

ISSUE 8 SUMMER 2026

RABBIT!

COLUMBUS NATURE, SCIENCE & COMMUNITY



Now with
Video Stories
+ Audio Quiz

DIG IN...
Summer just
got wilder!



IN THIS ISSUE:

THE TINY WORLD
AROUND US

TRASH PANDA
INVESTIGATES

SORT IT OUT
WITH NAYA

EXPLORE OHIO'S
AMAZING OUTDOORS

...AND MORE!

On the cover:

The cecropia moth is the largest moth found in Ohio. Adult cecropia moths do not have working mouthparts, so they cannot eat and live only long enough to mate and lay eggs after munching all they can as caterpillars. Take a closer look at the caterpillar on page 6.



HONORING THE FIRST PEOPLE OF THIS LAND.

As we explore the natural world around us in what is now called Columbus and Central Ohio, we acknowledge that this land has long been home to the Mound Culture People, Adena, Shawnee, Myaamia, Kaskaskia, Delaware, Ottawa, Wyandot, Seneca, Cayuga and other Indigenous Nations. These communities have cared for the land, rivers, and wetlands for thousands of years, shaping the natural world through their traditions, knowledge, and deep connection to the land.

The land was taken from its original stewards through forceful and harmful treaties. By acknowledging the land's history, we open the space to ask ourselves how we can be kind and caring humans, and how we can take better care of the nature around us now and in the future. This includes supporting Indigenous Land Back movements and Indigenous Sovereignty of our lands. Please check out Native American Indian Center of Central Ohio (NAICCO.com) to learn more or donate to their local movement.



HI EVERYONE,



Long, sunny days and warm nights mean summer is here! In summer, chances to be outside and explore the natural world are greater than ever. As you venture outdoors this season, you will find prairies full of colorful flowers and even more colorful butterflies visiting them. You will hear the buzzy song of cicadas and find their shells clinging to trees. You might even find young animals following their parents and begging for food. So many interesting things are waiting outside for you to discover.

This season, Ribbit! highlights some of the things that make summer great. Explore the miniature world around you and encounter tiny bugs. Discover Ohio's state parks and all the summer fun they hold. You will also investigate the process of sorting waste and recyclables and follow the journey of a soda can once it is empty. This issue is packed with inspiration for a memorable season.

Make the most of the long days by exploring the great outdoors this summer. Go for a long bike ride. Have a picnic in the park. Spend the day swimming at the pool or in a nearby lake. Plant a garden and observe the plants growing. Stay up late to watch the night sky. Give camping a try in the backyard or at a state park. No matter what you do, I hope you take full advantage of everything summer has to offer!



See you in nature!
— Cody

Metro Parks Naturalist

WWW.RIBBITMAGAZINE.COM





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Find summer events, wildlife fun and cool places to explore around Columbus.

THE TINY WORLD AROUND US **PAGE 4**

Get super close to tiny creatures through incredible macro photos taken by naturalist Craig Biegler.



EXPLORE OHIO'S AMAZING OUTDOORS **PAGE 12**

You don't have to travel far to find beaches, trails, wildlife and outdoor adventures at Ohio state parks.

TRASH PANDA INVESTIGATES **PAGE 16**

Trash Panda follows a soda can to see what happens when it gets tossed in the trash versus the recycling bin.



SORT IT OUT WITH NAYA **PAGE 20**

Naya takes on the challenge of sorting everyday items the right way.



GREENSPOT: HELPING COLUMBUS SHINE **PAGE 24**

Our interview guest Christy Walters shares easy ways families can help keep Columbus cleaner and greener.



SUMMER PUZZLE PARTY **PAGE 26**

Match, search and solve your way through our summer puzzles.



BEFORE YOU GO... **PAGE 28**

Watch Yusuf create nature art at the creek, take the audio quiz and explore more in our Media Library.



BEE COUNT



Summer is buzzing with bees! Look carefully. 5 tiny bees are hiding throughout the magazine. Can you spot them all?

(Page 29 has the answers.)

COLUMBUS NATURE NEWS



SUMMER 2026

Columbus Nature News shares local events, wildlife highlights, and ways to explore nature around the city.



WORLD SNAKE DAY

Ohio is home to lots of interesting snakes, such as garter snakes, northern watersnakes, rat snakes, and eastern milk snakes. July 16 is World Snake Day! Take the day as a chance to learn more about these amazing reptiles and why they are important for healthy ecosystems. Hint: They help keep nature balanced by eating pests like mice and rats.

Summer Community Days

On the first Sunday of each month, Community Days at Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens offer free entry. Themes this summer are: Sustainable Columbus and the Big Bugs exhibit on June 7, Yoga in the Garden on July 5, and Plant the Power VegFest on August 2. The Conservatory also participates in Museums for All, which offers reduced admission for qualifying families.



WATCH THE VIDEO

Join us on a visit to the butterfly exhibit at Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens! Scan the QR code or watch the video in our media library at: www.ribbitmagazine.com/library!



SUPERSTARS OF STEAM™ 2026

MAKER SPACE CENTRAL
Powered by: **BATTELLE**

Calling K-12 junior scientists & engineers: Do you like to tinker, build and learn about the world around us? Join us for the Makerspace Central Superstars of STEAM™ series!

Dive deep with **10 STEAM professionals who do this work EVERY DAY.** They'll share their experiences with you - the next generation of problem-solvers and innovators!

Follow our social media and website for location and speaker announcements.

SPRING & SUMMER 2026 DATES
Saturdays from **10:00 am to 12:30 pm**
May: May 23rd
June: June 6th and June 20th
July: July 11th and July 25th
August: August 8th and August 22nd
September: September 5th and September 19th
And a soon to be announced date!

