Three New Preserves
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Support made easy
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Celebrate
Annual Celebration: October 23
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Newest preserve shines with potential

Sycamore’s 3rd largest acquisition will return 339 acres to nature

BY KATRINA FOLSOM, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Imagine another Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve. A large preserve along Beanblossom Creek with habitat for bald eagles and woodcocks. A place to witness the regeneration of forest and wetland. A diverse resource for environmental education.

Introducing Sycamore’s newest preserve: 339 acres with over a mile of frontage along Beanblossom Creek in northwest Monroe County. This preserve will be named for the Sam Shine Foundation, which helped make the purchase possible. It is Sycamore’s third largest acquisition ever. It’s also the most significant project so far in the Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area. And it’s all thanks to our wonderful supporters!

This preserve protects an ecologically important area, provides a home for threatened and endangered species, and will create opportunities for public recreation and education. These are all priorities of the Bicentennial Nature Trust, which contributed match funding toward the purchase from Mike Edgeworth.

AN EXCITING RESTORATION OPPORTUNITY

As with Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve, which encompasses almost 600 acres acquired in pieces from 1995 – 2015, this new preserve offers an exceptional opportunity to restore a sensitive area. Sycamore will keep the current fields in agricultural production for several years while restoration plans are fully developed and funded. This will help control invasive plants until habitat restoration efforts—such as planting bottomland hardwood trees—begin.

For years, people like you have enjoyed strolling the boardwalk at Beanblossom Bottoms, watching the former farm fields transform into vital habitat for wildlife. Few things are more awe-inspiring than the spiraling mating dance of the woodcock. It has also been an ideal place for students to learn about wetlands, natural succession, and a variety of plant and animal species.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Sycamore plans to open this preserve for public visitation and enjoyment in time. This new preserve has similar potential for environmental education and enjoyment by hikers, birders, and nature photographers. We plan to build a parking lot near the top of the hill overlooking this beautiful southern Indiana landscape. If you want to be part of these efforts as a funder or volunteer, let us know!

Thank you to the Sam Shine Foundation, the Bicentennial Nature Trust, Mike Edgeworth, and Sycamore members for protecting it for future generations of Hoosiers!

(Right top) Colorful ironweed (Vernonia altissima), buttonbush (Cephalanthus occidentalis), and other valuable wildlife plants cover a significant portion of the new preserve.

(Right bottom) Beanblossom Creek runs along the side of the new preserve for over a mile, providing a beautiful wildlife sanctuary.

(Facing page) A preserve this big is worth seeing from the air! Thank you to Bill Oliver for giving our Assistant Director, John Lawrence, a fly-over with his camera. You’re looking southeast, with Beanblossom Creek bordering the property along the left and bottom of this photo.
Ordering up a double scoop

Sycamore Sustainers
savor steady support

In an alternate universe, I could enjoy coffee Oreo ice cream and mint brownie chunk in the same dish. What I’m trying to say is: I’m excited about the opportunity to run a business again, but I’m sad about leaving Sycamore. Why couldn’t I have both?! I’ve been so proud to represent Sycamore Land Trust and I already miss working with all the organization’s wonderful supporters.

Unwilling to give up one of my favorite flavors, I gave my dilemma more consideration. I realized that in some ways, I can have both. I can still be the Sycamore supporter I’ve been for the past 17 years.

Thinking about everything I’ve learned, this one thing really stands out: the value of unrestricted donations. One of the most effective actions anyone can take to protect land is to join the Sycamore Sustainers program with monthly unrestricted gifts.

Because Sycamore can leverage every unrestricted dollar to save $7 to $10 worth of land, it is the way to make your donation dollars go the farthest. It’s the way many Board members support the organization. It’s how our past Development Director Patrick Petro continues to support Sycamore. And it is one of the ways I’m going to support Sycamore from now on.

This steady support, automatically transferred from your bank account or credit card, helps Sycamore act quickly when exciting conservation opportunities arise. It also helps you budget. Many people find it’s possible to give more as a monthly donor than by writing one check a year. That might be $10 to $25 a month for you, or it might be $100. And it’s so easy! Learn more and sign up at www.sycamorelandtrust.org/sycamore-sustainers.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve you with this rewarding work!

