

# THE ACRES QUARTERLY

Fall 2023 | Vol. 62 - No. 3



**ACRES**  
LANDTRUST

*Heather Barth: Celebrating 10 Years  
Recent Acquisitions*

*Springing Into Action: A Plant Rescue  
Fawn River Nature Preserve Inventory  
An Update: Beechwood Nature Preserve  
Protecting Land and Evading Turkeys  
Retiring Trails*



## From the Executive Director

Dear Members,

I turned 50 this summer. I've worked for ACRES for 17 of those 50 years. About 1/3 of my life has been spent serving ACRES. However, conservation has been important to me since the age of 5 when I declared that my life would be spent caring for trees. So, for 90% of my life, my goal has been to care for nature, and for 34% of my life, ACRES has allowed me to achieve that goal.

I bring this up because for many of us, ACRES provides the means to exercise our core beliefs. We see how supporting ACRES helps us fulfill our personal goals in ways we can't on our own.

ACRES helps us exhibit and amplify our core values. That's quite a human service. ACRES isn't typically viewed as a "human services provider," but I'd argue we are.

We help people investing in ACRES feel fulfilled, purposeful, proud, hopeful, empowered and content. And the preserves help people connect, relax, reflect, appreciate and become inspired.

These are powerful outcomes that religion, health care and therapy strive for.

I am grateful that ACRES fulfills my goals as it fulfills its mission. Our mission statement says ACRES exists for the benefit of all. That includes benefiting both me and you. ACRES provides me immense personal value as it continues to make my 50-year-old self, and my 5-year-old self, very happy.

I encourage you to recognize both the internal as well as the external benefits your support of ACRES provides. We often focus on the external benefits of preserving land, but it's OK to recognize the benefits to you personally, as well. Rather than making you selfish, it will make you grateful.

Thank you for being part of something so valuable—for all.

Sincerely,



Jason Kissel  
jkissel@acreslandtrust.org  
260-637-2273 ext. 102

Photo by Thomas Sprunger: As the summer comes to a close, the landscape of Fawn River Nature Preserve in LaGrange County, Indiana, begins to transform. Amongst the lush green foliage, hints of autumn leaves emerge, displaying their familiar vibrant hues of red and yellow. This nature preserve has been chosen as the subject of this year's botanical survey. Read about it in the "Fawn River Nature Preserve" article on page 9.

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 steward more than 7,500 acres in northeast Indiana and portions of southern Michigan and northwest Ohio. In addition to helping care for and restore our local land, your support also offers 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](mailto:acres@acreslandtrust.org)

[acreslandtrust.org](http://acreslandtrust.org)



# WELCOME 87 new members!

Erin & Blaine Adams  
Darcy & Jeff Armstrong  
Anne & Philip Bao  
Hayley Bindi  
Anita & John Bowers  
Ray & Marikay Boylan  
Nash Brallier  
Jeff Carver  
Maggie & Greg Casteel  
Jan Chandler  
Molly Congdon  
Marci DeGroot & Matt Hummel  
Ben Dimino  
Holly & Dennis Durham  
John W. Edwards  
William Elsinger & Noelle Allen  
Jim Foote  
Julie & Ted Ford  
Morgan Golf  
Steve & Jan Goodwin  
Angela Green  
Miles Hahn  
from David & Sharon Bieberich  
Iris Hamilton  
William & Nancy Hankee  
Steven Hannon  
Amber Hansen  
Anela Hill  
Sandra Hoffarth  
Hannah Janssen  
Alisa Johnson

Mike & Jo Johnson  
Rev. Annetra Jones & Family  
from Mike & Diane Whitlock  
Tom & Julie Knudson  
Judy & Joe Koch  
Kerry Korpela  
Nancy Krom  
Quentin Kruse  
Russ & Dorothy Lambert  
Dewayne & Julie Lengel  
Daniel Maassel  
from Robert & Joy Maassel  
Stephanie & Jeff Mahoney  
Brady Marret  
Richard Martin  
Kelley & Allie Marvin  
Jess Mason  
Carol Miller  
Jennifer & Andrew Newton  
Monica Nierman & Allen Gorman  
Beth Nygaard & Mike Sims  
Oneel Occenat  
Kathryn Paschall  
Fred Pentecost  
Harold Perez & Alycia Glaze  
Diana Pierce  
Mary Place  
Josie Quack  
Athena Renno  
Justin Rhoades  
Judy Rice