REGISTRATION QR CODE



Meet the Superstars of STEAM

This summer, Makerspace Central is bringing back its free Superstars of STEAM™ program, where kids and families can meet local scientists, engineers, artists and inventors through hands-on learning and creative activities. Saturdays, May through September 2026, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. www.makerspacecentral.org.

COLUMBUS ARBORFEST



OUTDOOR FUN WITH METRO PARKS



Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks offer outdoor adventures across their parks, including guided hikes, kayaking, campfires, nature programs and family events. Have you already visited the two newest Metro Parks, Great Southern Metro Park and Bank Run Metro Park?

Columbus ArborFest returns to Whetstone Park on August 22 from 12 to 5 p.m. Celebrate the nature of Columbus with live music, food trucks, guided walks, children's activities, local organizations, art, poetry and more at this volunteer-driven community event focused on trees and our urban canopy.



THE TINY WORLD AROUND US

A FEW YEARS AGO,
I STARTED TAKING
PHOTOGRAPHS OF INSECTS
AND OTHER SMALL ANIMALS
WITH A MACRO LENS,
WHICH ALLOWS ME TO
MAGNIFY THE IMAGE AND
SEE DETAILS THAT ARE
INVISIBLE TO THE NAKED
EYE. IT'S A GREAT WAY TO
EXPLORE NATURE, EVEN IN
YOUR OWN YARD! HERE ARE
A FEW OF MY FAVORITE
PHOTOS THAT I HAVE TAKEN
HERE IN OHIO.

By Craig Biegler
Naturalist
Blendon Woods &
Rocky Fork Metro Park

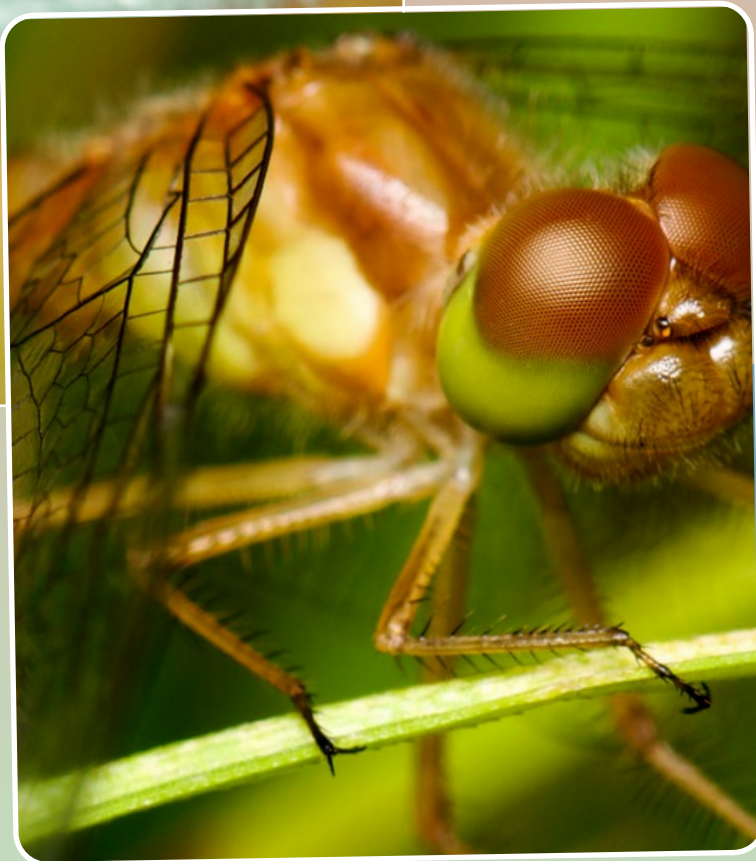
Bad-wing moth

When preserving a moth or butterfly, you are supposed to spread the wings out so that all the markings can be seen. The hind wings on this moth are very small, so whoever named it must have had a hard time spreading them!



Dogbane leaf beetle

This insect has "structural color," which means its color changes depending on the angle of the light. If the sun hits it just right, you will see every color of the rainbow. These bright colors warn predators that it is poisonous.



Autumn meadowhawk dragonfly

Some dragonflies will go through dramatic color changes throughout their lives. This one is freshly emerged, but it will eventually turn bright red. Their huge eyes and strong wings make them some of the most formidable predators in the insect world. This also makes them difficult to photograph; I was lucky to find this one resting in the grass.



Putnam's jumping spider

Jumping spiders are harmless to people and have a lot of personality. You can tell when they are watching you, trying to puzzle out what you are. Jumping spiders are active predators, always crawling around looking for food. They do not catch prey with a web: they jump on it! Male jumping spiders, like this one, often have strong patterns, bizarre tufts of hair or bright colors in order to attract a female.

Cecropia moth caterpillar

This is one of our largest and most colorful caterpillars. It has no defenses beyond camouflage, so it will whip its upper body around to try to smack whatever is bothering it. The orange, yellow, and blue knobs on its body may make it hard for a bird to swallow.





Swamp cicada

Cicadas are some of the loudest insects. Their bodies are mostly hollow, allowing the sounds they make to increase in volume, much like how a drum or a violin has a lot of empty space inside. You will hear them during the day in late summer. Each species sounds different; the swamp cicada makes a raspy, wobbly call that gets louder and louder for about 15 seconds.

Rosy maple moth

Anyone who says moths are boring and ugly has not seen a rosy maple moth! Despite their bright colors, they camouflage quite well on the fruits (also known as samaras or "helicopters") of the maple trees they lay eggs on. This male has extra-feathery antennae, which he uses to smell the chemical pheromones of the female. He can travel great distances in the dark just by following her scent trail.



