



Welcome to the
Oak Openings
Green Ribbon Initiative
2023 Annual Meeting

*Enjoy refreshments and coffee provided by
the Green Ribbon Initiative, please help yourself*

The meeting will begin at 11:10 am

Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative 2023 Annual Meeting

- Steering Committee Chair:
Erika Buri, Outdoor Sylvania
Community Parks
- *The Green Ribbon Initiative (GRI) is a shared vision of public and private organizations, landowners, and individuals working to preserve, enhance, and restore critical natural areas in the Oak Openings Region of Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan.*



Introduction

2022 GRI Restoration Tour

- **Openings Preserve Metropark**
 - Grazing in the Metroparks Project Update
 - Metroparks Toledo
- **Sandhill Crane Wetlands**
 - Restoration Project Completion Update
 - The Nature Conservancy



Introduction

2022 GRI Restoration Tour

- **Oakwoods Metropark**
 - Restoration Project Update
 - Huron-Clinton Metroparks

- **Toledo Memorial Park**
 - Prairie Restoration Project Update
 - Toledo Memorial Park Cemetery and Mausoleum

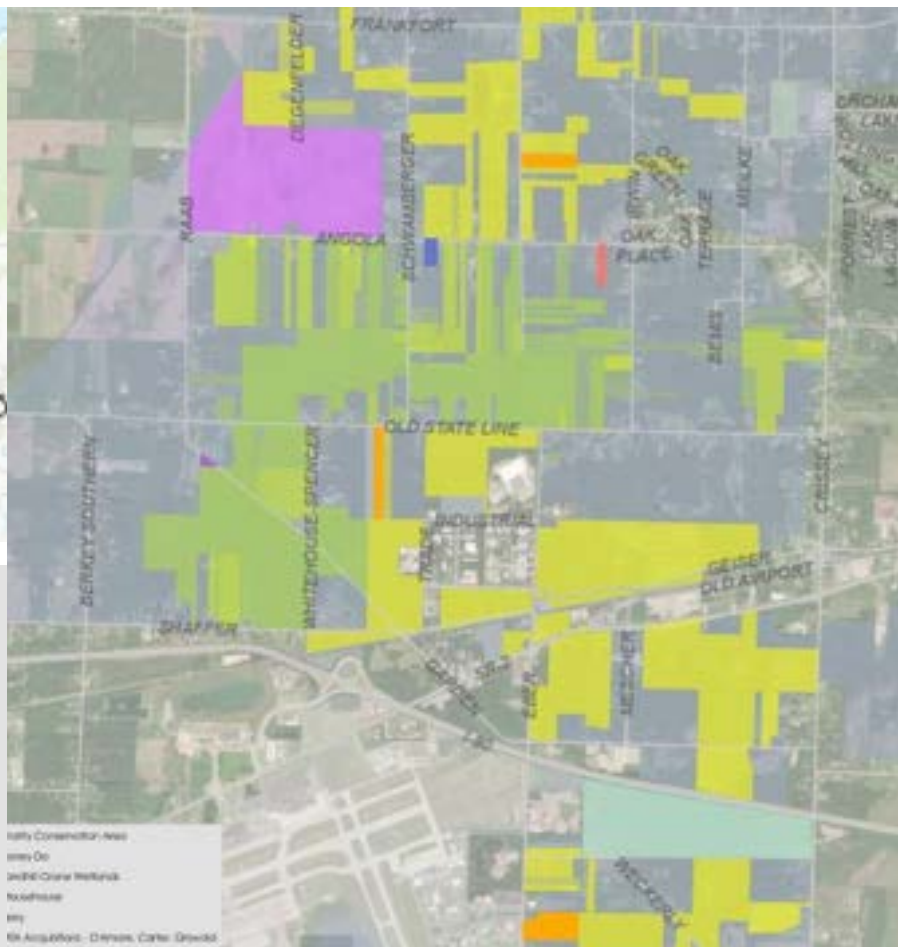


SANDHILL CRANE WETLANDS



*Water Resource
Restoration Sponsor
Program &*

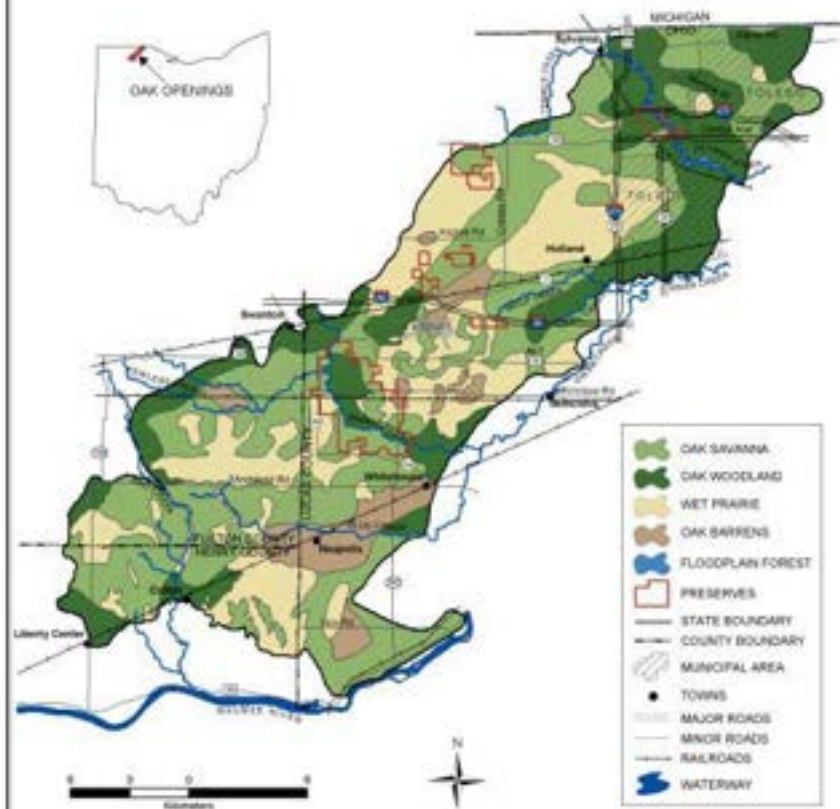




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|--------------|--|
| Landowner | Priority Conservation Area |
| Lucas County | Honey Do |
| MTA | Sandhill Crane Wetlands |
| ODNR | Mousehouse |
| Ohio | Perry |
| TNC | MTA Acquisitions - D'Amore, Carter, Griswold |
| Toledo | |

