The Denison Biological Reserve: 50 years of Teaching, Research, and Fun
Robert W. Alrutz
(1921 - 1997)

Professor of Biology
Denison University
1952-1990
Hobart Farm 1875

New Historical Atlas of Licking County, Ohio, 1875
With the acquisition of the 150-acre Hobart Farm bordering the north edge of the University it has become possible to embark upon the development of needed natural facilities. Upon these lands will be created the Denison University Biological Reserve. Such does not involve brick and mortar, but rather space. Mere space, that fast disappearing commodity, is the first prerequisite of such facilities. There must be enough to provide variety, enough to withstand varied use without interference with the natural processes, enough to protect fragile nature from encroachments by human activity.
Designing a Land Lab

1965
Habitats

Study Plots
It is the intention of the Board of Trustees:

That approximately one hundred acres of the east parcel of The Hobart Farm and fifty acres of the adjoining Goodrich Farm (the precise areas and boundaries to be determined by the University Administration) be set apart as a Denison University Biological Reserve and be dedicated to that purpose.

Formal establishment of the Biological Reserve 1966
Denison University Biological Reserve dedication
April 23, 1966
Norpell Presents Land To Denison

Jerome B. Norpell, president of the Licking County Building and Savings Company and a 1918 alumnus of Denison University, has presented his alma mater with 50 acres of prime timberland as an addition to the previously established Denison Biological Reserve.

The Norpell property was unimproved farm land in 1946 when he purchased it and began his planting. Since then he estimates that 63,000 trees have been planted and that 38 to 40 varieties are represented in the tract.

Norpell used the first tree planter available in the state of Ohio in placing some of his nursery stock in the late 1940s.

Present also at the brief informal ceremony were Thomas E. Norrell, nephew of the donor, development office; Dr. Charles E. Graham of the reserve board; Dr. Allan L. Reback of the biology faculty; Herman L. Counts, purchasing agent; and Charles K. Henderson, director of public information.
Norpell Section added in 1966
THE TAYLOR-OCHS DIVISION OF THE BIOLOGICAL RESERVE

In 1967 Denison University purchased the 130 acre tract of land of which, by purchase agreement, the previous owners shall retain life-time use. Areas will continue to serve for pasturage for the herd of riding horses used in instructional programs. This continues a use initiated
Denison University Biological Reserve
350 acres open for business - 1967
Biology Courses at the Biological Reserve
1967-68

Biology 214 - Environmental Biology

Emphasis upon the relation of the organism to the physical environment

Biology 221 - Community Ecology

The relationships of populations of organisms to each other and to the physical environment

Biology 240 - Behavior

The relationships between organisms and within single species populations of organisms
First recorded Senior Research project - 1967
Proposed DUBR Field Station (1968)
Ecological Succession

1964

2016
Faculty Succession
Polly Anderson Field Station

opened 1996
under the Old Barn 1966

PA Field Station 1996
Student/Faculty Research

>100 student research projects

>78 co-authored scientific publications
Presentations at Meetings of Professional Societies
Trees
109 species -

Flowers
182 species
Dragonflies & Damselflies
59 species

Butterflies & Moths
174 species
Amphibians
18 species

Reptiles
10 species
Mammals
25 species

Birds
135 species
8 miles of hiking trails open to the public year-round.
Denison’s Solar Farm
Online in 2017
This is but a beginning of what promises to be a real and fundamentally essential addition to the Denison science program. Because of our peculiar and fortunate position regarding adjacent land areas, we have, indeed, an obligation to promote ecological studies now so pressing on man’s future survival on this planet. (See photos on page 8).

— Robert W. Alrutz, Chairman of Biology