

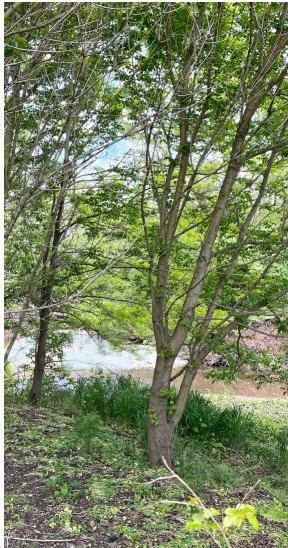


CONSERVATOR

THE NEWSLETTER OF CARDINAL LAND CONSERVANCY / MAY 2021

Issue X

Cardinal acquires two new Nature Preserves



NewForest Preserve

Caesar Creek Preserve

Cardinal is proud to announce that two new conservation projects were recently approved for purchase with **Clean Ohio Greenspace** funding!

We expect to close on these projects this summer and soon begin stewardship activities.

Cardinal has been fortunate to locate and acquire these high-quality lands from conservation-minded owners.

Our two new nature preserves demonstrate the importance of permanently protecting riparian areas and wildlife habitat in Southwest Ohio.

NewForest Preserve:

26 forested acres in Hamilton Co. in a fast-growing Springfield Twp. neighborhood. The new nature preserve is located off Compton Rd. near its intersection with Winton Rd.

The woodland supports diverse wildlife and plant habitat. A one-mile primitive trail crosses the property. A winding perennial stream flows through it and drains into Winton Lake.

The owner has carefully managed the mature woods as a natural area for 7 years. Almost all of the woody invasive honeysuckle, Bradford pear, and autumn olive have been

cut and treated. Staff and volunteers will soon build a parking lot. Visitors will be welcome to enjoy the preserve every day during daylight hours.

Caesar Creek Preserve:

96 acres in Clinton Co. immediately adjacent to Caesar Creek Lake in Chester Township. This beautiful, scenic property has steep ravines with an intermittent stream that feeds into the lake.

Because this land is adjacent to the State Park and federal lands owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, it is a high priority for protection.

Endangered Indiana bats make their summer homes in adjacent greenspace. Protecting this property will improve habitat conditions for this population.

Cardinal's stewardship team will plant native prairie grasses with a heavy wildflower component. A two-mile trail will be created with Cardinal's partners at the State Park and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



After a long, hard winter — Reconnections Await Us

As the threat of frost decreases and the landscape in Southwest Ohio becomes more lush, I find myself thinking about the potential of the season ahead of us. Perhaps this year, the changes in the plant life around me and increased wildlife activity are not solely responsible for this excitement. I am filled with optimism as restrictions related to COVID-19 relax and I reconnect with family, colleagues, and with friends.

This summer, I hope to reconnect with you, our members, too. In the last year, Cardinal has added a nature preserve in Hamilton County to our nature preserve roster, and we have completed six conservation easements with farmers in four counties.

I cannot wait for you to see our new nature preserve, or to tell you about these farms. We have had the honor of working with farmers in Clinton County who have proven their commitment to conservation as they protect their entire family farm, piece-by-piece over the four years we have worked with them. All told, they have

protected nearly 300 acres with Cardinal, and will protect an additional 300 acres this year.

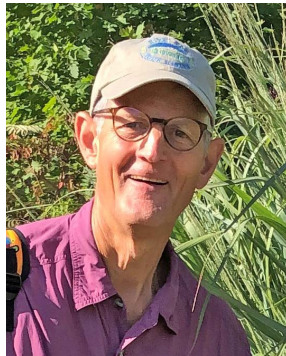
In Adams and Highland counties, we worked to purchase easements from landowners preserving land for the first time. One Warren County family chose to donate two conservation easements on their farm.

We are proud to hold easements on these farms, protecting high quality soil, riparian forests, and important watersheds.

In the year ahead, we will protect over 400 additional acres with conservation easements in Clinton and Clermont counties.

Join me as I celebrate the season and the work that Cardinal has done together in the last year. I hope that I will see you this Summer during a Todd's Fork workday, or a Little Miami Preserve River Cleanup.

