

Conservator

THE NEWSLETTER OF CITIZENS' LAND CONSERVANCY OF HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO, INC. / JULY 2000

You're invited! CLC quarterly program Mon., July 10 at 7 p.m. features a Guided Tour of Shaker Trace Seed Nursery & Wetlands

Join us Mon., July 10th at Miami Whitewater Forest's Visitor Center for CLC's quarterly program. It starts at 7 p.m. in the air-conditioned Meeting Room.

We promise an exciting evening that highlights the Hamilton County Park District's year-round land stewardship practices.

As guests of the Park District, we will be treated to a program designed especially for us by John Klein of the Land Management staff.

Starting off with a slide presentation, we'll learn how the Park District preserves and protects the land's natural resources, and what special methods are used.

Then we'll travel to nearby Shaker Trace Seed Nursery, established in 1992, which is only occasionally open to the public. At this 20-acre site, the Park District grows wildflowers and prairie grasses native to southwestern Ohio, collects the seeds, then reintroduces the plants into the park system. We'll get a close up look at beds of 150 species planted there—many will be in full bloom! We'll learn how the seeds are harvested, processed, stored, grown and replanted.

Next, a visit to the Shaker Trace Wetlands, reborn in 1991, will show us how the land looked in the 1790s. Located adjacent to the seed nursery, this restoration



PHOTO: Land Manager John Klein checks out the Butterfly Weed in the forb beds at Shaker Trace Seed Nursery.

Did you know that 80%—more than 11,000 acres—of the Hamilton County Park District's 13,854 acres are maintained as natural habitat!

Ecosystems thriving within the parks include old growth forests, young woodlands, restored prairies & wetlands.

effort preserves more than 130 acres as wetland and native prairie habitat. We'll find out the many benefits wetlands provide, and why it is important to preserve this ecosystem.

DIRECTIONS to Miami Whitewater Forest's Visitor Center:

From I-74 take Exit #3 (Dry Fork Rd.). Follow Dry Fork Rd. to R on Mt. Hope Rd., to R into Visitor Center's parking area. A Motor Vehicle Permit will be necessary: \$1 (Daily) or \$3 (Annual, includes \$3 in discount coupons.)

Update on CLC Efforts to Preserve Land

During the past three months, CLC Board members have consulted with landowners in Colerain and Green townships on the West side, and an East side landowner in Madeira. These property owners had contacted CLC for help in designing a conservation plan for their land.

Landowners explore CEs

During meetings with the landowners, CLC explained how the donation of a "conservation easement" (CE) can protect their land from unwanted future development. And, how they can continue to live on the land and use it, and can sell it, or pass it on to their heirs.

We also explained that the donation of a CE to a land trust may result in an income tax deduction. It also may result in reduced property and estate taxes.

Drafting our first CE!

At this date, CLC is working with a landowner to draft our first CE. This is a multistep process that reflects the preservation wishes of the landowner and determines the language of the CE.

Baseline Survey completed

CLC's Land Committee has completed a Baseline Survey of this property to determine the land's conservation values. (The survey includes a written environmental assessment of

the property, photographs, and topographical and aerial maps. It will be archived by CLC.)

Landowner arranges for Appraisal

In addition, the landowner has contracted for an appraisal of the property to determine two evaluations: one showing *full development value*, and the other *after the CE limits development*.

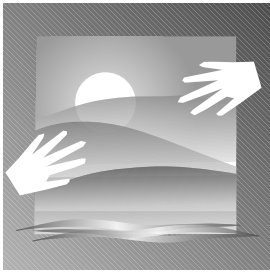
The difference between the two evaluations is the *value of the donation* to CLC.

Final steps in the process

Both the landowner and CLC will consult with their respective attorneys to refine the CE document. After the CE is signed and notarized, it will be filed with the Hamilton County Recorder to become part of the property's title in perpetuity. Future owners of the property will be bound by its terms.

