There is a place in the woods behind our office at Cedar Crest where the trail meets the creek. When I need to clear my mind, I head out the back door and take a lap on the loop trail.

I like how the water dries up in the summer and allows me to walk the creekbed and pick up fossils. It reminds me of creek-stomping in Brown County as a kid, back when screen-time meant opening the windows and being a good steward of nature amounted to recycling.

Now I, and an ever-increasing percentage of the world’s population, am aware that it will take much more effort to properly care for this earth that nourishes and sustains our families. But we find hope and grounding in the conservation movement.

We are doing this hard work together because we know it’s making a difference. We see firsthand the bobcats, woodcocks, prairie grasses, and oaks repopulating places that were, for a time, uninhabitable to these native species of southern Indiana. Neighbors are trading in lawns and fertilizers for native sedges and bird baths. Kids are rediscovering the joys of dirt under their nails and stargazing on a clear winter’s night.

This regeneration of life and the hope it inspires were the impetus for this issue of The Twig: The Climate Issue. Here are the facts about our changing climate, and how Sycamore staff, members, and volunteers are preparing southern Indiana and its residents for a resilient future. We’ll need your help to continue this work, and are deeply grateful for your involvement!

Preserving habitat
A warming climate means drier soil. Combined with hotter summers and more severe storms and flooding, this will burden farmers as they seek ways to keep their crops properly irrigated without washing away. Dry soils will push many plant species to shift their ranges to higher elevations and more northern latitudes. Over time, we could see changes in the species composition of forests, resulting in:

- decreased regeneration of trees due to more competition among seedlings
- decline or extinction of plant species that are unable to adapt or migrate
- decline in the herbivore species that depend on certain plants and forest structures

FACING A CHANGING CLIMATE
Seeking resilience through conservation

BY ABBY HENKEL, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
In a conversation with Dr. Jennifer Lau, a biologist specializing in invasive species at IU’s Environmental Resilience Institute (ERI), she outlined the three ways an organism could respond to a changing climate: adapt, migrate, or shift their behavior to mitigate the effects. So far, most species tend to migrate, she says.

“If you look at the big causes of extinction, it’s habitat loss and habitat fragmentation. Preserving land is the number-one thing you can do.”

Dr. Lau emphasizes that the land must be available, either contiguous or nearby, for anything to have a shot at migrating successfully. This is why Sycamore is concentrating our land acquisitions on building habitat corridors; read more on page 20.

According to a report from Birdlife International and the National Audubon Society, a majority of species are expected to experience shrinking ranges and will be unable to merely move north. The report predicts 53% of species could lose more than 50% of their habitat, and 40% of those species will be entirely unable to shift their livable range.

Data show that birds are already responding to changes. A few specific threats to birds include unpredictable seasons upending instinctual migration patterns; warmer springs endangering young birds in the nest; heavy rainfall flooding nests and impeding feeding; pesticide use killing insect populations; and urbanization destroying habitat.

Aside from performing crucial ecological services like seed dispersal and pollination, birds are inherently valuable, charismatic creatures. As Myriam Wood said to me in a conversation about her land protected by a Sycamore conservation easement, “Something I’m acquiring more and more is a greater respect for the other members of the world. They are not there just to make me happy, but because they belong.”

By preserving bird habitat at nature preserves across southern Indiana, Sycamore is stimulating positive effects across the ecosystem. We do this by planting and preserving exceptionally beneficial trees such as oaks, removing harmful invasive plants, minimizing chemical use to preserve insect populations, and creating prairies for grassland nesting birds. Join us for an upcoming birding hike; learn more on page 24.

Creating prairies

Historically, there were no prairies in southern Indiana. This hilly land was once covered in forests and seasonal wetlands. But as Indiana’s few remaining grasslands are converted to urban areas and monoculture farms, the species that depend on them

**Vulnerability of a Few Indiana Bird Species**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stable</th>
<th>Low Vulnerability</th>
<th>Moderate Vulnerability</th>
<th>High Vulnerability</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern bluebird</td>
<td>Bald eagle</td>
<td>Song sparrow</td>
<td>American bittern</td>
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<td>Pileated woodpecker</td>
<td>Cedar waxwing</td>
<td>Indigo bunting</td>
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<td>Chimney swift</td>
<td>Baltimore oriole</td>
<td>Yellow warbler</td>
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<td>Great blue heron</td>
<td>American crow</td>
<td>American woodcock</td>
<td>Scarlet tanager</td>
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*These predictions are based on an overall warming of 3.0+ °C, which is at the low end of the predicted warming range for this century if human activity continues as is.
have nowhere to go. In response, Sycamore is building new prairie habitat to give these plants, animals, and insects a home. For instance:

**Amy Weingartner Branigin Peninsula Preserve (Monroe County)**
Replacing the lawn by the parking lot with a one-acre native prairie featuring wildflowers, grasses, and sedges, along with educational signage funded by the Raymond Foundation and Lucky’s Market.

