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WISDOM AND ADVICE FROM LONG-TIME TRUST MEMBERS

By Rip Ripley, Trustee

As the Trust approaches its 30th anniversary in 2019, we are reflecting on our membership -- the people who have energized and supported the Trust's conservation efforts and successes. More than 75 current members have belonged to the Trust for 20 years or more since its early days as the Granville Land Conservancy, and many hundreds more have joined as our organization broadened its geographic scope, reflected in its name change to the Licking Land Trust. And the scope and credibility of the Trust expanded even further when national accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance was achieved two years ago.

To gain some perspective on the accomplishments of the Trust and its evolution, I interviewed Ken and Carol Apacki, and Jurgen and Kirsten Pape. All four have been active and imaginative supporters of the Trust for the last two to three decades, and are advocates of related environmental causes, both local and

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top photo, Ken and Carol Apacki
lower photo, Jurgen and Kirsten Pape



MEET CAROLYN MESTEMAKER, OUR SUMMER INTERN

By Lyn Boone, Board Treasurer

Carolyn Mestemaker is a young woman who knows her own mind, and she knows where she's going as well. Along the way, she's lending a hand – and her impressive skills – to the Licking Land Trust.

A rising sophomore at the University of South Carolina, the environmental studies major from

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TRUST CREW AND CANINE BATTLE INVASIVES AT FRYMAN RESERVE

By Carolyn Mestemaker, Trust summer intern

As the Trust's summer intern, I was eager to get my hands dirty and my feet on some conserved property to begin really experiencing what a land trust does. My first chance came on May 23rd, when I, along with board members Lyn Boone, Doug Spieles, and Jeremy King geared up with gloves and shears to battle the invasive garlic mustard that was happily growing within the Fryman Reserve, a Trust-owned and protected property off of Goose Lane in Granville. I brought along my trusted and ole faithful dog, Ziggy, to add some tail wags to our task. Garlic mustard is non-native to North America and is believed to have been brought over from Europe and parts of Asia for medicinal purposes and food. This plant is self-fertile and able to spread rapidly over a short period of time, so after several clearings opened up within the Fryman Reserve, it grew with haste.

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HEALTH CHECKUP FOR FORESTS

Five-year-old son of ecologist Mom asks the right question!

By Rebecca Swab, Trustee

Whenever I visit a forest with my five-year old, Brock, who considers me a “tree doctor,” he asks me, “Is this forest healthy, Dr. Swab?” While this may seem cute and bring a smile to your face, it’s an important question to those managing forests. Determining the ‘health’ of a forest can help decide how well forests are recovering from disturbances.

The RUFA, or Rapid Upland Forest Assessment, was developed by researcher Dr. David Burke and others from Holden

Arboretum looking for a quick way to evaluate forest integrity. Spending one hour per site, a relatively inexperienced ecologist can score its health on a scale of 0-15. This is much quicker than intensive forestry surveys which take experienced foresters hours or days per site. RUFA uses measurements such as the number of large trees, the number of species of trees, shrubs, and herbs, the percentage of tree seedling cover, and whether invasive plants or earthworms are present.

It is a little known secret that almost every earthworm in the northern United States and Canada came from elsewhere. Most of our native earthworms were wiped out by glaciers during the ice age. While gardeners and farmers love earthworms, in forests their invasion is destructive; they break up leaf litter quickly, removing layers essential to many forest bugs and animals, and creating conditions good for invasive plants. Therefore, the absence of earthworms makes for a healthier forest.

Scores can be calculated yearly and compared to see the trend of a forest through time. Information about which areas are problematic for each forest—invasive species, sapling regeneration, herbs—is helpful in deciding which management strategies might improve the health of any particular forest. While the Trust has not yet used RUFA data in evaluating its conserved properties, it’s a tool for future consideration.

Just this year I used RUFA at The Wilds to compare different aged forests. Not surprisingly, those forests which were unmined were healthier, with scores around 12, as compared with younger, reclaimed forests, some of which scored as low as 3. RUFA is a great tool to help assess forest health relatively quickly and easily!

RAPID UPLAND FOREST ASSESSMENT (RUFA) CRITERIA

- 1 At least 10 individual trees
- 2 At least 3 species of tree
- 3 Presence of snag
- 4 Presence of woody debris
- 5 Light gap (created by fallen tree/limb)
- 6 At least 30 individual shrubs/saplings
- 7 At least 3 species shrubs/saplings
- 8 At least 50% tree seedling ground cover
- 9 At least 3 species tree seedlings
- 10 At least 4 species herbs
- 11 Absence of invasive shrub or vine
- 12 Low abundance of invasive shrub/vine
- 13 Absence of invasive herb
- 14 Low abundance of invasive herb
- 15 No visible evidence of past human activity



- A healthy forest at The Wilds. Scored 12 out of 15. Was not mined and has large trees, open understory, and native species.

