



# the Hoosier WALTONIAN



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NATIONAL IWLA AWARD WINNING NEWS

E- Issue

## “OF GRAND DESIGN” By Kevin Howell

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GRAPHIC CREDIT: Kankakee River Awareness Program <http://www.gokankakeeriver.org/>

FOR ALMOST A CENTURY, PEOPLE HAVE DREDGED, DITCHED, AND DRAINED THE KANKAKEE WATERSHED IN NORTHWESTERN INDIANA—TRANSFORMING IT FROM A NATURAL PARADISE TO AN ECOLOGICAL NIGHTMARE. NOW, AFTER DECADES OF CONTENTION BETWEEN CONSERVATIONISTS, LANDOWNERS, AND FARMERS, A PLAN TO RESTORE THE WATERSHED IS GAINING BROADER SUPPORT. WHETHER THE PLAN SUCCEEDS WILL DEPEND ON SHEER DETERMINATION.

Although I grew up in northern Indiana, I never paid much attention to the Kankakee River other than to cross it occasionally. But when I heard last year that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had approved the formation of a 30,000-acre national wildlife refuge in the Kankakee Basin for both Indiana and Illinois, as a reporter I decided to investigate.

My research led me to the Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park in northwestern Indiana, where I met an Indiana member of the Izaak Walton League named Jim Sweeney. His involvement with environmental issues began in the 1980s, while walking pipeline rights-of-way in northern Indiana as part of his job. He started studying the Kankakee River and Grand Kankakee Marsh after joining the League's Griffith Chapter in 1988. He agreed to give me a tour of the area. We

drove to an old iron bridge that crosses the Kankakee River along the Indiana-Illinois state line.

On the Illinois side of the bridge, the Kankakee runs a naturally meandering course due west until it combines with the Des Plaines River to form the Illinois River, which empties into the Mississippi. On the Indiana side, the river is straight as an arrow. Some people call it a ditch.

The Indiana side of the Kankakee, Sweeney explained, was not always a ditch. Before the 1900s, it snaked 250 miles through the state—flowing naturally all the way from South Bend to northeast-ern Illinois. As Sweeney put it, “If you take a handful of

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Although this article appeared in Outdoor America, seventeen years ago, it's message is as relevant today as it was back then.

As of today, little has been accomplished, and the bickering goes on.

Today, as this issue is written, the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers has yet another proposal, working to satisfy the myriad of different factions involved.

TODAY'S GENERATIONS OF IKE'S KNOW LITTLE ABOUT

“WHAT WAS”  
and  
“WHAT COULD BE”,

NOR, DO MOST KNOW OF THE PATIENT WARRIORS PROCEEDING THEM WHO HAVE NEVER STOPPED WORKING TO SUSTAIN THE DREAM!

This issue is dedicated to the “Everglades of the North” and what might again be.

Jay Butler—Editor  
the Hoosier Waltonian

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Spaghetti and throw it on the table, that was the old Kankakee.

By the 1920s, though, dredging of the river and draining of the surrounding marsh for agricultural purposes had transformed the Kankakee into an 80-mile-long water chute. Its currents were sent rushing headlong into Illinois, carrying sediment and other debris from the drained marsh.



The ditching and draining of the Kankakee water-shed had both benefits and detriments.

From an agricultural perspective, the newly drained wetlands created fertile farmland along the river (although much of the land requires water to be pumped in and out of the river, depending on rainfall).



But from an environmental perspective, the activity transformed the ecosystem. Once drained, the marshland—which had acted like a sponge, slowly releasing moisture throughout the year—became more like a sieve. Run-off filled man-made ditches and earned sediment to the deepened, dredged channel of the river. When the river had meandered naturally, the sediment was deposited along the twists and turns. But because the river was now straighter, narrower, and faster, the sediment had no chance to fall out. Instead it drifted downstream to the Mississippi River, where—as soon as it hit the slow-moving water—it built up and formed deltas, blocking both

river's flows and causing Hooding.

Through his work, Sweeney heard about proposals to restore the Kankakee to its original, natural course. Intrigued, he began studying issues related to wetland conservation and biological diversity. The more he learned, the more he became interested in aiding then restoration efforts.

When Sweeney came across the Griffith Chapter in 1988, he was surprised by the League's long involvement in the Kankakee restoration project. Soon after ditching began claiming the river in the early 1900s, Indiana Ikes raised concerns that draining the marsh would hurt both wildlife and the landscape.

The effort to reclaim at least part of the 500,000 acres of Grand Kankakee marshland became one of the League's national objectives in 1933.

Around that time, A. E. Andrews wrote an article in *Outdoor America* titled ***'The Historic Kankakee Marshes.'*** He told of a, ***"Wilderness of fur, game, and fish where American presidents, European princes, and Midwestern sportsmen flocked to fish and hunt prairie chickens. It was a place where waterfowl darkened the skies, where oak and beech trees produced fodder for turkeys, geese, bears, and squirrels, and where red and yellow birches, willows, aspens, cottonwoods, and sycamores amassed in swampy clusters.***

By 1947 a small but important victory occurred when the Indiana General Assembly—under pressure from Indiana Ikes—appropriated funds for the Kankakee River State Park. It was

a start to reclaiming what was once a world-renowned sporting and outdoor recreation paradise.

But the reclamation would not come as quickly as the League hoped. Decades passed with little progress as agricultural concerns and, more recently, concerns for property rights held up restoration efforts. By the 1980s, the battle over Kankakee had become downright bitter. Restoration supporters insisted on protection of wildlife and habitat; opponents demanded control of the water. The ditch remained.

In recent years, some progress has occurred. Since the development of the Kankakee River State Park and the additions of Willow Slough, Jasper-Pulaski, and other wildlife areas on or near the river in Illinois and Indiana, wildlife has begun rebounding. For example, when the marshes were drained, the greater sandhill cranes that had used the area as a migration route and nesting.

