

Further Down the Path *(continued from inside)*

David has made a substantial dent in the Japanese bush honeysuckle population, although it will be an ongoing effort to control this invasive plant. "There is enough honeysuckle back there to keep me busy until 2024," says Dave. We will be planting native tree and plant species this spring in the cleared areas.

Beginning with the Winter 2019-2020 Newsletter, we began sharing some of David's notes as shared with Board President Laura. Many readers found the documentation as fascinating as we did. Dave kept at it after the snow flew, and the quarry and creek froze. Here are a few of his entries:

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

Didn't arrive till 1300 hours, but worked till dark. Was really pleasant down by the quarry. No wind. Everything frozen. Just at or slightly above 32 degree F. I'd left 2 big rocks, over 300#, partially dug up, last visit. Thought I could just roll them over and load them. But with the frozen ground, each took a lot of work to get them out and loaded. It was so hard to free them, I almost gave up. As I dug up the big ones with the mattock, I uncovered 3 smaller ones. Roughly 200# each. Was able to load and move all of them, and rolled them right up onto the path. Quite a distance to move them on the red cart, but the frozen ground really helped. Good exercise, anyhow. I figure the big rocks will help protect the banks during floods. Both sides. Would like to add 2 or 3 more big ones, before re-installing the flat rocks on the path and more dirt on the big rocks.

Sunday, January 26, 2020

Arrived just after noon, but got a good day in. Didn't stop till 1800 hrs. Was no longer frozen ground, so I could dig up rocks OK. For sure muddy up on the new path, but not as bad as before. And I had a shorter distance as I placed each rock. Tried to stay on 250# or less. Did dig up three giant ones, that had to be over 450#. The last hour or so, I got out the chain saw, and sawed the tops off of a bunch of old honeysuckle on the south side of the quarry. Used the saw to "top" them, then chop up the branches so they can be collected and piled easier. Finally, I got out the mattock and dug out the roots. Using the last 3 or 4 feet of the trunks as a handle to bend them over and after cutting the roots with the mattock, pull them out. Not leaving any "stumps", so hopefully they'll be only tiny starts if they do re-grow. I think the method is about as good as I can do. I can get a bunch of them done in an hour. Will sleep well tonight. Hauling rocks in my dreams....

Thursday, January 30, 2020

On Sunday I went hiking at Highbanks Metropark, up on US23. Saw the way they were "buffering" stream banks to prevent rapid wash out. Decided to use the honeysuckle the same way, on the high bank south of the quarry. Put a bunch of branches there, on the sand bar below the east side bank. Then some old logs on top to hold them down. Next trip I'll add a couple more big logs, and maybe rope them to the huge rock there. Started the day by putting up the rope as a hand rail, on the new SW bank. Did add a couple new rocks to the new SW bank. Also added 4 big buckets of wet gravel to the path, right in the middle, where the path stones are

Do you need to complete service hours for Scouts, school or for exercise? Give bush honeysuckle removal a try. Call 419-384-7195. We supply the tools and plenty of homemade cookies.



The red cart at rest: David has single-handedly engineered the move of over 30 tons of rocks to separate the quarry wetland from Cranberry Run. The creek was channelized in the 1950s which allowed sediment-laden floodwaters to fill the quarry that once was a popular fishing spot. In order to prevent the vital wetland from completely filling in and to allow visitors to observe creek and wetland life side-by-side, David has reconstructed the lost bank between the two bodies of water.

kind of thick. Dirt will wash off the path, but the gravel is much heavier. Much better to walk on. There is a good supply of gravel 50 meters south of the quarry, but it is pretty heavy work.

Friday, February 14, 2020

It was cold, but pleasant, down by the quarry. No wind! Kept going on the gravel. Hauled 10 big buckets of gravel up onto the SW bank. Spread it around, about 3 inches deep. The bulk of the work today was just cutting/pulling honeysuckle on the east side of the quarry. I don't know the type of tree, but I call it the "spider tree" because it reminds me of one. Finished just at sunset. Was getting cold, and the chain had frozen on the chainsaw anyhow. Worked with the mattock only for the last hour.

Monday, February 24, 2020

Dry socks, all day! With the creek at a modest level, I started by hauling more gravel up onto the SW bank—14 big buckets full. Found a couple nice 4" squarish rocks, and buried them in the slope, as steps. Much better, and safer, with the rope and the steps. In the summer, when the creek level is low, I may dig up some more from the Grand Canyon. Thinking about a slurry system, like gold miners use.

