

Ripples

The Quarterly Newsletter of Friends of Sugar Creek, Inc.

Summer 2009

200+ Gather for Bachner Reserve Dedication

By Steve Charles

It was the sort of day Mike Bachner loved.

More than 150 people from numerous environmental organizations joined Bachner's family and friends from Wabash College and the Crawfordsville community on Saturday, April 25, to dedicate the Mike Bachner Nature Reserve in memory of the outdoorsman, environmentalist, Wabash College bookstore manager and Friend of Sugar Creek.

"For my father, traveling on the creek was always about the adventure, and about the story you could tell when you got back," Bachner's daughter, Madeline, told those gathered around the large wooden sign marking the Reserve.

"What we have to learn from that and be reminded of is that when we put in on Sugar Creek, here or anywhere else, or on any trip we take, it's not about executing a smooth plan, it's about having an adventure and telling people about it.

"That's how we can educate people, that's how we can impassion them to use these beautiful wild places, and that's how we preserve them."



Volunteers plant one of 5,400 new trees

The Reserve, a 41-acre field which includes an access point to Sugar Creek, represents a joint effort among the NICHES Land Trust, Friends of Sugar Creek, the Nature Conservancy, Indiana Heritage Trust, Pheasants

Forever, Tipmont REMC, McCallister Foundation and the Indiana Plant and Wildflower Foundation. More than 5,000 trees have been planted in the field.

The seeds for the project were planted during a conversation between Wabash Professors David Krohne and Doug Calisch during an immersion learning trip in the Amazon Basin. Krohne serves on the NICHES board, Calisch with the Friends of Sugar Creek. As good friends of Bachner they were looking for an appropriate way to honor the man who had called Sugar Creek "my own little slice of wilderness."



The DNR access at the Bachner Reserve is now open

"This is a fabulous turnout," Krohne told those gathered, "and it honors Mike Bachner, the creek, and this place that will become a forest in about 100 years."

"I'm really so excited to see so many people out here," said NICHES Executive Director Gus Nyberg. "This project has been a wonderful opportunity for us to be involved in this community, and I'm looking forward to working with everyone down here and watching this forest grow.

"I know how important Sugar Creek is to people throughout the state of Indiana, which many people will agree is the best stream in the state."

NICHES' vision for the Sugar Creek valley is to preserve and grow the forests and ensure that future generations have access to free-flowing clean waters "teeming with bass, darters, and dragonflies."

FSC President Zach Cain thanked the crowd for "supporting Mike, his memory, and this project.

"It came to our attention several years ago that people were losing access to the creek. It was getting hard to get canoes in and harder to find places to stop and get out without worrying about being towed or run off.

"I can't say enough about the hard work that went into getting this place, especially to NICHES, who really took hold of this project."

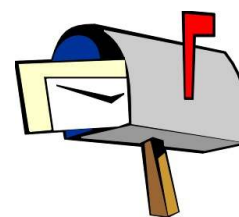
The DNR access point opened for public use in early June. Friends of Sugar Creek has adopted the site and will help maintain it in the years to come.

Mark Your Calendar:

- **August 4:** August Board Mtg.
- **Sep. 1:** September Board Mtg.
- **Sep. 12:** Riverwatch Training
- **October 6:** October Board Mtg.
- **October 24:** Fall Clean-Up

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Share your favorite Sugar Creek stories, photos, and artwork with us! Send submissions to our PO Box or to: nathan@friendsofsugarcreek.org

Annual Meeting Minutes

4/22/09 — Friends of Sugar Creek Annual Meeting

Board Members in Attendance: Zach Cain, Matt Williams, Angie Williams, Doug Calisch, Lali Hess, Doug Miller, Marc Hudson, Jim Suren

Total membership attendance: 40+



In accordance with the organization's by-laws, Friends of Sugar Creek held its annual meeting on Tuesday, April 22. The meeting consisted of a potluck dinner, review of activities, official business (election of board members and treasurer's report), and guest speaker Raoul Moore.

