COMMON GROUND

Sycamore Land Trust

2018 Annual Impact Report
Running deep among us is a love for the forests, bluffs, and streams of southern Indiana. We appreciate the wild Hoosier hillscape which gives us energy, and we find common ground through our mutual respect for the natural world. Amid a diverse community of people, cultures, and habitats, Hoosiers connect and collaborate to protect this place we call home.

Sycamore Land Trust and our 1,100 members are working every day to restore the wild landscapes of southern Indiana for forever. According to our annual donor survey, Sycamore members are highly motivated to: restore habitat for native animals and plants, provide public access to nature through hiking trails and nature preserves, and take care of the land for our descendants who will inherit our legacy, as well as the responsibility we now embrace.

The trails we blaze in our lifetime will set the course for the future. Generations to come will follow in our footsteps and benefit from the work we do now. Through Sycamore’s conservation and education programs, and in the choices you make every day to care for the land in big and small ways, you are choosing to create a world we can all be proud of. Thank you!

In this 2018 Impact Report, you’ll see how much progress we made together last year. We also lay out a vision for the future, and encourage you to continue your involvement as a Sycamore member, an everyday conservationist, and a lover of the natural world.

Sincerely,
The Staff and Board Members of Sycamore Land Trust
WHAT WE STAND FOR

MISSION

To preserve the beauty, health, and diversity of southern Indiana’s natural landscape through strategic land conservation and environmental education.

VISION

Sycamore Land Trust envisions a future in which southern Indiana has diverse and abundant habitat for native plants and animals, as well as clean air and water, working lands that are productive and sustainable, and people who embrace the connection between a healthy environment and our quality of life.

VALUES

- Integrity and Trust
- Respect
- Community and Connection
- Organizational Excellence
- Nonpolitical
- Focus
- Commitment to Diversity

Immature bald eagle at a Sycamore preserve | Jeff Danielson
Ellen Bergan was a fifth-grade student at Edgewood Intermediate School in Ellettsville when she worked with Sycamore’s Environmental Education program to build a wetland nature preserve at her school.

Ellen is a student of environmental management and geography at Indiana University, and intends to have a career in land conservation. She’s also a stewardship volunteer for Sycamore, and cites her childhood experience with Sycamore as a major influence on her aspirations.

"It was definitely formative in my love for environmental conservation, and also just building that confidence as a young woman. Being able to use my voice and make such a difference for the people around me… nothing feels more successful than that."
WE ARE CARETAKERS

Land stewardship is one of the pillars of Sycamore’s mission. This means taking care of the nature preserves entrusted under our protection. Acquiring acres isn’t the end goal; we accept responsibility for building healthy habitat for native species, providing access to the public when possible, and ensuring stable ecosystems long into the future.

Because of our collaborative conservation partners, hardworking volunteers, and loyal financial supporters, 2018 was a year of phenomenal progress!

2018 STEWARDSHIP IN NUMBERS:

30,000
NATIVE TREES PLANTED

7,000+
HOURS OF TRAIL REBUILDING AT BEANBLOSSOM BOTTOMS NATURE PRESERVE

15
VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS AT SYCAMORE NATURE PRESERVES

100+
ACRES TREATED FOR INVASIVE PLANTS

16
SCHOOLS & GROUPS PARTICIPATING IN SYCAMORE’S NATIVE PLANT PROJECT

30
RARE/THREATENED SPECIES SEEN ON SYCAMORE PROPERTIES OVER THE YEARS

Planting native trees at the Touch the Earth 2 preserve in Brown County, July 2018
**THE IMPACT OF INVASIVES**

Invasive plants cause huge disruptions to ecosystems, and they’re all around us in southern Indiana. Here’s how one plant does its dirty work, and what we’re doing to change that:

**THREATS:**
crowds out native plants, adversely impacts native insects and wildlife, takes over a forest understory, labor-intensive to eradicate

**CHALLENGES:**
spreads quickly, each plant produces hundreds or thousands of seeds, seeds remain viable in the soil for years and require multiple years of plant removal, removal requires constant vigilance

**REMOVAL:**
pulling by hand, herbicide; pulled plants can survive long enough to produce seeds, and must be removed from the site and disposed of properly

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:**
volunteer at a Sycamore workday, remove garlic mustard from your yard, thoroughly clean your boots whenever you enter and leave a nature preserve, plant native species on your property

