



Friends of the Limberlost

P.O. Box 571, Geneva, IN 46740

www.Limberlost.weebly.com

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The Limberlost Cabin (to the left) and the
Limberlost Visitor Center (above) are open:
Wednesday through Sunday: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Closed Mondays and Tuesday

Here are some things you can do when it's springtime at the Limberlost.....

The Architecture of Limberlost (for ages 16+) March 24, 2023, 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Cost: \$6/person, 25% discount for members of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.

Have you ever taken an up-close look at the architecture of the Limberlost Cabin? Delve into the Queen Anne architectural style—popular during the late 1800s and early 1900s—plus discover what makes Gene Stratton-Porter's cabin unique. Find out where Gene, credited as the home's designer, drew her design inspiration and how the Porters paid for such an extravagant home during that time. Participants will enjoy a guided tour of the exterior and interior of the Limberlost Cabin while learning about design features, elements and materials.

Creatures of the Night, April 29, 2023, 8:30 pm to 10:00 pm

Cost: \$4/adult or \$3/child, 25% discount for members of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites.

Experience nature at night! Explore the pothole wetland on Veronica's Trail with nighttime dip-netting, then use a digital microscope to see what was found. Try to spy the glowing eyes of plywood forest animals with reflective eyes and explore "mystery boxes" to see if you can guess what's inside. End the evening by experiencing night vision, listening to night sounds with bionic ears, and enjoying the warmth of a campfire while roasting marshmallows. This program is subject to cancellation in the advent of adverse weather conditions: call 317-402-1299 for the latest information. Attendees should go directly to the Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve Parking Lot, located at 8180N 250W, Bryant, IN 47326



Rent-a-Naturalist: Cost: \$40 for 90 minutes (up to 10 people). You drive your own vehicle and follow the Limberlost naturalist. These are personalized tours. The interests and physical abilities of the group, and the time of year determine areas visited and the details of each tour. A handicap accessible trail is available at one of the locations. A choice of five different Limberlost nature preserves is available. The itinerary can be customized according to your interests. For more information or to make a reservation email Curt Burnette, Naturalist/Certified Interpretive Guide, cburnette@indianamuseum.org or call: 260-368-7428

SANJO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (CBC) RESULTS & Some CBC History by Terri Gorney Lehman

SANJO (Southern Adams, Northern Jay, Ouabache) Christmas Bird Count was part of the 123rd annual CBC by the National Audubon Society. This was the eighth year that our CBC count was defined by the area within the SANJO circle. Previous to SANJO, the bird count in Adams County was formally known as the Adams County CBC. There has been a CBC in Adams County every year since 1948.

I was asked to be the CBC compiler by Larry Parker, a long-time birder from Adams County. Larry passed away last year. He was still active in birding until the end and could be depended on for a red-breasted nuthatch, Lapland longspur or Carolina wren on his CBC list. The “compiler” helps organize the local CBC and reports to the National Audubon Society the total number of each bird species seen by all of the SANJO CBC participants on Dec. 31, 2022.

When I took over the Adams Co. CBC from Larry, the National Audubon Society had moved away from using city or county boundaries to define birding territory and encouraged establishing a 15-mile diameter circle to define the area for birders to investigate. This change allowed all of the Limberlost Conservation Area and Ouabache State Park in Wells County to be included in our CBC. After birders had been out counting & observing birds all morning, I also started the tradition of a chili lunch served at the Limberlost Visitor Center in Geneva. I think everyone enjoys this lunch break which gives all of us the chance to compare notes, photos, and observations from birding the SANJO CBC.

Robert Cooper Audubon Society (RCAS), from the Muncie area, has been part of the SANJO CBC since I became compiler. Also, members from the Mississinewa Audubon Club (Marion) and the Stockbridge Audubon Society (Fort Wayne) have been annual participants in the SANJO CBC.

With January 1, falling on a Sunday, decided to have the count on December 31, 2022. It was a mild day in the 40s. All the field teams had good birds and all the teams saw at least some birds that the other teams did not see.

Rose and Jim Jeffery and Curt Burnette covered the Limberlost Swamp Nature Preserve and surrounding area. Their list included six northern harriers, nine northern pintails, a Sandhill crane and a ring-billed gull. Melissa Fey, a Friends of the Limberlost board member, had Ouabache State Park as part of her territory, and she saw a short-eared owl there. I don't find any previous records showing this owl at Ouabache.

