



WAWASEE AREA CONSERVANCY FOUNDATION

# CONSERVANCY VIEWS

Protecting our watershed through **AWARENESS, ANALYSIS** and **ACTION**.

Spring 2026



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Red-breasted Merganser duck | Photo credit: Larry Baumgardt

# Eco-Zone Wetland Protection

By Bill McCully, Board Chair

The WACF is well known for our work to protect water quality in the Wawasee Watershed through land acquisition and remediation, educational programs, and shoreline protection. We take this responsibility seriously, and it extends to some projects you might not be aware of.

Lake Wawasee's wetlands were once much larger than they are today. Aerial photography from the 1920s and 1930s shows just how much bigger they were than they are now. Many of us old-timers remember when the sandbar near the Leeland channels and the Martin Creek outflow supported reeds and bullrush across what was once known as the "Sunken Island."

The open area of Conklin Bay (The Kettle!) was much smaller than it is today, with a large percentage of native growth having receded toward SR13 and the WACF property at the back of the bay. As late as the 1960s, Johnson's Bay was nearly entirely encircled with cattails and reeds. The North Bay, near Wawasee Boat Company and Harborside Condominiums, was lush with native vegetation that guarded the channel back to "Harkless" as we knew it.

Red-winged blackbirds did indeed rule the roost in those days.

Over the years, the bay areas were developed through the construction of channels and the addition of hundreds of homes and cottages. While making the dream of lake life more accessible (a good thing!), this growth had a major impact on these important ecosystems. Add in the explosive growth of speedboats and their steady increase in size and draft to accommodate recreational activities, and the result is a significant loss of wetland area and native vegetation.

Some years ago, WACF embarked on a project to protect these areas and, in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources and local pier companies and marinas, started the Eco-Zone program. This was an effort to protect vulnerable areas by installing "Tall Boy" buoys in Conklin Bay, Johnson's Bay, and North Bay to keep boat traffic at a safe distance from native plants, which were threatened by wave action. Specific GPS coordinates identified the buoys' positions. Over time, the ability to accurately locate and place the buoys became difficult.

Through the efforts of a team of volunteers led by former board member Bill Hess, permanent anchors were designed and placed. In the protected areas. These anchors are difficult to locate, even with modern GPS technology. Bill



also very generously donated his family's pontoon boat, affectionately known as the "Earth Boat," to WACF, which helps place and remove the buoys at the beginning and end of each season.

This past year, Wawasee residents John and Carol Kellogg made a very generous gift to WACF to help us improve the placement of the Eco-Zone markers, and we are undertaking a project to upgrade the equipment and ensure accurate placement. The buoys provide a visual guide to boaters and anglers to keep a safe distance from protected areas. We are working with our volunteers and partners to design a process that will ensure the protection and hopefully the restoration of our precious native flora and fauna gracing our bays and wetlands. Thanks to our donors, volunteers, and partners for their help in this lesser-known but essential project. And a special thanks to you for respecting the Eco-Zone buoy line while enjoying our beloved lake!



# The Thunder Run Changes Course to Protect Wetlands

In 1993, five owners of antique and classic wooden Chris-Crafts decided their boats needed to be used more regularly. They met at the west end of Lake Wawasee on a Sunday morning and made a trip around the lake. They called their trip The Thunder Run because of the sound their old flathead engines made, and they decided to do it every week. The name stuck, and the number of wooden boats participating in the weekly trip around Lake Wawasee grew. A happy consequence of The Thunder Run has been the large numbers of people who look forward to watching the wooden boats go around Lake Wawasee (and sometimes Syracuse Lake) on Sunday morning. They are on porches, lawns, piers, and boats along the course. They wave flags, take pictures, point at their favorite boats, and fondly recall “the good old days”.

The increased popularity of The Thunder Run has triggered the requirement for an Indiana DNR recreational event permit. The application for such a permit requires evaluating many factors, several of which are tied to the lake’s ecology. The regulations require that the DNR consider water traffic density, the physical characteristics of the lake, and whether the activity can be designed to prevent unusual conditions or hazards and to promote fish, wildlife, or botanical resource management.

