



Landline

New Kelleys Island preserve created

Nestled just a few miles off Ohio’s north coast, many appreciate the rich geologic and natural heritage of Kelleys Island – from glacial grooves reminiscent of the ice age to pockets of globally-rare habitat that support rare and endangered species. For years, conservation partners have worked tirelessly to protect this heritage and provide public access to these natural wonders.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy recently worked with Ron Curilla and the Village of Kelleys Island to create the 15-acre Ed Curilla Preserve and add it to the island’s impressive interconnected system of natural areas.

The property is located on the southwest quadrant of the island, approximately a quarter mile north of the Lake Erie coastline and within walking distance of downtown.

The Curilla family purchased the property, once quarried and farmed, in 1972. Though there were plans to develop the property at one time, Ron Curilla talked his late father, Ed, out of building on it. “There are plenty of places to build, but this is a special place worthy of conserving,” noted Ron Curilla.

(continued on next page)



Western Reserve Land Conservancy has officially acquired the 202 year-old Kister Water Mill.

Kister Water Mill to be restored

Small water-powered mills once dotted the early American landscape. Few remain operational today, but thanks to the work of Western Reserve Land Conservancy plans are underway to restore, improve, and open one of the nation’s oldest working water-powered mills to the public.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy recently acquired Kister Water Mill and 15 acres of surrounding natural area, including the mill raceway. The property is located in Wayne County’s Clinton and Plain townships, eight miles southwest of Wooster.

Kister Water Mill was built in 1816 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Over the past two centuries, it has operated as a woolen mill, sawmill, gristmill, cider press, woodshop, and planing mill. All operations are powered by a waterwheel that measures 18-feet in diameter. “This mill is unusual because of the ability to perform multiple operations. Most historic mills specialized in making a single product,” Andy McDowell, vice president of western field operations for the Land Conservancy, explained.

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Kelleys Island (from page 1)

“We are proud to work with conservation partners to provide public access to these natural wonders,” said Andy McDowell, vice president of western field operations for the Land Conservancy.

The property boasts a 3-acre Great Lakes alvar community. McDowell explained that alvars are unique, globally significant habitats mostly found along shorelines where limestone bedrock lies flat and open with thin soils, sparse vegetation, and limited tree cover. In the United States, alvar occurs only within the Lake Erie Islands and in the northern parts of New York and Michigan. Alvars contain distinctive plant communities adapted to such extreme conditions. Among the plant species found within this unique community are red cedar and hackberry.

Mature forest makes up a significant share of the property. These forests provide important habitat for wildlife, especially migrating birds that depend on Kelleys Island as a critical stopover point. Two small ponds are also located on the property, which are of particular value to reptiles, amphibians, and a diverse array of dragonflies and damselflies.

In partnership with the Village of Kelleys Island grant funding was awarded to purchase the highly developable property through the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund. Additional funding for the project was provided through generous individual donations. The project has received wide community support including volunteer clean up help from Kelleys Island Audubon Club and ongoing stewardship support from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

Plans for the Ed Curilla Preserve are currently under development and the property will be opened to the public at a later date. 🌻



Visitors take a hike on the adjacent Huntley-Beatty Quarry Preserve created by the Land Conservancy and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in 2012.

“It was my greatest wish to see this happen. I hope future generations see the value of conserved properties like this.”

- Ron Curilla



Land Conservancy pursues accreditation

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. Western Reserve Land Conservancy is pleased to announce it is applying for accreditation. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant’s policies and programs. The Land Conservancy is committed to the land trust accreditation program as an avenue to strengthen its operations in order to lead to more effective land transactions, resulting in the permanent protection of some of our region’s most vital natural assets.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Western Reserve Land Conservancy complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may be mailed to: Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments, 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. They may also be faxed to 518-587-3183. Comments on Western Reserve Land Conservancy’s application will be most useful by October 28, 2018. For more information, please visit the Land Conservancy’s website. 🌻

Kister Water Mill (from page 1)

