

# OUTDOOR AMERICA™

PUBLISHED BY THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

2021 ISSUE 3

## RIVERS IN TROUBLE

### ALSO INSIDE:

Microplastics = Major Pollution

Award-Winning Ikes

100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gear





# Your Stories Tell Our History

## Share memories for our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary

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



**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, this is a great time 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](mailto:mreinemer@iwla.org).

# OUTDOOR AMERICA

PUBLISHED BY THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

VOL. 86 NO. 3

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By Paul Lepisto



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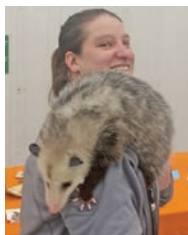
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Credit: SHUTTERSTOCK

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Credit: NPS

#### 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](http://www.iwla.org).



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## We Know How to Do This!

VICKI ARNOLD | NATIONAL PRESIDENT

**F**ellow Ikes,

I am always re-energized after our national convention. This July was no different as we held our first-ever virtual convention.

With the help of many behind the scenes, we successfully conducted all required business of the League, had the opportunity to attend four informative workshops and heard from two very interesting speakers. Their message was about listening to each other, working together, looking at all points of view and understanding the other person's perspective. A true message of coming together for the success of our organization.

For those who did not have the opportunity to participate in the convention, all of the activities, except the parade of states, were recorded and can be viewed at [www.iwla.org/convention2021](http://www.iwla.org/convention2021).

The success of conducting the business of the League was accomplished because of some changes made in the convention format. Drawing on surveys from recent years, the Executive Board began implementing member-suggested changes to the convention format.

One of those changes allowed for standing committees, resource

committees and resolutions committee to meet electronically before the convention. Going forward this change will make it possible to participate in multiple resource committees. If you have not completed the request form to be a member of a 2022 resource committee, I encourage you to submit that form to the League as soon as possible. All committee members will be assigned by November 1, 2021.

**The Izaak Walton League has been fighting for our natural resources for almost 100 years and we cannot stop now.**

During this year's convention we also kicked off "A Mandate to Save Outdoor America," our Second Century Campaign, to fund the future of the League. The campaign aims to build on the success of our first century: helping to pass the Clean Water Act, mobilizing citizen scientists, engaging the next generation in outdoor recreation and building our relationship with American farm families,



to mention only a few.

Those accomplishments did not come easy, and the future battles will be even harder. But we know how to do this! It is going to take continued hard work, a commitment of time and major investments.

The Izaak Walton League has been fighting for our natural resources for almost 100 years and we cannot stop now. Please visit [www.iwla.org/secondcentury](http://www.iwla.org/secondcentury) for information on how to donate to the Second Century Campaign.

I look forward to working with League members as we celebrate our past—and more importantly—plan for our future.

Thank you for all that you do for your chapter, your division, and the next generation of true conservationists.

**Notice to Members** ► The League occasionally makes postal addresses available to carefully screened firms and organizations whose products or activities might be of interest to League members. If you prefer not to receive such mailings in the future, please send us a note along with a copy of your *Outdoor America* mailing label (including your membership identification number), asking that your name be excluded. Send requests to IWLA Membership Department, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878-2983.



# OUTDOOR AMERICA

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IWLA provides equal membership/employment/service opportunities to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.

Minimum national dues are \$50 for individual and \$75 for family memberships, which includes \$5 for *Outdoor America* magazine. Magazine subscription is inseparable from dues. Chapter and division dues vary and are set separately.

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*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

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## Izaak Walton League

ENJOYING & PROTECTING AMERICA'S OUTDOORS

Not a member? It's easy to join!

Visit [www.iwla.org](http://www.iwla.org) to locate a chapter near you or join as a national or corporate member. You can also call 800-IKE-LINE and ask for the membership department. Your membership supports our conservation and education efforts and links you with a nationwide network of people working on common-sense solutions to environmental issues.



## Big Challenges, Inspiring Volunteers— Topics We Have Tackled Since Day One

SCOTT KOVAROVICS | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**I**n 2022, the League will celebrate many milestones, including 100 years of *Outdoor America* magazine. Our start-up organization published issue 1 in August 1922 with articles from some of the foremost writers of that time.

Over the ensuing decades, this magazine has delved deeply into every major conservation issue and showcased the achievements of chapters and members nationwide. This issue illustrates the breadth of coverage for which *Outdoor America* is well-known.

### The Big Issues

Two features spotlight major conservation issues—microplastic pollution and threats to rivers across America. As Professor Sherri Mason points out, “this plastic pollution is coming back to us in the food we eat, the air we breathe and the water we drink.” While the problem is serious, League members are already part of the solution by removing tons of plastic every year through roadside and stream clean-ups and personal choices, such as using refillable water bottles. One hundred years ago, League

members saw an urgent need to conserve and restore the nation’s rivers. Paul Lepisto and Duane Hovorka demonstrate how pressing this issue remains today in their articles about two important rivers.

The Missouri River is among the most endangered in America. Efforts to restore habitat and fish and wildlife are hamstrung by woefully inadequate funding and a management strategy developed in the 1940s.

The Patuxent River in Maryland is both an example of the problems and a model for managing our threatened waterways. Agriculture runoff is the largest source of water pollution. Yet, there are examples of how expanding conservation practices on farms—from planting cover crops to improving soil health—can substantially reduce runoff and combat climate change.

### Inspiring Ikes

Our members are the heart and soul of this organization. Every year, the League celebrates a handful of Ikes with national awards honoring their leadership, hard work and commitment to achieving our mission. Learn more about 2020



award recipients beginning on page 36. If you know members who deserve similar recognition, be sure to nominate them for national awards beginning in January 2022.

### 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gear

The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is a perfect opportunity to show the League brand. See page 22 for a preview of anniversary merchandise from old stand-bys, like hats and t-shirts, to new items, including fishing shirts and reusable Nalgene water bottles. Visit our online store at [iwla.org/shop](http://iwla.org/shop) to order your gear today.

For 100 years, *Outdoor America* has been the “voice” of the Izaak Walton League. We know that voice will be loud and clear as we embark on our second century.

**Library Subscriptions** ► Spread the League’s conservation message by sponsoring a subscription to *Outdoor America* for a local school, university, or library at the special rate of \$5 per year. Not only will you be raising awareness about the League, you will also be increasing your chapter’s visibility because address labels include the sponsoring chapter’s name. Subscription forms are available by calling (800) IKE-LINE (453-5463). Easy ship-to/bill-to service allows the magazine to be shipped to the institution while the renewal invoices are mailed to the sponsoring chapter. Don’t delay—spread “OA” today!



# By Way of Introduction...

JIM PIATESKI | CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE BOARD

**G**reetings to all Ikes!

As the newly elected Chairman of the Executive Board of the Izaak Walton League of America, I should tell you a bit about myself.

As a youth, my family always lived in close proximity to woods, fields and streams that fed my interest in the outdoors. Although moving around a fair amount, I always found places that I could fish or hunt. This was when you left the house in the morning and weren't seen again until the streetlights came on.

Fast forward to adulthood. My wife and I raised two daughters. Between work and other activities, I really didn't have too much time to pursue my outdoor activities. Some camping and beach trips were about all.

## A Friend Introduces Me

It wasn't until 1996 that a friend introduced me to the League. I was hooked. I started attending chapter meetings and eventually sat on their board of directors. Time moved on. I held several other positions at the chapter level up to president and eventually became a national director.

I started attending national conventions. That was a blast! My favorite part of the convention, other than the Parade of States,

was the presentation of the resolutions. There was always lively debate and often differing points of view. That kept it interesting and informative.

Roger Sears first approached me about running for the Executive Board. He seemed to feel that I had something to offer. I agreed to give it a shot. It took a couple of years and acceptance of some other responsibilities to become a familiar face and was eventually elected. Now, nearly 10 years later, I'm in the hot seat as chair of the Executive Board. I guess I've always had a problem saying "no" when it comes to the League.

**The Izaak Walton League has much to offer for today and tomorrow. Our efforts will benefit future generations, your kids and grandkids.**

## Joined to Shoot, Stayed for the Service

To be honest, I joined originally to shoot. Adult airgun specifically. Field target was just like hunting without all those pesky seasons and licenses.

My chapter had a conservation committee that did a lot of roadside and stream cleanups. I



got involved in that. It may seem odd, but it's interesting what you can find on the roadsides.

The efforts expanded to tree plantings and workshops on nest boxes and rain barrels. Time on the range dwindled away to some extent, but I still get out once in a while.

I have learned that the Izaak Walton League has much to offer for today and tomorrow. Our efforts will benefit future generations, your kids and grandkids. So let's continue working together—and introduce new faces to the League—as we step into our Second Century!





Fifth graders from Discovery Charter School sort macros in Porter County.

## Getting the Next Generation Outdoors

**Indiana** ▶ Young people today average just 30 minutes of unstructured outdoor play – per week.

Of course, little or no contact with nature isn't good for kids, and as every Ike knows, that is a problem for our natural resources, and for the future of the League.

Aware that new generations will need to champion our woods,

water and wildlife, many Izaak Walton League chapters offer youth activities, whether nature hikes, fishing derbies or Scout opportunities. In the process, chapters have learned a few ways to supercharge youth programs.

### A Service Mindset in Indiana

The **Porter County Chapter** in Indiana knew it needed to do more to involve kids in

conservation. They began their outreach by approaching teachers and asking simple questions: What do you need? Can we help fill gaps in nature education?

These conversations led to the creation of “Family Nature Nights” at the chapter. These were events where kids learn about the natural world through activities and discussions.

Forming partnerships with local nonprofits—like watershed groups, land trusts, the Indiana Dunes State Park—helped the chapter offer engaging content and plenty of people power to make it work.

From its start, the Family Nature Nights program grew and built on its own success. Partner groups came to the events and loved them, said Susan Swarner, co-chair of Porter County's Education Committee. More importantly, the kids loved them and spread the word.

The chapter learned that the activities don't have to be elaborate to be meaningful for kids. "They're really hungry for it," says Annette Hansen, the other co-chair of the chapter's Education Committee. Engaging the senses—touching, hearing and experiencing new things—can expand a child's attention span and open opportunities for learning about nature, Hansen found.

Presenting these types of opportunities to experience nature is vital, says Richard Louv, author of the best-seller *Last Child in the Woods*, which focused on his concern that kids are growing up with a "nature deficit." Outdoor experiences can start young and simple. "Just digging a hole, building a fort, watching the leaves move in the trees.... It's important to encourage our children to feel a part of nature in their earliest experiences," Louv told *Outdoor America*.

But don't kids get drawn to electronic devices?

## LEAGUE LEGACY: STREAM SELFIE

When the national Stream Selfie project was launched by the Izaak Walton League in 2017, the Girl Scouts of America quickly recognized it as a great opportunity for girls to take a step toward science by collecting information about local streams with an eye toward improving stream health. Stream Selfie was one of the citizen science projects chosen as an option for Scouts pursuing science badges.

The design of Stream Selfie "allows for future, ongoing and deeper forms of engagement, learning, and action," said Darlene Cavalier, the founder of SciStarter, explaining why Stream Selfie was selected by Girl Scouts from the nearly 1,500 citizen science projects on SciStarter—an online citizen science program.

Since the partnership formed, Girl Scouts from Maine to Hawaii and from Florida to Alaska have submitted photos and observations from streams in their communities, making valuable contributions to citizen science and learning that every kid can study and protect the natural world.

**The chapter learned that the activities don't have to be elaborate to be meaningful for kids. "They're really hungry for it," says Annette Hansen.**

Yes. Louv says kids today definitely live in a digital world and a physical world at the same time. He encourages kids to appreciate and embrace both, "using computers to maximize our powers to process intellectual data, and natural environments to ignite all of our senses and accelerate our ability to learn and to feel."

### The Power of Partners

Back at Porter County, being

willing to help partner groups created other opportunities to engage youth. Several years ago, a wildlife researcher from the U.S. Geological Survey asked for and was granted permission to trap bats on the chapter property. Hansen saw this as a chance to promote learning and to bring in additional partners—and revenue. They obtained a grant from the local gas and electric utility that allowed the chapter to purchase portable monitors, which analyze sounds emitted by bats. When those devices are plugged into smartphones, volunteers with no prior knowledge of bats can go into the field and identify the species of bats flying overhead.

