



Healthy Woodlands Require Hands-on Management

By Brian Riley, Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Division of Forestry

Have you ever wondered about what defines woodland conservation? It seems like a pretty simple and straight forward question, but in reality, it is one that means many different things to many different people. As a forester with the Ohio Division of Forestry, I am proud of my profession because the Division's mission is to help public and private woodland owners create a healthy, productive and sustainable woodland. We provide landowners with the tools and assistance necessary to employ any number of needed timber stand improvement practices required to achieve set goals and objectives through responsible, proactive management. This being said, there is a lingering idea that suggests hands-off woodland management will, over time, result in "natural" woodlands. This assumption could not be further from the truth.



Trust members hiking the beautiful woodland of the Fryman Reserve

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Trust Board Welcomes Lyn Boone & Craig McDonald

Birding and Backpacking Hobbies, and a Wealth of Expertise

By Linda Habig, Trustee

In January 2011 the Trust welcomed two new Board members, each of whom brings a wealth of knowledge and experience relevant to the work of the Licking Land Trust, along with fresh perspectives and a whole lot of energy and enthusiasm.



Lyn Boone, upon joining the Board, said, "*The preservation of open space in the form of forests, wetlands, and farmland is a cause that's easy to get behind.*" And the Board is thrilled to have her join our cause! As a 25-year resident of Granville, and an avid birder, Lyn brings depth of experience in fund-raising and development, board engagement, and many historic and naturalist organizations and activities.

Lyn retired in 2010 from Denison University, where she served as Senior Development Officer for Foundation & Corporate Relations. Previously she lived in Oberlin, Ohio where she worked for Oberlin College.

In Central Ohio, Lyn has served as a volunteer on several organizational boards, including the Friends of the Granville Library (1990-94); the Welsh Hills School (1994-2000); and Audubon Ohio (1999-2006 and 2007-09). Currently she edits the

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Why I Placed a Conservation Easement on My Property

By Bill Custer, Licking Land Trust member, and easement grantor

Over the years, I've often been asked why I placed a conservation easement on my property. In 1997, I granted conservation easements to the Trust on my 2 properties in St. Albans and Granville Townships, and Pataskala, with conserved land totaling 75.4 acres.

Let me start by saying that preservation of farmland, open spaces and recreational wildlife habitat should be a concern to everyone. American farmland is in trouble. Much of our most productive land is being consumed by urban sprawl and patchwork development. Poorly

"Conservation easements are very flexible in what rights are retained and whether all or a few parts of the land are included within the easement"

planned urban sprawl threatens valuable farmland and the underlying resource of land ownership. A prime past example is that nearly 25% of farmland around the Cleveland-Akron area and nearly 15% of agricultural land around Youngstown-Warren was lost in four years, thus making the list of the top 20 most-threatened farming regions in the United States. Once gone it never comes back.

My first involvement with conservation easements was in Montana where I worked with the Montana Land Reliance and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to help protect sensitive migratory corridors contiguous to Yellowstone National Park. It was from that experience that I decided to incorporate a conservation easement for my own property.

My personal goal was to protect my land while still enjoying the aspects of ownership. Secondly, there were financial and tax planning benefits associated with conservation easements. I was also hoping to help bring attention to groups like the Licking Land Trust and their efforts to save our best land. Finally, I wanted my descendants to have the same enjoyment of the land as I do today.

A conservation easement is a great way to guarantee protection of an open space into perpetuity for future generations without giving up ownership rights or use of the property. Conservation easements are very flexible in what rights are retained and whether all or a few parts of the land are included within the easement. For instance, I retained several building sites in the event my son decides to live on the property one day.

Groups like the Licking Land Trust are working hard to protect this vital resource. Hopefully, more people will learn about conservation easements and how they can incorporate them into their family and personal planning.

