

QUARTERLY

Autumn 1999
Volume 38—Number 4

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A Letter From The President...

As we approach our 40th year in land conservation work in northeast Indiana, ACRES has much to look back upon with pride and to look forward to with excitement. ACRES is approaching 1,000 members, nearly 50% more than anytime in our history. We are reaching many more people with our programs and guided hikes. With an important goal of introducing children and adults to the values of our natural world, ACRES is presenting programs to more than 1,500 people a year.

Two challenges ACRES faces are increasing our staff and finding a new office site. The number of preserves has grown from 23 to 41 in eight years and with this rapid growth has come the need to hire another full-time staff person. The Directors and I feel that having an office site near an ACRES preserve and better facilities for offering programs would strengthen the organization.

I thank the land donors, our faithful membership, generous contributors, land management volunteers and our volunteer board members and staff. I congratulate you all for the remarkable success you have achieved through hard work and dedication to the conservation cause.

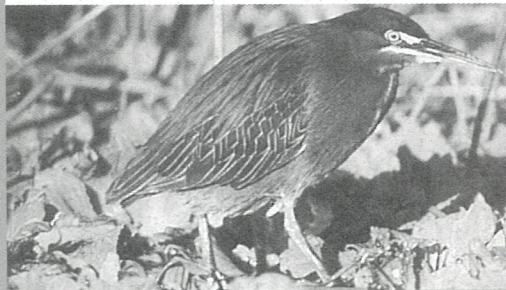
James D. Haddock

Serving on the ACRES board since 1978, Jim Haddock has been ACRES president since January, 1999. He is a Professor of Biology at Indiana University - Purdue University, Fort Wayne.

NEW LAND AQUISITION PROJECT

As you are reading your Quarterly, we are signing papers to acquire 30 acres in LaGrange County. The property protects a "notable" marsh, which means it is listed with the Heritage Program in Indianapolis. In the 1970s, the IDNR did a complete study of the state and cataloged the finest natural areas for protection. The "Indian River Wetlands" (the new preserve doesn't have a formal name yet) is what ACRES hopes is the first piece in a puzzle to protect some of the 200 acres of wetlands between Dallas and Hackenberg Lakes.

The property has two state endangered species, Marsh wrens *Cistothorus palustris* and Massasauga rattlesnakes *Sistrurus catenatus*. The land shelters a small pond, where canoeists saw twenty green herons roosting in the trees. ACRES will need to raise \$30,000 to acquire this property.



Green Heron by Donald & Lillian Stokes
from Stokes Field Guide to Birds

ACRES Annual Dinner & Guest Speaker

November 12, 6:30 p.m.

Concordia Seminary Dining Hall
6600 North Clinton Street
Fort Wayne, Indiana
\$12.50 a plate

Roast pork, au gratin potatoes, salad, buttered corn, apple crisp
(Vegetarian quiche available on request - Please order either quiche or pork - no substitutions later, thanks!)

Phone reservations to:

Mary and Howard Schneider (219-484-3986)
or Ethyle and Bill Bloch (219-747-4450)
Reservations must be made and honored

Deadline: November 9, 1999

Guest Speaker: Michael A. Homoya

Author of *Orchids of Indiana*, Michael Homoya is a botanist with the IDNR Division of Nature Preserves since 1982. Michael's beautifully photographed slides and scientifically fascinating talk on Indiana's 42 species of orchids makes for a memorable evening.

If unable to dine with us, please plan to join us at 8:00 p.m.,
in classroom 201, for the program.
General public is welcome for the program-no charge!

Artwork by Ethyle Bloch

Welcome NEW ACRES Members!

