



# Ripples

A Publication for Members and Friends  
Killbuck Watershed Land Trust

Volume 5, Issue 1

Summer 2015

## Inside this issue

They need help	1-2-3
Coshocton update	1-2
Monarch season	3
Field tile collector	4
Join KWLT today	4

## Board of Trustees

Maryanna Biggio, President  
Neal Caldwell, Vice President  
Linda Bush, Co-Secretary  
David Wilkin, Co-Secretary  
Ron Holtman, Treasurer  
Randy Carmel  
Barry Cavanna  
Bob Hunter  
David Kline  
Matt Mariola  
Robb Stutzman  
H. Dewey Thompson

Killbuck Watershed Land Trust  
133 S. Market St.  
Wooster, OH 44691  
330-264-1712 (Biggio home)  
330-317-2583 (Biggio cell)  
maryannabiggio@hotmail.com

Ron Holtman, Treasurer  
2171-B Eagle Pass  
Wooster, OH 44691  
Phone: 330-264-6115  
Fax: 330-262-5729  
www.killbucklandtrust.org

Melody L. Snure, Ripples Editor  
jgrad72@yahoo.com

Killbuck Watershed Land Trust  
is a tax exempt organization  
pursuant to Section 501(c)3 of  
the IRS Code.

## Monarch butterflies need our help

Dear Friends,

There are caterpillars and then there are Caterpillars. I made a major mistake this summer when I picked off three big monster caterpillars which I thought were devouring the dill plants in our herb garden. I did not squash them, but tossed them in a bucket used for weeds and covered them with more weed debris.

Days later I discovered they would have been monarch butterflies in a few weeks.

We want the monarchs around our home and gardens and have made concerted efforts to encourage them with plants that they love. And so I



feel especially guilty for destroying the caterpillars. For at least the last three years the monarchs have been so sparse that we celebrate each sighting and keep count of how many we see in a season. The first topic of conversation

when visiting friends is, "How many monarchs have you seen?"

We all know that the monarch population is decreasing and for a number of reasons. It is important to understand the life cycle of the monarch and how we can help these majestic creatures to flourish when their amazing journey brings them to our area.

First, learn to recognize the caterpillar! The total time frame for one butterfly's life cycle (one generation) is about 6-8 weeks ... egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly. It grows inside the egg for about four days. It then grows as a monarch

**Continued on Page 2**

## Coshocton property is secure at last

The rolling hills, lush forests and productive farmland of Coshocton County have endeared many travelers to the area. During routine travels on back roads from their home in Hudson, Ohio to warmer climates, Robert and Albine Stickney became so enchanted with the rural beauty of the area that the pair decided to buy property there.

In 2006, the Stickneys purchased 31 acres along Township Road 96 and County Road 97 near Bakersville in Adams Township. The property features a mix of farmland and woodland and is situated near farms, residences and limited commercial development.

The Stickneys hoped to build a residence on the property so they could enjoy it during the sunset of their lives.

Unfortunately, the dream was never realized and Mrs. Stickney's health prevented them from doing anything further with the property. However, not wanting to see the property split up and developed, the Stickneys began discussions with the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust to protect the property.

Rather than sign a conservation easement to restrict the development of the property, the Stickneys went a step further and donated the

**Continued on Page 2**

*Promoting, protecting and preserving our natural heritage*

## Provide the essentials in a butterfly garden

### Continued from Page 1

caterpillar (larva) for about two more weeks. The caterpillar's life inside the chrysalis (pupa) lasts about 10 days and its wonderful life as an adult butterfly lasts from 2-6 weeks.

Here is an approximate schedule:

**February/March** - Hibernating monarchs in Mexico and southern California reawaken, become active, find a mate, begin the flight northward and lay their eggs. Finally they die. These special monarchs have lived about 4-5 months through the long winter.

**March/April** - The first generation of monarchs are born - egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, adult butterfly

**May/June** - The second generation is born

**July/August** - The third generation is born

**Sept./Oct.** - The fourth generation is born ... but this generation does NOT die. It migrates south and lives 6-8 months in Mexico or southern California. They begin awakening and mating in February/March of the NEXT spring, and then lay their eggs. Withered and tattered from their migration and hiber-

nation, they finally die.

The monarch has recently been added to the World Wildlife Fund's Top Ten Most Threatened Species list. The overwintering population this past winter (2014) was the lowest ever recorded.

There are some key culprits of the population collapse of this butterfly: soggy weather and illegal logging have both indisputably reduced the monarch butterflies at their Mexican overwintering grounds; loss of habitat (the eradication of milkweed, the monarch's primary food source); the exceptional drought in Texas and northern Mexico which is on their route to the overwintering sites.

