



# CONSERVATOR

THE NEWSLETTER OF CARDINAL LAND CONSERVANCY / MAY 2019

Issue VII

## Cardinal's new nature preserve in Clermont Co. protects old growth forest

Cardinal is proud to announce the purchase and preservation of 59 wooded acres in Clermont County — our first nature preserve in this county. The forest is located just east of Stonelick State Park, adding to open space already in the region.

### *Precious family land*

Long time landowner Bob Rinsky, whose family has owned the property since 1935, worked with Cardinal to preserve the woods for all time. He reports that this stand of forest has never been cut, contributing to the superb diversity of huge trees, as well as a relatively open and diverse herbaceous layer.

Rinsky Woods is characterized by a unique community of American Beech, Swamp White Oak and Red Maple, and checkered with wetlands.

It is one of the few wet flat-woods of this type in the world. Those that still exist are found only in SW Ohio and SE Indiana. It is designated an Ohio Natural Landmark by the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources. In fact, Rinsky Woods is the second largest and most biodiverse woods of this



Land donor Bob Rinsky and Cardinal's Andy Dickerson



kind in the world. See for yourself. There is a loop trail inside the nature preserve that Cardinal will maintain for visitors.

The protection of this property helps to maintain a functioning wetland which provides a buffer between

*Being there —*

### **RINSKY WOODS NATURE PRESERVE**

**I**n the forest, your eyes track the sunlight, moving upwards through branches. A fine net of sinuous beech boughs and startling red maple leaves filter the sunlight.

*You are standing in the kind of woods that is seldom seen anywhere in the world.*

*The strangeness of this cross-section of trees, the wet woods laced with wetland, the smell of the soil settles on you like a fog.*

*You are in the Rinsky Woods Nature Preserve in northeast Clermont County, Ohio.*

working farms and the headwaters of Moore's Fork and Greenbush Creek. This is key to sustaining valuable agricultural production while protecting water quality.

Including this mighty wood, Cardinal owns and maintains over 360 acres of nature preserves. To learn more about our six other nature preserves, visit our website.

# SHAPING UP: Kope Hollow Nature Preserve

**K**ope Hollow Nature Preserve was acquired by Cardinal in November 2017 from conservation-minded owners Vern Uchtman and Elizabeth Oldiges.

The site is located at the southern edge of Brown County along the Ohio River. The land is protected for its scenic, natural and historic conservation values.

Cardinal Land Conservancy's stewardship of precious land it protects means taking care of it for all time.

Kope Hollow Nature Preserve, located on Rte. 52 in Brown County, is in the midst of an extensive project to complete trails across the 53-acre site — and remove invasive plant species as well.

Cardinal hopes that, with the help of volunteer land stewards, the preserve will soon have better access and trails. A recent project has opened up the entry and added parking spaces.

## Getting help

Aided by volunteers, Cardinal's staff is working with consultant Jason Brownknight of Brownknight EcoResources to improve the visitor's experience. A professional ecologist, Jason specializes in watershed planning, pollinator habitat creation, native landscape design and invasive species management. Of Kope Hollow, he says "Ecosystem resilience is dependent upon



biological diversity. Non-native species decrease resilience by limiting establishment of native species." Good reason to remove honeysuckle!

According to noted local botanist Dan Boone, Kope Hollow is an excellent example — not only of the geological Kope formation — but of a Calcareous Mesophytic forest (a forest with lime-heavy alkaline soils.) This type of woods provides fertile places for an array of native species, includ-



ing goose plum trees shown at LEFT.

The property embraces both sides of Kope Hollow. Its features include a direct tributary to the Ohio River, five waterfalls, mature hardwood trees, a great variety of bird species — and a staggering list of over 100 native plant species.

## A major geological find

In the 1960s, geologists discovered and named its now-famous geological feature — Kope Formation — after finding it on site.

Early Swiss-German settlers planted vineyards in Kope Hollow. One man-made feature worth noting is the ghost of a prohibition-era wine cellar. There are two, in fact, hidden as stills on a wooded hillside.

For more information about hiking existing trails on Kope Hollow Nature Preserve or about stewardship volunteer opportunities, contact Anna at Cardinal LandConservancy@gmail.com.

# Change is a comin'...

This week I spotted a trillium I'd never seen before – *Trillium luteum* – a yellow flowering trillium. Spring is a time to look for the surprising, the new. I want to highlight two great changes happening at Cardinal!

**Cardinal is now an Accredited Land Trust.** Did you notice the new seal on this page? In February 2019, Cardinal became a nationally accredited land trust, the fifth in Ohio.

