

OUTDOOR INDIANA

MARCH/APRIL 2016 \$4



OLD MILLS

URBAN WILDLIFE

POTATO CREEK
STATE PARK

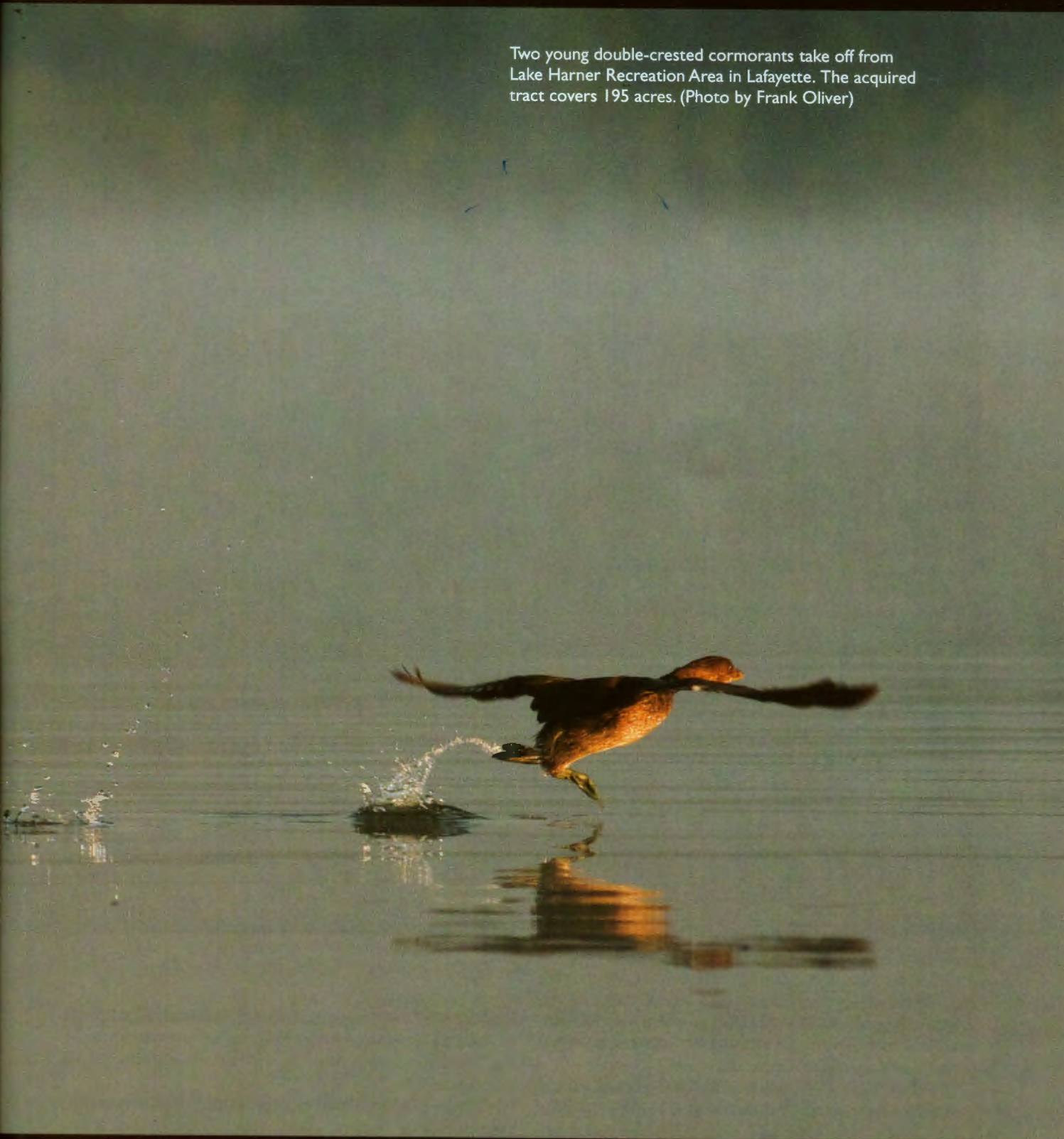
4,000 MORE ACRES

DNR LAND PROGRAMS REV UP FOR BICENTENNIAL

BNT and IHT expanded nature and recreation
areas by 4,000 acres in 2015



Two young double-crested cormorants take off from Lake Harner Recreation Area in Lafayette. The acquired tract covers 195 acres. (Photo by Frank Oliver)



