



New Trail & Labyrinth

by Noelle Jordan, Shane McGuire, and Dave Heithaus

One of my favorite ecological lessons is “the only constant is change.” At BFEC, we try to continually add new elements to keep you coming back again and again. I think our two newest features are sure to please.

A New Trail

At the end of May during Reunion Week-end, I heard many tales from a variety of alums of secret adventures and late-night escapes to Walker’s Pond. What a coincidence that our new trail will take visitors to that very site! I realize some of you may be disappointed that this spot will no longer be your secret hide-away, but it’s too good to keep it a secret.

History of the Property

In 2016, the Philander Chase Conservancy purchased almost 40 acres from Harlow Walker ‘57 and his wife, Carol Walker for the College. The Conservancy holds a conservation easement on the property. The property had been in the Walker family for seven generations and was called Woodbine Farm. It was important to the Walkers that the land be protected in perpetuity. The BFEC is very pleased to be managing the property and to share it with our visitors.

New Trail Construction

In January, we kicked-off the new year with a reconnaissance of the area to design the basic layout for the proposed



Walker’s Pond and surrounding pines.

trail. By the end of March, we had installed a fence along the extension to the Corridor Trail, which will be one of the access points. Actual construction began in May when Shane McGuire, our Land Manager, and volunteer Pat Corbin built 3 bridges that were necessary to access the pond area. After the bridges were complete, Shane and Travis Reynolds (from Kenyon Maintenance Dept.) cut the trail using a skidloader. The trail was then fine-tuned using hand tools with the help of our three summer assistants. The last remaining task is to level the path by filling in holes that were created when trees were removed. Our lovely new trail will be ready for visitors by mid-July.

Walker’s Pond Loop

The new trail, called Walker’s Pond Loop, can be accessed from the New Gambier Loop and from a new extension

on the Corridor Trail. The new portion of trail, from the Corridor extension, around Walker Pond and connecting to New Gambier Loop, is approximately 1/2 mile.

Part of the trail follows a ridgeline, but the pond sits in a depression and is fed by a small, unnamed tributary of Wolf Run. The tributary is spring-fed and augmented by run-off from the hills north of the pond. We believe that the pond was once a vernal pool, but now stays filled year-round. Surrounded by a forest of young pines, the area is still and quiet.

Although we have only started a species inventory for the area, we have already spotted Longtail Salamanders and Red-back Salamanders. We hope to find many more interesting species in this area.



What is a Labyrinth?

Labyrinths — as they are used today in many nature centers and gardens — consist of a single, non-branching, winding path that leads to a central point. Unlike a maze, there are no tricks or dead ends, no false paths or puzzles that need to be solved. There is one way in and one way out. No one gets lost or confused when walking a labyrinth.



Illustration of the labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral. By J.B. Rigaud, circa 1750.

Labyrinths are symbols rich in meaning from many different spiritual practices, and walking a labyrinth is used as a metaphor for taking a spiritual journey to our center. As we walk a labyrinth, moving ever closer to its center, we travel inward to our center.

Labyrinths started appearing in Europe in the 12th century associated with Roman Catholic gothic churches. The most famous labyrinth was constructed as part of the floor design in Chartres Cathedral in France.

Our New Labyrinth

The BFEC labyrinth was first envisioned in 2013, when Dave Heithaus spearheaded a tremendous volunteer effort to plant approximately 500 oak trees in concen-

tric rings around a large pole that acts as the focal point.

The labyrinth area is currently inconspicuous because we planted very small trees. In another 50 years, the labyrinth will be a shaded area with stately oaks.

While there are many different designs for labyrinths, ours is roughly based on the design found in Chartres Cathedral. Ours has 8 concentric rings, called “circuits” or “paths,” and the entire design is divided into four quadrants.

Why Oak Trees?

Oaks were chosen for this project for two reasons: primarily because they are native to Ohio, but also because of their rich history as a symbolic totem. Symbolism of oaks begins with the little acorn — a symbol of how greatness and strength may arise from humble beginnings. The tree itself is a symbol of strength, courage, power, wisdom, and greatness.

