

OUTDOOR AMERICA™

PUBLISHED BY THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

2025 ISSUE 1

Why We Fight to Protect America's Public Lands

ALSO INSIDE:

A Common-Sense
Conservation Agenda
for the 119th Congress

Prairie Classroom:
Outdoor Learning for
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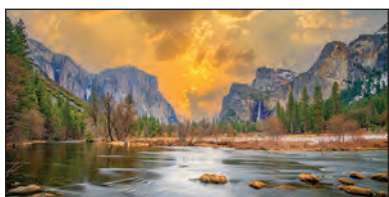
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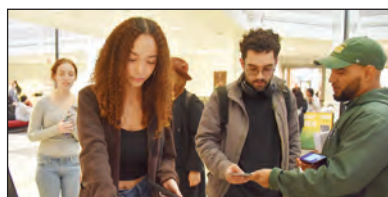
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ABOUT THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA ►

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



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Shout from the Mountain Top!

JODI LABS | National President

The chapter I belong to was recently selected as one of 50 non-profit organizations to participate in a 24-hour virtual fundraising campaign, Give BIG Green Bay, which is intended to highlight the great work being done by non-profits in the Green Bay area. As part of this honor, I have participated in several events with the other participating non-profit organizations and the community, each of which is designed to foster collaboration with the selected organizations to generate a greater impact in the community.

These events provided an opportunity to engage with the public and let them know about the Izaak Walton League and its mission. I was reminded of a few things while speaking with community members, the most important reminder being that despite all of the efforts and hard work of the **Brown County Chapter** in the Green Bay community, the Izaak Walton League continues to be one of the best-kept secrets, a secret that a lot of people wish they had known about sooner.

I was also reminded that the League's mission is very broad. The Brown County Chapter and its members do a substantial

amount to advance the League's mission, which provides a lot of opportunities for us to connect with the public. As part of the Give BIG Green Bay campaign, I had to write and record a 60-second radio ad to inform the greater Green Bay community about who the Brown County Chapter is and what services we provide for the community.

As I was writing, it was apparent that the Brown County Chapter does a lot for the community on the conservation side, along with providing outdoor recreation opportunities to segments of our community, from disadvantaged youth, scouts, disabled youth and adults to senior citizens. I have always known this but I failed to realize how difficult it would be to sum up the Chapter and League's work in less than one minute.

Pat yourselves on the back and tell people about the League's accomplishments; don't be shy.

It took several drafts of the radio ad to get it down to a minute, with each draft being more and more difficult as I



struggled to delete what I believed to be very important information that may appeal to a segment of the greater Green Bay community I did not want to leave out. This reminded me that Ike chapters have the potential to reach so many different segments of our communities with the vast array of work we do.

For example, we are able to connect with youth, whether it be via Scouts, 4H or Boys and Girls Clubs. We provide opportunities to connect with the outdoors, including through fishing, shooting, archery, hiking and camping.

We also can work with neighborhood associations and local municipalities on sustainable practices and policies such as developing rain gardens, community gardens and flood

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

resilience projects, as well as environmental programs such as stenciling storm drains and educating the public about the use of road salt.

We also can partner with non-profits who support underserved segments of our community as they are always looking for activities for their program participants. I was speaking with a couple of non-profits who serve minorities in our community and they said they are always looking for opportunities to expose their participants to activities they would not normally engage in, including fishing and archery. These are just a few examples of the groups of people we can connect with the League's mission.

Another thing I was reminded of during my discussions is people really do care about clean water and clean air, as well as having places they can enjoy exploring the outdoors. Several individuals even said they wish more people would care and take action to advocate for clean water and open spaces as they were worried about the future for their children and grandchildren. As I mentioned in my last article, these issues are not red or blue issues; people care about a healthy environment regardless of their political affiliation and we can use that to promote the League and its work.

I don't want the League to be the best-kept secret and I suspect that many of you would agree. We can take steps to share the "secret" of the League and spread the word by becoming a visible part of our communities. I encourage everyone to stand up and be proud of everything they and their chapter have done in their community to advance the League's mission. And then shout from the mountain top and let everyone know what your chapter has done. In other words, pat yourselves on the back and tell people about the League's accomplishments; don't be shy. After all, we have so much to be proud of. Let's strive to no longer be a secret in our community.

Becoming visible in our communities, including being a voice for conservation, will be especially critical this year. There is no question that we are going to be facing challenges on conservation issues. We will see efforts at the federal level to roll back and unwind many of the environmental safeguards we have pushed and advocated for over the last several decades.

We are going to need to advocate for conservation, which will be important at all levels. We need to begin at the local level in our communities and states where we can hopefully advocate for change right at home and then

work up to the national level.

The League's structure—boots-on-the-ground conservation—is one of our strengths that set us up well for this type of advocacy. And don't forget the League has a lot of resources and tools in its toolbox to help you, including the League's Action Alerts.

I look forward to hearing and seeing what each of you and your chapters are able to accomplish over the coming months.

CORRECTION

In the list of 2024 Endowment Grants published in Issue 3, 2024, we reported an incorrect amount for the grant to the Harry Enstrom Chapter. The correct amount is \$6,200. We apologize for the error. — Editor

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

Grassroots Advocacy for Conservation Outcomes

SCOTT KOVAROVICS | Executive Director

At our core, the Izaak Walton League is a grassroots organization. Forty thousand members and thousands more volunteers are the League's most important—and impactful—asset. Although your impact might be most visible through conservation on the ground and connecting people to the outdoors, it's just as significant—and essential—for successful policy advocacy.

In this issue of *Outdoor America*, you'll read about the League's most important public policy priorities at the national level. Many of the priorities will be familiar to you, in part, because our work to defend soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife is ongoing. They also reflect the incredible breadth of the League's mission.

I started writing this column with a focus on bill names, committees and process. Then it dawned on me, big picture, we're not advocating primarily for a piece of legislation—we're advocating for outcomes that every American wants for their communities and families:

- clean, safe drinking water
- sustainable farming that keeps soil in the fields and dangerous chemicals out of our streams, lakes and reservoirs

- healthy landscapes that reduce carbon, methane and other pollution helping to mitigate the most damaging impacts of a rapidly warming planet
- abundant public lands—from the park down the street to iconic national parks.

Achieving these outcomes depends, in part, on all of us being advocates. I know it can seem daunting to contact your U.S. Representative, visit your state capital or even speak at a town meeting. Fact is, you're better prepared than you might think. You're a constituent, voter and taxpayer. You know your local environment first-hand and can speak about it.

Effective grassroots advocacy doesn't depend on policy expertise—it depends on personal, local experience shared in your own words.

No one has to be expert on Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to talk about the impacts of accelerating wetland drainage in their community. Many of us can provide examples of harmful runoff from farms or discuss elevated levels of nitrate in our drinking water without knowing



a single provision in the Farm Bill or Safe Drinking Water Act.

Effective grassroots advocacy doesn't depend on policy expertise—it depends on personal, local experience shared in your own words. All of you can do that today. And the League has resources to help—from easy-to-use tools to contact members of Congress about legislation to staff who can work with you to hone your advocacy message.

When reviewing the policy agenda, please keep the outcomes in mind. By mobilizing our greatest asset and staying committed to advocacy for the long run, we can secure a healthy environment for future generations.

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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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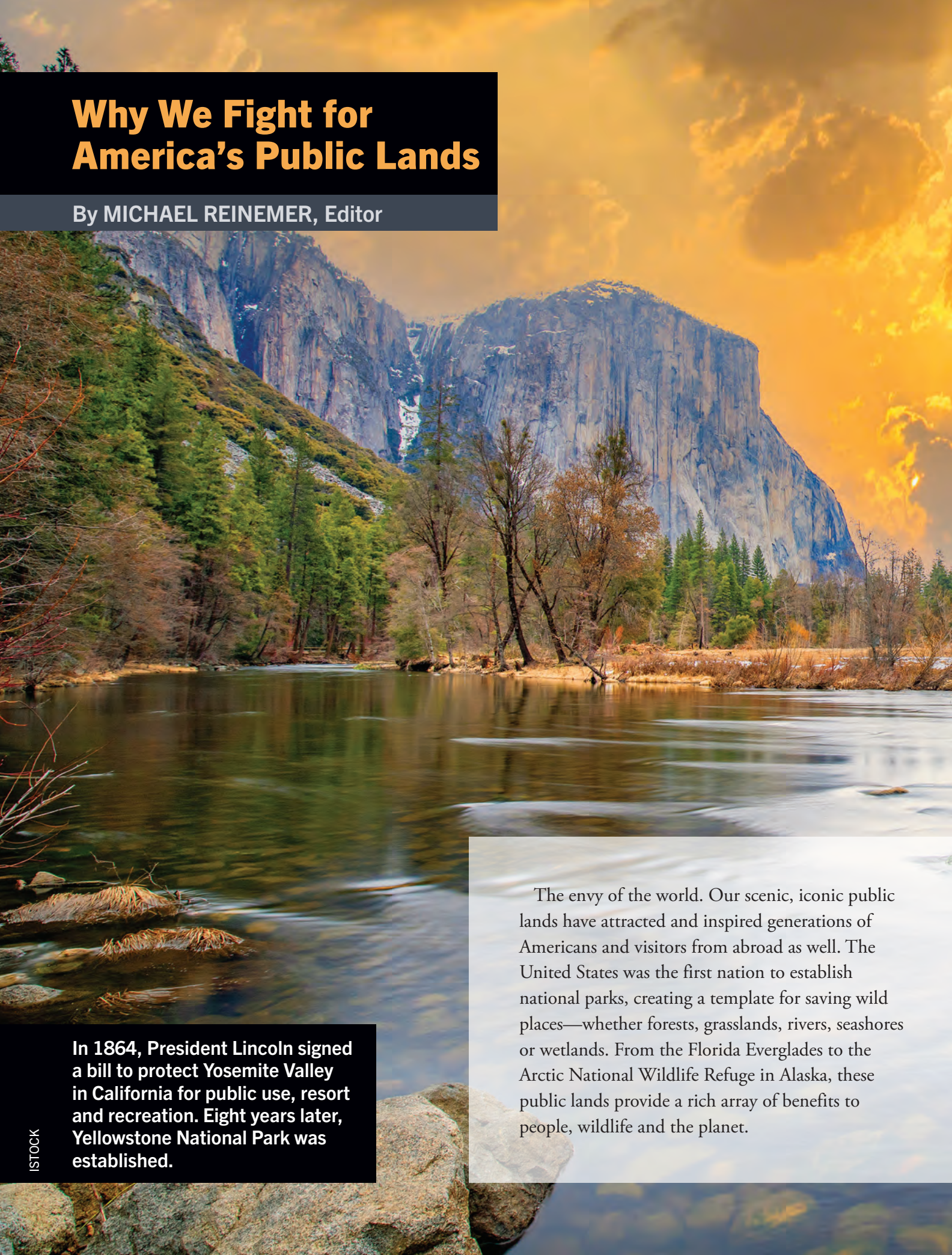
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Izaak Walton League

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AMERICA'S OUTDOORS

Not a member? It's easy to join!

