

**IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA
CHAPTER HOSTS BOTH SMALL
BORE AND SHOTGUN NSSF
“FIRST SHOT” EVENTS.**

**September
2025**

FORT WAYNE CHAPTER

NEWS





the Fort Wayne Chapter

THIS ISSUE

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MWTF Celebrates 18th year with "JAKES" at Chapter—18th Consecutive Year



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PHOTOS BY

- John Legg
- Gabe Bowser
- Patrick White

THIS MONTH'S PHOTO FEATURES

NSSF "First Shots" RIFLE & PISTOL was Happening at the Chapter on August 9th.

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R&P Parking Expanded and Entrance Lane Cleared of Invasives.

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NSSF "First Shots - TRAP" was Happening at the Chapter on August 23rd.

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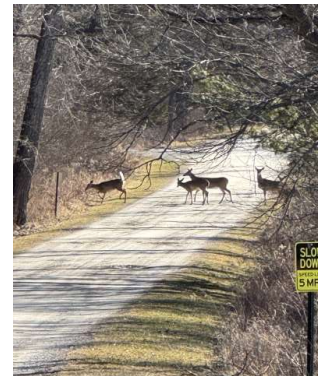
Featuring "Hooks & Arrows" one of our fine businesses supporting our Youth Programs.

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Member Memories At Chapter

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NWTF "JAKES" at the Chapter for record 18th Year in a Row .

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CHAPTER NSSF “FIRST SHOTS” - RIFLE



Kids and Adults of all ages took part in the Chapters “First Shots” day at the chapter. R&P Range Manager Zac Taylor looks on as young lady shoots.

This young man turned out to be quite a shot at the FW Chapter “First Shots” event sponsored by the National Sport Shooting Foundation.





BIG THINGS ARE HAPPENING AT THE RIFLE & PISTOL RANGE

By Pat White—CRSO

The past 30 days have been bustling with activity at the Izaak Walton-Fort Wayne Rifle and Pistol Range, with significant developments in both safety measures and parking improvements.

R&P PARKING LOT REVISIONS:

We've made some noticeable improvements to the parking lot along the dirt berm—it's now more than three feet wider! Our President, Gabe Bowser, utilized his grading equipment to complete this enhancement. In addition, the lot has been leveled to prepare for the addition of crushed concrete, which will cover large stones previously used as bedding that have popped to the surface during the leveling. Please be cautious while walking from your vehicle to the shooting concrete as we work these updates into our schedule and cash availability.



BRUSH CLEARED AT ENTRANCE AND PARKING AREA DOUBLED

Additionally, you may have observed a transformation at the entrance to the R&P Range. Brush invasives along the driveway have been removed, and both sides of the entrance have been cleared and leveled in preparation for future crushed concrete installation. This enhancement will about double the Range parking space; however, the timeline for this project is yet to be determined as it is not included in this year's budget.

We will also need fencing installed to replace the brush along the



OLD RANGE WARNING LIGHTS REPLACED!

Safety remains our top priority, and we've made a groundbreaking change to enhance it. We've installed new red flashing LED "Range Hot" lights, marking the most significant upgrade in years. Previously, orange blinking lights indicated a "Cold" range, which was contrary to shooting industry standards, where flashing lights signify a "Hot" range. At a recent Board of Directors meeting, a unanimous vote was taken to align our range with national standards. Following the meeting, we ordered high-tech rotating LED lights. Under the expert guidance of chapter president Gabe Bowers and his dedicated maintenance crew, the new lights were installed. Range Safety Officers (RSOs) have been briefed on the change, and the range now operates under industry standards. So, the next time you visit, remember that overhead lights will be illuminated when the range is hot.



A significant portion of our membership utilizes our Rifle and Pistol Range. Therefore, your consideration of a donation would be greatly appreciated, as our annual budget is currently stretched to accommodate all chapter amenities, overhead costs for insurance, and utilities, which we manage with considerable care and scrutiny.

A generous donation of \$5 or \$10 or more can be placed in the appreciation box. We remind that it is also approaching the end of the year, where you can assign a tax free donation with your annual payout on investments and this can be earmarked specifically for our specified chapter use, similar to the generous donations received for the Chapter House renovations that raised over \$20,000. This would allow completing these R&P Range renovations sooner rather than later.

Pat White—CRSO
Major USAF (Retired)



Chapter Workday

Date: September 13, 2025
Time: 10:00am - 2:00pm

Tasks include:
 Light repairs and maintenance
 Landscaping and grounds cleanup
 Organizing and tidying shared spaces
 🧤 Bring your work gloves, tools (if you have them), and a can-do spirit. We'll provide refreshments and plenty of gratitude!
 📅 RSVP register us if you're planning to attend.



