



2025 Year in Review

Appalachia Ohio Alliance

AOA's Mishe Moneto Preserve
Big Darby Creek Conservation Corridor
Home to Numerous Endangered Species



AOA's Conservation Preserves:

Forever Wild Spaces that provide Homes for Many of Ohio's
Rare, Threatened and Endangered Native Species

Appalachia Ohio Alliance (AOA) is proud that the many Preserves we have conserved over the years provide homes for numerous native Ohio species including a wide range of rare, threatened and endangered species that need sustainable natural landscapes to survive. Unfortunately, we live in a world experiencing a broad range of impacts that affect native species, leading to an alarming decline in range and populations, as well as the number and diversity of species.

In central Ohio we are witnessing the populations of once common species that are becoming rare, rare species becoming threatened, threatened species becoming endangered, while once endangered species are often becoming extirpated from sizable portions of their historical range, if not the entire state. The decline of many native species was observed and decried by local farmer and part-time botanist Floyd Bartley in the 1950's based on his lifetime of observations and specimen collection in the region.

Continued on next page...

23 Years of Conservation Achievement in Central Ohio

More than
17,600

Acres Conserved

195

Properties Conserved

Properties Conserved in

21

Ohio Counties

126 Fee Owned

66 Conservation Easements

3 Transferred / Facilitated

AOA Preserves - Homes for Rare Species

Continued from Cover

Impacts from new greenfield development; roads, urban infrastructure and utilities; agricultural monocultures; widespread application of herbicides, pesticides, and chemical fertilizers; pollutants; loss of wetlands and forested riparian corridors; deteriorating water quality in streams; et al., individually, and more so collectively, take a tremendous toll on native habitats and species.

Natural areas and habitats that provide homes for our native Ohio species are becoming smaller and more severely fragmented by development and subdivision. Alien invasive species from around the world are outcompeting native species and taking over their habitats. For instance, studies have shown that aquatic species are negatively affected by invasive honeysuckle within riparian corridors due to its potential to change water composition. Invasive honeysuckle has

become widely spread and now dominates many of our riparian corridors including Big Darby Creek, the most biologically diverse stream in Ohio, and its tributaries.

Fortunately, many of AOA's Preserves play a critically important role providing suitable natural habitats and homes for a diverse range of native Ohio species, many of which

are increasingly rare, threatened and/or endangered. Some of our Preserves are able to host and protect numerous rare species, while virtually all of our Preserves host some unusual species. Our Darby Creek Preserves protect a wide range of rare aquatic species including mussels and fish, as well as multiple documented maternity colonies of endangered Indiana bats and other threatened and rare bat species such as Northern Long-Eared bat and Little Brown bats.

The Scioto River riparian properties protect numerous aquatic species including varieties of fish and mussels. The Scioto also serves as one of the primary north-south migratory corridors in Ohio for many species including a broad range of waterfowl, birds, bats, butterflies and other pollinators whose survival depends on maintenance of sufficient natural areas and habitats.

Our Cedar Run Preserves are buffering and expanding native wetland habitats adjacent to Cedar Bog State Nature Preserve – with ~40 rare species, probably the most diverse and ecologically valuable patch of native habitat in Ohio.

AOA actively targets conservation of high priority resources such as properties with known rare species, relying on the Ohio Natural Her-

itage database maintained by ODNR, but also site surveys by staff and consultants. Many rare and unusual plants have been identified through our site surveys, including some previously unknown to Ohio.

As part of our conservation strategy, AOA works to build large blocks of unfragmented habitat. Small patches of habitat, while important, are often too small for the survival of many species which need larger contiguous areas.

One of our primary conservation mission objectives is the creation of habitat corridors, particularly along streams, which are essential for migrating species such as birds, butterflies and bats, but also help protect water quality for aquatic species. We are successfully piecing together key habitat corridors throughout the Central Ohio Region.

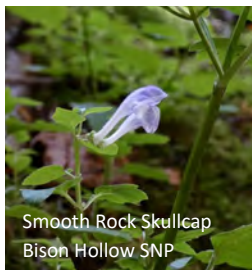
Stewardship of native habitats after conservation is just as important as the protection of the properties themselves. Control of invasive species on our Preserves is essential to maintaining native habitats suitable for native species including rare and unusual species. Imagine the disruptions in our food systems if our farmlands were suddenly invaded by an aggressive, uncontrollable weed that took over our fields and restricted the growing of corn? Native species are facing similar threats daily as invasive exotic plants displace plants they have become reliant on for food over thousands of years.

AOA conducts extensive invasive species monitoring and management on our thousands of acres of Preserves to assure the availability and sustainability of native habitats. We are also implementing numerous large-scale rewilding / site restoration projects on Preserve lands that were previously cleared or overrun with invasive species. These projects recreate and/or enhance native habitats on our Preserves, making more native habitat available to support rare species.

History has shown us that species left without native habitats that can support sustainable populations will inevitably be lost. There are many examples of once local species that haven't survived - Carolina Parakeets and Passenger Pigeons, to name but a couple.

We believe that it is important to conserve, protect and improve habitats that native species can sustainably survive and thrive on into the future. Protecting and restoring habitats, creating wildlife corridors, improving water quality, and other comparable conservation actions supporting native species survival and overall biodiversity will create safer spaces for threatened species.

Conservation of additional land and water resources is necessary to provide the habitat homes needed to prevent a precipitous loss of native species and diversity in Central Ohio, as well as the state, a goal AOA will continue to vigorously pursue.



