OUTDOOR AMERICA™

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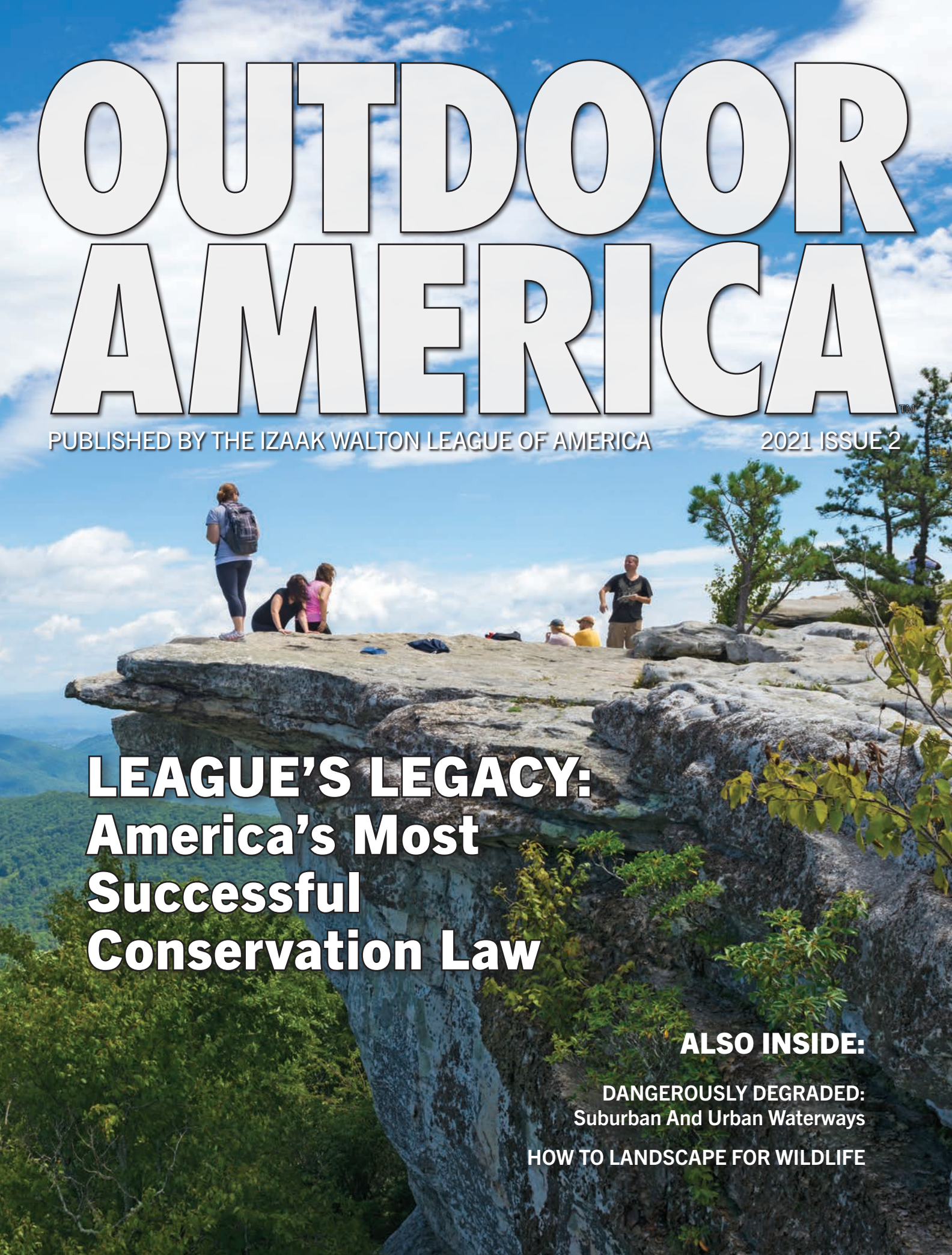

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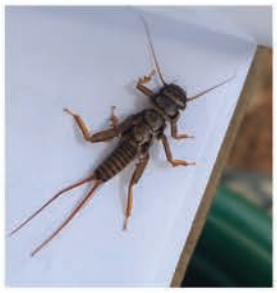

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OUTDOOR AMERICA™

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ON THE COVER▶ McAfee Knob in Virginia is a popular stop on the Appalachian Trail, which has received generous funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Credit: ISTOCK

CONTENTS▶ Credit: BENJAMIN VOGT

ABOUT THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA▶
Founded in 1922, the Izaak Walton League of America is a national conservation organization headquartered in Gaithersburg, MD. Our more than 40,000 members protect and enjoy America's soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife. For membership information, call (800) IKE-LINE (453-5463) or visit our website at www.iwla.org.

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Positive changes during a challenging time

KELLY KISTNER | NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Fellow Ikes,

This is my last article for *Outdoor America* as National President. I have been reflecting on my presidency over the last three years and all the positive changes that we as an organization have accomplished.

At the time of my election, I was not entirely ready to make the step up but took the leap and have accomplished several of my goals as President. One goal was improving communication between League leaders at all levels. We instituted quarterly leadership calls to ensure information and good ideas flowed more regularly across the organization.

Another goal was to help chapters modernize technology and take full advantage of social media to reach more people in their communities. We have leveraged support from the national staff, and not just around social media, but also by making the membership renewal process faster and simpler using online tools.

As we look to the future—to the League's second century—we need to be open to change while building on our incredible history. We must be willing to consider new ideas and new approaches to managing our organization. I regularly heard good ideas from our members and leaders, and I believe we embraced many of them. I know that the up-and-coming leadership will guide us into the 100th anniversary.

I have learned a great deal during my presidency, especially having a seat at the Executive Board table. If you want to learn more about the inner workings of the League, plan to attend some of these meetings.

I also learned the importance of mentoring new leaders at the chapter, division and national levels. Many people are interested in getting involved. However, they want to be asked and they need support learning the ropes. I feel like I have done a good job, but it could have been better with more knowledge about the League that mentors can provide.

During the pandemic, I have especially missed being together with Ikes at the national convention and other meetings. I miss the comradery and being able to pick up new ideas for projects, fundraisers and membership by conversing with other Ikes.

When I become a "Past President," I will still be involved with the League. I still hold the South Dakota President title and am constantly looking to mentor my replacement. The day will come when I can sit back and relax a little, but there is always something to do at the local, division and national levels.

It has been my honor serving as National President. I look forward to seeing everyone again and gleaning information to improve the League. Stay safe, stay well, get your shots and wash your hands.

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IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve, restore and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources, including soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife.

WWW.IWLA.ORG

THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

MEMBERS WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT LEAGUE POLICIES CAN REACH OUT TO THEIR NATIONAL DIRECTOR. FOR CONTACT INFORMATION, CALL THE LEAGUE'S HEADQUARTERS AT (800) IKE-LINE.

Building Momentum for the League's Second Century

SCOTT KOVAROVICS | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2022 will be momentous for the Izaak Walton League of America as our members and supporters nationwide celebrate our 100th anniversary.

Over the next 18 months, it will be just as important to articulate what we want to accomplish in the future as it will be to celebrate our past achievements. We can build on an incredible legacy of leadership that extends from local communities to the nation's capital.

League members and leaders have the opportunity to launch our second century with the same vigor, passion and commitment to action that motivated the League's founders nearly 100 years ago. Rekindling that spirit starts today and will carry us through 2022 and beyond.

As we undertake this longer-term effort, here are a few simple steps to take now:

Use the 100th anniversary logo

Throughout 2021 and 2022, the national office, chapters and divisions will use the logo to celebrate and raise public awareness about the League and our centennial. This visual shows the public the natural resources and outdoor traditions we cherish as well as our longevity of conservation leadership.

Tell chapter stories locally

League chapters have deep roots in their communities often stretching back to the 1920s and 30s. The 100th anniversary gives chapters a hook to interest local media and residents in learning more about their history and accomplishments. Chapters can prepare over the next few months by documenting their key milestones and achievements—get the highlights down on one page. The national office will support chapters with media outreach and provide a concise summary of League history to share with local audiences.

Help craft a bold, action-oriented vision for the future

As I read *Outdoor America* magazines from the 1920s, I am amazed by how active members, chapters and the national organization were from day one. The League was advocating for state and federal legislation and convening conferences focused on conserving huge landscapes. Consider this grassroots effort: members nationwide were

literally restoring black bass after picking up fry shipped to the nearest railroad station by the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries. And we see this arc of action—from the grassroots to the national level—throughout our history.

Let's launch into our second century with a similar commitment to addressing the conservation challenges of the 21st century. This spring, the Board of Directors, chapter and division leaders and members will all have opportunities to identify issues they believe should be priorities for the League in the future. By providing input, you can help develop an action plan for the League.

This is an awesome opportunity, and I could not be more excited to take this journey with you.

Want to see YOUR chapter in Ikes in Action?

It's simple! Email oa@iwla.org for further information or just send photos to that email address (JPG format, 3-5 mb) with up to 350 words describing the event. Be sure to include captions and credits for all photos. Please also include your contact information. Spread the news about your chapter events in an upcoming issue of *Outdoor America!*

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Gordy Honerman, 50-Year Member from South Dakota

The South Dakota Parade of States room won't be quite the same anymore.

Long-time jovial host and organizer Gordon (Gordy) Honerman passed away on January 27, 2021. Gordy was an integral part of the South Dakota Parade of States room and League conventions for almost 40 years. His sense of humor, outgoing personality and gift for serving fried pheasant, pheasant sticks and all nature of wild game he was inspired to dish out will be missed by all.

In addition to his active role at the national conventions, he was a 50-year member of the League serving at chapter, division and national levels. Gordy earned the Tobin Award and South Dakota's highest honor, the Eakins Ensburg Award.

Like all great members, Gordy's passing from the Ikes family will leave us all a little sadder but better for having known him.

August is National Shooting Sports Month

Demand for safety training and recreational shooting sports is growing. National Shooting Sports Month in August provides great opportunities for training, public awareness and member recruitment. Many Izaak Walton League chapters will be celebrating by hosting local events geared to beginners and first-time firearm owners.

Learn more at www.shootingsportsmonth.org.

NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS MONTH AUGUST

Corrections to the last issue ▶ For the article on Eastern elk in 2021, Issue 1, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) is the correct name for the state agency that manages elk. The agency's rule for managing elk that cause damage is called a depredation rule.

At the Lincoln Chapter, heavy machinery from a reclamation company separates lead shot from the dirt.

Lincoln Gets the Lead Out

Nebraska ▸ As part of the **Lincoln Chapter's** environmental stewardship plan for our facility, we reclaim lead from our trap range on a regular basis, most recently in September 2020.

In addition to the stewardship benefit, the chapter makes some money from the sale of the recovered lead shot. That amount depends on market value of the metal, which can vary. Currently the demand for lead is increasing with the growth in electric cars. For us, it serves as an asset that takes a little bit of work and is subject to market trends just like raising a corn crop.

We have reclaimed lead three times over the last decade—in 2009 (gathering 225,000 lbs.), 2015 (167,000 lbs.) and 2020 (270,000 lbs.).

Our chapter's corporate board president, Gene Ripa, spearheads this project and manages the contract with Gipson-Ricketts, a company that specializes in the lead reclamation process and the sale of the recovered metal. We split that revenue with the company.

In addition to the stewardship benefit, the chapter makes some money from the sale of the recovered lead shot.

How it Works

This process requires heavy machinery and a significant time investment. To start, Ike members apply an appropriate herbicide to the vegetation zone 75 yards to 300 yards downrange of the trap house. This is the drop zone where the lead shot falls to the ground.

Once the vegetation is dead, the area is burned to expose the soil and remove debris. Dan Wright and Craig Keaschall help us with the controlled burn.

Next, Gipson-Ricketts brings in heavy equipment to scrape off the top layer of soil that contains the lead shot—usually one to two inches of soil—and piles it up to dry. It is interesting that even the heavy lead shot does not migrate farther down into the soil layer.

Ensuring the soil is dry is the key to clean removal of the lead. When rain threatens, we cover the piles of soil with tarps.

Once dry, the soil is worked through a machine with many moving screens and air blowers that separate the lead from the dirt. With our clay soils, this takes a little more effort to break down the dirt clods.

