

Preserving Natural Areas

QUARTERLY

Winter 2002

Volume 41—Number 1



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RICHEY CONSERVATION EASEMENT!



Donald and Susan Richey have donated a conservation easement of their 26 acre restored wetland. Working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Richeys have taken a farm field and created a habitat for wildlife. In 2001, Donald and Susan protected 81 acres of their farm in a life estate which will soon be dedicated as a state nature preserve.

Photograph by Ellsworth Smith.

ACRES' Board Walks Dygert's Woods



In October 2001, ACRES acquired the Evelyn and Wendell Dygert Nature Preserve, Whitley County.

The ACRES Board of Directors visited the Dygerts and their family to see the new preserve.

Sitting in chairs: Wendell and Evelyn Dygert
Standing (left to right): Sylvia and Rich Manalis, Anita Dygert Gearheart, Carolyn McNagy, Sean Carroll, Art Eberhardt, Bob Weber, Sam Schwartz, Pat Heemstra, David Van Gilder, Bob Bryan, Mary Anna Feitler, Heather Hoffman, Susan Britton, Patricia McNagy, and Jim Haddock. Absent from photograph: Ted Heemstra and Janel Rogers

Photograph by: Jeff Britton



Sam Schwartz and Art Eberhardt walking back from the 56-acre Evelyn and Wendell Dygert Nature Preserve. Photograph by John Ellenwood

New Members

Chad and Jen Bailey

Gift of Kurt and Linda Kleinrichert

Richard Barton

William Berning

Gift of Tom and Jerry Schoenherr

Lynn A. Berry and Sarah C. Vetter

Thomas and Susan Blaising

William and Marita Cline

Anthony and Jill DeHoff

Beth Deimling

Gift of Carl and Ruth Deimling

David W. Doudt

Larry F. and Susan R. Goshorn

Mitch Harper and Dawn Wilson

Catherine and Scott Hill

Stephanie Hoard

Denyel Hulse

Gift of Heather and Jeffrey Hoffman

Miriam Lucas

Kenneth and Sherron Ludwig

Richard and Donna Nitterauer

Helen Meyers *Gift of Richard E. Seely*

Paul Nailor and Deb Davis

Ronald A. Patton

Anne Pinkney

Ed and Beth Rademaker

Melvin E. Rennaker

Cynthia Russell

James and Margaret Townsend

Mary Beth Wahl

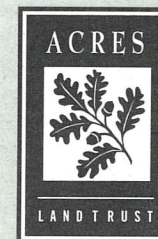
Cynthia L. Wilkin

Daniel and Beth Zweig



Our intrepid canoists prepare to face the Pigeon River. Three capsized canoes and a steady hour-long downpour later, we did not look this good at the other end. Saw many green and great blue herons and the fiery red cardinal flower was blooming along both banks, making for a wet but fun day.

-Photograph by Ken Millikan



ACRES' MISSION

Dedicated to preserving areas in northeast Indiana, ACRES manages and protects 44 nature preserves in 12 counties.

2000 North Wells Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46808-2474
260-422-1004

email: acreslt@fwi.com

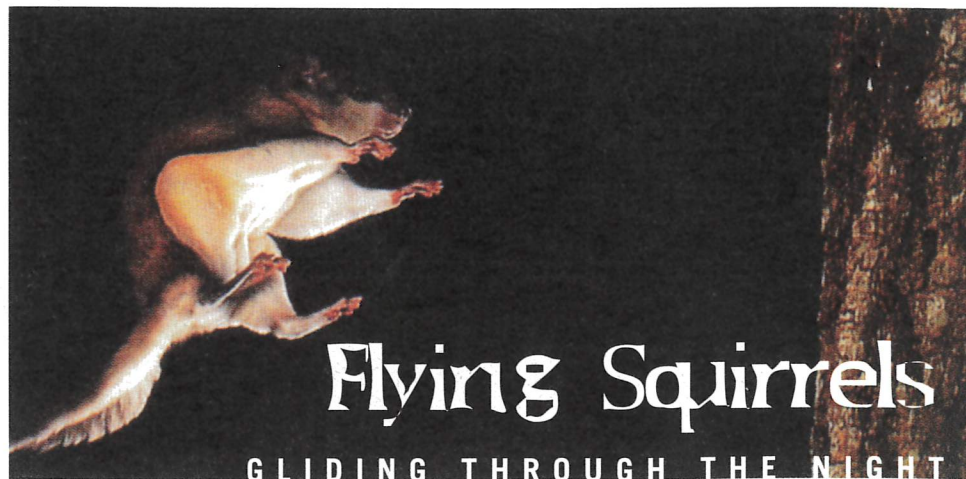
Web site:

