



# Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy

## Annual Overview for 2013

Congratulations to our 8th class of the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy which concluded in May 2013 and consisted of 30 participants. They included both volunteers and professionals, including:

- watershed coordinators
- consultants
- stormwater coordinators
- undergraduate and graduate students
- federal, state, and county government representatives
- planning and zoning coordinator,
- lakes council president,
- drainage board member, 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,



Bryan Wallace, Whitney Sauerheber, and Joe Schmees provided 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



*Photo courtesy of Leslie Schick*

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, identifying critical areas and best management practices, and the always-loved zipline across the pond. For the first time since the Academy started, we experience severe flooding that prevented us from getting out into the stream, but we were able to successfully experience Hoosier Riverwatch monitoring and assessing stream channels indoors. We added new programs this year including a presentation from Dan McCain on how volunteers can make a difference for any project and a highlight of local successes by Sara Peel describing the cost share program she leads and a new website showcasing conservation practices in Tippecanoe County, TippEcoNow at <http://tippeconow.com/>. Both additions were a huge success!



## Workshop 3 – Graduation

Dr. Jack Wittman, National Director for GeoSciences, Layne Christensen Company, inspired participants to think about long-term water supply planning and the importance of integrating planning into conservation discussions. Participants presented their group projects, and those 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 98% 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 Academy reinforced my professional competence and goals in a scenic and supportive environment.
- Watershed planning can be daunting given the amount of information and work ahead. The Academy has let me know that others have been through it and there is lots of support out there.
- It was easy to get to know everyone in a very conducive and supportive atmosphere.
- I appreciated the laid-back attitude and feel of the workshops. This atmosphere encourages honest discussions and confidence.
- I really like all the different ways of learning.
- A great way to learn of others working hard to understand the importance of working with stakeholders to improve water quality.

## 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 limnology 101, the impact of road salt on the environment, linking watershed protection and land use planning, and many other interesting subjects. All webinars are recorded and archived for viewing at your convenience. The webinar schedule and archives are available at <https://engineering.purdue.edu/watersheds/webinars/>.