



Habitats on The Quarry Farm: The Quarry

Yes, there really is a quarry on The Quarry Farm. In the 1870s, the Sackett family started a quarrying operation in the limestone bedrock east of Cranberry Run, a short distance from the present location of Red Fox Cabin. In the 1890s, they abandoned the quarry, perhaps because of an active spring uncovered in the southeast corner. Over the ensuing decades, the quarry became a popular swimming hole for skinny-dipping teenagers and a prime fishing spot for bass, bluegill, and crappies that thrived in the clear, cool, spring-fed water. It also provided a habitat for turtles, frogs, and other aquatic creatures. Great Blue Herons nesting in a Cottonwood tree on the bank had a readily available feast. Even after Carl and Joyce Seitz bought the property in the 1940s, families came on sunny Sunday afternoons to fish and picnic on the banks.

Events in the 1960s caused dramatic changes to the quarry. Cranberry Run, for miles upstream, was ditched and channelized to increase drainage from farm fields. The ditching operation invaded The Quarry Farm, widening and straightening little Cranberry Run, which enabled greater water volume and more forceful currents to rush past the quarry. Heavy rain occasionally produced lake-like floods that covered the quarry and surroundings. The bank separating



The quarry shrinks in late summer, with springs providing moisture for thrifty wildlife.

Baby Wood Ducks forage in the duck weed that grows on the quarry wetland's surface. (Photo by Deb Weston)

During the years since, the quarry has become a shallow wetlands pond. While it is no longer a fishing hole for humans, it has re-established itself as a rich wildlife habitat offering breeding ground, food, and/or shelter in season to many animal and plant species. Deer and other wild animals come to drink. Several species of turtles can be seen sunning on logs and rocks. Blanchard's Cricket frogs, leopard frogs, and bullfrogs breed in the shallows, sound off in the spring, feed on insects, and become part of the food chain. Dragonflies dart above the surface, voraciously devouring mosquitoes. In the spring, wood ducks and mallards may nest on the banks and launch their ducklings on the pond. Other waterfowl species like Great Blue Herons, Green Herons, and Belted Kingfishers visit to lunch on minnows, frogs, and sometimes trapped carp that have washed over the restored dividing wall by floodwaters. In the summer, duckweed, a tiny plant often mistaken for algae, blankets the surface and provides salad for waterfowl and fish and cover for aquatic creatures below. Other water-loving flowering plants like native Wild Iris and Lizard's Tail bloom in the shallow water.



Wild Iris bloom along the edge.

By the end of a dry summer, which is often the case these days, the water has mostly evaporated and life in the quarry appears to be extinguished. But with spring rains, plants and animals burst forth from wherever and however they have been overwintering. The quarry is once again a lively wetlands habitat where visitors can explore and learn.

—The Gardener at The Quarry Farm

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Do you have questions, want to schedule an outing or workshop for your group or keep up with what's happening here? Email thequarryfarm@gmail.com, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and visit www.thequarryfarm.org or call 567-376-0705.

Donations to The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a 501(c)(3) public charity, are tax-deductible.

Summer 2025 Programs & Events

Dress for the weather, including good walking shoes, and meet in Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora. Tax-deductible donations are appreciated.

Create an Herb Kokedama

Saturday, July 19, 2–3:30 p.m.

Preregister by July 12 at thequarryfarm@gmail.com

Kokedama is a centuries-old Japanese form of garden art that is closely tied to the practice of bonsai. Whether you're passionate about DIY gardening projects, looking for a green décor idea for your home, or simply need a mindful therapy to relax, join us to create and learn to care for your own herb garden art through this fun and easy activity. **Workshop Fee: \$20 per person (includes all plants and planting materials)**

Adventures with Tea w/ Kathleen: Teas, Tweets, & Sweets

Saturday, August 9, 2–4 p.m.

Register at www.kathleenskitchenhomebakedgoodness.com/product-page/the-quarry-farm-tea-tweets-sweets

Listen to the beautiful call of resident birds while sharing tea. Your reservation will include a selection of 3 teas paired with a thoughtfully curated 3 course tasting menu that celebrates the herbs grown there in the Quarry Farm garden. Kathleen will provide historical and cultural references related to the teas served. There are always a variety of feathered friends at the farm to serenade visitors, so we will keep our eyes and ears open in hopes that many choose to join us. **Registration: \$20 person (\$5 of every registration will be donated directly to the Quarry Farm)**

The Quarry Farm 5K

Saturday, September 13, 10 a.m.

(check-in opens 8:45 a.m.)

Walkers and runners will start at the Seitz Family Pavilion. Check-in is from 8:45 to 9:30 a.m. Please present ID to receive participation packet. The 5K run/walk will start at 10 a.m. (line-up at 9:55 a.m.) The race will be held rain or shine (unless there is lightning) so please dress appropriately and wear layers if necessary. **Entry forms are available at www.thequarryfarm.org under Upcoming Events.** Print and complete the registration and mail with entry fee to The Quarry Farm, 14321 Road 7L, Pandora, OH 45877 or register the day of the event. **Registration: \$25 per person (must be received by August 15, 2025, in order to receive the 5K T-shirt)**

Follow us on Facebook to find out about pop-up events like night-time Star Walks.





Mission Statement

It is our goal and mission to provide the opportunity for people of all ages to increase their understanding of the natural environment of Northwest Ohio and to interact with their fellow inhabitants in a sustainable manner.



A large early Question Mark Butterfly sunned itself in the nature preserve.

The Quarry Farm Newsletter is a quarterly publication for supporters of The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a nonprofit organization in Pandora, Ohio.

On the cover: Participants in the Putnam County Educational Service Center summer camp explored Cranberry Run.

