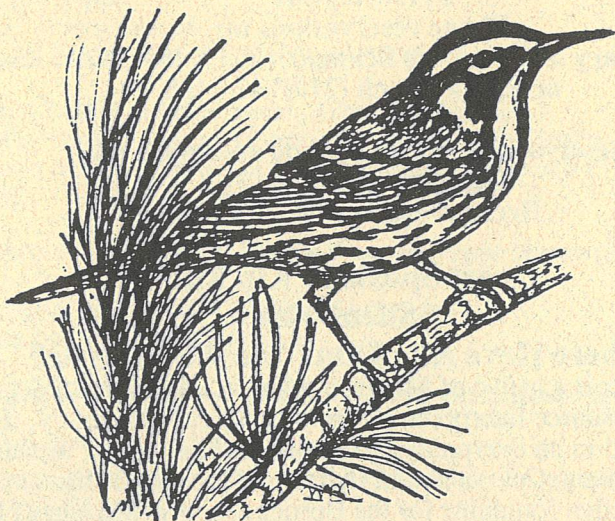




Quarterly

Autumn - 1992
Volume XXXI No. 4



For a lot of us, the chance to see migrating warblers, thrushes, vireos, and other neotropical birds in the spring and fall is a highlight of the year. Have you noticed any changes in these birds' populations?... Some people have and if you are one, or if you simply enjoy excellent nature programs, join us for our annual dinner meeting, November 6, when we will be treated to an informative and colorful program on the present plight and conservation of our neotropical songbirds.

In this issue...

- *Annual Fall Dinner Meeting Info*
- *Field Trips and Special Events*
- *Little River Wetlands Inc.*
- *Fish Creek Watershed Project*
- *"Help Wanted"*
- *Call for ACRES Board Nominations*

ACRES Annual Dinner Meeting

November 6, 1992



Concordia Seminary Dining Hall
6600 N. Clinton, Fort Wayne, Indiana

6:30 p.m.

\$11.00 a plate

Phone reservations to:

Mary and Howard Schneider (219)484-3986
or Ethyle Bloch (219)747-4450

Reservations must be made and honored.

Deadline: October 31

Decorations by Else Matott

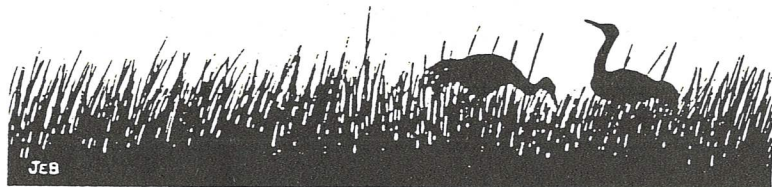
Guest Speaker: Kip Miller

"Silent Skies,

Where Have All of Our Songbirds Gone?"

Kip Miller is a native of Muncie, Indiana. He has a BS degree in Natural Resource Interpretation from Ball State University. He has worked as an interpretive naturalist in the states of Washington, Minnesota, Colorado, and Indiana. Since 1983, Kip has been an Interpretive Naturalist for the Berrien County (Michigan) Parks Department at the Love Creek County Park Nature Center.

Kip is a long-time member of ACRES and has helped form and been active in similar groups in southwest Michigan. His life-long interest in birds has taken him from the boreal forests of Canada to the tropics of Costa Rica. He presently leads birding trips throughout the country.



The Dinner will be a sit-down meal. If unable to dine with us, please plan to join us at 8:00 p.m., in Classroom 201, for the program. General public welcome - No Charge!

Field Trips & Special Events

October 11 Tippecanoe Audubon Society / ACRES Hike to New Seven Pillars Nature Preserve.

Enjoy the autumn woodlands and riverside in one of ACRES' newest preserves.

Where: Meet at bridge on State Road 124, just east of Peru.

When: 1:30pm.

Bring: Hiking apparel.

Contact Person: Carolyn McNagny 436-6524.

October 27-30 Annual Natural Areas Conference.

"Rediscovering America: Natural Areas in the 1990's."

Contact Indiana Division of Nature Preserves for details (317-232-4052).

November 1 Wing Haven Nature Preserve Open House (1pm to 5pm).

November 6 Annual Fall Dinner Meeting.

