PROJECT NATURE NEWSLETTER

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AUGUST, 2019 ISSUE

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Events

Insect Chorus Walk
Blacklick Woods Metro Park - Nature Center
10th August 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm, 9:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Learn what insects can be heard singing either during the day or at night, then take a half-mile walk to listen for them

Weekly Bird Hike
Scioto Audobon Metro Park - Grange Insurance Audobon Center
10th, 17th, 24th August 10:00 am - 11:30 am
Hike with experienced birders to find and learn about birds (Binoculars and field guides can be provided)

Evening Garden Walk
Inniswood Metro Gardens - Garden Entrance
11th & 25th August 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Take a guided stroll through the Gardens

Raptor Sunday
Blendon Woods Metro Park - Nature Center
11th August 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
The Ohio Wildlife Center will bring a few of their live birds of prey for a presentation about these amazing predators

Sunny Sundays
Inniswood Metro Gardens - Herb Garden
11th, 18th, 25th August 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
On Sundays throughout the summer, members of the Herb Society of America, Central Ohio Unit, will be in the Herb Garden to answer visitors' questions.

Hike To The Giants
Highbanks Metro Park - Oak Coves Picnic Area
11th August 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
Hike a rugged 4-miles off-trail to the 300-year-old giant sycamores along the Olentangy river

Family Creeking Adventure
Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park - Cedar Ridge
11th, 17th August 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Get wet as we catch fish, bugs, and crawdads in the Big Darby Creek

Ranger Bike Ride
Blacklick Woods Metro Park - Nature Center
17th August 10:00 am - 11:00 am
Join a park ranger on a 6-mile bike ride along the Blacklick Creek Greenway Trail

Caterpillar Crawl
Blacklick Woods Metro Park - Nature Center
17th August 9:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Take a half-mile walk to search trees and shrubs for caterpillars and see them fluoresce under light

Memory Rock Sunrise Hike
Clear Creek Metro Park - Park Office
17th August 5:30 am - 8:30 am
Join the park naturalist for a rugged 5-mile backcountry hike to view the sunrise from Memory Rock

Feed The Stream
Battelle Darby Metro Park - Nature Center
18th & 31st August 1:00 pm - 1:30 pm
Enjoy the fish feeding frenzy as you help feed them worms, crickets and minnows in the living stream at the Nature Center

Family Creeking
Blendon Woods Metro Park - Nature Center
18th August 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Look for salamanders and other creatures that live in the stream

Events

Butterfly Pursuit
Highbanks Metro Park - Nature Center
24th August 11:00 am - 12:30 pm
Take a 2.5 mile hike to find some of the most beautiful butterflies of the season and learn how to identify them

Meet The Beetles Display
Blacklick Woods Metro Park - Nature Center
24th & 25th August 8:00 am - 8:00 pm
Come to the nature center to check out our display about the world's largest insect group

Prairie Walk
Battelle Darby Metro Park - Nature Center
24th August 9:00 am - 10:00 am
Ramble through the tall grass prairie to see colorful flowers and wildlife

Canoe The Lake
Sharon Woods Metro Park - Schrock Lake
24th & 25th August 9:00am-12:00pm, 2:00pm-5:00pm
Stop by anytime and take a canoe out for a ride on the lake. Canoes and equipment provided

Moth Madness
Clear Creek Metro Park - Barnebey-Hambelton Picnic Area
24th August 8:30 pm - 11:00 pm
Join the Mothing Mavericks to discover what moths live in Clear Creek

Bison
Battelle Darby Metro Park - Nature Center
25th August 10:00 am - 11:00 am
See the bison herd on a 1-mile hike and learn all about our National Mammal

Late Night Fishing
Prairie Oaks Metro Park - Darby Bend Lakes
31st August 9:00 pm - 11:45 pm
Look for salamanders and other creatures that live in the stream

Creeking and Campfire
Three Creeks Metro Park - Confluence Area
1st Sept 1:30 pm-2:30 pm, 7th Sept 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
Take a half-mile walk to the creek to look for critters then toast hot dogs and marshmallows over a campfire. Limited hot dogs and buns provided.

Sunny Sundays
Inniswood Metro Gardens - Herb Garden
1st & 8th September 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
On Sundays throughout the summer, members of the Herb Society of America, Central Ohio Unit, will be in the Herb Garden to answer visitors' questions.

