DARK, SCARY, AWE-INSPIRING, AND COMMUNITY BUILDING: ESSAYS ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY OF THE GREAT BLACK SWAMP

Madison Stump-Smith

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Committee:

Amílcar Challú, Committee Chair

Cheryl Dong

ABSTRACT

Amílcar Challú, Committee Chair

Environmental history is an interdisciplinary field that seeks to understand how human-environment relationships and ecosystems have changed over time. Even with a focus on natural spaces, environmental history often examines land via socio-political barriers. This thesis aims to reconstruct that narrative by examining history through an ecosystem boundary. This collection of Great Black Swamp environmental history essays examines the use of place within a swampland ecosystem. It demonstrates the paradox of environmental history that humans can create affective connections to place and make decisions that harm those landscapes by examining the environment through a narrow and utilitarian perspective, ignoring interconnections. Chapters examine the erasure of environmental change at Fort Meigs Historic Site, Representative Delbert Latta "seeing like the state" in making 1970-80s environmental policy decisions, and the performative tradition of Earth Day at Bowling Green State University. While communities have an affective connection to the swampland, those relationships are changing and shifting in meaning. They must be critically analyzed and adapted, especially in an environment rapidly shifting from anthropocentric climate change.

To all the human-environment relationships that have come before me. May your stories continue to guide how we live and proceed. May the legacies of activists inspire a new ecological ethic of care.

And to my love. This labor of love is for you and our future exploring, protecting, celebrating, and connecting with the more-than-human world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bowling Green State University and its affiliated campuses are situated in the homelands of numerous Indigenous and Native tribal nations. Our campus footprint holds many contemporary and historical ties to the Wyandot, Kickapoo, Miami, Odawa, Potawatomi and multiple other Indigenous tribal nations, present and past, who were forcibly removed to and from the area.

This area's history reveals an arterial network of complex economic and cultural significance. We recognize the stewardship, dedication, and presence of those for whom the Great Black Swamp and the Lower Great Lakes region is home. Through this statement, we aim to trace the past to the present to inform current conditions. It is within BGSU's responsibility as an academic institution to disseminate knowledge about Indigenous peoples and the University's relationships, past and present, with tribal nations and individuals.

As such, we recognize the forced relocation of tribal nations to and from this land and we strive to decolonize history and present conditions. We thank Indigenous individuals and communities who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. This type of acknowledgment must not only be through statement, but in action and practice as well, in order to foster an inclusive, respectful, and sustainable community.[1]

A lot of people at BGSU have invested time and money into my graduate studies and research. From professors to Graduate Student Senate to my M.A. peers, I appreciate every single one of you. Your feedback, encouragement, and productive seminar conversations have made me into the scholar I am today. Though I cannot mention you all, I thank everyone

[1] Bowling Green State University Land Acknowledgement Statement, https://www.bgsu.edu/land-acknowledgment.html, accessed March 12, 2023.

associated with the BGSU History Department from 2019-2023 for contributing to my education.

There are a few individuals worthy of direct recognition. Dr. Amílcar Challú, BGSU History Department Chair, served as my committee chair, but also as a research advisor and mentor starting in my junior year at BGSU. I appreciate your encouragement and consistent weekend emails as I threw around ideas for months. Thank you for taking all my ideas in stride and helping me narrow my book-length ideas into something coherent and cohesive. Dr. Challú was the professor for the classes for which I wrote the Fort Meigs and Wintergarden papers. Dr. Cheryl Dong served as a committee member. I appreciate your in-depth feedback and our conversations about writing oral histories into an analytical framework. Dr. Ben Greene, former BGSU History Graduate Coordinator, was the professor under which I wrote the Earth Day original paper. He also served as my academic advisor for most of my M.A. I appreciate your multiple rounds of feedback for the seminar paper and its later publication, and for advocating for several grants for me to present at conferences. Dr. Walter Grunden was the professor for the course I wrote the early draft of the Latta chapter for. I appreciate your encouragement as I undertook a challenging and controversial topic.

I would also be remised if I did not thank the entire BGSU Center for Archival Collections team. I spent countless hours in the archives studying boxes of materials for the Earth Day and Latta projects. The archivists ordered boxes from storage for me and helped me find additional sources in obscure collections. I am lucky to have worked with such a fun and knowledgeable group of people. You all made me look forward to my visits to the archives, no matter how tired or discouraged I felt.

I received multiple travel grants to present these individual papers at academic conferences. I am thankful for the funding requests approved by the BGSU History Department, Graduate Student Senate, and American Society for Environmental History. I am thankful for the opportunities I was given to present at the following conferences: an early version of the Wintergarden paper was presented with Dr. Challú at the spring 2022 American Society for Environmental History conference in Oregon, Earth Day project was presented at the spring 2022 Ohio Academy of History conference, Earth Day abstract won second place in the Graduate Student Senate Shanklin awards competition in spring 2022, and the Latta paper was a finalist in the Shanklin abstract competition in spring 2023.

Adam Smith, my love. I would not have been able to do any of this without your support and encouragement. Thank you for the endless conversations about Earth Day and heterotopias, and for sitting through my frustration of archival research. I appreciate you.

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INTRODUCTION

Walking around Wintergarden Park in Bowling Green, Ohio, Chris Gajewicz reminisces on the changes in the landscape over his twenty-three-year tenure in the park. Hired around 2000, Chris was the first ever Natural Resources Coordinator for Bowling Green Parks and Recreation. Wintergarden Park was 80 acres and a solid wall of mostly non-native, invasive vegetation when he started. The woods were littered with garlic mustard, a highly invasive plant that spreads quickly and overtakes all undergrowth. The greater Bowling Green community supported Chris and his team of park naturalists as they began restoration efforts in the early 2000s. His team spent years watching and listening to the land as they manipulated the park space to resemble pre-European contact swampland ecosystems: wet prairies, sandy ridges, wildflower meadows, and oak savannas.[2] They worked tirelessly "to plant the right stuff, which [required] a tremendous amount of education, a tremendous amount of research, and knowledge base." Community members showed up to remove invasive species and gather seeds from natives. Chris "made a pact with [him]self that [he would] not leave this job until non-native invasive species are under control" and the park had "grown as big as possibly [as it could] get within the city of Bowling Green." Chris is now retired, having met those goals (knowing that non-native invasive removal is never over) in restoring the former Great Black Swamp patchwork of ecosystems.[3] Residents now find enough solace, comfort, and pride in the park that

[2] Though sometimes still regarded by some historians as a lesser and folkloric methodology, oral history is growing in popularity as a method of environmental history because of its unique ability to unveil affective connections and lessons from nature. These themes are difficult to uncover in tradition, written primary sources. Debbie Lee and Kathryn Newfont, *The Land Speaks: New Voices at the Intersection of Oral and Environmental History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[3] Chris Gajewicz (BG City Parks Natural Resource Coordinator), oral history interview with author, Wintergarden Park, Bowling Green, Ohio, February 2020.

they collectively donated over one hundred thousand dollars to expand the park by twenty acres in the last year.

Long before Chris started restoring the Great Black Swamp ecosystems, a glacier covered northwest Ohio. When it retreated over 20,000 years ago, it left glacial moraines and sandy ridges in a patchwork stretching from Sandusky, Ohio to Fort Wayne, Indiana. It created Lake Erie, which became the drainage basin for much of northwest Ohio. Low areas between the moraines and ridges were consistently under water. Through time as the water levels decreased, moraines transformed into the forested swamplands known today as the Great Black Swamp. The Great Black Swamp at its largest size covered almost 1,500 square miles in northwest Ohio and northeastern Indiana.[4] It is the ancestral homeland of the Wyandot, Kickapoo, Miami, Potawatomi, Odawa, and other indigenous peoples. While those peoples lived near, cultivated, engaged with, and traveled around the swamp since time immemorial, the swamplands were not densely settled by sedentary cultures until European exploration and expansion in the mid-nineteenth century.[5] Many European travelers documented how difficult and scary it was to cross through the swamp. The swamp quickly gained a reputation of fear and danger, fueling the motivations to drain and settle these fertile soils. Despite this, communities began to form along the high, sandy ridges in the mid-nineteenth century. The swampland created a unique community identity of resilience as European settlers learned how to listen to the land for their utilitarian benefit.[6]

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[4] *The Story of the Great Black Swamp*, directed by Paul G. Lopez (2010; Bowling Green, OH: WBGU-PBS), digital documentary, https://www.pbs.org/video/wbgu-documentaries-the-story-of-the-great-black-swamp/.
[5] Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indigenous Prosperity and American Conquest: Indian Women of the Ohio River Valley, 1690-1792* (Williamsburg, VA: University of North Carolina Press, 2018); Martin R. Kaatz, "The Black Swamp: A Study in Historical Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 45 no. 1 (March 1955): 1-35.
[6] *The Story of the Great Black Swamp.*

The region had a patchwork of micro-ecosystems, including oak and hickory savannas, elm-ash swampy forests, beech-cottonwood groves along waterways, wet prairies covered by water most of the year, and dry prairies on the higher ground of the sand ridges.[7] Transformed by waves of agricultural development, today less than 10 percent of this original patchwork still stands as insular ecosystems. Most of the landscape is monocrop agricultural fields. In 2021, Ohio agriculturalists harvested 3.34 million acres of corn totaling 645 million bushels, and 4.88 million acres of soybean crops for a total of 276 million bushels.[8] City, county, and state park systems conserve small areas of restored swampland ecosystems. Residents today recognize the value of these preserved spaces, as evidenced in the high visitor traffic in local parks.[9]

At its core, this thesis is an environmental history of the Great Black Swamp. It asks the broad question: How did communities in the former Great Black Swamp engage with the environment? Each chapter has a more pointed question, aiming to uncover the use of space and environment to accomplish different goals. There are differences in each of the case studies, as each takes place in a different geographic, temporal, and cultural context. Chapters examine a nineteenth century military fort and its re-creation as a public history site, the voting history of a twentieth century politician, and changes in Earth Day. The uniting theme in this thesis is one of the many paradoxes found in environmental history: people create meaning and affective connections to place, yet that perception does not consider the interconnectedness of natural

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[7] The concept of the patchwork of landscapes can be found in William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England,* 20th Anniversary Edition (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003).
[8] United State Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, *Agriculture Across Ohio*, January 2022, vol. 11, no. 1, https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Ohio/Publications/Ag_Across_Ohio/2022/aao2201.pdf.
[9] From the author's personal experience, there are races, fishing, hiking, dog walks, children playing, and more activities happening at area parks all times of the year. In addition, oral history interviews with Bowling Green city naturalists reveal the consistent visitation at Bowling Green and Wood County Parks: Gajewicz, oral history interview; Cinda Stutzman (BG City Parks Natural Resource Coordinator), oral history interview with author, Wintergarden Park, Bowling Green, Ohio, February 2020.

systems. Human-nature connections are often rooted in one aspect (temporal, geographic, special, etc.) of the environment.

Human historical perceptions of space are limited, especially as the environment so rapidly changes in the twenty first century. Fort Meigs Historic Site cannot be frozen in time. It will be impacted by anthropogenic climate change and the decisions of site managers. Representative Delbert Latta's state-dominated perception of his land in relation to his constituents' desires prevented him from seeing holistically, but that cannot keep happening if public policy is to protect against exponential environmental destruction. The ritual of Earth Day celebrates a disembodied, symbolic Earth, disconnected from any specific land or place. The trajectories of environmental history are primed to address the complex history of human-nature-space relationships and how they have been and continue to be destabilized.

This thesis also questions the previously used frameworks to examine environmental history and human-nature connections. Historians, humanities scholars, and activists typically can be categorized into five frameworks of examining the land. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Some scholars' work may fall into more than one category. Scholars such as environmental historian William Cronon, and geographers, have framed environmental history as a history of space.[10] Space is the abstract, geometrical/locational modeling of the land. It is commonly used to construct maps or create models that are not necessarily tied to one piece of land. Cronon has also used the territory model of environmental history when examining the control of land through management of a location.[11] In this framework, the land is diminished to

[10] William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York, NY: W.W. North & Company, 2009).

[11] Cronon discusses how the New England region had such a drastic ecosystem shift when European colonists arrived in the seventeenth century. Changes in tree cover, plant species, and animal presence were due to the cultural property rights of colonists. Land was to be owned, settled, and managed by one individual, rather than the communal culture of indigenous peoples. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*.

human domination. Place is a common term in environmental humanities. Place includes an aspect of cultural identity and interaction with a physical location.[12] This affective connection and identification with land often drives human preservation. Other environmental scholars frame land as a region: a collection of locations that respond or are impacted by a series of factors. Bathsheba Demuth's *Floating Coast* is an environmental history of the Bering Strait region as one impacted by shifting economic ideologies and anthropogenic climate change.[13] Demuth's monograph also falls under the landscape framework. Geographers as early as the 1920s used the term of landscape to conceptualize spaces with an intersection of "physical and cultural forms."[14] The history of a landscape is one that understands and examines the perception and use of location as an interconnected whole.[15] This framework places humans **within** the system, rather than outside of, in control of, creating, or dominating the system.

In addition, this thesis complicates the human-nature binary and common conceptions of natural space. Space is an idea constructed by human culture. Physical landscapes have experienced human intervention for millennia. Can a space really be "natural" if humans have lived on it, used it, and transformed it since time immemorial? Can space be defined as either "natural" or "human"? This thesis begins to complicate this binary by demonstrating the ways

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[12] Kathleen Dean Moore, *The Pine Island Paradox* (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2011); Lauret Savoy, *Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2015).
[13] Bathsheba Demuth, *The Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2019).
[14] Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick, "Introduction," in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America,* edited by Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick, 1-21, (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2000): 15.
[15] The National Park Service (NPS) has four different categories of landscape they use in preservation and restoration efforts: historic site, historic designed landscape, historic vernacular landscape, and ethnographic landscape. All these categories include a dimension of human use or alteration. Similarly, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has three types of landscapes able to be designated as World Heritage Sites: clearly defined landscapes, organically evolved landscapes, and associative cultural landscapes. Despite the titles, all these landscapes designations include an aspect(s) of human alteration, design, or value. Alanen and Melnick, "Introduction," 8.

the Great Black Swamp has been altered by human activity and cultural productions of environmental history over time.

The history of the Great Black Swamp is both a regional history and an examination of landscape. The former Great Black Swamp is a patchwork of landscapes impacted by the sedentary colonialist culture of European settlers. It was impacted by cultures of war, the rise of agriculture, city park preservation movements, and national activism. It is also an interconnected landscape. Trophic cascades are common in connected landscapes, as can be seen with such anthropocentric actions as clearing forests for level ground, poisoning crows, limiting air particulate matter, or cleaning up a stream. However, using these frameworks alone erases the history of territory. What these frameworks all lack in the conceptualization of a swampland is the instability and fragility of a swamp space. Swamps are liminal spaces, constantly shifting by humans' attempts to control it. Humans cannot use a space that is half land-half water; they desire one type of land for one utilitarian purpose. Thus, while this thesis draws upon the frameworks historians and humanists have used for decades, it also proposes a new swampland framework for environmental history.

The first chapter examines the multiple meanings encoded in Fort Meigs and Fort Meigs Historic Site in Perrysburg, Ohio. Nineteenth-century Fort Meigs was a military site with entrance allowed only for American soldiers. Fort Meigs Historic Site is a recreated, reconstructed fort with paid entrance. The chapter asks what it means to have an ecological perspective in public history. The reconstructed historical site demonstrates the separation of the fortified block from its surroundings, thus removing the necessary understandings of environmental placement so crucial to history. Including aspects of the environment in the

history of Fort Meigs enriches the history of space and increases the ecological awareness of public visitors.

Chapter 2 is an analysis of how community input influenced the environmental policy decisions of northwest Ohio representative Delbert Latta. The 1970 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was the first U.S. comprehensive environmental policy; a statement of national environmental values and a process for enacting them. Latta was one representative supportive of the initial NEPA bills. Using the Latta Papers archival collection in the BGSU Center for Archival Collections, this chapter explores why Latta did not have a consistent environmental ethic, despite his near precedent-setting vote in support of NEPA.[16] This chapter also briefly discusses the benefits and challenges of using placement as a method of policy history. Placement includes an analysis of a public figure's private history (i.e., personal values, interests, and experiences) and public history (i.e., voting history, public statements, correspondence) to understand why they made a decision or took a course of action.[17] It argues that Latta struggled to balance pro- and anti-environmental votes because of the competing interests of environmental and industry/agricultural constituency groups. He tended to vote with the group that contacted him the most frequently or, when balanced, the group with the most power as voters, typically agricultural interests. This case study demonstrates the government lens of simplifying complex systems into manageable, easy to understand components. Latta acted with an affective connection to his constituents and their values. However, this was done at the destruction of complex natural systems that require policy makers and voters to consider

[16] The term "environmental ethic" in this context refers to the set of environmental perspectives emerging from Latta's decision making and correspondence. It is not a value statement of Latta's environmental opinions.
[17] Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1986).

multiple angles, impacts, perspectives, and courses of action to preserve the integrity of the ecosystem.

Chapter 3 is an examination of the changing Earth Day practices at Bowling Green State University. Since 1970, Earth Day activities across university campuses have shifted away from university-wide teach-ins and the original goal of environmental education toward celebration and appreciation of nature, increasingly fostering a virtualized sense of community anchored in social media, not place. BGSU has been no exception to these changes. The final chapter asks how BGSU changed its celebration of Earth Day from 1970 through the present. Examining the evolution of Earth Day celebrations at the university and in the city of Bowling Green, this chapter broadens the existing literature in time and space.[18] It reveals the significant role of technology in fostering a culture of easily accessible information, changing Earth Day to social media campaigns and surface-level celebrations of nature. It also argues for a reframing of twenty-first century Earth Day to mimic the intentionality of the first Earth Day as the environment is in another state of rapidly changing conditions.

While this thesis draws upon the methodological approaches of several subfields of history, it is primarily an environmental history. Environmental history as a field began in academia in the mid-twentieth century. In 1977, a group of prominent scholars in the rapidly growing study of environmental history launched the American Society for Environmental History. Such scholars, heralded as the founders of environmental history, were Donald Worster, Roderick Nash, Carolyn Merchant, and more. These historians recognized that academic

[18] Personal conversation with Dr. Adam Rome, March 25, 2022. Dr. Rome shared with me that not a lot is known about Earth Day between 1971 and the rise of technology and social media. I strive to connect BGSU's way of celebrating Earth Day to other universities, but there is not a lot of evidence of national trends in Earth Day. Part of that comes from the lack of national organization of Earth Day. There was no national curriculum of teach-ins, so each community celebrated according to the cultural norms or values existing in that space.

historians examined nature purely as an effect of human activity. They raised scholarly awareness and analysis that "the natural world is not merely the backdrop to human events but evolves in its own right."[19] The early group of environmental historians began a field that would evolve from rural environmental history with a focus on indigenous peoples to a social history of the environment, urban history, colonization, and beyond.[20]

Methodological approaches in the late twentieth century contributed to the growing popularity of small-scale environmental histories. As urban history was growing in popularity, local and regional history became common approaches in environmental history.[21] This thesis borrows methodological and archival processes from local history as it examines small-scale communities and the voices of everyday people in Bowling Green. While grassroots environmental activists raised public alarm in the mid-twentieth century, environmental history publications kept focusing on the national, largescale level. Local histories are becoming more common in the twenty-first century. This research reframes that trend to examine a local environmental history at an ecosystem level, rather than a city or county level. The Great Black Swamp covered many socio-political boundaries, thus reclaiming some of the agency of nature to define functional boundaries.

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[19] J.R. McNeill, "The State of the Field of Environmental History," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 35 (2010): 346.

[20] Roderick Nash published what is commonly referred to as the first U.S. environmental history by examining changing cultural mindsets and values of wilderness, and how that contributed to the growing sense of American identity throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 5th edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014). Beginning with seventeenth century indigenous communities and New England region colonists, William Cronon uses ecological data and written primary sources to show how settlement patterns influenced many of the environmental changes; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*. Carolyn Merchant added layers of nuance to her studies of women and nature, cultural stereotypes of femininity, and the history of ecology: Carolyn Merchant, *Earthcare: Women and the Environment* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996); Carolyn Merchant, *Science and Nature: Past, Present, and Future,* 1st edition (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018); Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution,* 40th Anniversary Edition (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2020). Nancy Unger also examined the role of women in environmental activism in a later wave of ecofeminism: Nancy C. Unger, *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers: American Women in Environmental History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[21] McNeill, "The State of the Field."

These trends in environmental history are furthered in this thesis as recent scholars step beyond the boundaries of traditional academic history to do interdisciplinary and collaborative work. Online, short-form platforms such as Arcadia Environment and Society Portal, NiCHE (Network in Canadian History & Environment), and H-Environment showcase digital media projects, ethical dilemmas, and more. The American Society for Environmental History annual conference in 2022 featured collaborative projects on map analysis, social change, and public history. This thesis fits within the current momentum of environmental history becoming more interdisciplinary and public facing. The application of multiple methodologies and examining a community from various perspectives is a novel way of combining environmental and social history.

This thesis also engages with swampland study and affective ecologies. Scholars from across the environmental humanities have studied swamps and the emotional response to swamplands. Some, such as Annie Proulx, offer an in-depth analysis of identity formation despite the pressure of urbanization to drain wetlands.[22] Other examine the power of swamps to inspire creativity, imagination, and memory.[23] Nearly all studies of U.S. swamplands are focused on the Great Dismal Swamp in North Carolina and Virginia, the Atchafalaya Swamp in Louisiana, and the Okefenokee Swamp along the Florida-Georgia coast.[24] The few of the Great

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[22] Annie Proulx, *Fen, Bog, & Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and its Role in the Climate Crisis* (New York, NY: Scribner, 2022).

[23] Barbara Hurd, *Stirring the Mud: On Swamps, Bogs, and Human Imagination* (Boston, MA: Mariner, 2008); Anthony David Wilson, *Swamp: Nature and Culture* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2018).

[24] A few examples of texts covering long-term histories of swamplands include Ronald J. Larson, *Swamp Song: A Natural History of Florida's Swamps* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1995); Donald R. Whitehead, "Developmental and Environmental History of the Dismal Swamp," *Ecological Monographs* 42, no. 3 (1972): 301-315. Recent studies of the Dismal Swamp examine enslaved peoples and memory in the swamp and public history sites: Daniel O. Sayers, *A Desolate Place for a Defiant People: The Archaeology of Maroons, Indigenous Americans, and Enslaved Laborers in the Great Dismal Swamp* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2014); Kathryn Benjamin Golden, "'Armed in the Great Swamp': Fear, Maroon, Insurrection, and the Insurgent Ecology of the Great Dismal Swamp," *Journal of African American History* 106, no. 1 (2021): 1-26; J. Brent Morris, *Dismal Freedom: A History of the Maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2022).

Black Swamp portray a progressive narrative of Euro-American settlement and changes in agriculture that transformed the swamplands into fertile farmlands.[25] Studies of the Great Black Swamp are nineteenth century or early twentieth century studies, since that is the period in which the region was still largely swampland. Few studies examine how the environment and culture changed, and continue to change, after the draining of the swamp. This study briefly fills in that gap to examine how the swamp still informs a sense of place and identity (despite the space largely being developed and agricultural) that continues to inform practices and perspectives into the twenty first century.

There are several personal and professional values this research adds to scholarly conversations of environmental and local history. First though it is not an all-encompassing history of the swamp, it is the first collection of essays to center environmental agency and activism in this region of the Midwest. The essays that follow either add an environmental dimension to what has been previously studied (chapter 1 on Fort Meigs, chapter 2 on Delbert Latta) or center the environment as the driving force for community activism (chapter 3 on Earth Day). In both situations, the environment serves as a unifying theme across multiple temporal and geographic scales of environmental action. Another value of this thesis is to show the application of multiple types of history methodologies. Each chapter relies on a different methodological approach: heterotopic theory from sociology and other social sciences, affect theory and social history, policy history, and social history from below. This highlights the important feature of interdisciplinarity in environmental history. Using multiple methodologies creates a fuller understanding of the influence of humans on the environment, and vice versa. In

[25] Jim Mollenkopf, *The Great Black Swamp: Historical Tales of 19th Century Northwest Ohio* (Toledo, OH: Lake of the Cat Pub, 1999); Howard E. Good and Brenda Olson Sutherland, *Black Swamp Farm* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1967); Peter W. Wilhelm, "Draining the Black Swamp: Henry and Wood Counties, Ohio, 1870-1920," *Northwest Ohio Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (1984): 79-95.

addition, there are multiple types of primary source used in this study. Many chapters include print/paper archival research based on written documents. Other sources include aerial photography and maps, oral history, digitized sources, audio/visual sources, and social media. The breadth of the theories and sources used demonstrates the author's broad abilities to research and write academic histories.

