



OAK HERITAGE

CONSERVANCY

Protecting Southeast Indiana's Natural Heritage

Winter/Spring 2016

New Conservation Tools

By John Miller, President

Believe it or not something good came out of Congress in 2015.

Included in the Omnibus Spending Bill were new permanent options for donations and land donations given to a 501c3 public charity. Oak Heritage Conservancy (OHC) is a 501c3.

It is permanently allowed for retirees to give directly from their IRA accounts to a qualified tax exempt organization and not be taxed on the withdrawal.

For people over 70 ½ years old this can be a very smart way to benefit the groups they support and satisfy the requirements of minimum distributions.

In addition, there are new permanent rules about other donations to 501c3s like OHC.

Back in the early 2000s, Congress regularly passed budget bills

that reauthorized donation deductibility. Donors could count on this when making their financial plans. Land trusts could do their work efficiently.

This system worked then, but budget reauthorization has become less certain in recent years. The new permanent rules mean that we can move forward with land conservation regardless of Congressional budget debates.

Over the last 13 years, Paul Carmony and I have walked many properties with landowners who wanted to leave their favorite places to OHC. It is one of our favorite activities.

OHC would like to step up this informal program. If you are considering such a donation I thank you and ask that you contact us so that we may work with you and, with your permission, recognize you.

Conservation Ideas for Your Pocketbook and Your Land

Use IRA to Give to OHC

New tax law makes charitable gifting to OHC easier and better for seniors with an IRA. The details:

1. You must be at least 70½ and own an IRA. (Note: total gifting in this arrangement is limited to \$100,000.00 annually.)
2. Your transfer gift must go directly from your IRA to Oak Heritage.

How does this save on taxes? The income you would otherwise need to report on your gross income tax return is avoided.

High-income folks avoid some unpleasant tax consequences.

Lower-tax-rate individuals who wish to donate but find themselves forfeiting the tax deduction because they don't itemize charitable contributions now have this neat trick. In effect, their IRA makes the donation for them and skips the reporting of IRA income they would otherwise report.

Sound confusing? Our financial and investment advisors, the Rust-Messer Investment Group of Hilliard Lyons, have generously offered to help you understand the IRA giving option at no charge to you or our organization.

You can reach Greg Rust and Angela Messer at: (800) 677-1854 or AMesser@hilliard.com.



OAK HERITAGE

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Our mission is to preserve, protect and conserve land and water resources that have special natural, agricultural, scenic, or cultural significance. Oak Heritage Conservancy will help landowners personally protect their land so future generations can enjoy the rural landscapes of southeast Indiana.

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Create Monarch Habitat

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) wants you to help provide summer habitat for 225 million butterflies by 2020.

Monarchs (and many pollinators) suffer when we destroy habitat and spray pesticides along roadways and field edges.

The eastern population of monarch relies heavily on the Midwest for summer breeding. This means we have to restore and provide milkweed and nectar plants for monarchs throughout the region.

We can ensure this species thrives by creating habitat in southeast Indiana.

The USFWS has already restored 200,000 acres across the nation.

They want to do more restoration work with conservation-minded landowners like OHC members.

The program does not cover every project expense, but it does provide some funds as well as expertise to help you create a beautiful native wildflower planting.

Susan Knowles, a wildlife biologist at Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, assists private landowners with habitat restoration projects.

Reach Susan at (812) 522-4352 to learn about options for your land.

Stewardship Update

By Paul Carmony, Vice President

As I sit down to write about the stewardship of properties entrusted to OHC, I am also thinking of the eight acres of wooded land where I have lived and cared for during the last 36 years of my life.

With its two streams and three waterfalls it reminds me of a miniature Clifty Falls.

Since arriving here, I have ceased mowing, planted a windbreak of white pines, killed invasive plants and brought in native wildflowers.

I also made a list of all plants and animals observed.

Here is how things stand in 2016:

1. I've planted 50 white pines, and 4 have survived. Hardwoods thrive.
2. Of 102 species of birds, 61 have not been seen in recent years.
3. Of 16 species of mammals, 8 are now absent or have declined.
4. Of 10 species of reptiles, 7 are no longer seen.
5. Of 13 species of amphibians, only the green frog is seen or heard regularly.

6. The ash trees are dead or dying from the emerald ash borer.

7. Now for the good news: the wildflowers are spreading profusely.

This reminds me to wonder about stewardship efforts on the eleven properties for which Oak Heritage has responsibilities.

The history with my own property leads me to believe that stewardship is a process.

It often changes depending on circumstances both within our control and outside of our control. Some change is negative, but some is positive.

I feel that we will gain a better understanding of what is needed and possible now that we have brought Liz Brownlee on as our executive director.

Perhaps you would like to join Liz and me in solving the "mysteries" of stewardship.

If you would like to be part of the conversation about stewardship, please contact Liz at (317) 258-5217 or oakheritageconservancy@gmail.com.



Photo by Jan Kleopfer

*Find details about upcoming OHC events and learn
how to visit OHC properties on our website:*

www.oakheritageconservancy.org

Upcoming Events

We are collaborating with four other environmentally-minded organizations in Jefferson County to entice people to explore the natural world. We would like to attract new visitors to our natural areas. We also want folks to know about the programs we offer. The “Great Events. Great Outdoors.” event series aims at both goals.

Geology After Hours

Saturday, March 19, 7pm at Red Bicycle Hall, 125 E. Main, Madison
A fun, interactive talk about local geology. Complimentary hors d’oeuvres. Local beer and wine available for purchase.

Trail Work and Wildflower Walk

Saturday, April 23, 10am at Webster Woods, Hanover
Join us for a little work (adding painted blazes to mark our trail, general trail clean-up, and invasive species removal) and a little play (a wildflower walk with Paul Carmony).

Native Tree Give Away at the Madison Farmers’ Market

Saturday, May 7, 8am-Noon, Broadway Street, Madison
Swing by the Farmers’ Market for a free native tree or shrub!

Story Time in Nature

Tuesday, June 21, 2pm, Madison Library, Main Street, Madison
Bring your little ones to the library. We’ll walk to John Paul Park and read stories about nature, *in nature*.

Our partners are hosting great events, including:

March 8: Greening a Frank Lloyd Wright Home	Hanover College
March 19: Fossils Rock! Workshops & Exploration	Clifty Falls SP
March 26: Caring for the Birds & Birdhouse Build	Heritage Trail
April 16: Kite Building & Flying	Clifty Falls SP
April 22: Bird Tour	Big Oaks NWR
June 10-12: Tales of Scales Reptile Weekend	Clifty Falls SP

For event details, call (317) 258-5217 or go to our calendar: www.oakheritageconservancy.org/events

Call for Members

If you share a vision of protecting Indiana's resources and special places, please contact us and join with the Oak Heritage Conservancy.

*Let's work together to protect
southeast Indiana's natural heritage
for the generations to come.*

Your annual membership works hard, helping OHC

- Fund land acquisitions.
- Protect natural resources on our easements and properties.
- Provide stewardship on our more than 700 protected acres.
- Educate the public about southeast Indiana's special places and the importance of conservation.

Join OHC Today

Please select a category, include your contact information, and send this page along with your check to:

Oak Heritage Conservancy, P.O. Box 335, Hanover, IN 47243.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ____ Student - \$10 | ____ Cornerstone - \$100-\$499 |
| ____ Individual - \$25 | ____ Sponsor - \$500 - \$999 |
| ____ Organization - \$25 | ____ Benefactor - \$1000+ |
| ____ Family - \$40 | |

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Thank you for your support!



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