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The Olander Park System's *Artists in the Parks* Program Final Report

The Olander Park System (TOPS) requested funding from the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association Foundation (OPRAF) to present a program titled *Artists in The Parks*. In conjunction with funding from OPRAF, the Ohio Arts Council, and The Sylvania Area Community Improvement Corporation, this project connected northwest Ohio-area artists, regional scientists, and conservationists to educate the public about the rare natural treasures in Sylvania, specifically the Oak Openings habitats found there.

These connections occurred during meetings at multiple locations within the Oak Openings Region. Collaborators participated in guided walks in Sylvan Prairie Park (TOPS) and Oak Openings Metropark (Metroparks Toledo) about specific ecosystems unique to the Oak Openings region. A second hike at Kitty Todd Preserve (TNC) included a general ecological overview of the region. The artists joined scientists for a lecture on the geology of the region, and a discussion of habitat management, particularly controlled burns. Building on these experiences, the artists immersed themselves in the parks, then created artwork that reacted to the parks' habitats, their ecology, and the science.

Each artist presented their work in progress to the public at the annual Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative (OOGRI) meeting at TOPS.

We achieved most of our project outcomes and outputs. There were four scheduled meetings between artists and scientists/conservationists, facilitated by TOPS. There was a presentation of the artists' work in progress in February at the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative annual meeting at Olander Park (TOPS), open to the public, attended by twenty-five members of the community. We surveyed meeting attendees and 90% said the presentation exposed them to new points of view, and made them want to know more. The artists exhibited their work at the Manor House at Wildwood Metropark (Metroparks Toledo), during Blue Week, a week in May of educational programs about Oak Openings.

While we did not collect written reports by the participating artists, we did have an informal discussion at the end of the project. All artists said they learned new things about Oak Openings, and that the conversations with conservationists changed their viewpoint and working process with the project. One artist said "I was able to make connections I hadn't before, because of the talks with the scientists, which directly informed my work. This was a unique way to collaborate - I hope I have a chance to work in this way in the future."

Probably one of the most challenging aspects of this project was scheduling the meetings with conservationists and artists. Not all of the artists were able to come to all four of the meetings and discussions - one artist attended all of them, and the other

two artists each attended two meetings. We were able to film one of the presentations for later reference by the artists.

While we did have an exhibition of the work, it was for a very short duration. If we were to do this project again we would try to find a space where we could install the work for a longer period in order to have more people view it.

The public activities were free and accessible. The presentation of work in progress took place in an ADA-accessible building. While the historic Manor House is not ADA accessible, it was installed during a well-publicized, free week of events. The activities were promoted to the OOGRI partner organizations, on TOPS social media and on the OOGRI website.

This project impacted participants (artists and conservationists) as well as members of the public who attended events. One attendee at the presentation said she appreciated seeing artists' perspective on the conservation work of her organization. An artist remarked that this process changed her way of working. One of the conservationists told an artist that, "Your art will inspire interest, empathy, and stewardship."

Art in the Parks

This week we celebrate Blue Week in the Oak Openings Region. To highlight the amazing natural history in our area and engage a variety of audiences, **The Olander Park System** (TOPS) connected northwest Ohio-area artists to TOPS with regional scientists and conservationists in order to educate the public about the rare natural treasures in Sylvania.

The artists, scientists and conservationists engaged in a series of conversations over six months, facilitated by TOPS. The artists immersed themselves in the parks during that time and created artwork that reacts to the parks' habitats, their ecology and the science.

By working with artists to create science-informed art, we aim to educate and engage the public about the distinctiveness of the Oak Openings Region, and our local natural treasures.

