



ONAPA NEWS

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FALL — 2015

By Tim Snyder

"We are dedicated to promoting, protecting, and improving Ohio natural areas and preserves for educational, charitable and scientific purposes."

Natural Areas-The Early Years: Part 2

By Dick Moseley

It has been forty years since the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves (DNAP) was created by Executive Order in February of 1975. This new Division was given the responsibility of acquiring and managing Natural Areas and Scenic Rivers for the Department of Natural Resources. All Nature Preserves and lands along the State Scenic Rivers managed by other Divisions were transferred to DNAP. The new Division included a Natural Areas Planning Section and a Scenic Rivers Planning Section, both of which were transferred from the Division of Planning. Two new Sections were created to handle Natural Areas Management and Scenic River Management. The first administrators of these Sections were Steve Warner (Natural Areas Planning), Edward



Swearing in of DNAP's first officers 1975.

Salabsky (Natural Areas Management), Stuart Lewis (Scenic Rivers Planning), and Steve Goodwin (Scenic Rivers Management).

In the Division's first year, six new Nature Preserves were added to the state system, five through dedication and one by gift/purchase. Four of the areas were dedicated by the Hamilton County Park District and included Newberry Wildlife Sanctuary, Spring Beauty Dell, Greenbelt Preserve and Trillium Trails. Headlands Dunes was dedicated by the Division of Parks and Recreation. Lake Katharine was acquired through a combination of a gift and purchase of the property which was the private retreat of two long-time friends who owned businesses in the community of Jackson.

The gift of 712 acres from James

J. McKitterick, Edwin A. Jones, and Jones' son, D. Brooks Jones became the state match for a grant from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund which was used to purchase an additional 758 acres. At 1,470 acres, Lake Katharine became the largest preserve in the system and quickly became popular due to its beautiful lake and sandstone rock formations rivaling the Hocking Hills.

In late 1975, we received the first challenge to the Natural Areas Law. A local utility, Firelands Electric Cooperative, wanted the Division to amend the Articles of Dedication to grant an easement on Fowler Woods State Nature Preserve as part of the construction of a new 3-phase utility line along Olivesburg-Fitchville and Noble Roads. Section 1517.06 of the Natural Areas Law states that a nature preserve or interest therein "Shall not be taken for any other use except another public use after a finding by the Department of Natural Resources of the existence of an imperative and unavoidable public necessity for such other public use and

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Natural Areas—The Early Years: Part 2

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with the approval of the Governor.” We did not want to set a precedent by allowing the easement on the preserve, so we denied their request. However, they insisted that they needed this right-of-way and requested a public hearing as outlined in Section 1517.07 of the Natural Areas Law. The hearing was held on February 6, 1976 at the Law Library Annex of the Richland County Administrative Building in Mansfield, and nine people attended. A representative of the electric cooperative presented their case and the public also had an opportunity to have input. During the hearing, the utility admitted that it had an alternative route on the other side of the road, but wanted to use state land since they would only have to deal with the state rather than with a private land owner on the other side of the road who would not grant them an easement on his property. The utility’s request for an easement on the preserve was denied by the Department on March 4, 1976, because it could not prove an unavoidable necessity since there was an alternative route for the proposed project.

A bill to establish the Division statutorily was passed by the State Legislature in April, 1976. The bill created the position of preserve officer within the Division. With this new authority, the Division sent the new preserve managers, a scenic river ranger and their field supervisor to Ohio Peace Officer training so they could be commissioned as preserve officers. This first class included Ken Temple (Stages Pond), Emiliss Ricks (Eagle Creek), Bob Sanford (Goll Woods), Jim Abrams (Sandusky River), Bill Holdren (Little Miami River), Frank Skalski (Blackhand Gorge), David Reeder (Little Miami Ranger), and Ed Salabsky (Field Supervisor). Their commissions were approved on September 8th and they were sworn in as commissioned preserve officers by ODNR Director Robert W. Teater and presented their commissions on September 22, 1976.

The year 1977 brought more changes to the organizational structure of the Division, which was reorganized into five Sections to unify the Natural Areas and Scenic Rivers Programs. The new Sections were Administration, Staff Operations, Field Operations, Technical Services, and the Natural Heritage Program. The Administration Section was responsible for overall management of the Division and included the Chief (me), Assistant Chief (Guy Denny) and an accountant and secretarial staff. Staff Operations, headed by Steve Goodwin, was responsible for all real estate activities and engineering coordination. Field Operations, administered by Jim McGregor, was responsible for day-to-day management, maintenance, and interpretive programming on the preserves and scenic river access sites. The Technical Services Section, headed by Stuart Lewis, was responsible for the



Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Sanctuary.
By Tim Snyder.