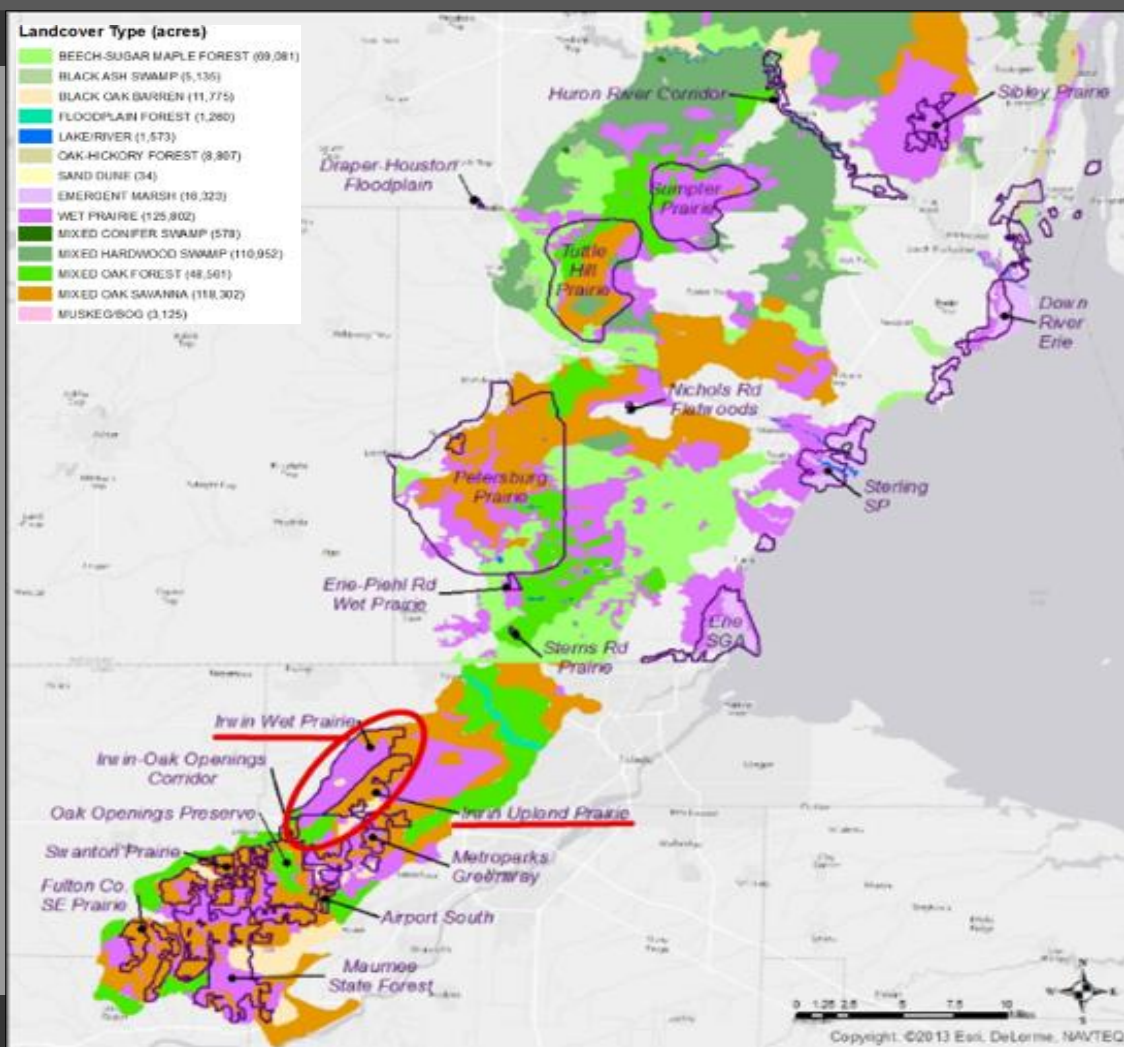


Vegetation of the Oak Openings of Northwestern Ohio at the Time of Euro-American Settlement



Landcover Type (acres)

- BEECH-SUGAR MAPLE FOREST (89,061)
- BLACK ASH SWAMP (5,135)
- BLACK OAK BARREN (11,775)
- FLOODPLAIN FOREST (1,260)
- LAKE/RIVER (1,573)
- OAK-HICKORY FOREST (8,807)
- SAND DUNE (34)
- EMERGENT MARSH (16,323)
- WET PRAIRIE (125,802)
- MIXED CONIFER SWAMP (578)
- MIXED HARDWOOD SWAMP (110,952)
- MIXED OAK FOREST (48,501)
- MIXED OAK SAVANNA (118,302)
- MUSKEG/SOG (3,125)



