

TECUMSEH LAND TRUST



Fall 2019

Inside This Issue

Jacoby Partners Update

Battle Easement

Whitehall Auction—
20 Years Later

Reaccreditation Public
Comment Period

Calendar

New Land Preservation
Specialist

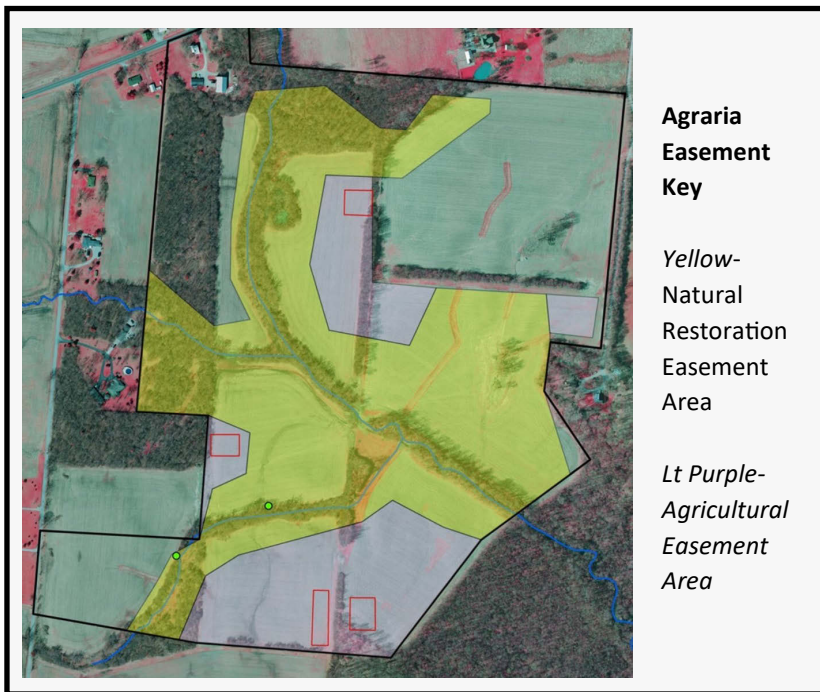
Volunteers Needed

Mining & Solar Farm News

Cover Crops

Annual Poetry Reading

27,695 acres
preserved



**Agraria
Easement
Key**

Yellow-
Natural
Restoration
Easement
Area

Lt Purple-
Agricultural
Easement
Area

Agraria Easements Signed Restoration & Regeneration Begins

The two conservation easements on Agraria became TLT's first Jacoby Partnership conservation easements to close from the Regional Conservation Partnership grant it was awarded. Signed at TLT's annual meeting on June 2nd, these easements protect 88 acres of Agraria, depicted in the map above. Agraria, located just south of Dayton-Yellow Springs Road, was purchased by the Arthur Morgan Institute for Community Solutions in 2017. The larger of the two easements is the Agraria Natural Restoration Easement, shaded in yellow on the map. The Agraria Agricultural Easement is the area in light purple and permitted sites for agricultural structures, such as sheds or wells, are outlined in red.

The Nature Conservancy's investment in the Jacoby Partnership will be approximately \$800,000 over the next 4 years, with creek and wetland restoration work to begin in 2020. Invasive species removal has begun with a crew out of Cincinnati called Groundwork Green Corps. Green Corps is a national workforce development program that gives young people work experience in environmental jobs.

Agraria farmer, Jason Ward, will soon plant winter wheat in the agricultural easement fields, as well as the non-wooded restoration buffer areas in yellow. The wheat will suppress weeds as well as yield a crop. Sorghum or cereal rye will be planted in the buffer areas next summer, followed by native grasses, forbs, and trees in the fall.

"Protecting local farmland, water, and natural areas forever."

Tecumseh Land Trust

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Cathy Holcomb, *Office Manager*
Jenny Randolph, *Office Assistant*

Founded in 1990, we are a private non-profit conservation organization serving Clark and Greene counties and surrounding areas. Our mission is to preserve agricultural lands, natural lands, water resources, and historic sites in voluntary cooperation with landowners, and to educate the public about permanent land preservation.

To learn more contact us at:
937-767-9490
tecumsehlandtrust.org

TLT does not solicit in states in which it is not registered as a charity.



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

Jacoby Partners in Action

Water Team

Partners from Central State, Xylem, Yellow Springs Schools, TLT, Agraria, and private landowners and volunteers are at work establishing new water quality testing sites in the project area and coordinating the data gathered with that from other sites up and downstream. While much information has been gathered, it has not been accessible or usable by local landowners or citizen scientists. The team hopes to get a database set up and running soon, providing information that will be useful even after the Partnership Project period ends.