Thank you to the following individuals and agencies for their participation in and funding of this project:

Lee Fearnside earned a MFA in Photography from Rhode Island School of Design, a MS in Arts Administration from Drexel University and a BA from Smith College. Her art has been exhibited in galleries and museums across the country, including Toledo Museum of Art, New York Hall of Science, National Museum of Wildlife Art and the Reece Museum. <https://www.chimeraprojects.art/>

Barbara WF Miner is Professor and Chair in the Department of Art at the University of Toledo, in Toledo, OH. Her mixed media sculptures and installation works, informed by the nexus of human/nature interaction, and the practice of meditative repetition, have been exhibited nationally (Maine to California) and internationally (Sweden and Poland) in over 50 exhibitions. <https://www.barbarawfminer.com/>

Simone Spruce works predominantly in the medium of graphite pencil, but also works in painting, installation, theater and poetry. She has been a teaching artist for over 40 years to various groups which include K-12, At-Risk Youth, Adults, Seniors and the Developmentally Disabled. She received her MFA at Vermont College of Fine Arts. <https://www.simonespruce.com/>

Maureen Bogdanski is the Preserve Manager of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, where she manages invasive species control through herbicide, mowing, and prescribed fire.

Todd Crail, PhD, is a Distinguished Lecturer in the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of Toledo. He is an ecologist and natural historian covering broad topics from non-game fish and mussels to landscape management and reintroduction. His professional focus is classroom instruction and works to foster undergraduate engagement through field experiences that solve local environmental issues.

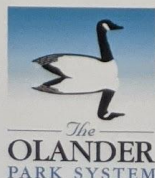
Tim Fisher, PhD, is a Professor of geology at the University of Toledo, Department of Environmental Sciences. Locally, Dr. Fisher's work with students in the Toledo area has focused on the sequence of glacial lakes in the Lake Erie basin including the Oak Openings Region, a former beach with sand dunes on which some of the TOPS properties sit. He has published over 75 peer-reviewed papers, won several research awards, and is a Fellow of the Geological Society of America.

Denise Gehring is the retired director of environmental programs at the Metroparks of Toledo Area. Currently, she works with the Ohio Natural Area and Preserves as a field botanist, the National Wildlife Federation as a Sacred Grounds advisor, serves with the Oak Openings Native Plant Working Group, and is a co-organizer, author and designer of Wild Ones Native Beauty program supported by the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust.

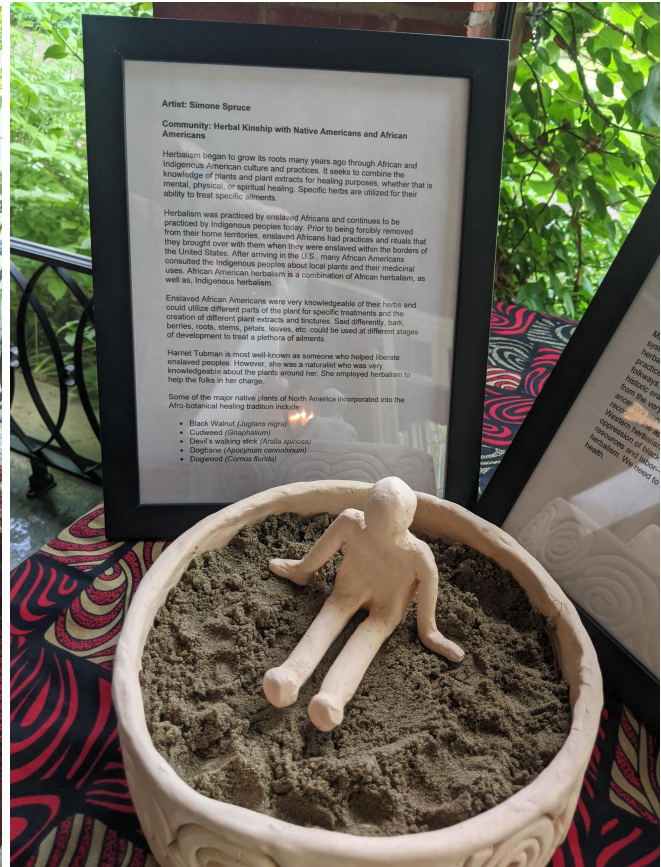
The Ohio Arts Council: Art in the Parks is made possible in part by state tax dollars allocated by the Ohio Legislature to the Ohio Arts Council (OAC). The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically.

