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## **OAK OPENINGS REGION BLUE WEEK CONTENT**

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# OAK OPENINGS REGION BLUE WEEK

## FACT SHEET

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### *Oak Openings Region History*

At the end of the last glacier period, a large lake covered portions of NW Ohio and SE Michigan. That lake deposited sand along its shores. After the waters receded, the sands left behind developed into oak savanna and the low-lying areas in between the dunes held water throughout much of the year and became lakeplain wet prairie. This area is called the Oak Openings Region. See a map of the region at <https://www.oakopenings.org/about/history/>

Over 99% of oak savannas, flatwoods and wet prairies have now been lost from the lakeplain. The small pieces that remain are referred to as “remnants” and are among the rarest natural communities on the planet. Many of the animal species that depend on them are also very rare.

The Nature Conservancy, a renowned conservation organization, has designated this globally distinct region as “one of the last 200 great places on earth”.

### *Green Ribbon Initiative*

GRI is a partnership of conservation groups working together since 2000 to protect the natural beauty and biological diversity of the Oak Openings Region with the support of public and private organizations, landowners and individuals.

Originally formed in Northwest Ohio, the partnership now includes partners in Southeast Michigan.

The collective goal of the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative is to protect and restore approximately 6,800 acres in the next ten years. Achieving this goal will help threatened and endangered species to survive and will revitalize human communities by filtering drinking water, improving the health of Lake Erie and making our communities more livable.

For more information, visit [www.oakopenings.org/](http://www.oakopenings.org/)

### *Oak Openings Blue Week*

An event sponsored by the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative and its partners to give the public a chance to experience the natural wonders of the Oak Openings Region firsthand.

Blue Week is named for blue species in the Oak Openings that reveal themselves in Spring (e.g. bluebirds, blue-herons, blue-spotted salamanders, wild blue lupine, big bluestem grass).

This year's theme is 'Wings at Work' and events will focus on the role that birds and insects play in the Oak Openings ecosystem.

The goal is to showcase the beauty of the Oak Openings Region and inspire home-based and collaborative conservation by businesses, organizations and individual landowners.

Full calendar of events at [www.oakopenings.com/blue-week](http://www.oakopenings.com/blue-week)

## OAK OPENINGS REGION BLUE WEEK

### 2020 VIRTUAL EVENTS

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Most events will be held over Zoom. Please register in advance at <https://forms.gle/1ad8nruoBEwVP9Hh6> to receive a secure login code and password. Select events also stream live on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/oakopenings/>. Kids will enjoy events with this icon 

#### **Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**

- 10 a.m.      **Lovely Lupine**       METROPARKS TOLEDO  
Wild Blue Lupine is one of the signature species of the Oak Openings Region. Join a Toledo Metroparks naturalist for a virtual walk through Oak Openings Metropark to enjoy this beautiful plant that is state listed in Ohio as a potentially threatened species. [Register](#)
- 7:00 p.m.      **Breeding Raptors in the Oak Openings**      METROPARKS TOLEDO VOLUNTEER  
Metroparks Toledo Volunteer, Steve Lauer, presents 14 years of data from breeding raptor surveys in the Oak Openings Region. [Register](#)

#### **Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>**

- 10 a.m.      **Where Wings Begin 1.0**       WOOD COUNTY PARKS  
Wood County Parks naturalists take you live to explore wetlands and the creatures that will soon become will become the winged insects of summer including dragonflies, caddisflies, and damselflies. [Register](#)
- 3:30 p.m.      **Where Wings Begin 2.0**       BEDFORD HIGHSCHOOL  
Bedford High School Environmental Science educator, Jason Russeau takes his lesson plans outside to showcase the hidden treasures that can be found in the beautiful remnant Oak Openings woodlot behind the school. Russeau will teach students about the vernal pools and identify macroinvertebrate that live there. [Register](#)
- 7:00 p.m.      **A Walk with Aldo Leopold**      BLACK SWAMP CONSERVANCY  
Join Black Swamp Conservancy's Education Coordinator, Laura Rodriguez, to journey through with Aldo Leopold's "Sand County Almanac" and discover the unique ecology of sandy oak savannas. [Register](#)

