



Killbuck Watershed Land Trust
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Wooster, OH 44691

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Ripples

A Publication for Members and Friends
Killbuck Watershed Land Trust

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Fall 2021

Inside...

Who benefits from conservation easements? find out on page 3



Spadderdock Pond looking north from Rte. 62 toward Killbuck Village.

Digital Subscription

We are now offering digital delivery of our quarterly newsletter. If you prefer this option, please visit our website at www.killbuckwatershedlandtrust.org and click on the "Contact" tab. Fill in your name and email and leave us a message asking to have your name removed from our paper newsletter mailing list.

Randy Carmel *continued*

community, and the work of many local people has been incredible. It really does show that people care about what is around them, so this award is for all of us, as it is for me." Spoken like a true friend!

Congratulations, and thank you, Randy, for your dedication to this work! 📧

Karen Karen Gotter,
KWLT Board Member

Moving Ahead *continued*

current, help with fund raising, work towards KWLT accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance which is our "Mother Ship" and, as is often said, "so much more". I know you will enjoy our progress reports as we move ahead with Tate. 📧

Maryanna Maryanna Biggio
KWLT Board Member

Thank You for Your Membership

We hope you will consider sharing your philanthropic dollars with the land trust. Your membership helps to maintain the rural atmosphere that has made our area a desirable and unique place to live.

Annual membership levels are:

Friend, \$50; Steward, \$100; Conservator, \$250; and Protector, \$500.

To become a new member or to renew or change your membership level for 2022, please make check payable to Killbuck Watershed Land Trust, and mail to:

Killbuck Watershed Land Trust
133 S. Market St., Wooster, OH 44691

KWLT is a tax-exempt organization pursuant to Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Donations are tax deductible to extent permitted by the new federal tax laws.

We thank you for your support!

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A True Friend of Conservation: Randy Carmel —

If you've been keeping track, KWLT has branched out and taken on several very involved projects recently, which have kept our board president very busy! In the space of a year, he's applied for more than a million dollars to

acquire over 350 acres for new preserves, plus additional funding for projects associated with them; he's collaborated and supported the conservation initiatives of Wooster Memorial Park, Holmes Soil and Water, Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves, the Holmes County Park District and the Greater Walhonding Conservation Alliance; he has led the charge to recruit and hire our first-ever executive director, update our webpage and social media presence, all while continuing his commitment to working with local landowners who wish to donate conservation easements.

That might not come as a surprise to those who know Randy; the man is a force of nature... FOR nature! He's had a storied career, with three decades committed to sharing his passion for science, education, and conservation. Teaching awards sent him traveling the country and abroad; He's taught in multiple disciplines while at Wooster City Schools and as an adjunct professor with the College of Wooster. He led the Wooster High School science club for 24 years, managed the high school greenhouse for 15, instructed at camps, led field trips, coordinated student volunteers, chaired the science department, and for 16 years helped at-risk students within the school system.

Fortunately, the work he has poured his heart into hasn't gone unnoticed. He has earned

recognition during his career as a teacher, including as the first Conservation Teacher of the Year in 2005 by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and as the 2011 Outstanding Teacher of the Year for the Wooster City Schools.

Now officially retired from the Wooster school system, he does get to enjoy more time out in the beautiful places he's helped preserve, which helps reinforce his knowledge and appreciation of the unique landscapes around us.

His knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, the swamps and marshes of the Killbuck Valley are two of the first things that impressed the staff of the Holmes Soil and

Water Conservation District. His willingness to commit to the work of conservation by getting his hands dirty, his feet wet, and by investing untold hours in relationship-building, grant-writing, and spearheading the objectives of the land trust proved that he is a man living out the mission statements of both the district and the trust. Each year, Holmes SWCD designates a "Friend of Conservation" award to those who further the goals of the district in an outstanding manner, and Randy was an obvious choice for this year's designation.

Randy humbly received his award at the SWCD annual banquet, held November 16 at the Carlisle Inn in Walnut Creek. In the manner of great leaders, he credited the people working alongside him at KWLT and their collaborating partners: "There were many people who helped along this journey to help us get to the point where we are actually preserving natural landscape. I feel strongly that this is going to be good for the



Randy Carmel (left), accepts the award from Brett Barton

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Promoting, protecting, and preserving our natural heritage

Moving Ahead (As Planned 20 Years Ago!)

KWLT has had an astonishing abundance of progress in the past six months; we are pleased to share with you many of the highlights of our organization in this issue of Ripples. We'll back up a little to the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust incorporating in 2001 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) having the ability to accept conservation easements from landowners with a desire to protect and preserve their farmland, woodlots, wetlands or land with unique historical or ecological features. Early on we worked with Ashland County owners, Judy and Phil Kocab, to preserve 40 acres of their 120 acre farm, our first easement! (The Kocabs have preserved the remaining acres through the years). Now, by the end of December, 2021 we will have protected over 10,000 acres of land in six

counties in north central Ohio. We have accomplished this with an all-volunteer board of twelve members and, for a time we were fortunate to have the help of Melody Snure as a part-time executive director. Melody retired and our office moved from the former Gault building to space on the second floor above the Gift Corner building on the square in downtown Wooster. Our portfolio was getting bigger and bigger. It was time to seriously address the need for a permanent executive director. We made the decision and the magic happened. Tate Emerson and his wife Krista were new members on the board. The KWLT search committee didn't have to look far for the perfect person we hoped would accept the position; Tate is our new Executive Director. I hope you will read his article



Our home base on the square in Wooster

(below) introducing himself - you'll understand why he has the qualification we were looking for. Tate will be visiting every property we have under easement and will meet the landowners of current and prospective properties. He will be available for informational meetings and presentations and also, keep the web site

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Protecting Our Wild World and Open Spaces



Tate Emerson

Hello, everyone. Thanks for taking your time to read this edition of Ripples. Your support of KWLT and your passion for conservation and preservation have built a magnificent organization. I

am grateful for the wonderful opportunity to join you. Having grown up on a Wayne County farm that has been in my family for 5 generations, I share your passion for preserving farm lands. As an environmentalist whose commitment to conservation has driven most decisions in my adult life, I share your desire to protect our wild world and open spaces.

