

# Beaver Creek Wetlands Association

# The Spotted Turtle

Volume XIX, No. 4

Fall 2006



## 2006 Calendar

October

### Combined Federal Campaign Kickoff

Wednesday, October 4  
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
WSU Nutter Center

CFC is the annual fund-raising drive held each fall by federal employees in their workplace, raising millions of dollars each year and benefiting thousands of non-profit charities. CFC donations account for a significant portion of BCWA's annual income, and we appreciate the federal employees who contribute annually to our mission.

*For our members and friends who are federal employees, please note that BCWA's CFC number is 7011.*

### Volunteer Work Day at Fairborn Marsh

Saturday, October 28  
9:00 a.m.

See article at right for complete details for this event.

*(Rain Date will be October 29th at 1:00 p.m.)*

## Volunteers Needed at Fairborn Marsh!



It is time once again to work on control of bush honeysuckle at Fairborn Marsh. We intend to start on October 28th at 9:00 AM at the north entrance to the site. If the weather is rainy, then the rain date will be Sunday the 29th at 1:00 PM (don't forget daylight savings time).

Please wear clothes that you won't mind getting muddy, and don't forget good work gloves. Also, if you have a spray tank for applying Roundup, please bring that, too. We will supply the Roundup at the critical concentration. If some of you can bring stepladders to reach some of the tall stuff, that would be great. Chain saws might come in handy for the things we can't reach with spray. What is left from previous years is hard to get! We may also be doing some transplanting and weeding around our already growing plants. We have an assortment of shovels so just bring a hand digger (trowel) to do the fine work.

The north entrance is off Trebein Road in the Fawn Ridge housing area just north of New Germany Trebein Rd. Take the entry street to the end and turn right. Then, take that to the end and turn left. At the end of the street, pull into the field and park with the other vehicles.

Your help is greatly appreciated! If you're interested in this and other volunteer activities, please sign up for our Volunteer Email List by sending a message to [admin@beavercreekwetlands.org](mailto:admin@beavercreekwetlands.org).

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## From the President... Grass Roots

Roots! What better word can express the situation of the BCWA? As I think about the past 18 plus years and the roots that have been nurtured and spread throughout the Beaver Creek watershed and the communities centered here, I am struck with the appropriate nature of the word “roots”.

### **Root (noun)**

1. the part of a plant that ...spreads underground, anchoring the plant and absorbing the water and nutrients from the soil
2. a feeling of belonging in a particular place or culture

### **Grassroots (plural noun)**

1. the ordinary people in a community or the ordinary members of an organization
2. the origin, basis, fundamental aim or basic meaning of something

Take **root**....to become established and accepted.

This association was begun as a grassroots effort among ordinary members of the community who recognized the value of the beautiful wetlands of the Beaver Creek. These concerned citizens stepped forward, organized themselves into an effective group, and literally anchored an organization that has spread roots among friends and neighbors, and absorbed nutrients of knowledge and energy from the community. We have taken root. We have become established. We have thrived.

Exciting growth is ahead as we approach the goal of a totally protected wetland corridor over twelve miles in length. We are pursuing grants that will enable the purchase of some of the critical remaining acres along the creek. We are writing more trail guides for more areas of the wetlands. Volunteers are doing the physical work of invasive plant removal, tree planting, trail building, boardwalk repair and more. Your trustees are holding meetings with our partners, including the Beaver Creek Township Trustees, the Greene County Park District, the ODNR/DoW, The Nature Conservancy, the city of Fairborn, and others in order to coordinate the work and activities in the corridor.

We are constantly addressing the need for funding to pursue this work. Soon our Annual Stewardship Campaign will begin. I appeal to you to take root...have that feeling of belonging to this particular place and support this unique grassroots effort generously when you receive the appeal in a few weeks. Do something positive for our community and our world! Thanks to all of you who root for the wetlands and help them grow!

- Susie Scott

**Spotted Turtle Name and Logo:** The logo of the BCWA is a rendering of the Spotted Turtle by wildlife artist Charlie Harper. Harper, who generously donated the drawing back in 1988, lives in Cincinnati and has produced a wonderful array of art covering innumerable aspects of nature. Some of his work has been adopted by the National Park Service and is appreciated all over the planet. Our newsletter title recognizes the Spotted Turtle as an icon for the many rare animals and plants that are protected in the Beaver Creek Wetlands.

