



The **Rookery**

SPRING 2022





Early wildflowers are emerging from the forest floor. Frogs are calling from vernal pools and migratory birds are returning to the region. Family farmers and home gardeners are readying for the planting season and the promise of a bountiful season. Bikes are being tuned up and kayaks are ready to be dusted off for adventures ahead.

There is so much to explore during springtime in northwest Ohio. It is a reminder of just how precious our natural resources are and how important it is to protect them, today and for future generations.

Thanks to your support, Black Swamp Conservancy is moving the needle forward for conservation in our community.

Last year brought about the permanent protection of another 1,500 acres of land. We completed four new large-scale ecological restoration projects that expand wildlife habitat and safeguard our drinking water. The Conservancy also added new nature preserves across the region for people to explore and experience.

We begin 2022 energized to do even more to preserve and enhance natural habitats and family farms in northwest Ohio. We are working now to protect more of special places and have new ecological restoration projects underway.

As we plan for a busy spring and summer of activities, including wildflower hikes, river paddles and more, I hope that you will be able to join us to celebrate conservation and make new outdoor memories. We are grateful for your continued support and look forward to seeing you soon!

Stay well,

Rob Krain
Executive Director

Rob Krain



Adventures Ahead



CONSERVANCY ACCREDITATION RENEWED

Black Swamp Conservancy is excited to share that our status as an accredited land trust program has been renewed.

This endorsement is a mark of distinction that confirms the organization has strong leadership, uses best fiscal practices, and maintains the tools and operations to remain permanent stewards of the land it protects. It demonstrates confidence in our business practices and land management techniques.

As an accredited land trust program, the Conservancy is part of a network of organizations operating at the highest level of service.

Black Swamp Conservancy Executive Director Rob Krain said,

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission is an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. Their accreditation follows an extensive review of the Conservancy's policies and programs including public input. For the full list of standards see landtrustaccreditation.org.

Thank you for your support and confidence in Black Swamp Conservancy. We couldn't do it without your help.



Sound Finances

Ethical Conduct

Responsible Governance

Lasting Stewardship

“The review by the commission pushes us to be sure that we are doing the very best we can to protect the land and to defend our conservation lands to ensure that the special places we preserve are protected forever.”



A New Acquisition

Those who have joined us for wildflower walks through Bell Woods know just what an incredibly special place it is. In early spring, the great blue herons return to their rookery in an ancient sycamore tree near the center of the property to re-establish nests and raise the next generation. A spectacular trillium bloom carpets the forest floor, interspersed with widespread vernal pool wetlands that offer a glance of our natural history and the historic Great Black Swamp that once covered our region.

In 2013, the Conservancy worked with the owners of the woods to ensure its permanent protection with a conservation agreement. Since then we have worked together to manage the property and share it with others through public programming. Now, as life takes the owners in other directions, Black Swamp Conservancy has secured a Clean Ohio grant to purchase Bell Woods.

“Purchasing title to Bell Woods secures use of this important resource for educational and community purposes,” said executive director Rob Krain. The property lies directly across the road from Eastwood Schools, a K-12 campus. Classes from Bowling Green State University also use it frequently for research projects and other field-based learning.

Access to Bell Woods will continue to be limited to scheduled programming to reduce stress on the property’s sensitive habitats, but future plans may include a boardwalk to allow more access while minimizing footwear on the soil and protecting the rarest areas. The Conservancy’s adjacent Pat & Clint Mauk’s Prairie features a mowed walking trail that is open to the public from dawn to dusk 365 days a year.



The wetlands at Bell Woods are classified as Category 3, meaning that they are of the highest biological integrity. More than a dozen rare species are known to inhabit the property, and an inventory of Vegetation Index of Biotic Integrity was conducted in 2021 and identified an astonishing 73 unique species per 1,000 square meter plots.







ALONG THE MAUMEE

ROTARY RIVERSIDE PRESERVE

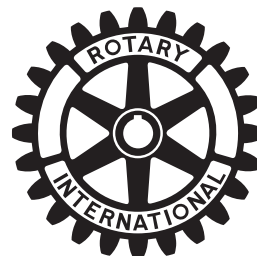
Thirty-five acres of mostly flood-prone farmland along the Maumee River near the North Turkeyfoot Wildlife Area in Henry County are about to be returned to natural habitats. Work is scheduled to start in June on this property that is full of potential.

Because the property lies along the main stem of the Maumee River, the Conservancy sees the likelihood of excellent new fishery habitat. Anglers can already catch Lake Whitefish and Freshwater Drum in this region. We're hoping to enhance aquatic habitat that will allow for the reintroduction of native fish species that are in decline, including Pirate Perch or Blacknose Shiners. Our restoration design includes a deep-water pool (four to six feet deep) where fish could safely overwinter.

The site is mostly located within the Maumee's floodplain, where we will be encouraging seasonal wetlands and restoring streamside forest. The trees of wet woods are home to a wide range of songbirds and raptors, and the floor of the woods is friendly breeding territory for salamanders and other amphibians known to already inhabit the property's existing habitat.

