



Monthly workdays will resume at Bahr Farm the second Saturday in March. Other volunteer opportunities will be announced through email and social media.

Cardinal Projects Closed in 2023 and Closing in 2024

Completed in 2023

209 acre Agricultural Easement in Highland County of through Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)

Pending for close early 2024

5 Preserves (283.3 acres)

109 acres from The Grail in Loveland

66 acre East Fork Wetland adjacent to East Fork State Park - CLOSED 1/11/24!

15 acre Denier Wetland in Colerain Township

2 acres to be added to Westmark Woods in Hamilton County

91.3 acre Life Estate in Clermont County



Cardinal
LAND CONSERVANCY

www.CardinalLandConservancy.org

790 Garfield Ave., Milford OH 45150

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

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

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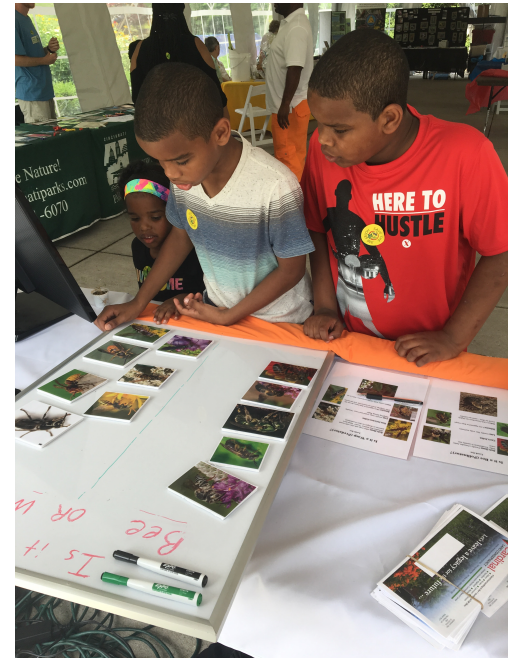
Cardinal's Future: Engaging Local Communities

By Andy Dickerson, *Executive Director*

In the vibrant landscape of the tri-state region, community engagement plays a crucial role in the success of Cardinal Land Conservancy, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for preserving the region's natural heritage and working lands. We rely on strong community ties to ensure the sustainable management and conservation of these valuable local landscapes that we all love.

One way we hope to engage communities in 2024 is through educational initiatives. By organizing volunteer workdays, nature walks, and public talks, we hope to raise awareness about the importance of conservation, ecological diversity, and sustainable land use. These opportunities are a powerful tool for community engagement. Inviting residents to actively participate in education and conservation projects, such as trail maintenance, habitat restoration, or tree planting, creates a sense of ownership and pride among community members. These hands-on experiences not only contribute to the physical improvement of the environment but also strengthen the social fabric of the community. Community engagement is the heartbeat of successful land conservation.

Through education, collaboration, and active participation, Cardinal hopes to weave a tapestry of shared responsibility, ensuring that the region's natural treasures remain preserved for future generations to enjoy. Furthermore, involving local communities in the decision-making process is vital. Collaborative efforts between Cardinal and residents can lead to innovative solutions for preserving open spaces while meeting the evolving needs of the community.



Here, some curious visitors learn how decipher bees from wasps at our event table. Some of them are tricky!

Eagle Cam Update

Since we started streaming the nest at the beginning of January, we have captured great footage of Bonnie and Clyde adding new sticks to the nest and even recorded a copulation event (check out our Facebook page for the clip). Early viewers have probably noticed some streaming interruptions due to the cold, grey weather we have been experiencing. Our staff has installed two new solar panels graciously provided by our friends at Sustainergy. We hope to share every moment in the nest with you this year.

Similar to last year, we will be accepting name submissions from Cam Keepers for the 2024 brood. To sponsor the Eagle Cam and submit a name, go to the Eagle Cam page on our website and click "Donate to Eagles Fund". Egg Watch starts in just a few weeks!

VISIT www.CardinalLandConservancy.org

Christmas Bird Count Review: Highlights of Local Preliminary Results

By Jack Stenger, Land Manager

The National Audubon Society’s Christmas Bird Count is the longest running wildlife survey in the country. The first count occurred in 1900, when rising concern about bird population decline inspired birdwatchers to create an annual winter bird survey to replace the then-popular Christmas side hunt.

Within Cardinal’s service area, there are seven Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs). Each CBC consists of a 15-mile diameter circle that is registered with the National Audubon Society. Participants divide the area and count all the birds they can find within their section. At the end of the day, all lists are tallied and the data is submitted to the National Audubon Society, which provides free access to all CBC data on its website. This massive dataset allows biologists to estimate population trends for each species over the past century. This is extremely important for groups like Cardinal that seek to protect habitat for declining bird species.

Preliminary results are in for this season’s local counts. The highest species count was the Western Hamilton County CBC, which recorded 92 species. The Cincinnati CBC had the highest participation with more than 90 people out on count day. Two of the birds seen on the Cincinnati CBC were Bonnie and Clyde, the eagles that nest at Cardinal’s Bortz Family Nature Preserve. They were the only eagles seen in that particular area the day of the CBC though more eagles have been observed in the area by birders and Cardinal's Eagle Cam.



In the 2022 CBC, the total number of circles in the U.S. alone where counts were conducted was 1,998 with 61,560 observers. The Christmas Bird Count extends farther though and includes Canada, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Islands.

