



OAK HERITAGE

CONSERVANCY

Protecting Southeast Indiana's Natural Heritage

Fall 2021

Let the Trail Building Begin!

The crew of twenty volunteers ended the day sweaty but satisfied.

"It was so fun to spend a day in one of the Oak Heritage preserves with fellow nature lovers!" said Glene Mynhardt, a Board Member and volunteer. "Learning how the trails are built, as well as the teamwork required, really made me appreciate what goes into creating and maintaining natural spaces for all to enjoy."

Together, the volunteers created a brand new, half-mile trail through Webster Woods Nature Preserve's

towering tulip poplars and oaks.

They also spent time maintaining the existing trail, which highlights the preserve's vernal pools.

The volunteer day is part of our new, three-year trail building initiative. We will transform seven Oak Heritage preserves into places where people can fall in love with nature, complete with safe parking at the trailhead, hiking trails, interpretive signs, and written guides for the trails.

"Making our preserves more accessible and welcoming is a critical goal," says Oak Heritage president

Twenty people gathered for a volunteer trail building day at Webster Woods Nature Preserve in July. It is the first of seven trails we are adding, as we invite more people to experience nature on our preserves. Below, from left: Oak Heritage intern Hanna Nyberg and Groundworks ORV Green Corps member Owen Hunter-Linville "grade" the new half-mile trail; Groundworks member Emma Wilson shows off a skull she found while clearing brush for the trail; and Hanover College students Cassie Froedge and Kesley Hughes team up with Oak Heritage Board Member Glene Mynhardt to build a step near the trail's stream crossing. Join us at the Trail Grand Opening on Saturday, October 9th, for a ribbon cutting, nature journaling, and family hike. Details on page 7.



Andy Kain. “People need places to connect with nature. This is how we build support for conservation.”

This project is possible because of significant grant funding as well as ongoing support from our members.

The “anchor” grant for this work is from J&G Fox. They provided a \$107,000, three-year commitment to fund the project. With their support guaranteed, Oak Heritage can secure smaller grants from foundations and other donors for each of the seven preserves involved.

The trail building effort at Webster Woods, for instance, is funded in part by the Foxes - but another \$12,000 is coming from grants from the Community Foundation of Madison and Jefferson County and the Duke Energy Foundation.

“These grants allow us to be more effective than ever before. We can pay interns to help build the trails and create interpretive signs that spark visitors’ curiosity about nature. We can buy the tools we need for volunteer work days, and dig into this exciting work,” says Liz Brownlee, Oak Heritage’s Executive Director.

The grants also help pay for printing signage, creating small gravel parking areas at each trailhead, and in some cases, bringing in experts to help build the trails.

Groundworks Ohio River Valley is a youth conservation corps based in Cincinnati. Their crew of four designed the new trail at Webster

Woods, built the footbridge and six stairs, and led the volunteer work day.

“The Groundworks crew brought real trail building expertise. Their group works to equip urban youth with conservation job skills - and together with our volunteers, they absolutely transformed Webster Woods. I’m extremely proud of this Oak Heritage preserve. It’s ready for visitors,” says Brownlee.

Come see the preserve for yourself at our Trail Grand Opening on October 9th.

Hear more from Groundworks at this year’s Annual Dinner, on October 16, when their Co-Executive Director, Tanner Yess, will talk about how trailbuilding is changing places - and changing lives.

Meg Perry, an Oak Heritage member and volunteer at the trail building day, uses a “McCleod” tool to clear the new trail’s path through this high quality hardwood forest.



Our Second Employee & New Programs

Welcome Kirsten Carlson (photo below), our new Education and Outreach Coordinator. Kirsten will lead events on our preserves, take nature to classrooms across southeast Indiana, write columns about nature for local papers, and lead monthly volunteer days on our preserves. She brings extensive knowledge about nature and experience teaching in and outside of the classroom. Learn more about Kirsten at www.oakheritageconservancy.org/about-us and click “Staff and Board” or meet her in person at one of our many events this Fall (see page 7).

