



CONSERVATOR

NEWSLETTER OF CARDINAL LAND CONSERVANCY / JULY 2023

Issue XVI

Strategies for Measurable Success

By Andy Dickerson, Executive Director

At Cardinal Land Conservancy, we take a great deal of pride in protecting the last great places and working lands in southwest Ohio. This past year, we worked with partners to create a strategic plan for conservation. Our team went through a rigorous and time-tested methodology based on the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (now Open Standards, learn more at conservationstandards.org). We have always followed our mission, but we set a goal of being much more strategic about where we spend our time protecting land.

I have been a conservation coach of this methodology for over 20 years. This methodology has been utilized on every continent and has been adopted by all of the “big international non-governmental organizations” or BINGOs as well as many state and country governments.

The process is as follows: identify what about our project area is important to us (targets); determine how its doing (viability); say what’s wrong with it (threats); look for causal relationships for threats (situation analysis); determine where to act and what specifically to do to have an impact (objectives) and review our results (measure success).

Letter From the President



Local news has recently reported on an active Cardinal project. We are working to purchase 89 acres of the remaining 108 acres of the Grailville property in Loveland utilizing a State of Ohio Clean Ohio Conservation Fund grant. The other 19 acres will be purchased using an alternative funding source.

This property is adjacent to 100 former Grailville acres previously purchased by Clermont County Parks. The majority of the land will be restored to native habitat with trails open to the public. In addition, Clermont Parks will be able to access the Cardinal land for environmental education programming. Cardinal intends to move its headquarters to the property utilizing some of the buildings for offices. Loveland City Council has unanimously adopted a resolution of support for Cardinals’ Clean Ohio grant proposal. Support is pending from Miami Township and the Clermont County Commissioners. All three are required for the application to be considered. Stay tuned.

Bill Hopple, Board President

Conservation Targets



Our team decided to focus our conservation efforts on five targets:

Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species – this includes habitat for freshwater mussels, endangered bats, wildflowers, amphibians and birds.

Wetlands – wetlands are the most valuable ecosystem that we can work on. They are the kidneys to our waterways and a home to many at-risk species. We will restore bad ones and protect good ones.

Mature Forests – forests that are climate resilient, climate connected, average over 100 years old, and large enough to make a difference to the plants and animals that reside in them.

Ecologically Sound Agriculture – lands that go over and above the normal call of duty for agricultural land to protect water quality, pollinator habitat and most importantly, put carbon back into the soil.

Urban Open Space – we added urban open space to our mission five years ago and seek to get involved where we can help create protected lands in an urban environment.

It Takes a Village

By Nick Hartley, Facilities Mgr. Bahr Farm

Most people have heard the saying “It takes a village to raise a child”, but did you know that it also takes a village to raise a pole barn? Cardinal staff learned this firsthand this spring when we set out to build a new pole barn on Bahr Farm. It all started innocently enough: we needed a space to store farm equipment and discovered a complete DIY pole barn kit purchased by Mr. Bahr that he never got around to building. The Bahr Farm team, alternating looks at each other and at the unassembled pieces, uttered one of the farm’s mottos “How hard could it be?” and set out to raise the barn to provide a location for our 2023 Annual Meeting. As it turns out, it was incredibly challenging!

With a deadline for completion set as May 21st, we had only a month to complete construction. In total, it took 5 people, 24 days, several tons of gravel, 2.5 cubic yards of concrete, and one lift from a rental company. Thankfully, we realized early in the beginning our farm staff of three needed help, which came swiftly in the form of two very dedicated volunteers. With only a few days to spare, construction was completed on May 18th. Exhausted and relieved the work was done we got to use another Bahr Farm motto “If it was easy everyone would do it”. Kevin Kiley and Richard Hiatt volunteered at least 100 collective hours of their time and talents to assist in this major undertaking. I can say with confidence, it would not have been possible to complete this project without their help. Volunteers make things happen!



Dale Bahr supervises the construction of the new pole barn at Bahr Farm. This photo was taken roughly 10 days before the project was completed.



Large haying equipment parked under the new pole barn at Bahr Farm. Pictured: tractor, hay rake, hay baler, and rotary cutter. The pole barn also was able to hold almost 50 people at this year’s Annual Meeting.

