

September 2026



FORT WAYNE CHAPTER

NEWS

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Support Our Sponsors

PHOTOS BY

- Pat White
- Karen Griggs
- Gabe Bowser
- Stuller Family



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Interview With TJ Stuller an Outstanding Young Chapter Member

Our Izaak Walton chapter focuses on using our outdoor facilities for activities that benefit both our member youth and the wider youth community of Greater Fort Wayne. My interview today is with one of several of our member youth who have achieved national recognition in various shooting sports. Allow me to introduce TJ Stuller, who competes in national youth competitive trap shooting events across the United States.

JB: TJ, thanks for taking the time from your busy schedule to sit down and share your experiences with us.

TJ: Thank you for taking the time to meet with me.

JB: How did you become interested in youth trap shooting?

TJ: My mom saw a Facebook post and my dad took me to the first meeting. I was hooked from there.



JB: Is this a Stuller family shooting sport, or are you the lone trap shooter in your family?

TJ: My dad and I compete together every once and while, but we practice together a lot.

JB: How long have you been shooting youth trap, and how long competitively?

TJ: This is my second season shooting. I've only been competing competitively for a little over year.

JB: As the Papaw of a youth competitive sports shooting athlete, I know competitive sports shooting requires significant dedication, with countless hours of practice and extensive travel to compete. Tell our readers what drives young people like you to commit so much time and effort to perfect their skills and advance their shooting careers. Is it the thrill of competition, the satisfaction of honing one's technique, the camaraderie within the shooting community, or is it something else for you?

TJ: I like to work at improving my scores and skills, shoot after shoot. It is extremely satisfying to get a personal best whether it is at Singles, Doubles, or Handicap. It is great to



1st Runner Up—Handicap Sub Jr



meet new people and form friendships within the shooting community. It is nice to meet people from all over the state and other states that are just as interested in trap shooting as I am.

JB: As a high school student, do the hours spent training to become a shooting athlete affect your social activities in high school?

TJ: No, I enjoy what I'm doing and the bulk of the bigger shoots are over the summer break.

JB: Your trophies are proof that you miss very few clays in competition. When it does happen, how do you keep it from affecting your next shot?

TJ: That is a tough question. I do my best to let the lost bird not impact my next shot.

JB: We have had several youth use their shooting skills to obtain full scholarships at well-known universities offering student scholarships to sports shooting athletes. Do you have similar aspirations?

TJ: It is something we talk about as a family, but it is a

little early in my shooting career to settle on if that is the best option for me.

JB: Do you have any thoughts that you would like to share with other young people who might be interested in competitive sports shooting?

TJ: I would recommend joining a team with all levels of experience. That has good coaches that care about your progress and not just the wins. If you can find a mentor to help guide that is also helpful.

JB: Thank you, TJ. I've enjoyed this time with you as you shared insights into the life of a youth deeply involved in competitive sports shooting. I'd say "Best of luck to you," but we know that it is not luck that makes a competitive sports shooter a success.

TJ: Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. My dad and I are lucky to have Izaak Walton of Fort Wayne close to home to practice and use the trap houses. Overall, I'm lucky to be involved in such a great sport that reaches across all ages.



The Word From The Top



Help Tell Our Story — Join the Izaak Walton Fort Wayne News Magazine Team!

After many years of dedicated service, **our award-winning editor of our award-winning news magazine is ready to retire.** We are incredibly grateful for Jay Butler's time, talent, and commitment that have gone into making our publication something our Chapter can be proud of. Now, we're looking for someone to help carry that tradition forward!

The Fort Wayne Izaak Walton League is seeking a new **News Magazine Editor** along with **monthly contributors** to help tell the stories of our Chapter, our members, and our conservation mission.

We're Looking For:

News Magazine Editor

Help organize and coordinate each monthly issue, work with contributors, develop story ideas, and keep our members informed about Chapter activities and conservation efforts.

Monthly Contributors

Do you enjoy writing, photography, conservation, hunting, fishing, shooting sports, gardening, or sharing your outdoor knowledge? We're looking for members interested in contributing articles, photos, tips, stories, and educational content.

You don't have to be a professional writer—we're looking for people who are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and willing to share!

Possible topics include:

- ◇ Conservation & Wildlife
- ◇ Hunting & Fishing
- ◇ Archery
- ◇ Trap & Skeet
- ◇ Rifle & Pistol
- ◇ Camping & Outdoor Recreation
- ◇ Gardening & Habitat Improvement
- ◇ Chapter Events & Volunteer Projects
- ◇ Member Stories, Photos & Outdoor Tips

Whether you'd like to contribute every month or occasionally, we'd love to have you involved.

