

THE ACRES

QUARTERLY

PRESERVING NATURAL AREAS
IN NORTHEAST INDIANA



Wine Tasting
ACRES Annual Dinner
Sandhill Cranes
New Trail Connection Between Pokagon and ACRES
Fall Berries
Going Bats with the Munsters
Open House at Dustin Nature Preserve
The Back Page

Fall 2006
Volume 45 - No. 4



ACRES' 2ND ANNUAL *Wine tasting* *and photography Show*

Support Nature Trust Radio Program
and enjoy a lovely evening of wine,
great food, and beautiful
nature photography at the

STEVE VORDERMAN
GALLERY

112 NORTH MAIN STREET
ROANOKE, INDIANA

Friday

October 27th

6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

\$40 per person or \$75 per couple — Call 260-637-ACRE (2273)

Tickets are limited. Make your reservations by Tuesday, October 24th!

Photographs will be available for sale.

Photo courtesy of Tom Galliher

Board Election/Nominations

The election of ACRES Board Members is upon us. If you would like to nominate someone for the Board, please do so in writing by October 12th. Mail to the ACRES office: 1802 Chapman Road, Hunteertown, IN 46748. Richard Hurley, Janet Kelly, and Bill Smith are serving on the nominating committee.

Facts about Board nominations: Four board members' terms expire this year. Thank you, Sam Boggs, Jeff R. Britton, Bob Bryan, and Gary Tieben.

ACRES bylaws permit members to nominate other members to the Board. Nominations from a member must be made in writing to the Secretary of the Board (Jack Stark) or nominating committee between October 1st and October 12th (sent to the ACRES office).

If you are a current member in good standing, you will receive a return-by-mail ballot by November 1st, or you may vote in person Wednesday, November 15th, 2006 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the new ACRES office. Elected members will be announced at the ACRES annual dinner.

ACRES ANNUAL DINNER & MEMBERS MEETING

Friday, Nov. 17th

Dinner - 6:30 p.m.

Meeting and Program - 8:00 p.m.

Silent Auction opens at 6:15 and closes at 7:50

Concordia Lutheran Seminary Dining Hall

6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne

See ACRES website for directions and parking map.

Dinner Tickets are \$20 per person - Program is free

You are welcome to attend the program if you cannot attend the dinner.

MENU

Strawberry Spinach Salad with Vinaigrette Dressing

Mango-Chardonnay Chicken

Herb-Roasted Potatoes and Vegetable Blend

Pumpkin or Pecan Pie

Vegetarian Alternative: Fettuccine Alfredo

Fresh Vegetable Mix and Green Beans

Program:

Charles Deam Skit by Sam Carman

Charles Deam was a common man who did extraordinary things, but most Hoosiers have never heard of him. Through this one-man, one-act play you will hear the irascible, opinionated Mr. Deam recount his life and accomplishments. Charles Deam was instrumental in your own ACRES organization, certifying properties such as Fogwell Forest.

**RSVP for dinner to ACRES office
by November 9th**

(confirm either chicken or vegetarian dinner choice)

Silent Auction: We are looking for donations of ACRES-appropriate items for a silent auction to be held at the annual dinner. Please notify ACRES at least one week before the event with a description and the value of your contribution.

Examples: locally-made goods, bird feeders,
weekend get-a-ways, or artwork.



Leaves by Art Eberhardt

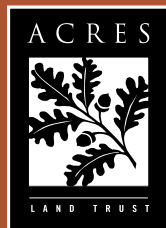
ACRES' MISSION

Dedicated to preserving natural areas in northeast Indiana, ACRES manages and protects 59 nature preserves in 13 counties.

1802 Chapman Rd.
Huntertown, IN 46748-9723

260-637-ACRE (2273)
email: acres@acreslandtrust.org

acreslandtrust.org



SANDHILL CRANES

ANCIENT BIRDS

a wild cry from the sky

By Neil A. Case



Sandhill Crane by Brad Bumgardner

I heard a call from overhead early one morning recently. It sounded almost directly above me, was clear and loud, yet sounded muted, as if far away. I recognized it immediately. It was unmistakably the call of a sandhill crane.

