

Beaver Creek Wetlands Association

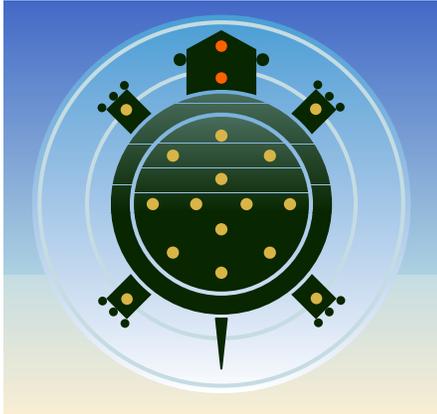
The Spotted Turtle

Volume XXI, No. 2

Spring 2008



TWENTY YEARS



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BEAVER
CREEK
WETLANDS
ASSOCIATION

Special Notice:

Beginning with our summer issue, the Spotted Turtle will be delivered electronically in .pdf format. This will help your Association to make the most of your membership dues and donations, freeing much-needed funds for land preservation and restoration. Equally important, an electronic format will greatly reduce our use of paper!

However, if you would like to continue to receive your Spotted Turtle newsletters in hardcopy format, please contact BCWA office at (937) 320-9042 or admin@beavercreekwetlands.org.

Julie Zickefoose to Present 20th Anniversary Keynote

Julie Zickefoose is a widely published natural history writer and artist. Educated at Harvard University in biology and art, she worked for six years as a field biologist for The Nature Conservancy before turning to a freelance art career. With more than three decades of observations on the natural history and behavior of birds in the field Julie has presented illustrated lectures for nature organizations and festivals across the country. She has exhibited her paintings at universities, museums, galleries, and in juried shows. Illustration credits include *The New Yorker*, *Smithsonian*, *Spider*, *Cricket*, and *Ladybug*. She has written and illustrated articles for *Country Journal*, and *Bird Watcher's Digest* has published more than 30 of Julie's articles and 17 of her cover paintings since 1986.

Paintings by Julie have graced such educational materials for the Laboratory of Ornithology and Cornell University, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, and the Boy Scouts of America, among others.

Julie's writing is a unique personal narrative that creates a mood, yet informs the reader. She accompanies her writing with paintings and drawings. Julie, along with her husband, Bill Thompson, III, and two children, lives on an 80-acre nature sanctuary in the Appalachian foothills of southeast Ohio.

The BCWA is most fortunate to have Julie coming to be with us at our 20th Anniversary Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 17th



Julie Zickefoose

where she will present "Letters from Eden", an illustrated lecture based on her new book of the same name. We hope you will plan to join us. Members will receive reservation forms in mid-April. Non-members may call our office at 937-320-9042 for reservations.

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From the President

It is hard to believe that it has been twenty years since several events came together (in 1988) that brought attention to the defense of wetland protection. Nationally a call went out for no net loss of wetlands. Locally, several voices were heard. Dave Nolin (then a naturalist with the Park District of Dayton/Montgomery County, now known as Five Rivers MetroParks) and Jeff Knoop of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) hiked the north end of the Beaver Creek to determine the quality and size of the wetlands noted on surveyor maps dating from 1802. At the same time, trucks were pouring landfill into areas of these wetlands.

As interest grew, more people stepped to the defense of these marshes and fens. Nancy Bain of the Native Plant Society, John Wilson of the Aullwood Audubon Center, Paul Knoop, a naturalist at Aullwood, Dane Mutter with Dayton Montgomery Parks District, and Jim Amon of Wright State University all gave their support. Jane Henry offered her kitchen table as a meeting place and things began to come together. Several weeks later the first Board of Trustees was selected and Bill Hagenbuch became the first president.

Carol Graff and Lee Schatzley drafted a strategic plan, and Dane Mutter took office as Executive Director. If you recognize many of these names it is because some twenty years later these, and many others, are STILL at work for the Beaver Creek Wetlands.

