



# ONAPA NEWS

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

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AUTUMN - 2018

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## ONAPA Member Kansas Trip Enjoyed by All!



ONAPA Members in front of the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve visitor center.

Twenty-four members had an opportunity to experience and enjoy the prairies of Kansas and compare them with the small remnant prairies of Ohio. Our trip began at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve on the afternoon of June 12<sup>th</sup> where all the members assembled to tour the new visitor center and take a three-mile bus trip out into the prairie and view the 10,894 acre preserve from the highest point in the prairie. On our way we had an opportunity to see a herd of American Bison (*Bison bison*) who were grazing along the bus tour road we were traveling. As they were moving away from the bus we were able to get off the bus to get some great photos of the Bison. It is an amazing sight to view these animals of the prairie. The panorama view of the prairie from the scenic overlook was spectacular. We were able to walk around the overlook and explore and photograph the prairie wildflowers that were blooming there.

The next day we returned to the preserve for a morning hike out into the prairie on the Southwind trail where we saw Collard Lizards (*Crotaphytus collaris*) and Regal Fritillary Butterflies (*Speyeria idalia*) on Orange milkweed as well as a many species of prairie wildflowers such as Lead plant (*Amorpha canescens*), Ground-plum milkvetch (*Astragalus crassicaarpus*), Purple prairie-clover (*Dalea purpurea*), Prairie coneflower (*Ratibida columnifera*), Compass Plant (*Silphium laciniatum*), and many others.

Later that afternoon, we traveled to Manhattan to visit the Flint Hills Discovery Center which is an outstanding Natural History Museum that acquaints visitors with the significance of this special region and its unique landscape. The tallgrass prairie once covered nearly 140 million acres of North America but now less

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## A Tale of Two Woods

In 1970, Richard Durrell completed a report for the U. S. Engineers Corps that listed the results of his inventory of the natural features of southwest Ohio. His work covered nineteen counties and attempted to describe every notable natural area or feature that might possibly be of interest.

One of the places he found was Millertown Woods. This was actually two woodlots on opposite bluffs of Nettle Creek valley. The western tract of 61 acres was smaller, but he rated it the "best" of the two because it had examples of sugar maple, white ash and tuliptree as much as two feet in diameter, and a few oaks that were even larger. The eastern tract also had good-sized trees and covered an area over twice as large. Over the past forty-five years, these two examples of mature forest have experienced vastly different histories.

At some point, the west woods was leased by its owner to an archery club which put up a small building, installed a parking lot and cut trails, mostly in the scrub woods growing up on former pastureland bordering the older forest. The east woods slumbered unmolested until the owner sold it to a party who promised to keep the trees. Once the deal was concluded, the new owner began cutting the trees and carving the woods into house lots.

Dismayed by this betrayal, the former owner was ready to listen when The Nature Conservancy (TNC), a private, non-profit organization that raises funds to purchase environmentally-important tracts of land, contacted him about his remaining woodlot. When he expressed an interest in having it protected, TNC notified the Davey Tree Expert Company which was looking for just such a project. Between them, they raised the finances, completed the purchase and then turned the area over to the Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves for management as Davey Woods State Nature Preserve.

At 103 acres, the preserve contains both the original west woods and most of the reverting pasture beside it, much of which has since grown up into a respectable second-growth forest of its own. The old archery club "improvements" have been removed and the trail system consolidated. Visitors can view some impressive trees, enjoy the spring wildflower show and follow the course of the small stream that winds its way down to Nettle Creek.

This is surprisingly hilly ground for western Ohio, a result of the glacial history of the area. The oversized valley in which Nettle Creek flows is actually



Davey Woods State Nature Preserve  
Photo by Tim Snyder.

older than the stream, for it was cut by a now-vanished meltwater river coming off the last continental glacier as it retreated. The force of its flow enabled it to cut a trench 100 feet deep into the glacial till left behind by the ice sheet. Davey Woods occupies the steep side of this trench, providing some interesting topography in an otherwise gently-rolling landscape.

Davey Woods State Nature Preserve in Champaign County can be reached from Urbana by traveling 7 miles west on US36, 1 mile north on Neal Road, ½ mile west on Smith Road, and then northwest on

Lonesome Road to the gated parking area. The other half of the old Millertown Woods—what's left of it--can be seen across the valley.

