

RED-TAIL CONSERVANCY ANNUAL REPORT 2010



The Cowan Jr/Sr High School Environmental Science class posed for a picture after removing Bush-honeysuckle from the Red-tail Nature Preserve.

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Overview

Red-tail Conservancy embarks on our second decade of land conservation in east central Indiana, riding the wave of momentum built up during our first ten years. RTC has laid a solid foundation by building a strong organization, establishing four endowment funds, and completing numerous land acquisition projects. An important aspect of our success is remaining focused on our mission to preserve, protect, and restore natural areas and farm land in east central Indiana, while increasing awareness of our natural areas.

Despite the community-wide support of our land conservation organization, ECI continues to lose natural areas and farm land at an alarming rate. Poorly planned development carves away at our precious, remaining open space. Red-tail Conservancy will continue to move our land preservation program forward in order to meet this challenge.

RTC has had an outstanding year and our fundraising efforts continue to provide the necessary funding. Let's look at the details.

Land Acquisitions

MISSISSINEWA WOODS: This land acquisition developed very quickly. Last summer Pam Buchanan phoned the Red-tail office. She needed to sell her woods along the Mississinewa River, and after "checking out" the Red-tail Conservancy, wanted us to buy and protect her beloved riparian forest. It was quickly discovered the Pam's woods was located near the center of a nearly 150-acre, riverside woodlands.

Pam offered it to RTC at a greatly reduced price. We initiated a fundraising campaign and within four months had the money in the bank to make the purchase. Once again Red-tail folks rallied to the cause of preserving wildlife habitat in our part of the state.

But it didn't stop there. One of the donors for the initial purchase, Janet Burkhart, expressed an interest in preserving her parcel of the very same woods located just west of the site we just purchased. Janet recently *donated* her land to Red-tail bringing the total area protected to 38 acres. RTC is currently speaking to other neighboring landowners to protect this special wildlife area for future generations.



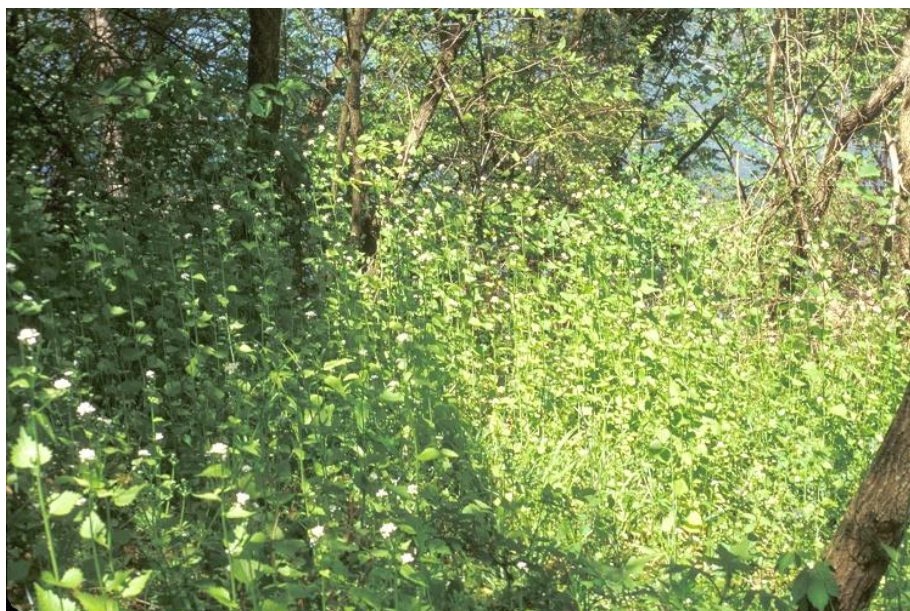
The pictures below attest to the natural splendor of this stretch of the Mississinewa River. RTC members are encouraged to visit and experience the beauty and serenity that awaits them at our nature preserves. Call our office or check out our website (www.fortheland.org) for locations, directions or to arrange a tour.



As has become the normal situation, our office is faced with the challenge of prioritizing and processing the many inquiries from landowners about land conservation options offered by our land trust. I currently have an overflowing stack of outstanding land-project files that promise to greatly expand our portfolio of wildlife habitat areas in east central Indiana.

Stewardship

The cover photograph on this year's report serves notice that the students of east central Indiana continue to be the driving force behind our efforts to control and eventually eradicate aggressive, non-native plants from our natural areas. Youngsters from area high schools, churches, and colleges have once again taken to the Red-tail woods to remove Garlic-mustard and Bush-honeysuckle.



There's nothing more rewarding than to know you're a part of the solution to this ongoing challenge to the diversity of wildlife habitat. Our sincere thanks go out to Jerral Ross, Jim Dalton Jr, Holly Hanauer, Barb Stedman, Susan Rosenthal, Steve Swoveland, Mark Keever, and Professor Amy Gregg for their participation and dedication.

Much has happened in the past year at Smith-Crisler NP. Rundel Ernstberger Assoc, a Muncie based landscape-architect firm, completed a conceptual drawing, that will guide us through the drafting of a management plan.

In the Summer of 2009, an outdoor recreation class, pictured here, from Ball State University made Smith-Crisler NP their class project. After conducting a site-visit, they presented many ideas about how to best utilize the site as a public nature preserve. Graduate student, Joshua Hapner, completed a report that will help us position the public hiking trail.



Friend-raising

The fundraising letter continues to be an effective way of raising funds. A significant portion of our operations budget will most assuredly be provided by our membership and potential new members responding to our direct-mail appeals.

The fundraising events that have served us so well continue to take place. The Red-tail Birdathon, and Open Space: Art About the Land have been well attended, well supported, and find new folks in our community that care about local land conservation. We partnered with Cardinal Greenway to once again hold a running event which takes place on both the Red-tail Nature Preserve and the Cardinal Greenway. A chilly, rainy day lowered the attendance at our annual Yuhus Woods Wildflower Celebration this year, but the spirits were lifted by the lovely display of woodland wildflowers. The Wild Hyacinths have never been more gorgeous.

We are receiving accolades galore for our newly designed website. Much credit goes to Sharon Stoops, Kyle Johnson, and Trinity Ring for moving this project forward.

Founding Board member, Helen Steussy, MD has once again made a stand for land conservation with her and daughter Alex's monumental bike ride across America entitled "**FLIGHT**...for the land". She has dedicated the 50 day trek to raising awareness and funds for Red-tail Conservancy, Land Trust Alliance, and all the land trusts she crosses on her bicycle this summer. You can follow her journey on her Blog which can be found through the Red-tail website (www.fortheland.org).



In Conclusion

For the eleventh time, it is my pleasure to report that Red-tail Conservancy has experienced another year of successfully accomplishing our mission, keeping the bills paid, and building an enduring, professional land conservation organization. Our resolve to protect as many acres in east central Indiana as possible has never been stronger, as we remain...

For the land,
Barry Banks, Executive Director
Red-tail Conservancy, Inc.

