



# Rattlesnake Creek Forest Legacy Tract, Indiana

December 2002

A conservation easement on the 158-acre Rattlesnake Creek property was acquired on December 30, 2002. This marked the first project closure in Indiana's Northwest Moraine Forest Legacy Area. The conservation easement, valued at \$145,000, was acquired through a bargain sale for \$122,500 using funds from the USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program. The conservation easement, acquired from landowners Nicholas Timm and Deborah Longworth, is held by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

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Dan Ernst, Assistant State Forester

The Rattlesnake Creek parcel is located in the headwaters of Lake Michigan, an important regional drinking water supply. With the protection of the forested tract, the water flowing from the property will continue to be from a natural filter.



Unique habitats, forest resources, and natural water resources are all protected thanks to the Rattlesnake Creek Forest Legacy Project.

Photo by Dan Ernst

The property's diversity of habitat types, including uncommon fens, has a high potential to support endangered species. The property expands earlier conservation efforts by the landowners, who helped establish an adjacent nature preserve now owned by The Nature Conservancy. A second State Nature Preserve, containing outstanding wetlands, was dedicated in 2003 by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources 1 mile to the west of the Rattlesnake Creek project.

"Northwest Indiana contains some of Indiana's most precious and diverse ecosystems. This acquisition protects natural wetlands, mature hardwood forests, and cultural features you don't mind getting your boots wet to see," said Dan Ernst, Assistant State Forester and Indiana Forest Legacy Program Coordinator.

The Rattlesnake Creek parcel contains beautiful large diameter northern hardwood forests dominated by red oaks, tulip poplar, and sugar maple. A small stream that flows through the property feeds natural wetlands unique to this region of Indiana. Once the site of a Boy Scout camp, the property still contains a few small shelters built for camp use. These shelters now serve as stopping points for woodland walks and storage for property management materials.

This parcel is also enrolled in the Indiana Classified Forest and Classified Wildlife Habitat Programs, which help conserve natural areas through reduced land assessments and technical assistance.

The Indiana Forest Legacy Program protects important forests from conversion to nonforest uses. These forests provide valuable forest products and essential wildlife habitat, protect water quality and karst resources, offer outstanding recreation opportunities, and provide the opportunity to continue traditional forest uses. A Federal-State partnership allows landowners to keep their land private while ensuring it remains forest forever through the use of conservation easements.