

THE ACRES
QUARTERLY

Spring 2024 | Vol. 63 - No. 1



ACRES
LANDTRUST

Little Wabash Research

Trail Rerouting

200 Year Ecological Reflection

Live Like Karlie

Retiring Trails: Flat Rock Creek

Acorn Society

WELCOME 61newmembers!

From the Executive Director

Dear Members,

"We live here—please respect our home!" is the unspoken understanding when visiting someone's home. We quickly catch cues about taking off shoes, where we can go, which doors and cabinets we shouldn't open. We know the range of acceptable activities.

When visiting a preserve, we may forget where we are. Instead of acknowledging we are guests in the homes of animals and plants, we might act as if the place exists for our entertainment.

Although ACRES preserves are homes for thousands of species, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, we are guests in their homes for only an hour or so at a time.

ACRES preserve rules can help us understand nature's cues—can help us know the house rules. The more we get to know the residents, the more we'll understand their unspoken cues about behavior while we are in their homes.

On your next preserve visit, in addition to enjoying the beautiful homes, get to know the residents. Think about where animals eat, sleep, travel, hide and play. Learn and think about where plants set up their solar panels (leaves), how they move through reproduction, how they defend themselves, how they adapt to a life rooted in place. Through observation, curiosity and increased knowledge, you'll become a better house guest.

Through ACRES, you ensure these homes exist and are well maintained. In the larger picture, the preserves are our homes too. They are part of where we live—providing the air we breathe and the water we drink. Thank you for investing in and helping maintain our shared household.

Sincerely,



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

Photo by Tom Sprunger. Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*) derive their common name from their flowers that resemble a pair of hanging pantaloons. These wildflowers bloom only a few weeks in early spring before returning to dormancy as temperatures rise. Due to their preference for moist, well-drained soil, look for these flowers on woodland slopes and ravines.

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 7,700 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



Valerie & David Barnes
Veronica Bayles
Amy Becker
from Chris McCoy
John & Kathy Bennett
from Dawn & Kent Martz
Greg & Kelly Bercau
Jordan Boone
Joan Bovee
Lorinda Browning & Bradley
Boyle
Laura Burger
Angela & Edison Byzyka
Jacqueline & Eric Derheimer
Michael Derickson
Peter & Penny Diehl
Victoria Eastom
from Lisa Gardner
Cary Fields & Kristi Lehman
Emily Fuhrman
Susan & Dennis Geisleman
Diane Gerardot & Alex
Saccavino
Olivia Gerdom
Patty Gerdom
Anthony & Brianna Harberg
Kate & Matt Hensinger

Sue & Ed Herran
Lauren Hill
Brad Kinsey
Howard Klinger
from Dean Messick
Daniel Klotz
from Karen & Kenneth Klotz
Catherine & Casey Langdale
from Jack & Marilyn Taylor
Todd & Vanessa Laubhan
Garrett Lawton & Kelly Minks-
Lawton
Maryalice & Shedrick Lee
Thomas Leech
Chris, Mandy, Elizabeth &
Miles Limiac
from Jack & Marilyn Taylor
Jennifer & Alvin Limiac
from Jack & Marilyn Taylor
Nick, Hali & Naomi Limiac
from Jack & Marilyn Taylor
Jordan & Emily Marshall
Constance Martin Steigerwald
Amanda Meyer
Marc & Leah Milne
Christy Miner
Alyson Munger

Josh Ogle
Joan Lee Parkes & Stanley
C. Cohen
Jode & Patrick Payton
Keith & Lindsay Pulfer
Peter Reyes
Melissa Rinehart
Dexter Roberts
Jeremy & Krista Schaffer
David A. Stahl
Marie Stump & Kelley
Brenneman
Jeff Surfus
Chris & Asia Todd
Jennifer Vanderpool
from Ken & Rebecca
Vanderpool
Ryan Walker & Elizabeth
Decker
Teresa & Dennis Walls
J. Mark & Nancy Wilcox
William P. Wise
Eric Yordy & Kristy
Shellenberger
Mark & Kathy Yotter
Jerry & Cali Zawadzke
from Charlotte Zawadzke

