

Ripples

A Publication for Members and Friends
Killbuck Watershed Land Trust

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Phil Mariola
Robb Stutzman
H. Dewey Thompson
David Wilkin

Killbuck Watershed Land Trust
Melody Snure, Administrator
716 Beall Ave.
Wooster, OH 44691
Phone: 330-263-8963
Fax: 330-263-8910
jgrad72@yahoo.com

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

Killbuck Watershed Land Trust is a tax exempt organization pursuant to Section 501(c)3 of the IRS Code. Your tax-deductible contribution helps to maintain the rural atmosphere that has made our area a desirable and unique place to live.

Cannons' South Hill Farm is protected through state ag easement program

In 1974, agricultural products salesman Fred Cannon moved from Youngstown with his wife Phyllis and their two young children to become a working partner on a 600-acre Wayne County dairy farm. By Phyllis's account, Fred brought her to farm life "kicking and screaming." She explained, "I knew he had a dairy science degree (from Ohio State), but I never thought we would actually LIVE on a farm."

Today the once-reluctant farm wife can't picture any other lifestyle.

Five years after moving to Wayne County the Cannons bought their own farm, a 133-acre dairy operation south of Wooster. Today South Hill Farm exemplifies responsible land conservation. A sign at the entrance off State Route 3 proclaims Ohio Preserved Farmland, denoting the Cannon farm's status as an Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (OAEPP) farm.

Though their farm divided by the state highway has more than a mile of prime frontage, the Cannons never gave a thought to selling off parcels for development.



"Our blood and sweat are all over this place," said Fred. "We raised our kids here and they saw Mom and Dad work hard and learned to work hard, too."

Added Phyllis, "I can't imagine this not being a farm."

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Landowner visits are highlight of autumn

Johnny Mathis crooned to his darling that he would love her until "the twelfth of never."

Trustees of the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust nurture equally long relationships, committing to our conservation easement landowners that we will monitor their protected property "in perpetuity."

KWLT is charged with protecting 6,639 acres including 4,779 acres under direct easements, 1,682 acres under shared easements and 178 acres owned by KWLT. Over the

next few months, board members will personally visit each easement property to complete an annual monitoring form. Alone or in pairs, board members will tour more than 30 properties in five counties to ensure that each landowner has remained in compliance with easement terms.

At the time of the visit, a KWLT representative will work with the landowner to complete an annual monitoring form that notes the current condition of the property and any

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Promoting, protecting and preserving our natural heritage

Once 'city slickers,' Cannons love life on their farm

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Fred, a Youngstown area native, was named for an uncle who, with his grandfather, operated a farm near the Ohio-Pennsylvania line. Phyllis, the daughter of an eastern Kentucky coal miner, had been enjoying the comforts of suburban Youngstown life the day Fred called from Wooster to proclaim he was going into active partnership on a Wayne County customer's 600-acre farm. "We had just bought my dream house," Phyllis remembered.

With their son Dave and daughter Tracy, then in third and second grades respectively, the Cannons packed up and headed west to the Crocker farm in Franklin Township. Despite exhausting 16-hour days, the partnership years enabled the city slickers to build a dairy herd, acquire skills essential for operating a farm, and save enough money for a down payment on one of their own. In 1979 they bought a farm just south of Springville. It was nearly a year before they moved, giving them time to fix up the house and adapt the property to the needs of their own Holstein herd.

Focal point of the new Cannon homestead was a louvered, German-style bank barn built in 1856. Many other barnyard structures were less notable (Phyllis describes them as "dumpy"), so the Cannons launched a long-term program to restore, remove, or replace them.



FRED'S "new" garden shed

In the early years they built a new pole barn, silo and pair of lean-tos along with a picnic shelter. The two-story farmhouse built in 1947 was adequate for their family of four, but has evolved over the past three decades into a welcoming rural showcase blending old and new.

It took active participation by all four Cannons to operate the farm, tending forage and grain crops and milking twice a day.

