

THE ACRES QUARTERLY

Spring 2019 | Vol. 58 - No. 1



ACRES
LANDTRUST

ACRES Saves 25 Acres of Elkhart Bog

Safeguarding the Land You Protect

Unexpected Giving

Member Volunteer Sue Diefenbach

2017–2018 Annual Report to Members



From the Executive Director

Wild stonecrop photo by Thomas Sprunger

Dear Members,

Each day is a victory for ACRES. Life thrives on 7,000+ acres of land because you, and members before you, chose to acquire each of these acres. And it is a choice. You choose whether or not to support ACRES, ACRES staff and board choose whether or not to acquire each acre, and after these choices are made, together we choose to honor a commitment of protecting these places forever.

Many nonprofits provide temporary services that are consumed in some way—necessary services that provide a great value. However, I appreciate that ACRES' efforts are durable, accumulate and only get better. The first acres we acquired in 1962 are still supporting life and ever-improving naturally, and sometimes with our help. What we choose to invest in will remain and improve forever. That's unique.

Next year, we will celebrate ACRES' 60th year of preserving places. We'll make some fuss over it, but not as much as many may expect. I think that's due to two reasons: within our "forever" mission, 60 years is a short amount of time, and we tend to celebrate daily.

There is joy in the act of protecting places. We celebrate each time we walk through a nature preserve. We celebrate when we donate, when we volunteer, when we read the *Quarterly*, and when we hear a friend commenting on how nice an ACRES property is and we can say: "I'm part of that!" We celebrate when we take time to reflect on the fact that 7,000 acres are out there right now, thriving in place, because of our choice.

Should we, and will we, celebrate ACRES' first 60 years of effort toward forever? Absolutely. But we certainly aren't forgetting to celebrate our 59th year, and today.

Sincerely,


Jason Kissel

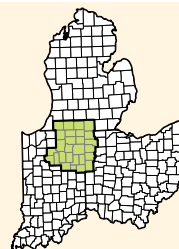
jkissel@acreslandtrust.org
260-637-2273 ext. 2

Cover photo of an orb snail discovered
at Kokiwanee by Thomas Sprunger.



ACRES Land Trust preserves, protects and manages 115 properties totaling 7,094 acres.

You can explore more than 70 miles of trails through forever-protected nature preserves, dawn to dusk, thanks to your member support.



1802 Chapman Road
PO Box 665
Huntertown, IN 46748-0665
260.637.ACRE (2273)
email: acres@acreslandtrust.org
acreslandtrust.org



WELCOME 107newmembers!

John & Molly Adams
Bethany & Scott Anspach
Amy Beck
from Mary Wiegand
John Becker
from Chris Ivancic
Julie Bender
from John & Joann Smith
Shawna Brubaker
Stephen Bryden & Jenn Nickell
Walt & Terry Burgess
from Mary Prater
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Cayot
from James R Crouse
Benjamin & Justine Caywood
James & Debbie Chinworth
James Clarke
from Andrea Clarke
Linda Clock
Darla Davis
Avery Dirr
R. Allen Drake
Eric Duff
Sam Eagleson
from Mystee Eagleson
Margaret & Rick Easton
Kile Egner
from Jake & Sarah Myers
Scott L. Feichter
LeighAnne & Chad Fitzpatrick
Deborah Frisinger
from Jennifer & Michael Straessle
Zac Gabet
from Danielle Johnson
Tracy Gaunt
Michelle & Marke Gerig
Frances R. Goff
Elizabeth & Lincoln Gray
Sarah & Kyle Groves
Hannah Grubb & Jonathon Mendelson
from Brian Grubb
Cindy & Roger Haggenjos
from Linda & Kevin Yant
Pam Harger
Connie & Tristin Houck
Joan Huffine

Teri Jarrette
Mike Kennedy
Nicholas Kessler
George & Becky Kibe
Renee Kingston
David Kirk & Michael Greene
Michael Klotz
Craig Ladwig
from William Harting & Olivia Snyder
Kyle Lahman
from Jeri Kornegay
Tim & Sara Landrum
Jordan Lepper
Justin Liedel
from Michelle Keil
June Manor
Lori Marcum
Austin & Lisa Miller
Megan & Logan Morton
Dr. Michael Mott
from Sandra Mott
Timothy Murphy & Candace Davis Murphy
Roger Newnum
Mary Pat & David Nichols
Laura Oberholtzer
from Mary Ann Oberholtzer
Gary & Lee Ann Oberlin
from Amy Oberlin
Cari & Nicholas Ocock
Sara & Grahame Page
Dennis & Stephani Parzych
Jeanne Pendleton
from Aaron Rom
Linda Raichart
Lucinda & Michael Reeves
Anne Rogers
Mary Gail Savoie
from John Stuber
Peggy Schindler
Joe & April Schultz
from Randy & Carol Roberts
Mark Scott
from Jeanie Rhoades
Tom E. Shearer
Brett Shull & Amy Fry-Miller

