



RAVINIA

An Advocate for Community Resources

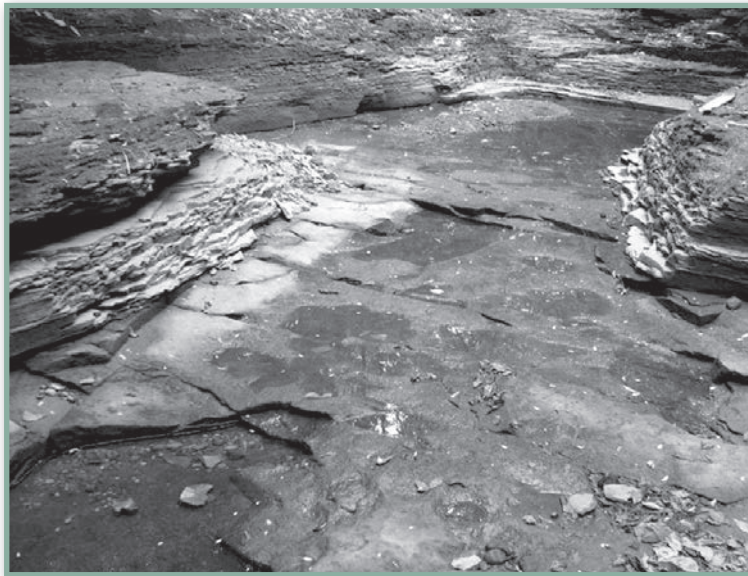
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Spring/Summer 2011

Billingsley Ravine History Layered in Stone

by Alex Silbajoris

In the Columbus area, the ravines along the Scioto are cut into limestone, and the ravines along the Olentangy are in shale. But one ravine on the Scioto cuts through both: Wright Run, also called Billingsley Creek, exposes the contact between limestone and shale, and while the lower portion looks like a typical Scioto limestone ravine, the upper Highbanks portion, with straight-edge shale banks, looks like a stream (See map on page 4).



Shale overlays limestone in Billingsley Ravine. (Courtesy of Alex Silbajoris)

Billingsley Creek rises along Sawmill Road, but it's covered by development and is invisible until it emerges flowing southward from under Saltergate Drive. It is promptly channelized into a concrete trough, to dog-leg around the Olde Sawmill Shopping Center, then into a retaining pond. It goes underground again to cross Hard Road and Sawmill Road until, west of Sawmill, it emerges into a small, winding ravine. Currently, the section of Emerald Parkway that runs behind the new Kroger crosses Hard Road, but ends here. (Soon it will span the stream and tie into Bright Road.)

The stream passes through a small neighborhood pond and dam and crosses under Bright Road. It runs alongside a neighborhood street, forming a landscape feature for

several front yards, then goes under the street to turn west. It begins to cut into the shale and drop, until it reaches the point of contact between the Olentangy Shale and the Delaware Limestone.

The contact is of a type called an "unconformity," meaning there is a gap in the geologic record because any rock that used to cover the limestone has been eroded away and later replaced by the shale. The shale is sharp edged and finely bedded in

thin layers, but the limestone is thick and flat and is dissected by fractures with rounded edges.

Beginning here, the streambed is usually dry, and it's an open and easy stroll down the bed. Chert (flint) nodules form hard, polished bumps as the softer stone matrix wears away around them. Sometimes a crack or pit will capture small stones, which swirl around in the current, boring potholes into the limestone bed. Big, round glacial erratics roll along with the flow. Trees shade the streambed, making it a cool place on a hot summer's day. The banks above the limestone still show the shale, but it fades from view as you continue downstream.

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

As we all try to weather the current financial storm, maintaining focus on the protection of our vital natural resources is more critical than ever. We are reminded again and again that ravines provide a tremendous number of ecological services: improving the water quality in our rivers and streams, maintaining essential habitat for large numbers of native plants and animals, and enhancing the overall quality of life for everyone living in and around central Ohio. These fragile ecosystems are truly a gift to be cherished now and preserved for all future generations.

Friends of the Ravines has maintained its commitment to the protection and restoration of these precious resources through a variety of activities and events during 2010. On March 23, we held our annual community forum at Clinton Heights Lutheran Church. The event featured two local historians, Algy McBride and Richard Barrett, who shared several fascinating tales of ravine lore with a rapt audience.