**Submissions, Questions, or Comments:** The BCWA is a member-based organization. Just as we rely on you for annual support, we also rely on you to make this newsletter the product of several diverse voices. So, if you have an idea for an article or a picture to include, please send them to us at [admin@beavercreekwetlands.org](mailto:admin@beavercreekwetlands.org). Also, we welcome any comments or questions that you'd like to have addressed in this newsletter. For newsletter submissions, questions, or comments, please include “newsletter” in the subject line of your email. Please note that we reserve the right to edit submissions for content or clarity.

**Donations of Land/Easements:** If you are interested in donating land, placing an easement on property, or remembering the BCWA in your will, please don't hesitate to contact the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association at 937-320-9042.

**BCWA Annual Report:** Copies of the BCWA annual report are available by request. Email the office at [admin@beavercreekwetlands.org](mailto:admin@beavercreekwetlands.org) or call 937 320-9042 to request a copy.

Thanks to Sue Rytel for designing the layout of the *Spotted Turtle*.



Founded in 1988, the Mission of the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association is to protect the wetland ecosystem in the Beaver Creek watershed through partnerships, community networks, and public education.

## Science Corner

### Microtopography

Restoring wetlands is both a science and an art. Science tells us that we need to provide for three things: hydric soils (are now or once were wetland soils), enough water to keep that soil wet long enough to become free of oxygen for long periods of time, and of course at least half the plants have to be capable of growing naturally in those water saturated oxygen free soils.

That is the science and, as such, it also has become the way regulators define wetlands. Making a good wetland requires much more. It has to look and feel like a wetland. Wetlands are generally lands that are pretty flat. These nearly level lands can become wet prairies, wet meadows, woods or swamps, bogs, marshes and fens. So why is it that so many “wetlands” look like ponds? What could be so hard about making a flat spot into a wetland? The problem seems to be that the restorers can’t see the water. They want water. They know they need water so they want to see water. Now they can’t see the land because it is under water. Not just long enough to make the soil oxygen free, but all the time. Year in and year out, water is visible.

Most natural wetlands are rarely like that. They may have water in the spring but they are dry in the late summer and fall. Others have water that sometimes shrinks back from the shore then floods the land in cycles. In natural wetlands we often see pockets of water here and there or in some cases like the fens we have locally, the water stays just below the surface all year long.

One more thing, all wetlands have is

*microtopography*. Microtopography is that subtle rise and fall of land elevation. Lumps and bumps make the wetland surface wetter or drier or control how long it is under or above water. We are talking about fractions of inches in some cases. That much can control whether or not the habitat is “just right” for a particular plant or animal. Some wetland plant seeds will not germinate unless they are above the water; others need to be submerged under a thin film of water. Water too deep will block sunlight from the plants, but some plants depend on standing water to help them compete against plants that like it a little less wet. In forested wetlands fallen trees form tiny hills as logs rot and those decaying logs provide a moist but non-submerged habitat for plants or perhaps a perch of a bird, reptile or mammal. This microtopography is essential to provide the endless variety of habitats that plants and animals use for homes, food or a place to hide. The beauty we see in wetlands stems from this diversity and is there for all to see. Restoring wetlands is certainly science but the beauty as well as the function of the restored habitat requires a closer look at the art of Mother Nature.

- Jim Amon



## Law Gives New Tax Benefits for Conservation

Generous landowners who donate voluntary conservation agreements to the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association are inspired by many things: they love the plants and animals who live along the watershed, they feel connected to their land, and/or they wish to leave a legacy for future generations. For almost all of our donors, donating a conservation easement is a major financial decision, and the federal income tax deduction that comes with a donation helps make easements possible for landowners in our community.

Congress recently passed a new law that enhances the tax benefits of protecting private land for many landowners.

The legislation improves the tax incentive for conservation easements by allowing conservation easement donors to:

- Deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year (up from 30%);
- Deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income if the majority of that income came from farming, ranching or forestry; and
- Continue to take deductions for as long as 15 years (up from 5 years) after the initial deduction.

Congress also passed tighter appraisal standards for such gifts, and stronger penalties for appraisers who violate the standards. The Land Trust Alliance (LTA) led the effort to get Congress to approve this new law. LTA is a national organization that sets national standards for conservation organizations like ours, provides training and networking opportunities, and represents the land trust community.

To learn more about these new developments in Congress, visit the Land Trust Alliance’s website at [www.LTA.org](http://www.LTA.org). If you are interested in donating a conservation easement on your property, please contact us at [admin@beavercreekwetlands.org](mailto:admin@beavercreekwetlands.org) or (937) 320-9042.

