



OAK HERITAGE

CONSERVANCY

Protecting Southeast Indiana's Natural Heritage

Spring 2018

Outpouring of Support Protects Monarch Butterfly Habitat

Head south from Lawrenceburg and pass through Rising Sun. Turn south onto Dibble Road and get out of the car.

You'll find yourself in the midst of vast swaths of milkweed and butterfly weed. And as of this winter, it is all protected as Monarch butterfly habitat. It is the newest Oak Heritage Conservancy nature preserve.

Chrys Cook, an OHC Board Member, has been watching the property for two years.

She knew this place was special: it was home to more Monarch butterflies than anywhere else she'd visited in southern Indiana.

Our new preserve offers critical habitat to Monarch butterflies. Photo by Nancy Metz, from our Fall 2017 Photo Contest.



Monarch populations have been plummeting for years, so finding a place where they thrive is unique.

When she learned that the property was up for auction and, likely, development, she realized that OHC might be ready to help.

After careful consideration, visits to the land, and lengthy conversation, we decided to try to raise the funds needed and purchase the property.

This was unusual, as we normally create preserves when landowners donate land for future generations to enjoy.

But this place was unique: we knew from Chrys's visits that Monarchs regularly visited the property and that it offered just what the Monarchs need.

Monarch butterflies migrate through the Midwest each year, and need a few specific things to survive along the journey.

First, they need native flowering plants like Butterfly Weed that provide nectar for them to eat. This food source is critical to their long migration.

Second, Monarchs only lay their eggs on milkweed plants. The migration includes multiple generations, so they have to have places in Indiana and throughout their flight path to raise a new generation of butterflies.

The property on Dibble Road hosts an ideal combination of both large patches of Butterfly Weed, a source of food for the adults, and milkweed, where Monarchs can lay eggs and caterpillars can thrive.

Unfortunately, we only had three weeks before the auction. We calculated that we needed approximately \$250,000 to purchase the property.

Longtime supporters Josie and Geoff Fox offered up a generous idea: their foundation would match every contribution 4:1, up to \$50,000.

If we could secure \$50,000, we could go to the auction prepared to purchase the land.

Donations streamed in from across the country, including Michigan, New York, and California.

Most of the donations, though, came from here in southeast Indiana: some from folks who are members year in and year out; some from people who used to be OHC members but hadn't renewed their memberships in years; and some from people who were new to OHC.

"Community support fueled the effort to save this Monarch habitat," says Oak Heritage Conservancy Executive Director Liz Brownlee.

"We are incredibly grateful to everyone who helped protect this special place for future generations."

Over 100 families, individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations contributed. Donations ranged from a few dollars to thousands of dollars.

Together, we reached the \$250,000 mark on Monday, Dec. 18, just in time for the auction.

On Tuesday, Dec. 19, Oak Heritage Conservancy successfully bid on the property.

“The auction was a real nail-biter,” reports OHC Board President Andy Kain, “but it was worth it.”

For almost two hours, Oak Heritage Conservancy bid and counter-bid.

In the end, we purchased 80.6 acres of Monarch butterfly habitat for \$253,000.

“We protected the core habitat that we were aiming for – the place where Butterfly Weed and Milkweed grow in vast swaths – as well as adjacent land that will help buffer and protect the core Monarch habitat,” says Kain.

We look forward to opening the property to the public this year. If you'd like to see the property during peak bloom, we recommend going in July and August. We're hosting a Monarch walk on August 25 to welcome our members and the public to enjoy this new preserve, and we hope you will join us!

Over 100 families, individuals, businesses, organizations, and foundations contributed to help purchase our newest nature preserve. Why? Because this land boasts something unique: thriving, intact native habitat that butterflies need, complete with nectar sources (Butterfly Weed, the orange flowers in this picture), a place to lay their eggs (Milkweed), and Monarchs! How many Monarch caterpillars can you count in this photo, taken at the preserve in 2015?



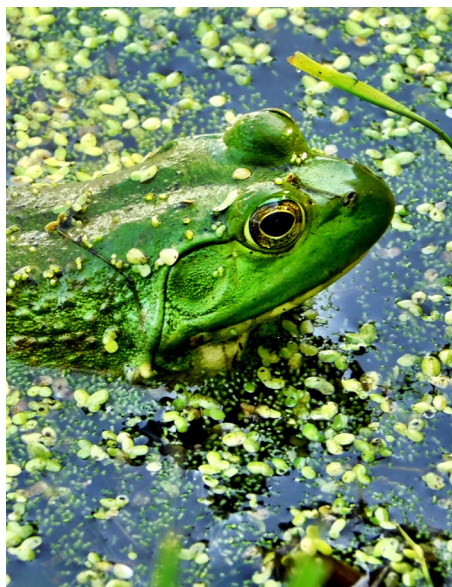
Photo Contest Gets People Outside

These photos show the breadth of the Hoosier experience: sunlight filtering down through trees; a hummingbird learning to fly; a grandfather and granddaughter caring for their cattle; a bald eagle perched in an oak; a couple hiking in the forest.

This winter, we're exhibiting the photos throughout southern Indiana and online, asking people to vote for a Grand Prize winner.

The exhibits and voting allow OHC to show just how much Indiana's natural areas have to offer, and to challenge people to go visit and explore these special places.

The photo contest and exhibit are a partnership with George Rogers Clark Land Trust, which protects working farmland, and are generously supported by the Indiana Arts Commission.



