Annual Meeting at Orion Organics

On June 1st, TLT supporters will be welcomed to the Rion Farm for TLT’s 18th Annual Meeting. This event, which includes a business meeting and tour, will be held on a very picturesque organic farm located between Enon and Yellow Springs.

Owners Barbara, John, and Jon Paul Rion donated a conservation easement to TLT, and then set about restoring the farm to its current state. George Bieri, TLT Monitor, recalls the property as it was, especially the eroded stream banks and scrubby fields. “The change has been remarkable,” he says. “You can really see how nature can rebound, if given the chance.”

The Rion family has given nature a chance to heal itself. The prairie on the property is flourishing, providing animal habitat, while the organic gardens and greenhouses, full of leafy greens and growing plants, are a sight to behold.

During the Annual Meeting, attendees will have a chance to tour the gardens, test the water quality for themselves, and meander through the rolling acres of prairie grass. Activities will be suitable (and fun!) for both children and adults, so bring the entire family. This Mad River Township property truly offers a little bit of everything—whether you are a local food enthusiast, an adamant water quality guru, or a nature lover extraordinaire, you can find something to enjoy at the Rion farm.

TLT signs will help point the way to 400 North Enon Road. From points south, go west on Dayton St. in Yellow Springs from Route 68. Then head north on East Enon Road from Dayton-Yellow Springs Road. From points north, head west on Jackson Road from Route 68. Turn south on Fowler, and west on Enon.

The 165-acre Orion property features restored natural habitats. Photo by Megan Wallsworth.

Kelly, a happy Orion Farm resident. Photo by Megan Wallsworth.
Tecumseh Land Trust

Staff
- Krista Magaw, Executive Director
- Kate Brash, Associate Director
- Cathy Holcomb, Administrative Assistant

Stewardship Team
- Doug Bailey, Documentation
- George Bieri, Monitoring
- Brannon Pyles, Monitoring

Board of Directors
- Jim Campbell, President
- Jim Timmons, Vice-President
- David Neuhardt, Secretary
- Tom Ruefenak, Treasurer

Land Preservation Committee
- Jim Timmons
- Richard Zopf
- Charles Swaimey
- Jennifer Harbage
- Brannon Pyles

Volunteers: Julia Cady
- Joe Staggs

Development Committee
- Barbara Kim
- Anne Randolph
- Bob Barcus
- Evelyn LaMers
- Ilse Tebbetts

Volunteers: Susan Miller
- Elisabeth DeForest
- Barbara Bernstein

Education Committee
- Eugene Barnett
- Rosalie Beers
- Gordon Cowperthwaite
- Bob Houston
- Ron Lewis

Volunteers: Sherry Chen
- Steven Conn
- Ed Davis

Finance Committee
- Dave Baird
- Tom Ruefenak
- Richard Zopf

Newsletter
- Evelyn LaMers

Volunteers: Jane Baker

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Antioch College Student Interns for 3 Years at TLT

My life as an Antioch student was one occasionally greeted with homesickness and instability. Traveling to co-op jobs all over the world is incredibly educational and beneficial, but I still longed for some degree of stability. My internship at Tecumseh Land Trust provided me with an important sense of continuity.

I first interned for the land trust as a second-year student at Antioch. In return for several of my scholarships, I was responsible for doing community service weekly. Initially, I chose TLT because of its appealing job description and the chance to honor my rural heritage. With roots in Appalachia and being the granddaughter and niece of farmers, I wanted to continue the legacy in a realistic way. After all, I couldn’t build a chicken coop in my dorm room! At first, I may have signed up for the significance it had to my family but I stayed because of the organization’s significance to me. The work environment was incredibly supportive and provided a much-needed “outside the Antioch bubble” perspective.

Helping out with the barn dances, street fairs, auctions, and mailings has given me many opportunities to interact with the members and supporters of TLT. I have met people not only passionate around a large array of subjects!