Farm Relics Inspire Storytelling

By Mark Besserman, Stewardship Director

Since the Bahr Farm is over 220 years old, and it sits on a very busy stretch of North Bend Rd, it’s common to come across mysterious objects. We sometimes enjoy putting together a story of what might have happened to explain the mysterious object. We hope you enjoy this **fictional** story – any resemblance to actual people or events is purely coincidental! While the story is fictional, the ring is real – found along North Bend Rd while picking up litter. Cont... The Story of the Lost Championship Ring

Soaring Support for Eagle Cam

By Lauren Stanula, Development Manager

The cost of operating the Eagle Cam that captures the life of Bonnie and Clyde and their eaglets runs approximately \$6,000.00 annually. With droves of dedicated viewers, I wondered if any of Bonnie and Clyde's fans would be willing to help us cover this cost to keep the Eagle Cam live and accessible to the public. In February we began asking members and followers to consider becoming an Eagle Cam sponsor (Cam Keeper). Since then, Cam Keepers have collectively raised nearly \$9,000.00 to cover the cost of streaming, equipment, maintenance, and preserve upkeep. Cam Keepers also gave us the names Obi, Ann, and Amelia. We can't say 'thank you' enough for the outpouring of support that these kind followers have provided!

The Eagle Cam is officially offline for the rest of 2023, but you can still catch a glimpse of the eagles by visiting Bortz Family Nature Preserve. We plan to start streaming again in early January 2024 and cannot wait to watch what happens in the nest with you! If you enjoy the Eagle Cam, please consider becoming a Cam Keeper and help us continue to provide an up-close and personal experience with the eagles who call Bortz Family Nature Preserve home. To become a Cam Keeper, visit the Eagle Cam page on our website and click "Donate to Eagles Fund".



June 11th: Bonnie, Clyde, Obi, Ann, and Amelia reunite in the nest a few days after the fledging of Obi and Ann. Obi was knocked from the nest and successfully fledged from the ground on June 7th. Ann fledged from the nest on June 8th. Amelia successfully fledged a few days later during a period of lost streaming.



Connect with Cardinal!

Website

www.cardinalandconservancy.org

Facebook

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Coalition of Ohio Land
Trusts (COLT):
www.ohiolandtrusts.org

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Cardinal's Mission

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



Cardinal
LAND CONSERVANCY

www.CardinalLandConservancy.org

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

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

Reaccreditation Announcement

In 2019 Cardinal Land Conservancy completed a rigorous accreditation process through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. The Commission conducts an extensive review of each applicant's operations and practices to ensure the organization not only meets the foundational requirements of a land trust but exceeds at a higher ethical standard.

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet and exceed high national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. Since inception, Cardinal has strived to provide this high standard of conservation practices to the Southwest Ohio community.

Cardinal is pleased to announce it is applying for renewal of accreditation. A public comment period is now open. Can you help us on our reaccreditation journey?

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Cardinal complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust.

For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>. To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments, 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on Cardinal's application will be most useful by September 30, 2023.



Welcome New Staff Members!



Jack Stenger

Jack Stenger joins Cardinal Land Conservancy as Land Manager. Jack is a biologist with a background in natural areas management, a wide variety of environmental survey work, and outdoor education. He has a B.A. in Zoology from Ohio Wesleyan University and completed graduate work in Biology at the University of Cincinnati. He has worked in the private, non-profit, and public sectors of conservation, most recently as a Conservation Biologist at Great Parks of Hamilton County. Jack serves on the Board of Directors for another local land trust -Oxbow, Inc. Jack is a bird expert and a naturalist fascinated by all aspects of our region's natural history. He hopes to bring this passion to Cardinal's mission to protect land in southwest Ohio.

Owen joins Cardinal as Stewardship Manager. Born and raised in Cincinnati, Owen is a lifelong student of our local habitats. Owen's passions live at the intersection of community and applied ecology. Before joining Cardinal, Owen worked for local non-profit organization Groundwork ORV, as Crew Leader for their "Green Corps" young-adult workforce development program. He has also worked at Cincinnati Parks with their dedicated Conservation & Land Management team. Through these opportunities Owen has accrued a variety of skills through working in volunteer engagement, light construction, urban agriculture, youth nature education, trail building, and ecological restoration. Getting to apply the skills he's developed along the way for Cardinal is "a dream come true!"



Owen Hunter-Linville

Cardinal Summer Interns!



My name is **Jack Ackermann** and this is my second summer working for Cardinal on the Bahr Farm. I am currently a junior attending the University of Cincinnati majoring in Sports Administration. I love working for Cardinal because of the great work they do for land around Southwest Ohio. I have enjoyed learning about what it takes to maintain pastures and rotational grazing for cattle.



My name is **Alex Hannah**, I am currently a junior at Otterbein University majoring in Finance, along with a minor in Sports Management. I have lived in Milford my whole life, and previously worked with Valley View Nature Preserve, which is how I learned about Cardinal. So far, I have learned about the different aspects of land trusts and land acquisition, in addition to experiencing a warm welcome to the family environment here at Cardinal.



