



ONAPA NEWS

Dedicated to promoting, protecting, and improving Ohio natural areas and preserves.

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VOLUME 9 ISSUE 4 AUTUMN, 2022

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American lotus a stately native of Ohio

Story and photos by Guy Denny

One of the most stately and interesting emergent aquatic plants native to Ohio's wetlands is the lovely American Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*), also known as Yellow Lotus and Water Chinquapin. I always look forward to seeing its sprawling colonies in late summer on my way up to Lake Erie upon crossing Sandusky Bay on the State Route 2 bridge, heading towards the Marblehead Peninsula. Historically there were once enormous beds of American lotus at the west end of Lake Erie. It is still frequently encountered in smaller beds around the western end of the lake growing in relatively shallow, still waters in protected, mud bottomed coves. American lotus also occurs sporadically elsewhere throughout Ohio in lakes, ponds and in the coves of large sluggish rivers. It has been introduced to some of the state park lakes in southwestern Ohio as well as in Pymatuning Reservoir in northeastern Ohio.



American lotus, relative of Asian waterlily

There are only two species of lotus in the genus *Nelumbo*. Each are in their own family, the Lotus-lily Family, Nelumbonaceae. They are the American lotus and the oriental sacred lotus (*N. nucifera*) introduced from Asia, and occurring as a planted ornamental species in the United States. Of these two, only the American lotus is native to North America where it ranges from eastern Texas through Florida and northward locally from Minnesota and Iowa into New England. The center of its range is the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Many of the northern sites are thought to have been introduced by Native Americans. American lotus is a state-listed rare species in both Michigan and Pennsylvania. The generic name *Nelumbo* is the name the Sinhalese people of Ceylon, a country on the island off the southeast tip of India, gave the oriental sacred lotus. The specific epithet *lutea* is Latin meaning "yellow" in reference to the creamy-yellow color of the large flowers.

The American lotus is an imposing long-lived perennial plant that you are not likely to confuse with any other. It has very large, bluish-green, round leaves that can be up to 24 inches in diameter. Some float at the surface of the water while numerous others can rise up to 2-3 feet above the surface of the water standing up like slightly inverted umbrella-like structures. Each leaf is attached at its center by a long petiole leading down beneath the surface of the water a few feet to one of many nodes positioned along a fleshy, air-chambered rhizome buried in the mud and anchored by a cluster of

rootlets. Also arising from each rhizome node at the same spot as the leaf stem may be a flower stem (scape), a single stem with a single flower at its terminus. Each flower has numerous pale yellow petals and petal-like sepals collectively known as tepals and can be up to 10 inches wide. The oriental sacred lotus that occasionally escapes into the wild has pink colored flowers by comparison. Flowers of American lotus typically have a blooming period of

about three days. They open in the morning and close each night. In the center of the cluster of tepals is a bright yellow structure called the receptacle where the sexual parts of the flower are located and which, after pollination, give rise to the seed head in which are imbedded several acorn-size seeds.

This species can be very aggressive, often carpeting acres of waterways. Buried in the mud is the "mother tuber" from which a network of spongy, long cylindrical, horizontal rhizomes emerge. The starchy tuber somewhat resembles a small sweet potato in size and shape, and is just as edible. The rhizomes radiating out horizontally from each main tuber can extend reportedly up to 50 feet, with numerous rooted nodes from which leaf and occasional flower stems emerge. Late in the growing season into autumn, new rhizomatous tubers develop at the base of the nodes, from which new rhizomes

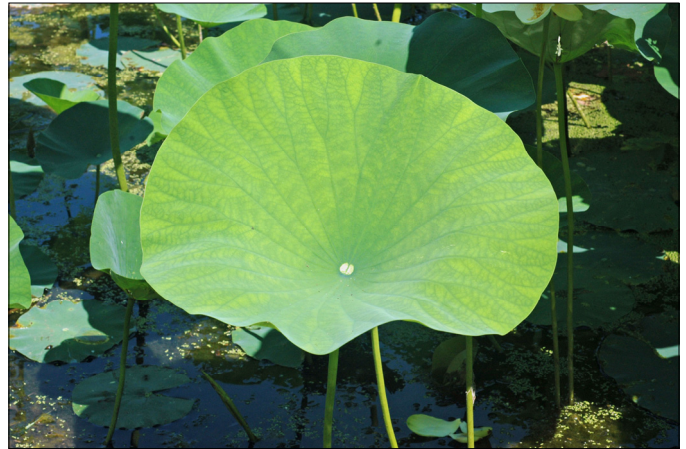
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American lotus more than just a pretty flower

