



# Wetland Trumpeter

Newsletter - September 2018

## Our Mission

*Ohio Wetlands Association is dedicated to the protection, restoration and enjoyment of Ohio's wetlands and associated ecosystems through science-based programs, education and advocacy.*



## VERNALPOOLOOZA

A Wetlands Science Conference

### SAVE THE DATE!

April 4, 5 & 6, 2019  
Ashland University  
Convocation Center  
Ashland, Ohio

Join us for 2 1/2 days filled with: amphibians, macroinvertebrates, hydrophytes, research, field trips, monitoring, photography, and college credit. Look for details soon.

## Welcome Amelia Harris to the OWA Board of Directors



Amelia Harris

Amelia hails from the hills of Tennessee, where she grew up enveloped by dense forests, playing in raging rivers, exploring boundless natural biodiversity, and loving Dolly Parton. Amelia loved learning about the world around her, so she set off to college at Tennessee Technological University to pursue a degree in environmental biology. She then joined the US Peace Corps to hone her skills, serve humanity, and travel the world, serving in East Timor. After an exciting, educational, and often heart-breaking stint in South East Asia.

After returning from the Peace Corps, Amelia got her start in environmental consulting working as a certified arborist. She loved working with trees and decided to take an opportunity working with The American Chestnut Foundation as a research assistant at the University of Tennessee at

Chattanooga while earning her graduate degree in Environmental Science. Amelia's research site had some unique wet meadows and forests that piqued her interest and allowed her to learn more about wetlands. After completing her thesis and earning her degree, Amelia began the exciting process of job-hunting.

She was offered a job as an Environmental Scientist in Columbus, Ohio! Here she was able to apply her knowledge to learn the science of wetland delineations and the labyrinthine, often frustrating, legal system regarding water in the US. Amelia is now working as a wetland ecologist with a small environmental consulting firm that has a strict policy of ethical work and dedication to science. She leads wetland delineations, manages projects, is the GIS and mapping guru, and enjoys botanizing. Amelia is looking forward to continued education and activism in environmental sustainability, especially water and wetlands.

OWA is happy to welcome Amelia and look forward to working with her on many projects.

## Inside this issue:

Welcome Amelia Harris to the OWA Board of Directors	1
2018 OWA Photo Contest	1
How Do We Inspire	2 & 3
Sprites in our Wetlands	3 & 5
The Great Black Swamp	4
Join the Ohio Vernal Pool Network	4
A Plant to Thrill: Swamp Rose Mallow	5
Bogman and the Magic Wetlands	6
You Shop. Amazon Gives	6
Be a Vernalpoolooza Conference Sponsor	7
38th International Symposium	7

## 2018 OWA Photo Contest

Give Us Your Best Wetlands Shot! is the Ohio Wetlands Association's 2018 photo contest that celebrates the joy of wetlands through photography. Subjects will include the flora, fauna and variety of landscapes within Ohio's diverse wetlands. For details visit <https://www.ohwetlands.org/photo-contest.html>

The contest runs until December 31, 2018. Please considering entering and have fun too!



Trumpeter Swans at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Ray Stewart.

## How Do We Inspire?

By Tara Baranowski, Wetland Ecologist and Wildlife Biologist

You've heard the adage, "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Well I find the same to be true when it comes to inspiring children toward a love for nature. Sure, you can tell a child about the Great Black Swamp and watch their eyes come alive as they ponder the depth, the darkness, and the danger of that lost place, especially if you throw in a few tales about wolves having roamed there or horses being stuck in the unforgiving 4-foot deep mud. But what really catches a child's imagination and leads it captive is standing within the aura of a still swamp itself, walking in a windswept marsh, or following a meandering creek. Children by nature are curious and inquisitive and I've found that with my own, they retain an appreciation for things learned when these things are learned in the field. When they've seen with their own eyes, felt with their own hands, and discovered something *first for themselves* and then asked for an explanation to follow.

