

Ripples

A Publication for Members and Friends
Killbuck Watershed Land Trust

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50 enjoy landowner meeting

Dear Friends,

Our thanks go to board member Barry Cavanna for hosting the landowners' meeting at Hawkhaven, his conservation easement protected farm near Shreve.

Just as we had hoped, the afternoon of Oct. 26 was warm and sunny, one of the last beautiful days of autumn, and the Killbuck Valley still boasted the gorgeous colors of the season.

We met Barry's pair of Friesian horses and Boomer, a rescued Tennessee Walker which has matured into a



BARRY CAVANNA (center) introduces his Tennessee Walker horse, Boomer, to fellow KWLT landowners (from left) John Fernyak, Fred Cannon and Mimi Fernyak.

stunning, well trained riding horse.

About 50 people, including KWLT landowners and guests, discussed issues in-

involved with deeds of conservation easements and, as we are learning, a new concern involving a massive gas

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Matt Mariola joins board; brings special expertise

The KWLT Board of Trustees is back to its full 12 members with the recent addition of Matt Mariola as a member at large.

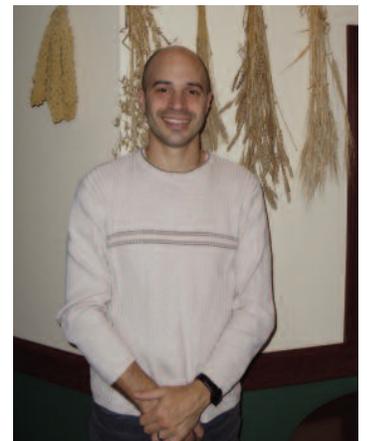
A son of former KWLT trustee Phil Mariola, Matt is an assistant professor in the Environmental Studies Program at The College of Wooster.

Not only does Matt bring environmental expertise to the board, he hopes to involve some of his students in hands-on work with KWLT.

Matt, who received a degree in anthropology from The College of Wooster in 2008, earned a degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 2004. He joined the Wooster faculty after receiving a Ph.D. in Rural Sociology from The Ohio State University in 2009.

He looks forward to learning firsthand about conservation easements through his KWLT involvement. And he

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Matt Mariola

Promoting, protecting and preserving our natural heritage

Meeting focuses on pipeline route, easement terms

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transmission pipeline which may be routed across protected properties. If not this time and this particular one, another pipeline in the future could involve the lands which we partner to preserve. And so we are faced with the conflict of passion versus practicality.

Our argument is that families who have made the important decision to place an easement on their land do so to ensure that the soils will remain in prime production forever. They have gone the extra step to limit any kind of development not related to agriculture and they have done this through the legal tool of a recorded deed of conservation easement which lasts forever.

Killbuck Watershed Land Trust board members are the stewards of these easements and share the passion of landowners' feelings for their property.

On the other hand, the energy sources which have been discovered through the latest technology of hydraulic fracking must get somewhere somehow. The most practical routes for these pipelines do cross farms in many cases. Once a pipeline proposal receives federal approval it becomes a FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) project and eminent domain overrides a landowner's objections. Then the most we can do as a land trust is work with



THE PROGRAM at the KWLTLandowners' meeting was held in the barn on Barry Cavanna's Wayne County farm. About 50 attended the get-together.

representatives of pipeline companies and landowners in an attempt to limit damage to soils as much as possible.

If you are a landowner with an easement with KWLTLand and/or the State of Ohio, please let us know if you are approached with a request to survey any part of your farm for pipeline construction. We have guidelines, much

the same as those developed by Ohio's Office of Farmland Preservation, which are designed to help with negotiations with energy transmission companies. We definitely want you to be aware of what your options are for the best use of your property.

*Maryanna Biggio, President
KWLTLBoard of Trustees*

Know the terms of your conservation easement

Quick question: Do you know the terms of your conservation easement?

If the answer is no, or you're at least not sure, I recommend you pull your dusty copy out of the drawer or safe, sit down with a nice cup of coffee or tea, and spend an hour or so reading through it. If you don't have a copy, make sure to get one from KWLTLor the recorder for the county where your property is located.

