

THE ACRES QUARTERLY

Winter 2020 | Vol. 59 – No. 4



ACRES
LANDTRUST

Quality over Quantity: Raising Our Standards

Herbarium: Providing a Glimpse into the Past

Partnering with Fort Wayne Children's Zoo

60 Years of ACRES

Member Profile: Kirk Swaidner

From the Executive Director

WELCOME
72newmembers!

Dear Members,

This year's pandemic helped me gain a greater perspective on various pandemics faced not only by people, but also by nature. As I write this letter, COVID-19 has killed more than 230,000 people in the United States, and as a result has impacted nearly every sector of our lives.

Because I'm a tree guy, I'll offer a few recent tree pandemics for perspective. Chestnut blight, Dutch elm disease and the emerald ash borer killed 90 percent or greater of the affected species' mature trees—American chestnuts, American elm and white ash trees respectively.

Losing 0.07 percent (230,000+) of our human population in America is devastating, but pause to imagine if it were over 90 percent. Everything would be fundamentally different.


When forests lose such a large percentage of any given species, the entire system is altered. Animals must change their diet. Insects relying on the species as a host plant decline.

Because there is one less competitor among tree species, species most like the missing species increase. Each of these changes triggers others. The human impact of lost species includes loss of inspiration for artists and others who love nature, loss of medicine and loss of cultural ties to the species ("chestnuts roasting on an open fire" as an example). Medicinal uses of the trees are harder to procure, towns and roads named after the trees are devoid of their namesake.

As we humans battle our own pandemic, we turn to nature—even as it battles its own numerous and simultaneous pandemics. ACRES nature preserves provide places where nature can recover, adapt and create its new way of living, both during and after pandemics, as well as places where we humans can find solace and strength to carry on in times of loss.

When you visit a preserve, you are witnessing a post-pandemic, current pandemic and pre-pandemic system. Although the plants and animals on the preserves may fluctuate wildly over time, the land itself will remain to sustain the next version of natural systems. ACRES protects land which, in turn, sustains what is living on it at the moment. Enjoy what is here today—it will be different tomorrow. Then tomorrow, go out and enjoy tomorrow's version.

Sincerely,

 Jason Kissel

jkissel@acreslandtrust.org
260-637-2273 ext. 2

Cover photo: the snow covered banks of the Wabash River illuminate with the rising winter sun. Located in Wells County, Acres Along the Wabash preserve protects 86.7 acres of riverbank, bluffs and forest. Bundle up and explore the frosty trails this season!

Photo of Acres Along the Wabash by Thomas Sprunger

Mary & John Albright
Melissa Allen
Dennis & Celia Amspacher
from Katrina Custer
Ben Armstrong
Bethany Ballard
Scott Bard
Paula & Randy Belice
Elizabeth Binford
Emily Bishton
Stephen C. Brown & Ruth Slavin
Lauren Bukiri
from Caleb Vogel
Bill & Gail Burk
Drew Butler
from Donna Lesh
Neal & Andrea Cousino
Carrie Cozad
Carl & Donna Custer
from Katrina Custer
Chad & Pat Custer
from Katrina Custer
Clara Custer
from Katrina Custer
Karen Eller & Greg Sherman
Timothy Ellsworth
Conrad Fisher
Lisa & Richard Gardner Jr.
Robert Hathaway & Amy DiNovo
Hathaway
Michael & Suzanne Heck
Charlene Hoffman

Jennifer Hornberger
from Anna & Caryl Hornberger
Pete Jones
from Art Jasen
Kimberly Kanney
Randy & Sue Koser
from Jim & Merna Eisenbraun
Jeff & Julie Kukelhan
from Mark & Mary Ellen Maffey
Anna Kyle
Ivy Kyle
Kathryn & Dave Lemish
Jacob Macke
Sara & Dave Manning
Marilyn Marchionni
Suzie McDonald
Liam McGouldrick
Nancy Miller
Lisa & Sam Mohler
Robert & Jill Montgomery
Harmony & John Nixon
Sharon Partridge
Ashley Pepple & Jacob Ressler
Dorothy L. Peterson
Mary Ann Petre
Donald R. & Jean M. Purcell
Chuck Putterbaugh
from Diane Groenert
Lillian Putterbaugh
from Diane Groenert
Zach Rilett & Jozy Garrison

