

# Ripples

The Quarterly Newsletter of Friends of Sugar Creek, Inc.

Spring 2009

## Bachner Nature Reserve to be Dedicated April 25; Volunteers Needed for Tree Planting

On Saturday, April 25, and Sunday, April 26, the community will gather to dedicate the Bachner Nature Reserve, a twenty nine acre area with Sugar Creek frontage located south-west of Crawfordsville.

The site's name honors Michael Bachner, a Wabash graduate and long-time manager of the College's bookstore. Bachner was an active environmentalist, avid kayaker, and lover of all things natural.

Directly adjacent to the new nature reserve will be a twelve acre area designated as a Sugar Creek Public Access point by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Friends of Sugar Creek has adopted this portion of the site and will help maintain it in the years to come.

The donation of this land for public use was made possible by a partnership among several local and state agencies who worked together to purchase the property. Friends of Sugar Creek was joined in these efforts by NICHES Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Indiana Heritage Trust, Pheasants Forever, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Over the course of the weekend, a large portion of the Bachner Nature



**41 acres of creek frontage west of Crawfordsville will be dedicated as a new nature reserve and public access site on April 25.**

Reserve property will undergo transformation from farm field to young forest. More than 5,400 trees will be planted in this area.

This restoration work is led by NICHES Land Trust, a group seeking to return riparian properties in central Indiana to native vegetation. The tree planting starts immediately following the 10 am site dedication on Saturday and will be done entirely by local volunteers. Groups from Wabash College, Cub Scout Troop 318, Indiana Smallmouth Alliance and St. John's Episcopal Church have all committed to help.

The new nature reserve will add a protected forest block to a critical habitat area. Several migrating songbirds and other creatures rely on this section of the Sugar Creek corridor for their survival. Increasing the forested buffer area around the Creek will also help control erosion and filter water from the surrounding agricultural area.

Following Saturday's workday, all FSC members, as well as those from partnering organizations, are invited to a pot luck Earth Day Celebration hosted by the Swift family at Camp Talitha. Directions for this event will be given at the dedication.

### Mark Your Calendar:

- **April 25/26:** Site Dedication and Tree Planting
- **May 5:** May Board Meeting
- **May 16:** Spring Clean-up
- **June 2:** June Board Meeting
- **June 6:** Family Float Trip

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### Schedule of Events:

#### Saturday April 25

- 10:00 Dedication Ceremony
- 11:00 Tree Planting Begins
- 5:00 Gathering at Camp Talitha

#### Sunday April 26

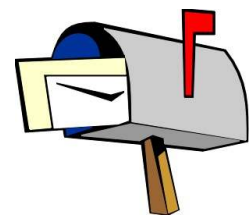
- 10:00 Tree Planting Continues

### Driving Directions:

1. Take IN 32 West from Crawfordsville
2. Turn left at CR 325 West (Camp Rotary Rd.)
3. Turn Right at CR 200 South (Offield Monument Rd.)
4. The Bachner Nature Reserve is after the hill by the Creek

### Trees to be planted:

1000	Bur Oak
1000	Black Walnut
1000	White Oak
800	Shagbark Hickory
500	Pecan
300	Kentucky Coffee Tree
200	Sycamore
200	American Plum
200	Hazelnut
100	Pawpaw
100	Chokecherry



Share your favorite Sugar Creek stories, photos, and artwork with us! Send submissions to our PO Box or to: [nathan@friendsofsugarcreek.org](mailto:nathan@friendsofsugarcreek.org)

## Environment Plate Fund Helps Protect Sugar Creek

Have you ever wondered how the money from the Indiana Environment license plates is spent? In 2008, portions of those funds were used to protect two areas along Sugar Creek.

The light blue license plates denote a \$25 contribution to the Indiana Heritage Trust (IHT), a fund created by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to purchase and protect important habitat areas throughout the state. These donations are supplemented by taxpayer money from the state budget.

More than a million plates have been sold since the program's inception in 1992, helping add 51,000 acres of land into state protection.

Seventeen properties were purchased by the IHT in 2008, including two with Sugar Creek frontage.

