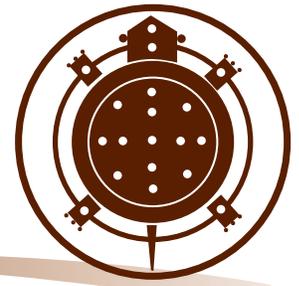


Beaver Creek Wetlands Association

The Spotted Turtle

Volume XX, No. 2

Spring 2007



2007 Calendar

April - May

Audubon Birdathon. Volunteers and pledges needed. Fri., April 27 - Sat., April 28. See page 6.

Reminder: May is National Wetlands Month!

Oakes Quarry Park Grand Opening
Friday May 4th. See page 6.

BCWA Annual Membership Meeting
Tuesday, May 15th, Bergamo Ctr.

June - August

Grand Opening & Wetland Celebration for Cemex Reserve
Sat., June 2. See page 6.

North American Butterfly Assoc. Butterfly Census - Date TBA. Assist the Ohio Division of Wildlife during its annual butterfly census in the wetlands

Greene County Fair - Sun., July 29 - Sat., Aug. 4. Visit our display!

Fairborn Sweet Corn Festival - Volunteers needed. Call 320-9042. Sat, Aug. 18 - Sun, Aug. 19

September - October

Beavercreek Popcorn Festival
Volunteers needed. Call 320-9042. Sat, Sep. 8 - Sun, Sep. 9

Combined Federal Campaign Kickoff - Date TBA

Annual Membership Meeting: A Forest Returns

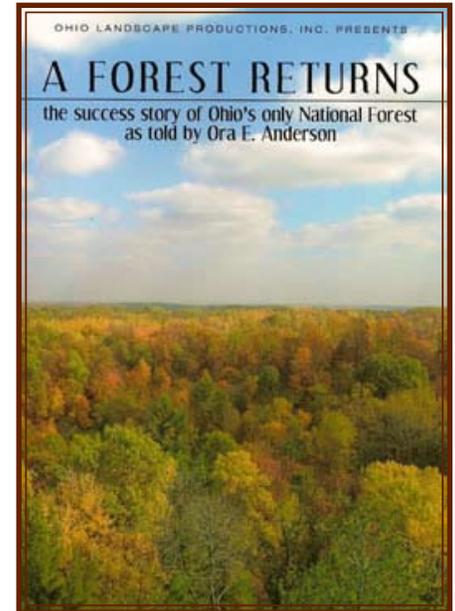
Jean Andrews of Athens, Ohio is featured speaker at the BCWA 19th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 15. The meeting begins at 7:00 pm preceded by a hike of the Bergamo prairie led by Don Geiger at 6:00.

A Forest Returns: The Success Story of Ohio's Only National Forest As Told By Ora E. Anderson is a 30-minute award-winning video documentary produced by Jean Andrews of Athens, Ohio, that presents an inspirational message about citizen participation and forest advocacy during the 1930's Depression era.

Andrews was inspired by Ora Anderson, a storyteller featured in the documentary as he traces the rebirth of a forest in Southeastern Ohio after generations of clear-cutting and farming. The project came about through her friendship with Anderson and her academic interest in the historical geography of Appalachian Ohio. Ninety-three year-old Ora Anderson, an Athens-area resident, nature writer, and radio commentator, was a journalist living in Southeastern Ohio during the Great Depression. In the video, Anderson recalls the environmental and social conditions that led to the establishment of the Wayne National Forest.

A Forest Returns has received top honors at national film festivals including First Place – Best Documentary in the 2005 Appalachian Film Festival in West Virginia, and first place in the Best Non-Broadcast Film category at the Montana CINE International Film Festival. It received the 2006 Outstanding Achievement Award for Public Programming from the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums.

You will enjoy this presentation. We urge all members, family, and friends to come to this special event, meet fellow members, and learn more about your organization's work and accomplishments. So please reserve the 15th and be sure to keep an eye on your mailbox for your invitation! For more information, contact us at 320-9042 or admin@beavercreekwetlands.org.



In this Issue

Annual Member Meeting.....	1
From the President	2
Science Corner: The Future	3
Nature Notes: Belonging to Spring....	4
BCWA Endowment.....	5
Env. Stewardship Award	5
Bulletin Board.....	6
Birdathon.....	6
Making a Difference	7
Contact Info	8

From the President... Affecting Life

“... actions and interactions between plants and animals are threads in the planet’s web of life. This intricate web supports life by providing food, clean air, shelter, and water. We can’t break too many threads before the web collapses. We are just one of perhaps 40 million species, but we are making decisions that affect all life on earth.” So stated a sign in the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida where we visited recently.

