



# BIG OAKS

Newsletter of Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge & Big Oaks Conservation Society

Fall 2011

## A Word From the President

By Jim Leveille

We've had some great news this summer. BOCS received two grants for projects on the refuge and preservation of Old Timbers Lodge. The first grant for \$2,000 was received from the Wilson Trust to create breeding pond habitat for crawfish frogs. With the funds, refuge maintenance specialist, Kerry Brinson, will install water control structures that will optimize water levels, not only for crawfish frogs, but also for rails, snipes, bitterns, and other amphibians. The devices are being installed as water levels drop in the traditionally dry autumn period. Refuge Manager, Joe Robb, is eagerly anticipating visiting these baby frog nurseries next spring.



Old Timbers Lodge

The other grant received was \$19,100 from the Rising Sun Foundation for renovation of the chimneys at Old Timbers Lodge. Last winter, BOCS volunteer, Bill Hughes, noted serious water infiltration coming through stone chimneys at the Lodge. Further investigation determined the source of those leaks to be failing cement chimney caps and deterioration of mortar. With the BOCS commitment to preservation of the Lodge, the chimneys became an immediate priority. The board of the Rising Sun Foundation agreed, and, along with \$1,000 donated by the Jefferson Proving Ground Heritage Partnership and \$4,000 from BOCS, the restoration work is being completed by Broady-Campbell, Inc, of Indianapolis. Our Lodge "Keepers" had already identified the chimneys as the necessary first step in the eventual re-roofing of the Lodge. The rapidity with which our volunteers and grant writer, Donna Errett, responded to the leaking chimneys has

permitted us to prevent much more serious (and expensive) repairs, as well as to clear the way for the roof replacement project.

We are grateful to the Rising Sun Foundation for their help with the Lodge and to the Wilson Trust for allowing us to pursue our other organization goal, supporting our conservation efforts on the refuge. Much hard work remains to be done. The roof project will be much more expensive but just as important as we strive to save the Lodge for future generations.

With all this talk of work at the Lodge, it is easy to forget that we can also have some fun out there. Don't forget about the annual OTL Christmas party on Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you there!

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# Tribute to Daryl Karns, Friend of Big Oaks NWR

By Ken Knauf

I was sitting next to Daryl at the June BOCs meeting the night before he died. He excitedly told me about his trip to Belize and his experience with actually



Pictures—Daryl Karns

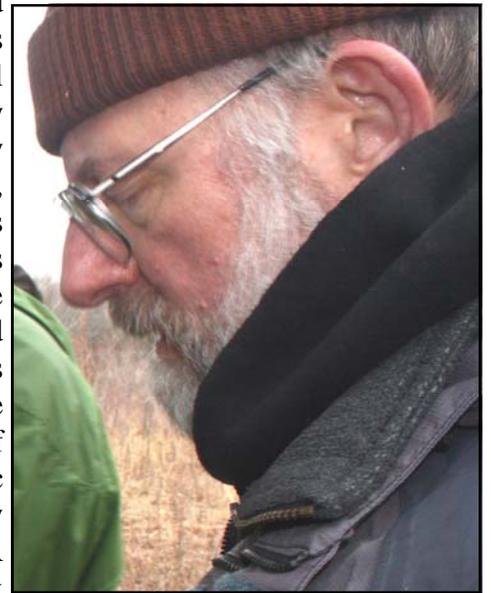
seeing the larvae of a parasite in the mouth of a frog that literally eats the tongue of its host and then functions as the frog's new tongue. Most of you knew Daryl as that amazing biology

professor from Hanover who worked with Joe on the crayfish frog and many other studies. I knew Daryl as a true renaissance man interested in a variety of subjects. Many of you probably don't realize that he was a charter member of the Jefferson County Civil War Round Table. He gave the only non-Civil War presentation that the round table has ever allowed when he talked about letters taken from a Japanese officer killed in the WWII battle for the Aleutian Islands.

