

# ONAPA NEV

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

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# Natural Areas Program celebrates a half century of preserving our natural heritage

By Dick Moseley

Time goes by so quickly that it is hard to believe that fifty years have passed since the inception of the Natural Areas Program in the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The real story of preservation began years earlier when it was obvious that private efforts alone could not stop natural areas from being developed into sub-divisions, shopping malls, and other uses. State Representative Robert Holmes of Columbus sponsored a resolution expressing concern over losses of natural areas and threats to the last remnants of Ohio's natural heritage. This resolution was adopted by the House in August of 1967 but nothing happened for nearly two years until the Ohio Legislative Service Commission approved a study of areas of unusual natural significance to be

preserved for present and future generations. This study resulted in the introduction of S.B. 113, the Ohio Natural Areas Bill, by Senator Clara Weisenborn of Dayton. This legislation was passed on May 22, 1970 and signed by Governor James A. Rhodes on June 1, 1970 and became effective on August 31, 1970.

The Ohio Natural Areas Act later became a national model that other states used to create similar legislation in their state. At the time, only Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana had similar preservation programs. This Act authorized the Department of Natural Resources to acquire and administer a statewide system of Nature Preserves which possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural history of Ohio.

We should consider ourselves fortunate that despite a long history of neglect, insensitivity, enormous population growth and extensive suburban sprawl, a few remnants of Ohio's natural features remained relatively unspoiled. These magnificent areas often are not only the last refuges for many rare and endangered plant and animals, but are the last refuges for us as well. These refuges provide the last



Clifton Gorge was one of the first 15 areas to be protected under the Natural Areas Act.

opportunities for the city dweller to commune with the natural world and enjoy the quiet serenity that only these areas can offer.

Ohio has made great strides in preserving these vestiges of wild and natural places in the state over the last 50 years. The State Nature Preserve System now stands at 138 preserves and natural areas involving 31,183 acres of land and water. The preserve system now has a variety of forests, bogs, fens, alvars, sand dunes, prairies, swamps, marshes, endangered species habitats, and geological features such as natural bridges, eskers, and glacial grooves. This may seem to be a sufficient number of areas being preserved, but there are many unique areas still to be acquired and preserved before they disappear forever.

Of what value are these preserves? In short, society needs nature preserves

to serve in the following ways: as a laboratory and classroom, as a museum, as a passive recreation area and as a reservoir, not of water, but of a diversity of living forms, containing genes which may be of untold value in the future. Because we really know very little about this world we live in, we must keep the undisturbed nature we have until we have learned more of its possible practical uses.

What's our responsibility as citizens of this state? Natural areas laws, designations and programs mean very little without the concern of its citizens. The dedication of a natural area as a preserve does not make it such, nor does it assure that it will remain in its present state of preservation. A unique natural area will only remain such if it is managed properly and the "user" values it highly enough to wisely care for its preservation. It is because of this responsibility that ONAPA was founded 8 years ago to help assure that these areas would be properly managed for present and future generations to enjoy.

(Continued on page 2)

Continued from page 1

## Highlights of Natural Areas Act to celebrate

## Celebrating 50 years of Preservation!

To celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Natural Areas Act, this edition of the *ONAPA News* will be devoted to re-living some of the highlights of the Natural Area Program during that time period especially in the formative years of the program of which you may not be aware.

The First Natural Areas Council



Natural Areas council members visit Darby Creek Scenic River. (Left to right): Jeanne Hawkins, Dr. David Stansbery, Dr. J. Arthur Herrick, Dr. Richard Durrell, Dick Moseley, and Dr. David Rigney.

Following the passage of the Natural Areas Bill, Governor Rhodes appointed the first members of the Natural Areas Council. The members included Dr. David Stansbery, Chairman, who represented Ohio Museums; Dr. Richard Durrell, Vice-Chairman, who represented Ohio Colleges and Universities; Jeanne Hawkins, Secretary, at-large member; Bert Szabo, who represented Metropolitan Park Districts; Dr. David Rigney, at-large Member; Paul Knoop, who represented Ohio Outdoor Education Programs; and Bill Price, at-large member.