By the end of my Kankakee tour with Sweeney last, I was hoping to find someone to interview on the Illinois side of the river. Sweeney said, *'Talk to Ed Mullady. He's been around the river a long time.'* Mullady has lived in Kankakee, IL., for more than seven decades and has *"fished, traversed, and fought for the river"* during most of those years. He is editor of a publication about the Kankakee—the *Sportsman's Letter*—and has developed an atlas highlighting the best fishing spots along the river's entire course.

Although he's not a member of the League, he has worked with Ikes on the Kankakee restoration effort and has witnessed much of the project's evolution. At this year's IWLA National Convention, he was presented with one of the League's distinguished Honor Roll Awards.

Mullady has watched how the floodwaters from Indiana rage into his state, dropping Hoosier silt that chokes the river and causes flooding in Illinois. *"For some time, the river in Indiana moved like a storm through the ditch, supporting very little animal or plant life,"* he says. *"The drained marsh left dying fish, water*

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fowl, shorebirds, aquatic animals, as well as land animals and plant life."

In more recent years, he has seen something else changing—something not readily apparent: The ecology is actually beginning to recover on its own. For instance, isolated meanders that were cut off from the main channel have helped save what was left of the river basin and given shelter to fish. *'The old meanders were left attached to the river in many instances,'* Mullady explains. *"Here, fish have found a place to swim out of the flood waters. These new backwaters and bayous have saved a portion of the area's ecosystem. 'It's amazing that the river has come back—at least where fishing is concerned."*

"These meanders can still be seen from an airplane. In June, I flew with a friend of mine, **Lenard Miller**, over the Kankakee from near its origin to Momence, IL. Sweeney's *"handful of spaghetti"* description is appropriate. As Miller and I viewed those spaghetti strands from above, we contemplated the possibility of canoeing them to see what secrets they might hide.

Another promising characteristic of the Kankakee in Indiana is that the land surrounding it is less developed than it is in Illinois, where the banks are dotted with homes.

*"If you go to the (slate-line) bridge in the summer, when there's foliage,"* Mullady says, *"it's straight, but it's beautiful."* Mullady, Sweeney, and others believe these characteristics, these glimmers of what could be justified.



**George Smolka**, who is a Friend of the Kankakee, an Ike, and a member of the Sierra Club,

says he supports any restoration efforts. Educated in zoology, organic chemistry, and biochemistry, he emphasizes the importance of wildlife as it relates to the Kankakee. *"When you start studying insect ecology you begin to understand how enormously interrelated every little thing is,"* he explains. "Everything affects everything else."

**Jean Hurrell**, another Friend of the Kankakee, studies environmental biology at the Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve in Kankakee County, IL.



She points out an obvious but often elusive point: *"It's the idea of trying to put a value on the water retention resource of a wetland,"* she

says. *"I don't think the average person realizes what that value is."*

She explains, *"That draining the marsh effectively created a hole in what was once a natural reservoir. Water that used to be available year-round now leaves the watershed faster than the rains can replenish it. With the water table lower—and the remaining water being used for irrigation upstream—communities down-stream have less of the resource to tap".*

Mullady puts it this way: *"One of life's most important requirements is water."*



*More and more areas ... are in dire need of it. The Kankakee River in both Indiana and Illinois can be a very important supplier of good, quality water."* But to fulfill this role, there restoration could replenish this vegetation, it would not only help the landscape retain more water—it would provide more habitat for plants and wildlife. Everyone and everything would benefit. At least, that's the way restoration advocates see it would be derelict as a journalist if I neglected to bring into the story the views of those who oppose the restoration plan. To be honest, there is basis for concerns voiced by reasonable people—farmers, homeowners, and others whose lives

could be affected by restoration. So, for this part I'll concentrate on these reasonable folks and skip over the concerns of United Nations plots, resurgences of malaria epidemics, and thousands of people being forcibly removed from their homes, which are unfounded concerns.

One concern is the impact on private land. Residents in several Indiana counties are warned that property acquired for restoration projects will be flooded, forcing adjoining landowners out. This is a valid consideration that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is trying to address.

Tim Bodeen, the USFWS project manager who has been assigned to work on the proposed national wildlife refuge, has also been assigned the job of dealing with these issues. *"There is a lot of misinformation out there,"* he says. *"Some people think we want to flood the entire marsh again. But it will be in bits and pieces and in all kinds of areas—not just wetlands. We have to obey all of the drainage laws, too. We want to work with the drainage boards and the counties."*

But even bits and pieces might include some farmland—a sore point with both U.S. Representative **Steve Buyer** and county commissioners, especially when it involves removing land from the tax rolls, as would be the case with the federal refuge.

Indiana **Senator Brandt Hershman**, who is also Buyer's district operations director on the federal side, explained to me that Buyer is a representative of farmland. *"He's concerned about taking private land out of cultivation until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determines the severity of flooding the river,"* he says. "If federal money is used for a refuge, they should be addressing all of the residents' concerns: the impact on neighbors and local government, of endangered species on neighboring properties, flooding on neighboring properties, and taxes."

Bodeen, Sweeney, and others have calmly tried to allay public fears about the project, but they have a tough sale.

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**Jody Melton**, director of the Kankakee River Basin Commission—which has purchased a 600-acre farm and turned 300 of those acres back into wetlands—notes, *“The main thrust is drainage. People want guarantees that if their land is Hooded something will be done about it. There are also credibility issues if land is taken off the tax rolls.”* In other words, what will make up for lost tax revenue? Although the federal government offers payment in lieu of taxes for federal restoration projects, the funding varies and isn’t seen as guaranteed. Conservationists say tourism would fill the void, but others are unsure.

*“This is something I’ve asked Tim Bodeen,”* Melton continues. *“Why would people favor a bunch of Chicago people coming down here and throwing their trash out, then leaving us with the mosquitoes? The only thing that locals have to compare tourism with are the state areas [such as] LaSalle and Jasper-Pulaski. But those places aren’t developed enough”—they don’t have the hotels, restaurants, and stores to bring substantial tourism revenue into local and state coffers.*

Melton admits that these issues must be addressed before the public could favor the projects. It’s a tough road ahead with Buyer holding funds for refuge purchases until the Corps of Engineers study is completed. And commissioners from four counties are considering or already drafting ordinances to make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for private landowners to sell property for a refuge. Still, most people are willing to see what solutions the Corps of Engineers comes up with for the drainage problems.