Conservation Practices through EQIP

Layne Garringer, our District Conservationist located at Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District, has made several visits to evaluate properties in the project area for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). EQIP can pay most of the costs of a variety of conservation practices, including planting cover crops, trees, and buffer strips. Improving pasture practices, converting to organic farming, and nutrient planning and management are also included. Two applications have been made for properties in the project so far. Up to \$380,000 is available for EQIP and related technical assistance in the remaining four years of the project.

Awards for Three New Agricultural Easements

Funding from two partners – the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service – is pending as we await a final contract to purchase easements on 3 farms in the project area, two in Bath Township and one in Miami Township. More than \$1.3 million remains available from partners for easement purchase through the next four years of the project, from these funders, along with the Ohio Public Works Commission, Ohio EPA, and the Village of Yellow Springs. TLT staff are ready to evaluate properties for easement funding year round.

Education for Landowners and Farmers

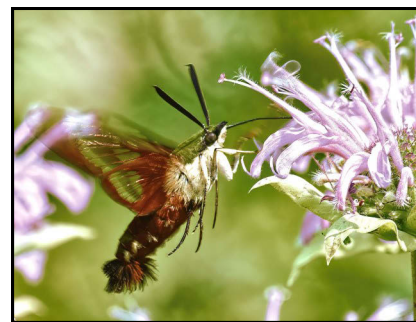
TLT staff and interns are keeping in touch with 80 landowners in the project area, providing information about upcoming conferences and events as well as programs available for their property. TLT and Agraria are planning their next conference on local food and farming practices for March 13 – 15. Antioch College will host the first two days of the conference, and the final day will feature demonstrations of restoration and regenerative land management and agricultural practices on Agraria.

Jacoby Partnership Project

Pollinator Photo Contest Winners



Barbara Vincent-1st place



John Beasley-2nd place



Battle Easement

In addition to farmland and natural areas, TLT holds conservation easements on three historic buildings. The most recent is the office and apartment building at the corner of Xenia Avenue and Limestone Street donated to Antioch College this year by David and Esther Battle.

The main portion of what is now 403 Xenia Avenue was finished for physician James Madison Harris and his wife Jerusha Peacock Hall in 1875. Both had been affiliated with the College and wished to settle in Yellow Springs with their growing family. Their home included offices for Dr. Harris, so from its beginning this has been a house with a shingle out front.

James continued to practice medicine at this location for a number of years after Jerusha's death in 1878. Five more doctors and a dentist were to occupy the space between 1897 and 1920. The last of these, Dr. Rush Richison, who briefly served as mayor of the village, built the brick addition and porch on the back of the house in 1916. When his family moved to Springfield in 1920, he sold 403 Xenia Ave. to the Presbyterian Church to use as their manse.

In 1944, the Church sold the house to the Inwoods, who opened The Old Trail Gift Shop. When architect Max Mercer purchased the property in 1959, he began extensive interior remodeling, creating a few apartments. John Thomas Russell owned the building and rented out the office and living spaces from 1978 to 1982, when he sold it to David and Esther Battle.

The Battles have used studio and office spaces themselves in addition to being landlords to a number of other practitioners. As the owners with the longest tenure, they had come to appreciate of the historic exterior features of the building and its location in the historic district of Yellow Springs, which led them to TLT to permanently preserve the building.

TLT also protects historic buildings.

IRA Distribution

The Good News About Being 70!

Almost everyone reading this newsletter has contributed financially to TLT over the years. We all do what we can to keep this important organization going strong. For some of us, a now permanent provision of the federal tax law allows individuals to donate directly from an IRA to a non-profit like TLT. Individuals who are 70-1/2 or older are mandated to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) each year from their IRA. This distribution will be taxed by the IRS as income. However, any part of this distribution transferred directly to a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization is not included in your adjusted gross income. Take the time to consult with your tax advisor about this provision. Perhaps this will be as good a fit for you as it was for me.

~Bob Huston



Thank you to the merchants that take the time and effort to participate in this program. Their efforts continually raise funds to be used for conservation projects in Miami Township.

Adoption Link

Arthur Morgan House

Asanda Imports

Current Cuisine

Earth Rose Imports

House of Ravenwood

Peifer Orchards

Wander & Wonder

Yellow Springs Brewery

Yellow Springs Psychological Center

Whitehall Farm Auction Remembered

Twenty years ago when the Whitehall Farm went up for auction TLT did not have the benefit of state and federal funding programs to purchase conservation easements. Today, TLT is able to focus on protecting agricultural lands, because of support from state funds through the Clean Ohio program and federal funds through the Farm Bill to fund conservation easements on farmlands. The Whitehall Farm auction highlights the importance of these dedicated government funding programs to farmland preservation.

