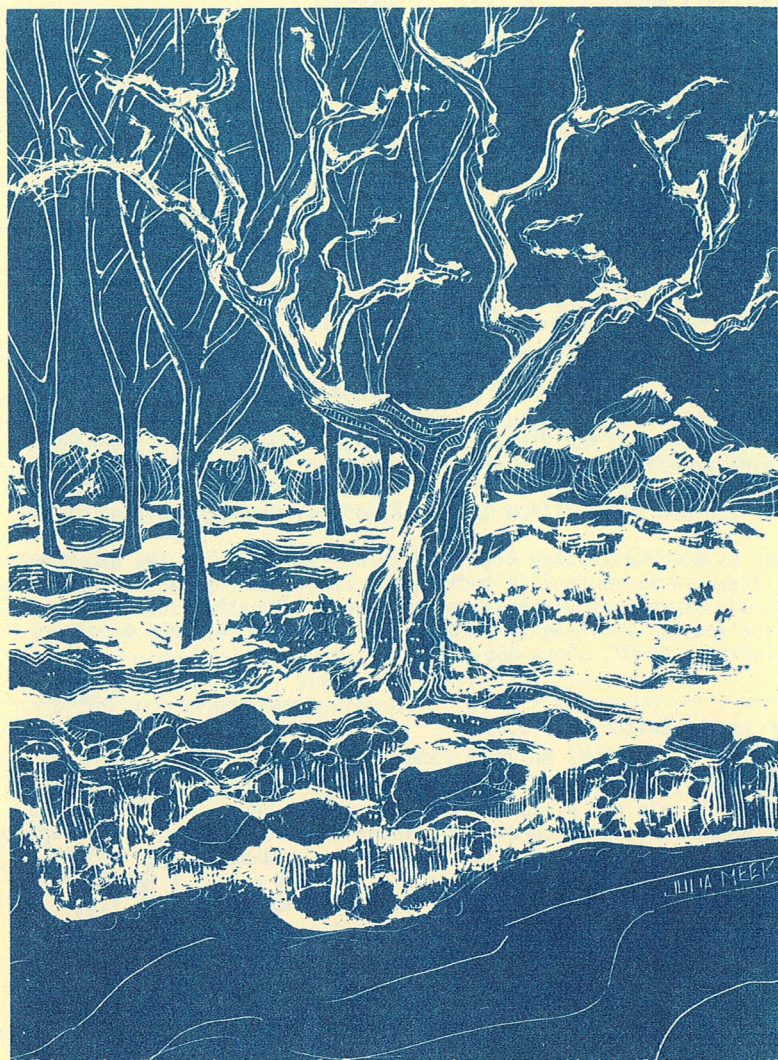




Quarterly
Winter - 1990
Volume XXIX No. 1



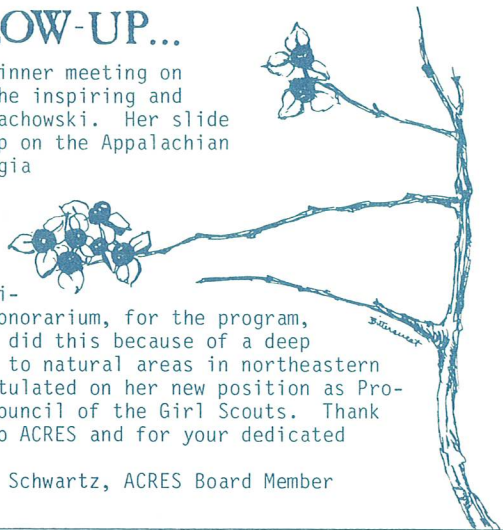
A NIGHT WALK

FALL MTG. FOLLOW-UP...

Everyone who attended our annual dinner meeting on November 3, 1989, was treated to the inspiring and beautiful presentation by Kathy Stachowski. Her slide program detailed a backpacking trip on the Appalachian Trail from Springer Mountain, Georgia to Mt. Katahdin, Maine. The program was highlighted with beautiful background music and stirring commentary about her journey.

