Midwest Native Plant Conference
July 17-19, 2020
Celebrating 12 Years!

Featured Plants & Wildlife

Our featured conference plants are Fragrant Sumac, *Rhus aromatica* and Culver’s Root, *Veronicastrum virginicum*. Artist Ann E. Geise beautifully depicts the plant and animal life cycle in her painting. The Showy Emerald moth and caterpillar use sumac as a host plant. The Zebra Conchylodes moth nectars on Culver's Root, while a Hermit Thrush feasts on sumac fruit.

Conference Steering Committee (in alpha order): Tom Borgman, Yvonne Cecil, Grace Dietsch, Alan Duffy, Ann Geise, Judy Ganance, Teri Gilligan, Scott Hogsten, Deborah Karr, Ned Keller, Randy Lakes, Diana and John Malas, Jim McCormac, Kathy McDonald, Cathy Plum, Mark Plunkett, Joyce Pontius, Lisa Ruschman, and Debi Wolterman. A special thanks to our partners, the Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC) for assisting us in hosting this event: Don Geiger, Leanne Jablonski, Michele Banker and Tara Poling, to the staff at Bergamo Center, to Five Rivers Metro Parks and Greater Cincinnati Wild Ones.
Warblers are much beloved by birders, although the non-birding community is mostly oblivious to this large family of colorful songbirds. Thirty-eight warbler species breed in eastern or boreal forests, and all of them are utterly dependent upon vast eastern deciduous forest ecosystems during some part of their highly migratory life cycle. Theirs is an invasion of epic proportions, evolved to capitalize on a bounty of insects that is only seasonally available. Native flora are the building blocks from which these insects spring, and many warbler species have specialized relationships with certain plants or plant communities. Backyard conservationists and those who manage habitats on a grand scale can help. Growing insects via appropriate native flora is key to warbler conservation.

Jim worked for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for 31 years as a botanist, and later specializing in wildlife diversity projects, especially involving birds. He has authored or coauthored six books, including *Birds of Ohio* (Lone Pine 2004); and *Wild Ohio: The Best of Our Natural Heritage* (Kent State University Press 2009). The latter won the 2010 Ohioana Book award. He is a coauthor of the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II book. Jim writes a column, *Nature*, for the Columbus Dispatch, and regularly publishes a natural history blog. He has written numerous articles and has delivered hundreds of presentations. He was named 2015 Conservation Communicator of the Year by the Ohio League of Sportsmen. Jim is an avid photographer, shooting a range of natural history subjects. He has had hundreds of photos published in various forums.

Recent headlines about global insect declines, the impending extinction of one million species worldwide, and three billion fewer birds in North America are a bleak reality check about how ineffective our current landscape designs have been at sustaining the plants and animals that sustain us. Such losses are not an option if we wish to continue our current standard of living on Planet Earth. The good news is that none of this is inevitable. Tallamy will discuss simple steps that each of us can – and must – take to reverse declining biodiversity and will explain why we, ourselves, are nature’s best hope.

Douglas Tallamy is a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, where he has authored 95 research publications and has taught insect related courses for 39 years. Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. His book *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens* was published by Timber Press in 2007 and was awarded the 2008 Silver Medal by the Garden Writers' Association. *The Living Landscape*, co-authored with Rick Darke, was published in 2014. Doug’s new book *Nature’s Best Hope* will be published by Timber Press February 2020. Among his awards are the Garden Club of America Margaret Douglas Medal for Conservation and the Tom Dodd, Jr. Award of Excellence, the 2018 AHS B.Y. Morrison Communication Award and the 2019 Cynthia Westcott Scientific Writing Award.
By designing outdoor spaces that are closer to natural, native ecological systems, we may be designing ourselves out of a job by reducing the need for constant maintenance and frequent redesigning. And that’s a good thing!

Matt Benzie started his company, Indigenous Ingenuities LLC, with the goal of helping to heal the environment, the habitat for all living creatures, through thoughtfully designed, environmentally friendly projects. He hopes that this work will eventually result in a natural corridor in which humans and all creatures can find welcoming habitats to enhance their well-being. One by one, the company’s projects add beauty and improve local ecosystems using locally sourced, natural materials. People, pollinators, and other wildlife have places to thrive, and, little by little, our local environment—our habitat—is restored. By creating a corridor of individual, preserved green spaces that enable safe passages for diverse species of wildlife, bringing depleted soil back to life, and restoring native plant life, he is aiming for nothing short of repairing some of the damage of development and climate change.

