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Our Land Manager has left the building!
From the Director

Life is a little more fulfilling when you’re part of an organization with a compelling vision. When Antioch renewed operations in 2011, it did so with a new articulation of what the school hoped to accomplish: “Antioch College will be the place where new and better ways of living are discovered as a result of meaningful engagement with the world through intentional linkages between classroom and experiential education.”

This emphasis on experiential education dovetails seamlessly with the way we approach learning in the Glen, so its been exciting to envision and start to build a mutualistic system that benefits both students and Glen Helen programs.

One of the primary ways that students are active in Glen Helen is through work. All Antioch students are required to complete at least four full-time work quarters – or “co-ops” – during their undergraduate career. Many also work part-time during their academic quarters.

We’ve had students operating Trailside Museum, where they greet visitors, make sure that they understand the rules of the preserve, answer questions, and entice them to support our work. Not only do students play an important role for the Glen doing this work, they gain skills in public communication and environmental interpretation.

Meanwhile, another set of students have been out in the Glen, where they have participated in the full range of our land stewardship efforts: Trail maintenance, invasive species removal, ecological restoration, plus more invasive species removal. Through it all, they have learned a variety of land management techniques, field botany, and the joys and challenges of tough outdoor work.

Funding for several of our student workers was provided by the Nolan J. and Richard D. Miller Endowment Fund at the Yellow Springs Community Foundation. We funded the remaining positions through operating revenue from gifts and fundraising events. As Antioch College continues its rebirth, we look forward to building on these efforts, expanding both the number of students we work with, and the range of positions we offer.

Nick Boutis
(nboutis@glenhelen.org)
Ice, thunder, and wind storms all tend to light a fire of urgency under Land Manager George Bieri. When Hurricane Ike ripped through the Glen in 2007, over a thousand trees came down in the preserve, and hundreds fell across trails. It is not the end of the world if one person walks around a downed tree. But it’s never one person. Every place that a tree fell across a trail, visitors were innocently walking around the tree, and innocently, relentlessly creating new trails.

As you walk through the Glen, you will see these “rogue trails” if you look. It is remarkably easy for a new trail to form. One visitor follows the row of footprints of another, and pretty quickly, the plants die back, which makes the trace look more like a trail, which encourages more visitors to explore the same route, which makes it even less likely that the plants will recover. Just last year, we closed 45 of these rogue trails.

Foot traffic quickly compacts soil, which brings a cascade of ecological consequences.

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It turns out that foot traffic quickly compacts soil, which brings a cascade of ecological consequences. Compaction of soil is a major reason for the decline of native wildflower populations. Many of these wildflowers have the audacity to grow right along the edge of the trail, so even walking on the fringe of the trail undermines habitat and increases erosion. Compaction even threatens the great trees of the Glen by damaging their roots and threatening their stability.

Conversely, and perhaps perversely, invasive species like Amur honeysuckle thrive in disturbed and compacted soils.

To protect the forests, we also work to remove obstructions that block trails. Last year alone, even with no hurricanes or ice storms, we removed 181 such obstructions.

Every time that someone scampers to the cliff edge to glimpse the stream below, or places a foot off trail to let a runner pass, or chases the sound of a yellow-throated warbler, they do their own small part to cause new trails to form.

The good news is that the same principle also works in reverse – if everyone stays within the organized trail system, they will be able to watch as, over time, the land grows healthy again.

Top 10 Ways to Help the Glen! (How Many Have You Done Today?)

1. **Adopt a bird.** For just $100 a year, you can help us feed and care for the hawks, falcons, owls, and vultures of our Raptor Center.

2. **Consider a planned gift to Glen Helen.** No single act can do more to help us sustain our efforts.

3. **Come to Ecocamp.** A week in Glen Helen helps shape the lives of the kids who experience it.

4. **Join the Glen Helen Association.** Support from members allows us to maintain the preserve and all of our programs.

5. **Rent the Glen.** Think of the Glen for your next party, meeting, or memorial. The Vernet Ecological Center, the Outdoor Education Center, or Birch Manor might be the spot you’re looking for.

6. **Visit the Nature Shop.** Marvel at the displays of books, toys, cards, and clothing. Proceeds go directly to the Glen.

7. **Volunteer.** Whatever your interests, there is a volunteer project perfectly suited for you.

8. **Explore** some of our 20 miles of trails and track your sightings on www.inaturalist.org, to document the biodiversity of the preserve.