- President Zach Cain began the meeting by welcoming attendees. He introduced watershed coordinator Nathan Mullendore, who discussed the past year's projects and events. These include three creek cleanups, a float trip, booths at the 4H fair and Montgomery County

Lawn and Garden Show, Bachner Nature Reserve and Public Access Site acquisition/development, and work on the Sugar Creek Nature Park. Mullendore also discussed grant funding and the watershed inventory project. Included in the discussion events were details about collaborations with different organizations including local schools, Wabash College, the City of Crawfordsville, and Friends of Turkey Run and Shades.

- Secretary Doug Calisch discussed the Bachner Nature Reserve project and dedication, which will take place on Saturday, April 25, and continue through Sunday, April 26. Volunteers are still being sought.
- Treasurer Doug Miller then gave an account of the organization's finances. He distributed balance sheets which outlined organizational expenses for the fiscal year. The closing balance as of 3/31/09 was \$19,690.19.
- The last order of official business was election of board members.
- Secretary Doug Calisch announced that he would not renew his post at the end of this term. A motion was made to keep Doug Calisch as an at-large board member. Motion was seconded and approved.
- A motion was made nominating Zach Cain for President. Motion was seconded and approved.
- A motion was made nominating Matt Williams for Vice President. Motion was seconded and approved.
- A motion was made nominating Marc Hudson for Secretary. Motion was seconded and approved.
- A motion was made nominating Doug Miller for Treasurer. Motion was seconded and approved.
- The election of officers concluded the official business section of the meeting.
- An informal call for questions/concerns was issued. One member commented on FSC's support of dialogue for a Montgomery County Planning and Zoning Ordinance. Another member asked about the Sugar Creek Advisory Board. Matt Williams, FSC Vice President, is a member of SCAB and discussed their ongoing efforts to enforce the Sugar Creek Ordinance.
- Following this comment session, former board member Raoul Moore gave a talk on erosion. His presentation concluded with a question and answer session.



Darter Dispatches

Summer Events at Turkey Run

- August 1 (Saturday) — Bird Fest

This event features live birds of prey, hands-on bird activities, programs, and hikes throughout the day and evening.

- September 5 (Saturday) — Archaeology Day
- Atlatl spear throwing, mock archaeological dig, fire starting and other activities throughout the day. Visitors can bring their stone tools collections for identification & origins.

Call the Turkey Run State Park Nature Center for additional details: (765) 597-2654.

Conservation Tent at Mont. Co. 4-H Fair

- FSC will share tent space with several local conservation groups at the Montgomery County 4-H Fair from July 17—July 24. Our educational focus is fishing in Sugar Creek. We will also be raffling off a canoe. Stop by and see us!

Hoosier



Riverwatch

Riverwatch Training Offered Sep. 12

- You can help FSC monitor Sugar Creek water quality by becoming Hoosier Riverwatch trained at a workshop held Saturday, September 12 in Frankfort. Hoosier Riverwatch is a state-sponsored program that provides water monitoring equipment and training for local watershed groups. Please contact Nathan Mullendore for more information (765-401-0839 or by email at nathan@friendsofsugarcreek.org).

Crawfordsville Stormwater Rate Passes

- Following several months of discussion, the Crawfordsville City Council passed a resolution imposing a stormwater fee on property owners. The Crawfordsville Stormwater Board was formed in response to requirements for MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System), an unfunded federal mandate issued through the Clean Water Act. Given the new funding levels, Crawfordsville's MS4 program has the potential to significantly improve water quality in Sugar Creek.

Hoosier Outdoor Experience Sep. 25-27

- Mix a little mountain biking with hiking, fly fishing, archery, kayaking, target shooting, horseback riding, camping or just about any other outdoor activity you can imagine and you get the Hoosier Outdoor Experience. This free event will be held 25-27 at Fort Harrison State Park. Visit <http://www.in.gov/dnr/5009.htm> for details.

Former Board Member Dick Ristine Passes Away

By Dean Ford

I was saddened to read of the passing of my dear friend, Dick Ristine. Dick was one of FSC's most loyal and dedicated board members.

In early 1990 we asked Mr. Ristine to help us understand the legal and governmental issues pertaining to the disposal of municipal/industrial sewage sludge in Montgomery County. As a life long resident of Montgomery County, former State Senator, Lieutenant Governor, and practicing attorney, we felt his insight and advice would help us produce an unbiased document for distribution.

Dick had not been involved with FSC at that point but he agreed to help us. Confident that he could review IDEM's files and interview the agency's staff, he drove to Indianapolis for what was expected to be a short visit.