supporting new leaves and flowers will emerge the following summer when waters warm up to 75 and 85 degrees thus increasing the size of the sprawling colony.

The most unusual feature of the American lotus is the flower head receptacle in which the seeds are embedded and develop. As the acorn-like seeds develop, the receptacle expands and turns a bluish-green with numerous chambers in which are the embedded seeds. Ultimately, the receptacle hardens and turns dark brown with the seeds loosely chambered and ready to fall out and be dispersed within the waterway. At this point, the receptacle looks very much like some kind of a fancy showerhead and the individual seeds now have hardened and developed a tough shell very much like that of an acorn. Even though the seeds may now be released from the receptacle and widely dispersed, the hard-coated seeds are reported to sometimes remain viable for decades before the coating breaks down enough to allow the seeds to germinate. According to botanical garden experts, the process can be speeded up by scarifying the pointed tip of the seed with a file then soaking the seed in water. If planting tubers to establish American lotus, tubers should be planted in spring when water temperatures are in the 50s, well before the spreading rhizomes develop.



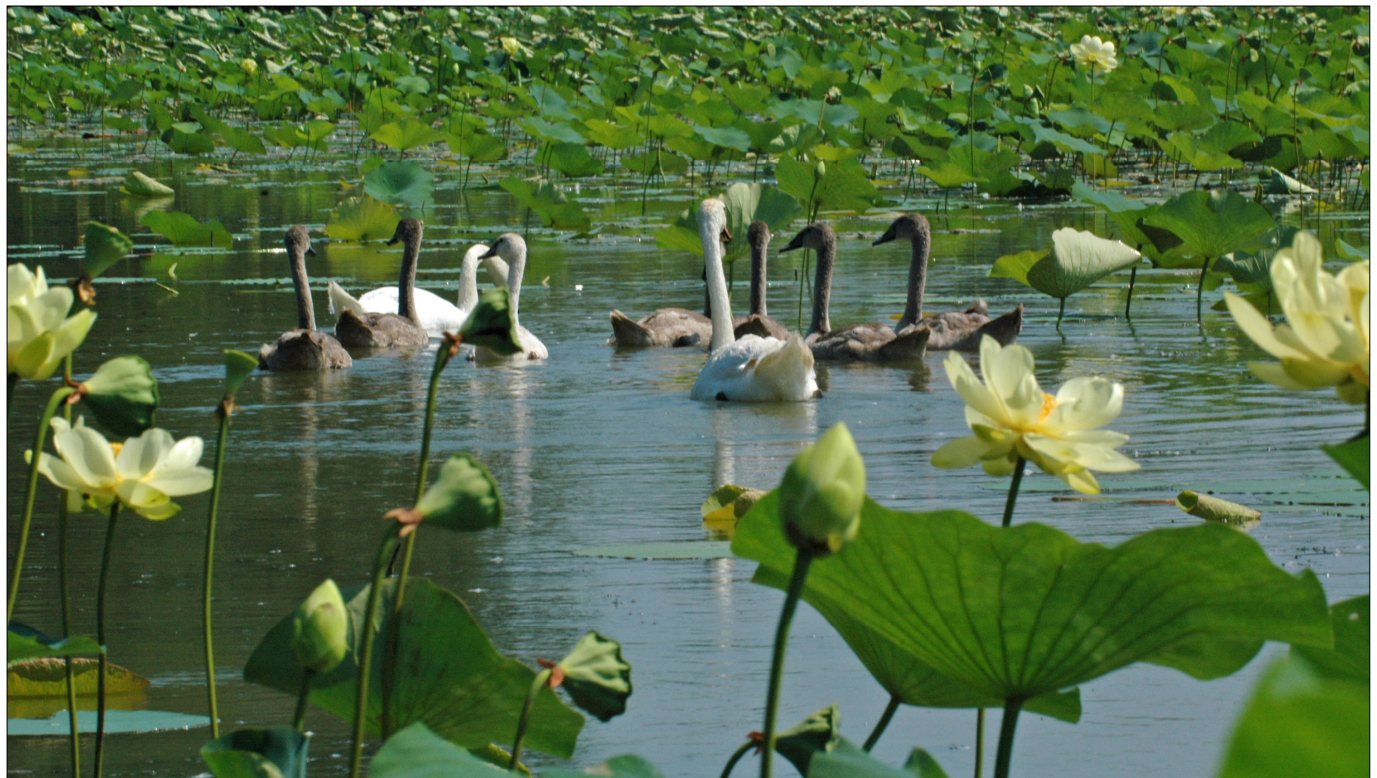
Water-shedding characteristic of lotus leaves have inspired industrial applications in paint and fabric.

