

May 2025

**First Crappie
Fishing
Competition A
Huge
Success!**

Fort Wayne Chapter

News

Izaak Walton League of America





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CRAPPIE CONTEST A HUGE SUCCESS!



**FORTY
MEMBERS
AND
GUESTS
TRY LUCK**





Thank you to everyone who joined us for our first Crappie Quest at Walton Pond. We had to reschedule the original date due to spring rain and cold weather. Despite the mid-50s temperatures, overcast skies, and breezy conditions, we held the event on April 13th. The 21 adults wore bulky sweatshirts, while some of the 19 children excitedly stripped down to T-shirts due to their adrenaline.



For those who regularly fish our pond, you may notice that the size of our bass is smaller than in years past. The bass and crappie are competing for the available food source, causing a "Stunted Bass Syndrome." Of the 13 bass caught during the event, 9 were between 9 and 11 inches long, which is typical for a stressed bass population.

To help the long-term health of our pond, we are introducing the S.O.C.K. initiative:

VISIT Our FINE ADVERTISERS

Carrie White
Realtor | Broker
(260) 310-5037



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Stemenalignandbrake@gmail.com
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Summer of Crappie Keeping

This initiative is to keep all the crappies that are caught to either eat or relocate, but not to be returned to the pond. A mature female crappie can lay 30,000 eggs in a year. This will continue our efforts to reverse the stunted bass syndrome. Hopefully, April's event and S.O.C.K.

will curtail the crappie growth and allow for the bass to grow larger.

We encourage our Members to drop a line and take home some fresh fish for dinner. Members can fish anytime and should use the number listed on the back of their membership card to open the lock on the pond gate.



Fishing will be available during our open house this summer, on June 7th, but the next fishing derby/contest will be on September 6. We hope you join us, enjoy the outdoors, and leave with a huge smile, such as those we saw and experienced on April 13th!

Huge thanks to the chapter volunteers who made this possible... Anne, Dave, Gabe, Keaton, Jeff, Brian, Matthew, and Zach.



SEE YOUR BUSINESS OR
FAMILY SUPPORT AD HERE
FOR A VERY REASONABLE
ANNUAL RATE.

Our magazine subscription has over a thousand readers. with a thousand subscribers!)

Thank you so much for a successful event.

Brian Doepke

Pond Committee Chair
briandoepke@gmail.com



HOW DID WE ACQUIRE ROPCHAN PRESERVE AND WALTON POND?



How did the Chapter come to acquire the Ropchan Preserve, home to the picturesque Walton Pond and an expansive network of trails?

Sam Ropchan, a generous benefactor of the Fort Wayne chapter of the IWLA, played a pivotal role in this endeavor. He not only made substantial financial contributions but also purchased land surrounding the tranquil Walton Pond. Additionally, he acquired land for the Acres Land Trust, which included a breathtaking preserve nestled between the charming towns of Angola and Fremont. Both Sam and his wife, Adeline Ropchan, were dedicated members of the Fort Wayne chapter, embodying a shared commitment to conservation and community.

Sam's journey began far from the serene landscapes of Indiana. As a young boy, he immigrated from Ukraine, eventually settling on a wheat farm in Canada. He and his whole family knitted socks, a simple tradition that reflected their close-knit bond and helped them survive those early years. In pursuit of a brighter future, Sam later became a peddler, traveling by train from the bustling city of Chicago to the vibrant community of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

It was in downtown Fort Wayne, within the bustling aisles of Murphy's five-and-dime store where his life took a romantic turn. Adeline, who worked at the store, caught his eye, and he fondly reminisced about that serendipitous meeting, often exclaiming with a sparkle in his eye, "I met my million-dollar baby at the five-and-dime store."

With determination and entrepreneurial spirit, Sam built a thriving business centered on international imports, establishing his shop on High Street, just east of Wells Street, where he brought the world a little closer to home.

Their generous nature helped make the Chapter that we enjoy today!

Karen Griggs

Fort Wayne Chapter Member



*"I've seen it all...., heard it all...., done it all
and I can't seem to remember any part of it!"*

Yer ole Editor



PRESIDENTS LETTER



Fort Wayne Chapter, IWLA

17100 Griffin Rd. Huntertown IN

Recently, our Chapter held an informative Spring Members Meeting on March 28th. We covered important topics, including upcoming events planned for the year, changes happening around the Chapter, and member Darrell Fish giving a demonstration of the Wood Duck houses he builds and maintains on our Chapter grounds. We were happy to see some new faces attend this meeting and hope to see more faces at our Fall Members Meeting on September 12th. Thanks to Director MaryAnn James and Site Manager Zach Walter for setting up for the event.


