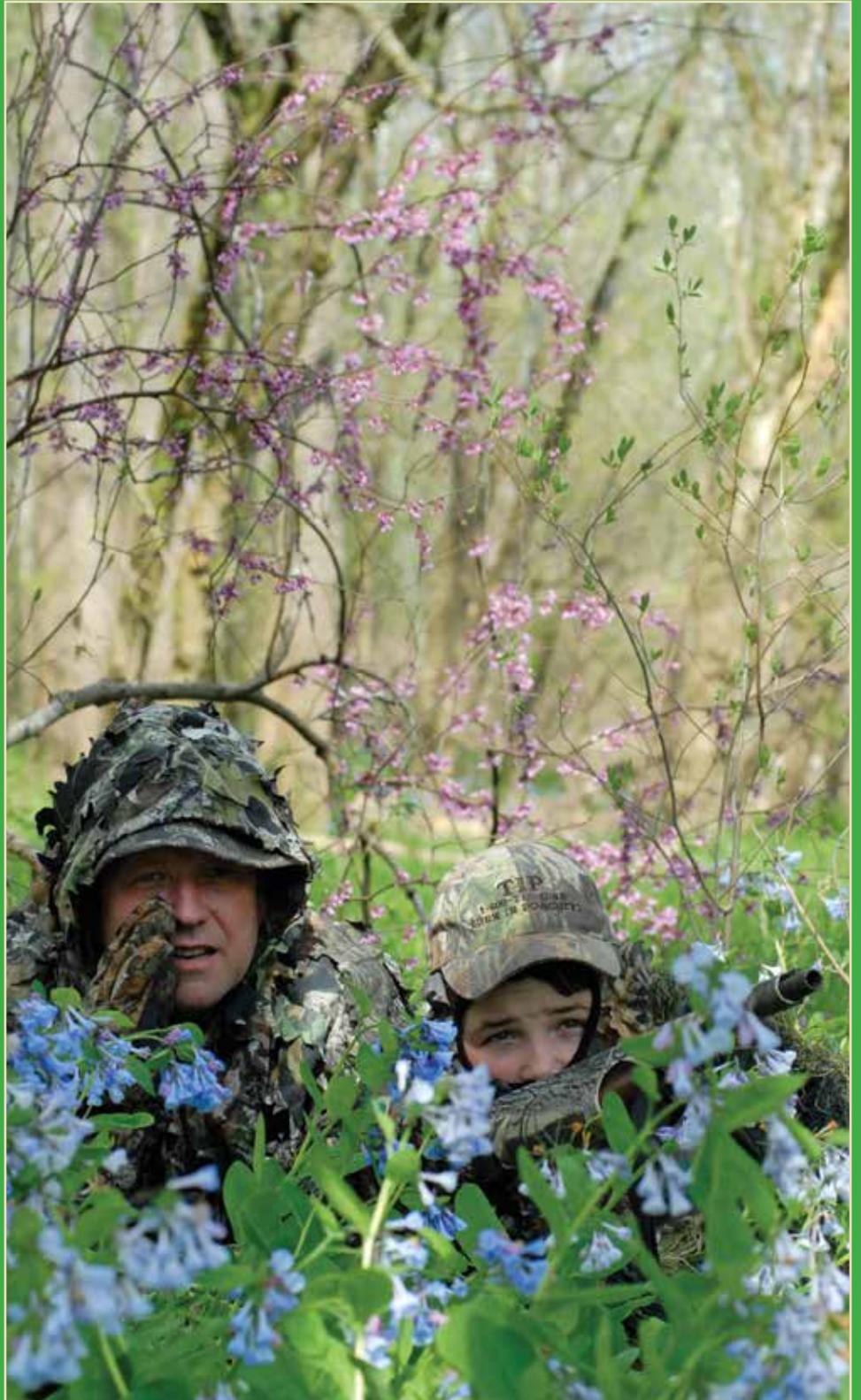
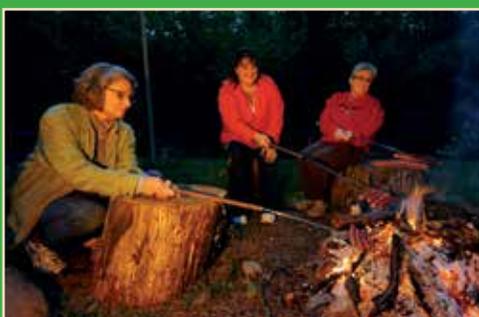




# *Indiana* Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

2016-2020





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*Indiana*  
**Statewide Comprehensive  
Outdoor Recreation Plan  
2016-2020**

Prepared by  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Outdoor Recreation  
402 West Washington St., W271  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2785

Phone: (317) 232-4071  
Fax: (317) 233-4648

December 2015

The preparation of this plan was financed in part through a planning grant from The National Park Service, Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, as amended).

The IDNR Division of Outdoor Recreation will have the authority to represent and act for the State of Indiana in dealing with the Secretary of the Interior for the purposes of the LWCF Act of 1965.

