



# OUTDOOR AMERICA™

PUBLISHED BY THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

2023 ISSUE 2

## **Joining Art and Conservation: Indiana Waterways Project**

### **ALSO INSIDE:**

Fertile Ground for Inclusivity:  
Differently Abled Farmers

Convention Preview:  
Conservation at a Crossroad  
Lincoln, Neb. July 27-29

Bio-Controls: Seeking  
Natural Solutions to  
Invasive Species





# CONSERVATION CURRENTS

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# OUTDOOR AMERICA™

PUBLISHED BY THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

VOL. 88 NO. 2

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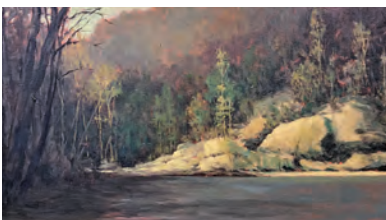
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#### ABOUT THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA ▶

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



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## A Challenge, and a Thank You

VICKI ARNOLD | NATIONAL PRESIDENT

F

ellow Ikes,

Since our last convention, the League has begun to implement our action plan as outlined in the Vision for a Second Century of Conservation.

Let's start with **Common Sense Conservation**. Throughout the Midwest, we have co-hosted a number of Ag Conservation Summits with like-minded organizations. These meetings are designed to discuss common priorities within the Farm Bill, help us understand how its conservation programs are important to our areas and how to convince key decision makers to improve farm policies. League members and community leaders alike are participating in these important discussions.

We are also building on our **Community Based Conservation** by introducing the newest clean water monitoring program, Nitrate Watch. Through a series of webinars, the League has begun to mobilize community advocates to monitor and track excess nitrates or nitrate pollution. Results of these tests will be added to the Clean Water Hub to help provide better data about water quality in monitored areas.

To be a strong force in **Conservation Advocacy**, members across the entire

League are working at the local, state and national levels to ensure that we bequeath the nation's woods, waters and wildlife to future generations, healthy and intact. Many of the bedrock laws we helped to create, like the Clean Water Act, require continuous defense.

We can do this. We have the history that shows we are a strong organization. The Vision for the Second Century plan reminds us how to remain a force of conservation leadership. The examples I cited are just a few of the many ways we are proving that.

Before I finish, I would be remiss if I did not remind you the 2023 national convention is July 27 to 29 in Lincoln, Nebraska. This is your opportunity to engage with the League in a new role—most simply as an attendee. Every member can attend the convention, or join a resource committee, become a national director or run for a national officer position. You're a valuable member of the organization and your participation is important to the continued success of the League. Complete details about this convention are included in this issue of *Outdoor America* and on the League website.

Over the last two years as your national president, I have tried to



conclude every article, presentation or meeting by thanking each of you for everything you do—for your chapter, division and the League.

This will be the last article I write as national president; my term will end in Lincoln at the convention. So I want to take a moment now to thank you for the opportunity to participate in the League with this role.

And I want to challenge each of you: When that new opportunity is in front of you please participate. Any action taken to support our mission is a step in the right direction.

I have enjoyed getting to know more of our members and working with so many of you to advance the mission and vision of the League.

Thank you again for all that you do for the League.

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# OUTDOOR AMERICA

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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.*

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



## Every Ike Can Advocate for a Clean Water, Public Health and Climate Bill

SCOTT KOVAROVICS | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**T**his year, League members will hear a lot about something called the “Farm Bill.” I want to highlight why this issue matters to all of us and how every Ike can advocate for the change we need.

The term “Farm Bill” is a misnomer. This critically important legislation is actually a clean water, public health and climate bill—and it represents the largest investment in private land conservation in America. It affects all of us—the food we eat, the water we drink and how successful we might be when hunting for ducks or deer.

Our farmers feed the country and are the most productive in the world. At the same time, agriculture is—and has been for many years—the single largest source of runoff polluting our drinking water, streams and lakes. Vital and diminishing wetlands and grasslands especially are being drained or plowed under at unsustainable rates.

### The problem with the status quo

Moreover, conventional farming accelerates erosion of precious topsoil and depletes natural soil nutrients, resulting in a vicious

cycle where more chemical fertilizer, manure and pesticides are applied to fields just to keep yields up.

**In the weeks and months ahead, please make your voices heard to help ensure the next “Farm Bill” is truly a clean water, public health and climate bill.**

And as author David Montgomery explained at our 2022 national convention, evidence is mounting that declining soil health results in less nutritious food in the grocery store. It exacerbates diseases, including heart disease and Alzheimer's, that harm millions of Americans annually.

### A rare opportunity in 2023

In 2023, League members have a rare opportunity to help change what happens on the ground by advocating for a better Farm Bill. There is a direct line of causation between policies and funding in



this legislation and what happens on hundreds of millions of acres of land nationwide.

Fact is, much of the investment in conservation on farms over the past 50 years would not have occurred but for taxpayers, and there are positive results. However, the scale, scope and accelerating nature of the problems demand we invest taxpayer dollars more effectively and evolve programs to deliver more concrete conservation benefits.

As the League evaluates why agriculture conservation programs have not delivered the outcomes Americans deserve, we return to the same conclusion over and over: programs have not—and still do not—prioritize or even include improving soil health.

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That's the weak link.

The League will press Congress to pass a better Farm Bill this year. Better means:

- Putting soil health at the center of America's agriculture policy;
- Increasing long-term investment in the conservation programs that have a proven record of success; and
- Focusing conservation dollars on programs that leverage non-federal funds, like the League's proposed State & Tribal Soil Health Grant Program.

These are common-sense proposals. But Congress is slow to change especially when

representatives and senators don't hear from their constituents. They need to hear from every League member, leader and volunteer—hear from all of you in a two-minute phone call, a few emails and even with an in-person meeting in their local offices.

The League is providing a host of resources to make advocacy as easy as possible. Visit [iwla.org/soils-agriculture](http://iwla.org/soils-agriculture) to learn more and get started.

In the weeks and months ahead, please make your voices heard to help ensure the next "Farm Bill" is truly a clean water, public health and climate bill.

Investments in conservation over the past half century, paid with tax dollars, have helped to improve farming practices. But today's problems are serious and are accelerating.

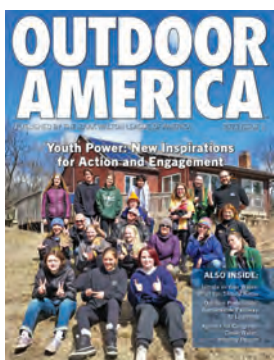
**⚠ Nitrates from agricultural runoff into our drinking water are putting Americans at elevated risk for cancer.**

**🌿 Natural grasslands and wetlands—two of the most effective carbon sinks on the planet—are being plowed under or drained at unsustainable rates.**

**🧐 Science is starting to point to connections between declining soil health and chronic human illness, even when we think we're eating healthy foods!**

# LETTERS

## Those young faces tell a big story.



**I** was so pleased to see the picture on the cover of the *Outdoor America*. Those young faces tell a big story.

We members beyond the age of let's say 65 have done a lot of hard work in awakening the populace to the perils to our natural resources and then

working for many years on solutions.

But the future will be in the hands of these young people. This Green Crew from my state of Minnesota must come up with solutions to climate change and habitat loss and implement them locally and share with the whole country.

This *Outdoor America* was filled with great stories. As some of us in different life stages act on our Ike

work in changing ways, I was also thinking about past leaders who inspired me over the years.

Dawn Olson from Oregon, Stan Adams as the perfect president, Paul Hansen was the visionary leader for many years. Charlie and Leila Wiles defined the best of volunteerism, and Minnesota's own Dave Zentner keeps on both fighting the battles while enjoying the best of the outdoors.

To all the staff and the members – keep up the great work into the Next Century.

*Char Brooker, past chair, Executive Board  
Member of the Jaques and Wapashaw Chapters  
Maplewood, Minn.*

### Letters to the editor

Letters can be mailed to the editor at: 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878 or emailed to [mreinemer@iwla.org](mailto:mreinemer@iwla.org). Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



# Your Endowment in Action

## Family Nature Night Expands Its Outreach and Popularity

By ANNETTE HANSEN, Executive Director, Porter County Chapter

The Porter County Chapter of northwest Indiana has been privileged to receive a few Izaak Walton League of America Endowment grants over the years. But it is our Endowment-funded Family Nature Night program that really has had the most outreach impact on youth.

The Family Nature Night program was founded in 2013 by Chapter members Bonnie and Susan Swarner. Both educators, they had a vision of visiting local elementary schools with community conservation partners to teach young families about ecological issues. In a year, they had grown from one school to three. The team was awarded a Lake Michigan Coastal Grant for the 2016-17 school year and the program blossomed to serving eight schools with up to 16 partners.

In 2018, the League's Endowment dollars helped to grow the Family Nature Night program again to include another four schools. With help from this grant, the Porter County Chapter has been able to maintain serving 12 schools per year. This spring, we will already have completed eight events. We are finding that schools are eager to get back to these events since they'd lost a couple seasons to the pandemic. There is a newly added event



Jim Louderman introduces a tortoise to students and shares an impressive array of insects from Chicago's Field Museum.

specifically for homeschoolers now too.

At these events, students and their families experience 10 to 20 interactive stations, each with an education theme related to the environment. Partners such as Chicago's Field Museum, Humane Indiana

Wildlife Rehab Center, Porter County Parks, Westchester History Museum and Trackers 4-H Club frequently participate. Others such as Purdue's Gabis Arboretum, master gardeners, watershed stewards, master naturalists, Save the Dunes, the Westchester Bird Sanctuary



and Shirley Heinze Land Trust rotate in when they can.

All present on the conservation topics they are working on, such as wildlife rescues, pollinator habitat restoration, releasing mudpuppies caught fishing, identifying invasive species or the pollution hazards of water runoff. The Porter County Chapter also has a chance to share our work in citizen science and welcomes visitors to get involved in bat, bluebird and butterfly monitoring.

To set up events, the Chapter contacts school principals at the start of the school year. Susan Swarner works with administrators to set a date, create a map of displayers inside

the school and get tables and equipment organized on the night of the event. A school's gym or library is typically used as open space for presenters. The events run from 6:00 to 7:30 pm.

The Endowment grant paid for consumable materials that are used during events as well as stipends for some of the larger displayers. Stipends help to keep popular partners who travel long distances, like the Field Museum, coming back every time.

The Chapter is celebrating its ninth year hosting this important programming in northwest Indiana, and we are ever-thankful to the Izaak Walton League of America Endowment grant that helped Family Nature Nights to

grow to be more inclusive.

Any Ike's chapter can do this, and Porter County Chapter is happy to help. Feel free to contact Annette Hansen at [executivedirector@iwlapcc@gmail.com](mailto:executivedirector@iwlapcc@gmail.com) to get ideas on first steps.

