



The 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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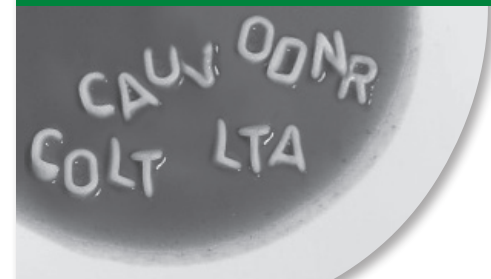
NEWSLETTER

A Publication for Members and Friends

Winter 2010



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



ALPHABET SOUP of Current Events:

By Mike Mickelson, *Trustee*

The Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts (COLT) Fall Meeting was held October 28, 2010 at Dawes Arboretum in Newark, Ohio. Don Wiper and Mike Mickelson attended for the Licking Land Trust. COLT seeks to bring together its member Ohio Land Trusts to provide timely information about new state and federal legislation and policy updates. These meetings are also opportunities for land trust members to network and exchange ideas.

COLT is a network of land trusts and other conservation organizations dedicated to advancing land conservation for public benefit in Ohio. COLT provides a forum for professional and technical support to the conservation organizations that work to conserve land. Participants have diverse but complimentary purposes, ranging from the protection of watersheds, to the preservation of prime farmland, to the restoration of natural areas.

The keynote address was given by Representative Dan Dodd,

representing Ohio District 91 which includes Perry, Hocking and parts of Licking and Pickaway Counties. Representative Dodd supports land conservation and spoke about the tradeoffs between incentives for land conservation and budgetary constraints. Funds that are given up in one area have to be made up in other areas. As a member of the Ways and Means Committee which is responsible for



Continued on page 3



The Kramer Farm: A Loving Owner and a Legacy

By Don Wiper, *Trustee*

It was a special Saturday morning in June 2001 when we met Arthur Kramer at his 80 acre farm on Beecher Road in Harrison Township. Five of us from the Licking Land Trust met at the Kramer Farm to talk to Mr. Kramer about protecting his farm from development through an agricultural easement.

The Kramer Farm would be our first agricultural easement and its 80 acres the largest property protected from development by an easement.

Standing on the homestead area at the highest place on the farm, Arthur pointed with pride to the fields of crops, to the pasture, to the woodlot, and to the scenic ravine. We started our walking and riding tour of the farm and soon noticed the good-looking fields and their carefully maintained and mowed perimeters. It was clear that Arthur wanted us to see what a farm should look like in the hands of a loving owner.

“It was clear that Arthur wanted us to see what a farm should look like in the hands of a loving owner.”

As we walked, we talked about what we do as a land trust and Arthur talked about his vision for the farm. He told us that he had farmed the property for 40 years and did not want to see it become a housing development. We told Arthur that we could not pay him for the easement. He said, “I don’t want money. Saving my land as a farm is just the right thing to do.” We agreed and so did our board.

We went to work with Arthur and his lawyer to see that the right kind of easement could be developed - an easement that would permanently protect the farm from development but would permit a variety of agricultural uses

Continued on page 2

Renew or Join the Licking Land Trust for 2011

☐ Yes, I'd like to help the Trust with its conservation activities by renewing or joining the Trust for 2011.

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Membership Levels

- ☐ Student: \$10
- ☐ Individual: \$50
- ☐ Family: \$50
- ☐ Business or Organization: \$150
- ☐ Conservator: \$250
- ☐ Steward: \$500

Please detach and mail this completed form to

the Licking Land Trust
P.O. Box 196 • Granville, OH 43023

along with your membership dues.

Please make checks payable to “Licking Land Trust.”

or

access the Trust's website to renew or join online.

www.lickinglandtrust.org

PAGE 2

2010 Annual Meeting Update

By Candi Moore, Board Chair

Nearly 50 intrepid members of the Licking Land Trust withstood stormy weather to attend the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Trust in late October at Bryn Du Mansion. We appreciate their dedication for participating in our traditional potluck dinner on such a miserable night weather-wise.

As usual there was a delightful selection of homemade food and wine along with an opportunity to connect with friends and acquaintances. It may have been cold and windy outside but warm and friendly inside.

I took a few minutes to update the membership on the status of our activities. In particular, I noted that the Board of Trustees has completed all of the policies and procedures needed to obtain accreditation but needs to raise about \$100,000 for stewardship and easement defense funds before being able to proceed. If you can help us with this activity, please contact us through our website, www.lickinglandtrust.org.

Our guest speaker was local author and potager (kitchen garden) expert Jennifer Bartley. Through her slide show we were transported back and forth between France and Granville, learning about how kitchen gardens can create outdoor rooms that help us

connect with the land and the food we eat. We experienced the seasonal nature of kitchen gardens and recipes for various seasons. For many of us, it was a new way of looking at the connection between the food we eat and where and how it is grown. Ms. Bartley brought along copies of her book, *Designing the New Kitchen Garden, An American Potager Handbook*.





The Board of Trustees is interested in your thoughts on our annual meetings, hikes and programs. We would like to get your suggestions and comments on what we currently do and your ideas on what you would like to see us do.

Please go to www.lickinglandtrust.org/survey and add your thoughts to our survey.

The Kramer Farm – Continued from page 1

and also allow a new farmhouse to be built in place of the old one.