Around the time an Amish farm going up for sale in Holmes County planted the seed for the KWLT founders, I was accepting my diploma from Ohio University and setting out on my own. As a Mechanical Engineer I went right to work researching, innovating and analyzing my way through design and process problems. I was fortunate to be promoted into leadership roles where I was able to collaborate with executives, guide cross-functional teams and mentor

young professionals. These professional experiences have enabled me to use and hone many of my natural abilities: organization, communication, problem-solving and creativity. And I, in turn, have been able to successfully manage complex projects and large budgets while facilitating collaboration among my teams.

“KWLT is here to provide our community the opportunity to invest in our future.”

Up to this point my career has been almost exclusively in the manufacturing industry. However, 20 years in I realized that the manufacturing field left me unfulfilled. For the past few years I have been searching for a position where I can integrate my personal passions with my professional experiences in a purposeful career. I see my new role as the Executive Director of KWLT doing just that.

I am excited to be traveling to area farms, learning about the owners' histories and helping them achieve their preservation goals. Randy and I recently visited the Lloyd James estate south of Wooster to create a Present Condition Report, which is how we initially document a property that will be placed under a conservation easement. Mr. James, a 1965 graduate of Waynedale

High School, Army veteran and lifelong farmer, passed away this past February. He had written into his will that both of his family's farm properties be placed under a conservation easement prior to being sold. His properties are a sight to see. If you have ever driven down McCoy road and seen the double gambrel roofed barn then you



Double gambrel barns on McCoy Rd.

know his property. And further south is his Messner road property, where you can see well beyond the OARDC water tower, four miles to the north.

Visiting Mr. James' farm and being able to share it with you is just one example of what makes this opportunity so great for me. Even as I am writing, the significance of this moment in my life is still settling in. It is with sincere gratitude that I thank

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Killbuck Swamp Preservation

The significance of saving our local wetlands

Preserving land in a conservation easement is often important for personal reasons. But sometimes preserving land can get lots of people excited and have great benefit to the whole community. The efforts to purchase a portion of the Killbuck Swamp and place a conservation easement on it “in perpetuity” (forever) is **reason for great excitement!** There is no greater level of protection than outright owning and caring for this special place.

This investment is one of the best ways to protect biodiversity, water quality and wildness. Through the joint efforts of Killbuck Watershed Land Trust and Arc of Appalachia, another non-profit committed to land preservation in southern Ohio, a Clean Ohio Grant was secured to purchase and preserve portions of Killbuck Swamp around the village of Killbuck. Wetland ecosystems are credited with being the most biologically productive communities in the world. They act as important filtration systems for floodwaters, greatly enhancing the water quality of the watersheds they serve. They also provide habitat for many

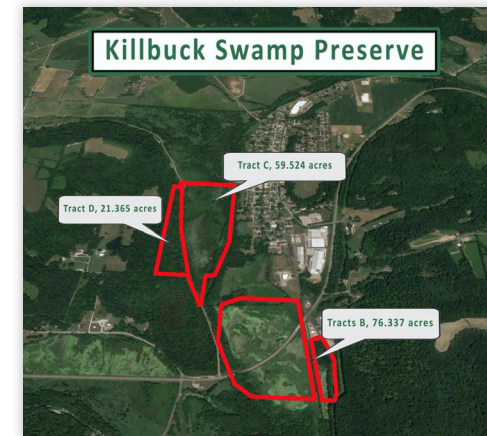


The marsh we call Spadderdock Pond, looking west from Rte. 62 toward Killbuck Creek and Rte. 520

Protecting Our Wild World continued

you, our supporters, for this opportunity. Additionally, I would like to thank my wife Krista, as she has given me the strength and bravery I needed to make this career transition. Thank you to Maryanna Biggio for her persistent effort to recruit Krista and me to join the KWLT board. And thank you to the entire Executive Committee for welcoming me and bringing me up to speed.

KWLT is here to provide our community the opportunity to invest in our future. I encourage you to check out our new website to stay connected with KWLT and to donate,



unique plants and animals, and a place for humans to observe and appreciate the rich biodiversity found in wetlands.

And if wildlife is not enough, there is history being re-written here too. Ohio historically was very wet when the first settlers came west. Over 20% of the state was covered by marsh, swamps and streams. Starting in the mid 1800's as agriculture increased, farmers wanted more dry, arable land so streams were straightened, drainage ditches were dug and field tiles were added. Today 90%

of Ohio's vast wetlands have disappeared. This makes preserving a beautiful wetland system like the Killbuck Swamp more important than ever.

So, who wins in this venture? **EVERYONE!** There will be trails for birders and hikers with a parking area close by.



Looking north over Spadderdock Pond

A canoe/kayak launch will be added for paddler access to Killbuck Creek. School groups can come to explore and learn first hand about the value of a swamp with its great diversity of creatures. Even those just driving by on Route 62 near Killbuck can enjoy glimpses of the swamp and maybe even an Eagle or the Trumpeter Swans that breed there. This is an exciting new venture in land preservation for Killbuck Watershed Land Trust and we look forward to all that it will provide. Working in tandem with Arc of Appalachia has greatly expanded land preservation efforts in Holmes County. 📍

Linda Linda Bush
KWLT Board Member



Inside of one of Mr. James' well-preserved barns

Tate Tate Emerson
KWLT Executive Director