The first is part of the 41-acre Bachner Nature Reserve and Public Fishing Area, which will provide a access site and restore a riparian buffer zone. The BNR is located downstream from Crawfordsville and will be dedicated on Saturday, April

25. The new DNR access site is expected to open to the public in June.

Friends of Sugar Creek played an active role during the acquisition and development processes, working closely with groups including the Indiana DNR, NICHES Land Trust, and the Coal Creek Chapter of Pheasants Forever.

The second Sugar Creek site purchased in 2008 is a 296-tract known as the Gehlhausen Parcel. According to the DNR, the land is a "mixture of pasture, upland forest, and a remnant population of Eastern hemlock, and will likely end up as a forestry property that allows horseback riding and camping."

The Gelhausen Parcel is located downstream from Shades and Turkey Run State Parks. It is adjacent to the protected areas included in the Mossy Point Nature Preserve and Allee Woods.

For more information on the 2008 purchases, visit <http://www.in.gov/dnr/heritage/>.

**The Indiana Environment license plate makes more than a statement; it recognizes a donation to the Indiana Heritage Trust, a fund used to protect natural areas in our state.**



### IHT: By the Numbers

\$40	License Plate Fee
\$25	Donation to IHT
1 million +	Plates Purchased since 1994
337	Acres of Sugar Creek land added into protection in 2008

### Water Word: Riffle

A shallow stretch of a creek where the water moves slightly slower than the surrounding area, creating small rippled waves. The rocky creekbed usually found in riffles provides important habitat for aquatic invertebrates and small fish.

## Ecological Assessment: Sugar Creek Nature Park

On Wednesday, March 4, members of the Sugar Creek Nature Park Planning Commission met with Gus Nyberg, the executive director of NICHES, to conduct an ecological assessment of the area designated for the city's new park. Nyberg provided management suggestions and commented on current plans for trail and shelter construction.

After walking the property, Nyberg concluded that the area is a classic riparian floodplain without need for extensive rehabilitation or management. He recommended that box elder trees be thinned, as well as some of the brush plants in the understory. This would increase light penetration at the ground level, bolstering growth of forbs and grasses including Virginia wildrye. This perennial grass helps stabilize topsoil and prevent erosion—a significant concern for the area given water volume during flood events.

Recent high-water events left visible evidence of the area's vulnerability to flood damage and channelization. One particularly scoured area was noted starting behind diamond 3. All vegetation in this strip had been washed away, leaving a thick layer of silt sand. This channel bed is prone to



**Local student Hannah Chalmers designed the new Sugar Creek Nature Park logo.**

expansion if not amended with new tree and grass plantings.

Invasive species are relatively sparse in the area. One plant of concern is garlic mustard. This biennial herb outcompetes wildflowers and other native plants essential to the area. Identification and removal of this

plant could become a regular activity for school groups using the park as an outdoor classroom. Honeysuckle, though not abundant in the area, could also be targeted for removal.

Many large examples of sycamores, silver maples, and other native deciduous trees were identified, contributing to the overall health and quality of the land. A well-marked interpretive trail would highlight these elements, contributing to the educational goals of the park.

Nyberg suggested that dirt trails be utilized throughout the facility, as other materials would eventually wash out. Shelters should be constructed with firm footings and deep posts to deter washouts. Permits will be needed for any construction.

A low-lying area between the newly-paved east parking lot poses an obstacle to access but also an opportunity for a wetlands demonstration area or rain garden. Ideally a bridge would span this area to enable access when water is present.

## Turkey Run Group Wins Eco-Challenge For Sugar Creek Work

Turkey Run science teacher Susan Seitz first contacted Friends of Sugar Creek in March with an invitation to help oversee a creek clean-up organized by her middle school students. While such requests are not uncommon, few groups display the level of ambition and motivation shown by Seitz and her class.

The clean-up, performed Wednesday, March 18, at Turkey Run State Park, was only one small part of the students' work this spring. They first conducted water testing to identify pollutants in Sugar Creek near their school. They then sent letters to 256 Indiana schools asking them to pursue similar work on their local tributaries to the Ohio and Wabash Rivers. The class also contacted State Representative Dale Grubb to fast track their protection of one and a half creek miles through the state's Adopt-A-River program.

