

QUARTERLY

Autumn—1997

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ACRES Annual Dinner Meeting

NOVEMBER 7, 1997

Concordia Seminary Dining Hall
6600 North Clinton Street
Fort Wayne, Indiana

6:30 p.m.
\$12.00 a plate
(Vegetarian dinners available on request)

Phone reservations to:
Mary and Howard Schneider
219-484-3986
or William and Ethyle Bloch
219-747-4450

Reservations must be made and honored
Deadline: November 5, 1997

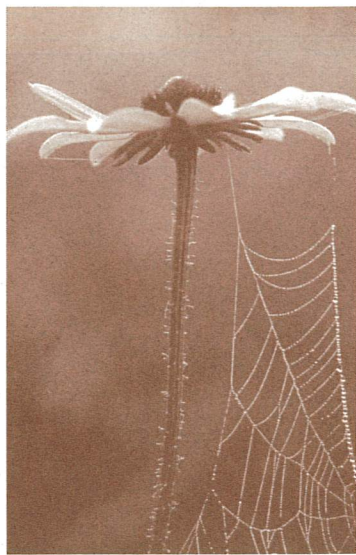
GUEST SPEAKER: LARRY MACKLIN, IDNR DIRECTOR

Trials & Triumphs of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources

While State Senator, Mr. Macklin served on the Natural Resources Committee and was actively involved in establishing the Indiana Heritage Trust Program. The Indiana Heritage Trust Program has been instrumental in allowing ACRES to acquire The Bicentennial Woods, Fawn River Nature Preserve, Emanuel M. Popp Nature Preserve, Robb Hidden Canyon Nature Preserve, and additions to Art Hammer Wetland Nature Preserve, totaling over 400 acres.

Mr. Macklin, IDNR Director since March 1997, wants to open the channels of communication between the IDNR and the public to improve the decision making process related to natural resources.

The dinner will be a sit-down meal. If unable to dine with us, please plan to join us at 8:00 pm at classroom 201 for the program. General public is welcome for the program, no charge!



Black-Eyed Susan photograph by Bruce Plew

A Tribute to GLENN AND WINIFRED POE

Glenn and Winifred Poe were true friends to ACRES in their lifetimes—and beyond. Glenn, who died in 1975 at age 68, was among the founders of ACRES in 1960 and remained active for many years. He and Winifred, who died at age 93 in September, gave Foxfire Woods to ACRES in 1974. Many memorials honoring Winifred have been received by ACRES.

Their daughter, Mary Menge of Fort Wayne, says her parents came to Fort Wayne in 1945 when Glenn was transferred from Bloomington, IN to become District Soil Conservationist for Allen County. Before going into conservation work, he had taught vocational agriculture in Ohio schools. Winifred taught Latin and English in Ohio and Fort Wayne schools. She was the first language department head at Snider High School and also taught at North Side High School and Kekionga Middle School. The couple originally was from Ohio.

"They were committed to educational issues, whether informal or school-related," Mary Menge says. "Dad loved growing things, and he had interest in plants, animals, soils, geology. He



liked photography and gardening, trying new things that he had never grown before." The couple always had a garden, and her mother relaxed by weeding it, Mary remembers. Her mother also loved to read and was active in the Cedar Creek Woman's Club and Forest Park United Methodist Church. Her dad, she says, "had a wry sense of humor" and her mother was a "serious, competent individual, but she had her lighter side and definitely her caring side."

The eight-acre Foxfire Woods, named for the fungus foxfire which glows in the dark, was property off of Hull Road in Allen County that Glenn Poe purchased around 1968, Mary says. He made a lake on another portion of the property. The couple lived about five miles away. The woods is comprised of many oak and hickory trees. Mary recalls that her father realized he was dying of cancer, and the couple thought making the woods a gift to ACRES a "wonderful opportunity."

—By Sharon Little



Foxfire Woods Nature Preserve

FAWN RIVER NATURE PRESERVE



Photograph by Art Eberhardt

By Sharon Little

For Melvin Larimer, happy childhood memories will be forever connected to land that today is part of the Fawn River Nature Preserve.

