



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 GENERATIONAL FAMILY FARM

In the rich level farmland of central Preble County lies the family farm of Susan and Duane Miller. The Millers have become one of the most recent members of the Trust's easement family, having signed their entire 81.5-acre farm into an agricultural easement under the Ag Easement Purchase Program in December of 2016.

Susan (nee Brubaker) purchased the corn and soybean farm from her dad around 1993, making the farm now owned by the 3rd generation of descendants. Duane, prior to marrying Susan, worked with his dad on a farm in Montgomery County, raising hogs and other crops. Their oldest son, Jason, has joined the family enterprise while their two daughters are off the farm raising their young families. The Miller's vision is that the farm will pass on to the fourth and further generations.

While their farm enterprise is the mainstay of their operation, they also provide farm tiling services and have tiled their entire 81.5-acre farm to improve drainage. They are blessed (maybe sometimes annoyed by) an abundance of water, with a spring under the house that feeds two ponds and also provides enough flow for an open-loop geothermal system. The ponds are pristine with solid limestone bottoms and serve as a haven for blue herons, fish and frogs. These have been a delight for the children growing up and also served as the neighboring community's ice rink in winter.

(Millers . . . continued on next page)



(Millers . . . continued from page 1)

Susan, Duane and Jason are employing advanced technology in their farm operation. They use a system called Nu-Till which has the potential to take no-till to a higher level of performance and potential for increased yield over traditional no-till. It was developed by Ag Spectrum with research pioneered by USDA and universities. The system requires modifications to a traditional planter with attachments that increases permeability of the soil, places the nitrogen where the plants need it, and sprays phosphorus and special micronutrients through tubes directly on the seed in the furrow. Gypsum is used to help break up clay soil and improve tilth.



Closing with Janet Krebs, Board Member, Liz Woedl, Executive Director TVCT, Agnieszka Marchlewska, Land Protection Specialist with Susan and Duane Miller.

The amount of nitrogen applied can be reduced by 25-35%, resulting in less cost, less run-off and less pollution of streams. The planter is gentler on the earth, so there is less compaction because there is less pressure needed to plant, resulting in an option for earlier planting especially in wet spring soils. Getting an early jump on spring planting can yield big boosts in bushels per acre.

The Millers are excited about their farm easement and want to get their neighbors to join in with them, too. Susan says her sister, who has a farm diagonal to theirs, will be applying for an Ag Easement Purchase Program grant this year. We wish the best to a long line of farming families in Preble and Montgomery Counties, and that the Millers, by their actions, will serve as an example that will inspire neighboring farmers to embrace agricultural and conservation easements as well as progressive farming practices



Transitions in the TVCT Office Staff

After four years at the helm of TVCT, Liz Woedl announced her decision to retire as Executive Director of Three Valley Conservation Trust. Liz, you were the right person at the right time with the right talents.



Liz Woedl

Of the many contributions that Liz's leadership provided, the most significant is that Liz completed the TVCT transition to a fully accredited land trust with a professional staff for both land acquisition and land stewardship that will continue to fulfill TVCT core conservation mission and the challenges of being a fully accredited land trust.

Liz pushed for and got a full-time professional stewardship coordinator. Randy Evans has excellent GIS skills, excellent personal skills, and a deep commitment to conservation. In addition to ensuring annual monitoring on nearly 200 easements, he visits with land owners, and addresses amendments, legal challenges, and violations to easements; i.e. the ancillary requirements of stewardship.

Liz pushed for and got a dedicated professional for land acquisition. Agnieszka Marchlewska navigates the government regulations and documentations of many new easements, and addresses the complexities of subordinating bank liens, overlapping easement requirements of the county, townships, Duke energy, sewer systems, gas pipelines, etc. (One of the "etc" parts is: *"Can you bury your father on land that he put into a TVCT easement?"*)

Because of Liz, Three Valley Conservation Trust is better equipped to acquire new easements and to ensure stewardship of its nearly 200 easements. Thank you, Liz.

