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 Medina and Wayne counties

Numbers only part of the story



It was like watching streaming stock quotes, except it was all good news.

Bill Jordan
Associate Field Director

During December 2009, Land Conservancy staff were treated to almost daily e-mail updates about land protection projects beings completed throughout our service area. They ranged in size from parcels less than 25 acres to adjoining family farms encompassing hundreds of acres. In all, more than 25 projects were completed in December alone. And for the year 2009, 41 projects were completed, preserving over 3,300 additional acres.

These statistics are one

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Border preserve

Medina County Park District completes acquisition of land at Medina-Wayne line

The Land Conservancy's mission includes the formidable task of preserving 400,000 acres of land in northern Ohio.



The property contains three spring-fed quarry lakes.

We are going to realize that goal through the good work of the Land Conservancy and our conservation partners. One of those partners, the Medina County Park District, recently completed an important acquisition that was 10 years in the making when it purchased the Harrison property located in southern Medina and northern Wayne Counties.

The fact that the property spans two counties – one portion is in Medina County's Westfield Township, while the rest is in Wayne County's Canaan Township – is unusual and complicated the funding process. The property was acquired through a combination of the park district's land acquisition funds and money from the Clean Ohio Fund. Wayne and Medina counties are in two different Clean Ohio Funding districts, necessitating two separate applications. The Land Conservancy was able to assist in the research and preparation of the application for the Wayne County portion of the funding request.

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Upcoming Events

- **March 27, noon-3 p.m. —** The Land Conservancy will be among the exhibitors at the Brunswick Green Expo, Brunswick Community Recreation Center in Brunswick. Free.
- **April 17, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.** — Medina County Earth Day at the Medina County Park District's Buffalo Creek Retreat in Guilford Township. Earth-friendly exhibits, kids activities, fishing, food and more. Free.
- **April 20, 11:30 a.m.-7 p.m.** — Scarlet, Gray and Green Fair, OSU Wooster Campus, 1680 Madison Ave., Wooster. Free.

Energetic volunteer has a passion for the land

Dan Miltner's passion for land conservation is not something he developed overnight.

Miltner, an active member of the Land Conservancy's Medina Summit Chapter, remembers standing on the banks of the Rocky River as a boy, wondering why adults don't take care of the land.

"Now I'm the adult, and it is my job to do something about it," Miltner says.



SPOTLIGHT
Dan Miltner

He is. Miltner, senior vice president and investment solutions specialist with Key Private Bank, has walked the walk of a true conservationist, devoting much of his spare time to the missions of such organizations as the Land Conservancy and the Rocky River Watershed Council.

"I like to volunteer in areas where I have a passion. For me, land conservation is one of those areas," he says.

Miltner's home in Medina Township is a testament to his

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Fall Festival 2009



More than 90 people attended the Medina Summit Chapter's annual Hoot and Harvest Festival on Oct. 10 at the Hill 'n' Dale Club in Montville Township. The event featured owl-spotting, hayrides, pumpkin-painting, food, music and a program featuring live, rehabilitated raptors.

Miltner

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love of the land.

When he and his wife, Regina, moved there 10 years ago, they did so knowing that the house on the property was modest and needed repairs. It was the land – part of a natural corridor along the West Branch of the Rocky River that includes property owned by the Medina County Park District, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and Bunker Hill Golf Course – they wanted.

Today, the Miltners grow vegetables and keep two sturdy Haflinger horses on their approximately 10-acre property. The land has hiking trails, two ponds and a great view of a riverside heron rookery.

Dan Miltner is a Kent State University graduate who worked for the U.S. Department of the Treasury, National City Bank and FirstMerit Bank before joining Key Private Bank five years ago. Miltner, who has four grown daughters, Katie, Jessie, Jenny and Jackie, works in Westlake.

Miltner says he believes conservation groups are most effective when they develop synergy through cooperation.

He also thinks the Land Conservancy's chapter members can make a difference.

"I think it is important to have a grassroots presence," he says. "You have to have people in the community."

Preserve

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The natural features of the property itself made the extra effort worthwhile.

The 232-acre property includes floodplains of the Killbuck Creek, category 3 wetlands and more than 25 acres of deep quarry lakes.