We owe Kathy a double debt of gratitude because she contributed her honorarium, for the program, back into the ACRES treasury. She did this because of a deep commitment to the environment, and to natural areas in northeastern Indiana. She is also to be congratulated on her new position as Program Director for the Limberlost Council of the Girl Scouts. Thank you Kathy, for your contribution to ACRES and for your dedicated interests!

- Sam Schwartz, ACRES Board Member



Local I.W.L.A. Plans Big Night!

A Dinner/Auction Fundraiser will take place to benefit the Fort Wayne Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America on January 26, 1990 at the Pine Valley Country Club. The Izaak Walton League of America, founded in 1922, is one of the nation's oldest anti-pollution organizations serving both conservationists and sportsman alike. The elegant sit-down dinner will be preceded by a cash bar opening at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25.00 per person and may be purchased by mail, in advance, by checks written to "Fort Wayne Chapter, IWLA Dinner/Auction", c/o Deb Ewing, 17100 Griffin Road, Hometown, Indiana, 46748.

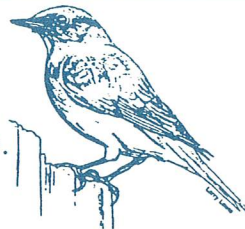
The group is also soliciting high quality auction items as tax deductible donations. Items received to date include sporting items, such as a custom made fishing rod, as well as antiques and art works. Donations of auction items are being received at Candlelight Antiques, c/o Sally Boose, 3205 Broadway, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46807; phone 456-3150.

Letter to the Editor.....

Dear Editor,

Just what do the Bluebirds eat in the winter? I hope this note will help the bluebirds that overwinter here.

In the summer, bluebirds are mostly insect eaters. When they cannot find insects, they eat berries and seeds. In one of my old Sialia bluebird journals, I found a recipe for winter feeding. Please print it in the Quarterly. Thanks.



Recipe for Miracle Food for Bluebirds: Mix one part flour (whole wheat) with three parts yellow corn meal in a large bowl. Add spoonfuls of lard, not shortening, and mix until you have a firm ball. Do not add bird seed. Pack the mixture on pinecones or on the lid of nesting boxes. - Else R. Matott

Cover Artist - This winter scene, entitled "A Night Walk" was done by Julia Meek, inspired by an adventure through an ACRES property. Julia is a Fort Wayne artist and ACRES member, and always eager to capture a bit of nature. "A Night Walk" was done in the old style scratch board method. Thank you Julia!

Field Trips & Special Events

January 26 Izaak Walton League Dinner/Auction Fundraiser

See details on page 2!

When: 6:30pm

Where: Pine Valley Country Club

Bring: An auction item and \$\$\$!

Contact Person: See article on page 2.

January 28 Winter Hike - (the new!) Vandolah Nature Preserve

A winter hike through Cedar Creek canyon and bottomland of our new ACRES Vandolah Nature Preserve in Perry Township, Allen Co. Hot drinks and cookies at Fort Wayne Izaak Walton League Chapter House (Griffin and Hollopeter Roads) following hike (3:00pm).

When: 1:30pm

Meet: Tother Road access. Take Vandolah Road west 3/4 mile from Tonkle Road (Old 427).

Bring: Hiking clothes.

Contact People: Judy Esterline, 219-432-8455.

Bob Weber, 219-747-6030

February 4 Wing Haven Nature Preserve Open House.

Studio/Visitor Center will be open and staffed by ACRES member.

When: 1:00pm to 5:00pm.

Where: Steuben County, On C.R. 400N, 1/2 mile east of S.R. 127.

February 9, 10, & 11 Badgers, Bats, and Bobcats Getaway

Friday night through Sunday noon, fun-filled weekend of activities and outings. Theme is **Nongame Wildlife**. Hosted by Indiana State Park Naturalist Service and the Spring Mill Inn.

When: Friday at 7:30pm to Sunday at noon.

Where: Spring Mill State Park, Mitchell, Indiana.

Contact for brochure: Spring Mill Inn 812-849-4081.

February 15 The Nature Conservancy Meeting (Waters of Life)

Further information on page 8, see "the back page".

March 4 Wing Haven Nature Preserve Open House.

See February 4 above.