Announcing the formation of our Nature Journal Guild, led by our new Education and Outreach Coordinator, Kirsten Carlson. Each month, the Nature Journal Guild will meet at an Oak Heritage preserve. We'll take a hike, then learn and test out a new artistic or naturalist skill.

This guild is for friends of all ages, regardless of artistic ability, who want to develop their wanderings and wonderings in a communal experience. Come every month, or just once in a while.

Nature journaling is an opportunity

to connect with nature through personal experience. In nature journaling we “discover (and rediscover!) the natural world through a combination of art, writing, and science...to be keen observers of the wild places in backyards and beyond” (John Muir Laws, *How to Teach Nature Journaling*, 2020, pg. 4). We will learn together at the preserves, and you can continue between sessions in your own backyard. Through a hike, personal journaling time, and time sharing with the group, we will enhance each other's experiences and record our own personal wonders.

On September 18, we will meet at Monarch Meadows Nature Preserve. We'll have a wide palette of choices for journaling, since our visit will be during the migration of the monarchs and other migratory animals. Our skill builder for this month will be “journaling basics” - a perfect refresher or introduction for anyone.

We will provide supplies that you may borrow and return (including different types of pencils, hand lens, etc.). If you want to build your own set of nature journaling tools, find a list of “basics” on our website. You can also find details, like each month's site, timing, and how to RSVP for these free events.



Book Review: 'The Nature of Oaks'

By Jamie Schantz, Oak Heritage Board Member

Douglas Tallamy's newest book 'The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our most Essential Native Trees' (published in 2021 by Timber Press) stole my heart, and earned the rank of "best book I have ever read" this summer. Tallamy walks us through the vast number of oak trees in this country, and explains with a combination of science, trivia, and photos just how important these trees are to life in our yards and forests.

Mr. Tallamy explains the "why's" behind planting native trees. Many trees, especially non-native ones, don't support any of the insects and butterflies/moths that evolved to utilize local, native trees and plants.

In one county in Pennsylvania, 511 species of moths and butterflies develop on oaks. No other genus supports as much life. Maples support 295 species, white pine 179, and sweet gum 35. But even if their numbers are less, these native trees are still necessary for the life cycle of certain species of insects. Incredible numbers of insects as well as moths and butterflies make use of these trees. It is the introduced, or non-native, plants that do very little to support our beautiful flying friends. For instance, only one species of insect was found on Callery pear!

Many people hesitate to plant large trees for fear of them falling on their

houses. Mr. Tallamy recommends planting trees in groups of three or more, and explains why: Trees planted in groups intertwine their roots and make all of them more stable and resistant to storm damage. They also do not grow as large as a single specimen tree. Most oaks send their roots deep so finding the correct species for your space is important. The author suggests species of oaks (northern white or red, Shumard or blue oaks) that are great yard trees, ones that do not cause damage to drives or walkways.

Numerous photos of the insects that inhabit these oaks are included in the book, as well as facts that have stayed with me long after I closed the book. For instance: it's mostly blue jays that bury acorns and don't remember where, giving us baby oaks all over. I have wondered for years about the oaks that continually popped up in my gardens when I saw no oaks nearby. The seedlings have been safely transplanted to my yard and hopefully will start bearing their own acorns soon.

Tallamy inspires us with this thought: we have the opportunity to look at something familiar, but see it for the very first time. If we take the time to notice all the small details hidden in the trees, we will be amazed by the adventure that awaits us.

*Join us for a
Nature-Filled Night Out:
Oak Heritage Annual Dinner
Saturday, October 16, 2021
Hanover College Science Center*

Your \$30 admission helps fund conservation, and includes:

- An evening in a natural history museum, with displays ranging from Tinker the t-rex, to butterfly exhibits and mammoth tusks
- Presentation by Tanner Yess, Co-Executive Director of Groundworks Ohio River Valley. Yess will share about the power of trails to change places - and lives. Look forward to this dynamic speaker's discussion of how Groundworks' urban youth conservation corps is engaging a new generation and including a broader cross-section of the community in conservation
- Fine dining with local beer and wine available
- A nature-themed silent auction
- An update on our conservation progress
- A chance to connect with other nature enthusiasts

Purchase your tickets on our website, or mail a check for \$30 per guest to Oak Heritage Conservancy, PO Box 335, Hanover, Indiana 47243.