Details on page 2. Don't miss it!

December 6 Wing Haven Nature Preserve Open House (1pm to 5pm).

December 6 Vandolah Preserve Hike.

Enjoy a nice Sunday afternoon stroll through the unique and relatively new ACRES preserve.

When: 2:00pm

Where: At the Preserve, located on Vandolah Road.

Bring: Comfortable walking shoes and warm clothes.

Contact Person: Bob Weber 747-6030.

January 3 Wing Haven Nature Preserve Open House (1pm to 5pm).

To learn about special work days, contact Bob Weber at 747-6030.



Little River Between Fort Wayne and Huntington - a lot of history to explore and wetlands to restore.

Little River Wetlands, Inc. has been organized to promote the interpretation of the natural and cultural history of this old, glacial sluiceway, and to return segments of it to its original, natural wetlands. Many people will be able to visit, enjoy, and learn at selected sites in this old sluiceway where Little River now flows between Fort Wayne and Huntington.

In the early 19th century this old river bed was a long, broad marshland renowned for its wetland waterfowl and other wildlife. Today it is largely used for agriculture where drain tiles have made that possible.

Fox Island County Park is a protected 600-acre parcel of the sluiceway just southwest of Fort Wayne. Impressive and rare, fine-sand, wind-deposited dunes are relatively intact from the days when they were formed as melting glacial water produced a mighty torrent that created the sluiceway.

At the south end of the sluiceway, just west of Huntington, the present Little River junctions with the Wabash at what is called "The Forks of the Wabash". Here, over 100 acres of ground has been purchased by Historic Forks of the Wabash, Inc. This ground includes much of the Miami Indian village site and their treaty grounds. Miami Indian and early pioneer history will be interpreted at the historic park where historic buildings, an Erie Canal restoration, nature trails, and more will await visitors soon. That project includes forty acres of the final

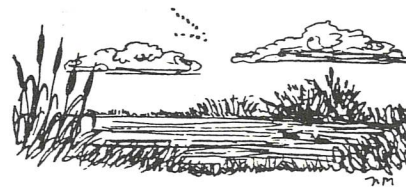
vortex of land between Little River and the Wabash.

In between Fox Island and The Forks of the Wabash, some 25 miles of sluiceway deserve our attention. Miami Indians and French fur traders used the sluiceway often for their trade and travel needs. It was a key portage route. The Wabash and Erie Canal made its way down the sluiceway during a colorful and brief history. Following the old canal towpath, the inter-urban train line used to run between Fort Wayne and Huntington. There are a number of people living today who can recall using the inter-urban lines.

Through those early days of human history in Indiana and until the agricultural drain tiles erased most of the former habitat, the sluiceway was a prime hunting area for game animals. Great flocks of ducks were common, and hunters would ride the train between Huntington and Fort Wayne to be dropped off as requested for hunting.



The Fort Wayne-Huntington Glacial Sluiceway is sometimes referred to by geologists as the Wabash-Erie Channel, or as the Wabash Sluiceway. Whatever one calls it, it represents the channel for a once major river that carried the overflow of glacial Lake Maumee, plus the wa-



ters of what we now call the St. Joseph and St. Marys Rivers, all down to Wabash and Huntington. This mass of water is referred to by geologist as the Maumee Torrent. David M.L. Lindahl, in his 1969 booklet on Allen County glaciation, said the river which carried that Maumee Torrent would compare with the present-day Mississippi. He quoted another geologist from 1873, Newberry, as saying the river was comparable with Niagara, cutting a broad, deep valley through rock, sand, and gravel. Newberry further remarked that the mighty river never had a name, was never seen by man, and eventually ran dry and ceased to be.

The flow of that mighty river ceased when the water reversed its flow as glacial Lake Maumee receded to become present-day Lake Erie and the Maumee River was recut to carry the waters eastward. Lindahl reminds us that the sluiceway river's flow was both intermittent and short-lived, lasting less than 1,000 years. He also said that this river was the major tributary of the Wabash, with the effects of the flow noticeable far downstream. It carved into the sluiceway a channel 60 to 100 feet deep and nearly two miles wide. The bed of the Fort Wayne outlet near present day New Haven stands at 735 feet above sea level, or about 182 feet above Lake Erie, but the Fort Wayne Outlet is only about eleven feet higher than the elevation at the Forks of the Wabash at Huntington. Only glacial torrent with its billions of gal-

lons of frigid lake water would have had the force necessary to cut such a deep valley on such a flat plain. The bed itself is strewn with boulders and cobbles which, for transportation, would have required more energy than any of the present streams currently possess.

