

THE ACRES
QUARTERLY

Summer 2023 | Vol. 62 - No. 2



ACRES
LANDTRUST

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From the Executive Director

Dear Members,

Knowing that ACRES decisions will have impacts for not only decades but centuries, we ensure careful thought, relevant research and ample time are part of the decision-making process. It is both sobering and exciting that decisions made on ACRES behalf will outlive our mortgages, our marriages, our lives.

ACRES current strategic plan ends December 31, 2024. Last year we began creating a new strategic plan, giving ourselves more than two years to think, debate, dream, analyze and seek input about ACRES future priorities.

We are currently spending six months creating a shared knowledge base among staff and board members while also asking you to engage with broad topics influencing ACRES work and direction, such as:

- *Conserving vs. preserving*
- *Prioritizing plant communities vs. animal communities*
- *Balancing human use of properties*
- *Allocating resources between acquiring new lands and stewarding existing lands*
- *Clarifying whether natural succession continues*

We want to ruminate on—perhaps struggle with—these topics for six months before talking about specific goals and objectives.

Even with the best science, philosophy and intent, we are limited in our ability to fully understand the complexity of natural systems we steward. Thus we make decisions with great humility and much thought.

It took a long time for our properties to become what they are today. Many of our trees are 200+ years old, many of our bogs formed thousands of years ago and most of our soil is about 12,000 years old. Prior to making decisions about a property's future, ACRES takes time to understand and honor its natural history.

I invite you to join this long and thoughtful discussion. Share your thoughts with me, order or pick up a free copy of Jim Barrett's "*Conservation Today*," and refine your position by thinking long and hard about these topics. Our collective position on these matters is ACRES position. We are ACRES! Thus we have a responsibility to think deeply about our decisions.

Sincerely,



Jason Kissel
jkissel@acreslandtrust.org
260-637-2273 ext. 102

Cover photo by Jay Solomon: A giant ichneumon wasp perches on dewy blades of grass at Beechwood Nature Preserve in Steuben County, Indiana. The female wasp's syringe-like ovipositor is often mistaken for a long stinger, but it's actually used to lay eggs into the hard wood of tree trunks—they don't sting people! Learning about species that induce feelings of fear and disgust can help us better understand and even appreciate them. Check out "Expanding Empathy" on page 6 to learn how you can begin to shift your perspective.

Derrick & Cathy Aldrich
Peggy Alfano
Nancy Austin
David Beard
Sharon Beatty
Lindsay & Nathan Beeson
Renee & John Bender
Hudson Bennett
Diana Bergman
Tim & Terri Berry
Kaz Billingsly & Gary Pyarman
Francis & Catherine Bir
William Brewer
Steve Brinkman
John & Jodie Brune
Andrew Burnside
Paula & Rusty Campbell & kids
Michelle Cano
Kari Carpenter
Rachel & Mike Carter
Rick Castle
Jared Christiansen
Gaylynn Ciocho
Jessica Cloud
Anthony Colon & Sheryl Etnier-Colon
Michael & Jennifer Craver
David Crowley
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Katlyn Dennis & Josh Ritter
from Jenna & Brian Biggins
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Belva & Sean Dreer
Barb Duddling
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Trent Gump
Teresa Gust
Sam Guy
Susan & Jeff Halley
Jessica & Todd Hart
Amy Hinderer
Mariarosa & Richard Hindley
Jeremia Holmes-Ploor
Wyatt Huff
from Robert G. Martin
Patricia Jackson
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Andrea & Justin Keller
Catherine Kile
Andrew Kimes
Mason Kirchubel & Jaclyn Goldsborough
Ashley Kovach-Hammons & Conner Kilbride
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Kelly Walters
William Weber & JoAnne Brooks-Weber
Mark & Jan Wiesenberg
Steven Wilkinson
Kinzie Williams & Kade Gerbers
Monica & David Woodard



ACRES Land Trust owns and protects natural and working lands, inspiring people to value, appreciate and support these places for the benefit of all—today and forever. Today we protect and steward more than 7,500 acres in northeast Indiana and portions of southern Michigan and northwest Ohio. In addition to helping care for and restore our local land, your support also offers trail systems where you and others can explore thriving natural places, from dawn to dusk, at no charge. Thank you!

