

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.

Three Valley Stewardship Team Transitions to New Data Management Platform

By Madison Perry and Caitlin Brown, Foreword by Donna McCollum

Foreword: Much of this newsletter looks at characteristics that have made Three Valley great over the last thirty years. Tom Vogel celebrates your influence as members and donors. Randy Evans considers contributions of former executive directors, especially in welcoming and training dedicated staff. April speaks of acting “intentionally” to conserve land. I would like to celebrate our talented and passionate stewardship team, Caitlin Brown and Madison Perry. The following article briefly explains an initiative by these two to make one of 3VCT’s major work items, monitoring the 220+ easements we hold and writing a monitoring report on each one every year, more efficient. Way to go, you two! **Thank you for your dedication and hard work!**

At the beginning of this monitoring season, the stewardship team began to transition all existing easement data to a new management platform and database system designed specifically for use by land trusts, *Landscape*. *Landscape* allows us to store all of our data about an easement in one place, including site visit information and associated documentation and files. The platform includes a mobile “app”, which allows the monitor to see a property map in real-time, including photo points, areas of interest and their own location. This makes navigation in the field significantly easier and allows monitors to answer questions about the property and mark items of note while still in the field.

The screenshot displays the 'Landscape' software interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Dashboard', 'Portfolio', 'Projects', 'Tasks', 'Funding', and 'Data Viewer'. The main content area is titled 'Old Stone Riding Center' and shows a 'Completed' status. Below this, there's a 'Details' tab with fields for 'NAME' (Annual Monitoring 3/7/2023), 'TYPE' (Annual Monitoring), 'SCHEDULED' (No data), 'START' (3/7/2023 11:15AM), 'END' (3/7/2023 12:06PM), 'METHODS' (Foot), and 'SUMMARY' (No data). A table titled 'Time Tracking (1.66 Hours)' lists staff members and their roles: Madison Perry (Contractor) and Caitlin Brown (Staff), both with 0.83 hours on 3/7/2023. To the right, a map shows the property with a solid blue line for the parcel boundary, a dotted blue line for the path taken by monitors, and white numbers in black circles for photo points.

Example of site visit data within *Landscape*. Solid blue line = parcel boundary; dotted blue line = path taken by monitors; white numbers in black circles = photo points.

Also, staff coded in an updated format for monitoring reports, so once all photo points have been accessed and all questions have been answered, *Landscape* will automatically generate a monitoring report, likely by the time the monitors return to the office. This feature alone, in place of creating reports manually, is estimated to save 165 hours of staff time.

While making the transition to *Landscape*, its capacity to store of all existing paperwork pertaining to an easement has allowed staff time to be dedicated to cleanup of existing digital folders. A more streamlined naming and storage process for these files will save time in the future as well.

The stewardship team aims to have all data migrated into *Landscape* and quality checked by the end of this year so they can work fully in *Landscape* in 2024. The team is very eager to see how this software can continue to transform and modernize the stewardship process at Three Valley, and how we can continue to work to best serve our landowners while maximizing the time of our small but dedicated staff.



By Tom Vogel
Board Chair

Our Gratitude for Members and Landowners is Endless

As we look ahead into 2024, the role of your Three Valley Conservation Trust (3VCT) in conserving land in Southwest Ohio has never been more challenging or vital. Pressure for land development created the need for your Trust nearly 30 years ago, and the 25,000+ acres under easement demonstrates the success we have had in conserving woodlands, wetlands, prairies, and farmland in this region. This would never have occurred without the continued generous support of our members, landowners, and donors.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the three-decade voluntary expertise of our board members and other experts in the field of conservation who have dedicated thousands of hours to your Trust. As we approach the end of another successful year, it is an ideal time to express my gratitude for all past and present lovers of the land who have created this wonderful entity we call Three Valley. Without sounding verbose, I want to commend the efforts of all involved in creating what I believe to be the most professional and

effective staff and board in the history of your Trust. This newsletter is a clear recognition of the strides the staff and board, as it has article after article on some of the advances we have made in 2023.

Noteworthy in 2023 is the creation of two wetland sites in Butler County, the Hoffman and Henshaw wetlands. These projects demonstrate 3VCT is moving beyond the mere establishment of conservation easements to enhancing the easements for wildlife, water quality, carbon sequestration, and erosion control. This is just one example of how we are elevating the role of your Trust to become a major force for land conservation in southwestern Ohio.