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**STATE OF INDIANA**  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**  
State House, Second Floor  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

**Michael R. Pence**  
*Governor*

November 25, 2015

Mr. Cameron Sholly  
Regional Director, Midwest Region  
National Park Service  
601 Riverfront Drive  
Omaha, NE 68102

Dear Mr. Sholly,

It has been five years since Indiana published our last Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). We have continued to use the Indiana Heritage Trust and the Land and Water Conservation Fund as primary funding sources to conserve and develop public outdoor recreation lands at the state, county, and local level throughout Indiana. The SCORP is an invaluable guide for this development.

This letter, in part, is to certify that the citizens of Indiana have been provided with ample opportunity for public participation in our latest SCORP planning process. As with our previous SCORPs, the 2015 plan uses a needs assessment based primarily on public input solicited from the citizens of Indiana, park professionals, and a 15-member Plan Advisory Committee. We used objective third-party surveys created to extensively gather public input from citizens all over the state. The Plan Advisory Committee used its subject-matter expertise from academia, the park profession, and related fields at each stage of the document's creation to provide reviews, feedback, and ideas crucial to our plan's development. All this input was supported with national recreation trends data, as well as data gathered from the review of local parks and recreation master plans.

Hoosiers across our state greatly treasure our parks and outdoor recreation lands and the many benefits they provide. The new 2015 Indiana SCORP will provide statewide acquisition priorities for these public outdoor recreation lands from willing sellers for the next five years.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Pence  
Governor of Indiana

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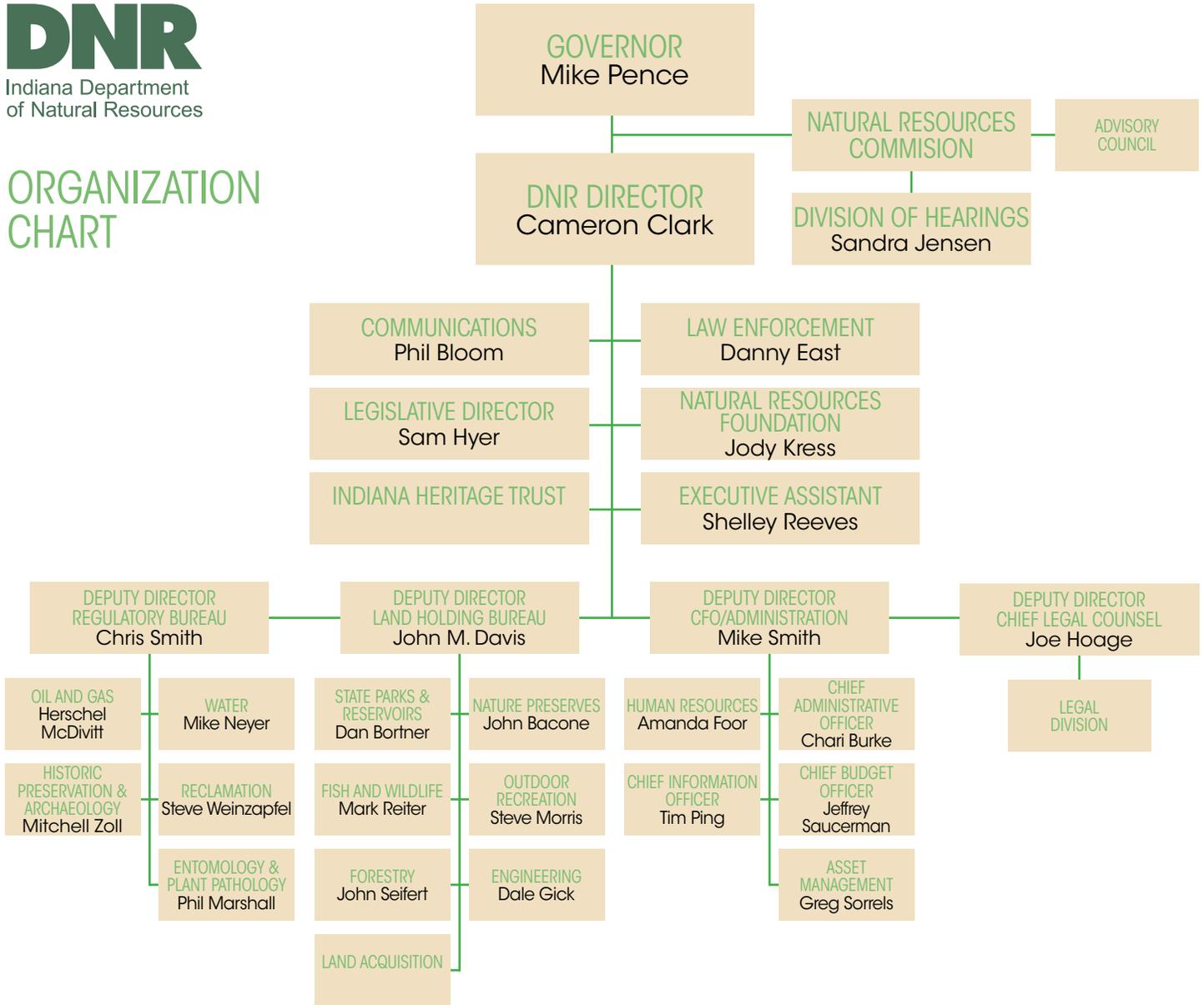
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Indiana Department of Natural Resources

