

## **A Lasting Legacy: The Kay Perkins Preserve**

For those unfamiliar with her remarkable story, Kay Perkins (1903–1983) was more than just a landowner—she was an adventurer, conservationist, and nature lover. She had a deep connection to the Chagrin River, where she enjoyed steelhead fishing, and she instilled a love of the outdoors in her family. One of her most famous adventures included canoeing down the Ochlocknee River from Thomasville, Georgia, to the Gulf of Mexico, a journey that spanned three days.

Her passion for preserving nature extended beyond Gates Mills. In the late 1970s or early 1980s, she donated 150 acres of land in Georgia to The Nature Conservancy, ensuring its protection from development. Her descendants continue her legacy, supporting conservation initiatives such as the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Holden Arboretum, and Cleveland Metroparks.

This acquisition of the preserve would not have been possible without the generosity of Katharine Perkins Oliva and Alexander Crane Scovil, who sold this heavily wooded hillside to the GMLC in 2024, after the sale of the Perkins family home. Their commitment to honoring Kay Perkins' legacy will allow the community to continue enjoying the serenity and ecological benefits of this forest.

Nestled among other wooded properties, the Kay Perkins Preserve expands a critical wildlife corridor leading to the Chagrin River. The property's streams, mature trees, and thriving ecosystem provide a haven for local wildlife, including deer, foxes, and migratory birds. Across from the preserve to the south of Mayfield Road, was the location of the Baldwin Estate's Bird Sanctuary along Carpenter Road. The neighboring Kay Perkins Preserve extends this bird sanctuary creating a peaceful and permanent refuge for native birds and wildlife.

By securing this land, the GMLC is safeguarding not only a beautiful piece of Gates Mills but also an essential natural habitat, a testament to the GMLC's mission: to protect the land, history, and character of Gates Mills. The GMLC and the Gates Mills community extend heartfelt gratitude to Katharine Perkins Oliva and Alexander Crane Scovil for their foresight in preserving this land's beauty and tranquility that Kay Perkins cherished.