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

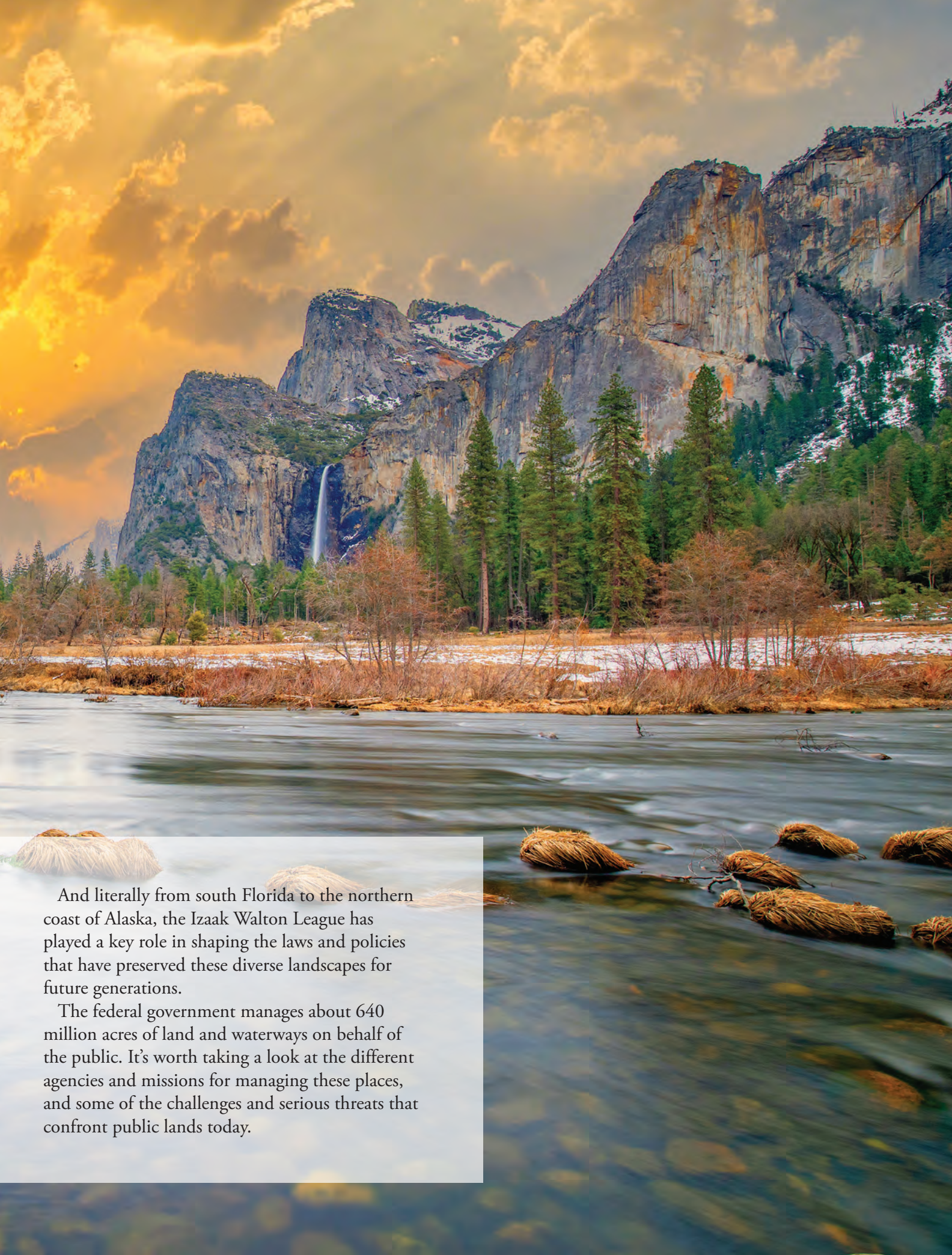


Why We Fight for America's Public Lands

By MICHAEL REINEMER, Editor

In 1864, President Lincoln signed a bill to protect Yosemite Valley in California for public use, resort and recreation. Eight years later, Yellowstone National Park was established.

The envy of the world. Our scenic, iconic public lands have attracted and inspired generations of Americans and visitors from abroad as well. The United States was the first nation to establish national parks, creating a template for saving wild places—whether forests, grasslands, rivers, seashores or wetlands. From the Florida Everglades to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, these public lands provide a rich array of benefits to people, wildlife and the planet.



And literally from south Florida to the northern coast of Alaska, the Izaak Walton League has played a key role in shaping the laws and policies that have preserved these diverse landscapes for future generations.

The federal government manages about 640 million acres of land and waterways on behalf of the public. It's worth taking a look at the different agencies and missions for managing these places, and some of the challenges and serious threats that confront public lands today.



Popular with paddlers, the Clarion River in northwest Pennsylvania is part of the nation's Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

How are public lands managed?

Four federal agencies manage most of these lands: the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The Property Clause in Article IV of the Constitution gives Congress authority to acquire, manage and dispose of federal property.

States, counties and cities often own land used for government offices, schools, parks, ballfields and the like.

The **National Park Service** (NPS) manages our most familiar public lands with two goals in mind: preserving unique places and providing the public with the opportunity to enjoy them. The agency oversees 80 million acres and 431 units of land in the National Park System. The units fall into many categories such as national recreation areas, national parks and national historic sites. They include Yellowstone National Park, Dinosaur National

Monument, Gettysburg National Military Park and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

The **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** (FWS) manages national wildlife refuges in order to conserve their flora and fauna for the benefit of current and future generations. One early, spectacular example is the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, which the League was instrumental in saving from development in 1924. This refuge saved the wetlands along 261 miles of the river that are invaluable to fish and waterfowl. FWS helps to manage migratory birds and protect endangered species; it also enforces wildlife laws. Of the 89 million acres of refuges and “waterfowl production areas” within the National Wildlife Refuge System, 77 million acres are in Alaska.

The **Bureau of Land Management** (BLM) has a mission to manage land for multiple uses including recreation, grazing, timber, conservation and wildlife habitat. Most of the 244 million acres of BLM land is in the West and 155 million acres are available for livestock grazing. A smaller portion, 37 million acres, is managed as National Conservation Lands to preserve scientific, cultural, historical and recreational characteristics.

The **U.S. Forest Service** (USFS), established in 1905, conducts research, advises nonfederal forest owners and manages 193 million acres of land for recreation, grazing and wildlife habitat in addition to timber. In response to indiscriminate clear-cutting in the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia during the 1960s, the League successfully sued the Forest Service for violating the 1897 law that specified what timber could be cut on the nation's forest reserves. The decision in *Izaak Walton League v. Butz* in 1975 led to the National Forest Management Act of 1976, which places some restrictions on clearcuts.

The Forest Service is the only federal land management agency housed in the Department of Agriculture. FWS, NPS and BLM are part of the Department of the Interior. A fifth agency, the **Department of Defense**, manages about nine million acres of land for military bases and training ranges. Several other agencies manage about 23 million acres.

Within and across the four major land agencies there are numerous additional designation categories based on specific use and management guidelines.

National monuments preserve places that have a specific cultural, historic or natural feature and monuments can be managed by seven different federal agencies including the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force. Examples range from the Aztec Ruins National Monument in New Mexico to the Statue of Liberty and Stonewall National Monuments in New York City.

Wilderness areas aim to leave land in its most natural state. Management of these areas prohibits roads, buildings or mechanical transportation while opportunities for outdoor recreation—from hunting and fishing to canoeing and camping—abound. More than 800 wilderness areas protect roughly 111 million acres in 44 states. One example that the Izaak Walton League has championed is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota, the most frequently visited wilderness area in the U.S.

National seashores and national lakeshores preserve shores and islands and provide access to recreation. Three national lakeshores are located on the Great Lakes. Ten national seashores are found along the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf coasts.

Forty **national recreation areas** near reservoirs provide visitors with opportunities for boating, fishing and other water-based recreation. In addition, there are a variety of **national trails** (Appalachian National Scenic Trail is one example) and **wild and scenic rivers** that keep rivers and surrounding land in their natural conditions (the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River, for example).

How we benefit from public lands

The millions of people who visit public lands every year typically make the trip for recreation or to enjoy a natural or historic setting. Public lands, whether forests, rivers or lakeshores, are treasured for their availability for camping, hiking, hunting and fishing.

Conserving natural resources to sustain outdoor recreation was one of the reasons for the creation of the Izaak Walton League. The early years of the League included many victories in protection of our public lands and it remains a top priority for the League.

But some of the benefits of public lands are less obvious and some could not have been imagined in the 19th century when the nation first began to protect these places. For example, climate mitigation and biodiversity are benefits that came into focus more recently.

The Izaak Walton League has played a key role in shaping the laws and policies that have preserved these diverse landscapes for future generations.



Natural resources

For many years, timber production was the primary function of the U.S. Forest Service. Public lands have also produced a wealth of minerals and energy (more on that below). And wild places like forests, grasslands and wetlands also “produce” clean drinking water for a vast proportion of Americans. Forests and wetlands naturally filter and clean water for drinking. Over the decades, management of public lands has shifted from a primary focus on extraction to include conservation and recreation.

Wildlife habitat and biodiversity

To preserve fish and wildlife populations, we need to preserve their habitat. Early conservation groups like the League and the Boone and Crockett Club have long understood this. Today, to conserve our dwindling biodiversity, we need to preserve a wide array of ecosystem types that are essential to specific flora and fauna that have adapted to those types over millions of years. In his book *Half-Earth*, the late biologist E. O. Wilson argued that the survival of humans as well as wild animals will be imperiled if we don’t protect at least half of the earth’s surface as wild places where biodiversity can persist.

The outdoor recreation economy: \$1 trillion

Outdoor recreation on public lands provides millions of jobs and drives the outdoor recreation economy, which has been valued at \$1 trillion in economic activity in the U.S. That includes hospitality, gear and other spending in gateway communities and in industries that support outdoor recreation. Whether for hiking, hunting, fishing, camping or paddling, public lands provide most of the space where Americans can get outdoors for recreation.

Energy production

Public lands in the U.S. produce an immense proportion of the nation’s energy including oil, natural gas, coal and renewables like wind, solar and geothermal.

Public lands and federal offshore waters produced about 25 percent of the nation’s crude oil and 10 percent of its natural gas in 2021. And coal mined from leases on federal land represents 45 percent of the nation’s coal production.



Grasslands, wetlands, forests and other wild places can store vast amounts of carbon to help mitigate the worst effects of climate change.

At the same time, fossil fuels taken from our federal lands contribute about 25 percent of total carbon emissions in the U.S., so the federal government can play a role in the transition to cleaner energy generated on lands owned by taxpayers.

Climate mitigation

Grasslands, wetlands, forests and other wild places can store vast amounts of carbon to help mitigate the worst effects of climate change. These natural places can also soak up stormwater to reduce the impact of flooding, exacerbated by warmer temperatures and extreme weather. In cities, which can become dangerously hot during the summer, urban parks with trees help to cool the air.

Migration corridors and control areas

The nation's network of public lands can help wildlife that need to migrate. This is true for elk, mule deer and antelope that face treacherous annual migrations across a patchwork of landowners in Wyoming. It's also true for plants in Virginia that need to migrate upslope or north to cooler temperatures in order to survive. Land managed as wilderness areas is largely left untouched and can serve as a "control" against which we can measure and understand how wild places deal with challenges, like a changing climate.