### Spiders Don't Smile

Did you ever look to see if they do? Of course they don't, they don't have the parts we recognize in the smiles of humans. They are maybe just a bit scary. Can you even name those parts? Would you want to? Fall is the season for spiders. Early morning dew sparkles on them in necklaces of a thousand diamonds and we admire the delicate artwork of their webs. We see them in the garden in our yards, in the corner under the eaves and if you are an early riser you will go the boardwalk right around sunrise to marvel at the many shapes and sizes of their webs. But will you touch them? Probably not. Why not? You pet your cat, your dog, why not a spider? Well first of all it IS a wild animal and mother said not to play with wild animals because they might hurt you, and some time ago you learned about things like the Brown Recluse and the Black Widow, spiders that do hurt people. We evaluate people by their smiles, and we know enough to stay away from a growling dog or a hissing cat. Crocodiles might seem to smile but they are big enough to eat you so they require a little caution too.

Spiders just plain scare people. They shouldn't but they

do. Most are quite harmless and getting to know them is worth the effort. Many years ago I was collecting seed with students from a local high school. Most of the students though they seemed to love nature had never ventured off trails. They had always been safe (and obeyed the rules about staying on trails). Now they were wading through plants taller than them looking for dry seeds of Joe-Pye, Boneset and Bullrush. I heard the scream and knew right away they found the spiders. One student was essentially frozen in space. Everywhere she turned there was another one. The guys tried to act like it did not bother them, but as I watched, they were just a little too quiet. The spiders most were seeing were those big ones over an inch in size, the black and yellow Garden Spiders.

There were lots of other spiders, too. Wolf spiders scampered over the ground and hundreds of pinhead-sized spiders were really all around us. But these BIG ones were impressive. I showed the young woman how the web was constructed, the stickiness of just some of the threads. We tested the awesome strength of the silk. We looked at the different sizes and markings on the spiders and found a number

of species, each with its own distinctive web. We watched as the garden spider pumped her legs up and down, setting the web into motion to snare some prey. Then we saw a hapless grasshopper tangle in the web. Quick as a wink the spider pounced on it, applied a quick bite and in practically the same instant began to roll the insect into a carpet of silk she produced. After several turns the spider hung the prey in the web and went back to wait for the next meal. The drama was entrancing. The student could not take her eyes off the scene. She was captivated, enthralled and beside herself with glee. The experience had turned her from fear to understanding, from aversion to inquisitiveness.

Knowledge is power, and empowering this young student is an experience I will never forget. Nature can be intimidating but it can also be beautiful and dramatic. As I continued on collecting seed I saw this young woman showing her friends the same drama, passing the knowledge and the appreciation of nature on to others. No, spiders don't smile but they are our friends and we can enjoy their company.

- Jim Amon

### Spotted Turtle at Pearl's Fen

The rare Spotted Turtle was seen at Pearl's Fen. Pearl's Fen is a Greene County Park and forms the headwaters of Beaver Creek just north of route 235. The property is not accessible to the public and is currently being studied by students at Wright State University to determine the best management strategy for both the plants and animals there. Finding the turtle is important because we need to know it is there to avoid stressing it by the management practices we use.

### Purple Loosestrife

During a routine mission to treat a few Purple Loosestrife plants with herbicide near the Siebenthaler Fen parking lot a large population of this invasive plant was found. The plants were sprayed but not in time to prevent seed fall. So more treatment will need to follow next summer. Several agencies are working together with BCWA to fight this menace but many sources of the seeds are on private land and a new effort to contact them must be undertaken. A regional hotspot of the plant has been identified along the Mad River and we are investigating the use of Biological Controls on that. Bio-control is successful only where large dense populations of the plant exist. More on that in a future issue.

### Driving Downstream

Today I took the back roads home from my parent's house in Fairborn instead of the usual boring I-675. While going down Byron Road I slowed down to catch a glimpse of Pearl's Fen. I envisioned the cold, clear spring that gushes forth there, the beginning of the Beaver Creek Wetlands complete with rare plants and squishy peat. The fen is now protected thanks to The Nature Conservancy and Greene County Park District.

Going further on Byron took me past the former Cemex limestone quarry that is now the Oakes Quarry Park owned by Fairborn. This big 190-acre park contains abundant fossils, thousands of snow trilliums in spring, and the creek flowing from Pearl's Fen. On the other side of I-675 this same water flows through the Greene County Park District's Cemex Reserve. Here restored wetlands and prairie cover over 169 acres.

