



Ripples

A Publication for Members and Friends
Killbuck Watershed Land Trust

Volume 4, Issue 3

Winter 2015

Inside this issue

Annual meeting	1-4
Fulk family farm	1,2,3
May Day	3
Please join KWLT	4
Spring cleanup	4

Board of Trustees

Maryanna Biggio, President
 Neal Caldwell, Vice President
 Linda Bush, Co-Secretary
 David Wilkin, Co-Secretary
 Ron Holtman, Treasurer
 Randy Carmel
 Barry Cavanna
 Bob Hunter
 David Kline
 Matt Mariola
 Robb Stutzman
 H. Dewey Thompson

Killbuck Watershed Land Trust
 133 S. Market St.
 Wooster, OH 44691
 330-264-1712 (Biggio home)
 330-317-2583 (Biggio cell)
 maryannabiggio@hotmail.com

Ron Holtman, Treasurer
 2171-B Eagle Pass
 Wooster, OH 44691
 Phone: 330-264-6115
 Fax: 330-262-5729
 www.killbucklandtrust.org

Melody L. Snure, Ripples Editor
 jgrad72@yahoo.com

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

Sonnenberg Village is site of KWLT March 21 annual meeting

Dear Friends,

March 21 is traditionally the first day of spring. Boy, are we ever looking forward to spring after this brutal winter we are experiencing!

As I write this I'm sitting at a north window looking out on a beautiful sunny winter landscape, but it's a "fooler." The temperature on our covered back porch reads -12, and we won't even talk about the "wind-chill factor."

In our household we appreciate the weather forecasters. We don't criticize them if



they get it wrong, as that usually means the actual temperature or snowfall, rain, heat - whatever the season - may not be as severe as predicted but at least we are prepared.

Yesterday I spent several

pleasant hours with Amish friends. Of course, we talked about the weather and the minus temperatures we should expect for today.

David asked if we had dogs

Continued on Page 4

For Fulks, farm preservation was easy decision

For Jim and Linda Fulk of rural Ashland County, putting all 600 acres of Fulk farmland under conservation easements was a no-brainer. "We got some tax abatements, but that's not the reason," said Jim. "My grandpa and my dad worked too hard for me to sell off the farm."

While Jim and Linda's three children grew up as farm kids, none had an interest in taking over the operation. Son Jon helped his dad, and daughters Cyndi and Amy



sometimes offered a hand though generally they, like their mother, left the farm work to the men. Linda, who raised the calves until they sold the dairy herd in 1997, recently retired after 22 years

as the clerk of Clear Creek Township.

The Fulks' land includes the original family farm along U.S. 250 south of Bailey Lakes, Jim and Linda's homestead on Clear Creek Township Road 1101, a third farm on State Route 302 east of Savannah, and several other parcels in Clear Creek and Orange townships. Part of the property Jim farms is owned by his widowed mother Helen, who shares a house

Continued on Page 2

Promoting, protecting and preserving our natural heritage

Ashland County farm involves fifth generation

Continued from Page 1

with granddaughter Cyndi and her husband Tony Lago. The Lagos, who have no children, both work in busy corporate careers.

Son Jon, who is single, lives in San Francisco where he is headmaster of a private bilingual school.

Younger daughter Amy and her husband Mike Smith live on the U.S. 250 farm that Jim's grandfather Jay Fulk purchased in 1920. Amy and Mike have demanding jobs. Mike is a paramedic in Danville for the East Knox Joint Fire District while Amy is a trauma nurse at Grant Medical Center in Columbus. Both have long commutes from the farm. Because the couple's jobs both require 24-hour shifts, their children, Jake and Jessica, often spend several nights a week with Jim and Linda.

While none of the Fulk children got the "farming gene," Amy must have passed it to 11-year-old Jake, his grandfather's hope for the future of the land. Jim's grandchildren are the fifth generation of Fulks to live on the farm. He says, "My biggest fear is that I won't live long enough to teach Jake farming." So far, Jim couldn't ask for a more enthusiastic pupil.

Jake spends hours with Jim on the huge tractors that traverse fields planted with corn, hay, wheat and soybeans. At the 150-head feeder cattle op-



JIM FULK poses for a photo with his grandson Jake.



THE FULKS used their AEPP money to build this shop. In 2008 their 130-acre Township Road 1101 farm became the first farm accepted into the Ohio AEPP program. A year later, their 128-acre farm on U.S. 250 also was accepted.

eration on the U.S. 250 farm, Jake helps tend the Angus and Limousin cattle Jim buys at 500 pounds and raises for sale to a local packing house or at auction. An autumn highlight for the duo is the Ohio State Tractor Pullers Association championship in Bowling Green.

