

EECONEWS



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Photographer:
John Halley,
Athens Messenger



Tomcats Monitor Vernal Pools

By Joe Brehm, Rural Action

On a warm spring morning in late April, about 30 juniors from Trimble High School hiked a half-mile through part of the Trimble Township Community Forest carrying native plants, shovels, buckets, nets, and clipboards. They headed for two vernal pools (fishless pools that are important breeding habitat for a variety of amphibians) that THS students build in 2010. Their tasks were to plant these native species around the vernal pools to curb erosion and increase biological diversity, and to collect data on the species of aquatic organisms in the pools.

The 1,200 acre Trimble Township Community Forest is located in Athens County, owned by Appalachia Ohio Alliance and designated for use as a wildlife area and land lab for Trimble Local Schools. AOA not only provides the space for Trimble schools to use for education, but also fund transportation costs for trips to the land lab. Because of AOA, Trimble schools now have one of the most expansive land labs in the state and almost endless opportunities for hands-on, outdoor studies.

As soon as the group arrived at the pools, students were breaking ground and planting herbaceous species such as wild ginger, Joe-Pye weed, butterfly milkweed, and cohosh. Other students, under the guidance of Rural Action's Environmental Education Coordinator Joe Brehm and THS Environmental Science teacher Gordon Gifford, began wading into the pools to see what life they could find there. The group found frog and salamander tadpoles from several different species, as well as adult green frogs, a red-spotted newt, and aquatic insects and their larvae. Students recorded the data, which will be submitted to the Ohio Vernal Pool Partnership as part of their vernal pool monitoring program.

The creation of these vernal pools was funded by the Ohio Environmental Education Fund and led by the Little Cities of the Forest Collaborative. Funds for purchasing native plants came from Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Wild School Sites program.

Not only did this field trip give students the opportunity to collect real scientific data, but they were also able to learn more about their natural heritage. With data collection complete, students climbed out of the pools with nets in hand, covered in mud, and with smiles on their faces. As they were leaving the pools, the unmistakable trill of a gray tree frog rang out above the vernal pools. A dozen frogs answered, and soon the forest was ringing with the first sounds of tree frogs this spring. Because of the dedication to conservation of several organizations, dozens of students, and teachers such as Mr. Gifford, these tree frogs and other amphibians have a safe place to lay their eggs for many years to come.

Thanks to a general grant from the Ohio Environmental Education Fund, Rural Action and its partners will facilitate several more outdoor learning experiences like this during the 2011-12 school year as part of the Appalachian Green Teachers Project. For more information, contact Joe Brehm at 740.767.2225 or joe@ruralaction.org.

Save the date

OEEF Grant Letter of Intent

July 8 Deadline

OEEF Grant Submission

July 15 Deadline

Language of Nature

July 24-29

101 Conference

Oct 7-9

Annual Conference

April 26-29, 2012

Keep the Wild in Wildlife from ODNR: Division of Wildlife

When we are promoting getting outside, whether to kids or adults, we should always remember to give the advice of keeping the wild in wildlife. In the spring and early summer, when wildlife reproduction is at its peak, you may discover a nest of young birds or rabbits, a fawn or another wild animal with no adult in sight. Enjoy the scene, but leave them alone! Wildlife parents are very devoted to their young and rarely abandon them. If taken from their natural habitat, young animals have little chance of surviving.



The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Wildlife staff, Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (OWRA) members, and licensed wildlife rehabilitators have worked hard to reduce the number of wild animals being picked up by well-meaning people. Despite their cute and sometimes helpless appearance, wild animals are capable of biting, scratching, and transmitting diseases to humans and domestic animals.

“The Division of Wildlife and wildlife rehabilitators share a common goal to be good stewards and ensure healthy wildlife populations will exist for future generations to enjoy,” stated Carolyn Caldwell, program administrator in the Division of Wildlife.

