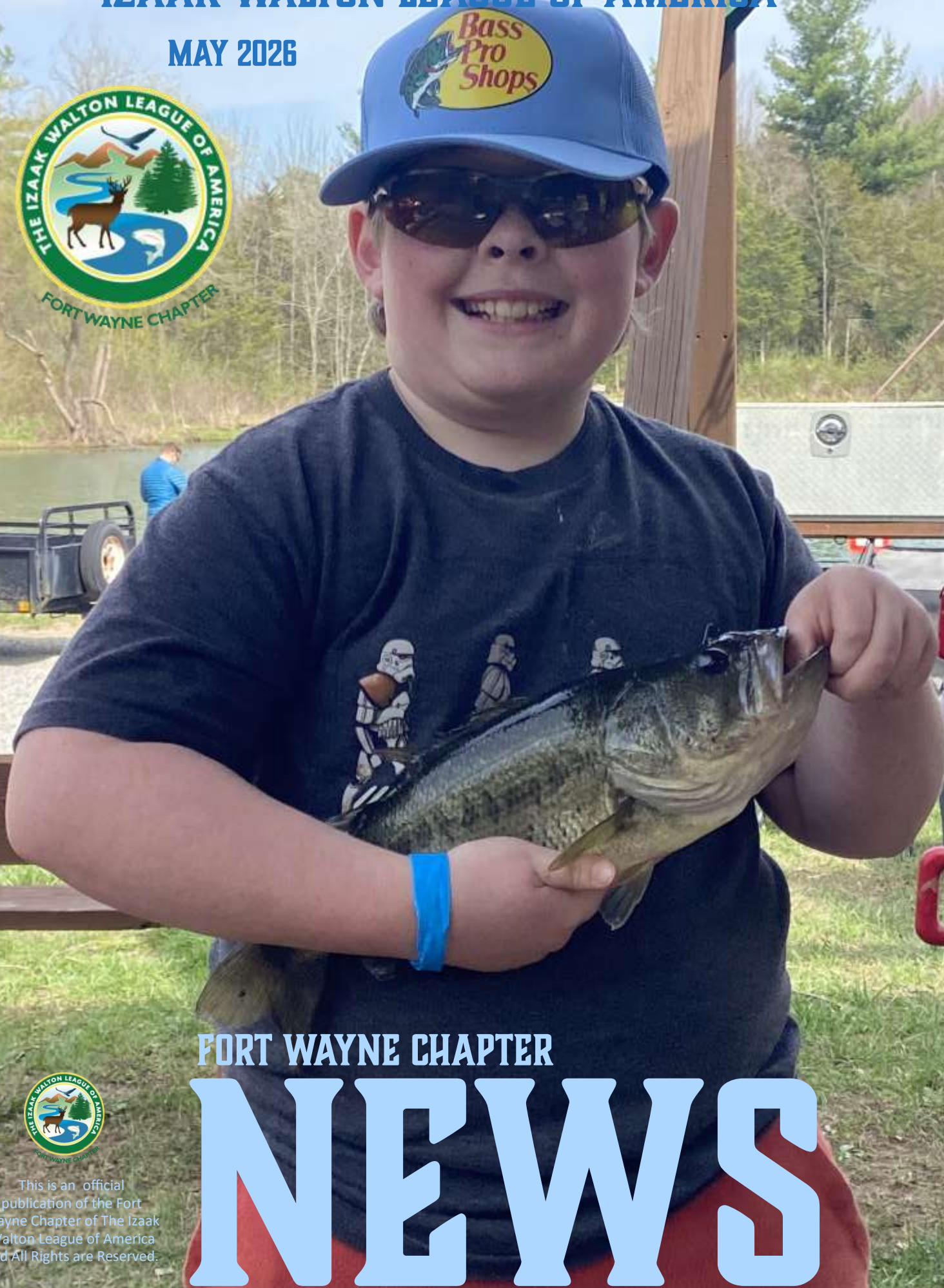


IZAACK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

MAY 2026



FORT WAYNE CHAPTER

NEWS



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FISHING CONTEST PROVES “THIRD PLACE” THEORY.

(Lead Article in April Issue.)

We had an impressive turnout of 57 participants at our event, bringing together both kids and adults for a day of fishing and fun. The fishing was quite productive; we managed to catch a diverse assortment of fish, with the bluegills measuring between five and seven and a half inches. In addition to the bluegills, several small bass were reeled in, most measuring under 12 inches, although one lucky angler did catch a remarkable bass that

stretched to 16 inches. Unfortunately, our luck with crappie was limited this time, as only two were caught throughout the day.



As a reminder for our fishing members, please remember to practice catch and release for all bass over inches. It's equally important not to return any fish under 14 inches to the pond, as they need to be removed to avoid overpopulating the pond resulting in stunted fish. Small fish can be quite delicious regardless of their size, and can be prepared in various ways—notably, they can be breaded and pan-fried as fillets or cleaned and cooked whole for a delightful meal.

