Making the Jacoby Greenbelt a Reality

Among the many ways Yellow Springs is unique is its lengthy history of land use planning AND its investment, over many decades, to make those plans a reality.

As early as the 1950s, local and state leaders shared concerns about the irreplaceable natural resources in the area. Southwest Ohio was developing quickly, potentially threatening the scenic Little Miami River, its tributaries, the College’s Glen Helen Nature Preserve, John Bryan State Park, Clifton Gorge, and the pastoral feel of Yellow Springs and Miami Township.

All agreed, in the early 1960s, to work towards a preserved Country Common, a 2,000 acre area of natural and agriculture land east of Yellow Springs, then added the concept of the Jacoby Greenbelt, to the north, west, and south of Yellow Springs. In the early 70s, the Village voted for an income tax to protect green space and provide funding for new businesses, fueling a series of protection projects in the Greenbelt.

Tecumseh Land Trust started in 1990, in response to the potential development of Sutton Farm. As the Land Trust built up expertise, and with the help of additional federal, state, and township funding partners, they protected many more of the properties in the Greenbelt, including the Village’s Sutton Farm, Glen Helen Nature Preserve, the Boy and Girl Scout Camps and 19 privately owned properties.

Many properties on the Jacoby Creek remain unprotected. Now is a key time to protect them. With the momentum of the recent property auction, TLT submitted a 5 year Regional Conservation Partnership Program proposal to protect the remaining Greenbelt properties AND to provide funds for best conservation practices on those farms, safeguarding the water supplies of Yellow Springs and Xenia. We are keeping the goal squarely in sight – making the entire Jacoby Greenbelt a reality!

“Protecting local farmland, water, and natural areas forever.”
I started working at TLT at the beginning of the Fall quarter – during the height of the planning for Dave Chappelle’s Juke Joint. I had to learn a lot and do it as quickly as possible, which was a challenge. However, we ended up doing just fine and I had a lot of fun along the way. Since then, there’s been plenty of event planning, going to meetings, working in GIS, researching, and helping with Operation Bluebird. I have learned so much and not just about conservation easements and event planning, but also about networking, being a leader, and tons more. It has been a wonderful experience and I’m glad I got to stick around after co-op to continue working for this great organization. I’ve grown to love all of the amazing people involved with TLT and I will miss all of you!

~Izzy Bausch

What I Learned at TLT as an Antioch Intern

I started working at TLT at the beginning of the Fall quarter – during the height of the planning for Dave Chappelle’s Juke Joint. I had to learn a lot and do it as quickly as possible, which was a challenge. However, we ended up doing just fine and I had a lot of fun along the way. Since then, there’s been plenty of event planning, going to meetings, working in GIS, researching, and helping with Operation Bluebird. I have learned so much and not just about conservation easements and event planning, but also about networking, being a leader, and tons more. It has been a wonderful experience and I’m glad I got to stick around after co-op to continue working for this great organization. I’ve grown to love all of the amazing people involved with TLT and I will miss all of you!

~Izzy Bausch

When I started working at TLT last summer of 2016, I did not anticipate the friends I would gain or the opportunities coming my way. I began my internship at Tecumseh after returning from a rather underwhelming co-op. Fortunately for me, Tecumseh had yet to fill their Miller Fellow position, and I was overjoyed to become a part of the Land Trust family. I learned so much from working at the land trust. I became more in tune with the Village of Yellow Springs due to my work with Bob Barcus and the 1% for Green Space program. I witnessed the inner workings of the office and thoroughly enjoyed the many events that I helped plan and support, such as the Solstice Poetry Reading. I am so grateful that I was able to get to know the people behind the sunflower field, as I did not just gain incredible knowledge but amazing mentors. Thank you, TLT!

~Tymber Compher

“We’re glad I got to stick around after co-op to continue working for this great organization.”
TLT Board Jumps Into Action on Jacoby Creek

What is a local land trust to do when a property they have long hoped to preserve suddenly goes to auction? Spring into action!! And that’s just what TLT board, staff, volunteers, and partners did February 16, 2017.

