

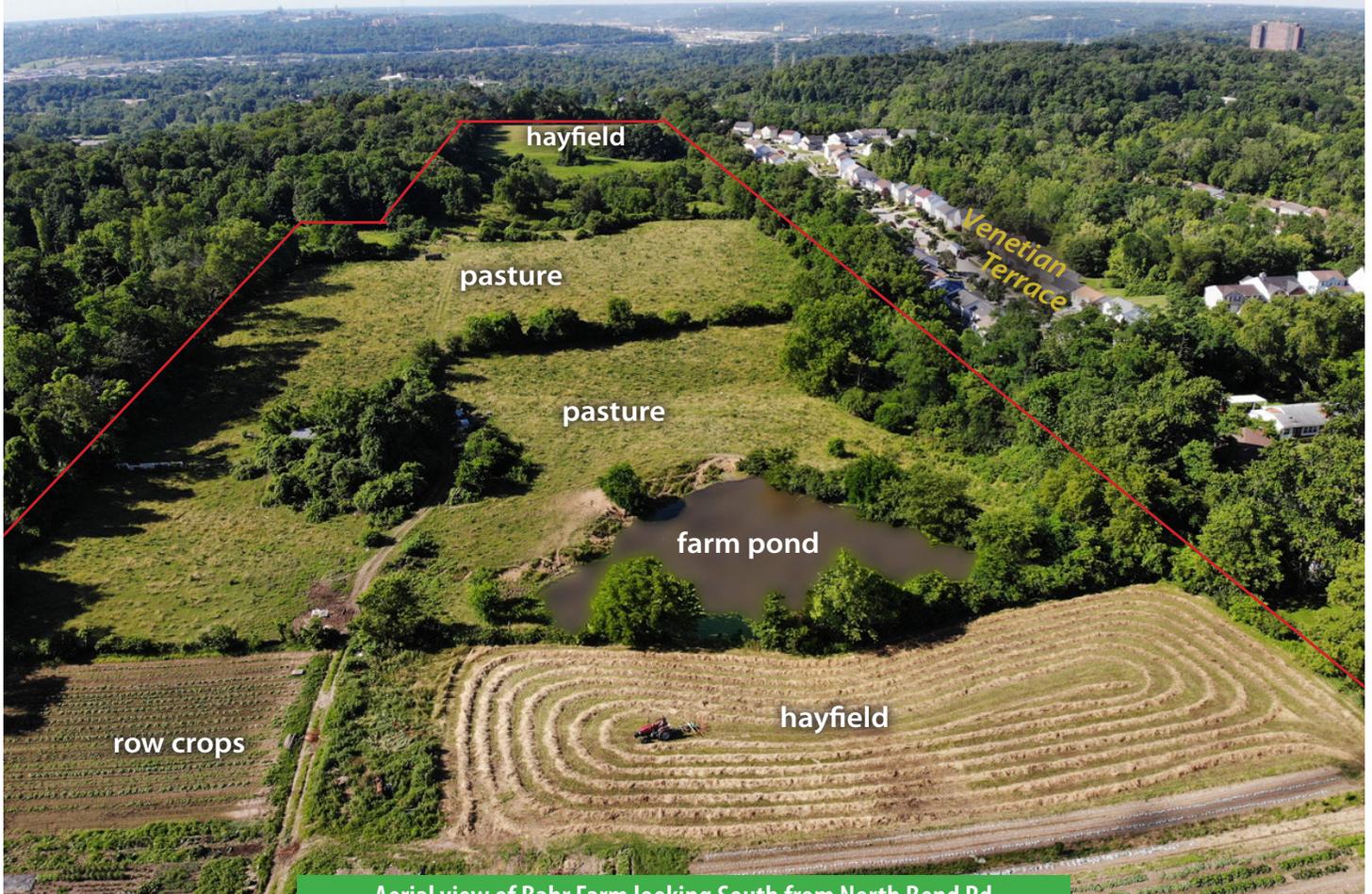


CONSERVATOR

THE NEWSLETTER OF CARDINAL LAND CONSERVANCY / NOVEMBER 2021

Issue XI

The Bahr Farm — Conserved for all time!



