

# Conservation is worthwhile reason for Sycamore Land Trust: [www.heraldtimesonline.com](http://www.heraldtimesonline.com)

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As I have previously written in this column, I have been elated to share many of the wonderful outdoor treasures we have to visit here in southern Indiana. When visiting some of these places I often wonder about the conservation groups responsible for these wonderful properties. This week, I wanted to share more about one of these organizations.

Sycamore Land Trust is a nonprofit group founded in 1990 with the goal of preserving the dwindling habitats and landscapes that make southern Indiana so beautiful. With the help of donors and volunteers, the organization now protects roughly 8,000 acres of land.

While some of the property has been acquired through purchases made possible by fundraising efforts, the majority of the land has come through donations from landowners who wish to preserve their property for future generations.

John Lawrence, assistant director of Sycamore Land Trust, explains, "They are folks who are attached to a certain piece of land, that has been in their family, or they have just enjoyed owning it. They really like the idea that these woods are going to be preserved and are going to be there for the next generation and the generation after that; for people to enjoy, and see the wildlife and preserve the plants."

Sycamore Land Trust also protects conservation easements donated to the care of the organization. Much like utility easements, conservation easements are areas of property that are restricted for the purpose of preserving a particular ecosystem or habitat.

"We don't own it, we don't control the access. The owners can still go out there and have fun," Lawrence says.

The easements transfer with the property ownership. The role of Sycamore Land Trust is only to help make sure the property stays in its natural condition.

With the easements and the other properties wholly owned by Sycamore Land Trust, the organization has become one of the fastest growing of its kind in the Midwest. The protection the trust provides, as a good steward to these natural areas, has been crucial in preventing the development and destruction of so many threatened ecosystems.

Some great examples of these beautiful properties are the Beanblossom Bottoms in northwestern Monroe County and Trevlac Bluffs in Brown County. Both are dedicated state nature preserves, a testament to the great work accomplished by Sycamore Land Trust and the many volunteers and donors that make the work possible.

As a land trust, owners can give land to the nonprofit with the peace of mind knowing that their beloved property will continue to thrive. The natural spaces they have saved will become even more beautiful for future visitors and wildlife.

Sycamore Land Trust has also worked in cooperation with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy and Indiana Heritage Trust. An example of the partnership between these champions of conservation as well as several other great organizations can be seen at the Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area, near Linton.

While Sycamore Land Trust provides so many beautiful places to visit for nature lovers, it also hosts many educational and recreational events. On Sept. 8, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., there will be a wetland plant identification workshop at Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve.

For more information about the event or upcoming activities, visit <http://sycamorelandtrust.org>. The site is also great for anyone interested in becoming a member, volunteer, or donor; or for information and directions to the many other great sites Sycamore Land Trust protects.

Upland Brewing Co. will host an annual concert in support of Sycamore Land Trust. The Hillbilly Haiku Americana Music Series kicks off the Labor Day weekend on the brewery grounds, at 350 W. 11th St. in Bloomington. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 the day of the concert. Kids 12 and younger can attend for free. Proceeds from the event will be donated to Sycamore Land Trust.

I look forward to sharing the stories of the many great people and organizations that make it possible to enjoy our natural world by protecting it. For now, I will say that, with so many great places under their care, Sycamore Land Trust is truly a worthwhile effort. They are one of the heroes of the conservation efforts that make southern Indiana such a wonderful place to live.

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A sign along the trail at Oxbow Lake tells about the woodland swamp that is part of the Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve. Clarence Knapp | Courtesy photo



**A sign tells about some of the early sucesional forest in the Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve.  
Clarence Knapp | Courtesy photo**

