

Seeking to preserve, protect and enhance land in perpetuity for the public benefit



Trustee Don Wiper (left) and artist James Young with "Looking Ahead," the painting Young donated to the organization for its fall 2013 raffle.

And we have a winner!

Raffle ticket #48 was the lucky draw on November 7 at the annual meeting of the Trust. John Kessler and his spouse Eloise DeZwarte of Granville are now the proud owners of the James Young painting, titled "Looking Ahead." The oil on canvas depicts a farm in western Licking County. Proceeds from the raffle will help build the organization's legal defense and stewardship funds. Trust supporters from 14 states, the District of Columbia, and Bermuda purchased 777 tickets, raising a total of \$6,000 from the event.

Business Member Profile: James Young of Kussmaul Gallery

By Lyn Boone, Trustee

"If no land is preserved, what would I paint?"

Artist and entrepreneur James Young, well known for his expressive paintings of rural landscapes and barns, wasn't always focused on farms as his artistic subject. The artist, who is the newest business member of the Licking Land Trust, describes his aesthetic evolution as a journey from producing modern artworks in the tradition of Andy Warhol, through a period of acrylic

printmaking, followed by a time when he produced pen-and-ink illustrations such as sketches of Granville scenes. "Getting into oil landscapes was like an epiphany for me," Young said. "At first it was tortuous to get it right, but then, working one day on a painting of a local farm, everything clicked."

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News Flash: Trust Acquires 60 Acre Easement from Beckett Family

By Don Wiper, Trustee

With thanks to the Becketts - Tom, Louise, and daughter Suzette - the Trust has acquired its 17th conservation easement. The 60 acre Beckett farm, now protected in perpetuity from development, is located in Bowling Green Township

just south of the National Road (U.S. 40). This acquisition brings a total of 1,151 acres under permanent conservation protection. This means all of those properties will, with very limited exceptions, stay as is, in all their natural beauty. The

granting of the easement and acceptance by the Trust was completed in November. The Trust's Spring newsletter will introduce readers to the Beckett family, and describe the property and some of its colorful history.

A Student's Perspective: Magic in the Land Lab *By Ivy Jo Gilbert, Granville High School Senior*

This is the story of a motivated group of students who discovered a way to feed multiple birds from a single bird feeder. The students at Granville High School, while learning about humanity's disconnection from nature coupled with escalating social challenges, became a trailblazing group who banded together to create the outline for their Land Lab. Their response to conservationists' call to action highlights the importance of wetland restoration and community involvement.

Schools will work in and experience the developing wetlands and prairies, learning the same things they would learn in science, math, and even English classrooms; the startling difference will be that they'll have grass under their feet and learn from the flora and fauna around them.

The goal is to get these students into a setting that will inspire learning with a clear purpose, and a chance to go beyond the textbook. Being outside in this atmosphere filled with

Ivy Jo Gilbert, a Granville High School Senior, is planning to major in environmental sciences in college.



Ivy Jo Gilbert at the Land Lab outside Granville Intermediate School.

One thousand trees, obtained through a student-written grant provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will soon find a new home on the 43 acres surrounding the Granville Intermediate School. As soon as the corn is pulled from this farmland, the soft and hardwood saplings will take the plunge into the silty loam. This beautiful acreage will contain varying habitats, from a prairie grass plain, to a dense hardwood forest. When the existing drainage tiles are removed, and dikes and water control systems are put in place, wetlands and their waterfowl will return and the ecosystem will flourish once again. Nature and man for once will both come out victorious.

Not only are these normally exploited lands being returned to nature, they will also be used to educate and inspire future generations. The magic in the Land Lab is in the educational aspect. Students from Granville

informational student-created kiosks will breed an academic thirst for knowledge in students as they ask, "What is that? Why is that?" This environment will cater to the musician who can find beauty in the babbling brook,

while enriching the mathematician thirsting to find the algorithm behind plant growth, breeding a community that praises both the poet and the scientist.

As a senior in High School, I want to leave my mark on the community that raised me, and the world that I played in. I hope that future students will find both the joy in watching something grow that they personally nurtured, and the thrill in asking the "why?" Mr. Reding's AP Environmental Studies class provided me with a means to turn a farmland into a museum that rivaled the Smithsonian with exhibits kids could actually touch. Now as students run through the intricate system of pathways left by my peers and me, they will leave the Land Lab with wildflowers woven in their hair, seeds of understanding sown in their hearts, and many birds upon the feeder.