In early May, our annual plant hike, led by Dr. Robert Klips from OSU-Marion, was held at Camp Mary Orton in northern Franklin County. The mature forest and wildflower-draped ravines provided the perfect backdrop for Dr. Klips, whose knowledge and enthusiasm on a wide variety of botanical subjects made the hike a truly memorable event for all who braved the elements to attend.

In this issue of *Ravinia*, we are especially delighted to present the results of our first ravine art contest. The response was overwhelming, with more than eighty entries from students who attend several different Columbus City Schools. We hope you enjoy the inspiring artwork and agree with us that these youngsters have provided a beautiful and hopeful vision of the future.

Many thanks to all who, through good times and bad, continue to provide the tremendous support needed for Friends of the Ravines to continue its focus on these fragile but critically important resources.

Brian Gara, Chair, Board of Trustees

NEWS FROM THE RAVINES

ALUM CREEK ARLINGTON PARK, aka Mock Park, is a bird watcher's paradise. To read about one birder's sightings, you can go to <http://www.columbusaudubon.org> and search on "Mock Park" for the full text of the April 2010 blog.

BILL MOOSE RAVINE, woefully surrounded by concrete west of High Street, will perhaps be treated more kindly with Wesley Glen's new plans for green development.

GLEN ECHO RAVINE, United Crestview Area Neighborhood, and Glen Echo Neighbors will all be beneficiaries of the *Lower Olentangy Urban Arboretum*, an ambitious reforestation project recently funded by The Columbus Foundation. The Fall 2011/Winter 2012 issue of *Ravinia* will feature a detailed account.

IUKA RAVINE beautification continues thanks to grants from Comfest and Martha Walker Garden Club. Five beeches, one muscledwood, five dogwoods, and 50 small shrubs were planted in 2010, and this year the Iuka guardian angel is planting woodland wildflowers grown from seed.

WALHALLA RAVINE residents report seeing coyotes and a pair of Cooper's Hawks in the area. (Is it possible the hawks are the same couple that nested in Walhalla last year?)

A Special Thank You:

Art Contest Donations

Blick Art Supplies	Bridgette Turner Fine Art
Dianne Efsic	Donatos Pizza
Galleria Evangelia	Giant Eagle
Half Price Books	Sue Neumann-Martiensen
Northwood ARTSpace	Pennington Custom Art
Staples	Services

Greater Columbus Arts Council & Franklin County
Neighborhood Arts Program



Franklin County Neighborhood Arts Grant
Greater Columbus Arts Council

And to:

Ohio Botanical Symposium Photographs

Paul Anderson Alan McClelland Tara Potts

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K Adamson

Now the ravine is deep enough that when one stands in it, the surrounding ground is above eye level. It runs westward on the smooth limestone, with little drop, until it forms the first of two waterfalls. It drops several feet and forms a huge, almost perfectly round, plunge pool before going over a second, higher waterfall. (I know of no other double waterfall like this in the Scioto valley.) The curve of the pool bottom extends up the sides and overhead, becoming a nearly spherical chamber. When there's water in the bed, the reflected sunlight shimmers on the limestone walls.

Beyond the second waterfall, the ravine is approximately 50' deep and geologically young, with steep sides and a rapid drop. The creek bed is full of loose, tumbling limestone. On the banks, sticks and floating litter mark high-water lines, suggesting that the stream receives sudden surges of water, perhaps due to the large amount of pavement and number of rooftops draining into its headwaters along Sawmill Road.

When the stormwater runs away like this instead of soaking into the ground, the groundwater table is depleted, which is one reason the creek bed is normally dry. (You can see this same effect at Hayden Run, where the waterfall sometimes simply disappears.) The long dry periods are interrupted by occasional rapid flows of runoff that flush out litter deposits, discarded not by careless human hands but washed or blown into drains along Sawmill Road on the journey to the Scioto River and beyond.



A natural bridge is a rare feature in central Ohio.

(Courtesy of Alex Silbojoris)

The ravine contains several caves in its sides. None are large enough to explore much, but you can at least take a look. In some, running water can be heard even when the streambed is dry. In another, researchers have excavated human and canine bone fragments linked to the Hopewell culture, similar to canine remains found in Kentucky and Alabama. It appears that, for some unknown reason, the bones were broken and thrown into the cave.