Shannon & Jeremy Simmons
Kevin Snyder
Adele Stuerzenberger
Leif Thomas
from Sandy Ferrell
Alyssa & Felix Torres
Pamela Van Zuilen
from Karen Griggs
Mark Vaughan
from Doris Vaughan
Larry & Delilah Watson
Stan & Glenda Whittern
Peggy Wihebrink
Christine Withers
Mark & Kristine Witte
Lawrence & Danielle Yarian
Philip & Sally Yuska
Diane Zumbaugh
Tyler Gault & Douglas Larkey
from Ross Bitzel
Jim Gabbard & Dick & Sue Shankle
from Fred & Mary Anna Feitler
Nick Borland & Lyn Munno
Matt & Erin Borland, Richard & Trish Fanning & Cynthia Waidley
from Janet Kauffman
Carole Koos & Darci Zolman
from Paul & Marla McAfee
Joy & Bobby Lucas, Guy Spriggs & Ashleigh Hardin, Barton Tyner & Barton Tyner Jr.
from Angie Quinn & Steve Nagy
Patrick & Fran Martin,
Torre & Eric Pepple
from Beth & Scott Seiler
Aaron & Anna Miller, Adam & Emily Miller, Ben & Audra Morgan,
Robert & Sharilyn Shearer
from Jim & Mary Shearer
Daniel & Jody McDonough & Family, Jason & Angie Reed & Family
from Suzan Stuckman

new organizations

McMahon's Best-One Tire
& Auto Care
Lifeshouse Church

Many thanks to ACRES members who gave 55 new memberships as gifts during the holidays.
Memorials can be found on page 18.

tributes

John Bremer
from Traci & Joseph Smith
Steve Hammer's retirement
from his friends at First Merchants Bank

Joan Luther
from Larry & Suzanne Rowe
Angie O'Neill
from Alice Kopfer
Ron and Bonnie Stebing
from Sarah & Kyle Groves

Tina Zion & Rebecca Minser
25th anniversary and wedding
from Cindy Lonergan, Conni & Robert Toth

ACQUISITION UPDATE

WITH YOUR SUPPORT ACRES Swiftly (and temporarily) saves 25 acres of Elkhart Bog for DNR

By Lettie Haver, advancement manager

At the request of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Nature Preserves, ACRES used our dedicated acquisition fund for high-priority conservation areas to purchase, at auction, a 25-acre addition to the DNR's Elkhart Bog Nature Preserve. The DNR will reimburse ACRES with funds from the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Fund and take ownership in the near future.

"Unlike our forever-protected nature preserves that we will never sell or transfer, we purchased this property as a transferable land that we'll hold temporarily, in this case, on behalf of a trusted conservation partner," says Jason Kissel, executive director. "We're grateful to our generous donors who make it possible for ACRES to be nimble in acquiring priority land at auction in support of the conservation community."

The DNR owns 166 acres of the Elkhart Bog. Around the bog, an additional 242 privately-owned acres are protected by conservation easements limiting development. The 25 acres recently purchased by ACRES encloses the bog and gives the DNR dry land important to nesting turtles, other wildlife and access.



Photo by Rich Dunbar

This land recently acquired by ACRES has been a DNR high-priority parcel for over 30 years. When it went to auction—unexpectedly, without notice and with only two weeks to put together funding—the state agency turned to ACRES, and we drew from our funds for at-risk purchases.

"ACRES' swift support for the Elkhart Bog helps Hoosiers keep their natural heritage safe," says John Bacone, director, Division of Nature Preserves, Indiana Department of Natural Resources. "We can say with certainty this land was at risk of development, and we're grateful to be able to rely on ACRES."

Elkhart Bog is a large wetland formed in an ox-bow of the glacial predecessor of the St. Joseph River. Over thousands of years, a mat of sedges and sphagnum moss formed across the top of the ox-bow lake, creating a 50-acre floating mat on the water. Today only a small pond of open spatterdock-covered water (referred to as the "eye" of the bog) remains exposed. Many rare plants and animals live in this unique habitat.

The small sliver of bog still unprotected is owned by a conservation-minded neighbor. Although the Elkhart Bog is now closed, the DNR plans, at some point, to provide a boardwalk trail.



