

Philander Chase Conservancy

2020 – 2021 Year in Review



Lessons from a Crow

Nature's Lessons Come in Many Forms

If you know bird behavior at all, you know that the crow has a unique ability to adapt to its environment. Species that are able to adapt and alter behaviors are most likely to survive, and the crow is a patient and masterful problem solver.

Did you know that crows learned how to use cars to crush the shells of nuts? They couldn't crack them with their beaks, but by observing traffic, they learned to drop the nuts in front of cars stopped at traffic lights. The cars crushed the shells, and the crows waited for the cars to pass before retrieving their meal.

The Ohio Bird Sanctuary recently wrote about crows and their abilities and offered the following lessons we can learn from crows:

1. Don't panic. Take time to study what is happening.
2. Inventory your primary needs and focus on them. Can you get them from another source?
3. What changes are you capable of making? How can you benefit from the changes?
4. Learn from the process and build on your strengths.
5. If needed, make allies and reach out to friends and neighbors for assistance.

Study What is Happening

For the past year, Philander Chase Conservancy has practiced lessons from the crow. We used our 20th anniversary year to think about the past 20 years and our next 20 years with regard to what we need to do to respond to challenges and opportunities.

Fortunately, panic was not an issue. Thanks to a strong base of support from both donors and the College, the Conservancy is on firm footing financially.

The past 20 years were primarily focused on conserving as many acres as possible in our five-mile radius around Gambier. We talk about conserving at least 8,000 acres, as many acres as Bishop Philander Chase originally purchased in Knox County, and to date, the Conservancy has conserved 5,580 acres.

We also focused on developing best standards and practices, developing more awareness of our mission and we have applied for accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance, the gold standard for land conservation organizations.

Build On Strengths

We took time to study what is happening, surveyed Kenyon students, faculty, and staff, and reached out to our major stakeholders and partners in Gambier and the county. Development pressure from Columbus will continue to move north toward the Gambier area, and environmental issues will continue to be at the forefront of national challenges.

We've learned from the process and can now build on our strengths, and we're developing a plan for the next 20 years that will respond to these challenges. We look forward to sharing our plans with you a year from now.

*Lisa Schott '80, managing director
Zali Win '84, board chair*



Learning from Conserved Lands

A conserved Knox County farm is providing environmental studies students with hands-on experience in sustainable agriculture, thanks to a partnership with a Kenyon alumna.

During fall 2020, Chrissie Laymon '01 began hosting students from the College's Sustainable Agriculture class at her family farm in nearby Pleasant Township. The course, taught by Visiting Professor of Environmental Studies Ryan Hottle, provides students with learning opportunities at the Kenyon Farm as well as other farms around the county.

Chrissie and her husband, Jay, acquired their 170-acre farm in 2016 and worked with the Philander Chase Conservancy to protect the land from development. The farmland, which had been in the family for generations, had been a conventional corn and soybean farm, but Chrissie and Jay set out to transform the farm into a diversified operation using regenerative agricultural practices. In addition to raising crops, they also harvest hay and participate in local 4-H programs raising pigs, cattle and horses.

The transformation of the Laymons' farm from a conventional operation into a sustainable class proved to be

the perfect real-world laboratory for the 18 students in the Sustainable Agriculture class. During the inaugural 2020 year, students participated in weekly activities at the farm, ranging from caring for livestock to weeding and harvesting crops.

Chrissie's aim is to model sustainable agricultural practices to increase soil quality, expand habitat for pollinators, and improve water quality by reducing soil erosion and nutrient flows into local waterways.

Following this successful inaugural project, the Laymons hope to continue partnering with the Sustainable Agriculture class for years to come.

Laymon Farm Conserved

Even the pandemic could not deter Josh and Jade Laymon from conserving their beautiful 81-acre cattle farm on Lee Wolfe Road in perpetuity in August 2020. The farm is now protected by an agricultural easement co-held by Philander Chase Conservancy and the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

This is the second conservation easement for the Laymons, whose 150-acre farm on Jacobs Road has already been preserved. Additionally, the Laymon family further strengthened their already strong ties to Knox County agriculture when their son, Jack, was named Knox County Fair King in July 2021. (Congratulations, Jack!)



