



SYCAMORE LAND TRUST

Media Coverage

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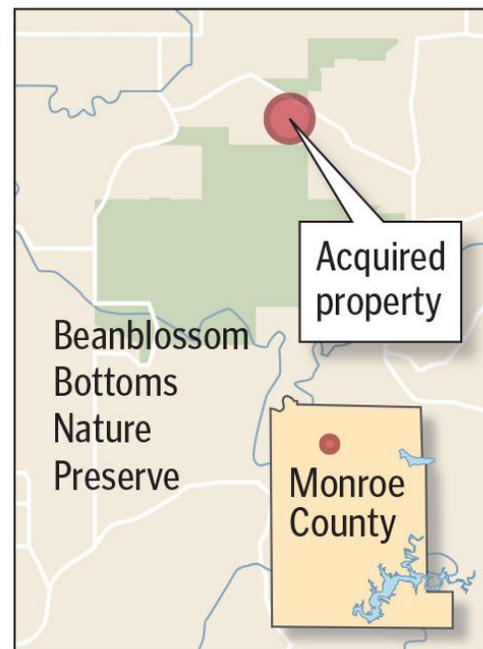
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Land trust adds more property to preserve

A land acquisition by Sycamore Land Trust has filled in another block of land in the Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve in northwestern Monroe County.

The 84 acres is in the northeastern corner of the nature preserve and fits neatly between the current preserve and the 78-acre Restle Unit of Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, which is west of the newly acquired land.

The land is a mixture of agricultural farmland and woods, which is considered bottomland hardwood forest, according to Christian Freitag, executive director of Sycamore Land Trust. He said the fields will probably be farmed for the next couple of years while the land trust determines what to do with the land and raises funds to return it to a more natural habitat. Freitag said farming the land is better than allowing it to go fallow, which promotes the growth of invasive plant species.



H-T Graphic

The bottomland hardwood forest is one of the rarer types of forest, in large part because it's woods in a wet area that is often drained and the trees cut down. Some of Indiana's endangered species live in the bottomland hardwood forest areas of the nature preserve, including the Indiana bat, Kirtland's snake, crawfish frog and rare orchids.

"Think swampy woods," Freitag said of the bottomland hardwood forest.

To help with the bottomland woods on the current Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve, volunteers will be planting 5,000 trees, including pin oak, white oak, swamp chestnut oak, swamp white oak, shumard oak, black walnut, shellbark hickory, bald cypress, redbud and grey dogwood.

Lucky's Market, through its Bags for Change program, donated \$1,788 last September to help fund the trees at the Beanblossom Bottoms preserve.

Bicentennial area

Sycamore Land Trust has another ongoing project that's nearing completion, which will conserve 66 acres southeast of Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve. The project area has more than a mile of frontage along Beanblossom Creek, and will add more land into the Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area.

The land has several old oxbows from the creek that provide a water source to wildlife even in the driest summers and give amphibians a moist habitat necessary to thrive.

The Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial 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 Indiana's Bicentennial Nature Trust as one of five special conservation areas in 2012 by then-Gov. Mitch Daniels. The conservation area includes Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve.

With the addition of 66 acres, Freitag said, the Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area is protecting more land — 1,483 acres — than many of Indiana's state parks.

The total acreage is expected to increase to 1,549 acres when that next land project is completed.

In Monroe County, there are more than 3,000 acres protected by the land trust through easements and preserves, Freitag said.