

OUTDOOR AMERICA™

PUBLISHED BY THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

2021 ISSUE 4

Climate Change in Our Back Yards

ALSO INSIDE:

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Young Olympians Aim to Inspire
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OUTDOOR AMERICA

PUBLISHED BY THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

VOL. 86 NO. 4

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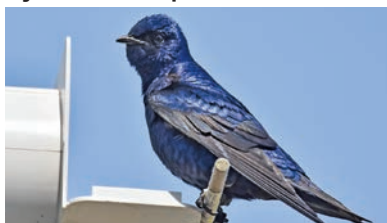
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ABOUT THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA ►

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



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The Power of Partnerships

VICKI ARNOLD | NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Fellow Ikes,

Greetings from Iowa. As I write this in November, the landscape is bursting with red, orange and gold leaves as the warmer days of summer turn to the cool days of fall. I hope each of you were able to get outdoors and enjoy what you dedicate so much of your time defending.

Throughout the nation, wonderful partnership opportunities are emerging because of Izaak Walton League efforts to defend outdoor America.

In January 2022, the League will serve as the host sponsor of the 37th Annual Everglades Coalition Conference in Duck Key, Florida. The Everglades Coalition (www.evergladescoalition.org) is a group of more than 60 organizations dedicated to full restoration of the greater Everglades ecosystem, which stretches from the Kissimmee lakes near Orlando all the way south to the Keys. This conference will bring together state and national conservation groups to discuss environmental issues we all care about.

Thanks to Mike Chenoweth from our Florida Division, we have an opportunity to showcase the Izaak Walton League's tremendous 100-year history and introduce our Second Century goals, which will

position us to continue to lead on a wide range of conservation issues.

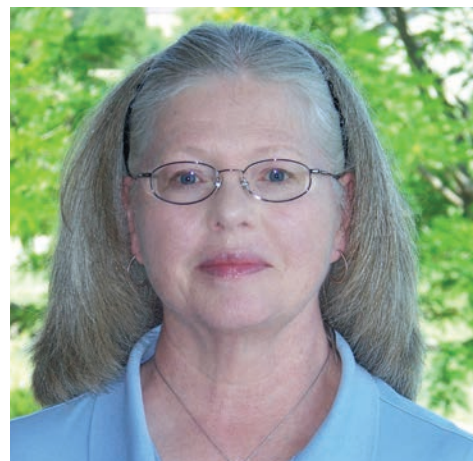
Here in Iowa, the League's national staff and local chapters continue to work with former IOWATER members to expand water quality monitoring across the state. Staff continues to work with the state's Department of Natural Resources on water testing and monitoring programs.

Salt Watch, one of the League's rapidly growing programs nationwide, will be expanded in Iowa with the hope of involving private landowners, local businesses and the state DOT in addition to League members. Bringing these groups together will foster a great partnership here.

Our conservation successes are amplified by partnerships.

The League is also looking to introduce a new monitoring program, Nitrate Watch. Nitrate pollution from agricultural runoff is a serious problem in Iowa, and this program will help us better understand the problem across the country.

Virginia volunteers continue



to excel in water quality testing, using protocols set up to monitor for invertebrates and for chemical pollution. These effective local conservation efforts owe their success to the dedication of Izaak Walton League chapters, the program partners and funding from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative.

These types of conservation partnerships will provide benefits for everyone.

Since becoming President, I have had the opportunity to visit with many of you about these partnerships that advance the mission and success of the League. I'm very encouraged to hear about your successes and plans.

Thank you for all you do for your chapter, division and the Izaak Walton League of America.

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.

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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 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.

League's Centennial Year Brings Together the Past, Present and Future

SCOTT KOVAROVICS | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we celebrate the League's 100th anniversary in the year ahead, we'll have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reflect with pride on so many accomplishments.

It's also the time to look to the future – to the League's second century of leadership on conservation and outdoor recreation.

As I think about 2022, the past, present and future will be recurring themes.

The Past

The 100th anniversary is a huge deal, and every member should take a few minutes to soak in the incredible achievements of generations of Ikes. Although the milestones are too numerous to review here (visit iwla.org/100years), they run the gamut from crafting some of the most important conservation policies of the past 100 years to pioneering leadership on citizen science.

What I find most inspiring isn't any one accomplishment, but the fact that members, chapters and volunteers drove the League's success through common efforts, a shared sense of purpose and persistence.

The Present

While the League retains a commitment to longstanding principles, it is also adaptable to meet today's conservation challenges. We're leading on next-generation citizen science with Salt Watch, leveraging technology, simple tests and crowd-sourcing for what is quickly becoming a nationwide initiative.

The anniversary also provides chapters (and divisions) with a unique opportunity to share their stories, history and impact with local media and communities. Our communications and chapter relations teams are committed to helping chapters maximize this opportunity, including with some tips on getting started at iwla.org/chapter100years.

The Future

From day one, League members have worked to conserve and restore natural resources for the benefit of future generations. Today, in the face of climate change, persistent water pollution problems and a soil health crisis, we know the League's work is far from done.

In 2022, our attention will



also turn to the future. A future in which the League builds on its strengths—community-based conservation and citizen science, policy advocacy and connecting people to the outdoors. A future in which we strive even harder to fulfill our shared mission. Please see the center spread of this magazine to learn how you can help the League do more as an early supporter of our 2nd Century Campaign.

2022 will be a fun, exciting and inspiring year. It's an opportunity to celebrate the past, do what we do best today and step boldly into the League's second century. I'm pumped to kick things off with you!

On behalf of your staff, best wishes for a joyous holiday season and a healthy new year.

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!

League Welcomes Rodriguez to National Staff



Emily Rodriguez

Emily Rodriguez has joined the national Izaak Walton League of America staff as Agricultural Outreach Coordinator. Emily lives in Champaign, Illinois, with her cat, Dewey.

She is a community organizer, Hoosier transplant and serves as a local elected official. She studied public policy communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

Member and Chapter Award Nominations



Who is the most dedicated Ike among your chapter members? You know, the one who shows up for all the meetings, signs up first for work crews, helps maintain the grounds and makes the organization run smoothly?

The Judge John W. Tobin Volunteer Appreciation Award is the perfect way to recognize that special member.

Did this year's chapter efforts and accomplishments rise to the level of earning the distinction of

the League's **Defenders Chapter Achievement Award**? This annual award recognizes chapters for successful work in membership, financial contribution, education, conservation, youth involvement and communications.

Nominations forms for both the Tobin and Defenders awards will be mailed in January to each chapter and are also available online at www.iwla.org/awards.

For both awards, nominations are **due March 15, 2022!**

Want to see YOUR chapter in Ikes in Action?

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





Ginny Thrasher's League training fueled enthusiasm that led to an Olympic gold medal in Rio.

Young Champions Aim to Inspire

Virginia ► Twenty-four-year-old Virginia “Ginny” Thrasher credits the Izaak Walton League of America with influencing her call to competitive shooting sports. So far, that calling has earned Thrasher a string of honors, including an Olympic gold medal for women’s air rifle shooting at Rio in 2016.

For her first four years of training, she used the air rifle range at the **Arlington-Fairfax Chapter** in Centreville, Va. “The seven-lane range was actually a converted tractor shed with no heat, AC, running water or bathrooms,” she says.

Those inconveniences didn’t deter her. She found herself

practicing at the range every night it was open. There, Bucky Sills and Oscar Starz, chapter board members and certified coaches, worked with her and other promising young participants, helping them learn and practice the sport.

In addition to Olympic medalists, the Izaak Walton League has helped to train NCAA champions and send many kids to college on shooting sports scholarships.

Thrasher says the League “helped the careers of multiple Olympic medalists and NCAA champions and sent many kids to college on shooting scholarships.”

She began participating in the sport as a teenager after her father and grandfather took her on a hunting trip. Her high school’s air rifle team practiced at the Arlington-Fairfax Chapter, and she joined the team as a freshman.

As a high school senior, Thrasher was recruited by West Virginia, which was the number-one-ranked NCAA rifle program. There she won both air and small-bore rifle NCAA individual titles as a freshman, the youngest person

in history to achieve that honor.

Soon after, she qualified for the 2016 Rio Olympic team where she won the gold medal at the tender age of 19. “It was the very event I had spent four years training for at the IWLA,” she said.

Thrasher graduated from West Virginia in 2019 with a degree in biomedical engineering and then moved to Colorado Springs, the location of the Olympic Training Center.

She is currently training to compete at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

While getting ready for

competitions ahead, Thrasher also works to get other young people involved in shooting sports.

“Legacy is not just the medals you win, but also the impact you leave on others,” she tells *Outdoor America*. “I believe the best way to introduce people to the sport is to make it fun.”

Thrasher tries to introduce the sport and engage young athletes across the world via videos and social media. She hopes she will make a difference, “like Bucky and Oscar did for me.”

“I am so proud to be an alumna of this range and have such fond memories of being a part of the

IWLA community.” Thanks to the work of Sills and Starz, the converted tractor shed is now a state-of-the-art range that features 26 lanes, electronic targets and a large lobby.

Another Olympic medalist who trained at the Izaak Walton League’s Arlington-Fairfax Chapter is Lucas Kozeniesky. In his Olympic debut in Rio in 2016, he placed 21st in a field of 50 competitors.

Not content with that result, he doubled down on his training, and it showed when he returned to the Olympics in Tokyo earlier this year. He won



Lucas Kozeniesky earned a silver medal in the 2021 Olympics.

a silver medal in the 10-meter air rifle mixed team, which narrowly missed gold. And as an individual competitor, he placed sixth in men's air rifle in Tokyo.

He credits his improvement between Olympic competitions to maturity and focus.

Kozeniesky's training began on the Robinson High School team in northern Virginia, using the Arlington-Fairfax Chapter's facilities. He continued training in college at North Carolina State.

Through a business he created, Team Winning Solutions, Kozeniesky now passes along what he has learned by coaching young people in the sport. He does this via Zoom and is proud to help those who are isolated or lack access to a range. Several athletes he has trained have continued the sport at the college level.

Kozeniesky is also training for the 2024 Olympics in Paris.

Indiana ► As a third-generation member of the **Fort Wayne Chapter**, 17-year-old Bremen "Bree" Butler has used the chapter rifle and pistol ranges to train for competitions.

The training has paid off. Earlier this year, Butler won silver medals in both air and small-bore rifle competitions in the USA Shooting National Junior Olympics.



Shooting champion Bree Butler (center) talks to day campers at the Fort Wayne Chapter.

"The League gave me a place to train and hone my skill, and my grandpa [Jay Butler] is very involved with the League's range. It's so neat to see how much support I get when I come to the range. People ask about my competitions and it's so great to be in that community," she said.

At the chapter's Young Ikes Day Camp, Butler spoke to campers and demonstrated her techniques.

"It was genuinely so much fun. I was really nervous going in because the kids were as young as 6 and I wasn't sure how I would explain the sport to them," she said. Butler herself attended an Izaak Walton League camp when she was 8, and she remembers nature walks, crafts, the archery range and flag ceremonies.

She recommends shooting

sports to younger generations because, "I think this sport is the most inclusive sport there is. It doesn't matter your height, weight or athletic ability. If you practice and work hard, you can achieve great things."

Still a member of the League, Butler plans to be out on the Fort Wayne range most summer days next year. In addition to support from father Chris and grandfather Jay, Butler views the chapter members as supportive family too.

Congratulations to Lucas Kozeniesky, Ginny Thrasher and Bree Butler, inspirations to young Ikes across the country.

Rion Haley is a freelance writer and former editor of Outdoor America.



A good Ike is easy to find.

But only you can help us find the best of the best.

Make sure your fellow Ikes get the recognition they deserve, for:

- Defending clean water
- Organizing a conservation project
- Engaging youth in the outdoors
- Advancing the shooting sports, or
- Writing informative newsletters about the League's work

Nominate an outstanding member, chapter, division or ally for an Izaak Walton League national award.

Nominations are due June 1, 2022.
Visit www.iwla.org/awards

Climate Change in Our Back Yards

LISA BALLARD

Climate change is happening all around us—in our back yards, farms, towns, shorelines, lakes and rivers.

Disasters related to the climate are now daily news. Prolonged drought, wilder wildfires, blistering heat waves, poor air quality and more intense storms and floods are increasingly common.

