



PRESERVE HIGHLIGHTS

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 2

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.

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Paths to the future

October 7
Community Meeting
6:30 p.m.

Fernald Preserve Visitors Center
 7400 Willey Road
 Harrison, Ohio 45030



Two new trails are scheduled to be opened at the Fernald Preserve to provide access to a much wider variety of wildlife habitat. The 2-mile Hickory Trail will originate near the Visitors Center and allow excellent viewing of prairie and edge habitats as well as mature hardwood and coniferous woodlots. The 1.5-mile Sycamore Trail will provide access to the Paddys Run riparian corridor as well as the prairies and vernal pools at the southern portion of the site. The new trails will increase the site's popularity with birders, photographers, and hikers.

To further enhance wildlife viewing opportunities, an observation platform is being constructed on the hill immediately north of the Lodge Pond. It will allow visitors to view our prairies and wetlands. We expect the observation platform to be completed by late fall.



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Did you know...

As recently as 10 years ago, 323 buildings, including 10 major uranium-production complexes, existed on this site, which now contains over 140 acres of wetland habitat, 400 acres of forests, and 360 acres of grassland.

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 1: It is the Office of Legacy Management's responsibility to protect human health and the environment through an effective and efficient long-term surveillance and maintenance program. An important aspect of this legacy management mission is the extraction and treatment, as necessary, of groundwater through our Converted Advanced Wastewater Treatment (CAWWT) facility.

During Fernald's uranium-production years, a plume of contaminated groundwater was created under the Fernald site and neighboring properties. It is the Department of Energy's responsibility to remove the uranium from the underlying plume and to treat the groundwater until it meets the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's safe drinking water standards. Through June 2009, the CAWWT personnel have extracted 1.13 billion gallons of groundwater while treating 53.34 million gallons and removing 270 pounds of uranium from the underlying plume of contaminated groundwater.

The need for groundwater treatment to meet our discharge limits continues to decline as the uranium concentration in the pumped water is reduced. Once the contamination is totally eliminated, the CAWWT facility will be dismantled and removed from the Fernald property.

Fun Fact

The population of the largest game bird in North America, the wild turkey, was reduced to only 30,000 nationally at the beginning of the 20th century due to unregulated hunting and loss of habitat. Thanks to reintroductions and other conservation initiatives, the current national population is estimated to be over 7 million. The explosive gobble of the male wild turkey can be heard from late winter through spring at the Fernald Preserve.

Nature Nook



Switchgrass *Panicum virgatum*

Switchgrass is a warm-season grass commonly seen in the maturing prairies at the Fernald Preserve. It is one of the dominant species of the central North American tallgrass prairies and is used primarily for soil conservation and as cover and food for birds and mammals. Because it is a native plant, it is naturally resistant to many pests and plant diseases.

Reaching heights ranging from 5 to 8 feet, with a huge permanent root system

that penetrates over 10 feet into the soil, switchgrass is a hardy and adaptive plant that can be grown on a variety of soils, including areas disturbed by remediation activities. Switchgrass can take up to 3 years to reach its full growth and, like most prairie grasses, is best managed through a program of prescribed burns. The burns enrich the soil and optimize the plant's growth potential. In areas where burning isn't possible, the plant is managed by mowing and baling. 



Individual Effort

Cathy Glassmeyer –
Process Engineer

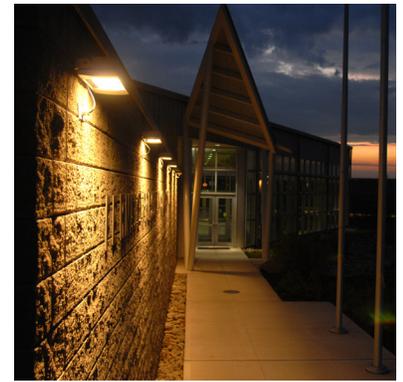
Cathy Glassmeyer has been committed to Fernald for longer than many people have committed to a single career—since August 15, 1985. That's almost 25 years. Before coming to Fernald, she worked at Piketon on a centrifuge project and earned numerous degrees. Although her education encompasses an M.B.A. and a master's in education, it's her science background—a bachelor's in chemical engineering and a master's in environmental management—that comes in most handy today. She's Fernald's process engineer for aquifer restoration projects.

For Cathy, there's no such thing as a "typical day." "Every day is different," she says. "I may be in the office writing a job safety analysis, then in the field walking down a project with the operations guys, then performance-testing a well, and working with operators from Tuba City on how to perform lockout/tagout." It's the hands-on tasks, rather than the paperwork that accompanies them, that

keeps Cathy excited about her job. She loves "going out into the field and working with the operations guys."

Cathy is proudest of having started on the Converted Advanced Wastewater Treatment (CAWWT) facility 2 days early, back in 1995. "It was the only project to start on time out of a whole lot of projects happening at Fernald at that time," she says. The CAWWT facility cleanses water from the Great Miami Aquifer, which underlies the Fernald Preserve. The facility can treat 1,800 gallons of water per minute. It also treats leachate discharged from Fernald's on-site disposal facility. The CAWWT helps to ensure that the concentration of uranium in the groundwater does not exceed regulatory limits.

But every day can't be as exciting as the day Cathy and the rest of her team surpassed the CAWWT deadline. So, when tasks seem monotonous, Cathy reenergizes by staying active. "Go for a run at lunch," she advises. Also helpful: talking to co-workers to learn about what projects they're working on. Staying curious is an important part of being able to make meaningful contributions to the same project for 25 years. 



Visitors Center

It's been more than a year since the Visitors Center opened, and over 10,000 people have spent time in the building. The institutional control provided by the information in the Visitors Center is part of the Legacy Management mission and has exceeded all expectations. Schools, universities, senior centers, and garden clubs frequently use the building. The Center has become a destination spot for history enthusiasts, "green" building specialists, and a place for quiet reflection after spending time on the Fernald Preserve trails. Several organizations have hosted annual meetings and dinners. Special activities, like the meteor shower watch, and May's BioBlitz have enhanced the mission of the building.

The Visitors Center is open Wednesday through Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and the site is open seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. to dusk. 



PRESERVE HIGHLIGHTS



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

Community Relations

Since opening the Fernald Preserve a year ago, over 10,000 people have walked through the doors of the Visitors Center, and many more regularly hike the trails. We have hosted garden clubs, senior centers, scouts, preschool through college-level classes, and casual visitors and hikers. Many former workers continue to visit, reminisce, and bring their families who learn about the site's history and the once secretive mission.

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 fernal@LM.doe.gov if you would like to receive this quarterly newsletter electronically.