His significance to the establishment of Big Oaks NWR revolves around Daryl being the first scientist allowed by the Army to conduct a study of biodiversity on Jefferson Proving Ground. Newly arrived at Hanover in 1995, but sensitive to the military mission of JPG, Daryl asked approval to study the



western wooded parcel south of Woodfill Road near Gate 19. This is the big woods now owned by Jefferson County and at the time served as a buffer area to shield outside residents from the noise and possible hazards from the artillery testing. Our commander at the time was a little leery of biologists coming in because there was concern that an endangered species might be discovered which could affect the mission. But times were changing and installations were being required to have this information so Daryl was approved. After being briefed on the possible hazards, he led his class out into the woods, and within a couple of days had found the beautiful and uncommon Kirtland's Snake. I think two or three rare salamander species were also discovered, and he literally was the proverbial kid in a candy shop. Like any good researcher, one of his conclusions was that more research should be done, and this led to the groundswell of scientific inquiry—both by the Indiana DNR and US Fish & Wildlife Service—especially after JPG was placed on the closure list in 1988. During the 90's and after JPG closed in 1995, Daryl often led his classes up Middlefork Creek looking under stones for crayfish and any other animal species. Occasionally he told me about artillery shells that were in the creek.



Thus I have long credited Professor Daryl Karns with being the “instigator” for the ultimate establishment of Big Oaks. I didn't work with him as closely as I did years ago, but he always popped his head in to say hi. His enthusiasm was contagious and his sense of humor keen, and I, like all of you, miss him.

*Dr. Karns, you will be missed by all the staff at Big Oaks NWR!*

# Refuge Manager's Hot Spots to Hunt

By Joe Robb

This time of year one of the most frequent questions I get is “Where are the best deer hunting areas on the Refuge?” My reply usually implies that all the areas have deer and that the trick is to know the particular area that you are hunting.

Some hunters will probably cringe when they read this because they want their secret spot kept secret. There is nothing worse than sneaking into a dark woods tripping over tangles and trying to avoid old cisterns, only to find someone is already up your favorite tree. For me that tree is usually overlooking a well-used trail in the middle of a thicket. The best hunters know that patience is a key attribute for hunting at Big Oaks NWR, and the other is to find a tree in the middle of a thicket or near a fruiting persimmon tree or oak tree. I don't consider myself an ace deer hunter, but I know several masters who hunt here at Big Oaks. It's a fun time of year for the refuge staff and the friendly group of hunters that we have here at the refuge.

The massive oak tree on the south end of Area 58 was once a state record swamp chestnut oak until another tree uncrowned it a few years ago. It's one of the big oaks of Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge. This massive tree doesn't produce acorns every year, but when it does, it draws deer. This species is also known as a “cow oak” because cows love to eat their tasty sweet acorns. I can affirm that deer especially like this acorn as well. It is a productive spot for an early deer hunt when deer are hitting the acorns hard. Trails that lead to the tree are also good spots to set up, or vantage points that allow views of the area around the tree. Swamp chestnut oaks are common in the Flatwoods on the refuge, and they are always a great spot to set up on when they are producing acorns.



Large Swamp Chestnut Oak located South of Area 58

I saw one of the largest bucks I have ever witnessed on the refuge in Area 33. I was chatting with a hunter the day before my hunt when he confided that he had just hunted the area. He told me he saw a monster on the east side of the area by Little Graham Creek. He was done for the weekend, but he encouraged me to try the spot. The next day, I set up in the area, which was a ridge overlooking the creek. Off to my east was the closed area, and the ridge was lined with big oaks which scattered acorns not only on the ridge but on the bottom by the creek. Before long, several does were foraging in the bottom. After about 20 minutes, I saw a large bodied deer arrive from the south, and as it emerged from the brush, I saw a massive 200 class antlered deer. I took my safety off and started following the deer in my sights for the perfect shot. I wanted to make it right, because the closed area was less than a 100 yards to the east. The buck had its head down and ignored the does near it, then quartered off, scrambled up the ridge to my west and was gone. My beating heart sank. My hunting partner, who was set up to

“All the areas have deer and the trick is to know the particular area that you are hunting.”

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*Continued on pg. 4*

# OUTDOOR WOMEN AT BIG OAKS GOES GREEN!

By Dianna Swinney

OWBO 2011 brought new classes, new ideas, a record number of participants, and an environmentally friendly initiative. The planning committee comprised of BOCS Volunteers and BONWR Staff took deliberate steps to make this year's event as "green" as possible. From reusable shopping bags and individual water bottles for every participant, instructor, and volunteer to brown paper bags for the lunch! We essentially eliminated the plastic bottles of water and used multiple large water jugs as water refill stations.