Ells & Cathy Saxer
from Katrina Custer
PJ Scherrar
Dannon Schroeder
Tim Schumacker & Sharon Doster
Larry Shepherd
Roger & Cindy Shirley
from Katrina Custer
Aaron Smith & Kirsten Eckert-
Smith
Phil Smith
Chloe Smith-Guitard
from Diane Groenert
Stephen Smith-Guitard
from Diane Groenert
Tasha Smith-Putterbaugh
from Diane Groenert
Scott Sovine
Amy Swick
Allen Tippmann
Russell Tomlinson & Sandra Cripe
Mars & Chris Valdivia
Tobi Vehrs
Caleb Vogel
Hope Wallace
Dana & Tami Williamson
from Jim & Merna Eisenbraun
Sally Witwer

CORPORATE
IWM Consulting Group, LLC



ACRES Land Trust owns and protects natural and working lands, inspiring people to value, appreciate, and support these places for the benefit of all, today and forever. Today, we protect and manage 117 properties totaling 7,230 acres. In addition to helping care for and restore our local land, your support also offers more than 50 trail systems where you and others can explore thriving natural places, from dawn to dusk, at no charge. Thank you!

1802 Chapman Road, PO Box 665 | Huntertown, IN 46748-0665
260.637.ACRE (2273) | email: acres@acreslandtrust.org

acreslandtrust.org



in memory of

John Elliott
from Mary Anna Feitler & Marcia Van Eden
Thomas Essig
from Laura Dauscher
Margien L. Lund
from Mary Anna Feitler

in honor of

Rick & Penney Phillips
from anonymous
Sandia & Ray Proud
from James Roberts

Raising Our Standards Quality over Quantity

The core of ACRES mission—to protect local land—drives everything we do. Protecting land is possible only when people participate by volunteering, donating and sharing ACRES with others. Because more people participating means more land protected and better cared for, our current strategic plan focuses on building capacity: increasing the number of people supporting this meaningful work.

Based on 2018 research conducted by ACRES, we know a sizable number of folks first learn about us through trails offered at our open preserves. They may finally check out a property after driving by it daily on their way to work. Maybe they were invited by a friend who's an ACRES member to explore a nearby preserve. We know that people from all walks of life enjoy ACRES trails: parents exploring with kids, runners logging miles of trail runs, individuals seeking a place to reflect and recharge. Although trails are not our primary mission, they benefit the general community while functioning as a useful way to draw people to ACRES.

Based on this same research, and anecdotally, we know there is often confusion about who owns the preserves and what guests can expect when they stop for a visit. Is it a county park? What kind of parking is available? What rules should I follow? Why doesn't this property "feel" like other ACRES preserves I've visited?

ACRES leadership realizes that the preserve visitor experience varies greatly from property to property, and we're missing opportunities to encourage support for ACRES mission. If we're going to raise awareness about these special places and increase support for them, it's time to raise our standards for that portion of a preserve experience that we can control.

ACRES leadership recently set new minimum amenity standards. These standards will help send a clear message to preserve visitors



that this is an ACRES property, thus strengthening our "brand" in hopes of inspiring more people to participate in our mission "to value, appreciate, and support these places for the benefit of all, today and forever."

At the very least, preserve visitors can expect:

- Entrance sign informing visitors they have arrived at their destination while raising awareness of those driving by that the preserve exists, and that it is owned and protected by ACRES Land Trust and its members
- Gravel parking lot big enough for six vehicles, well-maintained and free of potholes and ruts
- Trailhead sign encouraging respectful use of the property and asking visitors to help by joining ACRES
- Trails are clearly-defined, well-maintained earthen paths. Forested trails are maintained at least monthly, with grass trails maintained more frequently during the growing season.
- Trail map available online for address and most current wayfinding. (Yes—we'll be updating the book too!)



