



Farmland Conservation in Southern Illinois

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HeartLands Conservancy Mission

Empower and collaborate with the people of Southern Illinois to advance and protect the health of our distinctive communities and nationally significant natural and cultural resources

ABOUT HEARTLANDS CONSERVANCY

Formed 1989

- USDA Program
- SWIRC&D, now Heartlands
- Service area expansion in late 2023 through strategic plan

3 Focus Areas:

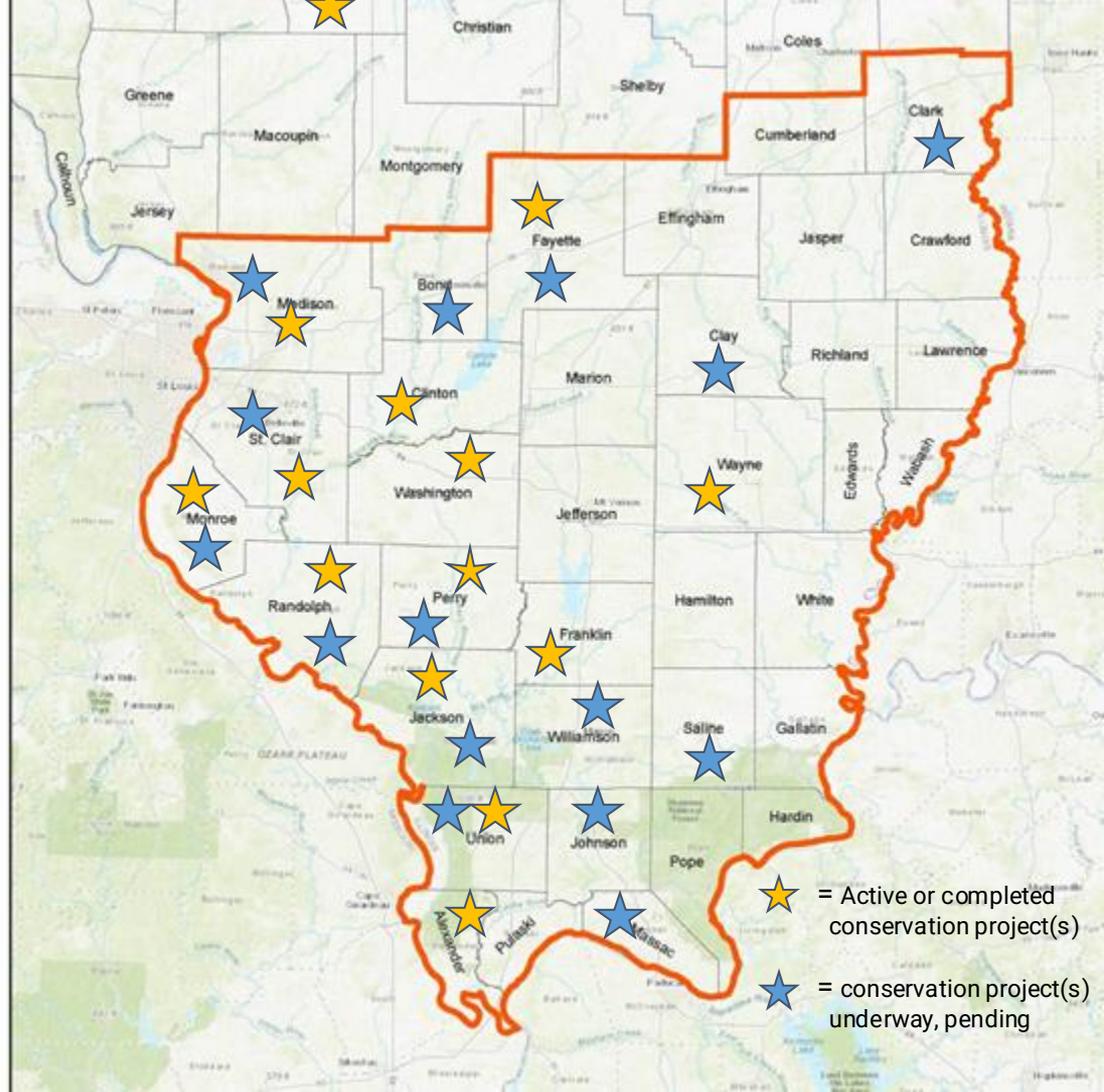
- Land Conservation
- Watershed Health
- Thriving Communities