In all fairness, the folks living in targeted restoration areas had no part in the drainage of the marsh. They deserve to be convinced, if they’ll allow it, of the viability of restoration.

Smolka said, *“Everything affects everything else. That’s why Sweeney stresses that there are three main objectives: better water, better habitat, and a better overall landscape. He, the League’s Indiana Division, and the Friends of the Kankakee are working with other public and private enterprises to raise awareness of these objectives.*

They’ve already begun work to restore 26,000 acres of wetland and adjacent upland through mostly individual tract projects. It’s part of an even larger effort, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Other ongoing projects include the proposed national wildlife refuge, as well as a Kankakee River Basin Study that was requested by Congress in 1997 and will guide the Corps of Engineers in correcting flooding and erosion problems that result from

dredging. A feasibility report is due in June 2002, and Congress recently approved funding to continue the study through that time.

As my introduction to the Kankakee came to a close last February, Sweeney had one last point to make. Leaving the state line bridge, he said to me, *“I’ve got to take you to a spot I know.”*

Not far from the state line, along U.S. Route 41 in western Indiana, where the highway crosses the Kankakee, Sweeney pulled over at the top of a rise. He turned toward me and said, *“Look back there,”* pointing out over the valley behind us. *“That was once the Grand Marsh.”*

The area has an awe-inspiring vastness. As we gazed behind us where the road gently fell away in a gradual slope toward the river valley, it felt as though we were sitting on the rim of a huge bowl—an expanse that once covered 800 square miles in Indiana and Illinois, forming the largest inland marsh in North America. Where the bottom of the ancient glacier-formed bowl is now covered with roads and farm fields, I could picture vast acres of marsh grasses, prairie savannas, and waterfowl by the thousands, with the river coursing through the valley’s center—the heart of the Grand Marsh.

Although the landscape has changed, the look in Sweeney’s eyes told me that he sees it the way it was. The way it could be again.

- *Kevin Howell is a freelance writer and reporter for the Carroll County Comet/Lafayette Journal and Courier in north-west Indiana.*

**EDITOR: Although Kevin Howell wrote these words seventeen years ago, his words still inspire and indict all who read them.**

**We have several generations of IKES, as well our other readers, who know little or nothing about the Grand Marsh, the treasure of Indiana.**



The issue of flooding in Illinois was around before Kevin wrote this piece all those years ago.

The desire to restore some segment of our history (the Grand Marsh), has been around more than 17 years.

And farmers have been concerned for their farming way of life more than 17 years.

County Government, has been concerned about revenue or the loss of it, since the day Indiana was founded on

December 11, 1816.

Back then many mistakes were made.

Must our children and future children continue to be robbed of their natural heritage?

But back then it was a question of money, and it is still the same today.

The difference is:

We now know the treasure that we have lost.

This issue is dedicated to all of you who might read this, regardless of your leanings.

Isn’t it time that we do something?

*Jay Butler—Editor*

## Years Ago, Indiana and Illinois Took Radically Different Approach's to Harnessing the Kankakee

The Indiana Territory was created by a congressional act that President John Adams signed into law on May 7, 1800. This formed an organized incorporated territory of the United States that existed from July 4, 1800, to December 11, 1816, when the remaining southern portion of the territory was admitted to the Union as the state of Indiana., with Illinois added in 1818. All of this happening quickly, following the westward movement of settlers looking for a better life.

In a series of treaties and land acquisitions beginning in 1816, and into the early 1830's the U. S. Congress purchased land in Northern Indiana belonging to the Potawatomi tribe, as part of the plan of pushing the Indian nations westward. Included, was the marshland through which the Kankakee River flowed.

The farmers moving into the Kankakee Valley that had become Indiana, immediately began to seek ways to reclaim the lands of the Great Marsh. According to **John Hodson, another well known conservationist and a member of the Porter County Chapter,** what the settlers didn't realize was *"what looked like fertile land, was only inches thick with sand underneath"*.

Working on the assumption of fertile land going to waste, land speculators soon saw opportunity to make fortunes by buying up the cheap land from South Bend westward.

They lobbied the Government, and in 1850, the U.S. Congress passed the Swamp Land Act, ceding the area to the new state of Indiana.

This was during the latter days of the Industrial Revolution, and many marvelous machines were being invented.



And one of those was the steam fired dredge, coupling a front hoe steam shovel, built onto a barge, complete with kitchen, living quarters, and coal storage. These were bought by the land speculators and assembled on site at various points of the Indiana Kankakee River.



In a remarkably short period of time they had reduced the Indiana Kankakee into a 83 mile long ditch, having removed approximately 2,000 bends or Ox-Bows in the process.

And the Kankakee Marsh with its plentiful wildlife of buffalo, deer, beaver and water fowl by the thousands had disappeared.

And the face of Northwestern Indiana, had probably changed forever.

So the stage was now set for the different strategies of Indiana and Illinois.

The Illinois State Water Survey of 1983 explained the river history of the two states in this way, *"Indiana's plan was based on increasing agricultural production by effectively draining the wetlands within the basin and the objectives of Illinois were based on conservation of the natural river for recreational, ecological, scenic and cultural use"*.

We can forgive the 1983 Illinois Report for their colorful prose, as historic documents describe the early Illinois goal as *"Securing the drinking water for their citizen's"*. We do know that today, the Indiana land is primarily farm land while the Illinois land quickly became heavily populated with homes along the Kankakee River.



In either case, the Indiana plan reeked havoc



on the Great Marsh, while setting the stage for long-term problems down stream for Illinois that began almost immediately and continues to this day.



In 2014, **Robert Barr** found himself addressing the **Friends of the Kankakee, a conservation group co-founded by Jim Sweeney.** His topic of the evening was the Yellow River. This river, flowing

thru Northern Indiana, merging with the Kankakee, both of whom had been dredged and straightened years before.

