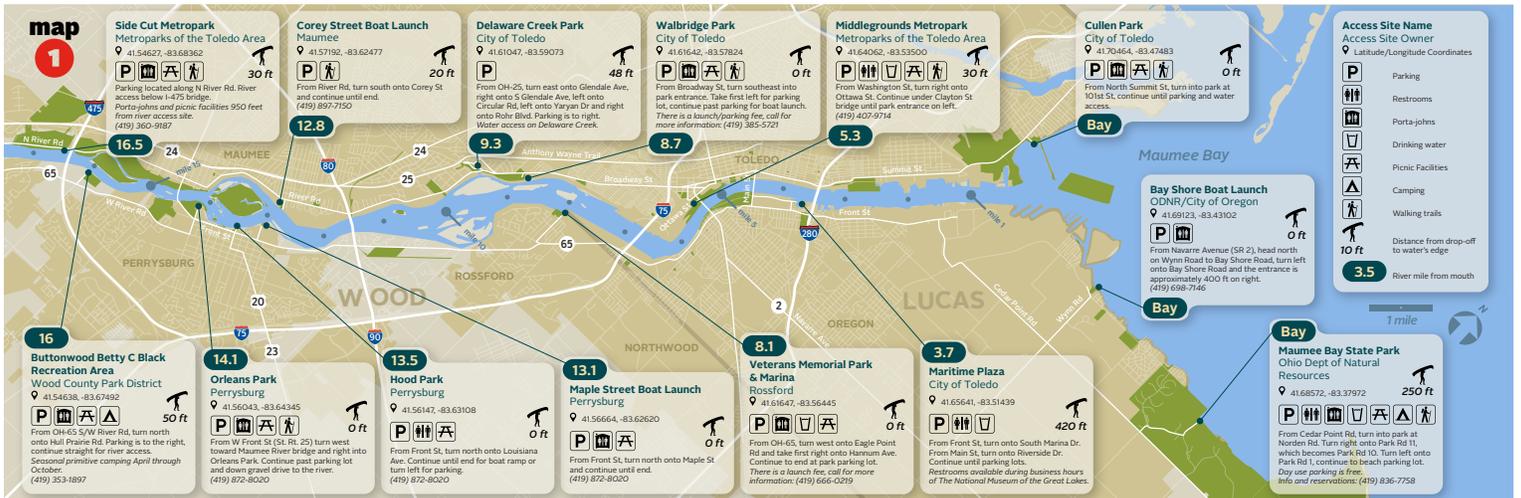
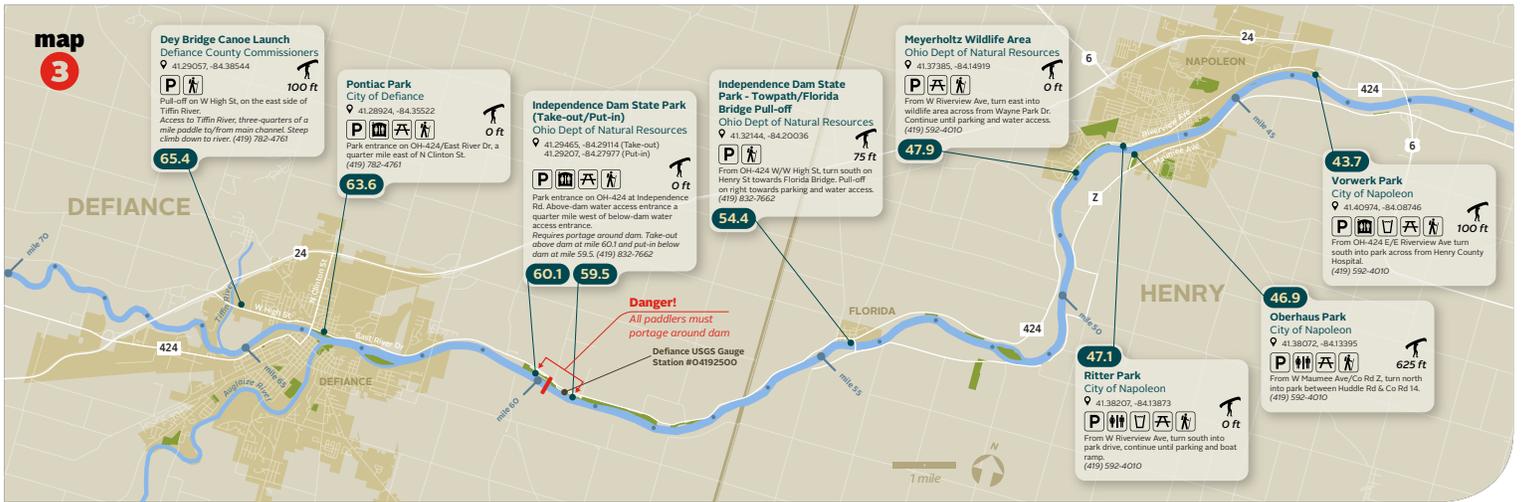
Sparkle

