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LLT'S AUTUMN EQUINOX CELEBRATION: WELCOMING THE CHANGING SEASONS

By Jen Jacquot

As the seasons transitioned and the first day of Autumn arrived, the community came together to celebrate this beautiful occasion at Infirmiry Mound Park in Granville, Ohio.

The free event offered an enriching and engaging experience for everyone who attended. The evening brought a blend of festivities, education, and stargazing under the autumn night sky. Visitors enjoyed autumn-themed arts and crafts, learned about flint knapping and local bees and insects, and children even had the chance to participate in moving, grooving activities.

Under the expert guidance of astronomy enthusiasts Wes Walter, Christian Harris, and Gary Schnettler, attendees gathered for a s'mores and stargazing session. The crisp autumn air and the captivating night sky provided the perfect backdrop for this enchanting experience.

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Stargazers led by Wes Walter, Christian Harris, & Gary Schnettler
Photo by Jen Jacquot

THE HODGSON PROPERTY – A DIFFERENT WAY TO CONSERVE LAND By Jeremy King



Hodgson Farm - cultivated fields interspersed with forested areas.

The 237 acre Hodgson farm is located in Fallsbury Township in the north-east corner of Licking County. The farm is nestled in rolling hills with tillable land, a nice tract of forest and a couple of streams - which are being restored with wetlands. A few years ago, landowner Christine Hodgson, and the firm, Water & Land Solutions, approached the Licking

Land Trust about helping to conserve the farm using a different mechanism for protection, an Environmental Covenant.

Many are familiar with the more traditional way to preserve and protect land through conservation easements. The Trust holds several easements; it is our responsibility to be active stewards to ensure the terms of each easement are being met.

What is an Environmental Covenant? Environmental Covenants are often required as a condition of clean-up or remediation for a property as a means to ensure long-term stewardship and monitoring. However, they are also used when doing wetland restoration as part of Ohio's wetland mitigation bank program.

Since the late 18th century, 90% of Ohio's wetland resources have been destroyed or degraded through draining, filling, or other changes. Because of the valuable functions wetlands perform, it is imperative to ensure that all impacts to wetlands are properly mitigated. Wetland mitigation can occur by purchasing credits at an approved wetland

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WELCOME OUR NEW BOARD MEMBER!



Scott Gray

Scott Gray is the newest member of LLT's Board of Trustees, joining the Board in July. Scott has been the Manager/Lender at the Park National Bank's Granville Branch for the last 3 years and at the PNB Reynoldsburg Branch before moving to his current position. Scott brings essential expertise and experience in financial management to the LLT Board.

A native Ohioan, Scott grew up in New Washington near Bucyrus. He attended Wittenberg University in Springfield, OH majoring in Business Administration. Scott has worked in the banking industry for nearly

36+ years at a variety of institutions in Ohio and in Florida.

Scott lives in Newark with his wife Michele, two teenage children, Ethan and Rylee, and Bailey, their Blue Merle Labradoodle. Scott and his son Ethan also run a small mowing business. He also enjoys coaching for the Granville Rec District, currently basketball. In his free time he loves family game nights, and is learning to play Pickleball. Truly community minded, Scott serves as the Treasurer of the Granville Rotary Club.

Attending the last three years of Farm to Fork, LLT's annual fundraising event, Scott learned about the conservation goals and activities of the Trust. His love for the outdoors and the desire to help protect greenspace in Licking and surrounding communities led him to join the LLT Board.

AUTUMN EQUINOX CELEBRATION

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We are grateful to all the partners and participants who made this celebration a heartwarming success. Our thanks go to the Licking Parks District, Pollinator Pathways, Artist Sarah Gray (photo 3), Denison University, Village Creative Dance, Ohio History Connection, Flint Ridge Ancient Quarries & Nature Preserve, Holly Latteman of Dawes Arboretum, Explore Licking County, Karen Goodell for her local bees and insects display (photo 1), and Lindsay O'Dell for face painting (photo 2). We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the talented folk band, Thistleswitch, whose music added a delightful touch to the evening's festivities.

