



# The Arc of Appalachia

2022 - 2023

C O M M U N I T Y

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER & MAYFLY - PHOTO BY MARY PARKER SONIS



## FEATURED ARTIST JEFF WHITE

With each annual magazine, it is our privilege to feature one of our many superb volunteer photographers who collectively make our magazine a top-shelf expression of the confluence of natural history and human artistry. This year we are proud to highlight the work of Jeff White from Cincinnati, whose photography graces our introductory essay, and many other pages in this issue of the magazine.

Like many of the Arc's contributing photographers, photography is an avocation for Jeff. Just this year he retired from computer programming, where he worked for a company that makes supporting racks for solar panels. He departed from a 20+ year career in commercial, institutional, and retail architecture.

Jeff knew he liked photography after a class he took back in college, but he never seriously pursued the hobby until 2019 when he decided to invest in a quality digital camera. As a child, Jeff's maternal grandparents helped him bond to the natural world through fishing outings with his grandfather, and his grandmother's watercolor paintings of nature. His mother's dedication to backyard bird feeding solidified the bond. Jeff's father modeled a love for photography through his joy of photographing trains in action, especially those powered by steam locomotives. Jeff was able to bring the two fields together—photography and nature—and as you will see, he does so quite capably and artistically.

A few years ago, Jeff discovered the Arc of Appalachia through nature writer Jim McCormac's references in his nature blog, and Jeff quickly became indispensable to our organization. Jeff has long served as a Trailblazer and Land Steward for Plum Run Prairie, and next year he will be transferring his skills to Kamama Prairie, an Arc preserve that will soon be open to the public with hiking trails. Jeff also volunteers for the Cincinnati Nature Center as a trail steward and helps there with the removal of invasive plants.

THANK YOU JEFF FOR ALL YOU DO!

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*Halloween Pennant Dragonfly  
at Plum Run Prairie - Photo by Jeff White*

*Dedicated to the earth's natural communities -  
communities that have been in continuous operation for 3.5 billion years*

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## the COMMUNITY revolution

*The next two articles are by Nancy Stranahan, Director, Arc of Appalachia  
All photos in the first essay courtesy of this issue's featured photographer, Jeff White.*

Here at the Arc, when we talk about preserving beauty, balance, and biodiversity, we aren't referring vaguely to "nature." We are talking about the beauty, balance and biodiversity of the earth's healthy natural communities. We have a lot of unconsciousness about the word, "nature." I like using the word "communities"++ because when we are destroying something, it hits closer to home.

Our planet has an extraordinary passion for growing these plant and animal communities. If you could go back in time a few millennia - far enough to precede humanity's recent population explosion - you would find natural communities covering nearly every square foot of the planet's land surface and a considerable volume of her oceans as well. It's a stellar achievement that has been 3.5 billion years in the making.

Many of the earth's natural communities are highly complex, boasting memberships of tens of thousands of species. Yet either because of, or despite of, this complexity, the natural communities on the planet today have remained healthy and self-sustaining for millions of years. Fire, severe weather, and geologic upheavals have all taken their toll from time to time, but following every catastrophe, forces

of healing are released - restoring the community as earnestly as a body attends to a wound. Admittedly, the earth appears to hold little sentiment for individual lives or the fate of any one species, but she certainly seems to like keeping her communities going for the long haul, even as they evolve and adapt to changing times.

America's Eastern Hardwood Forest community, as just one example, has been in continuous operation for well over 40 million years. Some of its component trees - like sweetgum, magnolias and dogwood - are so old that their ancestors were browsed by dinosaurs. The thought of any community lasting millions of years is staggering, considering that just one major interruption would have spelled its demise. Yet, somehow, thousands of natural communities on the earth have survived glaciers, continental collisions and meteor strikes. How have they achieved such resilience and stability?

Early hunting and gathering cultures believed that nature's balance and bounty was the product of a spiritual covenant between creation and Creator. This cosmic relationship was kept intact through the performance of sacred rituals and strict obedience to a long list of taboos.

Because nature's bounty and balance were dependent on something as frail as human morality, early people took their land stewardship responsibilities seriously. They knew their world's very survival depended on it.

Over time, as hunting and gathering communities were replaced by agrarian ones, humanity's sense of inclusion and dependency on natural communities lessened. Ethical codes governing right relations among peoples continued to evolve, but the ancient laws governing right relations between mankind and its fellow species faded away.

The Age of Enlightenment in the 1700's witnessed a new-found faith in human intellect and scientific inquiry, as well as an associated distrust of religious doctrines. Deep thinkers of this era questioned if the laws that governed the balance and bounty of natural communities really came from God. If these laws proved to be of earthly origin, perhaps they could be fruitfully applied to sustain rapidly growing human communities. One of the leading thinkers of the era was Scottish economist, Adam Smith (1723 - 1790). In his influential tome, *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith wrote these now famous words:

*"It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages."*

Although Adam Smith produced other writings acknowledging the essential sympathy of humans for each other, it was his writing on self-interest that survived to become the doctrine of modern economics. The primacy of self-interest offered a convenient truth for the ambitious businessmen of the industrial revolution. Self-interest didn't need to be harnessed, regulated, or apologized for. Self-interest was inherently rooted in our biology, it served the greater whole, and it was justifiably a good thing.

Although it was often demonstrated that in small groups, self-interest wreaked havoc, it nevertheless became a widely accepted principle that whenever communities were large and complex enough, self-interest worked for the benefit of all. When Darwin published his book on the *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, it only further cemented what Western Culture wanted to hear: survival of the fittest was the law of Nature, and by application, the law of human economy. Today this belief is so embedded in every aspect of Western culture that it is not only nearly unassailable, but indivisible from our ideals of freedom.

**.Left Page:** spittle bug droplet hanging from wingstem at Kamama Prairie. **Page Right: Top Photo:** Green frog resting in stream along Roundtop Trail at the Highlands Nature Sanctuary; **Middle Photo:** Caterpillar of Silver-spotted Skipper; **Bottom Photo:** Field Sparrow on blackberry sprig





Red Milkweed beetle at Plum Run

Scientific inquiry into the laws governing natural systems didn't stop with Darwin, of course, but continued forward in time, providing ever-deeper understandings of our living world. The term ecology was used for the first time in 1866. Mycorrhizal fungi were first identified in 1885. The word biome was first coined in 1916. When Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* in 1962, it was the first time a respected widely-read author charged humanity as accountable for the injuries inflicted on the earth's natural systems and communities.

The 1988 book, *Dream of the Earth* by Thomas Berry, hauntingly echoed the beliefs of the early hunters and gatherers. Humanity, Berry wrote, had an ethical and spiritual obligation to care for the world's natural communities and all the many beings within those communities. Taking care of the earth was not just a matter of human comfort and survival, he wrote. Taking care of the earth was a moral necessity.

With Thomas Berry's insights, it was as if humanity had come full circle, except with a new twist. The taboos that enforced good stewardship, instead of perceived as mandates from God, were now enforced by federal and state EPA agencies. The spiritual obligations that were once held by an entire community of people as dictated by tradition, were now felt as pangs of conscience in individual men and women.

Today, when we study the natural world on the traditional individual level, the world is still perceived as

Darwin described it: species are honed for fitness through the forces of natural selection in a never ending struggle for survival. But when nature is studied at the community level, the last half century of ecological research reveals a rich matrix of cooperative forces: reciprocal bartering, creative partnerships, and competition avoidance. Is the over-arching principle, then, competition or cooperation? It depends where we choose to put our focus.

In a functioning natural community, it is instinctual for most members to not only take from the community but to give back. A beaver creates wetlands that teem with life. Mycorrhizae transport water and minerals to the trees. Trees feed their sugars to mycorrhizae. Bees and bats fertilize flowers while gathering nectar and pollen. Groundhogs build burrows that serve as winter shelter for dozens of other species. Vultures remove carrion from our landscapes. Worms and moles till and aerate the soil. Wolves cultivate healthy herds of elk. Birds steward forests by reducing leaf-munching caterpillars and disseminating seeds. There are some slackers in every community, of course, but most species are team players.

Self-interest, then, is not the only force running a community. Natural communities are able to achieve balance because so many of the members are giving as well as taking. There is no reason to think human communities run any differently.

In the 2018 paradigm-busting book, *I Contain Multitudes: The Microbes Within Us and a Grand View*



*Crowned Slug Moth Caterpillar at the Highlands Nature Sanctuary*

of *Life*, author Ed Yong shares the results of the last 20-plus years of scientific research into the natural history and ecology of microbes. This book is so groundbreaking that if we were bold enough to integrate its contents, it would transform our culture beyond recognition.

Yong teaches us that not all communities are on the size and scale of forests, swamps and deserts. Micro communities exist just about everywhere, including in and on our bodies. They inhabit the rainforests in our armpits, the deserts on the backs of our hands, the aquatic communities in our mouths, and the soil ecosystems of our guts. Our left hand even has a different microbe community than our right!

Microbes are legion in our body, outnumbering our larger-sized human cells ten to one. Our body's resident microbes take from us, to be sure, but they also give back. Actually, they give a LOT back. Microbes help to defend us from diseases, digest our food, and regulate our fat. We've been co-evolving with them for millions of years and without them, we become sickly and weak. When microbes don't act like team players in our bodies, we call them pathogens. Of the 10,000 plus bacteria we dance, walk and sleep with, fewer than 100 species of them cause infectious diseases in people. *Imagine, fewer than 100!* The bottom line of all of this? Microbes are our friends.

Yong claims that our fiercely protected "I am" is contrived fiction. In actuality, each one of us is a vessel of creative alliances, all working for the collective. Yes, it's true, you really contain multitudes. If you find this thought

disconcerting, you can gain comfort by knowing you are never home alone.

The first human eye to see a microbe bacterium belonged to Antoine van Leeuwenhoek, (1632-1723), who, with his invention of a superior microscope, was able to catch a glimpse of a very strange little "animalcule" that he had just swabbed out of someone's mouth. Up until Leeuwenhoek's discovery, no one had had a clue these tiny single-celled animals existed. People were incredulous to learn there were little critters running around inside and outside their bodies. What were these things? What ever they were, it just couldn't be good.

In 1866, after working for years to protect beverages from spoiling, Pasteur had a suspicion that if microorganisms could rot milk, they might also cause disease. He postulated if he could prevent the entry of microbes into the human body, he could stop sickness. His theory opened the door to the first application of antiseptic surgery, and its consequent success sealed our culture's perception that the only good microbe was a dead microbe. This bias continues into modern day, even in modern healthcare systems.

Yong explains that health is not the absence of microbes in our bodies. Health is not even necessarily the absence of the so-called wrong microbes in our body. When a microbial community goes out of balance, even the good guys can switch hats and become trouble makers. Health is when our native microbiomes are balanced and biodiverse. Yes, biodiverse! A study of the gut flora of a remote Venezuelan

Clouded sulphur butterflies at Kamama Prairie.



tribe was shown to be 50% more biologically diverse than Americans! This may mean we don't have the guts for a Paleo diet after all! Since most species of gut flora come to us bearing gifts, microbiologists worry about all the health services we have lost as a result of this gut flora extirpation.

Health is ALWAYS a community function - whether it be a person's microbiomes, the larger culture in which the person is raised, or an Ohio woodlands. Communities can make us sick. They can also make us well. When the fields of psychology and medicine raise their focus from the health of the individual to the overall health of a culture, only then will the widespread healing of both be possible. Healthy communities raise healthy people. Healthy people nourish their human and natural communities.

When the Arc first founded the Sanctuary in 1995, astonishingly, autumn olive, garlic mustard, and bush honeysuckle had not yet arrived. Imagine that! It was with great trepidation that we watched a wall of non-native invasive plants move eastward from Cincinnati in our direction. As the green wave surged right through and beyond the Sanctuary, it left behind what at first looked like random and irregular splashes of non-native greenery across our preserve that kept growing...and growing.

Cave Road, with its long history of farming and human residency, was hit particularly hard, but even there, some of the Sanctuary's holdings tracts remained clean - such as the small, fragmented 2-acre woodlands on the west side of Beechcliff with its bounty of trillium, poppies and bluebells. In another case, the squared-off boundaries of the yard of an old house site near the 8th Cave became perfectly filled in with garlic mustard, even though the house was long gone. It was as if garlic mustard made the invisible ink of our earlier impacts on the land visible.

Following patient observation, it became clear that the only woodlands at the Sanctuary that were able to resist the invasion of non-native plants were not necessarily old forests, but those that retained their pre-agricultural native soil communities - communities that teemed with native fungi, macro-invertebrates, and bacteria. Although the mechanism is not yet understood, such intact soils are able to resist the entry of bush honeysuckle and other invasive plants in the same way a healthy human body resists the common cold. In fact, when our bodies DO become overcome by some bacteria or virus, the understory of a forest that is carpeted with a monoculture of bush honeysuckle is an apt visual metaphor.

Bush honeysuckle is not an invading marauder. *It is a messenger*, telling us that most of Ohio's woodlands were already unhealthy. That said, although healthy forests can resist invasion, they do not have full immunity. Just as a body bombarded with immense numbers of flu virus will eventually catch the disease, when a healthy intact forest is rained upon with heavy loads of bush honeysuckle seeds year after year, it too will eventually succumb. It's just one more good reason that, here at the Arc, we labor to keep invasive plants out of our otherwise high quality forests.

The Arc is engaged not only in preserving the pristine, but restoring biologically significant communities that have been weakened by human activities. We spend an immense amount of staff and volunteer time removing invasive plants, humbly knowing that such removal doesn't, by itself, heal the disrupted soils that are vulnerable to invasion in the first place. But we do buy time, and time is a healer. We like to see ourselves as one of the forces nature has unleashed to tend to communities' injuries; sort of like the white blood cells of the forest.

Here at the Arc, we believe that stewarding and restoring the health of our natural communities is how humanity gives back to the earth. Beavers build dams, honeybees build comb, spiders spin webs, and - when we ourselves haven't become too broken to serve - stewardship is what we are naturally called upon to do.

It is through the service of stewardship that we can rejoin the communities we once abandoned, carrying the gifts of redemption in our hands.







*The Rocky Fork Gorge under full moon, (c) by Rick Braveheart | rickbraveheart.com*

## Land stewardship as a calling

Buried deep in the souls of many of us is a yearning to bond to a living landscape. When a landscape is cherished, whatever its size may be, it brings us the gifts of a lover. It fills in the missing pieces, drowns us in beauty, invigorates our senses, enriches our mental and emotional stability, and affirms that we belong to something bigger than ourselves.

To love a land is to really know it – its high places and valleys, its natural communities, its rivers and streams, its seasons. The distinct smell it has after a rain and the color of its dust on our bare feet. Loving a piece of land is knowing where the chanterelles grow, under what log the wood frog sleeps, and on which hidden branch the brown thrasher sings. When we are blessed with a place we love and know, stewardship comes as naturally as our breath. As we labor to help heal our adopted landscape, in the end, we find that we are the ones who are healed.

If you bond to land somewhere in Ohio, inevitably you will have to face its wounds. Have you ever wondered why there are so few old-growth forests and other pristine sites left in Ohio? When I contemplate the tens of thousands of people who, early in the 1800's, were given ownership of pristine landscapes with their ancient forests, fertile soils, and sparkling waterways; I marvel at the fact that out of Ohio's 29 million acres of land, less than 1000 acres of old growth forest have survived the last 225 years. That means that roughly only .003% of our forests successfully ran the gauntlet, *that's only one acre in every 29,000 acres.*

The loss of our ancient forests has been shockingly thorough, revealing to us that over the last two-plus centuries, Ohio's citizens have been in solid agreement with the cultural belief that personal income is more important than nature, beauty, and life; and this belief was applied to the landscape almost without exception. It is extraordinary, then, given our past history, that in these last few years we are beginning to see a noticeable cultural shift. Even a small shift is a radical one.

Here at the Arc of Appalachia, we are now being contacted multiple times a year by individuals and couples in their retirement years who are wrestling with what to do with their rural properties. Traditionally, of course, family real estate is expected to go the children. But in the case of our inquirers, they either don't have children, or their children are either disinterested or they live too far away. The owners are clear about several things. They do not want to release their land back into the market economy, they don't want their trees cut down, and they don't want their land developed. They DO want to see their land perpetually protected and they are willing to give their land away to make this possible.

As much as the Arc would like to accept each and every one of these philanthropic proposals, the sometimes tragic reality is that the stewardship of new and often isolated nature preserves requires significant annual funding, even though the land itself may have been donated. Questions

we ask ourselves include: Does the land have regional biological or geological significance? Will the donation be accompanied with an endowment? How far away is the project from our staffing headquarters? And since preservation size matters, how many acres are involved?

In this magazine you will read about several private landowner offers that, after such considerations, were gratefully and enthusiastically accepted. They include one bargain sale of land, three donated conservation easements, two planned bequests of land, and an outright donation of land. And that's not even a complete list!