Ryan Smith, the new East-Central Regional Ecologist, and Greg McCallister, hiked the trails at Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve and drove around the surrounding area. They had two rough-legged hawks, white-throated sparrows and swamp sparrows as part of their list.

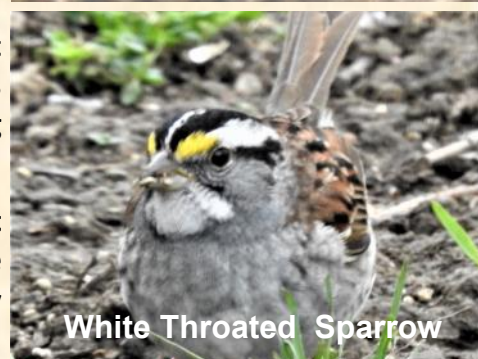
Rose Young, Randy Lehman and myself covered the old gravel pit in Geneva, the Red Gold Wetlands and the Wabash River off of Co Rd S 125E. We had a brown creeper, a mockingbird, red-shouldered hawk, and a yellow-rumped warbler on our list. April Raver, of Marion, is a regular SANJO participant. She covered the Rainbow Bend area. She had a pileated woodpecker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, golden-crowned kinglets and a red-breasted nuthatch on her list. The population of bald eagles is increasing around the Limberlost Conservation Area. This year, 20 were recorded. In all, 52 species were tallied.

Next year, SANJO CBC will take place on its normal date of January 1, 2024. Thank you to all who participated. Want to help with this count next year? Send me an email: bandtgorney@aol.com

**The pictures in this article were taken by Randy Lehman, FOL Treasurer & Membership Chair*



Northern Harrier—Male



White Throated Sparrow

Wherein We Discover C.D. Porter had a Notable Business Partner in the Dismal Oil Company—George Bolds by Terri Gorney Lehman

In August last year, at the Sesquicentennial for Geneva, Rich Briggs gave a talk on the history of the town. He mentioned Geneva native George Bolds and the book, Across the Cimarron written about him. I was able to purchase the book second-hand and enjoyed reading it but wanted to learn more about George than his time spent in the west.

George Bolds was born on a farm west of Geneva in 1863. His parents were Alexander and Leah (Pontius) Bolds. He knew he did not want to be a farmer and trained to be a surveyor.

As a restless teenager, he left for Dodge City, Kansas in 1879, when he would have only been 16 years old! Eventually, he would move to Cimarron then Ingalls. He met and became friends with Bat Masterson and Bill Tilghman* and he knew Wyatt Earp and other characters of this time period. George was a humble man who not only had a front seat view of this western history but was part of it. He was a deputy sheriff and a surveyor. He survived not one but two gunshots. This time in history was known as “Bleeding Kansas.”

After a dozen years, he moved back to Geneva and married Adda Weldon, of Portland, who had waited for him to return. George was soon involved in the oil business. A new adventure began for him as the area was in the beginning of an oil boom. Perhaps it reminded him of his days in the wild west as there were some rogue characters around the oil boom.

George and Adda lived on a Bear Creek Township farm in Jay County. Their farm was on the south side of the Adams-Jay County Line Road, and it was only one mile south of the farm that Charles and Gene Stratton-Porter owned. George is now entwined with Limberlost history as his land is now part of the Limberlost Swamp Nature Preserve.

In 1896, George became a partner in the Dismal Oil Company. The four partners were: George Bolds, Charles Porter, Andrew Briggs and Daniel Bolds. George would sell his shares to his brother Daniel. Charles Porter was a partner in a few different oil companies in both Adams and Jay Counties.

After the oil business, George lived in Hammond, Louisiana and established a partnership with William and Gilbert Houlton. They had one of the largest livestock farms in the south. A hog plague hit and wiped out the business. George moved to Selma, Alabama, and became the city engineer and inspector. George’s last career was as a city engineer in New York City. He and Adda lived in Manhattan.

George led a colorful and interesting life in his 90 years of living. He went boom and bust several times but always managed to re-invent himself. His many moves, careers, and adventures certainly make him

one of the most fascinating native sons of Geneva and the Limberlost area.



George Bolds and Adda Weldon



George Bolds is buried in the Green Park Cemetery, Portland, IN, next to his wife, Adda.

Across the Cimarron, is a book written by James D. Horan, published by Bonanza Books, New York. 1956. Horan says in the introduction that he tape-recorded George Bolds and also used material that was in long letters that George sent him. According to Horan, “As we listened we found gradually emerging a vivid picture of life on the frontier, as it was lived by an educated young hellion who had a keen eye and a remarkable memory. This man was among the last living links with the Wild West.”