www.acres-land-trust.org

Cardinal Chapter of Indiana Audubon Society

Tributes

In honor of William Berning's 70th Birthday
from Tom and Jerry Schoenherr



By Carolyn McNagny, ACRES Executive Director

I have a parade that wanders by my sliding door window at night. Living on the St. Mary's River, my back porch light rounds up the usual suspects - opossums, raccoons, red fox and, through one exceptionally cold winter, deer who crossed the ice-covered river.

This August I had a visitor I had never seen. In a vain attempt to keep the raccoons away from my bird feeders, I bought them a substantial bag of peanuts. This had the opposite effect than intended and I ended up with every raccoon for miles around eating the peanuts and then raiding my bird feeders. After the gang of raccoons had their quarrelsome dinner, the sounds of them faded as they moved off, screeching and yowling, to raid the neighbors' bird feeders.

Through the screen door, I heard a soft thump and looked out to see a pair of enormous black eyes looking back. A flying squirrel had glided down from one of the oak trees and landed near the abandoned peanut pile.

It is hard to describe flying squirrels in a clinical way. They are simply adorable. I watched as a second small, flat form glided from the oak tree and landed near the first. Others soon made their appearance and I went from not knowing they existed to suddenly having a party of four flying squirrels in my yard. A soft slapping sound caught my attention as another bundle of fur landed on a nearby tree trunk. The flying squirrel immediately disappeared to the opposite side of the tree.

Seen up close, a flying squirrel possesses a velvety brownish-grey coat on its back, edged by a blackish border that separates its white underbelly. Smaller than a red squirrel, it weighs two ounces which seems to be all fur. This furry effect is magnified by its flat fluffy tail, which helps guide it as it glides, and by its patagium, a loose fur-covered flap of skin that stretches between its front and rear legs on each side. The fur on the tail is not bushy like a gray or fox squirrels, but instead lies flat like vanes on a feather, with the hairs lying outward from the center.

The patagium acts as a parachute and keeps the squirrel airborne for glides of 20 to 60 feet. Flying squirrels increase the distance they travel by climbing to the tops of trees and then launching themselves into a glide. When preparing to land, flying squirrels swing their tail forward, which reduces their speed and brings them into an upright position for landing on the tree trunk.

Because they are nocturnal, few people are familiar with flying squirrels and are surprised to learn that they are our most common squirrel. Many of the ACRES nature preserves provide them with ideal habitat and we may attempt a program this summer to show them to you. In the wild, they eat mainly acorns, hickory nuts, tree buds, fruits, berries, moths, beetles and mushrooms. Flying squirrels can be enticed to your feeder with sunflower seeds, niger seeds, fruit, peanuts, and peanut butter.

There are two species of flying squirrels in the

United States, the Northern and the Southern. The Northern flying squirrel *Glaucomys sabrinus* prefers coniferous forests and inhabits New England, New York and the Appalachian Mountains. The Southern flying squirrel *Glaucomys volans* inhabits the entire eastern U.S. except for northern New England and the southern tip of Florida. They live among deciduous trees, with mature hickories, maples, beeches, and oaks among their favorite homes.