March 10-11 Bluebird Festival / Celebrate Wildlife

The annual event of the Dahlem Environmental Education Center and Jackson Community College, Jackson, Michigan. See page 5 for further information.

March 17 "Good Ol' Charlie Deam" - Indiana's Premier Botanist!

Slideshow and talk by John Bennett on the fascinating life of botanist and Bluffton native Charles Deam. Presentation by Keith Huffman on restoration of Deam Arboretum. Tour following.

When: 1:30pm

Where: Eastside Elementary School, 1100 East Spring St., Bluffton (Rt. 1 to south side of Bluffton, then east on Spring St.)

The Barred Owl:

Mouser Extraordinaire

By the shores of Crooked Lake is a branchless hollow tree that sits near a wooded swamp. For many years, this tree has been home to families of Barred Owls. Barred Owls are common in Indiana and reside in wooded floodplains, swamps and uplands. They are one of the larger owls, being 17 to 24 inches high. Their names comes from the striped pattern on their wings, breast, and tail. The owl has a large fluffy head, lacks ear tufts, and has big, brown eyes. The rest of the owls, except for the Barn Owl, have yellow eyes.

The Barred Owl is commonly known as the "hoot" Owl. It is a very vocal owl and can be heard calling on overcast days and through the night, especially if there is a full moon. The owl is even noisier during courtship in the late fall and early winter months when trying to attract a mate. The call is eight accented hoots, in two groups of four: "hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo". The "aw" at the close is unique to the Barred Owl. People say the call sounds like "who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?" with a southern drawl. When the Barred Owl becomes upset, as when another owl is in its territory, it will switch to its threat call. The threat call is a variety of barks and screams. The young have their own distinctive calls.

Nests are placed in the cavities of large trees or old nests of crows, hawks, and squirrels. The owl nests occasionally in abandoned buildings. Two to four white eggs are laid in an unlined cavity. The eggs are not camouflaged because the owls are capable of defending their nests from predators and the nests are in an enclosed place.

The young have been seen out of their nests as early as May. As they grow older, the young will troop out onto the branch at dusk and wait to be fed by their busy parents. By summer, the Crooked Lake clan can be seen flying across the channel to the Nature Preserve to hunt!

Barred Owls eat mice, shrews, Red Squirrels, rats, birds, and crayfish. Sitting on a perch close to the ground, the owl will watch the ground with eyes hundreds of times more powerful than our own. Their eyes are fixed in their sockets, so they have compensated for that lack of mobility by developing the amazing ability to rotate their heads. Their hearing is also extremely powerful.

The owl's face is ringed by stiff, curved feathers which collect and bounce sound waves into the eardrums. Since the owl's head is so wide, the ears are set far apart, so that a sound wave arrives later at one ear than the other. The lapse of time is great enough to give a better clue as to the direction of the sound. Once the owl has pinpointed a rodent or other prey, its talons are set in such a way as to clinch automatically on prey in may not be able to see.



BARRED
OWL

Since the owl's flight is so silent, the prey has no warning of the impending attack. The owl's soft, thick feathers are fringed at the edges which breaks up the air so their flight is completely muffled. The owl's ability to fly silently and through the blackest night has made them creatures of legend. Owls have added to their mystique by sometimes glowing with a phosphorescence as they swoop through the gloom. The glow comes from rotting wood in their nest holes that is coated with luminescent fungi which rubs off on their feathers.

The "wise old owl" of so many childrens' stories is another tale, but based in fact. Owls have lived in captivity to 68 years, a record with birds. Although they inspire fear and can startle us in the evening, owls lose some of their mystic ways during the day.

During the day, the owls will doze in their roosts or sun themselves on tree branches. Barred Owls sometimes hunt during the day and are then mobbed unmercifully by crows and jays. Smaller birds often join in and a Barred Owl was once seen being harassed simultaneously by a Wood Thrush, a Blue Jay, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, a Yellow Warbler, and an American Redstart!

As with all owls, the Barred Owl is very important in helping to keep down the rodent populations. Owls, especially the Barn Owl, have been declining in numbers because of destruction of habitat, ignorant people shooting them, and the removal of dead trees. You can help the owl a great deal by leaving dead trees standing on your property, or by building nesting boxes. Of course, you can also help by supporting groups like ACRES, Inc., which protect valuable habitats where Barred Owls and other wild things live!