Wet Prairie

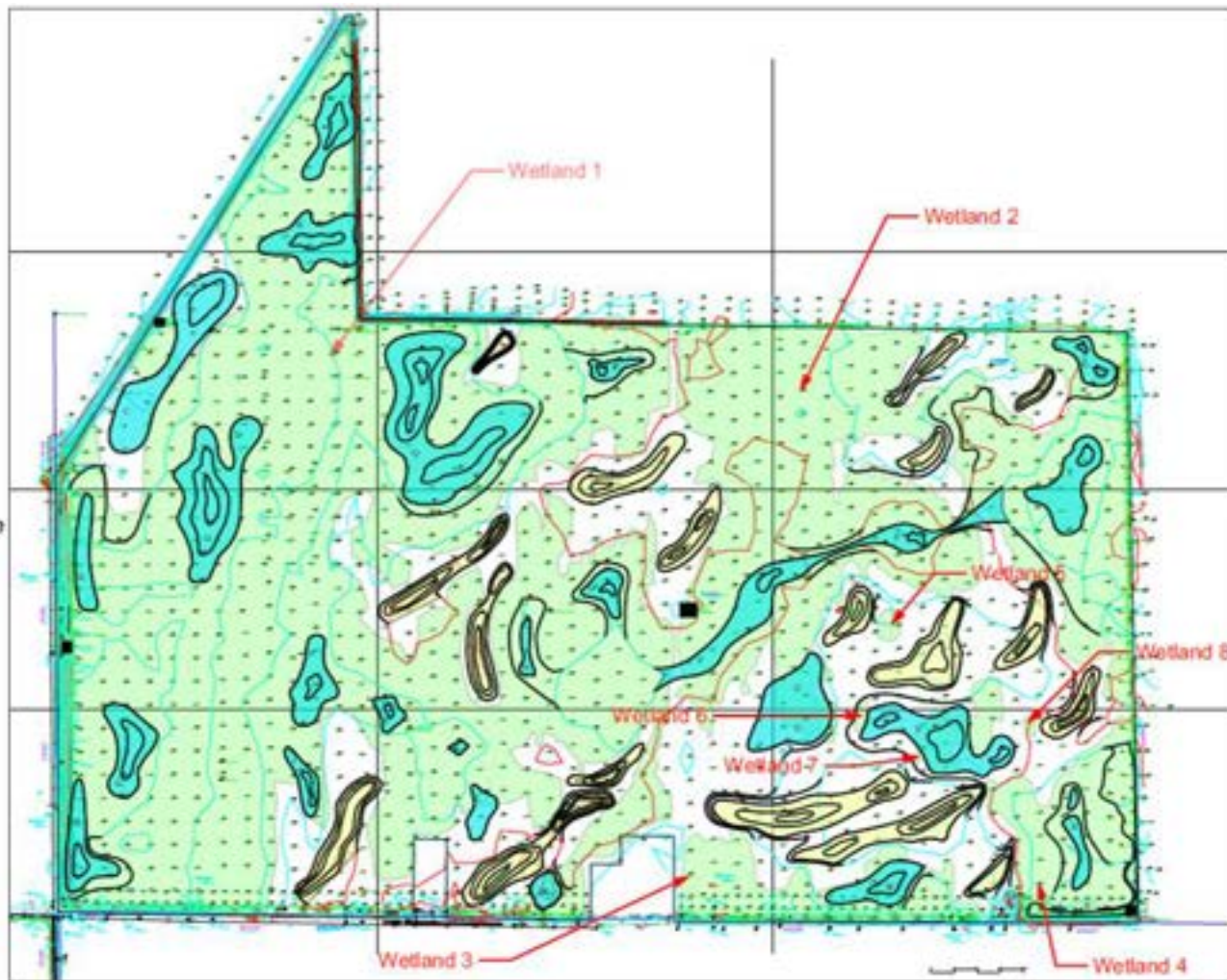


Upland Prairie



Design

- Proposed contours
- Fill ditch
- Existing wetlands
- Hydrologic infrastructure to be removed
- Scrapes
- Dunes









Over 350 plant species seeded!















What species are we seeing?









©Anthony F Belf



Thank you!

Education & Outreach Subcommittee

- Chair: Brittani Furlong, The Nature Conservancy
- *Works collaboratively to increase public awareness and engagement in the Oak Openings to ensure that the area's visitors and residents understand not only globally unique the area is, but also how it serves them.*



Education & Outreach 2022 Engagement Highlights

- **210+ programs/events** hosted with Oak Openings themes
- **7,000+ participants** reached through programs/events with Oak Openings Themes
 - Southeast Michigan Resiliency Fund grant partners reached 1,000+ underserved youth through programs
 - Wayne County Parks
 - Youth, Nature, and Outdoor Enrichment program
 - Huron-Clinton Metroparks
 - Get Out and Learn



Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Accomplishments

- Blue Week 2022 – Youth in Nature
 - 28 events
 - 23 in-person
 - 5 self-guided activities
 - 500+ reached
 - Native Plant Sale, Photo Contest, and Conservation Awards



Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Accomplishments

- Blue Week 2022
 - Featured Events:
 - Metroparks Outdoor Expo
 - 300+ raced the blue racer snake
 - 2 Preserve Openings
 - Jane Forsyth Preserve Opening
 - Sandhill Crane Wetlands Grand Opening



Education & Outreach
Subcommittee
2022 Accomplishments

- Blue Week 2022 – Photo Contest Winners
- **Best in Show**
 - Pileated Woodpecker, Mark Hainen



Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Accomplishments

- Blue Week 2022 – Photo Contest Winners
- **Oak Openings Native Plants**
 - A Sea of Blue, Luke Rosen
- **Oak Openings Wildlife**
 - Bee Happy, Bill Tucholski