At the end of the process, the lead looks amazingly clean when

L-R: DAVE TUNINK, ARL-FAIRFAX IWLA

it goes into bags, which hold roughly 3,000 lbs. of lead per bag. It took several loads in a semi-truck to transport the metal to a processing facility.

As the finishing step, the soil is spread back on the area and efforts to re-establish ground cover begins. We have re-seeded the area with a mixture of plant species. Despite the dry fall last year, winter snow and spring rains have resulted in a nice stand of grasses and broadleaf plants.

Starting Over

With the range reopened, the lead shot accumulates in the dirt again. We work to maintain the lead in a stable, non-toxic state which entails controlling the soil pH. That can be easier with clay soils but may require applications of lime at some point. The lead gathers at the rate of about one to one and one-eighth of an ounce for every clay target thrown.

Beginning in February 2021, four junior and senior high school teams started practicing trapshooting on our range using all seven trap houses. The club is the host site of three Eastern Cornhusker Trapshooting Conference meets which draw nearly 400 shooters at each event.

That will produce a lot of lead. Thus, in five or six years, the reclamation process will start all over again.

by Dave Tunink and Wes Sheets

Lead Assessment at Arlington-Fairfax

Virginia ▸ The **Arlington-Fairfax Chapter** started a series of voluntary assessments of its property in 2005 to ensure no lead was leaving the property. Assessments included regular tests of water, soil and wildlife on site for lead levels.

Last summer, the chapter completed its second lead reclamation project on skeet and trap ranges, which gathered about 85,000 pounds of lead. This lead is sold and the chapter receives a portion of the proceeds, which it plans to use to restrict the shot-fall area, which will improve future reclamation efforts. The latest way to contain the shot fall is a product called "Shot Stop," which is a series of curtains placed at a specific range to contain the shot. It will fall straight down and can be easily and safely collected.

The lead reclamation work follows the environmental policies of the chapter. Those policies and practices have earned the chapter a Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP) Level 3 certificate from the state that recognizes that the chapter is voluntarily meeting and exceeding high environmental standards.

Shooting ranges at Arlington-Fairfax Chapter.

The chapter adopted the best management practice of treating soil with lime and rock phosphate to limit the migration of lead through the soil.

The chapter has also adopted the EPA-approved best management practice of treating soil with lime and rock phosphate to limit the migration of lead through the soil. The chapter treats approximately 620,000 square feet with lime twice per year and rock phosphate once a year.

by Bob Brino

IKE CHAPTERS GET ENERGIZED BY SOLAR

Shedding Light on Solar Installations

BY DUANE HOVORKA, Agriculture Program Director

On a cold December day in 2017, the IWLA Minnesota Valley Chapter in Bloomington, Minn. held an open house to dedicate its new 10-kilowatt solar power system, with solar panels mounted on the roof of the chapter house. In a year's time, the new system was producing a bit more electricity than the chapter house uses.

In a year's time, the new system was producing a bit more electricity than the chapter house uses.

The Minnesota Valley leaders were motivated to go solar by the potential cost savings to the chapter and the environmental benefits of adopting clean energy. They were not disappointed.

"I think everybody is delighted," said Chapter President Ted Suss. "We are extremely pleased with it."

One of the first League chapters to invest in solar energy was the Winchester Chapter in Virginia. Leaders there said they wanted to expand their conservation efforts beyond food plots and education. They decided that investing in solar energy would be good for the environment, serve as an educational tool and save the chapter money on its electric bill.

Using $34,000 from member dues and the chapter's savings account, the chapter installed a solar system that could generate 5.7 kilowatts at full sun. The system is mounted on a frame at ground level to make maintenance easy and let students examine the system up close.

The Winchester solar system reduces the amount of

electricity the chapter needs to purchase, saving it money on its electric bill every month.

Lower Costs and Higher Benefits

While the cost of electricity in the U.S. has been rising, solar energy costs have been falling. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the average cost of solar photovoltaic panels, which convert sunshine into electricity, fell by 50 percent from 2014 to 2019.

Solar panels now make up about 13 percent of the total installation cost. Other expenses include labor, mounting hardware and equipment like inverters, which convert the panel's energy from direct current to alternating current so it can be used for appliances or fed into a power grid.

These costs vary considerably from site to site and community to community. The payback in reduced electricity costs depends on the location and factors like tree cover at the site.

Switching to renewable energy sources can also help address climate change by reducing the amount of carbon and other greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere.

Financing Strategies

Back in Bloomington, the Minnesota Valley Chapter took a different approach to financing its solar energy. Working with a company that installs solar systems, the chapter found a third-party investor to finance the purchase and installation. The investor could take advantage of federal production tax credits and accelerated depreciation on the solar equipment to offset federal and state income taxes, none of which is available to non-profit organizations.

The investor owns the solar system

A decade ago, the Winchester, Va. chapter installed a solar array that lowers its energy costs and serves as an education tool for students.

The chapter's lease payments are based on the money it saves each month on its electric bill. After about six years, the investor will have fully depreciated the equipment, and the chapter's lease payments will have paid for the costs of the system not covered by the tax credits and deductions. At that point, the investor plans to donate the solar system to the chapter, which will then have clean and virtually free energy for years to come.

Inspired by the efforts of other chapters and the need to address climate change, the Dwight Lydell Chapter in Grand Rapids, Michigan announced plans in 2020 to install a solar system on the chapter's lodge. On sunny days solar panels will power the lodge and feed excess electricity into the utility grid, earning credits that will offset the cost of power needed when the solar system is not producing electricity at night.

An anonymous donor offered to match contributions for the project dollar for dollar, and by the end of 2020 the chapter had raised $3,500 in contributions that will be matched. That puts the chapter almost halfway to its goal of $15,000 to purchase and install the new solar system.

DOING MORE ON CLIMATE

In 2019, the Minnesota Division established a grant program to encourage chapters to reach beyond their own properties to provide community education, outreach and advocacy on clean energy and climate-friendly agriculture initiatives.

The Division offered to provide grants of up to $1,000 to chapters who partner with other organizations in the community for outreach projects that focus on local impacts of climate change and the benefits of a transition to clean energy, climate-friendly agriculture and electrification of transportation.

Stegmeier, who has had a solar system helping power his own home for 15 years, said "Wouldn't it be great if the League were to become known for its chapters that have taken extensive steps to reduce their carbon footprint?"

L-R: USFWS; WINCHESTER IWLA

Minnesota Valley Ikes installed a 10-kilowatt solar system that supplies more than enough power for its chapter house.

OTHER STRATEGIES THAT SAVE ENERGY

Solar energy may not be right for every chapter—even in the Sunshine State.

The Florida Keys Chapter considered putting solar panels on its chapter house, which is a residence that houses visiting staff for agencies and organizations who otherwise could not afford to stay in the Keys. The chapter found that the trees surrounding the house shaded the roof so much that solar panels would not be effective. So they tried a different approach.

Chapter President Michael Chenoweth said they are replacing the existing roof with a highly reflective white aluminum metal roof, which should reduce the air conditioning load. They replaced older wall-type air conditioners with new split-system air conditioners; their high efficiency reduces the electric load. The chapter is also looking at replacing existing, leaky windows with new, tighter windows.

Energy experts like Efficiency Vermont say building owners thinking about solar energy would do well to first weatherize their buildings. Investments in insulation, weather-stripping, LED lights and replacing old, inefficient appliances often pay for themselves quickly. And in turn they could also reduce the number of solar panels needed to power the building.

GLOBALLY, THE SUN IS A RISING STAR

The 2020 "World Energy Outlook" from International Energy Agency predicts rapid growth in solar capacity due to sharp declines in costs, which make solar projects "some of the lowest-cost electricity ever seen."

Plugging into the "Community Solar" Option

In a growing number of places, community solar projects provide options for apartment dwellers, individuals or chapters who don't have a good site for solar panels on their land.

The League's Owatonna Chapter in southeast Minnesota took advantage of community solar in 2016 when it began investing in renewable energy for their electricity. According to Chapter Secretary Gary Schwartz, the effort tied to the celebration of the Owatonna Ike's 90th anniversary.

A fundraising campaign titled "$90 for 90 years" drew donations from local businesses and non-profit groups as well as members. Over a three-year period, the chapter raised about $11,000 to invest in 10 solar panels—enough to meet their electricity needs.

The payback in reduced electricity costs depends on the location and factors like tree cover at the site.

The 10 solar panels were installed at a community "solar garden" containing 250 panels at the headquarters of their local utility, Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric. The cooperative owns and maintains the chapter's 10 panels under a

Community solar installations like the Sunnyside Ranch array near Carbondale, CO provide a way to use energy from existing systems.

L-R: JOHN HICKMAN; DENNIS SCHROEDER, NREL, 60073

20-year agreement. The chapter gets credit on its monthly electric bill for its share of the solar power generated by the facility.

Schwartz said the chapter looked at other renewable alternatives including wind energy, and they considered buying and installing solar panels on the roof of the chapter house. But they decided the local utility's solar garden was their best option because it eliminated the risk of vandalism and the need to maintain the equipment.

"When we reached the 10-panel mark, we found that our cost for electricity in the months of June, July and August was zero dollars," said Schwartz. "We accumulated a credit for September and October, so our costs were significantly less then also."

As part of the package, the electric cooperative also installed a super-insulated, 100-gallon water heater to meet the chapter's hot water needs. The appliance heats water during the night when demand for electricity is low, and the extra insulation keeps the water hot throughout the day.

The chapter also changed all the interior lighting to more efficient LED bulbs, and added insulation to the roof of the chapter's environmental education center to reduce energy use.

Schwartz hopes energy conservation catches on, in the spirit of the Izaak Walton League legacy.

POLICY PULSE

PIXABAY

League Launches Work with New Leadership at Key Agencies

Major policy changes are emerging at EPA, Departments of Interior and Agriculture

BY JARED MOTT, IWLA Conservation Director

With confirmation of President Biden's nominees to lead the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Departments of Agriculture and Interior, the Izaak Walton League has begun work to implement our policy agenda across the three agencies. Each plays a vital role in advancing the League's mission.

EPA Role in Protecting Clean Water

Michael Regan, the new EPA administrator, will oversee programs that support some of the League's highest priorities, especially on water.

The Biden administration has committed to restoring Clean Water Act protections to tributary streams and wetlands that lost those protections in 2020. Regan will be tapped to lead that effort to ensure that American water quality does not fall below the standard set in the Clean Water Act.

The Biden administration has committed to restoring Clean Water Act protections to tributary streams and wetlands.

EPA will also engage on the front lines of the fight against climate change to reduce and then eliminate greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution and promote energy efficiency.

Fighting Climate Change at Agriculture

Tom Vilsack will lead the Department of Agriculture, a position he held throughout the Obama administration. Before that, Vilsack served as the governor of Iowa. In his return to Washington, Vilsack has committed to mobilizing the department to fight climate

change with policy strategies across the agricultural sector.

Improving soil health, long a League priority, is poised to become a clear objective for the department. Healthy soils provide a host of benefits. Healthy soils sequester large amounts of carbon dioxide and prevent it from being emitted into the atmosphere and contributing to climate change.

Interior Focus on Energy, Climate, Wildlife

Former New Mexico Representative Deb Haaland will lead the Department of the Interior. A member of the Laguna Pueblo tribe, Haaland is the first Native American to lead the Department.

As Secretary, Haaland will oversee national parks, wildlife refuges and other public lands that are owned by all Americans.

Haaland will work with states, industry and other stakeholders to reduce the development of fossil fuels on these lands and help lead the transition to clean, renewable energy.

About 25 percent of the nation's total GHG pollution comes from extracting, processing and burning fossil fuels from our public lands. The League is committed to working with Interior to usher in a new era of clean, sustainable energy development on those lands.

A Local Focus for Conservation

In May, the Biden administration issued a report titled, Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful, which outlines policy priorities, including a focus on locally led efforts to conserve and restore natural resources. (Posted on www.doi.gov)

The League is committed to working with Interior to usher in a new era of clean, sustainable energy development on public lands.

The League issued a statement that applauded the emphasis on local conservation and encouraged the administration to amplify citizen science.

"Prioritizing citizen science will help more people get involved in conservation where they live, reconnect with the natural world and play more active roles in policy decisions affecting our air, water and other natural resources," said Scott Kovarovics, executive director.

CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

House Considers Climate Plan

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce unveiled its CLEAN Future Act. This legislation outlines an ambitious plan to combat climate change by ensuring that the U.S. achieves a 50 percent reduction in GHG pollution by 2030 and net-zero emissions no later than 2050.

Net-zero emissions means any GHG emissions would be offset by at least an equal amount of gases captured through natural systems, like restoration of forests and grasslands, or through a direct capture technology.

This national climate target is at the heart of the legislation with several paths available to reach these goals. Many of the reductions would be attained in State Climate Plans that the legislation requires each state to develop. That allows each state to tailor its emissions reduction pathways to their own priorities and circumstances. The bill also calls on federal agencies to use their existing authorities to lower emissions, such as EPA using its authority to reduce air pollution under the Clean Air Act.

The CLEAN Future Act would:

- Establish a federal clean electricity standard that would put the U.S. on a path to 100 percent clean electricity generation by 2030.
- Set new energy efficiency targets and standards for buildings, fund infrastructure to improve efficiency and deploy related technologies.
- Authorize more than $100 billion over the next decade to electrify the U.S. transportation system, currently the largest source of climate-altering pollution.
- Modernize recycling and waste management and temporarily pause permitting of new and expanded plastic production.

TO LEARN MORE

For information about our key issues, visit www.iwla.org/advocacy.

SOIL MATTERS

Prairie potholes like this one in North Dakota provide essential breeding grounds for migrating birds and other wildlife.

L-R: USFWS, USDA

A Vital Home for Fish and Wildlife

Farms and ranches provide essential habitat

BY DUANE HOVORKA, IWLA Agriculture Program Director

Growing up a city kid in Nebraska, I was lucky to spend many a holiday on my grandparents' farm in southwest Nebraska or the farms my uncles and aunts operated in South Dakota. If you were a careful observer, you could spot rabbits in the woodlands, pheasants in the fields, deer in the pasture and the occasional rattlesnake down by the irrigation canal where mom told us not to go.

America's farms and ranches have always provided important habitat for our fish and wildlife. More than 40 percent of the United States is privately owned farm and ranch land, totaling more than 900 million acres. In states like Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas, farms and ranches make up more than 75 percent of the land base, compared to less than five percent set aside as public parks, refuges and wildlife areas.

About 85 percent of hunters in the U.S. hunt privately owned land, much of it on farms and ranches. There they find a wide variety of game species: deer, elk, turkey, quail, ducks, geese, pheasants and many more.

About half of the wildlife species on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service threatened and endangered list depend heavily on private land, much of it farms and ranches. That land is home to most of the wetlands in the Prairie Pothole Region of the northern Great Plains, dubbed "America's Duck Factory." But these small ponds and wetlands are also breeding grounds and stopover areas for more than 60 percent of the migratory bird species in the U.S.

Loss of Habitat = Loss of Wildlife

Our grassland birds are in sharp decline, largely the result of lost habitat. Millions of acres of grassland have been converted to cropland. Some remaining grasslands have been degraded by overgrazing and poor management. Fish and amphibians have also suffered as

wetlands have been drained and filled, and waterways of all kinds grow more polluted by fertilizer, pesticides and manure.

The implications are clear. To have healthy fish and wildlife populations we cannot focus only on our national and state parks, refuges and wildlife areas. We need to expand programs that help landowners make a place for wildlife on their farms and ranches and better protect our streams, lakes and wetlands.

The League Seeks Solutions

The Izaak Walton League of America is a strong supporter of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which was introduced in Congress in April. This bill would provide states and tribes $1.4 billion annually to restore essential habitat and implement conservation strategies outlined in each state's Wildlife Action Plan. Those state plans focus in part on restoring and protecting wildlife habitat on farms and ranches.

The 2018 Farm Bill provides $6 billion per year to help farmers and ranchers adopt conservation practices, including many that provide habitat for birds, mammals and pollinators. About $2 billion of that supports the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which rewards landowners who set aside environmentally sensitive farmland. That program now provides 21 million acres of grassland and wetland habitat. That supports a variety of wildlife, boosting the duck population by about 2 million per year, increasing pheasant numbers by 22 percent and providing much-needed habitat for pollinators like bees and monarch butterflies.

The CRP has also prevented more than nine billion tons of soil from eroding and provided buffer strips to protect 170,000 miles of streams. The program also stores an average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases in the soil each year.

The Farm Bill's conservation easement program has restored several million acres of wetlands and provided permanent protection to more than five million acres of grasslands, wetlands and other farmland.

More than 40 percent of the United States is privately owned farm and ranch land, totaling more than 900 million acres.

All told, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) major working lands programs have helped landowners improve the management of their grasslands, adopt wildlife-friendly farming practices and better manage their woodlands.

Climate-friendly is Wildlife-friendly

This year, Congress is considering a variety of bills to address climate change. That could provide an opportunity to double funding for USDA's suite of conservation programs because many of the practices that benefit fish and wildlife also address climate change.

Restoring and better managing grasslands and woodlands will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and store carbon in the soil and in trees. Providing permanent protection for wetlands, grasslands and woodlands will keep the carbon stored there for decades to come.

USDA scientists in Oklahoma aim to help lesser prairie chickens coexist with livestock.

By expanding USDA conservation programs that have a long record of success, Congress could promote climate-friendly agriculture while doing more to make a place for fish and wildlife on America's farms and ranches.

Over the past century, America has done much to restore to the landscape the species that we hunt and fish. But many other species are in trouble.

For the century ahead, we must expand programs that conserve land and water and help make a place for wildlife on farms and ranches for the generations to come.

CLEAN WATER CORNER

Izaak Walton League clean water staff at IWLA headquarters property demonstrate Salt Watch monitoring for *Washington Post* columnist John Kelly who reported on the program.

MICHAEL REINEMER

Growth Beyond Numbers – From Data to Advocacy

Volunteers go the extra mile to protect water quality

BY SAMANTHA BRIGGS, IWLA Clean Water Program Director

With the winter of 2020-2021 behind us, the Izaak Walton League is wrapping up the largest Salt Watch season to date. Volunteers all over the country (more than 2,500 people) have been monitoring their local waterways for road salt pollution throughout the winter.

As Winter Salt Watch has grown (with more than twice as many volunteers engaged this past winter compared to previous seasons), we are not only seeing more data coming in, we are also seeing more volunteers going above and beyond monitoring in their communities.

Winter Salt Watch had more than twice as many volunteers engaged this past winter compared to previous seasons.

What does "above and beyond" mean for Salt Watch, or any type of water quality monitoring? There are many opportunities:

- Returning to a site repeatedly to ensure that you are getting the full picture of water quality.
- Encouraging others to also start monitoring. Salt Watch is a great place to start. Bring family or friends along to show them the ropes, and ask them to visit www.iwla.org/saltwatch to request a free test kit.

- Eliminating or reducing your own use of salt, pesticides or other pollutants on property you own or manage.
- Calling your local government or the state's department of transportation to express concern over road salt application levels or report a salt pile that is washing into storm drains and waterways. Making your concerns known is very important; most community members calling local officials are concerned about undersalting rather than oversalting.
- Informing your neighbors, children, scout troops and other members of your community about pollutants in your watershed. Many people do not know how road salt works and apply much more salt than necessary. These types of knowledge gaps apply to most pollution sources, so educating others can get more people involved in clean water protection.
- Contacting your state or federal lawmakers or local news media to discuss your concerns about water quality issues. Head to www.iwla.org/saltwatch and click on "What you can do" for sample letters.
- Reading through our new Save Our Streams Advocacy Guide. The new guide can be downloaded at www.iwla.org/water/resources-for-monitors and has over 40 pages of the ins and outs of putting water quality data to action to better your community.
- Communicating with your civic or homeowner's association about actions they can take with their contractors to limit pollutants entering the waterways.

Contact your state or federal lawmakers or your local news media to discuss your concerns about water quality issues in your region.

These actions, large and small, help ensure that the water quality data collected is not simply sitting on a map or in the Clean Water Hub—it is being put to use.

If you have a particular water quality concern and would like some guidance about how to take action beyond what is listed above, we're here to help. Email the Clean Water Program staff at sos@iwla.org.

Visit www.iwla.org/sos to get involved with all types of monitoring, from road salt to macroinvertebrates. **To share your monitoring successes,** both large and small, email us at sos@iwla.org.

Water Monitors in Action

Kevin Roth and Pam Wolter are great examples of water quality advocates in their communities.

Kevin Roth – the Original Salt Watcher of Pennsylvania

Kevin Roth, education and outreach coordinator for the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust, first began noticing rising salt issues in this suburban Philadelphia watershed in 2018. The community network of remote sensors in local streams showed chloride levels tripling after a surprise early snowstorm when the local public works department did not salt at all.

Kevin and the partner organizations he works with quickly realized that a major part of the problem was salt applications on sidewalks, parking lots and other surfaces by private businesses and homeowners. They learned about the Izaak

Working for Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust in Philadelphia, outreach coordinator Kevin Roth discovered that private land owners were responsible for much of the excess salt flowing into local streams.

PERT

Walton League's Winter Salt Watch program and saw it as a great opportunity to engage the public and their volunteers on chloride pollution.

"We see Winter Salt Watch as a way for regular homeowners to learn that this is a problem, and there is something they can do about it," Roth says.

The Winter Salt Watch in the Philadelphia region owes its success largely to the coordinated efforts of local watershed organizations, including Kevin's, which has produced excellent results in terms of participation and public awareness. Kevin says residents pay attention to water quality because of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, a regional monitoring effort with a strong advocate base.

This is just the beginning of the chloride crusade for Roth, the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust and their volunteer base. "This year we are starting with the community and getting them to tell their friends and neighbors," says Roth. Next, they will be engaging businesses and local government entities to raise awareness and create change.

"The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is still a stretch for us, but we want the townships to be able to at least make some small basic changes… get the simple problems out of the way first and then convince the scientists and researchers to come up with alternatives." Small changes, big impact.

"We see Winter Salt Watch as a way for regular homeowners to learn that this is a problem, and there is something they can do about it," Roth says.

Pam Wolter – A Paddler Prevails against Pesticide Pollution

Pam Wolter has always been an outdoors person. An avid kayaker, she says, "I've really come to enjoy paddling on clean water." In 2006, Wolter started Cedar Valley Paddlers, a club in eastern Iowa. With the Cedar Valley Paddlers, she does Save Our Streams monitoring on the rivers and tributaries that they frequent.

Wolter wants to get more people out on the water,

Pam Wolter, a volunter water monitor in Iowa, shares a Stream Selfie which has become a popular way of highlighting local waters people care about.

Salt Watch data from the 2020-2021 winter season

PAM WOLTER

Each dot on the map represents one stream sample. Dark green means a salt level of less than 30 parts per million (ppm), which is ideal for freshwater streams. Yellow represents more than 100 ppm. Red is more than 230 ppm, which is toxic to aquatic life over a prolonged period.

Visit the interactive Salt Watch Findings map at: www.iwla.saltwatchfindings where you can zoom in on your region to review local salt levels in streams.

paddling and monitoring.

"People don't know what they don't know. If you start loving something, then you save it.... Once you start loving the water, then you start wanting to improve it."

Wolter shared one example of progress. A stream called Quarter Section Run flows through a city park in her hometown of Denver, Iowa. The city recently began to apply a systemic pesticide to trees in the park near the banks of the stream. Wolter voiced her concerns right from the start because the pesticides were likely to seep into the water. She met resistance from the city. "At first, they weren't willing to hear it."

"They say that one person can't make a difference. I think they can."
— Pam Wolter

Undeterred, she focused on the value of data and positive communication. Using SOS protocols, Wolter monitored the aquatic macroinvertebrates in Quarter Section Run on Earth Day 2020 to see if her initial concerns were correct. She found almost no aquatic macroinvertebrates in the park, though previous data from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' IOWATER program showed that area had supported a healthy macroinvertebrate population. She also monitored upstream of the park and found healthy macroinvertebrate populations there.

So Wolter created a report and presented it to her city administrator to bring before the city council, which voted to stop the pesticide applications to protect the aquatic life in Quarter Section Run.

Through positive communication, persistence and passion, Wolter was able to bring about meaningful change in her community!

Steps to Save Our Streams

SAVE OUR STREAMS™
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

The League's Save Our Streams (SOS) program helps people just like you check water quality in local creeks and streams.