The chapter developed bat education materials including an e-newsletter designed to appeal to the whole family, and started



## START A YOUTH PROGRAM

The “Engaging Youth in the Outdoors” manual from the Izaak Walton League provides lots of advice and ideas for successful youth programs. Find it at [iwla.org/key-documents](http://iwla.org/key-documents). Or you may request a CD version of the manual. Email your request to [chapters@iwla.org](mailto:chapters@iwla.org).

Every community has kids, and every chapter has something to offer to local youth. By finding out what those kids need, meeting them where they are and embracing programs that provide meaningful experiences, Ikes can help raise the next generation to value and defend the natural resources that make outdoor recreation and traditions possible.



**Susan Swarner introduces fossil digging to kids at the Porter County Chapter’s Family Nature Night.**

a “bat adoption” program, which lets families take home a plush bat. The idea was to introduce people to the mysterious mammals, share simple explanations of bat behavior and provide news about bat conservation issues.

## Engaging Older Kids

Youth engagement was going very well in Porter County until students aged out of the Family Nature Night events, which were geared toward younger children.

Drawing on their playbook, the chapter secured another grant to purchase stream monitoring equipment and partnered with middle school teachers to get older students into the water. Once on site, young scientists took turns donning waders, collecting and identifying macroinvertebrates and thinking about how to interpret their discoveries.

**“Just get kids outside. Even if it’s a half-hour hike around the local pond, so much can be discovered.”**

Aside from coming up with ideas about improving water quality and helping aquatic critters, the participants discovered a whole world, Hansen says.



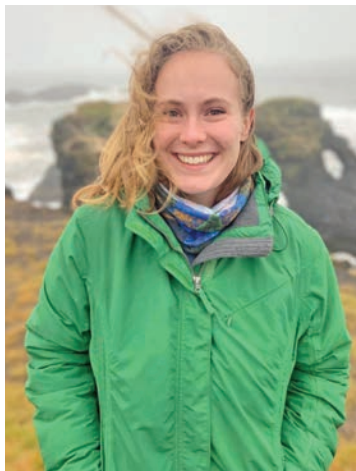
**Jim Sweeney from the Porter County Chapter shares some of nature’s secrets at a Family Nature Night event.**

“When kids see that there are bugs living underwater... and find out that by counting these bugs and finding their varieties, you can tell if the stream is healthy or not....” Hansen performs the exploding-head gesture and sound effect. “Kids are dying to tell you what they do know, and then they want you to give them what they don’t know.”

Hansen believes there’s a big opportunity out there. Advice for other chapters? “Just get kids outside. Even if it’s a half-hour hike around the local pond, so much can be discovered.”

*By Janette Rosenbaum, Strategic Communications Manager at the Izaak Walton League.*

## League Welcomes New Staff



Kira Carney

The Izaak Walton League warmly welcomes Kira Carney as the new Mid-Atlantic Save Our Streams Coordinator. She is based out of the League's national headquarters in Gaithersburg, MD.

Kira coordinates monitoring programs throughout the Mid-Atlantic, and especially Salt Watch and Virginia Save Our Streams.

Building on her love of rocks and sharing nature's wonders with others, Kira received her B.A. in Earth Science and Education from James Madison University. After spending a summer working with youth doing conservation projects in Virginia's state parks, she set her career sights on

community environmental education and earned an M.S. in Environmental Studies from Antioch University New England.

Kira has worked to engage a variety of communities in stewardship and science—from youth in state and national parks, to urban planners working on climate resilience projects, to a global network of teachers looking to build science and civic skills in their students.

Away from work, Kira loves to hike and hammock in the woods. She is excited to join the Save Our Streams team and work to protect the waters and wildlife of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and beyond!

## Want to see **YOUR** chapter in Ikes in Action?

It's simple! Email [oa@iwla.org](mailto: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*!







Flooded area along the Missouri River.

## Troubles Plague the Mighty Missouri

PAUL LEPISTO, Regional  
Conservation Coordinator

**T**he nation's arteries. That's one way to describe America's rivers. Just as arteries circulate vital blood and oxygen through our bodies, our streams, rivers and wetlands transport life-sustaining water throughout the country. Like a damaged circulatory system, many of our rivers now suffer from the effects of dams and channelization that dramatically alter their natural flow. And because of poor management of the land around our rivers, they also suffer from many forms of pollution, sedimentation, invasive plants and animals, trash and other unnatural shocks that have impoverished these tarnished waterways. This problem isn't new. Rivers

in America have been facing serious threats for more than a century. River pollution was a prime motivator for the 54 anglers who founded the Izaak Walton League of America in 1922, and the League has worked tirelessly to improve water quality in each of its 99 years since, through conservation stewardship and advocacy.

### Rivers in Trouble

Heavy industrial pollution famously caused Ohio's Cuyahoga River to catch fire several times in the 1960s. Mounting concern and pressure on lawmakers from the League and other groups finally prompted Congress to pass (and then override President Nixon's veto of) the Clean Water Act in 1972.

Since 1989, the advocacy group American Rivers has released an annual "Most Endangered Rivers" list. The 10 rivers on the 2021 list were selected because each stands at a critical crossroad or tipping point—whether a major decision about the river's fate that the public can influence or a major impact on the health of people or fish and wildlife along the river. All these factors are compounded by climate change and development disturbances along the lands near our rivers that should be filtering and cleaning water as it flows into these watersheds. This year's American Rivers list includes three waterways that have concerned the Izaak Walton League for decades. The lower Missouri River (which flows

through Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri) ranked as the nation's second most endangered due to poor flood management and the effects of climate change. Minnesota's Boundary Waters ranked third because of the threat of a proposed sulfide-ore copper mine upstream of this pristine wilderness area. And the Raccoon River in central Iowa ranked ninth owing to agricultural pollution from factory farms and the lax enforcement of clean water rules.

## Our Most-Altered River

From Montana to Missouri, America's longest river flows more than 2,340 miles across the nation. The Missouri River drains a watershed that encompasses more than 529,000 square miles—one-sixth of the lower 48

states. The river was considered the "Gateway to the West" as it was a major highway for European migration. For eons, the Missouri was a dynamic, wide, meandering river that spread out over its rich floodplain each year.

**Throughout the U.S., elected officials need to know that people care about the health of our critical waterways like the Missouri.**

Unfortunately, the Missouri is now the nation's most-altered river. The 1944 Flood Control Act authorized construction of five massive dams in the upper basin, after Fort Peck Dam in Montana had already been constructed. The

Act also authorized completion of the Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project (BSNP) and an extensive levee system on the lower third of the river. While the 1944 legislation stipulated that the lower river should not be narrower than 3,000 feet, some areas of the river have been pinched to a width of just 600 feet.

Alterations made to this mighty river were designed to fulfill eight authorized but conflicting purposes: flood control, navigation, irrigation, hydropower, water supply, water quality, recreation and fish and wildlife. When the Act was signed, President Roosevelt acknowledged that in most years there would not be enough water in the river to accomplish the aims of all the purposes.

The lower Missouri, through Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska, is also tightly confined by hundreds of miles of federal and private levees that disconnect the river from its natural, historic floodplain. The BSNP shortened the river by more than 120 miles. As a result, the river lost half a million acres of its natural features—side channels, chutes, shallow and slack water areas, sandbars, islands and connected wetlands.

This loss of these riverine features has exacerbated flooding in areas of the lower basin. The tightly constricted BSNP cannot handle the river's

**The lower Missouri River, flowing through Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri, ranks as the nation's second most endangered due to poor flood management and the effects of climate change.**





high flows. Frequent flooding has brought heartbreaking damage to homes, farms, businesses, and other critical infrastructure. In 2019, more

**The Izaak Walton League urges you to contact your members of Congress and request their support for the full \$30.6 million in funding for the Missouri River Recovery Program. Restoration and mitigation efforts will benefit all fish and wildlife, improve water quality, and increase recreational opportunities for families in the basin.**

**Full funding is also needed to complete and enact recommendations from the lower Missouri Planning Assistance to States study. This would support development and implementation of measures to prevent further lower basin flood damage.**

**Take action at [www.iwla.org/missouri](http://www.iwla.org/missouri)**

than 850 miles of levees in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska were overtopped or heavily damaged, resulting in more than \$2 billion in repair costs. Levees are frequently breached, often in the same locations.

Because of the alterations to the Missouri, communities are frequently flooded, farmers continue to lose crops and taxpayers are repeatedly stuck with the huge bill to rebuild levees. The changes have caused the loss of vital habitat for animal species, triggering the federal endangered species listing for the pallid sturgeon and the piping plover. The Fish and Wildlife Service is reviewing a possible Endangered Species Act listing of the sicklefin and sturgeon chub, two of 51 native fish now listed as rare or declining on the Missouri. Nearly every year the lower Missouri River needs more room to accommodate flood events and high flows. It was once thought the dams and levee system would “control” flooding in the lower basin. But with today’s frequent extreme weather events, even the staunchest supporters

of this outdated system are realizing the Missouri River needs much more capacity to handle the flood conditions.

This problem is not going away. Many climate models predict frequent major flooding across regions in the Midwest.

## **What’s Needed Now**

State and local officials must rethink rather than just rebuild existing levee systems and reconsider development in the river’s historic floodplain, since that puts people and infrastructure at risk. Management of the Missouri River must include additional capacity to handle the water volume in years with high runoff. In some frequently flooded areas, levee setbacks have been constructed, or are being considered. The setbacks give the water more room to spread out and slow down.

Following the devastating 2019 flood, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri joined the Corps of Engineers in a study called Planning Assistance to States (PAS). This three-year effort will examine ways to prevent persistent flooding and implement methods, like levee setbacks, that increase flood protection in the lower basin. The PAS effort needs to be fully funded so the study can be completed and measures to prevent future economic loss and flood damage can be implemented.

## **League Fights for Missouri River Recovery**

Additional funding is also urgently needed for the Missouri

**Construction of a new levee setback near a breach of the old levee.**



River Recovery Program (MRRP) and for BSNP's Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project. MRRP seeks to restore the river's habitat for the two listed endangered species. The mitigation project is authorized to restore a portion of more than a million acres of riverine habitat lost to the construction and ongoing operation of BSNP in the lower basin and the six reservoirs in the upper basin.

Due to lack of funding, these two efforts have stalled. The administration's MRRP budget request was only a bit over \$8 million for the next fiscal year. Inadequate funding is causing the Corps to fall farther and farther behind established habitat and species-recovery goals.

This spring, the Izaak Walton League again led an effort urging Congress to fully fund MRRP.

We authored a funding request letter and enlisted more than 80 partners, including the League divisions and chapters in Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota, to sign on. We urged Congress to fund MRRP to the Corps' budget request of \$30.6 million in the fiscal year 2022 budget process. At press time we don't know what the final MRRP appropriation will be.

**Officials must rethink rather than just rebuild existing levee systems and reconsider development in the natural floodplain, since that puts people and infrastructure at risk.**

## Policies Lawmakers Must Adopt

Lower basin states, including local entities where major flooding has occurred, must commit to non-structural solutions including:

- Additional levee setbacks that give the river more room
- Ordinances that prevent additional development in the Missouri River floodplain
- Funding for infrastructure relocation and flood mitigation in flood-prone areas

Throughout the U.S., elected officials need to know that people care about the health of our critical waterways like the Missouri. Recovery, flood mitigation and conservation projects will help ensure the health of our rivers.

## America's Most Endangered Rivers, 2021

The annual America's Most Endangered Rivers reports have helped spur many successes—removing outdated dams, protecting rivers with Wild and Scenic designations or preventing harmful development and pollution. The full 2021 list of troubled waters and why they were listed is below.

The Izaak Walton League of America has worked to improve the nation's water quality since 1922. In addition to the Missouri River, the League has also focused on two other rivers listed in American Rivers' 2021 report: the Boundary Waters

region in northern Minnesota (number three on the list) and the Raccoon River in Iowa (number nine on the list).

