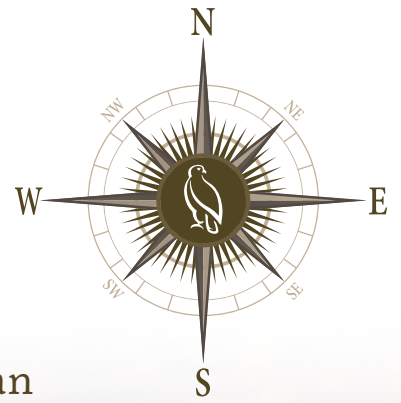


CHARTING A COURSE FOR CONSERVATION

Red-tail Land Conservancy's Strategic Conservation Plan



Red-tail Nature Preserve
Selma, Indiana



RED-TAIL
Land Conservancy

*The rivers, woods, wetlands, and wildlife
that make up east central Indiana are
precious and irreplaceable.*

We have a plan to protect them.



Building on two decades of experience, this plan will guide our work for the next 10-15 years.

What success will look like:

- Well-functioning, healthy, and **biodiverse** landscapes
- **Connectivity** for wildlife to move between important natural areas
- Improved **water quality** and aquatic habitats
- Natural landscape stability and **resilience** to mitigate the effects of a changing climate
- **Access for all** of our constituents to nearby natural areas where future generations may find wonder and restoration



McVey Memorial Forest
Farmland, Indiana

“

Consider this stark reality—there is not unlimited money or time to protect the most vulnerable and critical lands. Increasing urban development, conversion of wildlife habitat to working lands, and a changing climate creates pressure to act swiftly and judiciously.

That rapid pace of change is a call to action. How can we ensure the greatest impact with the resources at hand? By creating a **strategic conservation plan**. It has taken hundreds of hours of staff and board members’ time researching, planning, and analyzing to develop our goals. We’ve spoken with landowners, scientists, volunteers, and citizens to unravel unique perspectives.

Using science-based land protection priorities to guide our decisions and advanced mapping technology, we have identified core conservation regions. Keeping land natural in these regions will do the most to protect habitats that support threatened species, improve watersheds, add connectivity for migrating wildlife, and ensure future generations have places to explore nature.

