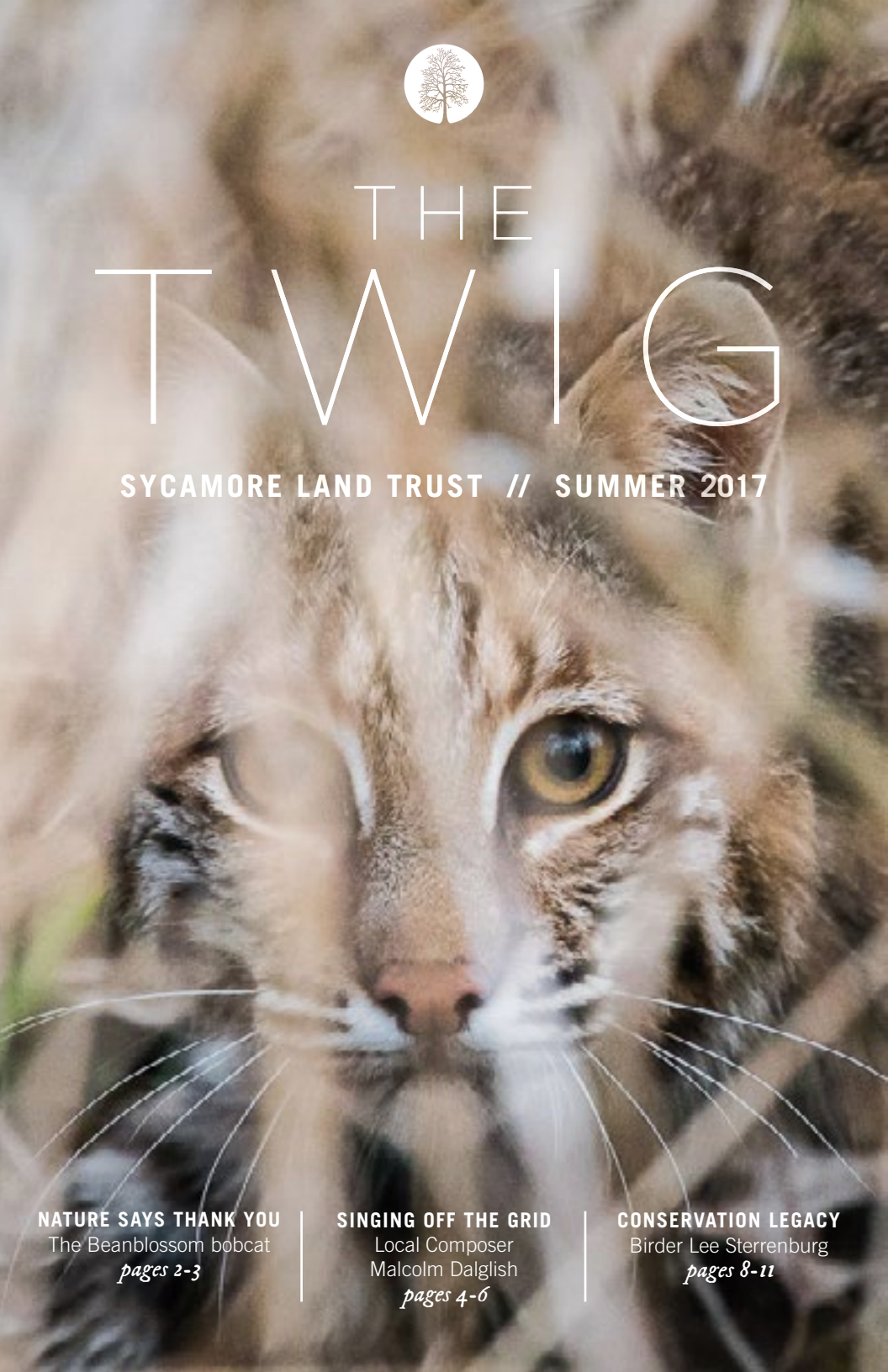

THE TWIG

SYCAMORE LAND TRUST // SUMMER 2017

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- FROM THE -

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NATURE SAYS "THANK YOU"

By Christian Freitag

One doesn't work in conservation expecting atta-boys. For every land project that works out, a few don't. You see progress continue its march through the countryside. People call you things like "environmentalist" and "greenie" with no compliment intended.