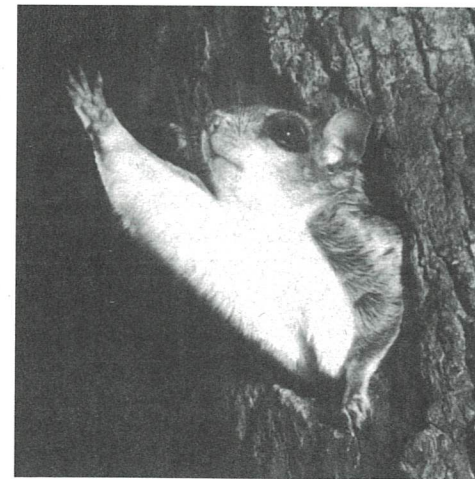
My four flying squirrels have their nest in a topped cottonwood by the river. The cottonwood has numerous woodpecker holes, which flying squirrels prefer as denning sites, lining the cavity with shredded bark or leaves. Getting up at dawn, I can hear the squirrels going to bed, sounding like an all-night party breaking up until there is silence.

I assume that my little group of four is a family, with a mother and three young. Most flying squirrels have two litters a year, one in February or March and a second in midsummer, after the young from the first litter are out of the nest. A flying squirrel mother is known for being fearless in defending her young. She will lay on her back and claw at an intruder that attacks her nest and, if a youngster falls, she will find and retrieve it.

Dr. John Whitaker, Professor at Indiana State University, has been involved in a research project netting bats along Cedar Creek for ACRES. Dr. Whitaker nets bats for as many as six months a summer, searching for rare or endangered species, and had a tale to tell about a flying squirrel mother.

Students and Dr. Whitaker had strung a mist net across a stream and were sitting in the dark with their echolocators waiting for bats. They heard a commotion in the middle of the mist net and turned on their flashlights. Entangled in the net was a baby flying squirrel, giving a soft continuous chittering. The group watched as the mother flying squirrel suddenly landed on the tree where the net was tied and began to scramble along its top edge towards the baby.

Unable to free the baby, the mother retreated when Dr. Whitaker went into the stream to release it from the net. He carried the baby flying

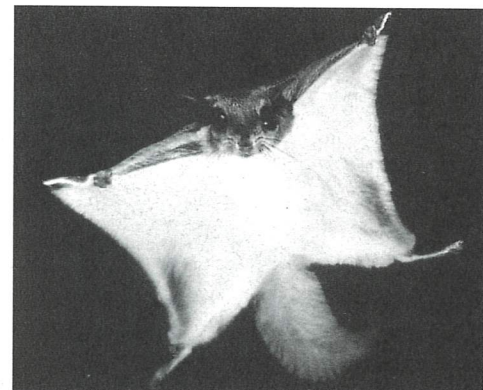


squirrel to the stream's bank and placed it there, unharmed. The mother quickly came over and the two went off together.

As for the flying squirrels in my cottonwood, I have not heard or seen them since November. In cold months, as many as 50 flying squirrels may snuggle together in nests to keep warm. They do not hibernate, but remain inactive, preferring to remain in cozy bundles for weeks at a time.

I look forward to seeing them again in spring.

Photographs from:
America's Favorite Backyard Wildlife by Kit and George Harrison
Mammals of the Northeast by Dr. John O. Whitaker, Jr.



FIELD TRIPS & SPECIAL EVENTS



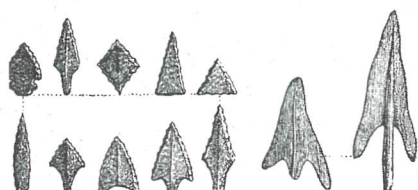
Primitive Skills Demonstration

Sunday, February 17th

Presented by: Erik Vosteen, Primitive Skills Instructor for 15 years.

Erik will teach flint knapping (process and techniques of making arrowheads), cordage (making string from plants), fire starting (demonstrating the hand drill and bow drill friction firemaking), and how to throw an atlatl (a spear-thrower that can send a dart hurtling 100 yards through the air).

When: 1:00-2:30 **Where:** Wing Haven Nature Preserve, Steuben County. Take I-69 to Pokagon State Park Exit (Exit 154), turn south on SR 127 and immediately left onto 400 N. Preserve located on the north side of 400 N in 1 mile. **Contact:** ACRES office at 260-422-1004.



