



Licking Land TRUST



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

Five New Members Bring Diverse Talents to Board

By Tiffany Edwards, OCVN (Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist) and Licking Land Trust Volunteer

This spring the Trust welcomed its largest group of incoming board members to date - a group of five community leaders whose strengths encompass the fields of law, politics, environmental science and conservation.

"We are thrilled to have this outstanding group with their

significant talents and depth of experience bring their energy and knowledge to the Trust's mission and board initiatives," said board chair Doug Spieles.

Raising the total number of board members to 14, the new members are Shana Byrd, director of land conservation at Dawes Arboretum;

Mary Fitch, trails administrator for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources; Randall "Rip" Ripley, political science professor at The Ohio State University; Rebecca Swab, director of restoration ecology at The Wilds; and Michael Whitehead, attorney with Reese, Pyle, Drake & Meyer.

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Fun, Fundraising, Farms, and Food August 19

*By Linda Habig and
Jeremy King, Trustees*

The excitement and fun return on August 19 for the Trust's second annual "Farm to Fork" event. And you can be a part of this fun, tasty, joyful summer evening, celebrating the work of the Licking Land Trust and raising funds for conservation efforts. We suggest you plan this evening with your friends, get the date onto your calendar, and purchase your tickets! (See below for ticket information.) We can think of no better way to highlight the work of the Trust than by tasting locally-sourced food and drink with our members and supporters in the historic ballroom of the Granville Inn. And the silent auction promises to provide great entertainment and the opportunity to bid on a vast selection of gift certificates for local businesses, weekend getaway packages, treasures from local artists, and more.



*Buy tickets while still available.
2015 event was sold out!*

Not only will we be celebrating our collective work to protect land in and around Licking County, but we're also taking this opportunity to focus on our ongoing efforts to raise vital funds for the stewardship of the land we oversee. It is through our stewardship that we ensure conservation in perpetuity.

Please join us for an amazing evening highlighting the Trust, sustainable farming, the bounty of local agriculture, and the relationships that continue to bloom in our community between farms, restaurants, producers, and conservation loving consumers like you and me.

Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased online at: <http://www.lickinglandtrust.org/upcoming-events> or by contacting our office at 740-587-4104.

Five New Members Bring Diverse Talents to Board

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SHANA BYRD

Whether managing nearly 2,000 acres as Dawes Arboretum's director of land conservation or working to preserve property in her own community, Shana Byrd has a passion for conservation. She hopes to share her expertise and enthusiasm as part of the Trust's board.

"I hope to offer support in monitoring properties, working with landowners considering partnership, educating the public on the value of our work and inspiring individuals to donate resources," she said. "I'm also interested to learn more about how I can best be of service based on needs of our community."

Shana studied biology at Ohio University and earned a master's degree in zoology from Miami University. Before accepting her position at Dawes, she worked with the Sustainable Forestry Program of Rural Action and directed the restoration ecology program at The Wilds. She currently serves on the Ohio Invasive Plant Council Board of Directors, where she raises awareness about native plant conservation.

Recent residents of Granville, Shana and her family also own a 10-acre farm in Athens County, where she helped secure adjacent property for preservation.

Shana reflected, "The land trust's



relevance of today helps endear communities to their natural assets; the relevance of tomorrow will be gratitude of future generations."

Mary was instrumental in obtaining a grant to facilitate the permanent protection of the Spring Valley Nature Preserve, and in obtaining a subsequent Surface Water Improvement Fund (SWIF) grant to fund the restoration of Spring Valley's Salt Run stream.

"The SWIF grant process was extremely competitive. We had a lot of wonderful minds working on that project," she said. "I have always enjoyed working with the Trust board and supporting the mission, so I was honored to be invited back."

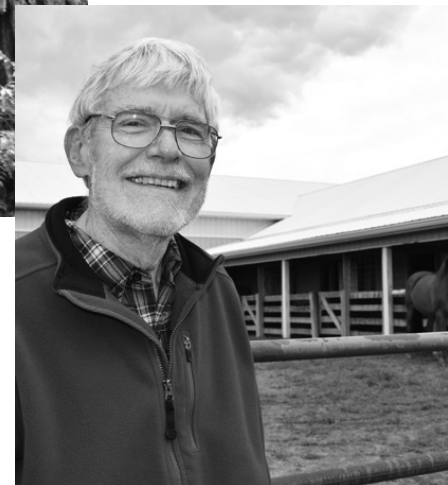
In her spare time, Mary enjoys kayaking and biking. Her love of open spaces extends to an appreciation of landscape paintings, and hiking to elevated places to reach panoramic views.