*William (Bill) Matthew Tilghman served as a lawman for 35 years. In his career he rode with the Earps, was a lawman in Dodge City, Kansas, and battled the Dalton gang and the Wild Bunch. In the early 1900s he became fed up with the way Hollywood glamorized the outlaws of the west and, along with his friends, E.D. Nix and Chris Madsen, set out to make a movie of how it really was back then. They starred in the film, Passing of the Oklahoma Outlaws (1915), as themselves and arranged to have a member of the Dalton gang named Arkansas Tom released from prison to act as a technical consultant. They met with some difficulty in getting the film shown. Theater owners didn't want to show it because there were “no name” actors in it. Hollywood told them to put Tom Mix in it if they wanted it to sell, but Tilghman refused. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0863237/bio>

Limberlost Bird Sanctuary, part 2

By Terri Gorney Lehman

In the previous newsletter (Winter 2022-2023), my husband Randy and I wrote an article on the Limberlost Bird Sanctuary. Further research has uncovered more interesting facts and more information about the people involved in creating this preserve. As noted in the previous article, the Bird Sanctuary was created as a lasting legacy to Gene Stratton-Porter and the beginning of today's Limberlost Conservation Area.



Two pictures of the same wildlife pond at the Bird Sanctuary, one taken in the summer & one in the fall. The uncommon Blue-faced Meadowhawk dragonfly has been seen here.



On February 14, 1950, Kenneth Kunkel, Director of the Indiana Conservation Department (today's Department of Natural Resources), Bob Starrett, Supervisory of State Memorials (today's State Historic Sites), and Kenneth Coughill, Director of Indiana State Parks, inspected several sites for the bird sanctuary. High water on highway 116 stopped the inspection of one or two sites on the east side of Geneva. The 12 acres off of the Jay-Adams County Line just east of US 27 looked to be the best site.

In February 1951, the Indiana Senate passed the Geneva Bird Sanctuary Bill 38-0 agreeing to accept the 12-acre property. With this commitment from the state confirmed, the Bird Sanctuary was one step closer to becoming a reality. The next step was to have the Limberlost Conservation Association (LCA) purchase the 12.46 acres from Robert I. and Crystal V. Hough, which the LCA did on July 24, 1951. In the Jay County Deeds, it is listed as the Gene Stratton Porter Bird Sanctuary. On September 17, 1951, Eli Stucky, president of the LCA, signed the deed over to the State of Indiana. In the deed, it was referred to as the Gene Stratton Porter Bird Sanctuary.

The board of directors for the LCA in 1953 were: E J Shug of Berne; Hugh Ronald of Portland; Robert Heller of Decatur; and E C Stuckey, Adam Egly, Joseph Anderson, and Earl DaWald, all of Geneva. All were active in the formation of the Limberlost Bird Sanctuary.

In May 1955, over 1,000 evergreen trees were planted on a 27.88 acre tract of land just west of the Bird Sanctuary, land still owned by the Limberlost Conservation Association. At the time, Robert "Bob" Heller of Decatur was the president of LCA, and he donated the trees. The trees were planted by the Geneva-Wabash Township agriculture students under the supervision of Conservation Officer Jack Hurst and teacher Kenneth Von Emon.

Years later the LCA received another shipment of 2,000 trees from the Indiana State Nurseries in April 1963. There were 1,000 pine trees and 1,000 tulip poplar trees. They were planted by the Geneva – Wabash Township and Berne – French Township agriculture students with the guidance of teachers Kenneth Von Emon and Eugene Sprunger.

This same parcel of land would eventually be sold to the Friends of the Limberlost on June 28, 2002, becoming the 28-acre Goodrich Addition to the Bird Sanctuary (funds for this purchase came from the Limberlost Swamp Remembered Committee, Ann Goodrich, and The Portland Foundation).

Now we know that many people played a role in creating the Limberlost Bird Sanctuary, which was the first land in what would become part of the Limberlost Conservation Area. Thank you to those early members of the Limberlost Conservation Association who took the initiative to purchase land and create the beginning of a lasting legacy to Gene Stratton Porter.