Here at the Arc, we are committed to meeting Ohio's future wildlands preservation needs with strength. An essential preparation is to build up the Arc's Stewardship Forever Funds - endowment funds that will be supporting our mission into the far-flung future by providing dependable stewardship income each and every year. Most of our endowment funds are with the Columbus Foundation, but we are working with local foundations as well.

Looking 20 years forward, our plan is to add four regional staffing and equipment hubs to better serve the breadth of Ohio's Appalachian counties. By establishing stewardship managers closer to our preserves than our Highlands Nature Sanctuary's headquarters, our field staff will not only be able to provide more on-site stewardship, but their accessibility will accelerate the pace of land acquisition, increase the number of private-landowner collaborations, create stronger networks with volunteers and community leaders, and build more miles of Arc-managed public trails. In short, our staff will spend less time in the car!

Our first regional stewardship manager has already been hired to serve at the new Tremper Mound hub:

Elijah Crabtree. Although we still need to raise most of the supporting funds for this hub, we needed Elijah on site immediately in order to oversee our complex development plans for Tremper Mound. Thanks to a few special donors, the hub is already equipped with a fully-packaged Kubota tractor, trailer, X-mark mower, and pickup truck - the essential tools of the Arc's stewardship trade.

We are humbly asking our donors to specifically direct their philanthropic attention to the funding of our first two prioritized hubs at Tremper Mound and also at Hocking Hills, where we have been acquiring preserves at an unprecedented pace. We hope to have the Hocking Hills hub up and running within the next five years. Please consider including in your estate planning a donation to the suite of the Arc's Stewardship Forever Funds at the Columbus Foundation. We will be happy to provide you with details upon request. You can also choose to designate half of this year's donation to the Stewardship Fund. Please look for that option on the donation form.

In closing, I'd like to share that the Arc of Appalachia is in a unique position to provide the opportunity for individuals to give and receive the gift of land stewardship. In the coming year, our stewardship staff will be organizing a program that will link interested volunteer Land Stewards with specially selected preserve lands that they can bond to and help care for. If you think this program may be of interest, be sure to attend several of our stewardship volunteer work days in 2023 to fast forward your training and get to know our staff. To receive emailed work day announcements, look for our subscribe button on the top right screen at [arcofappalachia.org](http://arcofappalachia.org) and tick off volunteer events on the preference options.



## Planning ahead for five regional stewardship hubs













Hub Location - in order of anticipated need	Stewardship Forever Fund Goal	Current Balance + Known Pledges
Highlands Nature Sanctuary Headquarters	\$24,000,000	\$10,500,000
Tremper Mound Hub	\$4,000,000	\$500,000
Hocking Hills Hub	\$4,000,000	\$750,000
Kokosing-Killbuck Hub	\$4,000,000	\$1,650,000
Quiverheart Gorge Hub	\$4,000,000	\$950,000



British soldier lichens among moss and pixie cup lichens at Elf Ear Barrens

**2022-2023  
WILDLANDS ACQUISITION  
CAMPAIGN**

# 2022-2023 LAND CAMPAIGN

Land Pursuits	Type	1756 acres	County	Total Project Value/Cost	Balance Yet to Raise
 Quiverheart Gorge	Acquisition	99	Adams	\$614,531	\$200,000
 Elf Ear Barrens	Donation	87	Adams	\$279,664	\$0
 Pickett Run Wetlands	Acquisition	19	Highland	\$153,000	\$153,000
 Killbuck - Crane Swamp	Acquisition	194	Holmes	\$894,627	\$331,247
 Cline Farm	Acquisition	254	Hocking	\$1,437,256	\$40,000
 Honeycomb Rocks	Acquisition	30	Hocking	\$480,000	\$480,000
 Buena Vista Road Conservation Easements	Donation	101	Hocking	\$500,000	\$0
 Big Cola Swamp	Acquisition	61	Hocking	\$634,700	\$60,100
 Wildwood Bequest	Donation	64	Hocking	TBD	\$0
 Butterfly Repair Bequest	Donation	89	Hocking	TBD	\$0
 Turtlehead Swamp	Donation	62	Knox	TBD	\$0
 Tremper Mound Expansion	Acquisition	706	Scioto	\$4,273,324	\$878,676





Turtlehead Swamp  
Killbuck - Crane Swamp  
Clear Creek Region  
Hocking Hills Region  
ATHENS  
Ohio Hanging Rock

## ARC OF APPALACHIA 2022 - 2023 LAND PURSUITS

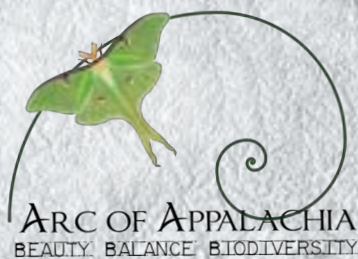
12 PROJECTS  
icons on map with  
**yellow halos**  
are active acquisition sites

7 Acquisitions  
1 Conservation Easement Donation  
2 Land Donations  
2 Land Bequests

Campaign = 1756 total acres

Total Acres protected  
in the Arc: 9204  
including current campaign  
not including bequests

for reading ease, only  
major projects are shown  
on the map





Columbine-strewn boulders below the waterfalls at Quiverheart Gorge Preserve. Photo by Tim Pohlar

## QUIVERHEART GORGE PRESERVE

By Nancy Stranahan, Director, Arc of Appalachia

The Quiverheart Gorge project is going down in Arc history as having the most remarkable beginning of any preserve in the Arc of Appalachia Preserve System. As with most new acquisition projects, it started with a phone call, but this one couldn't have come at a worse time. Andrea and I had just experienced a season of fast-paced land acquisitions, with all of the deadlines, negotiations, monetary strategizing, and piles of paperwork that come with buying land. We agreed that this would be an excellent time to slow things down for a few months so that we could catch up on our grant writing and other backlogged tasks. We solemnly pledged to each other that no matter HOW AMAZING the next land opportunity proved to be, we would have to prudently decline.

Just a few days after that conversation, the phone rang. The gentleman on the other end of the line had obviously thought over what he wanted to say in his head so many times that once he started talking, the floodgates opened.

"Hello, Nancy, my name is David Baker, and I own 150 acres just a few miles south of Peebles that I want to talk to you about. You don't know me yet, but the staff of The

Nature Conservancy told me to call you because they said my idea is an Arc kind of project.

My land lies generally behind the store you know as Black Diamond, off of Steam Furnace Road. You drive right by it when you go to Kamama. What you may not know is that the back 100 acres of my farm is cut by a deep dolomite gorge. You would never know what all is back here from just driving down the road.

It has the prettiest waterfall that I have ever seen in Ohio, and rock formations that will remind you of the Rocky Fork Gorge up there at your Sanctuary. My farm is actually the location of the first steam powered iron blast furnace built west of the Appalachians back in 1815, which, in its heyday, employed 400 workers. It's a very historical place. You can still see piles of charcoal that was used to fuel the furnace, and handmade bricks in the creek from the brick foundry that was also here.

I have put a lot of thought into this, and I would like to see the 100 wooded acres in the back of my farm become an Arc of Appalachia nature preserve. I want it to be open to the public and be developed with a trail system. I figured



Waterfalls on 'Bundle Run at Quiverheart Gorge Preserve. Photo by Nancy Stranahan

## A NEW SANCTUARY IN ADAMS COUNTY

out where the parking lot should go, and I have already opened up the fence along the road for its entrance.”

As astonished and intrigued as I was, “no” was still on the tip of my tongue. David must have sensed my resistance because as I took a breath to speak, he hurried on.

“I know you are worried about the invasive plants that are probably here, and yes, it is true that they are. I admit that they are dense in places, but I want to assure you that my wife, Kim, and I will continue to live on the adjacent 50 acres for the rest of our lives. I am retired and Kim is about to be. We will not only volunteer to be your free caretakers, but we will dedicate our retirement years to removing those invasive plants. You just show us how to do it, and we will prove to you that we are the hardest working people you will ever meet.

Furthermore, I imagine you are worried about the 25% cash match that you need for a Clean Ohio grant (how did he even know about that, I wondered???), but if you get Clean Ohio funding, Kim and I will give you enough of a bargain sale on the property to cover the match. I suspect that you are also worried about how you are going to fund this new preserve in the years ahead, so I want to tell

you up front that—if this all works out—Kim and I will also bequeath the remaining 50 acres to the Arc, along with our house and barns, accompanied by a sizable beginning of an endowment fund to help maintain the preserve. We are only two miles from Kamama, and also close to Chalet Nivale and Plum Run Prairie. Our dream is that our farm will one day become the main hub of your operations in Adams County. Can we set up an appointment for you to come out and see the place?”

At this point I was thoroughly astonished and uncharacteristically speechless. But I did have enough wherewithal to set up a time a few weeks hence for myself, Andrea, and Adams County naturalist, John Howard, to meet with David and Kim and take a walk.

The property was everything that David said it would be, and more, including, unfortunately, an impressive array of invasive plants. Invasive plants dependably move in after disturbances, and the site had had a BIG one—a massive iron making foundry proved to have a lasting legacy! Most of the invasive plants were in the northern half of the property where the furnace had been located and where the woodlands were still recovering from an earlier timber



*Spring ephemerals carpet the understory of Quiverheart in April - white trilliums, wake robins, snow trillium, Jack-in-the-pulpit, early meadow rue, and, as shown above, woodland phlox. Photo by Tim Pohlar.*



Photos Below: Left: David Baker below the rock cliffs rimming the upper gorge by Tim Pohlar. Right: Kim Baker takes a contemplative moment to share an old brick that she picked up in the creek and ponder the past activities at this site. Photo by Nancy Stranahan.



cut. The southern half of the property was much more pristine, with one of the valleys even boasting a mature woodlands.

But the gorge—oh, the gorge! It was indeed a smaller sister gorge to the one at our Sanctuary headquarters, boasting the same stunningly tall vertical walls and rare plant communities. Huge dolomite boulders tilted at odd angles at the floor of the narrow canyon; high above was a rim of sentinel rock walls. Covering the fallen rocks in the sheltered, humid depths of the canyon was a classic carpet of liverworts, columbine, miterwort, two kinds of trillium, abundant ferns, and thick cushions of moss. The waterfall was just as large as David had promised it would be, and it was absolutely enchanting.

But there was more yet to discover. As we descended the stream, the valley opened up into a nearly level floodplain with extensive remnants of Cedar Barrens—Adams County's signature prairie community—and one of the rarest communities in Eastern United States. I was delighted to come across colonies of shooting stars growing among prairie dock, little bluestem, pale spiked lobelia, summer bluets, whorled rosinweed, and grey-headed coneflower. The tall dense cedars were casting considerable shade which was limiting plant growth. We all agreed the prairie would respond eagerly to a little bit of management.

As we crossed the creek and began to climb the far wall of the canyon, we were rewarded by stunning panoramas of the deep forest rolling out below us and the discovery of a field of rocks that Kim dubbed, "Boulder City."

In the intimacy that often arises when people take a walk in the woods, David shared the tragic and poignant story of how it came to be that he was willing to dedicate the rest of his life to the creation of a nature preserve. He chose his words carefully, because even now, after 19 years of recovery, he couldn't tell the story without becoming choked with emotion.

David's farm was first purchased by his father back in 1965. It certainly wasn't the most productive farm that his Dad looked at, but it reminded him of his home in the hills of eastern Kentucky. As David's father aged, David slowly bought the farm from him, parcel by parcel, until David owned it in its entirety. His original intention was to let the farm revert back to nature, but his plans took a detour.

David and his former wife, Sarah, bore a child, Matthew, who was the light of their lives. As Matthew grew older, he loved being on the farm, playing in the woods and exploring the cliffs and overhangs. He also loved horses, and because of his passion, the farm was slowly developed with fenced pastures, stables, and even a large indoor riding arena. When deciding on a name for the farm, Matthew said that riding horses made his heart quiver, and thus it became known as Quiverheart Farm.

The rest of the story is in David's words:

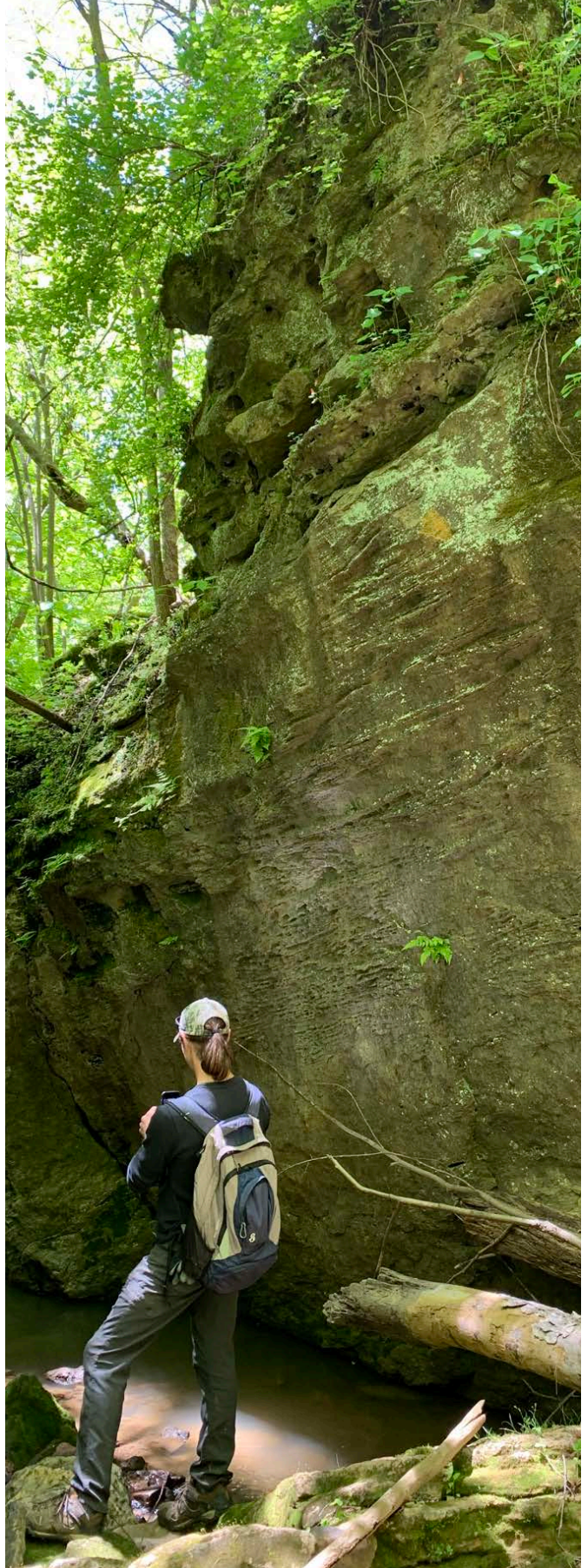
"On August 22, 2002, at the age of 16, Matthew's life was lost to a car accident on his way to Peebles High School on the second day of his junior year. It happened just one mile from the house on Steam Furnace Road. (cont.)"



*It is refreshing to see the blossoms of one of our native honeysuckle vines in bloom at Quiverheart Gorge.*



*Red Trilliums at Quiverheart Gorge, photo by Kim Baker*



*Arc Staff Member, Tim Pohlar, scouting the new trail route*



*Matthew Baker with his horse, Alen, in 2002.  
Matt, you will never be forgotten.*

Life can take a catastrophic turn in just a split second. For an awfully long time, I thought my life was over. But eventually, in the depths of my despair, my soul mate, Kim, magically came into my life. As we grew closer, we felt we were being called upon to dedicate the rest of our lives to service.

Kim and I are now actively keeping Matthew's memory alive by teaching 4-H kids—kids who love horses as much as Matthew had. This activity, however, cannot outlast our lifetimes. For years I have contemplated how to keep the memory of my son and my parents alive. I believe the answer lies in the creation of Quiverheart Preserve."

By the time we exited the gorge and headed back to the car, Andrea and I were both solidly won over by the beauty of the land, its diversity of plant communities, and David and Kim's integrity, commitment, and philanthropy. I looked askance at John Howard's face, by far the best naturalist in the group to assess the quality of the site, and he was nodding his head in approval. The board quickly concurred.

The months that followed our agreement to take on the project were dramatic. We encountered a major problem almost immediately. To be eligible to submit a grant to Clean Ohio, endorsements are needed from both the township trustees and the county commissioners. The trustees had given their enthusiastic approval but the proposal was stalled on the desks of the commissioners. Adams County had been dealing with severe money shortages, and, since

nonprofit preserve lands are tax exempt, the commissioners couldn't justify a project that reduced county income.

When it appeared the grant application was to be permanently denied, David circumvented the problem by donating \$15,000 to the Arc of Appalachia, who in turn created an endowment fund at a local foundation that would produce sufficient annual income to replace anticipated lost taxes, and would do so in perpetuity.

