

Further Down the Path

Many readers found engineer David Seitz' journal notes as fascinating as we did. Dave and his daughter Aili keep the faith, mattocks and saws at the ready. Here are a few of his entries:

Monday, April 20, 2020

We removed a warped 2 x 6 from the big bridge, and replaced with a new flat 2 x 6. Second job was to "chop" the big pile at the NE corner of the quarry. While I was chopping, Aili was watching the wildlife, and pointing out critters to me. Plenty of turtles in the quarry, enjoying the sun. Also, the female goose was on the nest, at the SW corner, overlooking the creek and quarry. We gave her plenty of space. Saw a big painted turtle in the south oxbow pond. Really big!

Friday, April 25, 2020

Cut along the bank of the creek, going north, opposite the south oxbow ponds. Took out a dozen large honeysuckle with the mattock. Only used the chain saw on a couple, which were leaning out over the creek. Left the roots to help hold the bank.

Spent an hour wandering around in Pony Hallow, cutting vines. Cutting, and cutting, but still finding more. Was maybe 5 p.m., and decided to start on the north of the south oxbow, moving up into Pony Hallow*. Along the north side there were a lot of honeysuckle. Started a new pile, and cleared the honeysuckle in an area 5 meters wide, and about 35 meters to the east, along the north side of the south oxbow. Gives a nicer view of the south oxbow, as you come south along the creek. There is a good path all the way around now. Nice walk there!

Monday, April 28, 2020

All honeysuckle were dug up with the mattock today. Piled them up, and chopped them with the chainsaw, as the last activity of the day. The south oxbow ponds are very open now, and the walk around even better. Friendly turtles. Found more vines, and kept at them. Lot of vines to cut still, I'm sure.

Thursday, May 7, 2020

Aili and I put in a good afternoon of honeysuckle clearing. First we used the old pile, just north of the south oxbow. Piled it up, and then I chopped it with the Polan. Then after 1600 hours, we switched to a new pile, more centrally located in Pony Hallow. Knocked off about 17:30, and I chopped that pile down before leaving that area. Looking more open in Pony Hallow after each visit.

Saw plenty of turtles today, all around the quarry. Spied a northern water snake in the water, up against the east bank. First one this year. Before, we saw garter snakes on the bank.

Saturday, May 23, 2020

The gander was gone, so a big old turtle took over that prime spot on top of the culvert pipe. Also plenty of fish cruising around today. They didn't all leave during the flood! Started the day by replacing some of the washed out gravel. In the course of that effort, became convinced the SW bank needed more large barrier rocks, to protect the path during flood. At the south end, where it joins the higher south side bank, there was obvious washout of the bank, and that needed bigger rocks on the west side of the path to stop it. Started looking around in the creek, trying to dig up big ones. Found several good candidates, but they were 300-400 pound rocks, and needed the cable puller to get them up the bank, and onto the red cart. Took some time, but got 4 big rocks up onto the path, and rolled into position. Have a few more picked out and ready to move during the next visit.



Aili with her new mattock

Friday, May 29, 2020

Aili and I came for some honeysuckle clearing yesterday afternoon, in the Pony Hallow. Missed the showers, and enjoyed the sun and breeze at the end of the day. I cut vines up the slope for the first two hours, and then joined Aili with the mattocks on the honeysuckle, for the last two hours. We worked back south to the south oxbow, clearing out several honeysuckle thickets. The critter highlight of the day was when we just arrived. We'd walked past the stepping stones, and come to the tiny stream from the north oxbow, down into the creek. There was a tiny 1 inch painted turtle there, struggling to get upstream over the fist sized rocks. Aili gave him a hand, into the pool, and he swam off at surprising speed. Didn't see any fish, but there were a lot of turtles. And the frogs are starting to sing, even in the daytime.

Thursday, June 11, 2020

Brought the brush cutter, and cleared (mowed) the path all the way from the SW corner of the quarry, past the stepping stones, and all the way down to the property line, just past the south oxbow. Cut away the low hanging limbs as I went. Was surprised when I got to the property line. There were trees down in the path, blocking the way. Went and swapped the brush cutter for the chain saw, and cleared the downed trees. The south oxbow and pony hollow are nicely freshed up, and would be good for a walk this week.

**Ponies Babe and Cookie sought the cool shade of this spot in the 1970s.*

Board of Directors:

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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.

Summer 2020 Programs & Events

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for photos and updates.

