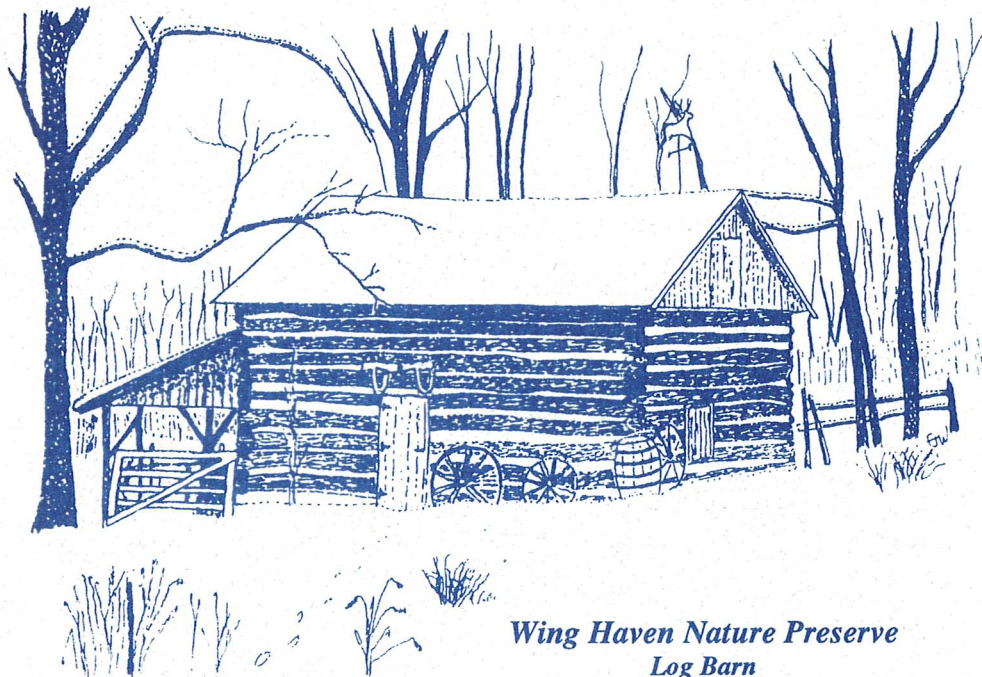




Quarterly

Winter - 1996
Volume XXXV No. 1



*Wing Haven Nature Preserve
Log Barn*

In This Issue: *News Briefs*
New Members
Memorial Gifts
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Ropchan Memorial
Preserve

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Some Parting Shots

ACRES Active Members Make Things Happen!

News briefs from the Executive Director

Elizabeth Snyder, ACRES Member, has baby Redbud trees available for anyone willing to transplant them. If you have a home for these beautiful understory trees, please call her at 219-432-4408.

Many Thanks To:

Dave Gall for all of his work on so many projects, including his work on **Robb Hidden Canyon Nature Preserve** and **Tel-Hy Preserve**. This fall, Dave supervised the building of the new bridge at **The Bicentennial Woods**, completed by Eagle Scout **Jason Skinner** and Troop 430 of Faith Baptist Church.

Art Eberhardt has built two new signs for ACRES in 1995. **The Bicentennial Woods** and the **Tel-Hy Nature Preserve** have beautiful new signs thanks to Art and his many hours spent routing letters (photo of Tel-Hy sign on page15).

Don McCormack and **Phil Clark**, our swat team stewards, undertook the removal of the overhangs at the **Wing Haven Studio/Visitor Center**. They were in bad shape and had begun to damage the studio (the overhangs, not Don and Phil! - ed.) Don and Phil have completed several projects for ACRES in the past two years. Most recently, Don has built and installed a complete railing system for the stairs and balcony at the Wing Haven Studio. Great care was taken in selection of materials and craftsmanship to blend in with the old tavern, turned art studio, turned visitor center.