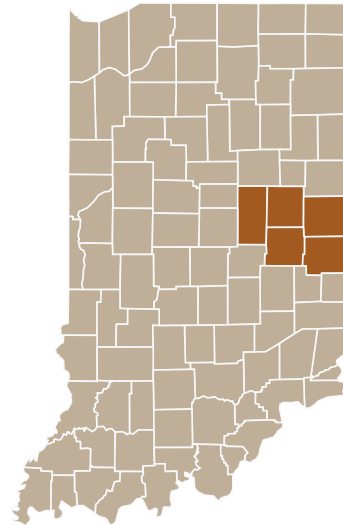
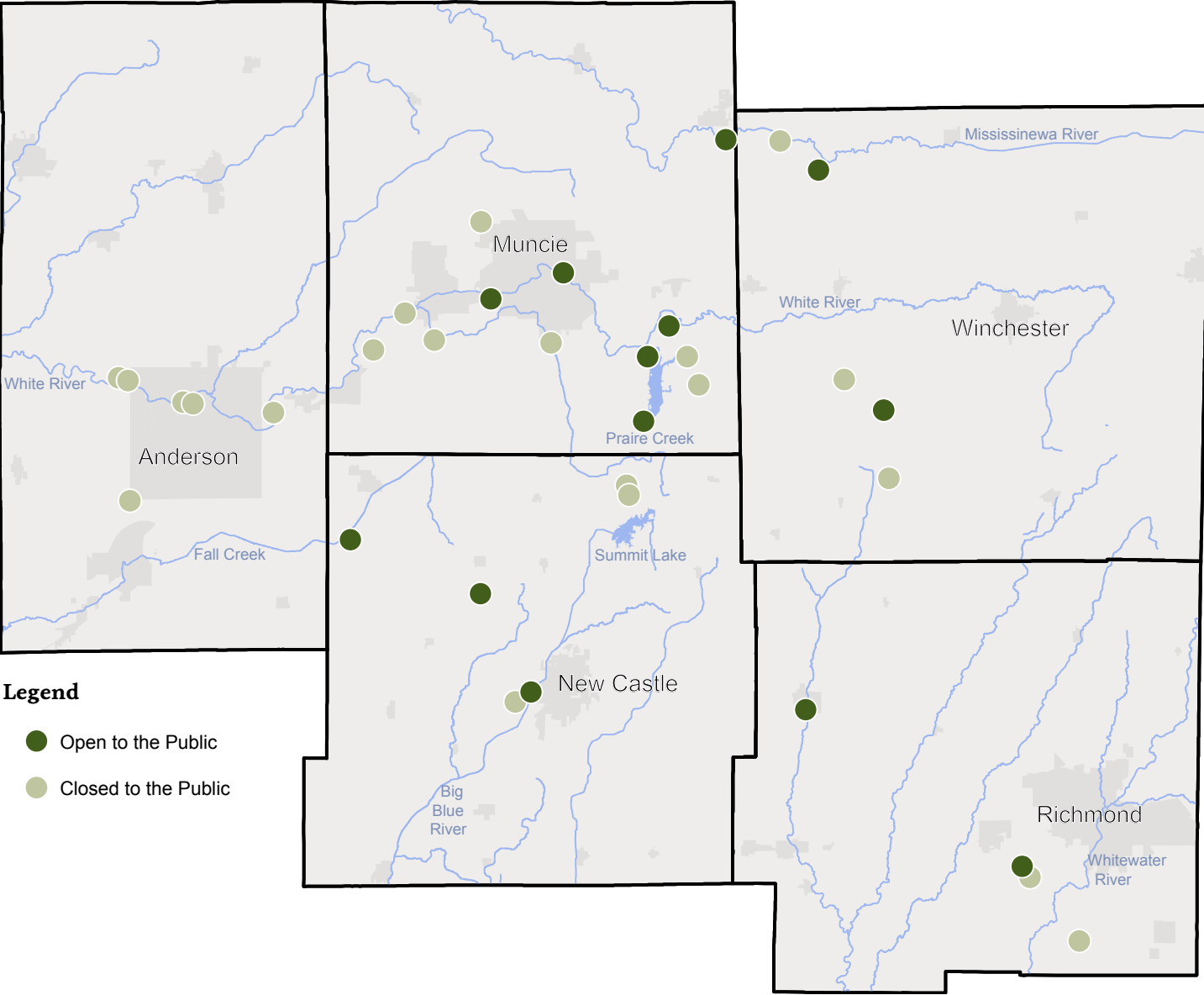
A proven method, land trusts with strategic conservation plans protect more than twice the land of those without. Our plan will not only accomplish that goal, but also help us create a stronger network of resilient protected lands.

We hope you will get involved and support this work. I look forward to celebrating our progress and conservation “wins” together. Nature can continue to be nearby and thriving in east central Indiana for many generations to come. With you, our partners, and conservation-minded landowners, we can achieve this vision.



~ **Julie Borgmann**
Executive Director

Where we work



Who we are

Red-tail Land Conservancy was founded in 1999 by citizens of east central Indiana who were concerned by the loss of woods and wetlands in their communities and determined to take action.

Our mission is to preserve, protect and restore natural areas and farm land in east central Indiana while increasing awareness of our natural heritage.

How we work

Conservation Easements

We help private landowners protect their land forever with voluntary, legally binding agreements. The land remains in private ownership, but future development is limited to preserve the land’s natural characteristics. We conduct annual visits to ensure the conservation value is protected by current and future owners.



Land Acquisition

We acquire land, either through donation or purchase, and manage it as nature preserves. When feasible, these preserves are open to the public for hiking and nature enjoyment. As of January 2021, we own and manage 16 nature preserves. Ten are open to the public.

Stewardship and Restoration

We provide sustained attention to protected land from threats that endanger it, a responsibility called “stewardship.” We work with landowners, volunteers, and organizations to design and implement management plans that maintain and restore health to the land.