Many people believe that they are doing the right thing by rescuing a young wild animal and think that hand raising is a good alternative to being raised in the wild. This could not be further from the truth as a hand-raised wild animal, even under expert care, has little chance of long-term survival once released to the wild. Because of the difficulties in providing the proper care and diet for wild animals, only specially trained and licensed wildlife rehabilitators are authorized to take them in when they are found to be truly orphaned or injured. Wild animals have a better chance of survival if left alone in the wild. Studies have shown that more than half of the fawns that are taken in by well-meaning people do not survive and most of the remaining animals die shortly after reentry to the wild. Additionally, handling stresses the animal, and excessive handling can make the animal defensive or can ultimately contribute to its death.

A common belief is that once young wildlife has been touched or handled by humans the mother will no longer have anything to do with it. This is not so, while wildlife officials discourage people from handling wild animals, there are rare occasions when it may be necessary. If a nestling bird has fallen out of a tree, or your child has plucked a young rabbit from its nest, pick it up and put it back in the nest immediately.

Along with the warning to leave young wildlife alone, the ODNR and OWRA offer the following advice:

- Think before you act. Check for nests before cutting down trees or clearing brush. It is best to cut trees and clear brush in the autumn when nesting season is over.
- Use common sense. If you disturb a nest, replace the animals and the nest material to the original location or as close as possible. If you find a fawn, leave it where you find it.
- Keep pets under control to avoid injury to them or wildlife. Keep pets vaccinated against parasites and diseases.
- Educate children to respect wildlife and their habitat. Emphasize to your children not to catch, handle or harass wild animals. Practice what you preach!

Visit the ODNR Web site at www.ohiodnr.com and OWRA at www.owra.org

Thank you to all of the Donors to EECO's 2010 - 2011 Annual Appeal

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Upcoming Conferences and Training
For more info visit www.eeco-online.org



**Celebrating the 45th
Anniversary of the EECO
Annual Conference
April 26-29, 2012
Shawnee State Park**

Join us on April 26-29 in the beautiful Shawnee State Park for the 2012 Environmental Education Council of Ohio Annual Conference.

Watch for the Call for Presenters at www.eeco-online.org. We will be accepting session proposals for these conference streams:

- Ohio's Rivers
- Native Americans
- Native Flora and Fauna
- Reconnecting Kids with Nature



36th Annual 101 Educator's Conference

October 7, 8 and 9, 2011 at YMCA Camp Kern (32 m NE of Cincinnati)

The "101" Conference is THE weekend outdoor education workshop experience designed to inspire teachers, outdoor educators, and all adults with creative and fun ways to provide exciting learning experiences. Enjoy large and small group sessions, campfires, good eating, and plenty more. As always, we will address specific Ohio Academic Content Standards.

- Cost: \$82 for all sessions, food, and lodging (\$42 for Saturday only) Discounts & scholarships are available.
- For more information contact Dave Moran at YMCA Camp Kern. 5291 SR 350 Oregonia, OH 45045 phone: (513)-932-3756 x1527, email: dmoran@daytonymca.org

This event is made possible by YMCA Camp Kern, The Environmental Education Council of Ohio, and The Ohio Environmental Education Fund

Call for Presenters: Seeking 90 minute, active, hands-on experiences that would be of interest to both teachers and outdoor educators. This year's theme is ***Waterways to our Future.***

Reading the Earth: The Language of Nature

July 24-29th at Cuyahoga National Park

A hands-on, exploratory, week long workshop....in the woods!

Spend five days working with a team of naturalist, writers, artists and teachers in the humanities to enhance your writing through appreciation of the natural world.

Designed for....

- teachers and other educators
- writers of all levels (fiction, poetry, non-fiction)
- anyone interested in renewing connection with the natural world through literature, writing, naturalist study and the arts.

Cost: \$199 includes materials, room and board.

Graduate Credit: Three graduate credit are available through Otterbein University of \$120 per credit

Registration Information: Kathy Ullom at kullom@otterbein.edu

For other Questions: Terry Hermson at thermson@otterbein.edu



Students experience unique opportunities while learning about the unique ways the Wilds manages their endangered species.