A changed Dick Ristine called me later that evening, angry and frustrated from his first encounter with IDEM. He was shocked by their 'stonewalling' and lack of cooperation. According to Dick, IDEM became very sensitive about questions concerning sludge disposal in Indiana. They

didn't know that he had played a decisive role in the formation of IDEM following President Reagan's weakening of the EPA.

Dick Ristine was reborn that day. The distinguished Republican statesman had become an environmental activist. Dick asked to join the FSC board.

In 1991, thanks to Dick, Bert Stern, Les Hearson, and others, we released our report on sludge management in Montgomery county.

Whenever Dick was asked by a newspaper reporter or radio interviewer what his most important goal was for the creek, it was always the same answer: "to make it safe to eat the fish and swim in its water again."

Dick was an outspoken proponent for the protection of Sugar Creek for the rest of his life. It was Mr. Ristine who negotiated and promoted

the second nomination of Sugar Creek into the Natural and Scenic Rivers Program. It was Dick who created the FSC 501(c)(3) status. He became the group's spokesperson for posting fish consumption warnings along the creek.



Photo by Wabash College

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Friends of Sugar Creek has lost a great friend.

Water Words: Riparian Zone

The banks and other land surrounding a body of water is known as the *riparian zone*. A healthy riparian zone features trees and vegetation that filter incoming runoff and provide shade and habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

500 lbs of Trash Removed During May 16 Clean-Up



Trash collected during the spring clean-up included several tires, pieces of insulation, and twelve contractor bags full of trash.

A small group of dedicated volunteers worked through inclement weather to collect an estimated 500 pounds of trash during the annual spring creek clean-up. The group met at the Sugar Creek Nature Park and focused on the creek banks and upland areas due to high water. Twelve large contractor bags were filled with litter and other debris. Four tires and several pieces of foam insulation were also collected.

Following the morning work, volunteers were rewarded with a hot barbecue lunch provided by Hog Wild. County Market also provided bottled water, hamburgers, and buns. Friends of Sugar Creek appreciates the volunteer efforts and food contributions from these sponsors.

FSC helps monitor and maintain two miles of the creek around the Nature Park as part of the state's Adopt-A-River program. The May 16 effort was the first of two scheduled clean-ups at the adopted section this year.

The fall creek clean-up is scheduled for Saturday, October 24, and will start at 9 AM (rain or shine).

43 Join Family Friendly Float Trip

A total of forty-three community members turned out for the Family Friendly Float Trip on June 6. The event was co-sponsored by FSC and NICHES Land Trust . A diverse group of members from both groups joined the fun on a day with perfect weather and water levels.

Participants floated from Jim Davis Bridge to Deers Mill, stopping along the way for lunch and to explore Indian Creek. Prior to getting in the water, FSC board member Jim Suren gave a brief talk on paddling safety and technique.

FSC would like to thank NICHES for their partnership and Clements Canoes for their help with transportation.



Ripples is online. Direct your friends to the "publication" section of our website <http://www.friendsofsugarcreek.org>

Sugar Creek Fish Consumption: Advisory and Advice

Go to any public access site on Sugar Creek in Montgomery County and you're likely to find a white sign with "DO NOT EAT ANY FISH" written in red letters. These signs were installed by the County several years ago in response to fish consumption advisory guidelines issued by the state.

Friends of Sugar Creek has used these signs as part of our display during outreach events throughout the last year. They have prompted many questions and lively discussions.

We've learned from this experience that many area residents either don't know about the advisory or are fuzzy on the details. Booth workers educated themselves on the advisory for events this summer and have been working to distribute the information.

The Indiana Fish Consumption Advisory is issued by the Indiana State Department of Health. The primary contaminants in Sugar Creek fish (of human concern) are PCBs. These come from industrial lubricants that have leaked or been dumped into the Creek. PCBs accumulate in fatty tissue over time—they don't simply pass through an animal's system.



The Indiana State Department of Health suggests that no fish be eaten from the Crawfordsville area of Sugar Creek due to PCB contamination.

Fish that are older, larger, and have fattier flesh tend to accumulate more PCBs than others. Carp and large (24" +) catfish, for example, are almost universally declared unsafe to eat for all segments

of the population in all areas of the Creek. Smaller fish such as bass, bluegill, and crappie are generally much safer to eat.

