

RAVINIA

An Advocate for Community Resources Published by Friends of the Ravines (FOR) Spring/Summer 2015

HOW DO WE PROTECT RAVINES?

Franklin County ravines are between 14,000 and 28,000 years old and if they could talk, they could tell us a lot about the history of geology, biology, culture, and politics in central Ohio. But the silent flora and fauna in our ravines can tell us a lot: they are bellwethers that forecast the state of ravine environment and sadly the forecast doesn't look good.

If you are someone who peruses aerial views of Franklin County, over time you'll notice that the strips of trees that shelter ravines and their tributaries are shrinking. Franklin County tributaries are seriously threatened by development. Here's an account of a recent occurrence (of great concern to Clintonville area residents) that dramatically reduced the lush corridor of the Adena/Overbrook ravine.

On March 29, 2015, Nelson Yoder, from Crawford Hoying Development Partners, sent out the following notice of tree removal on March 30 at High Street and Croswell: by Martha Harter Buckalew



Notice the dime in the lower half of the tree stump illustrating the size of this approximately two-hundred-year-old sycamore tree.

Photo by Sherrill Massey

The construction project is planned to get underway next month, but as some of you may know, federal fish & wildlife guidelines require that any trees over 2" caliper be removed only between November 1 and April 1 of each year in order to protect the endangered Indiana bats, which spend their spring/summer/fall in Ohio. Trees in the proposed preserve area will not be disturbed. A surveyor will stake the preserve and the stream corridor protection zone tomorrow prior to the tree contractor working near that area in order to be sure that nothing is removed that should not be. elcome to another issue of *Ravinia*. We are very proud of this publication and the efforts of our small but mighty group of friends. You are helping us bring ravine preservation awareness to the forefront. Despite the unfortunate events of the past year, your voices have motivated many to become advocates for Franklin County's valuable natural resources —our ravines and streams.

After the destructive actions of a fast food chain, the Clintonville community rallied to promote the importance of a ravine protection ordinance. On September 4, 2014, the Clintonville Area Commission passed resolution 2014– 10. This document recommends the passage of a Ravine Protection Ordinance which would protect our precious ravines, streams, and rivers from future development. (See page 4 to read the full text of the resolution.)

More than ten years ago, the City of Columbus proposed the adoption of a Waterway Protection Ordinance, prepared by MORPC's Greenways program with the support of the City, Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks, and Franklin County agencies. That effort met with much opposition and was dropped. Hopefully this is the time for that ordinance or a similar one to become reality. All of our readers can help support this movement by contacting their community leaders and expressing the importance of protecting our natural resources. Let's continue to raise our voices in support of ravine protection. It's for the benefit of wildlife, water quality, and the future health of Central Ohio!

Thank you to all our financial supporters and volunteers; we couldn't continue our work without you. Please consider becoming a supporter or volunteer and send an e-mail to <u>friendsoftheravines@gmail.com</u>

Carrie R. Morrow, Chair, Board of Trustees

You can read more about FOR's spring and summer activities on our website: <u>www.friendsoftheravines.org</u>.

If you would prefer to read *Ravinia* on the Web instead of receiving a paper copy, please send an e-mail to <u>friendsoftheravines@gmail.com</u> and let us know.

We'll e-mail you when a new issue is ready to read.

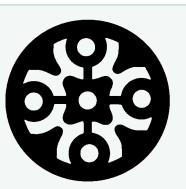
NEWS FROM THE RAVINES

CLINTONVILLE'S many ravines may make the area the most topologically diverse area in Franklin County. You can take an armchair tour of these slices of wilderness in the city and view the charming bridges that span its chasms by googling <u>http://www.roadfan.com/Clinton3.html</u>.

METRO PARKS is currently planning a new Metro Park in Grove City: Scioto Grove Metro Park is a 120-acre park containing mature floodplain forests and upland prairies along the Scioto River. There are unique ravines on the property; one of the unnamed tributaries provides an opportunity for future ravine restoration. A portion of the park will be open to the public later this year.

HIGHBANKS METRO PARK'S nature center had a facelift last year. Be sure to stop by to check out the life-sized sycamore "Giant" and an indoor reproduction depicting the shale walls of the ravines found in the park. As of this writing, we cannot confirm that the eagles have returned to their Highbanks nest this season.