Melvin and his wife, Joan, say they are "very, very happy" that 58 acres owned for more than a century by the Larimer family are now part of ACRES Land Trust. "It has been in the Larimer family for well over 100 years," Melvin says. "We (Melvin and Joan) owned the property personally for about 10 years; I inherited it from my father," Russell Larimer, when the latter died in 1985.

The plot is part of land originally acquired by Melvin's grandfather, a farmer, who moved to the area near the Indiana-Michigan state line from Ohio in the 1800s. He and his family of seven children, including Melvin's father, "spent a great deal of time in the woods cutting firewood and maintaining the woods, all with hand saws. My dad treasured the woods," Melvin remembers.

Russell Larimer worked on the family farm until he was married and became manager of a farmers' cooperative. For

the next 15 years he worked and raised his children, including Melvin, in Bronson, Michigan.

In the late 1940s, Russell Larimer returned to farm the land with his son-in-law, and in the next decade the family created a family fun park for reunions and church gatherings on a one-acre site (now part of the Preserve) near the Fawn River. They built a pavilion and a hand-powered ferris wheel. Melvin says "it was about 15 feet tall and had rungs you held onto. There also was a huge teeter-totter, and they also built a slide from the top of the hill down into the river. On the bend of the river, they put up a big cable from one of the big oaks to a limb that went across to the edge of the river. "There was a pulley on the cable you could ride by holding on with your hands down to the river." All the recreational creations have been removed from the site.

Melvin says that "going to the woods was always one of my very favorite things to do. When we were kids, we fished there and caught a lot of different fish, mostly bass and some pike. Some of my happiest memories of the woods are when

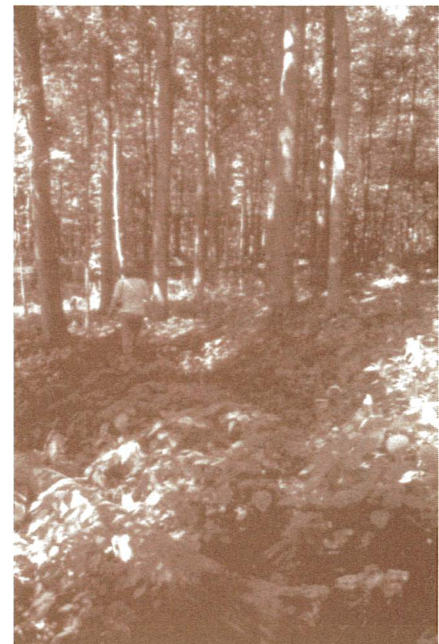
the family would go down to play and pick mushrooms."

He is proud that his father and grandfather "were very concerned about maintaining the integrity of the soil" they farmed near the woods and Fawn River. He says they disagreed with the "many farmers who poured on commercial fertilizers with the hope of a good crop without thinking about the long-range effects." Many gladiolus farms are in the area, but Larimer says his dad considered them detrimental to the land because "glads take a lot out of the soil and don't put anything back in."

Melvin Larimer taught music in Albion, Interlochen and Traverse City, Michigan before retiring in 1996 near Traverse City. He and his wife never lived on the land at Fawn River but they did visit. "We weren't able to supervise the woods and couldn't be there as much as we would have liked. We were disappointed many people were abusing the property; that was one of the main reasons we wanted ACRES to take care of it," he explains. Still, the decision to part with the land was "very" difficult, he says. Other Larimer family members still live on other portions of the original property.

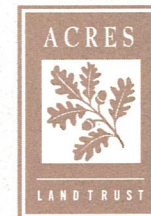
Larimer thinks visitors will enjoy the Preserve particularly in early May, a "glorious" time to be there, because "the trillium are so thick, it looks like you could walk all across the woods without stepping on the ground!" He is glad to have been part of a family that always treasured nature because, he says, "today so much farmland is being taken over for development, it's scary. In our area whole cherry orchards are disappearing."

The natural world definitely won't be disappearing at Fawn River Nature Preserve, comprised of the Larimer acreage and additional land formerly owned by the Wilbur Hawk family. Thanks to people who genuinely care about nature, it will remain a treasure for this and future generations.



