Celebrating What Counts
Western Reserve Land Conservancy
OUR LAND. OUR LEGACY.
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Our mission
From the countryside to the city, we provide our region with natural places that nourish and support vibrant and prosperous communities by identifying, preserving, restoring and maintaining essential assets like clean water, working farms, wildlife areas, and parks.
CELEBRATING WHAT COUNTS

Donor Report July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013
ne of the greatest mathematicians and philosophers of recorded human history, Albert Einstein, said: “Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.”

The undeclared premise of this quote is that counting is important, that we need to measure things to assess ourselves and our world in an accurate manner. And yet the quote reminds us that there are essential things that transcend measurement. Try to measure the joyful smile of a young boy when he sees his first puppy...do you count how many seconds he smiles? Or the number of visible teeth? What economic value do you attribute to that smile? Obviously, his smile counts for something very special that cannot be counted.

And yet there are also many good reasons to count and measure ourselves and our lives. Recently, we paused to reflect on what we provide to our communities, to the people and places we serve. There is a lot of good news!

Our objective is to provide the communities we serve with natural assets appropriate for that place and an ongoing foundation of fundamental natural resources that give rise to enduring prosperity. Essential natural assets include:

- Clean air and clean water to support all living things;
- Farmland that gives us our food and provides us with beauty and space; and
- Forests that produce fiber for the world and serve our wildlife and recreational needs.

There are others that are vital in certain places. Beautiful parks and preserves are necessary in places where people live. Without parks, people who can leave do leave, and we create communities with distressed values and fewer people. The bottom line in all of this is that all living things move away from toxins and towards nutrients; toxins can be literal poisons like PCBs and lead, and toxins can be metaphorical poisons like gun shots and blighted, boarded-up homes. Nutrients include clean air, clean water, healthy foods, scenic beauty, and friendly people.

So how do we count all of this up? How do we measure our work? Sometimes we do it with numbers.

Here are a few ways to measure our traditional land protection work. These numbers are often referred to as “bucks and acres,” stating the financial results as well as the land area preserved. We have:

- Preserved 500 properties comprising approximately 37,500 acres. To provide some context, that is about twice as large as all of Manhattan! These objective results are impressive and have made us the largest conservation organization in Ohio;
- Protected an average of 3,680 acres per year since 2006;
- Preserved nearly $400 million of land;
- Preserved 33 projects per year on average; and
- Completed the two largest farmland protection projects in Ohio, one involving more than 3,000 acres, the other 2,700 acres.

By the time you will read this report, it is very likely that we will have conserved an additional 2,500 acres, crossing the threshold of 40,000 acres preserved. And yet our work is about so much more than “bucks and acres.” We are the result of strategic and voluntary mergers among 13 organizations. Our urban revitalization division, Thriving Communities Institute, was launched just two years ago and has already:

- Worked throughout Ohio to launch many county land banks. Sixteen counties now have land banks and 13 more have expressed an interest in forming one;
- Hosted three statewide conferences on land banking and urban challenges; and
- Raised more than $182 million to support the revitalization of Ohio’s cities.

And yet, despite the breathtaking achievements that these numbers represent, they pale when compared to the smile on the little girl’s face as she eats her first cherry tomato off a plant she raised from seed. How should we measure the value provided in this case? Maybe we preserved less than an acre in the Central neighborhood of Cleveland. Maybe we preserved nothing and was worth only $500. Maybe it is not filled with mature trees and streams. Should we measure the degrees of the curve of her lips? No, as Einstein said, there are things of great value that cannot be counted. And implicit in this wisdom is the truth that when we do things that lead to that smile, we have changed many lives, because all people flourish when supported by healthy and beautiful places.
In the world of land conservation, we are constantly challenged by change – and our ability to adapt to it. As an organization, the Western Reserve Land Conservancy is not measured solely by the number of acres it preserves or the projects it completes, but by its response to ever-changing economic, political and societal conditions.

When the future of farming in Ohio was threatened, we created a strong farmland protection program. When the foreclosure crisis devastated our cities, we formed a strong urban revitalization initiative called Thriving Communities Institute. When we realized we were too dependent on philanthropy, we diversified our revenue streams. And when faced with the largest external force in our history – oil and gas exploration in the Utica shale region of eastern Ohio – we initiated a plan to preserve the natural resources there.

Fiscal year 2013 was a challenging one for the Land Conservancy, as cutbacks in public funding programs, a drop in philanthropic revenue and delays in the completion of some projects led to a loss of about $800,000. Yet the Land Conservancy did some of its finest work during the year, including the creation of Lake Erie Bluffs, the remarkable two-mile stretch of undeveloped coastline, in conjunction with Lake Metroparks; the amazing efforts of Jim Rokakis and the Thriving Communities staff, who helped bring to Ohio $182 million in funding for the demolition of vacant and abandoned homes, and continued to aid numerous Ohio counties in the formation of land banks; the mergers with Waite Hill Land Conservancy and Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation, the latter of which led to the expansion of our land-protection work into Columbiana, Jefferson and Carroll counties; the creation of additional public parks in Medina, Lorain, Ashtabula, Summit and Trumbull counties in partnership with the local park districts; the publication of Common Ground: The land protection report for northern Ohio, the first comprehensive look at all land conservation in the region; and the second-largest farmland preservation initiative in our history, a 2,700-acre project in Trumbull County.

