

news

Preserves continue to be resource for students at AU

ZACH READ  
Managing Editor

In most majors and departments at Ashland University, there are opportunities outside of the classroom for students to become involved in future occupations.

In the biology and toxicology department, this opportunity comes through the use of local wetlands and preserves that give students hands on experiences to apply the skills and terms they have used in class.

“We are trying to get our students knowledgeable about techniques and field work, or lab work, and we want to help them build their resume,” Merrill Tawse, professional instructor of biology said. “And I think even more importantly we want to help them find out what they like, what they have a passion about and then also what they don’t like.”

These preserves managed by AU include the Black Fork Wetlands (diverse wetlands and upland habitats), Canfield (stream), Dayspring (stream and forested stream), Rupp Stahley (restored prairie) and Stoffer (old field and mature forest).

The Black Fork Wetlands is the only openly public preserve — and is by far the largest — just six miles south of campus on U.S. 42 provides the largest opportunity for learning because of its diversity of habitats and wildlife.

“We have sites that we can get out there and the students can be exposed to some of the different bio communities we have in our area,” Tawse said.

For each biology class that Tawse and Dr. Patricia Saunders, associate professor of biology, teach, they typically take their students out for a few field trips throughout each semester.

Students are able to take the skills they have learned in the lab or the terms they have learned in the classroom and put them to use and have kind of an “AHA or WOW” moment as Tawse would describe it.

“The wetlands and preserves enhance my understanding of these broad topics by allowing me to apply them to the field,” junior biology major Lexi Butterbaugh said. “I feel that field trips to the wetlands and preserves better prepare myself and colleagues for future jobs.”

In addition, AU students have also been given the opportunity to work with professors in their research endeavors on these wetlands. For

Tawse specifically, he has studied Virginia and Sora Rail birds, which are on the watch list of endangered species, but are not endangered yet.

“Students have been working back in there for the last several years trying to find out what parts of these wetlands they’re using, how they interact, do they move between the wetlands?” Tawse said.

Tawse said that these rails do a lot of probing in muck for food and while they do this, they also ingest lead shot from shotguns during waterfowl hunting.

This past year, he expanded his work with rails by taking feather samples from the Black Fork Wetlands where waterfowl hunting is minimal and from Sandusky Bay, where waterfowl hunting has been common for over a century.

After running the feathers through an atomic absorption simulator, he was able to prove his hypothesis correct that the rails do ingest the lead from shotguns, and it is extremely higher in waterfowl hunting areas such as Sandusky Bay.

With Black Fork Wetlands providing many diverse habitats for humans to study and preserve, it also provides habitats suitable for roughly 200 species of birds, eagles nests, beavers, otters, trumpeter swans and sandhill cranes.

While the biology department enjoys using the wetlands, Saunders wants to make it widely known that they can be used by a broader range of departments and people around campus.

“I try to promote them with my colleagues,” Saunders said. “I could see art classes going out to some of our sites or writing classes. I could only imagine what kind of creative thinking would go on if they were wandering around in the prairie in early September.”

No matter how many times these professors use the wetlands in class demonstrations and explorations, it is no doubt that they are beneficial to the growth of the students.

“Classes will bond going into the field together which makes for a better classroom experience,” Saunders said. “I think they really enhance our teaching of science in many ways.”



SUBMITTED BY: PROFESSOR MERRILL TAWSE  
AU students work with Rail birds at the Black Fork Wetlands as apart of classes that enhance their learning experience.

Madrigal tickets on sale

ALEXIS PORTNER  
Reporter

The 44th annual Madrigal Feaste begins on Nov. 20 at 6:30 p.m. in Redwood Hall and runs each night at the same time through Nov. 24.

Rowland Blackley, professor of music and director of choral activities, has overseen the Madrigal Feaste for the past 23 years that he has worked at the university.

Tickets for the event are \$25 for groups of 10, \$28 for adults and \$18 for children. Students can buy their tickets for the opening night of the feaste, for less than half the cost of the regular tickets: \$13.

