

*News from the*



CENTRAL  
INDIANA  
LAND TRUST

*Preserving the Heartland*

SPRING  
SUMMER  
2009

Vol. 19, No. 1

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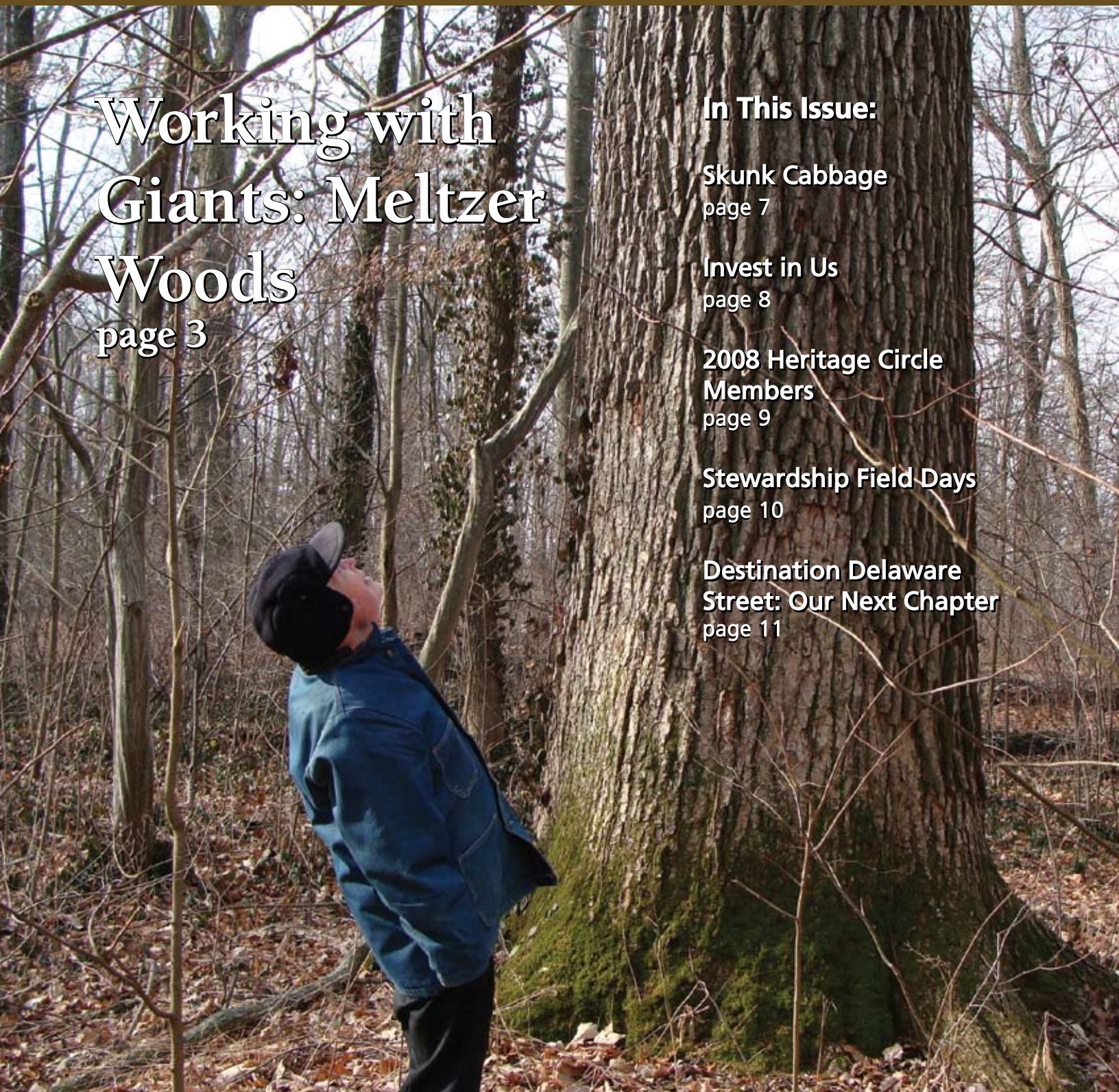
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Cover photo: Philip Meltzer  
admiring a centuries-old  
bur oak on his property.  
Photo by Cliff Chapman.