If you haven't lived through at least one of these disturbing weather events in the last few years, you've at least observed how much hotter, drier, wetter or windier it has become where you live.

Because the impact of climate ripples through so much of our lives, it's worth a close look at the cascading effects.

Heat Is Fierce, Water Is Scarce

Longer and more severe droughts and heat waves are at the heart of most climate change discussions.

In early September, an analysis by the *Washington Post* found that nearly two in three Americans had experienced a heat wave in the previous three months.

Heat waves are now happening more often, lasting longer, occurring across more months.

Last spring, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) analyzed nearly 60 years of temperature data for the 50 largest cities in America. The results are sobering.

Harmful air and water pollution accompany wildfire seasons which are longer and more severe due to climate change.



Grow your own. Climate change also affects access to food, like these veggies at the Chokecherry Festival in Lewistown, Mont.

In nearly every one of those cities, heat waves are now happening more often, lasting longer, occurring across more months of the year and bringing even more out-of-the-ordinary temperatures.

In September, the U.S. Department of Interior reported that 47 percent of the country was experiencing severe or extreme drought conditions, particularly in western states and the Missouri River basin, which stretches into the Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri.

In California and the Colorado River basin, some reservoirs are at 30-year lows. Lake Powell and Lake Mead are at historic lows. In New Mexico, the Elephant Butte Reservoir—the largest reservoir in that state—is at a mere five percent of its capacity.

Many municipalities are now struggling just to provide clean drinking water. Higher temperatures and fertilizer runoff also triggered dangerous algal

blooms this year. Water officials in Des Moines, Iowa, have turned to drilling into underground water supplies rather than relying on contaminated river water.

The Food We Eat

The relationship between weather and agriculture is apparent to everyone who grows things outdoors. Climate change will alter what you eat.

As food prices climb at our grocery stores, everyone has felt the impact.

A reliable water supply is essential for growing the vegetables we eat and for sustaining all plants and animals. Cattle, chickens and sheep need good pastureland, hay and other farm-raised foods.

Drought causes a decline in all agricultural output, as we've

witnessed this past summer in the northern and western United States. Lack of hay has forced ranchers to reduce their herds.

As food prices have climbed at our grocery stores due to climate—and pandemic-related supply-chain pressures—everyone has felt the impact.

In 2018, a study by the University of Arizona predicted vegetable yields will fall by 35 percent by the end of this century due to water shortages, higher soil salinity, more extreme temperatures and less filtering of the sun's rays.

Looking ahead, drought, compounded by harsher heat and sunlight, could shift crop choices from sun-sensitive vegetables, such as lettuce, to root foods like beets and carrots. With these crop-growing challenges, the wide array of fruits and vegetables in the local grocery store would become more limited.

LISA BALLARD



Water temperatures of 70 degrees or more can be lethal to brook trout.

Wildlife in Peril

The obvious impact of climate change on wildlife is the degradation or loss of habitat, particularly due to prolonged drought, heat or intense widespread wildfire.

A 2020 study published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States* found that “one-third of all animal and plant species on the planet could face extinction by 2070 due to climate change.”

Every species is adapted to a certain temperature range. For example, brook trout thrive when water temperatures range from the mid-40s F to about 60. But if the water warms to 70 degrees, they die. As water heats up, other species of aquatic plants and animals might move in and then outcompete and push out native species. Warmer water can also trigger harmful algal blooms.

Some species that need cold weather, like polar bears and

pikas, are at great risk. But the fate of more adaptable animals is difficult to predict. Whitetail deer suffer from low reproduction rates when winters are severe but commonly give birth to twin fawns when conditions are less harsh, so you might think whitetails would benefit from a warming climate. It's not that simple.

Hunters' and anglers' voices should be among the loudest calling for action.

As temperatures rise, dry spells last longer, rainstorms become more intense and infectious diseases in deer, like epizootic hemorrhagic disease, are expected to increase in prevalence and severity. And how will the increase in ticks and other parasites affect deer, elk, moose and other ungulate populations? Time will tell.

Climate change affects populations of useful pollinators and other insects and pests. Disruptions in the balance of beneficial insects affect U.S. food production and wildlife.

The story of how climate upsets the balance of nature is urgent, but not new. The topic was explored in detail in the cover story for the Fall 2007 *Outdoor America*, titled “Feeling the Heat: Global Warming Hits Home for Hunters and Anglers.” The article covered climate shifts' effect on fish, fowl, pests and invasive species. It concludes, “hunters' and anglers' voices should be among the loudest calling for action on global warming.”

How We Travel

In 2011, Tropical Storm Irene dumped 11 inches of rain on upstate New York and New England in 12 hours. I watched the storm from a lakeside cottage in the northern Adirondack Park. About five hours into the deluge,

the lakeshore disappeared below the dark, rising water but our house was spared from flooding. Friends across Lake Champlain in Vermont were less lucky. The road to their house washed out, leaving them stranded on the roof of their one-story home. Irene damaged 2,000 roads, washed out 1,000 culverts and closed 200 bridges in Vermont alone.

Due to climate change, severe storms are occurring more frequently, causing immense damage from flooding. “Hundred-year storms” are sometimes occurring several times per decade, disrupting transportation corridors as they damage neighborhoods. Auto and air travel, two contributors to the climate crisis, are also victims of it.

Take roads, which are engineered for a particular range of local weather conditions. Extreme heat and cold cause degradations like potholes, cracking and heaving. What’s more, many roadways are in low-lying areas that are the most prone to flooding. As our weather patterns become wilder, our roadways will need to be repaired and replaced more often.

According to the EPA, transportation systems in the United States are designed to last at least 50 years with the ability to withstand local weather patterns based on historical records. But nowadays, historical patterns are no longer a reliable basis for planning.

Air travel is also vulnerable to climate change. If you fly much, you’ve noticed that weather

grounds airplanes more often these days regardless of the location. Coastal areas, where many major airports are located, are at higher risk of flight disruptions as flooding becomes more frequent. Hotter air also reduces lift during takeoff and inhibits a plane’s ability to climb efficiently.

Outdoor Recreation

How does climate change affect your ability to enjoy the great outdoors? You’re in luck if you like to ride a bike.

“We estimate that climate change will increase the demand for recreational cycling by about 5.5 percent,” say researchers in a 2017 study at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Milder winters and warmer spring and fall months should boost outdoor activities such as cycling, hiking and running.

It’s imperative for the federal government to be at the vanguard of efforts to combat the climate crisis.

On the other hand, the widespread smoke from wildfires in the West over the summer reduced the air quality to a point where even walking your dog was bad for your health. Forget going for a hike or a bike ride.

In my case, on many days, my local health department issued



More Americans are feeling the impact of climate change closer to home.

warnings about heat danger, too, and I live in the northern Rocky Mountains of Montana 5,500 feet above sea level. The notion of the weather being too hot to exercise outdoors would have been laughable here only a decade ago.

Winter recreationists – skiers, snowboarders, snowmobilers, ice anglers – will also be losers. As the Earth warms, winters will be shorter and milder.

Code Red for Humanity

In August, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a long-awaited report to the United Nations stating, “Climate change is widespread, rapid, and intensifying, and some trends are now irreversible.... Human-induced climate change is already affecting weather patterns across the globe. Scientists are also observing changes across the whole of Earth’s climate system; in the atmosphere, in the oceans, ice floes, and on land.”

In response to this report, U.N. Secretary-General António

Guterres issued a “code red for humanity.” Rising sea levels, in particular, are on a course that will last into the next millennium. According to the IPCC report, mean sea level has risen faster since 1900 than over any preceding century in at least the last 3,000 years.

We know increasing levels of greenhouse gases accumulating

in the Earth’s atmosphere are the root of the climate crisis, but when couched in such monumental global terms, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed and wonder if individual actions make a difference.

Yes, individual actions matter. Every step you take to lessen your household’s and community’s impact makes a difference.

Lisa Ballard is an Ike from Red Lodge, Montana. A past president of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, she serves on the board of the Montana Wildlife Federation. She writes about wildlife, outdoor recreation and conservation for magazines and websites. www.LisaBallardOutdoors.com

Policy Solutions

It’s imperative for the federal government to be at the vanguard of efforts to combat the climate crisis. Effective and practical solutions that can be implemented through policy could mitigate the dangers of climate change.

Some solutions are readily available now. Others require more investments of resources and expertise. Below are a few solutions advocated by the Izaak Walton League of America.

Sequester carbon in our soils, grasslands and wetlands

About 40 percent of the continental U.S. is in agricultural production. Farmers and ranchers can contribute significantly to carbon sequestration efforts through the management and preservation of soil health, grasslands and wetlands. Lawmakers should boost existing programs, like the Conservation Stewardship Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program, so

more farmers can implement practices that improve soil health. See our articles in this issue focused on the climate roles of healthy soil (page 40) and wetlands (page 42).

Improve Energy Efficiency

The U.S. cannot reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to acceptable levels without addressing energy efficiency. Some states could meet between 25 and 100 percent of their pollution reduction goals simply by increasing energy efficiency. We can dramatically reduce dependence on fossil fuels by reducing energy demand. From uniform building codes and weatherization assistance grants to more efficient household items, many policy solutions are readily available, and more must be explored.

Expand Energy R&D

As we transform to a clean energy economy, we also need to address the challenges of storing and transmitting electricity generated by

clean energy sources and increasing the power and lifetime of batteries. One way to spur development of new technologies is to foster private sector incentives. For instance, we should supercharge the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, which awards grants to private energy researchers to facilitate high-potential, high-impact energy technologies.

Build Resilience into our Ecosystems

Resilient natural systems will adapt to a changing climate more easily than ecosystems that have become polluted and fragmented. Through programs that conserve public and private lands and waters, the League has advocated for decades for policies that build that type of resilience.

To read more about climate solutions, visit iwla.org/climatesolutions

What Can You Do at Home to Stem Climate Change?



Watch your water usage.

In regions where water is in short supply, use water sparingly and take shorter showers. Replace old toilets with low-flush models. Plant drought-resistant landscaping.



Grow some of your food.

Even a small garden or garden boxes often produce tastier vegetables than the ones at the store, and you won't depend as heavily on supply chains to put food on your table.



Turn off your vehicle.

Idling emits carbon into the air. If you're stopping longer than at a streetlight, turn the key.



Reduce your carbon footprint.

Analyze your home, vehicle, what you purchase, how you recreate and what you eat and drink. Look at how products are made and transported to you – then make decisions based on lowering your climate impact.



Change your lightbulbs.

And other outdated, energy-inefficient appliances and items in your home and at work.



Re-use and recycle.

You know the drill!



Consume less.

Shop wisely. Do you really need that new sweater? Every item we purchase requires materials and energy for manufacturing and transportation, adding greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.



Choose a more eco-friendly mode of transportation.

Walk or bike whenever possible. Take public transportation. Carpool or rideshare. Consider a more climate-friendly vehicle when you buy another one. Your fuel bill will be cheaper, too.



Live cooler in the winter and warmer in the summer.

Turn down the heat in your home during the winter. Likewise, set your AC a little warmer during the summer. It saves energy and reduces carbon emissions.



Prevent wildfires.

90 percent of wildfires are caused by humans. Be smart with your use of fire, especially during heat waves or drought. While low-intensity fires occurred regularly and naturally for millennia in North America, our history of suppressing every fire has left a legacy of excess fuel that has made catastrophic fires more likely to occur.



Show up and speak up.

Attend meetings, events and volunteer for climate causes in your local area. Understand the issues and offer solutions that make sense for your community.

Mark Trail Goes Millennial

MICHAEL REINEMER



Mark Trail takes a selfie in the wild with son Rusty and wife Cherry.

After hiking in the woods, rescuing wildlife and putting the hurt on bad guys for nearly 75 years, Mark Trail was ready for a break.

At least that's what King Features Syndicate thought, the company that publishes the "Mark Trail" cartoon strip.

They decided: time for a makeover for the beloved World War II veteran who ekes out a living as a freelance writer for *Woods and Wildlife Magazine*.

Mark Trail 2.0 is a millennial.

Now he shaves less frequently, seems to have bought some new clothes—and he has a new artist drawing him. Starting in October 2020, Jules Rivera began penning the cartoon and writing the weekly story lines. She also creates the Sunday science cartoon strips, which typically tackle a specific conservation or wildlife topic.