"Bonnie, you have been a dedicated and vital part of the operations of Three Valley Conservation Trust for four years, and the Board is very thankful for your service."

That statement doesn't even come close to expressing the outpouring of gratitude and respect for your work at TVCT at our most recent board meeting. Bonnie's position was temporarily eliminated when the TVCT Board of Trustees regretfully decided to downsize the office staff from 4 to 3. The Board was unwavering in its praise of her effectiveness in serving as the central "glue" of office operations.

It is clear that completing the many tasks she performed will not be easy. Volunteers, interns, the other staff, and many others will have to step up and perform in ways we're not used to. Prioritization has become a reality, and we're doing the best we can.

Thank you, Bonnie. You kept the heart of office operations beating.



Bonnie Kretschmer

Three Valley Conservation Trust is currently searching for a new Executive Director.

The work of the office manager will continue to be done (prioritized) by volunteers for the foreseeable future. The greatest need right now is assisting the logistics of the outreach activities, writing copy for publicity articles (web, calendar, eNews, newspapers), and sorting and filing in the office.

A SLATE OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2017!

Three Valley's Membership Outreach Committee has been busy. Last year's success with a great slate of activities helped connect our members with the natural world and helped raise funds necessary to keep TVCT going. This year's outdoor opportunities are even better! **FAMILIES ARE ALWAYS WELCOME** – in fact we want parents to stay! A few activities are spotlighted below on the next pages. Keep an eye on our website (www.3VCT.org), FACEBOOK, and future newsletters for more details, but mark your calendars for all events.

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays (mostly) from May 31st – August 9th – our programs are on mornings one week and evenings the next, getting folks out to bike or play in forests, prairies, ponds, creeks and farms. Additional adventures this year include organic gardening, flying squirrels, and bats!



BEAUTIFUL BIKING

2nd Thursday evening, May 11-Sept 14, (Wednesday in June). Join Amy Weber in biking to beautiful properties near Oxford. Routes will vary in difficulty; appropriate for teens to adults..

PRECIOUS PRESCHOOLERS OUT-DOOR ADVENTURES

Once a month from April to November we invite preschoolers to begin their connection to the natural world early by letting them get wet and dirty at our easements and local preserves.



SILVOOR CELEBRATION APRIL 23

Co-sponsored by Silvoor Biological Sanctuary, Miami Natural Areas, Audubon Miami Valley, and TVCT to honor people who contributed to making this a wonderful community asset over several decades especially the Wildflower Walk guides, curators, and homeowners with easements that are a part of the sanctuary. **Bring your picnic lunch** and hike along with the celebration.



A work day at the Ruder Preserve in the morning (9-12) followed by lunch and a celebration of Three Valley's founders (12-2).

BACKYARD BIRDING

Monday mornings, every other week (mostly), June 5th, 19th, July 10th, 28th, August 7 – These five days of birding fun are for “serious” 3rd to 6th grade birders. Become a bird sleuth with us!



SUMMER PICNIC Leonard Howell Park JUNE 25

SYMPHONY ON THE FARM AUGUST 12 (rain date-Aug 19)

Co-sponsored with the Preble County Historical Society, join them for dinner in the farmhouse museum (or picnic in the park) and a concert in their natural amphitheater.



GREAT OUTDOOR WEEKEND SEPTEMBER 24

Join us for our Annual Hike&Pie with BioBlitz in the Silvoor Biological Sanctuary on September 24. Children, families, and experts will work together to find and identify different animals, insects, and plants in order to update the catalogue of species that call the sanctuary home. After a walk through the Sanctuary join us for Pie at the Peffer Park Pavillion.