The main reason it is believed Native Americans spread American lotus is because of its importance to them as a dependable food source. The acorn-sized un-ripened seeds are edible and quite tasty. I can personally attest they are delicious and taste somewhat like water chestnuts.

Even once fully matured, the hard coating can be cracked open and the nut meat eaten raw, roasted, or boiled. They can even be ground into flour. Indigenous people often added the nutmeat with wild game meat making a nutritious soup. The newly developing unrolled leaves can be prepared as a potherb.



Far left, seed receptacle; at right, lotus seeds are edible in several forms.



Mute swans find open water among the American lotus colony.



Lotus colonies can be aggressive under favorable conditions; lotus blossoms close at night.

Native Americans would also locate and collect the mature tubers by fishing for them in the mud with the toes of their bare feet. The starchy tubers were then peeled, baked or boiled just like sweet potatoes. The Ojibwa also cut the tubers into crosswise pieces that were then strung on basswood strings to dry for winter use. The Dakota Sioux, Omaha, Pawnee, Ponca and Winnebago all reportedly believed this plant had mystical powers and used it in religious ceremonies

In recent times, the American lotus has played a role in biomimicry, a process scientists utilize for taking inspiration or imitating nature for advancing science and industry. It has been long noticed that water beads off lotus leaves as if they were coated with an oily film. In recent years, scientists studying this self-cleaning feature of the leaves discovered under high magnification at the nanoscale

level, the leaf's surface is instead made up of a coating of numerous microscopic structural bumps which force water to simply roll off the leaf, self-cleaning the leaf in the process. This self-cleaning process has inspired new industrial products such as a paint called Lotusan® developed in 1999. The paint contains microscopic bumps that force raindrops to readily roll off, removing dirt from the painted surface. The self-cleaning feature of lotus leaves has also inspired the development of GreenShield (™), a fabric finish that creates water and stain-repellency on textiles. There is also ongoing research to manufacture self-cleaning surfaces to repel water from titanium slabs to allow turbines and engines to operate more efficiently.

Clearly, the more we study and learn about the natural world and its components, the more rewarding and amazing it becomes.

Storm misses prairie tour - barely; everyone is invited back October 1 to collect seeds for their own gardens

By Terry Duncan

let you know in advance: email guydenny@centurylink.net. Pack a lunch and dress for the weather.

Groups of 15 to 20 led by Guy Denny, Jennifer Windus, Dick Moseley and John Watts managed to beat the July storm that drenched Guy's tall-grass prairie. They shared great information about the forbs and grasses before the rains hit.

Members and friends toured the gently rolling landscape in peak bloom: compass plant, royal catchfly, cone-flowers, cup plants, and so much more hosted a large gathering of butterflies, bees and other pollinators, much to the delight of the several photographers in attendance.

Everyone is invited back to the prairie October 1. Participants may collect all the seeds they want and learn how to establish their own prairie gardens. Several prairie specialists will be on hand to answer questions and help identify various species of prairie plants. Participants should bring hand pruners, and containers such as paper bags in which they can deposit and label the seeds they collect.

