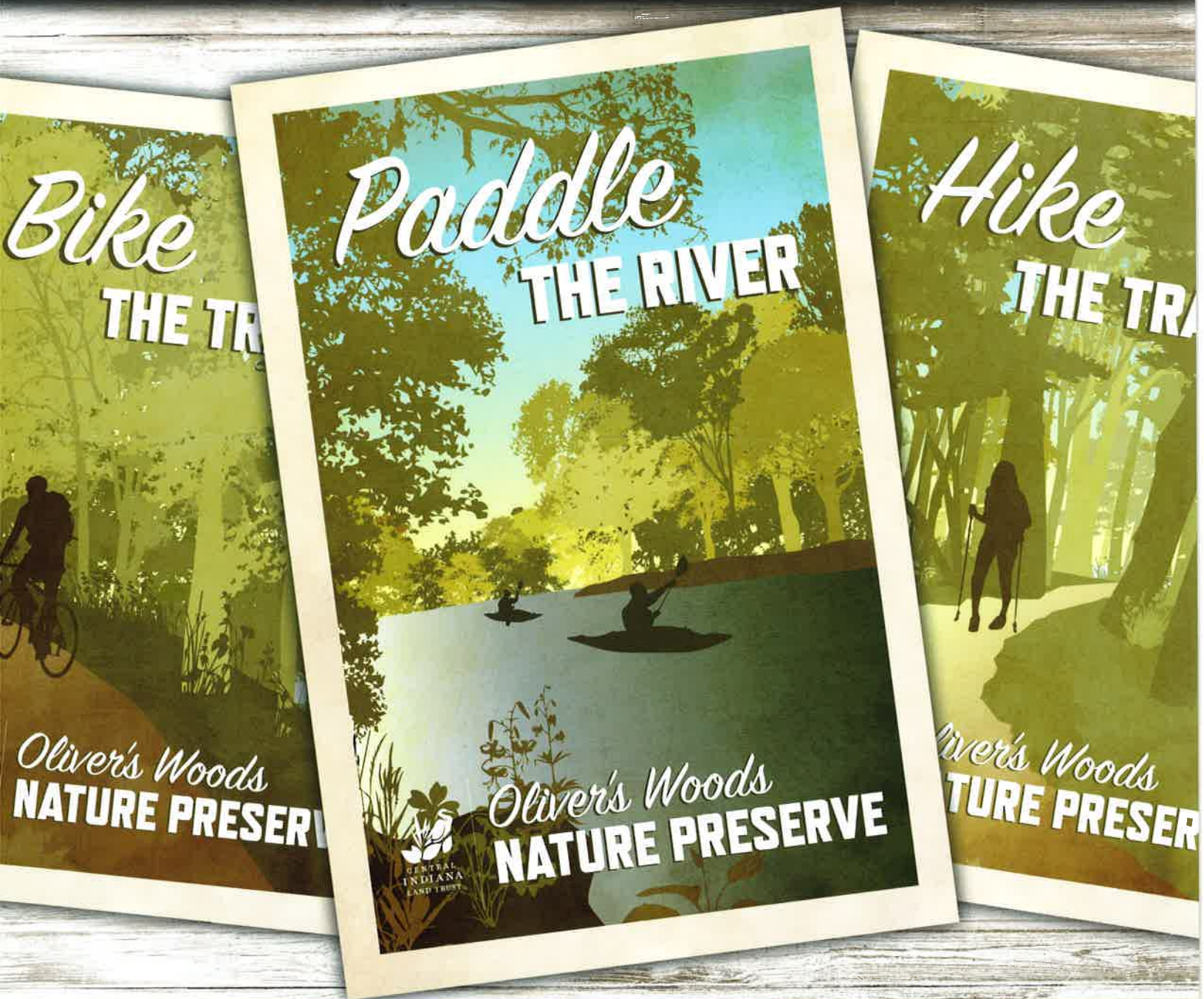




CENTRAL INDIANA LAND TRUST

Fall 2017



From the Leadership



While this issue of our newsletter might seem a little unusual to the reader, with no new land acquisition spotlighted, it reflects the time spent planning for some incredible work ahead. We've been busy outlining massive new projects at three of our nature preserves – as you'll read about in this issue. And we've remained busy planning for CILTI's new conservation plan. This is exactly what we want to be doing this year.