**Columbia Mine Preserve (Pike & Gibson counties)**
Land that was surface mined has great potential for prairie restoration. Invasive tree removal and controlled burns stimulated the native grass seeds that lay dormant in the soil at Columbia Mine Preserve, which had been replanted but then left to be overtaken by invasives before Sycamore took ownership. Rare and endangered species like the bobwhite quail, American woodcock, and dickcissel have returned here. Read more in our Summer 2019 issue of The Twig at sycamorelandtrust.org/twig.

**Native Plant Project (Several counties)**
With funding from the Vectren Foundation, Duke Energy Foundation, Brabson Library and Educational Foundation, and others, our Environmental Education program works with students to learn about and grow native plants in their classrooms, then plant them in gardens and prairies at their schools.

**Fish Creek Preserve (Owen County)**
Myriam Wood owns this 125-acre preserve protected by a conservation easement with Sycamore. Since purchasing the first tract of 48 acres in 1973, Myriam and her late husband, Jim, added on over the years and took great care stewarding the land and the habitat on it. Detailed prairie plantings, research, and the permanent easement have helped this exhausted farmland revert to a beautiful hardwood forest punctuated by streams and meadows.

**Controlling invasive species**
The National Wildlife Federation defines an invasive species as any kind of living organism that is not native to an ecosystem and causes harm – to the environment, the economy, or human health. All types of organisms can be invasive: plants, fish, insects, fungi, even mammals.

Invasive plants like multiflora rose, Japanese stiltgrass, garlic mustard, and callary pear run rampant on some Sycamore preserves. Their lack of predators causes them to spread easily, take hold over an area, and crowd out other species. This reduces biodiversity and weakens the whole ecosystem.

One big problem caused by invasive species is their power to disrupt the food chain and cause unpredictable cascading effects. Dr. Lau told me about spotted knapweed, which is highly invasive here in Indiana and across the Midwest and Great Plains. In Michigan, officials introduced 13 different biological control agents to try to reduce

Volunteer Kate Mulligan rides with a truckload of garlic mustard during a workday at the Amy Weingartner Branigin Peninsula Preserve in 2019. | Abby Henkel

“One thing that Jim used to say was, the only reason to justify having this paradise here is to share it. Because really, it is such a blessing that we’ve come across this piece of land, and that we were able to purchase and increase the size. And then that we came across Sycamore.”

-MYRIAM WOOD, CONSERVATION EASEMENT LANDOWNER
the population of this pink-purple flowering plant. One was a gall fly that would lay its larvae in the seed head, disrupting the plants' development. Unfortunately, deer mice were ravenous for the larvae. With an abundant protein source at the ready, the deer mouse population exploded – tripling the number of mice testing positive for the dangerous human disease hantavirus.

Our staff and volunteers are out in all seasons working to remove invasive plants. This spring, we’ll be pulling garlic mustard before it sets seed in the forest understory (see p. 24 for workdays you can join). In summer, we tackle Japanese stiltgrass. From July through September, herbicides applied to multiflora rose are our only hope against this sturdy bush whose seed bank can last 10-20 years. On warmer winter days, we’re looking out for periwinkle, winter creeper, and Japanese honeysuckle.

In 2019, we continued a concerted effort to pull garlic mustard at the Amy Weingartner Branigin Peninsula Preserve on Lake Monroe. Staff, interns, and volunteers went out as often as possible, and it paid off. For the first time since I joined the staff in 2016, I heard these magical words: “I think we pulled all the garlic mustard.” We’ll expect to find some returning plants this spring since the seeds stay in the ground for years, but we also know that we have greatly reduced the population of this rampant plant. Because of this work, native flowers like jack-in-the-pulpit, firepink, and Virginia bluebells stand a chance at strengthening their populations.