We divided our monitoring options into modules based on the time, equipment, and training needed for each one. Pick the one that works best for you! The more types of monitoring you do, the more you'll know about your stream health. Visit www.iwla.org/sos to get started.

Thinking Like a MOUNTAIN

IDEAS AS BIG AS THE OUTDOORS

A tiger swallowtail and bumblebee enjoy red milkweed *(Asclepias incarnata).*

BENJAMIN VOGT (2)

How to landscape for wildlife with native plants

By BENJAMIN VOGT

A landscape full of native plants revives nature while connecting us more deeply to our place in the natural world. Native plants are generally those that were found before sweeping changes in land use, like farming or suburbs.

Today, prairies, grasslands and other wild places are disappearing, taking with them the diverse communities of life that keep the natural world healthy. From the piedmont and longleaf pine savannas of the southeast, to Nevada's Great Basin and Palouse geography of the Northwest, natural landscapes are shrinking.

In just the Great Plains region, we've lost 99 percent of the tallgrass prairie, 75 percent of the mixed grass and 50 percent of the shortgrass prairies.

Yet much of the wildlife that rely on those spaces still live among us, even in highly altered rural and urban areas. How we manage our gardens and landscapes matters to wildlife.

A pocket meadow in a Midwest suburb.

Many insect species, for example, evolved alongside specific host plants, and those plant species are essential to the insect's reproduction; just consider monarch butterflies that can only lay eggs on milkweed species, or specialist bees that gather pollen from only one group of flowers during their short bloom time each year.

As climate change creates more weather extremes and shifts that change blooming times, native plants grow ever more important; they provide a lifeline that can help some creatures adapt—or at least hold on a bit longer.

Layers of Benefits

Beyond wildlife support, a native plant garden with thick layers—like we'd see in a prairie or forest—will be far more resilient to stress than one with plants spaced far apart like lamp posts. More plants, and more plants at each layer, means fewer weeds and more consistent soil moisture—which means less work for you.

So consider groundcovers such as wild geranium *(Geranium maculatum),* purple poppy mallow *(Callirhoe involucrata)* and even a variety of grass-like plants called sedges *(Carex* species*),* which can all replace annual wood mulch applications. We don't see wood mulch in a meadow, after all.

Then add in taller layers of flowering plants like Golden alexanders *(Zizia aurea),* coneflowers *(Echinacea),* mountain mint *(Pycnanthemum),* tickseed *(Coreopsis),* blazing star *(Liatris),* and goldenrod *(Solidago)* that provide a continuous cycle of blooms through the year.

How we manage our gardens and landscapes matters to wildlife.

During the summer, these native plants clean and cool the air and reduce stormwater runoff. They also build soil; for example, grasses lose up to one-third of their roots every year which naturally amends and aerates soil. But the benefits of native plants certainly don't end in autumn. In winter, spent flower heads provide seed for ground-dwelling birds, grasses shelter fauna from winter storms and the ground will remain covered with foliage which further reduces erosion.

Of course, to get these benefits you'll want to leave the garden standing in fall, resisting the

GET SCIENTIFIC

Whenever possible, use the scientific name of native plants to avoid confusion sown by common names, which can be vague or misleading. Use the precise *Genus* and *species* in the scientific name. For instance, *Asclepias incarnata* for red milkweed.

When you see *Echinacea purpurea* 'White Swan' that means the plant is a cultivar, often selected or bred for specific ornamental traits; sometimes that means the plant is not as beneficial for adult pollinators or their caterpillars as compared to the straight species.

Native plants provide beauty and habitat all year round.

urge to clean it up like we do the living room when the kids go to bed. You'll be amazed at the foliage colors when the low winter sun hits little bluestem, or the architectural forms of rattlesnake master *(Eryngium yuccifolium),* round-headed bush clover *(Lespedeza capitata),* stiff goldenrod *(Oligoneuron rigidum),* black-eyed susan *(Rudbeckia hirta),* and ironweed varieties *(Vernonia).*

In the leaf litter (fallen leaves) beneath the plants will be overwintering creatures snug in their hibernation, from spiders and frogs to butterfly caterpillars and even adult butterflies themselves, like mourning cloaks.

In the spring wait for temperatures to remain in the 50s before you cut the garden down, leaving the material in place to provide all of the fertilizer the plants will need. While you're at it, leave some stems 12 inches tall so a few of our native bees can nest in them (these would be individual, solitary nests, not hives). Waiting for warmer temperatures gives insects time to wake up and be off on their way.

Remember that these insects, which depend on native plants as hosts, are absolutely essential food for the vast majority of terrestrial birds which must feed insects to their brood. If you care about birds, you must also appreciate the value of native plants.

Thoughts About Landscape Design

For a native garden using nonwoody grasses and flowering plants called forbs, keep a few tips in mind.

1) Select an array of species and have at least one plant blooming throughout the growing season—for the pollinators and for lasting beauty.

THE BEAUTY OF NATIVE GRASSES

One afternoon last summer, I was kneeling in a garden bed enjoying sideoats grama *(Bouteloua curtipendula)* in bloom. This native, warm-season bunchgrass has bright orange anthers dangling down next to puffy white stigmas. Which is a botanist's way of saying this grass has pretty flowers when you get up close.

Also enjoying the flowers at the same moment was a little sweat bee, a native species that was gathering pollen for its young. I'd never seen a bee forage on a grass before and, truth be told, it rocked my world.

After that, I started to think about grasses differently in the pollinator garden. Yes, grasses can rebuild soil or decrease weed pressure. But they are also food resources for the same beautiful, winged creatures we admire on coneflower and aster blooms.

In the natural garden every plant matters.

L-R: BENJAMIN VOGT, MARGARET E. FISHER

Larger areas like the grounds at this Great Falls, Virginia library or Ike chapter properties, offer great places for landscaping devoted to attractive, wildlife-friendly native plants.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT NATIVE PLANTS:

Native plant lists by ZIP Code: Audubon Society and Pollinator Partnership.

Nursery directory: www.plantnative.org

State or local native plant societies

University extension services

Botanical gardens

Nature preserves

Regional plant guidebooks

Biota of North America Program (range maps)

2) Choose the right plants for your garden size and conditions. It doesn't make much sense to put a drooping, six-foot sunflower next to the sidewalk. And certain plants have preferences for how much sun or moisture they get.

3) Learn how each plant spreads. Some stay close together while others move rapidly by roots or seed. Knowing how they reproduce will help you match them to the area and to one another. You won't want aggressive plants next to well-behaved species.

If you care about birds, you must also appreciate the value of native plants.

4) Layer the plant beds and plant thickly. Place everything 12 inches apart or closer, no matter what the nursery tag says. For the first year, you want plants to cover the ground ASAP to slow down weeds. Over time, plants will show you what they prefer; be patient and let them teach you.

5) Consider using a mix of plants and seed if you're on a limited budget.

For larger areas or ground cover, don't overlook grasses and clovers. Putting in a mass of three purple prairie clover *(Dalea purpurea)* or a drift of twelve nodding onion *(Allium cernuum)* will help show design intention while being a brighter beacon to pollinators.

In spring or early summer sow some low, warm-season bunchgrasses like sideoats grama, little bluestem *(Schizachyrium scoparium)*, or blue grama *(Bouteloua gracilis).*

If you're sowing a larger space or field, use a diverse seed mix at 100-150 seeds per square foot. If a native plant seed mix from a reputable local grower says the mix will cover 5,000 feet, buy twice as much for the space. Germination rates tend to be only 5 to 10 percent since some seeds will be eaten, washed away, or just aren't viable.

A bit of design advice to appease suburban neighbors: while you're planting in masses also keep taller plants in the back of borders or in the middle of island beds. And the best overall advice is to use nothing that gets over three or four feet tall, especially in a front yard.

Consider nice wide paths of gravel, mulch, or lawn, alongside a bench or fountain. A sign that says what you're doing and why is often helpful.

Finally, it doesn't hurt to be caught outside taking photos of bees or birds on your plants. You might start up a conversation, or at least be seen leading by example as you appreciate nature and all of the good things plants do for our world.

Benjamin Vogt is author of A New Garden Ethic: Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future, *and the forthcoming* Prairie Up: An Introduction to Natural Garden Design (2022). *He owns the Nebraska-based landscape firm Monarch Gardens.*

Please donate to

Help safeguard clean water, wild

What a difference a year can make!

Last spring, our cities and towns were locked down as the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the nation.

Back then, we pledged to persevere and **carry on the League's important work to safeguard the environment, just as we always have for nearly 100 years.** Our team quickly adapted and didn't miss a beat helping volunteers monitor America's streams and rivers, ultimately to keep water safe for drinking and outdoor recreation.

Now, one year later, we are all beginning to breathe a sigh of relief. This spring is truly a season of rebirth and renewal—for public health, for our collective spirit and for the critical work ahead of us.

Save Our Stream volunteers in Nebraska gather data while social distancing.

Please support the League's work this year by making a generous gift of $25 or more to our Spring 2021 Appeal.

our Spring Appeal

dlife and other natural resources

The League is achieving impressive results—on stream monitoring and our Winter Salt Watch campaign—and with your gift of $25, $40 or more, if possible, to our Spring 2021 Appeal, we will build on our momentum this year.

In adapting to COVID-19, we discovered a proverbial silver lining. By emphasizing online volunteer training and educational webinars, we **were able to engage even more Americans** who care about clean water.

The League's Winter Salt Watch campaign demonstrates the power of growing our grassroots base to protect streams and drinking water from the harmful effects of road salt pollution.

A year ago, we distributed 900 Salt Watch test kits. This past winter, we more than doubled our distribution, **sending out 2,500 kits and receiving more than 2,500 results back from volunteers in 22 states!**

Going forward, we expect to pursue a hybrid model for volunteer training and engagement, including basic online courses along with hands-on training in the field. **Your donation of $25 or $40 today will help give our volunteers all the skills they need to start monitoring local streams this year.**

As the state of public health improves, we are excited to get back into communities shoulder to shoulder with Ikes and other volunteers to safeguard clean water, wildlife and other natural resources we all depend upon and enjoy.

Thank you for your continued support of the Izaak Walton League.

L-R: ISTOCK, SAM BRIGGS

To donate online, visit www.iwla.org/donate.

Join Us July 20-22 for

Dates:
Tuesday, July 20 to Thursday, July 22, 2021

Time:
Afternoon from 4 to 6 P.M. Eastern, 3 to 5 P.M. Central.

Registration and Fees:
Registration fees are waived for this virtual convention. However, **attendees will be required to register** in advance to participate. Watch for emails when registration opens.

July 20 through 22, 2021, the Izaak Walton League of America will hold its first-ever virtual convention. A survey of members earlier this year showed that most preferred the online option for a convention given the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This online format will enable members and chapter delegates to conduct important League business, including electing new officers and voting on policy resolutions, and have some fun.

With a virtual format, we also expect many more Ikes will be able to experience a national convention for the first time.

SUMMARY SCHEDULE AND AGENDA:

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

Keynote Speaker, Elections

We'll kick things off with a brief preview of the convention activities and a keynote speaker. That will be followed by a question-and-answer session with the speaker, open to all registrants. The afternoon will conclude with **elections of the League's national officers** and **members of the Executive Board.**

TUESDAY EVENING

(7 P.M. EASTERN, 6 P.M. CENTRAL)

A Virtual Parade of States

It will be impossible to replicate our traditional Parade of States, which is a laid-back **social opportunity** to visit rooms hosted by state delegations, say hello and sample their signature food and beverages. But we will offer a virtual Parade of States. At your leisure, you can grab a beverage or dinner, sit down with your computer or mobile device, and "visit" as many state rooms as you would like for video chats with new acquaintances or old friends.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

Looking Ahead to 2022 and Second Century

In 2022, the League will mark its 100th anniversary, celebrating a century of conservation leadership! During this afternoon session, we will take a moment to **reflect on our history, preview the in-person 2022 convention** and **launch a major 100th anniversary fundraising campaign.**

WEDNESDAY EVENING

(7 P.M. EASTERN, 6 P.M. CENTRAL)

Vote on Policy Resolutions

One of the hallmarks of the League is that members adopt the policies that determine our positions on conservation, outdoor recreation and other issues. These policies guide advocacy at the local, state and national levels. At this session, delegates will vote on the resolutions submitted by chapters and divisions.

