

Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy

2015 Accepted Participants



1. Gina Anderson is an Agriculture and Natural Resource Extension Educator with Purdue University in Floyd County, she also has an appointment as a Community Development Extension Educator. She teaches a variety of topics such as plant science, and other horticulture related topics. Her motivation for attending this training is to increase her knowledge in watersheds so that she can conduct more educational opportunities for those in her area, which sits along the Ohio River.
2. Caleb Asbury has been a Biologist for the Davey Resource Group for 18 months. His duties involve many different Indiana Division of Natural Resources Lake and River Enhancement projects including engineering feasibility studies, aquatic vegetation management plans, and sediment removal plans. He has an undergraduate degree from Manchester University and a master's degree from Indiana University in environmental science. He would like to participate in the Watershed Leadership Academy to further his knowledge of watershed management and to improve his communications skills between himself, watershed groups, and regulatory agencies.
3. Morgan Bennett has been an Environmental Health Specialist for the Hamilton County Health Department for 8 years. Her duties include coordination of the water quality program including recreational water sampling and private well sampling. She has participated in the Hoosier Riverwatch program for about 4 years. Prior to that, she worked for the Elkhart County Health Department where she performed soil and water testing. She is passionate about soil and water quality and is motivated to learn more about watershed management to help educate and secure clean water for generations to come.
4. Jake Brinkman is a Naturalist with Eagle Creek Park. He leads Environmental Education programs for school groups and the public at the Earth Discovery Center. He is also the Summer Day Camp Coordinator for Eagle Creek Park, which consists of planning weeklong nature-themed day camps for children, training camp counselors, and programming. Other responsibilities include animal care, birds of prey programs, grant writing, rain garden maintenance, and general nature center duties. Before his work with Indy Parks, he worked as an Environmental Scientist with a local environmental consulting company, worked on land restoration projects with The Nature Conservancy, and conducted stream surveys with IDEM. He hopes to gain new skills about watershed management through this program and better understand ways to protect our water resources.
5. Ross Carlson is a TMDL Project Manager for the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, and is currently coordinating the South Fork Blue River Total Maximum Daily Load report. His duties include creating GIS maps, coordinating with local stakeholders, assessing water quality data, creating Load Duration Curves and conducting linkage analysis. Prior to his role as a TMDL Project Manager Ross spent two years with IDEM's Probabilistic Monitoring Section assisting with fish and macroinvertebrate sampling and macroinvertebrate identification.

6. Jon Charlesworth is a Technician at the Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District and coordinates the Big Pine Creek Watershed Project. His responsibilities include encouraging the adoption of management practices aimed at reducing surface water pollution in a predominantly agricultural watershed.
7. Kristen Clason is a Watershed Coordinator for the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation. Her efforts are focused on following up with WREC-funded urban and agricultural BMPs to ensure cost-share and grant requirements are met. Additionally, she assists in organizing a variety of public outreach and education programs. Prior to this job, she was an Environmental Management student at Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs. Years of backpacking and hiking have solidified her passion for environmental conservation, with her interests focused in mitigating anthropogenic effects in urban areas.
8. Phil Cox is the Vermillion County Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Educator. He is responsible for agriculture and natural resources educational programming, including the Purdue Master Gardener and Indiana Master Naturalist programs. He was previously employed as the Natural Resources Administrator at the US Army's Newport Chemical Depot, also in Vermillion County. Currently, he is also President of the Ouabache Land Conservancy, a 501(c)3 land trust in west central, that is planning to apply for a 319 grant to help improve the environmental quality of the Otter Creek Watershed in Vigo, Clay, and Parke counties.
9. Leslie Davisson is the Assistant Watershed Coordinator at the Jasper County Soil and Water Conservation District, and helps coordinate the Upper Iroquois Watershed Initiative. Her responsibilities include informing the community about cost share programs that are available to improve water quality per their watershed management plan. This is her first job in conservation, but has been interested in environmental sustainability and local food production for some time. She stayed home to raise her three children for many years and is now ready to commit herself to promoting conservation agriculture at the watershed scale.
10. Zach Dripps is a Principal Planner at the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) in South Bend, IN. He manages various planning projects for MACOG including long-range transportation plans, economic development strategy, public transit, and bicycle and pedestrian plans. In addition, Zach manages GIS data collection and management, which includes various environmental data sets. Zach is also responsible for all public informational materials produced by MACOG which includes brochures, maps, and websites. He has a wife and four kids who keep him busy at home and motivated while at work.
11. Aileen Driscoll Farid is the Community Engagement Coordinator with the Bloomington Community Orchard. Her responsibilities with the Bloomington Community Orchard include coordinating volunteer groups, and special projects, in addition to leading volunteer work days. Prior to this volunteer position, she earned a B.S. Public Affairs, with a concentration in Environmental Management. Aileen enjoys finding new ways to improve the environment, and hopes to share this knowledge with the Orchard, and future volunteers.
12. Andi Hodaj is a second year graduate student at Purdue University in Agriculture & Biological Engineering. He earned his M.S. Degree as well as his B.S. in Natural Resources Management

and Agricultural Engineering, from the Agricultural University of Athens. His research involves monitoring the performance of a new best management practice, two-stage ditch, in terms of water quality improvements and representing this new practice in a hydrological model. He would like to learn more about watershed management and planning and develop relationships with other people interested and involved in watershed management.