Scenic Rivers Program and the technical services provided to landowners and local government entities along the state scenic rivers. The Natural Heritage Program, headed by Bob McCance, was responsible for inventorying the state’s rare and endangered species, unique plant and animal communities, and exceptional geological features. The Heritage Program was created in March of 1976 by The Nature Conservancy under contract with the Department, and was transferred from the Conservancy to the Division in October, 1977.

In May of 1976, the Division began working with Ken Mills and Tom Dusenbury of the Department’s Public Information & Education Section to produce a 27-minute film about Ohio’s Natural Areas Program called “The Legacy.” This film was completed and shown on local television in 1977 and was nominated for six Emmy Awards by the Columbus/Dayton/Cincinnati Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. To our great delight the film won the Emmy for cinematography. It also won an award from the American Association for Conservation Information and the “Teddy Award” from the National Outdoor-Travel Film Festival. The Legacy was distributed to sportsman clubs, conservation organizations, garden clubs and schools through the Department’s film library, and helped us increase public awareness and gain support for Nature Preserves throughout the State.

A project that began in 1974 finally came to fruition in early 1977. We had negotiated with the McDaniel family to acquire their property which was adjacent to the portion of Cedar Bog owned by the Ohio Historical Society (now Ohio History Connection). The 52.79 acre McDaniel property was a critical acquisition since it contained the artesian springs which provided the cold, alkaline water to

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Cedar Bog. The McDaniels were willing sellers, but there was a big gap between our appraisal of \$1000/acre provided by an independent appraiser and their asking price of \$3308/acre. The only solution was to let the court set the price, so the Division used for the first time the Department's power of eminent domain to acquire a property as a nature preserve. The trial concluded on February 2, 1977 with the McDaniels family receiving an award of \$109,500 for their portion of the bog. This price reflected a happy medium between their asking price and our appraisal. The original tract of Cedar Bog was purchased to preserve this unique habitat during Governor John W. Bricker's administration in 1942 for, would you believe, \$5,000.

By the close of 1977, the Division had added seven natural areas to the State Preserve System. Kyle Woods and Siegenthaler Esker were gifts to the Division, and Sharon Woods, Conkles Hollow, Hach-Otis Nature Preserve, and Cedar Bog were dedicated by their owners. A four-year acquisition program to preserve the largest remaining undisturbed freshwater estuary on

Lake Erie was the most ambitious project that the Division had entered into up to this time. The project was funded by The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and an appropriation of \$800,000 by the Ohio General Assembly. The Division acquired 562 acres to create Old Woman Creek Sanctuary at a cost of \$1,117,750—by far the most expensive preserve in the first decade of the program. On September 5, 1980, Old Woman Creek became the only freshwater estuary in the National Estuarine Research Reserve System. On September 26, 2015 (National Estuaries Day) the "Friends of Old Woman Creek" celebrated "35 Years of Research, Education, and Stewardship" on the 35th Anniversary of Old Woman Creek Nature Preserve becoming a National Estuarine Research Reserve.

I hope you find this history worthwhile and educational. Without knowing where we've been and understanding the foundations of this program, its trials and tribulations, and the problems it faced, we cannot fully comprehend where the program should go in the future.

Another Successful ONAPA Annual Banquet & Meeting September 19th & 20th, 2015 Dawes Arboretum, Newark, Ohio



Senator Mike DeWine enjoys the 2015 Annual Banquet. Photo by Jan Kennedy.

The Ohio Natural Areas & Preserves Association (ONAPA) had its third Annual Banquet and Meeting at Dawes Arboretum in Newark on September 19th and 20th. It was another very successful event with more than 80 people attending, including Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and his wife, Fran. The program included a morning indoor session with 4 speakers – Guy Denny, Jeff Johnson, Karen Jennings, and Jennifer Windus. Saturday afternoon field trips included Blackhand Gorge with Dick Moseley, Flint Ridge with Bill Weaver and Tim Snyder, and Dawes wetland plants and restoration with David Brandenburg.

There was a silent auction and social with a wine

tasting by the local Sand Hollow Winery, featuring 6 different wines. The evening dinner was catered by Creative Catering in Hebron and the evening keynote speaker was Ian Adams speaking about "Natural Ohio: A Photographic Celebration". Ian impressed the audience with his amazing photographs of natural areas in Ohio, focusing on excerpts from his new book.