This group of "Eco-H2O Warriors," in partnership with the Friends of Turkey Run, will conduct a creek clean-up throughout their adopted stretch on May 16. This event is coordinated with the Friends of Sugar Creek cleanup held the same day in downtown Crawfordsville.



Students from Turkey Run Middle School helped organize and conduct a Sugar Creek clean-up on March 18.

Their efforts were recognized by Lexus as part of the car company's annual Eco-Challenge. They received a \$10,000 award to fund future Sugar Creek projects. Some of the money has already been spent on laptops to help aid research and development of outreach materials. Seitz is also looking to purchase outdoor classroom materials

including more notebook computers and Vernier Lab Pros with water probes. These items will be used by future students to continue the work this class started.

Ms. Seitz and her students at Turkey Run Middle School deserve recognition for their efforts and enthusiasm. They are true Friends of Sugar Creek!



The Turkey Run "Eco-H2O Warriors" were awarded a \$10,000 grant for their efforts by the Lexus Eco-Challenge.

FSC would like to thank **Neal Tire and Battery** for accepting (free of charge) several dumped tires collected by volunteers during the early months of 2009. We appreciate your support!

**THANK YOU!**



## Darter Dispatches

### 47th Annual Sugar Creek Canoe Race

- The 47<sup>th</sup> annual Sugar Creek Canoe Race will take place on Saturday, May 2. There are two separate events: a twelve mile United States Canoe Association (USCA) sanctioned race and a five mile recreational race.

The pre-registration fee is \$20/person for the USCA race and \$25/team for the recreational race. Registration forms, fees and a liability waiver are due April 30 to qualify for pre-registration. After that date, the fees increase \$10. Clements Canoes is sponsoring the race and will provide rental canoes for an additional charge. Official information is available at [www.clementscanoos.com/race.htm](http://www.clementscanoos.com/race.htm).

### Fly Fishing Course offered by Tippecanoe Fly Fishers on Sugar Creek

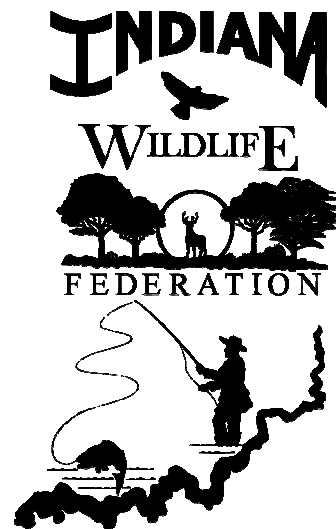
- The Tippecanoe Fly Fishers, in partnership with NICHES Land Trust, will offer a beginning fly fishing workshop at the Bachner Nature Reserve on June 20. Attendees will learn casting techniques before hitting the water. Registration information is available at [www.nicheslandtrust.org](http://www.nicheslandtrust.org)

### IWF Accepting Scholarship Applications

- The Indiana Wildlife Federation is offering a \$1,000 college scholarship to an undergraduate student enrolled in conservation-related studies. Applicants must complete the scholarship form and answer this essay prompt: "What is the most pressing environmental or natural resource Issue currently affecting Indiana wildlife? Why is this issue important to you? What could you do to help?" The application deadline is May 15. More details are available at [www.IndianaWildlife.org](http://www.IndianaWildlife.org)

### Sustainable Indiana Offering Plots in Crawfordsville Community Garden

- Sustainable Indiana, a green group based in Montgomery County, is offering plots in a community garden located 1 mile south from Crawfordsville High School on State Road 47 South (next to Golden Creek). Each plots costs \$20. Visit [www.sustainableindiana.org](http://www.sustainableindiana.org) or call Susan Smith (765-362-0251) for more information.



The Indiana Wildlife Federation is offering a \$1,000 college scholarship to a student studying conservation

# Wabash College Studying Sugar Creek Economic Impact

Story by Steve Charles

What is the economic value of Sugar Creek to residents of Montgomery County? How does damage to the creek affect not only businesses that depend upon it for revenue, but for other businesses in Crawfordsville and the surrounding area?

Students in Wabash Economics Professor Christie Byun's Environmental Economics class got a chance to ask examine those questions up-close last week as they toured several sites on Sugar Creek, then rented canoes from Clements Canoes Outdoor Center for a short paddle down the area's number one recreational destination.