We could not do this work without you, the loyal supporters of the Land Conservancy. We extend our deepest gratitude to you and promise we will continue to give great value for every dollar you invest in our mission. We also thank our partners, the park systems, landowners, foundations, community development corporations, land banks, government agencies and others who share our passion for making our region one filled with enduring prosperity. In addition, we are blessed with a talented, hard-working staff that continues to be a model for other land trusts across the nation. We thank all of you for your efforts.

The Land Conservancy faces many more challenges in the year ahead. Uncertainty in the public funding arena, the potential end of enhanced federal tax incentives for property owners who preserve their land and the lack of unified conservation plans for the Utica region are just a few of the issues we are facing as we head into 2014.

We will tackle those challenges with the same resolve that made us one of the top 10 land trusts in the United States. In this annual donor report, I hope you will get to know some of the people behind the numbers – the family that benefitted from demolition in their neighborhood, the couple who unselfishly preserved their farm, the park director who hopes to preserve more land with our help, the longtime national park volunteers who made a lasting gift to the Land Conservancy. Their stories are, in reality, our story.

Thank you again for your interest and continuing support.

John Leech
Chairman, Board of Trustees
Study evaluates structures in Lorain
The Land Conservancy conducted its first vacant property survey in the city of Lorain. The survey, made possible by a grant from the Nord Family Foundation, will help the city access the nearly $2.1 million in demolition funding available to Lorain County through the state’s Moving Ohio Forward program.

More acreage added to Lorain County park system
Lorain County Metro Parks and the Land Conservancy completed a project that adds 88 acres, including a heron rookery and a section of the East Branch of the Black River, to the park system. The land is located about a mile south of the existing Indian Hollow Reservation in Grafton and LaGrange townships.

Grain farm preserved in Richland County
A 154-acre tract that includes a family grain farm and greenhouse operation has been permanently preserved in Richland County. The Daron family farm, northwest of Mansfield, is the first one in Richland County to be accepted into the state of Ohio’s Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program.

More parkland added to Medina’s green corridor
The Medina County Park District worked with the Land Conservancy to acquire the 87-acre Medina Marsh in Medina Township. It is the latest link in a two-mile, 600-acre corridor of conserved land through parts of Medina and Medina Township.

Land Conservancy, Metroparks work together on Solon park
A joint project involving the Land Conservancy and Cleveland Metroparks is expected to protect more than a mile of headwater streams feeding a coldwater tributary to the Chagrin River, one in which native brook trout may one day be reintroduced. The Land Conservancy is continuing to raise funds for the 30-acre Sulphur Springs Headwaters project.
Trumbull County farmland preserved
In Trumbull County, the Land Conservancy completed the second largest preservation project in its history when it worked with the Miller family to protect 2,702 acres of productive farmland on 14 separate blocks of property.

Grand River watershed gets additional protection
In Ashtabula County, the Land Conservancy preserved a 177-acre tract in parts of Rome, Orwell and Hartsgrove townships, creating a more than 900-acre block of protected property around the main stem of the State Scenic Grand River. The property contains a host of threatened and endangered species, including the black sandshell and snowshoe hare.

Lake Erie Bluffs becomes a reality
A nearly two-mile stretch of undeveloped Lake Erie shoreline – one of the longest sections of publicly accessible coastline in Ohio – was preserved when Lake Metroparks and the Land Conservancy worked together to complete the acquisition of a 600-acre park. Lake Erie Bluffs is home to 20 documented rare plant and wildlife species.

Trumbull County farmland preserved
In Trumbull County, the Land Conservancy completed the second largest preservation project in its history when it worked with the Miller family to protect 2,702 acres of productive farmland on 14 separate blocks of property.

Easement recorded on Portage County farm
The Land Conservancy, the city of Aurora and Chagrin River Watershed Partners collaborated to preserve the 100-acre Harmon Farm in Aurora.

Mergers help enlarge land-protection footprint
At the start of 2013, the Land Conservancy grew through mergers with Lake County’s Waite Hill Land Conservancy and the Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation in Columbiana County. The latter merger was part of an extension of our land-protection work into Columbiana, Carroll and Jefferson counties.

Rare sphagnum peat bog is preserved near Kent
The Land Conservancy helped Portage Park District preserve a 58-acre parcel in Franklin Township that contains a rare sphagnum peat bog – a remnant of the last ice age – and helps protect the area’s drinking water. Franklin Bog, about a half-mile north of Kent, is adjacent to Akron’s 2,334-acre Lake Rockwell Reservoir and about 500 feet from the Cuyahoga River.
Land Conservancy preserves 5,286 acres in 2013, second-highest total in its history

The Land Conservancy protected the second-largest amount of acreage in its history during fiscal year 2013, permanently preserving 5,286 acres. The total was topped only by the 6,045 acres preserved in fiscal year 2012.

In FY 2013, the Land Conservancy preserved 49 parcels, second only to the 55 protected in FY 2012.