This process led us to realize some very tough decisions needed to be made. Not all of our open preserves can accommodate these new standards. And compared to similar organizations and even some trails groups, ACRES offers an extraordinarily high number of trails (read more at acreslandtrust.org/beyondtrails). It also can be argued that by offering trails, we are negatively impacting the land we promise to protect and care for. For all these reasons, we will retire trail systems at 23 open properties by the end of 2024, leaving 31 trail systems open to the public, from dawn to dusk, every day of the year.

This decision was not made lightly. Great time, care, and consideration was given to each trail system slated to retire. Criteria included proximity to other trail systems, size, inaccessibility due to flooding, low visitation and the inability to enhance visitor amenities to our new standards. ACRES staff presented this approach to both Land Management & Protection and Advancement committees before sending it to our Board of Directors for final approval. Staff also discussed this approach with surviving land donors to secure their approval.

ACRES leadership feels this approach is better aligned with our mission to protect land. Instead of reducing the amount invested in visitor amenities, it will be reallocated and concentrated on fewer trail systems. Although the number of trail systems will decrease, the quality of the visitor experience will increase, inspiring new support for protecting local land.

Join us for an open discussion about this visitor amenity plan on December 12 at Asherwood. Ask questions and talk with others who think a lot about protecting land. See page 12 for details.

HERBARIUM Providing a glimpse into the past

by Kevin Kilbane

ACRES protects more than land. We also work to protect the history of our land donors. Their stories and artifacts provide a glimpse into the past, an explanation of who they were and how they cared for and loved the land before ACRES. Join local journalist Kevin Kilbane as he uncovers the story of a rediscovered historical book.



August Detering was not quite 21 on April 21, 1860, when he boarded the ship *Teutonia* at Hamburg, Germany, and sailed for New York and a new life in America. The few possessions Detering carried with him included his treasured herbarium: a hardcover book the size of a family Bible. The book was filled with 167 pages of dried plant specimens he had begun collecting in 1857, near the village of Haldem in northwest Germany.

About 160 years later, ACRES Land Trust has helped return the herbarium to Detering's homeland. It's a story of a hardworking young man, of sadness and of generosity. It's also a tale of deep love of the land, including a parcel now protected forever as an ACRES nature preserve.

UNIQUE SPECIMEN

Born in 1839, in Hunteburg, Germany, Detering was about 18 years old when he started his herbarium. On each page he glued from three to seven plants—both natives and some garden species. Today they remain firmly attached, with leaves and flowers flattened out carefully to show them in detail. "The color is surprisingly intact," said ACRES Executive Director Jason Kissel as he carefully turned through pages in mid-August. Detering's precise handwriting identifies specimens by their Latin scientific names. (If he wasn't sure, he didn't guess.)

For Kissel, this rare glimpse of plants growing 160 years ago also raises a question: A few specimens are now problematic invasive species here. Could they have arrived with immigrants such as Detering who, like him, grew them as reminders of home?

NEW LIFE

Census data, plat maps and records obtained through genealogy research show Detering arrived in New York May 8, 1860. By mid-June, he had moved to Allen County, Indiana, where he worked as a gardener.

In fall 1862, he married Louise Marie Holzer in Allen County. Within a year, the couple moved to Dearborn County in southeast Indiana where the first four of their eight children were born between 1863 and 1869. The family moved to Noble County in late 1869, settling on the southwest side of Round Lake, northeast of Kendallville. Detering grew produce and plants there, then sold them in Kendallville. "Sweet Potato and Cabbage Plants a Specialty," notes an 1874 atlas of Noble County.

Louise died in December 1877, leaving August with eight children about ages 1 to 13. When August died at age 45 on Sept. 2, 1885, the farm passed to oldest son Henry, about age 20.