"As a mini-project for the class, we're studying Sugar Creek and its economic valuation in terms of recreational use and tourism, as well as for local real estate values," Professor Byun explained.

Friends of Sugar Creek Project Coordinator Nate Mullendore introduced students to the creek, taking the group to a site in town where the streams banks were badly eroded.

"One house had to be demolished, otherwise it would have eventually collapsed into the creek," Byun explained.

Then the group began their paddle down the creek, considered by many the most beautiful stream in Indiana.

"We talked to the canoe livery manager to get an idea of the amount of business he gets during the season," Byun said. "The amount of revenue they earn through rentals is quite large, and any kind of damage to the creek would damage his business (and others as well)."

"It was a good experience for the students to see these things in person," Byun said. "Seeing a photo is helpful, but going to the actual sites makes it all the more real. And it leads our class to the next topic—contingent valuation, that is, figuring out the value of a natural resource, when there is no direct market price for it. Some people never visit the creek, yet they place an "existence" value on it, meaning that they like the fact that such parks and resources exist at all.

"A lot of environmental goods are hard to place a price on, which makes it hard to formulate public policy to protect such resources," Byun said. "Seeing the creek in person, and experiencing a recreational outing like a canoe trip helped the students understand this more clearly."



Nathan Mullendore took Wabash College's Environmental Economics class on a road and canoe tour of Sugar Creek



The class visited a site on Wayne Ave. where a house was demolished due to cliff erosion

## To Report Illegal Dumping or a Pollution Incident

Call 317-233-7745 (24 hours)

Call the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's 24-hour emergency response hotline in Indianapolis immediately. Have detailed information ready, including time, date, and location. A small delay could reduce the chances of containing the hazard and make it difficult to trace. After notifying the response team, call Zach Cain, President of Friends of Sugar Creek, at 765-366-6682.



Once trapped into near extinction in Indiana, beavers have reestablished themselves in the Sugar Creek watershed. Look for them swimming in the evenings—or look for signs of their presence all along the creek banks.



Sandhill Cranes  
Artwork submitted by Lali Hess

## Lawn and Garden Show Wrap-Up

Following an annual tradition, Friends of Sugar Creek sponsored an informational booth at Montgomery County's Lawn and Garden Show. This year's event, which was held on March 27 and 28, provided an excellent opportunity for Friends to touch base with the community and learn about local citizens' creek concerns.

Booth workers promoted upcoming FSC events and discussed the organization's ongoing projects. They also listened to several fond creek memories, ranging from tipped canoes to fish stories.

The biggest booth attractor seemed to be the "Fish Advisory" signs. Several visitors seemed unaware of health risks involved with eating fish caught from Sugar Creek.

An estimated 1400 people attended the show. Many of these individuals left with FSC materials in hand, including the latest newsletter, schedule of events, and documentary DVD.

One lucky attendee was given FSC's door prize: a 50-gallon rain barrel. Congratulations to Carrie Runyan of Waynetown for winning this awesome, water-conserving prize!



FSC gave away a rain barrel as part of this year's Montgomery County Lawn & Garden Show.

*Ripples is online. Direct your friends to the "publication" section of our website <http://www.friendsofsugarcreek.org>*

## Wetlands Perform Vital Role In Hoosier Environment

From IDEM:

February 2 marked World Wetlands Day. These ecologically rich areas come in many shapes and sizes and are found in all of Indiana's ninety two counties.

Many believe the way to protect areas from flooding is to remove water as quickly as possible. Generations of Hoosiers have straightened streams, created ditches, tiled fields and drained wetlands to move water away from farmland and developing areas.

The result of these activities and more "efficient" draining is increased danger of severe floods, as storm water run-off inundates waterways more quickly than it can be absorbed.

Wetlands, which store water, act as a shock absorber for flood events. Wetlands collect water and release it slowly through evaporation and infiltration into the ground water and nearby streams. This reduces the amount of water that goes into streams during heavy rains, while maintaining streams and drinking water wells during dry periods. When floods do occur, wetlands let the floodwaters spread, reducing the power the floodwaters have to do damage.

