



Bull's Run Winter Newsletter December, 2011



Bull's Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum in Middletown is a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to preserving the natural area of Bull's Run, striving to develop the park as an environmental facility and educational resource for people of all ages.

Bridge to the Future

Chris Parker

As a culture, we are not yet considering erecting structures which will stand for 100 years or more. When the park transitioned some thirty years ago from Fresh Air Camp to Bull's Run Arboretum, the design and structure of the bridges were the best that could be had. Fast forward thirty plus years, and it's time to shore them up. Through financial support from the Middletown Garden Club, one of six bridges has been improved. More work is to be done.

During the last months, many hours have been dedicated by a cadre of people as they have studied and planned for restoring bridges in additional areas of the park. The facts are clear: the price tag for re-routing the stream bed in order to reduce advancing erosion and restoring the two most critically failing bridges is \$50,000 - \$60,000.

Can we afford to wait a year or two while gathering the required support and financial resources? We think not. Currently, watching energetic young people prancing joyfully on the bridges, we want to call "STOP!", and "Don't lean over the edge!" While it is feasible to revert to fording the stream by skipping through, or leaping over, we believe those options constitute the last and least desirable choices.

Best case scenario? 60,000 people each send us one dollar to cover the restoration costs. That would indicate that 60,000 people support and rejoice in maintaining this outstanding facility – a facility for all to visit often with confidence that the Bull's Run Mission, land stewardship and education, will go on without interruption. Of course, we are seeking grant money to prop us up in this effort but major support is not yet a certainty. However, a \$5,000 matching grant is on the table, and YOUR donation – whatever the amount – will be received with great gratitude and rejoicing, with the knowledge that you too are a financial stake holder. Please check Bridge Replacement on your enclosed donation form.



Bull's Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum 2012 Board of Directors

President – Chris Parker
Vice President (acting) – Nancy Clark
Recording Secretary – Debbie Grant
Treasurer – Jerry Schunk
Education – Katherine Lawson
Facilities – Jennifer Chen

Land Stewardship – Linda Mull
Newsletter – Nancy Clark
Public Relations – DeAnna Shores
City Liaison – to be announced
MUM Representative – to be announced
Naturalist - Barbara Reuss

Advisory Board – Carolyn Gaker, Jeff McMullen, Bruce Peters, Lisa Wilson

Sailing Ahead

Chris Parker

When Debbie Grant told the Bull's Run Board that she was stepping down from the president's chair, the immediate response from the group was silence, followed by grumbling and long faces. This was followed by such comments as, "You can't be serious!" Holding her ground, she remarked, "Ten years at this is enough." Well, she had only held the post for seven years – which of course simply felt like ten. More silence from all, then an agreement that she deserved a rest. She then proffered her assurance that she was not leaving town, or the board, but would like to be assistant treasurer and recording secretary to give Jennifer more time for much needed grant writing. Who would get the next turn in the "hot seat?" Each head bobbed left to right indicating "not me". Finally Chris Parker gave in and agreed to "give it the old college try" if everyone would provide hours of assistance. Please send all of us your best regards for smooth sailing ahead!

More changes lead us to recognize three people who have collectively served Bull's Run as board members for 46 years. It's no surprise that Abby Ison, Debbie McGuire and Jeff McMullen have chosen to transition from stalwart board members to dedicated volunteers in other capacities. Although their service is marked by our continuing growth and financial stability and we will miss them deeply, we wish them well as they move forward – and we will most certainly keep them on our phone and E-mail lists!

While we celebrate the long term service provided by Abby, Debbie, and Jeff, we celebrate DeAnna Shores, Katherine Lawson and Linda Mull as they join the board. All are experienced teachers and come with such skills as Organizing, Master Gardening, and Visual Arts. Each comes with fresh outlooks and high energy levels that will support our momentum in fulfilling our mission. Welcome all!

Herpetology: the Study of Reptiles and Amphibians

Aaron Fry, Miami University Middletown

Nature preserves are vital to support biodiversity, thereby providing conservation efforts at the ecosystem level. The problem most commonly encountered in conservation biology is the lack of baseline data with which to assess changes in species populations. These data are fundamental tools in determining the effectiveness of Bull's Run and its potential to support and increase local diversity.

