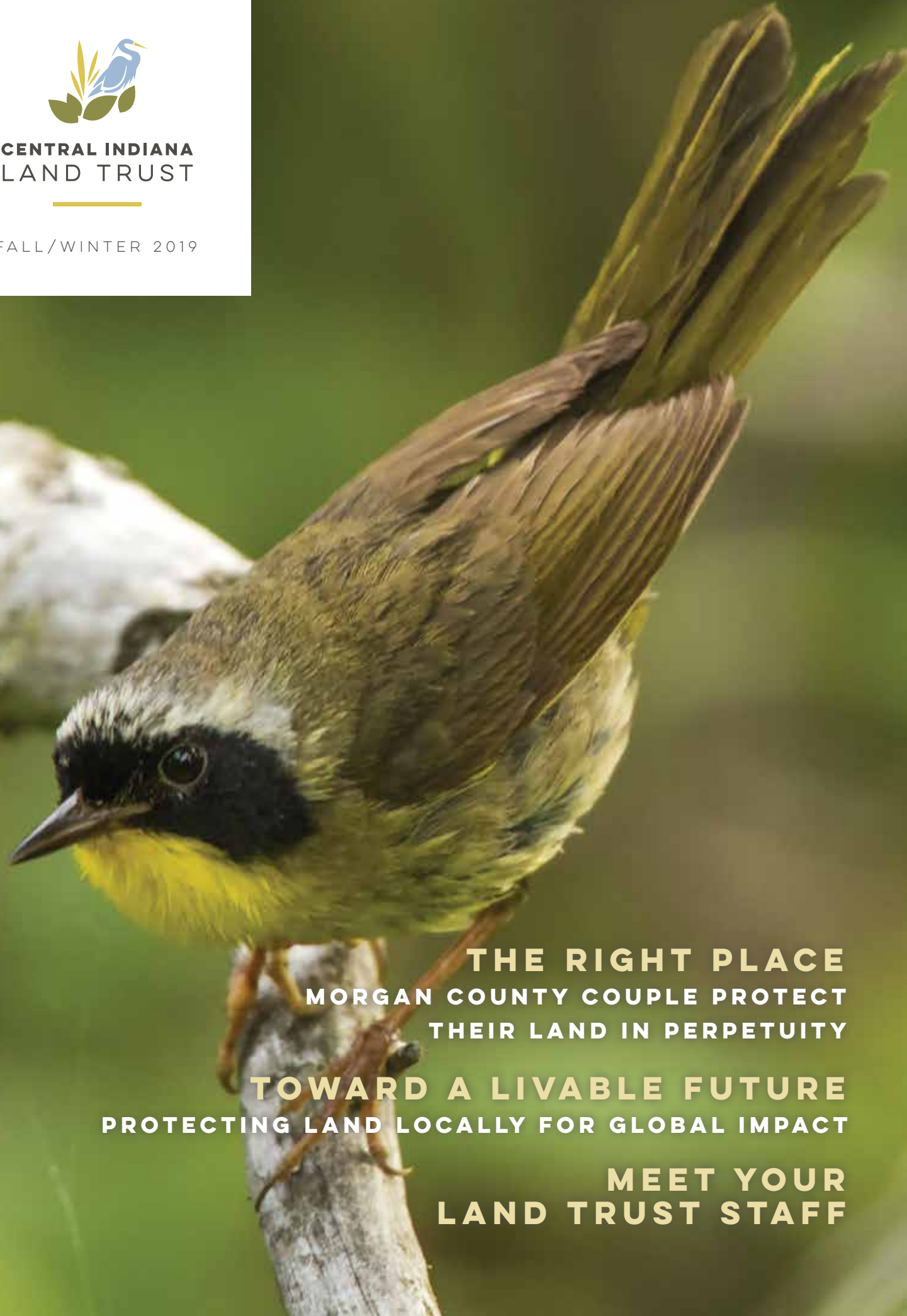




**CENTRAL INDIANA
LAND TRUST**

FALL/WINTER 2019



THE RIGHT PLACE
MORGAN COUNTY COUPLE PROTECT
THEIR LAND IN PERPETUITY

TOWARD A LIVABLE FUTURE
PROTECTING LAND LOCALLY FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

MEET YOUR
LAND TRUST STAFF



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FROM THE LEADERSHIP

As I'm sitting down to write this letter, the radio, television, internet and social media airwaves are ablaze with breaking news. It seems in 2019, whenever there is big news, lines are quickly drawn in the sand with differing sides quickly finding opposing corners, each ready to argue with the other. Among the big news stories bombarding eyes and ears is one that is just not going away. It involves climate change.