Many years ago, the WACF and the DNR worked together to adopt “Eco-Zone” protection for wetlands near recreational boating areas. At Lake Wawasee, the zones are located in Conklin Bay, Johnson Bay, and North Bay (at the Wawasee Boat Company entrance). At Syracuse Lake, the Eco-Zone is along Buck Island in the SE corner of the lake. In its Application for a recreational event permit, The Thunder Run has considered the required

factors, not least avoiding large wakes that could impact the established Eco-Zones. The Thunder Run has been granted a Flotilla (watercraft parade) Permit for 2026, which requires several changes to the Thunder Run course.

The wooden boats will gather at the west end of Conklin Bay. At 10 AM on Sunday mornings, they will proceed at idle speed along the north shore of Conklin Bay and past the Oakwood Resort floating piers and beach. The boats will turn south toward Sunset Park, accelerate to planing speed, and

proceed around Lake Wawasee in a counterclockwise direction. The boats will stay at least 250 feet from shore and will not enter Johnson’s Bay or Conklin Bay. The Thunder Run will end at Kale Island. The course will not enter the narrow area between Black Point and Sunrise Beach to avoid a switchback turn at Johnson Bay and the large wakes it creates. On holiday weekends, and otherwise as often as practicable, The Thunder Run will be led by a Kosciusko County Sheriff Lake Patrol boat.

The course for The Thunder Run has been designed with the DNR requirements for a recreational permit in mind. It avoids wakes in wetlands, Eco-Zones, and

high traffic areas. It will limit tight or switchback turns and the large wakes they create. The changes to The Thunder Run recognize the obligation of all boaters to protect our wetlands and consider the physical characteristics of our waters and shorelines. While some people will not be able to see The Thunder Run from their front porch, pier, or vantage point as before, knowledge regarding the revised course and the reasons therefore will allow everyone to find a location where they can see and enjoy The Thunder Run.



# Working with Partners on Watershed Agriculture Conservation

By Heather Harwood, WACF Executive Director

WACF works to keep water clean through several methods: erosion-control construction in the upper watershed, invasive plant treatment and shoreline protection in the lake, wetland preservation and restoration, and collaborating with farmers. To foster stronger, inclusive relationships with agricultural producers in the Wawasee watershed, WACF provides support and information to improve soil conditions and reduce erosion. These efforts include:

- farmer grants for cover crops, buffer strips, grass waterways, field repairs, farmer workshops
- farm tours
- farmer events
- The National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) – federal grants allocated to farmers for implementing best management practices in the field.
- collaborating with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

In 2025, WACF sponsored two farm tours hosted by Russell Anderson, a conservation farmer in the Wawasee watershed. Russell and his son, David, guided visitors through their fields, demonstrating Best Management Practices (BMPs), cover crop rotations, soil characteristics, equipment, techniques, and buffer strips (see photos).

In September 2025, a Soil Health Academy convened at Russell's Farm. The academy, a collaborative endeavor by WACF, Ecosystems Connections Institute, and the Soil Health Academy, highlighted regenerative farming. Soil Health Academy, dedicated to advancing regeneration through education, equips farmers to apply nature's regenerative agricultural principles. The goal is to foster healthier soil, food, farms, and communities for a more sustainable future. The Kosciusko County SWCD and NRCS participated and demonstrated a rain simulator to showcase erosion control with cover crops.

NRCS offices in Noble and Kosciusko Counties coordinate conservation practice sign-ups for the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI). NRCS and SWCDs extend outreach, educating farmers about NWQI-funded conservation practices, including cover crops, buffer strips, nutrient management, gypsum use, tree planting, anaerobic digesters, pesticide management plans, soil analysis, and manure transfer pipelines. As Dr. Jerry Sweeten, ECI, notes: 'The social science of conservation cannot be understated. Building partnerships across cultures is essential for collaboration toward sustainable farm productivity, soil resilience, and water quality protection in Lake Wawasee.'

WACF participated in annual meetings of the SWCDs and delivered a presentation at the Noble County meeting on NWQI efforts. This progress was supported by the Wawasee Inlets Nutrient Study (WINS), launched in 2019, which provided extensive data to target areas for improved water quality. WINS defines external nutrient and sediment loads from the upper watershed and identifies priority intervention locations. The study also revealed nutrient accumulation in Wawasee. Sediment and phosphorus can be resuspended by deep draft boats or boats not planed in shallow water.