Roger Tory Peterson described the call of a sandhill crane as “a deep rolling k-r-r-r-ooo.” Kenn Kaufman described it as “a guttural crowing rattle.” In *Audubon Field Guide to Birds*, it’s described as a “long, rolling, hollow rattle, garoooooo” and in *National Geographic* as a “trumpeting, rattling gar-oo-oo.” To me, and to many other birders, it’s a bugling call, though it doesn’t sound at all like a bugle. Regardless of how it’s described, it’s a wild call like none other.

In *Crane Music*, Paul Johnsgard wrote that “cranes left their footprints in wetlands of the world 60 million years ago.” All cranes are geologically old birds, and sandhill cranes may be the oldest of all. In *Marshland Elegy*, Aldo Leopold called sandhill cranes “the most ancient of all birds, the oldest living bird species on Earth.”

There are fifteen species of cranes in the world today. Two are in North America: the sandhill and the whooping crane.

I stopped and looked up to see this bird of ancient lineage, as I always do when I hear one (if I can). I found it, or rather them. There were three, so high they looked no bigger than

the squiggles in a large landscape painting representing birds in the sky.

Small as those cranes appeared, they were still easy to recognize. Unlike herons, cranes fly with their long necks stretched out in front. Big gray birds with necks out, long legs and feet trailing, and long broad wings pumping rhythmically - these had to be sandhill cranes.

Eleven of the fifteen species of crane are threatened or endangered. That includes the whooping crane of North America. At one point whooping cranes were reduced to just sixteen birds. That was fifty years ago. Now, after years of protection, with a refuge in their last wild nesting area, another refuge where they winter, and a captive and release breeding program, they have increased to a few hundred.

Sandhill cranes, on the other hand, may not only be the oldest but are the most successful of cranes. Instead of hundreds, their numbers are in the hundreds of thousands. And they, too, have been increasing. As they increased, they expanded their range. Or, more correctly, as they increased they have begun to nest again in areas where pioneers found them and drove them out by hunting, plowing the meadows, and later, draining wetlands.

The cranes I heard and saw could be part of the increase. Certainly sandhills have been increasing in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois and

Give a gift of land protection for Christmas at a special holiday price!

In November and December, the ACRES office will give everyone a chance to give a special holiday membership for family and friends at half price! We have colorful gift cards designed just for ACRES. You can either request them to be sent via mail to the recipient, or we can send the card to you so you can give it personally.



ACRES could really use your expertise...if you are good with computers, **data entry**, retrieval, and organization. ACRES is purging computer data and needs to organize folders.

ACRES also has a need for an **LCD Projector** and a **Laptop Computer**. If you have one you would be willing to donate, it would be extremely helpful.

sandhill cranes continued:

Indiana. In Indiana, I have read reports of more and more nests. My wife and I heard a crane occasionally all summer and assumed it was one of a nesting pair. The cranes I saw could have been that pair with a young one they raised.

Those three cranes could also have been early migrants. In any case, I was thrilled to see them as always. There is something special about wild cranes. Others have recognized this and described it more eloquently than I can. Aldo Leopold wrote, "When we hear (a crane) call we hear no mere bird. We hear the trumpet in the orchestra of evolution. He is the symbol of our untamable past, of that incredible sweep of millennia which underlies and conditions the daily affairs of birds and men." In a book about cranes titled *The Birds of Heaven*, Peter Matthiessen wrote, "These elegant birds, in their stature, grace, and beauty, their wild fierce temperament, are striking metaphors for the vanishing wilderness of our once bountiful earth."

WELCOME

new members!