It is interesting to note that the Council, by law, was to meet quarterly but because of the need to get the program started on the right foot, the council met 8 times in the first year of the program. Their accomplishments are as follows: (1) established the Preserve Classification System, (2) developed a list of 79 potential sites to be evaluated and 30 of these were on state owned lands; (3) proposed a budget for 71-73 Biennium for land acquisition - 11 areas for \$804,000; (4) developed natural area proposal form for public input; (5) developed considerations for Articles of Dedication; (6) developed rules and regulations for nature preserve use; and (7) proposed legislation to develop penalties for violation of rules, later becoming H.B. 724.

## The First Fifteen

Thanks to Senator Weisenborn's foresight, she knew that the new program would need funding to begin the acquisition of these special areas. In anticipation of the passage of the Natural Areas Bill, she was able to get \$400,000 earmarked in the Capital Improvements Budget for land acquisition of natural areas prior to the passage of the Act. Consequently, the new program had funds immediately for land acquisition and quickly began to acquire these special areas starting with Fowler Woods, Little Rocky Hollow, Caesar Creek Gorge,

Adams Lake Prairie and Clear Fork Gorge in that order. Seymour Woods by gift and then Cranberry Bog, Highbanks, Walter Tucker, and Mentor Marsh Nature Preserves were added to the program through dedication. Eagle Creek, Shallenberger, and Blackhand Gorge were purchased in late 1973 and Clifton Gorge and Hueston Woods by dedication. In 25 months, the Program had assembled the first 15 areas of what is now the State Nature Preserve System for Ohio.

### Ohio Natural Heritage Program

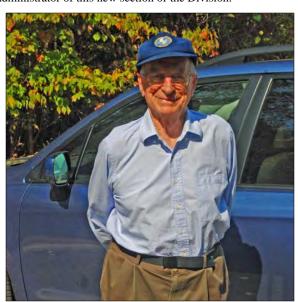
In 1976, Ohio was the sixth state in the nation to enter into a formal contract with the national office of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to establish the Ohio Natural Heritage Program. The concept and methodology were developed by TNC to provide a systematic,



Heritage staffer Mary Ann Silagy enters data into the Heritage database.

on-going program for identifying ecologically significant areas, communities, species and geological features, and protect them from adverse impacts. Funds from the George Gund Foundation and the U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's

Land & Water Conservation Fund were used to initially establish the program for Ohio. TNC hired and trained the Heritage staff for this 15-month project. ODNR provided office space, equipment, and computer resources for the Heritage staff. More importantly, ODNR agreed to continue this program and staff at the end of the contract period. Consequently, on August 1, 1977, the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves took over the funding and operation of the Natural Heritage Program with Robert M. McCance being appointed as administrator of this new section of the Division.



ONAPA member at Kent Bog in 2018: Bert Szabo, age 100 this year, is one of the original Natural Areas Council members.



The Lakeside Daisy is one of the many rare plants that the Division of Natural Areas protects on state nature preserves.

#### First DNAP Newsletter

The Division of Natural Areas & Preserves produced its first issue of the Newsletter in April, 1978 which was four pages long and highlighted our move from the second floor of Building E to the first floor of Building F at Fountain Square. This was done to accommodate the Heritage Program staff which was originally at 1500 Dublin Road. It is interesting to note that Director Robert W. Teater sent his copy of the Newsletter back to me with the following note: "Very Good in spite of 4 pages!"

## First Woman Preserve Manager

Ms. Tina Takach became the first female preserve manager of the Division and was assigned as manager of Blackhand Gorge Nature Preserve. As manager of this preserve, she also had responsibility for Cranberry Bog, Knox Woods and Gahanna Woods Nature Preserves. Tina was a seasonal naturalist with the Division of Parks and Recreation for four seasons prior to being named as preserve manager in June 1978

### Protection of Ohio Endangered Plants

Substitute House Bill 908, the endangered plant bill, passed and became law on August 23, 1978. This act gave the responsibility of protecting endangered species of Ohio native plants to the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. It required the Chief of the Division to develop criteria for identifying and designating species which are in danger of extirpation; it also required that the Chief adopt a state endangered plant list. The bill prohibits the removal of endangered plants from public property and from private property without written permission of the owner of the property. Ohio joined six other states at the time which had some form of protection of endangered plants.