### 1: Snake River

(Idaho, Wash., Ore.)

Threat: Four federal dams on the lower Snake River

### 2: Lower Missouri River

(Mo., Iowa, Neb., Kansas)

Threat: Outdated river management

### 3: Boundary Waters (Minn.)

Threat: Sulfide-ore copper mining

### 4: South River (Ga.)

Threat: Pollution due to lax enforcement

### 5: Pecos River (N.M.)

Threat: Pollution from proposed hardrock mining

### 6: Tar Creek (Okla.)

Threat: Pollution from Tar Creek Superfund Site

### 7: McCloud River (Calif.)

Threat: Raising of Shasta Dam

### 8: Ipswich River (Mass.)

Threat: Excessive water withdrawals

### 9: Raccoon River (Iowa)

Threat: Pollution from industrial agriculture and factory farming

### 10: Turkey Creek (Miss.)

Threat: Two major developments



# Patuxent's Problems Mirror the Nation's Waterways

DUANE HOVORKA, Director, Agriculture Program



**T**he Patuxent River in central Maryland provides lessons about the causes of and solutions for some of our most intractable water pollution problems. The river runs for 115 miles from its headwaters west of Baltimore to the Chesapeake Bay southeast of Washington, D.C.

The Upper Patuxent, nestled in a mixed area of farms and residential homes, is one of Maryland's better trout streams. The river's cool water and gravel bottom provide good habitat for brown trout that are native, and for rainbow trout that are stocked by the state's Department of Natural Resources.

The Izaak Walton League's Wildlife Achievement Chapter in Mt. Airy, Maryland monitors the river. The data they are collecting shows a relatively healthy and diverse mix of aquatic life in the stream, and generally good water quality.

**“By vastly improving conservation and soil health on America's farms and ranches, we can help solve many dire problems, from water pollution and climate change to food insecurity.”**

But when it rains, soil eroding from nearby farms, towns and stream banks adds sediment that clouds the water and covers the gravel stream bottom, degrading the habitat where trout spawn. Nitrogen and phosphorus pollution from farms and suburban yards also cause havoc by nourishing nuisance plankton and algae in the Patuxent. Critters like mayflies, stoneflies and caddisflies that are sensitive to high levels of pollution in the water can disappear, taking away an important food source for trout and other fish. The cold water of the Patuxent and its tributaries flows into





Kayaking on the Patuxent River.

Triadelphia Reservoir, and farther down the river into Rocky Gorge Reservoir. Together the two reservoirs can store more than 11 billion gallons of water, enough to provide drinking water for more than 600,000 customers of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). WSSC relies on the Patuxent and Potomac rivers for the drinking water it delivers to 1.8 million people in Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland, which are suburbs of Washington, D.C.

The two reservoirs are surrounded by thousands of acres of woodlands that help protect

the water in the reservoir and provide recreation trails and picnic areas.

However, high levels of sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus in the river make it more expensive for WSSC—in fact, more expensive for homeowners in monthly water bills—to purify the water for area residents. But that isn't the only harm those pollutants cause.

Farther downstream, the river runs through the Patuxent National Wildlife Refuge, America's only national research refuge, then wraps around the District of Columbia. At the bottom of the watershed, the

Patuxent broadens out, snaking through a large wetlands complex before emptying into the Chesapeake Bay. There, this excess sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus from the Patuxent—and from much larger rivers like the Potomac and Susquehanna—pollute the Bay, causing an oxygen-starved “dead zone.”

### Progress Built on Decades of Work

Thanks to decades of effort, this dead zone in the Chesapeake Bay is shrinking. Vital aquatic grasses, blue crab and striped bass populations are making a comeback. Yet a large dead



zone with few signs of life still plagues the middle of the Bay every summer, an indication that the cleanup job is at best only half done.

Farmers account for much of the success to date, and better agriculture holds the key to continued progress.

In Howard County, at the headwaters of the Patuxent, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) data show that less than one percent of cropland acres were farmed using destructive intensive tillage in 2017, and nearly 9 in ten farmers have embraced no-till farming. The county's farmers planted cover crops on nearly one-fourth of the acres they harvested, up from just six percent in 2012. These conservation practices substantially reduce polluted runoff from cropland, and the county's farmers have adopted them at much higher rates than the national average.

The conservation efforts are

not an accident. The Howard Soil Conservation District spent about \$2.5 million over the last five years, using federal, state and other funds to help farmers adopt better practices.

WSSC contributes to this effort, helping fund on-farm conservation upstream of the reservoirs that hold the region's drinking water supply.

One large farm had a badly degraded stream running through it and into Cattail Creek, said Martin Chandler, WSSC Senior Scientist. "Cattail Creek drains straight down into our drinking water supply reservoir, Triadelphia. The stream bed had cut down into the ground and had steep streambanks that were continually collapsing and eroding, and that erosion leads to sediment loads in the stream water carried downstream. There's a lot of phosphorus that's tied up with the particles of sediment so the particles of phosphorus were going into our reservoir," causing

harmful algal blooms.

To fix the problem, a \$3 million restoration project modified the path of the stream, raising the streambed up, and restoring the flood plain and wetlands so the creek has room to overflow as it originally did. Fences were installed to keep the dairy cattle out of the riparian area along the creek. Trees and shrubs were planted to provide a buffer that will stabilize the streambanks and filter runoff before it reaches the creek.

"The stream itself has been so totally transformed you wouldn't recognize it today," says Chandler. "We are impressed with what we see," he says. Success will be measured by the level of decreased pollution.

## Economic, Ecological Impacts on Chesapeake Bay

Improving the Patuxent should help the trout upstream,

Mouth of the Patuxent River with Chesapeake Bay in the background.



the Maryland residents who rely on WSSC for their drinking water and the crabs and other aquatic life in the Chesapeake Bay downstream.

The sand bars of the Lower Patuxent and its tributary creeks produce oysters and clams. Native Eastern oysters were once an important fishery here. Overfishing, water pollution, disease and loss of habitat have all taken a toll, causing a severe drop in shellfish populations in the Bay.

The collapse of the oyster population hurt the commercial oyster fishermen, the restaurants and fish markets that sold their catch, and the anglers who harvested a few oysters to eat. It also harmed the Chesapeake Bay. Oysters, clams and mussels are filter feeders, and a single oyster can filter more than 50 gallons of water in a single day.

According to the Chesapeake Bay Program, in the late 1800's the massive oyster population in the Bay could filter the entire Bay's water in three or four days. Today the remnant population of the Bay's oysters take nearly a year to filter the same amount of water. Beyond their ability to filter pollutants from water, oysters create aquatic reefs that provide habitat to small fish and other critters, and they are a food source for blue crabs and shorebirds.

Cooperative efforts to establish oyster sanctuaries, restore oyster reefs and more carefully manage oyster harvests are working to reverse the loss of shellfish. Sadly for the Patuxent, it was not one of the 10 sites in Maryland and Virginia selected for large-scale

oyster restoration efforts.

Fans of oysters and clams in the Lower Patuxent also face another challenge: fecal coliform. Waste from livestock, humans, pets and wildlife can carry bacteria that can cause sickness or death. The Maryland Department of the Environment created watershed cleanup plans for seven shellfish harvest areas along the lower Patuxent that had been closed to harvest because of dangerous levels of fecal coliform.

### Land Use Solutions for Improving Water Quality

Much work remains, and better farming practices will be a key. Farms cover 23 percent of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, but according to the Chesapeake Bay Program, agriculture contributes 42 percent of the nitrogen, 55 percent of the phosphorus and 60 percent of the sediment now going into the Bay.

The Izaak Walton League has supported the federal and state programs that farmers in Howard County and elsewhere are using to get help designing and paying for better conservation systems. The League is also urging policymakers to focus more attention on approaches that help farmers and ranchers adopt soil health systems that ultimately will pay for themselves through reduced costs for fertilizer, fuel and pesticides. (For more on this topic, see Soil Matters on page 32.) That is a recipe that can succeed in the Chesapeake Bay and elsewhere.

Restoring the health of the Patuxent, the Chesapeake and iconic species like the blue crab

### Time to Get Serious about Soil and Water

If you live in urban or suburban America and think what happens on 900 million acres of farmland doesn't affect you, think again. Chemicals running off farm fields pollute drinking water, contribute to cancer clusters and shut down beaches. Erosion is washing away the topsoil we will need to feed future generations.

But by vastly improving conservation and soil health on America's farms and ranches, we can help solve many dire problems, from water pollution and climate change to food insecurity.

Current debates in Congress over infrastructure and climate change present a once-in-a-generation opportunity to double funding for conservation and soil health that will benefit all of us. Send that message to your members of Congress today.

and Eastern oyster will require an all-of-the-above approach, engaging city folk, farmers and businesses working together.

While each stream and river in the U.S. is unique, rivers like the Raccoon in Iowa, Kankakee in Indiana and Illinois, and Maumee in Ohio all face common problems. Innovations to improve the Patuxent River may provide inspirations for other waterways across America.



# Your Endowment in Action

## Grant Awards Go to 15 Chapters in 11 States

The Izaak Walton League of America Endowment is pleased to announce grants to 15 Izaak Walton chapters, divisions and national office to support a variety of projects. The Endowment will provide a total of \$145,354 to the 25 winning grant proposals, shown on the chart on page 19.

The projects selected for grants include restoration of waterways, habitat improvements, youth engagement and stream testing. Several national projects, like Salt Watch, also received grants.

Members of the Endowment's Board of Directors discussed each grant application individually during its business meeting, which was held virtually on July 19. The Board seeks projects that align with the Izaak Walton League's mission of protecting the outdoors for future generations through education, community-based conservation and promoting outdoor recreation.

Most grant requests are different every year and may include stream clean-ups, plantings, meadow restoration, educational projects and youth programs. The projects vary in size and scope. This year, Board Members reviewed 29 grant requests and awarded 25 grants. Each awardee is assigned to an Endowment Board Member to support the requestor's successful execution of the project. Every grantee is required to provide

a final project report no later than July 1 of the year following approval of the grant.

The annual membership meeting for the Endowment was held on July 22 during the League's virtual 2021 national convention to allow the Endowment Board to address the League membership and conduct elections for the Board. Every member of the Izaak Walton League of America is also a member of the Endowment, which raises funds for grants to IWLA chapters and divisions.

**Every member of the Izaak Walton League of America is also a member of the Endowment, which raises funds to provide grants to IWLA chapters and divisions.**

The Endowment funds several national awards including the annual National Conservation Scholarship and 2020 James Lawton Childs Award.

The National Conservation Scholarship program provides two \$2,500 grants each year to help support rising junior and senior college undergraduates pursuing degrees in conservation

or environmental sciences related degree programs. Pam Meara serves as the Endowment Board representative on the national scholarship selection committee. The recipients of the National Conservation Scholarships for the 2021-2022 school year are:

- Elijah K. Hoar, a rising senior at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University studying Crop and Soils Science
- Jacob S. Hill, a rising senior at Stephen F. Austin State University (Texas) studying Forest-Wildlife Management

See pages 20 and 21 for profiles of these scholarship winners.

The James Lawton Childs Award recognizes two chapters (based on member size) that carried out the most outstanding conservation program during 2020. Congratulations to **Porter County Chapter** in Indiana (with under 500 members) and **Loudoun County Chapter** (with over 500 members) for receiving the award.

For 2022 grants, we encourage all League chapters to submit applications from the [www.iwla-endowment.org](http://www.iwla-endowment.org) website.

