

RED-TAIL LAND CONSERVANCY ANNUAL REPORT 2012



Bush Creek flowing through McVey Memorial Forest

**Prepared by:
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Executive Director**



“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, the stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” --- Aldo Leopold

Overview

Thirty years from now the folks of Red-tail Land Conservancy will look back at the year 2012 as the year our land conservation group elevated to a whole new level. This is the year we doubled the acres in which we have an ownership interest, dedicated our first Indiana state nature preserve, embarked on a three year branding initiative, and set in place the funding for our second staff person. An important ingredient of our success is that from the very beginning, we have remained 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.

As we enter our fourteenth year, the future has never been brighter. As usual, we have numerous land acquisition projects underway that will thrill Red-tailers and the community for years to come. Our events are well attended and our critical volunteers are as active as ever maintaining our splendid wildlife sanctuaries.

Let's look at the details.

Land Acquisitions

BERGMAN FARMS: Our eighteenth Conservation Easement is a total working land acquisition. That is, one hundred percent of the land is farm ground under the threat of being developed.

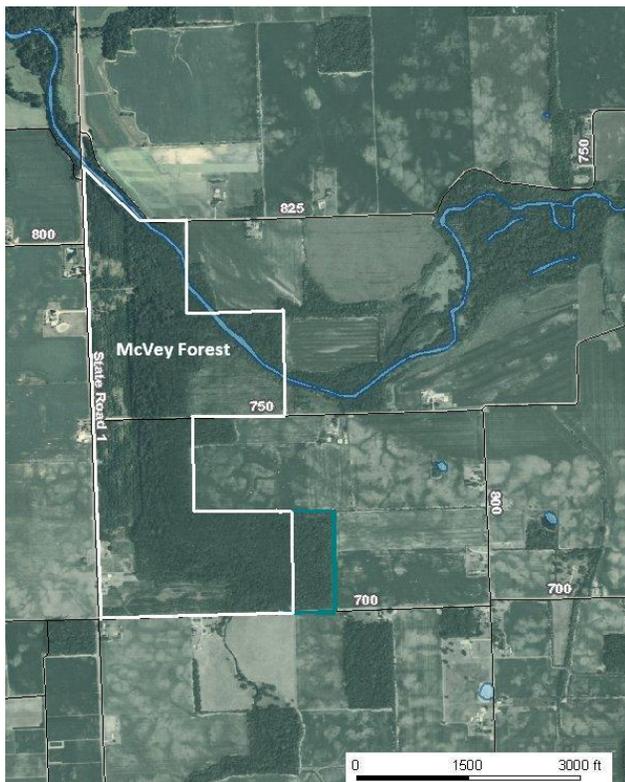
Kip, Ann and Marian Bergman own a farm west of Tipton next to a large imposing factory. They contacted RLC to ask that we consider including them in our conservation program in order to set aside their development rights and allow them and their heirs to continue to farm their land in perpetuity. We found the Bergman's to be good stewards of the land and conservation minded, with a sense of the value of producing crops on their land for generations to come. In December 2011, we recorded a permanent conservation/agricultural easement on 225 acres of their farm. This is our first acquisition in Tipton County, which expanded our coverage to six counties.



MCVEY MEMORIAL FOREST: This is a story I love to tell because it illustrates the reputation Red-tail has built over the years. It's the result of over thirteen years of mission focus, sound legal counsel, impeccable financial services, and a community that has supported land conservation from the very beginning.

Early last year, I received a phone call at the Red-tail office which started with the question, "Do you manage land that you don't own?" My answer was, "Not yet, who am I speaking with?" From that conversation ensued a year and a half of negotiations that culminated September 4th, 2012 with Judge Toney appointing Red-tail Land Conservancy as the Trustee of this 249 acre wildlife sanctuary in northwestern Randolph County.

But let's back up a bit. In 1958 Edna M. McVey filed her Last Will and Testament in the Randolph Circuit Court in which she spelled out a very succinct plan "...to establish, develop and maintain a natural forest in Randolph County...said natural forest to be used as a public park, and a sanctuary and refuge for wildlife...". She also provided for a stewardship trust fund "...with the one purpose in mind and that being to perpetuate the MCVEY MEMORIAL FOREST." When the appointed trustees passed on, the court appointed Old National Trust as the trustee, and it remained in their hands until last month.



Red-tail was brought in when the folks at Old National Trust came to realize they had no one with expertise in managing natural areas. During that initial conversation, I brought up the Randolph County GIS map and made an astounding discovery. Of course a 249 acre, protected natural area in east central Indiana makes it one of the largest sites. Even more exciting is that it is adjacent to a 340 acre IDNR Fish and Wildlife Game Preserve. What I had discovered was a wildlife habitat area of almost 600 acres! I was shocked. I knew at that moment Red-tail must be involved with permanently protecting this precious gem.

During the acquisition process, we brought in the Natural Resources and Environmental Management department at Ball State University to study McVey and draft a management plan. Graduate student Jennifer Curry was assigned the task of preparing said plan. She will present the outline at our Annual Gathering near the memorial.

SMITH-CRISLER NATURE PRESERVE: It is with much pride and satisfaction that I report Red-tail Land Conservancy, for the first time in our history, has had one of our protected sites dedicated as an Indiana State Nature Preserve. This acknowledges that east central Indiana has natural areas of the highest quality that meet the extremely stringent criteria set by Indiana Department of Natural Resources. We will gather November 2nd on site to celebrate this accomplishment.

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 Land Conservancy, Inc.