Fascinating Ferns

Sunday, March 3rd - Wing Haven Nature Preserve - Presented by Carl Deimling,

nurseryman. Introduction to our native ferns - how to identify them by whether they have once, twice or thrice-cut leaves. Carl has grown baby ferns in terrariums and will show how to raise them from spores and other plants from single leaf propagation. **When:** 2:00 p.m.

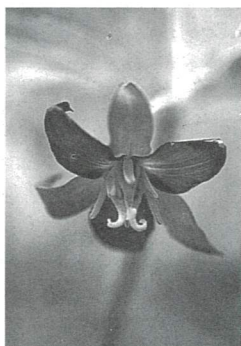
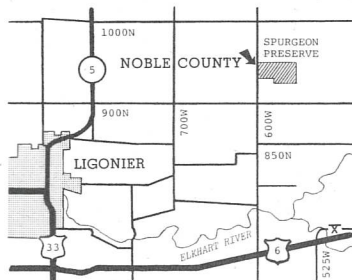
Where: Wing Haven Nature Preserve, Steuben County. Take I-69 to Pokagon State Park Exit (Exit 154), turn south on SR 127 and immediately left onto 400 N. Preserve located on the north side of 400 N in 1 mile. **Contact:** ACRES office at 260-422-1004. **Bring:** Wide-mouth jar with lid (if you want to take a plant home).



Early Spring Hike at the Edna W. Spurgeon Reserve

Saturday, March 30th - Presented by

Carolyn McNagney, naturalist. See the first wildflowers to bloom: the tiny salt and pepper, bloodroot with its snow-white petals and yellow center, and the deep blue hepatica. **When:** 2:00 p.m. **Where:** Edna W. Spurgeon Woodland Reserve, Noble County. Take SR 6 west of Kendallville and then north on 600 W. Preserve located between 900 and 1000 N. on 600 W. **Contact:** ACRES office at 260-422-1004.



Nodding Trillium photo by Phyllis Robb

FIELD TRIPS & SPECIAL EVENTS



Why We live Where We Do: Wildwood

Sunday, April 7th

Wing Haven Nature Preserve

Presented by Bob Frantz, caretaker of Wildwood with his wife, Alice. Dedicated to preserving their 238-acres of woods, Bob and Alice Frantz have watched over their beautiful land of wetlands, woods, and prairies for many years. An excellent photographer, Bob will present Wildwood through the seasons. **When:** 2:00 p.m. **Where:** Wing Haven Nature Preserve, Steuben County. Take I-69 to Pokagon State Park Exit (Exit 154), turn south on SR 127 and immediately left onto 400 N. Preserve located on the north side of 400 N in 1 mile. **Contact:** ACRES office at 260-422-1004.



Wildwood Photo by Bob Frantz



13th Annual Adopt-A-Tree Festival

Saturday, April 20th - Wing Haven Nature Preserve

Presented by Art and Marion Eberhardt, Jim Shearer, Dave Syler, John Eddy and Dave and Bonnie Snyder. Celebrate spring and visit Wing Haven for this yearly event! Take home a baby tree to plant. We will have white cedar, Chinkapin oak, tulip, and redbud.



When: 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. **Where:** Wing Haven Nature Preserve, Steuben County. **Contact:** Art and Marion Eberhardt

at 260-655-2421 or the ACRES office at 260-422-1004.



Maple Leaf Photo by Marcella Ellenwood



Mark your Calendars: May 4th Open House Celebration at the Evelyn and Wendell Dygert Nature Preserve.

Wing Haven Auction — June 1st

ACRES will be holding an auction to benefit Wing Haven. If you have a nature related item, artwork, furniture, books or antiques, with a estimated minimum value of \$50, please call the ACRES office. Your gift to the auction can be deducted from your taxes. Help support Wing Haven and clean out your attic or basement or garage at the same time! To donate items, call the ACRES office at (260) 422-1004 or in Steuben County, call Ethyl McClelland at (517) 238-2064.



