



Preserving Nature in the Heart of Indiana

Central Indiana Land Trust Incorporated News

Heritage Circle Visit to Burr Oak Bend

by Connie Douglas (Board Member)



Who would have thought there would be so many hardy souls who might enjoy tramping through harvested corn fields, crawling under and over fallen trees and sliding along a river bank on a raw, sunless November 17? CILTI did!

The Board thought there would be those hardy souls and extended an invitation to Heritage Circle contributors to visit Burr Oak Bend, 52 acres of mostly farm field in Hamilton County.

All were caught up in Board Member Tom Swinford's expert and enthusiastic guided tour of CILTI's newest acquisition. He stood beside a humongous piece of earth plowing equipment that would begin the first step toward restoring the agricultural field into native forest and

prairie. He shared the vision of the restoration project that would provide habitat for land creatures and a healthier White River habitat for water creatures.

Great Blue Herons are already enjoying the comforts of the land on the bend and were spotted flying toward the trees along the river.



Photo by Rob Rutledge

Randy Lewis, another expert board member, donned his waders and ventured out into the 40-degree waters of the White River placing and dragging a seine. The assembled group watched expectantly for what his large net might capture. And here's another "who would have thought"

--- Randy reached into the net to hold in his hand a bright green fish about 3 inches long, and let's repeat ---bright green ---such a contrast between that Greenside Darter's color and the gray day.

Not as colorful and not even alive were two mussels he picked from the net, a Hickory Nut and an Elktoe. Unfortunately, the exotic Asian Clam was sighted as well. How's that for names most of us have never heard?

Hot chocolate, hot apple cider and brownies sent the group off satiated and eager to follow the restoration process and maybe even help.

Long live mussels!
and Darters! and yes,
Great Blue Herons!
and volunteers!
and....



*Preserving Nature
in the Heart
of Indiana*

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President's Message



This is the time of year when I want to believe that all my wishes really can come true. What am I wishing? I'm wishing some of you will become land stewards for CILTI.

My husband, Rob and I were stewards several years ago and our private visits to the property made it feel like our very own. I loved that. Some friends of ours were property stewards and they invited Rob and I to go pull some exotics, take a hike and have a picnic lunch. It was a great outing. As we ate our picnic lunch on the rocks overlooking a valley, we watched an Eastern Phoebe feeding young on the nest.

So what is involved? A steward is a volunteer who commits to visit their CILTI property at least twice during each year and submits a report after each visit. We have properties in Marion, Johnson, Hendricks, Sullivan, Ripley, Morgan, and Hamilton counties. Being a steward gives you a reason to postpone raking the leaves, mowing the lawn, doing the laundry and instead go for a drive in the country. Take your friends, take your kids but most of all take yourself to visit the land.

If you are interested, you can call or email our office at 317-631-LAND or landtrust@cilti.org. Pick your preserve and get back to nature.

I'm also wishing for some material items for CILTI.

When we have outreach events, we have borrowed a folding table. It would be great to have our own. If you have one sitting in your garage or spare bedroom and haven't used it in six years, think about giving it to CILTI. We will take it to some great natural areas.

More and more often, we find a laptop would be really useful. Marissa has generously used her laptop for many of our needs but it would be great if we had our own. So that is also on the wish list.

As you think of year end giving, keep CILTI in mind. We have four land deals that keep teetering back and forth but when they happen, the owners will want us to pay them money for their land before they will give us title to it. (That really is how it works.) So, write a check for our general fund, for land or for our office and salary expenses. But do write it.

Finally, think about giving CILTI as a gift to friends, relatives, neighbors etc. There is a note in this issue on that topic and I just want to say that you don't have to worry about a gift membership in CILTI not fitting or being the wrong color. Best of all, you are offering someone else a chance to help save land in their own backyard. You get to do that through your membership in CILTI. Share that experience. By the way, you have protected 111 acres this year. Great job! How does it feel?

Reta B. Rutledge
President of the Board





Bloodroot Photo by Bob Kirkpatrick

**CONSERVATION EASEMENTS -
A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO
PRESERVING NATURE**

by J. William DuMond

Would you like to permanently protect your property as a nature preserve free from future development, while continuing to own and enjoy the land? If so, then a conservation easement may be ideal for you. Donors of conservation easements to qualified not-for-profit organizations may also be eligible for significant tax benefits. The Nature Conservancy, federal and state conservation agencies and hundreds of land trusts across the country have effectively protected tens of thousands of acres of land from future development by means of conservation easements. Many states, including Indiana, have adopted the Model Conservation Easement Act, thereby giving legislative recognition to this important tool for land preservation.

A conservation easement, like an easement, is a legally enforceable interest in land, created by an easement agreement between the landowner and the recipient of the easement. Conservation easements typically restrict and prohibit future development of the affected property, but the terms are negotiated and tailored to the unique qualities of the particular property and the desires of the property owner and the easement recipient.

