



# SUCCESS STORIES

REPORTING EXAMPLES OF OUR PROGRESS IN CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE



## Wayne National Forest Dedicates Ora E. Anderson Nature Trail

*On October 13th the Wayne National Forest dedicated the Ora E. Anderson Nature Trail at the Rutherford Wetland.*



Dale Dalrymple on the trail he helped envision.

It was a perfect fall day for the dedication of the Ora E. Anderson Nature Trail. The tent on the hill overlooking the Rutherford Wetland had someone in almost every chair giving rapt attention to the speakers and to the beautiful view as the fog lifted from the water in front of them. The event was a dedication / ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of the new Ora E. Anderson Nature Trail near Carbon Hill held on Saturday, October 13, 2007.

The new 1/2 mile nature trail was the first wildlife-viewing trail accessible to persons of all abilities on the Athens Ranger District. Along the trail, which was constructed on an abandoned railroad bed, were signs displaying poems by Anderson. Each poem was illustrated with an original watercolor art by Barbara Sheriff Kostohryz of Athens. The trail also included interpretive panels and a brochure to educate the public on the benefits of

wetland resources.

Ora E. Anderson was a journalist, conservationist, naturalist, and artist. He was well loved in the community and when he passed away in August 2006 at the age of ninety-four many people came forward and asked what could

be done in his honor. Earlier Dale Dalrymple, a seasonal employee who uses a wheelchair had suggested the possibility earlier of developing an accessible trail along an abandoned stretch of railroad bed adjacent to the Rutherford Wetland. Dalrymple's vision and Anderson's love of birding and the outdoors seemed to meld into the perfect project.

"Everyone wanted to help," said Mary Redan, Forest Supervisor of the Wayne and a friend of Andersons. "When we started looking for partners, we almost had trouble finding a table big enough to fit everyone around. He was just such a dear man who touched so many people's lives."

The event was attended by over a hundred people with Congressman Ralph Regula (R-16th), a friend of Anderson was the keynote speaker. Cindy Cunningham, a field representative for Congressman Zack Space (D-18th) was in attendance to read a Congressional Proclamation on behalf of Congressman Space. Mary O. Reddan and District Ranger DeVela Clark also spoke. Dale Dalrymple, whose idea sparked the vision, was on hand to participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The Ward Township Volunteer Fire Department served food and were available to provide medical attention if needed. They also helped with parking in nearby Carbon Hill. Hocking College provided shuttles to bring people to the site. In addition to the beauty of the wetland, inspirational poems and artwork, and friends and family shared warm stories about Anderson. A bird carver was on hand with some of his carvings, and had an activity for children making bird prints in clay.

The post master from Carbon Hill had a special cancellation stamp made for the day and was on hand to cancel commemorative post cards and stationary on the wetland and trail. The Eastern National Forest Interpretive Association (ENFIA) outlet was setup to sell field guides, Ora's book and DVD and did a brisk business. At the close of business ENFIA had sold \$261 worth of items at the event! Naturalists were on also on hand to give guided hikes after the program to anyone who was interested.

The trail is already paying dividends, shortly after the dedication, the Forest received a note from a man who explained he had multiple sclerosis and used a wheelchair. He had previously been an avid hunter and outdoorsman but had found few trails that were handicapped accessible. He made a few suggestions on how the Rutherford area could be made more accommodating to people in wheelchairs but thanked the Forest for the opportunities provided for his and his wife to get out and enjoy the out-of-doors.

There are future phases planned to expand the trail and the facilities provided at the site and the partners keep lining up to help. The spark of one man's life didn't go out with his death. People are still looking for ways to acknowledge what his life meant to them and want to help with this project which will eventually provide an accessible trail, benches, viewing blind, boardwalk, and picnic area for people of all abilities. We think Ora would be proud.

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