Kimberly Aspacher

Joseph and Nancy Conrad

David L. and Jami R. Hartzler

Jeff and Norma Hoepfner

Wayne Jenkins

Kip and Phillipa Katterhenry

Dave and Barbara Kissel

Larry and Betty Owens

Eric Petty and Suzanne Chalmers

Stephen and Kathleen Perfect and Family

Andy and Jessica Pyle - *Gift in honor of their wedding from Larry and Katie Wiedman*

Elizabeth Reynolds

Ken and Patsy Snyder

Jenny Weatherford

fieldtrips & SPECIAL EVENTS

For information on all programs contact: ACRES Office at (260) 637-ACRE or visit acreslandtrust.org

HOW TO GROW TREES FROM SEEDS -

Thursday, October 19th from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Presented by: Ricky Kemery, Purdue Extension Horticulture Educator. Spend some time in the field collecting seeds, then come into the cozy Dustin home and create your own planter of trees. Learn about the trees of northeast Indiana and their different needs while planting them. **Where:** ACRES Office/Tom and Jane Dustin Nature Preserve, Allen County. 1802 Chapman Road.

From Fort Wayne, take Coldwater Road 5 miles north of Dupont Road. Turn east onto Chapman Road. The entrance is 3/4 mile on the south side of road.



Acorns by Shane Perfect



Campfire by Shane Perfect

POPP OPEN HOUSE - HIKE AND HOT DOG ROAST

Saturday, October 21st, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Presented by Larry Biggerstaff, Caretaker. A gift of Jeannette Kent to the citizens of northeast Indiana, the Emanuel M. Popp Preserve is a dedicated state nature preserve. Hike the old-growth woods, and regain energy with a Hot Dog Roast hosted by Larry. **Where:** Emanuel M. Popp Nature Preserve, Allen County. Take Dupont Road east of I-69 to Tonkel Road. Turn north on Tonkel Road. The property is 1 1/2 miles, on the left (west) side at 12129 Tonkel Road.

WILD WALKERS

Presented by Renee Baines, Outdoor Education Coordinator, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation. This group of hikers always has a good time! If you are looking for friendship and fun, join us on selected Friday mornings for exercise and beautiful scenery. Contact Renee Baines at Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation at (260) 427-6005

October 27th, 7:30 - Noon

McClue Nature Preserve - carpooling available

December 8th, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Mengerson Nature Preserve - no carpooling available

ACRES 2ND ANNUAL WINE TASTING AND NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY INVITATIONAL CONTEST

Friday, October 27th from 6:00-10:00 p.m.

Where: Steve Vorderman Gallery, Roanoke Indiana. Visit the Vorderman Gallery and enjoy photography from selected northeast Indiana photographers. Winners will be chosen based upon people's choice of the photos. Fuel this difficult job with hors d'oeuvres and wine selected by Joseph Decuis. Photographs will be available for sale. **Why:** Proceeds will benefit *ACRES Nature Trust Radio*



Leaves by Art Eberhardt

fieldtrips & SPECIAL EVENTS

For information on all programs contact: ACRES Office at (260) 637-ACRE or visit acreslandtrust.org

Program, now aired statewide on 6 stations! \$40.00 a person, \$75.00 a couple. Tickets are limited. Make your reservations by Tuesday October 24th! (260) 637-ACRE (2273). Please see page 2 for details.

ACRES ANNUAL DINNER AND MEMBERS MEETING

Friday, Nov. 17th - Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting and Program at 8:00 p.m.

Concordia Lutheran Seminary Dining Hall, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne. See ACRES website for directions and parking map. **RSVP to ACRES office by November 9th** and confirm either chicken or vegetarian dinner choice. See page 3 for more details.



Photo by Tom Galliher

PREVENTING TOADS FROM EXTINCTION

Sunday, November 12th, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Presented by: Dr. Amy Obringer, Professor of Biology at St. Francis University. Amy will discuss the concerns of amphibian decline in the wild and their breeding in captivity. The reproductive cycles of male toads are well known whereas the female's cycle is more complicated. With a PowerPoint presentation and live animals, learn about challenges confronting wild amphibians and what can be done to help prevent their extinction. **Where:** ACRES Office/Tom and Jane Dustin Nature Preserve, Allen County. 1802 Chapman Road. From Fort Wayne take Coldwater Road 5 miles north of Dupont Road. Turn east onto Chapman Road. The entrance is 3/4 mile on the south side of road.



