



OUR MISSION IS TO CONSERVE NATURAL HABITATS, WATERWAYS AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN SOUTHWESTERN OHIO, FOR THE BENEFIT OF PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS, THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES.



A LANDSCAPE RESTORED

By Liz Woedl
Executive Director

If your vision of paradise includes 120 acres of forest, farmland, wetlands, creeks and a dip in the pond, you may be thinking of the Bruns property near Morning Sun, north of Hueston Woods in Preble County. Visitors to the Three Valley Conservation Trust picnic in late spring of 2016 found it a lovely place to pass the time. Al and Mary Bruns will likely tell you that making a place so welcome to wildlife and people is a labor of love.

The woodland areas contain a diverse population including black walnut, hackberry, black cherry, Kentucky coffee tree, burr oak, chinquapin oak, red oak, sugar maple, hop hornbeam, blue beech, Ohio buckeye, hackberry, sycamore, cottonwood, box elder, pawpaw, and others. As anticipated, the ash trees suffered from the emerald ash borer. The forest floor is so empty of invasive species like

honeysuckle that native shrubs and wildflowers are thriving.

Some fields are planted in crops like corn, soybeans, and wheat. Other fields, enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), have established wildlife food plots. Prairie plants also have a home in the fields: Indian grass, big bluestem, little bluestem, side oats grama, switchgrass, panridge pea, Illinois bundleflower, black-eyed susan, purple coneflower, ironweed, common milkweed, and dogbane.

The property includes a 3700 foot-long section of East Fork Fourmile Creek that eventually empties into



Acton Lake at Hueston Woods. There are also small and large ponds. Here you will find crawfish, fish, frogs, toads, turtles and snakes.

Birds abound in the variety of habitats including red-tailed hawk, great-horned owl, tree swallow, bluebirds, great blue heron, bobwhite quail as well as various shore birds and songbirds. Many mammals such as raccoons, opossum, coyote, fox and white-tailed deer continue to increase their numbers. There is habitat there that the Indiana bat might someday call home.

Riding down to the shaded creek, the riders felt calm and peaceful. Let's make it a point to visit again.... ☘

RUDER PRESERVE: MODELING FOREST RESTORATION

By Donna McCollum
Membership/Outreach Committee Chair

Have you ever looked at your yard and wondered how all that honeysuckle got there? Or what you can do about it? This summer, TVCT has begun a long-term project to remove some honeysuckle on the ~14-acre Helen E. Ruder Preserve and to restore this riparian forest to a more natural condition. The Ruder Preserve is one of the few properties TVCT owns, as well as being ideally located (across from Yeager Stadium) to serve as a model of what anyone can do to create habitat and improve our natural world in their own back yard.

Several workdays are planned for this fall, with more to come in the spring and we still need plenty of volunteers for these days (see sidebar). We've already met a few times and have been clearing near the entrance, but we need your help. If you (or a group you belong to) are interested in helping, contact Bonnie at (513) 524-2150 or

at bkretschmer@3vct.org. We'd also love to have people or groups "adopt" part of a trail or even donate memorial trees (or plants).

Ruder Preserve spans both sides of Four Mile Creek, connects to the Miami Natural Areas trails and lies close to the future OATS trail. The land was donated to Three Valley Conservation Trust (TVCT) in 1999 by the Ruder family, as they sought to preserve the natural integrity of their family's land. TVCT hopes to honor that wish as they clear this riparian forest of invasive species, then plant native species that can spread seed to surrounding areas. In the future we hope to use it as a site for environmental education, like the Wonderful Wednesday programs started this summer. Our goal is to make the Ruder Preserve a treasured natural asset the Oxford community will use, value and want to preserve through continued group and individual efforts. ☘



RUDER PRESERVE WORKDAYS

SEPTEMBER

18 SUNDAY, 9 AM TO NOON

OCTOBER

22 SATURDAY, 9 AM TO 1 PM

(LUNCH PROVIDED)