Barr, a staff scientist for Indiana-Purdue University in Indianapolis specialized in the study of the health of streams and rivers. That evening, he told his listeners that the Yellow River is the primary source of sand ending up in the Illinois river system. So much so that he characterized it as a *"River of Sand"*, flowing into the Kankakee Ditch, and flowing across the border into Illinois, where the natural ox-bows trap the sand, filling the limestone riverbed, causing flood damage that has gotten worse with the passing of time.

According to Barr, *"The Yellow River, 400 miles in length, was reported by a 2010 study, as the source of 39 percent of the sediment load of the Kankakee River overall, with another 30 percent coming from the upper Kankakee, all ending up in Illinois"*.

According to Barr, *"The entire Kankakee Valley is one large sand dune"*, far greater than can be handled by any of the current



## The Draining of the Kankakee Marsh

IF YOU THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS A PROJECT OF THE U.S. ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS,  
YOU WERE MISTAKEN



A few years prior to the draining of the Kankakee Marsh in 1918 Secretary of War Major General H L Scott submitted a report; examining the effects and impact of draining the marsh. Army Corps of Engineers, Lieut. Col. W V Judson, compiled the

information and wrote the report. Ironically, Judson was a born and bred Hoosier.

The report was to examine the proposed plan to drain the Kankakee Marsh; "with a view to devising plans for flood protection and determining the extent to which the United States should cooperate with the States and other communities and interests in carrying out such plans, its share being based upon the value of protection to navigation."

Soon after Indiana statehood in 1816, Indiana officials looked at the northwest corner of the state to what they perceived as the problem of the Kankakee Marsh.

The success of the Erie Canal, built in 1825, initiated discussion to canalize the Kankakee, drain off much of the swamp and sell the newly "reclaimed" land for agricultural purposes.

The income would be used for much needed infrastructure. Unfortunately, public and private corruption resulted in no money finding its way back to Indianapolis. Indiana came close to insolvency. This near bankruptcy ended these early thoughts of canalizing the Kankakee. However, the concept of using navigation as the reason for "straightening" the river— with the byproduct of draining much of the marsh— was not lost.

**Attempts persisted to build the Kankakee Canal; even after the disaster of Indiana's first attempt to channelize and drain the Kankakee Marsh.**

In the report an unnamed navigation and manufacturing company spent \$350,000 to build three locks and dams in Indiana and one in Illinois for commercial purposes. There was some early success, but by 1884 commerce had ceased. The limestone ledge at Mومence was cited as reason of the failure. Then in 1890 Indiana allocated \$65,000 to cut an 8,649 feet long, 300 feet wide and 3 feet deep excavation of the Mومence limestone obstruction. The efforts had no appreciable impact. Blame was placed on Illinois for not channelizing their end of the Kankakee. In defense, Illinois saw the work performed in Indiana and concluded there were no positive results. It was projected that another \$972,000 was needed for work either under construction or contemplated. The army corps report concluded that a comprehensive plan for channelization of the marsh was necessary for success. By this time it was estimated nearly a third of the 400,000 acres had been "reclaimed."

The report concluded: "the value of protection to navigation which would be afforded by such flood protection as is desired by the people of the Kankakee Valley is in fact negative; and that as a result of the entire lack of benefit to the Federal interest of navigation which the act indicates to be the measure of proposed Federal contribution, the United States should not cooperate with the States and other communities and interests in carrying out any plans for the improvement of the Kankakee River."

Indiana did not heed this report. The State went on to channelize the Kankakee Marsh three years later, with the devastating results forecasted in Judson's report.

Today we continue to struggle with the harmful impact of the channelization of the

Kankakee Marsh.



"the Aftermath" from Kankakee Valley Historical Society, Inc.



Brigadier General William Judson passed away in 1923, five years after the Kankakee Marsh was drained resulting in the disaster his report forecasted.



Article written by  
John P. Hodson

Founder, &  
President

Kankakee Valley  
Historical  
Society, Inc.

And member of  
PPC Chapter



(Continued From Page Four: **Radical Difference**)

methods of retention.

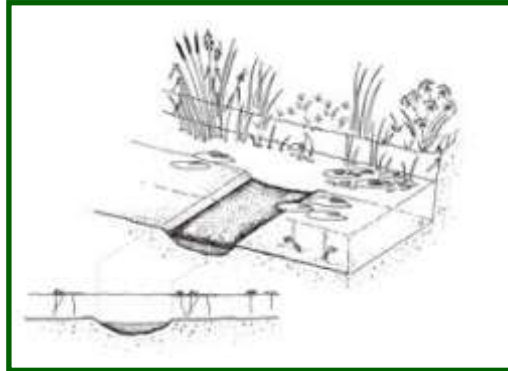
The Yellow River, not so oddly, gained it's name by its peculiar yellow color due to the sand it carried. As it enters the Kankakee, it's yellow color is distinctive, as it joins the more sediment carrying Kankakee, which tends to be more gray in color.

The flow of the sand river is exuberated by increasing amounts of rain in northern Indiana, allowing the sand to be carried thru the channelized Kankakee, without settling along the way. In fact, he said that, "*rain storms of over two inches have increased fifty-percent between 1978 and 2010*".

Barr says that one way to decrease the amount of sand carried away, would be to "*Convince farmers to increase deep-rooted cover crops to hold more water*". He commented that, "*with the change in cover*

*crops, an acre of ground can contain 25,000 gallons of water, essentially creating a giant sponge effect. This would hold the sand in place, while being a huge factor in retaining the water being lost*", and would reduce mechanical irrigation.

Other methods, such as silt traps, frequent dredging and other methods have not worked. In other articles appearing in this



issue, we will examine other thoughts on the reclamation of the Kankakee River in Indiana and reduction of flooding along the Kankakee in Illinois.