Help us continue the tradition of an award-winning Chapter publication that informs our members, recognizes our volunteers, and shares the mission of the Izaak Walton League.

For more information, email me at: gbrowser09@yahoo.com



Respectfully,
Mark
President
IWLA-FW

Devastating Derecho in Northern Indiana Causes Damage to Several IWLA Chapters in the Northwest Corner of the State

After a relentless day of heavy rainfall on August 11th, Indiana's rivers surged to unprecedented levels. Following the huge amount of rainfall from relentless storms that overwhelmed the banks of Indiana rivers and creeks, submerging adjacent areas in a wall of water. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has confirmed that a powerful Derecho swept through parts of the Midwest and the Ohio River Valley during mid-day of Tuesday, August 11, 2026. This phenomenon began its journey in Iowa, unleashing a ferocious series of storms that carved a path of destruction across Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. The relentless downpour brought unprecedented rainfall, leading to widespread flooding as Indiana's streams and rivers swelled and overflowed, as excess water rushed rapidly southward.

A Derecho, a term that might be unfamiliar to many, is defined by the National Weather Service as a series of storms that produce straight-line winds, unlike tornadoes, which skip across the landscape. Instead, a derecho made of tandem storms exerts its force in a single direction, uprooting trees and snapping utility poles with ease. On radar, this weather event presents itself as a sequence of individual storm arcs arranged in a bow-like configuration, one after another, resembling a series of parentheses, such as this:)))))))) west to east.

The overwhelming flooding that followed compelled many Indiana residents to flee their homes, downstate, desperately seeking higher ground as swirling waters encroached upon their lives, threatening their safety and security.

Throughout Indiana, Hoosiers demonstrated remarkable determination and resilience in the face of the

unprecedented deluge that struck following the August 11th Derecho. The sheer scale of the flooding has been staggering, resulting in heartbreaking loss of life and catastrophic damage to countless homes and businesses. Many communities now lie in disarray, struggling to navigate the

daunting aftermath of this disaster. In response to the crisis, 53 of Indiana's 92 counties have been officially designated as eligible for federal disaster relief, a poignant indication of the widespread impact and severity of this historic Derecho, followed by flooding.

Izaak Walton chapters in Northwest Indiana face significant challenges, with numerous downed trees and widespread power outages. Many of our chapters in the

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Northwest corner of Indiana were severely impacted, suffering the loss of towering trees and witnessing utility poles snap like mere toothpicks under winds at times over 100 miles per hour.

Now, four days later, hundreds of thousands of homes remain without electricity

as communities in Northwest Indiana grapple with ongoing power outages and internet disruptions caused by downed power lines. The IWLA Chapters, including those in Silver Lake, Griffith, and Glen Park, have been temporarily closed. The Miller Chapter, known for its state-of-the-art bar and grill that regularly welcomes IWLA members, now stands shuttered, with reports of numerous chapter-related trees that have fallen and utility poles that have snapped.

Fortunately, there have been no reports of significant damage to the Izaak Walton chapter buildings themselves, yet the scene is undeniably daunting. A simple search on Facebook reveals a striking collection of photos capturing the aftermath of the storm, illustrating the devastation caused by fallen trees. In response to these challenges, the chapters are actively rallying support to clear the obstructions and begin the long recovery process.

Jay L. Butler
Managing Editor,
FW Chapter NEWS



After the Storm.... A Significant Loss of Irreplicable Top Soil

Central Indiana is experiencing significant flooding following extraordinary rainfall across portions of the state. While attention is understandably focused on flooded homes, damaged roads, closed recreational areas and emergency response, another consequence is unfolding across Indiana's farm fields, streambanks and natural areas: **the loss of valuable topsoil.**

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has documented flooding and the effects of excessive rainfall at state properties. In an August 14, 2026 flooding update, Indiana DNR reported that flooding of Indian and Clifty creeks forced the closure of Pine Hills Nature Preserve within Shades State Park, while trails at both Shades and Turkey Run state parks were affected by flooding, mud and slippery conditions following excessive rainfall. The conditions provide another visible example of just how much water has moved across portions of Indiana's landscape in a short period of time.