PCBs have also accumulated in the Crawfordsville stretch more than any other area on Sugar Creek. From the I-74 Bridge to the Yountsville bridge (IN-32), the state recommends that no fish be consumed by anyone. Upstream from Crawfordsville, it's pretty safe for everyone to eat a moderate amount of fish. Downstream it's generally safe for everyone except the at-risk population (under 15 and pregnant mothers). PCBs are found in decreasing quantities the further downstream you get.

It is not illegal to eat contaminated fish, but it is ill-advised. Several studies have identified the potential health risk posed by high levels of PCB consumption. These include developmental problems and damage to the liver and immune systems.

We can't stop people from eating fish in a way that's potentially unhealthy, but we can make sure they are informed about the risks.

We can look back at our parents' decisions—about pesticides, radioactive waste, PCB's, the grand and fatal dams—and say that perhaps our parents didn't understand the consequence of their acts. When our children look back on our decisions, they won't allow us that excuse.

— Kathleen Dean Moore from the essay "Landing"

Sugar Creek Nature Park Update

The Sugar Creek Nature Park booth was a hot spot of activity during this summer's Strawberry Festival. It was also a cool spot for those seeking a shady place to rest.

The booth, which was staffed by representatives from FSC and the City of Crawfordsville, featured an example of the small shelters that will soon be installed at the Sugar Creek Nature Park.

Development work on the Park will continue throughout the summer, as crews work to establish the trail system and place shelters and signage along the way.

The Sugar Creek Nature Park Planning Commission has met twice monthly for several months to keep the development on track. Their efforts have paid off with several grant awards and a small number of private donations.

Shannon Hudson, a Tuttle Middle School science teacher, has worked prodigiously to create a curriculum for student groups to use at the park.

As currently designed, each shelter will serve as a learning station for a variety of topics including erosion, geology, soils, and wetlands ecology. Two stations will also be dedicated to nature-inspired artwork. Grant funding from the Montgomery County Community Foundation will allow Hudson to purchase lab equipment and other learning materials for students to use at the park.

The site will be open to the public throughout the development process. Hikers are advised to wear appropriate clothing to protect against poison ivy and stinging nettles since the trails are not yet fully established.



Members of the SCNP Planning Commission discuss plans for trails and learning stations.

Garlic Mustard One of Many Invasive Plants in Sugar Creek Watershed

By Dixie Kunze

I recently watched a program about Yellowstone National Park, where wolves were reintroduced in 1995. That same year, beavers also reappeared—without human assistance. By keeping elk herds on the move, the wolves stopped their prey from leisurely grazing on the tender saplings typically consumed by beavers. With their favored food source once again available, the beaver population quickly rebounded.

Countless other species are similarly linked in ways that often escape our attention.

We are aware that non-native species can be detrimental to the survival of native species. For example, garlic mustard, an herb that was introduced from Europe in the 1860s, produces a chemical that damages the fungi plants use to absorb nutrients from the soil. Studies have shown that hardwood seedlings grow much slower in soil that has been infested with garlic mustard.



Photo by Chris Evans, UCA

Garlic mustard has heart-shaped leaves and white flowers that blossom in mid-spring.

Unfortunately, garlic mustard is one of many invasive plants that exist in Turkey Run and Shades State Parks, as well as many other wooded areas along Sugar Creek. Although I am happy to pull and bag garlic mustard when it flowers in late April and May, I must confess that kayaking the area during that time has been to-

tally ruined for me by the sight of garlic mustard lining the banks.

The Friends of Turkey Run and Shades State Parks seek to protect the beauty and ecological health of the parks. One way we work towards this goal is by eradicating garlic mustard and other invasive plants such as bush honeysuckle and privet. This work is done through individual volunteer efforts as well as group workdays. We have also received grant funding to hire professional eradication crews.

More hands (and strong backs) are always welcome to join this cause! For more information, go to <http://tinyurl.com/ktkxg4>.

Dixie Kunze is a board member for Friends of Turkey and Shades State Park, a non-profit group who seeks “to conserve, develop, study and interpret the cultural, historical and natural resources within and near the parks’ boundaries.”

