



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

Regenerative Agriculture and Carbon Credits: Is the Time Right for Southwestern Ohio?

By Tom Vogel, Board Vice-chair, and Ryan Schwegman, Development Committee Chair

Soil health has always been a foundation for farming success. Even in Biblical times, health of the soil was understood to be the key to crop health and a farmer's prosperity. The concept of "regenerative agriculture", agriculture that has lower, or even positive, environmental or social impacts, has its roots in the early 1980s. At that time, the science of biodiversity, growing public concern about the impact of modern agricultural practices on air and water quality, and consumers' desire for safe and sustainably-raised food collided to form the basis of today's regenerative agriculture, re-building rather than degrading soils.

At first, the concept of regenerative agriculture did not gain much traction, as the dollars and cents did not encourage its practice. This has changed in recent years as concerns for soil health, markets for carbon sequestration, and plateauing yields have propelled the concept into the mainstream of modern agriculture. In addition, regenerative agriculture has caught the attention of major food producers including Danone, Cargill, McDonalds, and Land O'Lakes who have all announced plans to advance regenerative agriculture. General Mills, a producer of many varied food products, has been a leader in encouraging farmers in its supply chain to adopt regenerative practices, summed up as follows:

1. Understand the Context of Your Farm – implement regenerative practices based on the unique economic, environmental, and cultural context of your farm.
2. Minimize Soil Disturbance – maintain the natural porosity of the soil by limiting tillage, over-application of nutrients and pesticides, and overgrazing.
3. Maximize Plant Diversity – improve soil health by increasing plant diversity. Many problems experienced by farmers and ranchers result from a lack of biodiversity in the agricultural landscape.
4. Keep the Soil Covered – use living plants and crop residue to protect the soil from wind, sun, pounding rains, and other erosive forces.
5. Maintain Living Roots Year-Round – use cover crops to sequester carbon, limit and purify water runoff, reduce erosion, and improve soil porosity.
6. Integrate Livestock into the Operation – periodic livestock grazing can inspire new plant growth, provide natural fertilizer to fields, and attract insects to aerate the soil, improving soil health. ([generalmills.com](https://www.generalmills.com))



Cover crops on Gerber family farm. Photo by Randy Evans.

Because regenerative farming increases soil organic matter and reduces greenhouse gases it can act as an enormous carbon sink and generate

verified carbon credits. These carbon credits are purchased by companies that are interested in offsetting their own carbon emissions so that they can be "carbon-neutral." These credits are in increasingly higher demand from major corporations including Apple, Microsoft, BP and Google that have all made commitments to become carbon neutral.

Not only do major corporations support carbon credit markets, but recognition of their benefits is quickly gaining traction in the farming community and political world. The Growing Climate Solutions Act, introduced in 2020, would create a third-party verification certification program within the USDA that would bring credibility

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Chair's Report By Daniel Cox

Dear friends,

Like changes in the weather, our newsletter marks, or at least follows, the changing of seasons. Ice has left Four Mile Creek and soon maples will bud and put an end to syrup season. In a more normal year, this month would offer a week of easy parking during the annual Spring Break migration. Perhaps we would take the opportunity ourselves to share adventures with friends and family. But just as during the rest of this longest year, we wait just a little bit longer. We will mark the next months with trillium and morels in the woodlands, new birds in the backyard, the plow and planter in the fields. For 3VCT, we will mark our twenty-sixth year of service to our neighbors, land, and water.

If you are like me, you spent some valuable moments with your nose in our recent Book Club selection *Timefulness: How Thinking Like a Geologist Can Help Save The World* by Marcia Bjornerud. Dr. Bjornerud acknowledges "It may not be possible to grasp fully the immensity of geologic time", but challenges the reader to "at least develop some feeling for its proportions." Together as a trust, we have contemplated and celebrated our past, endeavored to push through this challenging present, and soon we shall put our hands, minds, and wallets to the work our charter demands: the protection of land and water and the life it supports – forever.