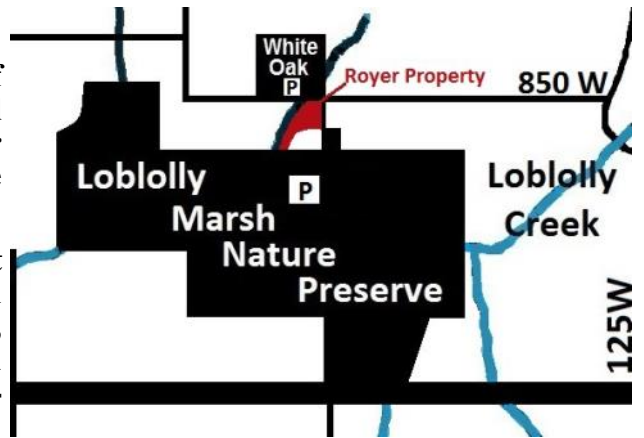


In the fall of every year, Limberlost Naturalist, Curt Burnette, leads a nature hike through the Bird Sanctuary and Music of the Wild.

ROYER PROPERTY UPDATE

In the Fall 2020 newsletter we reported that the Friends of the Limberlost were able to acquire 10.42 acres of land adjacent to the Loblolly Marsh creating a land corridor between the Loblolly Marsh Nature Preserve and the White Oak property (see map to the right).

In the previous newsletter (winter 2022-2023) we noted that the wetland restoration work had been completed in September 2022 by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, represented by Scott Fetter (the USFWS Private Land Biologist) and by the company hired to do most of the on-site work, The STANGER Group, out of Goshen, Indiana.



So, how is the Royer property looking today? After about 2 months the Royer property looked like the picture on the left. Today, 5 months later, the Royer property looks like the picture on the right. It's still too early for much plant growth, but it appears to be holding water nicely. Scott Fetters reported that he checked out the Royer property on Feb. 14, and was very pleased with what he saw.



November 6, 2022



February 15, 2023

Randy Lehman reports on INTO THE CASES...BEHIND THE SCENES

On Wednesday, February 15, Tiffany Parker (Site Manager at the Gene Stratton-Porter State Historic Site in Rome City) and Shaun Payne (Site Manager at Limberlost State Historic Site in Geneva) organized a ZOOM presentation that included showing selected artifacts from their respective sites to everyone who had pre-registered for the show and pre-paid the admission price to the Indiana State Museum.



I wondered what artifacts Tiffany and Shaun would select and how the items would be shown. I thought their program was very well done, very informative, and very interesting. The portable camera's worked well and there were very few technical snags.

According to Zoom, there were a total of 17 participants, and both Tiffany and Shaun agreed that it would be worth doing this program again with new objects to show, of course. So, I hope that INTO THE CASES...happens again, and we will be sure to let everyone know if it does. Pictured are a couple of the unique and very special objects that were shown by Shaun.



MIGRATING GEESE STOP AT THE LIMBERLOST ON THEIR WAY NORTH

by Ryan Smith, East Central Regional Ecologist, Indiana DNR, Division of Nature Preserves



The Limberlost Swamp Preserve, a restored wetland straddling the Adams and Jay County line, is part of what used to be a sprawling 13,000-acre wetland prior to the 1900s when it was drained for agriculture. The restored farmland now provides nesting habitat for a wide range of bird species that raise young in and around the wetlands. However, the Limberlost Swamp is important to birds at other times of the year as well.

This time of year, large numbers of geese migrate through the area on their way north. The Canada Goose, while it can be found here year-round, does undergo seasonal movements. Currently, these birds are on their way north with some individuals of the population destined for locales as far north as northern Alaska and north of the Hudson Bay, Canada (check out Statuses and Trends on the eBird website for fascinating interactive maps of how bird distributions change throughout the year: science.ebird.org/en/status-and-trends).

Recently (as I write this in early February), hundreds of Canada Geese have been congregating on the wetland. In addition to these, I have been treated to witnessing a large flock of Greater White-fronted Geese and a lone Snow Goose join the flock. These geese are also migrating north, their sights set on the Arctic tundra. All three

geese utilize the Limberlost Swamp as an important stopover site where they will feast on plants and seeds while resting from their journey.

Geese are not the only migrating waterfowl to visit the wetland. I look forward to the coming months when the number of ducks passing through the area reaches its maximum. March and April are typically the peak months to observe a large number of duck species on the marsh. Dabbling ducks (ducks that remain on the surface of the water while feeding) including, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, and American Wigeon most heavily utilize the wetland. However, keep an eye out for several species of diving ducks (those that completely submerge in search of food) that have historically been on the marsh this time of year.