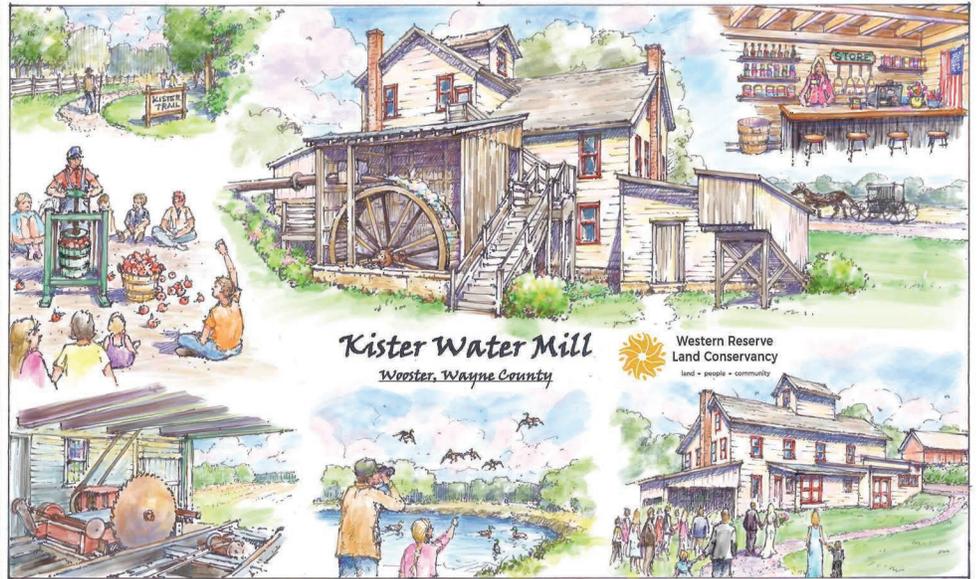
Additionally, the mill has unique machinery for creating custom-made parts used in mills across the country.

Remarkably, the mill is almost fully functional. The Land Conservancy has begun making the necessary improvements so that Kister Water Mill can be opened to the public as a history and education center. The restoration and renovation will be undertaken with funding from the State Capital Budget and a continued fundraising campaign.

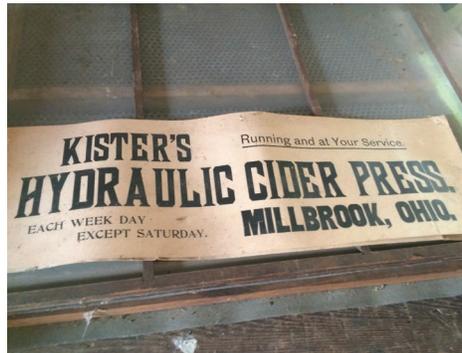
In addition to the historic preservation component, the Land Conservancy permanently conserved 15 acres of surrounding natural area as part of the project. The natural areas on the property contain a fragile, rare wetland ecosystem. Biologists who have surveyed the property have found several rare plants including the carnivorous sundew plant and queen of the prairie. The property's close proximity to the 5,000+ acre Killbuck Marsh Wildlife Area influences a diverse bird population, particularly during peak migratory seasons.

Funding for the project was generously provided through the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund and State of Ohio Capital Budget, in addition to significant gifts from the Donald E. and Alice M. Noble Charitable Foundation, J. M. Smucker Company, Gayle and David Noble, Ralph R. and Grace B. Jones Foundation, and many individual donors. Western Reserve Land Conservancy thanks Sen. Frank LaRose for his leadership in securing state capital funds.

"We are extremely grateful for the many project partners and generous donors who have supported this complex project over the past six years," McDowell said. "We look forward to celebrating the restoration and opening of Kister Water Mill with the community in the near future." 🌻



Special thanks to Tony Paskevich for providing beautiful renderings depicting the future of the Mill.



History of the Mill

- General Thomas McMillan built the mill for John Nimmon who operated it as a gristmill until he sold it to Jacob Kister in 1845.
- Jacob Kister converted it to a woolen mill and ran it until 1875 when Daniel Mehven bought the business and let it sit idle for six years.
- In 1881, John A. Kister (no relation to Jacob Kister) acquired it and turned it back into a gristmill.
- In 1894, John added on to make it a nearly 5,000 square foot, three-story structure. John's grandson, Guy S. Kister, became the new owner in 1934. At age 83, Guy built a new wooden water wheel with eight spokes, 56 buckets to replace the aging 1925 wheel.
- Guy operated the mill until 1968 when he sold it to Jim Strock and John Haloran who then sold it to Richard and Cindi Boyer in 1997. Richard Boyer rebuilt the waterwheel by reverse engineering in the early 2000s.
- In 2018, Western Reserve Land Conservancy purchased Kister Water Mill from the Boyer family and began restoration of the property. Richard Boyer is generously donating his time and expertise to reconstruct and replace the water wheel.

Staff Spotlight:

Land and Conservation Easement Stewardship



Members of the Land Stewardship Team include (from left): Shane Wohlken, Sarah Kitson, George Warnock, and Pete McDonald.

Thirty years ago, the Peters' family donated the first conservation easement to Western Reserve Land Conservancy. They entrusted our organization with upholding their wishes for the beloved 14-acre Geauga County property. We have and will continue to ensure this property – and the more than 710 properties on which we hold conservation easements – will remain protected in perpetuity.

“A conservation easement, in essence, gives voice to the land,” explained Pete McDonald, director of land stewardship for the Land Conservancy. “Our team is that voice because we will look out for the interest of the land forever, no matter who owns it in the future.”

