SPRING 2009

PRESERVE HIGHLIGHTS

Fernald Preserve

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 1

DIRECTORY

Goals	2
Meeting the Mission	2
Nature Nook	3
Individual Effort	3
Visitors Center	3
Community Relations	4

April 29
Community Meeting
6:30 p.m.

Fernald Preserve Visitors Center
7400 Willey Road
Harrison, Ohio 45030

Fernald Preserve

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Office of Legacy Management

10995 Hamilton-Cleves Hwy.
Harrison, Ohio 45030
(513) 648-6000
fernald@LM.doe.gov

Spotlight

The Fernald Preserve, which is located on 1,050 acres in northwest Hamilton County, was established following the cleanup and ecological restoration of the former Fernald uranium foundry.

The $14 million ecological restoration incorporated native plants and grasses that were identified in an 1819 land survey. The current landscape features 400 acres of woodlots, 327 acres of prairie, 140 acres of open water and wetlands, and 33 acres of savanna. A diverse array of wildlife is already well established at the preserve.

BioBlitz

The Fernald Preserve will host a BioBlitz on May 15 and 16. This event will coincide with International Migratory Bird Day. The BioBlitz will be an exciting 24-hour marathon that partners scientists and other subject matter experts with volunteers who will find and identify as many different plant and animal species as they can at the Fernald Preserve. This research will benefit the site, research universities, and museums, and it will help to explain and quantify the biological diversity in the region. This event will give volunteers a chance to search for plants and animals alongside experts with vast knowledge of the various species at the Fernald Preserve. Activities include identifying prairie plants, searching for amphibians in Paddys Run, and capturing bats at night.

To volunteer for the BioBlitz, please contact Sue Walpole at (513) 648-4026.

Did you know...

Within the past few decades, Canada geese have gone from being an exclusively migratory species to one that has established large, permanent resident populations. We are continuing our goose hazing program this year to limit goose damage. Specially trained dogs harass the geese before they start nesting at the site.

Legacy Management Goals

Goal 1

Protect human health and the environment through effective and efficient long-term surveillance and maintenance.

Goal 2

Preserve, protect, and make accessible legacy records and information.

Goal 3

Support an effective and efficient work force structured to accomplish Departmental missions and assure contractor worker pension and medical benefits.

Goal 4

Manage legacy land and assets, emphasizing protective real and personal property reuse and disposition.

Goal 5

Improve program effectiveness through sound management.

Legacy Management's Mission: To manage the Department's post-closure responsibilities and ensure the future protection of human health and the environment. Legacy Management has control and custody for legacy land, structures, and facilities and is responsible for maintaining them at levels consistent with Departmental long-term plans.

Meeting the Mission

Goal 4: It is the Department of Energy's responsibility to manage the Fernald Preserve land in a manner that will sustain the site's ecological restoration. Beginning this year, a series of prescribed burns are being conducted to increase the health and growth of the site's 360 acres of prairies. Controlled, prescribed burns are a critical component of prairie management and help native prairie plants, which are well adapted to periodic fires, to out-compete non-native and invasive species. Burning also adds nutrients to the soil, and in the spring, it warms the soil, speeding up the germination process for prairie grasses and wildflowers.

Prescribed burning is an effective practice that has been accepted by federal, state, and local land management agencies for preventing wildfires. The use of prescribed burns at the Fernald Preserve has been endorsed by both the U.S. and Ohio Environmental Protection Agencies. An Ohio Division of Natural Resources certified prescribed fire manager is responsible for planning and conducting the burns and for training site personnel who will be involved in them. The Ross Fire Department will provide support.

Fun Fact

The meadow vole, commonly called the "field mouse," is widespread on the prairies at the Fernald Preserve and is the site's most common prey animal. Predators include hawks, owls, foxes, coyotes, and snakes. These mice are amazingly prolific. Females can mate for the first time when they are 30 days old and may have as many as five litters in a year.

