

Ripples

A Publication for Members and Friends
Killbuck Watershed Land Trust

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President's Message

Intern helps get KWLT office up to date

It has been a busy summer with Killbuck Watershed Land Trust. We were fortunate to have an enthusiastic intern, Jacob Pries of Wadsworth, working for us during his summer term from The University of Toledo where he is studying law.

Jacob, a 2017 College of Wooster graduate, had approached several members of the board with a request to help KWLT as part of his effort to learn more about land trusts. His interest in conservation, combined with his

study in the School of Law at UT, made him a perfect fit for our organization.

We prepared a wish list of tasks for KWLT, including some that had been needed for a long time, and Jacob agreed to work on these. The most important item on the back burner was the need to get our easement files organized for scanning so all documents are digitized, including photographs taken when baseline reports were assembled.

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Hickey easement is unique to KWLT

Two years ago this month members of the KWLT Board of Trustees were faced with a new situation. All of the land trust's dozens of conservation easements to that point had been on rural property used by landowners for agriculture or recreation.

Before them was a request from Damon and Mary Hickey to put an easement on their residential property that lies little more than a mile north of Wooster's Public Square within the city limits.

The Hickeys had moved in 2013 to a house in the private Miller Lakes development known for its lakes and rolling terrain. Abutting their sloping residential lot was a heavily wooded lot that drops to a steep ravine. While the lot was undevel-



MARY AND DAMON Hickey enjoy the view from a bench along a trail in their back yard. Their property, in the Miller Lakes section of Wooster, is protected from development by the first urban conservation easement approved by the KWLT board.

oped, the Hickeys learned that it was zoned for residential construction.

They reveled not just in the privacy the next-door lot provided but in the parade of

animals that moved in and out of the ravine: deer, wild turkeys, foxes, raccoons, skunks and more.

When the neighbors across

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Promoting, protecting and preserving our natural heritage

KWLT work day, landowner meeting are planned

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This is important not only for backing up files electronically, but also to allow KWLT board members and others to access the files from remote locations. This will be especially helpful during monitoring as files can be accessed by laptop or even from a smart phone.

Our intern completed this and, as his last week on the summer job ended, he was in the process of getting estimates from companies to undertake this scanning work.

Brochure updated

In addition to the organization of files, Jacob completed an update of our KWLT brochure. Working with the board, he created a layout, organized photographs and maps, and completed the project by sending it off to the printer.

If you need a copy of the brochure, or several, to help promote the cause of land conservation, let me know and I will send them to you. Contact me at carmel.randall@gmail.com or mail your request to the KWLT office at 133 S. Market St., Wooster, OH 44691.

Well leases listed

As part of Jacob's interest in land trusts, he assembled a list and overview of environmental/conservation grants available for non-profit organiza-

tions. He also looked into legal defense insurance for land trusts and began the process of creating a list of our conservation easements that have oil and gas well leases.

As part of this, some wells may not be active, and landowners may wish to put these old leases to rest. This can be helpful in getting a legal release for a property in which leases may have been inactive for some time.

We visited several landowners this summer to complete easement monitoring, including two properties that had changed ownership. Please keep KWLT informed if you intend to make substantial changes to your property, as we want to be available for advice whenever you need it. If you have questions in regard to your property and planned changes, keep us in mind. We want to help you reach your goals for land management.

Barrens work day

As part of our ongoing management of the KWLT-owned Brinkhaven Barrens in southwestern Holmes County, there will be a work day at the Barrens on Saturday October 20, starting at 10 a.m. We will be working with volunteers from Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association as we continue vegetation management of this unique natural area. If you

would like to help or just come out and offer encouragement, call me at 330-763-4030 for more details.

Landowner gathering

The annual KWLT landowner gathering will take place at our Agriculture Security Area in Wayne County on Sunday, October 21, at 2 p.m. We will begin our gathering at the Tony and Maryanna Biggio farm at 5137 Lattasburg Road near Wooster. Mark your calendar; we would love to see you at this year's gathering.

In closing, many thanks go out to Jacob Pries for all his help this summer. His motivation, hard work, and ability to work independently made for a productive time for KWLT. He was able to complete items that were in need of attention. It was a mutually beneficial relationship as KWLT enabled Jacob to gain valuable experience working with an Ohio land trust.

We hope we can continue this relationship with Jacob into the future.

