



## Land Conservancy, Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland partner to expand bird sanctuary

Western Reserve Land Conservancy has partnered with the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland to acquire and permanently preserve approximately 80.5 acres of land that will be added to the adjacent Hach-Otis Sanctuary and State Nature Preserve located on Skyline Drive in the City of Willoughby Hills. The extension project effectively doubles the size of the Lake County sanctuary, permanently protects critical riparian and upland forest habitat along the Chagrin River, and increases public access to the river.

Jim Tomko, president of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland remarked, "Our mission is to promote conservation and the appreciation of birds and other wildlife through habitat preservation and educational activities. We can't imagine a more perfect match for our mission statement. This sanctuary is an emerald gem and we feel so fortunate to add it to our Hach-Otis Sanctuary to be preserved forever in its natural state."

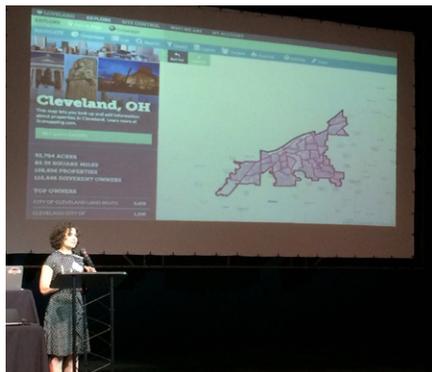


*The Hach-Otis extension project provides easier public access to the Chagrin River.*

Between 1944 and 1947 two contiguous properties in Willoughby Hills were donated to the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland (formerly The Cleveland Bird Club), to form the 81-acre Hach-Otis Sanctuary. The sanctuary was dedicated as a State Nature Preserve by the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in 1977.

Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland members have worked over the past 30 years to expand the sanctuary. The Land Conservancy began helping the Audubon Society with the expansion project in 2010.

*see Hach-Otis Extension on page 4...*



*Janis Bowdler of JPMorgan Chase shared her community development experience with the crowd at the 3C's Mapping Project launch in Cleveland.*

## Data-driven decision making tool launched in Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati

Ohio faces serious property challenges, ranging from blight removal to property reuse to new development. Groups and individuals often lack easy access to the property information needed to make the best possible policy, planning, and land-use decisions.

To address this concern JPMorgan Chase recently supported Western Reserve Land Conservancy and Loveland Technologies with a \$1 million grant for the development of online property data dashboards for Ohio's three biggest cities: Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. In April, the team toured the state to unveil the 3C's Mapping Dashboards to community development professionals and partners.

*see 3C's Project on page 8...*

## Kirby Broadnax honored as Next City Vanguard

This spring, Kirby Broadnax will join 40 of the world's top urban professionals under the age of 40 at the Next City Vanguard Conference in Montreal.

Broadnax serves as the Francis H. Beam Fellow for Placemaking and Equity, a fellowship generously funded through the Saint Luke's Foundation. A former elementary school teacher and trained mediator, she now works with residents and organizations in Cleveland's Buckeye, Mount Pleasant, and Woodland Hills neighborhoods to green and repurpose vacant lots and activate spaces in the community. Outside of work, Broadnax volunteers as a community organizer with her local "activist" group called Bridging The Tracks. The group uses art to connect residents of the Buckeye, Shaker Square, Larchmere, and Woodland Hills communities across physical and perceived divides.

"I feel so honored to have the opportunity to participate in the Vanguard Conference with other impressive and active leaders," Broadnax emphasized. "I look forward to learning creative strategies around equitable and resident-driven community building, land reuse, and placemaking that I can bring back to my work here in Cleveland."

Next City is a nonprofit organization aimed at inspiring social, economic, and environmental change in cities through journalism and events around the world. Each year, they select a prestigious group of young urban innovators to attend the Vanguard Conference. The organization notes, "Solving urban



*Kirby Broadnax engages community members while explaining the proper way to plant tree seedlings at EarthFest in April.*

problems means working across divides and breaking silos, so Vanguard convenes professionals across sectors, including architecture, art, civic technology, community development, entrepreneurship, government, transportation, and urban planning. Each year, Next City selects applicants whose smart ideas for cities, experience in the field, and ambition for the future all show great promise."

Broadnax is the only Vanguard from Ohio to be selected through this year's competitive application process.

