



# Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy

## Annual Overview for 2014

Congratulations to our 9th class of the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy which concluded in May 2014 and consisted of 37 participants. They included both volunteers and professionals, including:

- watershed coordinators
- consultants
- stormwater coordinators
- undergraduate student
- federal, state, county and city government representatives
- intermediate school and university educators,
- county surveyor,
- lakes group representatives,
- volunteers and interested citizens, 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, Leslie Schick, Bryan Wallace, Daragh Deegan, and Logan Garner provided guidance, energy, and the voice of experience.

### Online social networking

We continued to use our online social networking component 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 NRCS and MS4s and how to partner with these programs, identifying critical areas and best management practices, assessing stream channels, getting out into the stream to experience Hoosier Riverwatch monitoring, and the always-loved zipline across the pond. We added a new program this year that allowed participants to experience new technology using a Tipping Points tool to help with planning.

## Workshop 3 – Graduation

Ann McIver, Director of Environmental Stewardship, Citizens Energy Group, inspired participants by explaining how Citizens Energy Group is evolving an environmental leadership model into a culture of sustainability. 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 94% 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:

- Overall – extremely positive experience. The presentations and activities were wonderful – a great mix of individual and group learning. The friendly, welcoming atmosphere allowed for an incredible amount of learning to take place.
- I was very impressed with the organization and professionalism of the entire session! I was also impressed with the knowledge of each of the presenters. Each presenter stayed right on topic and finished precisely on time. The sessions were filled with information.
- I was made to feel very much a part of the program from the minute I stepped in. Everybody was treated the same, no matter what they brought to the table.
- Despite the fact that I originally thought I would be overwhelmed, I ended up feeling like I was among friends who supported me at every step. I was also pleasantly surprised at how much I really did know!
- The variety in current roles, background and education make group discussions so useful and insightful. Learning from the successes and failures of other participants is so useful
- The Academy has truly gotten me more involved in watersheds. I go to board and annual meetings now.

## 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 learning what bugs can tell us about water quality, the successes of two-stage ditches, climate change, 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/>.