



Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy

Cultivating Leaders * Creating Solutions * Connecting People and Water

Group Projects from the 2024 Academy

Academy participants work together to develop a project that contributes to the watershed community in Indiana. These projects can be used by others and advance watershed management in Indiana.

Note: These projects were created by the participants, and are not a product of Purdue University. For more information, please contact the authors listed.

Group A: Approaching Sustainability on the Indiana Toll Road: Exploring innovative native plant options and strengthening our relationships with our watershed

Troy McFarland and Matthew McLaughlin

The group catalogued low growing native vegetation options for municipalities and homeowners and created an educational tool for sharing these options.

Group B: Fish Fest

Hannah Simnick and Tyler LaFlash

The group will host Fish Fest in Elkhart with the goal of connecting the public with fishing opportunities along the Elkhart River in Elkhart. The event will include free fishing clinics, educational stations and food.

[Presentation](#)

Group C: Regional Ag Forum

Megan Ritterskamp, Neal Schroeder, Carrie Parmenter

The group hosted a workshop for farmers in the Lower Wabash/Ohio River conflict that focuses on regenerative agricultural practices.

[Presentation](#)

Group D: INDOT Mitigation

Bella Really, Jonah Leever, Josh Long

The group highlighted the mitigation process including overviews of success stories. They identified potential changes that INDOT staff would like to occur and identified options to connect the DNR In Lieu Fee program with SWCDs throughout the state.

[Presentation](#)

Group E: Middle Wabash-Deer Creek Watershed Virtual Tour

Jessica Outcalt and Jes Hatt

The group created a virtual map and self-guided online tour of the Deer Creek Watershed highlighting BMPs, scenic areas, public access points and other features of interest.

[Presentation](#) [Virtual tour link](#)

Group F: Fort Wayne Wetlands Passport Event

Hannah Allen, Terri Habig

The group designed promotional and educational materials for the Wetland Passport Event hosted by Fort Wayne City Utilities, Eagle Marsh, Becketts Run and Camp Scott with the goal of increasing awareness about green infrastructure and highlighting American Wetlands Month (May). Materials will include wetland and native plant handouts.

[Presentation](#) [Passport](#)

Group G: INLake: Online Lake Group Contact List

Megan Gokey, Rebecca Swift, Melody Myers-Kinzie

The group compiled an online listing of public and private lake group contacts highlighting associations, enthusiasts and watershed groups as well as professionals who work in, on and around Indiana lakes. The online list will be housed on an Indiana University website with a public facing website.

[Presentation](#) [Map link](#)

Group H: Walley Watershed!

Krysta Bozman, Amity Traylor, Sherry Plank

The group personified a watershed – Walley Watershed – building a social media platform to get kids interested in water quality and soil health.

Group I: Green Infrastructure with Cascading Consequences for Watershed Health: An informative booklet and interactive visualizer

Mikey Kracht, Shae Medlen, Belle Lee

The group constructed an interactive and digestible display that models the impact of green infrastructure on waterway health; developed a booklet describing green infrastructure applications with examples and data that shows how watershed health and individuals waterways health are impacted. These efforts will provide a foundation for further education and outreach and future work collaborations between the Shirley Heinze Land Trust and St Joseph River Basin.

[Game instructions](#) [Game management card](#) [Game resource card](#) [Game resources](#)

Group J: INnotive OUTreach

Sarah Reilly, Toria Callow

The group developed creative watershed branding including merchandise and physical items which highlight and identify and created easily shareable items.

[Presentation](#)

Group K: IWLA Impacts on Purdue Extension: Developing the network and creating connections to resources

Veronica Bullock, Valerie Clingerman

The group interviewed IWLA alumni to identify and compile alumni responses and highlight benefits to the community based on the IWLA experience. The group created a deliverable for Purdue Extension professionals to learn about the Watershed Academy and its benefits for extension staff.

[Presentation](#)

Group L: Watershed Grant Fact Sheet

Sam Lovold, Lori Jordan

The group produced a brochure targeting producers who are unaware of watershed grant funds which can assist with maintaining soil health practices, creating more resilient farms and preparing farmers for future generations. The brochure lists practices for which cost share might be available and details how these practices can impact a producer's bottom line.

[Presentation](#) [Handout](#)

Group M: Precipitation Conservation

Jen Brown, Anna Lux, Shelby Mathis

The group developed a rain barrel how-to-make video and an educational program to highlight 1) why remain barrels and other precipitation conservation best practices should be utilized and 2) identify ways to incorporate precipitation conservation into your landscape.

[Presentation](#) [Handout](#) [Rain barrel installation video](#)

Group N: Water & Legislation: Where We've Been, Where We Are Going

Brett Clark, Eric Pretzlav

The group created a summary and info graphic brochure to highlight challenges in watershed management, previous legislative efforts and outcomes which could lead to future legislation and highlight challenges of where water-based legislation has been and where it might be going.

[Presentation](#) [Handout](#)

Group O: Public Load Reduction Tool

Zoey Benton, Tim Neher, Alyssa Henthorn

The group created a user-friendly load reduction tool for public use. The excel-based tool provides a variety of analysis tools.

[Presentation](#) [Web link to tools](#)

Group P: Naturalist Book Club: Designing Active Community Outreach

Erica Eason, Katie Starr and Drew Myers

The group created a naturalist book club which aimed to engage the community. Participants selected a book list which included diverse voices and created a safe space for sharing. This partnership with local libraries was promoted via social media posts and highlighted future opportunities. The group developed a recommended reading list for future participants and developed a lesson learned list.

[Presentation](#) [Book list](#)

Group Q: Pollinator Pollooza

Lindsey Bishop, Hanna Garriott

The group created a family-friendly, vendor-based fair which will occur in June during pollinator week. The event will include local partners and highlight pollinator education, provide food and edutainment.

[Presentation](#)

Group R: Be a Rockstar for Your Watershed

Sarah Beckerman, Karen LaMere, Chris King

The group created a pamphlet targeting youth and the general public to increase awareness of watershed health and green infrastructure. The pamphlet highlights positive examples with the goal of 1) changing behavior to increase best management practice adoptions and 2) increasing awareness of water availability and human and environmental interaction.

[Presentation](#) [Scavenger hunt handout](#)

Group S: Archived Life Narratives along the Wabash River Heritage Corridor

Clarreese Greene

The group created a StoryMap of archived life narratives along the Wabash River Heritage Corridor using photos and videos obtained from the Purdue Archives. The StoryMap highlights how life narratives can be used to support the development, diversity and plurality of environmental and ecological narratives.

[StoryMap Link](#)