A Blue Plate Special: Hoosier Environmental License Plates will protect this land—and more.

Funding that will ultimately protect this portion of the Elkhart Bog comes from the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Fund, funded by sales of Indiana's blue Environmental License Plates. The plates cost \$40 annually, including a \$15 BMV processing fee. The remaining \$25 goes directly toward protection of Indiana's land, waters and wildlife.

Since 1992, these license plates have provided nearly \$4 million to ACRES Land Trust to protect land! Statewide sales of the Environmental License Plate have saved more than 62,000 acres of Indiana's natural heritage.

By displaying Indiana's Environmental "blue plate special" on your car, you're telling people you care about conserving land and you're backing your care with financial support that adds up. When it's time to renew your license plate, help protect land by requesting a Hoosier Environmental License Plate.



ACQUISITION UPDATE

ACRE BY ACRE, ADDING TO PRESERVES *Safeguards the Land You Help Protect*

By Lettie Haver, advancement manager

Nineteen acres added south of Warsaw. Eighteen acres in Wells County. Seventeen acres added to two preserves in Noble County.

ACRES appreciates having—and being—good neighbors, working with our neighbors to expand existing nature preserves through smaller acquisitions.

"Adding to existing preserves will always be an ACRES priority," says Jason Kissel, executive director. "Additions increase protection for the original preserve by expanding habitat or enclosing a natural feature. Adding to the lands that our donors protect reinforces ACRES' promise to protect places forever."

Expanding preserves allows microcosms to stabilize, to grow into larger, more stable ecological communities that better support biodiversity and resist non-native invasive plants. The result is an overall healthier system where animals move freely, larger animals have the room they need to hunt and native plants establish dominance.

For a tangible example, in places like the Cedar Creek Corridor, where decades of neighbor participation have helped ACRES permanently preserve over 1,000 acres, you can see how every acre counts. Where neighbors are willing, and land is not yet developed, ACRES can, in time, expand on our investments, establishing vast swaths of protected land that make a more meaningful positive impact on our natural communities.

While there are many other factors, your investment in preservation goes further when resources focus on protecting property of either existing, or potentially high, natural resource value. ACRES typically calculates this value based first on a property's size: ACRES acquires properties over 25 acres for permanent protection and prioritizes adding on to preserves.

ACRES never pays more than the land's appraised value and often acquires property through bargain sales or donations whereby land donors may receive tax benefit.

Recent neighborly preserve additions are found throughout the organization's 27-county service area:

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

Roger and Carla Wagoner, whose land adjoins ACRES' Wildwood nature preserve south of Warsaw, gave ACRES the opportunity to purchase a 19-acre addition that encloses the preserve's pond and protects the oldest part of the adjacent forest. Funding came from the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Fund, The Conservation Fund and the Kosciusko County Community Foundation.

These lands are being conserved, in part, by funding and technical assistance made available as mitigation for impacts caused by the construction and maintenance of the Reynolds Topeka Electric System Improvement Project in partnership with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

NOBLE COUNTY



When a generous Allen County couple asked how they could help, ACRES offered options from our then current and potential projects. The conservation-minded donors chose to fund the purchase of a 16-acre addition to ACRES' 68-acre Noble County Sauga Swamp, from a preserve neighbor who had been in touch with the organization.

"ACRES values and enjoys pairing donors' interests and goals with high-priority projects," says Jason Kissel. "Being prepared by being aware of potential projects gives us the chance to honor donors' intentions."

ACRES Land Trust also recently accepted the donation of an acre to its 10-acre Tamarack Nature Preserve in Noble County.

WELLS COUNTY

Southwestern Wells County land donor Kristie Fuller recently added 18 acres to the 56-acre Hurb and Frances Fuller Woods preserve, named for her grandfather and father, which she donated in 2017.

"I don't have children," says Fuller about protecting land with ACRES. "I'm the last one on my line. I think my family would have thought this was a good thing to do, to keep the place taken care of in perpetuity, with their names on it."



Photo by Thomas Sprunger

Thank you for making it possible to protect land forever—and to continue adding to it. Your participation tells the community that natural and working lands are worth protecting.

UNEXPECTED GIVING

Dave shares his joy in purposeful giving

by Heather Barth, advancement director

Photo of Little Lake by Thomas Sprunger

Like many ACRES enthusiasts, Dave can't recall exactly how or when he first learned about ACRES. "Likely from a friend," he says. But his reasons for investing in the organization are much clearer: "Nature is the place where I get the most spiritual renewal. It's my cathedral."