The Board and staff are to be congratulated on their efforts to achieve this standard of operational excellence. The Board felt that accreditation would provide confidence to the public that we operate according to best management practices and the Land Trust Alliance Standards & Practices.

After a year-long process of reviewing our finances, policies and procedures, and day-to-day implementation of these standards, the Commission approved.

## ***New leadership***

Change in leadership is healthy. As I conclude my three-year presidency, I could not be more pleased to announce that the Board has elected Bill Hopple to be the next Cardinal President.

Bill has been an active Board member of Cardinal Land Conservancy since 2015. He recently retired as the Executive Director of the Cincinnati Nature Center (1996-2019). He is truly a land preservation leader in Southwest Ohio.

## ***Bill's accomplishments***

During his time at the Cincinnati Nature Center, Bill Hopple ■ managed the acquisition of 450 acres of land, increasing land holdings to 1,800 acres, an increase of 30%, including in 2018, the acquisition of 125 acres of farm land adjacent to Long Branch Farm; ■ was a founding trustee of Green Umbrella, Cincinnati's regional sustainabil-

ity alliance; ■ launched Cincinnati Nature Center's regional Center for Conservation; ■ managed staff and volunteers for the 1100-acre Rowe Woods preserve; ■ managed a budget of \$4.5 million, including fundraising and membership.

## ***My term as President***

It's at an end but I look forward to continuing to serve on the Board. It's hard to believe that my work in land preservation started with (literally) nothing in 2004 in my home county, Clinton. There were more people who wanted a land trust than I imagined, then we held a yard sale to fund the new land trust, Clinton County Open Lands (CCOL).

In 2015, CCOL merged with The Land Conservancy

of Hamilton County and Southern Ohio Farmland Preservation Association to form Cardinal Land Conservancy, Inc., to create a stronger land trust to serve SW Ohio. Now with over 5000 acres preserved, our merged land trust is ready for the "forever" business.

For this reason, it was important to the Board for Cardinal to become an accredited land trust to better ensure the perpetual stewardship of our easements and properties.

I'm pleased and proud to leave the Presidency knowing that it is a strong organization and getting stronger every year. With the help and support of our wonderful members, landowners, and contributors, Cardinal's future is bright.

As I leave the Presidency, my parting wish is that Cardinal will bloom like the flowers in spring, that it will weather any storm, and that the good work of the Board, staff, members, volunteers and donors will be seen everywhere you look in a "forever green" Southwest Ohio.

— Laura Curliss, Past President



Flowering *Trillium luteum* in Clinton Co.

## **Connect with Cardinal Land Conservancy**

Our Mission: Preserve natural habitats, waterways, agricultural lands and open space we love in Southwest Ohio by working with individuals, families and communities.

### **Website**

[www.CardinalLandConservancy.org](http://www.CardinalLandConservancy.org)

## ***Not yet a Member?***

Join quickly through our secure Website:  
[www.CardinalLandConservancy.org](http://www.CardinalLandConservancy.org)

### **Facebook**

[Facebook.com/CardinalLandConservancy.org](https://Facebook.com/CardinalLandConservancy.org)

### **E-mail**

[andy@CardinalLandConservancy.org](mailto:andy@CardinalLandConservancy.org)

## **Mailing & Office Address**

PO Box 957  
790 Garfield Ave.

Milford, Ohio 45150

**Telephone 513-752-2828**

## **Affiliations**

Land Trust Alliance: [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org)  
Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts:  
[www.ohiolandtrusts.org](http://www.ohiolandtrusts.org)



# Cardinal LAND CONSERVANCY

[www.CardinalLandConservancy.org](http://www.CardinalLandConservancy.org)