Of the many habitat variables which combine to form the wide diversity of aquatic habitats we see in Ohio’s lakes and streams perhaps none are more influential than the native communities often associated with these aquatic systems. Terrestrial and aquatic plant communities each play important roles in aquatic systems and the determination of the populations of native fish which can be found in these habitats. This talk will examine the role of plants in the ecology of Ohio’s lakes and streams and the different fish species associated with these particular habitats.

A native of southern Indiana with degrees from the University of Missouri (BS ’73) and The Ohio State University (MS ’76), Dan was the Chief Zoologist for the Division of Natural Areas & Preserves (ODNR) from 1978 until his retirement in 2002. As the zoologist for the Ohio Natural Heritage Program, first started by The Nature Conservancy in 1976 before its transfer to ODNR in 1978, Dan had the fun and privilege of working with both amateur and professional biologists (and students) throughout Ohio looking for many of Ohio’s rarest animals and documenting their populations. Dan is a co-author on three books; The Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas (1991), Native Fishes of Ohio (2014) and A Naturalist’s Guide to the Fishes of Ohio (2019) in addition to a number of papers documenting the occurrence of rare species of fish and bivalves.
THE SONG OF INSECTS, WIL HERSHBERGER

After a brief description of the book, *The Song of Insects* and the website project, we'll examine how these insects sing and hear. Then we'll look at several species and their songs, when they sing, and learning where they live and how to recognize their songs.

Wil Hershberger has been an avid naturalist most of his life. After becoming an accomplished and well-respected birder, photography skills learned in his Dad's basement darkroom were rekindled. Today his photography has become an extension of his passion for the natural world. He has an innate ability to capture the natural world in an artistic way. Over a decade ago, Wil and his wife Donna formed Nature Images and Sounds, LLC. Together, they photograph everything from birds to bugs. Wil is also an accomplished sound recordist. Over 3,000 of his recordings, including birds and bugs, are archived at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds. Through his photography and sound recordings, he hopes to instill in others the desire to protect and save these sacred natural treasures.

GARDENING FOR NATIVE BEES: HOW YOU CAN SAVE THE BEES, SAM DROEGE

It turns out that saving bees is all about planting and encouraging native plants. Surprisingly, gardens (and therefore gardeners) can play a significant role. Why? Because bees are tiny, pilgrim. Gardening for native bees becomes even more interesting once you realize that our native bees often feed on only one species, genus, or group of plants. That door will be opened with examples, resources and strategies for creating large and small landscapes from containers to estates. A single clump can make a difference. Coda: Few stinging and no allergy issues without native bees.

Sam Droege spent most of his career at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. He has coordinated the North American Breeding Bird Survey Program, developed the North American Amphibian Monitoring Program, the Bioblitz, Cricket Crawl, and FrogwatchUSA programs as well as reviving the North American Bird Phenology Program. Currently his team is running an inventory and monitoring program for native bees, developing support tools and techniques manuals as well as online identification guides for North American bees at www.discoverlife.org and producing public domain hi-resolution photographs of bees, insects, and flowers which can be seen on Instagram, Flickr and Tumblr @USGSBIML
FRIDAY PRE-CONFERENCE OUTDOOR FIELD TRIPS

LOCAL PRAIRIES AND THEIR TIES TO OHIO GLACIERS, MEG RIESTENBERG, LIMIT 20

Meg (Mary M.) Riestenberg PhD is a geologist with a keen interest in plants, plant communities, and distribution as related to our local geological materials, landforms, and history. For thirty-four years, Meg has taught courses at Mount St. Joseph University, including, but not limited to Earth Science, Geology of Cincinnati, Ecology, Introductory Biology, Biology Seminar, Botany, and with her colleague in Art at MSJU, Loyola Walter MFA, she has co-taught Naturalist as Artist, and Art of the Nature Journal. She has especially enjoyed taking her Ecology classes to Adams County, to walk in the footsteps of Dr. E. Lucy Braun.

SONGS OF MT. ST. JOHN NATURE PRESERVE, WIL HERSHERBERGER, LISA RAISONG & WENDY PARTRIDGE, LIMIT 20

Wil Hershberger is a featured speaker during the conference weekend on Saturday. His talk, the Song of Insects, will feature his work and research in this field. You will learn a lot on this walk about the sounds of summer.

Lisa Rainsong. Lisa Rainsong holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition from the Cleveland Institute of Music and is a member of CIM’s music theory faculty. A soprano as well as a teacher and composer, she also earned a Naturalist Certificate from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, where her study focused on field experience. She now teaches birdsong classes and does field recording of bird songs and insect songs. In addition, she does field research on crickets and katydids — research work that is done primarily by ear. Her online field guide, Listening to Insects: NE Ohio's Crickets and Katydids can be found at https://www.listeningtoinsects.com/ Her recordings and photos and stories from the field are on her blog, "Listening in Nature" at listeninginnature.blogspot.com.

