Our mission

Western Reserve Land Conservancy seeks to preserve the scenic beauty, rural character and natural resources of northern Ohio.
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Field Offices

Akron Field Office
34 Merz Boulevard, Suite G
Akron, Ohio 44333
Phone: 330-836-2271
Fax: 330-836-2272

Medina Field Office
141 Prospect Street
Medina, Ohio 44256
Phone: 330-722-7313
Fax: 330-722-6592

Firelands Field Office
P.O. Box 174
Oberlin, Ohio 44074
Phone: 440-774-4226
Fax: 440-774-6409

Eastern Field Office
P.O. Box 114
Orwell, Ohio 44076
Phone: 440-773-5582

Painesville Field Office
70 South Park Place
Painesville, Ohio 44077
Phone: 440-357-4837

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https://www.wrlandconservancy.org

Cover photo:
West Branch of Rocky River,
Olmsted Falls

Inside cover:
Columbia Reservation,
Lorain County

This page:
North Chagrin Reservation,
Mayfield Village

Back cover:
Lake Erie shoreline,
Ottawa County

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When our fiscal year ended on June 30, 2010, we reflected back on the previous 12 months with gratitude.

For the 15th consecutive year, we finished the year with a surplus of revenue over expense, we added thousands of acres of beautiful preserved land bringing our total preserved acreage to 22,000 acres, and we merged another land trust, Grand River Partners, with Western Reserve Land Conservancy, making us the result of mergers of 11 separate entities. As everyone knows, the last two years have been economically challenging for not only Ohio but for all of America and even for the world. These challenging times have become the metaphorical headwind for many organizations of all types: government, for-profit, and nonprofit. Rather than giving up in the face of this powerful headwind, our organization chose to trim our sails and steer high into the wind tacking back and forth on a clear bearing, never losing our focus, and never giving in to the temptation to soften our sails to head in an easier yet less effective direction.

In reflecting back on how our organization responded to this adverse environment, we realized that our behavior was the result of our values. All organizations and all people have values. Some express those values clearly and others simply live by them but never deliberately describe them. An organization’s values define the culture, the personality of the enterprise, whether the values are clearly articulated or not. In this annual report you will read several stories that articulate many of the values Western Reserve Land Conservancy holds dear.

In ancient times, sages studied human behavior and began constructing the Vedas or truths that gave rise to many of our great philosophies and religions. One of the laws articulated in the Vedas states that people who pursue their ideals, their higher values, develop an initiative to work that transcends selfish interests. If people work simply for incentives (salary), they soon lose interest in the work and this begins a never-ending cycle of diminishing energy fueled by pay and perks. If we can simply attach our goals and our vision to higher values and ideals, to selfless and larger values, we unleash all of our energy. We now know that these ancient sages were indeed sage because in one contemporary study after another, we have learned that the most successful and the most joyful people (and organizations) are not those who collect the most selfish rewards, but are those who constantly seek higher and higher ideals and values in their daily work.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy has learned time and time again that by working with people who share our vision and our values, we find common ground and we build powerful energy and lasting success. The constant putting up of higher and higher ideals inspires us and all of the people with whom we partner to do more and to be more. We’re given the gift of initiative regardless of incentive.

We remain deeply grateful to all of our friends, partners and donors. The gifts you have given to us, like the gifts of oxygen and sunlight given to all of us by the unseen hand of nature, is everywhere, is essential, and is deeply appreciated. We look forward to seeing you soon at one of our events or on one of our preserves, and, in the meantime, we wish you and yours all the best.

William C. Mulligan
Chair

Richard D. Cochran
President and CEO
Hinckley Township gets a new park
A joint project involving the Land Conservancy and Medina County’s Hinckley Township resulted in the creation of a new 30-acre park on the banks of the East Branch of Rocky River at state Route 303 and River Road. River Woods Nature Preserve, a passive township park, is now open to the public. The Land Conservancy holds a conservation easement on the property.

Big Swamp Woods to remain a wild place
The Land Conservancy, in partnership with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History Natural Areas Program, preserved 81 acres of a 430-acre wetland complex in Fitchville Township. Big Swamp Woods is the largest swamp in Huron County.