The planning committee used input from past post event evaluations and their own drive for continual improvement to design the 2011 event. Many new classes were offered and well accepted. The Hyper Tufa



Tammy Davis from Hardy Lake

Trough Making, Firearm Familiarity and Falconry classes earned high remarks. The lunchtime break had a new twist with a raptor presentation by Tammy Davis with Hardy Lake. She gave an interesting talk and had a live bald eagle with her who just loved the cameras!

June 4<sup>th</sup> was a very hot and humid day! Where most people would have preferred to be home in air conditioned comfort, those in our group were troopers and stood the heat as true heroes. The canoes were on the lake and the hikers were in the woods!

As with all prior events, success does not happen by chance. It takes a tremendous amount of work and many months of planning. The BOCS volunteers

just never give up and work tirelessly to make every event better than the last. A special thanks to Jean Herron for her talent in putting the raffle display together. We sold over \$1,500.00 in tickets for the numerous items displayed. Our local merchants and businesses donated generously again this year in support of the event. Without them, we would not have the quality event we have come to be recognized for.

Outdoor Women at Big Oaks can be found on Facebook! We have a page where information can be found and pictures are posted. If you have an account, take time to look us up and "like" our page to make sure you are kept up to date on plans for the 2012 event. Again, my gratitude to all who helped and those who participated in the event. We hope you will join us for the next OWBO event!

## "Hot Spots" Continued from pg. 3

the west, also saw it but did not have a shot, and later expressed "Wow! That was a beauty!" To my knowledge, that deer was never seen again.

Though many of the southern areas of the refuge are popular with hunters because of quick commute times from the office, every year some of the largest deer are taken in the heavy forest of areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Some of our hunters know this and every year they call several days after the call-in dates, knowing that their favorite spot is safe. They laugh at the hunters who try to get the highly sought after Area 75, because they know their spot in Area 4 is safe. They'll confide in me about the deer funnel they have found and every year they tell me about the deer that they have seen or the hunt which resulted in the deer they have brought back to the office. "Don't tell anyone about this area Joe, I like not seeing other hunters!" Well, I didn't say which tree they were in.....

## Ninth Annual Take A Kid Fishing Day

By Jim Leveille

The ninth annual Take A Kid Fishing Day was held Saturday, July 16, at Old Timbers Lake. This year's event boasted the highest turnout yet, with 119 kids under age 15 participating and another 110 adults and volunteers. A warm but overcast day provided excellent fishing conditions with many of the young anglers landing bluegills, largemouth bass and channel catfish. A casting contest was held with winners Karen Denzio, Kyle McCool, Dylan Dirksen and Logan Marksbury taking home new rod and reel combos. An additional 39 raffle prizes of fishing rods and tackle were won by other youth. The prizes and food were provided by event sponsors; RKO Enterprises of Madison, the Madison local Wal-Mart, and DMF Bait Company. It was a fun time for all involved!



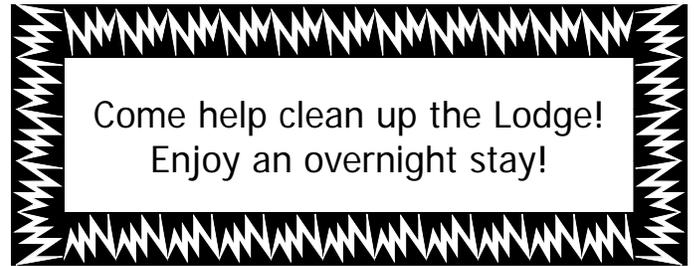
Raffle Prize Winners

## Old Timbers Lodge Clean-up and Overnight Stay

By Jim Leveille

We will be repeating our fall cleaning effort at Old Timbers Lodge (OTL) again this year on Saturday, October 15, and highly encourage all members who are able to attend to do so. We are making enormous strides toward our goals of preserving and maintaining OTL. This is an important and fun activity open to all members.