The property sits on top of a highly productive aquifer that supplies water for residents in both counties. And a natural resources survey by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History identified 260 species of plants and animals on the property. The open fields and forest land on the property provide habitat for two State-listed rare bird species: Brown Creeper (Ohio Species of Special Interest) and the Cerulean Warbler (Ohio Species of Concern).

Since the early 1990s, there has been considerable concern over the future of land located in southern Medina County due to its location above a high-yield aquifer.

The Harrisons enjoy a life estate on the property. In the future, the Park District plans to provide public access to the many recreational opportunities that exist on this outstanding natural resource.

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.

Chapter member's book celebrates Seiberling's work

Medina Summit Chapter member Dan Nelson, an emeritus professor of history at the University of Akron, has written a book about the late U.S. Rep. John F. Seiberling, who played a key role in the creation of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. "A Passion for the Land: John F. Seiberling and the Environmental Movement" (Kent State University Press, $39.95) examines Seiberling's land conservation work. He was considered a key figure in the expansion of the national parks and federal wildlife areas. The Akron congressman died in 2008.

Jordan

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measure of our effectiveness as an organization. While impressive, they can mask the underlying histories and compelling stories that bring the numbers to life. In neighboring Lorain County, for example, the numbers tell us that the 176-acre Browand farm was preserved through a donated easement. However, the fascinating part of this story is the fact that the great-great grandfather of one of the current owners is the fife player in the famous painting "Spirit of 76" by Wellington native Archibald Willard.

For years, Hinckley Township resident Chuck Gibson turned away developers who wanted his land for residential development. He wasn't waiting for a better offer; he was completing a commitment he and his late wife Carole Sue made to each other to preserve the land they both loved. Similarly, Stark County doctor Timothy Drake protected his 95-acre property in memory of his father and the years they spent working side by side on the family farm.

As we continue our work in 2010, we know that "the numbers" will be one measure of the positive impact we're having on the landscape of the region. But it's the landowners and their stories of human interest and historical significance that define our success and sustain our vision.

22-acre property is preserved in Hinckley

A Hinckley Township property owner and the Land Conservancy have teamed up to permanently preserve 22 acres just north of the Cleveland Metroparks' Hinckley Reservation.

Charles Gibson has placed a conservation easement on a portion of his property, which is on State Road just south of Center Road (state Route 303). A conservation easement permanently protects the natural, agricultural and scenic resources of the land while allowing the grantor to retain ownership.

Both Mr. Gibson and his deceased wife, Carole Sue, shared a genuine love of the land and before her death in 2004 had intended to preserve the property. The land had been part of her family's farm on Hinckley Ridge since the 1920s.

Bill Jordan, Associate Field Director at the Land Conservancy's Medina Office said the property possesses "significant scenic, aesthetic, open space and natural conservation values that add to the rural character of Hinckley Township." He said it contains old-field and forest wildlife habitat areas, which provide shelter, food and nesting areas for birds, mammals and other wildlife. The vegetated natural areas control runoff, prevent erosion and mitigate flooding to downstream properties, thus helping to improve water quality in the Rocky River watershed.

The conservation easement was the second one for the Land Conservancy in Hinckley Township in 2009. The Land Conservancy previously helped the township preserve a 30-acre parcel at the northwest corner of River Road and Route 303 for a passive park.

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

Hinckley girl, 9, picks park name

When Hinckley Township trustees asked Hinckley Elementary School third-graders to name a new park at the corner of state Route 303 and River Road, Kristin Curran, 9, was well-positioned to help.



Kristin Curran

"I love the outdoors, the birds and the trees," says Kristin, who regularly rides her horse in the Cleveland Metroparks' Hinckley Reservation, which is located between her home and the new passive 30-acre township park along the banks of the East Branch of Rocky River.

Trustees, who received about 30 submissions from pupils, ultimately voted to call the park River Woods Nature Preserve, the name submitted by Kristin.

Kristin and her parents, Janet and Philip Curran of Hinckley Township, say the honor was unexpected.

Township Trustee Martha Catherwood says trustees told the children about the park, which was jointly created by the township and the Land Conservancy, and showed them photos of it. Kids were asked only to include the word 'river" in the name.

"We feel that it is one of our responsibilities as trustees to assure the ongoing conservation of the township's precious natural places," Catherwood says. "What better way to assure an ongoing commitment than by involving our youngest members in the process?"

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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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.