Western Reserve Land Conservancy
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.

Fall 2009



Landline

A Western Reserve Land Conservancy newsletter celebrating land conservation in Ashtabula, Mahoning and Trumbull counties

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Scott Hill
Field Director

The connection between natural resources and economic development is real — and potentially transforming.

Since our work at the Land Conservancy involves preserving land for park systems and private owners, my view probably doesn't surprise you.

But it is not just my view. Mark Winchell, executive director of the Ashtabula County Convention & Visitors Bureau, says public access to some of his county's biggest natural assets — Lake Erie, the Grand River and Conneaut Creek, to name just a few — may be the key to growing tourism revenue and creating an even better community in which to live, work and play.

"There are a lot of opportunities when it comes to outdoors. We're in the infant stages of finding out the extent of those opportunities," he says.

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Welcome!

GRP staffers join Land Conservancy team



George Warnock, left, Lisa Pasquale and Brett Rodstrom are joining the Land Conservancy staff.

Three members of the Grand River Partners, Inc. staff will officially become Land Conservancy employees when the merger between the two groups becomes official later this year.

Grand River Partners employees Brett Rodstrom, George Warnock and Lisa Pasquale, who are based in GRP's Painesville office, are joining the Land Conservancy staff. The Painesville location, which is at 70 South Park Place, will become a Land Conservancy field office.

Rodstrom, GRP's land protection coordinator, was a storm water specialist with Lake Soil and Water Conservation District before joining GRP. Rodstrom, who holds a degree in environmental science from Allegheny College, said it is "exciting to be a part of the marriage of two of the most successful private conservation organization in Northeast Ohio."

Warnock's lifelong passion for environmental issues led him to Lake Erie College, where in he graduated with a degree in environmental

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Upcoming Events

- **Oct. 17, 4-7 p.m.** – The Land Conservancy's Fall Festival at Castlewood Farm, 16989 Snyder Road, Bainbridge. Games, crafts, music, cart rides around the farm and a campfire with s'mores. We will provide hot dogs, fixings and s'mores. Bring a picnic or a dish to share. As a special treat, the farm's horses will 'sign' copies of "A Bell for Justin," a new children's book by Faith Pescatore.
- **Oct. 31, 1-3 p.m. —** Halloween kayaking in Mill Creek MetroParks, Youngstown. Meet at East Newport Boat Launch. Free, but registration required.

He's an ardent advocate for the farming community



SPOTLIGHT
Dominic Marchese

Dominic Marchese is a champion for the preservation of farms.

Marchese, who has owned and operated Manna Farms in Farmdale for 35 years, currently sits on the Ohio Wildlife Council as a representative of the farming community. He raises grass-fed Piedmontese cattle, a breed from Italy that provides low-fat, low-calorie beef.

In addition, Marchese is a member of the Land Conservancy's Eastern Advisory Committee, which helps shape land conservation efforts in Trumbull, Mahoning and Ashtabula counties.

"They are not making any more land," he said. "If you don't act to preserve it, it will be lost forever. I think it's important to preserve something that's freely given. We really don't own anything, anyway. We just use it."

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GRP, Land Conservancy to merge

Members of Grand River Partners have unanimously endorsed an agreement to merge with Western Reserve Land Conservancy. The voice vote took place at an Aug. 31 membership meeting at The Winery at Spring Hill in Geneva.

The merger, which is expected to become official in November, joins northern Ohio's two largest land conservancies.

"We are humbled to have the opportunity to integrate Grand River Partners' land conservation portfolio into our stewardship program, and we are very excited to merge their staff and office into our operation," said Rich Cochran, president and CEO of Western Reserve Land Conservancy. "This will lead to more land protected more quickly. It is an example of the power of multiplication: While five plus five equals 10, we all know that five times five equals 25. Before this merger, we were engaged in addition, where our work and GRP's work produced incremental gains. The merger will produce a transforming multiplication effect that will result in greater mission accomplishment."



The Grand River is considered the cleanest stream that empties into Lake Erie.

Grand River Partners' office in Painesville will become a Western Reserve Land Conservancy field office staffed by three full-time employees who have been working for GRP.

The Land Conservancy has preserved 251 properties and 15,390 acres.

