Western Reserve Land Conservancy
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.
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Spring 2010

Landline

A Western Reserve Land Conservancy newsletter celebrating land conservation in Summit, Stark and Portage counties

Gifts to future generations



Eddie Dengg
Akron Field Director

The patchwork quilt of conservation in northern Ohio grew significantly over the past year.

Highlighted in this issue of *Landline* are two landowners who recently made the decision to permanently protect their land with voluntary conservation easements. Judge Spicer and Dr. Drake both care deeply about their land. By protecting their cherished family lands with conservation easements, these two amazing individuals have made a gift to all future generations.

They have protected our

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Judge makes case for conservation



The Summit County property preserved by Mary Spicer has been in the family since 1850.

Retired Summit County Common Pleas Judge Mary Spicer learned about the Land Conservancy's work at one of the organization's events last summer in Bath Township.

Now Spicer has made her own mark in land conservation.

Spicer, who retired in 2008 after a 24-year career on the bench, has permanently protected 60 acres of forested land on Hemphill Road in Copley Township and Norton in Summit County. The land has been in Spicer's family since 1850.

Spicer preserved the land with a donated conservation easement, one that will be held by the Land Conservancy. A conservation easement permanently protects the natural, agricultural and scenic resources of the land while allowing the grantor to retain ownership.

"I feel most fortunate to own the only remaining acreage of the once Spicer Farm," Spicer said. "I love the land, the beauty of the woods and the wildlife. I am determined to preserve it in its

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Upcoming Events

- **March 31, 7 p.m. —** Birds of Prey Presentation, Twinsburg Community Center, 10075 Ravenna Road, Twinsburg. The Medina Raptor Center and the Land Conservancy will display live hawks, owls, falcons and a turkey vulture.
- **April 10** — 12th annual Portage County Environmental Awards Dinner in Kent.
- **April 17** — Join other volunteers to help clean up Adams Run in Akron, where the Land Conservancy is creating an urban greenway.
- **April 24** — Tinkers Creek Van Tour through the Tinkers Creek Watershed.

Former teacher is at home in the outdoors

SPOTLIGHT
Judy Semroc



The outdoors has always been Judy Semroc's classroom.

Semroc, a former middle school science teacher who is now a conservation specialist with the Natural Areas Division for the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, has a passion for the natural world that she shares through guided hikes, interpretive programs and photography.

"I always enjoy seeing someone's face when they discover something and get excited about it," Semroc says.

Before coming to the history museum, Semroc, who lives in Uniontown, was a petroleum geologist and a teacher, working at The Academy in Canton and then at Canton Country Day School, where she taught sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders. Today, she spends much of her time outdoors, conducting surveys, leading hikes and organiz-

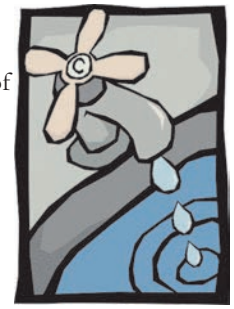
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Chapter member's book celebrates Seiberling's work

Medina-Summit Chapter member Dan Nelson, an emeritus professor of history at the University of Akron, has written a book about the late U.S. Rep. John F. Seiberling, who played a key role in the creation of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. "A Passion for the Land: John F. Seiberling and the Environmental Movement" (Kent State University Press, $39.95) examines Seiberling's land conservation work. He was considered a key figure in the expansion of the national parks and federal wildlife areas.

Grant to protect drinking water

The Greater Alliance Foundation is taking a lead role in a plan to protect the sources of the community's drinking water.



The foundation has awarded the Land Conservancy a $10,000 grant to develop a plan to preserve land around the city's two reservoirs, the 327-acre Deer Creek Lake and the 670-acre Walborn Reservoir. The approximately 23,000 people who live in and around Alliance depend on surface water drawn from these reservoirs. These sources are being threatened by the presence of excessive nutrients coming from the surrounding properties. The elevated levels of nutrients cause algae, which, as it decays, produces a chemical – 2-methylisoborneol or MIBS – that leaves drinking water with a musty smell and taste.

Our goal is to preserve land around the lakes, thereby preventing excess nutrients from reaching the reservoirs via failing sewage systems, farmland, polluted streams and new developments.

Semroc

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ing field trips, including one for Walsh University botany classes.

Semroc and colleague Larry Rosche have helped the Land Conservancy preserve numerous properties in northern Ohio by conducting species surveys that show what birds, insects, snakes, plants and other animals live on the parcels. The discovery of rare or threatened species on a property can help make it eligible for conservation funding.