Horses, Hounds, and Conservation: A Fall Afternoon on the Brush Farm

By Mark Roth, Treasurer

In October a dozen or more people from the land conservation community, including members and volunteers from the Trust, toured the Brush Farm. In 2007 Bernie and Victoria Brush donated a conservation easement on their 64 acre farm located in Pataskala, Ohio to the Trust to preserve the agricultural use of this property for future generations. This is a working farm where current crops include corn, alfalfa and hay. The Brushes also raise, sell and trade horses and hounds which give this well-maintained farm a “gentleman farmer” feel.

The farm has qualified and is enrolled in Licking County’s “Current Agricultural Use Valuation” program, commonly referred to simply as “CAUV”. Under CAUV, Licking County has certified the property as having agricultural productivity for property tax purposes, resulting in a lower tax assessment valuation than non-agricultural property.

Bernie led the group on a hike through the fields, meadows, woodlands and by the stream that runs through his property. He pointed out and explained the sustainable farming and land conservation practices that are used on the farm, including crop rotation, and maintenance of natural buffers between the fields and along the stream. The natural buffers along the stream filter out silt and other contaminants, preventing them from washing into the stream

during rainstorms, and keeping the water fresher for aquatic life. Natural buffers between the fields help control soil erosion from both wind and rainstorms, thus maintaining soil quality in the fields.

Bernie also plants trees along field borders, and maintains woodlands in a natural state, to nurture wildlife habitat and diversity. Lush woodlands also provide privacy from neighbors and roads.

The group enjoyed this educational hike, and all were delighted to learn about and experience the sustainable farming and land conservation practices on the Brush Farm.

Bernie Brush guiding Trust members and friends across a stream on his farm.



Members Enjoy the Land and Help the Trust

The Trust welcomes all member volunteers to assist with the annual inspections of conserved Trust properties. Come along with a Trustee to hike, view, enjoy and inspect one or more of our properties this summer or fall. We'd love to have you, and you'd be making a significant contribution to the work of the Trust. To volunteer, or for more information, contact Wendy Bittel, Office Administrator: lickinglandtrust@windstream.net

That was about ten years ago, and Young is clearly in his element now, working in oils to create expansive farmscapes and rural scenes. His upstairs exhibit space at his Granville business, Kussmaul Gallery, boasts gorgeous renderings of rolling roadways and countryside, in which light and shadow seem virtually a living element rather than simply technique. Most strikingly, Young's work carries a special emphasis on barns, especially old barns. Indeed, two barns adorn an oil on canvas, titled "Looking Ahead," that Young created for the Trust and donated for its recent fundraiser, a raffle that raised about \$6,000 for the organization.

Young, known to his friends as "Jay," has also come quite a way in developing his thriving business on Broadway in Granville. His father was an entrepreneur, so he grew up in a business-friendly environment. But Young's college years, spent at Rochester Institute of Technology and Columbus College of Art and Design, didn't include the business training he says he would have found helpful in launching his own enterprise. "CCAD offers business courses now," he says, "but not when I was there." Instead, he learned on the job, working at a framing shop in Gahanna that serviced large commercial accounts, and later opening his own signage business in Newark.

It was in the late 1980s that Young first had the opportunity to open his gallery in the second-floor level of the 1831 Granville store he still occupies. At first featuring solely his exhibit space, Young found it challenging to entice visitors to venture up the narrow stairs of the historic building. But gradually, as he and his wife Jenifer expanded the business to include a boutique on the first floor, the Kussmaul Gallery became a well-known fixture among Granville shops. Now many customers climb those stairs to see the coveted paintings in the airy gallery above. Indeed, Young's following includes not only local admirers, but also collectors from across the United States. In the shop on the first floor, Jenifer does all of the merchandising and purchasing, offering a wide array of unique hand-crafted gifts, jewelry, cards, and flowers.

Jay and Jenifer live on an Alexandria "hobby farm," as Jay describes it, with their daughters Emma and Ava and a small menagerie of horses, dogs, ducks, and (soon to be added) chickens. While eschewing "green" labels in describing himself, he says, "I like to think I am environmentally conscious, and my artistic interest in farms is a natural connection with the Licking Land Trust. After all, if no land is preserved, what would I paint?"

