Environmental Profile: Jefferson County, Indiana

Information & County Contacts

Jefferson County Visitor’s Center:
(812) 265-2956

Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District:
(812) 273-2070 ext. 3

Land, Water, & Biodiversity & Conservation Efforts:

Pennywort Cliffs Preserve

100-year-old tulip stands, flowing springs and a 30-foot waterfall makes Pennywort Cliffs an awe-inspiring experience. Walk through the Conservancy planted walnut plantation, and admire the tulip stands which are more than 36 inches in diameter and still growing. While well-defined trails are easily followed, what is found off the beaten path is stunning. Two constantly flowing springs meet and make their way over a 30-foot waterfall before reaching Big Creek, Jefferson County’s largest creek. The Cliffs are also one of the first classified forests in Indiana (1931).¹

¹http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/indiana/placesweprotect/pennywort-cliffs.xml
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Chelsea Flatwoods

One of the largest, wettest and most diverse examples of the Bluegrass Tillplain flatwoods in Indiana, Chelsea Flatwoods is a forest offering various wildflowers, ferns and an interesting mix of trees. American beech, sweet gum, sugar maple and a variety of oaks dominate the woods while a number of ferns cover the forest floor.²

Endangered Species:

Sheepnose (*Plethobasus cyphyus*)

The sheepnose is a freshwater mussel found across the Midwest and Southeast. However, it has been eliminated from two-thirds of the total number of streams from which it was historically known. Today, the sheepnose is found in Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. The sheepnose is a medium-sized mussel that grows to about 5 inches in length. It lives in larger rivers and streams where it is usually found in shallow areas with moderate to swift currents flowing over coarse sand and gravel.³

²[http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/indiana/placesweprotect/chelsea-flatwoods.xml](http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/indiana/placesweprotect/chelsea-flatwoods.xml)