



ANNUAL REPORT



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Oxford, Ohio, 45056
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2025

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As we reflect on 2025, I am deeply grateful for the resilience, professionalism, and dedication shown by the Three Valley Conservation Trust team—and for the donors and partners whose support made our work possible during a year that brought both growth and challenge. We welcomed three new staff members who strengthened our ability to serve landowners and care for conserved lands: Tom Buckley and Erik Herrmann, who now lead our easement stewardship efforts, and Preston Lawson, our new GIS Technician. At the same time, we said a heartfelt farewell to Caitlin Brown, our longtime land acquisition and GIS specialist. Caitlin's expertise and commitment helped shape Three Valley's conservation legacy across Southwest Ohio, and her impact will be felt for years to come.

Protecting land remained a central focus in 2025, even as competition for limited conservation funding intensified. With donor and partner support, Three Valley submitted 22 applications for funded conservation easements, two of which ultimately received funding. We also processed four donated easement applications—two successfully closed and one currently nearing completion—demonstrating the continued generosity and conservation ethic of local landowners. Support from the Kenneth M. Buerk Open Space Preservation Fund, managed by the Greater Oxford Community Foundation, was especially critical in helping us move donated projects forward and protect valuable greenspaces. Looking ahead, we entered 2026 with strong landowner interest, submitting 17 NRCS ACEP-ALE applications and anticipating two to three additional applications through the Ohio Department of Agriculture's LAEPP program. While demand for conservation remains strong, declining funding from traditional sources makes private support and innovative partnerships more important than ever.

One such opportunity emerged in September 2025, when four Three Valley staff members attended the National Land Trust Alliance Rally in Cleveland. There, we began conversations with representatives from Boston's Upstream Carbon team that have since grown into active collaboration. Together, we are exploring ways to bring new conservation funding into Southwest Ohio by supporting forest protection through carbon credit markets. This work represents an exciting opportunity to leverage private investment for long-term conservation outcomes, and we are encouraged by its potential to complement donor and grant support in the years ahead.

In addition to land protection, donor and partner investments continued to support our work improving water quality and restoring ecosystems across the region. While 2025 presented setbacks—including paused NRCS funding for the Upper Four Mile Creek watershed project and reduced wetland funding through the H2Ohio Wetlands Program—your support helped us remain adaptive and forward-focused. Notably, the H2Ohio Rivers Program awarded \$92,000 for Phase 1 planning and design of the Buck Run/Dry Fork fish passage and streambank stabilization project near Okeana. Our partners at Butler SWCD also secured funding for a low-head dam removal near Ruder Preserve and fish passage improvements near the Miami University Equestrian Center. These projects will move into implementation in 2026 and represent tangible, on-the-ground progress made possible through collaboration and sustained investment.

Finally, on behalf of the Board and staff, thank you to the landowners, sponsors, donors, partners, and advocates who believe in this work. Your generosity and trust are the driving force behind every acre protected, every stream restored, and every community partnership highlighted in this report. As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, continued donor support will be essential to meeting growing conservation demand in Southwest Ohio. Together, we can continue protecting family farms, restoring waterways, and conserving the landscapes that will define our region for generations to come.

Semper Gratus,

RANDY EVANS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ON THE COVER: Ribbon Cutting from the Ruder Boardwalk Dedication—October 2025

FROM THE CHAIR

2025 Is Behind Us!

Friends and Members of Three Valley Conservation Trust...2025 was another year of success for your Trust. Oh, there were challenges, no doubt. The funding for conservation easements is becoming more difficult in terms of availability. Additionally, the procedural steps necessary to establish an easement are becoming more tedious and time-consuming. Legal challenges to easements and addressing easement violations have required extensive staff and board time for resolution. In many respects, this is the most challenging time in our history for establishing and monitoring easements. But your Trust continues to flourish despite the new challenges and responsibilities of the staff and board.

We added three new staff members in 2025: Tom Buckley, Stewardship Specialist; Erik Herrmann, Stewardship Technician, and Preston Lawson, GIS and Conservation Specialist. These new associates not only bring extensive skills to your Trust, they have created a unique, team-oriented approach to their roles. They all have a positive "get-it-done" approach to their positions. They have responded beautifully to Executive Director Randy Evans' servant leadership style. Our other associates, Steve Gordon, April Hamlin, and Teri Wickham continue to function well as a team.