## Applying for a Grant

The Izaak Walton League of America Endowment offers grants up to several thousand dollars for chapters to advance local programs to conserve natural resources. Grant applications are due by May 1 and funds are awarded at the national convention in July. If your chapter has a project that needs additional funding, visit [iwla-endowment.org](http://iwla-endowment.org).

### Correction

In "Your Endowment in Action" in Issue 1, 2023, we should point out that the "We Are Water" component of the display was developed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Minnesota Department of Agriculture. The Will Dilg Chapter hosted a water monitoring and Save Our Streams display. The man in the photo is Val Codry.

## IN MEMORIAM — William (Bill) West



Long-time member Bill West, who served as National President of the Izaak Walton League from 1997 to 1999, passed

away on April 3 at his home in Florida. Quick with a smile and a "how are you?" for everyone he met, he brightened up a room.

Bill joined the League in 1978 and was active in the Calumet Region Chapter for decades, serving in many leadership roles in the Chapter and later in the Illinois Division. He stepped up to national positions in 1987. He served as secretary in 1993,

vice president in 1995 and national president beginning in 1997. He also served as co-chair of the national awards committee for seven years and was national treasurer from 2003 to 2007.

At the 2007 League convention at Big Sky, Montana, Bill was given the League's Hall of Fame Award, which recognizes members who have contributed long and devoted service. "Bill exemplifies the kind of volunteer leadership and commitment to conservation that the Izaak Walton League is all about," said Mike Williams, the League's national president at the time.

He was born April 28, 1940, in

Evergreen Park, Illinois to the late Wilbur and Magdelene (Reich) West. In 1962, he graduated from Bradley University, and he was an active member of many organizations throughout his life including the Knights of Columbus, Dolton Chamber of Commerce and the Air Force National Guard. He was an Allstate agent for 38 years before retiring.

The extended West family was also involved in numerous volunteer and leadership roles in the League. Bill is survived by his wife Carole, three children, four grandchildren and a great grandson.



# Fertile Ground for Inclusivity: Differently Abled Adults Discover Farming

By RION HALEY



Harvesting cherry tomatoes  
that will be sold locally.





**A**s you leave the two-lane highway to enter the graveled road that leads to the 12-acre Red Wiggler farm, an eastern towhee darts across your path and the wilderness opens on your left.

Then the large red barn comes into view.

To your right lies the heartbeat of the farm, the multipurpose building where the fresh vegetables are stacked and washed. On the second floor of the building, the six-person staff works in an open-plan office space that overlooks the cultivated USDA-certified organic vegetables, herbs and flowers that thrive in this corner of Montgomery County, Maryland.

Beyond the multipurpose building, the farm's executive director and founder Woody Woodroof maintains a solar-operated house.

Red Wiggler is an example of community-supported agriculture or CSA—a farm supported by people in the local community who buy prepaid shares in the farm's harvest and then receive a portion of that harvest throughout the growing season.

But Red Wiggler is much more.

## More than a Farm

Woodroof established Red Wiggler in 1996 to create meaningful and gainful employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who learn to grow and sell produce. The original farm was only three rented acres.

In 2003, Red Wiggler began working with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission to establish a public-private partnership on 300 acres of parkland that would create a farm four times larger than the original.

Today, the farm employs 15 adults with IDD who serve as “growers.” The term describes these adults as working farmers who are involved in every step of the crop growing and harvest. The farm also has full-time staff to help run the farm and hundreds of volunteers who provide their time and services to advance Red Wiggler's mission of helping people with IDD and others to come together to work, learn and grow healthy food.

Woodroof summarized the prodigious significance of the farm: “I'm proud of the people who work here and I'm proud to give them the opportunity to flourish. It's amazing to see how the growers change over time, have an impact on their community and work toward a common goal.”



## Sustainable, Local, Inclusive

Red Wiggler is devoted to environmental stewardship. It practices sustainable farming by paying careful attention to watershed and habitat protection. It also conserves resources through solar panels and driplines, reduces its carbon footprint by selling locally, actively preserves open farmland and builds food security for its community.

Fifty percent of the farm's total harvest is distributed to local food banks and the other 50 percent is sold through the 120-member CSA program. Red Wiggler is the longest continuously running CSA in Montgomery County, which sits just north and west of Washington, DC.

The farm is also committed to education and inclusion, providing youth and adults with the literal

tools and the experience of growing the food that ends up on their dinner plates.

The growers gain a professional identity as farmers. They engage with the community in growing and distributing organic food. In addition, the people with IDD who work at Red Wiggler enrich their lives by developing skills that assist them in building a life far beyond the group homes where they live.

David Ruch has been with Red Wiggler for more than 15 years. He began as a grower, starting seeds in containers, transferring them to the ground and eventually harvesting them. He now leads teams of growers and

volunteers. He is also passionate about flowers and creates beautiful bouquets. And last year, Ruch began operating the farm's tractor, a job he had long looked forward to.

Ruch encapsulates his time at the farm: "People at Red Wiggler have the same kind of disability I have and I feel safe here."

Steve Lashmit, who began as an intern and now is employed by the farm, seeds, weeds, transplants and thins the crop. He also harvests, sorts, weighs and mulches. Lashmit loves studying insects and knows many of their names and roles in the ecosystem—a knowledge he loves to share.

That leads to another benefit. The farm encourages the growers to interact with people on topics related to their work, which includes leading school groups on tours and explaining best practices to children. These growers speak at conferences, educate the public—and develop lifelong friendships.

Samantha Sheehan has also been with the farm for more than 15 years. She too was hired as a grower, but now she helps new staff learn about the property. She has a broad knowledge of agricultural practices, including irrigation and cover crops. In 2019, Sheehan was part of a team that presented Red Wiggler's farming methods at a conference on farm-based education.

All these opportunities provided by Red Wiggler help the growers overcome traditional barriers to skilled employment. According to the U.S.

**These growers speak at conferences, educate the public—and develop lifelong friendships.**



**Samantha Sheehan harvests garlic at Red Wiggler farm, an example of community-supported agriculture.**



David Ruch and other employees operate a thriving farm in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Department of Labor, people with disabilities are unemployed at twice the rate of the general U.S. population. And for some disability categories, the unemployment rate is much higher.

In short, the farm not only empowers the growers to live their best lives, it also provides an opportunity for them to supply fresh produce to the community, practice environmental stewardship and participate in the local economy.

### Care Farming as Therapy

Care farming is a therapeutic practice used with people with IDD as well as other marginalized populations (for example, veterans and seniors). This approach provides dependable, nature-related education and employment opportunities.

**Red Wiggler farm was created to provide gainful employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who learn to grow and sell produce.**

Red Wiggler established the Care Farming Network (CFN) in the U.S. CFN facilitates the networking of care farms like Red Wiggler across the nation to broaden opportunities for people with IDD to experience nature, meaningful work and interaction with the larger community.

CFN shares information and collaborates with care farms on solutions to a wide range of challenges. There are currently 175 member farms nationwide in the ever-expanding CFN,

and they all use the Care Farm Directory website that Red Wiggler developed to provide information about best practices and help troubleshoot concerns.

In 2018, in partnership with Future Harvest: A Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, Red Wiggler hosted the first-ever Mid-Atlantic Care



## CSAs in Your State

USDA built a local food directory platform at [usdalocalfoodportal.com](https://usdalocalfoodportal.com) where you can search for a CSA, farmers market, agritourism and related programs in your state. The mission of the portal is, "...facilitating the fair and efficient marketing of U.S. agricultural products." In a nutshell, the site connects consumers to their local producers.



Growers and volunteers display the sweet potato harvest. Some of the food grown here is donated to local food banks.

Farming Summit, which brought nearly 100 people together from seven states and Italy. Topics ranged from establishing farms to balancing mission with production and community involvement. In a post-Summit survey, all the participants said that they would attend an annual conference and would share their best practices and resources. And in 2022, Red Wiggler expanded outreach beyond the Mid-Atlantic region by launching the CFN web presence nationwide. It currently hosts free monthly membership gatherings that facilitate conversation and offer support to care farms and the people working on these farms.

This year, CFN is starting a mentorship match in the northeastern U.S. that will help beginners find established care farmers willing to guide them.

---

*Master Gardener Rion Haley's passion for all things natural takes her every day into the woods and finds her planting everything from figs to sugar snap peas in her yard. She is the former managing editor of Outdoor America and wishes the League another 100 years of prosperity.*

## How To Create And Enjoy A Care Garden:

1. **Contact CFN at:** [carefarmingnetwork.org](https://carefarmingnetwork.org) to discover if gardening programs already exist in your area.
2. **Contact the local chapter of Master Gardeners at** [ahsgardening.org](https://ahsgardening.org) to ask if they can help establish the garden.
3. **Reach out to the community for free tools, equipment and fencing for these projects.**
4. **Work with people with IDD (typically they have a job coach with them) to plant, maintain and harvest.**
5. **Enjoy your bounty with chapter members or host a community potluck.**





## Opportunities for League Chapters

If you'd like to do more to support people with IDD and help nourish your community, your chapter can help establish gardens that feed people locally and generate opportunities for people who might never have a growing and harvesting experience otherwise.

By starting a garden, Ikes can continue to engage their communities in a new way or work with a care farm to advance its mission.

CFN is always interested in pairing aspiring care farmers with underutilized land and is hoping to provide mini-grants to help out care farms in the future. Either way, chapters can attract new people to the League and enhance activities for current members interested in small-scale farming.

Master Gardeners are people who engage in intensive horticultural training and then volunteer in their communities in every state in the nation. They may be available, free of charge, to help a chapter determine the best location for a garden, the soil necessary

to provide the best crop, the type of food or flowers best suited to the location, and the steps necessary to provide years of harvest.

League chapters can create a local blueprint for a garden of inclusion that may increase membership and community goodwill. Ikes can also share the concept of care farming with schoolchildren who come to tour while giving people with IDD the chance to enjoy the great outdoors.

All chapters have the potential to be involved in the commitment to bring nature to all sectors of the public.

Like the League, Red Wiggler develops a community spirit and improves the world—one person at a time. The farm continues to evolve and discover new ways of supporting marginalized members of the community, and Ikes can too.

We the people have the power to share the joy and bounty of nature with everyone in the community.





# **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, 2023.**

**Visit [www.iwla.org/awards](http://www.iwla.org/awards)**



## A New Generation is Learning How to Build Bird Boxes



Larry Hibbs demonstrates to Kayden Hillegas how bird boxes are built.



Floyd County Chapter members including Matt Ross (right) build and maintain nest boxes for wood ducks and bluebirds. Grandson Karsyn Hillegas watches.