MARY FITCH

A 20-year veteran of Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Mary Fitch is a registered landscape architect who has been involved in park design and also has experience with grant writing and administration. She successfully served on the Trust's board in the past and returns after a six-year absence.

Mary left the board unexpectedly in 2010 due to her late husband's sudden illness. During her tenure,



RANDALL "RIP" RIPLEY

A political scientist and a public official, Randall "Rip" Ripley has both studied and played a role in setting public policy.

A political science professor at OSU since 1967, his teaching and research have focused on American and

Canadian politics, including domestic, foreign and defense policy. Although he retired from The Ohio State University in 2005, he continues to teach three courses a year.

Rip has also served on the Pataskala planning and zoning commission since 2002. As a commissioner, he strives to obtain a balance between conservation and rational land use. Early in his career as a commissioner he helped develop the city's comprehensive plan. In 2001 he was heavily involved in a successful campaign to overturn a new zoning law passed by city council that would have been detrimental to open land preservation.

"I am interested in finding land owners who have property that would be valuable additions to the Licking Land Trust and explaining the program to them," Rip said. "In general, a lot of people don't think about conservation, or they don't know what the options are."

Rip and his wife Grace, have lived on a 28-acre farm in Pataskala since 2000. They share the property with several cats, a dog and three horses. Lovers of the outdoors, they frequently hike and ride horses at state parks and trails near their home.

REBECCA SWAB

As a child, Rebecca Swab frequently went camping and hiking with her family. Her father's deep interest in



plants soon became her own and she decided to make ecology her calling. She earned a master's degree in natural resources from The Ohio

State University and a doctorate in ecology from University of California Riverside.

Currently director of restoration ecology at The Wilds, Rebecca hopes her environmental expertise will benefit the Trust in decision making, particularly in prioritizing ecological services or particular species.

"Given urban sprawl and development as population grows, having organizations that work to preserve green space within these areas is essential. These areas are valuable for native species, provide important environmental services, and can provide recreational opportunities, both locally and nationally," she said.

Teaching others about ecology has been a continued interest of hers.

She enjoys teaching children as well as older students and is supervising seven college graduates at The Wilds this summer through its apprenticeship program.

MICHAEL WHITEHEAD

Michael Whitehead has fond memories of the Licking County farmhouse he visited as child. His father grew up on the property, as had his family for generations before, back to the 1830s.

"You'd see horses running down the road. It wasn't asphalt; it was chip and tar," he recalled. "When you're a kid at the farm, you've got creeks to throw rocks in, get muddy, woods to run around in."

Those ties to Licking County eventually lured the Jamestown, New York, native to place roots in Ohio. He attended law school at The Ohio State University, became a partner with the law firm of Reese, Pyle, Drake & Meyer, and recently restored the historic family farmhouse, where he has now settled with his wife and three sons.

Michael said he looks forward to putting his experience in real estate law and background in conservation easements to use through his work with the Trust.

"I am happy to assist with property owners interested in working with the Trust," he said, "to address and solve legal concerns or issues."

Certified as an OCVN in 2014, Tiffany Edwards' professional career has included stints as a newspaper reporter, public relations officer, English instructor and paralegal.

Tax Incentives For Land Conservation Through Easement Donation

By Lori Fuhrer, Trustee

In 2015, Congress enacted an enhanced federal tax incentive for conservation easement donations, one of the most powerful conservation measures in decades. First enacted temporarily in 2006, then made permanent in 2015, the conservation easement tax incentive is a powerful tool that helps Americans conserve their land voluntarily, by affording them significant federal tax savings.

If you own land with important natural, agricultural or historic resources, donating a conservation easement can be a means of protecting the land you love, while gaining significant federal income tax savings for up to 16 years. Here's how it works.



In order for a conservation easement donation to qualify for the charitable deduction on the landowner's federal income tax return, it must be voluntarily and permanently donated to a land trust or government agency, and it must benefit the public by protecting important conservation resources. The landowner who donates the qualifying easement can typically take a deduction of 50% of adjusted gross income for the year of the donation and for each of an additional 15 years, up to the full amount of the fair market value of the donated easement.

Easement donations by qualifying farmers and ranchers may qualify for a tax deduction of up to 100% of adjusted gross income during the 16-year period (up to the fair market value of the easement). A farmer or rancher is someone who receives more than 50% of his or her gross income from "the trade or business of farming," as defined in the regulations. For such an easement to qualify, it must contain a restriction requiring that the land remain "available for agriculture."

