THE DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF THE FORT WAYNE CHAPTER

February 2025

FORT WAYNE CHAPTER

NEWS

IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

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New Hiking Trails Opened

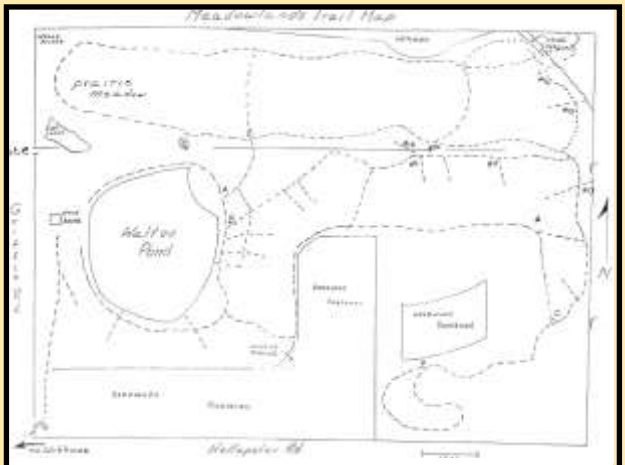
Walton Pond Continues To Evolve

Today, we are interviewing Gabe Bowser, our Chapter Building and Grounds Manager. Gabe, it was a challenge to find a time to sit down with you for a discussion about what has been happening with our grounds. Many of our long-time members have mentioned that they've noticed more changes in the last 6-8 months than in the previous 10-15 years. What is your latest endeavor?

GB: *Thank you, Lily, and I apologize for the delay in my response. Zack and I have been working doggone hard to complete as much groundwork as possible before winter arrives. I'm excited to announce that we have added three miles of new trails to the existing ones on our Walton Pond property! This project demonstrates our ongoing commitment to enhancing outdoor recreation and providing new opportunities for our members to connect with nature.*

LS: Most of our readers know, but Zack is our live-in Site Manager. What Inspired the Expansion in trails?

GB: *Last year, we worked diligently to enhance Walton Pond and received positive feedback from our members. Many of them inquired about what else was available on the pond property, which led us to see an opportunity to improve the overall experience. Zach, our Site Manager, and I decided to begin some trail maintenance. What started as a small project quickly evolved into a much larger initiative, and we ended up accomplishing far more than we had originally planned.*



Old Trail Map From Chapter Archives

LS: Gabe, I have may fond memories of our chapter as a youngster, and I remember that we had some pretty good trails back then. Did you do any work on them, or was your effort focused on opening new Trails?

GB: *We re-opened some previously abandoned trails at the back of the property, cut new paths, and widened existing ones. Altogether, we've created over two-and-a-half miles of new trails for members to explore.*

2025 Old & Added Trail Map

LS: So are we talking about more of the same type trails as we have?

GB: *These trails offer a more diverse experience compared to the current trails at Walton Pond or on the main property. They may be more challenging due to elevation changes and unique terrain. However, we considered that our hikers come from all age groups, so we aimed to make the trails accessible and enjoyable for everyone. Several up grades have been incorporated to enhance the experience. Be watching for them.*

LS: You mentioned several changes in terrain. From the pond, these changes are not readily visible. Provide a word picture of what has existed, what has been created, and what the future holds.
GB: *Last summer, we cleared out a lot of invasive honeysuckle, which was hard work but laid the groundwork for future efforts. The changing terrain provides opportunities for several new scenic views of Walton Pond. The diversity of the landscape on this parcel of land includes marshes, meadows, and wooded areas, each with its own unique characteristics. And the wildlife! There is so much wildlife to enjoy.*

New 2025 Trail Cut

LS: Wow! That must have created some unique challenges to overcome. Overcoming, comes to mind.
GB: *Building the trail was a challenging endeavor. We encountered numerous obstacles along the way, Including clearing thick brush, removing fallen trees, and dealing with weather delays. Additionally, we faced s several equipment breakdowns with the tractor, which further delayed the project. Despite these challenges, we remained committed and were determined, enduring our fair share of blood, sweat, and tears throughout the process!*

LS: I can hardly wait to see it. When I was a child, I explored the existing trails, and the chapter even included camping activities. Will there be any camping enhancements in your master plans for the area?
GB: *Glad you asked! The project also included upgrades to enhance the camping experience for our members. We have added seven new primitive campsites throughout the property, including three located near the pond. Additionally, we've improved existing sites by installing picnic tables, benches, fire rings, log holders, and trash receptacles to make camping more enjoyable for our members.*

Ice Beginning To Form On Walton Pond

LS: Could you use any volunteer member help to speed up the construction?
GB: *We are always looking for members to get involved and help improve the Chapter grounds. Whether it's assisting with trail maintenance or making upgrades to the campsites, there's plenty to do. I sincerely hope that our members will reach out to us after this message so we can discuss the areas where we need help and how you can contribute.*

Please contact me at [Email] so we can align your skills and available time with a project that matches your interests and abilities. Remember, no amount of help is too small, and no time commitment is too brief. If you're unable to give your time, we also welcome cash donations to assist us in purchasing materials for our projects.

