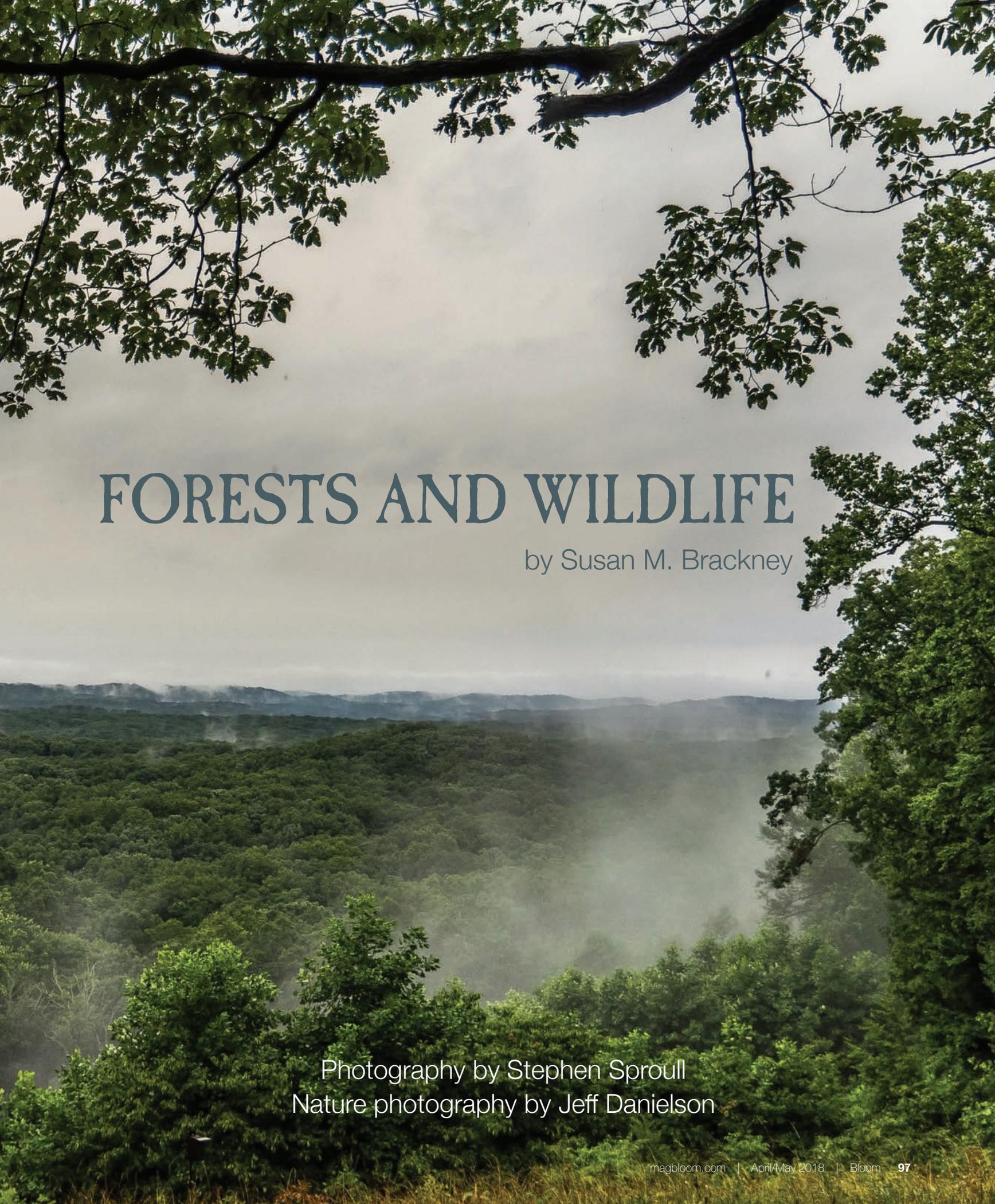




THE FIGHT TO SAVE OUR

A misty summer sunrise from Hesitation Point in
Brown County State Park, July 2017.