James Covell
James T. Frances
Joyce E. Goggin
Marjorie E. Goshorn
Bob and Lou Grawcock
Steven Hammer
Joe and Nancy Harber
Allen L. Hetrick
George and Martha Hively

Jennifer Hurley
Claude Keller Jr.
Arthur and Marcia Litton
Sam and Gina Loomis
Ruth McConnell
Ranelle J. Melton
Dwight and Waneta
Pinkerton
Robert and Jan Reber

K. J. Roller
Deborah M. Sarrazine
Nate Simmons
James Spangler
Tom Tempel
and Kim Waldschmidt
Maureen P. Voors

Helen Swenson:

Artist, Naturalist, and Photographer

By Lorna Leaders, Steuben County Writer

You might not recognize the name, but thanks to a lady named Helen Aldrich Swenson, people for generations to come will be able to enjoy the tranquility and beauty of an area of Steuben County that is untouched by progress. It is the Wing Haven Nature Preserve. The property is considered to be one of the highest quality nature preserves in the state.

Helen and her husband, Ben Swenson, were for many years managers of Potawatomi Inn at Pokagon State Park. Helen was the social director, park ranger and naturalist, interior decorator, bird study expert and resident artist. Her love of nature and art were a part of everything she did.

But this is getting ahead of her story. Swenson was born around 1907 in Hickory Corners, Michigan. She grew up on the family farm, but moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan, when she was in her teens. Her natural ability as an artist was evident at an early age, and after graduating from high school she attended the Art Institute in Chicago. She worked as a commercial artist designing Christmas cards, doing the bulk of her work in watercolors. She met Ben, who was manager of the Del Prado Hotel and they married in 1933.



Winter drawing by Helen Swenson

By 1936, they were living at the Potawatomi Inn. Loving everything about nature, Helen avidly studied birds, their songs, trees and flowers. Her knowledge of wildlife was shared with those who joined her on nature walks. In addition to the regular activities, the Swensons would surprise guests by doing such things as renting a big boat with a motor, attach two rowboats to it and take guests for a ride.

At Halloween, the Inn always had a big party. Helen would

fill fenced areas in the dining room with farm animals - sheep, ducks, goats and whatever else she could round up. Helen would have a spook trail that would go through-out the Inn. Of course, there was square dancing which she loved, games, and plenty of food. In the winter, they would hook a large wooden sled behind a horse-drawn buggy and take families for rides.



Around 1942, the Swensons purchased 400 plus acres near the state park, and began to make it into a retreat and farm. In 1948, the Swensons left Potawatomi Inn to open their own business, Wing Haven Resort. Marianne Preston Golden, Helen's niece, said that Helen envisioned Wing Haven as a spot to introduce friends, old and new, to what she called the pleasures of unhurried living in a tranquil corner of the earth.

Wing Haven included shoreline around two and a half lakes, farmland, and woods. Helen's artistic talents and love of nature showed in everything that was done. Guests stayed in cottages decorated with the theme of a particular bird. The colors of the bird were carried out in the interior decorations of each cabin, and biological information was given about each bird.

As an artist, she not only planted a garden, she designed it, mapping out areas and then photographing the flowers and vegetables as they grew. Helen painted Wing Haven in the different seasons. In the 1960s she had documented 137 species of birds, 42 species of trees, 27 species of shrubs and 60 species of wildflowers and ferns.

Her guests fished, walked the trails, read in the library, went on nature hikes, had breakfast cooked outdoors, and went swimming and canoeing. There were songfests and square dancing. She wanted people to enjoy learning about nature as much as she did.

Ben died in 1954, and for about 15

years, Helen operated Wing Haven Resort alone. In 1972, she sold the part of the property where the resort was to Camp Calvary. Today it is Oak Hill Conference and Retreat Center. She lived on the remaining 160 acres that was her farm. The 19th century wood farmhouse and tulip log art studio, originally an old tavern, had been brought in from other areas and rebuilt on the property. It was a place of tranquil beauty that she dearly loved. There were horses, chickens, and turkeys. The deer came to browse among the apple trees she had planted near the house. She continued to fish, hike, garden, feed the wild animals, study and learn.

One story that was written about her was that she loved to plow her own driveway. She wanted it to be artistic looking and did not want the dirt picked up with the snow. It had to be pure white when heaped into piles.

