

Habitats on The Quarry Farm: The Prairie

The space that is our developing prairie habitat used to be called simply “the back field.” A trail heading downhill from Red Fox Cabin, across Cranberry Run, around the quarry, up a hill, and through the woods leads to eleven acres that were tilled until 1985. The tractor path to the field skirted Cranberry Run for a stretch, where it narrowed to inaccessibility due to erosion. Farming the field had to be abandoned. A new direction for The Quarry Farm took shape: to establish a nature preserve with several distinct habitats, including a prairie in the back field.

As seeds and rootstock in the soil sprang up and spread, the field began to look a bit like a grassy prairie. There were some food sources and cover for rabbits and small animals like field mice and voles. They in turn fed predators like great horned owls, red-tailed hawks, and foxes. Seed-eating and insect-loving birds could feed and nest. In early spring, a visitor might be lucky enough to witness a mating American woodcock rise explosively into the dusk.



Migrating monarch butterflies find shelter and native foods in the prairie (Photo by Deb Weston)

That early resemblance to a prairie was deceiving though. Too much of the vegetation was non-native (teasel, for example), offering too little support for native birds, insects, and small animals. In no time, the field began to fill up with honey locust, hawthorn, and black walnut seedlings (native, but unwelcome outside the adjacent woods). Multiflora rose and Asian bush honeysuckle invaded.

Clearly, if The Quarry Farm was to have the prairie habitat we envisioned, management would be necessary. Recent years have been a learning process. We’ve tried to find the most efficient, least harmful ways to squelch invasives and non-natives so that we can eventually claim a true prairie habitat with a balanced ecosystem. Consultants have shared their expertise. Wonderful volunteers and



Wild Turkeys in the Prairie (Photo by Deb Weston)

skilled hirees have hacked, dug, and bulldozed trees; cleared ground and spread seeds of native prairie plants; and mowed spent growth to encourage the spread of native grasses and wildflowers. The search for best management practices goes on. We know the work of developing and maintaining a distinct prairie habitat may never be done, but we’ll have the joy of providing the creatures that find a home there the best chance to thrive. And we can share it with visitors like you.

—The Gardener at The Quarry Farm



The Putnam County Master Gardeners dedicated a great deal of time and elbow grease to reshaping their pollinator plant specimen garden this summer. Look for spectacular blooms in 2026!

Fall 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. There is no fee to participate unless noted otherwise. **Tax-deductible donations are welcome.**

October Big Day
Saturday, October 11, 10 a.m.

October 11 is October Big Day, the first day of the international effort known as Global Bird Weekend. Join birders Deb Weston and David Smith at The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm on that day for a 10 a.m. hike to record the species that you see in the nature preserve. The complete list will be submitted to ebird.org to join the global team and help set a new record for birding. Admission is free but donations are appreciated. The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm is located 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora. We will meet in the red-roofed Seitz Family Pavilion.

Open Fridays at the Kitchen
Beginning Friday, November 7, 7 a.m.

You won’t have to miss your favorite Farmer’s Market breads, bagels, macaron, and scones this winter because The House That is a Kitchen is now open Fridays, 7–10 a.m. 12–6 p.m. at The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm. Call 419-672-0981 to order or stop in at the copper-roofed kitchen. Breads include:

- Sourdough, Cinnamon Raisin Sourdough, Cinnamon Babka, Gran’s Milk & Honey, Chocolate Walnut Babka, Sandwich Rye, Honey Oatmeal
- New York-Style Bagels: Plain, Everything, Salt
- French Macaron with buttercream or curd filling

National Hiking Day Hike at Night
Saturday, November 15, 6 p.m.

National Hiking Day is Monday, November 17. We are celebrating just over a day early—at night. Put on good walking shoes, weather-appropriate clothes and join us on the nature preserve trails to enjoy the mental and physical health benefits of hiking.

Gingerbread Decorating Day
Saturday, December 13, 12 p.m.

Help us decorate gingerbread leaves, as well as “seed pinecones” (cookies for wildlife), on National Gingerbread Decorating Day. We will have hot chocolate for cookie-dipping. **Preregistration by email is required by 5 p.m. on Monday, December 8. Email: thequarryfarm@gmail.com** Fee: \$5 per person.



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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.



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.



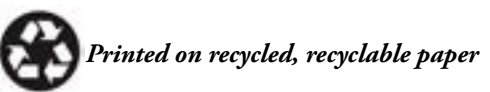
A Brown Thrasher posed magnificently for Deb Weston in the nature preserve in late summer.