As residents of Bowling Green and surrounding communities engaged with the natural world across time, this research engages with shifting meanings and placemaking of human and non-human inhabitants. Changes in climate, weather, and environmental composition prompt changes in human behavior, policy decisions, and attitudes about nature. It is integral to document the anthropogenic transformations in natural spaces as climate change accelerates ecosystem shifts. Fort Meigs Historic Site may not always be protected from the flooding of the Maumee River on its high embankment. A rise in river levels or flood stages may require the staff at the Historic Site to reframe how they tell the history of the site, or how they allocate funds to preserve and protect historic buildings. Industrial agriculture representatives in the mid-twentieth century worried about pests and air pollution control. Farmers may soon be writing to elected officials about struggles to meet quotas due to frequent droughts and/or floods. Bowling Green State University students once gathered to celebrate beauty and teach their peers how to be environmental stewards. They now post photographs and short videos to social media; some seemingly ignorant to the real-world actions they can take to lessen their environmental impacts. The environment affects everyone, no matter their societal role or belief system. It affected Fort Meigs soldiers, farmers, lakeshore residents, and college students. The differences are in what people do in response to environmental change. Whether people separate themselves from or

learn about nature, humanity's relationship to and the condition of the natural world rests in people's individual and collective responses to environmental change.

My hope is that readers take away a curiosity and critical analysis of the ways their own communities have portrayed these historic relationships so we can reframe our histories and unite ahead to create more place-based, nuanced, holistic, and intentional systems of resilience.

CHAPTER 1. POWER, AGENCY, AND OTHERED SPACES: LANDSCAPE SCRUBBING AT FORT MEIGS HISTORIC SITE

Walking through the six-foot-tall spiked wooden walls, the landscape turns from a semi-forested river embankment to a grassy, flat encampment of American soldiers. Surrounded by trees on three sides and water to the north, this protected military site is strategically located on the Maumee River, opening transportation for soldiers and supplies. The interior of the fort includes cloth tents, fires, and a plethora of soldiers cleaning weapons and preparing meals. More soldiers are stationed in guard towers and on canons facing north across the river. This was the landscape General William Henry Harrison and his soldiers constructed in the winter of 1813 during the fight against the British. It is also the landscape twenty first century tourists experience when visiting the Fort Meigs Historic Site in present-day Perrysburg, Ohio.

Though the differences may seem slight, these are two markedly different landscapes under two very different contexts. Fort Meigs was an American military fortification on the southern bank of the Maumee River in present-day Perrysburg, Ohio. General William Henry Harrison ordered it to be built in winter 1813 after a series of attacks diminished his army's size and morale.[26] After a second siege in the summer of 1813, the American forces deconstructed Fort Meigs. They continued to use the location as an armed supply depot until the end of the War of 1812.[27] The land exchanged ownership several times between the nineteenth century and when the state of Ohio acquired it in the mid-twentieth century. Archaeological excavation and reconstruction efforts started in the 1960s with a 1974 grand opening inviting the public to

[26] Fort Meigs Historic Site, "The War of 1812," accessed Oct 1, 2022, https://fortmeigs.org/the-war-of-1812/.
[27] Fort Meigs Historic Site, "A History of Fort Meigs," accessed Oct 1, 2022, https://fortmeigs.org/a-history-of-fort-meigs/.

immerse themselves in the War of 1812 public history site.[28] The Ohio History Connection completed a major restoration project in 2003, though efforts to renovate and improve structures are ongoing. The reconstructed fort remains a space dedicated to the role of Ohioans and the frontier in the War of 1812. The fort and museum require an entrance fee. There is a small museum, gift shop, and educational spaces on site. While the fort is closed during winter months, the museum is open year-round. The museum features an interactive War of 1812 exhibit, including material culture and archived documents.

This chapter questions what it means from an ecological point of view that historic sites present the illusion of a space that has not changed over time. Historic sites, like the Fort Meigs reconstruction, aim to tell narrative history of a specific point in time. They reconstruct history via an immersive experience. However, they often do not address how the landscape has changed over time. The Fort Meigs Historic Site land does not look the same as it did for nineteenth-century Fort Meigs occupants.[29] The retelling of War of 1812 history ignores those changes. The removal of indigenous people, traditional ecological knowledge, and Great Black Swamp ecosystems are not present in the site's education. Overlooking ecological change prevents historic sites from becoming part of the movement to prevent further climatological harm through environmental education.[30] Including environmental history will increase present-day knowledge of the processes and human-driven change that created the environments people live in today.

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[28] Fort Meigs Historic Site, "Reconstructing the Past," accessed Oct 1, 2022, https://fortmeigs.org/reconstructing-the-past/.

[29] For clarification and simplification, "Fort Meigs" in this paper refers to the contemporary War of 1812 fort and military encampment, and "historic site" or "Fort Meigs Historic Site" refers to the reconstructed fort comprising the twenty-first century public history space.

[30] Debra A. Reid and David D. Vail, *Interpreting the Environment at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019).

The most important primary source in this chapter is the space itself. The space is interpreted through surveys, map and aerial photography. Military journals also provide insight into weather and human movement around the fort. Videos and aerial photography are also used to understand some of the recent, twenty-first century heterotopic characteristics of the historic site. With these symbolic and pictorial representations, the analysis reads space by examining change over time. Locations of trees, grass, and fort walls point to how humans altered the landscape. This chapter engages with some of the most well-known works in the field of environmental history. Environmental history as a discipline, and its theoretical applications, nuance the understanding of space. This chapter only brushes the surface of scholarship on the War of 1812 since the focus is the space and environment of Fort Meigs. It is not an environmental history of Fort Meigs Historic Site, though it is the start of a deeper understanding of environmental conditions and change.

This chapter expands place-based studies and examines them through an environmental lens. It specifically examines how public history sites conceptualize and publicize changes in physical space. It is a first step in an environmental history of Fort Meigs and offers a few suggestions to improve the environmental dimensions of Fort Meigs Historic Site. The conclusions presented about Fort Meigs may also be reproduced with other public history sites. All physical locations, whether in a natural state of preservation or a built environment, have an environmental history. The analyses in this chapter are replicable for any location and can help bring a deeper sense of community, understanding, and activism.

A Brief History of Fort Meigs

While the motivations of the War of 1812 are unclear, most historians agree that the U.S. was fighting Great Britain over maritime laws and the British practice of forcing American

captives to man British warships. The war was fought in seven theaters across the world, four of which along the present-day U.S.-Canada border. The U.S. won many battles and well-known political leaders rose out of war participation, including General and future President William Henry Harrison. There was also poor planning and mismanagement by military leaders. Many of those decisions contributed to the fall of American forts and battle campaigns. With no clear "winner" of the war, the outcomes are also a bit controversial. The U.S. did not gain any territory or political benefit at the end of the war.[31]

The War of 1812 included important campaigns and forts constructed in present-day northwest Ohio.[32] When U.S. General Hull surrendered to the British at Fort Detroit in August 1812, General Harrison retreated to support General Winchester on the River Raisin in southern Michigan. Harrison settled at the foot of the Maumee River rapids, at the site of what would become Fort Meigs. There were three major deficiencies of Fort Meigs' location. Because the British controlled the Great Lakes, supplies and troops traveling to the fort had to traverse through the Great Black Swamp or go through Fort Wayne. They had to avoid traversing British-controlled Lake Erie. It was inconvenient to travel to Fort Meigs from the north or east. Similarly, the isolation of Fort Meigs made it vulnerable to British attack. As General Harrison experienced declines in the number of troops, Fort Meigs became a waste of resources, a sitting duck for British retaliation. Despite being asked to remove troops from Fort Meigs in early 1813,

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[31] Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Short History* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012).
[32] For a more extensive history of Fort Meigs and the War of 1812, see: Roger M. Carpenter, *The Renewed, the Destroyed, and the Remade: The Three Thought Worlds of the Huron and the Iroquois, 1609-1650* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2004); Alec R. Gilpin, *The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2012); R. Douglas Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996); Larry L. Nelson, "Dudley's Defeat and the Relief of Fort Meigs during the War of 1812," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 104, no. 1 (2006): 5-42; J.C.A. Staff, *The War of 1812: Conflict for a Continent* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Robert P. Watson, *America's First Crisis: The War of 1812* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2014).

Harrison kept them there.[33] Fort Meigs withstood two attacks, in May and July 1813, from British General Procter and his troops.[34] It was shortly after decommissioned as a military fort.

Fort Meigs was located on the banks of the Maumee River. In the early nineteenth century, this area was in the heart of the Great Black Swamp. The Great Black Swamp covered almost 1,500 square miles in northwest Ohio and northeastern Indiana. Many European travelers documented how difficult and scary it was to cross through the swamp. Some, such as General Robert Lucas in 1812, hired indigenous guides, experienced in paddling the waters, to canoe them through the "tremendous swamp."[35] Lucas also complained about horrible summer mosquitoes in the swamp around present-day Liberty Center, a small village southwest of Perrysburg.[36] That Fort Meigs was chosen to be placed on the high ridge of the Maumee River distinguished it from the surrounding swamplands; it functioned in relation to the space of inhabitability around the fort. Fort Meigs was a safe, high location with good sightlines in an otherwise dark and challenging landscape. It was a habitable location, housing and providing for hundreds of soldiers, in an uninhabitable landscape.

The land on which Fort Meigs was situated was a mixed landscape of forest, floodplain, and prairie. Government land surveys in 1805, after indigenous peoples ceded land to the U.S. government in the 1795 Treaty of Greenville, notate the visual landscape Fort Meigs soldiers would have experienced upon first arrival. On the north shore of the Maumee River, across the water from the site of the fort, was an indigenous village.[37] The land immediately south of the

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[33] Nelson, "Dudley's Defeat."
[34] Hickey, *The War of 1812*, 42.
[35] Robert Lucas and J. Carl Parish, *The Robert Lucas journal of the war of 1812 during the campaign under General William Hall* (Iowa City, IA: The State historical society of Iowa, 1906): 357.
[36] Lucas and Parish, *The Robert Lucas Journal,* 362.
[37] The indigenous village is not identified in original county survey notes. The surveyor notes simply state "old Indian village." Wood County Engineer, Original U.S. Land Surveys, U.S. Reserve Township 1, Section 1, surveyed by E. Glover, 1805, page 1.

river was flat with sparse ash trees, typical features of a bottom floodplain. Moving south up the hill where Fort Meigs was to be located the landscape transitioned to oak savanna/prairie with white oak, red oak, and hickory trees.[38] This combination of scattered trees and open space denotes an intervened landscape. Oak and hickory trees are largely fire resistant; other trees native to northwest Ohio at this time would have died from any controlled burn. The average size of the hickory trees (about 12 inches in diameter) and oak trees (14-24 inches in diameter) are common for trees anywhere from 40-60 years old. This ecological context suggests that an indigenous-led or natural burn occurred between 1750 and 1805.

Once the top of the hill at the rapids of the Maumee River was identified as the site of Fort Meigs, this landscape underwent a human-created transition from oak savanna to an open field where the fort was constructed. Soldiers had to clear out the trees and level the land in order to lift fort walls and place tents. This was a significant ecological shift from savanna with scattered trees to flat land with a semi-permanent human settlement. This is not recognized at the Historic Site.[39] Ignoring this action removes a vital part of Fort Meigs history. Removing the trees upon the hill removed all ecological evidence of an indigenous mitigated and inhabited environment. Not acknowledging this impact perpetuates the erasure of indigenous histories. The shift to empty land with a military fort demonstrated the new ability of the U.S. government to control the land and dominate other peoples.[40] This is a vital part of northwest Ohio history and should be told at Fort Meigs Historic Site.

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[38] Ibid., 1-2.
[39] The Historic Site website has an education guide for Fort Meigs history, that will be analyzed later in the paper. One of the lesson teacher prep notes contain some of these changes, though the actual lesson does not include any activity related to ecological change.
[40] Control of wilderness in the nineteenth century was a cultural product of a largely Eurocentric, Judeo-Christian interpretation of human's purpose of dominating land; Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*.

Figure 1.1: Aerial Photograph of Fort Meigs Historic Site, 2022. This is a vertical image of the historic site, taken directly above the site. The guard towers can be seen around the perimeter and in the center of the site. The built-up mounds are clearly visible in this image. The building in the lower left corner is the Fort Meigs Museum. This image clearly demonstrates how separated the interior of the fort is from the surrounding forested landscape. Source: Snapshot taken of Google Maps, Oct 23, 2022.

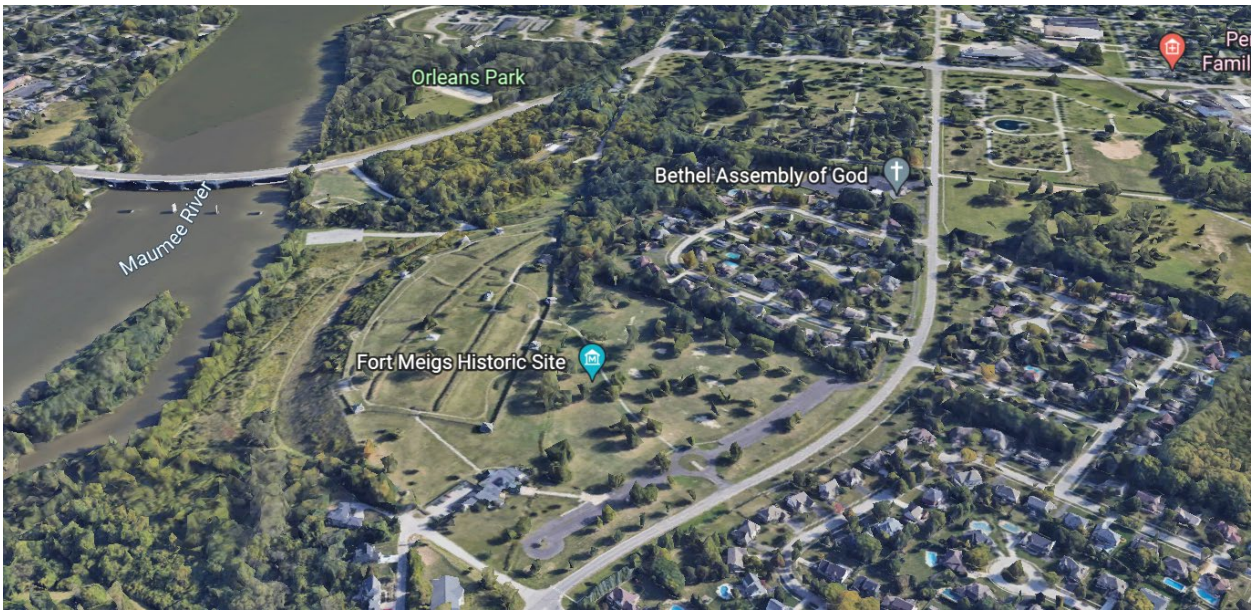

Figure 1.2: Second Aerial Photograph of Fort Meigs Historic Site, 2022. The long, dark asphalt area in the lower center of the image is the main parking lot of the site. The museum is the building in the mid-left lower part of the image. The reconstructed fort can be seen under the "Fort Meigs Historic Site" text. The walls are clearly seen, and the built-up mounds can be seen parallel to the Maumee River. The site is elevated above the Maumee River banks.

The slope can be seen on the left side of the site, to the right of the small trail on the banks. Source: Snapshot taken of Google Maps, Oct 23, 2022.

In the early twentieth century, Fort Meigs became an Ohio state park and its environmental character changed again. John B. Wilson and his ancestors had owned the property for nearly a century, using it only for pastureland. They established a memorial marker on the site. In 1907, the family sold the land of current Fort Meigs Historic Site to the state of Ohio.[41] The site was officially dedicated as a state monument the following year.[42] The Ohio History Council and local partners began working together at this time to reconstruct a public history site. The Historic Site is currently surrounded by the Maumee River, forests, and a neighborhood (Figure 1.1 & 1.2). The aerial photography of the site also shows how manicured and intentionally differentiated the site is from its surroundings. The grass is mowed inside and around the fort. This ensures that the fort can be seen from the road. The nineteenth-century fort was likely hidden by the thick swamp environment and contained no roads. There are few trees inside the fort, which is different from how the banks across the Maumee River look (Figure 1.2). This is an intentional decision to distinguish the fort from its surroundings. It also allows visitors to explore the inside of the fort upon entrance. When events are happening or with the living history aspect of Fort Meigs' public education, guests are free to wander through the yards off the gravel paths. This would be impossible if the grounds team did not mow the grass to an appropriate, accessible level.

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[41] "Deed for Ft. Meigs Has Been Executed and Property now Belongs to State," *Perrysburg Journal* no. 7 (June 1907): 1, accessed Oct 25, 2022, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87076843/1907-06-28/ed-1/seq-1/.
[42] C. W. Evers, *Dedication of Fort Meigs monument, September 1, 1908 Together with brief description of the two sieges of Fort Meigs in 1813* (Bowling Green, OH: Democrat print, 1908), accessed Oct 25, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/item/36012568/.

The twenty-first century Historic Site aims to reconstruct the nineteenth-century military fort; however, the site will never be restored to its nineteenth-century Great Black Swamp environment. The public historians and site managers at the historic site have been taking small steps to restore the native environment around the fort. The outside of the wooden walls are earthen hills. Staff planted native prairie grasses on those embankments surrounding the fort. However, invasive grasses are taking over and crowding out those prairie grasses.[43] Even if Fort Meigs Historic Site attempts to tie the site to its 1813 form, it will never be able to fully recreate or tie back to the environmental context of another time. The Great Black Swamp will not return in the same form that War of 1812 soldiers experienced it, thereby complicating the temporal dimension of a historic site. In addition, the Historic Site does not address this complicated history of environmental transition. It does not attempt to recreate or tell the narrative of the pre-War of 1812 savannas and prairies, nor does it question the composition of trees that soldiers witnessed when they first arrived at the location before construction. It displays a sort of landscape scrubbing in that the site erases historic ecological conditions in its reconstruction of the human-built environment.[44]

Nature has agency to move between and beyond the temporalities rooted in a space, connecting visitors to the twenty-first century. The lack of foreboding swamp forests and dense clouds of mosquitos prevent visitors from truly experiencing Fort Meigs military life. Reenactors at event days may talk about the mosquitos "they" (i.e., their historic character) experienced, but they cannot recreate that sensory experience. Visitors will tie that conversation back to their own

[43] Personal communication with Fort Meigs Historical Site staff, spring 2022.
[44] The concept of landscape scrubbing, as described by landscape architects and historians Arnold Alanen and Robert Melnick, is a type of ecological erasure. In scrubbing a landscape, public historians make decisions that hide certain aspects of the land's history. The decision to showcase one aspect of history alone limits the site's ability to educate future generations and inspire creativity, critical thinking, and community engagement. Alanen and Melnick, "Introduction," 7.

experiences of mosquitos, which are quite different from the experiences of nineteenth-century soldiers who did not have bug spray or pyrethroid ground insecticides to kill insect pests.

In addition, the seasonal and daytime hours of Fort Meigs Historic Site and Museum prevent visitors from experiencing fort life during challenging weather. The fort is open to visitors only April through October, and for a few special winter events. During those times, guests are only permitted entrance in daytime hours. Twenty-first century visitors are spared the challenges of harsh winter cold and snow, intense rainstorms, and other extreme weather. They can escape that experience through the technologically mediated indoor museum exhibits. Fort Meigs soldiers could not escape harsh weather. They did not have the construction technology to go inside a completely sealed building to stay dry and warm (or cool in summer months). Technology and decisions made in reconstructing the fort change the environmental experience of the Historic Site, thereby mediating the truly historic experience for visitors.

Fort Meigs Museum

The Fort Meigs Museum, currently located at the front entrance to Fort Meigs Historic Site, is its own type of material and temporal heterotopia.[45] It welcomes guests into the world of 1813 with visualizations, exhibits, and educational material. Like Daniel Sosna's study of

[45] Heterotopias, as defined by Michel Foucault, are spaces that inherently have tension between their purpose and their execution; between the temporal aspect of space and the present-day environments; and are othered or separated from the space around them. There is an extensive historiography of heterotopia theory as connected to public history sites, museums, prisons, and more. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," *Architecture, Movement, Continuity*, Oct. 1984. On resettlement of Greek and Italian women and their use of tapestry creation as heterotopias, see: Marietta Rossotte, "Heterotopia and its role in the lived experiences of resettlement," *International Education Journal* 7, no. 4 (2006): 446-454; on literary analysis, see: Noor-ul-Ain Sajjad & Ayesh Perveen, "Private Heterotopia and the Public Space: An Incongruity Explored Through Orhan Pamuk's *My Name Is Red*," *SAGE Open* 9, no. 1 (2019); on the function of social media, see: Kate Sangwon Lee & Huaxin Wei, "Social Media as Heterotopia: Applying Foucault's Concept of Heterotopia to Analyze Interventions in Social Media as a Networked Public," *Archives of Design Research* 33, no. 2 (2020): 5-17; MJ Brady, "The flexible heterotopia: Indian residential schools and the Canadian Museum of Civilization," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 19, no. 4 (2013): 408-420; Smaranda Spanu, *Heterotopia Preservation: The Heterotopic Tool as a Means of Heritage Assessment* (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020): 321; Rachel Ellis, "Prisons and Porous Institutions," *Theory and Society* 50 (2021): 175-199.

heterotopic landfills, the museum is a disposal site of material culture.[46] Archaeological digs revealed war buttons, weapons, metal goods, coins, and clothing that are all featured in exhibits. Those digs removed layers of soil and, with them, narratives of environmental history. Pollen records via soil cores are a common method to reconstructing environmental history, a way to understand what types of plants grew in what eras.[47] Archaeological digs, if completed before soil cores are taken or without in-depth documentation of soil layers, can remove that analysis of natural temporalities. While the museum curators create an exciting, engaging, and interactive set of educational displays in the museum, none discuss these environmental changes of the site. The museum is a sort of curated landfill with the materials intentionally on display for the public to understand the history of Fort Meigs. The priority is in human history, which freezes Fort Meigs in the nineteenth century and erases the history of the land. Environmental history adds a depth (literal and analytical) to these anthropocentric histories.

Even the landscape outside the museum building is a curated heterotopia of material culture. In February of 2022, Fort Meigs staff found a wedding ring dated 1983 in a maintenance shed on site.[48] Likely found somewhere above ground, this ring ties Fort Meigs Historic Site to the late twentieth-century wedding of a gentleman named Mike (unknown last name). There are at least four temporalities found in this one artifact: the twenty-first century reconstructed fort where the ring was found, the twentieth century wedding of Mr. Mike and his spouse, the reconstructed fort landscape of the nineteenth century, and whatever period the metals of the ring

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[46] Daniel Sosna, "Heterotopias behind the fence: landfills as relational emplacements," in *Archaeologies of Waste: Encounters with the Unwanted*, eds. Daniel Sosna and Lenka Brunclikova, 162-178 (Oxford: Oxford Books, 2016): 163.

[47] William Cronon, "Reading the Palimpsest," in *Discovering the Chesapeake: the history of an ecosystem*, eds Philip D. Curtin, Grace Somers Brush, and George Wescott Fisher (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001): 355-373.

[48] Shaun Hegarty, "History mystery with ring found at Ft. Meigs," 13 abc, Feb 1, 2022, https://www.13abc.com/2022/02/01/history-mystery-with-ring-found-ft-meigs/.

were uncovered and molded. The environmental conditions of these four eras are likely markedly different, but they are not explored at Fort Meigs Historic Site or in the news coverage of the story. The environment is simply a backdrop for Fort Meigs history, the agency of nature an unresolved plot twist in the War of 1812 narrative. The ring tells multiple stories of these eras. It also brings in temporal and situational tension with the potential of the ring being intentionally discarded. People leave trash and often lose personal items while visiting the museum. These modern artifacts tie the site to its twenty-first century context as the reconstructed landscape attempts to pull visitors back in time, creating a tension and challenge for public history education.

The Fort Meigs Museum complicates the idea that a museum is a crystal ball through which to view the past. The clarity of a crystal ball ignores the complicated history of museums as sites of appropriation, mediated or selected history, and colonization.[49] Colonization of the land brought intense ecological change that decreased diversity and increased habitat loss.[50] Fort Meigs as it stands does not address these land-based colonizing practices. They address the ancestral homelands of the peoples who lived on the Fort Meigs land before the War of 1812, but that is only one part of acknowledging and reckoning with the destructive practices that happened there.

Conclusion

Environmental historian William Cronon has called for a revisioning of history through the analysis of layers. He compared environmental history to a practice of reading palimpsests.[51] Unveiling narratives in the land layer by layer is no easy task. It requires an interdisciplinary

[49] Christine DeLucia, "Fugitive Collections in New England Indian Country: Indigenous Material Culture and Early American History Making at Ezra Stiles's Yale Museum," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 75: 1 (2018): 109-150.
[50] Cronon, *Changes in the Land.*
[51] Cronon, "Reading the Palimpsest."

team and analyses in archaeology, environmental sciences, geography, climatology, and more to read those land-based records. The power in bringing a palimpsest back to life, Cronon states, comes from "our ability to see them in our mind's eye."[52] Fort Meigs Historic Site creates the embodied experience to bring the 1813 fort back to life. Environmental history calls for an examination of Fort Meigs history before and beyond the nineteenth century layer. Studies of environmental history, when examining one geographic location, tend to utilize deep history methodologies.[53] This study did not have access to a deep history of Fort Meigs, because the staff do not have the resources to do pollen cores, climatology, and other extensive scientific studies. They also have limited understanding of indigenous peoples' use of the land before Fort Meigs was constructed, though they are actively collaborating with the Great Black Swamp InterTribal Foundation to bring indigenous knowledge and voices to the historical site.