The League's First-ever Virtual Convention

Shop Convention Store:
Although you can buy League-branded merchandise 24/7 through our online store, the convention is a perfect time to check out the latest Ike gear or replace that worn out t-shirt. This year, we'll have a wide range of 100th anniversary merchandise, including new fishing shirts, Nalgene water bottles and sustainable products.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON

IWLA Endowment Meeting and Closing Session

The IWLA Endowment is a separate non-profit corporation established to provide financial support to chapters, divisions and the national office to help achieve the League's mission. Every member of the Izaak Walton League is also a member of the Endowment and may participate in the election of the Endowment's Board of Directors. This is your opportunity to **learn about the Endowment's grants** for 2021 and **vote for your representatives** on the Endowment board.

We'll wrap up the evening by swearing in new national officers and members of the Executive Board and concluding any outstanding business.

WAIT – THERE'S MORE!

WEEK OF JULY 26

Small-group Workshops

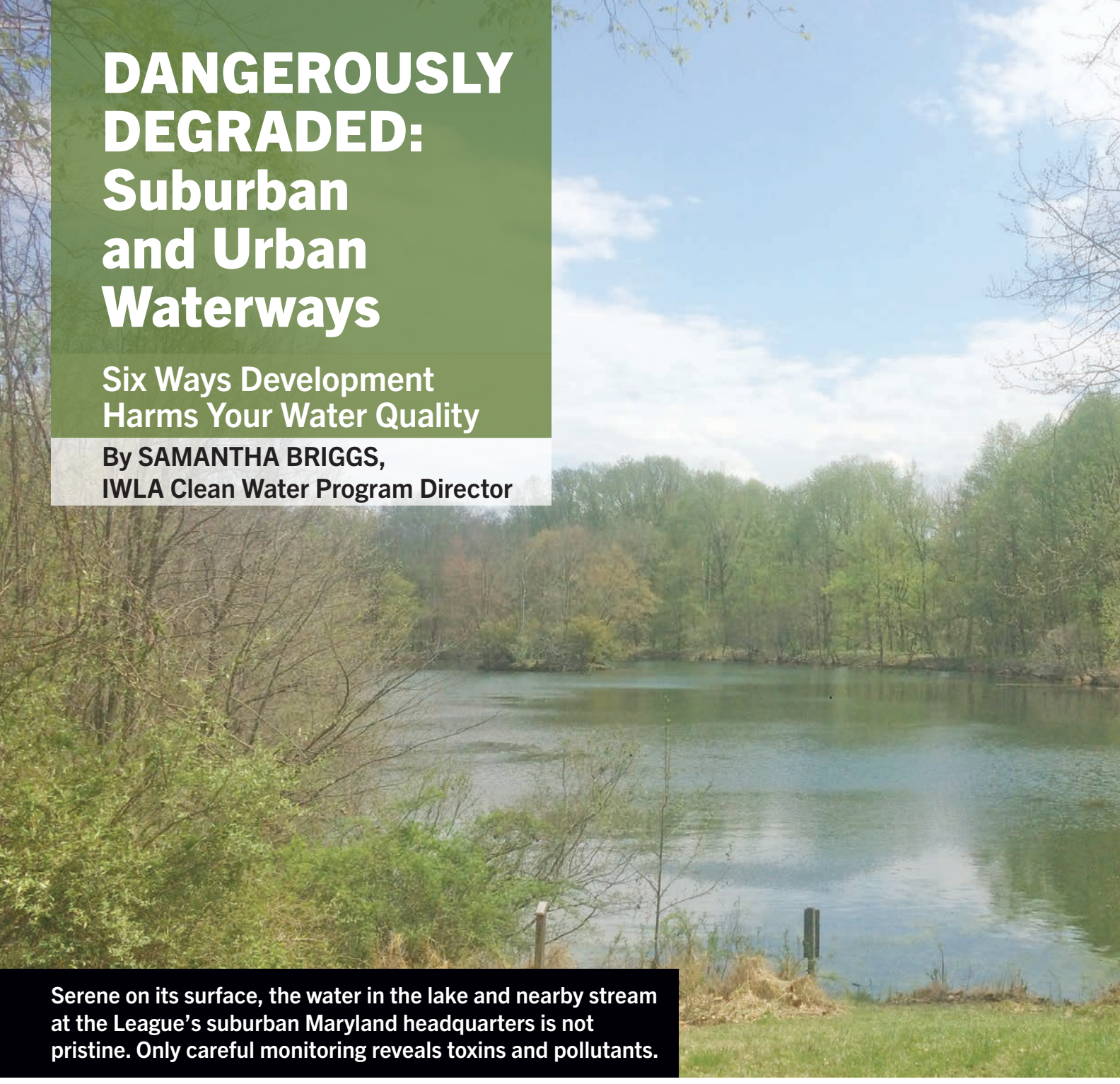
As a part of our convention, the League staff and outside experts lead small-group workshops to help members and chapter leaders build skills or take a deep dive into emerging issues. During the week of July 26, one workshop will be offered each evening. Specific topics, dates and times will be communicated in advance via email and posted on the national website.

Stay Connected: **All convention-related information will be posted as it becomes available on the national website. You can visit www.iwla.org/events any time and sign up for convention updates. The national office will regularly share information and updates via email.**

DANGEROUSLY DEGRADED: Suburban and Urban Waterways

Six Ways Development Harms Your Water Quality

By SAMANTHA BRIGGS, IWLA Clean Water Program Director



Serene on its surface, the water in the lake and nearby stream at the League's suburban Maryland headquarters is not pristine. Only careful monitoring reveals toxins and pollutants.

While your local lakes or streams may appear clean and healthy, chances are the water contains a host of pollutants, from dangerous pathogens to toxic heavy metals. Water treatment plants can't filter out all of the threats in our water, which is why monitoring and better protections for water are vital.

Thanks to groups like the Izaak Walton League of America, the quality of water in our rivers and lakes has vastly improved over the past century.

But problems persist. In many urban and suburban areas, the water in local streams is not safe for kids or dogs to play in. And most water treatment plants cannot prevent all the harmful chemicals, heavy metals and other pollutants from ending up in our drinking water.

While disasters like chemical spills or lead pollution make headlines, the degraded state of local waterways doesn't always make the news.

Are we willing to accept local

MICHAEL REINEMER

streams that pose health hazards?

Where your water comes from

Most of us take our drinking water for granted. Where does it come from? Where does it go?

The answer depends largely on where you live. All Americans get their drinking water—even bottled water—from rivers, lakes or groundwater. And that means what we do on the land directly affects the water that comes out of our tap.

For those of us living in urban and suburban America where there is a lot of pavement and development, it's worth taking a closer look at water quality issues. There are at least six big ways that development degrades the nation's water quality.

But let's start with water in natural, undeveloped areas. Imagine 100 raindrops falling into a forest, meadow or prairie. What happens? About 10 of the raindrops might run off the surface and go into streams, lakes or wetlands. About 40 end up back in the atmosphere by way of evaporation or plants releasing the water back into the air through transpiration.

What we do on the land directly affects the water that comes out of our tap.

For the rest, 25 drops infiltrate into the shallow ground and another 25 seep deeply into the earth. Rain plays a vital role in recharging the water cycle, ensuring the survival of plants, animals and people. This water that percolates into the ground is important since pollutants are filtered out of the water *before* it enters streams, rivers and underground aquifers (the primary sources of drinking water for most Americans).

Water in natural areas slows down during heavy rainfall, so catastrophic flooding is less likely to occur.

KEEPING AN EYE ON STORMWATER RUNOFF

Stormwater is the rain or melting snow that flows off of parking lots, roads and rooftops, picking up pollutants on its way to entering our vital waterways. Cities and counties need to manage their stormwater to limit pollution and prevent flooding. Local governments typically have policies and regulations dedicated to managing stormwater.

The fate of water in developed areas

Now consider what happens when the rain falls in heavily developed areas where the natural groundcover of trees, shrubs and grasses has been replaced by rooftops, parking lots and roadways. Where forests or family farms once stood, there are miles of developments. Suburban areas seem to get more and more densely populated, replacing natural land with impervious surfaces. These changes have immense implications for our water quality and health.

The journey of raindrops is very different in urban and suburban areas. Rather than only 10 percent moving off the surface as stormwater runoff, more than 50 percent of rainfall in developed places runs off into storm drains, eventually flushing right into streams.

And instead of 50 percent flowing into the soil to recharge the groundwater and supply plants and trees, that portion drops to a measly 15 percent.

This vast increase in runoff volume means that rainfall goes down gutters, storm drains and ultimately

into our waterways, picking up speed and pollutants along the way.

Some of the most serious threats to clean water fall into six categories.

Pathogens

E. coli, a dangerous strain of *Escherichia coli* bacteria, and other deadly pathogens often grab headlines in the context of beach closures and produce recalls, when tainted water collects on food and sickens people. These pathogens can cause acute illness, from severe gastrointestinal symptoms to neurological effects.

How do they get into our streams? Generally, these are introduced to the water via human or animal waste. Pet waste is a common source of pathogens in suburban and urban waterways. But so are malfunctioning septic systems, combined sewer overflows and sewage treatment plant discharges.

While these pathogens do not generally make it to our drinking water, they are prevalent in the streams we recreate in and around. If your beloved pet drinks out of a stream during a hike, or your children or grandchildren splash around in a stream or lake, these pathogens could certainly cause harm.

Metals

Lead, copper, cadmium, chromium, zinc and mercury, among other pollutants, also plague

Excess nutrients like nitrate and phosphate can trigger algal blooms and public health warnings like this one at Marion Reservoir, Kansas.

Stormwater in Annapolis, Maryland collects pollutants from streets before flowing into a local creek and the Chesapeake Bay.

suburban and urban waterways. Sources include oil leaks and emissions from automobiles and factories which enter the atmosphere but return to the streams via rain.

The more urbanized your environment, the more likely you are to see these pollutants in your waterways and drinking water. If your community or home has old plumbing infrastructure, heavy metals like lead may leach out of the pipes and straight into your drinking water—after it has left the water treatment plant! These substances are also toxic to aquatic life and can accumulate in fish tissue, posing the danger of development problems or brain damage when eaten by people.

Nutrients

While required for plants to grow, excess nutrients are a problem.

MONITOR YOUR WATER

Save Our Streams monitoring is an Izaak Walton League of America program and a great way to see how common suburban pollutants may be impacting your stream.

Here are the pollutants and the associated tests we do with Save Our Streams:

- **Sediment: Turbidity, visual assessment**
- **Pathogens: Macroinvertebrates**
- **Metals and oil: Macroinvertebrates, visual assessment**
- **Road salt: Chloride**
- **Temperature: Thermometer**
- **Nutrients: Nitrate and phosphate**

Learn more at: www.iwla.org/sos.

Fertilizers added to lawns run off into storm drains and eventually into our streams and rivers. Nutrients like nitrate and phosphate can promote growth of harmful algal blooms (HABs) in lakes, streams or reservoirs that serve as sources for municipal drinking water.

Lead, copper, cadmium, chromium, zinc and mercury, among other pollutants, also plague suburban and urban waterways.

In 2014, a toxic algal bloom in Lake Erie contaminated the drinking water for the city of Toledo, Ohio leaving 400,000 people without water. Boiling water does not get rid of the toxin. And mounting evidence links these HABs to liver cancer, respiratory illness and other diseases.

Too much nitrate—more than 10 parts per million—can cause "blue-baby" syndrome in infants (too much nitrogen starves the body of oxygen). Studies have also linked nitrate to cancer in humans, and experts are now urging EPA to lower the allowed concentration of nitrates in drinking water. (See "The Cancer Risk of Nitrate Pollution" in *Outdoor America,* 2021, Issue 1.)

Because of these excess nutrients, Americans who get their drinking water from treatment plants are paying more and more money to have nitrates removed from water. The Des Moines Water Works in Iowa reported that denitrification efforts in 2014 and 2015, including operation of the nitrate removal facility, have direct operational costs of over $1.5 million.

Road salt

Chloride pollution is a serious issue in the snow belt, particularly in the Midwest and up the East Coast. Road salt is used by transportation departments and private businesses as a safety measure to lower the freezing point of water on roadways and sidewalks to help remove ice.

Unfortunately, road salt is often overapplied. It eventually runs off into streams where it is toxic to aquatic life. A small amount pollutes a large volume of water: One teaspoon of salt will pollute five gallons of water. To make matters worse, this road salt persists in soil and streams for decades.