Thus, for example, the landowner and the easement recipient might agree that current uses of a particular property on which a conservation easement is to be granted may continue, such as agricultural uses and maintenance of existing structures and other improvements, but that undeveloped portions of the land would remain completely undeveloped.

Alternatively, the parties might conclude

that all residential and commercial uses of the land must cease and that the land should be allowed to revert fully to its natural state. Similarly, landowners and recipients of conservation easements may negotiate reserved uses of the land by the landowner, such as hunting, fishing and camping uses, or specify in the easement agreement that these and other uses are prohibited.

Moreover, a conservation easement may or may not include access to the property by the general public. Although many provisions in conservation easement agreements have become somewhat standardized, each agreement is unique based on the special circumstances of the parties, the land in question and the parties negotiations.

If the conservation easement is donated to a qualified not-for-profit organization, such as the Central Indiana Land Trust Incorporated (CILTI), the gift may qualify as a charitable gift for federal income tax purposes.

Under the IRS regulations, the easement grant must also be in perpetuity (never ending) and exclusively for conservation purposes. Conservation purposes include one or more of the following: (1) preservation of land for outdoor recreation by or education of the general public; (2) preservation of natural habitats of fish, wildlife, or plants and similar ecosystems; and (3) preservation of open space, including farm land and forest land for the scenic enjoyment

Continued on page 6

*A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself.
Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the
air and giving fresh strength to our people."
- President Franklin Roosevelt*



Executive Director's Column

As the holiday season approaches and we begin to gather with family and friends, there is likely to be a moment or two of reflection amidst all of the hustle and bustle. I often find myself stopping around this time of year to step back from the traffic jams and crowded stores to remind myself of what is truly important to my sense of happiness and well being. Inevitably I come to realize that the opportunity for directly connecting with the natural world around me finds its way to the top of my list.

There are numerous reasons that people feel a need to relate to nature, and countless ways in which people benefit from developing a connection to a special place.

Often these connections are made subconsciously. The way the air feels on a cold winter day, the smell of the ground during a spring thaw, the way the morning sun illuminates a forest with golden light, the sound of dried leaves under your feet, a field changing colors with the seasons---these are the things that become embedded in our memories. When the world around us becomes hectic and full of challenges, isn't it nice to know that these places can be preserved forever?

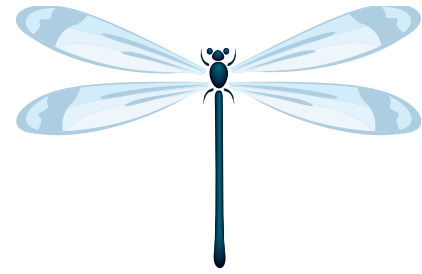


As you gather this season to rejoice and celebrate, I encourage you to also take the time to think about how important it really is to occasionally reconnect with your natural surroundings. Take the time... to drive away from the shopping malls and busy streets and celebrate the season by taking a walk on a forgotten trail, or watching a hawk soaring overhead against a winter sky.

We at the Central Indiana Land Trust will continue to work towards preserving important natural places for you, and we hope that you will continue to support us through the years with your contributions of time and resources.

Thank you all for your generous support this past year. Happy holidays!

Marissa Codey
Executive Director



IN MEMORY

Memorial contributions to Central Indiana Land Trust Incorporated are lasting tributes that preserve natural areas for generations to come in the name of very special people. CILTI is privileged to carry on its mission in their names.

In Remembrance of

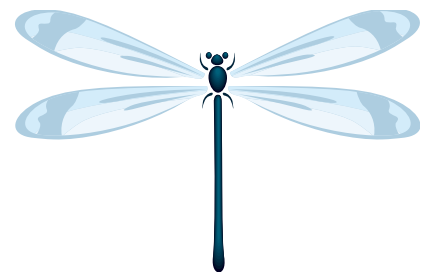
Harley Hovarter
By Lois M. Hovarter
Karen and James Williamson
Kathryn and Daniel Novak
Jayne, John and Daniel Langan

Irving Cohen, M.D.
By Paul Dooley and Mary Wollitz-Dooley

IN HONOR

Contributions to CILTI have also been made to celebrate special occasions or to honor special persons.

Such donations support preservation of habitat for native flora and fauna here in the heartland.



Holiday Gift Giving: Consider purchasing a bit of nature



Ever think about how much gift wrap, not to mention gifts themselves eventually end up in a landfill? You could save land instead through a membership in Central Indiana Land Trust. It's a gift not only for your direct recipient, but also for trees, birds, amphibians and wildflowers right here in Central Indiana. The critters and the planet will also thank you!

For \$25 you can give someone a year's membership in CILTI. Plants and animals get to keep their homes and your recipient derives all the benefits of membership: You'll save Central Indiana from bulldozers and save land for generations to come.

- ◆ Invitations to seasonal guided nature walks on CILTI properties.
- ◆ Opportunities to enjoy slide presentations and other nature related programs at CILTI's annual meeting and other events.
- ◆ CILTI's quarterly newsletter, keeping members informed of land acquisition, stewardship, and other events.
- ◆ Pride in knowing your gift is protecting much needed habitat for native plants and wildlife.