9. **Specify Glen Helen Association** through the Dorothy Lane Market Good Neighbor Program and the Kroger Rewards Program.

10. **Fulfill Our Wishes.** We maintain a wish list for new and gently used items. Visit glenhelen.org for the current list of needed items.
We've seen a number of changes at the Raptor Center over four decades of tracking raptor admissions, intake numbers, species, and details on why the bird required our assistance. What we see at the Raptor Center is a small piece of information on raptors in Ohio, but can be combined with other data to tell a story.

Twenty-five years ago, the first Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas was completed, and a new Atlas is about to be published. We compared information from the two to see how it compared with our admission data. In the latest survey, the number of confirmed nests for almost all raptor species increased. This may because there are now more people out looking for birds, and does not necessarily mean a higher population for all of these species. “Old-timers” will tell you they think many raptor populations have decreased due to habitat loss. That may be true, especially for wintering raptors such as short-eared owls, Northern harriers, and long-eared owls, all dependent upon specific habitats.

In fact, the Northern harrier, formerly called the marsh hawk, is currently the only raptor listed as endangered in Ohio, and has not been admitted to the Raptor Center since 1999. The Atlas data does not show any raptor species with significant declines, but does show some with very significant increases: bald eagles, ospreys, peregrine falcons, and barn owls. Bald eagles and peregrine falcons were on the federal endangered species list twenty-five years ago, and on the state endangered list along with ospreys and barn owls. Today none of them are considered endangered, only listed as threatened in Ohio. Although none are common admissions to the Raptor Center, they are more likely to be admitted today than twenty-five years ago.

Before settlers arrived, bald eagles were plentiful along the Lake Erie coast, but population growth on the shoreline, followed by DDT, nearly wiped them out. With a ban on DDT, habitat management, and protection of nests, nesting pairs increased from five to 281 nests. Today there are at least four confirmed
nests within a thirty-minute drive of Glen Helen. Of the 19 eagles admitted over the past twenty-five years, 10 were in the last three years. Two nestlings came in from Springfield last spring after their nest collapsed, but rejoined parents several days later in an artificial nest. We also had one of the fledglings from the Eastwood Lake site for a week after it injured its wing.

Ospreys were once common in Ohio, but DDT took its toll on them, as well. None nested between 1913 and 1996. Then, an eight-year effort was started to reestablish a resident breeding population. Nestlings brought in from the East Coast for hacking were fed in boxes and after release, until they could hunt on their own. It was time-consuming, but resulted in confirmed nest sites going from 0 to 110. We spent many hours in a tree blind at Spring Valley Wildlife Area observing the young in the hack boxes, and tracking the fledglings. Last year our only osprey admission was an injured fledgling from Springfield, probably a descendant of one of the hacked birds.

When peregrine falcons disappeared from the eastern half of the United States because of DDT, Ohio joined the Midwest Peregrine Restoration Project, with the goal of establishing a pair in each city. In the old days we had a patrol of volunteers roaming Downtown Dayton with radios to observe and keep track of the young. Now most of the monitoring can be done viewing a “falcon cam,” as is true for the eagles at the Eastwood Lake site. Confirmed nests went from 0 to 40 over the years. (Check out both cameras on the Boonshoft Museum website, www.boonshoft.org.)

Barn owls became well established in Ohio by the 1950s, but ran into trouble as agricultural practices changed. With hundreds of nest boxes placed by Division of Wildlife staff, and careful monitoring, confirmed nests increased from 7 to 77 over the last twenty-five years. There are few confirmed nests in Southwest Ohio, however, so anyone with a barn owl sighting is asked to report it.

When eagles, ospreys, peregrines, and barn owls were listed as endangered, every individual was of importance to the population’s survival. Special permission was needed from state and federal officials to admit them, with approval for care, euthanasia, and release required. If surgery or special care was needed, we sent eagles, peregrines, and ospreys to The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota. Even Solo, our resident eagle until his death in March, was sent from South Carolina to Minnesota in 1979 for treatment. With populations rebounding, and qualified rehabilitators and veterinarians in each state, it is no longer necessary for birds to be transferred.