Roughly 12,000 years ago, the Wisconsin-age glaciers ended their southern advance on Indiana, stopping before they could bulldoze the entire state.

Close to 200 years ago, President James Madison approved the Indiana Territory's admission into the Union as the 19th state.

The result of these two seemingly unrelated events is Glacier's End Nature Preserve in Johnson County.

Established in 2015 through Central Indiana Land Trust Inc. (CILTI), Glacier's End protects 204 acres of forest, steep bluffs, exposed bedrock, and shale-bottom streams in Johnson County. It balances between Indiana's hill country and the central till plain. The merging of ecosystems creates an abundance of biodiversity, according to CILTI executive director Cliff Chapman.

"This is the line where the glacier stopped," Chapman said. "There are glacial soils there, but also a lot of bedrock. It's a really interesting mix."

Glacier's End is being protected thanks in large part to the state's bicentennial celebration.

The property was one of dozens comprising more than 4,000 acres purchased in 2015 with help from two DNR land acquisition programs, Indiana Heritage Trust and Bicentennial Nature Trust.

IHT funds property acquisitions for lands that represent outstanding natural resources and habitats, or have recreational, historical or archaeological significance. IHT funds can be used to add land to state parks and reservoir properties, state forests, fish & wildlife areas, historic sites, nature preserves and other state conservation projects. The money can also help local governments and non-profit land trusts buy property for trails, parks or privately owned nature preserves.

The main funding source for IHT is the blue eagle-and-sun Environmental License Plate. The plate costs \$40, of which IHT receives \$25.

BNT is a project of the Bicentennial Commission, which is headed by former Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman and former Congressman Lee Hamilton. BNT helps acquire land for conservation and recreation to serve as a perpetual gift to Hoosiers in celebration of Indiana's 200 years of statehood in this year. This statewide effort honors the establishment of the state parks system created in 1916 to commemorate Indiana's centennial.

The state obligated \$20 million to BNT. The Lilly Endowment contributed an additional \$10 million grant.

BNT seeks local support for each project by requiring a dollar-for-dollar match. Most of the projects benefit land trusts, local parks and trail groups.

Like Glacier's End, several other 2015 state-assisted land acquisition projects received funding from both programs.



NICHES Land Trust in Lafayette used IHT and BNT funds to add 54 acres to Shawnee Bottoms on the Wabash River in Fountain County, bringing the nature preserve's overall acreage to 309.

"It's been a great partnership," said NICHES executive director Gus Nyberg.

While IHT and BNT work together to fund projects, both programs also help protect land on their own. IHT, which began in 1992, will continue after BNT ends in 2016.