Aerial view of Bahr Farm looking South from North Bend Rd.

Drone photography by Gabriela Waesch, OKI GIS Analyst

One of the last working farms in the City of Cincinnati has been donated to Cardinal Land Conservancy by owners Dale and Carol Bahr. They have grown crops and raised cattle there since 1972, and retired this year from active farming.

Now bearing the coveted “Century Farm” designation, the 32-acre farm is located in suburban College Hill on gently rolling land that has been in the Bahr family since 1916. The land was farmed by Dale’s parents before him.

“It was an 18-hour a day job,” said Dale of his years working the land. Using traditional farming practices, he grew seasonal crops of herbs, greens and lettuce for distribution to local wholesale markets. In good years the Bahrs harvested 3600 lbs. of herbs—basil, chives, dill and mint—among other crops.

Staying a farm

The Bahrs want the land to stay a working farm,” said Andy Dickerson, Cardinal’s Executive Director. “We assured

them that the land will stay a farm, protected from development and preserved as a community agricultural space.”

The rich soil has been cultivated by Our Harvest Cooperative—a year-round CSA—for more than 10 years. The co-op will continue its sustainable and chemical-free practices, continuing to grow food responsibly. This gives members access to healthy, local food in a way that honors the land and those who labor on it.

www.CardinalLandConservancy.org

The Story of Cincinnati's Bahr Farm

by *Andy Dickerson*,
Executive Director

It was a vibrant spring morning this year when I was introduced to Dale and Carol Bahr. With a goal of keeping their farm out of the hands of developers, the Bahrs were ready to discuss options to preserve their land forever.

As it turns out, they were in a position to donate the property to Cardinal – so that Cardinal could make their dreams come true.

After quite a bit of paperwork and due diligence, Cardinal became the owner of this quaint 32-acre farm located almost wholly inside the City of Cincinnati.

As new owner, Cardinal immediately assumed responsibility for the ongoing success of the Bahr family farm. We were fortunate to get significant anonymous donations to make improvements to the farm and update the basic necessities.

Bahr family land since 1916

The Bahr Farm is situated in the Cincinnati suburb of College Hill at 975 W. North Bend Road near the corner of Winton Road. The property borders the super tall landmark communications tower.

The front 10 acres (see aerial photo below) is dedicated to growing local food and produce. The majority of the food production is managed by the tenants, Our Harvest Cooperative. This year-round CSA is dedicated to sustainably growing



Dale and Carol Bahr

produce for the community. The nonprofit works from a very old and stable model of a union of cooperatives working together to help each other succeed.

Now in their 80s, the Bahrs had been working long days and nights for most of their lives. Dale still works on a few rows of produce, and there are a small number of spaces leased to the SW Ohio Catholic Charities Refugee Program. Volunteers grow food from their homeland that cannot be easily sourced here.

Pastures are for cows

Once you get past the first 10 acres, the property opens up to two large gently rolling pastures that contain 17 cows. Yes. Cows, right here in the City. They are mostly Black Angus with a couple Limousine, Charolais and Holstein.

There is a steep ravine dividing off the last eight acres where hay is grown. And if you climb to the top, you can see a view of the entire Mill Creek Valley.

Dale did a fantastic job managing the farm, yet as the years went by, there was more and more to do. When Cardinal entered the picture, we began spending three or four days a week

helping Dale get the equipment in good shape. A new battery was installed on the Case Farmall tractor; we sharpened the hay cutters, pumped up tires and greased fittings.

We then set to work cutting and wrapping hay and picking gooseberries. From time to time, Jungle Jim's would call to let Dale know that there were skids of watermelons or corn not worthy of their retail section. Dale would pick them up to be fed to the cows. My, how cows love to eat watermelon!

In just three months, Cardinal has groomed the property quite a bit, repaired the perimeter fence, put up electric fencing to make paddocks, emptied and repaired the half-acre pond, and installed a parking lot.