CREDITS:

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## The Old State Line Bridge On The Indiana/Illinois Border

**Are we looking at a Bridge that "Settled" or "Was this photo taken at Flood Stage"?**

We are looking at the old State Line Bridge at the Indiana-Illinois Border. On one side of the bridge, the Indiana Kankakee Ditch ends and on the other, is the Illinois Kankakee as God made it, except.....



According to Jim Sweeney, the answer is "No" and "No". The river bed has filled with sand from the "Ditch" just up stream, raising the natural water level to just under the floor of the bridge. Amazing, Huh?



## The Wild Game Of The Marsh

## One Hunter's Account Of Hunting The Marsh In 1869

Thanks to the Kankakee Valley Historical Society

Thanks to the Kankakee Valley Historical Society for this excerpts from an account written in 1869 by a New Yorker, named E. W. Erwin:

*On the 18th day of October, 1869, during a blinding snowstorm, I drove 10 miles to Westfield. N.Y., a (railroad) station on the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern railroad, and bought a ticket to Chicago. I was going duck shooting. I did not know the exact scene of my depredations but would determine that upon inquiry after reaching Chicago.*

Soon after arriving in Chicago, he was directed to South Water Street, the great game market of Chicago: *"Upon arriving there, I saw what to me was a wonderful sight. Commission houses lined the street on both sides and wagon loads of game of all kinds were piled on the sidewalk and hung from the awnings; drays were constantly arriving with fresh supplies and hauling away that already sold. Buyers from hotels and restaurants were present getting their day's supplies. It was a scene of great activity. Carcasses of deer were hanging from the awnings; also wild turkeys, geese, brent, ducks and prairie chickens. This was going on, on both sides of the street as far as the eye could see. We stepped into the commission house of Joyce and Cunningham. As soon as we could get the attention of the manager, I told him I was looking for a place for good duck and goose shooting and asked him if he could advise me where to go to find it. He said, "I surely can. You go to Hebron on the Pan-handle railroad about 50 miles from here. There is the greatest duck and goose shooting I know of." He handed me a package of his shipping tags, "and if you have anything to sell while there, ship to us and we will guarantee quick and satisfactory returns."*

He left Chicago by train to Hebron, Indiana: *"My train (Chicago) left at about 9 o'clock in the evening and arrived at Hebron about 11 pm." The next morning: "It was a bright and beautiful October morning. Upon looking down on the station I saw the platform covered with game. I went down*

*at once to look it over. There lay the carcasses of four deer and bundles of ducks in large quantities, also many geese and Brant. Each deer carcass and bundle of game had a card attached which proved to be one of Joyce and Cunningham's tags. Each tag read as follows: 5 deer, 467 ducks (large), 392 ducks (small). 22 geese, 16 Brant; from Beaubien and Sargent, Hebron, Indiana."*

Soon, it was time for his hunt: *"When we entered the marsh a wild scene met our eyes. A northwest gale was blowing, whipping the tree tops which surrounded an open marsh perhaps three-fourths of a mile across. Ducks and geese were constantly pouring in from all sides. We decided to shoot nothing but geese and Brant. We pushed out into the marsh and took our stations. Beaubien and Sargent each had a boat and going ahead picked their places some distance apart. Mr. Granger followed and put me on the first big muskrat house he came to. He had not proceeded more than 75 yards before a large flock of Brant came pouring over the tree tops directly over him. He gave them both barrels and I saw seven of them fall. That opened the ball and a million ducks and geese rose in the air and began to circle round the marsh thirty or forty feet high."*

(On another trip) *"I boarded with Wm. Fisher, a well-to-do farmer, who afterwards became a banker at Hebron. I put in a few days visiting before returning home. I got acquainted with George Allen, a prosperous farmer, who originally come from my native place, Chautauqua Lake, and married his wife there. He had a large family of children, a large farm and many horses, cattle and hogs. Mr. Allen was a very interesting talker and I think some of the tales he told me would be interesting in connection with this article. He said the first settlers could raise no crops, the deer were so plentiful.*

*He showed me where he had his first 40-acre corn field near the house and the deer came into it in droves of thirty and forty at a time. He would go out in the morning with a*

*dog and drive them out and by the time he got back to the house they would be in the field again. All the other settlers in the swamp suffered in the same manner. But the next winter there came an unusually deep snow. An icy crust formed on the surface that would bear up a man and a dog, but the small sharp feet of the deer would cut through it so they could not run and were helpless. Then the farmers took the opportunity to destroy them. They killed the deer with clubs and drew them on the crust to their buildings. There they skinned out the fore quarters to be fed to the hogs and tied the skin around the hind quarters or saddle. This snow lasted nearly a week and they killed hundreds of deer."*

He closes this account with: *"At the time of which I write conditions were rapidly changing. The trapper was giving way to the shooter,*

*wealthy sportsmen from Chicago (only 50 miles away) were flocking to the river in ever increasing numbers. The only places where they could be accommodated was at the trapper's camps. And the only guides available were the trappers themselves. They owned the only boats on the river and knew every inch of the swamp and*



*marsh. These sportsmen were able and willing to pay them prices they could not refuse."*



## Who Is Responsible For North West State Owned Wetlands and River Management?

It would appear that the primary responsibility for husbandry efforts on protection and propagation of the regions wetlands resides with **"The Kankakee River Basin Commission, also known by the acronym of KRBC.** According to their web site: **"The Kankakee River Basin Commission was created by the Indiana General Assembly in 1977. and represents 8 County Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Northwest Indiana: Jasper, Lake, LaPorte, Marshall, Newton, Porter, Stark and St. Joseph. The Commission is composed of 24 members: a representative from each of the eight Boards of County Commissioners, the eight county surveyors or their designated employee, and a supervisor of the eight Soil and Water Conservation Districts.**

These representatives of the people internally elect their own officers without allowing motions from the floor at election time.