**Iowa** ▶ Building nesting boxes for birds is a tradition at the **Floyd County Chapter** of the Izaak Walton League in Charles City, Iowa.

Keeping that tradition going means teaching youth how it's done. To that end, the Chapter invites kids to learn. In March, Karsyn and Kayden Hillegas observed the process and helped the adult Chapter members build more than 40 nesting boxes. That included 20 boxes for wood ducks and 22 designed for bluebirds.

Kayden, age 10, says, "I really enjoy helping do this year after year, and it's so neat to see how many we can make. Everyone is very nice and let me help with anything I want."

Young brother Karsyn, age 7, hits the nail on the head: "I really like building stuff with tools, and I get to help out lots of birds."

Once finished, the Chapter distributes the boxes to the public and the Floyd County Conservation Board for placement.

Chapter member Larry Hibbs says, "Floyd County Ikes easily

have 200-plus wood duck boxes out. The use rate has been 70 percent on the boxes we maintain annually. We also have many boxes with the Floyd County Conservation Agency. They also have a 70 percent use rate."

The Chapter recently worked with a local 4-H chapter to produce 30 bluebird nest boxes, and all of the youth were able to assemble a box from the kits created by the Ikes. The youth were also given background information about the bird as well as important information about placement and maintenance of the nest boxes.

Hibbs notes that the Ikes have 400-plus bluebird boxes in place in the county.

Chapter Treasurer Matt Ross provides use of his workshop for the project, and the boards for the boxes are cut from used utility poles.

The Floyd County project was featured in an article published in the *Charles City Press*—which included an invitation to join the Chapter.

## Why Nesting Boxes?

Female wood ducks like to build nests in snags (dead trees) and other tree cavities near wetlands and away from predators. Since that specific array of natural resources is not always available, "wood duck boxes provide a man-made alternative, where hens can nest in relative safety from predators," says Ducks Unlimited.

Bluebirds also prefer natural cavities for nests. But they have suffered from loss of habitat and competition over those cavities from introduced species from Europe, like the house sparrow. However, human-constructed nest boxes for bluebirds help sustain the population of this popular, beloved bird. The North American Bluebird Society has more information about how to help the species.

*By Michael Reinemer, Editor, Outdoor America*





# Bio-Controls: Seeking Natural Solutions to Invasive Species

By LISA BALLARD

Kudzu is sometimes called the vine that ate the South.





**N**on-native species of plants and wildlife are in every ecosystem, both on land and in the water. You've probably got a few in your back yard in the form of an ornamental shrub or flower, not to mention an aphid or two. According to the U.S. Forest Service, the United States harbors at least 5,000 different non-native species of plants alone.

While some of these foreign flora and fauna fit in just fine, others take over. They become invasive, crowding out native species and wreaking havoc on not only your garden, but the health of our waterways, forests, fields, highlands and everywhere in between.

The reason why these non-natives go rogue is because they have no natural population controls like they did in Asia, Europe or wherever they came from.

Controlling an invasive species is a challenge. If it's a plant, we might be able to weed it, at least until it covers too much acreage. For unwanted plants and insects, chemicals (herbicides or insecticides) might be another option.

But one effective way to get rid of a pest is to have a natural predator kill it. In fact, that is the definition of "biological control," or "bio-control" for short.

## Natural controls for pests

"Biological control is the use of living organisms to suppress pest populations, making them less damaging than they would otherwise be," said Kimberley Stoner, an entomologist with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in her paper, "Approaches to the Biological Control of Insect Pests," published by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. According to Stoner, biological control can be used against all types of pests, including vertebrates, plant pathogens, weeds and insects.

The use of bio-controls is not new. One of the earliest success stories dates back to the late 1800s when cottony cushion scale (*Icerya purchasi*) threatened California's citrus industry. This scale is an insect that feeds on plants and citrus trees in particular. Fruit growers imported the vedalia beetle which feeds on cottony cushion scale. Within a few years, the scale problem subsided.



Another example of the successful use of a bio-control is a wasp from China that was introduced in the United States to prevent the European corn borer from decimating corn crops. The wasp fed on the corn borer, and this stemmed the threat without the heavy use of pesticides.

There are three types of bio-controls: predators, parasitoids and pathogens.

## Predators

Insects, like beetles and wasps, are the most common forms of predators used as bio-controls, often to get rid of other insect pests. Vertebrates—birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish and mammals—might also feed on unwanted bugs. But not all of them serve as effective bio-controls. The problem is that invasive species may not be their top food choice or only food choice. What's more, these vertebrates probably don't exist in large enough numbers to have the needed impact.

But insects that naturally feed on an unwanted

interloper often do exist in large enough numbers. This can work when the insect has a narrow diet, a short lifecycle that's tied to the invasive species

and population density that ebbs and flows with the invasive's population. When the undesirable bug is gone, the bio-control often disappears, too.

## Parasitoids

A parasitoid is an insect that spends part of its lifecycle developing inside a different

“host insect,” killing the host. This is an ideal type of bio-control if the parasitoid requires a specialized host that is an invasive species. When the host species is gone, the bio-control dies off.

## Pathogens

Pathogens, such as bacteria, fungi, protozoa and viruses, can reduce the rate at which an invasive species feeds, grows and reproduces. Or they might simply kill the pest. The risk is that the pathogen

might infect native species as well. That said, pathogens can be an effective form of bio-control.

For example, the fungus *Entomophaga maimaiga* has proven an effective way to control the invasive gypsy moth in New England. The spores of the fungus rest on the forest floor over the winter, then germinate when gypsy moth caterpillars are present. The caterpillars crawl through the fungal spores, then carry them into the trees, where rainfall triggers the production of more spores. In June, the infected caterpillars die and fall to the forest floor, where the fungus remains, waiting to germinate again the next spring.

Once a bio-control is identified, then researchers determine how to introduce it. Some of the choices are 1) establish a permanent population or not; 2) import the species or breed it in the U.S., and 3) release the species all at once or intermittently.

**The key to successful use of bio-controls is understanding the full impact in an ecosystem to ensure that it's a solution that doesn't become a new problem.**



**Introduced to North America to control insects, European starlings became a problem for humans as well as native bird species.**



## A Report Card for Common Bio-Controls

### Russian Olive



**Origin:** Europe and Asia

**Use:** Landscaping tree, windbreak and erosion control in the early 1900s.

**Oops!** Russian olive has deep roots and can resprout from its root crown, making it tough to eradicate. It overwhelms native plants, particularly along riparian areas where it changes the hydrology of streambanks. It has spread to 17 western states in the U.S.

### European Starling



**Origin:** Europe

**Use:** Introduced to North America to control insects and serve as a pet.

**Oops!** Aggressive flocks, which can number in the thousands, harm crops and other bird species. They take over existing nests and fill up other nest spots to the detriment of native species, and they damage human structures.

### Sulphur Knapweed Moth

(Yellow-Winged Knapweed Root Moth)



**Origin:** Eurasia

**Use:** Used successfully to control spotted knapweed and diffuse knapweed since the 1980s. Adult females lay their eggs on the stems and leaves. When the larvae hatch a week later, they move to the roots, tunneling through the cortex and damaging the knapweed.

**Okay!** There's no evidence that the moth harms other plants related to knapweed, including species of economic importance such as safflower. The only downside is that it takes 10 years for the moths to establish enough to control their host patch of knapweed.

### Encarsia Moth



**Origin:** Europe

**Use:** This tiny parasitoid wasp is used to control whiteflies in greenhouses and nurseries. Whiteflies are difficult to eliminate using pesticides.

**Okay!** Since the 1920s, encarsia moths have been used successfully by greenhouses to save vegetables and flowers from whiteflies—and at relatively low densities, no more than two moths per plant.

### Knotweed Psyllid

(Knotweed Jumping Plant Lice)



**Origin:** Japan

**Use:** Approved for introduction in the United States in 2020, this small insect sucks the fluids from its host plant, which cripples or kills it. It is specific to knotweed, especially invasive Japanese and giant knotweeds, which form monocultures.

**Okay!** Release sites are currently being monitored in several states in the Northeast and Northwest. It has successfully reproduced at release sites, a positive for ongoing effectiveness.

### Mosquito Fish



**Origin:** Southern Illinois, Indiana and Mississippi rivers (not all invasive species are from foreign countries)

**Use:** Introduced in places with large populations of mosquitos to decrease the number of them. Mosquito fish eat mosquito larvae.

**Oops!** There's no evidence that adding mosquito fish controlled mosquito populations. This species breeds prolifically and kills other small fish and frogs.

### Asian Lady Bug



**Origin:** Asia

**Use:** Aphids threatened the pecan crop in the southeastern U.S. in the 1970s. The federal government released Asian lady bugs, which feed voraciously on the aphids, to save pecan trees. It worked.

**Oops!** Asian lady bugs spread up and down the East Coast, harming native lady bugs, which also feed on aphids. The nine-spotted lady bug, the official insect of New York State, is now extinct due to this bio-control getting out of control.

### Tamarisk Tree (Salt Cedar)



**Origin:** Mediterranean

**Use:** Introduced in the 1800s as an ornamental tree, it became a popular tree for stabilizing riverbanks due to its deep roots.

**Oops!** Over a million acres of the southwestern United States are now covered with tamarisk, which prevents native trees from getting needed water and alters riparian areas to the detriment of native wildlife.





**Captured by USGS staff on the Missouri River, invasive species like this grass carp outcompete and displace native fish.**

However, the problem with bio-controls is that they can become problems in their own right. It's a tricky balance since the control is often non-native, too.

## Regulating bio-controls

Since the vedalia beetle saved California's citrus trees over a century ago, biologists have sought bio-controls with varying degrees of success. We know more now than even a few decades ago.

Today, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture and a state agency approve a bio-control, a tremendous amount of research and testing has already been conducted to ensure it will work—without becoming a problem itself. Biologists must first identify the potential control species, then

understand how it will impact native species. If it passes that test, then the bio-control has to be quarantined to ensure it isn't carrying unwanted diseases or parasites. Finally, the bio-control must be released in a limited way, then studied to ensure it effectively does what it's supposed to do.

This process can take years. But if successful, the results can be dramatic and positive. One example is the parasitoids that were introduced from Europe to control the destructive alfalfa weevil, also from Europe, that had spread across the United States during the 1900s. One of the parasitoids attacked the weevil's larvae. Another struck the adult, and yet another targeted the weevil's eggs. Thanks to this combination of bio-controls, alfalfa remains a viable crop.

## Bio-controls that backfire

Unfortunately, bio-controls can backfire. Take invasive carp, which include bighead, black, grass and silver carp, all of which outcompete native fish in the Mississippi River system and have spread to other bodies of water in the country.