NATURE CONSERVANCY magazine (February/March 2015) includes a fascinating excerpt from *Subirdia: Sharing Our Neighborhoods with Wrens, Robins, Woodpeckers, and Other Wildlife* by John Marzluff that reveals an unexpected relationship between urban development and bird diversity. It sends another compelling reason to support urban ravine preservation. Go to <u>http://magazine.nature.org</u>.



ComFest Grant Awarded

Friends of the Ravines has been awarded a \$1000 ComFest Grant which will help us defray the cost of printing and posting *Ravinia* during 2015. We understand there were a large number of worthwhile applicants, and we thank ComFest for approving our request for financial assistance.

How Do We Protect Ravines? continued from page 1



Croswell and High before March 30, 2015.

After March 30, 2015.▶

On March 30 and 31, 2015, there was a massive removal of trees within the proposed building and parking areas of the Rusty Bucket at Croswell and High Streets. For Franklin County, this tree removal deletes a portion of a series of fragmented green spaces that sustain a surprisingly large number of flora and fauna. For Clintonville, it is a shocking loss of wildlife habitat along Adena/Overbrook ravine. (After hearing about the tree massacre, I overheard a person comment "Gee, I hope they don't burn down my house to save me from a fire.")

Everyone wants to know what he or she can do. Friends of the Ravines' advice is to be in touch with your local officials and area commissioners. You spoke out in August 2014 when development replaced a swath of mature trees along Bill Moose Ravine to make way for another fast food restaurant. Your requests for a Ravine Protection Ordinance brought results. On September 4, 2014, the Clintonville Area Commission passed Resolution 2014-10 recommending the passage a Ravine Protection Ordinance. (see page 4)

Residents of Columbus should be in touch with Columbus City Council; the Mayor's 2015 Columbus Green Memo III is a promising document: it was based on a public input process that invites community-wide participation to set the city's supported goals. If we want ravine protection to be a part of our future, we must actively voice our concerns to our city officials. On page 5, you can read an article by Erin Miller, Environmental Steward to the mayor, in which she lists those parts of the Green Memo III that will affect ravine areas.

A recent tree canopy assessment conducted by the City of Columbus recognizes that trees mitigate climate health: they prevent heat island effect, and they are assets for human

> health. Isn't it ironic that trees continue to be chopped down so more fast food restaurants can be built?

The survival and the health of our ravines depend on us. We must be their voice.

We need a Ravine Protection Ordinance to preserve and protect Franklin County ravines.

Franklin County doesn't have beaches or mountains, but it has ravines.

Photos by Sherrill Massey





Resolution 2014-10

Recommending a Ravine Protection Ordinance

Recitals 8 1

 The natural world can exist without mankind but mankind cannot exist without the natural world.

2. The presence of natural landscapes enhance the property values of an area while also enhancing the quality of life of the residents in innumerable tangible and intangible ways including reducing the air temperature in the summer, cleaning rain water before it gets to the rivers, protect otherwise fragile slopes along the waterways.

3. Due to the destruction of natural habitats through development and modern agricultural practices that create continuous expanses of concrete and monoculture crops devoid of natural environmental balance, that marginal urban landscapes are becoming a last resource reservoir for many native species and ecosystems.

4. The Olentangy watershed and its tributaries and associated ravines are all irreplaceable parts of a local urban ecosystem.

5. The ravines provide an east/west conduit for wildlife and access to green spaces and existing trails.

6. Recent and historical destruction of the ravines and the ravine ecosystems have highlighted their fragile nature.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CLINTONVILLE AREA COMMISSION,

In recognition of the desire to preserve ravines and ravine ecosystems located within the City of Columbus for current and future generations, and at the same time honor the rights of private landowners, the Clintonville Area Commission recommends that the City of Columbus, through City Council, adopt a Ravine Protection Ordinance to protect these irreplaceable natural resources.

The resolution was adopted by the Clintonville Area Commission on September 4, 2014.