There is a well-formed stone arch on the north rim, alongside another, smaller one that's easy to miss if not seen from the right angle. The high cliffs are sheer, as in the Hayden Run and Indian Run gorges. Ferns and lichens dot the cliff walls.

To the north, on the ground between the ravine and Bright Road, lie the Holder-Wright Earthworks, the northernmost such site in Ohio. The complex includes round burial mounds and an open rectangular ceremonial area that contains more burials under large stone slabs. These rare earthworks will be the focal point of a planned Dublin park.

Researchers have found abundant evidence of stone tool making on the site and on another site above the south rim of the ravine, where Emerald Parkway is slated to run. There are signs of the methods and stages of tool production, such as percussion and heat treatment. Some of the chert is local, but not all of it; some can be traced to other parts of Ohio and of Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and New York.



(Courtesy of Alex Silbojoris)

The presence of materials from far away indicates a center of trade and of a local flint-knapping industry working with a valuable commodity. This was probably alongside the Scioto Trail and the river itself, both major transportation routes of the time. Today, the transportation roars overhead on the I-270 bridges.

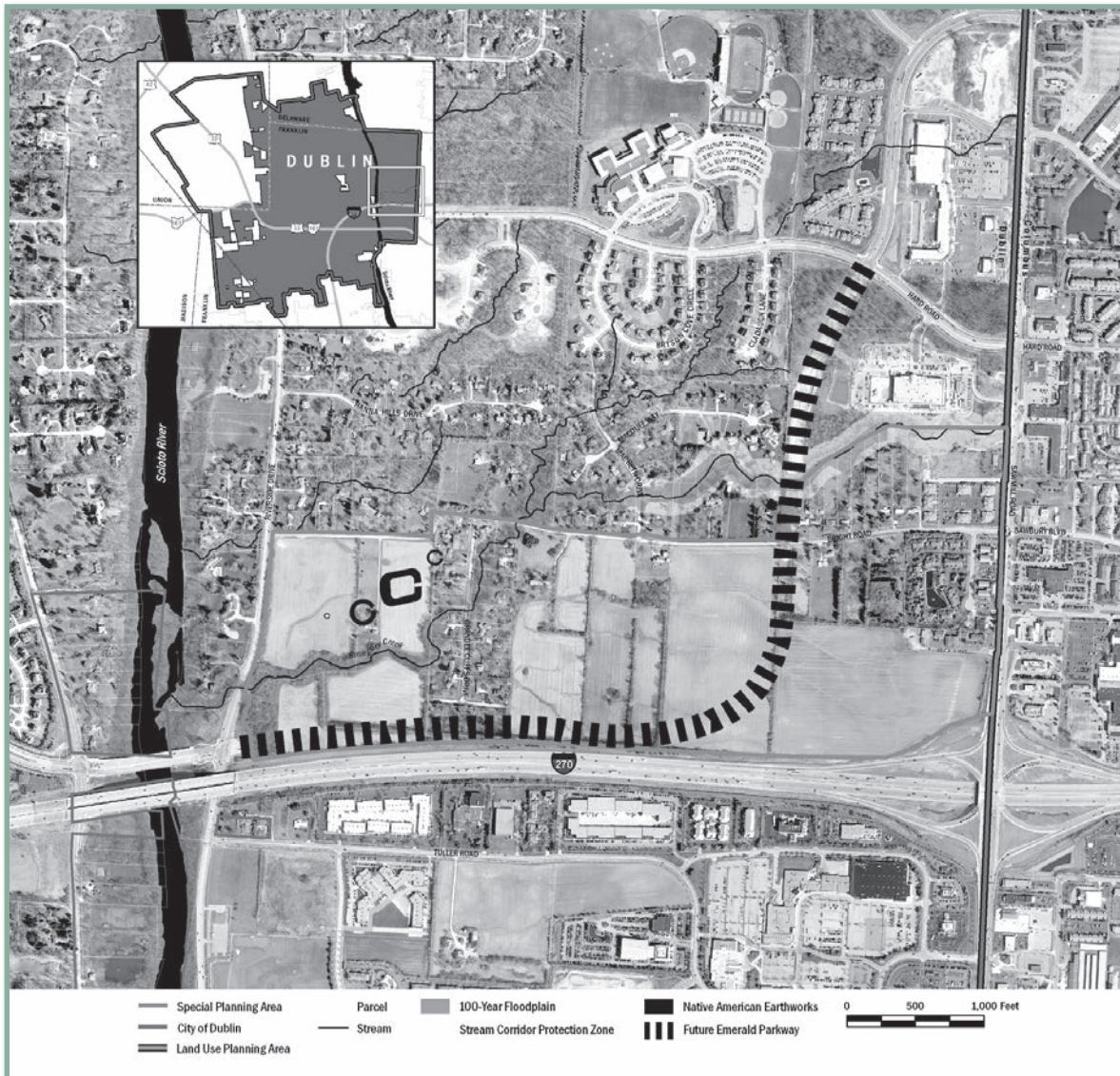
Back in the ravine (which is very tricky to enter here because of the sheer cliffs), the streambed continues to wind and drop. State Route 257 crosses over a long concrete culvert. The stream emerges on the west side of the road, off the culvert apron, and into another large plunge pool; the stones piled on the opposite side suggest the water blows out of the culvert with tremendous force and speed. Facing downstream, you can see a cliff to the left and the open river bottom to the right. This is a good hunting area for such fossils as ammonites, which resemble modern snails.