Information about Indiana’s invasive plants can be found at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/3123.htm>.



Donating to Friends of Sugar Creek is easy! Simply click on the “Donate” button located on our website (www.friendsofsugarcreek.org). FSC is a registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

Sugar Creek Conservation Concerns in 2009-11 Indiana Budget

The Spring edition of *Ripples* featured an article on the Indiana Heritage Trust, a fund used by the state to purchase important natural areas and provide new recreational opportunities for Hoosiers. We were dismayed to learn in early June that state funding for this program was likely to be cut in the revised budget. Other planned budget cuts included a further reduction in DNR funding and elimination of the Clean Water Indiana program.

In response to these concerns, FSC mailed the following letter to three local representatives (Dale Grubbs, Tim Brown, and Jeff Thompson). We are pleased to report that Clean Water Indiana and the Indiana Heritage Trust ultimately retained funding in the budget signed by Governor Daniels on June 30. The DNR budget did receive additional cuts, but they were in line with similar reductions across the board.

Dear [Representative],

I am writing you on behalf of the Friends of Sugar Creek to express our concern about tentative plans to cut funding for several conservation and recrea-

tion items in the revised state budget. Clearly this difficult time calls for difficult decisions, but this is the wrong time to slash funding for the Department of Natural Resources and eliminate state funding for the Indiana Heritage Trust and Clean Water Indiana.

These three agencies and their programs have a profound effect on the quality of life for Crawfordsville area citizens. Let me give you a few examples:

The Bachner Nature Reserve and Sugar Creek Public Fishing Area, a new public access site west of Crawfordsville that opened this spring, would not have been possible without Indiana Heritage Trust funding and support from DNR staff. IHT funding allowed the purchase of the land; DNR funding led to the development of a public parking lot and canoe launch. At a time when public access to Sugar Creek has been decreasing, the opening of the site has provided an invaluable addition.

Turkey Run and Shades are two of the most important recreational sites for Crawfordsville residents. These parks also provide a boost to the local economy, as visitors often spend money in Crawfordsville on their way to and from their park visits. These parks have already experienced staffing

reductions due to budget cuts earlier this year. A further 8% reduction (\$19 million) at the state level will have a detrimental effect on the operation and maintenance of this vital natural resource.

Clean Water Indiana funds have been used in the past to fund critical habitat restoration along farm fields in the Sugar Creek Watershed. Cutting these funds will limit future efforts to protect our creek from erosion and agricultural contaminants.

An area where these resources are not preserved and publicly accessible is, to me, an area not worth calling home. This opinion is far from unique—ask any one of our 400+ members and you are likely to hear the same thing.

I hope you will take these concerns into consideration when you return to the Assembly in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Zach Cain, President, Friends of Sugar Creek

Please take a few minutes to thank your representative for supporting these vital conservation concerns: <http://alturl.com/n4c9>.

Summer Lawn Care Tips for Water Quality

By the Indianapolis Clean Stream Team

Homeowners can beautify their property and even reduce flooding by employing creative and sustainable green solutions.

Rain barrels are large containers connected to downspouts that collect and hold rainwater. The collected water can be used to water flowers, trees, lawns and even indoor plants. Typically made of plastic or wood, rain barrels can be purchased at some lawn and garden stores or built using materials available at hardware stores.

Rain gardens are another sustainable solution that can beautify property and manage excess stormwater. These gardens are planted in low-lying areas with deep-rooted plants that thrive on and absorb water. Soil and flowers filter debris and other pollutants from stormwater before it enters the ground. These gardens can be planted with flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees.

For more information on these sustainable solutions and their benefits, visit www.sustainindy.org/green-infrastructure.cfm.

Chemical Sprays

When it comes to keeping your lawn and garden looking its best, homeowners can consider techniques that have minimal impact on our local waters.

Chemicals that are applied excessively or inappropriately to a lawn or garden may run off during rainstorms and wash directly into our waterways. Even small amounts of commonly used insecticides, herbicides and fertilizers can degrade water quality and threaten human health. Insecticides and herbicides can damage or kill aquatic animals and plants. Fertilizers accelerate algae growth, which can affect oxygen levels in our waterways, harming beneficial aquatic wildlife.