In Greek and Roman mythology, oak trees are associated with their highest gods — Zeus and Jupiter, respectively. Greek and Roman VIPS (i.e., commanders and Olympic heroes) were given crowns woven from oak leaves.

In Norse mythology, the oak tree was associated with Thor, the god of thunder.

Ancient Celtic Druids believed that oak trees were sacred, and accounts from Pliny the Elder say that Druids held religious ceremonies in oak groves. Through the centuries, many cultures have believed that oak trees serve as doorways to the spiritual realm.

Even today in the United States, the symbolism of the oak is alive and well. The U.S. Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps use an oak leaf to designate the rank of both Major and Lieutenant Colonel, and the Navy uses the oak leaf as insignia for the ranks of Lieutenant Commander and Commander. In many cemeteries, oak leaves and acorns appear on tombstones. Finally, in 2004, congress passed a bill making the oak tree America’s National Tree precisely because of its association with greatness, strength, power, and wisdom.

Where is our new Labyrinth?

The new BFEC labyrinth is nestled between the Kokosing Gap Trail and the Kokosing River on the south side of Laymon Road. It is behind a prairie unit, and in front of the forested riparian area that includes the River Trail. There are currently temporary signs posted in key locations to help direct you to the labyrinth.

Guidelines for Walking the Labyrinth

People walk labyrinths for many reasons: to relax, to solve a problem or to find answers, to relieve pain, to quiet the mind or meditate, to pray, to have fun.

Some believe that moving through the turns of a labyrinth helps us access the right hemisphere of our brain, which is associated with creativity, emotions, and intuition.

There is no right way or wrong way to walk a labyrinth. If you are alone and feel compelled, you can run, skip, dance, or sing through the labyrinth. If you have children, they can play in the labyrinth. However, if others are present, please be respectful and maintain quiet.

If you choose to use the labyrinth for meditative purposes, you may want to take a moment to clear your mind, quiet your body, and become aware of your breathing before you begin. As you walk, you may want to keep your eyes on the path and allow yourself to find the pace that your body wants to go. When you reach the center, stop for awhile. If you have a question, concern, or problem, hold it in your mind. Breathe. Stay in the center as long as you like.

On your outward journey from the center back into the world, listen for answers, be aware of random thoughts, stay attuned to your emotions. When you step out of the labyrinth, turn and stop for a moment. Be fully aware. Listen to your instincts.

We hope to see you enjoying Walker’s Pond Loop and the Labyrinth, and we would love to know what you think of them. Send your feedback to Noelle at jordan2@kenyon.edu.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

By Noelle Jordan

Very recently, Pat Corbin started volunteering at the BFEC. In a very short time, he has proven to be an invaluable consultant for upgrading the quality of life for our snakes and box turtle, and he has helped Shane do all kinds of work. So far, Pat has donated approximately 25 hours of his time.

During an interview with Pat, here's what he had to say....

Q: What do you do as a volunteer at the BFEC?

I helped Shane build three bridges for the new Walker's Loop Trail, and helped with some carpentry work. I also upgraded the animal enclosures for the reptiles and acted as a consultant for the care of the animals.

Q: How long have you been volunteering at the BFEC?

About 2 months ago, I contacted Shane, and he put me to work immediately!

Q: Why do you volunteer at the BFEC?

I love nature and love to meet new people. I have a flexible work schedule, and when I have downtime, I like to stay busy.

Q: What do you like to do when you're not at the BFEC?

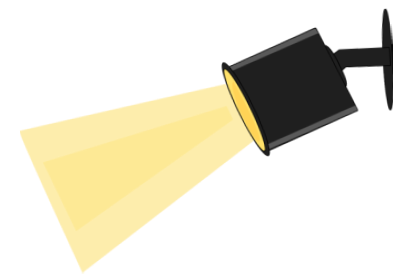
As a life-long learner, I can always be found studying reptiles. I build custom enclosures for a variety of reptiles, and I dabble as a reptile breeder.

