

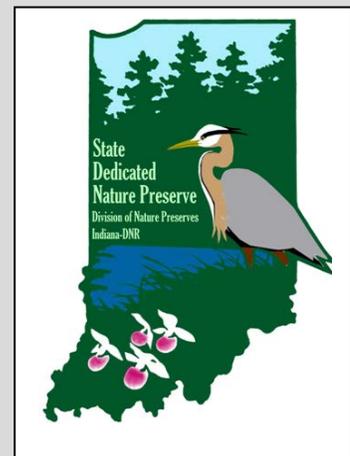
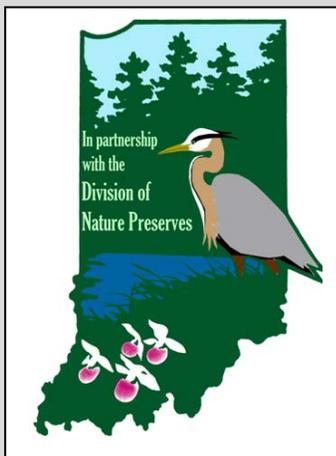
# IDNR Division of Nature Preserves

## 2014 Annual Report



### DNP: Mission and Staff

- Natural Heritage Data Center
- Indiana's Nature Preserve System
- Nature Preserve Dedications
- Heritage Trust Land Acquisition
- Nature Preserve Management
- Lake Michigan Coastal Program



## Division of Nature Preserves Annual Report for 2014

### Executive Summary

The Division of Nature Preserves is charged with finding, protecting, and managing examples of Indiana's natural communities, coastal resources, and rarest species for the benefit of present and future generations. It is comprised of four primary components: Nature Preserve Protection, Nature Preserve Management, the Natural Heritage Data Center, and the Lake Michigan Coastal Program. The Division is funded by a variety of funding sources, including trust funds, grants, and general funds. Approximately one-third of the full-time staff is paid by non-general fund sources, and all of the remaining staff receives a portion of their funding from non-general fund sources (See Figure 1). Division staff work in nine locations scattered around the State, including the Central Office in Indianapolis.

The Division works with numerous partners, utilizing grants and donations to protect, manage and restore natural areas. For example, a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant through the Army Corps of Engineers is restoring 76 acres of dune and swale at Pine Station Nature Preserve and 25 acres of savanna at Hoosier Prairie Nature Preserve. These two projects were accomplished with no State funds being involved. The Bicentennial Nature Trust combined with the Indiana Heritage Trust program, enabled partnerships with numerous partners to protect 19 natural areas in 14 counties.

Division staff was involved with numerous publications and outreach activities. These included 59 presentations, 92 partner projects, 81 technical assists to partners, 68 interagency projects, over 300 outreach activities and numerous projects to improve access and trails for visitors. The Division hosted 10 Field Day events at 10 preserves in 10 counties. Staff led 24 hikes on nature preserves overall, attended 185 meetings, and wrote 8 articles. The 5<sup>th</sup> Lake Michigan Coastal Ecosystem Poster, featuring Rivers, was printed and distributed.

During 2014, some of the field inventory work included monitoring of known occurrences and new finds of some extremely rare plants, including green adder's tongue and grass beak rush. Staff also monitored numerous occurrences of endangered and threatened plants.

The Natural Heritage Database now contains 17,421 element occurrences (rare plants, animals, natural community locations), and during 2014, 318 new records were entered and 5,796 records were updated. Staff answered 819 information requests and conducted 642 environmental reviews, 375 floodway permit application reviews, 232 public lake permit application reviews, and 30 coal permit application reviews, and 70 collecting and research permits were issued. The certified ginseng harvest was 7,831 pounds; and twenty-seven ginseng dealers were licensed.

There is at least one nature preserve in every natural region in Indiana. Nature preserves contain at least one example of all but two of the 58 natural community types known to occur in the State. Of the 213 state-endangered plants, there is at least 1 protected example of 179 of them. All but 3 of the 88 state threatened species have at least 1 population protected, and only 2 of the 115 rare plant species have no protected populations.