Smooth Rock Skullcap
Bison Hollow SNP



Salt Creek, a Superior High Quality, Exceptional Warmwater Habitat Stream as it flows through the Narrows.

AOA Expands Newly Established Salt Creek Narrows Big Woods Preserve with 576-Acre Acquisition

AOA recently acquired two parcels from BTG Pactual to expand our Salt Creek Narrows - Big Woods Preserve. This addition, totaling 576 new acres, enlarges the Big Woods Preserve to 950 acres.

The Salt Creek Narrows is the site of a unique glacial driven geologic “stream reversal” in the southern extent of the Hocking Hills landscape. Characterized by high hills with very steep slopes and narrow stream valleys, it is an aesthetically beautiful and ecologically rich area that is a high protection priority for AOA. Tucked away in a relatively isolated part of Hocking and Vinton Counties, the Narrows could be considered one of Ohio’s most overlooked natural features and is very worthy of conservation action.

Water quality remains high within the Narrows portion of Salt Creek, which is designated by Ohio as an Exceptional Warmwater Habitat Superior High Quality Waters stream. The BTG site acquired will preserve 1,800 linear feet of Salt Creek riparian corridor and ~24,250 linear feet of high-quality largely Class 3 Primary Headwater Habitat Streams that contribute to the excellent water quality in Salt Creek.

Although about half of the site has been timbered in the last 20 years, the riparian corridor valleys were largely excluded from

timber harvests. These are covered in a comparatively mature mixed hardwood forest, helping to protect water quality. The conserved properties support native habitat for a number of relatively rare species, including endangered Timber Rattlesnakes.

AOA continues to work with area property owners to conserve additional nearby sites. We have several parcels totaling another ~550 acres under contract that will be acquired within the coming



year, as part of our effort to assemble a large block of contiguous forested native habitat and preserved stream corridors. These areas will eventually provide a vital wildlife connectivity corridor linking the Hocking Hills to nearby Tar Hollow.



Land Conservation

AOA Adds Medford Parcel to Laurel Run Headwaters Conservation Area in the Hocking Hills

AOA has acquired a 35-acre parcel from the Medford family in the headwaters of the locally important Laurel Run watershed. This property contains six headwater stream reaches with an estimated 3,930 linear feet of stream protected. Several small waterfalls and rock-lined sluices are located along the primary stream course.

The largest of the Medford site streams, was assessed as a Class 3B (highest category Coldwater stream) primary headwater habitat stream that is a direct tributary to Laurel Run. The Medford site is punctuated by a line of south and east-facing non-calcareous cliff habitat ledges along the central stream gorge. The property has a mixed forest canopy of varying age.

A one-day botanical survey performed by Rob and Tomas Curtis identified many regionally rare and sensitive plant species indicative of high-quality habitat, including the State Endangered moss *Amphidium mougeotii*.

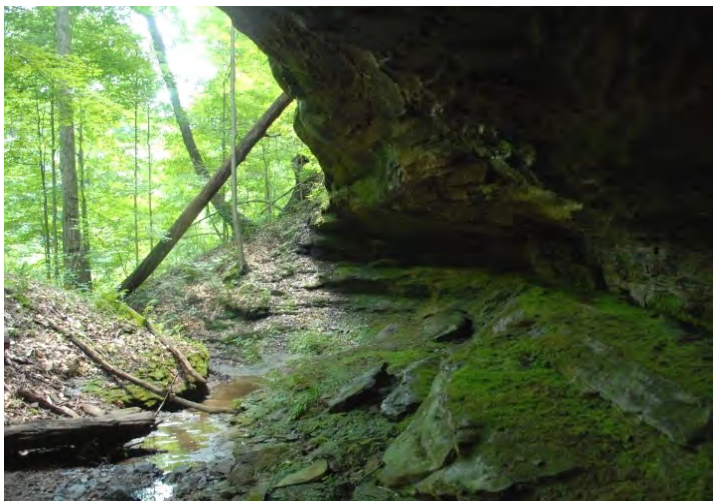
Laurel Run is a Coldwater/Exceptional Warmwater stream, which drains a significant portion of the central and northern parts of the Hocking Hills, and which ultimately flows into Salt Creek near Laurelville. In addition to its high-quality

Conservation within the Laurel Run watershed has been a priority for AOA as part of our Greater Hocking Hills Conservation Initiative. To date, AOA has preserved 14 properties and nearly 1,400 acres within the upper Laurel Run watershed headwaters area.

The Medford property is part of a conservation corridor that AOA is working to establish to connect several protected sites nearby: Cantwell Cliffs, Rock House, Hocking Hills State Forest and the private nonprofit Crane Hollow Nature Preserve.



Connectivity is particularly important in the Hocking Hills due to development pressures and the fragmentation of habitats and ownerships. The plethora of Coldwater streams and exceptional habitats with abundant listed species in the Hocking Hills necessitates the conservation of riparian corridors and larger blocks of native habitat to protect fragile, at-risk natural resources.



aquatic resources, this area contains a unique geology and aesthetic beauty, punctuated by numerous waterfalls throughout the watershed, including several spectacular waterfalls that AOA has already protected.

AOA Continues Hocking Hills Conservation Efforts with 8 New Preserve Properties Added in 2025

AOA has now conserved over 100 properties and over 6,300 acres through our Greater Hocking Hills Conservation Initiative. More properties are in process as we work to protect the wonderful natural resources found in this jewel of Ohio.



