

Ohio Landscapes



The Missing Link

New Acquisition Will Help Conserve Grand River

BY JESSICA KEITH

My mind tells me it's too early in the year to spot a bear, but my eyes scan the landscape anyway. I'm exploring a tract of land in Ashtabula County that The Nature Conservancy plans to add to its Morgan Swamp Preserve—part of an area where bear sightings have been on the rise in recent years—and I'm eager to have a chance glimpse of the creature.

Extirpated from Ohio by 1850, black bears are slowly returning to the state, both in the northeast and southeast, where woodlands are abundant enough for the animals to successfully cross the border from neighboring states.

"It's a perfect example of why we need large, contiguous habitat," says Northeast Ohio Preserve Manager Karen Adair. "And why connecting Morgan Swamp to other conservation lands is so important," she adds, referring to a string of protected lands just south of the property.

Let's Make a Deal

It's early March, and I've accompanied Adair and Director of Protection Terry Seidel to explore the 215-acre tract of land—long identified as an important piece in the region's protection puzzle—where an Environmental Hazard Assessment is being performed.

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director's message

The Value of Conservation

The economic slowdown has brought into sharp focus those things that are priorities because they sustain us and those things that are nice to have but that we can do without. Despite these troubling times, Ohioans everywhere continue to recognize the value of conserving natural areas.

Last November, seven out of every ten Ohioans voted to continue the Clean Ohio Fund, a program that allows the state to finance millions of dollars for green space protection, industrial site renovation, family farm preservation and recreational trails—without raising taxes. The Nature Conservancy led a coalition of partners in support of the ballot measure, which passed in every county.

Anglers, paddlers and boaters know that our state is fortunate to have an abundance of fresh water. It helps power our industries, sustain our crops and quench the thirst of our cities. Last year, Ohio joined with seven other states in support of the Great Lakes Compact, which sets standards to conserve and effectively manage water use. The Conservancy has been invited to sit on the Ohio advisory board that will make specific recommendations about water withdrawal and allocation within the Lake Erie Basin.

Birders are another group who deeply value conservation in Ohio, and because of this are some of the Conservancy's biggest enthusiasts. Recognizing the importance of Ohio's landscapes to migratory birds, the Conservancy recently hired James Cole as Ohio bird conservation manager. You can learn more about James and his work at nature.org/JamesCole.

For families, natural areas provide inexpensive opportunities for outdoor recreation and education. Thanks to a legacy of investing

in natural areas, no family in Ohio needs to travel far to enjoy a Conservancy preserve, metropolitan park, or state or federal natural area. And, as our guest columnist and Ohio Trustee Marianne Gabel points out, natural areas also contribute to the healthy physical and mental development of our children. Many of our preserves are open to the public—see nature.org/ohio/openpreserves.

For young and old, natural areas can be a source of spiritual healing and rejuvenation. A volunteer at the Conservancy's Kitty Todd preserve recently shared her own experience with us. Two days before undergoing surgery to treat breast cancer, she spotted a rare Karner blue butterfly. "For me, it was a sign that I wasn't done," she said. "It was a nature-made miracle and gave me more than I could ever give back."

Like everyone, the Conservancy has taken steps to meet the current economic challenges (for example, we are saving money and paper by reducing the size of our newsletter to eight pages and putting more content online at nature.org/ohio). We remain one of the strongest and most influential conservation organizations in Ohio and beyond. For that, and for your steadfast commitment to improving the quality of life for all Ohioans, we sincerely thank you.

Josh Knights



Josh Knights with Reh, a cheetah cub at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium © Elissa Knights

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Josh E. Knights

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The Nature Conservancy envisions Ohio thriving with healthy streams, wetlands, and forests that will help revitalize the globally significant Great Lakes and Ohio River. With partners, we will conserve the most vital freshwater and forest habitats in Ohio and support the conservation of related habitats beyond our borders.

The Nature Conservancy is a private, non-profit 501 (c)(3) international membership organization. Its mission is to preserve plants, animals, and natural communities by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. An annual membership fee of \$25 includes membership to the Ohio Chapter and the worldwide organization.



The Nature Conservancy meets all of the Standards for Charity Accountability established by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. The BBB Wise Giving Alliance is a national charity watchdog affiliated with the Better Business Bureau.

the missing link

(continued from cover)

“Before a land purchase we need to take inventory,” Seidel says. “This means identifying potential causes for concern like patches of invasive species, dumps or possible encroachment issues.”

Weighed down by five different kinds of maps, a digital camera and enough food to sustain him for hours on end, Seidel makes the environmental assessment look like pretty serious business.

“Should a major issue arise during an environmental assessment, or while completing land surveys or title work, it could affect the purchase process,” Seidel says.

Both Seidel and The City Mission, current owners of the property, are anxious to soon see the land conserved.

