



# Cardinal

LAND CONSERVANCY

Presentation by  
Laura Curliss, President

## Stepping Up the Pace and Quality of Land Preservation in Southwest Ohio



### Connecting to Place: Why do you love living in southwest Ohio?

- Please take a minute to think about why you love living in southwest Ohio, focusing on place.
- What do you love about the environment around you?
- How would your constituents answer that question?



### What we love: Rural way of life, scenic beauty and proximity to local food



### Clean water, clean air, open spaces for scenic beauty



### Enjoyment of nature – nearby – in our own backyards!



## Outdoor experiences



## What's at stake?

- **ENJOYMENT:** Outdoor recreation is part of enjoying life, health benefits; Scenic beauty where we live – our lands, waterways, forests and night skies
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Business location is driven, partly, by quality of life (e.g., sunbelt, mountain/ocean state phenomenon). Why move to Ohio? Ohio's outdoor strengths – Northern/eastern temperate forest, stream corridors, trails (paved and natural).
- **PROPERTY VALUE:** Property values are enhanced by open space preservation + tax base advantages (cost of community services studies)
- **FOOD:** Preserving farmland and a rural way of life is a top concern of citizens; Ag is Ohio's #1 business; Locally grown food
- **HEALTH:** Clean water, clean air are top concerns; importance of exercise, de-stressing and socializing; Better cognitive and emotional development for children.

## The Challenges

- Population growth – The U.S. is expected to add 100 million people in the next 50 years
- The pace of land conversion and land conversion without adequate planning to preserve *valued* and *valuable* natural resources - prime soils and forests, hillsides, riparian areas, trail corridors, scenic vistas and other open spaces near where people live;
- Food security near population centers.
- Providing outdoor experiences within 10-15 minutes of where people live.

## Part of the solution: Land Trusts

- Land trusts are non-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable corporations operating as "qualified conservation organizations" per I.R.C. 170(h)
- **LTs protect and preserve land by holding:**
  - Land in fee simple
  - Conservation & Agricultural easements
- LTs are partner with landowners, federal, state and local governments and other non-profits to implement land preservation goals
- First one in 1891 in Massachusetts.
- Now over 1,700 land trusts in the U.S.
  - > 100,000 volunteers; over 5 million members
  - > 37 million acres preserved in U.S.

## Land trusts preserve land forever

- Land trusts help landowners protect their property with conservation easements or fee simple transactions;
- LTs help landowners to leave a legacy
- LTs help landowners access available grant funds and tax deductions
- LTs enable land preservation on private land without public access (if desired)
- LTs help achieve community land preservation goals
- LTs have access to resources to preserve land in perpetuity



## Types of Land Preserved

Agricultural lands



Significant Natural Habitat



## Types of Land Preserved

Riparian Areas



Scenic Vistas/Public Recreation



## Cardinal Land Conservancy

- Formed by the merger of three (3) all-volunteer land trusts
- To increase capacity with professional staff
- To serve un/under served areas in seven (7) counties in southwest Ohio.
- Strategic partner – Cincinnati Nature Center



## Our Service Area



Southwest Ohio, Seven County Region

## Our Mission

To preserve natural habitats, waterways, and productive lands we love in southwest Ohio by working with individuals, families and communities.



## Land Trusts in southwest Ohio

- Little Miami Conservancy
- The Nature Conservancy
- Hillside Trust
- Oxbow, Inc.
- Western Wildlife Corridor, Inc.
- Tecumseh Land Trust
- Three Valley Conservation Trust
- **Cardinal Land Conservancy**



## What is a Conservation Easement?

- A voluntary, legally binding and recorded agreement
- Between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization
- Restricts development to protect significant natural resources or productive values;
- In perpetuity
- Monitored annually, implemented and enforced by a qualified conservation organization, including with conservation defense insurance available only to land trusts



**Cardinal Land Conservancy  
Making a difference**

- Cardinal has already preserved or is under contract to preserve almost 4500 acres of private land in southwest Ohio and is assisting in many more land-saving transactions;
- Cardinal is assisting public entities with preserving land for public use (green infrastructure, parks or park buffers), for the public's benefit (private ag lands, stormwater pathways, wetlands), or for public access projects (e.g., trail corridors, passive recreation areas)



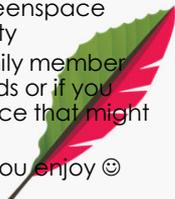
**Cardinal Land Conservancy  
Making a difference**

- Cardinal will review and respond to community planning and stated needs for land preservation.
- Cardinal will increase the pace of preservation with access to grant funding, private contributions for land-saving projects and with the enhanced tax incentives for donations of conservation easements (passed Dec. 2015)
- Cardinal will increase the quality of conservation transactions by using the Land Trust Alliance Standards & Practices, by providing professional advice and resources, and by using TerraFirma Conservation Defense Insurance (available only to land trusts).



**What you can do to save land!**

- Join one or more land trusts in southwest Ohio
- Participate in local planning processes
- Talk to your neighbors and representatives about the importance of greenspaces
- Advocate and vote for more greenspace funding, making it a public priority
- Call the land trust if you or a family member would like to preserve family lands or if you know of a high quality open space that might be appropriate for preservation
- Get outdoors! You value what you enjoy ☺



**Your vision...**

**Your thoughts...**

**Your questions...**



**Let's talk!  
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**My vision for land preservation  
in southwest Ohio**

Please leave this with the presenter. Cardinal Land Conservancy, Inc.'s Board will consider your input in creating a vision statement. If you would like to participate in our visioning process, please provide your contact info at the bottom of the page. We will get in touch with you when we start our visioning process.

My vision for greenspace preservation in southwest Ohio is:

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OPTIONAL: Name, tel., email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thanks to our funders and supporters, and strategic partners**