In Memory of

John Arnold
from Terry Dunbar, Michael & Patricia Nolan
Daniel E. Boone
from John & Joyce Bacone
Judy & Chris Eckert
from Rebecca Stockert
Corinne Fulkerson
from Harold Atkinson & Mary Ann Meo,
Dianne Bezdon, Sue & Al Diefenbach,
Steve Freiburger, Tony & Tracey Freiburger,
Daniel Fulkerson & Carrie Johnson, Kay
Gillespie, Mary Hornak, Judy Martony,
Cindy & Ronald Ruich, Sue VanGorderruich
& Randy Ruich
Dr. H.R. Hathaway, M.D.
from Wendy Eissey & Family
Michael Mettler
from Jenni Vincent
Ellsworth Smith
from Gary & Elma Chapman, Betsy & John
King, David & Elizabeth Meyers, Devin &
Brenda Willis, Susan & Michael Worstell

Carol L. & Eldon J. Summers and
Richard J. Summers
from Diana Harris
Dick Walker
from Noreen Walker
Larry Weatherholt
from Anonymous, Connie Cook,
Barbara & G. Joe Hanauer

In Honor of

Wayne Boyd
from Three Rivers Woodworking Club
Terry Dunbar
from Paul Dunbar
Don Jervis
from Thomas & Janice Jervis
Dawn Mart
from Angie O'Neill
Angie & Dan O'Neill
from Alice Kopfer
Steve & Sharon Williams
from Jennifer & Randy Pickard





Little Wabash River Nature Preserve The Place that Keeps on Giving

Article and photos by Tessa Aby-Kruger and Joanna Stebing

ACRES Land Trust protects a variety of properties with diverse habitats, plants and animal communities. While some preserves offer public access, many are closed for various reasons and under permanent protection.

Some preserve lands are recovering from human impact, while others contain sensitive habitats. Such differences make transparency about what is happening in these unique places all the more important. This is where site-based research comes in, particularly student-based work.

ACRES has a long history of allowing research on their preserves, beginning with botanical inventories in the 1960s. Since then, research has expanded past professional contracts or Department of Natural Resource partnerships into student-led research. Student research takes place on both open and closed properties, with projects covering star-nosed moles, weasels, bees, Blue-Eyed Mary flowers, bats, arthropod diversity and much more.

By allowing research on its properties, ACRES provides great opportunities for young scientists to learn about local ecosystems. This data is often used to help guide stewardship and conservation efforts while giving burgeoning ecologists a chance to experiment with research methods and styles. It's a mutually beneficial partnership!



Great Plains Ladies' tressess
(*Spiranthes magnicamporum*)

When we started our research at ACRES Little Wabash River Nature Preserve (LWRNP), the ins and outs of what it takes to properly survey a site were entirely new to us. We were wonderfully humbled by this preserve over the course of that year. We formed a relationship with the property that we'll never forget or cease to be thankful for: crawling on our hands and knees while dragging a transect line through dense honeysuckle, high kneeling through brambles and rose, eating our lunch cross-legged in the parking lot while listening to local birds and the immense joy of finding the elegant spiraling blooms of Ladies' Tresses orchids in the Mills-Black Tract portion of the preserve.

This research set a precedent of character development and we learned skills that have served us in other surveys since. We'll never misidentify certain plants again, and we still chuckle over those "greenhorn" mistakes we made.

Our research took place in 2019, almost a decade since the initial (and most recent) survey at LWRNP. This timing enabled us to do work on the site's plant community

changes, non-native invasive species spread and old field succession. The ecological and floristic research we conducted provided data on the forest overstory, midstory and understory. At our specific study plots we measured soil moisture, available light and leaf litter. Future work at LWRNP can use our research as a stronger baseline for interpreting changes at the preserve.

The 2019 study of the Mills-Black field became an interesting multi-year experience involving orchids. Upon first inspection, we found two species of Ladies' Tresses orchids: Nodding Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*) and Northern Slender Ladies' Tresses (*S. lacera*).

