One easement wasn’t enough for the Boeck brothers of Ross Township, Greene County. David and Timothy Boeck were already applying for a second agricultural easement on their other farm when the easement on their 84-acre farm located just outside Jamestown was secured in 2012. This fall, the pair happily signed the second easement on their 91 acre farm which is just down the road from the first.

The property has been improved over the past 10 years by the installation of grass waterways to reduce erosion, the installation of subsurface drainage tile to enhance crop production and the rebuilding of a barn.

The farm is 99% tillable land with all prime or locally important soils. It has nearly a mile of road frontage on two roads which made it extremely desirable for developers. Property appraisers noted its potential for future residential development, but the easement, through Tecumseh Land Trust, secures the property for agricultural use forever. This farm becomes part of a block of 1,850 contiguous acres of preserved farmland in Greene County.

Getting the financing to place an easement on the farm took some time. The brothers first applied in 2007 for funding from the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP) through the Ohio Department of Agriculture. It took four years before their application was accepted. But the effort was worth it.

The Boeck family has been farming in Ross Township since 1969, when David and Tim’s parents bought the property. The brothers have deep roots in the farm community. They are members of the Ohio Corn Growers Association, the Ohio Soybean Association and Greene County Farm Bureau; and they’re active in their church, athletic booster organizations and 4-H.

They felt it imperative to conserve the integrity of the land. “Our family wanted to preserve it, in its present state, for future generations,” Tim said after the first easement was complete. Now that this farm is also under easement they are helping to secure the future of farming in Ross Township.

“We strongly believe in the support of agriculture and of rural communities,” says Tim. Preserving prime farmland is key to ensuring agriculture continues to be our number one industry in the area and our rural identity remains.
Tecumseh Land Trust

Staff
- Krista Magaw, Executive Director
- Michele Burns, Associate Director
- Cathy Holcomb, Office Manager
- Carol Simmons, Events Coordinator
- Jenny Randolph, Web Master

Stewardship Team
- Douglas Bailey, Documentation
- George Bieri, Monitoring
- Mike Haubner, Monitoring
- Ben Silliman, Monitoring
- Richard Zopf, Monitoring

Board of Directors
- Rosalie Beers, President
- Susan Miller, Vice-President
- David Neuhardt, Secretary
- Jim Timmons, Treasurer

Land Preservation Committee
- Richard Zopf
- Fred Berge
- Jim Clem
- Chuck Dolph
- Charles Swaney
- Jim Timmons

Volunteers: Julia Cady
- Greg Kaffenbarger
- Linda Parsons
- John Ritter
- Bill Runyon
- Joe Staggs

Development Committee
- Susan Miller
- Chuck Dolph
- Evelyn LaMers
- Barbara Rion
- Ilse Tebbetts

Volunteer: Bob Barcus
- Gene Barnett

Education Committee
- Ed Davis
- Anne Randolph
- Carolyn Smith

Volunteers: Jim Campbell
- Dennie Eagleson
- Jennifer Rosengarten
- Bonnie Wilkenson
- Mickey Wilkenson

Finance Committee
- Richard Zopf
- Evelyn LaMers
- Jim Timmons

Volunteers: Dave Baird
- John Vitaliti

Newsletter
- Evelyn LaMers

TLT’s Events Coordinator Loves Connecting People

Carol Simmons brings a variety of work and life experiences to the newly created position of part-time Events Coordinator.

A long-time resident of Yellow Springs, she worked for many years in journalism as a reporter and copy editor. In recent years, she began pursuing a master’s degree in education with certification as an intervention specialist. And for the past five years, she has organized and led teen activities, including an annual summer service trip for a regional affiliation of Quaker congregations.

A thread that has run through all her pursuits has been connecting with people and connecting people to each other through work, play, service, and education, as well as the sharing of stories.

“Preserving our land and natural resources connects us to our past and to the future generations, and I’m thrilled to be a part of that.”