Family Creeking Adventure
Battelle Darby Metro Park - Cedar Ridge
1st September 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Get wet as we catch fish, bugs, and crawdads in the Big Darby Creek

Monarch Mania
Blacklick Woods Metro Park - Nature Center
1st September 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Take a 2-mile walk to search the fields for migrating butterflies and late caterpillars

Evening Wildlife Hike
Highbanks Metro Park - Nature Center
6th September 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Hike 1-mile as we search for wildlife in the forest and fields

Events

Hike To The Giants
Highbanks Metro Park - Oak Coves Picnic Area
7th September 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Rugged 4-mile off-trail hike to the 300-year old giant sycamores along the Olentangy River

Morning Coffee and Wildlife Watch
Blacklick Woods Metro Park - Nature Center
7th September 8:00 am - 10:00 am
View animals through the nature center windows and enjoy a cup of coffee

Weekly Bird Hike
Scioto Audobon Metro Park - Grange Insurance Audobon Center
7th September 10:00 am - 11:30 am
Hike with experienced birders to find and learn about birds (Binoculars and field guides can be provided)

Morning Walk With The Bison
Battelle Darby Metro Park - Nature Center
7th September 7:00 am - 8:00 am
Join for a 1-mile hike to learn about this 2,000-pound animal while watching the sun rise

Going on a Bigfoot Hunt!
Battelle Darby Metro Park - Nature Center
7th September 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Learn how to track movement and life in the forest as we search for one of Darby's most elusive creatures

Insect Songs
Blendon Woods Metro Park - Group Shelter
7th September 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Listen and learn about the singing insects

Migrating Monarchs
Battelle Darby Metro Park - Nature Center
8th September 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Monarchs are amazing butterflies! Come learn how researchers tag and monitor their movements to Mexico.

Crazy Caterpillar Display
Blacklick Woods Metro Park - Nature Center
7th & 8th September 8:00 am - 8:00 pm
Caterpillars come in all shapes and sizes, some you might not even recognize as caterpillars. View our display to see the crazy diversity of these larvae of moths and butterflies.

Outdoor Inclusive Adventure
Prairie Oaks Metro Park - Darby Bend Lakes
8th September 11:00 am - 3:00 pm
Children with special healthcare needs, developmental disabilities are invited along with family, friends and the community to connect with nature an each other during an afternoon of canoeing, kayaking and fishing. Meet live reptiles and amphibians, make a nature craft to take home and touch real furs.

Evening Garden Walk
Inniswood Metro Gardens - Garden Entrance
8th September 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Take a guided stroll through the Gardens

Bucks and Buckeyes
Blacklick Woods Metro Park - Nature Center
8th September 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Take a 2-mile walk in search of our state mammal and state tree

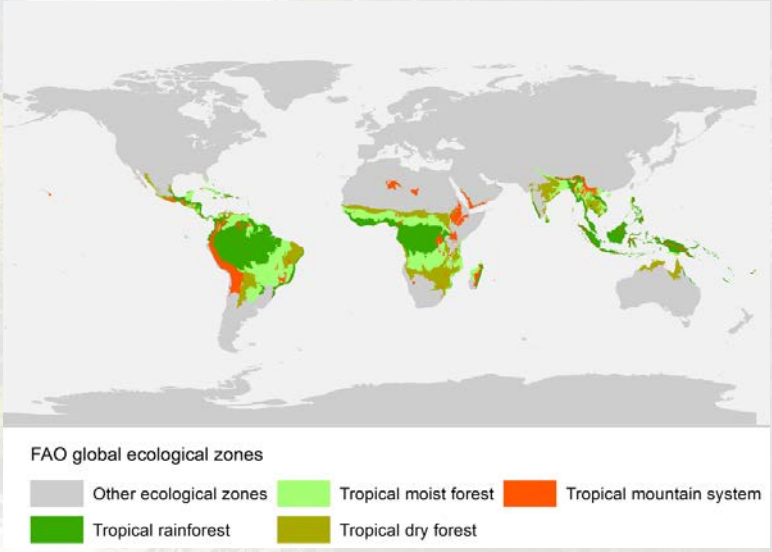
Forests

Forests are much more than just land covered with trees; they are one of the most important ecosystems on the planet, supporting 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity. Forests provide habitat to a number of plants and animals. They protect the watersheds by absorbing and filtering rainwater and preventing runoff. Forests mitigate climate change by sequestering greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide in the form of plant biomass and help regulate climate through exchange of energy and water. They purify the air and supply a large part of the oxygen in the atmosphere. An estimated 1.6 billion people world over depend on forests for their livelihood in one way or another.

Forests exist in all kinds of climates - dry, wet, freezing cold as well as sweltering hot. These very different climates result in different types of forests that are adapted to each kind of climate. Depending on the latitude, soil conditions, annual rainfall and prevailing temperatures, a forest could have different forms. Forests can be broadly classified into three major zones - *tropical*, *temperate*, and *boreal* forests.