Satisfied, the commissioners now chose to endorse the grant, and the application was immediately submitted to Clean Ohio. To our great joy, it was approved.

This last summer was a whirlwind of activity at Quiverheart. A beautiful parking lot was built at the entrance, and the installation of the nature trail commenced, with a completion date in either late 2023 or early 2024.

Two abandoned residences were removed from the property. When the buildings were coming down, David said he saw streams of copperheads abandoning their homes. I must have cocked an eyebrow because David suspected I didn't believe his ID. Two months later David proudly shared with me a photo of a healthy young copperhead he found while removing invasive plants. I was very impressed and David's reputation was duly redeemed!

And oh, remember those invasive plants? As I write, David and Kim have already cleared acres and acres of woodlands around the old factory site. Time has proven that David was right about everything he told me on the phone that first day we talked, including that he and Kim are two of the hardest workers on the planet.

This fall we hosted the Arc's Donor Gathering at Quiverheart. The new preserve handled the crowd of 225 people admirably. David ended the gathering's presentations by sharing these words:

"History was always my favorite subject in school. Try to imagine what the community of Steam Furnace must have looked like at this spot 200 years ago. In those days the sky was filled with smoke from making the charcoal that fueled the furnace. Not one tree was left standing, and the gorge baked in the sun. Here at this site, men took all nature had to give, and, then, just a few decades later when there was nothing left to take, they closed up shop and moved their operations to a new location to start anew. It's time to change the script on this land.

Last year, Kim and I began working with the Arc to conceive Quiverheart Preserve. We feel blessed to have been welcomed into the Arc family and we look forward to creating a beautiful nature preserve as a permanent, lasting legacy.

Nature will heal, but she can certainly use our help."





## ELF EAR BARRENS an otherworldly haven for bryophytes

By Brent Charette, Arc Director of Land Stewardship

The stories of the Arc's preserves are often blessed with turns of unexpected benevolence. A perfect example is Elf Ear Barrens, an 87-acre property in Adams county that is about to become one of the Arc's newest preserves. In late 2021, representatives from Dayton Power & Light (DP&L), contacted us because they were seeking a land trust willing to accept the donation of protected mitigation property that had frontage on Ohio Brush Creek.

Last December, I joined a number of naturalists and conservationists gathered to assess the property. The lower elevations of the property were typical of abandoned farm lands in Ohio. Bush honeysuckle and multiflora rose grew in abundance, while the open field areas had become a monoculture of non-native Chinese lespedeza. Nervously, I recognized that this landscape was not Arc of Appalachia preserve material, and I began to wrestle with how we might politely decline DP&L's incredibly generous offer.

We crossed Peterson Road and began ascending the hillside when we discovered an incongruity. The ground beneath our feet showed severe signs of what was likely

decades of overgrazing on naturally poor, thin soil - the backstory of what should have been an environmental disaster. The soil, quite literally, was just beat to death.

But, as far as my eye could see was a veritable moss and lichen garden. In typical Adams County fashion, Mother Nature had taken her licks and turned injury into something that was botanically awe inspiring. I marveled over the varieties, colors, and textures of literally carpets of lichens and mosses that covered the ground. Suddenly I realized, "Whoa. This property DOES have preserve potential after all! Knock-your-socks-off potential!"

Two of Ohio's best naturalists, John Jaeger and John Howard, were already amassing an impressive plant list. They recommended we invite Ohio's leading moss and lichen experts to break down this bryophytic jungle into its component species.

Following our footsteps in April, then, an impressive group of experts took a botanical inventory. One of those botanists was Robert Klips, professor emeritus at OSU. He is the author of the recently published book, *Common*



*Mosses, Liverworts, and Lichens of Ohio*. This extremely in-depth, colorfully illustrated book is destined to do for bryophytes what earlier field guides did for popularizing birds, wildflowers, butterflies and dragonflies. My copy was just delivered today!

*The botanists' findings were absolutely remarkable. They recorded 49 species of mosses and an astounding 118 species of lichens!!! Oh my word, what a wonder! We already had a staggering list of 361 plant species for Elf Ear Barrens and it wasn't even summer yet!!*

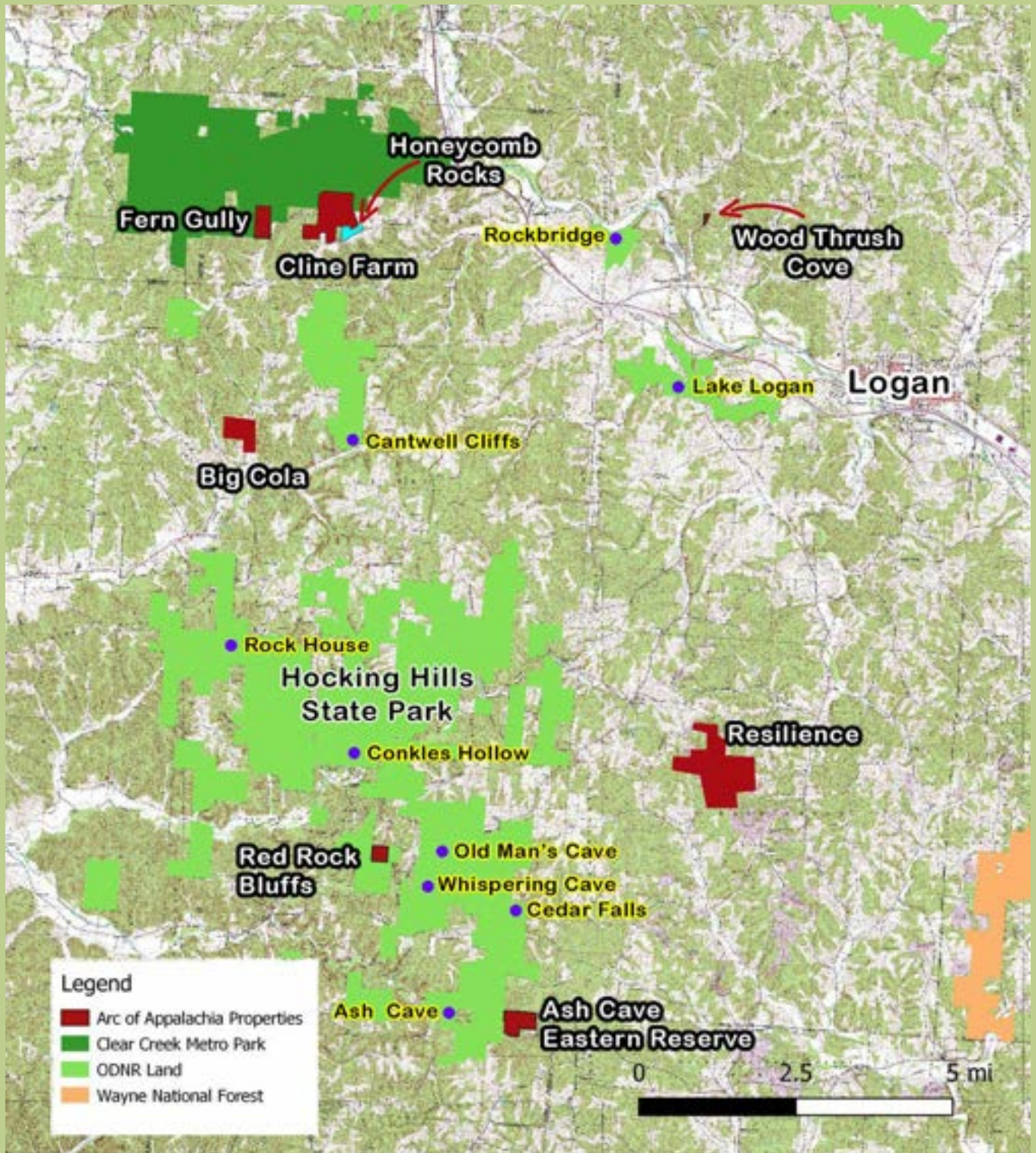
I am sure you are asking, "Why call the preserve Elf Ear Barrens?" No, I'm sorry to report there are no Tolkien-inspired Orcs or Ring Wraiths confirmed on the site. But, there IS a diminutive extremely rare lichen, *Normandina pulchella*, the Elf-Ear Lichen, that was found here that serves as this property's namesake.

The story of this land's journey from worn-out farmland to a biologically-significant nature preserve is another tale of good fortune for the wildlands preservation mission of the Arc of Appalachia - with more chapters yet to come.

*Top Left Photo: Cedar glade understory a carpet of reindeer lichen and mosses. Top Right Photo: Red Cedar Glade. Middle Right: Blue Juniper berries scattered on moss. Bottom Right: Elf-Ears Lichen, Normandina pulchella. Photo taken on site by botanist Robert Klips.*



Elf-Ears Lichen



## ARC OF APPALACHIA

Past & future wildlands protection projects in Hocking Hills

including bequests, conservation easements, unfolding acquisitions, and completed projects

Eleven projects totalling 1332 acres



Rick's daughter, Violet  
Salt Peter Cave at Honeycomb Rocks

## IN PERIL: OHIO'S HOCKING HILLS

The Arc, alongside citizen conservationists with a stake in Hocking Hills' future, are using every tool available to achieve a legacy of healing, reunification, and protection.

My first home as a young adult was a small house located near the Hocking River. My second was a cabin near Rock House State Park. I naturally fell in love with the Hocking Hills and enjoyed countless hours getting lost in the woods. The beauty of the landscape fueled my desire to live in other beautiful and wonderful places, but I ended up returning to Hocking Hills, where I have lived for the past 20 years with my wife and two daughters. As the Arc's current board president, I now find myself in the role of actively protecting the landscape that so deeply sculpted the person I am today.

The Hocking landscape from my youth is almost unrecognizable today. The state parks alone attract a conservative estimate of over five million visitors per year, and the larger region is becoming overwhelmed by day visitors, rental cabins and second homes. Tourism is not the first boom economy in Hocking Hills. A long succession of extractive enterprises include deforestation for lumber, charcoal production to fuel iron furnaces, strip mining for coal, drilling for natural gas, and thousands of oil wells.

The natural resources of Hocking Hills are again at the heart of a modern unregulated economy. Thousands of

cabins, lodges, homes, tree houses, cottages, yurts, densely-populated campgrounds and even shipping container rentals have sprouted up on the landscape—each one consuming water and producing sewage. Some lodges so large and luxurious that they house entire indoor swimming pools and theaters. Hocking Hills is now the Zip-line Canopy Tour Capital of the Midwest with over 50 courses.

With so much money to be made, the cost of land is skyrocketing to anywhere between \$5,000 and \$30,000 per acre—displacing the traditional agrarian households that once dominated the county. Without long term planning to bridle and guide such development, we worry that this is just the latest of a long history of enterprises that will drain the life and beauty out of the county.

The Arc is contributing a moderating voice into the fray by committing, to the best of our abilities, to permanently preserve the most beautiful of the Hocking Hills' landscapes that remain. In the pages that follow, you will see six stories of our wildlands preservation work in this most iconic of Ohio's landscapes.

Article by Rick Perkins, Board President



## 250-acre CLINE FARM PRESERVE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CAMP WYANDOT

By Nancy Stranahan, Director, Arc of Appalachia

As usual, the drama of successfully protecting Cline Farm began with a phone call; this time it came from Nikki Spretnak. Nikki had long been associated with the beloved children's summer camp, Camp Wyandot, roughly 100 acres of land lying in the heart of Hocking Hills directly south of Clear Creek Metro Park. Founded 94 years ago under Camp Fire Girls, Camp Wyandot eventually separated and became its own independent camp, serving both boys and girls and developing its own unique camp experience.

The curriculum of Camp Wyandot is heavily infused with nature education. In addition to boating, archery, fishing, swimming, hiking, cooking over a fire, and sleeping out in the woods, children advance through six progressive levels of nature lore. A child may experience how to identify a walnut tree by its smell, pick out the major constellations in the sky, pop open and eat the seeds of touch-me-nots, use its sap as a salve for poison ivy, recognize the spicy scent of the wild ginger, and brew sassafras tea.

But the glue that holds the camp experience together is song. Camp Wyandot has a thick book of original songs. There is a song for when you get up in the morning, a song for going to bed, and dozens to hike to. There is a good-bye song when the camp week is over, and a special song-for-life that is bestowed on every new counselor in training. There is even a spontaneous song the children sing to the cooks when they prepare a meal that is especially delicious.

On the phone, Nikki explained that the Camp had been working for months to be able to buy and protect the 250 acres of contiguous land that, for decades, the Cline family had permitted the camp to use for their nature studies. The land was now for sale, and if the Camp failed to buy it, the children's access to it would be forever lost. Fortunately, the Cline family was fond of Camp Wyandot, and were eager to see their farm preserved by them into perpetuity. They wanted the plan to succeed.

The leadership of Camp Wyandot had determined the best way to purchase the Farm was to seek Clean Ohio funding, and they worked for months to prepare for a quality submission. But then, just weeks before the Clean Ohio deadline, they received the devastating news that children's camps weren't eligible applicants. The thought of losing Cline Farm was unbearable.

Nikki hastily brought the conversation around to its central purpose, "Would the Arc be willing to: partner with Camp Wyandot, submit the application to Clean Ohio, and, if the grant was awarded, maintain educational access to Camp Wyandot's campers into perpetuity?"

The rapidly approaching deadline for such a complex grant was daunting, but after seeing the property with our own eyes, we were smitten. Almost half of the woodlands on the property were true old-growth forests with towering hemlocks and oaks of immense girth. Wildflowers included the pink lady slipper and the rare primrose-leaved violet. Scattered on the borders of the property were breathtaking rock formations including a large rock shelter known as Salt Peter Cave, and Paradise - a jumble of large boulders dwarfed by the immense boles of hemlock trees rising above them. Unquestionably Cline Farm needed to be preserved. If Camp Wyandot was unable to be the agent of its protection, then our board and staff felt certain that the Arc had a moral obligation to try.

The property was a perfect wildlands preservation project in every way but one. Although the land had sufficient road frontage, none of it afforded access. The roadsides were so steep that we couldn't even park a small passenger truck, let alone a work truck and trailer. Camp Wyandot, however, reassured us that we could use their camp for parking and make our way into Cline Farm across their land. It would be a long walk for stewardship purposes, but we welcomed the offer.

The following weeks were tense as we tried to squeeze five months of work into less than one. While Andrea and I





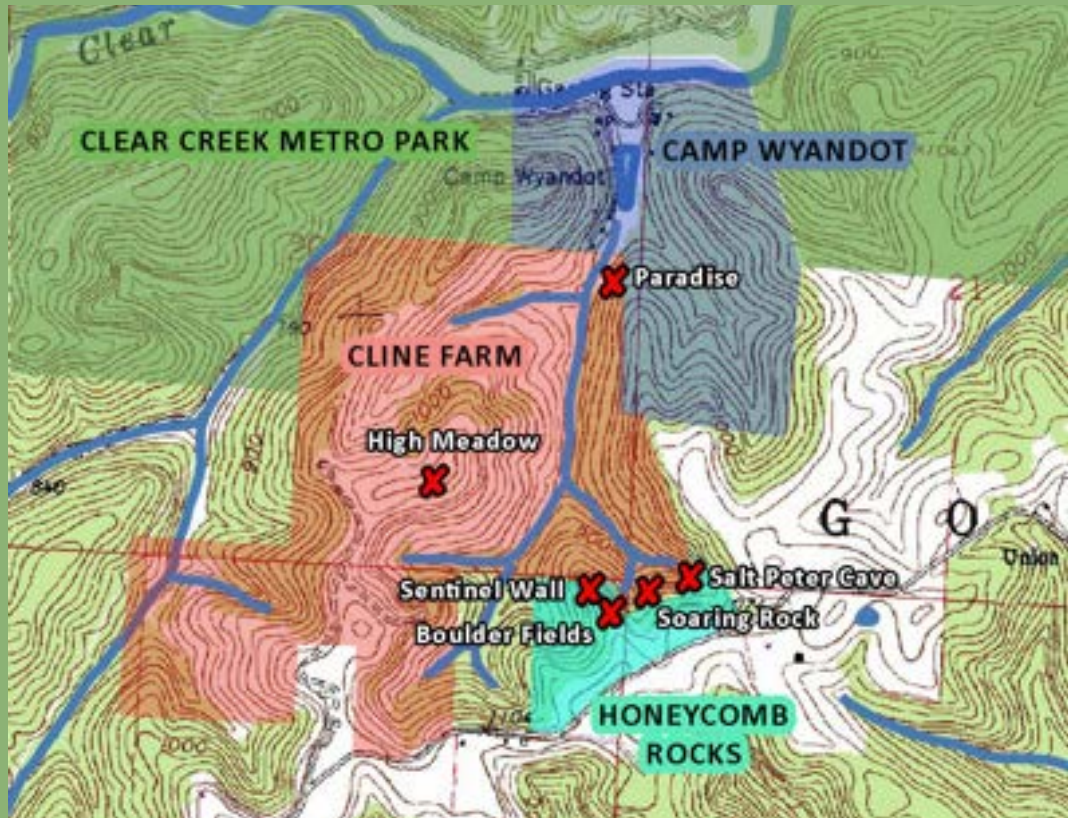
*Paradisé's hemlock grove at Cline Farm with Board President Rick Perkins and Nikki Spretnak*

were writing and researching, Board President Rick Perkins succeeded in getting resolutions of endorsement from both the township trustees and the county commissioners. The grant was duly submitted, and then, all we could do was wait. A few months later, we received the dizzying good news that the grant was awarded! Cline Farm was heading to the closing table! Today, as I write, we only have a relatively small sum of money to raise for the project because, in this rare instance, Clean Ohio was able to provide the bulk of the funding.