An extensive herpetological survey of Bull's Run was completed over the summer by Miami student, Aaron Fry. For 6-8 hours daily, research plots were monitored and the location of each species was photographed and recorded using GPS technology. The habitats were divided into 5 types: riparian, prairie, suburban, mixed, and upland forest. The following species were observed in relatively high abundance with healthy demographic patterns: Eastern Garter Snake (*Thamnophis s. sirtalis*), Streamside Salamander (*Ambystoma barbouri*), Redback Salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*), and the Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene c. carolina*).



Reptiles and amphibians are an integral part of rodent and insect population control. The existence of strong salamander, snake, and turtle populations indicate the possibility for sustainable reptile and amphibian populations within Bull's Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum for years to come, if habitat stability is maintained.

Thank you, Aaron, for your hard work! The presentation of your report with photographs at the annual meeting was well done. Readers, please support our efforts to protect the habitat by renewing your membership and making an additional donation for Land Stewardship.

Thank you! Barb Reuss, BRNSA Naturalist

Nature TOTS

Barb Reuss



Nature TOTS completed its 5th session this November. Josh Richards has been enrolled since the beginning and isn't bored yet! According to his Mom, TOTS is a highlight of her week too! Sixteen TOTS and their caregivers enjoyed exploring the creek, digging in mulch piles, hopping



on stumps and climbing on "root ladders" all the time surrounded by the glorious sights, sounds and smells of autumn in the woods. The winter session begins January 18th through February 15th, Wednesdays at 12:30. If you are interested, please call Barb, 422-5063 to register. This program for children 6 months to 6 years old is free with a 2012 Family membership. See our website, www.bullsrn.org, for more details.



New Threat to Ohio's Forests

Nancy Clark

The Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) is now threatening Ohio's hardwood forests, attacking maple, elm, willow, birch, horsechestnut, goldenrain tree, hackberry and poplar. Between the ALB and the emerald ash borer, the forests of Ohio are in danger!

The Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) has caused tens of thousands of hardwood trees to be destroyed in Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York. Most recently, the ALB has been found in Clermont County, Ohio. Trees in forests and cities all across America are at risk.



Photograph by Michael Bohne

The adults are large (3/4 to 1 1/2 inches long) with very long black and white banded antennae. The body is glossy black with irregular white spots.

IF YOU SEE THIS BEETLE IN OHIO, CALL 855-252-6450!

To learn more about this pest visit <http://www.beetlebusters.info/>. The site has more images of the beetle, the damage it does to trees, signs of egg laying sites to look for, and much more. You can also contact USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service or go to www.aphis.usda.gov.

Bull's Run Annual Fall Family Festival was held on Sunday Oct 23. It was a picture perfect fall day! Autumn colors greeted the families as they made their way to the picnic shelter where each table was staffed by volunteers ready with a wide variety of activities and crafts.



Look at all the fun we had!

- Nature displays and activities
- Scavenger Hunt
- Crafts & Snacks

Many thanks to the numerous volunteers and community support that made this day such a wonderful success!

What Kids Can Learn From Volunteering

DeAnna Shores

If volunteering begins at an early age, it can become part of kids' lives — something they might just expect and want to do. It can teach them:

- **A sense of responsibility.** By volunteering, kids and teens learn what it means to make and keep a commitment.
- **That one person can make a difference.** A wonderful, empowering message for kids is that they're important enough to have an impact on someone or something else.
- **The benefit of sacrifice.** Cutting back on recreation time to help clean up a woodland park tells kids that there are important things besides themselves and their immediate needs.
- **Tolerance.** Working in community service can bring kids and teens in touch with people of different backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, ages, and education and income levels.
- **Job skills.** Learning to work as a team member, taking on leadership roles, setting project goals — these are all skills that can be gained by volunteering and will serve kids well in any future career.

Reasons to Get Involved

Why should your family lend a helping hand?

- **It feels good.** When you commit your time and effort to an organization or a cause you feel strongly about, the feeling of fulfillment can be endless.
- **It strengthens your community.** When a community is doing well as a whole, its individuals are better off, too.
- **It can strengthen your family.** Volunteerism is a great way for families to have fun and feel closer.