Now, I must admit, our children didn't have a chance at *not* being immersed in nature, and more particularly wetlands if you'll pardon the pun. My husband and I have over 40 years of combined wetland ecology and wildlife management experience. And as impressive as that sounds to me, that fact is purely lost on our kids who simply know that mom is a "birdologist" and daddy works in the marsh. Sure, we've explained what we do, and the kids have been to events that we've professionally coordinated, but for them it's about what we do in our *off time* that matters most. And this is where we *all* as parents, family, friends and mentors have an equal playing field. You can inspire the next generation of wetland lovers just as much as I



Cecelia Baranowski

can, no degree or experience required. And inspire we must if we want today's and tomorrow's children to cherish the wet and wild places in an increasingly techno-advanced and detached-from-nature norm. How do we inspire? It's not a complicated formula, it's simply this: Provide the opportunity. If you have the chance to give of your time taking a son, daughter, niece, nephew, friend, grandchild into the outdoors, do so. And do so often enough that they can appreciate that each season is new within the wild world around them and that it's worth coming back again to discover new wonders. Let them explore and ask

questions. Speaking from experience I can tell you that a routine walk into the marshes with my children is anything but. The questions born out of their curiosity and unashamed minds astound me and quite often leave me fumbling for an adequate response. And yet, not knowing the encyclopedic answer to youthful questions provides the perfect opportunity to stand in shared awe at what nature has to offer, shoulder to shoulder with my kids. Those moments I think are the most impactful. They're not



Hazel Baranowski

planned, there's no learning agenda, they just happen and leave each of us breathless, inspired. So, to reiterate the heart of the matter and the message I hope I'm conveying. My children don't love wetlands because mom presents a thesis on shorebird habitat or dad delivers a lesson in aquatic invasives each time we visit...My children love wetlands because we're *together* there, we *discover* there, we *wonder* there, and we go out to them often enough that they've become a *regular* part of our lives. Provide the

(Continued on page 3)

## Sprites in our Wetlands

By Ray Stewart

Water Sprites are mythical creatures associated with all variety of wet places. They have the ability to breath air or water equally well. Thought to be composed of spirit as much as corporeal substance they are very small. One source claims that among their favorite pastimes is to tease butterflies and ride on the backs of fireflies. Folktales describe these whimsical Water Sprites as good flyers with excellent endurance but a short attention span. Story-telling and ancient traditions are interesting to explore, but, did you know that there are actual sprites right here in Ohio? Yes, and they have a number of things in common with lore and legend of distant places in the deep past. Sprites are diminutive flying creatures that inhabit the low vegetation and mosses near water sources, especially wetlands. Their transparent wings are nearly invisible, disguising their means of sustained flight. They move through the vegetation with grace and skill, seeming to appear out of nowhere, then vanish in the blink of an eye. Their lives are lived partially swimming under water and at other times in an aerial ballet.



Water Sprite



Sphagnum Sprite, *Nehalennia gracilis*  
Photo by Dave McShaffrey

I am describing our smallest members of the order Odonata. These are the sprites, a type of narrow-winged damselfly. In Ohio there are two species of sprites, the Sedge Sprite (*Nehalennia irene*) and Sphagnum Sprites (*Nehalennia gracilis*). The males are more brightly colored than females with a bright metallic shine. They differ from the Eastern Forktail (*Ischnura verticalis*) damselfly which is readily observed almost anywhere Odonata are found. Sprites are smaller, close to an inch in length, are shiny and lack the eyespots seen

in bluets, another common type of narrow-winged damselflies.

The genus name for sprites, *Nehalennia*, refers to a 2<sup>nd</sup> century goddess from the low country of Zeeland in Holland. That area is mostly river delta where several rivers reach the North Sea including the Rhine. Today most of the 'reclaimed' land is below sea level. *Nehalennia* was worshiped by travelers, many of whom traded goods from well into the heart of Europe and into the British Isles. Once again, the mythology ties these creatures to wetlands and

(Continued on page 5)

## How do we inspire? (cont'd)

(Continued from page 2)

opportunity. Provide it again and again. You just might inspire someone. You just might preserve the legacy that is our wetlands.

Cecelia aged 8: "I love wetlands because of the plants and animals and how they react to each other. The life cycle in the marsh is really cool."

Hazel aged 6: "I love wetlands because they're so beautiful; the plants, butterflies, ducks, geese, ducklings, they're all so beautiful."

### OHIO DRAGONFLY SURVEY

The Ohio Odonata Society is working with the Ohio Division of Wildlife to update the original survey that ran from 1991 – 2001. The new survey will run from 2017 through 2019 and culminate in a lay-person book on Ohio Dragonflies and Damselflies.