Native to Russia and China, these carp were first brought to the United States about 50 years ago to control aquatic plants in reservoirs and aquaculture farms in Arkansas and other locations near the Mississippi River. Other states soon stocked them, too. When flooding gave them unintended access into the Mississippi River system, they found their way into many of the nation's waterways, wreaking havoc as they ballooned in number.

Carp grow quickly and feed prolifically, outcompeting native fish for food. The longer carp are present, the more they alter the make-up of a waterway's food web by lowering its phytoplankton and invertebrate populations. They reduce the amount of sheltering flora used by native fish, reduce the populations of sportfish like bass and generally change the trophic structure of a lake or river.

According to the Illinois Department of Resources, which recently renamed Asian carp "Copi" (as in "copious"), 20 to 50 million pounds of Copi could be harvested from the Illinois River alone. As a result, that state is embarking on a PR campaign to encourage anglers to eat Copi, which have a mild taste and contain heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Underlying the "eat Copi" campaign is the hope that eating more of them will reduce their impact in the Great Lakes region and help restore aquatic systems downstream.

Another example of a bio-control that got out of control is the plant, kudzu, an edible, semi-woody vine with pleasant-smelling purple-red flowers. Initially imported into the U.S. in 1876 from Japan and China as an ornamental vine, it was used from the 1930s to the 1950s in the southeastern U.S. to reduce erosion. Now called "the vine that ate the South," kudzu has spread to the Midwest, Northeast and Oregon. It can grow up to a foot per day, creeping over and covering literally everything in its path.

Native plants deprived of sunlight under a carpet of kudzu often die. The insects that depend on

native plants also disappear. That, in turn, affects bird populations, which depend on insects to feed their young. Other native animals that can't adapt don't survive either. Over time, as native flora and fauna disappear, biodiversity steeply declines.

On the bright side, many bio-controls help to effectively control pests in our back yards, croplands and wildlands, often reducing the need for chemical controls. The key to successful use of bio-controls is understanding the full impact of a species in an ecosystem to ensure that it's a solution that doesn't become a new problem. When we get bio-controls right, the results can be long-lasting and inexpensive, with little or no ongoing human effort.

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*Lisa Ballard is an Ike from Red Lodge, Montana, and a long-time contributor to Outdoor America. An award-winning writer and photographer, she is dedicated to getting people of all ages outdoors. She's happy to catch a carp. Carpets of kudzu give her nightmares.*  
[www.LisaBallardOutdoors.com](http://www.LisaBallardOutdoors.com)

### How you can help control invasive species

- Use native plants in your landscaping. Exotic plants might escape and naturalize to the detriment of native species.
- Attract natural bio-controls (insects and birds) to your back yard by planting native flowers, keeping a birdbath filled with water and providing cover (shrubs and ground cover plants).
- Thoroughly clean, drain and dry all watercraft, as well as waders, fishing tackle and any other items you might use in more than one body of water.
- Do not release live bait or bait water into a waterway. Drain bait containers on land away from the shoreline and dispose of unused bait in a trash can.
- Avoid using pesticides and other chemicals around your home and yard—they can be harmful to both good and bad bugs, plants and other wildlife.





# CONSERVATION AT A CROSSROADS *Putting Solutions*

**Join Us at the 2023  
Izaak Walton League of America  
National Convention**

**July 27-29, 2023 in Lincoln, Nebraska**

Get details and register online at [iwla.org/convention2023](https://iwla.org/convention2023)

**Join** us as the Izaak Walton League marks our 101<sup>st</sup> year of conservation leadership in Lincoln, Nebraska. In a shift from previous years, our 2023 convention will be held **Thursday through Saturday, July 27-29.**



# CONSERVATION AT CROSSROADS *Conservation into Action*

Conservation in America is at a crossroads. As a nation, we have made real progress to reduce pollution, restore wildlife and protect special places. Yet, progress has slowed in many cases and serious challenges—especially climate change—threaten our environment, economy and way of life unlike anything League founders envisioned a century ago. Our conservation work is far from done.

The convention will explore a range of conservation challenges and the opportunities to address them by building on the League's enduring strengths—from community-based conservation and volunteer science to policy advocacy.

Everyone is invited. Whether you are a new member, a long-time convention attendee or an interested non-member, we have a place for you. Join fellow Ikes to elect new national leaders, vote on policy resolutions that guide League advocacy and have fun.

This is an opportunity to rub elbows with like-minded conservationists from across the nation. As you'll see in the following pages, we have scheduled great speakers, informative workshops, social events and a youth convention.

While you're there, enjoy the unique sights of Lincoln and the Cornhusker State. The Nebraska Division has been working behind the scenes to ensure this convention is memorable and fun.

See updates and details  
and register at:  
[iwla.org/convention2023](https://iwla.org/convention2023)



# TRAVEL AND LODGING

## Convention Site and Lodging

Our 2023 national convention will be in-person only. So to hear speakers, cast a vote for national officers or policy resolutions and network with colleagues from across the country, join us in Lincoln.

The Convention will be held at the **Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel, Thursday through Saturday, July 27-29**. Plan to attend the Early Bird welcome reception on Wednesday evening. The convention convenes on Thursday morning.

**Hotel reservations:** You can make a reservation online any time by visiting [iwla.org/convention2023](http://iwla.org/convention2023) and follow the direct link to the hotel reservation portal. To make a reservation by phone, call the Cornhusker at 402-474-7474 and mention that your reservation is for the Izaak Walton League convention. The Cornhusker has a restaurant and coffee shop. On-site parking is free.

**Address:** 333 South 13th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68508.

**Room rate:** The League's discounted room rate is \$127 per night, which includes taxes and fees. The rate is valid all week—from Sunday July 23 through Sunday July 30. Reserve by July 4 to guarantee this rate.

For campers, Lincoln's Camp-A-Way, a full-service RV Park, is three miles from the hotel.

## Transportation

Lincoln Airport (LNK) is served by United Airlines (United Express). The Marriott Cornhusker Hotel provides shuttle service to and from the airport. Visit [lincolnairport.com](http://lincolnairport.com) for details about flights and ground transportation. Car rental agencies available at Lincoln Airport include Avis, Budget, Enterprise and National.

## Lincoln Visitors' Information

For details about events, restaurants and things to do in and around Lincoln, visit the Lincoln Convention and Visitors' website: [Lincoln.org](http://Lincoln.org).



## Convention Contacts

**Rodger Mettenbrink**  
308-850-2820  
[rmcribnazi@gmail.com](mailto:rmcribnazi@gmail.com)

**Mike Gaghagen**  
308-390-7221  
[mikegaghagen@gmail.com](mailto:mikegaghagen@gmail.com)

**Cathy Berger**  
(Izaak Walton League)  
540-635-1259  
[meetings@iwla.org](mailto:meetings@iwla.org)

**Questions about Online Registration**  
Janette Rosenbaum,  
[jrosenbaum@iwla.org](mailto:jrosenbaum@iwla.org)

# SPEAKERS



## Dr. Doug Tallamy

Entomologist, University of Delaware

Dr. Tallamy advocates for harnessing the power of local conservation to help slow the decline of and restore once-common wildlife. He is the author of best-selling books, including *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Backyard*. He will describe what's at stake for the future of biodiversity in the US and include practical steps League chapters, members and supporters can take in "their own back yard."



## Dave Chanda

President and CEO, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

Dave Chanda will lead a panel discussion focused on the future of participation in outdoor recreation, especially angling and shooting sports. Panelists will highlight likely characteristics, interests and motivations of participants 10 years from now, and actions League chapters and members need to take now to successfully engage and support future participants.



## Bill Dunn

Vice President for Marketing, National Shooting Sports Foundation

Mr. Dunn will share the perspective of the firearms industry on future participation in shooting sports and the evolving demographics of firearms ownership in America.



## Andrew McKean

Outdoor Writer

The Conservation Luncheon speaker is Andrew McKean, conservation editor at *Outdoor Life* magazine. Andrew will share insights on the future of conservation, through the lens of successes and failures of the past.



## Samantha Briggs

Director, Izaak Walton League Clean Water Program

Samantha (Sam) Briggs manages the League's clean water programs and has been with the League for more than seven years. She has an MS in environmental science and policy degree from Johns Hopkins University. She is focused on connecting individuals with the environment and helping them to monitor water quality in their communities.



## Nicole Horvath

Environmental Outreach Coordinator, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)

Nicole Horvath currently serves as the lead of the Salt Summit Outreach Working Group. WSSC provides safe drinking water to more than 1.8 million people in Prince Georges and Montgomery counties in Maryland where road salt pollution is an increasing concern in the region.



## Ted Corrigan

CEO and General Manager, Des Moines Water Works

The Des Moines Water Works provides drinking water for about 600,000 people living in Des Moines and other communities in central Iowa. Mr. Corrigan will join a panel with Ms. Briggs and Ms. Horvath to discuss the 21st century challenges providing clean, safe drinking water.



# WORKSHOPS (All are on Friday)

## Advocating to Defend Outdoor America

Have you wondered how to get elected officials to listen to your concerns? Learn some basic techniques for getting the attention of your members of Congress, state legislators, and local officials and delivering your conservation message effectively. League staff will also highlight how Ikes can use chapter facilities and grounds for educating policymakers and community members about the importance of conservation through events like tours and speaking engagements.

## Starting a Green Crew at Your Chapter

League chapters have a strong interest in engaging young people and cultivating the next generation of conservation leaders. The Minnesota Valley Chapter – largely through youth initiative – has blended Scout Venture Crews with a conservation focus to create a Green Crew. This workshop will be led by the youth leadership of this science-based conservation service program, who will help attendees understand what it takes to create a Green Crew. Leave with a plan for starting a “Crew” at your chapter.

## Launching a Salt Watch Campaign in Your Community

Road salt pollution is a multi-faceted issue because road salt is applied at the individual, local and state level. This workshop will give you the building blocks to start or engage in a road salt pollution reduction campaign in your community, from monitoring and working with partners to policy advocacy. League staff will highlight several case studies of successful, local Salt Watch campaigns that can be replicated across the country.

## Using the Clean Water Hub to Facilitate Local Change

The League’s Clean Water Hub website is a powerful tool for water quality monitors and the public alike. At this workshop, League staff will demonstrate how to navigate the Hub to view data in your community and present information about health of local waters using maps, graphics and other readily understandable visuals the Hub provides. This workshop is designed for anyone – not only active monitors – who wants to use the Hub for advocacy, media outreach and public education.

## Reach a Bigger Audience through the Media

More people need to know about League programs, activities and priorities. There are easy ways to communicate that information to local audiences using media in addition to newspapers, including TV, radio, online bulletin boards like NextDoor, and social media channels like Facebook. Beginners and veteran PR practitioners alike will come away with some useful tips.

