

USDA Forest Service Botany in the News

Lichen and Bryophyte Groups Visit Wayne National Forest

Who (*partners*): Wayne NF, Ohio Moss and Lichen Association members, Lichen and moss experts throughout the eastern US, herbaria (New York Botanical Garden, Philadelphia Museum of natural History, University of Nebraska, Kent State university, Ohio State University.)

What (*species*): Lichens and Bryophytes (mosses, liverworts, and hornworts)

When: Spring 2006

Where: Region 9, Ohio

How: The visiting groups spent several hours combing the area and collecting specimens which were taken back to the Shawnee State Park lodge where microscopes were set up for identification. One of the goals of the workshop was to develop lists of lichens and bryophytes for each area visited. The Symmes Creek lichen list contained more species than any of the other sites visited. A total of 132 species were recorded, 16 are new county records, and one new state record. Two endangered lichens were also found at the site. The bryophyte list was equally impressive: 68 moss species; 18 liverworts and one hornwort. No Ohio area of equal size has ever reported this level of bryophyte diversity.

Why: The Symmes Creek area is recognized as a hotspot for moss and lichen diversity as well as a premier habitat for these taxa. The area contains a variety of tree bark, soil and rock habitats. A small cove harboring a waterfall had as many bryophyte species as would be expected in an area 10 times its size. The proximity to Symmes Creek may boost the relative humidity of the site, a definite plus for these non-vascular plants which do not possess roots for water extraction.

Contact: Chad Kirschbaum, Botanist, (740) 534-6500

