Western Reserve Land Conservancy
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.

A Western Reserve Land Conservancy newsletter for Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga and Lake counties.

LANDLINE

www.wrlandconservancy.org

Spring 2012

FROM THE FIELD

The changing face of conservation



Brett Rodstrom
Northeastern Field Director

The ability to adapt is essential for the long-term sustainability of any species.

It is critical that a species is able continually re-assess the environment around it and react positively to any changes, whether they are present or foreseen. The same holds true for any business or organization.

Looking back at the success of the Land Conservancy in 2011, it becomes apparent that we too have begun to take the necessary steps to respond to the changing environment around us. Our new reality sees the effect of a devastating national mortgage crisis, an increase in competition for public funding and a landscape-scale change manifesting itself in the form of the discovery of oil and natural gas in the Utica shale under most of northeast Ohio.

As with many things in nature, these changes are happening outside of our control and regardless of our consent. Thus, we are forced to adapt. In 2011,

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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

A natural beauty in Moreland Hills



If you are looking for a rigorous hike in a beautiful setting, look no further than the 115-acre Forest Ridge Preserve in Moreland Hills.

The preserve, which is in the Chagrin River valley across from the Cleveland Metroparks Polo Fields, features steep slopes and level upland plateaus. Forest Ridge became a

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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."

conservation

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we launched Thriving Communities Institute, we became more creative and focused with our public funding endeavors and we worked with the first of many farmers and landowners who are using the donation of a conservation easement to protect their property, while also offsetting the income taxes from significant oil and gas revenue.

Change is often unplanned, but the willingness to adapt makes it tolerable, which, in turn, makes us stronger. It's hard to argue with the bottom line of the Land Conservancy's record successes in 2011- **50 properties protecting 5,473 acres.** We've adapted to our new realities and will continue to adapt to keep this organization growing stronger.

Geauga Co. dairy farm preserved

A 285-acre working dairy farm with one of the most scenic views in Geauga County has been permanently protected by an agricultural easement barring future development.



The Weedon Reservation Farm in Geauga County.

The Weedon Reservation Farm located at the corner of Route 528 and Hosmer Road in Parkman Township, is now permanently preserved for agricultural use under an easement held by the Geauga County Commissioners and the Land Conservancy. This working dairy farm was preserved under the state's Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, a statewide, farmland-protection initiative administered by the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

Farm owner Mildred Weedon said, "This was my dream of my senior years ... now I can rest in peace."

Brett Rodstrom, northeastern field director for the Land Conservancy, said his organization worked with the Weedon family, ODA and the Geauga County Planning Commission to preserve the farm, which was first owned by Henry Parkman, for whom the township was named.

"The family felt strongly that this farm must be protected in perpetuity to preserve not only the history of Parkman Township, but also the agricultural heritage and scenic beauty of Geauga County," Rodstrom said. "It's always so rewarding to help protect someone's family land but it's especially gratifying when it's a farm that has such a breathtaking view and dedicated owners like the Weedon family."

Join us for concert, film festival

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.



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

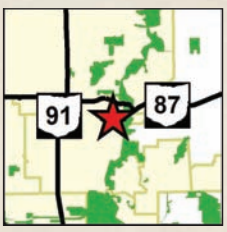
The concert, which features local musicians who work in the field of conservation, will again be staged at the Beachland Ballroom and Tavern, 15711 Waterloo Road, Cleveland. In 2011, the event attracted more than 250 people. Lineup and ticket information will be available shortly.

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.

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Moreland Hills park in 2007, when the Land Conservancy partnered with the village to acquire the land.

The property has approximately 3.5 miles of natural walking and hiking marked trails, and more are planned. Six rare species of birds -- dark-eyed junco, hermit thrush, sharp-shinned hawk, purple finch, black-throated blue warbler and brown creeper – are among the 68 types that have been identified on the preserve.



There are also more than 10,300 linear feet of headwater streams to the Chagrin River.

On property adjacent to Forest Ridge, the Land Conservancy is now constructing its new headquarters and expects to move into the building this summer. The Land Conservancy is constructing an office addition to the historic Lang home to create a center for regional conservation.

Forest Ridge Preserve is at 3841 Chagrin River Road, Moreland Hills.

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

Virtual Tour of Stebbins Gulch
6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 12
Land Conservancy's Painesville field office

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

Bratenahl Bird Walk
10 a.m. Sunday, May 20
Corning-Lakeshore Drives, Bratenahl

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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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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