The Land Conservancy takes a comprehensive and collaborative approach to working with landowners to protect their family land. Each conservation easement is unique and tailored to the landowner's long-term vision for their property. Owners can restrict the property's development at different levels, provided that the property's conservation values – such as scenic views, agriculture lands, and wildlife habitats – are preserved.

Once a conservation easement is drafted, our Land Stewardship staff members create a baseline documentation report, which depicts and summarizes the existing physical conditions, natural and human-made, of the property. On these visits land stewards identify hundreds of plants and animals, document farming practices, and collect the stories of

the land and the landowners. This report is a critical piece of each conservation easement because it is a snapshot in time that we will reference for decades to come.

Once a property is protected with a conservation easement, it is the Land Conservancy's permanent obligation to monitor the land by working closely with private and public landowners to ensure the corridors of wildlife habitat, natural areas, and farmland remain protected. “Through experience we have learned that long-term conservation easement stewardship is the only way landowners' dreams will not be forgotten or blatantly ignored,” said McDonald.

In order to uphold this commitment, dedicated Land

Stewardship staff members and expert volunteers make at least one visit to all conserved properties every year. They meet with landowners, walk – and in some cases, boat around or fly over – the property, review land management plans, mark property boundaries, issue approvals, review legal documents, and resolve any issues that arise.

“One of the keys to meeting our stewardship responsibility is to build strong and lasting relationships with landowner families and the land they love,” McDonald said. “We cherish these annual visits because they give us a chance to catch up with landowners, meet new generations, and really get to know the land. It is our basic obligation to ensure that the conservation easement agreements are upheld, but we truly see our relationships with landowners as a partnership in conservation and the long-term stewardship of the land.” 🌻

We currently monitor **710+** properties each year across northern and eastern Ohio.

The Land Stewardship team is comprised of **4 full-time staff members**. **Nearly 30 expert volunteers** support our monitoring efforts.

We have approved and documented hundreds of permitted rights like the construction or demolition of barns and houses within building areas, timber harvests, trail installations, maple syrup operations, wetland restorations, pond excavations, as well as public park improvements like parking lots, trails, and shelters.

We have tracked **122 property transfers** since 1987.



Pete McDonald (right) works with volunteers to complete a biological inventory of a conserved property.

Celebrating Spring Planting Efforts

As we beat the heat and bask in the shade provided by trees across the region, we are reminded of the many benefits trees provide to our communities. 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 a robust urban tree canopy plays in our communities.

Reforestation is one way in which Western Reserve Land Conservancy improves the vibrancy and health of our region, especially in urban communities where tree canopies are dwindling and communities are losing out on these critical benefits. This past spring, the Land Conservancy held several tree planting events across the city of Cleveland in honor of Earth Day and Arbor Day.



Earth Day Tree Planting

More than 60 volunteers helped beautify Cleveland's Slavic Village neighborhood in honor of Earth Day. Volunteers picked up litter and planted 20 robust trees at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland and along Broadway Avenue. The beautification project was made possible through

the generous support of the Third Federal Foundation and ArcelorMittal USA, as well as project support from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland, CityYear Cleveland, Holden Forests & Gardens, and Slavic Village Development.



Arbor Day Tree Planting

On a beautiful April morning, more than 75 community and student volunteers gathered at Cleveland Metropolitan School District's Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) Academy in Cleveland's Glenville neighborhood to celebrate Arbor Day! Students worked alongside school staff and volunteers to plant 25 robust trees on the FDR Academy campus and a Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) site adjacent to the school. The event, planned in partnership by the Land Conservancy and Holden Forests & Gardens, was generously sponsored by NEORS, Dominion Energy, and Eaton Corporation. Additional support was provided by the Bartlett Tree Expert Company, City of Cleveland Mayor's Office of Sustainability, and the Davey Tree Expert Company. 🌳



Neighborhood Tree Plantings

Staff from Western Reserve Land Conservancy and Holden Forests & Gardens supported Cleveland Neighborhood Progress and a number of community volunteers planting trees in Cleveland's Central and Detroit-Shoreway neighborhoods thanks to support from KeyBank.



Toast to Trees

Nearly 150 people attended our Toast to Trees celebration at Market Garden Brewery to support urban reforestation efforts. Market Garden Brewery generously sponsored the event and brewed a special tree-themed beer for

the occasion, aptly-named *More Bark than Bite*, which sold-out before the end of the night!



Tree Seedling Giveaway with Mitchell's Ice Cream

For the third year in a row, the Land Conservancy teamed up with Mitchell's Ice Cream to distribute 500 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 Ice Cream, the Bartlett Tree Expert Company, and the Northeast Reintegration Center for their support of this event!

Love the Land

There are many reasons we love the land. It provides healthy food, pure drinking water, and clean air. Land provides places to reflect and recreate. It supports healthy people and thriving communities.

Why do you love the land? We want to hear from you!