Toad by Tim Kimmel

12TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SING-A-LONG

Sunday, December 3rd at 2:00 p.m.

Presented by: Art Eberhardt. Historically known as Helen Swenson's Art Studio, this Wing Haven building is the site of ACRES annual Christmas sing-a-long. Go back to the 1900s with a cozy community feeling. Feel free to bring your signature holiday dessert to share. **Where:** Wing Haven Nature Preserve, Steuben County.



Have fun helping with our programs and learn something new at the same time! ACRES is always looking for volunteers to help with the seasonal programs. Please call ACRES if you are interested in helping out in any way. 260-637-ACRE.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

By Sam Boggs

Pokagon State Park and ACRES Land Trust have been good neighbors for many years. A recent opportunity to expand cooperation between the two organizations with similar missions has occurred with the expansion of Pokagon's hiking trail system.

Trail 8 was opened this September. It is a one-mile long trail that starts from Trail 3 west of Hell's Point, which is the third highest point in Steuben County. Trail 8 heads north and crosses CR 500 N. CR 500 N and 150 W have separated eighty acres from the rest of the Park since the purchase of the area in the 1970s. This trail traverses open rolling hills, which are currently being managed to return to meadowlands. Large areas of Big Blue Stem (over six feet high) prairie grass is thriving in this area after a decade of prescribed burning. As the resource managers, we have been pleasantly surprised with the reoccurrence of other prairie plants such as Blazing Star and Black-Eyed Susan. It is a thrill to see native plants return to the rolling hills after years of suppression by agricultural and non-native plants. Once-suppressed fires now rage under our control and enhance the area for these beautiful bloomers.

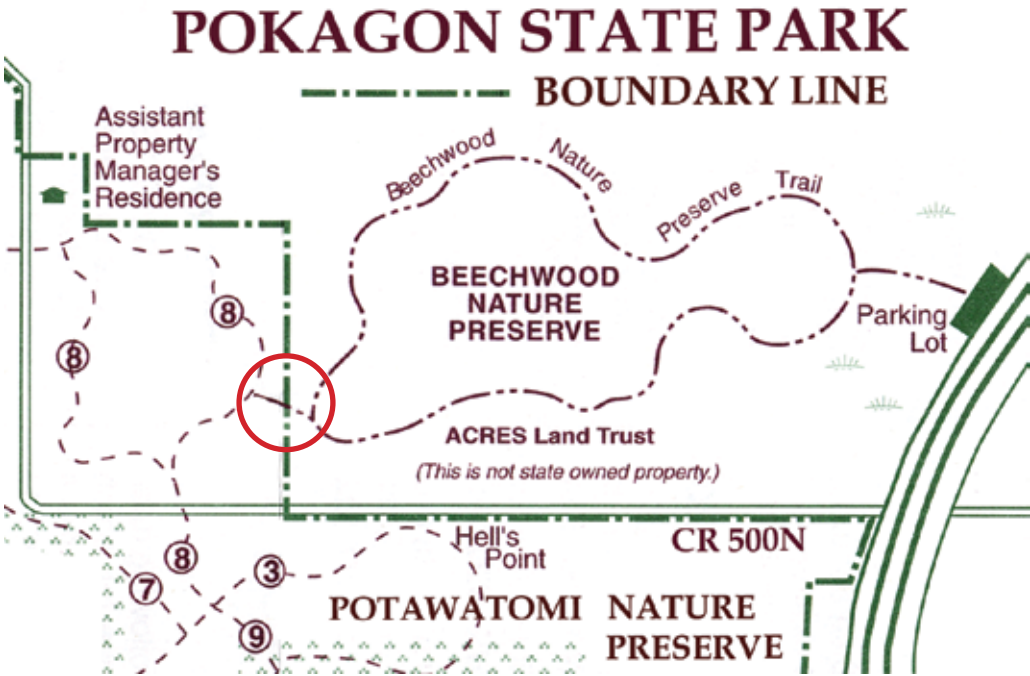
Expansive views of the open prairie from the tops of the many hills on this trail offer a change from the mostly woodland trails in the rest of the Park. It is common to see a deer in the distance loping across the Rolling Meadows.