And my budding environmentalist Brock, with the wisdom of a five-year-old, recently added, “If you got to a forest and it wasn’t healthy you could park your car and get out and do some things to make it healthy.”

Rebecca Swab, PhD, is the Director of Restoration Ecology at The Wilds in Cumberland, Ohio.



An unhealthy forest at The Wilds. Scored 3 out of 15. Dominated by invasive plant species (mostly Autumn olive), has few large trees, and minimal diversity.

“FARM TO FORK” AUGUST 17: THE TRADITION CONTINUES

Buy tickets now – past events sold out!

LOCAL will highlight The Trust’s 4th annual “Farm to Fork” event on Friday, August 17. Local foods, local experiences, local art, and local businesses will be the focus of this year’s fundraising festivities. The tradition builds each year with camaraderie, silent auction fun, and a colorful and delectable presentation of locally-sourced foods.

You can be a part of this fun, tasty, joyful summer event celebrating the work of the

Trust and raising funds for conservation efforts. Plan this evening with your friends, get the date onto your calendar, and purchase your tickets! (See below for ticket information.) There’s no better way to highlight the work of the Trust than by joining us in the historic ballroom of the Granville Inn.

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



MONROE & JERSEY TOWNSHIP LAND OWNERS CONSIDER CONSERVATION

The Trust and Licking County Soil and Water partner to educate and inform

By Jim Bidigare, Board Chair

Many farmers and land owners in Monroe and Jersey Townships are seeing New Albany's robust commercial development galloping towards them. They are wondering what will become of their farms and the rural character of that part of the county. Licking Land Trust in cooperation with Licking County Soil and Water Conservation District invited owners of 25 acres or more in Western Licking County to attend informational meetings in order to help



Farm lands in conservation in southern Licking County

them understand land preservation programs. In the past several months more than 35 people have attended the three meetings held.

In these evening meetings land owners learned about some of the options to consider when planning for the future: to pass farmland on to children, to permanently preserve farmland or greenspace for future generations with conservation or agricultural easements, and to protect important natural elements of a property even if the owner is planning to eventually sell to a developer.

The presentations have been well-received by those attending, in large part because

the consideration of the future of a property brings many important issues to the fore. These can include whether the owner has children who are interested in farming, how much the owner is counting on the proceeds from a sale for retirement, how long farmland has been in the same family, and what legacy the owner wishes to leave.

During the presentation, Pat Deering, Farmland Preservation Coordinator & Information Specialist at Licking County Soil and Water described options and processes for property owners to consider. For example, the Ohio Department of Agriculture has programs that pay property owners to put a conservation or agricultural easement on their land. Pat also shared her experiences with her family farm and how her family planned for the future.

Land owners at the meetings also heard from a representative of the Trust, which can offer more flexibility and quicker turnaround to owners who can donate an easement. The Trust is encouraging property owners to preserve open space or farmland through whatever program best suits them, whether through national or state programs, or through the Trust.

As development pressure increases, so does the commercial value of land. This makes it more imperative for the Trust to conserve properties, but also makes it a more difficult financial decision for the land owner. The Prospective Properties Committee of the Trust is always interested in discussing options with property owners interested in conservation, and land owners should feel free to contact the Trust to begin a discussion. Preserving rural character is a significant goal.

WISDOM AND ADVICE FROM LONG-TIME TRUST MEMBERS

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national. I also wanted their advice on how the Trust could be even more effective in the future.

Both Ken and Jurgen were board members of the Trust in its early years. Ken was a founding member and served from 1989 to 1993, while Jurgen served from 1996 to 2000. The Apackis and Papes are ardent environmentalists and see the Trust as a central part of infrastructure that supports sound environmental policy, sensible development, and preservation of green space in Licking County. All commented that the Trust cannot stand alone but needs to link with other public and private organizations that are pursuing some of the same values.

Both the Apackis and Papes suggested that the Trust identify logical allies in the conservation cause in a broad sense. The Trust and other relevant groups should have discussions that would result in coordinated campaigns on specific issues. Issues for such collaboration could include (a) questioning or challenging fracking of oil and gas wells, (b) urging smart planning in development strategies, (c) supporting public agencies and entities that are legislating or making decisions about parks, housing development, public gardens, alternative energy generation such as solar, preservation of wildlife habitat, and identification of threats to orderly promotion of conservation.

The group also urged the Trust to take various actions in pursuit of its values. These actions could enhance the public standing of the Trust and increase its impact on the conservation effort broadly conceived, and encourage more people to join the Trust as members. Specific suggestions included the following:

- Ally with other organizations, both public and private, whose values are similar.
- Explore with public utilities the possibility of publicizing the Trust.
- Create a flyer including information on the Trust for inclusion in material given to new residents in Licking County.
- Increase publicity for the Trust with the various chambers of commerce in Licking County, and in local newspapers in Newark, Pataskala, and Granville.
- Expand opportunities for local high school students and Denison students to work on various projects to further the mission of the Trust.
- Build relationships with a variety of public bodies in Licking County: county commissioners, township trustees, city and village officials, and federal agencies with local presence.