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**GARLIC MUSTARD**

Every acre we clear of garlic mustard and other invasive plants creates more space for native plants to spread and thrive. **The benefits of native plants include:**

**THE FOOD CHAIN:**
plants and insects are the base of the food chain, and many insects depend on only a few plant species for survival

**BIODIVERSITY:**
healthy habitats support a plethora of native plant and animal species but invaded areas can be dominated by just a few species

**SUSTAINABILITY:**
native species have adapted to our climate and natural landscapes, requiring less maintenance and contributing more to the ecosystem

**CLEAN WATER:**
native species create better riparian borders for protecting water quality along waterways

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Adapted from the Indiana Native Plant Society’s website
IMMERSED IN NATURE

OUR PHILOSOPHY:
Sycamore endeavors to help all people feel comfortable in the natural world and embrace their role in protecting it.

Not every student we meet will become a biologist. They’ll grow up to be writers, salespeople, doctors, composers, social workers, business owners, mechanics…and with a little encouragement, all will be lifelong caretakers of nature.

Memorizing Indiana’s 100+ native tree species isn’t for everyone. But everyone can appreciate the beauty of a towering shagbark hickory or the grace of a drifting maple seed. Developing a love for the natural world is the first step toward embracing a conservation ethic for life.

Our educational programs reach people of all ages and abilities. We invite you to learn more about our public activities and sign up for a hike at sycamorelandtrust.org/events.

IU Hiking Club, November 2018
**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

The madness of spring is so enticing. I love it when things are opening up and emerging from the ground.

ROSS GAY, BLOOMINGTON-BASED POET, IN AN INTERVIEW WITH PBS NEWS HOUR

**NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:**
6,787

**VALUE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS PROVIDED TO SCHOOLS FREE OF CHARGE:**
$80,485

**NUMBER OF K-COLLEGE CLASSROOMS:**
47

**COUNTIES:**
BROWN
BARTHOLOMEW
HARRISON
LAWRENCE
VANDERBURGH
MONROE
OWEN

Planting day at Highland Elementary School, May 2018
MAPLE SYRUP DAY

In winter, many of us avoid going outdoors. The biting cold, wind, and wintry mix feel like an insurmountable barrier when we could just brew some tea and turn on Netflix.

Sycamore’s Environmental Education program aims to get people comfortable in the outdoors, in all kinds of weather. One of our most popular outdoor activities in the winter is our maple syrup program. And like all of our educational programs, the maple syrup demonstration doesn’t hit on just one topic. It delves into nature, science, culture, art, history, cooking, and more.

Shane Gibson, Environmental Education Director, uses a question-and-answer style of teaching that incorporates hands-on learning (and tasting) to help participants understand the world around them. This style also inspires kids to explore nature on their own, asking questions about the things they see and learning how to find answers through discovery.

From talking about how trees experience the seasons and tapping a spile into a tree, to boiling the sap and finally tasting the sweet rewards, the maple syrup demo immerses students in nature. As we look to a future where all people embrace a conservation ethic, we must first help every person find comfort in experiencing the outdoors in their own way.
Focusing on expanding existing nature preserves to build habitat corridors, in 2018 we added key parcels to the following important natural areas in five counties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>256 ACRES</td>
<td>Barclay Woods</td>
<td>(ORANGE COUNTY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84 ACRES</td>
<td>Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve</td>
<td>(MONROE COUNTY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113 ACRES</td>
<td>Beanblossom Creek Conservation Area</td>
<td>(MONROE COUNTY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 ACRES</td>
<td>Hoosier National Forest</td>
<td>(MONROE COUNTY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 ACRES</td>
<td>Laura Hare Nature Preserve at Downey Hill</td>
<td>(BROWN COUNTY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 ACRES</td>
<td>Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge</td>
<td>(PIKE &amp; GIBSON COUNTIES)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acreage added in 2018: 547 ACRES

Total acreage protected by Sycamore, as of April 2019: 9,777 ACRES

Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve, October 2018
HABITAT PRIORITIES

The landscape of southern Indiana is diverse; the habitats we protect and restore should reflect that variety. Because conservation is so resource-intensive, we must prioritize what types of land we can accept and protect forever.

