Paddys Run Conservation Project

Partnering for Preservation

Years of effort and billions of dollars were needed to clean up environmental contamination at Fernald, a former uranium processing facility in south-western Ohio. Currently a community asset, the Fernald Preserve now provides wildlife habitat and educational opportunities.

The Fernald trustees, including Ohio EPA, the Department of Energy, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, are partnering with Three Valley Conservation Trust to enhance habitats and protect water quality in Paddys Run and the Great Miami Aquifer near the Fernald Preserve.

Three Valley Conservation Trust is a non-profit land trust organization whose mission is to conserve the natural environment and cultural heritage of southwest Ohio. Three Valley Conservation Trust brings experience working with local families to preserve their land.

The partners will work with landowners to keep land in private hands and preserve traditional land uses, such as family farms, while protecting water quality.

Three Valley Conservation Trust
Conserving the natural environment and cultural heritage of southwest Ohio

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

Paddys Run Conservation Project

Our future flows through our land

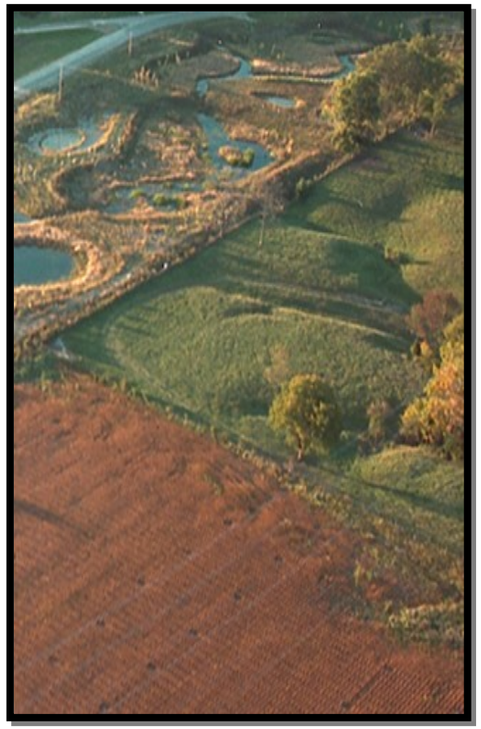

Photo courtesy U.S. DOE

Protecting our water, restoring habitat, conserving our land, preserving our heritage

Protect Your Land, Protect the Water

A watershed is all the land that drains to a body of water, like Paddys Run.

What happens on the land affects the water running through and under it. Paddys Run is directly linked to the Great Miami Buried Valley Aquifer, which was damaged by activities at the former Fernald uranium processing facility.

Billions of dollars were spent restoring the land and water at and near Fernald. Land conservation in the Paddys Run watershed will enhance the streams and the aquifer and compensate for some of the damage that was done.

The Paddys Run Conservation Project will protect the aquifer and preserve natural areas, wildlife habitat and working farms through conservation easements.

Preserve Your Land and Your Heritage

Up to $13 million will be used to purchase conservation easements in and around the Paddys Run Watershed and within portions of the Great Miami Aquifer.

Participating landowners would receive grant funding to permanently protect their land with conservation easements.

As an easement donor, landowners still retain private ownership and use of the land, and the conservation easement is permanently protected by the Three Valley Conservation Trust.

By using conservation easements to save land from development, the Paddys Run Conservation Project will protect water quality in our streams and ground water. We will help landowners retain control of working land, while preserving local heritage and the environment.

Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

Will Ohio fund easements only in the Paddys Run watershed? As part of the natural resources damages settlement, the Fernald trustees are focusing their efforts on protecting the Great Miami Buried Valley Aquifer, which was damaged by the activities at Fernald.

While the project is focused on the Paddys Run watershed, the trustees are willing to consider land outside the focus area if preserving such land will protect the aquifer.

Who will hold the easement? Ohio EPA's partner, Three Valley Conservation Trust, will guide interested landowners through the process of obtaining a conservation easement and hold the easements. Three Valley Conservation Trust is a local, nonprofit organization.