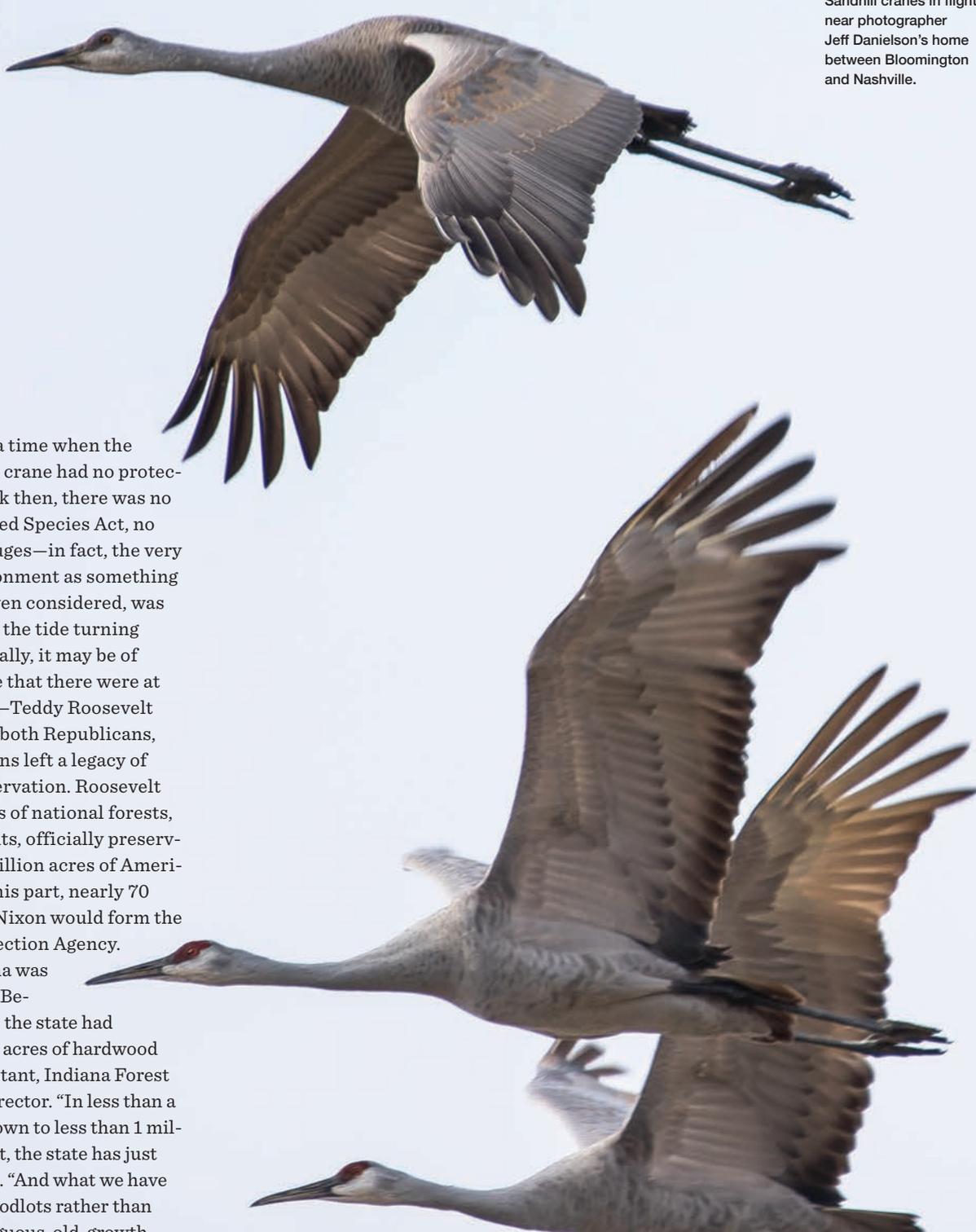
A misty forest landscape with a large tree branch in the foreground. The scene is viewed from an elevated position, looking down into a valley filled with dense green trees. The background shows rolling hills and mountains shrouded in a light mist or fog. The sky is overcast and grey. The overall mood is serene and atmospheric.

FORESTS AND WILDLIFE

by Susan M. Brackney

Photography by Stephen Sproull
Nature photography by Jeff Danielson

Sandhill cranes in flight near photographer Jeff Danielson's home between Bloomington and Nashville.



There was a time when the whooping crane had no protections. Back then, there was no Endangered Species Act, no national wildlife refuges—in fact, the very concept of the environment as something to be protected, or even considered, was utterly foreign. With the tide turning again, at least politically, it may be of some interest to note that there were at least two presidents—Teddy Roosevelt and Richard Nixon—both Republicans, whose administrations left a legacy of environmental conservation. Roosevelt established hundreds of national forests, parks, and monuments, officially preserving more than 230 million acres of American wilderness. For his part, nearly 70 years later, Richard Nixon would form the Environmental Protection Agency.

In the past, Indiana was covered with forest. “Between 1800 and 1810, the state had more than 20 million acres of hardwood forest,” says Jeffrey Stant, Indiana Forest Alliance executive director. “In less than a century, they cut it down to less than 1 million acres.” At present, the state has just under 5 million acres. “And what we have now are scattered woodlots rather than large swaths of contiguous, old-growth forestland,” Stant adds.