1802 Chapman Road, PO Box 665 | Huntertown, IN 46748-0665
260-637-ACRE (2273) | email: acres@acreslandtrust.org

acreslandtrust.org



In Honor of

Tony Fleming
from Erna Van Helfteren
Andy & Dayna Frantz
from Phil & Linda Frantz

Jann Prince
from Mary McDonald & Ward
Miller

Carol Roberts
from Sean & Michelle Bradley

ECOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Documenting Wing Haven: Year Six of 200

ACRES is creating a 200-year snapshot of Wing Haven in Steuben County through the works of artists, humanities scholars and scientists.

We launched the Ecological Reflections project in 2017 with the goal of compiling a body of work to better understand how a particular place changes through time. The project seeks to inspire people to see land and its protection in a new way.

Artist Statement by Josie Quack



In 2021, ACRES partnered with local artist Josie Quack to create a piece inspired by the land.

I am an illustrator, designer and herbalist working under the name Tenderheart Studio. My work, spanning across media (my primary modes are pen and ink and

printmaking), serves as an opportunity to help connect people to the natural world. As a student of the earth, I use art and illustration to encourage reciprocity with the land, rather than extraction and dominance; practicing that reciprocity is central to my process.

Wandering through woods, splashing in rivers, growing a garden and making plant medicine all inform my process of making artwork that serves as evidence of those experiences. What might not look like art from the outside is essential to cultivating an intentional relationship with the land that can then be spoken through my work.

Lying stylistically between scientific illustration and folk art, my work seeks to bridge the gap between the magic and the mundane, between humans and our earthly cohabitants. While accuracy is important to me, so is story, and drawing things as we remember them. When we connect emotionally with the material, we're able to create sustainable change.

My primary motivation is to share the magic of the natural world and advocate for its proper stewardship while hoping to eradicate human supremacy. We are not just part of nature: We are nature. Lasting change can happen only through recognizing that we are a crucial part of the whole.

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

I was struck by the variety of trees that are found throughout Wing Haven. I tend to work on tree identification in winter, a time when trees turn inward, shedding leaves and turning their energy toward their root systems. I use bark and arrangement of limbs as indicators. This lends a sense of hope in the dark times, an idea of what foliage is to come, and also offers an idea of where mushrooms might appear come spring.

My contribution to the 200-year study documents the most common tree species found on the preserve with the hopes that in 200 years, we can check the progress of conservation and see if there's been any change in the tree population, and celebrate our arboreal kin.

Thank you, Josie Quack, for sharing your talents with ACRES! To see Quack's work in its entirety, view previous commissioned work and learn more about the Ecological Reflections project, head to acres200er.org.



Purchase a poster print at acreslandtrust.org/shop



Scientific Study at Wing Haven

RESEARCHER AIMS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WETLAND SPECIES

Wing Haven's three major ecosystems—glacially-carved kettle-hole lakes bordered by a wetland fen system, upland forests and rolling grasslands—support a rich diversity of plants, birds, mammals and aquatic species.

Olivia Ruppert, a graduate student at Michigan State University, is looking at the nature preserve as a part of her project to learn more about threatened and endangered reptile and amphibian species of the wetlands across the Great Lakes region.

"Wetlands are relatively threatened systems across the world and in the Midwest. Due to human impacts, habitat fragmentation and degradation, we've lost many of the historic wetlands that once occurred here," Ruppert said.

As a result, many herpetofauna species (reptiles and amphibians) are losing crucial habitat to subsist in these areas. The best way to support these species is to protect wetlands, she said.

Ruppert is using environmental DNA (eDNA) to take stock of threatened and endangered reptiles and amphibians in wetlands across southern Michigan and northern Ohio and Indiana. eDNA can be extracted from the environment through water, sediment or air samples. The samples will be analyzed in a lab using metabarcoding, a process that allows for the simultaneous identification of many species within one sample.

"I hope to use the data collected from this project to characterize where these species are occurring, what habitat requirements they have, and how this information has the potential to be used by biologists and decision-makers at sites they manage," she said.

Wing Haven is one of 50 wetland sites in the region where she and her team collected samples at two different time periods.

In the field, they also recorded environmental variables such as water and air temperature, salinity of the water sampled and canopy cover. They used observational and audible identifications to see if they can identify species at these sites that can potentially show up in the DNA samples.

Water samples from Wing Haven revealed the presence of 13 species of frogs, toads and salamanders, including one species of special concern in Indiana.

Thank you, Olivia Ruppert, for sharing your work with ACRES! This wildlife survey and others like it help ACRES become better-informed stewards of the land.