The event will begin at 10:00 am at the 20-plus acre prairie located in Knox County, about 45 minutes north of Columbus. The street address is 6021 Mt. Gilead Road (SR 95) Fredericktown, Ohio. From the junction of Interstate 71 and State Route 95, follow SR 95 east just under five miles to the Knox County Line. Just about 20 feet beyond the line, on the North side of SR 95, is the driveway where there will be an ONAPA events sign directing participants up the drive to the designated parking area.

There is no limit on the number of participants, but do sign up so that if the event needs to be cancelled, we can



Above, a 'plant nursery' provided a beautiful assortment of blooms. (Photo by Terry Duncan)
At right, the oncoming storm rolls in. (Photo by Jan Kennedy)





Above, 2022 Stewardship Assistants (left to right) Lydia Radcliffe, Peter Zimmerman , Rachael Patterson, Edison Cigany and Maddie Brown. At right, Peter captured this digital image of a long-tailed salamander at Clifton Gorge SNP.

Stewardship assistants have had a banner year

By Jennifer Windus

In addition to our volunteers, we are very fortunate to have five stewardship assistants this season, with three returning for second and third seasons. Maddie Brown is in her third season with ONAPA as our lead assistant, directing work with volunteers and the new assistants. Lydia Radcliffe and Rachael Patterson are in their second seasons. Both Maddie and Lydia will be working through at least November. Rachael will be starting at Michigan State University this fall as a freshman in environmental science, so she will leave our team early.

Our two new stewardship assistants, Peter Zimmerman and Edison Cigany, are both college students, returning to college in the fall.

Peter grew up in Ashland and will be a senior this at Oberlin College, studying Biology and Geology. His academic interests are diverse and include paleontology, evolution, systematics, plant ecology, and freshwater ecology. Prior to this opportunity, most of his experience was in academia rather than conservation. Feelings of dissatisfaction with academia made him pursue conservation jobs like this one, and he is very grateful for the ONAPA experience so far. It wasn't until the spring of 2020 that he learned about Ohio's dedicated State Nature Preserves. That summer he spent his free time exploring as many preserves as he could and grew to appreciate Ohio's native diversity. He says he feels fortunate to meet and work with some of the most knowledgeable people in the state. He has learned about the history of DNAP and ONAPA in addition to the preserves and the people that manage them.

One of his best memories from this summer was at Clifton



Peter Zimmerman

Gorge, a favorite preserve. We were working on the “scientific side” to remove and treat honeysuckle and Asian bittersweet. The footing was unstable due to the small limestone boulders that had broken off from the adjacent cliffs and slumps. Cold seeps bubbled up out of the limestone substrate. Mosses and ferns covered every rock surface, and it seemed like the perfect place for salamanders! Peter and Mark (a volunteer) were pulling out a clump of bittersweet near the river bank to get to the base when they were surprised by a little charismatic long-tailed salamander! Bothered by the sudden exposure to bright light, it crawled back under a nearby rock. Peter was able to take a photo before it slinked away. One of the joys of working in the places we do is getting to see all the cool flora - and fauna!

Edison is a student at The Ohio State University studying plant biosciences. He has a deep interest in conservation, field botany, parasitic plants, and insects. ONAPA has provided him a great opportunity to explore all these interests. He had a great time with management of invasive species on the many preserves where we work. He especially had a rewarding experience with the rare plant surveys, getting the astounding opportunity to see plants most people in Ohio have no idea exist or occur here.



Edison Cigany

The stewardship assistant program provides college students and recent graduates a wonderful opportunity to get more experience in the field, obtain relevant training, explore potential job options, and help us manage our natural areas alongside of a variety of partners in Ohio.

We are proud of our program and the excellent individuals that are working with us this year.

