



t r i l l i u m

Fall 2008 Volume 8 Issue 1 Newsletter for the La Porte County Conservation Trust, Inc. Inc.



Hike at Dittmar Prairie

A beautiful summer day greeted 27 visitors to the Dittmar Farm in Galena Township. The hike, co sponsored by the Conservation Trust and the Potawatomi Audubon Society, was led by Jon Dittmar at his parent's farm. Jon has created a 10 acre prairie on the farm. As Vice-President of Restoration Services for J. F. New & Associates, Jon is eminently qualified for this type of land conservation.

Jon describes why the prairie was created. "The planting was funded by the Conservation Reserve Program of the USDA, in which farm ground with highly erodable soils is converted to native grasses or trees to stabilize the soil. We moved to the farm in 1957, and my parents have lived there ever since. The ground was in alfalfa hay most of that time, but around 1985 or 1990 the folks rented it out to farmers for corn and bean production. I noticed that runoff from the corn and bean ground was causing severe erosion downstream in an intermittent stream in the neighbor's woods (the neighbor noticed it too), and I decided to convert the ground to native prairie, with deep-rooted soil-stabilizing plants, and apply for CRP funding. The CRP program paid for the seeding and management, and annually pays my parents more than they were receiving in cash rent from the farmers who were producing corn and beans. Everybody benefits. Aside from the water quality and soil erosion benefits, the prairie offers good habitat for songbirds and other wildlife."

Hikers were treated to a lush field of prairie plants, including big bluestem, little bluestem and blazing star. Many plants towered over the heads of the participants. Butterflies and other insects were in abundance, emphasizing the biodiversity supported by the prairie ecosystem.

The prairie on the Dittmar Farm is an excellent example of private landowners conserving their land for future generations. The great majority of conservation land in Indiana is privately owned. The Conservation Trust is a strong supporter of these efforts.



sunflowers



Jan Baumer at the Conservation Trust booth at the fair

LPCCT GOES TO THE FAIR

Part of the mission of the Conservation Trust is to educate the public about our environment in La Porte County. For the second consecutive year the Conservation Trust, in partnership with Save the Dunes, has manned a booth in the conservation building at the La Porte County Fair. Persons manning the booth fielded questions from fairgoers ranging from unusual bird behavior to invasive plants. Many parents were a “captive” audience to the message in the booth, since we were located next to the fishing pond, where their children were trying to land the big one. Literature was distributed on many environmental subjects, including controlling invasive plants and protecting water quality. A large number of people signed up to receive the Conservation Trust newsletter.



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LPCCT BOARD MEMBER OPENING

The Conservation Trust is seeking a person for its board of directors. This position became available when Don Bowman retired from the board this year. The person taking this position would serve on the board until April of 2011. Any persons interested are invited to send an email to info@lpcct.org. A board questionnaire will be sent out to persons expressing such an interest in the board opening.

Are you interested in preserving LaPorte County's natural resources? If so, consider a financial gift or a donation of land to the LPCCT. Your generosity will insure that future generations will enjoy the beauty of La Porte County. For further information visit www.lpcct.org

USGS TO USE WINTERGREEN WOODS FOR STUDY

Wintergreen Woods has been chosen as one of several sites for a study of simple lianas (woody vines) and herbaceous vines in Northwest Indiana. The study will be conducted by Noel Pavlovic of the USGS Biological Resources Division at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Wintergreen Woods is a 23 acre Dedicated State Nature Preserve owned by the Conservation Trust. This preserve is ideal for certain biological studies since it is an outstanding example of a boreal flatwoods. The Conservation Trust is highly supportive of these type of studies which have the potential of improving our understanding of biological systems in Indiana.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATE SET

The Northeast LaPorte County Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, January 3, 2009. All people are welcome to participate. The Christmas Bird Count is a nationwide effort sponsored by the National Audubon Society to monitor bird populations throughout North America. The Christmas Bird Count has collected a large amount of critical information on birds since its inception in the early 1900's. The Northeast LaPorte County count has been conducted every year since 1986. The count area includes most of northeast La Porte County, including all or part of Galena, Hudson, Wills, Springfield and Center townships. If you would like to participate call 219-778-2810 or email hawkridg@csinet.net.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN
THE LA PORTE COUNTY CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.

Annual Memberships

Individual: \$15.00 Family: \$25.00 Corporate: \$100.00

Additional Donations Welcomed

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Detach and return with your check to: La Porte County Conservation Trust, Inc.
405 Maple Avenue, La Porte, IN. 46350 Phone: (219) 778-2810

The La Porte County Conservation Trust is a non-profit corporation,
incorporated under the laws of Indiana.
Contributions are deductible for tax purposes.