We are excited to continue fostering such meaningful connections in our community and look forward to future festivities that unite us in celebrating the changing seasons. Thank you to all who joined us in welcoming Autumn!



Photos by Jen Jacquot



A BUSY SEASON FOR LICKING COUNTY POLLINATOR PATHWAY By Susan King and Amy Mock

Native Plant Sale To help community members install more pollinator-friendly plants, Pollinator Pathways, in partnership with the Licking Land Trust, organized a very successful native plant sale in September. The sale featured 16-plant kits and lots of individual plants, shrubs, and trees – all grown by local nurseries (Natives in Harmony and Leaves for Wildlife) and local community members. There were three types of native plant kits available, designed for sun, shade, and a fun collection called “grower’s choice.” Pre-orders quickly sold out!



Native plant sale at Granville Farmers Market.

The plant sale was held on a glorious September morning at the Granville Farmers’ Market, where those who had pre-ordered also picked up their kits. Pollinator Pathway participated in several other local events

For information on Licking County Pollinator Pathway: <https://www.lickingpollinatorpathway.org>

– LLT’s Equinox Celebration, Autumn Harvest at Infirmary Mound, and Denison Museum’s Family Day to name a few – to make native plants available to a larger audience. Proceeds will help to fund future Pollinator Pathway activities.

Seed Collection at the Land Lab in October Pollinator Pathway, Granville Public Library and Granville Schools recently teamed up to host a seed collection event at the Land Lab, next to Granville Intermediate School. Participants fanned out across the ~100 acre site to collect seeds from white wild indigo (*Baptisia alba*), bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*), rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) and dozens of other native Ohio prairie plants. Participants were able to gather seeds for use in

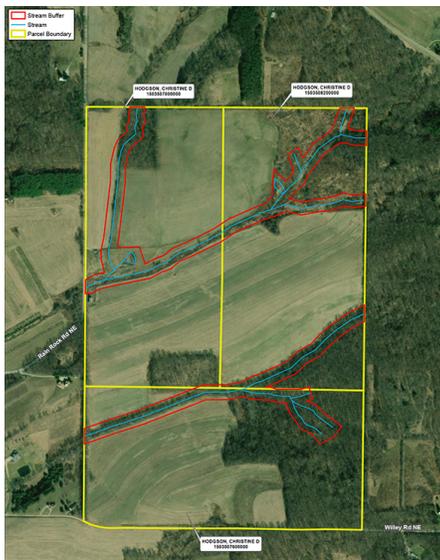


Heather Rhodes, Cookie Sunkle, Emily Pagano McCall (left to right) harvest native wildflower seeds this fall at the Granville School’s Land Lab.

their own landscapes as well as for the public. After seeds are dried and processed, seed packets will be available to the public via the Community Seed Library at Granville Public Library.

THE HODGSON PROPERTY – A DIFFERENT WAY TO CONSERVE LAND continued from page 1

mitigation bank, paying a fee to an approved in-lieu fee program, or permittee-responsible mitigation. Permittee-responsible mitigation can include wetland restoration, enhancement, or preservation.



Aerial map of Hodgson Farm showing streams for watershed remediation.

Wetland Restoration on the Hodgson Property. On the Hodgson property, multiple wetlands are being restored by Water & Land Solutions, and these wetlands will be placed into the wetland mitigation bank.

Ms. Hodgson will be paid to have these wetlands restored and maintained so that they can offset other wetlands in the state that are lost to development.

The Environmental Covenant was placed on the Hodgson property in 2022 and the LLT has gladly accepted the responsibility of monitoring this property in perpetuity to ensure that these wetlands continue to provide environmental and ecological benefits to all Ohioans.