Partnerships and Collaborations

We partner with local organizations to educate landowners about conservation options, land management practices, invasive plant removal, native plants, and other conservation practices.

Connecting People to Nature

We provide places for people in our communities to explore with trails and wildlife observation areas. Through volunteer events, guided hikes, and educational programs for youth and adults, we create spaces for people to develop deep connections with their surroundings.

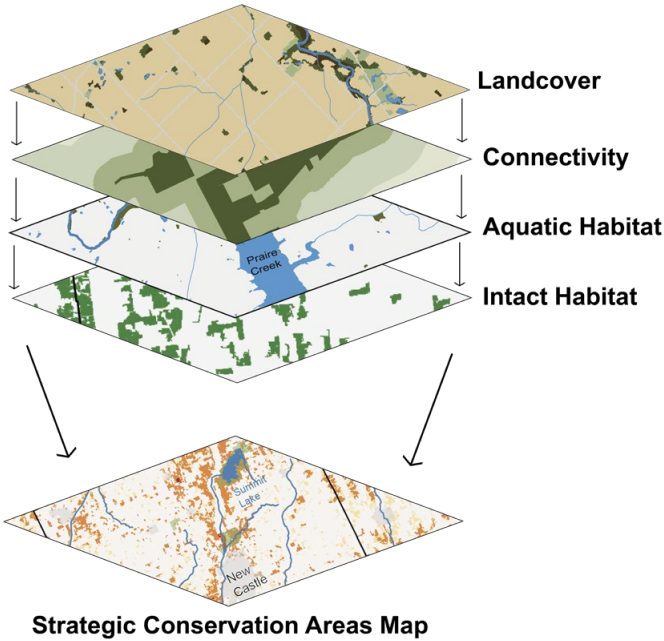


How We Built the Plan

Making the greatest impact with available resources means prioritizing land protection projects. Priority is given to the regions that meet our conservation goals. Identifying those priority regions requires a systematic approach of mapping.

To create the maps, we used a computer program known as Geographic Information Systems or GIS. Our conservation goals that include supporting biodiversity, adding connectivity, and protecting aquatic ecosystems were each mapped separately.

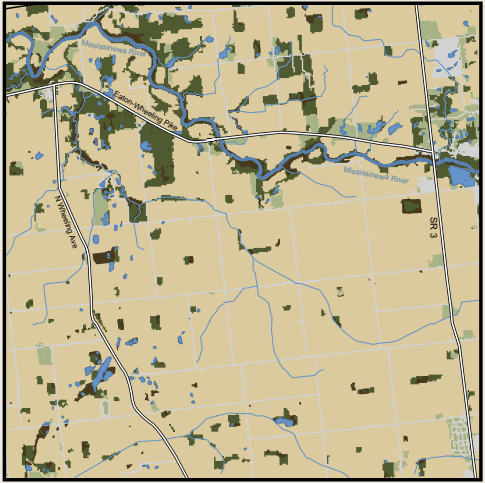
When the separate maps, or layers, were placed together, there were some areas where the layers overlapped. The overlapped areas showed the land which met multiple conservation goals. Places which met multiple goals were highlighted as priority conservation regions.



Strategic Conservation Goals

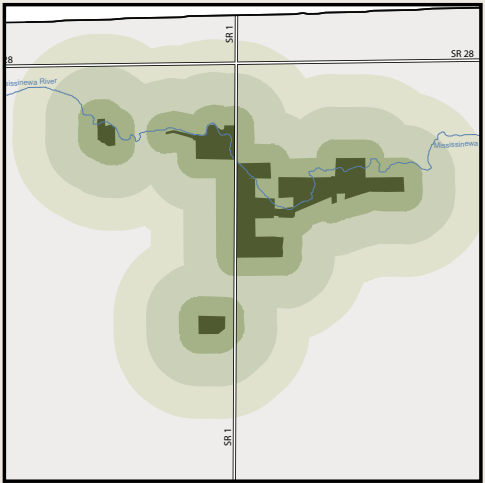
	Protect rare habitats that sustain biodiversity and support imperiled species
	Connect habitat blocks to create and expand corridors for ecological connectivity
	Protect aquatic habitats within critical watersheds and rivers to improve water quality and connect disjointed natural areas
	Apply and support land management strategies to restore ecological health and mitigate climate change
	Create inclusive public access for the enjoyment and exploration of nature.