22 SATURDAY 1 PM TO 5 PM

NOVEMBER

12 SATURDAY, 9 AM TO 1 PM



ANY YARD WILL DO

By Charlie Ford
Songbird Environmental

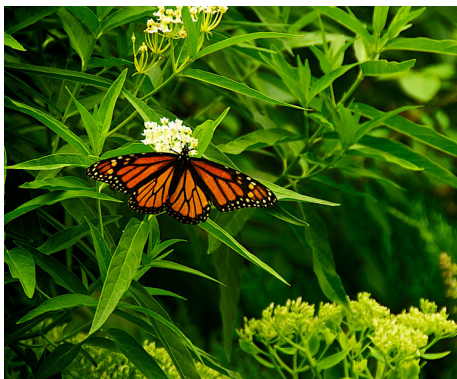
There are 40,000,000 acres of lawn in the contemporary United States. Why not 40,000,000 acres of biodiverse small ecosystems that can support something other than Kentucky Blue Grass? Forget the front yard for now – too much cultural bias. Choose your battles in life. However – back yards (or even small parts of them) can rock for Mother Nature!



If you decide to enhance the natural biodiversity of your property, follow the basics and get some help if need be. Good places to start:

- **Determine the general soil characteristics of your yard.**
- **How sunny or shaded is it (plants are rated in the context of shade tolerance).**
- **Slope can be a big factor when it comes to relative dryness, fertility and shade.**
- **Look for spots that are habitually wet as they will hold lots of promise!**

Don't forget to allow some time (generally measured in minutes



per year) to suppress invasive honeysuckle or other invaders from the plant world. There was a day when our landscape would evolve into a diverse hardwood forest. Now it evolves into a honeysuckle thicket. You most certainly will need to count on adding back plant species that, while not extinct, may have been extirpated from your immediate vicinity.

Once you determine the parameters of your yard, we advocate for a combination of native plants that you enjoy and those that support our native insects, pollinators, birds and small mammals. There is no right answer for these small yard landscapes and



don't let the "perfect" get in the way of the "good". We suggest that people think of their yard as an ark. Lots of biodiversity that is going to provide habitat in the here and now, but also provide seed sources for birds, mammals, wind, gravity, and water to carry to other properties and share the bounty in the not so distant future. So whether you choose reforestation, a wildflower meadow, a prairie, a savannah, or perhaps a small wetland – any yard will do. ☼

RESOURCES: WHERE TO START WITH YOUR YARD

RESOURCES

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION'S GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE RESOURCES:

- POLLINATOR GARDENING AT:
[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/JD7M8U8](http://tinyurl.com/JD7M8U8)
- BIRD-FRIENDLY HABITAT AT:
[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/JTQHWXG](http://tinyurl.com/JTQHWXG)
- ATTRACTING BUTTERFLIES AT:
[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/JDZNWU4](http://tinyurl.com/JDZNWU4)
- AMPHIBIAN DECLINE MYSTERY:
[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/Z9ETUQD](http://tinyurl.com/Z9ETUQD)
- NESTING BOXES FOR BIRDS AT:
[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/JY2Y2QO](http://tinyurl.com/JY2Y2QO)
- NEIGHBOR-FRIENDLY WILDLIFE:
[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/Z4GPZGA](http://tinyurl.com/Z4GPZGA)
- TIPS FOR BACKYARD PONDS:
[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/MZ9PDWT](http://tinyurl.com/MZ9PDWT)
- TIPS FOR LAWN REDUCTION:
[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/JZSXOZW](http://tinyurl.com/JZSXOZW)

CREATING A BIRD-FRIENDLY YARD BY RENE EBERSOLE (AT AUDUBON):
[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/P6VB6LZ](http://tinyurl.com/P6VB6LZ)

AUDUBON OHIO'S RESOURCES FOR BIRD FRIENDLY BACKYARDS AT:
[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/ZZHC73W](http://tinyurl.com/ZZHC73W)

SONGBIRD ENVIRONMENTAL,
CHFRD1@YAHOO.COM

L'OBEL NURSERY: NATIVE PLANTS FOR SERIOUS GARDENERS AT:
6751 BROWN ROAD, OXFORD

SHADEMAKERS NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE, (513) 523-

"BRINGING NATURE HOME" BY DOUG TALLAMY

"LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS" BY RICHARD LOUV



HESSELBROCK FARMS: THREE GENERATIONS OF BREAKING GROUND

By Steve Gordon
Paddys Run Conservation Project Subcontractor

American agriculture began with the family farm. More than two centuries after Jefferson envisioned a “republic of farmers” closely tied to the land, Hesselbrock Farms today produces food and fiber on a family farm operation based in Butler County that encompasses over 3,000 acres of corn and soybeans, 75 acres of wheat, and additional ground in hay. It has not always been that way. In 1950, the newly wed Carl and Marge Hesselbrock leveraged an initial farm loan of \$15,000 on their Morgan Township home farm and through strong backs and smart thinking built it into a successful farm operation managed today by three generations of Hesselbrocks.