There is a tendency to see historic sites as an unmediated past, but they are not unaltered. Fort Meigs Historic Site renders visible a landscape that is constructed. It is not the same as the landscape nineteenth century soldiers lived in. The Great Black Swamp environment is different. Twenty-first century visitors will not experience the dense, fear-ridden swamplands surrounding the fort. They experience a manicured landscape with minimal obstructions. Humans can control the landscape to recreate a feeling of an era passed. However, they have a limited ability to control natural spaces. When historic sites present the illusion of an unaltered natural space, they ignore the anthropogenic and natural environmental changes. They also limit the location from one major goal of public history: to educate the public about history and change over time.

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[52] Ibid., 357.

[53] For an example of environmental history of bison and the use of long-term (deep) environmental history methodology, see: Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser, eds, *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2016).

Landscape scrubbing is harmful for two major reasons. First, in ignoring environmental change, a historic site prevents the public from understanding how the space they inhabit became that space. All spaces, whether human constructed or "natural," are impacted by their past. A national park has not always been in that state. It may once have been a lush evergreen forest and now is a sparse mixed hardwood forest. Ecological change may happen without human intervention but understanding the role humans have played in ecological change creates environmentally minded citizens. "The cleansing of history… often has served to deny future generations opportunities for new discoveries and interpretations."[54] The more educated ecological stewards in the world, the more sustainable actions will be taken, and the less environmental harm will be caused. This is growing in importance exponentially as the rapid effects of anthropogenic climate change are realized. The second harm in historic sites presenting an illusion of an unchanged space is in erasing the history of marginalized peoples. The history of the land may be intertwined with forced labor by enslaved peoples, erasure of indigenous traditional ecological knowledge and lifeways, and/or the exploitation of natural resources and more-than-human species. While this chapter focused on the environmental aspects missing at Fort Meigs Historic Site, it can be expanded in a future study to examine the landscape scrubbing of histories of of peoples, labor, and cultures tied to the land.

The root of the fragmentation of the re-created landscape of Fort Meigs is the nineteenth century view of separation between nature and human. Nineteenth century landscape architects designed and desired a curated wilderness.[55] This human-intervened landscape was intended to mimic untouched land. The paradox here is that the untouched land was strongly designed to be

[54] Alanen and.Melnick, "Introduction," 7.
[55] Matthew Klingle, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Anne Mitchell Wisnant, *Super-scenic motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

that way. Curated wilderness is the opposite of untouched wilderness, yet it is still experienced and valued as if it was not intervened. Fort Meigs Historic Site is meant to mimic the nineteenth century landscape as it was experienced by War of 1812 soldiers; however, it is, and the landscape they inhabited was, strongly influenced by human decisions. Soldiers decided to fell the trees to make an open plain for their fort. Public historians decided what aspects of the landscape should remain for visitors to experience in the twenty-first century. The recreated fort creates an idealized state of the location. In doing so, designers fell back to the nineteenth century cultural separation of humans from nature.

Fort Meigs Historic Site is beginning to grapple with the environmental history of the space. In their guide for K-12 schoolteachers, lesson plans include statements about the environmental change that happened around Fort Meigs in the early nineteenth century. "Land was cleared and leveled. The forest was felled."[56] The historical site podcast channel includes episodes about how soldiers endured harsh winters.[57] The opportunities to infuse environmental history with the history of the War of 1812 are endless. Fort Meigs Historic Site is moving toward this goal as they begin to analyze forest removal, indigenous histories, and the impacts of weather, but there are unrealized potentials in teaching the public about environmental change in this space.

Chronopolitics and the separation of space from context is a challenge of public history sites. Chronopolitics is the study of the politicization and manipulation of time.[58] Fort Meigs

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[56] "Section 1: Fort Meigs Map," *The Educator's Guide to Visiting Fort Meigs*, https://fortmeigs.org/educate-2/, accessed May 26, 2023.
[57] "Winter Quarters – A Handful of Hickory Nuts," *The Foot of the Rapids: A History Podcast*, podcast audio, March 4, 2021, https://soundcloud.com/user-253214246/winter-quarters-a-handful-of-hickory-nuts; "Winter Quarters – Every Naked Man In Camp," *The Foot of the Rapids: A History Podcast*, podcast audio, Feb 14, 2021, https://soundcloud.com/user-253214246/winter-quarters-a-handful-of-hickory-nuts.
[58] Social scientists have been exploring the cultural, mediated, systemic, and experience of time in different settings: *The Time of Anthropology: Studies of Contemporary Chronopolitics*, edited by Elisabeth Kirtsoglou and Bob

Historic Site aims to immerse people in the War of 1812 northwest front. In making the decision to reconstruct this era, the site erases a long history of environmental change and human-land relationships. The site does not address how the Great Black Swamp changed from 1813 to its present form. Visitors only experience Fort Meigs through the embodiment of the twenty-first century. It is an anthropocentric history, one focused on human change and human activities. It ignores the environmental impact of those activities. Public history sites isolate a place from its surroundings. Fort Meigs Historic Site has reconstructed wooden walls and earthen embankments to create an atmosphere of a high-walled fort. This isolation ignores that there was an upland oak savanna and forests 100 yards from the walls. The site just tells the history of the War of 1812, not how Fort Meigs was situated in an indigenous landscape. The challenge of preserving a space to one point in time is navigating these temporal and geographic tensions and including an analysis of how the space has changed over time culturally, politically, and environmentally.

Simpson (New York, NY: Routledge Publishing, 2020); George W. Wallis, "Chronopolitics: The Impact of Time Perspectives on the Dynamics of Change," presentation at annual meeting of Rural Sociological Society (San Francisco, CA: 1967).

CHAPTER 2. CONSISTENT INCONSISTENCIES: UNDERSTANDING DELBERT LATTA'S BALANCING ACT OF TWENTIETH CENTURY ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY DECISIONS

On January 1, 1970, President Richard Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) into law. It was the first comprehensive environmental policy in the United States, and it created a national environmental ethic for all government decisions. It is composed of several sections to enact those values, of which the environmental impact assessment process is the most widely known. Environmental interest groups have contested that NEPA does not have enough legal backing. It has no enforcement mechanism; it simply asks that federal agencies *consider* the environmental impacts of their major decisions.[59] Ohio Representative Delbert Latta (served 1959-1989) supported NEPA as the government statement of environmental values. He did not support many of the environmental policies passed after NEPA. This chapter explores why Latta did not have a more consistent voting record on environmental legislation in the twentieth century.

Using archival research, the research reveals that Latta consistently alternated between pro- and anti-environmental votes because of the competing interests of environmental and industry/agricultural constituency groups. He was "consistently inconsistent" in his public environmental votes. Latta never had a consistent environmental ethic; he did not support all environmental policies, or even all policies within a subset of environmental problems, such as all proposed water quality regulations. He saw environmental problems through a perspective of

[59] To clarify, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) has nothing to do with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). NEPA was the first federal environmental policy to declare a set of U.S. environmental values. It is a non-regulatory policy. It was signed into law on January 1, 1970, by President Nixon. The EPA is a federal regulatory agency responsible for enforcing policies and researching pollution-control problems. It was created on December 2, 1970, also by President Nixon. NEPA did not create the EPA. However, the EPA would eventually become the main governing body responsible for commenting on NEPA-required environmental impact assessments.

individual pieces, rather than as a whole system. He acted on whatever constituents wanted but did not see that agricultural interests and environmentalists were fundamentally at odds. Latta simplified natural systems to act on "only that slice of it that interested" him.[60] He fundamentally used a fragmented, state-like perspective, thereby barring himself from contributing to deep, long-lasting environmental policies and programs.

The government often interprets the environment through a fragmented and abridged viewpoint. The state wants things to be easier than they are, especially with complex systems like nature. They will try to consolidate power, proceed with large projects, and do so in an efficient way.[61] The problem with looking at environmental projects through this lens is that human efficiency and environmental efficiency rarely coincide. Decreasing the water levels in the Great Lakes, as was requested of Latta, would be a major feat of human engineering that would likely be destroyed by rising water. Poisoning crows would benefit monocrop agriculture, but in supporting that policy Latta did not see how it could affect insect pest levels. Nature is messy and often unpredictable. By listening to constituent interests, Latta took a human perspective but failed to consider how that interest impacted the whole ecological system.

All throughout his terms in federal office, Latta expressed concern for his constituents and their desires. He frequently corresponded with constituents across northwest Ohio. Latta was known for his visits to Chamber of Commerce meetings, schools, agricultural committees, and more.[62] As evidenced by the correspondence with constituents, Latta's environmental voting record followed whichever policies his constituents asked him to support. The term

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[60] James C. Scott compares government action to a representative map selected only to represent the desired outcome, not to create a full image of the activity or people being analyzed. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (London, England: Yale University Press, 1998): 3.
[61] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 286.
[62] Sarah Glazer, Ralph Nader Congress Project, *Citizens Look at Congress: Delbert L. Latta, Republican Representative from Ohio* (Washington, D.C.: Grossman Publishers, 1972).

"environmental ethic" in this chapter refers to the set of environmental perspectives emerging from Latta's decision making and correspondence. It does not refer to the personal environmental beliefs of Latta as that would involve speculation of Latta's experiences and beliefs. It also does not assume that Latta understood his relationship to the environment as an ethical relationship. In addition, this essay is about perceptions and decisions, not successfully implemented policies or environmental actions. Many of the environmental policies supported by Latta did not pass, and many policies he did not favor passed. Latta commonly based his decision-making on the historic Republican party supporting agro-business and industry. Because it seems he did not prefer strict regulation, it may seem inconsistent that Latta voted for NEPA. However, NEPA was not a strong environmental regulation as it does not force or prevent any agency action from occurring. The policy opened doors for other strong federal environmental policies that Latta would later not support. By being favorable toward a federal environmental ethic as declared by NEPA, perhaps defending the policy gave Latta the courage to profess future anti-environmental beliefs. Therefore, NEPA is just one tool to begin examining Latta's position on environmental protection.

Using the method of placement that is common in policy history, this chapter examines the role of Latta in the policy making process of NEPA and post-NEPA environmental decisions. Placement is a methodology proposed by policy historians Richard Neustadt and Ernest May to explain how or why someone made a certain policy decision.[63] The placement process includes examining an individual's private and public histories, those actions they take outside of public attention and within their role as a public figure, respectively. Latta publicly voted for NEPA in 1969 but against many environmental policies after it passed. Placement is an attempt to

[63] Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time*.

understand his post-1970 environmental decisions. Because of the difficulty of finding private history, placement can at times be a flawed methodology. This is the case with Latta as his private history is not apparent in his correspondence or voting history. A brief discussion of the challenges and benefits of the placement methodology follows the placement of Latta within late twentieth-century environmental politics.

This chapter draws on archival collections and legislative minutes to expand the study of environmental policies. Using the Latta Papers archival collection at the Bowling Green State University Center for Archival Collections (CAC), the research explains the fluctuating policy decisions and votes of Latta.[64] The chapter covers the period between 1969 and 1987 as the archival material on environmental problems fall within these years. It ends in 1987 because that is roughly when Latta's final congressional term ended. As the collection is almost 300 boxes, the selections for this chapter were those identified and labeled via finding aids by CAC staff as having "environmental" content. There may also be environment-related manuscripts in other boxes not examined, but they are unlikely to change the conclusions.

There are several sections in this chapter that describe Latta's role in environmental policies and the roots of his environmental votes in the NEPA creation process. It begins with a discussion of the policy cycle of NEPA, including a brief legislative history. Then, it examines some of Latta's environmental decisions and constituent correspondence. The final section describes the benefits and limitations of the placement process, including the challenges of locating and appropriately speculating an individual's private history on a policy topic.

[64] MS 546 – Delbert L. Latta Congressional Papers, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University. The Latta Papers is a large collection of Congressional Papers, including 1959-1989 correspondence, media, committee files, and publications. It was deposited in the BGSU CAC in 1988 by Latta and his legislative team and has a 2012 addition.

Legislative history of NEPA

On July 10, 1969, the U.S. Senate voted to approve the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The U.S. House of Representatives voted shortly after, on September 23, and passed the policy. On December 23, 1969, it went to the joint committee and was officially passed onto the President's desk. Recognized as the most important environmental policy in U.S. history, the creation of NEPA was not without complications and challenges. Congress argued about the components of the policy from startup funds to the need for an executive environmental advisory group.[65] The only thing Congress appears to have agreed about was the need for a national declaration of environmental values.

The initial motivation for a national environmental policy statement began in the mid-1960s with the rise of the modern environmental movement. The post-WWII rise of suburbia created a novel urge for pollution control and protecting wild spaces. Suburbanization was a form of city building, ecosystem erasing, and nature rearranging.[66] Middle class suburbanites began fighting for corporate pollution responsibility. Other scholars situate the start of the modern environmentalism movement earlier with the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring,* a manifesto for banning DDT and other agricultural pollutants for the sake of protecting avian species.[67] Matthew Lindstrom and Zachary Smith argue that "environmental groups were

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[65] Lynton Keith Caldwell, *The National Environmental Policy Act: An Agenda for the Future* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998); Sabrina Reynolds, ed. *The National Environmental Policy Act: Background, Costs and Benefits of NEPA Analyses* (New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2014).

[66] Christopher C. Sellars, *Crabgrass Crucible: Suburban Nature and the Rise of Environmentalism in Twentieth Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

[67] Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962). Chad Montrie recognizes the cultural memory of Earth Day and/or *Silent Spring* as the origin of environmental activism, but he challenges that notion by situating working class people in early twentieth-century environmental activism, see more: Chad Montrie, *A People's History of Environmentalism in the United States* (New York: Continuum, 2011). For more about modern environmentalism, see: Marco Armiero and Lise Sedrez, *A History of Environmentalism: Local Struggles, Global Histories* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014); Benjamin Kline, *First Along the River: A Brief History of the US Environmental Movement, 4th Edition* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2011).

not a major factor in the legislative history" of NEPA. Congress recognized growing environmental problems without the urging of constituents. In addition to the activist roots of NEPA, Lindstrom and Smith credit the rise of ecological sciences for creating the holistic, systems thinking required for a comprehensive environmental policy.[68] While the previous 1960 Clean Water Act, 1964 Wilderness Act, and others were focused on one area of the environment, NEPA was different in that it is comprehensive, not a problem-based policy. Its foundation is the need for systems thinking in environmental actions.

This revolutionary environmental policy raised new hurdles in defining and measuring environmental impacts, and in determining responsible parties for those tasks. Much of the conflict in this part of NEPA stemmed from the creation of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The Senate and House did not agree on the early details of the Council and its reporting duties.[69] Latta spoke on September 23, 1969, on behalf of the House Committee on Rules, about the CEQ debates. He recalled agency feedback that the CEQ was unnecessary because "President [Nixon], on May 29, by Executive Order 11472, established an Environmental Quality Council and a Citizens Advisory Committee" on the environment.[70] No section of NEPA was as contested as the eventual creation of the CEQ. Latta's comments in Congress will be analyzed in more detail later in the chapter.

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[68] Matthew J. Lindstrom and Zachary A. Smith, *The National Environmental Policy Act: Judicial Misconstruction, Legislative Indifference, & Executive Neglect* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2001): 17.
[69] Senator Jackson on October 8, 1969, stated "There are a number of differences between title III of the Senate version, establishing a Board of Environmental Quality Advisors and calling for an annual environmental quality report to the Congress, and the similar House provisions." This same date the Senate approved a vote to send the bill to joint committee to work out the details that had been in conflict for several months already. For more about the early CEQ section of NEPA, see U.S. Congress, Senate, *Establishment of a Board of Environmental Quality Advisers*, S 1075, 91st Cong., 1st sess., Oct 8, 1969, vol. 115, pt. 21: 29087. For more about the continuing debates about CEQ responsibilities and functioning over time, see: John Hart, "The National Environmental Policy Act and the Battle for Control of Environmental Policy," *Journal of Policy History* 31, no. 4 (2019): 464-487.
[70] U.S. Congress, House, *Council on Environmental Quality, HR 544,* 91st Cong., 1st sess., Sept 23, 1969, vol. 115, pt. 20: 26570.

Placing Delbert Latta in Twentieth Century Environmental Policies

Ohio Representative Delbert Latta served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1959-1989 and was part of several House committees, including the Rules Committee, of which he was a member of during the creation of NEPA. Before becoming a federal representative, Latta served in the National Guard and Army (1938-41), Marine Corps Reserve (1942-43), and Ohio state Senate (1953-1958).[71] He was known for being a supportive community member and frequently met with his constituents about their concerns.[72] For example, while in office, he handwrote congratulatory letters to all graduating high school students in his congressional district.[73] Latta has a legacy of listening to his constituents, supporting big agriculture, protecting his constituents from high taxes, and resisting expansive environmental policies. This legacy is rooted in his struggle to balance constituent values and political promises to business and agriculture.

This chapter uses the concept of placement to understand Latta's consistently changing environmental ethic. Policy historians Neustadt and May define placement as a sort of sophisticated, educated stereotype.[74] Public policy historian Alix Green similarly describes placement as involving "the historian reviewing 'discernible items of individual experience...' related to the subject of study with the aim of refining working hypotheses" about a person's behaviors, likely a person in a place of political power.[75] The placement process includes examining an individual's private and public histories. Private history includes those actions

[71] "Latta, Delbert Leroy (1920-2016)," Biographical Director of the Unites States Congress, US Congress, accessed Feb 17, 2022.
[72] "Congressional Conversation," *The Republican* (Wauseon, OH), March 22, 1979, MS 546, Box 180, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[73] Glazer, *Citizens Look at Congress: Delbert L. Latta*.
[74] Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time.*
[75] Alix R. Green, *History, Policy, and Public Purpose: Historians and Historical Thinking in Government* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016): 72.

taken outside of public attention. These may include family experiences, personal reflections, and personal values or beliefs. Public history is the actions taken within an individual's role as a public figure, including voting history, published documents, public speeches, and more. Placement is meant to benefit policymakers by giving them a deeper context to the people and organizations important to the decision making. It can reveal common trends in decision making by an individual or organization, making deviant decisions more apparent. Placing political allies can help elected officials examine potential future courses of policy action.

Because Latta's voting record seemed along that of a traditional Republican, it may at surface-level seem surprising that he supported NEPA. However, a deeper examination of Latta's personal environmental experiences and the intention of NEPA suggests that Latta's support of the policy was in fact consistent with his voting record. Because NEPA was created without environmental interest groups involved, Latta did not have any constituents to answer to. In addition, NEPA was mainly a declaration of federal environmental values. Simply requesting that agencies *consider* environmental impacts in their major decisions was an easy way for politicians to show their support for environmental problems and gain the votes of "green" constituents. That is the box Latta seems to have fit in by supporting NEPA.

However, placing Latta within NEPA is difficult because there is little evidence of his pre-1970 environmental votes. This section explores Latta's environmental votes in policies after NEPA to understand his environmental ethic. Rather than someone who showed a strong public stance for or against environmental protection, Latta aligned his votes to whoever asked him to participate in a legislative action. He took the perspective of one group, rather than considering the whole of the environmental system his actions would impact. Placing Latta reveals four main types of decisions in his environmental politics: pro-environment, anti-environment (often pro-

business, industry, or agriculture), mixed, and non-committal. These categories are evidence of Latta's inconsistent environmental ethic. In every type of decision, Latta demonstrated a limited vision and understanding of the systems thinking that was a main goal of NEPA. There is not a clear moment when Latta changed his environmental voting, which is further evidence of his prioritizing human desires throughout his term.

Pro-environmental decisions

There are several examples of constituents asking Latta to support or propose measures for environmental protection. Four examples of pro-environmental decisions will be examined in this section: clean water and the CEQ, HR 2437 for federal assistance for lakeshore residents, federal assistance for local pollution clean-up efforts, and federal funding for Ohio forests research. Apart from his early support of NEPA and creating the CEQ, Latta's pro-environmental measures largely involve federal financial assistance for local action. This is consistent with Latta's overarching legacy of his role as a representative being to protect and benefit his constituents. The correspondence calling for Latta to support these efforts clearly demonstrate that he listened to his constituents when they asked for assistance or environmental change. While there are more clear cases of constituent correspondence resulting in pro-environmental decisions than anti-environmental decisions, the League of Conservation Voters report card for Latta shows an overwhelming majority of anti-environment votes during his last fifteen years in federal office.[76] This suggests that Latta supported environmental measures when asked but did not take the initiative to propose pro-environmental legislation without constituent motivation.

[76] For all of Latta's 1971-1986 environmental votes, see: League of Conservation Voters, "Delbert Leroy Latta LCV Scorecard," 1971-1986.

Latta's 1969 support for the creation of the CEQ, as discussed above, was the first evidence of him supporting an environmental measure, and one of the few policies he supported *without* the correspondence of constituents. Around this time the League of Women Voters in Bowling Green, Ohio asked Latta to vote for various environmental policies. He wrote back advocating for increased clean water funding, "investigating water resource development," and the creation of the CEQ.[77] Latta also took his vote public in a local newspaper, further declaring his endorsement of increasing clean water funding, despite federal budget problems.[78] While he was public about proposing new clean water funding before constituents wrote requesting his vote, it is apparent that Latta was in favor of this environmental policy because it would benefit his constituents.

The second pro-environmental decision, federal funding for lakeshore assistance, was the most corresponded about issue in his archival collection. Fluctuating Lake Erie water level in the early 1970s caused intense lakeshore erosion. Residents living on the lake were losing several feet of their property each year. Public beaches were also eroding into the lake. Dozens of constituents along the southern shore of Lake Erie requested that Latta do something to help their plights. They requested a decrease in Lake Erie water levels; some requested a decrease in water levels in all the Great Lakes. Several also requested financial assistance, declaring this a state of natural disaster warranting the release of federal funds. Latta authored the January 1973 House Resolution (HR) 2437 for federal lakeshore assistance in response to this correspondence. In later letters he shared details about the resolution with constituents. He was in constant

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[77] Delbert L. Latta, Letter to Bowling Green League of Women Voters, September 26, 1969, MS 139 – League of Women Voters, Bowling Green, Ohio, Box 5, Folder 8, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

[78] Frank Kane, "Latta Supports Full Water Fund," *Toledo Blade* article, September 8, 1969, MS 139, Box 5, Folder 8, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University; *Fremont News Messenger*, September 9, 1969, MS 139, Box 5, Folder 8, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

communication with the U.S. President, Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (at this time named Wildlife and Fisheries). After not receiving much attention from federal agencies, Latta introduced House Concurrent (H-Con) Resolution 163 in mid-March 1973 asking the President to negotiate with Canada to regulate Great Lakes water levels. Latta was very vocal about potential courses of action in an April House committee meeting on the resolution. He supported a long-term scientific study of the watershed, but he also requested Congress use available evidence, including first-hand narratives from his constituents' experiences, to act sooner. His first short-term suggestion was financial compensation for shoreline property damage.[79] Eventually, the President released emergency funds for residents of several Lake Erie shoreline counties because of the actions of Lake Erie representatives.

Latta's deep involvement in the Great Lakes water level debate reveals two important aspects of his environmental voting. First, it reveals that Latta was constituent oriented. He was vocal and active in getting what constituents requested: financial support. It also reveals that Latta had an anthropocentric environmental orientation. He actions leaned more toward protecting humans from environmental change than for environmental protection for nature's sake. Arguably this decision was not environmental in nature since the legislation passed targeted human benefit instead of ecosystem-wide changes. Depending on one's perspective on humans changing the natural environment, H-Con 163 could be viewed as anti-environmental in that it requested a change in the natural flow of the watershed. Correspondence and archives do not reveal that Latta took action to protect the Great Lakes ecosystem for the sake of natural systems and trophic cascades. He had a utilitarian and anthropocentric orientation, working for

[79] Correspondence about Great Lakes water levels, 1973-1974, MS 546, Box 180, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

the benefit of human constituents sometimes at the detriment of non-human species living in his congressional region.