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You may have noticed some changes in the Central Indiana Land Trust over the past year or two. Recent visible changes have included our new logo, website, and newsletter. A more subtle change has been a shift away from calling ourselves by the acronym CILTI. Over the years, many of you have told us that you are not particularly fond of this acronym because it sounds like we're talking about murky water, which of course, is ironic for an organization working to protect our land and natural resources. Those who were not familiar with us were confused by the CILTI reference. So, rather than using the term "CILTI," we now refer to ourselves as the Central Indiana Land Trust formally, and just the land trust on subsequent references, being the local land trust, one of many working in the state.



Another change has been in our goals. Never before have we undertaken such ambitious goals, which include 1) protecting an additional 2,010 acres between 2007 and 2010; 2) increasing the number of people engaged with the land trust to 1,000 per year; and 3) strengthening our organization through increased fundraising and staff capacity. We are well on our way toward these goals thanks to many of you and your dedication to the organization.

One of the changes that you'll see in the near future will include a new office address. As this newsletter is being printed, we are moving into our new office space at 1500 North Delaware Street in Indianapolis. Our new office is in a beautiful and historic building - the Meredith Nicholson House - owned by the Indiana Humanities Council. Many will recognize the Nicholson House as "The House of a Thousand Candles." Other tenants in the building include the Indiana Recycling Coalition and the YWCA. This office costs less per square foot than our old one and offers additional amenities such as a large space for meetings, a kitchen, and outdoor storage. See the back cover of this newsletter for information about our June 4th open house.

Another change that you'll notice is that we will be transitioning from four newsletters a year to two. In between, we will send out more frequent electronic communication, so please make sure Maria (msteiner@conservingindiana.org) has your email address. We will also provide stewardship and other news and updates in a more cost effective mailer when needed. This cost savings measure ensures your donations are used wisely.

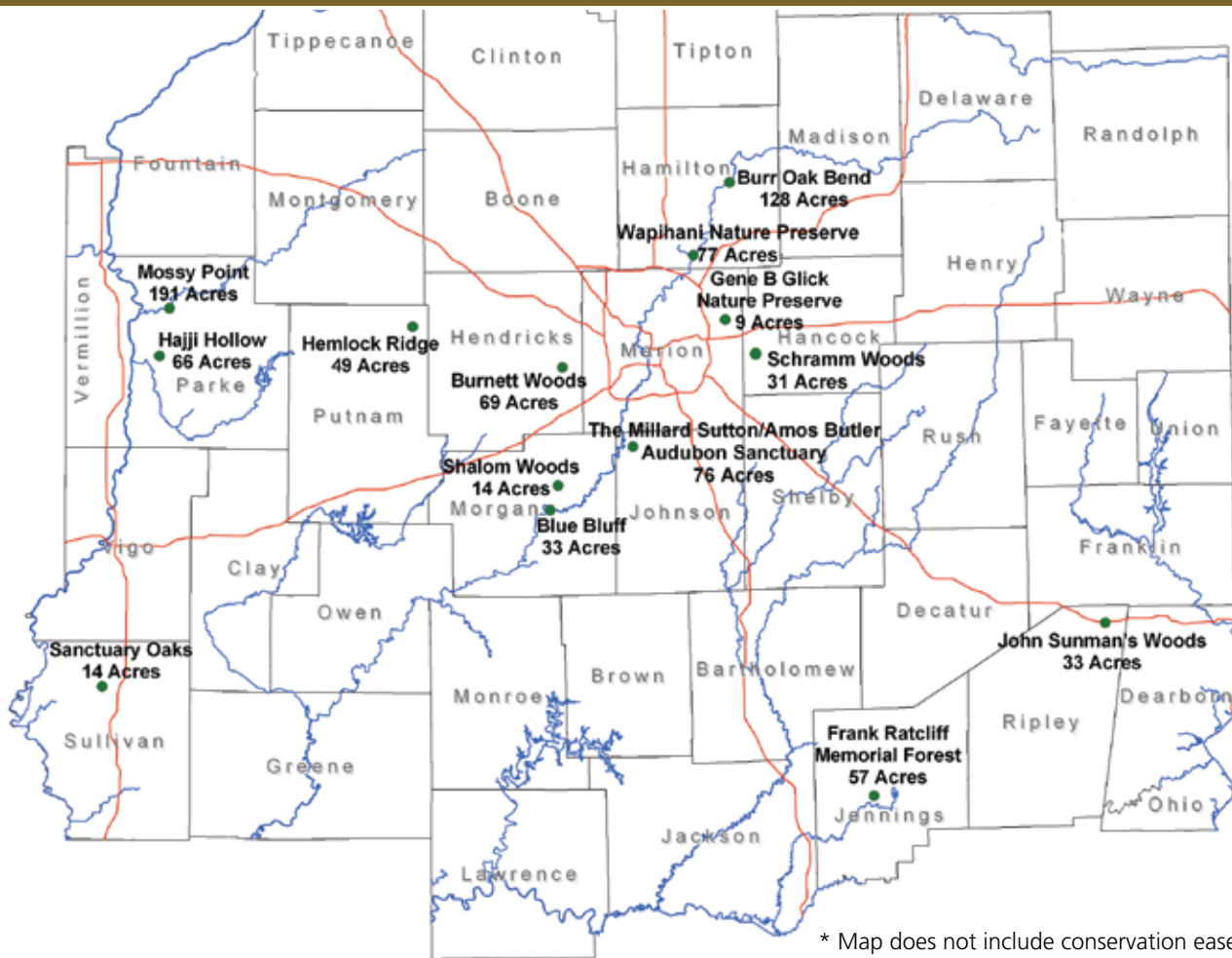
Please let us know if you have any other feedback regarding our work; after all this is YOUR land trust.