Ohio Parks and Recreation Association Foundation: The OPRA Foundation, the fundraising ally of Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA), undertakes research, educates critical audiences, and collaborates with allied partners to further the cause of public parks and recreation.

Sylvania Area Community Improvement Corporation: The SACIC has been a force in the community for 45 years with a history of economic development programs, community enhancement projects/studies and business assistance support. The SACIC provides multiple services with the focus on enhancing the vibrancy of the Sylvania area community.



Artist: Simone Spruce



Artist: Simone Spruce

Community: Herbal Kinship with Native Americans and African Americans

Herbalism began to grow its roots many years ago through African and Indigenous American culture and practices. It seeks to combine the mental, physical, or spiritual healing. Specific herbs are utilized for their ability to treat specific ailments.

Herbalism was practiced by enslaved Africans and continues to be practiced by Indigenous peoples today. Prior to being forcibly removed from their home territories, enslaved Africans had practices and rituals that they brought over with them when they were enslaved within the borders of the United States. After arriving in the U.S., many African Americans consulted the Indigenous peoples about local plants and their medicinal uses. African American herbalism is a combination of African herbalism, as well as, Indigenous herbalism.

Enslaved African Americans were very knowledgeable of their herbs and could utilize different parts of the plant for specific treatments and the creation of different plant extracts and tinctures. Said differently, bark, berries, roots, stems, petals, leaves, etc. could be used at different stages of development to treat a plethora of ailments.

Harriet Tubman is most well-known as someone who helped liberate enslaved peoples. However, she was a naturalist who was very knowledgeable about the plants around her. She employed herbalism to help the folks in her charge.

Some of the major native plants of North America incorporated into the Afro-botanical healing tradition include:

- Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*)
- Catweeds (*Galium aparine*)
- Devil's walking stick (*Aralia nudicaulis*)
- Dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

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Artist : Barbara Miner



Artist: Lee Fernside



Yellow Frogs
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Black Oak Leafhopper
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Longhorn Wren
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The Oak Openings region is a rare ecosystem the Nature Conservancy considers one of the 200 “last great places on earth.” This region has at least 23 state listed, threatened and endangered, plants and animals, all of which, with their more common companions, rely on complexity for survival. The interdependence of species offers opportunities for conversations about interspecies connections, habitats and conservation.

Oak Openings is home to 8 of Ohio’s 11 bat species, migrating songbirds, a salamander who lays its eggs underground rather than in wetlands, and so much more. For a relatively small area (130 square miles) it’s incredibly biodiverse – it is dense with life. It’s also a region that is threatened by over-development, water pollution, habitat fragmentation and a host of other human-made problems that are creating devastating loss.

Many of these native species exist in close proximity to people, and this leads to both more frequent opportunities to observe and enjoy wildlife as well as an increase in human-wildlife conflict. Resolution of these conflicts becomes a moral as well as a management issue, as our attitudes about specific plants and animals as more “cuddly” or “beautiful” versus “ugly” or “a nuisance” impact our decisions about how to respond to them.

Each of these 6 pieces represents a plant community and species that are (or were) found within it. Each plant community has species that are listed as endangered, threatened, or species of concern by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Special thanks to the conservationists and scientists who shared their knowledge, and to Erika Buri for making the project possible.

Lee Fearnside



Item	Expense	Income	In-Kind	Notes
artist fees	1500			3 artists @\$500 ea
scientist fees	2000			4 @ \$500 ea
supplies	250			potential signage, incl gallery, possible artist supplies
marketing			300	TOPS Newsletter, print and digital marketing (existing channels)
TOPS admin			700	22 hours of directors time
project coordinator	500			grant writing, evaluation and reporting (10), coordinate with artists (10), catalog project management (5), exhibition management (production, installation, de-install, 25) - estimated 40 hours @\$25/hr
space rental for presentations			2000	Manor House, Metroparks Toledo
Ohio Arts Council ArtStart Grant		748		artist fees
Sylvnaia Area Community Improvment Corporation, Community Grant		1000		artist fees
OPRA Foundation Program Development Grant (pending)		2500		
Totals	4250	4248	3000	