A third example of Latta's pro-environment votes is his requesting federal assistance for local pollution clean-up. Daniel Ainsworth from Sherwood, Ohio contacted Latta in May 1974 expressing concern that pollution control laws were "not being enforced as much as they should be."[80] Latta wrote back stating that he had already worked to increase the funding for local government pollution abatement by three times the initially proposed amount. He also wrote that he "introduced in the Congress legislation to cover air and water pollution plus solid waste disposal, as well as provisions for the maintenance of park and recreation lands."[81] This is the only exchange about pollution broadly, but there are several other letters addressing specific types of pollution, industries, or locations. These letters unveil some of Latta's orientation toward utilitarianism, specifically in his note of park maintenance for recreation. In addition, he does not directly address federal pollution regulations in his response, turning the conversation back to local power and local efforts to control and clean-up pollution. While a pro-environmental decision is portrayed to Ainsworth, there is also a sort of veiled anti-regulation sentiment in this example. Disturbances to natural systems (i.e., pollution) were to be handled by the people living in that system, per this correspondence, which ignores the systemic nature of pollution mobility. A lakeshore town may experience the harm of water pollution when the responsibility was a factory 100 miles away. More funding is great for pollution control, if the system for allocating that support examines where ecologically it makes the most sense to spend funds.

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[80] Letter from Daniel Ainsworth to Delbert L. Latta, May 1974, MS 546, Box 218, Folder "Independent Agencies: EPA Water Pollution," Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[81] Letter from Delbert L. Latta to Daniel Ainsworth, May 1974, MS 546, Box 218, Folder "Independent Agencies: EPA Water Pollution," Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

Latta's support for increasing federal funding for Ohio forest research is a direct example of his consistent value of local economic wellbeing. The Director of Toledo Metroparks, Robert Metz, contacted Latta in early 1974 requesting a $900,000 increase in Forest Service research for Ohio forests and air pollution control. Metz, perhaps knowing Latta on a somewhat personal level, appealed to his liking of recreation in the letter, stating "trees managed by the [Toledo Metroparks] provide the background and setting for recreation of the people in the Toledo area."[82] That Latta expressed "total support for such valuable forest programs" shows his continuity of advocating for District 5 communities.[83] Based on previous environmental decisions, placement might suggest that Latta would have voted for such a measure without constituent correspondence. However, Latta did not take initiative until Metz approached him for more funding. Latta's pro-environmental record was at the mercy of pleasing his constituents.

Anti-environmental decisions

There are two important anti-environmental votes in Latta's archives. While there are many more instances of him voting against environmental protection, these two examples directly speak to Latta being influenced by the constituents who most frequently wrote to him. The first example was a conglomeration of grain elevator managers requesting he not support the 1977 Air Pollution Control Act. The second example is a veiled discussion about attempting to dismantle the EPA, a test of the placement methodology.

Latta received over twenty letters in spring 1977 from Northwest Ohio grain elevator operators and managers. Grain elevators are tall, silo-like structures that store grain in the time between harvest and distribution. Whether collaborating or not, Robert Kreger, Scott Moorhead,

[82] Robert Metz, Letter to Delbert Latta, February 1974, MS 546, Box 218, Folder "Independent Agencies: EPA Water Pollution," Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[83] Delbert L. Latta, Letter to David Metz, March 1974, MS 546, Box 218, Folder "Independent Agencies: EPA Water Pollution," Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

and many additional managers requested, perhaps even insisted, that Latta vote against the new Air Pollution Control regulations. They united in their shared identity of being agriculturalists. This is a particularly strong constituent group in Northwest Ohio because of the draining of the former Great Black Swamp to create fertile soil. The proposed regulations would control the amount of particulate matter entering the air from grain elevators. Latta agreed and stated that the new air pollution regulation would cause "havoc... if finalized," supporting the community of agriculture at the sacrifice of not supporting other constituent concerns.[84] He explicitly expressed an anti-environmental perspective by stating that the new Air Pollution Control Act would be a disaster. At more than twenty letters in a few months, the agricultural interests were the loudest constituent group in the archived correspondence. They were likely also the most powerful and financially supportive of Latta's constituent groups. As Latta had a legacy of voting in the interest of big agriculture, it was historically consistent that he agreed with these letters. This vote against new pollution regulations was motivated by the largest number of constituents who contacted him, further showing Latta's consistency was in voting with his constituents, not in analyzing the long-term ecological impact of the decision..

The second major example of anti-environmental decision by Latta is not a policy or regulation decision. It is difficult to draw a conclusion from these letters, but this example is a useful test of the placement method. On November 27, 1974, John A. Caple of the A.B. Caple Company of Toledo, a big agriculture company, wrote a very short letter to Latta in D.C. It stated:

> "Dear Del:
> In my humble opinion the E.P.A. should go the same way as the shoulder straps and soon.

[84] Latta sent the same letter back to all 20+ grain elevator representatives who contacted him. Correspondence between Delbert L. Latta and NW Ohio grain elevator operations, March-June 1977, MS 546, Box 221, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

> Good luck and best wishes.
> Sincerely, John A. Caple"[85]

On December 4, Latta sent the following reply:

> "Dear John:
> Thanks for your opinion on E.P.A. We are of the same mind, but I can't get the job accomplished alone.
> With best personal regards, I remain
> Sincerely yours, Delbert L. Latta"[86]

This exchange reveals some of Latta's private history. There was no public declaration of Latta not supporting the EPA at any point in his political career. While Latta did not vote for public-right-to-known policies for the EPA, he advocated for increasing EPA funding and a few other pro-EPA decisions.[87] That Latta endorsed clean water protection and the Great Lakes so much complicates this finding. Therefore, there are two possible explanations to these letters. First, Latta had a private disdain for the EPA because it is the main body responsible for upholding environmental regulation and Republican party values did not align with strict government oversight and regulation. This seems unlikely as other correspondence points to Latta supporting tight regulation for water pollution control, one of the environmental problems of which the EPA has direct regulatory power. The more likely explanation is that Latta wrote this response to please Caple, owner and manager of a major agro-business in his district. This is consistent with Latta's nonconfrontational nature when there was potential conflict. It is also consistent with his public value of supporting big agriculture.

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[85] John A. Caple, Letter to Delbert Latta about EPA, November 27, 1974, MS 546, Box 218, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[86] Delbert L. Latta, Letter to John A. Caple about EPA, December 4, 1974, MS 546, Box 218, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[87] League of Conservation Voters, "Delbert Leroy Latta LCV Scorecard."

Mixed environmental decisions

This section addresses two significant examples of Latta explicitly balancing competing perspectives. He balanced pro-environment and Republican values in letters about energy development. The first is an example related to NEPA and exemptions from the EIA process. The second is an example of balancing energy expansion, environmental protection, cost, and regulatory power. Both show Latta as a conservative political representative. These are some of the few times he communicated with constituents in a somewhat disagreeable way. He did not immediately agree with constituents on these more complicated matters. Latta instead expressed a consideration of environmental impacts of his desired course of action.

In 1974 Latta was faced with the choice of whether to vote for a temporary NEPA exemption for energy development. He described in constituent letters his decision to support the exemption. It was necessary for energy development to continue until there is new technology for "cleaner sources of energy." In the same letter he made the balancing statement: "we certainly cannot abandon our commitment to a healthful environment."[88] A 1977 letter balanced competing interests in the same way. When asked about energy resources and the expansion of environmentally harmful energy, Latta responded balancing the inherent conflict of oil/gas development and environmental health. He wanted to support expansion of energy resources, but also protect natural resources, keep costs low, and prevent over-regulation.[89] Latta responded to his constituents for the first time in a way that promoted environmental protection and competing interests. This was the closest Latta became to systems thinking as he balanced the need to support human activity and keep environmental quality high.

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[88] Delbert L. Latta, Correspondence for NEPA exemption, May 23, 1974, MS 139, Box 5, Folder 8, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[89] Delbert L. Latta, Correspondence for energy expansion, 1977, MS 564, Box 221, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

Non-committal environmental positions

Frequently Latta avoided environmental positions, sending constituent complaints to various agencies, or providing veiled statements of his environmental ethic. Even when speaking in Congress, Latta avoided a strong environmental statement. In the September 23, 1969, meeting of the House of Representatives, when Latta was given 30 minutes to speak, his comments revolved around procedural matters. While he started his statement saying "I agree with all the statements just made" about adopting HR 544 and HR 12549, two precursory resolutions to NEPA, the rest of his statement is without personal values. He raised a jurisdictional issue between House committees to justify the delay in debate. He then declared a few rather dry comments about agency concerns regarding only the CEQ section, as discussed above. Latta's comments are followed by Representative Madden from Indiana who spoke at length about his previous resolutions and votes. Representative Collier from Illinois spoke after Madden and similarly included his personal and political perspectives.[90]

Latta also circumvented issues and opinions in constituent correspondence. Latta supported the 1971 proposals to dredge the Maumee River, arguably not a pro-environmental decision as dredging can alter the native landscape. The dredging was likely performed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to maintain navigable channels and clear the silt that raises riverbeds. It also helps lower flood risk along the banks, already a high risk in many areas along the Maumee. Several constituents expressed concern about the dredging. Rather than send back a response stating his position on dredging, Latta forwarded concerns to the Army Corps of

[90] Analysis of these comments is based primarily on the use of the "I" pronoun, but also through examining the relationship between comments, the CEQ proposed resolution, and the other representatives. For example, Collier states, "I would suggest to my good friend [Madden] so that he might straighten out his own thinking on this issue" of funding and taxation. This is a vibrant statement about other people. It is relevant, yet also personal. Latta has no such comments. U.S. Congress, House, *Council on Environmental Quality, HR 544*.

Engineers. He sent the Corps' response to his constituents.[91] Even in non-environmental decisions, Latta evaded a strong position. When asked by the Sandusky United Auto Workers union to support changes in labor laws, Latta responded stating he would "consider their thoughts."[92] He did not agree nor disagree with their statement. He responded in a professional manner that suggests a disagreement he did not want to make public. These situations of evading a position suggest Latta disagreed with the constituent correspondence but did not want to appear unfavorable to his voters. Rather than take an opposing stance in writing, Latta took the safe route and did not risk upsetting the people who kept him in elected office.

Brief Assessment of the Placement Methodology

While placement is useful to understand why a politician like Latta made the environmental decisions he made, there are many challenges to using this methodology well. Because Latta was not someone to disclose his private life to his constituents or legislative peers, placing his personal environmental beliefs is challenging. There are very few sources that speak to his conceptual understanding of the environment. In other words, there is little private history easily available for analysis. A few sources spoke to Latta being known as an avid outdoorsman.[93] Latta was remembered at his funeral for valuing hard work and active hands for boys. His son, current Ohio Representative Bob Latta, stated "Dad didn't want to see young boys without a pick, rake, shovel, or hoe in their hands."[94] These fragmented comments can be

[91] Letters about Maumee River dredging, MS 546, Box 180, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[92] Delbert L. Latta, Letter to Sandusky UAW, MS 546, Box 221, Folder "Grants," Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[93] An early letter from Bowling Green-based attorney Donald Simmons about clean water action reveals a bit of Latta's private history. Simmons closed his letter stating, "I'm probably one of the few people who knows you are an ardent sportsman and have a real interest in keeping our natural resources as clean as possible." Donald Simmons, Letter to Delbert Latta, October 6, 1969, MS 139, Box 5, Folder 8, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[94] Tom Troy, "Delbert Latta remembered for D.C. career, life," *The Blade* (Toledo, OH, 2016).

combined to create a surface-level understanding of Latta's private history about the environment. He grew up with a very utilitarian-Boy Scout-esque mindset that he shared with Bob; nature was for recreation and training productive boys and men. Latta instilled a love of the outdoors to his family. His love of place would inform his family experiences and the upbringing of his children. Unfortunately, no other private history was located. That Latta did not have a strong public position on environmental issues complicates placement. In addition, placement is difficult before 1970 because there were few environmental policies on which he could have had a position. NEPA was the launching point for federal environmental policies. Placement became easier in the mid-1970s with the rising environmental policy era. It is a limited methodology for understanding his role in environmental politics if misinterpretation or overstatement is to be avoided.

The benefits of placement are twofold: providing deeper context to understand why a decision was made and in understanding potential future decisions. Latta's consistently inconsistent environmental ethic is confusing. At first glance, it appears he cannot make up his mind on which environmental measures to support and which to sweep away. Placing Latta in the larger context of Republican party values (public history) and his childhood in outdoor recreation and hunting (private history) offers some explanations. He supported many environmental regulations because they were local, and his constituents mattered to him. He voted against other regulations because they would upset his agriculture and industry constituents. Placement gives deeper clarity to Latta's desired balances. Rather than assuming he was uneducated about environmental issues or was against environmental regulation all together, uncovering Latta's personal and public histories reveal his constant struggle to balance constituent interests. The newness of ecology in mainstream environmentalism brings further

explanation and context to his lack of systems thinking; it was not as common of a process or value as it would become later in the twentieth century.

Conclusion

Based on the correspondence and voting history of Latta and his office, his consistently inconsistent environmental votes were a continuity of his legacy of listening to constituents. He often struggled to balance constituent values and his political promises to business and agriculture. Sometimes the most frequent constituents in communication with his D.C. office were agricultural interests, as was the case during the grain elevator managers and the 1977 Air Pollution Control regulations. At other times residents or students were the most frequent writers, such as with the HR 2437 federal flood assistance bill. While not always the case, Latta's votes largely aligned with that which he was asked to support by his correspondence. When there were no constituents writing, he seemed to have voted in accordance with what would benefit his district, which was often in the context of agriculture and industry. Latta did not vocally support any environmental policy when no constituents asked him to propose or support a policy. He did not take the initiative when constituents did not write to him. However, in voting in accordance with one constituent group only, Latta demonstrated the limited field of vision of the state. Externalities and long-term impacts were not considered in his votes. Rather, he focused on the "productionist goal" of pleasing constituents and protecting their interests.[95] He took on pieces of constituent information and acted on it as if it was the entire system.

This chapter begs for a new framework when thinking about the land and environmental policies. The government wants systems, people, and processes to be manageable. Political officials make decisions on a wide variety of issues, so the simplification that is part of "seeing

[95] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 264.

like the state" is somewhat necessary. However, nature is a management paradox. It is difficult to manage, so its complex characteristics require it to be simplified in order to begin managing it. Latta simplified nature in his decision making, listening to only one constituent group at a time. This simplification cannot continue. To have effective environmental policies, policymakers and voters need to understand and appreciate the complexities of nature.[96] The environment continues to experience rapid and unpredictable changes due to anthropocentric climate change. Simplifying the land through the eyes of the state is harmful for ecology. NEPA's original framework to examine whole natural systems should be recentered as the goal of all environmental policies. Holistic thinking could consider multiple impacts to prevent environmentally harmful projects; increase awareness of long-term environmental impacts; and inspire appreciation for natural processes and the complexities necessary to preserve in the environment.

[96] Madison Stump, "Redefining Policy Through Fiction," filmed April 2018 in Bowling Green, Ohio, TEDx video, 10:54, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4D6FCkIQQB4.

CHAPTER 3. PART OF THE SOLUTION OR CAUSING POLLUTION?: CHANGES IN EARTH DAY PRACTICES AT BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Bob Stein woke up on the morning of April 1, 1970, in his dorm room at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. Getting ready for class, Bob walked his shower caddy down the hallway to the shared men's shower room. He was rudely awoken by a freezing cold shower. Though his peers would aggressively turn the shower nobs hoping for a speck of warm water, Bob knew it was no use trying. As the student chair of the BGSU Environmental Teach-in Committee he was well aware of the kick-off event to the first Earth Day at the university. The Committee had worked with the heating plant to shut off hot water, heat, and any way to warm up food. It was an aggressive awakening for students, meant to highlight the "drastic changes that can be caused by tampering with the living environment."[97] This was the start of a 22-day teach-in on the environment, organized by the Environmental Teach-in Committee and co-hosted by BGSU students, professors, and Bowling Green High School students. Throughout the month of April 1970, and particularly on April 22, people across the United States staged the largest environmental gathering in history. The first Earth Day was celebrated in many different ways across the country. Universities were sites of teach-ins, workshops, and marches. Earth Day 1970 was arguably the start of the modern environmental movement.[98]

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[97] Lee Stephenson, "A cold shower is part of ecological teach-in," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 1, 1970.
[98] Other scholars situate the start of the movement with the earlier publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and the rise of urban housewives being concerned about air quality. Particularly Richard Sellars discusses the origins of the environmental movement in suburbia in *Crabgrass Crucible.* Chad Montrie recognizes the cultural memory of Earth Day and/or *Silent Spring* as the origin of environmental activism, but he challenges that notion by situating working class people in early 20th century environmental activism, *A People's History of Environmentalism in the United States.* For more about modern environmentalism, see: Armiero and Sedrez, *A History of Environmentalism;* Kline, *First Along the River.*

Environmental historian Adam Rome details the planning and execution of the first Earth Day in *The Genius of Earth Day*, arguing that Earth Day's most important impact was the creation of a generation of environmental activists who grew their passion because of organizing the first Earth Day. Environmental activism and education on college campuses began in 1970 with Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson's proposal for nationwide teach-ins. Nelson's intention was to educate the public on environmental problems. These teach-ins were envisioned to be ground-up, led by a variety of community actors. Nelson organized several offices to serve as communication hubs for media relations, but, despite common misconceptions, his offices did not create a national curriculum for environmental education.[99] He never envisioned Earth Day to be an annual event in public and educational spheres. Earth Day was intended to be a singular event/year to accomplish his task of fostering awareness about environmental problems and innovative solutions.

Since 1970, Earth Day activities across university campuses have shifted away from university-wide teach-ins and the original goals of environmental education and toward celebration and performative appreciation of nature, often via social media. Bowling Green State University (BGSU) was no exception to these changes. This chapter asks how BGSU celebrated Earth Day from 1970 through the present. Examining the evolution of Earth Day as a case study with BGSU, this chapter broadens the existing literature in time and space.[100] It argues that Earth Day has become a ritualistic way of appreciating the natural world. It does not fill a need for

[99] Adam Rome, *The Genius of Earth Day: How a 1970 Teach-in Unexpectedly Made the First Green Generation* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2013).

[100] Personal conversation with Dr. Adam Rome, March 25, 2022. Dr. Rome shared with me that not a lot is known about Earth Day between 1971 and the rise of technology and social media. I strive to connect BGSU's way of celebrating Earth Day to other universities, but there is not a lot of evidence of national trends in Earth Day. Part of that comes from the lack of national organization of Earth Day. There was no national curriculum of teach-ins, so each community celebrated according to the cultural norms or values existing in that space.

environmental education, as the first Earth Day did. Earth Day must adapt to the changing ecological circumstances rather than remain a performance and tradition without a purpose.

Many of the previous studies of Earth Day are surface-level analyses of the event, crediting it as the launching point of the modern environmental movement. When Earth Day is discussed in a work of environmental history, it is often in passing or without regard to the long-term implications or changes in Earth Day celebrations over time. Historians such as Richard Sellars and Adam Rome briefly describe how Earth Day was the start of modern environmentalism.[101] Andrew Kirk adds a bit more depth by explaining how Earth Day increased membership in environmental organizations and lobbying.[102] However, the history of Earth Day and education-based activism is slim. Rome is the leading scholar and his monograph *The Genius of Earth Day* is the only publication solely focused on the history of Earth Day.[103] Because it is such an influential moment in institutional and personal environmental change, understanding Earth Day scholarship is necessary to navigate its changing role over time.

Research in university and local archives seeks to accomplish two main tasks in this chapter: reconstruct the first Earth Day at BGSU and examine the changes in Earth Day practices over time. Drawing upon these sources, the narrative that follows uses cultural and social theories to depict who organized, spoke, and participated in BGSU's Earth Day events. It also draws upon performance theory to describe how continuing Earth Day remains a tradition with no strong environmental values. This research is heavily based on local archival research due to the limited secondary sources of Earth Day history. The chapter seeks to address the following

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[101] Sellars, *Crabgrass Crucible;* Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[102] Andrew G. Kirk, *Counterculture Green: The Whole Earth Catalog and American Environmentalism* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007): 100-101.
[103] Rome, *The Genius of Earth Day*; Adam Rome, "The Genius of Earth Day," *Environmental History* 15 (2010): 194-205.

questions: What events, speakers, and/or activities were planned for BGSU's Earth Day celebrations? Who organized BGSU's Earth Day? Was Earth Day organized by students, faculty, organizations, or departments? How do the answers to these questions change from 1970-2020?

This research examines primary sources through the lens of performance theory. Performance theory is the notion that people's presentations of themselves and interactions with others denote certain cultural and social orientations. The roots of performance theory lie in Erving Goffman's 1956 work arguing that everyday actions are performances of an individual's values, perceptions, and desires to present themselves in their desired way.[104] The field has expanded to include analyses of theater performance, history, literature, and more.[105] Ritual and performance are types of human technology. Ritual has a purpose and has been used as a tool to resist enslavement, corporate responsibility, and environmental destruction.[106] It exists for human use and historically has been used as a tool for maintaining or gaining power.

There are two main arguments presented in this chapter. First, it argues that Earth Day has continued because of tradition, and it is now a performative/corporate tradition rather than the carnivalistic ritual of the mid-twentieth century. Earth Day is a performance because its value is derived from the interactions between people at events. Its significance is created by the organizers in their decisions of which speakers to invite and which environmental issues to represent. Earth Day has been a ritual because of its role as a public declaration of environmental values. It is now an institutional practice with certain unspoken rules or norms that corporations,

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[104] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Every-day Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1956).
[105] Simon Shepherd, *The Cambridge Introduction to Performance Theory*, Cambridge Introductions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Anthony Frost and Ralph Yarrow, *Improvisation in Drama, Theatre and Performance: History, Practice, Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).
[106] Enslaved peoples in Haiti used ritual as a tool to resist enslavement in the Haitian Revolution: Crystal Nicole Eddins, *Rituals, Runaways, and the Haitian Revolution: Collective Action in the African Diaspora* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

schools, and communities follow in declaring their support for environmental activism. It secondarily argues that the technology to practice Earth Day has shifted from teach-ins to social media/digital technologies. The university had multiple evolutions in how it celebrated Earth Day. Shifts often occurred even within a few years, suggesting that leadership in student organizations may also have played a role in changing priorities. However, the major changes occurred with the inclusion of technology in classrooms and daily life. Once communications technology became a widespread educational tool, Earth Day was no longer necessary to create informed citizens. The internet, social media, and virtual activities replaced the need for teach-ins and live speakers to keep students updated on relevant scholarship. Even before the inclusion of technology into higher education spaces, the practice of Earth Day continued because of the initial positive impact from the first teach-ins. Subsequent Earth Days did not create long-term change, but it remains part of university and environmentalism cultures because of its use as performance tradition. Earth Day is used as an individual's or institution's public declaration that they care about nature.

BGSU Earth Day 1970s

Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson had always been politically engaged in environmental issues, but the late-1960s environmentalism and Vietnam War teach-ins inspired him to launch a campaign for a nationwide day of environmental education.[107] Nelson organized Environmental Teach-In, Inc. when he could not do all the work himself. He hired several young people to staff

[107] Many scholars agree that the environmental movement started before Earth Day, though Nelson's vision, manifesting as Earth Day, may have been the start of environmentalism at the national scale. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* were two of the most influential texts in starting large-scale concern for nature: Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968). For more about modern environmentalism, see: Sellars, *Crabgrass Crucible;* Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside;* J.E. de Steiguer, *The Origins of Modern Environmental Thought* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006); Keith Makato Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists: A History of Radical Environmentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Green Revolution: The American Environmental Movement, 1962-1992* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

the office in DC, which was intended as a communication hub for all things Earth Day. It was not intended to be the sole party responsible for Earth Day. The teach-ins were organized by people living in the communities hosting the events. Earth Day was as successful as it was because of Nelson's vision of grassroots organizing around the theme of hope for the future health of the environment.[108]

BGSU celebrated Earth Day in ways similar to many of the hundreds of participating universities. The University of Michigan held a multi-day teach-in in March of 1970, featuring Michigan Governor William Milliken, environmentalist Barry Commoner, Senator Gaylord Nelson, and more.[109] The University of Alaska at Fairbanks hosted a federal geologist, US Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel, and a Stanford University environmentalist to share a panel on the contemporary pipeline debate. Pennsylvania State University held weekly seminars in early 1970 in addition to a music festival, films, exhibits, speakers, games, panels, and more.[110] While each community had its unique set of activities, all centered around educating the public on environmental problems.

The BGSU Environmental Teach-in Committee was instrumental in organizing 22 days of educational, recreational, and leisurely activities for the university community. This committee was composed of BGSU undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff. They contributed to creating spaces for environmentally conscious people to gather, hosting speakers, concerts, interdisciplinary panels, documentary screenings, waste treatment facility tours, and debates.[111] Speakers represented nearly every area of society, including

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[108] Rome, *The Genius of Earth Day*, 58.
[109] ENACT, "Teach-In on the Environment" Advertisement, *Michigan Daily* (Ann Arbor, Michigan), March 10, 1970.
[110] Rome, *The Genius of Earth Day*, 135-140, 156.
[111] "Teach-in schedule" bulletin in *BG News*; April 3, 7, 10, 14, 16, 17, & 22, 1970.

business/industry, environmental sciences, politicians, students, and faculty. This mirrored trends at larger public universities.[112] The 22-day speaker series began with a standing-room only presentation by Ralph Nader, well-known consumer activist and lobbyist.[113] Dr. W.D. Yerkes discussed problems of water pollution, Dr. Arnold W. Reitze promoted natural resource management, Murray Bockhin spoke about environmental politics, and more in the first week alone.[114] The Earth Day teach-in concluded with population scientist and author Dr. Paul Ehrlich discussing population growth, agriculture, family planning, migration, and the role of science in environmental protection.[115] The diversity of speakers represented the commitment of BGSU to create a broad, relevant, and well-represented Earth Day program.

