

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Environment needs voice in road debate

Audubon Miami Valley encompasses a membership of nearly 500 individuals in Butler and Preble counties. We are fortunate to live in an area that was built on a rural tradition.

However, since the end of World War II the character of this pastoral setting has been dramatically changed with urbanization and sprawl. The eastern part of Butler County has grown most rapidly so that few farms remain and those that do are threatened with development.

It is not that development is a bad thing, but when poorly planned the consequences may be dire.

An issue of great concern to the residents of the greater Oxford area is the proposed Oxford Connector that would allow U.S. 27 traffic to by-pass the community and move heavy truck traffic out of the city. The city and Miami University favor the by-pass while the townships op-

pose the by-pass, at least in its present guise.

The issue has clearly divided the community at large.

The mission of Audubon Miami Valley is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Thus, many members of Audubon Miami Valley will be conflicted by the various issues surrounding the proposed connector.

However, what we all can probably agree on is that if there is to be a connector, it needs to be well planned and take into consideration all the issues. Too often a voice for the environment is lacking.

In the case of the connector that voice is badly needed. Our bird species are in decline along with the habitats upon which they depend.

Rosalie Edge, the founder of

ORIE LOUCKS LOOKS AT THE OXFORD TWP. LAND USE PLAN, PAGE 7



Map courtesy of the Township Network,
<http://townshipnetwork.com/>

Hawk Mountain, (1934) once said "the time to save a species is when it is common."

As each of us contemplates the Oxford Connector we need to see the landscape through John Muir's eye and remember "going to the woods is going home."

The challenge for Audubon Miami Valley members is to keep informed and let your voices be heard regardless of how you feel on this issue.

– Hardy Eshbaugh

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SIGHTINGS

Gone, and now back!

The Pileated Woodpeckers had been coming in multiples for several months until swimming pool season started, and then I put out the PACE (peace) flag which fluttered proudly in warm summer breezes. That was the last straw for them. Let's see: "flag or bird?" Guess which I chose.

– Debra Bowles

Should have trusted my ears

Several months back I posted a question on an e-mail list: "How can I tell the difference between an Ovenbird and part of the Carolina Wren song?" There was no response, and I continued to wonder each morning as the loudest-of-bird-songs woke me, but figured it was the exuberant Carolina Wren, which always nests here.

When I saw two birds systematically turning over chunks of moss on the garage roof, Robin-like characteristics misled me. Binocs determined them to be Ovenbirds. For years, I've been seeing what I thought were Robins on that garage roof, except that Robins wouldn't mess with moss to get critters underneath.

The moral of the story is that when I sense something is different in a bird song, it's worth investigating.

– Debra Bowles

Dayton Falcon dies in flight

Kickapoo, one of the male Peregrine Falcons that hatched in May in downtown Dayton, flew into a building in early July and died, the Dayton Daily News reported.

Miami, the other male falcon born downtown this year, ran into a building the month before and was stunned, but he recovered at the Glen Helen Raptor Center, according to the center's Betty Ross.

The adult falcons nesting on the roof of the Liberty Bank Tower on Second Street also seem to be in good shape, Ross said.

del.icio.us-ly easy links

To find out more about Downtown Dayton's Falcons – or any of the Web-related stories in this newsletter – go to the social bookmarking site del.icio.us, specifically to <http://del.icio.us/juhetric/AudubonFall08>.

All the links have been gathered for you, so with just a click (and no other typing) you can see more details on any story.

Link to sites specific to the Connector road are at <http://del.icio.us/juhetric/OxfordConnector>.

– Judi Hetrick



OUR VISION

We envision a world where humankind accepts the obligations of being part of nature, especially the obligation of stewardship. We seek to shape a culture in which the violation of nature is socially, politically, and morally unacceptable. In short, we seek a culture of conservation and an environmental ethic.

OUR MISSION

Audubon Miami Valley works to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

The Audubon Miami Valley newsletter is published four times a year, as the seasons change.

Deadline for the winter 2008-2009 issue is Oct. 15.

Send contributions to

Newsletter@audubonmiamivalley.org or to
Newsletter, P.O. Box 556, Oxford, Ohio 45056

- Judi Hetrick is editor.
- Celia Ellison and John Blocher are proofreaders.
- Caitlin Stone designed the Meadowlark logo.



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Visit us online at www.audubonmiamivalley.org.



OUT AND ABOUT

Aullwood trails highlight the heights of summer

In a tall grass prairie more than the grasses reach soaring heights.

