

Newsletter of the Appalachia Ohio Alliance

"Just Say No"With Confidence: Conservation Defense Insurance Update

This article, by Francesca Dalleo, was taken from the Conservation News section of the Land Trust Alliance publication SavingLand.

Steve Goodwin of the Appalachia Ohio Alliance [land trust] says that "nothing is more intimidating than sitting in a farmer's living room and having to deny a request that compromises the conservation easement values." When the farmer threatens legal action to force the issue, "the situation becomes very tense." Appalachia Ohio Alliance has responsibility for 30 conservation easements, including working relationships with dozens of landowners, and ownership of four parcels of land. Clyde Gosnell, board member and past president says that "this has been a serious first seven years with a steep learning curve and legal challenges."

"Our land trust has already learned how potentially vulnerable we are. We have had three new successor owners and four serious stewardship challenges," Gosnell says. "Fortunately we resolved them successfully without legal proceedings. While we do have a defense fund and have recently increased our endowment

reserves, it could be expended with one trial."

Gosnell stresses that the conservation community "must have a collective conservation defense insurance program. We encourage all land trusts to seriously consider enrolling in the Land Trust Alliance proposed program immediately. This is a *one-time opportunity* that we must take advantage of now."

Goodwin says that "guidance from the proposed conservation defense insurance program would help us evaluate and analyze these potential challenges, especially with how far to push back on saying 'no' in ambiguous situations. Being able to talk with someone with much more experience in these situations, as well as knowing what other land trusts around the country do, would give us more confidence. If we could make just one phone call to the program and get this help, it would be fabulous."

Goodwin emphasizes the importance of having a safety net of insurance because:

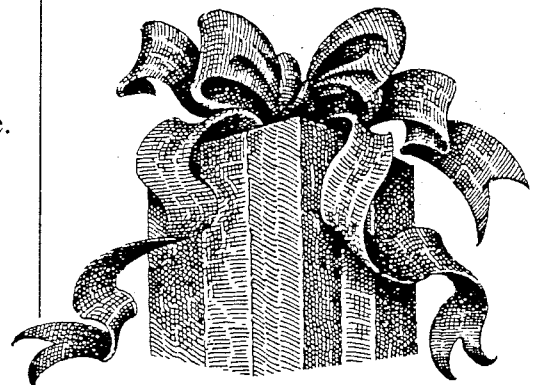
- One big case could bankrupt a land trust, especially a small or young one.
- The insurance will increase land trust confidence in dealing with challenges.
- The collective backing of the land trust community is formidable.
- Help in dealing with new issues is invaluable.
- Landowners will have confidence in the land trust when they learn about

the insurance program.

- The program will provide an important selling point to prospective donors.

Appalachia Ohio Alliance is one of thirty land trusts nationwide that has signed onto this insurance program. The Land Trust Alliance Conservation Defense Director, Leslie Ratley-Beach, applauded AOA's action saying, "Congratulations on your land trust's commitment to participate in the proposed Conservation Defense Insurance Program. Your leadership in ensuring the permanence of your conservation work is an inspiration to all land trusts."

Wishing You a Great Nature New Year



Fall 2009

Crane Hollow Hike

Looking out from the back porch of Crane Hollow Nature Center on a clear fall day, great waves of trees in the early stages of autumn colors blanketed the landscape. Old-field species such as flowering dogwood and winged sumac had already turned brilliant shades of red and maroon. From the vantage point of the ridge top, Crane Hollow was but a wrinkle or crease in that great blanket of trees. A strong, cool breeze blew across the porch as Jane Ann Ellis and Heather Stehle explained the history of this state nature preserve and their goals for its future. Participants in the day's event included students from Ohio University, local residents, AOA consultant Steve Goodwin and Franklin County Metro Parks' John Watts.

The group descended from the porch and into Crane Hollow for an afternoon hike. We followed an old county road, now restored and lined with scarlet oak, eastern hemlock and black cherry. Jane Ann and Heather told of other past scars on the landscape - old trash piles and other careless land management. Where a huge trash pile once lay is now shaded by mature hemlock, black gum and hickory.