Johnson Parcel Addition Supplements AOA's Queer Creek Conservation

AOA recently purchased a 111-acre parcel along Queer Creek from the Johnson family. Located in the unincorporated community of South Bloomingville, the parcel protects both sides of a stretch of Queer Creek and spans ridgetop to ridgetop across the valley bisected by Highway 664 on the northern entry. This site contributes to creation of a conservation corridor along Queer Creek, a high priority AOA water quality protection goal.



The Johnson parcel conserves spectacular Hocking Hills and Blackhand sandstone geologic formations including high steep bluffs and rock outcrops, shelter caves and numerous large slough rocks. There are several high quality wetlands on the

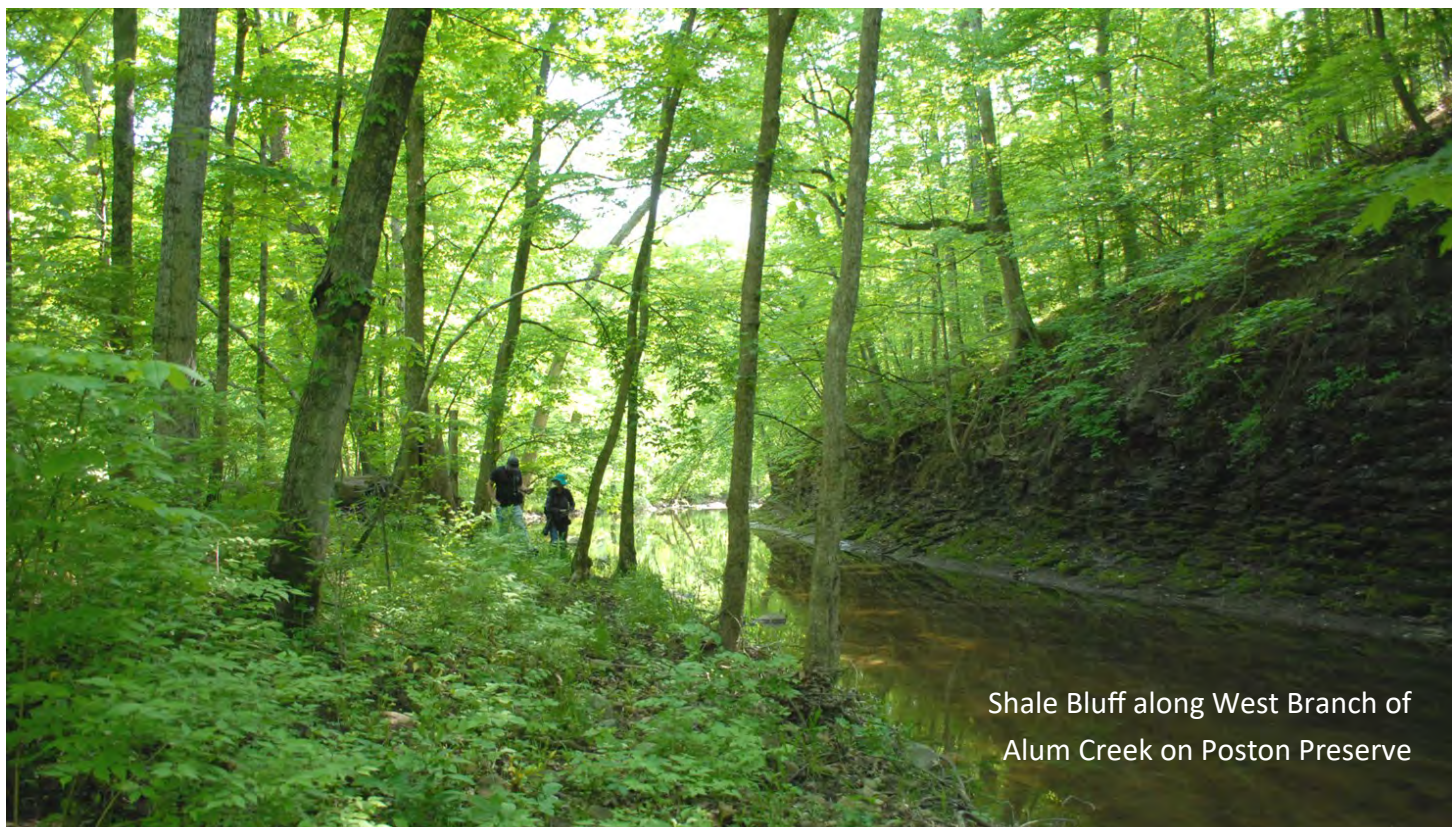
site. Most of the property is covered by older growth hardwood forests with large stands of hemlock and many native wildflower species.

The new Preserve protects over 2,200 linear feet of riparian corridor along Queer Creek, an Exceptional / Coldwater Habitat, Superior High Quality Waters, as it flows south from Old Man's Cave. There are two headwater streams in gorges on the west side of the site that flow into Queer Creek. The Preserve Increases lands AOA has preserved in the Queer Creek watershed to over 1,900 acres.



Conservation Buyers

AOA has been blessed with numerous generous, community-spirited conservation buyers who have stepped up this year to purchase land to hold for AOA. Buyers own the properties until we are able to procure funding to permanently conserve the site, filling a valuable and needed conservation partnership role.