2022 BLUE WEEK SCHEDULE

Blue Week Kickoff Day – Sunday, May 15th

- 9 am - 1 pm [Public Archery Shoot – Spring Bear & Turkey](#) [TOMAHAWK ARCHERS CLUB, MI](#)
Have you ever wanted to learn archery? Join us to learn one of the greatest hobbies of all time as we shoot a field course that winds through The Oak Openings. No experience or equipment is necessary. Tomahawk Archers will provide everything you need to have a fun filled experience. Kids- Free, Teens \$5, and Adults \$10. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 10 am - 12 pm [Adopt-a-Natural Area - Cub Scout Pack 27](#) [VILLAGE OF OTTAWA HILLS, OH](#)
In the Village of Ottawa Hills, Cub Scout Pack 27 will officially ‘adopt’ a parcel of Village owned floodplain through the Green Ribbon Initiative’s (GRI) Adopt-a-Natural Area program (AANA). Through this program, the troop will have an opportunity to take an active part in enhancing habitat for wildlife and native plants. Nature Conservancy (TNC) staff will work with the scouts on plant identification and management techniques and will help lead events such as invasive species removal and trash clean-ups. *NOTE: This event is only open to Cub Scout Pack 27 members.*
- 3 pm - 5 pm [Ottawa River Invasive Species Cleanup](#) [VILLAGE OF OTTAWA HILLS, OH](#)
Help kick off the Oak Openings Region Blue Week with an invasive species removal event along the Ottawa River in the Village of Ottawa Hills. Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) will provide interpretive programming on native and invasive species, water pollution and impacts to wildlife. Safety gloves and goggles and tools will be provided, as well as pizza after the event. This event is organized by ODNR Conservation Teen Advisor Council (ConTAC) and The Nature Conservancy and is supported by the Village of Ottawa Hills. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Monday, May 16th

- 9 pm - 10 pm [Nature at Night: Flower Moon](#) [SECOR METROPARK, OH](#)
Celebrate Oak Openings’ Blue Week with a walk under the light of the Flower Moon. Discover what blooms are carpeting the forest floor and learn about the nocturnal animals that call the globally rare Oak Openings Region home. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Tuesday, May 17th

- 9 am - 10:30 am [All Things Blue Walk](#) [OAK OPENINGS METROPARK, OH](#)
Discover all things blue during this year's Blue Week! Celebrate the diversity of the Oak Openings region as we will look for Wild Blue Lupine, Blue Jays, Blue Birds, Blue Racer snakes and more. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 10 am - 12 pm [Nurture the Nursery Volunteer Program](#) [J.C. REUTHINGER MEMORIAL PRESERVE, OH](#)
Help make the native plant nursery the gem of Wood County by assisting with planting and maintaining the beds. All tools provided. Training will be provided at the beginning of the program. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 6 pm - 7:30 pm [Land Management in the Oak Openings](#) [PETERSBURG, MI](#)
Join Wild Ones Oak Openings for an in-person workshop where you will learn how to identify and manage invasive plants on your land, plus how to establish a native plant community. This workshop is family friendly for those 10 years of age and up. Accessing the site involves a 1/2-mile walk; please wear long pants and closed toed shoes. This event is free, but registration is required. [REGISTER HERE](#) *Note: Directions will be emailed to registrants by May 16th.*
- 5:30 pm - 8 pm [Intro to Photography](#) [BRADNER PRESERVE, OH](#)
Interested in capturing the wonders of the outdoors in photographs, but unsure of how to use those camera settings to your advantage? Bring your camera and practice honing your skills. Program will begin with an indoor presentation followed by a practical hands-on session to help hone your skills. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Wednesday, May 18th