In 1983, Helen died, but her legacy lives on. By bequeathing her beloved Wing Haven to ACRES, she left a priceless natural treasure for future generations.



ACRES
LAND TRUST

ACRES' MISSION

Dedicated to preserving areas in northeast Indiana, ACRES manages and protects 41 nature preserves in 11 counties.

2000 North Wells Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46808
219-422-1004

www.acres-land-trust.org



FIELD TRIPS & SPECIAL EVENTS



October 23rd- 24th Hawk Migration Trip with Soarin' Hawk



October is the peak of migration for many birds of prey, including red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks, Cooper's hawks, and osprey. It's also the time of year when you can see huge kettles of turkey vultures gliding overhead. Join Soarin' Hawk for a 2-day trip to the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory, located on the north shore of Lake Erie. If the winds are from the north, you have a great chance of seeing thousands of hawks cruising down the shoreline. Please contact John Winebrenner, Field Supervisor for Soarin' Hawk at (219) 637-1152, if you plan on going or for more information.



Saturday, October 23rd at 2:00

Carolyn Harstad, author of *Go Native! Gardening with Native Plants and Wildflowers in the Lower Midwest*, will be at Little Professor Bookstore, Covington Plaza on West Jefferson, Fort Wayne. Carolyn will present a 20-minute slide program and will sign her book. Why deal with delicate cultivated plants when you can raise hearty, healthy native plants. For information call 436-7763.



Sunday, October 24th - Indian River Canoe Trip

Don and Pearl Wingstrom will lead a canoe trip to see ACRES' newest preserve! Ducks and geese will be migrating through and we will canoe up the Indian River from Dallas Lake to Hackenberg Lake.. Don and Pearl Wingstrom were instrumental in the acquisition of this property. Join us for a fun day!

When: 2:00 p.m.

Where: Don and Pearl Wingstrom's home, LaGrange County.

Directions: Take SR 9 north of Wolcottville, turn west at the stop light onto 800 S. Follow 800 S about 3 miles to 75 W. Turn north onto 75 W and then east onto 625 S (there will be a big sign that says North Shore and Dallas Bay.) Off of 625 S, turn onto Dallas Bay Drive and follow it left to the Wingstrom's home. Look for signs.

IMPORTANT: You are responsible for your own canoe! Bring canoe, paddles, life jackets or floats, and other aquatic necessities.

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



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

Thunderstorms & Tornadoes

Dr. David Finley, Chairman of Tri-State University's Chemical Engineering Department, will present a



FIELD TRIPS & SPECIAL EVENTS

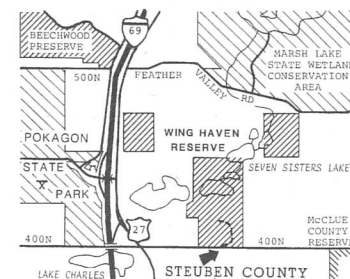
Thunderstorms & Tornadoes continued...

slide program on tornadoes and thunderstorms. "The conflict between the warm Gulf of Mexico and the cold arctic air from Canada", Dr. Finley says, "makes for some of the world's most dramatic weather in our own backyard."

When: 2:00 p.m.

Where: Wing Haven, Steuben County. Take I-69 to Exit 154, turn south on SR 127, then immediately east onto 400 N.

Questions? Call ACRES Office at (219) 422-1004.



Butternuts! Dilbert and Betty Phillips have donated a bushel basket of butternuts to give as presents to those attending the November 7th program and also at the ACRES Annual Dinner. The butternut, once a common tree, is now threatened by a blight. It is hoped that the Phillips' butternut tree is blight resistant and your planting them at your home or farm will give the tree a better chance of surviving the blight. Called the white walnut, butternuts were the tree of choice for settlers building their furniture and homes. The tree was once tapped for its syrup, the same way sugar maples are tapped today. But it takes 4 times as much sap to obtain a gallon of syrup, so the butternut tree is very seldom (if ever!) used today as a sugar camp. Thanks to Dilbert and Betty for picking up all of those Butternuts and to Art Hammer for his interest in saving the Butternut trees!