Owner of Preserved Farm Joins Land Trust Board

Andy Elder is TLT’s newest board member. An attorney in Springfield, Andy’s relationship with the land trust extends back several years to his own family’s successful efforts to preserve the Elder family farm in Clark County.

Purchased in the mid-1800s by his great-grandfather, the 198 acre property combines wooded, tillable, and pasture land, along with approximately one-half acre of the Little Miami River. In addition, the property is adjacent to other protected properties, creating just under 350 acres of preserved property.

Around 2007 Andy contacted TLT after he and his four siblings agreed that the land should be preserved permanently. After that Andy and TLT went to work on the project.

Now that Andy is on the board he can continue to assist other families, like his own, who wish to preserve their heritage. Andy says that his experience working to secure the easement showed him what a “good organization TLT is, with a conscientious staff.”
TLT BOARD MEMBERS ENJOY HORSE DRAWN FARM TOUR

One of the best perks of being a TLT board member is getting the chance to visit beautiful farm lands and natural areas across the region during scheduled walks on properties.

Recently, board members had an extra special experience when a farm walk became a horse-drawn ride, courtesy of the Finkes family, who operate Finch Creek Farm near Xenia.

“This is a whole family operation,” said TLT Associate Director Michele Burns. “It is always a pleasure to work with multiple generations who all share the same vision for their land and work together to make farming a prosperous venture.”

The family’s enterprise includes raising lavender with some direct sales at an on-farm market, larger scale crops, as well as logging. That’s where the horses come in. Horses are used in the logging operation to help minimize the impact to the environment when removing the trees.

The horse-drawn tour in July allowed the board to get a more extensive view of the property than by foot. “It’s beautiful,” Burns attested of the family’s land along U.S. 68.

A board visit takes place fairly early in the easement process, Burns said. “Usually, Krista and I have already met with the owners. The walk, then, is an opportunity for the property owner to meet our board and for our board to get an idea of their vision. The walk also helps me evaluate what kind of funding sources might be appropriate, particularly when there are multiple resource management objectives.”

Now that TLT staff and board members have visited the property the easement process can begin. Stay tuned because it will likely be several years before you read the Finkes’ success story!

Winter Solstice Poetry Reading

The third annual Solstice Poetry Reading held on Friday, December 12 at Glen Helen’s Vernet Ecological Center, was again a great success! Ten invited poets and eleven open mic poets captured the attention of the 100 people in attendance.

As in past years, the invited poets were a diverse group from southwest Ohio sharing moving as well as humorous poems. This year’s theme “Home on Earth,” evoked thoughts of what it means to live on the land. The last of this year’s scheduled poets to speak, Ruth Young of Dayton, claimed that, at age 69, the evening was her “coming out” as a poet.

The evening even included music, as Herbert Woodward Martin, well-known locally for his impersonation of Paul Laurence Dunbar as well as his poetry, burst into song following his reading.

The culinary talents of Elizabeth Wiley and the chefs at Wheat Penny in downtown Dayton were featured in the wine and cheese reception which they graciously provided.

Glen Helen and Tecumseh Land Trust have already made plans for the event to return on December 11, 2015. Mark your calendars and enjoy a respite from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season.
Mitch and I have learned many things working at the land trust since the beginning of the year. Over my co-op term we helped to plan and collaborate with TLT volunteers, community members, and organizations like the Yellow Springs Kids Playhouse and the Community Children’s Center for the first **Summer Solstice Barn Dance** at Young’s Jersey Dairy. The dance brought together organizations and people with whom TLT had not previously collaborated. It was great to work with the community and to see all the pieces come together!

At the dance we had a lot of fun helping facilitate some of the races like the water balloon toss, an egg on the spoon race, and the paper plane contest. I learned new skills in the Barn Dance planning process, and doing so showed me that I can play a hand to make things happen.

Thanks to everyone who made this event possible and to all who attended!

- Lauren Gjessing
Scott and Jeanine Clark are major donors to the land trust. They are also “sustainable givers,” dividing up their giving across the year. “Sustainable giving makes it easy to give a little more” says Scott. “Besides, it’s fun to interact with the land trust.”