Wing Haven Nature Preserve

Studio - Visitor Center

This artwork and that of the cover, are by the Editor.

continued on page 3

ACRES Welcomes New Members:

Tom and Anne Abernathy
Mark Berghoff and Mona Yoder
Kathryn A. Bloom
David E. Davis
Larry and Deb Davis and Family
J.C. and Alice Fitch Deck
Walt and Dottie Donlan
Deborah Galyen
Katie Gramling
Gary Green
Cynthia S. Greider

Robert J. and Mary K. Houser
Karla Lankenau
Michael and Grace Mastrangelo
James H. Millage
Carolyn F. Miller
Ramund and Shawna Niblick
Edwin and Cynthia Powers
Alan Shupe
James and Susan Smith
Wayne Sponhower
Amy L. Vanover

News Briefs from the Executive Director... continued ...

Ginger Murphy, Interpreter for **Salamonie Reservoir**, for her excellent program on Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at the **Wing Haven Nature Preserve**.

Jim and David Shearer hosted the **Wing Haven Open House** for December. David played his keyboard and led over 30 people (over half of them children) in a spirited holiday sing-a-long.

Stewards **Bob and Linda Miller**, **Jill Borkenstein**, and **Mike Hawfield** led a productive work day at **Lonidaw** and **Detering Preserves**. **Barbara Barrett**, **David Deimling**, **Art and Else Matott**, **David Rezits**, **Ken Millikan**, **John Ellenwood**, and **Everitt Padgitt** helped to establish trails, cleaned up trash, removed downed trees, and built a bridge.

A successful work day was held at **Tel-Hy Preserve** in October and attended by **Hy and Lorry Goldenberg**. **John Ellenwood**, **Dave Deimling**, **Tom and Karen Bennett**, **Kurt and Marcia Shively**, **Tony Parks** and **Cub Scout pack 6411** worked on the Tel-Hy trails.

Sam Schwartz, Chairperson of the Education Committee, has been arranging interesting and fun programs for **Wing Haven** and helping to plan the September backpacking trip. Coming up in 1996 at Wing Haven - Otter Reintroduction, Indiana orchids, and protecting our bats!

It would be difficult to recognize everyone who is involved with ACRES for all that you do! Thank you!

In Memory

From time to time people remember and honor loved ones and special people by making gifts to ACRES in their names. We feel it is appropriate that they be recognized in the **Quarterly**. We respectfully submit the following names and proudly carry on our important work in their names.

Mary Beth Gnagey
James and Patricia Barrett

Rob McCullogh
Bill and Ethyle Bloch

Ellen Eberhardt
Fred and Jackie Wooley

Barry D. Griffith
Richard and Jacquelyn Arnold
Lana M. Branch
Lynette Custer
Douglas and Christine Gard

Helen and Paul Gillespie
Rochelle Hammond
E. Franklin and Rebecca Hill
Gloria J. Hoevel
Kathie H. Irk
Marsha K. Martin
Amy Ross
Community Action of
Northeast Indiana
Fort Wayne Feminist
Mental Health Association
in Allen County
Fort Wayne Women's Bureau
Northeast Indiana ASSIST

Special Fund in Memory of Ellen Eberhardt

Art and Marion Eberhardt are creating a special fund in memory of their daughter, **Ellen Eberhardt**. Ellen was the Chief Naturalist at the Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary on Martha's Vineyard and worked for the Massachusetts Audubon Society. In honor of her commitment to nature, a scholarship fund is being established to help students who want to follow in her footsteps and become a naturalist. To contribute to the fund, send your donation to: **Steuben County Community Foundation, 100 S. Wayne Street, Angola, Indiana, 46703.**

Volunteers Needed! Fort Wayne Home & Garden Show

Karen Bennett, steward at Tel-Hy, has arranged for ACRES Land-Trust to have a booth at the Fort Wayne Home & Garden Show. This is a great opportunity to increase the public's knowledge about ACRES. Over 40,000 people attend the Home & Garden Show. Join us and have fun seeing the show!

Show Hours:

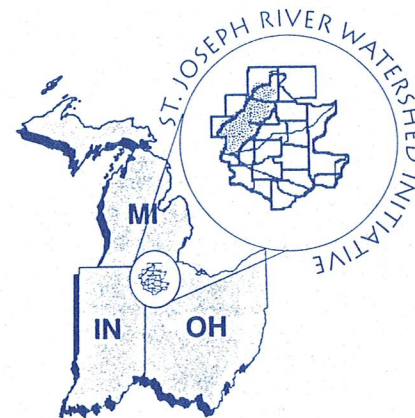
Wednesday, February 28, Noon to 10:00pm
Thursday, February 29, Noon to 10:00pm
Friday, March 1, Noon to 10:00pm
Saturday, March 2, 10:00am to 10:00pm
Sunday, March 3, 11:00am to 6:00pm

Volunteers will work in 2-4 hour shifts. If you have some spare time, please help. Call Carolyn at the ACRES office: 219-422-1004.