Q: Tell us a bit about your background.

I was born in Ravenna, Ohio (northeast of Akron) then lived in Mineral Wells, Texas for awhile (about 90 miles west of Dallas), and finally settled in central Ohio where I've been doing carpentry and industrial concrete.

Q: Are you reading anything right now? If so, what?

I'm currently reading *Bulfinch's Mythology* by Thomas Bulfinch. It's a collection



The Spittlebug: A Sign of Summer

By Noelle Jordan

When I was in my 20's, I discovered spittlebugs - tiny juvenile insects that surround themselves with a foamy froth of "spittle," usually found in the leaf axils of plants. Since then, every year I anxiously await my first sighting of spittlebugs, the sign (for me) that summer is finally here.

Spittlebugs are the nymphs of insects called froghoppers. They hatch in the spring from eggs that are deposited on plants the previous summer. As the nymphs mature, they change color from yellow to green. They do not cover themselves with spittle immediately, but by early June, enough spittle has built up to make them obvious. The spittle is a secretion from its alimentary canal - not from its mouth, but from the other end! Gross? Perhaps, but it protects them from predators like ants and birds, and keeps them from drying out.

By late June the nymphs have morphed into adult froghoppers. They go through incomplete metamorphosis which means that they do not have a pupal stage like butterflies. Adult froghoppers are about 6 mm long and usually gray or brown.

For a tiny, non-descript insect, the froghopper is somewhat famous. In 2003, National Geographic News called the froghopper the "world's greatest leaper." Leaping at a speed of 4 meters per second, froghoppers can jump 70 cm into the air. Malcolm Burrows, a neurobiologist at the University of Cambridge in England, calculated that froghoppers "accelerate from the ground with a force that is 400 times greater than gravity. For the sake of comparison, we humans jump with a force that is two to three times that of gravity."

Whether Spittlebug or Froghopper, these critters are interesting all the way around.

Q: What else would you like to share with everyone?

I really appreciate the opportunity to educate people about reptiles. I hope by volunteering I'll be able to make a difference. And the crew at BFEC are great!

If you would like to BECOME A VOLUNTEER call Noelle at 740-427-5052. We have many different ways for you to get involved.



A Bird in the Hand: This spring, Dr. Beth Schultz taught students in her Physiological Ecology of Animals class how to capture birds using mist nets. They then learned how to age and sex the birds and apply a bird band. All birds were successfully banded and released.

Spittlebug



Froghopper



The Green Corner

News from the Office of Green Initiatives

Preserving the Natural Beauty of Knox County

by Lisa Schott,
Director, Philander Chase Conservancy

Knox County is expected to grow by 16-17,000 people by 2050, a population equivalent to the current size of Mount Vernon. In 2000, Kenyon College responded to increasing development pressure by creating a land trust, the Philander Chase Conservancy (PCC).

The mission of the PCC is to protect the natural beauty of the farms, woodlands, waters and open spaces surrounding Kenyon College and to preserve the rural character of the region at large. We spur interest in land conservation and help steer landowners through a voluntary deed-restriction process by providing guidance and funding options for agricultural and conservation easements.

Agricultural and conservation easements are voluntary, legally binding agreements that limit future uses and activities in order to protect the property's values. Easements are given in perpetuity and can only be granted to qualified conservation organizations such as land trusts or state/local governments. Outright purchase is a last resort for conserving land. The PCC partners with Owl Creek Conservancy, its sister land trust in Knox County.

The PCC has protected over 5,300 acres in a 5-mile radius around Kenyon College but more work remains to be done. The goal of the Conservancy is to protect a total of 8,000 acres. For more information or to become a friend, visit the website at philanderchase.org or contact Lisa Schott, Director, at 740-427-5902.



BFEC

by the numbers

94

volunteers made our spring programs & events successful!