We plan to install a trail system at Cline Farm in 2023 with a projected finish date in 2024. The trails will be prioritized for Camp Wyandot's education during the summer camp season, and will be available to the public for

hiking by permit during the remainder of the year through Camp Wyandot.

This summer, Brent and I were invited to Beechcliff Lodge at the Sanctuary by a group of women who had rented it for the weekend. Most of them had experienced Camp Wyandot in various roles - as campers, counselors, and board members. When we walked down the entrance path to Beechcliff in the gloaming, we could dimly see the women on the front porch waiting for us. Unexpectedly, a song lifted out of the porch and beckoned to us, a camp song they had specially chosen to bid us welcome. Their sweet harmony filled the forest valley with a vibrant life force. To Brent and I, it sounded like we were coming home.



Sentinel Wall at Honeycomb Rocks  
Photo by Louis Ulman

adjacent to Cline Farm  
**HONEYCOMB ROCKS**  
boasts a rim of  
magnificent rock formations

After we closed on Cline Farm Preserve, the neighboring farm to the south of the Farm changed hands. The new owners were Hocking County natives with deep farming roots in the community. They had purchased the land as both an investment property for their retirement and as a working farm. It certainly is an ideal development property. The farm has long level road frontage in the heart of Hocking Hills that could easily be subdivided into extremely valuable house sites.

Soon after making the purchase, the new owners worked out arrangements with their good friend to conduct a timber harvest of the considerably mature woodlands that rimmed the farm's pasturelands. As the logging operation moved closer to our borders, we knew it was our responsibility to know our boundary lines better, especially considering the rock features lay so close to the line. We reached out to our new neighbor, who was very friendly and considerate, and he reassured us that he would respect our boundaries. Because there was not enough time to survey the boundaries, we asked Louie and Pat Ulman, two outstanding Arc supporters, to photograph the most outstanding rock features and record their GPS points on a copy of the county auditor's map to give us at least a rough idea of where our boundaries lay.

Louie reported back with map in hand. He had extremely disturbing news. Although everyone we talked to locally had assured us that the most beautiful of the rock formations were inside Cline Farm's boundaries, Louie's GPS points—reproduced in the map shown here—revealed a different story. If the auditor's map was correct, other than Paradise, the most impressive rock formations were all on our neighbor's side of the line.

We hurriedly reached out to the new owners and asked if they might be willing to sell off the corner of their farm so we could protect the features. They gave the idea due consideration, but they believed they could make significantly more money by following their original plan of select logging and subdivision. They threw out a sale price far beyond what we could afford, and so we regretfully had to decline, and we did our best to let this project go.

A month and a half later, I received a phone call from one of the new owners with unexpected news. He said, "Since we talked last, my wife and I took the time to walk the far western corner of the farm we just bought. We had no idea what was back there, or how beautiful it was.



**Soaring Rock at Honeycomb Rocks**  
*Photo by Louis Ulman*

## Slot Canyon at Honeycomb Rocks

Photo by Andrea Jaeger



I can certainly understand why you would want to buy and preserve it. I think your ownership might be the best outcome after all, and I am now willing to sell you that corner for a much lower price per acre."

Then came even more surprising news. "I know you won't want to buy it after it is logged, so although those trees are worth a fortune, I am willing to sell the acreage to you with the trees intact." He added, "I have one condition. I don't want to sell it this year. I want to wait until 2023 to close." Our hearts raced with joy. Now we had a chance to save the land, AND we were given the time to raise the money to do so. Plus, if we succeed in buying the property, Honeycomb Rocks would provide splendid access into Cline Farm for trail maintenance and stewardship!

Fundraising for Honeycomb Rock is now one of our prioritized land campaigns. If we succeed, it will be a particularly gratifying acquisition. Not only will it protect some of the most singular rock formations and the oldest forests in Hocking County, but the land's relative inaccessibility will allow us to manage its flow of visitors so that hikers can experience the region as it looked in its primeval past, without the land succumbing to being loved to death.

Honeycomb Rocks is full of surprises, and we are sure it's not done with us yet. Our latest was when we recently conducted a timber appraisal on the property. We knew

the trees were old, but we were flabbergasted to discover their full market value. Although the land has only 17 acres of woods, its saw logs were valued at \$135,600, just under \$8000/acre. Friends, in my 27 years as director of the Arc of Appalachia, I have never seen any wood boasting timber values more than \$3000/acre. Even considering wood prices are way up, Honeycomb Rocks boasts a premier forest that is just begging to be preserved. We are eagerly awaiting donor response to this project!



*Honeycomb Rocks is full of surprises. In the spring, a prominent hillside meadow is carpeted with a spectacular show of daffodils - a sight so pretty it is a local attraction!*  
Photo supplied by our neighbors.



Top left clockwise: buttonbush in bloom by Brian Blair; skunk cabbage in early spring; spotted salamanders by Brit Wood; belted kingfisher by John Howard.



## BIG COLA SWAMP



Between Laurelville and Rockbridge on Big Cola Road lies Big Cola Swamp, dissected by the half mile meanderings of Cola Creek

If you are a frequent visitor to the Hocking Hills, you have probably driven right by by this property. Perhaps you noticed the shining waters of its wetlands, carpets of marsh marigolds emerging out of saturated soils, and skunk cabbage popping up right next to the roadside beneath sagging barbed wire fences. Despite generations of farmers earnestly draining and ditching the land to try to coax pastures out of the swamp, this old farm so badly wants to be WET.

Today, with farming efforts largely abandoned on the site, wet-feet-loving buttonbush, alder and swamp rose are once again reclaiming the land. Herons and belted kingfishers nest among rushes and sedges, and, in the spring, the night calls of whip-poor-wills and wood frogs ring out across the fields. The property's uplands are equally compelling with their closed-canopy hardwood forests, beautiful Blackhand Sandstone outcrops, and clear headwater streams.

Brian Blair is an Arc of Appalachia board member who is recognized across southern Ohio as being one of the region's most active conservationists. After working 32 years for the Ohio EPA overseeing the cleanup of toxic waste sites, Brian can see the positive possibility in just about

anything. He would much rather fix something than throw it away, whether that something be old trucks, antique furniture, or a tired and worn out farm.

Living only a short distance away, Brian has had his eye on this property for a good long while. Although the farm was mostly covered in non-native pasture grasses and slashed with drainage lines, Brian saw a potential in it that almost everyone else had missed. After decades of quietly watching and dreaming, the magical day came when he heard a rumor that the farm might be for sale.

Brian knew that with the property's location in Hocking Hills, its long road frontage on level ground, and multiple septic systems, its future was sealed for development. Unless, of course, a conservation group hurried in to buy it before it formally went up for sale. Knowing that Arc staff already had their hands full with the demands of multiple land acquisition projects, Brian offered to take on the project nearly single-handedly on behalf of the Arc. He volunteered his time to negotiate with the sellers, wrote a successful Clean Ohio grant to help fund its purchase, and offered to serve as long term restoration caretaker.

We are delighted to share the good news that Big Cola Swamp was successfully funded as an Arc of Appalachia Preserve and we are currently raising money for its stewardship. Big Cola is lucky to have found such a committed caretaker, and southern Ohio is lucky to have such a splendid wildlands advocate!



*A deep ravine runs through the center of the protected property where the rocks are carpeted with red trillium.*



*Left to Right: Neighbors Shannon Moore, Molly & Nick Bukky, Rick McGill, and Board Member Brian Blair with his partner, Susan Spinelli*

## How a spectacular property in Hocking Hills was SAVED FROM DEVELOPMENT

By Brian Blair, Arc Board Member, & Susan Spinelli

When Judy Raabe was 10 years old she visited Hocking Hills and was spellbound by what she experienced. She put a lucky stone in her pocket as a souvenir and dreamed of one day living in that magical land. Fast forward 60 years. Judy had just lost her life partner when an opportunity came up to purchase 105 acres on Buena Vista Road from her old friend Jerry Koch, not far from Cline Farm. Jerry had always wanted to preserve the farm, but he had run out of time. For Judy, it was a dream come true.

The farm included a deep woodland gorge with towering trees, rock overhangs, old fields, a frog pond, and an 1860's-era slate-roofed farmhouse. Judy loved the property's boulders capped with trillium and ferns, its cool hemlock groves, and the sparkling stream that arose out of a large rock shelter. She often chatted with her neighbor and friend, Arc Board member Brian Blair, about her desire to protect the farm. Brian wrote up a conservation easement for her consideration but Judy was in no hurry. As a healthy 80-year old, she figured that she had plenty of time to navigate protection details.

Fate was to prove otherwise. The time between Judy's diagnosis of pancreatic cancer and her death was less than 6 weeks. By the time Judy knew she had to do something fast, she wasn't well enough to do it.

Judy's passing was a shock to her family. Feeling overwhelmed and living far away, her children placed their mother's farm for sale with a local realtor just as the COVID-effect on land prices was kicking in. As luck would have it, neighbors Nick and Molly Bukky found out about the imminent listing when the realtor inadvertently pulled in to the wrong driveway while looking for the farm lane. Word of the \$8000/acre listing made its way back to Brian and his partner Susan. Both of them knew this property would be in signed contract to logging and cabin development interests in less than 48 hours. They had to MOVE!!

Even though Brian had no idea where the money was going to come from, he had no time to inquire. He jumped into action and signed a full-price purchase offer just hours before the listing went live, with the contingency that the

Arc would be given 90 days to finance the \$800,000 contract price. Within an hour of its listing, two other offers from developers with deep pockets were received, but by then, the Arc's conservation option was already signed by the relieved conservation-minded sellers. Brian notified the Arc staff and Board and said, "Hey, guess what I just did!"

The Arc's leadership commended Brian's action, but after much soul-searching by the Arc, it was decided that an outright purchase at that scale posed too much risk for the Arc's limited resources, even if by some miracle a loan could be procured. Brian then shifted to the less-likely-to-succeed Plan B, wherein he would contact the three adjoining landowners (who didn't even know each other well), share his idea to divide the purchase of the farm among them, hope that each household had the cash to engage, and convince all parties to agree on the details of a conservation easement. All of this had to happen within 90 days.

Miraculously, the three adjoining land owners (Nick and Molly Bukky, Rick McGill and Jo Ann Damon, and Shannon Moore) all agreed that the land should be rescued from its pending fate. After several group meetings that included Brian and Arc Board President Rick Perkins, the three households gathered the wherewithal to each purchase a third of the land and permanently conserve it all.

The group barely succeeded to get a survey done in the allotted time, but, just prior to the deadline, the closing took place and the new deed and conservation easement was duly filed in the Hocking County courthouse. The developers, who frequently and aggressively inquired about the project's status, hoping the Arc would fail, were forced to set their sights elsewhere.

Tragically, one of the household buyers, Jo Ann Damon, passed away just one month following the closing. Her enthusiasm for the project will live on in this privately-owned preserve, and the endeavor's success comforted her greatly in her last days.

And so a story of how bold and risky action aligned with the stars to ignite a successful communal "save" comes to its successful conclusion, and a new chapter begins.





# WILDWOOD & BUTTERFLY REPAIR

Two Hocking County woodlands that will be saved through planned Bequests



*Winter Cardinal by Jerry Dalrymple.*



*Pair of Pileated Woodpeckers by Mary Parker Sonis*

## Jen Heller's Wildwood

by Andrea Jaeger, Director of Land Acquisition

When Jen Heller was five years old, her dad purchased a 54-acre forest retreat for their family in Hocking County. Over the years, Wildwood, as they came to call it, became an extension of Jen's backyard, a private wonderland that she and her sisters and friends could explore all on their own. Jen fondly recalls, "I was turned loose there as a kid. Sure, I was stung by bees, and I fell out of trees, but it was the best." She added, that no matter what befell her, she "never felt scared at Wildwood."

Around the year 2000, Jen's dad was getting older and because it had become more difficult for him to care for Wildwood, he decided it was time to let it go. Jen drove to Hocking County one last time to say goodbye. But when she did, the spirit of the place grabbed her and she felt as if it was saying, "Don't let me go." She went home that night and said, "Daddy, please, you can't sell this place." Moved by Jen's love of the land, her dad smiled and said she could have Wildwood as an early inheritance under one condition: "that your sisters and your mother and I can still come out anytime." Jen replied, "I wouldn't have it any other way."

The family continued to celebrate birthdays, Father's & Mother's Day, and other important family occasions at Wildwood until her parents could no longer physically make the trip. Jen's mom and dad have since passed away, but she has taken it upon herself to care for the land.

Jen speaks of Wildwood like the dearest of friends, with a physical presence that she feels moving through the trees. She pours her nurturing spirit into removing non-native invasive species and healing the wounds caused by the last major timber harvest that took place on the property in the

1920s. Jen says, "I can tell she was badly treated in the past, and I can still see her scars from time to time."

Having spent her career as a development director for a major university, Jen recognizes the importance of planning for the future of Wildwood when she is no longer able to care for it. "A lot of people are squeamish about the topics of money and death," she says. "Fortunately, my dad was not. He taught me that since you don't know what will happen in the world to the things you love after you die, it's best to start making good decisions now—while you still have the power to do so."

Jen approached the Arc of Appalachia last year about bequeathing her beloved Wildwood to the Arc at her passing. "Wildwood will outlast me, and it's important to me to know it will be in good hands," she says. She welcomed us to tell her story because she hopes it will inspire others to do the same.

"Although I have had a lot of luck in life, I'm not a wealthy person," Jen says. "I want other people to know that they don't have to be Bill Gates to make a difference. If you can do even one small thing to make the world a better place, then you have succeeded as a human being."

"Much of what we do now for our forests is "best practice." That is, we try our best, and we may never know the answers that we're seeking. But when love and care are our guides, I think we'll bring our forests through the days and years ahead just fine." ~Jen

## BUTTERFLY REPAIR



Alan and Evie believe that people and landscapes are like torn butterflies. The couple's life purpose is to promote healing and authentic expression in both beings and places. *Photo Above: Aerial swallowtails by Jeff White.*



Alongside Jen Heller's bequest of Wildwood, Alan Cohen and Evie Adelman's bequest of the adjacent sanctuary, known as Butterfly Repair, will one day collaboratively protect a 143-acre woodlands.

Alan and Evie model to the world what life can look like when a couple is deeply committed to service, artistry and authentic self-expression. The results are magical. Their cabin is densely filled with artwork, including Evie's masterful collages. The kitchen is perfumed with the exotic herbs and spices from Alan's dizzyingly-flavorful culinary creations. Light filters into the home through stained glass windows and the foliage of scores of potted plants. Everywhere one looks are acts of intentional beauty: a hand thrown serving dish of pottery, a wooden cutting board, a ceramic effigy drawer handle.

Life wasn't always this beautiful for the couple. When Alan bought the 89-acre property prior to meeting Evie, the land was a study in abuse. The soils were exhausted, the timber was cut over, and rolls of old barbed wire were strewn across the land. Alan built the cabin residence from scratch, convinced it would save his first marriage. When the insulation plan backfired, he recalls a painful winter living in the basement and sleeping under the covers with three dogs in order to stay warm. The house survived; the marriage did not.

Alan and Evie got together in 1983. He was a 6th grade school teacher and she a music therapy professor. Alan confessed that he was underperforming - a 6th grade teacher in a flannel shirt and corduroys who was content to wander his beloved forest communing with the plants and animals he loved. Evie became his muse - giving him the gift of truly being seen. Through Alan, Evie, whose childhood had been difficult, was given sanctuary. Strengthened by their partnership, they co-created a life of healing for themselves and service to others.

Today Alan annually hosts three major art events: Power of Poetry, which brings outstanding poets to Hocking Hills; Wellspring of Imagination, an intensive writing experience for high school students; and Never Too Late, an arts retreat for senior adults (see [www.ravensunpoetry.com](http://www.ravensunpoetry.com)). Evie went back to school to become a psychologist and today she specializes in working with couples to find their unique gifts and learn how to effectively communicate. For recreation, she covers 7 to 8 thousand miles on her bicycle every year.