Before preserving land, the TLT board and staff walk each property to understand it better and see if it’s worth protecting. You bet this one was! We quickly reached out to the Village of Yellow Springs and potential conservation partners – buyers, funders, donors, and volunteers. Decisions needed be made quickly – some Board members acted as liaisons to Council, while others reviewed various purchase scenarios and options. The Village and the Land Trust Board decided to raise and combine funds to help bidders who agreed to preserve the land if they purchased it. We recruited volunteers who helped us at the successful Whitehall Farm auction in 1999 and assembled our auction outreach team.

Volunteers created informational pieces and a fundraising vehicle for electronic media, interns made posters, and staff scheduled a series of information sessions and open houses for volunteers, donors, and bidders. Education of potential buyers is key in a situation such as this to promote the option of conservation easements. We had great conversations with new friends and old!

All told, the Village, the Greene County Parks, TLT, and individual donors gave or pledged over $380,000 to assist conservation buyers. Four of seven winning bidders plan to work with the Land Trust to protect the land. $112,000 was needed to help one of the winning bidders to close on the property. We are working with other winning bidders and neighbors to protect more of this and adjacent properties. And we’re keeping the momentum going to make the Jacoby Greenbelt real!

The TLT Board of Trustees walks every potential property to understand it better and assess the conservation value.

1% Businesses Preserve Jacoby Creek

It is 5 pm and the Land Trust’s day ends. We tuck our 25,000 acres in for the night and turn out the lights. Then... BOOM... Awakening with a start from a horrible nightmare in which the beautiful farmland on our western gateway has just been put up for auction! And this time it’s not a nightmare, it’s real. Quick, we gotta DO something to protect the clean drinking water of the Jacoby Creek headwaters and the open view vistas.

The Jacoby Creek Farm auction is exactly why we initiated the 1% for Green Space program. TLT needs to have money set aside for when land transactions happen fast and often with little warning.

Participating Miami Township merchants add 1% to a customer’s bill which is then donated to the Land Trust. These funds are only for land preservation projects in Miami Township.

In the recent property auction, $22,000 from 1% for Green Space Fund was leveraged to amass over $380,000 for a winning strategy. 1% for Green Space has raised over $87,000 and been a part of the successful preservation of 2065 acres in Miami Township. If you would like to join the effort, call the Land Trust office. We’d love to give you an opportunity to talk with current participants and learn just how easy raising 1% for Green Space can be.

A special thank you to Asanda Imports. They calculated their potential total 2017 collection of 1% funds and sent it in early to be used for the auction.
The Good News About Being 70!

Almost everyone reading this newsletter has contributed financially to TLT over the years. We all do what we can to keep this important organization going strong. For some of us, a now permanent provision of the federal tax law allows individuals to donate directly from an IRA to a non-profit like TLT. Individuals who are 70-1/2 or older are mandated to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) each year from their IRA. This distribution will be taxed by the IRS as income. However, any part of this distribution transferred directly to a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization is not included in your adjusted gross income. Take the time to consult with your tax advisor about this provision. Perhaps this will be as good a fit for you as it was for me.

~Bob Huston

Mining Operation in Mad River Township Opposed

In Clark County’s Mad River Township, a large sand, gravel, and limestone mining operation is proposed. Once owned by a family with a small sand and gravel business, the recent purchaser of the land intends to expand the operation to extract limestone, through a process known as dewatering. They plan to mine almost 400 additional acres that are currently farmed. Ohio Department of Natural Resources and county approvals are needed to do this. The Tecumseh Land Trust Board of Trustees voted to oppose this expanded operation.

TLT’s mission is to “protect farmland, water, and natural areas forever.” The Land Trust holds conservation easements on 1,986 acres of prime farmland in Mad River Township and an easement on 940 acres of Whitehall Farm, all in an area that might also be affected.