We revisited the tract in 2022 with state botanist Scott Namestnik to better identify the two orchid species. Due to a change in how the science community identifies and groups these plants, Nodding Ladies' Tresses (*S. cernua*) was actually Great Plains Ladies' Tresses (*S. magnicamporum*), an orchid currently listed as endangered in Indiana! Our expanded study also discovered a third orchid, Small Ladies' Tresses (*S. ovalis*).

These additions to our initial survey remind us that site-based work is never finished. To ensure success, research must be community-based over generations. Previous work established the basis for the study we did; in turn, our study set up building blocks for future students.

Although LWRNP is a heavily altered habitat, both landscape legacy and the removal of agitating forces are allowing the land to heal and develop into something of its own accord. We have the power to create conditions for change, to allow an uninhabited area to restore itself. Even if the old field cannot return to exactly what it once was, it will still become a unique natural area by existing and it will develop a system of its own, perhaps a novel one. The best thing we can do in research is document those developments as clearly as we can.



Banded Hairstreak (*Satyrium calanus*)

We are excited to announce that in 2023 our completed LWRNP research paper was accepted and published by *The Great Lakes Botanist*, a peer-reviewed, open-access quarterly journal of the Michigan Botanical Society. Without organizations like ACRES, students like us would be hard-pressed to find such fantastic opportunities for learning and publication.



Little Wabash River
Nature Preserve
research paper

Thank you to ACRES and those who made this research possible!





TRAIL
CLOSED

The Challenge of An Ever-changing Landscape

By Evan Hill, Stewardship Director

As an avid hiker and backpacker, I love hiking trails, but as a natural resource professional, it's also important that I keep an eye on where lines should be drawn on trail installation and upkeep. Having grown up a few miles from an ACRES preserve, I can attest to the potential outcome of introducing young children to the natural world. Trails are one of our best tools for cultivating and inspiring future generations of environmentally conscious individuals and new ACRES supporters.

Essential decisions are sometimes challenging about where not to construct trails, and when to retire existing trails. No decision on trail installation or removal is made lightly. With ACRES mission in mind, these decisions are made more easily when we observe obvious signs of degradation.

ACRES continually compiles information about its properties. When we find rare and sensitive plant communities in "inconvenient" places (such as growing alongside and in established trails), it is our responsibility to do what we can to limit our impact, usually by closing or rerouting the trail.

Many trail alterations and closures result from changes in the landscape, most exacerbated by climate change and land alteration in and surrounding our floodplains. The most common reason for closing or rerouting a trail system is to avoid increasing both the rate of erosion, and ultimately, sedimentation in our waterways. More frequent and intense high water events, degraded/minimized floodplains and less water retention in a landscape fraught with drainage tile and ditches result in a lot of impassable trails in areas where water likely would have been much less common when the trail was originally installed.

In an ever-changing landscape, ACRES continues to learn from its properties: the often subtle changes we observe help guide us in making difficult decisions. If you come across a trail closure this year or in the future, please keep all these reasons in mind as we strive to provide a balance between our access to nature, and the health of the natural communities themselves.



Kokiwanee: Celebrating 20 Years



Star Lodge was the main gathering space for campers at Kokiwanee.

Twenty years ago, ACRES acquired Kokiwanee from the Girl Scouts who had operated the property as a camp from 1945 to 1996. Before that, the property was a farm, and before that, it was a forest. Before the forest, it sat under a mile-thick glacier for a long time. Before that, it was under a shallow, saltwater sea. Before that...

Kokiwanee is still responding to these recent and ancient impacts—the ground is still “rebounding” upward each year as it recovers from the weight of the last glacier.

Like its past, Kokiwanee's future will remain dynamic, its plants and animals continuing to change. Sea creatures, mastodons, bison, elk, bears and wolves once called this property home, so it's naïve for us to think that Kokiwanee's current residents will always be its future inhabitants.

While nature is always changing, we do know some things about its future. Because ACRES will always own and steward this place, Kokiwanee will continue to provide the space for nature's continual changes.

So here's to ACRES' first 20 years stewarding this land, and all best wishes for whatever nature will do with this place over the next 200—and 2000 years.

