



## Friends of the Sangamon Valley

# The Boyle Woods

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Large red oaks (above) dominate the woodland areas above the ravines, while large red and white oaks (left) are found throughout the preserve.

Maidenhair fern abounds throughout the understory in the mesic uplands of Boyle Woods.



June 2008

**Name:** Boyle Woods

**Location:** Cass County, near Bluff Springs

**Size:** 50 acres

**Access:** Restricted. There is no direct access by road to the woods. Access is by appointment only with the Friends. Occasional tours may be offered.

**When Acquired:** January 2008

**How Acquired:** Purchased with member donations and a grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation

### **Natural Communities :**

- Mesic upland woodland forest
- Sand forest
- Intermittent creeks
- Ravines

### **Notable Features:**

- Twelve acres of sand forest dominated by black oak, white oak and black hickory and sassafras
- Mesic upland forest on loess soil dominated by red oak, white oak, and some shagbark hickory
- Old growth timber with minimal logging
- Red and White oaks over 3 feet in diameter throughout
- 300 year old White oaks
- Presence of small young oaks of varying age classes

**Notable Species:** Puttyroot orchid, Hazelnut, Spicebush, Black haw viburnum, Michigan lily, eight species of ferns

### **Management Plans:**

- Conduct ecological surveys
- Nominate to Illinois Natural Areas Inventory
- Control exotic species
- Reintroduce fire
- Post signage

**Funding Needed:** \$ 30,000 remains on the balance of the property.

**Ecological Significance:** The acquisition of this property helps preserve two imperiled natural communities in central Illinois. High quality sand forests are particularly rare, with only 120 acres documented in the region before now. The 12 acres in the Boyle woods would increase the regional total by ten percent.

Undisturbed mesic upland forests are also scarce within the region. Of about 600 acres remaining in central Illinois, less than 150 are located in the lower Sangamon Valley (Illinois Department of Natural Resources, *Lower Sangamon River Valley: An Inventory of the Region's Resources*, 2003). These acreages are largely concentrated along the I-55 corridor in the eastern part of the watershed. Acquisition of the Boyle Woods would protect 38 acres of highly-quality mesic upland forest in the western reaches of the Sangamon Valley.



The Friends of the Sangamon Valley is a charitable organization dedicated to the preservation of our natural heritage by acquiring, restoring and protecting ecologically significant lands in the Sangamon River Watershed.

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