P.S. Thank you to Patrick Petro for designing our new Sycamore Sustainers logo!

Preserve a Preserve

Work with us to expand your preservation impact

Volunteering is a fun, rewarding, and personal way you can contribute to Sycamore Land Trust! You will meet like-minded people, have stimulating conversations, see beautiful places, and get to know the hard-working Sycamore staff. You can participate in a way that fits your own interests, schedule, and needs. Here are two options to consider:

Meet with me and we’ll explore the best fit for your contribution to our local land conservation work.

Sign up for our new monthly volunteer e-newsletter! It will keep you posted on upcoming opportunities, many of which you can conveniently register for online. Simply visit www.sycamorelandtrust.org to subscribe—or contact me at 812-336-5382 x100.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY HIGHLIGHT
We have an exciting new volunteer opportunity for you! Roll up your sleeves on Third Thursdays and help “Preserve a Preserve!”

You can make a significant difference while meeting new friends, enjoying the outdoors, and sharing a light lunch together. September marked our first Preserve a Preserve day at Cedar Crest, Sycamore’s office and nature preserve. Sycamore’s Assistant Director, John Lawrence, heads up these workdays. Their purpose is to maintain and improve our preserves both for public enjoyment and for the many animals and plants that call them home.

Depending on the needs of each preserve we visit, the project may entail removing trash or invasive plants, restoration projects such as planting trees, building or clearing trails, and more. We now have over 40 preserves to manage and more on the way, so your help is vital!

NEW!
Preserve a Preserve on Third Thursdays
SEE PAGES 12 & 13 FOR DETAILS.

October 15 at Porter West Preserve (Monroe County)
November 19 at Trevlac Bluffs Nature Preserve (Brown County)
February 18*
March 17*
April 21*

*Locations and times to be determined. No workdays in December or January.
Property Update

On a sultry summer evening, friends, family, neighbors, and Sycamore staff gathered for the dedication of the Fix-Stoelting Preserve. We were all touched by Julie’s heartfelt gratitude and relief when she said, “I don't have to worry anymore about what will happen to this land.” Julie and Kent Stoelting stand with their son Jackson, who was thrilled to discover his name is on the sign!

You ensure Sycamore is there when opportunities arise

New Brown Co. preserve protects wildlife, scenery

BY KATRINA FOLSOM, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Even as we pull out all the stops to preserve land along Beanblossom Creek for Indiana’s bicentennial, we continue projects throughout southern Indiana. Your support enables us to perform this balancing act. So thank you for ensuring Sycamore’s services are available when people like Jon Stafford want to protect their land!

Jon approached us about preserving his land, which shares a border with Brown County State Park. He donated 46 acres of beautiful woods, fields, and a creek—now called the Stafford Family Preserve.

This land was well cared for by Jon and his family. They used the property as a weekend getaway. “Having the farm was a nice escape,” says Jon. It served as a location for family reunions, camping, bonfires, and stargazing. They also operated a Christmas tree farm in the bottomland fields.

This bottomland is high quality wildlife habitat, as Sycamore members Jess Gwinn and Joan ten Hoor found during a butterfly count in early June. They tallied over 100 great spangled fritillary butterflies attracted to the abundant milkweed there.

When the Stafford family bought the property, it included a barn of hand-hewn logs that dated back to at least 1857. It was in serious disrepair, so Jon saved the logs and used them to build a rustic cabin. This land helped fulfill Jon’s love of woodworking and his desire to teach his children practical skills. “Being at the farm was part of learning handy skills,” he says. “It convinced them that they could do anything if they set their mind to it.”

The land is located at the end of Upper Schooner Road. The Stafford family retained an adjacent parcel where their cabin is located. Once we devise access to a parking area that respects the family’s privacy, the preserve will be open for public enjoyment.

This land holds a special place in the hearts of the Stafford family members. Now, Jon says, “I hope the public in a small, quiet way can enjoy it. Hiking, enjoying the trees and wildflowers...it’s a pretty little spot.”

‘The best of both worlds’

Family finds preserving their land a perfect solution

BY KATRINA FOLSOM, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

“It’s always been part of my life,” says Julie Stoelting. Now her family has ensured that their land will always be a beautiful natural area.