The Breeding Bird Atlas also showed a greater increase for Cooper’s hawks and red-shouldered hawks, and we have also had an increase in their admissions in recent years, quite dramatically with Cooper’s hawks. Twenty-five years ago, a Cooper’s hawk was an unusual arrival. Today it is in our top four along with red-tailed hawks, Eastern screech-owls, and great horned owls. It is probably because of the proliferation of urban and suburban bird feeders, which provide an avian and rodent banquet for them. Red-shouldered hawks have also become suburban nesters.
Solo, an American bald eagle, was hatched and grew up in rural South Carolina. As a young eagle, in 1979, he struck a power line and injured a wing. He was taken to the University of Minnesota Veterinary School for treatment, but could not be released back to the wild. He came to Yellow Springs in 1980 to be on display at the Glen Helen Building as part of a Smithsonian Institute traveling exhibit on eagles. When the exhibit was over, we acquired permits to keep him permanently in the Glen. He moved to the Outdoor Education Center to be on display and a cage was built for him at the Raptor Center in 1983.

Although early caregivers handled him for programs, it was decided that traveling was too stressful for him, so the rest of his years were spent peacefully in his cage, where visitors, thousands of them, came to him. He was quite set in his ways, and didn’t handle change well, but he seemed to enjoy visitors, and could often be coaxed into communicating with high-pitched squeals or quacking sounds. He loved good food, splashing in his pool or water bowl, and occasionally even catching a live fish. Even without being touched or handled, Solo established close bonds with his caregivers, and they with him.

This spring his 39 years finally caught up to him; Solo passed on peacefully one morning in late March. He was a wonderful ambassador for wildlife, and the first bald eagle many had the opportunity to meet. If he was unable to live out his life in the wild, what better place than in the Glen? Solo will be missed by many and has a special place in our hearts.

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Betty Ross (bross@glenhelen.org)

All photos, including Solo: Ron Austing
At Home in Glen Helen

The photography of Axel Bahnsen

Born in New York in 1907, Axel Bahnsen came to Yellow Springs in 1924 to attend Antioch College. It was here that he discovered his passion for photography. To the people of Yellow Springs, Axel was well known for his photography studio, a business that he maintained for much of his adult life.

For decades, Antioch College students had their annual photos taken by Bahnsen. Students and others who sat for him describe his interest in getting to know them before he snapped the photo – his sense that, to capture their essence, he had to first know who they were.

Outside of Southwestern Ohio, he was known as a celebrated practitioner of pictorialism, and one who was advancing the field of photography as an art form. He became the youngest Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain, and the Photographic Society of America ranked him as one of the world’s top 50 photographers. During his life he exhibited over 2,000 photographs in national and international competitions.

Glen Helen was frequently the subject of his landscape photography. Often, the images reflect his pictorialist aesthetic, conveying texture and mood, like a painting made with a camera. Glen Helen also features prominently in his portrait photography. One iconic image captured by Bahnsen features Hugh Taylor Birch, sitting with Arthur and Lucy Morgan.

Bahnsen became the youngest Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain, and the Photographic Society of America ranked him as one of the world’s top 50 photographers.
on the glacial erratic that we have since known as Helen’s Stone. The year was 1929, when Mr. Birch had just donated the Glen to Antioch College. Bahnsen would have been in his early ’20s. The photo’s backdrop shows how much the Glen has changed in 85 years, as areas that were then in agriculture have grown to become mature forest.

After Bahnsen’s death in 1978, his salon prints were given to Wright State University. Thousands of his negatives were given to Antioch College, where they are held in archive. Interest in Bahnsen’s legacy increased with the 2010 release of *Photographs by Axel Bahnsen*, published by the Yellow Springs Historical Society. The book, which features over one hundred of his salon images, can be purchased through www.axelbahnsen.com. On your next visit to Glen Helen, be sure to visit the lower level conference room, where you can see a number of Bahnsen’s works on display.

— Nick Boutis (nboutis@glenhelen.org)
Glen Helen’s 1,000 acres offers a unique ecological and geological classroom setting for the nearly 3,000 students who visit each school year. This provides ample opportunities for learning natural history. However, the Outdoor Education Center would be remiss if we didn’t also provide learning opportunities based on the area’s rich cultural history.

As students move through the Glen on our Cultural History hike, they explore the various groups of people who have lived in the area, starting with the first known inhabitants. Nearly 15,000 years ago, as the last glacier receded, people roamed what is now Southwestern Ohio, hunting now long-extinct megafauna such as mastodon, woolly mammoth, and saber-toothed cats. As trail groups move through time toward present day, students discover the nomadic Paleo-Indian and Archaic hunter-gatherers, as well as the more semi-permanent communities of Woodland mound builders, and Shawnee tribes who inhabited the area as settlers expanded west in Ohio through the 18th Century.