At the close of FY 2013, the Land Conservancy had preserved a total of 492 properties totaling 35,174 acres in 19 counties – 18 in Ohio plus Mercer County in Pennsylvania. Geauga County has the largest amount of land protected by the Land Conservancy at 7,500 acres, followed by Trumbull County (7,114 acres), Ashtabula County (6,001), Lorain County (2,938), Portage County (2,517), Huron County (2,292) and Cuyahoga County (1,748).
**Watersheds benefit from land conservation**

The Land Conservancy is protecting our lakes, rivers and streams by preserving the land that drains into those waterways. Clean, healthy watersheds are critical to the future of our region: If a lake or stream is impaired or threatened, it could mean the water isn’t suitable to drink, swim in or eat fish caught there. To date, the Land Conservancy has protected the most land in the Chagrin River watershed (7,496 acres), followed by Pymatuning Creek (6,881), Grand River (6,071) and the Cuyahoga River (4,224). Everyone lives in a watershed, and the Land Conservancy is committed to keeping our waterways clean.

**ACRES PROTECTED BY WATERSHED**

- **Arcola Creek**: 90
- **Ashtabula River**: 80
- **Beaver Creek-Frontal Lake Erie**: 66
- **Black River**: 2,441
- **Chagrin River**: 4,224
- **Cuyahoga River**: 7,496
- **Euclid Creek-Frontal Lake Erie**: 50
- **Grand River**: 6,071
- **Huron River**: 2,597
- **Lake Erie Islands**: 184
- **Little Beaver Creek**: 281
- **Mahoning River**: 1,311
- **Old Woman Creek-Frontal Lake Erie**: 120
- **Pymatuning Creek**: 6,881
- **Rocky River**: 1,054
- ** Shenango River**: 2,902
- **Tuscarawas River**: 575
- **Unknown**: 232
- **Vermilion River**: 1,078
- **Walhonding River**: 233

**Thriving Communities leads land bank efforts**

Thriving Communities Institute, the Land Conservancy’s urban revitalization arm, has led efforts to launch county land banks throughout the state. Jim Rokakis, vice president of the Land Conservancy and director of Thriving Communities Institute, was instrumental in the formation of the Cuyahoga Land Bank – Ohio’s first – when he was Cuyahoga County Treasurer. Today, 16 Ohio counties have land banks and 13 more have shown interest in forming one. Only about half of the state’s counties have enough people to be eligible to form a land bank. Land banks are a valuable tool for revitalizing our urban centers because they enable vacant, abandoned and tax-foreclosed properties to be safely held and repurposed for productive use.
Unselfish farm family does ‘the right thing’

Tom Younglas carefully switches his cane from one hand to the other and closes the gate at River View Farm, his family’s picturesque 326-acre property in Lorain County. Younglas, 85, may not walk as well as he once did, but that does not stop him from doing some of the same chores he did as a boy. He still drives tractors, manages a herd of beef cattle and checks the soybean crop.

“Once a farmer,” says Jane Younglas, his wife of 61 years, “always a farmer.”

They smile at each other. It is that kind of understanding that prompted the Younglases to permanently preserve their farm in Penfield Township and to do so with the blessing of their four living children. The Land Conservancy this year honored the couple, who did not even seek a tax deduction for preserving the farm, with its highest honor, the Grimm Family Conservation Medal. Their property is in a section of southern Lorain and Huron counties where the Land Conservancy has helped permanently preserve nearly 5,000 acres of farmland.

The Younglases have endured health problems that might have devastated a weaker family. Four of their five children were stricken with juvenile diabetes. Kevin, the Younglas child who most loved farming, died in 1986 after a pancreas-kidney transplant; brothers Greg and Dennis required the same double transplant in the early 1990s. Their sister, Karen Fabian, lost her eyesight to the disease at age 21. The only child not affected was daughter Sherry Wilson, who now lives in Columbus.

Andy McDowell, vice president of western operations for the Land Conservancy, says helping people like the Younglases is the best part of his job. “They treasure and value the few things in life that truly have lasting impacts, those that are priceless,” McDowell says. “They value the love of family and health first, farm second and all the rest are somewhere off in the distance.”

He adds, “They preserved their family farm simply based on the love of the land that raised them and their family, a farm that has and will continue to do its part to help feed the world. It is difficult, if not impossible, to thank people like Tom and Jane enough for their priceless generosity to future generations.”

Tom’s parents, Nick and Catherine, purchased the farm in 1930. Tom took it over when his father died in 1955.

Today, when Tom and Jane Younglas look out over their property, which has fields, forests and a mile of frontage on the East Branch of Black River, they know it will never be a housing development or a shopping center. A Land Conservancy conservation easement ensures it will remain a farm.

“I really feel,” Tom says, “we’ve done the right thing.”
Visionary conservationist is an inspiration

Bill O’Neill Jr. climbs the stairs of Traydara, the treehouse located just a few paces from his Hunting Valley home. From the landing of the grandkid-friendly structure – the name is a Gaelic reference to the three oaks growing through the treehouse – O’Neill looks out over the 20 acres of land he permanently preserved with a conservation easement about 15 years ago. It is, O’Neill says, one of his favorite places.