~ Tim Snyder

### Thank You for Your Support! Newest Members & Donors

Jacob Abel	Gregory Lipps
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Timothy J. Lavelly	
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8/3/18

## ONAPA Member Kansas Trip Enjoyed by All! cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

than 4 percent remains, mostly in the Flint Hills of Kansas. The Discovery Center had interactive displays and an introductory film with special effects that helped you experience the prairie at all seasons of the year. It is an amazing facility and worth the stop when traveling west on Interstate 70 through Kansas. While at the Discovery Center the members were also treated to a special presentation on the "Grassland Grouse in Kansas" by the Discovery Center's Curator of Education, Stephen Bridenstine. It was interesting to learn about the identification and life history of the various members of the grouse family including the Greater and Lesser prairie-chickens.

The next morning, we traveled a few miles out of Manhattan to visit Konza Prairie Biological Station. This 8,616 acre prairie is owned by the Nature Conservancy and is managed by Kansas State University which operates it as a biological field research station. Due to the predicted temperature of 103 degrees, part of the group decided to start their hike at 7:00 AM while others chose to start an hour later. Here we not only hiked in the prairie but also had an opportunity to experience hiking in a "gallery forest" along the stream valley on the station. A variety of prairie plants were seen and included Catclaw sensitive briar (*Mimosa nuttallii*), Illinois bundle-flower (*Desmanthus illinoensis*), Prickly poppy



American Bison who were grazing along the bus tour road we were traveling.



Collared lizard. Photo by Dean Babcock.



Regal fritillary. Photo by Jennifer Windus.

(*Argemone polyanthemus*), Silver-leaf scurf-pea (*Pediomelum argophyllum*), Black-sampson echinacea (*Echinacea angustifolia*), and many others. By the time we finished the early morning 2.6 mile hike the temperature had reached 91 degrees at about 10:45 AM, so we were happy that we started early. After the hikes

everyone either headed home or decided to see other sites in Kansas and Missouri.

The following comments summarize how well the trip was received: "I loved the field trips. It is definitely a section of the country I would not have visited without your planning the adventure. Never again will I let someone tell me Kansas was boring to drive through" (Virginia Blasingame). "Thanks to all who planned the trip. Loved the landscape (not how I imagined it), the Regal Frits, the Collard lizards and the Buffalo, etc. Great to travel with people who know so much about nature" (Barb Gelderloos). "Thanks to Guy, Jennifer and Dick for leading this very enriching and rewarding trip. It was the Best! Gary and I had a great time. ONAPA Rocks! (Jan Kennedy).

We hope that you will consider going on the next out-of-state trip to experience and enjoy new environments and good fellowship with folks who share your love of nature at its best. Come and join us on our next adventure!

~ Dick Moseley

## Stewardship in Action, Join Us this Fall

For stewardship project details and to register to participate, visit [www.onapa.org](http://www.onapa.org)  
Rain dates will also be posted on the website.

We also ask that you keep track of your volunteer time, including driving time to the site, and submit it online at <https://www.onapa.org/volunteer-hours.html>

Thursday, August 30, 10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. - Myersville Fen SNP (woody species removal in fen meadows)

Saturday, September 8, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. - Springfield/Gallagher Fen SNP (woody species removal in east fen)

Wednesday, September 19, 10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. - Kent Bog SNP (woody species removal)

Wednesday, October 10, 10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. - Gott Fen SNP (woody species removal)

Saturday, October 20, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. - Brinkhaven Oak Barrens (woody species removal)

Thursday, November 8, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. - Medway Prairie Fringed Orchid Site (woody species removal)

Wednesday, November 14, 10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. - Karlo Fen SNP (woody species removal)



### Join us for an ONAPA Summer Field Trip

**Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10 a.m.:** *Annual Prairie Seed Collecting Event at Denny's Tallgrass Prairie.* Meet at Guy Denny's residence, 6021 Mt. Gilead Road, Fredericktown, Ohio at 10:00 AM. **No participation limit.** This annual event is for those who want to collect Ohio native genotype prairie seeds to start or expand their prairie wildflower patches. Collect all the seeds you want, but please, no commercial collecting.

### SAVE THE DATES FOR TWO OIPC WORKSHOPS!

**Saturday, September 15th, 10am – 2pm**

**Possum Creek MetroPark**

**4790 Frytown Road, Dayton**

Learn more about invasive plants, control techniques, & alternatives for your landscaping & habitat restoration needs.

**Wednesday, October 17th, 10am-3pm**

**W.W. Knight Nature Preserve**

**29530 White Road, Perrysburg**

Learn more about invasive plants, control techniques, & alternatives for your landscaping & habitat restoration needs.