To learn how to participate visit  
<https://u.osu.edu/ohiodonatasurvey/>

If you have any questions about the survey, contact: MaLisa Spring, State Coordinator at [spring.99@osu.edu](mailto:spring.99@osu.edu),

## The Great Black Swamp

By Ray Stewart

Dr. William J. Mitsch, world-renowned wetland scientist (and OWA Board Member!), proposes that restoration of 10% of Great Black Swamp (GBS) is necessary to reduce phosphorus inflow by 40% from the polluted Maumee River to Lake Erie. We are talking about a lot of farm land. The historic GBS stretched from Sandusky Bay to Toledo and west to Ft. Wayne Indiana, an area of about 1,500 square miles. 10% would be 150 square miles of highly productive farmland. This is no modest proposal, in that it would very likely take many farms out of operation and many families out of the business of farming.

It sounds outlandish on the surface, and largely unacceptable, to propose such an upheaval of land use and community that has existed for more than a century. But let's try a simple thought experiment and look at this region from a different perspective. Imagine, if you will, the vast GBS that is not 99.9% converted to other uses. Suppose that the very lowest, wettest, challenging acres were never cleared, drained or plowed. And suppose that the natural functions of all the Maumee basin tributaries were still intact. Streams would flow in broad sinuous curves instead of regimented straight ditches. Rain waters would gently slip beyond the banks fanning out through the forested swamps and marshes, depositing silt in a fine layer, as phosphorus and other nutrients were consumed by hundreds of species of water-loving plants.



The Great Black Swamp

In this scenario, water in the main stem of the Maumee River would be clean and fresh. Fish and other wildlife would thrive adding to the bounty of the most productive fishery in the Great Lakes, the western basin of Lake Erie. Commercial and recreational activities would be the envy of the Midwest, if not the world.

Now, to continue this little thought experiment, suppose that there was a proposal to strip the remaining 10% of the GBS to increase farming opportunities. There would be some trade-offs, however. Harmful algal blooms would choke the fisheries and turn away tourists. Beaches would be closed. Drinking water withdrawals might even be suspended in major cities during periods of high toxicity. Tens of millions of dollars would be spent to upgrade water treatment plants. Many more millions would be thrown at research to find a way to solve this problem.

Consider which of these is the more outlandish proposal: restoration or status quo? Would any of us accept the thought experiment proposal to expand the conversion of land to the extreme, knowing the consequences of that expansion? Should we, then, be open to some healthy discussion on the practical benefits of wetland restoration on an ambitious scale? Your Ohio Wetlands Association would argue that this discussion should move forward in earnest. The potential environmental, economic, and societal gains will make this a worthwhile conversation.

### Join the Ohio Vernal Pool Network (OVPN) and put on your very own vernal pool workshop next season!

This fall, the Ohio Vernal Pool Network will be offering an educator's package: With the purchase of a class set of 20 or more [Ohio's Hidden Wonders, A Guide to the Animals and Plants of Vernal Pools](#) you will get a full set of ancillaries including the 5 PowerPoint presentations we use in our own workshops.

The subjects include: Intro to Vernal Pools, Amphibians, Flora, Macroinvertebrates and Data Collection using iNaturalist. Tips on workshop best practices, conducting field trips and ask-the-expert resources are all provided. Details will be published at [www.ohiovernalpoolnetwork.org](http://www.ohiovernalpoolnetwork.org) as they become available.

## Sprites in Our Wetlands

By Ray Stewart

spiritual connections from many centuries ago. Their names describe their preferred habitats. The sedge sprite can be quite common in the sedges and other emergent plants that enjoy wet soils. Their range extends across southern Canada and the northern half of the U.S. While common and widespread, they are often overlooked because of their tiny size they appear to be flying needles. The sphagnum sedge prefers the boggy wetlands with mats of sphagnum moss either floating or on the surface above saturated soils. Its range covers most of the eastern U'S from Wisconsin to Maine south to northern Florida.



Sedge sprite, *Nehalennia irene*  
Photo by Dave McShaffrey

While the sprite's stature is unassuming, they must have a significant effect on their surrounding ecology. They are carnivores and, in their space, they are considerable predators. As airborne adults, they capture and consume all manner of flies, gnats and mosquitoes. Looking closely at their legs reveals lengthy spines used in the capture of lesser creatures that get too close. As aquatic larvae, they eat anything smaller than themselves.

