

Photo: Glacier's End - Aaron Stump

Inside This Issue:

• HOLT SCHOLARSHIP

p2

• NATIVE PLANT SALE

p4

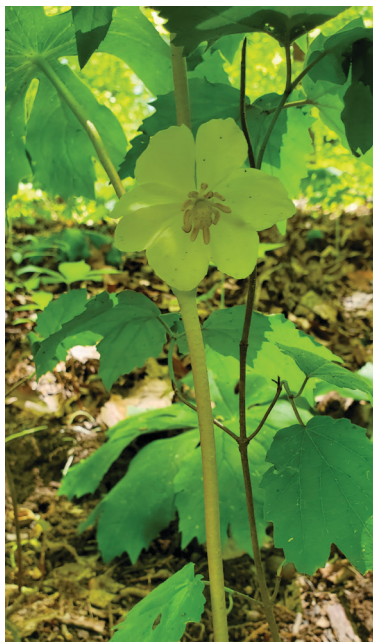
• LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

p6

We announced last year that IWF, in partnership with Central Indiana Land Trust (CILTI), was awarded \$239,500 from the 2022 [Next Level Trails Funding](#). We're now thrilled to follow up that great news a progress update on those trails. Several trails throughout the property are currently under construction! After touring the property recently, we were shocked how much more impactful it is to see the trails roughed in. We now have a much better idea of what it will be like for visitors to tour this unique and biodiverse paradise. The trail in the photo is part of the accessible loop at the front of the property and will be surfaced and finalized soon. The other trails will offer a deeper dive into Betley Woods at Glacier's End and even on a cursory tour, we were delighted to see a few spring wildflowers popping up along our walk. Stay tuned for more info and a grand opening announcement!



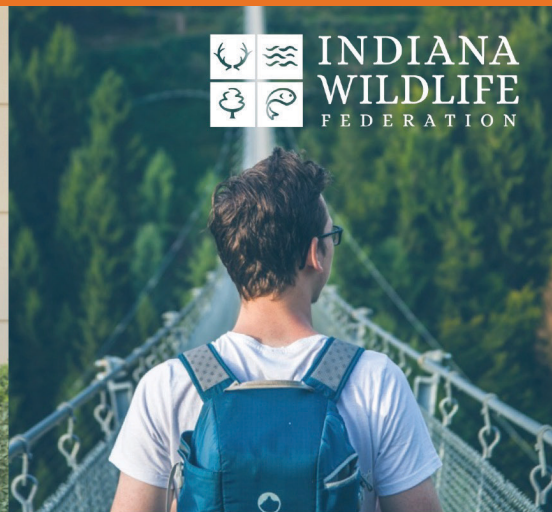
▲ Photo: *Silene virginica* (fire pink)



▲ Photo: Flower of *Podophyllum peltatum* (mayapple)



▲ Photo: *Phlox divaricata* (woodland phlox)



\$1000

HOLT SCHOLARSHIP

Applicants should be taking coursework to major or minor in a field related to resource conservation or environmental education.

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 30.

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

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear IWF Members, Partners, and Friends,

The 2023 Indiana Legislative session has come and gone. With your support the Indiana Wildlife Federation and our allied organizations were able to effectively fight for wildlife and wild spaces throughout the state. As each of you know the Indiana legislature has in recent years cared more about moneyed interests than our natural heritage, yet despite the uphill battle we were able to forge some successes while beating back the most problematic legislation. As we turn the page on Indiana's 2023 legislative session, we look towards the United State Congress for our next opportunities to help wildlife in our state.



The 118th United States Congress is an opportunity to transform the way in which the state of Indiana is able to help our wildlife and wild spaces. This Congress, divided as it may be, presents an opportunity that comes along only twice a decade. The Farm Bill, often thought of as a vessel for agricultural subsidies, is in fact one of the largest conservation programs which allows farmers and landowners to protect soil, water, and wildlife on their lands.

The Farm Bill is a massive piece of legislation that provides funding for numerous agricultural programs, including conservation. The Farm Bill can support conservation in Indiana in a number of ways, including:

- Supplying financial assistance to farmers and ranchers to implement conservation practices on their land.
- Investing in research and development of new conservation technologies. The Indiana Wildlife Federation has endorsed a bill put forth by Senator Braun and Representative Baird that makes it easier for Technical Service Providers (TSP) to promote conservation practices throughout the state.
- Promoting public education about the importance of conservation.