Marisa Robinett  
Louise Rodenbeck  
Rebecca Rollings  
Isaac & Kelsey Saxton  
Jacob Schall  
Michael & Stacey Schliesmann  
SES Environmental  
Robert Sloffer  
Kao Sorn  
Molly Stark  
Virginia Stephen  
Emily & Frank Swihart  
Ashley Thorne & Todd Warkentien  
Kelly Timbrook & Michael Coonce  
Heath Tinker  
from Christine Walters  
Susan Trent  
from Tracie Martin  
Maimi Vandelene  
Hannah Walker  
Pascal & Rebecca Walker  
Toni Weber  
Elsa Welker & Marcos Reyna  
Edward & Alexandra Westfall  
Steve & Sharon Williams  
Fredrick & Marisa Wren  
Karen & Lawrence Wrona  
Sophia Yordy  
John & Molly Zarse

## In Memory/Honor of

Malcolm Albersmeyer  
from Tim J. Gerardot  
Charlie Berg  
from Ed & Janine Albert & family, Brian & Cyndee Becker, James Berg, Michael & Maria Berg, Anita & John Bowers, Michael Bowers, Ann Butterfield, Kathy Dawson, Jim & Bonnie Deetz & family, Margaret Doell, Nancy Drewes, Chris & Jim Fairfield, Luke & Dawn Feagin, Terry & Dawna Freeland, Greg & Marilyn Gemmill, Hageman, Monk & Partsch families, Irv & Carolyn Hart, Ed & Susan Huguenard, Barbara Hurlbrink, Jay & Patty Jackson, Michael & Vicki Kuker, L. Edmondson Elementary School, Richard & Susan Longworth, Deborah & Charlie Parrish, Rod & Chris Pranger, Joan Schaeck, Gary & Kathy Scheumann, Eugene Snyder & Elaine Albert, Ron & Karen Starost, Patrick & LaDonna Wiltshire

Karlann Bieberich  
from Larry Bieberich, Corey & Alisha Bulmahn, Brenda Cartwright, Laura & Steven Christner, Mike & Anita Miller, Jim & Karen Schueler  
Mike Bowsman  
from Amy Donley, Jim & Merna Eisenbraun, Paul & Cindy Fisher, Jeff & Kris Hampshire, Carl & Carolyn Johnson, Beverly Martin, Andy & Terry Runyon, Al & Cheryl Silvers, Priscilla Spitzer, Fred Wooley  
Tom Brookshire  
from Johnell Bos  
Dr. Perry Brucker  
from Scott & Ann Stucky  
Margit Codispoti  
from Louise Larsen  
Michael Doran  
from Janet Kauffman







## Celebrating 10 Years at ACRES By Heather Barth



June 3, 2023, marked the 10th anniversary of my time with ACRES. As I reflect back over the last decade, I am honored to have played a role and astonished at all the organization has accomplished.

I first learned about ACRES in a most unexpected way. In 2013 I was working for another regional nonprofit when, out of the blue, a friend asked if I was looking for a job, explaining she knew of an opportunity that might interest me. I wasn't actively searching for employment, but my interest was piqued. We met at an Irish pub after work and she introduced me to ACRES Land Trust.

She explained ACRES was searching for a full-time fundraiser, and knowing my personal values, interests and hobbies related to nature, along with my experience in nonprofit fund development, she thought I would be a good fit. During the coming weeks, I met with Jason Kissel and a few other staff and board members for conversations and interviews. The rest, as they say, is history.

### PROGRESS

ACRES mission is to protect local land. When I started, the group had just secured its 5,000th acre of permanently protected land, this new land located at Blue Cast Springs. For the first 53 years, ACRES and its members acquired an average of 95 acres per year. Today's average is 120 acres acquired per year! This speaks volumes to the amount of support for our mission, as well as the dedication of our leadership to managing a financially sound organization and building a highly skilled team of staff.

During my time, ACRES has worked to hone the process for acquiring new land. Standards were set as to how much and what type of land the group could protect.

A checklist of more than 100 tasks was created to help keep the acquisition process moving along. Conservation priority areas were identified such as the Cedar Creek Corridor and the Quog Lake area in LaGrange County where ACRES works alongside partners such as county parks, Indiana DNR and other land trusts to protect the region's most unique natural areas.

### PEOPLE

One aspect of the organization that stands out to me is the solid foundation laid by predecessors: founders, board members, volunteers, members, donors, funders, staff and everyone else who had a hand in making ACRES what it was when I started 10 years ago, and what it is today. The significance of this isn't lost on me, and I gladly carry the responsibility to do what I can to ensure that foundation remains intact, is sustained and perhaps even strengthened for future generations of the people of ACRES.



I am genuinely humbled by the generous nature ACRES members and volunteers exhibit. The collective dedication and effort of each individual doing what they can to ensure local land is protected is astonishing. The ACRES community cares deeply and is always ready to jump in and help out when needed. That was true in 1960, in 2013, and remains steadfast today.