But even in this land of constant sun and warm temperatures there are worries and concerns about protecting this ecosystem. The work to protect estuaries, rivers, and coastlines from pollution and development reminds me of the daunting work we do here for the Beaver Creek Wetlands. Invasive species is a grave concern in the south as it is here.

I was amazed by the unusual, and even strange, forms of plant life in these subtropics. Like pieces of sculpture they rise and twist from the ground; they dangle roots from far above; they stun us with magnificent blooms; they awe us with robust and seemingly constant growth. But I could hardly wait to return home and experience, once again, the return from winter slumber of our own natural world and our wetlands.

“We want beauty; we want convenience. We want nature; we want shopping malls. How do we balance these very different desires? How do we create a space where change and timelessness can co-exist? Given the sobering lessons of our new century, how can we preserve our vanishing natural beauty in the ever-changing world?” asks another sign from the botanical gardens.

Those are words for deep thought. You can help “affect all life on earth” by your continuing support of the BCWA. I hope to see you at our Annual Meeting, Tuesday, May 15th. We can make a difference!

Susie Scott
President, BCWA

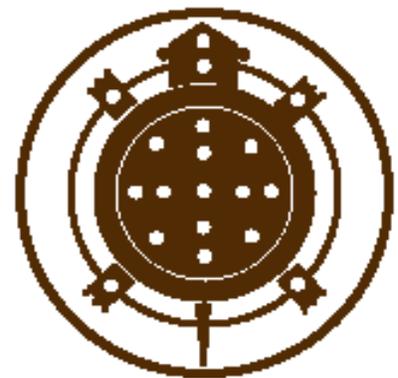
Spotted Turtle Name and Logo: The logo of the BCWA is a rendering of the Spotted Turtle by wildlife artist Charley Harper. Harper, who generously donated the drawing back in 1988, lives in Cincinnati and has produced a wonderful array of art covering innumerable aspects of nature. His work has been adopted by the National Park Service and is appreciated worldwide. 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. 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. 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 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

The Future of the Beaver Creek Wetlands

I've been reading lately and, for the most part, it is about things that have happened in the past. One poignant tale recounts the author's lonesome trip to an old trout stream where he had once fished with a friend. He loved fly fishing. The story ended in a melancholy way as the author realized that it was more than fishing but the comradery as well. I also believe it was because, at times, memories are better than reality and I am sure both factors played a role. I want to talk about the future but we only know the future from our past so let's see what it tells us.

Where were you when your house was built? What did that place look like? Was it a forest, a prairie, a farm field or a swamp? Those are pretty much the only choices. If your yard has a tree, was the tree there or was it planted? What child played there? What animals lived and died there.

Our goal in establishing the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association was based on a recognition that things change. That place where you live will never be a forest or a swamp again. Sure, it is your "nest". It's yours and if you outgrow it you will sell it and someone else will fill your nest. Our children go out and find new nests. By identifying the Beaver Creek Wetlands as something special, we have said that we don't want to put new nests there. We understand that once the natural habitat is built upon, it will not come back. Sure we are learning how to restore, but who are we going to displace you, your grocery store, your street, your school? Not going to happen.

We need to ask, "what

does it take to be sure the wetlands will be here in 2107 or 2207". Given the development we now see I have to wonder what it will be like. The Dayton metro area will have merged with Columbus, Cincinnati and maybe Toledo. Will there be parks, greenbelts, open spaces or will they be a faint memory smothered by all that surrounded them. Will they be cut-off from clean water, covered by sediment, choked by smog and poisoned by things we don't even understand and dissected by a thousand roads, lanes and cul-de-sacs. What must we do to prevent this gloomy possibility?

The first thing to do is make sure all lands are protected legally and *in perpetuity* (forever), but that is only the start. Think about a really cool wetland in the middle of the mall parking lot. Would it survive 200 years? Probably not. All natural habitats have connections and we need to protect those connections too. We need buffers or areas that are a transition from the wetland to its most natural surroundings. That's why we have asked developers to set aside large tracts of land between the homes they build and our wetlands. Those areas are important feeding grounds or nesting places for critical animals in the ecosystem and serve as dry havens during floods. They provide a barrier to toxic chemicals, sounds and light that would otherwise disturb the wildlife and plants. Will these extra precautions make our wetlands survive 200 years? Maybe not.