Wing Haven by John Ellenwood

Special Thanks

- Mary Anna Feitler, for her many hours handling the deposits and keeping membership information.
- David Deimling, for serving as the ACRES Land Management Chairman and leading the bridge-building teams.
- Bob Weber, for serving 41 years on the ACRES Board of Directors and his dedication to land preservation.
- Art Eberhardt, for making the map and the beautiful maple map-holder for the ACRES office.
- Claude Keller, Jr. and Bill Smith for removing barb-wire fences at Herman F. Hammer Wald.

FOUNDATIONS

John and Hester Adams Trust
Gift to Evelyn and Wendell Dygert
Nature Preserve

Fort Wayne Community Foundation
Gift to Operations

The Lupke Foundation
Gift to Wildwood

Whitley County Community Foundation
Gift to Evelyn and Wendell Dygert
Nature Preserve

In Memoriam

Bart Blosser
from Philip
and Phyllis Kaiser

Mary Helen Murphy
from Laura M. Edmunds and Nancy B. Cothorn

John Rouch
from the ACRES Board of Directors and Staff
for the Edna W. Spurgeon Woodland Reserve

Frederick C. Spurgeon
Nephew of Edna Walker Spurgeon,
Donor of the Spurgeon Woodland Reserve
from the ACRES Board of Directors and Staff

Arthur Stillwell
from Jack and Anita Dierkes

Robert Walda
from Leslie Walda Carr and Michael Carr
for Beechwood Nature Preserve and Wing Haven
-For my Father who loved nature

Norma Wiesner
from Kenneth and Carole Davis
Chip and Bev Folck
Jim and Diane Levande
Gregory and Susan Mauk
Daniel R. Thiele
Ralph and Janice Thiele
Gerald E. Warfel
Fred, Jackie and Joseph Wooley
for Beechwood Nature Preserve

Florence Wooley
from Fred, Jackie and Joseph Wooley
for Wing Haven Nature Preserve

Loyal Yoder
from Mr. and Mrs. Richard R. Gerke
for the Operations Endowment
held by the Fort Wayne Community Foundation

Janas Zimmerman
from Laura M. Edmunds and Nancy B. Cothorn

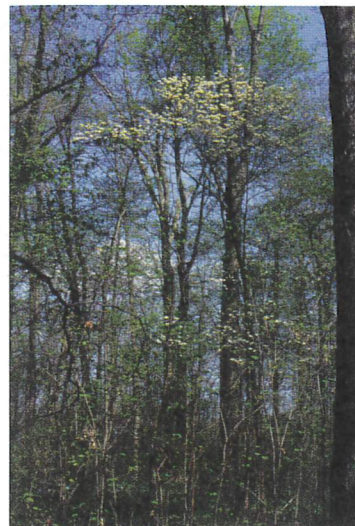
Wing Haven Endowment Fund

Operated by the Steuben County Community Foundation, the Wing Haven Endowment ensures that this beautiful 264-acre preserve, with its rustic homestead and barns, remains as a sanctuary for wildlife and a retreat for people to enjoy. With a 50% match from the Lilly Foundation, the Wing Haven Endowment has reached \$20,000 and is growing!

Our thanks to everyone who has supported the Wing Haven Endowment!



Gentian Lake Photo by John Tyson



Wing Haven woods by Bob Weber

John and Marcella Ellenwood
Joseph and Elizabeth Huguenard
Dr. Edwin and Mrs. Phillis Stumpf
Carol Thomas

Marcile R. Anderson
Collette Beeler
Lowell and Judith Beineke
William and Carol Berning
Glen and Chris Bickel
Robert Binder
Kathryn A. Bloom
Lois Booth
John P. Brennan
James A. Brenock
Mary Helen Burrow
Marilyn Byrne
Constance B. Carroll
William and Connie Carroll