May is National Wetlands Month and a perfect time to show our appreciation for all those who initiated this effort and to move forward with renewed vigor to continue the work for another 20 years. It is with great excitement that we are celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association on May 17th, 2008. There will be a Bio-Blitz with Cris Barnett of Greene County Parks on Friday evening and Saturday, a "Reflections of Nature" art raffle, our special dinner and annual meeting on Saturday evening, and a Sunday morning (the 18th) hike with Julie Zickefoose. I hope you will add your name to the list of those planning on joining in for the fun.

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. Charley passed away in 2007 and will be sorely missed. 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

A Little Science

We can count up all the species in an area and get a list of what is there. This is called *Species Richness*. However, a simple list like this can be misleading. When Purple Loosestrife invades a wetland it often becomes the dominant species and while its addition may mean more species richness the “evenness” of the community suffers. Typically in the Beaver Creek Wetlands we have a very even distribution of species and around the boardwalk you can probably identify about 200 to 300 plant species without leaving the walkway. Among those species there are about 10 that are very common and another 30 or 40 that are moderately common.

On a visit to a purple loosestrife-invaded fen in Minnesota I saw many species but only two dominated; purple loosestrife and cattails. Everything else was a

minor species. Animals depending on some of those species, now poorly represented, might have a hard time finding food, shelter, or nesting places and the association of other plants, insects and even the microbes below ground are bound to be changed.

The species richness in the Minnesota Fen was actually nearly as high as the Siebenthaler fen, but the evenness was drastically changed. The plant community, and the way everything interacted, was not the same and had suffered the same kind of change that comes from invasions caused by another species: *Homo sapiens*. I am not suggesting we need to eliminate our species, but I do want to recognize that we are part of the world’s ecosystem and we impose changes, both positive and negative, on our communities and ecosystems. The good thing about that is that our species can do something about it.

- Jim Amon



Giggles and squeals of delight greeted turtles and a salamander at two library programs for young children hosted by BCWA Anniversary Committee members at the Fairborn and Beavercreek libraries in February. The animals were provided by Greene County Parks District naturalists, Jason Ison and Ashlee Schmitt. The children and their parents responded with lots of enthusiasm and questions. With animated expression Carol Amon read a couple of well-chosen picture books. Susie Scott brought wonderful wetlands photos and inviting maps of the wetland trails. Carol Graff and I pitched in to help with the craft projects. Thanks to everyone who participated! especially the librarians, Anne Daum and Sherry Parsons, who were so supportive. - Becky Jarvi

2008 Calendar

April - May

Knollwood Garden Center Garden Party. Volunteers needed to work the food booth.

Saturday, April 12th.

Audubon Birdathon.

Volunteers and pledges needed.

Fri., April 25 – Sat. April 26

See page 5 for more details.

Reminder: May is National Wetlands Month!

BCWA 20th Anniversary

Membership Meeting. Walnut Grove Country Club.

Saturday, May 17th

See page 1 for more details.

June - August

Greene County Fair

Sunday July 27 – Sunday August 2

Fairborn Sweet Corn Festival.

Volunteers needed. Call 320-9042.

Sat. August 16 – Sun. August 17

September - October

Beavercreek Popcorn Festival.

Volunteers needed. Call 320-9042.

Sat. September 6 – Sun. September 7

Combined Federal Campaign

Kickoff - Date TBA

NATURE NOTES

Migration

The snow had a crust on it and walking quietly was but a dream. I had come on this sunny day in hopes of a few pictures of our winter birds doing what they do in the winter wetlands. They heard me coming about a mile away, I'm sure, so I was the one being observed. A few wrens and swamp sparrows came by and so did the song sparrows perching just long enough for me to raise my camera before they fluttered off to a nearby perch. It was as if they were toying with me. In the shallow but swiftly moving water of the marsh a dozen mallards cautiously poked their heads into the fresh greenery just under the surface. They tilted their heads a bit from time to time just to let me know they were aware of my presence.