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To illustrate this point, I recall a case that I worked on when I started as a Service Forester nearly six years ago. Landowners of more than 100 acres of prime real estate just outside of Delaware city limits, had the idea that they were preserving their woods simply by doing nothing in the way of proactive management. As a result of this misinterpreted idea of “preservation”, their woods had transformed into what might best be considered “Little Asia”. Nearly every Asiatic and Eurasian invasive species known in Ohio was ravaging this so called “natural” woodland. You name it - it was there – amur/bush honeysuckle, multiflora-rose, winged-euonymus burning-bush, privet, garlic mustard, European buckthorn and Japanese crabapple. The woodland canopy was dominated by native hardwoods; unfortunately the majority of them were ash, which happened to be infested with Asian emerald ash borer, and elm, then dying from Dutch elm disease. So this is what the forests of Ohio looked like when the early settlers arrived? I think not. I am pleased to say that these landowners came to realize what had gone wrong and learned the hard way why hands-off management, despite genuinely good intentions, is not the way to go.

Second only to land clearing and development, the biggest threat to Ohio’s woodlands is something that we all have a great deal of control over – invasive species. Whether a plant, pest or pathogen, invasive species are threatening the health and sustainability of our woodlands, and the problem is escalating due to new introductions. The only way to help mitigate the devastation they can wreak on the landscape is to aggressively eradicate invasive species as best we can. Plants such as garlic mustard, bush honeysuckle, privet, buckthorn, Japanese barberry, ailanthus and a variety of others should be targeted for control. Doing so will allow desirable native species, those that should be there, the chance to regenerate and perpetuate a healthy woodland ecosystem. Even though it may be a bit overwhelming in some instances, we can all partake in doing yeoman’s work to combat the spread of exotic invasives through education, switching to native species for our yard and gardens, and being proactive, not passive, when it comes to caring for our public and private green spaces.

Just as a good gardener knows to pull unwanted weeds from a flower or vegetable garden to enable desired plants to grow faster and healthier, so too must a good land steward apply the same philosophy when it comes to caring for woodland resources. Today, with the number of exotic species plaguing our forested landscapes, the need for implementation of sound, science-based forestry management is greater than ever. The Ohio Division of Forestry is here to help all woodland owners in Ohio realize all the potential benefits that their woods can provide for us and future generations to enjoy. Don’t let your woodland go unattended. Get out and take out that which does not belong, because no management is poor management. Simply put, our woodlands are far too important to ignore.

For more information on invasive species in Ohio and how you can control their spread in your woodland, please call toll-free 1-877-247-8733 or visit us on the web at www.ohiodnr.com/forestry. Here you will also find the contact information for ODNR Foresters who can help you combat unwanted plants, pests or pathogens that might be present in your woods.

Lyn Boone & Craig McDonald *Continued from Page 1*

newsletter for the East Central Ohio Audubon Chapter and serves on the newsletter and fund-raising committees for the Granville Historical Society (GHS). Her GHS service also includes twenty years’ involvement in the preservation of Granville’s Old Colony Burying Ground, and leadership of the Granville Oral History Project in 2000-02.

Lyn holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

Asked how land trusts could help the quality of life in central Ohio, Lyn responded, “Land trusts contribute to the cause of sustainability on a local and regional basis. Supporting our community land trust is something each of us can do as citizens. The quality of our lives in Central Ohio depends not only on employment opportunities, excellent schools, and pollution-free skies and waters, but also on the presence of open space for farming, wildlife, and recreation. Land trusts preserve such green space in perpetuity, assuring that later generations will have the same resources we do. That’s the essence of sustainability.”

Craig McDonald also brings to his new Board membership, a love of the outdoors, and a deep concern for preservation of our ecosystems and natural environment. As a science teacher, 8th Grade Team Coordinator, and Ski Club Advisor at Granville Middle School, Craig is also the owner and head coach at Always Forward CrossFit in Granville, Ohio. Craig has a B.S. in Environmental Science and a M.S. in Natural Resources from The Ohio State University. The Board is delighted that Craig has joined us!

“It is critical to our greater community that land be preserved for ecosystem function, habitat preservation, and the pure aesthetic qualities of traditional land use and wild spaces,” Craig responded when asked about devoting his time and talent to the Licking Land Trust. Craig’s experience with other land preservation, use, and management organizations will greatly help the Trust in its many projects. And his involvement with our youth as a teacher and in other sports and recreational capacities will help the Trust better focus on developing conservation awareness in the children of our communities.

Craig has volunteered his time and energy locally, serving on Granville Township’s Land Management Committee, founding and serving as Garden Coordinator at the Granville Elementary School-Community Partnership Garden, and guiding backpacking programs for over 10 years for the Granville Recreation District.