### ORGANIZATION CHART



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### INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISIONS

- **Accounting & Internal Audit** provides internal DNR fiscal tracking and support to all other divisions.
- **Budget & Administrative Support** manages the administrative support staff for all of DNR, as well as providing budgetary control.
- **Engineering** provides engineering and technical support for all DNR properties and others, including architectural, sanitary, electrical, landscape, civil, and code enforcement.
- **Entomology & Plant Pathology** provides information and technical assistance in managing plant and insect pests, specializes in invasive and harmful species.
- **Facilities, Fleet & Asset Management** administers the department's facilities, including mailroom services, access control, safety and ADA compliance programs; fleet, including vehicle reservations, owned fleet inventory and maintenance, accident review board and Wright Express. Also manages and tracks all assets with a cost of more than \$500 and a useful life of one year or more.
- **Fish & Wildlife** manages and monitors fish and wildlife populations, hunting and fishing licenses, and provides related technical assistance and information.
- **Forestry** manages State Forests and provides information and technical assistance to foresters and private landowners.
- **Heritage Trust & Land Acquisition** supports the acquisition of new properties from willing sellers via partnerships, donations, bequests and sales of the Indiana Heritage Trust Fund license plate.
- **Historic Preservation & Archaeology** acts as staff for State Historic Preservation Officer and promotes conservation of cultural resources by facilitating Indiana and federal preservation programs.
- **Human Resources** serves as resource for current and future employees of DNR, provides information on employment, benefits, volunteering, internships, applications and more.
- **Information Services** provides technological service and support, DNR-wide.
- **Law Enforcement** provides 204 conservation officers in 10 law enforcement districts, handles environmental investigations, emergency response, education, law enforcement and property protection.
- **Natural Resources Foundation** supports the charitable, educational and scientific programs, projects and policies of the DNR.
- **Nature Preserves** provides permanent protection to significant natural areas, maintaining sustainable examples of all native ecological communities in Indiana.
- **Oil & Gas** oversees petroleum production and exploration through three program areas: permitting and compliance, field services, and abandoned sites.
- **Outdoor Recreation** handles state- and local-level park & recreation master planning, streams & trails, grants; manages two properties and multiple programs; and provides technical assistance for the public and for recreation professionals.

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- **Communications** provides internal and external communications, public relations, marketing, and public education for DNR.
- **Reclamation** protects resources by overseeing reclamation of abandoned mines, active mines, mine blasting, mining permits, and public participation in oversight and permit processes.
- **State Parks** manages and operates Indiana State Parks, state-managed lakes recreation, and State Park Inns, and provides education, recreation, resource conservation and management of these public lands.
- **Water** oversees above- and below-ground water, provides customer information services, permitting, technical services, and engineering services; operates three work groups: floodplain management, resource assessment, and the compliance & projects branch.

### OTHER RELATED INDIANA GOVERNMENT OFFICES

- **Indiana Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation** provides guidance, education and technical assistance to public and private landowners throughout Indiana.
- **Indiana Department of Environmental Management** handles the environmental quality and sustainability of air, water and land. Technical oversight, permits and regulatory compliance are part of its mission.
- **Indiana Department of Health** provides policy, guidance and facilitation of public health and health care activities and programs statewide. Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health promotes sound physical fitness, nutrition and health.
- **Indiana Department of Transportation** works with all aspects of the statewide transportation system, including bus, car, rail, air, bicycle and foot.
- **Indiana Natural Resources Commission** comprises 12 bipartisan resident members who meet four times per year to address DNR issues.
- **Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs** provides planning, grants and technical assistance for rural economic development statewide.
- **Indiana Economic Development Corporation** is a public-private partnership with a 12-member board that acts as the top economic development agency for Indiana.
- **Indiana Office of Tourism Development** is a stand-alone agency within state government that uses public and private funds to expand tourism statewide.
- **State Museum & Historic Sites** operates a wide variety of historic/cultural programs and facilities, including Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis, Gene Stratton-Porter Cabin, Historic New Harmony and Angel Mounds archaeological site.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **SCORP Lead Author**

Greg Beilfuss ..... DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation

### **Editor**

Marty Benson ..... DNR Division of Communications

### **Pre-Publication Design and Layout**

Lindsay Brown ..... DNR Division of Communications

### **2016 Trails Plan Update**

Steve Morris ..... DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation

Bob Bronson ..... DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation

Dale Brier ..... DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation

### **SCORP Surveys**

Dr. Amy L. Gregg ..... Ball State University

John Schmidt ..... Survey America

Dawn Krause ..... DNR Division of Communications

### **SCORP Accessibility Chapter**

Ric Edwards ..... DNR Division of Facilities, Fleet, and Asset Management

Susan Ostby ..... Middle Tennessee State University

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National Recreation and Parks Association

Indiana Association of Cities and Towns

Indiana Association of Regional Councils

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

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## SCORP PLANNING

The production of the Indiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) requires the expertise of people from many disciplines to assemble an effective tool for Indiana. Those who volunteer as members of the Plan Advisory Committee meet several times a year during the research and writing. They provide valuable insight and commentary that guide the development of surveys, research analysis, and creation of a plan that can be used by providers from all levels of community, including state, county, municipal and township.

The DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation thanks the committee members for their advice, support, expertise, time and talent. Committee members give direction to the SCORP 2016-2020 and ensure the priorities and contents are consistent with the State's vision, mission and goals for outdoor recreation and the DNR.

## PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Susan Craig	.....	Southeastern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
Jerry Byanski	.....	Park Planner, EarthPlan Associates
Jenny Orsburn	.....	Portage Parks and Recreation Department
Ric Edwards	.....	DNR, ADA Safety Director
Walter Lenckos	.....	Porter County Parks and Recreation Department
Pete Fritz	.....	Healthy Communities Planner, Indiana State Department of Health
Dr. Amy L. Gregg	.....	Natural Resources and Environmental Management, Ball State University
Brian Kaluzny	.....	Clarksville Park & Recreation Department
Nancy Kinder	.....	Eastern Indiana Development District
Yvette Rollins	.....	Equestrian/Trails Representative
Dr. Nathan A. Schaumleffel	.....	Recreation and Non-Profit Leadership Program, Indiana State University
Steve Slauson	.....	St. Joseph County Parks
Donald Sporleder	.....	FAIA, Notre Dame, Professor of Architecture
Bob Arnold	.....	Park Planner, EarthPlan Associates
Dan Vallesky	.....	Paddling/Water Trails Representative

## DIVISION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION STAFF

Steve Morris	.....	Director
Bob Bronson	.....	Grants, Section Chief
Jay Keith II	.....	Grants, State and Community Outdoor Recreation Planner
Lisa Herber	.....	Grants, State and Community Outdoor Recreation Planner
Greg Beilfuss	.....	Planning, State and Community Outdoor Recreation Planner
Dale Brier	.....	Streams & Trails, Section Chief
Nila Armstrong	.....	Streams & Trails, Trails Specialist
Carman Jackson	.....	Streams & Trails, ORV Program Manager
Amy Marisavljevic	.....	Streams & Trails, Trails Specialist

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## SCORP VISION STATEMENT

The SCORP is an information resource that quantifies and analyzes the state's outdoor recreation resources for the social, environmental, health, and economic benefit of citizens statewide. The SCORP is intended to support local, regional and state-level recreation decision making, as well as foster research, partnerships and cooperation among users, planners, government officials, nonprofits, and the private sector.

## SCORP GOALS

- Qualify Indiana for National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) state-side grants
- Set statewide priorities for funding of grants through LWCF, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and any other applicable funds available at state or federal levels
- Provide a quantitative analysis of outdoor recreation supply and demand statewide
- Improve the provision of outdoor recreation to all users



MOUNTAIN BIKING

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## LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, 78 Stat 897) was enacted "... to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to all citizens of the United States of America of present and future generations and visitors who are lawfully present within the boundaries of the United States of America such quantity and quality of outdoor recreation resources as may be available and are necessary and desirable for individual active participation in such recreation and strengthen the health and vitality of the citizens of the United States by (1) providing funds for and authorizing federal assistance to the states in planning, acquisition, and development of needed land and water areas and facilities and (2) providing funds for the federal acquisition and development of certain lands and other areas."

According to the National Park Service 2008 LWCF State Assistance Program Manual: "To be eligible for LWCF assistance for acquisition and development grants, each state shall prepare a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and update it at least once every five years." In other words, a SCORP needs to look at outdoor recreation supply and demand; set priorities for current and future capital improvement, land acquisition, and development; and allow opportunities for citizens and local government officials to take part in the planning process.

The main objectives of the LWCF have remained the same for 51 years: land acquisition, preservation, provision, development, accessibility, and the strengthening of the health and vitality of our nation. This SCORP shows that Indiana's focus is still directly in line with the LWCF Act of 1965.



DOG WALKING

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CAMPING

Indiana has received more than \$87 million from the LWCF since the program's start. Indiana's smaller entities (e.g., counties, townships, municipalities) provide outdoor recreation opportunities to its citizens through the appropriation of LWCF grants. Sixteen projects were funded between 2011 and November 2015. Of those, the majority included land acquisition (484+ acres), 12 included trail development, and three included the development of new aquatic features. Amenities included in the projects were:

- Spray Pads
- Picnic Areas
- Playgrounds
- Natural Areas
- Ball Fields
- Dog Parks

A SCORP planning grant was used to help complete this document. The total cost of these projects was an estimated \$3,071,963. LWCF requires a 50/50 match from communities that receive the grant. All funds for the project must be paid by communities and then reimbursed upon successful project completion. As operating and maintenance costs increase, so does the importance of the LWCF in funding continued acquisition of land where needed. Unfortunately, these grants cannot fund every project in the state. Alternative funding methods will be discussed in this SCORP.

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OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHY

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# INTRODUCTION

Each new SCORP offers the chance to observe and record the many changes and new trends in Indiana and nationwide since the last SCORP and during the last decade. Many directly affect the provision of parks and recreation in Indiana. Some of these changes include changing demographics and socio-economics; the continuing children and nature movement; the growing statewide obesity epidemic; and the increasing importance and economic benefits of Indiana travel, tourism and outdoor recreation, both statewide and to individual local communities.

