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Graduate Students Work to Preserve Prairie-like Sites in Athens County

December 17, 2019

Categories: News

Tags: Delaney Gibbs, environmental and plant biology alumni, environmental and plant biology news, Kelsey Bryant, Marion Holmes, Philip Cantino, Plant Biology Graduate Student Association, Sam Lockhart



PGSA Outreach Coordinator Sam Lockhart at Strouds Run State Park

Athens County has prairie plants?

Strouds Run State Park is home to three small prairie-like openings that host grassland species. Persistence of this unusual community may be threatened by encroachment of trees and shrubs that can shade out herbaceous plants.

That's why members of the [Plant Biology Graduate Student Association](#) spent Dec. 7 helping to preserve the prairie-like openings at Strouds Run. They spent the afternoon thinning out woody seedlings to prevent damaging populations of these prairie species.



Common herbaceous plants found in prairie-like openings at Strouds Run State Park

A special thanks go to the Dec. 7 volunteers, who included:

- **Dr. Philip D. Cantino**, Environmental & Plant Biology Professor Emeritus
- **Samuel Lockhart** (Ballard Lab)
- **Delaney Gibbs** (Matlack Lab)
- **Hoang Luu** (Snell Lab)
- **Alberta Dempsey** (undergraduate)
- **Sarah Maracz** (undergraduate)
- **Kevin Yount** (undergraduate)
- **Kelly Love** (works with Americorps at Raccoon Creek)
- **Ashley Smith** (works with Americorps at Raccoon Creek)



Dr. Phil Cantino (left) pictured with Delaney Gibbs (second from left) and group of volunteers at Strouds Run State Park for the Prairie-like Opening Stewardship Day on Dec. 7.

This event began with Ohio University alum **Dr. Marion Holmes**, who earned a Ph.D. in Plant Biology from the College of Arts & Sciences in 2018. After much success, PGSA Outreach Coordinator Lockhart, with help from fellow PGSA member Gibbs, plans to continue this event over the next few years of his doctoral program.

PGSA President **Kelsey Bryant** says she is “excited that Sam and Delaney decided to continue this outreach event. This effort provides a unique, hands-on opportunity for undergraduates and graduates alike to learn local plant identification and gain a deeper understanding of ecosystem restoration.”

The PGSA will host similar restoration events in Spring 2020, providing undergraduate students with great opportunities to experience the application side of research.

For more information about future outreach events hosted by PGSA or to get involved, contact Lockhart at s1443017@ohio.edu.