"Kirby is smart, thoughtful, and bold. She is a natural leader," emphasized Jim Rokakis, vice president of the Land Conservancy and director of its Thriving Communities program. "She takes on difficult situations that require all of those qualities. We are fortunate to have Kirby on staff and in the community." 🌻

## Photography show features nature around the world

Susan Onysko is a travel photographer who has devoted the last decade to the art of capturing evocative stories from some of the most remote and extreme locations of our world, including places like Bhutan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Morocco, Patagonia, India, Thailand, Cambodia, Antarctica, Tibet, Vietnam, Myanmar, Turkey, and more.

"Photographing nature leaves me feeling connected and living in the moment in a way that is indescribably unique," Onysko explained. "The grace, power, and grandeur of nature always take my breath away and leaves me wanting more."

Onysko's work has been featured in Popular Photography Magazine and Photo District News and is on display at the Western Reserve Land Conservancy Conservation Center Art Gallery through June 23. All are invited to a reception with the artist on Thursday, May 25 from 5 to 7 PM. 🌻



Susan Onysko

# Arbor Day CLE takes root

Arbor Day provides a unique opportunity to celebrate the many benefits trees provide. From capturing stormwater and providing wildlife habitat, to improving public health and adding economic value to neighborhoods, a growing body of research and documentation validates the critical role that robust tree canopies play in our communities.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy is a proud member of the Cleveland Tree Coalition, a group of more than 30 public, private, and community stakeholders that have partnered with the City of Cleveland to rebuild the urban forest. Though Cleveland was once nicknamed the Forest City, the city has lost about half of its trees over the past 70 years and continues to lose vital tree canopy – nearly 100 acres each year. Stakeholders have begun working to achieve the goals established by the Cleveland Tree Plan, a community-wide collaboration to rebuild the urban forest through partnership. Officially adopted in 2016, the plan charges Cleveland Tree Coalition member organizations with various actions to reforest the Forest City.

One of those charges is to make Arbor Day a Cleveland institution. The Land Conservancy stepped up to this challenge by hosting a number of tree-mendous events this past April:

## Tree Seedling Giveaway with Cleveland Tree Coalition

Western Reserve Land Conservancy, KeyBank, and Forest City Realty Trust sponsored the distribution of 1,000 tree seedlings at EarthFest, the nation’s longest running Earth Day celebration hosted by Earth Day Coalition, with the help of volunteers from City Year, Cuyahoga County Planning, Holden Forests & Gardens, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and the North Face Store. An additional 1,500 tree seedlings were distributed by Cleveland Tree Coalition members at various Arbor Day events.



## Toast to Trees

Nearly 150 people attended our Toast to Trees celebration at Nano Brew Cleveland to support the Land Conservancy’s urban reforestation efforts. Market Garden Brewery generously sponsored the event and brewed a special tree-themed beer for the occasion aptly named *Root Flare*. Proceeds from the event benefit reforestation efforts.



## Tree Seedling Giveaway with Mitchell’s Ice Cream

For the second year in a row, the Land Conservancy teamed up with Mitchell’s Ice Cream to distribute 2,000 complimentary tree seedlings to customers on Arbor Day. Throughout the day, Land Conservancy staff members and volunteers chatted with customers about the benefits of trees and proper planting techniques. Special thanks to Mitchell’s, Jakprints, and the Northeast Reintegration Center for their support.



## Arbor Day Tree Planting and Cleveland Tree Canopy Announcement

More than 75 community and student volunteers gathered at Breakthrough Schools’ Citizens Academy in Cleveland’s Glenville neighborhood to celebrate Arbor Day. At the event, City of Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson announced the City of Cleveland’s new tree canopy goal, an important next step in fulfilling the Cleveland Tree Plan. The Cleveland Tree Coalition will plant more than 50,000 trees in Cleveland by 2020 and grow Cleveland’s tree canopy from 19 percent to 30 percent by 2040. The Land Conservancy pledges to ultimately grow Cleveland’s tree canopy to 40 percent. After the announcement, 25 fifth-grade students – alongside Breakthrough Schools staff and volunteers, and Cleveland Tree Coalition members – planted 15 robust trees on the school campus. The event was generously sponsored by Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and Eaton Corporation, as well as Sherwin-Williams and Westfield Insurance. Volunteer and equipment support from Breakthrough Schools, City of Cleveland Office of Sustainability, Holden Forests & Gardens, and Davey Tree were critical to the successful tree planting. 🌻



Special thanks to our major Arbor Day sponsors:



*Hach Otis Extension continued...*

The Land Conservancy worked with three separate landowners to acquire the eight parcels comprising the extension project. The property was recently acquired and transferred to the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, which retains ownership and full responsibility for the maintenance and management of the expanded property. The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland granted a conservation easement on the property to the Land Conservancy; the easement limits future development and ensures the property will remain a wildlife sanctuary. The new property will open to the public in the near future.