- 9 am - 10 am [Spot the Sparrow!](#) [OAK OPENINGS METROPARK, OH](#)
The Lark Sparrow is an endangered species here in Ohio and only visits for a short time in the spring and summer. These birds nest on the ground and occupy open grassy areas along open sandy beach ridges. Bring your binoculars or use ours as we celebrate this year's Blue Week with this beautiful bird. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 6:30 pm - 8pm [Fire and American Indians](#) [KITTY TODD NATURE PRESERVE, OH](#)
We often say the Oak Openings is a fire dependent ecosystem. Were these fires due to natural causes or did humans start them? Who was here before us and why did they burn the landscape? A presentation followed by a short walk. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Thursday, May 19th

- 7 pm - 9 pm [Nature Detective](#) [TOLEDO BOTANICAL GARDEN METROPARK, OH](#)
Come out for an evening of investigating at the Toledo Botanical Garden! We aren't going to be looking at a crime scene, but rather all the interesting signs of nature that surround us. Our walk will take a through the woodland garden, the herb garden, and places in between. Rain or shine. If it is raining, we will meet indoors at the Crosby Conference Center. Prizes will be awarded to the top nature investigators! The program is for all ages. We will meet outside the Crosby Conference Center. If you have any questions, please contact Amy Stone at 419-574-0986. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 7 pm - 9pm [A Visit to Irwin Prairie II](#) [IRWIN PRAIRIE STATE NATURE PRESERVE, OH](#)
Join the Toledo Naturalists Association and meet leader Todd Haggard at 7 pm in the Irwin Prairie parking lot on Bancroft St, ¼ mile west of Irwin Road. We will be searching for late spring migrants and listening for rails. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Visit www.oakopenings.org for more details!

Continued...

Friday, May 20th

- 10 am - 12 pm [Blue Week: Tallgrass Prairie Trek - AM](#) [OAKWOODS METROPARK, MI](#)
Join an Interpreter for a walk into our tallgrass prairie to discover and discuss some of the special plants and animals that can be found here. We will also focus on the unique history of the Oak Openings Region; and how prairies like this one are a window into the past. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 2 pm - 4 pm [Blue Week: Tallgrass Prairie Trek - PM](#) [OAKWOODS METROPARK, MI](#)
Join an Interpreter for a walk into our tallgrass prairie to discover and discuss some of the special plants and animals that can be found here. We will also focus on the unique history of the Oak Openings Region; and how prairies like this one are a window into the past. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 4 pm - 4:45 pm [What's the Buzz about Native Bees?](#) [PAT AND CLINT MAUK'S PRAIRIE, OH](#)
Join us to discover the importance of native bees in our community! Adelle Rodriguez of Stony Ridge Apiaries will share fun and fascinating native bee facts and stories. We'll also make a native bee house to take home. After the event, we invite you to take a walk along the prairie path and read our featured story trail book, Begin with a Bee! This event is free and geared towards 5–10-year-olds and their families. Registration is required – email: lrodriguez@blackswamp.org or call (419) 833-1025
- 7:30 pm - 9 pm [A Frogstastic Night: Understanding Frogs Helps Us Understand Our Environment](#) [SECOR METROPARK, OH](#)
Join Bowling Green State University graduate students and hop over to Secor Metropark for a Frogstastic Night of Fun and Learning! Kids come early (7:30pm) to play a frog lifecycle game for prizes! Later (8:00pm), you will learn the calls of the native frogs and toads that reside at the park and more about the importance of our local frogs. Then you will get to test your new knowledge in the field to find and identify frogs and toads, and adults can help inform local conservation action with a quick survey! [REGISTER HERE](#)

Saturday, May 21st

- 10 am - 4 pm [Blue Week: Plant Sale](#) [BLUE CREEK SEED NURSERY, OH](#)
Help restore nature and bring more wildlife to your yard by growing native plants sourced from the Oak Openings Region and Great Black Swamp. Proceeds go to the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative & Wild Ones programs. *Note: NO Registration required.*
- 10 am - 4 pm [Metroparks Toledo Outdoor Expo](#) [SIDE CUT METROPARK, OH](#)
At Outdoor Expo, everyone will have the opportunity to try out rock climbing, tree climbing, archery, kayaking, canoeing, mountain biking, Kids Zone and much, much more. Metroparks outdoor skills experts will be on hand to guide you as you discover your next outdoor passion – regardless of ability. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 5 pm - 6:30 pm [Jane Forsyth Preserve Opening](#) [MEET AT PARKING LOT OF DORR ST. SCHOOL, OH](#)
The dedication of the new Jane Forsyth Preserve owned by the Oak Openings Region Conservancy. Formerly called the Door and King wetland this new preserve has great potential for restoration. Learn about our preserves namesake followed by a short walk. Meet at the Door St. school parking lot. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Sunday, May 22nd

