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Environmental Education Council of Ohio

Volume XXIV

Number 2

Spring 2005

It Pays to Save Wetlands!

May is American Wetlands Month

Wetlands are very “in” (have been for a while, now) which is a decided switch from how they were viewed and treated through most of America’s history.

At one time or another, virtually every human malady of body, mind, or spirit was blamed on “fetid, stinking swamps.” But absence (and knowledge) has – thankfully – made our hearts grow fonder.



Wetlands Month was inaugurated in 1991 by EPA and its partners in Federal, State, tribal, and local governments, and private and nonprofit organizations as a way to educate Americans about the worth of wetlands as a natural resource.

Wetlands are among Earth’s most important ecosystems, providing many benefits, including food and habitat for fish and wildlife; flood protection; erosion control; food for human consumption; water quality improvement; and opportunities for recreation, education and research.

Happily, there is plenty of information available for formal and nonformal educators to help in promoting an understanding of and appreciation for wetlands in folks of all ages.

A good place to start is at <http://www.americanwetlandsmoonth.org/> where you’ll find



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From your editor...

A couple of issues ago, we introduced a new feature to the EECO Newsletter – “Meet _____,” to feature the natural history of some of Ohio’s native plants and animals. Since we featured a plant in the last issue, it’s time again for a member of the animal kingdom. And so, without further ado, please welcome back to Ohio after a long absence, *Felis rufus* – the Bobcat.

I think cats – all cats – are really amazing: sleek, silent, efficient, aloof. And beautiful.

I have a cat – Chaz (she’s 17 and in quite better shape than I expect to be at an equivalent age) – and while she’s “just” a domestic cat (*Felis catus*), I can see the

“wild” cat lurking deep in her genes. She’s a real sweetheart, though, and I suppose I suffer to some extent

– along with many other people who have house cats – from the delusion that all cats are just big versions of domestic cats.

But the Bobcat ain’t your Momma’s kitty! Read all about these interesting once-again-Buckeyes on page 9.

Nelson Strong, Editor



A word from the President...



Laura Busby

EECO is an amazing resource and just keeps the great events and programs coming!

June 20 – 24th the **Language of Nature** workshop will be held at Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center

(CVEEC). This weeklong institute will provide opportunities for personal and professional growth for anyone interested in nature study, literature, or self-discovery. Reflect, write and share with others in a beautiful natural setting! Rejuvenate your spirit and “bone up” on your writing skills at this incredible workshop. Find out more at

www.cvnpa.org or on EECO’s Web site.

Speaking of EECO’s Web site, if you haven’t visited it lately, take a moment to check it out at www.eeco-online.org. It is very attractive and hosts a lot of valuable information – links to organizations that provide EE, job opportunities, publications, a timely calendar, and more.

One valuable component of our Web site is the new statewide **EE Resource Directory** that can make information on your organization accessible to anyone with an Internet connection. We need your help to get this directory accurate and active. It only takes a few minutes and we know you will find it worthwhile. If you or someone in your organization has not edited your information, you can go to the directory,

sign in and make changes. If you or someone else has made changes, then to make additional ones you will need the login and password. If you do not have access to a previously used login and password, you can e-mail Chuck McLaugherty at MCCLAUCA@muc.edu and he will send you the information you need to get started. Once there, you can edit your organization and programs. You can also submit your activities, workshops, and other events for the calendar or post jobs and other current information at no cost to members.

Another great EECO member resource is our talented, energetic cadre of EECO Regional Directors. Please check the Partnership Insert or the back cover of this newsletter to find your region and the contact information for your resourceful Regional Director. Take a minute to drop them a

note and find out what activities are happening in your area. The EECO regions all have underserved audiences they are targeting and activities they are implementing for the region. They are terrific at networking and are very “plugged in” to EE in your “neck of the woods”.

As EECO staff and board move EE forward in Ohio, I would like to invite each of you to join us in our journey. If you have a little spare time and energy and would like to put some of your talents to use, please contact me at LauraBusby@juno.com. We would love to help you build your resume with regional or statewide work on committees, conferences, events, and other rewarding EECO activities.