## Ohio Natural Landmark Program

The Natural Landmark Program was created in 1978 by the staff of the Division of Natural Areas & Preserves. This program was designed to identify, register and encourage preservation of both privately and publicly owned natural areas of statewide significance. The primary goal of the program is to inform landowners, who wish to retain ownership and all rights to their property, of the natural significance of their property. The owners are recognized for helping to protect a part of Ohio's natural heritage and are given a "Landmark Certificate" that officially designates the site as a



Officials from Dayton, Power and Light are presented with a certificate recognizing the establishment of the Milford Center Prairie as an Ohio Natural Landmark. (Left to right) Susan Sandro, Dayton Power & Light, Elaine Lantz, Dayton Power & Light, Dick Moseley, and Jan Williams, DNAP staffer.

registered state natural landmark. This program was funded by the Natural Areas Tax Checkoff fund. By August 5, 1987, Milford Center Prairie became the 24<sup>th</sup> area registered as an Ohio Natural Landmark. The Dayton Power and Light Company was presented the Ohio Natural Landmark plaque on that date at a ceremony at the prairie.

#### Ohio Ginseng Management Program

The Division of Natural Areas and Preserves assumed responsibility for the regulation of ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) harvesting in Ohio. This added responsibility resulted from the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) which is an international treaty to prevent species from becoming endangered or extinct because of international trade. CITES listed ginseng as a species of concern and Ohio had to develop a management program for this species before any ginseng could be exported from the state for international trade.

Continued on page 5

## Summer volunteers' stewardship projects improve natural areas

## By Jennifer Windus

With our four stewardship assistants on board and well-trained, we have been busy on preserves during June, July and August. We are thankful we still have a small core group of volunteers joining us and have even recruited some new volunteers this season.

We had volunteer projects at Milford Center Prairie, Chaparral

Prairie, Cedar Bog, Jackson Bog, and Clifton Gorge (see our eNews, Facebook page, or website for more details). We have also been working hard at Brinkhaven Oak Barrens with the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust to control Japanese stiltgrass, a relatively new invasive grass there.

In addition to invasive plant control, we assisted USFWS with surveys for the Eastern prairie fringed orchid on four days. We searched for other rare plants to update records at Pallister Preserve and Sheldon Marsh. We cooperated with other partners at Richfield Heritage Preserve and Knox County Park District. We collected purple loosestrife beetles from Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area to distribute at Jackson Bog. Other projects included Myersville Fen, Meilke Road Savanna Wildlife Area, and some of the central Ohio prairies.

Fall projects have been scheduled and a complete description can be found at www.ONAPA.org/VOLUNTEER:

- Saturday, September 5 at Gallagher Fen SNP
- Wednesday, September 9 at Cranberry Bog SNP (also, Wednesday October 5 and Thursday, November 7)
- Thursday, September 17 at Kiser Lake Fen SNP
- Thursday, October 15 at Prairie Road Fen SNP
- Wednesday, October 21 at Karlo Fen SNP







Photos by Jennifer Windus

Clockwise, from top: Tree is removed at Jackson Bog; volunteers treat invasive cattails at Richfield Heritage Preserve; cedars are removed at Cedar Bog.

- Saturday, October 24 at Brinkhaven Oak Barrens SNP
- Tuesday, November 10 at Medway Prairie Fringed Orchid site
- Tuesday, November 17 at Lakeside Daisy SNP (new addition)
- To be rescheduled: The Fowler Woods SNP boardwalk reconstruction will delay any stewardship projects until further notice.

## Thank you for your support of June's BIG GIVE Event

The ONAPA Board of Directors sends a Big Thank You to all our members and friends who generously donated to the Natural Areas & Preserves Association through the Columbus Foundation's BIG Give Event which was held June 10th & 11th. ONAPA received \$15,431.11 in donations and with the bonus pool pro-rata match of \$1,016.91, the final amount raised was \$16,448.02.