Banded tussock moth caterpillar

Some furry caterpillars are safe to touch, but you should always be careful with them; you may be more sensitive to the hairs than the person next to you. While this species doesn't sting with venom like some other caterpillars, you can see in this close-up that its hairs are barbed, and will cause irritation if they get into your eyes, nose, or mouth.



Six-spotted tiger beetle

Tiger beetles are not named for their color, but for their ferocity! They are fast fliers and are very difficult to approach. Many species live on sandy beaches and have brown or gray camouflage, but the six-spotted tiger beetle is a common sight on woodland paths with its metallic blue-green body.





Chinese mantis

The Chinese mantis is not originally from North America; it was introduced by people as natural pest control. Unfortunately, they are voracious predators of any animal their size or smaller, not just the things we consider pests. They can eat butterflies, ladybugs, other mantises, and even hummingbirds! They have been around for over 100 years and are considered "naturalized," meaning they are now a permanent part of our American ecosystems, but we still don't fully understand the effect they have had on our native wildlife.

Gnat ogre

The eyes of predator insects are often huge. Gnat ogres are a type of robber fly that love to eat (you guessed it) gnats! They also eat mosquitoes and other biting insects, so I love finding them in my yard. Because their eyes wrap all the way around their head, gnat ogres can see a potential meal even when it's behind them.




BEHIND THE SCENES



Compare these photos of gray tree frogs taken at Blendon Woods Metro Park Nature Center. A regular camera lens sees the frogs more like we see them with our own eyes. But a macro lens can get much closer and capture a far more detailed picture. Just look at all the tiny details inside the frog's eye!



You don't need a special camera to explore the tiny world around you. A simple magnifying glass will reveal many hidden secrets. Look at flowers, under logs, or on the bark of a tree. A single shovelful of soil is full of interesting things. You never know what you'll find unless you look! 



FOR EDUCATORS & YOUTH LEADERS

With the Parks Connect Grant, the Friends of Metro Parks provide financial support to help schools, youth centers, and other groups enjoy our metro parks through field trips, transportation assistance and outdoor programs. To learn more, visit www.metroparksfriends.org/parksconnect.

Creature Super Challenge

You've seen these tiny creatures up close.
Can you match them with their regular photos?



1. Six-spotted tiger beetle



2. Banded tussock moth caterpillar



3. Cecropia moth caterpillar



4. Putnam's jumping spider



5. Swamp cicada



6. Dogbane leaf beetle



7. Rosy maple moth



8. Chinese mantis



(Page 29 has the answers.)

EXPLORE OHIO'S AMAZING OUTDOORS

By Mary Mertz, Director
Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)

Get Outside!

Ohio is full of adventure, wildlife and natural beauty. Whether you're splashing along the beach of a state park lake, hiking uphill along a forested trail, spotting a bald eagle soaring overhead or just enjoying your time playing outside, there's magic waiting for you outdoors.

Where can you go?

Ohio has 76 state parks across the state, and guess what? They are all free to visit! Some parks have huge lakes that are perfect for boating or fishing, while others have hiking trails that wind through forests and fields. Many parks also have nature centers where you can learn about animals and plants, and some even offer activities like horseback riding, mountain biking, or frisbee golf.

But did you know that you don't have to travel far to find amazing outdoor adventures? If you live near Columbus, there are several beautiful state parks only about 30 miles away, perfect for a visit with family, a school field trip, or a fun weekend adventure with friends. These parks offer fun in all seasons, including hiking, swimming, wildlife watching, picnicking and even playing on a playground!

You and your family can learn about all the parks and discover activities that you can try at ohiodnr.gov.

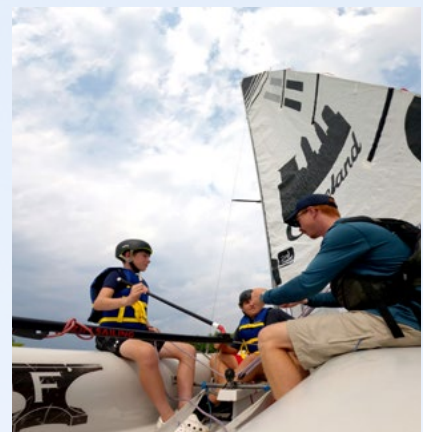
What can you do there?

Hike or take a nature walk and look for wildlife

Go swimming or fishing

Visit playgrounds or have a picnic

Explore nature centers or camp under the stars



FUN FACT!

Ohio's state parks won the 2025 Gold Medal Award for best state parks in the whole country! That means they're extra awesome.



ALUM CREEK STATE PARK

One of the closest and most popular parks near Columbus is Alum Creek State Park. It's a great place to spend a summer afternoon because it has Ohio's largest inland beach! You can swim, build sandcastles, or splash around on a warm day. If you enjoy boating or fishing, Alum Creek Lake is full of places to paddle, fish, or float. Families can hike on easy trails including a Storybook Trail, and there's even a big dog park where our furry friends can run and play. There are also places to camp and a nature center to explore.

A.W. MARION STATE PARK

Just south of Columbus near Circleville, A.W. Marion State Park is a peaceful spot with rolling woods and Hargus Lake. Kids can try fishing, hike the loop trail around the lake, or enjoy a picnic. In winter, it's a great place for sledding and ice skating if there's enough snow and ice. This park is small and quiet, a perfect place to unwind and have a relaxing day outdoors.