Tropical Forests

Tropical forests grow around the equator between the tropics. This part of the planet has only two seasons - wet and dry. Across the broad tropical region, the tropical forests can be further subdivided based on the amount of rainfall received during the growing season. These are the *rainforests*, *dry forests* and *savanna*. The transition happens gradually as one moves north or south of the equator. Close to the equator are the rainforests where, due to consistent rain, there is no or very short dry season. Hence, the trees remain green throughout the year. Most tropical rainforests are within 10 degrees on either side of the equator. Between roughly 10 to 25 degrees north or south of the equator are the tropical dry forests. These forests have longer dry seasons, which results in deciduous trees that lose their foliage at the start of the dry season (similar to the temperate forests of the eastern United States). Savanna forests are in areas with even lesser rainfall and/or more frequent wildfires. Savannas are mostly covered with grasses and shrubs with few trees.

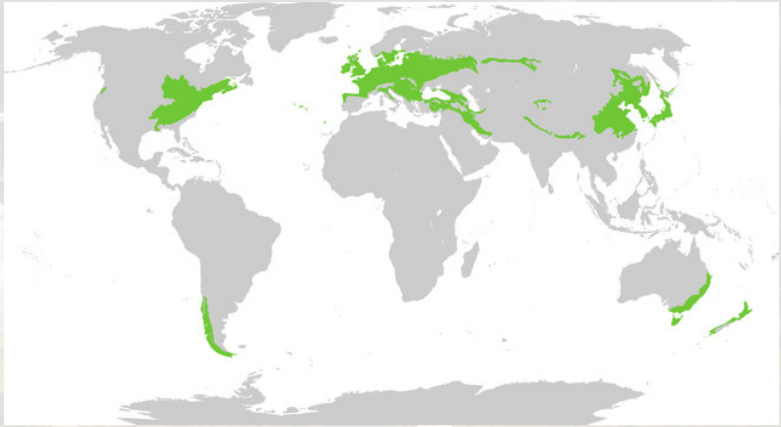


Map of Tropical Forests
Image Credit: Mark Marathon

Tropical forests have the highest biodiversity per unit area. Even though these forests cover only a small fraction of the planet, they support half of all the terrestrial species!

Temperate Forests

Temperate forests are found in the mid-latitude moderate climates in both northern and southern hemispheres. They are also sometimes referred to as “four-season forests”, owing to the fact that there are four distinct seasons - fall, winter, spring and summer - in the region that these forests thrive. Temperate forests range across a large part of the North American continent. Forests in the eastern United States, which includes Ohio,



Map of Temperate Forests
Image Credit: Terpsichores

are temperate forests. There is a vast diversity of forest types in this category that includes the deciduous forests and conifers (or cone-bearing trees), as well as few temperate rainforests. Hardwood deciduous trees dominate most temperate forests. Deciduous trees in these temperate forests are the ones that shed their leaves in winter, and in the process, offer magical fall colors! Regions with drier climate tend to have the drought-tolerant species of conifers. Temperate rainforests are found in the few regions with milder, wetter and often ocean-influenced climates. In North America, temperate rainforests are found in the Pacific Northwest and southern Appalachian Mountains. These forests are dominated by conifers.

Boreal Forests

Also known as ***taiga***, boreal forests exist in higher latitude regions in the northern hemisphere where freezing temperatures last for 6 to 8 months. Hence, the trees in these forests have a short growing season and are covered in snow for several months. The trees reach a minimum height of 5 m and a canopy cover of 10%. Frost-resistant species of conifers such as pines and firs dominate in these forests. Boreal forests make up 30% of the world's forests and contain the majority of surface freshwater. About a third of these forests are underlain by permafrost. Boreal forests supply over 30% of lumber and 25% of paper to the world markets!

Map of Boreal Forests
Image Credit: GeForce3 - Wiki Commons

Deciduous Trees lose their entire foliage for a part of the year, usually during the dry season. Deciduous trees are mostly found in temperate forests and dry tropical forests.

Evergreen Trees do not shed all their leaves at the same time, and hence appear to be green year round. Most, but not all, conifers are evergreen. Most broad-leaved angiosperms of the tropics are evergreen.

Angiosperms are flowering plants/trees that bear the seeds protected inside the fruit.

Gymnosperms are non-flowering plants/trees such as conifers that have exposed seeds.

Forest Ecology

Trees use sunlight and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to form plant tissue by the process called photosynthesis. Approximately 20% of a forest tree mass is in its roots. Most active roots of a tree are in the top 3 feet of the soil. The feeder roots are located in the top 6 to 8 inches of soil and are critical to the health of the tree. Rodents, earthworms and insects living in the forest burrow through this top layer and keep it aerated and nutrient-rich.

Forests have five stages of succession. ***Succession*** or ecological succession is the process of change in the species structure, i.e. one species replacing another, of an ecological community. The time-scale could vary from a few decades to millions of years.