Local Conference of Interest to ACRES Members:

Conference on the St. Joseph River

"Charting a Watershed's Future"



March 20 & 21, 1996

Grand Wayne Center
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

Citizens, environmental groups, and state agencies are concerned about the state of the St. Joseph River, and have good reason to be. Every year, our river picks up pollutants from residential developments, industries, farm fields, lawns, and a host of other human activities. Pollutants come in many forms: nutrients, heavy metals, pesticides, disease causing pathogens, and even sediment can all potentially cause harm to our way of life, both our health and our economy.

In 1995, a group of concerned individuals from Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio formed the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative and developed a list of goals for watershed management. Raising awareness of watershed issues was one of the top goals.

To that end, the group has planned the first **Conference on the St. Joseph River**. For a copy of a conference brochure contact: St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative. 2010 Inwood Drive Suite 103 Ft. Wayne, IN, 46815. Or call: 219-424-6612 or 1-800 River-04

Ropchan Memorial Bog: Part I

A (re)Introduction to one of ACRES' Original Properties

by Anthony L. Swinehart

The pioneer Hoosier botanist, Dr. Charles Deam, recognized the need to preserve tamarack bogs in Indiana as early as 1924, when, in an address to the Indiana Academy of Science, he urged that some lake with a tamarack bog should be preserved for posterity. In his 1940 book, *The Flora of Indiana*, Dr. Deam states that tamarack was once common in the state, but it was becoming scarce because of drainage and cutting.

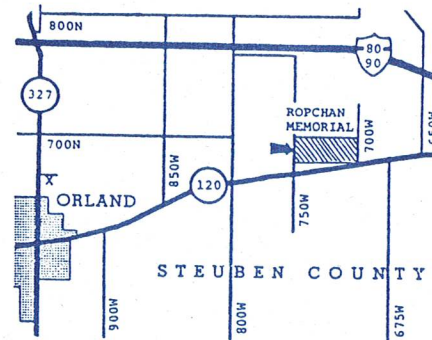
Ropchan Memorial Preserve, in Steuben County, harbors one of the state's relatively few remaining tamarack bogs. It is situated in an area rich in diverse, glacial topography. Kettle holes, the result of glacial blocks of ice, are common in this region. Many of these kettle holes, or kettle lakes, were favorable to the formation of bogs because of their small size and great depth. The wetland at Ropchan Memorial Preserve is an example of such a depression, and within the past 12,000 years, it has become a bog.

Unlike marshes and swamps, bogs accumulate peat. Peat is the remains of plants (and animals) that, because of poorly oxygenated conditions, do not fully decay. Thus, instead of the "muck" we find in a marsh or a swamp, bogs consist of soil made up mostly of plant

parts. Another characteristic of bogs is that their surface is dominated by *Sphagnum* mosses.

As peat was produced at the margins of Ropchan Memorial Bog (lake), the basin began to fill in until, eventually, no open water remained. As the surface peat became more stable, the establishment of trees was possible.

The first pioneer trees on this treacherous bog soil were tamarack. The tamarack is one of only two species of conifer in the eastern United States that is deciduous, losing its needles (leaves) in the autumn. In the northern lakes states, and in Canada, tamarack may be found in a wide range of habitats. In Indiana and other southern portions of its range, however, it is almost entirely restricted to bogs. This fact may be a result of the tree being an opportunist. It does not tolerate shade and competes poorly with other trees.



Its ability to survive in a bog, where other trees fare poorly, allows it to occupy a window in time - however short - before conditions eventually become favorable for other trees.

