

## Montpelier North Wildlife Habitat Site

**Oldcastle Company:** The Shelly Company

**Location:** Montpelier, Ohio, USA

**Size:** 70 acres

**Certification:**

- *Wildlife at Work*, 2009; Recertification 2011

**Awards & Recognition:**

- Rookie of the Year Award, 2009
- Finalist, Pollinator Advocate Award, 2010 & 2011
- Finalist, Prairies for Tomorrow Award, 2010

**Partnerships:** Pheasants Forever, Ohio Department of National Resources (ODNR) & North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC)



The 70-acre Montpelier North Wildlife Habitat site, a past sand and gravel mining operation, is located in a rural area outside of Montpelier, Ohio. The site is located half a mile north of the St. Joseph River and five miles south of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Lake La Su An Wildlife area.

In 2008, the Montpelier North site began transforming and developing its wildlife habitat. First, to combat the decline of season grasses in Ohio, volunteers planted five acres of cool season grasses and the following year, added an additional 10 acres of native warm season grasses to expand grassland habitat on the site. A number of invasive species including autumn olive, multiflora rose, Canada thistle, and phragmites were found in various areas of the site. A plan was implemented to control these invasive plants because, without control, these species can spread over large areas and displace native plants, which are of higher value to native wildlife.

### Wildlife

Frogs, turtles, wolves, coyotes, and waterfowl; native pollinator species

### Foliage

Cool- and warm-season grasses, wildflowers, native scrubs and trees

### Additional Features

Water feature, basking rocks and logs, pollinator garden, on-site wildlife learning center

In 2008, the eastern shoreline was graded and grasses were planted on the slopes to improve wildlife access and control erosion to the 50-acre lake. The lake was further augmented to attract a number of native wildlife with the addition of basking logs, which are valuable to frogs, turtles and waterfowl. In 2011, four wood duck boxes were installed and plans implemented to begin a turtle monitoring program using the slopes as nesting grounds. Annually, employees participate in fish tournaments to assist with monitoring and inventorying. The site's wildlife team was invited by the Montpelier Water Department in 2010 and 2011 to be a presenter at its annual Water Party event to help educate local students about the area's water resources, pollinators and native wildlife

planting. The site has extended an invitation to host the event in 2012.

Continuing the wildlife enhancements on the site, additional efforts focused on increasing habitat for native pollinator species. A water feature, basking elements and pollinator gardens consisting of two acres of wildflowers, shrubs and trees were constructed to further benefit valuable pollinator species since 2009.

In 2009, the site hosted its first *Wildlife at Work* day during which 100 saplings of native trees were planted and, in 2010, another 200 native trees were added. Also in 2010, the site hosted its first National Pollinator Week Kick-off event and Open House to promote and heighten pollinator awareness, and volunteers transformed a building on the site into a Wildlife Learning Center, for environmental education and related activities.

The Montpelier North Wildlife Habitat site received international recognition by winning the coveted 2009 Wildlife Habitat Council's Rookie of the Year award; this annual award goes to one newly certified program that exemplifies a superior wildlife habitat program. Due to Montpelier North's pollinator management and monitoring efforts, in 2010 and 2011, the site was nominated for the Pollinator Advocate Award and the Prairies for Tomorrow Award at the 2011 Wildlife Habitat Annual Symposium. ■