Register at [www.oipc.info](http://www.oipc.info)

## The “Snap, Crackle and Pop” of the Woodlands Witch-hazel (*Hammamelis virginiana*)

Witch-hazel is an attractive and fairly common shrub found throughout Ohio as well as throughout eastern North America. It is a species of stream bottom lands, open mesic woodlands, and dry sandy soils especially in the Oak Openings Region of Northwestern Ohio where it is a dominate understory species.

The generic name *Hamamelis* is derived from two Greek words: *hana* meaning “at the same time,” and *melis*, “a fruit.” This is an apt description for members of the genus *Hamamelis* for, contrary to the springtime flowering of most plants, witch-hazel blooms in late autumn at the same time it is in fruit. As a matter of fact, it is the last of all North American shrubs to flower which coincidentally is the same time seeds from the previous year are ripening. The strong-scented flowers of witch-hazel don't make an appearance until mid-October into early December when most woody species, including witch-hazel, are dropping their leaves in preparation for winter. The four wavy or crumpled, strap-like liner yellow petals give the flower an almost spider-like appearance adding color to the otherwise drab post autumn landscape.

Two hard, shiny black seeds are contained within each of the pale brown woody seed capsules situated along the branchlets. As these seed capsules reach maturity, which takes about a year, they shrink and split open at the top exposing the seeds. As they continue shrinking, considerable pressure is exerted upon the seeds until suddenly, with an audible snap or pop, they are forcefully shot out of the capsule up to a distance of 15-20 feet. This is why in some parts of its range witch-hazel is also known as “snapping hazel.” The empty seed capsules can remain on the branchlets for another season or more. The small seeds are said to be edible, however, they are only about the size and shape of a large grain of rice and nearly impossible to find once ejected. In spite of its common name, this tall, bushy shrub is not, nor has it ever been, associated with witchcraft. Instead, the witch in witch-hazel comes from the Old English word “Wyche,” a term used to describe pliable branches. Reportedly, witch-hazel was given its name by English settlers who thought its leaves looked similar to those of the hazel elm of England which is the hazel of their homeland. The



Witch-hazel flower



Witch-hazel fruit

closest thing to super natural powers witch-hazel possesses is derived from dowsers who favor diving-rods fashioned from the forked branches of witch-hazel believing them to have special powers for locating water and precious ores.

At one time in the not too distant past, a bottle of witch-hazel distillate could be found in just about every medicine cabinet in America. Witch-hazel was listed in the U.S. Pharmacopia from 1862

-1916, and in the National Formulary from 1910-1955. A recent visit to my local grocery store confirmed that witch-hazel distillate is still available as a home remedy for treating skin irritations, bruises, sore muscles, and minor sprains. It is also still used in some bath lotions, shaving creams, and other beauty aids. Witch-hazel liniment is distilled from the branches of this shrub. As is the cases of most medicinal herbs, it was the North American Indians who taught settlers about the medicinal value of witch-hazel. Native Americans highly valued witch-hazel for the medicinal properties of its leaves, twigs, and bark which were best harvested in the fall. The fresh leaves contain very high concentrations of

astrigent tannin making them useful as compresses for treating inflamed eyes, skin irritations, small cuts, insect bites, minor burns, infections, and to stop minor bleeding. They were even thought to be useful in treating headaches.

The Iroquois made a pleasant tea by steeping witch-hazel leaves and then sweetening the brew with maple syrup. This tea also served as a gargle for irritated throats, sore gums, and as a general mouth freshener. The Potawatomi reportedly utilized witch-hazel sweat baths to treat fevers, colds, coughs, and to relieve sore muscles. The Menominies of Wisconsin, reportedly boiled the leaves and rubbed the solution on their legs to limber up as well as to treat sore muscles. A decoction prepared by steeping the inner bark was considered by the Mohawks to be especially useful as an eyewash for bathing irritated eyes. Witch-hazel wood, which is very strong and flexible, was also said to have been used for making bows.

By today's medical standards, witch-hazel is now

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## The “Snap, Crackle and Pop” of the Woodlands Witch-hazel ((Cont’d)

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considered to be of little or no medical value. Nevertheless, this species has a long and fascinating history of such use. Regardless, witch-hazel remains one of our more interesting shrubs; a species with which it is well worth going out of your way to become acquainted.  
 ~ Guy Denny

## Support Nature Preserves on Your Vehicle

With its brightly colored purple coneflower and majestic monarch butterfly, this license plate is a perfect symbol for the beauty found in Ohio’s 136 state nature preserves. When you purchase the new Nature Preserves plate, your \$15 donation will support facility and trail improvements, as well as provide new educational opportunities for visitors. Let Ohio know you support your nature preserves! Order your Nature Preserves plate today! Visit [oplates.com](http://oplates.com)



## ONAPA’s New Stewardship Assistants

Welcome to ONAPA's three 2018 stewardship assistants, Brad Von Blon (left), Brad Small (center), and Valerie Sasak (right)! ONAPA is happy to be able to contract with three very qualified individuals this year to help us with stewardship projects, rare plant projects, preserve monitoring, and other preserve activities. They started in May and will be working through November.