PRIORITIES AND RESULTS

CRITICAL HABITAT FOR THREATENED AND RARE WILDLIFE OR PLANTS

20 such species have been documented at Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve

ADJACENT TO LAND PROTECTED BY SYCAMORE OR OTHER CONSERVATION GROUPS

Every land acquisition in 2018 expanded existing preserves

INCLUDES OR BUFFERS A SIGNIFICANT BODY OF WATER

The White River watershed serves drinking water to 2 million Hoosiers

NATURAL AREAS OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE

Sycamore has three nature preserves dedicated by the State of Indiana, and a fourth is being dedicated

LARGE ENOUGH THAT ACTIVITIES ON ADJACENT LAND WON’T IMPACT ITS CONSERVATION VALUES

Habitat loss and climate change are some of the biggest threats to songbirds on their twice-yearly migrations

As stewards of the land, we are entrusted to take care of it in perpetuity. Sycamore’s acquisitions staff and board committee for acquisitions are dedicated to seeking and approving donations or purchases of land only when we are confident that we can properly steward them forever. Learn more about land stewardship on page 5.

1 Hoosier Environmental Council
PROTECTING BEANBLOSSOM CREEK

The Beanblossom Creek floodplain has long been a priority area for Sycamore. This area is special, for its significance to Hoosier history and culture, and because forested wetlands are some of the most productive ecosystems on the planet.

WETLAND FORESTS LIKE BEANBLOSSOM CREEK PROVIDE
- HABITAT FOR VULNERABLE SPECIES
- FLOOD CONTROL
- CARBON SINK
- HAVEN FOR BIODIVERSITY
- WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

In 2015 we created the Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area to focus on creating a corridor here, by acquiring land and restoring habitat for native species. This map shows what we have accomplished together so far with Sycamore members, grantors, and partner organizations: Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County, Duke Energy Foundation, Efroymson Family Foundation, Laura Hare Charitable Trust, Loren Wood Builders, Namaste Foundation, Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, Oliver Winery, Ropchan Foundation, Sam Shine Foundation, Smithville Charitable Foundation, State of Indiana Bicentennial Nature Trust, and two anonymous donors.

As we continue to preserve nature in this part of the White River watershed, we hope you’ll renew your support for this vitally important conservation project!

For more on this history and future of the Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area, visit sycamorelandtrust.org/beanblossom.
WHERE WE’RE GOING FROM HERE

Our strategic plan, approved by the board of directors in 2017, identifies Sycamore’s key focus areas: land conservation, land stewardship, and environmental education. As we expand our impact, we work every day to be as efficient and effective as possible.

Since 1990, Sycamore has acquired more than 80 separate nature preserves and conservation easements totaling 9,777 acres to date. In 2019, we are developing a comprehensive conservation plan that will guide our decisions on land acquisition to ensure that Sycamore makes the greatest positive impact as we continue to grow.

This plan will identify critical habitat priorities, geographic areas where we can have the most impact, opportunities to connect with other protected land, and efficiency of access by Sycamore staff and volunteers.

We will also continue to strengthen our relationships with conservation and education partners. Landscape-scale conservation takes collaboration across sectors, county lines, public and private partnerships, and more. Over the years, we’ve been proud to work with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy of Indiana, US Fish and Wildlife Services, and the City of Bloomington on habitat protection projects across southern Indiana. Sycamore members can look forward to hearing more about these growing partnerships!

Lastly, we strive every year to more effectively communicate our goals, projects, and accomplishments with Sycamore members. And we’re always open to hearing your thoughts. Don’t hesitate to get in touch at the contact info on the back cover of this report.
For the first ten years of our existence, Sycamore was fueled 100% by volunteers. That service-driven mentality prevails today. Every project we complete, from start to finish, is touched by volunteers.

In 2018, volunteers contributed about 700 hours of service for Sycamore! Everything from clearing trails to approving budgets to preparing postcard mailings is done with the help of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds. These photos represent just a fraction of the contributions last year. Sycamore staff would like to express our particular gratitude to our tremendous year-round volunteers, which include the board of directors, committee members, and Trail Rangers.

Want to get involved? We’d love to have you! Check out the opportunities at sycamorelandtrust.org/volunteer and let us know how you can help. Thank you!
We consider it a great honor to be entrusted with the generous financial support of our donors, and we’re pleased to share this data with you. Thanks to a committed, expert board of directors and dedicated staff, Sycamore has completed yet another successful year, both financially and in our mission to preserve land, restore habitat, and connect people to nature in southern Indiana.