When the Whitehall Farm auction was announced, TLT wasn't sure how to save the farm. But the concern for its fate was real. People were "afraid developers would come in and develop mansions that no one could afford" said Ed Davis, TLT Board Member. The 940 acre farm stretches along Route 68 between Young's Dairy and Yellow Springs.



TLT shared that concern and sprang into action by alerting the community, raising money, and reaching out to farmers with interest in buying land. Mariann MacQueen remembered "it was a time to experience the community coming together, and by community I mean everyone from Kindergarten kids all the way up to 90 year olds. Everyone did whatever they felt moved to do." In a few weeks the land trust had raised over a million dollars, hoping the money would assist a buyer interested in putting a conservation easement on the land.

Community activists, as well as TLT, attended the auction with money for the easement. Dave and Sharen Neuhardt, owners of the Whitehall mansion, realized they would have to buy the whole farm to protect the land surrounding their home. Sharen Neuhardt, remembering the night, said "we saw that to do what we wanted to do we had to reach out and take control." The Neuhardts partnered with TLT and local farmer, Lamar Spracklen, to have the winning bid. The community was successful in saving Whitehall Farm!

Evelyn LaMers, TLT Board Member at the time, remembering the success said "I recommend everyone be part of a big community project. You will see people using their ingenuity in all kinds of creative ways."

It takes a community

CALENDAR

December 13, 2019

8th Annual Solstice Poetry Reading

7-9 p.m.

**Vernet Ecological Building,
Glen Helen**

405 Corry St.

Yellow Springs, 45387

See article on page 8.

December 14, 2019

TLT Holiday Open House

1-4 p.m.

TLT Office

4633 US RT 68 N

Yellow Springs, 45387

Join us at the land trust office for some tasty treats and fun! TLT merchandise will be for sale.

March 13-15, 2020

Growing Green

Conference

Antioch College

One Morgan Place

Yellow Springs, 45387

Info will be posted on tecumsehlandtrust.org

Ales for Acres

Yellow Springs

Brewery

305 Walnut St.

Yellow Springs



Dec. 5 Jan. 2 Feb. 6

Mar. 5 Apr. 2 May 7

\$1 of every beer sold between 7 & 9 pm goes to the 1% for Green Space Fund

~~Every 1st Thursday~~



**Conservation
Excellence**

Re-accreditation Public Notice

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. Tecumseh Land Trust is pleased to announce it is applying for renewal of accreditation. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. "Tecumseh Land Trust takes this process very seriously because we want to ensure we are providing the very best service to our constituents," says executive director Krista Magaw.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Tecumseh Land Trust complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on Tecumseh Land Trust's application should be submitted by January 12, 2020.

Volunteer Training

TLT Office

4633 US RT 68 N

Yellow Springs, 45387

Jan. 17, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

March 8, 2 - 3 p.m.

May 2, 11 am – noon

July 1, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

March 1, 2020

Sugar Shack at

Flying Mouse Farms

2 p.m.

Parking at TLT Office

4633 US RT 68 N

Yellow Springs, 45387

Great family event to learn how maple syrup is produced.



Welcome Back Lauren!



Meet our new Land Preservation Specialist, Lauren Gjessing. Starting in August, she has been busy learning about the many facets that go into making conservation easements happen. Additionally, Lauren has been monitoring properties, helping to ensure that the conservation easements are enforced.

Lauren participates on the Education Committee and she has already put together educational displays for the Yellow Spring Library and various events. She has contributed to educational and fundraising efforts such as the Harvest Auction, showcasing the sunflower field, and water quality testing with seventh graders on a preserved property.

Previously, Lauren worked with the Land Trust as an Antioch College student as part of the Miller Fellow program. She has a degree in Anthropology and Spanish, and after graduation worked on educational programming in Cincinnati and briefly in Nicaragua.

Lauren loves learning about local history, farming practices, and ways to protect our natural resources!

Volunteers Needed!

I am often asked how our “lean and mean” Tecumseh Land Trust gets so much work done. Only one other local land trust in Ohio has preserved more land, and they have 30 full time employees – we have just added our fourth! The answer is we couldn’t accomplish what we do without lots of talented and committed volunteers!! Our fifteen member volunteer board includes lawyers, farmers, researchers, writers, artists, naturalists, and party planners – all skills we draw upon, from legal review to Operation Bluebird! Scores of other volunteers make possible even more educational, outreach, and fundraising work. As we plan for our 30th year – 2020 – we need MORE volunteers than ever.