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 will strive to educate the public about the critical importance of honoring land, water, and local culture.

P.O. Box 335, Hanover, Indiana 47243 www.oakheritageconservancy.org

Liz Brownlee, Executive Director: oakheritageconservancy@gmail.com, (317) 258-5217
Kirsten Carlson, Education and Outreach Coordinator: ecoakheritage@gmail.com
Facebook & Instagram: @oakheritageconservancy

Events in Nature

Most events are free. RSVP required. Details:
www.oakheritageconservancy.org/events



Fall Native Wildflower Arranging - August 28

A fun Saturday night “out”side at Monarch Meadows Nature Preserve. Learn to make a proper bouquet, and go home with your work of art! Cost is \$14. RSVP is required (details online). Bring a friend!



Volunteer Days at Our Preserves - Monthly

Help Oak Heritage tackle critical projects at our preserves, and spend time working and learning alongside others. Starts Aug 31, 10am-1pm. Free.



Nature Journal Guild - Monthly

Build your skills as a naturalist and an artist. All ages welcome. First gathering is Sept. 18, 1-3pm at Monarch Meadows. Look online for the full list of Guild gatherings this Fall. Free, but please RSVP.



Discovering the Extraordinary - Sept 25

This guided hike will give folks of all ages an intimate view of the habits of pollinators and how flowers are designed to attract pollinators. Part of the “Great Outdoor Weekend” in the Cincinnati region. Free.



Webster Woods Trails Grand Opening - Oct 9

Explore the new hiking trail at Webster Woods! Ribbon cutting at 12:30, nature journaling at 1pm, and family nature hikes at 2pm. Free and kid-friendly!



Sixth Annual Photo Contest - October 1 - 30

This year's theme is “Explore Next Door.” Visit a new nature preserve or agritourism site (i.e. winery, pumpkin patch, etc.), and enter the photos you take. Details online. Adult and youth categories!



Oak Heritage Annual Dinner - October 16

A nature-filled night out: fine dining, a talk about the power of trails by Tanner Yess of Ground-works ORV, silent auction, local libations, and good company. Tickets are \$30 and always sell out. RSVP today.

Three Easy Ways to Help Nature

1. *Christmas in August!*

Many of our new outreach programs include hands-on or reading components. Do you have any of the following items that you do not need or use anymore that you could donate to the cause? If you would like to donate, contact Kirsten at eocoakheritage@gmail.com and she will make arrangements to get them (no need to mail). Thank you so very much!

- Books (field guides, nature-themed books, natural history, naturalists, etc.)
- Calendars with nature themes (plants, animals, landscapes, naturalists, etc.)
- Envelopes from cards that would be discarded
- Chenille stems (pipe cleaners)
- Craft sticks (any size/color)
- Crayons (even old, broken ones!)
- Rope, String, or Yarn
- Seeds (vegetable, fruit, flower, herbs)
- Unused point awards on your credit cards? Purchase gift cards to Walmart, Amazon and Lowes (then Oak Heritage can buy supplies as needed!)
- Hula hoops
- Toilet paper and paper towel tubes
- Plastic beads
- Unused or scrap craft paper
- Tote bags,

2. *Kroger / JayC Community Rewards*

Kroger and JayC will donate funds to Oak Heritage every time you shop. Simply sign up online, and then Kroger makes an automatic donation with every purchase. We have step-by-step directions on our website. It's easy to direct Kroger's charitable giving to nature.

3. *Become a Member (or Renew!)*

You can join, renew membership, and set up monthly giving online at 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

____ Family - \$40

____ Cornerstone - \$100-\$499

____ Sponsor - \$500 - \$999

____ Benefactor - \$1000+

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____



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P.O. Box 335
Hanover, IN 47243

*Get Outside this Fall with our
Nature Journaling Group,
Fall Wildlife Arranging,
and Volunteer Days at our Preserves.*