#### **Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>**

- 10 a.m.      **All Things Blue**       METROPARKS TOLEDO  
Discover all things blue! Join a Toledo Metroparks naturalist for a virtual walk through Oak Openings Metropark to look for Wild Blue Lupine, Blue Jays, Blue Birds, Blue Racer snakes and more. [Register](#)
- 7 p.m.      **Globally Rare in Your Backyard**      THE NATURE CONSERVANCY  
From the bluegrass to Blue Week, former Kentucky plant ecologist and now Kitty Todd Preserve Manager Brian Yahn gives you a tour of the globally rare plant communities on the Kitty Todd Preserve and compares Oak Openings diversity with his knowledge of Kentucky natural systems. [Register](#)

### Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>

- 10 a.m. **Butterfly Gardens for Kids**  THE OLANDER PARK SYSTEM  
Celebrate the return of wings with information on the best plants for our native butterflies, then watch as we put together a simple craft showcasing their beauty. Check Facebook for the video.
- 7:00 p.m. **Bats of Northwest Ohio** BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY  
Join Bowling Green State University researcher, Kelly Mei-Feung Russo Petrick to learn about her research on bats in Northwest Ohio and the threats they are facing. [Register](#)

### Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>

- 10 a.m. **Spot the Sparrow**  METROPARKS TOLEDO  
Commemorate National Endangered Species Day on a morning quest with Metroparks Naturalists to find Lark Sparrows, an Ohio endangered species.
- Noon **Ecological Restoration of an Urban Park** THE NATURE CONSERVANCY  
Join Dr. Pete Blank, TNC's Restoration Manager, to learn about ecological restoration in the Oak Openings region and how TNC's work is improving habitat at Harroun Park in Sylvania. [Register](#)
- 7:00 p.m. **Birds Falling Out of the Sky** TOLEDO NATURALIST ASSOCIATION  
Dr. Elliot Tramer with Toledo Naturalists' Association explains the weird attraction to the Oak Openings and why so many birds can be found here. [Register](#)

### Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>

- 11 a.m. **Designing Your Native Garden** WILD ONES OAK OPENINGS CHAPTER  
Come prepared to get all of your native plant and landscaping questions answered. Wild Ones Oak Openings Chapter board members will give a short 101 on why and how to use native plants in your landscape then dedicate the rest of this session for Q&A. [Register](#)
- 3 p.m. **Native Prairie Pollinators**  THE OLANDER PARK SYSTEM  
Celebrate native plants that grow in our community with a tour of the King Road Library pollinator garden. Learn why these plants are vital, how you can grow them, and make an eco-friendly craft. Check out our Facebook page for the video!
- 7 p.m. **Landowner Fireside Chat** OAK OPENINGS REGION CONSERVANCY (OORC)  
Join board members of OORC, the only land conservancy dedicated solely to the Oak Openings Region, for a casual conversation about the unique habitats that can be found in your backyard. Take a virtual tours of their properties and chat with these experts about management. [Register](#)

### Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>

- 10:00 a.m. **Close Up at Nature's Nursery**  NATURE'S NURSERY  
Tour Nature's Nursery with Education Director Jamie Forbush to learn about their native avian ambassadors and how they came to be permanent residents. Ask questions in real time and learn how the center takes in over 3,000 hurt, sick, and orphaned wild animals every year! [Register](#)
- 11 a.m. **Designing Your Native Garden** WILD ONES OAK OPENINGS CHAPTER  
Come prepared to get all of your native plant and landscaping questions answered. Wild Ones Oak Openings Chapter board members will give a short 101 on why and how to use native plants in your landscape then dedicate the rest of this session for Q&A [Register](#)

## OAK OPENINGS REGION BLUE WEEK DIY ADVENTURES

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### PHOTO CONTEST

Show us why the Oak Openings is worth protecting? How does living, working, or playing here add to the quality of your life? Submit photos in any or all of our 4 categories (\$5 per entry): Wildlife, Native Plants, Oak Openings in Motion, or Wings at Work

Awards will be given for Best in Show, Best in Show Runner-up, Top Photo in each Category, and Youth Winners in will be announced at on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Email digital entries to [OAKOPENING@TNC.ORG](mailto:OAKOPENING@TNC.ORG) by May 10, 2020. For more information and complete contest rules, visit [www.oakopenings.org/photo-contest/](http://www.oakopenings.org/photo-contest/)

### REGIONAL GAMES

Participate in one of the following GRI Blue Week games for a chance to win a Green Ribbon Initiative T-shirt. Double your chances by completing both challenges! Submit your entries to [oakopenings@tnc.org](mailto:oakopenings@tnc.org) by 11:59 pm on March 18th to be entered into the raffle. 10 winners will be announced on May 20th.