Turning onto New-Germany Trebein Rd. it was amazing to see how fast the farmland is being developed. However, it was not long until the Beaver Creek Wetlands Wildlife Area came into view on the left, purchased by the Ohio Division of Wildlife. On the right tall Indian Grass was growing on the former Gingell Property. A large sign proclaimed the land is now protected by the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association. The BCWA went into debt to save that one, but that was a very good decision. That was one of the most important and threatened wetland

parcels in the system. Going by Fairborn Marsh on the right called up memories of the long, painful process to protect and restore that area. Turning left onto Beaver Valley Rd. blooming Indian Grass and a new sign at the corner proudly proclaimed the Koogler Wetland Preserve. This extremely important parcel was purchased by Beaver Creek Township with the help of Clean Ohio Funds.

Going past the Sieenthaler Fen stirred up memories of all those that worked together to protect the heart of the wetland system nearly twenty years ago. Memories of all the volunteers working so hard to install the boardwalk are still fresh as well. Heading on south past huge new subdivisions I could see the entrance to Rotary Park and the adjacent restored wetlands on the far bank of the creek. What a great example of public and private partnership benefiting people and nature.

Crossing the Creekside Trail, the green corridor continued all the way to the Little Miami River. Huge victories by Little Miami Incorporated and many others have protected most of the Beaver Creek Corridor south of SR 35.

However, I needed to get moving so I turned west onto SR 35. On my right was the protected land of the Creekside Reserve, although I'll always think of that area as the "Banana". Young forest with a smattering of large trees covers a long stretch on the north side of the highway. On the south side a wet meadow full of beautiful

blooming Joe-Pye Weed has also been protected by the formidable combination of the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association, Greene County Park District, and the Clean Ohio Fund. Looking back to the north the car was going past an open area containing plantings of prairie and wetland plants, native trees, and a sign proudly announcing the Creekside Reserve. Right past that the forest returned. A remarkable fen has been discovered and restored to glory, much to the sorrow of about a billion bush honeysuckles.

Turning back onto I-675 gave time for reflection. What an amazing string of successes brought about by so many caring people working together. Often the environmental news in the media is not good, and good news does not seem to get the same attention.

If you are reading this you likely have been a part of this success story. There is still much to do, but one of those things is to celebrate success and feel good about what you have done. Keep it up!

- *Dave Nolin, Five Rivers Metroparks*



## Eagle Scout Project at Fairborn Marsh

Nate Spears of Troop 68 in the Tecumseh Council of the Scouts, is planning to complete his Eagle Scout project at the Fairborn Marsh. Bob Louis and Dave Scott will aid in the approval and construction process. Previous Eagle Scout projects include the bridges and trail improvements across the creeks at the Fairborn Marsh Woods Trail.

## Endowments and Management

Most land trusts find that land acquired will eventually need funds to do things like control of invasive plants, maintain trails, and develop signage. Many other things come up from time to time, and having a fund to meet those needs is essential. The Land Trust Alliance has long recommended that an endowment be set up for that kind of expense. Basically, a certain dollar amount is set aside as principle and only the interest generated on that money is spent on the management projects. Thus, it is a self-replenishing fund. BCWA is looking into the possibility of this so stay tuned.

## Be Careful During Hunting Season!

Hunting for deer and waterfowl is allowed on Division of Wildlife property. The most active time seems to be around the Thanksgiving to New Years timeframe. November is the peak month of all hunting activity in Ohio as the majority of Ohio hunters will be in the fields, woodlands, and on the water. So, hunters and hikers alike visiting the wetlands or any other public hunting area during peak times should wear bright colors.

# BULLETIN BOARD

## New BCWA Trustees

The following are biographies on new and renewing trustees. All started their terms at the Spring Membership Meeting except for Rob Evans and Marilyn Thompson. Rob joined us over the summer, and Marilyn replaced Marilyn Thompson, who retired in September.

**Chad Ferguson** received his Bachelor of Arts from Ohio University and Master of Arts from Wright State University, both degrees in Literature. He has also earned a Master of Science degree in Biology and Environmental Science from the California University of Pennsylvania and is presently working on a Ph.D. in Environmental Science at Wright State University, studying genetic diversity in freshwater mussels. He has long been interested in and worked for wetlands conservation and science.