- Heather Bacher and James Wilson

## OUR MISSION

*Through land protection, stewardship and education, the Central Indiana Land Trust preserves natural areas, improving air and water quality and enhancing life in our communities for present and future generations.*

# OUR PROPERTIES



## HOW WE PROTECT LAND

### Fee Simple

The outright ownership of land through donations or purchases is the most basic land protection tool. Once owned by a land trust, the land is protected in perpetuity.

### Conservation Easements

This agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government entity allows the landowner to retain the title to the land, but permanently limits development and prevents certain uses of the property.

### Protection Partnerships

We often partner with like-minded organizations to pool resources for the purchase of larger parcels of land.

**Acres Counter:**  
**3,132 acres protected**

815 acres owned  
272 acres under management  
2,045 acres protected through partnerships

For details on all of our projects, visit our website: [www.conservingindiana.org](http://www.conservingindiana.org)

# THE PHILIP MELTZER FAMILY AND MELTZER WOODS:

By Marion T. Jackson - Professor Emeritus of Ecology, Indiana State University

"We came to a tall gloomy forest, consisting almost wholly of large Beech (and maple) trees, which afforded a most refreshing shade. The forest continued without intermission . . . the lofty crowns of the trees shut out the sky from our view. They were the most splendid forest I had yet seen in America."

- Prince Maximilian of Wied, *Report of Travels in Indiana (June 1833)*

The prince's description of Indiana's primeval forest could well have been in reference to almost any one of the some eight million acres that comprise the Central Till-plain Natural Region, where Meltzer Woods is located. But that vast, unbroken deciduous forest that Prince Maximilian described is now confined to a series of imperfectly recorded memories, and a very few, widely scattered old-growth fragments.

For a state that originally was so predominately covered with high-quality temperate hardwood forest, precious few old-growth remnants remain today. Ecologists usually define old-growth forests as stands with some trees greater than 150 years of age, and with little disturbance during the past 100 years.

A 1997 study of Indiana's old-growth forest remnants by Marty Spetich and George Parker of Purdue University reported a total of only 19 different remaining stands, covering just 895 acres, for an average size of 47.1 acres. For the vast Central Till-plain Natural Region that covers more than one-third of the State, only five stands totaling 177 acres were reported. Since Meltzer Woods is one of these five stands, its value and importance as a natural area is unquestioned. The Central Indiana Land Trust has recently

signed a Management Agreement with the Meltzer Family to see that this woods is protected in the most sustainable way possible into the future.