From left to right: Cary Purcell (PCC attorney), Amy Henricksen (PCC staff), Jill Shriver (PCC staff), Lisa Schott (PCC staff), Josh Laymon and Jade Laymon



Jack Laymon, 2021 Knox County Fair King



Steen Fields Added to the Conservancy

In June 2021, the Philander Chase Conservancy purchased Jim and Marcie Steen’s 16-acre farm field along Route 308, the main road leading from Coshocton Road to Kenyon’s campus. The Steens are known to many Kenyon alumni and parents from Jim’s days as the head swimming coach at the College.

The Steens live on the adjoining parcel and appreciate knowing they can continue to enjoy the view and that the field is forever protected. Thank you, Jim and Marcie!



Conservancy in the News

The work of the Philander Chase Conservancy was recently featured in central Ohio media.

“How Kenyon College Preserved Its Rural Feel,” an article in the June 2021 issue of Ohio Magazine written by Elizabeth Stern, told the story of the development of the Conservancy. In the article, Conservancy Managing Director Lisa Schott '80 notes, “Students are able to go out in the evening and look up and see the stars. Kenyon wouldn't be Kenyon anywhere else, so we at the conservancy are working to save that, and in turn, the Kenyon experience.”

Schott also featured prominently, along with Project Manager Amy Henricksen, in a June feature package that aired on NBC 4 in Columbus. Videographer and journalist John Edwards interviewed Schott and Henricksen about the Conservancy's work and showed video of the Kokosing Nature Preserve. The full interview is available in the “In the News” section of the Philander Chase Conservancy website, at philanderchase.org.

LAND CONSERVED BY CATEGORY:

Agricultural
2,818 acres

Woodlands
1,490 acres

Pastures
709 acres

Waters (rivers and streams)
over 18 miles



Three Kenyon Alumni Join the Conservancy Board

Three Kenyon alumni with longtime interests in land conservation — Catherine Broadhead '96, Kathy DeCoster '77 and Garrick Vance '04 — have joined the Philander Chase Conservancy board of directors.

Catherine Broadhead learned to love the land surrounding Kenyon when running on the country roads around Gambier, training for her first marathon while a senior at the College. Those landscapes were instrumental in her decision to attend Kenyon. Since her graduation with a degree in psychology, Cat has stayed involved with the College as a volunteer. She has been an educator for much of her career, holding advanced degrees in education from Vanderbilt University, business from Cornell University, and counseling psychology from Adler University. She is also a life coach and certified mental performance consultant. In 2019, Cat founded NeoHear.com, a social enterprise serving the deaf and hard of hearing, inspired by the sudden onset of her own deafness in 2017. Cat lives in Palm Beach Shores, Florida, and Northfield, Massachusetts, with her Portuguese water dog, Zoe.

Kathy DeCoster comes to the Conservancy following a 25-year career with the Trust for Public Land, from which she retired in June 2019. For the final 10 years of her career, Kathy served as the trust's vice president and director of federal affairs, managing its federal program to protect land and create parks for people. She also represented

the organization to federal administration officials, Congress, non-profit organizations and other partners. Earlier in her career, Kathy worked as a legislative assistant on environmental issues for Maine Sen. William S. Cohen and Rep. David F. Emery.

Kathy holds an M.A. in foreign affairs from the University of Virginia. She recently stepped down from serving on the board of directors of the Partnership for the National Trails System in order to take on some related consulting work. Kathy recently moved from her longtime home of Washington, D.C., to Roanoke, Virginia. She enjoys hiking, travel, reading, music, movies, and playing electric guitar.

For Texan Garrick Vance, an interest in conserving the lands surrounding Kenyon began during his student years and was further reinforced by his wife Mary, who grew up in the area. Garrick joined the Philander Chase Conservancy board to support efforts to maintain this rural beauty.

After graduating from Kenyon with a degree in political science, Garrick received a law degree from the Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law. He joined the software company ServiceNow in its early startup stage, served as an advisory director for National HouseCheck and currently serves on the boards of several technology companies. Now a partner at the Austin-based management consulting firm SpurBridge, Garrick advises many of the world's largest companies, investment banks and enterprise-focused startups on their technology investments and strategy.

The Conservancy board is comprised of 17 members and sets policy and oversees all the work of the land trust. Through their volunteer efforts and generous support, they guide all the efforts of the Conservancy and have been key to the Conservancy's ability to secure almost 5,600 acres of conservation and agricultural easements.