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: *American Goldfinch feasts on fall bounty. (Photo by Deb Weston)*

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

www.thequarryfarm.org



Under One Big Sky

July 19 was a day to dig fingers into soil, add water, pack it into a ball, plant an herb inside, and wrap the whole thing in moss to create an herb Kokedama, a centuries-old Japanese form of garden art that is closely tied to the practice of bonsai. Several went home with participants and a few now hang off the porch of the summer kitchen until winter.



Tyree at Ottawa Kidfest

Ottawa Kidfest happened on August 9 and Tyree the Red Ratsnake (also called a Corn snake) was a gentle introduction to snakes for many visitors. On August 16, we adopted a very young Corn snake from Heartland Small Animal Rescue in Mishawaka, IN. We are calling him “Siyo Inada” (see-yoh ee-nuh-dah), Cherokee for “Hello Snake”. Corn snakes are native to the Southeast US, what was the traditional Cherokee Nation’s territory before they were forcibly relocated to Oklahoma.

September 13 was a beautiful day for our annual 5K. The event took place a month early this year, but runners came out to raise funds and enjoy the quiet country road race. Asher Haselman took first place.

The Garden Basket Herb Society conducted their August meeting in the Seitz Family Pavilion. Artist Mary Willets, proprietor of The Paper Garden by Min, was the special guest. She led the group in the creation of individual paper floral arrangements.

Putnam County Soil & Water Conservation District held their annual 5th Grade Conservation Tour on September 23 and 25. Winston the Virginia Opossum met almost every fifth grade student in the county throughout the tour at Memorial Park in Ottawa.



Jackie Frey shared a photo of the kokedama that she made here.



Siyo Inada



Paper flower sculpting in the pavilion



Asher Haselman took first place in the 2025 5K (Photo by Deb Weston)

Resident Spotlight:

Pongo

The small goat herd in the farm animal sanctuary includes two brothers that are frequently mistaken for very small cows. Their black and white patches do make them resemble miniature Holsteins. Patches and Pongo arrived here a few years back, delivered by a family that could no longer care for them. Patches still has the nubbin of one horn but his head is free of any curving horns to threaten his milky blue eyes. Pongo, on the other hand, came with a full set of horns that continued to grow. This year, one horn curled tightly to his cheek until it began to abraid the skin below one brown eye. He made a road trip this summer to Ohio State University Farm Animal Services in Marysville for a dramatic trim.

Horn removal in an adult goat is major surgery. You may recall that we had Pongo’s horns removed a couple of years back. This resulted in great pits in his skull that left his cranium open for months, requiring daily dressing changes, sprays, and wrapping. With that lesson learned, we elected to have Pongo’s horns cut close to his head instead. This was still invasive enough to leave an opening to his sinus cavity, but one that could heal and close quickly. He was sedated and both horns were sawed off and cauterized. The area required fly spray for a few days to prevent insects from entering the cavity and laying eggs, but he is now fine and back with his buddies.



Volunteer Spotlight:

ONU ACE Day

Ohio Northern University observed their annual ACE Day on August 23 to introduce incoming students to the surrounding community through service projects. The crew that volunteered their time and sweat here pulled invasive plants and brush from the fence line and pollinator beds. Past ACE Day participants pulled and cut invasive honeysuckle in the nature preserve and painted the outbuildings in the farm animal sanctuary. We love to have the volunteers onsite, as do the farm animal sanctuary residents who try to “help.”



Thank you...

- ...to Dave and Jane Hilty for sweet corn for the animals
- ...to ONU ACE Day participants for painting outbuildings
- ...to David Seitz for honeysuckle and vine removal and hydrological engineering
- ...to Rita Seitz for Kidfest puppeteering
- ...to Debbie Lieber and Deb Weston for mowing the hiking trails

Monetary Donations:

- Bruce Coburn in memory of Bert Coburn
- GSWO 16227
- Leticia Regalado
- Cathy Rupert



Beatrice the Pot-bellied Pig took her last ride in a car on August 29. She arrived here as a little pig, scared and confused. She joined First Pig Gertie in the kitchen: a duo of potbellies who watched Steve’s every epicurean move. She sashayed through the garden to join schoolchildren as they laughed and lunched on brown-bagged deliciousness. She rooted and ran, and lounged in sunny patches of grass. We miss sweet Bea and are grateful that we got to share so much of her life. **Thank you to everyone who shared kindness, apples, pumpkins, and other treats with her over the years.**