

THE ACRES
QUARTERLY

Summer 2024 | Vol. 63 - No. 2



ACRES
LANDTRUST

ACRES Interns: Where Are They Now?

200-Year Ecological Reflection

Natural Rhythms

Summer Road Trip

Volunteer Spotlight

Retiring Trails

WELCOME 175 new members!

From the Executive Director

Dear Members,

I earned degrees in forestry and ministry, both requiring long-term thinking and placing a high value on delayed gratification while recognizing and enjoying benefits available today. Because of that training and ACRES mission of protecting land forever, I (and other ACRES employees) think a lot about time.

This *Quarterly* reflects that focus. You'll find articles about our "short-term" 200-year ecological reflection at Wing Haven, about natural rhythms that take centuries and millennia to recognize, and about how we've turned short-term relationships (internships) into long-term relationships (employees and partners).

While there was no intent to theme this issue around time, it naturally occurred because as an organization, we intentionally think long-term vs. short-term. This is expressed in how we care for the land and the relationships we foster with those who make land protection possible—that's you!

Land trusts have the luxury of patience, and the unique ability to manage land based on natural—rather than human—cycles. Private landowners tend to manage land based on financial needs or desired outcomes that can be achieved in their lifetime. Government landowners have goals that need to be completed before the next election.

I encourage you to take time to ponder time. Once you gain an appreciation of how nature's actions take centuries and millennia, your desire will increase to protect not only places, but also processes. In only minutes, chainsaws can erase hundreds of years of growth. Draining a bog can erase 10,000 years of effort. Within an hour, bulldozers can reshape topography that took tens of thousands of years to form.

ACRES allows nature to work on its own timeline. Thank you for helping make that possible.

Sincerely,



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

Wood frog by Jarrid Spicer. Woods frogs have the unique ability to allow 70% of their body to freeze over the winter season. Their bodies produce a "natural antifreeze" that prevents ice from forming inside of their cells and causing damage!



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 7,800 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



Judi Adams & Aaron Piercy
Christopher & Shanelle Amstutz
from Jerry & Conny Amstutz
Keri Applegate
Amie & Isidro Arizmendi
Alyssa Augustyniak
Lincoln Bates
Rachel Baumgartner
Stacey Baumgartner
Teri Baumgartner
from Keirsten Baumgartner
John Bayless
Harrison Beard
Rosemary Bell and Thomas
Kosel
Alan & Pamela Bessey
Kim Bianrosa
Jan & Jim Boeglin
Terry & Deborah Bonbrake
Eric & Katelynn Bose
Natasha & John Broski
Ethel Mae Bureros
Carl & Jule Calloway
Kathlina Carney
Taylor Carpenter
Shelli Cawood
Leslie & Peter Chaparro
Darlene & Doug Chapman
Jim & Terri Christl
Sheila Clay & Jim French
Angell & David Clough
Ryan Colchin
Sarah Conrad & Chuck Rinehart
Jeff & Lori Cook

Gretchen Coplen
Brett Cox
Dan & Marsha Croner
Zach Crouch
Wade & Michelle Dailey
Jennifer Daisey
Brian & Michelle Davenport
Randi & Ryan DeMato
Alex Dickinson
Robert Dietrick Company
Carman Draves
Samuel Drazkowski
from Nachole Drazkowski
Sharon & Jeff Dryer
Ethan Duff
Tom & Nancy Dwire
Jon & Vanessa Evans
Paul Ewing
Caroline & David Feuker
Sara Fiser & Joe Wannemacher
Pamela & Keith Ford
Greg & Carol Franklin
Austin Gallion & Marissa
Shugart
Lawrence & Kathryn Gaskill
General Dynamics Mission
Systems
Missy Girardot
Shannon & David Goode
Susan Goodwin
Susan Graber
Kevin & Dawn Grady
Mary Donna Graham
from Scott & Beth Taylor

Emily Grigar & Evelyn Grigar
Adrian & Cory Guenther
Marilyn Guilford & Hal Osmun
Kris & Eric Gunckel
Michelle Hamilton
Nancy Jo & Cary Hammel
James & Vena Hare
Tammy & Mike Hargraves
Jordan Hartleroad & James
Greer
Alexis Hathaway
Sabrina & Kevin Heimann
Laura Helm
Rachel & Evan Heshner
Bryan Hocker
Diana Hoffman
from Scott & Beth Taylor
Joshua Holbrook & Katie
Orebaugh
Jeff & Brenda Hovermale
Cindy & Michael Huffman
Elena Hughes
Michelle Huss Ford
Kim Hyland and Teresa Smith
Daniel Jessup
Todd & Lisa Johnson
Nicholas Johnston
Paulette Kates
Jeffrey & Brenda Kean
Patrick & Hope Kelly
Bonnie & Louis Kerekgyarto
Terra & Kim King
Michelle Kivi

continued on p. 18

In Memory of

Karen Andrews
from Richard Griggs
"Aussie" Molargik
from Cynthia Molargik
Tom Brookshire
from Kim & Curtis Lehman
Neil Case
from Thomas Burkhart, Vickie Cracker, Janet
Dickson, Lyn Ocken, Kayla Schulz, Chris
& Beth Husband, Ginger Murphy, Janet
Schenkel

