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 Ashtabula, Mahoning and Trumbull counties

Let's focus on our strengths



Scott Hill
Eastern Field Director

I attend meetings throughout northern Ohio every week. At virtually all of them, the topic quickly turns to the economy.

Public officials work hard at attracting businesses, especially manufacturing, to the region to help with revenue and sagging employment. Many individuals in private sector are just thankful to have a job. The discussions involve ideas about how to get people back to work.

One excellent idea that has surfaced involves natural resource-based tourism. States and specific regions across the country have

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A milestone for the Land Conservancy

First project in Columbiana Co. is completed with Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation

The Land Conservancy and the Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation are teaming up to protect land in the Little Beaver Creek watershed.



The conservation easement will help protect Little Beaver Creek.

The Land Conservancy and LBCLF will co-hold a conservation easement permanently preserving 135 aces in Columbiana County's Elkrun Township. Bruce and Debbi MacLellan granted the conservation easement and will retain ownership of the property.

A conservation easement is an agreement in which a property owner permanently protects a parcel by prohibiting or limiting future development. Such an easement ensures that the natural, agricultural and scenic resources of the property will be protected forever.

This was Western Reserve Land Conservancy's first project in Columbiana County.

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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 24, 8 a.m. —** Lake Metroparks Canoe and Kayak Race on the Grand River at Harpersfield in Ashtabula County.
- **May 13** — Grand River cleanup organized by the Land Conservancy's Grand River Partners Chapter.

New trustee's roots are in land conservation

Susan Dicken Yerian, who grew up on a farm in Carroll County and went on to lead a nationally recognized park system, clearly feels at home in the Land Conservancy family.

"Soil is in my blood," she says with a smile.

In 2009, Yerian, the retired executive director of Youngstown's acclaimed Mill Creek MetroParks, was appointed to



SPOTLIGHT
Susan Dicken Yerian

the Land Conservancy's Board of Trustees. The appointment marked another milestone in the career of one of the region's most highly respected conservationists.

"I think it is important for people of all generations – kids, their parents, seniors – to have respect for the land," Yerian says. "So many people today don't know where their food comes from. It has been wonderful working with the Land Conservancy staff to stress the importance of conservation and to preserve land across the entire region."

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Newton Falls farm permanently preserved

A Newton Falls family and the Land Conservancy have joined forces to preserve an 87-acre farm along Kale Creek.

Richard and Trudy Houk have permanently protected their Trumbull County property with a conservation easement, one that will be held by the nonprofit Land Conservancy. A conservation easement permanently protects the natural, agricultural and scenic resources of the land while allowing the grantor to retain ownership.

Scott Hill, director of the Land Conservancy's Eastern Field Office, said the conservation easement will permanently preserve the farm and help protect the creek, which is in the Mahoning River watershed. Richard Houk has long been active in land conservation as a member of the Western Reserve Resource Conservation and Development board and the Trumbull County Soil and Water Conservation District board.



Richard and Trudy Houk have preserved their farm in Trumbull County.

"It has been very rewarding working with Richard and Trudy to protect their farm," Hill said. "We are honored to have been able to help them preserve this land for future generations."

The Land Conservancy has now preserved 333 properties and more than 21,400 acres in northern Ohio. In 2009 alone, the organization permanently protected 41 properties and 3,310 acres.

Yerian

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Yerian says she has been impressed with the Land Conservancy's willingness to help other organizations preserve natural resources. "The Land Conservancy brings all the tools in the tool belt," she says.

Yerian spent 21 years with Mill Creek MetroParks – the last five as executive director – before retiring in 2007. During her tenure, the park system acquired about 1,000 acres of natural space in the Mahoning Valley and established the Mill Creek MetroParks bike path.

She has had leadership roles with a number of local and regional groups, including the Ohio Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, the Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway Coalition, Youngstown City-Scape and AWARE (the Alliance for Watershed Action and Riparian Easement).

Yerian, an Ohio State University graduate, and her husband, Jay, live in Poland. Last year, they helped the Land Conservancy and Mill Creek MetroParks organize "A Celebration of Conservation: Stewardship through Partnership," a successful event held at the park district's D.D. and Velma Davis Education &Visitor Center.

