



Photo: Ribbon cutting at Goose Pond, FWA

Saturday, February 25 we gathered with Indiana Department of Natural Resources staff, including Director Dan Bortner and Division of Fish and Wildlife Director Amanda Wuestefeld, as well as representatives from the International Crane Foundation, Friends of Goose Pond, and many others to officially cut the ribbon for the interpretive trail at the Goose Pond Visitors Center.

Part of the Marsh Madness Festival, this trail opening brought folks from all over the state to see the new trail and signage offering a fun and educational path around the visitors center. We are incredibly proud to have been involved in this project at one of Indiana's outdoor gems. Goose Pond is renowned for its incredible bird watching opportunities and on this unseasonably beautiful February day, it did not disappoint. After the opening, visitors were treated with bird watching including Sandhill Cranes, Pelicans, and for the sharp-eyed onlooker even a Whooping Crane!

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Pictures from Goose Pond, FWA

Conservation in Indiana, particularly when it comes to funding, is not an issue that can be tackled by a single organization or individual. Projects like the Goose Pond trail are cooperative efforts. If you want to see more projects like this, the acquisition of new conservation areas, and the expansion and maintenance of existing properties we highly encourage you to become a member of IWF and take part in our advocacy efforts. It is only through our cooperative and persistent efforts that we can create beautiful havens for wildlife like the endangered Whooping Crane and vistas where we can enjoy their activity. If you have yet to visit Goose Pond, please do so when you can. Until then, enjoy these photos!



▲ Photo; A great view of Goose Pond from the visitors center



▲ Photo; IWF Executive Director Dan Boritt speaking to the crowd



▲ Photo; A family walking the new trail



▲ Photo; IWF Habitat Programs Manager Aaron Stump hanging out with the International Crane Foundation (they're not all birds)

Apply for the 2023 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.

Letter from the Executive Director

As we launch into 2023, wildlife throughout our state faces a variety of challenges, yet momentum is being built through statewide coalitions and continued efforts to educate Hoosiers. For all of us who consume the news the situation may often seem dire. Global temperatures are rising, water patterns are changing, wildlife is disappearing, and our politicians seem unwilling, or unable to do anything about it. The flip side of the equation is not often plastered on headlines or the lead to our news broadcasts, yet a tidal wave of environmentally conscious voters is rising. Young voters and pre-voters routinely list the environment as one of their most important



issues. They prioritize public spaces and public access to land when choosing where they will live. They support businesses that hold up their value structures and shun, often vocally, those that do not. A cynic may say this is how all young people behave, over time they will change. Time will tell what comes of the belief structures of young people, but preliminary evidence shows that issues revolving around the climate and the environment are core to them and will remain so, meaning how they vote and interact with the economy will endure well into the future.

The 2023 Legislative session is nearly halfway done. A variety of bills have been put forth, while most have no direct relation to wildlife in the state, a large number do. The Indiana Wildlife Federation has identified eighteen (18) bills put forth in both the House and Senate that we believe membership and like-minded Hoosiers should be aware of. These bills include the adoption of the Governor's proposed budget that makes historic investments in the Department of Natural Resources as well as unparalleled money earmarked for land acquisition and access to public lands through Next Level Trails. Other bills are more insidious, weakening protections for wetlands and regulations throughout the state. We urge each of you to familiarize yourselves with the following bills and reach out to your elected officials and encourage them to support or oppose these bills.

Federally, a variety of important issues continue to move through the 117th Congress. 2023 will see a renewal of the [Farm Bill](#), one of the largest pieces of legislation, and one that Indiana benefits greatly from. US Senator Mike Braun sits on the US Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. On the House side, US Representative Jim Baird sits on the House Committee on Agriculture. The Farm Bill, authorized every five years, is the largest drivers of land-based conservation in the United States. This bill has the capacity to institute strong agricultural conservation provisions for resilient communities, healthy soils, clean water, and thriving wildlife. The Indiana delegation has the ability to influence Farm Bill priorities and you have the power to influence Senator Braun and Representative Baird to make sure Indiana's lands and water will benefit from provisions in the Farm Bill.

Locally the Indiana Wildlife Federation continues to push forward with our [Sustainable Trails program](#). This program helps new and existing trails become thriving habitat corridors that both people and wildlife can safely enjoy. On February 25th the IWF dedicated our newest sustainable trail at the [Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area Visitors Center](#) along with Director Bortner and other DNR leadership. This trail will help to open up one of our state's most wonderful public lands to Hoosiers of all abilities. While the Goose Pond Trail is complete, we are just beginning construction on a new trail in Johnson County. This project, made possible through a grant from the Governor's Next Level Trails initiative, will open the Central Indiana Land Trust's (CILT) magnificent property near Trafalgar. This state dedicated nature preserve, Betley Woods at Glacier's End, managed by our partner CILT, is where the Wisconsin glaciation ended its southward migration when it ran into the Brown County Hills. When finished, this trail will provide multiple paths of varying difficulties, allowing nature lovers of all physical abilities to enjoy an immersion in healing properties of the natural world.

While no one can say what the rest of 2023 will bring, with the help of dedicated wildlife lovers like you we can continue to shape the future of wildlife and wildlands in Indiana.

With Love of Wildlife-

Dan Boritt
Executive Director

Thank you to our speakers!

