



Ripples

A Publication for Supporters of Killbuck Watershed Land Trust

VOLUME XV | FALL 2023

★ KWLT APPAREL ★ T-shirts! Hats! Sweatshirts! ★

T-shirts: \$23
100% organic cotton

Hats: \$25
Made from recycled plastic

Sweat shirts: \$57
100% organic cotton

Our new apparel designs are complete and we are taking orders. Reach out to your local board member, call the office or email me directly (tate@killbuckwatershedlandtrust.org) to let us know what items you want. Once we collect enough requests, we will place an order for production and let you know when it arrives. So, return those Christmas gifts and get hat!

5 Ways You Can Support Killbuck Watershed Land Trust

In addition to cash gifts, there are many other ways to support Killbuck Watershed Land Trust.

- 1 Donations of Securities** - A direct transfer of securities (stocks, bonds or mutual funds) to KWLT will avoid taxable capital gains and the sale transaction costs.
Your gift will be considered as part of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and will avoid both federal and state income tax.
 - 2 Life Insurance Benefits** - Name KWLT as a beneficiary on a portion or all of your life insurance policy benefits.
 - 3 Make a Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD)** from your IRA -
 - 4 Name KWLT as a beneficiary** of your will, trust or charitable trust or qualified retirement plan - As you plan your estate, your advisors can help you send a benefit to KWLT through a variety of "Planned Gifts."
 - 5 Gift Real Property** to KWLT
- Contact our Executive Director, Tate Emerson, who can assist you with your planning. The Wayne County Community Foundation manages several funds on our behalf and can also assist you with planning.
- Tate Emerson 330-804-KWLT (5958)
tate@killbuckwatershedlandtrust.org
- Wayne County
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
SHARING YOUR LIFE WITH SOMEONE YOU MAY NEVER MEET®
waynecountycommunityfoundation.org
330-262-3877

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Contact Us

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Killbuck Watershed Land Trust is a tax exempt organization pursuant to Section 501(c)3 of the IRS Code.

KWLT Community Comes Together

The KWLT community had a lot to feel grateful for at our Donor Appreciation Party this past September. We had an opportunity to celebrate the supporters who helped us reach our fundraising goal, which covers our 2023 and 2024 annual budget. We had an opportunity to chat and learn and share our unique



KWLT supporters at the lodge near Hemlock Falls

experiences with land preservation. And we had an opportunity to honor five founding board members who have each served on the KWLT Board for more than 20 years.

Held in the beautiful timber lodge on Camp Nuhop's Hemlock Falls campus near Mohican State Park, the afternoon included a guided nature hike to Hemlock Falls-led by board president and naturalist Randy Carmel-as well as a delicious supper, updates on conservation progress and an overall sense of camaraderie and pride in all that we are accomplishing together.

Executive Director Tate Emerson discussed the significance of private land stewardship to the economy, the environment and the culture of our area. He reported that to date with your help, KWLT maintains conservation easements on 3,735 acres in Wayne County, 3,455 acres in Ashland County, 1,537 acres in Holmes County, 1,140 acres in Richland County, 450 acres in Coshocton County and 94 acres in Tuscarawas

County, with the average size of an easement being 130 acres. And board president Randy Carmel updated us on the progress of our three nature preserves (see page 1) and extended a heartfelt thank-you to our volunteers in the field.

We closed the afternoon by recognizing five of the founding board members-Maryanna Biggio, David Kline, Ron Holtman, Linda Bush and Neal Caldwell-for their 20+ years of service by presenting them with a porcelain enamel sign* for the land they have each protected with a conservation easement. Killbuck Watershed Land Trust exists because of their tireless work and steadfast commitment to land preservation.

We'd like to lend a special thank-you to Camp Nuhop, Wooly Pig Farm Brewery and Buehler's Towne Market for their generous event support. We continue to be honored to have our KWLT community.



Neal Caldwell, Linda Bush, Maryanna Biggio, Ron Holtman, and David Kline (not pictured) are recognized for their service and commitment to KWLT.

Krista Krista Emerson
Board Member

Each KWLT landowner will be presented with your own complimentary 20" porcelain enamel sign at your 2024 monitoring visit. To receive your sign sooner or to purchase a 32" barn sign, please contact Tate@KillbuckWatershedLandTrust.org

Local folks working together to preserve local land.

Update on KWLTPreserves and Crane Swamp Rehab

There has been a lot of activity at several of KWLTPreserves. On October 28, Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association (ONAPA) partnered with KWLTP at Brinkhaven Oak Barrens Nature Preserve to remove invasive woody plants from the lower barrens. The weather cooperated, and we had a great turnout with 16 volunteers, including half a dozen college students from the OSU Botany Club. Many thanks to ONAPA in providing groups of enthusiastic, trained volunteers!



ONAPA Stewardship Assistant

This autumn has seen the removal of three low-yield oil/gas wells from the wetlands acquired in the last two years using Clean Ohio Program Grant money to expand Killbuck Swamp Preserve. Two wells were decommissioned at Crane Swamp, and one that hasn't been pumped for at least fifteen years was removed from Bowfin Bottom. Properly plugging wells, then dismantling and removing installations is a financial burden for well owners, and the use of Clean Ohio funding to avoid future abandonment or potential clean-up costs from aging infrastructure leaks is grant money well spent after acquiring the mineral rights to the preserves.