Future plans include you

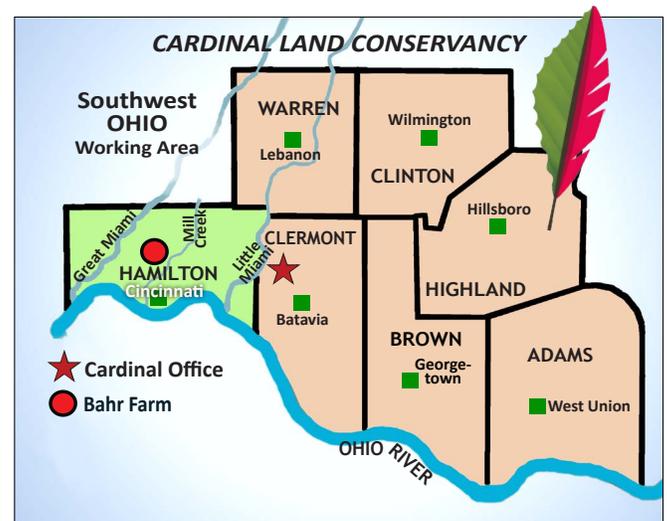
Cardinal is working on a plan for this wonderful property with our partners and the community. It will include how the public can visit and learn about local food production, see farm equipment and animals, and learn about the trades which are necessary to make farms viable.

Our goal is to be a shining example of best practices as we install new fencing and alternative water sources for the cows, new irrigation water for our tenants, new electric to the outbuildings and fix up the barn that was built in 1830.

This is a great and wonderful thing that the Bahrs have started. Cardinal is proud and humbled by their generosity and foresight in having their farm protected forever.



Aerial view of Bahr Farm's northern section at North Bend Rd.



CARDINAL LAND CONSERVANCY, INC.

Connect with us!

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Affiliations

Land Trust Alliance: www.lta.org

Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts:

www.ohiolandtrusts.org

Our Mission:

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

2021 Board of Directors

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Land Manager joins Cardinal

Noelle O'Neal joins

Cardinal Land Conservancy as full time Land Manager. With a strong background in environmental work, she is well prepared for the demanding job. Noelle and her Stewardship team are responsible for the annual monitoring of Cardinal's 7,500 acres of Conservation and Agricultural easements and 500 acres of



Noelle O'Neal

nature preserves.

Noelle's experience with mapping, tree planting and social media will also help her work on restoration projects with our Stewardship volunteers.

A graduate of Kenyon College in central Ohio, she was a student farmer and interned for Kenyon's Office of Green Initiatives.

New Manager of Donor Outreach



Lauren Stanula

Welcome Development Manager **Lauren Stanula**. The newest addition to Cardinal's growing staff, Lauren is in charge of strengthening financial support of Cardinal's land conservation goals. Her work includes donor communications and member outreach efforts throughout Cardinal's working area of seven Southwest Ohio counties.

A Cincinnati resident and University of Cincinnati graduate in environmental studies, her strong conservation background includes earning a Master's degree in conservation biology at Miami University, and work as an arborist.

Cardinal adds Staff for Bahr Farm

With the acquisition of the Bahr Farm, Cardinal's plan for this new property includes hiring knowledgeable help.

Nick Hartley took on a big job when he agreed to fill our need for Facilities Manager. He brings with him 20 years of experience as a project manager and leader at a large corporation. Nick is in charge



Nick Hartley

of making this operation run smoothly and is on site almost daily.

Cardinal has also hired three summer interns. **Abby Miller** and **Arica Volk** began in June as part time employees. Both are students at Cincinnati State getting horticulture degrees. **Troy Campbell** is doing all the dirty work to organize and care for equipment and animals.