“I’m very impressed with the vision and purpose of The Nature Conservancy,” says Richard Trickel, CEO of The City Mission, which will retain a portion of the property for continued use as a retreat center. “Entrusting the land to the organization’s careful stewardship is important to us.”

The Lay of the Land

The three of us are working our way along the Grand River when we hear a scuttle, then a splash nearby. “River otter?” I wonder.



The Conservancy’s new acquisition will protect one of the largest hemlock-yellow birch swamps in Ohio. © Terry Seidel/TNC

We sit in silence on the banks, hoping to catch a glimpse of the creature we’ve scared off. “I bet it was a beaver,” Adair says, eyeing a beaver-gnawed branch discarded nearby.

Both river otter and beaver were once staple features in the Grand River Valley, which Morgan Swamp Preserve is a part of. Missing from the landscape for years, they’ve returned recently, thanks to the prevalence of healthy protected habitat.

“It’s a testament to how important the river corridor is,” Adair says. “They’ll come in from the river, move into the preserve and its associated wetlands, eat, and then decide to stay or continue on down the river.”

When completed, the Conservancy’s addition to Morgan Swamp will protect a full 4,000 feet of Grand River corridor—good news for recovering river otter populations as well as for Lake Erie, which the Grand empties into.

The Grand River, a state Wild and Scenic River, is one of the cleanest rivers flowing into Lake Erie, thanks in part to large-scale protection efforts throughout the watershed, especially along the river corridor (see map). But it’s up and away from the riverbank, sizing up a stand of trees, where Seidel gets most excited about the property.

“This is one of the largest hemlock—yellow birch swamps in Ohio,” he says. “This kind of boreal habitat is typically found further north, but it exists here because of the large amount of snowfall generated by Lake Erie.”

Walking on top of the swamp, frozen over from the region’s chilly winter temperatures, the moisture-loving hemlocks and birches towering over us are like a woody cathedral, sanctuary for many rare creatures.



August Froehlich/TNC

“As far as animals go, the snowshoe hare is a poster child for this kind of boreal environment,” Adair says.

Successfully reintroduced in 2004, the snowshoe hare is yet another regional rarity that makes the acquisition at Morgan Swamp all the more meaningful.

“We can’t pass up this land,” Seidel says. “It’s the missing link in a chain of protected areas that will help conserve the Grand River for all Ohioans.”

For a virtual tour of this property, visit nature.org/morganswamp.

preserving place

No Child Should Be Left Inside

Why Nature is Good for Us

BY GUEST COLUMNIST MARIANNE GABEL

If you were a shepherd watching your flock a thousand years ago, you'd have the sense of peace that would come from the hills, the stars and the quiet.

If you were a Native American youth two hundred years ago, you'd go into the wilderness on a "vision quest" and return with a sense of your life's destination.

If you were a "baby boomer" fifty years ago, chances are that you loved being outside, playing freely. You built tree houses and brush forts, splashed around in streams and hunted bugs. After all these years, you probably carry a memory of a special place where you went to explore, feel free, or be alone.

But what if you are a young person today? Chances are, you're rarely muddied or scratched by nature. You watch it on TV, you learn about it in school, you may well worry about the big picture (climate change, threatened species), but you do it mostly from inside the house. You could suffer from "nature deficit disorder."

That's the worry of Richard Louv, author of "Last Child in the Woods." Parents who suspect their children are missing something by being chained to the power grid should run, not walk, to this book.

Why don't we see more kids enjoying free play outside in nature, having undirected, exploratory fun? Some answers: the disappearance of vacant lots, creeks, and woodlands available for kids to explore; the restrictions in subdivisions, parks, and green spaces that keep kids from wandering "off-trail"; landowners, parks, and schools with legal liability concerns.

More answers: Parents worry about dangers lurking outside. They also believe supervised and directed learning activities are the key to the child's chances for advancement. Of course, when parents don't encourage them to go outside, kids are more than happy with TV, video games, and computers. They get nature remotely, with no dirt on their hands or clothes. But they don't feel the fascination and excitement of being IN nature.

Children learn best through direct sensory experience. Mucking around in nature heightens awareness, sharpens senses. Undirected free play increases creativity, problem-solving skills and self-discipline. And—it makes kids happier. Studies suggest that keeping kids isolated from nature can make them depressed, irritable and unable to concentrate.



Marianne Gabel © Don Lateiner

Long-time environmentalist Marianne Gabel is a trustee for the Conservancy in Ohio. She practices law in Delaware, Ohio.

With antidepressants being prescribed for more and more children, and attention disorders a ballooning concern in schools, wouldn't it be smart to look into nature as "therapy"?

Next time you are thinking about gifts for your children and grandchildren, put "Outdoor exploration and adventures"—maybe on a Nature Conservancy preserve—right at the top.

