Western Reserve Land Conservancy
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.

A Western Reserve Land Conservancy newsletter for Mahoning and Trumbull counties.

LANDLINE

www.wrlandconservancy.org

Spring 2012

FROM THE FIELD

Corridors don't happen by accident



Scott Hill
Eastern
Field Director

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." -- Margaret Mead

Some people are fortunate enough to be part of something much bigger than they are, something that proves to be very rewarding and fulfilling.

It could be a sports team that rises above adversity to succeed, a military or law enforcement team that forms a special bond while facing danger together or an entrepreneur who carefully assembles a team of coworkers to build a business. This experience can take many forms, but the net result is that you grow and often make the world a better place.

Land conservation work is both challenging and rewarding because property owners and families essentially invite you into their lives and ask you to help them be caretakers of their land. If you do a good job, they will often introduce you to their neighbors. The

see corridors page 2

Win getaways and more!

Details on page 3, or go to our Facebook page to enter the Spring Fever Sweepstakes.

Couple conserves a record 3,100 acres

A Trumbull County couple has permanently preserved nearly 3,100 acres of farmland and natural areas in what is believed to be the state's largest-ever land conservation transaction.

Richard and Rhonda Thompson of Kinsman donated 23 conservation easements totaling 3,095 acres to the Land Conservancy. More than two-thirds of the property preserved by the Thompsons – about 2,157 acres – is farmland, and the conservation easements protect more than 11 miles of stream frontage.

The protected land is in Ashtabula and Trumbull counties in Ohio as well as in Pennsylvania's Mercer County. It was the first out-of-state conservation easement recorded by the Land Conservancy, which sometimes does special projects outside its 14-county northern Ohio service region.

The Thompsons had previously preserved 581 acres in Ashtabula County through conservation easements held by the Land Conservancy and Ashtabula County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Scott Hill, the Land Conservancy's eastern field director, said the Thompson properties contain 11.4 miles, or about 60,000 linear feet, of tributaries to the Shenango River. Most of the tributaries flow into Pymatuning Creek, a major branch of the Shenango River.



Soybeans grown on one of the Thompson properties.

Hill said the project is important not only because of the vast amount of preserved acreage but also because of the protection afforded to river corridors and farmland. He called Richard Thompson "one of the most forward-thinking and insightful people I have ever known, and I am honored to call him my friend."

Land Conservancy President and CEO Rich Cochran added, "We are grateful to the Thompsons for their decision to permanently preserve some of the best natural resources in our region."

Take a Hike

Greenway draws outdoor enthusiasts



If you are a hiker, bicyclist, runner or in-line skater, the 43-mile Western Reserve Greenway in Trumbull and Ashtabula counties is a great destination. The mostly rural rail-trail cuts a north-south course from Ashtabula to Warren.

While the trail will eventually be extended to the Lake Erie shoreline, it now starts at Ashtabula's

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We mourn the loss of a treasured friend



Dick Grimm

The Land Conservancy – and conservation – lost a transforming leader and true friend with the recent passing of Dick Grimm. Mr. Grimm served on the boards of Chagrin River Land Conservancy and its successor, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, from 1998 until his death last month, and his honest, direct and passionate approach to conservation will benefit future generations in northern Ohio.

His love of the natural world is embodied in the Grimm Family Conservation Medal, which he awarded annually to "a conservationist, possessed of a deep and abiding passion for our mission, who has preserved land in a charitable manner, who views land as a precious resource and not as a commodity, and who has forgone significant financial value to preserve land."

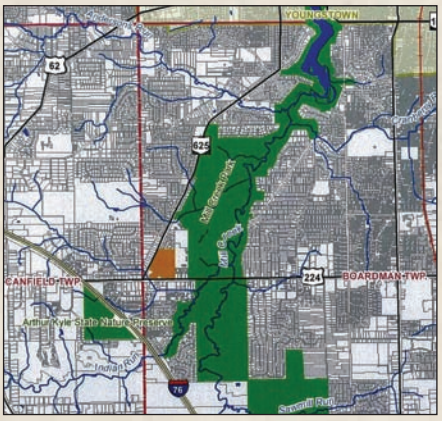
Corridors

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result of this activity is often a growing corridor of permanently protected properties and the stabilizing of rural and rural suburban communities that would otherwise be susceptible to urban sprawl.

A less tangible but equally important benefit is how the landowners in these communities work and live together. They may compete for years to lease or purchase good tillable land, but at the end of the day it is understood that as long as the land is productive and available for farming, timber or recreation, such as hunting or hiking, then their rural way of life is preserved. This cannot occur unless the landowners in an area have a common goal and work together to achieve it. I want to thank the dozens of landowners who have invited me into their lives and let me be part of their dream: to protect their property and their way of life.

Preserved acreage total is a record



The parcel in brown is the Land Conservancy's first preserved parcel in Mahoning County.

The Land Conservancy preserved nearly 5,500 acres in 2011, the highest total in its six-year history.

The 2011 results included the largest-ever single conservation easement project in Ohio: the permanent preservation of nearly 3,100 acres by Richard and Rhonda Thompson in Ashtabula, Trumbull and Mercer (Pa.) counties. Fifty parcels and 5,473 acres were preserved in 2011.