Funding for the project was generously provided by a Sustain Our Great Lakes grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and ArcelorMittal, an Ohio Public Works Commission Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Fund grant, the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, the Charles Lathrop Pack Trust, Cleveland Museum of Natural History Trout Club, and numerous individual donors.

The newly preserved property boasts a large tract of mature forest bisected by ravines that open into forest floodplains dominated by towering walnut, cottonwood, and sycamore trees that skirt the edges of nearly one half mile of the Chagrin River. The mature hardwood canopy and hemlock ravines provide extensive breeding habitat for rare species including the yellow-bellied sapsucker and cerulean warbler, which are both state designated Species of Concern. Winter wrens, Canada warblers, and dark-eyed juncos have also been spotted on the property.

Additionally, the permanent conservation of this property eliminates the threat of development at the site. This safeguards the Chagrin River from development-associated



*Pictured here is the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a species of concern found at the Hach-Otis Sanctuary. John Lillich, trustee of the Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland and manager of the Hach-Otis Wildlife Sanctuary explained, "The National Audubon Society has designated the Chagrin River Valley as an Important Bird Area. Many wild species are making their last stand from extinction in these protected areas."*

runoff, which in turn, helps to protect the quality of the Chagrin River watershed.

"With tremendous vistas, critical wildlife habitat, and spectacular views of the area, Hach-Otis Sanctuary has historically been a popular destination for birders, hikers, naturalists, and families," explained Brett Rodstrom, vice president of eastern field operations for the Land Conservancy. "The sanctuary's naturally eroding bluffs made river access nearly impossible for hikers, anglers, and others visiting the park. This acquisition now allows for simple public access to the Chagrin River."

The significant standalone conservation value of the expanded Hach-Otis Sanctuary is amplified by its connection to several conserved properties, including Cleveland Metroparks' North Chagrin Reservation and Lake Metroparks' Pleasant Valley Park, and its close proximity to several Land Conservancy conservation easement properties. 🌻



## Preserving the Western Reserve

Pat McCaslin's family purchased land in southern Lorain County in the early 1960s. Her family is only the second family to own the Huntington Township property since the land was settled as part of the original Western Reserve. McCaslin explained, "Both my parents grew up in the city during the depression and, like most parents, they wanted a better life for their children. They worked hard, scrimped, and saved to bring us out to the country from what my father referred to as the 'concrete jungle.'"

This past year, Pat and her husband, Ric, permanently preserved 135 acres of the property with a conservation easement. A majority of the property consists of hardwood and evergreen forest. Steep ravines bisect the forested habitat and contain nearly two miles of well-shaded, high-quality tributaries to the West Branch of the Black River. Agricultural fields comprise approximately 27 acres of the property and are planted with a standard rotation of row crops.

"Both Ric and I were raised to love and respect nature," Pat emphasized, "Working with Western Reserve Land Conservancy gave us the opportunity to perpetuate the dream my parents had to ensure the preservation of the green space they worked so hard to acquire." 🌻

# Former Ashtabula camp to become new public park

Ashtabula County Metroparks recently partnered with Western Reserve Land Conservancy to purchase and permanently preserve the 129-acre former Camp Yakewi in Austinburg Township. The new public park, Upper Grand River Metropark, will be managed by the park district and will offer outdoor recreational and educational opportunities including hiking, birding, camping, and canoeing.

Ashtabula County Metroparks applied for and was awarded grant funding to purchase the former camp through the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund, a voter-approved program to fund projects preserving natural areas in the state, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act Small Grants Program, a federally funded source of revenue to support wetland conservation projects for the benefit of wetlands-associated waterfowl, migratory birds, and other wildlife.

