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



Big Swamp Woods preserved

The Land Conservancy, in partnership with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History Natural Areas Program, has preserved 81 acres of a 430-acre wetland complex in Fitchville Township in Huron County.



Pete McDonald, the Land Conservancy's director of stewardship, at Big Swamp Woods.

Big Swamp Woods, located in the headwaters of the Vermilion River watershed, is the largest swamp in Huron County and one of the largest forest blocks in north central Ohio. It consists of a 60-acre, high-quality wooded buttonbush swamp and swamp forest wetland complex, with water hip- or chest-deep in the spring. Walking in the swamp has the remote feeling of being back in time – it is truly a primeval experience.

According to State Botanist Rick Gardner, Ohio has been interested in protecting Big Swamp Woods since the 1980s because of its 400-plus acres of connected forest, high quality swamp forest, buttonbush swamps, rare plants and significant amphibian communities. The state designated the area a Conservation Site and a Reference Wetland Complex, meaning it is of regional or statewide significance for its

See SWAMP page 2

Everyone needs an 'Uncle Jim'



Andy McDowell
Western Field Director

My 2-year-old daughter's current favorite book, 'The Gardener," describes a young lady, Lydia Grace, who lives in the country and gardens with her grandmother and parents.

Lydia then spends some time in the big city with her Uncle Jim, who owns a bakery. Over her stay, Lydia creates opportunities to make a garden in every spot she can – in pots, window boxes and all over the roof. Despite Uncle Jim's grumpy personality, the two form a close bond. My daughter

See MCDOWELL page 2

'Vermilion' book worth reprinting



Kate Pilacky
Associate Field Director

We are hoping that YOU can help us raise the needed funds for a reprint of the exceptional book "Living in the Vermilion River Watershed," a project of the Land Conservancy, Oberlin College and other community partners and organizations. Mary Garvin, an Oberlin College biology professor and member of the Land Conservancy's Firelands Chapter Board, and her Oberlin College colleague Jan Cooper co-edited the book.

The original printing was

See BOOK page 2

Contact Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Firelands Field Office:
Andy McDowell,
Western Field Director
(440) 774-4226 or
amcdowell
@wrlandconservancy.org

Central Office:
(440) 729-9621 or
info@wrlandconservancy.org

He works to preserve precious wetlands



SPOTLIGHT
John Katko

If there was ever a question of how much one person can contribute to the good of a community, one would just have to point to John Katko. Katko's work, which centers on the protection of wetlands and other habitats in northern Ohio, is legendary in the natural resource community.

Katko, who taught science and math at Sheffield Middle School before his retirement in 2007, has an enthusiasm for wetlands and the natural world that is infectious to young and old alike.

"With fewer than 10 percent of our original wetlands left in Ohio, we need to dispatch the outdated and destructive attitudes of the settler days, when

See KATKO page 2

Katko

From page 1

these places mainly represented an obstacle to human habitation and industry, and transform our approach to them with an enlightened and conserving view that encompasses their fabulous beauty, their biological and ecological functions, and the vital roles they play for people," he says. "There is nothing like the transformative experience of a sojourn in a wild place to unburden the heart of the terrific freight of 'civilization.'"

In 1991, Katko formed Friends of Wetlands as a response to wetlands being legislated out of existence and developments encroaching on prime habitat for amphibians, plants and other wildlife. Katko, who holds a master's degree in botany from Kent State University, became an expert at identifying plants, especially those that are wetland indicators.

Firelands Land Conservancy formed in 1997 as a result of the networking done within FOWL. In 2006, the FLC merged with seven other organizations to form Western Reserve Land Conservancy. Katko brought to the Land Conservancy's attention several biological jewels the organization may not have otherwise been aware of, including the recently preserved 80-acre Big Swamp Woods in Huron County. He is always happy to help us out, walking properties and identifying plants and animals for biological surveys.

In 2002, Katko received a Clean Water Hero award from the Clean Water Network, a coalition group within the Natural Resources Defense Council. He has served on the board of the Ohio Environmental Council since 2006. Starting next spring, Katko will teach a general course on wetlands through the biology department at Oberlin College.

But what he really likes to do is take a walk in the woods and teach folks about wetlands, salamanders and their significance. "When the noise, odor, confusion, and anxiety of civilized surroundings start to wither my soul," he says, "there is a billboard in my brain that starts to glow: 'Got Nature?'"

And because of John Katko's work, there are now more of these special natural areas preserved.

Book

From page 1

funded by a grant from the Ohio EPA Ohio Environmental Educational Fund and Oberlin College. In 2008, 10,000 books were distributed to landowners along the river as well as schools within the watershed. Only a handful of these books remain.

Earlier this year, a very generous landowner along the Vermilion River pledged $5,000 toward a reprint of an additional 5,000 books if we can raise the rest of the funds by the end of 2010. *We need to raise at least $13,000 in the next several months toward this reprint!*

SAVE THE DATE!
Sept. 10, 2010
EverGreen EverBlue
Our annual fundraising event

"Living in the Vermilion River Watershed" has been used as a textbook in Vermilion River watershed schools for classes in creative writing, history, agriculture, biology and geology. Our goal is to raise enough funds for a reprint for schools within the watershed. There is also a need to have more books available for landowners.

People who know the Vermilion River love the river! We are hoping that our members and friends can rally together to support this project and help us reach our goal. $100 will pay for enough books to supply a classroom of 25 students in your preferred school district.

