



Philander Chase Conservancy

2024 – 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW





Letter from Amy Henricksen, Director, and Zali Win '84, Chair, Philander Chase Conservancy Board of Directors

Dear Friends, Partners
and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, we are excited to mark two important milestones in 2025: **the 25th anniversary of the Philander Chase Conservancy** and the **10th anniversary of Kokosing Nature Preserve**. These anniversaries are a testament to the commitment of our community to protect the natural beauty of the farms, woodlands, waters and open spaces surrounding Kenyon College and to preserve the rural character of the region at large.

From its inception in 2000, the Conservancy has helped to protect over 6,000 acres of land within a five-mile radius of Peirce Hall's Philander Chase Memorial Tower, preserving vital open spaces, natural resources and farmland in perpetuity. Ten years ago, we deepened our mission with the establishment of the Kokosing Nature Preserve, Central Ohio's first and only conservation burial ground. The Preserve offers a sustainable alternative to conventional burial practices while also contributing to land conservation, habitat restoration, and encouraging a meaningful connection with nature.

This year, we were especially proud to announce the opening of the 124-acre Yauger Road property, now part of the North Trail System of the Brown Family Environmental Center. This newly conserved land expands public access to green space in Mount Vernon and represents a significant step forward in our efforts to connect people more closely with the landscapes that sustain us.

With your support and financial assistance, we will continue to protect our treasured landscapes for future generations. We are deeply grateful for your continued support and belief in our work.

With heartfelt thanks,

Amy Henricksen
*Director, Philander Chase
Conservancy*

Zali Win '84
Chair, Board of Directors



Cutting the ribbon! L to R: PCC Board Chair Zali Win '84, Mount Vernon Mayor Matt Starr; Kenyon President Julie Kornfeld; John Woollam '61, PCC Director Amy Henricksen, Cindy Woollam, Former PCC Director Lisa Schott, BFEC Director Noelle Jordan, BFEC student employee Mara Thomas '27

A Grand Opening for 1,000 Acres of Community Green Space

Although the threat of rain loomed in the forecast, bright, warm sunshine won the day as a crowd of over 100 community members gathered for the grand opening of the new Brown Family Environmental Center (BFEC) North Trail System at Yauger Road. The property, owned by Philander Chase Conservancy and managed by the BFEC, is a 124-acre parcel that sits just east of Mount Vernon and just south across Yauger Road from the Knox County Park District's Wolf Run Regional Park. It is a breathtaking and evocative landscape.

The crowd arrived to celebrate not only the property's grand opening, but also the realization of a vision of a continuous, communal green space in Knox County, an "emerald necklace" or "green ribbon", of which the Yauger Road property was the final, integral piece. This vision, shared by former Philander Chase Conservancy Director Lisa Schott '80, Knox County Park District Director Dave Heithaus '99, former park district director

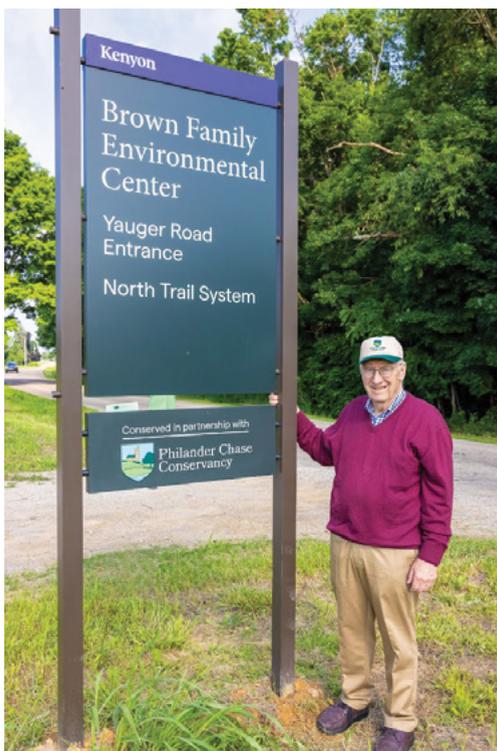
Lori Totman, and long-time Conservancy supporter and advocate John Woollam '61 H'08, was now complete. The acquisition of the property by the Conservancy, with the generous assistance of Woollam, resulted in the creation of 1,000 acres of contiguous green space and 20 miles of connected, publicly accessible trails by linking the BFEC to Wolf Run Regional Park.

From the parking lot, the newly named Schott Circle splits off in two directions, meandering over the newly planted prairie of native wildflowers and grasses. Prescott Springs Trail, named for the farming family who originally owned the property, heads off toward the woods, and a third trail, Woollam Way, connects and links the southern end of the property to the BFEC's Hall Farm.

We'll see you out there!



Prescott Springs Trail



John Woollam stands next to the new entrance sign to the property.



Hikers on one of the new trails through the prairie

Philander Chase Conservancy Celebrates 22 Years of Farmland Preservation Through State Program

Philander Chase Conservancy is observing 25 years of land conservation work in Knox County in 2025, and it has been an active participant in the Ohio Department of Agriculture's (ODA) Farmland Preservation Program for the vast majority of that time — 22 years! The Conservancy has worked diligently to protect the rural landscape surrounding Kenyon, protecting some of Ohio's most fertile and historically significant agricultural lands.

The ODA's Office of Farmland Preservation was established in 1998 by Fred Dailey, the longest serving agriculture director in Ohio history (1991 - 2007) and also a Knox County resident. Food and agriculture together constitute the state's largest industry, contributing more than \$105 billion annually to Ohio's economy and providing jobs to one in seven Ohioans. Between 1950 and 2000, Ohio lost more than 6.9 million acres of farmland, representing nearly one-third of Ohio's agricultural land. The Office of Farmland Preservation works to provide tools to farmers who want to preserve their land for future generations.