The tamarack forest in the Ropchan Memorial Bog is dying. The peat has become firm enough to allow red maple trees to grow large enough and tall enough to develop a dense canopy; thus shading out the tamarack. In the inner reaches of the bog, tamarack are still frequent, however, they are spindly and weak as they struggle to acquire dwindling sunlight. In 1995, the leaves were found to be brown and old as early as July. It is likely that most of the tamarack will be dead within ten years. This transition is natural, but in many cases, it is accelerated because of drainage.

The dense understory still harbors some remnant bog species. Fascinating plants such as the mountain holly, starflower, blueberry, lady's slipper, goldthread, and *Sphagnum* are still common. The chaotic arrangement of fallen and standing tamarack, dense shrub layer, and bright green hummocks of *Sphagnum* create a scene reminiscent, not of "Jurassic Park," but of Jurassic bog.

Studies are currently underway to identify the fossil plants and animals embedded in the peat of Ropchan Memorial Bog. This will provide a detailed chronological history of its development from time of glacial retreat to present. Any information that the readership might have on the more recent history of the bog, including any human stories, would be greatly appreciated. Send information to Anthony L. Swinehart, Purdue University, 11159 Forestry Building, West Lafayette, Indiana, 47907.

Anthony L. Swinehart is a doctoral student at Purdue University. Part II of this series on the Ropchan Memorial Preserve will appear in the Spring issue.



Hike and Trail Work Day Scheduled for the Ropchan Memorial Preserve.

On Saturday, March 2, 1996, Ropchan Memorial volunteer steward, Sean Carroll, will welcome any and all for a special day of work and play. The plan is to begin reestablishing a trail system through the 70-acre preserve, pick up trash, and possibly build some benches. See field trips and special events schedule on page 8 for details.

Field Trips & Special Events

Saturday, March 2. Hike and Trail Work Day at the Ropchan Memorial Nature Preserve.

Sean Carroll, steward for the Memorial, will lead the reestablishing of a trail system at this beautiful 70-acre preserve. We will also be working at cleaning up trash and building benches for along the trail. If the snow cover is deep, we will mark the trail and clean up the trash another day.

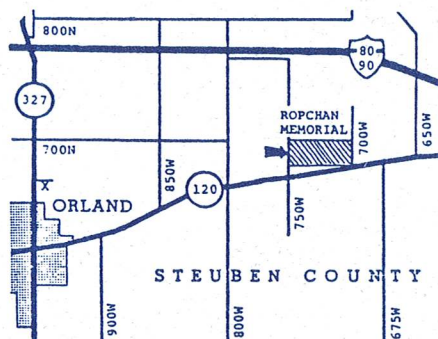
When: 9:30am.

Where: Carpool from ACRES office at 8:30am, or meet at the preserve parking lot at 9:30am (map on page 7).

Bring: Picnic lunch, work shoes, gloves, loppers, clippers, saw, shovel or whatever suits your fancy. We will need a couple of wheelbarrows if someone can bring one and trash cans.

Contact Person: Sean Carroll at 219-665-4858 or Carolyn McNagny, 219-422-1004.

If you would like to become a land management volunteer and receive a listing of all work days, please call the ACRES office at 219-422-1004. We will be happy to put you on the list for these very important spring and fall work days!



Sunday, March 3. Wing Haven Nature Preserve Open House (1pm to 5pm) Special Program at 2:00pm.

Return of Samhradh! The Samhradh ensemble will play their fiddles and pipes for all to enjoy. Listen to Irish, Northumbrian, and Scottish traditional music in an early St. Patrick's Day celebration. Join Bill Reeder, John Brennan, Ralph Reppert, and Connie Halt.

Where: Wing Haven Nature Preserve. Steuben County, on CR 400 North, just east of SR 127. (see February 4 for detailed directions).

When: 2:00pm

Bring: Family and friends.

Refreshments served!

Contact Person: Carolyn McNagny, ACRES Office at 219-422-1004.

Sunday, March 31. Waterfowl Watch at the new Addition to Crooked Lake Nature Preserve.

Stockbridge Audubon Society members **Ted Heemstra** and **Don Gorney** will lead a hike to see the 46-acre addition to the Crooked Lake Nature Preserve and look for ducks. After a break, we will drive over to the north side of Crooked Lake and watch for Woodcocks.

When: 3:00pm.

