

# Bulletin

Issue 11 • Fall 2024

for Educators

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management's (IDEM) mission is to protect the environment and human health. IDEM ensures Indiana's land is safe to live on, air is safe to breathe, and water is safe to drink. IDEM's environmental educator is a resource for you!

## Latest News



### Welcome to the Team!

Help us in welcoming IDEM's new education and outreach coordinator, Stephanie Schuck! Stephanie comes to us with many years of experience in environmental education, and has served as a Peace Corps Volunteer, zoo-keeper, restoration ecologist, and most recently worked with a statewide non-profit

focusing on invasive species management and outreach. In her role at IDEM, she provides resources and curriculum for teachers on recycling, water quality, vermicomposting, and more. She coordinates educational opportunities and collaborates with IDEM offices to engage Indiana citizens on environmental topics, and is looking forward to visiting classrooms this fall as well as planning

presentations for Earth Day in April. All IDEM's curriculum and resources, as well as information on the in-person programs we offer, can be found at [idem.IN.gov/iee](http://idem.IN.gov/iee). Contact Stephanie with questions or to schedule a presentation.

**Stephanie Schuck**  
Environmental Education and Outreach Coordinator  
*Office of Program Support*  
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## Featured Program

### Alliance for the Great Lakes: Adopt-a-Beach Program

Indiana is one of eight states within the Great Lakes Drainage Basin, with Lake Michigan making up a portion of the northern state border. The Great Lakes provide many resources for us, and habitats surrounding the lakes are some of the most ecologically diverse habitats in the state, providing habitat for many types of wildlife as well as recreation opportunities for us. It is vital that we protect these precious resources and spaces. The [Alliance for the Great Lakes](#) works to protect the waters and habitats of the Great Lakes region, and they provide resources for teachers and students to get involved! With their [Adopt-a-Beach for Your Classroom program](#), your students can join in a public beach cleanup or schedule their own, giving them hands-on experience and an opportunity to support their community. They also offer free K-12 lesson plans and activities aligned with a beach cleanup day. If you are not able to bring your students for a cleanup day but would like to [incorporate lessons](#) related to the Great Lakes and water quality, they have those too!



To learn more about how IDEM works to protect and restore the Great Lakes in Indiana, visit [idem.IN.gov/lakemichigan](http://idem.IN.gov/lakemichigan).

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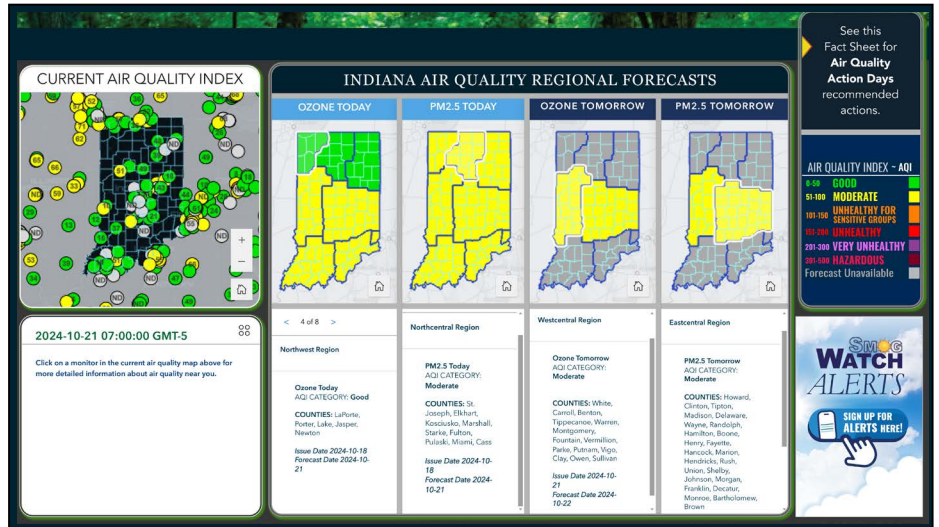


## Topics to Share

### Let's Talk Air Quality

IDEM's Office of Air Quality has a new [SmogWatch](#) page!

The SmogWatch page is a great resource for learning about the air quality in your area in real time, and you can sign up for air quality alerts as well. In the classroom, you can pair this up with [curriculum and activities](#) on air quality provided by the EPA.



## Craft Corner

### Activities with Leaves

*It's fall y'all!*

*With all the leaves falling, here are a few examples of what you can do with all those leaves:*



- **Nature confetti:** use hole punches to punch holes in newly fallen leaves to make confetti! Find different colors and textures throughout the fall season to have a colorful and fun confetti for all your fall gatherings or classroom parties! Nature confetti is Earth-friendly and provides a fun activity for students and families.
- **Leaf rubbings:** So simple and you already have all the materials! All that is needed is paper, crayons (this is a perfect time to use all those old crayons), and some leaves. Tear the paper off the crayon, place the leaf under the paper, and rub the long side of the crayon until you see the leaf shape.
- **Leaf pressings in clay:** Leaves that have a lot of texture are good for this and choose leaves that aren't too brittle or dry. Smooth your clay out to the desired thickness and size and press the underside of your leaf into the clay. Once dried, you can paint it the color of your choice or leave (pun intended...) it as is. These could be made as Christmas ornaments, wall hangings, or displayed on a shelf.
- **Add them to your compost and landscaping:** leaves are an excellent addition to your compost pile and can be a great natural mulch for landscaping.
- **Leave them be!** Leaf litter provides important habitat for many beneficial insects and animals, including bumble bee queens that need a place to overwinter. Try to have a space at your home or school where the leaves are left for wildlife for the winter. To learn more about why you should leave your leaves, visit the [Xerces Society website](#).

## Resources

### Find Your Local Recycling Education Expert!

Looking for recycling resources in your county? Your local solid waste management district's (SWMD) educator can provide you with lesson plans, information on what can and cannot be recycled in your area, and many offer in-person classroom presentations.

In addition to being a great classroom resource, SWMD's are your local county's authority for information about recycling, yard waste, and household hazardous waste service. To find out more about your local recycling education expert visit [recycle.IN.gov](http://recycle.IN.gov).

### Contact Information:

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Indiana Department of Environmental Management

The next grant round is projected to open late summer 2025. For eligibility, funding, and match requirements, visit [recycle.IN.gov](http://recycle.IN.gov).