168

Current members



1142

Guests at Keep It Wild: Earth Day at the BFEC

757

Hours served by volunteers from January 1- June 30



3

Part-time summer staff

623

Elementary students, teachers, and chaperones enjoyed field trips in April & May

1360

Estimated number of patrons who reserved the BFEC facilities January through June

197

Kenyon students and faculty at BFEC this spring

Thank You

Members ~ April, May, June

BENEFACTOR

Doug L. Givens
Margo de Camp & David M. Marietta
David & Kim Newell

PATRON

Geoffrey & Lori Brown
Eben G. Crawford
Kimberlee & Joe Klesner
Dennis O'Connell
Robert & Merete Martin
Jay Sears

FRIEND

Gene Bailey
Paul Bienstock
Kami & Eric Diehl
Vincent Becker & Barb Evans
David Greer
Dawn Jordan
Jon Philipsborn
Susan Ramser
Royal Rhodes
Cory Claffey-Koller & Maggie Somple
Barb Wood
Peter & Janice Young

FAMILY

Rob & Shiela Alexander
Fred & Victoria Baumann

Karen Bagne & Chris Bickford
Diane & Quinton Boroj
Michael Vincent & Linda Bunce
Garrett & Carol Bursco
Carol & Stanley Detmer
Beth Waller & Jay Dorsey
Brenda & Barry George
Chris & Kathy Gillen
Philip & Grey Glandon
Irene Lopez & Tom Hawks
Kevin & Dora Hawthorne
James Kyle & Mark Leggett
Anne Hill-Shrestha
Judy & Eric Holdener
Steve Van Holde & Michelle Mood
Sally & Joseph Nelson
Dan & Kaye Ranke
Gordon Reingold
Jim & Marcie Steen
Daniel & Cinda Stutzman
Lori & Terry Totman
Bruce & Virginia Weber
Denny & Bege Wiegman

INDIVIDUAL

James Atkinson
Shawn & Amy Dailey
Lisa & Eric Dilts
Jo Ann Graham
Dorothy Greiner

Ruth Griffing
Robert Hesse
Nancy Ingling
Keith & Carma Jo Kauffman
Ann Laudeman
Margaret Raasch
Dennis Rousseau
Anne Rozewicz
Stephen Schneider
Kenneth Smail
Jana Stewart

DONOR

Geoff Akie
George Ellis
Dawn Gardiner
Kelly Heilman
Robin & Al Helser
Natalie Klapper
Lily Miller
Andy Pearlman
Margaret Raasch
Maggie Taylor
Delia Turner
Rebecca Whigham

Correction:

In our last newsletter, we credited Linda Kurella with a Patron-level donation. We thank Linda for sending the check, but recognition should have gone to the **After Kenyon Society (AKS)**. Thank you!

Volunteers ~ in the garden, on the land, in the office, and with programming

**In the Garden:* Terri Heironimus, Bege Wiegman, Beth Waller, and 3 Kenyon students

**In the Office:* Diane Mack

**On the Trails:* Kenyon Land Lords, Pat Corbin, Noah Montgomery

**Public Programs:* Shawn Dailey, Emily Heithaus, Beth Waller

**Field Trip Volunteers:* 20 students and Jim Hieronimus, Brian Miller, Estelle Parker, Denny Wiegman

**Keep It Wild: Earth Day at the BFEC:* 35 volunteers, including Lisa Schott, Jen Odenweller, and Alyssa Lawrence made this event a success!

**A little bit of everything:* Vanessa Hawk, a graduate of Danville H. S., donated 32 hours of her time on the trails, in the garden, for programs

**Eagle Nest Monitors:* 18 volunteers gathered data on the 14 eagle nests in and around Knox County. The data will be provided to ODNR.

**Bluebird Monitors:* Our 34 bluebird boxes are monitored by 4 volunteers - Brian Miller, Sarah Goslee-Reed, Keith Kitchen, and Keith Robinson.

**Unpaid Summer Interns:* These hard-working college students are working in the garden, on the trails, and leading programs for us - Maddie Moss from Muskingham College, Jacob Es-senmacher from Ohio State University, and Matt Baugher from Ohio State University.

Invest NOW! Help us with our mission of conservation and education.