In each time period, students interpret how each culture interacted with the land, and how they influenced present-day Ohio. With guidance from their naturalists, students envision what the Glen looked like, how the land changed over time, and what life may have been like for each of these cultures. They see first-hand Clovis and Folsom spear points, used by Paleo-Indians and visit the Hopewell burial mound in Glen Helen, discussing the role earthworks played in native tribes, and the significance of agriculture in these communities and how it changed the course of life as we know it.

Imagine stepping back in time, to the late 18th Century. Your family has made its way to the Ohio Country from Massachusetts, where you ran a successful inn, through and despite the turmoil of the Revolutionary War. After months of traveling in a Conestoga wagon through the inhospitable terrain of the Appalachian Mountains, you’ve arrived, deed in hand, to start a new life in the Northwest Territory. In what sort of environment would you find yourself? How would you provide for your family? What challenges would you face?

Through Living History, students reenact the challenges of life in the Ohio country 210 years ago. Above, two pioneer women share resources.

While Cultural History includes the breadth of Ohio’s human history, our Living History program brings the region’s more recent history to life. Living History is set in the wake of the Northwest Indian War, after Native Americans ceded land in Southern Ohio to the United States for further settlement, while retaining much of Northwestern Ohio through the signing of the Greenville Treaty. Students travel as family groups, each with a different backstory, encountering and interacting with historical figures.
thrilling tales from the Revolutionary War firsthand from Betty Zane, gather in a wigwam and learn the Shawnee language from Tecumseh himself, and experience a frontier classroom with a very strict teacher. They then trade in their deed, earned through service in the Revolutionary War, for 100 acres of fertile land, all while trading goods such as fur, native seeds, medicinal remedies, cloth, and more to ensure their family can meet all of its needs.

Naturalists portraying both fictional and true-to-history figures encourage students to ask questions and become a part of the tableau. Through their interactions with various people and their differing motivations and world-views, students experience the harshness of frontier life and tensions between settlers and the Shawnee people as a result of the Greenville Treaty. Our living drama allows students to paint a vivid portrait of regional, national, and international influences of Ohio’s history, where textbooks can only provide a brief sketch.

The Outdoor Education Center takes pride in providing a well-rounded environmental education experience through its Cultural and Living History offerings. Just as our geology, animal classification, forest ecology and environmental problem solving hikes align with science learning standards, our Cultural and Living History hikes correspond with required social studies content, especially for fourth graders. In a region with such rich and meaningful history, Glen Helen provides a unique opportunity for students to explore and discover some of the Miami Valley’s most pivotal time periods.

– Janene Giuseffi (jgiuseffi@glenhelen.org)

Students meet trappers, nurses, and native people, all the while learning how they survived on the frontier and built a living off the land.
It’s an early morning in early spring, and a small crew has assembled at the north end of the Glen Helen parking lot. They’re an imposing bunch, outfitted with ropes, chainsaws, and leather gloves. Still, they seem to be friendly enough. Strike up a conversation with the group and you learn that they are volunteers working with George Bieri to spend the day working on land restoration in the Glen.

Today they’ll be starting to take out honeysuckle on the edge of the gorge just north of the Vernet Ecological Center. It’s an important area to restore. By mid-April, a profusion of native plants, including Jack in the pulpit, Cut-leaved toothwort, and Mayapple will be emerging, and the thick stand of honeysuckle threatens their survival. But, the edge of the cliff is a tough area to work, which is why George has put off this project for years, even as he’s made meaningful progress pushing back invasive species elsewhere in the preserve. Today, however, is the day of reckoning for this particular stand of honeysuckle.

The most limber of the volunteers dons a harness and safety gear, and reaches out to the cliff edge, to saw off and treat the honeysuckle. The crew pulls the cut branches back to the trail where they can be chipped. The chipplings will create a mulched section of trail in an area that was often muddy.

Over the course of the morning, the vista opens up. Now, from the trail, you can look past the cliff edge, and down toward the gorge formed by the Yellow Springs Creek. Progress is slow, yet satisfying.

George Bieri grew up in Yellow Springs, or more particularly, he grew...
up in Glen Helen. His father Bob was a professor of botany and environmental studies at Antioch College. From an early age, George learned about the plants and places of Glen Helen, and gained a deep connection to the preserve.

