



CONTACT: Dawn Anderson
(617) 338-4455, ext. 149
dawn_anderson@aptonline.org

PRESS RELEASE

“Oak Openings Region: Discovering Our Natural Heritage” Explores One of America’s Last Great Places

Long before America’s colonial settlement and westward expansion, dense Eastern forests gave way to an extensive patchwork of oak savannas and wet prairies that covered 30 million acres, eventually meeting up with the vast Western grasslands. “Oak Openings Region: Discovering Our Natural Heritage” explores a rare vestige of this unique and beautiful habitat, located in Northwest Ohio and designated by the Nature Conservancy as “one of America’s Last Great Places.”

Beginning with the first settlers in the early 1800’s, agriculture, urban and suburban development have wiped out most of America’s Oak Openings. However, remnants can still be found in Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa. One of the largest and best examples is a 130-square-mile ecosystem in Northwest Ohio, extending through Lucas, Henry and Fulton Counties.

Viewers of “Oak Openings Region” will see stunning images of the flora and fauna living within the region, including the rare lark sparrow, eastern prickly pear cactus, black and white oaks, the elusive spotted turtle, brilliant blue lupines, and the endangered Karner blue butterfly. The destruction and development of America’s oak savannas has meant widespread loss of the wild lupine, the Karner blue caterpillar’s sole source of food. Since the late 1990’s, the Toledo Zoo has been working with naturalists in Northwest Ohio’s Oak Openings Region to preserve the wild lupine, and reintroduce the Karner blue butterfly to the area.

The half-hour program also features the men and women who are dedicated to creating a network of natural spaces and corridors, or a “Green Ribbon,” to connect and preserve the last remnants of the region. On-going efforts to conserve habitat have been taking place since the late 1920’s when Edwin Lincoln Moseley, a professor at what is now Bowling Green State University, brought the region to the attention of naturalists worldwide. Since then, Oak Openings has been a “hot spot” for researchers and scientists,

keen on studying this rare ecosystem, created thousands of years ago as the last glaciers and post-glacial lakes receded north.

For 41 years, American Public Television (APT) has been a major source of programming for the nation's public television stations. APT has more than 10,000 hours of available programming including *Discovering the Real World of Harry Potter*, *Globe Trekker*, *Muhammad Ali: Through the Eyes of the World*, *Nightly Business Report*, *Rick Steves' Europe*, *Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home*, *Ballykissangel*, *Brian Jacques' Redwall* and *The Three Tenors Christmas*. APT is known for identifying innovative programs and developing creative distribution techniques for producers. In four decades, it has established a tradition of providing public television stations nationwide with program choices that enable them to strengthen and customize their schedules. Press should contact Donna Hardwick at 617-338-4455 ext. 129 or via email to donna_hardwick@aptonline.org. For more information about APT's programs and services, log on to aptonline.org.