The silent auction had a fantastic selection this year and successfully raised more than \$1,800 for ONAPA. Sunday morning field trips included Blackhand Gorge with Dick Moseley, Flint Ridge with Bill Weaver and Tim Snyder, and Dawes natural areas restoration with Shana Byrd. The weather was excellent for the weekend and ONAPA was pleased to see so many friends of Ohio's natural areas attend, most of whom were already ONAPA members! Dawes Arboretum was a wonderful host and ONAPA is so grateful for their cooperation and partnership.

Jennifer Windus



Silent Auction items. Photo by Jan Kennedy.

ONAPA Field Trip — Michigan's Upper Peninsula July 5-10, 2015



Michigan Field Trip attendees.

enough north that they are a fairly common component of the Boreal Forest landscape. Here we can explore them in order to get a better understanding of and appreciation for the few remaining ones we have in Ohio.



An unexpected participant.
By Mike Mainhart.

In addition to exploring the peatlands within Hiawatha National Forest, we also visited Pictured Rocks National

This past July, ONAPA conducted its very first several day-long out-of-state field trip. Our adventure took 20 intrepid participants north to explore the peatlands, bogs and fens, of Hiawatha National Forest within the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Bogs and fens are very rare and special ecosystems in Ohio where they occur as living relicts of the last Ice Age. Many are designated state nature preserves. In northern Michigan, we are far



Allison Cusick talks plants.

Lakeshore along Lake Superior and Seney National Wildlife Refuge. Allison Cusick, retired Chief Botanist for DNAP and now a resident of Pittsburgh, came along as a participant, but actually help lead the trip. Allison is planning some future ONAPA field trips to some of his favorite botanical spots in Maryland and West Virginia. Information will be posted in the newsletter and at onapa.org as it becomes available.

Guy Denny

Getting Acquainted

This last September 30th, ONAPA held its very first Legislative Reception for Ohio legislators and major office holders to acquaint and familiarize them with the work of ONAPA as a new statewide organization dedicated to promoting, protecting and improving Ohio's natural areas and preserves for educational and scientific purposes.

The event was organized by ONAPA Government Affairs Officer James McGregor, who is also President of the Board of Park Commissioners for the Columbus & Franklin County MetroParks and former State Representative for the 20th Ohio House District. Jim was assisted by Machel Ashbaugh who serves on his Government Affairs Committee. Co-hosting the event were ONAPA members Fran Buchholzer and Joe Sommer. Joe served as the Director of ODNR under the Celeste Administration and Fran served as the Director of ODNR under the Voinovich Administration.

The reception was held at Claddaugh Irish Pub and Restaurant in Columbus. A number of staffers from the Ohio House of Representatives were in attendance. We



Senator Faber



Senator Larry Obhof

were especially pleased to have Senate President Keith Faber along with Senate Majority Whip Larry Obhof attend the reception along with Senators Frank LaRose and Bob Peterson. This was a great first step in acquainting our elected leaders with ONAPA.

Guy Denny

American Bittersweet

Guy Denny

One of my fondest memories of growing up in the early 1950's was accompanying my family each autumn into the field to collect sprigs of American Bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*), a post WWII tradition in which many rural families took part. We would search along the edges of woodlots, thickets, and fence rows for this twining woody vine that climbed over everything including fences, shrubs, and well up into trees. Bunches of bittersweet with their array of colorful orange and bright scarlet fruits made a beautiful decorative fall arrangement along with Indian corn, gourds, and pumpkins. The cluster of curious looking, brightly colored fruits kept well, and retained their beauty for a very long time. To the inquisitive mind of a seven year old, bittersweet was truly a source of fascination.

The yellowish-white flowers of American

Bittersweet are small and inconspicuous. The plants are primarily dioecious, meaning staminate (male) and pistillate (female) flowers occur on separate plants. Sometimes, however, a few perfect flowers (male and female flower parts together) can be present on either sex plants. That means American Bittersweet can be "polygamo-dioecious" being mostly dioecious, but also having some perfect flowers. If you want to grow bittersweet in your garden in order to produce their fruit, it is best to plant both male and female plants together so they can easily cross pollinate.

The showy fruit of American Bittersweet is the real prize. The fruit is a large pea-sized, berry-like, roundish capsule with an orange covering. These capsules split open at maturity at which time the three-parted covering peels backwards, exposing a flashy bright crimson aril. An aril is the fleshy structure in which the individual seeds are embedded. The fruit, which persists well into winter, is relished by song birds and provide an important winter food source. The seeds are primarily dispersed by birds. Reportedly, at least 15 species of birds and a number of small mammals are known to feed on the fruit of the bittersweet.

