

AOA Plants 12,000 Trees Along Big Darby Creek Restores Bottomland Forest Habitat at Igel Preserve

AOA planted 12,000 trees last week as part of our riparian corridor restoration activities along the Big Darby. The 34-acre floodplain field portion of our 100-acre Igel preserve was planted with a diverse mix of floodplain species to help restore the site to its original bottomland forest habitat. The field was previously planted in native prairie species as part of the restoration succession plan.

Bottomland forests provide many benefits including: storing floodwater, reducing downstream flooding; improving water quality by filtering nutrients and wastes and reducing sediment and erosion; providing important habitat for waterfowl, songbirds, turkey, bats, and numerous other wildlife; and providing critical migratory corridors for many species of birds and wildlife.

The Igel Preserve retains a mature bottomland forest habit along the river which has a diverse mix of trees and wildflowers – see photo of large (over 1-acre), dense patch of Michigan Lilies and Star-flowered Solomon's Seal) along the river. The new trees will help expand this forest to the entire floodplain portion of the property.

This project is part of AOA's water quality initiative along the Big Darby, as well as our efforts to conserve and restore habitat in a known bat corridor that includes several rare species including Indiana Bats. The conservation and planting activities are a collaborative effort of AOA with several partner organizations including The Conservation Fund and OEPA DEFA (Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance).