Sometimes you'll catch a hug from a landowner whose family land you helped protect, or receive a wonderful card or email from a hiker. You find fellowship in the spirit of your colleagues, volunteers, and partners. You madly adore your members and supporters, always wishing there were more. If only everyone who shared these values stood up to be counted, you tell yourself. Those who do stand up seem like angels.

You find your rewards in other places. You develop a different sense of appreciation. You hope that the world can be better tomorrow than today, with the optimism that is inherent in conservationists and people who love nature.

And then, one morning, a young man goes for a walk in the woods with his camera. Not just any woods. Woods we've been working to protect and restore for almost two decades. Woods that weren't even woods when we started there. Swampy fields and a few trees with wet feet. A place tamped by generations of hard use, but still untamed. A place ready to show itself again if given the chance.

On that walk, looking for the eagles that have raised their young in the same area for 15 years, the man gets a moment.

Twenty feet away, a young bobcat jumps on to the boardwalk and looks at him, curiously, cautiously. The encounter lasts but a moment before the cat bounds away into the tall grass to hide. And in those few seconds, the man gets a few pictures. Then he sends them to Sycamore.

When I saw the photo from Chip Methvin featured on the cover of this issue, I lost my breath and my eyes swelled with emotion. I felt gratitude. My colleagues cheered together, a handful of friends sharing a moment rightfully belonging to many. Thousands of hours of hard work by hundreds of people over the course of many years, and look what we did!

To Chip, and the many people who made Sycamore's Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve a reality, to our members and supporters, to our friend the bobcat, we offer you thanks. You made that happen. Atta-boy.

And to the thousands of others in southern Indiana who care about this Earth, this place, these creatures, we ask you also to give thanks. Being a member of Sycamore Land Trust is both giving and receiving. Bobcats can say thanks, too. Nothing can be so rewarding to the conservationist as this small act of grace.

CHRISTIAN FREITAG

SINGING -OFF THE- GRID

AN INTERVIEW WITH COMPOSER MALCOLM DALGLISH

By Abby Perfetti, Communications Director

I've been a musician and choral singer since I was five years old. I was trained classically, and performed a lot of religious music for audiences who sat still and listened politely.

Over the years, I would run into pieces that felt different, but I didn't know why. I finally put it all together when I moved to Bloomington in 2009 and discovered Malcolm Dalglish, a local composer with international renown. I realized that all these songs I loved were written by the same quirky person.

In a word, Malcolm's music is grounded. The lyrics and the very notes themselves are in touch with nature, but they're also rooted in the spirit of musicians who came before him.

"I like to compose songs in the style of a people rather than a person," he explains. Many composers aim to be like the greats – Beethoven, Mozart, Bach – while Malcolm seeks influence from different cultures and traditions. He also stresses that the music must reflect and enhance the meaning of the text, rather than obscure it.

Unlike much of the artistic music of previous centuries, which is very religious, Malcolm seeks a sound that reflects the spirituality of his childhood, playing in the woods and drawing the details of nature in his sketchbooks. As he explains it: "Our family was raised in that religion of being out in the woods on Sundays."

His song "Great Trees," which is one of my absolute favorites, was written on a chilly winter's night when the power went out and he sat near the fireplace. To me, the piece sounds folky, almost like a hymn, and it's a true joy to sing. You can hear a recording of Voces Novae, the Bloomington chamber choir that I sing with, performing "Great Trees" at sycamorelandtrust.org/twig.

That song is a part of a larger work called *Hymnody of Earth*, which features Malcolm's original compositions (and some reworked folk songs) set with text by beloved poet Wendell Berry. The poems, like The Peace of Wild Things, To the Holy Spirit, and Over the River, reflect Berry's deep appreciation for nature. The Peace of Wild Things is a particular favorite among Sycamore staff, as you can see why:

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

© Wendell Berry. This poem is excerpted from "The Selected Poems of Wendell Berry" and is reprinted with permission of the author and Counterpoint Press.

Malcolm's music runs the gamut from a capella choral pieces to funny folk songs with dance movements and mouth music. You might hear his self-built hammer dulcimer, various percussion instruments, and improvisations. All this comes to play in his off-the-grid Ooolation Singing camp on the doorstep of

Yosemite and in performances at National Parks and concert halls around the world.

