Western Reserve Land Conservancy
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# Two are stronger than one



**Brett Rodstrom**
*Northeastern Field Director*

The integration of Grand River Partners. Inc. into the Land Conservancy was completed in late December 2009 and we are now off and running.

During the hectic four-month transition period preceding the merger, the Land Conservancy staff was able to complete three land protection projects totaling 208 acres in the Grand River watershed.

Included in these projects was a partnership with the Lake Soil and Water Conservation District to protect the 65-acre Petkosek Farm

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# Geauga Co. owners preserve 117 acres



**The Lewis property in Newbury Township.**

Two property owners and Western Reserve Land Conservancy have teamed up to permanently preserve 117 acres in Geauga County.

A 74-acre tract in Newbury Township and a 43-acre parcel in Huntsburg Township have been permanently protected by conservation easements secured 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.

"We are extremely pleased to help these property owners protect their land for future generations and also to help Geauga County retain its rural character. Our mission is to preserve land," said Brett Rodstrom, Northeast Field Director for the Land Conservancy.

In Newbury Township, Mary Angela Cavanagh Lewis donated a conservation easement on 74 acres at the corner of Bell Street and state Route 44. Lewis lives in New Jersey but was passionate about preserving the land, which has been in her family for several generations,

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## Upcoming Events

- **March 13, 3-6 p.m. –** Triple Tap, the Land Conservancy's annual celebration of spring, at Patterson Fruit Farm, 8765 Mulberry Road, Chesterland. Come celebrate as we tap sugar maple trees and tap our feet to the music of Pete McDonald. Bring a potluck dish to share. Donations appreciated.
- **April 18, noon-4 p.m.** — Lake Metroparks Earth Day, Farmpark and Penitentiary Glen Reservation in Kirtland. Free.
- **May 15** — Grand River cleanup organized by the Land Conservancy's Grand River Partners Chapter.

# *Former teacher is at home in the outdoors*

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.



SPOTLIGHT
**Judy Semroc**

"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 organizing field trips, including one for Walsh University botany classes.

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## Land Conservancy loses a great friend



The Land Conservancy lost one of its biggest supporters with the January passing of Rose Scheeff of North Olmsted. It was Rose's generous contribution that helped the Land Conservancy acquire a 9-acre parcel on South Bass Island and turn it over to the Put-in-Bay Township Park District. She helped create Scheeff East Point Nature Preserve in memory of her husband, Bill, and the nearly 50 summers they spent on the island. We will miss you, Rose.

# Semroc

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"I certainly like the interaction with people who enjoy natural history and want to know more about it," she says.

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.

Sometimes what is not present on a piece of property is every bit as telling as what is.

"You can learn from absences (of species) as well as what actually is on the property," she says.

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."

# Geauga

**From page 1**

according to Rodstrom. A cousin, Auburn Township Trustee P.J. Cavanagh, will continue to farm the property, growing corn and hay. The property includes a heavily wooded section where his brother, Michael Cavanagh, collects sap from the maple trees and makes syrup each spring, and will continue to do this on the property.

Rodstrom called the project "a great opportunity to receive a donated easement from a conservation-minded family in one of our core service areas."

In Huntsburg Township, Stanley and Josephine Downing permanently protected 43 acres on Clay Street. The wooded property, which contains a pond, is located in the Upper Cuyahoga River watershed.

The Land Conservancy has now permanently protected 333 properties and more than 21,400 acres in a region that covers 14 northern Ohio counties. In 2009, the Land Conservancy protected 41 properties and 3,310 acres.

## 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.

## *Whole Foods 'nickels' help Land Conservancy*

Whole Foods customers who get a five-cent rebate for toting reusable shopping bags can now convert that nickel into a contribution to the Land Conservancy.

Through April 30, the Land Conservancy will be featured in the Nickels for Non-Profits program at the Whole Foods Market at the corner of Cedar and Warrensville Center roads in University Heights. Choose the wooden nickel option and drop it in the Land Conservancy slot in the holder between the café and main exit.

# Rodstrom

**From page 1**

along East Creek in Leroy Township. Additionally, the Land Conservancy was able to set in motion the acquisition of another 166 acres of critical stream and wetland habitat along the Grand River to be added to the Ashcroft Woods Preserve in Ashtabula County.

These are just a few examples of several projects previously set in motion by GRP, and currently being completed by the Land Conservancy.

Since the merger, the former GRP Board of Trustees has begun the process of reorganizing itself into the Land Conservancy's newly formed Grand River Chapter Board, whose goal will be to continue the conservation efforts of throughout the Grand River watershed.

The former GRP staff and boards members are more excited than ever, believing the merger with the Land Conservancy will be nothing short of a complete success for the Grand River!

*Brett Rodstrom is one of three full-time former Grand River Partners employees who have joined the Land Conservancy staff. The others are Grand River Watershed Coordinator George Warnock and Land Protection Assistant Lisa Pasquale.*

*In addition, two former GRP board members, Marta K. Stone and Thomas Swank, are now on the Land Conservancy Board of Trustees.*



# Kids in the Snow

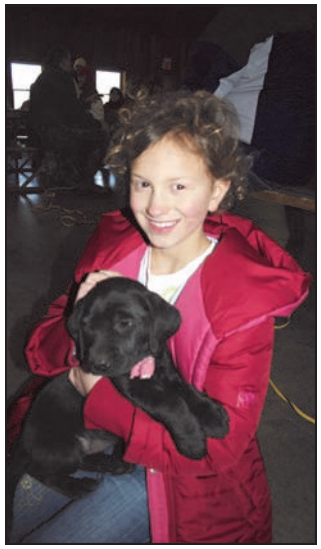
*January 31, 2010, The Rookery, Munson Township*



About 50 people got the chance to learn about wildlife tracks and tracking at the Land Conservancy's first Kids in the Snow event. Children spotted and identified animal tracks in the snow, then headed inside for stories and crafts in the Great Blue Heron Lodge.

The Rookery is a 562-acre park featuring one of Geauga County's largest nesting colonies of great blue herons.





**The Land Conservancy's Scott Hill, top, gives tracking tips to attendees, while Asher Kimball, above, gets an up-close view. At right, a friend helps Brooke Slesh stay warm.**



**Kids did pencil rubbings of animal tracks.**

# *Picciano, Mather join Land Conservancy staff*



**Picciano**



**Mather**

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

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.