You already know the high quality of the publication; please help us get this book more widely distributed. *This is the only reprint we will be pursuing.* Please support the Vermilion River and this worthwhile project!

Swamp

From page 1

biological diversity or ecological integrity.

The Land Conservancy and the history museum submitted a grant and received Clean Ohio funds to purchase the property. Fitchville Township Trustees, as well as the Huron County Commissioners, expressed their support for the project. The museum provided the match dollars needed, and will own and manage the property as a nature preserve and provide public access to the property by permission for educational and recreational pursuits. A dedication ceremony will take place in September.

McDowell

From page 1

Ashley frequently points to and mentions Uncle Jim when we read the book. Over the July 4 weekend, Ashley got to meet "her Great Uncle Jim," a 93-year-old retired farmer who still lives on his farm in Western Pennsylvania.

It is the same farm where I cut my teeth using old, Farmall letter-series tractors and formed a bond with my Uncle Jim. Now when we read "The Gardener" and see Uncle Jim the character in the book, Ashley always mentions "my Uncle Jim, a farmer, tractors."

Although it is priceless to hear her say it, I can't help but feel saddened knowing she won't grow up as a child with a bond with her Great Uncle Jim, working on a farm and the learning experiences that come with it. They are also priceless.

While I know Ashley will get to visit many farms growing up and gain her own experiences from it, it won't be the same. I have the pleasure of working with many farm families to preserve their family farms, and I most enjoy hearing the stories about their children and, more so, their grandchildren, coming to and working on the farm.

I smile and think how there are still many "Uncle Jims" out there providing priceless experiences with close bonds of family and the land they love.

Conservation Rocks!

May 22, 2010, The Beachland Ballroom, Cleveland



Headliner Jason White dazzles the crowd.

Cleveland rocks — and so does conservation.

About 250 people attended the Land Conservancy's first concert on May 22 at the Beachland Ballroom. Headlining the Conservation Rocks concert was former Clevelander Jason White, who now records in Nashville. Also performing were the Land Conservancy's own Pete McDonald and the Swamp Rattlers. Planning is under way for a second Conservation Rocks show in 2011.



The Land Conservancy's own Pete McDonald belts out a song.





At left, the Land Conservancy's Eddie Dengg, Lisa Pasquale and Pete McDonald relax before the show; the bill included a performance by The Swamp Rattlers, right, who opened with a rocking set.



Honoring our conservation heroes





Left photo: Rich Cochran, left, Susan Wendt and Dick Grimm. Right photo: Michael Shaughnessy, left, and Steve Morris.

A conservation-minded Lorain County couple and the man responsible for preserving historic White North Stables were presented with the Land Conservancy's highest honors on June 23 at Conservation Celebration. The late Dr. Wallace E. Wendt and his wife, Susan, who preserved their 272-acre tract in Columbia Township, received the Grimm Family Conservation Medal,, while Michael Shaughnessy won the Stephen C. Morris Sugar Maple Award for his tireless efforts to preserve historic White North Stables. The event took place at the Lang property in Moreland Hills.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Saturday, Aug. 7, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.** — Summer Sizzle & Family Fun Day, Trumbull County Agriculture and Family Education Center, 520 W. Main St., Cortland.
- **Sunday, Aug. 22, 8 a.m.** — The Land Conservancy's second Yoga on the Preserve, location to be determined.
- **Friday, Sept. 10** — EverGreen EverBlue, Western Reserve Land Conservancy's annual gala, at the Lake House in Hunting Valley.
- **Saturday, Oct. 16, 5 p.m.** — Medina-Summit Chapter's annual Hoot and Harvest Festival, Hill'n Dale Club, 3605 Poe Road, Montville Township.
- **Sunday, Oct. 17** — Firelands Fall Foliage Hike at Augusta-Anne Olsen State Nature Preserve in Huron County and the Land Conservancy's annual Fall Festival at the Geauga Park District's Sunnybrook Preserve in Chester Township.

Western Reserve
Land Conservancy

OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy

P.O. Box 314

Novelty, OH 44072

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cleveland, OH
Permit No. 1

Printed on Recycled Paper

Our members make our land protection efforts possible.

We thank you for supporting our mission.

Become a fan of Western Reserve Land Conservancy group on Facebook!

To receive event notices or Landline online, e-mail us at gpausch@wrlandconservancy.org.

Yes, I want to join the Land Conservancy.

Please check your membership level:

O $15 Student
O $25 Introductory
O $50 Supporting
O $100 Donor
O $250 Contributing
O $500 Sustainer



Member benefits: Car decal, event notices, regional newsletter, satisfaction of supporting our work plus additional benefits for those contributing $50 or more.

Name:_____

Address:_____

City, State, ZIP:_____

E-mail address:_____

Phone:_____

Payment Method: O Check enclosed, payable to
Western Reserve Land Conservancy

O Visa O MC O AmEx O Discover

#_____ Exp:_____

Signature_____

Please return to: Western Reserve Land Conservancy
P.O. Box 314, Novelty, Ohio 44072

The Land Conservancy is a tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation.

Western Reserve
Land Conservancy

OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.

Central Office
P.O. Box 314, Novelty, Ohio 44072 (440) 729-9621
info@wrlandconservancy.org
Firelands Field Office
P.O. Box 174, Oberlin, Ohio 44077 (440) 774-4226
amcdowell@wrlandconservancy.org

www.wrlandconservancy.org

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.