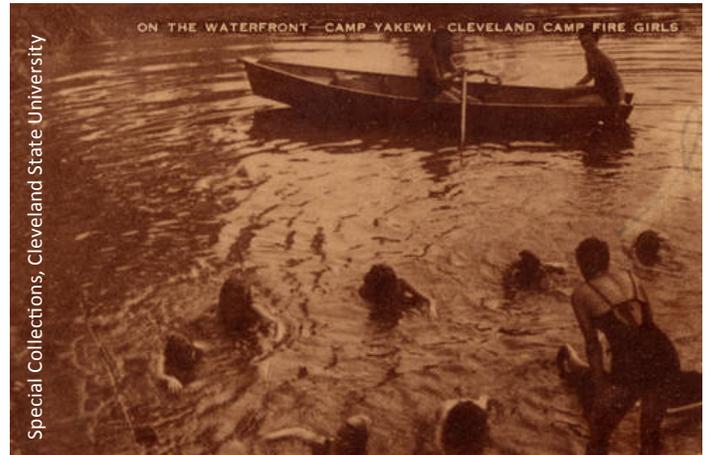
“It’s not often you have an opportunity to acquire three-quarters of a mile of Grand River frontage with a boat launch for public access for just pennies of our county taxpayer dollars,” said Larry Frimerman, executive director of Ashtabula County Metroparks.

**“We are grateful for our partnership with Western Reserve Land Conservancy. This partnership allowed Metroparks to leverage state and federal dollars to expand our park system without taking our focus away from opening parks and constructing trails.”**

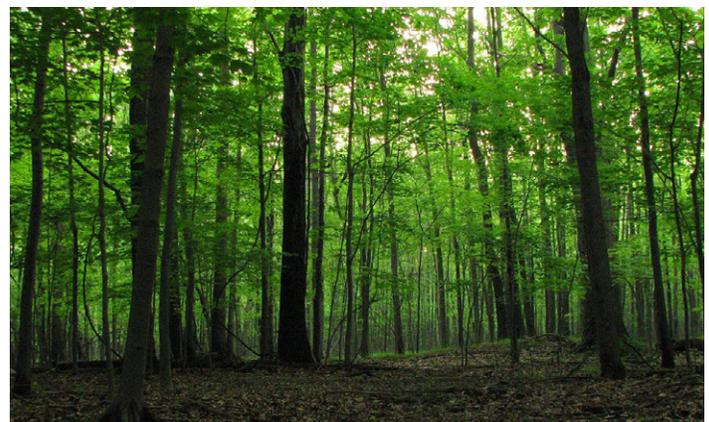
- Larry Frimerman, executive director of Ashtabula County Metroparks

As part of the funding requirements, the park district granted a conservation easement to Western Reserve Land Conservancy to permanently conserve the former camp. The easement allows for continued use of the existing cabin sites as well as the creation of a canoe launch.

The property consists of diverse habitats including wetland, wet meadow, and floodplain habitats as well as mowed areas, old field, and forest. The property also boasts more than one and one-quarter miles of the Wild and Scenic Grand River and its tributaries. These diverse habitats provide a home to the state-threatened Howe’s sedge, spotted turtle, and black sandshell mussel. Bald eagle, wood thrush, and wood duck – three North American Wetlands Conservation Act priority bird species – have been spotted on the property.



*This Artvue postcard, from Special Collections at Cleveland State University Library, shows Cleveland Camp Fire Girls at Camp Yakewi.*



*Upper Grand River Metropark boasts high-quality and varied forest, wetland and river areas, and habitat for three state-threatened species.*

The Cleveland Council of Camp Fire Girls of America (now known as Camp Fire) hosted summer camps for their members at Camp Yakewi.

“Western Reserve Land Conservancy is grateful to have assisted Ashtabula’s growing park system in the permanent preservation of this unique property along the Grand River,” noted Brett Rodstrom, vice president of eastern field operations for the Land Conservancy. “The new public park will be a tremendous asset to the community.”

Ashtabula County Metroparks and Western Reserve Land Conservancy appreciate the support of project partners including Ohio Representative John Patterson, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Upper Grand River Metropark is currently under development and will be opened to the public at a later date. For more information on park details, please contact Ashtabula County Metroparks. 🌻