---

*By Patty Nunn, President, and Pam Meara, Director, Izaak Walton League of America Endowment.*

# 2021 IWLA Endowment Grants

PROJECT	APPLICANT	AMOUNT
Conservation Scholarships	IWLA Scholarship Program, national	5,000
Dam Restoration	Ottumwa Chapter IWLA, Iowa	18,000
Dock Repair, Replacement	Peoria Chapter IWLA, Ill.	2,600
Fish Stocking for Lake	Spring Lake Chapter IWLA, Ind.	5,065
Fishing Derby	Peoria Chapter IWLA, Ill.	1,000
Floating Dock Stabilization	Woodford County Chapter IWLA, Ill.	3,000
Giant Goose Education Program	Illinois Division IWLA, Ill.	6,650
Habitat Improvement	Rochester Chapter IWLA, Minn.	5,000
Informational Kiosks	Linn County Chapter IWLA, Iowa	2,800
Kids' Fishing Day	Fremont Chapter IWLA, Neb.	1,400
Lake Evaluations, Treatment, Fish Stocking	Griffith Chapter IWLA, Ind.	11,050
Memorial Garden	Peoria Chapter IWLA, Ill.	1,500
Nature Trail Project	Lake Keuka Chapter IWLA, NY	6,500
Plantings and Meadow Restoration	Allegheny County Chapter IWLA, Pa.	12,900
Pollination Education Trail	Fremont Chapter IWLA, Neb.	6,000
Pond Restoration	Staunton Augusta Chapter IWLA, Va.	5,000
Restoration of Lake Drains, Banks	Peoria Chapter IWLA, Ill.	5,000
Salt Watch Program Support	IWLA Winter Salt Watch, national	11,000
Scan 1920s Magazines for Digital Archive	IWLA Outdoor America, national	10,000
Save Our Streams Education Outreach	Woodford County Chapter IWLA, Ill.	2,000
Storm Recovery	Linn County Chapter IWLA, Iowa	17,000
Stream Testing Materials	Mount Airy Chapter IWLA, Md.	775
Wet Meadow — Pollinator Project	Seven Mile Chapter IWLA, Ohio	2,033
Young Ikes Apiary Education, Supplies	Southern Brown Conservation Chapter IWLA, Wisc.	2,081
Young Naturalists Program	Central NY Chapter IWLA, NY	2,000
<b>TOTAL GRANTS</b>		<b>\$145,354</b>

Visit [www.iwla-endowment.org](http://www.iwla-endowment.org)



# Your Endowment in Action

## 2021 National Conservation Scholarships

The Izaak Walton League awards two \$2,500 national scholarships each year to complement scholarships offered by League chapters and divisions. The national scholarships help educate future conservation leaders by

supporting college students pursuing degrees in natural resources and related studies. These scholarships are made possible and fully funded through a generous annual grant from Izaak Walton League of America Endowment.

**The scholarship review committee selected the following students to receive the League's National Conservation Scholarships for the 2021-2022 school year.**



ELIJAH "ELI" HOAR

### Elijah "Eli" Hoar Virginia Tech University

#### Conservation Philosophy

"Agronomy is the biggest thing we need to focus on along with other related conservation practices to prevent soil erosion. I work in a region of Virginia where few of the agricultural producers practice no-till farming. This area is filled with many rivers and creeks, so keeping the erosion down is a huge concern.

"This type of tillage practice would help farmers keep essential nutrients in their fields and help keep water quality up. When nutrient-filled soil, or just treated soil, reaches the water it can

diminish the quality of water. If the water quality becomes too bad, then fish will die and the whole ecosystem will be completely changed."

#### Critical Conservation Issues

"I believe soil erosion to be the biggest threat to natural resource conservation. Many farmers still plow fields before planting leaving upturned soil open to the elements which could cause large amounts of erosion. For the average person, soil is just what they walk on. However, to farmers and environmentally minded people, soil is like gold. Producers need the nutrients that good topsoil provides, and they need the water-holding capacity as well.

"Limiting the amount of soil erosion will help keep nutrients

in the soil, allowing for better yields in crops, and could help remediate more marginal soils that are being conventionally tilled. Improving these marginal soils is going to be the key to feeding the predicted nine billion world population by 2050. Soil conservation is the key."

#### More About Elijah

Eli wishes to return home in southeastern Virginia to use his degree in crop and soil science and launch a career with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in order "to help farmers participate in conservation-minded ways of farming" and later further his studies in graduate school.

# National Conservation Scholarships

**Know a conservation-minded college student who could use an extra \$2,500 for tuition and expenses?**

**Learn more about specific requirements on the League's website at [iwla.org/scholarship](http://iwla.org/scholarship).**

**The next application cycle begins January 1, 2022, with a deadline of May 15, 2022.**



JACOB "JAKE" HILL

## **Jacob "Jake" Hill** **Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas**

### **Conservation Philosophy**

"Natural resource management is a holistic approach to managing the entire ecosystem. Ecosystems include the non-living, abiotic components along with the biota, such as the flora and the fauna. Soil, water, wildlife, woods and air are all components of an ecosystem that are so interwoven and connected that any effect on one consequently affects the whole. By maintaining stable soils, clean water, abundant wildlife, healthy forests and clean air, society is able to enjoy

the outdoors with an increased appreciation which will then be passed down to following generations."

### **Critical Conservation Issues**

"There are many issues currently facing North American wildlife and other natural resources. However, there are three prominent issues that stand out above all others and will be in the forefront over the next 10 years. These include a steep decline in hunter participation and recruitment, increased political interference in natural resources management decisions and a shortage of fresh, clean water. "We are faced with a wide array of perplexing and conflicting conservation and natural resource management issues in the 21st

century. With an increasing human population across the globe, these natural resources conflicts are only expected to continue. A renewed commitment to fight for the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources is needed."

### **More About Jacob**

Jake plans to pursue a law degree focused on natural resources and the environment, and he hopes to "become a 'weapon' for conservation, for hunters' rights and for wildlife...and to be influential in conserving the land."





# Celebrate the League's Centennial in Style



## Denim shirt

**\$42.00**

Perfect buttoned up or wear it open over a t-shirt. The 100th logo is embroidered over the pocket on the front and larger on the back.

Sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL

Tall available in L and XL



## Anniversary bear

**\$13.00**

This bear is waiting for a good home and is eager to show off the League logo! Nab one for a special youngster or add to your own collection. Available in a yellow or green shirt.

Prices include shipping and handling. Order using the form here or by visiting us online at:  
**[iwla.org/shop](http://iwla.org/shop)**



## Anniversary cap

**\$18.00**

Show your League spirit with one of these 100th anniversary embroidered logo ball caps. Colors: (L-R) Cardinal, Aqua, Forest Green, Stone, Texas Orange, Mustard



## Youth t-shirt

**\$15.00**

The kids will love this full color 100th anniversary t-shirt! Pick up one-- or two--in their favorite colors: (L-R) Mint Green, Yellow, Cardinal, Navy  
Sizes: S, M, L



## Long-sleeve t-shirt

**\$20.00**

Perfect for cooler days, this long-sleeve t-shirt will have you showing your League pride in style! Colors: (L-R) Celadon Green, Navy, Athletic Heather Gray  
Sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL



## Anniversary t-shirt

**\$18.00**

Your favorite League t-shirt now has the eye-catching 100th anniversary logo splashed across the front. Bet you can't pick just one color! Colors: (L-R) Candy Orange, Sand, Cardinal, Mint Green, Yellow, Navy. Sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL





## Vintage design grocery bag

**\$8.00**

The handy reusable bag has an outside pocket for your shopping list or other items.



## Veggie design grocery bag

**\$8.00**

Use this 100th anniversary veggie-design reusable bag to tote your groceries and other items in style!



## Mesh bag set

**\$17.00**

There's no end to the uses for this set of 3 reusable mesh produce bags. Take them to the farmer's market to separate and store produce. They can also go in the laundry to hold delicate or small items.

## Travel straw in case

**\$10.00**



On the go but still want to practice sustainability? This travel-sized reusable straw comes in a smart container with a clip. Cleaning brush included.



## Reusable straw set

**\$15.00**

Join the crowd by pitching in to reduce waste with this set of reusable straws. Our sustainable straws come in a variety of colors and lengths to meet your every need. Cleaning brush included.



## Fishing shirt \$46.00

Get ready for a day on the boat or just staying cool outside with one of our embroidered fishing shirts. Two great colors to choose from with the eye-catching 100th anniversary logo. Colors: (L-R) Sea Green or Tropical Blue. Sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL (*small not available in blue*)



## Nalgene bottles \$20.00

This 32 oz. Nalgene bottle is your perfect go-to drink container. Includes full-color logo and measuring scales on the back helps you keep track of daily goals. Colors: (L-R) Sea Green or Aqua

## ORDER FORM

OA0921

ITEM	COLOR (If Applicable)	SIZE (If Applicable)	QTY.	PRICE EACH	TOTAL

Prices include shipping and handling.  
Order using the form here or by visiting us online at: [iwla.org/shop](http://iwla.org/shop)

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TOTAL:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

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☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express ☐ Check Enclosed

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the Izaak Walton League of America and mail your check and order form to:  
**IWLA, Attn: Catalog Orders, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878**



# Virtual Convention Draws Robust Participation

In another example of successfully adapting to the pandemic, the Izaak Walton League of America conducted its 2021 convention virtually. Attendees, speakers, leaders and staff all logged in to computers and personal devices during the week to listen to keynote addresses, discuss and vote on policy resolutions and participate in the time-honored “Parade of States” social time.

The convention was free, and while it lacked its traditional in-person experience, the convention

drew participation from many members who would not otherwise have been able to attend.

Next year, the League will celebrate its 100th anniversary and kick off a second century of conservation leadership at its 2022 convention in Illinois, the same state where the League was founded in 1922. The convention will be held in East Peoria, Illinois, July 19-22, 2022.

A summary of the 2021 convention follows.

## TUESDAY

Kelly Kistner, wrapping up his final three days as national president, welcomed conventioners and presided over the meetings, summarized below.

**Former U.S. Senator David Durenberger**

(R-Minn.) gave a keynote address focused on the need to bridge partisan divides in America. He **commended the Izaak Walton League for its continuing tradition of nonpartisan advocacy.** His advice: Get to know people with different viewpoints and do it outdoors if possible. “If you really want to continue building this organization and its influence across America, reach out to someone you may not always see eye-to-eye with, and go fishing, hiking, paddling or bird watching.”

During a question-and-answer session with convention attendees, the Senator recommended taking a personal approach to communicating concerns to elected officials. He also highlighted consensus-building as the best way to reach the League’s conservation goals.

The first afternoon included **elections of national officers** for the League. The results: Vicki Arnold, President; Jodi Labs, Vice President; Jim Storer,



U.S. Senator  
David Durenberger

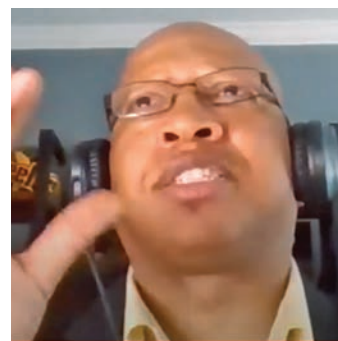
Secretary; and Scott Meyer, Treasurer. The first day also included a meeting of the Board of Directors who elected new members of the Executive Board. Mike Fuge (Wisconsin), Rick Graham (Ohio) and Dawn Olson (Oregon) were elected to two-year terms. Elected for three-year terms were Jack Johnson (Iowa), Jim Piateski (Maryland) and Herb Pritchett (Virginia).

## WEDNESDAY

Dr. Sacoby Wilson, Associate Professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Health, delivered a wide-ranging keynote about the **vital role of citizen science and community-based**

**science to engage people** in improving health, saving lives and promoting environmental justice. He framed environmental health challenges as opportunities for the Izaak Walton League to expand programs and engage affected communities.

Wednesday evening, League delegates discussed, debated and voted to adopt **new policy resolutions** related to restrictions for neonicotinoid pesticides, preventing sulfide-ore copper mining in the Boundary Waters region, improving mining oversight and applying an ecosystems approach to



Sacoby Wilson, Ph.D.



# 2021 Virtual Convention

conservation stewardship projects. See details on page 28.

## THURSDAY

Every member of the Izaak Walton League is also a member of the IWLA Endowment, which held its meeting and election of the Endowment's Board of Directors. See Endowment in Action update on page 18.