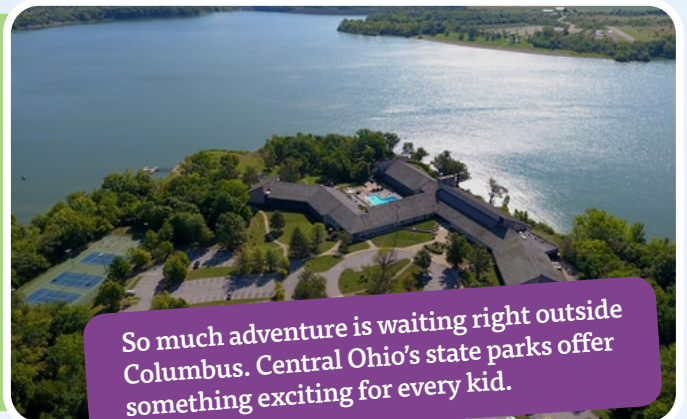


DELAWARE STATE PARK

About 30 miles north of Columbus, Delaware State Park is known for its forests, meadows and Delaware Lake. There's camping, swimming, boating, and nature trails. There's also a 27-hole frisbee golf course, so grab a frisbee, aim, and throw hard! You might also want to check out the inclusive Blue Jackets-themed playground, featuring inclusive swings and a climbable model of the Blue Jackets' mascot, Stinger! The park is also home to lots of wildlife, so keep an eye out for birds, deer, and maybe even a wild turkey wandering through the trees.

DEER CREEK STATE PARK

Only about 30 miles southwest of Columbus, Deer Creek State Park is perfect for families who like to have choices. You can stay at a lodge or campground, play on the golf course, hike, fish, boat, or enjoy a picnic by the lake. The mix of meadows, forests, and water makes it a great place to see nature up close. There are also many trails and wide-open spaces to run and explore.



So much adventure is waiting right outside Columbus. Central Ohio's state parks offer something exciting for every kid.

Ohio Wildlife Success Stories



BALD EAGLES:

SOARING THE SKIES ONCE MORE

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources isn't just great at taking care of places where you can see wildlife, it's also great at helping wildlife make a comeback! Here are two of Ohio's biggest wildlife success stories.

TRUE OR FALSE?

Bald eagles can swim using their wings like paddles if they catch a fish that is too heavy to lift.

(Turn to page 29 to check.)

Long ago, bald eagles almost disappeared from Ohio. In 1979, Ohio had only four bald eagle nests in the entire state. Protecting their habitats, banning harmful chemicals and keeping water clean helped bring them back.

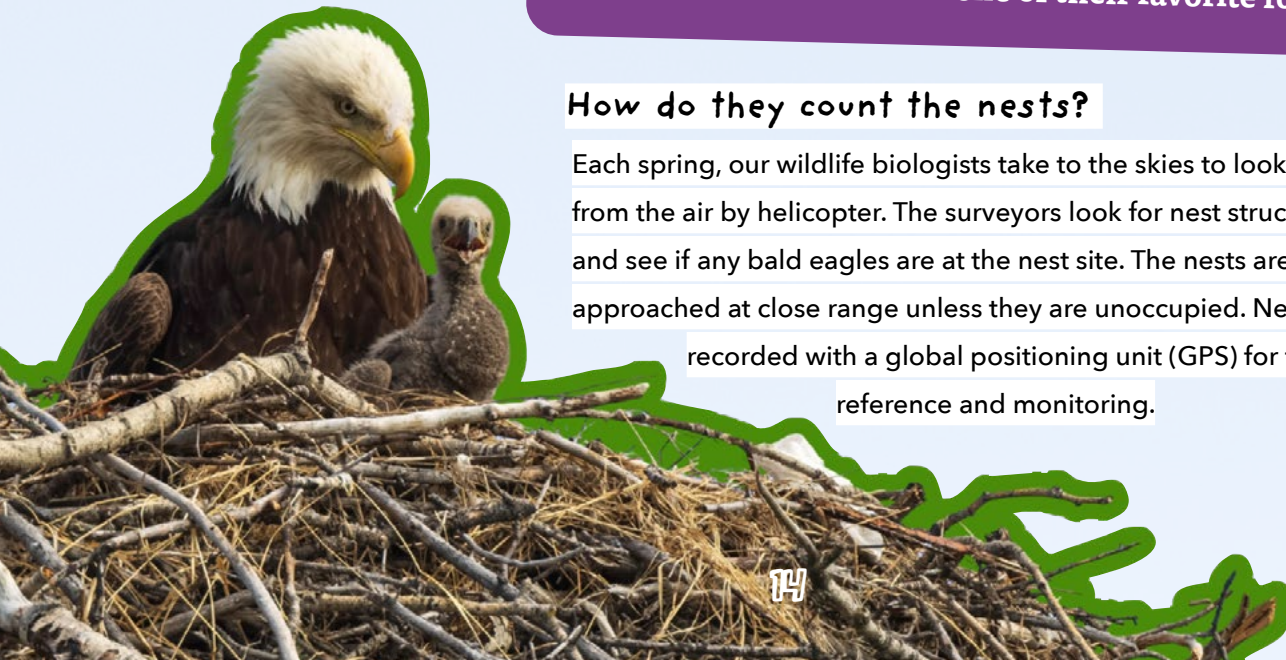
Today, Ohio has more than 900 bald eagle nests statewide, an amazing comeback! Now you can spot these huge birds soaring over rivers, lakes and marshes throughout the state. Look up and see if you can spot their bright white heads above the trees!

FUN FACT!

Bald eagles are found near lakes, rivers, and wetlands because fish are one of their favorite foods.

How do they count the nests?