Quarry Farm Fridays & Animal Book Bundles

Featuring:

- A fun video with the *Animal of the Week* on Facebook Live at 10am and posted Fridays on both organizations' Facebook pages and websites.
- Themed Animal Book Bundles available for pickup at the library on request! (*while they last!*)

Schedule:

- June 19 - Sophie the Pot Bellied Pig
- June 26 - Quinn the Fox
- July 10 - Angus the Virginia Opossum
- July 17 - S'more the Nigerian Dwarf Goat
- July 24 - Gerald the Rescued Rooster (and his feathered friends)
- July 31 - Tyree the Corn Snake
- August 7 - Donkeys



145 S Main St
Bluffton, OH 45817
blufftonpubliclibrary.org
419-358-5016



Summer Family Day

Saturday, August 8, 1 to 4 p.m.

Meet outside the Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, the annual Summer Family Day will be a little different. Masks are required out of respect for everyone present. We will have stations set-up where individual families or visiting groups of nine or less can learn about trees, insects, herbs, pioneer and Native American skills, and the residents of the farm animal sanctuary. Admission is free and no registration is required. Tax-deductible donations are welcome.

6th Annual Quarry Farm Jam

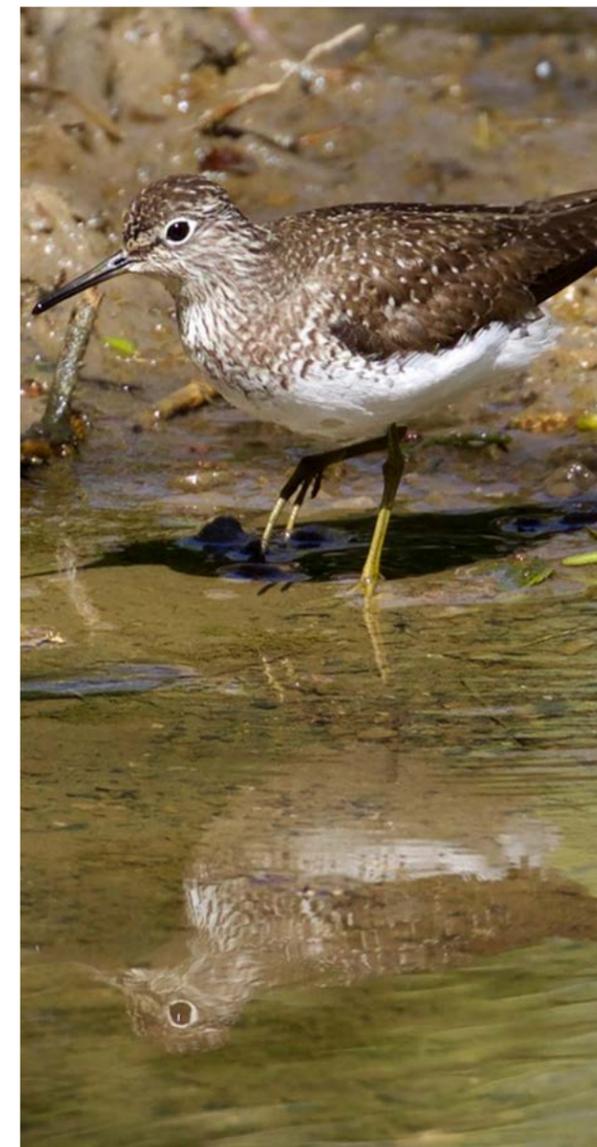
Saturday, September 12, 6 to 9 p.m.

Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora

Whether you play an instrument like a virtuoso, just like to pretend or sing along or listen, spend a sweet late summer evening with music under the big red roof alongside calls from the nature preserve. Bring your own chair. Masks are required out of respect for everyone present.



THE Quarry FARM
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 Black-throated Blue Warbler was one of the many birds that passed through The Quarry Farm this Spring. (Photo by Deb Weston)

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: A Solitary Sandpiper searches for treats on the banks of Cranberry Run. (Photo by Deb Weston)

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

As it did for everyone, March 2020 threw The Quarry Farm for a loop, upending plans for programs, school group visits and public workshops. But we know this is nothing compared to what others have gone through. Indeed, the nature preserve has been a refuge with ample opportunity for social distancing.

Just before the State of Ohio announced stay-at-home orders to slow the spread of the coronavirus, The Quarry Farm Board of Directors was able to conduct the annual meeting on January 16. A major goal for the new decade is to develop a clearly marked trail system on the nature preserve, complete with directional markers and trailhead signage that includes a map. Board member Paul Nusbaum went to work this spring on a new trail that loops through the north eastern floodplain. This low scrub area is perfect habitat for migratory warblers. Board member Deb Weston, an avid birder, discovered the value of the new trail along with fellow birder David Smith. On one birding venture on the new path, they found themselves spinning in circles to identify all of the different species of birds singing their travelling hearts out. On that May morning, just one of the early-rise walks Deb spent here with her binoculars and eBird app, they identified and recorded 57 avian species.