This pollution will even make its way into our drinking water since most drinking water treatment plants are not equipped to filter out excess salt. Chloride can also corrode infrastructure and the insides of pipes, causing other pollutants to leach into your tap water.

During the past year, the League's Salt Watch program recruited volunteers in 33 states who monitored local streams and reported more than 2,600 results. See results at www.iwla.org/saltwatchresults.

Sediment

Although some sediment occurs naturally in streams, the amount and negative effects are exacerbated by development and impervious surfaces. This combination of dirt, sand or clay comes from construction sites when vegetation is removed, from cropland erosion

TOP-BOTTOM: USGS; MATT RATH, CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM

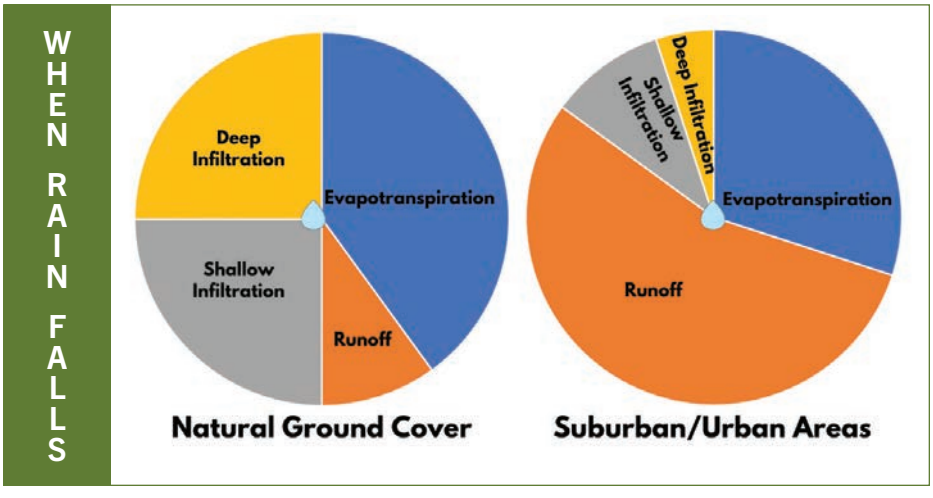
This stormwater pond in Fairfax, Va. slows rainwater and allows it to seep into the earth.

and even from the streambanks themselves. Sped up by a large volume of rainwater washing down roadsides, gutters and drains, stormwater carves away streambanks, undermining the structure of the stream channel and polluting the water with that sediment.

Sediment pollution causes a slew of problems. First, in the stream itself, cloudy water can impact the food chain by making it harder for fish to see and breathe and for plants to grow. Additionally, sediment can fill in the stream channel, burying key habitat for macroinvertebrates and fish.

From the human perspective, sediment complicates water treatment and sometimes means our drinking water tastes or smells "off" due to the increased particles in the water and the pollutants those particles are carrying, such as nutrients or minerals. If this describes drinking water at your home from time to time and your water comes from a local treatment plant, that's proof positive treatment does not always produce pristine tap water.

Sediment also fills in behind dams and in reservoirs, which presents costly dredging challenges.



Regardless of where you live, ongoing stream monitoring is important.

Heat

We all know how hot it might feel on the pavement in the summer. But how does that affect streams and rivers? Impervious surfaces (parking lots, black tops, sidewalks, rooftops) do not allow water to filter through them. Rainfall will instead flow over the surface, warming up as it travels. This causes water to enter streams at a much higher temperature than it would while flowing over natural groundcover.

Higher temperatures are bad news for wildlife that live in the stream, including fish and macroinvertebrates. This is because warmer water holds less oxygen, so the sensitive fish species like trout

Once completed this Virginia rain garden will allow water to soak into the ground and slow down storm water runoff.

that require more oxygen will die off. Additionally, higher temperatures allow for excess algae growth, and some types of blue-green algae are toxic to humans and animals. (See "It's Heating Up" article on hotter stream temperatures in *Outdoor America,* 2020, Issue 3.)

How you can help

First and foremost, regardless of where you live, ongoing stream monitoring is important. Monitoring can set a baseline of good water quality in your region before development. More commonly, monitoring can diagnose problems that are already apparent, which is the case in most developed areas. All information about Save Our Streams water quality monitoring can be found at www.iwla.org/sos.

Removing plastic trash from streams will reduce pollution in the dangerous form of microplastics.

If the region where you live is being developed, it is essential that the new infrastructure is built in a way that protects water quality. This means you will need to advocate for your city or county government to use pervious pavement (that allows water to soak through), install rain gardens and other conservation landscaping that promotes infiltration, slow stormwater down where possible, plan development based on the watershed and finally, leave natural buffer zones around streams.

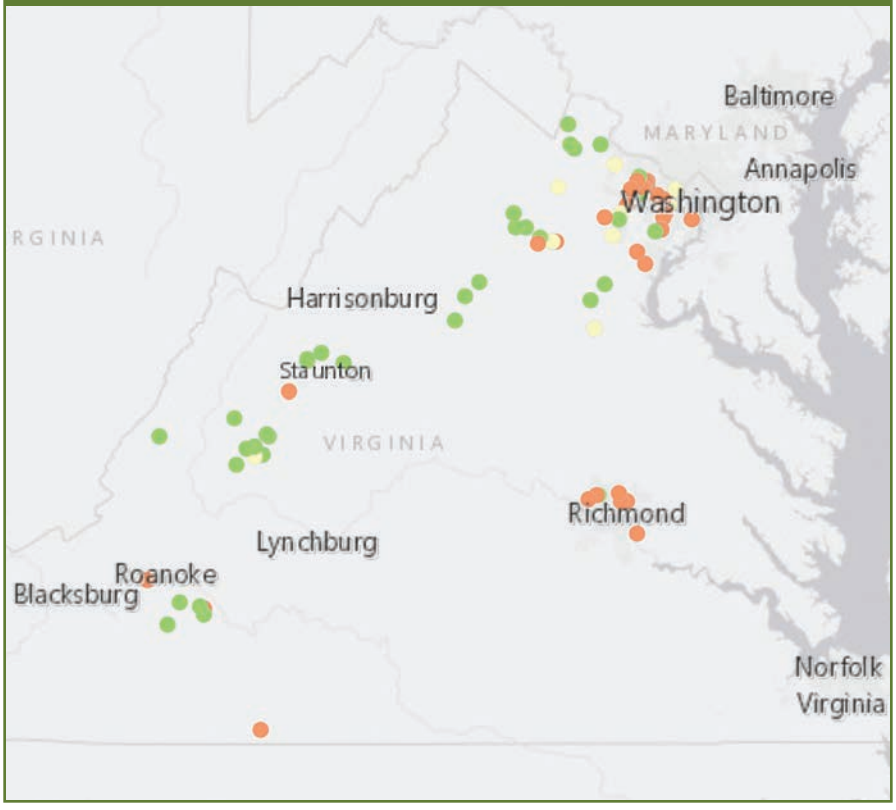
In already developed suburban and urban areas, existing infrastructure can sometimes be retrofitted to include these water quality practices. New technologies for sewage treatment plants and upgraded septic systems will also protect streams and rivers from pollution.

On your own property, make sure that you are taking steps to protect water quality as well. Plant trees and native plants to absorb water, sediment and nutrients. Install rain barrels to catch water washing off your rooftop and properly dispose of all wastes in your home.

Together, actions like these can provide a comprehensive solution when it comes to common suburban and urban pollutants. They protect our water from all forms of excess runoff, which is what carries these pollutants to streams in the first place.

To get started with monitoring, visit www.iwla.org/sos.

Virginia Save Our Streams Results, 2020



This map shows the monitoring results for the League's Virginia Save Our Streams program from 2020.

That program measures biological health of stream water, which is affected by all six pollution parameters discussed in this article. Red means the stream health score is unacceptable, green means acceptable and cream represents "gray areas" that suggest water quality problems. The urban and suburban areas, namely Richmond and the Washington DC metro area in Northern Virginia, had unacceptable water quality in many local streams, which is consistent with our monitoring results for this region in recent years.

L-R: MARGARET E. FISHER (2); MAP: IWLA

LEAGUE'S LEGACY: America's Most Successful Conservation Law

Land and Water Conservation Fund: Storied Past and Bright Future

BY LISA BALLARD

From Denali National Park in Alaska (above) to the Florida Everglades, LWCF has helped preserve wild places for more than 50 years.

PIXABAY

LWCF funds have helped to conserve Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania.

The idea was simple: Companies that profit by depleting natural resources owned by the public would return a portion of the funds to the United States to invest in conserving lands and water. Most of the money would come from royalties paid by oil and gas companies, particularly those drilling offshore.

This idea came to fruition in 1965 when Congress created the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to be managed by the Department of the Interior. In the decades since then, the fund has provided $18.9 billion in direct investments and matching grants to federal, state and local governments to purchase land or acquire easements to public land and water for the public's benefit, at no cost to taxpayers.

As a result, LWCF has helped to fund thousands of outdoor recreation projects in almost every county in the U.S., including urban parks, rec centers, ballfields and boat ramps. It has helped the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acquire lands of critical importance to both wildlife and public enjoyment.

But more should have been invested over that half century. When LWCF became law, it was authorized to be funded at $900 million per year. That meant that Congress still needed to actually provide those funds—appropriate the money, every year. And Congress rarely delivered more than a third to half of that $900 million. So the rest of the money was spent on unrelated budget items.

In spite of its relative obscurity, LWCF ranks as one of the nation's most essential conservation laws.

No longer!

Last summer, when the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) was signed into law, it included permanent funding for LWCF at its originally intended level of $900 million per year. That means LWCF is guaranteed this funding without Congress having to appropriate it annually.

Conservation groups including the Izaak Walton League of America, hunters, anglers and others who value our natural resources and outdoor recreation hailed the GAOA as one of the most significant conservation laws since the LWCF was established in 1965.

The League and LWCF

It was a soft-spoken yet influential Ike, Joe Penfold, who pushed the importance of outdoor recreation and the concept of LWCF. He served as conservation director for the League from 1957 to 1973. He championed the idea through three presidential administrations—Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson—until the concept became law under President Johnson. In spite of its relative obscurity, LWCF ranks as one of the nation's most essential conservation laws.

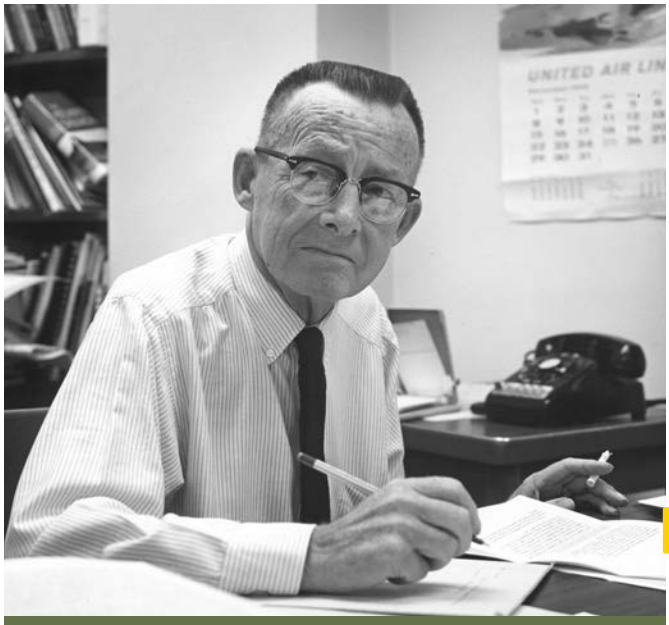
During the 1950s and 1960s, the conservation community was much less fragmented than it is today, and much smaller. There were only a handful of national organizations whose leadership not only knew

each other professionally but were often personal friends. Joe Penfold was a respected member of that group, and through his expertise and work, he earned the ear of influential lawmakers in Congress.

According to Mike Penfold, Joe's son, his father was among the first to understand the need to collect and use data to advocate for the economic and social benefits of outdoor recreation. Benefits that even non-conservation-minded politicians would support.

With Penfold's insights, the Izaak Walton League's vision not only covered large tracts of public land like national parks and forests, but also smaller city parks and ballfields. To that end, he co-drafted a bill and successfully advocated for creation of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, to which President Kennedy appointed him. Others serving on that commission included Senators Hubert Humphrey and Scoop Jackson, Representative Wayne Aspinall, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall and conservationist Laurance Rockefeller. Influential company indeed.