Kokiwanee 1941 and 2021 (lot of change in just 80 years)



RETIRING TRAILS

Flat Rock Creek ACRES Protects Wetland Habitats

by Chris Fairfield

The historic Black Swamp of Northern Ohio and Northeast Indiana once encompassed approximately 1,500 square miles of natural wetlands. Over the years, these wetlands have experienced extreme alterations from the Wisconsin Glacier's recession, Lake Maumee's draining and years of human impact. Today's remaining waters, such as Lake Erie and the Maumee and Auglaize Rivers, are fed by many smaller tributaries like Flat Rock Creek.

Wetland ecosystems act as the earth's kidneys, cleaning water and protecting developed lands from flooding. Yet wetlands currently suffer nationwide. Only 5.5% of the United States' wetlands survive in varying states of health. Furthermore, state and federal legislation and recent Supreme Court decisions have limited their 51 years of Fresh Water Act protections. This unfortunate history reminds us why ACRES keeps pushing to save and protect natural and working lands and their waters.



Flat Rock Creek Preserve is one of ACRES vital vestiges of wetland protection. This preserve allows a few miles of the 57-mile creek to expand and retract as it would naturally—without human manipulation. Prior to the Crooked Creek Farms land donation in 2008, five generations of family stewarded the farm and adjoining wetlands. Their children played in the creek and woods, growing up observing wildlife and the land's natural succession. Jill Noyes, an ACRES board member, recalls that it was practically coded in the family DNA to protect this special place. It took hard family discussions to finally decide to trust ACRES with their wetland stewardship. Jill said that in the end, "we trusted ACRES to ensure it would be there in another five generations."

Under ACRES care, this wetland will continue to protect nature and provide flood protection for the surrounding agriculture. Public access to Flat Rock Creek Preserve is closed to protect its highly erodible soil. Members-only group hikes will be scheduled to visit this special place, so keep watching your *Quarterly*.

200-YEAR ECOLOGICAL REFLECTION



ACRES launched the *Ecological Reflections* project in 2017 at Wing Haven with the goal of compiling a body of work to better understand how a particular place changes through time. This 200-year-long project seeks to inspire people to see land and its protection in a new way. In 2023, ACRES partnered with local poet Erica Anderson-Senter to create a collection of poems inspired by the land.

WING HAVEN POETRY

Erica's love and appreciation of nature are clearly visible in her work. As a child, she watched nature-y cartoons like David the Gnome, and she spent a lot of time exploring the outdoors with her grandparents. She attributes her love of nature to the large pine tree in her yard, her sturdy companion growing up: "I appreciate that my grandparents taught me to be empathetic toward all living things. Even plants have Life with a capital L."

"My grandmother insists that as a child, I never went anywhere without a notebook and pencil," Erica said. "She knew I was going to be a writer."

Erica began taking her craft seriously in 2010. By 2016, she was submitting her poetry to various outlets, including *Cutleaf Journal* in 2020. One year later, EastOver Press published her collection, *Midwestern Poet's Incomplete Guide to Symbolism*.

"Poetry is not only my hobby, it's my lifeblood—the pulse that keeps me fulfilled! It's how I synthesize my feelings, my way of storytelling," Erica said. "Poetry and nature weave around each other. My love of poetry wouldn't be as strong if I didn't love nature."

This past year, Erica visited Wing Haven many times for ACRES Ecological Reflections project. The little dock overlooking Gentian Lake became her main destination, and Wing Haven has become one of her favorite ACRES preserves.



"I love this project's longevity. For nature, 200 years is the blink of an eye, but for us, it's several lifetimes," Erica said. "It's hard to wrap my mind around the idea that I won't exist when this project is finished. Poets 200 years from now may look at my work in the same way I look at works from 200 years ago!"

Thank you, Erica Anderson-Senter, for sharing your talents with ACRES. To learn more about the Ecological Reflections project and to view this and previous commissioned work, head to [acres200er.org](https://www.acres200er.org).

Photo spread on pages 10–11 by Thomas Sprunger. An earthen path winds through the wildflowers at Edna W. Spurgeon Woodland Reserve. Learn more about the flowers that flourish throughout Indiana's natural areas by attending a wildflower hike for ACRES members this season. Details on page 12.