Both children were active with the animals and in 4-H projects. Phyllis learned to operate a tractor but deliberately avoided instruction in how to do the milking.

The farm's family labor pool took a hit in 1992 when Fred was elected to the first of what would be three four-year terms as a Wayne County commissioner. Long a part-time elected position, serving as a commissioner had evolved into full-time work.

While those were exciting days with the relative newcomer in a top county office, Phyllis remembers them as exhausting, too. In 1998 the Cannons seized an opportunity to sell their entire dairy herd, ending a quarter century of being tied to an inflexible milking schedule.



THIS GERMAN STYLE bank barn was built in 1856.

But Fred couldn't be without cattle. Before long a new, smaller herd appeared on the gently rolling pasture: purebred shorthorns to raise for beef. That herd was the forerunner of Fred's current "pasture decorations," his red durhams. A cross of shorthorn and red angus, the two dozen cattle include a resident bull. Fred recently sold the spring calves at an average weight of 680 pounds.

When Fred retired from public office in 2004 his lifelong love for fixing things led him to promote his services as a restorer of old barns. "Do you know how to DO that?" Phyllis asked.

"I think so," said Fred, adding, "I'll read a couple books."

He must have read the right ones since he is now in demand for his timber framing skills, not just restoring old barns where they stand but disassembling and relocating them. What was once the horse stable of the Tuscarawas County Sheriff's Department now stands at the Cannon farm, the result of an old-fashioned barn raising conducted by the Cannon family and 30 of their city slicker friends.

After the group had struggled unsuccessfully for several hours to erect the first wall with a front-end loader, son Dave opined that they should have invited some Amish guests. The group eventually used poles to raise the walls Amish-style.

Another historic building Fred transplanted to the eclectic farm was a ramshackle 6x8 structure he plucked from the back yard of a downtown Wooster home this past year. He transformed it into a garden shed complete with a slate roof and stained glass windows on both sides.

One of Fred's summer projects was restoring the six louvers on the 42 by 90-foot barn. He also built a new overhang under the louvers, replacing a decrepit one that had been removed years ago.

The Cannons have never regretted placing a conservation easement on their property, forever limiting its use to agriculture. "When we did it, some people we knew said, 'You'll be sorry,'" remembered Fred. "Well, we never have been. Someone has to take a step forward and save the land."

Melody L. Snure, KWL Executive Administrator

Family dynamics and the cow

There are many reasons why Wayne County is ranked Number 1 in Ohio for dairy cows and milk production. A fine example is Pine Tree Dairy Farms owned by Matt and Gail Steiner of Rittman with farms near Rittman and Marshallville and in northern Ashland County. The Wayne County farms are “conventional” operations with state of the art barns, feeding mechanisms, milking parlors and flushing systems. The resident “ladies” are happy, healthy and highly productive. The Ashland County farm is an organic operation and here, too, the ladies are happy, healthy and highly productive.

Matt Steiner is the third generation of his family to operate a dairy farm. He grew up in the old family homestead

with two brothers and three sisters and lives there still where he and Gail raised their 11 children. All except one daughter who lives in Connecticut are involved in the Pine Tree Farms, and four sons work full time in the farming operation.

There are 40 Steiner family members who benefit from this extensive dairy business. Matt went into partnership with his father, Alvin, in 1976. Their herd has always been Holstein. In the old days they milked 40 cows. Today there are 650 cows at the Benner Road facility, 150 calves and 250 heifers on the homestead farm and about 200 cows on the Ashland County farm.

There is always the need for a large amount of cropland to support a dairy

business of this size, and that is where the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust plays a small but important part. Matt’s sister Sharon Taylor was teaching at a nursing school in Nepal in 2000 when she learned Matt had the opportunity to purchase 100 acres of cropland adjacent to the main dairy facility. Sharon’s father had told her these 100 acres were among the most productive farmland in Wayne County.