Alan writes, "Because we have taken the steps to protect the land that has nourished us and taught us the most important lessons of our lives, others will have the chance to stand in awe and be healed. May they walk through this mature grove of the oaks and beech feeling that same sense of connection."



*Lush beds of marsh marigolds and skunk cabbage border Pickett Run. Below, a wooded tributary of Pickett Run. Photos by Tim Pohlar.*

## PICKETT RUN WETLANDS

the Sanctuary' first engagement in protecting Pickett Run,  
a tributary of the Rocky Fork - see next page for map

The Highlands Nature Sanctuary region is known for its outstanding karst topography, with sinkholes, stone arches, and the steep-walled Rocky Fork Gorge. What we're not known for are wetlands. There are a few notable exceptions. The back forty of Ridgeview Farm is positively saturated, and the Shining Springs region on Barretts Mill Road is filled with seeps and springs. Other than that, we pretty much sit on gravel. That was why we were so surprised to discover another truly wet property just over our boundary line on Furneau Road. Pickett Run Wetlands had been entirely off our radar until it came up for sale last spring.

Pickett Run Wetlands is not a pristine property. It has been heavily impacted by human activity over the years. A house sits near the road in disrepair, and admittedly quite a bit of trash (notably, cars) has accumulated in the young woods behind the house, which is, also unfortunately, choked by non-native invasive plant species. You are probably asking about now, "And why do you want to buy this?"

Because the property also has a lot of assets! Coldwater alkaline springs feed the property's soils, which lie on limestone bedrock and create an uncommon high pH wetland known as a fen. At Pickett Run, alkaline-tolerant plants, such as skunk cabbage and marsh marigold, thrive in the cool spring soils. In fact, Pickett Run Wetlands likely boasts THE largest colony of marsh marigold in the entire Sanctuary region. In summer, water-loving plants such as giant goldenrod, turtlehead, and the rare Riddell's goldenrod proliferate.

Acquiring Pickett Run Wetlands would enable us to preserve an outstanding plant community that is certainly worthy of protection, and we are willing to put in the work



to restore it. Our Arc Stewardship Team is looking for one or more dedicated volunteers who would like to adopt this tiny treasure of a preserve and show it the love it needs to meet its full potential as a healthy wetland ecosystem. If you are interested, please contact [info@arcofappalachia.org](mailto:info@arcofappalachia.org).

# Hiking Guide to the Highlands Nature Sanctuary

Acres: 3000

Of the Arc's 24 preserves, the Sanctuary is the oldest and the largest. Its central feature is the Rocky Fork Gorge, renowned for its steep canyon walls, wildflower showcases, springs, grottos and rare botanical treasures.

**Hours:** Trails are open to the public all year round from sunrise to sunset, EXCEPT for the Appalachian Forest Museum and its three trails, which are normally open from March 15 to November 15 from 9:30 am - 4:30 pm, and closed in the winter. NOTE: Sanctuary parking lots and trails are not cleared of ice or snow in the winter.

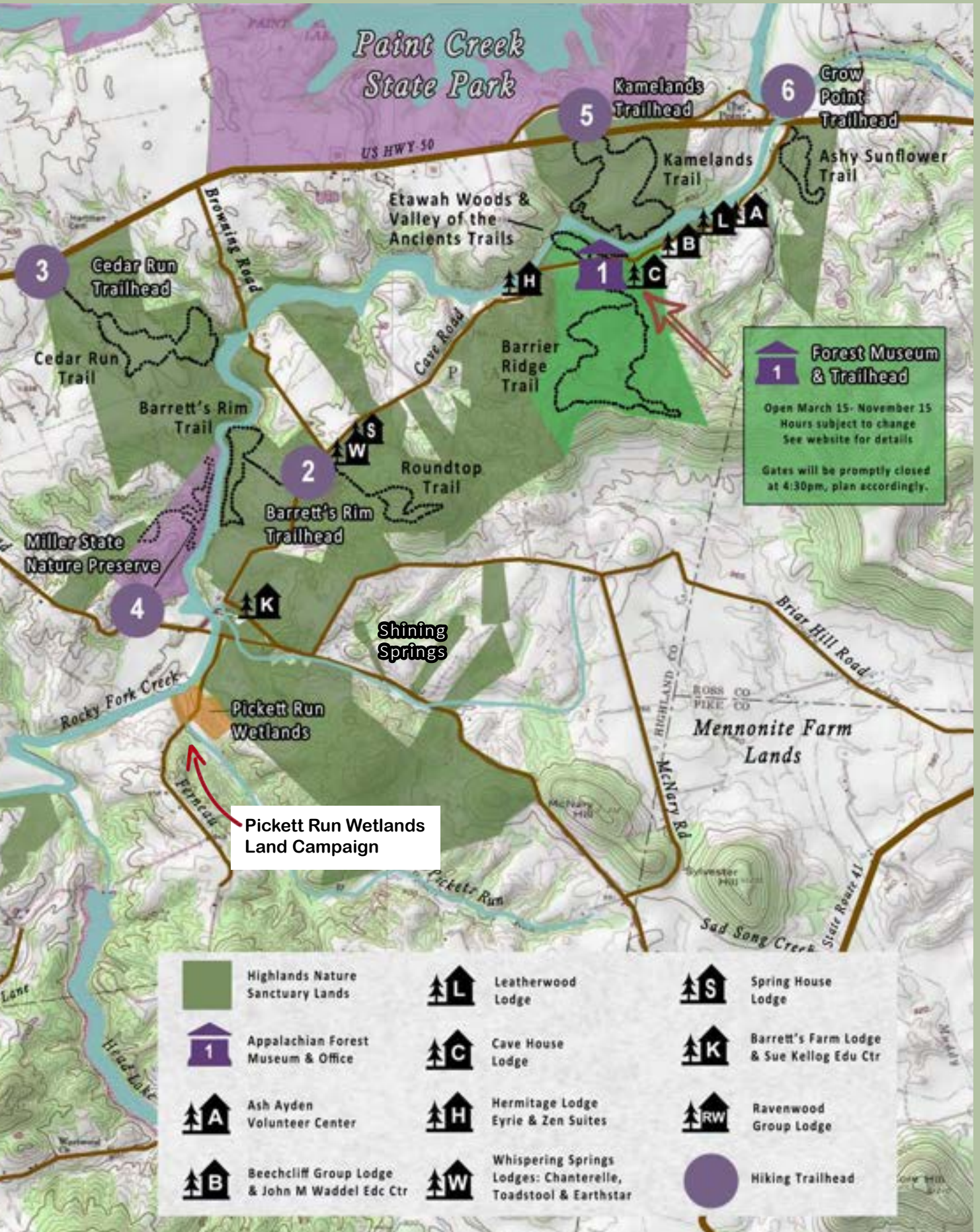
**Nature Preserve regulations apply,** including staying on-trail at all times, and not collecting or disturbing any plant, animal or minerals. Please see trail entrance signage for complete trail regulations.

**Safety Warning:** Most of the Sanctuary trails are narrow, often unlevel, and traverse potentially dangerous cliff country. Other standard outdoor perils exist, such as ticks, poison ivy and treacherous footing in the winter. Visitors hike at their own risk. Children must be kept close at hand for safety reasons. Youths 18 or younger may not hike without a guardian. The Arc website provides directions to the trailheads, and describes each trail and its level of difficulty.

**About Dog Friends:** Because the Sanctuary is a world-class destination for wildflowers that closely border our trails, dogs are not permitted on Sanctuary trails except on the Ashy Sunflower Trail and the Ridgeview Farm trails, where dogs may accompany guests when kept on a six foot leash. Another nearby dog-friendly destination is Fort Hill, also managed by the Arc.

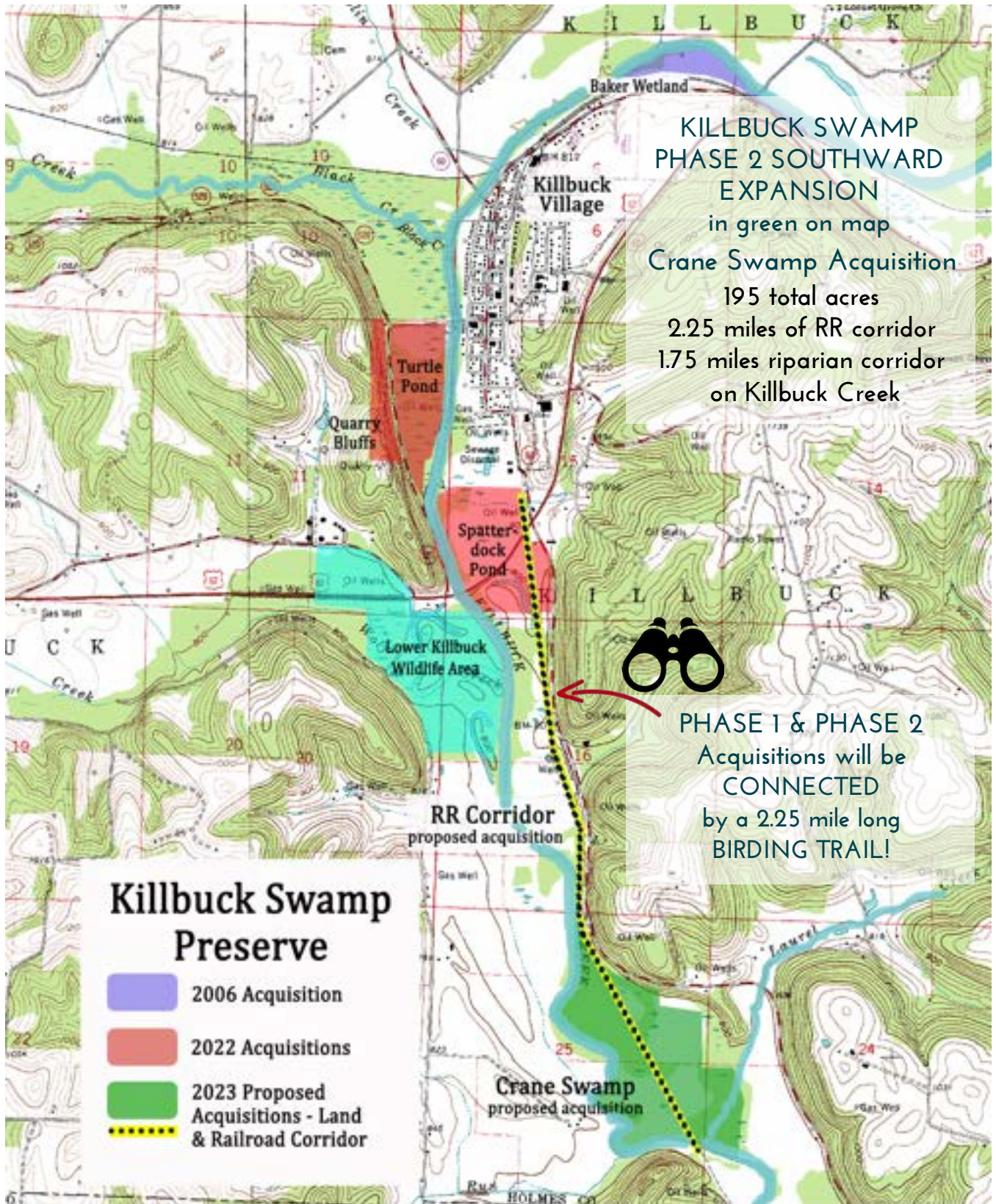


Go to [www.arcofappalachia.org](http://www.arcofappalachia.org) for trail descriptions,



trail maps & directions of the many Arc Preserves open to the public at this time.

KILLBUCK SWAMP EXPANSION - CRANE SWAMP  
 (in green on map) In partnership with  
 Killbuck Watershed Land Trust





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## Let's Save Another Swamp!

the next two articles were written by Andrea Jaeger, Director of Land Acquisition



Last year, we asked our supporters if they would help us save a swamp in Holmes County. To the Arc's staff and board, it was a very significant and meaningful endeavor. Killbuck Swamp is extremely biodiverse and worthy of protection, and we found the ideal partners in Killbuck Watershed Land Trust (KWLT), who were willing to co-own the preserve and serve as its onsite manager. If, that is, we were successful in saving it. But, we weren't entirely sure how this project would be received by our donors, considering its location is so far from our headquarters, and it lies in a county where we've not historically worked.

So, we took a leap of faith, and asked for a show of hands.

It became almost immediately clear that hands were shooting up all across the state in support of Killbuck Swamp. Donations came flooding in, and I'm pleased to announce that, just yesterday, I received the good news that fundraising for the project is now complete! Killbuck Swamp is now officially protected as a nature preserve!

And as we promised, if Killbuck Swamp received enthusiastic public approval and donor buy-in, the Arc would continue our partnership with KWLT to save additional wetlands in the region. So, folks, we would like to present to you a second remarkable acquisition opportunity.

**A new swamp for sale!** As soon as Randy Carmel, board president of KWLT, discovered that another 167 acres of prime swampland was for sale—less than one mile south of Killbuck Swamp Preserve—he called and begged



*Bucolic Killbuck Creek twists and turns through the Crane Swamp property, providing 2 1/4 miles of wildlife-rich shoreline. Photo by Janet Kohr.*

us to come and see it right away. Randy was rightly concerned that if a conservation buyer didn't step up and make an offer quickly, the future of the swamp would be uncertain at best. And so, I hopped in my car and met him at Crane Swamp.

Lying in Killbuck Creek's floodplain, the property is regularly inundated by water, creating both permanent and seasonal wetlands. Although concerted efforts have been made over the years to make Crane Swamp suitable for farming, the swamp refused to drain.

As we walked the property, Randy pointed out the swamp's various habitats and the plant and animal communities they support: wetland meadows with foraging sandhill cranes; a tributary of Killbuck Creek with a well-used river otter run; vernal pools full of salamander larvae and frog tadpoles; emergent wetlands with buttonbush, pin oak, and native grasses; areas of open water with snapping turtles and northern water snakes; and a 1.75 mile long riparian forest filled with sycamore and cottonwood trees bordering a particularly sinuous stretch of Killbuck Creek. I was sold!!!

Randy explained that because Crane Swamp provides such a wide diversity of habitats, it could one day be a birdwatcher's paradise. An avid birder himself, he has conducted breeding bird surveys in the Killbuck wetlands region for 30 years running, and he has had his eye on this property for a long time.

According to Randy, "Someone visiting here in the warmer months of the year might hear the rattling calls of the marsh wren in the cattails, willow flycatcher and swamp sparrow in the moist thickets, and white-eyed and warbling vireo, northern oriole, yellow-breasted chat, common yellow throat, blue-gray gnat-catcher and American redstart along the wetland boarders and in the riparian woods." He added, "You may even see the rare and beautiful prothonotary warbler," which he affectionately refers to as "the lantern of the swamp."

An abandoned railroad corridor runs through Crane Swamp all the way up to Spatterdock Pond, one of the four tracts that make up Killbuck Swamp Preserve. At 2.25 miles in length (and 25.44 acres in size), the railroad corridor provides an opportunity to connect Crane Swamp with the existing preserve by way of a level, dry, and easy-to-follow hiking and birding trail. And guess what? The railroad corridor is also for sale by the same property owner as Crane Swamp! Do you think we should buy them both?

We do! And we think this is the perfect opportunity for the Arc and KWLT to continue our partnership and reverse the destruction of Ohio's wetlands by expanding Killbuck Swamp Preserve. So, friends, I am going to ask you once again. Can we get another show of hands? Who wants to buy another swamp?







*Common Mergansers have made an huge comeback on the Kokosing. Turtlehead flowers by John Howard.*

## TURTLEHEAD SWAMP

the Arc's first preservation footprint in the Kokosing & in Knox Co.



The 57-mile-long Kokosing River in the Muskingum Watershed is one of Ohio's most pristine waterways. It protects over 70 species of fish and 24 species of amphibians, including the state-endangered mountain brook lamprey, spotted darter, and eastern hellbender. The Kokosing's riparian corridor and uplands are used by 72 species of birds for nesting, and by the state and federally endangered Indiana bat for roosting, feeding, and raising young. Due to its exceptional ecological value, the Kokosing is classified as an "Outstanding State Water" by the Ohio EPA.

Janet Kohr, a landowner in Knox County and longtime Arc supporter, is the person responsible for connecting the Arc with Killbuck Watershed Land Trust, and inspiring the partnership that now works together to preserve Killbuck Swamp in Holmes County. Meanwhile, in neighboring Knox County, Janet has created her own private preserve system along the Kokosing. Janet's five preserves totaling 270 acres will be donated in their entirety to the Arc at Janet's passing. She has also put into a place an endowment

fund that will help the Arc establish a staffing hub in Knox County to serve the larger Knox-Holmes County region.

