

# OUTDOORS

The Herald-Times **B8**  
Sunday, January 12, 2020

NATURE TRAILS

## Variety of sticktights cling to Hoosier landscape

I really enjoy the wonders of nature as I'm sure you know if you have followed my columns for the past 48 years. A trip out in God's creation is one of the joys of my life, but sometimes a little bit of not so great has to occur. Any time of the year is a good time to be outdoors, be it spring, fall, summer or winter. But spring and fall are for me the perfect seasons to spend an extended amount of time outside.

Fall with its mild weather and colorful vegetation can be a joy and if you only walk on trails you may not realize that a hike or hunt in a rather wild area can be somewhat annoying. I'm also sure at one time or another after a trip through a weedy area you look down at your pants and found



Harold Allison  
H-T COLUMNIST

them covered with what we call sticktights.

These come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Some are round; others are long; while still others are flat. One thing they have in common is

they usually appear in vast numbers and, once on your clothing, they are hard to remove.

While they are bothersome, they are also the way some plants send their seeds to other locations and are consumed by several species of wildlife. There are a number of plants that produce

these sticktights, and Indiana does indeed have its fair share. Some of the most common are what are known as beggars ticks. There are five species of these sticktights found in Indiana: the tall, common, swamp, purple-stemmed and three-parted. They can be found in fields, woods, in wetlands, woods and even along roadsides.

The tall, common and three-parted can be found across Indiana. The purple-stemmed is only found in northern Hoosierland, while the swamp grows in Daviess, Knox, Gibson and Vanderburgh counties. I have very vivid memories of the swamp beggar ticks in the latter county. For several years I was part of a small group of people who

wanted to turn a wetland area in Vanderburgh County south of Evansville into a nature preserve. We must have been out of our minds to consider such a project. It was really little more than an area where over the years people had dumped their trash. In addition, Mother Nature did not help to keep this area free from harm and neglect. Each spring the nearby Ohio River would flood and leave a smorgasbord of things including old tires, bottles, cans — you name it, we found it.

Our project area was just north of the bed of the old Ohio River, which is a part of Indiana.

Our little group could see that under all this trash a variety of plants were growing including some uncommon ones. Among

these were even a number of nice bald cypress, some of which were quite large.

Our group only consisted of seven at that time and we knew without help we could never remove all that junk. Thanks to many willing volunteers several from local youth groups, churches, companies and businesses, tons of trash were removed, trails built, a boardwalk put in — now it is a great nature place for all to enjoy.

I have run out of space without telling about the swamp beggar tick. I will continue the story in a future column.

Contact Carol Kugler at 812-331-4359, ckugler@heraldt.com or @ckugler on Twitter.

### OUTDOOR BRIEFS

H-T Report

#### Feldun Purdue Ag Center featured

The Feldun Purdue Agricultural Center has been an important part of Lawrence County for more than 100 years; ever since Moses Fell Dunn gifted the property to Purdue University. The center and property will be featured in the Bedford Park Program at 6 p.m. Jan. 28 when Farm Manager Brad Shelton talks about the farm's history and programs.

The Indiana Beef Evaluation Program's Bull Test Station moved to the facility in 1989 and is the most well-known. The farm's 380 acres of pasture are used for commercial beef cattle breeding and management, including a cattle herd that is part of a long-range genetics study. The wooded portion is used for research including studies of growth, yield and cutting alternatives for upland central hardwoods.

Shelton will answer questions during the free, one-hour program, in Wilson Park Shelter House, 2211 Denson Ave. in Bedford. The shelter is heated. RSVP for the program at 812-275-5692 so there are handouts and chairs ready.

#### Notice about state hunting, fishing license dates

All 2019 annual hunting and fishing licenses are valid through March 31.

The 2020 annual licenses are now on sale but are not valid until April 1.

For more or to purchase a license, go to [www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/9339.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/9339.htm).



Virginia bluebells cover some of the lower areas of the wooded, forested areas at the Feldun Purdue Agricultural Center in Lawrence County in early spring. The center will be the topic of a Jan. 28 Bedford Park Program. (Carol Kugler / Herald-Times)

#### Light goose hunting opportunities

The light goose conservation order is open Feb. 10 through March 31 statewide. The light goose conservation order is a national effort to reduce snow and Ross's goose populations; it allows hunting for these species outside of the regular season.

An Indiana hunting license, Indiana waterfowl stamp privilege, and a free permit are required to participate. A federal duck stamp and HIP registration are not necessary. The free permit and additional information are available online. For more, go to [www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/3570.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/3570.htm).