Wendy Partridge is a letterpress printer, book artist, and paintings conservator. Her art work is about specific times and locations, exploring what gives a place meaning and resonance. To that end, she spends as much time as possible outside, listening in nature, with her partner Lisa Rainsong. Wendy has a graduate degree in art conservation from New York University and works as a painting conservator at the Intermuseum Conservation Association in Cleveland, Ohio. She is a resident artist at Zygote Press where she helped establish the letterpress studio, and she teaches several workshops each year on letterpress printing.
SATURDAY BREAKOUT SESSIONS
INDOOR LOCATIONS TBD, OUTDOOR TRIPS MEET IN THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING.

OUTDOOR

A WALK IN NATURE: OBSERVING OUR NATURAL WORLD, LAURA HUGHES & KELLY CAPUZZI
Laura and Kelly will open up the natural world for you with their keen observational skills and close connection to nature. You’ll learn how to listen and look at the amazing world of wildlife in nature.

Laura enjoys studying and filming/photographing wildlife especially those things that many people don’t get to see. She worked for ten years for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the last few as a macroinvertebrate biologist. She is now a contract biologist working with the state endangered Allegheny Woodrat for the Ohio Division of Wildlife. She recently worked for the BBC filming fireflies for their Planet Earth series. In her spare time, she and her husband like getting outside to see what interesting things they can find and film. They enjoy using trail cameras to capture the secretive lives of wildlife.

Kelly is a fisheries biologist and water quality specialist with over 26 years of experience sampling lakes, streams, rivers and wetlands throughout the state of Ohio. Kelly has a BS in Zoology from the Ohio State University and is also an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist (OCVN) for he Hocking Hills region volunteering with Camp Oty’Okwa, Crane Hollow Nature Preserve, Arc of Appalachia, Appalachian Ohio Alliance and the Hocking Hills visitors center. Kelly has lead fish classes and presentations for Columbus Audubon Ecaweekend, Camp Oty’Okwa Educators Week, Franklin County Metroparks, Pickaway County Park District, Rural Action, Hocking County Soil and Water, Friends of the Lower Muskingum River, Raccoon Creek Partnership and the Nature Conservancy. Kelly’s latest obsession is learning about native bees and growing native plants for pollinators.

GROWING NATIVE PLANTS, MICHELE BANKER, MEEC

A walking tour with a behind the scenes look at the Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC) native plant nursery. The outdoor workshop will highlight the steps taken in native seed propagation: collection, cleaning, dormancy and planting. Learn through our trials and tribulations and how you can equip yourself to grow native plants at home.

Michele serves as the Land Resource & Service Volunteer Coordinator for the Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC). As caretaker of the 100 acres of natural areas at Mount Saint John, she has led the establishment and management of tall grass prairie, non-native invasive plant monitoring and management and installation of a bioretention ponds and rain gardens for storm water runoff control. Joining MEEC in 1998, she has led service learning, educational programs, ecological research, and worked with volunteers on land restoration projects in woodland, prairie, wetlands and native plant nurseries and currently serves on the Ohio Invasive Plant Council (OIPC) Board. She also gives presentations on native plant landscaping and non-native plant management and provides land consultations for homeowners.
**Nature Journaling, Dave & DeeAnne Helm**

We will start with a short talk of why we journal showing examples of journaling and give a brief drawing lesson and discuss materials one might need.

We will have examples of nature journals and provide some art supplies and have plants etc. to draw from or may take a walk. Our goal is to encourage people to start journaling while out in nature and develop better observation skills while sketching. Most importantly we hope everyone enjoys botanizing in a new way.

Dave has been keeping a travel journal for about 13 yrs. He has at least 15 to 20 journals filled in and finds the more you do the more you want to do! He has taken art classes from Mary Louise Holt and Nancy Neville along with classes at the Art Academy. Dave is a member of the Urban Sketchers and posts frequently on their Facebook page. He and his wife DeeAnne have had a lifelong learning experience in art as they often paint together.

As a retired K-8th grade art teacher for the Cincinnati Public School System, DeeAnne enjoys her time working in watercolor, oils, and fiber arts. Her work has been displayed at Hillsdale College, Cincinnati Nature Center, and the World Organization of China Painters Museum in Oklahoma.

**All Things Considered Nature Walk, Cheryl Harner**

We will enjoy the many wonders of nature on our walkas they are present. Plants, butterflies, dragonflies—who knows what treasures we will find? Bring your binoculars along too if you have them.