Overall species diversity was down on local counts, mostly due to the low numbers of waterbirds which typically move into our region in the winter. It’s been a very mild season, so this has not happened yet. More than one CBC recorded a high count for Hermit Thrushes, which are at the north of their winter range in the Ohio River Valley, and seem to be benefiting from the mild climate.

Perhaps the most unusual species observed this year: 17 Red Crossbills at Winton Woods. These irruptive and nomadic winter finches have only been recorded during 3 of the last 76 years of local CBCs. If you’d like to participate on a CBC next year, contact Jack Stenger: jack@cardinallandconservancy.org

Conservation Service Projects

By Owen Hunter-Linville, Stewardship Manager

Scouting is a formative experience for thousands of young people across the country. Scouts develop a wide variety of skills, self-confidence, and a life-long dedication to conservation. To achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, a prospect must apply all the skills they have learned in the program to lead a team of fellow scouts in a self-guided service project. We recognize that the next generation of environmental leaders is critical to our shared mission – so we always jump at the opportunity to work with Scouts that want to earn Eagle.

In past years, Cardinal has been lucky to be able to collaborate with several Eagle Scouts on projects in CLC’s protected lands. Through these projects Scouts don’t just gain life experience and leadership skills, they also provide much needed amenities for our nature preserves, such as foot bridges, trail infrastructure, benches, habitat for birds and bats, and so much more.

We’re extremely grateful to the scouts that have chosen to work with us for their projects, and we’re always eager to work with any person interested in pursuing a service project in our nature preserves!



An Eagle Scout hopeful and his troop pose together before setting out to install 10 Prothonotary Warbler boxes at Bortz Family Nature Preserve. Prothonotary Warblers prefer to nest along shorelines and love wet, swampy areas.

We have a number of projects at Bahr Farm, Grailville, and our preserves that would be great for an Eagle Scout and welcome any prospects to pitch their own idea. High school seniors looking for service projects and community groups are welcome too!

Scouts or other interested parties should contact Owen@cardinallandconservancy.org



President's Letter

By Bill Hopple, Board President

WOW! Cardinal had an unbelievable year in 2023! Here are the highlights in advance of our Annual Report which does not come out until May. I cannot wait that long to share the news:

- 52% increase in Number of Donors, from 331 in 2022 to 487 in 2023!
- 37% increase in Total Contributions from all sectors for all uses, from \$340,098 to \$466,417! This includes individuals, foundations, corporations, and organizations.
- 26% increase in giving by individuals, from \$169,751 to \$214,612

This tremendous growth in support has made possible equal growth in our work to protect land. We worked on ten projects during the year totaling 1,095.1 acres; one was able to close in 2023, the remainder will close in the early part of 2024. Additionally, we have more exciting projects on the horizon in 2024 that we look forward to sharing with you as they progress.

Clearly, the community believes in Cardinal’s work to protect land in this region! Continued thanks for your generous support!!

Connect with Cardinal!

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Website

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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.

Fueling More Than the Mission



By Lauren Stanula, Development Manager

As Cardinal takes on new projects and our reputation grows, our staff and supporters become more excited about the work we do. Our two most public projects in recent years, the Eagle Cam and Grailville, have showed us just how important our mission is to so many of you. The touching emails about your childhood experiences at Grailville and stories shared over the phone about the time you have spent with your families watching the Eagle Cam truly inspire us in our work.

Each staff member is part of Cardinal because we are passionate about conservation work. But hearing the personal stories of those whose lives have been positively influenced by these lands is a huge part of what keeps our fire burning. Through single digit temps, equipment malfunctions, funding hurdles, etc...our passion does not wain, but your kindness and warm words motivates us even more. We are so deeply appreciative for all your kindness and encouragement. It makes us all that much more passionate about what we do.

Event attendees discuss their shared love of birding and the outdoors with Cardinal staff on a summer hike at Bortz Family Nature Preserve. This was a well attended event with almost 50% of the attendees being newcomers to Cardinal by friends or family through the Eagle Cam. Thank you

Our Engaging Events in 2023

By Nick Hartley, Facilities Manager, Bahr Farm

The work we do at Cardinal Land Conservancy is vital to the health of our environment. What we do feels the most impactful though when we can engage the community in our conservation work firsthand. Be it through hands on work as a volunteer planting trees and clearing invasive species, joining a group hike to see animals that live safely in our preserves, or visiting Bahr Farm for a tour, every opportunity we get to engage with you means the world to us.

In 2023, the events we offered included volunteer workdays at Bahr Farm, guided birdwatching hikes, group preserve visits to look for orchids and wildflowers, and a very fun pumpkin feast for our cattle enjoyed by a crowd of onlookers. Talking with you at these events helps fuel our passion for conservation, and we sincerely hope you feel the same. We would love to hear some ideas from our members, neighbors, and community friends for more fun activities we can do together in 2024. Similarly, we love coming out for events, giving presentations, and sharing our mission with others. Please contact our office with ideas or requests by phone or send and email to: info@cardinallandconservancy.org



The cows on Bahr Farm go bananas for pumpkins! What started as a fun way to feed the girls and divert compostable material from landfills has turned into an annual tradition. Continuing in 2024, the Bahr Farm Pumpkin Feast will take place the Saturday after Thanksgiving. This event will be open to all.