ACRES CONNECTION

ACRES unknowingly connected with this herbarium story about 35 years ago. In her will, Henry Detering's daughter, Esther, gave ACRES her family's 54-acre farm, now known as Detering Nature Preserve.

By the 1950s, the family had stopped farming the land, Kissel said. Nature gradually reclaimed it. Today, towering wild cherry trees dominate a woods also home to oaks, maples, hickories, walnuts and wildflowers. One trail meanders through the woods while another leads to a clearing looking out on Round Lake. *(continued on next page)*

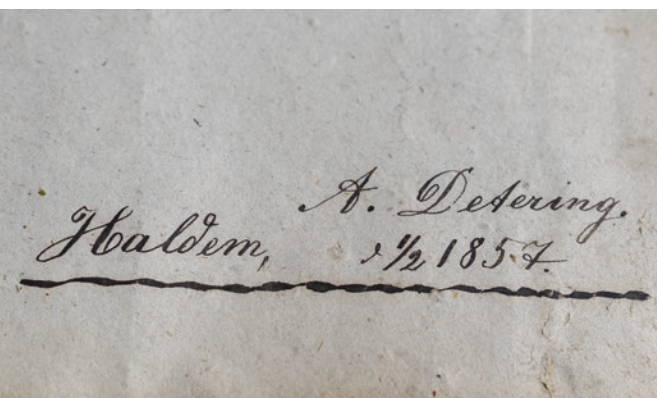




(continued from page 7)

"This land... meant so much to her," Evelyn Thiem, 88, of Kendallville, said of Esther Detering. They had become close friends in the 1950s while working at a Kendallville bank. Esther lived in Kendallville in her later years, never married and had no direct heirs. Knowing Esther wanted to save her family's land, Thiem told her about ACRES and put her in touch with members.

Although Esther was born after the death of her grandfather, August Detering, she had saved his herbarium. When Esther died in March 1986, she left the herbarium to her friend, Evelyn Thiem, who stored it in a closet for more than 30 years. About a year ago, Evelyn rediscovered it and showed it to her daughter-in-law, Cathy Thiem, who knew about ACRES' connection to the Detering family. She asked if ACRES wanted the book.



GOING HOME

Because August Detering had collected the plants in Germany, ACRES staff decided its best use would be at a German museum. "To me, that is pretty special," Evelyn Thiem said. "I think Esther would like it, too."

ACRES asked members Geoff and Josie Fox of San Jose, California, to find a German museum interested in the herbarium. (Geoff speaks German, and the Foxes enjoy traveling, Kissel explained.) Geoff said they searched online near Haldem, where August Detering had collected his specimens, and they connected with Museum am Schölerberg in Osnabrück, a natural history museum with an environmental education center. The museum also works with an organization like ACRES to educate students and the public about nature, said Francie Neinhuis, a biological preparator at the museum. Purdue University in West Lafayette has shipped the book to Germany.

Neinhuis said that although Museum am Schölerberg has a few herbariums, the Detering collection will be the oldest. Neinhuis explained that the Haldem area once had different types of bogs that were destroyed by people and businesses digging for peat. Today, the water areas have been restored, and the area is now protected in three nature reserves. "It actually is a very important area for migratory birds to rest," she said.

SHARING THE STORY

Neinhuis plans to have digital photographs taken of pages in the Detering herbarium and the museum's other herbariums. Scientists can use these photos to study plants without damaging the original collections. Neinhuis will send ACRES copies of these photos that could be used for a joint exhibit about Detering and his herbarium. Then ACRES and the museum in Osnabrück can share the story of a young man's love of plants, and his family's deep devotion to the land.

Photos by Rene Marvin Ramos



Photo spread on pages 10–11 by Thomas Sprunger: ACRES protects several acres of sugar bush on Asherwood preserve in Wabash County. Sugar bush describes a forest stand of maple trees that can be tapped for syrup. This historic sugar shack is still used by ACRES at the end of winter to make fresh maple syrup. Enjoy the harvest with us at a members-only breakfast. See page 13 for more details.