The Poet Laureate of Paisley Park once said life is an "Electric word", one that "means forever and that's a mighty long time." We have our work cut out for us.

Members of the Board of Trustees serve at the pleasure of our members for three-year terms. Roughly speaking, we replace or reappoint one-third of our board each year at our annual meeting. This structure provides valuable continuity of leadership for our members, staff, professional partners, and community. It further ensures flexibility and resiliency over time as resources and obstacles present. We have benefitted tremendously from consistent, durable, and visionary board members, each freely giving of their time, talent, and resources to committee efforts, trust projects, and properties.

As we contemplate our past, navigate our present, and envision our future, we recognize that the current makeup of the board and committees that govern 3VCT will not remain the same forever. As such, we believe it is in the Trust's best interests to develop a durable guiding tool in the form of a Strategic Plan that commits us all to goals that exceed the tenure of any single board member's term of service or board officer's annual appointment. The polestars that will guide this Strategic Plan are our vision and mission statements:

- *Our **vision** is for southwest Ohio to be recognized for its permanently protected and conserved open space in woodlands, watersheds, and family farms.*
- *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.*

When fortune shines bright and warm on us again, and this glacial pandemic recedes, we may find ourselves together for our next annual membership meeting. I would like to take that opportunity to present a clear and concise Strategic Plan for our mutual commitment. This Strategic Plan will keep us from falling into the trap of thinking like a janitor mopping the mess at our feet and instead allow us to think more like a geologist with a clear view from past to present and into the future.

If you have experience or interest in helping with such a project, please drop a line to: board_chair@3vct.org.

Respectfully,
Daniel C. Cox



Nature's Nectar- Tapping the Flow

By Maria Fagin, Stewardship Manager

It's that time of year! The spiles, the tubes, the buckets, the hauling, the boiling, and....the syrup! It's all a part of the labor-intensive process from tap to table. Montgomery County landowner Mike Kilroy has been hard at work prepping and monitoring his maple trees and syrup production on their 34-acre property in Jackson Twp. Mike's maple syrup-making venture started on the property around 10 years ago, with a few buckets on trees, progressing to ten, and then thirty or so. Over the last few years he has made his procedure more efficient by adding a tree-to-tree plastic tubing collection system, which cuts down on production

time and maximizes sap flow. On average Mike collects about 150-200 gallons per year, yielding about 5 gallons of syrup. This year was small scale in comparison, only tapping 6 trees, collecting about eighty gallons (minus 10 gallons or so shared with guests) of sap ending with about 2 gallons of syrup. Quite a ratio!

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Amazingly, 2020 was a wonderful year for Three Valley Land Trust. That seems strange to say with all we have been through in the last 12 months. The compulsory social distancing practices helped us focus more on fieldwork and property visits. We spent more time visiting with our current easement landowners and meeting new landowners with an interest in protecting property. In 2020, we added nine easements, bringing us to 210 protected properties. Although ODA postponed new easement grant applications in 2021, we are continuing to protect land. Just this month, we added the Shawn and Linda Casey easement in Ross Township as number 211. We are working to finish another 11 easements this coming year and meeting with additional landowners to meet 2022 ODA grant deadlines.

This has been a busy spring for the staff in other ways as well. Caitlin, Maria, and I enrolled in a soil conservation course. Our international student cohort is studying ways regenerative agricultural practices worldwide can repair soil quality and fight climate change. Aligning with this new knowledge, we are coordinating visits between Indigo Ag and some of our producers to discuss opportunities to benefit from the growing agricultural land carbon markets. We also are collaborating with Monica Rakovan and Agnes Marchlewska at Environmental Solutions on the Indian Creek watershed plan. The plan will help identify areas where water quality impacts are highest and help regional landowners apply for grants to reduce those impacts. Caitlin and Maria have begun working with federal and state partners to design and establish a wetland essential to supporting a unique amphibian community identified by Jeff Davis. These are just a few examples of the amazing work our staff is doing. Our 3VCT board, partners, and members are doing much more, as you will read in the following articles.

