



▲ Photo: A path through invasive wintercreeper

The Rise of CISMAs

by Amber Slaughterbeck, SICIM

There is something incredible happening across Indiana and you can get involved. It is called the "Indiana Invasives Initiative", or III, and it's coming to your county.

In late 2017, Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management (SICIM) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) entered into a contribution agreement for the purpose of developing local Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) throughout Indiana.

CISMAs are partnership groups/organizations formed with the goal of managing invasive species across jurisdictional and land ownership boundaries. Partners can include county, state, and federal governmental agencies, non-profits, citizen groups, landowners, clubs, and others. By working together at the local level, Cisma partners pool their resources and knowledge to address mutual invasive species problems.

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▲ Photo: Amber with Burning Bush, a common landscaping plant and major Indiana invasive

Simultaneously SICIM and the NRCS have been working to eradicate invasive species and raise public awareness of the devastation being caused by these non-native invasives. Both have come to the realization that we will not begin to make much headway until the problem is addressed at the local level, realistically honoring the demographics and available resources of each Indiana county.

SICIM has given the 5-year project a title of “Indiana Invasives Initiative” or III to represent the statewide efforts of the agreement. Since February 2018, with the hiring of two Regional Specialists and one Project Coordinator, the project has had many successes. “The III has already been working with over 40 counties, surveyed over 1,000 acres of land for invasive plants at no cost to the landowner, gained partnerships across the state, participated in over 100 outreach/education events, and recently hired an additional two Regional Specialists at the beginning of the new year; however, we are just getting started.

Throughout the “Indiana Invasives Initiative” the Regional Specialist’s will be providing newly developed CISMAs with trainings, educational resources and guidance. To get involved, or to organize a CISMA in your county, reach out to contact the closest Regional Specialist on the map. We encourage you to visit our website at www.sicim.info to learn more or check us out on social media.

We are excited to participate with you, our citizens in this statewide project. We are excited to work with and acknowledge enthusiastic people, many that have already devoted years to invasive species management. And we are excited to increase collaboration, as well as, affirm existing partnerships across Indiana for conservation of our amazing lands and water. We hope you will join us in the fight to restore and save native Indiana!



▲ Photo: SICIM at ISU Earth Day

Greenwood Stormwater Test Lab and Nature Center

The Nature Center, set in a wooded area along South Washington Street on the south side of Pleasant Creek, was created by the Greenwood Stormwater Department and will be free for schools, and other educational groups to use. The City will be able to use the site to give tours, lessons and experiments about water management, and the environment.

The Stormwater Department purchased the site in 2014, and uses the two buildings on the property for storing equipment. Part of the federal requirements for Stormwater departments is that they need to offer public education and outreach programs, and this site will fulfill those responsibilities.

IWF is proud to have this remarkable property join our growing family of Certified Sustainable Trails. We look forward to the public taking part in the growing number of programs on offer.



Letter from the Executive Director

Who needs the Indiana Wildlife Federation?

YOU do—that's who!

For generations, Indiana has provided a diverse landscape for all who love to be outdoors. Whether its hiking, biking, boating, fishing, hunting, camping, photography or wildlife watching—Hoosiers love to be outside. As the population in Indiana grows, so does the pressure on our natural resources to support these cherished activities.

The mission of the Indiana Wildlife Federation (IWF) is to promote the conservation, sound management and sustainable-use of Indiana's wildlife and wildlife habitat. For over 80 years, IWF has been the statewide voice; loud, clear and strong speaking out for the interests of Indiana conservationists and for the preservation of our outdoor heritage so it may be enjoyed by generations to come.

How do we do it? Through our 3 pillars of focus: Education, Advocacy and Action. We work across Indiana delivering free environmental education programs that provide clear calls-to-action that encourage everyone to be better stewards of our natural resources and habitats. IWF is also an agency watchdog in which our board and staff are frequently called upon to give views on bills pending before the legislature, on the actions of resource management leaders and on activities bearing upon our lands, forests, waterways or environment. We also work to add habitat and expand access through on-the-ground volunteer projects that engage and activate a conservation network across the state.

If you are among those of us that love being outside, then you know it is more than just fresh air and sunshine. It's about clean water, healthy ecosystems, abundant habitat and a deep respect for the natural world. If that sounds right to you—then join us and add your support to the growing

Visit our website to join, renew or find out more about upcoming events, campaigns, workshops, lecture series or projects that you can get involved with. Like us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to stay connected!

