



Three Valley and the Kilroys Mark 200th and 201st Conservation Easements

By Stephen Gordon

Two hundred easements in 25 years. More than numerical mile-stones, they serve as reminders of how visionary landowners and a conservation-based organization can forge powerful partnerships toward protecting land. Accomplishing successful easements often requires a substantial amount of paperwork, patience, funding, and - above all - caring landowners.

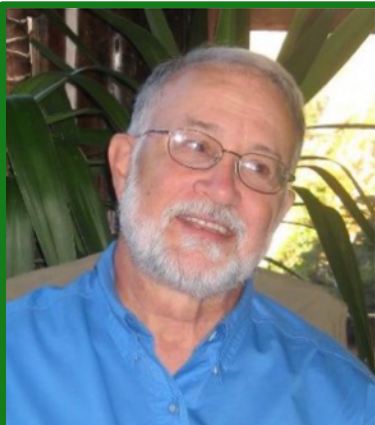
The Trust's 200th and 201st easements are a case in point. Michael and Vickie Kilroy are strongly attached to their earth-friendly house, woods, and meandering stream in Jackson Township, Montgomery County. Located along Little Twin Creek, the Kilroy property features a wooded tract and modern house on 34 secluded acres. Adjoining is an 82-acre small grain farm with mid-19th century house, timber frame barns, riparian waterway and cultivated fields. Although only a few miles from the Dayton metropolitan area, this corner of western Montgomery County remains largely agricultural. The rolling landscape with cultivated fields, woodlots, and historic farmsteads has remained relatively unchanged amidst urban development and sprawl. A strong desire to protect the land and their home in perpetuity led the Kilroys to donate the development rights for both properties to the Trust and place the land under conservation easements #200 and #201.



Why are these easements notable? First, the properties are located within the Great Miami Sole Source Aquifer. What happens upstream affects all water flowing downstream, and water quality is increasingly a concern among residents of southwest Ohio. Additionally, over 80% of the soils on the Kilroy's 34-acre tract are classified as prime. Now, with nearly 2,000 feet of blue line stream protected from future infrastructure development, the wooded riparian corridors on the Kilroy properties will continue to provide habitat, prevent soil erosion, and support water quality downstream for wildlife and for people. Ohio Department of Natural Resources Woodland Management Plans also emphasize the benefits of woodland habitats by outlining measures to restore and conserve healthy vegetation conditions. So, while the easements ensure protection, the Kilroys have undertaken removal of non-native species and planted pine and walnut trees to improve the functionality of the landscape for years to come.

What are the takeaways from 200 easements? Conserved property owners share a common bond – they all hold a love of their land. It may be a family farm, a special habitat, or a place that touches the soul. For Mike and Vickie Kilroy, Joni Mitchell's iconic lyrics "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot" stirred them to action. They have seen how natural areas are getting smaller and smaller. "We did our easements for the animals, so the wildlife has a safe place to live in the future."

CONSERVATION IS THE KILROY'S LEGACY !



View from the Chair

By Mark Boardman

Remarkable milestones come in many sizes and varieties.

Milestone # 1: Three Valley Conservation Trust is celebrating its 25th year of operation. Articles of Incorporation as a conservation non-profit organization were submitted to the State of Ohio in 1994 and specifically identify five purposes of the Trust that ***continue to guide our values, policies, and mission***. These five purposes are listed below:



- 1. Identify important natural, scenic, historic, and recreational land and water resources***
- 2. Acquire by gift or purchase conservation easements and deeded lands which merit preservation and protection***
- 3. Maintain, manage, and hold in trust acquired lands for the benefit of the general public***
- 4. Endeavor to inform the general public of the need for land use planning and for compatible development projects***
- 5. Serve as an information resource of available conservation options for individual land-owners***

Thank you to Wally Edwards and early Trust members for their remarkable and prescient vision that is now Three Valley Conservation Trust.