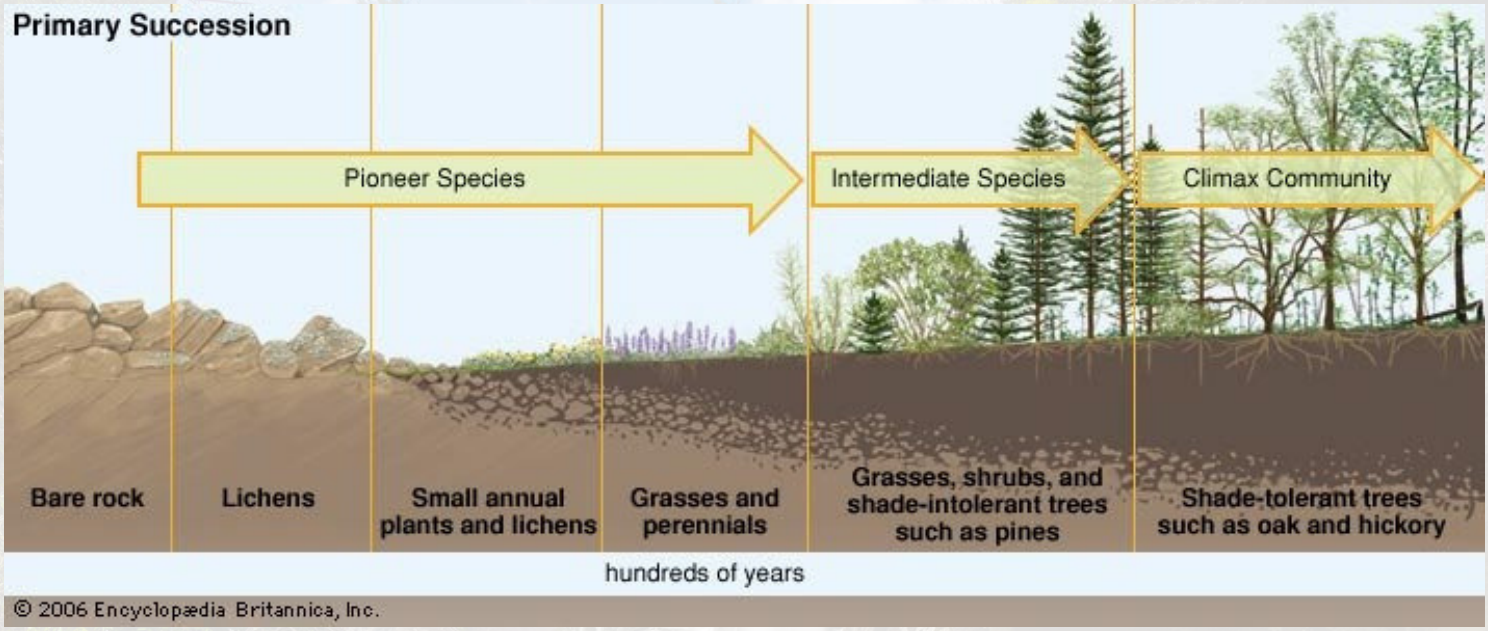
Stage 1 A non-forested land starts out with non-woody herbaceous plants.