Another major step in 2025 was your Trust's continued success in strengthening our relationships with our organization's conservation partners. We thank our conservation partners, the Oxford Community Foundation, Five Rivers Metroparks, Metroparks of Butler County, Ohio Department of Agriculture, US Department of Agriculture, Miami University, Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Butler and Preble Counties, and others, for their cooperation in advancing Three Valley. Your Trust is closer than ever to our partners in success, largely due to the efforts of Randy Evans, Steve Gordon, and April Hamlin. They have cultivated strong relationships with these organizations. This is not a mere coincidence. This success in building stronger relationships speaks not only to our efforts in cooperating with them, it is a testament to the immense respect these organizations have for our staff. Our staff is highly acclaimed throughout southwest Ohio and beyond for their knowledge, dedication, and professionalism.

Early in 2025, with funding assistance from the Oxford Community Foundation and support from the Larkin-Cobb Family of Dealerships, we purchased our first vehicle. The small, fuel-efficient SUV fits our needs well in terms of accommodating our staff and our monitoring equipment. Our staff can now enter properties safely, with visible lettering of our Trust's name and logo. This comforts both the landowners and our staff when entering properties. As a gesture of our appreciation to the Oxford Community Foundation and Larkin-Cobb, we recognize both with their names on the vehicle.

Finally, I want to thank our Friends and Members of Three Valley Conservation Trust for your support through time, treasure, and expertise. You have enabled your Trust to continue to build on our mission of land conservation in southwestern Ohio. Remember, without the support of our Friends and Members, Three Valley would never have become what I call "the land conservation powerhouse of southwestern Ohio." That is a fact!

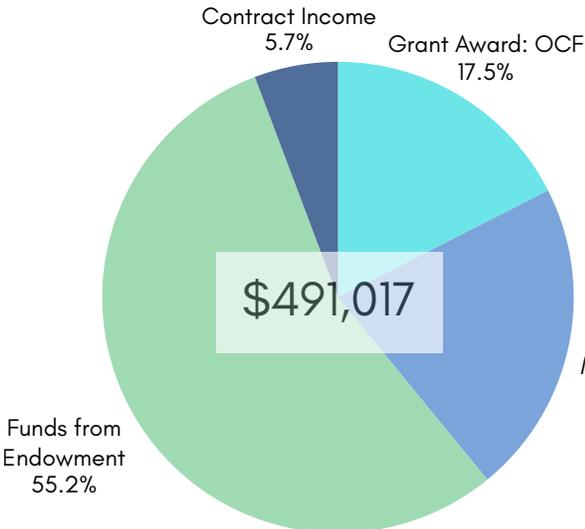
TOM VOGEL
BOARD CHAIR



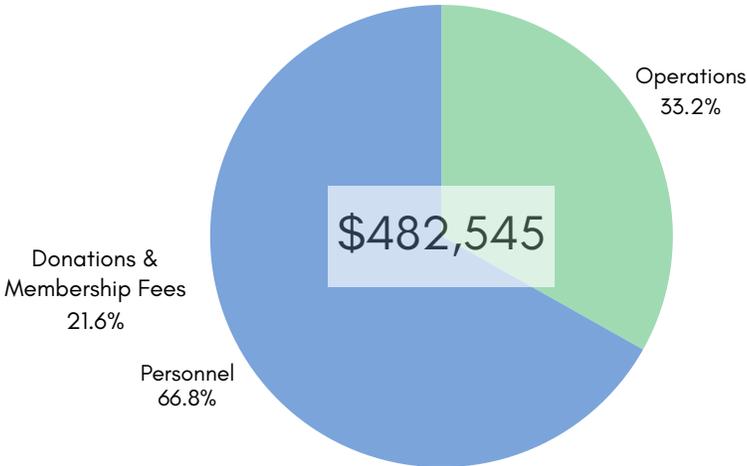
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In January, 2025, the board approved a budget that included expenses of \$509,374 and planned to meet these expenses with income from donations, contract income, and earnings from our endowment. End-of-year expenses totaled \$482,545 - 5% under budget.