WACF remains committed to improving water quality in the upper watershed's agricultural areas. We aim to further enhance our streams and expand outreach to agricultural partners. We value our farmer collaborators and our partners at DNR, SWCDs, NRCS, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Kosciusko Community Foundation, Harkless Foundation, and the Lilly Center for Lakes and Streams.



Watershed farmer tour with leader David Anderson



# Nutrients: When “Enough” Becomes “Too Much”

Pam Schumm Education Officer

When we talk about nutrients in lakes, rivers, and wetlands, we’re usually referring to nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P). These elements are essential for all living things, they help plants grow, fuel biological processes, and support life. But in water, they behave very differently from how they do on land.

## WHERE NUTRIENTS COME FROM:

- Nitrogen often enters waterways through fertilizers, manure, septic systems, and soil erosion.
- Phosphorus is typically carried by eroding soil, fertilizers, manure, and yard waste.

In small amounts, these nutrients support the healthy growth of aquatic plants and algae. The trouble begins when levels rise beyond the ecosystem’s capacity to handle them.

## WHY WATER IS SO SENSITIVE TO NUTRIENTS

In the human body, nitrogen and phosphorus are part of proteins, DNA, and energy systems. We need them in balanced amounts to stay healthy. Water, however, has no built-in mechanism to regulate excess nutrients. Even slight increases can disrupt the entire system.

Aquatic ecosystems are far more sensitive than our digestive systems. When too much nitrogen or phosphorus enters a lake or stream, it sets off a process called eutrophication. This is a natural process and isn’t necessarily bad until the lake reaches the tipping point due to too many nutrients. Eutrophication can lead to:

- Algae blooms, including harmful blue-green algae
- Cloudy or murky water
- Oxygen depletion occurs as algae die and decompose.

- Fish kills and loss of aquatic life.
- Habitat decline for plants, insects, and wildlife
- Reduced recreation quality due to odors, scums, and unsafe swimming conditions

This is why nutrient pollution is considered one of the most significant threats to freshwater quality.

## WHY SPRING IS THE RISKIEST SEASON

Spring is the time when nutrient loss from land to water reaches its peak. Several factors converge:

- Fields are often bare after winter.
- Snowmelt and heavy rains wash nutrients across the landscape.
- Saturated soils allow water and nutrients to move quickly into ditches and streams.

Nitrogen tends to leach downward into groundwater, while phosphorus moves with eroding soil particles. Both can travel long distances before reaching lakes and wetlands.



Cover crops – you’ve seen them in the fields. Farmers know that cover crops act like a living shield over the soil. Research shows they:

- Hold soil in place, reducing erosion and phosphorus loss.
- Absorb leftover nitrogen to prevent it from leaching or washing away.
- Improve soil structure
- Slow spring runoff,

Many farmers already use cover crops as part of their stewardship practices. But homeowners and shoreline residents also play a critical role.

## WHAT HOMEOWNERS CAN DO

1. Plant vegetative buffers. Grasses, shrubs, and native plants along shorelines and ditches to slow runoff and trap sediment.
2. Use fertilizers sparingly and strategically. Apply only what plants need—and never before a heavy rain, and use phosphorus-free fertilizers.
3. Keep soil covered. Groundcovers, mulch, and perennial plantings (think natives) help prevent erosion.
4. Protect wetlands. Wetlands act as natural nutrient filters and are essential for water quality.
5. Keep yard waste out of waterways. Leaves, grass clippings, and pet waste release phosphorus as they decompose.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

Nutrients are essential for life, but in water, too much of a good thing quickly becomes a problem. Spring rains accelerate nutrient loss, while cover crops and good land stewardship help keep nutrients where they belong. Whether you manage a farm field or a backyard, every action contributes to protecting our lakes and streams.



# Ecology Update

By Joan Szynal, Ecology Chair

This winter reminded us what a true Indiana winter looks like—ice stretched to an impressive 11 inches thick across the lake. But as winter loosened its grip, spring arrived with force. Heavy rains swept through the watershed, even forcing the temporary closure of Lake Wawasee and surrounding lakes. While dramatic, these moments are more than just weather events—they are critical turning points for the health of our lake.

Spring storms carry a hidden impact. WINS study data shows 75% of lake phosphorus arrives during just 25% of major rain events, mostly in spring. These few weeks shape water quality for the rest of the year.

That’s why the Ecology Committee has been hard at work.