I encourage you to make the trip to the Limberlost this spring to check out the migration for yourself.

A Canada Goose to the left and a Greater White-fronted Goose to the right—pictured in a field near Geneva.



The often grey skies of this winter allowed me to get some nice photos of local birds. From left to right: Kingfisher, immature Eagle, Kestrel, & mature Eagle pair at the Loblolly Marsh—photos by Randy Lehman

Introducing Ball State University Public History Intern: Thomas Fuller

Hello, I am Thomas Fuller, and I am the intern at the Limberlost State Historic Site. I am from Shelbyville, Indiana, but I am currently living in Muncie, Indiana.

A little bit about me. I am a senior and this will be my last semester at Ball State University graduating this May. I will be receiving a major in Public History and a minor in Landscape Architecture. At Ball State I am also a part of the Pride of Mid-America Marching Band and Basketball Band playing the Tenor Saxophone. Outside of school I am highly active in the Boy Scouts of America, and I did earn the rank of Eagle Scout in May of 2017. In the future I do plan on going back to Ball State to get a master's degree in landscape architecture.

Growing up in central Indiana, I unfortunately never heard of Limberlost or Gene Stratton-Porter. It wasn't until I started my landscape architecture classes when I finally learned who Gene Stratton-Porter was and her role in the conservation movement. I learned about the Limberlost State Historic Site through my public history professor, Dr. Wendy Soltz. Dr. Soltz is my faculty internship supervisor, and she is the one that directed me to Limberlost and Site Manager Shaun Payne. In the public history program we have to take two different classes with Dr. Soltz which are designed to prepare us for an internship. It also gave her a chance to get to know her students so she could guide them to an internship that is a perfect fit. For me, Limberlost is that perfect fit. Being a part of the Boy Scouts of America my entire life, I have always loved being outdoors and learning about nature. So, having my internship on the hundreds of acres of restored wetlands is perfect.

During my time here I will be working on a few different projects. Two of which I have already started working on. The first is digitizing the historic sites archives. I am scanning each document and inserting it into a file on the state museums server, so that in case something was to happen there would be a digital copy of the archives. Another project I recently started is coming up with a planting plan for the yard around the cabin based off what Gene Stratton-Porter would have had. For this, I have been working with Curt and Jeanette. We have been looking at photographs Gene would have taken as well as getting clues from Gene's books when she describes the plants around the cabin.

In the month that I have been here I have learned a lot about Gene Stratton-Porter and her life. I am eager to learn even more in my remaining three months and working with the incredible staff and Friends of the Limberlost group.



Friends of the Limberlost Board Member, Randy Lehman, is also Adams County's representative on the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission (WRHCC). Using funds provided by the WRHCC, Randy is organizing events this year that will feature educational programs and recreational opportunities for the general public focused on the upper Wabash River—it's history, it's water quality issues, how it's being used today, and more. Two professors have already agreed to share their research on the upper Wabash River. Dr. Robert Barr from Indiana University / Purdue University in Indianapolis, has conducted an extensive study of the upper Wabash River, and he will be sharing his findings with the public. Since the Wabash River starts in Ohio, Dr. Stephen Jacquemin of Wright State University in St. Mary's, Ohio, who has studied the water quality of the Grand Lake St. Mary's watershed, will also talk about the work he has done on water quality in the GLSM basin and what's being done to improve water quality in the region, including the Wabash River watershed in Ohio. Exact dates and times for their talks are still to be determined. Numerous other outdoor activities and other presentations are being planned for this multi-day event. So, please stay tuned.

THE LAND AUCTION ON DECEMBER 16, 2022, IS MORE EVIDENCE THAT LAND PRICES HAVE SKYROCKETED IN THE LIMBERLOST CONSERVATION AREA



The Friends Board of Directors held a special meeting on Friday, December 9, 2022, about participating in a land auction for approximately 8.17 acres in Jay County. This acreage that was to be auctioned off on Dec. 16 is located just across county road 250W from the White Oak property. White Oak is owned & managed by DNR-Nature Preserves (see map above). From our point-of-view, the 8 acres had very little to offer in terms of being restorable to wetlands. There were no trees of any significant size, being mostly cleared and mowed land. However, a small portion of the acreage was in the delineated flood plain of Jay County, and if the Friends were able to acquire this acreage, and if we were eventually able to add more land to this initial purchase, then the area could potentially become part of a larger wetland nearby. Also, its location across the road from the DNR's White Oak property helped to convince the Board that the Friends needed to acquire this property, if possible.