Stewardship volunteers show up and the preserves benefit from their efforts

Story and photos by Jennifer Windus

Since mid-May, we have been keeping our stewardship assistants and volunteers busy in the field. We finished up May with projects at Olsen Preserve (May 19), pulling garlic mustard and Dame's rocket, Irwin Prairie (May 24), pulling garlic mustard, collecting Lakeside daisy seeds (May 26), and at Milford Center Prairie (May 31), removing teasel and other invasives. In June, we worked at Brinkhaven Barrens (June 7), Daughmer Savanna (June 9), Cedar Bog (June 16), and spent three days doing surveys for the Eastern prairie fringed orchid. We also helped Knox County Park District remove downed trees at Knox Woods for two days after major storms damaged the woods in mid-June.

In July, we finished the prairie fringed orchid surveys, removed frogbit at North Pond on Kelleys Island (July 7), cleared bush honeysuckle at Trillium Trails in Great Parks (July 12), cut cattails at Jackson Bog (July 14), and worked on woody species at Herrick Fen (July 21) and Clifton Gorge (July 26). It was a busy month, but we enjoyed working with partners such as Great

Parks of Hamilton County and The Nature Conservancy.

August was another fun-filled month with projects scheduled at Cedar Bog, Brinkhaven Barrens, Herrick Fen, Meilke Road Savanna Wildlife Area, and Myersville Fen. For sites which need plenty of habitat management to be accomplished, we may schedule two or more projects each season. Some of our partners have little help and so greatly appreciate our assistance, such as at Cedar Bog, Brinkhaven Barrens, and Daughmer Savanna. In the upcoming fall season, it is likely that half our projects will be planned with other partners besides the Division of Natural Areas & Preserves (DNAP). The price of gas has definitely affected our volunteer program, reducing numbers yet again since the COVID pandemic began. We are grateful to our regular and dedicated volunteers who support our program and help manage Ohio's natural areas.

Our website lists a new season of stewardship projects through November! We hope you will consider joining us for a fun and rewarding day at one of Ohio's premier natural areas!



Clockwise, from top left: Daughmer Savanna Ohio spiderwort in bloom; Brinkhaven Barrens invasive plants pile shows hard work; looking for prairie fringed orchids during a survey of the endangered plant; helping clean up Knox Woods SNP after a destructive summer storm.



ONAPA celebrates 10th year supporting Ohio's natural areas

By Dick Moseley

It hardly seems possible that ONAPA is ten years old this year. It seems like yesterday that we began the process to create this organization out of the need to help the nature preserves due to budget cuts and lack of staff to properly manage these unique areas around the state. Guy Denny, Bob McCance and I decided that we would try to form a "friend's group" to help the Division of Natural Areas & Preserves manage the preserves. So, we applied for a State of Ohio certificate as a non-profit which was approved on April 5, 2012. Bob McCance "volunteered" to prepare the application for non-profit status with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. The application process was long and difficult to prepare but Bob did a magnificent job and our application was received by the IRS on July 16, 2012. The IRS approved our application for tax exempt status on April 17, 2013 with an effective date of Exemption on April 5, 2012.

Thanks to a grant of \$1,000 from Jane Ann Ellis and Crane Hollow Inc. on June 11, 2012, we were able to apply for the tax-exempt status as a non-profit organization. The first official meeting of the Board of Incorporators was held on May 16, 2012 with Guy Denny as Acting Chairman and Dick Moseley as secretary. Action taken at this meeting was to establish a mailing address, a bank account, a website, and choosing proposed members of the Board of Directors. Moseley was assigned to arrange the first meeting of the Board of Directors and to have the initial meeting in Central Ohio.

The first Board of Directors who willingly consented to serve included the three Incorporators, Guy Denny, Dick Moseley, Bob McCance as well as Barb Andreas, Jim Bissell, Mary Christensen, Delores Cole, Cheryl Harner, Ray Heithaus, Dewey Hollister, John Mack, Jim McGregor, Katryn Renard, Tim Snyder, Joe Sommer, and Dave Todt. Delores Cole had volunteered to be Webmaster.

The first official meeting of the Board of Directors of ONAPA took place June 29, 2012, at Columbus Metro Parks District Office in Westerville. The new Board approved the ONAPA Bylaws, elected officers, approved a Conflict of Interest policy, approved membership categories, and discussed the need for a newsletter to encourage memberships and activities in addition to the website.