*(Workshops run twice unless otherwise specified; topics subject to change)*

# EVENTS

## Early Bird Party and Auction

**Wednesday, July 26.** *Free to registered attendees.*

*Tickets for non-registered guests: \$35*

Bid on unique items or experiences at the early bird reception and auction. Meet fellow conventioners, catch up with old friends and enjoy refreshments.

**Please note:** Early Bird will begin later this year at 7:00 p.m.

## Awards Luncheon

**Thursday, July 27.** *Tickets: \$38*

This combined membership and national awards luncheon provides an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the hard work and achievements of members, supporters, chapters and divisions. Join us as we pay tribute to the winners.

## Parade of States

**Thursday, July 27.** *Free to registered attendees.*

States represented at the convention will share the best of what their states have to offer on the lower lobby level of the Cornhusker. Divisions can reserve a space now by contacting Cathy Berger at [meetings@iwla.org](mailto:meetings@iwla.org).

## Conservation Luncheon

**Friday, July 29.** *Tickets \$35.*

Outdoor writer Andrew McKean, conservation editor at *Outdoor Life* magazine, will share insights on the future of conservation through the lens of the successes and failures of the past.

## Lincoln Chapter Dinner

**Friday, July 28.** *Tickets: \$55 for adults, \$15 for youth*

Enjoy an evening at the Lincoln Chapter. Adults will be served prime rib dinner. A youth priced meal (pulled pork, mac and cheese and chips) will be available. Buses will depart from the hotel lobby at 5 p.m.

## Closing Banquet

**Saturday, July 29.** *Tickets: \$55.*

One last night of good food with friends and colleagues. New national officers will be inducted.

## CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

### Wednesday, July 26

- Executive Board meeting
- Endowment Board meeting
- Early Bird Party and auction (**NOTE:** 7 p.m. start time)
- Youth Convention early bird party

### Thursday, July 27

- President's Breakfast with division presidents
- Delegate orientation workshop
- Convention opening ceremony
- League awards luncheon
- Parade of States

### Friday, July 28

- National officer elections
- Conservation luncheon
- Workshops
- Lincoln Chapter dinner

### Saturday, July 29

- Endowment Board annual meeting and elections
- Board of Directors meeting
- Executive Board elections
- Convention site selection
- Vote on resolutions
- Closing banquet and officer inductions



# YOUTH CONVENTION

The Nebraska Ikes are arranging a Youth Convention that will allow the youth to experience many historical, scientific and natural wonders found in the “Cornhusker State.”

## Wednesday, July 26

Registration check-in will occur earlier on this day. Then in order to kick off this four-day experience, participants are invited to gather at the Cornhusker Hotel for their own **Annual Early Bird Pizza Party**. This will be a fun time to mingle, get to know each other and prepare for the election of the new National Youth Convention Chapter officers.



Youth Convention group at the League's 2022 convention.

On each of the following three days, participants will board a tour bus at the Cornhusker Hotel and travel to several attractions located throughout the central Nebraska region.

## Thursday, July 27

Plans include staying in Lincoln for the day, starting off with a guided tour of the **Nebraska State Capitol**. Followed by the **Lincoln Children's Zoo**, which is home of 40 endangered species and is designed specifically for youth to experience interactive, up-close encounters with many of the zoo's animals.

## Friday, July 28

The day will begin with a fieldtrip to Ashland to visit the **Lee G. Simmons Conservation Park and Wildlife Safari**. This adventure will include a four-mile drive through the park to experience North American wildlife, including eagles, bears, wolves, elk, bison, pelicans and other waterfowl. Then on to the **Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum** for a comprehensive look at history of manned flight, space exploration and America's air defense.

## Saturday, July 29

In the morning, the youth will make a presentation to the national convention. Next, a day trip to nearby Grenta to visit the **Schram Education Center** and learn about Nebraska's aquatic habitats and terrestrial ecosystems through the Center's interactive exhibits. Recreational activities at the **Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's Eugene T. Mahoney State Park** follow that. The day ends with a final gathering of the youth convention with a meal— and a **Young Ikes Dinner and Party** back at the Cornhusker Hotel, provided by the host Nebraska Division. That event will conclude by 8 p.m.

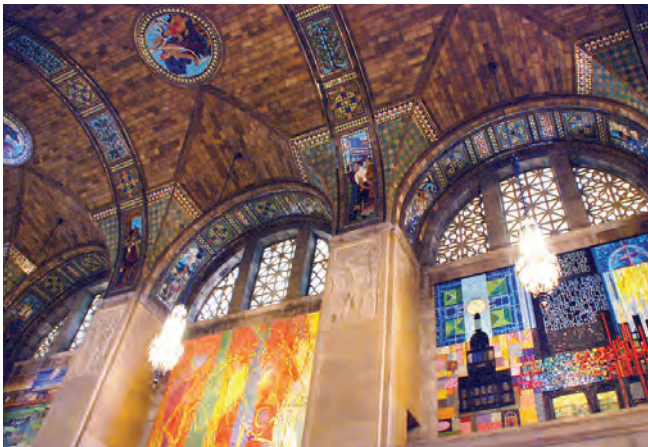
*(This schedule subject to change without further notice.)*

We look forward to providing this opportunity for our youth. Registration fee for this experience will be \$40 per person. **Youth ages 8 to 18 are eligible for this event.**

Lunch each day on field trips and two evening meals, Wednesday and Saturday, are included in the registration. The maximum number of participants is 50 (youth and adult chaperones), with no exceptions. Registration must be paid and submitted by July 1st to ensure a tee shirt for the youth.

For any questions regarding this year's youth convention, please contact [gmdather@yahoo.com](mailto:gmdather@yahoo.com).

# EXPERIENCE NEBRASKA



The foyer in Nebraska's capitol building.

## Lots to do in Lincoln

Nebraska's State Capitol Building, two blocks from the convention site, is an architectural showpiece. Designed by Bertram Goodhue and finished in 1932, the building features marble columns, mosaic floors and colorful murals that tell the story of Nebraska.

Lincoln is also home to the International Quilt Museum, the Speedway Motors Museum of American Speed and Memorial Stadium, home of the Nebraska Cornhuskers football.

As a college town, Lincoln has a vibrant night life. Its oldest bar, the Brass Rail, opened in 1935, and the legendary Zoo Bar has been a blues music venue since 1973. Misty's Steakhouse boasts the best prime rib in town and in Nebraska, that is saying a lot.

## For other wildlife...

See fish and wildlife from around the world at the 130-acre Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium in Omaha, an hour northeast of Lincoln. Consistently ranked as one of the top zoos in the world, the Henry Doorly Zoo is home to over 30,000 animals of nearly 1,000 different species and a global collection of plants.

Desert Dome, the world's largest indoor desert, features plant and animal life from three of the Earth's great deserts: Africa's Namib Desert, the Red Center of Australia and the Sonoran Desert of the American Southwest. Hidden beneath the Desert Dome, Kingdoms of the Night provides a unique look at the nocturnal life of critters like armadillos, bats, spiders and blind cave fish.

Walk the bottom of the ocean floor while sharks circle above you in the aquarium's 70-foot shark tunnel, then see penguins from the Antarctic, coral reefs, puffins, stingrays and colorful tropical fish.

The Zoo is known for its attention to detail in creating habitats that promote species-appropriate behavior and activity for the animals that live there, but what might not be obvious to visitors is the vigorous conservation program behind the scenes. The zoo's research and veterinary medical facility houses work in conservation genetics, animal nutrition, conservation medicine and plant propagation.

Another opportunity to see wildlife out of town is the Lee Simmons Conservation Park and Wildlife Safari (halfway between Lincoln and Omaha). The park provides a 2-to-3-hour drive-through experience with free-roaming bears, wolves, elk, bison, pelicans, cranes and other North American wildlife, and there is plenty of opportunity to get out and take in the scenery.





# EXPERIENCE NEBRASKA



**Niobrara River as seen from the Fred Thomas State Wildlife Management Area.**

## Niobrara National Scenic River

The Niobrara River Valley in northern Nebraska is a biological crossroads and one of Nebraska's hidden jewels. The Valley is the only place on the Great Plains where western ponderosa pines meet the oaks and elms of eastern hardwood forests and sprinkled in their midst are paper birch and aspen, remnants of Northern boreal forests. Eastern tallgrass prairie mingles with Sandhills and northern mixed-grass prairie, creating a mosaic of habitat.

The 76-mile Niobrara National Scenic River includes dramatic bluffs and more than 200 spring-fed waterfalls along the river or its tributaries. Whether you float, kayak or canoe, the Niobrara is easy enough for beginners but fun for experienced paddlers. Anglers will find a mix of rainbow and brown trout in the spring-fed tributaries and channel catfish and bluegill in the river.

Downstream the Lower Niobrara is part of the Missouri National Recreation River, where the Niobrara meets the Missouri River just above Gavins Point Dam. Below the Dam lies one of the last unchanneled segments of the Missouri River, where paddlers can get a taste of how the Missouri looked when Lewis and Clark navigated the river in 1804.



## Fort Robinson State Park

Travelers can get a taste of the Old West with a side trip to Fort Robinson State Park in the Nebraska Pine Ridge. Built in the 1870s, many of the Fort's original buildings survive today and guests can stay in the officers' quarters, lodge and other historic buildings. Campgrounds provide everything from primitive to full hookup options.

This 22,000-acre park features stunning scenery, trails for hiking, horseback, biking or jeep and offers stagecoach rides and a weekly rodeo. The park features buffalo and longhorn herds, and wild elk, turkey and bighorn sheep can be found in the Pine Ridge. Don't miss the monument near the park that commemorates the Northern Cheyenne who lost their lives fighting for freedom in the 1879 Cheyenne Breakout from the Fort.



# Become a volunteer scientist with Creek Critters

There's a whole world of critters in our streams! Find and identify the critters below to discover what they can tell us about the health of our water. The Creek Critters app is a great way to try out biological monitoring (for both kids and adults), generate a stream health score, and, best of all, your results can help educate your community about the health of the stream.

- 1 Download the free Creek Critters app, developed in partnership with the Audubon Naturalist Society, to your Apple or Android device by visiting [www.iwla.org/creekcritters](http://www.iwla.org/creekcritters).
- 2 Click "Collect" or "Identify Critters."
- 3 Follow simple step-by-step instructions to collect and identify critters in your stream. The app creates a Stream Health Score based on your findings.
- 4 Automatically share your score on the Clean Water Hub, the Izaak Walton League's national water quality monitoring website!



To learn more and get started, visit [www.iwla.org/creekcritters](http://www.iwla.org/creekcritters).







# Indiana Waterways: The Art of Conservation

By AVON WATERS

Curt Stanfield's oil painting titled "*Chasing Shadows*" captures light along the White River.