Flight time for sprites in Ohio peaks in June through August. When you next explore a wetland in summer, bend down to scan the vegetation. If you search carefully, perhaps you'll spot one of these mythical beings in the material world.

## A Plant to Thrill: Swamp Rose Mallow, *Hibiscus moscheutos*

By Mark Dilley

**Editor's Note:** Board Member Mark Dilley delivered a presentation at the 2016 Flora Quest conference with the title "Wetland Plants: Twenty to thrill, five to kill." He will be sharing details of select plants from this talk in a series of articles for the OWA newsletter.

Swamp Rose Mallow, sometimes called Crimson-eyed Rose Mallow, is a member of the Family Malvaceae (Mallow Family). Although this plant may blend into the scenery at certain times of the year, when it blooms in summer it is an irrefutable showstopper. Growing on the edges of ponds or in shallow to deep emergent marshes, the huge colorful corolla of the hibiscus flower can be seen from many feet away and are recognizable even traveling at 65 mph down the highway. The blooms can be a bright pink or paler cream color, with a crimson center.



Swamp Rose Mallow, *Hibiscus moscheutos*

As is true for most plants with showy flowers, hibiscus is pollinated by insects, including bees and bumblebees. Hummingbirds will also frequent the large (up to 4 inch-wide!) blooms in search of nectar. The plant's seeds have a thick coat and are buoyant so that they can be distributed by water (a process referred to as hydrochory). The Swamp Rose Mallow, and its close relative, the Halberd-leaved Rose Mallow (*H. laevis*) serve as a food

source for muskrats, waterfowl and numerous insects, and as habitat (cover) for many other species.

Historically, this plant has been used medicinally in the form of tea to treat digestive and urinary tract inflammations. Another relative of the plant from Europe, *Althaea officinalis* (common marshmallow), is a key ingredient in the marshmallow confections we enjoy. The next time you bite into a S'more, say a little thank you to the mallows of the marshes. They are a treat to the eyes as much as marshmallows are a treat to the palette.

## Bog Man and the Magic Wetlands

By Ray Stewart

If you were asked to look back in time at historic moments that gave rise to Western Culture, what would you see? Would it be the age of Socrates and the Greek philosophers? Maybe you would think of the roots of Christianity. Maybe the rise of Rome and the spread of its influence across Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East. These are among the standouts that fill World History texts in High Schools everywhere.



The Bog Man

But people were thriving in many other locations, founding cities, communities and cultures that did not leave as strong a written and architectural legacy as the Mediterranean examples mentioned above. I have recently read about Tollund Man, a bog mummy that came out of a Danish wetland in the 1950's so well preserved that it, at first, was thought to be a recent death. Closer examination has determined that he lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. making him a contemporary of the Classic Greeks.

Peat bogs have an amazing ability to preserve organic matter. The peat itself is a product of this preservation. In Ohio, the American mastodon, *Mammuth americanum* now on display at the Ohio History Connection in Columbus was retrieved from an Ohio swamp. This uniquely well preserved and complete skeleton is said to be 10,000 years old. The anaerobic (low oxygen) environment and slightly acidic waters of a bog are more conducive to 'pickling' a body than decomposing it.

The mastodon may have wandered in accidentally becoming stuck in the deep soft muck. Its remains must have avoided the indignity of scavengers since the complete

skeleton remained in place. Tollund Man's fate was somewhat different. No clothing was found with him except for a belt and a leather cap. His only other accessory was a noose around his neck, likely the cause of death. The forensic question begs to ask; how did this happen? Or was this death the result of a crime at all?

Archeologists and scholars think that there was likely a supernatural

or spiritual reason for Tollund Man's death. Northern Europe at this time was populated by a complex set of people often referred to as proto-German. Their mythology may have given rise to the elaborate pantheon that included Odon and Thor. Human sacrifice was a wide spread practice, even in Rome up until the first century B.C.E.

For the people of Iron Age Northern Europe, a bog would have played an important spiritual role. These wetlands were revered as something magical, representing a physical barrier separating the supernatural from the physical realms. If Tollund Man's death was presented as a gift to gods, this bog would be the portal to their domain. These vast northern lowlands would have been sacred places with taboos preventing any penetration except for the holiest practices of the time.