Cliff Chapman

Those two words, climate change, can also send people to opposite sides of an argument. They don't need to. We are living in a changing climate—there is no doubt about it. The question is: What can we do? Can we make a difference?

Here's the thing: We can do many things to make a difference, and at the Central Indiana Land Trust, we have a role to play. Can we, as a regional land trust, stop climate change? No. Can you, as an individual, stop climate change? No. Can we, together, play an important role in mitigating the effects of climate change? Absolutely.

Our strategic conservation plan outlines areas of critical land protection and restoration. Our intention is to plant over a million trees in these areas. Every single one of those trees will make a positive impact on our planet's future. That same plan calls for thousands of acres of forest, wetland and prairie to be protected. Every acre protected will make a positive impact on our climate and our future.

If you have friends on the coasts who like to make fun of Indiana, tell them this: Our land is incredibly productive and relatively inexpensive—and when a nature preserve has been protected here, not one has ever been destroyed. If you are looking for a place to invest in protecting and planting forests to cool a warming planet and help save our coastlines, I can think of no better place than our home state.

That's because forests across the country sequester carbon at different rates—and the forest types, climate and soil in Indiana (and parts of our neighboring states) are very efficient at scrubbing carbon from the air. This is why we need your continued support.

As this issue of the newsletter goes to press, I head to the annual Natural Areas Conference in Pittsburgh, wrapping up my final year as board president of the Natural Areas Association. I'll be networking with hundreds of conservation professionals from across the country.

Knowing that my colleagues from around the country are working together on these critical issues gives me great hope for the future. So does knowing that we have the support of so many here at home.

So, let's do it. Let's work together to create some good news that everyone can rally around.

Cliff Chapman
Executive Director

ON THE COVER:
Common Yellowthroat





WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY...

...TO MAKE A GIFT THAT
LASTS FOR CONSERVATION
IN CENTRAL INDIANA.

By including the Central Indiana Land Trust in your will, your passion for nature serves as a legacy for generations to come.

The Burr Oak Society was established in recognition of CILTI's donors who have created such a legacy. If you have made a provision for the Central Indiana Land Trust in your will or trust, please let us know so we can include you as a member of the Burr Oak Society and thank you during your lifetime.

If you would like more information about including the Land Trust in your plans and becoming a member of the Burr Oak Society, please contact Stacy at scachules@conservingindiana.org or 317-441-0535.

MEMBERS OF THE BURR OAK SOCIETY

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TOWARD A LIVABLE FUTURE

Burnett Woods. Photo by Dick Miller.

PROTECTING LAND LOCALLY FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

We've all noticed it: Wetter springs. Increased flooding. Hotter, drier summers. Warmer winters. Climate change is here—and already affecting Indiana.

As people with a passion for nature, we care deeply about the health of the planet as a whole. It's concerning to look ahead to an uncertain future marked by climate change. But one thing's for certain: Land trusts are positioned to mitigate the impact of climate change in several ways. The good news is that land conservation groups across the country are preparing, networking and mobilizing to address this threat.

Here at Central Indiana Land Trust, we take our role in this larger landscape seriously. We work locally, with an eye on the bigger global impact of our actions.

For example, we protect the forests that are so key to a livable future. In places like Burr Oak Bend, Meltzer Woods and Glacier's End, we are planting trees and supporting the forests' overall resilience. Not only do forests provide important habitat, filter water and clean the air, they also offer one of the best ways to mitigate the effects of climate change.

According to Jeffrey Dukes, director of the Purdue Climate Change Research Center, wood is 50% carbon when dried. "You can think about tree trunks as being bricks of carbon that are keeping carbon out of the atmosphere," he says.

Trees take more and more carbon out of the atmosphere every year as they grow. They also send carbon into the soil through their leaf litter and dead roots.

“So forests are good ways to vacuum carbon out of the atmosphere,” Dukes says. Once cut down or burned, trees release that stored carbon. That’s why it’s vital to keep forests on the landscape.