At this point Sharon stepped in with an offer to buy the land. A few years later she realized she wanted to place a conservation easement on it with KWLTL. Using the conservation tool to permanently protect the land was good for Sharon - she could participate in the

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Putting the farm to bed for winter

James Russell Lowell, one of the Fireside Poets, asked, “And what is so rare as a day in June?” My vote goes for a 75-degree cloudless day in late October held by a band of flaming colors. At least in my opinion as a farmer, October wins. For one, the five consecutive “rare” days allowed us to harvest an excellent crop of desperately needed hay—600 small square bales of fine grassy-garnished-with-alfalfa hay. At today’s hay prices that is almost \$5,000 worth of winter feed!

All this from a field that from June through early September, when the rains finally became a bit more regular, was practically dormant. What great pleasure throwing and stacking those bales gave us. Plus we baled 13 large round bales from another field for baleage.

The perfect weather also allowed us to prepare for the coming cold season, tucking the farm in for winter. All this with a sense of urgency as Hurricane Sandy churned up the eastern seaboard. Besides replacing windowpanes shattered by stray footballs and BBs, I took the 7-foot sickle bar mower and mowed along the fences and woods. Not only is this pleasurable work, but it keeps the encroaching briars and weeds from tak-

ing up permanent residence in the pastures and tilled fields.

The sickle bar mower will not shred praying mantis egg clusters on blackberry canes nor destroy the cocoons of moths and other beneficial insects on wild cherry and sassafras shoots that we need on a diversified farm.

Even though we have not had a killing frost, many of the goldenrods and asters are spent and dying, so clipping them won’t keep them from blooming again next summer and fall. The main plant that we want to keep at bay here is the multiflora rose. We all know that to give the noxious rose an inch means surrendering a foot, or maybe the field.

I understand the benefits of the multiflora rose as excellent wildlife habitat, and Louis Bromfield meant well in his love for living fences. But sometimes



there can be too much of a good thing and the multiflora is one of them.

Likewise, the common milkweeds toppled by the mower had finished their duty in nurturing monarch butterfly larvae and were going dormant. When I crossed the hayfield on my way home with the mower a monarch crossed in front of me. It looked freshly minted, flying southwest on its 2,000-mile journey to the Oyamel fir forests in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico - a journey that to my mind seems almost impossible here at the end of October.

If it survives the long flight and the winter, the third generation of its offspring may lay her eggs on the new growth of milkweed next June. And the cycle continues.

For now, with the weatherman promising high winds and possibly several inches of rain, we fill the bird feeders, close the west-facing windows of the barn, prop the big doors to the upper floor to prevent wind damage, make sure there is plenty of seasoned ash wood on the porch, and wait. The birds know it, the animals sense it, and we read the signs, that after this storm the last leaves will be stripped from the trees and then winter will be here.

David Kline, KWLTL Trustee

Conservation tool protects productive cropland

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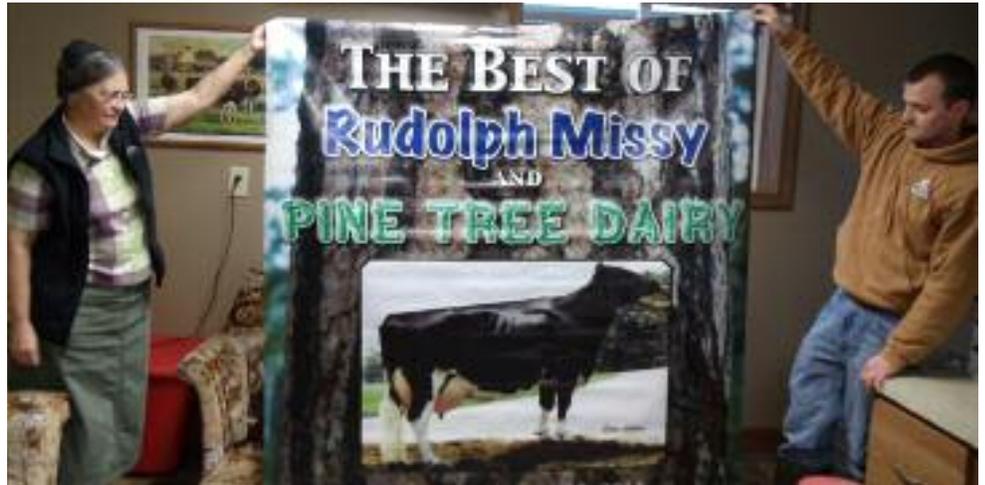
family farming operation and realize a cash incentive with the donated conservation easement. Here you have family dynamics, always an important part of the decision-making process to protect land, working in an extremely beneficial way for everyone.