Celebrating Bull's Run Volunteers

Chris Parker

How can one determine the true value of the dedicated commitment of those who continue the restoration and preservation of our priceless woodland, while providing Earth Science for people of all ages? Online, search for independentsector.org/volunteer_time. The easy task is finding that in Ohio, the value for volunteering is \$21.36 per hour.

The difficulty is in calculating the total hours that our dauntless volunteers have accumulated for a calendar year: twenty minutes on the phone discussing the project, fifteen minutes on E-mail gathering the troops, ten minutes to get the proper gear in the car, seventeen minutes to get to the park site, three hours on the job, twenty-five minutes to get home [had to wait for a train], fifteen minutes to put the gear away [trying to do it more effectively so you can find it more easily the next time] another ten minutes to E-mail the evaluation for the day, and FINALLY, figure out where you put your log book. Yep! We lose track of many hours.

Our best guess for the past year is 1800 hours, with the knowledge that we've lost track many times during the collection of the data. What we DO know is that 1800 hours x \$21.36 = **\$48,448**. Applause, folks! We couldn't do it without you.

Annual Christmas Bird Count

Nancy Clark

The 2011 Christmas Bird Count will be held at Bull's Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum on Saturday, December 17, beginning at 9 am. New bird watchers are welcome to join seasoned birders as they hike the arboretum trails recording the winter visitors to the woods. The hike usually lasts an hour, sometimes a little longer, if the feathered friends and weather are cooperating. Expect to see the species commonly observed over the past thirty-plus years, the cardinals, chickadees, nuthatches, sparrows and woodpeckers. With quiet patience and quick response, you may be fortunate enough to glimpse a brown creeper or a yellow-bellied sapsucker. Dress for the weather, bring a bird identification book and binoculars, if you have them, but not required, and join us for a closer look at the birds at Bull's Run.



A Huge Thank You to Kohl's Associates in Action

Jennifer Chen



This summer and fall, members of Kohl's Associates in Action wielded paint brushes and painted our front fence. Gone is the rust, in is the beautiful green paint. Along with the work, we received a \$500 grant each time they came to help us! This money was used to buy painting supplies and to seal coat the front driveway just in time for winter.

Trees of Bull's Run Winter Tree ID Class

Barb Reuss



Offered for the first time, this 3 hour class will give you the basics and a few tricks for learning to identify a dozen or so trees at Bull's Run. The skills that you practice will transfer to any woodland area. All materials will be provided but bring a tree guide if you have one. Dress for the weather. The class will be led by John Whittington and Barb Reuss and is free with your 2012 membership or \$15 for non-members. To register call Barb at 422-5063.



Mark the date: Saturday, January 14th from 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. We will begin in the Little Hall at the Episcopal Church of Ascension then travel to Bull's Run for field study.

Bull's Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum Contributions since June Newsletter

Memberships

Mr. and Mrs. George Cavalaris
Kelly Garrity & Jason Clark
Jane Denlinger
Don and Judy Dixon
David and Karen Harrison
Brad and Marge Kochunas
Katherine Lawson
Mrs. Ruth Sauer
Fran Thomas
Julie Thomas
Janet Turber
Lynne Waxweiler

Memorials

Martha Oches
In memory of Ron Oches

Education

Elizabeth Slivinski

Land Stewardship

Thomas Fye

Honorariums

Bruce Peters
In honor of Matthew Michalek
Mrs. Fran Thomas
In honor of Linda Mull
Middletown Garden Club
*In honor of Patti Gage,
Debbie Hazelbaker, and
Jenny Jennewine*

Undesignated Contributions

Denny Lumber Company
John Dupps
Richard and June Haller
Kohl's
Ruth Sauer
Joan Shivers

Bridge Support

David Adams
Ron and Barbara Conley
Forest and Debbie Grant
Carolyn Keiffer
Brad and Marge Kochunas
Katherine Lawson
Debbie McGuire
Edith Mulhall
Larry and Linda Mull
Christine Parker
Bruce and Glenda Peters
Boo Schmiedt
Janet Turber
Wilson Schramm Funeral Home
Ron and Joyce Williams
Bob and Gibbie Wise

These memberships were received between 6/9/2011 and 12/1/2011. If our records do not reflect your records, please notify us and we will be sure to include you in our next newsletter where we list new contributions to Bull's Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum. Thank you for your support.

Sea of Grass.... and Flowers!