Where: New addition to the Crooked Lake Nature Preserve. Take SR 9 north of US 30, 6 miles. Turn west onto 600 North and then north on Spear Road. Parking area is 1 mile north on Spear Road.

Bring: Binoculars, hiking boots, and dress warmly!

Contact: ACRES Office at 219-422-1004.

Saturday, April 6. Bats of Indiana and Their Protection.

Dr. John Whitaker, Jr., Professor of Life Science and Vertebrate Ecology at Indiana State University, will introduce you to the biology of bats, what bats live in Indiana, and the importance of bats to the ecosystem. Possible field experience of netting bats along Willow Creek after talk if weather and habitat are suitable.

When: 7:00pm

Where: ACRES office, 2000 North Wells Street (YWCA Campus) Ft. Wayne.

Bring: Hiking boots and a flashlight.

Contact: ACRES Office at 219-422-1004.

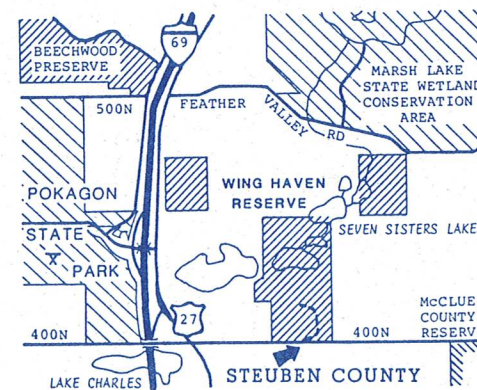
Sunday, April 7. Wing Haven Nature Preserve Open House (1pm to 5pm) Plus Special Event: Bats of Indiana and Their Protection.

Same program by Dr. Whitaker as yesterday, except no bat netting.

When: 2:00pm at the Wing Haven Visitor Center (see February 4 for directions).

Refreshments will be served:

Contact Person: ACRES Office at 219-422-1004.



The Vandolah Nature Preserve

Entries from a Steward's Journal

by Jeff Britton

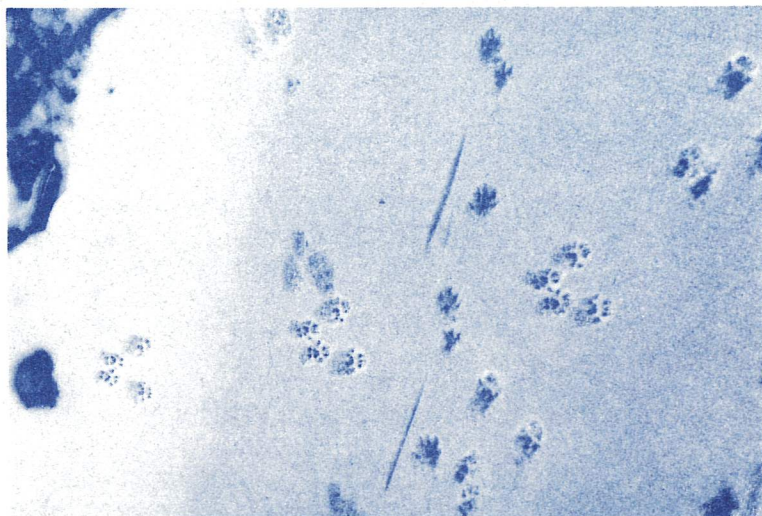
My wife and daughter and I live next to, and have been the caretakers of, the Vandolah Nature Preserve. We have come to know it quite well over the last two years. Here are several entries from our journal.

Spring, 1993. Evening. Great-horned owls. Nesting pair. The young screech like short-eared owls and have me fooled almost all summer.

April, 1993. One of the great-horned owls is diving down into the ravine. I rush to the fence and find a spot to watch. A moment later, he comes up out of the ravine. Great pumping wings. Little spouts of mist shooting from its nostrils. It has an opossum, nearly its own size,

in its talons. It gets to the first sizable branch and thumps onto it. A moment later, after sizing up its task, it flies to the giant old sycamore tree where it has its nest.