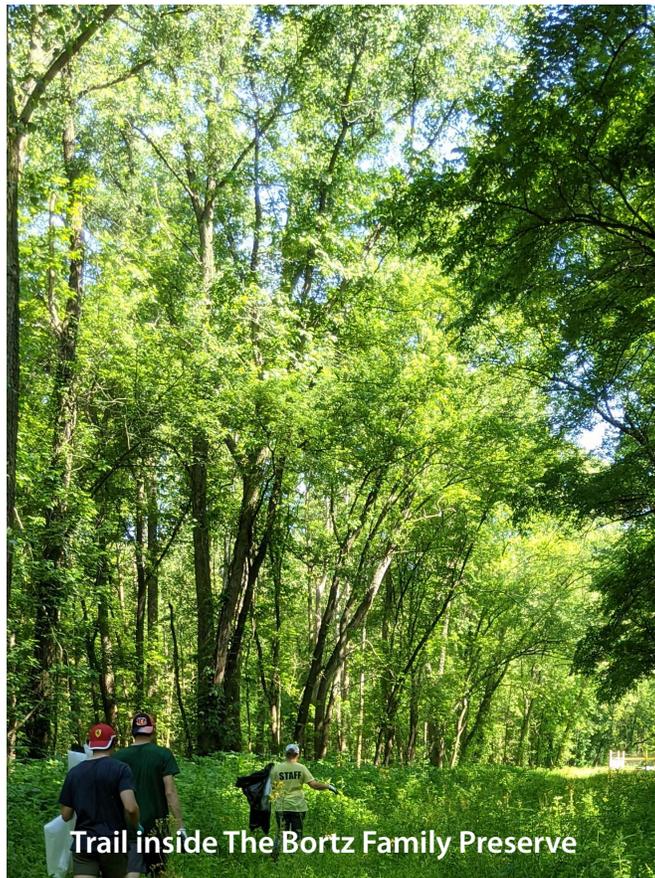
TRAIL UPDATE: Bortz Family Preserve

The 1.9 mi. loop trail at the Bortz Family Preserve at the confluence of the Little Miami and Ohio rivers is soon getting much needed attention.

Parking at the South end of the Four Seasons Marina parking lot will put you at Cardinal's trail head for the new pre-

serve. This fall, we are making progress on the primitive trail. We plan to build almost a mile of gravel trail for ease of use by more of the public.

For updates on the trail and Bortz Family Preserve, please check Cardinal's website and Facebook page.



*A land trust working for you in the
7 counties of Southwest Ohio:*

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

A Message from Cardinal's President



Bill Hopple

Thanks to the **Bortz Family and Towne Properties**, Cardinal received a Clean Ohio grant last year to acquire and protect 122 acres of wetland

forest at the confluence of the Little Miami and Ohio rivers. This unique property is adjacent to the Four Seasons Marina and has a resident Bald Eagles' nest. In recent issues of the *Conservator*, we shared pictures of the three eaglets that have hatched in 2020 and 2021.

To recognize the Bortz family commitment to conservation and their generosity in providing the matching funds, we are naming the property **The Bortz Family Preserve!**

Improvements are in the works so we can open the property to hikers. A 1.9-mile long trail has been laid out, but needs substantial improvements, including to provide a solid base that will survive the annual flooding which defines the riparian habitat. We are currently seeking the funding to make this possible.



Thanks to a grant from the **Duke Energy Foundation** and a partnership with **Cincinnati Bell**, plans are proceeding to install a camera to broadcast live observations of the eagles' nest on the Cardinal website. We expect to have it in place by December, in time for the next nesting season.

Cardinal is collaborating with several other organizations to provide access to the Preserve including: **Cincinnati City Parks, Great Parks of Hamilton County, and Tri-State Trails.**

Once the trail is built and the camera is in place, we will let everyone know so all can experience this unique greenspace within the Cincinnati city limits.

Continued thanks to all who make the work of Cardinal Land Conservancy possible!

Bill Hopple, Cardinal Board President

Leave a lasting legacy

Planned Gifts: *by Andy Dickerson, Executive Director*

The most important thing we do at Cardinal is to protect the land that you love—forever. Being in the forever business takes quite a bit of forward thinking not only from us, but from you as well. Part of our responsibility in being a nationally accredited land trust is taking care of our finances in order to steward those lands that we love forever. If you are passionate about land preservation, whether greenspace or working lands, really want to leave a legacy, and have been wondering what you might be able to do to contribute, please read further.