Remaining tracts of natural land that have been owned continuously by one family since settlement days are equally rare. Perhaps you have noted farmsteads or dwellings as you have toured Indiana that have the attractive blue, yellow, and white signs in their front yards stating "Historic Hoosier Homestead," signifying continuous ownership by the resident family for more than 100 years.

The Meltzer Farm and Woods, located east of the City of Shelbyville, meets both of the above criteria. Shortly after you exit Interstate 74 onto Hwy 244, you can see the high canopy of Meltzer Woods looming against the skyline as you look northeast. Two hundred years ago, 15 million acres or more of Indiana was covered by such a forest.

In 1857, John Frederick Meltzer, Philip Meltzer's great grandfather, who had immi-

grated from Germany, purchased the original 160 acres, a tract one-quarter of a mile east-west by one mile north-south. By 1920, John's son (also named Philip), and grandson Brady had made two additional purchases totaling 120 acres, bringing the farm to 280 acres. About 48 acres of their farm was never cleared, although Brady operated a sawmill on the property for a number of years. The remaining old-growth stand has been in Indiana's Classified Forest Program since 1928, a total of 80 years. Only a very few stems were ever taken from the stand, those were primarily dead or dying trees removed largely before 1900.

The Meltzer homestead site and buildings are somewhat of a time capsule representative of Central Indiana farmsteads of the late 19th Century. The large barn built in 1870 has hand-hewed,



Photo by Cliff Chapman

Phil Meltzer stands next to the state champion Shumard's red oak, which has been around since before the American Revolution.



pegged-beam construction and weathered siding. The imposing two-story, 11-room farm house, built in 1882, is of an interesting half-brick, half-frame construction, with a full basement, walled up by large limestone blocks that were transported by horse-drawn wagons from the St. Paul quarry in Decatur County some eight miles south.

Brady Meltzer (b.1886-d.1971), who was very interested in an array of collectibles, beginning as early as World War I, acquired everything from log buildings, early farm machinery, old tools, farm bells, to antique weapons of frontier days. He reconstructed the log buildings strategically about the farmstead and housed early steam-powered machinery in his huge barn. When I first visited Meltzer Woods in the late 1960s, Brady took me on a tour of this memorabilia, sprightly explaining in fascinating detail when, where, and how he had obtained each item, including the price he had paid for each. He was in his 80s at the time, but his memory still was amazing.

Philip, his sisters, his children, and grandchildren, retain this great love and concern for the future of their Homestead, especially for Meltzer Woods with its superlative trees, and also for the Family Farm that has nurtured five or six generations of the Meltzer Family during the past 150 years. Philip lost his wife Charlene in April 2006, but their children are equally committed to protecting the Family Forest in perpetuity. Their son Kris lives nearby in Shelbyville, and serves as a Child Services Attorney for Shelby and

Decatur Counties. Their daughter Karen, and husband Tony Armstrong live in the original farmhouse with their family. Tony farms the Meltzer acreage, raising corn and soybeans, much as Philip did for many years.

During the nearly 50 years that I have done natural areas work in Indiana, I have not encountered another family that epitomizes, as do the Meltzers, why it is essential that we preserve both the natural and cultural diversity that once was commonplace in Indiana, but which is now disappearing at an alarming rate. ***During the past few years, we have been losing open land in Indiana at the rate of approximately 100,000 acres per year!*** At that rate of loss, we develop or modify another average-sized county every three years. The Meltzers understand intuitively why it is essential to our future to protect their beautiful forest and all such high-quality natural areas throughout the state. These gentle, thoughtful people brought their heritage to the 21st Century essentially intact. It is now our responsibility to help them achieve their goal for the remainder of this century, and beyond.