The streambed is a jumble of dry rocks and is difficult to walk along. Fresh white scratches on the tops of the rocks indicate

that other stones have been washed over them. The cliff to the left curves away toward the Emerald Parkway bridge, and the streambed runs through wooded bottomland to the river itself.

As for the future, the ravine and the land around it are included in Dublin's Bright Road Area Plan. The plan shows Emerald Parkway running east from its current dead end at Rt. 257, alongside I-270, with office building complexes on the south rim of the ravine, on a part of the tool-making site that has never been formally excavated. A park on the north side of the ravine will enclose the earthworks and feature a historic farmhouse.

Billingsley Creek offers an excellent example of the changes that a stream can go through, over distance and over time. Once busy, it is now quiet and secluded. Once free and clean, it is now stressed. Nevertheless, Billingsley Creek remains a unique local feature.



Bright Road Area Plan.

(Courtesy of the City of Dublin)

Nature's Impressions:

Artwork Inspired by Franklin County Ravines

Friends of the Ravines congratulates all of the student artists who submitted poems, photographs, and 2D artwork to our ravine art contest. These contributions demonstrate that the Columbus community values local ravines, finding inspiration in these natural settings and the creatures that inhabit them.

The following pages feature a sampling of the winning entries; full-color photos of their work can be seen on our website at FriendOfTheRavines.org.

CATEGORY:

2D-Visual Art Winners

Winners

Mia Sullivan (*right*)