The ODA's easement programs began in 2002. These voluntary, legal agreements among the landowner, a local sponsor (e.g. the Conservancy), and the state ensure that farmland remains in agricultural use forever. Under an agricultural easement, the land itself stays under private ownership, but the easement prohibits any future non-agricultural development by landowners. A 100-acre farm remains a 100-acre farm in perpetuity.

The Conservancy's founding director, Doug Givens, worked quickly

to enroll Kenyon's land trust as an early local sponsor for ODA agricultural easements. The Conservancy has been a certified local sponsor for this program since the 2003 funding round, making it eligible to apply for funding on behalf of willing landowners.

"In the early years of the Conservancy (known then as the Philander Chase Corporation), securing Department of Agriculture easements for our local farmers was like a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval," said Givens. "It put us on the right side of all things farmland preservation and was the imprimatur to set the Conservancy on its way working with partners to help farmers protect their precious farmland."



In the ODA Farmland Preservation Program's first year, the Conservancy was the third largest source of applications statewide, filing 18 applications which represented approximately 2,000 acres. Statewide only 24 applications were funded in 2003; the Conservancy received one of the coveted easements for the 56-acre Tim and Heidi Norris farm located just outside of Gambier to the east. The first Knox County property enrolled in the program, the Norris farm is a multi-generational row-crop operation, producing corn, soybeans, wheat and sometimes sunflowers. The Norris family granted an agricultural easement to the State of Ohio and the Philander Chase Conservancy in June 2003 through the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, inspiring Ohio Governor Bob Taft to pay a visit to the Norris farm. This early success helped build community awareness and support for the program, encouraging other landowners to consider

conserving their farms as a legacy option.

"Heidi and I were honored to be the first farm enrolled in the ag easement program," said Tim Norris. "We had been through some rough financial times and had considered selling one time when we were approached by the local gravel company. We all need gravel, but we felt that we wanted our legacy to be one of conservation and protect our beautiful farm, house and barn. We can rest easy knowing that even if it leaves our family at some point it will always be protected"

Each agricultural easement obtained through the ODA's Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program is

selected through a competitive statewide application process. Landowners must meet criteria such as soil quality, proximity to other protected lands and evidence of ongoing agricultural use. The Conservancy assists applicants by preparing materials, coordinating with state officials, and stewarding the easements long-term. Applications with the highest scores are selected for easement purchase funding using Clean Ohio funds designated specifically for farmland preservation. Approved by Ohio voters in 2000, the Clean Ohio Fund is a \$400-million bond program established to preserve natural areas and farmland, protect streams, create outdoor recreational opportunities, and revitalize urban areas by returning contaminated brownfields to productive use.

Landowners are also able to donate agricultural easements to the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Jean Briggs worked with the Conservancy to protect her family's 106-acre farm in perpetuity through a donated agricultural easement in August 2003.

Over the past 22 years, the Conservancy has helped conserve 2,741 acres of farmland through the state's agricultural easement programs. As of 2025, the Conservancy has sponsored 21 agricultural easements in partnership with the state, protecting rich agricultural soils, scenic vistas and strong farming heritage. By working closely with local farmers, landowners and community partners, the Conservancy has created a model of collaborative farmland conservation rooted in trust and mutual benefit.

The benefits of farmland preservation go well beyond keeping land in agriculture. Easements help maintain clean water, preserve wildlife habitat and support local food systems. In addition, protecting farmland close to towns and cities curbs urban sprawl and helps local governments manage infrastructure costs more efficiently.

With Ohio's farmland under increasing pressure from development, the work of organizations like the Conservancy has never been more vital. Thanks to its long-standing partnership with the Ohio Department of Agriculture and local farmers, the Conservancy is well positioned to continue this essential mission for generations to come.





Seeds of Change: Kokosing Nature Preserve Celebrates 10 Years

By Samantha Bartram, Green Burial Coordinator, Kokosing Nature Preserve

As the saying goes, in life, the only constant is change. Few places better embody Heraclitus' famous aphorism than Kokosing Nature Preserve, which has seen incredible transformation in the decade since its inception. Its most apparent makeover is in the conversion of a beloved community golf course into a nature preserve and conservation green burial cemetery.

But change is also apparent in the more subtle operations of the Preserve — as its wildflowers flourish and fade, as the leaves on its trees turn from green to shades of orange, yellow and red, and as the remains of its human inhabitants come to more closely resemble the earth that surrounds them.

It's all in keeping with the vision landscape architect and Kenyon alumnus Stephen Christy '71, had for the former Tomahawk Golf Course when he began designing the area that would become Kokosing Nature Preserve. Christy wanted to create a space that was at once wild with native Ohio flora, yet orderly and structured enough to offer subtle support to visitors.

"The key design issue here is to balance the 'wildness' these landscapes create with the very human desire for some order and familiarity in what is, after all, sacred ground," Christy wrote in 2013. His design incorporated linear walking paths that cut through the

tall prairie to encourage movement through the landscape. He wanted visitors to feel both enveloped by a rich, verdant blanket, as well as awed by expansive vistas that opened out to the southwest.

"People focused on mourning and memory need an orderly but varied landscape providing openness, enclosure, and views both distant and near, all to play on their emotions and feelings," Christy wrote. "Thus, former fairways become alleés, and tees and greens, much changed, become gathering areas and contemplative nodes."

