

FRIENDS OF LOWER MUSKINGUM RIVER

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



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WORKDAY WITH MARIETTA COLLEGE STUDENTS AT THE BIESER FIELD STATION

By Katy Lustofin

Several times per semester, my colleague Dave McShaffrey and I bring students to the Barbara A. Beiser Field Station specifically to work on the trails and invasive species. The BFS, as we call it for short, is 77 acres that is owned by Friends of Lower Muskingum River and managed by the Marietta College Department of Biology and Environmental Science. Purchased by FLMR using funding from the Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation grant in 2007, the property belonged to Marietta College alum Barbara Beiser's family for over 100 years. A 99 year memorandum of

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Beiser Field Station

understanding between the biology department and FLMR permits use of the field station for educational purposes. We teach several field-based classes at BFS as well as use it for research, but one of my favorite activities is when we offer extra credit to students to help us manage the trails and invasive species.

In November, we had a very small group that came with us – just two students, plus 3 dogs. Dave and I always make sure at least one dog (his or mine) accompanies us, as many of our students are missing their pets. Plus, it is good exercise for the dogs. We are fortunate that the dogs of the biology department all get along well and appreciate the attention from our students.

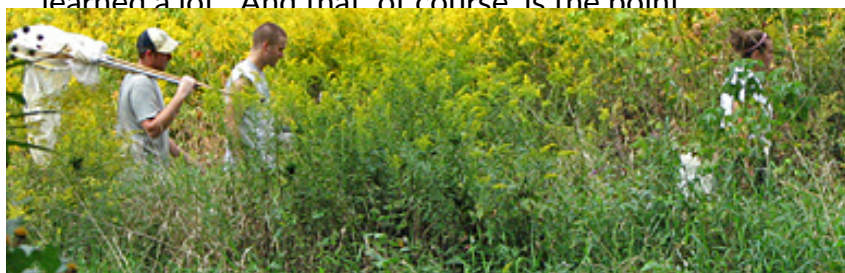
The students who came in November were surprised by how large the field station is. The trail system is not as well maintained as I would wish, because it is difficult to get equipment back to our property, but our mission that Sunday was to install metal trail blazes up the hill, to better mark the trail. Dave had the blazes while the students and I followed with clipper and loppers, attacking the multiflora rose growing on or adjacent to the trail. One student commented on how little multiflora rose he saw, compared to other locations he has been recently; I was quick to point out to him that we bring students three to eight times per year on a trip like this so what he was seeing is the result of much manual labor. From an essay the student wrote in class later that semester, I know that he was impressed with just how much work goes into fighting the invasive species.

While hiking up the hill, cutting multiflora rose and blazing the trail, we saw several species of nut trees, including hickory and red oak, which prompted a discussion about the importance of mast in food webs. Allie, the cattle dog, brought us

a live and uninjured possum, prompted a discussion about animal behavior. As we followed an old osage orange fence row, we talked about the property's history as a farm and the role that Friends of Lower Muskingum River played in making the field station possible.

The relationship between FLMR and the biology department has always been important in maintaining the field station. One of my first trips with students to the station involved planting butternut seeds that Marilyn Ort provided. Butternut trees, *Juglans cinerea*, are also called white walnut. While many websites tell you that they are easy to process, personal experience indicates otherwise, but the nuts themselves do live up to the name, being a delicious, oily nut that is high in omega-3 fatty acids. Unfortunately, butternut trees are susceptible to a fungal disease, which has made the tree increasingly rare. I don't know where Marilyn got her seeds from, and because we didn't keep good records of the locations students planted them, I don't know if that day 10 years ago added any butternut trees to our forest, but we have since planted more than a dozen seedlings, marking the location with GPS; I have my eye on a honey butternut cookie recipe that I hope to someday bring to an FLMR potluck.

Back to the present day - driving home, the students asked me why we don't require more students to come to work days like that gray one in November. The two students who came that came that day said that they enjoyed it and they both felt that they learned a lot. And that, of course, is the point.



FLMR News

Luke Chute Conservation Area Trail Kiosk

In November, Matt Halfhill, Ty Williams, Doug Albaugh, John Lee, and I installed a new trail information kiosk at the Luke Chute Conservation Area.

In December of 2018 Executive Director, Tiffany Harvey, applied for a grant through the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District. A few months later FLMR received the grant and in October Matt Halfhill and Tiffany Harvey started creating plans for the project and purchasing materials.

This kiosk will provide information about the pollinators and plants which can be viewed in the pollinator habitat at different time periods throughout the growing season and their decline. Tiffany Harvey is currently working on creating maps to promote more trail use of FLMR's underutilized trails at Luke Chute Conservation Area and Cabin Run located just across the road.

Thank you to all the volunteers and the MWCD who made this project possible. Thanks especially to Matt Halfhill for working many hours to design and build the kiosk at his home so it only had to be assembled on site.

Please go enjoy the Luke Chute Conservation Area and check out this new kiosk while you are there to learn more about the pollinators and pollinator plants at Luke Chute Conservation Area. There is an incredible diversity of plants and pollinators on display each growing season.



Luke Chute Conservation Area Workdays

In October and November of 2019, FLMR hosted two workdays at Luke Chute Conservation Area.

Around ten volunteers removed the invasive tree, Tree of Heaven, from the Luke Chute Conservation Area. 1200 plants in total were removed by volunteers in 2019.

It's necessary to remove this tree because it out competes native plants to which other native plants and animals are adapted to interact with in the ecosystem. It also takes up valuable real estate which could be used by more nutrient rich native plants for our pollinators.