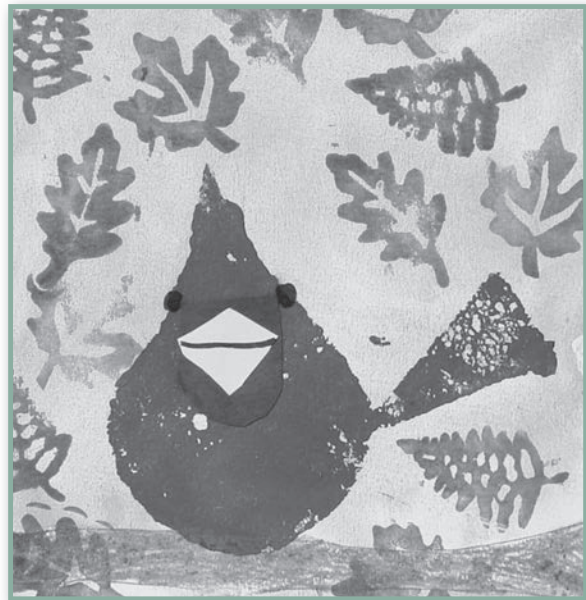
Grade 1, Como Elementary

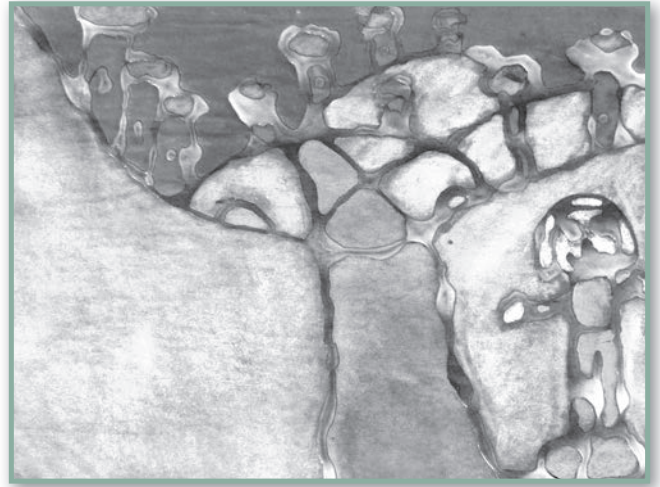
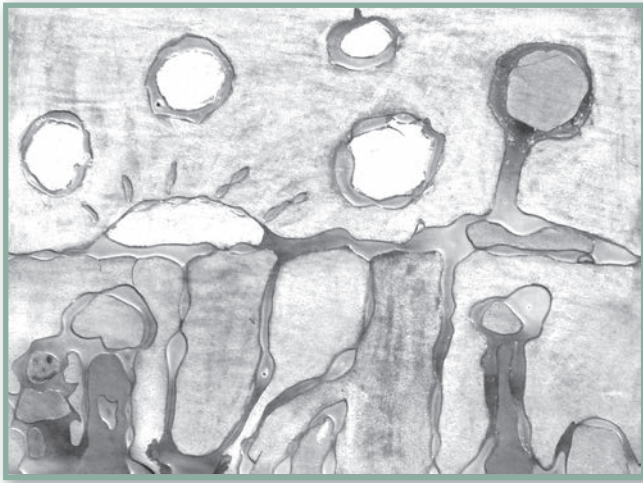
Shayla Edwards (*below*)

Grade 8, Champion Middle School

Chelsea Hall (*below right*)

Grade 12, Marion Franklin High School





CATEGORY:
2D-Visual Art

Winners

All 53 pastel entries from
Westgate Elementary
Alternative School

Samples selected for
inclusion in *Ravinia*
(clockwise from upper left)
Anthony Gober, Grade 4
Haley Dutton, Grade 5
Diana Jurado, Grade 5
Mayra Mateo, Grade 5
Jordan Brown, Grade 5
Evan Pekula, Grade 5





CATEGORY:
2D-Visual Art

Honorable Mentions

(clockwise from upper left)