Cultural attitudes about death, dying and grief are changing, too. Increasingly, people are looking for a way to return to the earth naturally after death, and families are searching for ways to honor and mourn their loved ones that more accurately reflect their attitudes and priorities.

The Preserve holds space for these practices to evolve. Today, Christy's "gathering areas and contemplative nodes" are frequented by friends and family members of those who have chosen natural burial at Kokosing Nature Preserve. For many, the experience of attending a green burial service is itself transformative, challenging people to more deeply examine long-held assumptions of what death and grieving should look like.

Amy Henricksen, director of the Conservancy, often highlights the desire to "normalize conversations about mortality, death and dying" as a principal part of the Preserve's mission. After engaging in many such conversations in my role as green burial coordinator, I can confirm that green burial affects people in a profound way. It is a practice that empowers people to care for and remember the deceased on their own terms, during a time when control can feel fleeting, and grief can be overwhelming.

There's another common saying: the more things change, the more they stay the same. And while attitudes continue to evolve and the restored native landscape churns through its seasons, the Preserve will endure as the constant to anchor it all. Ten years on, central Ohio's only conservation green burial cemetery is a study in change, and a meditation on the foundational spaces that hold us, and help nurture us through life's unrelenting ups and downs. Because of the enduring work of the Conservancy and its generous supporters, the Preserve will remain a perpetual touchstone — changing, certainly, with the seasons, but enduring as a place of peace, reflection, education and healing.

Bird walk at Kokosing Nature Preserve

Philander Chase Conservancy Project Coordinator Evan Stern and Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Beth Waller led a spring bird walk in May 2025 at Kokosing Nature Preserve. Beth is also a local landowner and easement grantor. Around a dozen people quietly made their way around the tree-lined perimeter of the Preserve, eyes and ears peeled for any avian activities. Red-winged blackbirds, orchard orioles, a scarlet tanager, and a variety of warblers were observed, and plans were made for a hoped-for repeat of this fun event in 2026.



A Lively Spring at Kokosing Nature Preserve: Native Plant Sale

More than 200 native Ohio wildflowers found new homes with folks who attended Kokosing Nature Preserve's first-ever native plant sale, hosted during Mother's Day weekend in 2025. Held in partnership with Natives in Harmony, a nursery located in Marengo, Ohio, the event also offered visitors an opportunity to explore the Preserve, ask questions about green burial, and learn about the ongoing restoration efforts at the Preserve.

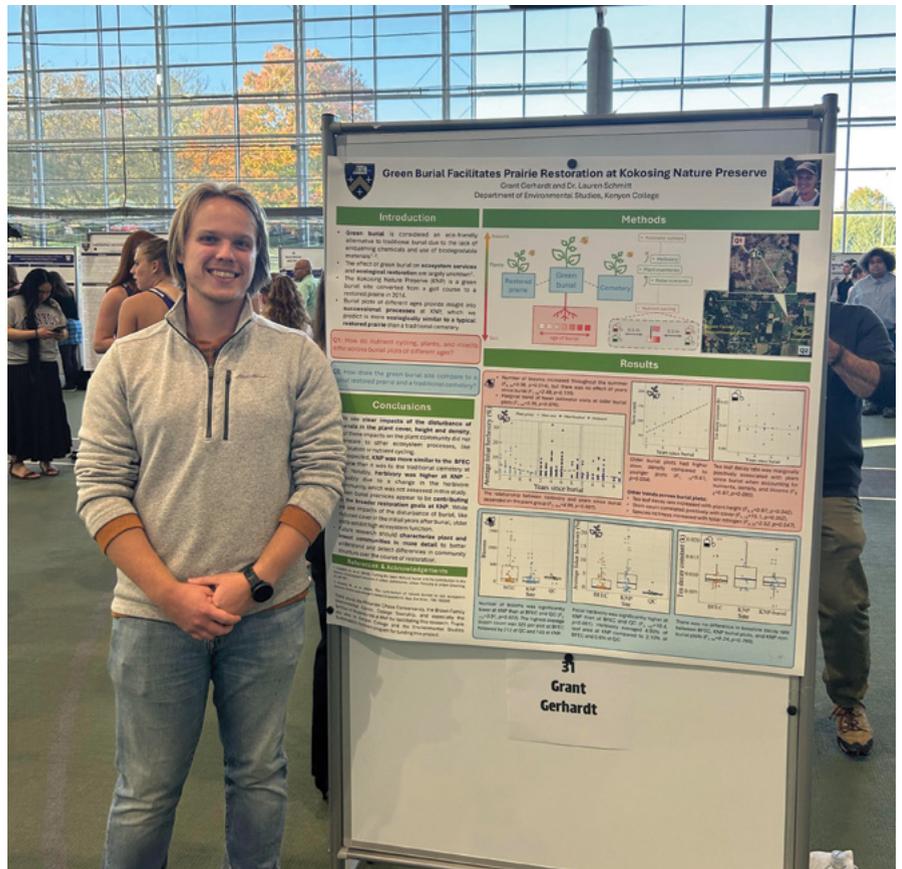
Student Learning at KNP

Siobhan Fennessy, Philip and Sheila Jordan Professor of Environmental Studies and Biology at Kenyon, brought her Introduction to environmental studies students to Kokosing Nature Preserve to learn about our conservation efforts. Some 60 students joined Green Burial Coordinator Samantha Bartram for a walking tour and wide-ranging discussion on green burial practices, land conservation, and the various ways the Preserve has changed since its establishment 10 years ago.