You can help this effort too! Be sure to brush off your boots as you enter and leave any nature preserve. If you have a yard, keep watch for any invasive plants, and please opt to plant only natives so that our local pollinators and herbivores can enjoy the myriad benefits they offer. To learn more, sign up for our Identifying Invasives workshop (p. 24) and explore resources at sycamorelandtrust.org/plant-natives.

Trees
As the climate changes, some species will be better suited to the new ecosystem than others. A restored forest will look different from the one that had first grown in that spot, hundreds of years ago. In fact, we can never simply recreate a forest or prairie to replicate one that has never been timbered, farmed, drained, or built on. Those practices fundamentally change the land, from the soil microbiome to the interactions of predator and prey.

But we can use this unprecedented opportunity to steward the land in creative and positive ways. We can leverage what we know about the southern species that might migrate to our neck of the woods, and establish a biologically diverse ecosystem that incorporates those new species.

If there’s one key thing we can do to address habitat fragmentation, food shortage for wildlife, erosion, carbon emissions, and biodiversity, it’s planting and protecting trees. As trees grow, they need to consume CO₂ to build tissue. The carbon from the atmosphere stays trapped in their biomass for as long as they live – which could be many hundreds of years if they’re preserved and able to live a full life. On Sycamore properties, some common trees include:

- American beech: 300-400 years
- Red oak: 200-400 years
- Sugar maple: 300-400 years
- Sycamore: 250-300 years

Extreme weather events resulting in insect infestations, wildfires, and rampant invasive species will affect forests before the gradual changes in temperature and precipitation are noticeable. Forested wetlands are particularly vulnerable as water becomes scarce. This is why Sycamore is concentrating on habitats like Beanblossom Creek in Ellettsville and Eagle Slough in Evansville. Wetlands provide outsized benefits for a huge diversity of organisms, and they contribute to cleaner air, drinking water, and soil. Projects help keep our wetlands healthy include invasive species removal, planting trees, building natural buffers along waterways, and allowing the water to flow naturally rather than diverting it.

The healthiest forests are ones where genetic diversity among and within tree species is high. According to the National Wildlife Federation, “such diversity is like...
climate ‘insurance’ – if one element of a system is compromised, it is more likely that other elements will still be available to support key ecological processes.”

When Sycamore planted 28,900 trees at Touch the Earth 2 Preserve in Brown County in 2018, we used 12 species of hardwoods to establish a forest, plus a pollinator-friendly blend of shrubs to buffer the creek. This border of gray dogwoods, buttonbush, and other shrubs is what we call a riparian border, and it’s another tool in our belt to combat climate change. You can read more about them in our Fall 2018 issue of The Twig, The Water Issue, at sycamorelandtrust.org/twig.

Moving forward, into forever
Climate change is profoundly altering ecosystems and thus complicating our task to restore habitat. But humans are adaptable, just like other animals. We can change our habits, evolve our thinking, and throw our efforts into protecting the beautiful wildlands that are our home.

While researching for this article, I had many emotional moments. Climate change grief is real. I also uncovered reasons for hope; one of them came from a long talk I had with Chris Fox, Sycamore’s Land Stewardship Manager. These words from Chris stuck with me:

“When I’m out there in the woods, I’m having fun doing my job. But still I ask myself, am I really making a difference? Then I remember, I’m part of a group on a mission. Our community has already protected 10,000 acres in just 29 years. Every action we take has a ripple effect. Together, we are making profound change. For our families, for future generations, and for the countless species of plants and wildlife now populating safe habitats that wouldn’t exist without Sycamore members.”

American Indians have been known to make special teas or “spring tonics” to rejuvenate the spirit after a long winter. A walk in a springtime woods can be good for the soul, too.

A spring woods is a marvelous place to visit. The warming temperatures bring us the drip, drip, drip of maple sap, a wild turkey’s gobble, a chorus of frogs, the Woodcock sky dance, morels exploding through the forest floor, and an array of wildflowers.

The array of woodland wildflowers that take advantage of the small window between thawing temperatures (snowmelt in some regions) and leaf-out are called spring ephemerals. They use this small window of time to leaf out, flower, be pollinated, and produce seed before they die back to their underground parts. There are many specialized insects, birds, and mammals that help these plants reproduce.