Of course, some things never change. Mark is still an outdoor writer, a champion of wildlife, married to Cherry, dad to Rusty with trusted dog Andy nearby. Plots typically involve wild places and critters, bad jokes and pancakes.

Created by cartoonist Ed Dodd in 1946, the strip grew in popularity over the years. At its peak, the cartoon was running in more than 300 newspapers in the U.S. and 55 more papers abroad.

Tea Fougner is editorial director for comics at King Features Syndicate, and she worked on the transition to a more modern Mark.

"When Ed Dodd began Mark Trail, his mission was to educate ordinary people about wildlife, nature and conservation," Fougner says.

"We realized that to really continue Ed's mission of bringing natural science to everyone, it was

important to make Mark, Cherry and Rusty broadly relatable to today's audience, and for them to deal not only with current events but with the kinds of issues facing millennial parents and their kids today."

"Jules Rivera's background in STEM [science, technology, engineering and math] as well as webcomics made her a great fit," Fougner says. "In today's world, we know that these issues have become even more important, and it's up to all of us to take care of our world."

Rivera strives to reach a broader audience by presenting underrepresented people, seen through the "Mark Trail" story lines.



Cartoonist Jules Rivera has spent the past year penning the Mark Trail strip, which chronicles the adventures of the legendary outdoor writer who first appeared in the funny pages in 1946.

"I am a woman of color who got bounced out of STEM because my working environment was so toxic," she tells *Outdoor America*. "I put people of color and marginalized gender in my stories doing things... that make people feel seen, and human. When readers can emotionally connect to a story, they can connect to its message a lot easier."

"The focus is always on what can be done moving forward," she says. "The audience can take bad news if they feel like they can do something to fix it."

"In 1946, Mark Trail was the right concept at the right time, a returning GI hankering for the literal peace and quiet of the wilderness when thousands of actual GIs were returning from war hungry for a similar return to normalcy," says Mark Carlson-Ghost, a cartoon historian and retired psychology professor. It was a realistic cartoon strip but unlike other comics of that era, the focus on hunting, fishing and conservation was unique.

After Ed Dodd retired from the strip, Jack Elrod and more recently James Allen continued to draw the traditional "Mark Trail."

Carlson-Ghost says, "Rivera's artistic regime has been especially successful in revitalizing the Sunday strips, which have always been educational in nature." They had grown a bit stodgy, he says, but they now include more sparks of humor.

How is the public responding? "It's such a joy every time I read a fan letter from a

scientist or wildlife activist who is just elated that Jules brought a subject that matters to them to a broader audience," says Fougner.

Having the opportunity to share thoughts with the new cartoonist, *Outdoor America* could not resist bragging about Salt Watch, Save Our Streams and various strategies and programs the Izaak Walton League uses to enlist citizen scientists and foster local conservation.

"That all sounds pretty cool! I'd be interested in trying out some of these apps. I love how technology

is changing how we learn about the natural world," Rivera says.

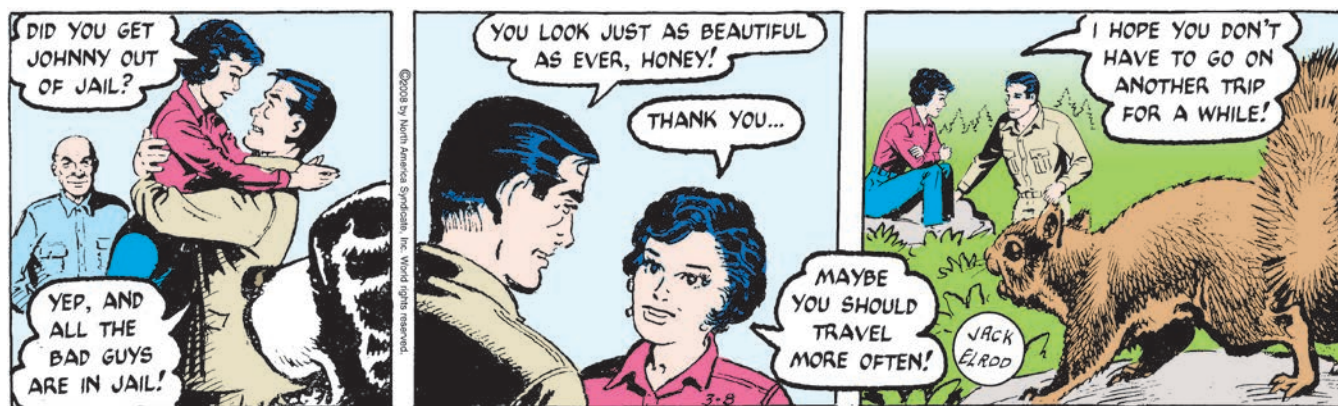
So, like conservation broadly, "Mark Trail" is keeping up with the times. And while the comic strip features fictional characters, the topics it tackles are very real.

Throughout the post-World War II era, when concerns about wildlife and forest management produced many of our nation's modern environmental policies and ethics, the "Mark Trail" cartoon strip touched on many

of the same topics of concern that the Izaak Walton League worked on during that period.

As a freelance outdoors writer, Mark Trail would likely have been a member of the Outdoor Writers of America Association, which was formed at the 1927 Izaak Walton League convention. It remains a very active organization today.

Like conservation broadly, "Mark Trail" is keeping up with the times. While the comic features fictional characters, the topics it tackles are very real.



Before the transition Mark as a millennial, the cartoon was written by creator Ed Dodd and later by Jack Elrod and James Allen.

Exclusive Interview with Mark Trail!

Outdoor America was able to wrangle this exclusive and perhaps first-ever interview with legendary outdoor writer and cartoon character Mark Trail.

OA: Mr. Trail...can I call you Mark? Thanks for talking with me. I know you're busy.

Mark: *I'm never too busy to talk about the outdoors. And Mark is fine—just as long as you don't call me late to dinner! ...or Lil Marky.*

OA: Got it. As an outdoor writer—probably a better career choice than comedian—you have a lot of close encounters with the natural world. Does that ever get old? Do you still get goose bumps out there?

Mark: *Did you know geese don't get goose bumps? Only mammals can. They're the result of tiny muscles attached to every hair follicle on your body! And boy do I get those. There's so many wonders of nature, and new ones being discovered every day. This year, we discovered the smallest reptile known to science, the nanochameleon, or Brookesia nana. There's always something new to learn!*

OA: As I just did. Thank you. You also keep your eye on threats to wildlife and their habitat and other problems. Do you worry about that? What keeps you up at night?

Mark: *Other than Andy snoring, the thing that keeps me awake the most is thinking about the world we are leaving behind for our kids. As a dad, I worry about increasingly dangerous weather, wildfires out of control, endangered species under constant threat of extinction, and the depletion of resources that come with rising global temperatures.*

A glass of warm milk at night helps.

OA: Other side of that coin: With so many negative trends—climate change, the extinction crisis—what gives you hope?

Mark: *Young people's passion for the environment and the urgency with which they are fighting for the earth! Heck, if it weren't for them, I'd be out of a job! But more important, it makes me feel confident that we're leaving the future of our planet in good hands...but we need to take care of it well enough to hand it off.*

OA: So what advice do you have for people who want to help protect wild places and wildlife?

Mark: *The number-one thing you can do without any training is to make sure you pick up your trash and recycle or dispose of it properly. Litter can be hard on local animals and plants! Always try to re-use items if you can, and if you can't, find out whether they can safely be disposed of in the regular trash or your local recycling program, or need to be recycled through a special program.*

OA: Mark, you've been at the peak of your career for... a really long time. Are there any assignments or challenges you would like to take on that you haven't yet?

Mark: *That's a tough question! There are definitely parts of the world I would love to explore! One natural phenomenon I've always wanted to see is a mud volcano. Mud volcanoes aren't "real" volcanoes. They're what happens when gas beneath the earth's surface bubbles up, pushing mud, silt, and clay with it, they're sort of like nature's burps! They're most plentiful and active in Azerbaijan, a country I've never been to. If you need someone to report from Azerbaijan, I'm your guy!*

OA: Mud volcanoes. Awesome. Finally, and this can be off the record, but I noticed you have a new look. Are you using a different hair product?

Mark: Beats me! I just use whatever Cherry puts in the shower. I did get an electric razor as a birthday present last year. It keeps me from cutting myself, but it does leave more stubble!

Cherry Trail, Mark's wife and partner in conservation, joins the conversation.

OA: Thank you for joining, Cherry! I've noticed that you are very focused on native plants and the importance of keeping ecosystems healthy and intact. What can folks do in their own communities to promote conservation?

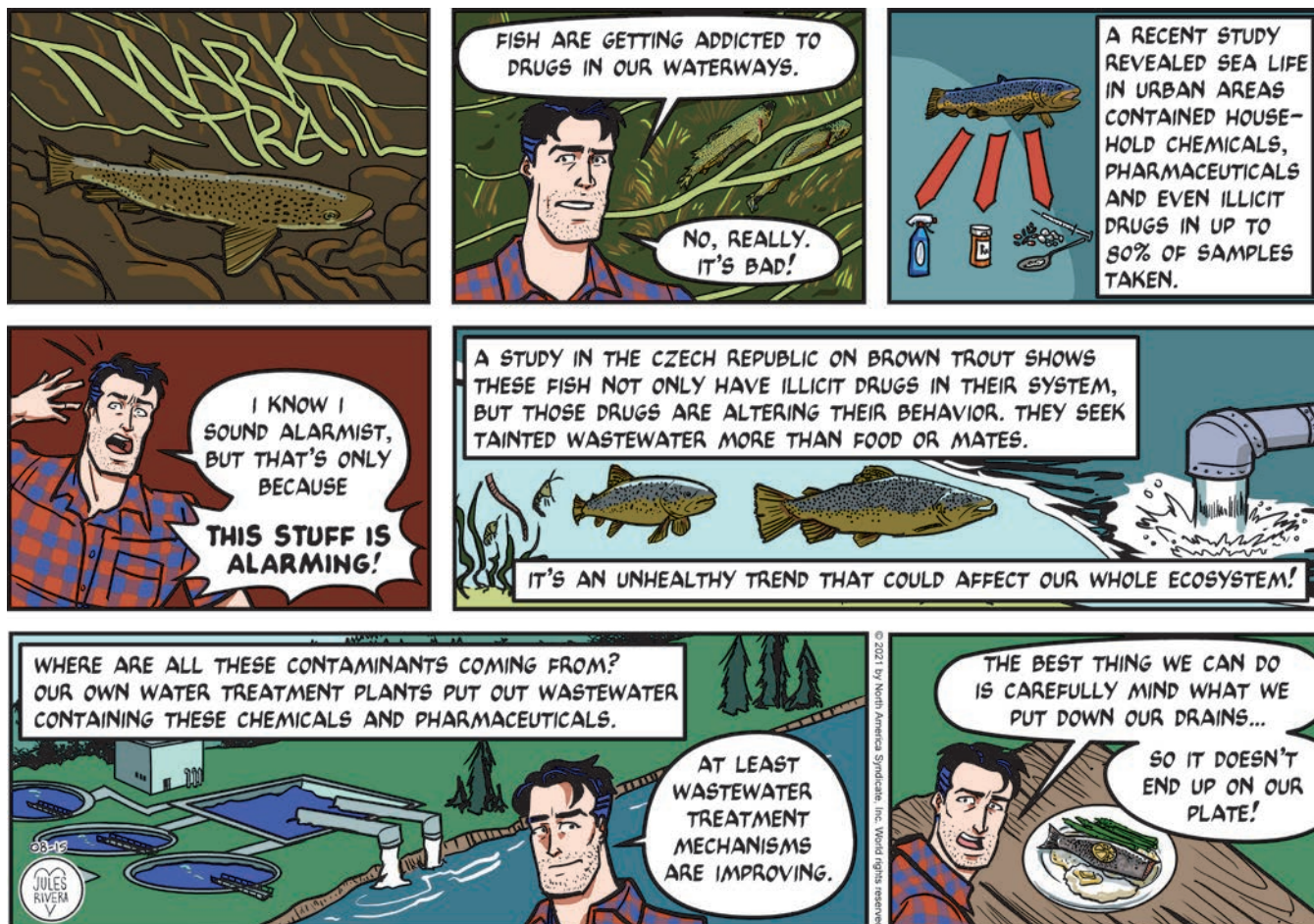
Cherry: Talk to your community about maintaining as many native plants as possible in yards, parks and other recreational areas. A great project for a local school can be to plant a garden using only native plants. Kids get to learn about their environment and how to maintain that for generations to come!