Data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and similar sources yield the following socio-economic changes in the state:

- **Hoosier Population Growing:** The 2014 U.S. Census estimates (American Factfinder, 07/2014), that the state has grown in population, but similar to what the 2010 Census numbers showed, not by much. The growth was from 6,483,802 in 2010 to 6,596,855 estimated population in 2015, a 1.74% increase.
- **Older Hoosiers:** Indiana is still aging slightly. The state's median age has risen from 36.4 in 2010, to 37, according to the 2015 Census estimates. People continue to live longer and medical care and access are improving.
- **More Baby Boomers Retiring:** Baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) began turning 65 in 2011. Five years into the trend, they are still retiring in increasing numbers.
- **Hoosiers Earning More:** Median household income in Indiana was \$47,465 in 2009, compared to \$48,248, according to 2013 Census estimates.
- **More Hoosiers Living Under Same Roof:** Average Indiana household size has rebounded to 2.52 (according to the 2010 Census) after falling from 2.53 in 2000 to 2.49 in 2009.
- **Unemployment Finally Easing:** The Indiana recession recovery continues. Indiana's March 2015 statewide seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 5.8% has fallen from 9.1% percent in January 2011. By comparison, Indiana's unemployment rate in March 2008 was 5.0%, meaning the state is still struggling to reach pre-recession unemployment levels. (IN Dept. of Workforce Dev.; 2008/2011/2015)
- **Construction and Transportation Manufacturing Employment Improving:** The Indiana Business Resource Center states that the number of construction and transportation manufacturing jobs across Indiana improved by double digits in 2014, (IBRC; 2014).
- **Poverty Still Increasing in Indiana:** The percentage of Indiana families living below poverty level has risen from 9.5% in 2009 to 15.4% in 2013, according to census estimates.

- **Gasoline Costs Drop Significantly:** Nationally, prices in 2006 were as low as \$2.20 per gallon. Prices in May 2011 reached \$4.27 per gallon in many Indiana cities. The U.S. Energy Information Administration in May 2015, reported the U.S. average price per gallon was \$2.48/gallon. Estimates of when, if or the degree to which prices may rise vary widely, (USA TODAY 11/6/2006; Indianapolis Star 05/06/2011; U.S. Energy Info Admin, 2015).

## RECREATION CLOSE TO HOME IS STILL A PRIORITY

Given the Indiana economy has recovered slowly, and many Hoosiers are still experiencing wage stagnation, nearby recreation appears to be important to state residents. Poverty statewide is still increasing. This means that in many parts of the state, free or low-cost local parks and recreation options are vital for families. Hoosiers who recreate close to home use local and regional public lands and outdoor recreation sites of every type. Local museums, parks, historic sites, special events, fairs, festivals, sports events, and outdoor activities of all kinds can be an inexpensive and popular option for Hoosiers, especially in difficult economic times. Vacationing and recreating nearby offers many Hoosier families recreation options with lower travel costs, less travel stress, low or no entry fees, minimum travel time spent, and the opportunity to explore new sights and experiences.



nature centers and other outdoor education sites, and to provide additional professional development for teachers. This proposal died in committee, as did the 2011 version.

The National Parks Trust, a non-profit group supporting all levels of public parks across the U.S., has created a nationwide outdoor play day for kids called Kids to Parks Day. May 16, 2015, was the fifth annual Kids to Parks Day. An estimated 500,000 people participated nationwide. Indiana had five individual communities participating. Gov. Mike Pence proclaimed the day as Indiana's Kids to Parks Day, and urged Hoosiers to take a child to a park. A 2014 news story said: "The day is the latest effort by the DNR to promote education and healthy living among Hoosier children. Kids to Parks Day is also an opportunity to get children involved in existing DNR programs, including the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights, the family-friendly State Parks and Reservoirs Fitness Challenge, and a wide variety of daily activities that vary by park," (Kokomo Herald, 5/12/2014).

The Indiana Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights is another program created to "encourage Indiana's children to participate in outdoor activities and discover their heritage." The DNR Division of State Parks & Reservoirs (since renamed the Division of State Parks) established the Bill in 2011 with the following purpose and plan:

- Result in more Indiana youth and families benefiting from outdoor recreation experiences

- Create a unifying message regarding youth and families in the

outdoors for federal, state, county, municipal, non-profit and for-profit agencies

- Result in more informal collaborations and formal partnerships among all involved agencies and organizations

- Promote an increase in family health and wellness

- Increase future stewardship of outdoor resources on public and private lands

- Increase the overall quality of life for Indiana's youth and families

- Highlight the abundant natural resources and recreation opportunities available in Indiana

## MOVEMENT TO RECONNECT CHILDREN WITH NATURE IS EXPANDING

See pages 13 and 14 of the 2011-2015 Indiana SCORP for a discussion and background of Richard Louv's "Children and Nature Movement." This movement is not only alive and well, but also inspires attempts at state and national legislation, and creates nationwide park activity days to try to reconnect kids and the natural world. The movement has found supporters in the U.S. Congress. A bipartisan group of senators introduced the No Child Left Inside Act of 2013. That version was intended to provide incentives to states to implement environmental literacy programs that support hands-on outdoor learning activities at schools,