With rapid development in Central Ohio, it is imperative that the Licking Land Trust and other conservation organizations utilize all the tools and mechanisms available to preserve and protect critical lands before they are lost to housing developments, roads, and industry.



One of the streams being remediated - center of photo.

FIRST ANNUAL BIOBLITZ AT SPRING VALLEY PRESERVE

By Karen Goodell, LLT Board Member and Professor, Dept. of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology, OSU Newark

On a bright July morning, 20 Licking Land Trust friends gathered at Spring Valley Preserve in Granville to conduct our first annual BioBlitz. A BioBlitz brings together scientists, naturalists, students, and community members to take a snapshot of the organismal diversity of a specific location. A BioBlitz aims to document as many species as possible in a short period of time, and is often located in a park or residential area close to where people live. A BioBlitz provides a unique way for communities to interact with their environment, learn from each other, and inspire stewardship. The first BioBlitz was sponsored by the National Park Service in 1996 at an urban park in Washington DC. Community members identified over 900 species in 24 hours! ¹



Ohio State University Newark biologist, Dr. Shauna Weyrauch setting up a camera trap on a log. Photo by Karen Goodell.



Night activities of a red fox

Social media apps such as eBird and iNaturalist facilitate sharing species sightings with a global community of amateur naturalists and professional biologists. We created a project for the LLT BioBlitz in iNaturalist to which participants could upload their photographs of

organisms. Once embedded in the project, photos can be viewed and identified by anyone. iNaturalist distinguishes between “casual” and “research grade” observations, the latter having at least two matching species identifications. Crowd-sourcing of identifications provides accurate, transparent data that can be updated any time. Subsequent BioBlitzes can be added to the project, which could become a valuable timeseries of biodiversity.

Dr. Andy McCall of Denison University kicked off our BioBlitz by demonstrating how to use iNaturalist with a mobile phone and camera. Small teams then fanned out across the preserve to scour the land and stream for species. In two hours, 14 individuals documented 284 observations on iNaturalist, representing at least 164 species. We engaged 76 taxonomic specialists online who helped identify these species, resulting in almost half of our taxa elevated to research grade observations. We also observed 19 bird species that were not photographed.

Camera traps set in Spring Valley by biologist Dr. Shauna Weyrauch from OSU Newark recorded animals throughout the week leading up to the BioBlitz, documenting species unlikely to be seen in a short daytime event. In addition to expected species

such as chipmunks and deer, the camera picked up a fox and a green heron.

The best part of the BioBlitz was the chance to enjoy a summer morning on a local protected property with nature enthusiasts of all ages. We learned so much about the animals, plants, protozoans, and fungi living right here. Establishing the LLT BioBlitz as an annual event will allow us to continue to bring nature closer to our community. Join us next year!

Ian Messke with JB King conducting observations. Photo by Jeremy King



JB King and Karen Goodell looking at a native bee. Photo by Jeremy King

Licking Land Trust Spring Valley BioBlitz Statistics ²



¹ <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/bioblitz>

² <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/licking-land-trust-spring-valley->

FARM TO FORK SHINES AGAIN



The evening of Saturday, August 12 brought the much-anticipated annual “Farm to Fork” celebration once again to Central Ohio’s land conservationists, foodies, and avid party-goers – for the NINTH year in a row. The now well-loved event benefiting the Licking Land Trust was held for the third time in Moon Hall on the Denison University campus.



Moon is a venue that allows for free-flowing indoor/outdoor movement of guests – this year, about 175 of LLT’s friends and supporters. Guests enjoyed the gourmet offerings of Bon Appétit, featuring produce, meats, and breads sourced from local and Ohio farms. Tables were decorated with stunning floral displays grown locally and carefully crafted by a crew of volunteers. After grazing on hors d’oeuvres while bidding on tempting silent auction items, guests moved to a bountiful dinner buffet accompanied by choice of wines and beer, and finished off with scrumptious desserts featuring Ohio fruits.