Once a bank account and the website were established, a membership campaign followed to generate interest in this newly formed organization. The first members "joined" on September 28, 2012, providing the first funds to help get this organization heading in the right direction financially. By the end of the year, ONAPA had 83 founding members.

From this humble beginning, ONAPA has grown now into a vigorous statewide organization with 1,296 members and an active program of stewardship on Ohio's State Nature Preserves as well as sites managed by other organizations which have sought our help and expertise in managing their natural areas.

We have had a successful Stewardship Assistants Program that has given college seniors and recent college graduates the opportunity to work along with ONAPA members who have volunteered to work on stewardship projects. These assistants gain valuable work experience in natural areas management to better prepare them for future employment in this field. We have had 22 Stewardship Assistants since program began in 2016; many of them went on to work for ODNR, park districts, and other conservation organizations, some out-of-state. Three pursued graduate school.

Help us celebrate our successes over the last ten years by continuing to support our stewardship projects through your volunteer time when projects are in your area. Your continued support of ONAPA financially with your membership will help us to do even more into the future with programs and projects.

Happy anniversary, ONAPA!



Eagleview Lodge

ONAPA Annual meeting set for October 29

ONAPA is partnering with the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks for its annual meeting Saturday, October 29, at the Blacklick Woods' Eagleview Lodge at the golf course near Reynoldsburg. The date was changed in late August to the last Saturday in October due to a scheduling conflict.

The meeting format is a little different this year, with three featured speakers before lunch; lunch will then be followed by a short business meeting and a choice of three field trips.

Speakers will be:

Dr. Elliot Tramer, retired, University of Toledo, *"Winners and Losers in the Age of Humans"*

Cody Berkebile, Senior Naturalist, Blacklick Woods MP, *"Preserves in Your Columbus Metroparks"*

Judy Semroc, Nature Spark, *"Hiding in Plain Sight: Amazing Patterns of Camouflage, Evasion, Trickery and Mimicry in Nature"*

A choice of one of three field trips will be offered:

Walter A. Tucker Preserve at Blacklick Woods, led by Cody Berkebile

Shallenberger State Nature Preserve, led by Dick Moseley

Cranberry Bog State Nature Preserve, led by Guy Denny and Jennifer Windus

Registration and more information are online at ONAPA.org. Registration deadline for Eventbrite registration is October 23; mailed in registrations must be postmarked by October 17 to meet the luncheon order deadline.

ONAPA ANNUAL MEETING
Saturday,
October 29, 2022
10 am—5 pm

**Eagleview Lodge at
Blacklick Woods
Golf Course**



**7309 E. Livingston Ave.
Reynoldsburg, Ohio
(Franklin County)**

**Visit ONAPA.org for details on
field trips and registration.**

Two inducted into the ODNR Hall of Fame

Two of the newest members of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Hall of Fame are members of ONAPA. Horace "Jim" Davidson and Steve Pollick were inducted at a ceremony held at the ODNR amphitheater on July 27, 2022, the first day of the Ohio State Fair. Both members have been long time members of ONAPA with Jim working on stewardship projects and Steve serving as an advisor to the Board of our organization.

Dr. Jim Davidson is a pathologist by profession but his passion has always been the natural world with all its beauty and mysteries. Jim first joined the Columbus Audubon Society in 1967 and quickly became a leader in preservation, conservation and education in the central Ohio area. Jim presented hundreds of natural history and nature programs throughout Ohio at various events, workshops, garden clubs, and local interest group meetings. He was always a big draw for presentations and field trips at the Columbus Audubon Society's Eco-Weekend. Jim was a regular participant and leader of Columbus Audubon land management and public access projects for the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. He also worked with the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks resource management staff developing park vegetative cover maps and biotic survey database information, and advising on resource management projects. He also participated in prescribed burns.

In 1996, Jim (along with his wife Sandy) worked with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to establish Rhododendron Cove State Nature Preserve in southern Fairfield County, protecting one of the largest stands of Great Rhododendron (State Threatened) in Ohio. This additionally led to the establishment of the Ohio Natural Areas and Scenic Rivers Endowment Fund at the Columbus Foundation, which will provide future funding opportunities to promote preservation of Ohio's finest natural areas and scenic rivers. In 2001, Jim and Sandy donated a 20-acre site (Davidson Butterfly Preserve) in Delaware County to the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks for the preservation and management of wetland butterflies. This was the first preserve in the United States dedicated to butterfly management and protection (American Butterflies Volume 9: Number 3, pp 32-35. Fall 2001).