LS: Can you give us a hint to the future?
GB: *Stay tuned for our event schedule—it's going to be a busy and exciting year! Our future plans include creating trail maps and adding educational signage to showcase local plant and animal life. We are committed to maintaining these trails sustainably while ensuring a great experience for everyone. Remember, many hands make light work!*

LS: Any last thoughts, Gabe?
GB: *In conclusion, I encourage you to get outside and explore. The Chapter property covers 275 acres and provides numerous opportunities for enjoyment throughout the year. We take pride in expanding the amenities available to our members, and we hope you make the most of everything Walton Pond has to offer. By the way, this issues cover photo is of one of the abandoned trails at the rear of the Walton Pond preserve.*

LS: Thank you, Gabe, and please extend our gratitude to Zach as well! We appreciate everyone involved in bringing this project to life. If you have some time, whether it's a little or a lot, please take Gabe up on his offer and send him an email at the address provided above. Thank you, Gabe; I enjoyed our conversation, and I'm sure our readers did too.

Lilly Smith
NEWS Reporter &Board Member
Email: lilysmith@gmail.com

PRESIDENTS LETTER

Fort Wayne Chapter, IWLA
17100 Griffin Rd. Huntertown IN

This month's Newsletter looks forward to the many events that are planned for 2025. Our outreach to the public, this past year, has been very successful and as a result we have also gained many new members. Fort Wayne Chapter now is the largest Chapter in the state of Indiana. This not only shows the attraction to the many amenities that are available on our campus, but also brings with it a responsibility to continue to maintain our resources and keep making improvements.

The opportunities for camping, hiking, fishing, admiring nature, and our shooting sports all are possible due to our focus on conservation efforts. By maintaining nature through providing areas for enjoyment, clean water, and a viable atmosphere, animals, plants, and humans all benefit.

The Executive Board has spent many hours in the past couple of months reviewing the SOP for our R&P Range. A couple incidents raised some concern on how certain aspects were left for varying interpretations. Therefore, our effort was to add more clarity to the SOP to reduce undesired interpretations and to ensure the range operated in the safest manner possible and still provided the family friendly operation it was designed to be.

I want to thank James Ramsey and Karla Weiss for their years of service to the R&P Range. They kept the grounds safe, clean and organized through their leadership. The amount of time and dedication to these roles is unmeasurable for the benefit of our many members.

At the end of January, a new leadership team has stepped up to continue providing the safe operation of our Range. Be sure to read the bios for Pat White as CRSO and Mark Ceccarelli as Range Manager.

At the beginning of each new year members renew their membership and receive new membership cards. It is a requirement for the RSO's to check each member's new card to assure that they have renewed their Range membership. In addition, each member must review the Range Rules and Waiver of Liability and sign the document that will be filed for the new year. This is a practice that has been in place for many years. Once done the member will have their card punched indicating the requirement has been met. All guests will be required to pay the $10 guest fee and will sign in indicating their presents, accepting the Waiver of Liability, and providing information, such as address and email, for our records. All guests must have a member host that takes on the responsibility to monitor their guest, so rules are understood, and actions are safe.

In January we had our annual Planning Meeting. This meeting is for the entire Board of Directors to plan out major events for the new year, approve the budget, and to gain an understanding of how the Board of Directors operates. The meeting took place on January 25, 2025. A lot of possible events have been planned for this year. Including an Open House for June, several youth events at our R&P, T&S, and Archery Ranges, and a kayak trip down Cedar Creek next summer. There are many more activities planned. T&S on Wednesday evenings will begin in March and so will the monthly 3D shoot on the third Saturday of each month.

Our goal each year is to provide our members with the opportunity they desire in a safe environment that provides enjoyment and appreciation for the beauty of nature that we work hard to sustain.

Woody Woodling

Woody Woodling

President, FW Chapter of IWLA

Meet our new Range Manager and CRSO

MARK CECCARELLI

Mark is a lifelong shooter with extensive experience in both rifle and pistol disciplines. A U.S. Marine Expert Rifle Shooter, he has honed his skills over many years. Mark has also served as Vice President at the Tacoma Rifle and Revolver Club (TRRC) for several years, where he was instrumental in managing the Pistol Orientation and Qualification Program. He is a certified NRA Instructor in Basic Pistol, Basic Rifle, Personal Protection in the Home, and Personal Protection Outside the Home. Mark's dedication to shooting and instruction reflects his deep commitment to safety and skill development in the shooting community.