While visiting Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm near Dayton in mid-July, several Audubon Miami Valley members found many plants that had already started their summer blooms, but one species got attention simply because it was so tall.



Two prairie sunflowers reach 4 to 10 feet high.

The Prairie Dock (*Silphium terebinthinaceum*) has elephant ear-sized oval-shaped leaves at the base of the plant.

The Compass Plant (*Silphium laciniatum*) has big-lobed leaves, is bristly and was likely the plant we found that day. Not yet blooming, the plants sported several marble-sized buds set to flower around August.

A trip to Aullwood is always worthwhile. Located at 1000 Aullwood Road off U.S. 40 near the Dayton Airport, you can get more details at <http://aullwood.center.audubon.org/>.



Photo by Gail Reynolds

– Liz Woedl Mary Poppendeck admires the prairie flowers.

Support AMV's mission

Supporting Audubon Miami Valley shows that you are committed to the mission of Audubon Miami Valley and are willing to give generously to support our programs and activities. Please give at one of the following levels (check your choice):

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Make your check payable to Audubon Miami Valley and send it, along with this form, to:

Membership
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CALENDAR

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 9 AMV public program

Brukner Nature Center – Always Something to Learn

Deb Oexmann, BNS Executive Director

7:30 p.m., Lebanon Citizens National Bank, 2nd floor Community Conference Room, 30 Park Place West, Oxford, Ohio

Come learn about the Brukner Nature Center, a privately funded, nonprofit preserve dedicated to environmental education and wildlife rehabilitation, located just five miles west of Troy, Ohio.

The 165-acre preserve, bounded by the scenic Stillwater River, comprises a variety of habitats including

pine forest, prairie, woodlands and wetland, all traversed by six miles of hiking trails. Brukner is a birding hotspot, which annually tallies more than 110 species, including a record 28 different warbler species.

Deb Oexmann graduated from the Institute of Environmental Sciences at Miami University.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20

Butterfly Adventure with Jo Layera and Tom Klak



Join Jo Layera and Tom Klak again this fall for a morning of learning more about butterflies and the plants that attract them to our area every summer.

See Monarchs tagged with a little round silk tag on their wing and then released to eventually fly to Mexico for the winter. The tag number is reported to a central

site so if a butterfly is found in Mexico, the tag number enables the person who finds the butterfly to know where it was tagged and by whom.

Not only will we see the butterflies at Jo's house, but we will go to a field just out of Oxford to tag butterflies that we find there.

MONDAY OCTOBER 13 AMV public program

Natural Science Observations in the Land of Chinggis Khan

Dr. Richard H. Munson, Department of Botany, Miami University

7:30 p.m., Lebanon Citizens National Bank, 2nd floor Community Conference Room, 30 Park Place West, Oxford, Ohio

In July 2007, Dick Munson spent nearly three weeks roaming the steppes of central Mongolia and in the Gobi Desert in the south. This presentation will sample the places, the people, the landscape and the animals (including many birds) that make Mongolia a unique

and wonderful place.

Munson, a specialist in landscape and ornamental horticulture, earned degrees from the Ohio State University and Cornell University. He became manager of The Conservatory at Miami University Hamilton in 2004.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 17 AND SATURDAY OCTOBER 18

Annual AMV Bird Seed Sale Pick Up. Watch for Sale Details.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 23

Ravens at the Feast, Bernd Heinrich, Professor Emeritus, University of Vermont

The Hefner Lecture, time and place to be announced

Dr. Bernd Heinrich's research has been at the interface between the field and laboratory, examining behavioral and physiological adaptation to the physical environment.

His research has led to the study of energetics of bees and their colony economy.

He then worked on the social organization of ravens

with a view to understanding how and why unrelated individuals share and/or defend food bonanzas. More recently Bernd Heinrich has concentrated on exploring cognition.

His many books include *Bumblebee Economics* (1979), *One Man's Owl* (1987), *Ravens in Winter* (1989), *Mind of the Raven* (1999), and *The Geese of Beaver Bog* (2004).