ATTENTION PLEASE!

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

RSO TRAINING

September 6, 2025
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
 17100 Griffin Road
 Huntertown, IN 46748

Lunch will be provided!

only 1 - Four Hour - shift per month

Keep our Range open 5 days a week!




Join us

FISHING Derby

Walton Pond
6 Sept
3pm-7pm

Members & Public Welcome

Door Prizes



Location:
 17100 Griffin Rd
 Huntertown, IN
 (260) 618-6768

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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!

September 13th
9:00am - 12:30pm

Bows and Arrows Provided

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

9:00 am - Paperwork
9:30 am - Class starts
Contact Anne Bowser:
amarieb3810@gmail.com

Chapter House
17100 Griffin Road
Huntertown, IN 46748
(260) 619 - 6768



The Izaak Walton League
Fort Wayne Chapter

OCTOBER FEST

Bouncy House - Games - Hay Rides - Fishing - Hiking
Kid Crafts - Mums - Pumpkins - Much More!

This family-friendly fall celebration features:
• Local food, crafts, and outdoor fun

18
October

11:00 am - 4:00 pm
17100 Griffin Rd
Huntertown, IN

Public and Members Are Invited!



FORT WAYNE CHAPTER

MEMBER'S MEETING

You're Invited!

Thursday, September 12
5:30 - 7:30 PM
17100 Griffin Rd, Chapter House

Come connect with fellow members as we:

- ✓ Celebrate recent accomplishments
- ✓ Share exciting future plans
- ✓ Enjoy good food and great company!

Bring an side dish or dessert to share - let's make it a tasty evening together!

Whether you're a longtime member or just getting involved, we'd love to see you there.

Tag a friend and spread the word!

iwla-fw@org

Chapter will provide main course & drinks



Carrie White

Realtor | Broker
(260) 310-5037



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MANDATORY

SPEED LIMIT 5

All Chapter Grounds





CHAPTER NSSF “FIRST SHOTS” - SHOTGUN



Kids and Adults of all ages took part in the NSSF “First Shots” day hosted by the chapter. Board member Andrew Neidermeyer, an avid Trap Shooter and Outdoor sportsman was just the man to help first timers.

Trying her skills with Dillon Rippenger and Zac Taylor, Range Managers of Trap & Skeet and of Rifle & Pistol look on.



She just need a helping Hand or Three!



A INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF OUR VALUED EVENT CONTRIBUTORS

Hook & Arrow

Locally Owned with Many Local made Items

LIVE BAIT AND TACKLE

Mathews, Mission, Bear, Darton
Archery Range and Service

7536 Winchester Rd
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46819
260-739-6661

HookandArrow.net
Email: info@hookandarrow.net



M-T 8:30-5, W-F 8:30-6 Sat 8:30-4 Sun. Call for Seasonal Hours

Over the months and years, the Fort Wayne IWLA Chapter NEWS has conducted numerous interviews with fellow Chapter members. This month, however, we are shifting our focus to one of our local Business events supporters. John Arnette, the manager of Hook and Arrow. His generosity has significantly contributed to the



fishing equipment prizes awarded in our Chapter and Community Outreach programs, which aim to highlight the amenities of our Chapter by using our amenities in support of the youth of Fort Wayne to participate in outdoor activities that they might otherwise never experience.

JB: "Good morning, John. Thank you for your generosity and for taking the time to discuss your business and your support of our youth outreach program. Your contributions help introduce young people to the great outdoors—an experience they might not have had otherwise."

JA: *Thanks, Jay. We always love to see younger age youth interested in fishing and hunting.*

JB: Tell our members and readers a little about HOOK AND ARROW. How did you end up as the owner of Hook and Arrow? Did you purchase the business, or did you start it from scratch and how long have you been in business?

JA: *Founded in the 1960s, the original bait store has been a cornerstone of the community of sportsmen for generations. Over the decades, the store has experienced several ownership transitions, each contributing to its storied past and evolving legacy. At one point, the establishment was relocated to the rear of the property, adapting to the changing needs of its customers and the surrounding area. Since 2011, Kirk Heemsoth has been the owner, guiding the store through the modern era. Our main Bow Tech, Jeremy Andrews, has more than 15 years of experience in archery service and sales to the business, offering customers unparalleled knowledge and support for all their archery needs. To further enhance our service, we are currently seeking an additional part-time technician to join our staff.*

JB: Hook and Arrow sounds like you specialize in two unrelated outdoor sports. How did you pick these two outdoor activities as the core of your Business?

