

# A Year In Review



Western Reserve  
Land Conservancy

land • people • community

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**Annual Report Fiscal Year 2025**  
July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

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# DEAR FRIENDS,

In early November, I was walking through the woods near our headquarters. The light was magical. It was a sunny day. Cool. Cirrus clouds were painted on an azure sky. The leaves were red, brown, green, and yellow, seemingly in every shade imaginable. They crunched, satisfyingly, as I walked. The aroma of nature and autumn, paradoxically both earthy and crisp, filled my heart. I paused. Looked up through the almost leafless canopy. It was breathtaking.

## PEACE. HOPE. WHOLENESS. GRATITUDE.

All of our greatest emotions washed through me. Gently. Completely.

Nearly 20 years ago, the land on which I stood was locked in the longest tenured real estate litigation in Cuyahoga County. Encumbered by IRS liens and lawsuits, it was destined for the bulldozer. And yet Western Reserve Land Conservancy stepped up and raised millions of dollars over a nearly ten-year period to both preserve this land and create a new public park.

Today, no one remembers the litigation or the liens. No one remembers how hard it was for us to raise the funds. The sleepless nights. The arguments. The stress and strain. What we know is that both now and forever, this will be a place that nurtures all living things.

Each year the Land Conservancy pauses to reflect with gratitude on the work we have accomplished together. We are reminded that conservation and urban revitalization are, at their core, about people... the people whose love for our region fuels everything we do. Fiscal Year 2025 was filled with moments that affirmed the power of partnership and the shared belief that our land, water, and communities are treasures worthy of preservation and renewal.

Because of you, the places that define the character of our region are being restored and cared for with intention. Beautiful and healthy places give rise to thriving communities of people. Families discover new connections to nature, children explore healthy green spaces close to home, and farmers and foresters provide for all of us by working their land with productive stewardship. These outcomes are not accidental; they are the result of a community united by purpose and inspired by the beauty and resilience of the places we cherish.

This year also marks an important moment in our leadership. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Craig Owen White, who concludes his distinguished service as Chair of our Board of Trustees. Craig's steadfast leadership, strategic insight, and deep commitment to conservation strengthened the Land Conservancy in countless ways. His service inspired us all, and we are profoundly better positioned for the future because of his guidance.

We are delighted to welcome Nancy Rubin as our incoming Board Chair. Nancy brings exceptional experience, a collaborative spirit, and a long-standing dedication to our mission. We look forward with enthusiasm to her leadership as we continue to expand our impact across the region.

This report captures only a glimpse of what your generosity makes possible. Behind every map, every photo, and every milestone are stories of collaboration, hope, and shared purpose—stories of people choosing to invest in the land and in one another. We remain deeply grateful for your belief in this work and for the trust you place in us to carry it forward.

As we look ahead, we do so with optimism and an abiding resolve. Together, we will continue to protect and revitalize the places that make Ohio extraordinary, ensuring that future generations inherit a landscape that is even more vibrant, healthy, and full of life than the one we enjoy today.



With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rich". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

RICH COCHRAN | President & CEO

## Statement of Financial Position

June 30, 2025 and 2024

<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$13,270,117	\$15,242,382
Investments in Marketable Securities	9,192,590	989,771
Pledges Receivable	1,781,576	2,157,944
Accounts Receivable	18,574	86,916
Notes Receivable	12,000	66,693
Conservation Property	10,538,223	6,243,114
Property and Equipment	4,717,397	10,630,928
Other Assets	528,294	10,212
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$40,058,771</b>	<b>\$35,427,960</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Loans Payable	2,000,000	15,800,000
Accounts Payable	486,336	268,362
Accrued Expenses	1,253,221	1,359,086
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$3,739,557</b>	<b>\$7,427,448</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Without Donor Restrictions	25,615,798	21,581,235
With Donor Restrictions	10,703,416	6,419,277
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$36,319,214</b>	<b>\$28,000,512</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$40,058,771</b>	<b>\$35,427,960</b>

## Statement of Revenue and Expenses

July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Transfer of Conservation Lands	\$7,090,805	\$8,021,975
Other Program Revenue	17,203,981	14,370,981
<b>LP Program Revenue</b>	<b>\$24,294,786</b>	<b>\$22,392,956</b>
Individual Donations	5,885,387	4,333,611
Foundation Grants	1,678,472	1,640,806
Corporate Donations	279,653	174,510
Events Net Revenue	265,748	174,701
<b>Philanthropic Revenue</b>	<b>\$8,109,260</b>	<b>\$6,323,628</b>
Interest & Investment Revenue	1,014,860	937,817
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$33,418,906</b>	<b>\$29,654,401</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>		
Program	\$23,385,073	\$23,833,407
Fundraising	737,608	785,991
Management and General	551,335	594,697
<b>OPERATING EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$24,674,016</b>	<b>\$25,214,095</b>
Depreciation	426,188	328,683
<b>REVENUE OVER (UNDER) EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$8,318,702</b>	<b>\$4,111,623</b>

## Our **Mission**

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**To provide the people of our region with essential natural assets through land conservation and restoration.**

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## Our **Vision**

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**Thriving, prosperous communities nourished by vibrant natural lands, working farms, and healthy cities.**

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## Our Values

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### Dedication to People

While our holistic mission speaks of natural assets, everything we do, everything we are, and everything we seek is meant to authentically benefit people and to co-create a healthy environment in which people, land, and communities will thrive now and forever.

### Integrity

Our strong and unwavering adherence to moral and ethical principles and values guides how we deal externally with stakeholders and communities we serve, and internally how we deal with each other.

### Collaboration

We aggregate the individual strengths of our team and external partners to create a collective and highly cooperative capacity to achieve our mission and vision.

### Innovation

We believe that each person, and the Land Conservancy as an enterprise, is always learning, continuously improving, and creatively looking for new and better ways to serve the communities in which we operate.

### Gratitude

We cultivate a daily awareness of all that we are provided with appreciation and humility.

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## Our Approach

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Western Reserve Land Conservancy is unique in our holistic roadmap to conservation. Three distinctive pillars define our work: Natural Land Conservation, Farmland Conservation, and Urban Conservation. While these guiding forces drive different components of our organization, they all work together to advance our mission and ensure that everyone in our region benefits from its natural assets.

Throughout this annual report, you'll learn more about the diverse programming that fulfills each of these three driving forces of our work. From nature preserves to working farms to city streets, the Land Conservancy is dedicated to providing positive outcomes for the communities we serve.

### NATURAL LAND CONSERVATION

With rich natural resources, including our Great Lake, unique geologic landscapes, and vast, mature forests, our region's natural spaces provide tremendous value. By working with private landowners, park systems, government agencies, and more, we permanently protect properties with conservation easements to ensure they will forever benefit the people of our region.

### FARM CONSERVATION

Our region's working farms are cherished for their beauty, the life-giving food they produce, and the traditions they uphold—but as communities face development, farmland is often lost. By placing conservation easements on working farms, we are able to safeguard Ohio's prime farmland soils and rich agricultural heritage for generations to come.

### URBAN CONSERVATION

In 2011, the Land Conservancy founded Thriving Communities, a program designed to revitalize vacant and abandoned properties in Cleveland. Working in historically marginalized urban neighborhoods with local partners, the program repurposes and revitalizes urban spaces for positive community use.