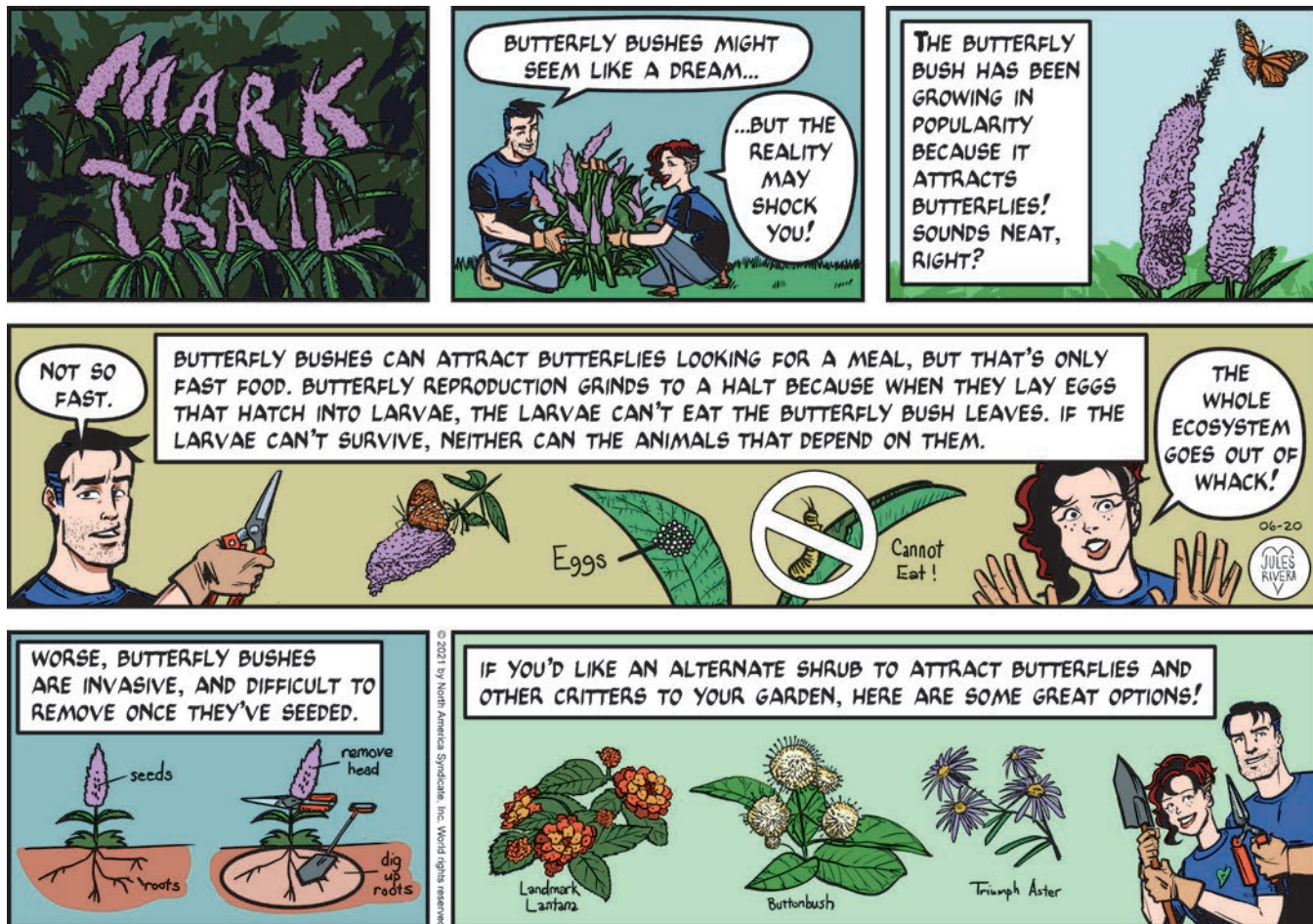
Another thing you can do is trade in your traditional sod lawn for a yard of native grasses and plants. This helps enrich natural wildlife and prevents flooding and erosion. Native plants are always the best ones for your yard. It costs ya' less water too!

OA: What is your vision for the future? What type of world do you want Rusty to grow old in?

Cherry: One where he makes his bed—just kidding, just kidding! I want to see Rusty grow old in a world where people have compassion for each other's differences and a real community spirit to solving problems! We shouldn't just pay attention when someone rich or famous brings an issue to our attention. We need to listen when people who don't usually have a voice tell us something is wrong.

OA: Thanks for those insights. Cherry, Mark always presents as super competent. What is he really bad at?





Cherry: He sometimes just gets so excited about something he's learned that he just won't stop talking about it. It's endearing as heck until you've heard about the mud volcanoes in Azerbaijan for the fifteenth time on your hike. You try to change the subject, but he just won't take a hint. In our house, we call this "Marksplaining." And boy, our boat insurance sure is expensive.

OA: Thank you, Cherry and Mark. Keep up the great work. We should make both of you lifetime members of the Izaak Walton League as thanks for your work to inform people about conservation.

Michael Reinemer is editor of Outdoor America and communications director for the Izaak Walton League.



A big thanks to Jules Rivera and Tea Fougner for allowing *Outdoor America* to "interview" Mark and Cherry, and for channeling the Trails.

Thinking Like a **MOUNTAIN**

IDEAS AS BIG AS THE OUTDOORS



Purple Martins: A Species that Depends on People

By MIKE BISHOP

In the 1950s, a bird enthusiast and TV antenna manufacturer in Griggsville, Illinois, came up with the idea of building and selling houses for purple martins (*Progne subis*). J.L. Wade promoted his all-aluminum bird houses by marketing the purple martin as America's favorite bird—because it consumed thousands of mosquitoes every day.

While Wade wildly overstated the bird's mosquito consumption, the advertising campaign worked. Weary of bites from the annoying insect, Americans bought and erected thousands of Wade's bird houses.

Because purple martins prefer to nest together in colonies, the Wade-style bird houses look like little hotels. In yards and farms in virtually every state east of the Mississippi, you can still find many of Wade's green and white houses for the purple martin.

Unfortunately, many of those structures are now unusable and have long since been abandoned by the birds.

MIKE BISHOP



Martins gather at the top of a colony in Virginia.



Purple martin tower.

A History with Humans

The close relationship between people and purple martins began long before Wade. During some of the first encounters between European settlers and Native Americans, the settlers observed gourds with small holes mounted on tall poles around the villages. The indigenous people had developed a semi-domesticated relationship with the purple martins. The birds would drive away crows, hawks and other species that pecked at drying animal hides, making the hides less useful.

The idea caught on among the Europeans, perhaps inspired by the fact that the martins do in fact dine almost exclusively on flying insects.

Historically, the Eastern purple martin nested in natural cavities, like dead trees or “snags,” which provide essential habitat for a wide array of species. But the Europeans brought with them

intensive logging for building and for fuel, and they introduced two invasive bird species—the European starling and the house sparrow—that would outcompete martins for nesting habitat.

Due to loss of habitat and competition for nesting sites from invasive bird species, the Eastern purple martin prefers human-erected housing.

Because of this competition and loss of habitat for nesting sites, the Eastern purple martin has adopted a preference for human-erected housing, which is unique among songbirds. Some of the genetically distinct Western purple martins (*Progne subis arboricola*) still nest in snags or saguaro cacti. Their population, west of the Rocky Mountains, is also fragile and benefits from

citizen scientists who take an interest in hosting colonies.

As the “fad” of martin housing faded and loss of suitable habitat continued, the purple martin population fell by about one percent per year between 1966 and 2015, resulting in a cumulative decline of 37 percent, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey.

Growing Need to Help a Falling Population

Fortunately, many people began to recognize the plight of the bird and became interested again in serving as “landlords” for the martins. With new and better housing options, thousands of colonies have sprung up across the U.S. and Canada in recent years.

As a member of the **Arlington-Fairfax Chapter** of the Izaak Walton League in Virginia and a naturalist for Fairfax County, I have an outsized interest in the fate of the purple martin.

A few years ago, I began a program to bring the martins back to the heavily populated and developed region. My martin journey began in the early 1980s when I installed bluebird and martin houses on my parent's property in rural Spotsylvania County, Virginia. For almost 25 years, three colonies grew and thrived.

But in 2010, the property was sold and I no longer had access to the houses. At that time I was working at a large high school with a lot of open ground and received permission to put up a martin house there, although I had never seen that species in the area. But within two years, the house was filled with the birds. This inspired the idea of putting up more houses in the county's schools and parks.

Despite 1.2 million people living in Fairfax County and

highly urbanized sections, the open spaces of parks and golf courses provided perfect habitat for these birds, who don't mind being close to human activities. County officials I contacted totally supported the proposal and I recruited a few others to help. By 2015, I gave this work a name—the Northern Virginia Purple Martin Initiative—and began selecting sites to install colonies. By the end of the second year, 13 colonies were installed, and while most had just a few birds, some were already filled to capacity.

Now the Initiative maintains 25 active colonies at parks, golf courses, a university and a monastery. Together, the colonies have more than 350 individual nesting gourds and housing compartments. The average occupancy was 95 percent for the 2021 season, which equates

to approximately 1,500 young purple martins fledged this year.

At the Arlington-Fairfax Izaak Walton League Chapter, one of my first conservation projects was setting up a martin colony. The open grounds combined with a nearby pond provide perfect habitat.

Because they live in colonies, the martins provide endless interest for the careful observer. As insectivores, the martins winter in South America. When spring arrives, the martins return and begin their cycle of fledging new generations, thanks to essential help from concerned conservationists.

Mike Bishop is an Izaak Walton League member at the Arlington-Fairfax Chapter and naturalist for Fairfax County, Virginia.

How to Get Started

If you are interested in becoming a martin landlord, the Purple Martin Conservation Association (www.purplemartin.org) has a wonderful website with useful information on martins and establishing a colony. The website includes a list of local or regional mentors who are glad to answer questions.

Purple martin colonies require maintenance to ensure they remain clean for every nesting season. The gourds are plastic and have a cleaning port. The steel or aluminum poles have racks that hold multiple

individual gourds. The racks are affixed to a cable and pulley to raise and lower the gourds with a winch, which makes it easy to clean and maintain them. The gourds have an entry hole designed to allow martins but prevent starlings from nesting – usually a crescent-shaped hole rather than a round hole typically found on bird houses.

Setting up and maintaining a purple martin colony offers a rewarding conservation project for Izaak Walton League chapters, schools, Scouts or master naturalist programs.

Editor's Note: A Unique Challenge for Citizen Science and Local Conservation

The fate of the purple martin plainly rests in the hands of a small number of humans, mostly volunteers. Without younger volunteers who take on this stewardship role and are trained to build and maintain purple martin colonies, the bird could disappear. This is an apt metaphor for our larger challenge of preserving wildlife and habitat for posterity.

— Michael Reinemer

Help Launch a New Century of

2022 will be a momentous year for the Izaak Walton League of America as **we celebrate our 100th anniversary**. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reflect with pride on so many accomplishments.

It's also the time to look ahead – **to the League's second century of leadership on conservation and outdoor recreation**.

The League was founded 100 years ago in the face of stark environmental threats, from industrial pollution and soil erosion degrading our waterways to loss of our nation's wetlands, woods and wildlife.

The original Ikes didn't question **if** they could save outdoor America for generations to come—they believed **they could**, and **they got to work**.

Once again, **the future is our focus**. Like the early Ikes, it's not a question of "if" we will achieve our goals. It's only a matter of "**when**"—**and when is now!**

You can **help the League get started today with your generous gift** of \$25, \$50 or more as we launch an ambitious **2nd Century Campaign** to restore and conserve America's natural resources.



We know **there is more work to do**.

Today, winter road salt and farmland runoff pollute our rivers and drinking water. We face a new surge of wetland loss and soil erosion.

Climate change threatens the future of our communities, the nation's economy and the very resources we depend upon for outdoor recreation!

Your gift of \$25 or \$50 today will help the League respond to these serious conservation challenges.

