



Brown's wetland area

## Brown Easement Adds to Ross Township Block

Mike and Nova Brown closed their conservation easement on their 78 acre property in Ross Township, Greene County in January with funding from the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program and United States Department of Agriculture's ACEP-ALE. The Browns were determined to protect their farm showing unprecedented persistence. They had been applying for funding since 2006!

Nova grew up on a farm that was, at one time, the largest hog farm in Greene County and Mike lived on a farm for part of his childhood as well. Originally, they bought the house and two acres of the property when it came on the market. Then, they purchased the other 76 acres at auction some years later. The property is at the corner of a 3,000 acre block of properties with TLT easements near Jamestown--one of the largest continuous blocks of TLT preserved land.

On five acres of the property is the house, barn, and pasture--which is where their children and grandchildren raise livestock for 4-H. A little over ten acres of the property is a forest with a wetland area where the family loves to hunt and enjoy the beauty of the trees. The wetland is located in the center of the woods and holds water 90 to 95 percent of the year. They see lots of ducks and even some bullfrogs who have made it their habitat. Mike said the woods are his family's favorite part of the property and that they just wish it were bigger.

Sixty-two acres of Mike and Nova's property is tillable farmland. It is systematically tiled and some of the best farmland in the area, according to Mike, which is why they think there is no sense in ever building houses on it.

# TECUMSEH LAND TRUST



## Spring 2020

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Auction

**28,317 acres  
preserved**

### TLT Will No Longer Participate in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)

Since the change in program administration in 2017 and the accompanying steep increase in fees, we receive about 50% of the amount pledged to our non-profit. Donors have pledged \$1,222 for the 2019 campaign. We have already paid a total of \$525 in listing and application fees. By the time we pay the distribution fees, we will be lucky to clear \$400 of the pledged amount for 2019. We cannot in good conscience to our donors continue with this program. As an organization, 16% of our expenses deal with fundraising. It looks like 67% of our 2019 pledges will go to CFC fundraising expenses. This program no longer is friendly to small and local organizations.

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

## Tecumseh Land Trust

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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 Partnership Forges Ahead!

We hope this newsletter finds you and your family healthy and secure. Our work at Tecumseh Land Trust goes on, and we are grateful for that. Coronavirus or not, good healthy land and safe abundant water are essential to life on earth - we can't take them for granted. That's why we launched the Jacoby Partnership two years ago, during what feels more than ever like an incredible period of abundance. Despite social isolation, and the need to cancel our Growing Green Conference in March, TLT and our Jacoby Partners continue to work together to improve and safeguard our land and water in the two sub watersheds that surround Yellow Springs – the Jacoby and Yellow Springs Creeks.

### 15 Properties Apply for Conservation Funding

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), along with Ohio Senators Rob Portman and Sherrod Brown, hoped that the Regional Conservation Partnerships made possible by the 2014 Farm Bill would create new partnerships across the public and private sectors, with the goal of connecting more landowners and farmers to best conservation practices. The Jacoby Partnership is one of many such projects aimed to improve water quality in the Mississippi Basin. We are thrilled that our Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS District Conservationist, are now working to rank (and potentially contract for) 15 or more local projects this summer.

### Local Food Systems – Challenges and Opportunities

The focus for the cancelled Growing Green conference was Local Food and Farm Economies, topics that seem even more important at this stressful time for so many families and farmers. Concern about food security for all – having enough safe and healthy food to nourish you – motivated us to plan the “Farm to School: Some Local Success Stories” panel. Before the Coronavirus, many people in our nation and world were not food secure. Sadly, those numbers, especially among the young and elderly, have grown recently. The good news is that local communities and state food and farm networks are reacting quickly with innovative systems for food distribution. TLT, Community Solutions, the Yellow Springs Senior Center, the Yellow Springs Public Schools, and the Yellow Springs Community Foundation are among the many groups more focused than ever on how local food systems can benefit local farmers and local eaters, providing greater food security that can also improve farm income security. We plan to convene our “Farm to School” panel virtually this summer (see page 4). Please contact [lauren@tecumsehlandtrust.org](mailto:lauren@tecumsehlandtrust.org) if you would like to watch the panel or learn more.

### Easements in Process for 4 More Farms in Partnership Area

The increased level of outreach and easement funding made possible through our Jacoby Partners is leading to faster farmland preservation progress than expected. Additional mailings, local conferences, farm visits, and conversations have led more landowner families to apply for easement funding so far. One of the properties applied for is a part of the “Country Common” target area for protection to the east of Yellow Springs and abutting the Glen Helen.

## Jacoby Partnership Project



## Whose Farm is this, Anyway?

Our Miller Education Fellow, McKenzie Smith, started her first Antioch Co-op term with us April 6. If you follow us on Facebook or Instagram, you'll see some of her posts as she learns about farming – how it has changed over generations and the challenges farmers face in the future. One of her first observations is that many non-farmers think most farmland around here is owned remotely, by corporations. This is simply not true! 97 % of the farmland in Ohio is owned by families and individuals. Some may share ownership among family members through a Limited Liability Corporation, but the majority of owners are still living on the land or nearby.

Many farm owners have not actually farmed their ground themselves for a generation or two. In our Jacoby Partnership area, almost 80% of farmland is rented and farmed by another local family with one or more family members engaged in farming full time. Over the last 50 – 70 years, the scale of agriculture has increased, and the size of the equipment used to plant and harvest has grown proportionately. The families who continue to farm generally own some land, but they rent (or create some kind of cost/revenue sharing arrangement with the landowner to farm) more than a thousand acres annually. Farming families with multiple family members in the operation often farm more than 3,000 acres.



