



# The Rookery

SPRING 2023







# SPRING HAS

# *Sprung*

With the mild winter coming to a close, early wildflowers are already starting to emerge. Frogs are calling from wetland pools, and we are starting to hear more voices in the morning bird choirs as the first migrants return to the region.

There is a lot to love about springtime in northwest Ohio - and the conservation work we are accomplishing today ensures that we can continue to experience the vitality and beauty of our wild places for generations to come.

Over the winter we have kept busy moving important habitat restoration projects forward. These properties add to the special spaces in our region the add value to our lives by harboring wildlife, supporting cleaner water and air, and providing us with spaces to learn, play and relax. In coming months we'll officially open a new public preserve on Wolf Creek in Seneca County, an outdoor laboratory for Otsego Schools in Wood County and complete another new wetland at Forrest Woods in Paulding County.

I hope you'll find some time this spring to enjoy the outdoors with us. We are looking forward to seeing you at upcoming volunteer and stewardship opportunities, bird walks, river paddles, and even a community paint-by-number mural project on April 29th. And ... you won't want to miss the barbeque dinner and modern-vintage stylings of our Nashville-based musical guest, Miss Tess at our annual So Wild a Place celebration on June 10th.

Thank you for helping to make conservation possible in our community, we couldn't do it without you.

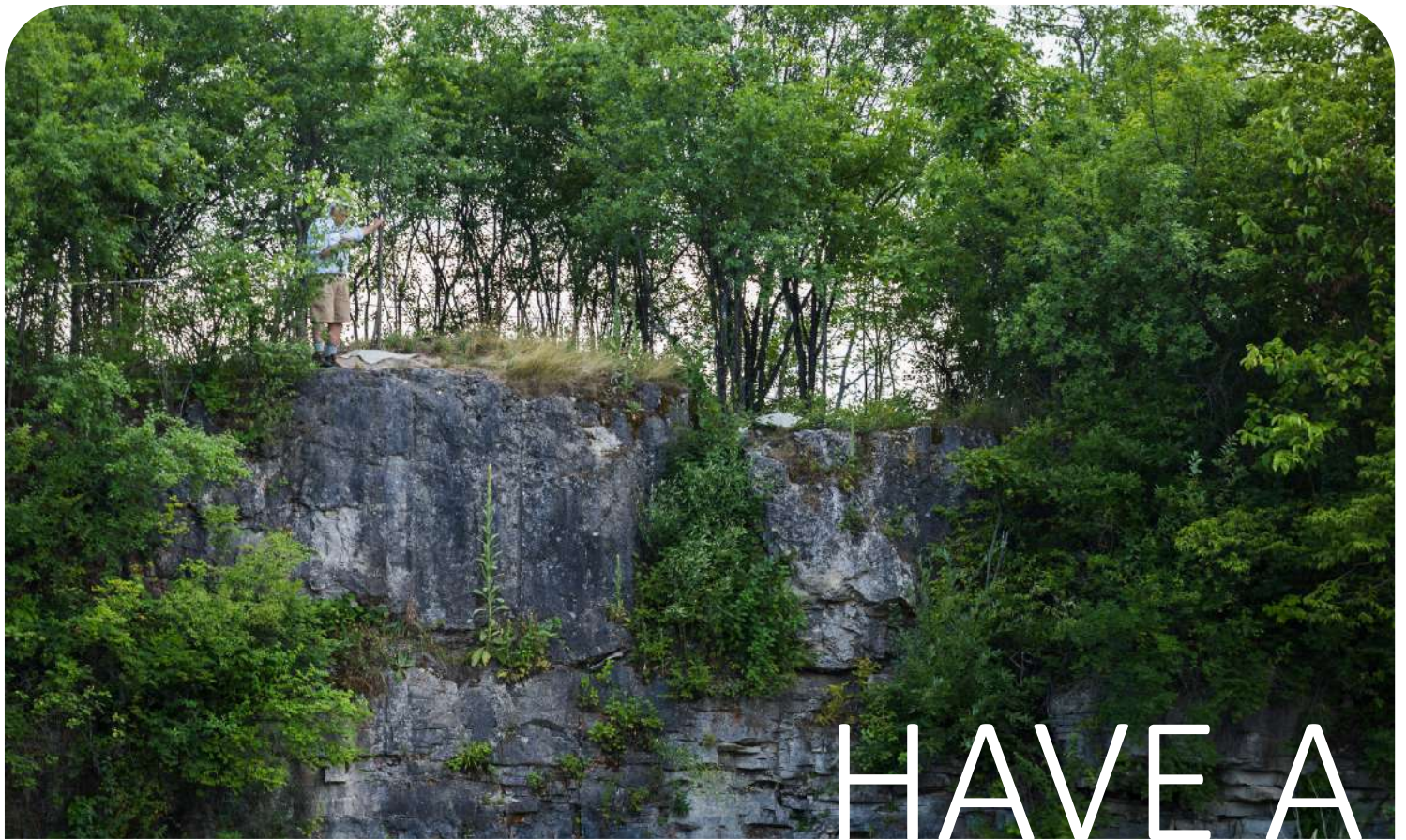


Stay well,

**Rob Krain**  
**Executive Director**







# *Rockin' Good Time* AT SAWYER QUARRY

A few things are hard to find in northwest Ohio, a good ski slope, and a rock-climbing venue. We can't help you with skiing, but Sawyer Quarry Nature Preserve is a rare local opportunity to climb.

Sawyer Quarry has had many lives, starting as an industrial operation that fueled the early industrial boom in northwest Ohio, morphing into a private family recreation spot, and with a life now as a unique Wood County community treasure.

The property includes the old stone quarry walls and dry basin along with 60 acres of woods. Visit in April and May to walk the quarry rim path and see the ground covered with wildflowers: trillium,

bloodroot, spring beauties, and trout lily. Then practice some rock climbing in the old quarry. Walls of the quarry are designated for aid climbing (climbing with ropes and pitons) and bouldering (free climbing with no tools). The bottom of the quarry is accessible by stairs and is open for exploring.

The Sawyer family bought the land in 1883 and started to quarry sedimentary rock in 1891. The industrial stone business continued through 1930. After the business closed during the Great Depression, the quarry and surrounding woods remained a favorite spot for generations of the Sawyer family. Family members built structures on the property for summer recreation and for full-time living. In 1999, the Ann B. Sawyer family decided to permanently preserve