Shirley Claxton
from Roger & Cheryl Bellis, Michael & Lucia
Claxton, Harold & Pamela Hill, IBEW Local
305, Barbara Jablonski, Shirley Lewis, Connie
Lothamer & Bob Fischer, Gloria & Michael
Pressler, Bruce & Valerie Sweetheimer,
Ray & Sue Claxton, Tim & Sheila Claxton

Shannon Cox
from Roxann & Jeremy Grogg
Mike Haley
from Diana Harris

Sue Holm
from Louise A. Larsen
Jean Kin
from Deborah Sarrazine

Duane Lupke
from Angie & Dan O'Neill; "In loving memory
of David Lupke's father, Duane, who taught
me so much about birding and nature."

Joan Peryam
from Gary Crabill
Stephen Petrisko
from Amie & Isidro Arizmendi
Sandy Schach
from Louise A. Larsen

In Honor of

Gael Gomez
from Katie & Mark Ranck, Milo Sherman
Reena Ramos
from Heather & Damon Barth
Jenny Sauder
from Danielle Sauder
Mary Kay & Jim Solon
from Lindsay & Greg Solon

Where Are They Now?

Thanks to support from the Olive B. Cole Foundation, ACRES hand-selects several students to accompany the stewardship crew on their summertime endeavors. These young minds learn the ways of conservation and form relationships with field professionals.

At the end of summer, participants part ways and embark on their own journeys. Where are they now? What do they do? Who did they become?



TATE ALLEN

Arborist with Harrison McPhee Inc. in Massachusetts, 2019 ACRES Intern from Purdue University

After graduating from Purdue University, my wife and I moved out east, where I have worked as an arborist ever since. Arboriculture is not necessarily a conservation career, but the ACRES internship confirmed I was on the right track to work outdoors and in nature! During the internship I became very familiar with herbicide application. I carried that knowledge into my arborist job, where I received my ISA arborist certification and Massachusetts pesticide applicator license. The biggest internship takeaway was how much of a problem invasive species are—it's a constant battle for management.

I have lots of fond memories from my internship. I remember electrofishing with wildlife biologists and other natural resources professionals in Cedar Creek. It was fascinating to see the process of surveying fish and how many different species of fish we found. Another time, we saw a state endangered Marsh Wren while checking an ACRES property by the Elkhart River.

ANELA HILL

Wildlife Major at Purdue University in Indiana, 2023 ACRES Intern from Purdue University

I am still finishing my degree, but I have an undergraduate research position studying habitat occupancy of the Hoary and Eastern Red Bat. I am applying to graduate schools, hopefully pursuing my master's at an east coast university.

I use a fair bit of data collected from ACRES properties in my research and upcoming publication. The internship was an excellent experience; I was able to see the places where the data was collected firsthand. I'm able to provide details about the vegetation cover, topography and other landscape details to my team.

One of my biggest internship takeaways is that keeping a landscape healthy requires getting creative with a combination of management techniques. I also learned Indiana has a widely diverse appearance and variety of habitats, even within the same county!

My favorite memory as an intern was helping Purdue Fort Wayne survey bats at an ACRES preserve. Using mist nets, we were able to catch the state and federally endangered Indiana bat, then attach a telemetry transmitter to find its day roost!



JESSICA GUMBERT

North Region Environmental Biologist with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Fish and Wildlife, 2019 ACRES Intern from the University of Saint Francis

The ACRES internship was my first field experience. It strengthened my resume and encouraged me to explore conservation careers. I learned about so many plants, animals and threats to natural communities, especially how to identify and manage invasive species. I use all these skills daily as the North Region Environmental Biologist! I'm also able to network with other professionals using the relationships I created as an intern, leading to many partnerships and collaborations.

A big internship takeaway was realizing the importance and impact of non-government conservation groups. Seeing groups with their own agency making a palpable change in their communities is a precious thing.