Another example of the success in 2023 is the continued improvement at the Helen S. Ruder Preserve. Ruder Preserve is 14 acres of riparian woods that spans both sides of Four Mile Creek near the Miami University campus. 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 land. Today, a new boardwalk enables visitors to safely traverse the preserve and enjoy the wildlife, vegetation, and scenic views of Four Mile Creek. The preserve is being enjoyed by all ages and physical capabilities of residents of the area.

The founders of your Trust would certainly be overcome with joy to see what strides have been made in its 30 years of growth. Your Staff and Board have no intention of sitting on our laurels and gloating over our past success. Never! We are riveted on continuing to be a major force in land conservation in Southwestern Ohio. I invite you to jump on board and continue a glorious ride to future success.

Grant Updates

By April Hamlin

Three Valley has been fortunate to receive more than \$193,000 from grant awards in 2023, that have supported our mission as noted below. We would like to thank the following for their generous support.

- **Oxford Community Foundation**, two awards totaling \$101,534 from the Open Space Preservation Fund for Core Mission Support and Successful and Sustainable Stewardship - Our largest award came from the Oxford Community Foundation and supports our efforts to increase the acreage of protected open green space and improve the stewardship of conserved land.
- As a result of the following awards, we have added a second ADA boardwalk at Ruder Preserve that connects the Oxford Area Trail to Four Mile Creek and has two benches for resting and enjoyment.
 - **Adams Legacy Foundation**, \$10,000, Sustainable Connectivity and Accessibility at Ruder Preserve
 - **The Disability Foundation**, \$10,000, Ruder Boardwalk Extension
 - **Duke Energy Foundation**, \$10,000, Ruder Preserve Restoration and Recreation
- **The James J. and Joan A. Gardner Family Foundation**, \$40,000, Henshaw Wetland Stewardship - This will help Three Valley steward the Henshaw Wetland in perpetuity. The Henshaw Project will develop a new wetland in the Paddys Run Watershed, which has been identified as impaired waters for aquatic life and human health due to the Fernald Superfund site.
- **The Christine Humphreys Fund at Northern Cincinnati Foundation**, \$20,000, Seed Library and Stewardship Program - Our Seed Library and Stewardship program has installed seed libraries around Butler County where visitors can take free native seeds to help increase pollinator friendly habitats. Seed libraries can be found at Ruder Preserve, VOA MetroPark, Cherokee Park, and Timberman Ridge Area of Forest Run MetroPark with more locations soon!
- **Taking Root**, \$500, Ruder Preserve Restoration - With this and a private donation, we purchased, planted, and protected 70 shrubs and trees.
- **City of Oxford**, \$1,500, Biodiversity Communications Educational Campaign - This supported a 12-week summer biodiversity education campaign with help from volunteer community members Amanda Brymer and Carla Blackmar.

Executive Director's Report

As Three Valley Conservation Trust (3VCT) prepares to celebrate its 30th anniversary, I find myself looking back to recall our history, as well as looking ahead and planning how best to situate ourselves for the future.

My personal journey with Three Valley began nearly 10 years ago and has provided me with the opportunity to connect with so many incredible mentors from our conservation community, board members, co-workers, and past executive directors.

I credit Liz Woedl, Executive Director when I began with 3VCT, for welcoming me into the organization's fold, for laying the groundwork and understanding of our mission, and for my early lessons in land conservation. Liz's passion helped foster a love and commitment for our work that remains ingrained in me to this day.

Liz's predecessor, Larry Frimerman, deserves credit for growing and building this organization into a successful conduit for conservation. By forging those early and important partnerships and utilizing his land acquisition expertise, Larry helped expand our mission to meet farmland preservation goals in SW Ohio. We continue to protect land every year through these partnerships.

Our natural and rural landscapes would not be the same if it weren't for the deep commitment and dedication of these two directors. I have been honored to join their ranks, but I humbly recognize that we would not have made these incredible advances in land preservation and stewardship without the dedication and support of so many donors, partners, board members, staff, volunteers, contractors, and interns.

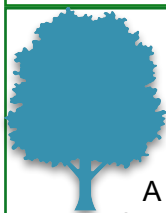
As we prepare ourselves for what the years ahead will bring, 3VCT is circling back and reinvesting in the foundations on which it was built, to serve the region by stewarding our region's forests, farms, and green space integral to our regional character and ecosystem health.

Thanks to your unwavering support, we are confident Three Valley is ready to support our community conservation goals. Our goal remains to ensure we protect a resilient region with clean water, clean air, and the abundant green space essential to our community's overall quality of life.