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.

Streams get new signs



New signs now mark 44 stream crossing locations in the Mill Creek watershed, thanks to a $5,000 grant secured from the Ohio EPA by the Mahoning County Engineer's Office.

The grant for the Mill Creek Watershed Sign Our Streams (SOS) program was sought by the engineer's office on behalf of the Alliance for Watershed Action and Resource Education (AWARE) in partnership with Mill Creek MetroParks, Eastgate Regional Council of Governments and Mahoning Soil and Water Conservation District.

First

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The Land Conservancy has preserved 333 properties and 21,402 acres in northern Ohio.

"The MacLellans have a deep love of their land and want to see this beautiful property preserved in perpetuity," said Scott Hill, Eastern Field Director for the Land Conservancy.

The Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation has protected more than 4,300 acres in the Little Beaver Creek watershed. "They have done a tremendous job, and we are honored to have them as conservation partners," Hill said.

LBCLF President Carol Bretz said her organization was gratified to work with the Land Conservancy on the easement.

"The Land Conservancy has many resources that our small land trust does not. I believe this initial collaboration can lead to future shared endeavors and we look forward to a continued relationship with the Land Conservancy," she said.

The conservation easement drafted by the Land Conservancy permanently preserves the quality managed forests on the property and will help protect the Little Beaver Creek watershed. Little Beaver Creek is a state and national scenic river.

Hill

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focused tourism efforts on natural resources for years, often with excellent results. Yellowstone Park, Stuttgart, Ark. and the Florida Keys have all built economies on the tourism associated with their natural resources.



Why not northern Ohio? We have some of the best parks in the state, including the beautiful Mill Creek Park, the Ashtabula, Trumbull and Geauga park districts, the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and countless smaller municipal and township parks. Our region also has tens of thousands of acres of state game lands that are available for fishing, hunting, hiking and canoeing at no cost to the user. Lake Erie, the smallest of the Great Lakes and the shallowest, produces 50 percent of all the fish caught in our inland seas. That is why Erie has been the walleye and perch capital of North America for 25 years.

Do you like to canoe? Ashtabula County is the only county in the state with three State Scenic Rivers – Conneaut Creek plus the Ashtabula and Grand rivers.

Did I mention steelhead fishing? The three aforementioned streams, along with the Chagrin, Vermilion, Rocky and Cuyahoga rivers have excellent steelhead fisheries. The same Cuyahoga River that once made national news for catching on fire now has steelhead swimming upstream during the cold months. Such a success story should be shouted across the country. Our steelhead fishery is, in fact, one of the finest in North America and people currently travel thousands of miles to enjoy this natural resource that is right in our back yard.

How about birding? From the incredible Mill Creek Sanctuary to Lake Erie shoreline, northern Ohio offers birding opportunities throughout the region. Bald Eagles have made a tremendous comeback along our streams and wetlands. Peregrine Falcons now nest and hunt in the urban canyons of Cleveland and Akron. Sandhill Cranes can be seen at Shenango and along Pymatuning Creek. Northern Harriers cruise the frozen hayfields for mice. Warblers migrate through and nest along our riparian corridors.

Ducks love the Grand River lowlands, which is why this area has been a focus area for Ducks Unlimited for years. People travel from Europe to Arkansas to go duck hunting every year, yet the waterfowl hunting at Mosquito and Grand River wildlife areas in northern Trumbull County is just as good. We just don't market our region for this activity.

Have we talked turkey yet? Ashtabula County has been the best county in Ohio for six consecutive years when it comes to turkey hunting. North American Hunting Magazine also voted Ashtabula County as the best county in the country for whitetail deer hunting. Other areas in the Midwest such as Illinois have built a massive tourism industry on hunting opportunities that are not one bit better than what we have to offer.

So while we wait for the next major manufacturers to discover northern Ohio, why not start to promote our greatest asset, our natural resources? Those who worked in factories and in construction can quickly be retrained to guide people on fishing, hunting and birding expeditions. We have an opportunity to help lead our region out of this economic downturn by inviting the rest of the country to come see what's going on in the wilds of northern Ohio.

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.