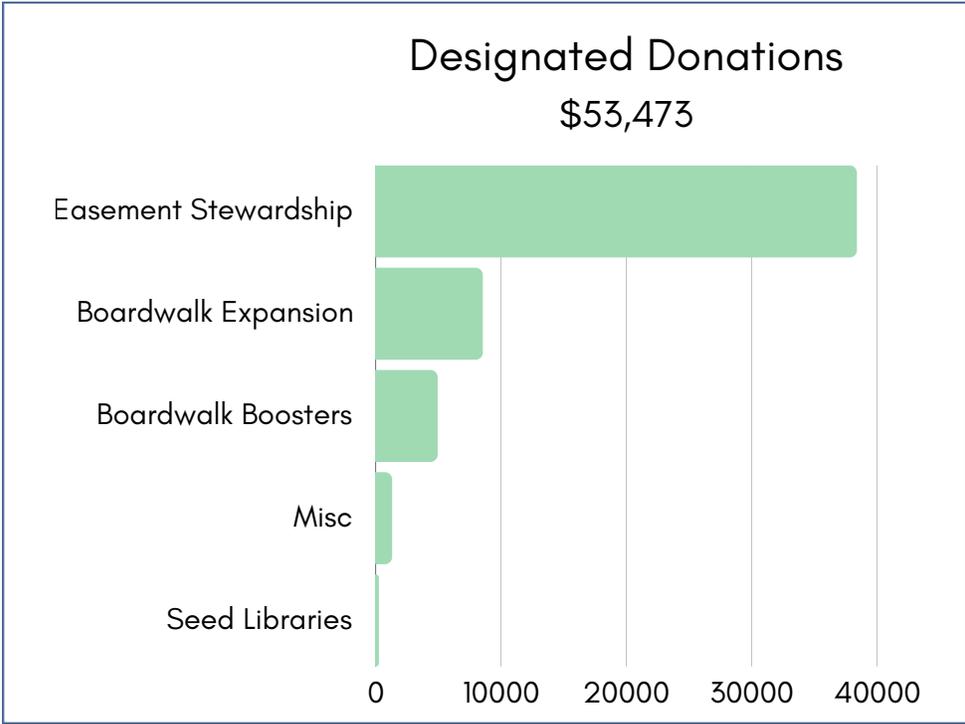
ED TEETS
TREASURER



REVENUE



EXPENSES



Monitoring Updates

The 2025 monitoring season was filled with many interesting wildlife encounters. Early in the year, we encountered cave salamanders hiding beneath flat stones in a creek. These little amphibians are bright orange, with dark brown or black spots. True to the name of cave salamander, their presence in the field indicated the streambed had healthy pockets of groundwater accessible to them. During our visits, we also ventured upon a variety of snakes, grey tree-frogs, a pair of mating box turtles, and even a softshell laying eggs on the rocky beach of our very own Henshaw Wetland. These, among others, were some of the most interesting animal sightings of the year.

Plants and pollinators were also a highlight of the monitoring season. One property, an agricultural field planted full of blooming alfalfa, was swarming with thousands of yellow sulfur butterflies. And this field wasn't alone. Throughout our year walking various farms and forests, we saw numerous eye-catching monarch butterflies. Although these dazzling black and orange butterflies are threatened, their presence this past summer was hopeful. Many other insects characterized our visits, pollinating the wetland plants like skunk cabbage and marsh marigold which dominate these moist woodland environments.

We would like to extend a thank-you to the landowners who work tirelessly to maintain and preserve these beautiful properties. The biodiversity we see is the direct impact of your efforts, and it is such a privilege for us to be able to walk these preserved forests and fields.



New Lands Protected in 2025

In 2025, Three Valley Conservation Trust celebrated the protection of remarkable landscapes across Southwest Ohio. Each property is shaped by dedicated landowners with a deep love for their land and a commitment to its future. These new conservation easements reflect powerful personal legacies and meaningful progress toward healthier watersheds, working farms, and restored natural habitats. A special thanks to the Greater Oxford Community Foundation for a grant award from the Kenneth M. Buerk Open Space Preservation Fund that assisted in protecting these properties.



“Protecting this land is about honoring a lifetime of memories and ensuring that the woods, streams, and trails we loved will endure for generations to come.”

-Claire Iniewicz

Valley Green Cottage - Oxford/Reily

For Clare Iniewicz, conserving her 13.3-acre property along Oxford-Reily Road was about honoring a lifetime of family memories and leaving a lasting legacy for the region. Clare and her late husband, Stanley, purchased the property in 1977 and spent many years riding horses along trails that wind through its beautiful woods.