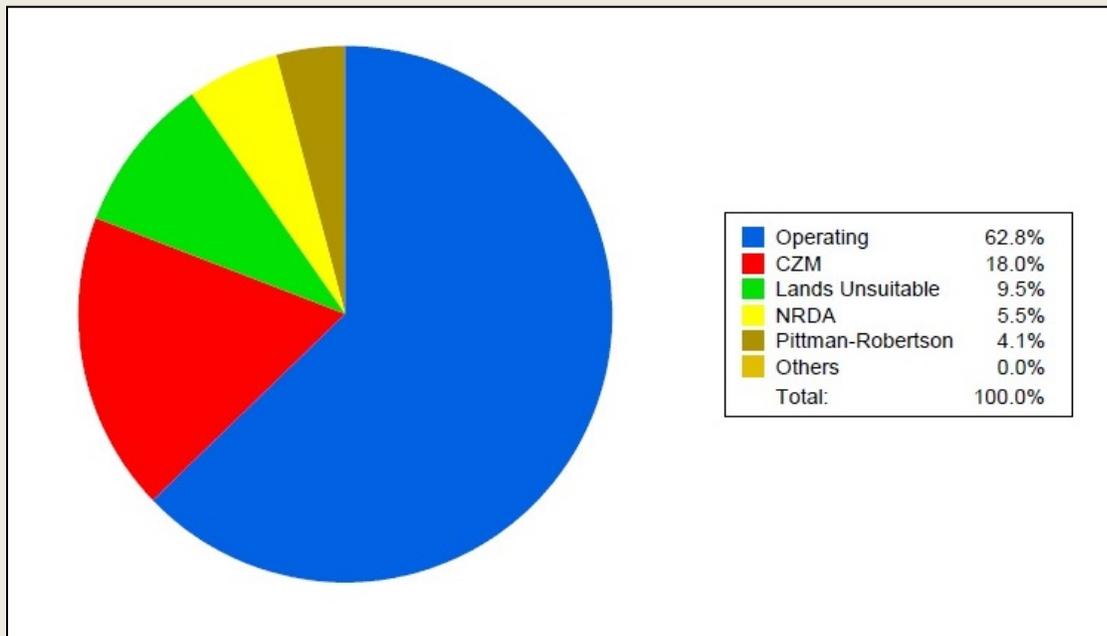
As of December 31, 2014, 262 nature preserves have been dedicated. They are owned by 46 different owners, which include 5 different DNR landholding divisions, 14 land trusts, 18 city/county governments, and 4 colleges/universities. Nature preserves protect some of Indiana's most diverse landscapes, including dunes, sand prairies and savanna, wetland complexes, lakes, rivers, forested ecosystems, glades, karst features, prairies, fens, bogs, swamps, and geologic features. In 2014, six new preserves were dedicated including Trevlac Bluffs in Brown County, Munsee Woods in Delaware County, Cave River Valley in Washington County, Coal Hollow in Parke County, Kokiwanee in Wabash County, and Russell Bend in Parke County. There were also five additions to nature preserves that were dedicated in 2014:

Mosquito Creek in Harrison County, Green's Bluff in Owen County, Calvert-Porter in Montgomery County, Portland Arch in Fountain County, and Bender in Noble County.

Regional ecologists managed over 2,600 acres in 2014, removing invasive species, installing and repairing trails, restoring wetlands, and planting prairie and wetland species. Large restoration projects funded through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative continue at several areas in Lake County. Regional ecologists were involved with prescribed burns at 27 different properties encompassing over 981 acres. Mitigation work conducted for clients to fulfill regulatory requirements resulted in restoration work valued at over \$1 million being conducted at several nature preserves, and land acquisition of over 30 acres, valued at over \$1 million being protected as additions to state nature preserves.

The Lake Michigan Coastal Program funded a number of projects in 2014 through its matching grant program, passing through over \$400,000 from NOAA. LMCP also focused on the development of a management plan for Indiana's shipwrecks along with a new website for shipwrecks and the dedication of the JD Marshall, all as Indiana's first protected shipwreck site, for which it received a Team Award from the Ivy Tech Society of Innovators.

2014 also saw significant staff changes, as veteran DNP staff retired and were replaced by new talented individuals.



**Figure 1.** Funding sources for the Division of Nature Preserves

**For a pdf copy of the complete report,  
please send email request to  
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