

FRIENDS OF LOWER MUSKINGUM RIVER

"To conserve and protect the Lower Muskingum Watershed
for all to enjoy"



WHY CARE ABOUT FORESTS?

By Rebecca Phillips

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Many of us love forests, and Marietta has long prided itself on being a tree city, but forests are not just beautiful to look at. Recent news reports have highlighted their importance to humans and the rest of life.

The August report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recommended tree planting as perhaps the best way to combat climate change; trees sequester carbon and thereby help to neutralize emissions. Reports on the Amazon fires have stressed that tropical rainforest's role as "the lungs of the planet," lungs endangered as the wildfires release all the carbon stored in those massive trees. And trees do not only help to



Why care about forests?

counteract humans' carbon emissions: ongoing research has revealed that more than half of the world's terrestrial species live in tree canopies, making healthy forests havens of biodiversity. However, deforestation has contributed to the 30% decline in bird populations.

The eastern United States has experienced a regrowth of many of its forests since misguided clearcutting in earlier centuries. Appalachia's forests, home to plant and animal communities found nowhere else, are recognized as one of the world's most biodiverse regions. Our eastern forests are used by migratory songbirds as rest and feeding spots on their spring and fall migrations. Some, like the climate-threatened cerulean warbler, breed only in mature deciduous forests. Southeastern Ohio's Wayne National Forest, which since the 1930s has transformed from a stretch of denuded hillsides to a mature forest, is part of this global treasure. So many bird species, including the cerulean warbler, breed in Ohio's only national forest that the Audubon Society has added the Wayne to its international list of Important Bird Areas.

Besides their importance to biodiversity, the large trees in older forests actually put on more growth each year and remove more carbon from the atmosphere than young trees do; this ability to offset large quantities of humans' carbon

emissions makes the protection of old forests essential in the fight against climate change. The forests of the eastern US are recognized as carbon sinks on par with the Amazon rainforest, absorbing, by some estimates, twenty percent of the country's CO₂ emissions; some of the planet's "lungs" are right here in Ohio. With large swaths of South American forests lost to this year's fires, protection of our closer-to-home resource only makes sense.

Finally, it should come as no surprise to FLMR supporters that riparian forests are essential to river health. Tree roots hold soil and thereby prevent erosion and sedimentation, while the leaves and branches break the force of rain before it hits the soil. Prevention of nutrient runoff from agricultural fields can impede the growth of the toxic algae that has plagued Ohio's rivers and lakes in recent years.

Healthy soil can also trap contaminants and allow them to break down into nontoxic forms before they reach the river or the aquifer, protecting both water quality and human health.

FLMR's work supports healthy forests, healthy rivers, and healthy humans.

FLMR News

Marietta College Make a Difference Day

On September 28, 2019 from 8AM-2PM Marietta College McDonough Leadership students and FLMR volunteers conducted another river clean-up on the Westside of Devol's Dam. Over 25 bags of garbage were collected along with tires, culverts, barrels, and steel rods.

Prior to the event Leadership students met with Executive Director, Tiffany Harvey, to plan the event. The students created a color code system to aid volunteers with sorting the recycling and garbage. Volunteers were divided into groups. Each group had a leader and were instructed to collect specific types of recycling or garbage.

The leadership students did an excellent job organizing volunteers and most impressively stayed long after the event to help wash bottles in order to be able to recycle them. Following the washing students delivered the recycling to the Marietta Area Recycling.

FLMR is thankful to have worked with such a wonderful group of young people to clean up FLMR's conservation area at Devol's Dam.



FLMR Monitoring

This year Executive Director, Tiffany Harvey, has been focusing on strengthening the FLMR monitoring program.

Monitoring refers to conservation easement visits which must be conducted to ensure that property owners are complying with the conservation easement restrictions they agreed to when purchasing their conservation easement property. These restrictions protect the conservation value of the property which may include maturing forest, headwaters or endangered species. FLMR as a land trust are legally obligated to protect the conservation values of the conservation easements they hold.

