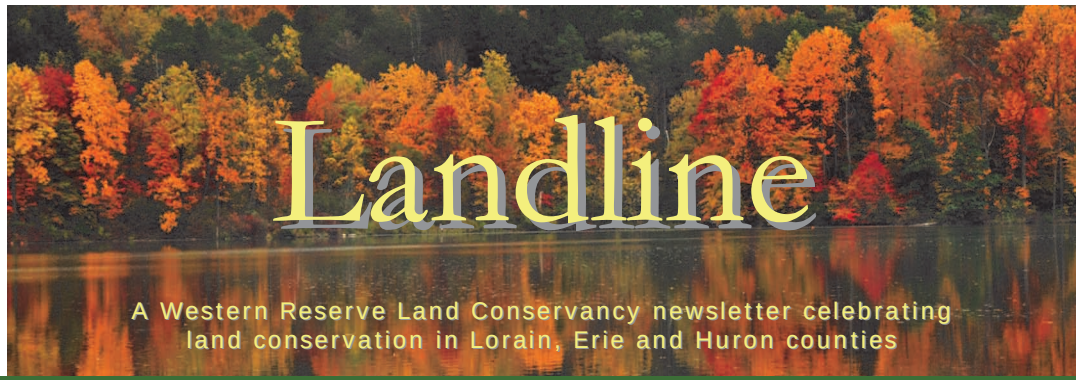
Western Reserve Land Conservancy
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.

Fall 2009



Landline

A Western Reserve Land Conservancy newsletter celebrating land conservation in Lorain, Erie and Huron counties

Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Firelands Field Office
P.O. Box 174
Oberlin, Ohio 44074
Phone: (440) 774-4226
www.wrlc.cc



Andy McDowell
Field Director

I want to first thank the Robertson and DeGiau families for recently preserving their beautiful properties in Ashland and Huron counties.

Their stories are highlighted in this issue of *Landline*. I wanted to use this edition of *Landline* to thank all of the landowners who we have or are currently working with to preserve their properties.

It is truly an honor and a pleasure to work with each and every one of you. I do not take what we do lightly and understand that the property each of you have or are preserving is one of the, if not the, most important and cherished items in you and your family's life, often for generations.

As I sit around a kitchen table and listen to the history and stories of the family farm or the reasons why this property is such a special place, I quickly conclude that this is a special place. A place with history. A place

See ANDY page 2

Landowners protect Upper Vermilion, Huron watersheds

Less than a year after they attended a Land Conservancy presentation on conservation easements, three property owners have agreed to preserve more than 100 acres in the Upper Vermilion and Huron River watersheds.



The Robertson property is the Land Conservancy's second conservation easement in Ashland County.

Larry Robertson of Ashland County, who preserved 69 acres, and Gene and Janice DaGiau of Huron County, who protected a 35-acre tract that was once a church camp, have donated conservation easements. The easements will be held by the Land Conservancy.

"These landowners should be commended for their commitment to preserving their beautiful properties," said Andy McDowell, director of the Land Conservancy's Firelands Field Office.

The Robertson property lies just north of the town of Bailey Lakes near Savannah, where Mud Lake, considered the Vermilion River's primary source, is found.

At its western border, Robertson's property crosses

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Upcoming Events

- **Oct. 18, 1 p.m. —** Join the Land Conservancy for a fall hike on the Vermilion River at Augusta Ann Olson State Nature Preserve. Mike Grote will be the hike leader. The preserve is about one mile north of Wakeman on West River Road. Look for the sign and the parking area on the south side of River Road.
- **Nov. 11, 7 p.m. —** A program for landowners at Wakeman Community Library, 33 South Pleasant St., Wakeman. Andy McDowell, director of the Land Conservancy's Firelands Field Office, will talk about federal income and estate tax incentives for landowners interested in preserving their land.

Lorain County legend seeking new challenges



SPOTLIGHT
Jarvis Babcock

Farmer and conservationist Jarvis Babcock is retiring from two key public service positions with a host of accomplishments and the knowledge that his work is far from done.

Babcock, who, along with his two sisters, preserved their 1,000-plus-acre farm in southern Lorain County in 2007, will be retiring as both a Rochester Township trustee and as a member of the Clean Ohio District 9 Natural Resources Advisory Council. Babcock has been a township trustee for 28 years, having been elected 11 times.

"I've been there a whole generation, and it's time for someone younger with more energy," he said.

Babcock has been a fixture in the Lorain County community. In addition to preserving his land through the Land Conservancy and the state's Agricul-

See JARVIS page 2

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.