One of my favorite memories was spending the entire day in a bog on my birthday. We were with a phenomenal botanist and saw so many unique plants. All of us were trying hard to stay upright and not fall through the sphagnum moss while pushing through the dense shrubs, but I was having a ball.

IRIS NORTON

Agriculture Major at Texas State University in Texas, 2020 and 2021 ACRES Intern

I will graduate in May with a degree in Agriculture, with a concentration in Horticulture and a minor in Plant and Soil Science. After my first summer with ACRES, I moved down to central Texas, seeking adventure and studies in agriculture.

I was looking forward to soil science and similar courses before my ACRES experiences, but after interning, I was reassured I was moving in the right direction. I was exposed to many new skills, tools, species and more. My experiences were memorable and could not be replicated in a classroom setting.

One of my big internship takeaways was the concept of acting as a steward to the land. It is a philosophy from ACRES that will stick with me forever as I continue to make meaningful positive changes in my academic work in agriculture.

I look back fondly on my general internship experiences, considering how much appreciation I gained for my natural surroundings. I constantly ask questions, identify and learn about things like plants, insects and birds. ACRES influenced me to appreciate my surroundings and become a more curious person.

Thank you, past interns, for sharing your stories and passions. You are all doing amazing things in the natural world! We're excited to share more intern stories in the Fall Quarterly.

ACRES looks for summer interns every year. Interested in learning more about this summer experience? Visit [acreslandtrust.org/boardstaff/internship](https://www.acreslandtrust.org/boardstaff/internship)





WING HAVEN 200 Years of Change

How do you comprehend and measure a timespan of 200 years? In familial terms, 200 years spans eight generations. In 200 years, someone's great, great, great, great, great-grandchildren will be changing our world. Although 200 years isn't long on nature's timescale, overnight, human activity can alter natural areas thriving for millennia.

In 2017, ACRES joined an initiative to help people begin to understand the kinds of ecological changes that can occur over a few centuries: our **200-Year Ecological Reflection** project at Wing Haven. Curating work in the arts, humanities and sciences, this project will provide a wealth of content, inspiring people to see land and its protection in a new way.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

ACRES chose Wing Haven as this project's focus because of its rich diversity of plants, birds, mammals and aquatic species in three major ecosystems: glacially carved kettle-hole lakes bordered by a wetland fen system; upland forests; and rolling grasslands/meadows. It's also a perfect place for artists to be inspired by nature, just as it was for land donor and artist Helen Swenson when she and her husband, Ben, called Wing Haven home.

By amassing 200 years of science, artwork and writings on Wing Haven, we are gaining insight into how people view their connection to nature, the impacts of land use and how Indiana's changing land ethic alters the landscape.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Each year, ACRES works with one artist and one scientist to produce something meaningful from Wing Haven. Over the past six years, artists have created everything from poetry to oil paintings to chamber music, all inspired by nature in this nature preserve. Scientists have conducted a tree survey, a survey of Little Gentian Lake, a plant species inventory, a bumblebee survey and more! Over time, these two approaches to documenting a specific portion of land will tell a story of change in both the environment itself and in humanity's connection with it. Even though no one reading this article in 2024 will see the end of this ambitious project, we hope to produce something meaningful for generations to follow.



200-YEAR ECOLOGICAL REFLECTION: WEASELS

ACRES recently partnered with wildlife researchers to study the weasel, known to be elusive, cunning and downright adorable. Dr. Scott Bergeson, Assistant Professor of Animal Biology at Purdue University Fort Wayne, and his Graduate Teaching Assistant, Carsten White, led the ongoing study of determining the best method of observing these secretive predators.

Researchers hypothesize that Indiana's weasel population might be on the decline and suffering from expanding development. Weasels play an essential role in our ecosystem by managing populations of small mammals (mice, voles, shrews) and snakes. Bergeson and White noted that because of the weasel's elusive nature, there is currently very little data to support speculation on population size. They are working with partners from other countries (notably the Netherlands and Europe) to develop better methods of studying these dodgy predators.

What is the best method to study these critters? Taken directly from Bergeson and White's published article:

"Where weasels are of management concern, and little is known, there is an emerging pattern of using an iterative, multi-method approach to gain an understanding of weasel distribution and population ecology.

First, citizen science and historical records are often used to identify where weasels persist. Second, baited camera traps (and to a lesser extent detection dogs or molecular approaches) are used to gather information on spatial distribution and factors influencing occupancy of weasels within those focal areas (e.g. Ghose et al. 2018, Cepeda-Duque et al. 2023). Third, where weasels are known to be resident, researchers use enclosed camera trap setups (Mostela and/or AHDriFT systems) to gain insights into weasel behaviour and factors influencing their relative activity or abundance. Formalising this process within management plans and across political boundaries could help build towards large scale, comparable trend data needed to information management."

