



## City Forest Credits Preservation Project Application

### 1. Project Name

Kirtland Hills Community Forest

### 2. Project Operator

*Provide name of organization/entity and contact information*

Organization/Entity: Western Reserve Land Conservancy  
Address: 3850 Chagrin River Road  
City: Moreland Hills  
State: Ohio  
Zip: 44022

Primary and/or secondary contact(s):

Sarah Blakely  
440.528.4168

[sblakely@wrlandconservancy.org](mailto:sblakely@wrlandconservancy.org)

Hannah Kelling  
513.673.7740

[hkelling@wrlandconservancy.org](mailto:hkelling@wrlandconservancy.org)

### 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 the name of the city, town, or jurisdiction where project is located. Provide the parcel numbers.*

- "Urban Area" per Census Bureau maps
- 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 in the Village of Kirtland Hills, Lake County, Ohio, an incorporated village It is also located within and along the US Census Urban Area, as well as within the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency's planning jurisdiction.

Address: Approximate parcels' centroid: 41.651031, -81.323879

Parcels:

Full: 22-A-004-0-00-006-0; 22-A-004-0-00-012-0

Partial: 22-A-001-0-00-005-0; 22-A-001-0-00-004-0; 22-A-004-0-00-011-0; 22-A-001-0-00-003-0; 22-A-001-0-00-007-0; 22-A-004-0-00-010-0

#### **4. Project Description**

*Provide short narrative of the project goals, Project Area acreage, land ownership, forest characteristics, and land use/zoning. Provide details about when the property was acquired or potential timeline for acquisition. Include information about when carbon crediting was first introduced into the overall project scope.*

Western Reserve Land Conservancy (the “Land Conservancy”) is seeking to permanently preserve the 64.8-acre Kirtland Hills Community Forest (the “Project”). The Project includes diverse stands of oak, pine, maple, beech, and other species of trees as old as 75 years in an area with increasing development pressure.

Preservation of the Project is critical to protect this unique, diverse forest in an urbanized environment. The Project contains 12 native Ohio tree species including sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), red oak (*Quercus rubra*), tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), and red pine (*Pinus resinosa*). There are five distinct stands based on age and species, ranging from approximately 55 years to 75 years based on historic aerial photography of the site.

The Project is owned by the Village of Kirtland Hills and is adjacent to the Kirtland Hills Village Hall. The Land Conservancy has worked with the current mayor Jack Turben and the local community to preserve the forest. The Project is currently zoned to allow for residential (55.4 acres) and retail (9.4 acres) development. In order to meet the CFC Tree Preservation Protocol requirements, the Land Conservancy entered into discussions starting in February 2022 with the mayor and the Village of Kirtland Hills to conserve the property and prohibit future timber harvest as part of a carbon project. The Village will grant the Land Conservancy a permanent conservation easement in 2024 with the goal to preserve trees on this property and register the Project for carbon crediting. The Village of Kirtland Hills will sign an Agreement to Transfer Credits to the Land Conservancy. The involvement of the Land Conservancy will provide perpetual preservation of the forest.

The Land Conservancy’s overall goal is to protect the Project in perpetuity through the aforementioned conservation restrictions. The Village of Kirtland Hills will continue to own and manage the Project area in fee title. The Project will be enrolled into the Land Conservancy’s diverse portfolio of protected lands, monitoring the Project annually to ensure its natural resources (including the maturing forest) are upheld to standards identified in 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.

In addition, the Village will operate the Project area as a public park, allowing public access to over 1.5 miles of walking trails. Upon completion of conservation easement, the Village will work together with the Land Conservancy staff to undergo a park planning process with the goal of opening the Project to public access a few years later. Public access will allow pedestrian use for nature enjoyment, nature study, bird watching and other compatible uses not detrimental to the high-quality habitat. The location of this Project in the Village of Kirtland Hills, and its high density of residential occupants, will provide perpetual public access and human health benefits to the surrounding community.

#### **5. Project Impacts**

*Provide short narrative of the environmental, social, and health impacts this project will achieve. Examples include how the project addresses increased access to green spaces for under-resourced communities,*

*flood control or watershed protection, benefits for human health and well-being, improved recreation opportunities, or protects bird and wildlife habitat.*

#### Open space preservation

With continued development throughout the Village of Kirtland Hills and Lake County, it is critical to conserve what is left of the forests that once dominated the region. The Project's 64.8 acres of forest will be preserved in perpetuity through a conservation easement held by the Land Conservancy, thus contributing to the conservation of the natural resources located on the property.

#### Watershed protection

The Project's 64.8 acres of forest will help mitigate flooding by absorbing rainwater, slowly releasing it back into the watershed. A single large canopy tree can absorb between 500 to 760 gallons of rainwater over the span of a year while stabilizing soil and preventing erosion. The mature forest's stormwater retention capacity will facilitate percolation deep into the ground as opposed to impervious features that cause rainwater to rapidly rush into storm drains, culverts, and waterways carrying pollutants and sediment into the watershed.

#### Human health

The Project's forest also significantly impacts air quality, as a single mature tree can absorb up to 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year. In an area with increasing development, the additional benefit of sound absorption provided by the forest is important to reduce noise pollution. These combined air and noise quality benefits will increase over time as protection of the Project will allow for continued maturation of the 64.8-acre forest. The Project's protection of open space will also contribute to the social and psychological quality of life for residents. For the benefit of health and wellbeing, the Trust for Public Land recommends that every American have access to a public park within 10-minute walking distance from their homes, and based on that recommendation, the Property is earmarked as an area in which there is a high need for park space.