It pained him to see invasive species gain a foothold in Glen Helen. The foothold was followed by a choke grip. Now, fifty years after honeysuckle became firmly established in the Glen, George is working to remove it from the most ecologically sensitive parts of the preserve.

March and April are pivotal months for invasive species removal in the Glen, because most of the fragile, herbaceous plants have not yet emerged. Between May and mid-summer, honeysuckle removal will need to be put on hold while we wait for all of the trilliums and bluebells and other perennial wildflowers to go dormant.

On a map that he updates daily, the priority areas of the preserve are encircled with a red pen. As he and the crew push back honeysuckle, George colors in the restored area with orange. Each year the map shows more orange. Progress!

Another day finds George closing rogue trails in the north part of the preserve. The trails, which lead down from the Inman Trail to Birch Creek, traverse some of the most ecologically significant land in the Glen. Perhaps they were begun by deer, but eventually a steady stream of human foot traffic has started to widen them. The soil is becoming compacted and eroded, and the wildflowers that were there last year won’t return if action isn’t taken. From elsewhere in the Glen, George carries a mass of thorny branches, placing them in the path of the rogue trail. This disincentive will hopefully keep both people and deer on the main trail system.

Trail obstructions are sometimes more of a challenge than trail closures. A large tree can take a team effort to cut, drag, and roll from the trail. Often, multiple trees will fall across the trail in the same spot. The crew needs to remove the trunks and branches in the right order, so that they avoid the danger of having limbs fall on them. It requires surgical precision by chainsaw. George is attuned to the aesthetics of a fallen tree – even one that blocks a trail. He knows that we’ll be looking at the tree for decades as it decomposes in place, and will take effort to arrange the branches so that, to the extent possible, they appear to be unmanipulated by human hands.

Stewarding Glen Helen is a big job, and George has benefitted over the years from a handful of volunteers who join him regularly out on the trail. Several, including Harvey Curran and Tony Pope, have been helping for years.

They carry out their work year in, year out. Including when it is cold out. Including when it is wet out. One spring morning, as thunder closed in, they worked to install protective signage at the Glen Helen boundary with John Bryan State Park. Rain cascaded off them as George and the others tamped Osage orange posts into the ground. Not many people would be keen to take on this type of challenge, but here, for George and his volunteers, the term “labor of love” is apt.

– Nick Boutis (nboutis@glenhelen.org)
Seeking Great Images for Our 2015 Wall Calendar!

The diversity of habitats and wildlife in Glen Helen provides outstanding photo opportunities for photographers at all levels of experience. We invite both first time visitors and long time friends to send us photographs taken in the Glen for a chance to be featured in our wall calendar. High-resolution, horizontal, natural-light photos are preferred.

We hope for images that convey the different moods and seasons of Glen Helen – an iced-over spring, a flower or animal only found at a certain time of year, a lush green meadow on a summer day, a foggy morning sunrise in late fall – anything that captures what is special about Glen Helen.

The deadline for submission is July 31st, 2014. Submission forms are available at glenhelen.org. Proceeds from the calendar sales support the Glen.

“Whoo Cooks for You?” Returns September 14

When the barred owl sounds its call, “Whoo Cooks For You,” Glen Helen answers. Celebrated chefs from Dorothy Lane Market, Fresco, Meadowlark, Roost Modern Italian, Rue Dumaine, Season’s Bistro, and Wheat Penny will cook for you at the fifth annual benefit dinner for the Raptor Center on Sunday, September 14. Dinner will be a bountiful six-course meal created by chefs who truly believe in good food and good relationships with local providers.

Enjoy great music, a silent auction, Ohio wine and beer, and close encounters with our raptors. Proceeds support the education and rehabilitation work of the Raptor Center.

Tickets are available on-line at glenhelen.org. Participation is limited, and we expect to sell out again this year, so make your plans now!

Our Wish List

We are always in need of miscellaneous items for our educational programs, staff houses, and land stewardship work. Do you have a set of quality gardening tools that you’re no longer using?

How about a gift card to Lowe’s or Home Depot that you don’t see yourself using?

Perhaps you’ve been wondering what you should do with those seven bolts of fabric that once seemed like the perfect material for curtains on the veranda?

We can use items like these, and your donations allow us to save crucial dollars.

Our current list of wish list items can be found at glenhelen.org – click on the “giving” tab at the upper right of the page.
“The earth has music for those who listen.”
– George Santayana

Members provide direct support to Glen Helen’s land, trails, and programs. You hike it. You love it. Support it. www.glenhelen.org/membership