We look forward to celebrating 30 years of conservation with you, our members, in 2024! Semper Gratus!



By Randy Evans
Executive Director



Planned Giving

By April Hamlin, Development Consultant

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now. (Chinese Proverb)

A few years ago, I got a bit of earth, land that was owned by family I never got to meet. My grandfather planned for his farm to go to his children, and his children carried on the legacy, donating it to their children. I am grateful I can walk on the ridge that looks mostly the same as it did 100 years ago. I can fish in the pond where I caught my first catfish and show my grandson the red barn his great-great-grandpa built. Each year we plant the little pink beans Mamaw grew in her garden. My family was intentional, and I got the reward.

I've spent the last decade in the nonprofit sector focusing on operations, programs, and development. A successful nonprofit must be intentional. As a consultant for Three Valley, I see this intentionality: thoughtful planning and considerations for land, strategic priorities for wetlands and habitats, painstaking restorations of overgrown areas, and unwavering love of the land. For nearly 30 years, 3VCT has been intentional. Generations long after us will view the beautiful landscapes we see today. Your donations have saved over 24,800 acres- that's more than MetroParks of Butler County, Great Parks of Hamilton County, and the Warren County Park District combined. And we have our sights set on more. More streams and habitats to protect, more fields to conserve and trees to save.

Thank you for walking alongside us and continuing to support our mission. Thank you for your deliberate and intentional gifts. Please remember Three Valley in your year-end plans. A Three Valley membership is a great gift for anyone on your list and all donations help save the land you love. For a lasting impact, consider us in your planned giving. Planned giving creates a legacy, often representing the largest contribution one makes to a charitable organization. No matter how you give, know that you are intentionally creating a better tomorrow.

Celebrate Three Valley's 30th Anniversary with a Lunar Feast!

By the Outreach Committee

Three Valley's 30th anniversary is in 2024, and we've decided to recruit YOU into raising funds to support the 3VCT mission. In honor of 30 years of land preservation, and to further fellowship among members and friends, we're hoping you will either attend or host a "lunar feast" (or two or three ...) In 2024, there will be 12 full moons, including a seasonal blue moon, four supermoons, and two lunar eclipses. Wouldn't it be wonderful to raise \$1000 for each full moon?

We'd like to give lots of freedom in how you raise money with lunar feasts. Hosting could be in your home or at a location of your choice. Hosting a dinner can be any meal, any month, any location, and any number of guests you want. If you would like to host a meal, let us know the following as soon as you can:

- Day and date (it doesn't have to be on the full moon date, but it can if you want!)
- Location, complete with address
- Tentative menu
- How many guests
- What price you will charge (the hope is to raise close to \$1000 for each feast)
- How guests can contact you to register

To get your feast on the schedule, check out the full moon dates below and text or email Donna McCollum, 513-544-7638 or donnamccollum@me.com.

To support 3VCT by attending a feast, contact the person who is hosting the feast you want to attend. Soon we will have a list of the days/dates, locations, menus, and contact info on the the 3VCT website, so check there for details.

To start us off, Julie Primack has volunteered to host the first feast on Thursday, January 25th, the Wolf Moon, in her 1804 log cabin (now renovated into the farm house but with hints of its ancestry left in place). Dinner will include wine and appetizers, beef stew with all the trimmings, crusty bread, and salad, topped off with chocolate mousse - yum! She will also be happy to conduct a short tour of her horse barn and facilities for those willing to brave the cold!



- January 25: **Wolf Moon** - because wolves are active at this time of year
- February 24: **Snow Moon** - because snow is most common in the northern hemisphere
- March 25: **Worm Moon** - because soil is warming and worms are getting active
- April 23: **Pink Moon** - when native *Phlox subulata*, which is pink, blooms abundantly
- May 23: **Flower Moon** - because spring flowers are most abundant then
- June 21: **Strawberry Moon** - when wild fruits like native strawberries are ready to pick
- July 21: **Deer Moon** - because deer antlers are fully grown
- August 19: **Super Sturgeon Moon** (seasonal blue moon) - for sturgeon, found in the Great Lakes
- September 17: **Super Harvester Moon** - historically, farmers extended their work by the light of the harvester moon (*Donna McCollum and Hays Cummins volunteer a New Orleans-themed dinner*)
- October 17: **Super Hunter Moon** - this supermoon allows hunting at night before lean winter months
- November 15: **Super Beaver Moon** - because beavers begin preparing for winter
- December 15: **Hail Moon** - because of the cold weather this month brings with it