AUCTION FOR ACRES NOVEMBER 11

ACTIVITIES

APRIL

| | | | |
|----|-----|--------|---------------------|
| 22 | Sat | | Earth Day (Oxford) |
| 23 | Sun | 12-3 | Silvoor Celebration |
| 29 | Sat | 9-noon | Ruder Work Day |

MAY

| | | | |
|----|-----|---------|-----------------------|
| 6 | Sat | 9-noon | Ruder Work Day |
| 6 | Sat | 12-2 | Founder's Day |
| 11 | Thu | 6-8 pm | Beautiful Biking |
| 13 | Sat | 9:30-11 | Precious Preschoolers |
| 20 | Sat | 12-4 | Salamander Run Gala |
| 31 | Wed | 6-8 pm | Wonderful Wednesdays |

JUNE

| | | | |
|----------|-----|---------|--|
| 5 | Mon | 8-10 | Backyard Birding |
| 7 | Wed | 9-11 | Wonderful Wednesdays |
| 10 or 17 | Sat | 9:30-11 | Precious Preschoolers |
| 14 | Wed | 6-8 pm | Wond. Wedn.: Beautiful Biking |
| 19 | Mon | 8-10 am | Backyard Birding |
| 21 | Wed | 9-11 am | Wonderful Wednesdays |
| 25 | Sun | 12-3 | Member Summer Picnic- Leonard Howell Park |
| 28 | Wed | 6-8 pm | Wonderful Wednesdays |

JULY

| | | | |
|------------|-----|-------------|--|
| 5 | Wed | 9-11 am | Wonderful Wednesdays |
| 10 | Mon | 8-11 am | Backyard Birding |
| 12 | Wed | 6-8 pm | Wonderful Wednesdays |
| 13 | Thu | 6-8 pm | Beautiful Biking |
| 15 | Sat | 9:30-11 | Precious Preschoolers |
| 23 | Sun | 4:30-7 pm | Fossils and Light Buffet replaces regular Wonderful Wednesdays |
| 23-29 | | | BUTLER COUNTY FAIR |
| 24 | Mon | 8-10 am | Backyard Birding |
| 26 | Wed | 6-8 pm | Wonderful Wednesdays |
| 30 - Aug 5 | | 8 am - 5 pm | PREBLE COUNTY FAIR |

AUGUST

| | | | |
|----|-----|---------|-----------------------|
| 3 | Wed | 9-11 am | Wonderful Wednesdays |
| 7 | Mon | 8-10 am | Backyard Birding |
| 9 | Wed | 6-8 pm | Wonderful Wednesdays |
| 10 | Thu | 6-8 pm | Beautiful Biking |
| 12 | Sat | 9:30-11 | Precious Preschoolers |
| 12 | Sat | 7-10 pm | Symphony on the Farm |

SEPTEMBER

| | | | |
|----|-----|---------|------------------------|
| 9 | Sat | 9:30-11 | Precious Preschoolers |
| 14 | Thu | 6-8 pm | Beautiful Biking |
| 23 | Sat | | Hike-a-Thon |
| 24 | Sat | noon-4 | BioBlitz (Silvoor) |
| 24 | Sun | 4-6 pm | Hike and Pie (Silvoor) |

OCTOBER

| | | | |
|----|-----|---------|-----------------------|
| 11 | Sat | 9:30-11 | Precious Preschoolers |
|----|-----|---------|-----------------------|

NOVEMBER

| | | | |
|----|-----|-----------|--------------------------|
| 11 | Sat | 9:30-11 | Precious Preschoolers |
| 11 | Sat | 6:30-9 pm | Auction for Acres |

DETAILS? VISIT www.3VCT.org

A Call for Citizen Conservation

Article and Photos by Steve Gordon, Paddys Run Project Contractor

Climate change. Deforestation. Coral reef dieback. Polar ice melt. The list goes on, but most readers are well aware of these global issues. We try to be thoughtful consumers who practice conservation. We strive to make decisions that reduce, reuse and recycle consumer products. Yet, we have a nagging feeling we are not doing enough to be positive forces of environmental change.

