Spring 2007

ANNUAL MEETING AT SUTTON FARM
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN SUCCESSFUL
TLT ACCEPTS RECORD NUMBER OF EASEMENT DONATIONS
CSA GARDEN PROJECT
GEORGE BIERI DISCUSSES MONITORING OF EASEMENTS
AND MORE . . .

JACOBY CREEK STUDY BRINGS YELLOW SPRINGERS CLOSER TO THEIR WATERSHED

On a blisteringly cold day in February, TLT Board member Richard Zopf hung precariously off the side of a creek bed, and tried to get a water sample from the middle of the Jacoby Creek. The risk of plunging into the frigid three inches of water was worth it. By obtaining water samples throughout the year, and comparing them, we can provide additional information about the quality of the watershed, while simultaneously involving the members of the public in the information gathering process.

The Jacoby watershed has been a long standing preservation goal of the land trust. "Our hope is that by better understanding the ecosystem and the outside factors that impact it, we will be able to build a comprehensive case for its protection. From there, working with willing landowners, we may be able to protect this unique area," says Kate Bush, TLT’s Associate Director. TLT continues to collaborate with Yellow Springs village council to establish a formula which will provide matching funds for easement purchase from willing landowners. Currently, five landowners in the Jacoby watershed have moved to protect their properties.

In addition to providing data that may eventually aid in the preservation of this critically endangered natural resource, the Jacoby Stream Team is providing an excellent opportunity for villagers to get to know their surroundings better, and to understand the various impacts of land use on water quality. For more information, contact Kate at kate@tecumsehlandtrust.org.

Above: The Jacoby Creek meanders through a preserved farm south of Yellow Springs. Left: Kate Bush collecting critters in Jacoby Creek
Over $194,000 has been donated or pledged to TLT’s 3-year Capital Campaign to raise funds to assist in making the land trust self-sustaining. The goal to raise $180,00 was surpassed in just three months!

The decision to undertake a Capital Campaign was made by the TLT Board in the spring of 2006 based on the recommendations of its Finance Committee. Then, the Board and staff worked last summer to create a “Campaign to Preserve the Future.” Successful applications were made to two local foundations. The Morgan Family Foundation in Yellow Springs, and the Turner Foundation in Springfield together donated $100,000 to TLT, whose board members also donated very generously to the Capital Campaign. Altogether, 100 individuals donated/pledged the additional $94,000.

“Surpassing our goal was a tremendous vote of confidence from our supporters. Thank you!” said Krista Magaw, TLT’s executive director.

Sherry Chen has always been a vocal advocate of local and organic farming, and two years ago, this passion led her to join Education Committee. As a small producer, she is intimately familiar with the importance of supporting local agriculture. Her interest in supporting the local economy and willingness to dive into the unknown has made her an invaluable asset during the effort to reinstate the Springfield Farmer’s Market as a downtown fixture. She has worked tirelessly to collaborate with potential vendors and excite them about the new community that is forming in downtown Springfield during summer Saturdays. She can be found there weekly, guiding the growth of this market, and selling her own chicken, eggs and produce.

David Fleming, a former New Orleans professional dancer, was caught in the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. He had to walk 9 blocks in chest high water before he was able to get out of the flood. David then moved to Yellow Springs to be closer to his nephew John, and after only one month in Ohio, David began volunteering at the Friends Care Center where he helps residents in wheelchairs get around. In addition to his time there, he started working at TLT every Tuesday and Thursday. He assists with regular office work, as well helping by working at regular events. David says, “Yellow Springs is a beautiful village with friendly people, but there is nothing like New Orleans.” David is an invaluable member of the TLT team.
NEW MEANING FOR LOCAL FOOD

Community Supported Agriculture (or CSA) is becoming a popular system for supporting local agriculture. Generally a CSA is comprised of a group of people paying a set price for a portion of a farm’s seasonal produce. Most CSA farmers do this by delivering a box for every shareholder to a convenient location for pick up. The members of CSAs benefit from fresh, local produce that is of a higher quality and less costly than at supermarkets and even farmers’ markets. Farmers are able to secure a base line income, and without the “middle man” they generally get a better price for their products.

Doug Christen and Kat Cline farm three acres just outside Yellow Springs. They began Smaller foot Print CSA last year growing potatoes, greens, tomatoes, squash, strawberries, and much more using sustainable, organic methods.