David Liam Kyle

## Fast Facts about the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

- The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is **one of the largest investments in the Great Lakes**. In 2010, a task force of 11 federal agencies developed a plan to put the historic, bipartisan initiative into action. The plan called for: cleaning up toxics and areas of concern; combating invasive species; promoting nearshore health by protecting watersheds from polluted runoff; restoring wetlands and other habitats; and working with partners on outreach.
- During the **first five years of the Initiative, over 2,500 projects were implemented** to improve water quality, clean up contaminated shoreline, and protect and restore native habitat and species in the Great Lakes.
- The **Grand River Lowlands funding was one of 14 GLRI grants allocated in 2015** to fund projects that continue to improve Great Lakes water quality by preventing phosphorus runoff and soil erosion that contribute to algal blooms in addition to reducing suspended sediments in Great Lakes tributaries.
- Other Western Reserve Land Conservancy conservation projects benefiting from GLRI funding include the creation of **Lake Erie Bluffs**, a nationally significant park now owned by Lake MetroParks; the **Beaver Creek/Bass Lake Corridor Project** which will protect and restore two miles of streams and 27 acres of wetlands in the Chagrin River Watershed; and the **Mount Zion Project** which protects 9.8 acres of wetland habitat in the Village of Highland Hills and helped implement the Mill Creek Watershed Action Plan.
- Western Reserve Land Conservancy **thanks Sen. Brown, Sen. Portman, Rep. Joyce, Rep. Kaptur, and other Ohio officials** for their commitment to funding this program.

## Protecting the Lowlands

Northeast Ohio is fortunate to have plentiful, high quality water resources. Clean water is important to healthy communities and ecosystems, and is closely tied to the health of the land.

The headwaters of the Wild and Scenic Grand River begin in Portage and Geauga counties. The river flows slowly northward through extensive swamp forests and wetland complexes in northern Trumbull County and southern Ashtabula County before making an abrupt turn westward, flowing through steep shale bluffs in Lake County and finally into Lake Erie. According to the Ohio Division of Natural Resources, the river “represents one of the finest examples of a natural stream to be found anywhere in Ohio.”

In early 2015, Western Reserve Land Conservancy secured funding to permanently preserve 1,000 acres in the Grand River Lowlands, an area targeted by many partner conservation organizations, given its rich natural resources. The Land Conservancy was awarded a \$750,000 federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant to purchase conservation easements from landowners along the Grand River in Ashtabula and Trumbull counties over the subsequent two years. The organization provided an additional \$250,000 for the project.

Brett Rodstrom, vice president of eastern field operations for the Land Conservancy, said preference in the conservation easement purchases was given to landowners in the Grand River Lowlands whose properties contain stream and river frontage, wetlands, and forests, as well as properties strategically located in conservation corridors. This water quality project moderates water flows in the Grand River during storms, reduces pollutants entering into the Grand, and reduces nutrient and sediment loadings to Lake Erie.

“It’s not often we are able to allocate funding for the purchase of conservation easements on private land – these dollars are simply not available that often,” Rodstrom explained.

With so much support from the Land Conservancy and participating landowners, for every federal dollar spent to date, another \$1.82 dollars have been generated in match. Purchased conservation easements are a cost effective means to achieve preservation of natural resources and stem the negative effects of land conversion. The total fair market value of the 12 completed tracts is approximately \$2.89 million. GLRI funding spent to date equates to only 20% of the fair market value, yet achieves the same conservation effects as if the land was purchased for ownership.

The project is expected to close by fall 2017 and is on target to exceed grant requirements by protecting approximately 1,200 acres, including an estimated five miles of streams and 400 acres of wetlands.

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### Land Conservancy works internationally to preserve 43 acres locally

Western Reserve Land Conservancy worked with Marjorie Townsend and her daughter, Mardy, to permanently preserve 43 acres in Windsor Township, Ashtabula County. The easement is adjacent to the Townsend's 175-acre easement which was recorded in 2000. The property is a mix of agricultural and forested land that boasts 3,000 linear feet of tributaries to the Grand River.

Interestingly, the final paperwork needed to close on the conservation easement was sent to the Republic of El Salvador for the signature of Mardy's husband, Jose Amilcar Martinez Perez. Chris Szell, director of conservation project management for the Land Conservancy, quipped that this is the first time the organization has worked internationally to preserve land locally.



### Three easements on neighboring Harpersfield Township properties preserve steep slopes

The Land Conservancy worked with three landowners at the end of Lafevre Road in Harpersfield Township, Ashtabula County to permanently preserve a 69-acre block of land along the Grand River. Steep slopes and critical wetland habitat are found on the properties along with mature forests. Combined, the properties preserved more than a half mile of state designated Wild and Scenic Grand River.

The vegetated and forested buffers along the river and its tributaries help control run-off, prevent erosion, and mitigate flooding to downstream properties which help to improve overall water quality in the Grand River watershed. All three easements prohibit timbering within 200 feet of the river.