All of this year's photos, including this one by Bethany Laffoon, had to be taken on public natural areas or family farms. If you want to find new places to take photos, play, and explore, visit the Oak Heritage Conservancy website and use our new "Park Finder." You can also see online exhibit and vote for a Grand Prize winner from the contest.

Feeling Inspired by the Photos? Find New Places to Play

Our new map of natural areas will let even the seasoned nature-lover find a new place to play. Visit www.oakheritageconservancy.org/findparks.

Vote for a Grand Prize Winner

Visit the website, www.oakheritageconservancy.org, and click "Get Involved" and "Photo Exhibit" to see the winners and vote for the Grand Prize recipient.

See the Winning Photos in Person

We've been exhibiting the winning photos through southern Indiana. One of the events, at Southern Indiana Center for the Arts, also served as a dedication for one of our new preserves, Leblene Woods Preserve. The next stop for the exhibit is Amack's Well, in downtown Batesville, March 26-April 14.

Come Explore: Events in Nature

Details at www.oakheritageconservancy.org. All events are free and open to the public.

April 14, 7pm – Photo Exhibit & Nature Trivia Night

See the photo contest winners up close, and try your hand at a friendly game of trivia. You'll play in teams of four or more, so bring some friends or plan to make new ones when you arrive. Our host is Amack's Well, in downtown Batesville, so while it's a nature trivia night, expect a few coffee questions, too!

April 21, 10am – Bluebell Walk at Leblene Woods Preserve

Put on your hiking boots and bring your camera: this forested preserve is covered in bluebells in Spring. We'll hope to catch them at the peak of the bluebell bloom. While not rugged, this hike requires a ½ mile walk into the preserve from the road, and there is no trail in the preserve, so we'll deal with some vines, branches, etc. Come ready to cover at least 2-3 miles through the fields and forest. Meet at the Southern Indiana Center for the Arts, 2001 North Ewing, Seymour, IN 47243 and we'll carpool from there.

May 5, 10am – Forest & Wildflower “Ramble” at Sunman's Woods

Last year, we were honored to take over stewardship of this rolling forest east of Batesville. Join us for an informal, relaxed wildflower walk in the woods. There is no trail at this preserve, but we will take our time. Bring your wildflower guide and hiking boots, and be ready for gently rolling hills. Meet at the Morris, Indiana Post Office, 4728 E. Morris Mill Street, Morris, IN 47003.

Great for Families:

July 14, 10am – Pollinator Walk at Hilltop Farm Nature Preserve

We've planted 13 acres of native pollinator habitat – that's wildflowers of all shapes, colors, and sizes. Come see the butterfly habitat in full bloom. We'll walk at least a mile along a mowed path through the wildflower meadows. Please park on the road near 28538 Dunevant Drive, West Harrison, IN 47060.

August 25, 10am – Monarch Walk at Our New Butterfly Preserve

Stroll among the butterflies and flowers you helped protect! We'll hope to catch the butterfly weed in full bloom, but even if we miss the exact window, we should find butterflies and wildflowers. The new grass walking trail will cover gently rolling terrain. Park near 2216 Dibble Rd, Rising Sun, IN 47040.

More Chances to Play in Nature!

Find Oak Heritage Conservancy at Upcoming Community Events

We're working hard to connect with conservation-minded people throughout southeast Indiana. Look for us at upcoming events at Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge: Conservation Happenings, an event for conservationists on March 14, and Wings Over Muscatatuck, a family-friendly bird festival on May 12. We'll also be giving away native plants (including species that wildlife love, like elderberry and silky dogwood) at area farmer's markets this Spring.

More Events in Nature, from Our Friends

We're bringing together nature-based groups (state parks, wildlife refuges, nonprofits, and others) to spread the word:

There's something fun (and usually free) to do outside, in nature, right here in southeast Indiana – every week!

Upcoming events range from butterfly counts to art classes. Here's a sampling of what's waiting for you outside. To see fun events coming up (and to find all of the details), "Like" us on Facebook, where we'll highlight new events each week, or visit www.oakheritageconservancy.org.

April 3-6 – Art in Nature Classes – Versailles State Park

April 14 - Kite Building Workshop - Clifty Falls State Park

April 22 – Earth Day – Clifty Falls State Park

May TBD – Birdhouse Building - Heritage Trail

*May 12 – Wings Over Muscatatuck Festival - Muscatatuck
National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)*

May 27 – Full Moon Hike - Charlestown State Park

June 2 – Nat'l Trails Day Hike – Knobstone Hiking Trail Assn.

June 9 – Women in the Outdoors – Big Oaks NWR

June 17 - Ohio River Sweep - Falls of the Ohio State Park

July 4 – Butterfly Count – Big Oaks NWR

July 21 – Butterfly Festival – Charlestown State Park

August 25 - Digging the Past - Falls of the Ohio State Park

Be Part of Something Powerful - Join Oak Heritage Conservancy!

Join a growing community of OHC members.

Protect the best of southeast Indiana.

Become a member today.

You can now join, renew membership, and donate on our website, www.oakheritageconservancy.org, or complete this page and mail it, along with your payment, to Oak Heritage Conservancy, P.O. Box 335, Hanover, IN 47243.

____ Student - \$10

____ Individual - \$25

____ Organization - \$25

____ Family - \$40

____ Cornerstone - \$100-\$499

____ Sponsor - \$500 - \$999

____ Benefactor - \$1000+

Name(s):

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone:

Email:



OAK HERITAGE CONSERVANCY

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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*New Butterfly Preserve,
Hands-on Fun in Nature, to
Join OHCC Today.*