When we realized that this trail would come within 100 feet of the ACRES Land Trust Beechwood Nature Preserve trail, the idea of connecting the two trails to expand hiking opportunities for Pokagon visitors was presented as a win-win situation to the ACRES management. ACRES agreed with the effort and the connection was made. ACRES installed their property sign and information box at the boundary with Pokagon. ACRES will benefit from Pokagon hikers learning about ACRES Land Trust



when they leave Trail 8 and enter the Beechwood Nature Preserve. Pokagon will benefit from the increased hiking opportunities for its visitors. Beechwood's trail has also been added to Pokagon's property trail map. The trail connection is also shown.

As both the Pokagon Assistant Park Manager and an ACRES Board Member, I am one example of the long history of partnering between the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the ACRES Land Trust. As Beechwood Steward for 15 years, I found it extremely rewarding to lay out Trail 8 and the Beechwood connection. It is an excellent partnership and I look forward to maintaining the Beechwood trail and connection as long as I am here. **Sometimes holes in fences make good neighbors.**



BERRIES BRIGHTEN FALL

By John W. Klotz, then professor of Biology at the Concordia Senior College

Most of the color is gone from the woods, now that November has come. Fields and open places still have some asters and goldenrods where the frost hasn't hit yet, but the woods have generally taken on what one author has called "the faded brown" of November. Most of the leaves that were so beautifully colored a few weeks ago have fallen and what are left are the brown shriveled leaves of the oaks and beeches that will remain until spring.



Bittersweet by Mike Bosela

It is for this reason that we are grateful for the small patches of color that do appear in some places. There are still some berries and fruits left that the birds and smaller mammals have not eaten. Among these are the berries of the bittersweet which you will see festooning trees and shrubs in some places.

The bittersweet is a member of the bladdernut family. It's a woody twining vine that's common in rich soils along fencerows and thickets in eastern North America. You'll often find that it's climbed a tree and is more than twenty feet from the ground. The leaves are alternate and simple with teeth along the edges. They look a little like plum leaves. The bittersweet blooms in June, but its flowers are rather inconspicuous. They produce the berries which give the color to the plant and which are eagerly collected to serve as decorations during the long bleak winter. The plant produces orange colored pods inside of which the scarlet berries are found.

The bittersweet has a number of other names. It's also known as waxwork, climbing bittersweet, staff vine, staff tree, fever twig, and false bittersweet. The latter name is



Bittersweet by Tim Kimmel

due to the fact that there's another plant known as bittersweet, the bittersweet nightshade which belongs to the same family as the tomato and potato. Botanists consider the true bittersweet, though I've always associated bittersweet with the orange-berried vine.

Because it's a climber, it can get along with much less tissue than if it had to support itself. I suppose you might say it's lazy, but that wouldn't be right either: it's only taking advantage of trees and shrubs which have produced enough tissue to hold themselves up. You certainly can't fault it as a parasite; it's not taking anything from the trees and shrubs on which it climbs. It's simply being economical and frugal because as a climber it can produce a stem that is quite long with relatively little tissue production. Some stems have been reported to be as much as fifty feet long.

Bittersweet makes a nice decoration, but you probably should be careful that children don't attempt to eat it. There's no conclusive evidence that it's poisonous although some have reported finding a poisonous substance, euonymin, in both fruits and leaves. There are also reports of horses that have been poisoned by eating the leaves.