#### Bird and wildlife habitat

The Project is located within a migratory flyway, and its forested habitat provides essential stopover habitat for neotropical migratory birds, species that rely on large, intact stands of deciduous trees in Northeast Ohio along their migration route. The Project's loose-bark trees also serve as prime roosting habitat for bats. The forest provides these species with critical breeding, nesting, feeding, roosting, and stopover habitat.

### **6. Additional Information**

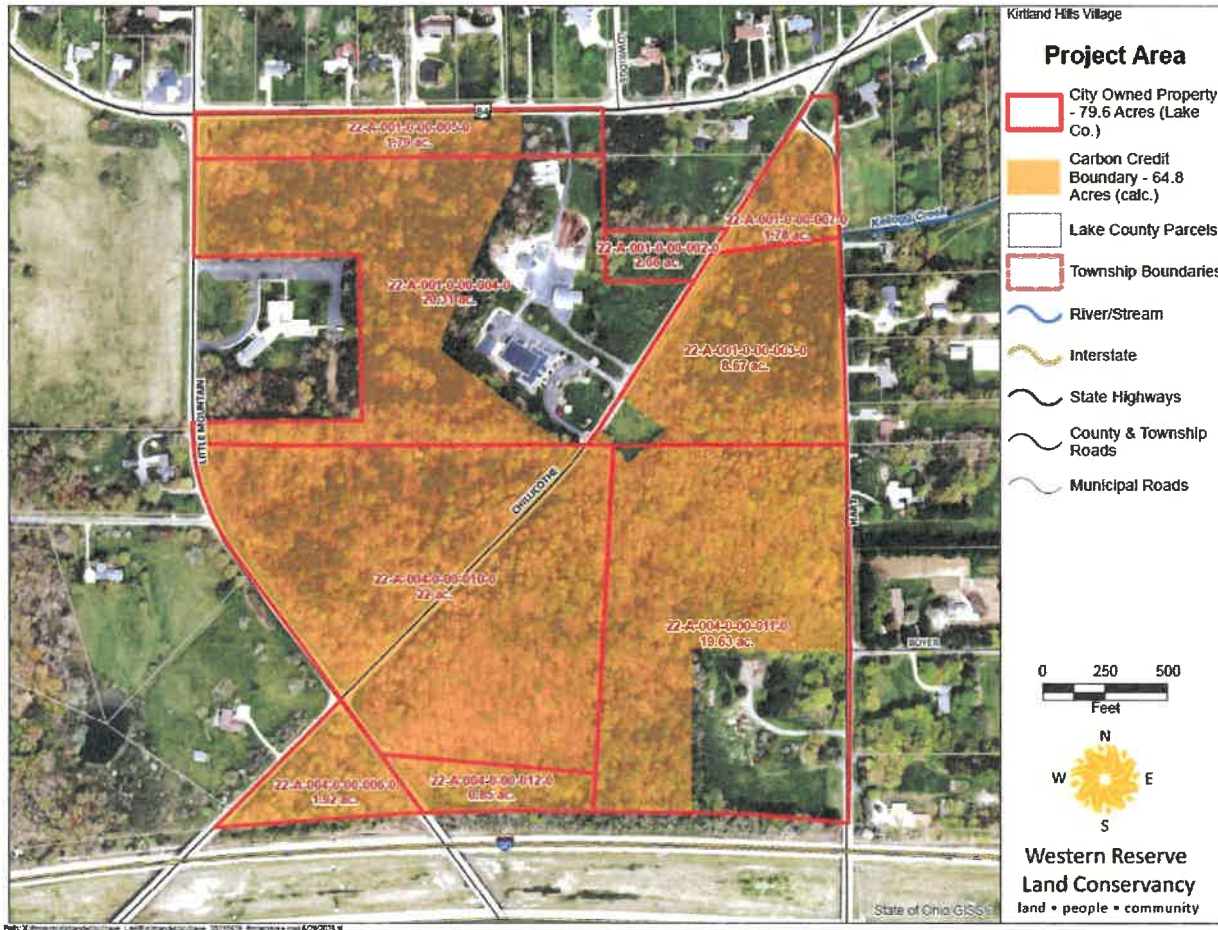
*Provide additional information about your project. If the Project Area is part of a larger program or preservation effort, include one sentence with more information. Examples include collaboration with other partners to preserve forestland or how this project fits into a regional initiative.*

The Project is located in a highly developed area adjacent to major state roads, and its protection will prevent additional development in an area that is quickly losing green space and the associated benefits. The Land Conservancy's efforts in partnership with the mayor and the Village of Kirtland Hills to record a conservation easement on the Project area demonstrates the local commitment to protection of the forest.

Western Reserve Land Conservancy, an accredited land trust, is Ohio's largest land trust with over 70,000 acres conserved across 30 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.

**7. Map**

Provide a map of the Project Area.



**PROJECT OPERATOR SIGNATURE**

Signed on 12/20 in 2023, by Alex Czayka, Senior Vice President for Conservation Transactions for Western Reserve Land Conservancy.

Signature

Alex M Czayka

Printed Name

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