New Staff for TLT Office

Cathy Holcomb joined the TLT team as part-time administrative assistant in July 2007. A University of Dayton graduate, she has held various positions: newspaper business manager, teacher, and product development chemist.

Cathy and her husband, Jim, moved to Springfield Township 9 years ago. The family lives in an 1890s farmhouse surrounded by 5 goats, 4 ducks, 3 children (Kelsey, Sam, and Tess), 2 cats, and 1 dog. The family is active in 4H and Cathy serves on the Clark County 4H Committee. Welcome, Cathy, and thanks to the capital campaign donors who made it possible for us to bring her on board!!!

Recent Antioch graduate Rachel Jordan

4th Generation Still Farming in Greene County

We hear so many stories these days about young people who leave the family farm and don’t look back. That’s not Doug and Rachel Anderson. They returned five years ago to Rachel’s home farm in Miami Township to expand a niche farming operation, selling sausage and a variety of vegetables directly to consumers.

Why did they return? Doug and Rachel wanted their children to be nearer to grandparents and to have the farm and 4-H experiences they had enjoyed.

“They’re a good life. They show pigs at the fair, help pick, and help out at the store.”

TLT has a small part in their story. The Anderson’s were able to purchase the 85-acre farm because TLT holds an agricultural conservation easement on the property, making it more affordable. “Land prices these days are just too high for most people our age,” says Doug. “Knowing the easement’s on it changes the way we think about the land. We can’t act on fleeting thoughts to build this or that. We’re better stewards and do everything we can to get more neighboring farms preserved.”

The Anderson’s Farm Market offers strawberries, blueberries (for the first time this year), raspberries, and blackberries, the full array of summer vegetables—from sweet corn to cauliflower—as well as pumpkins and squash in the fall. Visit their farm market at 1240 Clifton Road, Xenia, and see for yourself! (information at 767-7626)

Clean Ohio Fund

Renewal of the path-breaking Clean Ohio program will be on the ballot November 4.

“We support it!” says TLT Executive Director Krista Magaw. “Clean Ohio changed the pace of farmland preservation in our state forever. It is so important to keep this program going. We have a generation of farm owners who want to preserve their land. It would be tragic to lose this opportunity.”

How many landowners who have not yet been funded are interested in participating in the program? TLT staff and volunteers have succeeded in obtaining Clean Ohio funding for 31 easements to date. Yet, 200 more landowners wish to sell agricultural conservation easements through Clean Ohio. If those properties are not preserved soon, the multiple decision makers of the next generation, many of them far away from the family farm, are likely to make a much different decision.

Please call the TLT Office if you’d like to get more involved in advocating for this issue.
2007 Easements

This was a blockbuster year, with 22 easements signed and recorded, preserving a total of 4,667 acres.

Nine easements, comprising 1,862 acres, were donated to TLT.

Easement Location Acres

Spracklen Xenia 85
Welsheimer Springfield 53
Baldwin South Charleston 173
Kavanagh Janesvown 994
Agle Springfield 58
Skillings South Charleston 129
Olinger South Vienna 152
Pauley South Vienna 156
McGuire Mechanicsburg 120
LeMaster North Hampton 45
Burr (2) London 299
Burr (3) London 463
Baird Springfield 149
J. Drake Enon 124
Burr (4) London 350
Mott Xenia 151
Spahr Janesvown 227
Spears South Charleston 361
Stockwell Yellow Springs 102
Hartman Janesvown 271
Graham Xenia 108
Mersky Cedarville 97

It Takes a Team to Preserve a Farm

2007 was a banner year for the Tecumseh Land Trust. When the blizzard of paperwork settled, 22 new conservation easements were on the books. This represents some 4,700 acres of newly preserved farmland . . . and close to 2,000 hours of work by TLT staff and volunteers.

TLT director Krista Magaw estimates that she, associate director Kate Bush, and former TLT board president Julia Cady spend an average of 40 hours on each easement.

It begins when interested landowners call in to inquire about the process. Some—nine, last year—are prepared to donate the easement. Others want the land trust to apply for a variety of state and federal funds available for easement purchase.