All photographs printed in this newsletter were taken on The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm.

www.thequarryfarm.org



Printed on recycled, recyclable paper

Under One Big Sky

Putnam County Head Start invited us in for our first Spring program visit on April 9. It was Lavender the Bantee's first outing as well, and she cooed to her new small friends even when it was Tyree the Cornsnake's turn to meet everyone. The morning was also the last time that beloved Estella the Virginia Opossum was able to represent her species. Estella died later in the season after living almost four years. Her gentle nature provided a perfect introduction for many people to North America's only marsupial.

On April 10, Bonnie Brooks led "Women for the Land: Birding Workshop" that featured Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) educational staff as guides. The evening including a presentation in the pavilion and a stop at Steve's summer kitchen during the late hike. Bonnie came back during the second week in June



Junior Naturalists seined in in the clear water of Cranberry Run.

to conduct a three-day Junior Naturalist Camp. They explored the creek, looked through a telescope at the evening sky, and reviewed basic survival skills. "You DO have great water quality. I have never seen so many stone flies in my life!" said Bonnie. "I see these kids the whole school year in a classroom so to see them exploring outside in a creek... that's what my dreams are made of. What a difference in learning."

From 9 to 11 a.m. on May 12, participants in the annual Spring Bird Migration Hike followed the pointing fingers of Deb Weston and David Smith to catch a glimpse of brilliant spring plumage. That morning, the group documented 46 bird species in the wetlands, pollinator gardens, and upland forest of The Quarry Farm nature preserve. Six days later, Deb had a first for herself and The Quarry Farm. Among the 52 bird species that she reported on eBird, "I heard and saw a Connecticut Warbler on the trail before the creek overlook," noted Deb. This bird sighting brought The Quarry Farm's avian species list to 151. That number became 152 on May 26 when Deb identified two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers along the preserve trails.

Miller City-New Cleveland School invited The Quarry Farm to present during the annual end-of-year "School's Cool" day. The theme was based on Dr. Seuss' *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*. Instead of fish, students met Tyree and new educational ambassador Winston the Virginia Opossum.

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Steve introduced Lavender to the Head Start students.



Hiking to see migrating birds before they see you

Resident Spotlight: Grandpa Guinea

People invest a fair amount in home alarm systems. As long as the battery is operating, a cheap button doorbell will at least allow someone to notify you of their presence. For a substantial investment, you can capture photos of someone prowling outside your house and make them infamous on social media. But where's the fun in that? With a pair of Guinea Fowl, you will know immediately of any intruders, trespassers that include two-footed, four-footed, winged, and wheeled.



Modern Guinea Fowl originated in Africa a very long time ago. Even longer ago—56 to 33.9 million years—the extinct genus of birds *Telecrex* that was associated with guinea fowl inhabited Mongolia. Guineas have been around for a minute, and they look and behave like the tiny flocks of *Gallinimus* that you see running through fields in the 1993 film *Jurassic Park*. The tiny dinosaurs race over the grassland, weaving around the main human characters, and you know something big and toothy is on its way.

The Quarry Farm farm animal sanctuary is currently home to seven Helmeted Guinea Fowl. These birds have featherless heads as is typical of the species, with the addition of a curved, bony crest on top. They are quick to react by running in every direction, popping straight up in the air, and sounding an acoustically resonant alarm. It appears, to us anyway, that alarmed guineas sometimes run away from perceived harm and don't recognize where they are. Visitors ask, "Why is that bird yelling? Is it OK?" The answer always seems to be that it has found itself apart from the flock and hasn't turned around to notice that the other guineas are calmly hunting just a few feet away.

Grandpa Guinea is one of the oldest members of The Quarry Farm flock. For more than a decade, Grandpa and his mate Lavender have rummage through the grasses, soils, and brush in search of ticks, slugs, beetles, reptiles, ants, and anything else that members of their ancient species can capture. If the two become separated by the width of a board, a bucket, or any manner than prevents one from seeing the other, they panic. They call at drumming decibels until they are together as is the norm for a species that is known to mate for life.

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June 2 marked the second time that the Putnam County Educational Service Center held a full day of outdoor Summer Camp here. We started the day with an attempt at making bioplastic suncatchers. The recipe didn't work, but we have a new one lined up that will. We gathered invasive honeysuckle trunks and beaded them for use as hiking sticks, visited the farm animal sanctuary, then did stream quality monitoring in Cranberry Run where we found excellent results based on the aquatic macroinvertebrates that we found in our seines. We also saw a young banded water snake that allowed us to get close enough to see its pattern before it disappeared in the bank roots.



Summer campers arranged flowers, leaves, and grasses for bioplastic suncatchers.

Thank you...

- ...to Melissa Basinger and the PC ESC for a day of summer camp
- ...to Bonnie Brooks for conducting the Putnam SWCD Jr. Naturalist programs
- ...to David Seitz for trail maintenance and hydrological engineering
- ...to Martha Erchenbrecher for assisting with the PC ESC Summer Camp
- ..to Debbie Leiber and Deb Weston for mowing trails
- ...to David Seitz for honeysuckle and vine removal
- ...to Rita Seitz for talking about bats, owls, and how to observe wildlife at MCNC "School's Cool"
- ...to Deb Weston and David Smith for leading bird migration hikes

Monetary Donations:

- Doug Alexander
- Bruce Coburn in memory of Bert Coburn
- Maya Fischhoff
- Suzanne Frey
- Leticia Regalado
- Alison Rood
- Cathy Rupert
- In honor of Deb Weston's birthday:
- Becky Lieber
 - Deb Lieber
 - Dwain Lieber
 - David Smith
 - Deb Weston