(Continued on Page nine)





JA: *Fishing was the primary business, however with warmer winters archery was added to offset the slower times when ice fishing wasn't so good.*

JB: The greater Fort Wayne area has some large "Box Stores," providing everything from groceries to car care products. What is it that draws new customers to your specialty outdoor business? Do you offer something that they can't?

JA: *For archery we have Fort Wayne's only indoor archery range. We also custom fit bows and service all make of archery equipment. We are all familiar with fishing and Jeremy is an avid hunter as well and can guide the new archer and seasoned archer with terrific tips and suggestions.*

JB: Some may think that Archery and Fishing attract people of a particular age group. Have you found this to be so?

JA: *Absolutely not, we have customers of all ages. Retired seniors that use the range for enjoyment and some for honing skills. We have many of the 4H archery groups and clubs come in for service work, new bows, and supplies. Fishing since COVID has increased all ages to seek enjoyment in the outdoors.*

JB: Do you have any advice that you would give someone just starting out in the Sport of Archery and is looking to outfit themselves with the basics?

JA: *Come and try one out first. So many buy online or in a big box store and have never shot a bow before. Our advantage is, we can fit a bow to you and let you try it out to see if it is something you really want to jump into.*

JB: What about fishing? There are so many styles of rods & reels – open-faced or closed, spinning or bait casting, and don't get me started on the seemingly endless styles of artificial lures. Any recommendations for someone just starting in either?

JA: *It's natural to feel the allure of top-of-the-line gear but remember: your initial investment doesn't need to be hefty. By starting with something that doesn't break the bank, you leave yourself room to grow without the pressure of a sunk cost. As your skills improve and your preferences become clearer, you'll be in a much better position to decide if a larger investment makes sense for you.*

JB: How does a customer find your place of business?

JA: *We are at 7536 Winchester Road in Fort Wayne across from Kingston Nursing Home. We can also be found on Facebook and Google.*





JB: Is there anything that I've missed that you would like to leave with our readers?

JA: *If you've never visited us before, consider this your invitation. Whether you are a seasoned angler, a novice hunter, or simply someone seeking a place to belong, you are welcome here. Pull up a stool and join the conversation. We can't wait to hear your story and to add your photo to our ever-growing counter of memories. We appreciate customer loyalty and friendships over the years.*

JB: I noticed a couple of customers walking in, so I won't keep you. On behalf of our Chapter members, I want to thank you for taking the time to chat with us and for your generosity in support of our joint effort to get youth involved in the outdoors.

And to our readers: If you are looking for making a purchase in these two sports, there is no better place to find it than "Hook's and Arrows." Please support "Hook an Arrow" in appreciation for their support in our shared interest in creating outdoor opportunities for Fort Wayne's youth.

Around The Chapter In Photos Submitted by Members



Photo by Gabe Bowser, Chapter President



Montage by Maryanne James, Board Member



DELEGATE REPORT: 2025 NATIONAL IWLA CONVENTION

EDITOR'S NOTE: This year, two of our newer Fort Wayne Chapter leaders, Trap & Skeet Mgr. Dillon Rippenger and Zac Taylor, were selected by the IN Division IWLA, to represent the IN Division as replacement for Division leaders who were not able to attend this years National Convention.



Fort Wayne Chapter, IWLA

17100 Griffin Rd. Huntertown IN

Delegate Report

2025 IWLA National Convention

Submitted by: Zachary Taylor & Dillon Ripperger, Delegates

Dates: July 17–19, 2025 – Green Bay, Wisconsin

OVERVIEW

We attended the 2025 National Convention of the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) in Green Bay, Wisconsin, as appointed delegates of the Indiana Division. The convention brought together delegates from across the country to conduct official League business, vote on policy resolutions, and hear from national leadership, conservation experts, and chapter representatives. We want to thank the Board for this opportunity to gain insight into the culture, history, and future of the Izaak Walton League of America.

The event reinforced the strength of the League's mission and provided valuable insight into opportunities for our chapter to expand its role in conservation, education, and community engagement here in northeast Indiana.

KEY ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

Adoption of National Resolution on Data Centers – Delegates approved a resolution clarifying the League's position on large-scale data centers. The resolution addresses concerns over water usage, cooling systems, and environmental impacts. Chapters are encouraged to participate in local hearings and public comment periods when such projects are proposed.

