



City Forest Credits Carbon Preservation Project Application

1. Project Name

Black Fork Forest Preservation

2. Project Type

Preservation

3. Project Location

Project must be in or adjacent to one of the following. Describe which one of the criteria the project meets and provide name of city, town, or jurisdiction where project is located.

- *“Urban Area” per Census Bureau maps; see <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2010/geo/2010-census-urban-areas.html>*
- *An incorporated or unincorporated city or town*
- *A planning area for a regional metropolitan planning agency or entity*
- *Land owned, designated, and used by a municipal or quasi-municipal entity for source water or watershed protection*
- *A transportation or utility right of way through one of above*

The project is located within a planning area for a metropolitan planning agency or entity, Richland County Regional Planning Commission (RCRPC). RCRPC was formed under Section 713.21 of the Revised Code of the State of Ohio and encompasses Richland County, the Cities of Mansfield, Ontario and Shelby, townships and cooperating municipalities. The Bylaws can be found here: https://www.rcrpc.org/files/ugd/3fa60f_bd440808c3b1463b9b4cc4313873d2b7.pdf.

The project is located in Mifflin Township which is part of the Mansfield Metropolitan Statistical Area in Richland County.

Address: Property Centroid: 40.797207, -82.409665

Parcel Number(s): 021-17-030-10-000 (partial), 021-17-030-13-000 (partial), 021-17-030-17-000 (partial), 021-17-019-13-001 (partial), 021-17-030-14-000 (partial)

4. Project Operator

Organization: Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Address: 3850 Chagrin River Road

City: Moreland Hills

State: Ohio

Zip: 44022

Contact(s): Sarah Blakely
sblakely@wrlandconservancy.org

Alex Czayka
aczayka@wrlandconservancy.org

5. Project Description

Provide short narrative of the overall project goals, project acreage, land ownership, forest characteristics, and land use/zoning

The Black Fork Forest Preservation Project (the “Project”) consists of a 169-acre Project site that is part of a 482.45-acre property. Western Reserve Land Conservancy (the “Land Conservancy”) is seeking to preserve 169 acres of mature forest that are part of a larger preservation property which also includes old agricultural fields and wetlands. Preservation of the forest will benefit wildlife habitat, improve air and water quality, and provide carbon sequestration.

Located along a major interstate, the Project provides an important buffer for wetlands that drain to the region’s main water source, Charles Mill Lake. Adjacent to the heavily trafficked highway and agricultural land, protection of the Black Fork Forest will provide significant environmental and aesthetic benefits. Richland County, where the Project is located, has had a high rate of conversion of forests to agricultural use and urban expansion, so protection of remaining intact forests is critical to retain the region’s natural heritage.

The site contains high-quality forested areas with a diverse assemblage of mature trees with an average estimated age of 80+ years. The tree canopy height falls primarily within the 60- to 90-foot range with taller trees of 90 to 120 feet abundant in the northeastern portion of the property. Some of the tree species onsite include shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), bitternut hickory (*Carya cordiformis*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), American elm (*Ulmus Americana*), red oak (*Quercus rubra*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), and black oak (*Quercus velutina*).

The Land Conservancy’s overall goal is to protect the Project in perpetuity through fee ownership and conservation restrictions. The property will be owned by Natural Areas Land Conservancy, a supporting organization of the Land Conservancy, with restrictions held by the Land Conservancy. The Project will be enrolled into the diverse portfolio of protected lands and monitored annually to ensure its natural resources (including mature forest) are upheld to standards identified in the conservation restrictions. Layers of legal protection and stewardship monitoring granted through the easement terms will ensure continued provision of conservation benefits for generations to come.

6. Project Impacts

Provide short narrative of the impacts this project will achieve. Examples include how the project addresses increased access to green spaces for under-resourced communities, flood control, watershed protection, human health benefits, recreation or bird and wildlife habitat.

Bird and bat habitat protection

The hardwood forests that make up the project area are important breeding, nesting, and foraging habitat for neotropical migrating birds as well as native Ohio birds that depend on the habitat year-round. There have been 30 state-listed birds observed onsite or on the adjacent properties including 6 forest-associated migratory birds that depend on forested habitat, including Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria Citrea*), Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Setophaga Caerulescens*), Brown Creeper (*Certhia*

Americana), Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco Hyemalis*), Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus Satrapa*), and Veery (*Catharus Fuscenscens*).

The forest contains areas with mature trees that are the size, density, and type that serve as suitable habitat for bats. Though no bat surveys have been completed onsite, it contains habitat suitable for roosting and foraging as identified in the federally-endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalist*) recovery plan.

Air and noise pollution control

Located along Interstate 71, the roadside forest acts as a barrier between traffic and surrounding land which helps to reduce air and noise pollution. The green infrastructure barrier created by the forest buffers homes, fields, and wetlands from the highway. The trees capture pollutants produced by cars and absorb noise created by traffic. Preservation of the forest will protect the reduction of air and noise pollution provided currently and allow for increased benefits over time as the trees continue to mature.

Water quality and watershed protection

The region's main water source, Charles Mill Lake, is located just southeast of the Project area. The forested area provides a critical buffer to wetlands and streams that drain to the lake and protect the water quality of these resources. Interspersed with agricultural fields and located alongside an impervious highway, the forested Project area serves as an important system to slow runoff from neighboring lands before entering the waterways and the region's main water source. Slowing the water and filtering out nutrients is an important benefit for the water quality and protection of the watershed. The Project's location within Ohio's Muskingum River Watershed connects it to a region that drains a total of 8,051 square miles or approximately 20% of Ohio's surface area.