13. Jessica Hoehn is the South Fork/Blue River Watershed Coordinator and also the Washington County Rule 5 Coordinator. Jessica grew up in a watershed adjacent to South Fork/Blue River and has lived in South Fork Blue River Watershed for the past 3 years with her husband and 2 children. She attended Purdue University and received a Bachelor's in Agricultural Education. Before being hired into her current position, Jessica taught Agricultural Science and Business at North Harrison High School (part of the school district is located in South Fork/Blue River) for 4.5 years and served as the Washington County SWCD Technician for 10 months. She is excited to learn more of the water quality and have a positive impact in the watershed she lives in!
14. Jennifer Hughes is the Stormwater Coordinator for Dearborn County Soil and Water Conservation District. She provides stormwater pollution prevention technical assistance for urban lands. She reviews and inspects the Rule 5 projects in Dearborn County and provides training opportunities to local officials and the development community. She is also the coordinator for Rule 13 which currently covers Hidden Valley Lake. Jennifer received her B.S. in Agriculture from Wilmington College in 1999 and joined the SWCD in August 2001.
15. Char Ison is a new MS4 assistant coordinator for the City of Seymour located in Indiana. His responsibilities include storm water inspections within city limits and enforcement and maintenance of all MS4 aspects.
16. Zach Lee is the Watershed Coordinator at the Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District and coordinates both the Middle Fork and West Fork of the Whitewater River Watershed. His responsibilities include implementing Best Management Practices with funding from a 319 grant (Cost Share Program) and developing educational outreach programs to educate the Whitewater River community about the importance of our watershed. Zach's motivation for being a Watershed Coordinator is to ensure that the Whitewater River Community will have safe drinking water and a healthy sustainable ecosystem in our riparian environments for all future generations to enjoy.
17. Trisha McClain is a recent Environmental Studies graduate from Manchester University in North Manchester, IN. She has recently been chosen for a 1-year research assistant position at Manchester known as the Environmental Scholar. There she manages a water monitoring program known as the Paired Watershed Program. The water monitoring program includes analysis on physical, chemical and biological parameters on two headwater tributaries.
18. Ali Meils is a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Project Manager with the Department of Environmental Management. Her responsibilities include working with watershed groups to design projects to meet their watershed management planning needs, collecting biological, bacteriological and chemistry data, and using the data results to develop a TMDL document. She hopes to gain a better understanding of the available tools for watershed groups and some of the common obstacles watershed groups encounter when planning.

19. Carol Newhouse is the manager of the Hoosier Riverwatch program at the Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management and also the agency's Liaison for the External Data Framework program. Her responsibilities include training instructors and facilitators who lead and motivate citizens in their efforts to monitor and work within their respective watersheds. She helps to secure funding for equipment and training efforts, as well as outreach events around the state. She serves as an active partner with others who are educating and supporting similar citizen science efforts. She is looking forward to the final framework for external data, so that she can meet and work with others who wish to place their data within a central repository at IDEM, to aid in making better-informed decisions about future watershed activities; including funding, protection, restoration and/or regulation. A big motivation for the academy training is to get back into the swing of things so that she can more thoroughly support education and monitoring, data analysis and sharing efforts of the watershed groups who she works with.
20. Phil Odenkirk is a Senior Hydrogeologist employed with Santis Environmental, Inc. He started this company with his wife Rachel Odenkirk 6-years ago. Santis focuses on clientele that operate or manage drinking water production facilities and sources. Phil has worked with Fortune 100 companies and local residents to assist in their clean water issues ranging from non-point source contamination to creating site-specific watershed studies. A majority of Phil's earlier work in his 20 year long consulting career focused on the characterization and remediation of contaminated groundwater sites. In the past 15 years Phil has worked in at least 15 different states addressing clean water sources and treatment systems. He is still periodically involved with groundwater contamination sites but his focus at Santis has been addressing clean (drinking) water consulting. Phil is responsible for interfacing with the public or private clientele, developing work plans, reporting and assisting with a wide range of scientific details in order to maintain a responsible use of water resources.
21. Staci Orr is currently a student at Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs. She has just graduated with a dual master's in environmental science and public affairs. Her concentration at SPEA was water management. She completed a summer internship with a local environmental consulting firm, KCI Technologies, Inc., where she was able to further develop skills in water sampling and analysis. She would like to learn more about watershed management to ensure that the concepts she learned in school can be placed into real-world applications.
22. Larry Owen is a professional forester who has been self-employed for 34 years and has worked with private woodland owners since 1968. He has worked in Indiana and Illinois helping to properly manage woodlands for the long term as well as reforestation about 5000 acres of land.
23. Kelsey Owens is the State Environmental Coordinator for Indiana for US Department of Agriculture Rural Development. Her responsibilities include reviewing all proposed projects to ensure minimal environmental impact and legality with respect to environmental law and agency regulations. Prior to this job, she worked with Indiana University's Anthropological Center for Training and Research on Global Environmental Change while she was pursuing a MPA in Environmental Policy and Natural Resource Management and an MSES in Applied Ecology.