Looking ahead, each tree we plant and protect will store carbon over time, exponentially increasing the carbon storage with each passing year. Every acre of protected forest will magnify this effect. Here at CILTI, our aim is to buffer protected woodlands by at least a square mile of additional forest.

Floodplain forests provide additional crucial ecosystem services: reducing runoff during heavy rains, capturing sediment and keeping pollutants from waterways downstream. These will be even more important with the heavier precipitation associated with climate change. Smiley’s Mill, a privately held Johnson County property protected by CILTI, serves this function for Sugar Creek every year.

Flatwoods like our Burnett Woods Nature Preserve also play an important role in storing water after heavy rains and slowly allowing it to infiltrate underground aquifers.

What about land that is not forested? The soil itself is a valuable ally in sequestering carbon. At Nonie Krauss Nature Preserve, for example, native prairie plants hold the soil in place in a thick mat. “You can get a lot of carbon buildup in soils in prairies,” says Dukes, “especially in deep rooted grasses.”

Of course, drawing carbon out of the atmosphere is just one value of protecting nature.

By preserving and stewarding Central Indiana’s special places, whether forest, prairie, glade or wetlands, we retain habitat that

allows native species to thrive. Plants and animals that are likely to struggle in a warmer future may find “refugia”—meaning pockets where a population can survive unfavorable conditions—in our protected lands.

Large forest blocks also give wildlife space to move and adapt to changes arising from a volatile climate. By “unfragmenting” wildlife habitat, we give our native animal species a chance to breed and raise young—and potentially even migrate to more hospitable conditions—in the face of potentially dramatic changes.

“In my opinion, that’s the most important conservation mission right now,” says Dukes, “to find and protect landscapes that will allow species to persist in face of a rapidly changing climate.”

Our conservation plan guides our strategy, ensuring that the places we target are the most biodiverse and important natural areas in Central Indiana. As land continues to be snapped up for development, we look to preserve the natural areas that are emblematic of the heart and soul of Indiana—intending to keep them safe now and forever.

Aside from their ecological significance, these special places also have the power to soothe the human spirit. We don’t overlook the importance of having leafy oases to retreat to in troubled times. That’s why our mission includes the words “experiencing wonder.”

Our work is for nature, and humans are part of that picture. Thank you for walking this path with us. We could not do this work without you.



FORESTS ARE GOOD WAYS TO VACUUM CARBON OUT OF THE ATMOSPHERE.

— Jeffrey Dukes, director of the
Purdue Climate Change Research Center



MANAGING LAND WITH CLIMATE CHANGE IN MIND

Land trusts take on commitments that last far beyond the foreseeable future. Protecting land is forever. As we plan for the ongoing stewardship of our natural areas, we are keeping the impact of climate change foremost in mind.

Kevin Tungesvick, senior ecologist with Eco Logic, has researched the impact of climate change on Central Indiana's natural areas. The longtime CILTI member and friend graduated from Purdue University with a degree in atmospheric science. He suggests that conservation organizations like CILTI prioritize the following:

- **Acquiring baseline data and monitoring nature preserves for possible changes resulting from climate change.** Scientific data we collect will help us stay on top of the changes and help the broader conservation community strategize.
- **Fostering diverse habitats in support of the greatest amount of biodiversity.** For example, we plan to use prescribed burns to regenerate oak woodlands and bring sunlight to the flowering plants that support pollinators.
- **Looking for opportunities to shift floodplain cropland into forested land.** Increased flooding will mean that farmers lose crops in floodplains more often than they harvest, and these locations would support many flood-tolerant tree species. Taking these areas out of agriculture to reforest them would, over time, help reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere.
- **Continuing to address invasive plant threats.** Where honeysuckle is allowed to dominate, for example, we don't benefit from the herbaceous plants that would otherwise build soil through their roots and help sequester carbon.
- **Restoring wetlands to turn them back into "carbon sinks."** Draining wetlands releases carbon into the atmosphere, and resaturating these important natural areas will allow carbon to be incorporated into the soil, where it decomposes very slowly.

We are proud to say that—by working with partners like Kevin—we are already doing much of this on CILTI preserves. Eco Logic and other technical experts are helping us address the changing needs of land conservation.

JOIN US!

Join us! Renew or begin your membership today by simply using the enclosed envelope or by making a gift online at www.conservingindiana.org.