Appreciatively, Bill Hopple, *President*

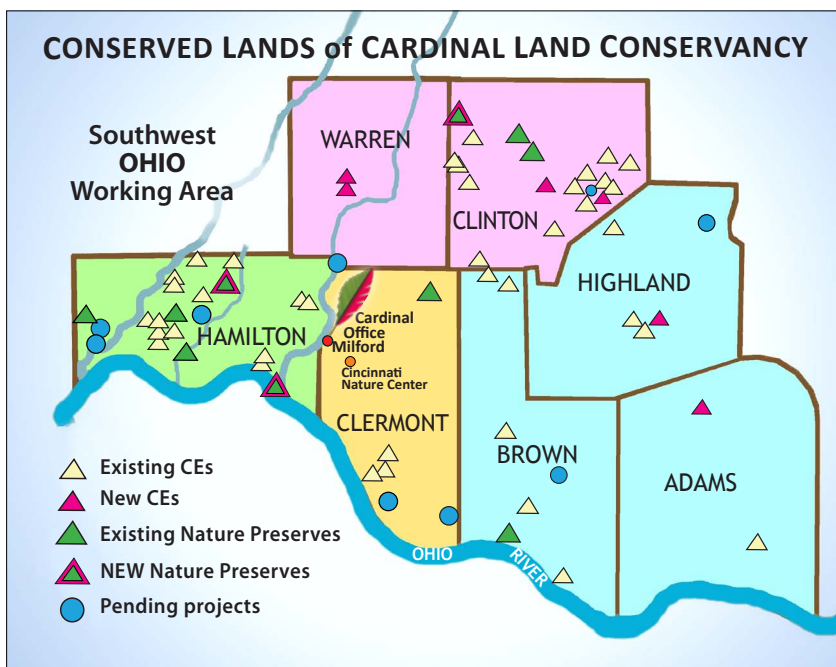


We welcome Rachel Wamsley to the Cardinal Land Conservancy team. She will be serving as Development Manager.

Her background is in nonprofit development work. Originally from Michigan, she grew up on her great-grandfather's apple orchard.

Rachel attended the University of Notre Dame and moved to Cincinnati for work while her husband attended UC for graduate school.

She has a deep love and appreciation for the natural world and is excited to be a part of Cardinal's mission to preserve land and waterways in Southwest Ohio, a place Rachel, her husband, and young son are proud to call home.



Thinking about preserving your farmland?

A time-honored, legal way for families to preserve their farmland forever, an Agricultural Easement may be for you. A voluntary agreement that protects your farm, it also brings many important benefits.

Cardinal can help you apply for funding for your agricultural easement. While the process of seeking funding may take two years, now is a good time to get started. Cardinal anticipates that increased funding for the partial purchase of agricultural easements may be coming in early 2022.

It takes time to consider your options and prepare. To learn more, contact Anna:

anna@cardinallandconservancy.org

Downtown Cincinnati: Where Eagles Dare

Andy Dickerson, Executive Director

Nationally, the bald eagle population has multiplied by 4.5 times since 2009, and we at Cardinal are lucky enough to have played a role — although the eagles really did all the work.

Our newest nature preserve — 119 acres with a 1.8-mi. trail within — located where the Little Miami River meets the Ohio River, is home to a special eagle couple that has nested there for years.

These wonderful birds fledged a rare three-eaglet family last year, and are currently feeding another three eaglets in the same nest this year.

Don't wake the fledglings

As the only nest inside the city limits of Cincinnati, these eagles experience a wide variety of what the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would call “disturbance.” Airplanes and helicopters leaving and approaching Lunken Airport offer what can be a deafening experience. Boats along the Ohio River as well as in the marina and the close proximity of the people that go with them are constantly within a range that in other places would be troublesome.

However, these “city eagles” have found a way to cope and adapt to these surroundings in a way that no others have. Food is plentiful, so they put up with the noise.

Courtship begins in winter

In Ohio, eagles begin their courtship in January or even earlier. Courtship can be as simple as perching next to each other or it can be seen as the eagles soar high in the air and then grab talons in a display that looks like fighting as they fall towards the earth-breaking away. Another form of courtship is by adding and adjusting sticks in their nests.

According to the new U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland:

“The bald eagle has always been considered a sacred species to American Indian people, and similarly it's sacred to our nation. The strong return of this treasured bird reminds us of our nation's shared resilience and the importance of being responsible stewards of our lands and waters that bind us together.”



Parent eagle returns to nest in summer 2020

A resilient life cycle

Eagles tend to keep the same mate year after year unless one happens to die, in which case they will generally find a new mate and build a new nest.

We know that is the case with “our” eagles, as one of the pair was found dead on the side of the road after being hit by a car five years ago. The remaining eagle found a new mate and they built a new nest about 300 yards away from the old nest. Their nests are incredible feats of building and can weigh 1,000 pounds!

