

A Tribute to Clare Johnson



1936-2023

A founding member of Cardinal Land Conservancy, Clare's passion for nature coupled with her skills in public relations, writing, editing, and graphic design introduced Cardinal's mission to hundreds of people. In addition to her other contributions over the years, Clare helped design and publish Cardinal's newsletter, sharing news of what your support has helped us accomplish. Her memory will live on through our conservation work.



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7 counties of Southwest Ohio:**

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The Honeysuckle is Gone...Now What?

By Owen Hunter-Linville, *Stewardship Manager*

Conservationists often fall into an ecological trap and learn an important lesson the hard way: simply removing invasives isn't enough to restore habitat. In fact, removal of these alien plants without a plan to ensure that native plants flourish in their absence leads to even worse invasive species problems down the road. The reasons for this are found in two core concepts: 1) invasive flora is typically better adapted to take advantage of environmental disturbance than native flora, and 2) Nature hates bare soil.

Most practitioners have experienced this firsthand; cutting down a jungle of honeysuckle only for other invasive plants to sprout up in its stead. To avoid this, Cardinal does not cut invasive-dominated areas unless we have the time and resources to continually manage that area. This prevents the emergence of secondary invasives and ensures that native plants are reintroduced to the area as soon as possible. By minimizing the amount of time the land is bare, you can maximize the success of invasive species removal projects. You can see these practices at any of our public preserves.



Porcelain berry is another common invasive and easily spread by animals who eat their berries. This vining plant can choke out natives if unmanaged.



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It's Finally Time to Share the News!

By Andy Dickerson, *Executive Director*

For most of this year, we have been working on pulling together a deal to purchase part of the property in Loveland owned by The Grail, known as Grailville. The Clermont County Park District has purchased 114 acres from The Grail south of O'Bannonville Road. However, there are still 109 acres that The Grail needs to sell and developers have been doing their best to divide it up into a few hundred lots with houses and apartments. We worked diligently with The Grail to get a memorandum of understanding and then a purchase agreement to acquire the 109 acre parcel and try to make it one of the premier, high quality nature preserves in the region.

Partnering with The Grail, Clermont County Park District and the City of Loveland we researched, planned, and dreamed to pull together a grant application for the Clean Ohio Greenspace Conservation Fund.



On September 28th, the Natural Resources Assistance Council voted in favor of our funding request. Once we finalize the closing agreement, Grailville will be protected in perpetuity. The project is a huge opportunity for us and the community. We hope to fix up several of the buildings and move our offices on site.

Additionally, we hope to open the buildings to the community for uses that we will create with them. On the land, we will remove invasive species, restore native prairie, and plant trees associated with native hardwood forest historically found here.

A first of its kind “sound garden” (created with native plant species) will be introduced to attract a wide variety of native insects whose “songs” can be enjoyed throughout the warm season. We will work with the Park District to join our trails together as well as the City of Loveland to extend a spur of the Little Miami Scenic Trail up to our front door.

Best of all, we are partnering with local healthcare providers to “prescribe” nature as a treatment for some of the mental health challenges that many struggle with on a daily basis.

This is by no means a “done deal”. However, with hard work, community support, planning and a little luck, we could be on track to have a huge impact on local green space and human health. Thank you for all your kind words and support during this process!

