Environmental Profile: Hamilton County, Indiana

Information & County Contacts

*Hamilton County Visitor’s Center:*
(800) 776-8687

*Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District:*
(317) 773-2181

Land, Water, & Biodiversity & Conservation Efforts:

Ritchey Woods Nature Preserve

Ritchey Woods Nature Preserve is approximately 127 acres: 42 acres is an Indiana State Designated Nature Preserve and the remaining 85 acres is under a conservation easement governed by the Department of Natural Resources. The Preserve offers ten different trails totaling 2.25 miles. Cheeney Creek meanders through the north end of the property and is viewed best from the Creek Ridge Trail.¹

¹ http://www.fishers.in.us/DocumentCenter/View/278
Environmental Profile:  Hamilton County, Indiana

Endangered Species:

Prairie White-Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*)

This perennial plant is about 1-2' tall, forming a single central stem with occasional short side stems. The alternate light green leaves are up to 6" long and 1½" across, and become smaller in size as they ascend the stem. They are lanceolate or narrowly lanceolate, and sparsely distributed overall. Various species of Hawkmoths pollinate the flowers. While seeking the copious nectar, a moth may acquire some pollen on its head, which is then carried to the next plant in bloom.²

Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus*)

Massasugas are small snakes with thick bodies, heart-shaped heads and vertical pupils. The average length of an adult is about 2 feet. Adult massasugas are gray or light brown with large, light-edged chocolate brown blotches on the back and smaller blotches on the sides. Young snakes have the same markings, but are more vividly colored. Other snakes that look similar include the fox snake, milk snake and hognose snake.³

² [http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/pwf_orchidx.htm](http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/pwf_orchidx.htm)