Expanding Empathy

By Joanna Stebing

“To meet all things with recognition and empathy”

This line from a podcast I listened to recently has stuck with me, and I think it’s a fitting way to start an article about “unloved” or underappreciated species. We might be apprehensive toward these plants and animals for a variety of reasons—maybe it’s how they slither or crawl, sting or bite. Whatever the reasons, I encourage you to gently put them aside to see these species in a new way.

I was asked to share my perspective on “unlovable” species because of something I mentioned a couple years ago when I was being interviewed about a floristic survey a friend and I did at an ACRES preserve. I mentioned that I feel a deep love and sense of kinship with poison sumac (*Rhus vernix*). Yes, the same plant that causes a nasty rash when your skin comes in contact with its urushiol, an oil the plant releases when the plant is bruised or damaged.

You see, I adore wetlands—bogs and fens in particular—and poison sumac is commonly found around the peripheries of these high quality habitats. This “edging” presence led me to describe them as “bog guardians.” These words transform poison sumac from a static, unfeeling plant to a character that protects and feels love for its home.



What was originally so “othered” in our minds edges a bit closer because we see it as inhabiting a role that includes others. We may still feel apprehension (it can cause a serious rash!) but maybe a bit of appreciation too. Given enough time and attention to detail, we may even come to love the poisonous and dangerous and the understated.

I don’t think we’re supposed to love only what’s beautiful, soft, pleasant and safe. Ecological values are often separate from what might benefit us. I would argue for creating intentional practices of inquiry and understanding. Just as learning more about a person makes us rethink initial assumptions, so too can learning about the species we share this planet with.

I personally have grown to appreciate the grabbing spines of native Smilax vines (they serve as food for many non-human species, including larva of the turbulent phosphila moth!) the spiny micrathena spiders that accidentally get stuck in my hair when they string their webs across trails (I usually gently extricate them and apologize for the inconvenience), the scurrying mother wolf spiders that are often carrying their babies in egg sacs—and the increasingly rare and beautiful massassauga rattlesnake (I saw a mother with her five babies in a fen last year, and it was a truly honorable experience—she posed no threat to me as long as I respected her space and motherhood—and isn’t that absolutely fair?).

Even the wee rat snakes sunning themselves in the middle of our walking paths shouldn’t be viewed as anything but a joyful reminder that we are in the natural order of things—and the more biodiverse, the better! Isn’t that why we belong to groups like ACRES? We can’t remove the components we don’t like without causing the harm of many others that we hold dear. Everything we see on our walks in the woods, prairies, fens and elsewhere exists in a messily entangled system that is so very relational.

Cultivating a wider sphere of appreciation really does matter. By intentionally choosing to widen our range of kinship, we increase our humility, which makes it easier to think and behave ecologically. (Humility is derived from “humus,” which implies that humility means drawing nearer to Earth!).

John Muir said when we try to remove one thing, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe. Every species we dislike relies on and is relied upon by species we find “prettier” or more “cute.” But aesthetics can be trained by knowledge! Sitting down and getting to know a thing through reading, direct observation and contemplation can change our views. It’s easy to consciously accept, less easy to put into practice, but we have nothing to lose and everything to gain when broadening our view of what kinship with the world really looks like.

Ideas for engaging in this practice of expanding empathy:

- Next time you’re in the woods, make it a point to choose a species (or two or three) that you would normally avoid or think isn’t as pleasant as, say, your favorite of that particular grouping.
- Figure out what it is and do some research into what species it is, and what role it plays in the community.
- Try “systems thinking.” That is, instead of viewing the landscape as a static background into which various organisms are embedded, think of everything as being both foreground and background. Including yourself. Consider what the relationships are and why that matters.



“High quality natural community” in Wabash Co. ACRES Protects Disko Fen

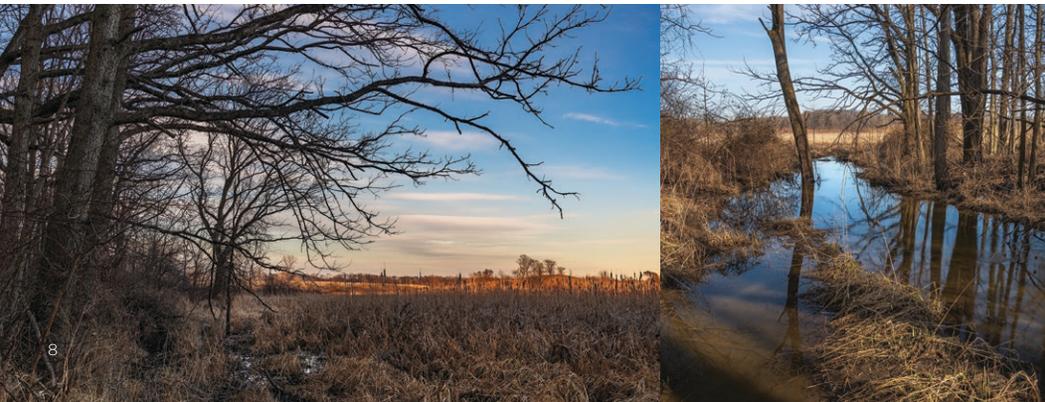
Disko Fen, a 58-acre preserve located in Wabash County, first caught the eye of conservationists decades ago. This special place features marl and peat wetlands and is home to a variety of sedges and plants like swamp lousewort, lesser fringed gentian and shrubby cinquefoil.