Together we are transforming the River into something really special. With a few more access points and conservation areas for wildlife habitat and related trails, as well as habitat restoration along the river, just imagine what the Water Trail will be.

The Conservancy will have trail maps. Call 419.833.0125 if you'd like one, or call Metroparks Toledo at 419.407.9700.



Sometimes the best views of Ohio are from its rivers and streams. Enjoy the newest official Ohio water trail - the Maumee - this summer. We think you'll love it.





Volunteers MAKE CONSERVATION HAPPEN

Hal Mann is a respected authority and lecturer on native plants, invasives and a variety of other conservation topics. He is a conservation monitor at Black Swamp Conservancy and member of our stewardship committee. He's also president of the Wild Ones natural landscape group in Toledo. His authority and expertise on these topics is the result of extensive study and interest over the past six years. Yes, only six years.

"I've always been interested in gardening, but I had no real knowledge of the subject," he said. But he has learned by jumping in with both feet: He wanted to add shade plants to his home garden, so he decided to become a master gardener, and then began learning about native plants from area specialists. Volunteering was his next logical step.

Hal learned that he could earn volunteer credits for his master gardener certification, by serving as a Conservancy volunteer monitor. Helping out to monitor the 130 properties protected in partnership with local families (using conservation agreements) is an important responsibility of our land trust, and Hal is passionate about it.

"These properties really take my breath away..."

I love learning about all the nuances of the properties we protect," Hal said. "I also love to walk with farmers on their properties, and see the conservation practices they have employed. And all the while I'm learning more about the environmental issues we're facing, and how organizations like the Conservancy are working to address those issues."

Hal has continued his education by becoming part of the Conservancy's Stewardship Committee, which advises the board of trustees on land protection and stewardship matters. "This group exposes me to so many professionals. I'm in awe of all of these people I'm around. And I have so much more to learn," he said. It's safe to say others around the table feel the same way about Hal.

Want to
HAVE FUN?
Share Your
PASSION?

Volunteers are the life blood of Black Swamp Conservancy. It's a great way to meet new people, share your love of wildlife, nature, farms and water, and learn new skills along the way.

How do you begin?

Complete the application on the Conservancy website (www.blackswamp.org), and we'll be in touch. Or call **Julie Pompa** at **419.833.1025** or email her at **jpompa@blackswamp.org** to discuss your interests and current volunteer activities.