Look for the bittersweet the next time you are out walking. You may want to gather some of it if you find a great mass of it. Be careful that you don't take too much. Unless it can continue to grow, you'll find the landscape poorer and less colorful next year.

nobleservants

During July 16 - 21, a servant event took place that provided 12 participants an electric experience in service. Appropriately titled "Noble Servants," this event was designed to help out and have a positive impact in Noble County, IN. This event was made possible by Camp Lutherhaven and Don Schroeder, Program Director. On Monday and Tuesday, high school students worked on a number of projects at Camp Lutherhaven, including the construction of a trail with benches and markers. On Wednesday, participants helped at the two ACRES properties just north of Kendallville, Lonidaw and Detering. Thursday was a day of service at the Noble house in Albion, which is a shelter for mothers with infants and children. After these experiences students were encouraged, motivated, and inspired to go into their home areas and continue the practice of good stewardship through community involvement and volunteer service.



Group by Shane Perfect

thanks!

Terry Bailey for making sign-in boxes and birdhouses

Art Eberhardt for making the ACRES office/Tom and Jane Dustin entrance sign

Carl Deimling for donating Dustin entrance landscape design and plants

Jon and Gloria Foor for being our environmental clean-up couple

Jon Hirschy - Eagle Project for benches for Allen County preserves

Leo Lumber for donating hardware for Jon's project

Jason Kissel for donating an ACRES woodcut sign

David Templeton for donation and installing a screen door on Tribal House at Kokiwanee, plus more!

Kyle Yeakle - Eagle Project for donating benches and sign in boxes for Steuben Co.

Fremont Lumber for donating materials for Kyle's project

Program Volunteers:

- Mike Dobbs and Linda Binek
- Leah Chester
- Bruce and Kate Johnson
- Tim Kimmel
- David Rezits and Dessie Arnold - Dustin open house

Thanks to all of our many volunteers helping out this year!

Indiana Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners

Jannah Tucker - Birdathon gift

GOING BATS!

By Bob and Ann Walton

GOING BATS is a rehabilitation residence for injured or displaced bats. Bats found by the public, whether injured or simply in the wrong place, are treated and cared for until they can be safely released. Now in its fourth year of operation, it has received 216 bats with an additional 26 born in captivity. To date, 175 bats have been returned to the wild.

Located in rural Allen County, the facilities consist of a "bat room," once the dining room in a 19th century brick farm house, and a flight pen in a bank barn which also houses a nursery colony of wild bats. We are Bob and Ann Walton, a retired electrical engineer and special education teacher, the main rehabilitators with some help of a very caring veterinarian and a number of other volunteers who pitch in to allow some vacation time.

THE MUNSTERS

About 8:00 p.m. on June 23, 2006, I received a call from Sue Craig. She had rescued a female red bat with three babies that had fallen to the ground. She was calling from Munster, Indiana, a suburb of Chicago, over 130 miles away. Since it was late and I had other young bats to care for, we made arrangements to meet the next day somewhere between Munster and Ft. Wayne.

I arrived with my padded bat box and some Gatorade to hydrate the bat. Upon picking her up, I realized there would be no problems. She was gentle and trusting, unlike the description given to most wild mother red bats. I spoke with Sue and her mother, the co-pilot, about their evening with the bats. I asked Sue if she had a name for the bats - I always ask people to name their bats. She replied that since she was from Munster, the mother should be named Lilly Munster. Great! The three babies, two males and one female, were named Hermann, Eddie, and Marilyn.

When I arrived home, Ann had prepared viscera (squeezed out guts) from meal worms, blended meal worm mix, strained baby food, and milk replacement formula. There was no problem feeding Lilly. With her offspring firmly attached to her, I placed her head down in my left hand and started feeding her.

After the second feeding, she allowed me to remove and examine Hermann and Eddie, but Marilyn refused to let go of her mom! The babies each took milk replacer readily and worked up to a meal worm mix.

