Western Reserve Land Conservancy
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.
www.wrlandconservancy.org



Autumn: A tough act to follow



Scott Hill
Eastern Field Director

Last weekend, I was cutting and splitting firewood and I noticed the leaves of the maple and black gum trees starting to turn. It is hard to believe that another autumn is upon us, but there is a certain comfort that comes with the changing of the seasons. The color that causes a familiar anticipation of change that includes the foreshadowing of winter. Autumn is my favorite time of year and I am not sure why.

It may be the endless streams of waterfowl following the ice line south or fleeing the massive arctic

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Trumbull Co. farms protected

Seven northern Ohio farms totaling 1,125 acres will be permanently preserved as a result of successful Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program applications filed with the state by the Land Conservancy.



Carrie Cox at Clover Hill Farm.

The total includes two farms in Trumbull County totaling 206 acres.

AEPP is a statewide initiative that preserves farmland through the purchase of permanent agricultural easements. It is administered by the Ohio Department of Agriculture, which selected 37 farms for funding this year from a total of 203 applications. Included were:

- Owner Carrie Cox's 101-acre Clover Hill Farm in Trumbull County's Bloomfield Township, which is listed on the Register of Ohio Centennial Homesteads. In the 1880s, the farm was home of a cheese factory, flour mill grocery and Clover Hill District School, a one-room public schoolhouse.
- The 105-acre farm owned by John and Jerry Lipps in Trumbull County's Gustavus Township. This farm was chosen to represent Ohio on "Good Morning America's" whistle-stop tour leading up to the 2008 election. Sen. John McCain visited the farm, and country star Brad Paisley performed a concert on the property.

Don't forget this 'right': preservation



Brett Rodstrom
Eastern Field Director

When talking to landowners about their family lands, the discussion inevitably leads to the topic of "property rights."

Most landowners understand they have the right to build a house, a barn, or even a pond and can enjoy passive recreational rights such as hiking, hunting or just generally enjoying nature. They are keenly aware they have the ability to sell or lease certain rights such as farming, timbering and oil and gas exploration on any given piece of property.

What landowners often fail

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River watchdog's legacy is a job well done

In Northeast Ohio, no fewer than six streams – the Chagrin, Grand, Ashtabula and Upper Cuyahoga rivers and Conneaut and Little Beaver creeks – are designated as State Scenic Rivers. As one of Ohio's four regional scenic river managers, Steve Roloson helped protect those high-quality waterways.



SPOTLIGHT
Steve Roloson

And doing so gave him tremendous satisfaction. "I love rivers, and, to me, (permanent protection of those watersheds) is something very lasting and significant," Roloson said.

In August, Roloson, who worked closely with the Land Conservancy on a number of

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River

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land-protection projects, retired after 32 years with the state, the last 18 as manager of the Scenic Rivers program in Northeast Ohio. He was recently honored by the Land Conservancy's Grand River Chapter for his work in protecting the region's rivers.

Even though Northeast Ohio has nearly half of the state's designated Scenic Rivers, the quality of local streams is not widely recognized. Roloson, who grew up in the Columbus area and worked in northwest Ohio before moving here in 1982, said the rivers here are exceptional.

"I never saw a clear stream until I came to



The Upper Cuyahoga River is one of six designated State Scenic Rivers in Northeast Ohio that Steve Roloson helped protect.

Northeast Ohio. It was an eye-opener," he said.

Roloson worked with landowners, government officials, community groups and organizations such as the Land Conservancy to protect the wild and scenic rivers in this part of the state. Since land features, such as floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands, riparian forest buffers and headwater tributaries, play a role in protecting the health of a river corridor, it is important to purchase or permanently protect these key properties.

Roloson and his wife, Nancy, live in Rootstown Township in Portage County. Their son Michael, 18, is a freshman at Kent State University majoring in zoology and pre-veterinary medicine.

Roloson said he hopes to remain involved in conservation and "helping those people who love their land and want to protect it."

Rights

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to realize, however, is that they also have the *right* to permanently protect their family land. This often overlooked opportunity is the single action a landowner can take to truly connect their great grandparents with their great grandchildren and share many of the lessons and experiences that often accompany these lands. Exercising this all important *right* essentially translates into passing on the ultimate family heirloom.

At the Land Conservancy, we strive to give landowners the unique opportunity to exercise their *right* to protect not only family lands, but also to strengthen their family heritage. We do this through a tool called a conservation easement, a voluntary agreement between the landowner and the Land Conservancy that legally protects land in perpetuity. While there are several potential tax advantages that accompany a conservation easement, the real benefit is to the family that strengthens its heritage by leaving behind a nature legacy.