Photograph by Art Eberhardt

Nominations Sought



Election of ACRES board members is upon us. If you would like to nominate someone for the board, please do so **by October 31**, by contacting the ACRES Office at (219-422-1004). Dave Gall, David Van Gilder, and Jim Haddock are serving on the nominating committee this year.

If you are a current member in good standing, you will receive a **return-by-mail ballot, or you may vote in person on December 31, 1997, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.** at the ACRES Office: 2000 North Wells Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Field Trips & Special Events



Sunday, November 2. Wing Haven Open House (1-5pm) Special Event: Operation Outreach by Soarin' Hawk

Laura Edmunds, Director of Soarin' Hawk, will give a lighthearted approach to the importance of protecting raptors. Through a multimedia approach, the program will increase your knowledge of raptors through slides and live birds (hawks, owls, & falcons)

When: 2:00 p.m.

Where: Wing Haven, Steuben County. Take I-69 to Exit 154, turn south on SR 127 and then take an immediate left onto 400 N.

Wing Haven is 1-mile down 400N on the left.

Refreshments served.

Contact: ACRES office at (219) 422-1004.



Friday, November 7. ACRES Annual Dinner and Meeting.

Larry Macklin, Director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Speaker.
See details on page 2.



Sunday, December 7. Wing Haven Open House (1-5pm)

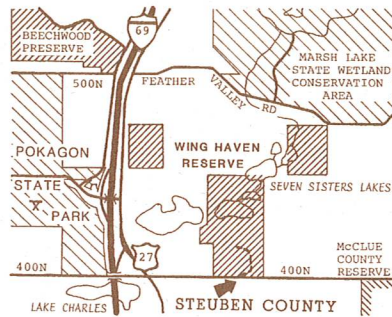
Special Event: 3rd Annual Christmas Sing-A-Long with the Eberhardts

Get in the Yuletide spirit! Join Art and Marion Eberhardt in singing Christmas carols at the rustic studio at Wing Haven.

When: 2:00 p.m.

Where: Wing Haven, Steuben County, on 400 North, just east of SR 127.

Contact: ACRES Office at (219) 422-1004.



Sunday, January 4. Wing Haven Open House (1-5) Special Event: Cross-Country Ski

Ski (or hike if no snow) the gently rolling Beechwood Preserve.

Warm up with hot cocoa afterwards at Wing Haven.

When: 2:00 p.m.

Where: Meet at Wing Haven, Steuben County, on 400 North, just east of SR 127.

Contact: ACRES Office at (219) 422-1004.



Brown-headed Cowbird

By Bob Walton



The Brown-headed Cowbird, or the Buffalo Bird of the Indians, was a grassland bird of the Great Plains. The cowbirds followed buffalo herds and fed on insects flushed by these shaggy beasts. As a reproduction strategy, this nomadic bird laid eggs in the nests of birds it encountered along the route. Typically, a cowbird will observe and follow potential victims within 50 yards of the forest edge. Many of the grassland birds in turn learned techniques to negate this parasitism and thus a balance was struck.

Civilization of North America has upset this balance to the severe detriment of most of the eastern songbirds because they have not had enough time to adapt to this parasitism. First, cattle ranching changed from grazing ranges to feed lots. Concentrated cattle attracts concentrated cowbirds. This results in all nearby being victimized.

Second, large tracts of land have been converted to feed grain production. Again, cowbirds concentrate in these areas and the host birds suffer.

The third and probably biggest impact on eastern songbirds has been the changes to the forests. Deforestation has removed habitat for

the forest species and replaced it with farms, factories and cities. Cowbirds find these areas very acceptable to their life style. Here they have open feeding areas and by working the forest edges can find host nests. Fragmentation has exasperated the problem by offering narrow tracts of forest which the cowbirds can easily access. Any human activity in the forest that provides an opening in the canopy, such as a road or clearing, can result in immediate cowbird activity.