A version of this column previously appeared in Suburban News Publications in Central Ohio.

Enjoy the Places You Help to Protect!

The Nature Conservancy invites you to visit its open preserves in Ohio. For more information about these special natural areas, including directions, please visit nature.org/ohio/openpreserves. See you outside!



© August Froehlich/TNC

conservation snapshots

Lake Erie Water Supply Enjoys Stronger Protection

In October 2008 the federal government officially adopted the Great Lakes Compact, which establishes water withdrawal principles and ensures that authority over the lakes' waters remains in the Great Lakes Basin. With common standards set, the Compact now requires that each state adopt its policies for managing water use. In order to help guide Ohio's use of Lake Erie water and provide decision-makers with the best available science, the Conservancy is sitting on the Compact's Advisory Board and evaluating the ecological impacts of altered Lake Erie tributaries. Understand the flow of things at nature.org/ohiouupdate.



Lake Erie © Anthony Sasson/TNC

Visit the Expanding Kitty Todd Preserve!

A recent 15-acre addition to the Conservancy's Kitty Todd Preserve in the Oak Openings region of northwest Ohio marks the first in what Conservancy scientists anticipate will be a string of land purchases in the near future. Total land acquired could near 100 acres before year's end and would include habitat for rare plant species like Skinner's foxglove and Virginia meadow-beauty. The Conservancy invites you to get outside and walk the trails at Kitty Todd in search of the globally rare communities of plant and animal species this preserve supports. Learn more about the preserve and get directions at nature.org/kittytodd.



Kitty Todd Preserve © Randy Edwards/TNC

Natural Capital— What's Nature Worth to Us?

A coral reef aswarm with ocean life. A honeybee busy over a flower. A forest standing silent guard over a river. These everyday sights of nature bring us joy, wonder, and comfort. But can we quantify the benefits they give us—not just aesthetic, but economic? In a world with so much poverty and hunger, how can we justify paying so much attention to conservation and the environment? Discover how we can account for nature at nature.org/ohiouupdate.



Big Darby Creek © Richard Baumer

We Did It! Clean Ohio Passes!

We did it! Thank you on behalf of all the natural places in Ohio. With 69 percent of voter support in Ohio, the state is now authorized to issue an additional \$400 million for conservation and revitalization! All of this will be done without raising taxes. Ohioans now will see an increase in natural areas, protected family farms, recreation opportunities and renovated industrial sites—which will attract jobs and make Ohio a better place to live. As chair of the campaign, The Nature Conservancy would like to thank you for supporting Issue 2, which continues the Clean Ohio Fund. Read the rest at nature.org/cleanohio

great people, great partners

Suverkrops Leave a Legacy for our Earth



Jan and Bard Suverkrop © TNC

Now that they're retired, Jan and Bard Suverkrop have vowed not to stray too far from their residence in Portsmouth, Ohio. World-class musicians (Jan a pianist and Bard an opera singer), the two have been on the move for decades,

including a 10-year stint in western Europe—where as residents they appreciated the region's "greenness." "I think they're a little bit ahead of us," Bard says, noting that the experiences he and Jan had while abroad helped to strengthen their commitment to conservation.

So when the time came to plan for their estate, the Suverkrops decided The Nature Conservancy would be an ideal beneficiary for their gift. "We did the research and saw that The Nature Conservancy was focused on the big picture," Jan says. "We like the holistic approach."

While the couple say they like the Conservancy's global reach, they're also quick to note their appreciation for the Conservancy's 14,000-acre Edge of Appalachia Preserve, located near their home in Portsmouth.

"We're definitely going to be exploring the Edge of Appalachia more," Jan says of how they might spend some newfound retirement time.

The nearby preserve affords the couple the opportunity to reconnect with nature, something they both enjoyed as children—Jan in her hometown of Portsmouth and Bard in California.

Though they have no children, the couple is committed to leaving a better, greener world to future generations. "It's the most important thing we can do," Jan says of their bequest.

"We have to look out for each other," Bard says. "We're trying to set a good example."

-Jessica Keith

Edge of Appalachia Receives Generous Gift

Inventor of the antihistamine Benadryl, Dr. George Rieveschl Jr. has left a legacy gift of nearly \$1 million to The Nature Conservancy in Ohio. Rieveschl, who passed away in 2007 at the age of 91, was a long-time Conservancy supporter with a special affinity for the Conservancy's 14,000-acre Edge of Appalachia Preserve System in southern Ohio.

"Dr. Rieveschl helped make the Edge of Appalachia what it is today," says Josh Knights, executive state director of the Conservancy in Ohio, "beginning with the purchase and donation of 1,270 acres that he spared from development back in 1972."