Summer Studies Examine Ecological Happenings at Kokosing Nature Preserve

Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Lauren Schmitt and her student research assistant, Grant Gerhardt '25, took part in some literally groundbreaking research during summer 2024 at Kokosing Nature Preserve. Their tea-bag test involved burying a bag of tea on burial plots to study the environmental impacts of green burial on soil composition, while their observations of insects and plant life offered other insights about the Preserve's biodiversity. Study results showed that green burial practices appear to be contributing to the broader restoration goals at the Preserve.



Students Show Up: Student Earth Day Service Day at Kokosing Nature Preserve

Philander Chase Conservancy student interns Jordan Schisler '25, Zachary Aronson-Paxton '25 and Tommy Hillmer '25, organized a Kenyon student service day at Kokosing Nature Preserve on Earth Day 2025, with groups tackling large piles of sticks and stubborn invasive weeds. Three truckloads of debris were removed from the Preserve!



Kokosing River Clean Up

The Philander Chase Conservancy joined forces with Kenyon's Brown Family Environmental Center and Knox County Recycling and Litter Prevention on a beautiful Saturday in September for the 2024 River Rally. Led by the Conservancy's student interns, a team of 12 volunteers removed two canoes full of trash (including 15 tires) from a three-mile stretch of the Kokosing River. This stretch of the river, from Big Run Road to Zion Road, spans five Conservancy-protected properties with frontage on one or both banks of the Kokosing.



Kenyon Students Engage with Local Farmers

Part of our work at Philander Chase Conservancy is to engage students with the land. Our goal is to provide them with opportunities to experience first-hand the rural and natural setting of Kenyon and to appreciate its importance to our sense of place. It is also important to connect Kenyon students with the people — their neighbors — whose lives are deeply intertwined with the land around them. That's where Tim Norris, Beth Waller and Jay Dorsey come into the picture.

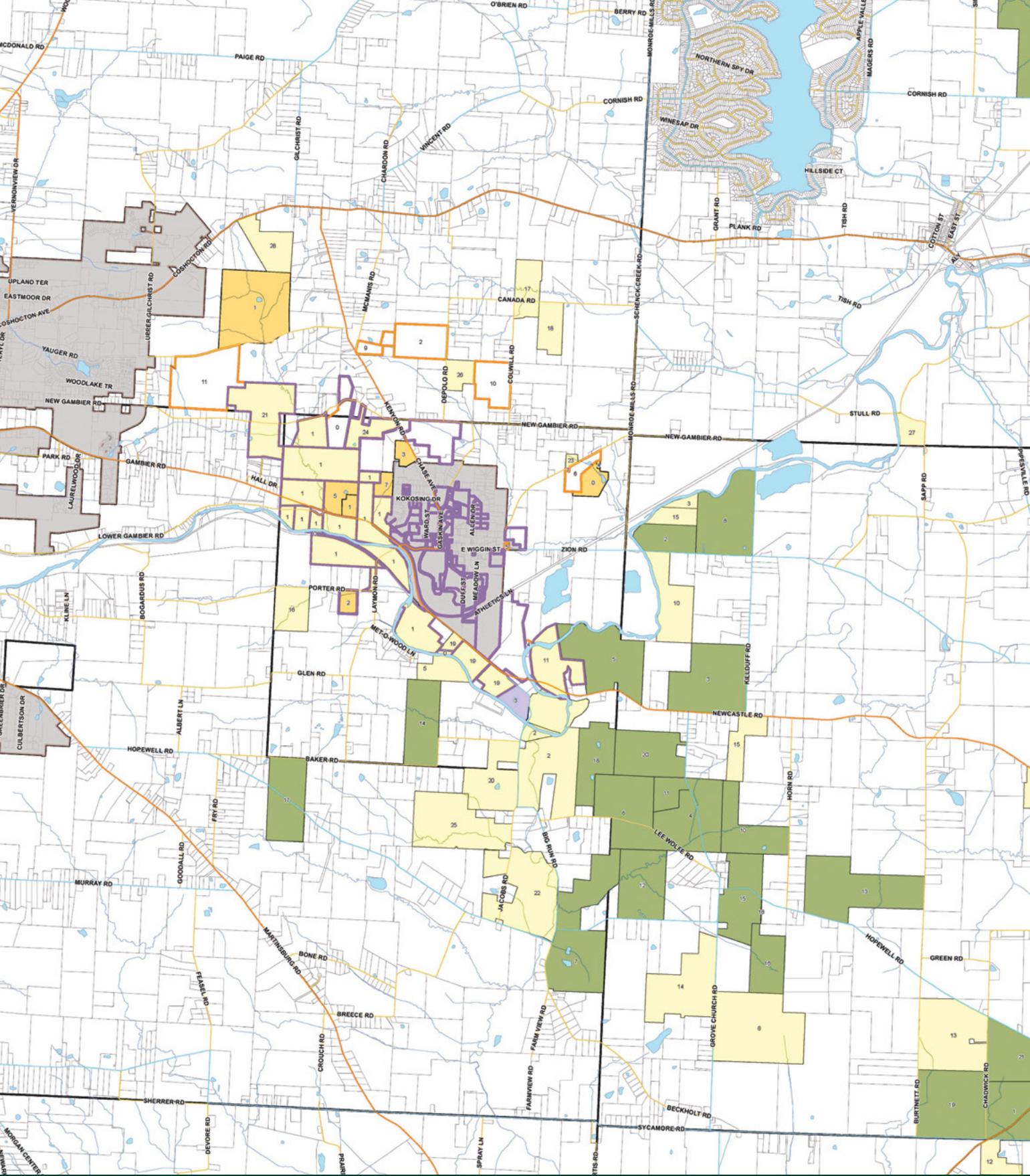
Tim is a local grain farmer who has conveyed both a conservation easement and an agricultural easement to the Conservancy. He raises corn, soybeans, and wheat, and plants cover crops during the winter. Often, Tim will plant sunflowers as a cover crop, beautifying the local hills and attracting flower lovers from far and wide. Beth and Jay are local pasture-raised and grass-fed cattle farmers, and their land is protected with a conservation easement held by the Conservancy.