James Chapman

Grade 11, Marion Franklin High School

Tamala Curry

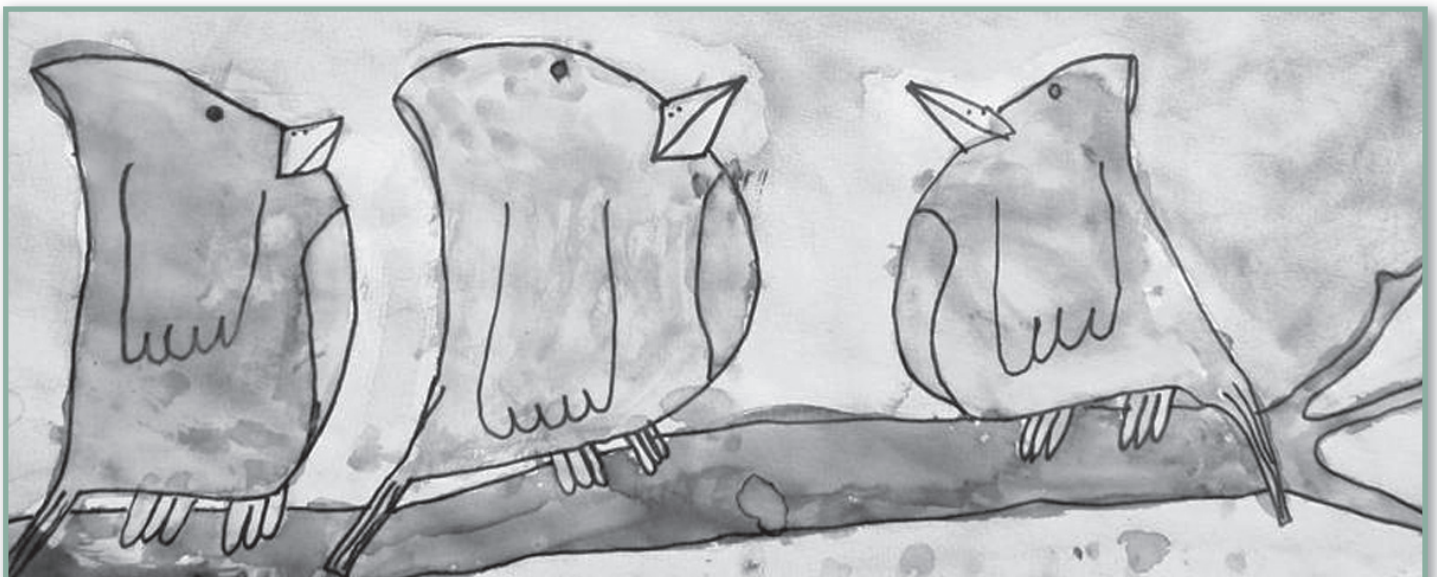
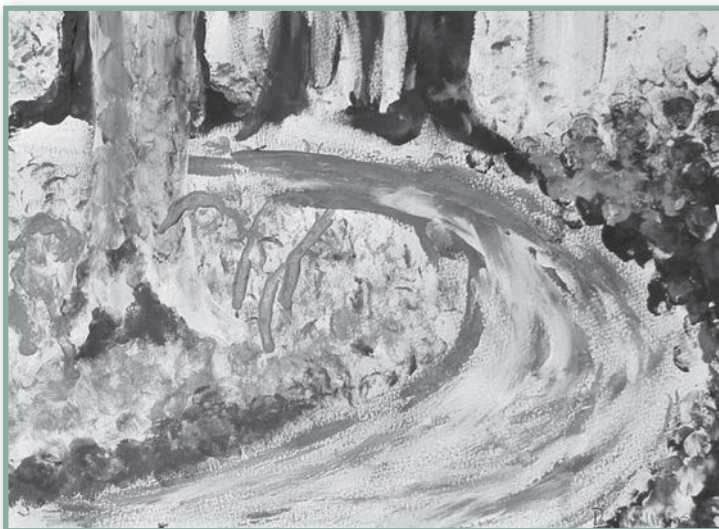
Grade 3, Como Elementary School

Jasmine Stanley

Grade 2, Como Elementary

David Williams

Grade 6, Champion Middle School



CATEGORY:

Photography

Winner

Julianna Hausman (*right*)
Grade 9, Whetstone High School

Honorable Mention

Ryan Lindsey (*below*)
Grade 11, Whetstone High School



CATEGORY:

Poetry

Winner

Rachel Schwerdtfeger
Grade 7, Indianola K-8

Winner

Emily Schwerdtfeger
Grade 10, Columbus Alternative High School

Ravine's Leaf

Rachel Schwerdtfeger

One solitary leaf,
golden-brown,
lifeless,
but beautiful all
the same.
A pioneer leaf,
Breaks free,
twists turns
gently lands
next to the
trickling ravine.
One vulnerable leaf
bare and rare,
the first of its
kind. The first
this year to
Break free
twist turn
gently land
next to the ravine that
tickles the roots of
the leaf's mother, its
friend, the tree.
One leaf, our own one leaf
is followed by thousands
of her brothers and sisters,
leafing their mothers
falling to the ground.
Many leaves, golden-brown.
Lifeless, but beautiful all the
same.

Sestina

Emily Schwerdtfeger

It's been years since I have passed between the many unplanned rows of trees, all bursting with the leaves of life, of fall, of spring, of dawn, or night. It's been years since the sun has seen me there, but the effect will last.

I'm not sure how long those moments last, but not a minute or an hour ever passed unfelt, unnoticed. I walked along the rows, content with the light, hoping it never leaves, hoping it stays forever brightened by dawn here, this memory enlightened by the red sun.

And I remember conversations with my sun and my stream and my sky and their words last and linger in my mind. Our words were passed between old friends, for it was these ancient rows who raised me, acres of ground, littered with leaves, and, of course, visited at last by the dawn.

The most important thing was the dawn. It brought to me the beautiful sun, who could bring an end to those dreary last moments of night. And when I passed through those dark, dense rows I reveled in the peace its serenity leaves.

The ground in fall attracted the leaves. They were downward drawn during the dawn, as they fell from life, and smiled upon by the sun, whose warmth, I knew, could no longer last when it faded beyond the far horizon, passed through my life, and through this sanctuary's rows.