### The Indiana Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights

All Indiana children, regardless of ability, should have the right to:

1. Explore and play outdoors in a safe place
2. Follow a trail and discover native plants, wildlife and history
3. Experience traditional outdoor activities like fishing or hunting
4. Discover and celebrate Indiana’s past
5. Camp under the stars
6. Climb a tree
7. Visit a farm
8. Plant a seed or tree and watch it grow
9. Splash and play in streams, lakes and ponds
10. Enjoy the outdoors, using all the senses
11. Ask questions, find answers and share nature with a friend

See the Indiana Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights webpage for more information: [stateparks.IN.gov/7243.htm](http://stateparks.IN.gov/7243.htm)

There are approximately 15 states that have created some type of Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights, and more states are considering creating one.

### INDIANA’S OBESITY EPIDEMIC IS WORSENING

Indiana’s statewide obesity epidemic is still increasing. According to the 2013 U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), the world’s largest ongoing telephone public health survey, nearly one-third (31.8%; up from 29.9% in 2009) of Hoosiers are obese (i.e., have a body mass index of 30 or greater). This percentage places Indiana as one of the most overweight states in the nation. The CDC reports that the associated economic impact of the nationwide obesity epidemic exceeds \$147 billion (in 2008 dollars). Estimates published in the journal “Obesity” in 2012 show that during an average year, Hoosiers pay \$3.5 billion in obesity-related medical costs. According to a recent CDC online article:

“Why is this epidemic happening?”

- Weight gain occurs when people eat too much food and get too little physical activity.
- Societal and community changes have accompanied the rise in obesity.
- People eat differently:
  - o Some Americans have less access to stores and markets that provide healthy, affordable food such as fruits and vegetables, especially in rural, minority and lower-income neighborhoods. Restaurants, snack



shops, and vending machines provide food that is often higher in calories and fat than food made at home.

- o There is too much sugar in our diet. Six out of 10 adults drink at least 1 sugary drink per day.
- o It is often easier and cheaper to get less-healthy foods and beverages.
- o Foods high in sugar, fat, and salt are highly advertised and marketed.
- Many communities are built in ways that make it difficult or unsafe to be physically active:
  - o Access to parks and recreation centers may be difficult or lacking and public transportation may not be available.
  - o Safe routes for walking or biking to school, work, or play may not exist.
  - o Too few students get quality, daily physical education in school.”

U.S. CDC; August 3, 2010; "Vital Signs: Latest Findings: Adult Obesity" [cdc.gov/VitalSigns/AdultObesity/LatestFindings.html](http://cdc.gov/VitalSigns/AdultObesity/LatestFindings.html)

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has recognized the impact and importance of the statewide obesity epidemic and responded with a special "Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative." The Initiative was formed in 2008 using public health officials, school officials, urban planners, parks and recreation professionals, child advocates, concerned citizens and professionals from many fields. The Initiative first launched a task force with the main purpose of assisting ISDH staff in creating the inaugural "Indiana's Comprehensive Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan, 2010-2020," (IN CNPA). The IN CNPA Plan includes objectives that "... address improving the policies, environments, and systems that can positively influence nutrition and physical activity. The Plan organizes the objectives based on the setting they affect—child care settings, schools, health care facilities, worksites, faith-based settings, and communities, with special sections related to older adults and breast-feeding. As a whole, the objectives seek to increase access and awareness and to change policies and environments to support the occurrence of healthier behaviors," (ISDH, 2010). The IN CNPA Plan is now at its halfway point. As mentioned in the ISDH quote from the IN CNPA Plan above, the Plan created eight workgroups based on the settings affected by the Plan. The workgroup most directly connected to the SCORP is the Communities workgroup. As with all eight workgroups, the Communities workgroup in the Plan has a series of objectives assigned to it. Two of the objectives for the Communities workgroup can be evaluated via data gathered for this SCORP. The objectives (and their most current results) are:

- Objective #7: "By 2017, increase the number of Indiana counties with at least 20 acres of public local outdoor recreation land per 1,000 residents from 22 counties to 32 counties." [Pg. 46; IN CNPA Plan, ISDH, 2010]
  - o This SCORP reports that there are now 26 counties that meet the 20 acres/1,000 population level of service criteria, a gain of four counties.
- Objective #8: "By 2020, increase by 20% the mileage of trails available throughout Indiana and promote their use as a means to increase physical activity, recreation, and transportation." [Pg. 46: IN CNPA Plan, ISDH, 2010]
  - o The 2016 Trails Plan Update included in this SCORP reports that there are now more than 3,500 miles of trail open and operating in Indiana. This is an increase from a 2006 total of about 1,542 miles of trail statewide, approximately a 126% increase in trail mileage

Significant progress is being made toward the Communities Workgroup objectives above. With one objective already met, and the other nearly halfway there, the objectives may be completed by the close date of the current IN CNPA Plan.

## INDIANA'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY IS MOVING FORWARD

Indiana's economic recovery is improving, but the improvements in job growth are not necessarily reaching all areas of the state evenly. Many communities in the state that once relied on long-established manufacturing jobs are still witnessing plant closures, employee layoffs and other economic losses related to holdover effects from the nation's recent economic hard times.