***Randy Carmel, President
KWLT Board of Trustees***

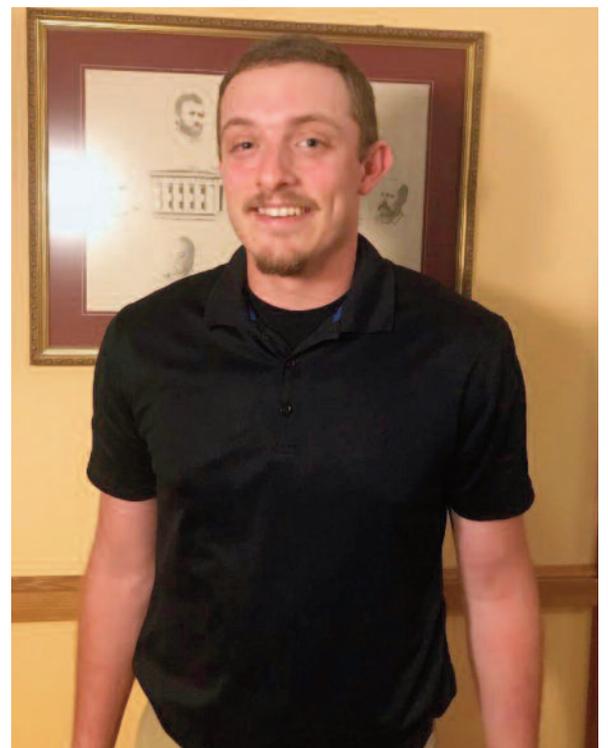
Of course Jacob helped KWLT, but what did WE do for HIM?

When Jacob Pries stepped into the KWLT office for the first time several months ago, he was clean-shaven. And fair-skinned. And wearing a pin-striped Law School Suit.

Witness, in the photo at right, what a summer in the field with KWLT has done for him. He's bearded. He's tanned. And he has traded his suit for the short sleeves and chinos it takes to walk property lines, chat with landowners and get down and dirty doing conservation work.

An avid hunter and fisherman, Jacob loves the outdoors. That was part of his motivation in successfully carving out a KWLT summer internship where none had existed before. As KWLT President Randy Carmel notes above, Jacob and KWLT have become a great match.

Good luck at UT, Jacob. Your work definitely merits an A-plus.



Hanging up the hoe for the season

I tend to forget how much I enjoy autumn until it arrives again. We're here in the best part of summer, late summer and that long, lovely passage into fall. The roadsides are aglow with goldenrod and asters, bees are gathering late nectar; our summer resident squirrels left last week for cold season homes, and the cows are contented on pastures that are still the sweetness of a green world, and where the flies are greatly diminished with the cooling of the earth.

Turkey vultures are drifting southward but are in a great hurry to reach their destination. The big birds are always in the mood for a warm meal. The other night (it happens four or five times during the course of the summer) an opossum took a shortcut across our lawn and the dog got him. The dog is wise to "possum-acting" and calls their bluff.

Anyhow, the down-on-his-luck animal hitched a ride to the field on the manure spreader and when I returned with the next load, a vulture was already dining on the opossum. The following load there were two vultures, but they were about twenty feet from the carcass, as a red-tailed hawk had claimed the dinner and between bites would, with hackles raised, stare down the vultures.

Here in summer-turning-to-fall is also some of the finest eating of the year for us – the last of the sweet corn, endless vine-ripened tomatoes dripping with juice and flavor, green beans, new potatoes, early apples and pumpkin pie – the list could go on and on. It's a fine time of the year.

As the year winds down to the ripening of the corn and a possible late hay cutting, we can summarize the growing season and conclude that it was good, though a bit on the wet side here in Ohio. My neighbor, whose farm is well drained, told me yesterday that their corn may even beat last year's record crop. My expectations are a little lower, but nevertheless, still an excellent crop. We are well off with hay and grain for the winter while the woodpile needs work.

Soon it will be time to put away the hoe. Almost all our garden hoes have a story attached to them. I will mention only one. That hoe is already stored for the winter.

When our neighbor's farm and tools



were sold at public auction in the late 1990s and we were cleaning up afterward I found a hoe minus its handle lying on the flatbed wagon. It was not a standard hoe but a bit wider and not as deep. The next time I went to town I bought a handle at the hardware, attached it to the hoe, and I was in business.

Our two-row corn cultivator has a three-inch-diameter by seven-foot-long tube/beam and in there I stuck the hoe. Whenever I come across a stubborn weed that evaded the cultivator sweeps, I stop,

pull out the hoe and that's the end of the dock or thistle. As of yet I haven't found a weed that has built up any resistance to that hoe, unlike Roundup-resistant Palmer's pigweed or mare's tail.

Besides weed-control, the hoe rekindles memories of my neighbor, John, a Lutheran Pennsylvania Dutch-speaking farmer of the old school. Every September John and his wife, Bertha, attended the Wayne County Fair on Wednesday and watched the harness races.