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WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

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Lori Marcum
Jan and Arthur Overmyer
Kathryn and Brendan Quinn
Cheryl Smolecki
Myra K. Summerlot
Brad and Jennifer Ward

YOUR DOLLARS PLANT (AND PROTECT) TREES

The CILTI staff is strategic with every dollar donated. **Your donations go directly toward protecting and managing land—which includes planting trees to sequester carbon.** We keep our management costs and overhead low so that we can spread every donation as far as possible. And, of course, every donation stays right here in Central Indiana.



THE

RIGHT PLACE

MORGAN COUNTY COUPLE PROTECT THEIR LAND IN PERPETUITY

It hurt their hearts to see the trees cut. That's what they knew for sure.

In the late 1990s, Drs. Meredith and Kathleen Hull had a selective timber harvest on their Morgan County land. They had purchased 121 acres outside of Monrovia in 1992, looking to satisfy their longing to be among trees.

It was (and still is) a lovely spot to explore, with Lamb's Creek and its tributaries winding through the forest. For years, the former Indianapolis residents spent nearly every weekend driving down to hike, until they finally built and eventually moved into the house where they now live. They've expanded their property to more than 160 acres over the years.

And the harvest? "It seemed like a good idea at the time," recalls Kathleen. But it broke her heart.

Though it was well-executed, and the woods bounced back within a few years, the Hulls knew they would never harvest trees again. They wanted to safeguard their beloved woods for good.

This year, they are dedicating 80 acres of their land as permanently protected. With CILTI's help, they set up a voluntary conservation agreement (sometimes known as a conservation easement) that will stay with the property in perpetuity. That way, even when new owners take possession, those 80 acres will always remain in their natural state.

For Kathleen, 74, the forest represents "one of the two places where I felt like I was in the right place." (The other one was the ballet studio—she studied ballet at Butler before turning her talents toward medical school.)

Meredith, 70, spent much of his childhood roaming woodlands. "One of my grandfathers had a farm with

Drs. Meredith and Kathleen Hull



“IT’S AMAZING TO ME THAT

WE’VE BEEN TROMPING

AROUND IN THESE WOODS

FOR 27 YEARS AND WE STILL

RUN INTO THINGS THAT

WE’VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.”

Scouring rush, the oldest extant genus of land plant in the world

about 100 acres of woods, and I spent a lot of time in the woods,” he says. When his grandparents died, the Greenfield-area land was sold for development. “Now it has houses on it,” he says, noting that their current property keeps him in connection with those happy memories.

The Hulls’ forest contains tulip poplar, sugar maple, American beech, white oak and sassafras, as well as bitternut and shagbark hickory. In the understory are found paw-paw, spicebush and maple-leafed viburnum. Ghostly blooms of Indian pipe rise from the pine duff under a stand of white pines.

Mature swamp white oaks and pin oaks dot the northern portion of the woods, along with black cherry, sycamore, cottonwood and red elm. Several old growth blue beech trees, also known as musclewood, grow here as well. A Lamb’s Creek’s tributary is lined with scouring rush, which has been called the oldest extant genus of land plant in the world.

Another tributary to Lamb’s Creek has carved a lovely valley through the southern ravines, sheltering a wide variety of ferns, from maidenhair to silvery spleenwort.

Winged creatures finding sanctuary here include the white-eyed vireo, Eastern towhee and common yellowthroat, not to mention

an abundance of butterflies of all kinds. And everywhere, the voices of green frog, spring peeper and wood frog can be heard. Skinks regularly find their way to the Hulls’ deck, the young sporting blue tails.

With all that biodiversity at their doorstep, the couple continue to enjoy new surprises. “It’s amazing to me,” says Kathleen, “that we’ve been tromping around in these woods for 27 years and we still run into things that we’ve never seen before.”

Keeping this rich ecosystem unspoiled—forever—is something they are rightfully proud of. “It’s just such a beautiful place that it made me feel good to think that nobody could ever knock it down and put up some tacky-tacky stuff,” says Kathleen.

Asked what she foresees as the ecosystem evolves, she says, “We all have to realize that, with climate change, we don’t know what the future of forests is going to be. But I envision the plants and the animals back there will keep going and be a community and manage to survive whatever comes along, at least in some way.”

Whatever the future holds, we know that it will be better because of the generosity and foresight of people like the Drs. Hull.