Use the enclosed envelope or donate online at support-bfec.kenyon.edu.

Membership level: Student ___ \$20 Individual ___ \$35 Name _____

Family ___ \$50 Friend ___ \$100 Patron ___ \$250 Address _____

Benefactor ___ \$1000 + City _____

Amount enclosed: _____ State, Zip Code _____

My check, payable to Kenyon College, is enclosed Telephone _____

Please bill my ___ Visa or ___ MasterCard Card number _____ Exp. date _____ Email _____

Card number _____ Exp. date _____ Email _____

Up-Coming Programs

All events are free and open to the public unless otherwise stated.

9781 Laymon Road, Gambier Ohio | 740-427-5052 | jordan2@kenyon.edu | <http://bfec.kenyon.edu>

YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS

Nature's Music - July 6 - 25, Tues & Thurs only, 10 - 10:30 am.

Meet at BFEC Resource Center. Dr. Rebecca Abbott will lead families with children ages 2 to 9 in songs and music activities about enjoying and exploring nature. Call (740) 324-1225 or email abbottmusiclab@gmail.com for more information or to **register by Friday, June 23.**

Family Program: Insect Mouthpart Mayhem - July 27, 1:30 pm

Meet at the BFEC Resource Center. Eek! Does it bite?! We share our planet with over 1 million different types of insects. In spite of this huge variety, insects have only four common ways of chowing down (on us and on their food). During this program, we will spend some time catching insects and examining their mouthparts. Join us to discover the world of insects! No registration necessary.

Garden Gurus (BFEC Summer Camp) - July 31 - August 4, 9 am - 12 pm

Meets at BFEC Resource Center. Campers will learn about soil, basic plant identification, and more! They will help us design a new garden, select plants, and transplant them into the area. We will take a field trip to the Kenyon Farm for some vegetable harvesting, then we will create yummy treats straight from the garden. The week will be interspersed with active games and creative crafts. For ages 8-11. Find our application form at <http://bfec.kenyon.edu>

Members — \$25; Non-members — \$30.

Oaks & Acorns - September 28—November 2, Thursdays only, 10 am - 11:30 am

This program is designed for caregivers (moms, dads, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) with children ages 2-5. Caregivers and children will spend time together outside experiencing guided nature play, outdoor investigations, and hands-on discoveries. We will provide children and caregivers ideas to safely and comfortably spend time outside while encouraging creativity and curiosity, and gently pushing the envelope on “risky play.” Programs are scheduled for Sept 28, Oct 5, 12, 19, 26, and Nov 2. Programs begin at 10:00am and end no later than 11:30. **Space is limited! Call now to register 740-427-5052.** Payment due (cash or check) by Sept 15.

To register for the entire series (all 6 programs): Members - \$20 per family Non-members - \$30 per family

To register for select dates: Members - \$5 per day Non-members - \$10 per day

ADULT PROGRAMS

Plein Air Painters at the BFEC - Wednesdays, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Meet next to the BFEC House. Enjoy this opportunity to paint, draw, or sketch with like-minded artists. Bring your supplies, including a chair and/or easel, and spend the evening hours painting in a peaceful setting. The Resource Center will be open for restrooms. The Wildlife Garden, ponds, and trails are all available and waiting to be painted.

Fly Fishing General Overview - July 11, 6:30 pm

Meet at BFEC Resource Center. This free overview will offer a sneak peek into the growing sport of fly fishing. No registration necessary.