Dave also shares that "children and adults alike are missing out on the nurturing nature provides, the way it was intended." When you add that he and his wife enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, it's clear there's a lot about ACRES that Dave enjoys.

"I think and live local. I feel responsible to live in and contribute to my own environment. This is my place, and I'm grateful that ACRES exists, that this land is cherished by others as well as me."

Several months ago Dave called the ACRES office to discuss an opportunity he had to do something really special for the land trust. In 2018, he'd received an unexpected inheritance from an estranged cousin whom Dave had seen only once in adulthood. His cousin's life in California was lonely and challenging, with no support system or close relatives. Dave and other cousins received modest bequests. Dave explained: "I didn't feel excitement about this gift. We didn't know each other; I didn't feel like I deserved it. It didn't feel right to benefit from my cousin's sad death."

"Children and adults alike are missing out on the nurturing nature provides, the way it was intended."

Little Lake



Little Lake

After considering many options, Dave concluded: "Since this isn't my money, it should go someplace where it can do some good." Dave chose charities from which his cousin—if he'd had a support system—likely would have benefited. He also picked a few that were important to him, like ACRES.

It turns out Dave's decision about how to spend this inheritance resulted in far more than its monetary value. "I've experienced so much joy giving away the money. I spent most of the year carefully researching the best ways to give, and it's been a lot of fun. I had no desire to simply

send checks to people. I wanted the experience to be purposeful, something I could identify with."

Dave asked ACRES to invest his gift in the last bit of fundraising needed to acquire Little Lake, just west of Albion, Indiana. He and his wife recently met Heather Barth, advancement director, on site to deliver the check in person and glimpse the special place he is helping permanently protect. "Thank you for allowing me to see and feel the place. I now have a picture in my head that's really valuable to me."

Although happy to share his story, Dave respectfully requests to remain anonymous.

Planned giving can be as easy as listing ACRES as a beneficiary on a life insurance policy. It also includes making a charitable gift during your lifetime, which takes a little more planning and foresight. To learn more about how you can leave a legacy during or after your lifetime, visit acreslandtrust.org/give-now/#acorn.

Center spread by Thomas Sprunger, taken at McNabb-Walter Nature Preserve, south of Spencerville. This 192-acre preserve offers two distinct hikes: north of Davis Road, a short stretch of forested trail with views of the St. Joseph River; on the other side of the road, you'll find a forest blanketed in wildflowers in spring. Here, you see an expanse of Blue Cohosh leaves.



SHARE THE TRAILS HIKES—RSVP TO ATTEND

Free to the public, donations encouraged. These casual, non-interpretive, volunteer-led hikes are easy-going social walks, welcoming new folks to the trails and to ACRES.

Event space is limited. Please register in advance at outreach@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273.

Saturday, April 6, 10 am

STEBEN COUNTY | Robb Hidden Canyon
425 Lane 201, Ball Lake, Hamilton, IN 46742

Beautiful in all seasons, this preserve's spectacular hidden canyon offers a changing wildflower display. What will be blooming in early April? *RSVP by April 3.*

Saturday, May 4, 10 am

NOBLE COUNTY | Edna W. Spurgeon Woodland Reserve
9478 N. 600 W, Ligonier, IN 46767

ACRES' first nature preserve features rolling kames (hills!) and astounding, dense and diverse wildflower displays. *RSVP by May 1.*

JAVA JAUNT

Thursday, May 16, 9 am

HUNTINGTON COUNTY | Pehkokia Woods
1570 Flaxmill Road, Huntington, IN 46750

Join us for a casual hike led by ACRES volunteer Angie O'Neill followed by a "treat yourself" stop for coffee at JJ Java in Huntington.

SWIFT WILDFLOWER WALK

Sunday, May 19, 10 am - 4 pm

WHITLEY AND NOBLE COUNTIES | Evelyn and Wendell Dygert Nature Preserve
4245 N. 50 W, Columbia City, IN 46725

Then to Ralph Gates Nature Preserve (in the DNR Crooked Lake Nature Preserve), Lloyd W. Bender Memorial Forest and Edna W. Spurgeon Woodland Reserve for a total of about six miles, including some hills.

Get moving and breathing in glorious, protected places! ACRES volunteer Janelle will lead fast-paced walks through multiple hilly preserves. This challenging and invigorating walk will introduce you to the preserves. You are welcome to drop to your own pace and leave the hike or the caravan as you need. *RSVP by May 15.*

Can't make it? Or prefer to explore on your own? Thanks to ACRES members, trails are open dawn to dusk daily, at no cost to visitors, to encourage folks to help protect these incredible places. You can find preserve locations, trail information and more at [acreslandtrust.org/preserves](https://www.acreslandtrust.org/preserves). See brief notes on wildflower displays on page 14.

