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



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.

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

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A job well done

Champion Creek project cleans stream, deepens partnerships between local groups

Dan Miltner noticed something moving on the banks of Champion Creek.



Volunteers collect debris from Champion Creek, a tributary of the West Branch of Rocky River.

Miltner, one of about 25 volunteers who were cleaning up a half-mile stretch of the creek west of Roscoe Ewing Park on Saturday, quickly realized it was a fawn tangled in the underbrush. Miltner, a Medina Township resident who volunteers with cleanup sponsors Western Reserve Land Conservancy and Rocky River Watershed Council, went to free the struggling animal but thought it might have a broken leg or other injuries that would prevent it from walking.

He was happy to be wrong.

"I set her down and she ran right down a (deer) trail," Miltner said.

Other items picked up by volunteers were not nearly as cuddly. They included two leather Wilson footballs, a rusty hot water heater, a volleyball, a pickup truck bed liner and several tarps. The volunteers, who started at the park and worked their way toward downtown Medina, filled 51 bags with

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Signs of success are everywhere



Bill Jordan
Associate Field Director

June 30 marks the end of the Land Conservancy's 2010 fiscal year, and a chance to reflect on the organizations accomplishments.

In an improving but still difficult economic environment, the Land Conservancy ended the fiscal year with a strong balance sheet and a balanced budget. Sincere thanks are extended to our donors who support the mission with their financial gifts.

The Land Conservancy enjoyed another year of significant accomplishment

See JORDAN page 2

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He views land conservation as vital



SPOTLIGHT
Jim Gerspacher

Jim Gerspacher is a Medina County real estate icon who sees land conservation as critical to the quality of life in a community.

Gerspacher, who owned James A. Gerspacher Real Estate Inc. and remains affiliated with the family business, now called the Gerspacher Real Estate Group, has championed causes that others in his industry might sidestep, such as farmland preservation and balanced-growth initiatives.

"I've always been a fan of open-space development – clustering the buildings (on a site) to preserve the open areas," says Gerspacher, who adds that European cities are models for this type of planning.

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SCARLET, GRAY AND GREEN FAIR

April 20, 2010
OSU Wooster campus



The Land Conservancy shared an information booth with conservation partner Killbuck Watershed Land Trust at the event held at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center in Wooster.

Vital

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Gerspacher, a former Land Conservancy trustee and current Medina-Summit Chapter member, is a lifelong Medina County resident who "always had an interest in the outdoors. As I grew older, I wanted to retain some of the things I enjoyed growing up as a kid."

Gerspacher's family tree has deep roots in Medina County. His mother's family settled in the Valley City area in the 1850s, while his grandfather and father moved to the county from Parma in the 1930s. Both sides of the family were involved in farming.

In June, Gerspacher was inducted into the Greater Medina Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame, and in 2005 was named the Medina County Citizen of the Year.

Gerspacher was one of the unsung heroes in the restoration of Haley's Run, the Akron urban greenway created by Lockheed Martin Corp. and others with the help of the Land Conservancy. Gerspacher volunteered his time to help the Land Conservancy acquire and assemble the small parcels needed for the greenway, which opened June 30.

"We cannot thank Jim enough for lending his time and expertise to this project. His assistance was truly invaluable," says Land Conservancy Vice President Eddie Dengg, a project coordinator.

As he eases into retirement, Gerspacher, a self-described "recovering attorney," says he hopes to use his legal and real-estate expertise to assist people who want to preserve their land. "I think I can use those skills to help people through the process," he says.

McDowell

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Ashley frequently points to and mentions Uncle Jim when we read the book. Over the July 4 weekend, Ashley got to meet "her 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 Jim's" out there providing priceless experiences with close bonds of family and the land they love.

SAVE THE DATE!

Sept. 10, 2010
EverGreen EverBlue
Our annual fundraising event

Cleanup

From page 1

trash. The event was sponsored by the city of Medina, the Medina County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Rocky River Watershed Council and the Land Conservancy.

Jordan

From page 1

in land protection. Land protected in fiscal year 2010 totaled more than 3,000 acres, bringing the cumulative total to more than 340 properties and 21,500 acres

The Land Conservancy is hosting meetings in every county in our service area. We are inviting park districts, Soil and Water Districts and other partners and professionals to help us develop a new approach for strategic conservation planning in northern Ohio. The meetings will focus on the development of maps that include the identification and location of the unique and important natural features and species in each county.



This Red-shouldered hawk was photographed on the Doermann property.

Our Medina-Summit Chapter Board continues to evolve. Carter Wilmot has been a guiding force on the board for many years. His recent request to take early retirement has been reluctantly accepted. Carter has our sincere thanks for his years of service. At the same time, the board welcomes new members Curt Keal, Judge Mary Spicer and Travis Crane.

On a final note, protection of important wildlife habitat is one of the objectives of many of our land projects. Are we succeeding? Take the case of the Doermann property, which includes beautiful habitat along the north channel of the Rocky River. Last September, the Medina Raptor Center released two rehabilitated Red-shouldered hawks on the property. This spring, the Doermann's have enjoyed the entire cycle of nest-building, incubation and fledging of young by, you guessed it, a pair of Red-shouldered hawks. And they have the photos to prove it.

Coincidence? Probably not.

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. 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 Township at the Bath Nature Preserve.
- **Saturday, Oct. 16, 5 p.m.** — Medina-Summit Chapter's annual Hoot and Harvest Festival, Hill'n Dale Club, 3605 Poe Road, Montville Township.

Western Reserve
Land Conservancy

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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.