

Riverwatch News:

Greetings Riverwatchers!

I hope you all have gotten the chance to get out and enjoy the weather (on the days when it has been nice)! Spring has sprung! Time to dust off your Riverwatch manuals and your flip flops (or, perhaps, more appropriate footwear), and start monitoring our state's streams.

We here at IDEM have begun the complex process of figuring out logistics for our several sampling programs (fish, macros, blue-green algae, and more). It's tough being short on hands, but, hey, a wise man once said, "Make do with what you have."

And this we shall have to do. In case you all haven't heard, Lisa, our beloved Riverwatch Program Coordinator for over ten years, has moved on to greener pastures. She has taken a position as a Workshop Liason for the Kevin Eikenberry Group. This position will allow her greater flexibility so she can spend more time with her family. It is with sadness and support that we wish Lisa Ritter-McMahan good luck in all that life offers her!

So where does that leave us? With our powers combined, we (myself and Chuck Bell, Section Chief here at IDEM) will carry on the program as efficaciously as possible until a new full-time coordinator can be hired. I will be handling workshops, equipment, and the database, and can be reached by phone at (317) 308-3389. Chuck can answer questions about the transition, and can be reached at (317) 308-3203. We will be maintaining the Hoosier Riverwatch email address, riverwatch@idem.IN.gov, and will do our best to keep this transition smooth.

May / June 2014

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Riverwatch Events:

[Click for the Riverwatch Workshop Schedule](#)

Hoosier Riverwatch is sponsored by





(Re)introduction

Thus far, most of my work with Hoosier Riverwatch has been done behind the scenes. I have been doing the quality control of the database, and you have probably gotten tons of emails from me pestering you about data you've entered into the system. Since I will now be the acting coordinator for the program, I thought I should tell you more about my background.

Before I came to IDEM in May of 2013, I was a graduate student and research assistant at Ball State. My research focused on [phytoremediation of explosives in soil](#). Before and while attending BSU, I completed internships at the state and local health departments and in the Office of Land Quality at IDEM. I received my BSPA in Environmental Management from IU. In my free time, I enjoy cycling, powerlifting, gardening, and electronic music.

I'm excited for this opportunity to work with you all in monitoring Indiana's streams!



May is American Wetlands Month

What are wetlands?

Wetlands are the vital link between land and water, where the flow of water, the cycling of nutrients, and the energy of the sun meet to produce highly productive ecosystems with unique plant and animal life. Wetlands may not be wet year-round. In fact, some of the most important wetlands are seasonally dry transition zones. They are among the most valuable, but often least understood, wetland resources.

More information American Wetlands Month can be found at

<http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/outreach/>.

Information about wetlands in Indiana can be found at

<https://secure.IN.gov/dnr/naturepreserve/7384.htm> and
www.IN.gov/idem/wetlands/index.htm.

Why celebrate wetlands?

Wetlands are often referred to as the "kidneys" of the landscape for their ability to remove excess nutrients, toxic substances, and sediment from water that flows through them, helping to improve downstream water quality. Recently published studies on pollutant removal rates for natural and restored wetlands indicate that, depending on the type of wetland, the season, and other factors, wetlands can retain significant percentages of nitrates, ammonium, phosphorus, and sediment loads. Natural wetlands have also been effective in removing contaminants such as pesticides, landfill leachate, dissolved chlorinated compounds, metals, and stormwater runoff. (continued...)

Wetlands Month (...continued)

Wetlands provide:

- Reduced flood risk
- Water storage and filtration
- Groundwater recharge
- Bioproductivity and wildlife habitat
- Economic benefit—support in the lifecycle of 75% of the fish and shellfish harvested in the US and up to 90% of recreational catch
- Recreational and cultural opportunities

Status of Wetlands in the United States

The United States has made progress in reversing the historical wetland loss of an estimated 100 million acres of wetlands since the late 1700s. Specifically, the net annual loss of wetland acres has decreased dramatically in the past few decades, from nearly 500,000 acres per year between the 1950s and 1970s to nearly 13,800 acres per year from 2004 to 2009 (refer to the [National Status and Trends Reports](#) conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

Despite this positive news, however, wetlands continue to be threatened by a variety of factors. The net loss described in the most recent national report includes a combination of gains in certain types of wetlands and losses in other types, especially forested wetlands. Silviculture activities accounted for 38% of freshwater forested wetland loss, and 56% of total wetland loss. Urban and rural development is now the leading cause of wetland loss, accounting for nearly 23% of wetland loss nationally. Urban and rural development can also degrade existing wetlands by increasing sediment, nutrient and other contaminant loads beyond a wetland's capacity to assimilate them. Additionally, habitat fragmentation, hydrologic alterations, and increases in invasive species are all troubling effects on wetlands due to urbanization. As watershed and associated wetland systems are compromised, there can be negative economic, social, and environmental impacts. Consequences of global climate change and sea-level rise are also expected to have an adverse impact on wetlands.

What You Can Do to Protect and Restore Wetlands

Citizens can make valuable contributions to the protection and restoration of wetlands. Consider taking some of the following actions to help conserve wetland resources near you:

- Volunteer with a local watershed or conservation group (or start your own if none exist in your area) to protect, restore, and monitor a local wetland or stream area.
- Work with a community group, youth group or school to identify a local wetland that could be restored to its natural condition. Funds may be available for local projects through U.S. EPA's 5-Star Restoration Program.
- Talk to your local government about steps they are taking to protect and restore wetlands in your area, and encourage action. Some local governments protect wetland quality by adopting ordinances that limit development next to wetlands (known as wetland buffers).
- Plant native vegetation in your yard and limit your use of fertilizers and pesticides, which can pollute nearby waterways. If you live in Georgia, adopt a wetland! The state of Georgia has developed an Adopt-a-Wetland Program, based on its Adopt-a-Stream Program. More information is available on the program's website.