VISITOR AMENITIES DISCUSSION

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1 pm

WABASH COUNTY | Asherwood
7496 W. SR 124, Wabash, IN 46992

Share your thoughts with others who also think a lot about land, conservation and the act of protecting the places we love. This is a great opportunity to get your questions answered about ACRES plans to improve visitor amenities. *Presented by Jason Kissel*

SHARE THE TRAILS: FIRST HIKES

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1 (multiple locations)

Ring in the New Year with invigoration! We'll trek the trails across our region, welcoming 2021 with movement and camaraderie in forever-protected places. Free to the public, donations and memberships encouraged. *Space is limited.* RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or call 260-637-2273 by December 30.

- 10 am** ALLEN COUNTY | Blue Cast Springs
21412 Bluecast Road, Woodburn, IN 46797
- 10 am** HUNTINGTON COUNTY | Pehkokia Woods
1570 Flaxmill Road, Huntington, IN 46750
- 3 pm** NOBLE COUNTY | Lloyd W. Bender Memorial Forest
1891 N. River Road W, Albion, IN 46701



NEW MEMBER OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 1-2:30 pm

ALLEN COUNTY | Tom and Jane Dustin Nature Preserve
1802 Chapman Road, Huntertown, IN 46748

Are you new to ACRES? Welcome! Meet other new members and longtime volunteers while learning how your membership protects land. Hear ACRES history, updates on new projects, and get answers to your questions: How do we acquire new land? How will we protect it forever? *Refreshments and light snacks provided.*

ART WORKSHOP FOR ACRES MEMBERS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 2 pm

WABASH COUNTY | Asherwood
7496 W. SR 124, Wabash, IN 46992

Get creative with local artist Julie Wall, owner of The Hedge art studio in Fort Wayne. Learn to bookbind your own nature notebook using the Japanese stab binding method. Each participant can create two hand-bound books using different patterns and colors. *Space is limited.* RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or call 260-637-2273 by January 22.

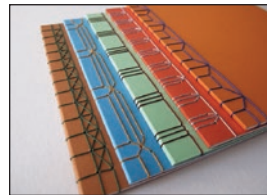


Photo by Julie Wall

SNOW MOON SHADOW

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 6:30 pm

STEBEN COUNTY | Wing Haven
180 W 400 N, Angola, IN 46703

Take to the trails under a Full Snow Moon and enjoy shadow play across hilly topography. If it's cloudy, bring a flashlight to make your own shadows. Meet in the studio for hot cider and cocoa before we venture out. *Presented by Shane Perfect, Wing Haven Caretaker.* *Space is limited.* RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or call 260-637-2273 by January 28.

CREEK STOMP—WINTER EDITION

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1 pm

WABASH COUNTY | Hathaway Preserve at Ross Run
1866 E. Baumbauer Road, Wabash, IN 46992

Ross Run in winter is spectacular! 20' icicles, frozen waterfalls, and fossils. Come see what you've been missing! Depending on weather, we'll be walking either through frigid water or on ice. Choose your footwear carefully and consider bringing dry shoes and socks for after. *Presented by the Kissel Family.*



SWIFT HIKE & BALD EAGLE WATCH

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2 pm

WABASH & MIAMI COUNTY

Addresses available with RSVP

Caravan along with us to three southern ACRES preserves. Take a quick hike at each preserve to watch for Bald Eagles soaring along the ravines and waterways.

Space is limited. RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or call 260-637-2273 by February 19.



Photo by Dave Fox

Save the Date

ASHERWOOD MAPLE SYRUP AND PANCAKE DAY FOR MEMBERS

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 9 am - noon

WABASH COUNTY | Asherwood Environmental Center
7496 W SR 124, Wabash, IN 46992

It's sugar bush season! You're invited to breakfast and a guided tour of ACRES maple sugaring operation. Come early or stay late to explore the trails.

\$5/person, children under 5 free.