Early travelers and explorers in Indiana routinely described the presettlement forest of Indiana as impressive stands of large, very tall, widely spaced trees with an overarching canopy of very dense foliage that excluded most sunlight from the forest floor. A vastly different aspect from most frequently disturbed woodlots of today. Although Meltzer Woods



Sessile trillium (*Trillium sessile*) is a native wildflower species that is found in Meltzer Woods.

still retains much of that primeval character even today, changes have occurred.

As Philip Meltzer described in our recent conversations for this essay, he has noted three definite changes during his memory:

- 1) A progressive decline in the number and vigor of black ash, the most wet-adapted tree species in the woods, following the construction of the large drainage ditch that lowered the water table, thereby reducing the frequency and duration of ponding in the swamps.
- 2) The loss of most of the elms following the widespread advance of the elm diseases.
- 3) Major increases in the amount of dead wood on the forest floor in recent years. In Philip's words, "The forest does not seem as healthy as it used to be."

Although the only constant in nature is change, we certainly hope that Meltzer Woods does not become subject to the emerald ash borer or other forest problems of today.

It is appropriate to conclude this essay with a brief overview of the



A photo of the woods taken in 1978 shows how the forest has changed remarkably little in three decades.

ecological site conditions where Meltzer Woods is located and a discussion of how Meltzer Woods became known to science.

The Meltzer farm, including the Woods, is flat to gently rolling with shallow depressions that originally held standing water from two to six months each year, before ditching and drainage tile lowered the water table below the root zone of agricultural crops. The soils that developed under the original forest over the millennia following de-glaciation were representative of the “black and clay” lands of the Central Till-plain Natural Region. The light-colored soils of the gently undulating slopes are largely Crosby silt loams; whereas those of depressions are of the nearly black Brookston silty clay loams.

Meltzer Woods first became known to the scientists and conservationists of the state through a quadrant study of the stand

completed by Carl O. Keller of Indianapolis in 1945, and published in the *Butler University Botanical Studies* (BUBS 7: 140-154). Even then, Keller, along with notable *Butler University Plant Ecologists* John Potzger and Ray Friesner, strongly

recommended the protection of Meltzer Woods in perpetuity. Brady Meltzer did also at the time of the Butler study. As Keller stated, “Mr. Meltzer seemed to have a tender affection for his trees.” He quoted Brady as observing, “There is some valuable timber in this woods, and it would make a nice piece of farm land, if cleared, but I’m going to leave it alone.”

The next intensive study of Meltzer Woods was by Lindsey, Schmelz, and Nichols of Purdue University, during their *Natural Areas Survey of Indiana* during the late 1960s. In their study, they divided their forest sampling according to the two soil types, Crosby and Brookston. Crosby soil supported predominately American beech, sugar maple, tulip tree, white ash, and red elm at a combined importance of 80% of the canopy trees, and a tree diversity of 23 species. In contrast, Brookston soil supported a more mixed stand with primar-

ily American beech, white ash, Shumard’s red oak, sugar maple, basswood, hackberry, and bur oak, at a combined importance of 64%, and a higher diversity at 27 species. They found 52 trees in excess of 30” in diameter in a 25-acre sample, including three species (black ash, swamp white oak, and Shumard’s red oak) that were then the Indiana State champions for those species. The largest trees were Shumard’s oak at 55 and 65 inches in diameter.

During the late 1960s and early 70s, I visited Meltzer Woods several times in conjunction with my National Landmark Survey for the U.S. National Park Service, and during my study of beech-maple forests of the Midwest.

All of us who have studied this remarkable stand have been singularly impressed by both its grandeur and its great ecological significance. We were all similarly touched by the Meltzer Family’s desire that it continue intact to equally impress those who come after us.

Perhaps Brady Meltzer said it best, as remembered by his son Philip in our telephone conversation in March 2009, “At the close of World War II, when veneer prices went so high, I was tempted to cut the trees, but I knew that if I ever sold them, I would feel bad every time I looked at the stumps.”

“The wilderness came to us from the eternity of the past.  
Let us have the wisdom and courage to project it into the eternity of the future.”