Finally dipping down into Crane Hollow itself, hikers fanned out in the creek, turning over rocks in search of salamanders, frogs and crawdads. One person removed a rock to find a dusky salamander staring back up at them. Sluggish from the cool temperatures, everyone was able to get a good look at its pale, peach-colored body and large, insect-eating mouth. John Watts spoke not only about natural

history, but also about the geologic forces that formed places like Crane Hollow - wind and water carving out gorges in the Black Hand sandstone. He also pointed to the marked difference in vegetation between the ridge top where the hike began and the deep, cool, shady hollow where salamanders lurked.

The final part of the hike brought us to a waterfall, only a trickle this time of year, and a large sandstone overhang, characteristic of the Hocking Hills region. Rare bulb ferns grew near the cliff's edge. Red fox tracks dotted through the sand, weaving around the purple-streaked white blossoms of Canada violet.

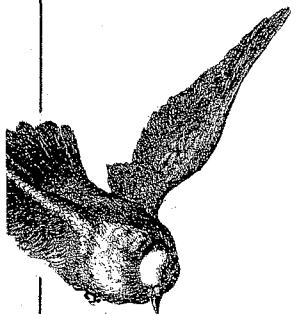
The program ended where it began - the back porch of the nature center that offers a 180-degree view of the land to the east. As everyone was eating lunch below a cloudless blue sky, my gaze again drifted to the wrinkle of Crane Hollow. What appeared to be a simple variation in the landscape only a few hours ago now held much more meaning to me. The many wonders of the hollow become obscured by distance and tree cover, but taking the time to experience what is beneath the surface is incredibly rewarding. While this could be a metaphor for many things in life, I am simply thankful that a group of people had the vision to take a closer look at that wrinkle on the land, and to put in the countless hours of work to ensure its preservation.

Because of the hard work of Crane Hollow, Inc., this preserve serves as a land lab for research, and a tremendous educational tool. It has enriched the lives of a great many people, and I am thankful to be among them.