Space is limited. RSVP to outreach@acreslandtrust.org or call 260-637-2273 by March 11. *Presented by Grady Stout, Asherwood caretaker; Jason Kissel, executive director; and ACRES volunteers.*

Volunteers needed for parking, cooking, greeting, check-in and syrup sales. To lend a hand, contact Jason Kissel at jkissel@acreslandtrust.org or 260-637-2273, ext. 2.

AUTHOR VISIT: ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

JUNE 16-17, 2021

Kimmerer, author of *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* will join ACRES for a refreshing few days of fun! Check with your favorite book retailer to order her book beforehand. More details about this event will be available in the Spring 2021 Quarterly.

ACRES 2020 WINTER PHOTO CONTEST

Photos due on Monday, January 18. *See more details on page 18.*

Social distancing (keeping at least 6 feet of distance between individuals at all times) will be implemented at winter events. Please stay home if you feel ill or have recently been exposed to someone with COVID-19. Masks are required at all indoor events.

To check the status of an event please call 260-637-2273, email outreach@acreslandtrust.org or visit [acreslandtrust.org/events](https://www.acreslandtrust.org/events)

ACRES Partners with Fort Wayne Children's Zoo MOTUS WILDLIFE TRACKING SYSTEM

Our friends at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo strive to make a difference for animals every day by participating in programs and initiatives to protect animals and their habitats. ACRES is excited to partner with the zoo to create and continue local conservation projects.

Notice any weird wire towers while hiking at an ACRES preserve? Though the towers might look like alien communication devices, they actually track wildlife! The towers are part of the Motus Wildlife Tracking System, a worldwide project to study the movement and or migration of small animals.

The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo partnered with ACRES to launch the project locally by setting up four Motus towers. The zoo installed one tower at its site. The other towers were installed at three ACRES preserves: Wildwood, Dygert Nature Preserve and Blue Cast Springs.

Joe Smith, Director of Animal Programs at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, explained: "We really wanted to work with ACRES Land Trust to install Motus towers because there were none in the northeast Indiana region when we first started this project. Now there are seven towers in Indiana, four of which are ours."



ACRES Land Management Specialist Matt Dunno (front center) poses for a selfie with the zoo crew after a successful tower installation

ACRES Director of Land Management, Casey Jones, said, "I thought it would be interesting to have the ability to track a chipped animal through our area. I found three ACRES sites along the same latitude as the zoo. Because the towers' ranges overlap a little bit, we should be able to get a complete picture of what's moving across this part of the state."

How does this tracking system work?

Researchers around the world participating in the Motus Wildlife Tracking System fit small, lightweight radio-transmitters on animals such as birds, bats and large insects. When these animals are within range of a Motus tower, their signal is detected via automated radio telemetry arrays. The data from the towers is sent to the Birds Canada National Data Centre, where it is analyzed and uploaded to the online public network. Each radio transmitter emits a unique signal that allows researchers to determine what type of animal is moving, where it's going, how fast it's moving between towers and how long it stays in an area.

"This project not only allows the public to track migration of small animals, it also can help provide data to people for their projects," said Smith.

The ACRES Land Management crew worked with a team from the zoo to install the Motus towers in 2019. With some maintenance, the towers will remain standing for years to continue tracking wildlife.

"Though ACRES doesn't currently use the data, we are happy to partner with the zoo to offer the necessary space for the Motus towers and be part of a larger international research network," said Jones. "And it is interesting to see what animals move through our area, and where they end up on their journey."



Would you like to learn more about this project, or check out the data for yourself? Visit motus.org

Photos courtesy of the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo.



MEMBER THANK YOU



Then and now, here and far, ACRES members have always made and continue to make our mission of protecting local land possible. From those first 12 founding members in 1960 to the family who joined just yesterday, from local members to those living in California, Connecticut and many states in between, thank you!



1980s



1990s



2000s



2010s



2020



Thank you for 60 years of protecting local land. And here's to many more!



MEMBER PROFILE - KIRK SWAIDNER

By Natasha Manor

ACRES member and volunteer Kirk Swaidner agreed to sit down with Office Manager Natasha Manor for a video interview. Kirk shared his stories of how he came to ACRES, how he developed his land ethic and how a big change in his life led to a new role with the organization.