48 Conservation Easements

11 owned/managed properties

22 other properties transferred to other entity or assisted

11,072 acres protected (about 4,000 acres have conservation easements)



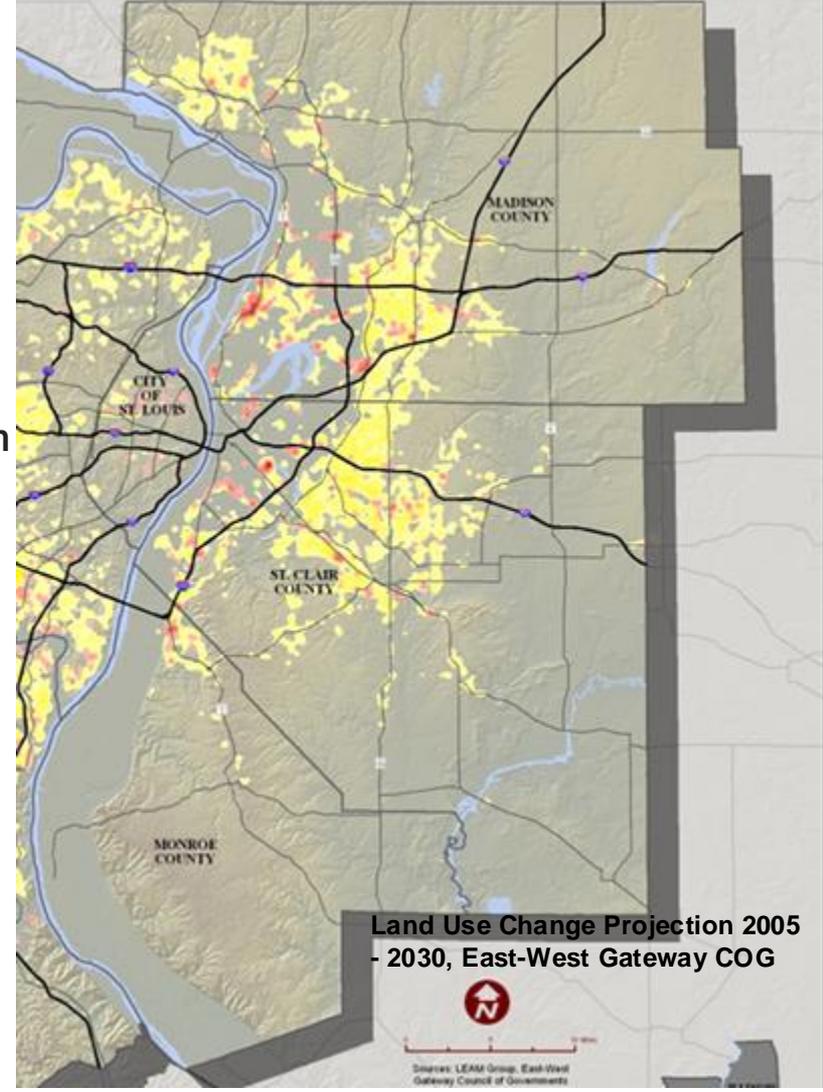
LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM

- Kaskaskia & Middle Mississippi River Watershed Ecosystems (wetlands, forests, etc)
- Prairie preservation & restoration (sand & hill prairies)
 - IL Chorus Frog & Ornate Box Turtles
 - Monarch Butterfly
 - Wildlife habitat
- Farmland Preservation
- Cultural/Sacred Landscapes (Mounds, etc)
- Floodplains & Resilience
 - Scott Air Force Base
 - American Bottom
- Community spaces:
 - Vacant lots
 - Parks, trails, & open space
 - Community forests
- Wetlands, Stream, & Species Mitigation Bank Partner