Thank you for being a part of this work!

**OUR EXPENSES DURING THE 2017/18 FISCAL YEAR:**

- **76%** Programs
- **14%** Operating Costs
- **10%** Fundraising

**SYCAMORE IS ACCREDITED**

We’re thrilled to share that Sycamore is an accredited land trust through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission! This nationally recognized seal of approval demonstrates Sycamore’s long-term commitment to upholding the highest standards of accountability and conservation excellence. To earn accreditation, we prepared for years and provided extensive documentation, and were subject to a comprehensive third-party evaluation in order to achieve this distinction. The application was filed and reviewed in 2018, and the announcement of our successful application was made in February of 2019.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded accreditation, signifying its confidence that the lands under Sycamore’s care will be protected forever.
## Financial Report

### Fiscal Year 2017/18

#### Revenue
- Contributions, memberships and planned gifts: $2,927,253 (82%)
- Non-Cash Contributions: $188,673 (5%)
- Government Grants: $382,671 (11%)
- Other Income: -$11,160 (***)
- Investment Income: $58,427 (2%)

**Total Revenue:** $3,545,864

#### Expense
- Program Services: $722,302 (76%)
- Management and General: $135,154 (14%)
- Fundraising: $97,604 (10%)

**Total Expense:** $955,060

**Net:** $2,590,804

***Net loss due to loss of value to land that Sycamore transferred to the State of Indiana for inclusion into the Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area***

### Net Worth

- **Land:** $10,553,590
- **Investments and Endowments:** $2,587,688
- **Operating Funds:** $2,907,992
- **Buildings and Equipment:** $545,775

**Total Net Worth:** $16,595,045
WAYS TO GIVE

CONSERVATION IS FOR EVERYONE.
Nature welcomes all to hike through woods and wetlands, grow food to sustain life, cultivate beautiful gardens that support wildlife, and stay nourished with clean water and air. In return, we must do our part to take care of our environment.

From all walks of life, in every part of the world, people come together to preserve and restore natural habitat. You can be a part of this effort! We’re grateful for every person who steps up however they can to join and support the Sycamore Land Trust community. Here’s how you can get involved and help out:

• Become a member and renew your annual membership
• Join our Legacy Circle by including Sycamore in your will or retirement plan
• Bring your family and friends to Sycamore’s public nature preserves
• Spread the word through conversations and social media
• Contribute to a Sycamore endowment to ensure a strong future
• Volunteer for a workday, special event, or office project
• Plant your own pocket of prairie in your backyard
• Donate land to be protected forever
• Become a business supporter and enjoy special donor benefits
• Name a preserve, trail, tree, or bench in honor of a loved one through a cash contribution

For more information, visit www.sycamorelandtrust.org/give or contact Ann Connors, Development Director, at 812-336-5382 ext 104 or ann@sycamorelandtrust.org.

THANK YOU!

Reel Rock Film Tour, Buskirk-Chumley Theater, November 2018 | Robert Stoffer

Member Mixer, Upland West Side, August 2018
Gratitude

All of the work you’ve read about in this report is possible because of more than 1,100 Sycamore members. Thank you for helping to make conservation and environmental education stronger in southern Indiana!

Business and Foundation Donors $20,000 and Above (January 1 – December 31, 2018)

Laura Hare Charitable Trust  |  Ropchan Foundation
Wylie Foundation

A complete list of 2018 donors can be found at sycamorelandtrust.org/impact

Board of Directors (2018)
George Huntington, chair
Greg Meyer, vice chair
Sarah Baumgart, treasurer
Bob Costello, secretary
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Brian Besser
Tim Dunfee
Jim Eagleman
Jenny Johnson
Terry Marbach
Rob McCrea
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John Whikehart
Linda Williamson
Lindsay Wood

Staff
John Lawrence, Executive Director
Ann Connors, Development Director
Chris Fox, Land Stewardship Manager
Shane Gibson, Environmental Education Director
Susan Haislip Daleke, Administrative Director
Abby Henkel, Communications Director
Protecting land, restoring habitat, and connecting people to nature in southern Indiana since 1990.