Last fall, the Conservancy hosted a farm tour for Kenyon students and brought them out to see both local farms. Tim, Beth, and Jay talked about their farm operations as well as the reasons why they conserved their land. Attendees learned about local agriculture, as well as the Conservancy's efforts to conserve working farms, and the rural setting of the region in general.

In November 2024, after the farm tour, Beth and Jay welcomed a little newcomer onto their farm — a small, chestnut-brown calf. Before Kenyon students left for Thanksgiving break, the Conservancy's student interns held a naming contest for the calf. The choices: Philander Chase, Pierogi, and Pecan, with Pierogi winning by one vote!

Thanks to Tim, Beth and Jay for welcoming and engaging with students during the farm tour, and to Beth and Jay for letting us hold this contest. Congratulations to Moth Hoffman '28 for the terrific name suggestion. Moth received a Philander Chase Conservancy t-shirt.

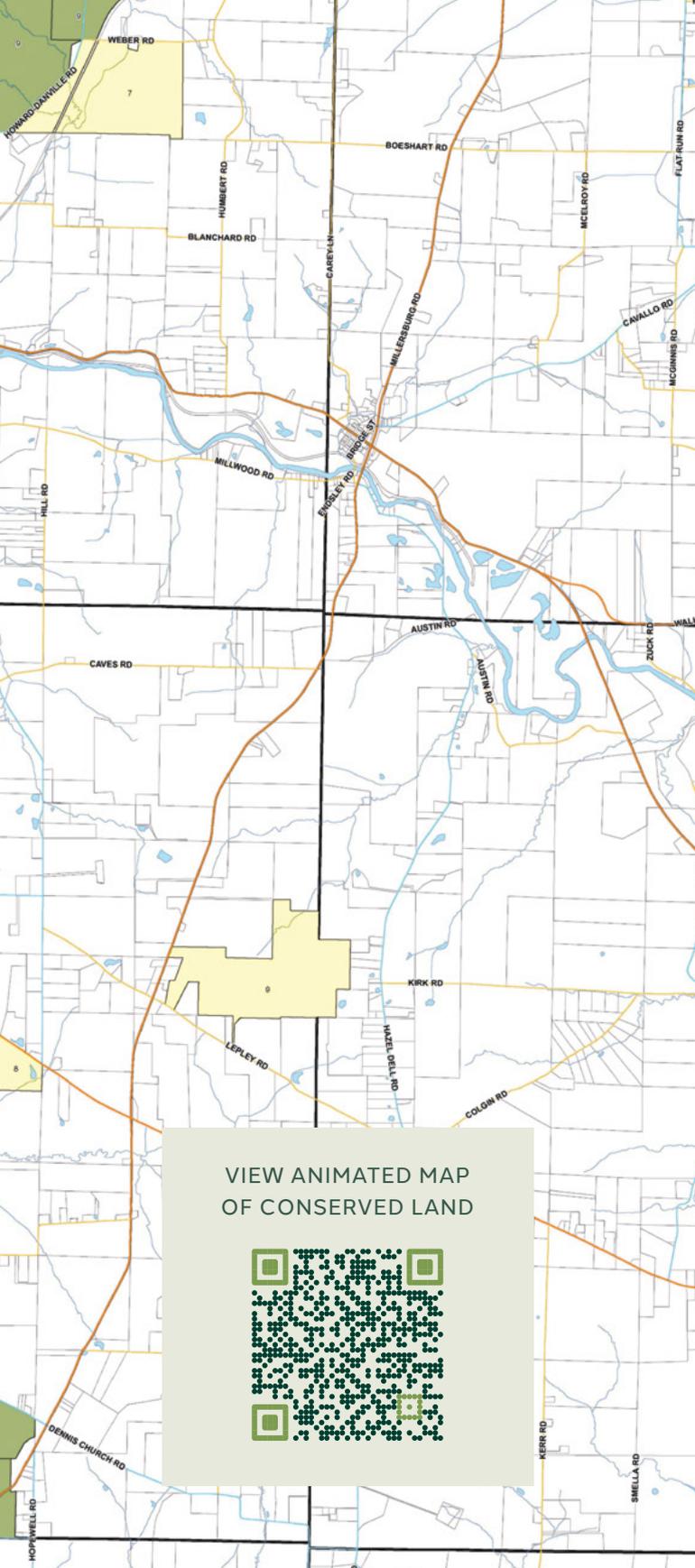




Philander Chase Conservancy
Over 6,000 Acres Conserved

Property protected through December, 2024

- PCHASE AG. EASEMENT
- PCHASE CONS. EASEMENT
- PCC INVOLVED
- PCC OWNED
- PCC OWNED / OCC EASE.
- PARCELS



VIEW ANIMATED MAP OF CONSERVED LAND

25 Years of Conservation

This map shows the 6,000+ acres of land Philander Chase Conservancy has protected since its inception in 2000 — efforts for which the Conservancy received anniversary commendations from Ohio Sen. Andrew Brenner and Ohio Rep. Mark Hiner.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF
REPRESENTATIVE MARK HINER
HOUSE DISTRICT 94

On behalf of the members of the House of Representatives of the 136th General Assembly of Ohio, we are pleased to congratulate the PHILANDER CHASE CONSERVANCY

on the memorable occasion of its Twenty-fifth Anniversary.