- Alton A. Lindsey, *Walking in Wilderness, The Natural Heritage of Indiana*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington

# BRINGING OUR PAST INTO THE FUTURE: A LAND TRUST-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

By Cliff Chapman, Conservation Director

We, as an organization, strive to be as effective as possible in accomplishing our mission. 2008 was a year of continued organizational growth as we became more strategic in how we spent our time and resources protecting plants and animals and the land and water that support them. A global look was taken for our eleven-county service area and our mission statement. Dozens of partners were spoken to. A lot of methodologies were reviewed.

While remaining central Indiana's local land trust and vetting all possible land protection opportunities, we decided to pick the best remaining examples of what central Indiana once was, where endangered species are still surviving, where ecosystems are still functioning, and where ecosystem function may return with concerted effort for proactive conservation.

The result of this is a list of Core Conservation Areas. Among others, sites that harbor emergent marsh and associated rare species, central Indiana's last remaining tall grass prairie, large forest blocks in need of connectivity and the area's last unprotected old growth forest made the list.

Meltzer Woods is the last unprotected old growth forest in central Indiana and became our highest priority for protection. Knowing the family has protected the forest for 150 years and takes pride in their family legacy of preservation, we had to ask ourselves what we could do to help.

We knew there were acres of purple winter creeper (*Euonymus fortuneii*) covering the forest floor and crawling up ancient trees. For years, the family has battled invasive species on their own. We contacted the family and explored what their wishes were for the future of the old growth forest and then discussed the variety of conservation options that we, as their local land trust, could offer.

We agreed to work with the family to manage the forest as a nature preserve and control invasive species. The family will continue their legacy of natural and cultural preservation. We are now working together to improve the health of this living museum.

We have never made such an offer to a private landowner in the past. But this is a special place. Of the 48 acres of old growth forest, there may not be a single one that is not infested with either purple winter creeper or garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) to some extent. Over time, thousands of volunteer hours will go into controlling these invasive species and monitoring the results.

Although the property is not open to the public, volunteer workdays will be posted on the event calendar on our website ([www.conservingindiana.org](http://www.conservingindiana.org)), and individuals can help us restore vigor to this magical place. Working alongside trees that not only predate statehood but a few that may predate Columbus discovering America is an experience difficult to describe. Spiritual? Awe-inspiring?

Join us on a workday, then tell us what you felt. If you are unable to volunteer, consider making a donation so we can continue this important work bringing our past into the future.



Photo by Cliff Chapman

Volunteer Richard Miller works to remove purple winter creeper, an invasive plant which has begun covering the floor and trees in Meltzer Woods.



# SKUNK CABBAGE: A SPRING ANOMALY

Photo courtesy IDNR/Outdoor Indiana



The skunk cabbage can be found in full bloom in Indiana's low, marshy areas in spring.

By Benjamin Eddy, Indiana Division of Nature Preserves

The notoriously late-rising Benjamin Franklin gave sage advice to those of us whose Rolodexes don't contain the Founding Fathers. His "early to rise" credo applies to plants as well as colonial farmers (the latter included the forthcoming plant in their pharmacopoeia to treat ailments like scurvy, consumption, even dropsy). The unfortunately named skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) has adapted to the highly competitive Midwestern forest floor by being the first to rise every spring.

The cabbage is on the short list of plants able to undergo thermogenesis, that is, the ability to generate its own heat; and not just a few degrees either, skunk cabbage can reach temperatures up to 35 degrees Celsius higher than the ambient surroundings. Its metabolic process of oxidizing starches to generate this heat is eerily similar to the way we maintain our own body temperatures. While other forest-floor dwelling plants patiently await spring, the skunk cabbage, melts the surrounding ice and snow like a zombie breaching its grave.

Evolution has bestowed the clever skunk cabbage another trait: the ability to mimic the smell of decomposing carrion. Traditionally we think of plants seducing their would-be pollinators with pleasant scents. The cabbage takes the low road towards achieving pollination by attracting flies. By committing what amounts to olfactory fraud, skunk cabbage lures hungry flies to trample around its reproductive parts inadvertently helping the cabbage achieve its reproductive needs. It should be noted that the compounds responsible for this odor are named cadaverine and putrescine, and efficiently enough, the by-product of the chemical reaction generating the cabbage's heat.