PATRICK WHITE

Patrick, born on May 25, 1947, is a distinguished United States Air Force Command Pilot who served from 1970 to 1995. A graduate of the University of Texas in 1969, he has had a diverse career that includes being a radio talk show host for WOWO 1190AM from 1997 to 2010. Patrick is a dedicated Mason and Shriner since 1982, and he holds certifications as an NRA Range Safety Officer and Chief Range Safety Officer (CRSO). Married in 1980, his life reflects a deep commitment to service, safety, and community engagement.

A SQUID ON A RANGE IN NORTHERN INDIANA?

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

No, Mr. Editor, this article delves into the term "squib," a concept maybe familiar only to our seasoned rifle and pistol shooters. On December 30th, 2024, a member of our Chapter was at the pistol range, confidently handling a Taurus .38 Special snub-nosed revolver alongside a friend, when an alarming squib load malfunctioned. Initially, she did not fully comprehend the gravity of the situation, nor did she grasp the potential dangers that such an occurrence could entail. In her unawareness, she pulled the trigger again, leading to a catastrophic barrel failure. The result was dire—a fragment of the barrel struck her fellow shooter in the head, leaving her with a reported concussion.

An investigation revealed that both the pistol and ten boxes of remanufactured ammunition had been purchased from a retailer in Idaho back in 2020. Disturbingly, the member recounted experiencing a similar misfire approximately every 75 rounds with that batch of ammunition. At the time of the incident, she still had two and a half boxes of that suspicious ammo in her possession.

Crucially, she shared that during her initial instruction prior to the purchase, she was never informed about the potential risks associated with squib loads or the fallout that could result from them. As the “Incident Report” was being written, she candidly admitted that this wasn't the first time she had encountered such troublesome misfires—this had previously occurred on multiple occasions. It is my firm belief that these repeated misfires had severely compromised the barrel's structural integrity, inevitably culminating in the disastrous failure that unfolded that day. The fact that the barrel had managed to withstand the previous incidents without failing sooner is nothing short of a miracle.

All members are strongly encouraged to maintain heightened vigilance whenever the sound or sensation of a fired round feels unusual or alarming. Should you encounter such a scenario, it is recommended that you immediately call a CEASE FIRE and call the RSO over to assist as you carefully examine your firearm! IT IS NOT A “DUD… IT IS A SQUID”.

MARK CECCARELLI—RANGE MANAGER

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DREAMING OF SPOTTING A SNOWY OWL IN THE WILD?

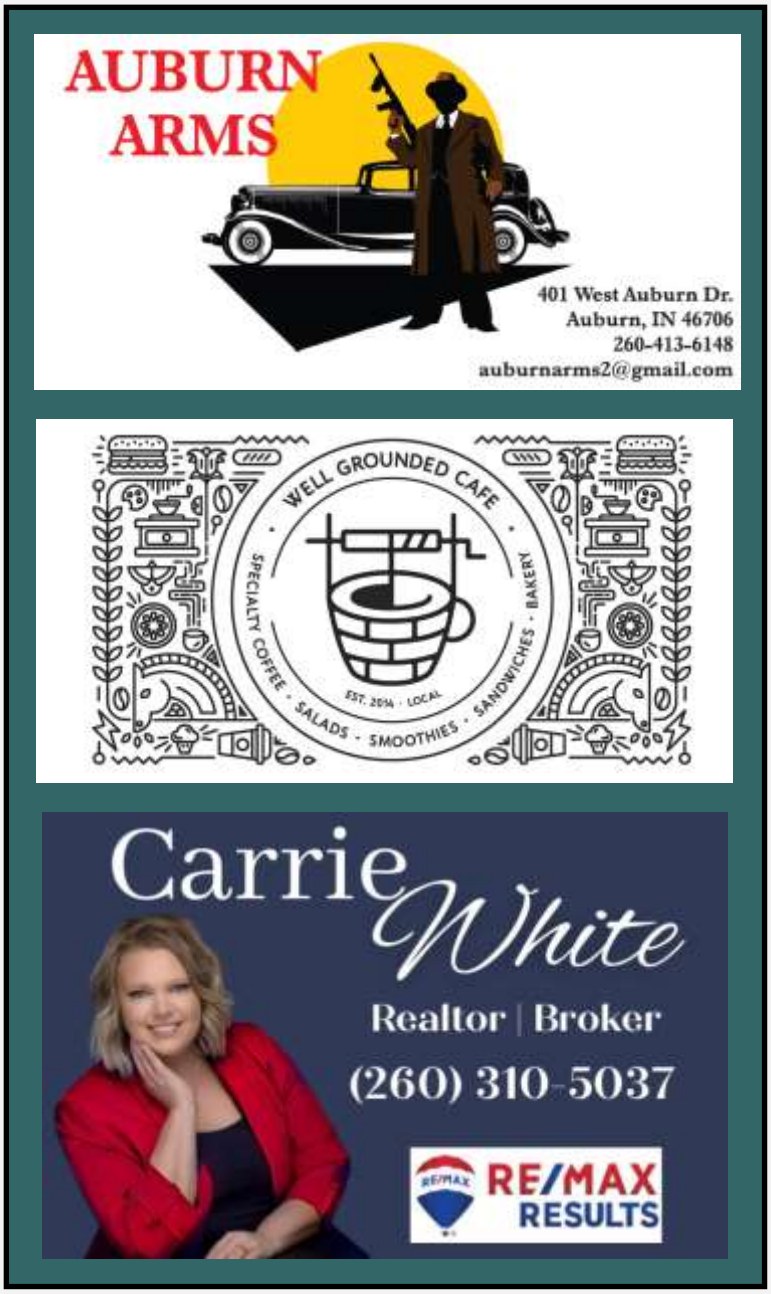
Dreaming of seeing a Snowy Owl in the wild? The Izaak Walton League is the perfect place to make that happen! These stunning birds, with their white feathers, are winter visitors to the area and can often be spotted in open, snowy fields and marshes—exactly the kind of habitat the IWLA provides!