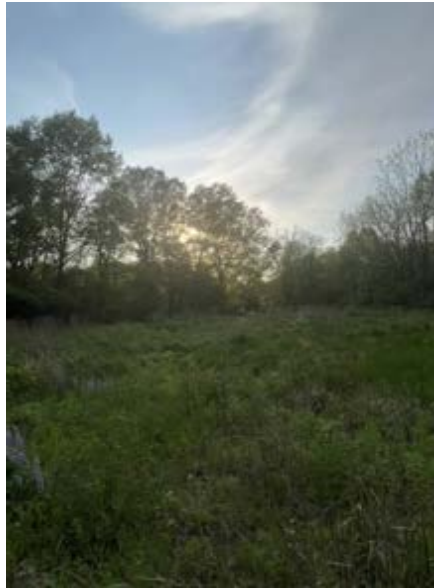


Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Accomplishments

- Blue Week 2022 – Photo Contest Winners
- **Community Pride**
 - Up and at ‘em, Bill Tucholski
- **Oak Openings Trail Cams**
 - Trail Cam, Rick Bryan
- **Biodiversity**
 - Biodiversity, Rick Bryan



Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Accomplishments



- Blue Week 2022 – Photo Contest Winners
 - **Youth (10&Under)**
 - A Beautiful Day 2, Madison Brown
 - **Youth (11-17)**
 - Sunset 2, Bentley Dzikowski

Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Accomplishments

- Blue Week 2022 –
Conservation Award Winners
 - **Landowner**
 - Jon Cross



Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Accomplishments

- Blue Week 2022 –
Conservation Award Winners
 - **Outstanding Volunteer**
 - Kate Mason-Wolf





Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Accomplishments

- Blue Week 2022 – Conservation Award Winners
- **Conservation Partner of the Year**
 - Rick Bryan, Oak Openings Region Conservancy

Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Updates

- **Ohio Environmental Education Fund (OEEF)**
 - *Engaging teachers and students in the Oak Openings*
- Dates: 10/1/2019—5/20/2021
 - Extension to 5/20/2022
 - Due to COVID an extension was given through May 2022



Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Updates

- OEEF Deliverables
 - At least 30 teachers will be trained
 - → **42 attended training**
 - At least 600 students will participate in the program learning the value of the OOR
 - → **Over 600 reached!**





Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Updates

- OEEF Deliverables
 - HS students and up to 15 teachers will attend a field trip to the OOR
 - → **6 classrooms (142 students) attended**



Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Updates

OEEF 2022

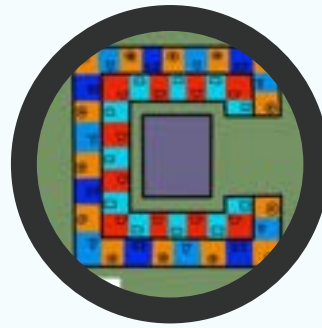
- Teacher Portfolios due at end of February → **11 Submitted**
 - Students engaged with lessons
 - Teachers provided valuable feedback for improving lessons



Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Updates

OEEF 2022

- Oak Openings Educational Summit
 - An opportunity for students and teachers to share what they have learned about the OOR



Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2022 Updates

- Oak Openings Region Conservancy (OORC)
- Improving landowner opportunities & connections
- 3 Workshops
 - Oct. 23 Seed Collection & Stewardship
 - Nov. 17 Winter Yard Prep (Online)
 - Feb. 11 Winter Tree ID Hike





Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2023 Updates

- (OORC) 2023 Events
 - Feb. 11 Winter Tree ID Hike
 - March 4th – Hack & Squirt Stewardship at Forsyth Preserve
 - April 15th – Moss Walk at Badger Barrens
 - May – Blue Week Event!
 - More TBA
- Be sure to subscribe to the GRI Newsletter for reminders!

Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2023 Updates

- Subcommittee looking to create a Web Working Group
 - Looking for volunteers interested in website maintenance, social media management, and content creation
- *Contact: brittani.furlong@tnc.org for more information*



Education & Outreach Subcommittee 2023 Updates

- Blue Week 2023 – You Belong in Nature!
- May 13 - 21
- Want to be involved with Blue Week?
 - *Contact:*
brittani.furlong@tnc.org to
discuss your ideas!

SAVE THESE DATES!