Prepare for Monitoring Season

Several workshops have already taken place this season, with more on the way. This is a friendly reminder to prepare for the monitoring season

- Are any items in your equipment inventory expired?
- Do you have enough supplies to last through the season?
- Are your waders and other gear stream-ready?
- What water quality questions do you want to answer with your data this season? (For example, "Are agricultural practices nearby affecting water quality in my stream?")
- Make sure you can answer the questions: What is our goal? Who will monitor? When and where will they monitor? What tests will they perform?

Workshop Schedule

Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring

This "Basic" training introduces citizens and educators to water quality monitoring utilizing hands-on habitat, chemical, and biological assessment methods. The sessions are held both inside and outdoors. Any interested adult is welcome to attend, and once certified, may teach students how to monitor.

Although Volunteer Stream Monitoring training workshops are free, you must contact the local host in advance to register. Most workshops are held from **8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**, unless otherwise noted.

Saturday, May 17

Elkhart, IN - Elkhart Conservation Club (Fly Tiers Cabin)

To register, contact Nancy Brown at nancy.brown@in.nacdnet.net or (574)533-4383, ext. 3.

Friday, May 23

Peru, IN - Peru Wastewater Treatment Plant

To register contact Jamin Beisiegel at perustormwater@gmail.com or (765) 473-7651.

Credits approved-7 technical drinking water operator and/or 2 technical & 5 general wastewater operator.

Wednesday, May 28

Peru, IN - Peru Wastewater Treatment Plant

To register, contact Jamin Beisiegel at perustormwater@gmail.com or (765) 473-7651.

Credits approved-7 technical drinking water operator and/or 2 technical & 5 general wastewater operator.

Saturday, May 31

Evansville, IN - Wesselman Nature Center (9 a.m.- 4 p.m. CST*) **note time zone*

To register, contact Gena Garret, at ggarrett@wesselmannaturesociety.org or (812) 479-0771, ext. 102

Thursday, June 12

TBD – Contact Lyn Crighton at telwf@kconline.com for more information

Friday, June 13

Bloomington, IN - Twin Lakes Recreation Center

To register, contact Hoosier Riverwatch at Riverwatch@idem.in.gov or (317) 308-3389.

Saturday, June 21

Zionsville, IN - Zionsville Town Hall (9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.)

To register, contact John Ulmer at watersheds@tds.net or (317) 769-3500.

Thursday, July 10

Battle Ground, IN - Brier Environmental Education Center, Tippecanoe Battlefield.

To register, contact Mary Cutler at mcut@msn.com or (765) 567-2993.

This workshop is part of the GLOBE program.

Thursday, July 17

Battle Ground, IN - Brier Environmental Education Center, Tippecanoe Battlefield

To register, contact Mary Cutler at mcut@msn.com or (765) 567-2993

Saturday, August 2

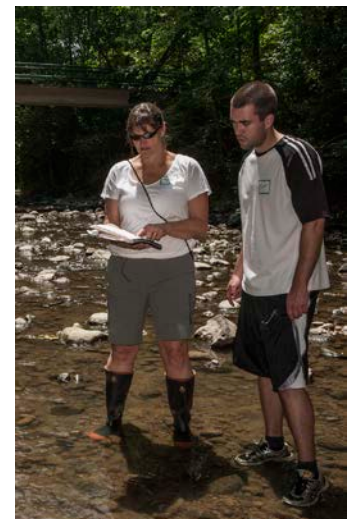
Frankfort, IN - Camp George C. Cullom

To register, contact Leah Harden at leah.harden@in.nacdnet.net or (765) 659-1223, ext. 3.

Saturday, September 6

Indianapolis, IN - Holliday Park (9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.)

To register, contact John Ulmer at watersheds@tds.net or (317) 769-3500





**Indiana Department of
Environmental Management**
*Office of Water Quality Watershed
Assessment and Planning Branch*

100 North Senate Avenue,
MC 65-40 - 2 Shadeland
Indianapolis, Indiana
46204-2251

PHONE:
(317) 308-3389

E-MAIL:
Riverwatch@idem.IN.gov



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www.idem.IN.gov



Advanced Workshop Schedule

E. coli Workshop

If you have already attended a Riverwatch Basic Training but would like more information on *E. coli*, attend this advanced workshop.

Thursday, June 19

Syracuse, IN - Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation's Education Center (6:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.), To register, contact Wendi Tomasik at the Tippecanoe Watershed Foundation at twf-wendi@kconline.com or (574) 834-3242.

Saturday, September 20

Zionsville, IN - Zion Nature Center (9 a.m.-12 p.m.)
To register, contact John Ulmer at watersheds@tds.net or (317) 769-3500.

Hoosier Riverwatch Mission:

The mission of Hoosier Riverwatch is to involve the citizens of Indiana in becoming active stewards of Indiana's water resources through watershed education and clean-up activities. Hoosier Riverwatch is sponsored by the **Indiana Department of Environmental Management's Office of Water Quality.**

For more information, go to www.idem.IN.gov/riverwatch .