Cheryl is interested in all forms of flora and fauna and fascinated by the connections between botany and wildlife. She is an avid gardener, and life-long wildflower and butterfly enthusiast. She currently serves as a Richland County Park Board Commissioner and works as an environmental educator and advocate for nature. Her extensive volunteer work includes leadership and grass-roots in conservation throughout Ohio for the Ohio Ornithological Society and Ohio Natural Areas and Preseves. On her days off, she weeds her moss.
**INDOOR BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

**Tom’s Top 10 Native Shrubs for Your Yard, Tom Borgman**

You will learn in-depth information about 10 beautiful native shrubs that not only attract wildlife such as butterflies, moths and birds, but also have place in many home landscapes.

Tom Borgman has more than 35 years of conservation related experience. Recently retired from Great Parks of Hamilton County, Tom served in several positions including Natural Resource Manager and, Conservation & Parks Trainer. As a gardener, landscaper, naturalist, and plant enthusiast, Tom has had a lifelong interest in connections between plants, wildlife and people.

**Larva Babies, Instars and Shape-shifters, Carol Mundy**

You will get an introduction to a few select Ohio butterflies’ favorite foods from nectaring to the all important host plants. You’ll learn how and what the butterflies and their larva eat and we will talk about their mind-boggling, shape shifting abilities as they progress through their lifecycle.

Carol is a naturalist, speaker and writer residing in Cincinnati, Ohio. A nature enthusiast her whole life, she claims most of her natural history knowledge is through “osmosis.” She retired from Hamilton County Park District in Cincinnati where she was Head Naturalist at Glenwood Gardens. Additionally, she’s taught for the University of Cincinnati and informally for many other groups, including Master Gardeners. Over the years she has presented many topics surrounding the use of native plants and plants as medicine. She’s consulted on projects featuring native plants and been awarded the Citation for Horticulture Education from the Garden Club of Ohio. Today she hosts a weekly radio program for WMKV in Cincinnati featuring unusual aspects of nature, science and culture.

**Ohio Orchids, Brian Jorg**

We will take a look at one of the most stunning wildflower families that can be found in Ohio, the Orchidaceae family. Orchids occupy nearly every habitat in any of our three growing seasons, and you will learn more about these amazing exotic gems found in our own state.

Brian is Manager of the Native Plant Program for the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. Brian also manages the Boyer Wetland, a 650-acre property in Warren County. His responsibilities include the Zoo’s Native Plant Program, which includes a wide range of projects that deal directly with the propagation and conservation of our native flora. This also includes the recovery projects of endangered and critically imperiled plants. Brian also travels extensively to study both flora and fauna of the world. Leading trips to the Galapagos, Kenya, Argentina, Madagascar, Brian is always planning the next trip to someplace wild.
EVENING OUTDOOR WALKS & FILM

Chimney Swift Walk, Judy Semroc & Larry Rosche
Join Judy Semroc and Larry Rosche for a walk to the Bergamo Chimney Swift tower. You will learn about these fascinating birds that eat on the wing, taking care of thousands of mosquitos for us - without the use of chemicals! We’ll watch them come in to roost at dusk, and learn some other fascinating facts about these aerial acrobats.

Judy currently works in the Natural Areas Division for the Cleveland Museum of Natural History as a Conservation Specialist. She is the founder of Operation Botanic Rescue (a volunteer plant-rescue group) and Chrysalis in Time – the first Ohio chapter of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA). Judy also co-wrote “The Dragonflies & Damselflies of Northeast Ohio” with Larry Rosche & Linda Gilbert. Judy has received numerous awards for her work in conservation and education including the “Governor’s Award for Excellence in Youth Science Opportunities, 2010 Portage County “Conservation Hero Award”, 2013 Gentian Award from the Native Plant Society of Northeast Ohio, and the 2013 “Outstanding Staff Achievement Award” from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. As a former Petroleum Geologist and science teacher, Judy loves to learn about and share her passion for the natural world through hikes, interpretive programs and photography.

MOONLIGHT NATURE WALK, MOTHING OR ASTRONOMY-TBD, SCOTT HOGSTEN
Evening walks will be announced on Friday and Saturday evening after the last talk.

A FORCE FOR NATURE: LUCY BRAUN, FILM
A Force for Nature: Lucy Braun is a co-production of Meg Hanrahan Media and Voyageur Media Group. “The documentary highlights the life of E. Lucy Braun, a groundbreaking 20th century scientist,” says Meg Hanrahan, the documentary’s writer, producer and director. “We think Dr. Braun should be better recognized for her role as one of the country’s first ecologists and for being a tireless advocate for preservation.” In addition to telling Lucy’s story, the program documents important history in ecology, tells the tale of the fate of many of our virgin forests, and illustrates the rewards of successful preservation of natural spaces.”