...We need your help to get this directory accurate and active...

EECO Offers New Membership Sections

In our continuing effort to reach out to new audiences and promote EE among all Ohioans, EECO will now offer its members the opportunity to have membership in special interest sections. When members join or renew their membership, they may choose to belong to one or more sections. Sections will provide members the opportunity to network among peers with similar interests, provide input into EECO’s current programs and services and to shape our projects and vision for the future.

Each section will elect a leader for a year who will facilitate the work and activities of the section. A representative from each section will serve in the annual conference planning to promote a breadth of programming for EECO’s broadening membership base. EECO

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EECO Offers New Membership Sections

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members may join one section at no additional cost to regular membership dues. Each additional section joined will be \$5 per section.

Benefits of section membership will include:

- All benefits of EECO membership
- Networking of peers with similar interests
- Special meetings at the annual conference and throughout the year
- Special interest projects initiated by the section
- Collaboration and networking with other sections
- Voice in the leadership and vision of EECO

Sections to be offered include:

PreK-12 Education Section—Early childhood, elementary, and secondary teachers and administrators working in public and private schools and parents who homeschool

Nonformal Education Section—Educators and administrators in EE centers, nature centers, parks, camps, resident outdoor education centers, zoos, museums, arboretums, historical sites and/or bring their education programs to schools and other settings

Higher Education Section—Students, faculty and administrators from colleges and universities offering Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. degrees

Government Agencies Section—Local, state and federal government agencies and/or their representatives who have education as one of their objectives

Environmental and Community-based Organizations Section—Local, state and national non-governmental organizations and/or their representatives who have education as one of their objectives; typically non-profit organizations

Research Section—People who conduct research in environmental education and those interested in applying the results of research in environmental education.

Business and Industry Section—Businesses and industry and/or their representatives who have education as one of their objectives

If you have already renewed your membership for 2005, e-mail us at: director@eeco-online.org to inform us of the section(s) you choose to join.



Stepping Off the Path

Language of Nature 2005 -Fourth Annual Summer Retreat and Writing Institute at Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center

This summer, you can hone your writing skills while learning more about the natural world in a relaxed, beautiful setting! **The Language of Nature** is an EECO-sponsored summer retreat and writing institute for formal and nonformal educators or anyone who wants to explore and improve their nature-writing skills.

The weeklong institute – June 20-24 – will take place at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center in Peninsula. Participants will experience a variety of writing media, including fiction, nonfiction and poetry, guided by an enthusiastic and experienced faculty of writers, naturalists and educators.

In addition to workshops dedicated to practical writing discussions, the institute will offer local field trips and hikes to special places around Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Personal reflection and writing time is scheduled each day, and entertaining evening programs are planned.

The \$210 application fee covers food, lodging, materials, and instruction for the five-day program. Graduate credit will be available through OSU-Marion. Applications must reach CVEEC by May 15. For more information, contact CVEEC, 330.657.2796 or e-mail info@cvnnpa.org. Complete details at www.eeco-online.org.



101 Conference 205: *No Teacher Left Behind*

When: Friday, Saturday and Sunday, September 30 to October 2

Where: YMCA Camp Kern (32 miles northeast of Cincinnati)

The 101 Conference is a weekend outdoor education workshop designed to provide teachers (classroom as well as outdoor educators) with new activity ideas, inspiration, and a chance to meet other educators. We offer something for everyone. Enjoy large and small group sessions, campfires, night hikes, good eating, and



plenty more. Cosponsored by YMCA Camp Kern, EECO, and OEEF.

Cost is a trifling \$71, which includes all sessions, food, lodging, a beautiful setting, good company, and FUN! For more information, or to register, contact Dave Moran at YMCA Camp Kern, 1-800-255-5357 x27. Local Phone: 513-932-3756 x27. E-mail: dmoran@daytonymca.org. Web site: www.campkern.org.