There are a lot of terms in the average easement, many of which specifically state what you can and cannot do in regards to your property. For example there should be paragraphs stating your right to farm, lease, sell, and mortgage the property as well as KWLTL's right to come onto the property to inspect. Most important to landowners tend to be those paragraphs that detail which activities are prohibited.

Since a landowner's failure to comply with these terms means a violation of the easement, it is strongly recommended that you become familiar with them.

Another important term is what to do when your property is being sold. Under all easements, the current landowner has a duty to inform KWLTLif this happens so that KWLTLcan begin a relationship with the new owners and continue its stewardship of the property. Despite what the jewelry stores may say, a conservation easement is the REAL gift that is forever.

After you've had a chance to read through your easement, if there is anything you have a question about or would like to discuss further, please call my office at 330-264-6115 or e-mail me directly at rstutzman@lslaw.com.

Robert Stutzman, KWLTLTrustee

Red-tailed hawks

In late September two years ago a pair of red-tailed hawks started building a nest 70 feet up in a black walnut tree in the middle of our lower pasture field. The pair worked at a leisurely pace through the golden days of autumn, a stick here and a twig there, and the nest began to take shape. By mid-November it was completed.

The hawks must be an experienced older pair because the nest is well and securely placed in a four-pronged fork and it survived Hurricane Sandy. It was built for the long haul. From my vantage point the nest appears to be the size that would fill a wheelbarrow with sticks.

Measuring at least three feet in diameter at breast height, the black walnut towers to 90 feet or more and lumbermen have gazed upon it with desire for its value as veneer timber. Since the tree is in the open, it is branchy. I could never see much sense in sacrificing a massive tree for a ten-foot saw log. Neither could my dad. So we left it in peace and harvested its annual crop of walnuts.

The tree always yields more walnuts than we use and the fox squirrels harvest those. Located between the woods and creek, all winter squirrel tracks cross the 150 feet of meadow to the tree and then back to the woods like spokes leading from the hub of a wheel. Around the base of the tree cracked walnuts litter the ground like gravel. I understand the squirrels' fondness for the nuts because the meats are big and plump and exceptionally sweet.

When the hawks began work on the nest, I thought it a bit odd for red-tails to be building a nest in the autumn, so I checked the literature.

Bruce Peterjohn in his "Birds of Ohio" said that Lou Campbell reported a pair beginning nest construction as early as January 24. John K. Terres in "Encyclopedia of North American Birds" likewise says as early as January. Arthur Cleveland Bent in his "Life Histories of North American Birds" doesn't give an early nest building date, but he does say that red-tailed hawks "stake out their

claim" late in February, a month before the eggs are laid. He was likely referring to New England, where spring is short and late, or absent. Frank and John Craighead in "Hawks, Owls and Wildlife," a report on their thorough study of raptors in southern Michigan, say mid-February.

In spite of what the experts said, our red-tails did build in the fall when the weather was a lot more pleasant for



home-building than it would have been in January. Plus interest rates were still low.

All of the experts also write that red-tailed hawks are cautious during nest construction and will stay away from the site if humans are nearby. This pair was not shy at all. Our family camped one evening and into the next forenoon about 300 feet downstream from the nest and the hawks continued with their nest-building while we watched. Now that the nest is finished, the pair is patiently waiting for March to lay their two eggs.

The red-tailed hawks are common in the neighborhood and have nested on our farm before. But it was always in the woods and in oak trees that tenaciously cling to their heavy leaves until late fall. We were hardly aware they had nested until we heard the hesitant calls of the young in late summer.

Here in the walnut tree they will be much more visible because walnuts leaf out late in the spring and then drop leaves early in the fall. Besides, from the ridge in our woods the red-tails' nest will be almost at eye level and should give us a good view during incubation and feeding and rearing of

their young.

Locally, red-tails are still called "chicken hawks" for their supposed preference for domestic chicken. According to friends who have laying hens in an "egg mobile," red-tails do like an occasional "free-range" chicken. Smart hawks. According to the Craigheads' Michigan study, 60 percent of the red-tailed hawk's prey is the meadow mouse or vole. The rest ranges from cottontail rabbits to snakes.