The visible destruction may eventually be repaired. Roads can be rebuilt, culverts replaced and buildings restored. **Replacing productive topsoil lost to erosion is a much more difficult proposition. Indiana's Topsoil Is One of our most important Natural Resources at about the same level of seriousness as excessive use of the States finite amount of water as if it is inexhaustible as we will be using multi-million gallons a day to feed the insatiable use of Data Centers.**

Indiana's agricultural productivity depends heavily on its thin layer of fertile surface soil. This topsoil contains far more organic matter than the layers beneath it, giving it the ability to absorb water, store nutrients and support plant growth. When it is removed, those functions are lost along with it. Purdue University notes that erosion reduces agricultural productivity and makes it more difficult to establish crops, lawns, gardens and trees.

Extreme rainfall creates ideal conditions for this loss. When heavy rain falls on exposed soil, it breaks apart soil structure and dislodges particles. Once rainfall exceeds the soil's ability to absorb water, runoff carries those particles downslope and into waterways. Purdue University describes this progression as moving from splash erosion to sheet, rill and eventually gully and streambank erosion, transporting large amounts of

fertile soil into streams and rivers. During widespread flooding, this process occurs simultaneously across entire watersheds, magnifying the total loss.

What Leaves the Field Doesn't Stay on the Land.

Floodwaters appear brown because they carry suspended soil, organic matter and sediment from fields, streambanks and disturbed land. While some material is redeposited on floodplains, much of it is transported into drainage systems, creeks, rivers and reservoirs.

This creates a dual impact: productive soil is lost from the land while sediment accumulates in waterways.

Purdue Extension identifies sediment as a major non-point-source pollutant in Indiana. It can cloud water, damage aquatic habitat and gradually fill streams, lakes and reservoirs, reducing their capacity to store water.

In this way, erosion can contribute to a damaging cycle: **Heavy rainfall → runoff → erosion → sedimentation → reduced water-storage capacity → increased flood vulnerability.**

Why Topsoil Loss Matters: Topsoil is not simply "dirt." It is a biologically active layer containing organic matter, nutrients, microorganisms and minerals that support plant growth. When it is removed, the land can be left with less-fertile subsoil that may hold less moisture and be more prone to compaction. The result can be reduced plant vigor and lower agricultural

productivity.

The difference in nutrient content can be significant. Purdue soil guidance demonstrates that the nutrient-rich surface layer can contain substantially greater concentrations of important plant nutrients than underlying subsoil.

Once this material is transported downstream, it cannot simply be replaced with fertilizer. Soil structure, organic matter and biological activity must also be rebuilt, a process that can take many years.

It's also a Watershed-Wide Problem: The effects of erosion extend beyond agriculture. Sediment in streams can cover aquatic habitat and transport nutrients and agricultural chemicals downstream. Streambanks also become more vulnerable during prolonged high-water events as fast-moving water removes vegetation and accelerates bank erosion.

Urban and suburban areas contribute as well. Construction sites, cleared land and poorly vegetated surfaces can all become significant sediment sources during intense rainfall.

For this reason, soil conservation is not only an agricultural issue but a **watershed-wide environmental concern.**



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tural issue but a **watershed-wide environmental concern.**

Increasing Pressure from Changing Rainfall Patterns:

This flood also highlights a longer-term concern. Purdue Extension has documented increases in Indiana precipitation over the historical record along with concerns surrounding heavier rainfall events. Intense downpours increase the potential for flooding, erosion and water-quality problems.

As extreme rainfall places greater pressure on Indiana watersheds, protecting soil must be part of long-term resilience planning.

Conservation practices such as cover crops, reduced tillage, grass waterways, vegetative buffer strips, wetlands and maintaining continuous ground cover can help slow runoff and keep soil in place. Purdue has specifically recommended cover crops following flooded growing seasons because vegetation and living roots help **protect soil structure and reduce erosion while helping restore productivity.**

The devastation the Derecho on August 11th and record rainfall well into the month of August 2026 has cost personal losses, storm damage and flooding, should be remembered **not only as a water disaster, but also as a reminder of the importance of soil conservation, watershed protection and responsible land management.**

Conservation After the

Storms: As floodwaters recede across central Indiana, attention will turn to clean-up and rebuilding. Roads will reopen, debris will be removed and damaged structures repaired.

But the land itself will tell another story. Sediment deposited along roads, newly carved gullies in fields, collapsed streambanks and exposed subsoil all reflect the movement of a critical natural resource.

These are not merely temporary marks left behind by flooding. They can represent the loss of soil that supports agriculture, forests, wildlife habitat and communities.