My space and time to speak with you in this newsletter is limited but as you will read, for good reason. Through these pages, we invite you to learn how our land trust continues to drive positive change in our community. We are confident that you will find inspiration in our efforts to conserve the rural landscapes and unique natural areas in SW Ohio...work made possible by your generous contributions. Your donations, guidance, and encouragement enable us to thrive.

Thank You!



Executive Director's Report By Randy Evans

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The Kilroy's recently hosted a local Montgomery County homeschoolers group (Hearth), taking them on a maple harvesting journey. The weather couldn't have been better for an impressive number of kids and parents in attendance, eager to learn about the process. Mike's enthusiasm for nature really showed through as he set out to take guests on a maple tour through time, from pioneer days to present, covering the step-by-step process and science of syrup harvesting. The group left with smiles and several kids left with gallon jugs of fresh sap to boil down into syrup of their own at home! Mike commented that he enjoyed the questions from the kids. "Many of them were really following along and learning." I feel confident in speaking for all those who joined that the experience really brought out the curious kid in us all. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and hosting such a fun outdoor education event! We appreciate our opportunity to be involved and admire your passion and contribution to common conservation goals.

The Kilroy's willingness to host such an event comes as no surprise, as Mike and Vickie's commitment to conservation

became evident to us in 2019, when they donated two easements to 3VCT. Their land stewardship efforts trace back to the purchase of their property in 1986, after taking action to improve the existing woods and planting 4,000 trees, becoming a certified tree farm. Mike and Vickie have remained actively engaged in practices to manage and maintain the delicate habitat that lies among the combined 116 acres of woods, fields and streams in SW Ohio.

Maple syruping at Kilroy farm. Photos by Maria Fagin

Thank you, Mike and Vicki, from all of us!

Save the Date!

(And cross your fingers...)

When: Saturday,
July 24, 4 pm
What: Annual
meeting
picnic
Where: Old Stone
Riding Center

We are looking forward, with open minds in this time of extra precaution, to having the 3VCT Annual Meeting as an evening picnic at Julie Primack's farm, the Old Stone Riding Center. We hope to have both virtual and in-person versions; if you are comfortable and we can safely spread out at the farm, you can join us, but if not, you can enjoy some of the camaraderie virtually, instead.

Check the website (3vct.org) and 3VCT Facebook page for more details as the date approaches.

Outreach and Education Committee

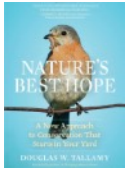
By Ben Maddox (Member) and Amanda Bowers (Chair)

Book Club is back! The 3VCT Book Club started again last month with an enthusiastic group discussing Marcia Bjornerud's "*Timefulness*." Below are the books we plan to discuss this year. All books have a conservation theme, from a new way to think about the economy to redesigning our gardens so native species may survive. Book Club meets at 7pm via Zoom. Please contact the 3VCT office or web site (www/3vctorg) for information on how to join the discussion for one or all of these books.



April 8: *Doughnut Economics* by Kate Raworth; Leader is Steve Edwards

In *Doughnut Economics*, Kate Raworth, sets out seven key ways to fundamentally reframe our understanding of what economics is and does. Along the way, she points out how we can break our addiction to growth; redesign money, finance, and business to be in service to people; and create economies that are regenerative and distributive by design.



June 10: *Nature's Best Hope* by Douglas Tallamy; Leader is Hardy Eshbaugh

Nature's Best Hope shows how homeowners everywhere can turn their yards into conservation corridors that provide wildlife habitats. Because this approach relies on the initiatives of private individuals, it is immune from the whims of government policy. Even more important, it is practical, effective, and easy—you will walk away with specific suggestions you can incorporate into your own yard.