A pair of Canada geese had enough of this game and took off in a loud flapping and honking flurry. Such noisy birds. That spooked the mallards and they exploded from the water with a sound likened to the falling of 2x4s off a wagon. Watching over the scene, a belted kingfisher sat high on a solitary branch occasionally chattering and seemingly oblivious to the commotion below. Every so often the king would make a routine trip to another outpost, chattering along the way. On one trip he turned and the sun caught the usually grey feathers and for a millisecond revealed a glowing blue that comes only in special light. That was nice.

I chose the path that put the morning sun to my back hoping to use that light to photographic advantage and walked on, crunching with every step, until the path came to a stop at a spring. The spring steamed in the

cold morning air in an inviting way and I resolved to proceed in spite of the soggy path. Red Osier dogwoods, and Gray dogwoods slowed my progress but the snow now had less to say and a comforting silence settled in.

As the shrubs dissolved into large cottonwoods, the incessant

great blue heron that was normally there, but today no luck. Perhaps it has gone a bit south to a warmer place while the temperature hovered around single digits - good idea. The grassy site is warm and inviting and I stay a while thinking great blue may yet return. What is that in the distance?



Photo by Jim Amon • Sandhill Cranes 16Feb08 at Beaver Creek Wetlands Nature Preserve (Greene County Parks)

cries of a Red Shouldered hawk pieced the air and made me look up to seek the source of this somewhat disturbing cry. It was high above, barely discernable against the brilliant blue sky but drifted away and out of sight still calling as if to some other being, perhaps a mate. My upward gaze caught a Northern flicker tumbling in some kind of disagreement with a Starling and I recalled a similar fight in the same location last summer. Could this be the same two mismatched neighbors?

I came into a grassy opening and walked toward the water's edge at the confluence of the creek and the marsh. I looked for the

A large bird, actually two. Ah, perhaps those noisy geese - but no they, hmm they are not flying like geese, maybe two great blues together but that is unusual. Gee, it looks like they want to land right here. They don't seem to notice me and I stand still and frozen. They swoop down and spotting me finally they turn. Sandhill Cranes! The weather is cold now in February but they know that will change soon. They are on their way back from Florida or maybe Georgia. The migration has begun.
- Jim Amon

BIRDATHON - JOIN THE FUN!

Each year we participate in the Dayton Audubon Society Birdathon as a means of raising cash for BCWA. While there are many birders out there gathering pledges and eventually looking for birds throughout and even beyond the Miami Valley, BCWA has a slightly different scheme. Sure, we like to raise the funds and if you want to make a pledge that's great, but we have an additional objective. We take this opportunity to study the Beaver Creek Wetlands and associated watershed to see just how many different kinds of birds are present during the spring migration.

Last year we found 101 species (not including several chickens and a peacock). To do this we put together teams to cover the many habitats within the wetland corridor and you are invited to participate. The Birdathon starts Friday evening at 5 PM on April 25th and ends at 5 PM April 26. We need teams that can assure that each location gets maximum coverage during much of that 24-hour period. The major locations include, CEMEX Reserve, Community Park in Fairborn, Marshes and Fens immediately south of Dayton Yellow Springs Rd. between Valle Greene and Autumn Creek, Fairborn Marsh, Division of Wildlife south of New Germany Trebein Rd., Koogler Prairie and Wetland Reserve, Siebenthaler area North of the boardwalk adjacent to the nursery, Siebenthaler Fen, Siebenthaler fen east of creek north to power lines, Hunters Point green area, Beaver Creek Wetland Nature Preserve, Rotary Park, Creekside Reserve & Bikeway, confluence of Big Beaver Creek and Little Miami River.

If you can be a member of the team all you have to do is go out there and look/listen for birds and report your findings to me. Just be sure as possible about your identifications. If something is doubtful report it as such. you can email me with your lists. Before you go, I would like to know what location you plan to cover and when you plan to do it so I might let others know and make suggestions on coverage to spread people out.