Scott & Jeanine’s connection to TLT started with the Whitehall auction. When they moved back to the area in 1994, the threat to farmland and natural areas felt rather remote. Then, in 1999, the Whitehall Farm auction got their attention! Roadside signs for the 34 parcels going up for sale made the threat became real. After Whitehall, a note from a neighbor, a land trust board member, encouraged the Clarks to step up their financial support.

The Clarks have a personal tie to another property the land trust helped preserve -- the Benham farm in Pitchin, with its significant “geomorphologic Pitchin moraine.” Scott had helped tag hogs there and watched over the property when the Benhams traveled.

If you would like more information on sustainable or planned giving options contact Krista or Cathy or make a sustaining gift online www.tecumsehlandtrust.org.
**POLLENATOR BACKYARDS ENGAGE MYRAID OF INTERESTS**

The eight unique gardens featured over the two afternoons of Tecumseh Land Trust’s Backyard Steward’s Tour included a garden for every interest, from a tiny backyard crammed with edibles to an urban mini-farm, from a butterfly smorgasbord to a vacant lot transformed into a flowery meadow.

Some were do-it-yourself efforts; others had professional help. Some were total makeovers; others smaller efforts, but all were designed to be pollinator-friendly.

During the hour at each venue, gardeners explained plant selections, resource and labor-saving features, and the history of the land.

They were as diverse as their gardens: some with years of accumulated knowledge, others just beginning, but all generously addressed every question. Each shared the vision of a landscape more nurturing to the creatures dependent on it, and a willingness to break out of the mold of the mown lawn.

**BOOK GROUP EXPLORES NATURE**

Tecumseh Land Trust education volunteers, Bonnie and Mickey Wilkinson, love to read and research! After retiring from Wright-Patterson, the couple offered to volunteer with the land trust. The time had come to try out an idea that had been on the back burner for years — a land trust book discussion group!

After Atina Diffley’s visit here last year, her book, “Turn Here, Sweet Corn” seemed like a great place to begin. This book on farming in harmony with nature pointed the way to a bounty of books for potential discussion, including Richard Louv’s “Last Child in the Woods.” Louv’s concept of “nature deficit disorder” is great reading for conservationists facing the challenge of involving the next generation in caring for — and enjoying — our special places.

More great books are to come in 2015! If you’d like to join the monthly book discussions at the Yellow Springs Library call 767-9490 or email cathy@tecumsehlandtrust.org.

**6 QUIET WALKS IN GLEN HELEN**

Silence, it turns out, is a great gift. And silence in a place you thought you knew and loved can truly be an eye opener!

For two years now, on the last Sunday of every month from May through October, the Yellow Springs Dharma Center and Tecumseh Land Trust have organized a one-hour meditation walk at Glen Helen nature preserve. Local nature chronicler Bill Felker and one volunteer from each organization lead the walks.

In silence, the smells, sounds, textures, and temperatures are experienced anew, written about, and shared by the 15 or so people who make their way to the walk.

“This little slice of time and space, shared with people who also love this special place, is truly remarkable,” says frequent nature walker Krista Magaw.

Krista adds, “we look forward to more nature walks as well as collaborations with other faith communities. Experiencing and taking care of the earth are universal values. Just an hour a month can make your life richer!”

Nature meditations will continue in 2015, so check our website for dates.
NATIONAL, STATE & LOCAL FUNDING FOR EASEMENTS

A land trust plays a unique role in the world of preservation. We reach out to hundreds of landowners each year to provide information on the options available to preserve their natural, agricultural, and historically significant land. Many options are available – donating a conservation easement, participating in a national, state, or local easement purchase program, or fashioning an individualized estate plan.

Unfortunately, the options are in almost constant flux! Administrations and legislatures change. Legislation and appropriations also change. Change is the one factor on which we can rely. This makes the land trust’s work all the more important — keeping up with the changing landscape of preservation options so families get the information they need in a timely way.