Some of you may remember that the nearby "Reed Enterprise" property (bottom-right) ended up selling last winter for just over \$12,400/acre (see the Winter 2021-2022 newsletter). Of course, the Reed Property had a lot of valuable timber on it, and the wetland areas had already been restored. The Friends Board of Directors voted to bid as high as \$8,000/acre for 8.17 acres, which in retrospect was not nearly high enough. At the auction on December 16, two Amish groups bid against one another, and price of this marginal land quickly went over \$8,000/acre with the winning bid climbing to \$17,258/acre. We were once again surprised by how high land prices are getting to be in the Land of the Limberlost.



BROUGHT TO YOU BY INDIANA HUMANITIES

Save the date: September 16—Friends of the Limberlost is working with Indiana Humanities to bring back their award-winning Campfires program to the Limberlost. The "Campfire" pairs nature and literature to spark conversations about Indiana's future. Something about the combination of wild places, great writing, a warm campfire and cold beer gets Hoosiers talking in fresh and surprising ways about the world around us and our place in it. The "LIMBERLOST CAMPFIRE" will include a guided nature hike at the Loblolly Marsh, a catered lunch, a Limberlost Cabin tour, and a nature hike to the giant sycamore trees at Rainbow Bend. It will be an all day event, starting at 9:30 AM, and lasting until approximately 3 PM. Since this is a weather dependent event, the itinerary could change, but Indiana Humanities is

providing a shuttle bus to make it easier and quicker to transfer from one Limberlost location to another. Please keep checking the Indiana Humanities website for your opportunity to register for this event. Pre-registration is required. There is a registration fee, and the number of participants is limited.

**FRIENDS OF THE LIMBERLOST
NEW MEMBERSHIP & MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

Friends of the Limberlost is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation. We support Limberlost State Historic Site, which is owned and operated by the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites. We also support the IDNR—Division of Nature Preserves which manages the restoration of wetlands in the Limberlost Swamp Conservation Area. Your membership dues and extra donations are vital to the many projects honoring the memory and legacy of Indiana author, naturalist, and nature photographer, Gene Stratton-Porter.

You decide how your annual dues will be spent. You choose one of the following:

- Choose the Limberlost Historic Site Friends who support projects and help pay expenses associated with the improvement or the betterment of Limberlost State Historic Site
- Choose Limberlost Swamp Remembered, a committee of the Friends of the Limberlost, which is primarily focused on Limberlost Swamp restoration projects
- Or you can support both missions of the Friends of the Limberlost

As a member you receive our quarterly newsletter. You get one free tour of the Limberlost Cabin, a 10% discount on Limberlost Gift Shop purchases, and you get a 15% discount if you purchase a membership in the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites. As a member of the Friends of the Limberlost you help us preserve the legacy of Gene Stratton-Porter and help us restore the environment by bringing back the Limberlost Swamp.

If you have any questions about your membership, please call or text Randy Lehman, membership chairperson, at 260-849-0308 or email randylehman@comcast.net

Please make checks payable to: FRIENDS OF THE LIMBERLOST. Mail both your check and completed membership form to: PO BOX 571, GENEVA IN 46740

STEP ONE

Select which mission of the Friends Group you want to support by checking a box to the right

☐ Limberlost Historic Site Friends—dues and any additional donations you make supports Limberlost State Historic Site and associated events, projects, and programs

☐ Limberlost Swamp Remembered Friends—dues and any additional donation you make supports Limberlost wetland restorations projects managed by the Indiana Division of Nature Preserves

☐ Combination Limberlost Historic Site and Swamp Remembered Friends—dues and any additional donation are equally shared by both groups

STEP TWO

Choose the type of Membership you want by checking a box below

☐ Older Adults—\$10

☐ Business—\$50 (Please enter the name of a contact-person below)

☐ Other Individuals—\$20

☐ Family—\$35

☐ Lifetime—\$1,000

NAME _____

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☐ Check the box if you want your newsletter mailed to you via the US Postal Service. We'd like to EMAIL the newsletter to you because it saves us money and time, and the e-newsletter is in color and has more pages. However, we are happy to mail you a "paper copy" of the newsletter, if that is what you prefer—just check the box. If you check the box and give us an email address, we will send you both versions of the newsletter.

AMOUNT ENCLOSED (additional donation appreciated!): \$ _____

ANY COMMENTS?