Thanks to your loyal support, we've been effective for many years and have enjoyed recent success with our strategic conservation plan adopted in 2009. We knew it was time to work towards updating this plan. With this in mind, our board of directors decided that with the new plan, they wanted us to continue to focus on high quality natural areas – the best remaining examples of natural Indiana remaining in Central Indiana. A discussion ensued as to just what boundaries define Central Indiana, to which a simple mathematical answer seemed most appropriate.

The new plan we are working on covers the central third of the state, from Illinois to Ohio. It also contains the entire boundary of the southern extent of the Wisconsin ice sheet that so dramatically influenced our topography and plant communities. As a land trust, we are moving from an 11 county service area to one that does not follow county lines but includes all or part of 39 counties.

You might be asking yourself if this is going to triple the amount of work we will be doing – which we do not anticipate. What it will do is force us to focus only the most critical properties in Central Indiana to spend your dollars on protecting and managing. What I think about every day is this – there are high quality natural areas in our area that have been here for thousands of years but could be destroyed in a day. We want to find them and protect them so that doesn't happen.

This new approach is taking us to parts of the state we haven't worked in since the 1990s (when we covered 36 counties), and introducing us to new partners to ally with to get more conservation done more quickly. We feel this is an integral part of the new plan – we are eager collaborators and will have many more opportunities to work together with more partners for shared success.

We will be unveiling the new plan soon, but are still in the phase of visiting potential sites (we have visited some amazing places this year!), talking to partners and thinking about how we will continue to be the local land trust for the area around Indianapolis. An example of the latter is the great work happening along the White River in Marion County as described in this issue. Thank you for your continued support that is helping us grow and mature into a regional land trust.

Cliff Chapman,



Executive Director



Cliff Chapman

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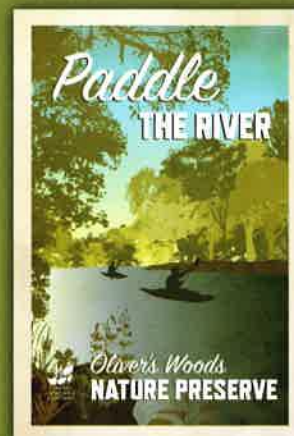
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1500 N. Delaware St.
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317-631-5263

On the Cover:



Coming Soon...

Thank you for the following tributes

In honor of...

Rose Elizabeth Chapman

Cliff and Carrie Chapman
Thomas and Priscilla Johnson

Connie Douglas

Christopher Douglas and Tom Korecki

Carl and Amy Wilms

Thomas and Priscilla Johnson

In memory of...

Julia Baxter

Sara and Jerry Steckbeck

Kate Cornwall

Thomas and Priscilla Johnson

John Hawks

Thomas and Priscilla Johnson

Elizabeth Kiser

Thomas and Priscilla Johnson

James Ray

Thomas and Priscilla Johnson

Stephen C. Roggie

Thomas and Priscilla Johnson

Welcome New Members!

Grace Chimples

Martha Fox

Scott Hensley

Ben Hess

Rosemarie Jeffery

James Keith

Harry and Cherie Kuhn

Debra Obrien

Matt and Nita Orth

Sherrie Owens

Judith Holt Sutton

Elaine and Joe Whitfield

Paul Alan Zeller

White River Conservation and Access

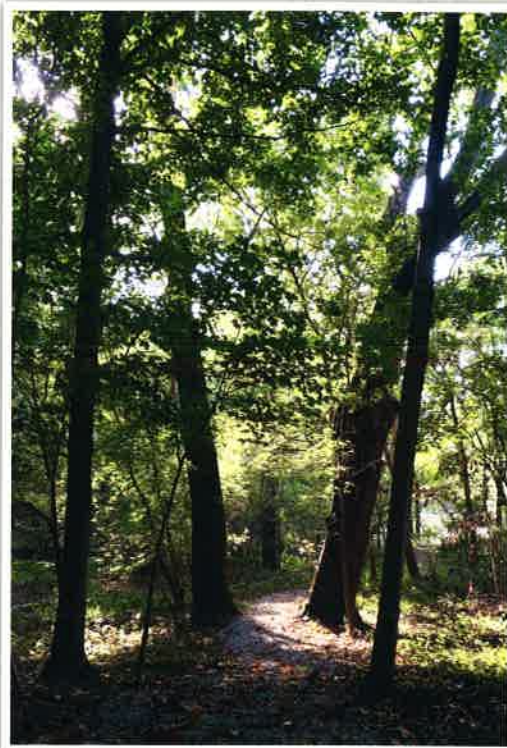
During our first 25 years, CILTI has primarily worked in the White River Watershed.