In April 2002, less than a year after we started, Arthur, his lawyer, his neighbors, the Harrison Township trustees, and several of us from the Licking Land Trust met at the Kramer Farm. It was a mild, but sunny, early spring morning at a lovely farm in Licking County. Arthur sat at a table in front of the barn where he bought the farm at auction 40 years earlier. The easement was presented and it was signed. Lots of congratulations and back pats were laid on Arthur and we even got a few smiles from him.

“Arthur died in September 2009 but his farm legacy lives on.” Arthur, who had never married, deeded the farm to his nephews and nieces in September 2005 but reserved a life estate and saw that the deed provided that the conveyance was subject to the perpetual easement granted by him in 2002 to the Licking Land Trust. Arthur died in September 2009 but his farm legacy lives on.

Regular stewardship visits to the farm have revealed a continuation of the proper management of the farm under the terms of the easement during the remainder of Arthur’s life and under the new ownership.

Your Land Trust at Work 2010 Projects

Project	Board Contact
Spring Valley surface water improvement: with Granville Township, restore Salt Run waterway to more natural state (Spring Valley Nature Preserve), using Ohio EPA grant funds obtained June 2010	Mary Fitch
Educational outreach: donate 12 earth-friendly educational books to Licking County libraries	Wendy Bittel
Stewardship inspection of all Trust easements and properties: 1100 acres/26 properties	Tod Frolking
Increase general membership: provide speaker presentations to affinity and community organizations	Linda Habig
Increase corporate membership: approach Licking County businesses and corporations	Linda Habig
Apply for national accreditation: standardize procedures and documentation	Mike Mickelson
Increase conserved acreage: communicate with interested landowners (currently 20 prospects)	Candi Moore Greg Sharkey Don Wiper
Create land management plans for 7 properties owned by the Trust	Doug Spieles

Anyone who would like to help with any of the above projects should contact the person indicated. **The Trust welcomes all volunteers!**

Alphabet Soup of Current Events – Continued from page 1

legislation dealing with tax incentives such as CAUV, he is concerned about the various loopholes in the tax code. He stated that there is a balance between conservation of natural resources and their exploitation. Ultimately it is an issue of quality of life.

One of the major issues confronting land trusts is the area of easement defense. The cost of defending violations of conservation easement can be substantial. Peter McDonald, Director of Stewardship, and Bob Owen, Associate General Counsel, both of Western Reserve Land Conservancy, and Terry Seidel, Director of Land Protection, The Nature Conservancy-OH, discussed **Easement Defense and Landowner Relationships**.

The afternoon was devoted to special topics and the attendees met in small breakout groups to discuss:

- Developing and Evaluating Your Board of Directors
- Drafting Conservation Easements
- Baseline Documentation Reports & Land Management Plans
- Preparing for Land Trust Accreditation

A session on **State Policy Updates** wrapped up the program. Cotton Randall, Division of Forestry, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) described the **Federal Forest Legacy Program**. Don Wiper, Licking Land Trust, discussed the **Status of Property Tax Reform Legislation**. He also explained needed amendments to Ohio Revised Code 5301.057 which bans private transfer fee covenants, which some land trusts incorporate into conservation or agricultural easements as a way of providing stewardship funds when property is transferred to new owners. **House Bill 292** seeks to exempt environmental covenants.

For the benefit of Licking Land Trust members and Licking County landowners, the Trust’s Board continues its active membership and participation in regional and national land trust organizations, including the national Land Trust Alliance (LTA), and the state-wide Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts.



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.



Trust members hiking amid tall trees at the Fryman Reserve

There are different schools of thought on the management of land for conservation purposes. The most intensive style of management advocates aggressive control of undesirable species, cultivation of desirable species, and careful regulation of environmental conditions. This level of management is beyond the scope of our (primarily volunteer) organization. There is also a convincing case to be made that it is an unsustainable style of management; that is, it is labor-intensive maintenance of what we humans find desirable, even despite contrary environmental circumstances. The Licking Land Trust, therefore, has adopted a more open management style. In this approach, we seek to reduce the stress (such as litter, flood restriction, pavement, erosion, etc.) on a piece of land and then let ecological processes progress as they may. The property may then support an ecological community that is more sustainable over time.

An exception to this is the Fryman Reserve, which is classified as CAUV (Current Agricultural Use Valuation) land. The CAUV program was implemented by the State of Ohio to permit the valuing of land based on its ability to produce income rather than on its market value. To maintain CAUV status, the Trust is managing the Fryman reserve according to a forestry management plan that incorporates occasional tree harvest as part of the conservation scheme.

The Trust recently completed creation of land management plans for all 7 of its owned properties, and will monitor and implement actions to ensure compliance. Any Trust member who would like to review any of the Trust’s land management plans should feel free to contact Doug Spieles at spielesd@denison.edu.

PAGE 3

The Land Trust as Land Owner

By Doug Spieles, Board Vice Chair

Of the properties protected by the Licking Land Trust, seventeen are in private ownership; the other seven are owned by the Trust. These seven properties—Harnden Mill Pond, the Boldon Reserve, the Hill Wetland, the Fryman Reserve, Hartman Farms, the LeFevre/Morrison property, and the Park Trails/MI Homes land—encompass over 125 acres. This is land that the Trust is responsible for managing.