Sources are listed at sycamorelandtrust.org/twig.
On a bright afternoon in early November, family and fellow environmentalists gathered at Sycamore’s Lake Lemon Woods preserve in Monroe County to honor the late Bob Klawitter and celebrate the renaming of the preserve in his honor.

Bob was an IU Assistant Professor, organic farmer, writer, and Executive Director of Protect Our Woods. He received the Hoosier Environmental Council’s Environmentalist of the Year award and the Indiana governor’s Sagamore of the Wabash Award for his tireless environmental advocacy.

In the 1970s Bob and his wife Kathy moved to an isolated plot of land in Orange County, where they lived off the land in the model of Thoreau. They became involved in local environmental protection efforts in the mid-1980s, when they joined with Protect Our Woods and others to prevent the U.S. Forest Service from clearcutting trees and building over 100 miles of off-road vehicle trails in the Hoosier National Forest.

Bob also lead the successful effort to prevent a huge theme park/resort from being built on public lands at Patoka Lake, out of concern for potential damage to the water supply, impact on wildlife, and loss of hunting areas for local people.

Bob’s life was cut tragically short in 1996 when he died in a car crash. To memorialize Bob and his legacy, Protect Our Woods raised $35,000 to buy forested land, but the high cost of land prevented them carrying out their plan for many years.

Representatives from Protect Our Woods came to Sycamore to ask about donating the funds to purchase forested land, and if Bob could be recognized with a sign at one of Sycamore’s properties. Honored with this opportunity, we renamed the 16-acre Lake Lemon Woods in Bob’s memory. Protect Our Woods’ John Maier said, “Sycamore is established and active and can protect land in perpetuity, so it was the logical way for us to honor Bob’s vision and inspire others.”

At the formal unveiling of the new preserve signs, Kathy, their son Sam, other family members, and conservation colleagues shared stories about how Bob brought together tree lovers, hunters, local folk, statewide organizations, government agencies, and media to protect the local environment. Following a champagne toast to Bob, the group walked the winding trail through the woods.

Kathy told me that the dedication ceremony was a touching memorial. She hoped that naming the preserve for Bob would inspire others to give to Sycamore so we can acquire more land, restore habitat, and inspire people to love and protect nature.

Steve Higgs, who has written about Indiana environmental issues for forty years, told me Bob was one of the most visionary people he has ever met. And that thanks to Sycamore, “his name will be associated with natural resource protection for eternity.”

Sycamore names nature preserves, observation decks, and trail benches in honor of major donors and their loved ones. For more information on creating a lasting legacy, please contact me at ann@sycamorelandtrust.org, or 812-336-5382 ext. 104.

“In conservation, you never know if your efforts will be successful, or where the tipping point will be, but that you just have to do it. Because if you are not doing it, it won’t happen.”

KATHY KLAWITTER
Gerin George with MCCSC’s Community Transitions class enjoys dandelion tea and persimmons on a hike at a private property forever protected by a conservation easement with Sycamore.

Mrs. Wray’s second-graders from Hatfield Elementary in Mitchell investigated an old garden plot for plant and insect life. The students are planning to enhance this habitat with Sycamore.

First-graders from W.D. Richards Elementary in Columbus participated in many lessons with Sycamore during fall 2019 including nature crafts. “I can’t wait to collect sticks at home to make more crafts,” said one student.

In Harrison County, Heth-Washington Elementary Principal Sue Lanham and a student accept a donation of Wake Up, Woods from Sycamore’s Environmental Education Director and co-author of the book, Shane Gibson.

Unionville Elementary fourth-graders in Mrs. Fisher’s class investigate fallen logs and micro-habitats. This salamander was found living between the old bark and log.

Harmony School’s fifth- and sixth-grade students explore the wetland habitat at Beanblossom Bottoms as part of their Indiana Junior Master Naturalist certification, a partnership that Sycamore works with them to earn.

Unionville Elementary students were special guest presenters at the 2019 Annual Celebration. They highlighted the extensive partnership between Sycamore’s education program and Unionville Elementary. “Mr. Gibson, Sycamore Land Trust, and donors like you have helped transform our school,” they said. “We promise to continue your work of protecting land and nature for generations to come,” a second-grade student shared with our 415 guests.
More than 400 people joined us for our 29th Annual Celebration on October 4, 2019 at the Monroe Convention Center. Thank you to all who sponsored, donated auction items, bought tickets and tables, volunteered, bid in the live and silent auctions, and made donations! You helped us raise more than $50,000 for Sycamore’s conservation and education work.

