

RED-TAIL CONSERVANCY ANNUAL REPORT 2007



Chuck Roberts: Superintendent Grandview Golf Course

**Prepared by
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Executive Director**

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Overview

It is with great satisfaction that I present this annual report to the members of Red-tail Conservancy, Inc. It has been a year of productive partnerships and community participation. The activities of our land conservation group have centered around restoration, mitigation and construction projects. Chuck Roberts, pictured on this year's cover, is one of many people who have placed their trust in Red-tail Conservancy. Let's take a closer look.

Land Acquisitions and Stewardship

STOUT WOODS STATE NATURE PRESERVE: RTC holds a Garlic-mustard pull every spring at this Henry county site. Eradicating aggressive, exotic plants is becoming a significant challenge across the world as well as right here in east central Indiana. This spring the stewardship party was treated to an exciting discovery. The perimeter of the woods is nearly free of Garlic-mustard.



Thousands of native woodland wildflowers are now thriving where GM once dominated all along the perimeter of the woods. We must continue our annual sessions in the woods because the seeds can lay dormant for many years. It is very encouraging to be involved with such a success story in this often-frustrating battle.

Sadly, I must report that Jane Fribley, pictured here between her sisters (left, Margaret Ellett and right, Mary Mann, dec.) at the dedication ceremony, passed away last winter. It was the influence and caring of the three Stout sisters that saved their family woods from being lost to development.

CITY OF ANDERSON: The bank stabilization project at the Grandview Golf Course in Anderson is this year's cover story. The course superintendent, Chuck Roberts, is pictured during a recent inspection of the new river bank.

With a well engineered plan in hand, FlatLand Resources, the city of Anderson, White River Restoration trustees, and Red-tail Conservancy embarked on a bold plan to redesign the rapidly eroding bank, designated by the red area in the photo to the right. FLR began by constructing a temporary levy to lower the water next to the bank in order to install a sound base of huge rocks. (see #1 next page)





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The bank was built up in sections called lifts that were held in place by organic mats. (photo#2) The stumps along the water's edge were placed there to provide cover for fish. During a recent visit to this exact spot, bass were observed nesting nearby.

A great volunteer effort planted 300 potted trees in the project. A cooperative effort by the city of Anderson, the Soil & Water Conservation District, Anderson Schools, and Red-tail Conservancy members brought out over forty folks that planted the trees in the buffer area in less than three hours. At one point it appeared that the trees would be planted before the latecomers got their hands dirty.



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All of this was completed by late Fall, but then the unexpected happened. During the time of year when we should have no flood events, we had four. The first of the floods (photo#4) actually took place during the construction. Two thirds of the matting withstood the final turrents, but the site suffered an onslaught of rocks and areas along the mats experienced erosion.

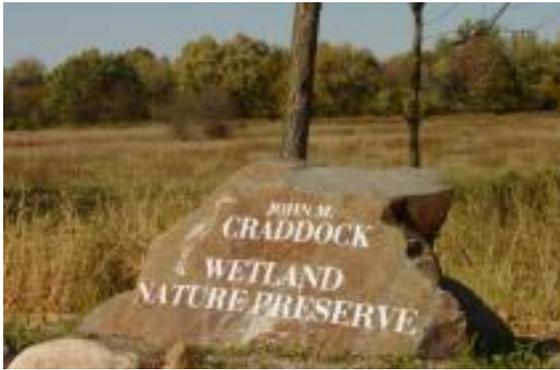


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Cosmetically it was a mess. Structurally, it was amazingly strong, and when the city pitched in some additional funding for repairs, the project was placed right back on schedule. If Father Nature will partner with the project, our mission will be accomplished once again. We expect the project to soon be cosmetically pleasing to the golfers as well as accomplish its purpose of stabilizing the bank and reducing the silt content of White River. Chuck Roberts is to be commended and admired for enduring the cutting remarks of the shortsighted naysayers.



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CITY OF MUNCIE: Red-tail Conservancy continues to proceed with the city of Muncie , Heritage Hills, LLC, and Flatland Resources in our capacity as overseer of the wetland mitigation on the John M. Craddock Wetland Nature Preserve.

In 2004, an opportunity arose to have wetland plants installed on the site at the cost of a land developer that planned to disturb a similar wetland in Hendricks County. By law, wetlands being destroyed are to be replaced at

an increased exchange ratio. This project will create approximately 6 acres of wetlands, enhancement of 3 acres of existing wetlands, and install 12 acres of associated upland buffer consisting of natives shrubs and hardwood trees on this 23 acre site. The project was initiated last November with an herbicide application to start the eradication process. The site has a mature stand of cattails and reed-canary grass that must be replaced with native species. Next the city of Muncie conducted a prescribed burn this winter to remove the residue of these plants to further enhance the next application of herbicide. This summer there will be a small amount of earth moving to increase the acreage of open water. Then the planting will begin. Scrub shrubs, trees and emergent wetland plants will be installed this summer.