Several BGSU students were involved at the national level for the first Earth Day, as well, further demonstrating the commitment of the university community to environmental activism. After Nelson publicized the general intention for Earth Day, the BGSU Environmental Teach-in Committee designed an Earth Day logo. Three BGSU students, Lee Stephenson, Ernest Brass, and Greg Thatch, travelled to the office in D.C. to propose it as the national Earth Day logo.[116] They called it the ECO logo: a three-branched tree with the letters E, C, and O in each leaf; the branches representing the government, business, and universities working together; and a peace sign to promote peaceful activism and collaboration. The roots represented "man's dependence on earth and [the] environment for life."[117] While Senator Nelson congratulated the BGSU Teach-in Committee on their intentionality and symbolism of the logo, it never became the national logo. BGSU used it in marketing and the *BG News* campus newspaper used it for all

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[112] "Almost every Earth Day event featured talks by scientists" and 2/3 of Congress were absent speaking at Earth Day events, Rome, *The Genius of Earth Day*, 165-209.
[113] Lee Stephenson, "A cold shower is part of."
[114] "Teach-in schedule," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 1, 1970.
[115] "Teach-in concludes with speaker-author," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 22, 1970.
[116] Pete Fairbairn, "BGSU rallies around Earth Day," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 2020.
[117] "Senator lauds Ecology plans," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), March 6, 1970.

teach-in schedules through the 1970 and 1971 publications.[118] This shows how active BGSU was in the first Earth Day at local and national levels, as well as the institutional for the first Earth Day.

In contrast to the active first Earth Day at BGSU, the remaining 9 years of the decade were relatively non-eventful. *BG News* only contains articles about three other years of activities. In 1971, the university community hosted a radio show, a trash clean-up, tree planting, an Earth Day dance, a march, and several documentaries occurring.[119] This was also the last year the proposed Earth Day logo was used in the university newspaper. The university also hosted a clean-up in 1978, but the exact organizing party is not clear.[120] In addition, Jerry Rubin, counterculture activist and famous anti-Vietnam War leader, spoke on April 25, 1979, though it is unclear whether his visit was directly connected to Earth Day or if his speech just happened to be in April.[121]

While there was little media coverage about BGSU's Earth Day in the 1970s, this does not mean the university community did nothing. The activities may have been smaller, thus not warranting a reporter. In some years, such as the 1972 HURT, Inc. city trash drive, large events involving BGSU students may have occurred off campus and, thus, were not written about in the campus newspaper.[122] From 1971 to 1989, the *BG News* infrequently covered Earth Day. This

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[118] The *BG News* is the Bowling Green State University campus newspaper. Its first publication was in 1920. The newspaper is still published in 2022 in digital and print formats.
[119] "March tops eco-week plans," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 15, 1971; "Hamilton emphasizes new ecology decisions,' *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 22, 1971; "Today 'week week,'" *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 21, 1971; "70 airs third show on 'World of Pollution,'" *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 14, 1971.
[120] "Campus clean-up day," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 20, 1978.
[121] "Yippies founder to speak," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 25, 1979.
[122] HURT, Inc. (Help Us Recycle Trash) hosted an April trash drive downtown. At 600+ Bowling Green families, it was the largest trash drive in the 8 months of the organization's existence. HURT, Inc. Trash Drive Advertisement, 1972, MS 1186 Ridge Street School Records 1940-2013, Box 10, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

may have been due to the change in student staff. As staff changed, priorities of reporting may have also changed, particularly if there were more pressing campus or national concerns. The newspaper frequently contained sections on national news, international events, and student athletics. These likely reflected the interests of the audience, mainly BGSU students. Thus, it can be implied that BGSU students had less of an interest in Earth Day as time went on, particularly in years when there was no major national environmental disaster. However, a lack of Earth Day events after 1970 would not be an anomaly; as Earth Day lost its excitement and the original infrastructure was not designed to host an annual event.

BGSU Earth Day 1980s

The decade following the first Earth Day demonstrates the legacy of the first environmental teach-ins in the creation of "eco-infrastructure" to continue environmental conversations on college campuses, though not limited to Earth Day.[123] One key eco-infrastructure at BGSU was the creation of the Environmental Interest Group (EIG), a student organization created to spread knowledge of environmental problems and foster engaged students. Sometime between 1989 and 1993 the Environmental Interest Group would be renamed the Environmental Action Group (EAG) because students wanted a more action-oriented environmental movement on campus.[124] Because of the eco-infrastructure as a legacy of the first Earth Day, the key characteristic of 1980s Earth Day was student-sponsored activities centered on contemporarily relevant environmental issues. Unfortunately, this meant that the university no

[123] In describing the legacies of the first Earth Day Rome states that "the post-Earth Day eco-infrastructure gave the environmental movement staying power," *The Genius of Earth Day*, 210.
[124] EIG appears in the 1989 version of *The Ecophile* magazine and EAG first appears in the 1993 publication. There are no archived publications between those years, so it is unclear exactly when students changed the name. "The Ecophile," Oct 1989, pUA 1736, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University; "The Ecophile," Oct 1993, pUA 1736, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

longer sponsored Earth Day events.[125] The little coverage in the *BG News* about Earth Day events suggests its lack of presence and university support. This trend would continue through the early 2010s as the university administration was rarely involved in planning and organizing Earth Day events.

Compared to the 1970s, there were more events, more speakers, and more diversity in subjects in this decade. Speakers were also more focused on the original purpose of Earth Day as education. While speakers were oriented to Nelson's intention, students viewed Earth Day as a time to celebrate the beauty and resources Earth provides for humans. The 1980s show a shift in BGSU students' understanding of Earth Day as a time for celebration instead of the beginning of life-long activism. "According to EIG, [Earth Day] is for celebrating the earth's natural resources and making new energy goals."[126] While Rome argues that the first Earth Day created lifelong environmental activists at many universities, the 1980s activities suggest that Earth Day at BGSU lacked its lasting influence on young people.

Speakers in the early 1980s focused on political activism and politically relevant science. There were petitions against nuclear arms in 1982 and speakers from the energy industry, Green Peace, and the Ohio Public Interest Campaign.[127] Celebrations in 1986 continued this political activism. The featured speaker was Tom Murray, Democratic candidate for 5th Congressional District of Ohio. He spoke about environmental policies and the relevance of environmental concerns to his candidacy and campaign.[128] As appropriate environmental policy decisions cannot be made without environmental science data, the 1984 Earth Day week addressed

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[125] Recognizing that the university had little to do with Earth Day from the 1980s-2020, this paper still uses "BGSU" when discussing the engagement of any university-affiliated party for consistency.
[126] Karen Sandstrom, "Earth Day '80," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 22, 1980.
[127] Kim Lamoreaux, "Resource preservation: University celebrates Earth Day," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 22, 1982.
[128] Julie Fauble, "Policies harm environment, speaker says," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 24, 1986.

scientific concerns. It featured several local speakers: Steve Pollick, outdoor editor of *The Toledo Blade* newspaper; Rex Lower, BGSU biology professor; and Jane Forsythe, BGSU geology professor.[129] These speakers localized environmental problems, making Earth Day relevant for BGSU students and their education. They also highlight how student interest fostered support for political activism by equipping peers with science to support their activism.

While not directly connected, it is likely that the political education at BGSU's 1980s Earth Day was inspired by national environmental politics early in the decade. The decade started with a series of U.S. Supreme Court cases in 1980: protecting Alaska federally owned lands from development, the passing of the Superfund Act to clean up contaminated zones, and the height of the Love Canal disaster.[130] With the inclusion of biology and geology faculty, BGSU's Earth Day might reflect changes in national environmental politics. The Superfund Act was a stark change in environmentalism from conservation and resource preservation to toxic and hazardous waste disposal. Superfund changed the public's perceptions of polluting industries and their responsibility to mitigation and clean up. However BGSU had a stronger focus on environmental science broadly than pollution specifically.

In the last few years of the 1980s, BGSU connected activism to relevant national environmental problems. The inclusion of marine animal exhibits in the 1987 Earth Day educational fair was one way for EIG and the marine biology lab to reach beyond local

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[129] Owen Fleming, "Environmental group seeks awareness," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 25, 1984.
[130] Love Canal, New York is a suburb of the Niagara Falls area. It was the sight of a devastating environmental disaster in the 1970s and 1980s. Toxics and chemical companies were using the area for industrial waste disposal. Community members raised concerns to the EPA in the late 1970s after children were getting sick and toxic waste drums were surfacing at parks and schools. After years of fighting with the state, birth defects, childhood health problems, and expensive lawsuits, the Superfund Act was passed, and the federal government demolished the neighborhood and cleaned the area. The clean-up ended in 2004, almost 35 years after concerns were first raised. For a comprehensive history of the Love Canal disaster and its role in environmental and environmental justice activism, see: Richard S. Newman, *Love Canal: A Toxic History from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

environmental problems.[131] BGSU has a strong marine biology program, but Ohio is not an ocean-touching state. Many students connect their work in marine biology to the freshwater ecosystems of the Great Lakes, which had been a relevant ecological and political problem for several decades. The Center for Environmental Programs, a formal group of faculty in environmental studies, and EIG also hosted a Nuclear Waste Symposium in 1987.[132] This is a strong connection to the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant meltdown. The disaster took place after Earth Day in 1986, making it the perfect fuel to launch environmental activism and be the subject of 1987 Earth Day education. The Earth Day keynote speaker was Kathleen Blanchard, Canadian conservation scientist who studies the reintroduction of the Atlantic puffin.[133] The connection of this event is not clear as the puffin science was completed years before. Unfortunately, the primary sources give little detail about the content of Blanchard's speech, so connections are difficult to make.

The 1980s were a period of contention of oil and gas development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). This region, a large part of northern Alaska, is home to Indigenous peoples and several species of threatened or endangered arctic wildlife. Regional energy development threatened the livelihood of both humans and animals.[134] EIG furthered the Earth Day political activism in 1988 with a petition to protect ANWR. They sponsored Jonathan Waterman, former mountaineer and ranger in Denali National Park and Rocky Mountains

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[131] Judy Ammel, "Earth Day features can crunch contest," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 23, 1987.
[132] Center for Environmental Programs, "Events," 1987, UA-0140 Center for Environmental Programs Collection, Box 1, Folder 4, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[133] Center for Environmental Programs, "Earth Day: Dr. Kathleen Blanchard Puffins in Peril," 1987, UA 0140, Box 1, Folder 4, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[134] For a long history of oil and gas development in ANWR, see: Anne Gillis, M. Lynne Corn, Bernard A. Gelb, and Pamela Baldwin, "Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR): Legislative Actions Through the 109th Congress," in *Arctic Natural Resources*, 1-46, Brian D. Raney, ed. (Nova Science Publishers, Inc.: New York, 2010); Pamela Baldwin and M. Lynne Corn, "Oil and Gas Leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR): The 2,000-Acre Limit," in *Arctic Natural Resources*, 47-56, Brian D. Raney, ed. (Nova Science Publishers, Inc.: New York, 2010)

National Park, to speak about the preservation of ANWR wildlife.[135] This connected BGSU students to the national movement to protect ANWR from oil and gas development, an environmental issue that would circle back in 21st century BGSU environmental studies courses as the Trump administration tried to reopen ANWR to energy development.

BGSU Earth Day 1990s

The 1990s were a particularly busy decade for Earth Day at BGSU. Besides hosting a total of 21 speakers, students organized a large variety of activities for their peers and community members. This decade had the largest number of years with concerts and outdoor educational. There was also at least one speaker every year of the decade, something that did not happen any other decade. Though EIG remained the primary organizing group, there were new organizing groups and departments involved. Like in 1970, speakers represented all categories of academia, politics, industry, and more.

The depth and breadth of BGSU Earth Day matched the national environmentalism trends as the 1990s were a busy time for environmental decision making. The decade started with the United Nations first report on global climate change, recommending a reduction in global CO_2 emissions. The Earth Summit in Brazil was held in 1992, increasing awareness and global collaboration in environmental technology, forest preservation, climate change, and biological diversity. In 1994, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its first report on the dangerously increasing greenhouse gas concentrations.[136] In 1995, after an extended period of scientific study, native wolves were reintroduced to

[135] "Earth Day 1988, 'Celebrate Your Earth," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 20, 1988.
[136] J.T. Houghton, et al., eds, "Climate Change 1994," published for the International Panel on Climate Change (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Yellowstone National Park. The Kyoto Protocol to reduce global carbon dioxide emissions was adopted in 1997, though the US Congress never ratified the international agreement.[137]

Nationally Earth Day grew beyond the previous two decades as the 20th anniversary approached. Universities renewed their interests in environmental education and activism by hosting large gatherings reminiscent of the 1970 teach-ins.[138] However, the 20-year anniversary of Earth Day at BGSU was much smaller than anticipated. EIG was responsible for organizing a nationally renowned speaker, the University Bookstore for organizing an eco-book fair, and the Cousteau Society for organizing additional lectures.[139] Former Secretary of Interior, Stewart Udall was the featured speaker.[140] Udall was a prominent federal government advocate for protecting public lands. He is most known for his work in expanding and managing new units of the National Park Service. Beyond the speaker and tradition of the eco-fair, 1990 did not hold any additional grandeur.

The lack of active Earth Day 1990 at BGSU reflects the national failure of Earth Day that year. Denis Hayes, one of Nelson's 1970 Earth Day interns at Environmental Teach-In, Inc., decided to organize a national Earth Day for the 20th anniversary. He organized a team who "sought to make Earth Day a global event."[141] While they were successful, Earth Day became a commercialized, capitalistic endeavor. The events were marketed as if goods for consumption. Because of the strong top-down organization, attendees learned less, and the lasting impact was much less than the first teach-ins. BGSU commemorated the first Earth Day with a teach-in and

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[137] The Kyoto Protocol has a long history of complication, skepticism, and denial in the United States, starting as early as a few years after its signing. See more: Brian O'Neill and Michael Oppenheimer, "Dangerous Climate Impacts and the Kyoto Protocol," *Science: Policy Forum: Climate Change*, 296, June 2022: 1971-1972.
[138] Adam Rome, "The Genius of Earth Day," *The Great Courses on Audible*, 2020, Audible Originals.
[139] "Celebrate Earth Day," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 18, 1990.
[140] Jill Novak, "University celebrates Earth Week," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 17, 1990; "The Ecophile," 1989, pUA 1736, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[141] Rome, *The Genius of Earth Day*, 276.

educational fair, but it also does not appear to have had a lasting impact or connection to contemporary environmental events as other years did.

The momentum of Earth Day snowballed as the decade pushed onward, though it looked and felt slightly different from the 1970 teach-ins. In 1992 the university shifted in its Earth Day practices, both in scope and focus. The University Activities Organization sponsored activist Bob Reiss of the Rainforest Alliance to speak on campus.[142] This was the first and last time a non-environmental group was involved in organizing Earth Day. That same year EAG hosted a residence hall trash clean-up. Several environmental studies faculty members credited technology for this shift in the intention and impact of Earth Day.[143] Technology made information more accessible than ever before. While students and the public may have been concerned about environmental issues, technology made mass education unnecessary and redundant. Time was apparently best spent together cleaning or celebrating unique environments rather than learning about a variety of topics from a diverse array of speakers.

Despite technology making mass teach-ins redundant, the remaining years of the 1990s were active on campus. The first speaker series of the decade in 1991 was "a global warming teleconference with the Mendeleev School of Technology in Moscow."[144] This workshop featured several speakers and was a collaborative effort. It also demonstrates the power of technology in connecting people across space for environmental conversations. With technology as the "bad actors" in so many environmental discussions, BGSU utilized technology in a meaningful and productive manner to show students the power and potential of international climate work. In 1993, EAG hosted the first ever student activist when Kim Maxwell, student

[142] "If you are not part of the solution," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 20, 1992.
[143] Christy Vargo, "Faculty comment on activists," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 21, 1992.
[144] Greg Watson, "Activities planned for BG Earth Day," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 17, 1991.

environmental activist from Freeland, Michigan, spoke for Earth Day.[145] EAG hosted the highest number of speakers ever in BGSU Earth Day history in 1994: Carl Holmberg, BGSU Popular Culture professor; Anthony Thiebaut, Bowling Green cooperative farmer; James Ludwig, founder of the SERE Group consulting firm; and a 6-person panel on environmental justice.[146] The panel was also the first time a single student organized an Earth Day event. There were six years in the 1990s with Earth Day concerts, two years with clean-ups (including 1992), and eight years with educational displays. Besides EAG, the University Bookstore, and University Activities Organization, the Undergraduate Student Government also sponsored a few events.

The 25th Earth Day anniversary celebrations were the most active and widely organized in BGSU's history. There are two potential, non-exclusive, explanations for why the 25th anniversary of Earth Day was so much larger than the 20th or first Earth Days. First, science and awareness of environmental issues boomed entering the 21st century. With previous Earth Days reflecting national environmental problems, this would be a probable explanation. Second, because the 20th anniversary was such an underwhelming event due to the failures of national organizing, the 25th anniversary's grassroots nature was a much starker contrast.

Earth Week 1995 started with a double-speaker presentation with Dr. Paula Gonzalez, founder of Earth Connection in Cincinnati, and BGSU professor Dr. Steve Steele, population growth researcher. EAG and the CEP co-sponsored an educational fair and keynote speaker Howie Wolke, co-founder of Earth First!, who spoke on wilderness preservation. In this way, the university once again connected students to national environmental issues. Students could also attend an Earth Day concert, clean-up of Toledo's Buckeye Basin wetlands, and a documentary

[145] Ginger Phillips, "Earth Day to be celebrated," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 21, 1993.
[146] Toriano Davis organized a panel focused on environmental justice, though panel participants are not identified in the archives or *BG News* articles. Robin Coe, "Earth Day events set to take place," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 20, 1994.

about mining in national forests.[147] Students expanded their understanding of Northwest Ohio's connection to similar national problems by directly experiencing local land pollution via the wetland clean-up and large-scale problems via speakers and documentaries.

Earth Day keynote speakers in the second half of the 1990s again connected the university to national environmental politics. In 1996, EAG hosted speaker Dr. David Mech who connected academic research on trophic systems to the reintroduction of wolves on Isle Royale National Park.[148] The following year students attended an Earth Day presentation of Jerry Brown, attorney, politician, and the Democratic candidate for California governor.[149] The event was co-hosted by EAG with funding from BGSU senior political science student Paul Gessing.[150] Activists Dave Foreman and Winona LaDuke were Earth Day speakers the following two years, continuing the 90s trends of environmental politics.[151] Earth Day had finally become a time to connect students to larger environmental problems. However, much of Earth Day remained surface-level and routine.

The 1990s were the first time it is apparent that Earth Day was tradition alone. An educational fair and one speaker in most years suggests that organizers were more concerned with portraying a traditional Earth Day celebration than with having an impactful experience. Except for Paul Gessing, no individual students are identified with the organizing committee.

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[147] "The Ecophile," Oct 1994, pUA 1736, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University; "The Ecophile," March 1995, pUA 1736, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University; *Monitor Magazine*, vol. 18, no. 38, April 17, 1995.
[148] "The Ecophile," March 1996, pUA 1736, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[149] "2004 Review of Environmental Programs," 2004, UA-0014 Graduate College Records, Box 25, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.
[150] Gessing continued work in the environmental sciences by working as the President of the Rio Grande Foundation. "Staff," Rio Grande Foundation, https://riograndefoundation.org/about/staff/, accessed Mar 29, 2022.
[151] Dave Foreman was the co-founder of Earth First!, a radical environmental organization that focused on monkeywrenching and political change. Winona LaDuke is an Indigenous woman and environmental activist whose work focuses on White Earth Reservation and environmental politics. For more lists of Earth Day speakers, see: "2004 Review of Environmental Programs," 2004, UA 0014, Box 25, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University.

This suggests that Earth Day has no metaphorical face, thus, no students claimed it as a moment of pride or as vital to their education. It was more of a temporal participation than learning how to be an activist. The genius of Earth Day was gone. In addition, the university was barely involved in the 1990s organizing Earth Day; all responsibility was left on EAG. The exception was the 25th anniversary when student organizations, the Center for Environmental Programs, the Department of Environment, and the university were involved in organizing events. It being an anniversary is further evidence that Earth Day was not institutionally valued beyond its use as an environmental performance. Because "cultural performance and social drama seem to offer an insight into how a society negotiates change," the maintenance of traditional Earth Day practices may explain the reluctance of BGSU to change its environmental practices.[152] It may further explain why BGSU administration, departments, and faculty groups did not participate in Earth Day beyond the major anniversaries.

BGSU Earth Day 2000-2010s

Earth Day again lost its momentum in the 21st century inter-anniversary years at BGSU. While Earth Day always seemed to happen, it did not garner media attention or feature the depth of activities from previous years. Unfortunately, most of the activities lost the student organization component. With the national rise of university sustainability offices, in the mid-2000s the organizing of Earth Day moved to the Office of Campus Sustainability.[153] In 2018,

[152] Shepherd, *The Cambridge Introduction to*, 46. Environmental activist students have attempted to make major changes on campus in the 21st century. They were met with intense resistance from university administrators. One such change was an attempt to ban plastic bags and straws from all campus dining and retail locations. The university made a promise to "phase out" bags after the ones currently in stock were used. Students wanted the bags gone immediately and they wanted the university to donate held bags to local charities. The university's response was this slow phase out and concern about their public image. They did not offer support to EAG when they applied for a grant to provide reusable, branded bags to all BGSU students. Author's personal experience in 2018-2020 as a member of the Undergraduate Student Government and Student Green Initiatives Fund Committee.

[153] For a history of sustainability coordination and planning in higher education, see: Camille Washington-Ottombre, Garrett L. Washington, and Julie Newman, "Campus sustainability in the US: Environmental management and social change since 1970," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 196 (2018): 564-575.

one of the "Office of Sustainability interns did most of the [Earth Day eco-fair's] planning."[154] While EAG was still involved in Earth Day, their role was mostly to be present at the eco-fair events as an information booth, not as the main organizing party. They no longer planned speakers or activities beyond their regular weekly meetings. Perhaps this explains why students and the university newspaper expressed less interest in Earth Day: the student role and buy-in was minimal.

As Earth Day began to lose its institutional value, there were a few active years in the early twenty first century. Students organized a documentary screening, a panel, and a recycling clean-up in 2008, but the topics were limited. Mike Tamor, fuel cell researcher at Ford Motor Company, was the featured speaker.[155] He was the only speaker that year, demonstrating that BGSU was still not committed to hosting diverse interests and perspectives on Earth Day. There were two weeks of events in 2012, including a restore event of used clothing and items, a live tree giveaway, music, artwork, tree plantings, campus service events, and documentary showings. The campus Outdoor Programs co-sponsored a park clean-up event with the city naturalists to remove invasive species.[156] Similar events happened in 2017, though the advertising and campus newspaper coverage decreased.

National environmental events may again have influenced the sporadic rise in Earth Day interest, though the relevant environmental problems did not feature in BGSU Earth Day rhetoric or planning. The rise of fracking may have influenced 2012 activities, but no campus event was focused on energy or natural gas. In the fall of 2016, there were campus-wide peace protests opposing the development of a natural gas pipeline just north of the city, but these were not

[154] Keefe Watson, "Eco-Fair attracts organizations from NW OH," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 19, 2018.
[155] Ibid.
[156] BG News Staff, "Earth Week," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 23, 2012.

directly connected to Earth Day.[157] The rise of activities in 2017 may have coincided with contemporary environmental politics, particularly the rollback of environmental policies and EPA power by the Trump administration. If this were the case, however, students would have demonstrated their interest in environmental politics by hosting events and presentations about policies and public lands. While it is possible that contemporary environmental events influenced BGSU student participation and planning of Earth Day in the early twenty first century, there was not as much of an intense relationship between Earth Day activities and relevant environmental problems as there was in previous decades. Earth Day still happened because of its legacy and public position as a time to declare support for the environment.

BGSU Earth Day 2020

Earth Day in April 2020 was a particularly unique case demonstrating the benefits of technology to environmental activism. In mid-March, BGSU locked its physical doors and transitioned to virtual learning for the next year and a half. The COVID-19 global pandemic shut down many universities after March spring breaks. Due to the pandemic, Earth Day in 2020 was largely a virtual event across the United States.