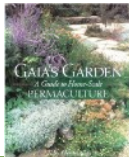
August 12: *Buzz* by Thor Hanson; Leader is Ben Mattox

Bees are like oxygen: ubiquitous, essential, and mostly unseen. While we might overlook them, they lie at the heart of relationships that bind the human and natural worlds. In *Buzz*, Thor Hanson takes us on a journey that began 125 million years ago, when a wasp first dared to feed pollen to its young. From honeybees and bumbles to lesser-known diggers, miners, leafcutters, and more, bees are central to our harvests, our mythologies, and our very existence. Alarming, they are at risk of disappearing.



Oct. 14: *Ministry for the Future* by Kim Stanley Robinson; Leader is Julie Primack

The Ministry for the Future is a masterpiece of the imagination, using fictional eyewitness accounts to tell the story of how climate change will affect us all. Its setting is not a desolate, postapocalyptic world, but a future that is almost upon us—and in which we might just overcome the extraordinary challenges we face.



Dec. 9: *Gaia's Garden* by Toby Hemenway; Leader is Cori Yaeger

Gaia's Garden has sparked the imagination of home gardeners the world over by introducing a simple message: working with nature, not against her, results in more beautiful, abundant, and forgiving gardens.

Support Three Valley Conservation Trust

Finance Committee

By Ed Teets, Chair

2020 was a difficult year for 3VCT financially. Due to the Covid restrictions, we had to cancel our usual fund raisers such as our Auction for Acres, Elegant Dinner, and member picnic. Donations were down by about 50% from normal, and legal costs for protecting our easements were substantially higher. One piece of good news is 3VCT applied for and received two PPP loans under the federal Covid aid program. These loans encouraged small businesses and non-profits to keep staff on their payroll. We received \$37,467 in 2020 and \$36,640 in Feb. 2021, which allowed us to keep our excellent staff employed. Under this federal program, the 2020 loan has been forgiven, and we anticipate the same forgiveness for the 2021 loan.

Despite these loans, 3VCT had to use the dividends on our endowments to cover shortfalls resulting from reduced income and higher expenditures. We are fortunate that we had this option so we could continue operations as usual, but we cannot count on this source to continue covering increasing costs. Until we can get back to normal fundraising activities we will need to rely heavily on your continued generous financial support. We recognize that so many of you have given much to 3VCT and we thank you heartily! We would not be where we are without your support!

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 for monitoring and protecting our 211 easements and acquiring new ones.

Planned Giving/Estate Planning—give a major gift of equity, life insurance, real estate, personal property, retirement proceeds, or cash to help provide for the long-term growth and financial sustainability of Three Valley Conservation Trust while addressing your own personal financial/estate planning considerations. Contact the Legacy Giving Committee at giving@3vct.org for more information.

Outreach and Education Committee - New programs for 2021!

Conservation Conversations

Three Valley Conservation Trust invites you to FREE, monthly online presentations and discussions of compelling topics related to land conservation in southwest Ohio. Experts and enthusiasts are excited to share their knowledge of topics ranging from native orchids to pollinators and restorative agriculture to stream ecology. Come join the conversation!

For schedule updates and a link to join via Zoom, see 3VCT Events webpage at <https://www.3vct.org/events-activities-news>. Also, be sure to follow 3VCT on Facebook and Instagram for event reminders and updates!

May 6, 6-7 pm: "Experiencing Native Orchids" with Jeanne Rhinehart of NOPEs in Cincinnati

June 17, 7-8 pm: "The Green New Deal" with Ben Mattox, retired secondary educator

July 15, 7-8 pm: "Macroinvertebrates" with Lynn White, Butler Soil & Water (optional stream activity July 20, 7-8:30 pm)

August 12, 7-8 pm: "Community Gardens" with Ross Olson

September 9, 7-8 pm: "Age, Structure, and Composition of Ohio's Forests" with OSU's Dave Apsley

October 7, 7-8 pm: "Freshwater Mussels" with Ryan Schwegeman from EnviroScience Inc

November 4, 7-8 pm: "Regenerative Agriculture and Agriculture Carbon Credits" with Indigo Ag's Mike Thompson and Bryan Randall

December 2, 7-8 pm: "Establishing a native back yard prairie" with Charlie Ford of Songbird Environmental

Questions? Sandi Woy-Hazleton at woyhazs@miamioh.edu

Weekly Wanderings

We are excited to invite you, your children and grandchildren to take part in some low-key outdoor adventures this summer. We have a wonderful line-up of explorations for elementary-aged kids and their families from 9-11 on Wednesday mornings. We will follow all current COVID-19 procedures; right now that means you should plan to wear a mask and must sign up on the 3CVT website at <https://www.3vct.org/events-activities-news> so we can limit participation to 10 participants on any given week.