Unfortunately, cowbirds are protected by the migratory bird act and cannot be killed. Only in a few instances, such as the Kirtland Warbler breeding area in Michigan, are the cowbirds captured and euthanized. This effort has resulted in saving the warbler and other species that nest nearby. To protect songbirds from predation by the cowbirds, we need to protect the existing forest areas from fragmentation, clearing of understories, or openings for roads.

WILDLIFE WATCH

The purpose of this column is to introduce members to the wonderful variety of wildlife that the ACRES preserves shelter and protect. Send your reports into the ACRES office.



Yellow-billed
Cuckoo

- ☒ Green Heron-Ropchan Wildlife Nature Preserve
Don Gorney
- ☒ Yellow-Billed Cuckoo and Swainson's Thrush
The Bicentennial Woods
Don Gorney
- ☒ Flying Squirrel-Vandolah Nature Preserve
Jeff Britton

HOW PEAT BOGS HAVE INFLUENCED

By Dr. Anthony L. Swinehart, Curator of the Herbaria, Purdue University

When people think of Indiana, they often envision flatlands planted with corn and other grains. Scarcely does the thought of pristine lakes and wetlands comparable to sites in northern Michigan and Canada ever enter the mind. However, northern Indiana was (and in many places, is still) rich in such areas, more so than most any other area in the same latitude of the United States. The peat bogs of northern Indiana were once a vital natural resource of early Indiana residents. Peat was mined and used for fuel and a variety of other purposes, native iron from the peatlands was procured and refined, select crops were grown on the acid soils of drained bogs, and to a lesser extent, native cranberries, huckleberries and blueberries were harvested for food.

In 1907, a Hoosier geologist, Dr. Arthur E. Taylor, envisioned peat becoming a major fuel source in northern Indiana, primarily as a result of dwindling supplies of other native cooking and heating fuels. Taylor writes:

At the present, no greater economic problem presents itself to the people of this section of



Wild Cranberry

Indiana than that of a cheap and abundant fuel supply. Until twenty years ago the farmer had little concern as to where his winter fuel would come from. Axes, crosscut saws, mauls and wedges were in his woodshed, and at his back door, the woods, where fuel could be obtained in abundance by merely cutting it. The cost was practically nothing, since he did this kind of work after grain, hay and other crops had been either stored away or sold; the fall wheat had been sown; and there was little else that could be done about the farm.

What a pronounced change has taken place. The large forests that once covered northern Indiana are now only a dream of the past. What, at one time, seemed to be an inexhaustible source of fuel, has become largely obliterated; and what remains is used little for such purpose, since the repeated advances in the prices of timber have made it much more valuable as lumber. This depletion in a native fuel means much to the farmer, and to the citizens of the many small towns that are several miles from a railroad...

However, there is a fuel in this seemingly barren territory that is sure to come into domestic use, especially with those living so far from the railroad switches. This fuel has been used by the people of the Old World for centuries, and today is used in Canada and many places in the United States. It is frequently found in large quantities, in the very localities where the people are hauling their coal for ten miles. The name of this fuel is "peat", commonly known as "muck" by the people of northern Indiana.

Taylor conducted an exhaustive survey of the peat deposits of northern Indiana, with recommendations for the construction of numerous peat factories. However, the use of peat as fuel in Indiana never really developed on a large scale; its use was mostly very local. This must certainly have been a function of the development of better transportation and other sources of heating. However, the peat deposits were put to other uses,

HOOSIER INDUSTRY AND CULTURE

some of which are still viable today. A peat mining establishment about a mile south of Garrett, Indiana (referred to by the author as Deam's Bog), was exporting peat litter for use as livestock bedding. Use of peat and living Sphagnum for horticulture was also a common practice. Other prospective uses for peat included: absorptive, antiseptic, preservative, packing material, filler for fertilizer, manufacture of paper and cloth, and deodorizer. Modern industry is now using Sphagnum peat to make highly absorbent, biodegradable diapers as well as many other innovative uses.