Full moon information from <https://www.arabiaweather.com>



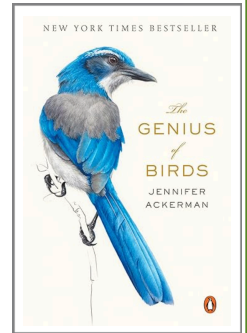
On September 16th about 20 people came out to help pick up trash along 4 Mile Creek, from the Corso Road covered bridge to Route 73. For many year's 3VCT has contributed to the Clean Sweep event organized by Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District. On that day, there were volunteer teams at 18 sites from Franklin to the Ohio River where people turned out to do their part, collecting trash from their section of the watershed. Thanks to all who helped!

Outreach and Education News

Book Club

The 3VCT Book club has finished its meetings for 2023 and is getting ready for next year. You don't have to be a scientist to enjoy our book selections, just be willing to read something interesting. Our first book for 2024 will be The Genius of Birds by Jennifer Ackerman. Birds have, until recently, been considered not very "bright". But Ackerman not only delves into how intelligent birds are, but into how recent findings have influenced our views of what it means to be intelligent.

Thursday, January 11, 7 pm, leader will be George Day. Meetings are held online: email Ben Mattox (benmattox50@yahoo.com) or visit 3VCT online at www.3VCT.org/events-activities-



We have one more fall guided hike - don't miss it!

Thursday, December 28th

3-4:30pm

Helen S. Ruder Preserve, Oxford

We hope you will take advantage of the timing of our last hike of 2023 - are you off work after Christmas and looking for something to do, especially with kids and/or grandkids? Then come on down and hike through Ruder Preserve with Steve Gordon, our favorite Oxford historian. He has a wealth of knowledge about Ruder Preserve, Three Valley, and the topic of the hour - how plants and animals make it through winter - "Fire and Ice". Come and explore, bring your own stories and hear Steve's, and enjoy some light refreshments - roasted chestnuts, anyone?

To support 3VCT and get your own "Hike for Acres" t-shirt, bring along some cash or credit. T-shirts were donated, so all proceeds support 3VCT. T-shirts are \$35, or with household membership \$65. Support Three Valley with your presence and wardrobe!



Save the Dates!

We have some great events coming up before we send out the next newsletter, so be sure to look for details on the 3VCT website (www.3vct.org):

Wines of the Pacific Northwest Wine Tasting - Sign up now!

Bring your friends and enjoy a fun evening tasting five wines from Oregon and Washington, paired with four tasting plates.

Saturday December 9, 2023

6-9 pm at Patterson's Café

103 W Spring St, Oxford, OH

\$100/person

Space is limited, so reserve your spot on the 3VCT website (www.3VCT.org) by December 5th!

Second Annual 3VCT Bourbon Tasting

"Every bourbon has a story".

(Mike Crowder, Oxford bourbon aficionado)

This event is back by popular demand – people really enjoyed our first bourbon tasting last year. Learn about the history and culture of bourbon, with dinner and four bourbons to taste and learn about.



The date is still to be determined but likely Saturday March 9th or 16th. Watch the website (www.3VCT.org) for details.



And finally - 2024 is Three Valley's 30th Anniversary!

We don't know if you know, but Three Valley Conservation Trust began in 1994, almost thirty years ago. We plan to commemorate this anniversary at several events, culminating with a fall Farm-to-Table dinner in late fall. Details are TBD, but we wanted to be sure you knew 2024 is a big year for Three Valley! Look for information on celebratory events in the spring newsletter (and on Pg 4 now!).

What have members been doing lately?

3VCT Annual Picnic

by Teri Wickham, Office Manager

On July 29, one of the hottest days of the summer, approximately 45 members and family celebrated summer and Three Valley Conservation Trust at the Chrisholm Historic Farmstead. Jeff Lehman conducted a tour of the historic building and the barns and shared stories of the past at Butler County MetroPark's Chrisholm Historic Farmstead. The children in attendance were able to enjoy the petting zoo and farmyard play equipment, while Judy and Warren Waldron played engaging music.

Three Valley provided the main course of hot dogs and meat and veggie hamburgers, grilled by a few of our members. Guests and members added a pot luck of yummy foods and desserts. We even celebrated "Almost 30" years as Three Valley Trust and shared an enormous cake. Thank you to all who attended and helped out this year!



Photos by
Julie Primack,
Teri Wickham



Fall Guided Hikes

by Donna McCollum



Giant sycamores (above) dominated the flood plain at the Hoffman wsite. Hoffman photo by Donna McCollum, Costanzo photos by Julie Primack.