Connections in our wetlands are not just on the surface, they extend underground too. Groundwater is the lifeblood of the Beaver Creek Wetlands. About 50% of the water that falls on the ground in a 10 square mile area around the wetlands percolates into the soil and eventually comes to

our wetland. As it goes deeper and deeper it picks up minerals, nutrients, microorganisms and leaves behind sediments, odors, flavors and a myriad of strange chemicals that those microbes destroy. The water reemerges as seeps and springs in the wetlands, clean, rich in minerals and its temperature is now a cool 52-56°F year round. That clean water and its load of minerals, nutrients and even temperature is just what our wetlands need.

So what happens if roads, homes, streets and storm sewers prevent that water from entering the soil? Where will the wetlands get its life blood? We have asked developers to assure that their runoff control includes groundwater recharge basins. We have asked that they use grassy swales to allow water to run over the surface as it soaks into the soil and we have asked them to make certain that both the rate and volume of discharge from their developments do not exceed preconstruction amounts. Ten square miles is pretty large but that is the minimum of surface that feeds the wetland, there is probably more. The wetland itself is only about 30 % of that area. If we are going to get it right we have to do these things and I am sure we will have to fight some tough battles over it because most people don't understand how it all works. But now you do. So talk it up. And pass it on to your kids and grandkids, and make sure when you vote, you vote with the future in mind.

We can't change the past so our hope is the future. Let's make the best of it.

- Jim Amon

Belonging to Spring

Early February and there has been a steady rain throughout the day. A warming trend has held in the area for several weeks. The ice begins to recede from around the edges of the shallow woodland pond, hastened by the falling rain. The overnight temperatures are expected to hold in the middle 40's. Even though spring is still almost two months away, the amphibian migration has begun. If you've never been in the forest during the amphibian migration it's a sight to behold, unfortunately it's a sight most of us miss. Now I'll admit, mid 40's and raining in February doesn't sound that appealing. Plus you want me to go out when? At night? OK, I'm asking a lot. But if the weather is right, it'll be a night you won't soon forget.

The first to stir is the Jefferson Salamander. The blue grey male begins moving from his winter home beneath the wind thrown sugar maple toward his breeding pond. The robust female, filled with hundreds of eggs, will move a few days later if the weather remains favorable. The migration begins slowly at first, in starts and stops. Old man winter is reluctant to loosen his grip and if the weather turns harsh, frogs and salamanders halt their march to breeding ponds and seek refuge under logs or in the leaf litter. The 100 yard migration through the woods to the vernal pool may take several days or as long as several weeks depending on the weather. By the first week of March thousands of amphibians will be on the move. This is when you visit. Double check your flashlight batteries, venture out after dusk. Watch the weather forecast, 50 degrees and rain is ideal.

The ground surges with

eager amphibians. You watch every step, carefully placing your foot on the rain soaked forest floor. Wood frogs, smallmouth salamanders, spring peepers, tiger salamanders, chorus frogs and spotted salamanders emerge. For most of the year these creatures live in your woodlands undetected. However, late winter offers us a rare glimpse as these creatures move *en masse* toward their woodland breeding sites. These breeding sites are known as vernal pools (see picture next page).

Vernal comes from the Latin, meaning belonging to spring. The vernal pool is a shallow depression filled by melting snow or rain. The pool holds water throughout the spring but some years it dries. Fish are excluded if the pool dries and without fish many unique creatures find their niche. These temporary habitats host a variety of creatures that are all in a race against time. For most the race begins in late winter. But there's always someone trying to jump the gun and in the amphibian world that someone is the rare marbled salamander. For the black and white marbled salamander the race begins in October. This salamander will only breed in the dry basin or margins of a vernal pool. The female marbled salamander is unique as she guards her nest of eggs awaiting the return of the vernal pool. Typically she heads for her winter retreat as the fall rains fill the pool triggering her eggs to hatch. The larvae then begin to forage, feeding on the tiny zooplankton often beneath a layer of ice. By March, marbled salamander larvae have a distinct size advantage in this "frog eat frog" world and will feed upon the smaller amphibian larvae in addition to the

zooplankton.