Daniel B. Miller, Chairperson Clintonville Area Commission

A NEW RELEASE! The Columbus Green Community Plan

by Erin Miller, City of Columbus Environmental Steward

The Columbus Green Community Plan (The Green Memo) is a document that has been released every five years since 2005 by Mayor Michael B. Coleman directing the efforts of the City of Columbus environmental initiative. The 2015 Green Memo III is now available.

Early versions of the document focused on the City making internal revisions to reduce its environmental impact. The Mayor's Green Team, an advisory body made up of business and academic professionals, nonprofit organizations, developers, public agencies, residents, and businesses was formed to advise the city on related green topics.

Following the Green Team's recommendations, the City of Columbus created a successful residential recycling program, increased bike and multi-modal transportation options, increased efficiency of city facilities through energy retrofits, and river protection and restoration efforts such as the removal of the Fifth Avenue Dam. A milestone, the City of Columbus was recognized for having the number-one-green-fleet in North America.

The Green Memo III addresses the next five years and is different from past versions. It was created using an intensive public input process, which showed a preference for adopting community-wide, city-supported goals. The City is committed to using its resources to help move these goals through to fruition, but it will take all of "us" to achieve the desired impact.

The Mayor's Green Memo III acknowledges the sensitivity of ravine areas and calls for action in a variety of ways which are enumerated as follows:

- Increase tree canopy and develop tree protection standards.
- Remove invasive species and establish native plants.
- Preserve additional greenspace including identification of high-risk sensitive ecosystems.
- Prioritize greenspace in zoning and development practices and proposals— including updating the parkland dedication ordinance to include urban neighborhoods.
- Install green infrastructure and increase infiltration.
- Increase awareness of and access to natural spaces.
- Improve habitat for aquatic life by furthering stream and wetland restorations focused on impaired waterways and create green corridors connecting parks and trails into neighborhoods through ravines.

These summarized goals are only a small selection of the efforts outlined in the plan. The full document can be reviewed online at www.Columbus.gov/GreenPlan.

An Easter Carol

Message from the poet:

I wrote the following poem on Easter morning, after recent clear-cutting in Clintonville to make room for 2 chain restaurants. Knowing what we know, it saddens me deeply that mature ecosystems by ravines were bull-dozed. The current post-recession boom is a great time to slow down, use resources wisely, and anchor the learning of the importance of working together for the greater good:

There's a pain behind my eyes for the loss

Of Cool Canopy

- My own mother is dying and I am crying for children, for all of us
- Tears, overflowing with frustrated anguish, trying to extinguish the raging fire of suffering

How many fish are left? in crowded pens

How many trees are killed? before dwindling bats can awake and return

How many people and homes destroyed by wind, flood and fire?

How much water is in the ground under California's dry skies?

How much oil and gas and antifreeze and trash run off an asphalt lot?

into a brook where children and dogs laugh and play

Together

How much extreme weather can modern technology help some of us Endure?

until everything "other" dies

- Understanding dawns with maturity of all the churning, seemingly whirling, acts that make up the NOW
- That we create joy and good health and pain and suffering

Together

Hospitals expand (we mean well)

What do the people lying in the beds think about? now that there's Time

Maybe we ask: How did this sickness happen? Maybe we try to ease the pain behind our eyes Maybe we remember with bittersweet pleasure A curtain of cool on a hot summer's day And the sounds of childrens' laughter

> J. Kronenberger Easter 2015



IV. REPTILE SPECIES OF THE RAVINES

As they are both temporally and spatially isolated, the ravines in northern Columbus are limited in the reptile richness they exhibit. The 2013 BioBlitz of Glen Echo Ravine revealed only a single reptile species: the Northern Brownsnake (Storeria dekayi) (Image 4). This is a small, inoffensive species that feeds primarily on earthworms, slugs, and snails and should be welcomed into any garden in which they are found. The Eastern Gartersnake (Thamnophis sirtalis) is also recently known from Glen Echo Ravine, although it was not detected during the BioBlitz. I have located Queen Snakes (Regina septemvittata) and Northern Watersnakes (Nerodia sipedon) along the Olentangy



Image 5: Vernal Pool. This particular pool in Randolph County, West Virginia is a breeding site for Spotted and Jefferson Salamanders, Eastern Newts, Four-toed Salamanders, Wood Frogs and Spring Peepers.