Eggs are typically laid in February and March and they hatch after about a month. They fledge or begin to leave the nest about 10-12 weeks later. Adults are easy to see with their white heads and white tails. This feature doesn't show up until the eagles are three to five years old and is a sign of sexual maturity. Once the young are able to fly, they might hang around for

a couple weeks to learn how to make it on their own and then they're off!

Eagles can be sensitive to human activities and we are taking precautions and following guidance from the USF&W.

Nature Preserve opens soon

Cardinal will be working this off-season to put up a viewing blind that will be at a minimum 100 yards away from the nest.

Duke Energy Foundation has awarded Cardinal a grant to place a live webcam pointed at the nest — which we expect to install this fall.

Cardinal's Nature Preserve at the Ohio & Little Miami





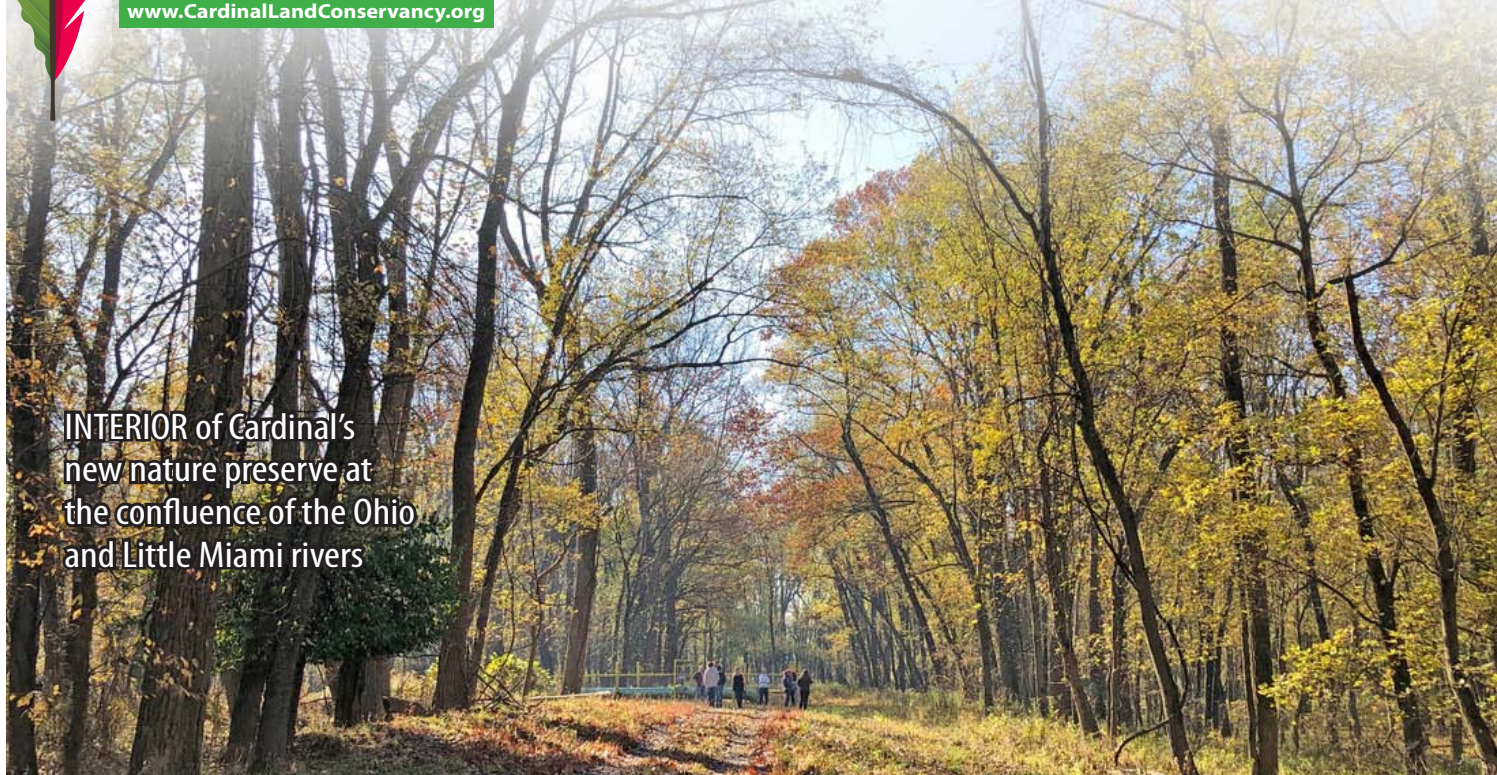
Cardinal
LAND CONSERVANCY
www.CardinalLandConservancy.org

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

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

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INTERIOR of Cardinal's new nature preserve at the confluence of the Ohio and Little Miami rivers

Volunteer monitoring help needed!