Amphibians are not the only creatures to utilize the vernal pool. Look for fairy shrimp in early spring. These 1-inch crustaceans are night active and are drawn to the beam of a flashlight. The rhythmic beating of their abdominal appendages propels them through the water and facilitates breathing while creating an underwater ballet worthy of the Bolshoi. Fairy shrimp lay their eggs in the drying basin of the vernal pool. The eggs are resistant to freezing will not hatch unless dried and re-submerged. The rare spotted turtle will travel great distances to feast in the rich vernal pool. Dragonflies, wood ducks, green herons, water scorpions, diving beetles, and box turtles are a few of the other fascinating creatures you may find while visiting a vernal pool. Often overlooked and frequently dry, these unique wetlands need protection. Suffering the same fate as many of our permanent wetlands, historically vernal pools have been drained, developed and destroyed. Even today with improved wetland protections in place vernal pools are not recognized as wetlands because of their seasonal nature.

Efforts made by the BCWA to recreate vernal pools have been another important piece in the effort to recreate a complex mosaic of wetlands along the Beaver Creek corridor. In the next issue we'll tell you about the partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the BCWA and the long over due return of the spotted salamander to the Beaver Creek Wetlands.

- Jim O'Boyle, Park Ranger,
Caesar Creek Lake, U.S. Army
Corps of Engineers



A picture of a restored vernal pool on the Siebenthaler Fen Division of Wildlife site - home to dragonflies, damselflies, salamanders, spotted turtles, frogs and toads and a wide variety of plants.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

BCWA is pleased to announce that we are starting a new endowment fund. An endowment is a permanent nest egg for the future, to help our organization to be good stewards of the wetlands that we've successfully preserved, as well as good stewards of the generous gifts from our donors.

As our endowment grows, BCWA can withdraw earnings from the account for projects like controlling invasive plants, maintaining trails, and public education. The principal is never spent, so that the fund may become a permanent source of income for BCWA. BCWA will be partnering with The Dayton Foundation to enable us to accept other-than-cash gifts like stock transfers, charitable gift annuities, life estate and real estate, life insurance, retirement assets, trusts and wills as well as cash donations. By partnering with The Dayton Foundation, donors will be able to receive expert assistance with planned giving, and BCWA will be confident of financial stability and long-term growth of our new fund.

The BCWA exists because of the generous donations of money and volunteer time from supporters like you. Starting an endowment has been compared to planting a seed. A seed, if given plenty of food, water, and sunshine, grows into a large tree that bears fruit. Likewise, an endowment needs care and nourishment to grow and bear the fruit of income for our organization. We'll need volunteers to help us spread the word and organize our endowment planning. We'll need donors who love the Wetlands and who would like to participate in planned giving with BCWA in mind.

We are excited to share the news that an anonymous donor who believes in the BCWA, and wants to help ensure the future stewardship of the Wetlands, has offered to match the first \$25,000 in gifts to the new fund. This means that your first contributions to the endowment will be doubled.

A representative of The Dayton Foundation will be available to talk about planned giving at our annual meeting on May 15, so plan on attending to learn more about how you can help make the BCWA endowment fund a smashing success. Please watch for information on planned giving, the endowment, and how you can help us get started by volunteering your time. For further information, email admin@beavercreekwetlands.org or call 937-320-9042.

- Kate Hagenbuch

Jim Amon Receives Beavercreek Chamber of Commerce Environmental Achievement Award

At this year's Beavercreek Chamber of Commerce awards dinner, the BCWA recognized James P. Amon as this year's BCWA Environmental Stewardship Award Winner. Jim has been a critical part of the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association since its inception in 1988. He has served in many capacities including Trustee, President, and Advisor and newsletter Editor. His expertise has given constant guidance to our Board and his energy and enthusiasm for the protection of the Beaver Creek Wetlands is inspirational to all who work on this project.

Dr. Amon is a microbial ecologist specializing in conservation ecology and restoration of wetlands. Jim is constantly in the field with his students and volunteers from the BCWA and his leadership has been highly instrumental in the success of the effort to save, restore and protect the Beaver Creek Wetlands. He has secured numerous grants for research and land acquisition. He spearheaded the successful effort to purchase the 58 acre property now known as The Fairborn Marsh, located on New Germany Trebein Rd.

He is in constant touch with local landowners in the wetland corridor to keep them abreast of the efforts of the association and encourage their participation. Jim currently chairs the Beaver Creek Wetlands Management Advisory Group which brings together all the agencies involved in protecting this important community asset.

Thanks, Jim, for all of your hard work!

Oakes Quarry Park Grand Opening

The grand opening for the Oakes Quarry Park will be on Friday May 4th at noon. The Oakes Quarry Park is located at 1267 E. Xenia Drive in Fairborn. The Keynote Speaker will be Senator Austria. The public is welcome to attend.