VISIT www.CardinalLandConservancy.org

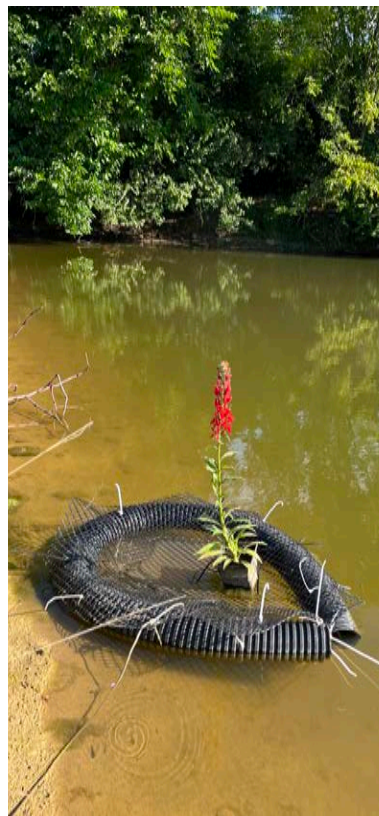
Floating Wetlands

By Nick Hartley, *Facilities Manager*

Restoring the pond at Bahr Farm was one of the first projects Cardinal took on when we gained ownership of the property. The pond is an important ecological site that provides a picturesque location for fishing or birdwatching and a rich habitat for wildlife. The most important factor in maintaining the health of this environment is ensuring good water quality. Because of the pond's proximity to the cattle pastures and attractiveness to geese, nitrogen and phosphorous nutrient pollution from runoff after heavy rains reduces the pond's water quality. We had to come up with a creative way to maintain good water quality to support the plants and (non-geese) animals that rely on the pond habitat. With the help of a local high school student, we developed an innovative solution: a "floating wetland".



Utilizing select plant species such as swamp milkweed, blue flag iris and black willow along the edges, these structures are floating plant platforms that remove excess nitrogen and phosphorous directly from the water. They have also provided safe spaces for minnows and frog eggs. The project has been a great success in combining ecology and community engagement to improve water quality and biodiversity.



Spotted: Lanternfly

By Lauren Stanula, *Development Manager*

It's tiny, it's beautiful, it's bad news. The spotted lanternfly (SLF), has taken up residence at Cardinal's Winton Preserve in Hamilton County. This is the only Cardinal preserve where our staff has confirmed sightings, but it could potentially be present at other preserves we manage. SLF tend to favor Tree of Heaven (also highly invasive) as a host plant and pose a significant risk to native tree species such as maple, oak, and sycamore. Member and volunteer support is always crucial to Cardinal's mission, this new threat highlights why Cardinal's work is so vital. To join the fight: donate to help us stock up on invasive removal equipment, volunteer to remove Tree of Heaven and other invasive plants on Cardinal properties, and make sure to squish SLF when you see them!



Protecting Vital Habitat

By Jack Stenger, *Land Manager*

Cardinal is close to acquiring a new nature preserve in Clermont County, adjacent to East Fork Lake State Park. The 67-acre property will protect 10-acres of high-quality wetlands and is bisected by a perennial stream. In the 1960s the property was developed as a goldfish hatchery but was soon abandoned and has been left largely undisturbed for 60 years.

A wetland delineation of the property identified 36 interconnected wetlands, which create a wide variety of habitats for wetland plants and wildlife. Wood Ducks and Prothonotary Warblers breed on the property, and we expect next spring will reveal it to be an important breeding area for many species of amphibian such as Spotted Salamander, Jefferson's Salamander, and Wood Frog. Once acquired, Cardinal plans to manage the property as a publicly accessible nature preserve.



President's Letter

By Bill Hopple, *Board President*

Cardinal's services to protect land in our region continue to be in high demand! We currently have 30 projects in progress totaling 3,000 acres of land.



To ensure protection in perpetuity, we require each project to include contributions to both our Land Stewardship Fund and our Legal Defense Fund in keeping with Land Trust Alliance (LTA) best practice. The Stewardship Fund is invested according to our Investment Policy Statement to provide income to our operating budget. We withdraw 4 % of the Fund's

market value each year to fund the costs of managing and monitoring our properties.

The Legal Defense Fund is set aside to be used for any legal costs which may arise from a threat to our lands. Our exposure is limited to a deductible on our insurance policy through the Terra Ferma insurance company, a subsidiary of LTA. But, to respond, we are dependent on additional operating income. Although we have a small Operating

Endowment, membership dues, contributions, and foundation grants are required to fund new land acquisition and educate the public about land protection.

Your support is critical to our success. Every project is possible because of your commitment to the conservation of the land you love. Please be as generous as you can when you receive our fall appeal! Thank you!

Connect with Cardinal!

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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.