We’re focused on the long game: stopping nutrients before they ever reach the lake. This winter, we strengthened partnerships with county Soil and Water Conservation Districts and expanded outreach to local farmers. Even



more exciting, we worked with area farmers to grant funds for new cover crops, targeting farmland in the southeast portion of the watershed—an area known to contribute disproportionately to phosphorus runoff. These upstream efforts may seem distant, but they directly affect what you see at your shoreline months later.

And now, we’re entering a new phase.

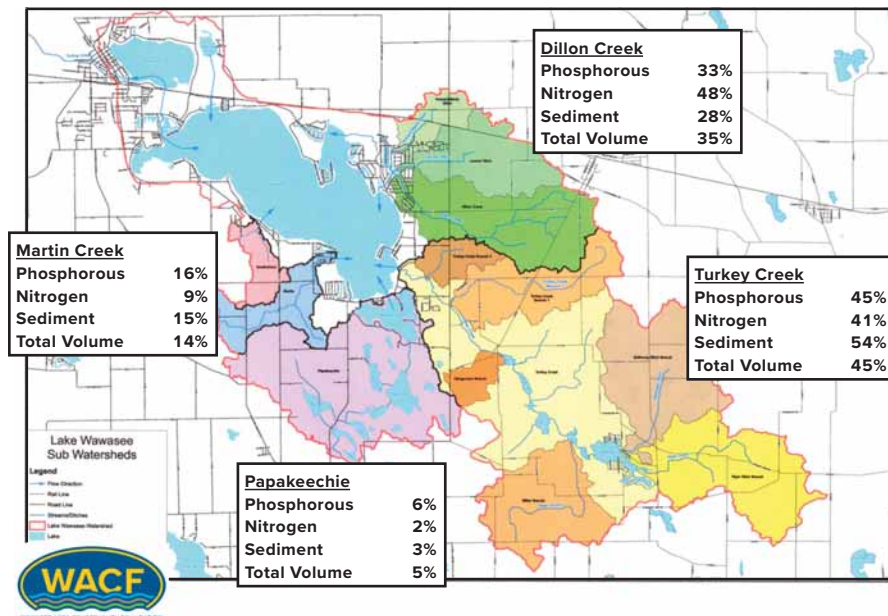
After more than five years of studying the lake, we’ve reached a pivotal moment—an inflection point where analysis turns into action. At our most recent ecology meeting, we explored three promising approaches to reduce phosphorus levels, with additional strategies still under review. The science is clear: about 75% of the phosphorus problem stems from legacy sources already in the lake, while 25% comes from tributary inputs. This raises an important question—should we focus more on treating what’s already here?

The answer isn’t simple, but the opportunities are real.

We rely on science, resources, and collaboration. We learn from lake associations across the country as we evaluate next steps. Dr. Sweeten and the Ecosystem Connections Institute team amaze us with their knowledge and insight. It’s an exciting time for WACF.

As you read, study the watershed map. It shows how the streams in the southeast affect water clarity at your pier in August. That geography and our data will guide us to improve water quality now and for years to come.