John, dressed up in new denim bib overalls and chambray shirt, and his wife Bertha, prim and proper in a new cotton dress, didn't even take a break for lunch. They took their lunch along and watched the horses run until it was time to go home for the evening chores. Since they enjoyed company they would ask my dad whether I could go with them, which I sometimes did.

At the end of the cultivating season I remove the hoe from the tube, take it to the shop, clamp it in the vise, straighten out any bends, and sharpen it. As I do this I reflect on the memories of my wonderful childhood neighbors. I then oil the hoe and hang it up to await another spring and corn season.

David Kline, KWL Trustee

Support land conservation: join KWL today

Your membership in the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust helps to maintain the rural atmosphere that has made our area a desirable and unique place to live. Your 2018 membership dues will be used for conservation education, public outreach, land acquisition and management, and legal action to monitor and maintain conservation easements.

Annual membership levels are: Friend, \$50; Steward, \$100; Conservator, \$250; and Protector, \$500. To become a new member or to renew your membership, write a check payable to Killbuck Watershed Land Trust. Mail it to Killbuck Watershed Land Trust, 133 S. Market St., Wooster, OH 44691.

Killbuck Watershed Land Trust is a tax-exempt organization pursuant to Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Donations are tax deductible.

Forest Green arose from 'unity of parcels'

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the street sold their property two years later the Hickeys found out the neighbors also owned the next-door lot. Fearing a sale would result in a house being built on the lot, the Hickeys began negotiations to buy it. Eventually they were successful, agreeing to pay \$67,000 – nearly what the owner had paid originally for the lot.

The pie-shaped, 0.814-acre lot, added to their 0.336-acre lot, gave them 1.15 acres in the heart of Wooster. But standing just about anywhere on their property facing away from the narrow, private street, you would never guess you were in the city limits.

The Hickeys – he hails from Houston while she’s a native of Alexandria, Va. – moved to Wooster in 1991 after having lived in Texas, Oklahoma and North Carolina. Both came to love their new community and decided to stay

following his retirement as director of libraries for The College of Wooster. They moved to their current home after living for years on University Street near the college campus.

In asking for KWLTL to approve a conservation easement, the Hickeys had thought ahead to what would become of the property when they’re gone. Their only child, a daughter, grew up in North Carolina and now lives in Bozeman, Montana with her husband, a native of Alberta, Canada. Both, say the Hickeys, are “very much Western by heart.”

Their daughter has no interest in living in Ohio, and there are no grandchildren.

An acquaintance asked, “What do you care what happens after you’re gone? You shouldn’t obstruct the inalienable right to develop property.” But all it took was for the Hickeys to look out the windows or stand on the deck shadowed by century-old trees to see what should be done.

In his library work Damon had gotten to know Prue Holtman, wife of KWLTL treasurer Ron Holtman, and had heard about the land trust. Would KWLTL help them protect the lot from development forever?

Said KWLTL Vice President Robb Stutzman: “This our first conservation easement in the City of Wooster and our smallest easement-covered property to date. While it is certainly different from the large tracts of farmland covered by most of our easements, it still serves a similar purpose – to prevent encroaching development and to conserve natural features. The Hickeys are great people dedicated to the mission of conservation and we are happy to partner with them.”

After the easement was granted the market value of the property dropped to just over \$7,000, providing the Hickeys with a real estate tax reduction. But since the



DAMON AND Mary Hickey make the most of their deck that overlooks huge oaks, hemlocks and other native Ohio trees chosen many years ago by Wooster developer Arthur Miller.

properties remain two distinct lots, the Hickeys still pay a double owner’s monthly fee to the Miller Lakes association.

Mary says her father loved the outdoors and would be pleased that her inheritance from him helped to buy the second lot. They have encouraged their daughter to sell the lots together when she inherits them someday.

“It always bothered me that our property stopped in the middle of a hemlock grove,” Damon remembers. “Now we have unity of parcels.”

The Hickeys, with the ongoing help of landscapers and tree trimmers, are enjoying the property they call Forest Green. A Maryland bluestone cairn and a Celtic cross by a holly bush, which salute the Hickey Irish heritage, are tucked beneath huge trees. Whimsical metal and stone sculptures peek out from leafy areas with St. Francis of Assisi sitting among ferns while wild turkeys and a stag keep watch near a rustic trail that overlooks the ravine.

Perhaps the Hickeys’ pathfinding partnership with Killbuck Watershed Land Trust will spur more city dwellers not just to think green but to take action that can make a difference.

Melody L. Snure, Ripples Editor



THE HICKEY HOME is tucked among huge trees at Miller Lakes just north of downtown Wooster.