



Field Notes: Morgan-Monroe

A firsthand look at the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment

T ramping through dense underbrush is par for the course for Patrick Ruhl, a Purdue graduate student, conducting mist-net surveys in Morgan-Monroe State Forest. His study on breeding birds is just one of many being conducted at Morgan-Monroe and in nearby Yellowwood State Forest as part of the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment (HEE). Begun in 2006, HEE is a long term (100 year) ecological project examining how various forest management techniques impact local wildlife and plant species. It also explores how those techniques can inform sustainable forestry operations in southern Indiana and beyond. Uneven-aged, even-aged, and no harvest (control) techniques produce research cores with different compositions and structures. University researchers, graduate students, natural resource professionals, and others manage experiments to see how disturbance influences species diversity, richness, behavior, and other factors in forest ecosystem dynamics.

In October, IWF enjoyed a first-hand look at these experiments, led by Patrick Ma, the HEE project coordinator. He introduced us to the overall scale of the research being done at HEE. Nine research cores, encompassing approximately 200 acres each, have been treated with alternative management methods, namely single-tree removal, patch cuts, clear cutting, and prescribed burns.

Besides breeding bird counts, surveys are also being done with small mammals, various beetles, salamanders, bats, and many other species. With such a diversity of wildlife, HEE offers outstanding educational and field training opportunities for individuals from Indiana as well as other states. During the summer, the project typically employs 200 undergraduate students, and since its inception, about 26 graduate students have completed their theses based on work done at HEE. Volunteers are also welcome to get involved in studies during the field season and make a contribution to the healthy management of Indiana's valuable hardwood forests.

Inside This Issue:

- FALL CONSERVATION CONFERENCE IN REVIEW p2
- WILD WALKS ON THE WHITE RIVER p3
- CATFISH RULING SUCCESS p6



▲ Indy's Urban Wilderness Trail

To learn more about the HEE, you can visit: www.heeforeststudy.org/. You can also find out about volunteer opportunities by contacting Patrick Ma at ma376@purdue.edu.

Fall Conservation Conference

The 2015 Fall Conservation Conference was a great success with over 50 attendees plus 10 excellent speakers. We began the day's agenda with a briefing on the commercialization of wildlife threat from Barb Simpson followed by an update on DNR rules and legislation from Sam Hyer, Legislative Director of the IDNR. Scott Johnson, Wildlife Science Program Manager with the DNR, introduced us to the 2014 Wildlife Science Report, focusing on threatened eastern box turtles and the endangered snuffbox mussel, among other topics. **We were privileged to have Collin O'Mara, President and CEO of NWF, as our luncheon speaker. He emphasized the importance of grass-roots conservation efforts being done at the state level and said that NWF is working hard to enhance its collaboration with state affiliates.**

After lunch, we were treated to a presentation on sustainable landscaping from Stephanie Krull with Indiana State University, one of the universities certified in our LSC program. Megan Dillon, Urban Wildlife Biologist with the DNR, discussed issues at the wildlife/human interface, and Shannon Zezula with the NRCS partnered with Kevin Allison from the Marion County SWCD to cover the importance of soil health. Our final speaker of the day, Bill Fielding, Roadside Services Coordinator with INDOT, highlighted successes in vegetation management through the Hoosier Roadside Heritage program.



▲ Mike Shriberg (NWF), Erin Baird, Collin O'Mara (NWF), & Jason Dinsmore (NWF)

Calendar Updates

Nov. 14 - INPAWS Conference

Dec. 1 - GivingTuesday

Feb. 26 - Cold Spring Environmental Magnet School's People in the Environment Day (volunteers needed)

Mar. 19 - Annual Meeting and Conservation Awards Banquet



Membership Update

During our recent strategic planning process, an area of confusion surrounding our membership renewal and our annual year-end appeal was identified. The IWF Board of Directors has approved changes that will simplify and clarify the membership renewal process. The biggest change will be moving the IWF Membership Cycle from a rolling renewal to an annual renewal system.

Starting in 2016, all IWF memberships will renew in May. You will receive your membership renewal reminders by mail and/or email in April and May.

This change will help clarify the Membership Renewal (May) and the Annual Appeal (November). It will also reduce the administrative resources needed to process ongoing renewals and allow staff to spend more time running programs, planning fun field trips, and keeping you updated on important issues. Stayed tuned for additional details on these changes!

Doxtater Internships

We are looking for a Conservation Program intern and a Communications intern for the spring semester. The **Conservation Program intern** will work closely with the Landscaping the Sustainable Campus program, as well as the What's in Your WILD Backyard? Program. The **Communications intern** will manage social media accounts, compose emails to donors/members, research and write newsletters, etc.

If you, or someone you know, are interested in applying go to www.indianawildlife.org/internships.

Volunteer Opportunities

Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped at our events in the spring & fall! We're winding down for the winter season but keep your calendar open for great opportunities in 2016.