**More photos of the 2026
Spring Fishing Contest.**





**SOME OF OUR
FIRST TIME
FISHERMEN ARE
BASHFUL...**

**... AND SOME ARE
PROUD, BUT BOTH
HAVE A MEMORY
THAT WILL LAST A
LIFETIME!**



The Word From The Top

CHAPTER ON THE MOVE!



Dear All,

As we turn the page into spring, it's hard not to feel a renewed sense of energy around the chapter. Warmer weather has finally arrived, bringing with it those familiar spring showers that we know will soon give way to green grass, blooming flowers, and gardens coming to life. It's a great time of year—one that reminds us why we're so passionate about conservation, the outdoors, and the community we continue to build together.

With the change in season also comes a full slate of activity here at the Chapter. This spring and summer are shaping up to be some of our busiest yet, with a wide range of events, programs, and opportunities for members and guests to get involved. Whether it's time spent on the ranges, walking the trails, casting a line at the pond, or participating in one of our many organized events, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

I want to take a moment to sincerely thank all of you who have already volunteered your time and attended events so far this year. Your willingness to step up, lend a hand, and show your support is what keeps this Chapter thriving. From behind-the-scenes work to event participation, every contribution plays a role in making our organization stronger and more impactful.

A reminder to all members: You must be a paid and current member to use our facilities and grounds. Signing in at the Chapter House counter before using any of our facilities and grounds is essential to remain a member in good standing. We are a members-only organization, therefore, any guests pay a guest fee and a guest card must be completed prior to enjoying our Chapter. As a member, please have your membership card on you at all times while on Chapter grounds. We take great pride in maintaining a safe and respectful environment, and unauthorized use of the property is not permitted.

Looking ahead, I encourage everyone to stay engaged and take advantage of the many opportunities coming your way. Bring a friend, invite a neighbor, or simply spend some extra time enjoying the grounds—we're building something special here, and it continues to grow because of each of you.



Respectfully,

President
IWLA-FW

Stats on number of viewings of our focused marketing on Facebook!



Spring Comes To Our Woodland Trails!



Now is the best time to walk our trails and see the wonderful woodland flowers that pop up every Spring.

NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY

Last week, a member was recorded, for the second time, allowing his children to use the small rowboat without wearing life jackets. This behavior is strictly prohibited as it compromises safety. Such behavior could lead to suspension or even loss of membership. If you observe anyone on the boating on the pond without a life jacket, please take a moment to remind them of our Chapter Rules. It's essential to reinforce the importance of safety; not only are they putting themselves and families at risk, they are also jeopardizing all members using boats as they could be removed as this

disregard of chapter rules on safety could affect all of us. Remember safety is a shared responsibility.

Let's all work together to ensure that the rules are followed faithfully by all.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Spring has brought new life to the chapter grounds, and with it, a renewed sense of energy and purpose for our Conservation Committee. As the days get warmer and the soil begins to wake up, we're reminded that conservation isn't just something we talk about—it's something we do together, right here at the chapter.

One of the biggest highlights of the season was



Growing Together: Conservation in Action at IWLA-FW

our Annual Plant Sale. Thanks to incredible support from our members and the surrounding community, we sold over 2,000 garden starts and plants this year! That's 2,000 opportunities for flowers to bloom, vegetables to grow, and pollinators to thrive across our region. The enthusiasm and turnout exceeded expectations, and it's clear this event has taken root as a favorite chapter tradition. Looking ahead, we're excited to expand the plant sale next year with



even more variety to serve both seasoned gardeners and those just getting their hands dirty for the first time.

But the impact doesn't stop there. Right here on our own grounds, the Chapter Garden is gearing up for another season. This space serves as more than just a garden—it's a living example of stewardship, sustainability, and community collaboration. To make it all happen, we're reaching out for help. Whether you have a green thumb or just don't mind pulling a few weeds, we're seeking volunteers to assist with planting and maintaining the garden throughout the season. The commitment is minimal—just a couple of hours a month—but the impact is lasting. It's a great way to connect with fellow members, learn something new, and contribute directly to the chapter's conservation efforts.

In addition to helping hands, we're also looking for natural materials to keep our compost program thriving. If you find yourself with extra leaves and grass clippings, don't let them go to waste—bring them to the chapter! These materials play a crucial role in building healthy soil for our garden and reducing unnecessary landfill use. Composting is one of the simplest and most effective ways we can all contribute to a more sustainable environment, and your participation helps close the loop right here at home.

As we move into the heart of the growing season, we invite all members to take part in these efforts—whether by volunteering, contributing compost materials, or simply stopping by to see the progress. Together, we are cultivating more than just plants—we're growing a stronger, more connected conservation community.

- CONSERVATION

- RECREATION

- COMMUNITY

It's not just our tagline—it's what we live every day at IWLA-FW.

- Anne Bowser, Conservation Chair IWLA-FW

A REMINDER TO ALL

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NEWS and NOTES ON ARCHERY



Note To Hikers & Mushroom Hunters

The Trails will be closed every third Saturday during the 3D

The first arrows of the 3D season flew this month, and despite less-than-ideal weather, we had a great turnout. As Rick said, "If you're going to hunt in the rain, you have to train in the rain!" Our seasoned archers showed up strong, and we were excited to welcome a great group of new shooters—especially the young archers from our first Youth Archery Club. There's some real talent coming up, and the future of archery at the chapter is looking bright.