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# Our Impact

# 77,944

Acres Conserved

# 962

Properties Protected

# 38,529

Acres of Agricultural Land Conserved

# 240

Parks and Preserves Created

# 34

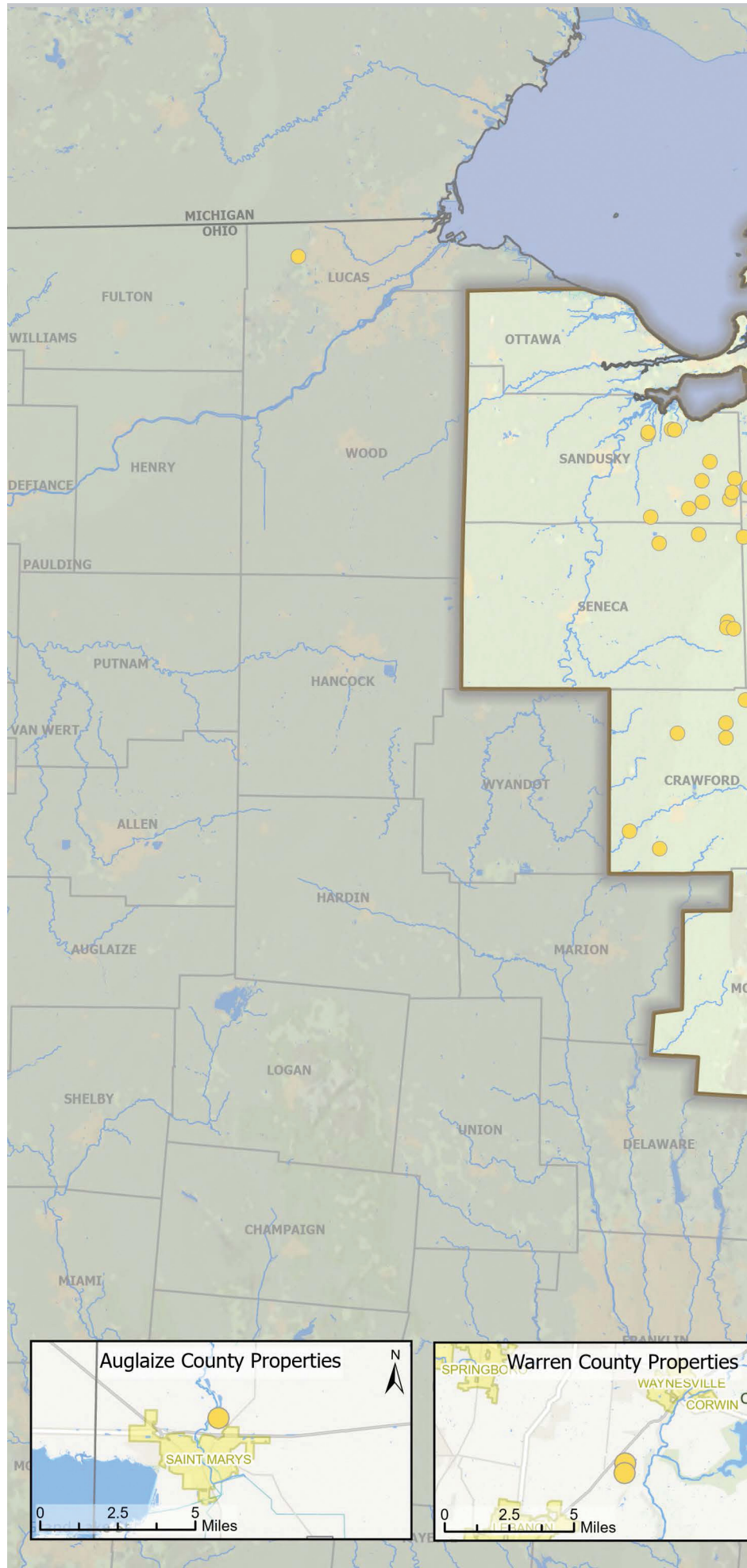
Counties Served

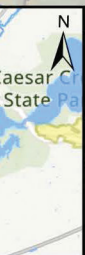
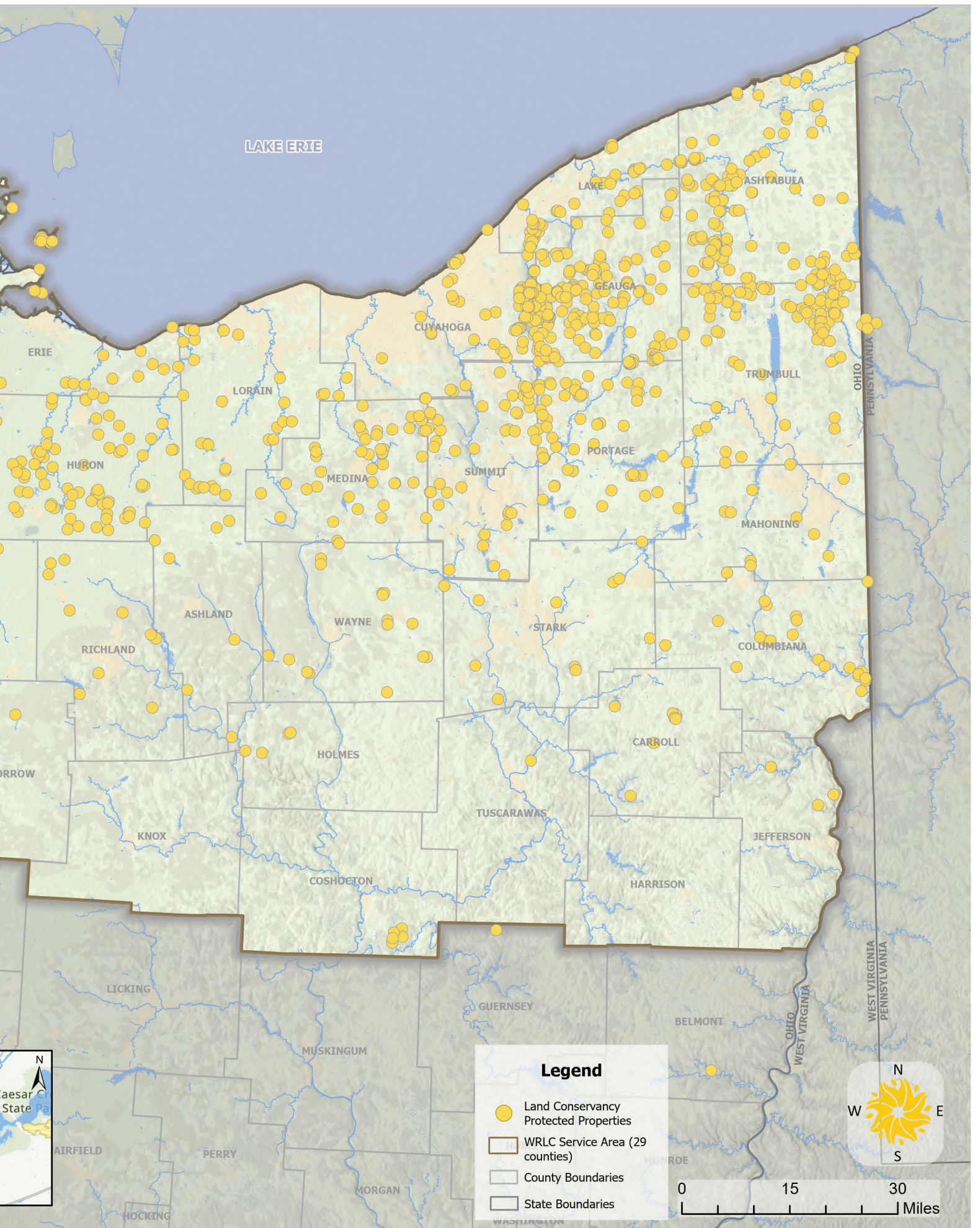
# 23

Major Watersheds Worked In

# 613

Property Owners





**Legend**

- Land Conservancy Protected Properties
- WRLC Service Area (29 counties)
- County Boundaries
- State Boundaries

0 15 30 Miles

# YOUR FY25 GIFTS IN ACTION

3,667

Acres Protected

322

Volunteers

27

Properties Conserved

39

In-Person Educational Programs

9

Virtual Education Programs

908

Trees Planted & Given Away

41

Celebrations & Events

12

New Parks & Preserves

# Land Protection



Our Land Protection team partners with landowners, communities, government agencies, park systems, and fellow non-profit organizations to permanently conserve vibrant natural areas and productive farmland. By safeguarding these lands, the Land Conservancy protects biodiversity, helps mitigate the effects of climate change, strengthens Ohio's agricultural economy, and shields private properties from development while keeping them in family ownership.

