



Richland County Park District

Friends of the  
**Gorman Nature Center**  
Newsletter

Autumn 2014 Vol 33, No 3

## **Gorman Nature Center Calendar of Events - Autumn 2014**

|     |         |           |   |
|-----|---------|-----------|---|
| Thu | Sep 4   | 6:30 pm   | <b>What's Hiding in the Prairie?</b> Join us for a walk through the GNC prairies to discover what interesting plants and animals reside there! (JL)   |
| Tue | Sept 9  | 8:00 pm   | <b>Night Hike - Night Sounds!</b> See page 4 for details! (JL)  |
| Wed | Sept 17 | 9 & 10    | Moms & Kids (for parents and their pre-school children, sessions 9-10 and 10-11 am) (JL)  |
| Sat | Sept 20 | 8:00 am   | <b>Birds &amp; Breakfast Bird Walk</b> - meet at GNC. See page 4 for details! (JL)  |
| Sat | Sept 20 | 1-5 pm    | <b>Invasive Plant Identification &amp; Removal Workshop!</b> See page 4 for details! (JL)   |
| Sat | Sept 20 | 5:30 pm   | <b>Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association (ONAPA) 2nd Annual Banquet &amp; Meeting.</b> See <a href="http://onapa.org">onapa.org</a> for details.   |
| Sat | Sept 27 | 10:00 am  | Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association (ONAPA) Field Trip Event – <b>Seed Collecting at Guy Denny's Prairie.</b> See <a href="http://onapa.org">onapa.org</a> for details.  |
| Sat | Sept 27 | 2-5 pm    | <b>Gorman Nature Center All Taxa Biotic Inventory!</b> An educational event held in conjunction with the National Biodiversity Teach-In Field Experiences. See <a href="http://nationalbiodiversityteachin.com">nationalbiodiversityteachin.com</a> for details! (JL) |
| Sat | Sept 27 | 8:30 pm   | <b>The Night Sky</b> - a monthly telescope program at GNC– only if the sky is clear. (JL or SM)   |
| Sat | Oct 4   | 9:00 am   | <b>Ferns That Rock</b> - a workshop to learn about ferns that live on rocks with Steve McKee and the Mohican Native Plant Society at GNC - more details on page 2. (SM)   |
| Thu | Oct 9   | 1:30 pm   | <b>Fall Color Nature Walk for Seniors</b> at GNC. (JL)  |
| Sat | Oct 11  | All Day   | <b>The Big Sit #1</b> - A 24-hour, bird-counting event sponsored by Bird Watcher's Digest. Visitors welcome! See page 3 for details or call 419-884-3764. (JL)  |
| Sat | Oct 11  | 11-5 pm   | <b>Fall Family Fest</b> - at the <b>Ohio Bird Sanctuary</b> . Call 419-884-4295 for times & details.  |
| Sun | Oct 12  | 8 am-4 pm | <b>The Big Sit #2</b> - Another Big Sit sponsored by GMAS at Charles Mill Lake Park. For details see: <a href="http://www.gmasohio.org">www.gmasohio.org</a> Visitors welcome.  |
| Tue | Oct 14  | 7:00 pm   | <b>Traveling for the Birds!</b> Join local birder, Anna Wittmer, as she recounts her birding adventures across the continent, from Alaska to Guatemala, and places in between.  |
| Wed | Oct 15  | 9 & 10    | Moms & Kids (JL)  |
| Sat | Oct 18  | 8:00 am   | <b>Birds &amp; Breakfast Bird Walk</b> - meet at GNC. See page 4 for details! (JL)  |
| Sat | Oct 18  | 1-5 pm    | <b>Invasive Plant Identification &amp; Removal Workshop!</b> See page 4 for details! (JL)   |
| Sat | Oct 25  | 3:00 pm   | <b>Ohio Reptile Program - Snakes!</b> See page 3 for details! (JL)  |
| Mon | Oct 27  | 7:30 pm   | <b>The Night Sky</b> - a monthly telescope program at GNC– only if the sky is clear. (JL)   |
| Sat | Nov 8   | 3:00 pm   | <b>Ohio Reptile Program - Turtles!</b> See page 3 for details! (JL)   |
| Sat | Nov 15  | 8:00 am   | <b>Birds &amp; Breakfast Bird Walk</b> - meet at GNC. See page 4 for details! (JL)  |
| Sat | Nov 15  | 1-5 pm    | <b>Invasive Plant Identification &amp; Removal Workshop!</b> See page 4 for details! (JL)   |
| Wed | Nov 19  | 9 & 10    | Moms & Kids (JL)  |
| Sat | Nov 22  | 9:00 am   | <b>Hunting for Hammerheads</b> - a walk at Mohican in search of Pileated Woodpeckers - meet at GNC to carpool. (SM)   |
| Tue | Nov 25  | 7:00 pm   | <b>The Night Sky</b> - a monthly telescope program at GNC– only if the sky is clear. (JL or SM)   |
| Sat | Dec 6   | 10:00 am  | <b>What's Up Duck? Annual Waterfowl Watch</b> at nearby reservoirs. Meet at GNC! (SM & JL)  |
| Sat | Dec 20  | All Day   | <b>Mansfield Christmas Bird Count</b> - call 419-884-3764 for details.  |

All programs free to the public. (JF=Jan Ferrell, JL=Jason Larson, SM=Steve McKee)



Green Newsletter

If you would prefer an email version of the newsletter to save paper and postage, please email us at [gormannaturecenter@gmail.com](mailto:gormannaturecenter@gmail.com). Thanks.