In analyzing the results, there were 100 donors to ONAPA and of those donors 56 were members and 44 were nonmembers but obviously the latter group support what we are doing. This money will definitely go a long way in financing the four stewardship assistants who are working for ONAPA this season. It is interesting to note that the total money raised through the BIG Give amounted to \$32,588,660 for 1,107

non-profit organizations. The Columbus Foundation said that it was overwhelmed by the generosity shown by the BIG GIVE donors.

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## Continued from page 3

# Natural areas program 50 years strong

Governor James A. Rhodes signed an Executive Order on August 1, 1979 giving the Division this responsibility. Ohio's Ginseng Management Program established a collecting season and required growers and dealers to obtain state certification for their activities. Our management program was approved by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Wildlife Permit Office on September 11, 1979.

## The 50<sup>th</sup> Natural Area

Samuel Gross Memorial Woods State nature preserve in Shelby County became the 50<sup>th</sup> area acquired or dedicated by the Division. It was a 40-acre gift of land from the Gross family in honor of Samuel Gross and was transferred to the Division in early 1980. The Nature Conservancy played a major role in the acquisition of this swamp forest community. TNC held the property in trust until such time as the State of Ohio could complete the necessary federal grant application. The gift of 40 acres generated an additional \$105,000 in federal matching funds for the Division.

### Tax Checkoff Bill

Governor Richard Celeste signed into law Amended House Bill 5 on July 15, 1983. This legislation created a system which permits Ohioans to contribute their state income tax refund to either or both of the nature preserves, scenic rivers and endangered species programs of the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves and the non-game and endangered wildlife management programs of the Division of Wildlife. In the first year of the tax check-off, the Division received \$692,464 from 169,240 contributors. The Division of Wildlife received \$489,234 from 135,758 contributors. These figures were most likely influenced by promotional efforts particularly in urban areas where the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves was most active in promoting the check-off. As a result, the Division announced plans to purchase 10 new natural areas and scenic river sites using these funds, totaling over 500 acres.

#### Monitoring and Research Program

One of the most exciting projects made possible by the Tax Check-off Program was the newly created Monitoring and Research

Program of the Division of Natural
Areas and Preserves.
This program, using college interns supervised by
Jennifer Windus, an existing staff member, not only benefited the preserves, it also provided the students with the opportunity to gain firsthand field experience in re-



Robert Sanford, Lou Campbell Preserve manager, monitoring wild lupines.

search and monitoring. The primary mission of this newly created program was to gather ecological data to be used for the effective management of species and biological communities within the state nature preserve system. The first two college interns, Sandra Washington and Deborah Clevenger were hired for the 1985 season. Both of these women entered natural resources work upon completion of their internships, with Sandra having a career in the National Park Service, and Deborah working for the Division of Watercraft and later becoming a teacher in Hawaii. The program provided valuable

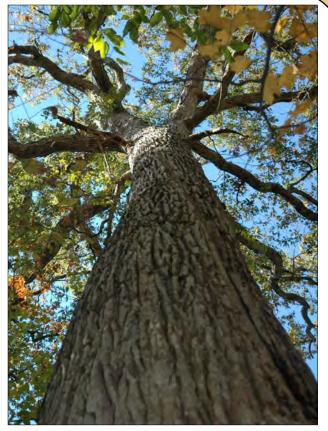


Photo courtesy of the Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves.

## Stately trees inhabit the Samuel Gross Memorial Woods State Nature Preserve, the Division's 50<sup>th</sup> preserve.

information to the preserve managers and other staff for preserve management. This program also oversaw the small research grants program which provided Checkoff funds to researchers to study rare plants and animals at state nature preserves and other natural areas.

## 15th Anniversary of the Natural Areas Program

August 31, 1985 marked the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Natural Areas Act. Although the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves has done an unprecedented job of preserving Ohio's vanishing natural heritage, the job has only begun. To date, a total of 11,500 acres scattered throughout Ohio has been protected under the Natural Areas Program. The 68 preserves represent a significant part of our Ohio landscape; however, if they were all pulled together into a giant preserve that preserve would still only be a little more than one-half the size of Ohio's largest state park, Salt Fork State Park near Cambridge.

