



The Rookery

FALL 2019





THERE
IS NO
SLOWING

With your help, Black Swamp Conservancy is making a difference in northwest Ohio. This year the Conservancy completed thirteen new conservation projects, protecting another 1,840 acres of land in our community – forever.

Among these newly protected properties are three new nature preserves, which stretch from the Lake Erie shoreline to the upper reaches of the Maumee River Watershed on the Little Auglaize and St. Joseph's rivers. These spaces harbor rare and endangered species, protect water quality and offer opportunities for public recreation – including hiking and canoeing.

The Conservancy also completed two large scale habitat restoration projects in the past year. At Carter Historic Farm near Bowling Green, we restored 20 acres of wetlands that serve as a publicly accessible demonstration project showcasing the importance of wetlands to clean water in our region. We've also continued on our previous work at Forrest Woods Nature Preserve by restoring another 48 acres of floodplain back to function.

There is no slowing down in sight ...

The Conservancy is now partnering with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources on four new restoration projects under the H2Ohio Initiative that are intended to support a cleaner Lake Erie and will be underway shortly. We have also secured grant funding through the Clean Ohio Greenspace Program to protect three new sites in 2020 – two that will be new public nature preserves and another that will expand upon an already beloved community space.

Thank you for your support of Black Swamp Conservancy and for helping to make this important work possible in our community. We couldn't do it without you.



With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rob Krain". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rob Krain
Executive Director

DOWN
in sight





H2Ohio

update



Simply put, water is life.

Yet, communities throughout the state have long-faced water quality issues caused by nutrient pollution, failing septic tanks, and lead contamination.

H2Ohio, a new environmental program recently established by the state, aims to change all that. The centerpiece of this program is a fund – approximately \$900 million – that will help address critical water quality needs and support innovative solutions to some of the state’s most pressing water challenges over the next 10 years.

Black Swamp Conservancy has been at the table on this initiative since early in its development, and in April 2019, we were invited to join conservation leaders from around the state in Columbus. We met with Gov. DeWine, Lt. Gov. Husted, the Directors of Agriculture, EPA and Department of Natural Resources, and the Lake Erie Commission to discuss H2Ohio and the ways we can work together to improve Ohio’s important waters.

We submitted several shovel-ready projects for consideration, four of which the State has selected for implementation under the H2Ohio program located on the Sandusky, Maumee and St. Joseph Rivers. We’re now working with ODNR’s staff to develop work plans and budgets for these exciting projects, which include the acquisition of a new property for use as a nature preserve, as well as floodplain, stream and wetland restorations throughout the western Lake Erie Basin.

“Water is the driving force of all nature.”

– Leonardo DaVinci

That conversation continued over the summer when the Conservancy’s staff toured agency officials through some of the stream and wetland restoration projects we’ve completed and new sites where we’re hoping to accomplish similar projects over the next few years.

We look forward to sharing more details with you soon! You can learn more about the H2Ohio program online at H2Ohio.gov.





Protecting More Than Land

Forest Woods Nature Preserve

-  Downy Carrion
-  Cuspidate Dodder
-  Ovate or Blunt Spike-rush
-  Cattle Egret
-  Regal Fritillary
-  Raven-foot Sedge
-  Leafy Blue Flag Iris
-  Lake-cress
-  Sandhill Crane
-  Blanding's Turtle
-  Silver-bordered Fritillary
-  Grove Sandwort
-  Bobolink
-  Black-billed Cuckoo
-  Sharp-shinned Hawk
-  Grasshopper Sparrow
-  Vesper Sparrow
-  Cerulean Warbler
-  Prothonotary Warbler
-  Red-headed Woodpecker
-  Four-toed Salamander

Middle Bass Island Preserve

-  Lake Erie Watersnake
-  Threehorn Wartyback Freshwater Mussel
-  Melanistic Eastern Garter Snake
-  Kidneyshell Freshwater Mussel
-  Round Pigtoe Freshwater Mussel
-  Purple Wartyback Freshwater Mussel
-  Black-crowned Night Heron
-  Sharp-shinned Hawk
-  Black-billed Cuckoo
-  Deertoe Freshwater Mussel

Sugar Ridge Prairie

-  Northern Harrier
-  Canada Milk Vetch
-  Rattlesnake Master
-  Northern Bobwhite
-  Grasshopper Sparrow
-  Badger