In addition to this gift of land, the Rieveschl family's philanthropic giving extends to the Conservancy's partner at

the preserve, the Cincinnati Museum Center, through operational support and funding for the Rieveschl Scholarship program. This fund provides scholarships to children from area communities to spend a week exploring and appreciating the natural beauty of "the Edge" as part of the Museum Center's Science Camp program.

To honor Dr. Rieveschl and his legacy gift—which he and his family requested be used to benefit the Edge of Appalachia—the Conservancy will publicly dedicate to him an overlook along Ohio Brush Creek, to be called the George Rieveschl Jr. Creek's Bend Overlook.

"Not everyone understands how transformative legacy gifts can be," Knights says. "We're so thankful that Dr. Rieveschl included us in his estate

plans. Now, his legacy will endure in the continued growth and protection of Ohio's Appalachian forests."

-Jessica Keith



George and Ellen Rieveschl © TNC

great people, great partners

Helen Black: A League of Her Own



Helen Black © TNC

In December 2008, Ohio Honorary Life Trustee **Helen Black** was inducted into the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Hall of Fame. Nominated by the

Conservancy, Helen played a leadership role in the establishment of the Edge of Appalachia Preserve and continues to give to the Conservancy by garnering support and making generous financial contributions.

Volunteer Hits Record 6,000 Volunteer Hours



John Day © Jessica Keith/TNC

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, **John Day** walks into the office alongside staff, brown lunch bag in hand. He heads to his cubicle, boots up his computer and hunkers down for

another day of “work.” While he can’t remember exactly when he started volunteering for the Conservancy, he can tell you that he’s been around longer than nearly all the current staff, during which time he’s racked up an incredible 6,000 hours of service. How has he spent his time? Find out for yourself at nature.org/ohiouupdate.

Conservancy Honors Its Volunteers

The Conservancy recently honored its strong team of volunteers for their dedication to the organization’s conservation efforts. Contributing more than 11,000 hours in 2008, volunteers provide a range of services, from removing invasive plants to counting

butterflies to helping in the office. This year, four volunteers received special recognition: **John Day, Gaylord Odegaard, Beth Lenoble and Diane Weeks**. Read more and find out how you can become part of the volunteer team at nature.org/ohiouupdate.

Board of Trustees Update



James Tarpinian © Rich Buchanan

The Nature Conservancy recently welcomed **James (Jim) Tarpinian** as its newest trustee in Ohio. The Columbus resident currently is Battelle’s Vice

President for Environment, Safety, Health and Quality (ESH&Q) and has more than 30 years experience developing, implementing and managing ESH&Q programs for commercial and government work, primarily for environmental restoration projects. As part of his personal commitment to the environment, Jim bikes to work.

It’s for the Birds

Each year about 200 species of neotropical migratory birds make an incredible journey from South America, Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean islands to North America. Many of these birds will nest or lay over in Ohio, where migratory bird habitat is on the decline. In order to help ensure their survival, the Conservancy recently hired Ohio Bird Conservation Manager **James Cole**. Find out how he’s helping at nature.org/ohiouupdate.

Steering Conservation in the Right Direction

Conservation is more than saving places. Today’s conservationist is protecting the environment at a whole new level, from preserving specific

places of biodiversity to influencing government action to determining where to make financial investments that provide lasting results. In an online feature, the Conservancy’s new Agnes S. Andreae Director of Conservation, **Bill Stanley**, answers questions about the future of conservation in Ohio. Uncover his vision at nature.org/ohiouupdate.

In Memoriam

Homer McCune

Long-time Nature Conservancy supporter Homer McCune passed away at the age of 85 in October 2008. A scientist with a PhD in chemistry who worked for Procter & Gamble much of his life, McCune was a lifelong and passionate conservationist who served as a Conservancy trustee from the mid-60s to the mid-80s, when he was inducted as an Honorary Life Trustee.



David Weekes © TNC


David Weekes


The Nature Conservancy lost a passionate conservationist and dear friend when David Weekes passed away in March. He was 53.

David devoted 22 years to the Conservancy, including six as state director in Ohio (1995-2001). Under his leadership, approximately 5,250 acres were protected across the state, including many in the Big Darby Creek watershed, where the Conservancy has installed a plaque in his honor at its Big Darby Headwaters Nature Preserve. “With warmth, great intellect, endless curiosity, quiet but strong leadership and a marvelous, subtle sense of humor, David inspired us to pursue excellence in our conservation work here in Ohio and around the world,” said Jan Portman, chair of Ohio’s Board of Trustees during David’s tenure.

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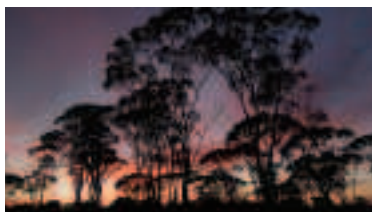
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To learn more about making a gift that provides a legacy for future generations, contact The Nature Conservancy today:

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