John Maxwell photo

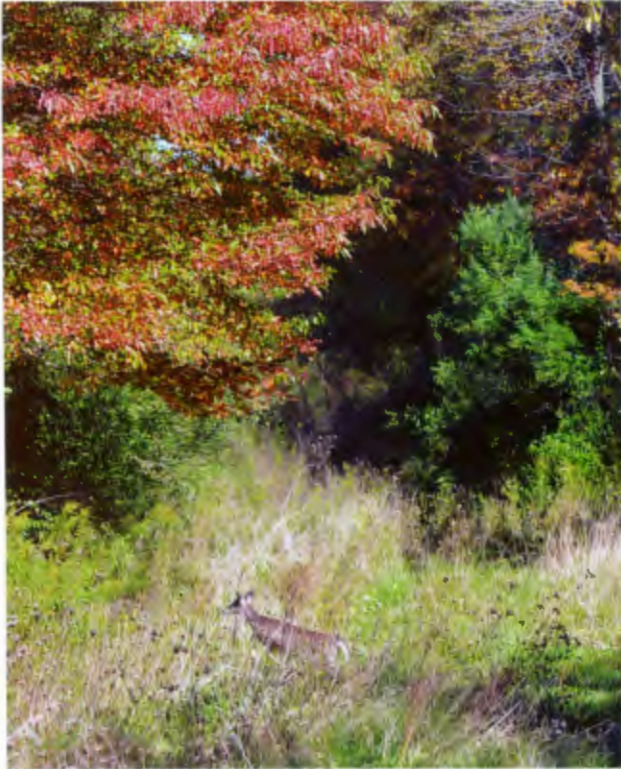
Glacier's End Nature Preserve joins Laura Hare Preserve at Blossom Hollow and Bob's Woods to create a 555-acre swatch of contiguous rolling forest in Johnson County, which is where the Wisconsin glaciation stopped.

BNT was especially productive in 2015. By December, all of the trust's \$30 million had been committed to 181 projects representing 66 counties.

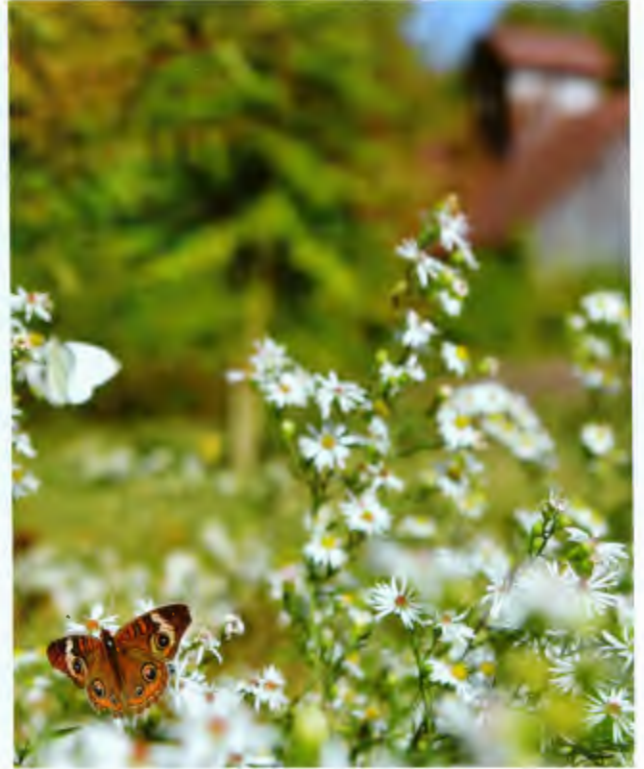
BNT program director Mark Becker said the projects represent about 15,000 acres. As of late 2015, the state had finalized acquisitions on about half of the projects, representing about

9,000 acres. The state will continue to finalize approved acquisitions through 2016.

"Communities across the state have shown a tremendous amount of support and enthusiasm for these projects," Becker said. "I think Hoosiers can be proud of the legacy of conservation this program leaves for future generations."



Frank Oliver photo



Frank Oliver photo

(Left) Spring Creek Seeps Nature Preserve features a large fawn and rolling uplands of oak and hickory. (Right) A common buckeye butterfly at Lake Harner Recreation Area in Tippecanoe County.

PROPERTIES ACQUIRED WITH IHT FUNDS SINCE OCT. 1, 2014

Oak Ridge Prairie County Park, Lake County, 97 acres, adds to the park's southwest corner for construction of a bike trail connecting the two longest trail corridors in northwest Indiana—the Erie Lackawanna and Oak Savannah trails. BNT funds were included.

Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Monroe County, 121 acres, connects a block of existing state forest land to Monroe Lake. The property includes an active bald eagle nest. BNT funds were included.

Farm Heritage Trail, Boone County, 11 acres, adds 1.7 miles to the trail, which will eventually connect Zionsville and Lafayette. BNT funds were included.

Nickel Plate Trail, Miami County, 65 acres, extends the trail 6.5 miles west from Bunker Hill to connect with the Grissom Air Museum along U.S. 31, and east to McGrawsville. BNT funds were included.

Spring Creek Seeps Nature Preserve, Montgomery County, 87 acres, adds to the 40 acres already protected through the DNR Division of Nature Preserves. The preserve is an outstanding wetland complex featuring a large fen surrounded by rolling uplands of oak and hickory. A groundwater-fed stream empties through the property into nearby Sugar Creek. This addition is considered critical to the preserve's viability. BNT funds were included.

Pufferbelly Trail, Allen County, 12 acres, expands the trail by filling several critical gaps. Currently, 2.25 miles of trail are open, with plans to expand to 13 miles. BNT funds were included.

Glacier's End Nature Preserve, Johnson County, 204

acres, features thriving forest communities, steep bluffs, exposed bedrock, shale-bottom streams and chunks of granite strewn across the valley floors. The site is owned and managed by CILTI. It adjoins 355 acres the organization already protects. BNT funds were included.

Jackson-Washington State Forest, Washington County, 54 acres, fills a gap in existing state forest and provides an improved route for the Knobstone Trail. BNT funds were included.

Brown County State Park, Brown County, 39 acres, acquires an inholding in the northwest part of the park. The property features a ridge and two valleys and consists of mature, second-growth hardwood forest. BNT funds were included.

Pine Knob Park, LaGrange County, 109 acres, more than doubles the county park's acreage. The purchase area features high-quality sedge meadow and fen wetlands and oak/hickory woodland. BNT funds were included.

Lake Harner Recreation Area, Tippecanoe County, 195 acres, will establish a new county park just north of Lafayette. The property is a former gravel mine that resulted in two bodies of water totaling about 70 acres. The property will support fishing, hiking, fitness trails, canoeing and kayaking, bird watching and picnicking. BNT funds were included.

Heinzerling Family Five Points Nature Preserve, DeKalb County, 111 acres, including a large forest block and a 6-acre wetland. The preserve will be owned and managed by ACRES Land Trust. Black Creek runs through the property and flows into Little Cedar Creek. BNT Funds were included.

ACRES Land Trust, Allen County, 41 acres, features 29 acres of upland forest and 12 acres of wetlands and floodplain



John Maxwell photo

Wood ducks flock into a Shawnee Bottoms oxbow pond at dusk last fall. Last year, BNT and IHT funds boosted the size of the Fountain County preserve along the Wabash River to 309 acres.

in the Cedar Creek corridor, north of Fort Wayne. The acquisition connects two state-dedicated nature preserves. BNT funds were included.

Shawnee Bottoms, Fountain County, 54 acres, adds to an existing 255-acre conservation area owned by NICHES Land Trust. The northern portion includes a 7-acre natural pond in the Wabash River floodplain, with nesting bald eagles and an upland white oak woodland. BNT funds were included.

Levi Coffin House, Wayne County, 1 acre, expands parking at the state historic site in Fountain City where the Coffins aided hundreds of runaway slaves to freedom via the Underground Railroad.

HEALTHY RIVERS INITIATIVE, AUSTIN BOTTOMS CONSERVATION AREA (MUSCATATUCK RIVER)

HRI used IHT funds to acquire four parcels that add 260 acres of forested wetlands. The conservation area surrounds the Muscatatuck River in Washington, Scott and Jackson counties and is the largest, least-fragmented bottomland forest in Indiana. The acquisitions will be open to the public for hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, bird watching and nature observation.