St. Joseph Wetland River Preserve

-  Copper-belly Watersnake
-  Blue Spotted Salamander
-  Eastern Cricket Frog

Red Horse Bend Nature Preserve

-  River Redhorse

Bell Woods

-  Three-Birds Orchid

Daubel Marsh

-  Blanding's Turtle

Meadowbrook Marsh

-  Black-crowned Night Heron
-  Early Buttercup
-  Deer's-tongue Arrowhead

Blanchard River Nature Preserve

-  Clubshell Mussel
-  Rayed Bean Mussel
-  Northern Harrier
-  Clubshell Mussel
-  Rayed Bean Mussel
-  Purple Lilliput Mussel
-  Rock Elm
-  Round Pigtoe Mussel
-  Northern Crayfish

-  Federally Endangered or Threatened
-  Ohio Endangered
-  Ohio Threatened
-  Ohio Potentially Threatened
-  Ohio Species of Concern



Black Swamp Conservancy protects more than 19,000 acres on 145 properties in Northwest Ohio.

The diverse habitats we protect are also home to more than 60 rare, threatened and endangered species of flora and fauna, a few of which are highlighted on the chart on the opposite page.

Biodiversity is in crisis worldwide, and habitat loss is the biggest threat to the plants, animals and other biota that make up life on this planet. In Ohio, more than 90% of our pre-European settlement wetlands have been destroyed, including most of western Lake Erie's extensive wetlands and the Great Black Swamp.

The Conservancy works in partnership with federal, state and local agencies to mitigate factors that contribute to habitat loss threatening biodiversity in this region. These efforts include management of invasive species, pollution control, protection from development, and reforestation.



Notes from the Field

Melanie Coulter,
Stewardship Specialist

This Notes From the Field is coming from very far afield... North Carolina! I'm in Raleigh at the Land Trust Alliance's annual conference, RALLY.

The Land Trust Alliance provides resources and services (and accreditation!) to land trusts like Black Swamp Conservancy. At RALLY, we get to meet and talk to staff from other land trusts across the country, and it's so inspiring to experience how we are part of a huge community of more than 1,400 land trusts, collectively protecting more than fifty million acres across the country.

I love learning about how other Land Trusts work and hearing about how they come up with innovative solutions to problems that we have in common. At this year's RALLY, I'm focusing on workshops and presentations about Water Quality and Climate Change. Land Trusts everywhere are major players working to solve these crucial issues since Land Protection and Habitat Restoration are critical to Water Protection and Climate Resilience.

Sometimes, learning about the damage to and threats facing our natural world can be disheartening. But being at a conference of professionals working toward the common goal of land protection quickly spins my feelings to hopefulness and determination to work on local solutions.

For example, compared to 1970 the USA now has 3 billion fewer birds. Declines have happened in all habitats EXCEPT WETLANDS. Wetland bird abundance has actually INCREASED since 1970. Why is that? Because we've spent billions of dollars and poured gallons of blood, sweat and tears into wetland restoration and protection efforts over the last 50 years.



This trend gives me hope that we can slow down declines in wildlife abundance by committing to large-scale restoration and protection of other habitats, too. Black Swamp Conservancy has worked to protect and restore wetlands and streams and woods all over northwest Ohio, and we're working hard to do more.



Thank you!

Stay Swampy my friends,



Melanie Coulter

A Year Of

GROWTH & LEARNING



This past spring, Michael Schiewer of Herbaceous, Ltd. – the first participant in our Food & Farm Initiative – began operations on

Conservancy land. As the winds begin to chill and herb beds are put to rest for the winter, we spoke with Mike about his experiences this season.

How did you become involved with the Food & Farm Initiative?

Through the community; I met Rob [the Conservancy's director] at an event last fall, where I had given a presentation. I was looking for land because my former rental was no longer an option and I wasn't sure whether I could continue my business. Rob told me about this program that the Conservancy was starting up, and encouraged me to apply to the RFP.

What are some differences between this program and other land arrangements you've had?

The biggest, most important thing is probably the resources. The Conservancy has connections in the agricultural and conservation fields that we were never able to tap into before. It's also great knowing that the land here has a good history; it's been well-cared for and there's no worry about contamination. The other thing that's great is being able to use the land as though it's mine.

What are some notable things that have happened in your business this year?

The business has really expanded. Having more land means that we can offer more product and greater variety. The story behind the herbs is really appealing to our clients as well. They like being able to tell their customers that their products are made with herbs grown organically at a nature preserve – how often do you hear that? Then, just a lot of learning. It's only my third year, so there are always new things to figure out.