The Farm Bill has a long history of supporting conservation in Indiana. In the past, the Farm Bill has allowed Hoosiers to protect wetlands, improve water quality, and reduce soil erosion. The Farm Bill has also helped to conserve wildlife habitat and promote sustainable agriculture, all while opening up opportunities for hunters and anglers to utilize private lands. Here are some specific examples of how the Farm Bill has supported conservation in Indiana:

- The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program that pays farmers to remove highly erodible land from production and plant it with grasses or trees. CRP has helped to protect more than 1 million acres of land in Indiana from erosion.
- The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program that pays farmers to restore wetlands on their land. WRP has helped to restore more than 100,000 acres of wetlands in Indiana.
- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial assistance to farmers and ranchers to implement conservation practices on their land. EQIP has helped farmers and ranchers in Indiana implement a variety of conservation practices, including cover cropping, nutrient management, and water quality protection.

IWF is also urging the expansion of the SodSaver Provision, currently utilized in six states, to help protect grasslands nationwide. This program offers both fiscal savings to all taxpayers while conserving land that provides little benefit when placed into agriculture. Grasslands are one of the most endangered habitats in Indiana, and SodSaver would help prevent further conversion of this valuable habitat and increasing habitat for such species as Bobwhite, Pheasants, Bobolink, American Badger, White-tailed deer, American Bison, Monarch butterfly and Northern Leopard Frogs.

While the Farm Bill will surely be reauthorized, it is imperative that we convince our elected officials that the conservation programs must be protected, and if possible, expanded in this reauthorization. Indiana is uniquely situated in this reauthorization cycle with a member on both committees of jurisdiction. In the Senate Mike Braun sits on the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. He is also a member of the Subcommittee on Commodities, Risk Management, and Trade; the Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry, and Natural Resources; and the Subcommittee on Rural Development and Energy.

In the House, Representative Jim Baird is a member of the House Agriculture Committee, he is also the chairman of the Subcommittee on Conservation, Research, and Biotechnology, which has jurisdiction over soil and water conservation, agricultural research and extension, biotechnology, and plant pests and diseases. Both of these Hoosiers are strong proponents of Hoosier agriculture as well as the conservation practices that fall under the jurisdiction of the Farm Bill.

The second piece of legislation currently moving through the 118th Congress is The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA). The bill would provide \$18 million annually to the state to help conserve wildlife and their habitats.

RAWA would help Indiana to address the urgent need to conserve wildlife. More than 100 species of plants and animals in Indiana are at risk of extinction, and the current level of funding for wildlife conservation is woefully inadequate. RAWA would provide Indiana with the resources needed to help in the fight to save our wildlife.

The bill would also be a boon to the economy. Wildlife-related recreation generates \$10 billion in economic activity and helps to support 100,000 jobs in Indiana. RAWA would help to protect these jobs and boost the economy by investing in wildlife conservation.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act is a commonsense solution to the urgent problem of wildlife decline. The bill will help to conserve our state's iconic bald eagle population, provide funding to restore wetlands, control invasive species and support educational programs that teach Hoosiers about the importance of wildlife conservation.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act is a win-win for Indiana. The bill would help to conserve our state's wildlife, boost the economy, and educate Hoosiers about the importance of wildlife conservation.

RAWA has been introduced into this Senate by Sen. Tillis of North Carolina and Sen. Heinrich of New Mexico and we are hopeful that this Congress it will finally get across the finish line. While we know RAWA will be transformational in both Indiana and our country's ability to conserve wildlife, like all things we will need to help get it across the finish line. The Indiana Wildlife Federation continues to fight for wildlife throughout our state, but we cannot do it without avid supporters like you. Thank you for helping us stand up for wildlife and wild spaces here in our state.

With love of wildlife,

Dan Boritt, Executive Director

Native Plant Sale 2023 - Fall Shipments!

Our spring orders have closed, but that doesn't mean you can't still get native plants in the ground this year. Fall is often considered an even better time than spring to plant new native plugs, so head over to our page and get your kit while supplies last.