Mapping Conservation Potential



Habitats that Support Biodiversity

Protecting high-quality natural habitats and the plants and wildlife they support is a core tenet of our mission. The data in this GIS layer identifies upland forests, large tracts of woodlands, prairie remnants, and rare wetland types. These lands support imperiled species, host high-quality examples of east central Indiana ecosystems, and represent large blocks of natural habitat where rare and sensitive species are most likely to occur.



Buffering and Adding Connectivity

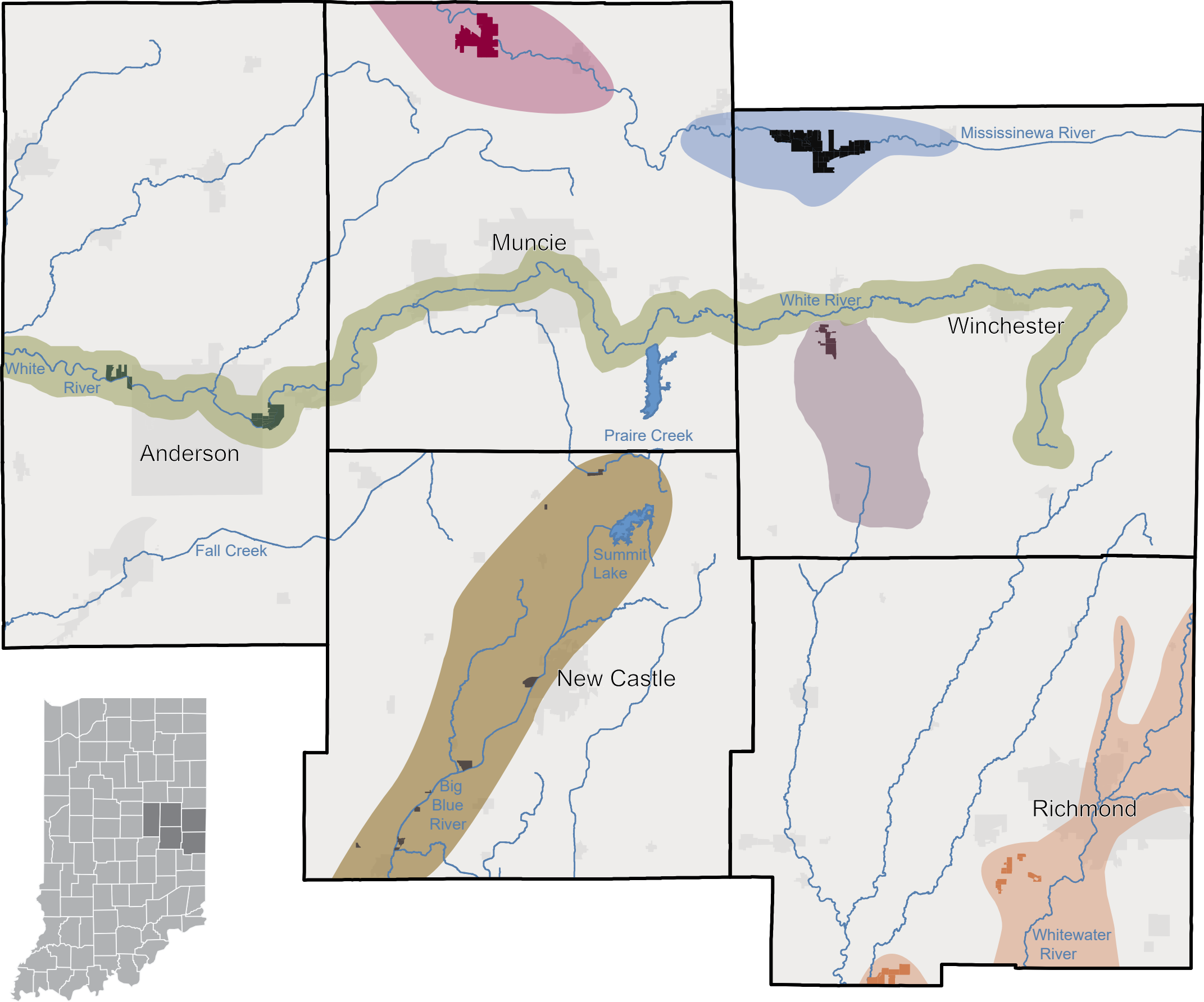
Preserving areas close to and between existing protected lands creates corridors of connected habitats—like green highways connecting isolated towns. This will help plants and wildlife adapt and find suitable places to live in the face of landscape and climate changes. The data in this GIS layer highlights land adjacent to existing protected lands. This allows us to identify and focus on opportunities to expand already protected areas, as well as protecting the connections between them.