Catherine Broadhead '96



Kathy DeCoster '77



Garrick Vance '04

Conservancy Interns Engage With the Community

Conservancy Interns Experience the Community

Thanks to our generous donors, the Conservancy benefits from being able to hire Kenyon student interns with a passion for land conservation. We had the pleasure of working with Jayne Gelman '22 (Masontown, West Virginia) and Mikaela Lancy '23 (Shaker Heights, Ohio), who are both environmental studies majors. Jayne and Mikaela assisted us in numerous ways, from increasing awareness about the work of the Conservancy among students to assisting with our social media presence, writing blog posts for the website and joining us on our annual visits to properties conserved by Philander Chase Conservancy. They also made our daily work lives brighter.

Thank you, Jayne and Mikaela.

Opening Doors

by Jayne Gelman '22

I was lucky enough to find the Philander Chase Conservancy within the first week of my sophomore year at Kenyon. I never thought I would have an Instagram post, of all things, to thank for my involvement with such a wonderful organization.

The Conservancy encapsulates so much of what I love about my Kenyon experience, and I did not even know they were the ones to thank. There is something so special about driving through the rolling hills leading to campus, passing farms and wooded areas — something I'm not sure I will ever be able to articulate fully. The Conservancy is able to deliver so much more than just easements and land conservation. Its hard work is ultimately helping to preserve that special combination of nostalgia and a sense of belonging I feel whenever I'm at Kenyon.



My work with the Philander Chase Conservancy and the Kokosing Nature Preserve has also given me opportunities within the workforce, the so-called “real world” outside Gambier. My experience as a student intern has given me a foot in the door, the ability to get within the interview room and prove myself.

The past two summers I have been a development intern for renewable energy companies, and I am hoping

to pursue solar development as a career after I graduate. As the development intern for the energy storage team at Nexamp, I was able to spend summer 2021 learning about cutting-edge technological developments and assisting the team in their pursuit of clean energy.

Without the Conservancy, I would have never discovered my passion for the transition to a carbon-free and equitable energy sector. I am so grateful for the entire team and the student intern program for allowing me the chance to work as I continue my studies, and for one of the best parts of my Kenyon experience.

Discovering Connections

by Mikaela Lancy '23

Having grown up in suburban Ohio, I still sometimes find it difficult to believe that the majority of the state consists of wide swaths of rolling hills covered in corn and soybean fields. It's very much not the Ohio I'm used to, but it's an Ohio I am coming to know more and more the longer I spend at Kenyon.

One of the great perks of working with the Philander Chase Conservancy has been the opportunity to take part in hands-on experiences. I had the pleasure of interviewing two local landowners who hold conservation easements and have worked closely with the organization for years. This interview was especially meaningful for me because it was the first time I was able to see the real-life consequences of the work I was doing and how it was benefitting real people in the local community.



For the interview, I met with Beth Waller and Nancy Badet, two neighbors who both hold conservation easements. Going into it, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I think generally people have their own ideas about how "city" or "country" folk are, but I soon realized that any differences were obsolete. For Beth and Nancy, the health of the environment played a really important role in deciding to place an easement on their property. This surprised me at first since I had previously thought that landowners often conserved their property for other reasons, such as the

financial benefits. Instead, they both wanted to protect the natural spaces they called home and ensure that those spaces remain that way for years to come, even after they're gone — something an easement can provide.

We also discussed large-scale versus small-scale farming and their hope for a return to smaller-scale farms and support for smaller communities. One thing that really stuck with me was something Beth said — that humans have largely lost touch with our connection to food, and we no longer understand the labor necessary to grow food. Although farmers are essential for all human

survival, they are often undervalued, and the work they do is increasingly underappreciated as farming practices become more mechanized.

Around a month after our interview, Beth and Nancy invited me to visit their homes and showed me around their beautiful properties. Seeing the land in person was an experience I'll never forget and made me feel that our work was worthwhile.

It was especially wonderful to meet Beth and see her husband Jay's cows. I had never been so close to a cow before! It feels so good to know that Beth, Nancy and their families are taking such good care of these parcels of land and that they will be forever protected from development. One step at a time, we are making whatever difference we can. Meeting Beth and Nancy really opened my eyes to the challenges faced by small farmers and helped me to realize the importance of conserving the natural areas of land that are left to us.

Inspiring Our Visitors

A respite, a sanctuary, a place of repose — the trails and prairies of the Kokosing Nature Preserve offer spaces for exploration, reflection and creative expression.

The Preserve in Paint

In September 2020, painter Laurie Clements captured Kokosing Nature Preserve in paint in her work “Peaceful Kokosing.” A graduate of Columbus College of Art and Design, Clements resides in Westerville and has deep ties to Kenyon and Knox County. To see more of her work, visit laurieclements.com.