I never tire of hearing stories about a founding member, about past excursions to scout for land for new preserves or "that time when..." I'm ever-grateful that folks stick around for as long as they do, friends who have a story ready to share any time our paths cross. I very much look forward to being one of those individuals in the future, spinning tales with the next generation of ACRES.

### PURPOSE



When asked in my initial interview what nature means to me, I shared that I am most grounded and feel most like my authentic self when I'm in the woods. Places protected by ACRES are teeming with life, my own included. And the opportunity to daily immerse myself in an office environment situated in a nature preserve (the icing on the cake!) has bolstered my spirit more than I ever imagined. I'm one of the few fortunate to be uniquely positioned in the very center of the "purpose" Venn diagram, doing what I love and am good at, and what the world needs—all in a way that enables me to make a living to support my family.

The last 10 years have been a fantastic ride full of fun and challenges. I can't wait to see what the next 10 years will bring.

*With gratitude, Heather*

*It's worth noting, Heather's 10-year milestone in her role with ACRES defies the odds. The average tenure for a nonprofit fundraising professional in the U.S. is 18 months. ACRES attributes her longevity to the culture and people of the organization—you!*





### Conley Woods Nature Preserve

ACRES recently acquired Conley Woods Nature Preserve, a 100-acre property in Elkhart County, Indiana. This land was previously protected by Trillium Land Conservancy (TLC), a land trust founded in 2001 by a group of volunteers when no other land trust covered Elkhart and several other north-central counties. Prior to TLC's ownership, The Nature Conservancy in Indiana owned the property.

"We are grateful to Trillium Land Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy for their hard work and are committed to continuing protecting and conserving this valuable property as its final owner," said Jason Kissel, ACRES executive director.

The property features rolling topography dominated by black and white oak trees with an understory dominated by flowering dogwood and spicebush. The herbaceous layer is composed largely of sandy/gravelly soil-loving plants, American columbo and poke milkweed, to name a few. Several slopes give way to depressional wetlands that are home to buttonbush, swamp-rose and multiple sedges. This property offers a unique mosaic of plant communities not often found within ACRES service area.

Remnants of rare plants have persisted, such as the downy rattlesnake orchid, ground cedar and pipsissewa. Invasive species management, forest stand improvement and prescribed fire will all be reintroduced to the preserve in the coming years. Through these stewardship activities, ACRES hopes to restore the plant communities back to a higher level of biodiversity.

ACRES is assisting TLC in its dissolution process—we've helped several land trusts start over the years, but this is our first opportunity to help a land trust end in a responsible manner.

"Being an all-volunteer agency with no staff had its challenges," said Ronda DeCaire, former TLC board member. "When ACRES announced in 2008 that it would begin covering Elkhart County, and later when Shirley Heinze Land Trust covered St. Joseph County, TLC became inactive. Having land trusts with qualified staff to grow memberships and provide stewardship of the land offers a better opportunity for land protection. TLC board members were happy and confident to partner with ACRES to continue the protection of the Conley property."



### John Cring Memorial Forest

Earlham College recently donated to ACRES a 40-acre forest in Jay County. In the 1960s, Earlham College had received the property from the Cring family, who had requested that the forest be "preserved in its natural and primitive state."

With the canopy layer consisting largely of mature sugar maples and American beech trees, The John Cring Memorial Forest is one of the few ACRES properties that could soon be considered a climax plant community.

A small grove of Kentucky coffee trees, along with scattered chinquapin oaks, offer additional uniqueness to the property. Underneath these 3–4 foot diameter canopy trees is a thick shrub layer of pawpaw and spicebush. Although tiling and draining in this and surrounding properties has altered the natural hydrology, this high-quality flatwoods has persisted and will continue to do so under ACRES ownership.

Thank you, Earlham College, for entrusting ACRES with this property. We are proud to steward the forest in a way that achieves the Cring family's wishes while providing benefits for all. Also, many thanks to a generous Allen County couple who provided the final fundraising to complete this project.



#### Update on ACRES Biggest Year of Acquisition

Conley Woods Nature Preserve and John Cring Memorial Forest are part of a larger endeavor to acquire and permanently protect more land than ever before. ACRES is working this year to secure 752 acres of land valued at more than \$7.8 million.

Thanks to landowner donations and discounts, we need to raise just a fraction of that: \$2.6 million dollars (what a deal!). These special places won't be protected without the support of people who care, people like you. Every dollar helps!

Many thanks to those who already invested in these projects. For the latest updates or to make a gift today, please visit [acreslandtrust.org/forever](https://acreslandtrust.org/forever).