Rivers, Streams, Wetlands, and Watersheds

Rivers, streams, and wetlands are magnets for biodiversity. However, they are vulnerable to pollution, erosion, and other landscape changes. The data in this GIS layer identifies key natural areas adjacent to wetlands and water features. This ensures these sensitive areas can continue to thrive, preserving valuable habitat for plants, reptiles, amphibians and waterfowl. Protecting these valuable resources will also improve our water quality and recharge our groundwater aquifers.

Conservation Priority Regions



Big Blue River Bottomlands - The Big Blue River Valley of Henry County is a historically large natural wetland complex. Our focus in the area is to restore former wetlands, protect rare wetland fens, preserve upland habitats, and add connectivity that supports threatened wildlife and plants.

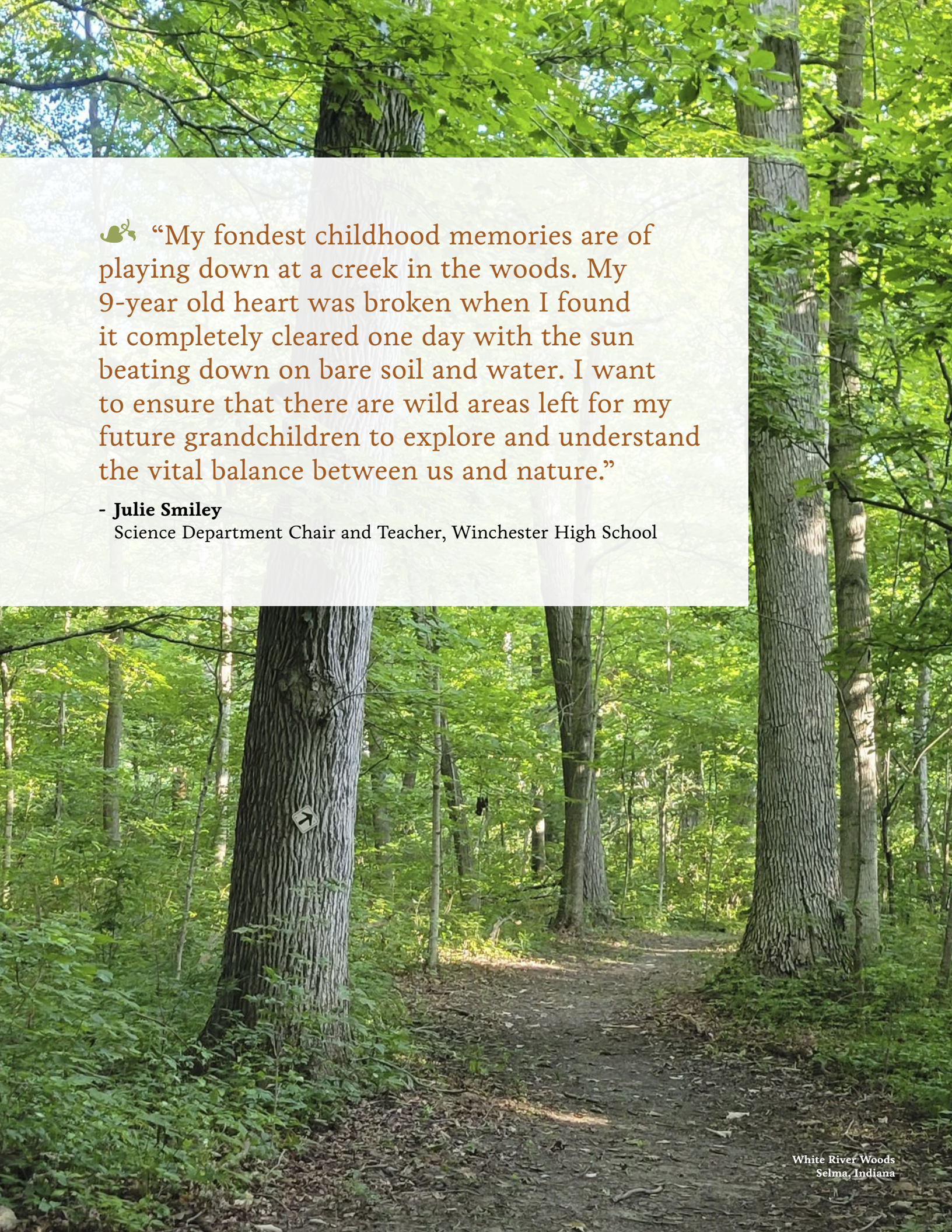
Cabin Creek Watershed - This is one of the largest and most biologically diverse wetland complexes in the region. Located in rural southeastern Randolph County, these wetlands improve water quality, provide critical amphibian habitats, and connectivity for wildlife to the White River.