Recognition of this prestigious milestone is a fitting tribute to the Philander Chase Conservancy, for it has attained a remarkable record of service to the area. Founded in 2000, the organization has protected the natural beauty of the farms, woodlands, waters and open spaces surrounding Kenyon College and preserved the rural character of the region at large, and its accomplishments are a justifiable source of pride and an outstanding reflection not only on the land trust itself but also on its hard-working staff and volunteers.

Since its inception, the Philander Chase Conservancy has enhanced the quality of life within the Gambier community, and its generous contributions to conserve the area's open spaces and important natural habitats have earned it the gratitude and respect of many. We are certain that as this worthy group maintains its steadfast dedication to service, it will continue in the tradition of excellence that has become its hallmark.

Thus, it is with genuine satisfaction that we commend the Philander Chase Conservancy on its Twenty-fifth Anniversary and extend best wishes for the future.

Mark Hiner
MARK HINER
REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 94

Matt Hoffman
MATT HOFFMAN
SENATOR
HOUSE DISTRICT 94

THE OHIO SENATE

SENATOR ANDREW O. BRENNER

On behalf of the Ohio State Senate, I am pleased to extend special recognition to:

The Philander Chase Conservancy

On the occasion of its 25th Anniversary of Land Conservation

I am pleased to congratulate the Philander Chase Conservancy on celebrating 25 years of protecting and preserving the natural beauty of Knox County and its surrounding areas.

This is, indeed, a significant milestone, and it provides a fitting opportunity to commend the Conservancy's outstanding contributions to land conservation and smart development. Since its founding in 2000, the organization has protected over 6,000 acres of farmland, forests, rivers, and open spaces, ensuring that future generations will enjoy the same rural character and ecological richness that define this part of Ohio.

All those associated with the Philander Chase Conservancy, past and present, are to be applauded for their vision, commitment, and tireless efforts to balance growth with sustainability. From conservation and agricultural easements to public green spaces and student engagement, their work reflects a deep and lasting investment in the land, the community, and the future.

Thus, with great pride, I recognize the Philander Chase Conservancy on its 25th anniversary and salute the dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters who have made its achievements possible.

Andrew O. Brenner
Andrew O. Brenner
State Senator
19th District

- KENYON OWNED W/PCC EASE
- RIVERS/LAKES/PONDS
- KENYON OWNED
- CREEKS/STREAMS
- CORP. BOUNDARY



Interns Guide Panel on Local Conservation and Development

In April 2024, local community members gathered in the Brown Family Environmental Center’s Resource Center to learn about land conservation’s legacy and current challenges in Knox County. The panelists were (sitting at the table above, left to right) Amy Henricksen (Director, Philander Chase Conservancy), Jeff Gottke (former President, Knox County Area Development Foundation), Vicki Kauffman (Director, Owl Creek Conservancy), and Tim Norris (local landowner, farmer, and easement grantor). Philander Chase Conservancy Interns Tommy Hillmer ’25, Zach Aronson-Paxton ’25, and Jordan Schisler ’25, (in order, far left to right, above) who organized the panel from its inception, hosted and moderated the program.

If you happened to miss this informative event, here are a few of the key takeaways:

- Land conservation is widely appreciated in Knox County, and the support from the community for open and green spaces is high.
- Knox County is choosing to channel that development inward towards areas that are already developed, to decrease sprawl.
- Knox County is choosing to redirect development toward areas that are already developed to decrease sprawl.
- Land conservation is personal. (Thanks to Tim Norris for sharing his story!)



Student interns Tommy Hillmer '25, Jordan Schisler '25, Zach Aronson-Paxton '25 and Clara Hales '26



The Conservancy's student interns, Zach Aronson-Paxton '25 and Tommy Hillmer '25 provided a fun, interactive caterpillar craft for community members while sharing our mission of land conservation.



In preparation of opening the BFEC North Trail System at Yauger Road, student interns and staff from both the BFEC and the Philander Chase Conservancy collaborated to blaze the new trails.

