

Quarry Farm Art Workshops

Calling all young artists & families!

Join us for creative, hands-on art experiences this year!

Feb. 16, 2026

Putnam County ESC

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

• **Create a Bark Mask**

• Limited to 20 students + 20 parents/guardians!

June 4, 2026

The Quarry Farm

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

• **Make a Leaf Stepper**

• Limited to 15 student-adult pairs!

Who: Students in grades K–12

Bring a guest: Parent, grandparent, guardian, or family member

Sign Up Online!

✓ Scan Here ✓

Register Today!

- ✓ Name
- ✓ Email
- ✓ Phone Number
- ✓ Grade
- ✓ Workshop Date & Guest Info

PC ESC

Link to register:
<https://forms.gle/VDHkLTcMcJ5wEhxE9>

Thank you...

...to Martha and Mike Erchenbrecher for produce
 ...to Dave and Jane Hilty for pumpkins
 ...to Karen Meyer for pumpkins
 ...to David Seitz for honeysuckle and vine removal
 ...to Keith Seitz for donating his hand-crafted wooden bowls and charcuterie boards as fundraisers
 ...to Casey Walker for produce
 ...to Deb Weston and David Smith for leading the Fall October Big Day hike

Monetary Donations:

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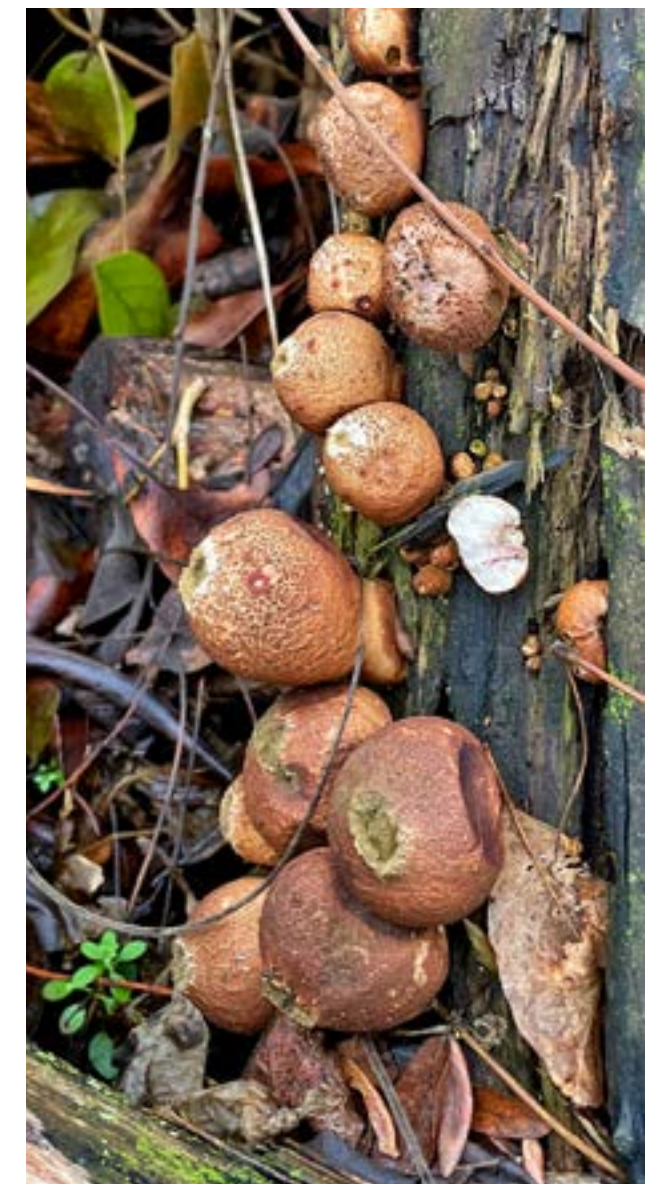
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Do you have questions, want to schedule an outing or workshop for your group or keep up with what's happening here? Email thequarryfarm@gmail.com, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and visit www.thequarryfarm.org or call 567-376-0705 (please leave a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

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.



Buddy slurps his vitamins in pumpkin form.

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: *This Fall was full of fungus wonders in the preserve.*

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

www.thequarryfarm.org



Under One Big Sky

Saturday, October 11 was October Big Day, the first day of the international effort known as Global Bird Weekend. Birders Deb Weston and David Smith led the morning hike to document Big Day birds in the nature preserve. The complete list was submitted to ebird.org. Twenty-one species were recorded, including Turkey Vulture, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, Carolina Chickadee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Ring-billed Gull.



Deb's Sharp-shinned Hawk

Kinglet instead of the one that wears a ruby hat. The total number of species that have been identified here is now 154, with Deb and David leading the flock.

A new adventure began November 7 at the south end of the pollinator garden. The green summer kitchen is open every Friday at 7 a.m. now (except for holidays) with Steve's breads, bagels, macaron, and scones on the table.

