



CENTRAL
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LAND TRUST

Fall 2016



From the Leadership



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Preserving the Heartland

One of my favorite things about working for the Central Indiana Land Trust is that we are apolitical. This year has been different than any in my memory when it comes to politics. Be that as it may, we don't take sides. We don't protest. We don't shout. We work diligently to protect nature in our part of the world.

This is very powerful. In January we will have a new president, a new governor, and a new senator representing Indiana. That much we know, who they will be or if there will be other changes we don't know. No matter who they are, we will continue the work that we do.

We have been keeping very busy working towards what may be our biggest year ever in land protection projects completed, the amount of land being actively managed, acres permanently protected, and fundraising to keep it all moving.

On one of the projects we are working to complete by the end of the year, we first walked with the landowner during the election year of 2008. I remember talking about some of the topics from the two campaigns with him, without taking sides. We've walked that land and other places since, mostly talking about the plants, birds, butterflies and other pieces of the natural puzzle we were walking through.

After eight years, we have built such a level of trust with this land owner that he has decided to protect his land working with CILTI. The land will be protected forever. This is one of my other favorite things about working for the Central Indiana Land Trust. Our work is permanent.

It takes more than words to make that a reality. Land protection isn't complete when a deed is signed. It requires adhering to policies set by our Board of Directors that follow national standards, careful investments with funds set aside to care for land in the future, keeping up with the current science to manage our natural areas effectively, speaking to groups of people encouraging them to join as members, and of course, delivering results so you feel great every time you make a donation.

There are many unknowns for next year. But please know this: we will be here protecting our best remaining natural areas and managing them to be resilient into the future. You make this possible. Thank you for supporting us now, so that we can build new relationships with landowners to continue this important work into the future, election years or not.



Cliff Chapman

Cliff Chapman
Executive Director

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1500 N. Delaware St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-631-5263

On the Cover:



Eastern
Box Turtle
enjoying fall



Welcome New Members!

Betty Boilek
Amanda Cumming
Greg and Marlene Gerline
Kandy Kendall
Penny Landrigan
Pat and Jim Life
Robin McDonald
Grace and Scott Norris
Donna Ormiston
Dallas and Pamela Peak
Daniel and Janice Rice
Neal Sanders
Liz Schallwig
Marcia and Keith Smith
Nancy Snively
Max Ward
Nissa Watkinson
Ray Wetnight
Adam and Alison Wilson

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.

Members of the Burr Oak Society

Anonymous (4)
Christine Carlson
Joe Collins
Oliver Daugherty*
Aron DiBacco
Rebecca and Thomas Dolan

Van Eller*
Sharon Horvath and Andy Pike
Tom Hougham and Ann Deutch
Marjorie Jones
Eleanor Krauss*
Cheri O'Neill

John* and Mary* Pelton
Ruth Ratcliff*
Reta and Rob Rutledge
Phil G. D. Schaefer
Deb Smith

*deceased

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 Rachel at reble@conservingindiana.org or 317-631-5263.

Hills of Gold Update



View of the forest at Glacier's End Nature Preserve

This was an exciting year for the Hills of Gold Conservation Area. CILTI worked with our partners to complete two key land protection projects, adding an additional 40 acres to the Laura Hare Preserve at Blossom Hollow and 97 acres to Glacier's End Nature Preserve. We now have 695 contiguous acres of protected habitat in southern Johnson County with two nature preserves and one conservation easement.

The area we call Hills of Gold are part of the Brown County Hills extending northward into Johnson County. The area gets its name from one of the glacial erratics found there previously. Gold and sometimes diamonds were found in this line across Indiana where the glaciers stopped. Gold was found as small flakes in areas just like Blossom Hollow and Glacier's End Nature Preserves in the 19th Century and are probably present in very small quantities today.

The Hills of Gold is one of the targeted areas identified in our strategic conservation plan. In 2008 and 2009, while the strategic conservation plan was being created, CILTI conducted field work of this area. This early field work revealed large populations of rare birds like worm-eating warbler, hooded warbler and some sightings of cerulean warbler. Beyond those rare birds, forest interior species like red-eyed vireo, Acadian flycatcher, ovenbird, and wood thrush were found in high numbers.