Dr. Timothy Zimmer, professor of economics and finance at the University of Indianapolis, in April 2015, published his article "Job Growth Uneven Across Indiana." In the article, Zimmer examined U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics non-seasonally adjusted Current Employment Statistics employment data for each of the metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in Indiana to determine metro-level employment growth from October 2000 to October 2014. According to Zimmer: "In examining the MSA data for the 12 Indiana-based areas, one can see that over the course of 14 years, employment grew by 84,114, an increase of 4.2 percent ... While employment gains are certainly welcome, the distribution of these gains should also be examined. By a wide margin, the aggregate gains are accumulated in the Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson MSA ... Without the Indianapolis area, the other 11 MSAs in aggregate actually experienced negative employment growth over 14 years (-22,686 jobs or -2 percent) ... While job growth in the state is welcome, efforts to extend this growth uniformly throughout the state appear justified as distribution inequality is evident in the data," (Zimmer, 2015).

Looking at data, some of the Indiana cities experiencing negative job growth include Terre Haute, South Bend/Mishawaka, Muncie, Kokomo and Michigan City/LaPorte. As mentioned before, some of the communities that are experiencing positive job growth are: Columbus, Indianapolis/Carmel/Anderson, Lafayette/West Lafayette, Bloomington, Elkhart/Goshen, and Evansville.

Rachel Strange, a geodemographic analyst at the Indiana Business Research Center in Indiana University's Kelley School of Business, wrote the article "Indiana Manufacturing On A Roll" in April 2015. In the article, Strange states: "Indiana continues to rank first among states in the percent of its workforce engaged in manufacturing. It also ranked second in the nation in manufacturing employment growth over the past year. Indiana's non-farm employment grew by 1.8 percent, while Indiana

manufacturing employment grew at a much more robust 4.5 percent between November 2013 and November 2014, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.” Strange also wrote “With all this wonderful news about manufacturing job growth, it is worth keeping in mind that manufacturing got hit hard by the Great Recession, and Indiana has yet to return to the 2007 levels when the sector employed 545,200 (and even before that, manufacturing employment had been steadily declining since 2000). That means Indiana is still 24,400 jobs below 2007 levels and more than 150,000 jobs below the 1999 peak. While we may not be back to manufacturing’s glory days, a few years of solid growth is always nice to see.”

So Indiana’s job outlook and overall economy is improving, but not in all locations, and not to levels as high as they were less than 10 years ago.

### INDIANA TOURISM AND OUTDOOR RECREATION CONTRIBUTING TO INDIANA’S ECONOMY

Indiana’s economy continues to benefit from tourism. According to a study commissioned by the Indiana Office of Travel and Tourism published in 2013, direct employment within the Indiana tourism industry was more than 139,900 workers in 2012, a 2.9% gain in one year. Based on employment figures, tourism was the 7th largest industry in the state, and that includes state government employment. Tourism garnered direct wages of more than \$3 billion. That included both full- and part-time workers for an average of \$21,700. An additional 186,000 jobs in Indiana were indirectly supported by tourism (such as service and supply jobs indirectly related to tourism), and this was slightly less than 6% of total non-farm employment in the state. In 2012, Indiana’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) gained 1.5%, total jobs gained 4.8%, and state and local tax receipts gained 6.3%, all from tourism. In 14 days alone, Super Bowl XLVI brought 116,000 visitors to Indiana. They spent \$377 million, and added \$278 million to the 2012 Indiana GDP. In 2012, Indiana visitors contributed about \$561 million or 8.5% of Indiana’s statewide sales tax receipts.

Anecdotal comments from park professionals across Indiana in local parks and recreation master plans reviewed by the DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation staff still indicate that local and regional park use is rising, despite slow improvement of the economy. There is support for this perception from the national level. According to a 2010 study by Dr. Ken Cordell of the U.S. Forest Service’s Southern Research Station: “One general category of activity that has been showing growth in the first decade of the 21st Century is nature-based recreation. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of people who participated in nature-based outdoor recreation grew by about 7.1 percent, and the number of activity days grew about 40 percent ... Generally, outdoor recreation activities are projected to grow in number of participants out to 2060,” (Cordell, 2010).



CATAMARAN SAILING

A 2013 study, also by the U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station staff said: "By 2060, the number of adults participating in each of 10 different outdoor recreation activities is projected to increase. Depending on future demographic, economic, land-use, and population changes, the activity demonstrating the least growth is hunting (8 to 25 percent). The activity projected to demonstrate the most growth is day hiking (70 to 113 percent)," (Bowker, et al., 2013). This projection agrees with the DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation's longitudinal research in the past four SCORPs, each of which shows outdoor pedestrian use (including day hiking) as the most popular outdoor recreation activity among Indiana residents.