Fall, 1993. The honkers are circling, sizing up the pond. It is horseshoe shaped and wraps around the house at the border of the Preserve. The pond lies in the ravine and is surrounded with sizable trees. Smart geese take off from one end and clear the trees at the other. Less experienced geese start one-half the way across and have to slam on the air brakes and drop down, or bushwack their way out at treetop minus 10 feet. We'll see what type these guys are.... Good! They drop down and do



ACRES Board Member, Bob Weber, captures squirrel and skunk tracks crisscrossing on snow-covered ice at the Vandolah Nature Preserve.

the barefoot ski thing. The pond feels the first waves it has had in weeks. The geese regroup with lots of barking. Time will tell on take off.

(time passes....)

They are honking and ready to go. Oh ohh! They start their take off two-thirds of the way down the pond. This will be good. Up!... bank to the corner... pumping harder... UP! Leaves blast up in the air as the lead goose pounds its way through the canopy at our end. The others bob and weave to avoid hickory and blue beech limbs. As they disappear, the last yellow hickory leaves drift down onto the disturbed surface of the pond.

Late February, 1995. Pair of gray fox scouting the hillside. They seem to be looking for a den site. It is about time for that. Not white tips on the tails like red fox.

Fall, 1995. Over a few weeks. Let's make a bird checklist: cardinal - pair, white-breasted and red-breasted nuthatches- one pair of each, great blue heron, green heron, tufted titmouse, chickadee, belted kingfisher (his rattling call makes it sound like something broken), pileated woodpecker, flicker, red-bellied, downy, and hairy woodpeckers, great-crested flycatcher, catbird, brown creeper, Carolina and house wrens (how can they survive the stress? man, these

little guys are wound up tight!), prothonotary and magnolia warblers, cowbird, goldfinch, purple finch, pine siskin, junco, and three pairs of wood ducks. Oh, and a blur that blew the tail feathers off of a cardinal between the feeder and the thorn bushes - I say it was a peregrine falcon, but my friends roll their eyes...

"You ain't got no peregrines!"

"Do too, saw the sideburns and it was big!"

Come out and visit the preserve. If you have a group and want to stretch your legs, give me a call. With advance notice, we might be able to look around together. Who knows what we might find at the Vandolah Preserve!

Jeff Britton (left), Vandolah steward, and John Ellenwood, ACRES Land Management Committee.



Water Watchers of Indiana is in its Fourth Year.

by John Rouch

Working with junior high and high school students, the Water Watchers of Indiana (WWOI) organization has educated youth regarding natural areas, especially rivers. ACRES Land Trust and WWOI have common goals. As preserves are developed along rivers, they will aid each other's efforts. WWOI connect the enjoyment of our natural environment with our use and dependence on it. Its supplemental curricula provide ways for students and teachers to use rivers, streams, or lakes for environmental education and scientific study. Teachers, such as agricultural science and business, history, English, science and art, form teams with flexibility in order to conduct programs within their schools.

Some schools visit small streams while others use boats on larger bodies of water. Students learn about the health of waterways through testing, history through research and interviews, and their aesthetic value through original literature and artistic expression. They all have a waterfront experience which leads to knowledge about the importance of water and its quality, past, present, and future.

Water Watchers was organized in Indiana using training and materials from the Illinois Rivers Project. The Indiana Rivers and Streams Project was developed by WWOI with Purdue University, using grant money to provide materials, equipment, and training for teachers. These two organizations provide training sessions where Indiana schools receive special instruction to help them plan their curriculum and how to do the scientific tests.

Teachers have several curricula from which to choose, but students must do biotic surveys of sites which can be used to access water quality. They must test in the spring and fall, on dates selected by Water Watchers each year. They use HACH brand test equipment. Tests to be conducted are: dissolved oxygen, biological oxygen demand, phosphate, nitrate, pH, temperature change, fecal coliform, turbidity, velocity, and total solids. The results are factored to form an overall water quality index. They must report their data collected to the Indiana Rivers and Streams Project or WWOI so that their data is included in the database being assembled. The use of telecommunications is encouraged.

Historical information, art, literature, and other outcomes created by

students can be published in *The Riparian*. This yearbook has been funded by the Northern Indiana Public Service Company in the past and consists entirely of student work. Schools become involved in clean-up efforts. This rewarding offshoot is encouraged especially when the greater community is involved. Reward activities such as free fishing trips to Lake Michigan have been done.