**A new book and traveling art exhibition, supported by the Indiana Division of the League, explore the beauty of the state's waterways and the conservation challenges they face.**

CURT STANFIELD

**D**uring the isolation imposed by the Covid pandemic in 2020, I and a few other painters began to communicate online visually and verbally to preserve a sense of community and a splash of normalcy.

We were all members of the Indiana Plein Air Painters Association (plein air meaning outdoor in French). As the pandemic persisted, our Association's scheduled gatherings were canceled, which was a loss. Those gatherings, held outdoors, provided valuable inspiration, support and camaraderie for artists.

So I asked four artists in my circle if they wanted to take on a project focused on painting rivers in Indiana and then exhibiting the artwork when the pandemic receded. In the meantime, we would at least share our art projects among ourselves if not with the public.





Soon after we agreed to this project, Keith Halper, then president of the **Indiana Division of the Izaak Walton League**, caught wind of it. He viewed it as an opportunity to help the public appreciate the fragility as well as the beauty of our rivers, streams and lakes.

As my group of painters learned more about the mission and history of the Izaak Walton League, we began to see how our art could generate awareness about the need for conservation. Art has the power to transform thinking and the way we see those places where a river runs through it.

From these beginnings grew an ambitious art project, which was partially funded by a 2021 grant from the endowment of the Indiana

Division of the League. We decided that including written narrative could add vital context and depth to the project, so we enlisted three well-known Hoosier conservation writers to help.

The end result is the book, *Indiana Waterways: The Art of Conservation*, and a traveling exhibition of the paintings. The book contains three essays and more than 100 pages of the art we produced, all focused on the lakes, rivers and streams of Indiana. The pages explore the beauty of waterways and also the challenges they face.

“The idea of combining two disciplines, art and writing for this project, was a stroke of genius,” said Dr. Jerry Sweeten, one of the writers for the project. “As a former college professor, I have seen how combining other course studies with the science classes I taught helped the students see connections they otherwise wouldn’t have.”

## A window into conservation

Sweeten might agree that true education comes from seeing how everything is connected to everything else. That is especially true in the arts. Thousands of people across Indiana love landscape art. There are thousands of Hoosiers who are painting landscapes and even more who are buying them. But many of them are not conservationists.

Connecting art to conservation helps new audiences to realize how conserving the natural beauty they love to see in art is valuable and essential to them—and not separate from them.

Typically, a landscape painting of a waterway reaches some emotion or memory in the viewer. But that connection does not necessarily translate into a commitment to conservation. So to help make those connections, we put conservation of these natural resources facing forward in the

project. As it progressed, we established a nonprofit, Art Nature Consortium, or ANC, to promote the connections between art and our natural resources.

The artists became the founding board members.

We formed ANC hoping other artists will develop connections to what they love to paint, realizing the need to also restore and conserve it.

**Art has the power to transform thinking and the way we see those places where a river runs through it.**





*“Whitewater River South of Brookville,” oil painting by Dan Woodson.*

## Viewing Indiana’s rivers

Over the course of about 20 months, each artist travelled across Indiana to create a visual record, in paint, of just a few of the 62,000-plus miles of waterways in the state.

What the artists found was neglect. The fires on Ohio’s Cuyahoga River that set off an ecological awakening in the 1970s no longer endanger our waterways. Instead, the artists and writers discovered today’s pollution problems are frequently unseen—and certainly unrecognized by most.

The industry that we rely on to feed a great nation is slowly poisoning our waterways. As farms have

increased in size, the need for efficiency has found new ways to drain standing water but at the cost of excess chemical nitrogen, pesticides and other

pollutants. Indiana’s waterways contribute about 11 percent of the sediment and nutrients that wash down the Mississippi River ultimately contributing to the red tides and dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico.

One of the essays in the book cites Indiana’s Save Our Streams Director Edward Wisinski discussing the work of the Indiana Division and

the national office of the Izaak Walton League as it pursues its 100-year vision of protecting the nation’s woods, waters and wildlife. If groups like the

**As my group learned more about the mission and history of the Izaak Walton League, we began to see how our art could generate awareness about the need for conservation.**



Izaak Walton League don't continue to raise the alarm, who will?

"We're trying to bring that to the public, not in a radical way, but in a common-sense way," says Wisinski. "It's a never-ending process. Just when we think we've crossed the bridge, so to say, we come up against another flooded stream."

Everywhere the artists went, people shared stories. A lot of Indiana history is hidden from plain view along the waterways, and the artists tried to find as much as they could. All the artists remarked that there are few miles of water where the public can easily visit the riverside. Most are hidden from the public or accessible only by canoe, float or kayak. To help with that, Indiana has 360-plus public launch sites along waterways for boats.

## Spreading the word—and the images

About two years after our initial gathering of five artists and work with three writers, we first exhibited some of the original paintings on October 16, 2022, at the Indiana State Museum. From there we added exhibits at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art in 2023, and then at the Minnetrista Museum's Oakhurst House in Muncie on the White River. Close to 20,000 people have viewed the exhibitions thus far. We will complete the tour in December 2023 at the Hoosier Salon in New Harmony, on the Wabash River.



John Kelty's watercolor, "Black River Reflection."

The writers and artists in the project have given or scheduled more than 10 discussions around the state to continue this conversation and highlight the role of organizations like the Izaak Walton chapters and how the public can get involved in waterway restoration and conservation.

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*Avon Waters is a pastel and acrylic artist from Converse, Indiana. Past president of Indiana Plein Air Painters Association, he is also an art organizer.*





## About the Project

Artists featured in the project are John Kelty, Curt Stanfield, Avon Waters, Dan Woodson and Tom Woodson. The three writers contributing essays are Carson Gerber, Jason Goldsmith and Dr. Jerry Sweeten.

In addition to the Izaak Walton League in Indiana, funding for this project came from donations by hundreds of individuals as well as grants from the Indiana Arts Commission, Indiana Humanities, The Metzger Group, Butler University, the Clemens Vonnegut Jr. House and the Eastern Woodland Carvers Club.

Learn more at [www.artnature-consortium.org](http://www.artnature-consortium.org), a nonprofit with a mission to help artists promote art projects aimed at conservation awareness.

Avon Waters captures Fall Creek in his painting, "*The Plunge*."



## The Paintings that Set American Conservation in Motion *By Lisa Siegrist*

It stands to reason that landscape painters revere nature. Its ruin would limit the subject matter they could depict. But in the mid-1800s, it was railroad companies focused on tourism that feared ruin and hired artists to depict the grandeur of iconic landscapes like Yosemite and Yellowstone. Their key motivation was to spur legislation that would protect the wild beauty of these places—and promote their attractiveness to sightseers.

Painter Albert Bierstadt used bold colors and exaggerated Yosemite's topography to wow an America that was tired of feeling overshadowed by Europe's wonders. Yet Bierstadt was no pawn to his business patrons. He was a charter member of the Boone and Crockett Club, an early conservation group. The wide popularity of Bierstadt's majestic paintings played a key role in the 1864 law signed by President Lincoln that granted the Yosemite Valley to California as a protected reserve.

A few years later in 1870, the Northern Pacific Railroad was zealous to secure its status as the only passenger rail to Yellowstone. Knowing the visual power of the destination, the railroad hired landscape painter Thomas Moran and photographer

William Henry Jackson to accompany the survey team that would explore that region.

During the 40 days he spent out west, Moran made sketches of over 30 different sites, many published in *Scribner's Monthly*. These images of the unique geological wonders of Yellowstone captivated audiences back east. Moran's watercolors and sketches prominently graced the U.S. Capitol as Congress and the public learned more about these western treasures.

In 1872, inspired by this artwork, Congress approved and President Grant signed the bill establishing Yellowstone as the first national park. Shortly after, Congress purchased Moran's "Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone" as the first painting that would hang in the U.S. Capitol. The mammoth painting, measuring 7 by 12 feet and condensing several of Yellowstone's vistas into one scene, is credited with fueling the public's interest in conservation.

*Lisa Siegrist is a writer and former editor of American Art, a journal published by the Smithsonian American Art Museum.*

**Thomas Moran's art helped convince Congress to create America's first national park in 1872. His painting "Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone" was purchased by Congress to be displayed in the Capitol.**









# *The Future Is Theirs!*

**The Izaak Walton League builds a brighter future through conservation and engaging Americans in outdoor traditions.**

For generations, the League's tireless work and unprecedented success has protected our woods, waters and wildlife—and promoted outdoor recreation in every corner of the U.S.

**Through your will, retirement plan, life insurance or trust, you can help continue this legacy.**

**Plan your gift to the Izaak Walton League and pass along a lifetime of benefits.**

**Email [develop@iwla.org](mailto:develop@iwla.org) or visit [www.iwla.org/support](http://www.iwla.org/support) to get started.**



Izaak Walton League of America  
707 Conservation Lane  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

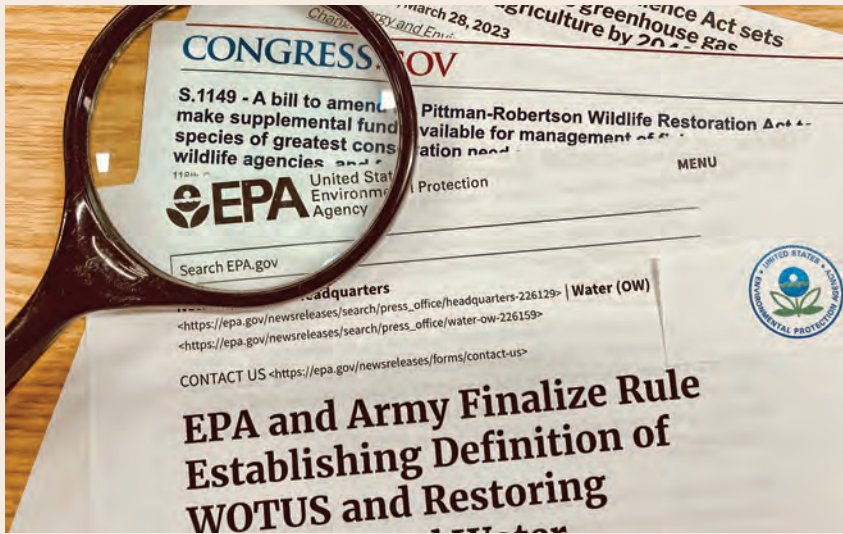
Contact us today for information about including the Izaak Walton League in your will or naming the League as the beneficiary for insurance or other investments.





## Why Conservation Requires Constant Attention in Washington

By JARED MOTT, Conservation Director.



League staff work closely with federal agencies and congressional offices to protect the nation's woods, waters and wildlife.

Since the League was launched in 1922, we have focused on conserving our woods, waters and wildlife through our individual actions and advocacy for better government policies.

