November 2026



FORT WAYNE CHAPTER NEWS

THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA
FORT WAYNE CHAPTER

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Member Mike Sienk –Master Craftsman



This month's cover features Mike Sienk, one of our Range Safety Officers. He personally built all of the concrete shooting benches on our rifle range and recently added one final bench. This marks his second FW NEWS cover feature; the first was in 2022 when he was honored with the prestigious National IWLA Judge Tobin Award for exceptional service in support of the Fort Wayne Chapter.

Presented in 2022, the Judge Tobin Award Text

Mike Sienk's exceptional commitment to volunteerism and his generous philanthropic contributions to projects that the Fort Wayne Chapter would not have been able to undertake otherwise truly set him apart as one of the Chapter's most devoted members. The concrete bench initiative was monumental, significantly enhancing both the rifle range's reputation and functionality. Few shooting ranges can boast facilities that come close to what Mike helped accomplish. Notably, he donated the funds reimbursed to him for the expenses incurred while constructing the concrete shooting benches back to the Chapter, ensuring that the Chapter benefited from these professionally crafted benches without any financial burden. These benches have transformed the shooting experience by providing a stable and comfortable platform for shooters. Mike is one of Fort Wayne Chapter's long-serving Range Safety Officers who has dedicated countless hours volunteering beyond the expected minimum, solidifying his role as a pillar of support within the Chapter. His unwavering dedication and hands-on contributions have left an indelible mark.

- National IWLA Tobin Award

Summer of 2027, Mike builds one more bench.

Mike found his old custom bench form that he made in 2022, brought out 15 bags of concrete and enumerable reinforcing rods that would have to be shaped.



Begins with reassembling the concrete form…..









Cuts, shapes an adds the reinforcing rod inner frame….

The pour begins with the legs and moves to the table top









Mike removes the form and is pleased as the table, setting on a slope, is perfect-ly level.



And the Master Craftsman looks over the finished product!



"Before" Mike IN 2022



"After" Mike's Master Craftsmanship

Mike is sitting on the kneeling/prone shooting bench that he built in 2022. Since our other shooting stations are restricted to standing and bench shooting to maintain the integrity and safety of the "No Blue Sky" baffle range design—ensuring that all projectiles remain within our range—he created this platform specifically for rimfire .22 LR shooting in the prone and kneeling positions. This dedicated shooting station allows our members to practice these positions, which are restricted to this area, while preserving the engineering integrity of the "No Blue Sky" baffles in our rifle and pistol ranges.



Photos by Pat White

The Word From The Top



Dear Fellow Ikes,

As 2026 draws to a close, we reflect with gratitude on another remarkable year at the Fort Wayne Chapter. Our Chapter continues to thrive because of the generosity, dedication, and commitment of members like you.

For more than 100 years, our Chapter has worked to preserve our natural resources, promote responsible outdoor recreation, and provide a place where families and friends can gather to enjoy the outdoors. Your support makes this possible.

As you consider your year-end charitable giving, we ask that you remember the Fort Wayne Chapter. **For members age 70½ or older, a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) directly from an eligible IRA may provide a tax-efficient way to support our Chapter.** When properly arranged, these distributions may satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution without increasing your taxable income.

Your contribution, regardless of size, helps us maintain our facilities, expand youth programs, improve accessibility, and preserve the beautiful grounds entrusted to our care.

Your generosity today helps ensure our Chapter remains a treasured resource for another 100 years and generations to come.

Please consult your financial or tax advisor regarding eligibility and the potential tax benefits of giving through your retirement account.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and members, thank you for your continued friendship, generosity, and commitment to our Chapter.

With sincere appreciation,



Respectfully,

President
IWLA-FW

How 5 Indiana data centers avoided needing federal water permits

BY CARSON GERBER
DATELINE: October 12, 2026

FPI NEWS

GUEST ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

Some of the largest data centers under construction in Indiana have avoided more extensive environmental scrutiny, public input and costs associated with restoring wetlands. That's because the projects were not required to get a federal water permit after a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2023 narrowed the scope of the Clean Water Act, the landmark 1972 legislation that protects and restores surface water. The ruling removed federal oversight of around half of all the nation's surface waters.

Five data center developments in Indiana contain wetlands, streams or ponds that, before the court ruling, would have fallen under the jurisdiction of the law and required a federal permit, according to a POLITICO analysis. Now, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is the only agency overseeing the surface water impacts at those sites.

Some of the largest data centers under construction in Indiana have avoided more extensive environmental scrutiny, public input and costs associated with restoring wetlands.

Wetlands are needed to protect and improve water quality, provide fish and wildlife habitats, store floodwaters and maintain surface water flow during dry periods.— and scrutiny from the Army Corps of Engineers, which oversees the federal program. *The federal process also poses the real possibility that the permit may be denied,* according to David Van Gilder, senior policy and legal director with the Hoosier Environmental Council.

"If I own and want to develop land on which there is a federally regulated wetland, I'm going to have to jump through a lot more hoops," he said. *"If I'm sitting on that same land now under (IDEM), I can breathe a lot easier because I'm going to get a permit, almost 100% assured, from the state of Indiana."*

A tale of two data centers: Two massive data centers currently under construction in Indiana highlight how the process changes when a federal permit is required.