## PROTECTING LAND



### Springing into Action: A Plant Rescue

Because protecting land is its mission, ACRES periodically receives calls that require immediate action. Such was the case in April when Freya Bernston, Stewardship Chair of the Northeast Chapter of Indiana Native Plant Society (NE INPS), reached out to ACRES with an urgent request to rescue an endangered violet found on land slated for development. Here is Freya's first-hand account of how the plant rescue unfolded:

Allen County's suburban areas are expanding with new housing developments. A number of these new structures will be placed on land that has been forested for decades if not centuries.

Knowing that a certain level of habitat loss may be unavoidable on new construction sites, one might want to quickly "rescue" plants from a site slated for development. However, if you don't have a connection to the property development group, it can be difficult to obtain permission to perform that rescue.

Enter Kelly Wheat, a member of NE INPS, who was granted permission to remove plants from a future construction site. One particular species she was interested in was a sweet little violet with lobed leaves. I reached out to our State Botanist, Scott Namestnik, who confirmed with violet expert Dr. Harvey Ballard of Ohio University that the plant was *Viola baxteri*, Baxter's violet.



Baxter's violet is an extremely rare plant in Indiana, listed as endangered and critically imperiled in the state. The advice given was to relocate what we could to nearby nature preserves with similar habitats. The site happened to be a few miles from some of ACRES Land Trust's nature preserves. I reached out to ACRES Stewardship Director Evan Hill, who graciously agreed to receive all 80 *V. baxteri* and plant them on ACRES properties.

Although events like this are not a solution to the ecological crisis brought by habitat loss, they serve an important purpose. Saving those individual violets may one day genetically benefit the species as a whole.

## PRESERVE SURVEYS



### A look into the importance of nature preserve surveys Fawn River Nature Preserve Inventory

By Reena Ramos

A midday sun flashing through the canopy catches the steady ripples of Fawn River. At first glance, it's a calm sparkling picture. But if you pause to watch and listen, the corridor is full of life! A heron flies overhead as water beetles zip through the duckweed. Dancing damselflies line the shore, aquatic plants are pulled by the current, and a pack of people...are wading through the water?

Our geared-up group of five looks quite out of place trudging through this serene summer scene on a mission to scour the preserve. A patch of riparian plants catches the eyes of senior botanist Nathanael Pilla from Midwest Biological Survey and ACRES Stewardship Director Evan Hill. As they pause to study, spider specialist Dr. Marc Milne from the University of Indianapolis pulls out a small collection jar and scans the mossy banks. A short shutter sound comes from the camera of ACRES Communications Manager Makayla Tedder.

*The mission has begun: Fawn River Nature Preserve is receiving its very first surveys!*

A species survey involves placing specialists like Pilla and Milne on a preserve with notebooks. They comb through the site and produce a detailed list of all species observed.

"Identifying what a site has in terms of biodiversity is one of the first steps in determining how to best manage the property," Hill said. "Ideally, we would have botanical inventories completed at every ACRES property. We are currently playing catch-up on these inventories, focusing now on properties that possess more unusual systems. Our goal is to conduct these surveys on a few properties each year."

As I stand in the hot sun and observe these specialists working so fluidly, I'm filled with appreciation. It's a joy to join them in the field, knowing these surveys will benefit ACRES for years to come while strengthening the greater scientific community. These surveys wouldn't be possible without ACRES and its members who protect Fawn River Nature Preserve forever in its natural state.



Photo spread on pages 10–11 by Gary Bendig: A great blue heron surrounded by autumn leaves. Join ACRES in October for an event at Wing Haven, a nature preserve where great blue herons are often spotted. Details on pages 12–13.







# FALL HIKES & events

ACRES events are held rain or shine. Preserve maps available online at [acreslandtrust.org/preserves](https://www.acreslandtrust.org/preserves)



## JAVA JAUNT

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 9-10:30 am**  
HILLSDALE COUNTY | Kauffman Nature Sanctuary  
13127 Beecher Rd, Hudson, MI 49247

Take a stroll through the rolling hills of ACRES only Michigan trails. Afterwards, join us for a "treat yourself" cafe stop at Main Street Perk in Hudson, MI.



## PRESERVE RESEARCH PRESENTATION

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2-3:30 pm**  
WABASH COUNTY | Asherwood  
7496 W. SR 124, Wabash, IN 46992

Though most ACRES preserves are closed to the public for permanent protection, there are still opportunities for scientific studies. Learn about the ongoing research and unique finds from ACRES closed property, Dorothy and Ray Garman Nature Preserve, presented by Joanna Stebing, a Purdue Fort Wayne ecology graduate student. *Space is limited.* RSVP to [outreach@acreslandtrust.org](mailto:outreach@acreslandtrust.org) or 260-637-2273 by September 21.

