



# t r i l l i u m

Fall 2009

Newsletter for the La Porte County Conservation Trust, Inc.



Pike Lumber forester Kyle Gunderson (second person from the left) explains the management of the Keehn Forest to visitors on the LPCCT hike.

## **Sustainable Forestry Explained During LPCCT Hike**

For many people, lumber companies and timber cutting evoke images of clear cut wastelands, piles of treetops and torn up forest floors. The hikers that visited the Keehn Forest in Galena Twp, which is owned and managed by Pike Lumber Company, saw a forest that looks nothing like this image.

Our guide for this hike was Kyle Gunderson, a professional forester who works for Pike Lumber. As the hike participants walked through the forest, Kyle explained how Pike Lumber manages their woodland. Instead of clear cutting an area, individual trees are selected from the forest for harvesting; the impact of the removal of each tree is studied to see how the new opening in the forest will effect younger trees in the area. Instead of waiting 20-30 years to do a major tree harvest, trees are cut on a 5-10 year cycle. This smaller harvest has fewer negative impacts on the forest.

Kyle explained that the forest is not only managed for the higher value species, such as oak and maple; virtually any healthy tree that grows to a harvestable size is economical for timber production. In the Keehn forest this includes tulip tree (poplar), beech, wild cheery and hickory. This type of management has the side benefit of maintaining forest biodiversity. Kyle mentioned that they do not need to “plant” any young trees in the forest. The natural growth of saplings in the forest is sufficient. In some areas of the forest there may be more than 100 maple saplings per acre. Natural selection in the forest is the best way for trees to grow. Kyle recommended against “high grading”, which is a practice of cutting all the largest and highest quality trees at one time; this system ultimately results in a forest with less diversity and a reduced timber harvest.

Sustainable timber production is an important industry that preserves woodlands in our area. Kyle stated that Pike Lumber has never sold a forest to be converted to development purposes (Pike owns or manages over 50 forests in Indiana). This type of forest management is a winning situation for everyone; jobs are created from the forest products, the landowner receives an income from the land, and the forest ecosystem stays intact.

## Rare Orchid Found at Wintergreen Woods

The Oval Ladies Tress Orchid (*Spiranthes ovalis*) has been discovered at Wintergreen Woods by local botanist Keith Board. This small orchid had not been observed during botanical surveys of Wintergreen Woods. According to Mr. Board, this orchid is on the Indiana State Watch List of plants, and has only been found in a few places in Indiana. This orchid was only discovered in Northwest Indiana in 1994. It is located in Sebert Woods County Park as well as Wintergreen Woods. This orchid is another example of the importance of preserving LaPorte County's special places. Wintergreen Woods is a Dedicated State Nature Preserve owned by LPCCT.



Oval Ladies Tress Orchid

This specimen is shown after the plant has finished flowering. Photo by Keith Board.

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## Pinhook Bog Visited by LPCCT

In June two hikes were sponsored by the LPCCT to Pinhook Bog. Pinhook Bog is part of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and is located in Cool-spring Twp. This bog is generally considered the best example of a bog in Indiana. Pinhook bog can only be accessed by special permission and visitors must be led by a designated guide. Due to the fragile nature of the bog, all visitors must stay on the boardwalk. At several points the boardwalk is "floating" on the mat of vegetation that covers the bog.

Interesting plants observed included sundew, pitcher plant, highbush blueberry and tamarack. Our visit proved there are more than unusual plants at Pinhook. A Spotted Turtle was seen, as well as a garter snake. A White-eyed Vireo was heard then seen along the trail.

Pinhook Bog is undoubtedly one of the most special places in LaPorte County.

Our thanks go out to Joy Marburger and John Irvin for leading these hikes.



Hikers at Pinhook Bog observe the plants and animals of this unusual ecosystem



This is the flower of the Pitcher Plant found in Pinhook Bog



## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATE SET

The Northeast LaPorte County Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 19, 2009. All people are welcome to participate. Both nature preserves owned by the LPCCT, Ridgway Wetland and Wintergreen Woods are located in the count area. 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 email [hawkridg@csinet.net](mailto:hawkridg@csinet.net) or call 219-778-2810.

### Some birds are easy to count

The Christmas Bird Count accepts "feeder counts" for those who prefer to count only at their bird feeders. In some cases this can yield more than Juncos and Cardinals. These Turkeys were observed in Galena Twp.

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### Annual Memberships

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

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Detach and return with your check to: La Porte County Conservation Trust, Inc.  
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