# 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

### EXCITING NEW MEMBERSHIP EVENTS COMING IN THE SPRING!

From Monitor Training on April 15th to Eco-Cache and Earth Day Events - we've got lots to do.



It may not seem like it right now, but spring is right around the corner and we just can't wait to get outside and enjoy it! We hope you can join us for some great outdoor fun.

On April 16th, Earth Day will be celebrated in the City of Oxford from 9 am to 2 pm in the Uptown Parks. It's Earthfest 2016 and we'll be there so come join us!

On April 20th, we'll celebrate Earth Day with our 2nd Annual Community Night at Kona Bistro in Uptown Oxford! Come out any time from 6 to 9 pm, for good food and drinks with TVCT Members, Board Members and their friends. All tips from the bar, and 10% of tips from the restaurant between 6 and 9 pm, support Three Valley Conservation Trust.

On April 22nd, Earth Day will be celebrated by the City of Hamilton! We'll be at their event, located on High Street at the City of Hamilton and Butler County Government Services Center in downtown Hamilton from 11 am to 1 pm.

On April 23rd, from 2 to 6 pm, we will have another fun Eco-Cache (as in years before), but this one with a Potluck Dinner for extra socializing and fun! Our hosts are Hays Cummins and Donna (Continued on Pg. 6)

### PHOTOS OF FUN FROM OUR 21ST ANNUAL MEETING 1/31/2016

Thanks to everyone who attended the annual meeting on January, 31st, 2016! We were delighted to celebrate the year's achievements with so many friends, volunteers, supporters and donors.



current and former volunteer easement monitors, thanked Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator, Lois Nelson for giving us 9 years of her time and expertise! Her efforts got us where we are. Thank-you!

Congratulations to Wallace I. Edwards Conservationist of the Year Award winner Don Kaufman for your lifelong dedication.



evening included the recognition of retiring Board members, the election of new board members and officers, keynote remarks from Mark Boardman and another successful Save an Acre campaign. We can't do what we do without our members - thanks to all of you for your support! ₩

# 

APRIL IS COMING! PLEASE
REDESIGNATE FOR TVCT.
In April, all supporters must redesignate their desire to support
Three Valley with their Kroger
Plus Shopper's Card. Even if you
currently support us, please:

1. Change your
account
settings at
www.kroger.
com; or

2. View complete
instructions at www.3vct.org; or

3. If you have any questions, please
call Bonnie at (513) 524-2150.



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# From the Desk of...

Alice Kahn, a current member and Board member emeritus (2000-2006), donated one of our earliest conservation easements. By protecting the land with a conservation easement, she made her 5.5-acre property a special place for all time, reflecting her interest in native plants and wildlife.



Alice has long been known to be a talented photographer so it is no surprise that she would be recognized for her work by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for a photo of the common buckeye butterfly, one of the creatures

who thrive in a place ready to welcome the diversity of native species. Her photo Buckeye Butterfly was selected as the top image for the 2016 Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp. Go to this link to read more: http://tinyurl.com/jnfkz9d.

Probably one of the reasons the common buckeye butterfly is so numerous is that it able to chose from a wide menu of plants for nourishment. Some butterflies, like the monarch, may require one or few acceptable food choices. In another sense, there is nothing "common" about the wing markings of the butterfly. Though the undersides of the wings are subdued, the topsides are adorned with six multicolored eyespots and several orange lines and splotches.

Three Valley Conservation Trust has several easements with landowners who own smaller pieces of open space. These properties are evaluated to see if they meet our standards for easement aguisition. From the moment the deal is signed and sealed, the property owners and TVCT are partners in the perpetual protection of a little piece of

paradise. \mathbb{H}

Left: Alice's photo that was chosen for the Stamp. Photo courtesy of Alice and the ODNR.

Right: Liz Woedl, Wally Edwards and Alice Kahn in 2002 at her 2002 Easement signing (held at her beautiful home).





MARK BOARDMAN, BOARD CHAIR

I've agreed to chair the TVCT Board of Trustees for 2016, and I'd like to share a bit of my dream regarding TVCT.

Recently, I visited the site in Mexico where nearly all the Monarch Butterflies from east of the Rockies overwinter. The Monarch Butterfly Reserve in Mexico is a World Heritage Site. After a four-hour car ride, a 15-minute horse ride, and a 30-minute single-file hike at an altitude of about 11,000 feet, we were suddenly surrounded by butterflies, thousands upon thousands of them, flying, landing, waking, and dying. We were allowed to stay there, at the edge of the aggregation, for about 20 minutes. Then we returned. The whole trip took 12 hours (from San Miguel de Allende, Mexico), and the object of our trip was completed in 20 minutes. It was awesome!

