



*Common Mergansers have made a huge comeback on the Kokosing. Turtlehead flowers by John Howard.*

## TURTLEHEAD SWAMP

the Arc's first preservation footprint in the Kokosing & in Knox Co.



The 57-mile-long Kokosing River in the Muskingum Watershed is one of Ohio's most pristine waterways. It protects over 70 species of fish and 24 species of amphibians, including the state-endangered mountain brook lamprey, spotted darter, and eastern hellbender. The Kokosing's riparian corridor and uplands are used by 72 species of birds for nesting, and by the state and federally endangered Indiana bat for roosting, feeding, and raising young. Due to its exceptional ecological value, the Kokosing is classified as an "Outstanding State Water" by the Ohio EPA.

Janet Kohr, a landowner in Knox County and longtime Arc supporter, is the person responsible for connecting the Arc with Killbuck Watershed Land Trust, and inspiring the partnership that now works together to preserve Killbuck Swamp in Holmes County. Meanwhile, in neighboring Knox County, Janet has created her own private preserve system along the Kokosing. Janet's five preserves totaling 270 acres will be donated in their entirety to the Arc at Janet's passing. She has also put into a place an endowment

fund that will help the Arc establish a staffing hub in Knox County to serve the larger Knox-Holmes County region.

One of Janet's preserves, Turtlehead Swamp, spans both sides of the Kokosing River and protects more than 2,100 feet of riparian corridor. Over the years, Janet has planted native prairie forbs in the swamp, as well as beech, swamp white oak, and Kentucky coffee trees in the river's floodplain. Both Turtlehead Swamp and a bordering 278-acre farm (owned by another private party) are already protected by conservation easements held by Owl Creek Conservancy.

Rather than give Turtlehead Swamp to the Arc at her passing, Janet chose to jump-start the Arc's entry into Knox County by donating the preserve to us this year. Knox County is heavily impacted by the expansive growth of Columbus. Farms and wetlands are being rapidly replaced by housing developments and retail stores. Turtlehead Swamp gives the Arc an important foothold in this part of Ohio and will enable us to continue working with Janet and other conservationists to further protect one of the state's most valuable natural resources—the Kokosing River.