The BGSU Office of Campus Sustainability hosted several virtual Earth Day activities in April. The activities were created, organized, and managed by Dr. Nick Hennessy, director of Campus Sustainability; undergraduate interns Adam Smith and Jacob Kern; and graduate intern Christina Deehr. They created a virtual bingo card that students could complete on their path to living a more sustainable lifestyle. Such activities included creatively reusing a piece of trash, nature journaling, going electricity free, and biking for transportation. They encouraged

[157] David Dupont, "BGSU students urge Mazey and trustees to oppose Nexus pipeline," *BG Independent* (Bowling Green, OH), Nov 14, 2016.

participation via a social media campaign and the hashtag #BGSUsustainability.[158] Campus Sustainability also hosted a social media competition to encourage green behaviors. Intended to raise awareness of how easy it is to live sustainably, unfortunately the Campus Sustainability social media campaigns had low participation.[159] The explanation for low participation can only be speculated, but it was possible that the new societal changes at the beginning of a stressful pandemic distracted BGSU from environmental activism. This low engagement also shows the lack of inherent value people scribe to Earth Day.

While Earth Day 2020 was not the most successful or well-visited day of environmental activism at BGSU, it would not have been possible without growing technology and social media. The activities at the very least kept students engaged with Campus Sustainability, even if it did not engage *more* students or attract *new* students to the sustainability movement. It is also another example of the university not valuing Earth Day beyond performing its public-facing environmental values.

Conclusion

The BGSU Environmental Teach-in Committee organized a robust set of activities in 1970 for community education. They invited speakers from around the nation, starting the 22-day teach-in with a speech from Ralph Nader and culminating with a standing-room-only presentation by Dr. Paul Ehrlich, one of the inspirations for environmental teach-ins. They engaged in direct activism by shutting off hot water and heat to campus dormitories. They featured the teach-in logo proposed, but never utilized nationally, by three students. The 1970s activities were novel, exciting ways to inspire a generation of environmental activists.

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[158] BGSU Sustainability, "Happy Earth Day!" Facebook, April 22, 2020, https://m.facebook.com/GreenBGSU/.
[159] Personal communication, Adam Smith.

Participation in organizing Earth Day 1970 had a lasting impact on some of the student's lives. Lee Stephenson, managing editor of the *BG News* in 1970 and a member of the original teach-in committee, continued to work in environmental activism for much of his career. He has been an editor of *Environmental Action* magazine, a communication manager for park preservation organizations, a consultant at an international resource management and marketing firm, and more.[160] Greg Thatch, 1970 undergraduate student body president, continued his career in activism by starting a California-based law office in 1977, specializing in "land use, real estate, and environmental and public agency matters."[161] He is recognized nationally for his involvement in major federal environmental policies including the Clean Air Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and state and federal endangered species acts. He also served on the Bowling Green State University Foundation Board in the early 2010s.

The general trend from 1970-2020 in BGSU's Earth Day practices is one of increased student organization responsibility, fewer funded events, fewer speakers, and less of a focus on environmental education. While Earth Day still featured speakers to teach about their area of expertise, attendees in the twenty first century were often already knowledgeable or attended for extra credit. Few came away with more passion or a drive for activism. As environmental studies professor Dr. Holly Myers stated in 2008, "Earth Day seems as if it is a part of the [university and environmentalism] culture, but [is no longer] a day for learning."[162] This declaration remains true through to 2020 Earth Day; Earth Day is a performance tradition, removed from its original context and intent, yet continued because of its cultural tradition.

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[160] "Lee D. Stephenson CV," Moongate Associates, https://www.moongateassociates.com/Home.html, accessed Apr 13, 2023.
[161] Law Offices of Gregory D. Thatch, http://www.thatchlaw.com/Thatch.html, accessed Apr 13, 2023.
[162] Brittany Roderick, "Highlighting the history of Earth Day," *BG News* (Bowling Green, OH), April 22, 2008.

Digital technologies were an important driving force in this shift. The internet made grassroots activism much more national, and Earth Day has been no exception. The internet also removed the need for an entire day dedicated to environmental education, as people have access to more information at the tips of their fingers every day. The purpose of Earth Day, to create informed and environmentally minded citizens, was no longer necessary because of technology. While the intention of twenty first century Earth Day organizers is not apparent, changes in how Earth Day was practiced at BGSU suggest that technology rapidly changed the mindset of using education to create informed citizens. This digital technology was a different type of tool than the 1970s teach-ins for performing the ritual of Earth Day.

Earth Day has become a ritualistic practice, continually observed because it once created a vibrant community culture of environmental education. The natural world in the 1970s was tumultuous. The Cuyahoga River was on fire, smog blanketed city skylines, water was unclean, and major lakes were polluted. Earth Day filled the need to educate the public about environmental stewardship. As more people became environmentally educated, the need for a day (or week or month) of ecological teach-ins became obsolete. However, Earth Day remained a ritual every April, though without the same intentionality and purpose. The twenty-first century is an environmentally tumultuous time once again as anthropogenic climate change brings rapid change and uncertainty. Earth Day has the potential to mimic the power of its 1970 origin, but it must be adapted to twenty-first century environmental contexts. Maintaining the same performance as contexts change is a disservice to Earth Day founders and the environment at large. Ritual without questioning its potential for change, especially in the case of Earth Day and its change-making abilities from 1970, prevents forward movement and environmental change.

Human-nature relationships are changing and so must the tools to foster environmentally minded citizens.

CONCLUSION. AN INCOMPLETE REFLECTION ON BOUNDARIES, FLUIDITY, AND SEMANTIC ECOTONES

As much as the utilitarian use of resources contributed to Bowling Green and Great Black Swamp history, so did the deep affection of the people for this place. This affection that translates into actions to conserve and then restore this piece of swampy forest and prairies. Affection and love of place are hard to document. There is little that is explicit in the historical documents, and certainly this reading is subject to the risks of romanticization. The long resistance of the Ottawa and Wyandot to their removal, and their deep mourning to the loss of their ancestral territory in the Black Swamp, speak of their love for the land. This love was nurtured by a deep understanding of the uses of the gifts of nature, and an ethical commitment to honor the gift. Fort Meigs soldiers created a home in a terrifying and challenging landscape. Twentieth century northwest Ohio residents wrote representatives to protect their land-based ways of life through lakeshore, forestry, and agricultural policies. The BGSU community continues to celebrate Earth Day as a legacy to 1970 and environmental stewardship. People continue to find solace and healing in places such as Wintergarden Park. Some residents use the natural spaces to remember passed loved ones or reconnect with their deeper selves.

The value of the swamplands in the Bowling Green community did not just start with the creation of the preserve. Since the reporting of the "big crow rookery" in 1905, people have been inspired by the woods to listen and learn from the land and its inhabitants. Birding has been a particularly favorite activity of many Wintergarden visitors over the last several decades.[163] Community support for the land became reaffirmed with the creation of Wintergarden Park, the hiring of permanent staff, and generations of volunteers who have substantially cut down on

[163] Stutzman, oral history interview with author.

invasive species, executed prescribed burns, and seeded and planted the meadows. The space is also commonly used for hiking, walking dogs, running, or experiencing the storybook trails the park staff create to engage young visitors.

It is a fitting finale to this narrative that the community also came back to the park in spring/summer 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. A public history project by a group of BGSU graduate students shared the history of Wintergarden Park, with a focus on St. John's Woods and the conversion of swampland to agriculture. The project ultimately acquired a different meaning in the context of an isolating global pandemic: it reminded the community that the former swamplands are a site for healing and care for each other, and love for the space that has brought so many people together in the long history of Bowling Green.

In his 2020 oral history interview, Chris Gajewicz recalls a recent Facebook post asking "'What is it that makes Bowling Green special to you?"' And Wintergarden Park was reeled off I can't even tell you how many times… Now, it's a random survey… but the ultimate end point for me is that this is an incredibly important place because we've managed it in a way to make it accessible and available so that people can all come here and feel that they're a part of it." Wintergarden Park, a culminating, celebrated space of Great Black Swamp nostalgia, is a place where all community members are welcome. Young students and volunteers venture the park to see the lupine plants growing from the seeds they sprinkled, or the garlic mustard they removed. Those young people "feel a sense of pride and ownership in the environment." To sustain the swamp identity and pride, Chris believes people living in the former swamplands have to understand that they "can't live without this;" the restored wetlands and wildflower prairies contribute to environmental and community protection.[164]

[164] Gajewicz, oral history interview with author, February 2020.

Additional visitors to Wintergarden have found solace and purpose in their interactions with the natural world. Gajewicz also recalls experiences watching visitors outside his office window.

> I came across a man who had severe PTSD because his daughter had been killed in a car accident. It was about a year prior to that, and he was just laying down with his head like face down on the trail with his hands over the back of his head, like just kind of cowering. I went out and sat and talked with him and it turned out that [inaudible] flight helicopter flew over going to the hospital, and that's the last thing he saw when his daughter was taken away from the crash scene. And so, people come here for lots of reasons. And my job isn't just to be the nature guy, but also, 'Hey, I'm here to help you. If you need help with something, let's sit down and talk.' And I sat with him until he calmed down, and I said, 'I need to let you know the police are on their way, but they're just here to check. That's all they're coming for.' He's like, 'I'm feeling a lot better. Thank you so much for just listening.' If that's all it takes, and that guy will always come to this park. He loves it here. I'm sure he's been here since, and he'll continue to come here as long as he can. It's the same with kids. I mean, this is their park. This is their place. It's the same with young adults. It's one of the reasons why people want to move to Bowling Green. I know a woman that her husband was relocated to BGSU, and he had a couple of offers from different universities. And she came here, and he really wanted to come here. She goes, 'Let me check it out.' She goes, 'The only reason I'm saying yes is because Wintergarden Park is right around from her house.'[165]

[165] Gajewicz, oral history interview with author, February 2020.

These moving narratives of finding a sense of comfort and home in the restored wetlands environments are not unique to Bowling Green or Wintergarden Park visitors. Contemporary visitors to Fort Meigs feel the comfort of the environment within the fort walls. Northwest Ohio farmers took pride in their agricultural identity, and the base of that being from the draining of the Great Black Swamp, by contacting Representative Latta to advocate on their behalf. BGSU students felt the comfort of an environmentally active community when they participated in Earth Day activities.

There were several major changes in the Great Black Swamp over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that contributed to a sense of community. Many of these monumental changes were more rooted in a change in how inhabitants of northwest Ohio utilized the land, though some of the changes were about how they transformed the land. Military battalions traversed the Great Black Swamp and settled on the banks of the Maumee River to defend Fort Meigs. They created a heterotopia of environments, forming their identity as patriotic men protecting their homelands. Twentieth century agriculturalists rallied around their identity as Black Swamp farmers to write Representative Latta to support agricultural legislation. Young people and Lake Erie shoreline residents wrote to Latta asking him to prevent further coastal erosion. They, unknowingly, used their identities as people living in a former swampland as motivation for political activity. College students raised awareness for ecosystem destruction and environmental pollution at more than fifty years of Earth Day events on campus. While from all over the country, these students unified in the protection of the swamplands where they lived and learned.

The affective relationships in the Great Black Swamp are connected to a sense of nostalgia for place. These connections build on each other with affective ties creating a sense of

nostalgia and vice versa. As early as the 1880s, Bowling Green residents felt nostalgic for the swampland.[166] They were nostalgic for the loss of swamp and for what is required to keep the swamp drained: a sort of mourning for the change in labor on the land. Earth Day, less than one hundred years later, incorporated a similar nostalgia, pride, and knowledge that the swampland is a constant maintenance project. Wintergarden Park is a continuing example of the nostalgic love of place as residents come together to discuss and reminisce about the farms and homesteads surrounding the land. Emotions and affective connections like nostalgia may be the connecting thread that influences community place/space-based identity and activism. Humanities fields such as film studies and literary analysis have studied nostalgia and the mind-changing impacts of entertainment.[167] A similar lens brought to environmental history will not only increase the interdisciplinarity of the field, but it may bring greater clarity as to why communities have united to protect damaged landscapes.

The Great Black Swamp ethic of community and care has existed since time immemorial, though it has undergone transformations. Because the landscape has been altered so much over time and the resulting environmental problems of those transformations, the communities in the Great Black Swamp have reclaimed the identity of swamplands. They supported, and continue to support, measures of conservation and preservation of intact swamp ecosystems, even if the patchworks of swampland are small. Reclaiming the otherwise negative connotation of a swampland community, the people of the former Great Black Swamp have rallied around the swamp identity and have been successful in protecting urban parks, historic sites, protective

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[166] Charles W. Evers, *Pioneer Scrap-book of Wood County, Ohio and the Maumee Valley* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2002).
[167] Dora Apel, *Calling Memory into Place* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2020); Christina Lee, *Violating Time: History, Memory, and Nostalgia in Cinema* (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008).

policies, and their unique sense of unity in space and place. They have reframed the swamp to be a positive force of social and environmental change, becoming a model for other small towns across Ohio.

As Gajewicz recalls about the community involvement in Wintergarden Park history: "people really, really love this place, and I'm very humble that I had a hand in it because I'm only one of many, many people that had a hand in this place, without the many community members and university students who I consider community members as well. And kids who have done their Eagle Scout projects or scout groups that have come and pulled out that g*****n garlic mustard and just continue to do so as we move into the future. I'll tell you; I mean, it really is a community effort to make this place what it is."[168] The Great Black Swamp has always been a place made by and for the people of the swamp.

As Kathleen Dean Moore put it:

> "What we need next is a new ethic — call it an 'ecological ethic of care,' call it a 'moral ecology.' It's an ethic built on caring for people and caring for places, and on the intricate and beautiful ways that love for places and love for people nurture each other and sustain us all."[169]

This thesis argues that there has always been an ethic of community and the Great Black Swamp region, though one sometimes permeated by utilitarianism. This ethic of care stemmed and still stems from the affection of the community for the Great Black Swamp. Affects build a unique swampland ethos. That ethos emerged, in the early nineteenth century, from a sense of fear, danger, and challenge in the swamp. The space was used as military community, othering the outside wild landscape. By the late nineteenth century a progressivist narrative of conquering the

[168] Gajewicz, oral history interview with author, February 2020.
[169] Moore, *The Pine Island Paradox*, 65.

swamp took hold.[170] Nostalgia dominated the tone in the twentieth century and helped shape a sense of swamp-place that further shaped the views of the emerging urban conservation movements, political activism, and students rallying to improve environmental quality in the Lake Erie basin.[171] While the specific type of community identity changed over time, all the moments in time examined in this thesis have the uniting theme of using the environment to create unity and community.

As we face unprecedented challenges due to global climate change, this swamp ethos must adapt to a changing environment. Practicing the same stewardship and policies without examining shifting systems will not do the same good as it did in the past. Understanding the environmental history of the region should inform actions moving forward. If we are to maintain affective connections to natural spaces, we must understand how one action, decision, or belief impacts all aspects of the system. Nature is complex. It takes collaboration, trust, and teamwork to support and restore human-nature relationships amidst the rising uncertainty and anxiety of anthropogenic climate change.

Previous definitions and ways of seeing swamplands (and, by extension, other types of geo-biologically defined landscapes) do not work anymore. A new definition is needed that places humans within the system. Like a swamp ecosystem, this conceptualization is messy and complex. They are liminal and have been altered since time immemorial. Swamplands are their own type of ecotone: a boundary ecosystem between two different types of space. There is no dichotomy between human-intervened and natural landscapes. Nearly every part of the world

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[170] For an extended history of the nineteenth century swamp, see: Dana Bogart, "'My Great Terror, the Black Swamp' Northwest Ohio's Environmental Borderland," MA thesis, (Miami University, 2015).

[171] Further examples of the swampland nostalgia can be found in publications throughout the twentieth century: Good, *Black Swamp Farm*; *The Story of the Black Swamp*, documentary; Carolyn V. Platt, "The Great Black Swamp," *Timeline: A Publication of the Ohio Historical Society,* 1987; and historic newspapers.

today has been intervened by humans. The Great Black Swamp is the result of centuries of curation by indigenous people. Wintergarden Park cannot be frozen in time. It was altered before European contact, and it will continue to be altered by human and non-human forces. By considering landscapes worth protecting as those with little to no human intervention distances humans from nature. Demuth, placing humans within the Bering Strait ecosystem, has come the closest to the type of environmental history we need today. We must examine humans as capable of causing large-scale environmental change, yet also as effected by that change. Perhaps the best framework to examine this complexity is by looking at the world as a swampland. Robert Melnick proposed the idea of a semantic ecotone as a framework for examining landscapes. A semantic ecotone is a "set of variable conditions [of nature and culture] rather than a fixed position."[172] Swamplands are variable landscapes, in ecosystem and human relationship contexts. Environmental history including an aspect of stability and time would add a dimension necessary to understand how we got to our current global environmental condition and equip people with the tools to frame the entirety of the environment and culture's complex, messy relationship to it.

[172] Robert Z. Melnick, "Considering Nature and Culture in Historic Land Preservation," in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, edited by Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick, 22-44 (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2000).

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APPENDIX A. ORAL HISTORY WITH CINDA STUTZMAN

MS: Alright, so I would like to know a little bit about your experiences, throughout your life, of being in nature, being outside, playing outside – you know – as far back as you want. And kind of getting your story of how you ended up here at Wintergarden Park.

CS: Um… there's a lot of places I could go with that. I know as a child, I obviously, I played outside a lot. We lived in the country. I can remember as a kid, you know, walking up and down the country road and squeezing the little touch-me-not plants and they would explode. I remember climbing trees with my brother. I also remember my mom locking us outside the house at which point we were obviously spending too much time inside and were on her last nerve. So yeah, so I remember just having free reign on, we had like six acres. My dad had a separate garage that he was always working in on weekends, tinkering and doing stuff like that. Yeah, I remember, some of my experiences, things I remember… I remember as a kid thinking it was really awesome, at the time, and now, as a parent, I now realize what my dad was up to, but he paid me a penny a dandelion to pick the dandelions out of the front yard. So a) "it was fun, I'm just picking dandelions, and I'm getting paid". Really I think he was just trying to keep me out of his hair a little bit. But those are some of the things I remember from my childhood home.

I do also remember when I was really little, when we moved there, I think I was there or four, like an early early memory, there was this field of flowers. And now I know that they were some sort of non-native just weed, but to me it was this whole field of little red and yellow flowers. And I just remember running through down the little hill and through the flowers like, you know, this is where we live now, this is awesome. So I'm not sure how much of these memories, like that one, are real or it's perceived from pictures I've seen. I remember some awesome snow forts and… I don't think it was the one they're all talking about now, what is it – the storm of '78, the blizzard, because I would have only been three. But I do remember my dad would plow the snow and then we would carve out little caves and tunnels to play in there. What else do I remember about my childhood and my house?

The killdeer. We had two really long driveways. It was kind of like a Y-shape. And if the killdeers nested on one part of the driveway, my dad would block it off so nobody could drive that part of the driveway. We would have to use the other entrance and exit to get to and from our house, but I remember trying to sneak up on the killdeer and just watch them… the moms do their little flutter and fly off and stuff like that. I remember my dad showing me which ones were actually the eggs and which were rocks.

When I go home now, there's a really awesome tree that my dad planted when I was little. And it's huge now. It's this huge beautiful buckeye tree, you know. It has a swing in it for my niece and nephew and, I don't know. When I did my graduate work here, at BGSU, I actually did some research on connecting kids to the land. And one of the things I read a lot, uh, on about 20 years ago was like what does it take to make someone go into the field like this. And at the time there was a lot of research showing that, like, there was like two main factors. One was a lot of time spent (fire crackle distorts sound) outside as a child and I said "hey well no wonder I like all this stuff." And then the other one was some sort of mentor or experience or something, some other guiding factor, like either an adult or, like for me it was 4-H. So I grew up, I wasn't… I-we

didn't have any farm animals, but I did the sewing and the cooking and hung out with the other – my other friends who were all farmers. But my summer – like I lived for camp, going to camp. And so a lot of my childhood memories are also based on 4-H camp in central Ohio.

The first year after I graduated from high school I spent a summer working at a Girl Scout camp for the whole summer, which was down in the same central Ohio neck of the woods. So yeah, basically living in cabins or platform tents for the entire summer. By then I was pretty sure I wanted to go into some form of Environmental science. And that's what led me to – I was originally going to go to Ohio Northern and then I had started dating my husband at the time, in high school and he was coming up here [to BGSU] for a teaching degree. So I finally got over my fear of a big college and decided to come here so I could also be with him, and fell in love with the environmental studies program here. And, uh, one thing led to another… I'm trying to think, focus on my childhood, I'm not going to get distracted. Let's see. Yeah I might have covered most of it.

MS: When you were in your college studies, undergraduate, graduate, or both, did you spend a lot of time either in Bowling Green city parks or learning about BG city parks?

CS: Um… not so much the city parks, but one of my early field trips I remember going to Oak Openings and they were teaching us about restoration and things like that. And I was with a friend, and they [Toledo Metroparks] were trying to open up a savanna, which entailed killing some trees in order to get sunlight to the forest floor to have that habitat matrix. And I just felt so empowered like I am helping nature, you know, and my friend, who is still one of my best friends to this day, she was with me and she was like "Cinda, you're killing a tree", like (distortion) I'm sawing and I'm saving the savanna. She was like "you're killing a tree" and I was like "I'm saving a savanna." So we're arguing about this because, for her, she couldn't get over the hurdle of looking at the bigger picture. She was like, this is a tree and this tree is special. And she gets it now. It's not like she didn't get it, she just physically couldn't... she just couldn't or wouldn't. And she ended up going into, working for the UAW and going more that route, more social justice sort of stuff. But she did her, she was an environmental science major, too. But it's just interesting, you know. We both.. and she's the one who taught me how to camp. Like I knew how to camp because my parents sent me to a camp as a kid, but we did not camp-camp.

We took a vacation every year. We went somewhere, usually the east coast. We hotel-ed it the whole way. But we saw really cool stuff. We tend to… my father liked to focus on history most of the time, like the Civil War. So we did Gettysburg, Williamsburg, and all the -burgs, and Boston. But then my senior year of high school, we did out west, which he had done before having children. But that obviously had an impact on him, like I could tell. He loved traveling, so that one vacation a year was a really big deal. But, so we went out west as a family and did the corner-to-corner of Wyoming and Colorado. So we saw Mount Rushmore and the Tetons; Pikes Peak; Kody, Wyoming; and that was really cool…. Like.. Oh! And Yellowstone, which was phenomenal, you know, just to see it. And that was right after the catastrophic fires of the late '80s, so it was kind of cool.. you could see the regeneration from the fires. And I'm sure, you know, as a high school student I'm sitting and doing deep thoughts about this as we're like driving around Yellowstone and saying hi to the bison.

MS: Do you think those types of experiences, of being able to see the impact of the fire on this whole system or, you were talking about in your field trip realizing that, sure you might be cutting down one tree but you're saving a savanna; do you think that type of whole-systems, larger picture helped you or continues to help you in the work that you do here?

9:36 - CS: Yeah, definitely. Because, you know, we have to make decisions on a daily basis that are, for a lack of a better term, playing god. You know while tinkering out here. Sometimes I refer to myself as the flower tinkerer, you know, because the overriding goal is biodiversity. So trying to find a way to fit as many plants into the park as possible, you know, or do we focus on that or do we, you know, focus on the rarity or unique? Or, how much energy do we put into just making sure we have a lot of the common, regular stuff. So a lot of it's about balancing and trying to, cause, you know… we started with a mosaic of habitats here, and there was a lot going for this place, but there was also a lot missing. So in my early days here, I would literally drive the countryside looking for seeds in the ditches. And then getting those plants here and harvesting then them here and continuing to make that population spread. But then there were things that were here historically and we can look at some of the historic lists, you know, and you can't find them anywhere in the country… so I have to… genetically, the biologists want us to try to stay as local as possible, but then there's also the point at which, after 15 years, I can't just sit around and find a small population of a certain rare plant to try to help protect it in the park, I have to… I work with Toledo Metroparks to bring things in. And I've gone as far away as Wisconsin and Cleveland to try to, you know, source certain plants.

MS: So I think that anyone that comes to Wintergarden or does a program with you here or elsewhere about the park or about restoration knows that: 1) you have a lot of really valuable information about the land, about restoration, the ecosystems, the historic ecosystems of the are; but also that you care a lot about this place. I think that comes through in the way that you interact and tell the story of the park, but how would you characterize your relationship to this place?

12:09 - CS: Hm… I feel like I've become closer to it. I mean I've been here pushing like 19 years now so I'm hitting like two decades. And I've gotten, you know, I spent the first couple of years getting to know the park and figuring out what was here so that I could take it and move forward with the restoration process and use what I learned while volunteering for Metroparks and the Nature Conservancy and my couple of years working for Wood County Parks. And at first I used to get really frustrated because I felt like we weren't making enough progress fast enough. And, you know, Chris would be like "chill, we've got thirty years to work on this place." And so… there were times when it felt like we would take a few steps forward and a few steps back. But now after I've been here for 19 years and look back on what this place looked like in some places, and how the vision has come to fruition… you know, it's really amazing. And so my husband and I are currently looking at trying to move next door to the park. Trying to find a house closer because it is, it's like one of my children, this whole park. And so…. I don't know…. I do, I refer to it as my home away from home. Kids think this is my home. I have to explain to them that this is a park and this place is owned by everybody in town, I just have the privilege of working on it. Because we'll be out on the trail and they'll start to get tired or thirsty

and they'll be like "can we go back to your house now?", yeah we can go back to the Nature Center.