Each spring, our wildlife biologists take to the skies to look for nests from the air by helicopter. The surveyors look for nest structures and see if any bald eagles are at the nest site. The nests are not approached at close range unless they are unoccupied. Nests are recorded with a global positioning unit (GPS) for future reference and monitoring.






WHITE-TAILED DEER:

AT HOME IN OHIO'S FIELDS AND FORESTS

White-tailed deer were once extremely rare in Ohio, so rare that for many years there were almost none left in the wild. Thanks to careful management, habitat protection and smart hunting rules, deer populations grew again.

Today, white-tailed deer are common and can be seen in forests, fields, or even your own backyard!

Munching away – deer eating habitats

White-tailed deer like to eat soft, green leaves from a variety of plants in Ohio. They aren't too picky! If you find that deer are eating your garden flowers, try planting some hardy native perennials, including black-eyed Susan and coneflower. Those plants do well in Ohio's climate and produce beautiful summer flowers. Best of all, deer generally don't like to eat them! 



Discover more about Ohio's nature

GIANT SCREEN JOURNEY

ODNR created a film called Ohio: Wild at Heart. It's a giant screen adventure that shows the beauty of Ohio through all four seasons. You'll soar over forests like a bird, explore waterfalls in the Hocking Hills, and see mighty Lake Erie, one of the biggest freshwater lakes in the world!

You'll also meet people who work hard every day to take care of Ohio's animals, plants, trails and parks. The movie encourages everyone, kids, families, teachers and explorers of all ages, to get outside. Ohio has mountains of adventure waiting for you: forests, rivers, lakes, trails and wildlife. When we take care of nature, nature takes care of us!

It has been shown in large-screen theaters across Ohio, including at Center of Science and Industry (COSI). Even if it is not currently showing during your visit, teachers and educators can still sign up to watch the movie for free in classrooms through ODNR's educational access program at ohiodnr.gov/movie.

DISCOVERY EXPERIENCE

At COSI you can explore Project: Ripple Effect, an exhibit about Ohio's water. The exhibit includes activities about wetlands, streams, freshwater mussels, fish and water pollution. You can also learn how everyday choices can affect water quality and wildlife.


Note: COSI participates in the Museums for All program, which offers reduced admission for qualifying families. Check COSI's website for details.



TRASH PANDA INVESTIGATES:


The surprising journey of a soda can

By Keep Columbus Beautiful



What happens after you throw away a soda can? The answer depends on one small choice:

whether it goes in the **TRASH** or the **RECYCLING** bin.



It's a warm summer afternoon. Someone finishes a cold soda at a picnic, a baseball game, or a backyard cookout. The can is empty. Now what? That can has two possible journeys ahead. The path it takes depends on one simple decision: which bin it goes into. If the can goes in the trash, it will likely end up buried in a landfill. If it goes in the recycling bin, it could soon be transformed into something new. Let's follow one aluminum can and see where each path leads.

THE LANDFILL PATH

Imagine the soda can gets tossed into the trash. Later, a garbage truck picks it up along with bags of other waste. The truck then transports the trash to a landfill. In central Ohio, most of our garbage is sent to the SWACO landfill near Grove City.

At the landfill, garbage trucks empty their loads into large areas where waste is spread out, packed down by heavy machines, and covered with soil each day. Landfills help keep our communities clean and safe, but they also occupy a lot of space. Once a landfill is full, it must be closed, and another must be built elsewhere.

And what about the soda can? If it stays buried in the landfill, it could stay there for about 200 years before fully decomposing. That means a valuable material, aluminum, would be wasted instead of reused.





THE RECYCLING PATH

Now picture the soda can going into the recycling bin instead of the trash. A recycling truck collects cans, paper, bottles and other recyclables from homes and schools. It then transports these materials to a recycling center.

Here in central Ohio, recyclables are collected at Rumpke's Recycling & Resource Center, the largest recycling facility in North America. The building is huge, roughly the size of several football fields. Inside, thousands of bottles, cans, boxes and containers quickly move along conveyor belts as powerful machines sort them. Magnets pull metal cans out of the recycling stream. Spinning screens separate paper and cardboard. Bursts of air push lightweight plastics into the correct bins. The system can sort approximately 60 tons of recyclables each hour, which is about the weight of 40 cars.

Once aluminum cans are separated, they are crushed into large bundles called bales. These bales go to manufacturers, many of which are about 250 miles from central Ohio. There, the aluminum is melted and rolled into thin sheets. These sheets are used to make brand-new cans. In about 60 days, the aluminum from that can you recycle might be back on a store shelf as another drink.

Unlike many materials, aluminum can be recycled over and over again without losing quality.





Remember:
Everything we use
comes from nature!



**ALUMINUM CANS ARE
MADE FROM BAUXITE,
A ROCK MINED FROM
THE GROUND**



**PAPER AND
CARDBOARD COME
FROM TREES**



**GLASS JARS ARE
MADE FROM SAND**



**PLASTIC BOTTLES ARE
MADE FROM OIL**

Many of these resources take millions of years to form or decades to develop. When recyclable materials are thrown away, we lose the chance to reuse them. Recycling helps us reuse materials instead of extracting more from nature.

MORE WAYS TO REDUCE WASTE

Recycling is important, but it isn't the only way to cut down on waste. Sometimes, we reuse items instead of discarding them. Glass jars can hold leftovers, and plastic containers can store snacks or craft supplies. We can also donate items we no longer need, like clothes, books, toys and school supplies, which might still help someone else.