Topsoil is the foundation of Indiana’s productivity. Once it is washed away, rebuilding what was lost can take generations.

The August 2026 flooding should therefore be remembered not only as a water disaster, but also as a reminder of the importance of **soil conservation, watershed protection and responsible land management.**



The August 2026 flooding should therefore be remembered not only as a water disaster, but also as a reminder of the importance of soil conservation, watershed protection and responsible land management. Because long after the water recedes, the soil—or its absence—will remain.



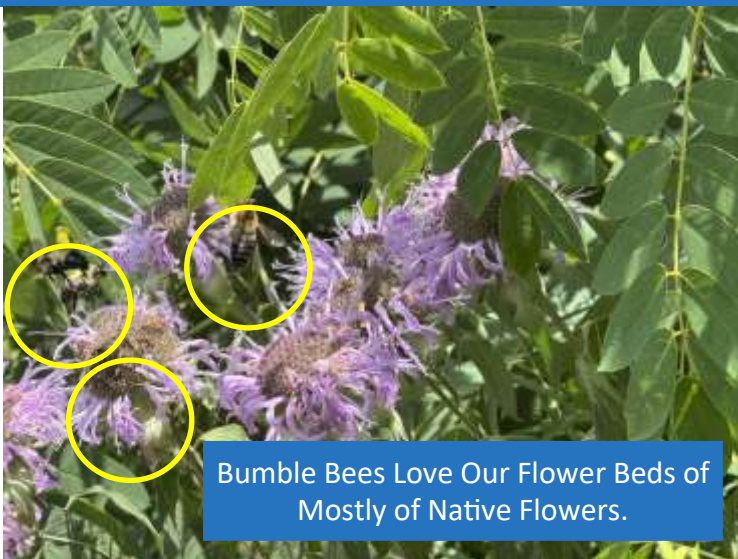
Our thanks to Perdue and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) for their excellent research and the inspiration for this article.

* Indiana Department of Natural Resources, *Turkey Run State Park — Flooding Update*,

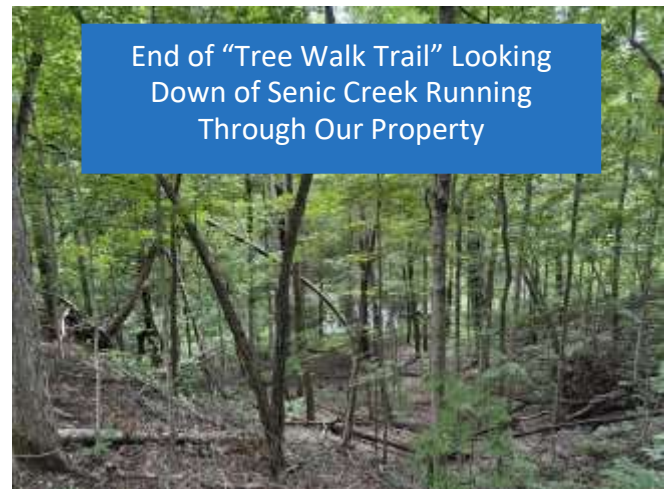
August 14, 2026. DNR reported flooding of Indian and Clifty creeks, closure of Pine Hills Nature Preserve, and trail impacts following excessive rainfall.

- * Indiana Department of Natural Resources, *Indiana State Park Advisories and Closings*, August 2026.
- * Purdue University, *Indiana Soils: Evaluation and Conservation Online Manual — Soil Erosion and Compaction*.
- * Purdue University, *Indiana Soils — Erosion*.
- * Purdue Extension, *Soil Erosion in Indiana — An Overview*.
- * Purdue Extension, *Cover Crops Could Help Save Soil in Flooded Fields*.
- * Purdue Extension, water-quality guidance on sediment and erosion.
- * Purdue Extension / Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, *Indiana precipitation trends*
- * Hoosier Environmental Council (HEC)
- * Various writings of the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA)