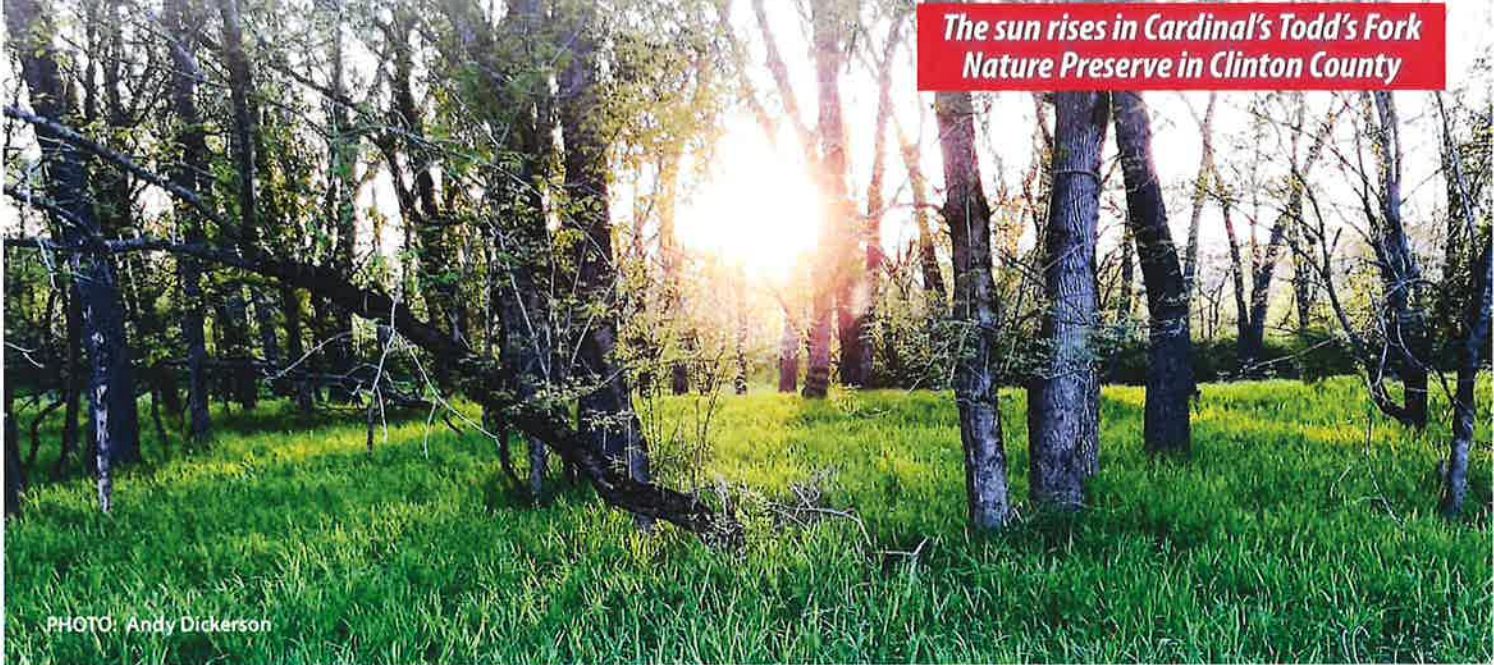
790 Garfield Ave., PO Box 957, Milford OH 45150

*A land trust working in the 7 counties of SW Ohio:*

- Adams ■ Brown ■ Clermont ■ Clinton
- Hamilton ■ Highland ■ Warren

*Conservation Partner: Cincinnati Nature Center*

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*The sun rises in Cardinal's Todd's Fork Nature Preserve in Clinton County*

PHOTO: Andy Dickerson

## CARDINAL LAND CONSERVANCY, INC.

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## News of Cardinal's Area Councils

### Clermont County Area Council

The Clermont County Area Council is proud to work to maintain Clermont's rural character.

The Council is launching an awareness and membership campaign to spread the word about land protection in Clermont Co. We can use your help. Anyone interested in working to protect land in Clermont Co. is invited to join the team to work on mailings, make follow-up phone calls or serve on the Council. Council members are Bill Hopple, Jim Meyer, Vanessa Hannah and John McManus. Interested? Please contact Executive Director Andy Dickerson at (513) 752-2828.

### Eastern Counties Area Council

Members have been working on two pending projects through the winter. Council member Pat Hornschemeier

is serving on the Natural Resources Advisory Council for District 15 (which includes Highland, Adams, Brown counties, and others) to benefit preservation of greenspace and working farms in the region.

### Hamilton Co. Area Council

The annual monitoring of our conserved properties is completed. Work on pending easements is ongoing, with new projects planned.

**SAVE THE DATE** for our Summer meeting set for Fri., June 28 at 7PM at Great Parks' Sharon Woods in Sharonville. Located at the heart of the 730-acre park, the Centre has lots of parking and access to trails.

Cardinal will join with The Hillside Trust to present a meeting for Members and Friends in the Auditorium of the air-cooled Sharon Centre.

We promise an exciting evening

that starts with an update on the ongoing conservation work of Cardinal and The Hillside Trust.

In the featured presentation, Great Parks' new CEO Todd Palmetter will share highlights of the newly-announced Master Plan that looks to a bright future for Great Parks of Hamilton County.

### Northern Area Council

Earth Day activities were held in Clinton Co. on April 27 at Hunter Glen, Wilmington, OH and Todd's Fork Nature Preserve, Clinton Co. Approximately 20 volunteers cleared invasives, picked up trash and planted trees or seeds.

Fifty people attended the Earth Day dinner in Wilmington. Biology teacher, bird bander and naturalist Bob Thobaben spoke about Todd's Fork Preserve's flora & fauna.