One method that sparked Carsten's interest is the AHDriFT system (mentioned above). Once expanded upon and proper protocols established, the AHDriFT system can prove to be a valuable tool in studying highly elusive animals.

So, what did all of this research turn up at Wing Haven? Bergeson and White captured photos of one resident weasel on the property! Because of their social habits, it is not uncommon for there to be a singular weasel in any particular area. With continued research of the Wing Haven weasel, Bergeson and White plan to observe more critters across other ACRES preserves in hopes of identifying habitat suitable for the weasel, expanding the AHDriFT system and fully developing protocols to share with other wildlife biology teams.

Explore ACRES 200-Year Ecological Reflection Project and check out all of the art and science that has come out of this project so far at www.acres200er.org





Natural Rhythms

By Jason Kissel, Executive Director

We are accustomed to many natural rhythms. We notice the change from night to morning and evening to night. We recognize the change of seasons. We've learned the growing seasons of our gardens and crops. We even track our time through natural rhythms—the duration of one rotation of the earth's axis (a day) and the duration of an orbit around the sun (a year).

Many of us have experienced several cycles of the periodic cicadas emerging every 13 and 17 years, so we catch that rhythm. But when we hear only one or two beats of a natural rhythm during our lifetime, we often miss it.

So how can we relate to rhythms whose beats occur every 200 years, or 1,000 years, or 10,000 years? For those, we need to consult the longer-lasting portions of nature.

Living trees show us the rhythms of forest fires, rainy seasons and other growing conditions—their growth rings recording hundreds of years of these rhythms. And through dendrochronology (the scientific method of dating tree rings), these rhythms can be traced back thousands of years.

Within ACRES service area, the soil under our feet increases in elevation a little bit each year, still rebounding from the last glacier's weight 14,000 years ago. The land knows the rhythm of glaciers over the past several million years and is anticipating the next glacier that will keep the beat progressing.

Under the soil, layers of rock and fossils indicate an even longer rhythm—the fluctuation of our area being dry land, then shallow sea, then dry land again. You need millions of years to understand those rhythms.

During our lifetime, we won't notice the sun's intensity increasing as it marches toward self-destruction, but nature notices.

Nature freely shares its rhythms—if we pause long enough to observe. When we do, we appreciate all the effort and time it took for the land we stand on to exist the way we experience it.

It humbles me and makes me less prone to want to “manage land” based on my blip of time as part of nature. ACRES respects the past efforts of nature and provides places where natural rhythms can progress uninterrupted.



While a total solar eclipse might seem like a rare occurrence, totality is observable somewhere on Earth every 18 months.

“One of the biggest lessons I learned from my dad is that *if you care, you have to get involved. You can't just sit on the sidelines.*”

— BO DIETRICK, PRESIDENT, ROBERT DIETRICK COMPANY

The values instilled in Bo include a deep commitment to community, and a drive to make a difference wherever he can. “Companies have an opportunity to help steward their communities, communities that influence their success.”

As a way to get involved, Robert Dietrick Company (RDC), family-owned for 55 years, developed the RDC Cares Committee, including Bo's mother, sister and wife. The company's long history, combined with the strength of the economy, positions RDC to give back in a meaningful way. His family shares an appreciation for the outdoors, so as they looked for conservation groups doing good work in the regions their clients and workforce call home, they found ACRES Land Trust in their northern market.

After doing their due diligence in learning more about ACRES, Bo stated confidently: “If you want to be involved in conservation in northeast Indiana, there's no better group to trust to know that your support will make a difference.”

WHAT IS A CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP?

A corporate partnership is a mutually beneficial relationship between a for-profit company and a nonprofit organization, with a shared goal and a commitment of time and resources that benefit both parties. This level of support involves more than making a financial donation or sponsoring an event. The ideal partnership aligns values and provides opportunities for both parties to grow their business and expand their reach. These partnerships are customized to meet the needs of both parties, which means that an openness to creativity and opportunities is a must.

Companies benefit by demonstrating their commitment to social responsibility while providing their workforce with engagement opportunities such as volunteerism and education. Nonprofit groups benefit from the added financial and volunteer support. Both parties enjoy positive publicity, access to expertise and enhanced credibility by partnering with an established organization.

Corporate partners enable ACRES to continue providing valuable community services while the partners gain visibility and affirm their own corporate values. As Bo put it, “If your reputation matters, you have to be able to look back and be proud of what you helped your community accomplish.” If you're interested in becoming a corporate partner, contact Heather Barth, Advancement Director, at hbarth@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273, ext. 105.