My Name is **Lucas Hardoerfer**, I am a sophomore at the University of Montana studying Environmental Science & Sustainability. I grew up in Milford and heard about Cardinal while working with Milford Schools foodbank, Feed Our Flock. I'm incredibly excited about the work I'm doing here and eager to learn. I've already been exposed to new perspectives in land management and stewardship. I've also had the opportunity to learn about how nonprofits work and function effectively.

The Story of the Lost Championship Ring

Monday, June 12, 2023, Cincinnati, OH: Local farmer Steve uncovered a long-missing Championship Ring earlier today at the Bahr Farm and brought it to my attention, hoping I could explain the history of The Lost Ring. It turns out I was familiar with the story, having moved to the area shortly before the events leading to its disappearance. Following an investigation that included searches of local newspaper stories, review of Hamilton County court records, and interviews with witnesses, I was able to recreate the series of events leading to the loss of the ring.

Police reports from the time confirm the ring disappeared during the awards ceremony of the 1997 Southwest Ohio Farm Bureau Tractor Agility Championship. Throughout the summer of 1997 a series of preliminary tractor competitions took place across several different locations in SW Ohio to determine the finalists for the Championship event to be held at the Bahr Farm on August 11, 1997. Tension was building during these preliminary events, clearly showing a group of farmers favoring green tractors and another equally enthusiastic group favoring red tractors. The two finalists were Farmer Nick from Wilmington and Farmer Mark from Cincinnati. Farmer Nick was one of the “Green Team” favorites, driving his John Deere 2400. Farmer Mark represented the “Red Team”, driving his Farmall H. Approximately 1916 people attended the event, leading to major parking and traffic congestion issues along North Bend Rd. While the event was very crowded, it is fondly remembered as the last time average traffic speed was actually below the 35 MPH posted speed limit.

The final competition consisted of a tractor agility test, where the farmers were competing side-by-side. They needed to weave their tractor through a series of hay bales, pick up a 55-gallon open-top drum full of water, return the drum to the starting location spilling as little water as possible, then return through the course to pick up a bale of hay and place it on top of the drum of water, where it needed to remain unaided for at least 10 seconds. The winner was determined through a complicated set of criteria including time to complete the course, amount of spilled water, amount of lost hay, and the quality of trash-talking about the other competitor’s tractor. Unfortunately, this complicated method of determining the winner is what ultimately led to the loss of the ring.

Farmer Nick got off to a fast start and was heard screaming “Eat dirt, Mark – greenies forever!” He quickly threaded his way through the hay bales and picked up his designated drum of water. Farmer Mark was close behind and being slightly quicker to pick up his drum of water, shouted back “Reds rule,

everyone knows greens are stuck in the ground!” Witnesses claimed to see quite a bit of water sloshing out of both drums as they were returned, with most impartial viewers feeling Farmer Mark held a slight edge at this point in the competition. On the return trip to pick up the bale of hay, Farmer Nick was able to make up enough time to place his bale of hay on the water drum just seconds ahead of Farmer Mark. Unfortunately, his bale of hay fell off of the water drum just as the judge was completing the required 10-second count. Some witnesses (typically wearing red) claimed the bale clearly fell off early. Many others (typically wearing green) were equally adamant that Farmer Mark lost too much of his hay bale as it was returned to the water drum.

Given the high stakes of the event, and tension seen during the preliminary events, local police were present to maintain



calm. They quickly stepped in, separating the Reds and the Greens, giving the judges time to determine the Champion. After a rather lengthy period of clearly heated-debate, an announcement was made for the contestants and audience to gather for the awards ceremony. However, as the judges approached the awards table, where the Championship Ring was located, an orange Kubota tractor, driven by Farmer Andy, came crashing through as he shouted “Orange you going to give me a chance? Red and green are the past, orange is the fu-

ture!” Chaos ensued, and riot police were called in to restore order. Thankfully there were no major injuries. Unfortunately, when Farmer Andy crashed into the awards table, the Championship Ring flew up into the air and was never found. Rumors swirled through the farming community for many years that one of the many injured farmers seen crawling along the ground after the crash had secretly found the Lost Ring. None were really injured – they were searching for the ring instead. In the years that followed, there were even stories of secret meetings and ceremonies held where new farmers would wear The Lost Ring and pledge their eternal loyalty to red, or green, or orange. However, since The Lost Ring was found by Farmer Steve only 50 ft from the location of the awards table, it looks like those stories were just that – stories told to pass the time between fall and spring, sowing and reaping, rain and sunshine, and that weird time following the Super Bowl, but before the Reds Opening Day Parade.

Only one question remains: **who should be awarded The Lost Championship Ring?**

Like this story? Want to tell one of your own? Every second Saturday there is an open volunteer day at Bahr Farm from 10am-12pm. Come join us and maybe you will find your very own farm treasure.