The operation could have potential negative impact to Mud Run Creek, a tributary to the Mad River. Mud Run Creek has high potential for ground water pollution. The owners of the company plan to release waste water from the dewatering process into the creek, posing a serious threat to the creek and its inhabitants. As of the last study by the Ohio EPA, Mud Run is designated Warmwater Habitat (WWH) suggesting a balanced biological community. A large increase in waste water could disrupt this balance and the creek could lose this designation.

Significantly, the Mad River was designated as a sole source aquifer by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1988. A sole source aquifer is one that supplies drinking water to a community that has no other viable source for drinking water.

Finally, large subdivisions are right next to the mining operation, including Echo Hills. Some 200-400 known private wells are likely to be impacted. There seems no gain to this community and to our watershed by permitting such expansive and deep mining right next to the creek. For additional information, please visit www.citizensagainstmining.org.
Volunteers Needed

Training Dates
June 17 10:30 am-noon
Sept. 9 10:30 am-noon

Volunteers Make Everything Possible, including Sunflower Fields

Our volunteers make so many things possible – writing our newsletter, clearing out invasive plants, staffing the Sugar Shack Tour, putting together our auction, and advocating for water and land conservation throughout the area!

But did you know that our biggest volunteer need for the year is helping host visitors to the Whitehall sunflower field? Dave and Sharen Neuhardt kindly allow visitors to the field each September, just to enjoy the beauty of the cheery flowers and appreciate permanently preserved farmland. To make sure that those visitors park safely, and have a chance to find out a bit more about this special farm and its preservation, we need over 100 volunteers over the 2 weeks they are in bloom, especially on weekends.

Groups, in particular, are needed as sunflower hosts. Scout troops, sororities, church youth groups, and sports teams can share hosting duties for a day, serve the community, and earn recognition for their organization and its charitable or conservation purpose. Please call 767-9490 or sunflower@tecumsehlandtrust.org ASAP to let us know of your interest. The sunflowers’ season is weather dependent, so we’re planning now to make sure we have contacts for potential volunteer groups (as well as individuals) as we get closer to blooming time.

Volunteers Needed

Training Dates
June 17 10:30 am-noon
Sept. 9 10:30 am-noon

Volunteers Make Everything Possible, including Sunflower Fields

Our volunteers make so many things possible – writing our newsletter, clearing out invasive plants, staffing the Sugar Shack Tour, putting together our auction, and advocating for water and land conservation throughout the area!

But did you know that our biggest volunteer need for the year is helping host visitors to the Whitehall sunflower field? Dave and Sharen Neuhardt kindly allow visitors to the field each September, just to enjoy the beauty of the cheery flowers and appreciate permanently preserved farmland. To make sure that those visitors park safely, and have a chance to find out a bit more about this special farm and its preservation, we need over 100 volunteers over the 2 weeks they are in bloom, especially on weekends.

Groups, in particular, are needed as sunflower hosts. Scout troops, sororities, church youth groups, and sports teams can share hosting duties for a day, serve the community, and earn recognition for their organization and its charitable or conservation purpose. Please call 767-9490 or sunflower@tecumsehlandtrust.org ASAP to let us know of your interest. The sunflowers’ season is weather dependent, so we’re planning now to make sure we have contacts for potential volunteer groups (as well as individuals) as we get closer to blooming time.

Volunteers Needed

Training Dates
June 17 10:30 am-noon
Sept. 9 10:30 am-noon

Volunteers Make Everything Possible, including Sunflower Fields

Our volunteers make so many things possible – writing our newsletter, clearing out invasive plants, staffing the Sugar Shack Tour, putting together our auction, and advocating for water and land conservation throughout the area!

But did you know that our biggest volunteer need for the year is helping host visitors to the Whitehall sunflower field? Dave and Sharen Neuhardt kindly allow visitors to the field each September, just to enjoy the beauty of the cheery flowers and appreciate permanently preserved farmland. To make sure that those visitors park safely, and have a chance to find out a bit more about this special farm and its preservation, we need over 100 volunteers over the 2 weeks they are in bloom, especially on weekends.