Photo spread on pages 10–11 by Thomas Sprunger. The golden sunlight dances on the tops of the trees lining the Wabash River at Acres Along The Wabash.



RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273. Watch for more events online: acreslandtrust.org.

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

ALLEN COUNTY | Tom & Jane Dustin Nature Preserve

Enjoy live music on the preserve every month from June to September. Bring your own drinks, snacks and camp chair or blanket. Come early to explore the trails.

Los Electro

THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 6-9 pm

Todd Harrold Band

THURSDAY, JULY 11, 6-9 pm

Augmentasia

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 6-9 pm

Debutants

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 6-9 pm

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY TAPS & TREK

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2 pm

FULTON COUNTY | Ruth Kern Woodland Preserve

Hike through the forest and wetlands to celebrate National Trails Day! Afterwards, join us for a “treat yourself” stop for drinks at Tip A Canoe Brews in Rochester, IN.

DEEP LISTENING HIKE FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1-4 pm

PAULDING COUNTY | Black Swamp Audubon Sanctuary (Address available with RSVP)

Listen! You might be surprised by what you hear. Brett Bloom will help you explore the sense of sound on this meditative hike. *This is an event aimed at adults, no kids please.*

Space is limited, RSVP by June 7.

FAMILY PLAY DAY

THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2-4 pm

WABASH COUNTY | Asherwood

Gather with fellow families for an afternoon of crafts, scavenger hunt hikes, make-your-own trail mix and more. Stop by anytime to enjoy the fun! *RSVP appreciated.*



BLUE JEAN GALA

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 6 pm

WHITLEY COUNTY | Union 12 Venue

An evening of supporting and celebrating local land with food by Catablu's BluSpoon, live music by Supernovas and a silent auction. Tickets available at acreslandtrust.org/gala.

ACRES INVASIVE PLANT WORKSHOP

FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 5-7:30 pm

ALLEN COUNTY | ACRES Land Trust Office

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 by June 19.*



BOOKBINDING WORKSHOP FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 10 am-noon

ALLEN COUNTY | ACRES Land Trust Office

Get creative with local artist Julie Wall, owner of The Hedge art studio in Fort Wayne. Learn to book bind your own nature notebook using the Japanese stab binding method. Design a unique cover and incorporate pages that are preprinted with space for sketches, meditation journaling and field notes. *Space is limited, RSVP by June 27.*

ASHERWOOD CLEANUP WORKDAY

SATURDAY, JULY 13, 10 am

WABASH COUNTY | Asherwood

ACRES is growing, help us clean a new stewardship hub! Join us for an indoor workday as we make this place look spick and span. Refreshments provided. *RSVP appreciated.*

NEW MEMBER OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY, JULY 20, 1-2:30 pm

ALLEN COUNTY | ACRES Land Trust Office

Are you new to ACRES? This open-house-style event allows you to meet other members and learn how your support helps protect local land. Come when you can, leave when you must. Refreshments provided.

SUNDAE SAUNTER

SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2 pm

NOBLE COUNTY | Lloyd W. Bender Memorial Forest

Take a stroll through the forested trails and join us afterward for a “treat-yourself” sweet treat at Cowabunga Creamery in Albion, IN.

CREEK STOMP XV FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SATURDAY, JULY 27, 10 am

WABASH COUNTY | Hathaway Preserve at Ross Run

This spectacular creek is off-limits the rest of the year, so here's your chance! Make your way through the cliffs and waterfalls of the Ross Run gorge while watching for fossils and fish. *Hosted by preserve steward Kirk Swaidner and the Kissel family. Space is limited, RSVP by July 25.*



BAT RESEARCH DEMO FOR ACRES MEMBERS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 8-10 pm

ALLEN COUNTY | ACRES Land Trust Office

Get batty with Dr. Scott Bergeson from Purdue University Fort Wayne. Learn about local bat research and how to survey these nimble nocturnal creatures with nets. Hopefully, a winged guest will make an appearance! *Space is limited, RSVP by August 6.*

MACKEL OPEN HOUSE FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 1-4 pm

ALLEN COUNTY | Mackel Nature Preserve (Address available with RSVP)

Explore the historic Mackel residence, located right along Cedar Creek! Take a tour through the family home, a short hike through the woods, and learn how this preserve is protected forever. Refreshments provided. This preserve is closed to the public. *Hosted by Mackel caretakers Isaac and Kelsey Saxton. Space is limited, RSVP by August 1.*