If you want to make a pledge of some amount per bird please send your pledge (how many cents per bird) to <admin@beavercreekwetlands.org> so our administrative coordinator (Bob Limbert) can let you know the total after the birdathon.

- Jim Amon, james.amon@wright.edu

WORK TO DO - VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!

The season when we do field work is upon us. On April 13, we will meet at the Division of Wildlife parking lot on New Germany Trebein Rd. at 1 PM. We will do some work in and around the experimental fens built there in the 1990s. We have lots of work to do at the Fairborn Marsh and I will be looking for help with planting a few trees 9AM April 19 and 1PM April 20. April 26th is the Birdathon so no work that Saturday (see article above).

We will also be monitoring the regrowth of Honeysuckle at Fairborn Marsh and Creekside and tackling that invader through the spring, summer and fall so look for volunteer notices to come via email. We have received funding to build a platform and trail at the Koogler Reserve and hope for some help on that later this summer after a little botanical study is finished to make sure we don't disturb anything rare. There will be honeysuckle to remove as usual. Meanwhile we anticipate a scout project will be working with our funds (via Sam's Club) and Greene County Parks to build an observation tower at the Beaver Creek Wetlands Nature Reserve (north of Philips Park).

To volunteer the best option is to provide Administrative Coordinator Bob Limbert <admin@beavercreekwetlands.org> with your email address so he can alert you with each volunteer opportunity. Sometimes those opportunities come up at the last minute and we understand if that is too quick for you to change plans - we will get you the next time!

BioBlitz - How many living things live at CEMEX Reserve?

Friday May 16th
at 7 PM
to
Saturday, May 17
at 11 AM

In conjunction with the 20th Anniversary meeting in May and under the guidance of Greene County Parks, there will be a BIOBLITZ - a fun and intense way of studying the amazing biological diversity of a single place.

We hope to have lots of curious people coming to CEMEX to join with park naturalists, volunteer naturalists and experts from the area to make a list of everything we can find. Animals, plants, fungi, worms, insects, lizards, weeds, fish, mosses, algae, grasses, birds, flowers, butterflies, trees and shrubs-everything. We want this to be fun, so the more the merrier. Come join us.

If you are good at identifying anything - come join us as an "expert" we need lots of those to help out the rest of us who will look high and low for all those wild and wonderful things. The BioBlitz will run from Friday May 16th at 7 PM to May 17 11 AM. We will soon be putting together teams of our experts and I suspect that each will have a special time slot (for example, it is best to look for bats at dusk).

Come join in the fun and if you are one of those experts let Greene County Chief Naturalist Cris Barnett <CBarnett@co.greene.oh.us> know who you are and when you might help.

BULLETIN BOARD

Environmental Achievement Award Recipient: Richard Swigart

BCWA co-sponsors a cheery new book as part of its Twentieth Year Celebration!

GEMS OF THE GREATER DAYTON REGION is a coffee table book featuring some of the special places of the Miami Valley. Part One was written by BCWA Board member Dane Mutter -- Natural Gems of the Region and Part Two -- Cultural & Historical Treasures -- by Brian Hackett, former Director of the Montgomery County Historical Society. Publisher, Allan L. Horvath Publications, Editor, Gail Horvath,.

Wonderful photos are from Tripod Camera Club members and other area photographers including Jim Amon, David Nolin and Richard Swigart, all current or former BCWA Board members. Foreword by David and Doris Ponitz, introduction by Tony Hall and afterward by Christine and Ralph Dull.

Books will be sold and signed at the Knollwood Nursery Garden Party (date??) and at the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association Twentieth Annual Meeting celebration, May 17, 2008. More details online @ www.ahpub.net (after April 1) and www.beavercreekwetlands.org. "Gems" retails at \$35.95.



Richard prepares to take care of some honeysuckle.