Cemex Reserve Grand Opening

You are invited to join Greene County Park District's Grand Opening & Wetland Celebration for Cemex Reserve on Saturday, June 2 from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Cemex Reserve is located at Sanctuary Drive just off of Garland Avenue in Fairborn. For more information: 562-7440. This event is free and will feature displays, bird banding demonstrations, a wetland hike, tadpole trek, prairie talk, bird walk and much more. The public is encouraged to attend.

Volunteers Needed for Outreach

Do you want to lead a nature hike on the Boardwalk, or introduce a group of children to the wonderful Wetlands? Would you like to present one of our slide presentations to a local community organization? BCWA would like to offer more community hikes and organize a speakers' bureau. We need volunteers to lead hikes and speak to groups. Cris Barnett of the Greene County Parks is willing to provide an educational offering for BCWA volunteer naturalists. Help us spread the word about the success of BCWA, and the importance of wetland conservation and biodiversity. Please contact us at 320-9042 or admin@beavercreekwetlands.org if you are interested.

BULLETIN BOARD

Birdathon: Many Birders Needed!!!

This year's Dayton Audubon Society Birdathon will be held from 5:00 pm on Friday April 27 through 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 28. Teams will be counting bird species in this 24-hour period to raise funds for Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm and the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association. These teams are regular folks sponsored by folks who pledge anywhere from 5 cents to \$10 or more for each species discovered by the team they choose.

The Birdathon provides us with a complete view of the species present in the entire Beaver Creek Wetlands corridor during the 24 hours of the Birdathon. We would like to understand which habitats harbor certain species only and which have the greatest diversity. The event also helps to raise money while enjoying the pleasures of birding.

First-time Birders are WELCOME! There are over 20 sites where we could use coverage, especially in the early AM timeframe between 7 to 10 AM. To participate in our team, the Wright State Rails, contact Jim at james.amon@wright.edu. He can help with finding a site and can tell you how to find ideal birding spots.

Please use the form below to make your pledge. Feel free to make copies for any additional pledges you sign up. Then send them to BCWA – Birdathon, PO Box 42, Alpha, Ohio 45301. Alternately, you can email your pledges to: admin@beavercreekwetlands.org.

Yes, I will support DAS Birdathon. I pledge _____ per species to the team(s) checked below.

- _____ Old Birders: Charlotte Mathena, Sue Tackett, Jim Hill, John Howard
- _____ Aristoquacks: Barbara Keegan, Jennifer Monahan
- _____ Philanthropic Phalaropes: Jim Simpson, Mike Zimmerman
- _____ Solitary Sandpipers: Mike Coogan, Mark Dillon
- _____ **Wright State Rails:** Wright State University and Beaver Creek Wetlands
- _____ Wild Berrys: Betty Berry and Betty Leve
- _____ Tenacious Towhees: Xenia Central Middle School students

Instead of a per species pledge, I will donate \$ _____ to Dayton Audubon's Birdathon.

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____

Special Bonus: Again this year, non-Audubon members who contribute \$20 or more will receive a membership to the National Audubon Society and Dayton Audubon! Dayton Audubon Society and Books & Co. will kick off Birdathon during Books and Co.'s Birding Night at their new location in The Green on Monday, April 23 at 7 p.m. Aullwood Naturalist and long-time DAS friend Tom Hissong will be on hand to speak about spring migration and field identification marks for beginning birders. It will be a great way to round out the Earth Day weekend, so plan to attend. After the Birdathon, we will inform you of your team totals so you can send your pledge. Please make all checks payable to the *Dayton Audubon Society*. Thank you!

Making a Difference

Thank You!

Thanks to the following people for helping out with the Winter Spotted Turtle mailing.

Dorothy Bordewisch; Bruce Ford; Judith Streiff; Ann Byrd; Robert Louis; Susie & Dave Scott; Nancy Makley; Richard Swigart; Debbie Karr; Mike Baumer; Evelyn Ferguson.

Also, a special thanks to everyone who gave last year through the Combined Federal Campaign to the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association. Your generosity provided a whopping \$18,399.65 of support!

May is Beaver Creek Wetlands Month!

Last year, the Beavercreek City Council declared May as Beaver Creek Wetland Month. In recognition of the wetland's importance, five large banners for the BCWA and the wetlands will hang from city light poles for the month of May. Thanks to the City Council for recognizing the importance of our local wetlands!



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

Join the BCWA Today!

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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