

The Wildlife Society



Ohio Chapter Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2017
Newsletter

Secretary's Message from Gabriel Karns

I took the liberty of inserting Tovar Cerulli's essay entitled "Blind Men and the Elephant of Conservation: Toward Ideological Diversity" into the last newsletter (Fall/Winter 2016). That newsletter was emailed on December 13th of last year, and a whopping 47% of you opened (and perhaps read) the newsletter. Forty-seven percent is actually the highest mark we have achieved in the past 2 years; partly an indictment of what is probably an outdated member's email list and partly a charge against our tendency to delete emails perceived as non-emergency/essential. That's neither here nor there, I'm getting off point.

I want to circle back around to a few words from that essay. Hopefully what comes next is read and interpreted by us as an admonishment and encouragement and reminder – nothing less, nothing more. And by *us*, meaning every one of us whose job (vocation too hopefully) it is to manage natural resources, protect the environment for future generations, and advance conservation's overall reach and impact throughout.

"There are two things that interest me,' Leopold once wrote, 'the relation of people to each other, and the relation of people to land.' We slip into polarized habits of mind. We begin to think in terms of binaries: blue versus red, urban versus rural. We accuse each other of ignorance. We lose interest in, and even the capacity to perceive, common ground. The integral wholeness of conservation, even the possibility of such wholeness, is largely forgotten."

If you read the fall/winter newsletter and did not at least suspect that the “recent...events pertaining to our beloved environment and natural resources as well as the broader landscape of society” referenced the anticipated change in administrations as our nation waited for the January inauguration, your head was in [the] “a loose granular substance, typically pale yellowish brown, resulting from the erosion of siliceous and other rocks and forming a major constituent of beaches, riverbeds, the seabed, and deserts.”

Red or blue, urban or rural, nature watcher or also a user, we can all agree that certain overtones are pronouncedly apparent with how our nation will conserve the environment and natural resources moving forward. Chief Ray Petering delivered a stirring keynote address at the 57th Ohio Fish and Wildlife Conference on January 27th, 2017. It could not have come at a better time. With content moving from one troubling trend to another and backed by personal anecdotes of his own childhood immersed in the outdoors contrasted with his casual observations of society writ large, he described how urbanization, declining participation in consumptive use outdoor recreation, and other factors forecast gloomy days ahead for conservation. But he stopped short of sounding the death knell. He identified (and I believe rightly so) how butterflies and bees, the “plight of the pollinator” have garnered attention and generated unified effort from nearly every single corner of our society, the red and blue corners, those rural and those surrounded by concrete. Framed this way and armed with a heightened awareness to watch this phenomenon play out, few weeks have passed without at least one example of how pollinators continue to gain momentum in some ways large, in many small:

- Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever have embraced their reputation as “The Habitat Organization”, using pollinators to advance initiatives within agricultural landscapes
- Ohio’s DOT continues to scale adoption of best management practices that create and conserve good habitat along our transportation corridors
- First Energy (in partnership with the Electric Power Research Institute) is researching how Integrated Vegetation Management can be used to enhance wildlife habitat under high voltage transmission lines in northeast Ohio’s rights-of-way
- Nearly 3,000 acres are successfully enrolled in the Farm Bill’s pollinator practice CP42
- Bayer just funded 2 Feed-a-Bee Forage Initiative projects and have 5 established Feed-a-Bee partners which hand out seed packets and plant bulk seed statewide
- 8 doors down on my quiet neighborhood street in NE Columbus, a “Monarch Waystation” sign just popped up highlighting that home’s pollinator-friendly landscaping
- Successful milkweed propagation program spearheaded by the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative and many other partners places milkweed seeds and plugs into key habitats

At present, pollinators appear to be the glue to our conservation “wholeness” looking at Cerulli’s quote from above. Monday kicks off the National Pollinator Awareness Week June 19-June 25, an event that will bring together people in our nation’s capital for a unified conservation cause. Embrace pollinators, not too tightly though, a few of them sting.

New Officer Bios

If you are not aware, Grace Dietsch and Andy Merkle accepted their nominations for and were voted into the offices of President and Treasurer, respectively. Below are their biographies:



As an Ohio native who grew up in the foothills of the Appalachia Mountains, the majority of my childhood was spent exploring the woods and wading through streams. Family vacations were spent camping and fishing in the remote mountains of Elkins, West Virginia, or at Hocking Hills State Park. Through these experiences I developed a deep appreciation for nature and was determined to pursue a career in the field of natural resources. My journey thus far has been tremendously exciting and rewarding.

