



ANNUAL REPORT

5995 Fairfield Road
Oxford, Ohio, 45056
513.524.2150

2024

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Dear Three Valley Friends,

2024 was a year of reflection for many of us as we celebrated Three Valley's first 30 years of conservation efforts in southwest Ohio. Over the last 30 years, the look of our organization has changed with a full-time paid professional staff, new technology to meet our growing obligations, and expanding community partnership opportunities. With your steadfast support, we've arrived at this important juncture in our history, stronger and more committed than ever to fulfill the mission. We remain steadfastly dedicated to protecting and rebuilding our regional natural systems. Every day, our team works relentlessly to identify and protect the best remaining natural areas we have left, restore those we've lost, and engage with conservation partners/leaders of tomorrow. What began in 1994 as a fledgling all-volunteer effort to protect water and riparian habitat along Four Mile Creek has grown to protect 223 properties (25,000 acres in seven counties) in perpetuity. Your support has made these accomplishments possible and we applaud everything you, as members, have done to make this possible and help keep us moving forward.

We have so much more to do and in 2024, we made progress toward these additional goals. With applications submitted and funding secured, we anticipate protecting over 800 acres in the next few years. While new easements are exciting, our team continues to meet the challenges of our stewardship responsibilities on the land already entrusted to us. From regular monitoring to major habitat restoration projects, our ongoing land stewardship efforts are the key to fulfilling our long-term mission obligations. The community and professional partnerships we've established and nurtured over the years continue to produce project opportunities which will increase water, soil, air, and habitat quality in our region. While many of these projects occur on privately-owned conserved land, we remain committed toward increasing community access to nature at our Ruder Nature Preserve as well. Toward this end, our board, staff, volunteers and donors dedicated significant time and resources in 2024 by completing our limited mobility access boardwalk to OATS connector and continuing our work to increase biodiversity at the preserve. Those efforts continue in 2025, as does our work to establish native seed libraries throughout Butler County, host nature hikes for our community, and increase the overall health of our local ecosystems.

I would like to close by expressing my deepest gratitude and thanks for all that you do as a Three Valley Conservation Trust members and partners— it is through your support that the work of land protection is made possible. Thank you for sharing our vision and your support toward protecting these natural resources for the plants, animals, and people who rely on them in perpetuity.

Semper Gratus,

RANDY EVANS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ON THE COVER: Frank House's Sugar Valley Farm was one of our earliest easements. Permanently protected since 2002.

FROM THE CHAIR

I Have Always Been Intrigued by Maps...

When I was young, I became enthralled by maps. I would spend hours and hours reviewing the weather maps in the newspaper. Similarly, I would sit down for hours pondering over the old gas station foldout maps. I could not get enough of maps! My interest in them led me to an undergraduate degree in geography; what a surprise! Why was I so consumed by maps at such a young age and even to this day? Maps tell a story that only they can convey. That is why I always ask our Three Valley staff to display the large map of your easements at our annual meeting. The map tells a story that only it can!

The map helps us all understand the magnitude of our impact on southwest Ohio, its resources, and its people. Over 25,000 acres in perpetual easements that will provide open space for producing food, energy, recreation, and visual pleasure for generations to come. In essence, every member of Three Valley can take credit for the success over the last 30+ years. This is not a trivial story; it is not something that just happened by mere coincidence. No! This is a story line of over 30 years of commitment from our members, staffs, and boards...and the map highlights our story, and what a grand story it tells!

Fellow members, I cannot thank you enough for your support over the past 30+ years. As Board Chair for the past three years, it has been one of the most satisfying roles I have ever undertaken. And this...oh, this map...tells a most wonderful story of success! Thank you!

TOM VOGEL

BOARD CHAIR

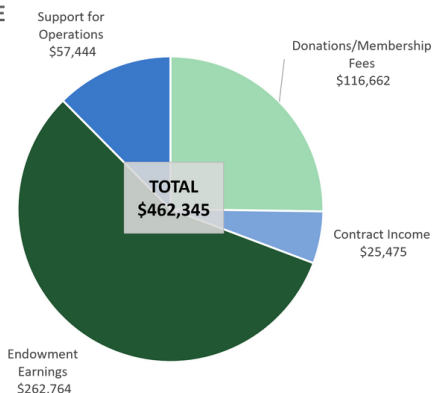
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In January, 2024, the board approved a budget that included expenses of \$ 450,831 and planned to meet these expenses with income from donations, contract income, and earnings from our endowment. End-of-year expenses totaled \$ 457,151 - 1.4% higher expenses than expected. Thanks to a grant award from the Oxford Community Foundation and support from our events, we were able to meet all of our important expenses.