The 31-acre Fix-Stoelting Preserve is the second property acquired as part of the Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area. The preserve has a half-mile of frontage along Beanblossom Creek, along with bottomland woods, a field, and an unusual tall wooded knob.

The preserve’s name honors the family of Julie and Kent Stoelting. They generously sold the land below appraised value to help Sycamore qualify for matching funds from the Bicentennial Nature Trust. “It’s a memorial for my father and a legacy for my son,” Julie said.

Julie grew up riding horses and camping out at the Monroe County property, which belonged to her father Wayne Fix. He recently passed away and because Julie’s family lives in Greenwood, they were considering selling the property. Then they received a letter from Sycamore expressing interest in protecting land in the Beanblossom Creek corridor. “It was perfect timing,” Julie said. “Donating it is the best of both worlds: it gets to be preserved, but I can visit it anytime.”

Jon Stafford and his late wife Linda Berg Stafford, flanked by children Catherine and Christopher, dressed for work on the family’s Christmas tree farm. The family recently donated 46 acres adjacent to Brown County State Park to Sycamore.
‘Who’s Been Here?’
How one book changed my inquiry process
BY SHANE GIBSON, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR

“Dad, who’s been here?” Sawyer asks as he holds up a small limb that is almost yellow and bright compared to its surroundings. We examine closer and see bark still attached and distinct patterns left by the animal’s incisors. Other clues help tell the story. We are on a lake shore. Stumps with tapered tops are nearby.

On another outing, my other son Tanner asks, “Who’s been here?” as he holds up a small, broken Styrofoam cup. He stands next to burnt logs, fish remains, and other human-made debris. The critters in question were obvious.

On both occasions, Sawyer and Tanner already knew what had been here—a beaver and people—from our many other explorations. But that did not stop them from asking the question, “Who’s been here?” The question has become what guides our family’s inquiry.

Lindsay Barrett George’s “In the Woods: Who’s Been Here?” (Greenwillow Books, 1998) was a birthday gift to my boys for their first and third birthdays. Both boys celebrate in August so they often share gifts. Picture books are usually thought of as children’s books, but I have never thought that way. I believe good books are good books.

My IU School of Education professors Jerome Harste and Carolyn Burke read a picture book to our graduate-level classes almost daily. “In the Woods: Who’s Been Here?” provides an inquiry method that is useful for all who enjoy reading the land and investigating the wonders of nature.

Whether on my own, with a group of second graders, or a group of adults, asking good questions trumps reciting facts almost every time. “Who’s Been Here?” is not just a good book for us all to enjoy, it is a lens through which to see the world.

Enjoy yourself. Enjoy nature.

Who’s been here? What is that? Asking lots of questions is a powerful way to learn about our natural world. During Li’l Hikers outings, Outreach Event Coordinator David Rupp encourages the children (and parents!) to ask questions about anything that catches their eye.

Breakfast with the Birds

Birders enjoy seeing warblers, cuckoo

The rain didn’t keep people away from Breakfast with the Birds on Saturday, May 16! Eagle Slough Natural Area in Evansville is a birding hotspot because of its location on a principal route of the Mississippi Flyway, and is a popular stopover for migrating warblers. At this event, the uncommon black-billed cuckoo was a highlight. You’re also almost guaranteed to see yellow-throated and prothonotary warblers during nesting season in the summer. Thank you to all the avid Eagle Slough volunteers who lead hikes and maintain the preserve!

(Above) The observation deck at Eagle Slough Natural Area in Evansville provides an excellent vantage point for viewing migrating birds.

(Right) Sycamore Board member Greg Meyer enjoys the company of his granddaughter Maddie at Breakfast with the Birds in Evansville on May 16.

You can make a permanent impact on Sycamore’s work to connect children and adults with nature by donating to our Environmental Education Endowment. Your gift will be matched up to $250,000 by an anonymous donor. Make a donation (or pledge a larger gift today and pay by March 31, 2016) at www.cfmbc.org/donate-now/. In the “A Named Fund” field, write “Sycamore Monarch Environmental Education Endowment.”