“It is kind of like being in a cabin in Maine without having to go to Maine,” he says with a smile.

O’Neill, 80, one of the early supporters of Chagrin River Land Conservancy, which later became Western Reserve Land Conservancy, has always walked the walk when it comes to land conservation. In addition to protecting his own land, he helped craft the groundbreaking 2003 transaction that saved the iconic White North Stables. The Land Conservancy has presented O’Neill with The Sugar Maple Award, one of its highest honors.

“Bill is a humble and a forcible conservation leader who inspires by his example with generous contributions of his time, talent and treasure,” says Rich Cochran, the Land Conservancy’s president and CEO.

O’Neill has a deep passion for the land. The former Leaseway Transportation president and COO, who now owns Dungannon, LLC and is a trustee emeritus of The William J. and Dorothy K. O’Neill Foundation, says he often tells his wife, Kathy, that as long as they were able to remain on their property, “I’d be happy if we lived in a tent. The land is what matters. The land is where my soul belongs.”

O’Neill’s friendship with CRLC founder Steve Morris – “I called him the Obi-Wan Kenobi of conservation. He ran the office, licked the stamps, everything” – led him to a seat on the conservancy’s board and a key role in the 11th hour agreement that prevented historic White North from being carved up for homesites.

“This was a keystone property with a lot of history,” he says. “It was the perfect conservation story, because everyone had a little skin in the game.”

O’Neill, a graduate of Harvard Law School who was trained as an Air Force pilot but ended up working as a member of the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps, grew up in the Chagrin Valley and returned to the region after his stint in the service. He and Kathy have five children and six grandchildren ranging in age from 4 to 13.

The treehouse is a reminder that conservation is a gift to future generations.

“One of the greatest values, I think, is the conservation of land,” O’Neill says. “You have created something that lasts in perpetuity. I view it as an investment, not a donation. You want the outcome to be long-lasting.”

The land is what matters. The land is where my soul belongs.”

– Bill O’Neill

 NUMBER OF LAND TRUSTS MERGED INTO THE LAND CONSERVANCY

13
Family, neighborhood get lift from demolition

They called it The Big Blue Wall. For years, the garishly colorful side of the dilapidated, three-family house next door was all Mike and Adriane Balli’s family, who live in Cleveland’s Slavic Village neighborhood, could see when they looked out the kitchen and living room windows. You might say the Ballis’ outlook improved markedly when The Big Blue Wall – and the rest of the house, which had become a magnet for crime – came tumbling down.

“We were so, so happy,” says Leah Balli, 19, Mike and Adriane’s oldest child.

The house was the first of four – all in a row – that would be demolished on Lansing Avenue over a six-year period. Today, a neatly mowed lawn stretches across those lots. For the Ballis, the park-like setting represents a vast improvement over the crumbling, vandalized and vacant homes.

“It is much better for our family and for the neighborhood,” says Mike Balli, who grew up in Slavic Village and now owns a tree-trimming company in addition to working part-time at United Parcel Service.

Adriane Balli adds, “It also gave the kids (Leah, Nathan, 17, Chloe, 5, and Joshua, 8 months) a yard.”

The Land Conservancy’s Thriving Communities Institute and its director, Jim Rokakis, are working to secure state and federal funding to demolish vacant and abandoned homes like those that formerly stood on Lansing Avenue. The goal is to revitalize Ohio’s neighborhoods by razing vacant structures that will never again be occupied, have become safe havens for criminals and are dragging down property values.

Rokakis estimates 100,000 homes in the state need to be demolished. To date, he and his team have helped secure more than $182 million in demolition funding for Ohio from state, federal and local governments.

“The Land Conservancy has conserved more than 37,000 acres of land and is providing green spaces in rural Ohio for future generations,” Rokakis says. “We are doing the same thing with land banks and demolition dollars – albeit on a smaller scale in our cities – providing green space in urban areas for residents who have stayed and are making a commitment.”

The Ballis, who purchased and renovated their home in 2003, have worked closely with community leaders, including Cleveland Ward 12 Councilman Anthony Brancatelli, who also chairs the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation, also known as the Cuyahoga Land Bank. They say the neighborhood is safer and looks better. In addition, they get along well with their neighbors, one of whom lives in a home renovated by the nonprofit Slavic Village Development.

The family now owns one of the adjacent vacant lots, leases two others and hopes to soon acquire the remaining lot.

Mike Balli says the neighborhood still has problems with crime, drugs, prostitution and illegal dumping.

“We still have a long way to go,” Balli says. “There are still a lot of rental properties in the neighborhood, and there is still crime. But demolishing the abandoned houses has made it a better community.”
A passionate voice for land preservation

You begin to understand Grant Thompson’s long-term view of conservation as he explains how he once rose to the rank of president of the local Ducks Unlimited chapter, even though he’s never hunted a day in his life. All he had to know was that the DU organization had permanently preserved millions of acres of wetlands.

“I saw what they did, and I understood the need,” Thompson says.

Such passion and pragmatism has made Thompson, the chief naturalist for Lorain County Metro Parks and a 26-year park district employee, one of the most respected conservationists in northern Ohio. The Amherst native presided over the Firelands Land Conservancy in 2006 when it became part of Western Reserve Land Conservancy, served as a Land Conservancy board member and now heads our Firelands Chapter.