The landowners we work with come from all kinds of backgrounds, reflecting the vast diversity of the region we serve. Yet, they all have one thing in common: a deep love of their land. We honor these families and thank them for the gift they give to future generations.

Over the course of the 2025 fiscal year, our Land Protection team worked to protect 27 properties encompassing over 3,667 acres. The following projects are just a few of this year's conservation wins.

# Shelly Preserve

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In partnership with the Portage Park District, Western Reserve Land Conservancy reached a significant conservation milestone in February 2025 with the permanent protection of the 550-acre Shelly Preserve in Portage County. Once a sand and gravel mine operated by the Shelly Company, the property now includes a remarkable mix of reclaimed land and approximately 107 acres of undisturbed natural habitat. Its diverse landscapes include open meadows, upland forest, and about 90 acres of emergent and scrub-shrub wetlands—46 acres of which are classified as high-quality Category 3 wetlands. The preserve also features two large lakes, several smaller ponds, and approximately 970 linear feet of streams, providing vital terrestrial and aquatic habitat for a range of species, including the State Endangered Tri-colored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) and the State Species of Concern, the meadow-loving Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*).

Looking ahead, Portage Park District plans to open the preserve as a public park for low-impact recreation. The Land Conservancy is supporting the Park District

and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in restoring 180 acres of former agricultural and mined land to vibrant prairie pollinator habitat. The work includes removing woody invasive species, such as autumn olive, and planting a diverse mix of native wildflowers and grasses. Once restoration is complete, the Park District plans to enhance the trail system, add park amenities, and expand opportunities for fishing and boating on the lakes.

This project was made possible through funding from the Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program and the North American Wetland Conservation Act, along with generous support from the Portage Park District Foundation and the Apex Clean Energy Conservation Grant in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. Thanks to this collaboration, essential natural resources have been permanently protected, ensuring lasting environmental benefits and outdoor enjoyment for generations to come.



# Honoring the Life & Legacy of Skylar Raine Schamb's: A POSTHUMOUS ART OF CARING AWARD

The Art of Caring Award was created to celebrate members of our White Oak Society whose philanthropy, friendship, and commitment to conservation embody the very best of our mission. In FY2025, for the first time in our history, the award was presented posthumously—to a remarkable young woman whose spirit, wisdom, and love for the natural world continue to inspire all who knew her.

At the October 2024 Stewards Event, Western Reserve Land Conservancy honored the life and legacy of Skylar Raine Schamb's, whose passion for conservation shone brightly from a young age. Though she left this world far too soon on December 3, 2023, Skylar's impact endures through the people she touched and the causes she championed.

Skylar was born in Cleveland in the 1990s, and even as a child, her connection to nature was unmistakable. Her mother, Faith Pescatore, served as one of the early trustees of the Chagrin River Land Conservancy, and many of us remember Skylar as a little girl who loved all living things. She explored creeks with boundless curiosity, delighted in discovering creatures, and instinctively sought out the beauty and wonder of the outdoors.

As she grew, so did her commitment to conservation. Skylar understood, intuitively and profoundly, the importance of protecting land and wildlife—and of nurturing a deep appreciation for nature in others.

After graduating from Gilmour Academy and earning a degree in psychology from the University of Colorado Boulder, Skylar made Colorado her home. There, her love of the outdoors fully flourished. She hiked mountain trails, mined for crystals, and soaked in natural hot springs. Her adventurous spirit knew no limits—she even earned her Class A skydiving license, embracing the thrill of freefall with the same passion and presence she brought to everything she did.

Skylar was also a thoughtful student of philosophy. Wise beyond her years, she cultivated a deep understanding of life and its complexities. She lived fully in the present—drawn to experiences that were joyful, daring, and profoundly alive.

Her passing left a deep void in the lives of those who loved her, and in the community that benefited from her generous spirit.

To honor Skylar's memory—and the generosity of her mother, Faith Pescatore—we established the Skylar Raine Schamb's Conservation Fund, a revolving fund already supporting three significant conservation projects. Through this fund, Skylar's passion for nature will continue to protect the landscapes she cherished.

Both Skylar and the loving family who carry her spirit forward embody the true essence of the Art of Caring with passion, generosity, and an enduring bond with the natural world.

Skylar's Garden at Western Reserve Land Conservancy's Conservation Center.



# Partners in Conservation: Summit Metro Parks

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With over 30 diverse conservation projects completed yearly across our 29-county service region, our Land Protection team is always busy. From supporting local parks districts to expanding existing natural corridors and creating new public parks, we work diligently to preserve our region's natural assets through our land conservation work.

In Summit County, we had the unique opportunity to complete three exemplary projects this fiscal year—a perfect conservation trifecta centered around bolstering the great work of our partner Summit Metro Parks (SMP) that showcases the complex work that we do every day at the Land Conservancy.

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## CLINTON WETLANDS

When the 19-acre Clinton Wetlands property was listed for sale, Land Conservancy staff saw its potential to be an asset for SMP. The property contains 15 acres of Category 3 wetlands and 2,500 linear feet of unnamed tributaries to the Tuscarawas River, contributing to the overall health of the surrounding area's watershed. Additionally, with the property's prime location within the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area and adjacency to 187 acres of natural spaces already owned by SMP, there was the golden opportunity to expand these uninterrupted natural spaces.

The acquisition of the property was fully funded through the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District's Partners in Watershed Management (PWM) grant program. After placing a conservation easement on the property, the Land Conservancy transferred ownership to SMP—who manages the site as a wildlife preserve, continuing their commitment to safeguarding the area's natural resources.

Tinker's Creek Wetlands



Clinton Wetlands



## TINKER'S CREEK WETLANDS

Purchasing and transferring properties to park districts isn't a new concept for us; we regularly source projects with the intent of helping our partners serve their communities. This fiscal year, the Land Conservancy also purchased the 41-acre Tinker's Creek Wetlands property in Hudson and then donated it to SMP. The now-protected property builds upon multiple existing conserved spaces in the area, including Tinker's Creek State Park and SMP's Liberty Park, which total approximately 2,500 acres along Tinker's Creek. The property's 14 acres of Category 3 wetlands are connected to a larger 500-acre wetland complex within this conservation corridor, providing important habitat for over 65 plant species, 86 bird species, and four bat species.

The acquisition of this property was fully funded by the Ohio EPA's Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP), with sponsorship from the City of Columbus. The Land Conservancy encumbered the property with an environmental covenant, as required by WRRSP, and immediately transferred it to SMP for long term ownership, ensuring that its natural features are permanently safeguarded.

Twin Creeks Preserve at Boughton Farm



## TWIN CREEKS PRESERVE AT BOUGHTON FARM

Our projects can often positively change the entire landscape of a community. The Land Conservancy's involvement in acquiring the Boughton family's 87-acre heritage farm and donating it to SMP has nearly doubled the parkland acreage in the township. The former agricultural land is set to become SMP's first park in Copley.

The property has a rich history since the Boughton family acquired it in the 1850's. When agricultural operations ceased in 2020, the Boughton family came together with the collective goal of protecting the land they love and providing a green space for their community to enjoy.

The Land Conservancy recently completed restoration efforts that transformed the former agricultural fields into native meadow, wetland, and forest habitats. Local Girl Scouts planted 1,350 seedlings with the help of ODNR as part of the Girl Scout Tree Promise initiative to plant 250,000 trees in Ohio by 2026.

Now, SMP is working on creating a comprehensive plan for the park's future. The acquisition and subsequent transformation of this property doesn't just open doors for future recreation—it ensures that wildlife and habitat on the property remain protected regardless of the future.

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**We are proud of the strides we have made in Summit County, and of the rewarding partnership we have built with SMP.**

**In working together, we can continue playing to our organizations' strengths and supporting crucial ecosystems found in the greater Akron area.**

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# Chagrin Meadows Preserve

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While we're equally enthused by our projects regardless of their location, it's especially exciting when our work hits close to home. Just down the street from Western Reserve Land Conservancy's Conservation Center, we partnered with the Village of Hunting Valley to permanently conserve nearly 28 acres through two conservation easements—one completed in June 2024 and the second in April 2025. The preserved land forms a key connector within a 2,200-acre corridor of contiguous protected habitat that stretches 7.6 miles along the Chagrin River.

