

Ecosystems at Merry Lea

Merry Lea's 1,189-acre nature preserve is home to a diverse selection of Indiana ecosystems.

| Species spotlight: | |
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| Forests at Merry Lea | |
| Lowland Forest <i>Poorly drained soils</i> | Silver Maple, Red Maple, Burr Oak, Pin Oak, Cottonwood, Sycamore trees |
| Upland Forest <i>Well-drained soils</i> | Red Oak, Black Oak, White Oak, Shagbark Hickory, Bitternut Hickory trees |
| Wetlands at Merry Lea | |
| Bog <i>Peat-forming, nutrient-poor, oxygen-deficient, acidic water</i> | Sphagnum moss |
| Fen <i>Peat-forming, nutrient-rich, alkaline water</i> | Grasses and sedges |
| Marsh <i>Herbaceous plants</i> | Sedges, cattails, rushes |
| Shrub-Carr <i>Neutral or alkaline water</i> | Scrubby vegetation |
| Swamp <i>Almost year-round saturated soils</i> | Trees and shrubs |
| Vernal Pond <i>Temporary, collects water in spring from melting snow and rainfall, dries up in the summer</i> | Important breeding ground for amphibians |
| Wet Meadow <i>Saturated soils</i> | Non-woody vegetation, grasses |
| Grasslands at Merry Lea | |
| Meadow <i>Typically formed in abandoned agriculture fields</i> | Queen Anne's Lace, Goldenrod, Black-eyed Susan, Bee-Balm |
| Black Oak Savanna <i>Widely-spaced Black Oak trees in a field of grasses and forbs</i> | Black Oak, Little Bluestem, Butterfly Weed, Round-headed Bush Clover |
| Tall Grass Prairie <i>A field of grasses and forbs maintained by fire</i> | Indian Grass, Big and Little Bluestem, Sideoats Grama, Canada Wild Rye, Black-eyed Susan, New England Aster |



Merry Lea's Mission

- Providing a natural sanctuary for northern Indiana's plants & animals
- Providing environmental education for people of all ages
- Providing a setting for re-creating opportunities that benefit the human body & spirit while not exploiting the land or excessively disturbing its ecosystems

Help us fulfill our mission. Donate online at:
goshen.edu/merrylea/donate



Merry Lea
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of Goshen College

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Where Earth and People Meet



Trail Map



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History of Merry Lea

Pre-1830s:

Nine hundred acres of naturally occurring wetlands and open water covered lowland areas. The Miami Nation lived in the area for centuries prior to their removal, due to the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

1830s:

Settlers used upland forests as woodland pastures and sources of timber, or cleared them for farming.

1880s:

Ditches were dug to drain the lake and expose rich soil for growing potatoes, onions and peppermint.

1930s-1986:

Luckey's Landing Resort on High Lake was a popular public destination for camping, fishing and boating.

1980:

The Rieths generously donated Merry Lea to Goshen College.

1991-present:

Restoration of wetland and prairie ecosystems begin. Merry Lea continues to restore 75 acres of wetlands and 50 acres of prairie on what was once agricultural land.

1964:

Lee and Mary Jane Rieth began purchasing parcels of land for preservation and environmental education.

1986:

Luckey's Landing property is purchased

2005-2007

Rieth Village is constructed, becoming the first LEED Platinum certified facility in Indiana.

Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center Trail Map

Trail Information

Hours:

Open dawn to dusk,
365 days a year.

Parking:

The Learning Center gate closes at 5 p.m. Please park along the side of the lane outside the gate if enjoying trails after this time.

Restrooms:

Available in the Learning Center during work hours. After hours, from April through October, porta potties are located at the Learning Center and Farmstead trailheads for visitor use.

Help Merry Lea fulfill its mission by:

- Staying on designated trails
- Traveling only by foot or skis on all trails
- Leaving plants and animals undisturbed
- Keeping all pets on a leash and carrying out their waste
- Properly disposing of all litter
- Using trails only during daylight hours



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