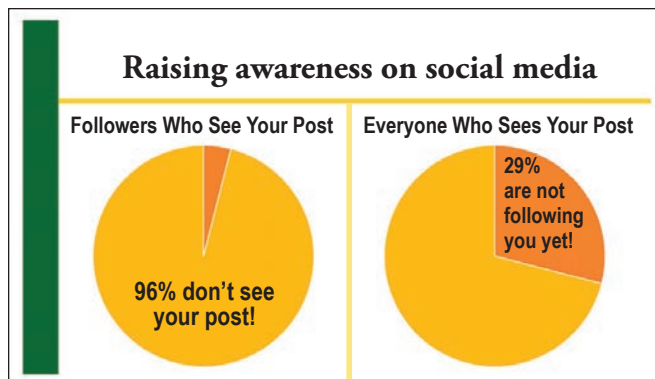
The 2024 Convention Site Selection Committee presented the proposal to hold the convention in Cambridge, on Maryland's Eastern Shore, which the delegates approved.

## CONVENTION WORKSHOPS

League staff and partners led several informative and practical workshops during the convention. Videos of the workshops can be viewed at [www.iwla.org/convention2021](http://www.iwla.org/convention2021). The workshops covered these topics:

### Leveraging the 100th anniversary for chapter visibility

The League's 100th anniversary provides a unique opportunity for chapters to highlight their histories, accomplishments and goals for the future. As described in this workshop, the League Communications and Chapter Relations staff can help chapters prepare to effectively communicate this information to their local communities and media in 2022.



## Double up for conservation

If you live in suburban America and think what happens on 900 million acres of farmland doesn't affect you and your family, think again. Manure, chemicals and fertilizer running off farm fields pollute drinking water, contribute to cancer clusters and shut down beaches and fishing spots every day. By improving conservation and soil health on tens of millions of acres, the U.S. can cut pollution and improve water quality. This workshop focused on a once-in-a-generation opportunity to double funding for conservation that benefits all of us. Watch the video of this workshop if you want to help make this opportunity a reality.

## Membership retention following the COVID bump

Americans rediscovered the outdoors in 2020, and many League chapters experienced a "COVID bump" in members. The challenge and opportunity going into the 2022 renewal period is to retain a majority of these new members as other activities, school and work resume. In a workshop designed for all chapter officers, Membership staff and chapter leaders shared proven tactics for effectively engaging and renewing members, including those who joined for the first time in 2020.

## Simple new techniques for stream monitoring

The League has more options than ever to test water quality locally and educate young people about stream health. League staff demonstrate how easy it is to use new tests, all of which are simple to conduct without extensive training or time commitments. This workshop is designed for participants with absolutely no prior experience with stream monitoring.



# 2021 Policy Resolutions

Each year at the national convention, members of the Izaak Walton League consider resolutions on conservation and outdoor recreation topics that are proposed by their colleagues. The resolutions are presented and discussed and those that are approved through a vote by members then become part of the League's Conservation Policies, which guide members and staff in pursuing the League's mission.

A summary of the resolutions approved at the 2021 national convention is below. To read the complete text of these resolutions visit: <https://www.iwla.org/news-events/2021-national-convention>.



**Neonicotinoid pesticides make whole plants—the pollen and nectar—toxic to insects, including pollinators like this Black Swallowtail butterfly.**

## Ban Neonicotinoid Pesticides Nationwide

Neonicotinoids are systemic pesticides that are absorbed into a plant's vascular system, which makes the entire plant, including its pollen and nectar, toxic to both target and non-target insects. They are commonly used and are found in agricultural and lawn products for pest management. Neonicotinoids persist in the environment and can be harmful to wildlife, particularly bees and other pollinators.

*The League adopted a resolution supporting congressional legislation to ban neonicotinoid pesticides and neonicotinoid-coated seeds in agricultural as well as lawn and garden products within three years and direct the relevant regulatory agencies to implement the ban.*

## Employ an Ecosystem Approach to Conservation

The Izaak Walton League has long been guided by our motto: "Defenders of soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife." Together, these are all components of healthy ecosystems. These biological communities of interacting organisms and their physical environments are inextricably linked to each other and conservation of one aspect often cannot be separated from the whole. But studies indicate that ecosystems are collapsing in the oceans and on land. The web of life is fragmenting as the diversity and numbers of species are declining.

*The League adopted a resolution declaring its responsibility to be advocates for not only soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife, but also for the interrelated ecosystems of which these are a part. The League recognizes the importance of healthy ecosystems of all scales, the need for ecology to be part of wildlife and water quality management, and the League encourages chapters and divisions to aim at improving and protecting these biological communities when considering conservation projects.*



# 2021 Virtual Convention



Canoeing in BWCA

## Strengthen Oversight of Mining

Typically, before mining operations can begin at any specific site, permits are required from all levels of government for a host of environmental considerations. Appropriate levels of government should require a thorough environmental impact study to be conducted as a condition of issuing a permit for any mining operation. Such study must fully and publicly disclose the scope of the project and potential impacts on natural resources and public health. Mining permits must include a full decommissioning plan. The permit holder must demonstrate it has reserved adequate funding to implement decommissioning when mining operations cease, and it will not be allowed to evade its financial responsibility for decommissioning costs through bankruptcy proceedings.

*League members adopted a resolution calling for mine permitting to adequately examine and disclose the scope of the project and potential impacts on natural resources and public health. The resolution additionally calls for mine permitting to require full reclamation plans and demonstration of an adequate bond to implement the reclamation plan when mining operations cease.*

## Protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area

A Chilean mining company operating in the U.S. is seeking permission to operate a sulfide copper mine within the watershed of the Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness in northeastern Minnesota. This type of mining leaves a legacy of polluted water, which would threaten this unique system of waterways featuring thousands of lakes and streams. Protecting this part of the Superior National Forest has been a priority for the League since the 1920s. Today, the Boundary Waters is the most-visited wilderness area in the United States because of its popularity as a fishing and camping destination for anglers, Scouts and other outdoor enthusiasts who come to explore and enjoy the 1,200 miles of canoe and kayak routes and 2,000 designated campsites.

*League members adopted a resolution supporting a ban on sulfide-ore copper mining on all federal and state lands in the Boundary Waters watershed and calls for permanent protection of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Quetico Provincial Park and Voyageurs National Park from any contamination from proposed sulfide-ore copper mining in the Superior National Forest.*





Upper Mississippi River above Minneapolis.

## Proposals Aim to Restore Our Waterways and Wildlife

BY JARED MOTT, Conservation Director

### House Bill Aims to Restore Mississippi River

A bill introduced by U.S. Representative Betty McCollum (D-Minn.) aims to improve the ecological health of the Mississippi while supporting the communities and economy along the river's 2,300 miles. The League strongly supports this legislation.

The Mississippi looms large in American history for a reason. Its main stem flows through 10 states and provides drinking water for more than 20 million people. The river's 30-million-acre floodplain supports 780 species of fish and wildlife and is a migration corridor for about two-thirds of

all North American birds.

But habitat loss and invasive species threaten fisheries and recreation on the river and the nearly 700,000 jobs that these natural resources support. Excess agricultural nutrients, such as nitrates, flow into the river and its tributaries, which creates a dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico and strains the budgets of water utilities up and down the river. Building just one mid-sized water treatment plant to reduce nitrate pollution costs \$10 to 15 million. And without major investments, flooding and wetland loss along the Mississippi will make riverfront communities more vulnerable to storms. Damages

to main stem states from historic 2019 floods alone cost \$6.2 billion.

Modeled on the successful Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Act, H.R. 4202, would create an initiative at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designed to protect and restore the river. It offers a framework for collaboration among government agencies and partners.

The bill would:

- Improve water quality by reducing runoff pollution
- Reduce flood and storm risks and increase community resilience by

restoring ecosystems

- Protect and restore wildlife habitat, including by combating the spread of invasive aquatic species.

McCollum's bill will provide grants for restoration projects in the states, cities, townships and tribal nations along the river, while prioritizing at-risk communities.

### Support Grows for Recovering America's Wildlife Act

The pair of bipartisan bills introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate would provide vital resources to help conserve thousands of wildlife species that urgently need protection.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), S. 2372, was introduced by Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Roy Blunt (R-Mo.). A similar bill, H.R. 2773, was introduced in the House by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb.). The League is working hard to convince Congress to pass the bill this year, and we encourage you to contact your members of Congress and urge them to co-sponsor this legislation.

One-third of all wildlife species across the nation require proactive conservation efforts. Funding shortfalls have long hampered the management of America's fish and wildlife, and this legislation represents a solution to the growing costs

of protecting these species.

RAWA would dedicate \$1.3 billion annually to state fish and wildlife agencies and an additional \$97.5 million to tribal agencies to implement science-based wildlife action plans. This dedicated funding will allow these agencies to proactively conserve fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need in a voluntary, non-regulatory manner before federal listing under the Endangered Species Act is warranted.

This bill will also help get Americans back to work, creating an estimated 33,000 jobs each year in natural resources restoration, bolstering community resilience while protecting our natural infrastructure. Contact your members of Congress from the Izaak Walton League's action page at [www.iwla.org/advocacy](http://www.iwla.org/advocacy).

### Administration Takes Steps to Restore Protections for Streams, Wetlands

In late June, EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) began what will certainly be a lengthy process to restore Clean Water Act protections for seasonal streams and wetlands.

This effort is vitally important because regulations finalized during the last year of the Trump administration eliminated protections for half of America's wetlands and many of its tributary streams.

According to the EPA and Corps, more than 330

construction projects are poised to proceed without needing Clean Water Act permits since the Trump 2020 regulation limited the jurisdiction of the Act so narrowly. With no need to get permits, developers in these projects can proceed without scrutiny or any plans to mitigate damages to wetlands and streams.

The League recently testified before the EPA and Corps and asked the agencies to repeal the 2020 regulation as quickly as possible to prevent approval of even more projects that would harm wetlands and tributary streams. The League also testified that any replacement regulation must recognize the importance of wetlands and all streams to the nation's water quality, urging EPA and the Corps to protect these resources.

Within a few days of the League's testimony, a federal district court in Arizona struck down the 2020 regulation, citing the same problems with the rule highlighted by the League over the past four years. The judge wrote that by failing to protect all tributary streams and half of the nation's wetlands, the 2020 rule has serious cascading effects on water quality downstream.

While this is a positive decision, EPA and the Corps still have to write new regulations and it will be imperative for League members to comment on the proposed regulations when they are issued.





# SOIL MATTERS

Patrick Bittner (left) a no-till, cover-crop farmer in Evansville, Indiana, checks his soil with Keith Williams, an NRCS planning team leader in May 2021.



## League to USDA: It's Time to Go Big on Soil Health

BY DUANE HOVORKA, Agriculture Program Director

The time is ripe to go *big* on soil health.

Improving soil health on tens of millions of acres is a priority for the Izaak Walton League because healthy soil reduces water pollution, combats climate change and provides a host of health benefits for consumers across the U.S.

In formal comments and meetings, the Izaak Walton League is clearly delivering that message to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In a memo prepared for Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, the League said, “By taking a set of bold actions that

make healthy soils a centerpiece of USDA’s conservation strategy, the Biden-Harris Administration can deliver big wins for farmers, ranchers, rural communities and all Americans.”

The set of nine actions laid out by the League would deliver benefits with respect to climate

**Better farming practices will promote cleaner water, climate mitigation and a host of health benefits for consumers across the U.S.**

change, clean water, flooding, water scarcity and wildlife, while helping farmers and ranchers boost their profits and increase the resilience of their operations.

The League’s recommendations include includes focusing existing programs on soil health, increasing on-farm research in soil health and climate-friendly practices, and setting aside a pool of funds to help every farmer and rancher who wants to develop and implement a soil health plan.

The League also asked USDA to launch a grant program to help states and tribes develop and implement soil health strategies. Legislation to

accomplish that, which the League had a hand in crafting, is included in the Agriculture Resilience Act introduced this year in the House (H.R. 2803) and Senate (S. 1337).

A League letter welcoming Terry Cosby as new chief of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service pointed to our long history in farm policy, from the very first Farm Bill in the 1930s through the “Walton Soil Plan” of the 1950s and more recent work on soil health.

Today, new research and farmers’ experiences over the past two decades have shown the power of better practices. It’s a growing list of great strategies: planting winter cover crops, eliminating disking and other tillage, planting a diverse rotation of crops, and better managing grazing to rebuild depleted soils. All deliver economic benefits for farmers and ranchers.