GeoTech Ohio – 2005

GPS and GIS technologies in the classroom

TEACHERS – Are you looking for ways to integrate real-world data into your curriculum? Do you want to engage your students in authentic applications of technology that support your current curriculum standards? Do you want to investigate natural hazards, climate, land use change, population, watersheds, and biodiversity?

At GeoTech Ohio you will learn how Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies can bring the world into your classroom.

This institute, designed by teachers for teachers, will help participants apply and integrate GIS and GPS technology in their middle school and high school classrooms.



The workshop, June 20-24 in New Albany (just northeast of Columbus) is sponsored by Ashland University, College of Education and New Albany-Plain Local School

District and is conducted in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

Lead Instructor will be Dr. Joseph Kerski, Education Outreach Geographer at the US Geological Survey in Denver, Colorado.

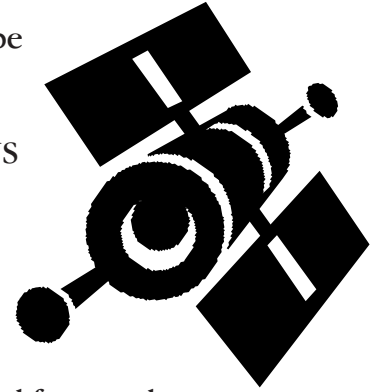
The institute fee is \$285 and includes five days of instruction, most breakfasts and lunches, and a copy of Mapping Our World. The book includes a one-year site license of the GIS software we will be using, data, and ready-to-use lessons for the classroom.

Participants can also receive two semester hours of graduate credit from Ashland University Professional Development Services for an additional cost.

Sound interesting? For detailed information about this unique institute, please visit:

<http://curriculum.new-albany.k12.oh.us/geotech/webpage.htm>.

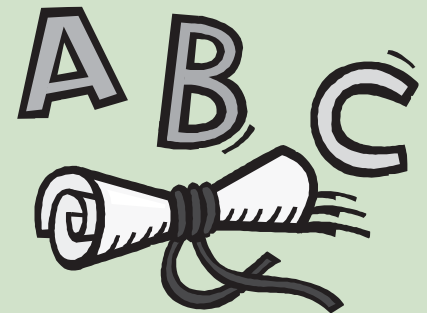
For institute registration and credit option questions, contact Dr. Herb Broda at hbroda@ashland.edu.



Awards for Innovative K-12 Educators

The ING Unsung Heroes Awards are given to K-12 educators pioneering in new methods and techniques that improve student learning. Educators submit applications describing projects they have initiated or have envisioned for the future. These applications are judged on innovative teaching methods, creative educational projects, and ability to make a positive influence on the children. Full-time K-12 education professionals from accredited public and private schools throughout the U.S. may apply. Each of the 100 finalists receives a

\$2,000 award and three finalists will be selected for additional awards of \$25,000 for first place, \$10,000 for second place, and \$5,000 for third place. The application deadline is April 30, 2005. Visit http://www.ing.com/us/about/connect/education/unsung_heroes.html for more information.



Meet *Felis rufus*

Bobcats again stalking Ohio's wild places

Bobcats *look* much like common house cats because of their facial features and body shape, but there are some differences. The size of a bobcat ranges from just slightly larger to four times as big as a large house cat. These cats also have stubby tails that are around six inches long. Another difference is that bobcats have tufts of black hair at the tips of their ears.

Bobcats are fierce hunters. They will stalk or just sit and wait for their prey to come near and then pounce on it once it is within a short distance. A bobcat will eat almost any small animal, but rabbits are their main food source. In some areas, bobcats even will attack a small deer! They have a hard time killing a deer because of the large size difference. However, once a bobcat catches a deer, it will not need to hunt for several days.

Bobcats are not social animals. A bobcat will usually live in a territory by itself. The size of a bobcat's territory depends on the habitat, food availability, and the bobcat population in the area. Their territories can be less than one square mile, or as large as 80 square miles. The edges of the territory are marked with urine. The scent lets other bobcats know when they cross into another cat's area.