Previous Indiana Republican governors—namely Dr. Otis Bowen (1973–81) and Robert Orr (1981–89)—deserve credit for some of the forested acres that do remain. “They established the first back-country areas of state forests,” Stant says. “They were de-emphasizing timbering or were not doing it altogether, in order to preserve wilderness areas in the state forests and wild areas for wilderness recreation.”

Coming undone

But these days? In Washington, D.C., the Donald Trump administration is swiftly dismantling the very agency his Republican brethren initially established. A month into his presidency, President Trump appointed Scott Pruitt to head the EPA. As a former Oklahoma attorney

general, Pruitt filed multiple anti-EPA lawsuits and long worked to de-fang the agency he now leads.

While campaigning, Trump told Fox News’ Chris Wallace, “Environmental Protection, what they do is a disgrace. Every week they come out with new regulations.” Responding to Wallace’s follow-up question, “Who’s going to protect the environ-



Bill Weeks, director of the Conservation Law Center.



Author and professor Steven Higgs.



Lynton Keith Caldwell at his home, Cedar Crest, in April 1972. Photo courtesy IU Archives

ment?” Trump replied, “We can leave a little bit, but you can’t destroy businesses.”

As president, Trump also signed a series of executive orders requiring review of all existing regulations, the reorganization of agencies, and the elimination of “unnecessary” agencies and agency programs. And, in March 2017, he visited EPA headquarters to sign the Executive Order on Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth, which eliminates the ban on federal leasing for coal production; lifts production restrictions on oil, natural gas, coal, and shale; and reevaluates the Clean Power Plan—which Trump referred to as a “crushing attack on American industry.”

Some tactics have been more subtle. According to the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative (EDGI)—a watchdog group of scientists, data analysts, historians, and others from universities and nonprofit organizations—the Trump administration has removed hundreds of governmental webpages and online reports from the EPA, National Park Service, Department of State, Department of Energy, and National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, among others. Content about climate change, the importance of renewable energy, and problems associated with continued reliance on non-renewables has simply disappeared.

B-town’s environmental rock star

It hasn’t always been this way. In addition to establishing the EPA, Nixon also passed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) during his tenure. Its enactment in 1970 represented a real paradigm shift—one that originated in large part here in Bloomington with Lynton Keith Caldwell. One of the NEPA’s chief architects, Caldwell was an Indiana University professor emeritus who also helped found IU’s School of Public and Environmental Affairs in 1971.

“He was one of the greatest environmental thinkers of all time,” says Steven Higgs, an environmental author and IU professor. “He wrote the environmental impact statement language in NEPA that has protected more of the environment than any stroke of the pen anywhere at any time.”

The NEPA was designed to set a national policy to “encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment.” At the time, this was a wholly original mode of thinking. The NEPA also would “promote efforts which will prevent

or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man.” The NEPA established a Council on Environmental Quality and required federal agencies to study and report on the potential environmental effects proposed actions might have.

A veritable environmental rock star during the 1970s, Caldwell fielded countless media requests and traveled the world to spread what was a new environmental philosophy. Still, when he could, he spent hours in discussion with his students, colleagues, and friends. His ideas were prescient—and still altogether applicable. “Today we have the option of channeling some of our wealth into the protection of our future,” Caldwell noted. “If we fail to do this in an adequate and timely manner we may find ourselves confronted, even in this generation, with environmental catastrophe that could render our wealth meaningless and which no amount of money could ever cure.”

During the Reagan and post-Reagan years, Caldwell became increasingly dismayed by rollbacks on the policies of previous administrations. “Whether he likes it or not, man is now responsible for what happens to the earth,” he said. “If he poisons the earth, pollutes it, overpopulates it, he will become his own destroyer.”

Toward the end of his life, Caldwell took special comfort in watching the wildlife outside his home. During his lifetime, he had seldom been without a pair of birding binoculars. He died in 2006 at the age of 92. His ashes were scattered along a streambed on his property.

Conservation Law Center

“Caldwell was a giant in our field,” says Bill Weeks, who knew Caldwell in the 1980s when both men were involved with The Nature Conservancy. Now, as director of the Conservation Law Center, Weeks and his staff have a strong impact on environmental public policy—one case at a time.

Since 2005, the Conservation Law Center, a nonprofit environmental law clinic, has worked jointly with the Indiana University School of Law to provide pro bono legal services to conservation-oriented organizations. The group primarily concentrates on freshwater ecosystems, conservation easements, nonprofit governance, endangered wildlife, and public trust doctrine. “We’ve done a variety of things, from advising Indiana land trusts on the rules of proxy voting



associated with their trustees to helping them with the specifics of the tax code as it applies to conservation easements,” Weeks says.