Work continues at the Quarry Bluff trailhead to open the trail for visitation. Signage is ready to install, and work is ongoing with the construction of an interpretive kiosk. Unfortunately, KWLTP was contacted this summer about plans to upgrade the gas pipeline that runs across the hillside at this

woodland preserve. The Ohio Cumberland Gas Company agreed to trench the line along the pre-existing quarry lane trail, then bore underground up the hill to another pre-existing quarry lane on the ridgetop. The successful underground boring eliminated the need to cut any trees on the preserve and disturbance was minimized by utilizing the old access lanes for trenching. That is fortuitous as the mature mesophytic forest trees on the slopes of the preserve are large and majestic. After remediation, and once signage is installed, the 1.3-mile loop trail will be open for the public to enjoy the wonderful seasonal views from on top as well as the rock walls, boulders and rubble remaining at the long-abandoned quarry.

KWLTP recently received more exciting news as we have been awarded an H2Ohio Program Grant for a wetland restoration at Crane Swamp! The H2Ohio Program provides funding for high-quality natural-infrastructure projects focused on nutrient reduction and water quality improvement across the state of Ohio. The Crane Swamp project focuses on the hydrologic enhancement and restoration of over 150 acres of riparian wetlands on the floodplain of Killbuck Creek. The restoration will



Lower Laurel Creek at Crane Swamp



Oil well site in wetland at Bowfin Bottom Preserve

include construction of several wetland pools at locations of abandoned agricultural fields that are dominated by invasive Reed Canary Grass. Culverts will be placed along the former railroad bed to allow floodwater to spread across the entire floodplain, enhancing the riparian wetlands. Where possible, drainage ditches will be filled and tiling disrupted to further enhance hydrologic function in the floodplain, storing and slowly releasing water to reduce flooding and erosion downstream. Water quality improvements will include the reduction in sediment, nutrients and bacterial load in the Killbuck Creek.

The H2Ohio Statewide Wetland Grant Program focuses on projects that make a real difference in cleaning Ohio's waterways and improving drinking water. This competitive grant program was once only open to projects in the western basin of Lake Erie, but now has been expanded to the Ohio River Basin and the central Lake Erie basin. The \$1.17 million awarded to KWLTP for the Crane Swamp project will positively impact water quality in the Lower Killbuck Watershed and has the added benefit of enhancing outdoor recreation possibilities at Killbuck Swamp Preserve. The enhancement and creation of wetlands across 150+ acres of Crane Swamp will improve wildlife populations, particularly those dependent on shallow water and seasonally flooded wetlands. Natural wetland creation has been shown to be a low-cost alternative for enhancing water quality. The restoration of Crane Swamp will occur over the next two years, with the wetland preserve opening to the public in late 2025!

Randy

Randy Carmel
Board President

The Values of Farmland

When people talk about why it is important to protect farmland, we will often focus on the economic reasons, such as supporting a strong local economy or profitability for local farmers. Other times we may focus on our heritage, like the traditions of family farming or the sense of belonging to a community. These farming values are important to our culture and reason enough to protect farmland. However, much less discussed and therefore often underrated, are the Conservation Values of farmland. These are the values inherent to the land being farmed, as opposed to the values of the practice of farming. Land trusts generally describe these Conservation Values as the natural, open-space and scenic values of the land.

Natural Value

Our Prime soils are the best example of the land's natural value. 10,000 years of soil evolution, starting with the weathering of glacial drift and outwash, and then further enriched by forest and grassland humus built up since that time period, established some of the best soils in the country for agricultural production right here in Ohio.

Open-Space Value

Open-space—agricultural land, wetlands, prairies, forests, etc.—are the last vestige for the wild world to inhabit. Where development occurs, wildlife is extirpated. In the 1700s Ohio claimed a diversity of abundant wildlife with dense primeval forest, wetlands and grasslands. It was home to huge fish, elk, bison, as well as bears, beavers, wolves and panthers. Yes, panthers! Passenger pigeons were so numerous that flocks were said to darken the sky.

Scenic Value

The scenic value of farmland may be the most often overlooked value. Which is ironic considering it's the most visible value. I become more appreciative of the beauty of our area every day, but congestion from over-development blocks our viewsheds, light pollution prevents us from seeing the full breadth of stars and rectangular industrial buildings can't hold a candle to the character of an old farmhouse or barn. Additionally, if our rural landscape gets developed, where are we to go to seek refuge from the congestion of our cities?

Did you know the first use of landscape easements are actually specific to scenic preservation? Throughout the 1930s and '40s, the National Park Service purchased easements encumbering thousands of acres of land in order to preserve the scenic vistas along the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Natchez Trace Parkway. This preservation effort continues nearly one hundred years later with the help of local land trusts working with local landowners throughout each Parkway's landscape.

Through the use of our conservation easements, KWLTP very specifically protects these Conservation Values of farmland. At their beginning, our easements state, "The purpose of this Easement is to preserve, protect and maintain the Conservation Values of the Protected Property in perpetuity...". That is our commitment to each landowner, and to our greater community.

The protections offered by our conservation easements extend well beyond what is specifically stated in the



Protected Wayne County farm

easement. Because, by protecting these Conservation Values, we are also protecting those farming values that have been placed upon the land. When we have farmland, we will have a farming economy. When we have farmland, we will have family farms on which to create family traditions. Similarly, when we have farmland, we can maintain our strong community. So the next time you see an auction sign in a field that says VACANT LAND, while it's true that land is vacant of development, remember, that land actually holds tremendous value just as it is.

Tate Tate Emerson
Executive Director



Protected Tuscarawas County farm