Even considering the significant economic impact of Indiana's public parks and recreation, and the still-growing use of our recreation lands, it is still prudent to ask if investing in public outdoor recreation space has any tangible benefit for municipal governments. Many people agree that having quality parks and recreation sites and facilities improves the quality of life in a community, but does it really affect a community's fiscal health? In May 2010, the Active Living Research Institute published "The Economic Benefits of Open Space, Recreation Facilities and Walkable Community Design," a research synthesis examining multiple studies nationwide. This study found "In addition to providing opportunities for physical activity and recreation areas, parks located in metropolitan areas provide economic benefits to residents, municipal governments, and private real estate developers. Parks tend to increase the value and sale price of homes and property nearby. In addition, the amount of local tax dollars required to operate and service recreation areas may be less than for other types of land use, such as residential developments, further increasing the fiscal impacts they have on municipal governments. Neighborhoods designed to preserve open space through compact development patterns may result in savings to private developers through reduced construction and maintenance costs, while communities designed for walkability can command price premiums in the marketplace." The study also said "... recreation areas and compact developments were found to produce positive economic outcomes for developers, homeowners, and

local governments." One caveat the study found was "Some residents will place a higher value on open space and recreation areas and will pay significantly more to be located near these amenities than others," (Active Living Research, 2010).



The DNR and the Division of Outdoor Recreation have created this SCORP as a way to share research and other information with state residents, park professionals, park board members, urban planners, government officials and many more. We have a strong tradition of blending public opinion and input from parks-and-recreation professionals in the field to give us an understanding of current and future recreational needs and preferences statewide. The next section of this chapter contains the priorities that have emerged from all the collected data and analysis from this SCORP.

### OUTDOOR RECREATION PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION PROVIDERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Based on the data contained in this SCORP, these goals and objectives are recommended, in random order, to guide decision-making in parks-and-recreation and natural-resources management for the next five years.

1. Protect and enhance Indiana's natural and outdoor recreation resources
  - a. Protect Indiana's natural heritage by identifying and preserving significant natural areas, including wildlife/fish habitats for endangered, rare, threatened or species of special concern
  - b. Protect Indiana's outdoor recreation potential by identifying and preserving areas with existing or potential outdoor recreation opportunities or access
  - c. Provide for education of the citizens of Indiana in environmental stewardship and wise use of Indiana's natural resources
  - d. Consider the improvements possible in water and air quality, brownfields, tourism and commerce, and economic development created by enhancing outdoor recreation

- e. Use “green” or sustainable designs, materials and energy sources in facility development, such as recycled materials, alternative/renewable energy sources (solar active and passive, wind, hydroelectric), and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building certifications/very energy-efficient designs
  - f. Use the 2016 SCORP Participation Study top five favorite outdoor recreation activities when considering parks and recreation user preferences: walking/hiking/jogging/running; camping; fishing; swimming; and canoeing/kayaking/paddle sports
2. Develop more trails and bicycle/pedestrian facilities
- a. Whenever possible, acquire rights-of-way, easements and railroad corridors for future trail development from willing sellers, donors or partners
  - b. Emphasize trails and bike/pedestrian facilities as means to connect and improve existing and future outdoor recreation facilities
  - c. Integrate bike/pedestrian facilities of all types into long-term planning of community infrastructure design and construction whenever possible
  - d. Encourage development of trail facilities of all kinds for bike/pedestrian use: urban, rural, long-distance, commuter, recreational, exercise/wellness, etc.
  - e. Require trail development using accessible, sustainable design and surfacing wherever possible
3. Continue emphasizing Indiana’s aquatic resources, both natural and man-made
- a. Preserve and protect rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands and riparian corridors when and wherever possible through acquisition, education, funding, restoration and development of new areas
  - b. Encourage actions that improve the quality of Indiana’s waters as well as user access to all types of aquatic recreation resources
  - c. Whenever possible, provide or enhance access to man-made aquatic resources, such as splash pads, pools, water features, wetlands, ponds, lakes, access/launch sites, etc.
4. Encourage and promote outdoor recreation participation
- a. Use outdoor recreation as a tool to fight the growing obesity epidemic by offering locations to participate in as many kinds of healthy exercise as possible and facilitating lifestyle change that encourages lifelong healthy living
  - b. Encourage continued development of new outdoor recreation facilities, especially in areas of expanding population growth, high user demand, or significant gaps in service provision
  - c. Encourage development of more neighborhood-level outdoor recreation facilities that meet local needs close to home, preferably within walking or biking distance of residential areas, schools, retail areas, etc.
  - d. Provide outdoor recreation opportunities for all user demographics, including all ages, abilities and skill levels
5. Provide funding for outdoor recreation development at the state and local level
- a. Explore alternative funding methods such as public/private partnerships, tax increment financing (TIF), cooperative agreements, cost sharing, corporate sponsorships, volunteerism, philanthropy, etc.
  - b. Continue to administer state-level grant programs such as Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants, Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants, Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund grants and Indiana Shooting Range grants.
  - c. Emphasize parks and recreation facilities that are cost-efficient and financially self-supporting while promoting financially affordable access to the greatest number of users possible
  - d. Consider the benefits of parks and recreation toward community economic development, tourism, job growth, urban and rural revitalization, reduction of health care costs and improving quality of life
  - e. Use existing financial resources as efficiently and effectively as possible; consider strategies such as detailed cost-benefit analysis for choosing public provision or privatization of services, maintenance or construction, multi-agency bulk purchases, interagency work-sharing agreements, and other means to control the costs of operations and maintenance