Easement protects one-sixth of island
A 44-acre conservation easement held by the Land Conservancy will permanently preserve nearly one-sixth of Johnson’s Island in Ottawa County. The property is in a region designated by the National Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area and provides important wooded habitat for migratory birds.

Century Farm is preserved in Lorain Co.
Joyce and Wilbur Browand permanently preserved 176 acres of their 182-acre Century Farm in Lorain County’s Brighton Township with a donated conservation easement. Joyce’s great-great grandfather, Hugh Mosher, who served as the model for the fife player in Archibald Willard’s famous “Spirit of ’76” painting, was born and raised on the Lorain County farm, which has been in the family for five generations.

Hinckley Township gets a new park
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Lockheed Martin Corp. could have done the minimum to clean up a polluted ditch in southeast Akron and fulfill all environmental standards. But the company and its project manager, David Gunnarson, were not content to simply replace the soil and toss down grass seed. They turned Haley’s Run into a showcase for urban conservation.

Under the leadership of Gunnarson, Lockheed Martin and its partners restored the PCB-laden channel to a natural, free-flowing stream, installed a scenic walking trail and planted native trees, shrubs and grasses. This beautiful urban greenway is now a true asset for the surrounding low- to moderate-income neighborhood and those who work nearby.

The Land Conservancy helped Lockheed Martin by acquiring the additional property needed to transform the area into a park. Gunnarson says the firm and the Land Conservancy “have a great cooperative partnership. It’s hard to imagine how Lockheed Martin could have completed the Haley’s Run project without the Land Conservancy’s assistance, and hopefully Lockheed Martin has helped the Land Conservancy achieve its mission.”

The Land Conservancy hopes to complete a similar transformation at nearby Adam’s Run, which is fed by Haley’s Run. The two projects together could eventually provide a link to the Towpath Trail in downtown Akron. For now, Gunnarson, an environmental engineer, says he is pleased that Haley’s Run has become an asset to the community.

“I’m surprised and happy with how quickly nature has returned,” he says. “Already I’ve watched a pair of ducks raise ducklings, and I’ve seen small fish in Haley’s Run. Frogs and birds seem to be abundant. I look forward to returning to Haley’s Run in the future to see how the 1,000 trees we planted have grown and to hopefully walk along Haley’s Run to Adam’s Run and beyond.”
Susan Wendt enjoys the natural beauty of Wendtwood.
Preserved land a home for creatures big and small

The rural Columbia Township home of Dr. Wallace Wendt, who was the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo’s honorary veterinarian for 45 years, was one wild place. Dr. Wendt and his wife, Susan, raised, rehabilitated and sometimes housed a menagerie that included camels, reindeer, tigers, Trumpeter swans and Thompson gazelles.

“Our home movies are unbelievable,” says Susan Wendt with a chuckle.

The Wendts, who purchased the Lorain County farm in 1963, had a vision for their land that went far beyond having a place to raise exotic animals. In 2006, the couple permanently preserved their 254-acre Wendtwood property by donating a conservation easement on it. Dr. Wendt died in 2008, but the protection of the land, which contains 11 lakes and has 67 different species of nesting birds, will forever be part of his legacy.

“This is what he wanted. This is what he always dreamed of,” Susan Wendt says.

In June, the Wendts were the recipients of one of the Land Conservancy’s highest honors, the Grimm Family Conservation Medal. Susan Wendt accepted the award at the organization’s annual Conservation Celebration.

Susan, a Lakewood native who holds a teaching degree from Baldwin-Wallace College and worked as a tutor, says her late husband donated all his services to the zoo and paid all costs for keeping the animals on the farm, including food, shelter and fencing.

Dr. Wendt had a lifelong love of land conservation and was one of the founders of the Firelands Land Conservancy, one of the eight organizations that merged in 2006 to form Western Reserve Land Conservancy. At the time of his death, 16 Trumpeter swans and two donkeys were living on the Lorain County property; Susan kept the donkeys and found appropriate homes for the swans, placing some at The Wilds sanctuary in east central Ohio.

Today, the fields of Wendtwood are still used to make hay, and the property itself will forever be a tribute to the natural beauty of the land along the West Branch of Rocky River.