Jim has held numerous Officer and Board positions including President, more than once, of a number of local conservation organizations in central Ohio. Those organizations included: The Columbus Audubon Society, The Columbus Natural History Society, The Wheaton Club, The Ohio Lepidopterists Society, and The Central Ohio Native Plant Society. In 1999, Jim was awarded the Columbus Audubon Society's Song Sparrow award for his years of work and effort with Audubon. He was additionally honored for his dedication, commitment, and service to the Columbus Audubon Society in 2008 receiving the Great Egret Award. This award recognizes and honors individuals for their lifetime of achievements and contributions to the Audubon Society. The Great Egret award has only been awarded four times by the Columbus Audubon Society since being founded in 1913. In 2016, Jim was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by The Wheaton Club. This award recognizes individuals who, over a period of many years, have given exceptional service to the Club, been active in the education of natural history, and steadfastly

furthered the cause of conservation. This honor has only been awarded eight times in the 101-year history of The Wheaton Club. Jim has also been active in organizations such as the Appalachian Ohio Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, and of course the Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association.

Steve Pollick, as an outdoor writer and lecturer, has spent a lifetime educating Ohioans about the wise use and management of the natural resources of Ohio. Steve graduated with a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Toledo, in Journalism, Biology, and Organic chemistry and Master's Degree from The Ohio State University, School of Natural Resources, in Natural Resources Management/ Environmental Education- Communications in 1971. He began his career that same year in December, working for *The Toledo Blade* covering general assignment/ environment-energy reporting. During his 40 years with the *Blade*, he served in various capacities including manager of Regional News Bureau/Bowing Green. In 1982, he took over the Outdoor column and became Outdoor Editor in 1983. As Outdoor Editor, Steve traveled to 40 countries, writing about conservation, native cultures, wildlife, fishing and hunting. In 1987, The Explorer's Club, New York City, elected him as a Fellow of the club, an elevated rank indicating significant contributions to exploration, conservation, and education of the public through the written word. He is a consummate sportsman, naturalist, and educator who has distinguished himself over his very long career as an outdoor writer. Even after retiring from the Toledo newspaper, Steve continues his good work statewide as a columnist for the Ohio Outdoor News, advocating for wise conservation efforts. He is also author of three books and a contributor to a fourth. His articles have appeared in *Audubon*, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Pheasants Forever*, *Great Lakes Fisherman*, *Ohio Fisherman*, and others.

Steve is also a member of and works in association with numerous conservation organizations, including Black Swamp Conservancy, Outdoor Writers of Ohio, and the Black Swamp Bird Observatory. His numerous awards received during his career include League of Ohio Sportsmen/National Wildlife Federation Conservation Communicator of the Year in 1983 and 2003; Society of American Travel Writers Lowell Thomas Award; ODNR Conservation Achievement Award; International Joint Commission of the Great Lakes Conservation Writing Award; Ducks Unlimited Man of the Year Award in 1990, and many more.

As a writer and speaker, Steve always championed ethical hunting and fishing practices, and the protection of both game and non-game wildlife habitat critical to their survival. Over the years, he has imparted his knowledge and wisdom to both young and old as an investment in Ohio conservation now and into the future.

Please join us in congratulating Jim and Steve on their induction into the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Hall of Fame and thank them for their lifetime of commitment and service to Ohio's natural areas, wildlife conservation and preservation of Ohio's natural history. Their award is well deserved!



Steve Pollick, left, and Jim Davidson

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Ohio Natural Areas & Preserves Association

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Protecting Ohio's Natural Legacy
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___ \$30 - Family ___ \$25 - Individual ___ \$15 - Student (Under 22 yrs old) ___ \$15 - Senior (Over 60 yrs old)

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Consider giving a gift membership to someone who cares about natural areas.