Thank you for your support!

f Progress for Outdoor America

Consider the impact of your early support for our 2nd Century Campaign:

- Your gift will **advance community-based conservation and citizen science** by putting our crowd-sourced data to work in communities nationwide.
- Your support will enable the League to **ramp up policy advocacy** – starting with our ambitious goal to scale up conservation on tens of millions of acres of farmland to combat climate change.
- Your generosity will enable us to expand the reach of our 200 chapters to provide a gateway for **more Americans to enjoy outdoor recreation and reconnect with nature close to home!**

Please join your fellow Ikes in kicking off this exciting new initiative. Together, we can achieve a bold vision for conservation and outdoor recreation in the League's 2nd century.

Please send your donation, payable to IWLA,
to 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878.
Or save a stamp and donate online at www.iwla.org/donate.



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



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. Measuring scales on the back help you keep track of daily goals. Colors: (L-R) Sea Green or Aqua

ORDER FORM

OA1221

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IWLA, Attn: Catalog Orders, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878



CLEAN WATER CORNER



Gaithersburg “junior mayor” Abeer Dey (left) helps paint the snow plows.

Focus on Local Benefits for Community-Based Conservation

BY SAMANTHA BRIGGS, Clean Water Program Director

As Salt Watch season four wound down last spring, it turned out to be our most successful yet. More than 2,500 test kits were distributed, producing 2,600 results from streams in dozens of states. Twenty-seven percent of those tests showed chloride readings toxic to aquatic life.

What else have we learned now that we are immersed in our fifth season already?

Clearly, we learned that partnerships and hyper-local approaches are key. Those

strategies are helping to keep salt from finding its way into our waterways and sources of drinking water.

With active partners, Salt Watch has grown from a local to national initiative in just a few years. Examples of these partners include the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance in Wisconsin, the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust in Pennsylvania, Friends of the Rouge in Michigan and 9 Mile Creek Watershed District in Minnesota.

This season, thanks to a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust and the City of Gaithersburg, Md., we are launching an intensive campaign in Gaithersburg. The League is working hand-in-hand with the city, homeowner’s associations (HOAs), schools and local businesses to distribute 1,000 test kits within a municipality of 10 square miles. The campaign includes intensive outreach to encourage private entities, like apartment developments

and shopping centers, to curb excessive use of salt and other chloride-based chemicals.

By using the following three tactics, we have been able to reach more of the community with Salt Watch, beyond our usual “choir.”

Spreading More Awareness, Less Salt

Because we had big goals for a small region, we cast a wide net in our outreach. First, we homed in on HOAs, through their boards and residents. That strategy opens opportunities to work directly with the HOAs on smarter use of chemicals, like road salt. For instance, favoring use, when necessary, rather than rewarding landscape companies for the amount of chemicals applied.

Spreading awareness via news media, social media and other channels is essential to the success of Salt Watch. We have worked with watershed organizations like the Muddy Branch Alliance, which generated news coverage in addition to test results! They notified local media about a fish kill in a Gaithersburg lake that was triggered by an uncovered salt pile.

Useful Tools and Tactics

Another tactic employed in Gaithersburg is providing volunteer Salt Watch monitors with useful, specific and engaging resources to help them create change on the ground. Resources include a brochure with telephone hotlines to report salt spills and other pollution events, waterproof Salt Watch fanny packs to store

and transport Salt Watch kits, and an interactive map that shows who treats which roads (state, county, city or private), so the community knows who to call about a spill that needs to be cleaned up.

We also created a media toolkit for HOAs and other organizations to use for social media, newsletters and press outreach.

Partnerships and hyper-local approaches are key.

In addition, we are translating the Salt Watch kits into Spanish to ensure that our message reaches a wide range of people and engages them in a topic that affects everyone in the city.

Broad Appeals Win Buy-In

The final and perhaps most important tactic for this campaign is building engagement beyond the water testing community. That has involved attending events like farmers markets and tree-lighting ceremonies to distribute Salt Watch kits. League staff inform residents about how excessive use of road salt and other chemicals pollutes local streams and drinking water supplies, and how salt use can be reduced while keeping drivers and pedestrians safe in the winter.

Our partnership with the city connected us with Gaithersburg Parks, Arts and Recreation Corporation (G-PARC), a nonprofit that

builds support for parks and arts in the community. G-PARC is assisting with connections to organizations and audiences not traditionally involved with water quality monitoring.

For instance, G-PARC organized an activity where youth and seniors painted snow plows with slogans about limiting road salt.

The League will work to keep Salt Watch a component of Gaithersburg’s commitment to community-driven conservation for years to come.

Interested in joining Salt Watch? Find details and order your free test kit at www.iwla.org/saltwatch.



Gaithersburg snow plows now come with smart-salting messages.



Gaithersburg Salt Watch is a project funded by a Chesapeake Bay Trust Outreach and Restoration Grant in partnership with the City of Gaithersburg.



WINTER SALT WATCH

You Can Protect Your Water
JOIN WINTER SALT WATCH

Test Your Salt IQ!



You don't have to be an expert to help reduce salt pollution in America's streams and drinking water. But by the end of this quick quiz, you'll know more about this serious, but often overlooked problem. And it's easy to get started in this unique Izaak Walton League program.

In its fifth year now, Salt Watch is one of the Izaak Walton League's hallmark programs that focuses on local conservation and citizen science. These traditions at the League began 100 years ago when the very first members and supporters got involved in combating local water pollution and taking action to restore stream health.

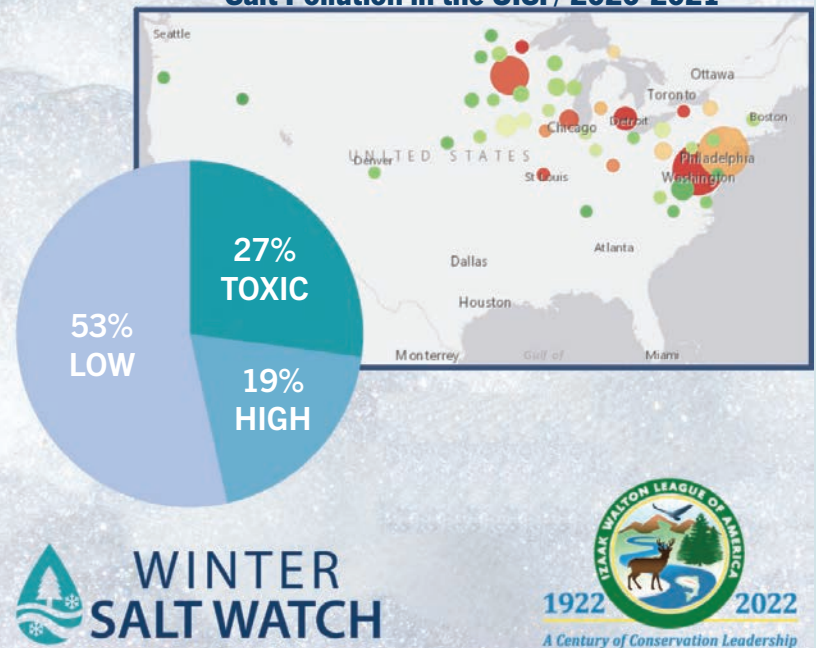


The Salt Watch Pledge

I plan to reduce road salt use in my community by:

"Monitor[ing] salt levels in the Rock Creek watershed in northwest Washington DC" — Philip, DC

Salt Pollution in the U.S. / 2020-2021



**Request your free
Salt Watch kit:**
www.iwla.org/saltwatch

**and get monitoring today
(no training required!)**

Follow instructions in your kit to
submit your results and get
your data on the national map.



Salt Watch Quiz

Applying salt and other chemicals to roads, sidewalks or parking lots can keep us safe during the winter. But it can be too much of good thing. Test your awareness about treating icy surfaces and why it matters.

1. Let's say you want to use salt-based de-icer for a 20-foot driveway. How much should you use?

- a. A tablespoon
- b. A 12-ounce mug
- c. A three-gallon bucket
- d. Just use the whole bag

2. Okay, you have salted a driveway. What should you do next?

- a. Salt the grass so wild animals don't slip and fall
- b. Go back inside because salt does all the work
- c. Wait 15 to 30 minutes, then shovel the snow and ice, which has been softened by the salt
- d. Buy more salt because you just used the whole bag

3. What's the big deal about salt anyway?

- a. Salt gets into our drinking water where it can cause health problems
- b. Road salt can corrode and damage cars, bridges and water pipes
- c. Road salt can harm plants and kill aquatic life when it leaches into streams
- d. All of the above

4. How much salt is used each year to treat ice in the United States?

- a. 20,000 tons
- b. 200,000 tons
- c. 2 million tons
- d. 20 million tons

5. What happens to salt after a storm?

- a. The salt evaporates
- b. Our concern about salt evaporates
- c. It washes into the ground and into local waterways
- d. It ends up in a salt reclamation tank at the water treatment plant

6. What should you do if you see evidence of overuse, like piles of salt on the road?

- a. Report it to your local department of transportation or environmental protection
- b. Report it to the National Guard
- c. Call 911
- d. Try not to think about it

7. How can you help reduce salt use in your community?

- a. Talk to your neighbors about smart salting
- b. Write a letter to the editor explaining the downside of excessive road salt use
- c. Move to a community in a warmer place where it never snows
- d. A and B

8. How can you know if excessive salting is a problem in your community?

- a. Look carefully to see if the stream appears to be salty
- b. Get a Salt Watch kit from the Izaak Walton League and measure salt levels in a local waterway
- c. Visit the interactive results page to see reports from your community at www.iwla.org/saltwatchresults
- d. B and C

See answers in the box to right.

Why it matters

Excessive amounts of chloride can enter streams, harming aquatic life, and eventually find its way into drinking water, which can harm human health. More than 118 million Americans depend on local streams for drinking water.

Some products marketed as pet-friendly are primarily chloride- or salt-based and can still cause harm.

Get started now

- Order a free Salt Watch kit at www.iwla.org/saltwatch.
- Next, start monitoring your local streams. No training is required.
- Report your results so everyone can see and benefit from your help.

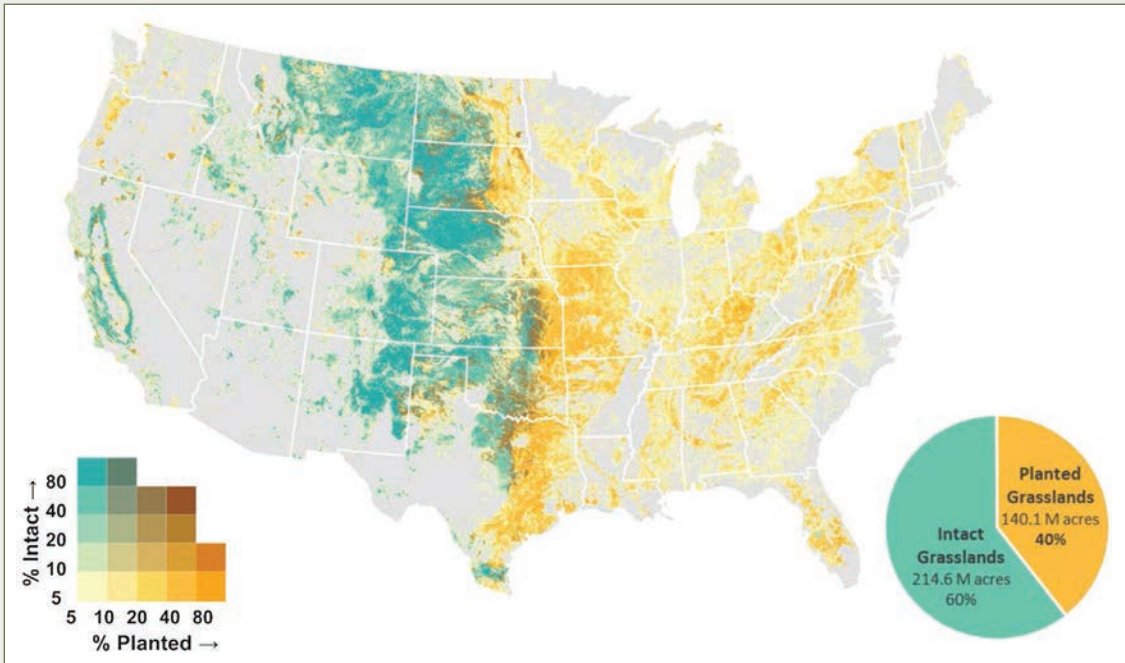
Answers to Salt Watch Quiz

- 1 B A little bit goes a long way. If you feel the crunch of salt underfoot, you applied too much.
- 2 C Salt can make it easier to treat ice, but it doesn't do all the work.
- 3 D Smarter salting will help wildlife, human health and even cars and bridges.
- 4 D 20 million tons is way too much!
- 5 C Road salt ends up in streams and drinking water. Most treatment plants do not remove salt.
- 6 A In many cases, the local agency can quickly respond and clean up excess salt. Some local governments and property owners are adopting smart salt practices.
- 7 D Greater awareness helps to solve the problem.
- 8 D There are easy ways to test your local streams and view local test results online.