Southern Indiana is lucky to have a musician like Malcolm in our midst, but he feels equally fortunate to live here. He describes the beauty of our natural world, like Sycamore's Amy Weingartner Branigin Peninsula Preserve.

"To be able to walk along a ridgetop that has sky above you and sky beneath reflected off a lake – it's visually stunning," he says of the trail, which he visits with his wife Judy Klein and their dog Lola. "There's shale walls and limestone outcroppings, beaches with geodes, bird migration above, and distant vistas of forested hills." He tries to get out in the woods for at least an hour every day. And he appreciates Sycamore's tireless efforts to protect natural places like this.

"I think the land trust idea is a way for people to be neighbors with nature…a part of the universe here on earth and right next door. If we have a connection to that in our daily lives, our 'pursuit of happiness' is tuned differently, less materialistic and human-centric. We're a better species, collaborating rather than dominating and exploiting. We're opened to the wondrous and wild patterns and systems that live beyond us and without us…great for the mind and spirit!"

Geese appear high over us,
pass and the sky closes, Abandon,
as in love or sleep holds
them to their way, clear,
in the ancient faith, what we need
is here.

-from "The Wild Geese" by Wendell Berry

MEMBERS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF OUR SUCCESS.

Join us and be a part of a healthier future for southern Indiana!

www.sycamorelandtrust.org/membership

Thank you for your leadership!

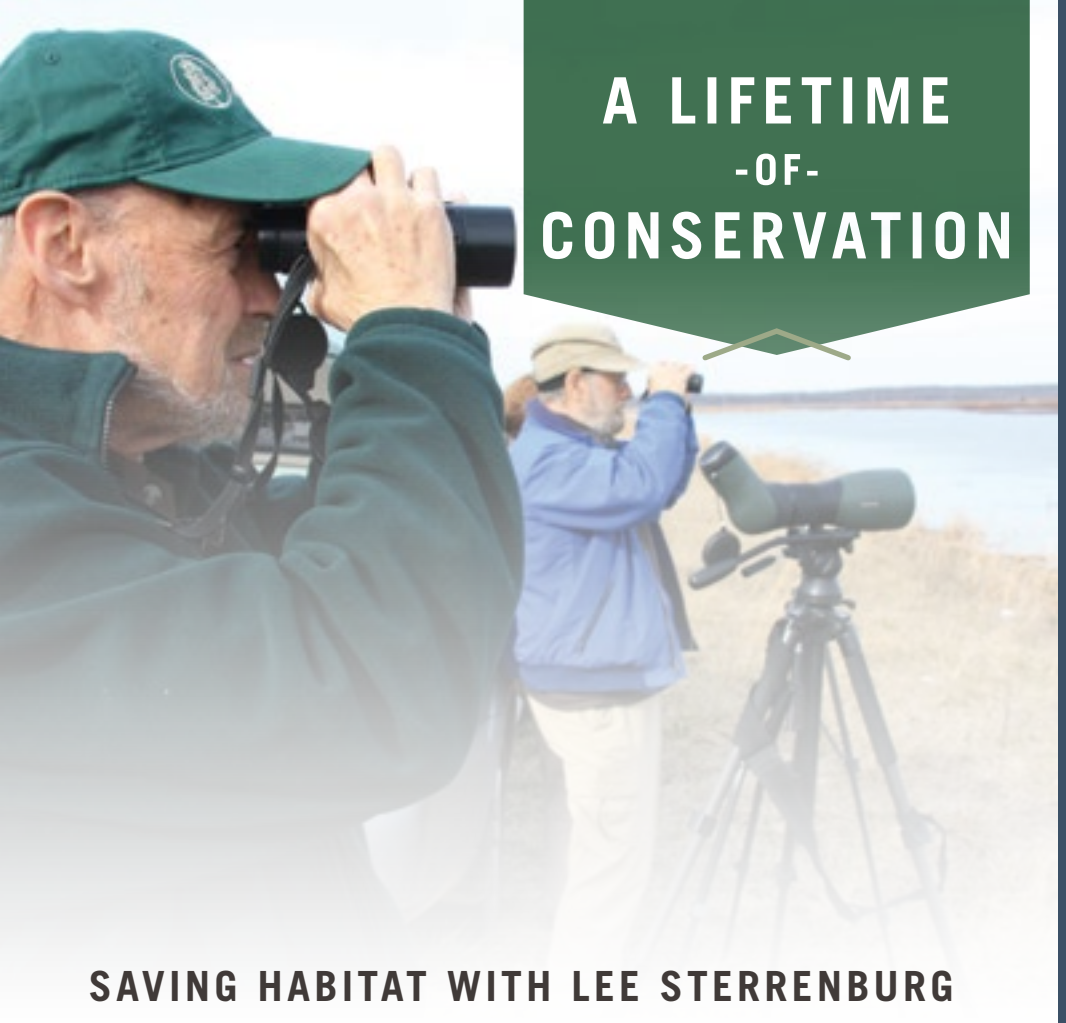
The long-time editor of The Twig, Joan ten Hoor, has stepped down after 16 years of service. Joan also recently completed her tenture as board secretary, and we are so grateful for her many years of thoughtful guidance and extensive knowledge. Thank you for everything, Joan!