Semroc is the founder of Operation Botanic Rescue, a volunteer plant-rescue group, Quail Hollow Land Conservancy and *Chrysalis in Time* – the first Ohio chapter of the North American Butterfly Association. In 2008, Judy was a co-author of the 2nd edition of "Dragonflies & Damselflies of Northeast Ohio," along with Rosche and Linda Gilbert.

Semroc says she views land conservation as vital to our future.

"The idea is to save it," she says, "so someone else can learn from it. That's the big draw to doing this kind of work."

Land Conservancy backs Envirothon

The Land Conservancy is a sponsor of the District 2 Envirothon competition for high school students. This year's regional competition will be April 28 at Camp Wise in Geauga County. The top four high school teams advance to the Ohio Envirothon competition June 14-15 at Lake Erie College in Painesville.

Fall Festival 2009



More than 90 people attended the Medina Summit Chapter's annual Hoot and Harvest Festival on Oct. 10 at the Hill 'n' Dale Club in Montville Township. The event featured owl-spotting, hayrides, pumpkin-painting, food, music and a program featuring live, rehabilitated raptors.

Dengg

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water quality, provided valuable permanent wildlife habitat, and added to the region's network of private and public open spaces.

By deciding to extinguish the development rights on their land, these two heroes and more than 300 others across northern Ohio have made their values known and impressed those values upon the landscape.

The results will reverberate for generations to come. We here at the Land Conservancy are honored that we have been able to get to know special people like Dr. Drake and Judge Spicer. Our lives are richer for it.

By deciding to extinguish the development rights on their own land, (they) have made their values known and impressed those values upon the landscape.

Even if you never get to meet these two champions or the peerless biologists and dedicated conservationists like Judy Semroc who work behind the scenes, your life is richer because of their actions.

95-acre farm preserved in Stark County

A man who worked the family's Tuscarawas Township farm with his father for more than 20 years has agreed to permanently preserve that land with a conservation easement.

Dr. Timothy Drake has donated a conservation easement on 95 acres in Stark County to the Land Conservancy. A conservation easement permanently protects the natural, agricultural and scenic resources of the land while allowing the grantor to retain ownership.



Dr. Tim Drake and his wife, Susan Lewis

Eddie Dengg, director of the Land Conservancy's Akron Field Office, said the property is mostly gently rolling farmland that the family has worked for more than two decades.

"We applaud and appreciate the decision Dr. Drake made to permanently preserve his family's farm," Dengg said. "His love of the land was the reason why he granted the easement."

This is not the first time the Land Conservancy has stepped up to permanently protect property in Stark County. Two years ago, brothers Garry and Leo Summers granted a conservation easement to the Land Conservancy preserving 245 acres in Osnaburg and Pike townships. The original homestead deed was signed by President James Madison.

The Summers brothers were named the 2008 recipients of the Grimm Family Conservation Medal, the Land Conservancy's highest award for conservation.

The Land Conservancy's work in Stark County has been made possible by the generous contributions of the Herbert W. Hoover Foundation and individual donors.

Judge

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natural state for posterity. This easement with Western Reserve Land Conservancy has made that possible."

Eddie Dengg, director of the Land Conservancy's Akron field office, said Spicer approached the nonprofit Land Conservancy about a conservation easement after attending "An Evening at the Historic Firestone Farm" in August.

The event was sponsored by the Land Conservancy and held at Oak Hill Farm, formerly part of the Firestone estate.

"We are honored to be able to help Judge Spicer permanently preserve her beautiful property for future generations. She has done a wonderful thing for her family and our region," Dengg said.

The Land Conservancy, which works in 14 counties and three special project areas, has now preserved 333 properties and 21,402 acres in northern Ohio. In 2009, we protected 41 properties and 3,310 acres.

Picciano, Mather join Land Conservancy staff

Conservation Funding Associate Jenny Picciano and GIS and Conservation Planning Manager Liz Mather are the newest members of the Land Conservancy staff.



Picciano



Mather

Picciano earned her master's degree in Urban Planning, Design and Development last May from Cleveland State University's Levin College of Urban Affairs. Jenny grew up in Orange Village and now lives in Cleveland Heights.

Mather, who holds a master's degree in geography and planning from the University of Toledo, spent the past seven years as GIS/IT Program coordinator for the Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District in central Ohio. Liz grew up in the Toledo area and now lives in Shaker Heights.

BEST OF SHOW



Diva, an 8-year-old female Chesapeake Bay Retriever, finds a novel use for a Land Conservancy whiz ring at last summer's Yoga on the Preserve in Chesterland. Diva's owner, William Fraser, says she enjoys swimming every day either at Orchard Hills Park or in the river near her home.

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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.