24. Tammy Patterson completed her MS in Conservation Biology at University of Michigan and now works as a research biologist at the University of Notre Dame. She manages and serves as a GIS analyst for a joint UND/USGS project funded by the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative that is building a scenario planning decision support tool that brings together surface and ground water models with ecosystem service models and climate change projections. The Kankakee River watershed serves as the first case study/proof of concept for this effort. Prior to this project, she worked on a NPS/USGS/UND project to evaluate the effects of climate change on the endangered Karner blue butterfly. Prior to this work, she served as a MS4 coordinator for a private community in Northwest Indiana.
25. Jeremy Reiman is an Environmental Planner at the Michiana Area Council of Governments and the St. Joseph River Basin Commission. His responsibilities include serving as a technical resource on water quality and watershed management within the St. Joseph River Basin. Jeremy also serves on the watershed council of the Friends of the St. Joseph River and is an active member of the Michiana Stormwater Partnership. He is a recent graduate of Purdue University, where he developed a passion for environmental stewardship.
26. Brenda Scott Henry is the director of Gary Department of Green Urbanism & Environmental Affairs and the MS4 Coordinator for Gary Storm Water Management Dist. Brenda has worked with water quality programs for over 12 years on both local and regional levels.
27. Amy Silva is the Executive Director for the Little River Wetlands Project, Inc. Her responsibilities include administration, fund raising, grant writing, strategic planning, policy development and implementation, major project planning, staffing, marketing, promoting community involvement, and Earth Day Fort Wayne planning. Amy has also served as the Superintendent of the Allen County Parks and Recreation Department in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and was a founding member of the NIPSCO Environmental Challenge Fund Board. She has 2 grown children and 2 granddaughters. She enjoys spending time outdoors, and teaching her grandchildren the value and wonder of the natural environment around them.
28. Larry Steward is a recently retired Indianapolis patent attorney and prior to that, was a chemist. Larry is looking for volunteer opportunities to further his long-held interest in conservation, water monitoring and water quality. Larry is hoping that experience in the IWLA, along with his scientific and legal training, will enable him to better understand watershed issues and practices and provide him with direction as he begins this next chapter of his life as a volunteer.
29. Kelsey Thetonia is the Executive Director of Owen County's SWCD, where she works with her board members to manage and conserve the natural resources of the county. She received her master's from IU SPEA and has previously worked as a lab/field technician for the Indiana Clean Lakes Program, on the Indiana field crew for the EPA's National Lakes Assessment, in wetlands and soils research at IU, as a graduate teaching assistant for water resources courses at SPEA, and is a member of the Indiana Lakes Management Society. Kelsey is passionate about the natural resources of southern Indiana and enjoys the outdoors by mountain biking, canoeing, and climbing.
30. Allison Turner is an undergraduate student at Purdue University, pursuing a dual degree in Natural Resources & Environmental Science and Political Science. She is currently writing her

undergraduate thesis on the adoption, maintenance, and diffusion of rain barrels in Lafayette and Valparaiso, IN, and is very active with environmental issues on Purdue's campus. In the future, she hopes to work in water policy.

31. Betsy Yankowiak has been with the Little River Wetlands Project since 2007 and is currently Director of Preserves and Programs. Her responsibilities include overseeing property stewardship on 1000+ acres of natural and restored habitats, the environmental education program that served 12,000+ in 2013, new land conservation projects and initiatives along with managing 150 volunteers. Betsy is an active volunteer at her children's school, neighborhood association, regional volunteer association, and sits on the Board of Governors for the Quest Club. Betsy wants to learn how to work with other conservation groups in the area for better watershed management.