River from the Ohio State University campus through the Olentangy Research Wetlands near Dodridge Avenue. I have also located Northern Ringneck Snakes (*Diadophis punctatus*) near Tuttle Park. While it is likely that both the Eastern Gartersnake and the Northern Brownsnake can be found in most of the ravines of Columbus, aquatic species such as the Northern Watersnake and Queen Snake are likely more



Image 4: Northern Brownsnake (Storeria dekayi)

limited. Queen Snakes feed almost exclusively on crayfish, and Northern Watersnakes feed heavily on amphibians and fish—resources not common within Glen Echo Ravine or others that lack connectivity with the Olentangy River. I would expect that efforts to restore connectivity to the ravines would result in colonization of the ravines by these two snake species. Additional snake species in the area, such as Black Ratsnakes (*Pantherophis spiloides*) and Eastern Milksnakes (*Lampropeltis triangulum*) are more uncommon, although they can be found within larger tracts of forest on the outskirts of the city. The Five-lined Skink (*Plestiodon fasciatus*) is the only lizard species recorded in Columbus. This species is localized outside the Appalachian Plateau, and it is unlikely that populations of this noticeable species exist within the ravines.

V. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Because my experience with most other ravines is rather limited, I will focus primarily on Glen Echo Ravine as I am most familiar with it. Despite being relatively narrow in width and having been affected by pollution, invasive species, and land-use changes, I am optimistic about the ability of Glen Echo to harbor additional populations of amphibians and reptiles if restoration efforts continue. While Glen Echo supports an apparently healthy population of Eastern Redbacked Salamanders, continued efforts to remove and/or limit invasive plant species, coupled with planting of native species, will benefit this and many other species. Also, efforts should be made to allow logs and branches to remain scattered throughout the ravine, as they provide valuable habitat for amphibians. Second, education and outreach to homes immediately along the ravine advising against the utilization of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers will benefit amphibians and reptiles both directly and indirectly through increased water quality and increased availability of prey. Third, improving watershed management practices meant to restore a more natural hydrologic regime will benefit all aquatic organisms, including aquatic species that may still inhabit the area or may be reintroduced. Finally, establishing a direct connection with the Olentangy River to Glen Echo and other tributaries would likely prove beneficial to increasing the biodiversity within the ravines by allowing populations of species to naturally disperse upstream from the river through the ravine.

An interesting project that has been proposed and may be attempted is the creation of a vernal pool in Glen Echo Ravine (Image 5). No vernal pools exist in Glen Echo, although it is quite possible that historically they were present but have been filled in. As vernal pools have historically received no protection and their importance is only recently being appreciated, it stands to reason that their presence may not have even been noted. While currently there are no populations of vernal pool-breeding amphibians in Glen Echo, there are populations within close proximity (namely, Common Gray Treefrog (Image 6), American Toad,



Image 6: Common Gray Treefrog (Hyla versicolor)

Northern Leopard Frog). Sadly, colonization of a created pool would be unlikely, as populations of the aforementioned species are all on the west side of High Street. If amphibians were desired in a created vernal pool, it would be necessary to "seed" these pools with the eggs or larvae of vernal poolbreeding species in an attempt to repatriate them to the ravine. Depending on the hydroperiod (length and timing of inundation) of the vernal pool, additional species potentially could be introduced that historically were found within the immediate area (Jefferson Salamander (Image 7), Smallmouthed Salamander, Spring Peeper (Image 8). Obviously,



Image 7: Jefferson Salamander (Ambystoma jeffersonianum)

this aspect of the project would require appropriate permits from the Ohio Division of Natural Resources in order to relocate amphibian eggs from one site to another. While Glen Echo may still be a work in progress, I am confident that the creation of vernal pool and subsequent stocking with selected local species not only would prove successful but also valuable for the local community. Such an effort would best be accomplished with further outreach to the surrounding area, educating homeowners about the fragile nature of amphibians and their role within the ecosystem, as few projects are successful long term without the support of the community. Justification for such a project may seen scant, but with habitat loss dealing consistent blows to amphibian populations worldwide, it makes sense to utilize such green spaces as Glen Echo and other parks to their fullest extent. Ultimately, such a project will require significantly more planning than expressed within this article, although the thought of returning the chorus of Spring Peepers or Gray Treefrogs to Glen Echo provides more than sufficient inspiration.