Emerging earlier than other plants gives the skunk cabbage a clear advantage over its rivals. For one, it is poised to make photosynthetic hay when the sun's rays grow strong again in the spring. By May, skunk cabbage leaves are fully developed and engaged in storing the starch it needs to pioneer the winter floor.

Skunk cabbage is a wetland plant and lurks in low, marshy areas near streams and ponds. You can find these intrepid plants in late February or early March. Should you be lucky enough to find one of these plants, carefully poke your finger into the spathe and you'll get an idea for its peculiar heat producing adaptation. Around June, these plants will bear fully developed fruit: little red balls vaguely resembling tiny pomegranates. After a long growing season, skunk cabbage goes to seed with withering leaves.

In keeping with its supernatural abilities, the plant will focus its attention on the subterranean. A long rhizome extending a couple of feet into the soil makes the cabbage hardy, so hardy that, undisturbed, it can persist for hundreds of years.



Photo courtesy IDNR/Outdoor Indiana

A glimpse inside the skunk cabbage's spathe.



# WE HAVE A BETTER RETURN THAN YOUR 401(K)

By Kathrine Calahan, Development Committee Vice-Chair

The economy is struggling. The instability of today's economy and the global financial markets holds many repercussions for the non-profit sector. Fundraising becomes increasingly challenging as donors may not be able to give as generously as in the past. Non-profit organizations will be affected, and the Central Indiana Land Trust is no exception. However this can be a unique chance for us to pursue corporate fundraising.

This economic downturn gives corporations an opportunity to indulge mission statements. Companies touting community support and giving can follow through. More importantly, this is an opportunity to ask corporations what we can do for them. By cultivating a relationship with the Central Indiana Land Trust, businesses small and large will have access to inexpensive exposure, publicity, community respect, and market share. We are also offering additional benefits to corporations interested in giving as outlined below.

Unlike international growth portfolios or mutual funds, the Central Indiana Land Trust is a guaranteed valuable investment. As the economy struggles so do natural areas in Central Indiana. Wooded areas are cleared. Streams are contaminated. Irreplaceable habitats are destroyed. The best time to conserve natural spaces is before they are gone which is exactly why we are dedicated to preserving the best of Central Indiana's Hoosier heartland.

Corporations can share this ideal with us if they have the opportunity to give. Everything is a business; from chains like Kroger, to mom & pop shops, even the company where you work. Please help be an active part of our corporate fundraising goals. Contact the office for more information.

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## Benefits for all Corporate Partners

All members of the Corporate Partner Program are offered for the following benefits with additional benefits listed below each category:

- Acknowledgment at public presentations by the Central Indiana Land Trust
- Listing in the Central Indiana Land Trust's Newsletter
- Recognition on the Central Indiana Land Trust's Website
- Special Invitations to events hosted by the Central Indiana Land Trust

### Giving Levels & Additional Benefits

#### **\$5,000 and up: Patron**

Corporate Partner Benefits, plus:

- An invitation to have a Corporate presence or booth at the Central Indiana Land Trust Annual Event
- 6 tickets to the Central Indiana Land Trust Annual Event
- 6 memberships to the Central Indiana Land Trust to give as gifts
- Feature article in an issue of the Central Indiana Land Trust's Newsletter
- 2 personal guided tours of one of our Nature Preserves

#### **\$2,500 - \$4,999: Protector**

Corporate Partner Benefits, plus:

- An invitation to have a Corporate presence or booth at the Central Indiana Land Trust Annual Event
- 4 tickets to the Central Indiana Land Trust Annual Event
- 4 memberships to the Central Indiana Land Trust to give as gifts
- 1 personal guided tour of one of our Nature Preserves

#### **\$1,000 - \$2,499: Guardian**

Corporate Partner Benefits, plus:

- An invitation to have a Corporate presence or booth at the Central Indiana Land Trust Annual Event
- 2 tickets to the Central Indiana Land Trust Annual Event
- 2 memberships to the Central Indiana Land Trust to give as gifts