Oak Openings Region

BLUE WEEK

MAY 13TH - 21ST, 2023

You belong in nature! Join us for in-person hikes, educational opportunities for kids and adults, DIY adventures, contests, native plant sale, and more to learn about the unique features of the Oak Openings Region in NW Ohio and SE Michigan.

Explore the globally rare in your backyard!

Full Schedule COMING SOON!

Science Subcommittee

- Chair: Karen Menard,
Metroparks Toledo
- Committee Member: Jay
Wright, Metroparks Toledo
- *Share new information and
insights about species and
systems in the Oak Openings
so that land managers may
use resources most efficiently.*



Science Subcommittee 2022 Science Summit Highlights

- Science Subcommittee hosted the 2022 Oak Openings Science Summit in November
- Over 70 people attended
- Over 10 organizations were represented
- We Learned:
 - The Oak Openings still faces many challenges
 - Amphibian and reptile decline
 - Increases in invasive species spread
 - Increases in detrimental tree diseases



*Missed the 2022 Science Summit?
To request the recorded presentations: Contact
brittani.furlong@tnc.org*



Science Subcommittee 2022 Science Summit Highlights

Presentations

- **Oak Wilt: Challenges and Opportunities**
 - *Jay Wright, Director of Conservation Science at Metroparks Toledo*
- **Early Detection Rapid Response of Invasive Plants in the Oak Openings Region**
 - *Pete Blank, Northwest Ohio Restoration Manager at The Nature Conservancy in Ohio*
- **Connecting Students to Our Waterways – With Science!**
 - *Sara Guiher, Water Quality Planner at Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments*

Science Subcommittee 2022 Science Summit Highlights

Presentations (*continued*)

- **Using Amphibians to Inform Wetland Conservation Under Anthropogenic Development Conditions in Northwest Ohio**
 - *Brian Kron, Root Lab Biological Sciences PhD Student at Bowling Green State University*
- **Status and Assessment Updates for Threatened Turtles in Northwest Ohio**
 - *Matt Cross, Conservation Biologist, at The Toledo Zoo & Aquarium*



Science Subcommittee 2022 Science Summit Highlights

Posters

- **Effects of Variable Canopy Cover on Floral Visitation in the Oak Openings of Northwest Ohio**
 - *Toby Shaya, M.S. Student, Bowling Green State University*
- **Metroparks Toledo Rare Plant Monitoring**
 - *Karen Menard and Josh Brenwell, Metroparks Toledo*
- **Improving Water Quality in the Oak Openings by re-investing in City of Toledo Green Infrastructure**
 - *Alexa Vogel, Environmental Specialist, City of Toledo*





Science Subcommittee 2022 Science Summit Highlights

Partner Tables

- Green Ribbon Initiative
- The Nature Conservancy
- Metroparks Toledo
- Oak Openings Region Conservancy
- University of Toledo: Department of Environmental Sciences & Students for Environmental Advocacy
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
- Wild Ones Oak Openings
- Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District
- Lake Erie Advocates
- Huron-Clinton Metroparks

Science Subcommittee 2022 Volunteer Natural Area Monitoring Highlights

- Nearly 2,000 volunteer monitoring hours
- Including Metroparks Toledo:
 - Bat monitoring: 101.5 hrs.
 - Grassland Bird Survey: 167 hrs.
 - Long-term Butterfly monitoring: 137.5 hrs.
 - Cavity Nesting Bird monitoring: 322 hrs.
 - Dragonfly monitoring: 52.5 hrs.
 - State-listed Plant monitoring: 316.5 hrs.
 - Breeding Raptor monitoring: 585 hrs.
- 11 Research Permits issued that included field research for: UT, BGSU, OSU, Toledo Zoo, McGill University, Purdue and BSBO



Science Subcommittee 2022 Volunteer Natural Area Monitoring Highlights

2022 Metroparks Toledo Research and Monitoring Highlights

- 54 total raptor nests located in the Oak Openings Region
- 250 Eastern Bluebirds fledged at Oak Openings Preserve, Wildwood, and Secor
- 9 Lark Sparrow sites surveyed with 12 breeding pairs documented, 26 adult individuals documented, and 6 successful nests