The Madrigal Feaste is a unique show, as it is interactive in nature and unlike a traditional play or concert. Blackley described it as interactive dinner theater set in the renaissance era.

“For the people in the audience, it’s a concert but the conceit is that they’re singing for each other and they’re just doing entertainment,” Blackley said.

The doors open at 6 p.m. and there will be instrumental music

performed by student ensembles until the show begins.

“The audience comes into a big party, a formal dinner and they are invited by aristocrats. The aristocrats are the chamber singers, it’s one of our choirs and there’s 17 people in it this year. They sit at the head table dressed in renaissance garb,”

This year, the Queen of the Feaste is senior, Sami Eron and her King is Junior, Ethan Tingler. Blackley said that they are responsible for leading the chamber choir, as there is not a conductor with them during the show.

“The Jester is my most important selection that I make every year,” said Blackley. The jester is in charge of writing an original skit for the show and training all the other players to fill their roles.

Nik Demers, senior theater major, has been involved with the Madrigal Feaste since his freshman year. He was the jester his junior year and will be filling the role again for his senior year.

He had to write and direct a 15 minute skit for his 5 players to perform that will be entertaining to the wide range of audience members at the Madrigal Feaste.

Demers said, they “always put a princess in because the little kids

like that. We’ll put some jokes in that might go over the head of some other people but the college students really like it, and then we’ll just try to make it broadly funny enough that it appeals to most people.”

He plans to include classic Disney and fairytale stories. “This year I did some stuff with some unknown fairytale creatures mixed in.”

Cinderella will make an appearance in the skit this year, and she will be played by senior theater major Holly Fongheiser.

She has auditioned a few times in the past. When she found out she would be one of the actors, she said that this is going to be a learning process, but is excited nonetheless.

Just as Demers’s character is named “Rick O’Shay” and Fongheiser is “Alli Gator,” all of the players have punny names that they use for the dinner portion of the show.

“During the general night we wander through the crowd in our costumes and just kind of mess with people,” said Demers.

Fongheiser is very much looking forward to her first Madrigal Feaste and said that everyone should come see the show and have fun.



ASHLAND.EDU

Poster for the Madrigal Feaste. Tickets are on sale for the production, which will run until Nov. 24.

Ford Koury to give lecture on Christian ethics in business

ALAYNA ROSS  
Reporter

This year’s Gordon E. Heffern Lecture on Christian Ethics in Business will feature Smart Business co-founder Fred Koury Wednesday, Nov. 20 at the John C. Myers Convocation Center.

Doors will open at 11:30 a.m. for the event, which is free and open to the public, with lunch being served at noon. Parking is available in University lots E and J. Those interested in attending should RSVP by Nov. 8 to au-cobe@ashland.edu.

The Gordon E. Heffern Lecture on Christian Ethics in Business is an annual event that welcomes a guest speaker to share their knowledge in applying Christian ethics in the business world. Friends and

family of Gordon Heffern have established an endowment with the university, which supports the ongoing series of lectures.

Alongside the endowment established in Heffern’s honor, Ashland University and In His Steps Foundation are sponsoring the event, which is hosted by AU’s Richard and Sandra J. Dauch College of Business and Economics.

The In His Steps Foundation embraces the idea of Christian unity, working together in a community toward the common goals and welfare of the community in Christ’s name.

Through this organization, In His Steps Foundation has a general fund for the Northeast Ohio area evangelistic Christian ministries, family giving funds and endowment funds for Christian ministries to build future resources and help promote the ideas of planned and deferred giving and Christian

stewardship, according to the website.

Koury, co-founder of Smart Business Magazine, which is a national chain of business management journals that offers insight, advice and strategy for C-level executives.

Koury leads the magazine to have an active role in many local charities, including the United Way, Make-A-Wish Foundation and Youth Challenge, an organization providing activities for children with disabilities.

Dr. Rebecca Schmeller, assistant professor of management, encourages her students and the students studying at the Richard and Sandra J. Dauch College of Business and Economics to attend the lecture.

Read the rest on AU-Live.com

It’s your news. And we’re your paper.

The Collegian

For up to date campus news, also check out AU-Live.com