In addition to income tax benefits, conservation easements can assist landowners who want to reduce estate taxes. A conservation easement may be beneficial to estate tax planning in two ways. First, it can reduce the value of the estate to be taxed, because the existence of the easement typically lowers the property value. Second, the Internal Revenue Code provides heirs with an estate tax exclusion of up to 40% (capped at \$500,000) of the encumbered value of land protected by a "qualified conservation easement."

If you would like to learn more about conservation or agricultural easement donation and whether it might be an option for land you want to preserve for future generations, please contact the Licking Land Trust. Consult your accountant or attorney to learn more about how available tax incentives may benefit you.

Save the Date!

Licking Land Trust Events

Aug. 19: Farm to Fork – tasting and silent auction
(see article)

Sept. 17: Farmland Preservation Celebration
(tentative date – watch for details)

Regional Events - Land and Conservation Focused

Dawes Arboretum (dawesarb.org)

All summer: Camps for kids ages 6-14

Aug. 27: Special Event: Ohio Sustainable Landscapes Symposium

Columbus Audubon (columbusaudubon.org)

Aug 4: "An evening with Doug Tallamy" author of Bringing Nature Home. 7-9 p.m.

OEFFA (oeffa.org)

All summer: Ohio Sustainable Farm Tour and Workshop Series

Technology Expert Continues as Trust Volunteer from the Blue Ridge Mountains

By Linda Habig, Trustee

"Considering that I am the son of a farmer, you could say I was born with an interest in land conservation", said Tom Shafer, who has tirelessly and repeatedly donated his technology expertise to the Trust for more than 10 years, while living in Granville. As a member and volunteer of the Trust, Tom created the customized Microsoft Access database that houses all of the Trust's membership records. And every year for the past decade, he has cheerfully updated the programming of the database to provide current year formats and query functions for reporting, member solicitation and mailings.

Tom and his wife Peggy recently moved from Granville to Asheville, North Carolina, but Tom has graciously and generously agreed to continue with update and maintenance of the database. The Trust is hugely grateful! Tom's ongoing volunteerism for the Trust reflects his appreciation of land stewardship and his Ohio roots. Commenting on how that translates to North Carolina, Tom said, "I've started networking with groups who are trying to protect western North Carolina from damage caused by fracking, as well as protecting tributaries from coal ash spills. There are several state and local groups, in addition to the North

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	Jodi Melfi Design
Aramar, Inc.	John Hinderer Honda
BFK Foundation	Kussmaul Gallery
CS Construction Group Ltd.	Licking Cty. Soil and Water
Davis Construction	Conservation District
Dawes Arboretum	Park National Bank
Granville Garden Club	Park Trails/MI Homes
Granville Milling Co.	River Road Coffee House
Granville Township	T.J. Evans Foundation
Granville Veterinary Clinic	Tecumseh Land Trust

Carolina Chapter of the Sierra Club, who are very active. It is very important that towns, cities and counties have their own voice to protect their natural resources, and where necessary work together to build alliances to support each other."

Reflecting on his long and varied career in information technology, Tom said, "I moved from heads-down technical work to project management, with a few years also as a trainer and an advanced computing technologies guru. I've worked at Huntington Banks, Nationwide Insurance, JPMorgan Chase, and OSU, in addition to work with non-profits." About 10 years ago, he developed an interest in acting, first for film and later for stage. Over the past several years, Tom has participated in local independent film and theater, as well as larger Hollywood productions that were filming in Ohio and surrounding states.

The Trust hopes Tom enjoys the breathtaking beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains, where he now lives, and continues to thank him for his valuable contributions to the Trust and conservation in central Ohio!



Tom Shafer with his wife Peggy

Licking Land Trust Reaches Out to Jefferson Township

By Bill Habig, Licking Land Trust Volunteer

One of the new directions being pursued by the Trust is community conservation, emphasizing collaboration with organizations with goals related to those of the Trust. With about 30 land trusts in Ohio, there's loads of opportunity for the Trust to reach out to neighboring trusts, explore synergies, and share information with them. One such discussion is currently underway with the Trust's close neighbor, Jefferson Township Land Conservation Association, in Franklin County.

Created to protect rural beauty and important natural features of Jefferson Township, the Jefferson Township Land Conservation Association holds 312 acres of conservation easements. It is a public-private partnership sponsored and endorsed by the township government. Its board is comprised primarily of individual property owners who are not affiliated with the township government, as well as three township appointees.