Science Subcommittee 2022 Volunteer Natural Area Monitoring Highlights

2022 Metroparks Toledo Research and Monitoring Highlights (continued)

- 206 Ohio Endangered, Threatened and Potentially Threatened plant populations were monitored
- 30 species and 1,242 individual dragonflies documented at Wiregrass Lake



Science Subcommittee 2022 Volunteer Natural Area Monitoring Highlights

2022 Metroparks Toledo Research and Monitoring Highlights (continued)

- 23 - 36 species of butterflies at 4 sites were documented
 - Top 5 butterfly species found in the Oak Openings:
 - Spicebush Swallowtail (512)
 - Cabbage White (215)
 - Great-spangled Fritillary (158)
 - Viceroy (104)
 - Pearl Crescent (78)



Science Subcommittee 2023 Updates & Upcoming Projects

- Next Science Subcommittee meeting TBA
 - *Contact: brittani.furlong@tnc.org for more information*
 - Oak Openings Science Summit – early November
- A few projects in 2023:
 - EAB parasitoid monitoring
 - Metroparks non-breeding avian count surveys
 - Oak Openings Landcover mapping project
 - Cattle grazing project will continue



Stewardship Subcommittee

- Chair: LaRae Sprow, Metroparks Toledo
- *Shares new information and insights about non-native and invasive species and best management practices in the Oak Openings so that land managers and community members may use resources most efficiently.*



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Achievement Highlights

- **Department of Natural Areas and Preserves**
- Awarded a USFWS grant for use on habitat restoration for rare species across the entire state in natural areas and preserves
 - Just over \$45,000 awarded, of that, nearly \$11,000 is budgeted for NW OH; including Irwin Prairie and Campbell
 - Installed bluebird nesting boxes at Campbell (4) and Irwin (10)



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Achievement Highlights

- **The Nature Conservancy**
 - **US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW) SMRF grant** in 2022
 - TNC closed out in 2022
 - **2014 WRRSP grant**
 - TNC wrapped restoration treatments and on-the-ground work in 2022
 - **USFS CWMA grant**
 - Extended through 2023 for more invasive plant control, additional data collection, and final model update



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Achievement Highlights

- **The Nature Conservancy**
 - **Blazing Star Borer Moth grant from USFW**
 - Focus was is SE Michigan with goal to restore 308 acres of habitat and plant 4000 dense blazing star plugs. Grant completed March 2022
 - Another grant was awarded to begin in 2022 to continue restoration in habitats that support Blazing Star Borer Moth. This restoration will focus primarily in Ohio



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Achievement Highlights

- **The Nature Conservancy (*continued*)**
 - **Blazing Star Borer Moth II grant from US Fish and Wildlife Service**
 - 2023 – Anticipating breaking ground on this grant in the spring!
 - **Save Our Great Lakes (SOGL) Grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**
 - 2023 – Maintain the Gain Phase II to begin



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Achievement Highlights

- **Metroparks Toledo**

- Secor Expansion:
 - 250 acres of restoration including wet prairie, oak savanna, ditch restoration, flatwood reforestation.
- Oak Openings expansion H2Ohio wetland:
 - 48 acres of wet prairie, upland prairie, flatwood reforestation.



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Achievement Highlights

- **Metroparks Toledo (*continued*)**
 - Cattle Grazing research at Oak Openings Preserve
 - Oak Wilt Working Group developed:
 - Beginning of a statewide group to begin collaboration on growing threat of Oak Wilt in Ohio.
 - Metroparks completion of SOGL:
 - “Maintain the Gain” \$64,000 sub-award.
 - TNC to complete round one of this grant in June 2023.
 - Round 2 of SOGL “Maintain the Gain” to begin in 2023.



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Volunteer Engagement Highlights

- Nearly 400 hours of Volunteer Hours spent working on a Adopt A Natural Area (AANA) sites!
 - 120 hours were contributed by Boy Scout Pack 27 in the Village of Ottawa Hills
- 2 New AANAs were established for 2023 in SE MI, at the native gardens of Wheeler Preserve and Ansted Park



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Volunteer Engagement Highlights

- 1,500+ Volunteer Hours spent on stewardship activities
- Almost 1,000 Volunteer Hours spent on Native Seed (hours in Nursery, Collecting Seed, and/or Spreading)
- 1,700+ of TOTAL Volunteer Hours spent on other volunteer activities