The Pine Tree Farms' new high-tech dairy facility was featured as the 2012 Wayne County Twilight Dairy Tour site. On a rainy summer evening more than 2,000 people visited the farm to get a first-hand look and to celebrate with the Steiner family their accomplishments in the dairy field.

There is a lot of conversation these days about the effects of large livestock operations, but as Matt Steiner is quick to emphasize, "We take better care of the land and cattle now than when we had just 40 cows."

We visited a few weeks later and asked the question, "With all (probably thousands) of the cows you have tended, is there one that stands out as your favorite?" Without hesitating, Matt beamed as he told us the story of "Rudolph Missy," truly a poster child of the great Holstein cows in the dairy industry.

Missy had all the traits that tend to a profitable, long and productive life. She was a beautiful animal, the perfect type for Holstein; she was a good producer and a wonderful embryo transmitter



GAIL STEINER and her son Matt show off a poster that features Rudolph Missy, all-time star of the family's Holstein dairy herd.

with around 120 offspring who carry on her good looks, calving traits and milk production today.

Missy lived for 15 years, pretty good

as bovine life is measured. She was a well-loved member of the Steiner family.

Maryanna Biggio, KWLTPresident

Great things lie ahead for KWLTP in 2013!

It's hard to believe KWLTP is publishing the sixth issue of our newsletter, Ripples, which would never have happened without the expertise of Melody Snure, our executive administrator. Distribution of Ripples has made a positive impact on memberships and financial support for the land trust - exactly what we had hoped for - and we thank you very, very much.

We have interesting plans for 2013 so please continue to follow and support our endeavors and think of the Killbuck Watershed Land Trust as worthy of your donation dollars. If you know someone who should be receiving our newsletter either by U.S. Postal Service mail or by e-mail, please let Melody know by calling the KWLTP office at 330-263-8963.

Maryanna Biggio, KWLTPresi?

Easement monitoring creates a long-lasting relationship

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changes that have occurred. Photos may be taken to supplement the information. After the visit each landowner will receive a file copy of the property's 2012 monitoring form.

The primary purpose of a conservation easement is to protect land from certain forms of development or use. Prohibitions may include building new structures or roadways; selling water, timber or mineral rights; subdividing the property; or storing trash, junked vehicles, or waste products.

Landowners who agree to give up development rights under a conservation easement continue to own and manage their property and may receive significant state and federal tax advantages for having donated or sold their conservation easement. Under Ohio law, several types of qualified land conservation organizations may hold easements including a land trust, a private non-profit organization, or a government

entity. The easement holder assumes the right and legal responsibility to monitor and enforce the easement restrictions "in perpetuity" - forever!

If a landowner violates the terms, the easement holder must work to resolve the violation. Holders must keep funds set aside for use whenever legal expenses are incurred in defending an easement.

KWLTP board members look forward to the annual monitoring visits and the opportunity to renew acquaintances with landowners who are passionate about preserving their property. Board members enjoy eye-popping vistas and see how best conservation practices are being implemented.

Thank you to each of our easement landowners for choosing KWLTP as your conservation partner. We look forward to visiting each of you soon.

Melody L. Snure, KWLTP executive administrator