Business Members and Organizations Support Conservation

The Trust welcomes and thanks our business members. Their products and services help farmers, landowners, and organizations maintain, preserve, and improve the great outdoors.

Aqua Doc Lake & Pond Management Co.
Benjamin D. Rickey LLC
The Dawes Arboretum
Granville Garden Club
Granville Milling Company
Granville Township
INT Information Systems, Inc.

Jake's Property Services
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Kussmaul Gallery
Licking County Soil and Water
Conservation District
River Road Coffeehouse
Spring Meadow Fencing Company

Board Members Share Statewide Collaboration and Learning *Mickelson and Wiper Attend COLT Conference 11/7*

By Mike Mickelson, Trustee

Working diligently to stay on top of current issues in land conservation while sharing their knowledge with Ohio colleagues, Trustees Don Wiper and Mike Mickelson attended the semi-annual conference of the Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts on November 7. Attended by board members from land trusts throughout Ohio, the conference was held at the inspirational Grange Insurance Audubon Center in Columbus.

Kirby Date, from Cleveland State University, gave the keynote address, "Ohio Balanced Growth Program: Local Government Policy and Balanced Growth", emphasizing the coordination between development and preservation interests. The talk was followed by a panel discussion on "Land Trust Involvement in Balanced Growth". Don Wiper discussed how the Trust created a coalition of local and regional partners to acquire the Spring Valley Nature Preserve.

Need for Land Protection in Licking County as Strong as Ever

By Tom Henshaw, Trustee

National trends towards re-urbanization coupled with the 2008 collapse of the housing market have led many analysts and academics to speculate that the half-century old rush towards suburbanization is in decline. Not so along the 161 corridor on the Western edge of Licking County. A Columbus Dispatch article from September 3 of this year highlights the looming conflict between development and tradition as business parks and residential development forge forward into Jersey Township. A 2011 agreement between the County, Southwest Licking Sewer and Water District and New Albany allows for the provision of sewer and water services to a narrow development corridor along 161 intended primarily for industrial development.

Speculation, however, persists that with increased industrial growth will come a spike in residential growth as well. Managed growth can benefit our communities and future generations, provided that land conservation is carefully considered in the planning process. Please see the link below for the complete Dispatch article.

<http://dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/09/03/new-albany-growth-continues-its-march.html>

Other panelists described similar community development projects.

Paco Ollervides, Great Lakes Program Manager, presented "Protecting and Restoring Rivers and their Watersheds", a vital Northwestern Ohio-Lake Erie concern given the severe algae pollution affecting the western Lake Erie region. The group received updates on current state and federal policy initiatives from Adrienne Dziak, of The Nature Conservancy. Also of special interest was the presentation by Denise King, Director, Office of Farmland Preservation, ODA, on changes to the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program.

A presentation on the newly formed Terrafirma RRG LLC described this risk pool insurance service organized by the Land Trust Alliance. Defending attacks on conservation easements can be extremely costly, with legal defense fees in some court cases having swelled to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Terrafirma is a defense insurance program that the Trust board continues to consider for protecting our easements. As many Trust members know, the Trust is undertaking a fundraising program, seeking contributions from easement holders and grants to enhance our defense fund to levels consistent with Standards and Practices of the Land Trust Alliance. That level may need to be complemented by an insurance program such as Terrafirma.

For more information about the Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts (COLT), visit <http://www.ohiolandtrusts.org>. Also visit the Audubon Center web site at <http://grangeinsuranceauduboncenter.org> for information on this interesting educational venue.

Save the Date!

Regional Events - Land and Conservation Focused OEFFA Farm Tours (oeffa.org)

Annual Conference, Granville Feb. 15 & 16
(registration now open - always a sellout)

Dawes Arboretum (dawesarb.org)

Holiday Decorations for Wildlife Dec. 7
Backyard Maple Syruping Jan. 18
Grafting the Right Way Jan. 25



Licking Land Trust
128 S. Main Street
P.O. Box 196
Granville, OH 43023

740-587-4104
lickinglandtrust@windstream.net
www.lickinglandtrust.org

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The mission of the Licking Land Trust is the preservation and permanent protection of central Ohio green spaces – wetlands, woods, farmlands, riparian corridors, and scenic vistas – and education about the importance of green spaces and their conservation, all for the public benefit.

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