The titles don’t really do justice to the hundreds of hours of volunteer work Thompson has done for the Land Conservancy, ranging from leading geology hikes to helping folks pan for gold in the Vermilion River.

“I’m more of a hands-on guy,” he says. “I enjoy doing the hikes, getting out and being with people. I can best help in that direction. It is why I do what I do – to help people understand the need to preserve land for future generations.”

Longtime friend Kate Pilacky, an associate field director for the Land Conservancy in Oberlin, says,

“Over the years, the Land Conservancy has always been able to count on Grant to share his knowledge, time and passion for nature.”

– Kate Pilacky

“Grant’s enthusiasm for the great outdoors is legendary. Over the years, the Land Conservancy has always been able to count on Grant to share his knowledge, time and passion for nature. He has been a great asset to the Land Conservancy and the Firelands field office in ways too numerous to mention. Got a question? Ask Grant, he’ll know.”

Thompson has served in a number of roles with the park district, which has grown from 3,000 acres when he started to 10,000 acres today. In addition to serving as a naturalist, he has managed all but three of the system’s 22 reservations and oversaw the renovation of Schoepfle Garden in Birmingham Township.

Thompson grew up on a 75-acre farm in Amherst and spent two years in the Merchant Marines – on ships hauling iron ore on the Great Lakes – before heading to Miami (Ohio) University. He graduated from Miami with a major in philosophy and a minor concentration in land-use management, and today he likes to tell people that he is one of the few graduates “who is actually doing what he went to school for.”

He says he takes particular pride in helping people learn new things about the natural world.

“During the gold-panning event, for example, people are just amazed that (gold) is even here,” Thompson says. “You can explain to them just how that happened, and they are fascinated. It is special.”

Celebrating What Counts: Volunteer Commitment

Number of events the Land Conservancy organized or helped lead during FY2013
Faith Pescatore is watching her rescued horses, Mombo and Delta, graze contently in a pasture at Castlewood Farm. The two Appaloosas may be the largest animals inhabiting Pescatore’s bucolic 25-acre property in Bainbridge Township, but they are not the only ones: She has spotted quail, wild turkeys, groundhogs, coyotes and even an extraordinarily rare albino whitetail deer roaming the grounds.

“It’s become a haven for wildlife, this huge sanctuary. It is amazing,” Pescatore says.

Nothing could please her more. The opportunity to protect wildlife habitat is one reason why Pescatore, a lifelong animal lover, permanently preserved her farm with a donated conservation easement. The easement marked a milestone for the Land Conservancy: It was the 500th property protected by the organization.

Pescatore, who lives in Russell Township, says she is honored to have that distinction and grateful to be able to preserve the farm.

“I love the land, but more importantly I view the land as a home for the animals,” she says. “It disturbs me to see their habitat destroyed. By doing this, I won’t ever have to think about their home being taken away.”

Brett Rodstrom, vice president of eastern operations for the Land Conservancy, praises Pescatore for permanently preserving Castlewood Farm. “Faith protected her property for the right reasons,” he says. “It’s landowners like Faith that recharge our passion and inspire us to continue to work as hard as we do.”

In 2004, Castlewood Farm was the site of the first EverGreen EverBlue, the Land Conservancy’s annual fundraiser. In fact, it was Pescatore who thought up the EverGreen EverBlue name while she was cross country skiing. The hugely successful event, which will next be held on Sept. 6, 2014, now attracts more than 600 people.

“It is really exciting to see how it has grown, and to see like-minded people getting together for such a worthy cause,” Pescatore says.

As a child, Pescatore lived in Florida and Maryland before her family moved to a 3-acre parcel in Russell Township, where she loved searching for crayfish in the creek and traipsing through the woods. “I distinctly remember saying that when I grew up, I wanted to have a lot of land,” she says.

Castlewood Farm is a special place for Pescatore, husband Gary Schambs and daughter Skylar, 17, a senior at Gilmour Academy. It is the setting for “A Bell for Justin,” the children’s book she wrote about the true tales of the real-life horses at the farm. It is where she lovingly cares for a perennial garden with 18 varieties of dahlias and plants, trees, shrubs and flowers that attract wildlife.

And it is where Pescatore enjoys the sights and sounds of nature.

“I can observe 50 different things just by sitting still,” she says. “Make yourself get away from the TV and the iPad for a while. Just pay attention to what is around you. You will be amazed at what you can see.”
When he was 8, Dale Alexander spent part of a family vacation fishing for Cutthroat trout in Montana’s Yellowstone River. He vividly recalls the day he glanced down river and spotted a moose about 100 yards away. “You can’t forget those things, those great outdoor experiences,” Alexander says.

Today, Alexander is helping ensure that Ohioans can have special places much closer to home. The first executive director of the Carroll County Park District is guiding the growing park system in a region blessed with bountiful natural resources, including surface water, rich farmland and oil and gas deposits.