Jarvis

From page 1

tural Easement Protection Program, he has been a township trustee, a five-year NRAC member and a representative to the South Lorain Ambulance District, which has seven members representing five townships (Brighton, Wellington, Penfield, Huntington and Rochester) and two villages (Wellington and Rochester).

Babcock is pleased that the family farm is preserved but acknowledges that his "work is not done."

Join the Land Conservancy!

See back page for details.

He has secured an agricultural easement for the property, is taking the legal steps necessary to keep the land in his family and is looking at ways to make the farm more profitable, including improved field tiling and the construction of a few outbuildings.

A Robert Frost quote comes quickly to Babcock: "I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep."

Andy

From page 1

which raised families for generations. A place that has sustained a way of life. A place to escape from today's fast-paced world. A place where many children caught their first garter snake.



"It is truly an honor and a pleasure to work with each and every one of you."

However, the deep attachment each of you has with your land is sometimes most evident from the look in your eyes when the stories are being told and when you gaze out across the landscape that has been nurtured for generations and no words are said.

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.

Owners

From page 1

into a large woodlot containing mature specimens of American beech, hickory and oak. Here, a two-acre lake drains into the headwaters of the Vermilion River.

Robertson's land is near several other protected properties. Just four miles to the west is the 187-acre Fowler Woods State Nature Preserve. Three miles to the north is another Land Conservancy easement, an 80-acre property owned by Jean Stell.

The DaGiau property lies along Greenwich-Milan Townline Road in Fairfield Township. Primarily comprised of woodlands, a single 15-acre lake also stands on the property. The Lake drains into a headwater tributary to the East Branch of the Huron River.

Gene and Janice DaGiau have always thought of their land as a wildlife sanctuary, and manage it as such. Historically, the property served as a church camp that ceased operations several decades ago. Today, the DaGiaus continue to maintain one of these camp structures as a vacation cabin.

'Vermilion River' authors honored

About 75 people attended an event celebrating "Living in the Vermilion River Watershed," a book produced by a collaboration of Western Reserve Land Conservancy's Firelands Chapter and Oberlin College.

The July 23 event was held at the Hostile Valley Campground, which is located on the Vermilion River in Wakeman. Honored were the book's co-editors, Mary Garvin, associate professor of biology at Oberlin College and a Land Conservancy Firelands Chapter board member, and Jan Cooper of the college's Department of Rhetoric and Composition. Garvin and Cooper collaborate and co-teach an Oberlin College course titled "Field-Based Writing: Ecology of the Vermilion River Watershed."

Since September 2008, 10,000 "Living in the Vermilion River Watershed" books have been produced and distributed to residents, libraries and school systems in the watershed. In 2006, the book project was awarded a $50,000 grant by the Ohio EPA Environmental Education Fund. Additional funding was provided by the Oberlin College biology and environmental studies departments as well as the Office of the President.

At the event, awards were presented by the Land Conservancy to the editors for their work in producing the publication. An online version of the book is available on the Land Conservancy's Web site: www.wrlc.cc.



Jan Cooper, left, the Land Conservancy's Kate Pilacky, Firelands Chapter President Grant Thompson and Mary Garvin.



Chapter members enjoyed a bountiful pot-luck dinner in the shelter at Hostile Valley Campground near Wakeman.

Exploring a natural estuary by canoe



Spectacular views are the norm on Old Woman Creek, one of Ohio's few remaining natural estuaries.

The annual canoe trip on Old Woman Creek in Huron is always one of the most popular events planned by the Land Conservancy's Firelands Chapter.



Canoeists paddle their way down Old Woman Creek.

This year 's outing, which was held Aug. 2, was no exception.

Old Woman Creek is one of Ohio's few remaining examples of a natural estuary. As a transition zone between land and water, it contains a variety of habitats, including marshes and swamps, upland forests, open water, tributary streams, a barrier beach and near shore Lake Erie.

Old Woman National Estuarine Research Reserve was established in 1980 as a cooperative partnership between state and federal agencies. The area has also dedicated as an Ohio State Nature Preserve.

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P.O. Box 314
Novelty, OH 44072

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We thank you for supporting our mission.

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To receive event notices or Landline online, e-mail us at gpausch@wrlc.cc.

Yes, I want to join the Land Conservancy.

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Firelands Field Office
P.O. Box 174
Oberlin, Ohio 44074
Phone: (440) 774-4226
amcdowell@wrlc.cc

Central Office
P.O. Box 314
Novelty, Ohio 44072
Phone: (440) 729-9621
info@wrlc.cc

www.wrlc.cc

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.