Thank you!
Join us for a special
25TH ANNIVERSARY
SYCAMORE LAND TRUST
ANNUAL CELEBRATION
25 years into forever
Friday, October 23, 6 – 9 p.m.
Bloomington/Monroe County Convention Center

Join nearly 400 other Sycamore supporters for an evening of camaraderie and inspiration!
Featuring Curt Meine, Senior Fellow at the Aldo Leopold Foundation and author of “Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work.”

Enjoy drinks from Oliver Winery and Upland Brewing Company, dinner, a silent auction, and music by the Andy Cobine Trio.

$75/person
$500/table for 8
Purchase your seats today!

Go to www.sycamorelandtrust.org or call 812-336-5382 x100.

Team Sycamore mounts up for second Climate Ride
The 2015 Climate Ride Midwest started on Sunday, September 27 from Grand Rapids, Michigan, and concluded Wednesday, September 30 at Northerly Island in Chicago. Last year, the Sycamore Climate Ride Midwest team rode about 300 miles in four days over the same route. Thank you to our 13 team members, their donors, and our sponsors Muddy Fork Farm & Bakery and Bicycle Garage for such a strong showing of support!

“IT has been a bit of challenge to find an awesome group of like-minded people who enjoy doing many of the same things I enjoy. Being a member of Sycamore Branches has exceeded my expectations on every front. I have met fantastic people who are passionate about nature—and are also just a great time!” – Lauren Harling, Sycamore Branches committee member

Photo by Katrina Folsom

There’s a well-recognized need within the conservation community to cultivate a new generation of leaders, especially as baby boomers begin to retire. Connecting young people to the mission—and to each other—is a good place to start.

That is precisely what a core group of Sycamore Land Trust supporters in their 20s and 30s are doing. With the support of Sycamore staff, they have formed the Sycamore Branches group to build community among people in their 20s and 30s with an interest in the outdoors.

The group organizes events that highlight preserved land and engage people who like nature. Highlights so far include two hikes followed by socializing at Upland Brewing Company, and a nature trivia night. Learn more at sycamore-landtrust.org/sycamore-branches.

(Above) A large group of 20- and 30-somethings had fun and discovered a new hiking spot during an event at Dilcher-Turner Canyon Forest, followed by drinks at Upland Brewing. Already, the connections formed by the group have energized local young people who love the outdoors.

Photo by Katrina Folsom
Upcoming Activities & Volunteer Opportunities

Join us for an event! Hikes are free for members; suggested donation for non-members is $5/person or $10/family, unless otherwise specified. See www.sycamorelandtrust.org for more details and directions. To RSVP, visit the event page online and fill out the form, email info@sycamorelandtrust.org, or call 812-336-5382 x100. Provide your address, phone number, and names and ages of any children participating.

NATURE ENTHUSIAST: Guided hikes for people of all ages and experience levels. Learn something new, come for a refresher, or check out a new preserve!

LI’L HIKERS: Family outings geared toward children up to age 12. A snack will be provided.

WEEKDAY WALKERS: Naturalist-led strolls on special topics. Your input and questions are encouraged!

15 OCT
THIRD THURSDAYS: PRESERVE A PRESERVE DAY!
Porter West Preserve (Monroe County)
Thursday, October 15, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lunch included.
Purpose: to maintain and improve our property for public enjoyment and for the many plants and animals that live there. Assistant Director John Lawrence will lead us in clearing a new trail through the woods at this popular preserve just west of Bloomington. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes or boots, bring gloves and water. RSVP by October 13.

18 OCT
LI’L HIKERS: AMAZING AUTUMN ADVENTURE
Laura Hare Nature Preserve at Downey Hill
Sunday, October 18, 2 - 4 p.m. Snack provided.
Come see why tourists flock to Brown County for the fall colors! Don’t miss a hike at this wooded preserve just because of a little traffic, but do allow extra time. This should be the peak time for colors. Leader David Rupp will have hands-on activities about trees and leaves for the children. RSVP by October 15.

7 NOV
TREE ID HIKE
Tangeman Woods (Bartholomew County)
Saturday, November 7, 1 - 3 p.m.
Join District Forester Rob McGriff at Tangeman Woods for tips on tree identification. This preserve features a wide array of hardwood species. This is a great chance to learn from an expert in forestry and to enjoy beautiful fall weather. RSVP by November 5.