ACRES members, you're encouraged to bring friends and family to members-only events.



Spring beauty by Bill Bloch, founding member



A nurse log in Spurgeon by John Jay Smith



Trillium by Staff

EVENTS, OUTINGS AND MEMBER HIKES

MEMBERS-ONLY ASHERWOOD MAPLE SYRUP MAKING & PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Saturday, March 16, 9 am - noon

WABASH COUNTY | Asherwood Environmental Center
7496 W SR 124, Wabash, IN 46992

Can you smell warm pancakes and fresh-made syrup? Feel the winter woods' cool, crisp air on your cheek? It's sugar bush season! You're invited to breakfast and a guided tour of ACRES' maple sugaring operation.

Presented by Jason Kissel.

No reservations required. \$5/person, children under 5 free. Come early and/or stay late and explore this incredible place your membership helps protect.

MEMBERS-ONLY VISIT TO PEACE FARM

Friday, March 29, 1-3 pm

WELLS COUNTY | Peace Farm (closed preserve; RSVP for address)

Here's your chance to visit a closed preserve! We'll stroll through prairie and beautiful open woods, and visit with the donor of Peace Farm, Jann Prince. Our pal Betsy from Little River Wetlands Project will be on hand to help us keep an eye out for salamanders. Space is limited. *RSVP for location to hbarth@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273.*

WATERSHED PRESENTATION & HIKE

Co-hosted by Ecosystems Connections Institute and Kosciusko County Soil and Water Conservation District

Saturday, April 13, 10 am - noon

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY | Wildwood
409 E. SR 14, Silver Lake, IN 46982

Enjoy a brief slideshow on watersheds, then explore the watershed boundary line between Nelson and Swank creeks. We hope it will be raining! Cookout afterwards.

Presented by Casey Jones.

LISTENING SESSION | ACRES 2020

Thursday, April 18, 5:30 pm

ALLEN COUNTY | Tom and Jane Dustin Nature Preserve
1802 Chapman Road, Hometown, Indiana 46748

Bring your ideas, concerns, questions, suggestions and direction to help inform ACRES' next strategic plan, launching in 2020. See page 18 for notes. *Hosted by Jason Kissel and Steve Hammer, board chair.*

WING HAVEN ADOPT-A-TREE SPRING FESTIVAL

Saturday, April 20, 1-4 pm

STEBEN COUNTY | Wing Haven
180 W. 400 N, Angola, IN 46703

Celebrate the wonders of Wing Haven! Explore the preserve, visit the former studio of land donor and working artist Helen Swenson and view our newest 200 Year Ecological Reflections art by Hannah Burnworth.

GREAT AMERICAN CLEANUP

Saturday, May 4, 10 am

ALLEN COUNTY | Mengerson Nature Reserve
5895 Stellhorn Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46815

Celebrate the volunteer spirit and support the preservation of this high-foot-traffic, urban, forested wetland. We'll pick up garbage and debris, sharing in Fort Wayne's city-wide efforts. Gloves provided.

Spring Hikes & Events Listings continue on page 14.



Photo by John Raub



SPRING HIKES & events

ACRES events are held rain or shine. Preserve maps available online at acreslandtrust.org/preserves



Trillium



Bloodroot by Thomas Sprunger



Wild geranium

EVENTS, OUTINGS AND MEMBER HIKES (continued from page 13)

MEMBERS-ONLY WILDFLOWER HIKES

Bring a Friend!

Saturday, April 27, 10 am

NOBLE COUNTY | Edna W. Spurgeon Woodland Reserve
9478 N 600 W, Ligonier, IN 46767

Explore 65 acres of state-dedicated nature preserve to learn about a variety of spring wildflowers. This is a great way to introduce others to ACRES, so don't forget to bring a friend! Hosted by Tony Fleming and John J. Smith. RSVP to hbarth@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273.

Saturday, May 4, 2 pm

WABASH COUNTY | Kokiwanee
5825 E. 50 S, Lagro, IN 46941

This is another great way to introduce others to ACRES, so don't forget to bring a friend! Hosted by Dave Hicks. RSVP to hbarth@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273.

Notes for Spring Wildflower Wandering

Weather depending, wildflowers typically peak near May 1 in the middle latitude of our region, near Huntertown. This means displays are most abundant at this time; times will vary and be earlier south, and later, north. Displays will change each week, beginning as early as March with skunk cabbage, and ending as tree leaves emerge, hiding sunlight from the forest floor in June. Hike early and often to spot harbinger of spring, spring beauties, bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, trilliums, wild geranium and so many more.



