

Buttonwood Nature Preserve

You could define Buttonwood Nature Preserve as 52 acres of rural land at the southeast corner of Sparta Township in Dearborn County, Indiana.

To David Styer and Myra Messick, it was a place away from daily concerns, a place to explore and record the things they saw in lists, drawings and memories.

Times change but the land remains, and David wanted to protect Buttonwood.

(The name comes from the Sycamore tree, a part of which was used for making buttons in the past. Sycamores grow abundantly here).

After concluding a career as a math professor, David followed that old

axiom, go west young man. He kept going till the shore of the Pacific Ocean stopped him. There he settled into collaboration with other scientists.

The years went by and David knew he needed to do something about the care of Buttonwood.

He contacted Oak Heritage Conservancy and the result is that we now own and steward Buttonwood.

At the southern end, Buttonwood begins in South Hogan Creek. The property rises steeply gaining about 200 feet, into a dry upland forest. There are a number of small sinkholes on the high ground.

The land, as well as the adjoining properties, is heavily impacted by

Asian Bush Honeysuckle and other invasives. When David bought the land, it had been farmed and was returning to a natural state.

Buttonwood is a case study of how disturbed land needs a guiding hand on its return or it can lose its way.

Oak Heritage has agreed with David to find the most protected path for Buttonwood's future.

— Based on John Miller's article in the Oak Heritage Conservancy 2014 newsletter



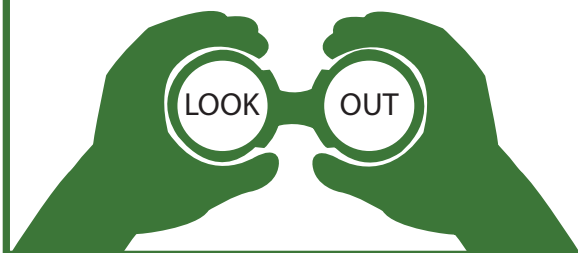
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See what's happening in the creek.

South Hogan Creek runs along the southern border of the preserve. If you can pick your way down to the water, you will be rewarded with fossils, mussel shells, and the clearest water around. Even if you don't want to venture down to the water's edge, you can take in the view of the creek on the west end of the preserve.

Look for evidence of the river - and the riparian buffer - at work.

This preserve provides an important "ecosystem service" (that's a specific, tangible service that nature provides to people): flood control. Alongside the water, a "riparian buffer" grows - that's trees and shrubs that buffer or protect the stream. When heavy rains come, the trees' roots hold the soil in place and absorb energy from the river, thereby protecting downstream farm fields and communities.



Look for signs of people on the land.

We're in the process of tearing down the old barn on this preserve. Once, it was an important piece of infrastructure. Today, we encourage you to be careful and keep your distance until we can finish tearing it down. You might see other signs on the land of past human inhabitants. If you look carefully, you can see signs of an old road traversing the hillside.



Points of Interest



Educational Sign



Observation



Parking



Trailhead

Streams

Trails

Minor Contours

Major Contours

Property Lines Light

Habitat Type

Access

Hay Field

Immature Forest

Mature Forest

No Access

Old Growth Forest

Open/Meadow Area

Open Water

Pollinator Habitat

Restoration Area-Forest

Restoration Area-Pollinator

Native Wildflowers

0 0.03 0.06 0.12 Miles