Looking ahead to success

Looking forward to accepting our first CE, CLC will celebrate the preservation of a beautiful piece of land in a rapidly developing area. And, the family that donates the CE will enjoy the satisfaction that preserving this land will forever benefit its present and future owners—and the neighbors and community that surrounds it.



CITIZENS' LAND CONSERVANCY

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Love the land?

Don't miss CLC's program
held at Miami Whitewater Forest
Monday, July 10 at 7 PM

Land Trusts—the Front Guards of Land Protection

What is a land trust?

Land trusts are nonprofit organizations that work hand-in-hand with landowners to preserve land for present and future generations.

Land trusts use a variety of land protection tools—including the CONSERVATION EASEMENT—to permanently restrict the uses of the land. In addition, land trusts accept land donations, and also purchase land.

Why do we need them?

America's open spaces, greenspaces and farmland are increasingly threatened by sprawl and development.

Local, regional and national land trusts, often staffed by volunteers or just a few employees, are helping communities save America's land heritage.

What kind of lands do they protect?

Land trusts protect lands of all kinds in urban and rural areas—open space, aquifer/ground water resources, hillsides, wetlands, natural habitat, farms, ranches, shorelines, forests, scenic vistas, watersheds and historical, archaeological and recreational areas—land of every size and type that has conservation, historic, scenic or other value.

More than 4.7 million acres of land have been protected by local and regional land trusts, according to the LAND TRUST ALLIANCE, the national umbrella organization for land trusts.

A Letter from CLC's President

Hamilton County Parks will celebrate its 70th anniversary in July. *What a class act. If the Park District were in the movie industry, it would be getting a Lifetime Achievement Award for seven decades of outstanding service to the public.*

The Park District is a sterling example of our tax dollars put to good work—protecting many thousands of acres of Hamilton County's environment in nature preserves and parks, and providing quality outdoor and educational experiences for residents of all ages.

In addition, the Park District provides a safe haven for many plant and wildlife species by maintaining wildlife and natural habitats. (Find out all about the Park District's 70th anniversary activities in Evergreen, the supplement recently distributed in the Sunday Enquirer, or pick one up at a park facility.)

Protecting farmland from development

In 1991, the Park District employed the use of "conservation easements" (CEs) to preserve land adjacent to Shawnee Lookout in Miami Township—land that might otherwise be developed. The Park District protects over 900 acres of wetlands that remain in private ownership (700 are farmed), along with 300 acres of Oxbow wetlands.

In an agreement with the farmers, the Park District purchased their land's "development rights value." The farmers received compensation for this value, which provided them with capital. This is a win-win situation! The farmer continues to own his land, and could invest the windfall in a 401k plan, purchase new equipment, pay off debt, or use it any way he pleases. The farmer continues to farm the land, earning his usual income. Or he could sell the property, or pass it along to his heirs. At the same time, the CE is held in the public trust by the Park District, and the farmland is protected from development in perpetuity.

Keep up the good work!

Citizens' Land Conservancy applauds the conservation, nature education and outdoor recreation policies of the Hamilton County Park District—and the work of its dedicated staff. It is truly one of the nation's leading regional park systems.

—Roland Johnson, President, CLC Board of Trustees

When did land trusts begin?

The first land trust was founded more than 100 years ago in New England. The first American conservation easement, which permanently limits development of land, was written in the late 1880s to protect parkways in and around Boston.

How many land trusts are there?

There are currently more than 1200 land trusts in America—63 percent more than in 1988. More than one million individuals are members and financial supporters of land trusts. In the Greater Cincinnati area, there are five active land trusts working to preserve land. In Ohio, there are more than 50 land trusts. In addition, national conservation organizations have chapters in Ohio: The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, and Ducks Unlimited.

CITIZENS' LAND CONSERVANCY OF HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO, INC.

is a nonprofit, member-supported land trust, founded in 1999 to help families preserve their lands. Also, CLC educates the public about how land conservation protects the quality of life in a community.

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