During those years, CILTI protected 4,638 acres - of those acres, 3,324 acres or 72% were in the West Fork of the White River Watershed. No non-profit has had a more significant impact on the White River's quality via land protection than CILTI. In the summer issue of the CILTI Newsletter, we profiled White River Bluffs - a property we are currently working to buy and protect forever. White River Bluffs is actually just one of our nature preserves that is along the White River, in fact we have six preserves that touch the White River. Running throughout Central Indiana, the White River is a significant resource and inspiration, providing drinking

water for much of Indianapolis and offering the potential for recreation and relaxation.

Thanks to a \$645,000 grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, CILTI will be able to make significant improvements to three of our Marion County nature preserves. These improvements will be designed to increase access to and appreciation for the White River in the Indianapolis metropolitan area. Of special note, the gift will allow for the opening of Oliver's Woods Nature Preserve to the public.

The project at Oliver's Woods will include a public canoe launch, providing a new access point for the residents of Central



Path to future canoe launch

CILTI properties help in preventing flooding in Indianapolis



High water mark as seen at over 6 feet following a flooding event

Protecting wetlands and floodplain forests along the White River make a lot of sense not only from the standpoint of protecting nature, but also for protecting people downstream from increased flooding.

CILTI properties along the White River contain numerous wetlands at various preserves. One example of water storage in a wetland is an area we restored and featured in the Summer 2015 issue of our newsletter. A typical flood at this site showed a water line on the trees averaging about six feet high. The restoration of this wetland was designed to trap sediment in the wetland as flood waters slowly receded not only to improve water quality, but also to increase water quantity (storage) as well.

We thought it would be interesting to see just how much water the wetland was storing during a typical flood. Believe it or not, the wetland mentioned above can hold about 49,413,000 gallons of water during a typical flood. This is water that is not flooding neighborhoods downstream. CILTI properties have similar wetlands, bigger and smaller, at several sites along the White River. Collectively, these properties are storing hundreds of millions of gallons of water during typical flood events along the river in Hamilton and Marion Counties.



Rendering of the proposed improvements at Oliver's Woods Nature Preserve

Indiana. Oliver's Woods will also receive a parking lot to accommodate visitors, trails and signage, a stewardship building to house our growing program and ongoing restoration to the property. In addition to its river frontage, Oliver's Woods features 16 acres of woods and 37 acres of prairie-savanna restoration. The southern portion of the popular Town Run Trail Park is also part of the property, and the improvements include a connection to the mountain bike trails from River Road via a low water crossing at Carmel Creek.

Slightly downriver from Oliver's Woods, the six-acre White Owl Conservation Area

will also gain a canoe launch as a result of the Pulliam Trust's gift. This means the public could enjoy quick nature excursions on the river, going from Oliver's Woods to White Owl, or enjoy longer adventures from either location. CILTI already has been working to restore the site and improve its floodplain forest for the benefit of wildlife and the river.



The White River

virtually no access to the river or the natural areas that line it," said Cliff Chapman, executive director of the Central Indiana Land Trust. "With its generous gift to the Land Trust and other organizations, the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust is opening the door to a new understanding of some of our area's greatest natural assets and opportunities."

White River Bluffs will also benefit from the grant by seeing restoration and infrastructure improvements at the site. Formerly part of Highland Golf and Country Club, the property includes some of the oldest trees in Indianapolis growing on a steep bluff that soars above the White River 85 feet below.

CILTI's other properties along the White River include Burr Oak Bend and the Nonie Werbe Krauss Preserve located in Hamilton County along with the Millard Sutton/Amos W. Butler Audubon Sanctuary located in Johnson County. Additionally, CILTI has protected several privately owned properties along the River with conservation easements.

"For decades, the majority of area residents have had

Species Spotlight: The Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias*

The Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias*, is a special bird to the Central Indiana Land Trust. The bird is the main symbol in our logo and is a great representation for Central Indiana. The Great Blue Heron is the largest North American heron. They are blue-gray in color and are known for the black stripe over their eyes. In flight, the Great Blue Heron curls its neck into an "S" shape with its long legs trailing behind the tail. While standing tall, the Great Blue Heron's head, chest, and wing plumage have a shaggy appearance. Although they appear mighty and stout in size, they only weigh 5-6 pounds due to their hollow bones which all birds share.