Food scraps like fruit and vegetable peels can also be composted, meaning they break down naturally and turn into nutrient-rich soil for plants. By recycling, reusing, donating and composting, we send less waste to landfills and use the resources we already have more wisely. ♻️

WATCH THE VIDEO

Scan the QR code or go to www.ribbitmagazine.com/library for a behind-the-scenes trip to the Rumpke Recycling & Resource Center.



Read on to
see how Naya
learns about
sorting.



SORT IT OUT

WITH NAYA



EVER STOOD OVER A BIN AND NOT BEEN SURE WHAT TO DO? NAYA TAKES ON THE CHALLENGE AT SWACO AND TESTS HER SORTING SKILLS.

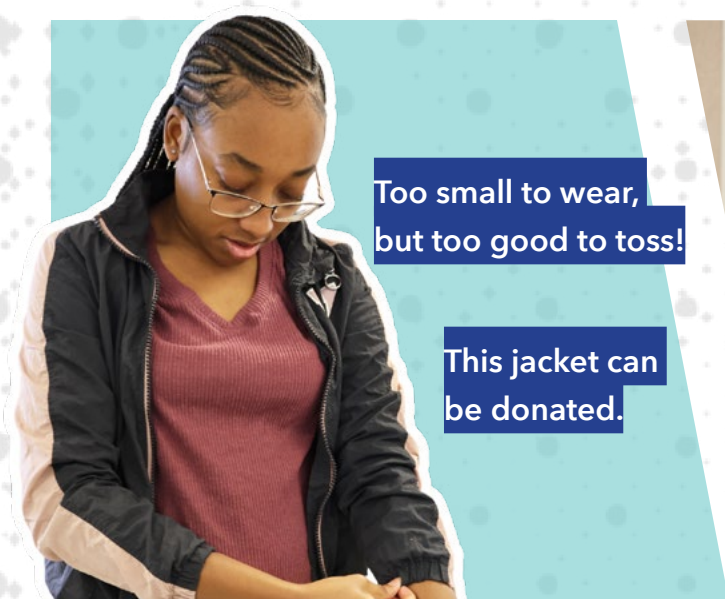
After a cleanup, Naya is left with a bag full of stuff and a lot of questions.



So we visit Kim at the SWACO Education Center.

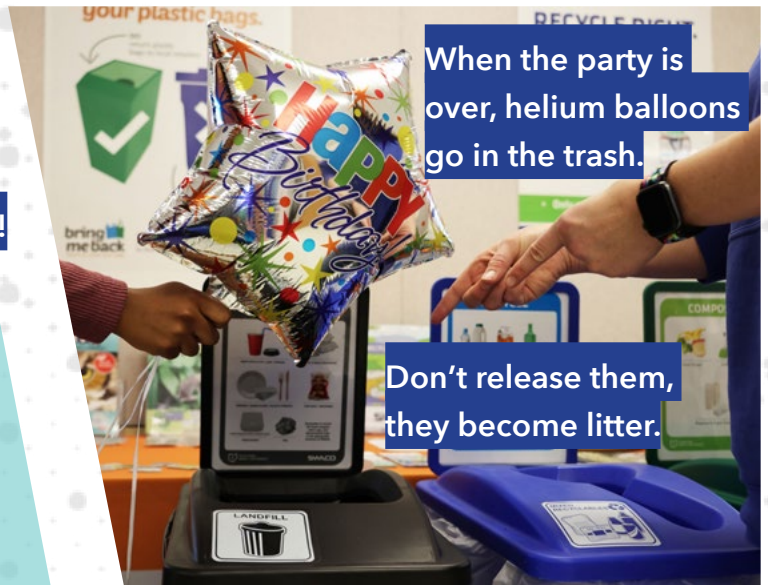


As an education specialist, Kim helps us figure out what goes where.



Too small to wear, but too good to toss!

This jacket can be donated.



When the party is over, helium balloons go in the trash.

Don't release them, they become litter.



A slipper that doesn't have its pair. Did the dog eat it? It goes in the trash.



This broken clothes hanger is plastic, but that doesn't mean it can be recycled.

Only certain plastics are accepted, and this one needs to go in the trash.



Naya doesn't play with dolls anymore. This one is still in great shape and can be donated so another child can enjoy it.



This toy dinosaur is missing its tail, so it goes in the trash.



Naya loves to snack!

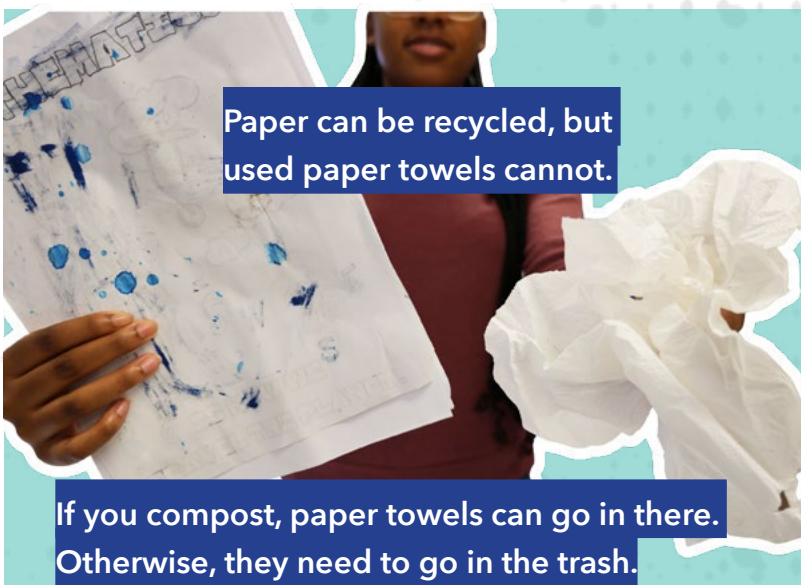
But even though these empty chip bags might look recyclable, they go in the trash.



