

# Beastly BANNER

COLUMBUS  
**ZOO**  
AND AQUARIUM

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium  
Membership Magazine, Spring 2014

## SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

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A Unique Experience for Every Visit Pg. 5

Join the Family Photo Safari Pg. 11

Jack Hanna's Wild Countdown Pg. 13

Coming May 2014 at Zoombezi Bay - Bahoona Lagoon! Details on page 6





LEFT: Adult Monarch butterfly resting on swamp milkweed

## Sustainability in Prisons Project:

Building capacity for conservation.

by **JOE GREATHOUSE**  
Director of Conservation Science  
and **SHANA BYRD**  
Director of Restoration Ecology

Last winter, we were granted the opportunity to participate in a unique program with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections known as the Sustainability in Prisons Project (SPP). This creative program enables participants to conduct activities during their rehabilitation that will enable them to improve their lives as well as contribute to the benefit of our local society. When we were approached about this unique opportunity, we brainstormed to determine how our conservation goals could coincide with the goals of the SPP, and we were enthusiastic to have the program's support with the following projects:

BELOW: Monarch butterfly larva munches on a milkweed plant.



**Eastern Hellbender Conservation**  
As part of the Ohio Hellbender Partnership we are participating in a program in which hellbenders are raised in human care at *the Wilds* as well as at the Toledo Zoo. These individuals are reintroduced in length and are territorial, so we need to have many aquaria available to separate individuals into for growth prior to reintroduction. Members of the Ohio Hellbender Partnership met with employees and participants from Marion Correctional Institution (MCI) to plan care guidelines for rearing hellbenders. The Toledo Zoo provided training, and several hellbenders that were being reared at their facility for the establishment of a group of hellbenders are now being managed by the participants in the SPP program at MCI. Employees from the Toledo Zoo and *the Wilds* monitor the hellbenders on a weekly basis with daily care being provided by the participants in the SPP.

Another threat to hellbender populations in the local region involves the reduction in the number of available stone shelters in streams and rivers impacted by sedimentation. In order to provide additional habitat in local streams and rivers, the West Virginia Division of Wildlife has provided grant funding to *the Wilds* to study the impact of adding in-stream concrete shelters to these streams. Participants at MCI have assisted by creating boxes for this project. Biologists from *the Wilds* placed the boxes in the stream and reintroduced nine hellbenders within these boxes to determine the habitat use and reintroduction success after additional shelters have been added. We have been tracking the movement of these individuals and will continue to do so over the coming months. We provide our partners in the SPP photos and video of the conservation effort to ensure that everybody participating in the project gets to experience the outcomes of the project.





Angela Adams, Principal, and Jeff Carpenter, Asst. Principal at SCC Hocking with the milkweed grown by Barry Free and his students.

### Monarch Butterfly Conservation

Recent studies have documented the decline of the monarch butterfly and measures estimate that the 2013 population will be the lowest recorded since scientists began monitoring the colony in 1979. The primary culprits are due to loss of wintering habitat from deforestation in Mexico and the decline of open habitats that support milkweed species along the monarch's migratory route. Milkweed is critical to the monarch's life cycle and serves as the exclusive food source and host plant for the butterfly's larval stage. In addition to larval food, the flowers provide energy for adults as successive generations of the brood take flight to southern wintering grounds. Efforts are underway through programs such as Project MonarchWatch, which designate milkweed habitats as registered "monarch waystations." *The Wilds'* certified waystation, called the Butterfly Habitat, is considered colossal in size – underscoring how important it is to monarch conservation. Participants in the SPP program at MCI, Southeastern Correctional Complex in Nelsonville, Madi-

son Correctional Institution in London and Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville have grown trays of milkweed in their greenhouse facilities for plantings at *the Wilds* to help provide additional foraging resources for monarchs. This national conservation program will help make a substantial impact for the delicate creatures that depend on the restoration of these habitats.

This cooperative program is a creative opportunity for those in rehabilitation to make a positive contribution to species in need of conservation. We are looking forward to additional projects that will further enhance the Sustainability in Prisons Program and continue building the capacity of all those involved.

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# NEW HELLBENDER CONSERVATION CENTER

The new Hellbender Conservation Center at *the Wilds* will feature windows for guests to get a glimpse at some of the conservation projects in which *Wilds* scientists are participating.

## GUESTS CAN VIEW...

Eastern hellbenders being reared in human care for future reintroduction efforts in the local region, some of the American burying beetles that are being reared for future reintroduction at *the Wilds*, and a video monitor that will share the stories of what scientists at *the Wilds* are doing for hellbender and burying beetle conservation.

## WITHIN THE CENTER...

...will be series of aquaria with specialized filters used for the rearing of hellbender eggs, larvae, and juveniles destined for reintroduction as well as refrigerated shakers used for providing optimal natural conditions for egg incubation. The goal of the hellbender program at *the Wilds* is to maintain a four-year rotation of up to 250 hellbenders at a time, and the facility has the capacity to host other smaller species of conservation concern.

NEW SUMMER 2014