While Great Blue Herons live in Indiana year round,



Great Blue Heron

they can also be found across much of the United States. They are considered a partial migrant, breeding in the northern portion of the United States up into Canada and moving away from the northern edge of their breeding range during winter. Some travel as far south as the Caribbean during the winter. Due to their range in habitat, Great Blue Herons live in both freshwater and saltwater ecosystems as well as grasslands. They eat practically anything that they are able to snatch including fish, amphibians, small mammals, insects, and other birds. With long, sharp bills that help spear their prey, they are fascinating birds to watch wade gently through the water and quietly stalk their prey.

With the encouraging population increase of Bald Eagles in Indiana over the last decade, nest predation of the Great Blue Heron will also increase. Bald eagles are known to feed on heron eggs and nestlings. Mainly nesting in trees, Great Blue Herons build platform- like nests which make predation by larger birds, including Bald Eagles, easily accessible. At CILTI, we work to protect the lands that allow for healthy ecosystems to thrive and for organisms at every trophic level to be sustained.



Great Blue Heron nests

Volunteer Spotlight: Josh Christie, Board President

We recently had a chance to catch up with CILTI's new board president, Josh Christie, and ask him a few questions about his history with CILTI and his hopes for the future. Josh is a Partner at Ice Miller, LLP and he lives in Indianapolis with his wife, Erica, and their daughter, Alice.

How did you become involved with CILTI?

I met CILTI at the Get on Board event a number of years ago – I was a new lawyer in town and looking to get involved. I was really drawn to CILTI's mission to protect important natural areas. I started by going to volunteer work days and working with what was then the Stewardship Committee, eventually chairing that committee and then joining the board.

Why is conservation so important to you? The outdoors has always played a big role in my life – natural areas are where I like to spend my free time. Helping to make sure that our region's natural areas are protected and still around for generations to come is very important to me.

What is your favorite CILTI memory? One of the first



Josh Christie

volunteer work days I ever attended was at Burnett Woods in Avon. At that time Cliff was running the stewardship field days and I remember that he had rented a pickup truck, mainly so that we could transport and dispose of trash we had picked up. It had rained and was a little muddy – Cliff managed to get the truck stuck in the ditch by the side of the road and had to call a tow truck to get it out! Cliff didn't think that was as funny as I did...

What is your favorite CILTI preserve?

Meltzer's Woods is hard to beat. To see old growth trees like that right in Central Indiana is truly spectacular.

As the new board president what do you hope to see CILTI accomplish? Mark Blakely has left me with some big shoes to fill – the growth and stability he's led the organization to during his tenure are nothing short of amazing. With the support of our dedicated members and donors, I think we have a real opportunity to focus on continuing to find the highest quality natural areas in Central Indiana to protect. I think we can grow exponentially, not linearly. Stay tuned!

Notes from the Field: Fall 2017

We've often said the protection of Meltzer Woods in Shelby County began with stewardship on the property. We began working on the control of the invasive species, purple wintercreeper, there in November of 2008. Hundreds of volunteers enabled us to see wintercreeper on the run, but we knew it would take sustained effort and a long term plan to eradicate it from the site.

These efforts paid off when the Meltzer family agreed to sell us the old growth forest in 2013 after seeing the success we were having returning the woods to a healthier state. After completing the purchase a year later, we got cracking on a plan to rid the National Natural Landmark of this ugly pest.

We crafted a multi-year plan to treat it with herbicide 16 acres at a time, treating the area two times before handing it back over to stewardship staff to maintain. With the generous support of the Efroymsen Family Fund at CICF, we are working with EcoLogic out of Bloomington, Indiana to carefully treat the area.

These treatments are done at such a large scale that we have to close the preserve for at least a week at a time while the

herbicide is being applied. We have had four treatments done thus far and the results are astounding. As more area is getting scheduled for treatment next year, we are monitoring the sprayed areas and taking steps to reduce new invasive species from taking over – namely garlic mustard.



Meltzer Woods trail, one side has received purple wintercreeper treatment

We are never excited about using herbicides at this scale, but the results speak for themselves.

The woods are becoming healthier every year with more native plants found in the treatment areas than in the wintercreeper infested areas. We look forward to this living museum being free of invasive species and having a bouquet of wildflowers blooming over its entirety every spring.



**CENTRAL
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Preserving the Heartland

Central Indiana Land Trust, Inc.
1500 North Delaware Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Please visit our website:
www.conservingindiana.org



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