

Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve

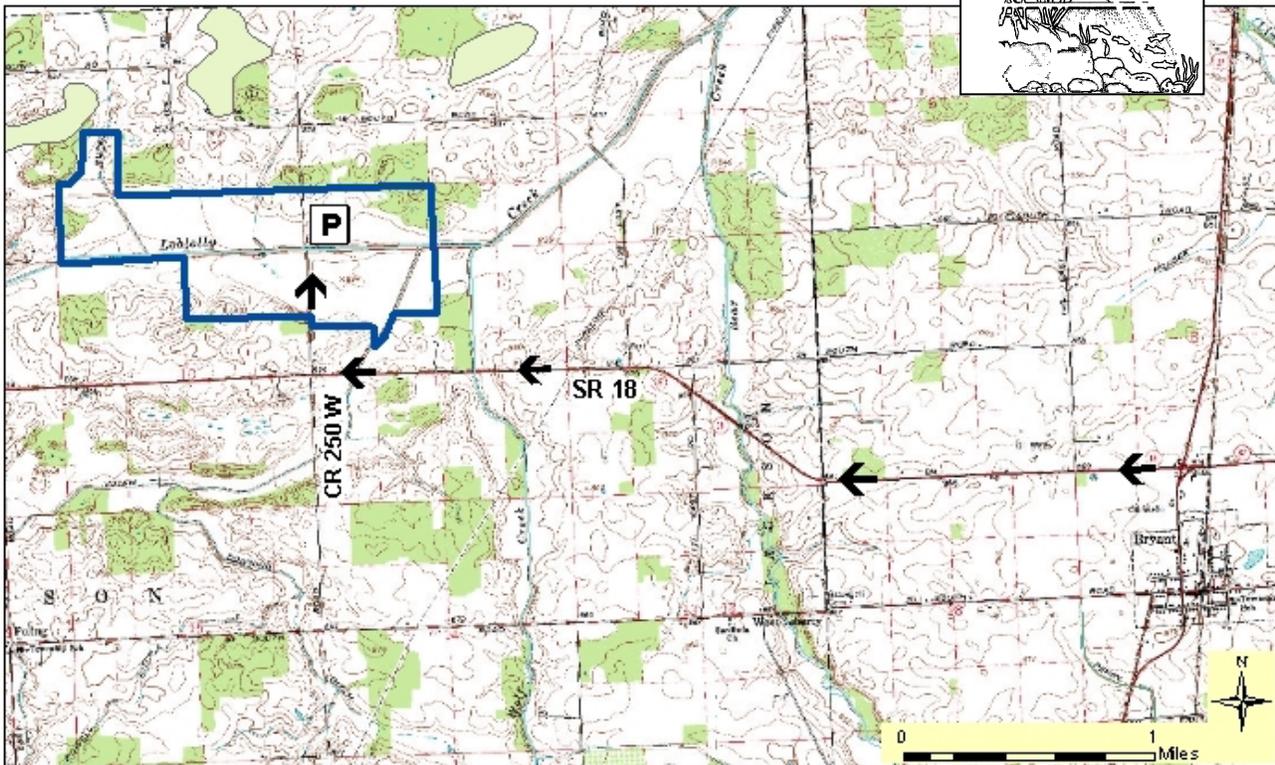
County: Jay Size: 440.10 acres
Ownership: Nature Preserves - IDNR



Location and Access

Parking and trail. From Bryant, take SR 18 west for 3.6 miles to CR 250 West and turn right (North). Go about three-quarter mile (0.75 mile). The preserve is on both sides of the road and parking is available north of the Loblolly Creek.

Trails: Veronica's Trail is a 0.25 mile Americans with Disabilities Act Trail located adjacent to the parking lot. This winding trail takes visitors over a pothole and a small stream and ends on a small hill overlooking a small upland meadow and large river bulrush wetland. Additional trails pass through prairie, upland forest, bottomland hardwood forest, beside potholes, meadows, a large marsh, and along the Loblolly Ditch that drained the area in the late 1800s and early 1900s.



Further Information:

Division of Nature Preserves East Central Regional Ecologist, Ryan Smith: rysmith1@dnr.in.gov

Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve

Description:

This land was purchased from five different landowners who entered their land into the Wetland Reserve Program. The residual value was purchased using Indiana Heritage Trust funds. Other donors include ACRES Land Trust, Ropchan Foundation, M.E. Raker Foundation and Friends of the Limberlost/Limberlost Swamp Remembered Committee. The restoration of the wetlands began in 1992.

Many of the soils in the Loblolly Marsh are floodplains that connect to the Wabash River and they support river bulrush, sedges and prairie cord grass. Several muck flats support bur reed and cattail marshes. The upland areas are equally divided with prairie and restored forest land. A twenty-five acre mature woodland is a mixture of upland and bottomland hardwood trees.

This area was drained by a steam powered dredge from 1888 to 1910. During these years of drainage, Gene Stratton-Porter wrote the majority of her most successful novels and nature studies about the Limberlost area. The Loblolly Marsh was the heart of the Limberlost. Once the wetlands were converted to farmland, and cropped from 1910 until restoration in 1992, crop losses from periodic flooding plagued the landowners almost yearly. But the biggest losses were the many species of plants and animals documented in Porter's books.

The Loblolly Marsh is a wetland complex containing emergent bur reed and cattail marshes where waterfowl reproduce. During drier times of the year, the marsh may have large mudflats exposed and shorebirds visit the area. Fall months are primed for the many migrating birds that feed on the abundant growth of annual plants. Winter months are a flurry of activity with all of the northern migrants and an occasional snowy owl.

In the spring, small potholes serve as mating areas for several species of amphibians. Sedge meadows and wet meadows are deafening with the calls of several frog species including northern leopard frogs. The woodland has a wide array of plants and the colors begin early. Waterfowl find nesting sites in the prior year's growth of tall grass prairie. In late summer and early fall, the prairies explode with native plants that expose their flowers throughout the area.

