Western Reserve Land Conservancy
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.
www.wrlandconservancy.org

Fall 2011

Landline

A Western Reserve Land Conservancy newsletter celebrating land conservation in Medina and Wayne counties



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Bill Jordan

Bill Jordan's love of the outdoors has led him to key roles in two nonprofit organizations and helped make him one of Medina County's most respected conservationists.

Jordan, who is the associate field director for the Land Conservancy's Medina office, became manager of operations and membership for the former Medina Summit Land Conservancy in 2004 after a 28-year career in the commercial banking industry with a focus on management of electronic banking.

Bill had also served on the board of trustees for MSLC, one of eight local land trusts that merged in 2006 to form Western Reserve Land Conservancy.

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Groups collaborate to preserve river corridor

The Land Conservancy, the Medina County Park District, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the Rocky River Watershed Council and local governments are among the groups quietly working to create a green corridor along the West Branch of Rocky River in Medina and Medina Township.

The corridor is located north and east of an area that has seen significant commercial growth over the past two decades.

The approximately two-mile-long green corridor stretches between the city of Medina's 226-acre Reagan Park and the history museum's 33.5-acre Medina Sanctuary off Watkins Road in Medina Township.

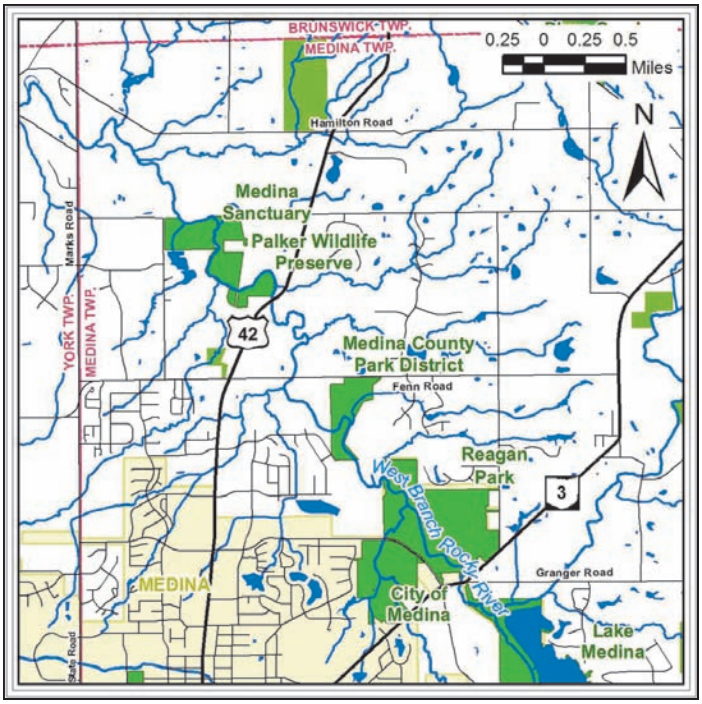
In addition, the county park system owns three properties totaling 108 acres within the corridor. The county park system's parcels include the 42.7-acre Palker Wildlife Area off U.S. Route 42, another nearby property that was acquired this year and acreage south of Fenn Road.

The Land Conservancy is also looking at additional preservation along the river corridor in conjunction with the park system and with private property owners.

The area of opportunity has a diversity of land types and habitat including forested areas, agricultural fields and high quality wetlands. Preserving this area is important to maintaining the health of the Rocky River and ultimately Lake Erie.

"Projects of this scope take time and commitment. We are grateful to our public and private partners who share our vision for this important area," said Bill Jordan, associate field director for the Land Conservancy's Medina office.

One goal of the Rocky River Watershed Action Plan, which was endorsed by the state in 2006, is to protect and restore the river corridor, its tributaries and its headwater streams by preserving an additional 100 acres with conservation easements and adding park land along five more miles of streams within the watershed.



The green areas are parks and land permanently preserved with conservation easements.

LTA president praises Land Conservancy's work

One of the nation's top conservationists described the Land Conservancy as "an extraordinary civic institution" and applauded the preservation work done by the organization in northern Ohio.

Rand Wentworth, president of the Washington, D.C.-based Land Trust Alliance, of which the Land Conservancy is a member, spoke Sept. 9 at EverGreen EverBlue, the Land Conservancy's annual benefit. This year's event, which was held at the recently preserved Stoneybrook Farm in Hunting Valley, drew a crowd of more than 600 people.



Rand Wentworth spoke at EverGreen EverBlue.

LTA is a national organization representing more than 1,700 land trusts.

"(The Land Conservancy) is at the top of the list," Wentworth said.

Wentworth had earlier toured some preserved properties with Rich Cochran, the Land Conservancy's president and CEO. The properties included the Adam's-Haley's runs urban greenway project in Akron, farmland and some of the preserved land in the Chagrin River valley. Wentworth said the formation of the Land Conservancy through the merger of eight local land trusts in 2006 and the addition of Grand River Partners three years later "bore extraordinary fruit."

He added, "It is just amazing to see what you are accomplishing."