Our current Membership Secretary, Carl Ehinger, has announced his retirement from the Chapter. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Carl on behalf of our Board of Directors and members. Carl has served multiple roles over the years, and his efforts to always go above and beyond are greatly appreciated. Thank you, Carl, and happy retirement!

You recently received an email containing our Chapter Welcome Booklet, highlighting our many amenities, contact information, and rules. Our member volunteers play an essential role in making "the world go around" at the Chapter. Our members are asked to volunteer for at least 15 hours annually to help with the upkeep of the facilities, to volunteer at events, etc. Unfortunately, many of these tasks usually fall upon a few, and it's time they get additional help. It is pertinent all of our members pitch in throughout the year and volunteer to help. Our membership contains a lot of members with diverse backgrounds who can bring a lot to the table to help out the Chapter and its members. If you and your loved ones enjoy our facilities, don't be shy; it's time to pitch in and give back.

We are currently seeking candidates interested in fulfilling the role of Range Manager. This is a critical roll overseeing our Rifle and Pistol Range's daily operations and needs to be completed soon to continue normal operations there. If you are interested in giving back to our Chapter and discussing the details of the Range Manager position, please reach out to me at gbows09@yahoo.com

We are also seeking candidates who are interested in being on the Board of Directors and various Committees. These are essential positions at our Chapter to help mold and guide the future of our Chapter and its members. Please let us know if you have a few extra hours each month and would like to help our Chapter.

As spring finally arrives, our facilities are bustling with members taking advantage of everything we offer. Our calendar of events for the quickly approaching warm weather is full of multiple events every month through Fall. Our Open House is Saturday, June 7th, and will be a fun day of festivities for all ages. We hope to see all our members attend our future events and make them a success.

Respectfully,

President
IWLA-FWJ

gbows09@gmail.com



**SIGN UP NOW FOR THESE MAY EVENTS
BY CLICKING ON**

Button



Youth Intro to Archery

Has your child shown an interest in Archery?
Want to find a new hobby, without the initial expense?
Not sure if Archery is for them?

Join Us and Find Out!

Members and the Public are invited to Participate **FREE**

Bows and Arrows Provided

May 10th
9 am - 12:30pm

Contact Anne Bowser:
amarieb3810@gmail.com

Chapter House
17100 Griffin Road
Huntertown, IN 46748

Email: Anne



ADVENTURE IN CEDAR CREEK

KAYAK CEDAR CREEK
MAY 3, 2025

- Meet at Clubhouse
- Two Ending Points
- Ferry back to Clubhouse
- Bring your Kayak/Canoe
- Limited Number of Loaners Available

Starting at **9:30am**

REGISTER
and to Reserve Kayak/Canoe

REGISTER
Follow Link in Comments

17100 Griffin Road, Huntertown, IN | www.iwla-fw.org

Register



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

RSO TRAINING COURSE

MAY 17, 2025
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

17100 Griffin Road
Huntertown, IN 46748

\$125 Value FREE for FW Members

NRA RSO Certification eligible after successful completion of class

1 - FOUR HOUR - RSO SHIFT per Month

Lunch will be provided!

WWW.IWLA-FW.ORG

Register



Izaak Walton Summer Fest

- Archery
- Fishing
- Hiking Trails
- Live Band
- Hay Rides
- Outdoor Games
- Bouncy House
- Kid Activities
- Face Painting
- Hamburgers
- Hot Dogs
- Drinks

SATURDAY JUNE 7, 2025
11:00am to 4:00pm

17100 Griffin Rd, Huntertown, IN 46748

Volunteers NEEDED

Email: Lily

HAPPENING THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER



3D ARCHERY

Season Opener!

MARCH - SEPTEMBER
3rd Saturday each Month
9am - 3pm

MEMBER FEE: \$5
GUEST FEE: \$10

Ages 12 & Under for free

20+ TARGETS
TARGETS IN WOODED AREA
Crossbows & Broadheads - Not Permitted

Public Welcome

March 15
April 19
May 17
June 21
July 19
August 16
September 20

17100 Griffin Road
Huntertown, IN 46748

Email Questions:
amarieb3810@gmail.com



RIFLE & PISTOL RANGE
Spring/Summer Hours

Effective: March 15, 2025

Open: 10:30 am
Closed: 7:30 pm

Closed on:
Wednesday & Thursday

IWLA-FW.ORG



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS



It looks like the Walton Pond Committee's efforts at Pond Management are beginning to pay dividends.