11 NOV
WEEKDAY WALKERS: A BEAUTIFIED MINE
Columbia Mine Preserve
Wednesday, November 11, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. EST (11 a.m. CST)
Join other adventurers for a day exploring a reclaimed mine in Pike and Gibson counties. This 1,063-acre preserve is home to bobcats, river otters, and many bird species. Bring a lunch and binoculars. David Rupp will lead the group from Bloomington, meet at Sam’s Club on the city’s southwest side. Please indicate upon registration whether you are willing to drive (1:45 one way). Those meeting at the preserve: plan on an 11 a.m. CST start at the main parking area. RSVP by November 9.

14 NOV
TOUCH THE INVADERS VOLUNTEER DAY
Touch the Earth Preserve (Bartholomew County)
Saturday, November 14, 9 a.m. - noon
Help ensure that the invaders don’t gain a new foothold after a three-year project to control non-native bushes, including autumn olive and Asian bush honeysuckle, that were taking over this scenic preserve! Wear long pants and sturdy shoes or boots, bring gloves and water. RSVP by November 12.

19 NOV
THIRD THURSDAYS: PRESERVE A PRESERVE DAY!
Trevlac Bluffs Nature Preserve (Brown County)
Thursday, November 19, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lunch included.
Purpose: to maintain and improve this state-dedicated preserve, one of the most significant natural sites in Indiana. We’ll control invasive Japanese honeysuckle vines in the preserve’s bottomland forest. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes or boots, bring gloves and water. RSVP by November 17.

4 DEC
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
Cedar Crest, 4898 E Heritage Woods Rd, Bloomington
Friday, December 4, 5 - 8 p.m.
Members and friends are invited to Sycamore’s headquarters for merrymaking. Come as you are, stay for a few minutes or a few hours. Light refreshments and drinks will be served. No RSVP necessary.

9 JAN
HEALTHY HIKE IN A WINTER WONDERLAND
Trevlac Bluffs Nature Preserve
Saturday, January 9, 2016, 12 - 1:30 p.m.
Get your new year started off right and exercise your heart, mind, and spirit while hiking the Yellowwood Trail at Trevlac Bluffs Nature Preserve. The hike will ascend to the 200-foot-high hemlock bluffs that overlook Beanblossom Creek. Enjoy the spectacular views and sounds of winter in the Brown County hills. This hike will be brisk and includes a fairly steep incline. RSVP by January 7.

23 JAN
LI’L HIKERS: WINTER GAMES
Touch the Earth Natural Area (Bartholomew County)
Saturday, January 23, 2016, 10 - 11:30 a.m. Snack provided.
Touch the Earth has a great mix of habitats to explore during the winter months. David Rupp will guide children through activities and games about the animals that live in these habitats and how they survive winter. Snow or no snow, join us for a fun morning! RSVP by January 21.

24 JAN
FULL MOON HIKE
Porter West Preserve (Monroe County)
Sunday, January 24, 2016, 5 - 6:30 p.m.
Using the light of the moon, we will experience the subtle beauty and wonder of deep winter. Shane Gibson (EE Director) and Jaime Sweany (Volunteer and Membership Director) will lead a stroll along the lowland paths, honoring our night vision. We will practice a variety of owl calls. We’ll finish off the hike by warming up with hot cocoa and cookies! RSVP by January 21.

2 FEB
WEEKDAY WALKERS: GROUNDHOG DAY HIKE
Powell Preserve (Monroe County)
Tuesday, February 2, 2016, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Shake cabin fever by getting outside and looking for your own shadow! While it’s unlikely that we’ll encounter a groundhog, there are plenty of other discoveries to be made on a winter walk. Powell Preserve is a key part of the Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area. Meet at the Marsh parking lot on Kinser Pike at 9:30 a.m. to carpool. David Rupp will lead the hike. RSVP by January 31.