WABASH RIVER FLOAT

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 10-noon

HUNTINGTON & WABASH COUNTIES | Rustic River Outfitters

Grab a paddle and join Stewardship Assistant Gavin King on the river! During this casual float, you'll learn about nature along the Wabash River and pass ACRES Hanging Rock National Natural Landmark preserve. Kayak rentals available for \$55 per person, \$45 for ACRES members. Learn more about rentals at acreslandtrust.org/events or call 260-637-2273. *Space is limited, RSVP by July 24.*



FIELD FLOWER HIKE FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 10 am

HUNTINGTON COUNTY | Pehkokia Woods

Enjoy the last of the summer blooms! Take a stroll through the fields 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 by August 22.*

Summer Road Trip

Are you looking to get out of the house this summer and hit the road? We've got you covered! This day trip takes you along I-69 and has you hiking in both Indiana and Michigan.



Greenhurst Commons

1740 North Main Street, Auburn, IN 46706

Greenhurst Commons stands out as one of the few urban preserves we protect. The entire trail system is paved, making it suitable for wheelchair and other mobility devices, as well as bicycles! As you hike along its 1.4 mile trail, you'll notice nature slowly reclaiming this former golf course. Make sure to keep an eye out for a variety of wildlife in the natural areas.

Wing Haven

180 W. 400 N. Angola, IN 46703

Wing Haven, once the site of the Wing Haven Resort and home to Helen and Ben Swenson, has a rich diversity of plants, birds, mammals and aquatic species. As you hike this preserve, you'll visit a kettle-hole lake, upland forests and rolling meadows. You'll also pass by Helen's artist's studio where she created paintings that captured the splendor of the nature around her.



Kauffman Nature Sanctuary

13127 Beecher Rd Hudson, MI 49247



Kauffman Nature Sanctuary is ACRES Land Trust's first Michigan property. Sedges, willows and cattails provide habitat for nesting green heron and sandhill cranes. The loop trail winds through tall grass before entering a forest with several large pawpaw patches and a rich floodplain at the back of the property. A coldwater stream — one of Michigan's headwater streams of Lake Erie — flows through these woods.

POINTS OF INTEREST ALONG THE WAY

Pokagon State Park

450 Ln 100 Lake James, Angola, IN 46703

Located near Wing Haven nature preserve, this park became the fifth Indiana State Park in 1925. Natural lakes created by glaciers that melted 10,000 to 15,000 years ago highlight Steuben County, which has more lakes than any other Indiana county. The park is framed by Lake James and Snow Lake, which offer abundant opportunities for boating, swimming, fishing and scenic sunsets.

Homestead Ice Cream Shoppe

22360 County Rd F, Archbold, OH 43502

Looking to cool off with a cold treat? Swing by this family-owned ice cream manufacturer and shop!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: John Laatsch

The Laatsch family protected their 97-acre property with ACRES in 2010, and in 2018, John Laatsch became a volunteer Preserve Steward. As a Preserve Steward, John is responsible for maintaining the preserve and trail system.

Prior to becoming an ACRES preserve, the north field of Pehkokia Woods was farmed. The area was considered to be highly erodible, making it eligible for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Through the program, subsidies were provided to discontinue farming and establish plantings that would protect the soil.

"I am a big fan of tallgrass prairies, so upon entering into the CRP in the late 1980s, it was decided that we'd establish one! Some prairie seed was purchased from commercial sources, and additional seed was collected from remnant prairie patches that I had noted while traveling the state, primarily in northwestern Indiana."

John enjoys observing how the prairie changes over time. Initially, he saw non-native weeds growing, but over time the native grasses began to dominate. Eventually, flowering prairie plants moved in, like Rattlesnake Master, False Dragonhead, Culver's Root Prairie Dock, Rosin Weed, Stiff Sunflower and Compass Plant.

"I find it remarkable that even though some seed likely was unknowingly collected and planted inefficiently, they have all become fairly well established (although in many cases it took years and even decades before they gained a foothold!)."



The bright purple Closed Bottle Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*) is John's favorite prairie bloom.

The preserve is an important part of both John's history and the natural history of the land. "Natural areas provide habitat for so much wildlife, including the prairie at Pehkokia Woods that is teeming with pollinating insects during the growing season. We rely on all of the plants and animals for a diverse and healthy ecosystem. I am thankful that I get to be a small part of protecting a natural area."

Thank you, John, for all your work protecting and caring for Pehkokia Woods! Visit John and the trails at the preserve this season to enjoy the tallgrass prairie.

Interested in learning more about the prairie blooms? Join John at a Field Flower Hike on August 24. More information on page 12.