Meanwhile TLT board member and Springfield attorney Charlie Swaney drafts or redrafts each conservation easement, the legal document defining reserved rights and prohibitions agreed upon by landowner and land trust.

Last but not least is documentation. TLT’s “documentarian,” Doug Bailey, spends some 30 hours gathering together photos, maps, soil reports and other relevant information to create a detailed picture of the property, particularly, the features that constitute the conservation values to be preserved forever.

Ultimately, copies of completed, recorded easements and key site maps are stored at multiple sites for safekeeping and future reference.

Baird Family Donates Another Easement

The Baird family is familiar with the Tecumseh Land Trust. Dave has been on the TLT Board for several years and his father, John, placed a conservation easement on land in Mad River Township. When Dave heard about the improved tax benefits available for farmers who donated conservation easements in 2006 and 2007, the next step was an easy one: the tax benefits provided the impetus to move forward with the donation of an easement on his 149-acre property, on Old Mill Road.

While the property itself is beautiful, and well worth preserving, the importance of the project is magnified once you realize the property lies within a block of almost 1500 other preserved acres. “Preserving farmland within blocks is a critical step toward protecting farming as an industry,” says Kate Bush, TLT’s associate director, “and the Baird family has demonstrated their commitment to preserving the land. It has been a joy to work with them through this process. This is a family dedicated to farming across the generations.” The property is located in the Mad Run watershed.

Preserving more property in Mad River Township is a priority, according to TLT Executive Director Krista Magaw. “Thanks to financial support from the Springfield Foundation, we’ll be looking very closely at Mad River and Springfield Township voter survey data results” (see article on page 7).

“Many landowners in both townships are interested in selling an easement but are stalled when it comes competing for easement purchase funds, particularly the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program.

“We’ve got to get creative,” says Magaw.
**Winds Chef Inspired by Local Foods**

Most of the food Americans consume travels an average of 1,200 miles from source to dinner plate.

Owners of The Winds restaurant in Yellow Springs make every effort to radically shorten that trip by adapting their menus, whenever possible, to offer local foods, according to chef and co-owner Kim Korkan.

Homegrown foods “are fresher, safer, and they taste better,” Korkan says. “And, of course, using them is much better for the environment.”

“...in the last 10 years, there has been a huge upsurge in farms and farm markets within a very few miles of Yellow Springs. Today, fresh fruits and vegetables of every variety, chickens, buffalo meat, honey, maple syrup, and corn meal are just a few of the products we can get from nearby, mostly organic, farms.”

Korkan signed on at The Winds as a dishwasher shortly after the restaurant was founded. “But I always knew I wanted to cook,” she says.

**TLT Keeps Ohio Legislators Informed**

Krista Magaw, and board members Gene Barnett, and Gordon Cowperthwaite all headed to Columbus on Earth Day, April 22, for the Ohio Environ-mental Council’s Lobby Day.

Our meetings with four legislators — including local representatives Ross McGregor and Chris Widener — were interesting and encouraging. All were very supportive of renewing the $400 million Clean Ohio initiative.

We also advocated for the Great Lakes Compact (H.B. 416) and Energy Efficiency Standards (House Bill 221). Ohio is the only one of the states and provinces that border the lakes that has not signed onto the Compact to safeguard our amazing water resources. The House actually passed the Energy Efficiency Standard Bill while we were in the capital!

Go to http://www.theoec.org/ for more information.

Cowperthwaite summarized the day as “an efficient, exciting, high-energy experience for all of us.”

**Barn Dancers Support TLT**

What’s not to like about an event that brings a bunch of people together for some old-fashioned fun? Over 180 people came out to dance to the old-time string tunes of Changeling at Mills Lawn School on a chilly Saturday night, February 23th. A renowned dance caller, Darlene Underwood, kept the dancers moving and instructed. Experienced dancers, never-before dancers, farmers, Cincinnatians, and TLT supporters of every stripe turned out for this very successful friend raiser, raising nearly $1500 for TLT. Both Underwood and Changeling musicians Karl and Deborah Colon attracted some expert Contra dancers to Yellow Springs for their first Land Trust event.