**“The health of the Great Lakes is vital to the health of our region. As a region, we count on these amazing lakes for fresh water, recreation, transportation, and so much more. The Great Lakes economy and the jobs it generates depend on the continued revitalization of this resource.”**

- Rich Cochran, president and CEO of the Land Conservancy



### 200 acres preserved in partnership with Cleveland Museum of Natural History

As noted in the last edition of Landline, the Land Conservancy now holds conservation easements on three properties within the larger Grand River Terraces complex owned by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. The Ashtabula County properties include a forested 100-acre property in Morgan Township containing nearly a half mile of a headwater tributary to the Wild and Scenic Grand River; an additional 50-acre forested property in Morgan Township containing 1,350 feet of a high-quality headwater tributary to Bronson Creek which flows into the Grand River; and a 50-acre property in Trumbull Township consisting of forested wetland habitat boasting 1,650 feet of the Grand River itself while also protecting an additional 1,800 feet of tributary waters.

Renee Boronka, associate director for the natural areas division of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History noted, “We are pleased to partner with the Land Conservancy to add an extra layer of protection to parcels at our Grand River Terraces, which is nearing 1,000 acres of contiguous forest. This preserve provides excellent habitat for forest dependent birds.” 🌻

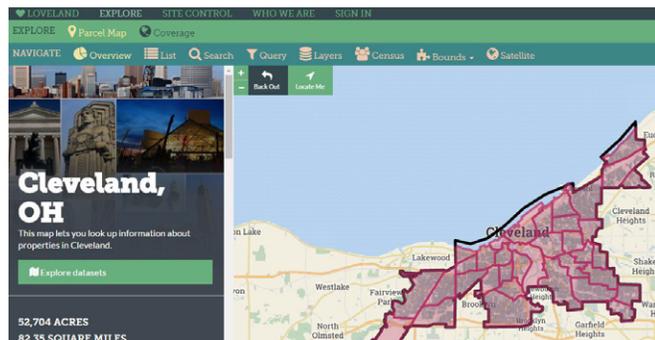
# Deep Dive: Land Conservancy heads up innovative urban

*In this new Landline section, we will profile innovative and important work done by Land Conservancy staff members.*

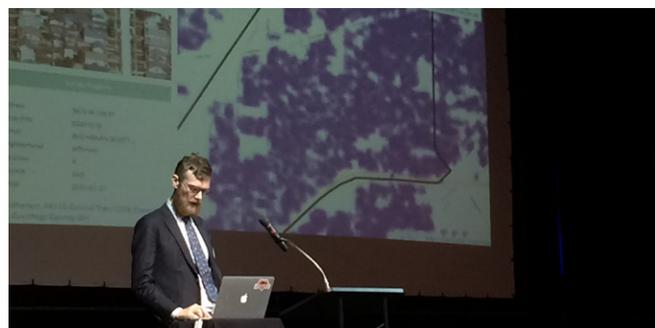
Affectionately known among practitioners as “VAPAC,” the Vacant and Abandoned Property Action Council, is widely regarded in the national community development field as the country’s best example of a collaborative response to the foreclosure and abandoned property crisis. VAPAC was founded in 2005 to bring together every entity in Cuyahoga County that touches foreclosure, vacant property, and neighborhood stabilization issues in an effort to ensure that state, county, and local efforts are coordinated for maximum community benefit.

VAPAC members represent 27 civic and nonprofit agencies, including federal, state, county, suburban, and urban government as well as academic, philanthropic, land banking, and community-based organizations. The council is chaired and staffed by Frank Ford, senior policy advisor for the Land Conservancy.

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*A screenshot of the Cleveland Dashboard at 3csmapping.com*



*Jerry Paffendorf, Co-Founder and CEO of Loveland Technologies, demonstrates how to use the 3C's Mapping Dashboards.*

## *3Cs Project continued...*

The 3C’s Mapping Dashboards will serve as a central resource for accurate and up-to-date property information for city governments, residents, community organizations, builders, and other users. The web-based tool easily allows users to explore city and neighborhood maps and dive into parcel-specific information. With just a few clicks of a mouse, users can visualize community data or add their own data to be visualized and studied. The dashboards can also display property survey information from those utilizing the Loveland Survey App.

The goal of the project is to make it easier for groups and individuals to identify and take action on property related problems, opportunities, and solutions in their communities.

This model has a history of success. JPMorgan Chase & Co. supported a similar initiative, known as Motor City Mapping, in Detroit. In 2015, the city’s philanthropic leadership banded together to commission a survey of blighted properties that gave local leadership the information needed to make time-sensitive investment decisions.