I attended Hocking College, where I earned an associate's degree in Fish and Wildlife Management as well as Natural Resources Management. I obtained my bachelor's degree in Wildlife and Fish Conservation and Management from the University of Rio Grande. While working on my bachelor's degree, I volunteered with ODNR's Division of Natural Areas and Preserves (DNAP) and was hired as a seasonal employee. After graduating from Rio Grande, I headed west, where I spent summers working with an environmental consulting firm conducting marbled murrelet and spotted owl surveys, the winters working at a ski resort outside of Mount Rainier. After several years of living the Pacific Northwest life, I moved back to Ohio where I resumed employment with DNAP and also worked as a salamander research technician with OSU. I obtained my red card certification in 2012 and traveled to wildfires in northern California and Idaho, where I also met my husband. Shortly thereafter, I moved to Dayton and began working in my current position with Five Rivers MetroParks as a Conservation Supervisor. Most of my work focuses on wildlife and habitat management on over 16,000 acres of parklands.

I am thoroughly enjoying being a new mother to my 14-week old daughter. My hobbies include backpacking, bicycling, fishing, kayaking, birding, nature photography, and cooking. I just started hunting last year, though no animals have been injured as a result.



Andy graduated from Hocking College in 2013 with an Associate of Applied Science in Wildlife Management and from the University of Rio Grande in 2015 with a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife and Fish Conservation and Management/Biology. While at Rio Grande he served as President of the student chapter of The Wildlife Society. After graduating he worked under an agreement between the Wildlife Management Institute and the Ohio Division of Wildlife as a chronic wasting disease technician where he helped coordinate sampling efforts of almost 1,000 CWD samples. Andy was hired with the Ohio Division of

Wildlife at the Highlandtown Wildlife Area as a wildlife area technician in 2016. He helps to manage timber harvests, dove fields, wildlife food plantings, waterfowl trapping and banding efforts, and other wildlife surveys.

2017 OFWMA Conference Recap

The 57th Ohio Fish and Wildlife Conference was held January 26-27, 2017. The proceedings led off with a Thursday evening business meeting at the Cabelas conference room in Polaris. The business meeting held jointly by OCTWS' and Ohio Fish and Wildlife Management Association's officers was very well attended with productive discourse around a number of issues and updates—student chapter activities, planned workshops by OCTWS, Kendra Wecker's legislative updates, and the minutia typical of most any other business meeting you might attend. The Thursday night business meeting was financially supported by OCTWS.

The actual conference featured Dr. Paul Curtis who gave an insightful overview of how different strategies and techniques of urban and suburban white-tailed deer population management has evolved through time and ultimately influences (or does NOT influence!) key demographic parameters of controlled populations. Ohio's Division of Wildlife Chief Ray Petering followed with a stirring address that I referenced above. Other talks discussed rattlesnake habitat utilization along transportation corridors in southeast Ohio, mallard demographics in the northwestern Ohio's coastal marshes, forest management principles, habitat enhancement potential for pollinators within eastern Ohio's energy landscape, and public attitudes towards bobcat trapping.

Post-conference surveys indicated overwhelming support for the venue change to the Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center, and next year's conference scheduled for January 26th is slated for the same location. On Thursday, January 25th, OCTWS is planning to piggy-back an indoor workshop on wildlife human dimensions social science research on to the business meeting. Location/schedule specifics for the workshop/business meeting are forthcoming.

Firearms Familiarization Student Workshop



A tremendous kudos goes out to USDA-Wildlife Services staff that ran a great program Saturday, April 8th, for 17 “wildlifery” from Rio Grande’s and Ohio State University’s student chapters. There were at least 2 people that had never shot a gun before and we believe they went away with a great experience. Without the staff that Andy Montoney had participate from Wildlife Services, we would not have been able to pull off anything resembling how fabulous the firearms familiarization workshop turned out to be. You will see from the pictures that this was no ordinary selection of “normal” firearms. An extra big thank you to Mrs. Montoney who used more than half her Saturday to help feed everyone and make sure all the liability forms were filled out and filed properly. Finally, Tri-County Sportsman’s Club made an extraordinarily generous gesture to OCTWS by returning the check for use of their shooting range and other facilities. Thanks to everyone for making this workshop a huge success!





Grasslands Management Professional Workshop

Replicating the general template of the fall 2016 wetlands workshop, we changed habitats from wetlands to grasslands and moved roughly 10 miles further west to the Gwynne Conservation Area next door to the Farm Science Review. Eight different speakers addressed topics ranging from prescribed fire to cost-share conservation programs, pollinator habitat enhancements to reclaiming old minelands, grassland songbird trends to floral identification skills. The full room there at “the cabin” also heard from newly-appointed national TWS executive director and CEO Ed Thompson who discussed benefits of being an active and engaged member of the national chapter and the upcoming 2018 TWS 25th annual conference to be held in Cleveland, OH.



2017 State Science Fair Wildlife Awareness Award

Emilee Hardesty, private lands biologist with the Division of Wildlife, stepped up the plate judging 10 projects for the 2017 Science Fair Day. The winning students have already been awarded their plaques and will be recognized at next winter's OFWMA conference. Caleb Rykaczewski from Mentor High School in Lake County, OH, won first place with a project titled "The effect of seasonal variation on food intake (Order Aves)", and Jared Swartz took second presenting "Run-off Effects on *Daphnia magna*" coming from Lorain County's Columbia High School. The students were senior and freshman high schoolers, respectively.

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