Sunday, November 12th

ACRES Annual Dinner and Meeting - See details on page 3.



Sunday, December 12th Wing Haven Open House (1 - 5 pm) Christmas Sing-A-Long

For the fourth merry year, musicians will lead you in your favorite Christmas songs. Hot cider and cookies around a crackling wood stove add to the atmosphere. Celebrate the Holiday spirit!

When: 2:00 p.m.

Where: Wing Haven, Steuben County. Take I-69 to Exit 154, turn south on SR 127, then immediately east onto 400 N.



Sunday, January 2nd.

No program. Happy Millennium!



10 YEARS OF MAPLE WOOD!

Day-long celebration of Maple Wood Nature Preserve & Center's first ten years serving LaGrange County. ACRES and the LaGrange County Park Department each own half of the forty-acre preserve.

OCTOBER 16TH

10:00 a.m. Honors Reception

It is fitting to express gratitude to those who helped make Maple Wood a special place. We will gather together donors and volunteers who participated in our first decade. Are you one of those people? If you are, be sure to be there. This is a time to share stories and contribute to the Maple Wood Memory Wall.

11:00 a.m. Wild Concert

Suite Strings Dulcimers and More hammer their folk tunes for the delight of our party. Playing hammered dulcimers, lap dulcimers and string instruments, these local musicians are a pleasure to hear.

12:30 p.m. Anniversary Color Walk

How many of you have walked all of the trails throughout the preserve? We will trod them all to get the best overall view of the habitat at the preserve. Bring your cameras, notebooks, and comfortable shoes.

For more information, call Scott Beam, Naturalist, Maple Wood Nature Center
Phone: (219) 463-4022.



BAT STUDY GRANT

ACRES has received two grants to study the bat population in the Cedar Creek watershed. **IPALCO** and **Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network and Fund** are supporting this study to look for the federally endangered Indiana bat *Myotis sodalis*.

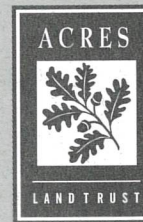
Dr. John O. Whitaker Jr., the director of the study, is Professor of Life Sciences at Indiana State University, Terre Haute. In August, Dr. Whitaker netted bats along Cedar Creek, but did not find the Indiana bat. Big Brown, Little Brown and Red bats were netted and released. In spring 2000, Dr. Whitaker will be netting for five nights at Cedar Creek. If you would like to help, call ACRES' office at 219-422-1004.



Indiana Myotis by Merlin Tuttle, Bat Conservation International, from *Mammals of the Northeast* by Dr. Whitaker.



Special Thanks!



Lee and Patricia Casebere have strongly supported ACRES land acquisition efforts. Lee is the Assistant Director with IDNR Division of Nature Preserves.

Roger and Lucy Johnson are a welcome addition to the ACRES volunteers!

Bob Gunzenhauser, for his research on the Fawn River Nature Preserve.

Debby Meade, for her valuable assistance with projects at the ACRES office.

Home Loan Bank for being a local business patron.

What D'Ya Mean You Haven't Renewed?



From *Mammals of the Northeast* by Dr. John Whitaker

ACRES goal is to reach 1,000 members by the year 2000. We need you to support the ACRES' land acquisition and environmental education efforts. Please renew TODAY!

In Memory

Jerald H. (Jerry) Reinking

Anita and Jack Dierkes for Wing Haven. "We cross-country skied there with Jerry and his wife Kathy one fine clear winter's day many years ago."

Harry Heinzerling

Tom and Jane Dustin

Molly Mackel

Debbie and Norman Herbert

Thomas L. Snider

Tom enjoyed the out-of-doors and hiking The Bicentennial Woods.