One of Janet's preserves, Turtlehead Swamp, spans both sides of the Kokosing River and protects more than 2,100 feet of riparian corridor. Over the years, Janet has planted native prairie forbs in the swamp, as well as beech, swamp white oak, and Kentucky coffee trees in the river's floodplain. Both Turtlehead Swamp and a bordering 278-acre farm (owned by another private party) are already protected by conservation easements held by Owl Creek Conservancy.

Rather than give Turtlehead Swamp to the Arc at her passing, Janet chose to jump-start the Arc's entry into Knox County by donating the preserve to us this year. Knox County is heavily impacted by the expansive growth of Columbus. Farms and wetlands are being rapidly replaced by housing developments and retail stores. Turtlehead Swamp gives the Arc an important foothold in this part of Ohio and will enable us to continue working with Janet and other conservationists to further protect one of the state's most valuable natural resources—the Kokosing River.



Above: "Tremper Mound and Enclosure" (2022) artwork designed by Herb Roe for the Scioto Historical Project of the Center for Public History at Shawnee State University.



## THE REBIRTH of TREMPER MOUND

*By Elijah Crabtree, Manager of Tremper Mound Regional Stewardship Hub, Arc of Appalachia*

The redemption of Tremper Mound evokes a profound feeling, as if one is breathing in rarified air. Earthwork sites of this magnitude, like Mound City in Chillicothe and Serpent Mound in Peebles, have enjoyed a century of protection and public wonderment. Millions of people across the globe have visited just these two sites alone in that span of time, while Tremper Mound remained locked away, nearly invisible to the public eye, and faced a roulette of very real threats. For the first time in Ohio's history, Tremper Mound will be opening its doors to the public.

There is poetic irony in creating a new beginning for a 2,000-year-old Hopewell Earthwork; and in breathing new life into a space that holds the ancient ceremonial embrace of death. Few sites as historically significant as Tremper Mound have been given the opportunity to rewrite their destiny this deep into the modern era. Since I began my work at Tremper Mound, I've heard countless stories of its close encounters with destruction and dismemberment. It is only because of Tremper Mound's uncanny run of good luck, coupled recently with our relentless determination to save it, that rewriting its history is even possible.

From Tremper Mound to the north, to the far shore of the Ohio River in present day Kentucky, once stood the greatest prehistoric earthwork complex ever constructed in

the world—the Portsmouth Works. The Portsmouth complex was a vast spiritual landscape that was eight and a half miles across, occupying an incomprehensibly large area of 50 square miles.

The earthwork complex included two side-by-side horseshoe mounds, circular enclosures, solitary mounds, and complex ceremonial spaces on both sides of the Ohio River. Arising from the twin horseshoe mounds on the Ohio side were three earthen-walled walking promenades, two of which led southward. They ended on the north bank of the Ohio River, only to begin again on the far shore, leading to large ceremonial centers on the Kentucky side.

It was likely that the walls bordering these walkways were at one time so tall that a person walking down the ceremonial pathway would not have been able to see to the left or the right. Only when a person reached the river did the view open up to reveal the stunning landscape of the Ohio Valley, with its forested hills and vast floodplain. The use of such dramatic design elements on a landscape scale was a classic strategy of Hopewell engineering.

The third walled promenade originating at the Horseshoe Mounds led in a northwesterly direction. It was the only pathway that lacked a discernible destination,

*Above: a wide angle panorama aerial taken with a drone above Tremper Mound, looking southwest, taken by Brian Prose.*



## 622 acres saved & a chance for another 85

likely because so much of our Hopewell features have been lost. However, it is quite possible, even likely, that the third promenade once led to Tremper Mound.

Today, the city of Portsmouth lies on the top of Portsmouth Works' leveled ruins. With just one exception, the only earthworks to survive to modern day were one of the twin horseshoe mounds and a few other isolated fragments, in every case surrounded by dense residential development. The one exception is Tremper Mound.

Tremper Mound's inclusion in the Portsmouth Works lifts the feature into an elevation of unimaginable importance. It has several incomparable attributes. Tremper Mound held what is arguably the greatest collection of prehistoric Native American art ever to be revealed (one of only two caches of Hopewell animal effigy pipes ever to be found came from Tremper). Tremper was the only known mortuary in the entire Portsmouth Works complex. And, notably, Tremper is the only earthwork in the Portsmouth complex that is not surrounded by residential development. Tremper did survive, but not without suffering many instances of dismemberment and threats to its existence.

Originally at head height or taller, the earthen walls surrounding Tremper's central mound today stand only a few feet high. In fact, it wasn't until I mowed the meadow

that covers the earthworks last summer that the walls became visible for the first time in decades (it was an unexpected outcome and I still get chills thinking about it) One can imagine how it was easier for farmers with their horse-drawn plows and later, with their tractors, to go up and over the mound and its walled enclosure, than around them.

Tremper Mound is also missing a fifty-foot section of its northernmost wall. In the mid-1900s a survey line was thrown across the outer embankment wall in two places in order to describe a new parcel of land. A brick house was constructed on the site, and a few decades later, the wall was bulldozed into oblivion. I suspect the ancient ceremonial wall proved to be too much of a nuisance to the tending of a neatly manicured lawn.

In 1915 the largest disturbance ever inflicted on the mound came in the form of its full excavation by archaeologist, William C. Mills. A man representative of his time, he oversaw an exhumation of what was discovered to be the 2,000-year-old resting place of close to 400 cremated Native American Indians. Although Mill's excavation uncovered an immense amount of historic information and art pieces, and his records were meticulous and publicly shared, the damage done to the spiritual

integrity of the mound can never be atoned.

In recent history, a very serious threat came in the form of a proposed byway that would have created a safer intersection for OH-73 and OH-104 (the mound is located on the southwest corner). Those plans would have completely annihilated the mound, just as an earlier expansion of OH-104 destroyed Tremper's sister mound immediately to its east, a feature known as the Square Mound.

The other day, a retired contractor reminisced with me about the immense volume of mica pushed out of the way by bulldozers when the intersection was widened, and earlier yet, how similar artifacts were uncovered during the excavation of the Ohio and the Erie Canal that borders OH-104. The road and canal went right through Square Mound. The mica sheets had been arduously carried to Square Mound by the Hopewell people all the way from North Carolina. Now they lie unceremoniously buried beneath road ditches and rubble.

I also came across evidence of yet another disaster barely averted. At the time the Arc of Appalachia first determined to save Tremper Mound, the mound was divided among three owners. After nearly a decade of preparation and strategizing, the Arc successfully purchased the 618-acre farm that contained the mound proper, and over half of the wall that enclosed the mound. The remaining portion of the wall was still split between two owners, each with a two-acre lot that was developed with a house. We bought both of them. The brick house that I mentioned earlier in this article is one of those houses. It now serves as the manager's residence, and I have the honor of living in it. The second house is a grand manor house, circa late '40s, that I am helping the Arc remodel as an education center.

A few weeks ago, when I was cleaning out the closets of the manor house, I uncovered a large stack of blueprints. Most of them were design plans for the manor house, but one of them was sort of curious, so I pulled it out of the pile to study it. To my astonishment I saw that it was a blueprint for developing the entire mound and its environs into multiple house sites, complete with plotted parcels, driveways, and water lines. Had that plan materialized, Tremper Mound would have ceased to exist.

But somehow, by a series of fortunate circumstances, Tremper Mound has proven resilient. Although battered and broken by the ages, it remains standing. Today, the Arc's goal for Tremper Mound is not simply to steer it away from the fate of its sister earthworks, but to surround it with 622 acres of undeveloped ground as a whisper of the expansive sacred landscape in which Tremper Mound was once embedded. Its story of redemption unfolds.

*The sacred landscape of the Portsmouth Works covered a 50 square mile area*



## READYING TREMPER MOUND

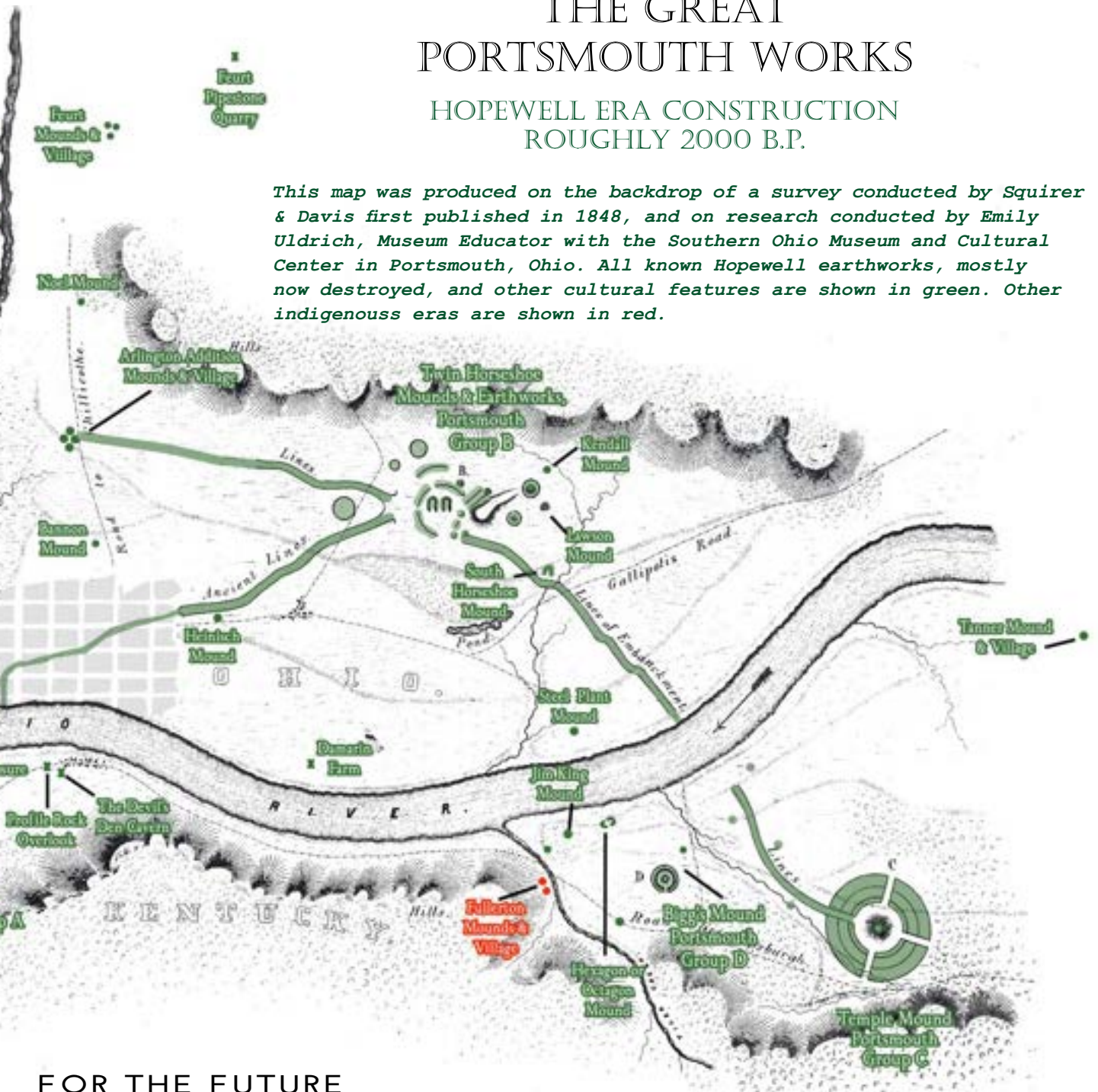
As the newly hired manager for the Tremper Mound Regional Hub, my primary responsibilities are to facilitate its expression as a nature preserve, a world-significant historic site, and a sacred landscape for indigenous people. I feel the weight of all this. How do we honorably and respectfully guide Tremper Mound into this future? We know what wrong looks like. Now it is our turn to try to do what's right.

We have had a very busy year of development

# THE GREAT PORTSMOUTH WORKS

HOPEWELL ERA CONSTRUCTION  
ROUGHLY 2000 B.P.

*This map was produced on the backdrop of a survey conducted by Squirer & Davis first published in 1848, and on research conducted by Emily Uldrich, Museum Educator with the Southern Ohio Museum and Cultural Center in Portsmouth, Ohio. All known Hopewell earthworks, mostly now destroyed, and other cultural features are shown in green. Other indigenous eras are shown in red.*



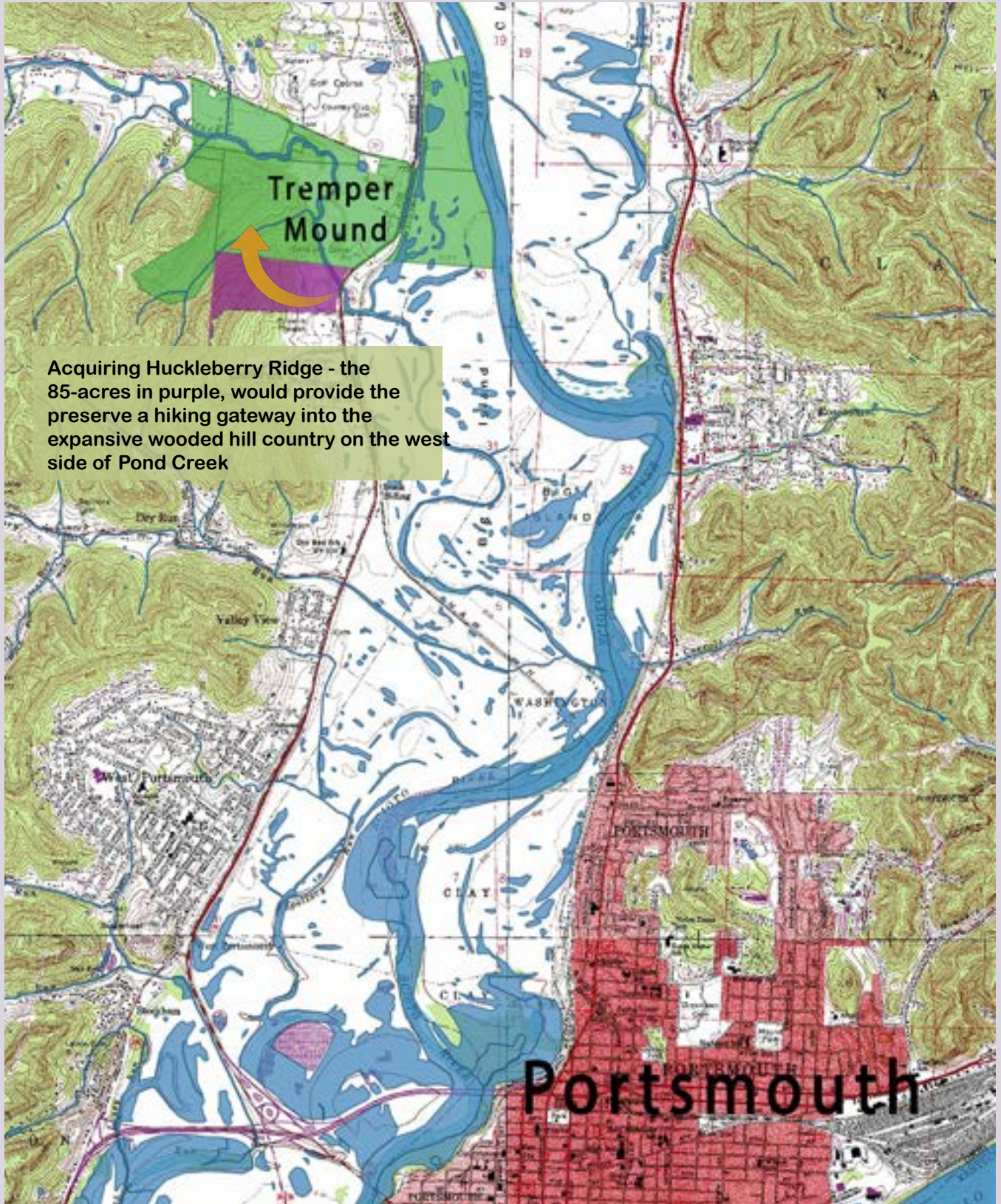
## FOR THE FUTURE

behind us. When we bought the manor house it had no entrance drive, and so this year we built a long driveway and constructed a generously sized parking lot for what will serve as the preserve's secondary entrance off OH-73. Expecting high visitation, we built our main entrance off of OH-104, along with an expansive parking lot. Deconstruction of what remains of two long-abandoned homesteads on the property is currently in progress, and we have recycled back into use the useable hardwood lumber.

We are well into our plans to remodel the manor house.

