

# Indiana Conservation Alliance



Indiana needs – and deserves – greater investment in our state’s outdoor heritage and our natural resources – our forests, streams, lakes, prairies, wetlands and wildlife habitats. Ideally, this investment should include a dedicated source of revenue sufficient to meet the need both for acquiring new lands for parks, wildlife areas, nature preserves, places to hunt, fish, hike and bike, and for ensuring that these indispensable resources are properly managed and maintained.



## The Indiana Conservation Alliance and its partner organizations are seeking state budget appropriations for the following programs:

- President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust (IDNR): \$20 million over 2 years
- State Wildlife Action Plan/Wildlife Diversity/Fish and Wildlife management (IDNR): \$16 million over 2 years
- Deferred maintenance at all DNR properties\*

## Why these programs?

Many states are making major investments in conservation, while Indiana’s investment pales in comparison. For example,

- Colorado and Arizona dedicate a share of the state’s lottery proceeds to conservation. Colorado’s dedicated lottery raises about \$125 million a year for conservation.
- Arkansas, Missouri, and Minnesota dedicate a small additional sales tax percentage to land and wildlife protection and outdoor recreation. Missouri’s two dedicated conservation taxes raise about \$190 million a year; Minnesota’s raises \$300 million a year.
- Maine and California issue bonds to pay for conservation projects.
- New Jersey, Florida, Maryland, North Carolina and New York dedicate a share of real estate transfer or deed transfer fees for conservation. Florida’s dedicated fee has raised \$3 billion since 2001.
- Virginia, Texas and Georgia dedicate a share of sales tax revenue from outdoor equipment sales, which was the mechanism contained in HB 1376. (State websites; State Funding Mechanisms for Outdoor Recreation, Outdoor Industry Association, August 2017).



\*This appropriation is contained in the House-passed budget’s line item for \$150 million for deferred maintenance for all state properties.

# INVESTING IN CONSERVATION

## Is more funding really needed now?

Indiana needs a similar commitment to conserving our lands, waters and wildlife as these other states have made. Funding for Indiana's land and water conservation programs has plummeted.

- The highly successful Bicentennial Nature Trust program, established in 2012, has **reached its end** and all its funds were committed by 2016.
- The President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust (formerly the Indiana Heritage Trust) has not received a meaningful general fund appropriation since **2009**. Revenue from the environmental license plate, dedicated to the Harrison Conservation Trust, has declined by over 50% in the last twenty years — dropping from \$1.9 million in 1998 to \$955,000 a year in the coming biennium — due to the growth in the number of specialty plates being offered.

Beyond conserving our splendid natural heritage and protecting the plants and animals that make our planet livable, pollinate our food crops, and control insect pests, conservation of these resources also has a direct bearing on the state's economic success.

- Outdoor recreation in Indiana generates nearly **\$16 billion a year** in consumer spending and results in 143,000 direct jobs (Outdoor Industry Association, 2017).

More opportunities for outdoor recreation, in parks, on rivers and lakes, or along trails, also lead to a healthier citizenry, reducing health care costs.

- Physical activity "...is one of the most important actions



people can take to improve their **overall health.**" (Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities, September 2015).

What's more, outdoor spaces are a major element of quality of place, widely recognized as essential to recruiting and retaining top professional talent and the companies that rely on this talent.

- "Attracting **new talent** is essential, and the best way to bring in high quality people is to offer a high quality of place." (Fourth Economy Consulting, December 2017)

Investing in conservation provides a strong return on investment.

- \$61 million in state funding provided to the President Harrison Conservation Trust/Indiana Heritage Trust since 1993 has leveraged **\$74 million** in private/partner contributions.
- Every dollar invested in the Bicentennial Nature Trust leveraged **\$2.32 in private funding** (\$20 million state funds, \$46.4 million private funds including \$10 million Lilly Endowment).

**A significant investment in conserving Indiana's lands, waters and wildlife is long overdue.**



## Take Action:

Contact your state senator and state representative and urge them to support these vitally-important conservation appropriations, and request that they urge the budget bill conferees to support these appropriations as well. The budget bill is **House Bill 1001**.

Find your legislators and their contact information here: **[iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators/](http://iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators/)**

For more information go to **[indianaconservationalliance.org](http://indianaconservationalliance.org)**.