We're looking forward to expanding the course this season and continuing to grow the program for all skill levels.

Whether you're a longtime archer or just thinking about giving it a try, our 3D course offers a fun and challenging experience in a relaxed, welcoming environment. It's a great way to sharpen your skills, enjoy the outdoors, and connect with others who share a passion for archery. We'll also be hosting our Youth Archery Club on May 16th from 10 AM–12 PM, making it a perfect opportunity for younger archers to learn and get involved. Bring a friend, bring the family, and spend a few hours on the course—you might just find your new favorite way to spend a Saturday morning.

Come out and join us for our next 3D Archery Shoot on May 16th from 8 AM–1 PM—we'd love to see you on the course!

- Anne Bowser, Archery Manager IWLA-FW

Our recent Ladies Pistol Class was nothing short of a resounding success, bringing together both members and non-members for a morning of learning, confidence-building, and camaraderie. From first-time shooters to those looking to refine their skills, the class created an encouraging and supportive environment where everyone could grow at their own pace.

Ladies Only Introductory Pistol Class A Resounding Success

A special thank you goes out to Mark Ceccarelli, whose expert instruction, thoughtful training curriculum, and thorough safety briefing set the tone for a safe and empowering experience. His ability to connect with participants and break down fundamentals made a lasting impression on all who attended.

Participants had the opportunity to train with a variety of pistol brands and models, giving them hands-on experience and helping them discover what felt most comfortable and effective. For some, the experience sparked immediate excitement—several attendees left eager to purchase their own firearm and continue practicing their new skills.

The enthusiasm didn't end when the class wrapped up. Many are already looking ahead to future opportunities, including the upcoming Ladies Rifle Class on July 18 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., proudly sponsored by Acme Rifles, as well as the next Ladies Pistol Class scheduled for August 20 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Events like these highlight what makes our chapter so special—creating a welcoming space where people can learn, grow, and build confidence together. We look forward to seeing even more faces at the next class!



Chief Instructor
Mark Ceccarelli

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

Kid's Have Blast At Easter 2026 Easter Egg Hunt At Chapter

The children at the Annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 4, had a blast! They first decorated bags to collect their goodies in. They then ran outside to hunt down the 300 eggs



that were hidden in the bushes, in the flowers, grass, and other areas of the Chapterhouse. During the hunt, rain started to fall. Although many would think that would spoil the children's fun, it actually had the opposite effect! The children giggled, laughed, and had huge smiles as they splashed in the rain while hunting with the other children.

Afterward, the families stayed a while to look at the goodies and chat. Family memories were indeed made of the Easter egg hunt. They collected a lot of eggs and got to play in the rain at the same time! We thank the people who volunteered their time — including two teens who came to help hide the eggs and set up!

Maryann James—Easter Chairperson

Chapter Calendar As Of May 2026

Check Our Calendar On Our Website at FW-IWLA.ORG
for Most Current Listing of Calendar Dates.

Date	Start time	End time	Subject
5/16/2026	8:00 AM	1:00 PM	3D Archery
6/2/2026	5:00 PM	7:00 PM	Huntertown Chamber of Commerce - Meet me at Five""
6/6/2026	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	Rimfire Championship
6/6/2026	10:00 AM	9:00 PM	Chapterhouse -EH Rental
6/12/2026	5:00 PM	9:00 PM	WITO - Setup
6/13/2026	8:00 AM	5:00 PM	Women in the Outdoors
6/17/2026	6:00 PM	8:00 PM	Youth .22R
6/20/2026	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	KYL Championship
6/20/2026	8:00 AM	1:00 PM	3D Archery
6/21/2026	1:00 PM	3:30 PM	Sip & Paint
6/26/2026	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	Chapter Campout
6/27/2026	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	NSSF - Pistol
7/18/2026	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	Ladies Rifle
7/18/2026	8:00 AM	1:00 PM	3D Archery
8/1/2026	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	NSSF - Shot Gun
8/8/2026	9:00 AM	1:00 PM	Jake's Day
8/8/2026	10:30 AM	2:00 PM	R&P CLOSED until 2:00pm
8/15/2026	8:00 AM	1:00 PM	3D Archery
8/20/2026	6:00 PM	8:00 PM	Ladies - Pistol
9/19/2026	8:00 AM	1:00 PM	3D Archery
9/20/2026	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	Chapter House - East Hall Private Rental
9/25/2026	6:00 PM	7:30 PM	Fall Member Meeting
9/26/2026	3:00 PM	7:00 PM	Fishing Derby
10/3/2026	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	Rimfire Championship
10/3/2026	10:00 AM	2:00 PM	Member Volunteer Work Day - Cookout!
10/10/2026	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	KYL Championship
11/14/2026	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	RSO Refresher

Izaak Walton Quote Of The Month.

**“The Waters and Soil are Nature's Storehouse In Which
She Locks Up Her Wonders.”**