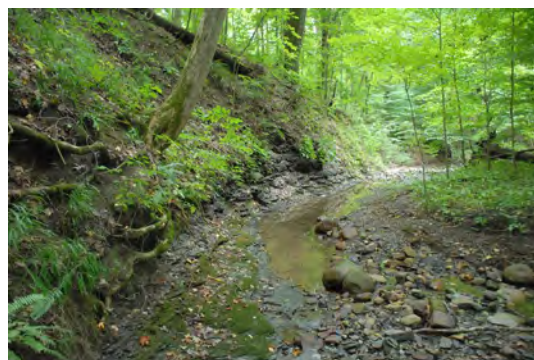


Shale Bluff along West Branch of Alum Creek on Poston Preserve

AOA Expands Alum Creek Conservation Corridor with Poston Farm Phase 2 Purchase

AOA recently expanded our Poston Preserve with a phase 2 addition of 4 new parcels totaling 178 acres from the Poston Trust.

This addition brings the Preserve to 404 acres. The new property protects another 3,700 linear feet of riparian corridor along Alum



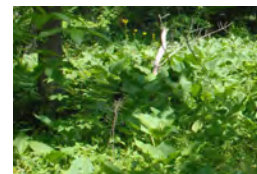
Creek plus another 2,900 linear feet along the West Branch of Alum Creek – both classified by Ohio as Superior High Quality Waters.

The Poston addition helps imple-

ment AOA's initiative to protect the upper reaches of the Alum Creek watershed in Morrow County upstream of Alum Creek Lake. Protection of the Poston farm property, which is an exceptional natural site situated at a strategic location at the confluence of Alum Creek and West Alum Creek, is the first step in assembling a larger conservation corridor that protects water quality and native habitat corridors.

The Poston property has been in the family for multiple generations and has been well stewarded – with relatively light farming and timbering over the years, avoiding habitat degradation from

more intensive farming and forestry practices. Much of the timber on the site is very mature. The newly conserved area also protects 8 primary headwater tributaries of Alum Creek and several Category 3 wetlands, including a large fen.



All of the waterways on the Poston property are very scenic outwash

streams created when melting glaciers cut through formations of Ohio Shale - leaving towering, very steep cliffs of exposed shale along the stream corridors. Some of the shale outcrops are over 60 feet high and virtually vertical to the stream bed.

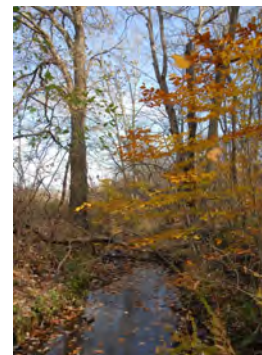
Walsh Property Conserved

Jane and Bruce Walsh donated a conservation easement on their 74-acre property located in Fairfield County on the northern edge of the Hocking Hills ecoregion. This beautiful site includes a forested ridge as well as old, successional fields, and a wetland area along Pine Run, a tributary of the Hocking River.

Sandstone outcrops occur in several



locations on the ridge, which displays an abundance of spring wildflowers.



This site contributes to scenic views and values along the US33 corridor entryway into the Hocking Hills Region.



Land Conservation



AOA Protects Large Scioto River Floodplain in Pickaway County

AOA has acquired a 145-acre portion of the Crites Farm in Pickaway County. The Crites site is located just north of the Village of South Bloomfield in the Highway 23 corridor, which has experienced explosive development over the last few years pushing southward from Columbus.

Due to rapidly escalating land values, AOA was unable to conserve the entire 325-acre farm site which fronted along Highway 33 but was able to procure the bottomland floodplain area along



the Scioto River. Conservation of this riverfront property contributes to AOA's Scioto River Flyway Corridor Initiative.

The Crites property has 1.25 miles of frontage along the Scioto River, which exceeds Exceptional Warmwater Habitat quality standards and is classified as Superior High Quality Waters in this reach. In addition to the floodplain, the site includes a high bluff along a 1,700 linear foot section of the river frontage on the north end.

The property also includes 8 acres of upland terrace which borders the floodplain. Several wetlands are located in the floodplain area including a significant old river oxbow wetland at the base of the terrace that rises from the floodplain. AOA plans to reforest the site, restoring the original bottomland forest habitat while reestablishing a forested upland riparian buffer along the floodplain edge.

Rewilding of this property will have tremendous positive impact on water quality in the Scioto River. The restoration of native bottomland and upland forests will help improve filtration of floodwaters and aquifer recharge, create a natural riparian buffer, and protect the river from nonpoint sources of contamination, while providing greatly improved native habitats for wildlife.

Importantly, this Preserve will provide a high quality natural area and stopover site for migrating species dependent on the Scioto River Flyway Corridor.