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Questions? Email thequarryfarm@gmail.com, visit us online at www.thequarryfarm.org or call 419-384-7195. Donations to The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a 501(c)(3) public charity, are tax deductible.

Spring 2020 Programs & Events

Meet in Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora for all of these scheduled activities. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for photos and updates.

Spring Migration Bird Hike

Saturday, April 25, 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Rain date: Saturday, May 16

Migration will be in full swing during that time and our leaders, birding enthusiast Dave Smith and Deb Weston, Birder and Quarry Farm Board Member, hope we'll see some nice warblers. Dress for the weather in earth-toned colors and sturdy hiking shoes. We'll be walking with stops to look and listen for migrating and resident birds. Participants will learn which are passing through on their way to breeding grounds in Canada and which will stay to nest here. If the birds are actively singing, we'll listen for the differences between species. Materials will be available for take-home, including warbler bird song mnemonics, basic shapes of birds and a list of residents versus migrants. What we see will be documented on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's **ebird** and shared with any participants who want to share their email. Bring binoculars and cameras are welcome. Preregistration is not required and there is no fee to participate. Tax-deductible donations are welcome.

(Note: We won't use bird songs on devices to draw the birds in, especially during breeding season when they have enough to contend with. Sensitive species may leave the area if they hear a rival.)

Cookies & a Canvas

Saturday, June 6, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Rain date: Saturday, June 20

This introduction to the wonderful world of painting with acrylics on canvas board is for ages 15 and up. Color theory, perspective, shadow and composition are some of the topics we will address in this relaxed class surrounded by nature. We will walk through the Red Fox Cabin gardens and choose a scene to paint, then gather in the Seitz Family Pavilion for homemade cookies.

Cost: \$12 per person for materials.

Preregister by calling 419-384-7195 or emailing thequarryfarm@gmail.com by June 4, at 4 p.m.

Spring Open House

Saturday, June 13, 1 to 4 p.m.

Bring yourself, friends and family for an afternoon of fun in the gardens, woods and wetlands. Make a walking staff and take it with you along the trails to count butterflies and Blanchard's cricket frogs and visit residents of the farm animal sanctuary. Paul Nusbaum will demonstrate pioneer and Native American skills. Admission is free and no registration is required. Tax-deductible donations are welcome.



NATURE PRESERVE & CONSERVATION FARM





Mission Statement

It is our goal and mission to provide the opportunity for people of all ages to increase their understanding of the natural environment of Northwest Ohio and to interact with their fellow inhabitants in a sustainable manner.



A very young and tiny Praying Mantis prowls a yew for insects outside Red Fox Cabin.

The Quarry Farm Newsletter is a quarterly publication for supporters of The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a nonprofit organization in Pandora, Ohio.

On the cover: Male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, photographed by Deb Weston on the nature preserve

All photographs printed in this newsletter were taken on The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm.

www.thequarryfarm.org

Printed on recycled, recyclable paper

Under One Big Sky

Our winter holiday season began offsite at the Putnam County District Library with the placement of a Christmas tree sculpture constructed of Japanese bush honeysuckle trunks and decorated with red velvet bows and 3-D paper snowflakes. The "tree" was part of the month-long PCDL Friends of the Library Christmas Tree Festival. Just a few days later, we were down the road in Bonnie and Brad Brooks' barn where volunteers created The Quarry Farm's entry in Ottawa's Welcome Santa Parade. The Brookses loaned a wagon which we transformed into a woodland scene complete with quilt-batting "snow" and a nine-foot-tall tree decorated with origami birds and red ribbons. The Brooks' even pulled the finished float along the December 1 parade route with their ATV. Six days later, Red Fox Cabin was a stop on the annual Riley Creek Old Time Christmas Tour.



The bush honeysuckle "Christmas Tree" will be used in the vegetable garden this spring and summer.

On December 20, seven Brownies, their leaders and sibs earned their Hiking badge in the nature preserve. We set out at 6 p.m., flashlights in mittened and gloved hands. The sky was a little hazy, but we could see Cassiopeia and the Big Dipper, with flashlights off, from our seats in the new Nature's Classroom. Venus, the dazzling evening "star" of December, greeted us on the return hike up the hill south of Red Fox Cabin. The hike was lively, with the questions and observations that are some of the best things about sharing the trails. Thanks to the troop for bringing apples, carrots and potatoes for the residents of the farm animal sanctuary.

