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## Greene County land now a state-designated nature preserve

By Carol Kugler The Herald-Times  
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Shane Gibson, environmental education director with Sycamore Land Trust, looks at the rock outcroppings and foliage at the Dilcher-Turner Canyon Forest Nature Preserve in Greene County. (Jamie Sweaney / Courtesy photo)

A nature preserve on the edge of Greene County — featuring woods, waterfalls and scenic ravines with sandstone outcrops — has been designated as Dilcher-Turner Canyon Forest Nature Preserve after it was approved as a state nature preserve by the Indiana Nature Resources Commission on May 19.

The nature preserve was donated to the Sycamore Land Trust in 2013 by its owners David and Kathy Dilcher and F. Rudi Turner, who purchased the 68 acres in the 1970s, according to John Lawrence, executive director of Sycamore Land Trust. Turner was a retired Indiana University biology researcher who died in 2018. He had an interest in orchids, which can still be found on the property. David Dilcher is a retired IU biology professor who has contributed flower, leaves and fruits from trees at the site to the IU herbarium, according to a news release from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

“They wanted to see it protected,” Lawrence said. “It was such a really exceptional natural area. ... It did impress me as a place that I thought would be worthy and exceptional enough on the statewide level that it would interest the state as a dedicated nature preserve.”

Dilcher-Turner Canyon Forest is the fourth Sycamore Land Trust nature preserve to become a state-designated nature preserve, Lawrence said. But this preserve is different from the others because the state did not help purchase the property, as it had with the other three. Oftentimes Sycamore Land Trust will work with state and federal agencies to purchase property with exceptional natural features to ensure it remains undeveloped. Special nature trust funding has been used by the state to help secure a piece of land for the land trust.

Lawrence said he reached out to state officials a few years ago to see if they might be interested in the Dilcher-Turner property, which has a small parking lot and 1.6 miles of trails that begin at the trailhead/parking area along Edwards Road in Greene County.

Lawrence was excited the preserve now has the state designation, which is only given to the best natural areas across Indiana.

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## More Information

The Dilcher-Turner Canyon Forest Nature Preserve is located in Greene County with a small parking lot off Edwards Road.

There are 1.6 miles of moderate trails that loop through ravines, past seasonal waterfalls and rock outcroppings. Uncommon plant life at the preserve includes walking ferns and club moss. Varieties of orchids as well as scarlet and summer tanagers have been seen on the property.

Like Sycamore's other nature preserves, visitation at Dilcher-Turner Canyon Forest has increased greatly due to the pandemic. The announcement of this state designation has only added to that, as people are eager to experience such a beautiful natural area. Visitors are urged to follow all guidelines for social distancing and observe rules posted at its nature preserves, including leashing dogs at all times. Parking is limited to protect sensitive habitat; if no spots are available, visitors must leave and come back at another time. Trespassing on a neighbor's property is strictly prohibited.

For more about Sycamore Land Trust, go to [sycamorelandtrust.org](http://sycamorelandtrust.org).



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