

NORTH AMERICAN

WETLANDS

CONSERVATION ACT

# project flash

## Indiana Partnership Receives \$48,000 for Wetlands Project

On June 9, 2004, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council reported to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission that it had approved **\$48,000** in funding under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act's Small Grants Program for the **Limberlost and Loblolly Wetland Restoration Project in Indiana's Jay and Adams Counties in Congressional District 6**. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop and implement wetlands and associated uplands conservation projects to benefit wildlife. Projects must meet certain biological criteria to be considered for funding, and partners must be able to match the grant request 1:1 with nonfederal funds.

In 1888, farmers began draining wetlands on the 13,000-acre Limberlost Territory, an area of both wetlands and associated uplands habitats. It took 20 years to complete the effort. Sadly, the drained wetlands provided only marginal cropland, and in most years, crops on thousands of these "wetland" acres are lost due to flooding. Ironically, the watershed has lost much of its water-holding capacity due to the loss of its wetlands. Adding insult to injury, wetland-associated birds and other wildlife, of which several species are listed as threatened or endangered, have long since disappeared from this area, where once they were abundant.

To restore this area to its former glory, Friends of the Limberlost State Historic Site, Inc. (Friends), already has purchased 159 acres and assisted the State of Indiana in purchasing 916 acres of wetlands and associated uplands in the Limberlost Territory from willing sellers. The acquired parcels are in four distinct wetland areas: Limberlost Bird Sanctuary and Sanctuary Addition (Sanctuary), Loblolly Marsh Wetland Preserve, Limberlost Swamp Wetland Preserve, and Wabash River Rainbow Bottom. Croplands separate these wetlands. Project partners will begin the process of creating contiguous habitat by purchasing and restoring 112.5 acres between the Sanctuary and Limberlost Creek. Restoration will include planting of bottomland hardwoods and removing subsurface drainage. Friends will own the property, and Indiana Department of Natural Resources will hold title to a permanent conservation easement on the land, which it will manage.

Friends will be joined by Build Indiana Funds, Indiana Heritage Trust, and June Windmill Estate in contributing **\$96,084** to the project. Their work will benefit waterfowl and other migratory birds of the **Mississippi Flyway**, plus several federally and state-listed threatened and endangered species such as Indiana bat, bobcat, great egret, short-eared owl, marsh wren, yellow-crowned night-heron, and king rail. Partners' work also will help to advance the habitat conservation goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's **Upper Mississippi River & Great Lakes Joint Venture**.

For more information about this project, contact Ken Brunswick, Friends of the Limberlost State Historic Site, Inc., [loblolly@adamswells.com](mailto:loblolly@adamswells.com), (260) 368-7594, or Keith Morehouse, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, [keith\\_morehouse@fws.gov](mailto:keith_morehouse@fws.gov), (703) 358-1784.

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