One can view the sluiceway from some places along Highway 24 and Interstate I-69. Some of the people of the Little River Wetlands organization are planning to sponsor field trips to visit and inspect various advantageous sites along the sluiceway. I strongly recommend that interested readers use the enclosed brochure to contact this organization and perhaps become supporting members. Who can say what limits there are for great fun, great learning, and better habitats for wetland denizens when we focus our collective expertise and time on the old sluiceway?

- by Bob Weber
ACRES Board Member



Little River Wetlands Project!

An exciting new wetlands project is taking shape in Allen and Huntington Counties in northeast Indiana. The Little River Project is working to protect and restore wetlands associated with the Little River between Huntington and Fort Wayne.

This area is adjacent to Fox Island County Park and will add significantly to the natural and educational aspects of that area. The wetlands will also have the prospect of significant research regarding changes in water quality due to the

destruction of some wetlands and now the restoration or others.

This project is part of the recent interest and concern about the loss of wetlands in the United States. You can help make this venture become a reality by joining the Little River Wetlands Project. Attached is a membership brochure. Please read through it and give it your full support.

- Paul McAfee



Fish Creek Watershed Project!

A small stream flows through the northeastern part of Indiana and into Ohio. It is called Fish Creek and its small size and unknown qualities have hidden the importance of this watershed and its nationally significant diversity. Numerous federal, state, and local organizations in Indiana and Ohio are working to protect the Fish Creek watershed. At stake is an often overlooked link in nature's chain, the mussel. Mussels, which are often the first "canaries" of an aquatic system's health, have been disappearing at an alarming rate from the drainage systems in northern Indiana.

The goal of the Fish Creek Watershed Project is to save from extinction a rare mussel called the White cat's paw pearly mussel (*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*). Native to the Wabash River drainage system in Indiana and the Maumee River drainage system in Indiana and Ohio, the mussel recently

underwent a precipitous decline. The only known site in the world where the White cat's paw pearly mussel exists is in Fish Creek, right here in our backyard!

By managing soil erosion on agricultural lands and reducing sedimentation and pesticide inputs in the aquatic systems, the Fish Creek Watershed Project will protect the White cat's paw pearly and many other State Endangered mussels with memorable names like Purple lilliput, Round hickory nut, Kidney shell, Rayed bean, and Salamander. The Clubshell and Northern riffleshell mussels will soon join the White cat's paw pearly as Federally Endangered Species. Other species in the watershed listed as threatened or of special concern are the Mud puppie, Copperbelly watersnake, Massasauga rattlesnake, Kirtland's watersnake, and the Eastern sand darter.

The Fish Creek Watershed Project is a pioneer program in Indiana. Working

to protect an entire watershed instead of just a small portion of an endangered area, the Fish Creek project has the possibility of being an example of sound conservation practices and economically rewarding farming practices co-existing. Indiana farmers use one of the most intensively manipulated drainage systems in the country. Scientific documentation shows clearly that the common practices of dredging, channelization, deforestation, and altered flow regimes are detrimental, ineffective, and cost-prohibitive. The Fish Creek Watershed Project will offer a concrete model of an alternative.

The Fish Creek Watershed Project is a two-state program already well underway in Ohio. An educational campaign, the purchase of filter strips, and tree planting programs are meeting with success and the progress has been encouraging. Indiana is



involved in gathering the necessary finances together to initiate the same programs. With numerous agencies in the public and private sector working together for a common goal, the Fish Creek Watershed Project has generated great interest. Some of the organizations involved are the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the EPA, Ohio DNR, Indiana DNR, The Nature Conservancy, Indiana/Purdue University at Fort Wayne, and ACRES, Inc.

Watch for further news in this newsletter and in your local paper. It is a new and exciting project and it is happening right here.