Joan ten Hoor at Sycamore's 2013 Annual Celebration

Farewell, Hugh

In February, Sycamore said goodbye to our dear friend and longtime tenant of Cedar Crest Hugh Hazelrigg, who passed away. He volunteered for many years, taking beautiful photos of Sycamore properties and tending to Cedar Crest.

CEDAR CREST FALL
By Hugh Hazelrigg



A LIFETIME -OF- CONSERVATION

SAVING HABITAT WITH LEE STERRENBURG

By Ann Connors, Development Director

One of the joys of working at Sycamore is getting to know the inspiring people who are involved with the organization. Lee Sterrenburg is just such a person - an exceptional birder and environmentalist who helped create the Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area, and received the Sagamore of Wabash Award (Indiana's highest State honor) for his conservation work; an educator who brought together English and science in his career as a professor at IU; and a long-time member and volunteer who has made Sycamore a beneficiary of his estate plan.

Birds, Landscapes, Organizations, Connectivity

Lee's love for birds, being in nature, and reading about biologists and explorers started as a boy in San Diego. He spent time at the San Diego Zoo and San Diego Natural History Museum, and joined the Audubon Society and participated in bird counts. He also visited relatives in Wisconsin who had land in an area known for birding, hunting, and fishing, and were influenced by Aldo Leopold's conservation work.

> "The Sycamore vision of the future includes not just acquiring land but also ongoing stewardship and education about the value of the land. I want to be part of that."

"My favorite bird book as a child was Ralph Hoffman's Birds of the Pacific States, illustrated by Major Allen Brooks," he explained to me. "Originally published in 1927, this book might be called a kind of institution too. Hoffman's writing featured the observer actively operating and walking out in the landscape. Allen Brooks' watercolor illustrations portrayed birds in the landscape with romantic pale pink or salmon-colored skies casting light tinges on the mountain escarpments or wide-open western spaces. Hoffman's informed observations of behavior and Brooks' line drawings of birds in action brought art and science together for me."

Lee came to IU during the early 1970s to teach English and Victorian Studies. In the 1980s he participated in a multidisciplinary faculty seminar on "Charles Darwin in Context." The late Dan Willard was also a faculty member in the seminar. "I read a lot of Charles Darwin's works, and also writings of Alexander von Humboldt in translation, and the 19th-century geologist Charles

Lyell. This led me to teaching graduate seminars on Darwin in context and also co-teaching a combined English and School of Environmental Affairs graduate and undergraduate course with Dan Willard. Our team taught a course focused heavily on wetlands and rivers." (Dan was later a founding member of Sycamore Land Trust).

> I like assisting to bring together people of different political and organizational affiliations to accomplish shared goals of conservation.

In the year 2000 and after, Lee became very involved with a group of people working with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to find a way to purchase more than 8,000 acres of farmland to create a wildlife habitat in Greene County. Within five years, the land was purchased with the help of many organizations, including Sycamore Land Trust, and the Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area was established. It is one of the most successful wetland and grassland habitat restoration projects in the U.S., famous for its whooping cranes, snow geese, and other wildlife.

Lee continues to be a very active bird monitoring volunteer at Goose Pond FWA. Sycamore's recent purchase of a keystone property to add to Goose Pond FWA has been especially meaningful for Lee.

"I like assisting to bring together people of different political and organizational affiliations to accomplish shared goals of conservation."

What has been your experience with Sycamore?