You Spoke and ACRES Listened

by Chris Fairfield

Fox Fire Woods

In the 2020 Winter Quarterly, ACRES announced a new program to raise the standards of public preserve access. Based on 2018 extensive research, the initiative responded to preserve visitors asking for more park-like trailhead parking lots, distinctive and directive signage, well-maintained earthen and mowed paths and digital and printed trail maps.

Over the last four years, ACRES has purposely invested in its visitor amenities while keeping a clear focus on preserving inhabitants. Open preserves now include distinguished parking areas, new signage and well-defined hiking trails.

Beyond the many parking lots and trail signs, ACRES actively facilitates the care of all its properties to protect native species, land and water integrity and property history. Each preserve requires regular attention and maintenance by stewardship staff, interns, volunteers and visitors. Additionally, professional environmentalists and permitted researchers continue to study many of the properties' unique features.

So, when a preserve trail closes to public foot traffic, there are carefully considered and specific reasons. The ACRES board, staff, members and property owners engage in conversation to make the tough decisions. As outlined in the 2020 article, criteria include proximity to other trail systems, property size, visitation and space limitations. Some preserves include uncommon and disappearing land and water forms. ACRES considers flood and erosion implications. Some properties support rare habitats and/or listed plants and animals. Inhabitants' health and status are always a protective promise.

The closed properties included in this final enhanced services article highlight three small but significant preserves.

Fox Fire Woods

Fox Fire Woods, in Allen County, was donated by Glenn and Winifred Poe in 1974. The Poes were among the original ACRES members. This preserve was named for the unusual fungus (false chanterelle) that glows in the dark of an undisturbed woodland. The Poes specified the donation for scientific research, teaching and conservation. The 7.9-acre woods offer a short .4-mile loop trail with limited parking access and will close at the end of 2024. Flanked with farmland, it will remain safeguarded for native plants and animals.



Maumee River Overlook

Maumee River Overlook is a .9-acre Allen County property along the Maumee River. This tiny property with minimal foot traffic carries a mighty history. It was once the site of the Ashton Mill and dam. The steam-driven sawing and grinding process supplied lumber for the Wabash-Erie Canal. Mill operations there were frequently interrupted by ice and flood waters. Around 1865, the dam and mill were washed out and dismantled. Although this property was closed to the public at the end of 2023, ACRES continues to preserve its riparian value and deep roots in Indiana's history.

Florence Badger

The 36-acre Florence Badger Nature Preserve was donated in 2002. Florence Badger was raised on this Noble County family farm before becoming the first female to graduate with a Manchester College mathematics degree. As agreed, ACRES continues to work the homestead farm. The south end of the property offers a .5-mile trail. Public access to this preserve will close at the end of 2024.



These three preserves, along with the others outlined in recent years, will remain strong under ACRES care for natural and working lands. As these few trail systems return to nature, other public trail systems are opening to the public with enhanced amenities and new hiking experiences.

Outdoor enthusiasts can now visit Greenhurst Commons in DeKalb County. This extensive 110-acre preserve, acquired in 2022, is located in Auburn, where ACRES assists nature in reclaiming the former golf course. Greenhurst Commons offers a large parking lot and 1.4 miles of accessible trails. The trail system connects to the Poka-Bache trail system and is unique in that it is the only ACRES property to permit bicycle traffic.

As ACRES continues its mission of protecting land, keep an eye out for future ACRES preserve openings and unique members-only visitation announcements.



Welcome Carman Draves!

Carman joins the ACRES stewardship team as a Stewardship Assistant after serving as extended seasonal help during the past fall and winter seasons.

Growing up on a lake in Shippshewana, she spent her younger years catching insects and wrangling toads. Filled with wonder about the landscape around her, she and her mother would seek (and often find) answers to every question she had.

Living at the lake gave her a front-row seat to hydrological processes, animal life cycles and migrations. Her curiosities eventually landed her at Manchester University, where she studied Environmental Science and History. She later earned

her master's in Integrative Biology from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

When asked what she's passionate about, Carman replied: "Fair land use, land conservation and management and closed-loop manufacturing. For me, it is most important to fix the land first. Species endangerment, soil degradation and migratory stress are all reduced once contiguous high-quality habitat is provided."

Carman recognizes that her work is vital for the plants and critters in northeast Indiana. "My work as a steward is critical to improving Indiana's sparsely protected lands. In Indiana, we have strong potential for incredibly biodiverse habitats. The Midwest is a haven for migratory critters and giving them a good 'hotel room' to rest and regroup is critical to their safe passage."

ACRES is committed to growing its ability to steward the land it protects. Before the end of 2024, ACRES is looking to hire one additional employee beyond Draves, doubling the size of its current Stewardship Team.