The conservation easements ensure the future protection of this significant historic and scenic natural area, which supports diverse wildlife within the Chagrin River Watershed. Old field and high-quality mid-successional mixed hardwood forest provide habitat for a wide array of

species, including five state-listed bat species such as the State-Endangered Tri-colored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), as well as the State-listed Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*) and hobblebush (*Viburnum lantanoides*).

Together, the two protected properties now form the Chagrin Meadows Preserve, a public park owned and managed by the Village of Hunting Valley. The Land Conservancy will continue to hold and annually monitor the conservation easements. Passive recreation will play an important role in the preserve's future, balancing public access with the protection of its sensitive natural resources. Visitors will be able to reach the Buckeye Trail, a beloved 1,444-mile footpath that encircles the State and runs adjacent to the preserve, and explore a new 0.5-mile loop trail that guides them through the preserve's varied habitats.

# LAEPs and Bounds: Protecting Ohio's Farmland

Farmland is an important piece of Ohio's economy, heritage, and landscape. Helping protect farmland from the threat of development through agricultural conservation easements is one of Western Reserve Land Conservancy's primary conservation focuses. These easements ensure that properties will remain as farmland, even if the land itself changes ownership.

While some farmland owners choose to donate easements on their properties, it is not always financially feasible to do so. We are lucky, here in Ohio, to have the Clean Ohio Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP) managed by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. This program provides funding to purchase agricultural easements from landowners and protect farmland for future generations of Ohioans.

We love working with Ohio farmers and protecting the farmland that is a key part of a thriving Ohio. Through the LAEPP program, we can help protect more farms each year—safeguarding this important industry and providing additional revenue to the farmers that we all depend on.

Polly and David Winchell



Janice and Dean Falb



Andy McDowell, Vice President of Western Field Operations, with Loren & Barb-Brazis Lang



## WINCHELL FARM

Polly and David Winchell are only the fourth owners of their 117-acre property in Freedom Township, Portage County, which was first purchased by David's parents in 1956. They currently farm the land for soybeans and hay while keeping six to 12 dairy cows. The Winchells protected their property through LAEPP in hopes of keeping the property in the family and safe from development forever.

## FALB FARM

Located in Baughman Township, Wayne County, the 80-acre Falb Farm is comprised entirely of prime and locally important agricultural soils used for a rotation of certified organic row crops (corn, hay, and cover crops), as well as pastured land for 60 to 70 grass-finished beef cattle. The farm has been in the Falb family since the early 1900s and with moderate development pressure growing around the farm, the family was proud to protect the farm and continue passing it down to future generations.

## PINE HILL FARM

Positioned amidst 333 acres of protected farmland and adding to their previous 286 acres of protected farmland, we were thrilled to work with Barbara Brazis-Lang and Loren Lang to protect their 60-acre Pine Hill Farm. Comprised of prime and locally important agricultural soils, the pair grows row crops and hay to support their dairy farm. Located in Ripley Township, Holmes County, Pine Hill Farm has been in the same family for many decades, with the 60-acres purchased by Loren's grandparents in 1943. Barb is an ardent supporter of farmland preservation, especially in the Holmes and Wayne County area, and is currently on Ohio's Farmland Preservation Advisory Board.

# Honoring a Woman on a Mission: ELEANOR SEMENIK RECEIVES 2025 GRIMM CONSERVATION AWARD

When Western Reserve Land Conservancy created the Grimm Conservation Award in 2007, it was designed to shine a light on extraordinary people—individuals whose leadership, vision, and enduring commitment to conservation mirror the legacy of Richard and Susan Grimm and their family. Each year, the award celebrates someone whose work strengthens our region’s natural and historic resources, protects open spaces and wildlife habitat, and ensures that future generations inherit landscapes worth loving.

This year, that honor belongs to Eleanor Semenik, a woman whose generosity, persistence, and passion for the land embody the very spirit of the award.

In May 2023, Eleanor permanently protected two remarkable properties in Munson Township: a 49-acre property on Wilson Mills Road and a 35-acre property on Fowlers Mill Road. These lands—marked by sweeping fields, mature forests, and vibrant stream corridors—represent some of the region’s most beautiful natural features. The Fowlers Mill parcel includes a stretch of the East Branch of the Chagrin River, one of Northeast Ohio’s ecological treasures.

With the completion of Eleanor’s conservation projects, the Land Conservancy celebrated an important milestone: surpassing 10,000 acres of protected land in Geauga County alone. It was a moment years in the making—and one that Eleanor helped make possible.

But Eleanor’s story is about more than acres and maps.

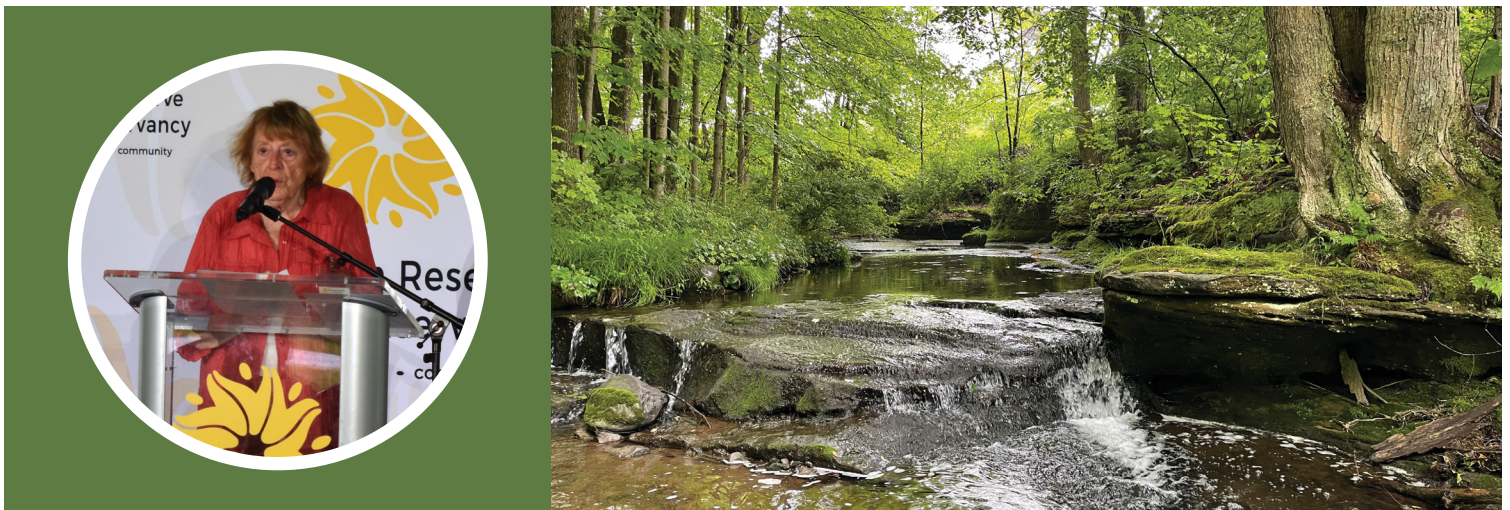
From the very first phone call, she approached conservation with a contagious energy and a clear plan. For nearly two years, she worked alongside our team to explore every detail of her easement terms, always asking the same essential question: *What is best for the land?* She brought ideas, questions, and—often—jokes to every discussion. She cares deeply about her property, her community, and the future she hopes to leave behind.

And through it all, her motivation remained beautifully simple. Eleanor insisted she wasn’t protecting her land for recognition. She did it, she said, because “it’s the right thing to do—and it’s what anyone else would do.”

At the Land Conservancy, we know better. Not everyone would make the kind of long-term, generational commitment that Eleanor has made. Not everyone would spend years ensuring their land remains loved and protected forever. But Eleanor did.