Thanks to our partnership with Stantec (formerly 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 indianawildlife.org/wildlife/native-plants/native-plant-sale



▲ Photo: Pollinator Kit

Orphaned and Injured Wildlife

Spring is finally here. It is time for you to open grills, cut down dead trees, and you suddenly encounter what appears to be orphaned or injured animals. What should you do?

First of all, ask yourself: Did I see an adult animal in the past hour? Does the animal really need help? Does it have signs of disease or injury? Will I help or harm the animal? It is important to know that juveniles' best care and best chance for survival is with their parents. Similarly, removing babies from their nest can disrupt their growth. Also note that human scent can drive predators to the young animals.

Be aware of your natural surroundings. Taking care of your yard may unfortunately result in injuring or even killing wild animals. To prevent any injuries, you can look for nests in your trees before cutting them down. Similarly, look for burrows and dens before mowing down grass and turning the soil over. Make sure the animals are safe from dogs, cats and humans to prevent any accidents.

Even when our intentions are good, we may not be helping. The easiest and safest option is to reach out to a certified wildlife rehabilitator. You can also reach out to your local veterinarian and ask if they take care of wild animals. Finally, a gentle reminder that it is against the law to keep wild animals if you don't have permits, even if you plan to release them.

Check out the list here: in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/orphaned-and-injured-animals/wildlife-rehabilitators/



▲ Photo; Baby squirrels - Jenny Blake

Workshops and Wildlife Education

Do you belong to or manage a group looking for educational workshops? IWF offers several presentations from our Wildlife Habitat Workshop, which covers the basics of creating habitat at home to our Indiana's Wild Climate Workshop where we discuss the impact of the climate crisis on Indiana and our wildlife. If you would like more information or want to schedule a workshop, please visit our [Workshops Page](#) or contact Aaron Stump at stump@indianawildlife.org.



▲ Photo; presenting to Wild Birds Unlimited in Schererville



▲ Photo; presenting to Teter Retreat and Organic Farm

Legislative Recap

Indiana's Department of Natural Resources budget and Conservation funding got a lot more attention this year thanks to Governor Holcomb's strong support for trails, land acquisition for public access, a new state park Inn at Potato Creek State Park, and substantial pay raises for many DNR employees.

The final budget adopted by the Legislature included:

- \$30 Million for Next Level Trails (NLT) grants (IWF is currently working on a trail in Johnson County funded by NLT)
- \$100 Million for construction of the Potato Creek State Park Inn
- \$5 Million for McCormick's Creek State Park campground rehabilitation from tornado damage
- \$10 Million to the President Harrison Conservation Trust to purchase natural areas
- \$6 Million per year to the Clean Water Indiana Fund for the operation of the 92 county Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

HEA 1639 was a huge win for the environment. The bill creates an option for Indiana counties to join together to form Watershed Development Commissions. These commissions could work on both water quantity and water quality issues in their respective watersheds. This model has proved highly successful with other river basins and their commissions, including the Blue River Commission and Kankakee River Basin Commission.

On the downside, HEA 1623 further weakened environmental protections in the state.

- Weakening air quality standards: HEA 1623 weakens the state's air quality standards for particulate matter and ozone. These pollutants can cause respiratory problems, heart disease, and cancer.
- Deregulating coal ash disposal: HEA 1623 deregulates the disposal of coal ash, a waste product from burning coal. Coal ash can contain harmful chemicals that can contaminate groundwater and pollute rivers and streams.
- Allowing more pollution from landfills: HEA 1623 allows landfills to emit more pollution. This can lead to air quality problems and can contaminate groundwater.
- Weakening water quality standards: HEA 1623 weakens the state's water quality standards for a number of pollutants, including mercury, lead, and arsenic. These pollutants can cause health problems, including neurological damage and cancer.

Indiana wetlands came under attack again with a proposed change in classification of wetland areas that would have removed protection for a substantial portion of Indiana's remaining wetlands. The Indiana House passed the wetland protection reduction language, but the bill failed to pass in the State Senate, thanks in large part to the activation of members like you who called, emailed and wrote to your elected officials urging them to abandon this devastating policy.

Overall the 2023 legislative session produced some wins as well as some setbacks for wildlife in the state. We also know that some legislators will continue their attempts to weaken environmental regulations in our state, and we will continue to fight back in order to protect wildlife and wild spaces throughout our state.

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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.