In December of 2009, we closed on the first project in the Hills of Gold, the 246 acre Bob's Woods Conservation Easement. It was the owners of this magnificent property that invited us to the area to begin with, and without them, the Hills of Gold probably wouldn't have become a priority as there was no data from field surveys. The land was all private property with no roads going through it so there were no records in state databases.

While working on the Bob's Woods Conservation Easement, Land Trust staff were introduced to another family that owned land in the Hills of Gold south of Lamb Lake and began building a relationship with them. The first walk-thru of their land was done in November of 2009. During 2010 we continued to meet and discuss options for conservation of the area. In 2011, CILTI signed a purchase agreement for 109 acres that became the Laura Hare Preserve at Blossom Hollow. When fundraising was completed we closed in 2012.

CILTI continued negotiations with that family for land east of the Bob's Woods Conservation Easement but then began talking with the first family who owned land south of Blossom Hollow. The situation was challenging. This area was one of 13 priority areas in the newly developed strategic conservation plan for Central Indiana, there were two families with land in the area willing to sell, but there just wasn't enough money available to plan a way forward.

With the Indiana's upcoming Bicentennial, outgoing Governor Mitch Daniels decided to make a conservation impact by allocating \$20,000,000 into a newly created Bicentennial Nature Trust in 2012. The Lilly Endowment added another \$10,000,000 to it. The idea was to celebrate the Bicentennial by protecting important natural areas, parks, and trails as a gift to future generations.

CILTI jumped at the opportunity but faced raising more

money than it ever had in its history, not just in the Hills of Gold, but in some other critical areas needing protection like Meltzer Woods. The owners of what is now called Glacier's End Nature Preserve signed a purchase agreement for 203 acres in 2014. Later, the owners of 40 acres south of Blossom Hollow signed a purchase agreement with CILTI. It took some time, but in 2015 CILTI completed its largest fundraising campaign in its history and closed on the 203 acres at Glacier's End. Soon afterward, the same owners signed a purchase agreement on additional 97 acres to add to Glacier's End.

In spring of 2016, CILTI closed on the 40 acre addition to the Laura Hare Preserve at Blossom Hollow and then in late fall we closed on the 97 acre addition to Glacier's End Nature Preserve protecting a contiguous 695 acres with a total project value of \$2,399,000!

None of this is possible without the support of our members and working in partnership with other conservation groups and organizations. Key partners who have made conservation possible in the Hills of Gold include the Hougham family, the Johnson family, the Lamb family, the State of Indiana, The Nature Conservancy, Amos Butler Audubon, Efroymsen Family Fund, Herbert Simon Family Foundation, Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society, Johnson County Community Foundation, Central Indiana Community Foundation, The Conservation Fund, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and CILTI members. Thank you all!



Fall hike at the Laura Hare Preserve at Blossom Hollow



Carex timida, an endangered sedge found at Glacier's End

Bioblitz Findings

In the spring of 2016, CILTI partnered with the Indiana Academy of Science for our first ever Bioblitz. We are excited to now have the findings from this Bioblitz survey that took place on 695 acres of the Hills of Gold Conservation area. This event brought 75 scientists, naturalists, and students who volunteered their expertise and time. Thirteen taxonomic teams were put together; the taxa included: bats, beetles, birds, fish, freshwater mussels, herpetofauna (reptiles and amphibians), lepidoptera (butterflies and moths), mammals, mushrooms, non-vascular plants, snail-killing flies, spiders, and vascular plants. In the end, the teams reported 548 taxa.

Highlights from the findings:

- **Bats** – this group had some exciting findings! Two endangered bats; one pregnant adult female Indiana bat and one adult male Northern long – eared bat.
- **Birds** – 86 species of birds reported, with 17 of those species being migratory.
- **Spiders** – 33 species representing 39 taxa of spiders were reported. Five of these are new distribution records for Indiana. Two of these are new species to science. See more on this in the species spotlight.
- **Beetles** – 16 species of beetles were reported but likely there are many more. The rainy conditions of the BioBlitz didn't lend itself well to the beetle count.
- **Amphibians and Reptiles** – 16 amphibians and 6 reptiles were represented. Two species of special concern in Indiana were found, the Blanchard's cricket frog (*Acris blanchardi*) and the Eastern box turtle (*Terrepena carolina*). Also, four pond breeding species of salamanders were considered new Johnson County records.
- **Plants** – 30 species of non-vascular plants were recorded indicating a healthy biodiversity of a mature mesic woodland environment. Of the vascular plants, there were 269 species, with one species on the state endangered species list, timid sedge (*Carex timida*), four on the watch list, and 113 potential Johnson County records. 31 sedges, 13 ferns, and three orchids were also reported.
- **Mammals** – 14 taxa of mammals were recorded, with eight species of mammals noted. The woodland vole, southern bog lemming, pygmy shrew and smoky shrew were the more uncommon species found.



