The ACRES Land Trust Fund

ACRES Land Trust is a member-supported nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and preserving natural areas and working lands. The land trust began its mission in 1960, and it now protects over 120 preserves across 27 counties. ACRES acquires all land with a forever promise to preserve and protect it. Additionally, ACRES desires to inspire people and communities to get excited about protecting these places through programs, events, and celebrations.

ACRES staff members and preserve steward Greg Batten visiting the Ruth Kern Woodland Preserve.

Today ACRES protects over 7,300 acres across northeast Indiana and portions of southern Michigan and northwest Ohio. About 200 of these acres belong to preserves residing in Fulton County, the Steve Richie Nature Preserve and the Ruth Kern Woodland Preserve.

The Ruth Kern Woodland Preserve was donated by the children of Bob and Ruth Kern in 2007. The children named the preserve in honor of their devoted conservationist and beloved mother, Ruth. Like many of ACRES land, the preserve offers a free trail system for public use. When walking the trails at Ruth Kern, one walks beside the Tippecanoe River, filled with diverse plant and animal communities, and the remains of a camp mark the preserve's history as a former home to a local boy scout troop.

ACRES shares that people have various reasons for donating land to ACRES, but a big one is honoring their family and the history of their generational land. The children of Ruth Kern share a similar reason, "Our mother had an abiding love of nature and outdoors and an abdominal enthusiasm for life itself. It is especially appropriate to dedicate to her this beautiful piece of land that meant so much to our family. Preserving this land to protect a piece of Indiana's natural heritage is a lasting memorial to Ruth Kern."

In 2015, ACRES established a fund with the Fulton County Community Foundation in order to invest back into the community and provide Fulton County residents a way to support ACRES on a hyperlocal level. ACRES' efforts aim to inspire people to value, appreciate and support natural and working lands for the benefit of all — today and forever.