



### Annual Overview for 2011

The sixth class of the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy concluded in May 2011, consisting of 29 participants. They included both volunteers and professionals, including:

- watershed coordinators
- consultants
- stormwater coordinators
- graduate students
- federal and state government representatives
- private citizens
- city planner,
- county surveyor, and
- nonprofit representatives.



Those participants who completed all components of the face-to-face workshops and distance education received their Professional Certificate in Watershed Management.

### Workshop 1

The first workshop was held at McCormick's Creek State Park, in the historic Canyon Inn. This scenic state park provided an excellent location for our program. Participants enjoyed a walk to the waterfalls in the wintry weather.

Highlights included the Watershed Game, an interactive tool to help individuals understand the connection between



land use and water quality, and a watershed case study. Unfortunately, bad weather interfered with our greatly anticipated song by the IDEM Watershed Specialists. Excellent team leaders including Matt Meersman, Sara Peel, Jennifer Birchfield, and Bryan Wallace guidance, energy, and the voice of experience.

### Online social networking

We continued to use our online social networking component (new in 2010) at <http://iwatersheds.net>. Using the program "Ning", which is similar to a private Facebook just for the Academy, participants shared thoughts, discussed issues, and exchanged information. The site was also used as an archive for the information provided to participants regarding face-to-face meetings. All IWLA alumni and the steering committee members were also invited to participate.

## Workshop 2

The second workshop at Tecumseh Leadership provided an opportunity to reconnect. Highlights included learning about Porter County's success in linking watershed protection and land use planning, an opportunity to get out into the stream to experience Hoosier Riverwatch monitoring or stream restoration, how to easily implement a web site, and the always-loved zipline across the pond.



## Workshop 3 – Graduation

USGS Indiana Water Science Center Deputy Director Scott Morlock and IDEM Watershed Assessment and Planning Branch Chief Lou Renshaw inspired participants with graduation talks, the 29 participants presented team projects, and 24 participants who had completed all modules received a professional certificate in watershed management.

## Evaluations

The Academy has always received very strong evaluations from participants. The Academy participants found all the sessions for both workshops to be useful. Over 95% of the participants greatly appreciated the networking among Academy participants and the opportunity to work in small group activities that required critical thinking. Some specific comments regarding the most positive aspects of the Academy include:

- Meeting so many different people and becoming knowledgeable about the breadth and depth of experience present and realizing what an amazing resource they can be
- “You meet a diverse and great group of people, and the information is endless if you take advantage of it.”
- “It was extremely helpful to see how another group keeps stakeholders involved. I will use this information in my own project.” [Watershed Case Study]
- “Great tool for teaching the fine points of cooperation within the watershed.” [Watershed Game]
- “A wide variety of backgrounds of the participants leads to exposure of a lot of interesting and different points of views and ideas.”

## Indiana Watershed Leadership Webinar Series

We began a monthly webinar series to share experiences and ideas to strengthen watershed management in Indiana. Our “Learn Over Lunch” series occurs every second Wednesday of the month from noon to 1:00pm EST. No special software is needed -- just a computer with speakers or headphones. Presentations have included identifying critical areas in your watershed, Clean Water Act 101, Wellhead Protection and how it interfaces with Watershed Management, and many other interesting subjects. The webinar schedule is available at

<https://engineering.purdue.edu/watersheds/webinars/IWLA2011/>.