Milestone # 2: Three Valley Conservation Trust now holds more than 200 easements. Vickie and Mike Kilroy donated two easements along Little Twin Creek. The Kilroys' land includes over one mile of stream and 40 acres of forest (red oak, walnut, beech, buckeye and pawpaw) that has been cleared of invasive, non-native Amur honeysuckle.

Milestone # 3: Three Valley Conservation Trust is now a resilient conservation institution. In the beginning, the Trust was run as a committee of dedicated individuals. As more easements were acquired through state and federal funding, more staff were hired, and the Trust became an entity with many working parts - an efficient conservation institution. Institutional resilience was demonstrated last fall by the smooth transition from one Executive Director to another. Randy Evans was hired from within the staff to be the next Executive Director. Randy has been with the Trust for several years as its Stewardship Manager and has demonstrated competence in communication, fundraising, and management. He will be an excellent Executive Director. The institution of the Trust is in good hands.

Three Valley Conservation Trust
2020 Annual Meeting
The Oxford Community Arts Center
10 S College Ave
Oxford, OH 45056

For our planning purposes, please register
www.3vct.org/annual-general-meeting
email : office@3vct.org
or call: (513) 524-2150

Sunday, March 22
5:30-8:00pm

Cost: \$10
Meal Provided

From the Executive Director

By Randy Evans



We have been so fortunate to serve our ever-changing SW Ohio region for the past 25 years. Since 1994, we have worked in numerous communities to protect over 23,000 acres of vital agricultural lands and unique green space. As we conclude our 25-year celebration and move into new opportunities this year, we would like to take a moment to thank YOU, our members, for helping us to achieve new heights in land conservation. We would also like to reassure our members that we are not finished with this important task. In 2020, the TVCT board and staff remain committed to conserving high-quality land that is threatened by development, caring for the land we protect in a sustainable way, and helping current and future generations understand the value and importance of land conservation and stewardship.

Our staff is busy processing new easement applications as well as exploring new partnerships and funding opportunities to help our current landowners effectively overcome the challenges they encounter. When we say we are committed to protecting and stewarding land *in perpetuity*, our objective is an active partnership with our landowners to protect and restore these cherished properties. Maria Fagin and Caitlin Brown, our stewardship team members, are dedicated to this objective and passionate about working with our members, partners, and volunteers to meet this important goal. So, again, thank you for helping to bring these efforts and the successes of our past and future to fruition. Without you, we would lack the resources to fulfill our mission. We look forward to continuing our community partnerships for the next 25 years and beyond.

Property Management

Fossil Creek

Three Valley Conservation Trust is the owner and manager of a 45-acre tract called "Fossil Creek." This tract includes a tributary of the Great Miami River and is being protected as part of the Paddys Run Conservation Program, a partnership agreement with Ohio EPA (part of the Fernald clean-up project). This partnership has been a conservation focal point of TVCT for many years.

Fossil Creek is important for two reasons. First, Fossil Creek serves as another example of how TVCT has pieced together an amazing combination of tracts protecting the Paddy's Run watershed. Secondly, Fossil Creek demonstrates how TVCT creatively works with partner organizations, in this case the Ohio EPA, to protect critical watersheds, in effect serving as a model for future watershed protection.

The impact of watershed conservation touches on all phases of our area's environment – surface and groundwater quality, plant and wildlife habitat, recreation, and carbon sequestration. Stay tuned as your Trust takes additional steps to protect Fossil Creek and the Paddy's Run watershed.

Angst Family Farm

TVCT accepted ownership of this strategically important 82-acre tract in Butler County from the Angst family. The family desired their farm to be a "park-like" haven for future families of southwestern Ohio to enjoy nature in perpetuity. The Trust will manage the farm until an alternative is found for its long-term ownership and stewardship. TVCT is currently in discussions with MetroParks of Butler County to create the park-like setting so desired by the family. The farm has a house and out-buildings that could serve many uses in the future.

The Angst farm will be another example of how farmland can be preserved and restored for the continued benefit of the southwestern Ohio community. We are humbled by the trust granted to Three Valley by Helen Angst to preserve this tract of farmland, woodlands, and open space for generations of future residents.