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCH

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 11:30-1 pm**  
ALLEN COUNTY | ACRES Land Trust Barn  
1992 Chapman Road, Hometown, IN 46748

Volunteers, let ACRES staff serve you for a change! In gratitude for your service, share lunch, get to know other volunteers and learn how your combined contributions make ACRES run. Your time and talent protect land. We want to thank you! RSVP to Reena Ramos at [rramos@acreslandtrust.org](mailto:rramos@acreslandtrust.org) or 260-637-2273 ext. 109 by September 20.



## FAMILY STORYTIME HIKE

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2-3 pm**  
STEBEN COUNTY | Wing Haven  
409 E. SR 14, Silver Lake, IN 46982

Journey through the woods while listening to a fall-themed children's book with fellow families. Light snacks and refreshments provided.

## ART WORKSHOP FOR ACRES MEMBERS

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2-3:30 pm**  
ALLEN COUNTY | ACRES Land Trust Office  
1802 Chapman Road, Hometown, IN 46748

Get creative with local artist Ida Mae Short, owner of Short Stack Press. Learn simple printing techniques and create several nature-themed prints to take home. Open to all experience levels, all supplies included. *Space is limited.* To register, email [outreach@acreslandtrust.org](mailto:outreach@acreslandtrust.org) or call 260-637-2273 by October 12.



## POPP OPEN HOUSE FOR ACRES MEMBERS

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1-4 pm**  
ALLEN COUNTY | Emanuel M. Popp Nature Preserve  
12129 Tonkel Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46845

Warm up at the campfire or take a hike through the forested trails at this preserve open only once a year to ACRES members. Light snacks and refreshments provided. Hosted by Popp caretaker Larry Biggerstaff, Louise and Keith Pomeroy and Tom Gardner.



**SEED COLLECTION WORKDAY**  
**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 5-6:30 pm**  
STEBEN COUNTY | Wing Haven,  
180 West 400 North, Angola, IN 46703

Help us harvest native seeds alongside fellow volunteers. The seeds will be used for upcoming restoration projects on other ACRES preserves. The workday will begin with a short introduction to plant identification and harvesting techniques, no prior experience necessary. All equipment provided. Long pants and closed-toed shoes recommended.



## CLEANUP WORKDAYS

Help us keep the preserves healthy this fall! Join us as we clean up litter and remove invasive species. Bags, gloves and grabbers provided. Long pants and closed-toed shoes recommended.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 10-11:30 am**  
ALLEN COUNTY | Orion Woods  
Address available with RSVP

*Space is limited.* RSVP to [outreach@acreslandtrust.org](mailto:outreach@acreslandtrust.org) or 260-637-2273 by November 2.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 5-6:30 pm**  
DEKALB COUNTY | James P. Covell Nature Preserve  
2727 County Road 52, Auburn IN, 46706

*Space is limited.* RSVP to [outreach@acreslandtrust.org](mailto:outreach@acreslandtrust.org) or 260-637-2273 by November 7.



## BOOK DISCUSSION FOR ACRES MEMBERS

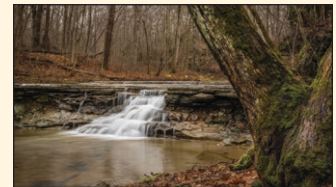
**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2-3:30 pm**  
ALLEN COUNTY | ACRES Land Trust Office  
1802 Chapman Road, Hometown, IN 46748

Take time this fall to read *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. The novel follows the stories of nine people whose life experiences with trees bring them together to protect forests. Gather in the office to discuss your thoughts and takeaways from the book. Light snacks and refreshments provided. Hosted by volunteers Natasha Manor and Bridgett Hernandez. *Space is limited.* To register, email [outreach@acreslandtrust.org](mailto:outreach@acreslandtrust.org) or call 260-637-2273 by November 9.

## NATIONAL TAKE A HIKE DAY SWIFT HIKE

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1-5:30 pm**  
WABASH COUNTY & MIAMI COUNTY | Multiple locations

Fuel up your vehicles for a caravan to four preserves: Kokiwanee, Hathaway Preserve at Ross Run, Asherwood and Seven Pillars Nature Preserves. Finish the day with a Seven Pillars sunset along the Mississinewa River. Plan to hike six miles total, at a steady pace. Hosted by hike leaders Janelle and Larry Hicks. *Space is limited.* To register, email [outreach@acreslandtrust.org](mailto:outreach@acreslandtrust.org) or call 260-637-2273 by November 15.