14:09 – MS: And because you've worked so closely with this place for 19 years, what types of changes be you seen over time? Maybe it's throughout the time, the vision, the restoration efforts through the past 19 years. Or maybe it's season to season or year to year. What are some of the changes that you see that you think others don't necessarily see?

14:36 – CS: Well sometimes people do… some of the things I know I see but I don't know other people see, sometimes or maybe not… we have gotten rid of a lot of the invasive shrubs through the wooded areas. Obviously there's a lot more prairie grasses out in the prairie. One thing that always makes me stop and think deep thoughts, you know, is there's certain oak trees out in the meadow where we were going for the melding of the habitats, the transition zone. So, like, we… as the acorns would start making little tiny oak trees out into the prairie, there were certain ones where we would start flagging them and start mowing around them. Or watering them down so they wouldn't burn when the fire came through. And so there are trees out there that are now 15 year old oak trees that are ginormous, but then I also look at them and think that's my baby. We nurtured those specific trees, we picked them, we selected them. There's also a handful of shrubs out there… one of the first things I ever transplanted. And I got the seeds from Steidman Woods, from BGSU, and I grew them at Bostorff's and they helped me get the going. And so now there's these shrubs that are like twice as tall as me. And people go by the wetland and they're like these are phenomenal, look at all the butterflies on there, and the insects and whatnot… and I'm thinking "I did that, those are my babies." It makes me happy to see other people enjoying it so much.

16:32 – MS: Do you think that the people that come and say those things and they see this beautiful shrub but they don't necessarily know all of the work and the tending and care that you put into making it what it is… do you think that they… that they have lost something in that experience because they don't know?

CS: I don't think so. I think that for the most part, I mean, the verbal things I get from people is nothing more than lots of sincere appreciation. Every once in a while somebody will critique our methods for our madness. But we've had less and less of that over the years. Early on there was a lot more educating people because it was like my friend, "you don't kill a tree period." That whole leave it alone, let nature take its course, mentality of the '60s or '70s and '80s. What was still somewhat prevalent. But now, usually, if someone comes in when we're doing something, they just want to know why. And as soon as as give them a short scientific explanation they're usually fine. Because it think, at this point, people who have been watching the park for 20 years – as users or neighbors… I think we've proven ourselves, we have a proven track record. They can see the park has changed for the better.

MS: What have you learned from being out and working with…

CS: Oh I've learned so much. I tell students all the time, if I knew… if I knew then what I know now as far as how to go about restoration, cause I was pretty green coming into this. This was my… I had spent a little bit of time volunteering and, like, one year employed…. No, two years,

at the county parks. And my focus there was the educational programming, but at the time the county parks was also developing their restoration program. They didn't have a department yet, so it was just the naturalists doing the restoration work on the side. Now the county parks has like, a complete… at the time there was only three staff doing all of that, and now they have three full-time programmers, and a bunch of part-time and seasonals and three full-time restoration people and a bunch of seasonals and stuff like that. So they've grown leaps and bounds knowing that they need to manage and take care of their properties as well. So year when I came here I was very book smart but I was not necessarily hands-on smart and I was still doing a lot of learning. And I felt kind of alone because I didn't have anyone to draw on. You know what I mean? I had those experiences at Metroparks and every once in a while I'd call somebody up there or, you know, or call somebody at the county parks, you know, "hey, what do you think about this". But there was a lot of learning curves where we would try something on a specific species, as far as trying to kill it and it would backfire, it wouldn't die. Just like, well that was a waste of time and energy. But then there were other times where you would throw a bunch of seeds out and you wouldn't see anything for a while but then a couple years later, a plant would just go "poof! Here I am!" And we would go "oh, my gosh it worked." And then I would figure out, that plant's happy place is kind of this soil and this amount of water and this amount of sunlight, so that I could focus my energies taking seeds and transplants there. So sometimes it was just a lot of trial and error, throwing seeds around seeing what grew where or why.

MS: So learning about what are the resources here for the plants that the books don't say…

CS: Yeah, every plant has got its own mind, is what I've decided. So if there's.. some plants are really easy to restore. A handful of seeds, boom, done. And peoples are just, you know, "that lupine, it's such a phenomenal plant" and I'm just "yeah, that took no effort. I'm so glad you guys love it"… it was totally happy. If you give it what it needs, which is sand and sun, it will take off and have a mind of its own. Other plants seem to be a lot more picky about being reintroduced.

21:18 – MS: And how does it feel when people come up to you and say "this plant is really beautiful" and it *was* one of the more tricky ones? Is that…

CS: I usually tell them the story. "I'm so glad you like that because that plant really gave me a hard time." And I just tell the about my experience with that particular plant. And they seem to enjoy it… I guess… They don't go running for the hills. They make jokes about me being the crazy nature lady here in like 50 years, because I'm pretty sure after I retire I'm not going to go far. Like I said, my husband and I are trying to move closer to the park. I've got a very vested interest in this place. It's not just a job, you know.

MS: Do you see that with visitors as well?

CS: There are some visitors that are very attached to this park, that have been coming here longer than I've been here, you know. And they've left behind a legacy. There's a handful of people in town, predominately I can think of several women, who… this place would not exist if they… in the way it does, if they had not led the charge in the '90s to start a foundation, add land, encourage the city to hire staff to manage it.

MS: Yeah, because this place has…. Go ahead.

CS: Lots of money has gone into this place privately, not just the city. From the city standpoint, we're one of the cheapest parks as far as to manage. Cause, you know, with all the other parks, you have to take into account all the labor and time it takes to mow them or take care of the pool or to, you know, staff the Community Center. I've got the smallest budget but we've got the most land.

MS: I think this place and the history of the park, the preserve, really shows that people in the city care about it (Cinda affirms), with the foundation and all the community efforts that we see BG and the surrounding areas coming together to expand, or make this change to better this place and have.. make it a community feeling. So I want to kind of get your perspective on that as well, and… what the roles, or role, is for this type of place, this type of urban park-nature preserve, in a larger context of a community?

CS: Yeah, so a lot of times, especially if someone is new to the community, because half the time I can tell, so why are you in Bowling Green. Are you new to the university? Or a new job? Whatever, and I tell a lot of people when they're like "This place is awesome. I can't believe this is here in this little town." I'm like "okay, well if you like this, make sure you go visit Toledo Metroparks, make sure you go visit Kitty Todd Preserve because this is just a sampling of what was here historically." Most of the swamp has been turned into farm fields but, you know, just north of the [Maumee] River there are some amazing places you can go to get away. It's not just all flat and boring. And the Toledo area has done a phenomenal job of preserving, protecting, and enhancing a whole corridor of oak savanna habitat and stuff up there.

MS: And you mentioned going back to the Metroparks and the county parks getting some feedback when you were first starting here, how influential has the Toledo corridor and that model been for your restoration work?

25:27 – CS: Oh, a lot, because it.. you know, I still make sure to… because what I saw at Kitty Todd, the habitats that had been restored, I could see them in my head and then I would look out here and I would be like "okay, how do I make this place model what's going on up there?" And I could, I would compare plant lists and I would compare how much canopy… I did a lot of research on Wood County specifically compared to the habitats up there. We did have a little bit of a different mosaic here. We had a lot more true tall grass prairie, we obviously had more of the swamp woods and the wet meadows. So try to represent all of those habitats has been a fun challenge, honestly. I mean I could sit and look at plant lists all day and try to figure out plant communities… because when I look out here (pause for Cinda to welcome familiar guests to the Nature Center)…

MS: So you were modeling and comparing plant lists and seeing the things that you could…

CS: And early on, some of the experts from the state came in and they gave some plants lists as far as what things we should target to reintroduce. I still have a Cinda's "Top 50 Hit List" which I've gotten maybe half of the plants, you know… there's getting a plant to grow and there's

getting a plant to grow as its own sustaining population. So I can put a transplant in and it can live for four to five years, but if it's not making its own babies at some point then it's just like… okay, did I succeed or not? Meh.

MS: These things that you have learned from working out here about restoration and how to best allow the land to work with you to restore itself in this collaborative partnership that you've created, how do you think other people can start to create relationships with land so they can see "well this plant does really well" or "wait a second, that wasn't here last year", what do you think people can do to get to the point where they can see changes?

CS: Well obviously if you have a large chunk of land you can do something with, you can try planting seeds and see what happens. I think if you have a smaller landscape, obviously transplants might be a better way to go. It takes a lot of time to learn all the possible plants that you could put in your yard. But there are some really good sources out there that you can study. If you know you have this kind of soil and this kind of light and this kind of moisture, you can go to certain places. And I know where a lot of those sources are for where you can start, so if anybody is ever interested in trying to naturalize their yard, I'm here as a resource. We want people to use us as resources because I have been trying to landscape natively for a long time and it was a learning curve, learning what plants… you know, some plants put out so many seeds that you dwarf all the other plants you've planted so you have to either have the time and energy to cut the seed heads off ahead of time or know what plants to put with what plants and in what quantities. So there is… there's some really good stuff coming out right now. There's a woman I went and saw, what was her name, Claudia West, I'm trying to think of the name of the book because I lent it to someone… cause yeah, it's not as simple as you just go out and start planting natives in your yard and everything takes care of itself and it will look great without any effort. There is some… you do need to.. but there are certain plants you can start with that are easy, and sometimes I can recommend those to people. Like, okay, when in doubt, put in ten plugs of little blue stem and if you have good sandy soil put in butterfly weed and four or five other plants. I know the county parks right now is trying to focus their growing efforts on the most landscape-friendly native plants. They've worked really hard on putting stuff back into the parks as well, but from what I understand, they're really trying to focus on getting good native plants in people's yard so they do a sale once a year. And that's where we've gotten a lot of our transplants and seed sources from in recent years.

MS: Well do you have anything else you'd like to add?

CS: I can't think of anything off the top of my head.

MS: Well then, thank you for this, this is wonderful to hear about your story. I hear a lot about Wintergarden from you, but to hear about the steps that you've taken and the thing that you've done in your personal life to get you hear and the relationship that you've made with this land was really neat so thank you.

APPENDIX B. ORAL HISTORY WITH CHRIS GAJEWICZ

Madi: All right, so if you want to tell me a little bit about your experience throughout your life with nature from as far back as you want to go, from your childhood all the way up until now?

Chris: Okay. Well, when I was a little kid, I lived in Sylvania Township, which is just west of Toledo, and my parents still live there today. Behind their house was about a one square mile forest. Now it's a one square mile housing development, but it was a forest and there was nothing back there. It was completely and totally desolate, there was nothing. I don't even know who owned it at the time, it was just this big woods.

And we would go there as a family, we would walk around back there. My parents were really big on, "Let's go outside." So, starting at a very young age, as far back as I can remember, and I can remember things when I was two and three, we would go to the woods behind our house or we would go to the parks. And the two parks we went to most often were Secor Metropark in Toledo, or it's actually not even in Toledo, but it's Sylvania and a further Richfield Township.

And then Oak Openings Preserve, which was not nearly as big as it is now, but those two areas were places we would go and we still have family pictures from way back when we would go there, and we'd go on hikes and walks. And so my parents were a huge influence as far as go outside. I think my dad was a Boy Scout. I know that my mom was a Girl Scout. And they valued being outside though both of them did not grow up in rural areas. We moved to Sylvania Township. My mother grew up in what is now south Toledo. My father grew up in what is now downtown Toledo. So, they were city dwellers.

Madi: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: But they very much valued going out away from the city and getting into the forests, and getting out into the woods. And they even... There was some family member of mine who had a piece of property that was adjacent to Secor Metropark that we would go out and they called it the woods. And we would go out there and we'd see my Aunt Evelyn and Uncle Bailey and hang out with them in the woods.
And so the woods, the forest was always a big part of it. As I got a little bit older and became a little bit more independent, where we lived on the street... I have two sisters and have a brother. My two sisters, one's older, one's younger, and then my brother is significantly younger. He's like five years younger than me. There were no boys my age in our neighborhood. It was all girls. And so my sisters had plenty of people to hang out with.

Madi: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: And I was apparently fairly gender specific about who I wanted to hang out with. So, there were no other boys. If I wanted to go play with my friends, I'd have to go find them somewhere in Sylvania, which meant riding a bike, which was a completely different experience back then to ride my bike. And I'd be 10 years old riding my bike all over Sylvania. Nobody thought anything of it.

Now it's a little like, "Oh, my God. Your kid went away on a bike." But even though we can track them on their phones. But anyway. So, I spent an inordinate amount of my free time in the woods behind the house. And I often would fantasize about being out in that woods, and I would go back in time. And I was always, always interested in Indian, Native American culture, always reading books about it, and reading. So, as soon as I would get out to the woods, I would strip down naked and I would be an Indian in the woods.

And so for me that forest experience was always a highly sensory experience, because I was this naked kid running around out in the forest. Like this wild thing. I'd read the stories about a wild child was found somewhere and raised by wolves, or whatever. And that to me that was like, "Oh, my God, how awesome." That I could be this kid.

And so I became very... I would immerse myself literally into mud, into dirt, into whatever. And I'd just be this filthy, dirty kid, head to toe completely naked in the woods, but loving every second of it, because I was just at this total level of freedom that I don't think anybody really gets to experience these days.

Madi: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: And so it was just a completely uninhibited feeling of freedom. And so for me, the forest environment for me is a freedom environment. It's an environment of just being at one with nature, and for that reason I think that we, as a group, that we, as a culture, we do everything we can to keep ourselves from nature.

So, we wear as many clothes as we possibly can when we go out into the forest. Oh, my gosh, it's 50 degrees. Bundle up. Native Americans wore next to nothing when it was 50 degrees out. They didn't think about it. I think that we have become very soft, and myself included, when it comes to our ability to withstand what the environment can throw at us.

And so I can't say that as an adult I haven't experienced that as well, but you have to be very careful about where one experiences nature in its fullest. But I would encourage everybody to try it, because my gosh, how close to nature can you be? We've just separated ourselves so much from it that just laying down with yourself open to the sky and letting raindrops fall all over you, it's a highly sensory experience.

And it's something that we have looked at as almost in a demonized way, that nature's a bad thing, that, "My gosh, I'm getting wet in the rain." Well, so what? You get wet, you can't get wetter. Once you're saturated, you're wet. So, it always fascinated me, that feeling. So, and again, as I've gotten older, I have absolutely experienced the exact same things. Again, in very private situations. It's that separation of is this a dirty thing to a this is just a completely natural and normal thing.

And quite honestly, there's an incredibly large community of people that are like me, and they feel the same way. So, that's my connection with the environment as a kid. It was a very sensory one, very sensory based. My parents also took us camping for the first time. I'd never camped

before I was five years old, but I remember our first camping trip very, very well, because it rained. We were in an old canvas tent that my dad borrowed from someone.

The rain water got underneath the tent and there was four inches of water in the tent with us. All of our sleeping bags, which were all Korean war issued sleeping bags hat my dad again borrowed from somebody. We're soaked, we're just absolutely soaked. There was this smell, and there's a smell... Again, that sensory thing, the smell of canvas in a canvas tent is a very specific smell. And so we would always, I would always have tents in the backyard. We'd always have like a camp thing. Camping out in the backyard was a big deal. So, because there wasn't anything around us. Where we lived, there was nothing.

And again, it's completely different now. My parents look out their back patio window now and look into somebody else's back patio window, which is really a shame, but that's just how it goes. So, my parents, I credit my parents very much with giving us the experience of being outside. I remember smelling mushrooms once. We walked out into the back forest and I'm like, "I smell mushrooms." And my dad's like, "You don't smell mushrooms." I'm like, "I do. I smell mushrooms." And my mom comes around the corner with a big puffball mushroom. Had to be fall.

And so my dad told a friend of his, who was a mushroom hunter, and we went back there with bags and came back with bags and bags of mushrooms. And my God, the kid really did smell mushrooms. So, I think that we've lost that kind of connection with the environment that so... The sights, the smells, the feelings of being in a forested environment. At least, for me, a Midwestern forest. I'm incredibly comfortable in that surroundings. It doesn't... I have no fear at all about being out there. Where I know a lot of other people whenever they're in a forest environment, I brought many students here to Wintergarden, many, many over the past 20 years, and I'm really surprised by how many people are absolutely terrified to be out here. And I'm like, "There is nothing in this forest that can hurt you at all unless a tree falls on you, but that's pretty rare."

Madi: Yeah. So, you went to school for natural resource management and outdoor recreation both here at BGSU and in Southern Ohio.

Chris: That's right.

Madi: Do you think that these experiences of being outside in the forest behind your house and camping, is that what pushed you to study these things in college?

Chris: Yes. I didn't know that you could learn about this stuff. When I was in school there were teachers that were not... Our teachers and counselors in our high school at the time were not aware either that these options existed. I think that they... We glibly throw around terms like forest ranger, or park ranger, but we don't really... There's no real set definition of what that person really does.

I think one of my first experiences with education in the environment was going to sixth grade outdoor education camp and that was at Camp Storer in Michigan, which is the Toledo YMCA

camp. And I went there in sixth grade and that had a huge impact on me, because I remember to this day, the activities we did, the things we did, the experience that we had. I remember the smells.

The smell of the cabin, the smell of the dining hall, all of that. And it was driven home by four years later when I was 16 years old, I got a job there working in the summers. And so that then every single summer from 1980 to 1989, I worked at Storer Camps in the summers and sometimes during the year. So, there were two summers I worked at different places, because I needed to make money for college. But my heart was always at camp. And so while I was there, I was around a lot of people who were very much... I mean we would call them hippies now. They would be people in the generation ahead of me, which are baby boomers, but they were hippies. They were like, "Wow. Get close to the environment." And everybody could play a guitar, and they'd all sit around the fire and they'd sing their hippie songs.

But I was influenced by all of these folks, because they were bright naturalists. They knew what they were... But I always thought to be a naturalist, you had to wear a uniform and you had to have a badge, and had to have a gun. Excuse me. You had to have all these things. You couldn't be a naturalist. And I found out that through YMCA camping and working at the Y as a naturalist, you weren't on a staff of educators, all of them having different degrees in different disciplines. Excuse me. So, all of that was... I'm going to have to get some water. I'm sorry.

Madi: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: Okay. All of these different people that I was around came from all different places around the country and around the world. They also had backgrounds that were all different, and they came from different universities, that they were all intelligent. They were all educated people. And so, I was hanging around with people with backgrounds in outdoor education, geology, math, science, biology, I mean, all of these different kinds of things.

Then I met this woman that was there. She was working. She was a young woman. She was a couple of years older than me. And she was like, "Well, I go to Hocking College." I'm like, "What's that?" I was probably about 17 at the time. And she said, "Well, Hocking College is a small college down in Southern Ohio. It's a two-year program and you go through. And I'm like, "Wow, that sounds really great." So I went back to my high school counselors and I said, "I'd like to look into Hocking College." They said, "No, no, no, you don't want to do that." I'm like, "Why not?" Like, "Well, you're taking all of these college prep courses. That's a two-year school. That's a technical college. You're kind of beyond that

I'm like, "I don't know. I mean, I don't know if I want to go to a four-year college. What if I don't like college?" As just an informational note, I would be the first person in my family to ever go to college. Everybody in my family, up until that point, were all laborers in one form or another, either cement... My dad was a factory worker. My grandfathers were cement finishers and factory workers as well. So they were hard labor guys and I would be the first one to go to college. And I was like, "I don't know." I mean, my parents didn't say, "No, you can't." They encouraged me to go to college. But they were really unaware as to what it would take to go. They weren't aware of it. I mean, because they just hadn't gone themselves. And it wasn't

expected, nor was it not expected. It was just sort of, "Oh, okay. So that's what you want to do. Okay. Well, all right." Well, they tried to get me to go to Ohio State. That was what they wanted me to do. I said, "I don't want to go to Ohio State's, too big and I don't want to go to a four-year college and lock myself into something, and then not be sure that that was the right thing I wanted to do." So if I went for two years and did okay there, then maybe I could go on further. And that's what I did. And so, much to the chagrin of my counselor in high school, she was very much adamant that I would go to a four-year school, and I'm like, "Nope." But everybody around me was going to four-year schools. I mean, Sylvania schools at the time, and probably to a certain extent today, people, you go to college. I mean, it's expected of you to go to college.

I was taking classes in... I had anatomy and physiology, and I had a Greek and Latin roots. I mean, I was doing all of these different classes, and I was in calculus, I mean, all expecting you to go to a four-year college. And they felt that I was dumbing myself down, to be quite honest, to go to a school like Hocking. So I went to Hocking and I did great. I loved it. I mean, the first day we were there, we were on a bus and we were going out into the field and I'm like, "This is incredible," because I wasn't just theoretically learning about something, nor was I going through two years of gobbledygook that they make you take at the four-year colleges to see if you're college material. I was right into the thick of it. By the time the second or third quarter rolled around, I was doing research papers and I was out counting different animals and listening for different animals. You go out in the middle of the night and it's dark out, you're counting owls, or you get up really, really early in the morning and you're counting turkeys by sound and you're listening. The birding classes that I had were unbelievable, and I had fish. All of these things were just so great because your hands were in it. You weren't just reading about it

Then I took an extra class on top of it, which was outdoor education from a woman named Donna Sui. She was the outdoor education coordinator for the State of Ohio, and she was teaching one quarter at Hocking. It was an evening class and I decided to take it just for fun and realized at that moment, I wanted to be a teacher in the environment. She made teaching amazing, and she made the environment accessible to everybody. And I thought, "This is where we need to go. This is what we have to do, is we have to teach other people in a way that they can understand."

And so, what she was saying to us was, all of the stuff that you've learned here at Hocking, all of the scientific names, and all of the plants, and the animals, and everything that you've learned, all of that stuff is great for you to know. But if you can't teach somebody else about it, it becomes dead knowledge. And so, it has to be relearned again by somebody else from scratch where you can interpret that to someone and now they don't have to go back to the basics. They can actually learn and gather information by you telling them the story. I often look at myself now. I'm not a scientist. I'm a storyteller. There are two different people in our world. They're scientists and storytellers. And it can cross disciplines. But in our case, a biologist would be our scientist. They go out, they collect the data, they put the data on paper. They themselves can interpret the data, but I also can interpret the data and then disseminate that data to other people in human words and not in statistical words. And that is exciting.

In fact, we were told, remember all that Latin that you learned? I'm like, "Yeah. Yeah. I know my Latin names for everything." Yeah, forget it, because people don't care. So if I'm talking with a colleague, that's different. But if I'm talking to just a member of the general public... I don't use Latin to show how much I know. They don't care and there's no connection between that average listener. Now, I will use Latin when I find a funny Latin name. And if you want to get kids laughing, the American Robin is turdus migratorius. Well, turds that migrate. Oh my gosh, that's hilarious. And you get them laughing and they're like, "Oh okay."

But you say the reason why, and then you go into why it's called, and that the word turd is actually a Latin word for feces. And they're, "Really?" Then, "Oh," and it all sort of connects together. So I'm not teaching them just like, "Well, obviously, you could see turdus migratoria is..." blah, blah, blah, blah, and come off sounding like some academic that knows too much. You're telling them a story about how it got its name and how Linnaeus, or one of his contemporaries, decided to name this bird and what it does. And the reason why is that robins will eat their babies feces while it's in the nest. So when you see a Robin's nest, as the baby begins to eject its feces, it comes out in a thing called a fecal sac. The mother then will eat it, and then she flies away and drops it elsewhere. So the nest always stays clean and free of parasites.

Madi: Wow.

Chris: Awesome.

Madi: Yeah, it's really interesting.

Chris: Yeah. So there's a reason why they have a name like that. But for a sixth grader, when you say turdus, my gosh, I mean, that's just comic genius, and that's hilarious stuff to them. So that's the only reason I would use it, more as a funny kind of side story as opposed to this is what you call it from now on, because they'll forget that part. They won't forget turdus, but they will. And they'll put robin and turdus together and hopefully down the road someday that that will be a connecting point for them if they decide to move on into a field that requires that.

Madi: You started working with the park in 2000, correct?

Chris: Yeah.

Madi: And you've been involved with a lot of restoration efforts of transforming this place into the various different patchwork ecosystems that were part of this area, and the greater Black Swamp. What were some of those early restoration efforts that happened here?

Chris: The restoration began before I got here. So it began probably in very late nineties, I believe in '97, '98, '99. And there was another part-time seasonal naturals that had been hired, and she had some pretty grand visions about what she wanted to see done here, which we're all certainly on the same path that I would have put myself on. When I arrived here, though, the first thing I needed to do was learn about the site because even though I did my undergraduate and graduate work at... So I did a two plus two program here at BG from Hocking.