Western Reserve Land Conservancy is launching an initiative to collect stories, photos, and videos about our collective love of the land. We plan to feature different stories periodically – in our publications and online – in an effort to inspire others as we work together to conserve our region's special places and connect people from all walks of life to the land.

To share your story visit: bit.ly/wrlclovetland

Out and About



The **Annual Adam's and Haley's Run Clean Up** took place on a spring morning in Akron. Twenty-five volunteers and community members of all ages helped pick up trash, rake trails, and beautify the two urban streams.



More than 60 volunteers helped with the **19th Annual Grand River Cleanup** in May! With their help, we were able to pick up litter and keep the Wild and Scenic Grand River clean and pristine.



Around 30 people joined the Land Conservancy and Black River Audubon Society in the Oberlin Big Parade in May! The **Pollinator Parade** celebrated our work to restore 10 acres of prairie habitat at Oberlin Great South Woods. Volunteers distributed more than 150 wildflowers and wildflower seed packets. (Photo Credit: Anakarine Solorzano)



In May, we hosted a training event for our expert **Stewardship Monitoring Volunteers** who help our team walk more than 700 properties each year to ensure conservation easements are being upheld.



As part of our **Vibrant Places** tour series, guests explored vernal pools, a beaver wetland, and a blueberry bog at Portage Park District's 504-acre Morgan Preserve in June.

Make a date with conservation

Art Show with Julie Clayman, MD (SEE)

July – September at the Conservation Center

Stop into the Land Conservancy's Conservation Center to see Dr. Clayman's drawings of vibrant natural areas from around the world. The Center is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM – 5 PM.

EverGreen EverBlue (SUPPORT)

Saturday, September 22 in Hunting Valley

Join us for our most important fundraising event of the year in the heart of the Chagrin River. Together we will celebrate land, people, and community!

Art Show with Ian Adams (SEE)

October - December at the Conservation Center

Stop into the Land Conservancy's Conservation Center to see Ian Adam's fantastic photography show. A full-time Ohio landscape photographer, writer, and educator, Adam's work features natural areas, rural scenes, historic buildings, and public gardens. The Center is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM – 5 PM.

Ohio Land Bank Conference (LEARN)

Monday, October 22 – Wednesday, October 24

in Columbus

Interested in community revitalization efforts? Join us at our eighth annual conference where we'll discuss re-purposing vacant and abandoned properties and revitalizing neighborhoods across Ohio.

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 is requested.

Vibrant Places (TOUR)

We are pleased to bring back our Vibrant Places tour series in 2018! Experience the Land Conservancy's work first hand by hiking new trails, connecting with family farmers, and exploring cherished keystone properties. Tours are reserved for current Land Conservancy donors – watch for your invitations!

For more information on all of our upcoming events, visit www.wrlandconservancy.org/events



Join Us!

EverGreen EverBlue

Saturday, September 22

www.wrlandconservancy.org/egeb18



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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Funding for this edition of Landline was generously provided by the Sandra L. and Dennis B. Haslinger Family Foundation

Help us win big!

During the month of August, your donation could help Western Reserve Land Conservancy win more than \$15,000 to advance our mission!

Western Reserve Land Conservancy has been selected to participate in the 2018 Quicken Loans Community Challenge Cleveland. The challenge is a friendly fundraising campaign where local organizations will compete through August 31, 2018 to raise the most money. In addition to weekly bonus prizes, the top earning team will win a grand prize cash donation of \$15,000.

These additional funds will help the Land Conservancy conserve mature forests, protect clean streams, preserve family farmland, plant robust trees, and create new parks and preserves across northern and eastern Ohio.

Every donation helps! To make yours, visit: bit.ly/helpwrlcwin2018

Contact Us

Geauga, Lake, Ashtabula, Trumbull, Mahoning, Portage, Columbiana, Jefferson, and Carroll counties
Brett Rodstrom, vice president of eastern operations
brodstrom@wrlandconservancy.org • 440.867.6659
Alex Czayka, eastern field director
aczayka@wrlandconservancy.org • 440.813.4664

Lorain, Erie, Huron, Medina, Wayne, Stark, and Summit counties
Andy McDowell, vice president of western operations
amcdowell@wrlandconservancy.org • 440.774.4226
Kate Pilacky, Firelands associate field director
kpilacky@wrlandconservancy.org • 440.774.4226

Cuyahoga County and urban work across Ohio
Jim Rokakis, vice president and director
Thriving Communities
jrokakis@wrlandconservancy.org • 216.515.8300

Development and Fundraising
Stella Dilik, chief development officer
sdilik@wrlandconservancy.org • 440.528.4150

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
4266 Fenn Rd, Medina, OH 44256

Thriving Communities
2012 W. 25th St, Suite 504, Cleveland, OH 44113
216.515.8300

Wayne County
140 E. Market St, Suite 150, Orrville, OH 44667