Kick-Starting a Conservation Career

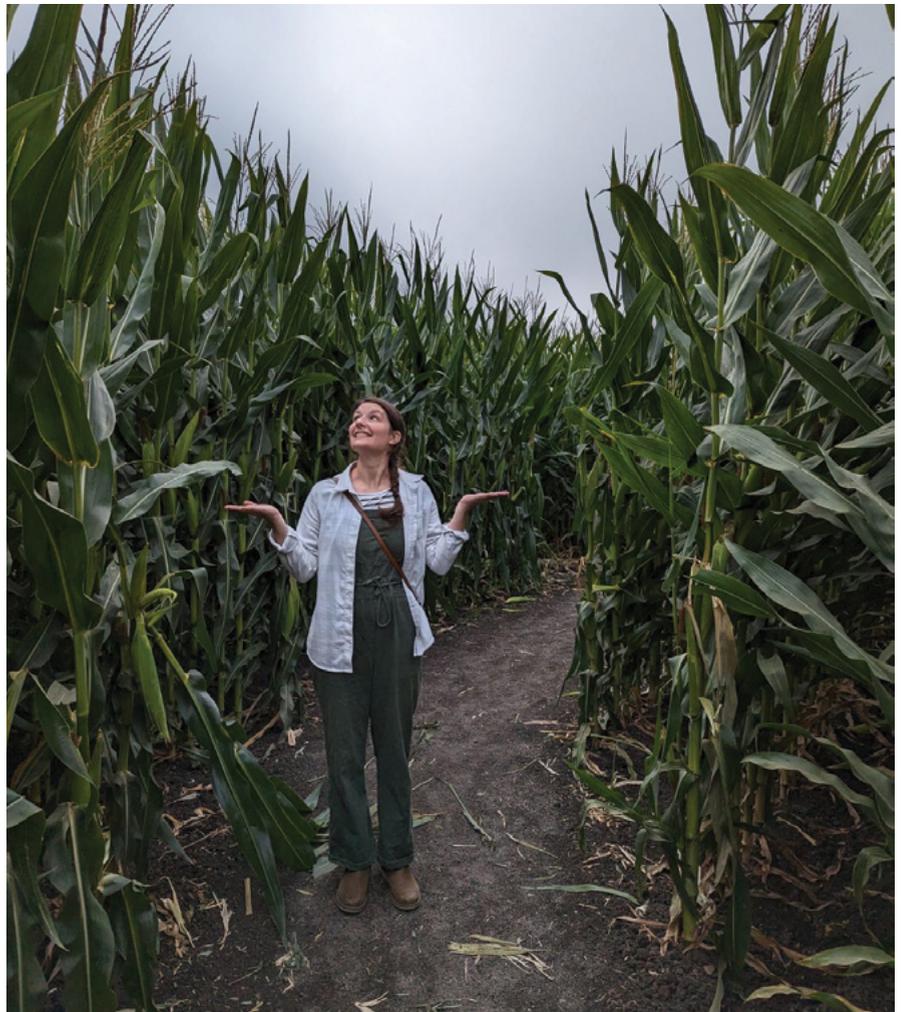
by Lauren Faccinto '14

I have worked in the field of land conservation since graduating from Kenyon in 2014, and I'm proud to say I got my start as a Philander Chase Conservancy intern. I started working for the Conservancy as a junior, when I was just starting to consider how I could gain some practical work experience before graduating.

I learned about the Conservancy through my environmental studies course and decided to reach out to its then-director Lisa Schott '80. Lisa kindly brought me on and worked to create the intern role as a part-time, paid position. I had a basic understanding of what land trusts were, thanks to growing up in California where the Marin Agricultural Land Trust easement signs dot the rural county highway. Lisa took the time to help me learn the ins and outs of conservation easements and how they were monitored, as well as the role of a land trust in preserving community as well as the land itself. As an intern, I assisted with easement monitoring, social media and community outreach, digitization and organization of easement files, and I researched funding opportunities.

I continued to work for the Conservancy the rest of my time at Kenyon, and my experience led me directly to a summer fellowship at the Piedmont Environmental Council in Virginia right after graduation. I then continued on to other conservation work in Washington, D.C., and back in my home state, where I worked to conserve wild and working lands in the Sierra Nevada region and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Coming full circle, I am now the associate director for land protection at the Marin Agricultural Land Trust, and I sit as an advising member of the of the Conservancy's Conservation and Lands Committee. It really is a dream come true to work for my hometown land trust and conserve and enhance land that matters deeply to me. I credit the Conservancy and Lisa Schott for starting me on this path and for being able to have a career that aligns with my values. I am so grateful for the opportunity to stay connected and continue to contribute to the preservation of the beautiful Kokosing region for future generations to enjoy.



Retired Director of Knox County Park District, Lori Totman, awarded the Conservancy's 2024 Jean S. Briggs Award



The Conservancy honored longtime Knox County conservation leader Lori Totman in October 2024 for her career spent conserving and managing natural resources. Totman, who retired at the end of 2023 after 10 years as director of the Knox County Park District, received the Conservancy's Jean S. Briggs Award for Leadership in Land Conservation during a dinner hosted by the Conservancy's Board of Directors, honoring easement grantors, landowners and community partners.

Established in 2022, the award recognizes extraordinary leadership in protecting the natural beauty, health and vibrancy of the rural lands surrounding Gambier and Kenyon. Given by the Conservancy's directors, it is named for Jean Briggs, the first landowner in Knox County to donate an agricultural easement to the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Conservancy, thus protecting her farm in perpetuity in 2003.

Totman shared in the Conservancy's mission of protecting the area's natural resources and was an invaluable partner to the Conservancy, according to director Amy Henricksen. "The Philander Chase Conservancy has a longstanding history of partnership and collaboration with the Knox County Park District, and this partnership thrived during Lori's tenure as the park district's director," Henricksen said. "Our community has benefited greatly from Lori's particular focus on the expansion of the county's green spaces, parks and trails."

Under Totman's leadership, the park district and the Conservancy partnered on the acquisition and protection via conservation easement of 62 acres adjoining Wolf Run Regional Park on its north side. Totman also participated in the early discussions envisioning the Knox County Greenway project, which led to the Conservancy's acquisition of 124 acres on Yauger Road, connecting Wolf Run Regional Park to the Brown Family Environmental Center at Kenyon.

LISTEN TO
THE EPISODE



All Sides with Amy Juravich

Amy Henricksen, Conservancy director, joined a conversation with Amy Juravich on WOSU Public Media's daily news program to discuss development and keeping the rural feel of central Ohio.

Knox County Junior Fair Livestock Sale

Philander Chase Conservancy was pleased to support Lily Grassbaugh's 4-H livestock project by purchasing her pen of three chickens at the Knox County Junior Fair Livestock Sale in July 2024. Lily is a member of the Better Livestock 4-H Club and is the daughter of Jenn Grassbaugh-Denuit and Doug Grassbaugh.



Landowner and Board Dinner

As part of its annual board meeting, the Conservancy hosted a special appreciation dinner to honor and thank the easement grantors and landowners who have made a lasting commitment to conservation. This dinner provided an opportunity for the Conservancy's board members to personally express their gratitude for the vital role these landowners play in protecting the natural beauty and rural character of the land surrounding Kenyon and Gambier.