Threats to public land

The push to extract public lands from the public hands began in earnest during the 1940s when private cattle and wool interests wanted to own those lands to graze livestock and stop paying a below-market fee to the government for grazing. One breath-taking legislative idea championed by Wyoming Senator Edward V. Robertson and Nevada Senator Pat McCarran was proposed in 1946. Backed by livestock interests, the bill would have given away for free more than 145 million acres of BLM lands (which are owned by all Americans) to the states, where they would have been put up for sale to stockmen and wool growers for as little as nine cents per acre.

A column titled "The West against Itself" by writer Bernard DeVoto exposed the McCarran bill as a greedy land grab. Published in *Harpers Magazine* in January 1947, the column led to a series on the topic that resonated in Washington and across America. McCarran objected to the columns. At the Izaak Walton League convention in Chicago a few months later, the senator said he was in fact a "Theodore Roosevelt" man. A conservationist. But popular opposition to the land grab killed the idea.

There have been more attempts to transfer public lands to private interests. An effort dubbed the "sagebrush rebellion" opposed conservation on public lands in the late 1970s. In 2014, a Nevada rancher—who had stopped paying grazing fees and owed a million dollars in fees and penalties—organized an armed standoff to prevent enforcement of grazing laws.

Today, grazing on public lands is less common and less profitable but ranchers and, more to the point, extractive industries seeking to mine or drill on public lands are very interested in acquiring millions of acres of those lands.

Preservation of public lands has enjoyed wide bipartisan support for many decades. But our public lands still face several threats.

One is funding. Some popular parks and wild places, like Yellowstone, are "loved to death" due to the number of visits. The growing need for updating infrastructure has fallen behind due to underfunding. The cost of fighting and managing wildfires has escalated rapidly in the past decade as drought and

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League-inspired laws like the Land and Water Conservation Fund make public lands more accessible in every corner of the U.S.

our long history of fire suppression have exposed forests and grasslands to catastrophic wildfires.

The bipartisan popularity of public lands, whether in Maryland or Montana, has not prevented attempts to begin the process of selling off or giving away these lands that, again, are owned by all Americans.

Renewed threats to public ownership emerged when Congress convened in January 2025. The House of Representatives adopted a special rule that would make it easier to transfer public lands to the states.

The push to “return” federal lands to western states is specious since western states gave up claims to federal land as a condition of being admitted into the Union when the territories applied for statehood. Also, the Property Clause of the Constitution clearly gives Congress, not states, the authority to make decisions about public lands.

The Izaak Walton League has a long history of policy and advocacy defending the nation’s public lands and it helped to establish one of the most productive laws that helps to ensure Americans have access to those lands: the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Read more about that in “League’s Legacy: America’s Most Successful Conservation Law,” *Outdoor America*, Issue 2, 2021.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FEDERAL OWNERSHIP

Uncle Sam’s role as a landowner started when the 13 original states gave up a portion of their land to the new central government. The acreage of public lands increased as the U.S. expanded. New states formally agreed, typically, to federal ownership of a portion of their land as a condition of statehood.

The Property Clause of the Constitution gives Congress authority over the lands, territories or other property of the U.S.—authority that the Supreme Court has described as “without limitations” (*Gibson v. Chouteau*, 1869). Under the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution, congressional authority supersedes any conflicting state laws.

Throughout the 19th century, the federal government gave states tracts of land for the purpose of funding public education, for example. In 1864, President Lincoln signed a bill to protect the Yosemite Valley in California for the express purpose of “public use, resort and recreation.” A few years later in 1872, a bill to create Yellowstone National Park was approved by Congress and signed into law by President Grant.

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Honoring Ikes: The Inspirations behind the National Award Namesakes

By JANETTE ROSENBAUM, Strategic
Communications Manager

Every year, the Izaak Walton League honors volunteers, leaders and allies with national awards. Some of the awards are named after leaders whose service to the League and to conservation warrant continuing recognition. Who is Judge Tobin after whom the Chapter Volunteer Appreciation Award is named? And who are the other champions whose names now stand for excellence in youth engagement, or a lasting commitment to conservation? Let's find out.

Stanford M. Adams: A long commitment to conservation

Stanford Adams had a long professional career in natural resource management, starting with the U.S. Forest Service and eventually becoming the state forester and director of the North Carolina Forest Service.

Adams was an active member of the League for more than 30 years, serving in many capacities, including as national president and vice chair of the Executive Board. Those who worked with him benefited from his knowledge and leadership. In 2002, he was awarded with the League's highest honor—the Fifty-Four Founders Award, in recognition of his outstanding contributions over

the years to the conservation of America's natural resources.

Recognizing both his lifelong commitment to conservation and his leadership contributions, the Executive Board established the **Stanford M. Adams Memorial League Leadership Award** in his honor in 2009. Each year the Executive Board selects and recognizes the national director judged to have shown a continued commitment to their duties and responsibilities that come with their elected position.

James Lawton Childs: An ardent angler

The James Lawton Childs Award is the oldest and one of the League's most prestigious. Along with the Tobin Award, it's one of the two that are supported financially by the Izaak Walton League of America Endowment.

James Childs and his wife, Edith, were both ardent anglers. Jim passed away in 1927 of Hodgkins Disease. He was barely 30 years old. At the League's national convention that year, the keynote speaker was Herbert Hoover, who was then Secretary of Commerce, and his address focused on the importance of sport fishing and urged the production of more game fish.

Edith Childs took inspiration from Hoover's address, and in



1928 established the Izaak Walton League's **James Lawton Childs Memorial Award**, which included a perpetual trust fund, the interest from which was to be awarded annually to the League chapter that raised and released the most game fish to public waters. She awarded the first bronze Memorial Award and a check for \$200 to the **Minneapolis Chapter** at the National Convention in 1931.

In 1960, the award was changed, with approval of the Childs Trustees, to its current focus on recognizing the chapter with the most outstanding conservation achievement. At that time, the trusteeship of the award was transferred to the Endowment, where the responsibility for the award has remained.

Robert C. O'Hair: Champion for Young Outdoor Americans

An economist and fierce, effective champion for clean water

in Illinois, O'Hair spent the late 1940s as president of the Illinois Division and the 1950s serving as the League's national secretary, executive board chair and national president. He was instrumental in pushing for congressional legislation to create the influential Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, one of the League's hallmark accomplishments in 1958.

At his Studebaker dealership in Mattoon, Illinois, O'Hair used his showroom to display posters promoting the Izaak Walton League's Young Outdoor Americans Conference. That event, which the League launched in 1953, was the first concerted effort by any organization to bring together youth from across the country and give them an opportunity to learn about and collaborate on natural resource conservation. He chaired the League's Young Outdoor Americans Committee for three years until his death in 1958.

Today, the **Robert C. O'Hair Memorial Award** recognizes two chapters annually for their outstanding youth programs. Additionally, these chapters each receive a cash prize to continue their work locally engaging youth in the outdoors.

Thelma "Pete" Reed: Demonstrating a pathway to leadership

Given the nickname "Pete" by her father, Thelma Reed began her long service to the League in 1946 in Virginia. She served as a chapter organizer and president for many years and treasurer of the Virginia Division for seven years. During the 1980s, Reed

became the first woman to serve on the board of directors of the League's Endowment.

For her contributions over a half century, she received the Hall of Fame Award in 1992. Unlike some other exceptional Ikes, Reed didn't create her own namesake award. Instead, the award was created after her death by Sam Gibbons, who was the League's national president in the mid-1990s.

Today, the **Thelma "Pete" Reed Memorial Award** honors members who have given many volunteer hours to the organization and are recognized as up and coming leaders but have not served as a national director or officer. In this way, the award celebrates the potential of members who are bringing new perspectives to the League's work.

Arthur R. Thompson: A model leader for state divisions

Arthur Thompson served as the president of the **Norfolk-Chesapeake Chapter** in Virginia from 1944 to 1950 and then held various positions with the Virginia Division. In the late 1950s, he served as vice chair of the League's Executive Board.

The **Arthur R. Thompson Memorial Award**, which debuted in 1960, celebrates excellent conservation work by state divisions. For instance, the 2023 award recognized the West Virginia Division for its college scholarship program, support for the West Virginia Conservation Camp and installation of 100 fishing line disposal containers in the state.

For many years, the award was represented by an elegant silver

cup that circulated from winner to winner, before it was housed at the national office as part of its archives. Today, winning divisions receive an engraved plaque recognizing their accomplishments.

Judge John W. Tobin: A lifetime of service

When he and his wife Blanche donated their 68 acres along Iowa's Cedar River to the Benton County Conservation Board in 1977, John Tobin said, "Conservation is humanity caring for the future."

Judge John W. Tobin joined the League almost as soon as it was founded and remained an active member for more than half a century. Starting at the local level, he moved up to state leadership in Iowa, then served as the national president in the early 1950s. In 1974, Tobin received the Hall of Fame Award, which recognizes members for long, devoted service leading to outstanding accomplishment in furthering the League's mission.

In 1976, Tobin created an award for Ikes who served their chapters by effectively and continuously pursuing the League's conservation priorities. To support the award, he established a \$10,000 trust fund to be administered by the Endowment. Today, the **Judge John W. Tobin Chapter Volunteer Appreciation Award** recognizes outstanding chapter volunteers. Each year, every chapter can give one award to a volunteer who consistently helps the chapter advance important projects. John Tobin personally exemplified exactly this kind of commitment.



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, 2025.

Visit www.iwla.org/awards

University Students Create Clean Water Awareness Campaign for the League

By Hailey Bangerezako, Arley Evans, Valentina Fala, Maria Fruchterman, Ella Krug, Nick Leubecker, Allie Meiller, Rick Platt, Roger Quiroz, Rafah Shlla

[Editor's note: Communications students at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, created a campaign for the League designed to boost awareness among Gen Z students about water quality and volunteer monitoring. The League greatly appreciates their work, described here by the students, and guidance from their professor, Barbara Burfeind.]

The Izaak Walton League is known for its environmental mission. However, it has been difficult to expand their audience among members of Generation Z (born between 1996 and 2010). For a capstone project at George Mason University (GMU) in Fairfax, Virginia, we created and began a public relations campaign in the fall of 2024 that serves as a blueprint to help the League grow and continue its endeavors by gaining followers, volunteers and interest among college-aged students in this cohort.

The League wanted to focus on students' knowledge of and interest in water pollution, and specifically, chloride pollution caused by excessive use of road salt to treat icy pavement and nitrate pollution, which contaminates water through runoff from agricultural lands and leaking septic systems.

Based on our research and the client's goals, our campaign aimed to expand the League's audience to Gen Z college students 18-to-25 years old because of the generation's strong pro-environmental attitude and draw towards political advocacy. George Mason

University was a good test base to understand how this audience prefers to engage, what messages resonate best and their understanding of water pollution.

Over the last five years, evidence has mounted to show that this demographic is highly involved in multiple forms of activism, especially political activism among as many as 70 percent of this group, which represents approximately 14 percent of the national population. They are consistent users of social media such as Twitter/X, TikTok and Instagram.

Reaching this target audience can be challenging. They are not as in tune with traditional media as other audiences. They opt for online resources instead of traditional sources such as print and are difficult to pin down in terms of their interest and attention.

The awareness campaign included a kiosk on campus that provided free Salt Watch test strips and details about water monitoring.





Creating a model for reaching and engaging college-aged Gen Z students was one of the key goals of the campaign.