Mark and Sharon Hare
Pam Hoffman and John Bubb
Kathleen A. Pascarella
Dr. Allan Perry
Steve and Michele Souder

Bicentennial Woods
by John Ellenwood



NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

ACRES election of board members is upon us. If you would like to nominate someone for the board, please do so by October 30, by contacting the ACRES Office at (219-422-1004). Mary Anna Entwisle, Sam Schwartz, and Sean Carroll 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 by November 10, or you may vote in person on December 15, 1999, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. at the ACRES Office, 2000 North Wells Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46808.

MISSING THE CALL OF THE QUAIL...

By Roger Johnson with a Foreword by Carolyn McNagy

On the dirt road that leads to Crooked Lake in Whitley County, there is a steep hill that dips down between two spatterdock wetlands, rimmed with buttonbush, willows, and red maples. Near dusk, an adult quail could sometimes be seen hustling its brood across the road, with the chicks trailing rapidly. Disappearing into tall grass, the suddenness of their appearance and then disappearance would add a comical touch to summer days.

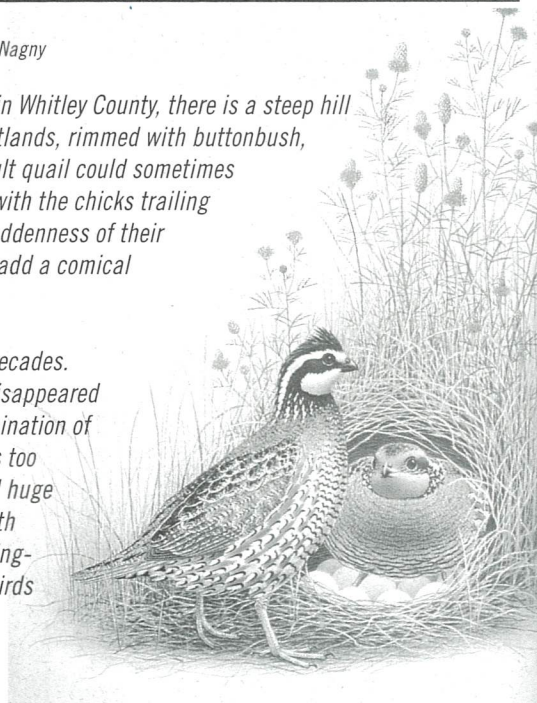
I haven't seen quail near Crooked Lake for decades. During the late 1970s, the bobwhite quail disappeared from much of northeastern Indiana. A combination of unbelievable snowfall with driving wind was too much for the coveys of quail, which suffered huge losses, along with other birds associated with edge habitat, like the Carolina wrens, mocking-birds, and bluebirds. The other species of birds slowly recovered, but not the bobwhite.

Bobby Hettmansperger of Wabash presented an informative program on "The Vanishing Quail" at Wing Haven in September. We were reminded of how we miss the quail's call of "wheet..." and "bob...bob...wheet" at mating times.

What has caused this favorite feathered friend to vanish? Perhaps there are several reasons. The Great Blizzard of 1978 started the dramatic decline. Extreme periods of drought during breeding season, heavy amounts of rainfall during the hatching season and harsh winter cold all contributed to the drop in quail numbers. Predators, such as skunk, raccoon, and opossum, have taken their toll. Surprisingly, the coyote is not one of the main predators of this bird. The loss of quail habitat has also contributed to the decline.

What, we ask, can be done to reverse this trend?

On the local level, each of us can make a difference! A landowner who improves the habitat on his property will see quail respond. This can be done by dedicating a small percentage of the property (one or two percent of the land) to warm season grasses. In recent years, advances in herbicides, no-till drills and alternative planting methods have increased the successful establishment of warm season grasses. This type of grass aids in the quail's nesting stage and for brood-rearing. A key to the quail chick's survival is the presence of insects and legumes, which serve as a source of protein for their voracious appetites. A special concern of wildlife biologists is the rapid increase of the alien grass