Image 8: Spring Peeper (Pseudacris crucifer)



Article and photography by Maureen Lorenz



Site of the vernal pool

t was not very long ago that Glen Echo Park celebrated its 100th anniversary. The park was created in 1910 because of its proximity to new development and to preserve its beauty. Since that time, it has seen many changes. However, the ravine setting was a wild and natural space for a lot longer than Glen Echo has been a public park.

Unfortunately, one particular area of the park has always

drawn the attention of the park designers that shouldn't have. This area is at the base of a slope, not too far from the intersection of Parkview and Glen Echo Drive in the ravine. Records indicate in 1941 a "comfort station" (a euphemism for pit toilets) was built on this area. There is no information on when and why this structure was removed.

The next development in this area was a playground, built sometime in the 70's, but this park amenity failed because the base of the wooden playground equipment rotted. The location was not suitable for a playground—it was constantly saturated. So nothing was built there. And although the playground area has been undeveloped for years, it has, in fact been very busy recovering.

Fast forward to 2014 and enjoy the potential of this site realized. The



Marsh Marigold (Caltha palustrus)

hydrology at the base of the ravine slope, the proximity of Glen Echo Creek, and the treed canopy overhead creates the ideal site for the restoration of a vernal pool. All that was needed was someone with the expertise and know-how to realize what a benefit to wildlife and the park this area could become.

It did not take Michael Graziano long to suggest creating a vernal pool – or, more likely, restoring the vernal pool at this site. He knew the hydrologic conditions were ideal. Michael, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Environmental Natural Resources knew a thing or two

about creating vernal pools. It was the backbone of his research. Michael had helped organize a BioBlitz in Glen Echo Park in previous years, and he knew the park was reliably home to only one amphibian, the redback salamander.

With an expert 0n hand, the Friends of the Ravines applied for a grant from the Little Garden Club of Columbus for plants to support the project. The Little Garden Club had never funded

> such a project. The goal was to use native plants to support the wildlife attracted to the pool and also to introduce native plants that could be incorporated into a backyard conservation landscape design. Other funding was secured for the earth moving and construction of the vernal pool.

What exactly is a vernal pool? It's an area that retains water in the spring, is usually wooded, and is the ideal habitat for amphibians. Vernal pools are wetlands, but usually are dry by August and are often overlooked. How long the water stays in the pool can determine what sort of amphibians will breed in the pool. The water needs to be present through the end of May to permit frog, toad, and salamander species to mature so they can begin to repopulate the area. The goal of Friends of the Ravines is to increase the diversity of wildlife by creating and restoring habitat. The project began in the fall of 2014. Native plants were ordered, and locally sourced plants were particularly sought out. The contractor to do the earthwork was identified, and permits were obtained from the city to ensure no environmental rules were violated as the project was located in the floodplain.

On the morning of October 15 a Bobcat fitted with a backhoe and dozer blade set up at the location and with guidance began to sculpt the vernal pool. The dimensions for the pool were approximately 6 feet wide and 10 feet long. The surrounding contours determined its outer shape, and the bottom was graded with smooth, irregular pockets of varying depths to capture water. The excavated dirt formed the berm on the

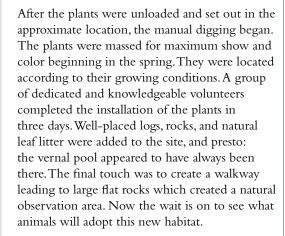


Excavation underway

downslope side to serve as containment and to create a viewing area. With the aid of the Bobcat, the entire pool was completed in two hours.

Around the time the excavation for the vernal pool was completed, almost 200 plants arrived from Scioto Gardens. The native flowering plants were selected to attract butterflies and pollinators and to be attractive to park users. Some plants, such as boneset, attract insect predators, creating a balance and plenty of food for the frogs. Selecting commercially available plants (such as *Aster* and *Monarda*, which also grow in backyards) was another consideration. Although most people know that monarch butterflies need milkweed to feed their caterpillars, many are not aware that the caterpillar of the monarch prefers swamp milkweed or common milkweed over "butterfly weed,"*Asclepius tuberosa*. (A full list of the vernal

pool plants is included in the table at the end of this article.)