The dead tree at Crooked Lake will hopefully remain standing for many more years and we can hear the Barred Owls call on cloudy, gloomy days and see them silently glide through the trees.

by Carolyn McNagny

Carolyn McNagny is a seasonal naturalist with the Indiana Division of State Parks, long-time ACRES member, and frequent contributor of artwork and articles to the Quarterly.

The Bluebird Festival invites you to



March 10 and 11
1 • 9 • 9 • 0

A Nature and Wildlife Art Show
Conservation Exhibits
Live Entertainment
Wildlife Programs
Nest Box Building Information
Much, Much More!!

Jackson Community College
Jackson, Michigan

Sponsored By:
The Dahlem Environmental
Education Center

For Additional Festival Information
Call: 1-517-782-3453

For a Full Festival Schedule Write:

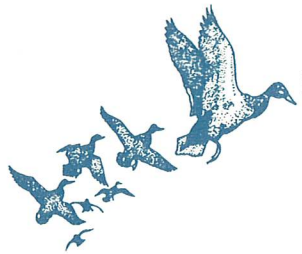
Dahlem Environmental Education Center
Jackson Community College
7117 S. Jackson Road
Jackson, MI 49201

HOTEL INFORMATION

Call the Jackson Convention and
Tourist Bureau at 1-517-783-3330

Brochures available at the Pokagon State
Nature Center

Preliminary Announcement



Northeastern Indiana
Natural Areas Conference
and Field Day

May 12, 1990

YMCA Camp Crosley
North Webster, Indiana



The Division of Nature Preserves, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, is organizing its 9th annual Indiana Natural Areas Conference. This year's conference will focus on Indiana's lakes and wetlands, with presentations emphasizing the plants, animals, and natural communities associated with them.

Afternoon field trips to local natural areas will follow morning presentations. Lunch and dinner will be offered on Saturday, and camping and rustic cabin accommodations will be available at YMCA Camp Crosley.

Due to this event's growing popularity, limited space is available for the conference, so please register early. A finalized schedule and registration form, as well as information regarding overnight accommodations and meals, will be available after March 1, 1990 from:

Division of Nature Preserves, 605B State Office Building, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204.
ATTN: Conference. Phone: 317-232-4052.

Generations

My son and I went walking
On an ACRES preserve one day
Enjoying the plants and birds
And other gifts along the way.

We rounded one more trail
And paused a bit to rest
Then noticed towering above us
One bigger than the rest.

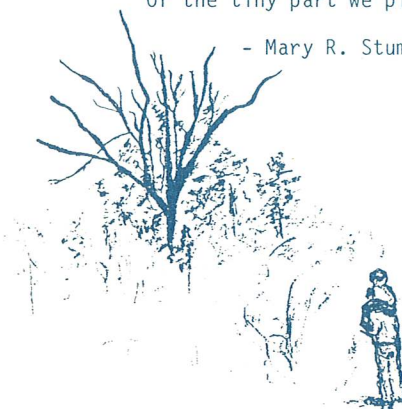
The old oak big and dark
Stood atop the hill
Underneath its shadow
Some smaller even still.

Father oak held no leaves
Its lifetime had been spent
But twenty feet below him
A new lifeline he had lent.

We found it hard to leave them
They made us feel at home
Thank you God for such as this
Where my son and I may roam.

My son and I went walking
On an ACRES preserve one day
And were once more reminded
Of the tiny part we play.

- Mary R. Stump

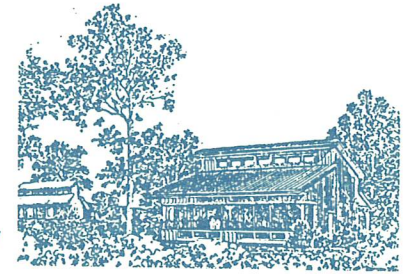


(The above poem and artwork done by ACRES member Mary Stump, was inspired during a walk along the Meadow Trail at the Wing Haven Nature Preserve. Thank you Mary for sharing it with us! - Editor)

Maplewood Moments

LaGrange County Nature Center Dedication

On October 14, 1989, there was a joint meeting of ACRES, Inc. and the LaGrange County Parks and Recreation Dept. The main function was an open house and dedication of LaGrange County's new Maplewood Nature Center. Connected to this property is a piece recently purchased by ACRES.