Scioto River Flyway Corridor Initiative

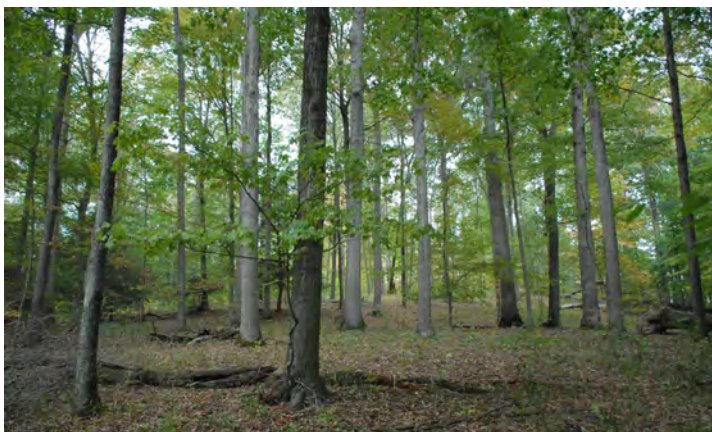
AOA continues our ongoing endeavor to protect riparian corridors along the Scioto River and its tributaries as part of our Scioto River Flyway Corridor Initiative. This large landscape-scale project is being carried out by AOA in collaboration with Ducks Unlimited and numerous compatible organizations. Our efforts have so far led to the protection of 40 conservation properties and over 5,400 acres within the Scioto River Flyway Corridor, including significant stretches along the main stem, as well as prominent tributaries such as Big Darby Creek.



Land Conservation

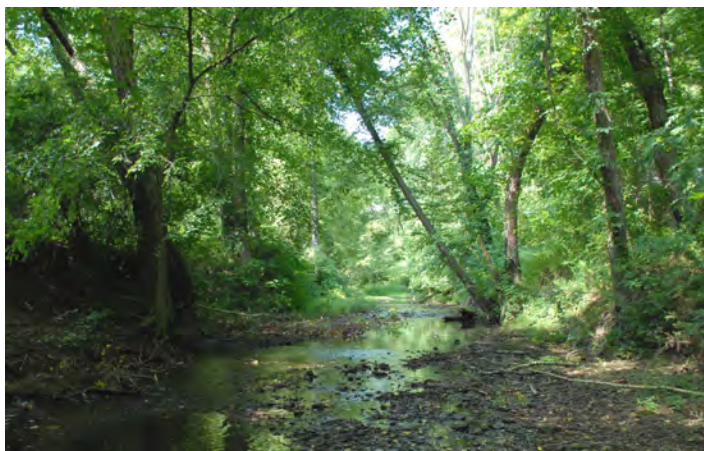
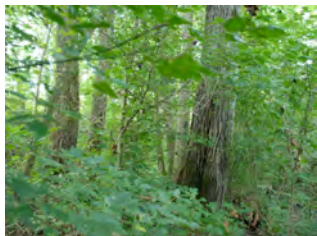
AOA Acquires Three Properties Protecting Queer Creek Water Quality and Aquatic Habitats

AOA purchased three new properties that expand our Queer Creek Conservation Corridor along Highway 56 in the southern Hocking Hills. These additions lie in the important gateway area between Ash Cave and South Bloomingville. They supplement the many properties conserved by AOA in this region - over 1,900 acres stretching from Bison Hollow to the South Bloomingville area Preserves and easements, helping to protect water quality in the Queer Creek watershed.



The 14-acre **Hathaway Family Preserve** lies on the north side of Highway 56 and the East Branch of Queer Creek. It consists largely of a south facing ridge that slopes steeply towards Queer Creek. A narrow ledge of Blackhand Sandstone outcrop crosses the property on the edge of the ridgetop. The site is covered in a relatively old growth forest that has not been timbered in many years.

The **Parrish Preserve** consists of an assemblage of a ten small subdivided lots along Highway 55 comprising ~2.4 acres in total. Located along the north side of the East Fork of Queer Creek, this site lies just upstream of the confluence of the East Fork with Queer Creek in the community of South Bloomingville. Located in the floodplain in an area once known as "East Bloomingville", this site contained a few small residences on the lots that have since been removed. The lots are now largely grown up in relatively mature riparian forest that help protects water quality in the East Branch of Queer Creek.



An adjacent .4-acre parcel located at the intersection of Highway 56 and Goose Creek Road in South Bloomingville, was also conserved. This site was donated to AOA by **Pat Hartman**, who owns the adjacent apartments, to assist AOA in further protecting the stream corridors. Although small, this strategic property straddles the confluence of Queer Creek and the East Fork of Queer Creek, and contributes to the assembly of continuously conserved riparian corridor to protect Queer Creek.

Doles Preserve - Meigs County Medicinal Plant Sanctuary

The Doles Preserve is a 42-acre family heritage parcel in northern Meigs County that was donated to AOA by Jon and Diane Doles. The hilly topography of the site includes a couple of headwater streams and is covered by a maturing hardwood forest that has not been cut in 40 years.

This site will be stewarded by AOA as an old growth forest habitat in collaboration with the nearby United Plant Savers (UpS), whose Goldenseal Sanctuary is conserved by AOA with a 292-acre conservation easement. The Preserve will be managed as part of a greater Meigs County Medicinal Plant Sanctuary that focuses on AOA's aligned mission with UpS - conservation and restoration of forest habitats that support the sustainability of wild native medicinal plant populations.





Snowy Egrets fishing in Genevieve Jones Preserve wetlands

Organizational Enhancement

Generous gifts from friends and supporters enabled the Appalachia Ohio Alliance to accomplish much in 2025. We are grateful for this support, and for continued validation of our conservation mission.

AOA continues to pursue the resources and support needed to carry out our valuable and worthy conservation work. For every \$1 donated to AOA, we are able to protect over \$20 worth of land and water resources.



Planting Goldenseal Roots

Grants. AOA was fortunate to receive numerous grants in 2025 to support our conservation, stewardship, education and outreach activities. We procured \$13 million in grants from public sector organizations, helping to maximize the return on our donor's investments in our conservation work.