*The KRBC was established to coordinate development in the Basin and has, since established, sought to plan and coordinate the many environmental demands placed upon the Kankakee River,*

*its tributaries, and all the land around it. This includes flood control and drainage, as well as recreation, water quality and supply, hunting and fishing, wetlands preservation and upland soil erosion. The Kankakee Basin in Indiana comprises 1.9 million acres of which almost 1.6 million has been used as cropland.*

*Their mission statement is: "The Kankakee River Basin Commission will provide an organizational environment to promote and sustain the development of surface and ground water for agriculture, residential, recreational and commercial purposes; to address water quality and in stream issues; to restore and protect fisheries; wetlands and aquatic habitat; and to ensure future availability of water supplies in the basin."*

It is worth mentioning, that in the writer's opinion, based on a review of the KRBC minutes back to 2015, that there is little, if any, discussion about restoring wetlands, and the only mention relative to wetlands is mitigation of current wetlands, impacted by flood control measures. There is no mention of wetlands or protecting fisheries or aquatic, otherwise. It would also appear to this observer, that no funds are set

aside in annual budgets specifically for projects underlined above. The lack of mention speaks volumes about the KRBC focus and who they protect, and that is not conservation.

However, there will be a report presented by the by Cristopher Burke Engineering contracted by the KABC, to investigate and propose best practices that would address flooding and erosion on the Kankakee, Yellow and Iroquois Rivers in both Indiana Illinois. Their report will be advisory in nature and does not require any action on the part of the KRBC.

It is recommended that conservationist in the Kankakee River Basin, make every effort to **attend this meeting,** as a show of commitment to conservation and reclamation efforts of your wetland's areas.

Editor: the Hoosier Waltonian  
Jay Butler

THE NEXT MEEETING OF THE KRBC WILL BE HELD ON JANURARY 11, 2019

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TIME AND LOCATION, CALL KRBC AT (219) 763-0696.

## What Farmer "Best Practices" Can Prevent Soil Erosion

Old traditional tilling of farm land was done by plow, turning the grass or crop residue under, followed by disking to break up the clods, and then by a spade tipped planter. More recent Best Management Practices (BMP) in Soil Conservation are available today. These serve several beneficial services: Prevents erosion, lessens amount of fertilizer run-off, and enhances wild life preservation.

**CHISEL PLANTING.** Done with a chisel plow used to loosen and till the soil without turning it over. It can be set to till the soil quite deeply and, in fact, can loosen the earth to 18 inches or more. Instead of turning the soil over like most plows, the chisel plow leaves sod, rocks, and weeds, on the top.

**COVER CROPS.** A **cover crop** is a **crop** planted primarily to manage soil erosion, soil fertility, soil quality, water, weeds, pests, diseases, biodiversity and wildlife in an agroecosystem, an ecological system managed and largely shaped by humans across a range of intensities to produce food, feed, or fiber.

**FIELD BORDERS:** Field borders increase plant diversity and provide wildlife habitats. They also provide erosion control and protect water quality by trapping sediment and pollutants. Properly managed field borders increase plant diversity and the availability of food sources such as seeds and insect prey for bobwhite quail, cottontail rabbits, wild turkeys, gray fox and many other birds.

**STRIP CROPPING:** A method of farming which involves cultivating a field partitioned into long, narrow strips which are alternated in a crop rotation system. The most common crop choices for strip cropping are closely sown crops such as hay, wheat, or other forages which are alternated with strips of row crops, such as corn, or soybeans.

**CONTOUR FARMING:** Plowing and/or planting across a slope following its elevation contour lines. These contour lines create a water break which reduces the formation of rills and gullies during times of heavy water run-off; which is a major cause of soil erosion. This is of little help in the Kankakee Valley as the land is very flat.

# First People of the Kankakee Marsh

Article written by John P. Hodson

Soon after the last glacier receded north, humans began to move into the Kankakee Valley. We do not know what tribes these prehistoric people later evolved into. Today two main Indian tribes are associated with Kankakee Marsh history—the Miami's and Potawatomi. Both tribes were pushed into the Kankakee Marsh because of Iroquois pressure.

In the 1670s the Miami began migrating from the Fox River area in Wisconsin southeastward towards the St. Joseph-Kankakee Rivers portage. The first recorded encounter, in around 1675, with western man was with French priest Father Allouez.

The Miami were the dominant tribe in the St. Joseph River and Kankakee Marsh area until the Potawatomi took the lead.

In the early 1600s the Potawatomi occupied northern Michigan. Soon the fierce Iroquois Confederation expansion threatened them. By the mid-1600s the Potawatomi had moved to northern Wisconsin.

The Algonquin Tribe eventually pushed the Iroquois back to New York. The Algonquin then put pressure on the Potawatomi to continue moving south along the western Lake Michigan shore. By the early to mid 1700s the Potawatomi lived in northern Illinois and

Indiana, and southern portions of Wisconsin and Michigan. The Potawatomi consisted of a number of bands, with the Kankakee Marsh controlled by the Kankakee River Band. There were other tribes in the Kankakee River area. The occupation of the marsh was actively evolving until the early 1700s when the Potawatomi took control.

France was the dominant European power in

stronghold. It was located near present day Niles, Michigan and controlled southwest Michigan and the entire Kankakee Marsh region.

England took possession of France's New World holdings after their defeat in the French-Indian Wars (1754-1763). English trappers and settlers began to move into the Kankakee Marsh area and later Americans came after England's defeat in the Revolutionary War.

Although, the English were required to leave the Northwest Territories, they continued to keep a military presence and instigated conflict between the Indians and Americans. There were many skirmishes between American and English paramilitary. Both sides used the Indians as pawns.

After England's defeat in the War of 1812 a peace-of-sorts came to the

Kankakee. However, America was expanding west and the Indians were seen as a nuisance, slowing its growth.

Treaties were signed between the United States and the Indian tribes. In 1838 the last of the Indians were to be removed west of the Mississippi. The Indian removal is a blemish on our country.



the region. Much of our information comes from French records.