Converting this property's frequently flooded fields will help reduce erosion and reduce nutrients reaching the Maumee River and Lake Erie where they contribute to the growth of harmful algal blooms. This restoration design will capture runoff from nearby agricultural fields and hold that nutrient-rich water, filtering it through the soil where it will be taken up by trees and shrubs rather than flowing into the river.

We'll also be planting thousands of trees, shrubs, native grasses and sedges. In addition to the H2Ohio program, which is funding the bulk of this project, we are pleased to be working with Rotary District 6600. The district, and 11 individual local Rotary Clubs, are providing funding to increase our planting budget to facilitate the planting of 6,600 trees on site.







2022 Fundraiser



So Wild a Place

TICKETS available at BlackSwamp.org

July
16th
Saturday

Toledo Botanical Gardens
Toledo, OH

Gates open at
5:30 PM

A benefit for:



HOG ROAST BBQ • Live music by Jesse Daniel Band • OPEN BAR

“When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable ... swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place, a sanctum sanctorum... I seemed to have reached a new world, so wild a place... far away from human society. What’s the need of visiting far-off mountains and bogs, if a half-hour’s walk will carry me into such wildness and novelty?”

- Henry David Thoreau

As Henry David Thoreau knew, a walk through the woods – or a swamp, or a garden – provides calm and joy and restores our energy and sense of purpose.

Join us to celebrate the wildness of northwest Ohio and our conservation mission with others like you who care about natural habitats and family farms in the beautiful outdoor space of the Toledo Botanical Garden.

So Wild a Place is Saturday, July 16, 2022, from 5:30 pm – 10 pm.

We’ll have the entire park to explore as we enjoy a hog roast BBQ dinner with all the fixings by Chef Ian Regent and listen to classic country music artist Jesse Daniel and his six-piece band for their first-ever Ohio performance.

Our natural places provide more than just respite for people needing to relax and renew. Woods, wetlands, and fields provide habitat for threatened and endangered plants and animals. They provide space for floodwaters and naturally treat nutrients and other pollutants that we don’t want to reach our lake.

Register to attend before July 1 to take advantage of the early bird ticket price of \$75. Tickets include entertainment, food, and beer and wine.

We would love to visit together, but if you can’t come in person, we are offering a limited number of celebration kits as well. Each kit will be shipped to your home and include a taste of the event including Conservancy gear, local products and music from Jesse Daniel.

We are also looking for event sponsors. If you or your business would like to sponsor at one of these levels representing rare species that make their homes on Conservancy-protected properties, please contact Laura at 419-833-1025 or lrodriguez@blackswamp.org.

- **Sandhill Crane (\$10,000)**
- **River Otter (\$5,000)**
- **Blanding’s Turtle (\$2,500)**
- **Four-toed Salamander (\$1,000)**
- **Golden-crowned Kinglet (\$500)**

So Wild a Place – Black Swamp Conservancy Fundraiser

Saturday, **July 16, 2022**
5:30 pm to 10 pm

Toledo Botanical Garden
5403 Elmer Dr, Toledo OH

Learn about the Garden at
toledogarden.org

Register for So Wild A Place here:
BlackSwamp.org/SWAP-2022





A PERMANENT *For Storytelling*



Storytelling is an ageless joy that keeps getting better. At several Black Swamp Conservancy-protected properties, families have enjoyed walking Storybook Trails for several years. These first trails were laminated book pages mounted to simple sign frames posted at intervals along walking trails that could be picked up and moved between the Conservancy's preserves. Classrooms and families told the Conservancy how much they loved this addition to their nature walks.

Last year we installed our first permanent Story Book Trail at Pat & Clint Mauk's Prairie in Wood County. Now, a permanent story trail is coming to our Dr. Robert L. Nehls Memorial Nature Preserve (4400 East Muggy Road in Port Clinton).

We plan to keep the reading experience new and fun by partnering with schools and libraries to select and post nature-based stories relevant to the season and the location. Imagine reading about how bees make honey as you watch and listen to pollinators busy in a summer flower prairie. Or learning about the last leaf left on the tree as fall leaves shower their colors down around you in an autumn woodland.

Fresh air, exercise, and being surrounded by the beauty and surprises of nature improves physical and mental health. Add in a story book and a walk becomes a rich educational activity for people of all ages, introducing new vocabulary and new information about ecological relationships that are all around you. Mycelium is a big word, but the fairy ring of mushrooms that grows from it is something you can see and touch. The idea of a parasitic plant might be hard to explain to a child but seeing dodder or mistletoe feeding off its host can make the concept come to life. Love for the natural world



PLACE

is built through these experiences. The Story Book Trail is a captivating way to introduce people – especially children – to the value of our natural resources and the role we all play in protecting them.

If the Story Book Trail makes you want to take a book home, look for the book box managed by the Catawba Stewards of Little Free Libraries group at the trailhead. As the Nehls Memorial Nature Preserve becomes even more a part of the community, we look forward to adding to the family fun nature activities on Catawba Island.

The Story Book Trail is flat and mown, accessible to people using strollers or wheelchairs. It is open to the public from dawn to dusk.