MEET YOUR LAND TRUST STAFF

With our team expanding, we thought it would be a perfect time to (re)introduce everyone on a personal level. You can find more information about each staffer's professional background and duties on our website at conservingindiana.org/about-us/staff.



CLIFF CHAPMAN'S ideal day would involve three elements: driving a convertible to a fabulous nature preserve and uncorking a great bottle of wine. As our executive director, at least he gets to indulge one of those wishes. Back in college, when he first realized that a bird like the beautiful hooded warbler calls Indiana home, he realized that

he didn't necessarily have to move west to find and protect "real nature." What brings him the most joy on the job is when he gets to move the boundary signs of an existing nature preserve because the borders have expanded.



Before she settled into her current trajectory, **ANDREA GRONER** studied oboe performance, which required knife skills to make her own reeds. But now, she doesn't need to wield sharp implements—as our office and operations manager, she ably supports the staff (and occasionally herds the cats). A cosplayer, singer,

published author, former AmeriCorps member and lover of all baby animals, she appreciates working with a passionate team, especially on days we hold our meetings outside.



Having been to hundreds of concerts in her life so far, **STACY CACHULES'** high point was seeing her first show at Red Rocks Amphitheatre near Denver—the perfect spot for a music-loving nature-lover. Though the CILTI office is far from that venue, she never gets the Sunday night blues, because working as our assistant director

feeds her passion for protecting our beautiful planet. Her favorite part of the job is connecting with the wonderful donors and landowners who make it all possible.



Spending time outdoors has always been a priority for our stewardship manager, **JAMISON HUTCHINS**. With his basset hound named Floyd, he used to camp and hike the backcountry of Montana. Since moving back to Indiana, he served as bicycle and pedestrian coordinator for the city of Indianapolis, but as our newest

staffer, he now heads up the monitoring and stewardship of our many nature preserves. He loves the gratification of seeing visible results of his team's work, not to mention the freedom of spending nearly every day out in nature.



Communications specialist **SHAWNDR A MILLER** loves working at CILTI because it gives her a chance to learn and write about things that really matter, and she is eternally grateful to her dad, the late Donovan Miller, for introducing her to the organization as a volunteer all those years ago. When not reaching for just the

right word to describe a bird or plant for CILTI, she spends her spare time writing (go figure!) and pursuing mind-body practices like forest bathing, yoga and Dragon's Way qi gong.



After getting married in the butterfly garden at the Indianapolis Zoo, **TRACI WILLIS** and her husband weathered a category 5 hurricane on their honeymoon in the Bahamian island of Eleuthera. So, when her job as CILTI's outreach coordinator gets demanding, she doesn't break a sweat. Traci loves that working

at CILTI contributes to leaving a legacy—and the fact that she is sometimes called upon to help with a bat rescue in the historic building that houses our office.



Though she often pretended to run away from home as a child (only to play in the woods behind her house), these days, **STEPHANIE PAINE CROSSIN** doesn't need to escape her work at CILTI. As our land protection specialist, she oversees land transactions, which involves paperwork, relationships—and the occasional

day in the woods. She loves how her job stretches her brain in new directions as she collaborates on protecting the natural world so dear to her heart.

Not pictured but vital parts of the team are our contract staff. Our bookkeeper, **NANETTE JOHNSON**, has been with us for over 10 years, keeping our financial records and transactions in good order. **PHIL SCHAEFER** began working with us as a volunteer, then as a seasonal stewardship team member, and he now coordinates special projects at Oliver's Woods. Field assistant **RUSTY WILBURN** particularly loves connecting other people to the natural world and deepening his own knowledge about nature through his work.



PHILLIP WELDY worked for an animal behavior laboratory in college, attempting to determine if toads could learn (results inconclusive). Now, as CILTI's stewardship assistant, he spends his days wrangling invasive plants and otherwise keeping our nature preserves healthy and well-tended. The former AmeriCorps member is a

mediocre piano player but a standout bread baker (though he has yet to share either talent with the team), and his gorgeous photos from the field have really been brightening our social media feeds this year.

PUTTING THE "I" IN CILTI

Though we don't usually use the designation in everyday parlance, our organization is incorporated! The full name is Central Indiana Land Trust, Inc., which explains the acronym of "CILTI."



CILTI staff acting up during a recent photo shoot. All staff photos by Emily Schwank.



**CENTRAL INDIANA
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