the entire quarry, woods, and buildings through the Black Swamp Conservancy. Fifteen years after taking it into protection, the Conservancy helped the family donate their property to the Wood County Park District. The old family buildings have now been converted to park offices that include a history of the preserve, interpretive center, and wildlife observation windows. The park is open every day from 8 a.m. to 30 minutes after sunset.

Black Swamp Conservancy holds a conservation agreement on the land and continues to protect this unique piece of local history from development, ensuring its permanent preservation as a community resource.







# VOLUNTEER FOR

## *Baby Tree Planting*

A big planting day is a day of rebirth. When we're ready to plant, we've already graded the site, removed invasive species, seen water moving the way we planned. Now we're adding a lot of young life in confidence that we have done everything we could to help them grow. That day is coming for the Marie DeLarme project.

The Black Swamp Conservancy invites volunteers to help put the final touches on this important restoration project in Forrest Woods Nature Preserve the first week of April. First, visit the site to see how a former hay field has been transformed into a healthy wetland adjacent to the Maumee River. Check out new vernal pools near the Marie DeLarme Creek; we may have frogs already laying eggs! Then put your stamp on the project by helping get bare root seedlings off to a good start.

Contractors will be on site to handle the planting of 1,200 trees and shrubs but volunteers are needed to follow behind them to place tubes around the seedlings and stake the tubes to the earth. Planting

day will be the first week of April. The actual date is dependent on weather. Interested people are asked to contact the Conservancy's Conservation Manager Melanie Coulter who will coordinate the event: [mcoulter@blackswamp.org](mailto:mcoulter@blackswamp.org) or 419.833.1025. Tools are provided but bring water and be prepared to be wet and dirty.

The translucent tubes are essential to getting the seedlings off to a strong start. The tubes shield the baby trees from deer and rabbits and other animals that would browse on them. But they also create micro-habitats. April can be chilly, but the tubes will amplify the sun's rays and give the seedlings a warm environment. As the summer goes on and the trees grow, the trees release water vapor which condenses inside the tube creating a self-watering system.

The tubes stay in place for three to five years. Conservancy staff will check on them periodically, especially after a significant rain or windstorm. Wind can knock the tubes over and bend the trees.