More than half of the acreage preserved by the Land Conservancy with conservation easements in 2011 was agricultural land, including larger farms in Lorain, Huron, Erie, Ashtabula, Geauga and Trumbull counties. In addition to those larger tracts, Sally and Phil Meyfarth also donated a conservation easement on their 18-acre family farm in Macedonia.

The organization, formed in 2006 by the merger of eight local land trusts, has – with the protection of several more properties at the start of 2012 – now preserved more than 29,000 acres – an area approximately the size of the city of San Francisco.

The Land Conservancy grew in 2009 when it merged with Grand River Partners. In March 2011, the Land Conservancy launched Thriving Communities Institute and named former Cuyahoga County Treasurer Jim Rokakis as its director.

Join us for concert, film festival



Pete McDonald belts out a tune at the 2011 Conservation Rocks! concert.

The Land Conservancy resumes its love affair with the arts this year by organizing the third annual Conservation Rocks! concert on June 8 and by partnering with the Cleveland International Film Festival.

The concert, which features local musicians who work in the field of conservation, will again be staged at the Beachland Ballroom and Tavern, 15711 Waterloo Road, Cleveland. In 2011, the event attracted more than 250 people. Lineup and ticket information will be available shortly.

The Land Conservancy will also give introductory remarks and provide other information at the Cleveland International Film Festival's showing of "Women With Cows" at Tower City Center. Show times are 7:40 p.m. March 27, 1:50 p.m. March 28 and 11:40 a.m. March 29.

Hike

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Herzog Rotary Park. There is a nice trailhead in Austinburg, where you can snag refreshments just seconds from the greenway. In the rural area south of town, you might see deer, beavers, wild turkeys, waterfowl and a wide variety of songbirds.

Some of the most picturesque areas are the Mosquito Lake wetlands in North Bloomfield, where an observation deck allows you to view bald eagles, red-tailed hawks and other birds, and the Stone Arch Bridge in Trumbull County. The best access to the greenway in the Warren area is the Sunside Trailhead at state Route 305.



The Land Conservancy has preserved properties adjacent to the greenway and will continue to partner with groups now working for the extension of the trail.

For a Western Reserve Greenway trail guide, visit www.metroparks.co.trumbull.oh.us.

Kids in the Snow

January 22, 2012, The Rookery, Munson Township



Above: The Land Conservancy's Scott Hill talks about the winter habits of animals.

Right: Rabbits make tell-tale marks in the snow.

Far right: Indoors, kids were able to make their own bird houses.





Winter Ecology Tour

February 10, 2012, Ashcroft Woods, Ashtabula County



Above: Hikers got a chance to explore the natural wonders of the Grand River Lowlands.

Right: One of the tour highlights was the spotting of two bald eagles in a tree at the edge of this marsh.



CONSERVATION CALENDAR

Triple Tap
3-6 p.m. Saturday, March 31
Patterson Fruit Farm, Chester Township

Earth Day at Penitentiary Glen
Sunday, April 22
Penitentiary Glen Nature Center, Kirtland

Blue Herons and Blooms
8-10 a.m. Saturday, May 12
Ashcroft Woods, Ashtabula County

AWARE Watershed Festival
10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, May 19
Mill Creek MetroParks Farm, Canfield

Grand River Cleanup
Sunday, June 3
Hidden Valley Park, Madison Township

Visit www.wrlandconservancy.org for details.



Enter 'Spring Fever' drawing for overnight getaways, dinner

Go to Western Reserve Land Conservancy's Facebook page to find out how you can enter our Spring Fever Sweepstakes and be eligible to win one of several great prizes, including overnight stays at The Lodge at Geneva-on-the-Lake and The Inn on Kelleys Island, dinner at the new Spice Kitchen+Bar or a cool bicycling package. Other prizes include canoe and kayak trips, concert tickets, a guided rattlesnake hike, an up-close look at birds of prey and a one-year subscription to Edible Cleveland. Just 'like' us on Facebook and click on Spring Fever Sweepstakes to enter. It does not cost anything to enter. The deadline for entries is May 10.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy
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P.O. Box 314
Novelty, Ohio 44072

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Landline expands with news online and in print

Starting with this edition, Landline will be published four times per year – twice in print and twice online. The print version of the newsletter will be published in the spring and fall, while online editions will be sent in the summer and winter. If we do not have your e-mail address, please send it to gpausch@wrlandconservancy.org or sign up at our website, www.wrlandconservancy.org, to ensure you receive all editions.



Photo by David Liam Kyle

Our mission: Western Reserve Land Conservancy seeks to preserve the scenic beauty, rural character and natural resources of northern Ohio.

Our members make our land protection efforts possible. We thank you for supporting our mission.

Contact Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Central Office

P.O. Box 314
Novelty, Ohio 44072
(440) 729-9621 or
info@wrlandconservancy.org

Eastern Field Office

P.O. Box 114
Orwell, Ohio 44076
(440) 773-5582
Scott Hill, Eastern Field Director
shill@wrlandconservancy.org

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