See the 3VCT Events webpage for more details and be sure to follow 3VCT on Facebook and Instagram for event reminders and updates!

June 16 - Birds - Amanda Bentley Brymer at Pfeffer Park Pavilion

June 23 - Topic leader and location to be determined

June 30 - Topic leader and location to be determined

July 7 - Trees - Amanda Bentley Brymer at Pfeffer Park Pavilion

July 14 - Phenology - Adriane Ruther at Talawanda High School's Erik/Talawanda Land Lab

July 21 - Topic leader and location to be determined

July 28 - Ecocache - Donna McCollum at Edge of the Farm Conservation Area

Aug. 4 - Invasive species - Lynn White at Leonard Howell Park

Aug. 11 - Beaver exploration - Barbara Hamilton at Bachelor Pond

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 to helping monitor easement properties. One way we would like you to get involved is to join one of the ongoing committees. If you would like to contribute, check out the standing committees below to see where you fit. Contact the 3VCT office at 513-524-2150 for information.

Outreach and Education - recruits the next generation of 3VCT supporters and educates current ones

Land Protection and Stewardship - evaluates properties proposed for easements

Property Management - makes decisions about what goes on at all Trust-owned properties

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

Finance - keeps track of and reports finances to board

LEAVE A LEGACY OF CONSERVATION Planned Giving / Estate Planning

Planned giving is any major gift made during your lifetime or at death as part of your overall financial and/or estate planning. Planned giving may include gifts of equity, life insurance, real estate, personal property, retirement proceeds or cash. Planned giving can address your personal financial concerns while enhancing Three Valley's financial sustainability. However, this type of planning requires the assistance of knowledgeable legal and financial professionals.

To learn more about planned giving and leaving a legacy to Three Valley Conservation Trust, contact one of our legacy committee members: Mark Boardman, Sandi Woy-Hazleton, Cathryn Loucas, Randy Evans, Reva Evans at giving@3vct.org

Land Protection and Stewardship Committee

By Sarah Dumyahn, Chair

The Land Protection and Stewardship Committee (LPSC) is one of 3VCT's standing committees and it advises the Board of Trustees on conservation easement and land topics essential to the mission of the trust. These topics span the entire conservation easement process, from approving the initiation of a conservation easement on a potential property to the monitoring and assessment of potential violations after the easement is placed on the property. The LPSC provides informed recommendations throughout the land protection process. 3VCT now holds 211 easements covering 23,945 acres.

Once a conservation or agricultural easement is in place, 3VCT conducts annual monitoring visits. In addition to the 211 easements, 3VCT also monitors easements for Five Rivers MetroParks bringing the total number of easements monitored to 226. LPSC provides guidance to ensure that the conservation values of the properties are maintained and sustained over time. The LPSC also reviews any stewardship issues that may arise and advises when legal action is needed to protect the interests of the easement.

The expertise and perspectives of the LPSC members provide informed guidance to the 3VCT Board. The LPSC membership currently includes four community members, 3VCT's Land Protection and GIS Specialist, 3VCT's Stewardship Manager, and three board members. LPSC meetings are generally held on the fourth Wednesday of every month. If you are interested in joining the LPSC or would like more information, you can contact Sarah Dumyahn at sarah@moioplin.com.



Silvoor Spring Wildflower Walks are Back!

All walks will begin at Pepper Park Pavilion at 1:00 pm. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes and a mask!