Brad Von Blon, Brad Small, and Valerie Sasak

Brad Von Blon graduated from West Virginia University with a degree in Wildlife & Fisheries Resources in May 2017. He worked at Seney National Wildlife Refuge in Michigan after he graduated as well as at Gorman Nature Center

in Mansfield. Brad lives in Belleville.

Brad Small graduated from the University of Akron with a degree in Biology in the summer of 2017. He worked on summer research projects at the University of Akron at Bath Preserve on wetland management as well as native bee surveys. Brad lives in Wadsworth. He is also working part-time for DNAP in the northeastern Ohio preserves with Charlotte McCurdy.

Valerie Sasak graduated from Cleveland State University with a degree in Environmental Biology in May 2018. She has experience in wetland restoration and watershed stewardship while volunteering at some of the Cleveland Metroparks. Valerie lives in North Royalton.

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## New Board Members



**Randy Haar** worked as a mechanical engineer in the private sector for 29 years before joining Owens Community College in 2009 where he teaches Alternative Energy, Environmental Science, Safety, and Engineering curriculum. He completed the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist (OCVN) program in 2011 and has volunteered in many capacities with Metroparks Toledo and Wood County Parks, including rare plant monitoring and teaching the plant portion of recent OCVN classes. Randy and his wife Chris have led a series of spring wildflower walks in Oak Openings since 2013 and through a program with the Green Ribbon Initiative have adopted an oak barrens in the Oak Opening Metropark and work to remove invasive and other unwanted plants there.



**Gordon Maupin** retired as Executive Director of The Wilderness Center, a nature center and land conservancy, located near Wilmot, Ohio. He served from 1981 to 2014, but often tells people that he never held the same job two years in a row. He studied biology and plant taxonomy/ecology at Missouri State University earning bachelors and master's degrees.

Prior to joining the Wilderness Center he worked for the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. From 1992 to 2002 he served on the Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA) Board of Trustees including two years as Board President. In 2006, ANCA honored him with its ANCA Leadership Award, the highest recognition in the field of Nature Centers.

In the 1990s, he expanded the mission of The Wilderness Center making it a land conservancy in addition to its educational mission. In early 2000s, he again transformed the mission of The Wilderness Center to include a variety of "ecopreneurial" activities including wetland mitigation, Foxfield Preserve (a nature preserve cemetery), consulting forestry, and ecotourism. He and his wife Margaret have two grown sons. The Maupin's live in Orrville, Ohio.

## One of ONAPA's Founding Board Members, Former ODNR Director . . . Honored

Stark County Parks opened the new Joseph J. and Helen M. Sommer Wildlife Conservation Center at Sippo Lake Park June 9, 2018. The \$3- million facility is dedicated to conservation and rehabilitation of native wildlife and their habitat through research, education, and quality animal care. The environmentally friendly designed building includes facilities for treating injured wildlife as well as outdoor enclosures for recovering wildlife. Animals that cannot be treated and released back into the wild are retained for display and educational programs. The center also provides research and office space for Stark County Park staff and volunteers as well as facilities for fieldwork and research with local universities.

Joseph Sommer, and his late wife Helen worked to establish the Stark County Park District in 1967. Joe served as a park commissioner and Stark County Commissioner. Joe has served in many capacities in state government, most notably as past Director of



**Bill Bryan, Denise Freeland, Joe Sommer, and Bob Fonte breaking the ground for a new Wildlife Center.**

the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. In recognition of his many achievements, Joe has been inducted into the ODNR Conservation Hall of Fame and the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association Hall of Fame for his distinguished service on both the local and state level.

We at the Ohio Natural Areas & Preserves Association are especially proud of Joe for serving as a founding board member of ONAPA. Joe is a strong advocate for ONAPA

and for the preservation of our best remaining natural areas for the enjoyment of this as well as future generations of Ohioans. During his tenure as Director of ODNR, he helped add more than 1,600 acres to the state nature preserve system. A humble leader of exceptional integrity, knowledge, and leadership skills, Joe now continues serving as an advisor to the board of ONAPA, and we couldn't be prouder of his lifetime achievements and of Joe as a great individual who has provided a lifetime of service to the citizens of Ohio. Congratulations Joe!

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