**Rob Evans** is a Software Engineer for Computer Sciences Corporation in Fairborn. He is a 1994 graduate of Wright State University with a B.S. in Human Factors Engineering and a 1984 graduate of Beavercreek High School and Greene Vocational School. He is a lifelong resident of Beavercreek and married for 13 years to his wife, Nancy Evans, also a Beavercreek resident. Rob volunteered at the Fairborn Marsh when we put in the nursery – despite some very nasty weather! He also has volunteered at the Creekside Reserve and helped influence several friends to volunteer at Creekside.

**Kate Hagenbuch** is daughter of our first president, Bill Hagenbuch. Kate has been involved with the BCWA for some time now, and has eagerly taken on numerous BCWA responsibilities.

**Ed Phillips** is the chairman of the board of the Phillips Companies. He is very active in the Beavercreek and Greene County area serving the community in many capacities including the Beavercreek, Dayton, Fairborn, and Xenia Chambers of Commerce, the Rotary Club of Beavercreek, the Greene County Foundation, the Greene County YMCA Board, the Financial Oversight Committee for Beavercreek School District and many others. He is concerned about non renewable resources and land use planning. He is a graduate of Bowling Green State University and has completed graduate work at the University of Dayton and Miami University.

**Richard Robertson** has worked in the environmental area since 1972. He moved to the Dayton area in 1978 to work for the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission as an environmental planner for the water quality. Four years later, Richard joined the Ohio EPA to head the water quality group in Columbus, Ohio. After four years at this position, he transferred to the Dayton Southwest Office of the Ohio EPA to work in hazardous waste enforcement. During this time Richard served on the Glen Helen Board of trustees and taught Environmental Science at Antioch College for eight years.

**Susie Scott** has been a resident of Beavercreek for 38 years. She and her family have been active campers, backpackers and, more recently, kayakers and bicyclists. She has been active in Campfire Girls and 4-H, and other community activities. Currently, she is a member of the Beavercreek Women's League.

**Richard Swigart** has been a BCWA member since 1994 and has previously served as a Trustee. He has also been a key member of the team responsible for building and maintaining the boardwalk. He has been a Fairborn resident since 1974 and is an Electronics Technician with The Balancing Company. He has BA in Anthropology. His interests are photography, woodworking, lapidary & gardening. Richard is also a member of The Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society.

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# Making a Difference

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## Thank You!

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Thanks to the following people for helping out with the Summer *Spotted Turtle* mailing, the Fairborn Sweet Corn Festival, and the Beaver Creek Popcorn Festival:

**Dorothy Bordewisch; Bruce Ford; Lou Falkner; Dorothy Mulhauser; Richard Robertson; Susie & Dave Scott; Lorie Burger; Jane & Howard Klein; Mary & Dave Townsley; Mindy Bridges; Bonnie & Ed Norvaisis; Judith Streiff; Dave Duell; Carol Graff & Lee Schatzley; Rob Evans; Jim Maley & Lynn Reily; Doug Hull; Jim Amon; Sue Rytel; Robert Louis; Dane Mutter; Laura White; Ann Byrd; Fred Tokarz; Mike Ericksen; Chris Martin; Richard Swigart; Kate Hagenbuch; Chad Ferguson**

Thanks, too, to everyone who participated in this year's Birdathon, either by participating on one of the many birding teams or making a generous pledge. The Birdathon brought in \$1,003.50 in donations for the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association! **And a special thanks to the Dayton Audubon Society for organizing this great event each year!**

*If you're interested in birding in the Beaver Creek Wetlands, visit our website at <http://www.beavercreekwetlands.org/publish.php> for a listing of birds found in the wetlands in the 2004 Birdathon.*



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper. Please recycle it when you're through ... or better still, share it with a friend!

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## Join the BCWA Today!

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Membership dues go directly to fund land acquisition, our quality programming in education, habitat restoration and management of our preserve. In order to purchase future parcels of land and pay off the mortgage on our most recent purchase, we rely on your membership.

Membership categories include:

|              |                   |                 |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| \$5-Student  | \$10-Senior (60+) | \$15-Individual |
| \$25-Family  | \$35-Contributing | \$50-Supporting |
| \$100-Patron | \$1,000-Life      |                 |

To join, please send a check payable to BCWA to: **BCWA, P.O. Box 42, Alpha, OH 45301.**

Please include your name, address, phone and email. Remember, the BCWA is a 501(c)(3) land trust organization and your donation is tax deductible.



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