### **Needed: Funds, Information**

The League has urged USDA to join us in asking Congress to double down on programs that help farmers and ranchers adopt conservation practices. USDA’s five major conservation programs total \$6 billion per year, but that doesn’t come close to meeting the requests from farmers for help.

The League has carried that same message to members of Congress, asking them to double farm conservation funds in pending infrastructure legislation and asking Congress to increase funds for USDA soil health

planning and grazing land conservation.

In addition to financial help, farmers need more information on how different soil health practices perform in their local soils, climate and farming systems. USDA could help collect that data by making soil health testing a standard part of every conservation contract that includes a soil health practice. Farmers could use the data in their day-to-day management, and researchers could use the data to better understand the impacts of practices and fine-tune recommendations for farmers.

### **The Izaak Walton League won’t rest until the federal commitment to soil health matches the urgency of the natural resource challenges we face.**

On national grasslands and national forest land that USDA manages, the agency should adopt the same land stewardship practices that it urges private rangeland owners to adopt. For example, federal investments in fencing and water facilities could improve livestock grazing systems that would rebuild healthy soils, improve wildlife habitat and reduce the risk of wildfire.

### **A Promising Start**

It appears that leaders at USDA are listening. In June,

it announced a \$5 per acre discount on federally subsidized crop insurance for farmers who planted cover crops during the 2020-2021 crop year. The funds reward farmers who maintained the conservation benefits of cover crops despite the financial difficulties caused by the pandemic.

The one-time payment could be a model for implementing the League’s proposal for a broader “good farmer discount” on crop insurance for farmers who adopt soil health practices like planting cover crops, eliminating tillage, using diverse crop rotations and adopting better grazing systems.

The moves by USDA so far are great first steps, but there is much more to do.

As one of the leading conservation organizations promoting soil health solutions nationally, the Izaak Walton League won’t rest until the federal commitment to soil health matches the urgency of the natural resource challenges we face.

### **STAY TUNED**

To keep up to date, subscribe to the free, monthly *Conservation Currents* newsletter for news and alerts about both national and local topics.

You’ll find ways to make your voice heard on issues affecting natural resources and outdoor recreation. Go to [www.iwla.org/subscribe](http://www.iwla.org/subscribe).





Stream monitoring at Cabin Branch in Maryland, Bill Roberts and Sharon Fujikawa.

## Engage the Public: A Community-Based Approach to Monitoring

BY SAMANTHA BRIGGS, Clean Water Program Director

If you tuned into the League's 2021 Virtual National Convention this year, you likely heard Dr. Sacoby Wilson discuss citizen science and how to engage communities in tackling environmental problems. His main takeaway: to get people engaged, frame the issue around food, faith, family, health or jobs.

This is great advice when it comes to water monitoring since water quality has far-reaching effects, and people of all ages can get involved. Perhaps it's time to

grow your monitoring program, and you are struggling to engage new volunteers. Maybe you are

**Water quality can be improved. People and communities can be protected. The Clean Water section of the Izaak Walton League website provides simple steps to tackle water pollution.**

trying to use your data to create change in your community, but the information doesn't seem to resonate.

Or you may be looking to monitor water conditions that have the most impact in your community, whether at a chapter property or a local stream. To focus on high-impact conditions, you can start with temperature, nitrate and chloride monitoring to really connect with your community about issues that matter to them.

## Higher temperatures = greater harm

If you are trying to reach folks who love to fish, they should know that higher temperatures can decrease dissolved oxygen in streams and rivers, making it difficult for more sensitive species, like trout, to survive. For an angler, fewer fish could ruin a treasured family tradition and a source of food.

By monitoring for temperature with a simple thermometer, you can pinpoint where impervious surfaces (like roadways and parking lots) and lack of tree cover or vegetation may be harming water quality.

## Nitrate risks are serious

High nitrate levels in drinking water can cause terrible human health problems, such as blue baby syndrome and cancer. Also, excess nitrate levels coupled with high temperatures can trigger blue-green algae growth, which can cause liver failure in pets and humans when ingested. (See “The Cancer Risk of Nitrate Pollution,” issue 1, 2021 of *Outdoor America*.) This is why you may see swimming hole closures in the summer months. High nitrate levels may be caused by chemical fertilizers or manure applied to crop lands.

Monitoring nitrate levels with test strips helps identify where that nutrient exceeds safe levels in your waterways. Nitrate test strips are cost-effective, easy to use and produce fast results. Nitrate test strips and thermometers can be purchased at [www.iwla.org/sos](http://www.iwla.org/sos).

## Salt pollution: bad for everyone

Excessive use of road salt can kill aquatic life and contaminate drinking water sources when it washes off roads, parking lots and sidewalks. That salt can also have a corrosive effect on water pipes and produce salty water coming out of your tap. The health impacts of excess salt levels in drinking water include hypertension and poisoning from lead and other heavy metals.

**Engage people in ways that matter to them. That might include connections to food, faith, family, health or jobs.**

The League’s popular Salt Watch program collects data gathered by volunteers nationwide. Chloride monitoring helps to identify hot spots where over-use of salt has polluted streams. Get free Salt Watch kits at [www.saltwatch.org](http://www.saltwatch.org). Our staff can work with local groups to develop advocacy campaigns to reduce salt pollution.

## Get started

The good news is all these problems can be addressed. Water quality can be improved, and people and communities can be protected. The Clean Water section of the Izaak Walton League website provides steps people can take to tackle water pollution.

For help aligning your cause

with others, the Save Our Streams Advocacy Guide is a great place to start. Download the guide at [www.iwla.org/water/resources-for-monitors](http://www.iwla.org/water/resources-for-monitors). It provides useful guidance about putting water quality data to action to better your community.

No matter what you choose to monitor, try to engage people in ways that matter to them. That might include connections to food, faith, family, health or jobs, as Dr. Wilson suggested.

**Remember to enter your data into the Clean Water Hub**

([www.cleanwaterhub.org](http://www.cleanwaterhub.org)), so you can easily share your results to help researchers spot dangers and track changes over time.

## Questions?

Email the Izaak Walton League’s Clean Water team at [sos@iwla.org](mailto:sos@iwla.org).





# AWARD-WINNING IKES

## Izaak Walton League 2020 NATIONAL AWARDS

The Izaak Walton League recognizes people and organizations within and outside the League for their conservation, outdoor ethics, water quality, shooting sports, communications and youth-focused work at the local, state and national levels. We honor members and organizations for lifelong accomplishments and devotion to natural resources conservation.

It is our pleasure to recognize the following 2020 award winners who made a difference in conserving outdoor America.

### NATIONAL AWARDS

#### Stanford Adams Memorial Award for League Leadership

This IWLA Executive Board's award recognizes the national director or director-at-large for continued commitment to the duties and responsibilities that come with their elected leadership position.



**Jim A. Madsen (South Dakota):** An IWLA Life Benefactor member from Watertown, S.D., Jim has been a national director since 2000. He sat on the League's Executive Board for 13 years serving as vice chair and chair and later as the national vice president and president. Throughout the years, he served on various Resource Committees and currently is vice chair on the Governance and Bylaws Committee. He continues today to provide leadership and guidance to South Dakota Ikes.

#### Hall of Fame Award

Recognizes a member's outstanding accomplishments in furthering the mission and goals of the League.



**George W. Coakley (Maryland):** While president of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter, George established the chapter's Endowment Board and organized the chapter's Environmental Stewardship Plan and five-year master plan.

For the past 12 years, he has served on the League's Energy and Environment Resource Committee. His community service includes chairing the Town of Poolesville Planning Commission and Global Ecology Senior Project Award Program at the local high school.



**Lee Hays (Maryland):** Lee has been a leader among Maryland Ikes for many years, including as a national director and president of the Rockville Chapter. He developed and raised funds for the chapter's scholarship program. An active

archery instructor, he worked with the chapter's popular Junior Archery program and advised other Maryland chapters on how to implement similar outdoor skills training resources.



**Herbert W. Pritchett, Sr. (Virginia):** In addition to serving as current vice president and national director from the Virginia Division, Herb orchestrated two recent IWLA national conventions

held in Virginia. He is currently serving his third elected term on the League's Executive Board. As president of the Fredericksburg-Rappahannock Chapter, he provides leadership and guidance to various chapter conservation projects and outdoor recreational events. His management skills, planning expertise and goal-oriented strategies have greatly benefited his chapter as well as the state and national organizations.

#### Conservation Award

Recognizes member contributions to conservation in the name of the League.



**Arthur V. Belendiuk (Maryland):** As the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter's Greenhouse Committee chair, Arthur partnered with the chapter's American Chestnut Committee to dedicate a large

portion of the greenhouse operations to the growth and protection of chestnut tree seedlings. Under his

management, these efforts have attracted the attention of visiting greenhouse operators, scientists and university botany and entomology professors from around the Mid-Atlantic region.



**Noel R. Gollehon (Maryland):**

While serving on the board of the Rockville Chapter, Noel helped to create Nature Unlock 2020 – an educational program for teenagers focused on local water resource management and conservation. Noel also works to

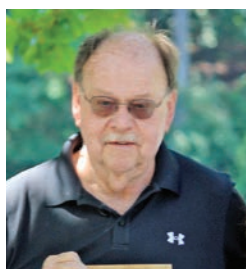
rehabilitate the chapter's lake, implement silt and erosion control and promote angler education.



**William Iltzschee (Indiana):**

William plays an important role on the Porter County Chapter's Frame Family Farm Conservation Area where he maintains equipment, plants trees and installs bat roosting and bird nesting structures.

William is one of the instructors during the chapter's Family Nature Night events held in local schools to inform children and their families about natural resources conservation.



**Thomas J. Vegella (Maryland):**

As a 20-year member of the Rockville Chapter, Thomas managed all the work on their lake, including habitat enhancement and stocking of fish. Other accomplishments include the research, design and

installation of solar energy at the chapter, along with various wildlife conservation and pollinator projects.

## Outdoor Ethics Award

Presented to individuals, groups, or organizations judged to have done outstanding work in outdoor ethics.



**Mark A. LaBarbera**

**(Wisconsin):** An active member of the Southwestern Wisconsin Chapter, Mark founded the Outdoor Heritage Center, which is dedicated to introducing people to the outdoors, promoting

responsible and ethical outdoor recreational use and educating youth about the value of wildlife and conservation. He was recently promoted to executive director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, where he will continue to promote conservation and protection of the land and natural resources in the state.

## Save Our Streams Award

Recognizes outstanding work in environmental education and citizen activism for clean water.



**Jay Butler (Indiana):** An avid target shooter, Jay joined the Fort Wayne Chapter for its ranges and shooting sports programs. As he learned more about the value of conservation and the League's Save Our Streams program, Jay began to conduct chemical monitoring of streams by

developing a specialized kit to collect water samples from bridges. Even during the pandemic and with limited personal mobility, Jay monitored more than 30 stream sites.



**Susan Swarner (Indiana):**

Described as one of the Porter County Chapter's most productive volunteers, Susan has helped the chapter to become a recognized leader in conservation education. She works with local fifth and sixth grade students who are learning

about water quality and stream health. Her plans for future training sessions include topics on wildlife, healthy soil and erosion as well as restoration of prairie grasslands and woodlands.



## Save Our Streams Committee of the Lois Green-Sligo Chapter

**(Maryland):** This group of dedicated volunteers, under the guidance of committee co-chairs Dr. William

Roberts and Duane Hovorka, monitors stream health at six Cabin Branch sites throughout the year. They have developed many partnerships in the community



## AWARD-WINNING IKES

with groups that have become stakeholders in advocacy for clean water in this small suburban stream in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

### Thelma “Pete” Reed Award

Recognizes the member who has volunteered in many conservation projects, educational efforts, community service or chapter leadership development, and is not serving as a national leader of the League but is considered an “up and coming” future League leader.



**Judy Danish (Maryland):** Over the course of 25 years, she has volunteered as the Rockville Chapter’s membership officer developing and running both the new member orientation and the range officer training program. Using her knowledge

about the Izaak Walton League and her leadership skills, Judy actively encourages new members to support the League’s mission and volunteer. She further mentors members on the chapter board, committees and special projects to help them become more involved in achieving the League’s mission.