HEALTHY RIVERS INITIATIVE, WABASH RIVER CONSERVATION AREA

HRI used IHT funds to acquire 11 acres of wetland and waterfowl habitat along the Wabash River in Vigo County. The land eventually will be open to the public for hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, bird watching and nature observation. The WRCA spans roughly 94 river miles in Vermillion, Vigo and Sullivan counties.

OTHER PROPERTIES ACQUIRED WITH BNT FUNDS SINCE OCT. 1, 2014

Pine Lake Park, LaPorte County, 2 acres, includes 400 feet of shoreline on Pine Lake in LaPorte and was purchased through the Unity Foundation of LaPorte County.

Meadowbrook Forest, Porter County, 80 acres, more than doubles a BNT project owned and managed by Shirley Heinze Land Trust. The property lies along the north slope of the Valparaiso Moraine. It features different types of mature forest and provides important bird habitat.

Oak Ridge Prairie County Park, Lake County, 5 acres, includes dry mesic sand forest and shrub swamp. The addition enhances connections to the Oak Savannah Trail Corridor and protects an inholding of rare plant communities.

Wabash Heritage Corridor Trail, Adams County, 119 acres, includes several old Wabash River meanders and areas of forest containing large oak, hickory, sycamore, cottonwood, ash, and several wetland species. This acquisition links two properties owned by Friends of the Limberlost and provides for the expansion of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Trail.

Brown Hill, Brown County, 130 acres, contains examples of five of the six major forest types found in Brown County. The site is named for a prominent ridge with views that extend for several miles. It is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy.

Sycamore Land Trust, Monroe County, 95 acres, protects two adjacent parcels that are typical of the steep topography found in the area. The acquired property adjoins Morgan-Monroe State Forest.



John Maxwell photo



John Maxwell photo

(Left) A young bald eagle hops along Sugar Creek last summer, along floodplain conserved through the Healthy Rivers Initiative. (Right) Sycamore Land Trust staff repair boardwalk and benches at Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve last fall.

Trevlac Bluffs Nature Preserve, Brown County, 26 acres, adds two tracts to an existing property owned and managed by Sycamore Land Trust. The acquisition provides habitat for threatened species, including cerulean warbler and Eastern box turtle. The historic Yellowwood Trail crosses the property.

Cedar Bluffs Project Area, Monroe County, 32 acres, expands an existing property owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy, helping protect the wooded limestone cliffs and reducing visitor impact on sensitive bluff tops.

Covell Nature Preserve, DeKalb County, 93 acres, establishes a new nature preserve owned and managed by ACRES Land Trust. The acquisition includes 2,600 feet along the west bank of Cedar Creek and contains emerging upland forest, mature forested floodplain and riparian buffer.

Brincka Cross Gardens County Park, Porter County, 46 acres, expands the existing park. Plans call for expanding the park's trail system with the hope of connecting to Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

Falls Park, Madison County, 23 acres, protects wooded wetlands around Prairie and Fall creeks and expands this town park in Pendleton.

Charlestown Road County Park, Floyd County, 9 acres, includes woods and a wetland in New Albany near the county's main commercial corridor. The purchase area is part of a proposed 35-acre park that will provide passive and active recreation.

Durham Lake Wetland Conservation Area, Kosciusko County, 20 acres, adds woodland wildlife habitat adjacent to the WCA and expands hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities. The property, owned and managed by the DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife, includes mature stands of

hardwood trees such as oak, cherry, black walnut, hickory, maple and beech.

Rainbow Farms Preserve, Delaware County, 117 acres, establishes a new preserve owned and managed by Red-tail Land Conservancy. The acquisition includes upland forest and a forested wetland along the White River.

Dutro Woods, Delaware County, 15 acres, adds to Red-tail Land Conservancy's existing preserve within Muncie city limits. The property contains mature oak, walnut and early-succession trees. About half of the site is in a grassy meadow.