Ms. Harvey and FLMR volunteers are happy to announce that we have completed all monitoring of all conservation easement properties this year.

If you would like to be trained to monitor contact Executive Director, Tiffany Harvey, at vista@muskingumriver.org

FLMR Membership Event

On August 23, 2019 FLMR hosted a Membership Event at Board Member Ty and Megan Williams cabin adjacent to Luke Chute Conservation Area. The event was designed to encourage the gathering of FLMR Members to connect them to each other and FLMR's work.

Around 30 members attended. Hamburger, veggie burgers, and hotdogs were provided by Ohio Foothills Custom Catering.

Many members explored the pollinator habitat with board members and everyone enjoyed the company of those who care about conserving and protecting the lower Muskingum watershed.





LUKE CHUTE CONSERVATION AREA

DOUG ALBAUGH

I live right beside the Luke Chute Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is owned by Friends of Lower Muskingum River, and the walking trails are open to the public. There are several miles of trails, and I walk them frequently. In this short article, I want to share a few observations and thoughts from my walks, in hopes of enticing you to come enjoy the Conservation Area, too.

There are interesting things to be seen in all seasons of the year. Perhaps spring is the most exciting. It marks the beginning of a succession of wildflowers that lasts through summer and into fall. The variety of flowers is surprising. I don't have a good estimate for the whole year, but last August I counted 59 species in bloom. The spring flowers are a special treat. Many of them are conspicuous because they appear before a lot of plants are leafed out. They come on so quickly there is something new to see every day or two. And some of the spring flowers are really spectacular – like bloodroot and large-flowered trillium.

Last winter, with the greenery gone, it was easy to see the trees that AEP Ohio planted in 2006. Some of the trees – especially the sycamores – have grown amazingly fast, with some now well over an inch in diameter. In a few more years, the transition from brushy fields to woods is going to become apparent. In some areas of the fields there are a lot of young black walnut trees that were planted by squirrels. Last fall, buck deer did a lot of damage to these trees by polishing their antlers on them. Many of them have much of the bark stripped off. They won't die, but some will have to re-grow from ground level.

Damage such as this emphasizes the importance of hunting in an ecosystem where deer have practically no natural predators. Coyotes kill a few fawns, but probably not enough to be significant. Sometimes it looks like the hunters don't have a great effect either. Todd Stewart, our wildlife officer, says he thinks we will notice a temporary drop in deer population as a result of epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) associated with last summer's drought.



Before hunting season, deer could be seen every day, both on the Conservation Area and on my place. After gun season, as happens every year, the deer were very secretive for a while – but by late winter they were once again becoming more open in their daily movements. On March 1, the turkey vultures returned. For a number of years, about 30 of them have been using the white pine and sycamore trees on my place as their roosting area. Bluebirds showed up in March, also. Dave Blount put out about 15 nest boxes for them, along the trails on the Conservation Area. Last year Boy Scout Troop 222 of Waterford, OH built 20 new Bluebird boxes.

Through volunteer work, we maintain a historic granary, adjacent to the parking area. Be sure to check it out when you visit the Conservation Area.

The hand-hewn beams, with their well-fitted mortise and tenon joints, are quite impressive.

During the winter, windy weather brought down some of the tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) that Dave Blount and I girdled and poisoned in the past two years. So we had some chainsaw work, to clear the fallen trees that interfered with the trails. The trails are in great shape now – come out and enjoy them! We have some more tree of heaven to get rid of this year, but progress looks good. It's worth the effort to control this nasty non-native invasive tree, because it's very aggressive and will out-compete native species. Control of some other invasive species is even more problematic. There are several patches of garlic mustard on the Conservation Area, and controlling garlic mustard is a real challenge. In the area where the trail follows the riverbank, south of Cabin Run, there was a large stand of milkweed last year. In spite of the wind, some of the pods still held seeds this spring, each with its tuft of fluff that can carry it a great distance when it breaks free of the pod. I hope a lot of them find good places to germinate. The section of trail along the riverbank will soon have to be moved over a bit, as chunks of bank continue to slump into the river every time the water is high. When we made the trail two years ago, it was well back from the river, and now it's pretty close to the edge. When the river decides to change course, it's no easy matter to stop it. Rivers are accustomed to doing as they please. Give me a call when you are going to visit the Conservation Area, and if I'm not too involved with one of my projects, I'll give you a tour. Or just come enjoy the trails by yourself.