It's inspiring to realize how one person's decision to exercise his or her individual property *rights* can have lasting repercussions for families and communities that will echo through generations to come.



RESTING RATTLERS

Local naturalist Greg Lipps photographed these two Massasauga Rattlesnakes on Land Conservancy-protected property in Ashtabula County. Lipps says this was the third sighting of the endangered rattlesnakes in the Grand River lowlands over the summer.

Hill

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cold fronts. Duck hunters love to see deep low pressure systems spilling out of Canada because they push thousands of ducks south. The waterfowl in front of these systems have included tundra swans and sand hill cranes for the last few years. The big swans fly through the dark and on clear cold nights you can hear the faint haunting calls drifting down from a mile above. The sand hill cranes have a call that always makes me think of something prehistoric. These beautiful big cranes are now nesting in Northeastern Ohio and, if you know where to look, you can see them with their "colts" in May where they hide in wetlands and wet crop fields.

These experiences were not possible in our area 20 years ago. Today they are, thanks to habitat protection and restoration.

Maybe my fondness for fall is rooted in the trees that are rubbed by buck deer in an effort to free themselves from the itchy velvet on their antlers. Or the silhouette of a mature buck in a soybean field at dusk, with shreds of velvet hanging from his antlers. It could be the activity and engineering associated with a beaver colony.

Then again, it may be the sound of coyotes howling as they stretch their legs and course through the swamps for rabbits and mice. The long lonely sound of a howl in dark of autumn is exciting and makes the hair on your neck stand up. It is primal.

As I watched wood ducks pouring into my marsh to roost for the night, I realize that all of these experiences are timeless. We see pictures and read stories about these experiences from our forefathers, and for some reason they feel like a black and white picture. They shouldn't. The colors, the sounds, the smells – they are all exactly the same as they were before we colonized this continent. The work that we do at the Land Conservancy is critically important because we must preserve these experiences for generations to come.

I want my grandchildren, who have not yet been born, to know what it is to hear swans at night or the howl of a coyote.





Cleveland Yoga instructors led the outdoor class at Orchard Hills Park.



Yoga on the Preserve

August 29, 2010

Orchard Hills Park, Chester Township

More than 450 people took part in the second Yoga on the Preserve at Orchard Hills Park. The event, which included a 75-minute yoga class and a guided nature hike, was cosponsored by Cleveland Yoga and the Land Conservancy.

The Land Conservancy would like to thank Cleveland Yoga, the Geauga Park District, Master Pizza, Pete McDonald, Patterson Fruit Farm, Marni Task and Enchanted Hearts for making the event such a big success.

Photos by Amanda Skingel-Synecky



A guided nature hike, above, preceded the yoga session, below.





Family members of all ages splash around in the creek.

Kids in the Creek

July 25, 2010, West Geauga Commons



The Land Conservancy's 12th annual Kids in the Creek event attracted about 75 children, parents and grandparents to the banks of the Chagrin River.

The popular family event helped reinforce the vital connection between children and their natural surroundings.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Saturday, Oct. 9, noon– 5 p.m.** — The Land Conservancy will have a booth at "Fall into Nature," an event sponsored by the University of Akron and Bath Parks at the Bath Nature Preserve, 4240 Ira Road, Bath.
- **Sunday, Oct. 10, 2 p.m.** — "A Magical Historical Ride Down River Road: The Untold Story" with local historian and storyteller Dan Ruminski at the newly remodeled White North Stables, 3160 Chagrin River Road, Hunting Valley. Cost is $25 per person, credit cards only. Call (440) 477-4695 for reservations.
- **Saturday, Oct. 16, 5-8 p.m.** — Medina Summit Chapter's annual Hoot and Harvest Festival, Hill'n Dale Club, 3605 Poe Road, Montville Township. Bring a potluck dish to share. Free. RSVP to kbihler@wrlandconservancy.org or (440) 729-9621.
- **Sunday, Oct. 17, 3-6 p.m.** — The Land Conservancy's annual Fall Festival at the Geauga Park District's Sunnybrook Preserve , 12474 Heath Road, Chester Township. Games for children and a hike around the park. Hot dogs, fixings and s'mores will be provided; bring a dish to share. Free. RSVP to kbihler@wrlandconservancy.org or (440) 729-9621.

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Our mission, our vision

Western Reserve Land Conservancy seeks to preserve the scenic beauty, rural character and natural resources of northern Ohio. We want to help create a network of interconnected natural areas, working land and green space throughout the region. We envision northern Ohio as a stunningly beautiful and healthy place to live, work and play.