

Guthrie Woods

The protection of this “flat woods” is the story of a man and a woman, and their love for each other and their native state of Indiana. William Guthrie and Sarah Lewis were married in 1875. Their union lasted fifty years, until Sarah’s death in 1925 during a trip to Egypt.

William was good in both business and politics. He held several political offices, including State Senator. He was also appointed to the Indiana State Forestry Commission and later the Conservation Commission. He was instrumental in the creation of McCormick’s Creek, Turkey Run, Clifty Falls and Dunes State Parks.

Sarah’s interests in history led her to be active in DAR, Daughters of the Union, Indiana Society of Pioneers, the Colonial Dames, and other groups. As one might expect, she held high offices in many of these groups.

Both Sarah and William had a great interest in nature, and they were

members of the Nature Study Club of Indiana.

Guthrie Woods came down through Sarah’s family and was jointly owned by Sarah and her siblings. Upon her death, William purchased their shares and set about to create what we now call the Guthrie Woods Nature Preserve.

This was an unusual move for this time on our state’s history. In 1925, preserving woods for nature study, and as homes for plants and animals was almost unheard of. Our first state parks were less than a dozen years old and Indiana’s first official state nature preserve would not come about for another 34 years.

Whether Sarah and William had discussed the future of this woods, we’ll never know, but whoever came up with the plan to save it had a truly ingenious mind. Upon William’s death, the land was conveyed to the Nature Study Club of Indiana. The deed included the admonition, “that no tree be cut or no

wildlife destroyed so long as this club or any nature organization that might succeed it is in possession.” William built in support for the Nature Study Club. Their stewardship of the land was overseen by the Madison Safe Deposit and Trust Company and the John Paul Chapter of DAR. For about fifty years, this innovative arrangement allowed the young forest to thrive and reach middle age. Eventually, The Nature Conservancy took over stewardship. Now, Oak Heritage Conservancy takes on the privilege and responsibility of Sarah and William’s dream: that these 61 acres mature into a serene old-growth forest.

— Based on Paul Carmony’s article in the 2005 Oak Heritage Conservancy newsletter

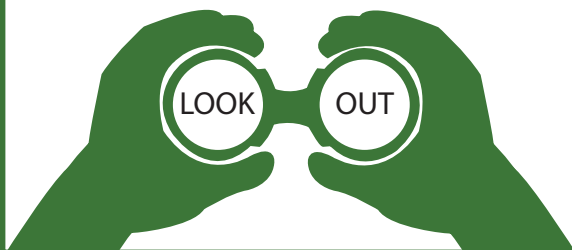


OAK HERITAGE

CONSERVANCY

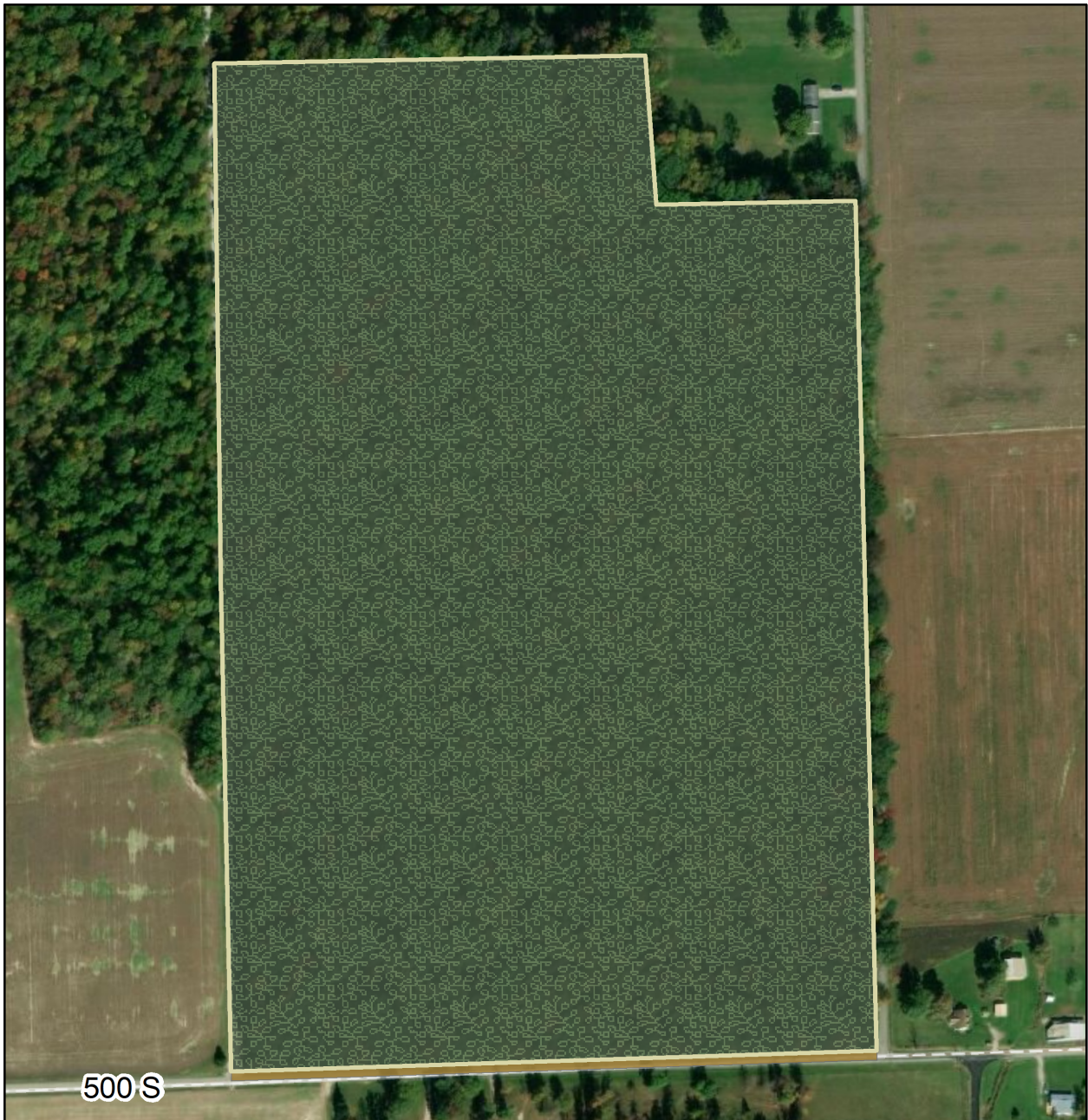
Enjoy the big (and little!) trees.

Guthrie Woods is home to some towering oak trees. Come with a buddy – you’ll need one to reach all the way around the trees. When this forest was donated to Oak Heritage, it needed some R&R. We planted oak tree saplings about ten years ago, and today those trees are as big as your forearm.



Look for our partners.

Did you know that Indiana has a system of state Nature Preserves? These preserves protect the highest quality ecosystems in the entire state. We’re proud to say that Guthrie Woods is a state-dedicated Nature Preserve. We partner with DNR to protect this special place, so don’t be surprised if you see DNR folks out caring for the woods.



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 0.0325 0.065 0.13 Miles