And that is why we are proud—truly proud—to honor her as the 2025 recipient of the Grimm Conservation Award.

Her gift is lasting. Her impact is profound. And her legacy will shape the landscapes of Geauga County for generations to come.



# Stewardship & Restoration



Conservation easement stewardship has been at the heart of our work since our founding in the 1980s. It is how we uphold our promise to landowners, supporters, and the public that conserved land will remain protected in accordance with the wishes of the original landowners. If we were to abandon this program—or allow significant, non-permitted changes to conservation easements—trust in both our organization and in the conservation restrictions themselves would quickly erode.

Our dedicated Stewardship team brings more than 50 years of collective experience to this work, ensuring that we remain a steadfast voice for the land, regardless of who owns the protected property over time. In Fiscal Year 2025, the team visited 898 properties, encompassing

approximately 67,000 acres. They also completed 20 baseline documentation reports for newly protected properties, recorded dozens of notable changes on conserved lands, and met with many new owners of protected properties.

In addition, our Stewardship staff manages more than 100 properties owned by the Land Conservancy, totaling over 7,000 acres. These lands further our mission by supporting our education programs, sporting circle events, and habitat restoration initiatives. A few highlights from Fiscal Year 2025 include beginning work on a major wet meadow habitat restoration project, opening an ADA trail to the public at Oberlin Preserve, and completing our first sustainable timber harvest and forest management project.

# Stewardship for the Birds

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Birds are powerful indicators of ecosystem health and often signal when habitats are in decline. The 2025 State of the Birds Report from the U.S. Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) shows that one third of U.S. bird species now require conservation action. Populations continue to fall as climate change and development degrade the environments birds depend on. Conservation remains one of the most effective tools we have to protect them.

Ohio serves as a vital stopover for migratory birds, offering critical places to feed, rest, and breed. Maintaining a diversity of habitats—woodlands, grasslands, prairies,

scrub-shrub areas, lakeshore stopover sites, and more—is essential to support a wide range of bird species. By forever protecting over 77,944 acres of land across the state, Western Reserve Land Conservancy has safeguarded significant amounts of habitat for birds.

Stewarding land means not only upholding the conservation easements that protect bird habitat but actively managing the habitats that support a wide variety of bird species. Across the 100 properties that the Land Conservancy owns, we monitor and take additional steps to protect critical habitats for birds. Many of the properties we own contain a wide variety of bird species. What follows are some highlights throughout our region.



Magnolia Warbler, Aimee Pierson

## TRUMBULL & ASHTABULA COUNTIES

Our large nature preserves in Trumbull and Ashtabula Counties have hundreds of acres of restored wetlands, ideal for migrating ducks including the Blue-winged Teal, Bufflehead, and Wood Duck, among many others. Shorebirds like Killdeer and various sandpipers as well as larger birds like Trumpeter Swans and Sandhill Cranes are also common. Our Blue Heron Preserve in Newbury, OH, a public park owned and managed by the Land Conservancy at the headwaters of the Upper Cuyahoga River, is aptly named because it is hard to make a visit without seeing the majestic Great Blue Heron wading the shores of the wetlands or flying overhead. We also own critical habitat along the headwaters of the Chagrin River in Geauga County. In these areas, American Kestrels, Sandhill Cranes, Northern Shrikes, Marsh Hawks, Snow Buntings, and other unique bird species have also been documented.

## VILLAGE OF WAITE HILL

At our preserves in the Village of Waite Hill, American Eagles, Ospreys, and a wide variety of hawks are ever present. Our annual bird hikes in the spring and fall yield long lists of species including migrating warblers like American Redstart, Northern Parula, and Magnolia Warbler, to name just a few.

We also have projects where we actively manage bird nests to help specific bird species. At our Waite Hill preserves in the eastern region and our Oberlin Preserve in the western region, we maintain and monitor over 80 bluebird nest boxes designed to support Eastern Bluebirds and other native species that call these properties home. Volunteers monitor the boxes each week during breeding season (April through late July), checking for non-native species that may displace native birds or damage their eggs. The volunteers also monitor the health and fledging success of Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and other birds that may use the nest boxes. At Oberlin Preserve, we also have a flourishing Purple Martin colony!

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**Our Stewardship team works on projects to enhance and restore bird habitat including invasive species removal, wetland restoration, and prairie and pollinator plantings across the properties we own to help sustain healthy diverse landscapes where birds and other wildlife can flourish. We're proud of the steps that we have taken through our Stewardship program to protect the lives of birds large and small across our region.**

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# Habitat Restoration at Ashcroft Woods Conservation Area

In spring 2024, Western Reserve Land Conservancy was awarded the largest Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) grant in Ohio for that year, supporting a major forest management and habitat restoration project across approximately 800 acres of Ashcroft Woods Conservation Area in Ashtabula County. Administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), EQIP provides technical and financial assistance for landowners and conservation organizations to address natural resource concerns such as invasive species, erosion, and habitat loss.

At Ashcroft Woods, EQIP funding has allowed the Land Conservancy to implement science-based management strategies that strengthen forest health, enhance biodiversity, and restore early successional wet meadow habitat, including habitat for federally threatened species. Early successional habitats include fields, wet meadows, shrublands, and even young forests. These habitats provide critical food sources, shelter, and cover for species such as ground-nesting birds, small mammals, reptiles, and other wildlife. Managing early successional habitat helps increase the diversity of species in an area, which overall strengthens the health of the region.

In recent decades, much of this habitat has been lost or degraded due to invasive plants, hydrologic alteration, and natural forest succession that reduces formerly open landscapes. Recognizing these challenges, the EQIP-funded restoration at Ashcroft Woods aims to reintroduce the structural diversity and native vegetation that many species require to thrive.

Work began in summer 2024, when Land Conservancy staff and contractors initiated invasive species control and selective forest thinning in dense stands of trees. Using single tree selection harvesting and timber stand

improvement techniques, crews carefully removed overcrowded, poorly formed, and invasive trees to open the canopy. Increased sunlight reaching the forest floor stimulated native regeneration and enhanced habitat conditions for all local flora and fauna.

A defining feature of the project occurred in the fall of 2024, when a 17-acre stand of non-native red pine, planted in the 1960s, was removed. The densely planted pine trees offered little ecological value and shaded out native vegetation. After tree removal, the stumps were ground to facilitate future maintenance and natural regeneration. The goal was to create a mosaic of wet meadow and upland habitat, providing a mix of sun exposure, vegetation structure, and microhabitats.

By the spring of 2025, the cleared area was regenerating naturally with native grasses, sedges, and forbs. Targeted invasive plant treatments during summer 2025 helped maintain these gains and will continue for at least two more years under EQIP guidance to ensure long-term ecological stability.

Looking ahead, continued EQIP-supported management at Ashcroft Woods will include ongoing invasive species control, additional timber stand improvement, and canopy thinning to sustain healthy, diverse forests.

Through EQIP and partnerships with NRCS and ecological professionals, the Land Conservancy is demonstrating how collaborative, science-driven restoration can make a measurable impact. Our work at Ashcroft Woods supports the recovery of federally threatened species while enhancing water quality, forest resilience, and wildlife diversity across the Grand River Lowlands, one of Ohio's most ecologically valuable landscapes.





# Urban Conservation



Thurgood Marshall Green, Kendrick Chittock Photography

Our Thriving Communities program works in historically excluded or underserved urban communities with local partners and community members to repurpose and revitalize vacant spaces for positive community use. Several Thriving

Communities teams work in unison toward this goal by collecting property and vacant land data, conducting inventories on illegal dumping, planting trees, connecting trails, and even building new city parks.

# Thurgood Marshall Green: Community Driven Park Design



Royalty In the Making LLC

When the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and the City of Cleveland issued a Request for Proposals to redevelop surplus school sites in 2021, staff at Western Reserve Land Conservancy saw the potential of the John W. Raper Elementary School site. The school closed in 2010 and was demolished soon after in 2013; the 2.6-acre property had sat vacant for over a decade. Adjacent to the Thurgood Marshall Recreation Center, the property's location provided the unique opportunity to expand upon the existing campus and design a space specifically for Hough, an east side Cleveland neighborhood with an identified need for more high-quality park space.