"I had been birding for a number of years at Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge. I strongly supported Sycamore's successful purchase of the Columbia Mine Preserve as a part of a Refuge that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would manage, as the open landscapes attract many bird species in large numbers – making it a boon for birds and birders."

"Sycamore has an overall grasp of the complicated conservation process, including preliminary assessment and evaluation, funding, the legal and sales and contractual complications, sale or donation, site improvement, and often opening the land to public access. In my experience, Sycamore has been very creative and persistent and skilled at cutting through the red tape and jurisdictional hurdles that regularly snarl up government and DNR attempts at land purchases. Sycamore can also on occasion quickly come up with the necessary purchase price for a key property. The State usually cannot do that, and State purchases sometimes fail. Getting the whole thing done might be a fitting rubric for Sycamore."

Why is it important to you to support Sycamore in your estate plans?

"Doing estate planning tends to focus the mind on what's important. What do I want to leave behind, and to whom, and why? Sycamore Land Trust exhibits values and attributes that I share or appreciate. In my experience, Sycamore has been visionary, pragmatic, responsible, and trustworthy about land conservation. Sycamore handles the intricacies of financing, legalities, easements, and partnerships. One can see the finite results by visiting their preserves. The Sycamore vision of the future includes not just acquiring land but also ongoing stewardship and education about the value of the land. I want to be part of that."

EAT LOCAL

Our friends at Indiana Public Media have come out with the new Earth Eats Cookbook just in time for your summer trips to the farmers' market (or your own garden). We highly recommend the recipes, foraging tips, and backyard garden advice! Copies are available from Amazon and other retailers.

Author Annie Corrigan
Photo by Steph DiVohl

BLUE SHALE CREEK AT CEDAR CREST
By Hugh Hazelrigg

PROPERTY UPDATE

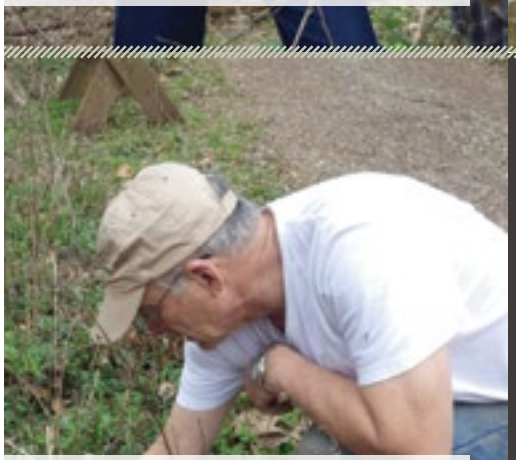
UPGRADES AT EAGLE SLOUGH NATURAL AREA

By Susan Haislip, Administrative Director

Spring is a time of renewal, and Sycamore's staff and volunteers have been busy making repairs and improvements at Eagle Slough Natural Area in Vanderburgh County. On a warm Saturday in late March, more than a dozen volunteers cleaned signage and structures, removed invasive plants, and collected two truckloads of trash from the parking lot, trails, and roadway. Local contractor Happe and Sons Construction worked to replace the deteriorating flooring on the observation deck overlooking the bald cypress pond. The deck is now open and the results are quite gratifying!

If you haven't been to Eagle Slough lately (or ever), spring is a terrific time for a visit. Like most forested bottomlands, there is an abundance of frogs and toads, emerging wildflowers, and migrating songbirds. Eagle Slough is located just south of Evansville, easily accessible from US 41. Because of its close proximity, it makes for a quick getaway from the bustle of the city.

Sycamore members and volunteers Carol Pettys and Andy Thieneman worked to remove invasive plants from along the trail at Eagle Slough Natural Area in late March.



Member and volunteer Jim Lodato has been planting native plants and tackling invasives at Eagle Slough for many years now. Additions include a variety of oak species, native cane, and cross vine, all planted to increase biodiversity.

Photo courtesy of Evan Speck

Wetland Conservation in Action on a Sycamore Property

By Lee Sterrenburg

A juvenile White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*) that turned up at Sycamore Land Trust's Eagle Slough Natural Area in Evansville on October 8, 2016 excited the birding community. Ken Brock reports this was the first record ever for Vanderburgh County. White Ibis is a southern bird. The breeding range includes Florida, along the Gulf Coast, and coasts of Mexico and Central America. The first Indiana White Ibis record was in May of 1878 in Knox County. The major pattern of Indiana incursions began in 1980. White Ibises wandering northward have found some of the state's most prominent wetland restoration and conservation projects: TNC Kankakee Sands, Goose Pond FWA, Muscatatuck NWR, and Patoka River NWR. Sycamore's Eagle Slough now belongs on that ibis wetland list too.

