

## Making a Way for Pollinators

Over the years we've written in this space about the long-term focus on pollinators at The Quarry Farm and ways our related gardening practices have evolved. We've talked about selecting butterfly-friendly plants for our garden at Red Fox Cabin and beyond. We've talked about conditions that butterflies, bees, bats and hummingbirds need to survive or that threaten their existence, and we've shared photos of some of the beauties that have graced our garden.

Our concern for pollinators really began during the 1990s when Gerald Coburn began photographing and studying the butterflies on The Quarry Farm. As his inventory grew (eventually to around 55), we learned about preferred host and food plants and began choosing plants accordingly. Our plantings of popular annuals and "Perennials of the Year" transitioned to mixed beds of plants and flowers known to support butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. We planted pollinator-friendly native grasses like Indian Grass and Big Bluestem. We put up bee blocks where native bees could lay their eggs. When we learned of the deadly impact of pesticides on butterflies and bees, we stopped using Sevin in our large vegetable garden at the time and became organic gardeners.



Several residents on Road 7L in Riley Township have already established pollinator gardens and larger habitats. This is the view facing west from Cranberry Run at the Herman Family home.

As reported in previous issues, an exciting new chapter in our history of gardening for pollinators opened five years ago when, as an educational project, the Putnam County Master Gardeners designed and planted a pollinator habitat garden next to Red Fox Cabin. The dedication and hard work of the Master Gardeners have made the site a model in miniature of what a pollinator habitat garden should be—not rigidly structured, mulched and manicured, but purposefully planned, nevertheless. It's become a diverse riot of plants that offer food and shelter for a stopover or home for an entire life cycle. It's fenced in and has a handsome gated entrance, decorative hardscaping and informative signage.

Before the Master Gardeners turned the first shovelful, they studied pollinator issues—who the pollinators are, their vital ecological importance, the features of a pollinator habitat, and devastating environmental challenges to survival, including pesticide use and habitat loss. Because land is increasingly polluted, paved over, robbed of diversity, and otherwise made unsupportive, the distances between

food and rest sources may be too great for long-distance migrators—for instance, bats and Monarchs—to survive their journeys.

Some concerned environmentalists have proposed creating *pollinator corridors* to support migratory pollinators throughout their journeys. The idea is for people living along migratory routes to make a concerted effort to offer habitats with food, water and shelter—even if they're only a few square feet of garden space—at intervals necessary for life-saving stopovers.

An intriguing "what if?" is this: what if people living along interstates, highways, or even country roads like the one that runs past The Quarry Farm were to join in common cause to learn about pollinator issues and then plant habitat gardens, uncontaminated, big or small, along their "corridors." Several residents on our country road have already established pollinator gardens and larger habitats. What might happen if we organized, gave our cause a name and spread the word?

—The Gardener at Red Fox Cabin



In 2017, the Putnam County Master Gardeners designed and planted a pollinator habitat garden next to Red Fox Cabin.

### Board of Directors:

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Questions? Email [thequarryfarm@gmail.com](mailto:thequarryfarm@gmail.com), visit us online at [www.thequarryfarm.org](http://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 2022 Programs & Events

Dress for the weather, including good walking shoes, and meet in Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora. There is no fee to participate. Tax-deductible donations are welcome.

### Annual Haiku Hike

**Saturday, April 23, 1 to 2 p.m.**

April is National Poetry Month, April 22 is Earth Day and April 17 is International Haiku Poetry Day. In celebration of all three, we'll hike the trails, look for wildlife and spring wildflowers and—you guessed it—try our hands at writing haiku about nature in Spring. The Haiku poem is a Japanese art form that consists of short and simple, 3 line stanzas consisting of 5-7-5 syllables. We can be bards and enjoy the emerging season in the process.

### Spring Migration Bird Hike

**Saturday, May 14, 8 to 10:30 a.m.**

**Rain date: Saturday, May 21**

Migration will be in full swing! Dress for the weather in earth-toned colors and sturdy hiking shoes that can get muddy. We'll be walking with stops to look and listen for migrating and resident birds. 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.

(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.)

### Bluffton Public Library: Summer Storytime

**Monday, June 6, 6:30 p.m. and**

**Wednesday, June 15, 10 a.m.**

For two special engagements, Sophie the Pot-bellied Pig will join Sharlene Anderson for adventures in summer reading in the Youth Room. Call the Bluffton Public Library at 419-358-5016 for details.

### Bluffton Public Library: The Roots of Our Watershed

**Tuesday, June 14, 6 to 7 p.m.**

Join representatives from The Quarry Farm at the Bluffton Public Library as we focus on the native plants that hold soil in place to protect one of Earth's greatest freshwater ocean systems, the Great Lakes, from sedimentation and harmful algal bloom. This program is for Adults and Teens as well as children with a parent or guardian present. Preregister at The Bluffton Public Library at 419-358-5016 by June 12.

### Spring Family Day

**Saturday, June 25, 1 to 3:30 p.m.**

We will have stations set up where individual families or visiting groups can learn about birds, insects, herbs, pioneer and Native American skills, and the residents of the farm animal sanctuary.

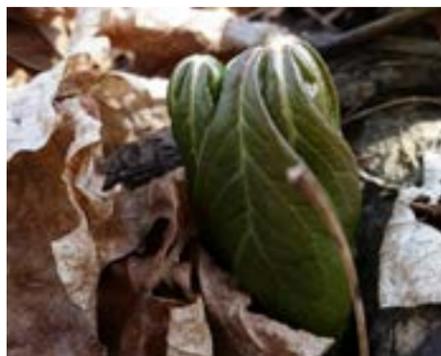
Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates.