CHAPTER ON THE MOVE!



For those who wonder why have a swing set at the Pond, this is the reason why!



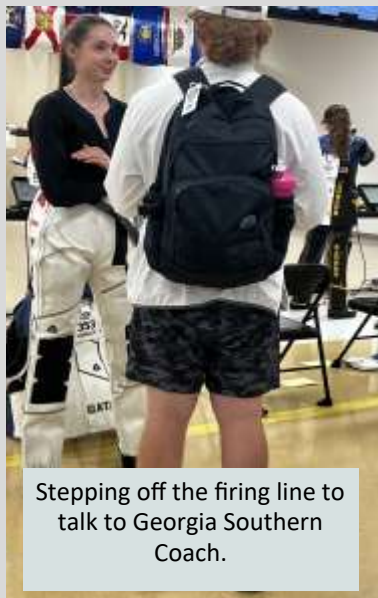
WATCH THIS SPACE!

We are excited to share the wonderful news that, thanks to the generous contributions received for our Building Fund, construction is actively progressing on a state-of-the-art, handicap-accessible unisex restroom.

This new facility will provide comfort and convenience for all users, reflecting our commitment to inclusivity. In addition, we are also developing a modern kitchen area, complete with new, high-quality appliances that will enhance our culinary capabilities and foster community gatherings. **To make a donation, you can do it directly from our website at iwla-fw.org**

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

(Continued)



Stepping off the firing line to talk to Georgia Southern Coach.



Member Bre Butler competed in the USA Junior Olympics in Aniston and Talladega, Alabama. In a field of 250 shooters, she made the finals of air rifle and placed seventh, where the finalists can have all shots in the ten ring, and the contestant winning the match will win/lose by .01 tenth of a point. Later, they moved to the outdoor range at Talladega for small-bore 3Pcompetition, and the wind became the main factor.

When hitting ten ring just isn't enough!



When the wind is constant and the count down clock is ticking!

Dick Atkinson Retires As R&P Maintenance Mgr.



Dick Atkinson has announced his retirement from R&P Range Maintenance. A familiar face at the range, he's spent countless hours the past 11 years maintaining our target boards along with the steel plates all our avid shooters continue to enjoy. His inventions and time spent building structures at our range is a legacy and we all owe him an enormous amount of gratitude. He's definitely made his mark on the range and our Chapter. Next time you see Dick enjoying the range instead of working on it please tell him thanks!

Gabe



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

(Continued)



Charita is One Species Away From a Grand Slam!

Charita Neidermeyer, a dedicated member of our Chapter, has once again showcased her hunting prowess by bagging her fifth species of tom turkey.

Two of her impressive trophies now proudly adorn our fireplace wall, a testament to her skill and dedication.

With one more species in her sights, she is incredibly close to achieving a grand slam, a thrilling milestone that every turkey hunter dreams of.

Member Bremen's Photo Adorns Lobby of Anschutz Factory

Anschutz stands as the pinnacle of craftsmanship in the realm of precision firearms, renowned for its exceptional small bore and air rifles in the world of sports shooting. A striking tribute to our youthful member, Bremen Butler, can be found in the lobby of Anschutz, where her captivating photo is featured as a centerpiece of a beautifully crafted composite mural. This mural not only highlights her remarkable achievements and collection of medals but also showcases her two exquisite Anschutz rifles, embodying the dedication and excellence she brings to Sports Shooting Sport.





CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

(Continued)



Member, Rick Thompson has opened the Beaver Dam, allowing water to flow through the Griffin Rd. Culvert Bridge for the first time since it was constructed. Though this is merely a temporary fix, the majority of our property is drained, a welcome relief after the prolonged obstruction and water is flowing into Cedar Creek.



The Pond Committee kindly requests that we **harvest all fish measuring under 14 inches and ensure they are not returned to the Pond, including Bass.**

Additionally, they ask that you not harm our valuable Grass Carp, as they play a vital role in our Weed Eradication efforts. Thank you for your cooperation in maintaining the health of our pond ecosystem!



Thanks to a generous grant from REMC, the Walton Lake Pavilion will soon have 110V power, enhancing its functionality and enabling a new camper trailer site. We're also hoping to install a "Bubbler" system in the pond in the future to oxygenate the water. REMC has consistently supported our chapter in various projects, including the installation of bat house poles and skeet light poles.