PROPERTY UPDATE

BEANBLOSSOM BOTTOMS NATURE PRESERVE

By Abby Perfetti, Communications Director

Over the years, both Oliver Winery and the Oliver family have contributed to the preservation of the Beanblossom Creek area. Their gifts of land and financial support have helped Sycamore protect more than 600 acres at Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve.

Not far from the Creekbend Vineyard which provides grapes for the Winery's delicious line of local wines, the nature preserve protects an important area of swampy bottomland forest and is one of our most popular public preserves.

"Giving back to our community is a huge part of our culture here at Oliver, and it's our privilege at Oliver Winery to help conserve the land near Creekbend Vineyard," says Sarah Anderson, Marketing Director for Oliver Winery, an employee-owned company. "Sycamore Land Trust does a great job putting our support to good use, and this is a wonderful example of the difference even gifts of time can make."

After learning about the deterioration and vandalism of the signs along our educational trail at Beanblossom Bottoms, Oliver Winery gave Sycamore a $5,000 grant to fix things up. While more repairs are in the works (stay tuned!), we're excited to share with you the following updates:

- **SIGNS**
  Designed and installed a new entrance sign at the parking lot in a new location, which better directs people to parking; a new trailhead map/welcome sign; and three large interpretive signs on the observation decks. Many more signs are coming, with new photos and great information to enhance your experience.

- **ACCESS**
  Added gravel to the parking lot entrance to fill in ruts on both sides. We are holding off on further parking lot work pending larger trail improvements.

- **VOLUNTEERS**
  Hosted two volunteer days this spring, one with Boy Scout Troop 100 and another with a group of new and returning loyal weekday volunteers, to replace rotten and damaged boards and railings on the boardwalk. We've replaced almost $1,000 worth of boards and have more repairs planned.

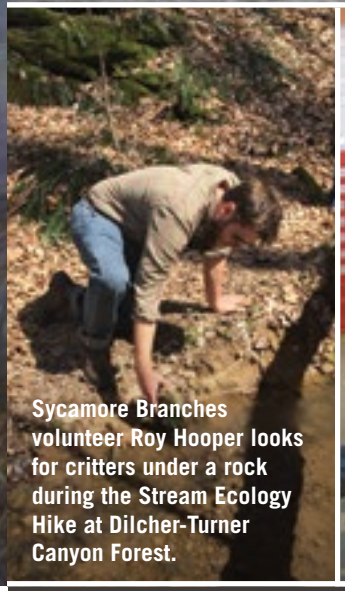
Thanks to Oliver Winery for your continued help in protecting this important habitat and hiking area!

Art at Cedar Crest

Sycamore headquarters has been made even more beautiful with the donation of a painting by Dawn Adams, a Bloomington artist. Selected by Scott Wylie Hoover, the Wylie Foundation purchased the piece entitled "Back Country Waters," and donated it to Sycamore for display in our office's living room. You can see more of Dawn's artwork at locations around the Midwest and at www.DawnAdamsPaintings.com.

Sycamore Sightings

Tens of thousands of snow geese were seen migrating through Goose Pond FWA in February.



Sycamore Branches volunteer Roy Hooper looks for critters under a rock during the Stream Ecology Hike at Dilcher-Turner Canyon Forest.

Mrs. Lewis' kindergarten class at Marlin Elementary (Bloomington) was Sycamore's first-ever Classroom Member! Contact shane@sycamorelandtrust.org for more info.

-THE-
GROUNDSWELL
June 2017

OWNED LAND & EASEMENTS		PROJECTS ASSISTED	
102	9,044	8	10,010
PROJECTS	ACRES	PROJECTS	ACRES

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Join us for hike or workday! Hikes are free for members; suggested donation for non-members is $5/person or $10/family, unless otherwise specified. Volunteer events are free. To get more details on an event and to RSVP (required for all hikes and volunteer days), visit **sycamorelandtrust.org/events**.