- Be an IWF ambassador! IWF often gets requests to do presentations for groups. If you love educating people about wildlife and habitat, then this could be a perfect fit!
- Photography - We are always looking for quality photographs of wildlife and habitat to use for our website, marketing, social media, and outreach materials.

Find out about all our opportunities visit: www.indianawildlife.org/about/volunteer/. To volunteer, call us at 317.875.9453 or email us at info@indianawildlife.org.

Volunteering Spotlight

TASTE OF THE WILD GAME COOKOUT

On August 8th, IWF served 450 venison sloppy Joe's at the wild game cookout at the State Fair. It was only possible because of our great volunteers and the generous venison donations from Jim Wagoner and the Indiana Bowhunters Association. Join us next year for the cookout's 25th anniversary!

HOOSIER OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

Despite a cool and rainy start, our dedicated volunteers and staff were able to build 112 bird feeders with children and families at the 2015 Hoosier Outdoor Experience. We spoke with many folks about the importance of backyard habitats for supporting wildlife. Supplies donated by the Glendale Lowe's allowed us to build more feeders than ever before!

Kids' Corner

COLLECT AND LEARN ABOUT SEEDS!

Things you will need:

- Egg Carton
- Seed and/or plant guide
- Snack of sunflower or pumpkin seeds to accompany your research

1. **HUNT FOR SEEDS** - Search for seeds (and the berries and other fruits that may contain them) in your neighborhood or a nearby park or woodland. A walk through tall grasses may produce burrs or other seedy hitchhikers left over from last fall. Try to fill each section of the egg carton with a different variety. (Note: Some seeds are toxic. Don't eat the seeds you find.)

2. **TAKE A GOOD LOOK** - Find the seeds in any fruits you've found. Open up the seeds to see what they look like inside. Think of reasons why acorns have hard casings and chestnut covers are thorny.

3. **BE SEED DETECTIVES** - Look at the seeds you've gathered. Guess how each kind gets dispersed. Experiment with your seeds to figure out how they move. Toss seeds into the air, especially maple wings. Blow on dandelions. Shred an old pine cone to see what happens. Try to guess if animals play a role in dispersing seeds.

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Reprinted with permission from National Wildlife Federation. For more family fun & kids games check out www.nwf.org/kids!



Plant THIS, Not That

Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*)

This species of tree has escaped cultivation and has invaded habitats such as fields and forests. This tree creates dense shade and displaces native trees, shrubs and plants. You can distinguish it from other maple trees by crushing the leaves. If the leaves produce a milky substance, then you've got a Norway Maple on your hands. This plant species can be found in 62 counties.

Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)

This species of maple is native to Indiana. It is best known for its bright, colorful fall foliage and is the primary source for maple syrup. Sugar Maples can grow to heights of 82-115 feet.



Photo: Paul Wray, Iowa State University



Photo: S. Weeks, CD-FNR1



A Walk on the Wild Side

We had a terrific time taking two urban wildlife walks along **Indy's Urban Wilderness Trail** during the **White River Festival**. Our hikers got to experience a flurry of Monarchs, a green heron, great blue heron, an osprey, and more!

IWF Hosts SUSHI

IWF and the Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife jointly hosted the Statewide Urban & Suburban Habitat Initiative roundtable event on October 16th to discuss suburban and urban habitat issues. Representatives from state and federal agencies, non-profits, soil and water conservation districts, parks systems, and others participated in this event to improve communication regarding habitat work. The organizations shared experiences with funding, marketing, stewardship, and resource availability. Outcomes of this brainstorming session included the development of key messages and a Facebook group to promote resource sharing.

All Aboard!

IWF Executive Director, Erin Baird, and board member, Stacy Cachules, made great contacts at the **Get on Board** event at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis on October 5th. This annual event offers a chance for individuals looking for leadership opportunities to connect with local nonprofits in need of board and committee members. At this year's event, Erin and Stacy spoke with 20 engaged, skilled individuals who were interested in learning more about and becoming involved with IWF. We are looking forward to building relationships with these professionals and attending next year's event!

Upcoming Field Trips

We have completed our scheduled field trips for 2015 but look forward to taking more next spring! Be sure to check the IWF website for a rescheduled Eagle Marsh tour. We are exploring new field trips to locations such as:

- Big Walnut Creek
- Bean Blossom Nature Preserve
- Hellbender research project at Purdue



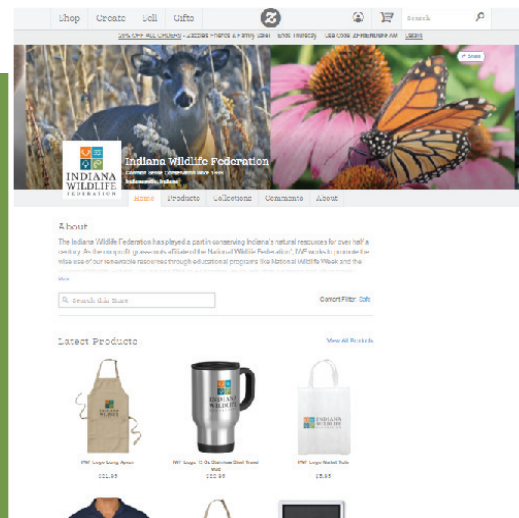
Give the Gift of IWF This Holiday Season!