The relatively young park district – it was formed in 1999 – now consists of the 55-acre Bluebird Farm Park and the 42-acre Carroll Community Park, both on the outskirts of Carrollton. Under Alexander’s guidance, the park system hopes to eventually have five reservations in the four corners and central portion of the county connected by linear parks, bikeways and hiking trails obtained from utility corridors and abandoned railroad rights-of-way. It is an ambitious plan that the district believes it can accomplish with the help of the Land Conservancy, which in 2013 began work in Carroll, Columbiana and Jefferson counties.

“The vision is to create parks throughout the county for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors. We’re a district without a levy, so we need to develop revenue from a number of sources,” Alexander says.

Maggie Corder, associate field director for the Land Conservancy, says she looks forward to assisting the park district, adding that the Land Conservancy has helped a number of county park systems acquire land and fund projects.

“As a resident of this area, and an avid park-goer, I am extremely pleased that the Land Conservancy is now available to partner with park districts in Carroll, Jefferson and Columbiana counties,” she says. “With this mechanism in place there will be more opportunities for park districts to accomplish their goals and provide more recreational areas to the communities they serve.”

Bluebird Farm is a stunningly beautiful property that includes an amphitheater, gift shop, trails, restaurant (the park district is currently looking for an operator), a toy museum and the park offices. Carroll Community Park, which has soccer and baseball fields, a playground, trails and a pavilion, has been improved with the help of community partners, including the Carroll County Community Foundation, Rex Energy and Fusion Ceramics Inc.

Alexander, who was born and raised in Lakewood, has spent more than three decades in the field of recreation. He worked for the city of Cleveland before serving as director of parks and recreation in Broadview Heights and Watertown, S.D. He, wife Laura and their four Labrador Retrievers live in a house on the Bluebird Farm grounds; their son Ryan, 23, resides in Cuyahoga Falls.

Currently, the park district is collaborating with the Land Conservancy and the Ohio Department of Transportation on the possible creation of a park in the northern part of the county along Sandy Creek between Minerva and Malvern. Other projects will also be considered as opportunities arise and funding permits.

Alexander says while oil and gas leases have improved the financial outlook for many Carroll County landowners, most don’t seem eager to move away. “They hold their homeland,” he says, “very close to their vest.”
Celebrating What Counts: Planned Giving
Couple makes lasting gift to conservation

It would be easier to list the volunteer jobs Jane and Richard Whitehead did not do in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park than those they tackled.

Between them, Jane and Richard logged about 6,000 volunteer hours with the nonprofit support group Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park, formerly Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association. Jane entered volunteer information into the organization’s database, while Richard did boundary surveys, property inventories and trail cleanups in his 12 years as a park volunteer. They both worked as elves – yes, elves – on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad’s Polar Express.

“Anything they wanted done, we did,” Jane says with a laugh.

Since retiring from B.F. Goodrich and moving from Brecksville to Hudson’s Laurel Lake Retirement Community three years ago, the Whiteheads have scaled back their volunteering but not their commitment to land conservation. They recently joined the Land Conservancy’s White Oak Legacy Society, a special group of Land Conservancy supporters who have generously included us in their estate planning.

The Whiteheads did so by completing a Charitable Gift Annuity with the Land Conservancy.

“We believe very strongly in preserving land. It is so important,” Jane says.

Jane and Richard – both of whom have degrees in chemistry and worked in the field – first learned about the Land Conservancy in the early 2000s from Peg Bobel, an author and longtime Medina Summit Chapter member who at the time headed the national park support group. The Whiteheads have been regular supporters of the Land Conservancy since 2004 and joined the White Oak Legacy Society earlier this year.

“They have been great supporters of Cuyahoga Valley National Park and were two of my best and most reliable volunteers,” Bobel says. “They are a delight to work with and two of the gentlest, most generous people I know.”

After the Whiteheads discussed the idea of making a lasting gift to the Land Conservancy, Richard says he encouraged his wife to tour the organization’s headquarters in Moreland Hills and find out more about its mission. She did just that and came away feeling good about the work.

Richard, a Lake County native who graduated from Mentor High School and Bowling Green State University, and Jane, who was born in Canton and graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University, worked together at the B.F. Goodrich facility in Brecksville before retiring. When they travel – and they vacation approximately six weeks each year – Richard says, “We always seem to end up stopping at all the state parks.”

Jane says she and her husband believe conservation is important.