Aerial view of the Stockwell farm above the woods in Miami Township, Greene County

## Stockwell Journey— Research to Cover Crops

Fred and Kathy Stockwell, a retired doctor and teacher, plan to start cover crops later this year on their hundred-acre farm in Yellow Springs, however, this was not a quick decision. Over the past few years, the couple has learned about soil health through participating in TLT's book club & attending Growing Green conferences – where they were particularly intrigued by presentations by David Brandt, a long-time cover crop advocate from Fairfield County.

When the Stockwells decided to turn their research into action they worked with their farmer & this coming fall, their farmer will plant cover crops. The Stockwells and their farmer have signed up for National Resource Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program to fund this conservation practice.

Earlier this year, graduate students from Central State University visited the Stockwell Farm to gather soil samples for baseline data on the farm's soil health. These students are studying with Dr. Sakthi Subburayalu, Research Assistant Professor of Soil Science and Agronomy. Dr. Subburayalu's goal is to study "the impact of conservation practices and their impacts on the health of soils and water."

The Stockwells agreed to have Dr. Subburayalu study the health of their soil and monitor various components over the years, looking at the effect of the cover crops. When asked what motivated him to participate in the research study, Fred Stockwell said "if we are starting cover crops now, why not study it now, and have local information in Greene County."

Dr. Subburayalu & Central State University are partners in the Jacoby Creek Partnership. The goal of the Jacoby Partnership is not only to help remove barriers to farmers and landowners from implementing conservation practices, it is also to encourage research partnerships and study the health of the land and water. Dr. Subburayalu would like to have more participants in his research, and all findings will be generalized and confidential. Landowners and farmers can work together to sign up for an EQIP conservation practice, and contact Dr. Subburayalu at [ssubburayalu@centralstate.edu](mailto:ssubburayalu@centralstate.edu).

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*Would your farm benefit from a collaboration  
with Central State University?*

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# CALENDAR

**June 3, 2020**

## **Connecting Local Foods to Schools**

**6:00-7:30 p.m.**

### **Zoom Conference Call**

Panel discussion on how schools are working to meet the food needs of their students, as well as their plans and challenges in connecting fresh, local foods to schools.

Email [lauren@tecumsehlandtrust.org](mailto:lauren@tecumsehlandtrust.org) for the conference-call link

Speakers will include:

**Lauren Marlow**, Supervisor of Nutrition at Cincinnati Public Schools

**Sherry Chen**, founder of Springfield Ohio Urban Plantfolk, & physical therapist in Springfield City Schools

**Bruce Smith**, 4th grade Science Teacher at Benjamin Logan Elementary School

**Ryan Kerns**, 2nd grade Math, Science, and Social Studies Teacher at Benjamin Logan Local Schools

**Donna First**, Yellow Springs Schools' Student Services Coordinator

**Michelle Martin**, Food Service Director with The Nutrition Group at Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District and Greene County Career Center

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**August 2020**

## **Local Foods Dinner**

Look for announcements on our website regarding this annual event.

## **Annual Meeting June 7, 2020 at 2 p.m.**

Plans are being finalized for our 21st Annual Meeting. Members will be sent a postcard with all the details to register for the meeting. Owing to Coronavirus restrictions, it will be a virtual event this year. To be qualified as a member, you must have sent in a donation in the past 12 months. Please call the office at 937-767-9490 or email [cathy@tecumsehlandtrust.org](mailto:cathy@tecumsehlandtrust.org) if you have a question about membership.

We will still be highlighting Mt. St. John Nature Preserve in Beaver Creek Township, our original location for the annual meeting, and the work of the Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC), on the Mt. St. John property. A conservation easement on the Mt. St. John Nature Preserve was completed in October of 2019, and includes an outstanding prairie created out of waste land from the I-675 project in the 1980's. It also includes a 40 acre woods and 1/2 acre woodland fen.

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## **MEEC Native Plant Sale June 27 – Online Ordering Has Begun**

You can support the Marianist Environmental Education Center's work by purchasing high quality native plants at their annual sale. They started their nursery because of difficulty finding natives plants for their own restoration work. They have become a respected supplier in this area.

Please visit [meec.center/event/2020-native-plant-sale](http://meec.center/event/2020-native-plant-sale) for a very informative catalog, order form and instructions. They are still working out details -- aren't we all -- of the logistics of plant pick-up. If you order, they will contact you directly about the pick-up arrangement. They have paw-paw trees for sale!



## **Looking for something to read?**

Here are some suggestions from the TLT Book Club and/or staff:

*Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren

*Overstory* by Richard Powers

*Braiding Sweetgrass* by

Robin Wall Kimmerer

*Desert Solitaire* by

Edward Abbey

*A Walk in the Woods* by

Bill Bryson

*The Moth Snowstorm: Nature*

*and Joy* by Michael McCarthy



15th Annual Harvest Auction attendees enjoy homemade desserts

## **16th Annual Harvest Auction Sept. 25, 2020**

Our auction committee is continuing to monitor the COVID 19 situation. This year's auction may be different from the usual but they plan to make it fun. Time will only tell what we can do and how creative we can be. Stay tuned for details this summer.