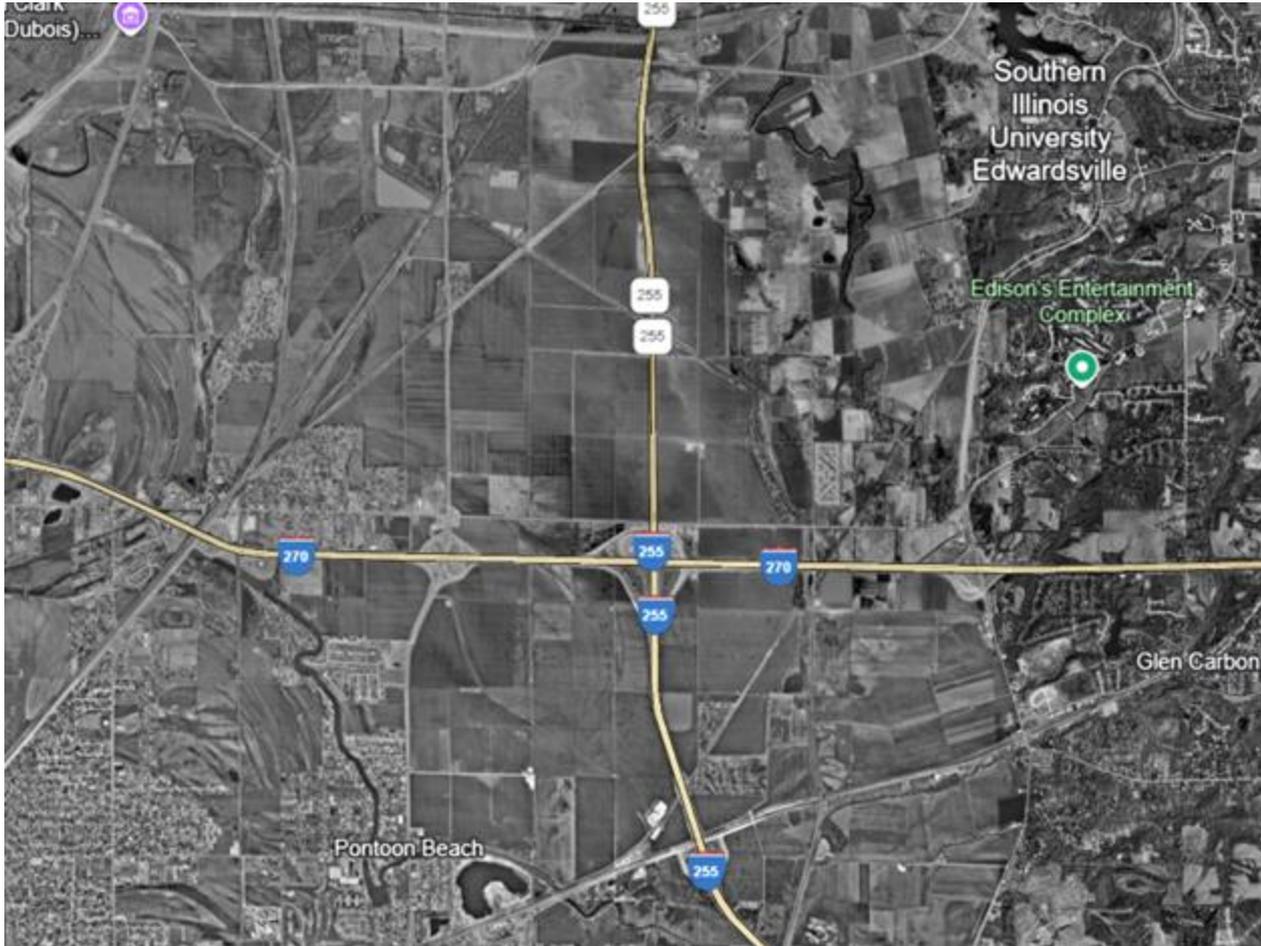


WHY WE CONSERVE FARMLAND

- Organization founded to support agricultural and natural resources in southwestern Illinois
 - Illinois had highest amount of agricultural land converted to development of Midwestern States 2001 - 2021
- Haphazard growth of development in St. Louis Metropolitan Service Area
 - At 17%, Madison County is fastest conversion of farmland to development 2017-2022
- Farmland...
 - Absorbs rainfall, helping with flooding
 - Provides wildlife travel corridors, supports wildlife
 - Is important for the economy & way of life
 - Provides food, fuel, & fiber
 - Often includes buffer corridors, woods, & waters