## WOODY ID WORKSHOP

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1-3 pm**  
ALLEN COUNTY | ACRES Land Trust Office  
1802 Chapman Road, Hometown, IN 46748

Join the ACRES stewardship team for an in-depth look at identifying native and non-native trees and shrubs. Learn about the methods used to manage these "woody plants" during the cold season. *Space is limited.* RSVP to [outreach@acreslandtrust.org](mailto:outreach@acreslandtrust.org) or 260-637-2273 by November 30.

Watch for more events online: [acreslandtrust.org](https://www.acreslandtrust.org).



## FIFTY-SEVEN ACRES GIVEN BY MRS. SPURGEON, FOSTERS

During the month of August, Acres made two announcements of occurrences which resulted in more than doubling the natural lands now under its supervision as permanently preserved living museums.

The first of the good news for Acres' program was disclosed August 5, at which time our president, Dr. John W. Klotz, announced that Miss Garnette Foster and Miss Mildred Foster had presented our group with 19 acres of land just north of Indiana's Pokagon State Park on U. S. Route 27 (north of Angola).

The second news was the gift from Mrs. Edna W. Spurgeon of 38 acres as an addition to the Edna W. Spurgeon Woodland Reserve, disclosed August 24.

The gift from the Foster sisters, both of Angola, will be known as the Beechwood Nature Reserve, as designated by the generous donors.

Dr. Klotz described this land as "a good example of typical northern Indiana habitat, including a small bog in the lowland area and a rich mesic woods on the highlands."



Mrs. Edna W. Spurgeon

Geologically, Dr. Klotz explained, the tract is glacial in origin, and contains a number of tamarack trees which "are fast disappearing in this region due to land drainage."

The Beechwood area also contains hummocks of peat moss, red osier dogwood, marsh marigold, miterwort, as well as enormous beech and other hardwood trees, and dozens of other plant species.

The addition to the Spurgeon Reserve is both interesting and challenging for Acres. Parts of it show many aspects of a climax forest, with large white and black walnut trees, beech, maple, tulippoplar, a beautiful array of spring wildflowers, and pawpaw trees--not so common as they once were.

But another part of the new addition has been pastured, not too heavily because of the hilly and rugged terrain--but pastured. **How will it recover over the years? What will the plant succession be like?** There are already a number of hawthorn trees coming in. A few such sites are under observation elsewhere, but none like it as far as we know in this region which can be closely studied under controlled conditions.

The intervening years of recovery, which will outspan many of us will be fascinating ones indeed; and Acres plans a detailed photographic and reporting history of the process for posterity.

But it would all be impossible were it not for the generosity, and even more importantly the concern for our natural heritage, of such citizens as Mrs. Spurgeon and the Foster sisters. The full importance of their contributions, your editor surmises, may not be fully appreciated for several generations to come.

### An Update: Beechwood Nature Preserve

Nearly 60 years later, the once-pastured land had been overrun by autumn olive, a non-native invasive species. ACRES is delighted to report that as of this year, through our efforts in forestry mulching, we have successfully reduced the invasive species population in the pastured area and are witnessing native regrowth of winged sumac, Virginia spiderwort and gray-headed coneflower there!



Left to Right are Acres directors Glenn Poe, Thomas Dustin and Arthur Eberhardt, at the newly acquired Beechwood Nature Reserve.

Looking back, we are encouraged to see that the questions posed by our founding members have been met with hopeful answers, thanks to our stewardship team's dedicated work restoring this protected land.

Looking forward, ACRES ideal vision of a future Beechwood is a preserve that offers a high level of biodiversity within a mosaic of plant communities with the absence of invasive species. But only future generations will be able to speak to the result of our efforts on this portion of the land.

## HIDDEN HEROES



When you enter a healthy forest, you see a landscape dominated by trees standing strong and hardy, thriving in four seasons. You see these trees are made of many parts: heavy trunks, sweeping branches, knobby roots, lush leaves. You can imagine the plant's tissue made of structures composed of cells creating a complex system of energy exchange too microscopic to see. But your inability to see these single cells' efforts does not diminish their importance. Without these cells, the system would collapse, and eventually, the tree would perish.

**Like a living tree, ACRES could not flourish without the varied and diverse efforts of folks like you!**

We experience and appreciate your involvement in a variety of ways. We know ACRES members' voices are being heard when an event planner invites us to host a booth after a mysterious individual has endorsed us, or when a hiker connects with someone on the trail and invites them to attend an ACRES event. And can you imagine our excitement when a potential land donor reaches out to us, saying they heard about our organization during a conversation at the grocery store!

**No matter the action, hidden heroes help make ACRES mission possible.**

To all of you who take a second to pick up a piece of trash along the trail or share an ACRES pamphlet with a friend, know that we see your efforts and we appreciate you! Our "tree" continues to grow and thrive as each act, seen or unseen, contributes to the community. To everyone who supports ACRES through acts of service—thank you!