#### **\$300 - \$999: Century**

Corporate Partner Benefits

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by Carl and Laurel Zangerl-Salter

In Honor of Patricia Hair  
by Chance Hair and Erin Downs

In Memory of Dr. John Pelton  
by Central Indiana Land Trust,  
who along with his wife Mary, was a  
great supporter of the land trust

## Spring Field Days

**Saturday, April 4th:** Honeysuckle removal at Burr Oak Bend, Hamilton County

**Saturday, April 11th, 1:00 pm:** Hank Heron Kids Club Rookery visit, Johnson County

**Wednesday, April 15th:** Garlic mustard removal at Blue Bluff, Morgan County

**Saturday, April 18th:** Flag trail route and removal of garlic mustard at Schramm Woods, Hancock County

**Saturday, April 25th:** Wildflower hike at Schramm Woods, Hancock County

**Saturday, May 2nd:** Garlic mustard removal at Meltzer's Woods, Shelby County

**Wednesday, May 6th:** Garlic mustard search at Burnett Woods, Hendricks County

**Saturday, June 6th, 7:00 am:** Breeding bird count at Burr Oak Bend, Hamilton County

**Saturday, June 13th, 7:00 am:** Breeding bird count at Mossy Point, Parke County

All events begin at 9:00 am unless otherwise noted. RSVPs are required for all events. Please sign up by contacting Maria at [msteiner@conservingindiana.org](mailto:msteiner@conservingindiana.org) or 317-631-5263 x114. Detailed information will be emailed out to those who have signed up the week before each event.

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: MARK STACY

I am a CPA in the audit and assurance department of Blue & Co., LLC, a regional accounting firm based in Indianapolis. Prior to joining Blue, I attended Purdue University. While I am not a native Hoosier, having been born in Charleston, SC, I have grown to love the changing seasons and diverse wildlife found in Indiana. I am currently serving as chair of the Central Indiana Land Trust's Outreach Committee. The land trust has expanded my knowledge and appreciation of our precious natural areas and reaffirmed my belief that their protection is vital to maintaining the ecological balance of our planet. In our free time, my wife Kelly and I enjoy riding bikes and exploring Indiana's wonderful parks and nature areas.

***The land trust thanks you for your commitment, Mark!***



# DESTINATION DELAWARE: OUR NEXT CHAPTER

## Welcome New Members!

William and Susan Alexander  
Christopher and Alissa Boardman  
Laura and Jay Bolden  
Michael Brill  
Chumleys Beer House  
Mary DeVoe  
Lisa DeWeese  
Wendy Ford  
Christy Frampton  
Patricia K. Hair  
Diana Harvey Jackson  
Dori Lipschultz  
Gates Maier  
Joe McCurdy  
My Garden Club  
Kathleen O'Callaghan  
Kate B. Ott  
Martha Roan  
Steve and Lori Schwartz  
Cheryl Shearer  
Amy Smith  
Joe Stasey  
Steven Steiner and Ellen Gullett  
Mary Ann Stewart  
Janet Wagner  
William Wagner  
Jim and Laura Whalen  
Jennifer Whitson

*Before you recycle this newsletter,  
please share it with a friend!*

You are invited to join us as we celebrate the opening of our new office in the Indiana Humanities Council Building, also known as the Meredith Nicholson House and "The House of a Thousand Candles." Meredith Nicholson was the author of approximately 30 novels, essays, and short stories, and frequently hosted fellow Hoosier authors Booth Tarkington and James Whitcomb Riley.

1500 North Delaware Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202  
Thursday, June 4th, 7:00 pm

Refreshments will be served

Please RSVP by Tuesday, May 26th to 317.631.5263  
or [info@conservingindiana.org](mailto:info@conservingindiana.org).



Photo courtesy Indiana Humanities Council

The new Central Indiana Land Trust office is located on the third floor of the Indiana Humanities Council Building.

## THANKS TO OUR NEWSLETTER SPONSOR:

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[btlaw.com](http://btlaw.com)



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

Please visit our website:  
[www.conservingindiana.org](http://www.conservingindiana.org)!

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