“It is our gift to future generations,” she says.
Statement of Financial Position
June 30, 2013 & 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>June 30, 2013</th>
<th>June 30, 2012</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Cash Equivalents</td>
<td>$1,099,821</td>
<td>$1,572,860</td>
<td>$(473,039)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pledges Receivable</td>
<td>1,491,716</td>
<td>1,816,962</td>
<td>(325,246)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>743,589</td>
<td>1,180,526</td>
<td>(436,937)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes Receivable</td>
<td>190,000</td>
<td>408,000</td>
<td>(218,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation Property</td>
<td>12,019,886</td>
<td>18,531,303</td>
<td>(6,511,417)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deposits - Land Purchases</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>5,756,264</td>
<td>3,277,534</td>
<td>2,478,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Assets</td>
<td>77,250</td>
<td>81,746</td>
<td>(4,496)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ASSETS</td>
<td>$21,528,526</td>
<td>$27,018,931</td>
<td>$(5,490,405)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loans Payable</td>
<td>10,879,754</td>
<td>14,563,050</td>
<td>(3,683,296)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>159,107</td>
<td>993,492</td>
<td>(834,385)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deposits - Land Sales</td>
<td>528,600</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>(271,400)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accrued Expenses</td>
<td>343,558</td>
<td>225,605</td>
<td>117,953</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL LIABILITIES</td>
<td>11,911,019</td>
<td>16,582,147</td>
<td>(4,671,128)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET ASSETS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>6,546,416</td>
<td>6,609,737</td>
<td>(63,321)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Restricted</td>
<td>3,071,091</td>
<td>3,827,047</td>
<td>(755,956)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL NET ASSETS</td>
<td>9,617,507</td>
<td>10,436,784</td>
<td>(819,277)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$21,528,526</td>
<td>$27,018,931</td>
<td>$(5,490,405)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statement of Revenue and Expenses  
July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2013 Unrestricted</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP Program Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of Conservation Property</td>
<td>$6,724,255</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$6,724,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Program Revenue</td>
<td>3,868,400</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>3,873,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,592,655</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>10,597,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philanthropic Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Grants</td>
<td>812,417</td>
<td>160,801</td>
<td>973,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Donations</td>
<td>851,828</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>851,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Donations</td>
<td>282,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>282,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events Net Revenue</td>
<td>163,285</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>163,285</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,109,530</td>
<td>160,801</td>
<td>2,270,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest &amp; Investment Revenue</td>
<td>31,148</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions satisfied by Payments</td>
<td>921,757 (921,757)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>952,905 (921,757)</td>
<td>31,148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GROSS REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>13,655,090</td>
<td>(755,956)</td>
<td>12,899,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Expense</td>
<td>12,284,439</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12,284,439</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>385,648</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>385,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>1,048,324</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,048,324</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSE</strong></td>
<td>13,718,411</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13,718,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUE OVER (UNDER) EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>$8(63,321)</td>
<td>$8(755,956)</td>
<td>$8(819,277)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Land Protection Fund Donors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company/Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Frank Zatko &amp; Ms. Mary Beth Zatko</td>
<td>Supply Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. William Summers Jr.</td>
<td>Mason Structural Steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Michael Stone</td>
<td>Sherwin-Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. &amp; Mrs. John T. Makley</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. John Leech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. James Baldwin</td>
<td>Ms. Kathy K. Leavenworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lee B. Wood</td>
<td>Ms. Patrice A. Kouvas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Mary Frances Haerr &amp; Kal Zucker</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. William M. Baldwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim &amp; Tracy Zuccaro</td>
<td>Dana Zintek &amp; Lisa Daiber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Zintek &amp; Lisa Daiber</td>
<td>Dr. James Zins &amp; Dr. Cynthia Zins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Sean Hice</td>
<td>Mr. James H. Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. John E. Grimm</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairmount Minerals, Ltd.</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward M. Yandek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Howard Wright</td>
<td>Jo &amp; Bill Wooldredge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo &amp; Bill Wooldredge</td>
<td>Woodscroft Surveying Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted &amp; Diana Woodbridge</td>
<td>Ted &amp; Diana Woodbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodscroft Surveying Inc.</td>
<td>Dana Zintek &amp; Lisa Daiber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Kathy K. Leavenworth</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. William M. Baldwin</td>
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<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. John E. Grimm</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jo &amp; Bill Wooldredge</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### In-Honor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company/Institution</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. &amp; Mrs. James Kotapish Jr.</td>
<td>Viki &amp; Marc Byrnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Stevens</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. John Koepke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Stevens</td>
<td>Viki &amp; Marc Byrnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Stevens</td>
<td>Mary Frances Haerr &amp; Kal Zucker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Stevens</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. John Koepke</td>
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</tbody>
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### In Memory of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company/Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Meg Martino</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Tim Hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Meg Martino</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Tim Hunter</td>
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<tr>
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### In Honor of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company/Institution</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black River Audubon</td>
<td>Steve Mitrovich</td>
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<td>Steve Mitrovich</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company/Institution</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The John E. Grimm Family Foundation</td>
<td>Steve Mitrovich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The John E. Grimm Family Foundation</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Company/Institution Donors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company/Institution</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

### In Memory of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company/Institution</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Cocoa Foundation</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cocoa Foundation</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
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<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
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### In Honor of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company/Institution</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W&amp;H Land Protection Charitable Trust</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W&amp;H Land Protection Charitable Trust</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Cocoa Foundation</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cocoa Foundation</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Edward F. Meyers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All text content has been converted to a plain text representation as if it were being read naturally. The table structure has been preserved to maintain the data's integrity. Any pagination or formatting details have been removed to ensure a clean, readable output suitable for further processing or analysis.
Western Reserve Land Conservancy extends its thanks to the following people:

