Western Reserve Land Conservancy
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.

A Western Reserve Land Conservancy newsletter for Medina and Wayne counties.

LANDLINE

www.wrlandconservancy.org

Spring 2012

FROM THE FIELD

Conservation 'customer' finds value



Bill Jordan
Associate Field Director

My wife and I feel very fortunate. We have the opportunity, and perhaps responsibility, to preserve our property for the benefit of future generations. And in the process of doing so, I have been able to view and appreciate our organization as a customer in addition to an employee. The knowledge, experience and commitment to our mission that I've so admired in my colleagues are even more impressive when seen from a customer perspective.

The property has been in our family for over 40 years. Some of the history prior to that was provided by a 90-year-old resident of our community who grew up on the property. She remembers the maple syrup operations in the woods, the logging of walnut trees to provide guns stocks during both world wars, and the "old barn," (still standing) that was built prior to the Civil War using chestnut beams.

This is where our children grew up

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Win getaways and more!

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

Groups work for Medina greenway

For several years, the city of Medina, the Rocky River Watershed Council and the Land Conservancy have joined forces for a one-day cleanup of Champion Creek, the tributary to the West Branch of Rocky River that flows west to east through the heart of Medina County.

Now these groups and others have an even bigger goal: to create an urban greenway with bike paths, trails and conservation easements in the Champion Creek-Smith Road corridor. The restoration project would make the creek – nearly unrecognizable in spots where it flows through industrial and commercial areas – a more accessible community asset.

In line with this effort, the annual creek cleanup on June 9 will be expanded to include more cleanup zones, additional volunteers and an increased number of reporting sites. City Planning Director Greg Hannan said the creek restoration is part of a redevelopment plan for the area, and that "by creating greenspace and trails along Champion Creek, we hope to reconnect the historic neighborhoods to the downtown."

There have been positive developments in the creek restoration project:

- The city has created and extended a walkway along Champion Creek at Roscoe Ewing Park.



The annual Champion Creek cleanup.

- The Greater Medina Area Coalition, which includes Medina and several surrounding townships, has received a $1 million U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant to assess potential brownfield sites, including those along the creek.
- In May, Medina will be applying for a state EPA grant to improve the creek and establish conservation easements. The city is also exploring funding for some green stormwater demonstration projects.

"We are happy to help with this project in any way we can," said Bill Jordan, associate field director for the Land Conservancy and a board member of the Medina County Soil and Water Conservation District, another project partner.

Take a Hike

Medina County park is a plum



In Brunswick Hills Township, the Medina County Park District has transformed a former landfill into Plum Creek Park, a 190-acre preserve with great hiking trails, picnic areas and two fishing ponds.

Five trail loops cover distances from 0.3 mile to 1.5 miles, and you can lengthen your hike by

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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."

'customer'

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and where we've created our own memories of the property. Wildflower walks in the spring, baling hay in the summer, gathering firewood in the fall and late night horseback rides through snow-covered woods are now part of our family's shared memories.

The property was never much of a farm. Much of it is wooded, and the steep ravines make farming difficult. But the most important natural feature is the stream that flows through the property and eventually to the Black River. The stream had been known locally as "Little Sweetly Creek." A good friend, active in our local historical society, found a 19th century reference to the stream, and the official name became Gray's Creek. This cold water stream, a tributary of the Black River, has been the site of many "kids in the creek" type events. With the easement in place, we are comforted in the knowledge that new generations will enjoy the same opportunities.

Preserved acreage total is a record


Our 2011 work included an Akron greenway.

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 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

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combining sections of each. The trails are well-maintained and in primarily wooded areas. A paved section of trail connects the north and south sections of the park.

The park has three reservable picnic shelters – one enclosed and two open-air structures – as well as individual tables and grills. The two ponds, which are periodically stocked by the park system, contain largemouth bass, bluegills and trout.



The Land Conservancy has partnered with the Medina County Park District to preserve land in the Plum Creek Park region and holds conservation easements on two adjacent properties totaling 90 acres.

Plum Creek Park is at 2500 Plum Creek Parkway, Brunswick Hills.
For more information on the park, visit www.medinacountyparks.com.

Hoot ‘n’ Harvest Festival

October 15, 2011

Hill ‘n Dale Club, Montville Township



Hayrides were popular at this year’s festival, which was attended by about 150 people. The event is organized by the Medina Summit Chapter.





Above, Medina Raptor Center volunteer Annette Piechowski with Boris, a Barred Owl. Pumpkin-painting, left, gives children a chance to show off their creativity.



Bill Lamb serves hot chocolate to fellow Medina Summit Chapter members Ray Jarrett, left, and Curt Keal

CONSERVATION CALENDAR

Medina Earth Day
Saturday, April 21
Buffalo Creek Retreat, Seville

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

Adam’s Run Cleanup
Saturday, April 28
Akron

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

Champion Creek Cleanup
10 a.m.-noon Saturday, June 9
Medina

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.

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