Do you have a favorite plant that you've grown this season?

The lemon verbena. It has an amazing fragrance and the leaves have such a bright color in the field.

What are your plans going into next season?

We've been struggling to get the greenhouse completed, but that will be ready to go by spring, so that's one thing. I also want to tie back into my roots in designer landscaping, to create a working farm on the model of a garden, and hope to open it up to agritourism. It could be a great site for photographs, meetings, dinners; we could have chefs come and tour the place where their herbs are grown. We'll also be taking cuttings of a lot of the annuals here to overwinter in my greenhouse at home, so we won't need to start everything from seed next year.

What was the most difficult thing you had to deal with this year?

Well, like everyone, the rain and the late spring. But also, going from 1/21st of an acre to 2/3 of an acre was a huge expansion. It requires a whole new level of planning, and learning the land was a challenge. That's probably the biggest thing – learning the land that we're on now; how it acts and what it wants us to do.

What was unexpected about your season?

The amount of water that the land holds. I mean, it is a swamp, but we hadn't really thought about it that way. It's not a bad thing, just a hurdle that we need to learn to work around. We already have plans to turn the wettest corner into an edible rain garden with some native berries.

What is the best thing about this location?

Probably the location itself. It gets really windy out here and some of the herbs, like the basil, can be pretty sensitive to that. But our field is nestled into the corner of the woods, so it's fairly well-protected. It's also accessible from the highway and a couple different cities. That helps us to tap into other markets beyond Toledo.





PRESERVING FARMLAND



for the future

*By Sarah Williams,
Farmland Associate of
Black Swamp Conservancy*

There I was, standing in the middle of a shop, laughing out loud and drawing all kinds of curious stares, all because of a t-shirt that says “without farming, you’d be hungry, naked and sober.”

While the sentiment may not strictly be true – early hunter/gatherers certainly had clothing, food and libations – it certainly made me reflect on the value of our local farmland and the importance of protecting it.

Land trusts like Black Swamp Conservancy partner with the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Office of Farmland Preservation and landowners to establish agricultural easements that keep farmland under private ownership and protect it against future non-agricultural development.

The Conservancy has facilitated easements on more than 80 farms, in four counties.

We closed five new farmland preservation projects at the end of October, permanently conserving another 591 acres of productive agricultural land in this region. These newly-protected family farms, located in Seneca and Sandusky Counties, were preserved in partnership with the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program.

Two more farmland preservation projects are scheduled for completion before the end of the year.





BLACK SWAMP
CONSERVANCY
P.O. Box 332
Perrysburg, Ohio 43552
419.833.1025

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERRYSBURG, OH
PERMIT NO. 12

Clean Water, Good Food, Wild Places

At Black Swamp Conservancy...

We take direct action to permanently preserve northwest Ohio's natural habitats and family farms for the benefit of future generations. By protecting our valuable land and water resources we are supporting healthy communities with strong, sustainable economies. Our work ensures the diverse habitats of our region will be protected for generations and that our children and their children will forever be able to enjoy this special place.

Board Trustees

- Eric Britton**, *President*
- Brian Kennedy**, *Vice President*
- Tim Minning**, *Treasurer*
- Virginia Keller**, *Secretary*

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Steve Bowe | Paul Croy |
| Mary Fedderke | Mary Krueger |
| Dani Kusner | Will Lewis |
| Tom Reed | Tim Schetter |
| Rachel Sherry | Karen Ranney Wolkins |

Anne Yager, *Immediate Past President*

Advisory Council

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Sara Jane DeHoff | Don Leary |
| Clint Mauk | Steve Pollick |
| Deke Welles | |

Conservancy Staff

- Rob Krain**, Executive Director
- Elisabeth Anderson**
- Melanie Coulter**
- Linda Wegman**
- Sarah Williams**

Our front cover features a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, photographed by Brian Zweibel.

Your support helps to protect and restore northwest Ohio's rivers and streams, providing critical habitat for wildlife.



The
Rookery

FALL 2019

or Current Resident

A benefit for:



**ProMedica Steam Plant
Downtown Toledo, OH**

**March
13th**

Friday

**Doors open at
6:30 PM**

**Bluegrass &
Green Acres**



TICKETS available at BlackSwamp.org

LIVE MUSIC • Heavy Hors D'oeuvres, Beer & Wine • AUCTIONS

FIND US ONLINE AT BlackSwamp.org