Starting with research

Our 10-person team interviewed League staff and conducted secondary research to understand the organization's goals. We also fielded a survey on campus to understand students' attitudes on water pollution. When asked what type of action they would be most likely to take to tackle pollution, the top choice was changing their own behavior. That ranked higher than monitoring water or taking policy action. The most common motivation cited by respondents was achieving better health. The main obstacle to taking action was lack of time.

The overwhelming response from participants was that they were hindered from participating in water testing due to an uncertainty in how to get involved. A lack of knowledge about relevant water testing organizations was the second most common

This PR campaign points to a blossoming interest among students in the fight for clean water.

response. Most students reported that they would be best motivated by personal and community health concerns. Half of the respondents said that they would be extremely willing to change their personal behavior (e.g., using less road salt or lawn fertilizers) in order to help reduce water pollution. Four out of five students reported that they had no knowledge of any practices on the GMU campus to prevent water pollution, which is an opportunity to fill that gap.

Also the survey revealed that most participants believe the main cause of water pollution is point-source water pollution, in other words, pollution from a specific point, like a pipe, with visible discharges. Only 14 percent could identify the source for their tap water.

We used all of this data to draft measurable objectives, strategies and tactics for our campaign.

ISTOCK

SWOT Analysis

Using existing data for our background research, we conducted a SWOT analysis to better understand the League's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

STRENGTHS:

- 1. Long-standing history:** The Izaak Walton League of America has been actively fighting water pollution for over 100 years, establishing a legacy of dedication to environmental causes.
- 2. Grassroots power:** The League can mobilize volunteers and gain community support for regional conservation projects and initiatives thanks to its robust grassroots membership base.
- 3. Comprehensive programs:** The organization offers several key programs, such as wildlife preservation, outdoor recreation, and water quality monitoring, making a wide impact in multiple areas of conservation.
- 4. Collaborative partnerships:** The League works in partnership with governmental organizations, other conservation entities, and local communities, expanding its influence through collaboration.
- 5. Contributions to U.S. policies:** The League has helped draft and shape significant laws and public policies that protect natural resources. Some of the most famous and still relevant examples are the Clean Water Act in 1972 and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1968 which still affect the quality of life of the American people.
- 6. Strong advocacy:** The League continues to actively advocate for policies that conserve wildlife, such as the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, demonstrating its commitment to the future of conservation.
- 7. Strategically located chapters:** With a large number of chapters in key areas, the League ensures its efforts are relevant to regions where environmental conservation is most needed.
- 8. Educational outreach:** The League provides educational programs that promote conservation ethics and stewardship, fostering awareness and participation in environmental protection.
- 9. Volunteer engagement:** The organization has a strong volunteer network, fostering hands-on community involvement in conservation activities such as water monitoring.

WEAKNESSES:

- 1. Perception of conservation vs. preservation:** Some critics question the League's environmental motives, viewing its conservation approach (which allows sustainable use of wild places) as less committed than strict preservation.
- 2. Website navigation:** The slightly disorganized layout of the website makes it difficult for visitors to find important information, such as membership or how to start a chapter.
- 3. Public visibility:** There is a general lack of public awareness about the League's mission and achievements, which could hinder its ability to attract new members and volunteers.
- 4. Lobbying and advocacy efforts:** It is unclear to the general public if the League engages in lobbying and actively promoting environmental bills, which could limit its influence in shaping public policy.
- 5. Membership:** The general age of its membership is 50-plus, potentially leading to a decline in membership and relevance in future years unless steps are taken to engage younger generations.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- 1. Online identification apps:** The League currently has an app that volunteers can use to identify organisms they find while testing water quality called Creek Critters, and this digital application can help the League further its connections with Gen Z.
- 2. Gen Z's interest in activism:** Current college-aged students have a strong interest in activism when it comes to causes they care about, including environmental topics like climate change. With messaging specific to Gen Z and emphasis on digital communications, the League has a strong opportunity to engage younger generations in water quality and protection.
- 3. Social media presence:** While the League currently has a social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and X, we believe that it could benefit from a greater and more unique presence. We believe that by tailoring and repurposing the content they post to each platform to the specific needs of that platform, they will be better able to reach their audience.

THREATS:

1. Changing political world: Depending on which candidates and which parties hold power, the policy work that the Izaak Walton League wishes to do could be impacted. Policy concerning environmental action and water conversation could become either easier or harder to pass depending on the outcome of each election cycle. It is important to maintain a non-doom messaging and neutral political status to have general support regardless of its members' or volunteers' political affiliation.

2. Economic changes: Similarly to the changing political world, the state of the economy could potentially be a threat to the League. It is a non-profit and relies strongly on member donations. If economic status were to greatly change and members were no longer able to give, it could be detrimental to the work of the League and their ability to carry out fundamental tasks, such as providing water quality testing kits for free to volunteers.



As part of the awareness campaign, League Conservation Director Jared Mott appeared on the university's cable news program to discuss the importance of water monitoring.

Goals for the campaign

Our campaign features four main goals with supporting objectives:

Increase awareness about water pollution and contaminants

- Educate college students (18-25 years old) about potential water contaminants, using George Mason University as a model.
- Increase awareness of the water pollution issue by approximately 20 percent among the target audience over the course of the next year.

Inform the audience about how they can help protect clean water

- Host an educational event within the year to facilitate sharing information among the target audience (GMU students).

Influence the audience

- Influence 20 percent of the target audience that interacted with our campaign to change personal behavior that can help reduce water pollution by this year's end.

Motivate the audience to participate in water conservation

- Motivate 10 percent of the target audience to personally participate in water conservation efforts over the course of this year.

An on-campus campaign

Our awareness campaign employed a variety of media to reach students. We conducted a social media campaign on Instagram where we presented authentic, visual content made in vlog style (video blog) that generated positive responses and engagement.

We successfully pitched a story to campus media and had an article published in the George Mason student newspaper, the *Fourth Estate*, with over 300 views, and had an interview with Jared Mott, the League's conservation director, on the Mason Cable Network. The article and interview covered basic information about the sources of water pollution and steps that volunteer scientists can take to reduce salt and nitrate pollution in their waterways, including the League's hallmark programs Save Our Streams, Salt Watch and Nitrate Watch.

Another tactic was direct student outreach where we held an in-person event at the GMU Johnson Center in November with participation by Maggie Dombroski, the League's Mid-Atlantic Save Our Streams Coordinator. Thanks to the high level of foot traffic, we reached about 100 students in a three-hour time span, gave out 70 Salt Watch kits and signed up 24 students to the League's e-newsletter.

Emotionally compelling, visually engaging

By combining emotionally compelling language with visually engaging content, this campaign aimed to inspire action, raise awareness and foster a deeper connection between the audience and our campaign’s mission. Our approach emphasizes clarity, relatability and action steps ensuring that every message, whether in person or online, motivates our target audience to participate in water conservation efforts.

In our flyer advertising our GMU kiosk to discuss the Izaak Walton League, we decided to use a more exciting verbal message of, “come find out what is in your water,” because we found it to be more appealing than saying “come to our table.” The team explored ideas that would get students’ attention and draw them to the kiosk.

Results and recommendations

Through outreach at our event, university news and social media, our team observed a high level of interest in taking action against the harms of water pollution. These results show a promising starting point for the future of clean water

Young people are the backbone and future of environmental action.

programming on the George Mason campus and suggest that more outreach with other universities will help to benefit the League’s future advocacy partnerships with younger generations. Young people are the backbone and future of environmental action and, therefore, a valuable target audience for the League. Our team strongly recommends that the formula of research, conducting events and providing informative content be repeated for other universities to increase water pollution awareness among college students. We also recommend that the League continue its presence at George Mason University, based on the high level of student interest. Altogether, this PR campaign points to a blossoming interest among students in the fight for clean water.

Authors, all GMU students: Hailey Bangerezako, Arley Evans, Valentina Fala, Maria Fruchterman, Ella Krug, Nick Leubecker, Allie Meiller, Rick Platt, Roger Quiroz, Rafah Shlla.

PRIMARY RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Major findings, interpretation:

Among 55 responses, 70 percent were female and 30 percent were male. About 70 percent of the respondents were Communication majors or in related fields and roughly 12 percent were Psychology majors. Respondents’ ages ranged from 18 to 60 years old.

What words come to mind when you think about water pollution?

- Industrial waste and factories (24%)
- Trash, litter, and plastics (20%)
- Agricultural runoff (18%)
- Sewage and wastewater (13%)
- Runoff from roads and gas stations (13%)
- Oil and chemical spills (9%)

How concerned are you about water quality?

- Not concerned (7%)
- Slightly concerned (26%)
- Moderately concerned (46%)
- Concerned (15%)
- Very concerned (7%)

What would motivate you to participate in water testing?

- Better health (26%)
- Preventing contamination (26%)
- Improved water quality (21%)
- Money (16%)
- Care about my community (11%)



The authors conducted research and crafted a comprehensive communications plan working with GMU professor Barbara Burfeind and League staff who posed with the students.

CONCLUSION

Key Takeaways:

- Students are interested.
- Expand to other campuses in Virginia and along the East Coast.
- Boost social media presence to reach Gen Z.
- Continue events, surveys, and partnerships to inspire action and track campaign impact.

Creative Spark PR



Your Endowment in Action



Chapter members, Scouts and other volunteers plant native trees including 2,000 chestnut hybrids donated by the American Chestnut Foundation.

A Legacy of Conservation and Collaboration in Ohio

By Central Ohio Chapter

The **Central Ohio Chapter** of the Izaak Walton League of America has a long-standing tradition of promoting conservation and engaging youth in outdoor education.

Throughout its history, the chapter has focused on environmental stewardship, community involvement and scientific research to preserve Ohio's natural biological landscapes. (Originally chartered in 1952 as the Franklin County Chapter, the organization underwent several name changes

before becoming the Central Ohio Chapter in 2015.)

A history rooted in conservation

The Chapter does not own property, so meetings were held in locations ranging from barbershops to the Columbus Zoo Education Building. A significant milestone occurred in 1987 when the Izaak Walton Columbus Zoo Nature Preserve was dedicated by renowned zookeeper Jack Hanna, made possible in part through a grant from the **Izaak Walton**

League of America Endowment.

The Endowment funded construction of a wildlife observation blind at the preserve. This partnership with the Columbus Zoo resulted in the Chapter and Ohio Division holding meetings and activities on-site for many years after the dedication.

Environmental surveys and studies

In 2015, the Chapter's efforts became heavily focused on the Upper Alum Creek in

Morrow County, where a pivotal conservation partnership with Appalachia Ohio Alliance (AOA) was formed. AOA, a conservation land trust, acquired 400 acres of forested land along Alum Creek, ensuring its long-term protection. Today, most of the Chapter's conservation efforts and social activities take place within this preserved corridor, making it a hub for ecological research, habitat restoration and community engagement.

Dating back before 2017, the Central Ohio Chapter has conducted an array of biological and environmental surveys to

monitor and protect native species. These studies have been carried out in collaboration with various scientific institutions and conservation organizations, yielding important data on local wildlife and ecosystems.

Invertebrate and fish surveys conducted in partnership with Midwest Biodiversity Institute and MAD Scientist provided critical data on aquatic invertebrates and fish populations in Upper Alum Creek.

Bat surveys conducted in partnership with the Ohio Division of Wildlife have focused on populations and habitat

conservation. Professional surveys conducted in the summers of 2021 and 2024 identified two federally endangered bat species—the northern long-eared and tricolored bats.