Donations. AOA's conservation efforts benefited from many generous gifts this past year including several land donations and significant contributions for land conservation and long-term property stewardship and conservation defense totalling over \$4 million.

Capacity. As AOA continues to grow and evolve we are striving to strengthen our organizational capacity to better achieve our conservation mission goals. In 2025 we:

- Added a fifth full-time staff member to our stewardship team.
- Purchased new stewardship equipment including a pickup truck and tractor to assist our stewardship team.

- Participated in a variety of Ohio and national land trust seminars and conferences as part of our efforts to build stronger leadership and organizational sustainability.
- Increased the amount of funds in our dedicated Conservation Stewardship and Defense Endowments.

Community Foundations. AOA continued to receive support through endowed funds at Community Foundations in our service area. AOA now has eleven donor advised funds at local Community Foundations that support the sustainability of our conservation, stewardship and defense missions.



Large Yellow Lady's Slipper Orchid
Mercer Woods Old Growth Forest Preserve

Photo Credits: The Conservation Fund (page 1), Rob Curtis (page 2), Carol Shurlow (pages 7, 8, 12 and 14), Doug Shevelow (page 9), Bob Depinet (page 12), Ty Smith (page 14) and AOA Board and Staff.

Preserve Restoration and ReWilding

In addition to basic stewardship activities, AOA undertakes extensive ecological restoration and rewilding site enhancements on many of our Preserves. We seek to create ecological uplift of our Preserve properties, assuring the achievement of natural, native, sustainable habitats that fulfill their appropriate ecological function and role within the larger landscape ecosystem. We are highlighting numerous projects this year that have either been underway or are just getting ready to begin. We hope that you can visit some of these sites.



Sun rising over newly restored wetland at AOA's Cackley Swamp Preserve in Jackson County casts a primordial glow

Kiser Restoration at Cackley Swamp Preserve

AOA has completed the new wetland construction on our Kiser property at AOA's Cackley Swamp Preserve in Jackson County. We continue to work on tree planting, reestablishment of wetland vegetation and invasive controls in and adjacent to the site. The new 6-acre wetland expanded and enhanced the wetland hydrology, restoring this portion of the swamp to its original extent.

Shelly Lakes Floodplain ReConnection / Restoration Plans Completed

AOA has secured sufficient funding and is ready to kick off the restoration construction activities at our Shelly Lakes Preserve



located along the Hocking River in Fairfield County. We spent the last year refining plans and budgets that will allow one of the old quarry lakes on the property to

be modified to store and filter floodwaters from the Hocking River. An inlet and outlet will be constructed on the upstream and downstream ends of the lake. This project will greatly enhance water quality and flood control in the Hocking River, benefiting downstream communities and the Hocking Hills region.

Poston Farm Preserve Restoration Begins

AOA began site restoration on the first phase of the Poston Farm Preserve conducting extensive invasive removal and tree planting. AOA collaborated with the U.S. Forest Service, First Energy, DNO Products, the Izaak Walton League and numerous volunteers to procure, plant and stake over 3,000 trees, to help reestablish the upland forest in existing hay fields. First Energy provided 1,400 trees and 15 volunteer employees. The Forest Service planted 440 Ash and 15 Elm trees that show disease resistant traits, creating a new resistance testing research plot as part of its efforts to defeat the Emerald Ash Borer and Dutch Elm disease. Additional tree planting and site restoration activities will continue in 2026.



Scioto River Floods Reconnected Bottomlands at AOA's Scioto Bend Preserve for First Time in 100 Years

AOA's 309-acre Scioto Bend Preserve received floodwaters from the Scioto River this past February for the first time since levees were constructed on the property. Located on a large bend in the river channel adjacent to the City of Circleville in Pickaway County, this property includes 2.6 miles of Scioto mainstem river frontage.

Part of AOA's Scioto River Flyway Corridor Initiative, this property accommodates many of the thousands of waterfowl and migratory birds that use this corridor during the early spring and fall migration periods. Phase 1 of the restoration and rehydration

work is largely completed although revegetation activities will continue through 2026. AOA is seeking additional funding for a second phase levee breach upstream of the first that would engage a larger portion of the site.



AOA Continues Buffering and Expansion of Cedar Bog Wetland Habitats through Restoration of Adjacent Preserves

AOA continues the incremental process of rewilding and restoring the four parcels we currently own along Cedar Run adjacent to the Cedar Bog State Nature Preserve, one of the most ecologically rich sites in Ohio.

We have performed extensive invasive control and reseeded of the former fields on the Clark Preserve parcels on the south side of Cedar Bog. On the north side, we are pursuing a multi-year process of reclaiming agricultural fields on the Newell and Koerner Preserves, which we are converting to native sedge meadows and upland prairies, as appropriate.

We have planted trees on portions of the Preserve sites to reforest buffer areas. We recently planted white cedar trees transferred from Cedar Bog to help reestablish the native wetland cedar forests to the Preserve.



Genevieve Jones Phase 1 Completed

AOA recently completed the first phase of the restoration construction work on AOA's Genevieve Jones Preserve in Pickaway County. As part of the rewilding work, the site is being reengineered to enlarge wetland areas and to utilize natural systems to



engage, filter and retain floodwaters to improve water quality in the adjacent Scioto River.