SPRING CLEANING

Get in the spirit of spring cleaning! Gloves, bags, visibility vests and snacks provided. **RSVP appreciated.**

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2-5 pm

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

Join a cleaning caravan to our two Huntington County preserves. Meet at Pehkokia Woods and finish at Tel-Hy.

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2-5 pm

WABASH COUNTY | Hanging Rock National Natural Landmark
4552 E. Hanging Rock Road, Lagro, IN 46941

Join a cleaning caravan from "rock to rock." Meet at Hanging Rock National Natural Landmark and finish at Seven Pillars Nature Preserve in Miami County.



ASHERWOOD MAPLE SYRUP EVENT FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 9-11am

WABASH COUNTY | Asherwood Environmental Center
7496 W SR 124, Wabash, IN 46992

You're invited to a pancake breakfast and a guided tour of ACRES' maple sugaring operation. \$5/person, children 5 and under free. ACRES syrup will be available for purchase. Presented by Asherwood caretaker Grady Stout, ACRES Executive Director Jason Kissel and ACRES volunteers.



BOOK DISCUSSION FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2-3:30 pm

ALLEN COUNTY | ACRES Office
1802 Chapman Road, Hometown, IN 46748

Take time this spring to read *Entangled Life* by Merlin Sheldrake, listen to Ologies podcast *Mycology (Mushrooms)* with Dr. Tom Volk and watch the WIRED YouTube video *Mycologist Answers Mushroom Questions*. Gather in the office to discuss your fungi thoughts. Light snacks and refreshments provided. Presented by volunteers Natasha Manor and Bridgett Hernandez. Contact outreach@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273 for the podcast and video links, or to **RSVP by March 20.**



WILDFLOWER HIKES FOR ACRES MEMBERS

Hike with local wildflower enthusiasts and learn about the unique blooms that decorate our forest floor.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 10 am

HUNTINGTON COUNTY | Tel-Hy
1429 N. 300 W., Huntington, IN 46750

Presented by volunteers Dave and Deborah Hicks, and ACRES Executive Director Jason Kissel. **Space is limited. RSVP by April 10.**

TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 6 pm

WHITLEY COUNTY | Evelyn and Wendell Dygert Nature Preserve
4245 N. 50 W., Columbia City, IN 46725

Presented by ACRES Stewardship Director Evan Hill and Stewardship Assistant Jenna Bair. **Space is limited. RSVP by April 21.**



FAMILY STORYTIME HIKE

SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2-3 pm

ALLEN COUNTY | Heinzerling Family Five Points Nature Preserve
Approximately 6800 CR 7A, Garrett, IN 46738

Journey through the woods while listening to a spring-themed children's book with fellow families, then join us for a scavenger hunt. Light snacks and refreshments provided. **Space is limited. RSVP by April 12.**

WOODCOCK WALK

FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 6 am

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

Start your day searching for woodcocks, elusive little ground birds that are active early in the morning. Follow ACRES Stewardship Director Evan Hill and Project Manager Ben Taylor through the fields to listen for their unique calls and possibly see a "sky dance" courtship display. Light breakfast and refreshments provided. **Space is limited. RSVP by April 17.**



INDIANA HUMANITIES CAMPFIRES PARTNER EVENT

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 4-6pm

STEBEN COUNTY | Wing Haven
180 W. 400 N., Angola, IN 46703

Our partners at Indiana Humanities pair nature and literature together at their Campfires program. Join local poet Erica Anderson-Senter on a reflective hike, then stay for a campfire meal and discussion. **Space is limited. To purchase tickets on Eventbrite visit [indianahumanities.org/campfires](https://www.indianahumanities.org/campfires) or [acreslandtrust.org/events](https://www.acreslandtrust.org/events).**

FOREST BATHING FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2-4:30 pm

NOBLE COUNTY | Edna W. Spurgeon Woodland Reserve
9478 N. 600 W., Ligonier, IN 46767

Explore the preserve following certified forest therapist Christy Thomson's playful prompts, engaging your sense of wonder, inviting renewal and restoration. **Space is limited. RSVP by April 19.**



INVASIVE WEED REMOVAL WORKDAYS

This is a great time of year to remove the easy-to-pull invasive weeds. Gloves, bags and light snacks provided. **RSVP appreciated.**