- by Carolyn McNagny

(editor's note: The Indiana Chapter of the Nature Conservancy has recently opened an office in Steuben County. The manager of this new project is Larry Clemens. Larry can be reached at: Fish Creek Watershed Project Office, Indiana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Peachtree Plaza, Suite N, 1220 North, 200 West, Angola, Indiana, 46703, (219)665-9141.

Help Wanted.....

The volunteer position of recording secretary has been filled for over 20 years by Marion Eberhardt. Since Marion and her husband, Art, may be away from the area more frequently, Marion suggests that we find someone else to take over this important task. The recording secretary's duties are to record the deliberations of each meeting of the ACRES Board of Directors, transcribe them into typed minutes, make 20 copies, and mail to each director about 1 week prior to the next meeting. The Board meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm, except December. The meetings are held in the homes of board members, or other suitable places. For further information, and to apply, please contact Ted Heemstra (484-4385, evenings) or any board member. Starting date: next meeting!

Nominations Sought

ACRES election of board members will come up this fall. If you would like to nominate someone for the board, please do so by October 16, by contacting board members Dave Gall (627-2770), Jim Haddock (347-3697), or Ethyle Bloch (747-4450).

The Back Page... on wetlands and candidates....

In this issue of the **Quarterly**, we focus heavily on the topic of wetlands. It seems that wetlands have been a hot topic of recent years, and rightfully so as their importance has been well documented. In Indiana, only 14 percent of our original wetlands that once covered 25 percent of our state remain. Of that, we continue to lose 5 percent a year due to draining, filling, or other alterations.

This issue highlights two very significant projects that will take very positive steps in preserving and restoring specific and unique wetland/watershed areas in northeast Indiana. The Little River Project and the Fish Creek Watershed Project combine governmental agencies from all levels, private organizations, and, most importantly perhaps, private citizens like you and me. It is as simple as staying informed and showing your support for the organizations involved. Look over these groups' brochures and agendas and get involved. We have moved beyond the hot topics of discussion into the exciting reality of action.

Speaking of taking action, election day is near. I hear too many people expressing dissatisfaction with the campaigns and saying "why vote, they don't talk about environmental issues and they flip-flop once elected". By all means, **do vote!** If nothing else, you will have the right to complain about any bad decisions and policies the winner may ultimately make. Hopefully though, those decisions and policies will end up being favorable and then you will have something of which to be proud.

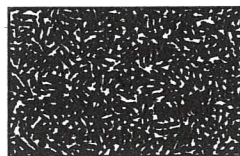
- Fred J. Wooley, Editor

The **ACRES Quarterly** welcomes letters, articles, artwork, black & white photos, and anything else of interest to our readers. Send any and all items to **Fred J. Wooley, Editor, ACRES Quarterly, 180W., 400N., Angola, Indiana, 46703-9502**. Deadline for the Winter issue is **December 1, 1992**.



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Directors: Ted Heemstra, President; Robert C. Weber, VP; James M. Barrett, VP; Ethyle R. Bloch, VP; Jane Dustin, Secretary; James L. Shearer, Treasurer; Edward H. Eberhardt, John Ellenwood, Arthur Eberhardt, Mary Anna Entwisle, Judy Esterline, James D. Haddock, Carolyn McNagly, Sam Schwartz, Sharon Partridge, David Gall, Nancy Kasdorf; David J. Miller. Membership Secretary: Mary Anna Entwisle. National Advisory Board: Howard Michaud, Alton Lindsey, M. Graham Netting, Richard H. Pough, Durwood Allen, Lynton K. Caldwell, Frank Kirschner, John W. Klotz. **ACRES Quarterly** is published by ACRES, Inc. at 1802 Chapman Road, Huntertown, Indiana for the interest of its members, friends, and others similarly dedicated to the preservation of natural lands in northeast Indiana. ACRES, Inc. is a non-profit corporation, incorporated under the laws of Indiana. Contributions are deductible for tax purposes. Fred J. Wooley, Editor. **MEMBERSHIPS:** Patron, \$100.00; Sustaining, \$50.00; Family, \$10.00; Regular, \$5.00; Senior Citizen, \$2.00; and Student, \$1.00. Payable Annually. Membership year is July 1 to June 30.