Evangeline Claphan
Nena and Willard Clark
James Coffey
and Georgean Johnson-Coffey
Harold E. Cook
Lorraine Davis
Anita and Jack Dierkes
James and Karen Farlow
David and Heidi Finley
Tony Fleming
and Victoria Ferguson
Laura Frank
Jeanne Gehring
Delles Gerig
Judith Glasgow
R. Michael and Debra S. Glasper
Matthew and Hallie Grant
Albert Guilford
Marvin and Kate Hall
Dan and Nancy Hamlin
Fayne Harter
Jack and Karen Horrell
Diane S. Humphrey
Marion T. Jackson
Lynn Johnston
Alexander and Sharon Jokay
Dr. Joan Karbach
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Claude Keller, Jr.
Patricia Kinsey
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Mary Leggitt
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Pat McNagay

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Richard and Joyce Pacer
Everitt Padgett
Edwin and Cynthia Powers
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Darlene Stucky
Jack and Jeanette Sunderman
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John and Tam Vogel
Robert and Ann Walton
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Joanne A. Weber
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Dennis White
Phil and Sherilyn Wilcox
Frances E. Wilder
Don and Barbara Williams
John and Peg Williams
Tom and Hope Wilson
Fred and Jackie Wooley
Don and Cheryl Wyckoff
Nadine M. Zabierek

Our apologies for any omissions.

LITTLE RIVER WETLANDS PROJECT



By Paul McAfee, Director
Little River Wetlands

Imagine, if you will, a twenty square mile wetland in Allen County with tens of thousands of ducks, geese, and swans stopping by every spring and summer. Rare plants

and animals such as orchids, black terns, and otters abound in this area.

This is exactly what the Little River wetlands

area was like 150 years ago. Southwest of Fort Wayne and extending all the way to Huntington, the Little River (Little Wabash) was a short stream that encompassed a tremendous wetlands complex.

In the progressive attitude of the day, the river was ditched and straightened and the wetlands were drained in what was the largest and most aggressive drainage project in all of

Indiana. A tour of the area will show some of this area's deepest ditches. The banks of some of them are diked and the water is actually pumped up into them to accomplish the necessary drainage.

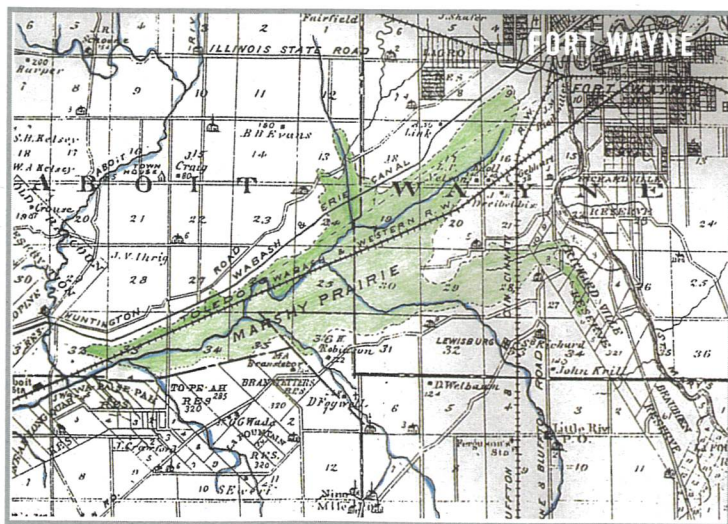
Currently, the area is farmed with some remnant wetlands still remaining. Fox Island County Park is located near the east end of the area providing a

sample of what the area was like and could be again. The Little River Wetlands Project is committed to protecting the remaining wetlands and restoring some

sections. We are currently working on a trail from Fox Island to a wetland area that has been restored along Yohne Road. We are also in the process of purchasing 100 acres of land near the town of Aboite that will be easily restored to a nice wetland area and will become home to an abundance of wildlife.

We now have an office in the old United Refuse building at 5000 Smith Road just southwest of Fort Wayne. A grant from the Fort Wayne Community Foundation has allowed us to hire Mary Berghoff to be Executive Director of the Little River Wetlands Project for one year. After only six months, she has accomplished a lot that could not have been completed by volunteers alone. She has been instrumental in fund-raising efforts and is talented in developing and maintaining strong relationships with local residents and landowners. We are focusing on raising enough money to make this a permanent position.