Jim credits Killbuck Watershed Land Trust President Maryanna Biggio for helping to get the Fulk property protected, some with conservation easements donated to KWL and a total of 258 acres accepted into the Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program.

Maryanna, in turn, praises Jim and Linda for being the model of what the AEPP program was designed to do. "They put every cent of their AEPP money back into the farm," she says.

In 2010, with the state money, the Fulks built a 54- by 80-foot frame storage building on a poured concrete slab near their home. Two 15-foot-high electric doors accommodate Jim's John Deere 9770 Bullet Rotor combine and other equipment. The third bay has Jim's office, a restroom, and furniture



JIM AND LINDA FULK take time for a photo inside their farm machinery shop, built in 2010.

that faces a wall-mounted flat panel TV. The spot is accessed through a door labeled "Grandpa & Jake's Shop."

When Jim's not working in the well-equipped building, chances are good that the family is planning an event there. A highlight of summer is the Fulks' annual hog roast, their way to bring family, friends and other community members to see what's going on at the farm.

Another big event is a party to celebrate maple syrup season. Last year the Fulks made 250 gallons of syrup in their sugar camp, the bounty from nearly a thousand taps on hard maples.

Continued on Page 3

May Day launches great time of year

An Andrew Wyeth painting shows children, and possibly some adults if my memory serves me correctly, dancing around a Maypole in celebration of the arrival of spring. I, and most other farmers in northern climes, could join in that revelry if the celebration of May Day wouldn't have been declared so ideologically significant.

After all, frail old Fidel celebrated it and some of us remember the former Soviet Union parading its military muscle on May Day – countless trucks laden with missiles as big as silos. So in order to be politically correct, we farmers skip the dancing and rejoice less obviously than the folks in Wyeth's painting do. But it's a great time of the year nevertheless.

Subtle signs of spring begin appearing in late winter – the call of the great horned owl booming from the woodlot in the early morning, horned larks nesting in mid-March, skunk cabbage pushing its hood up through icy meadow bogs, skeins of tundra swans flying north. But it isn't until the spring peepers and wood frogs begin their mating choruses in early April that we seriously think spring.

March and April are the promise and May the fulfillment. In more years than not in this part of the country, May 1 marks the arrival of the Baltimore

oriole. The brilliant orange, white and black male claims the maple tree in our front yard as his home turf and he makes music all the day long. While the peak of the great northward migration of neo-tropical birds such as the wood warblers is still ten days to two weeks away, our summer resident birds are by now staking out their territories.

Aldo Leopold wrote in his landmark paper *A Biotic View of Land*, "... a good farm must be one where the wild fauna and flora has lost acreage without losing its existence." What has worked well on our farm is to lightly graze one field when the grass reaches six to eight inches of growth, usually around the middle of May, and then let it go for hay. This allows the grassland birds, especially the bobolinks and vesper sparrows, time for nest building, egg laying, and raising their families before the field is cut.

Some years, depending upon the weather and the amount of hay needed, we'll wait an extra week or ten days to cut and then use the hay for heifers and dry cows or horses. Our goal is to see flying young bobolinks while we're mowing the field. Reward enough for a bit more mature forage.

Other benefactors of delayed hay cutting are the ring-necked pheasants, bobwhite quail, and cottontail rabbits. The pheasants and quail are mostly

gone from our county (the bobwhite never fully recovered following the severe winters of the 1970s). But the cottontails are doing fine, in part on account of the West Nile Virus outbreak in 2002 that greatly reduced the local population of great horned owls, their number one predator.

I can walk through the orchard at any time and see half a dozen cottontails sitting motionless in their daytime "beds" in the blackberry patch. For several winters I have considered "collecting" a cottontail for fried rabbit and candied yams, but I haven't found the heart to do it. I practically know them by name as they make their early evening visits to the crib for corn-on-the-cob.

The cottontails around the farm buildings are also protected from the pair of red foxes that is raising a litter of pups in a woodchuck burrow in the east fence row. The fox dine on young hayfield red-winged blackbirds instead of cottontails.

I have often wondered how the female cottontail rabbit excavates her nesting hollow – half the size of a football – without leaving any soil around the edges. Does she dig with such energy that the soil is so spread out that it's undetectable? Probably. It is surely done to avoid detection by predators such as the opossum and red fox. She then plucks fur from her breast and fills the nest before the young are born.

When the muzzle of a grazing cow approaches the nest, the young cottontails will squirm and jerk beneath their furry cover giving the appearance of some weird legless animal. The cow will likely sidestep the odd creature and graze elsewhere and the baby rabbits will live for another day.