Remaining dates are:

Sunday, April 4
Sunday, April 11
Sunday, April 18
Sunday, April 25
Sunday, May 2
Sunday, May 9

Participation will be limited to 8 slots. To sign up, contact Amanda Brymer, bentleal@miamioh.edu

Natural History Moment Late Winter-Breeding Amphibians By Jeff Davis

In late winter, usually between the third week of February and the second week of March, many of our local amphibians are roused from their overwintering habitats to make their annual journey to a vernal pool where courtship, mating, and egg-laying will occur. Among the amphibian species present on various properties under Three Valley Conservation Trust protection are five that breed in late winter. They include a one-inch long treefrog, the Spring Peeper, plus Spotted, Tiger, Jefferson, and Streamside Salamanders. All of these salamanders are members of the family Ambystomatidae, commonly called mole salamanders. Streamside Salamanders usually breed in headwater streams instead of vernal pools.



Spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*). Photo by Jeff Davis



Mole salamander egg mass. Photo by Jeff Davis

Salamanders are secretive and silent. Males arrive at breeding sites first, usually a day or so before females. When females show up, males release pheromones into the water and do courtship dances to attract a mate. Fertilization is internal but copulation doesn't occur. Instead, males deposit small gelatinous structures called spermatophores, the top of which has a packet of sperm. A female opens her cloaca, a common opening for excretion and reproduction, and removes the packet, releasing the sperm cells into her reproductive tract where they fertilize her eggs. Multiple paternity occurs often, meaning the sperm of several males may fertilize a female's complement of eggs. Usually, the night after her eggs are fertilized, she climbs onto a submerged twig and deposits them in a globular mass. She leaves them to develop on their own. The ping pong ball-sized egg mass will absorb water until it reaches the size of baseball, give or take, depending on the species and the number of eggs deposited.

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Spring Peepers, which range in color from tan to brown to pinkish and are marked by an "X" on their back, are not silent like salamanders. When the males arrive at breeding pools, usually a day or so ahead of females, they repeat loud, high-pitched peeps every few seconds. The call, aptly referred to as the advertisement call, informs females they have established a suitable site where eggs can be laid and invites females to mate with them. Females respond to lower pitched calls (we can't tell the difference) which come from larger males, perhaps indicating the genes he has to contribute to her unfertilized eggs are superior as he has managed to live two, or maybe even three years. One-year old males are sexually mature and advertise to females as well; however, many of these smaller individuals are unable to establish a desirable territory, and instead act as satellite males. Satellite males maintain a low profile out of sight of larger males, but close enough to intercept a female responding to a more dominant male's call. As a female approaches a male, he climbs onto her back and secures a grip with his forelimbs just behind hers. This mating embrace is called amplexus. The female dives, with the male in tow, and deposits her eggs on submerged vegetation, one at a time. As she pushes an egg from her cloaca, the male releases sperm cells to fertilize it. She moves a centimeter or so and repeats until her full complement of 200 to 1,000 eggs has been deposited. As a side note, other species of local frogs deposit their eggs in masses ranging from perhaps 20 to as many as 5,000 and both local toad species lay long coiled strings of eggs. Regardless of whether eggs are laid in strings, masses, or individually, fertilization among our local species is external. Like salamanders, female frogs offer little to no protection to their eggs. Salamander and frog eggs hatch a few days to weeks after being laid, depending on the water temperature in which they are developing (warmer water promotes more rapid egg development).



Spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*) advertising his availability and occupation of a suitable egg-laying site. Photo by Jeff Davis

Salamander larvae are carnivores. During the day they hide among the leaf litter on the bottom of their pond where they hunt for tiny invertebrates. At night, they move up into the water column and hunt where tiny organisms swim. Frog larvae, better known as tadpoles, are largely herbivorous. They scrape algae from the surface of submerged objects and filter organic matter from the water.