“It is so nice to be able to do something like this, to preserve land for future generations,” Susan says.
Even though he himself rarely rides a bicycle, Charles Kohli is admired by pedal-pushers throughout the region. Kohli, a 26-year member of the Ashtabula County Metroparks Board of Trustees, has spent two decades working on the creation of the nearly complete 43-mile Western Reserve Greenway Trail between Ashtabula and Warren.

Today, only a 4.2-mile stretch in Ashtabula remains unfinished. This haven for bicyclists – planners also envision a southerly extension to the Ohio River, one that would complete a trail network connecting Ashtabula and Washington, D.C. – is a source of pride for Ashtabula County and highlights the area’s natural beauty.

“It really shows off the variety of natural resources in Ashtabula County – creeks, fields, forests, wetlands,” says Kohli, who grew up near the Grand River in Harpersfield and still lives there.

Kohli, a University of Mount Union graduate who works at a chemical plant, says he learned the value of collaboration in working on the greenway trail. What started as an inquiry to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in 1989 turned into a string of successful partnerships involving the state, the railroads, local governments and others.

Now the park system, which is not funded by a tax levy, is working closely with the Land Conservancy to preserve additional parkland. Kohli says the Land Conservancy’s ability to assess, purchase and find funding for new parks “is right up our alley. The support we have had from the Land Conservancy is amazing. To work with an organization that can preserve land is just great. And we’re happy to be the repository of that land.”

The park system is working with the Land Conservancy and the Ashtabula Sportsmen’s Recreational Conservation League to create a 92-acre county park at Lampson Reservoir, just west of Jefferson. Kohli says such projects are shining examples of cooperation.

“He sees the value in collaboration”

The Land Conservancy secured state, federal and local funding for a record 30 different preservation projects in fiscal year 2010, including nine under the state’s Agricultural Easement Purchase Program and eight from the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund.

The Land Conservancy secured a total of $9,675,131 in public funding during FY2010. The funds came from state ($6,980,247), federal ($2,275,600) and local ($419,284) sources.

In FY2010, the Land Conservancy secured funding from 13 sources, compared to seven the year before. There were also sharp increases in total funding (14.8 percent) and the number of projects funded (131 percent). The sources producing the most funding for Land Conservancy projects were the Ohio EPA’s Water Resource Restoration Sponsor program ($3,213,750), the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund ($2,604,874) and AEPP ($1,142,973).

The Land Conservancy was able to get nine of its 12 AEPP applications funded, allowing us to preserve 1,125 acres of farmland in five counties.

Record number of projects receive public funding

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Science competition fuels love of outdoors

Carlos Sanchez, 17, admits to having “a really long list of (possible) college majors.” But one thing has become clear to Carlos, a Lawrence School senior from Hudson. “I will go into something involving the environment,” he says.

Carlos’s academic interests have been fueled by his participation in Envirothon, a competition in which high school students are challenged in the areas of forestry, wildlife, aquatics, soils and groundwater at outdoor stations. The Land Conservancy was a major sponsor of the 2010 Area 2 Envirothon, which drew more than 400 students from 15 counties.

Carlos is one of the original members of his Sagamore Hills Township school’s 3-year-old Envirothon team, which is advised by science teachers Karen Callahan and Joyce Freeman.

“It seemed like something cool, something I would really have an interest in,” says Carlos, who plays basketball and sings in the choir at Lawrence. “I found out that I really enjoy working with other people on environmental issues. And I like the competitive aspect of it.”

This year’s regional competition in Chardon was hosted by the Geauga and Trumbull Soil and Water Conservation Districts with the assistance of public and private partners, including the Land Conservancy, Dominion, Giant Eagle, the Geauga Park District and Lake Metroparks.

Freeman says preparing for the competition is an extremely valuable learning experience for the students, especially those whose grasp of science is enhanced by hands-on experiences.

“One thing we stress is team collaboration – they have to work as a team, not just have one person answering all the questions,” she says. “The kids also have to have a passion for the science. One of the most rewarding things is when the students start to see how one aspect of our environment has an effect on another – that everything is connected.”

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Huron County tops land protection list

Eight hundred sixty-one acres in Huron County were protected by Land Conservancy conservation easements during fiscal year 2010, the highest total among counties in our service area.