The Chapter also performed a botanical survey of local flora, a snake survey and the iNaturalist species list, which is a public, crowd-sourced initiative, which documented more than 3,000 species observations in Upper Alum Creek.

Collaboration and restoration projects

The Central Ohio Chapter's conservation work is deeply rooted in collaboration with a network of organizations dedicated to restoring native habitats and biodiversity. Collaboration partners have included the U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station, 1st Energy Green Team, Scouts and the American Chestnut Foundation.

The Chapter has been planting native trees along the Upper Alum Creek corridor since 2000, with an increasing focus on large-scale restoration efforts. In 2024 alone, 2,500 trees were planted, and ambitious plans for 2025 include planting an additional 7,500 native trees.

The Upper Alum Creek watershed is a key focus for conservation efforts. Ongoing Salt Watch and Nitrate Watch programs have allowed the Chapter to track water quality and advocate for sustainable land-use practices.



Members of the Central Ohio Chapter installed a roosting or nesting tower for chimney swifts, *Chaetura pelagica*.

The Central Ohio Chapter has always prioritized youth involvement and community education. Volunteers, including local youth groups and Scouts, play a vital role in conservation projects, tree plantings and scientific surveys. By engaging the next generation in hands-on environmental work, the Chapter ensures long-term sustainability and fosters a passion for conservation.

Technology and innovation in conservation

The Chapter has leveraged grants from the Izaak Walton League of America Endowment and DNO Inc. to purchase

GPS technology, allowing members to accurately map tree plantings and track forest recovery. With the guidance of GEOACE, this data is being used for future monitoring of tree health and growth, demonstrating our commitment to scientific innovation in

For those passionate about conservation, volunteering, or supporting these efforts, there's always an opportunity to get involved.

ecological restoration. As the Chapter continues its legacy of conservation, new initiatives, research and restoration projects

are always on the horizon. Through their work along the Upper Alum Creek corridor, members of the Chapter are not only preserving the natural beauty of Ohio but also ensuring that future generations will inherit a thriving, biodiverse landscape.

For those passionate about conservation, volunteering, or supporting these efforts, there's always an opportunity to get involved.

To learn details about the Endowment and grant deadlines, see the ad on page 48 and visit iwla-endowment.org.



The Chapter used grants to purchase GPS technology to help map tree planting and track forest recovery.



Winter Salt Awareness Week Reaches Volunteers across the U.S.

By MICHAEL REINEMER, Editor

Scott Kovarovics talks about the League's work to reduce chloride pollution. City of Gaithersburg, Md. employees who work on snow removal and salt application (in yellow overcoats) were among the Salt Awareness Week participants.

In January, groups across the U.S. and Canada held discussions to raise awareness about the dangers of and solutions to road salt pollution during Winter Salt Awareness Week. Abby Hileman, the League's Salt Watch coordinator, kicked off webinars watched by more than 1,000 people, and the League collaborated with a wide array of government and nonprofit groups.

While salt keeps our roads safe during icy weather, using more than needed comes at a steep price to our waterways, infrastructure and drinking water. Winter salt runs off the roads and becomes a permanent pollutant in our soils and waterways. There is no feasible way to remove salt once it enters the environment.

Yet private and government efforts to treat ice mean that between 20 and 30 million tons of road

salt are spread on sidewalks, roadways and parking lots each year in the U.S. High levels of chloride, a component of road salt, pose health hazards to humans and aquatic life. And road salt corrodes structures and property including bridges, drinking water pipes and vehicles.

To monitor this problem, the League's Salt Watch program has collected more than 3,600 test results so far this winter from local waterways and tap water. Of results submitted, 14 percent showed salt levels in the poor range (100-230 parts per million, which is above naturally occurring levels) while another 14 percent fell into the toxic range (230-plus ppm, levels that are toxic for freshwater aquatic life). Visit saltwatch.org for details.

MICHAEL REINEMER

Open house at League headquarters

On January 31, the League hosted a public event to raise awareness around the issue of road salt pollution with partner organizations including Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, Rock Creek Conservancy, Nature Forward, Northern Virginia Regional Commission, Maryland Department of the Environment, WSSC Water, Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

At the event, League Executive Director Scott Kovarovics noted that elevated chloride levels

have a corrosive effect on the estimated 10 million lead drinking water lines serving American homes, schools and businesses. “There is no safe level of lead consumption for any person—not just children, anyone. And for people on low- or no-sodium diets, few, if any, think about drinking water as a source of sodium.”

Kovarovics said an informed public can support adoption of best practices in ice control and advocate for the protection of freshwater resources.

During the event, Abby Hileman took the attendees out to test chloride levels in Muddy Branch—a local waterway that drains into the Potomac River.



Abby Hileman describes the national Salt Watch program to a TV reporter.

Winter Salt Awareness Week: 16 events, 7 states

A series of webinars and events were held during the week. For example, Ted Diers of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, Cara Hardesty of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and Bryan Gruidl from Bloomington, Minnesota, spoke about policy solutions that have been enacted to address various facets of the problem. Friday was a “Local Salt Monitoring” day with at least 16 events in seven states (Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin).



Luis Maya from the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission shows the 41 percent chloride increase in the Potomac River and the 102 percent chloride increase in the Patuxent River over the past three decades. The Potomac and Patuxent are the sources of drinking water for millions of people in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, DC.

A broad range of partners from regional governments and nonprofit groups participated in the Salt Awareness Week open house at League headquarters in Gaithersburg, Md.



MICHAEL REINEMER (2)



Taking a water sample from Muddy Branch, Abby Hileman describes the chloride reading from a Salt Watch test strip. The chloride concentration measured in this test exceeded 650 ppm — almost three times greater than the level the U.S. EPA defines as toxic for aquatic life.

Get involved! Join the Salt Watch.
www.saltwatch.org



SALT WATCH™
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

A Common-Sense Agenda for Conservation for the 119th Congress

By JARED MOTT, Conservation Director



Protecting What Matters Most

For more than a century, the Izaak Walton League of America has worked to safeguard the lands, waters and wildlife that define our outdoor heritage. As we step into a new presidential administration and new congressional session, the urgency to act has never been greater.

Across the country, water pollution, habitat loss and climate change continue to threaten the natural

resources that sustain us. But we are not bystanders. For over a hundred years, the League's members have been advocates, stewards and protectors of the great outdoors.

Our goal is clear: secure long-term conservation success through decisive policy action, ensuring that future generations inherit a thriving natural world.

Call to Action

The road ahead is challenging. But no problem is unsolvable and in every case we know precisely what policy is needed. Our priorities are rooted in science and driven by the commitment of outdoor enthusiasts, conservationists and everyday Americans who recognize the value of leaving a better outdoor America for future generations.

Together, we can achieve the following:

- **Pass a conservation-focused Farm Bill** that prioritizes soil health, wetland restoration, and reductions in agricultural runoff to protect waterways.
- **Restore Clean Water Act protections** to ensure that wetlands and tributary streams remain safeguarded from pollution and degradation.
- **Enact the Recovering America's Wildlife Act** to provide critical funding for proactive wildlife conservation, keeping species from reaching endangered status.
- **Support legislation for grassland conservation** to preserve one of our nation's most imperiled ecosystems, vital for biodiversity and carbon storage.
- **Expand investments in clean energy infrastructure** while ensuring responsible siting that minimizes harm to wildlife habitats.
- **Fund large-scale ecosystem restoration** in critical watersheds such as the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Mississippi River and Ohio River to reverse decades of pollution and habitat loss.
- **Oppose efforts to privatize or sell off federal public lands**, keeping millions of acres open for recreation and conservation.
- **Strengthen grassroots advocacy and conservation programs** that empower local communities to take an active role in protecting their natural resources.

Policy Goals that Reflect America's Values

Transforming Agriculture for Future Generations

Farming is at the heart of America, but without sustainable practices, our land and water resources suffer. The Farm Bill is more than an agricultural policy; it's really a clean water, wildlife and climate mitigation bill. By implementing policies that support healthy soil, clean water and resilient landscapes, we can create a system that benefits farmers, consumers and the environment.

Action:

- We must push for conservation incentives. Two examples: the "Good Farmer Discount" that encourages practices that build healthier soils and reduce water pollution and a State and Tribal Soil Health Grant Program that helps producers transition to more regenerative farming practices.

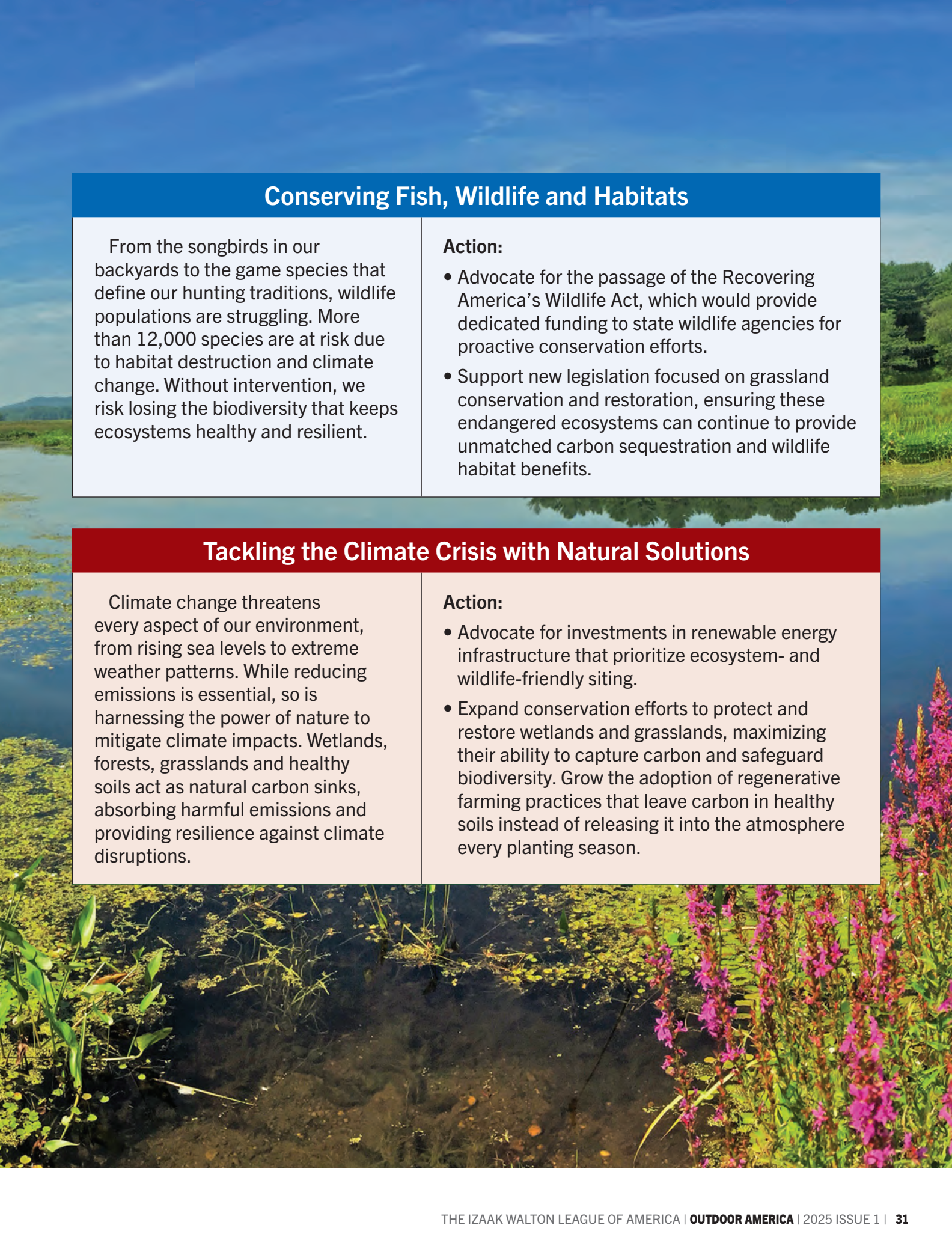
Protecting and Improving Drinking Water

Water sustains all life and is the north star for the League's conservation efforts. Yet pollution from industry, agriculture and urban development continues to compromise drinking water across the nation. Recent court rulings, such as *Sackett v. EPA*, have stripped protections from vital wetlands and tributary streams, leaving the drinking water for millions of Americans vulnerable to life-threatening pollution.