The Land Conservancy put community feedback and participation at the forefront of the design and visioning process. We worked with trusted community partners, including Village Family Farms, Little Africa Food Co-op, Famicos Foundation, and Councilwoman Stephanie Howse-Jones to engage residents and understand their vision for the land. Through door-to-door surveys, regular community meetings, and a semester long landscape

design workshop with Cornell University graduate students, the community's goal was clear: to create a welcoming intergenerational park that integrates well with the surrounding area.

According to Tim Dehm, Planning and Design Specialist at the Land Conservancy, ideas came together quickly. "Every step of the way, the community was invested and involved in helping us design a park that could become a part of their daily life," said Dehm. "They guided decisions as we worked with City Architecture and LayerCake to create the space, down to selecting the concrete colors for the walking path."

The community was clear in its request for more play options for younger aged kids, as well as more options for local seniors. To best serve children in the neighborhood, the designer opted for two side-by-side play areas, with one geared towards slightly younger ages. The playgrounds feature countless opportunities for kids to slide, scale, swing, and spin as they play and explore.

For older adults, we designed gentle walking paths and a fitness area that sits in a quiet corner of the park, creating a sense of privacy for those exercising. The barbecue area features coal bins, barbecue pits, and picnic tables—which are placed on a compacted stone surface so families can push them together as needed. The pavilion is a spacious, open structure, big enough to host moderately sized events. The lounge area’s reclining chairs offer a calm place to relax overlooking the rest of the park. A well-lit quarter mile walking loop ties everything together, creating a space to stroll without feeling overwhelmingly paved.

The City of Cleveland named the park Thurgood Marshall Green as an expansion to the nearby recreation center campus. It doesn’t just honor the first African American Supreme Court Justice by name—the park includes a natural nod to the prominent civil rights leader in the form of Eastern Redbud trees. Nine redbuds circle the walking loop: one with dark purple leaves, and the other eight with variegated white leaves, representing Thurgood Marshall and the racial composition of the Supreme Court at that point in history. In the future, signage will be placed in front of each tree with information about Thurgood Marshall’s life and the history of the Hough neighborhood.

The park’s overall landscaping was created with the Land Conservancy’s goal of increasing urban tree canopy in mind; in addition to the redbuds, over 100 new trees were planted in the park. The Land Conservancy’s Reforest Our City program will water and maintain these to ensure they establish and provide plentiful shade in the future. Large grassy areas on two event lawns provide ample room for any number of activities, and nearly 2,500 native shrubs adorn garden beds throughout the park.

This project was made possible through the generous leadership gift of the Dusenbury Family in addition to other private partners and public donors. Following the rigorous design process, construction of the park went smoothly thanks to our contractors, R.J. Platten Contracting. We broke ground in March 2025, and Thurgood Marshall Green officially opened to the public in October 2025 with a community celebration hosted by the Land Conservancy, honoring the new park and the collaborative spirit that made it possible.

The City of Cleveland will own and maintain the park long-term, but this isn’t the end of the story for the Land Conservancy. We have established a reserve fund for future maintenance needs and a Friends of Thurgood Marshall Green volunteer group to help with ongoing stewardship and advocacy needs. We will also study the continued impact that this new green space has on the community through our milestone Office of Minority Health Grant.



Kendrick Chittock Photography

## PROJECT PARTNERS

### The Dusenbury Family

Bank of America

The City of Cleveland

Cleveland Clinic

Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program

Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation

FirstEnergy Foundation

Partners for Places –  
a Project of The Funders Network

The Hershey Foundation

The Department of Housing  
and Urban Development

Jean Heflich Legacy Fund

KeyBank Foundation

The Louise H. and  
David S. Ingalls Foundation

The Reinberger Foundation

Shaker Lakes Garden Club

State of Ohio Capital Fund

Sustain Our Great Lakes Program

# Restoring Health Equity and Resilience to Cleveland Through Vacant Land Improvements



Kendrick Chittock Photography

Growing research confirms that urban greening plays a critical role in creating nourishing environments which narrow health disparities. Cuyahoga County contains both the “Emerald Necklace,” an interconnected chain of green spaces in outlying suburbs, and a struggling urban core with a rapidly declining tree canopy and many vulnerable neighborhoods in the City of Cleveland. Yet Cleveland’s abundance of vacant parcels offers a major opportunity to leverage environmental assets on public land for improving neighborhood vibrancy, climate resiliency, social connections, and human health.

Beginning in September 2024, Western Reserve Land Conservancy launched a transformational new partnership with researchers from the MetroHealth System, Cleveland

Clinic, and Case Western Reserve University to study how thoughtful greening activities in Cleveland neighborhoods impact residents’ health and well-being. Ultimately, this research will support decision tools for policymakers, clinicians, and community organizations to use in planning the future of legacy cities throughout the Midwest and beyond.

Funded by a \$2.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, the project is concentrating its efforts in four low-income, majority Black, Cleveland neighborhoods: Hough, St. Clair-Superior, Glenville, and Buckeye-Woodhill. Specifically, the project is striving to improve blood pressure control and physical activity levels for adults, and datasets derived from

electronic health records at MetroHealth and Cleveland Clinic through aligned research will allow for examination of a variety of other chronic disease outcomes and leading health indicators.

Results from the first year of the partnership have exceeded our goals. Focusing initially on Hough and St. Clair-Superior, the team used relevant datasets on property conditions and socioeconomic need combined with community feedback from CDCs and residents to identify, clean, and green 46 vacant parcels near city parks, churches, and schools. Associated improvements included increasing pedestrian safety and accessibility, removing hazards, planting more than 250 trees, and creating community gathering spaces.

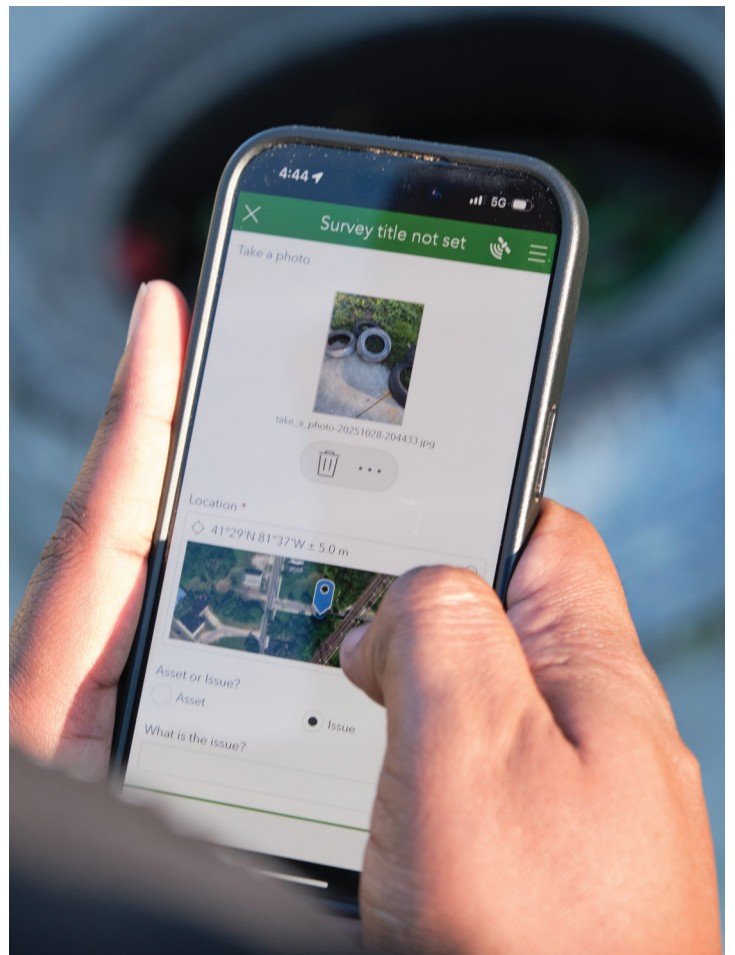
To accomplish these tasks, we formed a 20-person Resident Advisory Committee made up of representatives from each of our focus neighborhoods to guide project design and implementation. We also created the Forest City Crew, a Land Conservancy program that recruits trained volunteers to monitor planting sites weekly and become neighborhood ambassadors for trees. Residents receive stipends for their participation in these activities. Our healthcare partners conducted geocoded, place-based walking interviews with engaged residents to better understand how neighborhoods are changing and how physical environments impact their daily lifestyle. Additionally, research team members developed data processes to measure cardiovascular outcomes and health-promoting behaviors for target communities over time. Moving forward, these efforts will support the identification of neighborhood sites with high disease burden, enable health outcome measurement before greening interventions occur, and establish important data infrastructure for examining health changes in target neighborhoods as parcel improvement projects are implemented.