The Beavercreek Chamber of Commerce Award for Environmental Achievement was presented to long time BCWA member Richard Swigart on March 7th at the Chamber's annual Awards Dinner held at the Hope Hotel. Richard has been a BCWA member since 1994 and is currently serving as a Trustee, a position he has also held in the past. Richard is a resident of Fairborn and is an Electronics Technician with The Balancing Company. He has a BA in Anthropology. His interests are woodworking, lapidary, gardening and particularly, photography.

While most weekends you will find him volunteering in the wetlands, working to remove invasive species in the Creekside Reserve or the Fairborn Marsh, building boardwalks, and repairing winter damage to board-

walks, it is his photography that has come to make him very special to the BCWA. Richard has taken thousands of photos showing the extreme beauty of the wetlands and documenting the work of the volunteers: flowers, insects, turtles, snow and stormy skies, billowing clouds reflected in marshes – all have been the subject of his work. Richard has donated these images, unselfishly allowing the association to use his work in brochures, art prints and more. This spring we are preparing a DVD, complete with original music, which will feature Richard's work so that we may communicate the wonders of these wetlands to the public. This will be available at our 20th Anniversary celebration dinner in May.

We salute Richard for his wonderful and varied contributions to the BCWA!

SIGN UP FOR OHIO'S BREEDING BIRD ATLAS II

The breeding atlas is set up on 10 square mile tracts of land. The volunteers' goal is to identify all species of bird that breed within that area. Members of the Beaver Creek Wetlands Association can help with this effort. You may sign up online or by telephone: (614) 247-6458 or obba2@osu.edu.

Goal #1. First and foremost, OBBA II will document the current distribution of breeding birds across Ohio. Think of a breeding bird atlas as a five-year "snapshot" of where each species is nesting.

Goal #2. OBBA II will assess changes in statewide distributions of breeding birds over the last 20 years. Breeding bird atlases do not address changes within each 5-year atlas period but instead, can be used to address changes between atlas periods. Ohio is now in a unique position to detect recent changes in the distribution of nesting birds.

Goal #3. OBBA II will provide

measures of statewide abundance for many breeding species. Historically, atlases have not collected data on how abundant each species is within a block. Beginning in 2007, a small crew of highly trained field technicians will be employed to conduct point count survey routes. These data will be used to create invaluable maps of relative abundance and statewide population estimates.

Goal #4. Through a 6-fold increase in survey coverage, OBBA II will identify specific areas that support high bird diversity and concentrations of species of concern.

Goal #5. OBBA II will specifically target species that are difficult to survey, such as owls, nightjars, and wetland birds. Special survey protocols will be designed to direct each volunteer to appropriate habitats in order to maximize species detections. Stay tuned for more details about these surveys!

Goal #6. It is our sincere hope that OBBA II will engage bird enthusiasts of ALL experience levels. This is your Atlas and its success will hinge on extensive volunteer participation. If you're not already involved, please consider contribution to this valuable "citizen science" project. Remember, atlas projects only come along every 20 years. We hope to see you in the field soon!

- *Richard Robertson*



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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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Spotted Turtle Editors

Jim and Carol Amon
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Publisher

Oregon Printing

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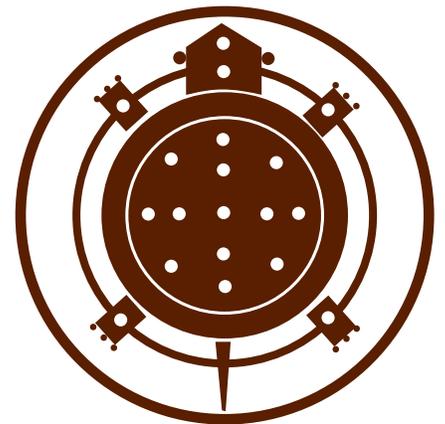
Rob Evans

Contact Us

Administrative Coordinator
admin@beavercreekwetlands.org

President
president@beavercreekwetlands.org

Technical Advisor
technical@beavercreekwetlands.org



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