CABIN CREEK WATERSHED: Cabin Creek, located in southern Randolph county, is known throughout the state and nation because in its watershed is a raised fen known as the Cabin Creek Bog. In December 1974, the National Park Service designated the bog as a National Natural Landmark. CCB is included in Alton Lindsey's hallmark book "Natural Areas of Indiana".

Our land trust has once again increased our presence in this ecologically significant watershed by entering into a streambank mitigation project with landowner Jim Borgmann and ecological engineering company JFNew. Along Cabin Creek less than one half mile downstream from Yuhus Woods a field is currently being grazed by cattle that is degrading the seasonal tributary immediately adjacent to the creek. In this project, JFNew will build a fence around the stream and then enhance the area with native plants and shrubs. This will amount in an immediate reduction of silt that enters Cabin Creek during every rain event. The project will be funded by Opus North Corp. in return for allowing them to disturb a shorter section of a natural stream elsewhere in the White River watershed.

RED-TAIL NATURE PRESERVE: On our 18-acre prairie which links the Prairie Creek Reservoir Park and the Cardinal Greenway, we constructed a nearly half mile loop-trail, parking lot, and plaza. This is all in keeping with RTC's mission to ... increase awareness of our natural heritage. Thanks to the generosity Ball Brothers Foundation, Community Foundation of Muncie & Delaware County, George & Francis Ball Foundation, and the Kitzelman Fund, Phase III of this project will soon be completed by the construction of the connector trail to the Cardinal Greenway. This long awaited construction will take place as soon as the owner signs a sublease allowing our contractor to cross a very small portion of their property .



Friend-raising

RTC continues to combine two critically important aspects of running a not-for-profit and calls them Friend-raising. This unique approach to fundraising and community outreach has accomplished much in the past twelve months.

Fund-raising is a vital and constant activity of all not-for-profit organizations. Our end of the year financial reports are included with this report, to clearly present the details of our fund-raising program. Particularly impressive is the fact that we have land assets totaling \$500,620.29; which means that for every dollar we've raised since our inception for the operation budget, we've acquired more than a dollar's worth of land to protect. Even more impressive is that this dollar amount represents only the land that we hold fee simple. The seventeen conservation agreements that we hold protect nearly a thousand additional acres.

A highlight of this year has been the partnership that has developed with the Cardinal Greenway, which resulted in the approval by the Community Foundation of Muncie & Delaware County of our joint grant proposal to purchase a John Deere tractor with accessories. CG needs numerous apparatuses to maintain their popular linear park. For the most part RTC will use the 6' bush hog to maintain our prairie and trails.

RTC has had another good year with our friend-raising events, such as our second annual Red-tail Day at the Blue Bottle Coffee Shop in downtown Muncie. RTC board members and the director worked behind the counter and served orders to customers throughout the day. It was a grand opportunity to discuss land conservation with the patrons of this popular café.

Our annual events continued to enhance our presence in east central Indiana as well as provide funding for operations. OPEN SPACE: Art About the Land had a phenomenal year with nearly a hundred artists entering and RTC netting over \$6,000. Minnetrista Cultural Center plays a key role in providing numerous hours of planning and implementation. This event could not take place without Brian Gordy and MCC's expertise. Much credit goes to the Art Association of Henry County and Anderson Fine Arts Center for hosting this premier art exhibit. RTC held the second Opening Reception dinner at the Anderson Fine Arts Center. With fifty-four people in attendance, we celebrated the connection of art and nature in that elegant facility and raised over \$2,000 for the operations budget.

This year our biggest attraction has become Yuhus Woods. Our second annual Moonlight Hike in November and third annual Spring Wildflower Celebration continue to draw the biggest crowds, witnessing the fact that people love nature and will attend well thought-out activities.

This summer will be the second year without our Red-tail Run at the Paws prairie. Once the Red-tail Nature Preserve is connected to the Cardinal Greenway, we will once more hold that popular event

In Conclusion

As with any organization that is in the business of entering into and carrying out long-term contracts, it is essential that our land conservation organization look to the future. The board is currently working on our second Strategic Plan. We have great expectations for this document, because we have

recruited the services of Dr. Ray Montagno to act as facilitator. Ray is the Assoc Dean of Research & Outreach at Ball State University and has much experience in the craft of setting forth strategic plans. We expect this document to be completed in the Fall of 2007. It will most assuredly guide our efforts and improve our performance for years to come.

It is my privilege to champion wildlife habitat protection and land conservation in my homeland. I will remain forever grateful to the communities, foundations, benefactors, and volunteers that are the driving force responsible for our success. We also owe a huge debt to Dr. Montagno who is very generously donating his time to assist Red-tail in the complicated task of drafting our Strategic Plan.

Respectfully submitted
For the land,

Barry Banks,
Executive Director