Our multidisciplinary team looks forward to continuing our momentum on this exciting project as we move into its second year, now turning our attention to Glenville and Buckeye-Woodhill.

*This project is supported by the Office of Minority Health (OMH) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$593,882.50 with 100 percent funded by OMH/OASH/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, OMH/OASH/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [minorityhealth.hhs.gov](http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov).*



Kendrick Chittock Photography (above & below)



# A Decade of Reforest Our City

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This year, we are celebrating a decade of the Reforest Our City Program—a program that is, simply put, dedicated to planting trees and helping them grow. But it's far from simple. Access to trees is not a given, and many Cleveland neighborhoods have long faced an abundance of vacant land and a shortage of healthy tree canopy.

Through close collaboration with partners, community members, donors, and health experts, the program remains steadfast in its mission to bring trees to the communities that need them most. We sat down with Western Reserve Land Conservancy's President and CEO, Rich Cochran, to discuss the program's inception.

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Reforest Our City Program, 2025

## ***What was the inspiration behind starting the Reforest Our City Program?***

**Rich:** We were working on a project in Bratenahl in the early 2000s and it really struck me that driving in, Bratenahl looked like a park. You could clearly see the municipal line where Bratenahl started based on the trees. I kept thinking, what can be done about this disparity?

At that time, studies were starting to come out about how trees were linked to health and happiness, and they were a privilege that not everyone could afford. We came together with a group of organizations at the Cleveland Sustainability Summit in 2012 and created a “forest city working group,” which later became the Cleveland Tree Coalition. We realized we needed to launch both this program and the Cleveland Tree Coalition to be able to strategically raise the tree canopy in Cleveland.

## ***Were there hurdles launching the program?***

**Rich:** We are, first of all, a land trust, so traditionally an organization like ours would accept conservation easements and people thought of us as only doing this. But our mission has always been to provide the people of our region with natural assets. Planting urban trees is a strategy to accomplish this mission. It has nothing to do with accepting a conservation easement—but it has everything to do with our mission.

Nonetheless, it was a massive shift in the way we deploy our assets, and it takes time to make a change like that and get everyone on board for it. We also didn't have the capacity to start this program at first, but I knew we needed to.

## ***What were your main objectives when you started the program?***

**Rich:** It's always been about improving environmental conditions in the city. We know environmental conditions and human health outcomes are linked. We see it in so many ways, but one example that always sticks out to me is that kids who walk to school in the presence of trees experience less stress, which leads to better academic outcomes. By investing in the neighborhoods that have historically been disinvested in, our hope is that we see mental, physical, and community health outcomes improve. Over time, these neighborhoods won't need intervention; they'll only need maintenance. Over the last 10 years, we have seen how the first trees we planted are now providing shade, and vacant lots we've transformed into green spaces are now providing community connection. I can't wait to see where we are in another 10 years.



Rich Cochran and students from Laurel School, 2016

The program has grown tremendously over the past 10 years. To those who have witnessed each stage, its transformation is almost unrecognizable. Reforest Our City began as a one-person crew planting about 50 trees per planting season. Thanks to the many people who have believed in this vision, we are now a full-time staff of five with several seasonal tree crew members, growing canopy through our Sherwick Tree Steward Training, tree distribution and giveaway events, partnerships with local organizations, and planting over 350 trees per season—and maintaining every tree for three years to ensure its long-term survival. With a new tree yard just around the corner from our downtown office, we are poised for even greater growth.

We are deeply grateful to all who have supported the program throughout the past decade—staff members, Sherwick Tree Stewards, donors, volunteers, partner organizations, the City of Cleveland, and community members. Their dedication has made our reforestation work possible. We are also deeply grateful to the Dusenbury Family and others for their transformational investments in the program—their extraordinary gifts allow us to flourish in ways that we only imagined just a few years ago.

As Reforest Our City continues to take root, branch out, and bloom, we look ahead with confidence: the next 10 years will be our best yet.

# Groundwork:

## Working with Nature on Cleveland's Vacant Land



As Cleveland's population has declined, a new reality has emerged: fewer people remain to care for increasing amounts of land. Tens of thousands of vacant parcels now dot the city, and the resources to maintain them grow thinner each year. Yet across Cleveland, trees still grow untended on vacant lots, providing shade and cooling without ongoing maintenance. How do we create natural areas and healthy, welcoming neighborhoods when maintenance work is in short supply?

How can we work with natural processes—rather than against them—to achieve these goals? One answer is Groundwork, our program that transforms how Cleveland plans and invests in vacant land. Groundwork recognizes vacant parcels as opportunities to work with natural processes to create healthier neighborhoods.

Realizing this vision required building new strategies organized around three essential steps: creating access to land, locating where natural areas should be, and implementing practical interventions.

Building off our earlier efforts to create county land banks that brought abandoned properties into public ownership, we launched CLEVLOT (Cleveland Vacant Land Opportunity Tool) in 2023 to address a persistent barrier: getting city-owned lots into the hands of community groups and nonprofits ready to invest in them. Working with residents, city administrators, and partners, we created clearer pathways to reimagine vacant land.

CLEVLOT also sparked a solution to another persistent problem: planning future uses of vacant land. Working with Cleveland's Planning Commission, we began with the 15-Minute City Index, which maps walkable access to amenities like grocery stores, transit stops, and libraries. This framework revealed both well-connected areas that make sense for future housing, as well as more isolated areas ideal for future trees and green space. But data alone cannot capture the full picture of how people experience their neighborhoods.

In 2024, in partnership with the City of Cleveland and Community Development Corporations on Cleveland's east side, we trained and paid neighborhood residents to walk every block with survey tools on their phones, verifying or adjusting recommendations based on what they see and know. The result? Agreement on 60–70% of lots, creating a shared vision that reflects both planning analysis and lived experience—and identifying where natural areas could emerge.

During the summer of 2025, we worked with City staff to create *Designing Natural Areas: A Pattern Book*. This practical guide documents how to prepare vacant lots through simple interventions: removing old fences, clearing illegal dumping, and restoring overgrown sidewalks. These modest investments help prepare sites for future opportunities—like Reforest Our City Program tree plantings—and create opportunities for natural processes to restore the land with little maintenance effort.

By addressing common problems and then stepping back to follow nature's lead, we can create strong networks of natural areas that complement our signature park projects.

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**Resources in Cleveland may be limited, but nature's power is abundant; through strategic access, resident-informed planning, and nature-based interventions, we are helping to create healthier neighborhoods throughout the city.**

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# Conservation Education & Outreach



Our Conservation Education and Outreach program strives to connect people of all ages to the wonders of our natural world. Through each program and event, we blend learning with meaningful experiences

that deepen appreciation and understanding for the outdoors. Nurturing a lifelong love for the land is crucial; it helps build allies who work alongside us to protect our planet.