## PROTECTING LAND

### Reflections of ACRES Stewardship Interns Protecting Land and Evading Turkeys

Imagine it's your first week as a stewardship intern for ACRES. Excitement, mixed with a hint of nervousness, bubbles inside as you embark on a new adventure, eager to acquire valuable skills for your future career.

One of your first assignments is spraying non-native invasive species. As you secure a backpack filled with herbicides, you suddenly find yourself staring at the sky. The weight of the pack is heavier than you anticipated. A flush of embarrassment warms your cheeks as you look to find help, only to spot your fellow intern cornered by a wild turkey.

This incident marked the beginning of ACRES two summer interns, Anela Hill and Ben Dimino, who can't help but laugh when recalling the details. Since then, Anela easily handles the weight of a backpack sprayer, and Ben can proudly say he outmaneuvered a determined turkey.

Both Anela and Ben are students from Purdue University's Forestry and Natural Resources Department. Reflecting on their time with ACRES, they feel it's been beneficial for their personal and professional growth.

Anela, who aspires to research bats, explains, "Being out on the preserves allows for a more in-depth understanding of the ecosystem. Understanding where your focus species lives is one of the biggest components in studying them."

Ben, with a passion for a career in wildland fire management, shares, "Spending time outside and seeing my progress in managing strenuous work has been rewarding. Knowing that in the future I'll likely spend my workdays outdoors, my body feels better prepared to handle the wear and tear that comes with working in the heat with heavy equipment."

Among the various tasks they were assigned, they particularly enjoyed planting native sprouts and exploring ACRES properties with specialized scientists. Their time with ACRES not only provided them with knowledge and experience but also left them with unique stories to share.



## RETIRING TRAILS

### Brammall and Richard Bruner Nature Preserves: Two preserves will be as one

By Chris Fairfield, ACRES Volunteer

If you are looking down at the Brammall and Richard Bruner Nature Preserves from above, they look like a tiny woodland flanked by a small kettle lake, a busy highway and lots of farmland.

From ground level, you can see that the Brammall/Bruner Nature Preserve is a special 124-acre sanctuary with big land and water connections. Diverse in nature, it features a wetland forest, meadowlands and shallow lake habitat. A variety of wildflowers thrive in its sand, marl and clay soils. Breeding and migrating waterfowl and some endangered animal species depend on its acreage. The land not only solidifies wildlife access to the southern 80 acres of Pigeon Lake's northern basin, it also completely encircles Little Pigeon Lake's southern shallow water basin. These two basins help improve water quality by giving the water time to rest and soak there before flowing and winding with the headwaters of Pigeon Creek, Pigeon River and Fawn River, eventually discharging into Lake Michigan. The waters of these preserves and others are vital to Indiana's growing communities, recreational pursuits and natural wellbeing.



Under ACRES forever care, the two parcels today are connected as one. The plots were transferred to ACRES through the generosity and foresight of two families holding and stewarding these adjacent properties. First, until 2004, the preserve containing 80 acres, known as Brammall Nature Preserve, was owned and enjoyed by Terry and Nancy Brammall, avid outdoor enthusiasts and lifelong learners. Then in 2012, June Bruner, at the request of her late husband, Richard Bruner, transferred to ACRES Richard's and her adjoining

properties, totaling 43 acres. This conveyance completed the preservation of the Little Pigeon Lake shore. To ensure the lakeshore's natural integrity, ACRES was granted an Indiana Department of Natural Resources Conservation Easement.

As part of ACRES comprehensive plan to update visitor amenities at our nature preserves, the Brammall and Richard Bruner Nature Preserves will close to the public on December 31, 2023. Learn more at [acreslandtrust.org/raisingourstandards](https://acreslandtrust.org/raisingourstandards).





## Welcome, Janelle Windsor!

Advancement specialist Janelle Windsor will support ACRES development, outreach and communication efforts.

Janelle has been connected to ACRES Land Trust since 2006. She enjoys nature for various reasons: peace, social outings, spiritual devotion, education and physical wellness. Over the years, she's found joy in sharing ACRES preserves with her family and friends. With grandchildren now in the family, ACRES outings will continue for a new generation.

In 2017, Janelle expanded her joy of introducing others to the preserves by volunteering for ACRES by

leading caravan hike events—driving and hiking from one preserve to another in a single outing. “Through the years, I have observed that the mission of ACRES brings people together from all ages and from all perspectives into a common mission.”

Janelle has previously worked for the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department and the Pokagon State Park Nature Center. In 2020-2021, she and her husband had the opportunity to live and work in Northern Minnesota along Lake Superior's shore and then in the snowy Sierra Mountains of Northern California. Experiencing the land and wildlife in those areas has been a highlight in Janelle's life.