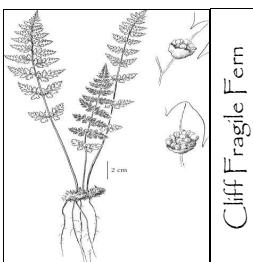
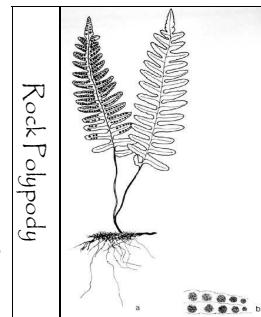
# RICHLAND FLORA- Ferns that Rock

Most of us think of ferns as growing in cool, moist, shady forests. Some ferns, though, grow on rocks where few other plants can grow. How do they do that? Why do some ferns prefer rocks?

Ferns that grow on rocks, or “Ferns That Rock”, will be the subject of this year’s annual wild plant workshop. For the 18th year, we will offer a workshop to learn about a special group of wild plants that you can find in our area. Past workshops have included maples, oaks & hickories, vines, shrubs, ferns, sedges, violets, ash trees, non-photosynthetic plants, asters, conifers, duckweeds, the trees of South Park, goldenrods and several others. The workshops are held in association with the **Mohican Native Plant Society**, a local group of wild-plant enthusiasts. This year’s **free public workshop** is entitled “**Ferns That Rock**” and will be held at the Mohican Outdoor School Field Trip Center on Bunkerhill Road, between SR 97 and SR 95 east of Butler, on Saturday, October 4 at 9:00 am. Call GNC at 419-884-3764 if you need directions.

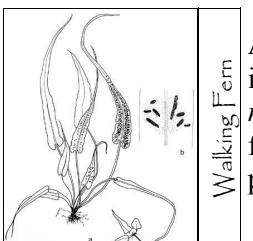
There are 20 different fern species in our area that can grow on rocks, and 11 species that are pretty much restricted to rocks and cliffs. A bare rock surface would be a near impossible place for a fern to get started, but a small lichen could grow there. After awhile the lichens can trap some soil which allows larger mosses to grow. Eventually, enough soil is trapped for some ferns to grow and thrive.

As its name would imply, one of the “ferns that rock” is the **Rock Polypody** (*Polypodium virginianum*). Sometimes called the “Rock-cap fern”, the Rock Polypody often “caps” the top of a rock or cliff edge with a dense colony of evergreen fronds. Thoreau called them “fresh and cheerful communities”. Their deep-green, leathery blades are cut into narrow, blunt-tipped lobes. Be sure to look for the yellowish, round sori on the backs of their fronds. The “sori” are clusters of sporangia that release spores for the fern’s reproduction. A very similar fern that grows in Mohican is the **Appalachian Polypody** (*Polypodium appalachianum*), which we may try to see on our workshop.



Down from the cap of the rock, on the steep cliff face itself, is where you find the **Cliff Fragile Fern** (*Cystopteris tenuis*). This fern is more of a challenge to identify, but as with any plant, once you establish a “search image” in your mind, its recognition will be easier. You can look for a delicate fern in a small clump on a cliff ledge or in a crack. Its stipe (the leaf stalk) is usually purplish and the frond (the leaf itself) is finely dissected, making it one of our more lacey ferns. Older fern books will have you call this the Fragile Fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*), but this genus is now better understood, and this other species is no longer found in Ohio.

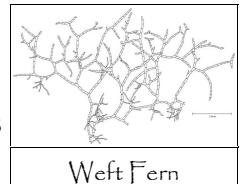
Growing near the Cliff Fragile Fern is a look-alike species called **Blunt-lobed Woodsia** (*Woodsia obtusa*). Although rare in our area, we recently discovered a large Woodsia population that we will visit during our workshop. It will be a good chance to see Woodsia growing side-by-side with Cliff Fragile Fern so you can learn the differences. There are differences in the indusia (covering over the spores), veins, hairiness and stipes. The genus was named in honor of Joseph Woods, an English architect and botanist.



Another new discovery, and the inspiration for this year’s workshop, is Richland County’s second known population of **Walking Fern** (*Asplenium rhizophyllum*). As the name indicates, Walking Fern actually “walks” across the rock face. Walking Fern can reproduce by spores, as most ferns do, but in addition the long pointed fronds can root at their tips, allowing the fern to start a new plant in an adjacent

crack. That plant, in turn, can do the same with its fronds, allowing the plant to slowly “walk” across the cliff surface. The Walking Fern has undissected fronds, so it looks rather un-fern-like. It is a delight to see.