We are stronger together!

Emily Wood
Executive Director



Save the Date: Weed Wrangle®!

The Urban Wilderness Trail (UWT) was the flagship trail in our Certified Sustainable Trails program in 2017. This incredible space has become a beloved destination for many IWF events from our Monarch Tagging to nature hikes to a pollinator planting. If you love to volunteer to improve our nature spaces, we have just the event for you.

IWF is bringing the Marion Co Cisma to the UWT on Saturday, May 18th from 9a - 12p. We will be gathering at Martin Park and working in the Forest Loop section of the trail. More details will be available on our website and social media soon. All tools and gear will be provided, along with snacks and water.

IWF volunteers who RSVP to Aaron at stump@indianawildlife.org will receive a free IWF t-shirt!

St. Mary-of-the-Woods Gets Certified!

On February 5th, IWF joined Duke Energy foundation to present a check for \$15,000 to our newest Certified Sustainable Campus, St. Mary-of-the-Woods College. The campus has always promoted a sustainable approach to maintaining their grounds. They already reduced or eliminated the use of pesticides and herbicides on campus and they take great care of their beloved old oaks.

The newest project on the campus involves the restoration and improvement of Lake Le Fer, a small body of water on the campus grounds. IWF visited this site and helped denote the invasive plants to be removed and the native ones to keep. Campus staff and volunteers cleared the area of invasive species ahead of an installation of benches and tables made of recycled bottle caps collected by students.

This year, the college plans to begin construction of an outdoor classroom geared toward connecting students with nature and educating them on the importance of being good stewards. The classroom will also serve as an event space for other campus activities. It will be powered by solar panels, connected to the Certified trail around Lake Le Fer and the area will be open to the public upon completion.



▲ Photo: IWF, Duke Energy Foundation, and St. Mary-of-the-Woods representatives

Apply for the 2019 Holt Scholarship!

The IWF Endowment awards a \$1,000 scholarship in memory of Charles Holt, a lifelong member and champion of fish and wildlife resources. Applicants must be at or above a sophomore level and studying a field related to resource conservation or environmental education. Applications are accepted until June 15.

Visit www.indianawildlife.org/Holt-Scholarship to apply.

Indiana Outdoor Stewardship Act (IOSA)

The Indiana Outdoor Stewardship Act ([House Bill 1376](#)) would increase state investment in Indiana's natural resources - our land, our waters, and our native wildlife. This goal would be accomplished by dedicating a share of existing sales tax revenue generated by the sale of outdoor equipment and sporting goods - camping, hiking, biking, hunting, and fishing equipment - to state land, water, and wildlife conservation programs. The programs receiving these funds would be President Harrison Conservation Trust, State Wildlife Action Plan and Wildlife Diversity Program, Maintenance and repair of buildings and facilities on DNR properties.

These programs have been underfunded and unable to fulfill their missions or meet their needs. The President Harrison Conservation Trust has seen revenue from sale of the environmental license plate decline due to increased specialty plate competition. The State Wildlife Action Plan and the Wildlife Diversity Program support DNR efforts to protect and restore wildlife habitats and populations. Neither program receives state funds dedicated for their specific purpose, apart from the funds that state taxpayers contribute on their tax return for non-game and endangered wildlife. Dedicated state funding will allow Indiana to match federal wildlife funds, resulting in a significant funding boost for wildlife conservation in Indiana. The Indiana DNR owns and manages hundreds of outdoor properties - state parks, state recreation areas, state forests, nature preserves, and state fish and wildlife areas. The buildings, picnic shelters, restrooms, inns, and trails at these sites must be constantly maintained. Yet state funding has not kept pace with the need, resulting in a backlog of deferred maintenance projects estimated at nearly \$100 million. If Indiana does not address this need, the backlog will only grow and may result in many of DNR's historic buildings and facilities being lost.

The IOSA is not a new tax and only dedicates existing sales tax revenues for conserving our outdoors. The demand for and purchase of outdoor gear is mainly driven by the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities in Indiana. Given this, the use of sales tax revenue generated by the sale of outdoor equipment for land, water, and wildlife conservation is a logical and sensible tax policy. The benefit to conservation is enormous, given that Indiana has collected an average of \$62 million a year over the past five years on sporting goods-related sales tax.