With a few calls to Texas, we found that the mother and babies would need to be placed in a soft-sided cage, covered with leaves, and hung about ten feet above the ground in a predator-free wooded area. They would be released in the evening and monitored the next morning to see if they all left, if they all stayed, or if mom abandoned one or more of the babies.

On the third day, I took Lilly out to the flight pen to ensure that she could fly. Oh yes, she could fly! She zoomed back and forth and wasn't too concerned about the babies. Finally she tired and I caught her. She was purring happily and seemed to be excited about getting back to the babies. Repeated flights were made, and meanwhile, the babies had almost doubled their arrival weight.





Since quick release of the bats was imperative, we scouted daily for a suitable habitat. Finally, we settled on a nature preserve that had little human traffic and probably few “domestic” predators. On a Friday night after the gates were closed, we prepared the release cage. I had camouflaged it so well that Ann walked right by it at eye level. We installed the Munster family, gave them our blessings, and wished them well.

The next morning, I checked the release site. Lilly was gone but the three babies were still there. What to do? Threat of severe thunderstorms had us insisting they come home!

And they were happy, not to see us, but after 24 hours, to get a meal! After a few days and hearty meals, the three had become more mobile in their cage; each feeding time found them positioned at the top of the cage so they could be extracted easily. They slept together as a clump, for both warmth and companionship.

We bathed the three every two days. With their heads held upward, warm water was trickled down their body to wash away any urine, food or feces. The bats were dried with soft towels and a gentle blow-drying, then brushed with a comb and eyebrow brush. Our invalid female red bat from last year had taken an interest in the babies. She hung on my shirt while I worked with the kids. Some conversation passed between them, and even though I didn’t understand, none of it seemed hostile. So now it was just a matter of time, care and patience. The babies had more than doubled in weight and were noticeably larg-

er than when they arrived. They stretched their wings and flap. By mid- August they were ready for release, but were we?

Toward the end of their six-week rehabilitation, Eddie, Herman, and Marilyn became restless in their cage at night. We met some ACRES members at the Dustin’s homestead one evening and released our three little charges. No one who has visited the site can say that they’ve seen the kids since their release. I guess that means they have settled into their north-east Indiana home.



Bat photos by Bob and Ann Walton



Dustin Open House is enjoyed by all!

The drizzly rain let up just long enough for a beautiful afternoon at the new ACRES office within the Tom and Jane Dustin Nature Preserve. Over 200 people visited the home of Tom and Jane Dustin on Sunday, August 27th! David Rezits and Dessie Arnold, members of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, kept visitors entertained as they milled about the beautiful Dustin home, complete with a massive stone fireplace and wood floors. Mike Bosela, IPFW Botanist, led hikes which highlighted the plant diversity of this preserve. I have heard people say, "this home seems to have emerged from the surrounding woods. It is part of the natural landscape here." This is the way Tom and Jane wanted the property to be utilized and thought of. The event allowed old friends time to reminisce, along with making new ones.

Open House Photos by Shane Perfect



naturetrust

Nature Trust is a weekly 3-1/2 minute radio program. The episodes are recorded by Jeff Britton, the show's host, and Jon Gillespie from Monastic Chambers Recording Studios in New Haven, Indiana.

One can catch Jeff's imaginative verbal tour of the natural world on six Indiana stations. Nature Trust went statewide last year and can be heard in six of the seven major markets: Fort

Wayne, Indianapolis, West Lafayette, Muncie, Evansville, and Vincennes - for a total listenership base of approximately 335,000.

In Fort Wayne, you can tune in on WBOI 89.1, Wednesday at 12:35 p.m. during *Day to Day* and Saturday at 9:30 a.m. just before *Car Talk*.

We are looking for a few nature heroes to sponsor Nature Trust episodes. If you would like to do so, please contact ACRES office at 260-637-2273. The radio station provides a mention after each spot to let the listener know who has graciously sponsored each and every one. Each show costs \$30, or you can sponsor a month of 8 spots for just \$160.