By June or July, most of the local species of late winter breeding amphibians are ready to undergo metamorphosis and move to land where they will grow to adulthood. Salamander larvae developed legs shortly after hatching. For them, metamorphosis means they will absorb the fins on the upper and lower edge of their tail, develop lungs, and absorb their gills. Most of the local ambystomatid species are about 1 ½ - 2 inches at metamorphosis. They leave their pond on a rainy night and take refuge under rocks, logs, or in an abandoned burrow where the humidity is high, and they can maintain moist skin through which most of their oxygen and carbon dioxide will be exchanged.

Spring Peeper tadpoles must go through more radical changes. They develop hindlimbs, then forelimbs late in their larval developmental period. Likewise, their filter-feeding, algae scraping mouth must develop jaws as wide as their head.



These developing tadpoles have begun to grow legs. Photo by Jeff Davis



This Spring Peeper metamorph, about 1/2 inch in length, has recently absorbed its tail and left the water. Photo by Jeff Davis

Gills are replaced by lungs, and digestive enzymes capable of digesting insects and spiders replace those that digest the herbivorous diet of their larval stages. Spring Peeper metamorphs will leave the water but stay close to their natal pool for a few days to weeks, but eventually move into woodland and brushy habitats. Despite being treefrogs, they generally stay within a few feet of the ground.

It's worth mentioning, that this article has only discussed those local species that breed during late winter. Other species of local amphibians breed in early spring through summer. Some do so entirely on land and others in water. Perhaps, sometime in the future, I will have the opportunity to share some of their life cycles with you.





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Newsletter prepared and edited
by Donna McCollum, Barbara
Hamilton, and Amy Sullivan



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

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to carbon credits and make participation easier for growers. This legislation has bipartisan support as well as support from a multitude of farming organizations including the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Your Three Valley Conservation Trust, along with two other southwestern Ohio land trusts, Tecumseh and Cardinal, is working with Indigo Ag, a leader in regenerative agriculture, to inspire more interest in regenerative agriculture among farmers in the region. Indigo is a “turn-key” organization that assists farmers in managing their farms with regenerative methods and acts as an agent for carbon credits. Carbon credits may likely become the next commodity crop that our local farmers produce. Contrary to practices that historically focused on yields this new commodity crop would incentivize regenerative agriculture practices. Indigo’s results indicate that not only does regenerative agriculture foster environmental sustainability, but it also serves to sustain the long-term economic viability of the farm.

Local interest in regenerative farming and carbon credits has been strong; Three Valley leadership has initiated discussions with several agricultural easement owners and several other farmers want to know more. Three Valley is promoting regenerative agriculture on its easements as a means to benefit the overall conservation value and its commitment to support the local farming community.

If you are interested in additional information on regenerative farming, please contact us at Three Valley Conservation Trust at office@3VCT.org or 513-524-2150.

Ruder Preserve Update

By Donna McCollum, Ruder management team

If you haven’t visited Ruder Preserve lately, we hope you will take advantage of some spring weather and take a walk. You might notice that the second section of the boardwalk is almost finished, a new fence and sign were erected last fall, and at least 50 native shrubs have been planted. We started off spring 2021 right with a day volunteering by Miami University students and professors, organized by Jacqueline Daugherty, acting director of the Western Center for Social Impact and Innovation, Individualized Studies. They were supervised by two members of the management team, Barbara Hamilton and Stephen Gordon, and at least one long-time 3VCT member Marlene Hoffman. Thanks to all who helped out on this productive day! Here’s what they accomplished:

- Moved lumber off the new boardwalk section
- Planted 20+ shrubs east side
- Pulled LOTS of honeysuckle
- Picked up trash
- Rerouted the path and planted shrubs where a path was being undercut streamside
- Collected and organized tubes/cages that no longer had anything in them

Everyone was able to spread out and accomplish a lot, separately in space, but together in spirit! We have two more work days scheduled at Ruder on April 10 and 24. Check 3VCT’s web site or Facebook page for more information. We hope you can join us!



3VCT members join MU students and professors at Ruder Preserve on day of volunteering associated with the Western Center’s Valuing Water Miniconference. Photo by Stephen Gordon

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.