The commission revealed for the first time the billions of dollars and countless jobs generated by outdoor recreation on public lands. The reports issued by the commission paved the way for passage of the Wilderness Act, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the National Outdoor Recreation Act and LWCF. Owing to his foresight and trusted opinions, Joe Penfold earned the title "the father of the LWCF."



Joe Penfold was the Izaak Walton League's conservation director for nearly 20 years beginning in the 1950s. He was instrumental in developing the concept and momentum behind creation of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

"My father understood the importance of investment in communities as well as remote natural areas," says Mike Penfold.

The program has helped the nation's outdoor recreation economy to grow to $788 billion per year today and has protected natural areas in virtually every American's community.

"He believed the diversity of outdoor experiences was important and relevant to each other. Outdoor recreation needs to start in town. To protect wild areas, you need people to have outdoor experiences, though not necessarily in a place that can't handle a lot of public use."

Public Use of Public Lands.

Thanks to work by the League and Joe Penfold, LWCF has played a critical role in increasing access to public lands for a half century. The program has helped the nation's outdoor recreation economy to grow to $788 billion per year today and has also protected green spaces and natural areas in virtually every community in America.

The 40,000 projects that LWCF has funded over the last 56 years have included such diverse needs as the restoration of the natural waterflow in the Everglades, the pit toilets on top of Mount Evans in Colorado (the highest paved road in North America) and the expansion of the California National Monument from 1,711 acres at Point Arena to 7,924 acres. LWCF grants were used to stabilize the shoreline at Illinois Beach in Chicago and construct walking paths in Riverfront Park in Billings, Montana.

The fund has also been used extensively to purchase private inholdings surrounded by public lands (private lands or homes located inside national parks or forests) and consolidate the patchwork of public and private lands in the West, which improve efficiencies in managing our shared public spaces.

Once an LWCF grant is used to acquire or enhance land for public use, the property

L-R: BRUCE EMMERLING, PIXABAY; IWLA

must retain those uses.

At Indiana Dunes State Park, the **Porter County Chapter of the IWLA** is relying on this provision of LWCF to prevent the state of Indiana from building a banquet facility on the beach adjacent to a newly renovated, circa 1930 pavilion. The state wishes to convert the plaza on one side of the pavilion into a three-story restaurant with a sports bar on the first floor, dining on the second floor and a roof bar with sliding glass walls.

"How crazy to put up glass walls in a flyway for birds," says Jim Sweeney, an IWLA state director.

Investing in the Basics—Another Win

While the Great American Outdoors Act permanently funds LWCF, it also provides separate funding of $9.5 billion over the next five years to catch up on the enormous maintenance backlog in our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges and waterways.

Unfortunately, for many years now, Washington has been short-changing the federal programs that maintain and improve our national parks, forests and wildlife refuges.

Given that the National Park Service backlog alone is now over $12 billion, GAOA is not a cure-all. But it will provide noticeable upgrades to facilities, trails and roads and create the jobs needed to achieve these improvements.

"This is your land!" says Jared Mott, IWLA Conservation Director. "The degradation of our public land over time, due to lots of budget cuts, has been used by some anti-conservationists as an excuse to sell off public lands. It took a long time to get to this state of disrepair in our national parks and public lands, and it's going to take a long time to fix it. But the Great American Outdoors Act and the permanent funding of the Land and Water Conservation Act is a good start."

"The Great American Outdoors Act is a down payment," says Amy Lindholm, who manages the LWCF Coalition, a network of groups that has been advocating for authorization and funding. "We want to make sure those dollars are spent well and equitably, both geographically and across underserved communities who don't have access to nature."

Tools to Combat Climate Crisis

Now and stretching into the future, one of the more profound values of LWCF is helping to deal with climate change. Through strategic land acquisitions, the program can help with flood mitigation in places like the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, which the League helped to establish in one of its earliest and most enduring conservation victories. It can also be used to create buffers where sea levels are rising, like wetlands along the Chesapeake Bay and in southern Louisiana.

Lindholm cites funding from LWCF that supports forest legacy programs in the highlands of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut as another example. By keeping those timberlands in current use (in keeping with LWCF's covenants) rather than clearing them for housing developments, the forests hold on to carbon and remain available for hiking, hunting and for other outdoor recreation.

What's more, wild places give wildlife the chance to modify their behavior and move around in reaction to climate-related changes to their habitat and natural range.

"You can't teach animals how to adapt to climate change, but you can remove other stressors so they can figure out how to adapt," explains Mott. "Likewise, LWCF helps us protect wildlife migration corridors."

LWCF PROJECTS NEAR YOU

To learn about local LWCF-funded projects, visit the interactive map at: www.iwla.org/lwcf-map

KEITH JOHNSTON, PIXABAY

LWCF has provided funds for urban and suburban parks and ballfields as well as natural areas.

Formed over thousands of years, the sand at Indiana Dunes State Park towers nearly 200 feet above Lake Michigan. The park was preserved with help from LWCF.

In fire-prone regions where wildfires are becoming more frequent and severe, LWCF helps fund the creation of buffers between likely burn areas and residential developments—an area called the wildland-urban interface—to protect property and lives.

"Land is our greatest resource to fight climate change," says Lindholm.

Our nation's 640 million acres of public lands are unequalled anywhere in the world. Over the past year, due to the pandemic, these public places have seen high demand and unprecedented levels of use. Record numbers of people have flocked to parks, forests, mountains, lakeshores and coastal areas as something healthy and safe to do.

We, the American people, also own that land and we need to take care of it.

A Legacy for the League

Mike Penfold recalls his father's observation that "there's no limit to what can be done—if someone else gets the credit."

Joe Penfold was far more concerned about achieving the best outcomes for conservation and outdoor recreation than taking credit. Few people know about the extraordinary scope of benefits that LWCF has delivered to Americans for decades. Even fewer people have ever heard of Joe Penfold.

Yet, thanks to Joe's visionary leadership, LWCF will continue to conserve our land and water and help people enjoy the outdoors for many generations to come.

Lisa Ballard is an Ike from Red Lodge, Montana, and a long-time contributor to Outdoor America. *An award-winning writer and photographer, she is dedicated to getting people of all ages outdoors. www.LisaBallardOutdoors.com.*

HOW FUNDS ARE DISTRIBUTED

Some LWCF funds go to states and local communities through grants to support parks and rec centers, working forests or water protection. The funds may be distributed as block grants based on population size or through competitive applications submitted by states or municipalities. This distribution process is typically handled by a state's natural resources agency.

Funds for federal land conservation is a different process. Projects must be approved by Congress and win approval through congressional appropriations and the Department of the Interior.

In both cases, local conservation and recreation organizations often partner with a municipality or government agency to develop a project, build community support, raise matching funds and advocate for approval.

DAVID MARK, PIXABAY

LEAGUE SEEKS BIPARTISAN WINS IN WASHINGTON

A framework for defending our woods, water, wildlife

BY JARED MOTT, IWLA Conservation Director

Policy in Washington affects the health of the nation's lands, water and wildlife.

Every two years, the Izaak Walton League of America reexamines our public policy priorities and prepares for a new term of Congress, which offers a clean slate for advancing our conservation agenda.

This year, in addition to the beginning of the 117th Congress (2021-2022), a new presidential administration has been sworn in, offering more opportunities for education and collaboration with national conservation leaders and officials.

The League is poised to secure crucial victories for conservation in the next couple years for a few reasons. Perhaps most importantly, many of our priorities are popular on both sides of the political aisle. Conservation issues are known for their bipartisan support.

Republicans, Democrats and Independents can all agree on certain things. Those include the need for clean air and water, conserving fish and wildlife habitat and supporting our outdoor traditions. Common values, like

PEXELS

these conservation priorities, often win support from all sides.

For evidence of this, we need look no further than last year when Congress passed and President Trump signed the Great American Outdoors Act. (Read more about the new law on page 36.) The year before, the John Dingell Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act was signed into law.

Common values like these conservation priorities often win support from all sides.

Together, these two momentous measures permanently secured the future of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, one of the League's biggest policy priorities for decades. Both bills were passed out of a House of Representatives controlled by Democrats, a Senate held by Republicans and signed by a Republican president.

The League now looks to capitalize on this momentum to continue advancing conservation

wins with the new Congress and the Biden administration.

As we always have, the League will engage on a variety of conservation policies, whether complex regional issues or broad issues that are national in scope.

What follows here is an overview of the most vital national priorities that the League's staff and dedicated grassroots volunteers will be working to advance in the next two years.

Safeguarding Clean Water

Since passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, water quality across the country has improved dramatically, and the rate of wetland loss has slowed significantly. However, the progress and protections provided by the Act are increasingly at risk.

In 2019, the Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency issued rules administering the Clean Water Act in a way that drastically reduces the number of streams and wetlands protected by the Act. These policy changes defy the original intent of Congress and ignore the science of water pollution and Supreme Court precedence. Most alarming, the rules unnecessarily put Americans' drinking water, public health and outdoor recreation at risk.

The Biden administration must repeal and replace this bad policy with strong guidelines that protect America's waters. Additionally, we call on every member of Congress to support legislation that amends the Clean Water Act to define the types of waters more specifically, including all wetlands and tributary streams, that are protected under the Act.

Resilient Farmland Helps Taxpayers as well as Farmers

America—the breadbasket of the world—has lost half of its topsoil, and cropland soil is eroding 10 times faster than it can be replenished. Since colonial times, soil organic matter has declined dramatically, requiring enormous increases in use of chemical fertilizer.

Improving soil health is a top priority for the League. Healthy soils store atmospheric carbon, protect water quality and reduce flooding. They also grow healthy food, increase drought resilience and reduce farmers' and ranchers' input costs (buying fertilizer for example).

With taxpayers paying 62 percent of crop insurance premiums, every American would benefit from broader adoption of conservation measures.

For years, the League has led the charge to establish a "Good Farmer Discount" on crop insurance. That would lower insurance costs for farmers who adopt agricultural practices such as no till, cover crops and managed rotational grazing that build soil health. Healthier soil holds more water, reducing the likelihood that farmers will suffer a large crop loss in a very dry or very wet year.

Yet these "high conservation/low risk" farmers pay the same premiums for their crop insurance as farmers who have not adopted the conservation measures. Farmers not adopting conservation practices are more likely to have a crop loss covered by crop insurance.

With taxpayers paying 62 percent of crop insurance premiums, every American would also benefit from broader adoption of conservation measures that make soils more resilient to drought and flooding, the two largest categories of payouts for crop insurance loss. This discount could be passed by Congress but could also be implemented by the Biden administration as a model or pilot at the Department of Agriculture.

In addition to a Good Farmer Discount, Congress should pass legislation creating a State and Tribal Soil Health Grant Program. Modeled after the successful State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program (created in 2000), this grant program would provide 75 percent of the cost of creating soil health action plans, and then 65 percent of the cost of implementing those plans. Plans would identify needs, opportunities, costs, benefits and strategies for restoring and maintaining healthy soils.

Combatting Climate Change

Essential to America's future food and fiber supply, soil health can also help us address climate change. Our elected officials must lead an aggressive strategy to put the U.S. on a path to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 to avoid the most catastrophic effects. Investments in energy efficiency, clean energy infrastructure and emission reductions are imperative to achieving the goals scientists have said we must attain.

While any strategy must reduce emissions from power plants, vehicles and other sources, the League believes that the pathway to net zero must also include land and water-based solutions found on our public lands, agricultural areas, wetlands and oceans. All offer powerful ways to sequester

carbon and increase climate resiliency. As bills addressing climate change are debated and passed, we believe Congress should adopt and strengthen policies that build soil health, conserve and restore wetlands and protect the carbon sinks found in our forests and native prairies.

League-championed initiatives such as the Good Farmer Discount and State and Tribal Soil Health Grants can help meet climate goals. In fact, improving soil health provides proven options to quickly sequester millions of tons of carbon from the atmosphere. Existing programs like the grants funded by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and wetlands reserve easements in the Farm Bill must be strengthened. And the government must enforce Farm Bill provisions that stop federal payments to farmers and ranchers who plow under native prairie to plant row crops.

