



Newsletter

Volume 18
Spring 2009

Protecting Land For Future Generations

Land Donated for Open Space

Thomas Hobson of Belleville recently donated 1.5 acres of wooded wildlife habitat in a subdivision in Collinsville, Illinois to The Land Conservancy to preserve as wildlife habitat and/or open space within the developed area.

The property was originally a farm owned by Edmund and Pearl Mrovka until they passed away in 1969 and 1971. It was inherited by their daughter Joan Hobson and she left it to Thomas Hobson when she passed away in 2004. "Mom wanted to preserve the land in its natural state," said Tom. "Thank you for helping us to fulfill Mom's wishes for preserving that land."



The property will be managed for wildlife habitat and to provide a secluded wooded area in an otherwise urban development. The long term plan for the site is to potentially turn it into a community park or wildlife area.

Thanks to TLC Members/Contributors

A special thanks to our Members/Contributors: Joseph and Kay Courtney, Robert and Katie Nelson, M. Cody and Christine Favilla, Miriam Huelsmann, George Obernagel, Thomas and Catherine Hobson, David Warner, St. Clair County Property and Recreation Committee, Abigail Lambert, Susan Hezel, and Cahokia Mounds Museum Society.

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*There is
nothing so
sanative, so
poetic as a
walk in the
woods...
Nothing so
inspires me
and excites
serene and
profitable
thought.*

Thoreau

Festival of the Bluffs - May 16, 2009

Celebrate Illinois' stretch of the Ozarks at the Festival of the Bluffs, a nature festival, hosted by IDNR and CLIFFTOP Alliance. The event will be held from 9 am to 4 pm, Saturday, May 16, 2009 at Cedar Bluff Park, Village of Fults, Monroe County, Illinois. The activities will include:

- ☞ Interpretive hikes at Fults Hill Prairie National Natural Landmark and Kidd Lake State Natural Area
- ☞ Natural History Demonstrations and Displays
- ☞ Presentations on Conservation and Land Stewardship

There will also be native plant sales by Missouri Wildflowers Nursery and arts, crafts, and book sales. Food, music, and entertainment will also be a part of the day. There will be a \$2 parking donation requested. Contact CLIFFTOP at www.clifftopalliance.org for further details.

Mari Castello Joins the Organization

Mari Castello, a recent graduate of the University of Montana, College of Forestry and Conservation, with a B.S. in Natural Resource Conservation, has recently joined the organization. Mari will be assisting The Land Conservancy in working to conserve open space within the region on a part time basis. The balance of her time will be devoted to serving as a Forest Health Technician covering the lower 1/3 of the counties in Illinois. Work on this effort is a joint venture between Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the USDA Forest Service.

Mari is especially excited about her assistance with The Land Conservancy as she wishes to expand her background in conservation policy and administration. She also enjoys a passion for overseas travel, having undertaken two study abroad opportunities, one in Chile and one in New Zealand. She has also recently returned from Argentina.

Monsanto Fund Provides Grant for Open Space

The Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development recently received a \$25,000 award from the Monsanto Fund to support the conservation of open space in the region. The funding will be used to help support activities undertaken by The Land Conservancy. "We really appreciate the Monsanto Fund support for our conservation programs," said Jonathan McLean, Chairman of the RC&D Council. "With the rapid pace of urban development in this region we need to have programs that will help landowners to protect their farms, forests, and other natural areas."

The Monsanto Fund is the philanthropic arm of the Monsanto Company. Incorporated in 1964, the Fund's primary objective is to improve the lives of people by bridging the gap between their needs and their resources. The Monsanto Fund is focused on grant-making in four main areas: nutritional improvement through agriculture; science education, primarily on professional development for teachers; healthy environment, which includes conservation, protection of biodiversity, clean water and restoration of wildlife habitat; and improving the quality of life in communities where Monsanto employees live and work. Visit the Monsanto Fund at <http://www.monsantofund.org/asp/welcome.asp>.

Easement Incentive Boosts Conservation

In 2006 Congress enhanced the tax incentive for the donation of conservation easements by allowing landowners to deduct a larger share of their income over a longer period of time. America's land trusts protected 2,027,553 acres with conservation easements in the first two years with the enhanced tax incentive, 535,000 more acres than were protected in the previous two years. The number of conservation easements also increased in this same time period by 2000. Land trusts in the Midwest conserved nearly 3 times as many acres as they did in the previous two year period.



The Land Conservancy had added 6 conservation easements in this region since 2006 covering about 200 acres. There are four additional landowners who are working to complete easements in 2009 on an additional 308 acres

Currently, the easement incentive is set to expire at the end of 2009 unless Congress acts to extend it or make the enhanced deduction permanent.

Join The Land Conservancy!

Join us in protecting land for future generations. Your membership dues will help us reach more people in the community about the tax advantages of conservation easements, preserve more land through donations, and provide a voice to policy makers about the importance of land conservation.

As a TLC member, you will receive a quarterly newsletter, invitations to exclusive outings to some of the most beautiful private land in this area, and numerous social opportunities.

Yes! I want to become a friend of The Land Conservancy.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Friend of Open Spaces | \$ 40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prairie Guardian | \$ 75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Wildlife Patron | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Forest Benefactor | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Land Steward | \$1,000+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | \$ _____ |

To pay by credit card, call TLC with your credit card number or fill in the information below:

Mastercard Visa Discover American Express

Card # _____ Expiration Date _____

Card verification # (on back of your card, last 3 or 4 digit #) _____

Mail to:

The Land Conservancy
406 East Main Street
Mascoutah, IL 62258

The Land Conservancy, a division of Southwestern Illinois RC&D, is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) land trust organization and all donations are tax deductible.



MISSION OF THE LAND CONSERVANCY

To work regionally to protect agricultural, forest, and other natural lands in order to provide for open space, landscape diversity, sustainable agriculture, wildlife habitat, and conservation benefits for present and future generations.

The Land Conservancy Applies for Accreditation

The Land Conservancy has applied to the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) to gain accreditation. The LTA awards the accreditation seal to land conservation organizations what meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust, and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. The process will begin this fall and we hope to have the accreditation seal by early 2010.



The general public and interested conservation partners will have an opportunity during the process to provide comments in regard to The Land Conservancy's past accomplishments and future efforts. Further information on how you can provide input will be provided in upcoming newsletters.



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*Protecting land and water resources in Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington counties.
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