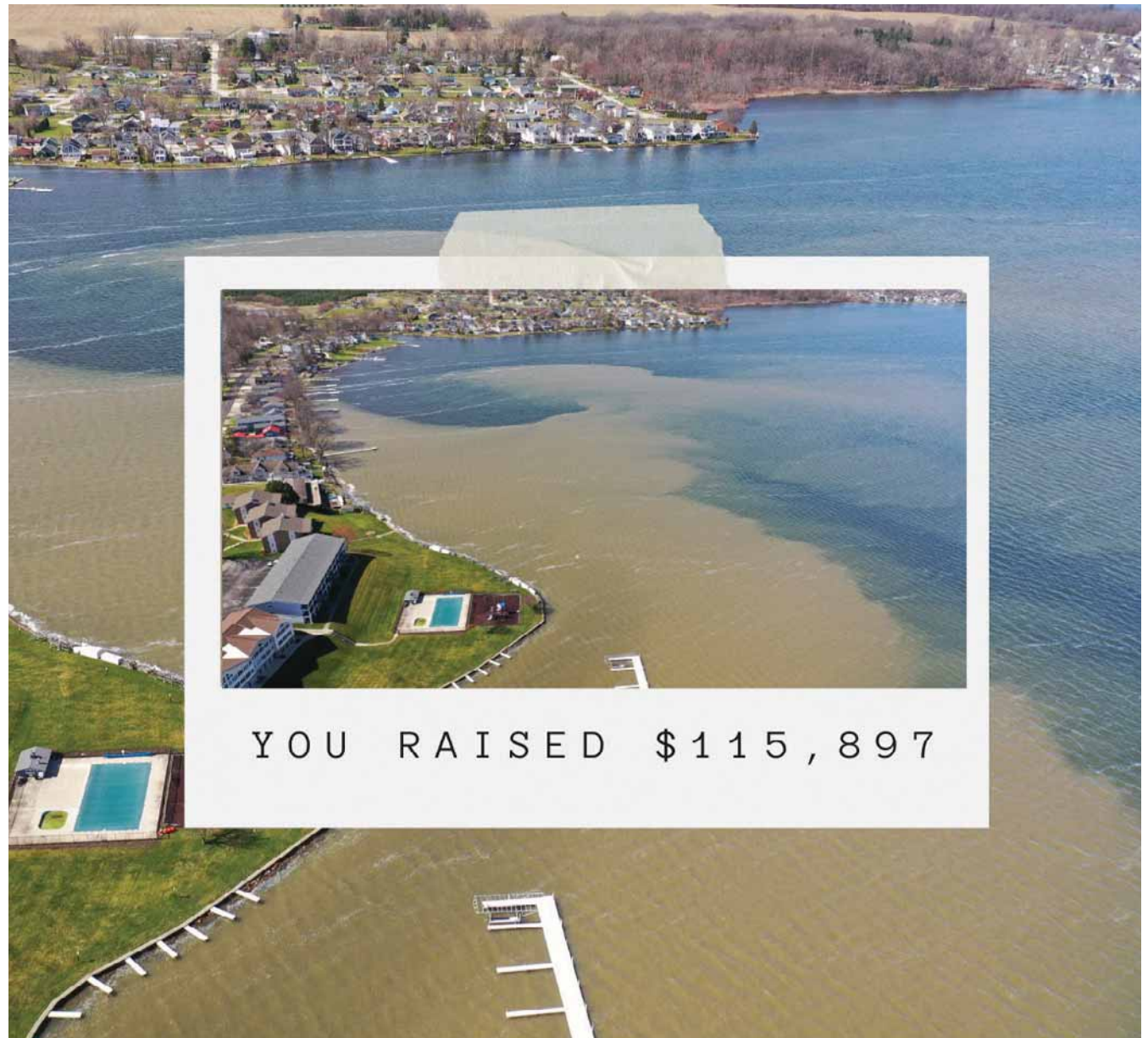
## 5-Yr. Avg. Inflow Contribution to Nutrients and Sediment 2019-2024



# Update for the Engineering Feasibility Study for the Turkey Creek Wetlands.

The death of every freshwater lake (eutrophication) begins and ends with sediment and phosphorus. As a result of the five-year Wawasee Inlets Nutrient Study (WINS), WACF has substantial data indicating that Lake Wawasee, like most Indiana natural lakes, is in decline due to those pollutants. The most significant source of sediment and phosphorus into Lake Wawasee comes from Turkey Creek (54% of sediment and 45% of phosphorus). When those pollutants flow through Turkey Creek, we can't stop them from entering Lake Wawasee—or can we?

As a result of many generous year-end 2025 donations earmarked for ecological projects, WACF commissioned an engineering study to determine whether “scrubber” technologies, which are used in the urban setting to remove pollutants from combined sanitary and storm sewers and return clean water to a nearby creek, could be used to remove sediment and phosphorus from a flowing creek and return clean water to a nearby lake. The goal of the study was a “proof of concept,” and the results are very encouraging. WACF intends to present the study to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and begin a discussion of how this technology could be used in the WACF watershed and throughout the State of Indiana to reduce the flow of sediment and phosphorus into natural lakes and thus reverse the eutrophication process.



# Native Plants Guide

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Native plants offer homeowners more than just beauty. They help protect shorelines, support wildlife, and need less fertilizer and water. Along shorelines, native plants prevent erosion, improve water quality, and provide food and shelter for aquatic animals. In northern Indiana, invasive plants threaten our woodlands, wetlands, and lakefronts, but there are native species that can fill the same landscaping roles without harming the environment.