Rich Dunbar, regional ecologist with Indiana Department of Natural Resources, noted in a June 1988 report on the immediate area: “This is a high quality natural community. There are fewer high quality fens remaining in this area.”

Draining, ditching and tiling across the region have significantly reduced or destroyed wetlands. Places like Disko Fen were fairly uncommon to begin with, but in light of habitat loss, are now considered rare.

With little notice, this land went to auction in October 2022. Having been on ACRES radar for many years, we jumped at the chance to protect it. Most land protected by ACRES is donated or sold to the group at a discount, but this is an important enough property that we were willing to purchase it outright for \$360,000. Closing documents were signed in December 2022, and soon after, the important task of fundraising began.

\$337,000 is still needed to complete the funding needed to lock in the permanent protection of Disko Fen.



2023 ACQUISITION CAMPAIGN

We’ve set an audacious goal for 2023—a record-breaking year for land protection that adds more than 750 acres across the region to the 7,500 acres already protected by ACRES and its members.

The act of acquiring land is ACRES mission in motion—owning land as a means of protecting it. The group has worked tirelessly to build a highly-skilled team to not only navigate the process of acquiring land but to steward that land well into the future. There’s a fine-tuned process in place for taking on more land. The primary obstacle to protecting more land: a lack of funding.

ACRES executive director Jason Kissel, said “We’ve got the process down. We have a great team of staff, volunteers and board members who review new projects and there’s no shortage of available land worthy of protecting. We’re missing what should be the easiest piece of the puzzle—the money needed to acquire land.”

Sometimes a year or two will go by without the opportunity to acquire more land. Some years ACRES takes on a few new projects. This year we’re on track to acquire eight preserves that total 752 acres, land valued at \$7 million. Thanks to the generosity of land owners providing deep discounts or outright full donations of land, we need to raise a fraction of that: \$2.6 million. We’ve secured 65% of the funding needed, with \$923,000 left to go.

On average, ACRES passes up approximately 95% of projects brought to its attention due to a lack of funding. There is urgency in this work: once developed, these places will never again exist in a natural state. With your help, we can protect eight new preserves this year. ACRES members like you make this work possible.

We’re asking our biggest fans to do their part by making a personally meaningful gift, and by telling others about this exciting opportunity. Every donation, no matter the size, makes a tangible difference in the natural world.

Mail your donation, along with a note of support for 2023 acquisitions, to PO Box 665, Huntertown, IN, 46748 or visit [acreslandtrust.org/forever](https://www.acreslandtrust.org/forever) to give online.

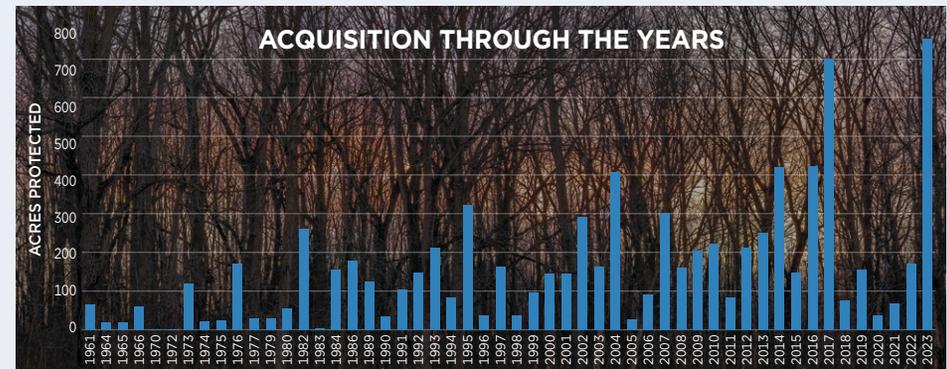


Photo spread on pages 10–11 by Thomas Sprunger: Goldenrod blooms along the trail at Robb Hidden Canyon in Steuben County, Indiana. Join ACRES in August for a field flower hike to enjoy the final blooms of the season and learn to identify these colorful, sun-loving flowers. Details on page 13.