- Photo Scavenger Hunt:
- Visit 8 of any of the [parks or preserves](#) in the Oak Openings Region during Blue Week and take a selfie of you with the following Oak Openings icons. Put all of your photos on one document with the date and location of each and send it to [oakopenings@tnc.org](mailto:oakopenings@tnc.org) for a chance to win an Oak Openings T-shirt.
  - A big sprawling oak tree alone in a field
  - Your footprint in the sand
  - A Lupine background
  - A vernal pond or wetland
  - Any wildlife
  - A budding shrub or tree
  - On a bridge
  - Your favorite Oak Openings Region icon
- Did You know? Fact Finding Fun:

Visit 8 of 11 participating parks and read the fun fact about a special Oak Openings species. Fill out the attached form and submit it to [oakopenings@tnc.org](mailto:oakopenings@tnc.org) for a chance to win an Oak Openings t-shirt.

  - Participating parks/preserves include: [Pat and Clint Mauk's Prairie](#), WW Knight Preserve, Irwin State Nature Preserve, Oak Openings Metropark, Secor Metropark, Kitty Todd Preserve, Sylvan Prairie Park, Olander Park, [Ansted Park](#), Crosswinds Marsh, [Sibley Prairie Nature Preserve-West Rd.](#)

## OAK OPENINGS REGION BLUE WEEK NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

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### **Oak Openings Blue Week Celebrates Rare Plants and Wildlife**

Did you know that the natural habitats found in the Oak Openings Region are among the rarest on the planet?

Join [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] and the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative (GRI) to celebrate this rare habitat during an all new Blue Week May 11-16, 2020. Virtual educational programs for adults and kids, regional experts, and DIY adventures and contests, give you an opportunity to learn about the unique natural features of Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan. [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] will be hosting [EVENT, DATE, LOCATION].

“Oak Openings Blue Week is all about raising awareness and revealing the wonders of our home,” said Ashlee Decker, GRI Partnership Specialist. “Sometimes, I think it’s one of our region’s best kept secrets. Blue Week has activities that can help all of us to feel proud to live in the Oak Openings.”

For a complete list of Blue Week adventures please visit <http://www.oakopenings.org/blue-week/>.

### *Oak Openings History*

Roughly 12,000 years ago at the end of the last glacier period, there was a large lake that covered the area. As the lake receded to what is now present day Lake Erie, it left behind huge amounts of sand creating dunes. The higher elevation of the dunes allowed for oak savannas to form while in between the dunes, lakeplain wet prairies formed. This habitat combination is what makes up the Oak Openings.

Today, less than 1% of the local ecosystem remains. The Green Ribbon Initiative is a partnership of local conservation groups that is trying to save the best remaining pieces of the Oak Openings and restore a small percentage of what has been lost. Preserving the Oak Openings also helps with improving the health of Lake Erie and filtering our drinking water which will make our communities more livable. Blue Week is one way the Green Ribbon Initiative shares this message.

### *You Can Help the Oak Openings*

Learning about this rare habitat is key to helping to preserve it. Attend one of the many Oak Openings Blue Week activities and events and discover for yourself how special our area is. If you live within the Oak Openings, GRI invites you to register as an Oak Openings landowner. The registry is free and demonstrates your awareness of the oak openings, even if you’re unable to plant a native garden. To register, visit <http://www.oakopenings.org/resources/landowners/>.

For more information on how you can help the Green Ribbon Initiative protect and restore one of the last great places on earth, please contact Ashlee Decker at [ashlee.decker@tnc.org](mailto:ashlee.decker@tnc.org).

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## OAK OPENINGS REGION BLUE WEEK

### PROMOTIONAL FLIERS

Please consider posting on social media, hanging in public places, or emailing these fliers to groups with which you are affiliated.