Every 5–7 years, a Farm Bill is passed. The 2014 Farm Bill has some new opportunities in regard to organics and local food, but less funding to purchase conservation easements. Hence, after getting every federal application for the Farm and Ranch Protection Program funded for 9 years, we were awarded funding for 4 out of 13 projects submitted this year. Our large number of submissions, however, may increase Ohio’s allocations in 2015.

Perhaps the biggest federal issue we face is the flux in the income tax benefit for donating all or some of the value of an easement. The expanded benefit is especially important for working farmers, who make a profit some years, and some years have a loss. The expanded benefit allows them to deduct the appraised easement value against 100% of their income (rather than 30%) for up to 16 years (rather than 6). After 3 cycles of expansion and contraction of the benefit, the House voted this July to make the expanded benefit permanent. The Senate, however, did not follow suit. The work to orient newly elected lawmakers will begin again in 2015. Please contact Krista for the latest information on this important issue – constituent contacts are needed!

Clean Ohio funding is a bright spot for 2015 – the legislature and governor approved two years full funding for Clean Ohio’s Trails, Open Space and Localized Agricultural Easement Purchase Programs in early 2014. Open Space is the biggest fund and it can be used to protect wooded, riparian, or other natural areas. TLT is currently looking for applicants for both easement programs. It’s important to thank returning Ohio leaders for supporting this great program and to orient new leaders about what it does for Ohio.

At the local level, the Village of Yellow Springs has long had a designated fund to protect “Green Space” around the village. In this tight budget year, no additional funds were added for 2015. But we maintain contacts with the landowners of properties in the Jacoby Greenbelt to find out if they are interested in preservation options. If they are, the land trust will work with village leaders to avoid losing out on long held goals. The land trust makes the connections to keep these opportunities on the table. If you’re a village resident, let our leaders know you care.

Judging begins at the first of the year.

— Ed Davis

Living on the Land Essay Contest

TLT’s first nonfiction essay contest celebrates the land trust’s 25th anniversary in 2015 with the theme “Living on the Land.”

A $100 prize and website publication will be awarded middle, high school and adult winners as well as publication in the Yellow Springs News. Some winners may also be broadcast on WYSO 91.3.

On Nov. 8, we offered the last of the free writing workshops conducted at various locations in Greene, Clark and Montgomery Counties to help entrants prepare competitive essays.

What I learned from the two workshops I conducted — one for adults at Blue Jacket Books in Xenia and one at Kettering Middle School — is that there is plenty of writing talent in our area. However, writing something memorable, if not downright poetic, in only 250 words is a big challenge. It requires writers to really focus. Therefore, essays were best when limited to one thing — like how making luscious pies out of native fruits makes a writer feel deep appreciation for the land’s bounty. Also, a clear beginning, middle and end provides structure for the specific details used.

Judging begins at the first of the year.
Tecumseh Land Trust

Founded in 1990, we are a private non-profit conservation organization serving Clark and Greene Counties and surrounding areas. Our mission is to preserve agricultural lands, natural lands, water resources, and historic sites in voluntary cooperation with landowners, and to educate the public about permanent land preservation.

How Can You Help?

Become a Member!

TLT is a member-based organization. We rely on our members to support our daily operations -- making us available to consult with landowners.

Volunteer

Give to Our Endowments

Put TLT in Your Will

Preserve a Property

To learn more about how you can help contact our office at 767-9490.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

The 10th annual Harvest Auction on Sept. 19 at the Hollenbeck Bayley Center in Springfield was an unqualified success. The feeling among many of the 275 in attendance was that the evening was “the best one yet” in terms of “good vibes,” food and entertainment.

What’s more, TLT’s major annual fundraiser netted $33,447 this year, well over our goal of $32,300. And we’re already planning for 2015. So save the date of Sept. 18, when we’ll be back at the Hollenbebeck Bayley Center for another evening of conviviality.

Auction attendees enjoy bidding on many silent and live auction items.