Endowment Grants Expanded – The IWLA Endowment Board approved adding renewable energy projects to the list of eligible initiatives for grant funding. This opens potential opportunities for our chapter to pursue sustainable energy-related improvements.

Clean Water Advocacy – National staff emphasized the importance of submitting both salt and nitrate monitoring data to the Clean Water Hub. This nationwide database helps track water quality trends, identify problem areas, and strengthen the League's ability to influence state and federal water policy.

Chapter Recognition – The Fort Wayne Chapter was recognized for achieving 110% membership growth in 2024.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR CHAPTER

Program Expansion – Chapters across the country are seeing success with public conservation events, school-based volunteer partnerships, and structured conservation education programs. These serve as models we can adapt locally to grow our community presence and impact.

Advocacy Engagement – The data center resolution and other policy discussions reinforced how important it is for chapters to engage actively in local environmental decisions, including land use, water management, and habitat preservation.



Partnership Building – Executive Director Scott Kovarovics introduced us to leaders from chapters in Iowa and Virginia with long-running firearms safety and education programs. These contacts are willing to share best practices, and their models could help guide future program development at our chapter.

LOOKING AHEAD

The 2026 National Convention will be held July 16–18 in Bloomington, Minnesota. Future conventions are scheduled for Roanoke, Virginia (2027) and Sioux Falls, South Dakota (2028).

Continued annual delegate participation is strongly recommended to maintain influence in national policy, develop partnerships, and bring back actionable ideas for chapter growth.

The insights from this year's convention highlight our potential to expand programs, strengthen advocacy, and solidify our position as a conservation leader in northeast Indiana.

CONCLUSION

Attending the 2025 IWLA National Convention was both informative and inspiring. The sessions, discussions, and connections reinforced the value of the League's work and the important role our chapter plays. With strategic planning, active partnerships, and continued member engagement, we can significantly increase our local impact in conservation, education, and community service.

We are very appreciative of the Indiana Division – IWLA for naming us delegates and covering our cost of attending the 2025 National Convention IWLA, replacing two Division leaders who could not attend. As new members of Izaak Walton, this gave us invaluable insight into the history, traditions, and current programs of the League.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,
Zachary Taylor & Dillon Ripperger
Delegates: Representing Indiana Division, IWLA
Members: Fort Wayne Chapter IWLA

“JAKE’S MEET AT CHAPTER



**FOR THE EIGHTEENTH
STRAIGHT YEAR THE
NATIONAL WILD TURKEY
FEDERATION “JAKE’S”
YOUTH EVENT WAS HELD AT
THE FORT WAYNE CHAPTER.**





CHAPTER EVENTS CALENDAR

Date	Start time	End time	Subject
9/2/20 25	6:30 PM	7:30 PM	Pond Committee Meeting
9/4/20 25	5:30 PM	7:30 PM	Intro to Clay Sports Camp
9/6/20 25	3:00 PM	7:00 PM	Fishing Derby
9/6/20 25	9:00 AM	2:00 PM	RSO Class
9/11/2 025	5:30 PM	7:30 PM	Intro to Clay Sports Camp
9/12/2 025	5:30 PM	7:30 PM	Fall Member Meeting
9/13/2 025	9:00 AM	12:30 PM	Youth Intro to Archery
9/13/2 025	10:00 AM	2:00 PM	Chapter Work Day
9/18/2 025	5:30 PM	7:30 PM	Intro to Clay Sports Camp
9/25/2 025	5:30 PM	7:30 PM	Intro to Clay Sports Camp
10/4/2 025	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	Rimfire Championship
10/4/2 025	10:00 AM	2:00 PM	Chapter Work Day
10/18/ 2025	11:00 AM	4:00 PM	October Fest
12/5/2 025	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	Private North Hall Rental



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



3D ARCHERY

Season Opener!

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

Public Welcome

MEMBER FEE: \$5
GUEST FEE: \$10
Ages 12 & Under for free

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

17100 Griffin Road
Huntertown, IN 46748

Email Questions:
amarieb3810@gmail.com

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



Ladies Firearm Class

Pistol Training & Safety

Ready to feel confident and capable with a pistol? Join us for a hands-on class designed just for women!

- Learn essential firearm safety
- Train with experienced instructors
- Gain real shooting experience
- Bring your pistol or try one of ours

Whether you're brand new or looking to sharpen your skills, this is a welcoming, supportive environment to learn and grow.

September 27, 2025
9 am - 12pm
Cost: Members: \$15
Non-Members: \$25

Fort Wayne Chapter
17100 Griffin Road
Huntertown, IN 46748
More Information
iwa-fw.org/calendar