### Outdoor America’s Future Award

Recognizes the IWLA youth or student member who has volunteered in many conservation projects, educational efforts, community service, or chapter leadership development and is considered a young “up and coming” future League leader.

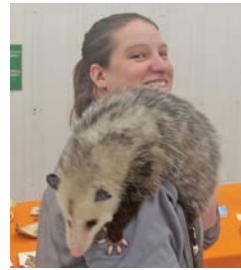


**Gabriel Ballard (Indiana):** As a youth member of the Porter County Chapter, Gabriel has become an active promoter of conservation and educates many others of different ages about the importance of bees and other pollinators.

After reading that planting trees is a good way that kids can help fight climate change, he led an effort in his 4-H club to plant trees in their community.

### Honor Roll Award

Recognizes outstanding accomplishments in conservation, public education and/or publicity in keeping with the League’s goals by an individual or organization.



**Nicole Harmon (Indiana):** As an animal care technician, her wildlife rehabilitation, advocacy work and efforts to educate citizens and promote awareness is well known throughout northwestern Indiana. Nicole now serves the community as director of Humane Indiana Wildlife.



**John McAuliffe (New York):** John recently retired as the Syracuse program director of the Onondaga Lake cleanup project for the Honeywell Corporation. For many years, John oversaw the \$450 million cleanup to revive the lake that had been an industrial and municipal dumping ground for over a century. John’s project generated citizen awareness and support and funded many programs that promoted greater use and recognition of fish and wildlife resources in the Finger Lakes region of central New York.



**Rebecca Rolnick (New York):** Using her experience as former environmental interpreter at several New York state parks, Rebecca became the program leader of her community’s Young Naturalist Program. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she developed and conducted a popular weekly series of virtual interactive nature programs.



**Neil Shaffer (IL) and Hunter Slifka (Iowa):** Both men have dedicated their lives to respect the land, soil, water and the people who use these resources to produce our food. As the Howard County Watershed Project coordinator, Neil has worked with agriculture producers to add riparian buffers, increase winter cover crop plantings and help re-establish native brook trout habitats. As Neil’s work partner, Hunter has generated significant grant funding for grassland waterways and other wildlife and fisheries habitat restoration projects. Neil and Hunter have achieved amazing records of

successful conservation projects on several critical watersheds within the Upper Mississippi region.

## Shooting Sports Award

**Presented to individuals, groups, or organizations judged to have done outstanding work to promote shooting sports.**



**Richard C. Deibert (Pennsylvania):** As a longtime member of the Lancaster Red Rose Chapter, Richard served in various leadership capacities. However, his most significant contribution has been developing and operating

the chapter's annual youth pheasant hunt. To make each event a success, Richard draws on his experience as a high school teacher, hunter education instructor, avid shotgunner and bird dog hunter.



**Kenneth C. Mincks (Iowa):** As a member of the B.F. Carroll Chapter, Ken has spent countless hours promoting shooting sports to beginners, both young and old. He established and coached the Davis County High School

Trap Team and helps manage regional tournaments held at the chapter. Ken has also been the driving force to maintain and upgrade the chapter's ranges, and he successfully sought grant funding to improve the chapter's shotgun, rifle and handgun ranges.



**Shooting Sports Program of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter (Maryland):** This members' recreational shooting facility is used for outreach to non-member groups including a public winter trap league, local Ruffed Grouse Society chapter and Boy Scouts seeking to earn their shooting merit badges. In addition to improving personal marksmanship and hunter proficiency, their rifle and pistol range is used

to host sanctioned Mid-Atlantic Summer Biathlon Competitions attracting athletes from throughout the region. The shotgun shooting site includes five-stand and sporting clays additions to the trap and skeet ranges. Their enhanced archery area, with a pavilion used for training and expanded target and 3-D courses, continues to attract new families and youth to the League. The chapter's shooting sports program is led by dedicated committee chairs: Warner Parks, T. Steve Eschholz, Jr. and Jack Mandel.

## James Lawton Childs Award

**Recognizes chapter accomplishments in conservation.**

### Small Chapter (less than 500 members)



**Porter County Chapter (Indiana):** This chapter completed many projects to improve wildlife habitat such as monitoring bat populations, installing roosting poles and using salvaged deck board to make bird nesting shelters. Other work included the planting of 160 native trees and efforts to eradicate invasive species on the Frame Farm Conservation Area. Advocacy efforts focus on the continued protection of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and public education about the threats to local waterways from chemical spills and effluent discharges from local industries.

### Large Chapter (more than 500 members)



**Loudoun County Chapter (Virginia):** The chapter regularly hosts public educational events presented by



## AWARD-WINNING IKES

naturalists about bats, birds, moths and other wildlife. The state wildlife agency helped the chapter inventory the fish population and prepare a management plan for the pond. With the state forestry department's guidance, the chapter removed invasive plants from large tracts on its property and replaced them with native trees and shrubs. They maintain a monarch butterfly way station and pollinator gardens. A bluebird trail and a well-marked nature trail in their eastern forest arboretum identifies ecological sites and wildlife habitat as well as tree species.

### Robert C. O'Hair Award

Recognizes outstanding chapter youth programs.



**Rockville Chapter (Maryland):** This chapter has a long and proud history of leadership on youth activities and is fortunate to have many members willing to lead and assist with activities to engage youth in the outdoors. Their extensive wood duck nesting box program and Save Our Streams training are provided for chapter youth, student members and several local youth groups. They provide opportunities to earn student services learning hours through conservation-related projects. The chapter sponsors and provides a home for Boy Scout, Girl Scout and Cub Scout units to meet. Certified instructors provide hands-on training with air rifle and pistol and BB guns for youth of all ages. Last year, the chapter provided \$17,000 in scholarships for college-bound students seeking a conservation- or environmental-related degree.

### Best Chapter Newsletter

Based on appearance, originality, timeliness and news coverage, including national and state news and community conservation.

### Small Chapter (less than 500 members)

**"IWLA PCC Newsletter":** Recently changing the

format and delivery to an online e-newsletter, the Porter County Chapter (Indiana) uses Smore.com online template. The chapter distributes the monthly full-color newsletter to its members and other chapter presidents and division officers in Indiana. This newsletter lists the contact information for chapter officers, includes meeting minutes, updates on chapter-sponsored events, projects and a variety of issue-related links. The masthead tagline "From the Dunes in the north, to the Kankakee River in the south" and a web presence strengthens the chapter's brand for greater public recognition.

### Large Chapter (more than 500 members)

**"BCC-IWLA Monthly Newsletter":** The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter (Maryland) distributes its colorful, informative monthly newsletter to all members and posts it on the chapter website, <http://bcciwla.org/>. All phases of chapter activity are covered. The newsletter lists upcoming events, contact information for chapter leaders, a summary of the most recent membership meeting and information about how to join. Color photographs show members and guests engaged in conservation activities, nature and shooting sports. The chapter president pens a regular column.

### Best Chapter Website

Based on appearance, originality and news coverage.

**Loudoun County Chapter (Virginia):** This chapter recently reorganized its website to make it more attractive, comprehensive and easy to navigate (<https://www.lcciwla.org/>). Specific webpages reflect the variety of available outdoor recreation facilities, conservation projects and educational events. Membership requirements are clearly presented along with rules for the use of the chapter's facilities and its shooting ranges.

## MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

In an effort to continue to promote member recruitment and retention, we recognize several chapters and one division that successfully grew their membership over the past year.

### John C. Gregory Award

Awarded to the division with the highest numerical increase in members.

**Indiana Division:** With a net increase of 506 members in 2020.

## Membership Achievement Awards

Recognizes chapters with the largest net gain and percentage increase in membership.

**Greatest Percent Increase: Seward County Chapter (Nebraska)** with a 107 percent increase.

**Greatest Net Gain: McCook Lake Chapter (South Dakota)** with a net gain of 349 members.

## Membership Merit Awards

Recognizes membership growth based on chapter size.

**50 and Under Member Class for Percent Increase: Fullerton Chapter (California)**

**For Net Gain: Tied – Wadsworth Chapter (Ohio) and Rochester Chapter (Minnesota)**

**51 to 250 Member Class for Percent Increase: Seward County Chapter (Nebraska)**

**For Net Gain: Miami Chapter (Indiana)**

**251 to 500 Member Class for Percent Increase and Net Gain: St. Joseph County Chapter (Indiana)**

**501 and Over Member Class for Percent Increase and Net Gain: McCook Lake Chapter (South Dakota)**

## 110-Percent Awards

These chapter grew by 10 percent or more in 2020.

<b>California</b>	St. Joseph County	<b>Nebraska</b>
Fullerton	Terra Haute	Freemont
<b>Colorado</b>	<b>Iowa</b>	Lincoln
Pikes Peak	Ames	Seward County
<b>Florida</b>	Anamosa	New York
Cypress	B. F. Carroll	Cortland
Mangrove	Boone Valley	<b>Ohio</b>
<b>Illinois</b>	Emerson Hough	Central Ohio
Decatur	Mahaska County	Fairfield
Kewanee	Ottumwa	Fremont
Peoria	Three Rivers	Seven Mile
Woodford County	Warren County	Tallawanda
<b>Indiana</b>	<b>Maryland</b>	Wadsworth
Evansville	Frederick #1	<b>Oregon</b>
Fort Wayne	Free State	Eugene
Miami	Lois Green Sligo	Pennsylvania
Michigan City #7	Washington	Allegheny County
North Manchester	County	<b>South Dakota</b>
Porter County	<b>Minnesota</b>	Duel County
Spring Lake	New Ulm #79	McCook Lake
	Rochester	<b>Wisconsin</b>
		A.D. Sutherland

## DEFENDERS CHAPTER ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The following chapters received this annual recognition for their 2020 contributions to the League's mission through successful programs, promoting membership, education, conservation, youth involvement, community outreach and the principles of philanthropy.

Arlington-Fairfax (Virginia)	Kampeska (South Dakota)	Sunshine (South Dakota)
Austin (Minnesota)	Lincoln (Nebraska)	Tiffin-Seneca County (Ohio)
Berkeley County (West Virginia)	Linn County (Iowa) *	W.J. McCabe (Minnesota)
Bethesda-Chevy Chase (Maryland) **	Lois Green-Sligo (Maryland)	Walter J. Breckenridge (Minnesota)
Bill Cook (Wisconsin)	Loudoun County (Virginia)	Wapashaw (Minnesota)
Brown County (Wisconsin) **	McCook Lake (South Dakota)	Warren County (Iowa)
Bush Lake (Minnesota)	Mid-Shore (Maryland)	Warren County (Virginia)
Central New York (New York)	Minnesota Valley (Minnesota)	Wayne County (Ohio)
Des Moines (Iowa)	Mountaineer (West Virginia)	Wes Libby - Northern Lakes (Minnesota)
Dwight Lydell (Michigan)	New London (Minnesota)	Wildlife Achievement (Maryland)
Elgin (Illinois)	New Ulm (Minnesota)	York #67 (Pennsylvania)
Frederick #1 (Maryland)	Owatonna (Minnesota)	
Fredericksburg-Rappahannock (Virginia)	Pikes Peak (Colorado)	
Grand Island (Nebraska)	Prairie Woods (Minnesota)	
Hamilton (Ohio)	Rochester (Minnesota)	
	Rockville (Maryland)	
	Sioux Falls (South Dakota)	

\* First-time award recipient

\*\* 20th consecutive year!  
(The Defenders Chapter Achievement Awards were launched in 1999.)



# Microplastics: Major Pollution

SHERRI A. MASON, Ph.D.



On Lake Erie near Buffalo, NY, author holds a Manta Trawl, used to collect microplastic samples.

**D**uring my backpacking days in the Big Sky country of Montana, I was able to reach remote mountain lakes and natural hot springs accessible only by hiking. Thanks goes, in part, to modern backpacks, which now can weigh less than 10 pounds.