Learning is Wild **Brandon Good, the Wilds**

The Wilds, North America's largest conservation facility located in Cumberland, Ohio, advances conservation by discovering innovative methods in science, incorporating the scientific advances into educational programs, and discovering fun and exciting ways for guests and students to explore the educational opportunities to generate a unique personal experience.

The roughly 10,000 acres of land that makes up the Wilds promotes diverse habitats including wetlands, grasslands, lakes and ponds, and woodlands that in turn support diverse species both native to Ohio and the exotic and endangered species managed by the Wilds dedicated staff. These resources provide the Wilds with a large living laboratory that allows students unforgettable, hands-on experiences that cannot often be replicated in a classroom. The Wilds

offers education programs that are structured to meet and emphasize the Ohio Academic Content standards that engage the students with exciting interactions with animals, nature, and conservation. School groups can learn about water ecology while investigating a stream or pond, understand concepts in anatomy and physiology by exploring the "Ins and Outs" of herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores, and even blast off into space by exploring the stars under a clear night sky with limited light pollution. Groups can experience these opportunities by spending at day at the Wilds with a Day Venture, spend a night or more at the Wilds' Robert W. Teater Conservation Education Camp that features Mongolian style yurts, or bring the Wilds to you with a in-class presentation.

With the belief that every student, no matter his/her economic circumstances, should have the opportunity to discover and engage in the wonders of animals and the natural world, along with a generous grant received from Columbia Gas, the Wilds will offer Learning is Wild Scholarships to low-income schools. These scholarships will be available to schools that have a 30% or higher student population taking part in the federal free or reduced lunch program. Interested schools are required to submit an application for funds, including a demonstration for financial need. The awarded funds may be used to underwrite up to 75% of a school's field trip costs. Educators may also apply for funds to participate in one or more of the current educational programs offered at the Wilds, depending on their length of stay.

With the unfortunate tightening of school budgets and resources, it has been increasingly difficult for students from low-income areas to take a field trip and use the skills they have developed in a classroom in real-world experiences. The Learning is Wild scholarships will provide an opportunity for those students to take part in programs that bring nature up close while integrating core scientific concepts into meaningful and interactive activities about the natural world. For more information regarding the Wilds' education programs please visit www.thewilds.org.



School groups can get their "Hands on the Land" by helping with projects such as reseeded wetlands!

Internship at the Holden Arboretum

The Holden Arboretum has a two-year internship opportunity available in our Education Department to begin October, 2011. The Education Intern will receive practical work experience, assisting with programs centered on public horticulture, natural history and science/environmental education. Opportunities exist to gain experience with exhibit development, school programming, teaching, writing and developing educational materials, based on the intern's interest and Holden's annual needs.



This internship opportunity offers recent graduates in education, horticulture, conservation or natural sciences the opportunity to experience various job responsibilities in a professional environment. This unique two-year program will also provide the opportunity to work on both large and small projects from concept development to final implementation and review. This internship will be a paid position, and will include benefits. Holden has onsite housing available. Some weekend work will be required.

Interested candidates should send a cover letter, a résumé and three academic or professional references. Resumes may be sent to the Human Resources Department of The Holden Arboretum 9500 Sperry Road, Kirtland, Ohio 44094-5172 (Attn: Education Intern), e-mail to resumes@holdenarb.org.

Water You Doing This Summer?

Lynn White, Butler Soil and Water Conservation District



“Are we hunting for crabs and lobsters?” was one of the first question asked by a group of inner city students on a stream study. We were on a field trip to the headwaters of the Millcreek in West Chester, Ohio. This same creek eventually flows past the students neighborhood in Cincinnati. The kids have trouble recognising it as the same creek. Near their homes, it is a concrete lined channel, often with high levels of bacteria and other pollutants. After working with the kids, they were getting quicker identifying the mayflies, stoneflies and other macro-invertebrates than myself or their teacher. Most importantly, the students were able to make predictions about the water quality in other parts of the stream by analyzing the land use.