## The Natural Areas Act of 1970 — 20 Years Later

August 31, 1990 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the enactment of Amended Senate Bill 113, the Natural Areas Bill. Little did I know that five months later that I would be leaving the Division as Chief to become the new Deputy Director of the Department of Natural Resources, overseeing the five divisions involved in land management and law enforcement—Parks & Recreation, Wildlife, Forestry, Natural Areas & Preserves and Watercraft.

When I look back at what we accomplished, we can all be proud of our success in these formative years. We were able to acquire and protect 103 areas involving nearly 20,000 acres of land that became the State Nature Preserve System. It was the tireless work and dedication of my staff that I give credit for all our accomplishments in those first 20 years.

# Tree strategy for winter gives us our Fall color

#### By Tim Snyder

The early immigrants from England to America were familiar with the peculiar autumn habits of deciduous trees, but not on so vast a scale as presented by North America. They found the change so abrupt when the leaves dropped that they gave autumn a new name: Fall.

The spectacular colors of autumn that we humans enjoy so much are the outward sign of inner changes that are to the tree very serious business. Without this annual "shutting down", the tree would be hard-pressed to survive the coming winter. While leaf-fall is the most obvious sign of this annual process, it is but one part of it. For trees, the danger in winter is two-fold: cold and drought. Their strategy combats both.

The problem with coldness is that it can cause water in the tree to freeze. Ice crystals are sharp as daggers and can rip through delicate cell walls, causing their contents to spill out (this is why most garden plants go limp after a hard frost). Trees solve this problem by withdrawing most of their water into an underground root system where it will be protected from freezing. Only enough water remains in the above-ground parts to maintain life. That water is thickened with sugars which lower its freezing point, forming in effect a natural anti-freeze.

Leaf fall is also a part of this strategy. The deciduous leaf is an amazing adaptation to food production. Its broad surface is oriented to catch as much energizing sunlight as possible. It is thin so that light can pass through it, activating green chlorophyll "food factories" embedded within it. These advantages, however, become liabili-



Photos by Guy Denny

Ohio's forest trails are lined with evidence of winter's approach.



ties in winter. The leaves' broad surfaces catch the force of the wind and would be quickly torn to pieces by a winter gale. (Have you noticed how tattered they are after just a summer?) They are also a tree's largest contributor to water loss. A leaf gives off a prodigious amount of water vapor each day as part of the mechanism whereby water is pulled from the ground up to the highest leaf. In summer when the soil is saturated, this is no problem, but in winter the ground is frozen and so the water is unavailable. Winter is a season of drought. So the tree shuts down its vulnerable, water-using food factories.

It does this by forming a corky layer of cells (called an "abscission layer") across the base of the leaf's stem. This shuts off the flow of water and nutrients into the leaf and the flow of leaf sugars produced by the remaining chlorophyll out of it. The green chlorophyll which is continuously breaking down can no longer be replaced. More stable yellow and orange pigments (carotenoids) which have been present all along are unmasked. Sugars trapped in the leaf form red and violet pigments called anthocyanins, and autumn's spectacular colors paint the woodlands.

Eventually the leaves fall or are carried off by wind. The abscission layer remains as a bandage over the wound. The tree is ready for winter.

Snyder is an ONAPA Board member and retired DNAP preserve manager.

## Seed collecting set for Sept. 26

Seed collecting is back in 2020 at Denny's Prairie.
We won't have a big gathering at the beginning to review the plants, but we will have volunteers stationed throughout the prairie to help with plant identification.
We will also have displays. Shirts, hats and bandanas will be available for a donation.

Registration is not necessary, but you will want to bring paper bags, marker, bug spray and water to drink.

Details are at <a href="https://www.onapa.org">www.onapa.org</a>.