Nature Nook

American Sycamore *Plantanus occidentalis*

Large and impressive sycamore trees can be found growing along the Paddys Run corridor and in other wet areas of the Fernald Preserve. Sycamores are readily identifiable by their trunk of mixed tan, green, and cream colors and by their large, broad, maple-like leaves. Mature trees are very large and frequently reach heights of over 120 feet and have diameters of 6.5 feet.

The bark of all trees has to yield to the growing trunk, and the sycamore illustrates this fact more clearly than any other tree. The whitewashed appearance of the tree, resulting from the bark flaking off in large, irregular masses, is due to the rigid bark tissue, which lacks the expansive nature common to the bark of other trees. It cannot stretch to accommodate the growth of the wood underneath and, hence, is shed.

Sycamores are very fast-growing trees and can live for 600 years. The largest sycamore tree in the United States is in Jeromesville, Ohio. It's 129 feet tall with a limb spread of 105 feet and a circumference of 49 feet.

Individual Effort

Wanda Sumner - Records Specialist

Wanda Sumner has been working at the Fernald site since 1994. She helped "close the books" on the site's cleanup records, and her vast knowledge of the records has served the public well in her position with Legacy Management. Wanda preserves and protects legacy records and information, and she is one of only 10 people in Ohio who support the 10 different Legacy Management sites in the state.

The records of the Fernald cleanup and subsequent Legacy Management mission contain tens of thousands of pages that must be assembled and cataloged to form a comprehensive, easily followed record of Department of Energy activities at the site. Wanda's primary areas of responsibility involve ensuring Fernald's compliance with the records management requirements of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and additional federal regulations, as they apply. Specifically, she ensures that the necessary records have been included in Fernald's Administrative Record, which is the official documentation of the site's 10-year Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study process and the ensuing Records of Decision (the final cleanup plans for the site). Her responsibilities also encompass managing post-closure records and maintaining site records on all correspondence with federal and state regulatory agencies.

As a member of the Records Management team, Wanda is occasionally called on to support other aspects of the Records department's function, such as Freedom of Information and Privacy Act requests. She also retrieved records to support the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health's dose reconstruction study of Fernald workers.

"To be a successful records management professional, you must be detail-oriented, have a thorough understanding of the federal regulations that pertain to records, and have a strong focus on the needs and expectations of the Department of Energy," said Wanda.

Visitors Center

In the nearly 6 months since the Visitors Center's opening, more than 4,000 people have visited, and it has become a popular destination for classes, senior groups, and nature observers.

Several exhibits have recently been upgraded. The 20-foot column in the atrium, explaining the on-site disposal facility, has had a facelift, and the reading rails in the same area have been changed to reflect the Fernald Preserve's spring species.

The Northwest High School Senior Honors class continues its activities at Fernald. The students are doing field studies to help Fernald personnel prepare a baseline of plant and animal species for the site. The information students gather will be presented during the next community meeting on April 29.

Fernald Preserve

PRESERVE HIGHLIGHTS

As a community asset, the Fernald Preserve will foster wildlife habitat and provide educational opportunities through environmental stewardship.

Community Relations

This past winter has been a great season for local birders, with a wide variety of waterfowl and raptors inhabiting the site. Recent raptor sightings include bald eagles, ospreys, great horned owls, short-eared owls, rough-legged hawks, red-tailed hawks, red-shouldered hawks, Cooper's hawks, and American kestrels. We'll soon be constructing additional trails to allow more access to Fernald's diverse wildlife habitat.

The Fernald Preserve maintains an active public outreach program with schools, local conservation organizations, community groups, and elected officials. We hope that you will consider the preserve as a destination. If your organization is interested in reserving the Community Meeting Room, please contact Sue Walpole at (513) 648-4026.

Think Green

E-mail fernald@LM.doe.gov if you would like to receive this quarterly newsletter electronically.