We tore out old carpet, laid wood flooring, and prudently purchased beautiful antique furniture (the value of which had conveniently plummeted in the thick of the COVID years). Volunteers Randy and Linda repainted much of the home's interior, and looking back over the year, it seemed like we spent an inordinate amount of time cleaning.

Last year we also removed over a mile of the old fencerows that lined OH-104, as well as the fencerows that bordered the boundaries of the two home sites intersecting the mound. The sagging wire fences were heavily entangled



Acquiring Huckleberry Ridge - the 85-acres in purple, would provide the preserve a hiking gateway into the expansive wooded hill country on the west side of Pond Creek

**HIKING GATEWAY.** The 85 acres that are for sale - if acquired - would allow the Arc to design a hiking trail that takes visitors into the high country west of Pond Creek. Without this new acquisition, Pond Creek cannot be forded.

with poison ivy, Callery pear, multiflora rose and bush honeysuckle. It was an invasive plant nightmare. Their disappearance removes evidence of the survey lines that once fragmented the mound into three pieces. Tremper is once again a single integrated landscape.

Just this fall, the free Scioto Historical mobile app made its debut as an on-site digital interpretation of Tremper

Mound. It provides an unprecedented look into what the earthwork and the landscape looked like 2,000 years ago. Designed by Andrew Feight, Professor of History at Shawnee State, the app is suitable for both driving and walking tours. We think this app is going to put Tremper Mound back on the map of human consciousness. For more information, visit [sciotohistorical.org](http://sciotohistorical.org).

## A CHANCE TO SAVE 85-ACRE HUCKLEBERRY RIDGE

Because Tremper is understandably viewed as a historical preserve, the masterful expressions of Hopewell artistry and mortuary ritual uncovered here will forever underscore the historical magnitude of Tremper Mound's surrounding landscape. Even beyond the intoxicating cultural history of this place, Tremper Mound's Appalachian wilderness is integral to the preserve's deepest purpose and lasting legacy.

Steep-sided 1000-foot elevation sandstone ridge-tops - covered in mixed hardwood forests - tower above both the Lower Scioto River and the sinuous turns of Pond Creek that dissect the preserve. In the spring, floral denizens of the forest understory offer lovely displays of large flowered trillium, bloodroot, black cohosh, yellow mandarin, twinleaf, wild comfrey, showy orchis, wild ginger, long-spurred violet, and more. The thin soils of the steep hillsides boast a diverse array of heaths, ferns, mosses and lichens.


And yet, all of these rich expressions of the natural beauty of Tremper Mound's hill country are inaccessible to visitors because the only way to reach them is to cross Pond Creek, a waterway too large to ford by foot, and too wide to span with a bridge. Imagine then, how thrilled I was to hear that a property was for sale that could unlock access to the isolated western reaches of Tremper Mound.

We are now in contract to purchase 85 acres of the forested woodlands known as Huckleberry Ridge. If our fund-raising drive is successful, the acquisition will provide hikers with stunning ridge-top vistas looking into the heart of Tremper's remote hill country. To get to Huckleberry Ridge from Tremper, one simply drives south on OH-104 and it is the next property on the right after crossing over

Pond Creek Bridge. This bridge handsomely solves the problem of how to transport our visitors to the other side of the creek without having to swim! Huckleberry Ridge is the perfect location for our future hiking trailhead and I have my fingers crossed that we will succeed in securing it. In the meantime, please remember that, for now, it remains private land.

When Nancy, Brent and I first prepared to walk the property, we were told by the seller that at the base of the property's hills was a wide piece of level ground that back in the '50s had been subdivided into 50 small housing lots. Those parcels are still duly recorded at the courthouse. Once on the site, we were awed to see that, in the thick stand of young cottonwood trees that had reclaimed the land, there were shiny red fire hydrants. I thought to myself, there was a ton of money invested here. How in the world did this housing development never manifest? Brent exclaimed, "Holy mackerel. Luck sticks to Tremper Mound like sorghum syrup on a Martha White biscuit." I had to agree. This just didn't make sense.

Intrigued, I went back to the manor house and dug through the pile of blueprints again. And I found it. With almost trembling hands I unrolled the scroll and saw the plans for a carefully designed housing development at the base of Huckleberry Ridge, immediately on Tremper Mounds' southern border. The housing development that never happened, at least not yet. I hope some of Tremper Mound's luck sticks to the Arc, and that Huckleberry Ridge can be added to the preserve, along with its wooded hills and panoramas (and yes, even its fire hydrants), and can be protected forever.



*The engineering blueprint for the development of fifty house sites on the property immediately south of Tremper Mound.*



Arc Stewardship Team: Elijah Crabtree, Ethan King, Tim Pohlar, & Brent Charette beginning a trail-cutting day at Ohio Hanging Rock.





Photo of Ovenbird by Mary Parker Sonis

# LAND STEWARDSHIP 2022 FIELD REPORT



## OHIO HANGING ROCK

from Appalachian industrial center to nature preserve

Article by Brent Charette  
Director of Land Stewardship

The Arc of Appalachia's history is a chronicle of human communities joining together to preserve natural ecosystems after a much longer history of extraction. As a member of the Land Stewardship Team I have had ample opportunity to witness how our culture, for better or worse, has left its mark on our environment. Nowhere is this drama of loss and healing better illustrated in the Arc's preserves than at Ohio Hanging Rock. The landscape's redemption is a play with many acts, a drama that began long before the Arc entered the stage. The prologue began in the early Industrial Age of America, when a wealth of natural resources were discovered in the larger Ohio Hanging Rock region.

In the late 1700's, pioneering families that ascended the rivers and streams north out of the beautiful Ohio River encountered a vast wilderness of expansive virgin forest in the Ohio Hanging Rock region. By necessity, these virgin trees were cleared to facilitate subsistence farming and the first settling households were soon joined by thousands more. Portsmouth, the county seat of Scioto County was founded in 1803.

By the mid 1800's, the growing American republic's need for iron was fed by ore extracted from the hills of southeastern Ohio. Iron furnaces were scattered over much of the larger Hanging Rock Iron region. The furnace closest to our present day preserve was Scioto Furnace, just a few miles away. Ohio Hanging Rock's forests were among many others that were clear-cut many times over to make the charcoal that fired the iron furnaces, enriching America's production of pig iron.

A short time later came the discovery and subsequent mining of clay - high quality clay that was made into industrial fire bricks. While the clay was being unearthed below the ground of Ohio Hanging Rock Preserve, the forests continued to be harvested above ground to supply fuel for the clay industry, further helping to support America's growing populations and build its industrial might. Additionally, the forests of Ohio Hanging Rock were intermittently harvested for hardwood lumber and processed at a sawmill that was located on the present-day preserve near the trailhead parking lot.

The last iron furnace cooled down in 1916; the clay mine shut its doors in 1960, and the last clear-cut of Ohio Hanging Rock's forests for lumber took place in the early to



*Spring and fall photos of Ohio Hanging Rock by Brian Prose.*

middle 1970's. By then, the site's natural communities were reeling from well over a century of heavy natural resource extraction. Somehow the hills of Ohio Hanging Rock had managed to endure the prologue and were entering into an intermission of sorts.

Like the old adage, "If life gives you lemons, well, make lemonade," the exhausted soils of the woodlands supported whatever life that they could. Although the native hardwood trees soon rebounded as saplings and stump sprouts, invasive thickets of multiflora rose rushed in to exploit the tired mineralized soils. Grape tangles, logging roads and extensive hillsides of greenbrier characterized much of the landscape. For the next half century, the property appeared to the eyes of the public as unclaimed by any particular steward. Because the land seemed to serve no tangible purpose, it became an area playground for trespassing ATV operators and other pursuers of outdoor recreation.

The Arc of Appalachia entered the story of Ohio Hanging Rock in 2016 with its first 600-acre land purchase, bringing to the site a new land use ethic. Although our staff came in with great ambitions, we would discover that traditions die hard, and changing cultural perceptions at Ohio Hanging Rock would take both time and creative problem solving. The land had been enjoyed by ATV riders for so many years that it was even a popular destination



*Roseshell Azalea, *Rhododendron prinophyllum*, is iconic to the Ohio Hanging Rock region. Photo by Elijah Crabtree*

for out of county residents. And because abandoned public township roads still dissected the preserve providing legal entry, the off-road vehicle traffic seemed unstoppable.

On my first visit to Ohio Hanging Rock, after walking many of the logging roads that crisscrossed the property, I was hiking out of the preserve on one of the abandoned township roads. As I rounded a corner in the road, a Jeep

outfitted for off-road use appeared in front of me. Not on the road. No. Why use the road when you've got this beast of an off-road vehicle? You drive right down the middle of the stream bed - right through salamanders, crayfish, minnows, and all - just five feet off the road - until you get yourself stuck up to your eyeballs in sand and mud. This was certainly a rocky beginning for a nature preserve, and we knew we would have to start thinking outside the box.

Eventually, several things happened that helped anchor the site's preservation. One, we purchased a 2nd 150-acre tract. Two, we worked with the trustees and commissioners to officially vacate and close the roads. Third, we installed a half mile of guard rail along the road and erected gates across all the access points. This helped slow the trespassing vehicles down, even though we lost a few gates and signs in the process. But, we were finally successful in communicating that this property has new owners, and these owners care deeply about what happens to the land.

The most positive of the Arc's contributions began last November with the painstaking creation of a 4.6-mile hiking trail winding around the preserve's beautiful waterways and impressive rock formations. The long length of the trail and the preserve's exceptionally steep terrain presented the most challenging trail project that our staff had ever attempted. Trail construction, including design and

*Photos below, top to bottom 1) map of old railroad routes that served the region. Ohio Hanging Rock lies just north of Scioto Furnace on the B & O.S.W. line, 2) in the general region of the preserve's western trailhead (now forested) was a sawmill, railroad spur, and a baseball diamond.*



installation, required nearly 1000 hours of hard physical labor in the field. The tool of choice was the mattock, and our staff literally cut most of the trail into the hillside to minimize slope and erosion. Four men working an entire day could often only extend the trail by a couple hundred yards. The results, however, were spectacular. And, to our surprise and delight, almost as soon as this trail was in place and the land visibly displayed a purpose that made sense to the larger community, the most grievous of our trespassing problems suddenly ceased.

It is my opinion that this trail is one of the most beautiful in all of the Arc of Appalachia. Soon, nature lovers from all across the state will experience Ohio Hanging Rock's diverse and stunning splendor. I am awed by the incredible diversity of ferns. Yes, the preserve is beautiful in the summer. But the burnished orange and lemon yellow leaves during fall leave me speechless. And among the leafless trees of winter I am humbled by the landscape's grandeur, and the rugged beauty of the massive hanging rock features visible from the forested ridges and up the deep ravines. Hikers will love this destination and I look forward to the day that their enthusiastic voices will link with ours to proclaim that "Yes, this is a place well worth nurturing!"

Many groups of people and individuals came together to lend their hands to the preserve's healing. Trail building at Ohio Hanging Rock was supplemented with the help of two large volunteer groups: the "Feet on Fire" hiking club from the Columbus area, and staff from the Green Acres Foundation in Cincinnati.

In addition, a very active group of local residents who were especially delighted to have a new park in their midst, have adopted the preserve as its stewards. Many truckloads of trash and debris, including car and truck tires, have been removed from the landscape under their leadership. Ohio Hanging Rock also has local representatives in the Arc-administered deer management program, bringing balance to deer populations that were becoming too high for healthy tree regeneration. Collectively, this high degree of local voluntary investment demonstrates publicly that Ohio Hanging Rock is a precious natural community.

Today, the protected forests at Ohio Hanging Rock retain much of their original assemblages of maple, beech, hickories, and oak. Now that they have been given a chance to naturally mature, the forest communities are expanding in plant and animal species diversity with every passing year, and growing ever-larger showcases of spectacular spring wildflowers.

Witnessing the inspiring resurgence of life at Ohio Hanging Rock Preserve shows the effectiveness of weaving human communities and natural communities together in mutually supportive relationships. Ohio Hanging Rock is a shining demonstration of how respect and love for life on this planet can be a truly transformational force.

If you are interested in being a Trailblazer, email me at [ethan@arcofappalachia.org](mailto:ethan@arcofappalachia.org) or call/text 513-508-8549



## walking the path of the TRAILBLAZER

*Article by Ethan King, Arc Land Manager. Photo above of Ethan and Mischah by Tim Pohlar*

Standing back and reflecting on the development of the Trailblazer program since its inception two years ago, I can't help but feel an overwhelming sense of joy. The hopeful vision behind the program was that a communal relationship would develop between the Trailblazers and the lands they choose to steward. Although I loved the Trailblazer idea, never in my wildest dreams did I think the program would prove to be this successful. It's incredible. Today we have 25 exceptional volunteers!

The primary duty of the Trailblazers is to visit their preserve once a month to do light trail trimming and document their time in the woods. But many of our volunteers go way above and beyond these basic responsibilities. I often find them removing invasive species, cleaning up trash, and documenting significant nature discoveries. All of the Trailblazers' experiences and fieldwork are shared immediately through a Telegram app group chat on our phones. Every time the Telegram app dings, I rush to read the latest post because everything they share is just so darn cool. The love they show for natural spaces is evident in every one of their reports. While our volunteers may not own the lands that they steward in a legal sense, they humbly claim ownership on a spiritual level, which aids their overall health and wellbeing.

It is my understanding that this type of land stewardship is similar to how indigenous peoples view the commonwealth of land. They do not believe anyone owns the land. People are simply one part of a greater whole,

just as are the woodpecker, deer, vulture and chipmunk. Protecting the land and waterways for generations allows indigenous people to develop a deep connection with the land and the gifts it offers. Living today in a country that, by contrast, now has 40 million acres of lawn and four million miles of paved roads, it is essential that we create sanctuaries where people can connect to the living world in a more meaningful way.

With the Arc trails currently measuring 50 miles and counting, we are incredibly fortunate to have our Trailblazer community. Our trails are maintained at a higher standard of care than ever before, and yet, we still have room to grow. I invite you to connect with us and join the crew, because, quite honestly, we need you! As Trailblazers, we have all been touched by the morning sun, casting its golden beams through the forest canopy. The smell of the morning, the coolness of fallen dew, and the songs of birds - all these things accompany us on the trail. Whether we notice it or not, whenever we lean into the outdoors, a healing is happening at a very deep level.

We invite you to join our Trailblazer community and team up with one of our veteran volunteers. They would love to share their passion and knowledge with you. As a Trailblazer for the Arc of Appalachia, you will not be just a volunteer; you will be a curator of precious biological communities. Your time spent on the trails will be a gift to both natural ecosystems and visiting hikers—a legacy that will last for generations to come.



**Kathleen Smythe**

Ohio River Bluffs  
Cincinnati, OH

I love playing a very small part in re-wilding southern Ohio. As a Trailblazer, I get to spend time in one small part of our landscape, getting to know it across the seasons and contributing to its health and vitality. At the same time, I am aiding my own health and that of our wider region by reducing the impact of invasive species and ensuring that there are ample green spaces for people's enjoyment and restoration.



**Ian Pratt**

Fort Hill  
Peebles, OH

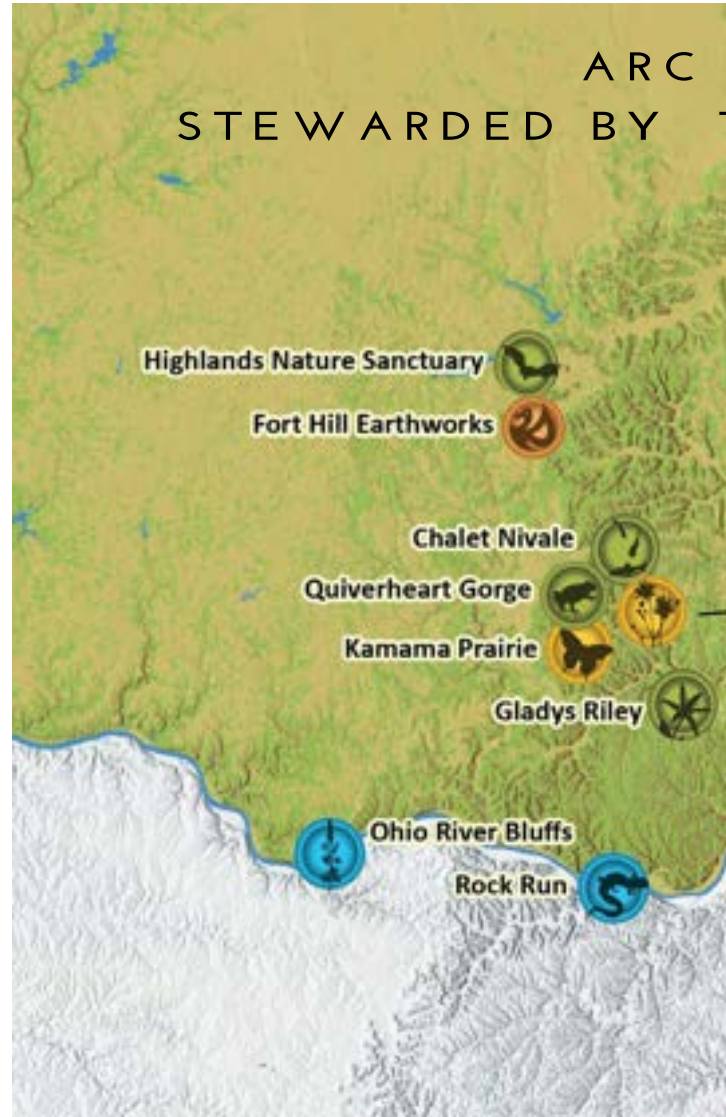
A trailblazing day at Fort Hill is typically an even mix of work and wonderment. I usually head out early in the morning, toting a pack of tools plus food and water for a good long day. On my way I'll usually see some animals - could be owls, deer, flocks of turkeys, squirrels, or ducks. Walking along in the growing season, much time is spent carefully trimming back encroaching plant material. I'm always on the alert for invasive plants. Trees of all sizes fall on the trail year round, so oftentimes I will be dragging small ones away or sectioning out bigger trees and wrestling logs and limbs off the trail to make it passable once again.