Additionally, legislation must advance environmental justice by increasing the capacity of all communities to participate in the policymaking process. This is especially important for the low-income and communities of color that have disproportionately borne the worst impacts of pollution, climate change and extreme weather.

Grassroots engagement is the fuel that will drive the League to wins on these and other important conservation issues.

Protecting America's Wildlife

For nearly a century, funding for the conservation and restoration of our country's wildlife has come from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, as well as excise taxes on sporting goods—primarily firearms, ammunition and fishing tackle. Now however, in the face of fewer Americans engaged in hunting and fishing, new funding sources for fish and wildlife conservation are needed.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) addresses this critical need. This bill would redirect $1.3 billion in existing revenues to state fish and wildlife agencies for management of a wide array of fish and wildlife from songbirds and pollinators to amphibians. An additional $97.5 million would be directed to tribal wildlife managers to conserve species on tribal lands and waters.

At the heart of this important legislation is the idea that investing in conservation now will prevent costly actions later, including when imperiled wildlife are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Action Needed Now

These policy priorities outline actions needed to defend America's soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife. None of these priorities have a built-in luxury of time; they all require urgent and decisive action.

Ignoring these issues could be disastrous for our natural resources and undo so much of the critical conservation work that generations of Ikes worked so hard to establish.

While we have much to do, we are buoyed by wins secured in the past two years and the knowledge that these issues enjoy support from across the political spectrum.

The Izaak Walton League has a proud 99-year legacy as a credible, action-oriented leader in conservation. So we hope more Ikes will engage in these policy issues, respond to League action alerts and make sure policymakers get the message.

Grassroots engagement is the fuel that will drive the League to wins on these and other important conservation issues.

USFWS

One imperiled species that benefited from incentive-based habitat restoration and conservation regulations in recent decades is the Louisiana black bear.

How You Can Make a Difference

Together, we can make a difference on conservation causes we care about. To get a notification when policymakers need to hear from you, sign up for our Action Alerts and the *Conservation Currents* e-newsletter at www.iwla.org/subscribe.

Also, like or follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/iwla.org) and Twitter for updates on national initiatives, chapter efforts and news about issues.

Fishing Gear Discounts for Chapters

Fishing is a great way to introduce youth, adults and families to outdoor recreation—and engage them in the great outdoors for life. League chapters are great places to introduce people to fishing and Zebco wants to help.

Zebco's Family Fishing Program provides discounted fishing gear to non-profit organizations, such as League chapters that engage youth and families in fishing activities.

Chapters are eligible for 50 percent off on Zebco rods, reels and combos. This discount cannot be combined with other offers or clearance items. Discounted fishing gear purchased must be used for a chapter's fishing event or given as prizes at such events.

Chapters can take advantage of this opportunity by emailing chapters@iwla.org for an authorized discount code and ordering instructions before you can place an order. Please include your name, chapter name and officer title (if applicable) in your email.

Feel free to send photos and a brief write-up about your chapter's successful fishing event to *Outdoor America* at OA@iwla.org.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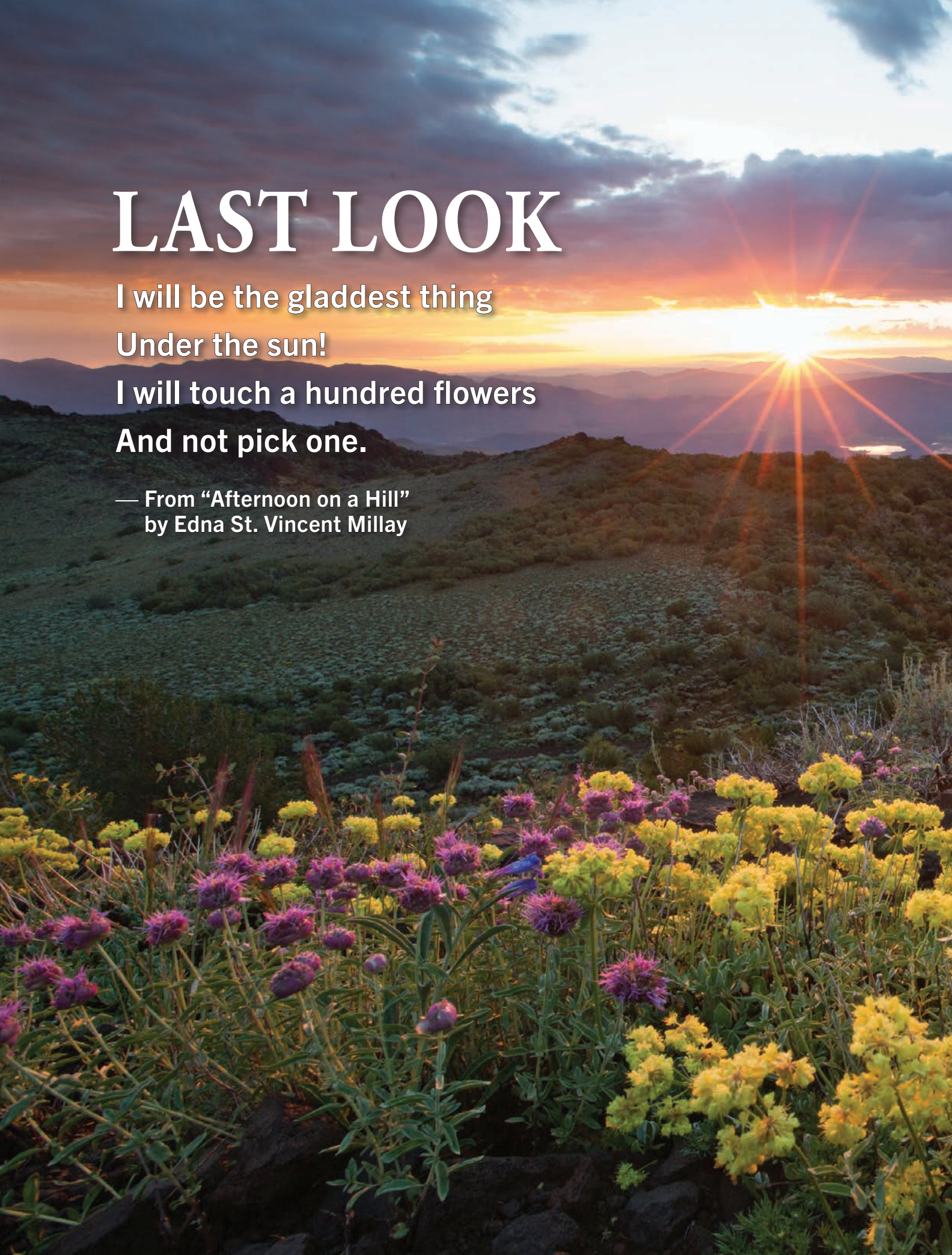
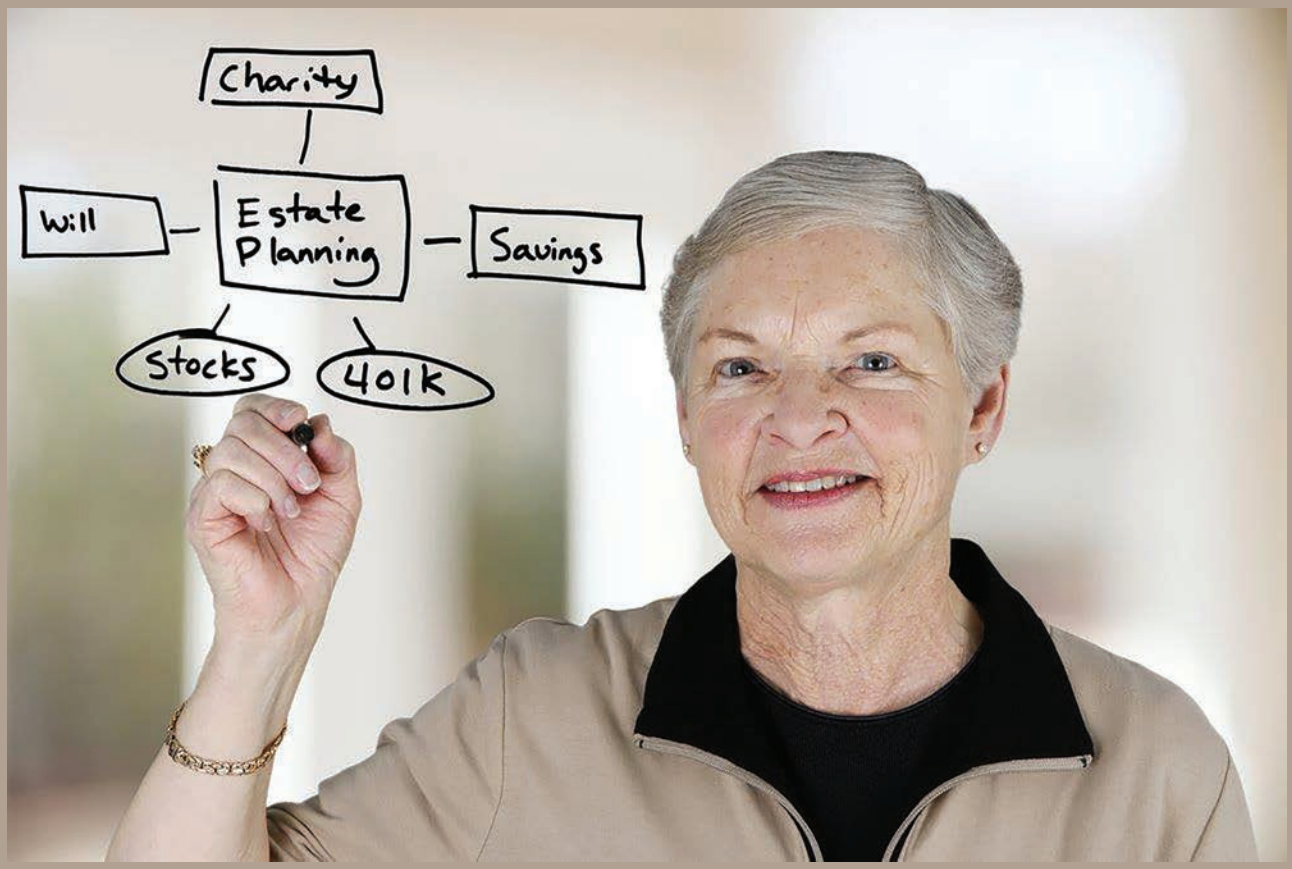


LAST LOOK

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

— From “Afternoon on a Hill”
by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Are You Prepared for the Unexpected?



We're living in uncertain times and it's impossible to predict how quickly your circumstances might change.

There's never been a better time to plan ahead to leave a legacy that will protect our air, water and wildlife for future generations.

Contact us today for information about including the Izaak Walton League in your will or naming the League as the beneficiary for insurance or other investments. Email develop@iwla.org or fill out and return this form. Thank you!

☐ Please send me more information about estate planning.

☐ I have included the League in my estate plans and would like to be recognized as a member of the Willing Waltonian Society. My bequest will support one of the following:

___IWL Trust ___National Conservation Programs ___Chapter/Division (please specify below):

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Daytime Phone: _____

Chapter/Division: _____

Return this form to: Izaak Walton League of America, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878.

SHUTTERSTOCK

IWLA NATIONAL AWARDS

"Two big thumbs up for a lifetime of service to the League!"

"Saved more wetlands than we thought possible!"

"Best conservation program in our lifetime!"

Nominations due June 1, 2021

www.iwla.org/awards

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A Century of Conservation Leadership

Your Stories Tell Our History

Share memories for our 100th anniversary

The Izaak Walton League is gearing up to celebrate our remarkable century of conservation leadership from 1922 to 2022.

L-R: JANET PALADINO, IWLA, ELMER GROUP

We would welcome a brief story or recollection (two or three paragraphs at most) that you would be willing to share in Outdoor America.

Our 100th anniversary provides an opportunity to remember our accomplishments as a national organization. And just as important, the next two years are a great chance to share some of your stories and chapter experiences from our first century.

Across several generations, countless experiences of stewardship and fellowship have shaped our identity and underscored our commitment to defending soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife.

Whether a memorable fishing trip, an action that advanced a policy achievement or a successful conservation project from the past 100 years—we want to hear about it. Also we want to hear about your vision for the next 100 years, for the League and your chapter.

We welcome your thoughts between now and the end of 2022.
Email to Michael Reinemer, mreinemer@iwla.org.