SATURDAY NOVEMBER 1

Gilmore Ponds with Mike Busam



Join Mike Busam for a guided walk around the ponds. Learn the history of the area with old maps along with old photos and new ones. We will also see the remains of old ice houses, ancient canals and ditches. Eric Burgess and Sharon Pawlowski will be there

banding birds. Audubon Miami Valley had a hand in helping Eric and Sharon purchase the mist nets used in banding.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. on the west side of the old Oxford Wal-Mart parking lot to carpool.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 10 AMV public program

MetroParks of Butler County: An Overview

Jonathan Granville, MetroParks Executive Director

7:30 p.m., Lebanon Citizens National Bank, 2nd floor Community Conference Room, 30 Park Place West, Oxford, Ohio

MetroParks was established to enhance the quality of life in Butler County by acquiring, establishing, and managing a system of regional natural-area parks. This park system contains a number of gems including the Rentschler Forest Preserve, Gilmore Ponds Interpretive Preserve, Dudley Woods, Hueston Farm and Forest Preserve, Indian Creek Preserve and the Voice of America Park.

Jonathan Granville became the executive director of the MetroParks in September 2007, after 21 years with Erie MetroParks in the Sandusky area. He led the growth of that park system from less than 80 to more than 3,600 acres.

His bachelor of science degree is from Bowling Green State University, and he has taught high school science in Delphos and Wapakoneta, Ohio.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 6

Brookville Lake with Dave Russell



Dave Russell will take us for a warm up bird walk for the Christmas Bird Count. Last year 51 species of birds were seen on the early December trip,

with many of those being ducks in mating plumage.

Meet on the southwest side of the new Wal-Mart parking lot at 7:30 a.m. to car pool.

MONDAY DECEMBER 8 AMV public program

Re-cognize Your Environment: Conservation through Photography and Education Emphasizing Beauty in the Ordinary

Molly Barger Steinwald, Department of Zoology, Miami University

7:30 p.m., Lebanon Citizens National Bank, 2nd floor Community Conference Room, 30 Park Place West, Oxford, Ohio

Environmental outreach focused on species extinction and the destruction of distant exotic ecosystems often confuses children and connects negatively with the public at large. In contrast, education that creates an awareness of the value of one's local surroundings can lead to the development of an authentic, lasting environmental ethic.

Interweaving personal experiences as a child, student, teacher, researcher, photographer and mother, Steinwald argues that integrating the seemingly disparate spheres of art, education and research is necessary for the ultimate

success of the conservation movement.

Steinwald earned her M.S. in ecology at Purdue University and is a Ph.D. candidate in Zoology at Miami University. She has research experience with plants, birds and mammals in coastal, desert and woodland habitats around the United States.

A self-taught photographer, Molly's accomplishments include an international scholarship from the North American Nature Photography Association and an exhibit at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival in Utah. She is Miami's 2008 Charley Harper scholarship recipient.



EDUCATION

Members' favorite things

- Being outside!
- Finding animal tracks
- Studying bones
- Going into the woods
 - Field trip!!!!
 - Learning about earth stuff
- Making a birdfeeder
- Testing the creek
 - Going on trails
 - Looking for animals
 - Learning about body parts.
- Night hike
- Bird watching
- Making things out of food
 - Protecting our Earth!



Photo courtesy of Sharon Edwards

AMV grant helps Earth Clubbers answer with 'all of the above'

As budding naturalists make their way back to Earth Clubs with the start of the school year, Sharon Edwards reports on last year's successful program. The clubs are partially sponsored by Audubon Miami Valley and an Audubon Ohio Chapter Mini-Grant.

EMU, the non-profit Environmental Mobile Unit, works with teacher-advisors at several schools to give science-minded students a chance to learn about and help protect our environment in after-school Earth Club meetings. Audubon Miami Valley members instrumental in getting Earth Club started included Chris Parker, Debra Bowles, and Ann Geddes.

We had about 100 third- through seventh-grade members this year in six schools: Kramer, Marshall, Bogan Elementaries and Talawanda Middle School (Talawanda School District), Grant Elementary (Hamilton), and Elda Elementary (Ross).

We tried a new schedule for the middle schoolers: We met twice a month instead of monthly and stopped in February so members could join spring clubs and sports. This seemed to work *and* made it possible for a great winter night hike. Many thanks to science teacher Mike Bishop for adding Earth Club to his busy schedule.

Altogether there were 46 Earth Club meetings. Most members built a birdfeeder to take home and worked for one meeting in their school's nature area or butterfly

garden. Grant School members decorated 49 cloth napkins for their own use and to give to first-graders, encouraging them to save resources and reduce trash. Elda members chose to study primates and began developing games to help others learn about them, too. Some groups tested commercial environmental board games (on rainy days!), and others learned about animals' insides by studying bones (real) and internal organs (models).