The loss of wetlands by filling or draining takes away these water retention benefits and leaves areas susceptible to water accumulation. Increased drainage may help with small, localized flooding problems but results in more water flowing into streams. This water enters the stream more quickly after heavy rains and causes more water flowing into areas downstream of the drainage improvements.

Indiana has lost an estimated 85 percent of its wetlands in the last two hundred years. A quarter of Indiana's surface area was wetland when the first European settlers arrived; now less than 4 percent of Indiana is covered by wetland.

Hoosiers can work together to improve the state of Indiana's wetlands. By preserving wetlands that exist and working to create new wetlands, Hoosiers can take the first step to protecting themselves against rain events.

Striking a balance between economical development and the preservation of Indiana's environment is vital.

Wetland replacement, which is required by law, is known as mitigation. Finding appropriate mitigation sites often takes a great deal of time.

IDEM and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) recently unveiled a public portal for a new Volunteer Mitigation interactive site. The site will assist in the connection of property owners willing to provide land for mitigation and organizations that must complete mitigation as part of their project. The goal is to easily identify potential sites and streamline wetland restoration and creation.

The public portal can be found at [Idem-Maps.idem.IN.gov/apps/MitigationVolunteer/](http://Idem-Maps.idem.IN.gov/apps/MitigationVolunteer/) and is currently accepting entries from property owners.

IDEM developed the project in cooperation with INDOT, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

**Indiana has lost an estimated 85 percent of its wetlands in the last 200 years. A quarter of Indiana's surface area was wetland when the first European settlers arrived; now less than 4 percent of Indiana is covered by wetland.**

"The Volunteer Mitigation site is a revolutionary way to streamline the wetland restoration process," said Thomas Easterly, IDEM commissioner. "It will allow groups that need locations for wetland restoration to find and work with interested property owners easily and efficiently."

Organizations that disturb wetlands through construction or other activities are required to restore or create new wetlands to offset the impact. In order to increase the probability that new wetlands will survive and to offset the amount of time it takes for the area to mature, groups must create more wetlands than they disturb.

IDEM issues permits and water quality certifications for construction, excavation, and dredging projects in Indiana wetlands, streams and other water bodies. Hoosiers planning a project of this nature that could affect the quality of Indiana waters should call the IDEM Office of Water Quality Wetlands Program at (800) 451-6027 or visit the Wetlands Program Web site at [wetlands.IN.gov](http://wetlands.IN.gov).

Friends of Sugar Creek, Inc.

PO Box 291  
Crawfordsville, IN  
47933

Return Service Requested



Phone: 765-366-6682  
E-mail: info@friendsofsugarcreek.org

Friends of Sugar Creek, Inc. (FSC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit grassroots environmental organization located in west-central Indiana. FSC was founded by a group of concerned citizens in 1987 after a fish kill along Sugar Creek was disregarded by local and state government officials. Since that time the mission of FSC has been to protect, restore, and promote appreciation of Sugar Creek and its watershed.

Board of Directors

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# Spring Creek Clean-up Set for May 16; Family Float Trip June 6

Friends of Sugar Creek will host its first major creek clean-up of the year on Saturday, May 16. The event is a partnership with Mayor Coons and the City of Crawfordsville. Volunteers will meet at the Elston Softball Diamonds at 9 am. FSC will provide latex gloves and all the trash bags you can fill. A hot dog lunch will be served at noon.

Friends of Turkey Run, in partnership with the Turkey Run Eco H2O Warriors (see page 4), will host another cleanup event on the same day. If you would like to help with this effort, please contact Glenn Summers (765-597-4623).

feature the the Bachner Nature Reserve and Public Access Site, a new canoe put-in opening this year. Call or email FSC Vice President Matt Williams to reserve a spot—they won't last long: 765-376-5213 or matt@friendsofsugarcreek.org.



Join us for our spring creek clean-up on May 16



The annual Family Friendly Float Trip is scheduled for Saturday, June 6

When was the last time you canoed Sugar Creek? Friends of Sugar Creek and NICHES Land Trust will give you a chance—for free—on June 6 during our annual family-friendly float trip. The first twenty canoes worth of participants will ride for free. Shuttle service will be provided for those who bring their own canoe or kayak. This trip will