6 FEB
SOLITUDE WALK
Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve (Monroe County)
Saturday, February 6, 2016, 3 - 4:30 p.m.
In today’s over-stimulated world, silence can be a valuable asset. Hike participants will walk solo and quiet in short intervals. We’ll also make brief stops along the way to read quotes from well-known nature writers. Coffee and pine needle tea will be provided by your guide, EE Director Shane Gibson. RSVP by February 4.

INDIVIDUALIZED OPPORTUNITIES
To schedule a nature experience tailored for your group, contact Environmental Education Director Shane Gibson at shane@sycamorelandtrust.org or 812-336-5382 x107. Sycamore is dedicated to providing outdoor experiences for people of all ages and abilities.

Need a speaker for your church, service club, or other group? Contact Communications Director Katrina Folsom at katrina@sycamorelandtrust.org or 812-336-5382 x101.
WELCOME 43 NEW MEMBERS!
Paula and David Albers
Caryn Brown
Kathy Byrne
Evan Boyer
Stephanie Burks
Kim and Kevin Cook
Deer Park Manor
Pat Denny
Krista Detor and David Weber
Liz Feil
Michèle and Roger Fields
Lynn Flittner
Krista Glasgow
Greg Graf
Randall Haile
Cinda and Jim Hamilton
Bob Harter and Vicki Toelke
Dena Hayes
Dirk and Susan Hess-Hoyman
Amy Jackson
Jeff and Lily Kleinlein
Kristin Konstanty and Troy Kim
Lively
Bill Manwaring
Sam and Brittany Marcello
Dave Meginnis
Chris Merlo
Muddy Fork Farm and Bakery
Chris Newman
Helene H. Leary
Nancy and David Owen
Ryan and Tyler Perron
Robert Raiborn
Megan Reece
Joe and Sandy Reidnor
Shannon Skikman
Jonathan Vatterott
Julie and Kent Stoepling
Eli and Emily Trinkle
Tobin and Pamela Tyree
Kate and Jim Wiltsie
Gary Wittlich

Thank You

This list includes donations received from 5/1/2015 through 8/10/2015, followed by special giving groups. Donations made near the end of this date range may appear in the next issue of "The Twig." If you believe we have omitted your name in error, please contact us at 812-336-5382.

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Paula and David Albers
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Gregory G. Meyer Charitable Fund in the Vanderburgh Community Foundation, a member of Community Foundation Alliance
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Donna Marcus
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Lee Streebney
James Sutton
Thomas Talbert
Eli and Emily Trinkle
Tobin and Pamela Tyree
Gary Walters
Larry and Mary Wise
Gary Winch
Christina and Dana Wray

IN HONOR OF DAVE MEGINNNIS
Michèle and Roger Fields

IN HONOR OF VICKY MERTESKY
Bob Kussel

LEADERSHIP SOCIETY MEMBERS
VISIONARY ($250,000 + ANNUALLY)
Anonymous
Namaste Foundation
Sam Shine Foundation

CHAMPION ($10,000 – $24,999)
Bill and Kathleen Olivier
Barbara Restle
Robert and Judy Wargel
Wylie Foundation, Inc.

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Freitag, Weeks attend LTA conference as experts

Sycamore’s Executive Director Christian Freitag and Conservation Law Center Director and Sycamore Board member Bill Weeks presented lectures at a recent Land Trust Alliance (LTA) conference. Christian and Bill were invited as two of the country’s foremost experts on agricultural conservation easements. They were pleased to help scholars and land conservation professionals from around the country learn about cutting-edge developments in the field.

In appreciation

Guy and Connie Loftman, of Loftman Law, recently retired after working together for over 40 years. Sycamore was proud to be their client for more than half that time. “That means they helped us protect thousands of acres of land!” Thank you, Guy and Connie, for your excellent service and constant support.
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If you would like one of us to speak to your group or organization, please call 812-336-5382 x101.

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<tr>
<th>LAND STATUS</th>
<th>PROJECTS</th>
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<tr>
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A special 25th anniversary
SYCAMORE LAND TRUST
ANNUAL CELEBRATION

Friday, October 23, 6 – 9 p.m.
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Purchase your seats today!

Go to www.sycamorelandtrust.org or call 812-336-5382 x100.

More information on page 11.

Bufflehead. Photo by Steve Gifford