They’ve also had some significant court wins. “One was on behalf of the endangered Indiana bat,” Weeks says. “We took a matter and won it in the United States Court of Appeals. We also took a matter to the Indiana Supreme Court, where we were arguing that environmental organizations should have a right to participate on behalf of their members in administrative proceedings in Indiana. We won that one, too.”

To a degree, the types of requests the Conservation Law Center fields depend on the values and policy positions held in the White House. “If the budgets for the agencies that have responsibility for things like the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, or the Endangered Species Act are ample, then we can count on those laws being carefully

followed and enforced,” Weeks explains. “If they’re cut, less of that’s done.

“The other thing is, what’s their attitude?” Weeks continues. “For example, the current administration has announced that it will no longer enforce the Migratory Bird Treaty Act with respect to what’s called incidental bird deaths. This is a 180-degree shift from the previous administration.”

Before this change, incidences of accidental migratory bird deaths were punishable by up to six months in prison and a \$15,000 per-bird penalty. (Historically, power lines, communication towers, wind turbines, oil pits, and similar man-made structures have caused millions of migratory bird deaths.) Enactment of the Migratory Bird Treaty induced industry operators to carefully consider the safety of hundreds of avian species during project development and operation. Now, inciden-

tal bird deaths are no longer punishable by law, so those same operators can act with relative impunity.

Attitudes at the statehouse also influence the Conservation Law Center’s docket. “In Indiana, forest policy makes a big difference administration to administration,” Weeks says. “The position that the current administration takes on the management of a natural resource makes a difference as to whether matters come walking in our doors, with people saying, ‘This isn’t right. There has to be something we can do about this.’”

Hoosier Environmental Council

Like the Conservation Law Center, the Hoosier Environmental Council also works on a variety of statewide issues, from safeguarding air and water quality to protecting the state’s forests and lakes.



(opposite page) A waterfall at Leonard Springs Park on Bloomington's west side. Photo by Jaime Sweany

(left, top) A whitetail buck in a meadow at Stillwater Marsh on McGowan Road, east of Bloomington.

(left, bottom) A pair of river otters on the ice of a back pool at Muskatatuck State Wildlife Refuge in Jackson County. The otters swim under the ice to catch fish, then bring them to the surface to eat them.

Whenever possible, the nonprofit environmental advocacy group looks for wins that are both environmental and economic, with “great coalition-building potential, strong underlying science and economic data, and the potential to draw allies across the political spectrum,” says Jesse Kharbanda, the group’s executive director.

What are the specific challenges Kharbanda sees for Bloomington’s environmental future? “Ensuring that Bloomington has sufficient legal authority to enact far-sighted environmental policies, safeguarding Lake Monroe and Lake Lemon from sedimentation, and preserving old forests from unwise logging,” Kharbanda suggests.

The Nature Conservancy

Whether logging Indiana’s forests is altogether unwise or, possibly, well-warranted

has long been the center of debate. What’s more, the debate itself exposes a philosophical continuum—one that’s far more nuanced than a “gentlemen-start-your-chainsaws” mentality at one end and tree-spiking radicalism at the other.

“There are literally dozens and dozens of ways to manage our forest stands in Indiana,” says Dan Shaver, director of the Brown County Hills Project, part of The Nature Conservancy. Shaver says it depends on what you are trying to do. “[What you do depends on] if you’re trying to restore that forest, retain certain forest community types, or promote different age classes within the forest. It’s not a one-prescription-fits-all approach.”

The Brown County Hills Project’s goal is to conserve as many acres of forestland as possible. “That involves everything from setting it aside as nature preserves or purchasing land and making it part of our public

land system like Brown County State Park or Yellowwood State Forest to working with private landowners to manage their land sustainably for timber production,” Shaver says.

Since 2002, the group has protected more than 7,000 acres out of the 34,000 unprotected acres in its targeted focus area. Although The Nature Conservancy began primarily as a conservation organization, it started implementing sustainable timber management on some lands about 20 years ago.

“We would look to buy a piece of property, if it had significant natural features on it or certain kinds of endangered species,” Shaver says. “We would buy it and protect it. But as the organization grew into a global conservation organization, it was trying to impact conservation on a global scale. We had to change the way we were doing business. There wasn’t enough money to buy it all. You had to find other ways to work with landowners.”

Regarding Indiana’s public lands? “You kind of have to look at them together to see which ecological services they are providing and which ecological services they are not providing,” Shaver says. “And those that are not providing [ecological services] are the ones that we tend to focus on and say, ‘Well, how can we get these public lands to provide these ecological benefits?’”