Young bobcats are called kittens (imagine that!). The kittens are born anytime from late winter to midsummer. A **litter** can contain up to six kittens. The mother bobcat catches and kills small animals for her kittens until they are several weeks old. Then, she brings them live prey and lets it loose in the den. This practice teaches the young kittens to catch their prey. Eventually, they go hunting with

her. In a little less than a year, the kittens are almost full grown. This is when they must leave their mother to find a territory of their own.

Although there are bobcats in Ohio, you are not likely to see one. They are rarely seen because they are **crepuscular**, meaning they hunt in the late evening and early morning hours. Also, bobcats are an **endangered species** in Ohio. At one time, they were found all across the state.

However, after settlement, bobcat populations declined. In the mid-1800s, they were **extirpated** (missing from Ohio entirely). This was due to unregulated hunting and trapping. Slowly, the bobcat population is rising again thanks to laws created to protect them. They are mainly found in the southern and eastern parts of the state. However, sightings are still rare.

During 2004 there were 14 confirmed bobcat sightings in eastern and south-eastern Ohio counties according to the Ohio

Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. This represents an increase from 10 verified sightings in 2003.

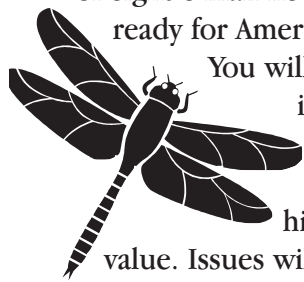
All of the 2004 reports occurred in the following counties: Washington, Harrison, Athens, Noble, Vinton, Guernsey, Lake, Meigs, Morgan, and Jackson. ODNR also received 52 unverified bobcat reports last year.

The information in this article comes from <http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife/PDF/Bobcat.pdf> and other ODNR sources



Classification: Mammal (Carnivore)
Diet: Birds, amphibians, reptiles, and small to medium sized mammals.
Habitat: Wetlands, forests, and mountains.
Size: Length: 30-37 in., Weight: 15-42 lbs.

plenty of info and links to all kinds of good stuff. One neat offering is **A Wetland in Your Inbox**. The Izaak Walton League of America is offering a unique opportunity for you to experience wetlands through the Internet. "Wetland Sights and Sounds" is a series of eight e-mail news flashes to help you get ready for American Wetlands Month in May.



You will receive one issue per week in March and April. Each issue of Wetland Sights and Sounds will highlight a wetland function or value. Issues will include educational information, pictures, sound cards, conservation project ideas, and links to other resources. You can sign up by sending a blank e-mail to join-friends@list.iwla.org.

Here you'll also find the **American Wetlands Campaign Kit**, which contains information such as:

- Wetlands Ecology Functions and Values
- Common Wetland Definitions
- Wetlands Project Ideas
- Wetland Monitoring and Education
- Wetlands Watershed Resources – and more

Also check out the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds Web site for additional information about wetlands and American Wetlands Month at

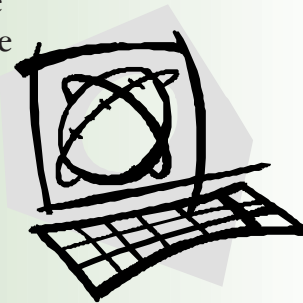
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/awm/>. Here, too, you'll find links to many other useful wetland info Web sites.

For those looking for a way to create a wetland, check out www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/boone/. The USDA Forest Service, Izaak Walton League of America, and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. have teamed up to produce a new book, "A Guide to Creating Vernal Ponds," which describes how to build seasonal wetlands to improve wildlife habitat. Designed to help private landowners, teachers, and biologists establish vernal or seasonal wetlands, the guide also discusses the importance of these vanishing wetlands and helps you design and build a vernal pond that looks and functions like a natural wetland. From the Web site you can order hard copies or download a pdf.

Wetlands are a tremendous national resource. Once maligned, more people are discovering their values, beauty, mysteries, and wildlife every year. Make this the year for your students to join them!

Visit the new, free, online EE resource directory!