Garlic Mustard Pull (Allen County)

FRIDAY, MAY 10, 10 am-2 pm (staff lead: Ben)

Spring Lake Woods and Bog, 12905 Lake Everett Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46818

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 10 am- noon

Bicentennial Woods, 340 E. Shoaff Road, Hometown, IN 46748

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 10 am- noon

McNabb-Walter Nature Preserve, 16138 Davis Road, Spencerville, IN 46788

Dames Rocket Pull (DeKalb County)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 4-6 pm

James P. Covell Nature Preserve, approximately 2727 County Road 52, Auburn IN, 46706

HERP HIKE FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 7 pm

WABASH COUNTY | Asherwood, 7496 W. SR 124, Wabash, IN 46992

Gear up for an evening of "herping" along the trails! Look and listen for herptiles (reptiles and amphibians) with ACRES Stewardship Assistant Gavin King. **Space is limited. RSVP by May 9.**

RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273. Watch for more events online: [acreslandtrust.org](https://www.acreslandtrust.org).



Unbreakable Bonds Formed in Nature Live Like Karlie

Photos by Andie LaComb

People appreciate being in ACRES preserves for different reasons. For Andie LaComb, what began as a simple way to enjoy nature's beauty morphed into a deep motivation to help the dogs she loves enjoy every moment of their lives.



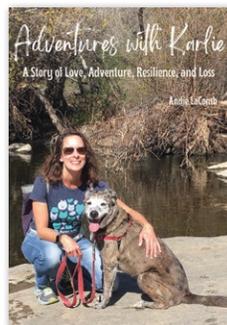
Karlie

LaComb and her husband, Art, lived in San Diego, California, with their two dogs, Karlie and Anna. When Anna passed, LaComb and Karlie began hiking parks and canyons, LaComb photographing and jotting down their adventures together.

When LaComb noticed Karlie's energy and mobility diminishing, a specialist diagnosed Karlie with geriatric onset laryngeal paralysis polyneuropathy (GOLPP), a rollercoaster of a disease affecting eating and mobility and causing muscle loss. Faced with this new reality, LaComb determined to make the best of her remaining time with Karlie.

LaComb wrote **"Adventures with Karlie"** to share Karlie's life and their hiking adventures. This eventually became the springboard for her livelikekarlie.com website with hiking tips, reviews and gear recommendations to inspire other dog owners to live adventurous lives with their dogs.

Fifteen days after Karlie's passing, the LaComb family adopted Sunny, a Catahoula/Australian Shepherd. Together, they continue hiking and exploring new places in California and Indiana, including many ACRES preserves.



FAVORITE ACRES PRESERVES

LaComb first learned about land trusts while living with Karlie in Bloomington. When Karlie passed and the family moved to Northeast Indiana, LaComb discovered ACRES preserves where she now hikes with Sunny, documenting many treks on the website.

When asked why they hike parks and preserves instead of neighborhoods, LaComb chuckled, "Neighborhoods are so boring!" While living in Northeast Indiana, LaComb and Sunny have explored over 20 ACRES preserves, including these highlights:

Bicentennial Woods

Bicentennial Woods is LaComb's favorite ACRES preserve, reminding her of preserves she and Karlie hiked in Bloomington with "a narrow trail winding through a forest of towering trees." LaComb and Sunny have walked the preserve many times, recording three of their adventures on their website.

Seven Pillars Nature Preserve

This ACRES property ranks highest on LaComb's "paw scale," rating 4 out of 4 paws for its challenging hike through woods, a walk along the water and the view of the stone pillars.

Greenhurst Commons

Unique among ACRES preserves, Greenhurst Commons has the only trail entirely paved due to its previous use as a golf course, and later, a community park. LaComb says this preserve is "perfect for those with mobility issues but also good for runners, cyclists and walking your dog" (she and Sunny prefer earthen rather than paved trails).

Leashing Dogs

Because of LaComb's years of experience hiking with dogs on trails, we asked her about leashing a dog in a nature preserve. "It's incredibly important! There are so many things that could go wrong for a dog in nature." LaComb says she drops the leash only for quick posed photos of her dog, using treats in her pocket to keep the dog next to her as she snaps a shot.