## Gentians among the loveliest of autumn blooms

## By Guy Denny

The gentians are among our loveliest and latest blooming autumn wildflowers. The genus Gentiana honors King Gentius of ancient Greece who ruled the small monarchy of Illyria situated along the east coast of the Adriatic Sea. It was he who supposedly discovered the medicinal properties of some species of gentians.

The soapwort gentian (Gentiana saponaria) is mostly a plant of the lower Atlantic Coastal Plain and Gulf Coastal plain. Yet it ranges sparingly inland to Tennessee, Ohio, northern Illinois, and formally in southern Michigan. It also occurs sporadically west to eastern Oklahoma and eastern Texas. It can be found growing on moist or seasonally wet, often sandy, soils in wet meadows, alder thickets, along lake shores, and within open woods. This gentian tends to be infrequent at the limits of its range, but in ideal habitats a number of specimens may be found scattered within a given area. The common name "soapwort" is reportedly derived from the notion that the leaves of the soapwort gentian resemble the foliage of the common, non-native and invasive roadside plant, bouncing bet, also known as soapwort (Saponaria officinalis). The name "Saponaria" comes from the Latin word "sapo" for soap. Soapwort has a sap that when crushed and mixed with water forms a soapy lather. The suffix "wort" comes from Old English "wyrt" meaning a plant or herb.

In Ohio, the soapwort gentian is officially listed as an endangered species. While there are a few records from two counties in southwestern Ohio, it is best known from a few sites within the Oak Openings region of northwestern Ohio. The largest known population occurs at Lou Campbell State Nature Preserve in Lucas County. In 1984, Jenni-



Photos by Guy Denny

Above, the more common bottle gentian, which generally blooms earlier than the soapwort gentian.

Right, bouncing bet, is also known as a soapwort, but is no gentian: non-native and invasive.





Soapwort gentian is endangered in Ohio.

fer Windus, who at that time was the Administrator of the Monitoring and Research Program for the ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, began a project to monitor the Campbell population of approximately 700 plants in order to learn more about the life history of this rare gentian and how best to manage its habitat (Jennifer, now retired, is the Vice President of ONAPA).

One of the first discoveries made in 1985 was that only eight percent of all seed capsules produced from these soapwort gentians successfully dispersed seed that year. Approximately 92 percent of all seed capsules investigated were so severely damaged by the seed predation larva activity of the dull-barred endothenia moth (*Endothenia hebesana*), that the seed dispersal mechanism was impaired and most of the seeds were either eaten or rotted within the capsules.

The beautiful distinctive bright-blue tubular flowers, which turn more purple-blue with age, appear in late September through early October. This perennial, which stands about 1-2 feet high, can easily be confused with the more common closed or bottle gentian (G. andrewsii). However, soapwort gentian typically blooms later than bottle gentian. Also, if you spread the corolla (the united petals forming the tubular flowers) out by hand, in the bottle gentian, the plaits or folds between the corolla lobes are wider and longer than the lobes, but distinctively shorter and narrower in soapwort gentian. But even using these identifying characteristics, soapwort gentian is difficult even for professional botanists to accurately identify especially considering there is a certain amount of variation in both populations from different parts of the range as well as from among individuals within a single population. Your best opportunity for viewing this lovely and very rare fall-blooming wildflower is at Lou Campbell State Nature Preserve located just east of Toledo Express Airport.

## **ONAPA Annual Meeting cancelled**

The 8<sup>th</sup> ONAPA Annual Meeting was to be August 22, 2020 at West Woods Nature Center in Geauga County in Northeastern Ohio. Ian Adams and Jennifer Windus had planned an outstanding program, with expert speakers and variety of field trips for all to enjoy.

Unfortunately, with the continued rise in the number of Covid-19 cases in Ohio, President Guy Denny and the ONAPA Board made the difficult decision to cancel the Annual Meeting so as to protect those in attendance as well as the speakers and field trip leaders.

We regret that we are not able to hold this annual event as we were all looking forward to seeing each other and share the experiences of the planned program.

The Board wants to thank Ian Adams and Jennifer Windus for their hard work in planning this meeting, and to thank the speakers for their willingness to participate in the program.



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