# Conservation Awareness

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**The Land Conservancy's Conservation Awareness Series is designed to deepen our shared understanding of issues that affect our environment and the communities we call home, empowering all of us to be better stewards of our natural resources.**

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In January, the Land Conservancy hosted a screening of the documentary *Ripples of Plastic* at the Capitol Theatre in Cleveland, drawing an audience of 364 people. The film shines a light on plastic pollution in the Great Lakes, highlighting the staggering amount of plastic found in our local lakes and waterways. It explores the often-unseen impacts of this pollution, examining contamination pathways, the effects of microplastics, and the surprising toll on human health. At its core, the documentary aims to inspire a collective shift toward a plastic-free future.

After the screening, Renee Boronka moderated a panel discussion with Director Chris Langer, researcher Dr. Sherri Mason, sustainability coordinator Jill Bartolotta, and owner of Trash Fish Cleveland Eddie Olschansky, all of whom appear in the film. Together, they led an engaging conversation about the personal choices we can make as consumers and the efforts underway to clean up our beaches and waterways.

As a follow up to the documentary, in June, a group from the Land Conservancy joined Trash Fish Cleveland on the Cuyahoga River for a plastic cleanup paddle. We spent a few hours on the water, spotting a troubling amount of plastic and collecting as much as we could along the shoreline. By the end of the trip, our hardworking crew had gathered several bags of plastic from the river.



# Children in Nature

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Reaching kids is at the heart of our work. Today's children spend less time outdoors than any generation before them—averaging just four to seven minutes of unstructured outdoor play each day, compared to more than seven hours of screen time. Yet time in nature is vital: it helps reduce

stress and depression, strengthens the immune system, and improves focus and concentration. When kids spend less time outside, they miss out on these important health benefits—and on the sense of wonder and connection that comes from experiencing the natural world firsthand.



## CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR BILL OF RIGHTS

We are proud to play a role in the City of Cleveland's adoption of a Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights (COBOR). Throughout the school year, Renee Boronka, Director of Conservation Education & Outreach at Western Reserve Land Conservancy, worked closely with Cleveland Metropolitan School District Teacher Mary Kennedy-Brown and her class of AP Environmental Science Students from John Marshall High School to analyze data and compose the COBOR, which will serve as practical framework for future environmental planning and nature-based programming in Cleveland.

On Earth Day, Matt Zone, Chief Advocacy Officer at the Land Conservancy, joined the 12 students and their teacher as they presented the COBOR to Cleveland City Council's Committee on Workforce Education Training and Youth Development. The young scholars did an amazing job advocating for the youth of Cleveland. At the full City Council meeting on April 28, the Cleveland COBOR was unanimously adopted. Its passage underscores the City's commitment to ensuring every child in Cleveland experiences the benefits of time spent in nature.

## HIKING & JOURNALING FOR KIDS

In June, the Land Conservancy welcomed 20 guests to our Blue Heron Preserve for a Hiking & Journaling for Kids event. The forecast called for steady light rain, but we wanted to show the kids that there's no such thing as bad weather, only bad gear — so we stuck with our original plan. Under dark clouds and a gentle drizzle, we gathered in the pavilion to journal. Naturalist Judy Semroc shared stories and insights about the natural world, and participants got creative with leaf rubbings, sketches of flowers and wildlife, and poems inspired by what they observed. The children's artwork and reflections were impressive.

After journaling, our young hikers ventured along the trails of Blue Heron Preserve. They encountered a Painted Turtle up close, watched a Garter Snake slither through the grass, heard the call of a Barred Owl, and even observed River Otter scat — an unforgettable glimpse into the hidden lives of local wildlife, all within an hour-long walk.

### The Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights declares that every child in Cleveland has the right to:

Breathe fresh and clean air.

Recreate safely on the beaches and  
in the waters of Lake Erie.

Play in clean parks, green spaces,  
rivers, and streams.

Bike on safe trails in parks that  
connect the community.

Hike and explore safely in nature.

Walk along tree-lined streets in  
their neighborhood.

Play in the snow, build a snowman,  
ride a sled, throw a snowball.

Dig in soil, plant and nurture a seed, watch it grow.

Engage and connect with their community  
at events in parks and green spaces.

Bond with family and friends over  
an outdoor meal.

Watch the stars shine brightly during  
a peaceful night of camping.

Learn in nature, building confidence  
to be stewards of our natural world.





## FIELD WORKSHOP Owls

This overnight experience on Kelleys Island allowed participants to learn about bird banding from Master Bird Bander Tom Bartlett with opportunities for close-up views of six Northern Saw-whet Owls.

## JULY

### FIELD WORKSHOP Moths

Held at Hiram College's James H. Barrow Biological Field Station, our instructor Judy Semroc covered the identification, natural history, and behaviors of moths. The event featured a moth lighting after sunset that documented 59 species of moths.



### August

### September

### October

### December

**Vibrant Places**  
Blueberry Picking

**Field Exploration**  
Moths of  
Moreland Hills

**Nature Quest**  
Monarch Tagging

**Zoom Into Nature**  
Flying Squirrels  
with Dr. Don Althoff

**Vibrant Places**  
Winter Solstice  
Hike

**Vibrant Places**  
Oberlin Prairie Walk

**Special Events**  
Bat Blitz

**Special Events**  
Nature & Wine:  
Mikolaj Preserve &  
Laleure Vineyard

**Nature Quest**  
Owl Walk  
and Pellet Dissection

**Vibrant Places**  
Backcountry Hike

**Vibrant Places**  
Sherwin Fall Hike

**Zoom Into Nature**  
Ohio's Bats  
with Todd Cartner

# FY25 Conservation Education and Outreach Programs

# FEBRUARY

## CONSERVATION South Carolina Style

We toured conserved properties with staff from three local land trusts during this week-long excursion to the Low Country of South Carolina: Kiawah Conservancy, Edisto Island Open Land Trust and Spring Island Trust.



# APRIL

## FIELD WORKSHOP Amphibians

Our annual hike to the vernal pools of Oberlin Preserve taught participants about fingernail clams, fairy shrimp, mosquito larvae, salamanders, crayfish and other critters. During our visit, we heard Chorus Frogs and met a very photogenic Gray Tree Frog.

### January

**Zoom Into Nature**  
Spotted Lanternflies  
with Dr. Jennifer Essler

**Inspiring Biodiversity in Our Gardens**

Session 1:  
Stewardship Lessons  
of Naturalistic  
Public Gardens

**Special Events**  
Ripples of  
Plastic Documentary

**Inspiring Biodiversity in Our Gardens**

Session 2:  
Honey Bees and  
Native Bees—  
What You Don't Know

**Inspiring Biodiversity in Our Gardens**

Session 3:  
The Science of Plant  
Survival Strategies in  
Garden Design

**Vibrant Places**  
Groundhog Day  
Hike

**Inspiring Biodiversity in Our Gardens**

Session 4:  
Composition Tips  
for Wilder Gardens

**Zoom Into Nature**  
Trees  
with Ian Adams

**Zoom Into Nature**  
Preparing for Spring  
with Judy Semroc

**Vibrant Places**  
Waterfowl at  
Grand Valley Ranch

**Vibrant Places**  
Oberlin Amphibians

**Inspiring Biodiversity in Our Gardens**

Garden to the Max:  
Joyful, Visionary,  
Maximalist Design  
with Author  
Teresa Woodard

**Vibrant Places**  
Earth Day Hike

### May

**Field Exploration**  
Mushrooms

**Vibrant Places**  
Ashcroft Wildflowers  
Walk

**Vibrant Places**  
Waite Hill Spring  
Bird Walk

**Field Exploration**  
Songbirds & Daisies  
on Kelleys Island

### June

**Nature Quest**  
Hiking and Journaling  
for Kids

**Field Exploration**  
Plastic Pick Up  
(Kayak Cuyahoga)

## FIELD WORKSHOP Beagling

Participants had a unique opportunity to watch a pack of sporting beagles (thank you Chagrin Valley Beagles!) explore the thickets at our Grand Valley Ranch.



# MARCH

# Our Supporters

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**\$25,000+**

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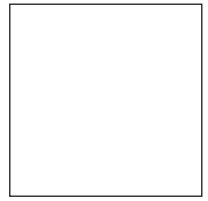
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