EECO and the Ohio Environmental Education Fund have taken the Ohio EE Resource Directory online. Visit us from the front page of EECO's Web site (www.eeco-online.org) and go to Calendar/Directory, then Ohio EE Directory. This new resource replaces paper directories of Ohio's environmental education organizations and resources that are no longer available. This directory is updated by the organizations themselves and should therefore be more up-to-date than paper directories. We are now trying to get the directory up to date.



This free service can be used by both providers and consumers of environmental education. The directory is organized into three major parts: Organizations, Resources, and Events. All entries are related to organizations.

If your organization provides EE resources, then you should be listed. Please check us out to see if your organization is listed. If you are listed then you can login to the site and update your contact information, resources that you provide, and add any events that you would like listed in the directory and its associated calendar. At the minimum, we encourage you to be sure that your organizational contact information is correct so that folks can find you. If you no longer know your user id or your password, please send an e-mail to EEDirectory@eeco-online.org. If your organization is not listed, you can apply for your free listing on-line without a password.

If you are a user of EE resources, check out the directory. Please let us know if your favorite resource providers or organizations are not listed and if you find any outdated or incorrect information. Try out the search functions that allow you to search for organizations and resources by location, topic and many other parameters. Send any comments or suggestions to EEDirectory@eeco-online.org. This is a work in progress and the more people who contribute the better it will be able to serve the EE community. More detailed user instructions will appear in future issues of the newsletter and will be available online.

If you are really anxious to get to the new directory the URL is: <http://www.eelink.net/cgi-bin/risee/eeco/start?id=>

HEAR YE!

EE Enrichment Opportunities for Summer, Early Autumn 2005



April 24-May 1 – **Soil and Water Stewardship Week** – Share the good reasons why we “Celebrate Conservation!” Activities available for Pre-K and grade 1, grades 2-3, and grades 4-5; also Educators Guide. Contact your county Soil and Water Conservation District or visit <http://www.stewardshipweek.com/html/celebrate.html>.

May 5 – **Project WILD: Science & Civics: Sustaining Wildlife** – Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Registration fee of \$10 includes dinner. Contact Pam Keiper to register at 216-231-2075.

June 14-15-16 – **“Black Swamp Educators’ Extravaganza”** at the 577 Foundation, Perrysburg. Sponsored by NW Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Registration is \$85 (\$75 if registered by May 2). Contact Nicki Kale to register at 419-352-5517.

June 20-24 – **Language of Nature** Summer Retreat and Writing Institute – Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center. Whether you are a writer or language arts teacher looking to improve your understanding of nature, a naturalist looking to improve your writing, or someone looking for an inspiring week of self-discovery and renewal, this one’s for YOU! Lodging, meals, materials, instruction all for one LOW price. Check www.eeco-online.org for more info.

June 21-22 – **Healthy Water, Healthy People** facilitator training – Shawnee State Park Lodge, West Portsmouth. Classroom and outdoor activities are designed for grades 6-12. Registration fee (\$50) covers meals (2 breakfasts 2 lunches) and meeting space rental. Healthy Water, Healthy People Educators Guide and Test Kit Manual will be provided by the Ohio Environmental Education Fund (OEEF). Contact Jeff Montavon to register at 740-355-0505 or www.sciotoswcd.org.

July 8 – **Grant Writing Workshop** – Ohio Environmental Education Fund (OEEF) staff will teach you how to compete and succeed in the hunt for program funding. Contact Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District at 740-264-9790 to register.

Sept 30-Oct 2 – **101 Conference** at YMCA Camp Kern, Oregonia. A weekend outdoor education workshop designed to provide teachers (classroom as well as nonformal and outdoor educators) with new activity ideas, inspiration, and a chance to meet other educators and “recharge.” Registration (\$71) includes lodging, meals, all sessions. Contact Dave Moran to register at 1-800-255-53576 x 27 or dmoran@daytonymca.org.

Have an event you’d like to promote
to the EECO membership?
Send information on date, time, title and topic,
along with a brief summary and contact information to:

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For membership application, please contact Wendy Welsh, Membership Manager.
For information about EECO's programs and services, please contact Brenda Metcalf, Executive Director.

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