Many of the newly drained peatlands at the turn of the century, originally intended for farming of grains, were found to be sour and unsuitable for most crops. However, several species seemed to thrive on these wet, often acid substrates. Onions, potatoes, cabbage, and peppermint became significant sources of income for many farmers in northern Indiana. Often, the drained peatlands were fertilized to produce higher yields; a cheaper method, proven successful, involved burning the peat to release previously unavailable nutrients. Peppermint was grown primarily for distillation into peppermint oil. Many bushels of peppermint were required to make one small vial of very expensive oil. Most of the distilleries have now been abandoned, but several stills remain standing about the area of Wolf Lake, Noble County. Larger commercial peppermint farms are presently active in LaPorte County where vast fields fill the air with the aroma of mint.

Indiana once harbored many vast expanses of cranberry marshes. Residents of northern Indiana as far south as Tippecanoe County would venture into these areas to collect cranberries. Hand-held devices were made and implemented to facilitate the collection of the berries. Charles Osborn, of Leesburg, IN, possesses a collecting device that was used near the turn of the century in Little Chapman Bog. It consists of a wooden box, open on the top and at one end, and attached to a handle. The bottom of the box near



Charles Osborn with a cranberry rake.

the open end had several teeth cut into it. The box was pushed into a clump of cranberry bushes, and the teeth "combed-out" the berries which collected in the enclosed end. Other fruits, found growing chiefly in bogs, were sought out by early Indiana residents, namely the blueberries and huckleberries. The practice of picking these wild "bog berries" has declined over the years for various reasons.

Peatlands of Indiana are not well known or well documented in the scientific literature. However, they cover thousands of hectares of the Indiana landscape, and they have directly influenced culture and industry in the state. Careful review of old and obscure literature as well as some more recent studies and surveys reveals nearly 100 notable peatlands—many have long and varied human histories. Documentation of the natural and human history of these declining systems will be an invaluable contribution to future studies that seek to determine the palaeoecology, vegetation ecology, disturbance history, reconstruction, and preservation of both extant and historic sites.

ACRES Welcomes New Members!

Craig and Diana Bartscht
Kate Birdseye
Catherine A. Dietsch
Janet S. Gaff
Anthony and Julie Hanchar
James and Anne Heger
Steve and Donna Helm
Tamera R. Jones
Daryl C. and Ellie M. Lambert

Harold and Kathy Lentz
Clifford E. Pomeroy
Tim Schlotter and Mary-Catherine Manuel
Alan and Anita Showalter
Bill and Kathy Shuman
Steve Wallen
Thomas Willman
Donald and Pearl Wingstrom
Thomas S. Worms

In Memory

Irene McKinley

Pam Hanes

Ellen Eberhardt

Alan and Anita Showalter

Rick Pichon

Lincoln and Lois Booth
Tom and Jane Dustin
Ben, Cheryl and Mindee Gleason
Robert and Jacqueline Gunzenhauser
Gene and Sharon Lewis
Roger and Norma Lewis
John Pichon
Deric and Pam Righter
Larry and Barbara Rue
Jackie Smyth
Fred and Jackie Wooley

Winifred Poe

Marilyn Auriti
Kay Baughman
Ethyle and William Bloch
Neil and Doris Bracht
Fred and Cece Dunderman
Tom and Jane Dustin
Marilyn Hall
Jean Mendenhall
Gordon and Julie Johnson
Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Jordan
Gladys D. Lomont
Bette Poe
Jan Schroeder
David and Doris Sharts
Max and Mary Sprunger
Paul and Charlotte Trenary
Robert and Janet Weber
Cedar Creek Woman's Club
National Labor Committee Education
Fund in Support of Worker and Human
Rights in Central America

BOY SCOUTS BUILD BRIDGES & TRAIL SYSTEMS

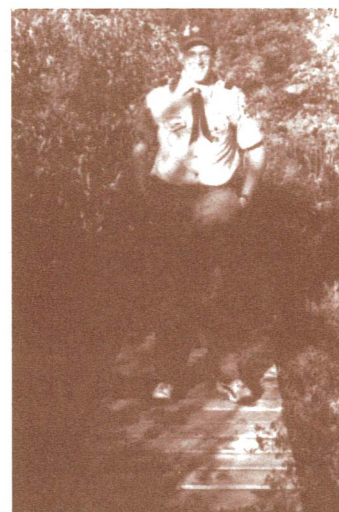
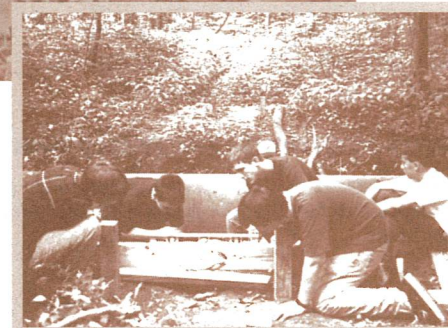
ACRES