“That’s the beauty of The Quarry Farm,” she said. “You don’t have to walk 20 miles to be in the different habitats and see the birds that utilize them.”

During this “Stay Home” time, The Quarry Farm has provided a place for a lot of people to social distance while volunteering their time and talents to help out here. Just before local schools shuttered doors in March, Miller City-New Cleveland High School student Emma Barlage registered as The Quarry Farm’s Spring intern. From March through May, Emma spent up to 20 hours per week lopping and pulling bush honeysuckle saplings and seedlings. Findlay’s Rich and Nora Park offered to help out, too. With Emma assigned to the northwest hillsides and floodplain, the Parks’ to the uplands east of the old stone quarry, and David Seitz continuing his work in the south (see back page), we are watching native trees and wildflowers emerge along the trails almost overnight.

As noted above, this season has not gone according to plan. However, with social distancing and sanitizer at the ready, we have continued to provide tours and offer programs for individual families and small groups, by appointment. In early May, a Girl Scout troop from Leipsic came here to earn their hiking badges. As they climbed out of the Riley Creek floodplain toward the grass prairie, two large fluffy feathered great horned owl fledglings bobbed in a black walnut at eye level. In June, a Bluffton Boy Scout Troop came to hike. Hike they did, down, up and around almost every trail, including those not traversed by most visiting groups. We looked for the nesting pair of Scarlet Tanagers with no luck, but we did see a male Baltimore Oriole bobbing amongst the aquatic plants on the quarry wetland.



Chablis at sunset



There is a tremendous amount of golf cart traffic in front of the farm animal sanctuary fence. Chablis the Llama sits placidly under the pines at sunset, blinking her long lashes at the onlookers. If you wish to schedule an outdoor visit onsite during Summer 2020, send an email to thequarryfarm@gmail.com.

Resident Spotlight:

Mavis

More people have met Mavis the Peahen more outside than on The Quarry Farm since her arrival here in January. Most of this is due to the fact that we have had to cancel most of our Spring program lineup and to limit visitation due to the current pandemic. It is also due to Mavis’ and her sister Gert’s proclivity to go on walkabout (or flyabout) when they first arrived.



These two young peahens came from a flock located at a retirement community in Sandusky. Rather than to brutally cull the flock, the director and residents seek to periodically place some of the birds in new homes. Because peacocks are notorious watchdogs that take on intruders and predators vocally, we said we would accept either two peacocks or peahens (but not one of each as it is our policy to provide a good home for animals in need but not to breed more.)

Most animals that come here settle in pretty rapidly. They have food, water, shelter and enough space to figure out their place in the grand scheme of things. Mavis and Gert turned up their beaks at this, preferring to stare at themselves in good neighbor Casey’s window by day and to roost here in the trees at night. One day in April after a night of high winds, the two disappeared. We received calls and messages about peahen sightings in Pandora. Thanks to the help of homeowners with ladders and patience, we were able to capture the ladies and bring them home. They must have decided that this was the place to be after all, especially since there are sprouting spring vegetables to burrow in on hot days. There are tattered parsley plants in the raised bed, but the peahens are staying put.

‘Art is a Harmony Parallel with Nature’

A focus here is to share a discovery of art in nature. You may have attended one of our leaf-making workshops or painted watercolors here using natural dyes and pigments. For three years, we have invited local artists to paint a 24” x 24” board that mount to the fence that borders the farm animals sanctuary. Here are two pieces from this year’s gallery. If you are interested in creating a painting or drawing, send an email to thequarryfarm@gmail.com. The only requirement is that your theme be Ohio nature or a Quarry Farm experience.



This year’s Fence Gallery submissions include works by Holiday Herman (left) and Ambz Kear (above).

Thank you...

...to Ambz Kear for the Virginia Opossum painting
 ...to Paul Nusbaum for clearing the new Coburn’s Bottom Trail
 ...to Nora and Rich Park for volunteering to tackle bush honeysuckle removal, and to Rich for the bat box and carpentry skills
 ...to Butch Radabaugh for the tree cavity bird houses
 ...to David Seitz for continued engineering of the stone walking between it and Cranberry Run, and for clearing bush honeysuckle and downed trees
 ...to Deb Weston for recording her Quarry Farm Spring birding observations on Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s ebird and for leading the Spring Migration Hike

Monetary Donations:

Donations in honor of Steven Coburn-Griffis’ birthday
 The Lieber Family in honor of Deb Weston’s birthday
 Julie Dietsch
 Doug and Sandy Downing
 Lois Felkey
 Erin Fitch
 Paula Harper
 Rebecca McKee
 Leipsic Girl Scouts
 Nora and Rich Park
 Butch Radabaugh
 Bruce Stowe
 Deb Weston



Wild Hyacinth