

SPRING & NATURAL HISTORY AT NEW HARMONY

WHEN: April 26 -28 (2026)

WHAT / WHO: a multi-day symposium focusing on the Wabash Valley, past and present – the flora (esp. canebrakes & sedges), geology, birds and the significance of the Boatload of Knowledge. We also will continue the discussion on the plight of natural history training – where do we go from here? **More story time, too** (people, places and things). Further, given the special locale, there will be some interesting intown activities. New Harmony is a veritable natural history and cultural shrine – 2026 marks the 200th anniversary of the second utopian experiment there which, although failed, left an exceptional and far-reaching legacy. Additionally, we will use the New Harmony symposium to recall and honor the remarkable pioneering work of Jack White and his Illinois Natural Areas Inventory associates which include seminal players in the preservation movement.

This very special gathering, essentially an escape, will consist of stimulating presentations as well as field trip options, featuring a truly exceptional group of speakers and leaders. In many respects, the last gathering of eagles. Symposium starts Sunday afternoon (CST) and will conclude Tuesday afternoon. See tentative schedule below.

The event sponsors (in order of amount contributed) include the Central Indiana Land Trust Inc. (CILTI), I(N)DNR (Nature Preserves), Paul Rothrock, Illinois Native Plant Society, Stantec, the mad botanist, Anton Reznicek, Mary Damm, Sam Shine Foundation, EcoLogic, Mike & Barb Homoya, Christy Jacobi, (IN)TNC, John Bacone, Brian & Karen Anderson, Lee Casebere & Scott Namestnik

(We are still about \$4K from what we need but cannot wait any longer to open registration)

WHERE: SW corner of Indiana at the New Harmony Inn & Conference Center

FOR MORE INFO AND TO REGISTER, see or contact

themadbotanist.com bill.madbotanist@gmail.com (317-205-5440)

LIMITED TO 100 PARTICIPANTS (FCFS) 75 REGISTRATION SPOTS

Similar to the Rothrock Sedge (2022) & Wilhelm FQA (2024) symposia
but logistical and fund-raising issues required us to modify the size, schedule and offerings
As with the previous events, the presentations will be recorded for future reference

Registration closes on April 1 (OR) as soon as full

REGISTRATION FEE \$550

Includes all food and drink

Lodging is separate thru the New Harmony Inn (800-782-8605) (register first)

A block of rooms has been reserved at a special rate
(reference Natural History Symposium)

organizer: Bill McKnight, assisted by John Bacone, Cliff Chapman & Jack White

● **REGISTRATION** ●

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April 26-28, 2026

In order to avoid a service fee we are doing it old school
Send a check (\$550) made out to

Bill McKnight or mad botanist productions
4601 E 65th Str
Indianapolis, IN 46220
317-205-5440 bill.madbotanist@gmail.com

Check will not be deposited until we have at least 40 registrants
If need be, we can accept card payment (see SHOP @ themadbotanist.com)
but that price is \$570
Sponsorship checks should be made out to CILTI, noting Symposium

We also need: your phone number
 your email address
 whether or not you drink alcohol, and what kind
 whether or not you have any dietary issues

Further, choose one of the following **field trip options** (FCFS)
also please indicate an alternate (#2) in case your first choice is full (max 30 per)

A - WESSELMAN WOODS / TWIN SWAMPS
 leaders: Michael Homoya & Scott Namestnik

B - TWIN SWAMPS / WESSELMAN WOODS
 leaders: Chris Benda & Paul Rothrock

C - BEALL WOODS
 leaders: Paul Marcum & Nathanael Pilla

D - hang out in New Harmony on your own (golf cart available)

An updated alphabetized list of who has chosen which is posted below (next page)
the list will also permit you to see who has registered and seats remaining

AFTER YOU HAVE DONE THE ABOVE

Contact the New Harmony Inn to make your rooming arrangement (800-782-8605)

Again, lodging is separate (not covered by the registration fee)

A block of rooms has been reserved (reference Natural History Symposium)

The optional Saturday Workshop is for the NH community (20 max), but open to you too (contact McKnight)

SPRING & NATURAL HISTORY AT NEW HARMONY - FIELD TRIPS

April 27, 2026

(updated Feb 3)