She says interactions with other dogs are tricky: "Karlie didn't love every dog...she didn't appreciate a dog running up to her. Even when people say, 'My dog is friendly,' that doesn't mean your dog is going to be friendly to my dog in this situation. Not every dog wants to meet your dog."

Your dogs and cats are welcome to join you as you hike ACRES preserves as long as they're on a leash. Remember to remove pet waste! You can keep up with Andie and Sunny and all of their adventures at livelikekarlie.com.

What Will Your Legacy Be?

Photos by Thomas Sprunger

Perfectly aligned with ACRES' long-term approach to thinking and planning, planned giving allows you to plant seeds of change that will grow into a lasting benefit for future generations.

Former Board President Steve Hammer and his wife, Lila, lifetime members and Acorn Society members, say, "The long-term effect of planned giving is well-aligned with ACRES' long-term vision: we expect that the protected land, the important habitats, the clean water, the beauty, will be here long after us."

What is Planned Giving?

Sometimes called "legacy giving," planned giving means making plans for a contribution that is arranged in the present and allocated at a future date (either during your lifetime or upon death), through a will or other financial vehicle. The most common and simplest form of planned giving is a bequest or gift of property or cash made through your will. A planned gift can be as simple as leaving a percentage of your life insurance policy to ACRES, or as complex as establishing a charitable lead or remainder trust.

Gifts can include:

- *Bequest by will or living trust*
- *Retirement assets such as 401k plans & individual retirement accounts (IRAs)*
- *Stocks and securities*
- *Real estate*
- *Charitable lead trusts*
- *Charitable remainder trusts*
- *Life insurance*

While planned giving takes many forms, all result from careful planning and an intention to make a lasting impact. Much of the land you help protect today came to ACRES through wills. Significant growth in ACRES' long-term investments is largely thanks to planned gifts.

"The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit."

—Nelson Henderson

Benefits of Planned Giving

You can leave a legacy for future generations through planned gifts. Planned giving is an opportunity to turn your values, hopes and dreams for your community's future into a legacy protecting and caring for natural areas and working lands while providing countless opportunities for research, recreation and conservation.

Depending on the gift's type and value, there are tax and financial benefits for you and your heirs.

You get to determine today how your gift will be spent, working with ACRES to identify the best use of your support for an organizational need.

Although during your lifetime you may not have the cash to make a substantial gift, through planned giving you can donate assets that equate to what could be the most significant gift you make in support of protecting local land.

Steve Hammer shares that "planned giving offers, even to those of us with modest means, the opportunity to support the important work of our favorite charity in a significant way. It often can do that while also reducing income taxes."

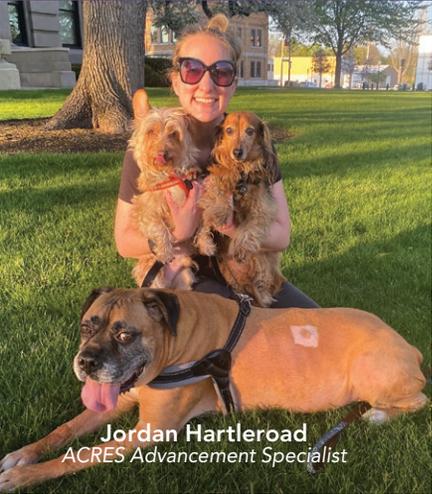
ACRES Acorn Society

Making your plans known to ACRES by completing a Declaration of Intent will include you as a member of the Acorn Society. This special group of legacy donors is planting the seed today, helping ensure that local conservation continues well into the future.

For more information about including ACRES in your long-term plans, and/or to complete a Declaration of Intent, please contact Heather Barth, Advancement Director, at hbarth@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273, extension 105.

SAVE THE DATE **Acorn Society Brunch, Saturday, April 27**

Invitations will be sent to Acorn Society Members in late March with more information!



Welcome Jordan Hartleroad!

Jordan joins the ACRES advancement team as the Advancement Specialist, supporting outreach, communications and fundraising.