It was energizing and informative for me to hear such a wealth of advice from these long-time members who continue to advocate preservation of our green spaces, wide-open land, and agricultural acreage. The Trust board will also welcome the many ideas shared and consider all as it develops ongoing strategies and objectives. Many thanks to Ken, Carol, Jurgen, and Kirsten!

TRUST CREW AND CANINE BATTLE INVASIVES AT FRYMAN RESERVE

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Our goal was to snip off as many tops of the garlic mustard as possible before the plants could seed within the next couple weeks. On average, one garlic mustard plant can produce 22 siliques, each of which can contain as many as 28 seeds. That means that about 600 seeds can be dispersed by just one of the plants, so it was crucial to eradicate the plants before they could spread.

The Fryman property has a beautiful stream running through it, with a couple of merry waterfalls adding to the ambiance. Ziggy splashed through the water as the crew hopped stone-to-stone following the trail. As we went, we snipped and pulled every garlic mustard plant our eyes spotted, and then proceeded to collect the debris into bags. It was a daunting task with poison ivy and brambles every which way, yet the crew prevailed. No garlic mustard plant was to evade us. After a couple hours, our bags were full of defeated invasive plants and the summer heat was beginning to find its way through the canopy.



On the battlefield with garlic mustard

We said our goodbyes, but Doug noticed me searching for my keys around the car. After a few more minutes of looking, he heroically offered to drive Ziggy and me home to retrieve my spare keys. Once back at Fryman, I moved my van and found that the missing keys were hidden under it in the tall grass. Oops. Thanks again Doug.

Fun Fact: Dish soap cuts right through poison ivy! We all got by itch-free.

POTENTIAL UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE IN LICKING COUNTY

Farmland preservation purchase in 1856 was first step
By Richard Shiels, PhD, Associate Professor - The Ohio State University

Licking County is conceivably three years away from having a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage site – the first in Ohio. The United States Department of Interior posted an official notice in the Federal Register on May 25, 2018, stating

that the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks will be the next U.S. nomination to UNESCO for inscription. The nomination will include Hopewell Culture National Historical Park and Fort Ancient in addition to the Great Circle and Octagon Earthworks in Heath and Newark.

The initiative of kindred spirits has made this possible. Whereas ancestors of today's American Indians built geometric earthen

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MEET CAROLYN MESTEMAKER, TRUST'S SUMMER INTERN

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Granville is a Dean's List student, a Woodrow Scholarship recipient, and a participant in the Green Scholar program, a service and sustainability program at U.S.C. She's an athlete as well, as a member of the USC Scuba Club and Swim Club.

But these collegiate honors and pursuits don't fully describe the student who is volunteering her time this summer in an internship with the Trust. Instead, to know Carolyn, one needs to focus on her "can-do" attitude, her enthusiastic commitment to the environment, and her willingness to serve.

The 2017 Granville High School graduate took the initiative late last winter to contact the Trust and offer her services as an intern for the summer. For the Trust, the proposal turned out to be a godsend at a time when the organization is busier than ever. Carolyn has taken on multiple aspects of the Trust's work with confidence and an ever-present eagerness to learn, and she's making good use of her interest and experience in environmental science and sustainability. An example is her hands-on assistance combating invasive species, featured in her accompanying article.



Carolyn and Ziggy

But it's not all field work. Carolyn is getting a broad range of experience in tasks such as updating property documentation in the Trust office; assisting with plans and donor contacts for "Farm-to-Fork," the organization's summer fundraiser; initiating a collaboration with Granville High School students; and managing the Trust's social media. There's plenty to do, and board members as well as staff feel they truly "hit the jackpot" when she offered her help for the summer.

What's in the future for Carolyn? "After college," she says, "I've considered both the military and the Peace Corps. My uncle was in the Peace Corps in Africa, and possibly I'd like to serve in that part of the world too." Wherever she ends up, we know that Carolyn will make exceptional contributions, and she'll do it sustainably! In the meantime, we're proud to have Carolyn as part of the team at the Licking Land Trust.

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enclosures in nearly 600 sites across Ohio nearly 2000 years ago, the Great Circle and Octagon earthworks are among a tiny number that remain. Citizens of Newark acted to preserve the Great Circle in 1856 by purchasing the farmland that included this enclosure in order to preserve it. Later, in 1893, Newark voters approved a tax levy to purchase the farmland that included the Octagon – and did so by a 3-1 vote.

For more information,
visit www.worldheritageohio.org.

Dr. Shiels, who is Founding Director of the Newark Earthworks Center at The Ohio State University, and an officer of World Heritage Ohio, has been involved for 17 years in a multi-partner effort to have the Earthworks named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. He presented a session on the earthworks in spring 2017 as part of the Trust's "Read for the Land" series of events.



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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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