Loveland Technologies worked with community volunteers to map each of Detroit’s 380,000 parcels. JPMorgan Chase provided funding to create a dashboard that the Detroit Land Bank Authority used to identify and remove more than 10,600 dangerous structures and create a door-knocking campaign to save houses at risk of foreclosure. As a result, tax foreclosures declined nearly 50 percent in Detroit in 2016.

“We know from our work in Detroit: This information is powerful. The data tells a story and helps to create consensus among neighborhood stakeholders about the path forward toward neighborhood stabilization,” explained Janis Bowdler, managing director and head of community development for global philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase. Citing her previous work for Famicos Foundation, a community development corporation serving Cleveland’s Glenville neighborhood, Bowdler shared her enthusiasm about the sophisticated, yet easy-to-use online tool.

Jim Rokakis, vice president of Western Reserve Land Conservancy and director of our Thriving Communities program agreed. He added, “Our previous work with Loveland Technologies to complete the City of Cleveland Property Inventory in 2015 was immensely helpful. The partnership that JPMorgan Chase has now helped to foster with Loveland Technologies and community leaders across the state is going to pay real dividends.” 🌻

## policy and research initiatives

“The causes and drivers of the foreclosure crisis are complex, and have been continually evolving for more than a decade,” Ford noted. “New manifestations of the crisis seem to emerge every six to 12 months. VAPAC serves as a forum where these issues and challenges can surface, and where participants share best practices and brainstorm solutions.”

In addition to staffing VAPAC, Ford provides community development practitioners with research that tracks the latest trends in foreclosure, tax delinquency, vacancy, and home sale prices. Many of these studies, including a 2013 study published by Harvard University and 2016 study appearing in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, can be found on the Land Conservancy’s website at [www.wrlandconservancy.org](http://www.wrlandconservancy.org). 🌻



## Prairie restoration planting in Oberlin engages students, community members

In April, Oberlin College students and local residents worked with Western Reserve Land Conservancy to restore a natural prairie on previously farmed land on the Oberlin Great South Woods property.

The 63-acre property, which was targeted for conservation for more than a decade, was acquired by the Land Conservancy in October 2015. The property boasts high quality forests, wetlands, and a sedge meadow as well as 30 acres of previously farmed land.

This year marks the first year the field will not be farmed, as the public funding used to acquire the property does not permit continued agricultural use. This provided a fantastic opportunity for conservation partners to begin prairie restoration work of the former fields while they were relatively clear of invasive plants. The restoration work will further prevent the potential establishment of invasive species and spread to adjacent farmland.

“We planted a number of pollinator-friendly meadow and prairie seeds this spring and plan to plant additional native plants and seed this fall,” explained Kate Pilacky, Firelands associate field director for the Land Conservancy.

She explained further, “Prairie ecosystems attract a diversity of wildlife as habitat for grassland birds and key pollinating insects such as bees, butterflies, and ants. More grassland habitats have disappeared than any other habitat type on the continent because of sprawl, climate change, and conversion to cropland and forest. A vast community of pollinators and birds is tied to these rich prairie habitats, and they are losing their homes. This project is great for wildlife in so many ways, and humans will enjoy the beauty for generations to come!”



*A local resident casts wildflower seeds after Oberlin College students prepared the site of the prairie restoration.*

Students from Oberlin College’s Environment and Society 101 class helped plan the project. They joined members of the Track and Field team, to assist with the prairie planting.

“From direct service to administrative projects, we’re pleased that Oberlin College students have had the opportunity to support the Western Reserve Land Conservancy in a variety of ways over the years, including the annual Day of Service during new student orientation, the Community Service Work-Study Program, and community-based learning courses,” shared Trecia Pottinger, Oberlin College’s director at the Bonner Center for Service and Learning.

This is not the only connection Oberlin College has to the project. In addition to significant Clean Ohio Conservation Fund grant funds secured by Western Reserve Land Conservancy to acquire the property, additional funding from the Oberlin College Green EDGE (Ecological Design and General Efficiency) Fund helped make the project possible. 🌻

# Past Events



The annual **Adam's and Haley's Run Clean Up** took place on April 15 in Akron with 25 volunteers and community members who helped pick up trash, rake trails, and beautify the two urban streams. Special thanks to LKQ Corporation for sponsoring!



More than 100 people attended the **Eastern Region Reception** hosted by the Land Conservancy's Eastern Region Chapter. Guests celebrated the Land Conservancy's conservation success and learned about upcoming plans, including the preservation of Red Brook Preserve.