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Restoration Highlights

- 351 Acres treated with prescribed fire
- 822 Acres treated with mowing (flat deck prairie mowing) or other maintenance mowing
- 195 Acres that were planted or seeded with native plants/seed
- 165 New Acres acquired



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Restoration Highlights

- 168 Acres of other treatment
- 249 Acres of brushcutting Invasive Species
- 224 Acres of forestry mowing Invasive Species
- 2,711 Acres of herbicide treatment of Invasive Species
- 101 Acres of canopy treatment of Invasive Species
- 39 Acres of Wetland Restoration



Stewardship Subcommittee Native Plant Working Group

- Plant Materials Exchange
- Species of Greatest Conservation Concern
- Looking Into Funding For Oak Openings Flora

Contacts

- Blue Week Plant Sale
 - *Brittani Furlong*: brittani.furlong@tnc.org
- Ohio Native Plant Month or Other/General Native Plant Working Group Questions
 - *Penny Niday*:
penny.niday@metroparkstoledo.com
 - *Brittani Furlong*: brittani.furlong@tnc.org



Stewardship Subcommittee: Native Plant Working Group

2022 Ohio Native Plant Month (April)

- GRI Oak Openings website
 - Created a “GRI Celebrates Native Plant Month” page
- Organized Native Plant Events and Programs
 - 7 conservation workdays
 - 9 wildflower hikes
 - 4 other native plant related programs
- Encouraged the public to take and submit photos for the Native Plant category of the 2022 Blue Week Photo Contest



Stewardship Subcommittee: Native Plant Working Group

- **2022 Blue Week Native Plant Sale**

- Blue Week Plant Sale Committee formed and planned the event
- Plants contributed from –
 - Metroparks Toledo, Wood County Park District, The Olander Park System, The Wild Lupine, Poppin Up Natives, and Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District
- **3,275 Total plants sold**
- **253 Total seed packets sold**



Stewardship Subcommittee 2022 Native Plant Working Group Highlights

- **2023 Blue Week Native Plant Sale**
 - Blue Week Native Plant Sale Committee planning event, led by Wild Ones Oak Openings Chapter
 - Growers – Metroparks Toledo, GUTS, 577 Foundation, The Wild Lupine, and Bradford Blooms
 - Location :
 - **Blue Creek Seed Nursery – White Barn**
 - Plant Sale Dates:
 - **May 20 – 12 pm – 4 pm**
 - **May 21 – 10 am – 2 pm**





Stewardship Subcommittee Native Plant Working Group Feature Project

- Species of Greatest Conservation Concern
- 2022 Update:
 - *Filipendula rubra*
(Queen-of-the-Prairie)
- Maureen Bogdanski, ODNR
Division of Natural Areas &
Preserves

Stewardship Subcommittee Native Plant Working Group Feature Project

- Metroparks Toledo Blue Creek Nursery had 12 plants germinate from seed collected in 2021 from Secor Metropark, Irwin Prairie, and Blue Creek Metropark
- 12 plants were added to the mixed genotype population at Blue Creek Metropark
- New population discovered on OH side of the Oak Openings; looking into contacting the owner
- Very important to continue management on remnant populations



Stewardship Subcommittee Native Plant Working Group Feature Project

- July 2022:
 - Letter sent to landowners, Mike and Susan Nowowiejski
 - They said yes!
- October 2022:
 - Denise Gehring volunteered to collect seed from the Nowowiejski (Mike & Susan) Residence.



Stewardship Subcommittee Native Plant Working Group Feature Project

- November 2022:
 - A small amount of the Nowowiejski seed was added to the Irwin Prairie population.
- 2023:
 - Mike & Susan Nowowiejski gave verbal permission for plants to be dug up from their private population in 2023





Looking Ahead

A photograph of a forest with a fire burning in the background. The fire is bright orange and yellow, with smoke rising. The trees are dark and silhouetted against the fire. A semi-transparent grey rectangle is overlaid on the image, containing the text "Thank You" in a white serif font. The entire image is framed by a thin white border.

Thank You



Questions & Community Input



A close-up photograph of three yellow butterflies with dark brown markings on their wings, perched on a cluster of small white flowers with yellow centers. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brown.

Discussion & Networking

- Please enjoy refreshments and coffee provided by the Green Ribbon Initiative
- *The meeting will end at 12:30pm*