SUMMER HIKES & events

ACRES events are held rain or shine. Preserve maps available online at [acreslandtrust.org/preserves](https://www.acreslandtrust.org/preserves)



NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 10-11 am

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY | Wildwood
409 East State Road 14, Silver Lake, IN 46982

Join us on a hike through the forest, wetlands and prairie of Wildwood to celebrate National Trails Day!



ACRES INVASIVE PLANT WORKSHOP

FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 5-7:30 pm

STEBEN COUNTY | Wing Haven
180 West 400 North, Angola, IN 46703

Join the stewardship team for an in-depth look at identifying the many non-native invasive plant species present in our region. Learn about the methods used to eradicate these invasive plants and how you can manage your own property.



Space is limited. RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273 by June 21.

TAPS AND TREKS

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2-3:30 pm

DEKALB COUNTY | James P. Covell Nature Preserve
2727 County Road 52, Auburn IN, 46706

Take a short hike and learn about ACRES recent reforestation project. Afterwards, join us for a “treat yourself” stop for drinks at Auburn Brewing Company.



RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273.

ACRES THROUGH THE YEARS LUNCHEON

THURSDAY, JUNE 29TH, 11:30 am-1 pm

ALLEN COUNTY | Metea County Park
8401 Union Chapel Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46845

Join us as we celebrate the good “ole” days while looking toward the future of ACRES and land protection. The program includes a panel discussion, historical photos and fond reflections by members who “remember when.” Lunch provided, dietary restrictions asked upon RSVP.

Space is limited. RSVP to hbarth@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273 ext. 105 by June 21.

NEW MEMBER OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY, JULY 15, 1-2:30 pm

ALLEN COUNTY | ACRES Land Trust Office
1802 Chapman Road, Huntertown, IN 46748

Are you new to ACRES? Welcome! Meet other new members and longtime volunteers while learning how your membership protects land. Hear ACRES’ history and updates on new projects, and get answers to your questions: How do we acquire new land? How will we protect it forever? Refreshments and light snacks provided.



KIDS ART WORKSHOP

FRIDAY, JULY 21, 10-11 am

ALLEN COUNTY | Tom and Jane Dustin Nature Preserve
1992 Chapman Road, Huntertown, IN 46748

At this art workshop designed for children ages 5-11, participants will create a summer-inspired craft with ACRES volunteer Erin McKeever. All supplies included.

Space is limited. Registration is required for all attendees: children, parents and caregivers. To register, email outreach@acreslandtrust.org or call 260-637-2273 by July 19.

HERP HIKE FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SATURDAY, JULY 29, 9:30 pm

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY | Wildwood
409 East State Road 14, Silver Lake, IN 46982

Gear up for a night of “herping” along the trails! Look and listen for herptiles (reptiles and amphibians) with ACRES Stewardship Assistant Gavin King. Flashlights and headlamps are welcome, if you have a night setting (red light) those are greatly appreciated, ACRES will have extra red tape on hand.

Space is limited. RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273 by July 27.

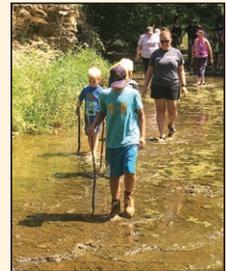
CREEK STOMP XV FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 10 am

WABASH COUNTY | Hathaway Preserve at Ross Run
1866 E. Baumbauer Road, Wabash, IN 46992

This spectacular creek is off limits the rest of the year, so here’s your chance! Get up close and personal with minnows, pinching crayfish and fossils as you make your way through the cliffs and waterfalls of the Ross Run gorge. Water shoes are recommended.

Presented by the Kissel family. Space is limited. RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273 by August 1.



FIELD FLOWER HIKE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 10-11:30 am

HUNTINGTON COUNTY | Pehkokia Woods
1570 Flaxmill Road, Huntington, IN 46750

Enjoy the final blooms of the season along the trails, and learn to identify some of these native flowers and grasses that thrive in the sun.

Presented by Preserve Steward John Laatsch. Space is limited. RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273 by August 19.