Medina Summit Chapter members shared more about the Land Conservancy's work with those attending the **Medina Earth Day Celebration**.



Special thanks to photographer Lori Diemer for hosting a **macro-photography workshop** at the Land Conservancy's Conservation Center for members of our Viewfinders Photography Group.



On Earth Day, Third Federal Foundation, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, and a host of Reforesting Slavic Village partners teamed up to plant 25 robust trees at the Boys & Girls Club in Cleveland's Slavic Village neighborhood. Special thanks to the Third Federal Foundation for sponsoring the tree planting event as well as a full series of Sherwick Tree Steward Trainings.



# Conservation Calendar

## **Grand River Clean Up** (VOLUNTEER)

Saturday, May 20 at Hidden Valley MetroPark in Madison, 8 AM - 1 PM

*Hike local parks and, weather permitting, canoe along the Grand River to collect unwanted waste.*

## **Vernal Pool Expedition with Ohio Wetlands Association** (LEARN)

Sunday, May 21 in Sullivan, 1 - 4 PM

*Join us for a hike of this property with high quality biodiversity, landscape ecology, and hydrological function.*

## **Art Gallery Reception with Susan Onysko** (CELEBRATE)

Thursday, May 25 at the Land Conservancy Conservation Center Gallery in Moreland Hills, 5 - 7 PM

*Artist Susan Onysko is a travel photographer who has devoted the last decade to the art of capturing evocative stories from some of the most remote and extreme locations of our world!*

## **World of Wildlife Bicycle Tour** (VOLUNTEER)

Saturday, June 11 at Kent State University Trumbull in Warren, 7:30 AM

*Volunteer with us and support the 13th annual Bicycle Tour along the Western Reserve Greenway.*

## **Firelands Gold Panning** (LEARN)

Sunday, July 16 at the Lorain County Metro Parks Vermillion River Reservation in Vermilion, 9 AM

*Come try your hand at gold panning, learn a bit about the river and have fun on a protected property.*

## **Ohio Land Bank Conference** (LEARN)

Monday, September 11 – Wednesday, September 13 in Cleveland

*Join us for the 7th Annual Ohio Land Bank Conference.*

## **EverGreen EverBlue** (SUPPORT)

Saturday, November 18 at Tenk Warehouse in Cleveland

*New date, new location, new experience! Tickets will go on sale soon for our annual gala.*

*Check our website for more information.*

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE!**

## **Sherwick Tree Steward Trainings** (LEARN)

*Check our website for the latest Sherwick Tree Steward Trainings hosted in partnership with Holden Forests & Gardens. Trainings are free, but advance registration requested.*

## **Sporting Circle Group** (JOIN)

*Check our website for the latest Sporting Circle outings – including a Perch Outing on Saturday, September 9 and Pheasant Outing on Saturday, September 30 – designed to engage sportsmen and women on designated properties.*

## **Viewfinders Photography Group** (JOIN)

*Check our website for the latest Viewfinders' instructional meetings and experiential outings – including a behind-the-scenes tour of the Medina Raptor Center on Saturday, July 22 – designed for all ages, skill levels, and camera types.*

## **Young Professionals Group** (JOIN)

*Check our website for the latest young professional engagement events – including a volunteer clean up along the Red Line Greenway on Monday, August 14 – designed for environmentally-conscious, sustainability-savvy, conservation-loving young professionals.*



# Western Reserve Land Conservancy

land - people - community

3850 Chagrin River Road  
Moreland Hills, OH 44022

www.wrlandconservancy.org  
440-528-4150

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## Thank you!



It has been great to engage with so many volunteers, donors, and partners this spring. Thank you for your continued support of Western Reserve Land Conservancy's work across the region! Together, we continue to provide the people of our region with essential natural assets – fertile farmland, mature forests, clean streams, and public parks – through land conservation and restoration. Together, we are making a difference!

## Contact Us

### Geauga, Lake, Ashtabula, Trumbull, Mahoning, Portage, Columbiana, Jefferson and Carroll counties

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### Lorain, Erie, Huron, Medina, Wayne, Stark and Summit counties

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### Cuyahoga County and urban work across Ohio

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## Offices

### Conservation Center (Central Office)

3850 Chagrin River Rd, Moreland Hills, OH 44022  
(440) 528-4150

### Chardon

102 East Park St, Chardon, OH 44024

### Firelands

P.O. Box 174, Oberlin, OH 44074  
(440) 774-4226

### Medina Marsh Conservation Center

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### Thriving Communities

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### Wayne County

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