Fort St. Joseph was an important military, church and trading installation. Father Allouez (1622-1689) was a Jesuit explorer that established the Mission de Saint-Joseph in the 1680s. The French later built a fort there in 1691. The former mission and trading post now became an important French

## The Potawatomi Trail of Death

In 1800 the Potawatomi claimed land in Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Illinois. President Andrew Jackson addressed congress in support of the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and Indian leaders were pressured to sign treaties that would give up ancestral lands in exchange for much smaller areas in the West. The Potawatomi Tribe was moved from Northern Indiana to the eastern side of what would later, become Kansas. This forced migration of the Potawatomi was known as the "Potawatomi Trail of Death" because many died along the way.



The one thing consistent with all tribes forced to vacate their ancestral homes, was that they all moved into environments

different than their traditional tribal lands.

The Indiana Potawatomi tribe left a life based on hunting and fishing in the forest of the Great Swamp, and were relocated to a portion of the Louisiana Purchase that was considered "The Great American Desert; an area with no forest, little variety in wild game, and completely foreign in appearance and life style to the tribe.

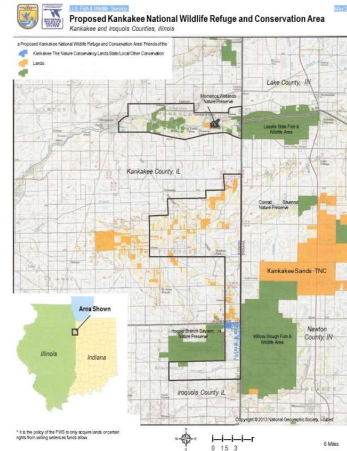
A large number of those living in Indiana refused to move and eventually fled to Canada and some returned to Indiana in later years.





← WHAT WAS

WHAT IS ENVISIONED →



SEE FULL SIZE PROPOSED NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE AND CONSERVATION MAP ON PAGE THIRTEEN, COURTESY OF JIM SWEENEY



## IWLA/ATA Archery Academy Coming To Indiana



A large number of Izaak Walton League chapters in Indiana offer facilities for recreational archery, provide archer and bowhunter education and skills training, and host competitive archery events.

As part of an effort to ensure the future of recreational shooting and hunting, the League partnered with the Archery Trade Association (ATA) to help grow local interest in archery at our chapters.



Whether your chapter is starting from scratch or expanding an existing program, the key to a successful archery program is having knowledgeable, certified instructors who can create a safe and fun environment.

These two-day training sessions will provide participants with Level 1 *and* Level 2 Archery Instructor certification (as recognized by USA Archery). Also additional introductory training on Explore Bowhunting is included on the second day.

Level 1 instructors will learn about range safety and setup, steps of shooting, equipment and repair, and receive lesson plans for training sessions. While Level 2 instructors will learn enhanced archery teaching techniques and be qualified to train Level 1 instructors.

Those who attend this training session will leave with the tools and knowledge needed to develop beginning and intermediate archery and bowhunting programs locally.



In conjunction the IWLA and ATA, the Indiana Division IWLA will co-host an IWLA/ATA Archery Academy on April 27 and 28, 2019 at the Glen Park Chapter located at 5700 Mississippi Street, Merrillville, IN 46410.

For more details visit [www.iwla.org/outdoor-recreation/shooting-sports](http://www.iwla.org/outdoor-recreation/shooting-sports) or email [archery@iwla.org](mailto:archery@iwla.org).

# Native Indiana Wild Flowers That You Might Have Seen In The Grand Marsh

There are many wild flowers that are native to Indiana that you might have seen in the Grand Marsh.

Indian Jack In The Pulpit  
(*Arisaema triphyllum*)



Butterfly Milkweed  
(*Asclepias tuberosa*)



Bluebell Bellflower or Witches  
Thimble  
(*Campanula rotundifolia*)



Great Blue Lobelia  
(*Lobelia siphilitica*)



Closed Bottle Gentian  
(*Gentiana andrewsii*)



White Turtle Head  
(*Chelone glabra*)



Orange Coneflower  
(*Rudbeckia fulgida*)



Swamp Rose



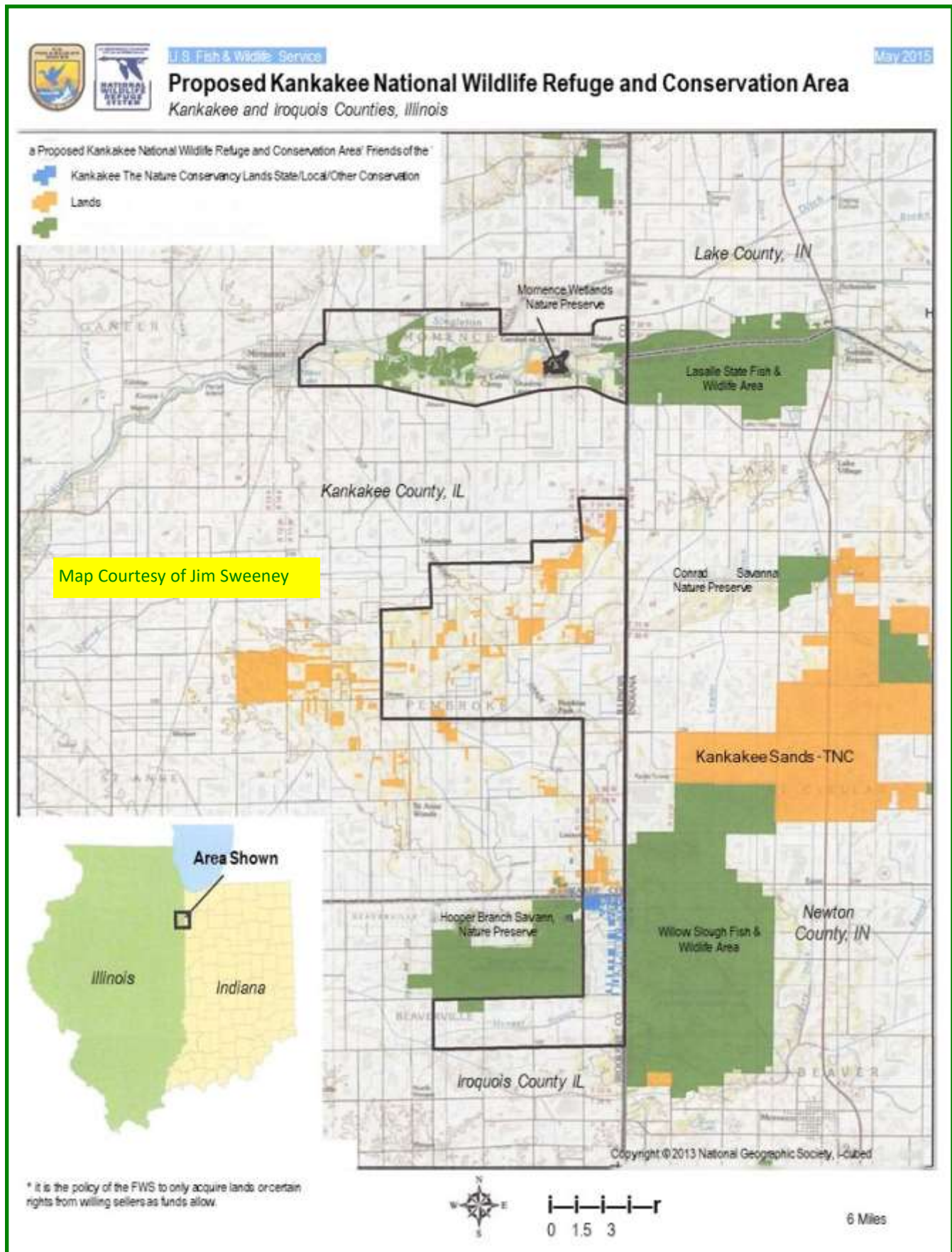
Cardinal Flower  
(*V. Wilkins*)



