



Sycamore Land Trust

Media Coverage

News source: The Herald-Times

Author: Carol Kugler

Date: June 21, 2017

URL: http://www.heraldtimesonline.com/life/outdoors/sycamore-land-trust-adds-parcels-in-beanblossom-conservation-area/article_bac16d98-046f-58c1-9b09-99cebf2f7f33.html

Sycamore Land Trust adds 2 parcels in the Beanblossom conservation area



Sycamore Land Trust officials are celebrating two land acquisitions and 2 square miles.

The land trust has purchased two properties totaling 115 acres that will be added to the Sam Shine Foundation Preserve, which is near Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve and part of the area in the Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area. The conservation area covers roughly 20,000 acres, from north of Lake Lemon following Beanblossom Creek eastward to just south of Gosport. It was established as part of the state's Bicentennial Nature Trust as one of five special conservation areas in Indiana.

The new land has pushed Sycamore Land Trust's total acres to more than 2 square miles, or 1,345 acres, within the Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area. The land trust has been trying to acquire and preserve land in the conservation area to provide habitat for wildlife and native plant species in connected areas or nearby land to better preserve open natural spaces.

Money from the Bicentennial Nature Trust, which is a project begun by former Gov. Mitch Daniels, was used to purchase the land, along with contributions Sycamore Land Trust has received from its members and others. In all, Sycamore Land Trust was granted \$1 million from the Bicentennial Nature Trust. Part of the stipulation when using the money is that the land trust must match the funding it was given. All the funds in the Bicentennial Nature Trust must be used by the end of 2017, which will happen, according to Abby Perfetti, communications director with Sycamore Land Trust.

"We're always looking strategically to what we can add," Perfetti said, adding that the new properties have excellent habitat. Most of it has been farmland that is expected to become wetland forest much like Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve. The new property is known to have bobolinks and dickcissels, which are two grassland bird species that are uncommon in the area, as well as American kestrels. Although the land eventually will revert to mainly wetland and woods, Perfetti said that parts of it will possibly be prairie for a while and that areas now farmland will soon become edges of forestland, providing important habitat for many wildlife species.

Those species will be added to the list of wildlife found on Sycamore Land Trust property within the conservation area. Those species include 15 threatened and endangered species including bobcats, Indiana bats, bald eagles, cerulean warblers and Kirtland's snakes.

The new land will not be open to the public for some time, as work needs to be done to prepare the land and also to determine the best way for people to access it, Perfetti said.

One of the projects will be planting trees on the property, something that will be possible because of funds raised through the Lucky's Market "Bags for Change" program. The program gives customers who use reusable bags a wooden dime that can then be "given" to one of three agencies the market is helping. Sycamore Land Trust is one of those three for this quarter of the year.

Besides planting trees, Perfetti said, land trust volunteers will be walking through the new acreage to control invasive plants, something that is necessary to allow native plants to thrive.

The land trust's plan is to monitor the property, watch the wetland area and "see what will survive best there," Perfetti said.