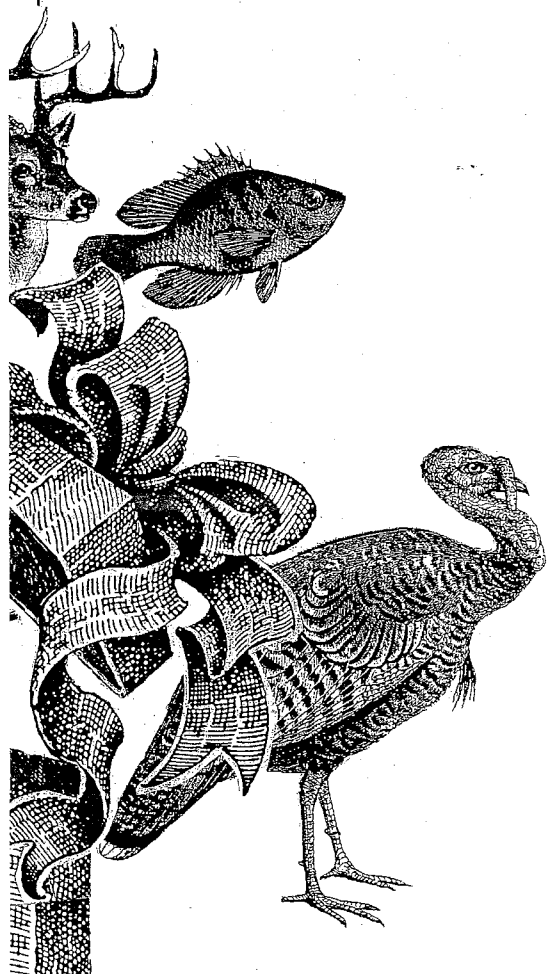
by Joe Brehm

*'Tis the Season
To Be
Conservation
Minded*





Consider Donating a
Conservation Easement
This Year



President's Message

As the year winds to a close, I wish you all a joyous holiday season and a happy new year! I would also like to offer a heartfelt "thank you" to the generous supporters who responded to our end-of-the-year funding appeal. We will continue to strive to use your donations wisely. One way in which we try to stretch your donation dollar is to leverage matching funds for State "green space" grants. For example, Clean Ohio grants require a 25% match. Sometimes the seller will offer a discount price, which counts as an "in-kind" donation. In such cases, however, we will still need funds for appraisals, closing costs, or surveys. One project that is currently "in the works" is a parcel next to Ash Cave that contains beautiful streams, wetlands, and bottomland forest. The property would be vulnerable to the kind of development that would be harmful for the park area. Consequently, both the seller and the State Parks managers are supportive and grateful that we have a Clean Ohio purchase opportunity. We hope to close on that purchase next month, and as AOA financial supporters and volunteers, you can pat yourselves on the back for making it happen. (Watch our web site for news of the event).

Speaking of our web site, make sure to check out our new updated web-page. Many thanks to Kit Goodwin, who managed our web site in the past several years, and to Alan Cohen, who has updated our site and added many new features, pictures, writings, and much more. (Alan has put a lot of time into the web-page in the last couple months!). Make sure to check

often for new developments and events.

Enjoy frosty wonders and remember, the skunk cabbage will be blooming in about a month.

Brian Blair, President

Thanks to Easement Donors

AOA is grateful for the following donations of conservation easements:

* **Case conservation easement** by Denis Case and Rita Apanius on their 72-acres of beautiful forested land in Hocking and Ross Counties adjacent to Tar Hollow State Forest. This heavily forested area and this property is an outstanding example of an Appalachian hardwood forest community with a good assemblage of plant and animal communities that will develop old growth forest characteristics and also protect the forested headwaters of Pike Run in the Salt Creek watershed.

* **Kleinmaier Rhododendron Hollow State Nature Preserve** by the heirs of Bertram and Josephine Kleinmaier on 32 acres in Fairfield County. Angie Tornes, one of ten grandchildren the land was in a trust for, guided this property into being a dedicated state nature preserve, managed by AOA. While access is restricted, the property contains an outstanding population of the state-listed rare plant species *Rhododendron maximum* as well as a beautiful forest community with many wildflowers and sandstone outcrops.

* **Joyce Property** by Rosemary and John Joyce for their addition of 6.44 acres to the existing 334 acre conservation easement. This easement amendment helps to protect other

forested land in Hocking County. The original easement was donated by the the Joyces to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and is now managed by AOA. This additional easement will maintain the 6.44 acres as open space, prevent further development and enhance the conservation value of the adjacent 334 acre easement while protecting additional stream habitat and hemlock forest. The Joyce property has been recognized by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for its spectacular Blackhand Sandstone gorge with numerous cliffs, waterfalls, rock shelters and ledges, in addition to its impressive forest cover of large eastern hemlocks, black birches and associated Appalachian vegetation.

Appalachia Ohio Alliance 2010 Calender of Events

-January 11, 2010, Learn How to Protect Your Family Land

Come learn the ins and outs of preserving your land for the future. A consortium of organizations and government entities presents this regional education initiative which includes a keynote speaker, land-owner testimonials, education sessions and more. Education sessions include information about land trusts; tax incentives, estate planning and easement appraisals; and the importance of land preservation. This seminar will be held at Sheridan High School, 8725 Sheridan Road, Thornville, OH., from 6:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. For more information and to reserve your seat call the Perry County O.S.U. Extension at 740 743-1602.

Leave a Legacy of Beauty

If you are interested in leaving a legacy of natural beauty for future generations, plan now for 2010 taxes through a conservation easement. Please contact Steve Goodwin, program consultant at 740-967-2737 or any representative of Appalachia Ohio Alliance.

Appalachia Ohio Alliance

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*Preserving Family Lands
Today for Tomorrow*

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