Because the weather was less than ideal on January 11, the winter "Full Moon Hike" was held on February 8. We had a full trail of 16 people. A beautiful soft snow fell during much of the event, but the moon did make an appearance as we entered the upland woods' Nature's Classroom. Wild Turkey, White-tailed Deer and Fox Squirrel tracks crossed our path and the Huber family heard an Eastern Screech Owl near the cabin.



Wild Turkey tracks paraded across the trail at the 2020 GBBC.

The February 15 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) installment on The Quarry Farm was cold; 5 degrees F cold. Beautiful, with thick frost and snow and blue sky for the walk, but the cold filtered through Thinsulate, wool and whatever else each of us could layer over our pasty winter skins. Our count from that Saturday and another done on Monday is now part of the official GBBC 2020 observation list.



Brownies cross the Cranberry Run bridge.



Resident Spotlight: Brownie

What says springtime more than a duck playing in a fresh rain-filled puddle surrounded by green grass? Brownie rules a small flock of Rouen ducks in The Quarry Farm farm animal sanctuary. This expressive lady even took under her gentle (but firm) wing a young Canada Goose placed here for release by Nature's Nursery. The gosling, creatively known here as "Baby Goose," is so enamored of Brownie that she sleeps with her in the hen house at night, even though Baby Goose is now fully-feathered and can fly.

Brownie was surrendered to us by someone who acquired her as a duckling. Although Rouens look very much like large Mallards, Rouens are a heavyweight breed of domesticated duck that originated in France sometime before the 19th century. While Mallards are wild, lightweight flyers, Rouens weigh between 9 and 10 pounds and can only fly short distances. Brownie prefers to waddle-march around the sanctuary, sliding nimbly under the paddock gates to attend to whatever piques her considerable interest.

We spotlight Brownie here not only for her charming personality but as a reminder to refrain from purchasing live rabbits, chicks and ducklings as Easter gifts in April. Each year, Easter pets die cruelly from neglect or mistreatment or are surrendered to animal shelters that receive a surge of unwanted. These animals are given up after owners lose interest or become unable to care for them. Others that are not taken to shelters are "set free" into the wild where they have no knowledge or experience at foraging or evading predators. Death is inevitable. Those that may survive become part of feral colonies of domestic and hybrid birds that cause problems for native wildlife.

Statistics indicate that within the first weeks after the holiday, 30 percent of all Easter pets die, and another 60 percent to 70 percent are abandoned or turned in to shelters. Instead of a Brownie, fill your Easter basket with a fuzzy toy and gelatin-free jelly beans.

Further Down the Path

Ten years into this grand adventure that is The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, the January 16, 2020, annual meeting of the Board of Directors resulted in substantial plans for the new decade.

As Putnam County is limited in its opportunities for nature hiking, we receive calls all year round from people wanting to hike the trails here. A major goal that was set during the January 16 meeting is to be able to open the nature preserve trails to the public during certain days of the week. However, there is much work to be done before this becomes a reality. Thanks to David Seitz, we have good bridges that ford Cranberry Run and connect the quarry farm land bridge to the quarry's south bank. Paul Nusbaum's boardwalk offers smooth passage over the 19th century stone quarrying channel. Before public hours are set and posted, all existing and proposed trails must be clearly indicated with way-finding signage. Stay tuned as updates will be printed in this quarterly newsletter and at www.thequarryfarm.org.

(continued on back page)



A very young volunteer removes a bush honeysuckle seedling.

Thank you...

- ...to Paula Harper for creating fundraiser gift baskets
- ...to Debbie Leiber for building an owl box for the nature preserve
- ...to Paul Nusbaum for mapping out the new Coburn's Bottom Trail
- ...to David Seitz for engineering a retention system for the quarry wetland, sediment barrier between it and Cranberry Run, and for clearing bush honeysuckle and downed trees
- ...to Sarah Sunderhaus and her Brownie troop for donating apples, carrots and potatoes for the farm animal sanctuary residents
- ...to Deb Weston for recording her Quarry Farm winter birding observations on Cornell Lab of Ornithology's ebird and for Amazon gift cards

Monetary Donations:

- Doug Alexander
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WISH LIST

- whole potatoes, apples and tree nuts for the farm animal sanctuary residents