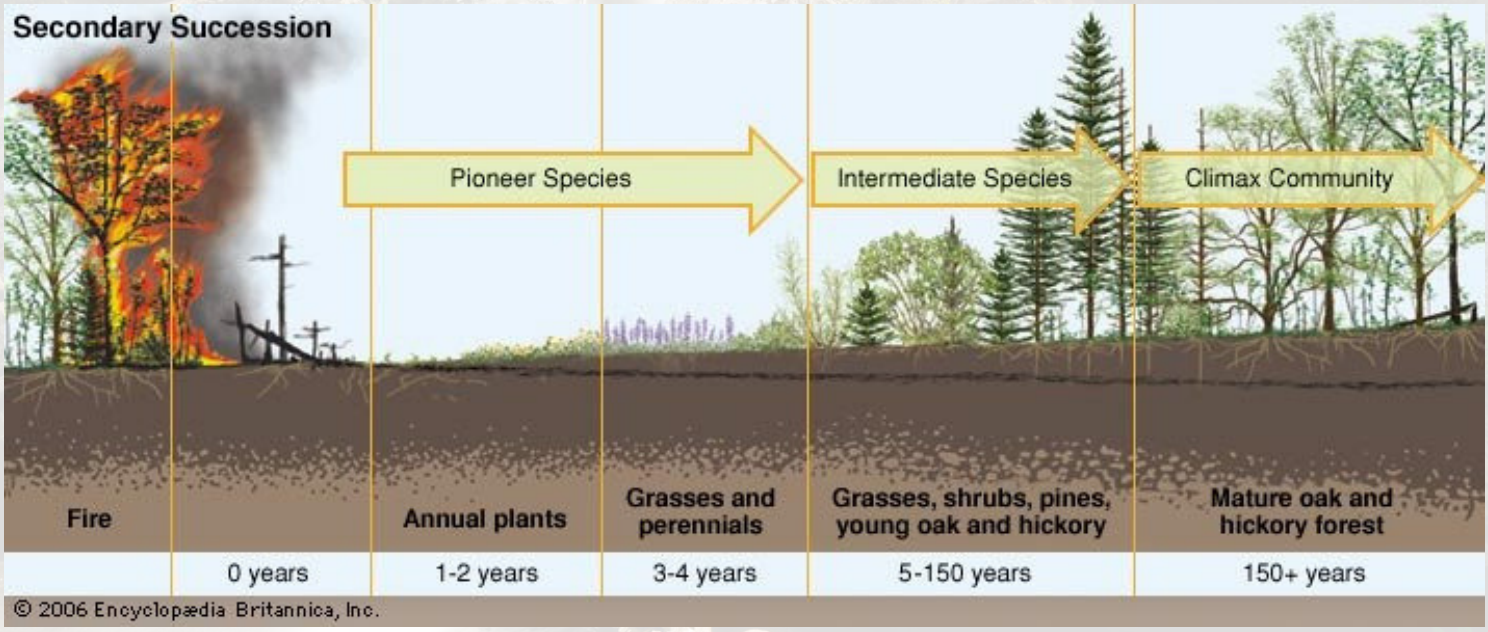
Stage 2 In a few years, the herbs are succeeded by shrubs.

Stage 3 The first wooded-trees to grow are the shade-intolerant trees. Also called *pioneer species*, these trees need full sunlight to survive and hence would not thrive in the forest understory. In Ohio, some of the species that fall under this category are black cherry, yellow poplar and cottonwood.

Stage 4 The next species of trees to take over are the mid-tolerant trees. As the name suggests, they can establish themselves in shade but still need some sunlight. Examples of mid-tolerant species in Ohio include some species of oaks and hickories.

Stage 5 The final stage is when the forest has matured and includes shade-tolerant species. This stage is also referred to as the *climax forest* or *climax community* because the successional changes have now reached an equilibrium or steady state. Sugar maple and beech are some of the species in Ohio that fall under this category.





Ecological succession of a forest
Image Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

Mature Forest

A mature forest is one that has attained climax community. In a mature forest, there are five distinct vertical layers.

Forest Floor This layer consists of moss, fallen leaves and trees, and other *detritus* (decaying organic matter). Forest floor is where the decomposers of the ecosystem such as insects, fungus and bacteria are at work, recycling energy by breaking down the organic matter that the plant roots can consume.

Herb Layer Herbaceous plants such as grasses and ferns occupy this layer. Since very little sunlight reaches this part of the forest due to the thick canopy above, only the shade tolerant species of herbs can thrive.

Shrub Layer This layer comprises of woody vegetation growing relatively close to the ground. This layer receives a little more sunlight, just enough for the shrubs to grow.

Understory Layer This layer of the forest consists of immature trees and small trees that do not rise up to the canopy level. Understory trees provide shelter for several animals.

Canopy Layer This is the topmost layer of the forest and receives unhindered direct sunlight. In this layer, crowns of all the mature trees in the forest meet.

Ohio's Forests

History

Before the European settlement, Ohio was mostly forested. According to some estimates, the forest cover in the state was over 90%. As the settlement grew, forests were cleared for agriculture and other developmental projects, and by 1910, the total forested land in the state was reduced to a mere 10%. Efforts for conservation started in late 1800s with the creation of the **American Forestry Association** in 1875, paving the way for the creation of the state forestry agency, which would ultimately become today's **Division of Forestry**. The state forest system was born in 1916 with the purchase of 221 acres in Athens County and 1,500 acres in Lawrence County that led to the creation of Waterloo State Forest and Dean State Forest, respectively. By the end of 1920s, the

Division of Forestry had acquired over 30,000 acres of land, most of which were either cut-over forests or poorly degraded farms. Temporary nurseries were established in several state forests to help with the reforestation efforts.

To ease the economic impact caused by the Great Depression, the federal government created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) among other work programs in the 1930s. Through CCC, thousands of people found employment in planting millions of trees on Ohio's state forestlands. The creation of the Land Utilization Program in the late 1930s helped the Division of Forestry acquire another 40,000 acres of land from the federal government, which helped create several other state forests. Through yet another federal program - Works Progress Administration (WPA) - a comprehensive survey of all of Ohio's forests was conducted from 1937 to 1944.

