



# Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy

## Annual Overview for 2012

The seventh class of the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy concluded in May 2012, consisting of 26 participants. They included both volunteers and professionals, including:

- watershed coordinators
- consultants
- stormwater coordinators
- educators
- graduate students
- federal, state, and county government representatives
- county 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 mild winter weather.

Highlights included the Watershed Game, an interactive tool to help individuals understand the connection between land use and water quality, how to gather social information, interpreting monitoring data, and a watershed case study. 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, and the always-loved zipline across the pond. We added new programs this year including assessing stream channels using the Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index and a presentation on engaging people both on and in the water. Both additions were a huge success!



## Workshop 3 – Graduation

Jerod Chew from Indiana State Department of Agriculture and Jill Hoffmann, Empower Results LLC, inspired participants with captivating stories of conservation. The 26 participants presented their group projects, and 23 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:

- The comfort level of participants was constantly maintained because of the support from everyone. Leaders, teammates, table mates, made me feel like an important member which aided to my nervousness about being a younger member.
- The activities that allowed for discussion and idea sharing were most useful. It is nice to hear new ways to approach a topic/issue
- I felt my point of view was important to the whole group.
- The networking and learning from the different professionals was the most positive. We all bring different views to the discussions
- This workshop was done very well. Good info and excellent balance of speakers and exercises.

## Indiana Watershed Leadership Webinar Series

We continued our 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 Eastern. No special software is needed -- just a computer with speakers or headphones. Presentations have included urban green practices, alternative ditch design, practical web site options, Indiana's hydrologic cycle, and many other interesting subjects. The webinar schedule is available at

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