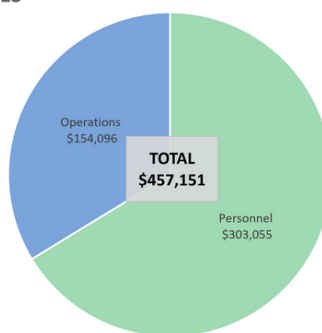
ED TEETS

TREASURER

REVENUE



EXPENSES



EASEMENTS

In 2024, Three Valley closed an ODA LAEPP funded 82.589 acre agricultural easement on one of Fred Voge's farms in Preble County, Ohio. The Voge family has protected over 1,150 acres of agricultural land in Preble County. Fred Voge was awarded the Cattlemen's Commercial Producer of the Year Award in 2020 and is known for his Wagyu beef. Voge is an outstanding land steward, utilizing regenerative agricultural practices to decrease fertilizer inputs and improve soil health. This 83 acre farm is Three Valley's first Regenerative Agriculture Case Study site, where we will continue to test the soil to analyze the impacts of Fred's regenerative practices.

Three Valley currently has eight easements that are in the works, which we hope to close in 2025. Of those easements, six are located in Butler County and two are in Preble County. In addition to the pending easements, Three Valley submitted 16 applications to NRCS' ACEP-ALE program, which funds agricultural easements. Three Valley is thrilled to have so many landowners interested in protecting their land and the precious resources of Southwest Ohio.



MISSION

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.

VISION

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

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

1994-2024



Founder Wallace I. Edwards

Three decades ago, a vision took root—the vision to protect the natural beauty and ecological health of Southwest Ohio. From that vision, Three Valley Conservation Trust was born.

Our mission is simple yet profound: to preserve the open spaces that define our community. Through collaboration with people and communities, we work tirelessly to conserve the natural habitats, waterways, and farmlands of Southwestern Ohio.

Together, we are safeguarding these precious lands for the benefit of both current and future generations.

The Farmer's Feast

Supporters came together on September 21, 2024 to enjoy an evening filled with music, food and friends marking Three Valley Conservation Trust's 30 year anniversary.

The night included music from The Farmer and the Crow, a video showcasing our work and a special presentation of the Wallace I. Edwards Conservationist awards to Mark Boardman, Steve Gordon, Tom Farmer, Donna McCollum, Steve Nimis, and Ed Teets to acknowledge their tremendous contributions to the Ruder Preserve.

Generous sponsorships were provided by: Vogel Farm Enterprises, Fred P. Kreuzer & Associates, LPL Financial, Miami Valley Gaming, Rodeffer Meats, Yeager Farms, The Farmer & The Crow, Ron Stevens, and Schaefer's Farm Market.



Mark Boardman, Steve Nimis, Ed Teets, Donna McCollum, Steve Gordon. Not Pictured: Tom Farmer

LOOKING AHEAD

As we look ahead to the next 30 years, our land trust remains steadfast in its mission to conserve and protect the landscapes that sustain our communities. With growth and development accelerating, the challenges of preserving open spaces and natural habitats are greater than ever. To meet these demands, we are committed to securing the resources needed to expand our team and enhance our operations, ensuring we can respond effectively to conservation opportunities. Our ambitious goal is to safeguard 30,000 acres of land by 2030, a critical step toward building a resilient future for generations to come. Together, we can achieve lasting impact and ensure that the next 30 years are as transformative as the first.



SPECIAL PROJECTS



SW OHIO WOODLAND ASSOCIATION

Since July 2022, Three Valley has been coordinating the quarterly meetings and workshops of the SW Ohio Woodland Association. With a growing membership, the group focuses on providing community members with information and technical assistance in the planning, managing, and use of their woodland resources. Quarterly meetings are often hosted by our members on their properties. This gives our attendees an opportunity to examine and discuss best practices and lessons learned at ongoing woodland restoration projects. Regional forestry experts from park districts, county conservation districts, and the state division of forestry are usually in attendance as well to answer questions. Please reach out to Randy Evans at director@3vct.org to learn more.

HENSHAW WETLAND

Last year the Annual Report profiled construction of the Henshaw Corner Wetland project. The wetland was named in recognition of Stanley Henshaw, the landowner and easement donor. Several partners and funders have made the project possible, principally the Ohio EPA. This year will mark the third year since the 11.4 acre parcel was converted from row crop cultivation to a native wetland habitat. The goals of the



reclamation are to improve water quality, conserve amphibian habitats and restore diverse native plant populations. In spring 2023, over 1,000 woody shrubs, deciduous trees and pollinators were planted. As expected, incursions of non-native species, namely Japanese hops, teasel, Johnson grass and noxious weeds have presented management challenges, along with encroaching native sycamore, cottonwood and box elder seedlings. In addition, deer browsing and last season's severe fall drought mitigated optimum plant growth. TVCT staff will again team up with Davey Resource Group (DRG), the principal restoration contractor, to continue monitoring and maintaining the wetland. Volunteer plant stewards are welcome to assist. If interested, contact the TVCT office.