All the cookies are gone. This tin can be recycled.



Like most paper, this unopened junk mail can be recycled.



Paper can be recycled, but used paper towels cannot.

If you compost, paper towels can go in there. Otherwise, they need to go in the trash.



Naya's old toothbrush can go straight into the trash.



Batteries and old light bulbs need a special drop-off, not the trash or recycling.



Yum! We all love pizza. Pizza boxes, even greasy ones, can be recycled.



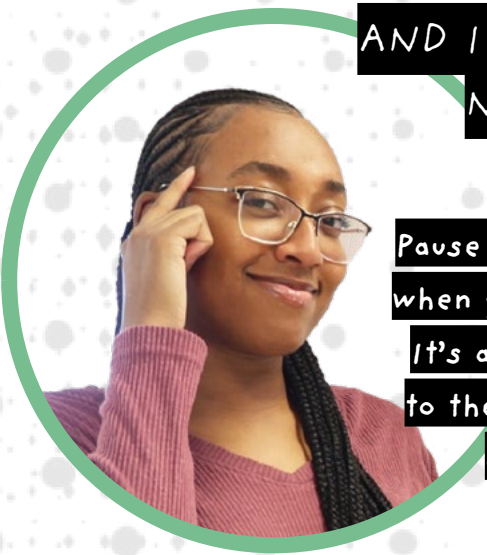
This orange bag can be turned into a dish scrubber with a simple craft.



Food scraps and plant waste can be composted.



AND IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW, NOW YOU KNOW.



It's your turn.

Pause and make the right choice when you throw something away.

It's a small way to be a friend to the environment and make a

difference every day. ♻️



STAY CONNECTED WITH SWACO!



Scan the QR code to plan a landfill tour, look up where to take hard-to-recycle items and discover food scrap composting sites in Franklin County!



Christy Walters

Community Relations Coordinator

Hobbies: Gardening and planting flowers for bees and butterflies, going to concerts with friends and checking out local restaurants.



GREENSPOT: HELPING COLUMBUS SHINE



We spoke with Christy Walters from Columbus GreenSpot about simple ways we can help the environment, what sustainability means and how small everyday choices can make Columbus a healthier and greener city for everyone.

If someone has never heard of GreenSpot before, how would you describe it in one sentence?

GreenSpot is a free city club that helps people, schools, and businesses learn easy ways to protect nature and keep Columbus clean.

What does the word “sustainability” mean?

Sustainability means using Earth’s treasures like water, trees and energy carefully so we have enough today and plenty left over for kids in the future. It is like sharing a giant box of crayons so that there are still bright colors left for the next class!

Why is sustainability important for a city like Columbus?

Our city is growing super fast and adding lots of new homes and neighbors. Being sustainable keeps our air healthy to breathe, protects our drinking water and ensures we have plenty of green parks to play in.

GreenSpot is part of Columbus Water & Power. What does Columbus Water & Power do?

Columbus Water & Power sends clean, safe water straight to your home’s sinks and showers, and cleans the dirty water that goes down the drain. They also keep our neighborhood streetlights glowing at night and help the city use clean energy from the sun whenever possible.

What is a “green job” and can someone in Columbus get one?

A green job is a career where you get paid to help the planet, like installing solar panels, planting trees or testing river water to make sure it is safe for fish. The City of Columbus is working to create thousands of these jobs so you can grow up to have an awesome career that protects nature!

What are some simple things people can do that actually make a bigger difference than they realize?

Turning off the faucet while you brush your teeth saves tons of water from being wasted down the drain. Also, turning off the TV and lights when you leave a room saves lots of electricity!

What is something small that kids can do to help the environment right now?

You can become a recycling superhero by placing empty plastic bottles, metal cans and clean paper directly into the recycling bin. You can also pick up litter on your school playground so the wind does not blow it into nature.

What is one thing people do that accidentally hurts the environment?

Washing cars in a driveway sends soapy and dirty water into the street, which flows straight into local creeks where fish and frogs live. You should always wash your car at the car wash or in your yard so the dirty soapy water doesn’t harm our streams and rivers. Another mistake is putting plastic bags into the recycling bin, because they get tangled up and jam the city’s big sorting machines!



What are some of your favorite local sustainability or environmental protection projects happening around Columbus right now?

The city is planting thousands of new trees through the Urban Forestry Master Plan to give neighborhoods more cool shade and places for birds to nest. Columbus is also building more bike paths so families can pedal safely to the park instead of driving cars.

What is one easy “swap” people can make in daily life to reduce waste?

Swap out squishy plastic water bottles that get thrown away for a reusable metal water bottle that you can fill up and use every single day!

What is your favorite thing about the Columbus community?

My favorite thing is how much people here love working together, like neighbors joining hands to plant neighborhood gardens or clean up local parks.

Are there any local environmental groups, gardens, or projects that you especially love?

The Franklin Park Conservatory has awesome gardens where kids can see how yummy food grows from tiny seeds. Also, a group called FLOW brings volunteers together to clean up riverbanks and plant trees along our local rivers. Keep Columbus Beautiful is so fun to pick up litter with and Green Columbus is an awesome volunteer group that gives away free trees if you live in Franklin County!

If kids ran Columbus for one week, what environmental changes do you think they would make first?

Kids would probably build giant community treehouses, put bright recycling bins on every

playground and create massive gardens filled with flowers for butterflies and bees. You might even replace standard school buses with electric ones that run quietly and do not puff out smelly smoke! Kids would probably require everyone to ride bikes to school instead of driving cars.