How would you like to help? Are you interested in visiting farms and natural areas we protect to plan more walks? There is so much innovation that we can showcase, from supporting pollinators to growing hops, to producing value added products. Do you have artistic skills and interests? Give me a call or send an e-mail anytime to get plugged in! And mark you calendar for one of the volunteer orientations coming up this year: Friday, January 17, 10:30 – 11:30AM; Sunday, March 8, 2 – 3 PM; Saturday, May 2, 11 AM – noon; and Wednesday, July 1, 3:30 – 4:30 PM.

Land Use Challenges

Lendlease, LLC has reportedly acquired leases in parts of Cedarville, Miami, and Xenia townships to construct “Kingswood Solar Farm.” Citizens for Green Acres (CGA) has emerged to inform residents about the proposed development. TLT supports CGA and their concerns regarding land use and ecological implications of utility-scale solar in agricultural areas. Lendlease has not yet filed an application with the Ohio Power Siting Board. Once they do, TLT plans to participate in the Ohio Power Siting Board public input process.

Enon Sand & Gravel (ES&G) has yet to mine on the land they acquired in Mad River Township in 2015. To begin operations, ES&G will need to prove to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency that their effluent will not harm local piscifauna (specifically the red sided dace) or interrupt water flow to the nearby wetland ecosystems. Near the proposed mining area, TLT has conservation easements on 4,377 acres.

Have you ever considered volunteering with TLT?



*Species shown are winter cereal rye, hairy vetch, crimson clover and Austrian winter pea.
Photo credit Walnut Creek Seeds, David Brandt*

Cover Crop Benefits

There has been a lot of talk about the benefits of cover crops in recent years. Tecumseh Land Trust has even brought in experts from around the state to present years of research on their benefits, including Jim Hoorman of the Natural Resource Conservation Service and David Brandt, a Fairfield County farmer who has been using cover crops for 20 years. But when our board visited James Davidson's farm in Pike Township, Clark County, they heard his testimony first hand for using cover crops here locally.

James, a 4th generation farmer, starting planting cover crops 10 years ago. The benefits weren't immediate, but James was looking at long-term farm productivity and was committed to sticking with it. Cover crops have many benefits but perhaps the most important one is reducing soil erosion. James says, "top soil is very shallow in Ohio. Saving top soil is critical to growing crops long-term." The roots of the cover crop keep the soil anchored preventing erosion from both wind and rain.

Increasing organic matter is also important to farm productivity because the "the higher the organic matter, the higher the yield potential," James says. The decaying roots of the cover crops and the micro-organisms that eat those roots help to increase that. Cover crops also reduce soil compaction, which allows the roots to grow deeper to reach water and nutrients and increases water holding capacity of the soil. Cover crop roots tend to be deeper than the roots of cash crops. James notes, "these deep roots can pull up nutrients into the root zone for the cash crop." Ultimately, James has been able to reduce the amount of commercial fertilizer he uses and has seen on average a 5% increase in productivity on the farm. He attributes this increase, primarily to the deep roots of the cover crops which allow the cash crop roots to grow deeper and quicker.

Introducing cover crops into an operation has to be thoughtful. Knowing what the farm needs will dictate what species to plant, because different species have different benefits. You have to carefully time when you plant the cover crops. Some can be planted in August when the cash crops are still on and others after harvest. Then when its time in the spring to plant the cash crops, it's important to consider how you will kill back the cover crops. The most important point is planting a cover crop has to be a multi-year commitment. James said, "it took 3-4 years to see the economic returns, so you have to be committed to planting at least that long."

2019 Pollinator Photo Contest



Colleen Pearson - 3rd Place



Sue Breeden - Fan Favorite Winner

Tecumseh Land Preservation Association
P.O. Box 417, Yellow Springs, OH 45387
www.tecumsehlandtrust.org
937-767-9490

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Fall 2019 Newsletter

With support from



Renewal and Regeneration, something we all need more of in our lives, is the theme for this year's Solstice Poetry Reading. This collaboration between TLT and Glen Helen has remained strong, attracting over 100 attendees each year. The lineup includes the first poet Laureate of Cincinnati, Pauletta Hansel, a Dayton Literary Peace Prize nominee, Moriel Rothman-Zecher, the president of Ohio Poetry Association, Chuck Salmons, and the mother-daughter team Karen and Alexandra Scott. There will be 12 scheduled poets to begin the evening, then a wine-cheese reception sponsored by **Wheat Penny**, followed by an exciting open mic session during which astonishing things always transpire.

405 Corry St., Yellow Springs
\$5 suggested donation
More info at tecumsehlandtrust.org