All this takes place in May, a wonderful month once it comes. May's full moon, on May 4 this year, is sometimes called the Flower Moon. Rightfully so, because in May everything bursts forth in flower, in song, and in birth.

Fulk farm is forever protected

Continued from Page 2

They do it the old fashioned way, collecting sap from a bucket on each tap rather than linking the trees with tubing. It takes a dozen people to collect the sap and two to run the sugar camp when sap is being boiled down.

Jim's grandpa started making maple syrup in 1921; his parents Helen and Vic continued the tradition. Jim and Linda have had an active sugar camp since 1995 at their 40 acres of woods. Unfortunately there won't be any maple syrup this year while Jim gives his bad back a rest.

The Fulk farms lie along the Lake-Erie Ohio River (continental) divide, a point Jim loves to tell guests. In theory, if he were to dump a bucket of water in his front yard, half the water would drain north to Lake Erie while the rest would go south to the Ohio River.

What would he change about his operation if he could turn back the clock? Jim is quick to answer: "We would have stopped milking cows a lot sooner."

He adds, "I 'retired' the day I sold the milk cattle."

Melody L. Snure, Ripples Editor

David Kline, KWLTT Trustee

Welcome Center is in repurposed church building

Continued from Page 1

in the house, a wood-burning stove and a pile of good books. Well, yes we do. "Then you're all set," he declared. There's nothing bad about that.

Now, back to **March 21** and the first day of spring. The Killbuck Watershed Land Trust is holding its annual meeting on **this date, March 21, at 2 p.m. at The Sonnenberg Village Restoration Project**, 13515 Hackett Road. The site is one-fourth mile east of the Kidron Road intersection.

All KWLTLandowners, members and friends (and friends of friends) are invited to join us for a special viewing and program highlighting this re-creation of a typical early Mennonite/Swiss village on a five-acre campus near Kidron. The project is part of the Kidron Community Historical Society which operates a nationally acclaimed museum located on the square in Kidron.

In July of 2007 the KCHS was offered eight buildings of importance to the history of the Sonnenberg area. Rather than attempting to maintain and preserve all the buildings on their original locations it was decided the best course of action was to find a parcel of land big enough to place all the historic buildings together.

The Leonard Geiser family graciously donated two acres of land with frontage on Hackett Road and permitted the society to purchase an additional three adjoining acres for this purpose, and the Sonnenberg Village five-acre campus was born.

One of the original eight historic buildings acquired by KCHS is the



1907 Sonnenberg Church that has been transformed into the Sonnenberg Village Welcome Center. This is where we will hold our gathering. Readers of the local newspaper and those of you already familiar with this restoration project will remember the story of moving the church from its original location across many, many acres of fields and forest and onto the village campus. For many people in the area it was an almost daily excursion to watch as this huge building lumbered along across the landscape, some days by

only feet or inches.

Ray Leisy, retired Wayne County judge, and one of the many skilled volunteers devoted to the village restoration, will be our host for the afternoon. KWLTL will provide refreshments catered by Deborah Geiser, co-owner and executive chef of the Quince Bakery and Cafe in the heart of downtown Kidron. We've sampled some of her creations and – WOW – delicious! Deb is planning a perfect snack menu for the Saturday afternoon party. Children of all ages are sure to enjoy her pastries and pizzas, so bring the family.

We hope you will plan to be with us for this fun and informative afternoon. We are grateful to able to meet here. We rely on your continued interest in our mission of protecting lands and would like to share this event with you, our supporters. Please mark your calendar and, very important, **RSVP to 330-264-1712**. We would appreciate your response, one way or the other, by March 15. Come and celebrate the beginning of spring with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maryanna Biggio".

Maryanna Biggio, KWLTL President

Your KWLTL membership helps to conserve area lands

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 2015 membership dues will be used for:

- Conservation education
- Public outreach
- Land acquisition and management
- Legal action to monitor and maintain conservation easements

Annual membership levels are:

- Friend, \$50
- Steward, \$100
- Conservator, \$250
- Protector, \$500

To become a new member or to renew your membership for 2015, 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.

Help keep our lands clean; Pick up litter in your travels!

We know you appreciate the beauty of the land in our Killbuck Watershed area of Ohio. May we suggest that you resolve this year to help us keep it beautiful?

Believe it or not, spring is just weeks away. Whenever you're out and about, please take time to pick up litter along your path.

If you don't feel inclined to stoop down, or to touch the stuff that needs to be picked up, use an inexpensive litter picker. Several styles are available at area hardware stores.

Thank you for helping us in this simple land conservation effort!