Many of us take kids to creeks, whether it is to study aquatic life such as crawdads and mayflies, study water chemistry, or even to just hunt frogs. It can be a great experience to take a group of adults out for the same kind of experience. In Butler County, I work with the Stream Team. This is a dedicated group of volunteers that collects water samples and helps process them for water chemistry. On our annual canoe float, we decided to take seine nets, and offer the chance for our volunteers to learn about biological testing. It was hard to convince them to get back in their boats and continue downstream.



Enjoying the water, of course, does not have to be about water quality. If you have never taken a child fishing before, now is the perfect time. Whether you visit a lake, river, or even fishing pond it can be a great learning experience for kids. Fishing offers children a way to learn about our role as stewards of nature—about preventing pollution, about releasing fish we do not intend to eat, and eating the ones we injure. To find out about fishing regulations and fishing licenses please visit www.dnr.state.oh.us



Ok, so catching creek bugs and fishing might not be for you. Perhaps its a little too close to nature. Well, you can still get out and enjoy nature with children, while floating downstream. Throughout our state there are numerous canoe, kayak, and raft outfitters. Your boat can act as a floating playroom for the kids. They can move around a bit, paddle if they want, fish as they float, or just relax and check out the clouds.

Watch out for great water events around the state. There's Paddlefest, the largest canoe/kayak paddling event in the Midwest with over 2,000 paddlers making their way down the Ohio River, or a small kids fishing derby close to home.

One great water event is the Crazy Cardboard Regatta. This is a national event that started in the late 1970's as a class assignment at Southern Illinois University. Since those humble beginnings, the cardboard regatta has grown to be hosted all across this great nation with hundreds of thousands of spectators and participants getting involved every year!



MetroParks of Butler County will be hosting this event on July 22nd and 23rd at the 35-acre lake at Voice of America Park in West Chester, Ohio. With its light-hearted premise and ability to bring groups together for a common goal, this event appeals to all ages. Teams successfully paddle the boat they built together from cardboard through a 200-yard course making 2 left turns. Awards are given for the fastest finish time; however, the more coveted awards also include the People's Choice and the Titanic for the most spectacular sinking!

This free events kicks off on Friday night with live music, getting up close and personal with the boats and their makers, and voting for the “Peoples' Choice” award.

Saturday at noon, the boats go into the water and the real fun begins. Whether or not you build a boat, come and cheer on your favorites. It's a wonderful family-friendly outing. No matter your age, you'll have a wonderful time. Seating is limited, so you might want to bring a folding chair.

With so many great activities to do in Ohio's waters, always remember water safety is of the utmost importance.

Be E3 Smart Free Education Program

Science teachers are invited to be part of an exciting program, e3smart. Facilitated by the Ohio Energy Project, participating teachers in grades 5-12 will:

Meets Ohio Standards

- > All curriculum is correlated to meet the Ohio Academic Content Standards.
- > Multiple academic standards met for grades 5-12.
- > You'll receive a list of applicable standards with your training.

It's Easy

- > It's simple and easy to incorporate the curriculum and activities into your lesson plans.
- > You'll receive the complete curriculum and a teacher kit with necessary supplies and equipment worth more than \$2,500, as well as many classroom-ready activities.

Professional Development

- > One-day professional development workshop - Required
- > One semester hour graduate credit from Ashland University (at a reduced rate) - Optional
- > CEU documentation
- > \$100 stipend after submitting program evaluation and collected data

Does Your School Qualify for this Free Program?

Several of the Electric Companies on Ohio have partnered with the Ohio Energy Project. To qualify for this free program you must be within their service area:



5-12 grade science teachers at a school in both DP&L and Vectren's service territories



5-12 grade science teachers at a school in AEP's service territory

To Apply: mail a completed application form to the Ohio Energy Project (OEP) with a \$50 refundable deposit.

Application available at www.ohioenergy.org

View the e³smart FAQ sheet online at www.ohioenergy.org, email OEP at bgrimm@ohioenergy.org.

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