Barb Reuss

If you have visited the prairie lately you know that it got its first "haircut" in October. Mike Wertz, of Wertz Christmas Tree Farm, is the volunteer I call on when I have a BIG machine chore! On October 6th Mike and his big, red tractor with bush-hog went straight up the hill by the steps and, in less than two hours, the tall, shaggy grasses, were reduced to a military burr! Prairies thrive with fire, but that is not an option for maintaining the Bull's Run prairie area. And grazing buffalo aren't an option either! So, mowing every few years is the method of choice to remove competing plants, promote robust growth, add organic matter and allow the soil to warm earlier in the spring. The literature suggests that fire encourages the grasses while mowing tends to encourage the forbs (flowers). Seeds harvested this fall have already been scattered, so that December's snow can settle them into the soil. The cold temperatures can stratify the seed and it will be ready to germinate next spring. Next summer's blooms should benefit from this grooming. I can hardly wait!



Thanks to all who help keep Bull's Run an important asset of the community!

- ❖ Thanks to Cameron Everage for assisting Naturalist, Barb Reuss with our third annual prairie seminar and tour in August with a record setting attendance!
- ❖ Thanks to neighbors John Whittington and Cameron Everage for their help with wildflower labeling and prairie education.



- ❖ Thanks to Michael Wertz and his big red tractor for mowing the prairie so it can grow back even stronger next summer.
- ❖ Thanks to all the guides working with Nature Tots helping to build a bridge to the future where each child learns to love and understand the outside world.
- ❖ Thanks to Kohl's Associates in Action who have partnered with us sending volunteers to help with the facilities.
- ❖ Thanks to Sunshine Preschool at Breiel Church for access to their laminating equipment for the bulletin board displays at the entrance gate.
- ❖ Thanks to Marge Perkins for creating the bulletin board displays monthly.
- ❖ Thanks to the numerous volunteers who brought craft supplies and food to our fall events!
- ❖ Thanks to Danbarry for popcorn for the Fall Family Fest!
- ❖ Thanks to Dr. Alan Cady for an entertaining and educational presentation at our annual meeting.
- ❖ Thanks to the Miami University Middletown Botany Department for providing Verity Lodge for the annual meeting.
- ❖ Thanks to the Butler County Master Gardeners for their partnership. Education and volunteerism is flowing both ways!
- ❖ Congratulations to recent Master Gardener, Linda Mull, who has worked over 100 hours transplanting wildflowers and working in the prairie!
- ❖ Thanks to Bruce Peters for watering and caring for two new trees this summer and keeping the park free of litter.
- ❖ Thanks to all the workday volunteers!
- ❖ Thanks to those who shop at Staples and say to put the Rewards toward Bull's Run 45044.
- ❖ Thanks to everyone who "likes" us on Facebook.
- ❖ Thanks to the Episcopal Church of Ascension for their all-around support.
- ❖ Thanks to Aaron Grant for maintaining our website.
- ❖ Thanks to Debbie Grant for her consistent and loyal guidance to our Board of Directors and to all Board members for their enduring support!
- ❖ To everyone who made Bull's Run part of their 2011 giving and those who plan to contribute in 2012. We truly appreciate your support!

**2012 Membership and Donation form is included in this mailing.
Together we are making a difference!**

Mark your Calendars for Upcoming Events at Bull's Run

December

17 Annual Christmas Bird Count 9-10 am

January

14 Winter Tree Identification Class 1:30 - 4:30 pm begins at
Episcopal Church of Ascension

18 Nature Tots 12:30 – 1:30 pm

25 Nature Tots 12:30 – 1:30 pm

February

1 Nature Tots 12:30 – 1:30 pm

8 Nature Tots 12:30 – 1:30 pm

15 Nature Tots 12:30 – 1:30 pm



For more information please visit our website www.bullsrn.org
Contact Barb Reuss, Naturalist, to speak to your organization or for a program at Bull's Run.
Contact her at naturalist@bullsrn.org or 513-422-5063.

Bull's Run Photo Gallery



Fungi on stump along trail



Caterpillar discovered at a workday



*Creative child at
Fall Family Fest*



*Inquisitive child at BRNSA Booth at
National Night Out at Sunset Park*



*Energetic child at
Fall Nature Tots*