If you have any questions or comments, or would like a tour of the area, please feel free to call our office at 260-434-0728. We are always looking for support and



invite you to become a member. This is an area worth protecting that will become a natural area for all to enjoy.

By Janel Rogers, ACRES Director

Forget any preconceived notions about an octogenarian. Art Hammer just does not fit the mold. He is a man with a passion for life and an unbeatable enthusiasm for any project that draws his attention.

Art invited me to spend an afternoon with him at one of his many properties, this one in southwest Allen County. The plan was to release several pairs of quail onto the property. Sounded simple but I should not have dismissed the significance of his comment to wear heavy clothing.

It take only a few minutes of talking with Art to get caught up in his enthusiasm and, like a kid striking out on a new adventure, to abandon reservation and eagerly conspire to tackle the unknown with a friend. What was soon apparent, was also an invitation to explore. And explore we did. Through thicket and masses of chest high golden rod, circling a pond with a leak, down embankments and stumbling over a dead elm, I tagged along listening and admiring Art's descriptions of his years of involving himself in his land.

To have walked the property alone would have been to miss the intimate details of how the land developed its personality. Of how the bald cypress got their start, how the hickory trees got planted and then munched on by those pesky deer, the trial and error of tree planting in different soil types, the lovely chestnut trees, and the disappearance of quail. Figuratively and literally, we covered a lot of ground. With Art, one idea leads to another as inconspicuously as grass grows. He delights in influencing, enhancing, and promoting the natural rhythm of things. Something as seemingly ordinary as varying growth rings on trees or the protective cover afforded wildlife by the dense clustering of blue spruce rise to the status of what is important. What a delight to consider what many dismiss as mundane.

Before President's Day (February 18th), the Senate will be voting on whether to permit oil companies to drill in the caribou calving area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Contact information:

• Senator Richard Lugar
Rm. 306 SHOB-Senate Hart Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510-1401
Phone: (202) 224-4814
Email: senator_lugar@lugar.senate.gov

• Senator Evan Bayh
Rm. 463 SROB-Senate Russell Office Bldg.
Washington DC 20510-1404
Phone: (202) 224-5623
Email: <http://bayh.senate.gov/WebMail.htm>



Art Hammer releasing Quail. Photographs by Janel Rogers



Targeted drilling site of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge



ULTRALIGHTS AND WHOOPING CRANES

This pilot has flown tens of thousands of miles, ferrying tens of thousand of people on jumbo jets, but this October morning is different.

This day, dressed as a ghost, he is flying a plane that looks like an airborne motorcycle, guiding eight young whooping cranes on a 1,250-mile journey through seven states, including Indiana, on their way from Wisconsin to their new winter home in Florida.

Slowly he soars, up, up, above the sturdy pin oaks and jack pines, the silence of the dawn broken by the buzz of the engine. If all goes well, these eight whoopers may help save their species.

So here's the plan: Take some top-notch scientists, a devoted group of bird lovers who happen to be pilots,

planes small enough to fit into a barn, and a group of baby cranes trained so they never see people.

"It's a little like science fiction, but it's been put to the test and it works," says Tom Stehn, co-chariman of the whooping crane "recovery" team.

Canada geese, trumpeter swans, and sandhill cranes have made migrations guided by an ultralight plane — called Cosmos Phase II trike—that the birds see as a parent leading them to their homes.

It's a journey in slow motion. The birds fly only 20 to 80 miles a day until they reach Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge in central Florida. Next spring, they are expected to return to Wisconsin on their own.

Whooping cranes are majestic, white birds that stand 5-feet tall. The tallest birds in North America, have black wingtips and a patch of red on the head. As few as 15 birds remained in 1941. Now, more that 400 exist in NA, their only home, and about one-third are in zoos or breeding centers. But that flock, while growing slowly, could be wiped out in one fell swoop, by a hurricane, oil spill, or disease. Scientists hope that will change this year.

Information from Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Wisconsin

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 the Spring issue is **March 1, 2001**. For information on ACRES call 260-422-1004. www.acres-land-trust.org

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