Love for the natural world is built through these experiences.





WEISGERBER- POHLMANN



RESTORATION

Underway

Nature and time do most of the work on a restoration project. The staff of the Black Swamp Conservancy and our contractors help habitat development along. We restore topography for water retention, connect habitat that had been separated, and re-introduce native plants and encourage them to get their feet down deep and become well established. On the 75-acre Weisgerber-Pohlmann Nature Preserve north of Defiance, we are doing that and a little more to rebuild a diverse habitat.

This property was selected for restoration because its low-lying cropland was often flooded over by the Tiffin River, which runs along about a mile of the preserve boundary. The site has a range of soil types and elevations that show us how a little intervention will create a lot of special value. On a bluff above a farm field and above some isolated wetlands, we are excavating areas for vernal pools and planting trees to re-establish a forest canopy. Vernal pools hold water from early spring to

June but dry up in the summer and fall. In the spring, the pools are rich with organic material in the form of leaves and other decaying plant matter, providing shelter in the shallow waters that lasts long enough for breeding amphibians, but not so long that fish or other predators become established. This spring, we'll be hard at work with equipment on-site but by next spring, we expect to hear the loud chorus music of spring peepers, the snore of leopard frogs, and the quack of the wood frog.

The property falls in a steep slope to the farm fields and wetlands. We'll establish native shrubs on the slope to prevent erosion. On the farm field, we will let the water ease back where it wants to be by restoring the land's natural hydrology. This will restore the connection between the Tiffin River and the acreage, rebuilding acres of useful wetland. Wetlands are proven to be strong tools in our efforts to reduce the amounts of phosphorus and nitrogen reaching Lake Erie and contributing to harmful algal blooms. Existing wetlands on the property are

being treated to control some invasive species encroachment and interplant some additional natives that will further stabilize soil with their deep roots.

We've scheduled a lot of planting in this property, too. In the restored wetlands area, we plan to add elderberry, dogwoods, sandbar willows, and other shrubs that will grow into a diverse wetland community over the next several years. In the higher ground, we will expand the wooded area with more trees. This area already includes a nice diversity of maples, black walnut, and butternuts.

All the earthwork and planting should be completed by late spring. Then we'll help nature along as a thriving natural system develops.





SMILE, YOU'RE ON *Herpatology Camera!*

Frogs are great at letting you know where they are by emitting their species-specific calls with gusto, which is wonderful! But how do you find out what quieter salamanders, snakes, and turtles are nearby? With the loan of a brand-new tool the Black Swamp Conservancy will be able to accumulate data and photos at our Forrest Woods Nature Preserve and share that data with the rest of Ohio.

Black Swamp Conservancy was recently chosen as one of only three organizations in the state to receive a temporary equipment grant from Ohio Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (OHPARC). OHPARC works to conserve amphibians, reptiles, and their habitats as integral parts of Ohio's ecosystem and culture. We will be part of their system of proactive and coordinated partnerships to collect information. An integral part of wildlife conservation is knowing where species of interest are currently located, and that's what this grant will help us do.

OHPARC has loaned the Conservancy two high-definition cameras to be used for herpetological (reptile and amphibian) surveys at our Forrest Woods Nature Preserve. The cameras are mounted within a specifically designed "trap" system called the Adapted-Hunt Drift Fence Technique.

The setup consists of an entrenched drift fence, which intercepts small animals moving across the landscape and directs them to a modified 5-gallon bucket containing a camera trap. Animals passing through the bucket trigger the camera, leaving behind photo evidence. This method of wildlife surveying offers a gentle way to assess which species are using a site while the animals go about their regular activities.

In addition to the generous equipment grant, OHPARC hosted a workshop at Ohio State University to help grant recipients learn to set up and deploy the system. The Conservancy's stewardship staff deployed our camera traps in late March, just in time for the beginning of spring and tons of herpetofaunal activity. We'll collect image data from April through October, at which point we will return the camera to the organization. The data we collect will be submitted throughout the season to the Ohio Herp Atlas (<http://atlas.ohparc.org/>).

In addition to adding to the state database of reptile and amphibian species accounts, this is a great opportunity to supplement the Conservancy's species records at Forrest Woods. Knowing what is living in our woods helps us make decisions and monitor our progress.





Notes From the Field

Freya Berntson, Land Steward



BLACK SWAMP
CONSERVANCY
P.O. Box 332
Perrysburg, Ohio 43552
419.833.1025

Clean Water, Good Food, Wild Places

At Black Swamp Conservancy...

We take direct action to permanently preserve and improve northwest Ohio's natural habitats and family farms for the benefit of current and future generations. By protecting our valuable land and water resources, we support healthy communities with strong, sustainable economies. Our work ensures that the diverse habitats of our region will be protected for future generations; and that our children and their children will forever be able to enjoy this special place.

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Laura Rodriguez, Events & Education Coordinator

Your support helps to protect and restore northwest Ohio's land and water resources, providing critical habitat for wildlife.



The Rookery

SPRING 2022

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ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERRYSBURG, OH
PERMIT NO. 12

or Current Resident



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