Located adjacent to the Hoffmann property, this easement expands protected lands along Indian Creek. An intermittent stream on the property feeds the creek, further strengthening the watershed. The Valley Green Cottage conservation easement also enhances the buffer surrounding our recently completed H2Ohio Indian Creek Wetland and Streambank Stabilization Project, making it a meaningful and strategic addition to the lands we steward in this vital watershed.

Baker-Duvelius Farm- Trenton

The Baker-Duvelius Farm represents more than a century of agricultural heritage. Jerome and Glenna Duvelius continue to farm the land with the help of their son, David, who lives on the property and operates a cover-crop business rooted in sustainable practices.

New Lands Protected in 2025

Together, the two parcels total 67.69 acres of prime agricultural soils supporting grain crops and livestock. Designated as a Century Farm, this land has remained in the Duvelius family since 1914. By protecting the farm with a conservation easement, the family has ensured that its agricultural legacy and its contribution to local food systems will continue for generations to come.

“For more than a century, this farm has sustained our family. Conserving it ensures that tradition, stewardship, and working lands remain part of our community’s future.”



Bluestem Reserve - New Richmond

“We wanted to know that the restoration work we’ve poured our hearts into—planting trees, healing streams, and restoring habitat—would be protected forever.”

We first met James Lockey and Grace LeMasters at one of our Southwest Ohio Woodland Association meetings in 2024. For several years, they had been searching for the right conservation partner to help protect their 108-acre woodland parcel east of Cincinnati and we were honored when they chose Three Valley.

Now known as Bluestem Reserve, the property features more than 7,500 feet of blue-line streams and a documented prehistoric mound feature. Once a cattle and tobacco farm, the land is being actively restored by the family and is currently a certified tree farm. To date, they have planted over 5,000 trees and continue ongoing invasive species removal.

In December, we proudly closed this conservation easement which marks our first easement in Clermont County and our 225th easement overall. Most importantly, the Lockey-LeMasters family can move forward knowing their hard work and vision for the land will be protected forever.

Ruder Preserve



Ruder Preserve: Community Conservation in Action

The Oxford area is experiencing a renaissance in outdoor recreation and conservation opportunities. In 2025, the Oxford Area Trail System (OATS) began construction on a major extension and connector bridge over the CSX Railroad. At the same time, a sensitive renovation of the Black Covered Bridge was completed. The Community Park expanded spaces to natural areas, tree planting and is considering further naturalization. Miami University's Natural Areas is continuing its removal of invasive species along the OATS and is beginning plans for stream restoration work in Silvoor Preserve.

A key part of these community conservation efforts continues to take place in Ruder Preserve, a 13.5-acre riparian parcel along Four Mile Creek owned by Three Valley Conservation Trust. As the Trust's flagship publicly accessible property, Ruder Preserve and its boardwalks are free and open to all, especially those persons with limited mobility. Balancing the natural character of this protected riparian habitat with the goal of public accessibility is paramount. As such, ongoing maintenance is essential. Invasive plant removal, trail monitoring and debris removal all require constant attention. In 2025, six organizations that included 163 volunteers donated a total of 413 hours toward restoration projects in Ruder Preserve. Expansion of the boardwalk also continued, with 1500 feet and nine resting platforms constructed in 2025. For those generous "Boardwalk Boosters" who donated \$100 or more, they are recognized with individual plaques. A highlight of 2025 was the grand opening of the boardwalk entrance and associated parking pads at Oxford's Barkham Park.

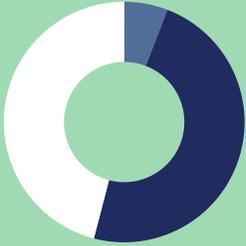
Two notable projects for 2026 are underway. New conservation signs funded by Butler Rural Electric have been designed by volunteers and will be installed in the spring. A major project funded by H2Ohio was awarded last year for restoration work on Four Mile Creek downstream from the Bonham Road bridge. Locally managed by Butler County's Soil and Water Conservation District, the project to begin this fall will remove the low-head dam near Ruder, restore the stream banks and establish a fish passage near Miami University's Equestrian Center dam.