#### Amos Butler accepting grant proposals

Amos Butler Audubon Society is a nonprofit organization that promotes the enjoyment and stewardship of the birds of central Indiana by protecting natural areas, supporting ecological research, educating the public and taking part in appropriate advocacy to protect the environment.

To further this mission, the organization awards small grants to support Indiana-based research or other projects that benefit the birds of central Indiana with preference given to grants submitted for Marion and the surrounding counties.

To apply for a grant, email



This ruffed grouse chick is one of the bird species in Indiana that has declining population numbers. Grants from the Amos Butler Audubon Society can help with this issue and other bird-related problems. (U.S. Forest Service / Courtesy photo)

Donna McCarty at [mccartydd@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mccartydd@sbcglobal.net) and request the grant proposal guidelines. The funding guidelines are available at [www.amosbutleraudubon.org](http://www.amosbutleraudubon.org) or at <http://www.amosbutleraudubon.org/general/>

birdathongrantguidelines. All requests should be submitted by Feb. 25.

Submit news for the Outdoors briefs by noon Wednesday by emailing [outdoor@heraldt.com](mailto:outdoor@heraldt.com). For more information, call 812-331-4359.

## FARMING PAST, WILD FUTURE

By Abby Henkel, Communications Director, Sycamore Land Trust

Sycamore Land Trust has been concentrating some of our acquisition and wilderness restoration efforts on the Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area, an area of Monroe County that holds fantastic opportunities for wildlife and native plant habitat. Two contiguous properties we acquired there in the last few years are the Sam Shine Foundation Preserve and the Dan Efroymson Preserve. These 589 acres include former crop fields in the floodplain, a steep wooded bluff, and an upland field with karst topography.

Stewarding a new property often starts with cleaning up some messes; here, that meant selling an old pole barn and trailer to make space for more wilderness and reduce waste by giving them a second home. We fenced off a big sinkhole in the upland and hauled out large piles of junk dumped by vandals.

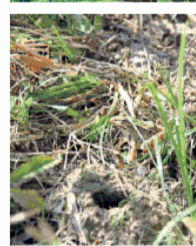
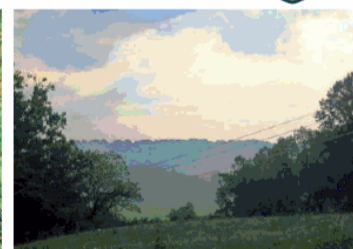
To begin the ongoing process of removing invasive plants, we hacked Asian bush honeysuckle from the bluff and uprooted reed canary grass in the wet floodplain areas.

One simple restoration option would be to plant trees on the property, but we're excited about the chance to turn part of this preserve into a grassland to create much-needed habitat for grassland birds. In just a few years of less-frequent mowing in the pasture fields, we've noticed unusual birds including bobolinks, dickcissels, and Henslow's sparrows. As we plant native grasses and prairie wildflowers, more pollinators such as monarch butterflies and native bees will make the preserves their home. Strong pollinator populations help humans and wildlife alike: they strengthen ecosystems by helping native plants thrive, thus providing food and shelter for many small animals and insects, and pollinating many crops that humans depend on.

With the help of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Sycamore is restoring the Sam Shine Foundation and Dan Efroymson preserves to native wetland, an abundantly productive habitat for thousands of species. Tasks will likely include removing field drainage tiles, blocking drainage ditches, and installing water control structures so that the water can flow more naturally. The water will stick around like it once did, before this area was ever farmed. This creates habitat for shorebirds like American woodcock, sandpipers, yellowlegs, and common snipe, which all flock to shallow water conditions.

Last November, our dear friend and supporter Sam Shine passed away. Founder of the company Samtec in New Albany, Sam believed passionately in advancing the work of conservation groups here in his home of southern Indiana, and also in Louisville, northern Florida, and beyond. Stewarding the Sam Shine Foundation Preserve feels all the more significant now that we are carrying on Sam's legacy. His impact on wilderness in southern Indiana will be felt for generations to come.

You can help Sycamore's restoration work! Sign up for a volunteer day to remove invasive plants, start or renew your Sycamore membership, and plant native species in your yard. Check out [sycamorelandtrust.org](http://sycamorelandtrust.org) for more information.



Top 2 photos are courtesy of Katrina Folsom and bottom 2 photos are courtesy of Abby Henkel.

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