Here are a few photos from the evening. Please visit our Facebook page for the photo album by Robert Stoffer Photography.

Second- and third-graders from Unionville sang songs, read a poem, and read a letter to thank Sycamore, and specifically Shane Gibson, for his fun education work with every classroom at the school.

Dan Crites, Rhett Elliott, Jerad Oren, and Loren Wood enjoying Upland during the reception.

Development Director Ann Connors introducing “Around Beanblossom Bottoms,” a new painting donated by artist Dawn Adams. The live reverse auction raised $26,000!

Volunteer Cathy Meyer greeting Jerry Pagac at the welcome table.

Board member John Whikehart and Executive Director John Lawrence

Heath Hamilton, Refuge Wildlife Specialist for the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge, was our keynote speaker. He discussed how the Refuge and Sycamore work together to protect and restore Sycamore’s Columbia Mine Preserve.

We’re grateful to the Monroe Convention Center and all our event sponsors for helping to make this event possible! Learn about our sponsors at sycamorelandtrust.org/annual-celebration.

Guests bidding on items in the silent auction, which raised $13,000!
I recently read an article which stated that the national volunteerism rate had declined to a new 15-year low. The percentage of people giving financially to nonprofits also saw a similar downtrend. The article, however, was not all bad news. It did report that some nonprofits experienced record highs in volunteer hours and charitable donations. As the article put it, “it’s a case of fewer people doing more.”

At Sycamore, we are blessed with an abundance of dedicated volunteers. We rely heavily on those volunteers to help us continue to protect and care for land. Nearly every week, I personally work alongside volunteers who dedicate so much time to help us accomplish so much together. In the words of Margaret Mead, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

If you’re interested in becoming a volunteer, we have many opportunities for you to get involved. As we begin the new year, we will continue to have our monthly volunteer events, now known as the Third Thursday Volunteer Days. And we’re forming some specialized smaller volunteer groups, such as a crew dedicated to trail work and one focused on invasive species management. These groups will receive specialized training and be called out on a more as-needed basis. If you’re interested and would like to learn more, check out www.sycamorelandtrust.org/volunteer. If you already volunteer, thank you! We couldn’t do it without you!
Habitat fragmentation is one of the biggest impacts to biodiversity. Land use patterns that carve up contiguous natural areas and isolate habitats make it harder for populations of plant and animal species to survive. Following the principles of island biogeography, natural areas act like forest islands in an ocean of agricultural land, subdivisions, shopping centers, and roads. The smaller the “island,” the fewer the species, and the greater the risk for the decline of species’ populations through loss of habitat, reproductive isolation, loss of genetic diversity, and increased predation.

Small isolated habitats, and the plant and animal populations within them, are also more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Random catastrophic events like fires, floods, and droughts can wipe out entire populations. As seasonal weather patterns change, plant and animal species’ ranges will need to shift. What is suitable habitat for a certain species now may not be so twenty years from now.

Connecting habitats is a hallmark of conservation science. Providing for habitat connectivity allows species to move more freely, protected by a broader range of safe habitat. And it’s especially important as we respond to climate change.

Sycamore has always used the science of conservation biology as our guide. Habitat connectivity is one of the most important factors we consider when deciding whether to acquire a new parcel. By expanding and connecting our nature preserves, we’re helping to facilitate the movement of species between protected areas. This will only become more important as climate change forces species to shift their ranges.

Five years ago, Sycamore announced our Beanblossom Creek Bicentennial Conservation Area (BCBCA) project thanks to a matching grant from the Indiana Bicentennial Nature Trust. The BCBCA extends along the Beanblossom Creek watershed below Lake Lemon all the way to the confluence with the White River.

At the beginning of 2015, Sycamore owned or held a conservation easement on 692 acres in the BCBCA. Today we own and protect 1,591 acres. Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve, the Sam Shine Preserve, and the Dan Efroymson Preserve form the backbone of the protected land in the BCBCA. Sycamore intends to connect these large natural areas, which will prove particularly important for the rare, threatened, and endangered species documented on the Beanblossom Bottoms preserve like the eastern box turtle, Kirtland’s snake, and purple fringeless orchid.

Connectivity is a criterion that we use for every acquisition we consider, not just in the BCBCA. We evaluate the extent to which a parcel will enhance habitat connectivity to existing Sycamore preserves or other protected lands, such as state and national forests.