We sincerely thank REMC for their ongoing commitment to our Chapter!



Izaak Walton Summer Fest

Archery
Fishing
Hiking Trails

Live Band
Hay Rides
Outdoor Games

Bouncy House
Kid Activities
Face Painting

Hamburgers
Hot Dogs
Drinks

SATURDAY

JUNE
7
2025

11:00am
to
4:00pm

📍 17100 Griffin Rd, Huntertown, IN

iwl-fw.org





Archery Being Expanded for the 2025 Summer Season

Youth Archery Event—May 10th

Spring has finally arrived with warmer weather and occasional rain showers, and our archery range has recently seen increased activity with the sunnier days. Unfortunately, we were again halted by the weather for our April shoot. While the rain wasn't too severe, the winds were the primary concern due to falling limbs and trees and overshooting.

We look forward to our first "Youth Intro to Archery" event on May 10th from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM. All ages, including adults, are welcome from 5 years old and up. This event is open to the public as we aim to expand our youth archery program. Registration is available through both Facebook and a direct link via email.



Youth Intro to Archery

Has your child shown an interest in Archery?
Want to find a new hobby, without the initial expense?
Not sure if Archery is for them?

Join Us and Find Out!

May 10th
9am - 12:30pm

Contact Anne Bowser:
amarieb3810@gmail.com

Bows and Arrows Provided

Members and the Public are Invited to Participate FREE

Chapter House
17100 Griffin Road
Huntertown, IN 46748

This will be the first use of our new archery equipment, made possible through a Grant from the IWL Indiana Division Endowment.

Many thanks for their generosity.

**A REMINDER: ALL HIKING TRAILS
WILL BE CLOSED TO HIKING ON MAY 10TH!**

If you are interested or have any questions about this event or archery in general, please contact me at amarieb3810@gmail.com

We are also very excited as plans to expand the 3D shoots by the pond trails are being discussed and mapped out.

Anne Bowser
Archery Manager

Meet Dillon Ripperger Our New Trap & Skeet Range Manager!



JLB: Today, I caught up with Dillon Ripperger, our new Trap & Skeet Range Manager, as he was taking inventory of our trap supplies. I managed to get him to sit still long enough for a short interview. Good morning, Dillion, let's start with the basics. Tell us a little about yourself.

DR: "Morning, Jay. Well. I was born and raised just outside of Des Moines, IA. I grew up hunting pheasant and shooting trap at our local Izaak Walton League. I joined the U.S. Navy just after high school at the age of 18 and retired in July 2023 after 15 years of service. While I was a Master-At-Arms (military police officer), my duties ranged from base police and high-value asset security to a deployable expeditionary security unit specializing in Aircraft security. I was part of the training department for two different commands, where I was a Small Arms Marksmanship Instructor (SAMI). I have also conducted numerous firearms range classes as the Lead RSO, qualifying thousands of personnel. I have an Associate's degree in Gunsmithing and firearms science. "

JLB: Wow! You grew up shooting trap at an Izaak Walton range, had an extraordinary career in the Navy, and now you're back managing trap and skeet on another Izaak Walton range. Can you tell us a little about the Izaak Walton chapter from your youth?

DR: . "Growing up my Father, uncle, cousins, and I would form a five man trap team to compete at the local weekly Izaak Walton League trap shoot that was open to the public. We never could beat the old timer. They would end each evening with a friendly Annie Oakley shoot off with the winner walking away with the entry fee pot. Again I never could outshoot the old timers, but for me it was just the experience and fun of getting together for our "guys night out". My local Chapter back home is still much smaller than the Fort Wayne Chapter, so my hope is to bring this experience to the chapter and bring in some life and new members."

JLB: I heard that you just completed an NRA shotgun coaching class. Tell us a bit about that.

DR: "I recently completed the NRA Level 1 shotgun coaching course, and my experience was positive. The course served as a valuable refresher on marksmanship fundamentals and coaching techniques. It provided insights into the various clay shooting sports available worldwide, as well as the standards commonly practiced in the United States. Additionally, I learned effective strategies for better connecting with youth shooters during coaching sessions."



JLB: I know that you want to get back to your inventorying work, so could you share a word or two on your vision for Trap and Skeet Shooting at the Fort Wayne Chapter?