Then I went off into the world for five years. Was an outdoor environmental education director, and then I came back for my master's degree. And so, in '93, I graduated in summer of '93 with my masters and then I moved on. Oh, I actually worked at Wood County parks for eight years. Then from there I came here. And so, when I got here, and I got the job as Natural Resources Coordinator, my first thing to do was come out here and really get to know the land and figure out what happened here and why it happened here. Usually, there's a book around like that, but I began gathering information about this park, and that required many visits to the archives at the university. Many, many visits to websites with data. This was pre-Facebook. I mean, there's not a lot online yet, but I was just digging up stuff. Then somebody came in at some point with the motherload of all of the articles about this building being built and the site itself. And there were old anecdotal stories about St. John's Woods and kids playing out here.

So all of this stuff started coming together. And so, I was gathering all this information and trying to figure out who the landowners were originally, what did they do to the land? Because, to me, that's an incredibly important part of the story. What was done here? Why do we have certain plants here but not other plants here? What was happening? Who did what? When did they do it? Why did they do it? All of that stuff without judgment, just trying to figure out what happened here. So that was our first thing.

Then I invited Jennifer Winders who at the time was the Director of the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. I asked she and her staff to come here on an afternoon and just walk with me through the park and tell me what they thought. The park was smaller then. We were only about 80 acres. We're about 103 now and soon to be about 125. And so, we walked and we came through the park and came back here to the building and I said, "So what do you think? Tell me what your thoughts are." She looked at me and she just shook her head and she said, "You guys are the poster child for environmentally, if it can go wrong, it went wrong." And I go, "What do you mean?" She goes, "You have so many non-native invasive species here. It's unbelievable." My pallet of knowledge for that was for the most part, fairly minimal. I was fully aware of what the native plants were here, but when it comes to non-natives and invasives, which was something we were just starting to talk about 20 years ago, I was shocked myself. And I looked at the woods, I'm like, "Oh my gosh."

I remember coming out here with my first wife and I. After I got the job, I said, "Let's go for a walk out of my new workplace." We went out for a walk out into St. John's Woods, and there was garlic mustard that was four feet tall, and that's all you could see all the way through the woods, was this lime green garlic mustard. And my wife at the time said, "Oh my God, this is beautiful." And I go, "Oh my God, this is horrible." So here's two different people. She was in the law profession, so she didn't see it the same way I did. I'm looking at it as, "Oh my God, we've got to do something and do it now." She was looking at it, "Oh, isn't this pretty?" Because it's green. Green is pretty. Anything green is okay, which we know is not true.

Anyway, so I made a pact with myself that I will not leave this job until non-native invasive species are under control at Winter Garden and we have grown as big as we possibly can get within the City of Bowling Green, and that will be in the next couple of years. So that kind of tells you what my retirement plan is. Then I knew I couldn't do this alone. There was no possible way that this could be done alone. Cinda Stutzman came onto the staff, Mike Przysiecki came

onto the staff. These were staff positions that never existed. I'm the first person in the City of Bowling Green's history to be a natural resources manager. That was something completely foreign to everybody. They're like, "Well, what's he going to do?" Well, someone has to take care of this. Well, don't you just keep the trails clean and that's it? No, we are going to make this park healthy again. We are going to make this environment healthy. Even today, as I look out the window from where I am sitting at this moment, I see things that I would love to see gone. But we can't just wave our hand over it. It takes time, and it has taken 20 years to get to the point where we are now.

But from where you're sitting, you can look out and see Wintergarden Road. You would not have been able to see it. In fact, this time of year, it would just have been a wall of vegetation. But that vegetation you were looking through is all non-native invasive species, most of which were planted here on purpose, because back, again, you go back in time 20 years ago... Well, let's go back 35 years ago when I was at Hocking, they were talking about covering food crop. That's all they drilled into our heads. Covering food crop, covering food crop.

We want a quick-growing cover that provides a food crop. Well, what are they? Autumn olive, Russian olive, all of multiflora rose, Tatarian honeysuckle or bush honeysuckle. All of them provide all of that. However, they're all Asiatic species. They're all highly out of control. We didn't know that then. We weren't thinking about that. We were thinking, "What can we plant that the animals are going to like and eat?" And now we have Dr. [inaudible 00:15:41] coming out of New England saying, "Hold up, folks. Just because it tastes good doesn't mean it's good for you." It's like eating bags and bags of Fritos. They taste delicious, but they're really not providing you the kind of nutrients you really, really need.

Birds, animals are the same way. They eat at certain times of the year because they need certain things within their food source. So we were wrong about all of that cover and food crop nonsense. The problem is that it's been built into the American psyche that that's what we need. And so, we've got to help the birds. We have to have bird feeders. Oh my gosh, if you don't feed the birds, the birds are going to die. I think the birds have been around for millions of years. Humans have not. So they don't really need us. They'll be fine.

I think at some point we feel like we're somewhat indispensable when it comes to the environment, and to a certain extent we might be. But we don't need to plant the cover and the food crop. And that all came out of strip mining and tearing out, coming in and clear cutting forests. Well, forestry practices have changed. Strip mining has changed. All of these things have changed over the past 50 years in remarkable and responsible ways. They may not be the best, but they are a heck of a lot better than they used to be. It all comes down to people in our field that are paying attention to that and saying, "We really need to think about the ramifications of what we do 50 years after we do it. What happens?"

So we can't just plant stuff because just planting stuff isn't the right... We have to plant the right stuff, which requires a tremendous amount of education, a tremendous amount of research, knowledge, knowledge base. You have to understand the environment as a whole, not just... You have to look at the whole environment, not just a little part of it, a little piece of it because we're part of a much bigger fabric.

Madi: So you've created this very sensory based experience with the natural world from your childhood, continuing through your education. You talked about being in the field, getting your hands dirty, actually experiencing things. What do you think are the benefits of that type of sensory, experiential relationship with nature?

Chris: For me, nature isn't an option, and I don't know any other way to say it. Nature is not an option for me or anybody else. We need the natural environment. We need it more than we understand how much we need it. Humans go back a long way and we have always been a part of the environment. And I think that's one of the most important things that we have to accept. I think some people don't accept it. They would much prefer the environment stays on its side of the fence. And we manage it when it gets onto this side of the fence. It is something to be feared and something to be tamed. And that comes out of the American psyche. It comes out of perhaps a European psyche of, we have to manage the environment.

So the European ideal of kill all the predators because the predators are bad. Well, when you have domesticated fauna that you take care of, and you put it in a fenced in area and a pack of wolves attack your goats and fenced in area, well, you're not really giving the goats the chance to get away, are you? I mean, and the wolves are perfectly happy with that. While you get rid of the wolves, then you can raise your goats unhindered. It comes out of that management of, we've got to manage the environment. That mentality was brought with our European ancestors for sure.

If we look at our native American ancestors who are already here and managing the environment, which they did, we want to believe, I think, and this is maybe the romanticized Hollywood version of native Americans in the environment, is that the native American walk lightly on the earth and only took what it needed and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. That's bullshit, okay? And I can prove it. I have visited a buffalo jump, and a buffalo jump out West was where maybe 20 or 30 native Americans all chased about 300 buffalo off of a cliff. Well, that group of people could not nearly come close to eating all of that that they just killed. So I don't buy that they live lightly on the land business.

I think that it's a nice romanticized version. But the other thing that we know, absolutely positively know, is that native Americans burned the bejesus out of everything they ever touched. They were constantly burning things. And so, we're still learning about that kind of environmental impact that humans can have regardless of what their time period is. We look back at the native Americans that were here when our European ancestors arrived on the Eastern part of the country. And I think the jury's still out as to who exactly landed on the Western side, but the Polynesians are, in my opinion, one of the go-tos and as well as the Chinese and the Japanese.

We also have this idea that the only way that the people got here was walk across the Bering land straits, land bridge. That is not necessarily true. Maybe some people did, but I'm thinking if Australia was peopled 55,000 years ago by people in boats coming from the Indonesian islands, then why couldn't people in Japan use a boat 55,000 years ago to get here? It just makes sense. If you're in a boat, you're not going to go far from land because that's where your fresh water

supply is. There's also a lot more food on that strip of land. I mean, there's seals, and there's otters, and there's fish, and there's all kinds of things that you can eat. It just makes sense.

Humans do things for reasons. They don't do things willy nilly and crazy just for the heck of it. So there's a reason behind it. But anyway, once people got here, and let's just say, sake of argument, between 15 and 20,000 years ago, is when most people will agree that needed that there were people in the Americas. They realized really fast, because they were not about to, for whatever reason, domesticate any animals. But they realized they wanted the animals nearby. So when they needed food, they would burn areas or keep these areas managed with fire because easy. And you manage it with fire and these animals would come to those burned out areas to feed and you could jump out from behind a tree and kill one.

You didn't have to domesticate a cow. You could just kill a bison every now and then as you needed one and butcher it and save the meat or whatever. But fire was such an incredibly important part of the native American cultures. There's studies being done right now. We're still learning, but the little ice age that took place after... Well, it was well after the Europeans arrived in the Americas, but they started pushing native Americans further West. And as they pushed further West, the native Americans lit everything on fire, which created a huge, gigantic amount of smoke going into the atmosphere, which may or may not have played a part in the little ice age which took place in Europe, which eventually caused very long, sometimes no summers, very long winters, damp but not cold enough to kill stuff, that caused the potato famine, which caused the Irish culture to move to the Americas.

All of these things were swirling around because native Americans burned the living hell out of everything. They didn't do it out of spite. They did it because it was the right thing to do. That's what they understood. This is not unusual to just North America. South America did the same thing. In the Amazon, there's a theory going now that the Amazon basin was a managed forest by native Americans, and these gigantic fires that we've been seeing coming out of Australia, the Aboriginal culture which has been there for 55,000 years, was all forcibly removed from their lands and put into European culture, made to be Europeanized.

So they're not out burning like they did. They're not out living in the land like they did. They're so far removed from it. But if you don't burn, the duff gets deeper and deeper and then it catches on fire. And when it does, it's devastating. That's what we are, in my limited experience but opinion, about what has recently happened in Australia is because they just stopped allowing burns to take place. Then when one catches, it just gets out of control fast. Happens in the American West every year, and we're surprised, "Oh my gosh, Brad Pitt's house burned down." Who cares?

Build your house in sagebrush, you might as well build it on a funeral fire because it's going to go up. Sooner or later it's going to go up. So by managing with fire here at the park, we've been able to really knock back the non-native invasives because they don't like fire at all, because in Asia, fire was not a part of the management process. And these plants came from Asian. They don't like fire. The plants here do. They don't care about it. You can burn an Oak tree at the base and the Oak tree's like, "Yeah, whatever."

Madi: When we were removed from the environment in the ways that are so common today, and we aren't situated as close to the land, and don't take that initiative to understand it and learn about it, we don't see how that's beneficial, or how fire... We're not going to burn the park down with one fire.

Chris: But people were concerned. When we first went, I mean, we're the only organization in the City of Bowling Green that's allowed to burn like we do. No one else is allowed to burn anything. You can't even burn leaves in your backyard. We can burn down most of the park and nobody cares. And that sounds really dramatic. We're burning down the park, but the park... I just saw a picture yesterday of where the burns had gone through a forest in Australia, and it's all green and all these plants, I'm like, "So everybody calm down, okay? These plants are designed, they evolved with fire."

So to see that happen, and every year when we do a burnout here in the meadow, we have to explain with less and less emphasis. I don't know how to say it. Emphasis isn't the right word. People get a little excited when you burn in the park, but when they see how we do it and it's such an organized experience. It's not like we light a match and go home and have lunch, which by the way, every farmer in Northwest Ohio does that in the ditch out front. They light a fire in the ditch and they go eat lunch. They don't sit around and watch it. They don't call the fire department. They just go home.

We don't do that here we. We watch it till it's out and do what we can to obviously contain it. And it's never gotten out of control to the point where we've had an issue. But fire department is on site. But every time you go through there the day after, it looks like The Day After. You're too young to remember that movie. But if you want to really get scared to death, watch The Day After sometime. It's about like nuclear Holocaust. It's terrible. It's a horrible, scary movie.

But anyway, you're walking through there and there might still be wisps of smoke coming up, but it's blackened. And then, usually, because of when we burn, you have to burn when there's a high-pressure system, which is followed by a low-pressure system, usually within a day or two it starts to rain. And when it rains, and then in a week you've got green coming up all over the place. At that point we can say to people, "Look, the green is here, it's coming." We have proven ourselves over the many, many years we've done this to, now, the people in these houses, they don't get excited anymore. We let them all know we're going to be burning, but we don't get the gawkers that come over, they're like, "What's going to go wrong next?"

We had one neighbor who came over and she was really upset with me. She goes, "I smell corn huffs burning. I'm like, "We're not burning corn huffs. We're burning Oak leaves." "I don't know." I'm like, "What are you talking about? It's right there." And she goes, "Well, what are you going to do if it gets out of control?" Literally, I had my hand, and I was leaning on a firetruck in the meadow. And I'm like, "I'll just tell these guys to put it out. Calm down. We've got this under control." But fire is bad. Fire is always looked at as a bad thing.

And so, when we look at it in the environment, what's the first thing? All these people, "They've got to put it out. You've got to get that fire under control." Makes the news and the news gets excited about it. And yes, I mean, there's a lot of damage. There's a lot of people who live where

these fires are taking place. People lose everything. They lose their homes. Some people lose family members, pets. A lot of terrible things happen in fire. But if fire was allowed to manage the environment as it originally was designed to do, we wouldn't have these big fires like we do.

It sounds callous and it sounds sad, but again, Brad Pitt can go buy another house. When they tell me that... What is the town they all live in? It's in California. I'm like, "Oh God, really?" I mean, every house is a million jillion dollars. And I'm like, "Guys, you just built your houses in places that historically burned."

Madi: So you learned a lot from being out here and from your education, your experiences with nature. How do other people start to learn from nature? What kinds of things do people have to do in order to have lessons come from the natural world?

Chris: Well, I think people need to not look at the environment and not look at the forests and look at the natural environment as the enemy. They need to look at it as part of their world. And as I said earlier, it's indispensable. I can't see life without it. There are a lot of people, many, many people, who they have never been... I teach a class at the university, I talk to my students. I said, "Tell me about an experience you've had in a park." And he said, "I've never been to a park." It's like, "What?" And he's like, "Where I live there are no parks." He told me where he lived and I go, "Well, yeah. I know where you live and there are parks." He's never been to a park.

I don't even know what to say to something like that because, for me, I mean, it's a little different because I don't look at Wintergarden as a park like you might. You're a visitor here. I work here. This is my office. This is what I do for a living. But if I go to the Oak Openings, for me, that's heaven because I don't have to do anything there. I don't look at it and go, "Oh my gosh, look at all the work we have to do on Monday," where I look at this park and if I go for a walk, I know the staff are like, "Oh my God, he went for a walk, which means he's going to come back with a list of things to do." And they're right.

Like today, I mean, we're expecting 51 degrees in February on Sunday, and it's supposed to be sunny out. It's supposed to be sunny tomorrow on 48. We need to get the garbage cans empty today because if we don't empty them today, they're going to be overflowing by Sunday, because there are going to be so many people here. I will tell you now, I mean, it's a beautiful day today. It's going to be about 45 degrees. I know by four o'clock this place is going to be crawling with people. And that's a great thing because people can't live without this park. And so, I think, to answer your question or maybe kind of clarify that more, is that people have to be able to understand that the natural world is just as much part of their life as going to the grocery store. It's got to be that important to you.

I think, for the most part, younger people feel that way. But I do fear that if younger people don't value it, then what will happen to it in the future? There has to be a healthy balance between the environment and your electronic devices. I've had people try to convince me that Pokemon Go is a good way to get people into the park, but I just don't buy it because they're looking down at their hand the whole time and then they leave. So they're not real, and then once they catch their little thing that they're trying to catch, their little Pokemon guy, then they leave. I mean, they

could do that in a mall, or they can do that in a shopping center, or a parking lot. I mean, it doesn't necessarily have to be a park like this.

So I think that the more we can do to get people to be involved and what we do is we definitely try to do that. We worked with kids throughout the community and get them out here, and they have had a hand in planting plants and removing non-native invasives. And so, it's extremely important to them because they'll come back and they'll say, "You see that field of lupine? I planted that. Now, they may have planted two or three of them, but, hey, listen, they planted that. And that's good because they feel a sense of pride and ownership in the environment. And I think we have to get that through to people that we have to feel like this is a part of our life. We can't live without this.

If you ask any of these people that you've seen walking by, pull them aside. Why are you here? Why are you here? They're going to say, "I can't live without it. I've got to have Wintergarden. I've got to have my daily dose. If I don't get it, I just can't live with myself." And I'm not kidding. It's amazing, the stories you hear from the people that are walking through our park. And this park wasn't here 20 years ago. I mean, it was, but it wasn't used like it is now. You ask them, they will tell you flat out, "I can't live without it."

Just recently there was a thing on Facebook on one of the Facebook pages for Bowling Green just in general. And it said, "What is it that makes Bowling Green special to you?" And Wintergarden Park was reeled off I can't even tell you how many times, and not City Park, no offense to my friends at City Park, and not the community center, no offense to them, and not Carter park, no offense there. But Wintergarden came up time and time and time and time and time again. Now, it's a random survey. It's people that are on Facebook. I don't know if that makes any difference, but the ultimate end point for me is that this is an incredibly important place because we've managed it in a way to make it accessible and available so that people can all come here and feel that they're a part of it.

Madi: In all of the community efforts as well, as you were saying earlier, of the people that invest their time and energy and love to this place-

Chris: And money. I mean, the City of Bowling Green does not have a line item to buy land. So when land comes up for available purchase, we have to find the money from the goodness of the hearts of the people in the community to give more than their tax base. And we've already come up with over a hundred thousand dollars for the land that we're planning to buy that's next door. We have a ways to go, but I don't doubt for a second that we won't have difficulty getting the full amount. We've done it. We've done it in the past. We'll do it again.

Madi: And continuing to manage this place to be accessible, to be a learning environment, to be a place where people can see nature as part of their world is really important in the time where we live now, where it's so easy to be removed from nature. Yet this place makes it so easy for people to be immersed in nature as a way to combat that huge problem that we're facing today.

Chris: Just getting people outside I think is just the most important thing. I don't care if you're out here for a walk with your friend or you're out here to birdwatch, or you're out here to go for a

run. I don't care why you're here. I mean, a lot of people come here for a lot of reasons, to heal. This is a great healing spot for a lot of people. I've come across people more than once in my 20 years here, of people sitting on a bench crying. And I always ask, "Is everything okay? I'm with the parks. Is everything okay?" "Yes, it's okay. I'm just going through a tough time right now." And I'm like, "Look, I'm right around the corner here in the park building. If there's anything you need, just let me know."

I came across a man who had severe PTSD because his daughter had been killed in a car accident. It was about a year prior to that, and he was just laying down with his head like face down on the trail with his hands over the back of his head, like just kind of cowering. I went out and sat and talked with him and it turned out that [inaudible 00:37:54] flight helicopter flew over going to the hospital, and that's the last thing he saw when his daughter was taken away from the crash scene. And so, people come here for lots of reasons. And my job isn't just to be the nature guy, but also, "Hey, I'm here to help you. If you need help with something, let's sit down and talk." And I sat with him until he calmed down, and I said, "I need to let you know the police are on their way, but they're just here to check. That's all they're coming for.

He's like, "I'm feeling a lot better. Thank you so much for just listening." If that's all it takes, and that guy will always come to this park. He loves it here. I'm sure he's been here since, and he'll continue to come here as long as he can. It's the same with kids. I mean, this is their park. This is their place. It's the same with young adults. It's one of the reasons why people want to move to Bowling Green. I know a woman that her husband was relocated to BGSU, and he had a couple of offers from different universities. And she came here, and he really wanted to come here. She goes, "Let me check it out." She goes, "The only reason I'm saying yes is because Wintergarden Park is right around from her house.

They were coming from a fairly rural area and she's here twice a day. I know her. Twice a day, I always see her walking her dog. And then there's a third time her dog walks, and that's what their son. So the dogs are here three times a day, and it's that important to them. It becomes a part of our life. I think that if anybody ever uttered the words, "We need to sell Wintergarden Park to save the city's skin because the city is in the red so deep," I think there would be a riot. It would be interesting to watch because it would not be pretty.

People really, really love this place, and I'm very humble that I had a hand in it because I'm only one of many, many people that had a hand in this place, without the many community members and university students who I consider community members as well. And kids who have done their Eagle Scout projects or scout groups that have come and pulled out that goddamn garlic mustard and just continue to do so as we move into the future. I'll tell you, I mean, it really is a community effort to make this place what it is.

Madi: And it'll be a community effort as long as the city exists, I feel-

Chris: God, I hope so.

Madi: ... because it is so important to so many people.

Chris: Well, one of the deals that we had to make with the new land that we're getting is in order for the organization, which is the Black Swamp Conservancy, to help us up getting the grants that we need to buy it. One of the stipulations is that the park, the entire park, has to be put into a conservation easement, which will solidify that protection forever. There are parks, just because it's a park, and our current president has done something very recently that I've never seen a president do, which was take park land and move it back into private ownership. I've never seen that happen before, so I hope that's not a trend, when we have public lands, that those public lands need to be maintained in perpetuity. The conservation easement sees to it that it does.

And I just, as a quick note, 20 years ago I tried to put a conservation easement on this property, pardon me. The powers that be at the time said, "No, we can't do that because we would be tying the hands of a future city council," which is basically the nice say way of saying, "If we have to sell it, we're going to sell it." That was shocking to me, that it was such a fight. Now it's given. It's going to happen. And so, I can leave my job here knowing that for 20 some years I put into this place, that it's protected, that it's bigger than I could possibly imagine, and that the non-native invasive species have been removed, and the public loves this park more than any other park in the city and will do whatever they can to protect it.

I hope that somebody that's in my shoes for the next 20 some years will also continue the work that we've done here and not waver from thinking, "Oh, you know what you should do, is put in soccer fields," or something, which with the conservation easement, they won't be able to do so.

Madi: Okay. Well, this was wonderful.

Chris: Was it?

Madi: Thank you for sharing all of this. Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

Chris: No. Thanks for documenting all of this.

Madi: Yeah. Thank you.

Chris: It's kind of nice to... It's hard for those of us that when we work in the field, we forget sometimes why we got into it in the first place. And so, when Cinda was telling me, she goes, "Well, Madi's going to ask you all these different questions." And she goes, "She's going to ask you about your childhood." And that's when I got to think of like, "Does she really want to know about my childhood?" Like, "Okay." I mean, there's a reason why I got into this field, and there's a reason why I have a cabin in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan on an Island in Lake Huron. There's a reason I have that. I would have never ever bothered to have that had my family not gone to the Upper Peninsula, Michigan, had my grandpa not taken me to Drummond Island, all of those things.
But when I get to my cabin, it's just the most amazing place because it's quiet. The smell there. Again, it's that sensory kind of... There's nothing like hiking down to Lake Huron in July and the sun is hot, but the air is cold, and the smell of the Balsam firs just intoxicating, and you stop and you breathe that in. When do we do that now? We don't breathe in anything because we're

hurrying. Hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry, run, run, run, run, run. And no matter how much we love the environment...

Quite honestly, I've gotten away from the environment. I don't have the time to do the kinds of things. Life changes. I'm married, I have two boys, our lives are busy. They're very busy. The boys do like the outdoor environment. They like going to the cabin. It's their cabin too. They told me I'm not allowed to ever sell it. And so their environmental ethic, but they know. They just know by example from their mom and me, that there are certain things you just don't do. They know that you don't just cut trees down for the sake of cutting them down, and you don't just do this, and you don't throw garbage out the window. And if it's a can laying in the road up there, you pick up the can and you throw it away, or we take it to the recycling trailer.

So by example, I think by the time my kids have grandkids, I think that the ethic in the environment will be far greater even than it is today. We've planted the seeds. I mean, the boomers ahead of me planted the seeds, and they taught me and I taught you, and you're going to teach your kids, and your kids will teach theirs, and it kind of keeps going. But the effort becomes less and less because it becomes, "This is how you just do it," instead of, "Why are we recycling again?" Or, "Why are we doing this?" Yeah. Anyway, thanks for asking me this stuff.

Madi: Yeah.

Chris: Made me think.

Madi: Thank you. That's good.

Chris: And now somebody else is going to make me...

APPENDIX C. COPYRIGHT PERMISSION: FAIR USE

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Figure 1.1: Aerial Photograph of Fort Meigs Historic Site, 2022. Source: Snapshot taken of Google Maps, Oct 23, 2022.

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Figure 1.2: Second Aerial Photograph of Fort Meigs Historic Site, 2022. Source: Snapshot taken of Google Maps, Oct 23, 2022.

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