JUNE

6/6

WEEKDAY WALKERS: WATER HIKE

Tuesday, June 6, 9am-12pm

The Cedars Preserve (Monroe County)

Beat the heat and enjoy a morning hike in beautiful southwest Monroe County. At the conclusion of our hike, we will conduct water quality testing in the creek.

6/15

THIRD THURSDAY PRESERVE-A-PRESERVE DAY

Thursday, June 15, 8:30am-1pm

Stafford Family Preserve (Brown County)

We'll start work on removing multiflora rose and other invasive bushes at this newer preserve next to Brown County State Park. Lunch included!

JULY

7/20

THIRD THURSDAY PRESERVE-A-PRESERVE DAY

Thursday, July 20, 8:30am-1pm

Restle Natural Area (Monroe County)

Help clean up the historic cemetery at this preserve, which features a pioneer-era headstone. Lunch included!

7/22

NIGHTTIME MOTHING CELEBRATION

Saturday, July 22, 8:30pm Central Time

Eagle Slough Natural Area (Vanderburgh County)

Enjoy some nighttime entertainment from moths and other fascinating nocturnal creatures, in celebration of National Moth Week. This event is free!

AUGUST

8/5

BUTTERFLIES AND BLOSSOMS

Saturday, August 5, 1-3pm

Touch the Earth Natural Area (Bartholomew County)

Enjoy the beauty of butterflies and blossoms as you stroll the broad trails of Touch the Earth Natural Area with naturalist and butterfly enthusiast Doug Johnson.

8/12

LITTLE HIKERS: BUZZING, FLYING, HOPPING

Saturday, August 12, 12-2pm

Powell Preserve (Monroe County)

As summer flowers are in bloom, bees, butterflies, beetles, grasshoppers, and more are very active. With sweep nets, magnifiers, and our own keen eyesight, we will discover many critters living in this pocket of prairie.

8/17

THIRD THURSDAY PRESERVE-A-PRESERVE DAY

Thursday, August 17, 8:30am-1pm

Trevlac Bluffs Nature Preserve (Brown County)

We'll use backpack sprayers to treat invasive Japanese stiltgrass along the Yellowwood Trail, and also work on some trail improvements. Lunch included.

SEPTEMBER

9/9

LITTLE HIKERS: HUG A TREE

Saturday, September 9, 12-2pm

Scarlet Oak Woods (Monroe County)

Like the human body, a tree has many parts-both visible and hidden-that are essential for its survival. We will explore trees living and dead, and find out what is happening inside and around them.

9/21

THIRD THURSDAY PRESERVE-A-PRESERVE DAY

Thursday, September 21, 8:45am-1pm

Dilcher-Turner Canyon Forest (Greene County)

Autumn olive and other invasive bushes will be our target at this scenic preserve just off of State Road 45, along with some trail work. Lunch included!

9/23

TREE ID HIKE

Saturday, September 23, 10am-12pm

Tangeman Woods (Bartholomew County)

Indiana district forester Ben McKinney will lead us on a hike to identify trees by leaf and bark. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn from an expert.

OCTOBER

10/16

SECOND THURSDAY PRESERVE-A-PRESERVE DAY

Monday, October 16, 12:30-4pm

Sam Shine Foundation Preserve (Monroe County)

We'll continue work on removing Asian bush honeysuckle and other invasives at this newer preserve along Beanblossom Creek. Lunch included!

10/20

27TH ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL CELEBRATION

Friday, October 20, 6-9pm

Monroe Convention Center (Bloomington)

Celebrate another great year of conservation with friends and colleagues. Inspiring and educational speeches, live music, local wine and beer, and a fabulous silent auction make this a memorable night in support of Sycamore's mission.

April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017

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Thank you!

Where's the list of donors and volunteers?

We're always working hard to be the best stewards of our members' contributions and of the environment. So we've decided to save paper and postage by not listing donors and volunteers in each issue of *The Twig*. Instead, as is common practice among nonprofits, we invite you to visit sycamorelandtrust.org/impact to see a list of all donors and volunteers from the previous year. This lets us include four more pages of articles and photos in every issue of *The Twig*!

We are so grateful for your support, and hope you appreciate the consideration that went into this decision. Thank you!

Friday, October 20, 2017

Monroe Convention Center in Bloomington, IN

Now accepting event sponsors and table hosts

www.sycamorelandtrust.org/annual-celebration

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