They had 25 members their first year and are expanding to 35 this year. They plant several rounds to expand the number of weeks with diverse produce. To ensure that members can utilize the bounty each week, they have done canning workshops and include recipes in their weekly newsletter. Doug says they want to stay small and have a relationship with their members. This year they have a few memberships that include 20 hours of work for season, to encourage an even closer bond.

Just around the corner, the Rion family has started a CSA which will compliment their direct sale operation. Orion Organics, located on a property with a TLT easement, has become a force in the Miami Valley in the past few years, selling to Dorothy Lane and Second Street Markets.

To find a CSA in your area or to get more information on starting a CSA go to: www.localharvest.org. For information specifically on the CSAs mentioned in this article, visit www.tecumsehlandtrust.org.

Ohio’s New Director of Agriculture

Governor Ted Strickland recently named Robert Boggs to direct the Department of Agriculture for Ohio. Boggs, a former state legislator, schoolteacher, and coach, served as an Ashtabula County Commissioner since 1997. The Ohio Agriculture Director provides leadership for Ohio’s No. 1 industry—agriculture—and administers numerous regulatory, food safety, and consumer protection programs, as well as the agricultural easement purchase program. TLT has worked with landowners to leverage over $4 million to Clark and Greene Counties for land preservation over the last 5 years. When Krista and Kate met Mr. Boggs in April, he accepted their invitation to tour several TLT preserved farms, and to meet the landowners, local officials, and TLT supporters who make our success possible. The tour is scheduled for early May.

Farm Bureau Supports Clean Ohio

At the 2006 Farm Bureau Annual Policy Meeting, delegates from all over the state voted to support the renewal and expansion of the Clean Ohio program, which provides funding for the purchase of conservation easements on natural and agricultural lands, as well as money for brown field cleanup and trails programs. This is the first time the Farm Bureau has endorsed the renewal of the program, which provides an exciting opportunity for the program to gain support and grow. TLT has received funding to preserve over 5000 acres in the last five years through the Clean Ohio program.
750 ATTEND TLT BARN DANCE!

Y.S. Bryan Community Center thumped as barn dancers heehawed the night away with square dancing and two steps. Organized by the Mad River Theatre Works, the dance raised $1000 for the Tecumseh Land Trust to support preservation of Ohio’s rural landscape. The Emporium supplied exotic beverages and hors d’oeuvres, while the Burning Desire String Band kept the music flowing throughout the evening. Hot conversation and even hotter dancing fueled world renowned dance caller Fredrick Park, as the dancing went on long into the evening. During brief periods of rest, dancers could view maps of the Jacoby Creek watershed and other information about Clark and Greene County agricultural easements provided by TLT. The night was a great opportunity to learn a few new steps, meet new people, and become more acquainted with how TLT helps to preserve agriculture.

JULIA CADY SOCIETY CELEBRATION

The mood at Whitehall Farm during the 2006 Julia Cady Society Celebration can only be described as joyous. Dave and Sharen Neuhardt hosted the party, and opened their home and farm to the enthusiastic members of the Society. Dave led the group on a walk of the historic farmstead, and then showcased his farm from the bike path on top of the railway trestle. In addition to a highly entertaining and informative walk, the celebrators enjoyed wine and appetizers, followed by a scrumptious buffet dinner, which included barbecued chickens, grown by local farmer Sherry Chen and made with Krista Magaw’s top secret recipe. The 2007 event, which is held to thank TLT members who have donated over $500 in the membership year, or $10,000 over a lifetime, will be held at the Jacoby Creek property of Bud and Jean Marsh.

WINDS CAFE LOCAL FOODS DINNER

For the third year running, the Wind’s Cafe hosted their very popular Local Foods Dinner. The event raised over $8000 for the Land Trust, and brought together 150 members of the TLT community. The event has become a touchstone in the TLT calendar, and is one of the board and staff’s favorite events. “It is a rare opportunity to come together to celebrate the spirit of the land trust’s work—local people eating delicious food with the farmers who raised it, while supporting continued farmland preservation efforts that will allow future generations to share in the same simple, yet rewarding, act,” reflects Kate Bush, who organized the event with Kim Korkin and Mary Kay Smith of the Winds Cafe. The work of the Winds’ staff, and the fantastic TLT volunteers, Sarah Buckingham and Eve Fleck, allowed the evening to go off without a hitch. The 2007 Wind’s Cafe Local Foods Dinner is set for October 22nd, with seatings at 5:30 and 8 PM.
**Annual Monitoring of Sixty TLT Easements**

TLT monitor George Bieri is a tree man—in virtually every aspect of his life. As a cabinet maker, he crafts furniture and furnishings from a myriad of beautiful woods. And as land manager of Glen Helen, he nurtures living trees by the tens of thousands.