Ginn Woods Complex - Located in northeast Delaware County, this complex buffers and adds connectivity to Ginn Woods, a 161-acre dedicated state nature preserve owned and managed by Ball State University. Ginn Woods is the second largest old growth forest remaining in Indiana. Protecting land in this area will connect additional wetlands to Ginn Woods and provide a corridor to the Mississinewa River.

McVey Expansion and Connectivity Area Preserving land in this northeastern region of Randolph County connects several protected habitat blocks. Creating large tracts of woodland conservation lands is critical to support imperiled species like the Cerulean Warbler and Indiana Bat.

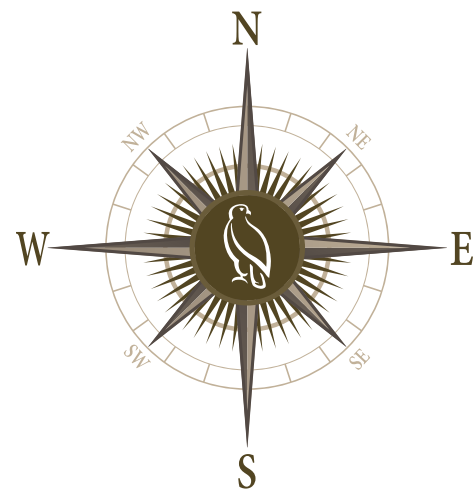
White River Corridor - This riparian corridor adds an east-west wildlife passageway through the region. Preserving land in these areas improves water quality for the entire state, creates recreational opportunities, and protects the rare habitats contained within Mounds State Park.

Whitewater Valley - One of the most unique areas in east central Indiana, this region in Wayne County is at the edge of the last glacial retreat. Composed of upland forests and carved valleys, the geographical varying grades provide climate resilient habitats for the future.



🌿 “My fondest childhood memories are of playing down at a creek in the woods. My 9-year old heart was broken when I found it completely cleared one day with the sun beating down on bare soil and water. I want to ensure that there are wild areas left for my future grandchildren to explore and understand the vital balance between us and nature.”

- **Julie Smiley**
Science Department Chair and Teacher, Winchester High School



*Together, we will
chart a course for conservation.*

- ☐ Donate to support land preservation
- ☐ Conserve your land with us
- ☐ Volunteer your time
- ☐ Plan a legacy gift

Call: 765-288-2587 Email: info@ForTheLand.org Online: www.ForTheLand.org



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