Some agency was preserving this wonder. Some agency will guarantee that it will be there tomorrow and the next century. What foresight! How selfless and generous! We returned to San Miguel de Allende, a colonial town whose cobbled streets, plazas, architecture and culture are also being preserved. I am very thankful for the nameless,

faceless and generous individuals that have allowed me to share a bit of these world treasures.

In a week or two, I'll return to southeast Ohio and its beautiful streams and woodlands, and beautiful and productive farms. I'm glad that TVCT is helping to preserve this landscape.

The people and government of San Miguel de Allende and Mexico are doing their parts and TVCT is doing its part to ensure that a portion of our heritage is preserved in a manner that does not prevent personal enjoyment, its usefulness, or progress, but ensures that we keep a snapshot of our history and heritage.

My dream is that our grandchildren, yours and mine, and their grandchildren will be able to see a broad field of soybean or corn, or walk along a stream shaded by centuryold trees. I am thankful to the hundreds of persons who have helped preserve the thousands of acres of farms. woodlands, and streams. I want to do what I can today, to make all this possible in the future. \*#



## GROWTH AND CHANGE AT THREE VALLEY CONSERVATION TRUST By Mark Boardman, TVCT Board Chair 2. In 2014 Above 1. C.

At the Annual Meeting on January 31, I could almost hear the gasps of concern and surprise when it was announced that our annual operating costs far exceeded our income. I feel it is necessary to share with you some background and a more complete financial scenario.

First, Three Valley Conservation Trust (TVCT) is financially strong, and its budget for 2016 will be balanced. Yes, costs of annual operations are greater than annual giving, but TVCT has several investments and two endowments that are generating income which can be used to supplement annual giving.

What has changed to increase our expenses?

- 1. In 2012, we became accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Association, and this accreditation revealed a need for professional bookkeeping. (ca. \$10,000).
- 2. In 2013, we hired a Land Protection Specialist to seek and complete the increasingly complex governmentsponsored easements. (ca. \$40,000).

- 3. In 2014, the number of easements grew to a point that we felt it prudent to hire a Stewardship Specialist to handle GIS needs and to gradually assume responsibility for the easement monitoring (now nearing 200), previously supervised by Lois Nelson (now retired). (ca. \$40,000).
- 4. In 2015 (January), the Trust offices moved from Morning Sun Road (that it had occupied rent-free, courtesy of the Beck estate), to our current location west of Oxford. Although our current rent is \$6000 per year, savings because of lower utility costs add little to our total annual operating costs.

Together, these changes added about \$90,000 a year to our total operating expenses.

During this time, our combined investments grew to over \$2,000,000 because of donations and efforts by individuals plus contracts with cooperating partners.

In the past, the Board opposed using any dividends or appreciated income to meet yearly budget needs, but now (Continued on Pg. 6)

SPRING 2016 WWW.3VCT.ORG

### SPRING BUSTING OUT ALL OVER AT SALAMANDER RUN PRESERVE

By Steve Gordon, Subcontractor, Paddys Run Conservation Project

February 10 marked what meteorologists define as last day of the "dead of winter." Between that date and the Spring Equinox, March 21, sunlit days get rapidly longer in the temperate zones of the northern hemisphere and average temperatures begin to rise. Hibernating flora and fauna slowly awaken, and weather permitting, maple sap begins to run. Even humans are known to emerge from the comforts of their winter slumber with renewed activity, reacquainting themselves with nature.

Such is the case at Salamander Run Preserve. Winter's grip has loosened and restoration work for 2016 is getting into gear. The ice sheets have melted from the vernal pools and the woods has shed its winter blanket of shallow snow. February saw staff and volunteers continue woodland seeding. Purchased from Prairie Moon Nursery in Winona, Minnesota, the seed mix consists of 32 woodland species, including waterleaf, bottlebrush grass, wild hyacinth, smooth Solomon's seal, and golden alexanders. Remaining field areas will soon be bush hogged and over seeded with a diverse prairie seed mix. Additional seed will be broadcast in the meadow areas and exclosures. The seed mix consists of 50 species, including Virginia and Canada wild rye, purple coneflower, big bluestem, butterflyweed, and blue wild indigo. This high -quality mix was also purchased from Prairie Moon.



Striving to reduce rapid water runoff and erosion, while providing more ecologically diverse habitats, 17 water features have been constructed or restored. Excavation and restoration work was carefully done by Rack Excavating, a local contractor. Agri-Drain control structures installed in two of the vernal pools help regulate water levels. All of the water features are strategically located at the edges of the prairie, in meadow depressions and in the deep woods. Earthen berms and border zones have been hand seeded with native plants and grasses and covered with biodegradable matting.