This year, BOCS members will have the opportunity to spend Friday night before or Saturday af-



ter the cleanup at the Lodge. We will need to know if you are planning on spending either night there. Please sign up no later than October 9 with Carole Poffinbarger (513) 868-7679 or [poffin@fuse.net](mailto:poffin@fuse.net), whether you are spending the night or just coming for the Saturday cleanup. We need to have a good head-count to purchase food. If you are staying overnight, remember that sleeping cots at OTL are limited and that the old Army mattresses are all gone. Think of the Lodge as a very nice tent with limited furniture. We recommend bringing air mattresses or folding cots. Water is also limited & not considered safe to drink. Bring your own water and food for Saturday night/Sunday morning. BOCS will provide donuts and coffee Saturday morning and a pizza lunch. Remember, you must already be a member and have signed up prior to the sleepover - no non-member guests overnight. Those who have not yet watched the refuge safety briefing video and signed for this calendar year will do so at the Lodge.

On Saturday, we will be conducting a deep cleaning, and depending on the weather, a variety of other outside tasks. Gate entry for Saturday morning will be at Gate 6 from 7:15-8:00 AM, which is located at the refuge fence and 900 S/Michigan Rd in Ripley County. The easiest way to get to Gate 6 is to take US 421 until reaching 900 S, turn west for approximately one mile - it ends in the gate. Especially for our newer members who have not yet had a chance to visit and work on the Lodge, this is a great chance to come out, mingle with fellow BOCS members, and to make a real contribution to our Lodge stewardship. **Don't forget to sign up for this event with Carole Poffinbarger.** If you have any general questions about the OTL Cleanup Day, please contact Bill Hughes at (812) 689-5107 or [whughes4@yahoo.com](mailto:whughes4@yahoo.com). Bring work gloves, and, if you have any extra rags, we can always use them. We'll see you there.

## Who's New in the Refuge Office...

### Kerry Brinson - Maintenance

Hi! Please let me introduce myself to those of you that don't already know me. I am Kerry Brinson formerly with the Indiana Air National Guard and I had been assigned at Jef-



Kerry Brinson

erson Range here on the northern portion of Big Oaks. September 1, 2011 I will be completing just shy of 28 years of military service. I began working here at the Jefferson Proving Ground on March 30, 1987, so this will give me a little more than 24 years of time already spent here on the refuge. I am looking forward to this next chapter of my life, as a civilian and the Maintenance Worker here at Big Oaks. My primary area of responsibility will be to maintain the roads and grounds and try to improve on the infrastructure. Most of my time will be spent on the tractor mowing the road sides and on the grader trying to upkeep the roads. My goal is to provide you with a safe and leisurely experience during the time that you spend here at Big Oaks enjoying the wildlife and the remoteness of this great refuge. I am one of the lucky few that get paid to enjoy this vast wonderful place, so if you see me out on the refuge working and need anything please just ask!

### Eric Margenau - Intern

Hello, I'm Eric Margenau. I am an intern here at Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge for the summer. By the time you're reading this I will be completing my final

year of school at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. I will be graduating in the spring with a degree in Wildlife Biology and minoring in GIS. I am originally from Spooner, WI and grew up there my entire life along with an older brother and sister. Past work experiences have been with the Wisconsin DNR, where I did goose banding and spraying invasive species. I had a really great time while I was at Big Oaks. Learning from the staff was a great experience for me and hopefully will lead to other opportunities in the future. I had a great time and want to thank everyone that helped make my experience here AWESOME!

### Stephanie Bishir - Intern

I am Stephanie Bishir and I am an intern at Big Oaks NWR. My internship was made possible by a grant from the Rivers Institute at Hanover College. I began working in early June and will continue through the end of August. During my time on the refuge, I have been working on a project to assess the small mammal biodiversity throughout the refuge in conjunction with creating a mammalian collection for Hanover College. Thus far, I have found only a few species of mice but hope to capture different species of shrews and voles as well. I have one year remaining at Hanover where I am majoring in Biology and minoring in Environmental Science. Working at Big Oaks has introduced me to many new experiences that I have greatly enjoyed.



Refuge Interns from Left to Right: Eric Margenau, Stephanie Bishir, and Chad Springer

## **Grant Will Make Big Oaks More Birder Friendly**

By George Terlinden and Beth Black

In the fall of 2010, George Terlinden and Donna Errett began to formulate a plan for writing a grant to help make Big Oaks NWR a more birder friendly refuge. Some of the goals for this grant included: updating the Big Oaks bird list, gathering the supplies needed to make a bird tour at the refuge a really great experience, interpretive signage at Big Tree Point Trail, new benches for birding or resting, and plans to install a new native plant garden at the kiosk on Michigan Road and Highway 421.

