

INDIANA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2013:

1. \$2 million/year for the Indiana Heritage Trust
 2. \$2.5 million/year for the Bicentennial Nature Trust
 3. \$1.3 million/year for Clean Water Indiana and Indiana Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil
 4. We support HB 1202/SB 546 which requires retailers/lawn care professionals to provide consumer education on the need to reduce the use of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus to protect water quality.
 5. We oppose HB 1194 which would legalize the shooting of deer in fenced enclosures.
 6. We support passage of HB 1011 which would improve and expand public transit in central Indiana.
-

1. Indiana Heritage Trust – We support an appropriation of \$2 million/year.

- In the first 7 years of the IHT, appropriations and revenues raised by the sale of the Environment license plate were comparatively equal. Since 2001, the license plate revenues exceeded budget allocations 3 to 1, \$16.8 million to 5.5 million.
- We strongly support a biennial appropriation which effectively matches each \$1 raised by Hoosiers voluntarily purchasing the Environment license plate with \$2 of state funds.

Why is this appropriation important?

- The IHT is the only dedicated land acquisition fund for the 5 land acquiring divisions of DNR, each with their own unique constituencies.
- The IHT protects important natural lands for state and local parks, forests, fish and wildlife areas, significant lands for nature preserves, and lands specifically used for outdoor recreation, as well as historic sites.
- The IHT is an investment in our collective future. These investments become a part of our natural capital, just as important to each of us as money in the bank, a quality education, and good health.
- The IHT has been exceptionally successful; it has attracted over 100 partners and completed nearly 400 projects totaling nearly 58,000 acres, yet only representing (one quarter of one percent of Indiana's 23 million acres.)
- It has provided \$400,000 to match both federal funds and hunting and fishing license revenues committed to the Healthy Rivers Initiative.
- It enables DNR to acquire inholdings and additions to state properties and improve access. Reducing fragmentation improves management efficiency.
- It allows the DNR to react quickly to individuals ready to sell their land. Prior to IHT, DNR could not act quickly on a property acquisition; it had to be approved with a line item in the budget.

What's the Urgency for the Indiana Heritage Trust?

- Indiana is a largely developed state when you consider the thumbprint of our vast agricultural heritage. Yet, there are still natural lands, which provide the important benefits of nature that should be protected.
- In most cases, there is only one opportunity to protect significant natural lands. When second chances arise, most often the original property has been split into smaller pieces to sell. With parcelization (same amount of land, but with more owners), we most often see more fragmentation, meaning tree cover has been removed, the ecosystem has been altered, and the land has been converted to another use.

2. Bicentennial Nature Trust –

We support an appropriation of \$2.5 million/ year.

- The Bicentennial Nature Trust (BNT) was established by Governor Daniels in January 2012, as “fitting sequel and bequest from our second century to our third.”
- Similar to the celebration of Indiana’s 100th birthday, which launched the state park system, the BNT is a statewide effort intended to inspire others to match the state’s investment with their donations of land or dollars in a continuing statewide surge of conservation.
- We support an appropriation for the Bicentennial Nature Trust to continue the great work that has occurred in the first six months of the program, with \$5 million spent, the state has leveraged 1 of state funding to 3 of partner funds.
- The intent of the Bicentennial Nature Trust is to preserve and protect important conservation and recreation areas throughout the State of Indiana. Property acquired with this fund will become part of the public trust to ensure that the land is protected for future generations.

3. Clean Water Indiana (CWI) and the Division of Soil

We support a \$1.3 million/year for CWI and Division of Soil.

- The *Clean Water Indiana* (CWI) program was created to protect and enhance the water quality of Indiana’s lakes, rivers and streams, by reducing the amount of polluted storm water runoff entering our surface and groundwater from urban *and rural lands*.
- **We strongly support a \$1 million/year in general fund appropriation for CWI.**
- The revenues generated by the cigarette tax dedicated to the Department of Agriculture’s Division of Soil and Clean Water Indiana are declining. ***To ensure the continuation of the work of the Division and the support provided to local soil and water conservation districts we also support an augmentation of \$300,000/year in general fund appropriations.***
- Funding is inadequate to support the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and conservation delivery systems in 92 counties.
- Indiana’s soil resources are remarkable; However, Indiana is losing approximately 3.5 tons/acre/year of soil annually (due to wind/water erosion) at a cost of \$275 million (\$6.00 per ton). SWCDs are the only agency whose primary focus is soil and water quality. The ability of these local agents to work across political boundaries, to garner support from a wide range of local partners, and to engage stakeholders in water quality planning is not duplicated by any other government agency or not for profit.

4. Consumer Education on the Need to Restrict Use of Phosphorous-Containing Lawn Fertilizers

Senate Bill 546 **Author: Senator Ed Charbonneau**

House Bill 1202 **Author: Representative Sue Errington**

- We support passage of legislation to reduce phosphorus run-off from residential lawns by requiring retailers and professional lawn care providers to provide: 1) a phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer alternative to consumers, and 2) consumer educational information on the need to reduce phosphorus run off. Many lawn fertilizers contain phosphorous, a nutrient that is not necessary for most lawns and which causes a number of ecological problems at excessively high concentrations in our waterways. When excess phosphorus runs off into streams, rivers, lakes and reservoirs, it greatly contributes to the spread of noxious, blue-green algae blooms, which produces toxins, makes water unsafe to drink and swim in, kills fish and other aquatic life, and reduces property values.
- In Indiana, more than 7,000 lake acres are polluted with too much phosphorus and more than 16,000 lake acres are polluted with too much algae. In 2012, 16 public swimming beaches had dangerous levels of blue-green algae. Geist, Morse and Eagle Creek reservoirs -- drinking water sources for about 1 million people -- also had elevated blue-green algae counts. Tragically, two dogs died and two others sustained liver damage from exposure to toxic blue-green algae after swimming in Salamonie Lake.
- Clean water is important to Indiana. 65% of our estimated \$9 billion in tourism dollars are generated by visitor spending at outdoor recreation destinations at or near waterways. Also, Hoosiers pay a premium to live on or near waterways. A 2003 study found that assessed residential property values were 54% higher in Indiana's communities that have lakes as opposed to those that do not.
- There is growing recognition of this problem nationally as evidenced by the fact that 12 other states have passed legislation regulating the use of phosphorus fertilizers.

5. Opposition to Hunting Preserve “canned hunting”

House Bill 1194 **Authors: Ubelhor, Heaton, VanNatter**

- *We are opposed to legislation that would legalize shooting deer in fenced enclosures, “canned hunting”, in Indiana.* Canned hunting violates ethical standards, impairs wildlife health, and threatens Indiana’s economy.
- The health of Indiana’s wild deer herd is threatened when captive deer are held in high density populations and disease occurs.
- Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is the most concerning disease. If CWD occurs in Indiana the wild deer hunting economy that contributes over \$400 million annually and supports over 2,300 jobs is threatened.

6. *Improve and Expand Public Transit in Indiana*

House Bill 1011 Authors: Torr, Kirchhofer, Porter, Pryor

- ***We support passage of HB 1011 which would improve and expand public transit in central Indiana by allowing,*** upon the approval of local voters in a referendum; establishment of a metropolitan transit district in Indianapolis and nine surrounding counties; and, adoption by the participating counties of a local income tax of .3% dedicated to funding the Indy Connect regional transit system.
- Public transportation use helps reduce air pollution and saves energy, provides access to jobs and access to the workforce, promotes economic development and contributes to a community's quality of life.