To top it all off, the Mills Lawn Gym was transformed into a barnyard, replete with straw bales, sunflowers, and a charming barnyard façade. We plan to do it again next year, so keep those dancing shoes handy!

**Voter Surveys Support Land Preservation in Clark County**

How important is farmland preservation to voters in Clark County? Is it important enough to devote some local public funding to the cause? OSU Cen-ter for Farmland Preservation Director Jill Clark thinks it’s important to an-swer these questions and is supporting TLT’s efforts to do so. “Clark County has preserved more farms than any other county in the state,” says Clark. “But the state and federal dollars TLT has been able to utilize are just not enough to reach our goal of preserving 50,000 acres. Local match dollars are needed.”

A preliminary survey addressing these questions was mailed out last summer to randomly selected Clark County voters. Here are some of the results from the 82 respondents:

Preserving farmland is important to Clark County residents beyond its agricultural uses.

- 93.7% of respondents agree or strongly agree that “farmland in Clark County offers benefits to the community that go beyond just agricultural production.”

The rural and historical character of Clark County needs to be maintained.

- 93.6% agree or strongly agree that “we need programs that promote main-taining the rural and historic character of portions of Clark County.”

It’s important to enact programs to protect agricultural land.

- 90.6% of 75 responding voters agree that “officials or voters should enact programs to protect agricultural land in Clark County.”

Agriculture related job development has resonance with voters.

- 91.4% of the responding voters would “support a program that would create new agricultural jobs in Clark County.”

**Next Steps**

A reliable, professionally conducted phone survey will be used to gather more decisive information from at least 400 voters this summer.

Results of the phone survey will be shared with the public, local govern-ment leaders, and the press.

Township Trustees and County Commissioners have discretionary funds they could make available for farmland preservation, if they see the need. If the phone survey information is as compelling as the initial findings, leaders may be motivated to make a commitment. If not, it is also possible to take the issue directly to the voters through a ballot initiative.

And what if the results are not posi-tive? Then, says Jim Timmons, TLT vice-president, “More education about the importance of preserving good agri-cultural land is needed. That’s what TLT is here for.”

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

Level of Support:


**Support of A Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 0% not at all
- 10% of respondents say they are not at all in favor of supporting a local program to preserve farmland.

- 10% say they are “neutral” toward giving such support.

- 80% of respondents say they are in favor of supporting a local program to preserve farmland.

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 0%

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 10%

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 80%

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 90%

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 90%

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 90%

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 90%

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 90%

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 90%

**Support of a Local Program to Preserve Farmland**

- 90%
Spring 2008 Newsletter

An Another First for TLT

TLT is the first land trust in Ohio to apply for national land trust accreditation, one of the first 16 applicants nationwide. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission program was recently organized to recognize land conservation organizations that operate in an ethical, legal, and technically sound manner.

“Increased scrutiny of land trust projects—spurred on by a series of bad projects, among them a couple easements on golf courses—has motivated the proactive creation of the commission by the Land Trust Alliance,” says TLT Executive Director Krista Magaw. “We expect that the IRS and federal funders will require accreditation for all land trusts within a few years.”

The Accreditation Commission welcomes letters in support of our application. Check out our website for more information; the deadline is June 14.

Tecumseh Land Trust

Founded in 1990, we are a private non-profit conservation organization serving Clark and Greene Counties. Our mission is to preserve agricultural lands, open spaces, and historic structures in voluntary cooperation with landowners and their heirs, and to educate the public about methods of private land conservation.

TLT is a member-based organization. We rely on our members to support our annual operations.

Become a Member!

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If you are interested in placing an easement on your property, or making a bequest to TLT in your will, please contact us at 937-767-9490.

Kate and Krista ready to mail 45-pound accreditation application