LAND TRUST



Stuart Neill's Eagle Scout project was building a much needed bridge at Lonidaw Nature Preserve. Troop 27, with Scout Master Jim Neill, Stuart, Jason and Joe Neill, John Purcell, Daniel Briney, and Anthony, Joseph and Daniel Selby spent three days completing the project.



Thanks to Derek King for a great job improving the trail system & signs at the Mengerson Preserve.

Tel-Hy Tidy-Up Goes Terrific!

Thanks to:

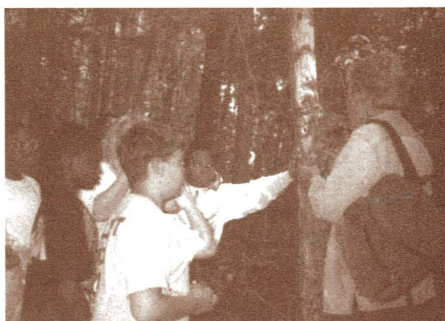
Tom and Karen Bennett, Stewards
John and Marcella Ellenwood
Larry Bieberich
Tom and Jane Dustin
Hy and Lori Goldenberg
Ken Milliken
Chuck Kinsey
David Pettit
Carl and Barbara Bauer

The Back Page...

Many of us can remember a hike through the woods as a kid with our school class or with a parent. It's easy to recall all the sights, sounds, smells, curious shapes and unusual surprises we found there. We realized that a woods isn't just a pretty picture, but that it's incredibly alive with animals and ecosystems, all dependent on one another. Some ACRES folks took some time out of their busy schedules to lead some nature hikes for school children from Shawnee and Franke Park schools.

Hats off and thanks to:

Nancy Malis	Bob Walton
Barb Meyer	Angie Quinn
Elsie Matott	Nate Meyer
Don Gorney	Bob Weber
Judy Esterline	



Listening to the children's questions and watching them hike the preserves is a rewarding payoff for the ACRES volunteers.

The **ACRES Quarterly** welcomes letters, articles, artwork, photos, and anything else of interest to our readers. Send any and all items to **Susan Britton, Editor, ACRES Quarterly, 2000 North Wells Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46808**. Deadline for Winter issue is **December 1, 1997**.

ACRES Land Trust
2000 North Wells Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46808-2474
Address Correction Requested

Directors: Ted Heemstra, President; Robert C. Weber, VP; David Gall, VP; James D. Haddock, VP; David C. VanGilder, Secretary; Richard E. Walker, Treasurer, Mary Anna Entwisle, Membership Secretary; Tony Acosta, David P. Deimling, Ben Roush, Arthur Eberhardt, Sam Schwartz, Greg Craghead, Paulette Bremer, Jane Dustin, David J. Miller, Janel A. Rogers, Dennis Schoff, Carolyn McNagny, Executive Director; Sharon Little, Administrative Assistant. National Advisory Board: Howard Michaud, Alton Lindsey, M. Graham Netting, Richard H. Pough, Durward Allen, Lynton K. Caldwell, Frank Kirschner. ACRES Quarterly is published by ACRES, Inc. at 2000 North Wells Street, Fort Wayne, 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. Susan Britton, Editor. **MEMBERSHIP:** Benefactor, \$500.00; Patron, \$100.00; Organization/Club, \$50.00; Share-the-Expense, \$50.00; Family, \$25.00; Individual, \$15.00; Senior Citizen, \$10.00; and Student (through High School), \$10.00. Payable Annually. Membership year is July 1 to June 30.



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