



PRESERVE HIGHLIGHTS

VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 1

Spotlight

The Fernald Preserve, which is located on 1,050 acres in northwest Hamilton County, was established following 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.



DIRECTORY

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

Deer Control

April 28
Community Meeting
6:30 p.m.

Fernald Preserve Visitors Center
 7400 Willey Road
 Harrison, Ohio 45030




When hiking the new Hickory and Sycamore trails, you will notice a number of fenced-off areas. The eight-foot-tall fences have been installed to protect our emerging plants and grasses from deer depredation. A mature whitetail deer requires 10–12 pounds of food per day, and its diet consists of more than 610 different plants.

Nationally, deer numbers have grown from a low of 300,000 in the 1930s to over 35 million today. Ranging from Canada to South America, deer are remarkably adaptable and prolific animals; as many as 75 percent of mature does have multiple births each year. In a 20-year span from 1988 to 2008, Ohio's deer population grew from 150,000 to 600,000.



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Did you know...

Birds use feathers for flight, protection from the elements, camouflage, and attracting potential mates. The bird at the Fernald Preserve with the least number of feathers is the ruby-throated hummingbird with 940, and the mute swan has the most with over 20,000 feathers.

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.



Meeting the Mission

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.



Goal 4: The Office of Legacy Management has the responsibility to effectively manage land and assets. Managing the Fernald Preserve's restored grasslands is a critical aspect of the site's mission.

The prescribed burns conducted in 2009 were an overwhelming success, and we anticipate the same results for this spring if the conditions are right for the burns. The prescribed burns are essential to effectively managing the site's 360 acres of grasslands. The burns stimulate prairie growth by removing the dead vegetation that inhibits germination and new growth in prairie grasses. Last year's burned areas are thriving with healthy grasses and wildflowers that provide food and cover for a variety of birds and animals.

Our prescribed burns are always managed by a certified prescribed fire burn manager and are conducted by a trained fire management crew. Each burn requires an approved plan and is only conducted under strictly controlled conditions involving air temperature, ground moisture, wind speed, and wind direction. As with our initial prescribed burns, local fire departments, site neighbors, and stakeholders are notified in advance of all burns.

Fun Fact

If you happen to be at the Fernald Preserve in the evening you may hear the distinctive call of a coyote. These adaptable animals will eat almost anything, and they adapt to most any habitat. In spring, females give birth to litters of three to twelve pups. Both parents feed and protect their young and their territory. The pups are able to hunt on their own by the following fall.

Nature Nook



Eastern Bluebird *Sialia sialis*

Nearly 50 nest boxes are scattered throughout our property to attract cavity nesting birds. Most notable among the local nesters is the eastern bluebird.

Over the years land once used by bluebirds has been cleared and developed, resulting in a dramatic reduction in available nesting cavities for bluebirds. Compounding the problem of habitat loss has been the proliferation of two nonnative species, the house sparrow and European starling. Like bluebirds, both the sparrow and the starling are cavity nesters;

they are both very aggressive and will out-compete bluebirds for nest boxes and natural cavities.

We can help increase the numbers of bluebirds by providing and monitoring nest boxes. At the Fernald Preserve we will begin monitoring nest boxes to determine nesting success in early April and continue throughout the summer. If you want to volunteer to help the bluebirds at the Fernald Preserve by participating in our monitoring program, please contact Sue Walpole at (513) 648-4026. 



Visitors Center

The Fernald Preserve Visitors Center continues to grow in popularity as a meeting place for area clubs and organizations. During 2009, over 9,500 people toured or used the Visitors Center for meetings, including groups as diverse as local Boy and Cub Scouts; elementary, secondary, and college classes; the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District; Ohio Valley Camera Club; Miami Valley Audubon; and the Cincinnati Cycling Club. The building is also the starting point for many of our guided tours and educational programs.

If your group or organization is looking for a meeting site, consider using the Visitors Center. The community meeting room is available free of charge, can handle up to 250 people, has a fully equipped kitchen, and is equipped with a state-of-the-art audiovisual system. 



Individual Effort

Stephanie Bien -
Environmental Scientist

When Stephanie Bien began working at the Fernald Preserve one year ago as a member of the ecological restoration group, little did she know the variety of tasks her job would encompass. "I've learned about more plants than I even knew existed," says Stephanie.

Stephanie plays a significant role in continuing the ecological restoration that started during the site's cleanup work and continues today as part of the legacy management mission. She works on monitoring mitigated wetlands, assists with maintenance and restoration projects, performs weekly inspections of many of the seven miles of trails on site, and helps with prescribed burns. "Spending time outside, applying my knowledge of ecological restoration to further enhance the diverse ecosystems at the Preserve, and learning in the process is a wonderful experience."

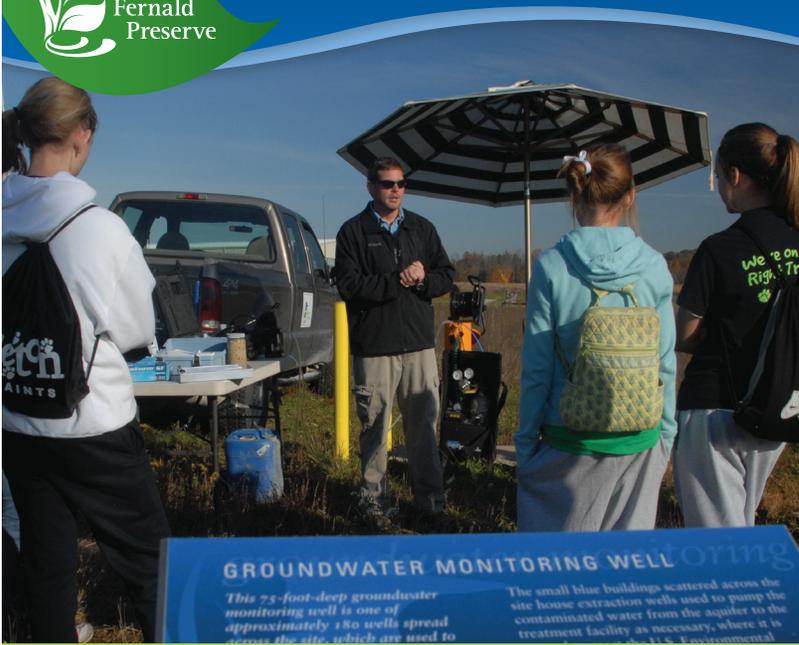
Stephanie received an environmental science degree from the University of Rio Grande, and another degree in ecotourism and adventure travel from Hocking College. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in environmental science at the Institute of Environmental Science at Miami University.

Before coming to Fernald, she worked as a biologist for a local consulting firm that specializes in endangered bat species. The work involved setting up mist nets at night, and then documenting bat species caught in the net. Stephanie is one of three Stoller employees at the site that has received a rabies vaccination so that she can conduct similar bat surveys as part of the site's ecological monitoring. She was also with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sampling streams in Appalachia.

When Stephanie talks about her work, her enthusiasm is contagious. "Every day I learn something completely different. I love watching the preserve grow and change with each season," she says. "It might be snow that blankets the prairies, the fog rolling in, or finding a new species while conducting coverboard monitoring. There is something very intriguing and all-encompassing about this environment." 



PRESERVE HIGHLIGHTS



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

Community Relations

We are beginning to assemble a Fernald Preserve volunteer corps. After proper training, these individuals will assist with school field trips, wildlife and plant surveys, special events, and administrative tasks. Volunteers are an important part of our expanding programs offered at the Fernald Preserve, and we hope that you will consider joining us in our efforts.

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.