A WESSELMAN WOODS TWIN SWAMPS	B TWIN SWAMPS WESSELMAN WOODS	C BEALL WOODS
LEADERS & Assistant		
Michael Homoya Scott Namestnik	Chris Benda Paul Rothrock	Paul Marcum Nathanael Pilla
CILTI	Tessa Aby-Kruger	CILTI
1 John Bacone	1 Lucy Arnold	1 Crystal DeBoer
2 Lois Gray	2 Lee Casebere	2 Ben Hess
3 Fran Harty	3 Deanna Deterding	3 Caity Sims
4 Cloyce Hedge	4 Victoria Leffel	4 Gerould Wilhelm
5 Barb Homoya	5 Anton Reznicek	5
6 Gene Kritsky	6	6
7 Randy Nyboer	7	7
8 Jessee Smith	8	8
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30	30	30
D HANG OUT IN NEW HARMONY:		

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SATURDAY (25)	MONDAY (27)	TUESDAY (28)
(optional) WOODY PLT WORKSHOP (McKnight) @ Working Men's Institute (1:30 - 5)	BREAKFAST 7:00 - 8:00 Inn (and all subsequent meals)	BREAKFAST 7:00 - 8:00
	8:20 - 8:25 Announcements	8:20 - 8:30 Announcements
SUNDAY (26)	8:25 - 8:50 WHERE ARE WE? Victoria Leffel geologist, IN Geological Survey	8:30 - 9:00 LEGACY OF INAI John Bacone botanist, Dir IN Nature Preserves emeritus
Travel (New Harmony is CST)	8:50 - 9:15 BOATLOAD OF KNOWLEDGE Lois Gray emeritus teacher & Harmonie SP naturalist	9:00 - 9:30 EMPHASIS NOW - RARE SPECIES Scott Namestnik Indiana DNR, State Botanist
10:00 - 2:30 Conference Room setup (staging, AV, exhibitors)	9:15 - 9:25 PRIMAL WABASH VALLEY FORESTS Bill McKnight botanist, educator, producer	9:30 - 10:00 WEA GRAVEL HILL PRAIRIE Cloyce Hedge botanist, Dir IN Natural Heritage Prog emeritus
Early birds Lunch (optional) @ Red Geranium Restaurant	9:25 - 10:00 BEYOND SAY: Early Natural History in Indiana Gene Kritsky entomologist, emeritus prof & dean MSJ	BREAK 10:00 - 10:30
CHECK-IN & REGISTRATION 1:30	BREAK 10:00 - 10:30	10:30 - 11:45 ELDERLY ADVICE THE FUTURE / PARTING WISDOM (where do we go from here?) from an august lineup
HISTORY TOUR 3:00 - 5:00 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 groups / 3 starting locations assigned at on-site registration walking (3 short blocks each way) golf cart shuttle available about 40 min each location <p>A Roofless Church B Atheneum C Working Men's Institute</p>	10:30 - 10:40 SHARING/ACCESS (Info & Visit) & BIAS Bill McKnight	
	10:40 - 11:15 HISTORIC CANEBRAKES OF INDIANA Michael Homoya emeritus Indiana State Botanist	X X X
APERITIVO 5:30 - 6:15 @ Granary 6:00 GROUP PHOTO	11:15 - 11:45 LOWER WABASH VALLEY BIRDS, THEN & NOW Cliff Chapman Dir Central Indiana Land Trust	Bill McKnight (CLOSING)
	LUNCH 11:45 - 12:45	LUNCH 11:45 - 12:45
TRIBUTE DINNER 6:15 - 7:15 @ Granary WELCOME (McKnight)	1:00 - 6:00 FIELD TRIPS (30 max each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Wesselman Woods / Twin Swamps B Twin Swamps / Wesselman Woods C Beall Woods D New Harmony 	CHECK-OUT 1:00 (optional) 1:30 - 3:30 cryptogam graminoid-focused field trip @ Harmonie State Park (leaders TBD) OR opportunity for more New Harmony
7:45 - 9:00+ @ Conference Center Jack White nature preservationist BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER THE ILLINOIS NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY: A Personal Story	APERITIVO 6:30 - 7:00 GROUP DINNER 7:00 - 7:45 7:45 - 9:00+ STORY TIME: Tales of Protection, Inventory & Misadventure John Bacone (moderator) not open mic	Travel / return home