The Preserve in Dance

The Kokosing Nature Preserve was the setting for “Branch Out,” a dance short filmed in August 2020.

Kora Radella, assistant professor of dance at Kenyon, choreographed the short film, in collaboration with movement artist Kelly Hurlburt, filmmaker Cory Koller, and composer Ross Feller. Filmed in the prairie under a large old oak tree, the short film was featured in the recent “Art of Trees” exhibition at Gund Gallery.

The Preserve from Above

Terry Thurston, a corporate photographer in Columbus, captured this drone photograph of Kokosing Nature Preserve in October 2020.



A Place of Remembrance

Kenyon Professor of Music Benjamin Locke reflects on his visits to the Kokosing Nature Preserve to remember his beloved wife, Kay.

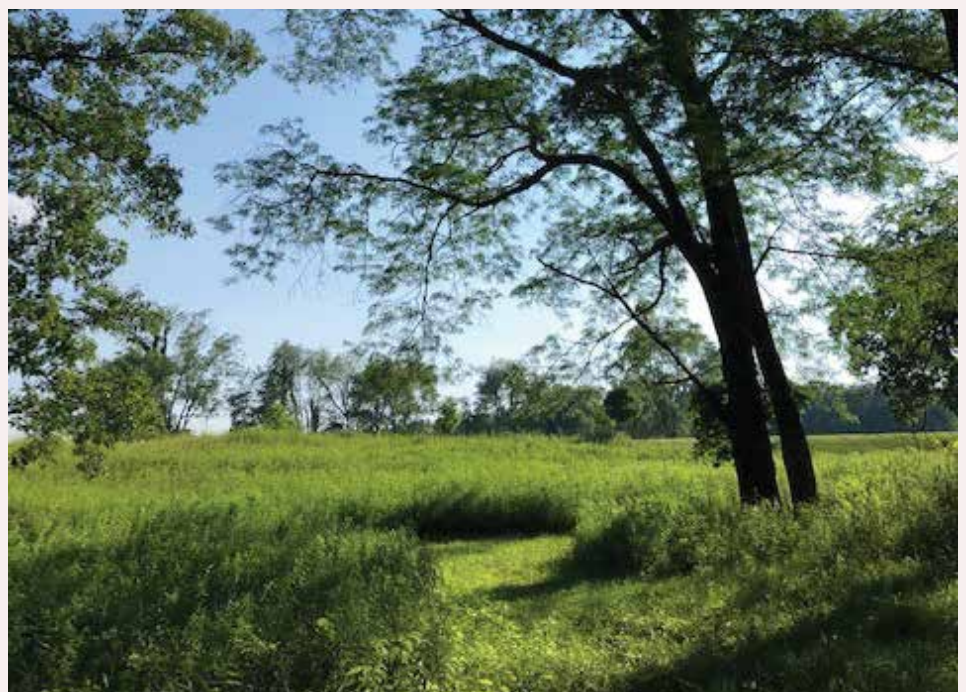
I visit Kay's grave every day, usually in the late afternoon. Occasionally there are other visitors there at the Kokosing Nature Preserve, but more often than not I am there alone. I usually talk to her, but on this day I just sit in my camp chair and take in my surroundings. I am in a place for burial of the dead, surrounded by towering maples, oaks and honey locusts. I study the large mound of earth that clearly marks Kay's final resting place, taking particular note of the evergreen branches that were placed decoratively over the pile, for the evergreen needles — ironically named in this milieu — are turning decidedly brown in sympathy. My musical mind floats into a commentary on the scene with the remembrance of a Gregorian chant which begins, in Latin, "Media vita in morte sumus" — "in the midst of life, we are in death."

My eye catches some movement. I witness a trail of large ants scurrying along in a straight line from somewhere in the woods to a rock near the edge of Kay's grave, having set up a colony underneath it. While watching them going about their ant business, I see bright green shoots of wild ginger and stinging nettle growing out of the mound— both considered of value for their purported medicinal properties. I look again at the dying evergreen boughs, and on the stems two insects are busily engaged in some ritual of

courtship, alternatively regarding one another in stillness then flying frenetically about, only to return to the same spots on the branch. Finally, in this place of death, a butterfly violates the restricted airspace and lands on my hand. It wanders unconcerned over the contours of my fingers and palm for 40 minutes before taking its leave. A message, I think.