JAVA JAUNT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 9-10:30 am

HILLSDALE COUNTY | Kauffman Nature Sanctuary
13127 Beecher Rd, Hudson, MI 49247

Take a stroll through the rolling hills of ACRES only Michigan trails. Afterwards, join us for a “treat yourself” cafe stop at Main Street Perk in Hudson, MI.



Watch for more events online: [acreslandtrust.org](https://www.acreslandtrust.org).

LAND RESTORATION



Supporting Biodiversity Through Selective Thinning COMPETING FOR THE CANOPY

ACRES commitment to protecting land goes beyond ensuring it remains undeveloped. We take a hands-on approach to make sure these places continue to improve under our care. Our stewardship team works to promote the health and biodiversity of these areas by creating or maintaining conditions that allow ecosystems to thrive.

When caring for forests, we use a variety of methods to reduce certain species in order to give others a chance to make their way to the canopy. We use fire and herbicides to thwart non-native invasive species that threaten to take over natural areas. We also “thin out” less desirable tree species through girdling.

Girdling is a forest management technique that involves removing a strip of bark around the tree’s entire circumference. Removing the bark’s innermost “cambium” layer prevents nutrients from being transported from the leaves downward, or from the roots upward. As a result, the tree slowly dies.

ACRES Stewardship Director Evan Hill said thinning out less desirable species through girdling is completed for a couple reasons, ultimately depending on the goals for or use of the property. ACRES performs selective thinning in protected lands being managed for sustainable timber harvests, as well as in some nature preserves.

Hill explained: “In certain areas this thinning may be completed to promote a more diverse understory/ herbaceous layer, and in other areas, to promote a higher timber value while offering higher quality habitat to the countless critters that call the place home.”



HABITAT RESTORATION

In ACRES nature preserves, selective thinning takes place where historically, there would have been less canopy cover and a more diverse understory, such as an open oak woodland or oak savanna. After non-native invasive species management, our stewardship team removes less desirable tree species through girdling. The goal is to return the property to the state in which it would have persisted in the presence of more frequent natural disturbances, such as fire.

At this time, in portions of Ropchan Memorial, thinning is taking place as one of the early steps towards restoring an open oak woodland. In years to come, invasive species management will continue, along with the reintroduction of prescribed fire.

On working lands, selective thinning is used to ensure the success of specific kinds of trees, including oak, hickory and walnut, for sustainable timber production.

Girdling trees allows a more gradual process of tree mortality. Instead of having several hundred trees piled up on the forest floor, this method allows them to die slowly and stay vertical for several years. In some cases a large tree may persist as a standing dead tree for a decade or more while providing habitat for countless insects, birds and small mammals.

This method is extremely useful when ongoing management is also needed. Invasive species management and prescribed fire become very difficult when paired with a large amount of downed woody debris.



SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY

Hill said because of the threats facing natural areas today, a “hands-off” approach to stewardship isn’t an option: “With the increased presence of invasive species and a lack of natural disturbance, it is nearly impossible for natural succession to occur as it once would have.”

As land stewards, promoting or increasing biodiversity within the preserves is a top priority for ACRES. *The more diverse an area, the healthier the ecosystem will be.*

“A diverse plant community supports more insects, which attract more birds and small mammals, and so forth,” Hill said.

The biggest threats to biodiversity include the presence of non-native invasive species, habitat loss and on a local scale, the lack of natural disturbance.

Our goal is to restore these places through stewardship activities such as invasive management, prescribed burns and selective thinning/harvests so the land once again can support a high level of biodiversity. Through these “hands-on” conservation efforts, we hope these areas ultimately return to self-sustaining ecosystems requiring minimal intervention to remain healthy.

PRESERVING HISTORY

"The stories are everything."

By Chris Fairfield, ACRES Volunteer

Two years ago, we shared the story of two volunteers spearheading the effort to digitally archive the records for all ACRES properties. Much has changed since then, and we are excited to share an update on all their hard work!

ACRES members Carol Spallone and Chris Fairfield remain diligent in their volunteer work to preserve each property's unique history. Carol recently completed archiving courses through the Allen County Public Library, which led her to update ACRES standard processes for handling delicate documentation, such as our generous donors' personal, handwritten letters that we want to ensure remain intact for years to come.

Getting glimpses into the relationships and memories surrounding the existence of each nature preserve is inspiring the team to finish this extensive project.

Joining the preserve archiving team is Bob Palmer, ACRES member and former neighbor of Chris Fairfield. Chris knew Bob was looking for an organization to volunteer his time with that aligned with his personal values. Since joining Chris and Carol, Bob has enjoyed "being around the team spirit of giving to a good cause," a team he describes as having "a truly caring attitude about preserving the environment."