WWOI uses community involvement for support and coordination of activities. Schools, universities, park departments, and agencies, such as the SWCD and county health departments, send representatives to regular meetings. These organizations are encouraged for each major, or major part of, a watershed. Two examples of possibilities are the WWOI St. Joseph and the WWOI Maumee Watersheds.

The first annual meeting of students from around the state is scheduled at Camp Alexander Mack, Milford, Indiana, on March 17 and 18, 1996. This student congress, called "Waterjam 96," provides opportunity for sharing and growth among all involved state-wide.

John Rouch is Coordinator for the Indiana Rivers and Streams Project

For further Information, contact:

Mel Lenig, President
Water Watchers of Indiana
Penn Harris Madison High
56100 Bittersweet Road
Mishawaka, IN 46545
219-259-7961

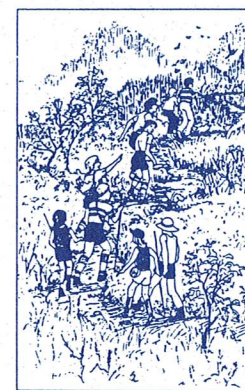
Dr. Jerry Peters, Director
Indiana Rivers and Streams
Purdue University
Agricultural Education
West Lafayette, IN 47907
317-494-7290

John Rouch, Coordinator
Indiana Rivers and Streams
10464 North Grove Road
Milford, IN 46542
219-658-9108

Mark your Calendars!
ACRES and Earth Adventures Unlimited
are offering an:

ACRES Members Only
Backpack Trip
September 26-29, 1996
Big Manistee Trail

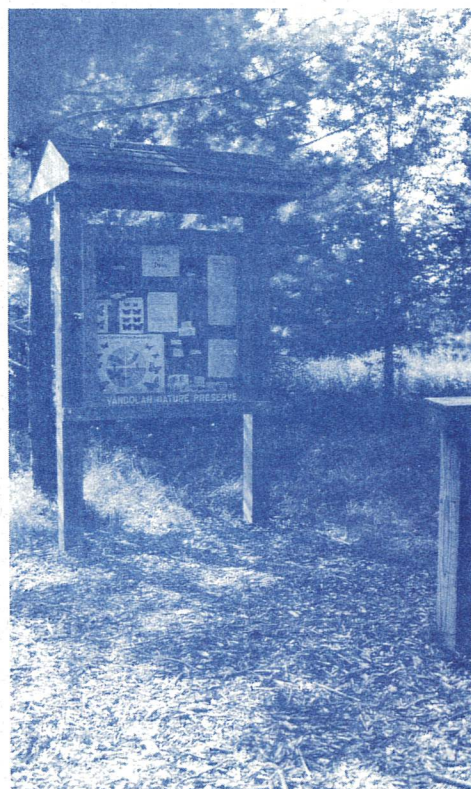
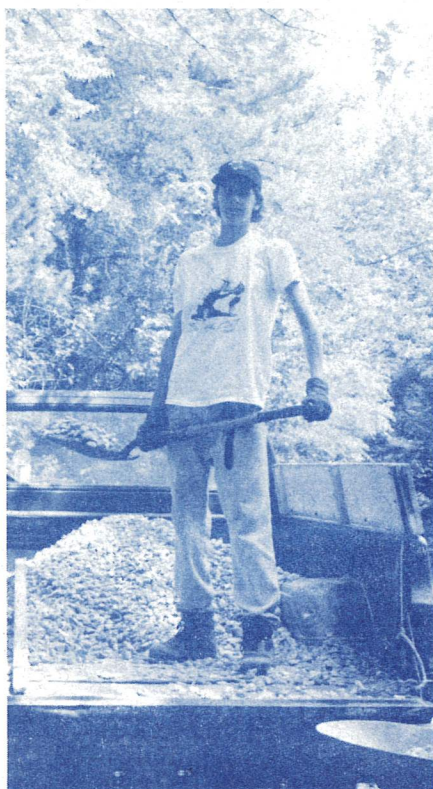
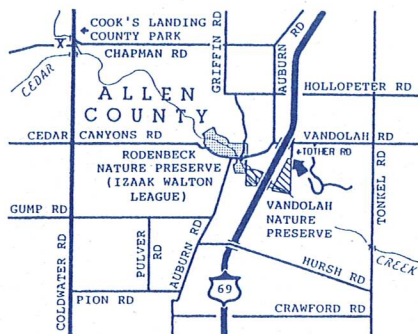
On May 5, 1996, there will be a pre-trip meeting at 1:30pm at the Wing Haven Nature Preserve. You must attend the pre-trip meeting to come on the backpack trip. Judy Esterline and Judy Hestermann will be hike leaders. Look for more information in the Spring **Quarterly**, along with more information on other trips by Earth Adventures Unlimited!