Currently the Association is exploring whether to stay independent or affiliate with the Franklin County Soil and Water District, Licking Land Trust or some other land trust. At the invitation of the Association's board members Steve Wittmann, Ellen Tripp, Sally Crane, and Linda Mosbacher, Trust board members Doug Spieles, Candi Moore, and member/volunteer Bill Habig met together on two occasions. The group discussed common conservation goals, challenges to land conservation, and possible synergies and strategies. One topic under ongoing discussion is whether an affiliation would be mutually beneficial. This could range from the Trust simply providing expertise and advice, to a full-blown merger between the Trust and the Association.

As with Licking County, Jefferson Township's open spaces and riparian corridors are its treasures. Although continually subject to growth and development pressure from Gahanna and Columbus, Jefferson Township has retained lower development density and more open space. This is largely due to the township's unique organizational structure, established to protect it from annexation; in 1987 the Jefferson Water and Sewer



Rocky Fork Creek, Jefferson Township

District was created to provide water and sewer services to township residents independently from municipal systems, resulting in lower density residential growth without extensive annexation.

Similar to the Trust's focus on protection of Raccoon Creek and its watershed, the Association feels that the most important areas in need of protection in Jefferson Township are the Rocky Fork Creek and Blacklick Creek waterway corridors. A related area of emphasis is their state-designated Scenic Byways.

The Trust and the Association share a passion for conservation of greenspace and waterways, and will continue to share ideas and neighborly collaboration.

Bill Habig is the former Executive Director of Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission.

Trust Events Connect People with Land

By Jim Bidigare, Trustee

Education and outreach are important missions of the Trust, for we are protecting open space for the public good. This is at the heart of connecting people to the land. Each year, the Trust offers educational and recreational programs on its protected properties or in conjunction with other relevant events.

This spring, Denison associate professor of biology Andrew McCall, assisted by his botanist wife Emily, led a group of about 30 nature-loving members and friends of the Trust on a wildflower hike at Spring Valley Nature Preserve. The 46-acre preserve, named after the former pool used by generations of Granville families, now includes beautiful wooded acreage surrounding the former pool site. Andy's perspective as a plant evolutionary ecologist was particularly interesting. A smaller but equally energetic group, led by Trust Chair and Denison professor Doug Spieles, also hiked the Preserve during Granville's annual "Turn Your Screen Off" week.

The Trust hosted a booth at the annual Dawes Arboretum Arbor Day celebration in April. This event was a great opportunity for Trust board members to meet attendees and answer any questions about the Trust, or to speak with land owners informally about the process for preserving farmland and open space. Board members Lyn Boone and Doug Spieles, and Trust staff member Amy Mock distributed bags of milkweed seeds and Trust materials, and led a children's craft activity of stamping animal and flower shapes. Enthusiasm and attendance were high, right up until the afternoon rains started.

A significant undertaking of the Trust in connecting people and community to farm land is the 2nd annual Farm to Fork event, a festive tasting and silent auction to be held August 19 at the Granville Inn. While raising funds for the

Trust's conservation efforts, the event also highlights local food and drink, and provides a setting – the beautifully renovated Granville Inn – for members and friends to get together to celebrate efforts to preserve open space. (See separate article in this newsletter for details and ticket information.)

A collaborative trio of Licking County Soil & Water Conservation District, Licking County Farm Bureau, and the Trust are planning a farmland preservation celebration for mid-September. The idea is to host the event at the exquisite 93-acre farm of Kayla Hughes; the Trust holds an agricultural easement on this farm in Newton Township, where Kayla's sheep happily graze on rolling pasture land. Ideas include a demonstration of shepherding by dog. More information will be coming soon as a date, activities, and location are finalized.

The Trust offers a slideshow presentation that board members would be happy to present to interested groups. All interested persons or organizations are urged to contact the Trust if they would like to arrange for a general program about the Trust or for a landowner seminar.



Andy McCall leading wildflower hike at Spring Valley Nature Preserve



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Newsletter

Linda Habig, *editor*

Jodi Melfi Design, *layout*

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.

Join The Licking Land Trust

Renew your membership, join, or contribute
online at www.lickinglandtrust.org



Donate
securely
online.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Membership Levels:

☐ Student: \$10

☐ Business/Org.: \$150

☐ Leader: \$1,000-2,499

☐ Individual: \$50

☐ Conservator: \$250-499

☐ Partner: \$2,500-4,999

☐ Family: \$50

☐ Steward: \$500-999

☐ Visionary: \$5,000+

Stewardship & Easement Defense Fund \$ _____

Detach and mail this completed
form with your check to:
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