Ruder Preserve



Impact

**25K
ACRES PROTECTED**



CONSERVATION

12,010

AG./CONSERVATION

11,452

AGRICULTURE

1,460

**5,285 ACRES
OF FOREST**



**107 MILES OF
STREAM**

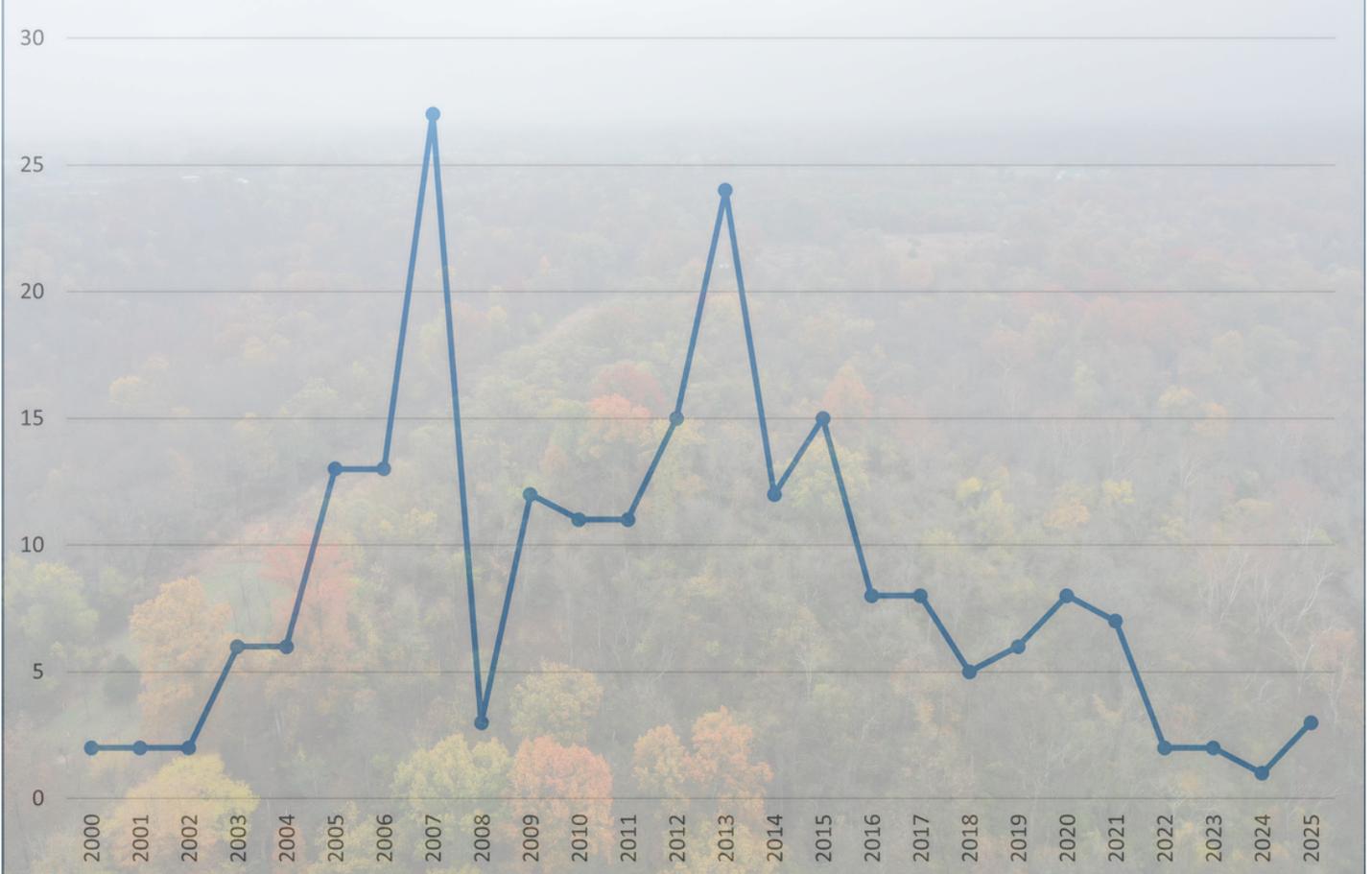


**1,825
SEED PACKETS
DISTRIBUTED**



**11 FREE
SEED LIBRARIES**

Easements Closed Per Year



Impact



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.

ANNUAL MEETING SPONSORS

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VOGEL FARM ENTERPRISES



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