

Sycamore Land Trust: 20 years and growing: www.heraldtimesonline.com

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This guest column was written by Carroll Ritter, environmental education coordinator for Sycamore Land Trust.

Growth is measured in many ways. For children, we speak of physical maturation, emotional development and educational knowledge. In organizations, we have metrics of size, reach, influence and community leadership.

In this 20th anniversary year, Sycamore Land Trust has accomplished much in the community and our larger geographic area. We are respected for our conservation projects, membership growth, service area and educational outreach. More than 5,500 acres are now protected by acquisition or conservation agreements. This includes natural areas of ecological interest, working farms and family forests. You can view our "Quality of Life, Quality of Place" video at sycamorelandtrust.org/videos.

Feb. 22-28 has been proclaimed "Sycamore Land Trust Week" by Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels; celebrating outstanding leadership in sustaining our natural, cultural and community programs. Sycamore Land Trust also received an Indiana Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence last fall. This recognized the effectiveness of its overall environmental education program and outreach to children.

Land Trust Week events include a birthday party/open house at Cedar Crest on Feb. 25 and a winter hike Feb. 27.

Everyone is invited to see details for both on our Web site, www.bloomington.in.us/~sycamore.

Throughout the year, many other opportunities abound for becoming involved with the land trust, whether it is financial support, donating land, helping on work days, building and maintaining trails, or getting the family out for hikes. Check out our new L'il Hikers opportunities to introduce children to hiking and exploring. We'd love to have you join, contribute and be part of our growing success.

We are as excited about the next 20 years as we are about our first 20 years.

Down to Earth welcomes reader submissions of no more than 350 words on topics of interest to the local environmental community. Submissions will be edited for grammar, spelling, punctuation, clarity, length and good taste. Authors must provide first and last names, as well as relevant affiliations. Submission is no guarantee of publication, and there will be no compensation for articles. Please send contributions to dte@heraldt.com.

Courtesy photo

School groups love to visit the land trust's Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve, where they learn about nature in all its various habitat types.