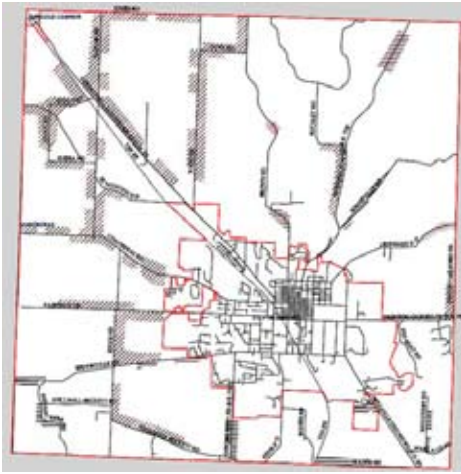
Kramer and Marshall members enjoyed meeting snakes, raptors, and Cougie and Eli at the Hueston Woods Nature Center. Bogan members had a great field trip to Miami University's Natural Areas and found two NEW (to us, anyway) aquatic insect species. Many thanks to Audubon Miami Valley and all the others who sponsored Earth Club!

– Sharon Edwards, EMU Naturalist

More area schools want Earth Clubs than funding currently can cover. Tax-deductible donations for the program can be made to Audubon Miami Valley. (See the donation form on page 3). Purchases at the AMV fall Bird Seed Sale and Spring Native Plant Sale also support AMV and Earth Clubs.

This year's bird seed pickup will be October 17 and 18. Watch for sale details closer to the date.





The map at left shows the “viewsheds” in the unincorporated portion of Oxford Twp. It is one of many maps included in the township’s Comprehensive Plan, which can be found online at http://development.butlercountyohio.org/content/txtcontent/plan/Planning_Commission_Meetings/2008/documents/FinalDraft.pdf

You can find a quick link to that site and quick links to several other sites with information about local development and the proposed Oxford Connector at <http://del.icio.us/juhetric/OxfordConnector>

Oxford Twp. plan fights urban sprawl

Important changes are under way for the planning of future land use in northwestern Butler County. A committee appointed by Oxford Township Trustees last year has worked for 18 months on a Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the unincorporated portion of the township. I was pleased to serve on the committee with many township colleagues, who, it turns out, found they were representing a community that wants to avoid conventional sprawl.

The first priority in our Plan is to maintain the Rural Character of Oxford Twp., understood as protecting the agricultural character and scenic views, if we can. This has not previously been a stated goal of township land use planning, and it is hard to imagine the maps and other zoning measures needed to get this done. As one major step, we have introduced a map of the significant “viewsheds” along roads in our township, and that, along with related measures, is a baseline to work from.

A second priority goal is Conservation, understood as protecting the

township’s woods, water, wildlife, and other sensitive resources. Development is to be directed away from these unique resources, and away from their further fragmentation.

The new plan sets other goals for improving on population diversity, the rural economy, local cooperation with the City of Oxford, Miami University, and other townships, and elements of a forward-looking transportation network for our area.

All the chapters of the Plan except for Transportation have been accepted by the Butler County Planning Commission. Transportation was not accepted because there are significant differences between the Township’s vision and Oxford City and Miami’s vision for solving street safety issues in the City. Right now we have until early October to jointly articulate a vision for future land use in our area that meets both the conservation goals of township residents, and the safety/decongestion goals of the city and the university.

It is my hope, as it is others’, that the emerging broad consensus on

conserving energy, reducing greenhouse emissions, emphasis on livable neighborhoods (the new urbanism) and protecting habitat for biological diversity around us will serve as an umbrella which helps both sides of the “transportation issue” come together.

Other cities of Oxford’s size have created a huge new capacity for bicycling and other measures that reduce congestion, while also upgrading existing rural roadways to carry heavy traffic (rather than building the new roads that increase rural fragmentation and reduce carbon retention on the land).

Are we on the threshold of new more conservative ways of using the land around us? Aldo Leopold’s ideas on the land ethic pointed us in that direction many years ago. Oxford City, Oxford Twp., and our surrounding townships are turning out to be a very significant test case, but also an opportunity to prepare for a future that is likely to be quite different from our recent past.

– Orie Loucks



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Audubon Miami Valley is
an incorporated,
non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization in
Butler and Preble Counties of Ohio

"Almost every day, instead of going to
school, I made for the fields, where
I spent my day."

– John James Audubon

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