Ashtabula (398 acres) and Lorain (384 acres) were next on the list for FY2010.

Overall, the Land Conservancy has protected the most property in Geauga County, with 6,681 acres, followed by Ashtabula (3,328 acres), Lorain (2,563), Portage (2,056), Trumbull (1,724), Cuyahoga (1,449) and Huron (1,050). Mahoning and Wayne are the only counties within the Land Conservancy’s service area where we have not preserved land.

The number of counties with protected properties has been on the rise since 2006, when eight local land trusts merged to form Western Reserve Land Conservancy. At the start of calendar year 2010, Grand River Partners merged with the Land Conservancy.

The Land Conservancy has preserved property in 15 counties – 12 within its 14-county service region and three in the “special project areas” of Ashland, Columbiana and Ottawa counties.
Family’s passion saves an iconic place

Five years ago, historic White North Stables faced a bleak future. The place – where as many as 8,000 spectators once gathered to watch polo matches – needed a lot of attention. The buildings needed repairs, as did the grounds. So it probably was not surprising that a developer proposed buying the land and building homes there.

Michael Shaughnessy and his family had other plans.

Michael, wife Marian and daughters Kate and Anne are equestrians with a deep love of White North and the collective will to preserve it. Michael Shaughnessy’s quiet persistence led not only to the preservation of the 75-acre White North property but to a major rehabilitation of its structures, including the stables and Ohio’s oldest indoor arena.

“White North has really been a special place, and it is truly rewarding to see it restored,” says Shaughnessy, a Gates Mills resident and president of ColorMatrix. “We have gotten a very favorable response from the community, and not just the government officials.”

In June, Shaughnessy, a Land Conservancy trustee since 2004, was named the 2010 recipient of The Stephen C. Morris Sugar Maple Award, the organization’s highest honor. The proclamation says Shaughnessy “emerged as the transforming leader of our most complex and significant project ever: the acquisition, preservation and restoration of White North Stables.”

Since January 2006, Shaughnessy has served as president of the board of White North, which is located at Chagrin River Road and Shaker Boulevard in Hunting Valley. Along the way, he has helped turn the stables into a profitable operation and helped fund approximately $800,000 in building and grounds improvements. Thirty-five horses are now boarded there, including Michael’s beloved Seamus O’Rourke – the Irish-born horse who revived Shaughnessy’s interest in riding after he was seriously injured in a 2002 fall – and four others owned by his family.

Shaughnessy has a deep passion for the pastoral landscape of the Chagrin River Valley, one that was sparked when he first moved to the Cleveland area in the late 1960s and started looking for homes.

“I ended up out here and said, ‘Wow, this is incredible,’” he says. “I decided in my own mind that I would move (to the Chagrin Valley) as soon as I could. And that’s what we did.”

Today, the valley is a better place because of it.

Conservation partners help us set priorities

The Land Conservancy’s strategic conservation plan, which involves identifying priority properties for preservation in our 14-county service area, has been undergoing a revision.

The Land Conservancy recently held meetings in each county so public agencies, conservation organizations and natural resource experts could identify additional potential preservation targets. Our organization’s strategic plan, which was adopted in November 2009, included a refinement of land protection prioritization to make the process consensus- and concurrence-based.

In order to effectively implement its land protection program, the Land Conservancy will revise the land protection prioritization model (formerly called The Anchor Strategy) by using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to identify and prioritize focus areas based on specific ecological, agricultural and scenic criteria. Elizabeth Mather, GISP, the Land Conservancy’s GIS and Conservation Planning Manager, says developing the list is a dynamic process, and if a listed property gets developed, we will try to find a new corridor to the next anchor area.
Presley Gillespie in downtown Youngstown
Group uses ‘green’ touch to transform neighborhoods

For some civic leaders, the 23,000 vacant lots in Youngtown might represent an obstacle that is difficult, if not impossible, to overcome. Presley L. Gillespie and his team see things differently.

“We believe there is a huge opportunity in Youngstown to turn this vacant land into neighborhood assets that attract public/private investment and economic development,” says Gillespie, the executive director of the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation.