TVCT 25th Anniversary Dinner

By Tom Vogel

On August 17th, a group of 40 members, supporters, and TVCT Board members and employees gathered for TVCT's 25th Anniversary Fundraiser Dinner. A good time and fellowship were enjoyed by all. After 90 minutes of musical entertainment and conservation mingling, our Board Chair, Dr. Mark Boardman, kicked off the formalities with several statements regarding the role of TVCT in enhancing conservation in Southwestern Ohio. His major theme was this: **land conservation is the very foundation for maintaining our environment...**and that is precisely what we do at TVCT!

Next, **Mr. Ronald C. Todd II**, Minority Affairs Liaison with Governor DeWine's Office, then read a proclamation from the Governor congratulating Three Valley Conservation Trust for 25 years of conservation success. Mr. Todd pledged the Governor's support for the Trust's conservation endeavors and both he and the Governor will assist the Trust in any way possible. He specifically referenced Governor DeWine's H2Ohio's water quality initiatives, a bold series of strategies for improving water quality around the State.

Our keynote speaker was **Mr. Kirk Hines**, Deputy Director –Conservation, for the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Mr. Hines conveyed his Department's commitment to the State's conservation initiatives, citing the aforementioned H2Ohio water quality initiatives. Mr. Hines complimented TVCT for our commitment to the similar goals in the H2Ohio program and pledged his Department's support for our future conservation efforts. Mr. Hines indicated he would welcome working with Three Valley on various projects in the future, including our Strategic Mapping endeavor.

Both speakers engaged with participants for nearly an hour after their presentations. The support of Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Agriculture is invaluable to our Trust as we move forward for the next 25 years of conservation endeavors.

Three Valley Conservation Trust



By the Numbers:

1994

Year Founded

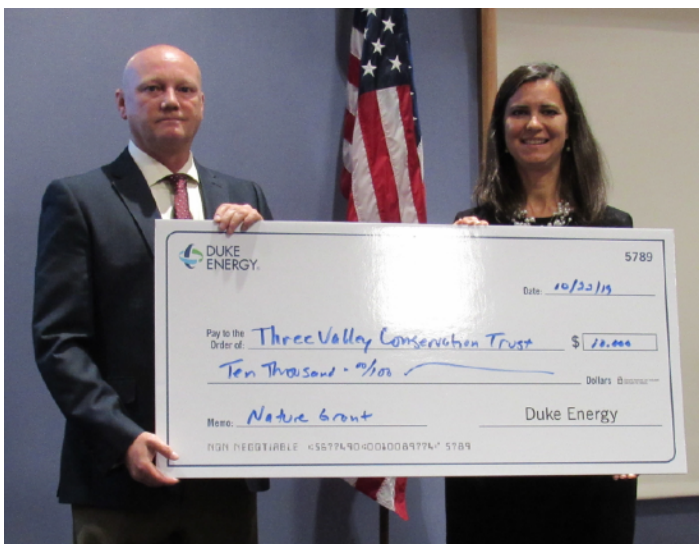
202

Easements Donated

23,124

Acres Preserved

Duke Energy Foundation Grant



Congratulations to Randy Evans who, on behalf of Three Valley Conservation



Trust, was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Duke Energy Foundation! The foundation contributes more than \$30 million annually in charitable gifts, and is funded by Duke Energy shareholder dollars. This philanthropic support is provided to meet the needs of communities where Duke Energy's customers live and work.

The funding will help complete the suppression and removal of invasive flora remaining in Ruder Preserve and help fund the purchase and planting of native plant species.

Three Valley Welcomes New Stewardship Management Team

By Randy Evans

As the TVCT Stewardship Manager, my normal week included many journeys to the properties protected by Three Valley over the last 25 years. During those visits, I routinely enjoy the company of passionate landowners

and admire their work as the daily stewards of our natural resources. After 5 years, many new friendships, and some amazing memories, I'm handing over the stewardship reins to a new team.