Visit www.iwla.org/saltwatch to order a free kit.



SOIL MATTERS



Most eastern grassland regions have been converted to agriculture while some intact grasslands remain west of the Mississippi.

Preserving Grasslands for Future Generations

BY DUANE HOVORKA, Agriculture Program Director

America's grasslands provide a long list of benefits—and those benefits aren't confined to the Great Plains region.

They provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife, from deer, elk and grouse to the butterflies that pollinate the plants that grow our food. Grasslands nurture cattle and sheep that help feed our nation.

They protect soil from erosion, reduce flooding by absorbing and holding rainfall, buffer wetlands and capture carbon dioxide from the air and store it in the soil.

Grasslands serve as a massive carbon sink for the entire country—the mid-Atlantic as much as middle America. Consider this: one acre of healthy

grassland—including on League chapters—can hold 40 tons of carbon. Yet grasslands are also our nation's most endangered landscape. Ninety-nine percent of the tallgrass prairie that once extended from eastern North Dakota and central Texas to parts of Ohio have been lost, converted to row crops or urban areas.

Grasslands once extended from eastern Texas across the southeast and north into Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

More than 70 percent of the mixed-grass prairie that

dominated the central Great Plains has also been lost.

As a result of this habitat loss, the population of grassland birds has dropped by more than half just since 1970—a loss of more than 720 million birds.

To address the losses, the League is working on several fronts to restore and protect America's grassland legacy.

What Once Was

The grasslands that once blanketed the Great Plains in the central part of the continent are well known. But Dwayne Estes, executive director of the Southeastern Grasslands Initiative and biology professor at Austin Peay State University, says the

Great Plains was not the only place dominated by grasslands when Europeans arrived on the shores of North America.

“Today, based on a combination of historical evidence, we now believe there were in excess of 120 million acres of naturally open landscapes in the southeastern U.S.,” says Estes.

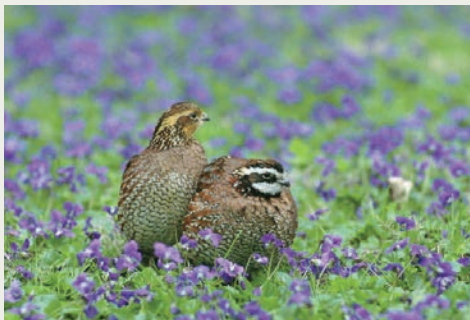
Those grasslands extended from eastern Texas across the southeast and north into Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, and they supported a diverse array of plants and animals, many of which are disappearing.

Looking at a longleaf pine savanna in eastern North Carolina, Estes describes it as “the richest plot of land north of Costa Rica in North America in terms of plant diversity,” with 52 plant species in a single square meter. “We’re talking about the rarest of the rare, Venus flytraps, pitcher plants, sun dews, orchids. About six species of plants that can eat animals occur in this single plot.”

Today, most southern grasslands have declined by at least 90 percent, converted to cropland or overgrown by forests as a result of fire suppression.

In the West, 44 percent of sagebrush habitat has been lost. As a result, greater sage-grouse populations have declined by 80 percent since 1965. From the grasslands and meadows of California to the dry prairie of Florida, America’s grasslands are being lost at an alarming rate.

But there are solutions.



The northern bobwhite, which requires native grassland habitat, has seen a 78 percent decline in population since 1970.

Farm Lands Are Key to Restoration

Farmers and ranchers own about 440 million acres of America’s grasslands, and much of it supports cattle, sheep and other livestock. The League is helping lead an effort to double the federal investment in conservation programs that help farmers and ranchers be better land stewards. Part of that increase would help landowners permanently protect grassland and help ranchers set up grazing systems that restore the health of those lands.

Grasslands are America’s most endangered landscape.

This investment in grassland conservation will benefit all Americans. It will improve soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat. It will reduce some of the worst impacts of climate change. And it will help ensure that future

generations can enjoy the long-term benefits of preserving this vital natural resource.

The League has also asked Congress to provide dedicated funding for the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If we are successful, ranchers will have better access to education on grassland management and technical advice from experts, and they could receive support for the organization of rancher networks that let farmers learn from each other.

Working with the National Wildlife Federation, Pheasants Forever and other conservation groups, the League is also advocating for Congress to enact a North American Grassland Conservation Act. Modeled after the highly successful North American Wetlands Conservation Act, this legislation would provide a bold new national policy to support grasslands and provide funding to help tribes and other landowners conserve and restore threatened grassland systems around the country. Learn more at www.ActForGrasslands.org.

America’s grasslands are in trouble, but the solutions are at hand. Find out how the League is working for policies designed to conserve and protect these vital landscapes for future generations at www.iwla.org/agriculture.



The continuing loss of natural areas has grave implications for the conservation of our woods, waters and wildlife.

Protecting Threatened and Vanishing Natural Areas

BY JARED MOTT, Conservation Director

The Izaak Walton League is pushing for protection of wild and threatened lands in every corner of America, from the Great Plains and northern Minnesota to literally every state in the Union.

Progress for Protection of the Boundary Waters

In October, the Biden administration took an important step to protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from water pollution that would be caused by copper sulfide mining upstream.

This wild, pristine region of the Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota is a top fishing destination for anglers

and is the most-visited wilderness area in the U.S. Saving the region from logging and mining has been a priority for the Izaak Walton League since the 1920s when the League fought to protect the area.

To prevent the mining pollution, the Bureau of Land Management, working with the U.S. Forest Service, initiated a 20-year withdrawal of mineral leases in the Rainy River watershed, which drains into the Boundary Waters.

Once given final approval, this withdrawal will prevent new mineral leases from being issued but does not affect existing leases.

Two existing leases are not subject to this announcement but

are currently being challenged by the League and our partners. The leases are owned by Twin Metals, and if developed, would place the state's first copper sulfide mine upstream of the Boundary Waters, where mining pollution will directly affect water quality, wildlife habitat, and a thriving recreation economy fueled by paddlers, anglers, Scouts and other groups that visit each year.

While the mineral withdrawal announcement does not directly affect these leases, it would prevent Twin Metals from securing additional leases needed to boost the proposed mine's viability. The proposed lease withdrawal period of 20

years is the maximum allowable under law to the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management.

To permanently withdraw mineral leases, Congress must enact H.R. 2794, the Boundary Waters Wilderness Protection and Pollution Prevention Act, which was introduced by Minnesota Representative Betty McCollum. This important legislation would prohibit any future copper-nickel mineral leasing in this watershed. Congress envisioned protection for this pristine wilderness when it included the Boundary Waters in the Wilderness Act of 1964 and in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act of 1978, which expanded the acreage.

The League strongly supports H.R. 2794 and encourages all members to contact their U.S. Representative and urge them to become a cosponsor. To take action, visit www.iwla.org/boundarywaters.

League Weighs in on 30x30 Plans

A study reported by *Smithsonian* magazine in 2019 found that between 2001 and 2017, more than 24 million acres of natural areas in the lower 48 states of the U.S. were lost, or converted, to development—chiefly urbanization along with energy, transportation and agricultural development. To visualize 24 million acres, imagine losing an expanse of land that is larger than the state of Indiana.

That rate of loss has grave implications for conservation

of our woods, waters and wildlife, for climate, and for outdoor recreation.

To tackle this challenge, the League has joined a host of sporting-conservation groups as part of the Hunt Fish 30x30 coalition in submitting formal recommendations to the Biden administration's "America the Beautiful" 30x30 initiative. That effort aims to conserve 30 percent of the nation's lands and waters by 2030.

Between 2001 and 2017, more than 24 million acres of natural areas were lost to development—an area larger than Indiana.

Key priorities of the coalition's recommendations include:

- Clearly defining "conservation" to support the active management and sustainable use of our nation's public trust fish and wildlife resources.
- Recognizing and including all efforts directly contributing to biodiversity conservation including those on lands subject to multiple uses.
- Collaborating closely with entities devoted to achieving measurable biodiversity conservation objectives, including state fish and wildlife management agencies, members of the sporting and conservation community,

the more than 500 federally recognized Native American tribes, and private landowners.

The success of the administration's goal of conserving 30 percent of America's land and waters by 2030 hinges on knowing where we started and being able to demonstrably track our progress.

The League's recommendations are common-sense considerations that will amplify the outstanding conservation practices being implemented on public and private lands and waters today. Those practices should grow to the scale needed to achieve our shared goals of combatting climate change with natural solutions, protecting wildlife and biodiversity and safeguarding clean air and water.

Push for Grasslands Protection

A coalition of leading conservation organizations, including the League, has drafted a plan to conserve essential grassland habitats for farmers and ranchers and supporting outdoor recreation.

Our coalition is proposing this idea to Congress and has generated substantial momentum. Bipartisan members in the House and Senate have agreed that a substantial need to accelerate grasslands conservation exists. We hope a bill will be introduced soon. For more on this topic, see "Soil Matters" on page 34.



Native Plants Combat Icy Sidewalks and Sterile Landscaping

JANETTE ROSENBAUM, Strategic Communications Manager

A self-professed “nature lover,” Rachel Hopp had noticed fewer birds, butterflies and lightning bugs in her Gaithersburg, Md., neighborhood. But it was an icy sidewalk that ultimately launched her into community-based conservation.

Hopp’s home stands at one end of a semicircle of houses that surround a common green space. When it rained, the tiny strip of lawn in front of each house dumped water onto the sidewalk. In the winter, that water turned into ice, creating dangerous conditions for walking.

Already, the community has noticed that the young native plants are solving previously intractable problems.

The community put down salt, but it didn’t clear the ice effectively, and local leaders knew the chloride was damaging to water quality. Hopp edged her yard with mulch, but the water went through it. She installed a dry well, but it overflowed.

“Is there anything I could do here that would make a difference?” she wondered.

Then she discovered native plants.

Idea Takes Root

Through lectures and workshops by a local botanist, Hopp learned that lawn grasses – which have shallow roots

Native asters were still blooming profusely in late October, providing important habitat for native bumblebees.

Native plants replace turf grass in front of a semicircle of homes, helping to prevent icy sidewalks in the winter.



plants are solving previously intractable problems. They're keeping water off the sidewalk and reducing the need for salt, while requiring less supplemental water than the turf they replaced.

Once they've settled in a little more, the plants won't need a new blanket of mulch every year. And, judging from the bees still busy in the asters and the birds calling to each other throughout the dedication ceremony, the new native gardens are a big hit with local wildlife too.

Buoyed by the success of the planting, the community has committed to preserve the Butterfly Commons for at least 10 years and to use at least 90 percent native plants in future landscaping projects.

As an environmental attorney, Hopp had faced big challenges in her career, including climate change and acid rain. But tackling a very local problem with a community-based solution provided a deeply satisfying win.

and aren't native – do very little to absorb stormwater and support wildlife. On the other hand, native grasses and wildflowers soak up rain and provide natural habitat and food for birds and butterflies.

The idea of the Butterfly Commons was born. Hopp mapped out a plan to transform not just her own yard, but the tiny lawn strips all the way around the shared green. Then she brought her idea to the leaders of her community association.

"When I heard about it, I knew we had to do this," said Bettina Thompson, the vice president of the community's board of directors.

Native grasses and wildflowers soak up rain and provide perfect habitat for birds and butterflies.

From there, the project moved fast. The community partnered with grant funders, native plant experts and landscaping contractors to fill 4,000 square feet with more than 3,000 native plants. And on a beautiful fall day barely a year later, the project leaders gathered with close to 50 guests to celebrate what they had accomplished.