Craig resides in Granville with his wife Dianne and daughter Margaret. Craig and his family enjoy CrossFit which helps them train for rock climbing, backpacking in the mountains, ultra-running, and skiing.

Craig said that he values conservation benefits to our ecosystems, including riparian corridors and fresh water supplies, and added, “I also value wild places; those places where humans have not made a permanent “footprint” on the landscape. In short, wild places are, by definition, “free”. In a philosophical sense, wild places can therefore provide humans with a “benchmark” for understanding freedom. In a sense, wild, undeveloped land provides us a lens that we can use to better see and ultimately understand ourselves.”



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 Trustee Craig McDonald: craig@alwaysforwardcrossfit.com

Save the Dates!

Hike for members and guests
at Spring Valley Nature Preserve
“Take Dad on a Hike”
June 19 (2-3:30 p.m.)

Visit the Licking Land Trust Booth
at the HARTFORD FAIR in Croton
August 7 - 13

Trust Educates Youth at Dawes Arbor Day Festival



Candi Moore, Board Chair, with the Trust's interactive water conservation exhibit for youth, Dawes Arbor Day Festival.

By Wendy Bittel, *Licking Land Trust Administrator*

On April 30, one of the few sunny Saturdays this spring, the Trust was delighted to participate in the annual Dawes Arbor Day event held at the Dawes Arboretum in Newark. Dawes invited many community organizations to be a part of this special day celebrating trees and the great outdoors. We were fortunate to be located between the Energy Cooperative (the event sponsor), and other family-friendly organizations like the Works, the Newark Library, and the Licking County Mineral and Gem Society.

At the Trust's booth we introduced children to the concept of land management with an opportunity for them to develop "Dragonfly Pond". Using a felt board model, children were invited to lay out a new community but asked to save space for the resident nesting duck population. Other factors they were asked to consider included transportation time to and from work, pollution emission from factory and farm areas. The activity was designed to get kids thinking about land management and community design.

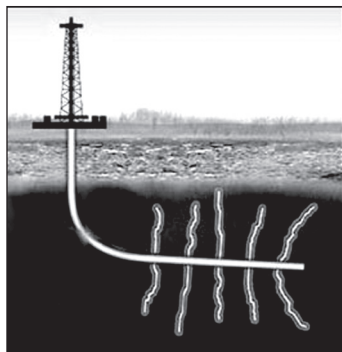
We also had a water conservation experiment for kids to explore. Using spray bottles each child

was invited to be the "rain" for three different environments, a parking lot, agricultural land, and a forested area. Each of these mock habitats had holes drilled into the bottom of the receptacle that allowed the water runoff to accumulate in a bucket below. As the day progressed, children observed how much more run off accumulated from the parking lot compared to the agricultural land and the forest. The goal of the experiment was to demonstrate how green space is a tool for water conservation. In addition to information on the Trust, parents were provided with a list of picture books, activity books, and websites geared for families which explore conservation issues in more depth.

Licking Land Trust Board members volunteered their time throughout the day, working with kids, talking to adults about the mission of the Trust, and making connections with landowners that might be interested in preserving their property in the future. We had about 250 children participate in our experiments, and Dawes estimates community attendance was between 2,500 and 3,000 people. It was a beautiful day to be outdoors meeting members of the community and sharing the goals of the Licking Land Trust.

Hydraulic Fracturing—Coming to a County Near You?

By Doug Spieles, *Trustee*



Recent developments in the natural gas industry are changing the political landscape of Ohio—and they may soon be changing the environmental landscape as well. An extraction technique called hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," has enabled the recovery of trillions of cubic feet of previously inaccessible natural gas from deep beds of shale. The fracking process was developed in Texas in the 1990s and has since been used in many locations across the country. In this technique, a well is drilled vertically until

it reaches a shale formation, and then is turned horizontally to run through the formation for many thousands of feet. Shale formations in Eastern and Central Ohio are currently being explored for extraction potential. While this is undeniably an opportunity for enhanced domestic energy production (and a potentially lucrative opportunity for landowners), it does raise numerous environmental concerns. Fracking involves high-pressure fracturing of the shale formation into which the well has been drilled, followed by the injection of a fluid to keep the fractures from sealing when gas is extracted. Fracking fluid has been shown to contain known carcinogens. In many cases, the fluid is not completely recovered from the well. When it is recovered, the fluid is not always disposed of in ways that promote human and environmental health. A major concern is that the use and disposal of fracking fluid is exempt from the Safe Drinking Water Act. In fact, drillers aren't even required to disclose the chemicals they are using. To date, there have been over 1,000 claims of aquifer contamination or other threats to public health as a result of hydraulic fracturing, though the oil and gas industry has asserted that these allegations are unfounded. The controversy was brought to the attention of the general public by the 2010 documentary film *Gasland*, written and directed by Josh Fox.