George and Walter Seeds worked every week on updating the bird list. They spent approximately nine months conducting surveys. You could find them birding on the refuge every week no matter how cold or hot. They found several new birds to add to the list. The list will now be updated with the new information. The list is designed to help beginning as well as seasoned birders remember which birds they saw while here and at what time of year you might have the best luck finding them.



Former Big Oaks birder, Dusty Varble

The supplies that were gathered to help make birding fun included many different birding field guides by several authors. Many of these guides are geared toward kids in an effort to get them started on a lifetime of birding and to develop an interest in the outdoors. There's lots of great information in the guides and reference books. A couple of the books have "wow" and "Did you know?" facts. In addition, there are ten pairs of binoculars and a spotting scope to help with identification. Signs at the lake will be positioned along the trail with short descriptions of birds or bird related topics to help inform users of our trail. Two new "green" benches will be placed along the trail. They are made from high quality recycled plastic and should provide a nice resting spot as you hike.

George and Beth traveled to Shooting Star Nursery near Georgetown, Kentucky in the spring and purchased a wide variety of native plants. The refuge fire crew spent several days constructing a raised flower bed at the kiosk off of Highway 421. These plants will attract butterflies as well as birds and it really beautifies the area around the kiosk.

### **Chad Springer- Intern**

I am Chad Springer and am a recent graduate from The State University of New York College at Brockport and I am anxiously delving into the job market with a degree in Environmental Science. I grew up in northeastern Ohio on a small family farm. After working last summer as an intern at Big Oaks NWR and having a stint at the Kalamazoo Oil Spill, I saw fit to return to Big Oaks again this summer to further my experience and time with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I have had the opportunity to serve in many different roles while at Big Oaks and after taking time and pleasure in each endeavor, I have found most joy in fire crew and maintenance work. I enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking, camping and working hard. I am looking forward to finding a full time job with the USFWS and continuing the goals of the Service while protecting the outdoors for generations to come.

**Office Goodbyes...** Sadly Big Oaks NWR says goodbye to Ashley Buchanan, Perry Williams, and Hillary Williams as they move on in their careers. Good luck! You will be missed!

## *Bird Studies on The Refuge*

Have you ever driven by a parked vehicle on the Refuge or seen people with odd looking equipment and wondered what they were doing? If it was this summer, more than likely, you saw researchers from one of two projects studying birds. Take a look at what's been happening...

### *New Innovations in Bird Monitoring Technology Tested at Big Oaks*

By Michelle Wilcox (Ph.D. Student, University of Tennessee) and Dr. David Buehler (Professor, University of Tennessee)

This summer research has been initiated monitoring grassland birds of Big Oaks NWR by a team of scientists, engineers and students from the University of Tennessee and the US Army Engineer Research and Development Center- Environmental Lab. The project is funded by the Department of Defense Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (ESTCP). The project is demonstrating and validating cutting-edge technology developed to record bird songs in inaccessible areas using a remote-controlled weather balloon carrying a microphone and audio recorder. The work is being conducted on grasslands along the eastern edge of the Refuge and so the weather balloon was often visible from Highway 421. Target species being monitored include Henslow's Sparrows, Field Sparrows, Prairie Warblers and Northern Bobwhite quail.

This four-year project will continue on Big Oaks NWR again next year as well as on other military installations in Kansas and North Carolina and Georgia. The main goal of the project is to validate that



Research team with song simulators

than currently-established methods of bird surveys which include point counts and line transects. The Department of Defense administers nearly 30 million acres of land, large parcels of land which are inaccessible impact zones with unexploded ordnance, such as those found on Big Oaks NWR. Because these areas are dangerous to access via normal wildlife survey methods, the DOD is investing in this alternative method of surveying to fulfill monitoring needs for endangered species and other species at risk.



Weather Balloon

To better understand how well humans and the weather balloon detect bird songs, the team also developed a 'bird song simulator'. The simulator is a computer-controlled mp3 player which can broadcast on command any given bird song at a specific time and location during the monitoring event. The simulators are used to measure the detection rates of humans and balloons under varying environmental conditions. In addition to testing this new technology, the team is also investigating how often different species of birds sing. This information can affect how difficult or easy it is to pick up a certain species of bird on a typical bird survey.