Staff will prop them back up to let the trees grow straight. When the trees and shrubs are well-established, the contractor will remove and re-use the tubes on another site.

The seedlings planted in this area will include trees that are represented in the surrounding forest such as various oaks and hickories. The shrubs will include native fruit-bearing species including chokeberry, buttonbush, and dogwoods. Because these shrubs flower, they provide nectar and pollen for bees and butterflies. They also harbor the larvae of moths and butterflies which birds feed to their nestlings. The roots of the trees and shrubs will prevent erosion and also take up nutrients including phosphorus and nitrogen, preventing excess nutrients from reaching the Maumee River and Lake Erie.

Melanie Coulter said, "With the completion of this parcel, we've really effectively protected a big piece of the true Great Black Swamp in Forrest Woods Preserve. We're looking forward to seeing big changes in a short time in this small field."



# So Wild a Place

Saturday June 10th

West Side Montessori Campus  
7115 W Bancroft St, Toledo, OH

Festivities start at  
5:30 PM



JIMMY G'S BARBECUE • Miss Tess & her 4-piece 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



We’re going a little wild celebrating the wild places we all love. Bring your friends and join the party!

It’s our annual backyard casual bash, with music, food, dancing, and fun. Everyone is invited to celebrate Black Swamp successes and get energized for a spring and summer of life outdoors. The party and fundraiser will be Saturday, June 10, 5:30 p.m. – 10 p.m. at the beautiful campus of West Side Montessori.

Come for a barbeque dinner from Jimmy G’s, stay for the music of Miss Tess, a four-piece Nashville-based band swinging out to early rockabilly, bopping country, and jump jazz. We’ll have plenty of room to dance and swing your partner.

See you at the party! And in the meantime, we’re wishing you can get out to your favorite woods, swamp or garden and find your joy in the wild outdoors.







# CONSERVING

Hopeful commercial and real estate developers used to call Jane and Tom Schetter regularly, asking about their 145 acres of farmland and 40 acres of woods just north of Fostoria on a tributary of the Portage River. “Now we can just tell them, it’s in a conservation easement,” said Jane, “and that closes that down.”

Bill Frankart also chose an agricultural easement for his 510 acres in Sandusky and Seneca counties. Development pressure where he farms, farther away from cities for now, tends to be utility companies. An easement creates a shield that, for example, adds a layer of protection against a power company wanting to run transmission lines through his farm fields.

An easement can be designed to meet a family’s immediate and future needs. In the case of the Schetters, one parcel of land by the creek was kept out the easement and may be built on by one of the children in the future. For Bill Frankart, he was able to add to the easements over time, starting with 70 acres years ago and now including all 510 acres that he farms. Land preserved

by an easement can be sold or gifted but the protection remains with the land, and it can never be developed with residential or commercial construction.

For both families, that permanency is satisfying. Six generations of the Schetter family have raised cattle, farmed, and lived on their land since 1935. Now they know it will always be open space. Schetter family members will remain living on their property in two homes. Those properties can be improved or replaced but no new construction will happen on the protected land. The creek that runs through their woods is a branch of the Portage River. It will continue to be a natural buffer, filtering the water leaving the farm and retaining stormwater and rainwater. Since they stopped raising cattle they have seen more ecological diversity return to the woods and fields. Jane Schetter said, “Cattle aren’t trampling around so the creek is clearer. We’re seeing wildflowers, and more deer and rabbits.” Their woods are diverse with nut-producing trees including buckeye, hickory, and black walnut, as well as black cherry, American beech, honey locust,

maples, sycamores, and a few ash trees that escaped the emerald ash borer. The family continues to plant trees every year, including fir trees which provide their Christmas trees.

Bill Frankart and his family are actively working their land, farming corn and soybeans, and they plan to keep it that way. He said, “It’s important that we take steps to preserve farmland and keep land viable for food production in the future. Not just in Ohio, but internationally.” He realizes that other interests see big farm fields as a developable resource but to Frankart, the greater value of his land is the family business of food production. His easements ensure that he and his family can manage the property for the best production. His land management strategy includes use of filter strips around waterways, and he participates in the Conservation Reserve Program which takes environmentally sensitive land out of agricultural production.