So what programs are in store for 2016 at Salamander Run Preserve? On Saturday, March 19, locally renowned herpetologist Jeff Davis will lead a hike of the wetlands to hunt for salamanders and frogs. The hike begins at 9am and is open to the public. Hikers are advised to wear mud



boots and bring water and snacks. For directions to SRP, call the TVCT at 524-2150.

The next scheduled event is held in conjunction with Big Week of Birding in Butler County. Sponsored annually by MetroParks, this fun event begins on Saturday, April 30 and continues daily through Saturday, May 7. On Thursday, May 5, MetroParks staff and Audubon volunteers will lead a birding field trip into Salamander Run. Readers should know 84 bird species have been observed at Salamander Run, and this list includes woodcock, quail, wood duck and green herons. The free hike begins at 7:30 am and is open to the public.

Sometime in mid-summer a prairie hike will be held. At that time, the 21 acres taken out of cropland and planted with the prairie mix in January 2015 should be taking hold. Although newly seeded prairies require about 3 years to reach maturity, visitors should see many of the prairie plants in flower and be able to talk to prairie experts about how to plant and care for a prairie. The date of this event will be announced in the spring.

Finally, TVCT staff is frequently on site as various project tasks require. We are happy to have visitors during these times, either to introduce folks to the Preserve or to recruit some informal assistance with the tasks at hand. So if you are feeling the urge to get outdoors, call TVCT at 524-2150 and we'll arrange a time join for you to join us at Salamander Run. \$\mathcal{H}\$

### BECOME AN EASEMENT MONITOR!

Do you enjoy walking the land, taking pictures, and observing your surroundings? Want to help us fulfill our responsibilities to protect our easements?

**Become a Volunteer Easement Monitor!** 

Next in-house training:

Saturday, July 16th, 1:30-3:30pm

Field training can also be scheduled by appointment.

For more information contact:

Randy Evans, Stewardship Specialist 513-524-2150, revans@3vct.org

### ON THE HORIZON!

By Randy Evans Stewardship Specialist

Currently, Three Valley Conservation
Trust provides yearly monitoring of over
20,000 acres of easement land with more
properties being placed under easement
each year. Recently, a generous donor
has offered to purchase an unmanned
aerial vehicle and send our stewardship
specialist through operational training.
Thanks to our donor, Randy Evans has just
completed training classes at Flamingo Air
in Cincinnati on February 11th and 12th.

We will not be conducting flights until we have successfully petitioned for the necessary FAA exemptions. However, in the near future we expect this new technology will significantly contribute to meeting our mounting yearly monitoring obligations. We are inviting landowners to voice any concerns or questions they may have, directly to our stewardship specialist via email at revans@3vct.org or phone at 513-524-2150. \#



Instructor Dean Toth (from Flamingo Air) with Randy Evans and the UAV (Unmanned Ariel Vehicle) that he can now fly.

### STEWARDSHIP IN 2015

By Randy Evans, Stewardship Specialist

The past year presented many occasions to volunteer as land stewards. The volunteer projects ranged from various planting sessions at Salamander Run and sowing milkweed for monarch butterflies to generating baseline species lists and the annual monitoring of conservation easements.

In 2016, we hope to continue those habitat restoration efforts as well as host opportunities to learn about and employ invasive species control methods and new field monitoring technologies. Check our newsletter for announcements of those upcoming opportunities! \$\mathbb{H}\$

### JANUARY EASEMENT CLOSINGS

TVCT, in collaboration with the Paddys Run Conservation Project (PRCP), acquired two Agricultural Conservation Easements in January. We are pleased to have two new properties to protect in perpetuity!

On January 21st Three Valley closed an easement with the Hazel Kusil Trust on a 27-acre agricultural feild. Jean Griffith cares for her late mother's property, now owned by the Hazel Kusil Trust, and just after we closed an easement on the original 143 acres in 2014, she and Bath State Bank (the managers of her mother's trust) worked to purchase these adjacent, 27 acres of farmland. Both easements have been funded by the Paddys Run Conservation Project (PCRP) and these monies have helped to increase Hazel Kusil's legacy to her heirs and the community that they will live in - what a wonderful gift!