Gillespie, who had an 18-year career in community development banking before joining YNDC one year ago, heads a city-wide, neighborhood-based organization launched in February 2009 in partnership with the city and The Raymond John Wean Foundation to catalyze strategic investment in Youngstown’s neighborhoods. His five-member staff is initially focusing on three neighborhoods – Idora, Lincoln Park and Crandall Park North – and is already seeing results.

In Idora, for example, there are now five resident-operated community gardens. One is a full-scale urban agriculture demonstration site on a lot where an abandoned and blighted apartment complex once stood. The demonstration site also contains fruit orchards and a rain garden to decrease excessive storm water runoff.

Gillespie says the community gardens give residents access to good, fresh food. He says green space also increases market value in neighborhoods, and that is why YNDC is embracing partnerships with such organizations as the Land Conservancy and Mill Creek Metroparks. YNDC’s “Lots of Green” program transforms blighted land into neighborhood assets.

“Our overall strategy is holistic and transformative,” Gillespie says. “It creates healthier families, healthier communities and improves the image and confidence of the neighborhoods. Because of the gardens, people who never knew each other are now friends. And they’re talking positively about their neighborhood again. We’re starting to see results.”

Gillespie, a Youngstown State University graduate who in 2010 was named to the Board of Trustees of the new Eastern Gateway Community College, says YNDC values partnerships with organizations like the Land Conservancy as it seeks to attract and retain young talent to the region.

“We value partnerships very much,” he says, “and we know what the Land Conservancy brings to the table.”

Merger shows off ‘power of multiplication’

Land conservation in northern Ohio was the clear winner when the state’s two largest land conservancies – Western Reserve Land Conservancy and Grand River Partners, Inc. – officially merged at the end of 2009. The Land Conservancy assumed stewardship of the nearly 3,700 acres preserved by GRP and added three former GRP employees.

The former GRP headquarters in Painesville became a Land Conservancy field office.

Land Conservancy President and CEO Rich Cochran said the merger “will lead to more land protected more quickly. It is an example of the power of multiplication: While five plus five equals 10, we all know that five times five equals 25. Before this merger, we were engaged in addition, where our work and GRP’s work produced incremental gains. The merger will produce a transforming multiplication effect that will result in greater mission accomplishment.”

The Land Conservancy, which works to protect the scenic beauty, rural character and natural resources of northern Ohio, was formed in 2006 by the merger of eight local land trusts.
A lasting commitment to future generations

The view from the Chagrin Falls Township home of Franz and Beth Sauerland is enough to make a person swear off the trappings of civilization. Here, the natural world – hardwood forests, meadows and abundant wildlife – rules. And that is exactly how the Sauerlands like it.

The Sauerlands have made a commitment that will ensure natural areas like the one surrounding their home will forever be preserved. They have joined the White Oak Legacy Society, a group of Land Conservancy supporters who have included land protection in their estate planning through such tools as bequests in a will or trust, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, IRA designations or gifts of life insurance.

“Land preservation is obviously very important to us,” Beth says.

Franz’s love of the outdoors was nurtured as a child growing up in a rural part of Germany. His father – a teacher whose hobby was botany – was in charge of local nature preservation projects and would often take Franz and his sister on bicycle excursions into the countryside.

Franz became an electrical engineer. He founded TRANSAT CORP., a successful equipment manufacturing firm covered by 25 U.S. and foreign patents, and owned the firm from 1970 until his retirement in 2003. He never lost his passion for nature, and in 2001 became a trustee of Chagrin River Land Conservancy, one of eight local land trusts that merged in 2006 to form Western Reserve Land Conservancy. Franz was one of the original Land Conservancy trustees and remains on the board today.