At the March Conservation and Coffee event at the Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation, participants discussed native and invasive plants. Cecilie Keenan of Kosciusko Woodland and Water Invasive Partnership (KWWIP) and Jodie Overmyer from Marshall County Soil and Water Conservation District delivered highly informative presentations to a full house.

Doug Tallamy, co-founder of Homegrown National Park, suggests that if everyone plants native species in just 30% of their yard, together we can create a Home Grown National Park ([homegrownnationalpark.org](http://homegrownnationalpark.org)). Jodie Overmyer recommends, "When something dies, replace it with a native plant. Remove an invasive plant and replace it with a native plant. Find a trouble spot in your yard and remove the sod to make a rain garden or pollinator garden." Cecilie Keenan adds, "Once you remove invasives, it's amazing what natives appear. They are just waiting for space."

KWWIP organizes Weed Wrangles several times a year. To learn more, visit [KWWIP.info](http://KWWIP.info). You might also see more walking areas now, with bike and shoe cleaning stations to help stop the spread of unwanted seeds. Many boat launches have boat cleaning stations, but remember to clean your transport trailers too, since they can carry eggs and plant pieces between lakes.

Jodie Overmyer said, "Insects are the number 1 reason we want native plants." The oak tree is especially important, supporting more than 2,300 species of birds, insects, mammals, and fungi. It even helps over 900 different caterpillar species, making it a keystone species in our area.

The following lists match each invasive plant with a strong native substitute that serves the same purpose, such as screening, spring color, groundcover, or ornamental interest.

**Invasive shrubs and their native replacements.** These shrubs are some of the most common invaders in Indiana. They outcompete native understory plants and harm local habitats.

**Asian Bush Honeysuckle** (*Lonicera maackii*, *L. morrowii*, *L. tatarica*), **Autumn Olive** (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), **Glossy Buckthorn** (*Frangula alnus*)

**Use instead:**

- **Ninebark** (*Physocarpus opulifolius*): tough, attractive bark
- **Red-osier Dogwood** (*Cornus sericea*): great for wet soils and winter color
- **Gray Dogwood** (*Cornus racemosa*): adaptable and wildlife-friendly
- **Blackhaw Viburnum** (*Viburnum prunifolium*): berries and fall color
- **Nannyberry Viburnum** (*Viburnum lentago*): tall, arching habit
- **Buttonbush** (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*): excellent for wet areas

**Invasive vines and native replacements.** These vines spread aggressively, smothering trees and shrubs.

**Japanese Honeysuckle** (*Lonicera japonica*), **English Ivy** (*Hedera helix*)

**Use instead:**

- **Virgin's Bower, native clematis** (*Clematis virginiana*): airy white blooms
- **Wild Ginger** (*Asarum canadense*): lush groundcover
- **Virginia Creeper** (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*): red fall color
- **Native American Bittersweet** (*Celastrus scandens*): orange-red fruit



Virgin's Bower (*Clematis virginiana*)

**Invasive herbaceous plants and native replacements.** These species dominate forest floors, roadsides, and lake edges.

**Garlic Mustard** (*Alliaria petiolata*), **Purple Loosestrife** (*Lythrum salicaria*)

### Use instead:

- **Wild Geranium** (*Geranium maculatum*): spring woodland flower
- **Blueflag Iris** (*Iris versicolor*): strong shoreline stabilizer
- **Swamp Milkweed** (*Asclepias incarnata*): pollinator powerhouse

**Invasive grasses and native replacements.** These grasses spread rapidly and alter soil and habitat structure.

### Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)

#### Use instead:

- **Fox Sedge** (*Carex vulpinoidea*): thrives in wet soils.
- **Prairie Cordgrass** (*Spartina pectinata*): tall, strong roots
- **Switchgrass** (*Panicum virgatum*): excellent for erosion control

**Invasive wetland plants and native replacements.** These species threaten lake edges and wetlands across Indiana.

### Common Reed (*Phragmites australis* – non-native type)

#### Use instead:

- **Soft-stem Bulrush** (*Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*): wave buffer
- **Hard-stem Bulrush** (*Schoenoplectus acutus*): fish habitat
- **Pickerelweed** (*Pontederia cordata*): emergent plant with purple blooms

