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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WILD ABOUT WILDFLOWERS? RARE SNOW TRILLIUM AND 75 OTHER SPECIES ARE ABOUT TO BLOOM IN GREENE COUNTY!

After a cold and snowy winter, the sight of wildflowers blooming is a spring tonic for the soul and Greene County has just what the doctor ordered. There are over 4,000 acres of parks and nature preserves that offer a constantly changing floral display from February through September. But there is no better time for viewing than in the next several weeks. Visitors can discover these subtle treasures on their own or with the help of knowledgeable naturalists.

Two thousand of these acres are comprised of Glen Helen Nature Preserve, John Bryan State Park, and Clifton Gorge Nature Preserve. Located north of Xenia, these three areas form a continuous band of wooded sanctuary along the limestone cliffs of the Little Miami River between the villages of Yellow Springs and Clifton. Glen Helen in particular has a loyal following of wildflower fans. One eager individual showed up at the Glen Helen Nature Center one snowy Saturday and asked where he could see the snow trillium. The volunteer on duty, Susan Stiles, told him that he would have to wait until the snow was gone. According to Ms. Stiles, "The snow trillium will be blooming anytime now. Certainly by the middle of April." While the snow trillium is considered rare or endangered in many areas, Bob Whyte, Executive Director of the Glen

Helen Ecology Institute, reported that last year the slopes of the Glen were white with them. Snow trillium (*Trillium nivale*), also found in John Bryan State Park and the Clifton Gorge, are smaller than the large-flowered trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*) that will show up a bit later in April and linger into May. There are two other trillium to watch for. Nodding trillium (*Trillium flexipes*) make their appearance in April and also linger into May. They can be differentiated from the other two white trillium because the flower droops from the leaves. Toad trillium (*Trillium sessile*) have maroon to brown flowers that grow stalkless from the leaves. They make their brief appearance in April. The official Glen Helen wildflower checklist includes 68 species. According to Scott Fletcher, Park Manager of John Bryan, there are 17 documented flowers that are on either the endangered or threatened species lists. The best trail for flowers in John Bryan is the Pittsburgh-Cincinnati Stage Trail. Hikers should be aware that picking flowers in John Bryan or any preserves or parks in Greene County is illegal. “An old botany teacher of mine had a saying: ‘Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints, and kill nothing but time,’” said Fletcher.

With one exception these trillium can also be found at Indian Mound Reserve, the Narrows Reserve, and Crooked Creek Nature Sanctuary, all managed by the Greene County Park District. According to Naturalist Supervisor Christine Barnett, “Indian Mound is the crown jewel for wildflowers in Greene County. The diversity is just incredible.” Located on U.S. 42 south of Cedarville on Massie’s Creek, there are over 75 species of wildflowers in this park. The snow trillium does not occur at the Narrows Reserve. The greatest concentration of wildflowers in the area is probably Crooked Creek Nature Sanctuary. A permit is required to visit the sanctuary but can be obtained at no cost at the Greene County Park District office in Xenia. This concentration is the result of the efforts of previous owners who kept a summer home there and bequeathed the property to the Park District.

Knowing the names and natural histories of wildflowers can enhance the experience. Once the blooms come out, Glen Helen Nature Preserve offers guided wildflower walks on Thursdays in April at 4:30pm and Saturdays in April and May at 1:00pm. On April 23rd at 7:00pm, Robert L. Henn, author of *Wildflowers of*

Ohio, will give a talk on wildflowers at the Glen Helen Building. The Greene County Park District has a Spring Wildflower Stroll scheduled for Sunday May 4th at 2pm. A Greene County Parks Wildflower Guide prepared by Greene County Naturalist Shannon Nave and illustrated by Maureen Deis is available by stopping by at the Narrows Reserve Interpretive Center near Xenia. This complimentary guide gives flower descriptions, bloom times, and the names of the trails where the blooms occur.

Other areas in Greene County to visit to enjoy wildflowers are the Beaver Creek Wetlands, Huffman Prairie Flying Field (Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park), Spring Valley Wildlife Area (Ohio Division of Natural Resources), and Sugarcreek MetroPark (Five Rivers MetroParks). For driving directions to any of these parks, contact the Greene County Convention and Visitors Bureau at (800) 733-9109.

For more information contact the following.

Greene County Convention and Visitors Bureau – (800) 733-9109 ~ www.greenecountyohio.org

Glen Helen Nature Preserve -- (937) 767-7375 ~ <http://www.antioch.edu/glenhelen.shtml>

John Bryan State Park – (937) 767-1274 ~ <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/parks/parks/jhnbryan.htm>

Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve – (937) 767-7947
<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/dnap/location/clifton.html>

Greene County Park District – (937) 562-7440 ~ www.co.greene.oh.us/parks

The Narrows Reserve Interpretive Center – 2575 Indian Ripple Rd., Xenia (937) 429-9590

Beaver Creek Wetlands – (937) 426-4055 ~ www.beavercreekwetlands.org

Huffman Prairie Flying Field – (937) 225-7705

Spring Valley Wildlife Area – (937) 372-9261

Sugarcreek Metropark -- (937) 278-8731 ~ http://www.metroparks.org/Facilities/Sugarcreek_MetroPark/sugarcreek_metropark.html

Reporter's Notes

To request a copy of the Greene County Parks Wildflower Guide,
to request a copy of the attached image,
or to arrange for a visit to any of the sites mentioned above,
contact Alan Raney at the Greene County Convention and Visitors Bureau (937) 320-9751.

Dates for Glen Helen Wildflower Walks

Thursdays (4:30pm) April 10 and 17 ~ Meet at Trailside Museum, 405 Corry St, Yellow Springs
Saturdays (1:00pm) April 12, 19, and 26; May 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31 ~ Meet at Trailside Museum

Wildflower Talk by Robert L. Henn

Wednesday (7:00pm) April 23 ~ at Glen Helen Building, 405 Corry St, Yellow Springs. (Nature shop will be open and copies of the authors book, *Wildflowers of Ohio* will be available.)

The following are the contacts for the principle parks mentioned in this release.

Christine Barnett, Naturalist Supervisor, Greene County Park District, Xenia (937) 429-9590

Bob Whyte, Executive Director, Glen Helen Ecology Institute, Yellow Springs (937) 767-7375

Scott Fletcher, Park Manager, John Bryan State Park, Yellow Springs (937) 767-1274

Tim Snyder, District Preserve Manager, Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve, (937) 767-7947