MADISON COUNTY - 1998



Google/U.S. Geological Survey



IL Chorus Frog



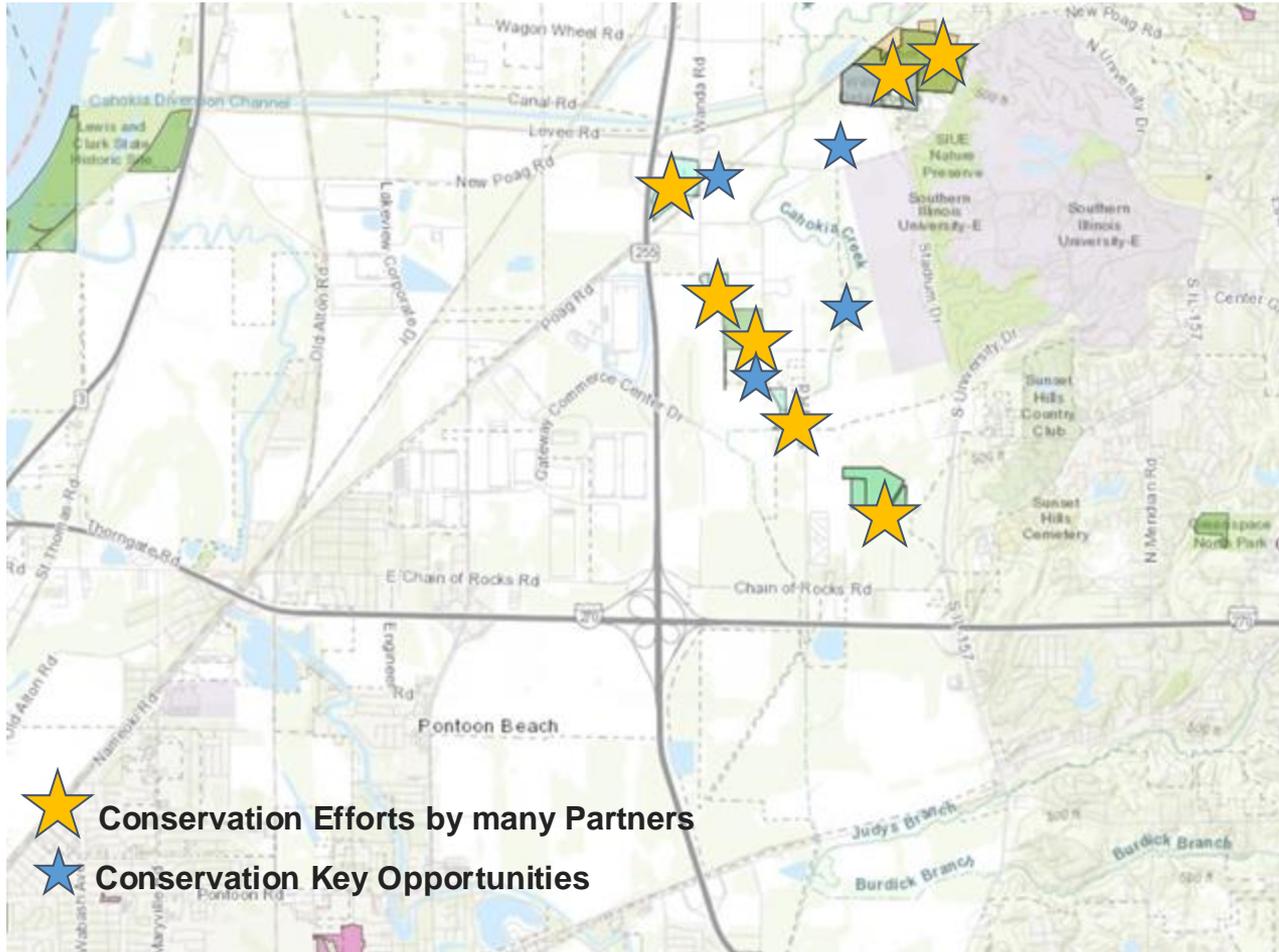
Ornate Box

Turtle



Horseradish

MADISON COUNTY - 2023



IL Chorus Frog

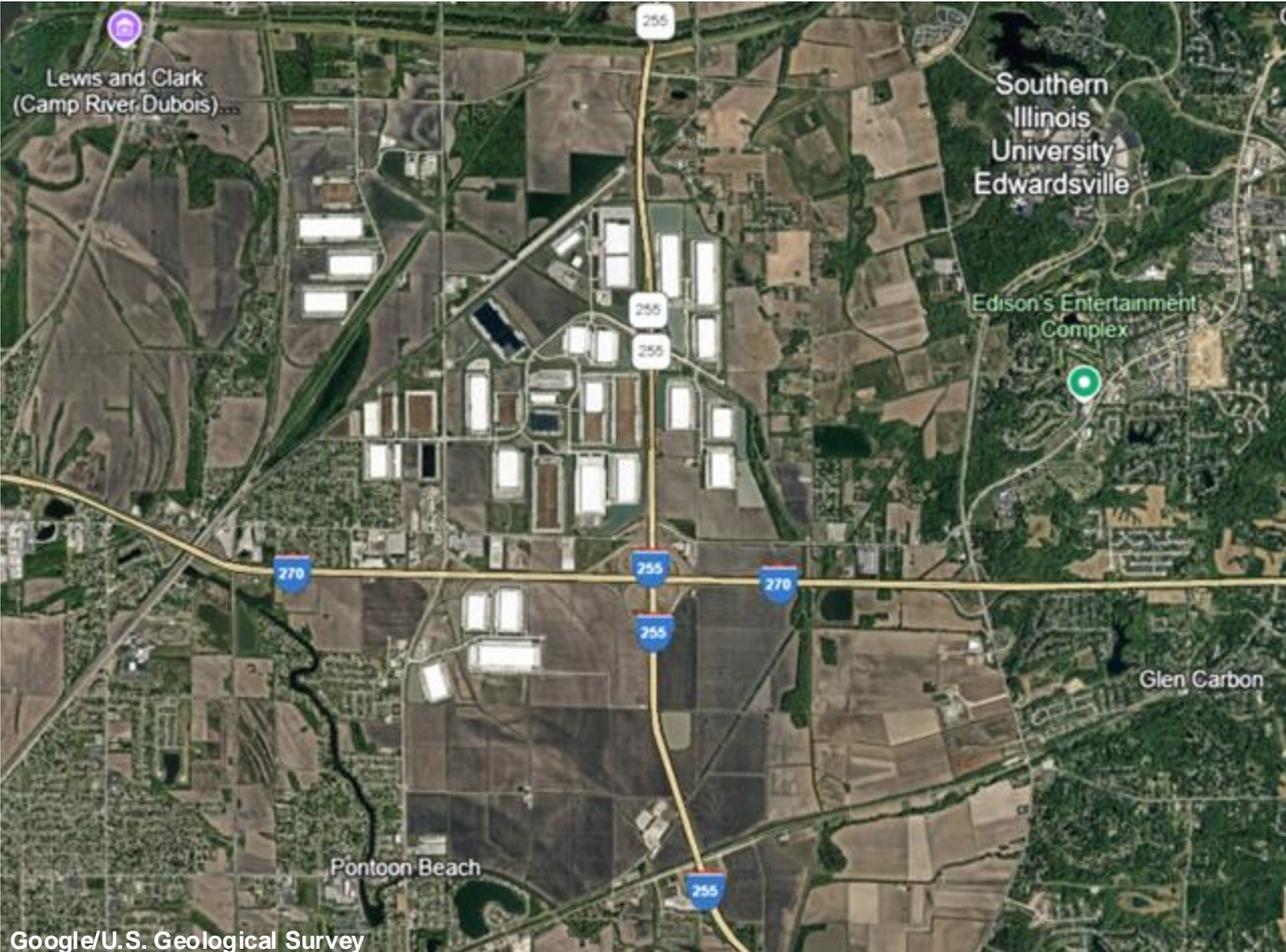


Ornate Box



Bob White Quail

MADISON COUNTY - 2023

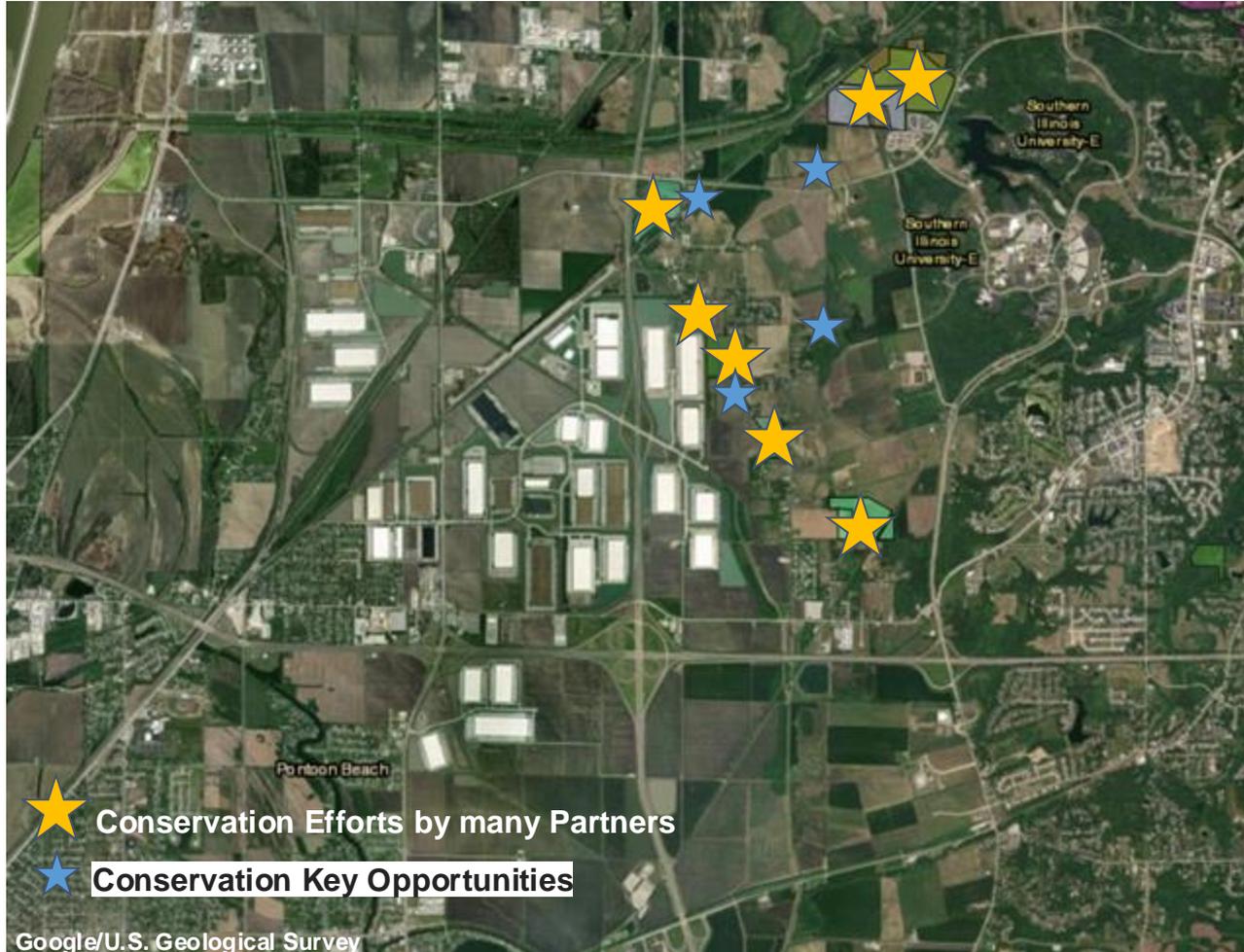


AMAZON BOX



AMAZON WAREHOUSE PROGRESS MADISON COUNTY THE ONE TO WATCH WAPT NEWS

MADISON COUNTY - 2023



FARMLAND PRESERVATION

- **3,000 acres farmland under conservation easement**
 - 78% of acreage protected under easement
- **Donated easements**
 - Private donor had covered stewardship donations for several donations in past
 - Working on ACEP
- **Accept fee-simple land donations of farmland**
 - Tradeland: Conserve & sell
 - Conserve & continue farming
 - Conserve & Restore (+ transfer)
- **Other Beneficial Opportunities:**
 - Encourage Conservation Practices, Regenerative Agricultural Practices
 - Assist with Best Management Practices to protect water quality and erosion of topsoil .
 - Helps to protect other lands: Bluffs, Forests, etc.



Selected Farmland Conservation Easements



**Weilbacher Family Farm
Monroe County**



**Fahey Farm
St. Clair County**



**Wittenauer Family Farm
Monroe County**



THANK YOU



HEARTLANDS
CONSERVANCY