SEED LIBRARIES

Last year, we celebrated the launch of seed libraries that provide free, locally sourced seeds to our community. Thanks to additional funding secured from the Middletown Community Foundation, we are excited to expand this program with new seed libraries in Monroe, Trenton, and Middletown.

We are also grateful for the overwhelming support during our Holiday Open House, graciously hosted by Jan and Roger Ames. The event's success raised over \$2,000 that will go directly toward purchasing and stocking these seed libraries. Together, these efforts will continue to empower community members to grow their own pollinator friendly habitats.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

RUDER PRESERVE

Ruder Preserve is a showcase of the values and mission of Three Valley Conservation Trust. Through the dedicated efforts of our board, staff, and incredible volunteers, the preserve continues to thrive and grow as a beacon of conservation and stewardship.

Highlights from 2024

- **Completion of the OATS Connector Trail:** The OATS connector trail was successfully completed, providing a seamless connection between the existing OATS trail and Ruder Preserve. The total length of boardwalk includes 654 feet on the OATS side and 309 feet on the connector loop. An accessible parking pad was also established off Bonham Road, making it easier for all visitors to access this beautiful area.

Support the Boardwalk

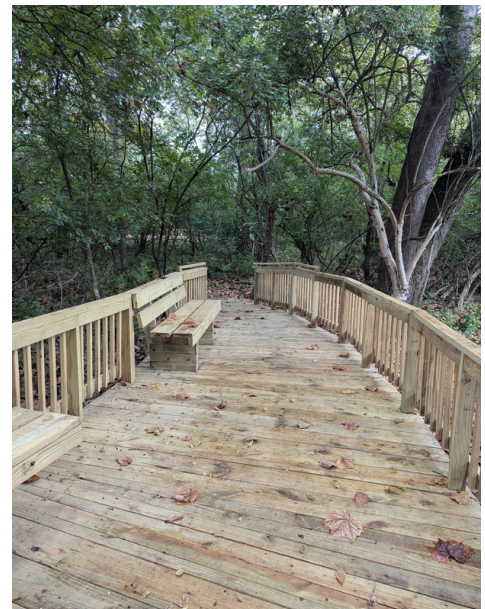
- **Be a Boardwalk Booster:** To support the maintenance of the boardwalk, we are launching a new opportunity to become a Boardwalk Booster. With a \$100 donation, supporters will receive a plaque installed on the boardwalk with their names. These funds will be used to ensure the boardwalk remains a safe and enjoyable feature for years to come.

Special Thanks to the Ruder Management Team

- Mark Boardman, Tom Farmer, Steve Nimis, Ed Teets, Donna McCollum, Steve Gordon and Randy Evans.

Exciting Upcoming Addition

- In 2025, thanks to local donors, a new boardwalk will connect the accessible parking pad to the existing boardwalk, winding through the woods along the river. This addition will enhance accessibility and provide visitors with more opportunities to enjoy the riparian forest. All construction has been made possible by our amazing volunteer team, whose dedication and hard work continue to transform Ruder Preserve.



THANK YOU!

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of our members, sponsors, and funders. To our **members**: thank you for your continued commitment. Your annual memberships and donations directly protect the spaces you hold dear. To our **sponsors**: your financial contributions and in-kind donations of goods and services add a special touch to each of our events. And to our **funders**: we extend heartfelt gratitude for believing in our mission and supporting us through your grants.

Together, we are preserving this land for generations to come. Future generations will be nourished by food grown on this same soil, delight in splashing through the creeks, and be inspired by the beauty that surrounds us. Thank you for your past support and for considering continued support of this important work.

ANNUAL MEETING SPONSORS

THE AMES FAMILY &  LPL Financial



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VICE CHAIR

Ed Teets
TREASURER

Amy Sullivan
SECRETARY

Mark Boardman

LaTricia Hillman

Meg Maloney

Donna McCollum

Julie Primack

Mark Rentschler

Ryan Schwegman

Jim Vinch

GRANT AWARDS

Greater Dayton Conservation Fund
Greater Oxford Community Foundation
McCullough Hyde Foundation
MetroParks of Butler County
Middletown Community Foundation
Oxford Chamber

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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CONSERVATION CONSULTANT