This year’s auction packages boasted one-of-a-kind artworks from several central Ohio artists, hard-to-get tickets to sporting events and entertainment, and high-end goods and services that seemed to whisper, “Bid on me and get a deal!”

The event netted \$25,700 for the Land Trust, a high-mark for the nine years of Farm to Fork. All of this was possible due to the generosity of our guests, as well as the event’s sponsors and auction-item donors. Please see the accompanying list that acknowledges these generous supporters of green space conservation in Central Ohio. A thousand thanks, one and all!

PHOTO CAPTIONS - Clockwise from photo above:
Two of the tempting auction packages. Photo by Lynn Boone.

Photos along the side by Laura Atchison.
Natalie Deal, Brooke Klumper, Lynsey Hinton enjoying the evening

Bon Appétit prepared delicious appetizers with produce,
meats, and breads sourced from local and Ohio farms.

Stunning floral displays grown locally and crafted by volunteers.

Chris Ramsey, Steve Matheny, Raj Bellani, John Kralovec, Julie Houpt,
Rob Cathcart , Mary Frazell waiting to bid on auction items.



THANK YOU FOR MAKING FARM TO FORK 2023 POSSIBLE!



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The Vail Series
Village Flower Basket
Welsh Hills School
Wes Walter
The Works

Flower Farms who generously donated to fill Moon Hall with beautiful blooms:

Cat Run Ranch Flower Farm
Moon Maiden Flowers
Sunny Meadows Flower Farm

These volunteers helped to harvest and/or arrange fresh flowers for the event:

Susan, Jeremy, & J.B. King
Sarah Marks
Kay Studer
Jim Reding & Granville
Land Lab
Michelle Newman
Natalie Deal & Frankie
Lindsay Nathanson
Sam Stearns
Erin, Tom, Adaline, & Caed
Henshaw
Lauren Sabo, Dan Crawford, &
Charlotte & Lincoln
Peg Betts
Megan Cuda

FORAGED FLORA: VOLUNTEERS CREATE ART INSTALLATION FOR FARM TO FORK

By Susan King

In addition to sampling delicious locally-sourced dishes and bidding on one-of-a-kind gift packages, Farm to Fork attendees also got to experience a unique and immersive floral art installation as part of the event. Utilizing foraged materials, floral designers Susan Studer King, Sarah Marks and Kay Studer created a wild meadow scene enveloping an antique Italian settee. The floral-flanked loveseat also served as a photo backdrop at the event.

“We challenged ourselves to create something that would be beautiful and educational and also functional as a space for photos,” Sarah Marks shared.

“The design incorporated visual cues to the critical role of native plants, and the pressure that invasive exotic plants have in our landscapes,” Susan Studer King added.

One half of the meadow design utilized native plants such as wild indigo (*Baptisia australis*), clustered mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*), and rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) that are great pollinator plants found in prairies and thickets. The other half featured examples of invasive plants commonly found in landscapes that are threatening our natural areas and local woodlands, like callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), privet (*Ligustrum* spp.) and burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*)

The designers paired the installation with a conservation foraging “key” which featured test tubes filled with clippings of some of the plants used and their identification as native friends or invasive foes. The designers motivated guests with the following call to action:

Without careful conservation and management, invasive plants can take over our landscape. Here’s what you can do:

- Learn more about the plants in your landscape.
- Remove invasive plants.
- Plant native Ohio trees, shrubs and flowers.
- Support the Licking Land Trust.



Susan King, Kay Studer, and Sarah Marks take a selfie



Flower arranging crew



Lauren Sabo and Lincoln Sabo-Crawford



“Friend or Foe” display and photo booth



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The mission of the Licking Land Trust is the preservation and permanent protection of central Ohio green spaces – wetlands, woods, farmlands, riparian corridors, and scenic vistas – and education about the importance of green spaces and their conservation, all for the public benefit.

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Renew your membership, join, or contribute online at lickinglandtrust.org



Donate securely online.

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