As Roman influence and civilization expanded, these proto-Germans were Christianized. But, even as the ancient pagan superstitions waned, these bogs remained in their minds as magical and awe-inspiring places. For many of us, wetlands still inspire awe and wonder. If you're one of those who possess this awe, please make every effort to share it with others!

## You Shop. Amazon Gives

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when customers shop on AmazonSmile ([www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organizations selected by customers. Link your Amazon account to the Ohio Wetlands Association today! Just go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com).



## Be a Vernal Poolooza Conference Sponsor

After many years of providing one-day vernal pool workshops we are expanding our format to a 3-day conference. The Ohio Vernal Pool Network, a team effort of Ohio Wetlands Association and Midwest Biodiversity Institute, is taking our expertise and experience to the next level. The conference will provide more depth and breadth of vernal pool topics than we can provide in a one-day format.

Feedback from our workshop attendees indicates a need for expanded experiences and offerings on vernal pool subjects. We will also be offering a variety of laboratory and field experiences. Our quest to recruit and train vernal pool monitors will include training on specific monitoring techniques. And our train the trainer program that includes workshop and outdoor resources will be completed and available to enhance the repertoire of environmental educators across the state.

Vernal Poolooza will be at the Ashland University Convocation Center on April 4, 5 & 6, 2019. AU catering is an award winning and nationally recognized food service provider. We have secured Keynote speakers for the two evening sessions, Jim McCormac, a popular and well

respected Ohio naturalist and Elizabeth Colburn, author of the natural science book Vernal Pools. They are both charismatic and informative speakers that should please all who attend. Several nearby locations will provide superior vernal pool experiences.

We are expecting 100 to 200 attendees at this conference. There will be students, volunteer naturalists, park managers and environmental educators from around the state. While some attendees will enjoy this event as paid professional development, many will take time off and pay out of pocket for the experience. We need sponsors to help us keep registration costs as low as possible. Your generous support will help defray the cost of food, materials and logistics. Thousands of hours of volunteer time will also contribute to keeping costs down. Still, there is no substitute for cash donations. See back for sponsorship levels and benefits. Sponsorship and payment information can be found at <https://www.ohiovernalpoolnetwork.org/become-an-ovpn-sponsor.html>.

**Thank you for your consideration!**



### 38th International Symposium of the North America Lake Management Society

The Ohio Lake Management and Indiana Lakes Management societies are excited to welcome NALMS to the Midwest's "Queen City," Cincinnati, Ohio. On the shores of the mighty Ohio, the river was impounded to serve modern navigation; those impoundments now function like a series of lakes. Cincinnati is

also home to a burgeoning craft-brewery industry that is certain to be one focus for conference outings. With Thomas More College's field station, active urban reservoir projects, and Environmental Protection Agency research facilities nearby, we'll find plenty to see, do, learn. Our region is also bordered by the Great Lakes to the north, and our conference theme is well served by recent cutting-edge efforts to understand and mitigate western Lake Erie's press-grabbing eutrophication issues.

Details can be found at <https://www.nalms.org/nalms2018/>



**Ohio Wetlands Association**

P.O. Box 3  
Amherst, Ohio 44001  
www.OHwetlands.org

**Executive Committee**

Mark Dilley PWS, President &  
Education Committee Chair  
Mick Micacchion, Vice President &  
Policy Committee Chair  
Delores Cole, Treasurer &  
Webmaster  
Ray Stewart, Secretary &  
Communications Committee  
Chair

**Directors**

Amelia Harris  
Brett R. Joseph, Ph. D.  
Robert Kyle  
William Mitsch, Ph.D.  
Michael Peppe  
Ric Queen

*Wetlands for a Better Ohio*

September 2018 Issue



**JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!**

Time to renew your  
OWA membership

**MEMBERSHIP LEVELS**

- Individual \$20
- Family \$30
- Student \$10
- Organization \$40
- Senior \$10
- Business \$50

**2018 SPONSORSHIP LEVELS**

- Heron \$100
- Bittern \$500
- Rail \$250
- Swan \$1,000

**DONATION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL ENCLOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP CODE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, send me the newsletter electronically.

**Please make check payable to OWA and mail to OWA, PO BOX 3, AMHERST, OH 44001**