In 2017 the Hoot family donated Hoot Woods to Sycamore. This 80-acre wooded land in Owen County is one of the last remaining stands of old-growth forest in the state. In 2019, an anonymous donor gave 187 acres of beautiful woods not far from Hoot Woods. We hope to connect these two protected areas through more acquisitions, over time creating a preserve of 300 acres or more.

Your ongoing support enables science-driven conservation in southern Indiana, and is helping Sycamore anticipate the impacts of a changing climate on biodiversity. Because of you, we are preparing Indiana’s wilderness for a resilient future.

Thank you!
This past November, we reached a milestone:

10,000 acres protected forever.

Thanks to the steady support of Sycamore members and volunteers, together we will protect this land forever. And we’re working hard to steward our nature preserves by restoring native plants, removing harmful invasive species, creating safe habitat for endangered and protected species, and building and maintaining hiking trails.

Three recent acquisitions brought us to this point:

- **188 ACRES** in Owen County not far from Hoot Woods (our old-growth forest preserve) donated anonymously through a life estate allowing the donors to enjoy special access to the land for the rest of their lives.
- **92 ACRES** in Harrison County donated by Sam Hays and his children after his passing. Thanks to Sam’s planting 30,000 trees and placing a conservation easement on it during his lifetime, the land is all wooded or open field.
- **15 ACRES** in Monroe County added to the Oxbow Preserve. Beanblossom and Griffy creeks pass through this parcel, purchased with a grant from the Ropchan Foundation and the last remaining funds granted to Sycamore from the Bicentennial Nature Trust.

10,000 acres represents much more than parcels of land. It’s the work of diverse volunteers — founding a new nonprofit in 1990, identifying potential projects, navigating complex land deals, building hiking trails and boardwalks, planting trees, leading hikes, working in the office, and much more. It’s the generosity of donors making a difference with contributions of every size. It’s the committed participation of conservation partners. It’s the hard work of a small but mighty staff.

Most importantly, these 10,000 acres provide safe, supportive homes for countless species of native Indiana wildlife and plants. They provide roost trees for the endangered Indiana bat, swampland for rare bald cypress trees, remote patches for delicate orchids, and more. They support 35 miles of hiking trails, with educational signs and overlook decks that help people connect to and interpret the beautiful wilderness.

We are grateful to every person in Sycamore’s three-decade history who has helped us preserve these lands for Forever! Our work is ongoing, and as we look to our 30th anniversary this year, we hope you will join us in this challenging yet rewarding progress.

BY ABBY HENKEL, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

*Hoosier Heights staff at the Reel Rock Film Tour, which raised $4,000 for Sycamore in November!* | Robert Stoffer

*Taking a close look at lichen during our Liking Lichen hike led by Gillian Harris at the Laura Hare Nature Preserve at Downey Hill!* | Ellen Bergan

*A monarch feeds on a native thistle in the prairie at Cedar Crest!* | Chris Fox

*Sycamore Sightings*

**GROUNDSWELL**

WINTER 2020

117 PROJECTS

10,030 ACRES
Join us for a hike, workday, or special event! Hikes are free for Sycamore members; suggested donation for non-members is $5/person or $10/family unless otherwise specified. Volunteer days are always free. For more details on an event and to RSVP (required for hikes and volunteer days), visit sycamorelandtrust.org/events. For questions about volunteer stewardship days, please contact rob@sycamorelandtrust.org.

**FEBRUARY**

### EVANSVILLE SYCAMORE SOCIAL

**Thursday, Feb. 20, 5:30 – 7:30 pm (CST)** | Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library Central

Let’s get together to connect with fellow Sycamore supporters and celebrate another year of conservation and education successes! This event is free and open to all, thanks to sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited of Evansville.

### SYCAMORE SOCIAL AND SHIRT LAUNCH

**Wednesday, Feb. 26, 4:00 - 7:00 pm** | Switchyard Brewing Co. (Bloomington)

Our For Forever shirts are back by popular demand, now on organic cotton! Come on over to buy a shirt ($25) and other merch, hang out with Sycamore members and staff, and their menu of delicious local beverages. Kids and dogs are welcome.

### LITTLE HIKERS: NATURE’S TEAS & TREATS

**Friday, Feb. 28, 10:00 – 11:00 am** | Cedar Crest (Monroe County)

Many plants in your yard are edible and delicious. Learn all about them as we hike the prairie and woods around Sycamore’s office, and then make food and drink around a campfire.