Notes from the Field

Melanie Coulter, Stewardship Specialist

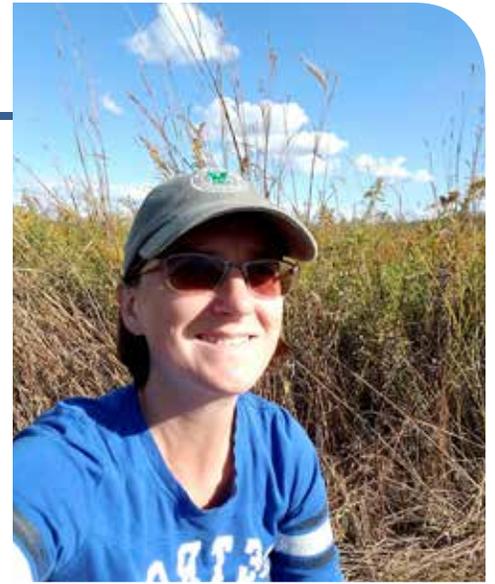
In my time on this amazing Earth, I've had the privilege of protecting snowy plovers on the California coast and caring for island fox on a nearly uninhabited island in the Santa Barbara Channel. I've counted prairie dogs in Colorado and conducted research on lakes in Idaho and Alaska. But the first time I paddled the Great Maumee River, I nearly tipped my canoe when I was started by a loud croaking squawk I'd never heard before. I looked up and saw a Great Blue Heron taking off from a tree on Missionary Island. The prehistoric look and sound of the heron brought to my mind a picture of this landscape the way it once was when the river's floodplains were lined with wetlands and impenetrable woods.

A year ago, I started working for Black Swamp Conservancy. My first week on the job, I was greeted by Great Blue Herons flying over our office and into Bell Woods, a beautiful remnant of the Great Black Swamp and #myfavoriteacre. The herons fly back to this exact spot every spring to nest in a giant old sycamore tree.

Herons use rivers like the Portage, Maumee and Sandusky as road maps to find their way back to their spring rookeries.

These rivers are so important to herons and fish, but also to all of us. The Conservancy protects our rivers by buying land in the floodplains and restoring native river-side habitats and their ecological functions. Our work is bringing back those lost floodplain wetlands and woods ... like my vision inspired by the Great Blue Heron on the Maumee River a decade ago.

I'm proud to be here, doing this work, and I am grateful for everyone who puts their shoulder to the same wheel (Hint: that's ALL of you!).



Thank you!

Stay Swampy my friends,

Melanie



YOU'RE Making it Happen

The next step in converting our Homestead office to a conservation center for the community just took a giant step forward.

Thanks to the support of people like you at our recent Bluegrass & Green Acres event, 50 solar panels, donated by the First Solar Charitable Fund at Toledo Community Foundation, are being



engineered and installed by GEM Energy. The solar energy system should provide about 1/3 of the Homestead's energy needs, and compliments the geothermal HVAC system already there. This is great news, because it means more funding can go to other conservation projects, and it helps reduce our impact on the land.

Come visit us at the office. You'll be able to see first-hand what our solar array looks like and learn how you can use something similar at your home or farm. And we'd love for you to join us for walks and photography field trips through the summer and fall.





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At Black Swamp Conservancy...

For 25 years, we have taken direct action to permanently preserve northwest Ohio's clean water, natural habitats, working lands and community access to nature for the benefit of future generations.

Together, we are protecting the diverse habitats and important lands of our region so our children and their children will forever be able to enjoy the Clean Water, Good Food and Wild Places in our area.

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Linda Wegman, Office Manager

Our front cover photo of a Blanding Turtle is courtesy of Patrick Kriner.

Your support is helping to protect and restore northwest Ohio's rivers and streams, providing critical habitat for birds and animals - like this blanding turtle.



The Rookery

SPRING 2018

or Current Resident



It's time

JOIN US ON THE WATER

JUNE 9 WEEKEND - GRAND RAPIDS ON THE MAUMEE
JULY 8 - FARNSWORTH ON THE MAUMEE
JULY 19 - ALONG THE TOUSSAINT RIVER
AUGUST 1 - DOWNTOWN ON THE MAUMEE
SEPTEMBER 8 - ALONG THE SANDUSKY RIVER

jpompa@BlackSwamp.org for information

FIND US ONLINE AT BlackSwamp.org