**Mike & Matt Zianni**

Gladys Riley  
Columbus, OH

Being a Trailblazer with my son is an opportunity to relax, feel the vitality of the world, and give back one day at a time. In other words, I can work hard physically and nap under the warm sun to the sound of bird songs, knowing this small part of the world is a little better off.



Ohio River Bluffs Joe Phelps



Plum Run - Kathy McDonald



Quiverheart - David & Kim Baker



Kamama Prairie - Jeff White



Chalet Nivale - Natalia Nekrasova



Barretts Rim, HNS - Glen Price  
Jim Smith

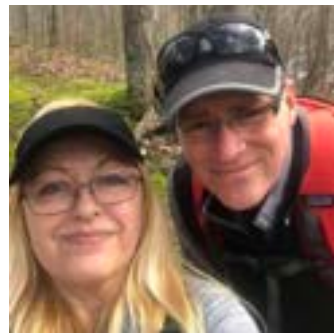


Maudes Cedar Narrows -  
Larry Bevins, Zach Sunderland



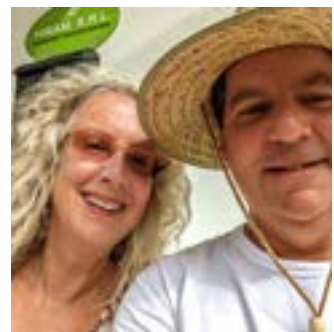
# PRESERVES TRAILBLAZERS

-  Roundtop - Roy Willman & Mary Wahrer
-  Fort Hill - Gary Ludwick, Justin Green
-  Rock Run - Brian Williams
-  Junction Earthworks - Laura Enda Susan Prall
-  Ohio Hanging Rock - Chris Rase Gary Daniels
-  Samson-Obrist Woods - Mark Hill



**Bryan & Kipra  
Kilgore**  
Barrier Ridge, HNS  
Batavia, OH

Our favorite part of being Trailblazers is witnessing the natural healing process of the forests that were logged 25 years ago, just before Barrier Ridge was purchased by the Arc. It is amazing to watch how Barrier Ridge has made a comeback with the passing of time and our loving attention! Watching the forest respond and thrive in areas we have given it special care creates a deep personal connection to the natural world. Trailblazing is "gym membership," as well as being mentally refreshing and emotionally recharging.



**Brad Ollinger  
Becky Schrand**  
Cedar Run, HNS  
Bainbridge, OH

The Cedar Run Trail has much to offer year-round from prairieland to steep cliffs overlooking the Cedar Run and Rocky Fork Creek. Our favorite time to be out on the trail is in spring when the Cedar Run hillsides are filled with large-flowered trillium. It is quite the spectacle. We also love the winter as the leafless trees make way for incredible vistas from the cliffs



**George  
Sakash**  
Forest Museum, HNS  
Hillsboro, OH

Becoming a Trailblazer allows me to be a steward of the wonderful properties that are protected by the Arc. I serve two of the most visited properties in the Arc system, The Valley of the Ancients Trail and the Etawah Woods Trail at the Appalachian Forest Museum. Because these are the first two trails that most new visitors experience, it is important to give newcomers a good first impression of who we are and what we do.

# the blooming of KAMAMA PRAIRIE

by Tim Pohlar, Arc Land Manager



Above: Pink Lady Slipper. Below: Spider Milkweed. Both photos taken at Kamama by Tim Pohlar.



Just as the inscrutably tiny seeds of the pink lady slippers growing at Kamama require mycorrhizal networks of fungi to germinate and thrive, so has Kamama depended upon networks of supporters to grow through its five phases of acquisition to become the 192-acre preserve it is today. And just as a lady slipper can take a decade or more to store enough energy to bloom, so has Kamama waited a very long time for its beauty to be noticed in the public's eye.

You see, Kamama has been landlocked since its inception in 2004. The Arc didn't even own legal road access, which kept Kamama isolated and nearly invisible for nearly two decades. Despite the fact that Kamama shelters over a quarter of the Arc's state-listed species on only 2.4% of our land base, it's been the Arc's best kept secret.

Kamama's trajectory took an abrupt turn last fall when a property came up for sale along Steam Furnace Road that would finally give Kamama substantial road frontage. With the parcel's level ground and easy access, we could finally build a parking lot and trailhead, allowing us to open Kamama's trails to the public.

But first we had to buy it. We rushed to put the parcel into contract and then held our breath. Fortuitously, Arc supporters generously supported the project with monetary gifts over the winter, AND we were successfully awarded a Clean Ohio grant last spring. With these combined funds, we were able to not only pay for the land in full, but direct additional monies into the Arc's Stewardship Forever Fund—earmarked for Kamama's enduring care.

Allow me to give you a preview of some of the wonders that await you on the trails when they are completed in 2023, a stewardship project I will be working on, alongside others.

In the spring, cobweb skippers, spring azures, and juniper hairstreak butterflies flit among the brightly colored flowers of Indian paintbrush and hoary puccoon. Wild columbines dangle from the rim of stream side rock ledges. Showy orchis dot the forest floor. In early summer, curious clusters of spider milkweed adorn the meadows, while crested coral root orchids brighten well-shaded woodlands. Edwards' hairstreak, northern metalmark, and monarch butterflies nectar on midsummer's prairie flowers. Prairie dock, whorled rosinweed, and stiff gentian contribute to the prairie's full glory in late summer and fall.

Kamama's diverse habitats—its xeric short grass prairies, recovering pastures, juniper-oak woodlands, exposed limestone boulders and cliff edges, and its seeps, springs, ponds and streams—are responsible for this grand explosion of life.

Kamama is about to finally bloom, but I see it in my mind's eye more like a mushroom than a flower. It is the long-awaited fungal "fruit" of the Arc community's generosity and labors. Once the trails are open, be sure to visit and commune. But do not come as a mere observer. Follow the way of the hyphae and let yourself merge!



ARC OF APPALACHIA  
NATURE EDUCATION



TREE PEOPLE 2022 was a grand success last August. Our goal with this event is to help Ohio become the most forest-literate state in the nation! Last summer, 30 expert teachers led 30 five-hour field trips at locations scattered across Ohio, all held at the same time to teach registrants tree identification. 300 earnest students participated! Some day we hope these hikes are enjoyed by thousands. May it grow!

"Learn your trees and pass it on."

*Photo of Jean Farkas, Board Member & Retired Board President*



## WILDFLOWER PILGRIMAGE

International Bat Conservationist, Merlin Tuttle, will be our keynote speaker in 2023!

The Wildflower Pilgrimage returns to the Highlands Nature Sanctuary in 2023 for its 16th year running! Guided by expert naturalists, participants immerse themselves in the splendor of spring by witnessing some of the most spectacular wildflower displays in the world—right here in south-central Ohio.

Each year, a few pilgrimage participants encounter eastern red bats hanging on young beech trees, discreetly blending in with last year's leaves. Those folks often claim the experience was the highlight of the entire weekend. So, we got to thinking, why not have the sub-theme for our upcoming Pilgrimage be 'bats?' That's perrfect, right? Bats and wildflowers? These remarkable mammals reemerge in spring, just like our wildflowers do, after hibernating through the winter or migrating back from warmer climes.

So boldly, we asked the planet's leading expert on bats –Merlin Tuttle– to be our next keynote speaker! Dr. Tuttle is an author and the founder of Bat Conservation International and Merlin Tuttle's Bat Conservation. He has dedicated over 60 years of his life to studying, protecting, and successfully promoting a positive image of bats all over the world through his outstanding photography and advocacy. And, drumroll please, he's willing to come all the way from Austin, Texas to Ohio to share his love and knowledge about bats with our Pilgrimage community!

Dr. Tuttle will give two presentations at the Paxton Theatre in Bainbridge, Ohio on Saturday, April 15, 2023—one in the daytime for the general public, and one in the evening for Pilgrimage guests. Seeing bats through the lens of Dr. Tuttle's camera is a transformative experience. It is guaranteed that he will make us all fall in love with bats by showing his photos of "bats as cute as any panda, bats as strange as any dinosaur, bats worth billions of dollars annually to human economies, and bats that are vital to their ecosystems."

We have also asked Erin Hazelton, cave ecologist and wind energy expert with the Ohio Division of Wildlife, to speak Friday evening about Ohio cave ecology and preservation. She'll be taking us on a virtual journey through Ohio's unique and beautiful caves and teach us about critters we will never see aboveground!

And to top it all off, Manon VanSchoyck, founder and executive director of Ohio Nature Education will present "Bats and their Predators" with the help of her live animal ambassadors. All programs will be held at the Paxton Theatre in Bainbridge.

Be sure to subscribe to our e-news on the top right hand corner of our home page, [arcofappalachia.org](http://arcofappalachia.org), to receive registration information later this year.

A pair of IO moths pose during Mothapalooza. Photo by John Howard



Top: Rosy Maple by LM Miller. Middle: White Flannel Moth by Chelsea Gottfried; Bottom: Harris' Three Spot, by Lewis Ulman.

## MOTHAPALOOZA!

Thought to be permanently retired, the Arc conspired with Jim McCormac and other past coordinators to bring back a COVID-scaled back Mothapalooza "Light" in 2021, and a full-blown event last summer attracting 150 participants.

Saturday field trips explored nearby nature preserves, while at the Forest Museum, Sam Jaffe, founder of the Caterpillar Lab displayed his extensive collection of live caterpillars. Participants had the opportunity to watch the caterpillars munch away on their specific host plants and learn about their fascinating life cycles. At night, special lighting stations were set up at the Forest Museum and at Fort Hill. A stunning diversity of moths descended upon the sheets, giving participants the opportunity to gather round to see them up-close.

Mothapalooza will be held again on July 14-16, 2023. If you are interested in attending, please be sure to subscribe to our e-news on our website, and keep an eye out for registration announcements. The event filled up in just 7 days last year!



We were deeply honored to have author Doug Tallamy as our keynote speaker!



*Pouring off the finished syrup.*



*Olivia Cole with Lola, her Dwarf Nigerian dairy goat.*



*Gary Gemmer, boiling down the sap*



*John Roger Simon's iconic 1953 Willys*



*John Roger Simon, event founder, being serenaded by Tommi Stanley and Joeann Springer*



*Elijah Crabtree, Arc's Tremper Mound Hub Manager, cutting the sorghum cane*



## JOHN ROGER SIMON SORGHUM FESTIVAL

For 27 years the Arc of Appalachia has worked to protect the natural wildlands of Appalachia. Last fall we had a chance to give back to our region's cultural heritage by adopting an event that pays tribute to sorghum making, Appalachian skills and traditional music.

John Roger Simon hosted the Sorghum Festival for 37 years straight before the event was retired back in 2018 due to the inevitability of its aging volunteer organizers. Everyone thought that this beloved event was forever gone. In the years that followed, John Simon reached out to the Arc of Appalachia through a mutual friend and shared his desire to permanently protect his 564-acre farm, along with its extraordinary mature white oak woodlands

and John's intact 1864 French ancestral homestead. As the conversations deepened (more information forthcoming on that preservation story), the two parties conspired to bring John's Sorghum Festival back to life!

On the first full weekend of October, 2022, we hosted roughly 28 musicians and two dozen crafts people on John's beautiful farm, a few miles northwest of Portsmouth on Pond Creek and just upstream from Tremper Mound. Visitors watched how sorghum is made from the cutting and pressing of the cane, to the boiling down of sorghum syrup. IT WAS SO MUCH FUN!! Stay tuned for next year's Festival. We'll be back!



Scioto County Commissioner Bryan Davis, watches his son, Blake, stir the apple butter in a copper kettle.



Connie Cole, Oivia's grandmother, shows how she makes goat milk soap the old fashioned way.

# ARC OF APPALACHIA - 2023 EVENTS

In pursuit of nature literacy, stewardship & connection



## 16th Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage - April 14-16, 2023

Spend your spring in the sublime company of southern Ohio's most beautiful wildflowers! Join us for two days of guided hikes - taking you to some of the showiest wildflower displays in all of Eastern United States. Hikes are in small groups and are led by some of Ohio's most talented botanists and interpretive naturalists. The event headquarters is at the Highlands Nature Sanctuary and includes two days of field trips, three delicious meals, and two evening presentations. Participants pack their own lunch and water. Our keynote speaker this year is the internationally famous conservationist, Merlin Tuttle, founder of *Bat Conservation International* and *Merlin Tuttle's Bat Conservation*



## Little Smokies Firefly & Biodiversity Fest - June 16-18, 2023

Spend a weekend in the heart of Shawnee State Forest and several Arc of Appalachia Preserves in Scioto County - the Little Smokies of Ohio. June combines the extravagant LIFE of mid-summer, touched with the last kiss of spring's vernal resurgence. We will catch the last flush of the early fireflies, including synchronous & Christmas Lights. And, we'll catch the beginning of the stunning displays of Chinese Lanterns and the great Photuris showcases that turn the river corridor trees into ribbons of light shows. We will also be exploring southern Ohio's grand diversity of flora and fauna by day. Lodging has been reserved for registrants in Shawnee State Park's cabins and lodge rooms for those coming out of town.



## Mothapalooza - July 14-16, 2023

For two consecutive nights, participants will stay up well into the night, witnessing well over a hundred species of moths and other nocturnal insects attracted to our light stations. The names of native moths are unusually intriguing and poetic, making them easy to remember, and expert hosts at the stations will aid in moth identification and natural history. The event hubs are the Highlands Nature Sanctuary and Fort Hill. Daytime field trips explore the rich natural history of the region, visiting other nearby Arc of Appalachia preserves. Event includes two evening presentations, afternoon field trips, and three meals.



## Tree People: Forest Literacy Field Trips - August 26, 2023

What would Ohio look like if people - LOTS of people - knew their trees? What if Ohio boasted the most forest-literate residents of any state in the nation? What would change? All things good; all things life-supporting. The Arc will be hosting over two dozen forest literacy hikes all across southern and central Ohio at the same time and on the same day. The field trips will be led in small groups by expert teachers - all of whom are passionate about sharing their craft and time to help you on your sylvan journey. Our goal is to transform your perception of nature as a "wall of green" into a community of distinct tree species that will one day become your familiar and cherished friends.



## The 39th John R. Simon Sorghum Festival - October 7&8, 2023

The Arc of Appalachia has the honor and privilege of bringing back the John Roger Simon Sorghum Festival, a beloved annual event that, until retired in 2018 due to aging organizers, had run continuously for 37 straight years. It's now it's back! The festival takes place on the 5th generation Simon Family Farm outside of Portsmouth, OH, and was founded by John R. Simon to not only demonstrate and sell delicious sorghum molasses from cane grown on-site, but to celebrate the rich heritage of Appalachia through the demonstration of time-honored rural Appalachian arts and skills, the making of sorghum syrup, and traditional Appalachian music.



*A gift to the earth does a world of good...*

Our earth has been five billion years in the making and its natural communities are quite possibly the most significant & singular creation in the entire galaxy. Thank you for protecting these tapestries of beauty, balance, and biodiversity.

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like half of your gift deposited in our Stewardship Forever Fund?

Circle One: Yes No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

You can save paper and postage by agreeing to receive your receipt of donation by email.

Please send my Gift Receipt by: (please check one)      email      standard post

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Make out your check and mail to either entity (they are one and the same):

Highlands Nature Sanctuary, (dba) Arc of Appalachia

7660 Cave Road, Bainbridge, OH 45612 info@arcofappalachia.org; 937-365-1935



*Winter ice splendor last winter at the Highlands Nature Sanctuary. Photo by Tim Pohlar*