Memorials

Robert Griggs

The Dygert Project:

Amanda and Jeremy Adkins

John Brennan and Suzanne Runge

Warren and Mary Fish

Matthew, Catina, Jacob, and Joshua Fish

Herbert and Charlotte Read

Janel Avery Rogers

Philip and Jean Ross

Dean and Thresa Ford



The Dustin Project:

Sonia Alexander

Barbara Barrett

Ethyle Bloch

Izaak Walton League of America, Fort Wayne Chapter

Dr. Elizabeth A. Hoger and Lisa Swem

Frederic and Prudence Widlak

Donald and Darlene Van Zuilen

The Kokiwanee Project:

Briljent, LLC

Joan Karbach

Robert and Betty King

Robert and Nancy Lambert

William and Mary J. Mikulski

Anna Belle Dixon, Tony, Lisa, and Steven Duarte

Michael Walter

Frederic and Prudence Widlak

Donald Eric Wingstrom

For LAMF:

Kurt and Roxanne Bachman

Randy and Peg Baumgartner

Fred Hartz

IDEM - coworkers of Greg

Wes Jehs

Donald and Suellen Mains

Bill and Trudy McNabb

Phillip and Carol Perry

Thomas R. Quick

Ms. H. Patricia Storrer

A. Philmour and Charlotte B. Terwilliger

James Scott and Sara Vanderbeck

William and Lillian Waltz

Ralph and Marilyn Wilt



For much of my life, my sole creative connection to nature has been taking pictures. This summer, though, Andy Goldsworthy, an artist I'd never heard of before, got me outside and playing in the dirt. I encountered him first at my friend Jeff's place. I had picked up a monograph of Goldsworthy's work that Jeff had lying around, and almost before I had fully registered what I was looking at, Jeff pressed a DVD about the guy into my hands. DVDs and their cases are made of plastic and have no soul, but Jeff held this one with the kind of small reverence I normally reserve for my copy of Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree* and old comic books. I got the message.

And this DVD deserved the respect. Goldsworthy's art has to be seen, but what my wife, Catherine, and I sat down to watch was sixty minutes or so of a diminutive, Polartec-layered Scot stacking stones, ice, and leaves into painfully elegant sculptures, often mere hours or moments before they were destroyed by the sun, tide, or gravity. His creations spring out of nature and all hint at a human use—walls, cairns, arches—but at the same time muddle the idea of “use” and “human.” Compared to Goldsworthy's meandering walls, for example, actual, real-world walls end up looking like dull imitations of nature.

When you go outside after experiencing Goldsworthy for the first time, it's not the same. Your perspective shifts. Catherine and I started to see the outside as a place where – well, who knows – we just knew we wanted to start making stuff like that bearded guy in the cool movie. So there we were this summer: out there in the heat with sunscreen, making painfully dreadful structures out of sticks, gravel, and bark. Dreadful but fun, at least.

Unlike Goldsworthy, we didn't have the luxury of a tide or a thaw to destroy our creations and remind us of the ineffable delicacy of life, but our 20-month-old son, Birk, enthusiastically assumed the role of nature-as-destroyer. A couple of those things I made, I wish he'd let stand a little longer, but hey, that's Nature for you: an uncontrollable force.

I would have taken pictures of some of these objects, but one of Catherine's less successful Goldsworthy-inspired projects this summer was to leave my camera outside in the rain. Never let anyone tell you that art can't hurt you. Anyway, if you know Jeff, ask him to lend you his Goldsworthy DVD and then get to work making stuff.

Scott Hill teaches English at Homestead High School and blogs at <http://monkey-squirrel.blogspot.com>.

Photography from the cover of the book Andy Goldsworthy A Collaboration with Nature. published by Abrams Books

ACRES Land Trust
1802 Chapman Rd.
Huntertown, IN 46748-9723

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Fort Wayne, IN
Permit No. 954

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