The Sauerlands are also active in Habitat for Humanity, as well as urban education initiatives.
Beth and Franz Sauerland outside their home
### Statement of Financial Position

**June 30, 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th><strong>June 30, 2009</strong></th>
<th><strong>Changes</strong></th>
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<td><strong>(796,337)</strong></td>
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Statement of Revenue and Expenses
July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010

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<th>Revenue Description</th>
<th>FY2010</th>
<th>% Revenue</th>
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<tr>
<td>Management and General</td>
<td>739,587</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSE</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,081,166</strong></td>
<td><strong>91%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Revenue Over (Under) Expenses             | $827,416  | 9%        |
Events connect land, people

Yoga, a rock concert, panning for gold and an after-dusk search for owls were but a few of the dozens of community events organized by the Land Conservancy over the past year. More than 450 people turned out on a Sunday morning in August at Orchard Hills Park for the second Yoga on the Preserve, sponsored by the Land Conservancy and Cleveland Yoga. In May, Conservation Rocks -- our first concert, headlined by former Clevelander Jason White -- allowed us to share our mission with more than 250 music and conservation fans at the Beachland Ballroom. And a day of gold-panning in the Vermilion River and a night of owl-spotting were huge hits. The Land Conservancy recognizes that people who seek out experiences in the natural world are more likely to embrace our mission.
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Your support is vital to our mission, and the money you invest with us will put to good use.

Thank you!

The Land Conservancy is deeply grateful to those whose donations make our work possible.

Donations make our work possible.

Thank you!

23
Did you know... country music star Brad Paisley once performed a concert at the 15-acre Trembley County Farm owned by John and Jerry Lipsy and protected by a Land Conservancy conservation easement?
Did you know... the Land Conservancy’s preserved acreage total is now equal to that of the Cleveland Metroparks system?
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Mr. & Mrs. Blair Whidden

Ms. Elizabeth Juliano

*deceased

Did you know... the Land Conservancy has preserved more than 200 acres of farm land in northern Ohio?
More than 590 people attended the seventh annual EverGreen EverBlue, the Land Conservancy’s benefit on Sept. 10 at The Lake House in Hunting Valley. The setting for this year’s EverGreen EverBlue was a private preserve in the heart of the Chagrin River valley. Brian and Cheryl Coughlin’s custom Tony Paskevich-designed home is in a one-of-a-kind conservation development surrounded by scenic meadows, a beautiful lake and conserved land.

Event chairs were Brian and Cheryl Coughlin, Meg and Scott Mueller and Karen and John Miller. Committee members were Kathy Goss, Susan Greig, Pam Haag, Leta Hickey, Andrea Hill, Sarah Hollington, Nancy Jeffrey, Anne Kilroy, Kathy Leavenworth, Julie Lynch, Kitty Makley, Sara Mansour, Laura Pinnick, Kris Rogers, Elizabeth Spencer, Hallie Wasserman, Mary Weber and Amanda Zalud.

The corporate committee included chair Scott Mueller, Elizabeth Juliano, Bassem Mansour and Bill Mulligan.
Our vision

There is nothing more beautiful than a crisp fall day in northern Ohio: the sun shimmering on our great Lake Erie; the red and yellow leaves of a beech maple forest; the long views of crop and pasture land framed by towering forests; and the gentle murmuring rivers that run through our glacial landscape. We love the Western Reserve. It is where we rear our children and where our hearts reside.

Our vision is that today, a decade from now, and beyond the time that we can imagine, the Western Reserve will be a stunningly beautiful and healthy place. An authentic place filled with breathtaking scenic views, abundant clean rivers and lakes, miles and miles of connected trails for hiking, biking, skiing, and horseback riding; and an accessible, clean and safe great lake for world class fishing, swimming, and boating.

Development will be concentrated in historic urban areas such as Cleveland and Akron, in historic Western Reserve villages such as Chagrin Falls, Brecksville, Medina and Bay Village and, as needed, in new areas that promote lasting, community-oriented development. Working farms will flourish, supported by local markets that provide healthy and fresh produce that connects citizens to the land in a tangible, enduring way. Parks and preserves will provide people with a special connection to the land, a safe place where children can play, and a quality of life that attracts and retains as residents a great diversity of people.

The Land Conservancy inspires citizens throughout our region in the effort to protect land and water for the benefit of all of our communities; to create a habitat that serves people. We envision a healthy and scenic landscape, a patchwork quilt of large natural areas connected by wildlife and river corridors, a beautiful region interspersed with well-planned agricultural, residential, and commercial development that supports the people of our region now and forever.
Western Reserve Land Conservancy extends its thanks to the following people

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Jean Antonacci
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