Fly Fishing Class - Tuesdays, July 18 - August 1, 6:30 pm

Meet at BFEC Resource Center. Learn the basics of fly fishing, including knots, casting, and leaders. Learn to read the water, and best places to fly fish right here in Knox County. Graham Stokes, professional outfitter, will lead this exciting program. **July 18, July 25, August 1, at 6:30 pm each evening. Call now to register 740-427-5052. Registration required.** Payment due (cash or check) by July 14. **Members - \$45; Non-members - \$60**

Up-Coming Programs

OPEN TO EVERYONE

Snorkeling in the Kokosing River - July 15, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Meet at the River Access parking lot at the corner of Laymon and 229. Registration Required. For adults and families with children age 8 and older. Experience the Kokosing in a whole new way! We will provide masks and snorkels. You may want to wear water shoes and bring your own life jacket. Bring a sack lunch for a picnic afterwards. Space is limited. **Call now to register! 740-427-5052**

Butterflies for Beginners - July 22, 1:00 pm

Meet at the BFEC Resource Center. Impress yourself and your friends when you see an orange-brown butterfly in the distance and say, "That's a Meadow Fritillary!" We'll search for the fritillary and other butterflies in the BFEC gardens. There are about 65 common butterflies in Ohio. We will have ID guides and insect nets for everyone to share. No registration necessary.

Artist Reception - July 29, 2-5 pm

Meets at BFEC Resource Center. The BFEC is pleased to host an art exhibition by the Central Ohio Plein Air (COPA) painting group from July 29 through September 22. The exhibition, titled "Dog Days of Summer: COPA at the Brown Family Environmental Center" will display approximately 40 original paintings from a variety of local artists. The paintings will feature the unique and beautiful landscape of the BFEC. Join us on July 29 to meet the artists and learn about their inspiration. Refreshments will be provided. No registration necessary.

Moths for Beginners - July 29, 9:00 pm — 11:30 pm

Meet at the BFEC Resource Center. When you see a moth close-up, you'll discover their hidden beauty including artistic designs fit for a museum painting! During this program, we'll use a variety of techniques to attract moths. As they fly in, we will identify them. After this experience, you'll want to leave your porch light on all night! No registration necessary.

Solar Eclipse Party — Monday, August 21, 1:00 — 4:00 pm

Meets at Wolf Run Regional Park located at 17621 Yauger Rd. Mount Vernon 43050. Join the Knox County Park District for this spectacular event at Wolf Run Regional Park. The August 21st Total Eclipse seen through much the United States will be seen as a partial eclipse for us in central Ohio. This partial eclipse will certainly not disappoint! The "party" starts just as the moon shadow on the sun begins. Party-goers will need protective eyewear in order to watch the solar eclipse. Park District will provide limited eyewear. For those who do not have protective eyewear we'll do the old "pinhole in the cardboard box trick." Bring a chair and snacks. Knox County Park District will provide lemonade and iced tea. No registration necessary.

Climb-a-Tree & Tubing - September 9, 12 pm — 4 pm

Meet at the River Access parking lot at the corner of Laymon and 229. Join us for this FREE event! See the BFEC from a new perspective as you climb one of the oldest trees on our property. Then cool off and relax while you tube down the Kokosing. We will provide tubes and tree-climbing equipment. Just bring your adventurous spirit! No registration necessary.

Fossils of Knox County - September 10, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Meet at the Resource Center. Kenyon Assistant Professor Eric Holdener will speak about fossils common to Ohio with a focus on Knox County. Learn about the bedrock in which our local fossils are found and what the rocks and fossils reveal about the environments of these ancient critters. Bring your own fossils for identification! No registration necessary.



**Brown Family
Environmental Center**
at Kenyon College

9781 Laymon Road, Gambier, Ohio 43022
(740) 427-5050 ~ <http://bfec.kenyon.edu>

Our Staff

Jill Kerkhoff, Facilities & Volunteer Coord.
Shane McGuire, Land Manager Naturalist
Noelle Jordan, Manager

To conserve natural diversity and connect people to nature.

Upcoming Programs & Events

- Plein Air Painters at the BFEC** every **Wed.** | Meet next to BFEC House | 5:00pm
- Fly Fishing Overview** **July 11** | BFEC Resource Center | 6:30pm
- Moths for Beginners** **July 29** | BFEC Resource Center | 9:00pm
- Climb-a-Tree & Tubing** **Sept 9** | River Access Parking Area | Noon

**Brown Family
Environmental Center**
at Kenyon College
P.O. Box 508, Gambier, Ohio 43022