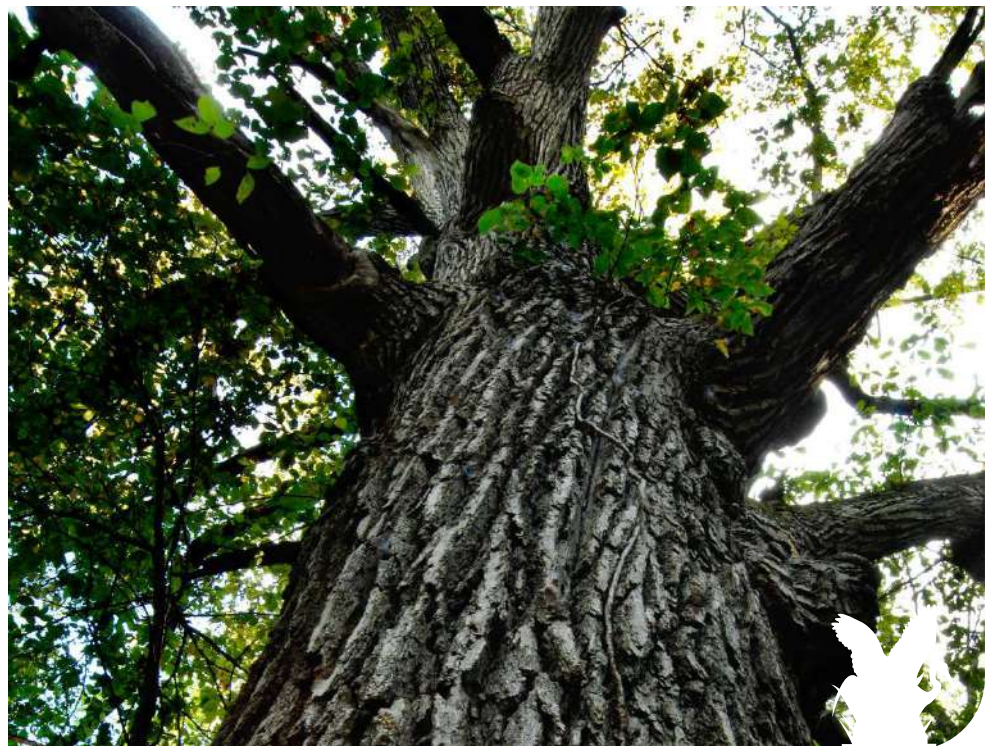


# FAMILY LANDS

## *with Easements*

Frankart weighed the costs and benefits of an easement. He appreciates the years of tax deductions he'll receive for extinguishing his development rights and sees no downside. Some people told him that you lose value of the land when you put it in an easement. However, Bill said that since the goal is to keep this land as a family farm, lowered values can help with estate planning and generational transfers. For the Schettters, their goal was simply keeping the family homestead and woods intact and in the family. Jane Schetter said, "We are pleased to have permanently preserved the land in an ever-changing society."

To find out how to permanently preserve and protect agricultural land, start the process by talking to Black Swamp Conservancy. Find answers to initial questions online at [blackswamp.org/conservation-options](http://blackswamp.org/conservation-options).







# SHOW & TELL:

## *the Conservancy Story Documented*

“The main character is the land,” said filmmaker Christy Frank talking about the documentary she and collaborator Alex Goetz are working on for the Black Swamp Conservancy. Their story documents how a drab member of the chorus is transformed into a vibrant star actor. Their lead character is about 100 acres at the new Clary-Boulee-McDonald Nature Preserve along Wolf Creek in Seneca County.

The Conservancy is thrilled to work with wildlife filmmakers and journalists Frank and Goetz on this video project. They are local talent with international credits including National Geographic WILD, BBC, PBS Nature, and CBS.

Their film follows the Conservancy’s habitat restoration project in a way that allows viewers to better understand the how and why of these projects. Viewers will be able to see the before-and-after and how it all happens in between. The before is a mono-crop field farmed under conventional practices. All that grew was the farmer’s grain. In the after you see all kinds of trees and shrubs growing in a diversity of habitat with wetlands, floodplains, pollinator prairies, and forested woodland.

The filmmaker team was there when the parcel was an ordinary, flat, agricultural field and they will be there filming the final planting, documenting a complete transformation to multi-level wetlands and prairie. The pair sat in on the early planning process learning about grading the land, about protecting nearby farms’ drainage, listening to discussion about what kind of plants should go where. Then Frank and Goetz documented putting the plan into action. They flew drones, sat in earthmovers, and followed the process. “It was neat to see how quickly the water was flowing in, right where they had planned,” said Frank. The film will show a year of work in about 15 minutes.