Cardinal has an ongoing need for volunteer help with our Annual Easement Monitoring program. We hold close to 50 conservation easements on land owned by others. We have a responsibility to visit each property every year and to write a brief report describing the condition of the property and verifying that the terms of the easement are being followed.

Monitors help schedule the visit with the landowner, take photos to document the current condition, and write a short report.

In addition, we are searching for a drone pilot who can assist with the monitoring program. If you are interested in helping out with any part of this program, please email to Mark Besserman at mark@cardinallandconservancy.org. Monitoring visits are expected to begin in June and continue through November.



Can you identify this bloom?

Here are a few hints: It is from a tree that is native to our area. The bloom is visible at the end of April as most trees are just beginning to leaf out. It produces a large edible fruit, about the size of a potato. It is also known as the false-banana or the hillbilly mango. Still not sure? *The answer is in this issue.*

Connect with Cardinal!

E-mail

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Website

www.CardinalLandConservancy.org

Facebook

Facebook.com/CardinalLandConservancy.org

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Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts:
www.ohiolandtrusts.org

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Our Mission:

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

Outdoor Volunteer Stewardship Events in 2021 and COVID-19 UPDATE



Mark Besserman

occurred through the rest of the year.

Group projects restart

And now the good news for 2021. Given the dramatic decline in COVID-19 case numbers from the winter surge, and the percentage of Ohioans with at least one dose of the vaccine over 40%, we have begun to restart group volunteer projects. We will continue to observe social distancing and masking.

In mid March this year at Todd's Fork Nature Preserve, a group of about 10 volunteers and staff gathered to check on the previous tree planting projects that happened in November 2019 and March 2020.

Volunteers individually checked on trees to make sure they were alive and thriving and checked that deer fencing was in good shape. Then in April this year, we had another awesome day at Todd's Fork Preserve. A group of volunteers planted 100 Swamp White Oak trees that were donated to Cardinal by the Ohio Valley Forestry Fellowship.

New arrivals: American Chestnut trees

In addition, Cardinal has begun an exciting partnership with The American Chestnut Foundation. This group donated 36 hybrid American Chestnut trees to Cardinal that were also planted in April. These first trees are a test case for future work. Since Southwest Ohio is right on the edge of the native range of the American Chestnut tree, we need to determine if they can thrive under the local conditions at the preserve. If so, then more trees could follow in coming years.

In early March 2020, a group of volunteers planted 2,000 bare root trees at Todd's Fork Nature Preserve in Clinton County. Unfortunately, after that successful event, COVID-19 precautions cancelled remaining group events in 2020. While minimum work continued at Cardinal's nature preserves with staff or lone (and lonely) volunteers, no group events



Volunteers Richard Hiatt, Jim Donnelly, Cathy Fay and Alyssa Kensill

Join us at Stewardship events

■ Sat., June 5, 8am to 12noon

Cleanup at Little Miami Nature Preserve. Not surprising, quite a lot of trash collects during flooding events at Cardinal's new nature preserve at the mouth of the Little Miami where it meets the Ohio River. Early June is a great time for this cleanup event, hopefully after the worst of springtime flooding events. So, visit our newest nature preserve and help to clean it up for future

visitors! The Keep Cincinnati Beautiful organization is helping out by providing supplies and much-welcomed trash pickup.

■ Sat., June 19, 8am to 12noon

—and the 3rd Saturday of each month through November—we will host work days at Todd's Fork. The focus is expected to be on trail work and invasive species control.

Contact us!

Look for additional stewardship events at Cardinal's other nature preserves. We are also working to setup volunteer stewardship teams for each preserve.

If you would like to be on a stewardship team, and you're not yet receiving emails announcing

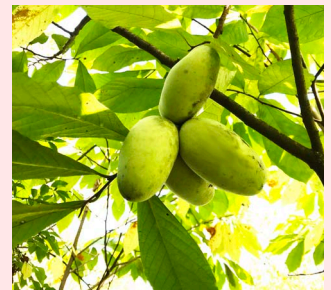
volunteer events, please email describing

your interests to Mark Besserman:

mark@cardinallandconservancy.org

You were correct if you answered:

Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*). The fruit is typically ready to be harvested mid to late September. It doesn't last long—the dark spots on the fruit are a sign that it is ripe, or very nearly ripe. Lots of animals enjoy eating it.



www.CardinalLandConservancy.org