So what can we do? Part of the answer lies at home. When was the last time we carefully looked at how we view our properties? Instead of looking at "nature" as special places detached from where we live, we would do well to look closer. Our yards - and our neighbor's yards - with their manicured lawns, neatly pruned shrubs, and perfectly spaced individual trees, are relics of an artificial paradigm that are waiting to become sustainable habitats. More than "green islands," parks and preserves can be interconnected via riparian corridors, conserved private lands and backyards. Our yards, streets and neighborhoods become life-giving connective tissue.

Here is where citizen conservationists like you can play a vital role. A first step is to renew your memberships that provide vital support to local, state and national conservation organizations. Second, invite family, friends and colleagues to meetings and programs. Perhaps most important, re-think at the micro level the way you manage your own landscapes. Consider the time and expense of maintaining turf grass. If you contract with a landscape firm, calculate the amount of fuel and labor required for the truck, trailer, leaf blowers and driver needed to regularly service your property during the growing season. Are pesticides and herbicides being applied to your lawns, and if so, have you considered the unintended consequences? How will chemicals impact microbial life and the worms, insects and water that birds and other animals depend on? Instead of noisy, polluting lawn blowers, invite the neighbor kids or service fraternities to help quietly rake leaves for composting.

Converting even a small portion of turf grass to a more natural habitat can have profound benefits. This winter I observed a male cardinal pick seeds off uncut Canadian rye grass in my back yard. A recent issue Song Sparrow, the newsletter of Columbus Audubon, suggested: "Homeowners need to think of their suburban or urban backyards as a food web and not as pure decoration, in order to save many species of birds. Thoughtful planting will create a viable food web for the suburban or urban backyard."



Restoring Your Backyard Making Your Backyard “Nature-Friendly”

Your own Three Valley Trust, in collaboration with landowners, volunteers and public officials, is working to create more of these diverse habitats. Invasives are being reduced, native plants and prairies restored, and water features conserved. We can assist you with determining what are native plants and what are invasive non-natives. The Trust also has lists of prairie mixes and growers, as well as local backyard habitat restorers. Whether a 300 acre working farm or a small half-acre residential lot, the potential for co-existing with the natural world is rewarding on many levels. Come and join us and see.



START WITH YOUR YARD

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

RESOURCES GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

Websites

Pollinator gardening

[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/JDM8U8](http://tinyurl.com/JDM8U8)

Bird-Friendly Habitat :

[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/JTQHWXG](http://tinyurl.com/JTQHWXG)

Attracting Butterflies

[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/JDZNUW4](http://tinyurl.com/JDZNUW4)

Amphibian Decline Mystery

[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/Z9ETUQD](http://tinyurl.com/Z9ETUQD)

Nesting Boxes for Birds

[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/COMMZ9PDWT](http://tinyurl.com/COMMZ9PDWT)

Tips for Lawn Reduction

[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/JZSXOXW](http://tinyurl.com/JZSXOXW)

Books

Creating a Bird-Friendly Yard

by Rene Ebersole (At Audubon)

[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/COMP6VB6LZ](http://tinyurl.com/COMP6VB6LZ)

Audubon Ohio's Resources for
Bird-Friendly Backyards

[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/ZZHC73W](http://tinyurl.com/ZZHC73W)

Bringing Nature Home

by Doug Tallamy

Last Child in the Woods

by Richard Louv

Local Businesses

Songbird Environmental

CHFRD1@yahoo.com

L'Obel Nursery:

6751 Brown Road, Oxford, OH

Shademakers

513-523-2427



6715 Ringwood Road, Units 1&2
P.O. Box 234 Oxford, OH 45056
513-524-2150 www.3vct.org

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Lois Nelson, *Volunteer Proofreader*

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Photo courtesy of
Linda Boardman

GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY AT THE RUDER PRESERVE

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 9 to noon (followed by lunch)

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 9 AM TO 1 PM (followed by lunch)

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 9- noon, followed by lunch and Founder’s Day Celebration, noon to 2 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.



Three Valley Conservation Trust (TVCT) is a member-funded, not-for-profit organization certified by the IRS under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your contribution/donation is deductible.