“The state forests and the national forests are really the only places where timber management can be done on our public lands [because timber cannot be harvested from state or national parks, nature preserves, and other protected areas], so it becomes a priority to keep those lands available for timber harvesting so that you can manage for a declining forest community like our oak-hickory forest, or manage for young forests by creating openings in relation to other more mature forests,” Shaver adds.

Not everyone agrees. Indiana Forest Alliance Executive Director Jeffrey Stant believes this stance—coupled with the present state administration’s agenda—is putting Indiana’s forests at greater risk.

(Continued on page 104)



The white plumage of a lone whooping crane stands in stark contrast to the grayish-brown of sandhill cranes at Ewing Bottoms outside Brownstown.





(above, l-r) Sycamore Land Trust Communications Director Abby Henkel and Executive Director Christian Freitag at the desk where Lynton Keith Caldwell drafted much of the language used in the National Environmental Policy Act.

“We’ve found it increasingly difficult to protect wild nature on the state’s public lands,” he says. “The Republican leadership of the state has been decidedly more commodity-oriented when it comes to state forests. They view them much more as timber supplies.

“All we’re trying to do is to make sure that they allow some of the state forest to live out its natural lifespan,” he says. “They’re cutting these trees in 97 percent of the forest when they’re at one-third to one-half their natural lifespans and not allowing the forest to grow any further. The forest ecosystem cannot survive in a healthy way when you don’t allow trees to grow out to their full, natural lifespans.”

Proponents of timber harvesting sometimes point to increased wildlife habitat as a potential benefit of early succession forests, Stant says. “[They comment on] everything from cottontail rabbits to quail, grouse, and pheasants,” he says. “They find more of those animals out there, and they say, ‘See? This is good for wildlife!’”

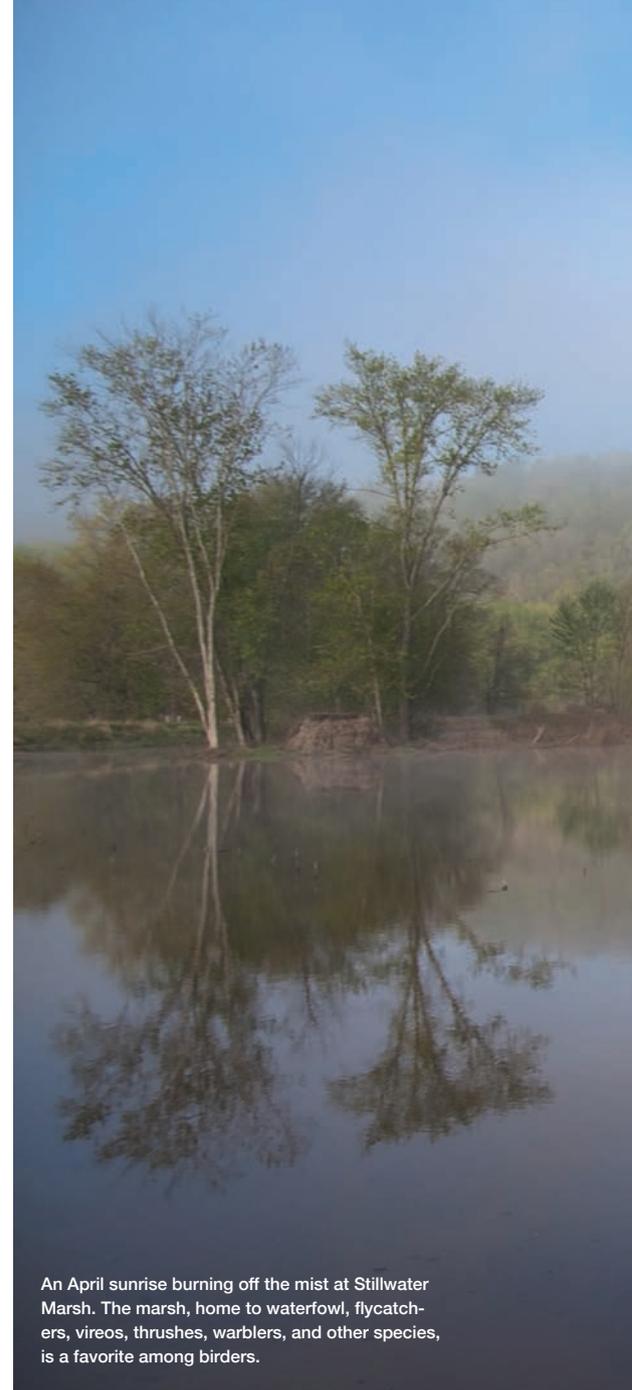
But forest gaps—especially those occurring along forest edges—can expose the forest to foraging deer and invasive plant and animal species, which crowd out natives. And there is no need to create early succession areas with management, Stant says. “There’s already more of that early succession habitat in an old forest than in a managed forest, because there are so many



Pete Banta of Hoosier Hikers Council.

gaps from when the big trees fall as they grow old and die, die from disease, or are wind-thrown,” he points out.