Grand River Partners, which was formed in 1994, currently holds or co-holds 33 conservation easements and owns eight preserves in the watershed for a total of almost 3,700 acres of permanently protected land.

Spotlight

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The former Warren Fire Department lieutenant – he worked there as a firefighter from 1966 to 1991 – is also active in the Trumbull County Farm Bureau and has served on the bureau's Board of Trustees. In addition, Marchese is currently a Johnston Township trustee.

Marchese, a U.S. Navy veteran, said it is important to have in place mechanisms such as agricultural and conservation easements.

Join the Land Conservancy!

See back page for details.

It is equally important, he said, to have land conservancies and other groups willing to make sure the easement grantor's wishes are followed.

"Somebody has to make the bold move to dictate something that will remain just as they have planned," Marchese said. "It's all about conserving and protecting the land for future generations."

Hill

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For example, the average steelhead fisherman in Northeast Ohio spends more than $40 per fishing trip, and the industry brings in $12 million to $14 million per year to the state, according to an Ohio State University study. Lake Erie's recreation offerings and the region's world-class whitetail deer-hunting also generate significant tourism revenue. Preserving these special places is vital to the region's economic future.

White Oak LEGACY SOCIETY

Make a lasting gift to our beautiful land.

Join the Land Conservancy's White Oak Legacy Society, whose members make a permanent commitment to land protection through wills, trusts and other estate-planning tools. For more information, contact Jean Gokorsch at (440) 729-9621, Ext. 124 or jgokorsch@wrlc.cc.

Welcome

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science with a concentration in chemistry. While earning his degree, he worked as an intern at Grand River Partners and was subsequently hired by GRP as its Upper Grand River Watershed Coordinator, which involves developing and implementing a watershed action plan for the Upper Grand River Watershed.

"I am excited at the prospect of working with an elite team of professionals using innovative methods to help improve the quality of life in northern Ohio by working for the Land Conservancy," Warnock said.

"I am excited at the prospect of working with an elite team of professionals."

— George Warnock

Pasquale, who holds a bachelor's degree in communications from Cleveland State University, has been the media and outreach coordinator for Grand River Partners. Before joining GRP, she operated a full-service advertising agency that helped market and produce national events.

Pasquale is also the founder of the Mentor Ultimate Frisbee League.

"I am impressed by the professionalism and structure of the Land Conservancy and inspired by the passion of its employees," Pasquale said.

She added, "This merger will preserve the legacy of Grand River Partners and continue its mission with strength and integrity."

A Grand event

Get-together celebrates merger of region's two largest land conservancies

More than 75 supporters of Grand River Partners Inc. and Western Reserve Land Conservancy got the chance to share food and fellowship at the Aug. 31 GRP membership meeting at The Winery at Spring Hill in Geneva.

After GRP members endorsed an agreement to merge with the Land Conservancy, members of both organizations joined landowners and supporters in a celebration.



Paul Belanger, left, president of Grand River Partners' board of trustees, talks with Land Conservancy Chair Bill Mulligan, center, and Land Conservancy Trustee John Leech at the Aug. 31 event in Geneva.





Above, the crowd enjoys the party; at right, Aaron Van Ostran, left, of the Ohio Wetlands Foundation and the Land Conservancy's Pete McDonald.



Bill Abell, left, Land Conservancy President/CEO Rich Cochran and Ralph Haehn.



GRP Secretary Thomas Quintrell and President Paul Belanger.



Jeff Burr, left, Bill Ginn and Grant River Partners Trustee Kristi Schmitt Burr.







Clockwise, from above, Western Reserve Land Conservancy volunteer Brandon Wood chats with a visitor; the colorful gardens on the grounds added to the beauty of the event; and the Land Conservancy's booth, which featured maps and publications, was visited by more than 100 people at Summer Sizzle.

Making friends at Summer Sizzle

Trumbull County residents offered advice and encouragement to Western Reserve Land Conservancy at the annual Summer Sizzle. More than 100 people made a point of stopping by the Land Conservancy booth at the Aug. 8 festival, which was held at the Trumbull County Agriculture and Family Education Center in Cortland.

The Land Conservancy has helped protect several properties in Trumbull County, including a 294-acre tract near the state's Grand River Wildlife Area northwest of Warren.

Western Reserve
Land Conservancy

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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.