## 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.



Umbrella-like Mayapples are some of the first spring wildflowers to push up through the soil and dried leaves.

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 Wilson's Warbler visited the nature preserve during 2021 Spring migration (Photo by Deb Weston)**

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

[www.thequarryfarm.org](http://www.thequarryfarm.org)

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## Under One Big Sky

Emily McBride from The Lima News joined other well-bundled hikers on January 15 for the annual Hat Day Hike. The event was held this year under bright moonlight. It was very cold, beautiful, and the hot chocolate was welcome.

On the morning of January 27, when Beatrice the Pot-bellied Pig's Belly Rub Girl offered Sean the Virginia Opossum his dried cranberries, greens plus a peanut butter sandwich for winter sustenance, Sean didn't wake up. Just six days before on January 21, Sean met the entire second grade class at Kalida Elementary School. The second graders thought Sean was "adorable." They couldn't understand how anyone would go out of the way to hurt his kind. They asked if they could see him walk. He was more interested in sitting, even though he was born with no eyes and had every reason to be afraid of squirrely limbs and echoes in the halls of school. They asked how old he was. "He's almost three," I told them. How long would he live, they wanted to know. "Two to three years," I said. How old is he in people years? "Very, very old." While Sean wasn't the first Virginia Opossum to have served The Quarry Farm as an ambassador of his kind, but he was the one who immediately convinced them that Virginia Opossums have every right to live, under our porches and wherever their nomadic ways take them, in peace.

What with temperatures predicted to be in the single digits and flooding in the nature preserve, the February 19 Great Backyard Bird Count bird hike was cancelled here. But that didn't stop us from counting the birds that visited the feeders. We saw our first Red-winged Blackbird of 2022, a good sign of approaching Spring.

David Seitz celebrated St. Patrick's Day on the nature preserve by continuing his work to clear invasive bush honeysuckle, removing grapevines to prevent them from pulling down tall native hardwoods, and by documenting eight mallard ducks on the quarry plus a pair of Canada geese. "In the PM, there were 25 or so turtles, enjoying the sun," he said, "and a bunch of minnows."



We saw sparrows and plenty of woodpeckers, as well as other signs of Spring like this Butler's Garter Snake (left) and Turkey Tail Fungus (right) on March 20.



The Annual Hat Day Hike was a night walk with crystal cold and clear skies. Flashlights made great star finders.

We celebrated the official arrival of Spring with the March 20 Spring Sparrow Hike. A great crew of 12 people walked the trails, documenting 16 species of birds, a couple of fungi, turtles and a garter snake sunning itself beside the homestead well.



## Resident Spotlight: Bernard

Visitors frequently ask how the farm animal sanctuary here came to be. That's a great question, since The Quarry Farm's mission statement does refer to the increased understanding of the natural environment of Northwest Ohio, not the domestic environment. The short answer is several of us trained for six years with a wildlife rehabilitation center so that we could do wildlife rehabilitation here. During that time, the center that we trained with received quite a few calls about domestic species that were found wandering. Since there was no designated farm animal sanctuary in Northwest Ohio, we decided to change our plans.

Most of the animals that live on the farm animal sanctuary are and never were wild animals, although we do have permits to home a few non-releasable native wild species that you might encounter. Since agriculture is the big industry in these parts, a natural progression of our mission statement is to help people to appreciate the wild world that one would contact in farm country. We have state and federal permits to keep some native wild animals, occasionally doing what's called "soft-release" where they remain inside the four-acre fence until it is possible for them to be healed or no longer bonded with humans.

It's important to note that the sanctuary's domestic animals do not leave. Most came here after suffering from neglect or even abuse. The newest resident is Bernard, a Narragansett turkey that was abandoned, which is a type of abuse. Most domestic animals don't have what it takes to survive in the wild. Wild turkeys are good flyers and foragers. They have the smarts to flock and keep away from predators. Domestic turkeys are bred to be big, showy, and fairly docile. They are curious and often friendly. Bernard found his way to a small zoo where his friendly curiosity led to his following families around the grounds and helping himself to packed lunches. He is now at home here, where he will spend what we hope is the first of many Spring seasons, strutting his stuff with Bronze Turkey Bruce, Royal Palm Turkey Edgar and Blue Slate Turkey Sioux..

There is a sign on the gate outside the farm animal sanctuary that asks visitors not to feed the animals. We provide the different kinds of animals with foods that are best for their different dietary needs. Bread is **not** one of the foods on the list. Bread can cause rumenal acidosis in goats. Bread is bad for donkeys, too. It's far too rich for their bodies. The grain used to make bread contains various forms of sugar, and donkeys just aren't built to process large quantities of sugar.

Bread isn't good for many species of wildlife, either. Some of the wild geese that live in the confines of the sanctuary were placed here because they were born with malformed wings. This a condition that occurs because young goslings and ducklings are fed improper foods—often bread—by well-meaning people. If the feeding continues long enough, the condition is permanent. They can never fly freely as nature intended.



Bernard (center) is a Narragansett Turkey who is working out his place in the farm animal sanctuary. Edgar the Royal Palm Turkey (back left) is trying to show him the way of things while the hens just go about their business.



## Thank you...

...to Martha Erchenbrecher for the Tiny Raptor sign

...David Seitz for honeysuckle removal, trail clearing and hydrological engineering



Aldrik Burgei likes chickens. He and his dad made an early Spring bicycle visit to the farm animal sanctuary.

## Monetary Donations:

Joyce Brown  
Darryl Baker in honor of Mike Erchenbrecher  
Bruce Coburn in memory of Bert Coburn  
Lara Joseph/The Animal Behavior Center  
Mary K. Mack  
Tim Seitz