These majestic creatures are a true winter wonder, and while they may seem elusive, with a little knowledge and some patience, you can find them right here in Fort Wayne. So, grab your winter gear, and let's go owl-spotting!

WHY SNOWY OWLS MIGRATE TO INDIANA: Snowy Owls are migratory birds that typically live in the Arctic tundra. As winter sets in, they leave their northern homes in search of food and more temperate climates. Indiana is one of their preferred winter destinations, as it offers wide open fields and wetlands—perfect for hunting small mammals like mice and voles. While not all Snowy Owls migrate every year, many make their way south to Indiana between December and March, making it a great time to spot one.

BEST TIME TO LOOK: Winter is the best time to see Snowy Owls, from December through March. These owls are more active during the day, so you have a good chance of spotting one in the early morning or late afternoon. Dress warmly and bring some hot cocoa as you explore the peaceful IWLA grounds!

WHERE TO LOOK: Snowy Owls like to perch on tall posts, fence lines, or even the ground in open fields. The IWLA has several trails out at the pond and by the clubhouse and expansive fields that provide excellent viewing areas. Keep an eye out for white shapes against the snowy backdrop, and use binoculars to spot them from a distance. They blend in well with their surroundings, so patience is key!



TIPS FOR SPOTTING SNOWY OWLS:

1. **Bring Binoculars** – Snowy Owls can be hard to spot, especially when perched in the distance. Binoculars will help you see them clearly.
2. **Look for Movement** – These owls often stay in one place, but they do move - whether it's scanning the area for prey or adjusting their position to stay comfortable. Keep an eye out for any shifting or scanning for prey.
3. **Be Patient** – Patience is key when spotting Snowy Owls. These birds are not always easy to find, so take your time and stay calm. Snowy Owls are often stationary, so they'll stay in one spot for a while.
4. **Respect Their Space** – If you're lucky enough to spot a Snowy Owl, be sure to observe from a respectful

distance. While it might be tempting to get closer for a better view, remember that these owls need their space to hunt, rest, and stay safe.

Spotting a Snowy Owl is an unforgettable experience. The IWLA offers an ideal, peaceful setting for owl-watching, with its open fields and scenic landscapes. Even if you don't spot a Snowy Owl right away, the IWLA is home to plenty of other wildlife to enjoy, from deer to other owl species. Whether you spot a Snowy Owl or simply enjoy the peaceful beauty of nature, there's something magical waiting for you in the winter landscape!

Lily Smith

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

We are trialing a new format on publishing our chapter calendar in our NEWS magazine, and the wall calendar format holds promise, but we are concerned about the font as the software limits print size. Drop us an email at jaybutler1940@gmail. and give us your thought (See Page 8).

- the Editor

WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR A COPY OF OUR NEW MEMBER WELCOME PAMPHLET!

COMING SOON!
A DIRECTORY OF CHAPTER AMENITIES AND ITEMS OF INTEREST.