Harbinger of spring



Skunk cabbage



Dutchman's breeches
by Thomas Sprunger

3RD ANNUAL BIRD BLITZ, JUNE 2-8, 2019

Backyard birders and beginners welcome!

Celebrate the preserves and have fun helping ACRES track bird species.



3RD ANNUAL BIRD BLITZ

Sunday, June 2 to Saturday, June 8

Explore any open ACRES property between dawn and dusk and make note of each bird species you see/hear. Count as an individual or as a team.

Registration is \$2 per person and includes a sticker designed by Adam Johnson of Yonder Clothing Co. Registrants will receive an email with instructions on how to enter your birding data into **ebird**, an online citizen science bird tracking tool. After Bird Blitz, we'll mail your sticker and a final tally.

Register online at acreslandtrust.org/birdblitz or by phone at 260-637-2273.

NEW FOR 2019

New to birding? Learn with a birder! Join local Audubon chapter-led Bird Blitz outings:

TIPPECANOE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Sunday, June 2, 5:30 am

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY | Wildwood
409 E. SR 14, Silver Lake, IN 46982

Presented by Casey Jones.

STOCKBRIDGE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Thursday, June 6, 10 am

ALLEN COUNTY | Fogwell Forest
9630 Whippoorwill Dr, Fort Wayne, IN 46809

Presented by Ed and Cynthia Powers.

MISSISSINewa AUDUBON CLUB

Saturday, June 8, 9 am

WABASH COUNTY | Asherwood
7496 W. SR 124, Wabash, IN 46992

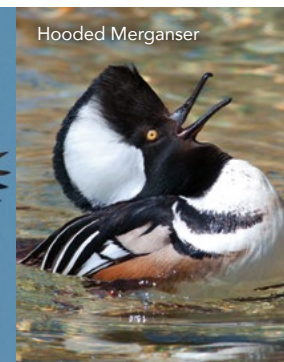
ROBERT COOPER and SOUTH BEND-ELKHART AUDUBON SOCIETIES

*pending at the time of publication.

*Event details will be published online at acreslandtrust.org/birdblitz.



Sandhill Crane



Hooded Merganser



Rose Breasted Grosbeak

Photos by Dave Fox

ACRES Land Trust 15



Sue Diefenbach, pictured with her husband Al, served as ACRES' recording secretary for the past 12 years, attending 71 board meetings and recording minutes.

Member Volunteer Profile: Sue Diefenbach

By Jason Kissel

"I feel like I've made a difference, and it's been fun," said Sue Diefenbach, reflecting on serving as ACRES' recording secretary for the past 12 years. Prior to retiring from her volunteer position at the end of 2018, Sue attended 71 board meetings, taking minutes and producing a near transcript of all conversations. New board members quickly learned that when they chose to speak at a board meeting, Sue would capture their comments for posterity!

Sue admits it wasn't all fun: long strategic planning sessions weren't always her preferred way to spend a Saturday. The three or four hours after board meetings revising and putting together minutes and narrative reports could be tedious at times, and sometimes it was hard to hold her tongue during meetings! But outweighing these negatives were the rewards: being able to document 12 years of history for the organization, seeing its growth and witnessing a string of new people providing leadership as they honored the intent of those who served before.

Sue and her husband, Al, live across the road from ACRES' office, the former home of founders Tom and Jane Dustin. They have many fond memories of time spent with the Dustins—hiking, sharing meals, playing games. "We feel so lucky living next to ACRES. We can still walk down the driveway and into the Dustins' home. We can walk down their trails and help continue their dream. ACRES allows us to continue that relationship even now that they're gone."

Thank you, Sue, for being a great recording secretary, and for continuing to be a great neighbor, member and friend.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sue Diefenbach
Recording Secretary

ACRES RECORDING SECRETARIES AND LENGTH OF SERVICE

Sue Diefenbach
2006–2018

Frannie Headings
Recording Secretary
1993–2005

Marion Eberhardt
1976–1993

Jane Dustin
founding member
1960–1976



Tom and Jane Dustin with Tim Diefenbach on the occasion of his high school graduation. As neighbors for decades and co-founders of ACRES, Sue says the families shared not only the work and joys of land preservation, but a life together.