In October, FLMR was happy to host a group of Marietta College students who helped remove trees and collect seeds from the pollinator habitat. Tiffany Harvey also taught them about invasive species and the importance of pollinator habitat establishment.

The collected seeds were be packaged by Marietta College students on the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service at Marietta College by the Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity.



Cabin Run Hike

On December 1st, FLMR hosted a hike at Cabin Run, the trail located across from Luke Chute Conservation area in Stockport, OH. More info and trail maps at <http://www.muskingumriver.org/projects/luke-chute-conservation-area/>.

FLMR's objective was to mark property boundaries and scout possible routes for expanding the trail at Cabin Run. FLMR hopes to share more of the properties beautiful features to the public by expanding the trail in the future. Keep checking for emails. We will need volunteers to help with the completion of the trail.

It was a great experience seeing the beautiful overlook at the top of the hill and the rock features at Cabin Run. When the trail is completed, it will be a beautiful hike.



Alpha Sigma Phi making seed packets at MLK Day of Service



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STUDY: LAND CONSERVATION BOOSTS LOCAL ECONOMIES

Land conservation modestly increases employment rates, a traditional indicator of economic growth, according to a new study of New England cities and towns, led by scientists at Harvard Forest, Amherst College, Highstead, and Boston University. The study, published in *Conservation Biology*, is the first of its kind, estimating the local net impacts of both private and public land conservation over 25 years (1990-2015) across 1500 cities and towns that are home to 99.97% of New England's population. The study shows that when land protection increased, employment increased over the next five-year period, even when controlling rigorously for other associated factors.

"Employment gains were modest but significant across the region, and the effect was amplified in more rural areas," says Kate Sims, Chair of the Economics Department at Amherst College and a co-lead author of the study. To illustrate the study's results, she explained that if a town with 50,000 people employed increased its land protection by 50%, it saw, on average, 750 additional people employed in the next five years.

Conservation – the permanent protection of land from developed uses – has long been viewed by skeptics as a loss of possible local tax revenue from new development or resource extraction, and thus painted as incompatible with economic growth. Proponents of land protection point to the fact that conservation can reduce the cost of community services, while providing both indirect economic benefits – such as clean water and flood protection – and direct economic gains such as increased real estate and amenity values and inputs to the forest and farm products industry.

Prior studies have mainly focused on the impacts of public land conservation such as national parks, and in the Western U.S. The current study builds on analyses by Harvard Forest and Highstead to track and learn from the unique framework of land protection efforts in New England, which include large amounts of privately-owned land.

The authors say gains in employment following increases in conservation may be driven by new jobs in tourism.



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and recreation—a sector that provides 52 billion dollars a year in direct spending, according to estimates by the Outdoor Industry Association. The authors also point to the preservation of jobs in areas with commercial timberlands that support timber harvests, non-timber forest products such as maple syrup, and public access and recreational activities. The scientists saw small gains in median household income, overall population, and employment in recreation, tourism, and arts-based industries as a result of land conservation, though the effects were not statistically significant. They saw no change in the number of new building permits when conservation increased, suggesting that protecting land does not reduce housing development, but redirects where it occurs.

Today, about a quarter of New England's land base is permanently conserved. "More than half of the region's conservation has occurred within the last 25 years," says Spencer Meyer, Senior Conservationist at Highstead and a co-author of the study. "We now have further evidence that conservation generally boosts, rather than depresses, local economies through job growth." "New England is unique," says Jonathan Thompson, Senior Ecologist at Harvard Forest and co-lead author of the study. "Most of its land is privately owned by hundreds of thousands of individual landowners. We've now shown that when private landowners protect their land, the benefits extend beyond nature and into their communities, too." "The benefits of land conservation provide all kinds of ecosystem services, from recreation to water purification," says Doug Levey, a program director for the National Science Foundation, which funded the study through its Long-Term Ecological Research program. The team notes that more research, especially on property values and tax revenues, is needed to get a more complete picture of the costs and benefits of land conservation.

Read the full research paper in Conservation Biology
https://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Sims_et_al-2019-Conservation_Biology%20%281%29.pdf





348 Muskingum Drive
Marietta, OH 45750

Events:

Annual Dinner and Auction

When: 3/7/2020 6PM-8PM

5PM Social hour followed by dinner at 6PM and an auction

Where: 312 Franklin St. Marietta, OH 45750

RSVP by 2/23 here:

<http://www.muskingumriver.org/annual-dinner/> or
<https://flmrannualdinner.eventbrite.com> or mail your check to FLMR to 348 Muskingum Drive, Marietta, OH 45750.

Ticket costs: \$35.00

Auction Items:

REI Trekking Poles, Two Cincinnati Reds Tickets, Four Athens Alysium Tour Tickets, MWCD two night stays in a cabin, Two BalletMet Tickets, Bluerock Station Dinner and Tour, Two Cosi tickets, A night's stay at Burr Oak Lodge, Hidden Marietta Harmar Ghost Trek and Putnam Street Ghost Trek, Trolley Tours, Learning in Retirement courses, Hocking Hills Canopy Tours
Auction items and descriptions at
muskingumriver.org/auction-items/

AT KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
COUNCIL #478 312
FRANKLIN ST.
MARIETTA, OH 45750
**FLMR ANNUAL
DINNER AND
AUCTION
MARCH 7, 2020
6 PM-8 PM**
DINNER IS \$35 PER PERSON
Catered by: Ohio Foothills
Custom Catering, LLC
Please join us at 5 PM for social
hour preceding our 6 PM dinner
and auction.

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watershed!

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