In September, about 15 members and friends enjoyed a hike through the Hoffman wetland site. Through the woods and into the river we went, with herpetologist Jeff Davis, looking for critters and just absorbing the beauty of this property that will soon become a functioning flood plain again. This is one of the wetland sites 3VCT has received a grant to improve, thanks to the H2Ohio Program. The giant sycamores, typical of flood plain forests, were a sight to behold, as was the mist rolling in over the fields as we left. What a wonderful night!

In October, we visited another easement, Jon and Amy Costanzo's property in Camden, Ohio, Quail Ridge. These two have perfected



the stewardship of their forests and prairies, providing habitat for native species in prairies (above), forest (left) and wetlands.

Ruder Preserve Update

By Donna McCollum, Ruder mgt. team, Photos by Mark Boardman

Ruder Preserve has seen a lot of action this fall. In addition to working on invasive species removal with various Miami and community groups, we have planted and protected 70 trees and shrubs thanks to a *Taking Root* grant and private donation. Thank you to Dr. Jacque Daugherty's class (photo at right), the Miami Marine Biology Club, the Miami Navy ROTC, Alpha Phi Omega and 3VCT members and staff.



And if you haven't seen the boardwalk on the east bank of Four Mile Creek at Ruder Preserve, PLEASE stop by and check it out. Mark Boardman, Tom Farmer, Steve Nimis, and others have been working steadily to connect the Oxford Area Trail System (OATS) to the stream. Although the west side of Ruder Preserve gets a lot of traffic from hikers and joggers, this section of the boardwalk attracts people who travel the OATS trail. A long-time Oxford resident emailed a story exhibiting the benefits and purpose of all this hard work: "Yesterday afternoon I was checking out the beautiful boardwalk, and I came across a couple sitting on the bench overlooking the creek, enjoying ..."

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Natural History Moment - Local Fauna Prep for Winter Weather

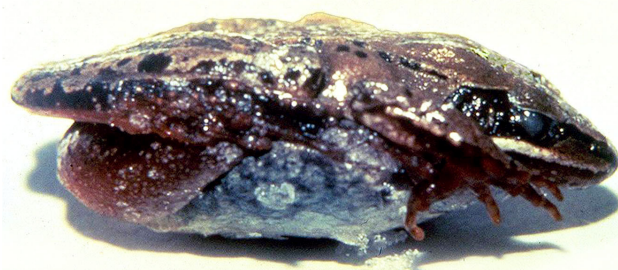
By Jeff Davis

About this time every year, my wife puts away her summer clothes and pulls out her warm winter attire. I debate if I should start the furnace. Morning news meteorologists warn parents the kids will need a jacket at the bus stop. And like us, despite our unusually warm weather near the end of October, our local animals, from insects to mammals, are currently making their own preparations.

Ohio seasonal temperatures range between the 90s and subfreezing. Surviving the stresses of winter requires behavioral or metabolic adaptations, and our local fauna has evolved some remarkable tactics to do so. Reptiles are finding winter hibernacula; on October 26th at a study site in Champaign County, I encountered just one Eastern Gartersnake and one Dekay's Brownsnake instead of my June 8th finding of five snake species totaling 182 individuals. Box Turtles are digging in under logs where they'll overwinter. Aquatic species like Painted and Map Turtles were still basking in the sun at the end of October, likely their last chance before finding a muskrat lodge or safe spot on the bottom of a pond or river, where they'll be insulated from freezing air temperatures.



This Eastern Gartersnake was captured as it emerged from a crayfish burrow where it spent the winter.



Woodfrogs can survive several days with much of their body water frozen during winter.

Amphibians also deal with the onslaught of winter in different ways. Salamanders move underground via small mammal burrows, gaps along tree roots, or openings between rock strata. Toads burrow below the frostline. American Bullfrogs and Green Frogs, like aquatic turtles, overwinter at the bottom of a body of water, protected by a layer of ice at the surface. Species that cannot excavate a burrow or tolerate prolonged submergence in water find refuge under leaf litter on the forest floor where low temperatures suppress their need for food. Wood Frogs, Cope's Gray Treefrog, and Spring Peepers have cryoprotectants that help them survive being frozen for days.