JULY 1, 2017 – JUNE 30, 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

ACQUISITION

PROPERTY	ACRES	COUNTY	DESCRIPTION
Dunlap Woods	14	Williams (OH)	Forest
Preston Island	23	Defiance (OH)	Forested island, Maumee River
Black Swamp Audubon Sanctuary	73	Paulding (OH)	Forest, meadow, Maumee River frontage
2 Founders Forest additions	76	Allen (IN)	Agricultural fields, forest edge
Grass Lake	102	LaGrange (IN)	Rare marl flat, largest of record in Indiana
Little Lake	24	Noble (IN)	Lake, wetlands, forest
Wildwood addition	19	Kosciusko (IN)	Pond, forest

TOTAL ACQUIRED 331 acres

MANAGEMENT | (Calendar year 2018) In the Cedar Creek Corridor, ACRES staff and interns spent 495 hours, walking 243 miles, fighting non-native invasive species, spraying 27 gallons of herbicide across 554 acres in 174 visits.

PEOPLE | 277 new members joined during this fiscal year. ACRES hosted 70+ hikes and events, engaging 1,000 people, inspiring them to protect the places they love. 800 new people followed us on Facebook, helping expand our reach to new audiences. 54 volunteers reported 900 hours of service, but we're certain there's more that goes unreported. We estimate that more than 150 volunteers provided 2,500 hours of service, a value of \$61,725.

MILESTONES | We celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Nature Preserve Act, written by founding member James Barrett. We completed the \$1 million Bicentennial Nature Trust Cedar Creek Corridor project, leveraging \$1 million to protect \$3 million in appraised land. We launched our 2018-2019 strategic plan to evaluate all aspects of the organization.

YOUR INVESTMENT: FINANCIAL REPORT

NET WORTH

Value of Nature Preserves	\$24,274,000
Bank Accounts	\$1,318,000*
Equipment	\$209,000
Investments & Endowment	\$5,080,000

TOTAL \$30,881,000

*\$500,000 is restricted as a self-loaning account for new acquisitions.

ACRES has no long-term liabilities.

REVENUE / EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Revenues	\$1,665,000
Expenditures	\$770,000**

NET REVENUE \$895,000

**By accounting standards, cost to purchase land is considered a 'transfer of an asset' and cannot be shown here as an expenditure.

SAVE THE DATE!

OCTOBER

20

ACRES Annual Member Meeting and Picnic
Sunday, October 20, 1 pm

FALL

TBD

ACRES Volunteer Appreciation Brunch
Date TBD Fall

ACRES AT THE HOME & GARDEN SHOW

Thursday, February 28 – Sunday, March 3

ALLEN COUNTY War Memorial Coliseum

Will you come by our booth in the Garden Center to say hello and happy birthday? On March 2, our organization marks 59 years of service!

Your friends and neighbors can become ACRES members at the Home and Garden Show and enjoy their choice of a complimentary Preserve Guide, ACRES stainless steel water bottle or an ACRES water bottle sling as a part of our birthday celebration. Here's to 59 years into forever. Happy trails!



LISTENING SESSION NOTES

To see clearly, we need to hear from you.

“Have you ever considered...?” “I wish ACRES would do more...” “I have an idea...”

“Is it possible you could do more of...if you did...?” “What if...?”

ACRES wants to hear from you about what potential you see in our work. It's difficult for us to view our work with fresh eyes. Our current strategic plan challenges us to question everything. Your feedback and questions help us see our work anew and generate opportunities and solutions.

Will you join our April 18 Listening Session?

See page 13 for details.

You can submit questions in advance or participate solely by email:

jkissel@acreslandtrust.org.

memorials

Jacob Feichter

from JoAnn Abramow, Wayne Beer, Holly & Thomas Bill, Sue, Rach & Lucy Bisig, Donald Dager, John & Cheryl Fiene, Mitch Harper & Dawn Wilson, Rolla & Patricia Harris, John T. Hay Jr. & Mary Lou Hay, Julie & Kevin Kinsey, Judy & Gary Koontz, Dennis & Mary Liechty, Phyllis Montgomery, Deborah Nutt, Lisa & Steve Poole, Janice Randall, Thomas Rayl, Rodger & Irene Sarrazin, Catharine Schmitt, Karl & Judy Schroff, Jim & Betty Speed, Ed Tobey & William & Cecilia Weakley

Jacob & Lucille Feichter

from David & Faith Van Gilder

Ed Eberhardt

from Mary Gynn

Alice Frantz

from Jeannette M. Lahman, Sandra Mitting & Sally Welborn

Pat Heemstra

from David & Faith Van Gilder

Harry Hummel

from Kathryn A. Bloom

Everitt Padgitt

from Ken Millikan

Evan Pauly

from Julia Buetel & Brian Headings, Willard & Nina Clark, Douglas & Aimee Davis, Bill Jensen, Rachel Welch, Tom Pauly, Brian & Geana Rockwell