**How to choose the right native substitute.** When replacing an invasive plant, match the native alternative to the role you need it to play:

- **Screening or privacy:** Ninebark, viburnums, dogwoods
- **Pollinator support:** Wild bergamot, swamp milkweed, coneflowers
- **Shoreline stabilization:** Bulrushes, sedges, blueflag iris
- **Groundcover:** Wild ginger, native clematis, native sedum, Virginia creeper

Native plants are more than just a pretty addition to your yard. They help you take care of the land and water. If you live by the lake, planting natives is a great way to support the environment. Let's all pitch in and join the Home Grown National Park! You can get started by coming to the WACF's Native Plant talk and sale on June 6 at 9 AM. We're at 11586 SR 13 in Syracuse. Enjoy a free Brunch and Bubbly—no registration needed.



# Spring Garden Cleanup Timing

Joan Szyal, Healthy Shoreline Chair

## How to determine when spring cleaning won't bug your pollinators

1. Have I put away the snow shovel, mittens, and winter coats?
2. Would I plant tomatoes now?
3. Is the lawn growing tall?
4. Have I paid my taxes?

If the answer is "no," take your time and enjoy the anticipation before cleaning the gardens.

## Embrace Spring Fever, but appreciate your "messy" garden as a safe haven for pollinators.

### Why Wait to Clean Up?

1. **Protecting Overwintering Insects:** Many pollinators, like bees and butterflies, depend on dead plant material for shelter.
2. **Disrupting Life Cycle:** Early cleanup can disrupt the natural emergence of these creatures.
3. **Debris in the garden provides habitat** for beneficial insects like ladybugs, fireflies, and ground beetles, which naturally control pests.
4. **Decomposing plant matter enriches** the soil, acts as natural mulch, and helps retain moisture.

### What you can do:

1. **Wait for Consistent Warmth:** When daytime temperatures stay above 50 degrees for a week, your garden will be ready.

2. Keep dead leaves and plant stalks in place until spring.
3. Avoid applying mulch everywhere; leave some bare soil for native bees to use as nesting sites.
4. Plant extra herbs and flowers that attract pollinators.
5. Rake gently, and pile or compost leaves instead of discarding them.

### You help pollinators and other insects.

1. Moths and butterflies use dead leaves and plants for shelter and overwintering. Many species protect their eggs and chrysalises with fallen leaves.
2. Native bees nest in dead stems or bare ground.
3. Ladybugs and fireflies overwinter in leaf litter.



# 2026 WACF Events

Pam Schumm, Education Officer

YOU are invited to WACF! We are the Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation, and our headquarters are at 11586 N SR 13 in Syracuse. We WANT to see YOU! Our mission is to preserve and protect the Wawasee area watershed for generations to come. We offer adult and children's programming from April through October, open to the public. Most programs require no reservation. One way we ensure watershed protection is through education programs. When the public flag is flying at the entrance, a free program is available. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Visit [wacf.com](http://wacf.com) for event dates, times, and details.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**June:** Wetland Adventure takes place on June 4, 11, 18, and 25. June 4 and 18 are from 9 to 11 AM. June 11 and 25 are from 6 to 8 PM. This year, for the 250th birthday celebration, enjoy a FREE guided canoe/kayak tour of the wetlands at **Between the Lakes**. Learn about past and present conditions in the area, identify water plants, and visit the Quinn cabin. Register at [wacf.com](http://wacf.com). Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

**June 6:** Native Plants – Tashina Lahr-Manifold from Kosciusko County Soil and Water Conservation District leads a discussion on the importance of native plants and soil health, followed by a plant sale from three local nurseries.

**July 4:** Bug Catch – A favorite for all ages. Learn about aquatic critters and their impact on lake quality. Get wet and catch bugs! Nets provided or bring your own. Dress for water activity.

**July 16:** Fishing Derby with DNR at Between the Lakes. Children and grandchildren are welcome. Poles and bait are provided by DNR. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**August 1:** Lilly Pad Cruise offers relaxation aboard HMS Lilly Pad. Board at Frog Tavern. Registration required. Find more details and register at [wacf.com](http://wacf.com).

**Friday, July 10, 17, 24, 31:** Canoe trips. See [wacf.com](http://wacf.com) for available dates and departure times. Registration required. Join us at Knapp Lake headwaters and paddle to Indian Village. See wildlife, the continental divide, and learn about water quality.