In interview segments, the film shows how the work affects a much broader region than the 100 acres being reconstructed. Conservancy staff explains how the floodplain channels reduce regional flooding. The wetlands hold water and allow excess nutrients from nearby farms to be treated naturally in the soil, impacting the health of nearby rivers and Lake Erie. The diversity of plants provide food for pollinators and the improved habitat allows animals to thrive over a wide territory.

Christy Frank enjoyed her first documentary about land restoration. “It was cool how quickly nature reclaimed and took over.

*It gives you hope, which we all need.”*

Later this year, with the work complete, the Conservancy plans to gift the Clary-Boulee-McDonald Nature Preserve to the Seneca County Park District, which will operate it as a public park.







*Alex Goetz*

is a wildlife filmmaker and photographer, and co-founder of Running Wild Media, a film production company specializing in stories of wildlife and conservation. He has contributed to outlets such as National Geographic WILD, BBC, PBS Nature, CBS Sunday Morning, and was a winner of the National Geographic WILD "Wild to Inspire" film competition. An Ohio native, some of his extensive travels have taken him from the countryside of Tasmania filming Tasmanian devils, to boating throughout the vibrant Marshall Islands, and road-tripping around four amazing African countries filming wildlife and conservation efforts.



*Christy Frank*

is a photojournalist, writer, and filmmaker based in Toledo. She is passionate about storytelling that intersects environmental and human conditions. Her work has appeared on CBS News and PBS Nature, as well as in Audubon, bioGraphic, National Wildlife Federation, Toledo City Paper, and as a highly honored conservation story in Nature's Best. Her most recent film, Ploverville, won the First Time Filmmakers Award at the 2022 Fresh Coast Film Festival and is currently on the festival circuit.







# ART, *Flowers,* MUSIC, *Games,* GO!

This year, our long-time patron and friend of the Conservancy, the Greater Toledo Community Foundation (GTCF), is celebrating five decades of service in northwest Ohio. They are choosing to spotlight valued partners in the community all year long. The Black Swamp Conservancy is honored to be the April spotlight partner and to be able to invite friends and family to a celebration at our homestead. Joanne Olhausen of GTCF said, "This event is our gift to the community. We have proudly supported the Conservancy for years for their work in land management, educational programs for children and adults, and on behalf of clean water. They should be celebrated."

This spring afternoon event has no agenda and there's no fundraiser, just big family fun. Come on over and help celebrate the preservation and restoration of natural areas and family farms in northwest Ohio – no tickets required, no reservations necessary.

Thank you, GTCF, and congratulations on fifty years of service! GTCF has made a permanent impact on northwest Ohio by supporting the work the Black Swamp Conservancy and so many other nonprofits. Greater Toledo Community Foundation Celebration with the Black Swamp Conservancy



# Sunday

APRIL 29TH

Noon - 4pm

BLACK SWAMP HOMESTEAD  
4825 SUGAR RIDGE RD, PEMBERVILLE

- **Community paint-by-number mural** on the barn. Madison Roy, a Toledo native and New Orleans-based artist, has designed a huge community mural for the GTCF 50th year celebration event. Madison is excited to give back to the community that raised her and to support conservation in northwest Ohio. Everyone is invited to contribute to the mural.
- **Guided Hikes** through Bell Woods. Experience the phenomenal wildflower bloom at Bell Woods ... one of the Conservancy's best-attended events every year. The tour will take you through vernal wetlands along a forest floor carpeted with native spring ephemerals, with a peek in on an active heron rookery. You won't want to miss this brief but spectacular show.
- **Interactive lawn games** for children and families. Giant Jenga, cornhole, much more.
- **Live music.** We love a joyful noise at the Conservancy. Get up and dance in the tent or on the lawn.
- **Children's story trail** through Pat & Clint Mauk's Prairie. Read a story at stations as you take in the beauty of the spring prairie. Stories are changed often to match the seasons and the activity taking place around the prairie.
- **Food trucks** and complimentary beverages.







BLACK SWAMP  
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**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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*Our front cover features an egret.*

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



**The Rookery**

SPRING 2023

or Current Resident



FIND US ONLINE AT [BlackSwamp.org](http://BlackSwamp.org)