The water pans and buckets could still be filled by the outdoor hose in late October. On November 10, we woke to an inch of snow and a wagon full of frozen Hilty Farm pumpkins. Dave and Jane brought their juicy orange produce to rave donkey and pig reviews. The Hilty wagon supply was gradually whittled away, but other generous folk periodically delivered their fall squashes to add to the feast.

Bitter December cold put the kabosh on the planned gingerbread decorating/public hike. We still walked the trails in search of tree bark that had fallen during high winds. As leaves are dried and fallen, one of the best ways to identify trees is by their outer coats. So when the Putnam County Educational Service Center invited us to craft an Art in Nature event, we decided that a creative adventure in tree bark identification was just the ticket. Check out the registration details for the February 16 "Create a Bark Mask" workshop on the back page, as well as early registration access to a spring "Make a Leaf Stepper" event.



Girl Scout Troop 16227 flexed outdoor skills here on October Big Day.

A few days later on October 15, a new species bumped The Quarry Farm's ebird.org tally. Deb said, "28 species today. We had 20 American Pipits in the field across the street. Also, had a Sharp-shinned Hawk flying around the prairie. We're at 154--very exciting. Luckily, David had his spotting scope so we could make sure they were pipits and not Horned Larks."

The last 2025 birding expedition on the trails was taken by Deb on November 20. She spotted 21 species, including a Golden-crowned



Patches dives into a Hilty pumpkin

Habitats on The Quarry Farm: Cranberry Run

Cranberry Run is a natural stream that enters The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve on its southern edge behind the farm animal sanctuary. It winds through the bottomland and past the quarry, crosses the property line on the northern edge, and flows into Riley Creek about one hundred yards later.

When The Quarry Farm came into the family in the 1940's, our stretch of Cranberry Run was narrow and winding, with gently sloping banks and a stony bed. We called it "Little Cranberry." Its flow cut close to limestone bedrock in places, and because its elevation dropped sharply as it neared Riley Creek, the current tended to be swift and clear. It was known then as a prime spawning ground for bass. It was exciting on occasion to spot an elusive creature like the Common Mudpuppy, a large, nocturnal aquatic salamander. Muskrat burrows were a common sight just above the water's edge. Crawdads hid under the rocks, and minnows swirled and darted. Food for wildlife was plentiful.



Common Mudpuppy (Photo Ohio University)

As touched upon in the Summer 2025 newsletter, powers-that-be decided in the 1960's that little Cranberry Run was probably holding up water draining off fields to the south. They failed to consider its rapid drop in elevation. Moving in with heavy equipment, they proceeded to turn Cranberry Run into a drainage ditch by channelizing its course—straightening, deepening, and widening. As more acreage to the south was tiled, run-off from heavy rains became swift torrents that scoured the banks, created temporary lakes in the surrounding lowland at least once a year, and even shifted the course of the stream in places. Cranberry Run became inhospitable to many of the previous inhabitants. The stream's role as a bass-spawning ground came to an end. In the mid 1980's the dredging was repeated.

Fast-forwarding to 2026, I wish I could report that Cranberry Run is once again a gentle, meandering stream

Resident Spotlight: Guineas

Guinea fowl are prehistoric-looking birds that are particularly well-suited to consuming massive quantities of ticks, which might otherwise spread Lyme disease. The 7 Jurassic Park wannabes that pop up and down the farm animal sanctuary like Jack-in-Box toys are Helmeted Guinea Fowl. They are a quick, gregarious group who sound the alarm at threatening things. They call if they can't see each other. When calling together, the instance begins with one individual and then builds to a raucous chorus. When they fall silent, that void of sound gives them a great opeing to grab any unsuspecting insect that was stunned at the feet of their wall of sound.

teeming with wildlife. While that hasn't happened, some of the news is positive. Improved tiling technology and upgraded septic systems in the watershed have reduced the amount of sediment and impurities in the water. On the bank, grassy plants and native trees like cottonwood and hackberry do their part to filter and hold soil. The water quality can support animals like the Northern Water Snake (nonvenomous!), which we sometimes glimpse lying in wait for prey in quiet shallows. Deer and waterfowl can safely drink, wade, fish, and swim. The first dredging operation unintentionally produced an ongoing ecological gift: excavators had cut off a loop in the stream that formed an oxbow. Vernal pools collect there, ideal for frogs and other animals and plants—arrowhead, for instance--that prefer quiet water and boggy conditions.



Summer camp students explore a biological sample from Cranberry Run.

Cranberry Run has served us well as an outdoor learning lab. A visit last summer by students attending an Educational Service Center day camp is one example. The students waded into the water for a stream quality monitoring workshop near the south end of the nature preserve. Assisted by our resident expert, Anne Coburn-Griffis, they identified Good to Excellent water quality, which was indicated by a low sediment level and aquatic creatures like mayfly larvae, gilled snails, and riffle beetles. Whenever we hike along Cranberry Run, we are happy to see a clear plume of water where the stream flows into Riley Creek. We hope Cranberry Run can remain a clean, healthy aquatic habitat for many years to come.

—The Gardener at The Quarry Farm