Around the Chapter in Photos



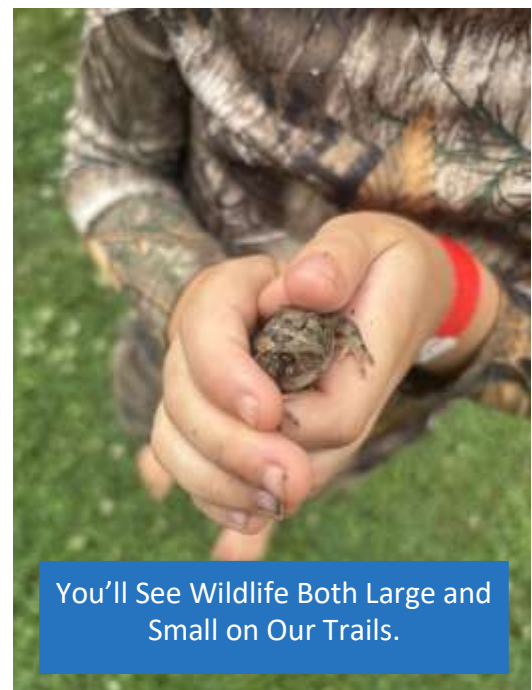
Bumble Bees Love Our Flower Beds of Mostly of Native Flowers.



End of “Tree Walk Trail” Looking Down of Senic Creek Running Through Our Property



Popular Area On Our Trail System Continues To Evolve.



You'll See Wildlife Both Large and Small on Our Trails.

Choosing the Right Lures and Bait for Our Upcoming Fishing Derby in Walton Pond and Then Into the Fall Fishing Anywhere You Find Yourself

As summer heat begins to fade and cooler temperatures settle across Indiana, fall can provide some of the best fishing of the year. From farm ponds like our Walton Pond and small lakes to reservoirs and rivers, cooling water triggers changes in fish behavior. Many species begin feeding aggressively as they prepare for winter, making September through November an excellent time to get on the water.

Our Upcoming Fishing Derby: It's also a great time to bring the family out to Walton Pond for the Fort Wayne Izaak Walton League's Fall Fishing Derby on September 26, 2026, from 3:00–7:00 PM.

Anglers of all ages are welcome for an afternoon of fishing, fun and fellowship. Whether you're an experienced angler or introducing a child to fishing for the first time, the Fall Fishing Derby is a great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and put some of the following fishing techniques to work. For hints on bait, turn the page.

(Continued on Next Page)



WALTON POND - 17100 GRIFFIN RD. HUNTERTOWN
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FW

FALL FISHING DERBY

Bring the whole family for a reel good time!

Bring the entire family for an afternoon of fishing, fun, and fellowship at our annual Fall Fishing Derby. It's a wonderful event with door prizes for each attendee. Anglers of all ages are welcomed and another great way to introduce children to the outdoors.

All ages Welcome!

Door prizes for each attendee!

Anglers of all ages welcome!

SATURDAY | **26** | 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM
SEPTEMBER 2026

For more information, contact
iwlafwchapter@gmail.com

CONSERVATION • RECREATION • COMMUNITY

A SPECIAL NOTE TO OUR WALTON POND ANGLERS: Please remove all crappie caught from Walton Pond. Crappie should not be released back into the pond. Anglers are encouraged to take their catch home for the table or properly cull the fish.

Removing crappie helps manage their population within the pond and reduces competition with other fish species. Fortunately, crappie are also excellent table fare, making a successful afternoon with minnows an opportunity to help manage Walton Pond while bringing home a fresh fish dinner.

BLUEGILL AND OTHER PANFISH: Please don't catch and release panfish. A female Panfish can produce thousands of fry each season, and until a year or so ago, our pond. Don't put away the ultralight equipment just because summer is over. Bluegill and other panfish continue feeding during the fall and can provide excellent action. Live bait remains difficult to beat. Try: Red worms, Nightcrawler pieces, Wax worms, Mealworms and Small minnows

Small jigs and plastics can also be productive, particularly when fish are concentrated. Early in the fall, check remaining vegetation under our dock and relatively shallow structure that has been placed in Walton Pond. As the water becomes colder, panfish may gradually move toward deeper structure and wintering areas.

Success, however, often comes down to matching your lure or bait to what the fish are eating—and adjusting as water temperatures continue to fall.

BASS: THINK SHAD AND CRAWFISH: Fall largemouth and smallmouth bass can become surprisingly aggressive. As the water cools from summer temperatures, bass frequently move away from their deepest summer locations and follow baitfish into more productive feeding areas.

Some dependable fall lure choices include: Spinnerbaits, Square-bill and medium-diving crankbaits, Lipless crankbaits, Jerkbait, Swimbaits and Soft-plastic paddletails

Football jigs and crawfish-style plastics

Don't overlook spinnerbaits on windy fall days. Wind can break up the surface, move forage and create excellent feeding opportunities along windblown shorelines.