Groups, in particular, are needed as sunflower hosts. Scout troops, sororities, church youth groups, and sports teams can share hosting duties for a day, serve the community, and earn recognition for their organization and its charitable or conservation purpose. Please call 767-9490 or sunflower@tecumsehlandtrust.org ASAP to let us know of your interest. The sunflowers’ season is weather dependent, so we’re planning now to make sure we have contacts for potential volunteer groups (as well as individuals) as we get closer to blooming time.

Volunteers Needed

Training Dates
June 17 10:30 am-noon
Sept. 9 10:30 am-noon

Volunteers Make Everything Possible, including Sunflower Fields

Our volunteers make so many things possible – writing our newsletter, clearing out invasive plants, staffing the Sugar Shack Tour, putting together our auction, and advocating for water and land conservation throughout the area!

But did you know that our biggest volunteer need for the year is helping host visitors to the Whitehall sunflower field? Dave and Sharen Neuhardt kindly allow visitors to the field each September, just to enjoy the beauty of the cheery flowers and appreciate permanently preserved farmland. To make sure that those visitors park safely, and have a chance to find out a bit more about this special farm and its preservation, we need over 100 volunteers over the 2 weeks they are in bloom, especially on weekends.

Groups, in particular, are needed as sunflower hosts. Scout troops, sororities, church youth groups, and sports teams can share hosting duties for a day, serve the community, and earn recognition for their organization and its charitable or conservation purpose. Please call 767-9490 or sunflower@tecumsehlandtrust.org ASAP to let us know of your interest. The sunflowers’ season is weather dependent, so we’re planning now to make sure we have contacts for potential volunteer groups (as well as individuals) as we get closer to blooming time.

Volunteers Needed

Training Dates
June 17 10:30 am-noon
Sept. 9 10:30 am-noon

Volunteers Make Everything Possible, including Sunflower Fields

Our volunteers make so many things possible – writing our newsletter, clearing out invasive plants, staffing the Sugar Shack Tour, putting together our auction, and advocating for water and land conservation throughout the area!

But did you know that our biggest volunteer need for the year is helping host visitors to the Whitehall sunflower field? Dave and Sharen Neuhardt kindly allow visitors to the field each September, just to enjoy the beauty of the cheery flowers and appreciate permanently preserved farmland. To make sure that those visitors park safely, and have a chance to find out a bit more about this special farm and its preservation, we need over 100 volunteers over the 2 weeks they are in bloom, especially on weekends.

Groups, in particular, are needed as sunflower hosts. Scout troops, sororities, church youth groups, and sports teams can share hosting duties for a day, serve the community, and earn recognition for their organization and its charitable or conservation purpose. Please call 767-9490 or sunflower@tecumsehlandtrust.org ASAP to let us know of your interest. The sunflowers’ season is weather dependent, so we’re planning now to make sure we have contacts for potential volunteer groups (as well as individuals) as we get closer to blooming time.

Volunteers Needed

Training Dates
June 17 10:30 am-noon
Sept. 9 10:30 am-noon

Volunteers Make Everything Possible, including Sunflower Fields

Our volunteers make so many things possible – writing our newsletter, clearing out invasive plants, staffing the Sugar Shack Tour, putting together our auction, and advocating for water and land conservation throughout the area!

But did you know that our biggest volunteer need for the year is helping host visitors to the Whitehall sunflower field? Dave and Sharen Neuhardt kindly allow visitors to the field each September, just to enjoy the beauty of the cheery flowers and appreciate permanently preserved farmland. To make sure that those visitors park safely, and have a chance to find out a bit more about this special farm and its preservation, we need over 100 volunteers over the 2 weeks they are in bloom, especially on weekends.