For Carl and Marge, cultivating the land is in their blood. Carl grew up on the old Shaker farm on Howard Road where he helped the family milk cows, tend the crops and drive a Fordson tractor. Marge’s youth was spent on the Arnold home farm on Race Lane where Larry Hesselbrock’s farm is today. Marge attended Morgan School in Okeana while Carl went to Ross schools where he excelled in athletics.



True to the Hollywood script, the couple met on a blind date and were married in 1950. The newlyweds first lived in the historic Governor Bebb log house, now located in Governor Bebb Park. By 1958, Carl and Marge built the comfortable brick ranch house where they would raise five children. Over the years, Carl served in the US Army, oversaw the farm and served on Butler County’s Soil Conservation Board. Marge worked at Butler Rural Electric and also did what many quietly effective farm wives did- keep

the books, feed the family and help raise the kids. In 2005, Carl and Marge closed on the first conservation easement in Morgan Township. It included the core 105-acre home farm originally owned by Governor Bebb. The Hesselbrock’s deep commitment to conserving land they have tended for decades has grown to encompass 1,300 acres protected by voluntary conservation easements. As land stewards, the Hesselbrocks have also served as strong advocates for the Paddys Run Conservation Project, a partnership program between the Ohio EPA and the Three Valley Trust. Through this

project over 2,000 additional acres in Morgan and Crosby Townships are protected from development. Married for 66 years, Carl and Marge never could have imagined where hard work would take them when they began their farm in 1950. Carl’s father used profits from the ear corn harvest to help pay down the young couple’s initial farm loan from the Okeana Bank. Although rooted in the past, Carl and Marge see a bright future. They can relax a bit knowing the farm operation they established in over 65 years ago with a corn crop and small bank loan is in good hands. Sons Tim, Larry and Joe are overseeing

the farm operations while three of the grandsons are either actively farming or have expressed a desire to work in agriculture. The daughters and daughters-in-law have also been integral to the farm operation. At 89, Carl has devoted his long life to the family while overseeing the daily tasks and challenges of the farm. The farm’s success is rooted in sound land management practices. Looking over the fields from his front porch, Carl recently mused, “If heaven is any better than this, then I am ready to go.” Maybe, perhaps, Hesselbrock Farms is heaven, and Carl has known this all along. ☼

MANY OF YOU HAD SOME WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS THIS SUMMER

By Donna McCollum
Membership/Outreach Committee Chair

This summer we have been enticed to enjoy the outdoors this summer with a series of Wonderful Wednesdays. These morning and evening activities have been held primarily on easement properties to introduce new folks to



the kinds of lands we protect. And oh, what beautiful land we protect!

Our morning programs started at 9:30am and had many rather youthful attendees. Together we went Birding at the Edge of the Farm Conservation Area, hiked the Salamander Run Preserve, explored Perfect Pond Critters at the Indian Creek Nature Preserve (including a 4" long water

scorpion – the find of the day) and did some Crazy Cool Creekin' along Four Mile Creek.

The evening programs began with a call to action for the restoration of Ruder Preserve, which we have started to tackle this summer and fall (see page 2). During the rest of the evening programs, starting at 6pm, we saw how to make our backyards more

inviting to wildlife (see page 3), biked through several of Oxford's beautiful places, unfortunately missed some fossils and a feast due to weather (we'll try to do this next year!), but ending up with a celebratory cookout and a ramble through the prairie.

We hope that you enjoyed the green spaces we are working so hard to preserve, as much as we did. ☘

LTA REACCREDITATION

As of February 15th, 2012, Three Valley Conservation Trust is an Accredited Land Trust with the Land Trust Alliance (LTA).

The Land Trust Alliance is a national land conservation organization that was founded in 1982 and is based in Washington, DC.