- Akron Community Foundation
- Harriet Alger
- Gary Alkire
- Dick Ames
- Jeff Arona
- Ashland Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Ashland County Park District
- Aurora Title
- Babcock Family
- Ned Baker
- Tom Barratt
- Taylor Barratt
- Mary Becker
- Paul & Susie Belanger
- Amanda Bennett, Ohio Department of Farmland Preservation
- Sandy Berkes
- Karen & Larry Bettcher
- Black Oaks
- Ryan Harrel
- Pete McDonald
- Anthony Papaleo
- Zach Smolko
- Black River Audubon
- Black River RAP
- Bloomfield Township Trustees
- The Blues Birds
- Jeremy Dubsky
- Paul Pira
- John Puchan
- Jim Blum
- Peg Bobel
- Jim Bolton
- Gail Bowen
- Chet Bowling
- Kathleen Bradley
- Anne Briechle
- Joyce & Wilber Browand
- Wes Brown
- Foster Brown
- Simeon Brown
- Eileen Bulan, Mayor of Vermilion
- Jeff Burr
- Dan & Judy Buttlar
- Jacqueline Cabonor
- Catharina Melts Caldwell
- Margaret A. Cannon, Esq.
- Dorothy Carney
- Case Western Reserve University
- Charles M. & Helen M. Brown Memorial Foundation
- Edith Chase
- Steve Chavez
- Jennifer Chipner
- Ken Christensen
- Julius Ciaccia, NEORSD
- City of Lorain
- Cleveland City Council
- Cleveland Museum of Natural History
- Dr. Jim Bissell
- Renee Boronka
- David Kriska
- Keith Moran
- Larry Rosche
- Judy Semroc
- Jim Coker
- Doloros Cole
- Columbiana County Park District
- Dorothea Betz
- Thomas Butch
- Marie Cox
- Eileen Dray-Bardon
- Rachael Esterly
- Michael West
- Columbiana County SWCD
- Matt Brown
- Pete Conkle
- Lindsay Short
- The Conservation Fund
- Patricia Cook
- Fran & Roger Cooper
- Lynda Costilla
- Jerry Cowie & Family
- Wayne Cox
- Todd Crandall
- Travis Crane
- Chris Craycroft, Portage Park District
- Margaret Cummins
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation
- Beau Daane
- Norm Damm
- Carl & Mary Daniels
- Davey Resource Group
- Ana Burns
- Ken Christensen
- Todd Crandall
- Davey Tree
- Jeff Dick
- David DiTullio
- Doan Brook Watershed Partnership
- Jack Dolan
- Peter Dolan
- Ducks Unlimited
- Jason Hill
- Roy Kroll
- Russ Terry
- Eastgate Council of Governments
- Stephanie Dyer
- Rachel McCartney
- EHOVE Career Center
- Dr. B. Mrs. Lloyd H. Ellis
- Dr. B. Mrs. Ibrahim Eren, Brownhelm Horticultural Learning Center
- Eva L. & Joseph M. Bruening Foundation
- Theresa Evans
- Diane Farr,
- Fat City
- Jimmy Baurco
- Jim Hoyt
- Tonja Sletetcher
- Harvey Webster
- Ralph Webster
- Amy Firem
- First Energy Corporation
- Bill Beach
- Harry Flannery
- Jeff Mosher
- Ketan Patel
- Josh Sponsaull
- David Wareham
- Doug Weber
- Dave Winston
- Franklin County Land Bank
- Freedom Township Trustees
- James Hammar
- Roy Martin
- John Zizka
- Sally Gardner
- Mary Garvin
- Geauga Park District
- Jim Gerspacher
- Tan Gillespie
- Barb Gillette
- Bill Gorr
- Will Gottfried
- Grafton Township Trustees
- Greater Mohican Audubon
- Laurel Gress
- Clark Hahn
- Hamilton County Land Bank
- Matt Harbage, NRCS
- Corey Patrick Harkins
- Harvard University
- Wes Hatch
- Pat Hazelton
- Marsha Heiske & Larry Forthofer
- Sharon & David Herzer
- Chip Hess
- Mary Heuy
- Doug & Sue Hicks
- Hill 'n Dale Club
- Mark Hoberect
- Jeff Holland
- Gregory A. Huber, Esq.
- Marilyn Hyde
- Andrea Irland
- The J.M. Smackes Company
- Jeanne & Chuck Jacobchak
- Tom James, Medina County Park District
- Ray Jarrett
- Jean Thomas Lambert Foundation
- Eric. Jennings
- Charlotte Karson
- John Katsko
- Curt Keal
- Kelleys Island Audubon
- Kelleys Island Park Board
- Kendall at Oberlin
- Ron Kotkowski
- Fae Krokey
- Dean Kulwicki
- David Liam Kyle
- Kyle Kyseula
- Robbie LaCroix
- Charles LaFave
- Lake County SWCD
- Lake MetroParks
- Seth Begeman
- Amy Dirks
- Dennis Eckart
- Nancy Martin
- Paul Palagyi
- John Pogacnik
- Vince Urbanski
- Guy Wagner
- Elaine Lamb
- Matt Laurich
- John Lawton
- Leadership Medina County
- Cathy Leary
- Kathy Leavenworth
- Pat Leech
- Holly Leclon
- Tom & Betty Leib
- Jami, Rick & Eric Lieberman
- Greg Lips
- Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation
- Board Members
- Richard Berg
- Bradley Bosley
- Carol Brez""
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.