The team got wonderful support from the biologists and staff of Big Oaks NWR and the Indiana Air National Guard at Jefferson range and they look forward to returning next summer.

## Monitoring Nearctic-Neotropical Migratory Bird Populations

By Brandt Ryder Ph.D. (Research Ecologist, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute Migratory Bird Center, Washington D.C.)

One of the most studied and publicized conservation issues of the past 25 years is the decline of Nearctic-Neotropical migratory bird populations. Understanding the causes of these declines requires information about factors that influence the health of populations. For example, both large-scale changes to the configuration of the habitat (i.e., forest fragmentation) and local scale factors such as the abundance of predators and nest parasites can impact bird populations. As such, large forest tracts are often considered refugia for forest birds and serve the vital function of helping to maintain declining populations.

Starting in the summer of 2011 researchers from the Smithsonian, Oregon State University, Institute for Bird Populations, and US Army Engineer Research and Development Center partnered with the US Fish and Wildlife service to begin a four year study of migratory bird populations at Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge. Big Oaks was chosen because its ~ 50,000 acres of habitat is likely core breeding habitat for a large number of “at risk” migratory bird species. The project will be focused primarily on a species of conservation concern, the Wood thrush (*Hylocichla mutess-*



Wood thrush on a nest

*lina*), but data will concurrently be collected for a number of other migratory species. Overall, the project has three broad objectives: 1) to compare different census techniques for bird populations to determine the most cost effective way to monitor bird populations, 2) to quantify how local (i.e., predators and nest parasites) and landscape factors (i.e., habitat fragmentation) influence the health of bird populations and 3) to develop regional management strategies to mitigate declines in populations of migratory birds.

The project will combine detailed field studies with state of the art technology to monitor Wood thrush populations at Big Oaks. We will use basic techniques such as standardized counts of birds, capture-release and monitoring nests. In addition, we will use a suite of tracking techniques including radio-telemetry and new technology called geolocators. Radio tags will be used to track the survival of young birds after they leave the nest and geolocators, which record day-length, will be used to track the migration patterns and winter location of Wood thrush breeding at Big Oaks. Finally, we will use a number of laboratory techniques including sampling of blood for genetic analyses and feathers to quantify stable isotope traces. Both genetic samples and stable isotope patterns can provide essential information about the movement patterns of Wood thrush across the landscape and help assess the importance of large patches of habitat like Big Oaks.

After the first summer of intensive fieldwork we are happy to report the project is off to a great start. Thus far we have banded 156 adult Wood thrush at our Big Oaks study sites. Of those individuals 60 were females, 87 were males and 10 we were unable to determine their sex. For those territories that were monitored, we found 124 Wood thrush nests. Of those nests, 36% successfully produced offspring that survived to fledging. We were able to band 99 of those offspring with hopes of finding some individuals next field season to determine how far young birds move between seasons.

One possible cause of low nesting success is the brown-headed cowbird, a known nest parasite. Cowbirds remove eggs from the host nest and deposit their eggs, which develop faster and often hatch first outcompeting host offspring. We observed 31% of Wood thrush nests as being parasitized. Finally, we deployed 20 geolocators on male Wood thrush and we look forward to reporting back on where in Central America our birds spent their winters. The next time you are out on the refuge in the summer months we invite you to listen carefully for the ethereal flute-like song of the Wood thrush and know that we are working hard to conserve this and many other migratory birds as a vital part of the forest community.



# Old Timbers Lodge Christmas Party on December 9th

By Fred Swinney

The BOCS annual membership begins October 1, 2011, so now is the time to renew it by completing the form on the following page and mailing it along with your annual dues payment. BOCS members interested in attending the 4th annual Old Timbers Lodge Christmas Party **must be current on their membership!** Only BOCS members and spouses or dependent children living at home are eligible for tickets.



Renew your annual BOCS membership now!