The League is proud of our many advocacy successes over the years, and we encourage all of our members and supporters to get engaged in that work. Remember that lobbying our government is a vital First Amendment right.

Policymakers expect to hear from you. It's part of their job.

There are several ways to communicate your views to policymakers. The most effective avenue is meeting directly the policymaker or their staff. If you can't meet in person, a phone call is effective but only if you are contacting the elected officials who represent you geographically. In other words, you have far less impact contacting an elected official who represents a different district or state. Email can also be effective, again if you are writing as a constituent the official represents.

### President vetoes bill that would undermine clean water protections

In late March, Congress approved a joint resolution to repeal a good, common-sense rule that was issued last year by EPA and Army Corps of Engineers defining "Waters of the United States." That rule, which is supported by the League and other clean water groups, clarified which waters

are protected by the Clean Water Act, and it restored long-standing protections for wetlands and tributary streams.

If that resolution became law, it would

open up our streams and wetlands to pollution and destruction, undoing 50 years of progress. Fortunately, President Biden vetoed it on April 6.

Congress used the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to overturn the rule. CRA allows Congress to reject rules issued by federal agencies during a limited time window. In addition to nullifying the rule, CRA resolutions that pass and are signed

**Clean water dodged a bullet—but it reminds us that defending bedrock conservation laws requires constant attention.**

into law prohibit any federal agency from issuing a “substantially” similar rule in the future. That would mean that under the CRA, the EPA and Army Corps could never issue another rule including these wetlands and tributary streams in any definition of “waters of the United States.”

So, in this case clean water dodged a bullet—but it reminds us that defending bedrock conservation laws requires constant attention.

## **Wildlife conservation bill reintroduced in Congress**

The bipartisan Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (S. 1149) has been reintroduced in the Senate by Senators Martin Heinrich (NM) and Thom Tillis (NC). Passing this legislation is a longstanding priority for the League and it came closer to the finish line late in 2022 than ever before.

This legislation would provide vital investment in habitat conservation and wildlife restoration that would be aimed at keeping common species common and preventing at-risk species from becoming threatened or endangered. Through their State Wildlife Action Plans, which serve as unique roadmaps for each state’s conservation needs, state fish and wildlife agencies have identified nearly 12,000 species in need of active conservation efforts to keep populations from declining. In fact, about a third of U.S. wildlife species are at risk of becoming endangered.

To address the conservation challenge facing these species, the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would provide approximately \$1.4 billion annually to state, territorial, and Tribal agencies to proactively conserve and restore at-risk species. These funds would be matched by at least 25 percent and provide the states with sufficient funds to fully implement their Wildlife Action Plans. To ask your Senators to support the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, go to [iwla.org/rawa](http://iwla.org/rawa).

## **Agriculture Resilience Act would provide climate and water-quality benefits**

Representative Chellie Pingree (Maine) and Senator Martin Heinrich (NM) have reintroduced the Agriculture Resilience Act in the House and Senate, respectively. This bill aims to fight climate change by rebuilding healthy soils, improve water quality by reducing polluted runoff, create more resilient farms that are able to grow more nutritious food and increase funds to protect powerful carbon sinks in wetlands and prairies.

Importantly, the bill stakes out a pro-climate, pro-water-quality agenda as Congress begins to debate the next Farm Bill. The League played a critical role in crafting this legislation and it includes both the League’s “good farmer discount” and the state and Tribal soil health grant program.

The League crafted the “good farmer discount” to provide a federal crop insurance discount for farmers who implement conservation practices that build healthy soils. Since healthy soils reduce a crop’s vulnerability to drought, disease and other disasters, farmers using these practices—like cover crops, no till and rotational grazing—are less likely to need crop insurance to cover losses. It only makes sense that these “good farmers” receive a discount on their insurance premiums, since they are less likely to need compensation in the event of a crop failure.

The state and Tribal soil health program is another legislative idea hatched at the League. Modeled after successful state and Tribal wildlife grants, this legislation would leverage non-federal funds to drive adoption of soil health practices. In return for federal money, states and Tribes would create soil health plans that detail how to best build healthy soils in their respective areas and then provide matching funds to landowners and farmers to implement the action plans.

You can help make sure these soil health priorities are included in the Farm Bill by going to [iwla.org/advocacy](http://iwla.org/advocacy).

**The League’s “good farmer discount” and the state and Tribal soil health grant program are included in the legislation.**





Among the three states where smart salt bills have been introduced is Wisconsin, which is considering a bill to better manage the application of deicers.

## League Supports Smart Salt Legislation in Three States

By SAM BRIGGS, Clean Water Program Director

In many areas of the United States, road salt is used in the winter to create safe travel conditions, but excessive salting is a problem. Excess road salt ends up in our waterways, creating toxic conditions for aquatic life and threatening human health. One-third of all Americans depend on local streams for drinking water and more waterways every year are at risk of being contaminated by road salt pollution.

Water treatment plants are not equipped to remove salt from water, so salt can end up in your tap and contribute to serious health risks, including heavy metal exposure, high blood pressure, heart disease and strokes for many Americans. This is why the League launched the Salt Watch program years ago—to equip individuals to monitor the impacts of road salt in their waterways.

Now, as Salt Watch has evolved, we are doing more—such as equipping volunteers to advocate for smarter salting practices in their region. With these efforts, we are also seeing a change of perception around the issue of road salt, and the potential for statewide policies that result in smarter salting practices.

## Smart salt bills introduced in Maryland, Minnesota and Wisconsin

In 2023, the Izaak Walton League has already supported three bills introduced in state legislatures across the U.S.

In Maryland, the House introduced a bill (HB0216) to establish a salt applicator certification program, which would require all commercial applicators for hire to take the Maryland Department of the Environment's smart salt training and certification course.

In Minnesota, the House introduced a bill (HF820) to establish a salt applicator program, limit liability and report results. That bill would provide limited liability protection to applicators and business owners who complete a training course sponsored by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Unfortunately, neither of these bills made it out of committee, but the fact that they were introduced shows that there is concern for the health of the environment and our drinking water when it comes to road salt pollution!

## As Salt Watch has evolved, we are doing more—such as equipping volunteers to advocate for smarter salting practices in their region

Last but not least, there is a bill in the Wisconsin State Senate (SB52) creating a deicer applicators certification program. The bill was still pending as of mid-April 2023. This, like the Minnesota bill, would establish limited liability protection for applicators who attend the Salt Wise training and certification—

and for businesses who hire them.

League staff will continue to track the progress of bills like these across the country and create action alerts so that Ikes and other volunteers can easily write their representatives and senators to support both “carrot” and “stick” approaches to road salt reduction.

We are also continuing intensive Salt Watch campaigns in regions across the country, which includes hosting applicator trainings in Gaithersburg and Montgomery County, Maryland.

To get involved in Salt Watch and find more information about advocating for smart salt solutions, visit [saltwatch.org](https://saltwatch.org). To see other action alerts from the League, including salt bills like these, visit [iwla.org/saltaction](https://iwla.org/saltaction).



State bills that require or incentivize applicator training would reduce the overuse of salt, which is illustrated by this example on a walkway in northern Virginia.





## SOIL MATTERS

## Got Clean Water? Demand Better Farm Policies

By DUANE HOVORKA



Practices that enhance soil health reduce polluted runoff and improve water quality.

Three-quarters of all the water we use and 56 percent of our drinking water comes from lakes and rivers. Each year, 55 million Americans go fishing—that's one out of six of us. And more than 20 million folks across the nation canoe or kayak in our lakes, rivers or estuaries.

But today, more than half of our waterways remain polluted. This is more than 50 years after Congress passed the Clean Water Act with a goal of making all of our waters swimmable and fishable again. The largest source of that pollution is water running off farms carrying fertilizer, pesticides, soil and manure. The pesticides and nitrates that run off into our waterways can cause numerous health problems.

Fortunately, there are solutions.

This year, Congress returns to its twice-per-decade consideration of the Farm Bill. Because of the sweeping scope of this legislation, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to restore and protect rivers and lakes that all of us depend on and enjoy. The League's priorities for Congress in 2023 include a major increase in funds for federal programs that

invest in better conservation systems on farmland that reduce polluted runoff into nearby streams.

### We know the roots of the problem and solutions

Fact is, we know exactly what drives runoff—and how to substantially reduce it. Water runs off the land following rain or snowmelt when most of that water cannot be absorbed into the ground. And that water carries much of what's in its path. All of us have seen this in our back yards and communities.

Now, scale this up by hundreds of millions of acres and you can begin to appreciate the magnitude of the problem in agriculture. Tens of millions of acres of fields lack adequate water absorbance and are a major source of soil erosion.

The absence of cover crops on the vast majority of fields today exacerbates erosion.

Your community may encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets because this waste pollutes local waters. A single farm with thousands of cows and pigs or millions of chickens produces exponentially more manure. This is applied over

**We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to restore and protect rivers and lakes that all of us depend on and enjoy.**

and over to the land as fertilizer. Then, after a heavy rain, some of it washes into the nearest water body, carrying E. coli, bacteria and excess nitrogen pollution with it.

Seeking to solve these problems, the League is calling on Congress to put soil health at the center of this next Farm Bill. Healthy soils absorb water like a sponge, eliminating or sharply reducing runoff that carries soil, chemicals and often manure into nearby streams and other waters.

Polluted runoff from their farms shrinks as farmers rebuild the health of their soil. How?

By eliminating or reducing harmful tillage, planting cover crops between cash crops, diversifying their crop rotation and reducing and then eliminating chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Also, as livestock producers move more of their cattle, sheep and other livestock out of giant barns and feedlots and back out onto grassland, the manure is less concentrated. With rotational grazing systems that move the animals every day or so, mimicking mother nature, their grasslands grow stronger, soil health improves and runoff from the land drops dramatically.

## **A greater investment is essential**

These practices work best when used together. They often require an investment in knowledge, equipment and supplies and they can take time to deliver results.

USDA conservation programs offer the largest single source of funds to help farmers and ranchers understand and adopt these critically important conservation programs. Yet only one-third of applicants seeking help putting conservation on the ground through the agency's working lands programs receive it; the rest are turned away for lack of funding.

The League now asks Congress to boost funding for these critically important conservation programs so many more farmers can put conservation practices

on millions more acres of land. The League asks for other changes that would focus dollars on practices that deliver the most conservation benefits and

would spread the funds among more farmers.

The League is pressing for these changes because they will ultimately benefit the American people—and because voluntary conservation is our primary option to address this issue on farms. When Congress passed the Clean Water Act, it focused on reducing, treating and regulating pollution discharged from a pipe—deciding not to also regulate water pollution

running off the land. Moreover, it also exempted nearly all common farming and ranching activities from provisions in the Act designed to protect wetlands from being filled or drained without a permit.