Action:

- We need congressional action to restore the Clean Water Act's authority, ensuring that all waterways remain protected and safe for human consumption and wildlife.

**Our goal is clear:
secure long-term
conservation success
through decisive policy
action, ensuring that
future generations
inherit a thriving
natural world.**



Conserving Fish, Wildlife and Habitats

From the songbirds in our backyards to the game species that define our hunting traditions, wildlife populations are struggling. More than 12,000 species are at risk due to habitat destruction and climate change. Without intervention, we risk losing the biodiversity that keeps ecosystems healthy and resilient.

Action:

- Advocate for the passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which would provide dedicated funding to state wildlife agencies for proactive conservation efforts.
- Support new legislation focused on grassland conservation and restoration, ensuring these endangered ecosystems can continue to provide unmatched carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat benefits.

Tackling the Climate Crisis with Natural Solutions

Climate change threatens every aspect of our environment, from rising sea levels to extreme weather patterns. While reducing emissions is essential, so is harnessing the power of nature to mitigate climate impacts. Wetlands, forests, grasslands and healthy soils act as natural carbon sinks, absorbing harmful emissions and providing resilience against climate disruptions.

Action:

- Advocate for investments in renewable energy infrastructure that prioritize ecosystem- and wildlife-friendly siting.
- Expand conservation efforts to protect and restore wetlands and grasslands, maximizing their ability to capture carbon and safeguard biodiversity. Grow the adoption of regenerative farming practices that leave carbon in healthy soils instead of releasing it into the atmosphere every planting season.

Policy Goals that Reflect America's Values

Preserving America's Iconic Ecosystems

Some of our most cherished landscapes are under siege—from pollution, invasive species and the relentless push for development. The Mississippi and Ohio rivers, the Chesapeake Bay and the Great Lakes are ecological treasures and economic powerhouses, yet they remain at risk. America's 640 million acres of public lands are under attack—from underfunding of management programs to undermining the legitimacy of these national treasures.

Action:

- Secure long-term funding for restoration initiatives in key watersheds.
- Defend federal public lands from efforts to transfer ownership to state or private entities, ensuring continued public access and conservation protections.

Defending Conservation Progress

Decades of hard-fought conservation victories are under constant threat. Attempts to dismantle bedrock environmental laws, divert conservation funding and open protected lands to development jeopardize the progress we've made over the last 100 years.

Actions

- Stand firm against efforts to weaken the Clean Water Act and other bedrock environmental laws.
- Ensure that funding for conservation programs remains intact and protected from political interference.

How You Can Make a Difference

Conservation isn't just the responsibility of policymakers—it's a collective effort for all of us. The power to protect our environment rests with individuals willing to take action.

Here's how you can contribute:

- **Be an advocate:** Contact policy makers, use League action alerts and make your voice heard on key conservation policies.
- **Monitor water quality:** Join the League's network of volunteer scientists working to track and address pollution in local streams and rivers.
- **Engage with your local chapter and partners:** Whether it's restoring habitat, advocating for policy change or educating your community, your involvement matters.

Together, we can shape the future of outdoor America. By standing up for clean water, abundant wildlife and thriving landscapes, we ensure that future generations will have the same opportunities to explore and enjoy the natural world as we do today.



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Harmful Algae, Wolf Talk, Least Leases

MICHAEL REINEMER | Editor



About half the nutrient pollution in Lake Erie comes from farm runoff that collects in the Maumee River which empties into the lake at Toledo, Ohio.

Slow progress on harmful algal blooms

Some farmers are trying to reduce nutrient runoff that ends up in Lake Erie. A dangerous bloom in 2014 temporarily shut off water supplies for 400,000 people in Toledo, Ohio and southern Michigan.

One corn and soybean farmer in Ohio invested in an expensive strip till machine that plants solid fertilizer several inches deep into the soil. The investment pays off through lower fertilizer costs and less nutrient pollution washing off agricultural land and into drinking water supplies.

Planting cover crops and employing strip till machines are among the tactics farmers are using to prevent this pollution. Agricultural runoff accounts for

about 80 percent of the nutrients that drain into Lake Erie.

The U.S. and Canada agreed in 2015 to reduce by 40 percent the amount of phosphorus flowing into Lake Erie. The latest data shows a 32 percent reduction so far. But a combination of warmer temperatures and intense rainfall could exacerbate algal blooms.

Spring rains result in what's known as a "spring flush" of nutrients into waterways in agricultural regions. Through the Izaak Walton League, volunteer monitors in the Nitrate Watch program will be measuring the impact of the 2025 spring flush using test strips and reporting data to the Clean Water Hub website.

The League also continues to push for federal policies

that incentivize farmers to reduce nutrient runoff through popular, proven programs that are underfunded.

(Source, *Associated Press*, December 2024).

Seeking common ground on wolf policy

The National Wolf Conversation brings together ranchers, environmentalists, trappers, animal rights activists and wildlife professionals to sit down and listen to each other's views about wolves. Which may sound like a ready-in-minutes recipe for disaster.

But this organization, created to build bridges and respectful relationships, has succeeded in starting both.



The Porcupine caribou herd, numbering as many as 200,000 animals, migrates to their birthing ground along the Porcupine River on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Also bird species from six continents migrate there to take advantage of the short burst of energy during the long summer days that provide 24 hours of sunlight.

The group met in Tucson in February, drawing participants from 17 states and four Tribal nations. Two participants—one an environmental journalist, the other a writer for livestock publications—recently wrote about the meeting in the *Washington Post*.

They said the goal of the gathering was not to eliminate conflict. Or force a compromise. “The aim is to change the nature of the conflict, gradually transforming it from a no-win standoff to a shared struggle for lasting solutions.”

(Source, Michelle Nijhuis and Callie Hanson, *Washington Post*, March 1, 2025)

Going, going... Not going

The 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act required that the federal government hold auctions to sell leases for oil and gas exploration in the fragile, remote Arctic

National Wildlife Refuge. This wild public land hugs the coastal plain on the northeastern corner of Alaska.

Proponents of the provision in the 2017 law predicted it would produce roughly \$2 billion in revenue for the federal government and Alaska government over 10 years. But during the first sale in January 2021 there was little interest in the leases, which only brought in about \$14 million in revenue. The sale did not draw any large companies. All the leases were later cancelled by the oil companies and the Department of the Interior.

The second sale, which occurred during the final days of the Biden Administration, produced nothing. On January 9, 2025, the *Oil and Gas Journal* reported that the “Bureau of Land Management received no bids for the congressionally mandated oil

and gas lease sale offering 400,000 acres in the coastal plain....”

The chief reason for the low interest is the high cost of drilling and transporting oil from the Arctic.

The 2017 law that opened up the Refuge for drilling dismayed conservation groups, which have long advocated for protecting this vital sanctuary for caribou, polar bears and countless birds.

(Sources: *Greenwire*, January 8, 2025; *Oil and Gas Journal*, January 9, 2025)



SOIL MATTERS

Congress Fumbled the Farm Bill—but Our Conservation Work Must Continue

By KATE HANSEN, Agriculture Program Director



Time-sensitive. Timely. An opportunity that won't come around again. Any of those words would catch your attention at work, at home or at school. They signal something needs to be acted upon, and that the chance to do so won't be around forever.

That's exactly the position that our lawmakers in Congress found themselves in at the end of 2024. Just before the holidays, they had an opportunity to invest billions

of dollars to scale up conservation across millions of acres of land. The money was already on the table. There was support from Republicans and Democrats alike. And still, they fumbled in the eleventh hour.

At the time, members of Congress had important business to attend to. They needed to fund the government to avoid a shutdown and address an expired Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is a

broad piece of legislation that directs food and agriculture policy in our country, but practically speaking, it can be a clean water, public health and climate resiliency bill.

Each Farm Bill has a lifespan of five years. The most recent Farm Bill passed in 2018 and expired in 2023. Congress had already extended it an additional year to September of 2024. Once that deadline passed, the entire

agricultural economy—and the largest investment in conservation on private land in America—was in limbo.

A top priority for the League and the conservation community is increasing funding in the Farm Bill for conservation programs. Programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) are proven to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, improve wildlife habitat and more. They are entirely voluntary for participants, who receive technical and financial assistance to implement new conservation practices, and a win-win for American taxpayers who make these investments possible.

Yet, the programs are underfunded and oversubscribed. In 2024, 64 percent of applicants for three popular programs were not enrolled due to lack of program funding. That means nearly two-thirds of farmers, ranchers and landowners who wanted to put conservation on the ground were turned away.

In some states, the situation is even more dire. In Minnesota, only 12 percent of CSP applicants (or 413 out of 3,404) were approved in 2023. In Mississippi, only 8 percent. We all lose out when farms and ranches across the country do not move forward with conservation.

Congress misses opportunity

Recognizing mutual benefits of conservation across agricultural

landscapes and the unmet demand from farmers for financial support to expand conservation on the ground, Congress approved nearly \$20 billion for agricultural conservation programs in 2022.

This surge of funding was an undeniable win. But conservation advocates and members of Congress saw an even bigger opportunity at hand—to put the money into the Farm Bill.

Two-thirds of farmers, ranchers and landowners who wanted to put conservation on the ground were turned away.

Because of the way Congress projects its budgets, putting the money into the Farm Bill would actually grow it for years to come. Doing so would increase agricultural conservation program funding by around \$1 billion annually well into the future—creating a sustained boost for conservation on agricultural lands.

In late 2024, lawmakers had the opportunity to do exactly this. The idea had support from leaders of both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, and bipartisan backing from members in both chambers.

Yet, when all was said and done in December, congressional leaders left the money out of the Farm Bill. American taxpayers, and our water, soil, air, woods and wildlife will be worse off for it.

“I don’t think it’s going to be a part of this deal, which I don’t understand,” said House

Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn Thompson (R-Pa.) in the press. “I argued it should have been done now.”

The League was quick to respond, calling the situation what it was, a fumble. Our natural resources connect us all—the water we drink, the soil that our food system relies on, the outdoors we enjoy. Congress should have made the long-term investment in conservation, but it failed to do so.

Our response was published in multiple news outlets, such as *Outdoor News* (“Farm Bill extension gets cold reception from conservation groups”) and the Cedar Rapids *Gazette* in Iowa (“Congress squanders opportunity for investment in conservation”). Even more importantly, we let our contacts on Capitol Hill know how disappointed we were.

