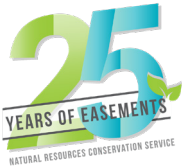


Easement Landowner Profile

Craig and Meghan Black Clinton County



Craig and Meghan Black purchased their 120-acre conservation easement from Craig's uncle, who enrolled the Clinton County property in the Emergency Wetlands Reserve Program (EWRP) in 1994. The easement closed in 1996.

"My uncle enrolled the land because he was a non-resident and wanted a place for recreation," said Craig. "He also wanted a way to conserve the property."

"It was also not the best producing ground, so this was a great program to permanently retire the land and still have it in the family," he said.

Recreational & Wildlife Use

Craig says he loves the property, calling it his own "little piece of heaven." The easement is primarily surrounded by agricultural land, so it allows wildlife an escape from



the surrounding area. "We admire all of the wildlife species that come through and make this their home," he said. "We listen to the Trumpeter swans and although I'm not a waterfowl hunter, we appreciate that hundreds of ducks use our wetlands and make themselves at home."

Craig says he wants to enhance the easement so wildlife want to return. "That gives me ample opportunity for projects," he said. Opportunities for improvements include maintaining the native [grass/plant] stand, planting a food plot, and conducting prescribed burns.

"I strive to be the best steward of the land," he said.

With the family cabin nearby, Craig says the easement provides a peaceful, relaxing atmosphere and a breathtaking view from the front porch. "It is nice to have such a beautiful place that is yours, and it really has sentimental value to me and my family," he said.

Easement Future

Craig says he enjoys seeing the changes that occur over time, and how the land has naturally evolved in the quality of wildlife, hydrology and environment.

"I enjoy being out there whenever I can, enjoying the outdoors," said Craig. "I hope to pass it on to my daughters one day."

"It's comforting to know this land is always going to stay protected," he said.



Megan Black (left) and her two daughters strike a pose with their pups on the family's Clinton County conservation easement.