Finally, keeping forested areas within the Lake Monroe watershed relatively pristine influences the health and quality of Bloomington’s water supply, so there is growing concern about the effect of the new I-69 extension into the area. “The potential environmental impacts from that highway on southwest Indiana are limitless,” notes Steven Higgs, environmental author and IU professor. “It can be a corridor for any kind of exploitation they want to do with the land. Lake Monroe and the areas around here are among the most vulnerable.”



An April sunrise burning off the mist at Stillwater Marsh. The marsh, home to waterfowl, flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, warblers, and other species, is a favorite among birders.

Sycamore Land Trust

While some conservation advocates are hard at work in courtrooms and at the statehouse, Sycamore Land Trust is busy acquiring as much land as it can. Since its 1990 founding, Sycamore Land Trust has protected 9,320 acres of land by purchasing property and establishing nature preserves or setting up permanent conservation easements on privately owned lands. It has protected another 10,100 acres through partnerships with The Nature Conservancy and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Not only is the nonprofit organization housed in Lynton Keith Caldwell’s former residence, Cedar Crest, but Executive Direc-



tor Christian Freitag sits at the desk where Caldwell drafted his famous environmental impact statement. “It’s pretty neat to be able to sit at that desk, but, more importantly, Sycamore as an organization has been part of Keith’s visionary thinking that tomorrow can be better than today,” Freitag says.

By leading nature hikes and specialty programs, Sycamore Land Trust also reaches out to schools, community groups, and retirement homes. Last year it worked with more than 5,000 people via educational programs. “Connecting people to nature is really important,” says Communications Director Abby Henkel. “The more you get in touch with it, the more you want to protect it.”

Beanblossom Bottoms is one of Sycamore Land Trust’s crown jewels. Thousands of people visit the nature preserve each year. What started with 40 acres 20 years ago now encompasses 600 acres—with an additional 600 acres nearby. The forest-and-wetlands destination features nesting bald eagles, a plethora of migratory birds—even bobcats. “We have 20 threatened and endangered species at that property alone,” Freitag says. “It has felt a bit like, ‘If you build it, they will come.’”

Hoosier Hikers Council

Pete Banta has seen the “if you build it, they will come” philosophy played out first-

hand—with people—over his many years as a board member and volunteer with the Hoosier Hikers Council. The all-volunteer group builds, maintains, and promotes sustainable, natural-surface hiking trails, mostly in south-central Indiana. That can mean assisting with trail planning—including taking soil erosion into account—or actually hand-digging and hand-building the trails themselves. “By building a trail, we can give people a way to discover these natural areas and the features that make them special,” Banta says. “It gives people a reason to go out and hike.”

Over the group’s 22-year history, Hoosier Hikers Council volunteers have built “over 60 miles and probably closer to 100

A mother bald eagle leaves her nest after bringing a large fish to her offspring. This is from a series of photographs taken by Jeff Danielson in 2017 that documented one nest at Lake Monroe from egg laying to first flight.





(top) A barred owl along McGowan Road.

(middle) A red-headed woodpecker in western Monroe County. *Photo by Jaime Sweany*

(bottom) A fritillary butterfly on milk thistle at Cedar Crest, east of Bloomington. *Photo by Jaime Sweany*

miles” of trails by hand, according to Banta. On average, the group creates about three miles of primitive, back-country foot trails annually. Their handiwork appears on many Sycamore Land Trust properties, as well as within city and state parks.

“Some of the land managers have become familiar with our work, and they’ll have a property that they want to put a trail on,” Banta says. “They’ll ask us to help them lay it out so they can build it, or make it a project for us to do.

“When you get done and look back at the trail that we’ve built, there’s a satisfying feeling,” he adds. “You have a landscape where there was nothing, and, at the end of the day, you’re walking back on a nice trail.”

Those trails make it possible for the public to connect with nature. “If people actually have positive experiences in nature, that’s really valuable to the future of conservation land preservation,” Sycamore Land Trust’s Henkel says.

Sassafras Audubon Society

That’s why getting kids excited about being outside—and about birds—is a major emphasis of the Sassafras Audubon Society, which has been bringing nature to the public since 1970. Serving Monroe and seven other counties, the local chapter of the National Audubon Society actively works to develop a culture of conservation. “The most important work we’re doing is with schoolkids,” says Geoff Conrad, vice-presi-

dent of Sassafras Audubon Society. “That’s the future.”