Kirk first heard about ACRES Land Trust through his friend and mentor, Ted Heemstra. Ted was an early member and board president of ACRES who shared his passion for birding with Kirk and visited various ACRES sites with him. Kirk has supported ACRES as a member and occasional volunteer for the past 20 years.

In 2018, just as Kirk was retiring, ACRES put out a call to recruit a new volunteer steward for Hathaway Preserve at Ross Run in Wabash County. Kirk described how he felt this volunteer opportunity was a gift to him at this point in his life. He has since taken on this demanding role with gusto. To keep the preserve welcoming for its many visitors, he spends long hours trimming back thorny brush, mowing and clearing downed trees off trails. He is grateful to the land that he helps protect, relating how the land often takes care of him too. His support of ACRES Land Trust is deeply anchored by his values and his hopes for the future.



Check out the video at [acreslandtrust.org/yourstories](https://www.acreslandtrust.org/yourstories)

Kirk's reverence for the natural world is inspiring. He says, with a twinkle in his eye: "We are so lucky to be on this planet."

Thank you Kirk, for sharing your story with other ACRES volunteers and members, and thank you for your care of Hathaway Preserve at Ross Run.

Welcome Our New Communications Manager!



Bridgett Hernandez

As someone who grew up in northeast Indiana, I feel incredibly fortunate to join the ACRES team and play a role in protecting land in my new role as Communications Manager.

My passion for storytelling revealed itself at an early age. I began my reporting career in high school as a student journalist and went on to graduate from Ball State with a bachelor's degree in journalism. A deep sense of curiosity attracted me to the profession; it's given me the opportunity to learn new things, interview interesting people and gain access to areas that are off limits to the general public.

In 2012, this curiosity led me to South Korea, where I lived and worked as an English teacher for more than three years. When I wasn't in the classroom, I was learning the language, exploring the culture and traveling to the peninsula's volcanic islands, bamboo forests and mountain-top temples. I documented these experiences on my travel blog and wrote articles for publications, including Stars and Stripes.

I returned to Fort Wayne in 2016 with a renewed appreciation for the region's natural spaces. As a journalist covering northeast Indiana, some of my favorite stories have taken me outside from following a first-time hunting class for women to interviewing outdoor enthusiasts about the joys of winter hiking.

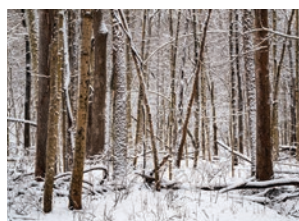
I look forward to getting to know the ACRES community and learning your stories. Of course, the land itself has its own stories to share. These natural spaces are so much more than beautiful backdrops: They offer windows into the past and future, sustain plants and animals and play a vital role in the health of our planet.

If you have a story idea, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I look forward to meeting you!

ACRES 2020 WINTER PHOTO CONTEST

PHOTOS DUE ON MONDAY, JANUARY 18

'Tis the season to snap a photo! As you explore the frosty trails, take your camera or phone to capture a critter, a selfie or a stunning scene! Members of ACRES board and staff will select five winners who will receive a newly-designed ACRES reusable bag and a one-year membership.



Contest Categories:

- **Wildlife:** Take a quick pic of a critter you've spotted along the trails
- **People on Preserves:** Photograph a preserve outing with your friends or family
- **Selfie:** Bundle up and snap a trail selfie by yourself or with your group
- **Landscape:** Share the natural wonders of an ACRES preserve with a winter scene
- **Macro photo:** Capture a nature close-up

Photo submissions must be captured this winter (2020-2021) at an ACRES preserve following all preserve rules. Interested in participating? Find out how to enter and read contest guidelines at acreslandtrust.org/photocontest.