BioBlitz fungus discovery

This list is just a highlight of the findings, the full report is on the Indiana Academy of Science's website. It should also be noted that this was all found in a 36 hour window, and gives a glimpse of the overall biodiversity of the area. Inventory during different times of year will reveal a more complete picture. The overall impression by the researchers is that CILTI has found something very special in the Hills of Gold, not just an area rich in species, but one with impressive ecosystem function.

Thank you for the following tributes

In honor of...

Otto O'Neill Eble

Tom and Priscilla Johnson

Rachel Eble

Lance Cline and Sue Nonweiler

Priscilla Johnson

Nancy Hague

Myrta Pulliam

Perry Griffith

Kai Anthony Tiongson Schaefer

Tom and Priscilla Johnson

In memory of...

Jerry and Avonelle Selby

Janet Hollis and Ronald Selby

New Species to Science Discovered

At the 2016 Natural Areas Conference in Davis, California, a speaker from the U.S. Forest Service D.C. office described a recent Bioblitz that took place at the 116,000 acre Fort Pierre National Grassland in South Dakota. The exciting news, and we agree, was that two new species of spiders were discovered during the inventory. That is fantastic.

As described in this newsletter, we just received the report of the 695 acre Hills of Gold Bioblitz conducted in May of 2015. It took over a year to compile all the results.

We are excited to announce that two new species of spiders were discovered in the Hills of Gold! We often hear that Indiana doesn't have mountains or oceans, but we have an incredible diversity of plants and wildlife in our natural areas. Having similar exciting news in an area only 0.6% the size of a federally protected area is pretty special.

The two new spider species, yet to be named, wouldn't scare too many people on Halloween. They are very small and live in leaf litter. Believe it or not, there is a whole predator/prey dynamic going on as leaves decay every year creating new soil. A plethora of small to microscopic organisms live in the leaf litter helping with decomposition and spiders are there to prey on them. If you've ever seen birds thrashing around on the forest floor, they are often looking for spiders to eat.

When we received the news of the first species being discovered, the researcher said, "We need to do more inventory in the Hills of Gold to get a better understanding of this area that supports so many rare species. It's a very special place." We couldn't agree more.

Notes from the Field:

Monitoring and controlling Japanese Stiltgrass keeps our stewardship staff busy

Controlling Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) was a main priority for our stewardship staff this summer. The properties managed included: Glacier's End Nature Preserve, Laura Hare Preserve at Blossom Hollow, and Blue Bluff Nature Preserve.

The staff worked with Ann and Tom Hougham (CILTI volunteers) on the two Johnson County properties. We are so lucky to have their help as they have been working with us to control the invasive annual grass for several years. Both Glacier's End and Blossom Hollow have an extensive amount of stiltgrass to be removed and it will take several more years to get these properties to a manageable state. The stiltgrass found at Blue Bluff, located near Mooresville, is located along a drainage, parallel to the roadway. Although it is located in an easily accessed area, the drainage is a concern for the future spread of the seed. Stiltgrass spreads most rapidly along roadways and drainages making it harder to control here.

Our technique for controlling the invasive grass is by using our utility task vehicle with a tank sprayer on the back as well as using our backpack sprayers. Hand pulling the

stiltgrass is an option in smaller more contained areas. At this time, chemical treatment is the most efficient method for us to use. Being an annual, we can use a very low concentration of chemical so native perennial grasses are not harmed by the spraying.

We will continue tracking the progress made until next year when we can treat again. It will take some time before we are able to get the stiltgrass to a manageable state, but we will strive to reach that point. So far, we are pleased with the outcome of our treatment this season.



CILTI's Stewardship Specialist, Joanna, spraying stiltgrass



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Please visit our website:
www.conservingindiana.org



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