The words that follow are the opening comments and prayer given at the dedication by Rev. Lowell Anderson of the Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, LaGrange, Indiana.

"Three weeks ago today, at about this very hour, I was tearing across Nebraska, eastbound on I-80. If you are in Wyoming, and want to get home to Indiana, you tear through Nebraska; it is in the way. And there is so much of it in the way. During our "tearing spree", at about noon, I looked out the car window to the Platte River. And there on the bank, about a hundred yards from me stood two stately, long-legged white birds, who appeared to be on stilts, since they stood about six feet tall. Their glistening white uniforms were topped by a black cap on their head, with a red nape. I had just seen two per cent of the whole world's Whooping Cranes in those two birds.

My thrill and privilege three weeks ago was made possible by those who changed the attitudes of humans, so that those birds were protected, and no longer shot for the feathers for hats. As far as I am concerned, the cost of their work and investment was worth it for me alone.

But it is not just the thrill. We are discovering nearly daily that every creature filling every niche in the vast ecological system and the balance of life is vital and necessary, and that without some of those creatures, we upset the entire biological ship. Nearly daily we discover new compounds with new uses, as in the case so often in medicines, to heal creatures like you and me.

My dream is that this place may not be a museum, for a museum is a place where you go to see what is gone.

My dream is that this place may not be a sanctuary for all those plants and creatures whose vital role in the balance of nature we do not yet know, because it is not big enough.

My dream is that this will be a place where correct attitudes about our natural world are made and corrected.

LET US PRAY:

Holy God, help us to dedicate this place and ourselves to future generations. Help us to understand that dedication is not just a one time event but a life-long commitment. Daily grant us the necessary attitude where we will appreciate the flute solo of the wood thrush, the enticing whispers of the poplars, the welcome chatter of the red squirrel, the masked grin of the raccoon, the white-flagged symbol of the white-tailed deer, the delight-at-the-world whistle of the cardinal, and the unseen and unheard army of earthworms enriching the soil on which we stand and on which we depend, that all of us may live in peace with all other things now and in the future. AMEN."

the back page ...

"Waters of Life Campaign"



"In northeast Indiana, clear streams still sweep through undisturbed wetlands, natural lakes meet unblemished shorelines, and rivers run as they have for the past 10,000 years. Here, acidic bogs and alkaline fens converge with sun-dappled swamp forests and deep glacial lakes. These and other native resources are richer in rare species than either land or water alone. In all of Indiana, nowhere else is there a greater concentration of pristine freshwater ecosystems."

The above piece is the opening paragraph of a paper describing the Indiana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy "Waters of Life" Campaign. A major goal of this five year project is to raise over 2 million dollars to protect outstanding examples of freshwater habitats in northeast Indiana. Some of this will come from the State of Indiana and The Nature Conservancy, and a lot will come from donations from the private sector. This program may be the most single important event ever to be undertaken to preserve these most unique areas right here in our corner of the state!

To learn more about this program and other TNC activities, mark your February calendar for the following event:

The Nature Conservancy Members and Friends Meeting, February 15, 1990.

7:00 p.m. Welcome / 7:30 p.m. Open Forum Meeting
Walb Memorial Union Ballroom, Indiana/Purdue University
2101 Coliseum Blvd. East, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Note: Please park in lot 12 near the athletic center.

It should be a very informative meeting a very important issue! - Fred J. Wooley, Editor

The ACRES Quarterly welcomes letters, artwork, black and white photos, and anything else of interest to our readers. If you are out enjoying one of our preserves, drop us a note, let us know what you discovered and enjoyed! Send any and all items to Fred J. Wooley, Editor, ACRES Quarterly, Rt. 2, Box 108, Angola, Indiana, 46703. Deadline for the spring issue is March 15, 1990.

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