“Trees speak to me,” he says. “Especially the big ones.”

He comes by his love of nature naturally. As a young boy, he spent many hours trailing around after his father, Antioch biology professor Bob Bieri, who showed him everything he knew about trees.

George joined the Tecumseh Land Trust board in 1990 and soon gravitated toward the monitoring duties that are an integral part of the TLT easement program. An easement begins with the creation of baseline documents that describe and illustrate what then exists on the property with particular attention to the conservation values the landowner seeks to preserve. Annually, a TLT monitor inspects the property to ensure that the provisions of the easement continue to be met.

In the 1990s, George says, we had just a few easements and monitoring was a very informal process. There was, as he puts it, “no serious paper work involved. We had everything in a shoebox.”

Fast-forward to 1999 and acquisition of the Whitehall Farm, and 2001 and the advent of the first professional director. By that time “we had 26 or 27 easements and there was no way I could manage to get all those done.”

The solution? Take to the air. With the help of a friend who collects old planes, Bieri now monitors many of the properties from the window of an old Aeronica, a pre-World War II training plane. Not that this is exactly a jet-age operation, he points out. “I slide open the window, stick my head and camera out into this incredible wind, and take pictures.”

Today, the land trust holds 67 easements and will add 9 more before the year is out. Monitoring duties are now shared with TLT Board Member Brandon Pyles who personally walks each farm he inspects. To help maintain the important relationships with the landowners, Bieri annually alternates inspecting properties from the air and on the ground.

And the shoebox is long gone. Each monitoring trip results in a detailed report and a set of pictures carefully recorded on archival paper.

---

**Calendar of Events**

**June 2, 2–4 pm**

17th Annual TLT Membership Meeting and Farm Tour

Sutton Farm
Yellow Springs, Ohio
Join us to celebrate TLT’s 2006 land preservation achievement and walk this 80-acre property, preserved in 1990.

**June 17, 2–4 pm**

Buffalo Farm Tour

Running Bare Ranch
Springfield, Ohio
Learn about buffalo ranching from owner Dan Accurso. Meet at John Bryan Center at 1:30 to carpool.

**July 29, 4 pm**

3rd Julia Cady Society Celebration

Marsh Property
Miami Township
Members of the Julia Cady Society are invited to join Bud and Jean Marsh for a picnic supper and tour of their 80-acre preserved farm, located on Jacoby Creek.

**September 7th**

3rd Annual Harvest Auction

Springfield Art Museum
Springfield, Ohio
New location, same great party! This year the auction will be held at the Springfield Art Museum, promising a fabulous atmosphere for this event, our largest fundraiser of the year!

**October 22, 5:30 and 8 pm**

4th Winds Local Foods Dinner

Winds Cafe
Yellow Springs, Ohio
Mary Kay, Kim, and the staff at the Winds Cafe will once again host this delicious affair, where TLT supporters are joined by local farmers to share in the bounty of the season.

For information on any of these events, please contact the TLT Office, at 767-9490 or visit www.tecumsehlandtrust.org

We hope to see you at one, some, or all of these events!
The Land Trust staff is always hard at work on numerous grant opportunities for easement purchase, but lately, equal energy has been devoted to the flood of potential donated easements that have come into the office. “Working with donated easements is a true pleasure,” says Kate Bush, TLT’s associate director.

“Since we are working directly with the landowner, rather than through the government, we are able to craft the easement more specifically to the landowner’s needs, including incorporating extra protection for historically and ecologically sensitive areas where the landowner desires it, and we can move much more quickly, completing an easement in three to four months, rather than the year it may take when working with state and federal easement programs.”

Donated easements are accepted based on board approval, after a board walk of the property. Properties that don’t score well for some of the government purchase programs are appropriate for donated easements based on their conservation values, such as open space, habitat protection, historical standing, hydrologic or natural resources, and agricultural value. Donated easements, unlike purchased easements, do not provide cash payment to landowners, but rather can provide an opportunity for a significant tax benefit to qualifying landowners.