Open space preservation

The protection of the property and Project area will add to a nearly 4,120-acre corridor of protected green space including lands owned by Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District, Ashland County Park District, and Ashland University. The Land Conservancy also plans to complete restoration of the old agricultural fields and enhance existing wetlands to further benefit the resources of the area.

7. Additional Information

Provide additional information about your project. Examples include collaboration with other partners or how this project fits into a larger effort.

This preservation project will be the second completed in Richland County and fits into a larger, strategic county-wide comprehensive plan involving the Richland County Parks District, and other conservation entities. Preservation of forested land in the county helps further the goals of Richland County.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy, an accredited land trust, is Ohio's largest land trust with over 67,000 acres conserved across 24 Ohio counties. The Land Conservancy preserves natural resources that provide multiple environmental benefits and improve the quality of life for residents of Northeast Ohio. Carbon credits are an excellent extension of the Land Conservancy's mission, furthering conservation goals that will benefit communities, increase valuable open space acreage, and preserve critical wildlife habitat.

Signed on May 23 in 2022, by Alex Czayka, for Western Reserve Land Conservancy.



Signature

Alex M Czayka

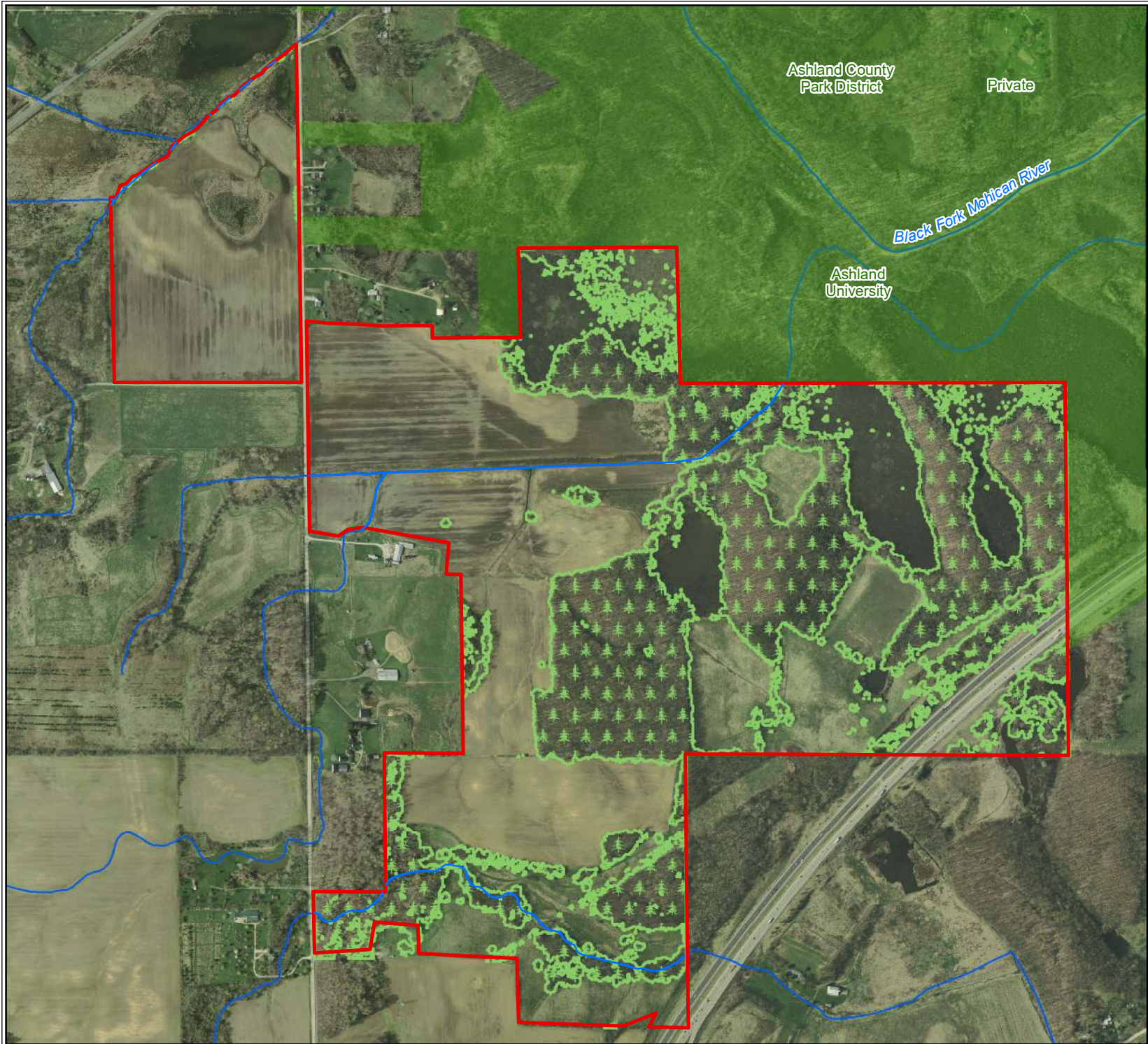
Printed Name

440-813-4664

Phone

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Email



Black Fork Forest Preservation Project



Parcel Boundary:
482 ac.



Preservation
Project Area: 169
Ac.



NHD -
Streams/Rivers

0 480 960 1,440



Feet



Western Reserve
Land Conservancy

land • people • community

Map Created 5/25/2022 sblakely