Several years ago, the group introduced the Great Backyard Bird Count, a citizen science project originating with the National Audubon Society. “We started with just a couple of schools in Monroe County, and now it’s like eight or nine schools in three counties,” Conrad says. Students are encouraged to make bird species lists and count the maximum number of species they see at a time.

The group also plans to implement “Flying WILD,” another National Audubon Society program, in some area schools this year. “It’s a broad environmental education program focusing on birds, bird behavior, and bird ecology,” Conrad says.

Reintroducing bald eagles

Locally, birds have gotten a leg up in some other big ways. For instance, bald eagles had vanished from the state—and their numbers had also plummeted nationwide—due to widespread loss of habitat and the post-1940s popularization of the pesticide DDT. But restrictions on DDT use, the implementation of national species protection laws, and the creation of new lakes and reservoirs throughout Indiana set the stage for the species’ local reintroduction.

“We started in 1985 with three young birds from Wisconsin,” says Rex Watters, a wildlife biologist with the Department of Natural Resources/State Parks and Reservoirs Monroe Lake division. During the next four years, additional sets of eagles from Wisconsin and Alaska were introduced at Lake Monroe. “We’d raise the Wisconsin birds and then, when they were released, we’d bring in birds from Alaska which nested later, so they could also be released in the same timeframe,” he explains.

In all, 73 eagles were released at Lake Monroe during the five-year-long program. By 1991, bald eagles were again successfully nesting there. Now, Lake Monroe supports between 15 and 17 eagle nests annually, and there are more than 200 bald eagle nest sites throughout Indiana. Watters and other wildlife biologists are also working to reintroduce or bolster populations of both locally extinct and threatened, non-game species such as the 13-lined ground squirrel and the Indiana bat.

Tomes, Trips, and Tips

Whether you want to get back—or give back—to nature, here's how.

TOMES

- *A Guide to Natural Areas of Southern Indiana: 119 Unique Places to Explore* by Steven Higgs, Indiana University Press (April 20, 2016)
- *Butterflies of Indiana: A Field Guide* by Jeffrey E. Belth, Indiana University Press (December 19, 2012)

TRIPS

- IndiGo Birding Nature Tours
indigobirding.com
- Sycamore Land Trust
sycamorelandtrust.org/events
- Sassafras Audubon Society
sassafrasaudubon.org/events
- Wild Nature Project
wildnatureproject.com

TIPS

- Got Land? Indiana's Classified Forest and Wildlife
in.gov/dnr/forestry/4801.htm
- Become a Certified Indiana Master Naturalist
in.gov/dnr/parklake/6321.htm

GIVE BACK

Here are just a few conservation-related nonprofits always up for financial donations:

- Conservation Law Center
conservationlawcenter.org
- Hoosier Environmental Council
www.hecweb.org
- Hoosier Hikers Council
www.hoosierhikerscouncil.org
- Indiana Forest Alliance
indianaforestalliance.org
- Sassafras Audubon Society
sassafrasaudubon.org
- Sycamore Land Trust
sycamorelandtrust.org

Positive economic impact

One may not be able to put an economic value on a single, endangered cerulean warbler, but, taken together, south-central Indiana's natural resources do have a positive economic impact—even if that impact is somewhat difficult to quantify. As Visit Bloomington Executive Director Mike McAfee suggests, economic and



environmental sustainability need not be mutually exclusive.

"We know what makes us special and how lucky we are to have these resources," McAfee says. "We've always been very much about preservation. I'm coming at it from being the best outdoor recreation or outdoor adventure destination in Indiana and arguably in the Midwest. Bloomington is built right in the middle of a national forest."

Of the \$360 million spent here each year by visitors, about \$20 million is spent on recreation. A Visit Bloomington study revealed 22 percent of visitors came to the area specifically for outdoor adventure.

What's more, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources estimates Lake Monroe hosted nearly 1 million visitors between 2015 and 2016 alone.

"We know that the more we keep our forests pristine and wild, the more attractive they are," McAfee says. "That's our philosophy on it."

Visitors aside, Bloomington's also gaining about 1,000 new residents annually. "As the interstate is completed, and we continue to deal with growing pains throughout the community, it's really about what works best for citizens and what protects our reputation and all those resources that makes this a place everybody loves so much," McAfee adds. "It's just a delicate balance."



(top) Black-eyed Susans and thistle on a misty July 2017 morning at Stillwater Marsh.

(above) Mike McAfee, executive director of Visit Bloomington.