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Your Land Trust at Work

2011 Projects of the Licking Land Trust

Conservation plaque on the right is being installed on Trust-conserved properties.

Project	Board Contact
Improve Spring Valley surface water: with Granville Township, restore Salt Run waterway to more natural state (Spring Valley Nature Preserve), using Ohio EPA grant funds obtained June 2010	Doug Spieles
Develop a capital campaign to raise funds for stewardship and defense reserve requirements for national accreditation	Entire Board
Apply for national accreditation: finalize standardization of procedures and documentation	Mike Mickelson
Participate in and provide educational youth activities for Dawes Arboretum Arbor Day Festival in April	Wendy Bittel
Educate and inform the public about the Trust through staffing an information booth at the Hartford Fair in August	Larry Bicking
Identify and mark all Trust-conserved properties. (Boundaries located by use of GPS coordinates. Attractive conservation plaques installed, with property owners' permission.)	Mike Mickelson Craig McDonald
Inspect all Trust easements and properties, annually: 1100 acres/26 properties	Craig McDonald
Increase general membership: provide speaker presentations to affinity and community organizations	Linda Habig
Increase corporate membership: approach Licking County businesses and corporations	Linda Habig
Increase conserved acreage: communicate with interested landowners (currently 20 prospects)	Candi Moore/ Greg Sharkey/Don Wiper

Anyone who would like to help with any of the above projects should contact the person indicated.

The Trust welcomes all volunteers!



Board

Candi Moore, *Chairman*

Doug Spieles, *Vice Chair & Secretary*

Mark Roth, *Treasurer*

Larry Bicking

Pat Deering

Mike Mickelson

Lyn Boone

Linda Habig

Greg Sharkey

Bernie Brush

Craig McDonald

Don Wiper

Wendy Bittel, *Office Administrator*

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

Renew or Join the Licking Land Trust for 2011! OR Make an Additional Contribution!

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

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Membership Levels

☐ Student: \$10

☐ Business or Organization: \$150

☐ Individual: \$50

☐ Conservator: \$250

☐ Family: \$50

☐ Steward: \$500

☐ Additional contribution amount: \$ _____

PLEASE DETACH AND MAIL THIS COMPLETED FORM TO
THE LICKING LAND TRUST, P.O. BOX 196, GRANVILLE, OH 43023,
ALONG WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES OR CONTRIBUTION.

Please make checks payable to "Licking Land Trust".

OR, ACCESS THE TRUST'S WEBSITE TO RENEW, JOIN, OR CONTRIBUTE ONLINE.
WWW.LICKINGLANDTRUST.ORG

Hydraulic Fracturing *Continued from Page 3*

This year, Governor Kasich has promoted hydraulic fracturing in Ohio's state parks. Two pieces of legislation that would allow leasing of state lands for oil and gas production, H.B. 133 and S.B. 103, are currently under consideration by the Ohio General Assembly. Additionally, many private landowners are being offered lease agreements to allow hydraulic fracturing on their land. Clearly, this issue deserves our vigilance, for it will only become more important for Ohio over the next few years.

For more information on hydraulic fracturing, we recommend the U.S. EPA website at water.epa.gov/type/groundwater/uic/class2/hydraulicfracturing/

The Board of the Licking Land Trust is following developments in well drilling and fracking issues. Through its annual inspections of conserved properties, the Trust monitors landowner compliance with all easement requirements, including any limitations on or prohibitions of drilling and related activity.

Denison Students Josh Howington and Thomas Schultz contributed to this article. The author, Doug Spieles, is professor of environmental studies at Denison University, where he teaches courses on ecosystem management and wetland ecology.