Interestingly, there are anecdotal reports that a Native American site may be located on a rocky strip of high ground. An 1879 Map of Archaeological Sites in Butler County shows a site in the general location of the Protected Property. A conservation easement on this property will protect in perpetuity the agricultural productivity of the land as well as the location of the potential archaeological site. Present benefits of erosion protection, surface water quality, stormwater infiltration and groundwater recharge will also be permanently protected. Alternative agricultural, forestry, habitat

restoration or recreational uses would be allowed so long as such practices did not degrade the erosion prevention, water quality and recharge values addressed by the easement.

On January 28th, Three Valley closed an easement with Allen Fliehman on his 48-acre farm, including several highly productive agricultural fields, near the village of New Haven in



Crosby Township, Hamilton County. The farm is crossed by Howard Creek, which exhibits good water quality and supports populations of Cricket frog and Johnny darter. The stream and riparian corridor total about 7.5 acres.

A conservation easement on this property will protect in perpetuity the agricultural productivity of the land as well as Howard Creek and its riparian corridor. Present benefits of erosion protection, surface water quality, stormwater infiltration and groundwater recharge will also be permanently protected. Alternative agricultural, forestry, habitat restoration or recreational uses would be allowed so long as such practices did not degrade the erosion prevention, water quality and recharge values addressed by the easement. **\$\mathcal{X}** 

### SAVE THE DATE: 4/23/16 - ECO-CACHE AND POTLUCK DINNER!

Come and enjoy an afternoon of an interesting, educational activity suitable for the entire family – grandparents to children.

Edge of the Farm Conservation area was founded in 2007. Located south of Oxford, the conservation area is planted in tall and short prairie grasses and has 5 wetlands. The adjacent forests have had over 11 acres of honeysuckle removed.

Easement donors Hays Cummins and



Donna McCollum have laid out paths that will lead us on a combination of "caching and orienteering" through the conservation area, across the prairies, wetlands and woods emphasizing important ecological functions along the way.

After the walk, gather for socializing and refreshments at the Pot-luck Dinner.

### UPCOMING SPRING EVENTS

(Continued from Pg. 1)

McCollum at their Edge of the Farm Preserve. See the article above (on this page) for more details!

For **April 16th and 22nd**, we will need **Tabling Help!** Do you like to meet new people and talk to them about the Trust? If so, please consider signing up for a one to two-hour shift to help us staff our table at either event. No worries, we'll bring what you need and you won't be alone (we table in pairs). If you're new, we'll pair you with a veteran Trust member. Please contact Bonnie at bkretschmer@3vct.org or (513) 524-2150. **\mathbb{H}** 



### GROWTH AND CHANGE

(Continued from Pg. 3)

the need is there and I feel we need a change of policy. Good stewardship is not the same as saving money; rather it includes using money wisely. Money was given to the Trust to be used for the Trust's mission and investment earnings could balance TVCT's budget.

This deliberate withdrawal of income from our investments to meet the yearly budget would be a "first" for the board. Board members hold strong and conflicting views about using this income, and it seems advisable to create a committee to take a fresh look at the TVCT mission, strategic planning, and sustainability, to provide the Board (and you) with options to consider. \*\*

### TVCT ENDORSES ISSUE 6

The Three Valley Conservation Trust (TVCT) Board voted in their February Board Meeting to support the passing of the Butler County Parks Levy, Issue 6, on the ballot on March 15, 2016. The levy will include a 0.05 mill renewal and an increase of 0.02 to keep parks open, clean and safe.

TVCT has had a hand in putting conservation easements on two park properties, Timberman Ridge (Forest Run) and the Mill Race Preserve and is restoring two additional properties that will be transferred to the park later this year. We are pleased to be in partnership with the MetroParks of Butler County – not only in preserving land, but in encouraging a community investment in facilities that will make using these parks easier and more pleasant.

MetroParks of Butler County tells us that state funding received in the past was cut by 50%, while they are bearing increased operational costs due to increased park visitation. Without an increase in funding, MetroParks would need to close parks or reduce park maintenance.

We at Three Valley Conservation Trust are thrilled to see the increased use of outdoor spaces, some of which we helped protect. We hope that you consider a "Yes" vote on Issue 6 on March 15th, 2016. Support our Parks! #

### DOUBLE YOUR GIFT'S IMPACT!

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could double the value of your gift to Three Valley Conservation Trust (TVCT)? Many companies have programs that will match charitable contributions of their employees. Every year, TVCT receives a few checks from these matching programs. However, we wonder if some of our supporters may have overlooked this opportunity to increase the value of their contributions. Please check to see if your employer sponsors a charitable gift matching program and, if they do, please tell them about your gift to TVCT!