DR: "My vision for T&S in our Izaak Walton chapter is to revitalize the program by updating and refreshing our equipment and physical facilities. I plan to reform our policies and guidelines to ensure safety and smooth operations across the board. My mission is to cultivate a strong sense of unity and collaboration within the organization, prioritizing our collective growth and harmony above all else. I want to keep our experienced members while motivating the younger generation to engage actively and step away their screens. Additionally, I have some exciting events planned to engage the surrounding Greater Fort Wayne area and spark interest."

JLB: How and where do you begin to build on this vision?

DR: Regarding the youth shooting program and the youth shooting team, I believe we need to establish a solid foundation and ensure everything is operating smoothly before introducing the additional challenges that come with change. It is essential to expand and properly train our Trap & Skeet Committee beyond just two coaches and two support members. We must move away from relying on "old school training and tribal knowledge" and instead embrace a focus on "confidence and commitment."

I am eager to establish youth camps and competitions, but I will proceed only when I feel confident in the skills of the range staff supporting the Chapter, both in coaching and in managing our T&S events. We have some excellent core talent to build upon, and I am also seeking additional Trap and Skeet shooters who are interested in helping to grow this sport at the Fort Wayne Chapter. If interested, I can be reached at email

KEY CHAPTER EVENTS IN MAY

1. **Trap and Skeet events**, which are open to the public, take place every Sunday at 9:00 AM and on Wednesday evenings starting at 5:30 PM.
2. **The rifle and pistol ranges** are available for members (and their guests for a \$10.00 fee) every day except Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 10:30 AM to 7:30 PM.
3. May 3— 9:30am: **Chapter Kayak Event**. Registration req'd. for Kayak.
4. May 10th— 10:30am: **Introduction to Archery Event**
5. May 17th— 9:00am: **NRA RSO Training at Chapter**. Registration req'd.

CHAPTER PLANT SALE A GREAT SUCCESS!



Our first plant sale raised \$766 for our conservation program. We are planning on planting the left over plants in the Chapter garden.

Many popular plants were noted to be related to homemade salsa based on feedback received. Zucchini, various

squashes, green beans, and peas were in high demand. Additionally, many of Zach's house plants were sold.

Special thanks to volunteers: **Anne, Zach, Megan, Cassie, Eva, and Melissa.**

We hope to see you at the at the next plant sale during the Chapter's Summer Fest on June 7, 2025.



A NEW .22 KYL CHAMPIONSHIP

Chapter Requires Additional RSOs to Avoid a Decrease in R&P Range Hours

Lunch will be provided

NRA RSO Certification eligible after successful completion of class
1 - Four Hour - shift per month

RSO TRAINING

May 17, 2025
9am - 4pm

\$125 value: FREE for FW Members

17100 Griffin Road
Huntertown, IN 46748



I have been asked by numerous members about a new targeting system featured at 50-yards on shooting lane #2. My response has been that it's a new potential competition for those interested in precision shooting. The new target system is called a "KYL Target" which stands for "**Know Your Limits.**" It's simple in its concept: Hit eight individual targets ranging from 2" to 1/4". The catch is that you have only eight (8) rounds to accomplish the task.

But it gets better!

Once you complete the 50-yard target set, you get to repeat the process at 100-yards with larger targets. The goal is to hit all the targets without missing any one of them. Along the way you get points for each target you hit, BUT if you miss a target, you lose all your accumulated points. However, you can stop at any point declaring that you "**Know Your Limits**" thus retaining the points you

already accumulated. The decision to stop is yours in hopes that you will have more points than your opponent's when the competition is finished. Whoever has the highest point total wins.

My goal is to make this an annual event for members, but there is a small "hitch." It takes multiple RSO's for timing, scoring, spotting and target certification. Finding enough RSO's has become a challenge because of normal turnover of our volunteer staff. Currently we have enough certified RSO's to cover the days our R&P Range is open, but having an overflow allows our chapter to offer different types of competition events.

To resolve the problem, I will be teaching a certification course to create more RSO's on May 17th. Slots are still available until May 10th when registration closes. The course starts a 9am and concludes at 5pm. You also get a free lunch, best of all, there is no charge for members. All we ask is that you volunteer for one RSO shift per month.

Having Your to help is needed to maintain our R&P range

Having competitive shooting championships is the goal of every club, but to have them, you must have enough NRA Certified RSO's to ensure safety is #1. If you want to be a part of our RSO Safety Team, sign up for our RSO Training Program to maintain our R&P range or send me an email at ftwayne@hotmail.com



Patrick White—Major USAF (Retired)
Chief Range Safety Officer (CRSO)