The talons of a red-tail are formidable hunting objects, as I discovered one autumn. We have a V-top house sparrow trap that supplies needed protein for our barn cats to supplement their milk diet. There were a few house sparrows in the trap that attracted a migrating Cooper's hawk, which pushed its way through the narrow V of wire. The hawk promptly caught and ate the cats' sparrows, but then it also was trapped.

A hunting red-tail saw the Cooper's hawk and forced (I still can't understand how) its big body through the V-top meant for house sparrows. Once the red-tail was inside it realized its mistake and dropped the idea of eating its cousin. Now it, too, was trapped. When I approached, the hawks were waiting at opposite ends of the trap. I caught the fierce-eyed Cooper's hawk, which turned quite passive, and released it.

The red-tail, however, was something else. It flipped over on its back and presented its sharp and powerful talons. I gingerly offered my foot and sacrificed a new Tingley boot. So I pulled on my gloves and picked up the irritated hawk. It righted itself, gripped my arm with its free leg and sank its talons through the lined chore coat, flannel shirt, and deep into my wrist as easily as penetrating Swiss cheese.

I endured the pain and carried the hawk, like a falconer, to the house for the family to see. Then I released my grip and after a few moments, the hawk relaxed its grip on me and flew away devoid of its usual imperial hauteur.

By David Kline, KWLTL Trustee

WITH A NAME like Hawkhaven Farm, it's not surprising that birdwatching was one of the attractions at the KWLTLandowners' meeting hosted by Barry Cavanna. See the story on Pages 1 and 2.



Mariola will involve students in KWLTL efforts

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plans to share that knowledge with students by having them help monitor some of KWLTL's easements.

His second-semester Rural Sociology and the Environment class has a heavy emphasis on field trips, with two 80-minute classroom sessions and one three-hour field trip each week. "I like students to be steeped in the local landscape," Matt said. "I would like them to have the ability to drive through the countryside and know and understand what they are seeing."

Meeting area landowners and seeing their farms, woodlands and other conservation areas will help students develop a consciousness about land use

to complement the facts they learn in class, he believes.

His Sustainable Agriculture class, which helps students to understand the food system, also will be a great fit with seeing how KWLTL easement farms fit into the food chain.

Matt's gardening practicum perfectly illustrates experiential learning (learning through experience) which is emphasized at The College of Wooster. Until three years ago, the classroom was the site for a course in how plants grow and are affected by various conditions. Students grew plants in pots and manipulated them. "I thought, why not just go out and garden?" he said. Matt asked to use a vacant plot of land on the Wooster campus and

soon a garden was born.

Gardening is a favorite activity for Matt, his wife Debora Galaz, and their children Luca, 9, and Clara, 7. They live on the seven-acre farm near Moreland where Matt grew up. Debora, a native of Chile, is known to Local Roots customers for her beautiful cut flowers and for Lana de Flor, her creations of felted hats, soaps, jewelry and other items.

This was the final season for the flower garden, which became too labor intensive for the active family. No doubt that's a lesson about commercial agriculture that Matt can incorporate into future College of Wooster courses.

Welcome to the KWLTL board, Matt.

Melody L. Snure, Ripples editor

Remember KWLTL in your year-end charitable gifts

Dear Friends,

The Killbuck Watershed Land Trust is approaching the 9,000-acre mark for lands preserved and under our stewardship. We have accomplished this over the last 12 years as a group of dedicated volunteers. We rely on the monetary support of friends and landowners who see the value of sustaining the natural beauty and economic stability of their communities.

We hope you will consider sharing your end-of-year philanthropy dollars with the land trust. We are a 501(c)3 organization and a donation to your local land trust is tax deductible. We thank you, so many of you, for your past support and hope you will continue to assist us financially as each year brings new challenges and great rewards.

Please make your 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.

Thank You!

Sincerely,

We're again accepted as a state program sponsor

Killbuck Watershed Land Trust has been notified that we have been accepted as a certified local sponsor of applications for the state's farmland preservation program. We can work with landowners in Ashland, Holmes and Wayne Counties.

The application period for 2015 will begin in January. Funding for the program is derived from the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund approved by voters in 2008. We have found that interest in this program often comes from word of mouth, so please pass the word.

Watch for more information in local newspapers in the near future.