Where will the money come from? As partial compensation for damages to the Great Miami Aquifer caused by the activities at the former Fernald Feed Materials facility, Ohio received $13 million from the U.S. Department of Energy. A portion of this money will be used to purchase conservation easements in the Paddys Run watershed.

Why should landowners consider participation? Landowners may continue farming and enjoy other land uses while protecting it for the future. Depending on the characteristics of the property, a land-owner can be paid up to 100 percent of the value of the current development rights.

Are there any tax benefits? It depends on individual circumstances. Interested landowners should consult a tax attorney.

Does the land have to be currently farmed to be eligible? No. Easement values may include agriculture, woodlands, streams, wetlands, and unique habitat.

What will and will not be allowed on easement-protected land? Conservation easements are crafted to address landowner desires. However, land uses such as development would be prohibited.

Would the entire parcel be under the conservation easement? Generally, conservation easements cover an entire parcel. There are times, however, when a small piece can be left out of the agreement.

What access will the easement holders have to the land? As required by the Internal Revenue Service, the Three Valley Conservation Trust schedules an annual visit to each easement-protected property to confirm that the conservation values are being sustained.

More questions? Please contact:

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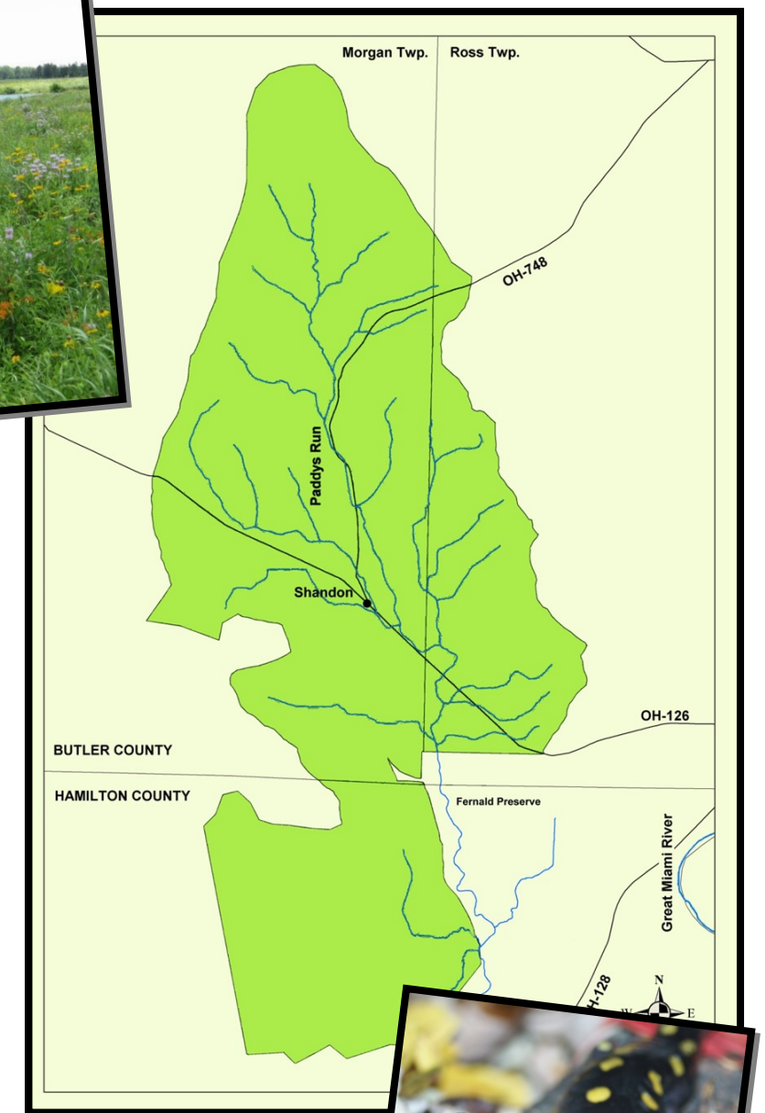
Conservation Project Focus Area