For further
information call
Earth Adventures at
219-424-1420.

Chad Grimm Eagle Scout Project Provides Major Work at the Vandolah Preserve!

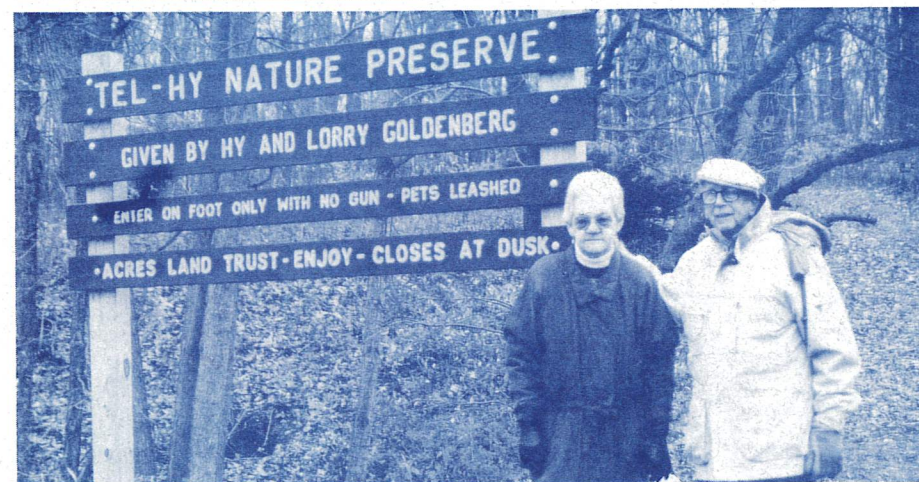
Chad Grimm received his Eagle Scout Badge by completing work projects at the Vandolah Nature Preserve. Chad (pictured below in the pick-up truck) and his Troop 6411, under the direction of Scout Master Frank Hartman, completed trail work, planted many trees, built an excellent bulletin board, and made several benches. Working in the summer of 1995, they braved 90 degree plus heat and did a super job! Thank you, Chad and Troop 6411!



Parting Shots from 1995....



A summer canoe trip, shown above, featured the Art Hammer Wetlands. Below, board members Dave Deimling, Sam Schwartz, and Jim Barrett survey this unique property while having some fun. Bottom photo is of Hy and Lorry Goldenberg at the entrance of the nature preserve they made possible.



The Back Page...

Changing of the guards...

It is with great regret that I announce this will be my last issue as editor of the **ACRES Quarterly**. I began this job in the Winter of 1988. It was a big job then, just to give it the dedication, heart, and soul that Jane Dustin had for so many years. The **Quarterly** has evolved much since then. What used to be 4 or 8 pages is now typically 12, with some issues, as this one, swelling to 16. There is still much room for quality improvement and I look forward to someone else taking it to another level.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to be the first to see and report some exciting new projects and programs of the **ACRES Land Trust**. Highlighting most issues for me was witnessing the fantastic

efforts of volunteers and the kind contributions of our generous donors. Thank you to all for making the organization so strong.

I thank all of you who have written articles and sent items to me, especially Executive Director, Carolyn McNagny, who constantly kept me supplied with materials. Filling each issue was never a problem and that is a luxury few newsletter editors enjoy. I also thank my proofreader of recent years, Patricia McNagny, who caught my many creative spellings and undangled my participles. For any errors that did slip through over the years, I take full credit.

I will continue to support the group, be involved, and continue to encourage all of you to do the same. If not visiting here on these pages, I hope to see you all out on the trails. - 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 Spring issue is **March 1, 1996**.

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