The 2011 Christmas Party Planning Committee has decided the dinner will be a pitch-in event. Each attendee/family

attending is encouraged to bring one covered dish consisting of a vegetable/casserole, salad, or dessert. The meats, bread, non-alcoholic beverages, and table service will be provided. Attendees are welcome to BYOB if desired. There will be a \$10.00/person ticket fee in addition to your covered dish. If an attendee does not plan to bring a covered dish, the ticket fee will be \$15.00/person. The tickets will be sent with your dues renewal confirmation letters. Lifetime members need only to submit their OTL Party ticket order with the appropriate fee in order to have the ticket mailed to you. Make sure we have current mailing information on file by completing the membership form and sending it with your payment. Remember to provide the names of each family member needing a ticket. **Tickets must be purchased in advance! The deadline for purchasing a ticket is Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup>!** Don't miss out on this opportunity to attend a great holiday evening at the Lodge with plenty of delicious home cooked food and fellowship.

The party will be Friday evening, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00PM. **Gate 6** will be the designated point of entry, with the gate opening at 5:30pm. The gate will be open until 6:15pm. **Gate 1 will NOT be open!** Directions to Gate 6: take US 421 N from Madison, turn left (west) onto 900 South for one mile, dead-ending at Gate 6 which is in Ripley County.

\* **Remember: Gate 6 entrance will be allowed only to current BOCS members who have a pre-purchased ticket.** If you have questions concerning the Christmas Party at OTL, contact party chairman Fred Swinney at (812) 528-5824 or [flswinney@gmail.com](mailto:flswinney@gmail.com).

**Big Oaks Conservation Society**  
**Membership Benefits**

-  10% discount on merchandise
-  Opportunities to participate in special refuge events
-  Contribute to the improvement of the refuge for all visitors
-  Big Oaks Newsletter

Directions to Gate 6: take US 421 N from Madison, turn left (west) onto 900 South for one mile, dead-ending at Gate 6, which is in Ripley County.



**Mission Statement:** *To support the goals of wildlife conservation and habitat restoration at Big Oaks NWR; develop environmental education programs; enhance public awareness; encourage use and appreciation for the natural and cultural assets unique to Big Oaks.*

If you would like to join or rejoin the Big Oaks Conservation Society to support the refuge, please fill out this membership form and send it along with your check to: Big Oaks Conservation Society, P.O. Box 935, Madison, IN 47250

Yearly BOCS Membership (Oct. 1, 2011 to Sept. 30, 2012)

Please select a category:

<input type="checkbox"/> Youth \$5	Name(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15	Address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25	City _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$25	State _____ Zip _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime (per Individual) \$150	Phone (        ) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate \$500	E-mail _____

December 9th Christmas Party—\$10 per person (must be a BOCS member to purchase tickets)

<input type="checkbox"/> Number of \$10 Tickets	Names of BOCS members attending: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Number of \$15 Tickets	Spouse's / Dependent Children's Name(s): _____

### A Friend's Perspective of the Conserving the Future Conference

From July 11-14<sup>th</sup> Joe Robb, Ashley Buchanan, Brian Winters, and I attended the Conserving the Future conference held in Madison, WI. The conference consisted of facilitated discussions dealing with the future and direction of the refuge system.

I was able to attend several workshops and lectures learning valuable information, especially in the area of increasing refuge support via friends groups. This focus session was dealing with developing community awareness and engagement, as well as developing those relationships to benefit the friends group. This session was very enlightening due to our unique situation with Old Timbers Lodge. Generating other outside support can only provide positive opportunities with BOCS.

I also had the privilege of listening to several speakers who have significant roles within our nation's wildlife preservation. Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar and Thad Allen, director of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill were among my favorite speakers.

I encourage all of you to check out the conference website at <http://americas.wildlife.org/conference>. They will be putting all the workshops and lectures online to make available to anyone interested.

Helping conserve the future,  
*Kavan Gray*



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Society  
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**Joe Robb** - Executive Secretary

**[www.bigoaks.org](http://www.bigoaks.org)**

**Refuge Staff**

**Dr. Joe Robb** - Refuge Manager  
**Mardean Roach** - Admin. Support Asst.  
**Brian Winters** - Fire Management Officer  
**David Jones** - Lead Range Technician  
**Casey Mefford** - Range Technician  
**Kerry Brinson** - Maintenance  
**Beth Black** - Park Ranger  
**Lisa Jones** - Park Ranger  
**Laura Lake** - Park Ranger  
**Eric Margenau** - Intern  
**Chad Springer** - Intern  
**Stephanie Bishir** - Intern  
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