Already, the community has noticed that the young native

PROBLEM:

Traditional turf grasses

- Don't absorb a lot of water
- Provide few wildlife benefits
- Require a lot of maintenance

SOLUTION:

Native plants

- Help to prevent runoff, ice
- Support birds, pollinators
- Need less maintenance once established

Capturing Carbon on America's Farms Is Part of the Climate Solution

DUANE HOVORKA, Agriculture Program Director

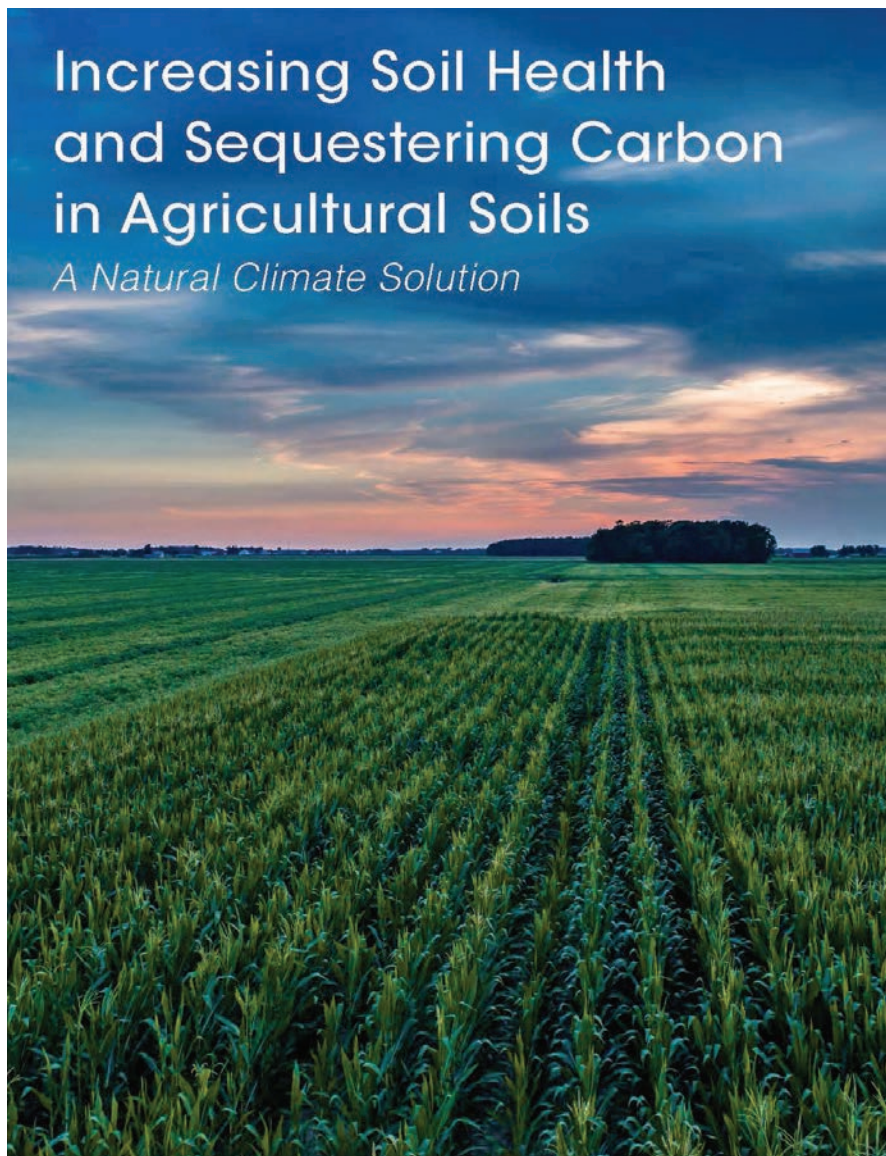
A comprehensive review of existing research on soil health and carbon sequestration from a University of Maryland scientist shows that increasing the use of common agricultural practices that improve soil health will slow climate change while producing other environmental and economic benefits.

In the report, “Increasing Soil Health and Sequestering Carbon in Agricultural Soils: A Natural Climate Solution,” Dr. Sara Via discusses how rebuilding our degraded agricultural soils and acting on climate change are related and urgent problems.

Via, a professor and climate extension specialist at the University of Maryland, writes, “the practices recommended in this report provide a low-cost and immediately available way to reduce atmospheric carbon. Given the wide array of co-benefits associated with these practices, increasing their use is an investment in U.S. agriculture that will pay economic and environmental dividends for years to come.”

Let's Get Started!

Despite decades of outreach by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a relatively small fraction of farmers use the management practices



recommended in the report. Via's report discusses how barriers to the adoption of these practices can be identified using principles from social science and suggests how these barriers can be lowered through policies that reduce the financial risk of changing management practices and

facilitate learning interactions among farmers.

The report was published in collaboration with the Izaak Walton League of America and the National Wildlife Federation.

This publication explains why restoring the health of America's soils is so vital, and it

highlights the huge opportunity we have to help farmers and ranchers become part of our solution to climate change.

Rebuilding our degraded agricultural soils and acting on climate change are related problems. Both require urgent action.

Now Is a Good Time

Dedicating funding in climate and infrastructure legislation to boost incentives and outreach for climate-friendly farm and ranch practices would be a down payment on that opportunity.

“The \$27 billion for climate-smart agriculture that the House and Senate Agriculture Committees have proposed as part of the Build Back Better Act would help ensure that funding is available to enable farmers and ranchers to adopt these critical soil health practices,” said Aviva Glaser, Senior Director of Agriculture Policy at the National Wildlife Federation.

Key Facts

Although Earth’s soil can store over twice the amount of carbon found in the atmosphere, agricultural soils worldwide have become severely degraded, losing a large fraction of their sequestered carbon and the ability to sustain productive crop growth in just the past 150 years.

Basic principles identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture can increase soil

health and carbon storage by protecting soil organisms from disturbance or erosion and providing them with a constant food supply from living plant roots. The report outlines 24 USDA-approved management practices that use these principles to rebuild degraded soils on farms and ranches, and it provides estimates of their CO₂ reduction potential in representative states based on USDA models.

The report highlights some of the other environmental benefits the practices deliver: reduced erosion, less polluted runoff, improved water quality, increased biodiversity and more productive wildlife habitat.

“The practices recommended in this report provide a low-cost and immediately available way to reduce atmospheric carbon.”

The estimated economic value of healthy soil to farmers is \$40 to \$140 per acre because healthy soil boosts production, saves farmers money on costly inputs like fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides, fuel, equipment, maintenance, and labor, and improves the resilience of farms to climate change.

Recommendations

Via recommends steps, summarized here, to help agency personnel and policymakers at federal, state and local levels to recognize not only the climate-related benefits of the

recommended practices but also their extensive environmental and economic co-benefits.

- Make soil health a central focus of USDA programs, and boost soil health and carbon sequestration efforts at all levels of government.
- Strengthen soil health education and outreach programs and expand our capacity to deliver accurate and up-to-date technical assistance on soil health and carbon sequestration practices.
- Expand existing incentive programs and develop and fund new ones to help farmers adopt these climate-friendly practices and increase equity and inclusion in delivering USDA conservation programs.
- Establish a National Soil Monitoring Network, fund regular soil testing by farmers to monitor changes in soil health, make USDA data more available to researchers, and increase funding for needed research.

Read the full report, “Increasing Soil Health and Sequestering Carbon in Agricultural Soils: A Natural Climate Solution” at www.iwla.org/soil_report.



Four Ways to Save Our Wetlands

JARED MOTT, Conservation Director

DUANE HOVORKA, Agriculture Program Director

JANETTE ROSENBAUM, Strategic Communications Manager

For nearly 100 years now, the Izaak Walton League has recognized wetlands' intrinsic value. The League's early efforts to protect these places centered around conservation of waterfowl habitat.

Now we better understand the broader range of benefits. Wetlands help to filter out pollutants, which protects our supply of drinking water. They absorb stormwater and reduce flood damage.

In the face of climate change, extreme weather and continued loss of wildlife habitat, wetland conservation stands out as a vital priority.

Wetlands were once considered places that needed to be drained and dried out to transform the land into "productive use" for agriculture or development. That perspective persists in some quarters, which is why we need to keep fighting to conserve wetlands.

Four common-sense steps can help our wetlands so they can continue to help us.

- Support laws that protect nature's water filters
- Tell Congress to encourage wetland conservation on farms
- Make sure wetland laws are enforced

- Help states implement wildlife action plans to restore habitat, especially wetlands.

1 Support laws that protect nature's water filters

Think of wetlands as essential infrastructure for protecting drinking water and our health. They filter and purify water before it ever gets to our built infrastructure.

Wetlands slow water flow, allowing sediment and other particulates to settle out. They trap pollutants such as phosphorus and heavy



metals in their soils. They transform dissolved nitrogen into nitrogen gas and break down suspended solids to neutralize harmful bacteria.

Since the 1970s, the United States had formally recognized this role for wetlands by including them among the waters protected by the Clean Water Act. But in April 2020, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adopted a rule that changed the definition of which waters are covered by the Act.

According to that new rule, wetlands that don't have a "continuous surface connection" to a larger water feature like a river or ocean are not "waters of

the United States," and therefore they're no longer covered in the Clean Water Act.

But these "unconnected" wetlands, it turns out, count for about half the wetlands in America. And they definitely are connected to nature's mechanisms for filtering and cleaning water.

This question of whether a wetland is counted as a "water of the United States" is vital. Wetlands that have no protection under the Clean Water Act can be dredged or filled without a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers—and probably without a permit from a state-level authority. That's because some states don't protect wetlands, so without federal protections the wetlands are left vulnerable. Some states have even barred themselves from adopting clean water protections that are broader or stronger than federal regulations.

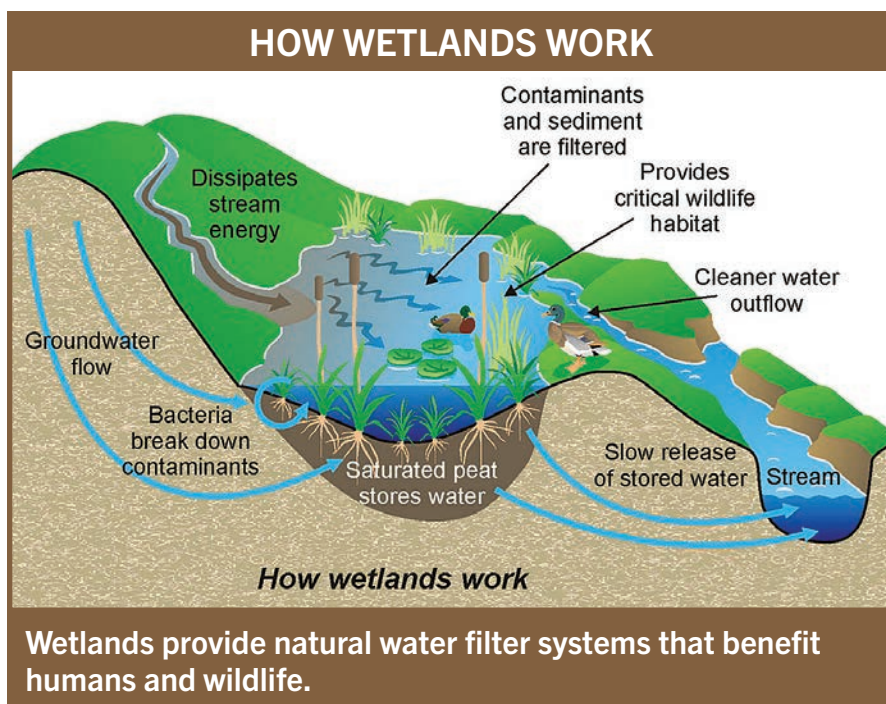
The Izaak Walton League vigorously opposed the 2020 rule from its inception and provided

formal testimony in favor of restoring the previous protections for wetlands. Fortunately, that rule was struck down by a federal court in Arizona for exactly the reason we highlighted: failure to protect half of the nation's wetlands has cascading effects on water quality downstream.

While this court ruling is a step in the right direction, the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers are currently working on a new definition of "waters of the United States."

Only a rule that fully protects wetlands and all tributary streams will be acceptable.

Take action: When the new rule is proposed, it will be imperative for League members to **participate in the rulemaking process** by submitting comments. Subscribe to the League's monthly newsletter, "Conservation Currents," and action alerts to stay up to date on this and other pressing topics.