*“I believe the mission of ACRES Land Trust is crucial and I am thankful and honored to assist in preserving land in our community and beyond.”*

*“Our parks and preserves are not mere picnicking places. They are rich storehouses of memories and reveries. They are guides to the weary and faltering in spirit. They are bearers to wonderful tales to those who will listen; a solace to the aged and an inspiration to the young.”*

— RICHARD LIEBER

## In Memory/Honor of (continued from p2)

Dr. Harvey Hathaway Jr.  
from Victoria Avellano, Joann Baseman, Bay Colony Building 300 Friends, Matilde Carrillo, Leon & Judy Chalhub, Stephani Decker, Charles Edwards, Wendy Eissey, Brian Gies, Mel Hathaway, Ernest & Teresa Jabour, Shirley Kransteuber & family, Joselyn & family, Jake & family, Nancy Margolies, Jill McDaniel, Dawn McMullin, Barbara Porcher, Tom & Jane Raymond, Mona Reis, Katherine Rowan & Robert Baker, Dr. Michael & Mrs. Diane Steiner

Ruth Kern  
from Noel & Patricia Holmgren  
Dr. Robert Robb  
from Howard Brooks  
Sharon “Sherry” Smith  
from James R. Crouse & Jane Porter Gresham, Ed & Jill Kerr, John & Betsy King, Larry & Sally Schlatter, Caroline Shatto, Jacqueline Smyth  
Carol Jolly & Eldon James Summers  
from Diana Harris

# SPECIAL thanks

ACRES Board of Directors and Committee Members  
Archive project volunteers:  
Chris Fairfield, Mary Anna Feitler, Bob Palmer, Carol Spallone  
Tim Brauch  
Leading a National Trails Day hike  
Community booth volunteers  
Kris Connerly, Tedra Hemingway, Cathy Lassen, Kathy and Doug Rogers, Wayne Shive, Al Spice  
Eckhart Public Library  
Group outing at Heinzerling Family Five Points Nature Preserve  
Tom Gardner  
Improvements Popp Cabin and outbuildings  
Garrett Public Library  
Kids summer reading program presentation  
George Kibe  
Donating 2-way radios, weather meter and routing trail signs  
Garlic mustard removal workday volunteers  
Jeri Kornegay & Lyn Winchell  
Donating liquid hand soap, insect repellent  
Native Garden Workday volunteers  
Office support volunteers

James Orozco  
Painting ACRES Office observation deck  
Ossian Rotary Club  
Workday at Acres Along the Wabash  
Panelists for ACRES Through the Years luncheon  
Mary Anna Feitler, Jim Haddock, Steve Hammer, Sam Schwartz, David Van Gilder  
Jann Prince  
Hosting salamander hike at Peace Farm  
Quarterly assembly and distribution volunteers  
AJ Rambo  
Leading Boots and Brews hikes  
Summer stewardship interns  
Ben Dimino and Anela Hill  
Grady Stout, Kirk Swaidner and Larry Watson  
Improvements and repairs to sugar shack at Asherwood  
Mark Schmidt  
Painting office ramp  
Spring cleaning workday volunteers  
Volunteer preserve stewards, caretakers and trail monitors  
Wildflower hike leaders  
Tony Fleming and Dave Hicks

Thank you **Anela Hill** and **Ben Dimino** for interning with ACRES this summer and assisting in stewardship efforts to protect and preserve local land. Anela's internship was funded by the Olive B. Cole Foundation and Ben's internship was funded by ACRES board member, Dr. Scott Mattson.



## wish list

To order from ACRES Amazon Wish List, visit [acreslandtrust.org/wishlist](https://acreslandtrust.org/wishlist)

ACRES memberships	Bottled water
Your stories and photos	Warm weather chainsaw bar oil
2-stroke oil (preferably ones for making 2.5 gallons)	Tyvek pre-wired label tags
Husqvarna BLi200 Battery	(2) Solo 425 4-gal Backpack Sprayer with Piston Pump

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Something of our relationship to the earth is determined by the particular place we stand at a given time. If you stand still long enough to observe carefully the things around you, you will find beauty, and you will know wonder. If you see a leaf carried along on the flow of a river, you might ponder its journey. Where did it begin, and where will it end? What will be the story of its passage?

You will discover a thousand ways in which the leaf is connected to the water, the banks, the near and farther distances, the sky and the sun. Your mind, your spirit will be nourished and grow. You will become one with what you see. Consider what is to be seen.

N. Scott Momaday from *"The Way to Rainy Mountain"*

N. Scott Momaday is a Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, poet and a member of the Kiowa tribe.



[acreslandtrust.org](http://acreslandtrust.org)