Jordan met her long-term partner, James, while volunteering at Black Pine Animal Sanctuary in 2015. They now have a small herd of rescue animals of their own. Jordan is involved in multiple nonprofit organizations and works part-time at an emergency veterinarian hospital. In what little free time she has, she enjoys walking her dogs, attending concerts and binge-watching murder mystery shows. Jordan and James love to travel and aim to visit as many state and national parks as possible.

Jordan's motivation to protect land runs deep and is directly tied to her dedication to the welfare of all animals. "I was drawn to ACRES because of its long-term commitment to protecting and restoring local land. Watching forests turned into suburbs can be disheartening, but knowing ACRES properties flourish without the possibility of destruction brings hope."

"I look forward to the 'wins' of ACRES like endangered species thriving on protected land or restoring areas overgrown with invasive species that are now lush with native plant life."

Jordan shares, "I am so excited to be surrounded by co-workers, volunteers and members who have a passion for our environment, to learn from them and do my part in protecting nature!"



- ACRES Board of Directors and Committee Members
- Archive project volunteers
Chris Fairfield, Mary Anna Feitler, Carol Spallone, Jannice Razor Hubbard, Julie Samek, John Shire
- Steve Berlin
Donation of birdseed
- Linda & Brenda Baker
Donating a case of water
- Harold Eyer
Donation of hand sanitizer and insect repellent
- Goshen College Sustainability Students
Removing invasive plants at Lloyd W. Bender Memorial Forest
- Deb Grider
Donation of postcard stamps
- James P. Covell Nature Preserve and Orion Woods cleanup workday volunteers
- Cathy Lassen
Aiding at the Holiday Pop-Up Shop
- Dee McClurg
Donation of fence posts
- New Member Open House volunteers
Jeri Kornegay & Lyn Winchell, Dawn Ritchie
- Office support volunteers

- Popp Open House volunteers
Larry Biggerstaff, Tom Gardner, Keith & Louise Pomeroy,
- Purdue Fort Wayne Chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success
Removing litter and invasive plants at Mengerson Nature Reserve
- Quarterly assembly and distribution volunteers
- AJ Rambo
Leading Boots and Brews hikes
- Donna Seiler & Deborah Willig
Donation of coffee & toilet paper
- SES Environmental
Donation of toilet paper
- James Sherwood IV & James Sherwood V
Eagle Scout project building boardwalks at Blue Cast Springs.
- Ida Mae Short
Leading a member art workshop
- Grady Stout & Kirk Swaidner
Aiding in habitat restoration and boardwalk removal at Asherwood
- Volunteer preserve stewards, caretakers and trail monitors

wish list

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

- Bottled Water
- Coffee
- Council Tool Fire Rake (3)
- Indian Wildland Firefighting Pump (2):
Model 179061V, Complete Wildland Pump, Backpack, Plastic, 5-gallon Tank Capacity
- Toilet Paper
- Sure-Seal Classic Drip Torch



ACRES

BLUE JEAN

Gala

SAVE THE DATE:

Thursday, June 20, 2024

6 - 9 pm @ Union 12

Featuring live music, silent auction

Invitations will be mailed to members mid-April, with tickets to go on sale in early May.

DIRECTORS: Dawn Ritchie, President; Brittany Hall, Vice President; Jill Noyes, Vice President; Dan Ernst, Secretary; Veronica Mertz, Treasurer; John Caffray; Shannon Connors; Bob Hake; Alexis Hathaway; Jeri Kornegay; Sara Manning; Jordan Marshall; Scott Mattson; John Michaels; Melissa Rinehart; Wayne Shive; Al Spice; Terry Thornsbury; Chris Fairfield, Recording Secretary

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MEMBERSHIP: Life Member, \$1,000; Corporate Member, \$500; Annual Member, \$20. Dues payable annually.

ACRES Land Trust
1802 Chapman Road
PO Box 665
Huntertown, IN 46748

An Earth Song

Langston Hughes (1901 - 1967)

It's an earth song, —
And I've been waiting long for an earth song.
It's a spring song, —
And I've been waiting long for a spring song.
Strong as the shoots of a new plant
Strong as the bursting of new buds
Strong as the coming of the first child from
its mother's womb.

It's an earth song,
A body song,
A spring song,
I have been waiting long for this spring song.



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