How did backpacks get so light? Over the decades plastic materials were developed that offered many benefits not only making gear extremely light-weight, but also

more durable and water-repellent. Plus, manufacturers can imbed within the plastic other synthetic chemicals that make outdoor equipment fire- and UV-resistant, and even bug repellent. As the advertising slogan goes, *"Plastics made it possible."*

For the past decade, I have been studying plastic pollution, focused primarily on its impact on fresh water. Sadly, what we have discovered is that plastic,

and specifically microplastics, have invaded every corner of our environment: from the air we breathe to the water we drink to the soil we grow our food in, the very living skin of our planet.

## Why Worry?

Microplastic pollution is ubiquitous and results from the plethora of plastic items we all buy and use, whether backpacks or yoga pants. And this pollution



Microplastic fragments shown against a span of 10 millimeters. Countless fragments are invisible to the naked eye.

is coming back to us—in the food we eat, the air we breathe and the water we drink.

With more than 10 billion metric tons of plastic having been produced since 1950 (roughly when it entered the consumer market), an estimated 10 to 15 percent of that plastic has found its way into our environment.

Understanding the impact of this contamination is the focus of scientific research on plastic pollution. The early signs are not good.

The synthetic chemicals added to plastic, like UV stabilizers and flame retardants, are known to be endocrine disruptors, which mimic hormones. Because hormones are the chemical messengers of the body, endocrine disruptors mess up all sorts of signals and communications in our bodies. This leads to a myriad of serious human health

**Microplastics have invaded every corner of our environment: from the air we breathe to the water we drink to the soil, which is the living skin of our planet.**

outcomes, from decreased sperm counts and pregnancy viability to increases in certain types of cancer and other diseases. These health consequences are triggered by the chemicals within the plastics. We don't fully understand the potential impacts of the plastics themselves, which is where current studies are focused.

The creation of plastic from its fossil fuel sources is another huge pollution problem of its own, and an environmental justice issue to boot. Refineries are routinely located in lower-

income communities and those with higher populations of people of color. These same communities suffer higher incidence of certain cancers and respiratory diseases, leading the area along the Gulf Coast of the United States to be known as “Cancer Alley.”

For all the talk about the durability of plastic, we have all seen how it comes apart—when some plastic clip, utensil or other item breaks. The durability of plastic doesn't mean that it won't break. It means that it won't break down—that is, it can't be decomposed and returned to its elemental state (i.e., the carbon and hydrogen from which it is made).

Why doesn't plastic readily decompose? Most natural decomposers (which include certain bacteria, fungi and insects) can't use it as a food source. That's why no matter



where you wander you can't escape seeing some plastic bag caught in a tree or scattered fragments of red solo cups.

Over time, largely through mechanical actions, plastic will break into smaller pieces. These ever-smaller pieces are called microplastics once they reach 5 millimeters (see photograph on page 43) or smaller, and of course countless fragments are reduced in size until they are invisible to the naked eye.

## Solutions: Reduce, Reuse, Replace

Like any addiction, the first step toward ending it is admitting to it. Let there be no doubt—we, as a society—are addicted to plastic.

There are things we can do. First and foremost, we can reduce our use of this material. I advise people to start with one product at a time and find a non-plastic replacement. Some of these are easy: Bring your own reusable cloth bags to the store. Use a refillable water bottle and coffee mug. Buy wool or hemp

clothing instead of synthetic. Other items are harder to replace but alternatives exist: shampoo and conditioner in stainless steel refillable containers, toothpaste in tablet form or glass jars, sunscreen in metal jars and bug spray in stainless steel spray bottles.

When reducing isn't possible, think about *reusing*. I have friends who are especially gifted at shopping second-hand stores. There are even communities that have created tool libraries and repair workshops focused on reusing and fixing rather than replacing. There are also on-line stores, like Gear Trade and Out&Back Outdoor, that allow you to buy and sell used equipment.

## We are all part of the problem of plastic pollution, but that means we are all part of the solution.

When you do have to buy something new, remember the old adage: *you get what you pay for*.

The point is choose quality items that will last. You can also use your dollars to support companies that recognize the problem and are trying to be part of the solution. In the arena of outdoor gear, Patagonia is engineering synthetic materials that shed less.

Beyond individual actions, lend your support to legislation such as the Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act of 2021, S. 984, which moves the responsibility for plastic pollution from consumers to companies. As corporations design the products we purchase (and produce 70 times the waste in the process) this is ultimately where the solutions lie.

We are all part of the problem of plastic pollution, but that means we are all part of the solution. Remember to leave no trace: pack it in, pack it out and find ways to eliminate unnecessary plastics from your life.

Maybe then we can all enjoy the great outdoors without finding that proverbial plastic bag blowing in the wind or that red solo cup ruining the scenery.

A similar story can be told for any number of plastic products—each polluting through the additional pathways of littering (either accidental or intentional) and leading to direct contamination of water and soil.

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*Sherri A. Mason, Ph.D., Professor of Chemistry and Director of Sustainability at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, is a leading expert on freshwater plastic pollution.*

Through stream cleanups nationwide, Izaak Walton League volunteers have been removing plastic and other trash from our waterways for many decades. Today, this community-based conservation continues to reduce microplastics in the nation's water.

JOIN OUR NEXT STREAM CLEANUP

**TIRES ARE NOT BUILT TO WORK IN WATER.**



The image shows two people, a man and a woman, wading in a shallow stream. They are both wearing hats and waders. The man is holding a large black plastic bag, and the woman is helping him. They appear to be collecting trash from the stream. The background shows trees and a clear sky.



The logo is circular with a yellow background. It features a silhouette of a person's head in profile, facing right. The text "IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE" is written around the top inner edge, and "AMERICA" is at the bottom.

Reduce use of plastic products, author recommends.



## FOLLOW THE YOGA PANTS

How do plastics end up so ubiquitous a pollutant? Let's take a product, like a pair of yoga pants, as an example.

First, the pants are crafted from synthetic threads. Anyone who has sewn an article of clothing can tell you about all the little threads that are lost in the process of sewing. These threads, termed *microfibers*, can easily become airborne and depending on their size travel hundreds to thousands of miles. Air samples from the Pyrenees Mountains to the national parks in the Western U.S. to the Arctic have all shown this type of contamination. These airborne microfibers also lead to water and soil contamination when these particles fall out of the air, which is how the samples from these regions were collected.

Once our clothing item is made, we bring the items home to wear and then wash. Studies have shown that a single garment made from synthetic materials can shed more

than 1,900 microfibers in a single wash. While wastewater treatment plants weren't designed to remove this type of contaminant, they are still surprisingly effective at pulling microfibers out of the water. But they still end up somewhere, in this case in sewage sludge, which is frequently used as a soil amendment on farmland.

So, the wastewater treatment simply moves the microplastics to our soil. Here rainwater can move them off the soil into waterways through run-off. Or it can move the plastic particles through the soil though percolation. Some studies have shown microfibers making their way from the soil into plants or into aquifers.

Plastic microfibers from synthetic clothing circulate into our air, our soil and our water. In total, textiles represent one of the largest sources of microplastic pollution with current estimates topping 2.2 million tons per year.

SHERRI A. MASON



# KEEP THE GOOD TIMES GOING

RENEW your IWLA membership for 2022!



...the sports action...



...the quiet times...



...the family time...



...the conservation to protect natural resources...

Don't let all the good times pass you by! Your chapter and the Izaak Walton League need you to help us stay strong and bring you all the outdoor activities and conservation programs you enjoy.

**Return your dues payment to your chapter today!**

# 2020

IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
combined balance sheet and statement of  
activities and changes in net assets for the  
year ending December 31, 2020.

## PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Contributions and Grants	656,936
Grants from Federal and State Governments	17,050
Member Dues	1,827,751
Investment Income, Net	48,428
Charitable Remainder Unitrust	286,936
Rental Income	321,521
In-Kind Services	254,922
Other	87,414
<b>Total Public Support and Revenue</b>	<b>3,500,958</b>

## EXPENSES: CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION

Conservation	415,685
Membership	317,526
"Outdoor America"	225,480
Annual National Convention	11,844
Chapter Relations	156,039
Communications and Media	147,855
Water	294,776
Agriculture	206,912
Missouri River Initiative	63,629
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>1,839,746</b>

## Supporting and Planning Services

Management and General	554,974
Building	151,100
Fundraising	154,796

**Total Supporting and Planning Services** **860,870**

**Total Expenses** **2,700,616**

Changes in Net Assets from Operations 800,342

Unrealized (Loss) Gain on Investments 159,632

**Changes In Net Assets** **959,974**

**Net Assets, Beginning of Year** **9,452,490**

**Net Assets, End of Year** **10,412,464**

## BALANCE SHEET

### Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,754,796
Grants Receivables	55,225
Contributions and Other Receivables	46
Prepaid Expenses	24,208
Property and Equipment, Net	1,110,454
Investments	2,665,311
Charitable Remainder Trust	3,113,509

**Total Assets** **10,723,549**

### Liabilities and Net Assets

#### Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Other	198,470
Accrued Expenses	90,493
Refundable Advances	-
Security Deposits	22,122

**Total Liabilities** **311,085**

#### Net Assets

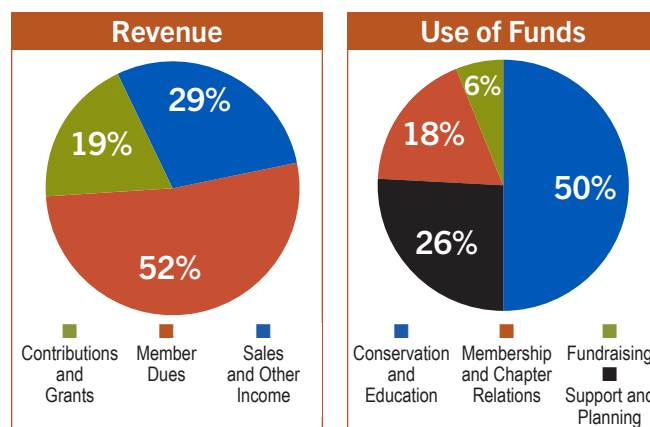
Without Donor Restriction	5,213,100
With Donor Restriction	5,199,364

**Total Net Assets** **10,412,464**

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** **10,723,549**

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

For audited financials, visit [iwla.org/finances](http://iwla.org/finances).





# LAST LOOK

“The successful scientist  
thinks like a poet but works  
like a bookkeeper.”

— E.O. Wilson







HUNT • SHOOT • FISH

YOU HELP RAISE OVER

**\$100,000**

DOING WHAT YOU LOVE TO DO

Through licenses and excise taxes, hunters, shooters and anglers help generate over **\$100,000** every **30 minutes** for fish, wildlife and habitat programs.

For fish, wildlife and habitat programs, anglers help generate over **\$100,000** every **30 minutes** through licenses and excise taxes. Yes, hunters, shooters and

**50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

TAKE THE PLEDGE AND CELEBRATE THE OUTDOORS

**SEPTEMBER 25, 2021**

**NHFDAY.ORG**



Cabela's



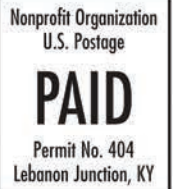
& HOOK BARREL





**THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA**  
707 CONSERVATION LANE | GAITHERSBURG, MD 20878

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



# Celebrate the Centennial

Help Launch Our Second Century of Leadership

## Izaak Walton League of America 2022 Annual Convention:

East Peoria, Illinois,  
July 19-22



The first annual convention of the Izaak Walton League in Chicago, 1923, attracted a large crowd.



Members gather for an event during the 2016 Izaak Walton League convention in Wisconsin.

2022 will be a momentous year for the Izaak Walton League of America as we celebrate our 100th anniversary. One of the highlights of that celebration will be our Centennial Convention.

We'll go back to our roots in Illinois to reflect with pride on past accomplishments and look to the future of conservation and outdoor recreation.

Don't miss out on this historic moment—or on the many things to see and do in East Peoria and Illinois. Step aboard the *Spirit of Peoria* riverboat, see the white bison at the Wildlife Prairie Park or enjoy the famous Chicago waterfront. Most of all, join your fellow Ikes to celebrate our first hundred years and launch our second century.

STORYBLOCKS

It's more than a meeting. It's our **CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.**  
Details: [www.iwla.org/convention2022](http://www.iwla.org/convention2022)