Western Reserve Land Conservancy
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.

A Western Reserve Land Conservancy newsletter for Erie, Huron and Lorain counties.

LANDLINE

www.wrlandconservancy.org

Spring 2012

FROM THE FIELD

Big and small, farms make a difference



Andy McDowell
Western Field Director

2012 saw the biggest year to date for the Land Conservancy in terms of acres preserved.

Naturally, the lion's share of those acres comprised a large amount of farmland on large family farms all across our region. With the world's population at seven billion people, the need to preserve large tracts of farmland is obvious to me, although there are many other reasons beyond the fact that everyone needs to eat.

But it's my 3-year old daughter who indirectly reminds me of the need to preserve smaller tracts of land closer to our urban and suburban areas. In 2012, the Meyfarth family in Macedonia preserved what remains of their family's historic farm. Although currently not a farm, the easement preserving the 18-acre property – at the request of the Meyfarths – allows for farming if a future owner chooses to do so.

see Farms page 2

Win getaways and more!

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

Farmland preserved in Lorain County

A former longtime Penfield Township trustee and his wife have permanently preserved 326 acres of Lorain County farmland in conjunction with the Land Conservancy.

Tom Younglas, who ended his 36-year career as a Penfield Township trustee in 2009, and his wife, Jane, donated three conservation easements for land in Penfield and LaGrange townships in southeast Lorain County. Andy McDowell, western field director for the Land Conservancy, said the Younglases first inquired about conservation easements at a 2006 landowner information meeting in Wellington. The Younglas family purchased the farm in 1930.

"I applaud and respect what the Younglases are doing – they are great people," McDowell said. "When we discussed with them whether they might seek a purchased agricultural easement instead of a donated one, Tom indicated they would not. He added, 'Compensation is not necessary to do the right thing.'"

Tom Younglas stated, "My folks bought this farm and spent their whole lives building it up. They raised five children here. My wife and I kept adding to it and we put in a lot of work. Former farms nearby are now housing developments. I want to preserve this farm to know that this won't happen to our farm." Jane Younglas added, "We love this farm. We don't know of anyone who doesn't like to eat. If this land were to have houses on it this farm wouldn't be available to produce food for people again".



Tom and Jane Younglas have preserved farmland their family has owned since 1930.

McDowell said the protected property includes more than one mile of frontage along the East Branch of the Black River, with some areas on both sides. The active agricultural operation was traditionally a dairy farm with row crops.

McDowell said the Younglases are close friends with several other Lorain County farm owners who have donated conservation easements to the Land Conservancy, including Jarvis Babcock and the Browand family.

Take a Hike

Island preserve is a gem



In terms of sheer size, the 9-acre Scheeff East Point Nature Preserve is dwarfed by most parks. But its setting – at the eastern tip of Lake Erie's South Bass Island – sets it apart from its counterparts.

In 2008, the Land Conservancy and its funding partners, including longtime summer island

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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."



Photo by Connie Oney

Farms

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Living in North Ridgeville, my family frequently stops at a small local farm that has a roadside stand during the season. I am always surprised how often our daughter speaks about what we call the "Blue Barn Farm Market". It makes me realize how in built-out areas like North Ridgeville and Macedonia, these small local farms have an importance that goes far beyond providing a local source of fresh produce.

Fourth-generation farms preserved



The barn at the Wallrabenstein farm.

Nearly 600 acres of Erie County farmland has been permanently preserved by conservation easements granted by the Wallrabenstein family to the Land Conservancy.

John and Shirley Wallrabenstein preserved their 415-acre farm in Oxford Township, while John's mother, Marge, preserved her 150-acre farm in Milan Township. The fourth-generation farms have been in the family since the 1880s and are some of the most productive in the region, according to Andy McDowell, the Land Conservancy's western field director.

The farms, which are south of Sandusky in the flat farmland region easily visible from the Ohio Turnpike, are grain operations that include popcorn. Both have small woodlots.

"These are both among the best maintained and managed farms I have had the privilege to walk. I commend the Wallrabenstein family for their commitment to land management and conservation," McDowell said.

John Wallrabenstein is currently the fiscal officer for the Erie County Farm Bureau after serving as the immediate past president. In the past, he has held other officer-level positions with the Farm Bureau.

Join us for concert, film festival



Pete McDonald sings.

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

from page 1

resident Rose Scheeff, finalized the purchase of the property, which had at one time been targeted for a residential development. Instead, the preserve became the first property owned by the Put-in-Bay Township Park District.

Located next to rows of grapevines, the park entrance is at the northeastern tip of South Bass. The entrance is marked by three boulders and a combination split-rail and chain-link fence that makes the property only accessible to foot traffic from dawn to dusk.

Follow the footpaths, which are cut through meadow plants and tall grasses, to circle the perimeter of the preserve and gain access to the shoreline. The park provides habitat for thousands of migratory birds, numerous species of butterflies and the Lake Erie watersnake.



What appears as a white sand beach is a product of Lake Erie's waves grinding 20 years of invasive zebra and quagga mussel shells into tiny fragments. Stones of various shapes and sizes are mixed in with the crushed shells and native sand; footwear is recommended. The water level around East Point is extremely shallow; it is only deep enough for kayakers and canoes to paddle ashore.

Scheeff East Point Nature Preserve is located near the end of state Route 357 on South Bass Island.

Firelands Fall Hike

October 15, 2011, Vermilion River



Hikers gather for a trek on the Steyer property in Lorain County.

Great views of the Vermilion River were plentiful.





Hikers took the time to get a closeup look of critters like this crayfish.

Land Conservation Talk

January 23, 2012, Kendal at Oberlin



Medina Raptor Center volunteer Karen Napoli with Feathers, an American Kestrel.



The Land Conservancy's Andy McDowell talks about the importance of conservation.

CONSERVATION CALENDAR

Landowner Presentation
7 p.m. Thursday, April 5
Lorain County Joint Vocational School, Oberlin

Flower Walk with Miles Reed
Saturday, April 28
Westfield Township, Medina County

Oberlin Spring Walk
10 a.m. Saturday, May 5
Oberlin Great South Woods

Garlic Mustard Pull with Nordson Corp.
1-4 p.m. Saturday, May 12
Wendtwood, Columbia Township

Day's Dam Cleanup
Saturday, June 2
Day's Dam, Lorain

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.

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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



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