Maria Fagin, who many of you have met, started as an unpaid intern with Three Valley in the summer of 2016. She spent many days on the road and walking fence lines with me that first year. For the past 2 years, she has been our Stewardship and Communications Coordinator, spending the majority of her time making sure the office ran smoothly and deadlines were met. She grew up in Reilly Township and spent her summers and weekends on her grandparent's farm where she developed a knowledge of, and love for, rural landscapes. Maria will be our new Stewardship Manager, and she is looking forward to spending more time in the field and with our landowners. Maria can be reached at her new email address LandStew1@3vct.org.

Maria will be joined by Caitlin Brown, our new Stewardship Specialist. Caitlin spent this last summer with us as an intern while finishing up her requirements to earn a Master's in Biology at Miami University. Caitlin provides a unique background knowledge in soil nutrient cycling and a love for hiking and exploring the natural areas of our easements. Caitlin can be reached at her new email address: LandStew2@3vct.org.

Sadly, all this means my new role as Executive Director and as the Land Protection specialist at TVCT will require more desk time for the time being. I plan to continue visiting properties and to help introduce our new stewardship team when time permits. However, Maria and Caitlin are an energetic and enthusiastic team and they are already out in the field as I write these words. I'm excited for you to meet them in the field. By the way, please offer a hand if you see Maria running from the cows. She's a little skittish around them and the cows don't seem to understand, so you may need to explain it to them.



Caitlin Brown
Stewardship Specialist

Maria Fagin
Stewardship Manager



Reva Evans
Office and Communications
Coordinator

TVCT Welcomes New Staff Member

Office and Communications Coordinator

We are thrilled to welcome Reva Evans to the TVCT family as our new Office and Communications Coordinator. Reva (no relation to Randy) is an Oxford community member with a passion for the environment and helping others. She has extensive non-profit and office management experience through her work with the Hamilton YWCA and local businesses. We are excited she has chosen to share those skills and help us expand our community outreach. Reva provides us the additional capacity to accelerate the pace of land conservation and stewardship. Welcome aboard, Reva!

Outreach and Education

Community Engagement for Conservation

This seemingly never-ending summer was a perfect time to be out in our community sharing the Three Valley mission and values! Our Outreach and Education Committee coordinated restoration efforts at Ruder Preserve, youth programs, and book club discussions, and we kicked-off fall with Hike-and-Pie at Ruder as part of Green Umbrella's Great Outdoor Weekend and the Miami Natural Areas Hike-a-Thon.

Ruder Preserve

At Ruder Preserve, progress continued on habitat enhancement of this riparian forest - removing invasive plants and planting native species. We also finished the first phase of enhancing accessibility to it by constructing a boardwalk and a paved parking area. Both of these initiatives were funded entirely by hundreds of volunteers, designated gifts, and grants (procured by **Donna McCollum** and **Randy Evans**). You are encouraged to visit this extraordinary showpiece of land stewardship and public access.



This fall, MU's Field Botany classes and other service groups advanced our clearing of honeysuckle toward the south of the preserve and along both Shadowy Hills Drive and Bonham Road. We are almost finished with the initial clearing on the west side of 4 Mile Creek! MU's Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) scholars worked on one of our 90-degree days removing Asian bittersweet - whew! But they enjoyed their service work so much that we think we've arranged to work with them several times each summer for the next 5 years. Many thanks, all!

We celebrated the completion of the parking area and first section of the ADA-compliant boardwalk with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Oct. 6th. The addition of the parking area with handicap parking means the beauty and serenity of this riparian forest is available to ALL members of the community. Donations are in hand to build a viewing platform overlooking Four Mile Creek and extend the boardwalk to it. Volunteers will begin work on this section of the boardwalk and platform in the next few months. A grant from the Oxford Foundation will help purchase and install signage.