The road ahead

While we hoped for a better outcome, make no mistake: League members and other conservationists played an important part in growing support for these conservation dollars. Over the years, you have answered the call to speak up for agricultural conservation—in letters, action alerts, meetings and more. In late 2024 alone, together you sent more than 350 emails and phone calls to Congress encouraging them to invest this conservation funding.

With a new Congress comes new members and leaders on agriculture. We have a new administration, and with it,



A grassed waterway reduces soil erosion and prevents nutrients from running off into drinking water on a farm near Geneseo, Ill. Farmers can install them with assistance from USDA.

new leadership at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Amid change, our steady approach to advocating for common-sense conservation remains the best path forward. The programs we advocate for are proven to work. There is an urgent need to improve our water quality, restore our soils and recover wildlife habitat. We have many allies in this fight on Capitol Hill and across the country.

In the coming months, lawmakers will resume negotiating

the next Farm Bill. We will continue our work to influence it for the better. The League will advocate for increased funding for agricultural conservation programs and defend them against proposed cuts. We will also press for innovation, like the inclusion of the League's proposed State and Tribal Soil Health Grant program, which would make grants available for technical assistance, financial assistance, on-farm research, education and outreach relating to soil health.

We had a meaningful opportunity to invest in conservation. Instead, congressional leaders chose politics over pragmatism.

To stay updated on agricultural policy issues, be sure to sign up for our "Soil Matters" newsletter by visiting iwla.org/soilmatters.

USDA



SAVE OUR STREAMS
IZAACK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Water Quality Monitoring: A Win for Volunteers and Local Decision-Makers

By **MAGGIE DOMBROSKI**, Save Our Streams Coordinator

Certified VA SOS monitors and Virginia Master Naturalists Carol Kauffman, Elijah Barrett and Regan Williamson conduct a macroinvertebrate survey at Towne Branch in 2024.

Towne Branch, a stream in Christiansburg, Virginia, was “flashy”—which doesn’t mean it was exciting or colorful, it means its level rose rapidly during a rainfall. Additionally, the stream had issues with *E. coli* pollution and sedimentation. Crab Creek, the slightly larger stream that Towne Branch flows into, has been listed as impaired for *E. coli* and sediment since 1996.

To improve water quality and outdoor recreation, the town of Christiansburg devised and completed a stream restoration project along a stretch of Towne Branch that runs through Depot Park. At the time, the park didn’t have much appeal to the local community, according to Tonia Moxley who is a volunteer in the League’s Virginia Save Our Streams program (VA SOS). The Towne Branch watershed is steep, very urban and burdened by a highway that was constructed before stormwater controls.

Christiansburg began a major park revitalization project in 2012. The effort included lifting the streambed and creating step-pools and riffles to slow down the water, restoring adjacent wetlands and planting native trees and plants as a buffer along the streambanks.

After the restoration, members of the New River Valley Master Naturalists got involved to

help manage invasive plants so the newly planted natives could thrive. One Master Naturalist, Carol Kauffman, wanted to get started as a VA SOS monitor and thought that Towne Branch would be a great site for monitoring. Patricia Colatosti, the Environmental Program Supervisor for Christiansburg, agreed, recognizing the opportunity to use volunteer-collected data to track the success of the stream restoration.

Unfortunately, no stream data was collected prior to the restoration, which would have allowed monitors to compare pre-restoration water quality with post-restoration measurements.

Macroinvertebrates tell a story

Municipalities in Virginia are required by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to reduce *E. coli* and sediment in their streams to below a certain threshold—and, of course, they have to prove it with data. As proof, DEQ accepts data about macroinvertebrates, insects that live in fresh water and are affected by the conditions in their home streams.

Through the VA SOS program, the Izaak Walton League trains volunteers to find and identify macroinvertebrates. Volunteers can observe the bugs living in Towne Branch, use those findings to draw

**“Volunteers are our
extra eyes in the parks
and on town property.”**

TONIA MOXLEY

conclusions about the water quality in the stream and provide that data to environmental staff like Colatosti, who in turn send it to DEQ.

Because the data originates from volunteer scientists trained and certified by the League's rigorous national program, it pulls a fair amount of weight with decision-makers. Aside from VA SOS, there is no other volunteer program in the area providing comparably trustworthy macroinvertebrate data.

The monitoring data from Towne Branch has continued to prove helpful in linking stream health to things going on in the very urban watershed. In fall 2023, a decline in macroinvertebrate abundance and diversity turned out to be related to a leak from a water pipe and a resulting influx of mud into the stream. Now that those issues have been resolved, Colatosti is interested to see how life in the stream will be affected. And since it's been demonstrated that sedimentation is bad for water quality as well as macroinvertebrates, Christiansburg is continually working on getting sediment under control.

Encouraging results

Overall, after implementing the more-than-half-million-dollar stream restoration, Colatosti is encouraged that monitoring results are indicating that the stream is doing pretty well. The broader revitalization project has also been a success. Depot Park is now heavily used and features an Aquatic Center, walking trails, a playground, sports fields and a skate park. The town is also looking for ways to use the park to educate residents about stream health and macroinvertebrates. At one of the stream access points right by a riffle, the town installed an educational sign about macroinvertebrates, one of three educational signs throughout the park.

"I'd like to be able to compare our data to other stream restorations to see if design features can be correlated to macroinvertebrate data," says Colatosti. She would encourage anyone who is looking to have their water quality data used at the municipal level to find and reach out to the person in their municipality who is in charge of the

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit, usually someone within the Stormwater Management Division. MS4 permits are issued through EPA's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System. As an MS4 permit manager herself, she said, "they'll probably be thrilled to hear from you." It's a win-win because volunteers get to participate and the municipality gets help fulfilling their requirement to hold public participation events related to water quality.

Plus, Colatosti said, most MS4 managers are already looking at how they can use data collected from these events for another purpose. Moxley, the VA SOS monitor, said that the partnership

has been great, noting that Colatosti has gone out of her way to direct volunteers to places around town she'd like to see monitored, and to help them gain access where they otherwise wouldn't be allowed to go.

"I jumped at the chance to help Carol's team monitor the water quality," Moxley said. "Seeing it improve over time has inspired me to work with Patricia and Carol and other Master Naturalists to get other streams into the SOS program." She says these programs give her a way to contribute to the health of her community.

Moving forward, Colatosti and her colleagues are continuing to determine how to use macroinvertebrate and temperature data to inform decisions the town makes with respect to public land and are hoping to collect data at potential future restoration sites before the work begins.

She noted that environmental volunteerism in Christiansburg has increased over the past five or so years, which she is excited about because there is a lot of public property but the town's staff is small.

"Volunteers are our extra eyes in the parks and on town property," Colatosti says. "Our volunteers know they can call the town and we will find the right person to respond. Their input is valued, and the data they collect is being used."

**Aside from VA SOS,
there is no other
volunteer program
in the area providing
comparably trustworthy
macroinvertebrate data.**



Students can identify big bluestem, indiangrass and about a dozen other common forbs.

A Prairie Classroom: the Outdoors Enhances Learning for Middle Schoolers

By NICOLE C. DORHOUT

“Hey, everybody, look, look, look, look! There’s a northern flicker! See that bird bouncing up and down? That’s a telltale sign of the flight of a northern flicker.”

While this observation might sound like one from a group of middle-aged birdwatchers, it was actually from a middle-school science teacher with his students in rural Iowa.

It was the second week of January, and students in Mark Dorhout’s middle school science classes were returning from their annual January Bird Walk. Going out right after their winter break, the students were among the first of the year to contribute to the Raccoon River Watershed’s annual bird list.

“Give me three minutes of silence,” Dorhout had said. “Walk down that path. See which birds you see and hear.”

Among the birds students identified were the Eurasian collared dove, American crow, blue jay, bald eagle, American kestrel, red-tailed hawk, Canada goose and others. Students recorded their observations in their class nature journals.

“Any time I can get kids outside, it’s a good day.” — Mark Dorhout

The bird walk is just one of many outdoor learning opportunities that the middle-school science students from Panorama Secondary School in Panora, Iowa, have experienced through Dorhout’s Outdoor Education Program. Over the past four years, Dorhout has developed a robust program that includes prairie restoration, citizen-scientist birdhouse building, water-quality testing at nearby Lake Panorama and a major emphasis on appreciation of the outdoors and nature.

Prairie reconstructed and repurposed

Panora is a community of just over 1,000 residents, located about an hour west of Des Moines.

The Panorama School District serves 691 students from Panora, Linden, Jamaica, Yale, Bagley and Lake Panorama.

Dorhout, a board member of the local **Panora Conservation Chapter** of the Izaak Walton

League, was a middle-school principal for 21 years but decided four years ago to go back to his roots and the science classroom. His background in wildlife and fisheries was a perfect fit with



MARK DORHOUT

Sixth-graders dissect a flower and organize the parts.



Mark Dorhout (right) helps eighth-graders learn about horticulture and propagating native plants as part of the ongoing restoration of the prairie.

Panorama, which had started a prairie reconstruction two years before he arrived at the school.

“The prairie has been there for about 20 years but kind of fell out of favor,” Dorhout said. About six years ago, Steve Roe and Mike Delaney—both local Izaak Walton League members—along with Greg Randel, the transportation and grounds director at the school, started restoring it. “When I came in, it was the perfect time to involve our students in the process,” Dorhout explained.

The 11-acre prairie is on school grounds. Five acres sit over a geothermal system that heats the Panorama Elementary School. Another nearby geothermal system heats the secondary building.

Chemistry, ecology, horticulture

On a recent walk back from Lake Panorama, Dorhout could be heard explaining that process to

students. “You may not know it, but the heat under your feet in this alfalfa field is what’s keeping us warm in our classroom,” he said.

Students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades spend about 50 lessons outside during their three years of middle-school science classes. Along with that, about an additional 100 class periods will be used to support this learning. Some activities, such as the bird walk, are done by all grades, while other projects are specific to a particular level.

In sixth grade, students connect their classroom study of chemistry to water quality at Lake Panorama. “We make a connection between pure science and the outdoors,” Dorhout said. “We study chemistry and polyatomic ions. Water has nitrates or nitrites in it, which impacts water quality. That leads us into the nitrogen cycle and how it cycles



Each student takes home a birdhouse, which are constructed for bluebirds and wrens.

throughout nature. While studying these concepts, we go out and do water-quality testing at the lake.”

The focus of the seventh-grade year is ecology, with an emphasis on birds and soils. Dorhout said, “A big chunk of seventh grade is ecology. We look at the water cycle and rock cycle. We then study biology on earth. That’s why we do a bird project. We make bluebird and wren houses.

“Every student gets to take a birdhouse home. They become citizen scientists, recording data every two weeks about their birdhouse over the next two years.”

“In eighth grade, our emphasis is on the prairie specifically,” Dorhout said.

“We learn how to grow plants. We grow native plugs and put them in the prairie. We look at biodiversity. A big chunk of their class is about climate change and the human impact that contributes to climate change.”

With cooperation from Panorama’s agriculture teacher Steve Hameister, the eighth-graders use part of the Panorama greenhouse to plant prairie seeds and then transfer those plugs to the prairie. Students learn about diverse prairie plants and can identify several plants. “All the students can identify big bluestem, Indiangrass and little bluestem, along with about a dozen other common forbs,” Dorhout said.

“This world is the students’ and will be their responsibility to maintain.”