In August of 2006, Congress passed the Pension Act. While the majority of this bill has no impact on the conservation community, there was one major change to the tax code that has opened the floodgates for easement donation both nationally and right here in Ohio. The act expanded the benefits of easement donation to allow landowners to deduct the value of the easement against 50 percent of their adjusted gross income, and carry the deduction forward 15 years, or until it is exhausted. Even more dramatically, the act now allows qualified farmers and ranchers to deduct the value of the easement against 100 percent of their adjusted gross income. This change opens the door for many landowners to recoup some of the market value they forgo when they donate a conservation easement on their properties, and has served as a catalyst for action among the landowning community.

Because the tax changes are in effect only for the 2006 and 2007 tax years, TLT moved quickly to disseminate the information to landowners and the accounting and legal community. By working with already established partners like OSU Extension and Farm Bureau, as well as TLT’s Land Preservation Committee’s connections throughout the rural community, TLT has been in contact with over a dozen landowners in the Clark and Greene county area. Kate sees the benefits on the tax changes daily. “We are receiving calls several times a week from landowners who have been thinking about donating an easement. The tax benefits have provided the impetus for them to take action. In some cases, the benefit has helped convince somewhat resistant relative that they should preserve the property. This will be a landmark year for donated easements.”

The process of placing a conservation easement on a property can take up to four months, depending on the nature of the easement, and the circumstances of the property. In order to ensure that a donated easement would be completed within the 2007 tax year, interested landowners should contact TLT now.
Welsheimer Family Preserves Farm

Nestled behind a rampart of evergreen trees and flanked by a beautiful red barn, is the home place where Judith and Alan Welsheimer grew up and on which Judith has lived most of her life. The conservation easement they are donating to the Tecumseh Land Trust will preserve their 53-acre farm and its buildings for future generations.

“This farm is a wonderful place to raise children,” Judith says of the property located just off Route 41 near Lawrenceville in Clark County. “We wanted to make sure that other families have a chance to do that as well.” She and her brother feel strongly that there has already been too much development on agricultural land in the area.

“This soil is too good to put houses on,” Judith says.

The Welsheimers are planning a trip to Europe this spring and wanted to get the easement signed, sealed, and delivered before they left. “Planes come down sometimes,” Judith said. And who should know better? Upon graduation from Ohio State University in 1962, she became a stewardess for Pan American Airlines and flew all over the world. “I’ve walked across the Atlantic many times,” she says with a smile.

She came back to live on the farm in 1971. Alan, who “fell in love with the West,” and lived for many years in Oklahoma and Arizona, now lives close enough to the coast of Oregon to hear waves crashing on its shore.

Though Alan lives more than 2,000 miles away from the family’s farm, he and his sister are of one mind about its future.

Farmland is “such a part of our history,” Judith says. Placing an easement on the property ensures it will remain a farm forever.

Planned Giving

Each day we plan events, jobs or meetings those which we consider to be the most important to accomplish. We usually make a list with very good intention of completion. We might even plan ahead for a vacation or next year’s garden. Occasionally, I consider the whole of these daily tasks wondering what impact they have over a lifetime. Hopefully, we will provide some level of inspiration to others through our work, as parents and grandparents, or by the example we set in our lives. We may ask ourselves at this point; why not make a plan for the future that will insure a benefit for our family and community. It is comforting to know that vehicles exist to continue the planning process beyond our lifetime. The Tecumseh Land Trust can help. By participating in a planned gift you will not only help provide a sustainable future for all generations to come but also protect our communities’ farming heritage forever.

Barbara Rion,
Development Committee Co-Chair
Spring 2007 Newsletter

The Sutton Farm, location of TLT’s June 2nd Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting at Sutton Farm

On June 2nd, TLT will hold its 17th Annual Meeting at Sutton Farm. This farm, owned by the Village of Yellow Springs, is one of the earliest projects completed by TLT in the 1990s. Terry Stewart, a watershed ecologist, will be in attendance this year to lead a walk through the property, and to comment on the impact of preservation on the Yellow Springs Creek watershed.

Additionally, numerous maps and aerial photos of the property show the importance of preservation for the watershed’s protection. The meeting will begin at 2 p.m.

The 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 for their annual financial support.

Become a Member!

- **Land Champion**: $10,000
- **Guardian**: $5,000
- **Agrarian**: $1,000
- **Julia Cady Society**: $500
- **Preservationist**: $200
- **Conservationist**: $100
- **Supporter**: $50
- **Friend**: $25

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