Goldenrod gall fly larvae chew an exit tunnel to the paper-thin epidermis of the spherical gall on their host plant's stem by the end of October. They will wait out winter inside the gall where they will tolerate winter lows by supercooling and remaining unfrozen even though their body temperature will be well below the freezing point of water. If they do freeze, cryoprotectant chemicals will keep their cells from forming ice crystals and they, like those freeze-tolerant frogs, can thaw, metamorphose, and continue their life cycle next spring.



Goldenrod gall fly larvae induce ball galls to develop on goldenrod stems. Larvae feed on gall tissue and overwinter inside. Downy Woodpeckers and Carolina Chickadees open the galls and feed on the protein-rich larva in winter.



Poison Ivy fruits are an important source of food for birds during winter.

Tanagers, orioles, indigo buntings, and other neotropical migrants have migrated back to Central and South America where their choice foods are plentiful while other birds stay with us during winter. Northern Cardinals, Titmice, and Carolina Chickadees, among others, find seeds and dried fruits like wild grapes, poison ivy berries, and other energy rich resources to sustain them. Woodpeckers drill through bark on dead trees and branches where they find overwintering insects. Downy Woodpeckers and Carolina Chickadees even find the exit tunnels made by the fly larvae on those spherical goldenrod galls, peck through the dried epidermis, and extract the plump, protein and fat-rich larvae inside.

Thirteen-lined ground squirrels, eastern chipmunks, and groundhogs spent the summer gorging themselves to build fat stores. As winter approaches, they'll enter the deepest recesses of their burrows, lower their body temperature, slow their metabolic rate, and survive on their fat until they emerge in spring, much thinner, but ready to repeat the cycle. Some bat species, such as little brown and Indiana bats, also lower their body temperature and metabolic rate to survive the winter in caves, mines, and hollow trees. Others, like red bats, migrate south where they will spend the winter actively hunting and feeding like they do here during summer.

So take a walk in the woods and take a moment to appreciate all the life around you and how it will survive until spring!



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Newsletter prepared by: Donna McCollum



*"Valley Trust News,"
 the newsletter for members
 of Three Valley
 Conservation Trust,
 is published twice a year.*

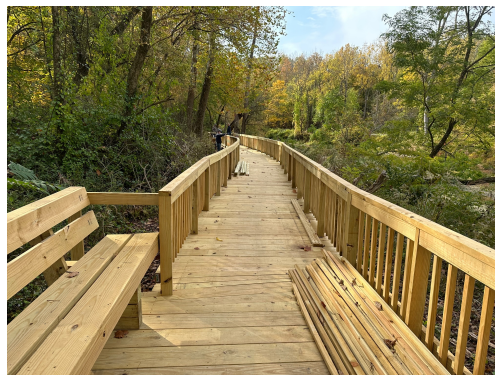
(continued from page 6 - Ruder Preserve Update)



We agree, THANKS Mark, Steve, and Tom!

Above Steve Nimis, Tom Farmer, and Mark Boardman, left to right, take a rest from building. At right is the fruit of their efforts. Photos by Mark Boardman

... the day with their daughter, who was in a wheelchair. They were so happy to enjoy nature together - so thankful for the efforts of all of you who made this possible. Thanks for all you do!"



Support Three Valley Conservation Trust

Membership - show your commitment to land conservation in SW Ohio by becoming a member, renewing your membership, or providing a gift membership. As a Three Valley member, you join people committed to conserving open land, preserving agricultural legacy, clean air and water, and habitats.



Donations - provide additional support to monitor and protect current easements and acquire new ones.

To become a member or to donate, go to www.3vct.org/donate or call the 3VCT office at 513-524-2150 ext. 5.

Attention current easement holders

Please remember that if you plan to transfer your property title through sale or gift, you are required by your easement to notify Three Valley Conservation Trust 30 days in advance. This insures that new owners of the property are aware of the easement.

Would you like to help?

Three Valley has always relied on volunteers in many ways, from helping with the auction and other fundraisers to getting newsletters ready to mail or working on restoration at Ruder Preserve. Another way to help is to join one of the ongoing committees. If you would like to help in any way, contact the 3VCT office at 513-524-2150 for information.

Outreach and Education - recruits the next generation of 3VCT supporters and educates current ones, plans and executes fundraising events

Land Protection and Stewardship - evaluates properties proposed for easements

Property Management - makes decisions about activities at Trust-owned properties

Development - determines strategies for developing a financially sustainable organization through key partnerships and donors

Finance - keeps track of accounts, formulates the budget and informs the board on all financial matters

Three Valley Conservation Trust is a member-funded, not-for-profit, charitable organizations certified by the IRS under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your contribution/donations can be tax deductible.