DON'T FORGET TOPWATER LURES TOO SOON: A chilly Fall morning might make topwater fishing seem finished, but don't automatically put those lures away.

If baitfish are active near the surface and bass are feeding aggressively, topwater plugs, walking baits and other surface presentations can continue producing. Warm afternoons following several stable days can be especially interesting.

Let the fish—not the calendar—tell you when the topwater season is finished.

IZAAK WALTON QUOTE FOR SEPTEMBER

“Rivers and their inhabitants of watery elements are for wise men to contemplate and for fools to pass by without consideration.”

*Editors Note: If alive today, Sir Izaak might have completed his sentence with (**and for their protection!**)*



MARK THESE ON YOUR CALENDAR!

FORT WAYNE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE

FALL

Members Meeting & POTLUCK

 **SEPTEMBER 25, 2026**
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

-  **BRING A DISH TO SHARE!**
Let's enjoy good food and great company.
-  **CHAPTER UPDATES**
Hear updates on the Chapter and what to look forward to for the coming year.
-  **ELECTION OF CHAPTER OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS**
Your participation helps shape our future.
-  **Q & A SESSION**
Your questions. Our answers. Let's keep the conversation going!

Your Chapter. Your Voice. Your Future.

TOGETHER, WE CONSERVE, RECREATE, AND BUILD COMMUNITY.
Conservation • Recreation • Community

FW CHAPTER

RANGE SAFETY OFFICER TRAINING



RANGE SAFETY OFFICER
SAFETY FIRST, ALWAYS

-  **LEARN GUN SAFETY**
and how to conduct the safe operation of our R&P Range.
-  **VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED**
to help keep our range open 5 days a week.
-  **JUST ONE 4 HOUR SHIFT PER MONTH!**

 **OCTOBER 17 9AM**

 **LUNCH PROVIDED**

 PLEASE RSVP TO INSTRUCTOR & CHIEF RANGE SAFETY OFFICER
MARK CECCARELLI

 **253-548-7944**

CONSERVATION - RECREATION - COMMUNITY



WORTH A MENTION

Congrats to
Member Mack
Neukam on his first
25 straight



MARK THESE ON YOUR CALENDAR!

FIRST SHOTS

AN INTRODUCTION TO SHOOTING
TRAP & SKEET

Perfect for...

- ✓ FIRST TIME SHOOTERS
- ✓ LIMITED EXPERIENCE SHOOTERS
- ✓ GUN SAFETY

INSTRUCTORS ARE
EXPERIENCED T&S SHOOTERS

AUGUST 22ND, 2026
9:30am - 2:00pm
Bring a bagged lunch!

REGISTRATION REQUIRED
<https://forms.gle/wovL4w1vxovtGar66>

JOIN US...

17100 Griffin Rd
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IWLA-FW.ORG

Due to forecasted
thunderstorms tomorrow...
POSTPONED
UNTIL SEPTEMBER 5!

3D ARCHERY SHOOT

LAST SHOOT OF THE SEASON!!!

21+ TARGETS COURSE

COURSE OPEN
SEPTEMBER 19TH
8AM - 1PM

MEMBERS: \$10
NON-MEMBERS: \$15

KIDS ARCHERY CLINIC
10AM - 12PM
BOWS & ARROWS PROVIDED
ALL AGES 5 AND UP WELCOMED!

Ft. Wayne Izaak Walton
17100 Griffin Rd
Huntertown IN 46748

www.IWLA-FW.org

Conservation -
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You caught me. Fought me for 3 minutes.
Took a photo. **Put me back.** And I died 6 hours later.

Not from the hook. From the fight. In 85-degree water, water, my muscles **burn** through **oxygen** I can't replace. Lactic acid builds up. My organs fail hours later.

You think **you released me.** I think I was **tortured.**

In cool water, catch-and-release works beautifully. In August, in warm shallow water? It's delayed execution with a selfie first.

85°F (29°C)

85°F (29°C)

FT. WAYNE IZAAK WALTON'S — ANNUAL — RIMFIRE CHAMPIONSHIP

OCTOBER 3, 2026
— 9A-11A —

REGISTRATION STARTS PROMPTLY AT 8:30A!

\$10 CASH BUY IN.
50/50 POT SPLIT!

EVENT CONTACT:
PAT WHITE 260-466-1479

.22 LR
40 GRAIN
RIMFIRE CARTRIDGES

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(Contact Melissa Doepke at
melissadoepke@gmail.com
for details.)