Brock Sampson-Hardin Ridge Conservation Area, Floyd County, 103 acres, adds two large-scale forest communities: Appalachian low elevation mixed pine forest and chestnut oak forest. The conservation area is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy and provides habitat for warblers.

Fox Ridge Nature Park, Knox County, 97 acres, allows the county parks department to transform the former Fox Ridge golf course near Vincennes into a passive recreation park. Three miles of paved cart paths will be converted to bike and pedestrian trails. The property includes 12 acres of woods, small wetlands and two fishing ponds. Gov. Mike Pence helped dedicate the new park in November 2015.

Frame Little Calumet Conservation Area, Porter County, 40 acres, adds to ground owned by the Izaak Walton League of America, Porter County Chapter. The purchase is next to the DNR Reynolds Creek State Game Bird Area and features a complex of upland woods, forested wetland, riparian woodlands and old fields.

Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve, Monroe County, 27 acres, adds to the state-dedicated nature preserve,



John Maxwell photo

Beaver dams help flood a woodland swamp along the boardwalk at Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve last fall. The Monroe County preserve's Environmental Education Trail has four observation decks along 2 miles of wetland boardwalks.

providing habitat for several threatened species, including the federally endangered Indiana bat.

Moraine Nature Preserve, Porter County, 5.5 acres, protects the existing preserve against development and adds access from the south. The site contains a natural pond and some steep slopes supporting old second-growth mesic upland forest. Moraine NP is owned and managed by DNR Division of Nature Preserves.

Douglas Woods Nature Preserve, Steuben County, 28 acres, adds land in the Fish Creek floodplain and wooded acreage. Several structures in poor condition will be removed, and the site will be restored. Douglas Woods Nature Preserve is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy.

Beckenholdt Family Park, Hancock County, 15 acres, expands the existing park in Greenfield by 25 percent. This acquisition will allow the construction of a loop trail and wildlife observation decks around a wetland. A block of woods will buffer the park from Interstate 70.

Splinter Ridge Fish & Wildlife Area, Jefferson County, 60 acres, includes steep, rolling hills overlooking the Ohio River Valley.

Ohio River Glades Conservation Area, Floyd County, 5 acres, acquired by The Nature Conservancy. The conservation area protects steep ridges along the Ohio River extending from New Albany in Floyd County, to the southern tip of Harrison County. The area is known for its many glades, where exposed siltstone has created natural openings in the forest. It is home to rare plant communities and several endangered species. The area includes numerous state-dedicated nature preserves and other protected lands, offering a strong framework to build upon.

Little Calumet River Conservation Area, Porter County, 49

acres known as Spring Run Woodlands, was acquired by the Izaak Walton League. The conservation area includes more than 10 river miles of the Little Calumet River, a Lake Michigan tributary in Porter and LaPorte counties. The area features forested floodplain with oxbow lakes, ideal habitat for migratory birds, and opportunities for canoeing, kayaking and fishing. An excellent framework of protected property already exists within the corridor.

Whitewater Valley Bicentennial Legacy Conservation Area, 331 acres, includes four acquisitions by the Whitewater Valley Land Trust in Wayne County. The conservation area includes the East Branch of the Whitewater River in Wayne and Union counties, generally following the Greenville Treaty Line of 1795. The area includes deep ravines, large forest blocks, and several rare and endangered species. The river valley already boasts several state-dedicated nature preserves, offering an existing matrix of protected lands to expand upon.

HEALTHY RIVERS INITIATIVE, WABASH RIVER CONSERVATION AREA

HRI used BNT funds to acquire seven properties totaling 1,215 acres of floodplain forest, wetlands and reclaimed coal mining land along the Wabash River in Vigo County. The land eventually will be open to the public for hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, bird watching and nature observation. Some of the acquired land is next to Wabashiki and Fairbanks Landing fish & wildlife areas. The conservation area spans roughly 94 river miles in Vermillion, Vigo and Sullivan counties. □

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