Internal improvements to reroute floodwaters and expand, connect

and enhance wetland areas has been largely completed this past year. Funding has been secured for the next phase of the restoration to be carried out in 2026. This includes the construction of river floodwater inlet channels, floodwater retention and additional wetland improvements and enhancements. Native vegetation and tree planting activities and invasive control to upgrade the native habitats on the Preserve will continue after the heavy restoration construction work is finished.

Utzinger Bog Restoration Update

Rewilding activities are ongoing at AOA's 91-acre Utzinger Bog Preserve in Franklin County. The site continues to rehydrate as a result of water retention enhancements, approximating the original extent of the wetland bogs on the site prior to the construction of drainage improvements to support agricultural use and peat mining.

AOA's stewardship team continues to carry out restoration activities such as invasive control, ditch and erosion restoration, native wetland vegetation seeding and transplanting, and tree planting, et al., to elevate the quality of the Preserve habitats.



AOA seeks to enhance the natural qualities of existing habitats and to restore and/or reestablish healthy ecosystems focusing on native plants. As once common species become rare, and rare species endangered, it is critically important that we conserve and restore natural habitats that provide homes for these species.



Stewardship

AOA works to enhance our land and water resources as sustainable assets for our community. We undertake a wide range of stewardship activities on our properties annually to preserve and enrich the natural habitats and site features.

In association with corporate and community partners, friends and volunteers, during the past year we have undertaken extensive site management and restoration activities on AOA preserves.



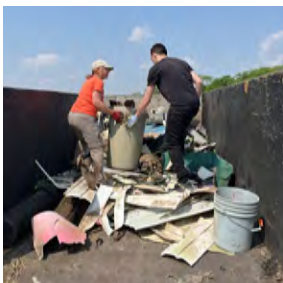
Reintroduced declining native species and augmented populations of forest medicinals such as Goldenseal in suitable habitats on our Preserves.



Demolished dilapidated structures and removed legacy trash, debris and tires from AOA preserves.

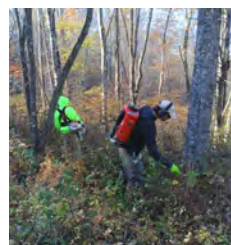


AOA continues to utilize staff, volunteers and contractors in a massive effort to remove and control non-native species throughout many of our Preserves, targeting destructive invasives - particularly Japanese Honeysuckle, Multi-flora Rose, Tree of Heaven, Autumn Olive, Reed Canary Grass, and Garlic Mustard.

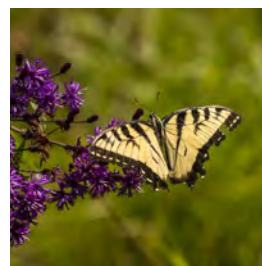


Ohio DYS Cleanup at Fickardt Farm

AOA's stewardship team collaborated with the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) Southern Region Parole team, and several volunteers to help clean up a legacy dump site on AOA's Fickardt Farm Preserve along the Big Darby Creek in Pickaway County. Through this community service project, we were able to remove a large dumpster full of garbage, restoring native habitats and protecting water quality. The project provided DYS parole youth with a valuable opportunity to contribute positively to their community while learning about environmental stewardship.



Maintained existing prairies - removed invasive species and woody trees and shrubs from over 150 acres of existing prairies.





Installed natural erosion control structures and stabilized stream corridors



Planted trees to help reestablish bottomland and upland forests on numerous preserves.

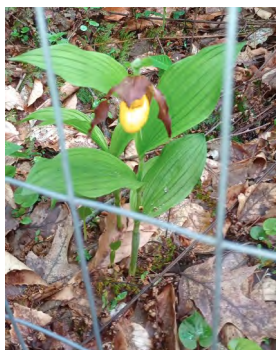
Removed trees and undesirable growth damaging old Hocking Canal locks.



Restored wetlands on numerous Preserves.



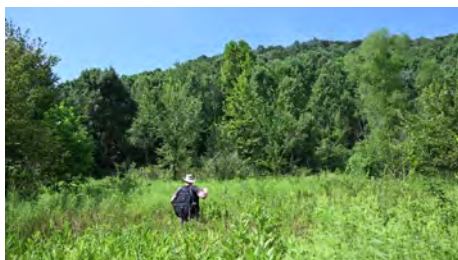
AOA sponsored over 30 workdays for volunteers and partner groups to assist with stewardship activities at our Preserves.



Installed new gates and natural structures and posted signage to control vehicular access to our Preserves and prevent habitat damage from noncompatible site uses.



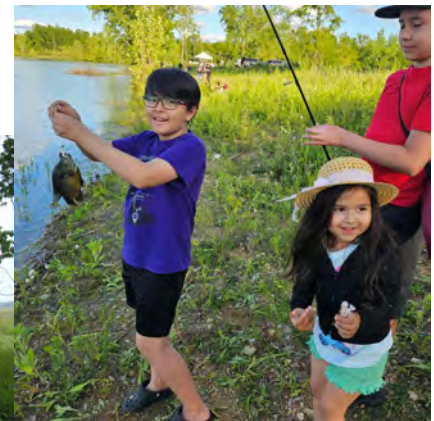
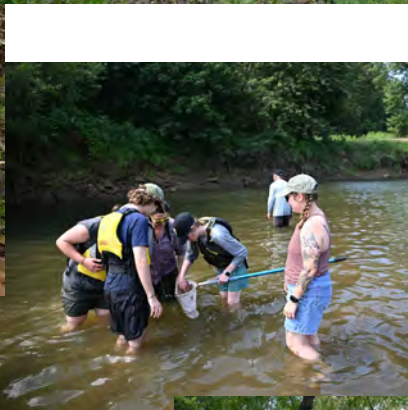
Performed numerous botanical / species surveys, monitored streams and identified new rare, threatened and/or endangered plant species on AOA Preserves as part of site resource assessments.