Three states currently use this method of funding conservation programs: Texas (\$277 million over 2 years), Virginia (up to \$13 million a year), Georgia (estimated \$20 million a year). In November 2018, over four-fifths of Georgia voters approved the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act and made it part of the state's constitution, guaranteeing this state investment in conservation for future generations.

In order to guarantee appropriate conservation funding, the Indiana General Assembly must enact HB 1376 into law, which could occur as soon as the [2019 legislative session](#).

For more information on how you can get involved, email the Indiana Conservation Alliance at indianaconservationalliance@gmail.com.

Follow the Investing in Conservation campaign at:

indianaconservationalliance.org

facebook.com/INCAsc2014

twitter.com/INconservation

Calendar Updates

Feb 21-24 - Deer, Turkey, & Waterfowl Expo

March 12-16 - Wildlife Week

April 13 - JoCo GRIP Weed Wrangle

April 22 - Earth Day Indiana Fest

April 28 - Little River Wetlands Project Earth Day

April 26-May 5 - City Nature Challenge

May 4 - JoCo GRIP Weed Wrangle

May 18 - IWF Weed Wrangle

Mid May - IWF Native Plant Sale orders begin shipping

June 8-19 - Nature Play Days

June 15 - Holt Scholarship Application Deadline

2019 Legislative Updates

We are pleased to announce the addition of BillTrack50 to our website. BillTrack50 is a web-based tool for tracking policy and legislation and also provides up-to-date information on legislation as it moves through the legislative process. You can stay on top of policy relating to conservation, wildlife and natural resource management by bookmarking our Indiana policy tracker: <https://www.indianawildlife.org/news-events/bill-watch/>

TOP 2019 LEGISLATIVE ISSUES:

IN HB1376: The Indiana Outdoor Stewardship Act (IOSA): Conservation funding. Establishes the Indiana outdoor stewardship program to: (1) protect land, water, and wildlife resources; (2) acquire land, or an interest in land, for the protection of land, water, and wildlife resources; and (3) maintain Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owned or managed facilities in good condition. Full Text: <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2019/bills/house/1376/>

Sponsors (3): Sue Errington (D)*, Mike Aylesworth (R), Rita Fleming (D)

Position: SUPPORT - Contact Your State Legislators - The Indiana Outdoor Stewardship Act (IOSA) -- House Bill 1376 -- would increase state investment in Indiana's natural resources by dedicating the share of existing sales tax revenue that is generated by the sale of outdoor equipment and sporting goods -- i.e., camping equipment, hunting and fishing equipment, hiking equipment, bicycling equipment -- to state land, water and wildlife conservation programs. Ask your state representative to cosponsor the Indiana Outdoor Stewardship Act! Read our [fact sheet here](#).

IN HB1407: Hunting and trapping of bobcats. Establishes a bobcat hunting and trapping season in an eligible county. Requires the director of the department of natural resources to establish and implement a program under which a bobcat may be taken in an eligible county. Full Text: <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2019/bills/house/1407/>

Sponsors (3): Shane Lindauer (R)*, Ron Bacon (R), Steve Bartels (R)

Position: OPPOSE The Indiana Wildlife Federation opposes this legislation because we feel that it takes management decisions and control away from the Department of Natural Resources. Our Indiana DNR has highly-qualified, skilled resource managers that for decades have made informed management plans based on scientific data and the latest resource management techniques. This bill threatens the long-established processes that have been in place to protect our shared natural resources in the same way that exempting deer from the jurisdiction of DNR has allowed the disgraceful practice of captive "high-fence" hunting ranges in Indiana since 2015.



Native Plant Sale!

Spring is just around the corner and it's time to start thinking about landscaping and planting. IWF offers a variety of native flowers, shrubs, and trees to spruce up your yard or create new habitats.

We are continuing our partnership with Cardno Native Plant Nursery to provide a selection of native plant kits, bare root shrubs and trees, and seed packets. Each plant kit contains 50 native plants that will be delivered to your door. Every purchase supports IWF and Indiana's wildlife.

For more information visit <http://www.indianawildlife.org/wildlife/native-plants/native-plant-sale/>



▲ Photo: Bird and Butterfly Kit