Doug Albaugh lives next door to the Luke Chute Conservation Area, in Morgan County, on State Route 266, about 10 miles from Beverly. He is on the board of directors of Friends of Lower Muskingum River. Doug can be reached at 740-984-8201 or dalbaugh@ee.net.



348 Muskingum Drive
Marietta, OH 45750

Events:

Oct. 26th Pollinator Habitat Workday-tree of heaven removal

When: 10/26 9AM-12PM and 11/10 2PM-5PM

Where: Luke Chute Conservation Area

Carpool:

Where: 348 Muskingum Drive. Marietta, OH 45750

When: 8:15AM

Nov. 10th Pollinator Habitat Workday- building a kiosk and tree of heaven removal

When: 10/26 9AM-12PM and 11/10 2PM-5PM

Where: Luke Chute Conservation Area

Carpool:

Where: 348 Muskingum Drive. Marietta, OH 45750

When: 1:15PM

Don't be alarmed!

We are removing trees in our pollinator habitat, but don't be alarmed. If trees are allowed to grow, the forest will overtake the pollinator habitat. All the trees we will be removing are saplings. We have a few trees scattered throughout which are much larger. They are not being removed.

Sapling tree removal is important for maintenance of the habitat which is more important than ever as pollinators are sharply declining.

The majority of these trees are also the invasive tree, Tree of Heaven. This tree out-competes the nutrient rich native plants which wildlife and pollinators have adapted to feed on.

The native grasses and flowers in the pollinator field also sequester carbon and protect against erosion much like a stand of trees would because they have root systems that reach up to 6 feet. Note that turf grass and nonnative grasses (used in many yards) do not have the roots systems which bring about those benefits.

Volunteer!

Property Monitors:

Property monitoring is great for anyone who enjoys visiting new properties and ensuring the conservation easements are upheld. Property monitoring is done during daytime hours in spring, summer, and fall. Property monitoring can be scheduled with executive director, Tiffany Harvey, who will train you.

Property Monitoring includes:

- Contact conservation easements landowners prior to visit to schedule a monitoring visit.
- Visit the office to pick up the property's monitoring binder.
- Use directions found in the binder to travel to the property.
- After arriving on the property, hike and record required information in the Monitoring Report found in the property binder.
- After leaving return your signed copy of the monitoring report to our office and email any photos you have to vista@muskingumriver.org.

Land Stewards (Volunteer Days and Pollinator Habitat Workdays):

- Land stewardship is great for anyone who enjoys working with their hands and being outdoors. Stewardship volunteer workdays occur in spring, summer, and fall. Please check our website and Facebook for times and dates.
- Remove invasive species of plants on our properties.
- Mow and/or weed-eat trails.
- Remove trees and debris from trails.

Table Booths

A great opportunity for anyone who is not physically able and those who don't enjoy being outdoors.

FLMR attends many events where we table booths throughout the year.

Volunteers can table those booths.

FRIENDS OF LOWER MUSKINGUM RIVER MEMBERSHIP

The mission of Friends of Lower Muskingum River is to conserve and protect natural areas in the lower Muskingum Valley for all to enjoy.

☐ Individual (\$25) ☐ Corporate (\$100)

☐ Family (\$35) ☐ Lifetime (\$500)

☐ Non-Profit (\$50)

Full Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

FLMR is a 501(C)3 tax deductible organization.

Please Make checks payable to: FLMR

Mail to: Quincy Robe

FLMR Membership Chair

PO Box 31

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