**August 8:** Farm Tour from 9 AM to 12 PM. Ride through a working farm bordering the watershed and learn about ecologically conscious farming. Free, but pre-registration is required at [pam@wacf.com](mailto:pam@wacf.com).

**October 3 & 4:** Falltastic Trail Walk 12-4 PM. Come celebrate the season with a fun fall adventure on the WACF trails! Join us for the Fall Tastic Trail Walk, where our woods and wetlands will be decorated for autumn and Halloween.



## 2026 EVENT SCHEDULE

### APRIL

SATURDAY  
4/25 8 AM

BIRD WALK

### MAY

SATURDAY  
5/2 11-3

EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

### JUNE

SATURDAY  
6/6 9-11

NATIVE PLANT SALE

### JULY

SATURDAY 9-11  
7/4

BUG CATCH

THURSDAY 9-11  
7/16

FISHING DERBY WITH THE DNR, BETWEEN THE LAKES

### AUGUST

SATURDAY  
8/1

LILLY PAD CRUISE, THE FROG

SATURDAY 9 AM  
8/8

FARM TOUR, ANDERSON FARM

### OCTOBER

SATURDAY 12/4  
10/3

SUNDAY 12-4  
10/4

FALLTASTIC TRAIL WALK



### CANOE TRIPS

FRIDAY'S 7:30 AM  
DATES LISTED ON OUR WEBSITE

Guided Canoe and Kayak trip through our Ten Lakes Chain of the Wawasee Watershed

### WETLAND ADVENTURES

#### BETWEEN THE LAKES

THURSDAY, 6/4, 9-11AM  
THURSDAY, 6/11, 6-8 PM  
THURSDAY, 6/18, 9-11AM  
THURSDAY, 6/25, 6-8 PM

GUIDED CANOE / KAYAK TRIP  
Paddle into the past on this guided trip exploring wetlands as they existed 250 years ago. A peaceful, immersive way to experience Indiana's ecological history from the water.

EVENTS ARE LOCATED AT THE LEVINSON LABROSSE EDUCATION CENTER AT 11586 IN 13 SYRACUSE, IN 46567 UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE

FOR DETAILS AND UPDATES ABOUT OUR EVENTS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE, [WACF.COM](http://WACF.COM) OR FOLLOW ON SOCIAL MEDIA

# A Letter of Gratitude

Becky Levinson, Development Chair

Each year, there's a week before the green returns. The first shoots push up through the soil. The air fills with quiet anticipation for what comes next. Nature comes alive all at once. I deeply appreciate this time. I am grateful to live, work, and raise my family on Lake Wawasee. Reflecting on that gratitude and the meaning of this community, I wanted to say a heartfelt thank you. The work of the Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation is only possible because of you. This past year showed how generous, steady, and deeply rooted this community is.

Your gifts last year made real, measurable changes. You helped us protect more land. You repaired stream banks, mitigated invasive species, sustained water-quality initiatives, and brought hands-on conservation education to many children and families. Every gallon of clean water carries your fingerprints. Thank you to every member, donor, volunteer, and friend who gave last year. You make these waters worth protecting and still protectable.

The lakes, wetlands, and natural lands of the Wawasee area depend on the vigilance of those who love this place. A legacy gift allows donors to make a contribution far larger than they might give in their lifetime while still

meeting personal and family financial goals. Planned gifts give WACF the long-term, flexible resources needed to respond to emerging threats, seize time-sensitive land protection opportunities, and sustain WACF's mission for decades to come. The Wawasee Legacy Society ensures these generous intentions are honored — and inspires others to follow.

If you have already included WACF in your estate plans, please contact us so we can personally thank you. If you are considering making a legacy gift, reach out to start a no-pressure, no-obligation conversation about options that fit your goals and circumstances. We are here to help you create a legacy that supports conservation work for generations.

Thank you for another remarkable year. The lakes we love, and the wildlife, memories, and families who depend on them are healthier because of you. With a legacy gift, you ensure they will be here for the springs after next, and for generations not yet born. That is a legacy worth leaving.





WAWASEE AREA CONSERVANCY FOUNDATION

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Email: [info@wacf.com](mailto:info@wacf.com)

Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation  
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**Brian Warren**

**Bradey Wright**

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