We'll send an attractive announcement to the recipient informing them that they have been given membership in Central Indiana Land Trust Inc. through your generosity.

Simply complete the form below and return it with your **check**



324 West Morris St
Suite 210
Indianapolis, IN 46225

Gift Membership Order Form

Please start a membership in CILTI for:

Name _____
(As you would like it to appear on acknowledgment)

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

~~~~~  
This gift is from:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(As you would like it to appear on acknowledgment)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

of the public, or pursuant to an adopted governmental policy.

Obviously, when a landowner legally gives up significant development and other commercial rights to property by granting a conservation easement, he or she is giving away a significant part of the value of the property. Accordingly, assuming all IRS requirements are satisfied, the amount of the charitable tax deduction is equal to the difference in the fair market value of the property without a conservation easement and the fair market value of the property with the conservation easement, as determined by a qualified independent appraiser.

Besides federal income tax benefits, conservation easement donations may sometimes be a tool for reducing estate and property taxes. A landowner wishing to realize tax savings by donating a conservation easement should seek qualified tax and legal advice.

Conservation easement agreements are recorded in the Records Office of the county in which the land is located, thereby giving notice to any future owners of the land (or any other holder of an interest in the land, such as a mortgagee) that use of the land is restricted in accordance with the conservation easement agreement. Once recorded, the conservation easement generally takes precedence over any future ownership interest that is inconsistent with the conservation easement.

Conservation easements are legally binding and the recipient of a conservation easement should be an organization, such as CILTI, that has the capability and determination to enforce it, if necessary, against the grantor and all future owners of the property in question. The qualified recipient of the conservation easement will periodically inspect the conservation easement property for purposes of monitoring and enforcing compliance.

Because monitoring and enforcing compliance with conservation easements is such an important and permanent responsibility, CILTI and other land trusts must take care not to accept conservation easements that do not provide real conservation benefits, or that are likely to be impractical to enforce. In addition, monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements require time and



money. For this reason, land trusts typically ask conservation easement donors to contribute cash to an endowment fund intended to support future monitoring and enforcement activities.

If you or someone you know would like to preserve land by means of a gift of a conservation easement, please contact the CILTI office for more information (317-631-LAND).



## **CILTI needs your help!**

If you have some free time and are willing to help out in our office, please give us a call at 631-5263. We are currently looking for someone to re-organize and update our land stewardship files.

If you have other volunteer interests, please let us know and we will try to find an opportunity that works for you!

# A Miracle Comes Through Indiana

It seems nothing short of a miracle: Whooping Cranes in Indiana. A miracle because these magnificent birds were on the very brink of extinction, reduced to a mere 15 birds on the whole continent in 1941. The regal black and white cranes lost wetland habitat due to development and their numbers plummeted from thousands over most of North America to two small flocks by 1938, one of which was decimated by a storm.



A juvenile Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*) takes flight departing Boone Co. the morning of Nov. 7, 2002. Photo by permission of Operation Migration Inc.

Now, through remarkable work over decades by very dedicated professionals and volunteers, captive bred Whoopers are being reintroduced into the wild. They are then taught a migration route by following an ultralight whose pilot is dressed in a crane costume. Their journey of over 1200 miles takes them from Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin, to wintering grounds in Florida, with vital stops in Indiana.

Earlier this month the elegant birds visited central Indiana, touching down in Boone County and migrating through Hendricks and Morgan Counties. For two to four weeks Operation Migration, the non-profit group that leads the Whoopers, will guide the endangered birds toward Chassahowitzka Wildlife Refuge in Florida. Out of over four hundred possible landing sites identified by a NASA computer about three dozen were selected, including the Indiana touchdown sites. Natural sources of food, water, and safe resting space are sought en route, preferably in areas remote from humans.

For inspiring photographs and documentary of the birds in their southward migration, as well as information about the Operation Migration team and this epic experiment visit their website: [www.operationmigration.org](http://www.operationmigration.org) Operation Migration (OM) is a non-profit in need of funding for this and the next three years of flights.

P.S. The Whooping cranes are home for holidays, the 16 birds that passed over Indiana touched down for winter at a refuge in Florida on December the 3th 2002.

by Mary Wollitz-Dooley



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in the Heart of Indiana*

Return Service Requested

324 West Morris St  
Suite 210  
Indianapolis, IN 46225

www.cilti.org

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**I want to help save irreplaceable open spaces in Central Indiana!  
Enclosed is my membership contribution to Central Indiana Land Trust Incorporated.**

**Membership Level**

- \$25
- \$50
- Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Heritage Circle**

- \$100
- \$250
- Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- I want to volunteer. Please contact me!
- I wish to give a gift membership
- Please send information about estate planning

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(as you would like it to appear in the Annual Report)

Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
(day) (evening)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make your check payable to CILTI. Your donation is tax deductible as permitted by law.  
Mail to: CILTI 324 W. Morris Street, Suite 210, Indianapolis, IN 46225 Thank You!*