The mound has sunken a bit over time, an indication that the wicker casket has surrendered to the weight of stone and soil above it. It also signifies that Mother Earth is reclaiming those elements that Kay's spirit put to good use for the majority of her 81 years. Dust to dust, yet so much in between. I recall again the Gregorian chant, and I think perhaps it should read instead, "Media morte in vita sumus" — "in the midst of death, we are in life."

Photos by Ben Locke. Used with permission.





Luke Hester '20, who was a post-baccalaureate fellow at the BFEC for the 2020-21 academic year, created a “Choose Your Own Adventure” event in September 2020. Participants located several waypoints at Kokosing Nature Preserve.



In honor of Earth Day 2021, conservancy interns Jayne Gelman '22 and Mikaela Lancy '23 designed and hosted a scavenger hunt throughout the grounds of Kokosing Nature Preserve.

Close to Paradise

“I want to write to pass on my enthusiasm and thanks for all you have done to create the Kokosing Nature Preserve. Throughout this summer of the pandemic, I’ve spent many early morning hours there just as the sun was sliding above the horizon. It’s extraordinary how many crystal clear mornings we have had this summer, as though they were offering an antidote to COVID. A few weeks ago, the preserve was in full bloom — the chokeberry glowing in fluorescent color, the bees buzzing, the sunflowers waking to the sun — and I thought, as I wandered the mowed pathways, this is as close to Paradise as I have ever been.”

— *Greg Spaid '69*

PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF ART





Board of Directors

Richard S. Alper '71
Catherine L. Broadhead '96
David H. Cannon '73
Lisa S. Coney '78
President Sean Decatur
Katherine B. DeCoster '77
Linda D. Findlay '75
Anne C. Griffin '78
William R. Hartman Jr. '86 P'20
John R. Knepper '62
Meredith C. Moore '88
Neil Mortine
Thomas R. Sant '65 H'13
Garrick A. Vance '04
Wendy Webster P'18
Zali Win '84, Chair
William J. Yost '68

Emeritus Directors

Kathryn Batchelder Cashman '73
Stephen F. Christy Jr. '71
Howard B. Edelstein '68
Cornelia Ireland Hallinan '76 H'91
Julia F. Johnson '73 H'99
Douglas H. Stevens '68 P'89
John A. Woollam '61 H'08

Staff Members

Lisa D. Schott '80, Managing Director
Amy Henricksen, Project Coordinator and
Kokosing Nature Preserve Steward
Jill Shriver, Office Manager and Student
Intern Coordinator

Current Easement Holders

Nancy and Spence Badet
Seth and Katie Black
Angela and Anthony Buchert
Krys and Mike Clifton
Clutter Family Farms LLC
Rita and Chuck Dudgeon
Kim and Jim Giles '78
Mary Hall Family
Kate and Eric Helt
Sue and Paul Holeski
Kenyon College
Landmark Ventures LLC
Bill Lawhon / White Oak Farms LLC
Jay and Christine Laymon '01
Jane Laymon-Kasper
Josh and Jade Laymon
Mary Ann and Lee McPhail
Kenneth and Jennifer Mason
Elizabeth and Jerry Mickley
Heidi and Tim Norris
Mary McManus and Keith Plocki P'07
Angela Porter
Maria Rager
Florence and Tracy Schermer
Rebecca and John Simpson
George Smith
Sharon Sweeney
Beth Waller and Jay Dorsey
Norman White / Bent Canoe Farm LLC
Howard Workman

Original/Previous Owners:

Jean Briggs
Colton LLC
Tom Jegla P'89 H'97
Steve Lanning
Lisa and David Seitz
J. Shorey '80
Alesia and Don Thomas
Cornel Van Gorp / Casey's Way LLC

Donors 2020-2021

Kevin Aepli '96
Richard Alper '71
Mike Barmach '99 and
Elizabeth Fleming Barmach '01
Christopher '93 and
Rebecca Barth '93
Kate Batchelder Cashman '73
Susanna Beacom '84
Donna Bertolet Poseidon '75
Lindy Borske-Hubbard
Catherine Broadhead '96
James and Sharon Broadhead P'96
Thomas and Margaretta
Brokaw P'01
Meryl Brott '91
Larae Bush Schraeder '97
Anne Cadigan '92
David '73 and Susan Cannon
Anne Chamberlin '76 and
Joel Turner '76 P'08,'10
Kathryn Chiasson '08
Stephen Christy '71
Thor Collard
Columbus Foundation
Lisa Coney '78 and Tom Shively '76
Jay and Sonia Corrigan
Phil '56 and Jane Currier P'82
Peter and Barbara Curtis P'12
Charles '02 and
Phoebe '01 Davidson
Sean Decatur
Kathy DeCoster '77
Jay Dorsey and Beth Waller
Catherine Ebert P'99
Howard Edelstein '68
Erin Ellingwood '07
John Elliott and Jackie Robbins '73
Donna Featherstone
Robert and Joan Feitler P'80
GP'10,'14
Linda '75 and Charles '68 Findlay
Steve Fineberg '73
Colin Finnegan '15
Carl Fleischhauer '62
Christopher Frisby '96
Joe '90 and Kay '91
Gerhardinger P'19,'22,'24