Groups, in particular, are needed as sunflower hosts. Scout troops, sororities, church youth groups, and sports teams can share hosting duties for a day, serve the community, and earn recognition for their organization and its charitable or conservation purpose. Please call 767-9490 or sunflower@tecumsehlandtrust.org ASAP to let us know of your interest. The sunflowers’ season is weather dependent, so we’re planning now to make sure we have contacts for potential volunteer groups (as well as individuals) as we get closer to blooming time.
Local Foods Dinner—at The Winds Café

The TLT Local Foods Dinner is one place that I *always* eat my vegetables. The freshness of the produce and the imaginative preparation makes it easy for the lackadaisical veggie eater to clean her plate! The 2016 dinner was a fabulous feast. It was a difficult choice for the entree. Should I get the risotto with roasted zucchini and patty pan squash with hyssop oil or the pork loin (from locally raised hogs) with succotash? I went with the pork loin and yes Mother, I ate my succotash which I had previously considered a curse on humanity. You simply cannot compare locally grown produce freshly prepared with the canned variety. The entire menu from the heirloom tomato salad, to the cheese and honeycomb plate to the wonderful grilled peaches with granola topping, whipped cream and blackberry syrup was outstanding. I cannot wait to see what is on the menu for this year’s dinner on August 7th!

~Cathy Holcomb

7th Graders as Citizen Scientists & Nature Educators

Sixty-seven 7th grade science students are near the end of the very successful first year of *Operation Bluebird*, a Project Based Learning program at Yellow Springs’ McKinney Middle School. Teacher Rebecca Eastman and TLT volunteers Kate Anderson and Bethany Gray have led the way on the project, with the help of Ohio Bluebird Society, Lowes, Home Depot, US Bank, and TLT and parent volunteers. After studying the habits and habitat of cavity nesting birds and building bluebird boxes, the students visited the Xarifa Farm bluebird trail this spring to observe and submit data about the nests, eggs and fledglings to scientists at Cornell University via [NestWatch.org](https://www.nestwatch.org). The students also chose social media to educate the public on the needs of native cavity nesting birds – You-Tube, Instagram, and Twitter. Even if you are not a subscriber to these sites, you can check out their coverage at [https://twitter.com/opbluebirdys](https://twitter.com/opbluebirdys).

Why Save Seeds?

Why should we save seeds? They aren’t going anywhere – or are they? Did you know that some companies have patented many specific vegetable and grain seeds? This assures that seed buyers purchase from the patent owner. They are not allowed to save those seeds to plant the next year. But if you grow a special tomato that is not patented, you can save your seeds from the best fruits and keep doing this for many years. By then you will have a variety that is specifically suited to your garden – and you can name it. Libraries and large seed storage repositories are saving local seeds and cataloging them in case varieties are damaged or destroyed. Saving seed is a way to assure that the next generation has a diverse food supply. To get started, you can find a book such as “Seed to Seed” by Suzanne Ashworth that describes the best methods for saving seeds from your favorite vegetable. Have fun trying it.

~Macy Reynolds
Temperatures soared into the seventies and the sap simmered into dark, sweet syrup at this year's Sugar Shack. Host Michele Burns of Flying Mouse Farms estimated about 150 people attended, many of them younger fun and sun seekers, who most enjoyed playing on the swing set; however, the chickens were quite popular, too! A campfire sing-a-long concluded the day's events.

Ode to TLT

ETERNITY IN LEGALESE

Easement in perpetuity
provisos that define forever
Signed and sealed, a guarantee
Easement in perpetuity
to yield to Nature's majesty
and human interference sever
Easement in perpetuity
provisos that define forever

~By Joan Harris

Original poem for the 2016 Winter Solstice Poetry Reading
Come See the Difference You Have Made!  
Join us for an afternoon at the Jacoby Creek property you helped preserve.

Come and experience the Jacoby Creek Farm you helped protect first hand! See why Community Solutions wanted to buy it and hear their plans for improving soil and researching different farming practices. See the farm through the eyes of The Nature Conservancy and other partners who hope to help us preserve and restore more of the creek! Meet at 2 and walk at 2:30 at 131 Dayton-Yellow Springs Road, YS. Parking may be a little tight. Please bike or carpool if possible – visit www.tecumsehlandtrust.org for more info.