It's been years since the ravine's disordered rows of trees, occasionally barren of all leaves, have attracted the redeeming dawn, with me present to witness the coming of the sun. Each day was more welcoming than the last. But all of those days have come and passed.

I know I miss the rows of clean earth that sun cannot touch, and the dawn that always leaves them feeling new. When have I last this way passed?

**Note: A sestina is a form of poem in which the last word of each line repeats in each stanza in different order.*

Some Errata and Embellishments

by Martha Harter Buckalew
Photos courtesy of John Snouffer.

Two articles about life on Linworth Ravine appeared in the Fall 2010/ Winter 2011 issue of *Ravinia*. Thanks to an email from John Snouffer, grandson of Stanley Snouffer, we can add more details and clarifications to "Country Life on Linworth Ravine" and "The Snouffer House on Olentangy River Road."

The Snouffer family and their kin had a major part in settling Linworth, Worthington, Powell, and Perry and Sharon Townships. The Snouffers originally came to Perry Township in 1834. The area where they settled would become Don Scott Airport.



The Stanley Snouffer house in the 1970s.



Sons of Stanley Snouffer fishing: Steve, Elmer, Leslie, and Ray. ca. 1910-1911.

Stanley Snouffer (1877 – 1970) was not the son of Mary and John, but was, in fact, the son of Joseph Snouffer of Snouffer Road—and the great grandson of Mary and John Snouffer. Also, Stanley was one of ten children, not eight.

In about 1919, after his first wife died, Stanley and his four sons moved out of the house on the bluff overlooking Olentangy River Road. In 1933, the property was bought by Dr. McMeekin, who moved the Snouffer house to its current location. He built in its place on the bluff what is now called the Whieldon Mansion, named for Dr. John Whieldon, who purchased it from Dr. McMeekin. The builder, Kim Kelsic, incorporated the Whieldon Mansion into the master plan for the Bainbridge Condominiums that he built on Linworth Ravine in the late 1970s.



Walhalla Ravine

Wildlife Habitat Restoration Project

By Dianne Blankenkaker

In the fall of 2009, a wonderful opportunity to fund improvements in Walhalla Ravine fell into the laps of Walhalla residents. The Clintonville Community Fund chose Walhalla Ravine as the theme of the 2009 Clintonville Tour of Homes. As a result, we learned that we were eligible to apply for a grant. This kicked off the year-long project that became the Walhalla Ravine Wildlife Habitat Restoration Project.

While we could have called it the “Invasive Species Containment Project,” we found that, for many folks, “Invasive Species” sounds like science fiction. Many home owners believe what they grow on their own property does no harm. Unfortunately, invasive plants, by definition, do not respect property lines.

Because every inch of the Walhalla Ravine is privately owned, ultimately only the property owners can protect the ecosystem. Fortunately, many folks who have trouble accepting the harmfulness of innocent-looking plants still want to preserve what they love about the ravine—the woods and the wildlife. For that reason—in the hope of engaging more home owners—we focused on the results we wanted to achieve rather than the method of achieving them when we named the project.

Because we were working with private property, we went to the City of Columbus to determine the options. The Department of Recreation and Parks worked with us to determine the city’s right of way and to advise us on what to remove or to plant.

In the spring, we sent e-mails to our neighborhood list and distributed door-to-door flyers announcing the project and

providing contact information in case people were concerned about our working on their property. In the fall, one of our organizers went door to door to check with the home owners where we were working, and, at home owners’ requests, we skipped several properties.

Our biggest challenge was the lack of participation by home owners. In the spring, fewer than 10% of the homes in the ravine were represented in our volunteer forces. We realized that we were going to need to supplement the troops if we were going to cover the full length of the ravine. Earth Day turned out to be quite a boon: we registered as a work site and attracted three times the number of volunteers who had helped on previous work days.



Volunteers removing bush honeysuckle in the spring of 2010.