### VALLEY NEWS NATURE SHOT

..because nature is beautiful and worthy of celebration



Three wild turkeys (from a much bigger flock) snapped foraging in a dusting a snow. Spring is on it's way! Do you have an interesting Nature Shot you'd like to share? Please submit your nature shot (interesting plant or animal photo) to bkretschmer@3vct.org. Thank you!



### "How can I help?"

There are many ways to support the Trust! Aside from cash donations (or Kroger Card - see page 2), you just might have a skill or some time we can use.

Call Bonnie at (513) 524-2150 or Email Bonnie at bkretschmer@3vct.org.

### CREATIVITY NEEDED!

Are you familiar with the Adobe program In Design? If so, we are looking for a long-term volunteer who could lay out the newsletter on a quarterly basis. If you're interested, please contact Bonnie at (513) 524-2150 or bkretschmer@3vct.org.

### REGULAR VOLUNTEERS ARE CRUCIAL TO OUR CORE MISSION!

E ARE OBLIGATED TO PROTECT PROPERTIES, IN PERPETUITY. TWO CRUCIAL, PERPETUAL PARTS OF THIS ARE MONITORING AND EASEMENT FILE MAINTENANCE. MONITOR TRAININGS ARE HELD REGULARLY AND FILING ORIENTATION WILL BE SCHEDULED INDIVIDUALLY, DURING BUSINESS HOURS. TO BECOME A REGULAR VOLUNTEER, PLEASE CONTACT RANDY (REVANS@3VCT.ORG) OR BONNIE (ABOVE). THANK YOU!

### 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: LONG TERM: MONITORING HANDS-ON CONSER-VATION PROJECTS EASEMENT FILE MAILING ASSEMBLY ORGANIZATION TABLING COMMITTEE WORK ON-SITE EVENT SETUP GRANT WRITING NEMBER/PARTNER SUGGESTED LEVELS Il receive the Valley Trust News (via mail or email) \$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). Please contact me. I'd like to make an automatically recurring (monthly or yearly) donation on my credit card. ake payable to: Three Valley Conservation Trust

Or renew online at www.3vct.org!

P.O. Box 234, Oxford, OH 45056

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Amy Leedy

Mark Boardman	Cathy Loucas	Eric Sauer
Amy Butterfield	Donna McCollum	Ed Teets
Pat Kaufman	Roger Millar	Robert Thurston
Janet Krebs	Erika Nelson	Amy Weber

Founded in 1994, Three Valley Conservation Trust conserves natural habitats, waterways and agricultural lands in Southwestern Ohio, for the benefit of present and future generations, through

Neil Poppendeck

"Valley Trust News," the newsletter for members of the Three Valley Conservation Trust, is published four times per year.

partnerships with people and communities.

Editors: Bonnie Kretschmer, Liz Woedl; Proofreader: Lois Nelson

# SUPPORT TVCT THROUGH PAYROLL DEDUCTION!



Sandra Woy-Hazelton

http://earthshareohio.org

Make contributions to TVCT via payroll deduction. Contact your Human Resources or Payroll Departments.

### CALENDAR

### MARCH

- 2 BOARD MEETING, 7PM LOCATION TBD
- 5 LANE LIBRARY: INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES, 2PM
- 13 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME STARTS (SPRING FORWARD)
- 15 PLEASE VOTE "YES" ON ISSUE 6! (SEE PG. 5)
- 19 SRP HERPTOLOGY HIKE, 9AM (SEE PG. 4)
- 30 LAND PROTECTION STEWARDSHIP MTG, 7PM

### APRIL

- 6 BOARD MEETING, 7PM LOCATION TBD
- 16 EARTH DAY IN OXFORD, 9AM TO 2PM
- 20 TVCTs KONA COMMUNITY NIGHT, 6-9PM
- 22 EARTH DAY IN HAMILTON, 11AM TO 1PM
- 23 ECO-CACHE AND POTLUCK DINNER (SEE PG. 6)
- 27 LAND PROTECTION STEWARDSHIP MTG, 7PM
- 30 AUDUBON'S WEEK OF BIRDING 4/30 THRU 5/7

### MAY

- 4 BOARD MEETING, 7PM LOCATION TBD
- 5 SALAMANDER RUN BIRDING, &: 30AM (SEE PG. 4)
- 25 LAND PROTECTION STEWARDSHIP MTG, 7PM
- 30 MEMORIAL DAY, OFFICE CLOSED

### SEE SALAMANDER RUN IN SPRING GLORY!

If you can't make the Herpetology Hike on 3/19 or the Birding on 5/5, group tours of Salamander Run are available on request. Contact Eric at (513) 524-2150.



### THREE VALLEY CONSERVATION TRUST

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