To reduce the risk to waterways, residents can use native plants in landscaping, mow less frequently, allow grass to grow a little higher, leave grass clippings on the lawn, and/or water their lawn in the evenings. These tips also can help cultivate healthier lawns that require less maintenance.

To Report Illegal Dumping or a Pollution Incident

Call 317-233-7745 (24 hours)

Call the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's 24-hour emergency response hotline immediately. Have detailed information ready, including time, date, and location. A small delay could reduce the chances of containing the hazard and make it difficult to trace. After notifying the response team, call Zach Cain, President of Friends of Sugar Creek, at 765-366-6682.

2009 Fundraising Campaign Donors

FSC would like to recognize our 2009 Fundraising Campaign donors. Your generous contributions will enable us to pursue our mission to restore, protect, and promote Sugar Creek for another year. Thank you!

J & Patricia Barnes

Don & Mary Bickel

Steven Birt

Mike & June Blood

Zach Cain

Doug Calisch

Janice Clauser

Darlington Pet Clinic

Mara Davis

(In honor of Dean Ford)

Audra Ezell

(In memory of Susan Calvert)

Richard & Ellen Farnham

Dean Ford

Peter & Kathleen Frederick

(In memory of Mike Bachner)

Paula & Russell Frew

(In memory of Lodell & Helen Jean Branstetter)

Cindy Galloway & Jeff Wells

(In honor of the Sugar Creek Tree Farm)

Kathy A. Goebel

(In memory of Fred Goebel)

Herman & Katherine Haffner

Garry & Connie Hamilton

Pamela Hartigan

(In memory of Mike Bachner)

Pat Hauck

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James & Joan Hutcheson

(In memory of Glenna Hutcheson Mcbee)

Chuck Johnston

Diane Kreisher

Dixie Kunze

Gren & Mary Lefebvre

M. Rita Locker

(In memory of Lyle and Avis Seaman)

David & Virginia Maharry

Brian McCafferty

Mary Kate McKenna

Irmgard McKinney

(In memory of Mike Bachner)

Doug Miller & Lali Hess

James Moore

Frank & Elma Moss

Brad & Sue Mullendore

Cortney Mycroft

(In memory of Don Albright)

Robin & Gail Pebworth

Victor Powell

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(In memory of Bob Keedy)

Dick & Lou Ristine

Richard Sheek

Sommer Metalcraft Corp.

Donald & Dorothy Sperry

(In memory of Mike Bachner)

Bill & Ellie Stieg

(In memory of Abijah O'Neall)

Richard & Doris Strawn

Bob & Nancy Stwalley

Sugar Creek Animal Hospital

Jim Suren

Ellen Swift

Jim & Beth Swift

Terry & Michael Swift

(In memory of Barbara Sue)

Tom Twarek & Ellen Ball

Paul Vasquez & Family

Chris & Pat White

(In memory of Mike Bachner)

John & Margaret Zimmerman

Friends of Sugar Creek

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Return Service Requested



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Friends of Sugar Creek, Inc. (FSC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit grassroots environmental organization located in west-central Indiana. FSC was founded by a group of concerned citizens in 1987 after a fish kill along Sugar Creek was disregarded by local and state government officials. Since that time the mission of FSC has been to *protect, restore, and promote appreciation of Sugar Creek and its watershed.*

Board of Directors

Executive Members:

- Zach Cain — President
- Matt Williams — Vice President
- Doug Miller — Treasurer
- Marc Hudson — Secretary

At-Large Members:

- Jim Suren
- Doug Calisch
- Wendy Feller
- Christie Byun
- Paul Vasquez
- Beth Swift

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“Chances are, your own life and history of your place are braided with the current of a river...When we figure our addresses, we might do better to forget zip codes and consider where the rain goes after it falls outside our windows.

As the poet Conrad Hilberry has written, ‘Knowing rivers, you know the slope and the bias / Of earth's body. You know how the land lies.’ We need such knowledge to feel as intimate with the branching and gathering of the earth's veins as we do with the veins in our own wrists. The tilt of land that snares the rain also defines where we are more profoundly than any state line or city limit.”

—Indiana writer Scott Russell Sanders, from the essay “The Force of Moving Water.”



Youth participants from the Family Friendly Float Trip test the waters of Indiana Creek.