The ravines in Columbus are refugia for wildlife. Because of the steep slopes associated with ravines, development has been too expensive. However, as the City focuses inward, this is changing. Natural areas need our protection. The retention of tree cover, the inclusion of streams



The plants arrive.

Spring/Summer 2015

often in ravines, and the different exposures of the slopes all contribute to the existence of a myriad of habitats and conditions that support wildlife diversity. A balance needs to be struck between development pressures and maintaining the wild places for children of all ages to explore. After all, it's not just wildlife that needs these green spaces.

The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department is supportive and encourages volunteers who want to help wildlife thrive in our city. Through volunteer efforts, several city parks now boast new vernal pools or protected natural ones. Franklin County needs these efforts (and many, many more) to keep Columbus healthy, prosperous, and *WILD*!



Location of plants.

Scientific Name

Common Name

Trees:	
Juglans nigra	Black Walnut (existing)
Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak (existing)
Quercus marcrocarpa	Burr Oak
Shrubs:	
Lindera benzoin	Spicebush
Cephalanthus occidentalis	Buttonbush
Ilex verticillata	Winterberry
Physocarpus opulifolius	Ninebark
Upland:	
Aster novae-angliae	New England Aster
Arisaema triphylllum	Jack-in-the-Pulpit
Chelone glabra	Turtlehead
Eupatorium perfoliatum	Boneset
Heliopsis helianthoides	False Sunflower
Monarda fistulosa	Wild Bergamot
Wetland:	
Asclepias incarnate	Swamp Milkweed
Caltha palustrus	Marsh marigold
Carex grayi	Burr Sedge
Iris versicolor	Blue Flag Iris
Lobelia cardinalis	Cardinal Flower
Lobelia siphilitica	Great Blue Lobelia

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Letter from a Ravine Supporter in Pebble Beach, California

I was delighted to come across the 2011 newsletter online about the Jeffers Mound and the surrounding ravines. I now live in California, but lived across from the Jeffers Mound (as did my parents) for many years. In fact, my mother, Mary Armstrong, helped found the Worthington Historical Society. The mound was always part of our landscape in many ways.

The other information I found out after checking out ravines online (was) that my first home was at the end of Orchard Drive in Worthington and the Ravine was our playground winter & summer. At the time, we never knew the creek had a name (Rush Run). It was just a place to hunt crawdads and fall through the ice in the winter.

On hikes with our father going down Grandby Street at the end of Orchard Drive going towards Colonial Hills, we would hunt for arrowheads in the newly excavated hillside. There were many in those days (late forties after WWII). Anyway, I'm sending a small contribution to the Ravinia Friends in appreciation of what your group has accomplished.

Thanks so much, Patty Armstrong Biederman Pebble Beach, California



Photograph of arrowheads accompanied above letter.

YES!

I CAN HELP FRIENDS OF THE RAVINES PROTECT FRANKLIN COUNTY RAVINES.

I want to participate by:

- _____ Helping with the annual ravine art show
- ___ Working on the *Ravinia* publication

- ___ Fundraising/Outreach
- Maintaining FOR's website

Please send us your name, address, telephone, and email in the space provided below.

Name: ______Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Telephone (____) Email _____

Mail to Friends of the Ravines, PO Box 82021, Columbus, Ohio 43202

Thank You

Supporting Members:

(Received by March 31, 2015)

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The Clintonville-Beechwold Community Resources Center (CRC) is fiscal sponsor for our organization because the relationship furthers the CRC's mission to "respond to the needs of our diverse community to foster safer, healthier, and empowered lives." For more information, please visit CRC's website at www.ClintonvilleCRC.org.

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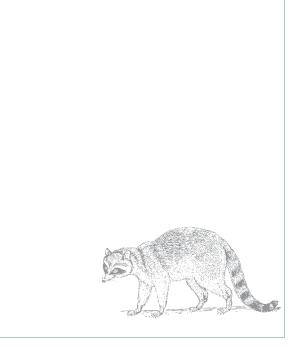
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