Take the guesswork out your holiday shopping this year! Share your passion for conservation by shopping our new online store:

www.zazzle.com/indianawildlifefed. We have created a variety of products like t-shirts, polos, magnets, car decals, baseball caps, and more that feature our new logo. You and your loved ones can support Indiana's wildlife and habitat and look great at the same time!



▲ Getting the inside scoop on beetle surveys in HEE from Dr. Jeff Holland of Purdue's Department of Entomology.



A New Logo, A New Look

On October 1st, we launched our new IWF logo through our online communication platforms. What a wonderful, positive response we received! The new logo preserves the identity, mission and tradition of IWF while simplifying and updating our image. We will be transitioning all of our print materials to use the new logo and we are excited to show off some new event and marketing materials that we were able to purchase through our grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust.



▲ We now have a retractable banner for outreach events!

Habitat Program Updates

BACKYARD HABITAT WORKSHOP

We are working with local partners to encourage residents in urban Indy neighborhoods to create backyard habitats. We are also exploring opportunities to present to homeowner and neighborhood associations. Be sure to check our website for 2016 workshop dates!

LANDSCAPING THE SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS

On November 3rd, we met with representatives at Goshen College to discuss possible participation in the *Landscaping the Sustainable Campus* program. We received a tour of the campus and a close look at the school's many sustainability projects, including native prairie landscaping and dining hall composting. We hope that Goshen will be able to participate in the LSC program in the near future.

SUSTAINABLE WILDERNESS TRAIL

We are in the early stages of the certification process of the first Sustainable Wilderness Trail. This new program is aimed at helping trail developers and managers create and maintain trails that provide the 4 basic needs of wildlife while still being accessible and useful for people.

KIDS' CONTEST

The 2016 online Kids' Contest will be launched during National Wildlife Week in mid-March and will run through Earth Day (April 22). We are once again working with the Student Chapter of Environmental Education at Purdue University to develop new questions to challenge students. K-8 students who take the online quiz will be entered for a chance to win great prizes like game cameras, outdoor adventure kits, and more.

Friends & Family Offer for IWF Members!

Enjoy a special **friends & family discount** if you shop at the Cabela's in Noblesville between Friday, November 13th and Sunday, November 15th. You can save 5-25% on items throughout the store! Be sure to print **this offer** to get your discount at the checkout!



Legislative Updates

New catfish rules: In September, the Indiana Natural Resources Commission issued its final approval of rule changes regarding the minimum size of catfish taken by sport and commercial fishermen in the state's waterways, lakes, and reservoirs. Once approved by the Attorney General and Governor's offices, the rule will increase the minimum size from 10 to 13 inches and restrict the daily take of large catfish.

These rule changes are a good first step to addressing the growing concern of many conservationists regarding the commercialization of wildlife, and the importance of protecting and managing our Indiana natural resources for all Hoosiers now, and for future generations.

Appeals Court flawed ruling hurts wildlife: The Indiana Court of Appeals handed down a flawed decision Feb. 2, suggesting that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) does not have authority to regulate any privately-owned wild animals. The case was part of the decade-long fight over whether "canned hunting" of captive whitetail deer should be legalized in Indiana.

In a surprisingly broad decision, the court ruled in a 2-1 vote that DNR has no authority to regulate captive-raised whitetail deer and further asserted that the DNR does not have authority over ANY wild animal that is privately owned. The court's analysis flies in the face of decades of wildlife management practice in Indiana and is counter to the wildlife-management principles of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation that have been in practice across the United States for over 150 years. It undermines DNR's ability to assure ethical treatment and secure containment of privately-owned wild animals, puts the public safety at risk, threatens the environment, and hinders the preservation of Indiana's wild animals for future generations.

The court's opinion clearly has "unintended" consequences. This "anything goes" approach is not what anyone in Indiana wants, regardless of where you stand on the canned hunting issue, and it needs to be addressed in the upcoming legislative session.

Ongoing Advocacy Issues

Cervid chronic wasting disease

State authority over wild animals

Mounds Reservoir / Greenway

Water resources

Ohio River Coalition

Division of Forestry strategic plan

State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)



SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, MARCH 19TH
9-3PM

THE SOL CENTER
708 E MICHIGAN ST

Join us for IWF's Spring
Conservation Conference
and 56th Annual Awards
Banquet!

MORE INFORMATION...

Registration will be
available at www.indianawildlife.org
in February

Photos From Our Fall Events



▲ Erin and Barb enjoying the State Fair after the Taste of the Wild Game Cookout



▲ John Goss and Chuck Brinkman taste test the venison sloppy Joes and fried Asian carp.



▲ HEE techs, Danielle and Caroline, gear up to tag mice and chipmunks.