TVCT celebrates the opening of the ADA-compliant boardwalk at Ruder. Photos: Archer Hill (L), Linda Boardman (R)



Finding fish

Little Mudders

Our Little Mudders embarked on many little adventures this spring and summer. Some of our favorite outings include creeking for salamanders at Hueston Woods State Park, searching for bugs at **Hays and Donna McCollum's** house, visiting cows at the **Mann/Tincher farm**, building bird feeders at the Miami Natural Areas bird blind, and monitoring the butterfly garden at **Ed Teets'** home. We are grateful for all our members who have been so willing to open their homes to our Little Mudders. Many thanks to all participating families for joining us, and thanks to all you awesome parents and caretakers for bringing your children outside! We have big adventures for our little Mudders coming up in the spring and summer, so please join us! Visit our website for more information or call Three Valley.

Photos by Tricia Hillman



Searching for bugs



Building bird feeders

Phenology at Ruder Preserve

Phenology is the study of the life cycles of plants and animals (leafing, flowering, migrations, etc.) - especially in relation to weather and climate. Through the efforts of Board member Suellen Albert, Ruder Preserve is now part of the USA-National Phenology Network (USA-NPN). Suellen is creating a phenology trail at Ruder Preserve to guide citizen-science observations and monitoring efforts, and she will train persons to contribute to the USA-NPN database (March 15; call 524-2150 if interested). She and Adriane Ruther (Talawanda science teacher) will make a presentation at the Environmental Education Council of Ohio (EECO) in April. Also presenting on phenology at the EECO will be Board member Dr. Amy Sullivan and Dr. Katie Feilen. Suellen is a dedicated and accomplished elementary/middle-school teacher who has been recognized at the county and state levels for excellence in conservation education and community engagement. Dr. Sullivan is a visiting Assistant Professor at Miami and works for Project Dragonfly.

Wonderful Wednesdays

Wednesdays throughout June and July were filled with wonderful experiences for children and their parents to explore the natural world. Our partner in conservation, **Lynn White with the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District**, met our explorers at the banks of the Four Mile Creek for a stream ecology appreciation program. **Suellen Albert** introduced phenology and nature observations to a small group at Ruder Preserve. **Eric Hollins** graciously led us through a beautiful prairie restoration site at Hueston Woods, where we saw numerous pollinators and discovered unique flora planted to help them thrive. Thank you to all our volunteer leaders for sharing your extensive expertise and enthusiasm for conservation in our community!



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.

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office@3VCT.org
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"Valley Trust News"
the newsletter for members of
Three Valley Conservation Trust
is published twice a year.

Trustees

Mark Boardman
Chair

Sandra Woy-Hazleton
Vice Chair

Ed Teets
Treasurer

Amy Sullivan
Secretary

Suellen Albert
Amanda Bowers
Amanda Brymer
Daniel Cox
Sarah Dumyahn
LaTricia Hillman
Cathryn Loucas
Donna McCollum
Tom Vogel

Staff

Randy Evans
Executive Director
Maria Fagin
Stewardship Manager
Caitlin Brown
Stewardship Specialist
Stephen Gordon
Paddys Run Contractor

2020 Annual Meeting

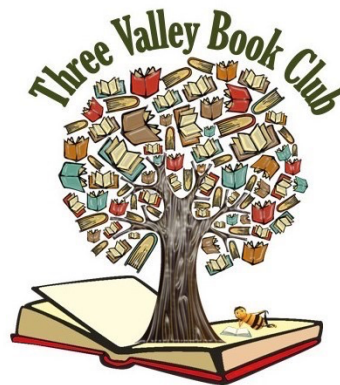
**Oxford Community
Arts Center**

10 S College Ave
Oxford, OH 45056

**Sunday, March 22
5:30-8:00pm**



For our planning purposes, please register
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email : office@3vct.org
or call: (513) 524-2150



Contact:
office@3VCT.org or
call 524-2150.

It's never too late to join discussions of interesting books about our world and how we think about it. All books chosen for this book club concern conservation, but vary in being fiction, nonfiction, or even poetic. You are always welcome to join the club at LaRosa's at 6 pm on the days indicated.

Books chosen for discussion:

Timefulness by Marcia Bjornerud
May 14

The Green New Deal by Jeremy Rifkin
August 13

The Overstory by Richard Powers
November 12



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 to the extent permissible by the IRS. The TVCT non-profit & tax exempt ID is 31-1418241.