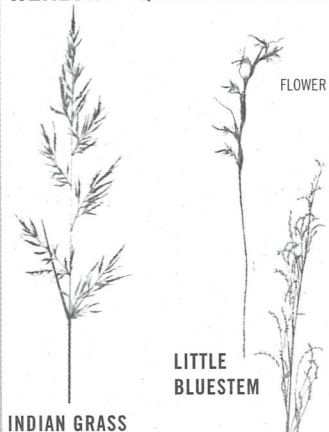


TOXIC QUAIL GRASSES



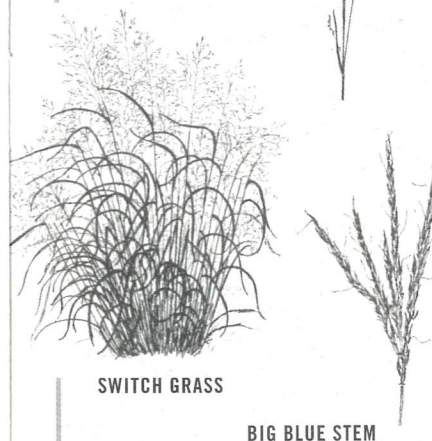
MEADOW FESCUE
Festuca elatior

HEALTHY QUAIL GRASSES



INDIAN GRASS

LITTLE
BLUESTEM



SWITCH GRASS

BIG BLUE STEM

Grass Drawings from *Grasses* by Lauren Brown

Taller Fescue *Festuca elatior* on farmland. Fescue has a toxic effect on quail and other grassland birds.

Opportunities exist to partner with organizations such as Quail Unlimited and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to restore the quail to its rightful place in our upland game population. Can we answer the call to realize a comeback of this favorite bird?

Quail Unlimited is a non-profit organization that is working to restore the quail populations in Indiana. David Howell of Quail Unlimited, speculates that the bobwhite have never returned to their pre-1977 numbers due to "lack of and highly-fragmented habitat". The bobwhite depended on the fence rows, once a common sight in Indiana's countryside. New farming practices have removed the fence rows.

ACRES NOTE: In August, Bobby Hettmansperger, Habitat Chairman of Quail Unlimited, planted the 11-acre field at Tel-Hy Nature Preserve into warm season-prairie grasses for ACRES. Karen Bennett, Steward for Tel-Hy, said the field is a carpet of wildflowers; yellow, pink and white. It will also be a prospective nesting site for quail.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

Emanuel M. Popp Nature Preserve
Trail System



Zach Herman and Troop 419 worked many hours to complete a new trail system at the Emanuel M. Popp Nature Preserve (the preserve is not open to the public at this time). Building trail markers and a bench, Zach created a loop trail which shows this impressive oak woods off to its full advantage. Thank you to Zach for his excellent work and congratulations on becoming an Eagle Scout!

A Night Picnic...

"How about a Night Picnic?" I asked my niece, Elyse. She's thirteen and game for any adventure her Uncle Jeff and I dream up. "Ooh, sounds fun!" she said.

It was close to midnight on a lovely Saturday evening in September. The moon had risen, smiling - out of the east, like the Great Pumpkin. By the time it was high over our house it was clear, and white, and bright as day. The air was crisp, so we took a thermos of hot cider and some cinnamon cookies and walked out into the woods for a moonlit hike. We followed some of our familiar paths and listened for night animals and birds. You could almost see the colors of things. On the way back we saw firefly larvae twinkling on logs near the pond. It didn't seem like night-time or day-time, more like a dream world, and since we should have been sleeping by then, the thrill of breaking some self-imposed rule was

added to the keen sense of mystery. By the time we returned to the house, we felt like we had really gotten away with something. We couldn't bear to go inside. Instead... wrapped ourselves in blankets, and sat on lawn chairs in the backyard by a glowing fire until early morning. When Elyse finally dozed off and almost fell out of her chair, we called it a night...a magical, all-night- twilight- kind of night.

Susan Britton

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 46808-2474**. Deadline for Winter issue is **December 1, 1999**. For information on ACRES call 219-422-1004

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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.**