American Bittersweet occurs throughout eastern North America including all 88 counties of Ohio. It tends to be widespread but not especially common in any one location. It is in its own family, the Bittersweet Family (*Celastraceae*) which is a very large family of about 98 genera and 1,200 different species. Many members of this family are tropical and sub-tropical. The genus *Celastrus*, pronounced "see LAS-truss", was applied to the genus in 1773 by the "father" of binomial nomenclature, Carolus Linnaeus, the renowned Swedish

botanist who lived from 1707 until 1778. Binomial nomenclature is simply the scientific system of giving every plant and animal a double name consisting of the name of the genus followed by that of the species within the genus. The generic epithet, *Celastrus* comes from the Greek "*Kelastros*", the name of an ancient evergreen tree. Although American Bittersweet is not evergreen, other species within the family are, including the non-native, highly invasive

Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*). The species name or specific epithet *scandens* comes from the Latin *scando* meaning "to climb or ascend" which is highly descriptive of the growth form of American Bittersweet. Don't confuse American Bittersweet with Bittersweet Nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*). Bittersweet Nightshade is the original Old World "bittersweet." Our North American bittersweet is not native to Europe. Bittersweet Nightshade is an herbaceous,

climbing, somewhat woody vine or shrub that has become widely naturalized, and common in North America. It is a member of the Nightshade Family (*Solanaceae*) as are potatoes, tomatoes, and tobacco. You may have seen Bittersweet Nightshade growing in your yard. The small numerous flowers have a deep purple corolla with a bright yellow "beak" of anthers. The fruit is red and it, as well as all parts of this plant, is poisonous if ingested.

Within the last several decades, a new species of bittersweet has come onto the scene in North America. Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), native to China, Korea, and Japan, was introduced through the nursery trade in 1870 and has since escaped from cultivation into the wild. It is considerably more aggressive than our native bittersweet and quickly colonizes new sites. It has moved rapidly from the East Coast westward and in recent years has become a terribly noxious invasive species in Ohio, especially in the borders of prairies and prairie savannas. Just like our native species, the oriental species is moved about by bird droppings. However, unlike our native species of bittersweet, it becomes very invasive, rapidly smothering and choking out other vegetation and even strangling or girdling large trees in which it can climb much higher than our native species of bittersweet. The seedlings of Oriental Bittersweet can tolerate shading unlike seedlings of American Bittersweet. This gives it a competitive edge over our native species. Worse yet, it is known to hybridize with American Bittersweet. Consequently, there is some concern that our pure American native genotype might eventually be lost through hybridization.

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American Bittersweet. Photo by Tim Snyder.

American Bittersweet

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Oriental Bittersweet tends to have very rounded or circular leaves, nearly as wide as they are long, hence the specific epithet *orbiculatus* which is derived from the Latin *orbis* meaning “circular”. American Bittersweet on the other hand, has leaves that are somewhat variable in shape but tend to be mostly oblong-elliptic to oval—more like the shape of the leaves of a wild cherry tree. Another conspicuous and major difference is in the placement of the flowers and fruit. In the Oriental Bittersweet, the flowers and fruit emerge in clusters of 2 or 3 axillary cymes. In other words, they emerge from along the stems of the vines in small clusters. Also, the fruits are a yellow capsule. By comparison, American Bittersweet has dull orange colored capsules and the flowers and fruits occur in clusters of 6 or more emerging from the terminal end of the new growth stems, not from the sides. Hybrids can be very difficult to identify since they can have a combination of characteristics.

Eliminating or controlling Oriental Bittersweet in natural areas and state nature preserves is a very challenging task. First the species has to be correctly identified, ideally when it first shows up on site before it gets a foothold. Each growing season, seedlings can

be repeatedly pulled out of the ground by hand or treated with a foliar herbicide application such as glyphosate; but, of course, birds will continually be depositing seeds into the area every year. Large established vines should be cut at ground level repeatedly throughout the growing season to exhaust their vigor and then have an herbicide such as triclopyr solution applied to the cut surface.

Controlling invasive species is a huge, ongoing essential task if we are to keep pristine natural areas from being contaminated and degraded with undesirable non-native species. You can help control invasive species in our state nature preserves by becoming an ONAPA volunteer. We can train you to be a preserve monitor, enabling you to recognize and report any occurrence of Oriental Bittersweet as well as other invasive species in the preserves. If you like to work hands-on, you can participate with other like-minded individuals on our preserve work trips to remove invasive species. Check out our website at www.onapa.org for more information about how to get involved.

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Deadline for Winter 2016 issue—February 1

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Deadline for submissions to the Winter—2016 Issue of ONAPA News is February 1st



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