If animals in Columbus could talk, which one do you think would complain most about humans?

The fish in our rivers would complain the most because trash and oily water from our streets wash right down storm drains into their watery bedrooms. This is their home, too! We are their neighbors and we should make sure not to trash their habitats.

Which Ohio animal do you think would make the best mayor of Columbus?

The North American beaver would make the best mayor because beavers are natural builders, excellent at managing water and know exactly how to work together as a team!

What is your favorite thing to do outside in Columbus?

Walking along the Scioto Mile downtown is fantastic because you can watch ducks splash in the river and see beautiful native flowers blooming along the paths.

If a family wants to become more sustainable, where would you suggest they start?

Your family can celebrate with GreenSpot online for free and choose easy goals, like using reusable grocery bags or reusable coffee cups for your parents. You can also visit the Community Backyards program to get free seeds or a discounted rain barrel that catches water for your garden. Families can sign up for the GreenSpot newsletter at www.columbusgreenspot.org or drop me an email at greenspot@columbus.gov! 🌱

SUMMER PUZZLE PARTY

Can you solve every challenge?

Search, match, count, and puzzle your way through the page!

TOAD SHADOW MATCH

Can you find the right shadow for our toad?



1.



2.



3.



4.

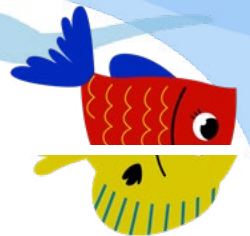
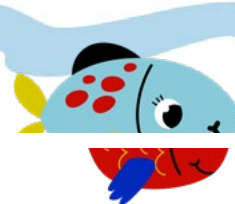
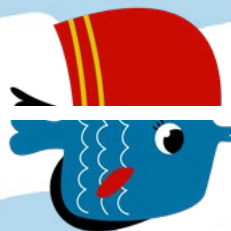
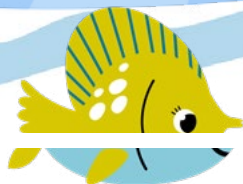


5.



FISHY MIX-UP

Draw lines to connect the matching fish parts and complete each fish.



WILD WORD SCRAMBLE

Connect the mixed-up word parts to reveal the correct nature names.

SUN

LADY

WOOD

GRASS

BUTTER

HOPPER

FLY

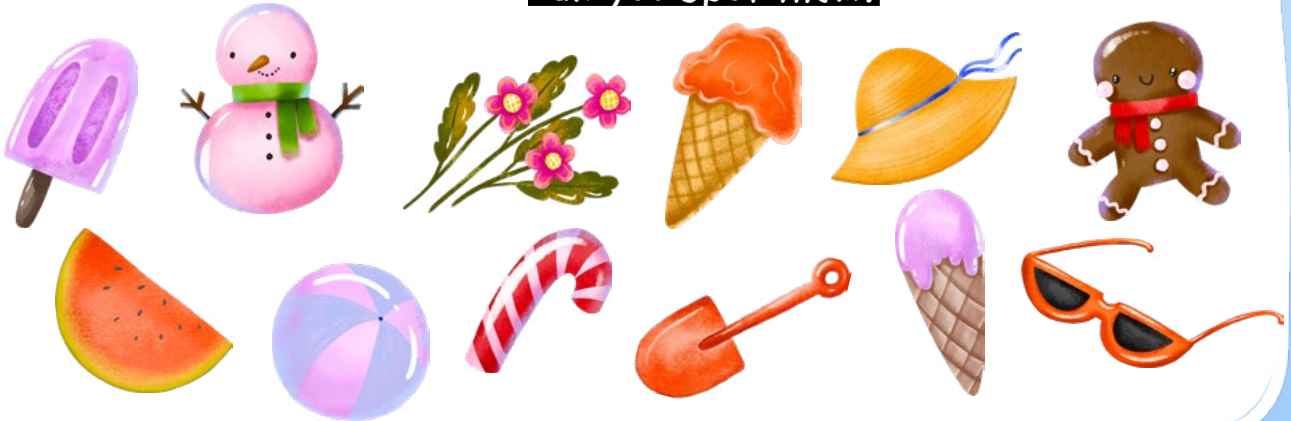
FLOWER

BUG

PECKER

SUMMER SORT-OUT

Three items do not belong in summer. Can you spot them?



PUZZLE PIECE SEARCH

Look closely at the loose puzzle pieces. Which one fits the picture?



A



B



C



D



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Nature Art with Yusuf

WATCH THE VIDEO

Follow Yusuf on a trip to the creek where he gets inspired to create fun nature art! Quack quack!



Take the Audio Quiz →



What's That Sound???

Can you guess the sounds of nature?
Put your ears to the test!

Find it all in our
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RIBBIT!

ANSWERS

Page 1

The bees are hiding on pages 3, 15, 18, 23 and 24.

Page 11

1D, 2A, 3B, 4H, 5C, 6G, 7E, 8F

Page 14

True! They can use their big wings like paddles to swim to shore.

Page 26

Toad Shadow Match: 4.
Fishy Mix-Up:



Wild Word Scramble:
Sunflower, Ladybug, Woodpecker,
Grasshopper, Butterfly.

Page 27

Summer Sort-Out:



Puzzle Piece Search: B.

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Interested in volunteering or partnering with us? Reach out to us at contact@naturewisecolumbus.org.

About Ribbit! Magazine

Ribbit! Magazine is published quarterly by Naturewise Columbus. Our mission is to connect children in Columbus with the environment through Ribbit!, our free community magazine that inspires curiosity, learning and a sense of stewardship for the natural world.

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STAY TUNED FOR FALL!

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