Top: Beth Waller and PCC interns
Bottom left: Landowners Norman and Pat White
Bottom right: Landowners Mike and Krys Clifton





Ohio Documentary Film Screening

In celebration of the Philander Chase Conservancy's 25th anniversary, the Conservancy hosted a limited, pre-release screening of Brad Barber's documentary short film "OHIO." Screened during Kenyon's Reunion Weekend in May 2025, the film features Lisa Schott '80, the retired managing director of the Conservancy, along with the Conservancy and Kenyon College. Many of Schott's classmates from the Class of 1980 were on hand for the screening as part of their 45th reunion. The film is part of Barber's "States of America," a series exploring the concept of home and belonging by featuring a resident from each of the 50 U.S. states. It is anticipated that this short film will be released in 2026.



Introducing New Philander Chase Conservancy Board Members

The Conservancy welcomed two new board members in October 2024.

Charles Davidson '02 has been engaged with various local land trusts and conservation groups in Pennsylvania for the past 18 years. He has contributed to preserving and managing local lands, working closely with numerous organizations. His efforts have centered on promoting sustainable land use practices, protecting natural habitats and ensuring the long-term conservation of valuable land resources. Charles and his wife, Phoebe Brokaw '01, have two children and live on a small farm in Pennsylvania with their five dogs.

Philip Musser '94 is senior vice president of government affairs of NextEra Energy Inc., a leading clean energy company. Prior to joining NextEra Energy, Phil served as senior vice president and chief communications officer for The Boeing Company. Previously, he served as chairman and CEO of IMGE, a leading digital media and advocacy agency in Washington, D.C., that he co-founded in 2013. Phil has also served as senior advisor to several presidential campaigns and many governors, senators, and members of Congress, and he has more than 20 years of top-level experience in public relations, political strategy and government relations. He served as deputy chief of staff at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of State. He has served on the board of several companies and local nonprofit organizations in the Washington, D.C., area. Phil resides in Alexandria, Virginia, with his wife Heather and their two daughters.



Charles Davidson '02



Philip Musser '94



Mo Hesler

Introducing New Philander Chase Conservancy Staff Members

Mo Hesler joined the Woollam House team in 2024, supporting the work of the Philander Chase Conservancy and Kokosing Nature Preserve as administrative assistant. She previously worked as an administrative assistant in Kenyon's Academic Division.

Mo's love of the outdoors and her appreciation for conservation and sustainability have made her the perfect fit for the role. Her enthusiasm, positivity, collaborative spirit and unwavering support make her an absolute pleasure to be around. She creates a welcoming atmosphere for colleagues, students, visitors, and community partners alike and is keeping the staff well organized. Mo has very quickly become a vital member of the team and a joyful presence in Woollam House.

Evan Stern joined the Conservancy this year as project coordinator. He assists with some of the essential functions of the Conservancy, conducting annual monitoring visits to protected properties, helping with new conservation and agricultural easement procurement, overseeing the Conservancy's student interns, and leading the re-accreditation process with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

He came to the Conservancy from Richland Soil and Water Conservation District in Mansfield, Ohio. He obtained a B.A. in environmental biology from Houghton College and interned with various conservation organizations, including the National Park Service and The Wilds. He loves to travel and ride his bike and is an avid birder. Evan lives with his family in Mount Vernon.



Evan Stern



Thank you, Jill Shriver

In 2024 we bade a fond farewell to Jill Shriver, administrative assistant for the Philander Chase Conservancy and Kokosing Nature Preserve for eight years. During that time, Jill was a beloved colleague and trusted resource for the Conservancy's many landowners and community partners, and she was a kind supporter for the individuals, families and friends served by Kokosing Nature Preserve. Jill's retirement marked the end of an impressive 27-year career at Kenyon. We wish Jill all the best as she enjoys time with her family, and especially with her grandchildren!

At Kenyon

Rob Alexander, Environmental Studies
Julie Brodie, Office of Community Partnerships
Todd Burson, Finance Division
Rachel Curtis, Finance Division
Kyle Eddy, Finance Division
Siobhan Fennessy, Environmental Studies and Biology
Colleen Garland, Office of Advancement
Adam Gilson, Office of Communications
Molly Guttridge '99, Advancement Division
Ruth Heindel, Environmental Studies
Eric Holdener, Environmental Studies
Noelle Jordan, Brown Family Environmental Center
President Julie Kornfeld and the Office of the President
Iris Levin, Environmental Studies and Biology
Jacqueline Holmes, General Counsel
Janet Marsden, Communications Division
Bethany McCarty, Kenyon Farm
Shane McGuire, Brown Family Environmental Center
David Maldonado Rivera, Religious Studies
Susan Morse, Chief of Staff
Nick Neuerer, Finance Division
Katelyn Ratajczak, Office of Communications
Lauren Schmitt, Environmental Studies
Ian Smith, Operations Division

In the Community

Kathy Bartlebaugh, Park National Bank
Tom Blackford, Photographer
Rob Clendening and the Knox County Soil and Water District
Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts (COLT)
Kris Davis, Naturalist
Seth Dennison, Legacy Signs
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Recycled

25 Years of Philander Chase Conservancy BY THE NUMBERS

Total Acreage
Protected

6,049
ACRES

Total Number of
Easements

50

Total Acres Protected
by Conservation Easements

2,785
ACRES

Total Acres Protected
by Agricultural Easements

2,741
ACRES

Miles of Kokosing
Riverbanks Protected

10.9
MILES

Wooded Acres
Protected

1,792
ACRES