GENERAL BLUE WEEK FLIER:

<https://www.oakopenings.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Blue-Week-General.jpg>



*Oak Openings Region*  
**BLUE WEEK**

May 11-17, 2020

Virtual educational opportunities for kids and adults, meet the experts, DIY adventures and contests to learn about the unique Features of the Oak Openings Region of NW Ohio and SE Michigan.

*Explore the globally rare in your backyard!*

**FULL BLUE WEEK SCHEDULE AT:**  
[www.oakopenings.org/blue-week](http://www.oakopenings.org/blue-week)

THE GREEN RIBBON INITIATIVE is a partnership of public and private organizations, landowners and individuals working to preserve, enhance, and restore critical natural areas in the Oak Openings Region.

**GREEN RIBBON INITIATIVE**

PHOTO CONTEST (Target: photo clubs, naturalists)

<https://www.oakopenings.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/photocontest-flier-color.jpg>



OAK OPENINGS REGION BLUE WEEK  
**PHOTO CONTEST**

Show us why the Oak Openings is worth protecting? How does living, working, or playing here add to the quality of your life? Submit photos in any or all of our 4 categories (\$5 per entry):

**Wildlife**                      **Native Plants**  
**Oak Openings in Motion**      **Wings at Work**

Awards will be given for Best in Show, Best in Show Runner-up, Top Photo in each Category, and Youth Winners in will be announced on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

EMAIL DIGITAL ENTRIES TO [OAKOPENING@TNC.ORG](mailto:OAKOPENING@TNC.ORG)  
BY MAY 10th, 2020

For more information and complete contest rules, visit  
[www.oakopenings.org/photo-contest/](http://www.oakopenings.org/photo-contest/)

## SOCIAL MEDIA FEED

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Green Ribbon Initiative has created Facebook events for each individual event.

1. Please accept the “co-host” invitation on Facebook and share widely.
2. Don’t forget to tag Green Ribbon Initiative in posts. Username:  
@oakopenings

### Here are some fun easy ways to share:

- Schools may be closed, but nature’s laboratory is open all year! Join Green Ribbon Initiative partners every morning at 10am during Blue Week for family friendly programs about the unique species that call the Oak Openings home. [www.oakopenings.org/blue-week](http://www.oakopenings.org/blue-week)
- Who said protecting nature can’t be fun? Participate in one of two DIY adventures during Blue Week 2020, May 11-17 and enter for a chance to win sweet Green Ribbon Initiative swag. [Link to website](#)
- Join regional experts and researchers every evening at 7pm during Blue Week 2020, May 11-17. See the full list of presenters at [www.oakopenings.org/blue-week](http://www.oakopenings.org/blue-week)
- Blue Week 2020 is coming. Are you ready? Mark your calendars for a week of non-stop Oak Openings virtual programming May 11-17 with [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] and the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative. [Link to video, website, or event page](#)
- Bluebirds, blue racers, blue lupine, oh my! [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] and the Oak Openings Green Ribbon Initiative invite you to Blue Week 2020, May 11-17. Join us for online presentations or on a DIY adventure to help us celebrate all the cool species that call the Oak Openings Region home. [Link to video, website, or event page](#)

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**OAK OPENINGS REGION BLUE WEEK  
PROMOTIONAL VIDEO**

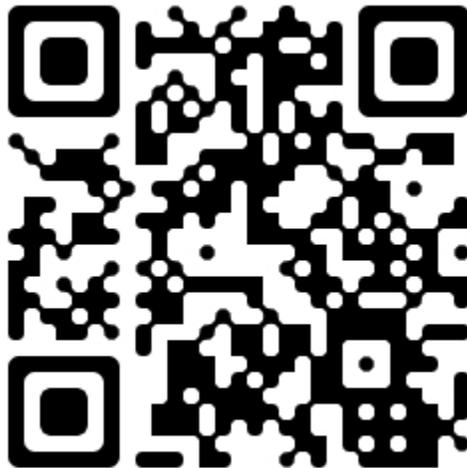
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Please share this 30 second video about Blue Week on social media:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWje6irLrKY>

**OAK OPENINGS REGION BLUE WEEK  
QR CODE**

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**Live on Instagram**  
**Connection between wellness and nature**  
**More important now that ever**  
**Recess text**