The expansion of forests continued after World War II with the state legislature appropriating a $1.5 million grant to the Division of Forestry for purchasing more land that aided in the creation of more state forests. In 1949, Ohio's state legislature unified the different state agencies working on managing natural resources with the creation of **Ohio Department of Natural Resources**.

Between 1965 and 1973, several mining areas in the state, that totaled approximately 8,000 acres of badly damaged and strip-mined land, were reclaimed to be restored into natural forests. The environmental movement of the 1970s led to the declaration of Shawnee Wilderness Area in Scioto and Adams County, following which, several other forests also came under the protection of the Division of Forestry. With increasing public support for such conservation, a new **Division of Natural Areas and Preserves** was created in 1975 and it took up responsibility of all such areas with unique habitats.

The Division of Forestry continues to manage, preserve and expand Ohio's forests to this day while also ensuring that other natural resources such as soil and water quality, wildlife habitat, endangered species as well as backcountry recreation are protected!

Present Day

The percentage of forested land in the state stands at about 31% today. Ohio has 43 different forest types. Oak-Hickory is the most dominant type of forest in Ohio, making 63% of total forest area. Maple-Beech is second largest type at 21%, and Elm-Ash-Cottonwood makes 9% of forest land. Majority of the state's forests (96%) are deciduous (hardwood trees), with over 100 different species. Only 4% of the forests are conifers (softwood), with about 25 different species.

While the Division of Forestry and federal agencies like the US Forest Service manage the public forests, 85% of the forested area in the state is privately owned, and each landowner has different objectives for their forests. The Division of Forestry offers technical assistance to private landowners in the form of service foresters and wildlife biologists to help them achieve their objectives while observing best management practices for a sustainable forest ecosystem.

Ohio has been a leader in **Tree City USA** designations and has 237 communities certified as Tree City USA. More than 3,400 communities across the country are certified Tree City USA communities.

Tree City USA

Tree City USA is an Arbor Day Foundation program in collaboration with US Forest Service and National Association of State Forests. A nation-wide movement that started in 1976, Tree City USA "provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees". For a community to qualify for a Tree City USA designation, four core standards of sound urban forestry management must be met

- Maintaining a tree board or department
- Having a community tree ordinance
- Spending at least $2 per capita on urban forestry, and
- Celebrating Arbor Day

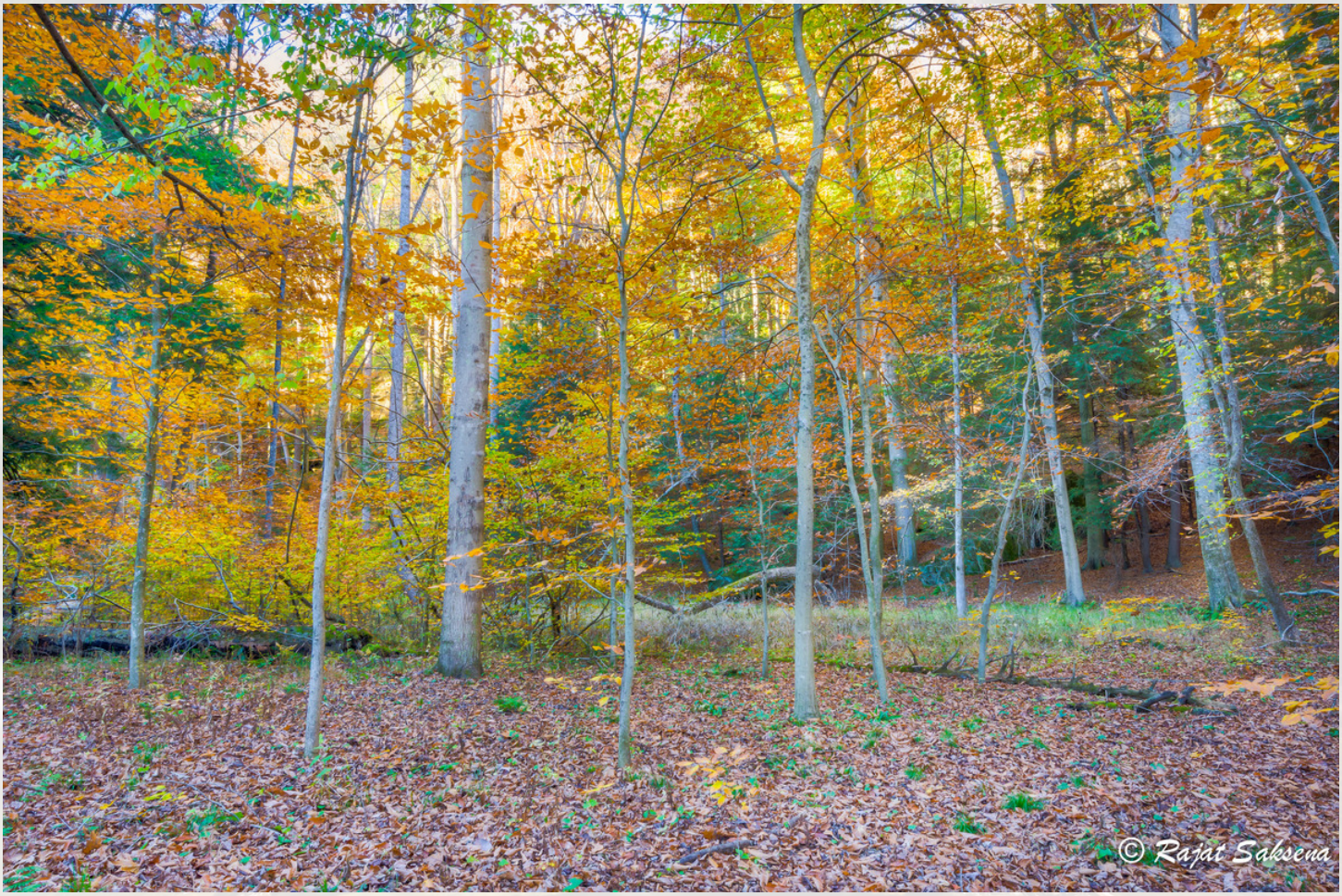
Ohio's forests are a testament to the power of land stewardship and a century-long dedicated and painstaking effort to successfully restore and protect the natural resources. The dwindling forest land that was reduced to only 10% of the state total area at the beginning of the 20th century, has now climbed up to a little over 30%. Ohio has about 8 million acres of forested land. Ohio's forest products such as timber and other processed goods are a $15-billion industry, employing about