Away from computer screens

Other outdoor-ed activities include traveling to Delaney’s nearby native prairie to harvest seeds,

studying the Lake Panorama dam, studying ice on the lake and learning how to be observant.

Dorhout uses traditional classroom methods but is also a big believer in integrating the whole student. “We use nature journals. We try to use drawing and art, as well as words, to record our findings. Drawing is a way to open the brain to see things differently,” he said.

Each time the students go outside for a lesson, they do a brisk walk for 10-15 minutes out to the prairie and another brisk walk back. Dorhout sees that walking time as valuable in and of itself.

“Students spend a lot less time outside than in previous generations. Screens are a major reason for that. Any time I can get kids outside, it’s a good day. On the days we go outside, the other middle-school teachers report that the students are calmer and more ready to learn,” he said.

Eighth-grader Caleb Prescott enjoys the walks. “It’s fun,” he said. “I enjoy going outside and walking to the lake. We went to the dam and collected water for water samples. We were looking at water quality and whether it was good or bad. I like getting fresh air. I like being outdoors and seeing all the birds and the environment. I think it gives people a chance to see what it’s really like being outside.”

Colin Lestina, also an eighth-grader, especially enjoys learning about birds. “You’ll learn a lot about different types of birds and their feeding processes and their eggs,” he said. “You open up the birdhouse

and examine how many eggs there are and what type of nest it is. You can tell if there's been one bird or multiple birds in it."

Many students have not spent much time in nature, but most seem to enjoy the time outside. Dorhout said, "The vast majority of students love the outdoor-ed days. Our attendance is good on those days."

"Sometimes the students get the idea that going outside is getting away with something or goofing off. I'm OK with their thinking that. Whatever it takes to get them out in nature."

Creating a legacy for students

The concept of a "legacy prairie" is one of Dorhout's major emphases, as is the idea that this world is the students' and will be their responsibility to maintain.

"We talk about passing this world forward to the next generation," Dorhout said. "In 20 years, many of these students will be parents. I ask, 'What are you going to do for your kids? What are you doing for this world for them?' We also plant specific species each year so that the students can go back in future years and say, 'I planted that.'"

It seems that the idea of passing on knowledge is working. Eighth-grader Jacey Glade said she's more likely to go outside than she used to be, and she's sharing what she learned with her siblings who are three, seven and eight.

"We get to experience things in real life instead of photos," Glade said. "Now, when I have nothing to do, I will find myself outside and looking at more things and playing more and teaching my siblings about things that I learned that they wouldn't know."

Lestina said the outdoor-education program has changed the way he sees the world. "It teaches you how to plant things, pick seeds, teaches you about lots of different kinds of plants, even some you've never seen before. It makes kids want to find more. It makes you very curious about what else is out there," he said.

"You see [the world] as a very beautiful place and a very calming place because you can hear the birds and the water and hear nature in general. You can feel the breeze. You can hear the trees moving in the wind."

Lestina believes other schools should adopt outdoor education. He said, "Not a lot of kids like to go outside. A lot of kids want to sit inside and be on electronics. Being outside is good for us. I think it should continue to be taught, and I feel like it should be spread across the United States."

Dorhout is aware that the time spent in science class can teach more than just scientific concepts. He believes he has a responsibility to the next generation and takes his responsibility seriously.

"I have only 540 class periods to impact their lives," he said. "What are we going to do with that time?"

Nicole Dorhout is a writer and language arts teacher. She previously worked as a journalist covering education and sports and has taught everything from fifth-grade language arts to college-bound English. She currently teaches at Panorama Secondary School.

Innovations and examples of using the outdoors as a classroom for preschoolers were explored in a feature published in Issue 1, 2023 of *Outdoor America*, "When Mother Nature Is the Teacher: Outdoor Preschools Provide a Path to Learning."

Additional activities are found in the *Engaging Youth In The Outdoors* manual issued to each League chapter. A digital copy is available upon a request to chapters@iwla.org.



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.

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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.

Izaak Walton League of America Endowment

Grant Application Deadline May 1, 2025

Does your chapter or Division have a worthwhile project or program that could use a funding boost? The Izaak Walton League of America Endowment might be able to help with a grant.

The deadline for the 2025-26 grant cycle is May 1, 2025. If your chapter or division has a good project or program and needs some financial assistance check out the Endowment website iwla-endowment.org for detailed information.

In 2024 the Endowment awarded 24 grants totaling \$116,364, providing funds for projects ranging from aquatic weed control to conservation education, to riparian restoration, youth programs and more. **Please note:** In addition to the customary conservation projects and programs, in 2025 renewable and energy conservation projects up to \$2,500 will be considered.

If you have questions, contact George Guyant, Endowment Executive Secretary, at iwlaendowment@gmail.com, (715) 824-2405. Or contact any Endowment Board member.



iwlaendowment@gmail.com
Phone: (715) 824-2405
iwla-endowment.org



Pamela Meara
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Happy Anniversary



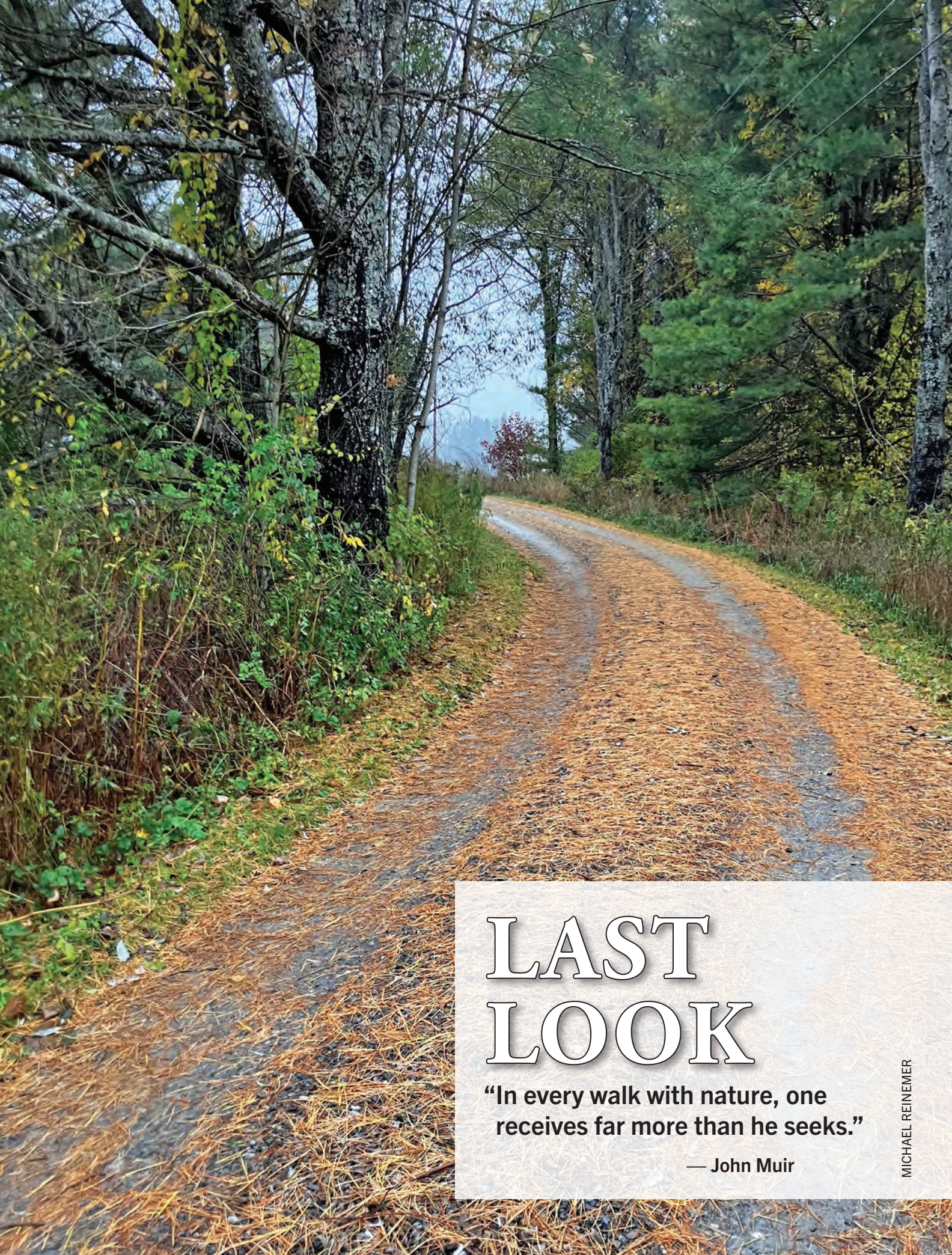
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100th Anniversary *Chartered in 1925*

Brown County Chapter (*Wisconsin*)
Charles E. Piersall Chapter (*Wyoming*)
Columbus Chapter (*Nebraska*)
Madison #16 Chapter (*South Dakota*)
Manitowoc Chapter (*Wisconsin*)
New London Chapter (*Minnesota*)
New Ulm #79 Chapter (*Minnesota*)
Tiffin-Seneca County Chapter (*Ohio*)
Wes Libby Northern Lakes Chapter
(*Minnesota*)

75th Anniversary *Chartered in 1950*

Christiansburg-Montgomery Chapter
(*Virginia*)
Ding Darling Chapter (*Iowa*)
Harford County Chapter (*Maryland*)
Louisa County Chapter (*Iowa*)



LAST LOOK

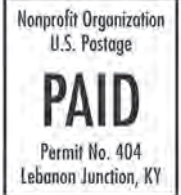
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receives far more than he seeks."**

— John Muir

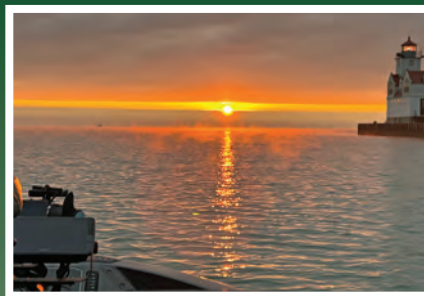
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Please Join Us for the **2025 National Convention** Green Bay, Wisconsin, July 18-19



Defending America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations

In July, Ikes from across the country will gather in Green Bay, Wisconsin for the 2025 national convention. The convention follows a two-day format, July 18-19. The Early Bird Welcome Reception will be on Thursday evening, July 17.

This schedule includes the traditional convention business: national officer and Executive Board elections, votes on policy resolutions, national and membership awards and speakers.

Make hotel reservations early.

The convention will be held at the **Tundra Lodge Resort, Water Park and Conference Center** in the heart of the Stadium District only four blocks from legendary Lambeau Field. It includes two restaurants and a poolside bar, and guests enjoy free Wi-Fi in every room and complimentary parking. The main attraction for kids of all ages is the 30,000-square-foot

waterpark with everything from towering water slides to a lazy river.

To reserve your room at the League's discounted group rate, you must call the hotel directly at 877-886-3725. When calling the hotel, tell the staff you want to make a reservation for the Izaak Walton League national convention in July, and this will prompt them to provide you with the League's group rate.

Before calling to reserve your room, see detailed information about room types and rates at <https://www.iwla.org/news-events/2025-national-convention>. Our discounted rates are good Tuesday, July 15 through Monday, July 21, 2025, subject to availability.

Reserve your hotel room and see more convention details at [iwla.org/events](https://www.iwla.org/events).