DON'T FORGET, FEBRUARY 15TH IS THE LAST DAY YOUR 2024 RANGE PASS CAN BE USED ON OUR RIFLE & PISTOL RANGE.

GATE LOCKS CHANGED FOR 2025 SEASON

RSOs: The Gate lock combination for the R& P Range has been changed for 2025 and you will receive notice of the new combination.

WALTON POND: The gate lock combination to the entrance has been changed for 2025. It will be stamped on the back of your 2025 member IWLA membership card when you receive it.

NOTE: These combinations must not be shared and members are subject to suspension for sharing.

The FW Chapter Board

FEBRUARY & MARCH CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	1 SIP AND PAINT 2p-4p
2 Public Trap shoot Girl Scouts N hall	3	4 Boy Scouts N hall	5 Range closed	6 Range closed	7	8
9 Public Trap shoot	10	11 Boy Scouts N hall	12 Range closed BOARD MEETING 6:30p	13 Range closed	14	15
16 Public Trap shoot Girl Scouts N hall	17	18 Boy Scouts N hall	19 Range closed	20 Range closed	21	22 RSO CLASS 9A-4P
23 Public Trap & ATA shoot	24	25 Boy Scouts N hall	26 Range closed	27 Range closed	28	1

SIP AND PAINT

IWLA-FW LADIES EVENT

Join us for a fun afternoon of trying wines, sharing a charcuterie and great conversation. Take home a wine glass of your own creation for only $18!

When: February 1st 2-4pm
Where: IWLA Chapter House
17100 Griffin Rd
Huntertown, IN 46748

This Event is 21 and Older

To Avoid a Decrease in R&P Range Hours We Need More RSO Volunteers!

Lunch will be provided

NRA RSO Certification eligible after successful completion of class

1 - Four Hour - shift per month

RSO TRAINING COURSE

$125 Value FREE for FW Members

FEBRUARY 22

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

17100 Griffin Road
Huntertown, IN 46748

WWW.IWLA-FW.ORG

MARCH 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
23	24	25	26	27	28	1
2 Public Trap shoot	3	4 Boy Scouts N hall	5 Range closed	6 Range closed	7	8
9 Public Trap shoot	10	11 Boy Scouts N hall	12 Range closed Public Trap shoot Board meeting 6:30p	13 Range closed	14	15 3D Archery shoot 9a-1p
16 Public Trap shoot	17	18 Boy Scouts N hall	19 Range closed Public Trap shoot	20 Range closed	21	22 Hunter Ed Class 6:30p Invasive Species Removal
23 Public Trap shoot Hunter Ed Class 6:30p	24	25 Boy Scouts N hall	26 Range closed Public Trap shoot	27 Range closed	28 Member meeting 6:30p	29
30 Public Trap & ATA shoot	31	1	2	3	4	5

R&P RANGE CLOSED
EVERY WED & THUR

TRAP & SKEET
-EVERY SUNDAY 9A-1P
-ATA SHOOT LAST SUNDAY
OF EVERY MONTH
-WEDNESDAY SHOOTS
START MAR 12
4P-SUNDOWN

3D ARCHERY STARTS UP
MARCH 15TH 9A-2:30P

2025 Membership Renewal Form

Please fill in the requested information and determine the appropriate dues payment , based on the table at the bottom of this page (Total Dues column). Place this completed form and your payment into an envelope and mail to: Fort Wayne Chapter, IWLA, c/o Carl Ehinger, 2709 Bearberry Ct., Fort Wayne, IN 46818. You may also submit your application and payment to the RSO on duty at the range, or drop it into the countertop drop slot in the Chapterhouse.

Name:_____ Member No. _____

Email address: _____

Type of Membership: _____ Dues: _____

If you wish to purchase range privileges—add $50.00 R/P: _____

Total Enclosed: $ _____

Thank you for your continued support of our Fort Wayne Chapter.

Current Dues Distribution

Type	National	Ind/Division	FW Chapter	Total Dues	% retained	Range Fee
Youth/ Student	$25.00	$6.00	$43.00	$74.00	58 %	*$50.00
Individual	$50.00	$8.00	$64.00	$122.00	52 %	*$50.00
Family	$75.00	$12.00	$85.00	$172.00	49 %	*$50.00
Senior	$50.00	$6.00	$54.00	$110.00	49 %	*$50.00
Senior Family	$75.00	$10.00	$80.00	$165.00	48 %	*$50.00

* To use the rifle and/or pistol ranges you must pay an additional $50.00 range fee. If you choose to purchase range privileges, remit the "total dues" amount plus the range fee.