120,000 people. This is a good example of managing the resources in a sustainable and responsible manner. With proper forest management practice, forests can be both preserved and utilized for their economic value. But beyond the economic value, these forests offer natural and outdoor experience for millions of people, habitat for almost 100 endangered species, and house some of the oldest trees in the country!

Threats to Ohio's Forests

Even as conservation and restoration efforts have been underway for over a century, our forests continue to face other threats.

Since the conservation efforts began over a century ago, Dutch elm disease and chestnut blight have been two very significant factors that have affected Ohio's forests. Both were caused by a non-native parasitic fungus. First reported in 1928, the Dutch elm disease is believed to have been transported to the US from the Netherlands in shipments of timber for the Ohio furniture industry. The disease severely impacted the elm trees in North America. Over 75% of all elm trees



in North America were lost to the disease. Chestnut blight was another disease that was accidentally introduced from Japanese nursery stock around 1904. The disease killed an estimated 4 billion trees in the first half of the 20th century.

More recently, the gypsy moth, Asian Longhorned Beetle and the Emerald Ash Borer have severely impacted Ohio's forests. Of these, the emerald ash borer (EAB) has caused the most damage. Native to northeast Asia, the EAB was first discovered in Michigan in 2002. A year later it had made its way into Ohio. The beetle lays eggs underneath the tree bark. The larvae of the beetle bore tunnels under the bark to feed, damaging the xylem, which disrupts the water and nutrient flow up the trunk, thus killing the tree. Since its discovery, the EAB has spread to 35 states in the US as well as several states in Canada. EAB has killed hundreds of millions of ash trees across North America. The USDA has enforced quarantines and fines to prevent further spread. There are several other invasive insects that threaten the ecological balance of Ohio's forests. Among these, the Hemlock Woody Adelgid (HWA) and the Walnut Twig Beetle are some of the significant invasive species. Yet another non-native invasive insect that has not yet reached Ohio but is almost at its doorstep is the Spotted Lanternfly. Endemic to China, this planthopper has spread to a greater part of southern Pennsylvania and has severely impacted the trees. Given the ease with which it spreads, Spotted Lanternfly poses a potentially serious threat to Ohio's forests.

In addition to the invasive insects, there are several non-native invasive plant species that threaten Ohio's forests. These include the Japanese Honeysuckle, several species of Bush Honeysuckles, Purple Loosestrife, Multiflora Rose, Garlic Mustard, Autumn Olive, Common Reed, Buckthorns, among others.

Conservation

The Division of Forestry in Ohio and similar agencies in other states have been working tirelessly to maintain and preserve the forests at the state level. At federal level, the US Forest Service manages and protects 154 national forests and 20 grasslands in 43 states and Puerto Rico. Locally, many cities have park systems that work to keep a large part of the land forested. Such systems of parks not only provide small pockets of natural space within a city for the citizens to enjoy and benefit from, they also provide much-needed habitat for the wildlife to prosper, and preserve the land from any further development.