Our Annual Conference would be nothing without our amazing speakers. Every year, we are fortunate to have presenters speak to us about some of the most important issues facing conservation in Indiana. This year was no different. The informative and uplifting presentations at our conference inspire action and bring us together in the pursuit of a common goal. If you weren't able to attend, you can still view the conference in our [video library](#).



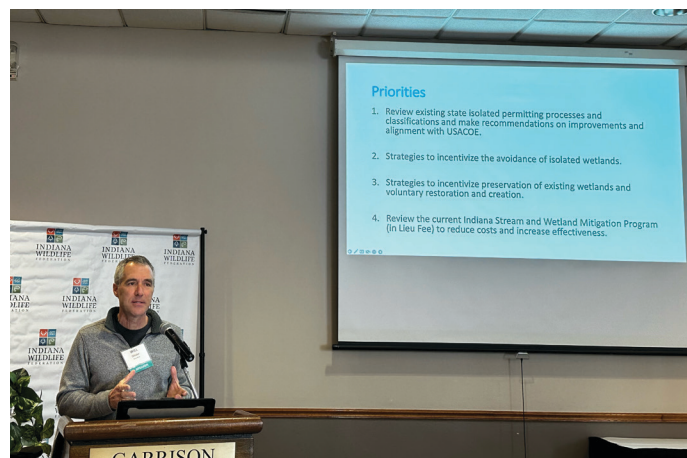
▲ Photo; Anne Lacey, our keynote speaker, broke down the peril Whooping Cranes face and how we can help



▲ Photo; Drew YoungDyke updated us on National Wildlife Federation priorities



▲ Photo; Kalli Dunn presented on the management practices that keep Goose Pond a premiere bird watching locale



▲ Photo; Will Ditzler explained the importance of legislation protecting our dwindling wetlands

Thank you to our 2023 Annual Conference sponsors!



Think Spring: Native Plant Sale 2023!

Our Native Plant Sale is back for 2023! We've undergone some fairly major changes and updates are still being made, but we're officially open for orders. We have streamlined our plant kit offering so you can find exactly what you need for your garden.

For more info on some of the plants, don't forget to check out our [Native Plant Finder](#)!

Thanks to our partnership with Stantec (formerly Cardno) Native Plant Nursery to provide a selection of native plant kits. You can also order bare root trees and shrubs for fall. Each plant kit contains 50 native plants that will be delivered to your door.

For more information visit indianawildlife.org/take-action/native-plant-sale



▲ Photo; Example of a typical kit

IWF 2023 Legislative Priorities

State Budget - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1001>

Support the Governor's proposed budget.

Watercraft Registration Renewal Fee - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1304>

This bill raises fees on watercraft registration and utilized the funds to fight invasives.

Hunting and Fishing License Agents - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/senate/184>

This bill allows businesses to tack on a \$0.75 fee for the sale of hunting/fishing licenses. We support this as it incentivises small, rural businesses to prioritize the sale of these licenses.

Watershed Development Commission - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1639>

Allows municipalities to organize around watershed development. Allows the Maumee River basin commission, the St. Joseph River basin commission, or the Upper Wabash River basin commission to transform into a watershed development commission if the county executives of all participating counties, by vote of at least two of the three members of the county executive, approve the proposed transformation.

Closure of Coal Combustion Residuals Surface Impoundments - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1190>

Requires the owner or operator of certain coal combustion residuals (CCR) surface impoundments to remove all CCR from the CCR surface impoundment. This bill will NOT move, but we still believe we should take a stand. **SUPPORT**

Duty to Notify Water Utility of Spill - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1250>

Amends bill, requiring party responsible for a potentially dangerous spill to notify authorities & water utility operators if there is danger to people or the environment. This bill will NOT move, but we still believe we should take a stand.

IWF 2023 Legislative Priorities cont

State Police and Conservation Officer Raises - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1551>

Significant raises to State Police and DOC officers.

Climate Change Study - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1604>

Creates commission to study impact of climate change in Indiana and annually report findings and recommendations to the legislative council and the governor from December 1, 2023 to December 1, 2027.

Climate Solutions Task Force - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1453>

Establishes the climate solutions task force (task force) to review issues related to sustainable and clean energy solutions. Sets forth membership and requires the task force to issue a report to the general assembly and the governor not later than November 1, 2024.

Climate Solutions Task Force - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/senate/335>

Establishes the climate solutions task force (task force) to review issues related to sustainable and clean energy solutions. Sets forth membership, and requires the task force to issue a report to the general assembly and the governor not later than November 1, 2024.

Property Tax Assessment - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1515>

Incentivizes land owners to protect wetlands through tax incentives.

Natural Resources Matters - **SUPPORT**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/senate/412>

Cleans up issues with DNR's ability to operate effectively.

Exception From Permitting - **OPPOSE**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/house/1601>

Provides that a forestry operation that conducts its operations in compliance with the Indiana Logging and Forestry Best Management Practices Field Guide published by the Indiana department of natural resources is exempt from any requirement to obtain a permit from the department of natural resources or the department of environmental management concerning forestry activities confined to a waterway that has a watershed not greater than 10 square miles.

DNR Best Floodplain Mapping - **OPPOSE**

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2023/bills/senate/242>

This bill weakens flood plain protections and will increase the risk of flooding.

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ADVERTISE HERE!

Does your business share the IWF vision of sustainable wildlife and wildlife habitats for Indiana? If your business would like to show its commitment to conservation and be highlighted for doing so through our communications and website, please contact us by e-mail at info@indianawildlife.org.