



Indiana  
Natural Resources  
FOUNDATION

# Spring Newsletter

2026

## Discover the Outdoors: Inspiring the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders



For more than a decade, Discover the Outdoors has helped students experience the wonders of Indiana's natural spaces. Each year, thousands of students spanning grades K-12 participate in hands-on learning led by knowledgeable and dedicated DNR staff. From guided hikes to interacting with wildlife, students are exposed to activities that spark curiosity and create a lifelong connection with Indiana's outdoors.

Since the program's inception in 2013, more than 30,800 students have participated in these special trips. From discovering the unique habitat of Indiana Dunes State Park to the fossil beds at Falls of the Ohio State Park, students across the state have connected to the outdoors and created memories.



Applications for Discover the Outdoors field trips are accepted from March 15 – April 30 prior to the school year for which the grant is requested. Each grant has a maximum award of \$500 and may be used to cover transportation costs, program fees, or other material costs.

Each impactful field trip is made possible through the generosity of donors who believe in the value of outdoor education. If you'd like to help more Hoosier students make meaningful connections with Indiana's outdoors, visit our website [IndianaNRF.org](http://IndianaNRF.org).

## Support Indiana's Natural Spaces This Spring

Spring in Indiana is a special time. Our forests and wetlands come to life with stunning colors and active wildlife, and the trails and waterways welcome Hoosiers eager to explore our special outdoors. As the spring season brings renewed excitement, we invite you to support Indiana's natural resources. Your generosity directly supports important initiatives like acquiring new public land, creating outdoor recreation opportunities, and educating the next generation of Hoosier conservationists.



**Donate at:**  
[indiananrf.org/donate](http://indiananrf.org/donate)

Donations are tax deductible under section 170 (c)(1) of the IRS code.



# Closing the Gap at Harrison-Crawford State Park

**H**arrison-Crawford State Forest is a special spot for outdoor recreation. The area is defined by its rugged hills, hundreds of caves, miles of horse and hiking trails, and the waters of the Blue and Ohio rivers. The wide, winding Blue is a favorite destination for anglers, kayakers, and birdwatchers alike. Now, through an impactful land acquisition, an additional 10 acres along the river have been added to the state forest, permanently protecting the stretch of riverfront and expanding recreation opportunities for all Hoosiers.

For decades, the 10-acre parcel sat within the boundaries of Harrison-Crawford yet isolated from its former owner's larger parcel by the Blue River. Accessible only through existing state forest, the inholding offered a special opportunity for expanding Indiana's public lands. Inholdings can create unique challenges such as fragmented habitat, limited recreation access, and obstacles for DNR's land managers.

"This addition to the state forest improves our ability to manage the forest," said Dwayne



Sieg, Harrison-Crawford property manager. “The river’s edge makes a readily identifiable boundary, helping to reduce the public’s uncertainty about trespassing on neighboring private party.”

For the Division of Forestry, bringing this parcel into public ownership closes a long-standing gap on the map and strengthens its ability to steward the forest. For visitors, the small but significant piece of riverfront increases the treasured recreation opportunities in one of the state’s special natural areas.

“The parcel provides added protection from eventual development in that area, ensuring future benefits for fish, wildlife, scenic value, and water quality,” added Sieg.

The INRF is proud to play a role in making acquisitions like this possible. Opportunities to acquire important properties often arise quickly and require swift action to ensure the land’s protection. Once acquired, these properties are transferred to DNR so their dedicated experts can focus on long-term stewardship. It’s through the generosity of our donors and partners that the INRF can help DNR expand and protect Indiana’s outdoors.

“DNR Division of Land Acquisition works closely with the INRF to assist with time-sensitive real estate acquisitions,” said Mark Becker, director of DNR’s Division of Land Acquisition. “Often, conservation land is held and cared-for by families for decades and the chance to add it to the public trust may only happen once in a generation—the INRF’s assistance is vital to ensure DNR does not miss these opportunities.”

This acquisition is just one more example of how the INRF and DNR are working together to protect natural spaces for current and future generations. With the addition of every acre of public land, Hoosiers gain more opportunities to explore, hunt, paddle, and connect with nature. If you want to join us in celebrating and preserving Indiana’s natural legacy through impactful projects like this, consider supporting the INRF today.

# Indiana Tree Project Continues Spreading Its Roots

Each year, thousands of trees are planted on Indiana's public lands through the Indiana Tree Project, our partnership with the Division of Forestry. Since 2010 the program has reforested Indiana through tree plantings, forest management, and land acquisitions – all thanks to you, our donors and fellow lovers of Indiana's outdoors.

We enjoyed celebrating Earth Day and Arbor Day at Prophetstown State Park again this year. Our partners at Huston Solar continued their commitment to Indiana's forests by planting thousands of trees in the park, just as they have annually since 2022.

Alongside that planting, the Division of Forestry continues to expand and manage Indiana's forests for the enjoyment of all Hoosiers. If you're interested in supporting the Indiana Tree Project, visit our website at [IndianaNRF.org/donate](https://IndianaNRF.org/donate). For every \$10 donated to the program, one tree is planted and managed in a state forest.

Together, we'll continue to reforest Indiana. We hope to see you outside among the trees this recreation season.



*Sign-up*  
for our **Monthly Newsletter**

We're making waves for conservation and outdoor recreation in the Hoosier state, and so can you. Keep up with us by signing up for our e-newsletter. Receive feature stories, news and photos in your inbox each month.

Sign up by visiting [IndianaNRF.org](https://IndianaNRF.org) and click **Subscribe**.



[IndianaNRF.org](https://IndianaNRF.org)



[inrf@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:inrf@dnr.IN.gov)



[@IndianaNRF](https://www.instagram.com/IndianaNRF)