Florence Pauly

from Evelyn Pauly, George Pauly, Tom Pauly

Susan Barnes Schlemmer

from Cal, Ken and Marta Schlemmer; Jon & Lori Schlemmer; Mike & Jody Schlemmer, Sam & Donna Hutton

Vivian Shire

from anonymous, Carolyn Davis, Sandy Ferrell, Pablo Gonzalez, Jeanie Herold & Michael Biesiada, Alyce Hughes, Thomas & Rita Rae Koerner, Connie Long, Nancy McKelvey, Cynthia & Jim Rich, John Shire, Gerald Warfel & Norma Warren

Matthew Shumaker

from Suzanne K. Dunn

Phillip R. Smith

from Karen Eames

Shawn Stiver

from John Stiver

Mrs. Phyllis Stumpf

from Richard M. Lunz, Don & Deb Tinker, Terry Stumpf

Dan Thiel

from Denise & Mark Cleveland, Ann Marie Wallace

Eugene Winicker

from Michael & Laura Dauscher

Preserve Stewards, Caretakers, Trail Monitors
Walter H. and E. Marie Myers Flowers Creek Tire cleanup volunteers

Founders Forest Work Day volunteers

Preserve Play Day volunteers

Share the Trails Hike Leader volunteers

Year-end annual fundraising mailing volunteers

Anonymous
Donation of bird seed/suet

Craig Bobay, Terry Bobay
Bench materials and construction

Tim Brauch, Patrick Ewing, Chris Fairfield,
Angie Quinn, Audra Widmann, Phillip Wright
Autumn Olive Workday at Dustin

Dave Brumm, Mary Campbell, Laura Colpitts,
Kris Connerly, Joe and Nancy Conrad,
Norm Cox, Jodie Frecker, Barb & Terri Gorney,
Jim Haddock, Tedra Hemingway, Sandra Lamp,
Mark Maffey, Jill Noyes, Shane Perfect, Pam &
Jay Sagers, Jim Shearer, Ginny Simerman,
Nellie Jean Wendell

Winter Q stuffing and distribution

Dave Brumm, Keith Pomeroy
Repairs, maintenance at ACRES office

DeRozier's Bakery
Donuts for tire cleanup day

Chris Fairfield
Orion Woods cleanup

Jeri Kornegay, Lyn Winchell
Kitchen supplies and coffee

McMahon's Best-One Tire & Auto Care
Tire removal and disposal for tire cleanup day

Roger McNett
Postage stamps

Kathy Zack
Rotary sander

wish list

Order from ACRES' Amazon Wish List: Under "Find a List or Registry," search for "ACRES Land Trust" or request a link at acres@acreslandtrust.org.

Coffee

Paper

Compostable cups, plates, bowls
and dinnerware (no Styrofoam, please)

Snacks for outings

Gas cards

DIRECTORS: Steven Hammer, President; Dawn Ritchie, Vice President; Joe Conrad, Vice President; David Schnepf, Treasurer; Angie Quinn, Secretary; Norm Cox, Connie Haas Zuber, Bob Hake, Ashley Motia, Marc Levy, Stan Moore, Carol Roberts, Janel Rogers, Wayne Shive, Jerry Sweeten and David Van Gilder.

STAFF: Jason Kissel, Executive Director; Heather Barth, Director of Advancement; Matt Dunno, Land Management Specialist; Lettie Haver, Advancement Manager; Evan Hill, Land Management Specialist; Casey Jones, Director of Land Management and Natasha Manor, Office and Volunteer Manager.

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ACRES Land Trust
1802 Chapman Road
PO Box 665
Huntertown, IN 46748

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers today;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
All simply in the springing of the year.

– *from “A Prayer in Spring”*
by Robert Frost

Toadshade or trillium sessile,
photo by Thomas Sprunger

Weather depending, wildflowers typically peak near May 1 in the middle latitude of our region, near Huntertown. This means displays are most abundant at this time; times will vary and be earlier south, and later, north. Displays will change each week, beginning as early as March with snow trilliums and ending as tree leaves emerge, hiding sunlight from the forest floor in June. Hike early and often to spot harbinger of spring, spring beauties, bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, trilliums, wild geranium and so many more.

See pages 12 - 14 for spring outings, or explore the preserves on your own. Trails open dawn to dusk daily, thanks to your member support.



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