Each week, the team meets at the ACRES office for a couple hours to trade out files, scan in paperwork, and catch up on each other's progress.

Together, Carol, Chris and Bob have archived a total of 33 properties! Although this is a great accomplishment, the team is far from finished and looking for your help. If you have an eye for detail, an interest in history, and a passion for the ACRES mission, please consider becoming an archiving volunteer!



Carol, Chris and Bob

Nature preserve files are not the only items in need of archiving. The publication you are reading is an entire archiving project on its own—the ACRES *Quarterly*, which ACRES began producing and publishing in 1962. While we do maintain physical copies of each issue, we want to safeguard our past in a more current way—digitally.

Long-time ACRES member and volunteer Mary Anna Feitler (pictured at left) has accepted the mission to digitize all *Quarterlys* because she believes the publications "document our history and should be available for any and all to see."

Thank you to all our archiving team members for the valuable work you do! Interested in becoming an archive volunteer? Learn more at acreslandtrust.org/volunteer.

Mary Anna Feitler

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RETIRING TRAILS

Beechwood Nature Preserve

By Chris Fairfield, ACRES Volunteer

It's a nature preserve, not a park. What's the difference? The distinction is a matter of human mission and stewardship.

Park systems and land trusts function for both similar and different reasons. For example, the Indiana State Park mission is "to conserve, manage and interpret our resources while creating memorable experiences for everyone." This Indiana park system provides ecosystems of habitat, landscaped beauty and various human recreation opportunities. ACRES Land Trust's mission is "to own and protect natural and working lands, inspiring people to value, appreciate and support these places for the benefit of all, today and forever." While offering select opportunities for human recreation and respite, ACRES mission focuses primarily on ecosystem conservation and preservation.

Beechwood Nature Preserve, state-dedicated land, protects land and water adjacent to Pokagon State Park. If you have climbed up to Hell's Point in Pokagon, you likely have seen Beechwood in the distance below. Together, Pokagon State Park, other state-owned lands, and this ACRES preserve create a vital, contiguous natural corridor in Steuben County. Beechwood Preserve provides natural sanctuary for increasingly rare Indiana flora and fauna, depending on the select habitats found there.

Beechwood's record reaches back into ACRES history. In 1964, Garnette and Mildred Foster gifted the majority of the preserved land. Garnette was a Detroit teacher and early member of ACRES. The Foster sisters recognized the importance of the deep Carlisle muck bog and surrounding plants. Their environmental lead prompted other Beechwood Lake Association landowners to add extensions to the main body of the preserve. In 1987, Charles Foster entered into agreement and willed his lakefront property to ACRES. Foster intended to ensure his part of one of the more beautiful areas of Steuben County would never be disturbed, saying: "This is my paradise here. I wanted to make sure nobody touched it." A stream runs through the property, and the wetlands act as a natural water filter for Little Otter Lake, helping to refresh the lake, part of the heavily-used Lake James chain of lakes. In 1998, Elizabeth Ann Turnley; and in 2000, Muriel C. Majneri, each added their lakefront properties to the ACRES preserve for forever care.

Today, Beechwood Preserve conserves over 89 acres of natural habitat. Its proximity to Pokagon and to area Steuben County lakes makes it a quiet breeding ground, home, and natural migratory space for many animal and plant species. As part of ACRES comprehensive plan to update visitor amenities at our nature preserves, the Beechwood trail system will close to the public on December 31, 2023. Learn more at acreslandtrust.org/raisingourstandards.



Welcome, Makayla Tedder!

Hello, ACRES Community! I'm excited and honored to be your new communications manager. With over six years of experience in communications and graphic design, I'm eager to learn more about, and share with our members and community, ACRES impactful work.

In a world where being human sometimes feels like an extreme sport, nature's been a consistent source of grounding for my life. Some of my happiest memories are climbing high branches of trees as I grew up in Fort Wayne, listening to wind whisper as it passes through creaking limbs and watching critters as they spend

their day foraging. Recently I've been exploring the woods with my sketchbook to draw the wildlife I see around me; in these moments, I feel most at peace.

Although I've always felt connected to outdoor life, it wasn't until 2020 that I devoted much of my time researching what is happening to our environment. From the information I gathered, I felt a deep calling to work towards sustaining our environment for future generations of humans and other species. I've witnessed and met many people like me who want to work towards helping our planet and to explore its natural beauty but don't know how or where in the Midwest. I'm excited to explore creative ways of sharing the many opportunities ACRES provides for people to practice their passion for nature.