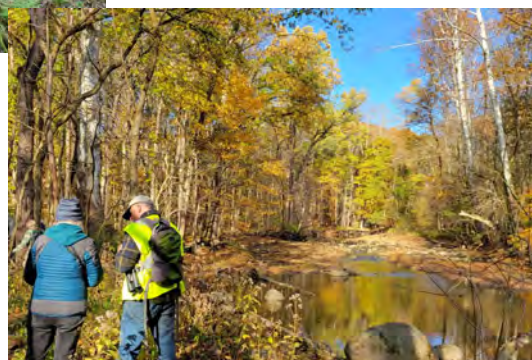
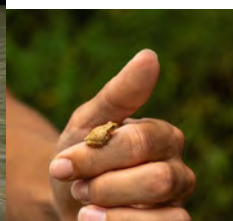
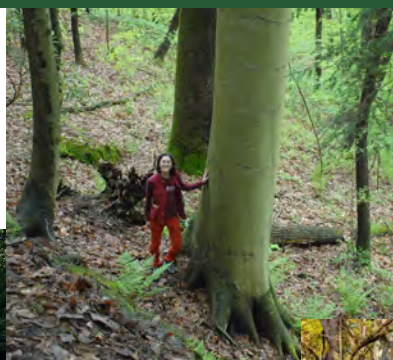
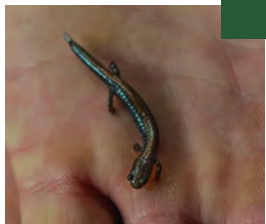
AOA Scales Up Treatment of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid on AOA Preserves

AOA's stewardship team has substantially increased treatments for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) infestations on our Preserves in Hocking, Vinton and Fairfield Counties. We are treating hemlocks with injections of systemic insecticide to help existing trees build up resistance to the HWA. Most infested hemlock trees that remain untreated, will succumb to the HWA, resulting in the loss of individual trees as well as large groves, similar to what has already occurred throughout large parts of the Appalachian region. AOA is committed to caring for the hemlocks on our Preserves and plans to eventually treat each of our Preserves in coming years.





Nature-Based Outreach and Engagement





AOA provides opportunities for members and the public to participate in and learn more about our conservation mission.

We emphasize nature-based education that features conserved lands and local ecosystems, conveying an enhanced understanding of their significance and relevance to our community. Our numerous programs and events help provide outdoor recreational activities, build partnerships, engage local communities, provide hands-on learning and stewardship experiences, and allow friends to visit the lands they have helped to conserve – some of the most beautiful places in our region.

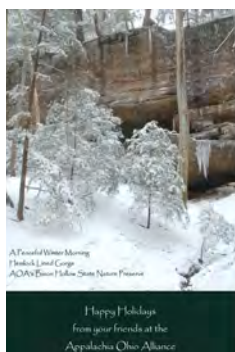


Our 2025 education and outreach program consisted of 25 events, providing a wide range of outdoor activities including naturalist-guided field trips to AOA conserved properties and programs. In addition we undertook a variety of stewardship-based events focusing on restoration and enhancement of AOA preserves. In all, our programs and events during the past year attracted over 800 participants, inspired by AOA's conservation work and the beauty of our special landscapes.



AOA Annual Dinner and Friends Gathering

AOA's **Annual Dinner** was held at The Mill Event Center in downtown Lancaster. Bringing together 125 of our friends and supporters, this event recognized AOA's numerous 2025 land and water conservation achievements, featuring our success in preserving and restoring water quality and native habitats in Central Ohio. Our keynote speaker was **Ecologist Rob Curtis** who spoke about his botanical surveys of AOA properties and the important role of AOA Preserves in protecting rare native habitats and species. We are grateful to our sponsors for helping to fund the dinner event.



- AOA's Holiday Card program provides opportunities to **"give a gift of conservation"** to promote AOA's mission and local conservation to friends and associates. Our 2025 card features a **"A Peaceful Winter Morning, Hemlock Lined Gorge, in AOA's Bison Hollow State Nature Preserve."**

- AOA's **Conservation Achievement Award** recognizes exemplary dedication, commitment and achievement in the field of conservation. **Paul & Cathy Knoop**, were honored for their lifelong dedication to conservation and particularly their efforts this past year to amend the existing conservation easement (CE) on their Hocking Hills property. The Knoop's updated their outdated easement language while adding land to be conserved and removing the option for a second house.



Rent an AOA Cabin in the Hocking Hills

Support AOA's Hocking Hills conservation mission - stay in one of AOA's 7 cabins in the Hocking Hills available for short term rental. Our cabins are located adjacent to some of AOA's most spectacular Preserves with wild and scenic settings and easy access for hiking. Bookings are available through our leasing partner, Venture in Real Estate in Logan.



The Appalachia Ohio Alliance is a regional non-profit land conservancy that serves central, south-central and southeastern Ohio. The Alliance is dedicated to the conservation and stewardship of our land and water as sustainable natural resources that are an asset and a legacy for our community.

