

A Conservation Collaboration for an Historic Property

The Carpenter Road property consists of a 78.8-acre area located in the heart of the Village of Gates Mills and bordering the Chagrin River and property owned by the Cleveland Metroparks. The Conservancy worked with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History to document the conservation values present on the property and raised the necessary funds to purchase the easement. These funds were made possible through a Clean Ohio Conservation Fund – *Chagrin River Riparian Protection Project* application and grant.

The preservation of these properties as a natural area and used by the Village as a park and a bird sanctuary, is important to the Gates Mills Community because it possesses significant scenic, natural and aesthetic values, and it constitutes an important natural area for endangered species. The Protected Property is located in an area identified as a potential conservation corridor by the Northeast Ohio Regional Parks Consortium, which compiled a “conservation vision that could improve the quality of life, the environment, and the region’s economic competitiveness”.

This gift of the Bird Sanctuary parcels, totaling 35.48 acres and given to the Village by Lillian Hanna Baldwin in 1948, stated that the “property be used for park purposes, particularly as a bird sanctuary...(and) that the property be left as nearly as possible in its natural state and trees be cut only as necessary for the preservation of the forest.”

The natural habitat that exists on the protected property contains a splendid old growth Hemlock-Beech-Maple forest. It includes (5) mature forest canopy birds nesting areas, including the threatened Dark-eyed Junco, a species listed as rare by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Therefore, the conservation easement protects significant natural habitats.

The property contains 7,900' of “Category 3 - Primary Headwater Streams” located along the steep ravines. A tributary stream running through the property is a “Primary Headwater Habitat - Category III Coldwater Stream” which contains Northern Two-lined Salamanders, an indicator species for Category 3 waterways, the highest water quality category.

Five other parcels acquired at various times by the Village are located adjacent to the west side of the Chagrin River and together with a 9.5-acre parcel owned by Cleveland Metroparks encompass all of the property on the west side of the Chagrin River from Mayfield Road to Old Mill Road. They must be protected as a riparian buffer zone, most of which is in the flood plain. It supports a variety of birds, and this section of the River has been designated as a “Scenic River”, enjoyed by canoeists and fishermen, especially Steelhead fishermen.

Another portion, (12.6 acres) has been used by the Village for municipal purposes and includes a cell tower, a gas well, storage facilities, a tree disposal site and parking area. It was excluded from this Conservation Easement.