Often the landscape in Texas is parched, no wildflowers, no frost-weed blossoms to feed on. Without this food, winter survival in Mexico and the migration back into the U.S. the following spring is gravely endangered; many monarchs will die of starvation.

If these valiant creatures do reach our area we can provide some of the essentials for their survival. They need water. We keep several large, shallow clay saucers filled with fresh water around

the garden. Many flowering plants attract the nectar-seeking monarch and so many other hungry flying species. We have hundreds of bees, swallowtails of several varieties, fritillary, skippers and more visiting our garden.

Thanks to our good neighbor and enthusiastic gardener Prue Holtman, we have a large patch of Joe-Pye weed (*Eutrochium maculatum*) flourishing in a mostly sunny garden bed by the house. It ripples every day with butterflies and bees enjoying its nectar. We recommend Joe-Pye as a stunning garden accent. It is no longer a "weed" but a major food source for monarchs and other flying creatures.

We have found a web site called Butterfly Plants List - Butterfly Flowers and Host Plant Ideas, hosted by Tony Gomez. Go to [www.monarchbutterflygarden.net/butterfly-plants](http://www.monarchbutterflygarden.net/butterfly-plants). You may already have many of the plants listed and you may have enjoyed monarchs and other wonderful butterflies in your garden. Let's pass the word on to friends. If they have the space in their garden, or any outdoor area, encourage

**Continued on Page 3**

## Rural Coshocton property finds enthusiastic new owners

### Continued from Page 1

property directly to the land trust so that KWLT could manage the property for conservation purposes as it saw fit.

While such a generous gift is rare for a land trust the size of KWLT, it certainly is not unheard of. KWLT manages and holds title to a number of other properties on which it conducts conservation efforts in the region.

Following the Stickneys' donation, the property was put to use as farmland. In addition, the Coshocton County Career Center's Natural Resources program was invited to conduct a learning lab on the property, with students helping to plant about 2,000 trees under a forest management plan approved by KWLT, including red oak, white oak and conifer species. Unfortunately, a majority of the trees were damaged due to foraging deer and bad weather, but KWLT's desire to continue the Stickneys' legacy on the property lived on.

In 2015, KWLT Coshocton County representative Dewey Thompson was approached by Vincent and Janell Adams, neighboring landowners to the Stickney property. The couple had a desire to purchase the property from KWLT and

strongly believed in the organization's mission to conserve rural property from development. After brief negotiations the property was sold to the Adamses, who have since placed a conservation easement on the property to prevent future development.

They plan to build a house on a neighboring parcel and will use the Stickney property for farming and wildlife habitat. A number of new trees are set to be planted on the property to restore woodlands, thereby providing cover for native animal species and erosion control for the steep hillside.

While the Stickneys may not have been able to realize their dream of living out their days in Coshocton County, their dream lives on through the actions of the KWLT and Vincent and Janell Adams. Owing to the positive experience, KWLT is now in discussions with other landowners in Coshocton County, and hopefully more land can be conserved so that others who find themselves traveling on twisting back roads can enjoy the area's beauty for years to come.

**Robb Stutzman, KWLT trustee**

# Monarch season arrives with concern

Yesterday the Monarch Rescue Squad was busy because this is the season for mowing – old orchards, permanent pastures, and roadsides. Unfortunately it coincides with the monarch butterfly's reproduction peak. Monarchs lay their eggs (up to 250 per female) only on members of the milkweed family, and milkweeds often get cut by the mowers.

We heard that areas would be mowed, so our family sprang into action and checked milkweed plants in places that were subject for cutting. We rescued 21 larvae ranging in size from a quarter-inch long to almost ready to pupate. (A word of caution – don't attempt to do this unless you are ready to meticulously care for the larvae in giving them clean quarters and new plants every morning and as soon as a butterfly emerges from its chrysalis and has dried its wings a bit, move it gently

to a plant outside such as a butterfly bush, where it finishes its "tanning" and then flies to places unknown.) Our grandchildren are very good at this.

The monarch butterfly is in serious trouble in the eastern part of the United States and Canada. This is the population that migrates to the Oyamel fir forests in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico to spend the winter months, over 2,000 miles from here.

A winter population of monarchs that covered 40 acres of fir forest in the mid-1990s has shrunk to an acre and a half. There are a number of ideas on

what has caused this dramatic drop in the number of monarch butterflies.

Since there are numerous opinions, I'll add mine too. The decline coincides almost perfectly with the introduction, and the widespread acceptance, of



genetically modified farm crops, especially glyphosate-tolerant corn and soybeans.