We are coming up on our 5th anniversary as an Accredited Land

Trust. While we are proud of this achievement, it is now time for us to apply for renewal of our accreditation, as all Accredited Land Trusts must do every 5 years and a public comment period is now open. ☘

STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION/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. Three Valley Conservation 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. We

at Three Valley Conservation Trust find that the accreditation process and being members of the Land Trust Alliance provides us with best practices, guidelines and resources that help us fulfill our mission effectively and in perpetuity.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Three Valley Conservation 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) 112 Spring Street, Suite 204, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on Three Valley Conservation Trust's application will be most useful if made by November 11th, 2016. ☘

THREE VALLEY CONSERVATION TRUST



CONSERVING THE NATURAL
ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURAL
HERITAGE OF SOUTHWEST OHIO

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I'D LIKE TO VOLUNTEER!

PLEASE CONTACT ME WITH THE FOLLOWING OPPORTUNITIES:

SHORT TERM:

- ☐ HANDS-ON CONSERVATION PROJECTS
- ☐ MAILING ASSEMBLY
- ☐ TABLING
- ☐ ON-SITE EVENT SETUP

LONG TERM:

- ☐ MONITORING
- ☐ EASEMENT FILE ORGANIZATION
- ☐ COMMITTEE WORK
- ☐ GRANT WRITING

MEMBER/PARTNER SUGGESTED LEVELS

All receive the Valley Trust News (via mail or email)

- ☐ \$20/mo Sustaining Membership (on a Credit Card)
- ☐ \$10/mo Sustaining Membership (on a Credit Card)
- ☐ \$50 Household Membership
- ☐ \$35 Senior/Student Membership
- ☐ \$10 Supporting Volunteer (check interests above)
- ☐ \$_____ (Surprise us with something amazing!)

- ☐ I give permission to list my name as a member/partner.
- ☐ My employer has a matching gift program (I'll send form).

Mail to: P.O. Box 234, Oxford, OH 45056

Or renew online at www.3vct.org



PARTICIPATE IN OUR CORE MISSION

We are obligated to protect properties in perpetuity. Two crucial, perpetual parts of this are Monitoring and Easement File Maintenance. Monitor Trainings and Filing Orientations can be scheduled individually. To become a regular volunteer, please contact Randy (revans@3vct.org) or Bonnie (bkretschmer@3vct.org). Thank you!

BUT THAT'S NOT ALL...

Whether long term or short term, inside or outside, mindless or intellectual, on location or at your home, **we have a volunteer opportunity for you.** Go to:

http://www.3vct.org/?page_id=48 or contact Bonnie at bkretschmer@3vct.org or at (513) 524-2150.

WOW ...THE NEWSLETTER REALLY CHANGED.

- **No Calendar.** We don't want to wait months to tell you about our events. Instead, our Enews now comes out every two weeks. If you haven't seen one yet, go to: www.3vct.org and subscribe.
 - **Semi-Annual Newsletter.** We'll have Spring and Fall Newsletters. In between, our web page, Facebook page and Enews will have all the latest.
- We hope you enjoy our new look and content!*

YOU CAN GIVE MONEY - FOR FREE

What? Yeah, you heard me. It costs you nothing, but when you buy stuff you need anyway, at Kroger and/or Amazon, they will give us a percentage of your purchase price. While it might not seem like a lot, it adds up - so do it when you can!

Kroger will donate 4% of your purchase, if you designate **Three Valley Conservation Trust** as your community rewards charity. This needs to be renewed each year (ideally in April). Please:

- Change your account settings at www.kroger.com
- You can view complete instructions at www.3vct.org
- If you have any questions, please call Bonnie at (513) 524-2150.



Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of your purchase, if you designate **Three Valley Conservation Trust** as your supported charity. To designate your Amazon Smile charitable organization:

1. Go to: <https://smile.amazon.com>
2. Choose "Your Account" from the pull-down menu at the top of any page.
3. Go to the "Settings" box (or on a mobile browser; the options at the bottom of the page) and select "Change your Charity".
4. Search for "Three Valley Conservation Trust" and select it.



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GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY AT THE RUDER PRESERVE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH, 9AM TO NOON

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22ND, 9 AM TO 1 PM (LUNCH PROVIDED)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22ND, 1 PM TO 5 PM (LUNCH PROVIDED)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH, 9 AM TO 1 PM

Work is available for all skill levels and abilities. Some experienced conservationists will be using power tools, so adults must be fully responsible for any children they bring with them.



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper and is also available in digital format. Visit www.3vct.org