SPECIAL thanks

ACRES Board of Directors & Committee Members
 Alison Adams
 Donated shelving
 Stephanie Bailey, Kris Connerly & Diana Jones
 Native garden workday volunteers
 Bonnie Bloom
 Video interviews & editing
 Dave Brumm, Laura Colpitts, Nancy & Joe Conrad, Norm Cox, Chris Fairfield, Barb & Terry Gorney, Jim Haddock, Tedra Hemingway, Mark Maffey, Shane Perfect, Louise Pomeroy, Judy Schroff & April Steury
 Fall Quarterly assembly & distribution volunteers

Eagle Scout James Langmaid from Scouts BSA Troop 349
 New Wildwood trail bridge
 Chris Fairfield, Mary Anna Feitler & Carol Spallone
 Archive Projects
 Louise Pomeroy
 Office Support
 The Goat's Beards
 Musical preserve performance
 Jeff Ormiston
 Leading an ACRES firefly hike
 Kirk Swaidner
 Participating in a video interview
 Volunteer Preserve Stewards, Caretakers & Trail Monitors

wish list

Order from ACRES Amazon Wish List: Under "Find a List or Registry," search for "ACRES Land Trust" or request a link at acres@acreslandtrust.org.

ACRES Memberships
 Your ACRES stories and photos from the trails
 10-15 amp portable jobsite table saw
 2-cycle oil
 Bar oil
 Batteries (AA, C & D)
 Belt sander
 Bottled water
 Chainsaw backpack(s)
 Compostable cups, plates, bowls and dinnerware (no Styrofoam please)
 Extractigator Classic, Up Rooter, and/or Weed Wrench
 Facebook and Instagram followers and contributors

Gas cards
 Hardware store gift cards
 Mike's Car Wash Gift Cards
 More Farm Store credit (money can be added to ACRES Inc account)
 Paper towels
 Safety glasses
 Snacks for events (individually wrapped)
 Toolbox and tools
 Trash bags (33 gallon or larger)
 USB Flash drives

Questions? Please contact acres@acreslandtrust.org.

Share our story! Will your organization or group benefit from learning about ACRES? Contact us for a presentation: outreach@acreslandtrust.org

DIRECTORS: Steven Hammer, President; Dawn Ritchie, Vice President; Joe Conrad, Vice President; David Schnepf, Treasurer; Mark Maffey, Secretary; John Caffray, Barb Clark, Dan Ernst, Bob Hake, Ben Hess, Stan Moore, Carol Roberts, Janel Rogers, Wayne Shive, Phillip Smith II, Jerry Sweeten, Terry Thornsby and Julie Wall. Chris Fairfield, Recording Secretary.

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Letter from the Editor, Looking Back, Looking Forward

Before joining ACRES board, I asked to sit in on a board meeting to better understand ACRES mission. Following enthusiastic discussion, the board voted to accept a donor's generous gift—now ACRES Sauga Swamp Preserve. I remember thinking: "Wow. ACRES cares about not only people's love of local lands but also those lands' native species. I'm no expert on rattlesnakes and swamps, but ACRES is the place for me!"

As a tumultuous 2020 draws to a close and we begin to imagine the possibilities of a new year, ACRES continues its mission to own and protect natural and working lands, inspiring people to value, appreciate and support these places for the benefit of all, today and forever.

Each time I walk in an ACRES preserve, I'm delighted with a sense of freedom in not knowing what I'll see next, with nature's limitless capacity to both surprise and soothe. Our preserves engage me with a wild world beyond myself. I walk under sheltering trees that have no questions for me, no expectations. Physical contact with earth moves me toward better understanding how all living things are connected:

I watch insects feeding on plants, birds feeding on insects, autumn turning maples red and beeches golden. Nature's transforming, evolving, changing within the constancy of our four seasons, leads me to wonder: "How does this trillium in spring, this turkey tail fungus in autumn, this pileated woodpecker in winter play a vital role in the whole?"

How would you describe your own relationship with our natural world? What are you observing, discovering, learning, questioning? Are you also thinking: In what ways can I do more to share and support ACRES?

– Carol Roberts



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