**MARCH**

### TAKE CONTROL: INVASIVE PLANT WORKSHOP

**Wednesday, Mar. 18, 1:00 – 4:00 pm** | Cedar Crest (Monroe County)

Monroe County Identify Invasive Species (MC-IRIS) expert Ellen Jacquart will teach you to identify invasive plants in our county and how to use deer-resistant native plants in landscaping. After the talk there will be a one-hour hands-on workshop.

### THIRD THURSDAY VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP DAY

**Thursday, Mar. 19, 8:30 am to 1:00 pm**

**Tangeman Woods and Touch the Earth Natural Area (Bartholomew County)**

Meet at Cedar Crest to carpool to Tangeman Woods in Bartholomew County to work on the trails and pick up trash along the road. If we have time we’ll head over to Touch the Earth for some more trail clean-up.

**APRIL**

### COLUMBUS HIKE & BREW

**Friday, Apr. 3 10:00am – 2:00 pm**

**Touch the Earth Natural Area and Tangeman Woods (Bartholomew County)**

Join us for a day of educational hikes at Sycamore’s two public nature preserves near Columbus, plus lunch with the group at Upland’s historic Pumphouse restaurant in Columbus.

### THIRD THURSDAY VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP DAY

**Thursday, Apr. 16, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm** | Columbia Mine Preserve (Gibson County)

Meet at Cedar Crest to carpool to the Columbia Mine Preserve, one of Sycamore’s largest preserves, for a day of trail maintenance with folks from the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge. Columbia Mine is 1.5 hours from Bloomington, so plan on spending a full day.

### OWEN COUNTY WILDFLOWER WEEKEND

**Apr. 17-19, various times and locations**

Check out owencountyswcd.org for updates as the weekend gets closer.

**MAY**

### WOODLAND WILDFLOWERS

**Tuesday, Apr. 21, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm** | Porter West Preserve (Monroe County)

Before the canopy leaves out and shades the sun, spring wildflowers are emerging in the warming woods. Enjoy the beautiful sights and sounds and learn how to use the Newcomb’s Wildflower Guide to identify flowers.

### ARBOR DAY TREE GIVEAWAY

**Friday, Apr. 24, 12:00 – 5:00 pm** | Bloomingtonfoods East (3220 E 3rd St, Bloomington)

Pick up a free native tree seedling, get planting advice, buy Sycamore swag, renew your membership, and celebrate everything that makes trees amazing! The giveaway will end when supplies run out; stay tuned to our Facebook event for updates.

### BROWN COUNTY WILDFLOWER FORAY

**Apr. 24-26, various times and locations**

Check out tcsteele.org/calendar for updates as the weekend gets closer.

### LITTLE HIKERS: WHAT’S IN A WATERSHED?

**Wednesday, Apr. 29, 10:00-11:30**

**Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve (Monroe County)**

Spring brings a flurry of activity including migration, mating, and rising waters in the wetlands. The chorus of amphibians during this twilight hike will be the backdrop as we search the sky for the woodcock’s famous mating ritual, the “sky dance.”

### SKY DANCE & TWILIGHT HIKE

**Wednesday, Apr. 29 at dusk (exact time TBA)**

**Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve (Monroe County)**

Spring brings a flurry of activity including migration, mating, and rising waters in the wetlands. The chorus of amphibians during this twilight hike will be the backdrop as we search the sky for the woodcock’s famous mating ritual, the “sky dance.”

**JUNE**

### BEGINNING BIRD WATCHING 101

**Tuesday, Jun. 9, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm** | Cedar Crest (Monroe County)

This is for anyone who’s interested in birdwatching but doesn’t know where to begin. We’ll begin with the basics of bird identification and suggestions on equipment you might want. Then let’s take a walk through the forest, meadow, creek, and gardens around our office to put your new skills to use.

### THIRD THURSDAY VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP DAY

**Thursday, Jun. 18, 8:30 am to 1:00 pm**

**Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve (Monroe County)**

Meet in the parking area at Beanblossom Bottoms to pull invasive garlic mustard. We’ve made significant process in the past and are excited to build on this work.
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Our new Nature Preserve Guide is out, with updated maps, photos, and more! To request your free copy in the mail, visit sycamorelandtrust.org/explore.