Factories or sewage treatment plants can be required to reduce pollution. But reducing equally harmful runoff of manure, pesticides and other chemicals from farms depends on voluntary conservation incentives, funded by taxpayers, and other indirect methods.

USDA conservation programs will never be the “silver bullet” that will solve all our water quality problems. These programs only reach the farmers and ranchers who are willing to change how they farm to better protect our natural resources. Even then, the chronic shortage of funds in these programs leaves out many farmers and ranchers who want to participate.

The League's agenda for the 2023 Farm Bill would substantially increase the impact of USDA conservation programs by putting soil health at the center of our agriculture policy and boosting funding for those programs.

**Factories or sewage treatment plants can be required to reduce pollution. But reducing equally harmful runoff of manure, pesticides and other chemicals from farms depends on voluntary conservation incentives, funded by taxpayers, and other indirect methods.**

**Read more about the League's priorities for improving our health, water quality, wetlands and climate through better agriculture policies. Visit [iwla.org/agriculture](https://iwla.org/agriculture).**





**NATIONAL  
SHOOTING  
SPORTS**  
— MONTH —  
AUGUST

## Chapters Host Successful National Shooting Sports Month Events

By EARL HOWER,  
Director of Chapter Relations

Each year, League chapters across America hold events to introduce members of the public to recreational shooting sports as part of National Shooting Sports Month.

This month-long promotional event is coordinated by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) – the trade association for the firearms and ammunition industry. The goal is to provide opportunities for people of all ages and ability levels to try recreational shooting sports for the first time.

In August 2022, several League chapters in Iowa, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia hosted events.

The **Mountaineer Chapter** of Elkins, West Virginia held their “New Shooters Event” that attracted participants with very little or no firearms experience. The event was publicized in a front-page article in *The Inter-Mountain*, a local newspaper.

The Chapter’s shooting sports coordinator, Charlie Friddle, said, “A dozen Ikes assisted our attendees shoot for the first time. After a safety briefing, the attendees shot .22 caliber rifles and handguns and 20-gauge shotguns.” He said one young girl who participated said, “I didn’t know this could be so much fun!”

## Planning for 2023 National Shooting Sports Month

Ernie Padgette, chair of the League’s Shooting Sports Conservation Committee, says “Holding a local National Shooting Sports Month event is a great opportunity for any chapter to introduce others to fun, safe activities they can enjoy. Chapters everywhere should start planning now for their 2023 event.”



The Mountaineer Chapter hosts instruction for beginners as part of their annual National Shooting Sports Month.

An important objective of this program is encouraging participation by people who are not already recreational shooting sports enthusiasts. If your chapter periodically opens its range to beginners for an introduction to shooting sports, simply consider doing so in August this year.

If your chapter has never hosted a public shooting sports event, NSSF offers support with its First Shots program curriculum ([nssf.org/ranges/first-shots](https://nssf.org/ranges/first-shots)). These resources are adaptable for all shooting ranges and all types of firearms. Plus, you’ll be eligible to receive support in the form of eye and ear protection, targets, ammunition and participant handouts. In addition, the League is in a position to assist chapters with event marketing and promotions for your August event.

The Izaak Walton League is again offering **National Shooting Sports Month mini-grants** (up to \$250 per chapter) as extra support and incentive for chapters to promote the shooting sports and introduce the public to safe and responsible firearms ownership. Mini-grants can be used to pay for event expenses and promotion. To request more details or a grant application, email [shootingsports@iwla.org](mailto:shootingsports@iwla.org). Applications should be postmarked no later than June 1.

Generations of Americans have discovered recreational shooting sports at League chapters. National Shooting Sports Month is a great opportunity to raise public visibility and the perfect time for you to introduce more people to shooting sports while recruiting new chapter members.



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It's about spending time with  
friends and family and making  
memories that will last a lifetime.

- Unknown

INTRODUCE SOMEONE NEW TO THE OUTDOORS

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2023**

**NHFDAY.ORG**





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Have you begun a new activity, held an event or tackled a local conservation project?

Share your news and programs with all *Outdoor America* readers. Send a brief write up along with photos (as attachments, 3-5 MB) to appear in our “Ikes in Action” section. For photos, please include descriptions and the name of the photographer. Email [mreinemer@iwla.org](mailto:mreinemer@iwla.org)



## Keep up with Trends Affecting Our Woods, Waters and Wildlife: Subscribe to “Conservation Currents”

Stay up to date on conservation news, issues and work by the League. Take advantage of a free subscription to the League’s email newsletter “*Conservation Currents*.” Go to [iwla.org/morenews](http://iwla.org/morenews).

No organization has done more than the Izaak Walton League to defend woods, waters and wildlife. We’ve carved out a unique role, promoting conservation and community science locally while advocating for strong state and national policies to protect natural resources.

## Donate Your Vehicle . . . and help protect America’s outdoors

CARS makes it quick and easy to donate your vehicle – whether it’s running or not! Your donation is tax deductible, and the League will receive a portion of the proceeds.



### Call CARS today to:

- Donate a car, truck, van, commercial vehicle, motorcycle, RV, bus, boat, jet ski, or snowmobile
- Help achieve the League’s conservation and outdoor recreation goals

### Select the Izaak Walton League as your CARS charity to help protect America’s natural resources. You’ll benefit through:

- No-hassle donation process
- Fee-free towing
- Tax deduction to the extent allowed by law



Visit <https://careasy.org/nonprofit/iwla> or call (844) 952-2227 to get started.



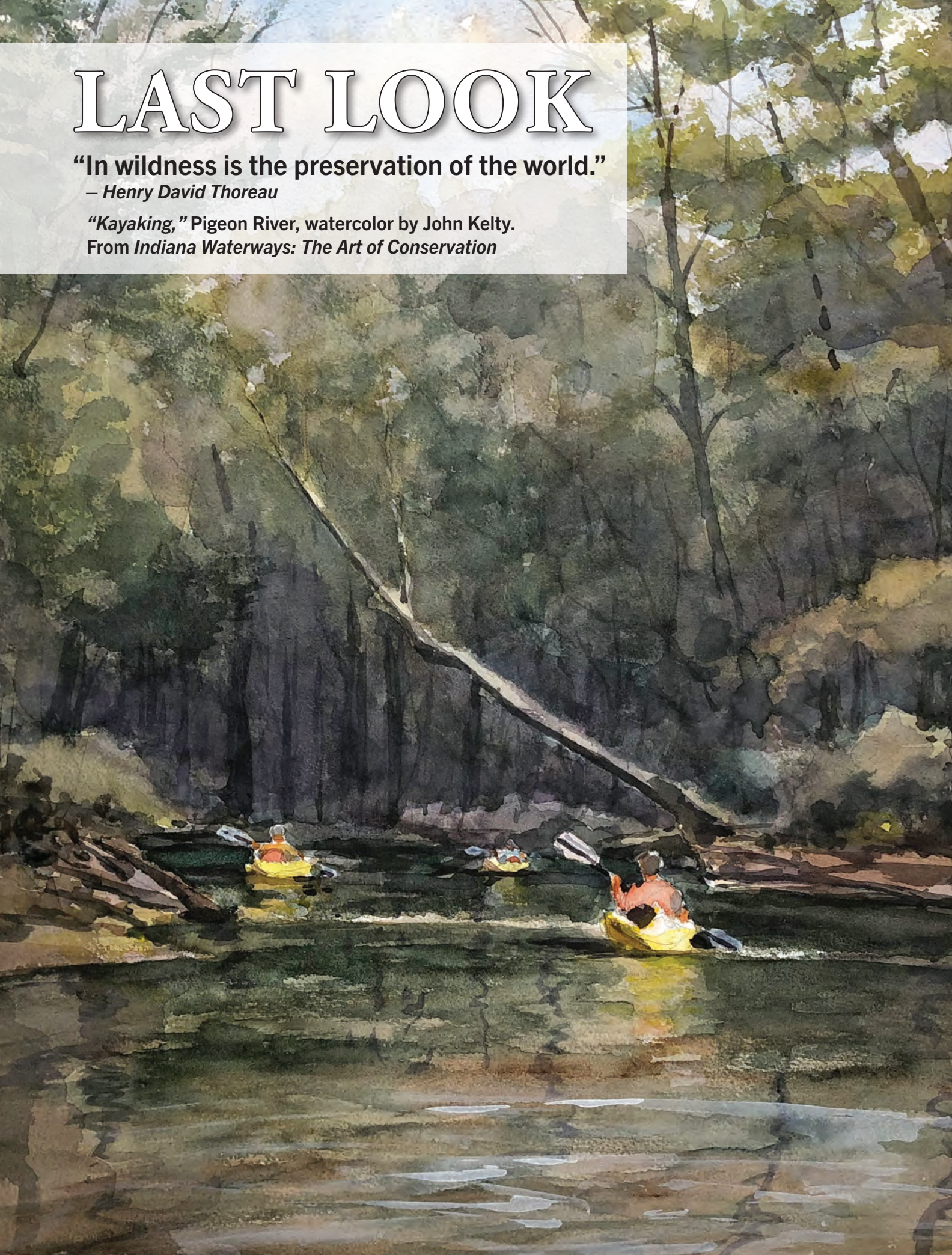
# LAST LOOK

**"In wildness is the preservation of the world."**

— *Henry David Thoreau*

*"Kayaking," Pigeon River, watercolor by John Kelty.*

*From Indiana Waterways: The Art of Conservation*

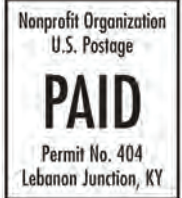






**THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA**  
707 CONSERVATION LANE | GAITHERSBURG, MD 20878

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**IWLA**  
**2023 National Convention**  
Lincoln, Nebraska  
July 27-29, 2023

Ikes from across the country will gather in Lincoln, Nebraska July 27-29, 2023 for the annual Izaak Walton League national convention.



**One noteworthy change to the schedule: the convention will be held Thursday through Saturday**—not the traditional Wednesday through Friday schedule.

Plan to attend the Early Bird welcome reception Wednesday evening and the convention that begins on Thursday.

We will gather for the convention at Cornhusker Marriott where the League's discounted room rate is \$109 per night (excluding taxes).

The Cornhusker has a restaurant and coffee shop. On-site parking is free. If you travel by air, there is free shuttle service to and from the Lincoln Airport.

Stay longer if you can. Lincoln has great restaurants, arts and culture and nearby attractions to visit.

Keep informed about convention registration, speakers and other special events at [iwla.org/convention2023](https://iwla.org/convention2023) and by signing up for convention-specific emails.

**There's something for everyone in the Cornhusker State.**  
**Plan to spend a few extra days when you attend the**  
**2023 Izaak Walton League National Convention, July 27-29.**