Wentworth, who was vice president of the Trust for Public Land before joining LTA in 2002, is a graduate of Yale University and holds an MBA in finance from Cornell University. He told the EverGreen EverBlue audience that the preservation of our natural areas and working lands is "the greatest legacy any of us can leave." The Land Conservancy, he said, is an example of "neighbors working with neighbors" for the community's good.

Jordan

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"I'm very fortunate to work for a great organization whose mission of land conservation is something I care about very deeply," Jordan said.

Jordan, who holds bachelor's degrees in economics and finance from Case Western Reserve University, is also chairman of the Medina County Soil and Water District's Board of Supervisors.

MCSWD helps landowners work together on soil and conservation issues.

The Cleveland native and his wife, Laura, also operate the nonprofit Medina Raptor Center, a wildlife rehabilitation facility. Established in 1990, it is one of the leading centers of its type and treats more than 400 birds annually.

Bill and Laura, who have lived in Chatham Township since 1973, have two adult children, Bill and Melissa. In his spare time, Bill enjoys birdwatching, wildlife study, gardening and landscaping, canoeing, camping and woodworking.



Thomas



Owen



Davis



Leslie



Boehnlein



Schiffman

Bob Owen promoted

Bob Owen has been named the Land Conservancy's new general counsel, replacing the retiring Ed Meyers. Owen, who lives in Chesterland, has been on the Land Conservancy legal staff since 2006. He is a graduate of Hiram College and Cleveland-Marshall College of Law.

The Land Conservancy also welcomes:

- Die-hard Florida Gators fan and Shaker Heights resident **LeAnn Davis**, our new conservation attorney. The Florida native worked for six years as a real estate attorney at Thompson Hine in Cleveland.
- **Robin Darden Thomas,** land bank program director for Thriving Communities Institute. The Parma resident's career in public service includes stints as interim treasurer and chief deputy treasurer of Cuyahoga County.
- Conservation project manager **Jeffery A. Schiffman**, who has worked in site acquisition in the private and public sectors. Jeffery was raised in Oberlin in Lorain County and now lives in Shaker Heights.
- Medina County native **Paul Boehnlein**, our new GIS and conservation planning specialist. Paul comes from the Muskingum Watershed District, where he was a GIS Technician.
- **Joe Leslie** of Aurora, our new land acquisition specialist. Joe comes to us from Howard Hanna, where he created a successful real estate practice.

Medina County celebration

July 20, 2011, O'Neil property

Westfield Township









Rory and Dedee O'Neil hosted a group of Land Conservancy supporters and conservation easement donors at their gorgeous property, above. At top left, Land Conservancy Development Director Robert Koonce pins a White Oak Legacy Society pin on Medina Summit Chapter member Laurel Gress in honor of her commitment to the organization. The society's members are those who have decided to include the Land Conservancy in their estate planning. A barn, below left, and an antique car were among the nostalgic touches in evidence at the event.



Friends greet Ed at a surprise retirement party at the home of Trustee Kathy Leavenworth.

One of the good guys takes down his shingle



Ed Meyers

Ed Meyers, who in 2003 left private law practice to head the legal team for what would become the largest land conservancy in Ohio, has retired.

Meyers had been a partner with the law firm of Arter & Hadden for 30 years before joining the staff of the Chagrin River Land Conservancy, one of eight local land trusts that merged in 2006 to form Western Reserve Land Conservancy. As the Land Conservancy's general counsel, he headed the legal team that oversaw the protection of more than 23,000 acres.

"It is impossible to express how grateful we are to Ed," said Rich Cochran, the Land Conservancy's president and CEO. "He has been a stalwart at the Land Conservancy. He and (his wife) Fran are part of our family in a deep and special way."

Have you remembered the Land Conservancy in your will?

White Oak LEGACY SOCIETY

Find out how you can make a lasting commitment to future generations by including Western Reserve Land Conservancy in your estate planning. For information on our White Oak Legacy Society, call (440) 729-9621, e-mail rkoonce@wrlandconservancy.org or visit www.wrlandconservancy.org.

CONSERVATION CALENDAR

- **Oct. 15, 5-8 p.m.:** The Medina Summit Chapter's annual Hoot 'n' Harvest Festival at the Hill 'n' Dale Club, 3605 Poe Road, Montville Township. Bring a potluck dish to share; the Land Conservancy will provide hot dogs and fixings. There will be hayrides, pumpkin-painting and a campfire, as well as an owl walk. RSVP khibhler@wrlandconservancy.org.
- **Oct. 26, 7-9 p.m.:** Rocky River Watershed Council presents information on the current status of land protection in the Rocky River Watershed and future priorities for preservation at the Cleveland Metroparks Rocky River Nature Center, 24000 Valley Parkway, North Olmsted.
- **Nov. 12**: 'Fly the Alley' fly fishing expo at The Lodge at Geneva-on-the-Lake, 4888 North Broadway (state Route 534), Geneva-on-the-Lake. Day passes are $15; weekend packages are available through the lodge. Visit www.flythealley.com.

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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.