(Courtesy of Dianne Blankenkaker)

Some of the plants to watch for

Wildflowers:

Wild ginger
Bluebell
Wild blue phlox
Bloodroot
Solomon’s seal
False solomon’s seal
Jacob’s ladder
New England aster
Christmas fern
Lady fern
Wild geranium
Twinleaf
Canada anemone
Violet

Trees and Shrubs:

Ohio buckeye
Yellow buckeye
Beech tree
Dogwood
Sassafras
Papaw
Redbud
Witch hazel
Spice bush
Viburnum
Black willow

Fall brought a bigger problem. So many of us had gotten poison ivy in the spring that several of our spring regulars, understandably, didn’t return in the fall. Also, OSU football was competing for fans’ time. Realizing that we needed reinforcements to complete our work in the ravine, we pursued every potential lead to obtain volunteers. We registered as a community service project at websites that organize volunteers and contacted the Boy Scouts. We also followed up with Anheuser-Busch, which had been unable to send us Earth Day volunteers because of a conflict. They committed to sending us 30 volunteers for one Saturday. Then we registered our project with the Master Gardeners. This brought much-needed help from people who really like to work with plants!

While we would have liked to involve more of the property owners, we were encouraged that several folks who couldn’t join us on Saturdays were making all-out efforts on their own properties. That, we realized, was the real goal. Removing



Wild asters bloom in place of bush honeysuckle in the fall of 2010.
(Courtesy of Dianne Blankenbaker)

invasives from the right-of-way will not solve the problem: until property owners attack invasives throughout Walhalla, the invasives will return. Seeing several properties cleared of invasives during this project gave us the most satisfaction.

Because the labor was 100% volunteer, we were able to spend all of our grant money on plants and trees—over 1000 specimens. And removing invasives gave us even more for our money: the natives that had been crowded out by the invasives had space to spread. When we returned in the fall, we discovered a sea of asters growing in areas that we had cleared in the spring. The combination of existing natives and the plants we added will make for a lovely spring in the ravine.

We made great progress in partially controlling many of the plants that threaten not only Walhalla Ravine, but the rest of the region. The people who made this possible are Cindy Decker, Richa Jhaldiyal, Carolyn Schiefer, Bill Otten, Todd Lusch, Bev Baker, the wonderful folks at Anheuser-Busch, Friends of the Scioto, Earth Day Columbus, and the Master Gardener program.



Project Timeline

- October 2009: Selection of Walhalla Ravine as site for the 2009 Clintonville Tour of Homes created eligibility for grant funding for the area
- November 2009: Grant application due
- December 2009: Grant submission approved
- January 2010: Project planning
- February 2010: Plant selection
- March 2010: Project planning with a city representative; ordered plant materials
- April 2010: Scheduled four Saturday work sessions ending on Earth Day for removal of invasives and installation of native plants
- May 2010: Spring planting completed
- June/July 2010: Maintenance of new plantings
- August 2010: Planning phase two: volunteer search and ordering plant materials
- September 2010: Volunteer search; three groups confirmed support; plant maintenance; two Saturday work days completed
- October 2010: Two more Saturday work days completed: dozens of truck loads of invasives removed; hundreds of natives planted

YES! I WANT TO BE A SUPPORTING MEMBER OF FRIENDS OF THE RAVINES.

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Indicate any special instructions for listing of your name in the Roster of supporting members. _____

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- Friend: \$15
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 Sustainer: \$50
 Contributor: \$25
 Household: \$40
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I want to volunteer to help Friends of the Ravines carry out its mission to protect ravine areas and educate the public. I can help by:

- Distributing *Ravinia*
 Writing Articles for *Ravinia*
 Preparing Mailings
 Assisting with the Website
 Giving Computer Advice
 Helping with Ravine Cleanups
 Planning Community Forums
 Removing Invasive Plants in Ravines
 Becoming an On-Call Volunteer

My special area of expertise is _____.

My favorite ravine is _____.

Friends of the Ravines, PO Box 82021, Columbus, Ohio 43202

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(Received by March 18, 2011)

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Ravinia is the official publication of Friends of the Ravines.

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Brian Gara	Alex Silbajoris
John Snouffer	

Ravinia is funded through donations from supporting members. The mission of Friends of the Ravines is to foster the protection and restoration of ravine areas in Franklin County through community education and conservation.

Submissions and suggestions are welcome.

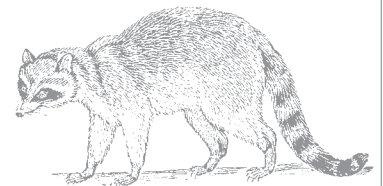
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