HOW MANY OF  
THESE DO YOU  
HAVE IN YOUR  
INDIANA GARDEN?



# WHAT "MIGHT BE" WITH YOUR SUPPORT



## The 2019 IN Division Chapter Events Calendar

JAN. 26  
Griffith—Ice Fishing Derby

JAN. 12  
Spring Lake—Ice Fishing Derby

FEB. 3  
Spring Lake—Super Bowl Party

FEB. 9  
Griffith—Archery Shoot

FEB 16  
Spring Lake—Sweetheart Bingo

FEB 14 to 16  
2019 IWLA Midwinter Board of Directors Meeting

FEB. 23  
Griffith—Chili Cook Off

MAR. 16  
Griffith—St. Patrick's Day Brunch

APR. 14  
Griffith—Kid's Easter Party  
Spring Lake—Kid's Easter Party

APR. 24  
Griffith—Wild Game Dinner

May 15  
Griffith—Dutch Auction

May 18  
Griffith—Annual Yard Sale  
Spring Lake—Crappie Tournament

JUN. 1&2  
IN-Div. Convention  
Spring Lake—"Take Dad Fishing"

JUL 17-20  
Nat'l Convention, Iowa

JUL. 20  
Griffith—Catfish Derby

JUL 21-27  
IN-Div. Youth Camp

AUG. 4  
Griffith—Carmelite Kid's Day

AUG. 10  
Spring Lake—Food Fest

AUG. 17  
Griffith—Summer Picnic

SEP. 7  
IN-Div BOD meeting

SEP 14  
Spring Lake—Catfish Derby

SEP 21  
Griffith—Yard Sale

OCT. 19-20  
Griffith—Haunted Trail

Oct 19 & 26  
Spring Lake—Haunted Hay Rides

OCT. 26-27  
Griffith—Still Target Turkey Shoot

NOV. 2&3-9&10  
Griffith—Paper & Clay Turkey Shoot

NOV 17  
Spring Lake—30th Annv. Party

NOV. 24  
Griffith—Thanksgiving Potluck

DEC. 8  
Griffith—Kid's Christmas Party

DEC. 14  
Griffith—Chapter Christmas Party  
Spring Lake—Christmas party

**This Space Available For Your Chapter's  
2019 Events. Send your calendar of  
events to:**

**[jaybutler1940@gmail.com](mailto:jaybutler1940@gmail.com)**





Announcing New Feature

on Digital Issue only:

*"What's on your mind!"*

Members, send an email and we'll publish it.

- \* Please, no hurtful remarks aimed at "individuals" .
- \* Constructive criticism accepted.
- \* Must include your name, phone & email information.
- \* May be edited for brevity and may be forwarded to subject matter expert for response.

IN-DIVISION WEB-SITE IS:

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PRESIDENT:	Keith Halper	Email: keedo001@icloud.com
VICE PRES.:	Jim Buitter	Email: gingnick@sbcglobal.net
SECRETARY:	Stan Jarosz	Email: sjelectric65@gmail.com
TREASURER:	John Decker	Email: jdecker@oaksg.com
NW REGION V.P.	Bobby Wright	Phone: 219-972-3649
NE REGION V.P.	Kim Russell	Email: cubbielvr6923@gmail.com
WALTONIAN EDITOR	Jay Butler	Email: jaybutler1940@gmail.com
WALTONIAN PUBLISHER	Jeff Farkas	Email: jfarkas63@gmail.com

CHECK IN-DIV. WEBSITE FOR LOCATION AND TIME OF NEXT IN-DIV. BOARD MEETING

The IN-Div. will pay a mileage allowance and buy lunch for any 1st time chapter attendee. Why not come out and add your voice to the discussion about Conservation of soil, air, water, and wildlife in Indiana?

NOTE: If you do not get our digital Waltonian, send an email to [jfarkas63@gmail.com](mailto:jfarkas63@gmail.com)

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FOR CHANGES

Jeff Farkas  
(219) 718-7329

Or Email

[jfarkas63@gmail.com](mailto:jfarkas63@gmail.com)



PUBLISHING/DISTRIBUTION

FOR SUBMISSIONS

Jay Butler  
(260) 341-5233

Or Email

[jaybutler1940@gmail.com](mailto:jaybutler1940@gmail.com)



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YOUR FRIENDS  
AND FAMILY!