Columbus & Franklin County Metro Parks
(Forests in Your Backyard)

Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks is a system of parks in Central Ohio with 20 parks and over **27,000 acres** of land. **Battelle Darby Metro Park** is the **largest metro park in Ohio**. The park system also manages 95 miles of Greenways Trails. These Greenways provide a scenic trail for the residents to use for recreation, physical fitness, alternative transportation as well as preserve open space to improve air and water quality. Metro Parks maintains a policy of 80/20, i.e. only 20% of the land is developed (roads, trails, parking lots, picnic areas, etc.) while 80% is left natural.

Metro Parks' restoration projects began in the late 1970's with a small prairie plot at Darby. Today, over 5,500 acres of land is dedicated as Nature Preserves through ODNR - Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, including the **largest dedicated natural preserve in Ohio at Clear Creek Metro Park** (4,769 acres). Approximately 7 miles of river riparian forested land managed by Metro Parks is also dedicated as Nature Preserves. A total of 60 miles of riparian corridors in Central Ohio are protected and managed by the Metro Parks. The Park District protects over 3,700 acres of wetland habitat and manages another 200 acres of ponds and lakes. Over 12,000 acres of forested land owned and protected by Metro Parks are mature forests. Metro Parks has restored nearly 1,300 acres of native Darby Plains Prairie at Battelle Darby Metro Park and 300 acres at Prairie Oaks Metro Park. Nearly 14,000 feet of stream and stream corridor channels has been restored or

enhanced along the several rivers and streams throughout the Park District. In 2007, Metro Parks, in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), initiated the reforestation on over 2,500 acres of land.

Approximately 2,400 species of plants and animals thrive in the forests, prairies, wetlands, river riparians and other habitats managed by Metro Parks. Of these, nearly 60 species are listed as State or Federal Endangered or Threatened! Forests at Battelle Darby Metro Park house breeding populations of the critically endangered Indiana bats. Metro Parks work hard to keep the dead trees for the bats to roost and regularly monitor the roosting trees to track their population.

Metro Parks has also helped restore brownfield lands into open green space. Prairie Oaks Metro Park and Quarry Trails Metro Park (soon to be opened to public) are both constructed on land reclaimed from old open-pit mines. Parts of Scioto Grove Metro Park and Battelle Darby Metro Park were also abandoned quarries. Several other Metro Parks have parts that were old farmlands, now restored into natural green space. Scioto Audubon Metro Park is built on an urban brownfield that once housed factories, warehouses, rail yards and auto impound lots. Today that land has been restored with small wetlands, a rain garden, a stormwater retention pond and improved river riparian that has made it into a regional bird sanctuary and a stopover point for thousands of migrating birds in the middle of the city!

The Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks continues to maintain, expand, restore or enhance the natural space throughout the city and its dedicated team of staff works tirelessly every day (the parks are open 7 days a week) to preserve our environment. The contribution of Metro Parks in maintaining and protecting such valuable forested land in and around the largest city in the state cannot be overstated!

Epilogue

Forests are being destroyed and degraded at an alarming rate all over the world for agriculture and other purposes. By one estimate, 18.7 million acres of forests are lost annually - equivalent to 27 soccer fields every minute! Climate change is causing further degradation of the forests. Among the different types of forests, rainforests have the largest biodiversity of flora and fauna. Unfortunately, it is the rainforests that are being destroyed the fastest. The largest rainforest on the planet - the Amazon - has lost 17% of its forest cover in the past 50 years due to human activity. In Indonesia, the island of Sumatra has lost 85% of its forest, mainly for oil palm and pulp plantations. The island of Borneo is facing destruction at similar level.

We need forests for our own existence. Forests purify the air we breathe, they help keep our rivers clean from pollutants and help maintain the temperatures. It is ironical that even when our own lives depend on these forests, we continue to destroy them. We tend to forget that we are an integral part of the ecosystem, and any damage we do to any part of the system, is eventually going to affect us.

Nature is resilient and even after facing much destruction, it can bounce back, if given a chance. A great example of nature's resilience is the bobcat. **Bobcat** is one of the seven wild cat species in North America and is native to Ohio. It belongs to the same family as domestic cats - Felidae. Prior to settlement, bobcats were common in Ohio. But after the majority of forests were cleared, they lost their habitat and were extirpated (locally extinct from a particular geographic area, but exists elsewhere) from the state in 1850. Due to our concerted, diligent, and successful conservation efforts to reforest, the bobcats have made a comeback on their own. First sighted in the mid-1900s, the cat has been sighted every year since, and is believed to be gradually returning.

Bobcat
Photo Source: ODNR-Division of Wildlife (http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/)

Humans possess incredible potential. If our actions can cause a negative impact on our surroundings, we also hold the ability to effect a positive change. The decision rests on us what path we choose forward!

Project Nature logo designed by Sushil Narsian, Indus Design
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