But conserving our wild lands also advances quality of life. As Christian Freitag says, "The good jobs go where the people want to live. People want to live in places where their kids can have good outdoor experiences. Where they have state forests. Where they have city parks. The environment is wrapped up into our quality of place, and that affects our quality of life. That's our sweet spot." ✧

Champions of Nature

Myriam Wood

In 2007, Myriam Wood and her husband, Jim, a former Indiana University sociology professor now deceased, donated 152 acres in Owen County to Sycamore Land Trust. Known as Fish Creek Preserve, it features a rich forest floor popping with native wildflowers and ferns, attractive geologic features, diverse bird species, and myriad insect pollinators.

“Jim very much wanted to leave a lasting legacy of this beautiful place, which so many had started calling a paradise,” Wood, a retired schoolteacher, says.

Fish Creek Preserve is now protected in perpetuity—with maintenance ongoing. Wood credits Spencer Goehl, executive director at Eco Logic, as “number one in our early attempts to introduce more diverse native plantings.” Eco Logic, an ecological restoration consultancy and native plant nursery, was integral in assessing the property’s meadowlands and obtaining appropriate plant species. Wood notes, “It really does take a village!”



Jim and Susan Hengeveld

“We’ve put a lot of miles on our car to see rare birds,” Susan Hengeveld says. She and her husband, Jim, are both avid birders and senior lecturers in IU’s Department of Biology. The pair also presently oversee the saw-whet owl-banding program at Yellowwood State Forest, and run the Lake Monroe Christmas Bird Count, both sponsored by the Sassafras Audubon Society.

“We love to teach and we just try

to get people as educated as possible about birds,” she says. “There’s nothing more exciting than getting someone on a bald eagle or a songbird for the first time.”

Cathy Meyer

“Nature is my sanctuary and inspiration,” says Cathy Meyer, who has been a naturalist with the Monroe County Department of Parks and Recreation for 27 years. She has a hand in countless trips and programs, from Bug Fest and Birdathon to FrogWatch and the Wildflower Foray. She is involved with the Indiana Master Naturalist courses, trail planning sessions, invasive plant remediation, and much more. The common denominator? “I raise awareness of natural resources and interconnections,” Meyer explains. “I encourage people to learn more and then use what they learn to live more lightly on the earth.”

Meyer says she’s noticed decreased connectedness to nature in today’s children. “Kids don’t know how to play outside or know anything about what is out there. I worry they will not care about an environment they don’t know.”



Vicky Meretsky

An award-winning professor at the IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs since 1997, Vicky Meretsky’s areas of focus include conservation biology and climate change impacts on natural resources. She has researched species such as the Indiana bat, California condor, humpback chub, Kanab ambersnail, and the northern spotted owl. “I’ve been doing this work since I was 5,” Meretsky says. “I feel passionately that the

next generation should have as much to enjoy in the world as I had to enjoy—and part of that is conserving nature and things natural.”

Jess Gwinn

A professional land surveyor and self-described “casual birder,” Jess Gwinn has tracked saw-whet owl populations in his Greene County backyard since 2003. It started after he and a friend traveled to Pennsylvania’s Hawk Mountain Sanctuary to see migrating hawks. “While we were there, we saw a saw-whet owl-banding operation,” Gwinn recalls. “There weren’t any banding stations at the time in Indiana, so we decided to start one.” They opened their banding station at Yellowwood State Forest in 2002, but, he admits, “That was kind of a drive for me.”

In 2003, Gwinn set up a new station on his 65-acre property. He heads out at dusk to catch, band, measure, and release the very small—and secretive—migratory owls during their temporary winter stays. And in summer? Gwinn bands songbirds. All the data goes to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Lucille Bertuccio

Although Lucille Bertuccio died in 2016, her conservation-oriented legacy survives. Eighty when she passed away, Bertuccio was an educator and activist spreading the sustainability concept long before it became a buzzword. Offering classes on wild edibles, composting with worms, the value of native plants, and similar topics, Bertuccio taught at Indiana University, Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, through the Monroe County Master Gardener program, and elsewhere. She also co-founded the Center for Sustainable Living, frequently participated in protests, and even ran for political office.

A memorial episode of WFHB’s *EcoReport*—itself founded by Bertuccio—featured interviews with Bertuccio’s friends, including former IU Biology professor Marti Crouch, who recalled, “She taught me the value of showing up. . . . She was at the City Council meetings. She was always wearing something bright—some T-shirt with a message on it—and sitting in the front row, engaged. . . . You don’t always win your point, but you’re there to be a witness to what’s going on.”

That episode also included a sound bite from Bertuccio herself: “Whether you believe that God created the world or whether you believe it was the unconscious act of a blind watchmaker, this is the only planet that we know of in the universe that has such diverse and beautiful life. Right now, we’re in the Anthropocene, which means that human activity is impacting all of the creatures.”