2 Tell Congress to encourage wetland conservation on farms

In discussions about natural systems that combat climate change, forests get most of the attention. But wetlands, it turns out, are the true workhorses when it comes to storing carbon and keeping it out of the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide, are potent drivers of the climate crisis.

In forests, bacteria and fungi break down the leaf litter and other dead plant matter, releasing most of the carbon from that organic material back into the atmosphere. But the soggy soils of wetlands contain a whopping 15 to 30 percent organic matter.

Altogether, wetlands store 20 to 30 percent of all the soil carbon in the world, even though they cover just five to eight percent of Earth's land surface. As it happens, a lot of wetlands are on farms, which means that to conserve wetlands, farmers need incentives to restore and protect them. **The Agriculture Resilience Act** would do exactly that.

Introduced by one of the few farmers in Congress, Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine), the Act would provide additional funding to existing programs for restoring wetlands and purchasing conservation easements on farmlands. The additional funding proposed in the bill could **protect 800,000 or more acres of wetlands over the next decade.**

That adds up to a lot of carbon we could keep out of the atmosphere.

Take action: Contact your members in the Senate and House and ask them to **support the Agriculture Resilience Act.** Visit www.iwla.org/ara.

3 Make sure wetland laws are enforced

It is also important to ensure that farmers aren't being rewarded for destroying wetlands.

Provisions added to the Farm Bill decades ago were designed to prevent situations in which farmers drain and destroy wetlands but continue to benefit from taxpayer-funded programs — like federal crop insurance, conservation program incentives and subsidized farm loans. That wetlands compliance program is nicknamed “Swampbuster.”

To ensure farmers comply with Swampbuster, farmers and USDA both need to know which wetlands are protected by the provision, and USDA needs to ensure farmers follow the rules.

One method USDA uses to identify those wetlands is aerial photography. The problem is the aerial photographs used are taken during the hottest and driest time of the year. That results in many wetlands left unprotected in places like the prairie pothole region of the upper Midwest, where wetlands speckle the landscape in spring before drying up in the summer.

Alternatives to summertime aerial photography are readily available—including satellite imagery. But in many states, USDA has refused to use them. The agency conducts spot-checks on very few farms. USDA

employees are often expected to ignore violations they see, and when there are clear violations, the offenders are almost never punished by losing benefits.

Take action: Demand that USDA use better alternative methods and enforce the law to ensure that wetlands get the protections they are already supposed to have.

4 Help states implement wildlife action plans to restore habitat, especially wetlands

Wetlands exceed all other land-based habitat types for wildlife productivity.

Many iconic species of American wildlife are inextricably linked to their wetland habitats. It's hard to think about ducks without prairie potholes, moose without willow bogs or big red drum without coastal marshes. In other words, if we lose wetlands, the future is bleak for all the plants and animals that depend on them. More than 150 species of birds and 200 species of fish, plus many kinds of mammals, amphibians and reptiles, depend on wetlands.

Habitat loss is almost always the key culprit when a species is listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. More than one third of all fish and wildlife species found in the U.S. today are at risk of becoming endangered if actions are not taken to protect their habitats.

That's the bad news about wildlife in America. The good



Wetland in Washington State.

news is that state fish and wildlife agencies have identified the species most in need of urgent action, and they've created restoration plans to help those plants and animals thrive again. Every state has these wildlife action plans – and most of these plans call for restoring habitat, especially wetlands.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act, currently pending action in Congress, would **fund state wildlife action plans in a way that would direct more resources to restoration and conservation** than ever before—about \$1.3 billion a year.

With resources like that, states could restore and protect habitats for all the species they have identified as being at the greatest risk of becoming threatened or endangered. Because so many at-risk plants and animals call

wetlands home, conserving wetlands would be high on the priority list for many states.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act joins the restoration of Clean Water Act protections, the Agriculture Resilience Act and the switch to more accurate methods of identifying wetlands as common-sense ways to conserve these treasured natural resources.

Take action: Ask your lawmakers to **support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act**. Visit www.iwla.org/rawa.

Stay Current, Take Action on Conservation Topics

A subscription to our monthly newsletter, *Conservation Currents*, will keep you up to date with the latest on news, advocacy and interesting stories.

Sign up at
www.iwla.org/subscribe.

Visit the Izaak Walton League's Take Action page (www.iwla.org/alert) to communicate concerns to lawmakers.

Or visit www.senate.gov to contact senators and www.house.gov to contact your representative.

Your Endowment in Action

Chapter Goes Extra Mile to Host a Major Event for Pandemic-Weary Scouts

The Winchester Chapter worked with local Scout groups and law enforcement agencies to host 200 camporee participants in September.



In 2020, the Izaak Walton League Endowment provided a grant to the Winchester Chapter in Virginia to host a Scout camporee for the units in the region. But due to COVID concerns, the event was bumped from 2020 to September of 2021.

Some 200 Scouts and leaders turned out September 10-12 for a COVID-careful event at the chapter's facilities. Attending were Scout troops from the Shenandoah Area Council of the Boy Scouts, which covers nine counties stretching from the eastern panhandle of West Virginia down into Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.

"It was great to see our youth outdoors this weekend, learning and developing leadership skills," said Robert L. Garrett, Scout

Executive and CEO of the Shenandoah Area Council. "The youth have been locked down for nearly 18 months and desperately need interpersonal interactions in a safe and fun atmosphere."

The theme of the Camporee was Law Enforcement in Action and included participation from local and state agencies. That theme was combined with a conservation focus, which is central to the missions of both the Scouts and the Izaak Walton League.

The conservation and crime elements came together in a whodun-it crime scene investigation exercise involving a forest fire in the chapter's pine forest. The Scouts had to follow the clues to determine whether the cause of the fire was a careless

campfire or arson. The event was run by retired forester Gerald Crowell, who guided the scouts through the crime scene while also reinforcing a key element of the Outdoor Code, being careful with fire.

Camporee activities during the weekend also featured a fishing tournament, patrol challenges and meet-and-greet with multiple law enforcement agencies. The agencies found an excited audience as the Scouts hiked the newly constructed chapter trails to meet the different teams. Frederick County introduced several of their teams to the Scouts including their search and rescue, K9 and dive units.

The Virginia State Police as well as the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources also

provided teams that described their roles and functions. A medical helicopter landed at the event, and the Scouts were able to meet the crew and see the helicopter up close.

The fishing tournament netted 31 fish with the 11-year-old winner catching a five-pound, seven-ounce catfish. The all-day tournament was staffed by chapter volunteers who presented seminars on the finer points of catfish and bass fishing.

Chapter Devotes Hundreds of Hours to Ensure Success

“This event is the culmination of enormous volunteer efforts from the Chapter Conservation Committee,” said Brian Callahan, who chairs that committee. “Members clocked several hundred hours creating new campsites, redesigning the event for social distancing and cutting new trails. We cannot thank Frederick County law enforcement enough for helping us with this event.”

Callahan added that the chapter would never have been able to hold the camporee without the grant from the **Izaak Walton League of America Endowment**.

“The planning required to hold this event in the COVID reality forced us to completely redesign our registration and admission strategy because of the new protocols. Every participant needed to

have their temperature validated before they were allowed into the camping areas, complicating the flow of vehicles and equipment. We also had to collect and verify COVID symptom forms for every participant before they were allowed to exit the vehicle. We needed to purchase items atypical for an outdoor event.” He said the event also extended into October because several Scout units requested later camping access to reduce exposures, as a safety precaution.

“Scouting and the League are natural partners in a broad-based approach to conservation. A big payoff for the League is goodwill in the community and a way to reach youth.”

Traditionally, Scout troops aim to camp monthly, but COVID reduced those outings, and the camporee was the first group event held by the Scouts’ Shawnee District since the lockdown.

“We made sure that every participant left with a small gift bag that included fishing hooks, bobbers and tackle box stickers through a program with Eagle Claw.” Prizes and materials at the event encouraged youth to get back outdoors, and to focus specifically on eradicating invasive plants, a top environmental priority.

Callahan said the benefit for the Izaak Walton League nationally is “providing a quality outdoor experience that encourages youth to get back into nature after a long lockdown.” The chapter benefited by having their campground booked solid for months and increased interest in the chapter. “We also currently have five Eagle Scout projects happening in the chapter.”

Long-time chapter member Vernon Guidry noted that, “Scouting and the League are natural partners in a broad-based approach to conservation. A big payoff for the League is goodwill in the community and a way to reach youth who might later become members. The chapter didn’t merely host the camporee,

it partnered with local scouting in producing a rich, safe, successful outdoor experience under greatly demanding circumstances.”

“It helped that Brian Callahan and his team volunteer at both the Winchester Chapter and at local Scouting units.”



Conservation, safety and law enforcement agencies demonstrated skills and technology.

Iconic Ikes Sigurd Olson

Sigurd Olson's Tireless Conservation Work Left a Formidable Legacy across the Nation

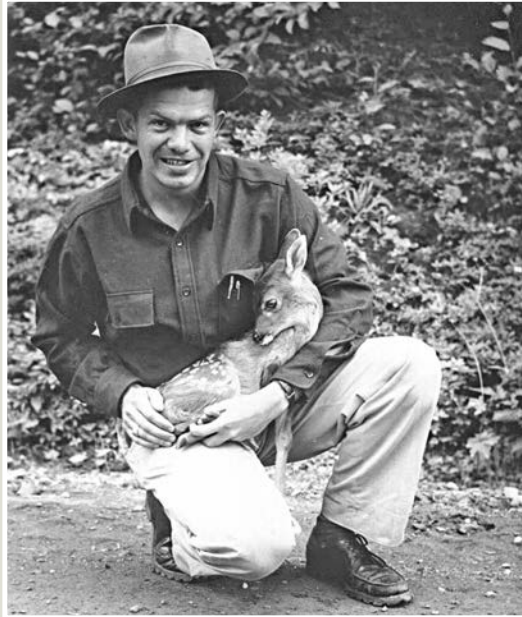
Like the Izaak Walton League, Sigurd Ferdinand Olson was born in Chicago. But Olson was born in 1899, and the League's creation was still two decades away. During those intervening years, "Sig" Olson grew up in northern Wisconsin, exploring the outdoors and developing a life-long love of nature.

In June 1921, Olson's first canoe trip brought him to the lakes and rivers of northern Minnesota. In August he returned with his wife for their honeymoon. By 1923, he had moved to the region. He became a guide—and met some of the first Ikes.

League founder Will Dilg and a group of early members had come to see the wilderness. Olson showed them how fast it was already disappearing, the forests falling to unsustainable logging. Dilg vowed the League would take action.

It was the beginning of a decades-long partnership. Olson became the League's wilderness ecologist. He also wrote frequently for *Outdoor America*, carrying on the magazine's tradition of quality that Emerson Hough had set the bar for in the first issue. While working for the League, Olson also published 10 books and won the John Burroughs Medal, the highest honor in nature writing.

In collaboration with other iconic Ikes like Joe Penfold, Olson was a key champion for the Wilderness Act. That 1964 law, a landmark conservation achievement, now protects more than 800 wilderness areas covering 111 million acres.



Olson also helped achieve the original protection in 1960 of what would be called the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (see *Outdoor America* 2021 Issue 1), creation of California's Point Reyes National Seashore in 1962 and the establishment of Minnesota's Voyageurs National Park in 1975.

And all along, there was that Minnesota canoe country. By the late 1930s, the region Olson had fallen in love with had gained some protections, but the League knew stronger conservation

measures were needed. In January 1950, Olson reported in *Outdoor America* that President Truman had signed a first-of-its-kind executive order banning flights in and out of the protected zone. The area was finally designated as wilderness—the highest form of land protection—in 1964. In 1978, Congress expanded the protected acreage. Today, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area is the most-visited wilderness area in the United States.

Olson stayed involved with the League for the rest of his life. He died of a heart attack while snowshoeing on January 13, 1982—one day before the League's 60th anniversary.

By Janette Rosenbaum,
Strategic Communications Manager

Look for more profiles of iconic Ikes throughout 2022 in *Outdoor America* and on our website, www.iwla.org.

LAST LOOK

“Joys come from simple and natural things:
mists over meadows, sunlight on leaves,
the path of the moon over water.”

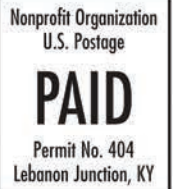
— Sigurd F. Olson





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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