- 8 am - 10 am [Sunday Songsters](#) [HARROUN COMMUNITY PARK, OH](#)
Will you be the early bird that gets the worm? Join The Nature Conservancy's Oak Openings Restoration Manager, Pete Blank, for a walking tour to see the birds of Harroun Community Park. TNC's Oak Openings Restoration Crew is currently working in the park to control invasive plants. This tour will focus on birds of the region and the work being done to improve wildlife habitat. Plus, it's the peak of spring bird migration. Come out and see what migrating birds are passing through. Meet at the upper-level parking lot off Main St. at 8 AM. Bring binoculars if you have them. All ages are welcome. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 10 am - 4 pm [Blue Week: Plant Sale](#) [BLUE CREEK SEED NURSERY, OH](#)
Help restore nature and bring more wildlife to your yard by growing native plants sourced from the Oak Openings Region and Great Black Swamp. Proceeds go to the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative & Wild Ones programs. *Note: NO Registration required.*
- 10 am [Mute Swan Talk](#) [STERLING STATE PARK, MI](#)
Join us as we learn from the Michigan DNR Outdoor Adventure Center as they lead a guided walking tour of Sterling State Park to learn about Mute Swans, their habits, management actions and much more. [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 1 pm - 4 pm [Sandhill Crane Wetlands Grand Opening](#) [SANDHILL CRANE WETLANDS, OH](#)
Celebrate the opening of The Nature Conservancy's Sandhill Crane Wetlands by joining TNC staff for a ribbon cutting ceremony, guided site tours, and activities for kids. Be the first to enjoy the beauty of the biggest wet prairie restoration in Northwest Ohio! [REGISTER HERE](#)
- 4 pm - 6 pm [Blue Week: Lingerin Ash Training](#) [WILDWOOD PRESERVE METROPARK, OH](#)
To assist the US Forest Service with finding additional ash trees in the Oak Openings Region for their inventory of emerald ash borer surviving ash (lingering ash) we are holding a training for community volunteers and private woodland owners. This training will focus on lingering ash found in either public or private forested settings. Resources related to private woodland management will be shared, but the training will focus on the background story of lingering ash, how to identify ash trees, how to survey public areas or your own forested land, and how to identify and report lingering ash. We will cover how to report your findings with smart phone apps TreeSnap and AneCDATA. We will also walk down to the Wildwood boardwalk to see the remnant ash population. [REGISTER HERE](#)





The Olander Park System

Published by Erika Buri, Executive Director

May 19 · Toledo, OH

It's Blue Week in the Oak Openings Region, and TOPS worked with local artists, scientists and conservation professionals to facilitate an artistic collaboration. Now on display at Metroparks Toledo's manor house until tomorrow!

Thank you to artists Lee Fernside, Barbara Miner, and Simone Spruce for their artistic contributions to this exhibit.

Funding was provided in part by the Sylvania Area Community Improvement Corporation, Ohio Parks Association Foundation, and the Ohio Arts Council.

#olanderparks #metroparkstoledo #BlueWeek #oakopenings See less

— at Manor House.

Edit

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Artists In the Parks

TOPS Received Funding for Artists in Parks in 2021

Thanks to grants from the Ohio Parks And Recreation Foundation, The Sylvania Area Community Improvement Corporation and the Ohio Arts Council, TOPS was able to work with three local artists and four local scientists and conservation experts to collaborate on an exhibit displayed during the Oak Openings Regions Green Ribbon Initiative Blue Week event, May 17-21, 2022.