Diane Grabowski '76
Anne Griffin '78
Lizzi Hagg '14
Buffy '76 H'91 and Bob '74 Hallinan
Mack Haning '68
Barbara and
Bill Hartman Jr. '86 P'20
Amy and Chris Henricksen
Pamela '80 and
Christopher Hoehn-Saric P'10,'14
Thomas Hoffmann '62
Christopher Holden '08
Julia Johnson '73
Martha Johnson '84
Andrew '03 and Anna '04 Kalnow
Mark Kaplan P'14
David and Patricia King
John Knepper '62
Charles and Gina Koke
Tyler Kollar
Karen Laird
Jake Layton '77
Heather Anne Lee Rue '89
Bill Lipscomb '80
Kelly '99 and Robert '99 Lyles
John '89 and Lee '88 Lytle
Jeanne Maine Top '84 and
Franklin Top III '84 P'14,'17
Forest '10 and Natalie '08 Malchow
Anne '88 and Stephen '88 Manella
Gregg and Alixetta Marlow
Nick Matlin '05
Andrew McCabe '88 and Lisa Volpe
McCabe '88
Bill H'99 and Pat McCulloh
Cathy Mehl
Sally Milton
Meredith Moore '88
Anne Morrissy '01
Neil and Christine Mortine
Dale Neuman '58
Tristan Neviska '13
Robin Nordmoe
Katie O'Malley
Laura Paul '11
Barbara Perry

Blythe Philips '05
Peter Platt P'22
Florette Press '10
Michael Rapaport '83
Tom Sant '65 H'13
Lisa '80 and Stu Schott
Helene Shapiro '75
Jill and John Shriver
John '84 and Laura '84
Siphron P'17
Andrew Smith '04
Debra Smith
Mike Spetrino '77 P'15
Karel Starek '86
Jane Stedman
Doug Stevens '65 P'89
Elizabeth Stevens
Kelly Surrick '88
Robert Sykes '68
David Thomas-Train '73
Sam Todd '76 P'13
Katie Towson '88
Alex Valchuk '65
Garrick Vance '04
Helen Veit '00
Caryl Warner '55
Steve Waterfield '94
Zack Weber '06
Wendy Webster and
Stuart Davidson P'18
Leah Wedul Maragos '00
Simone Weil '05
Kathy Weise '76
Peter White '66 P'01
Barbara Williams
Bo Williams '08
Sharon Williams
Zali Win '84
Matthew Winkler '77 H'00 and
Lisa Klein Winkler P'13
Sue Woog Wagner '77
John Woollam '61 H'08
Henry Woolsey '76
Vicky Wyatt '77 H'15
Bill Yost '68

Special Thanks to our Partners

Rob Alexander
Jacob Beam
Todd Burson
Rob Clendenning
Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts
(COLT)
Kris Davis
Guy Denny
Jack Esslinger P'05
Siobhan Fennessy
Wendi Fowler
Gambier Village
Administrative Office
Doug Gifford
David Heithaus '99
Ray Heithaus '68 P'99 H'14
Chris Henricksen
Luke Hester '20
Ryan Hottle
Noelle Jordan
Knox County Auditor's Office
Knox County Recorder's Office
Knox County Soil and Water Office
Land Trust Alliance
Iris Levin
Jacki Mann, RN
Shane McGuire
Vince McMorrow/
Fahlgren Mortine
Shirley O'Brien
Ohio Department of Agriculture
Office of Farmland Preservation
OSU Extension Office
Owl Creek Conservancy
Cary Purcell
Royal Rhodes
Stu Schott
Ken Schuesselin
Darrel Severns
Ian Smith
Justin Smith
Lori Totman
Richard Tuck
Jennifer Windus



Philander Chase Conservancy