Anyone connected with farming knows that the common milkweed is often an edge-of-field and roadside plant. Glyphosate (Roundup) kills milkweed as well as other field weeds. Some research indicates that corn spliced with the Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) gene, so that the corn plant becomes its own insecticide to kill corn insect pests, also is in the corn plant's pollen. Pollen drifts with the wind and is indiscriminate on what

plants it lands, which can include milkweed. I spoke recently with a former Pioneer Seed researcher who helped to splice the Bt gene into corn. He is convinced that Bt-infected corn pollen is the monarch larvae killer.

In many parts of the Midwest, 95 percent of the crops (corn and beans) are sprayed with glyphosate. That means no milkweed in the fields. The only place the milkweed has any chance of surviving from here to Nebraska is along roadsides. Now many counties and townships own those long-armed rotary mowers that do such an ugly job of mowing. At least a sickle bar mower doesn't shred everything to smithereens. Many roadsides are now being groomed to death, and that means thousands of monarch butterflies are destroyed.

My proposal is that roadsides should be mowed from mid- to late-June and then left undisturbed until at least late October. That would give the lovely monarch a better chance of surviving

and flying the 2,000 miles to the mountaintops of Mexico and replenishing the dwindling population.

As my granddaughter said, "The monarchs are having a banner year on our farm, even though they were late in arriving." Could it be because our community has thousands of acres in organic production where milkweed is not looked at as a weed and the iconic orange-and-black butterfly is considered a national treasure?

*David Kline, KWLTL trustee*

## Safe travels to all the beautiful monarchs!

**Continued from Page 2**

them to use these multi-purpose plants. Catching a glimpse of the monarch butterfly swooping around in the garden is a real delight.

Butterflies are known for one biological miracle in particular: their ability to metamorphose from caterpillars into beautiful, brightly colored, winged creatures. I will leave all

caterpillars alone from now on. And to the monarchs, we wish you well, and safe passage in your travels.

Thanks to Prue Holtman for taking the photos of monarch butterflies to illustrate both my column and David Kline's for this issue of Ripples.

*Maryanna Biggio, KWLTL Board of Trustees President*

# Burckhart's long career disproves dire prediction of his teacher

When Roger Burckhart was a less-than-studious sixth grader at Chester Township School his teacher once admonished: "If you don't buckle down you're going to be a ditch digger." So what did young Roger become? The most sought-after "ditch digger" in Wayne County and far beyond.

Says Roger with a grin, "I think that warning programmed me for life."

From his 56-year career he has amassed a collection of 12- and 18-inch clay tiles in all shapes from round to square to pentagonal. All have come from excavations he has overseen.

"Anybody can 'dig a ditch,'" says Roger, who is widely known for applying his extensive knowledge of soil types and grades to every job as well as using good old common sense.

"Lots of people are walking encyclopedias, but don't have much wisdom. I've been blessed with wisdom," he proclaims.

Perforated "drain" tile doesn't actually drain the soil, he says, it aerates



**ROGER** Burckhart poses with one of his favorite rocks, a limestone boulder with a peekaboo hole.



**VARIOUS SIZES** and shapes of drainage tile that Roger Burckhart has unearthed over the years in ditching jobs make up his unique collection. At far lower left is an unusual concrete tile while the yellow tile at the top represents the new generation of plastic drainage.

the soil so crop roots can grow deeper to get moisture. He's proud to have laid the first plastic drainage tile in Wayne County in the late 1960s, the beginning of the end for clay tile.

While his clay tile "finds" have diminished, another job-related hobby remains strong: collecting boulders. His home west of Wooster is land-

scaped with groupings of rocks weighing as much as 10 tons. He even used one flat specimen as the base for his swimming pool's diving board.

Need a good field drainage guy? Better book Roger soon. He says he's going to retire at 90 - just 14 years from now.

*Melody L. Snure, Ripples editor*

## Your KWLT membership helps to conserve area lands

Your membership in the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust helps to maintain the rural atmosphere that has made our area a desirable and unique place to live. Your 2015 membership dues will be used for:

- Conservation education
- Public outreach
- Land acquisition and management
- Legal action to monitor and maintain conservation easements

Annual membership levels are:

- Friend, \$50
- Steward, \$100
- Conservator, \$250
- Protector, \$500

To become a new member or to renew your membership for 2015, write a check payable to Killbuck Watershed Land Trust. Mail it to Killbuck Watershed Land Trust, 133 S. Market St., Wooster, OH 44691. Killbuck Watershed Land Trust is a tax-exempt organization pursuant to Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Donations are tax deductible.