One skill I'm eager to use comes from my experience as an online personality with my greyhound, Cheese (together we are Mak and Cheese). I created my own brand, connecting people from all over the world to engage with one another and create a community which helped fund different charities important to me. I look forward to bringing my social media knowledge to ACRES and hope to connect with a variety of people in the online community.

I have much to learn and am confident my curiosity will fuel my continuing to grow and connect with everyone I meet. I'm blown away by members of ACRES and their passion and commitment to environmental work—to the many reasons ACRES work is important to them. It's an honor to work for an organization that carries the legacy of protecting land. Forever.

In Memory of

Bonnie Anderson
from Rebecca Figert

Karlann Bieberich
from Teresa & Gregory Kitson, Paula & David Mitchell, Shirley & Arthur Simon

Tom Brookshire, Jr.
from Hudson Bennett, Kimberly Bower & Andrew Bir, Pat & Deb Brase, Eric & Tara Bustos, Joseph & Nancy Conrad, Monica Elam, Healthier Moms and Babies, Alan Hofer, Steve & Katie Hoffman, Duane & Jenny Hougendobler, Mary Lehman, Veronica & John Mertz, John Robb, Naoma & Wendell Sparks

Shane Evans
from Janna Stollery

Bob & Alice Frantz
from Phil & Linda Frantz

Bart Hofherr
from Sharon Boese, Paula & Dennis Felver, David & Chris Hofherr, Jacqueline Hofherr, Patricia Jackson, Betsy & Jeff Kachmar, Patrick Oberley, Ken & Beth Perkins, Donna Pusey

Robert C. Johnson & Rosella C. Garey Johnson
from Georgean Johnson-Coffey & James Coffey

Thomas McDonough
from Francis & Catherine Bir

Joan Peryam
from Gary Crabill

- ACRES Board of Directors and committee members
- Anonymous donation of batteries and copy paper
- Archive project volunteers
Chris Fairfield, Mary Anna Feitler, Bob Palmer, Carol Spallone
- Asherwood Pancake Breakfast volunteers
Leslie Butterbaugh, Amy Kissel, Megan McClellan, Bryce Runkle, Julie Samek, Sharon Smith, Grady Stout, Kirk Swaidner
- Jon Broderick
Donating a gently used cell phone
- Bridgett Hernandez and Natasha Manor
Leading Conservation Ethic Discussion event
- Lisa Coville
Donating Do It Best gift card and suet cakes
- Harold Eyer
Donating a car wash book, insect repellent, hand sanitizer

- Chris Fairfield
Article on retiring trails
- Fort Wayne Home and Garden Show
booth volunteers
- Office support volunteers
Leslie Carmin, Laura Colpitts
- Gene Pelter
Donating suet cakes and disinfecting wipes
- Quarterly assembly and distribution volunteers
- Doug Rice
Donating coffee beans
- Kirk Swaidner
Donating lawn tractor parts
- Volunteer preserve stewards, caretakers and trail monitors
- Wabash Spring Cleaning volunteers
Tim Brauch, Chris Fairfield, Thelma Rohrer

wish list

To order from ACRES Amazon Wish List, visit [acreslandtrust.org/wishlist](https://www.acreslandtrust.org/wishlist)

- ACRES memberships
- Your stories and photos
- Midland GXT1030VP4 two-way GMRS Radio (6)
- Kestrel 5500 Weather Meter
- Volunteer Preserve Stewards
(visit [acreslandtrust.org/volunteer](https://www.acreslandtrust.org/volunteer) to learn more about this opportunity)

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SUMMER

by Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

Winter is cold-hearted,

Spring is yea and nay,

Autumn is a weather-cock

Blown every way:

Summer days for me

When every leaf is on its tree;

When Robin's not a beggar,

And Jenny Wren's a bride,

And larks hang singing, singing, singing,

Over the wheat-fields wide,

And anchored lilies ride,

And the pendulum spider

Swings from side to side,

And blue-black beetles transact business,

And gnats fly in a host,

And furry caterpillars hasten

That no time be lost,

And moths grow fat and thrive,

And ladybirds arrive.

Before green apples blush,

Before green nuts embrown,

Why, one day in the country

Is worth a month in town;

Is worth a day and a year

Of the dusty, musty, lag-last fashion

That days drone elsewhere.

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acreslandtrust.org