How does it work?

Planned giving or legacy giving is a way that a nonprofit works with donors and their advisors to develop charitable giving solutions that meet a variety of the donor's objectives (retirement and tax planning, unburdening of surplus assets, simplifying one's financial life, etc.) while resulting in substantial, sometimes transformative transfers of capital to charity. These are gifts that are generally given from wealth, not income. They tend to involve more reflection and complexity.

They may or may not be deferred to some time in the future, and that often—though not always—



they involve non-cash assets like real estate, securities and mutual funds, life insurance and tangible property.

Plan now to provide for family, friends and your special interests

Your will, living trust or legacy gift are important ways to provide for family and friends, plan the management and disposition of your estate and ensure a lasting legacy for the causes that have special meaning for you.

Gifts made through wills and living trusts are easy to arrange and can be changed at any time you choose, giving you maximum flexibility in your planning. You will also enjoy peace of mind knowing that your property will be put to good use when you no longer need it, but your cash flow will not be affected today.

For more information or to explore what leaving a legacy could mean for you—or how you can earn your Cardinal Wings—please call Andy Dickerson at (513) 752-2828.

Bats are with us. And it's a good thing!

By Anita Buck, Cardinal Land Conservancy member



Indiana Bat

Bats,

the only mammals that fly, are critical to ecosystem health everywhere they live.

As nocturnal animals that function in ways we are only beginning to understand, bats have long been feared, and many harmful myths about bats persist. But bats, in fact, perform important ecological tasks for us and pose very little risk.

Here in Ohio, our nine species of bats are our single best control on night-flying insects—not just on the mosquitoes that can infect us with West Nile and other diseases, but on moths and beetles that are agricultural pests.

It's a common misperception that bat houses will attract bats to a property. Bats already foraging on your land may move into a properly sited bat house, but the bat house is not why they're there.

Increase your population of native night-flying insects, add clean water accessible to bats, and bats will find you.

Steps to a bat-friendly habitat:

Minimize, and if possible eliminate, the use of pesticides and herbicides. Bats eat an enormous number of insects relative to their weight, so they can be poisoned by trace amounts of pesticides accumulating in their systems.

The nine species of bats that live in Ohio are all woodland bats, so if you don't have woodland on your property, then replicating a mature Ohio woodland—native canopy trees, understory trees and shrubs, and native grasses and forbs—is your aim. Urban homeowners can plant native shrubs and beds of wildflowers.

Rural bats forage over pastures, ponds, and agricultural fields, but they need woodland, or at least mature trees,

nearby to roost in. Red Bats and Hoary Bats roost only in trees, but even bats that colonize buildings and bat houses need a place to hang out and rest between the main evening and morning feedings.

Don't overtidy your property. To encourage native pollinators, leave flower stalks standing in your beds over winter. Don't shred or bag leaves in fall; instead, rake them into your garden beds and under shrubs and trees.

Mow your lawn at the highest level possible. Many more insects and small vertebrates can live in a four-inch-tall lawn than one scalped at an inch. Grass and sedges, violets, clover, and other broadleaf plants that diversify a natural lawn will be healthier and more drought-resistant.

A pond wide enough for bats to drink from on the fly is a huge asset. If you want to encourage maternity colonies of bats, there must be a pond or slow stream nearby. Unpolluted water also generates a great many insects.

If you have or have created bat-friendly habitat, you might consider installing a bat house. Farmers in particular often have good luck with bat houses. But it's good habitat that's the key.



PHOTOS ABOVE: Bat houses come in all sizes.

This 15 ft. tall bat house was built by Scout Payton Gage for Cardinal's Rinsky Preserve in Clermont Co. The small bat house (16 x 12 x 4.5 inches) has been installed on Cardinal-conserved property in Hamilton Co.