Welcome New Members *(continued from p. 3)*

Denise & David Klausner
 Fred & Cindy Koch
 Dwayne Kuipers
 Rhonda Ladig
 Brad & Angie Landrum, Wyatt, Maddy
 Rachel Larimore
 Thomas & Crystal Laux
 Alice & Doug Lawson
 Mark & Julie Lazerwitz
 Erin & Jason Lenardson
 Stephen & Leah Liebenauer
 Neal Lockwood
 Pete & Judy McDonald
 August McFarren & Brianna Huey
 Beth Meyer
 Frank & Denise Mikulski
 Charles & Terri Milledge
 Tim & Lora Miller
 Greg & Jennifer Mohr
 Dulton Moore
 Dan & Becky Morford
 James Morrow
 Don & Karen Muckenfuss
 Jennifer Musall
 Nathan Myers
 Cindy & Myron Noward
 John & Sandy Oberley
 Mike & Mary Ann O'Neil
 Ian Orewiler

Mike & Trisha Payne
 Bob & Deb Pearson
 Alexandra Peck
 Renee Pence
 Faith Post
 Lea Powers & Jim Griest
 Apollo Ramos
 Katie & Mark Ranck
 Ranney Family
 David Reed
 Patrick & Christina Richardville
 Cheryl Ripley
 Denise Risser
 Kerri Roby
 Michael Roe
 Ron & Iris Russell
 Rose & George Saalfrank
 Judith & Tim Schaffter
 Jason & Katie Schaller
 from Jerry & Conny Amstutz
 David Scherer
 Daveana Schieler
 Nick & Anne Schiffl
 Roy & Carolyn Schneider
 Susan Schott
 Becky Schrag
 from Nicholas & Valerie Schrag
 Mariah Schroeder & Brett Fifield
 David & Constance Sewell
 Haley & Josh Shively

Alexis Shuler & Zac Stillwell
 David & Ellen Smith
 Donald & Theresa Smith
 Joe & Kateri Smith
 Millie & Nathan Smith
 Mary Kay & Jim Solon
 from Lindsay & Greg Solon
 Becky & Jeff Souder
 Pam Spohr
 Kerry & Judy Springer
 Tracy Springstead & Karen Semones
 Rodney & Jenny Stayner
 Ethan & Pamela Taylor
 Cassandra Thomas
 Dani & Robert Tippmann
 Elisha & Tommi Tucker
 Tara & Jason Turner
 Juli Wald
 Evan Welter
 Anita Westhues
 James & Christine Wilcox
 Karen Wilgus
 Sara & Jason Windsor
 Trent Winkler
 Greg Wiseman
 from Paul & Debra Wiseman
 Johnny & Latoya Wright
 Jeff Wyckoff & Tammy Nierman-Wyckoff
 Tiffany Yorek

SPECIAL thanks

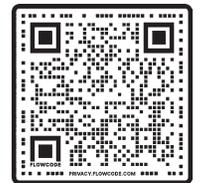
ACRES Board of Directors and Committee Members
 John Laatsch, Kirk Swaidner and Larry Watson
 Aiding in prescribed burn
 Steve Berlin
 Donation of birdseed
 Linda & Brenda Baker
 Donating a case of water
 Harold Eyer
 Donation of hand sanitizer and insect repellent
 Erica Anderson-Senter
 Hosting a poetry workshop
 Archiving project volunteers
 Chris Fairfield, Mary Anna Feitler, Jannice Rasor Hubbard, Julie Samek, John Shire
 Asherwood Pancake Breakfast volunteers
 Nancy and Joe Conrad
 Leading a First Day Hike
 Home and Garden Show booth volunteers
 Bridgett Hernandez and Natasha Manor
 Hosting a book discussion
 Indiana Master Naturalists of Allen County
 Hosting an ACRES presentation
 Anne Bao, Diane Randall Louise Pomeroy, April Steury
 Office support volunteers
 Erin McKeever
 Hosting a kids art workshop
 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 & 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, boardwalk removal, and harvesting maple syrup at Asherwood
 Spring Cleaning Caravan Workday volunteers
 Kirk Swaidner
 Aiding with the Winter Creek Stomp
 Volunteer preserve stewards, caretakers and trail monitors

wish list

Your generous donations of these supplies help keep our overhead costs down to focus on our mission. Thank you!

acreslandtrust.org/wishlist



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

ACRES LAND TRUST'S 6TH

Blue Jean Gala

Thursday, June 20th at 6 PM

UNION 12

7563 Lincoln Way Road,
Columbia City, IN

\$75
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TO PURCHASE TICKETS
acreslandtrust.org/gala