The weirdest rock fern in our area, or any area for that matter, is the **Weft Fern** (*Trichomanes Crepidomanes intricatum*). Few people would recognize it as a fern. In fact, it wasn't even described as a new fern species until 1992. To look at this fern with a handlens, you might describe it as “tiny, green steel wool”. There are no fronds or spores because, for some reason, this fern occurs only in its small gametophyte stage of the fern lifecycle and not the sporophyte stage that we are all used to. If that is confusing, I will explain it at the workshop. We will look for it with a flashlight in its habitat on the moist, dark ceilings of sandstone overhangs! This was a new species for Richland County when discovered at Hemlock Falls in 2012.



Weft Fern

Other local ferns and lycophytes that are restricted to rocks and cliffs include **Rock Clubmoss** (*Huperzia porophila*), **Bulblet Fern** (*Cystopteris bulbifera*), **Maidenhair Spleenwort** (*Asplenium trichomanes*) and **Northern Beech Fern** (*Phegopteris connectilis*).

If you would like to see these ferns in person, and learn about other Richland County plants, please attend our “Ferns That Rock Workshop” on October 4. For more information, please call Gorman nature Center at 419-884-3764.

## GNC BIG SIT 2014!

Saturday, October 11 - All Day!

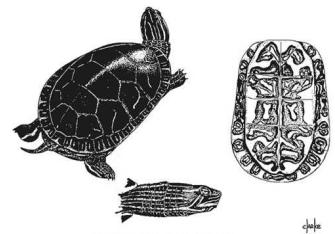
Come join us for this 24-hour, bird-counting competition sponsored by Bird Watcher's Digest. The entire day will be spent counting from a 17' circle at the GNC pond. Visitors are welcome and may come and go, as they please, throughout the day. Binoculars and lawn chairs are recommended, but are not required, to participate in this event. Feel free to stop by for an hour or two, bring something to snack upon, learn a little bit about the birds that inhabit the GNC property and those birds that are just migrating through for the season. A variety of food and beverages will be available for participants throughout the day. For additional information call GNC at (419) 884-3764.

## Ohio Reptiles— Snakes & Turtles!

Saturday, October 25 at 3:00 pm

&

Saturday, November 8 at 3:00 pm



Do you have questions about what species of snakes are found in Richland County? Do native turtles really spread diseases? Are there any venomous snakes in our area? Have you ever held a live snake? Come have all of your questions answered, see many of the native species we have here at GNC and even interact with these amazing creatures. The October 25th program will focus on local snakes and the November 9th program will focus on our native turtles. Free ODNR reptile guides will be provided for all participants. These programs will take place at Gorman Nature Center. For additional information call GNC at (419) 884-3764.

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I am eager to help support natural history education in Richland County and to receive your quarterly newsletter. Please enroll me in “Friends of the Nature Center” at the following level for one year:

|                        |
|------------------------|
| Name _____             |
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Enclosed is my membership donation for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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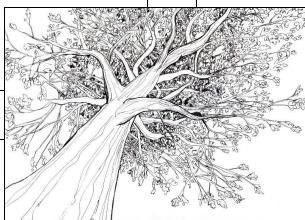
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- |       |                            |
|-------|----------------------------|
| _____ | \$2.00 Fledgling (student) |
| _____ | 5.00 Cardinal (individual) |
| _____ | 10.00 Flock (family)       |
| _____ | 25.00 Owl (supporting)     |
| _____ | 50.00 Hawk (sponsoring)    |
| _____ | 100.00 Eagle (sustaining)  |

## Birds & Breakfast Bird Walks

Saturday, September 20 at 8:00 a.m.  
Saturday, October 18 at 8:00 a.m. &  
Saturday, November 15 at 8:00 a.m.

Join us for an early morning bird walk around the GNC property followed by a hearty breakfast and discussion of that morning's sightings at a local restaurant! Fall migration will be in full swing, so be prepared for warblers, vireos and more! Walks will be held rain or shine! Free checklists and ODNR bird guides provided!



## Night Hike- Night Sounds!

Tuesday, September 9 at 8:00 p.m.

Have you ever wondered what happens at GNC after dark? Curious about those sounds you hear after the sun goes down? If so, then consider joining us for this nocturnal hike around the GNC property, as we explore the sounds of the night. Call 419-884-3764 for details!

## Invasive Plant Removal Workshops

Saturday, September 20 from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Saturday, October 18 from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Saturday, November 15 from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Are you interested in learning more about the non-native, invasive plants in our area and how to combat them? A short informational session will be followed by some hands-on invasive removal in our fields and prairies. We will take a break around 3:00 and then head back out until 5:00 p.m. Extra handsaws and pruners will be needed. Call 419-884-3764 for details!

## GNC All Taxa Biotic Inventory

Saturday, September 27 from 2-5 pm

Have you ever heard of an ATBI? No? Come help us identify and catalog each and every species of creature here on the Gorman Nature Center property. Biodiversity is critical to maintaining a healthy ecosystem and we want you to understand why!



A red X in the box at the right means that it is time to renew  
your "Friends of the Nature Center" membership.

Thanks for your support!

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