At Project Zodiac, the nearly 900-acre Google campus in Fort Wayne, an inspection determined the first two construction phases at the site didn't contain any federal waterways, placing jurisdiction with IDEM. The state agency determined the project area contained nearly 12 acres of wetlands, but just 2.4 acres under state jurisdiction would be impacted by the development. Another 2 acres were considered exempt, allowing the company to fill them in without any permit. IDEM required Google to mitigate the loss by purchasing credits through a program administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to restore around 4 acres of wetlands in other parts of the state.

Project Rainer, the 1,200-acre Amazon data center campus in New Carlisle in northwest Indiana, includes wetlands and streams regulated by the Clean Water Act. by requesting another plan with less impact. Amazon is now proposing to fill in around 5 acres of wetlands, but create around 10 acres of new wetlands in the southeast corner of the site to make up for the lost land. The permit is still under review.

However, the Army Corps in July determined the state program to be out of compliance because it wasn't restoring wetlands in the federally mandated three-year timeframe. The program has collected at least

(Continued On Next Page)

$109 million in wetlands payments from developers, but has only fully completed two projects.

"I think there's an open question about whether it's reasonable or arbitrary and capricious for our agency to accept (mitigation credits) even though the federal government says the program isn't good enough anymore," Van Gilder said.

Mark Becker, the IDNR's land acquisition division director, told the Indiana Capital Chronicle the main reason for the backlog comes from complex regulatory hurdles and lengthy review timelines to begin implementing wetland mitigation projects for which developers can buy credits. He said the agency is building a "robust pipeline" of 27 mitigation projects in various stages of development to reduce the backlog.

In 2024 the House Act 1383, completely removed some wetlands from state oversight and reduced regulations on other protected wetlands.

Indiana loosens wetland protections. The court decision narrowing the Clean Water Act is impacting other states beyond Indiana. At the time of the ruling in 2023, nearly half of all 50 states had no state-level regulations or permitting process for wetlands. Indiana law for decades has required reviews, permits and mitigation efforts that, in some ways, closely mirror federal regulations. But those state standards in 2024 were significantly reduced by House Enrolled Act 1383, which completely removed some wetlands from state oversight and reduced regulations on other protected wetlands.

Kim Ferraro, managing attorney at the Conservation Law Center based in Bloomington, said the law "gutted" the state's wetland program, leading to *"very few" wetlands receiving protection from either state or federal laws. "Now they can just fill them, and they don't have to replace the damage that they caused,"* she said.

FPI NEWS

This article was re-printed by permission of FREE PRESS INDIANA—Oct 14, 2026



Chapter Public Outreach Fishing Derby Well Attended by Community









Sixty-five From Greater Fort Wayne Area Attend Chapter Fishing Derby.






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Chapter Members Receive Awards for Exceptional Service



Gabe Bowser on right, National IWLA *Tobin Award* for his outstanding leadership.



Melissa Doepke receives IN-Div. *Russell Sinclair* award for her creative chapter web site and social media innovation.



Andrew Neidemeyer receives Chapter *Outstanding Service* recognition for years served on Chapter Board.



Brian Doepke receives IN-Div. *Achievement Award* for work to rejuvenating the Chapter Walton Pond



Jay Butler receives " *Gale Atwood* IN-Div. award for his many years of leadership of the Indiana Division, IWLA.

THIS AWARD SPACE RESERVED FOR YOU!

Photos by Pat White


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Soaring Hawk Visits Fall Chapter Business Meeting







The Soaring Hawk folks visited the chapter accompanied by two of their rehabilitated feathered friends.

The following day we took some fish from the fishing derby as a special thanks to those feathered participants.





Photos by Pat White & Gabe Bowser

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATES TBD
STAY TUNED!

LEARN • PARTICIPATE • MAKE A DIFFERENCE



STOP THE BLEED CLASS

Learn life-saving skills that can make a difference when seconds count.



HONEY BEE CLASS

Discover the importance of pollinators, beekeeping basics, and how you can help protect our bees.



COMPOSTING CLASS BY ACDEM

Learn composting basics, reduce waste, and help create a healthier environment.



CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

Friendly competition, prizes, and a great time with fellow members!



Sip and Paint

Unleash your creativity, enjoy good company, and take home your masterpiece!



RSO APPRECIATION

A special event to thank our dedicated Range Safety Officers for their time, commitment, and service to our Chapter.

Ft. Wayne Izaak Walton
17100 Griffin Rd
Huntertown IN 46748

www.IWLA-FW.org

Conservation
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Conservation – Recreation – Community

PLEASE NOTE FOLLOW-



SHOOTERS ARE REQUIRED TO ISERT AN EMPTY-CHAMBER FLAG (ECI) IN FIREARM ANYTIME THE RANGE IS COLD.

ASK RSO FOR ONE IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE!

NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS SAFETY RULE.

WE WILL BE OFFERING SOME REALLY EXCITING NEW TRAP SHOOTING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

STAY TUNED!





Drone shot of Walton Pond



Smiles Worth Thousand Words, as we create memories of a life time.



Jay Butler wearing Granddaughter's Georgia Southern University accessories pontificates on "Sameness & Differences" in University's Small Bore Rifle Shooting and Chapters Small Bore Competition just completed.

Around the Chapter In Photos



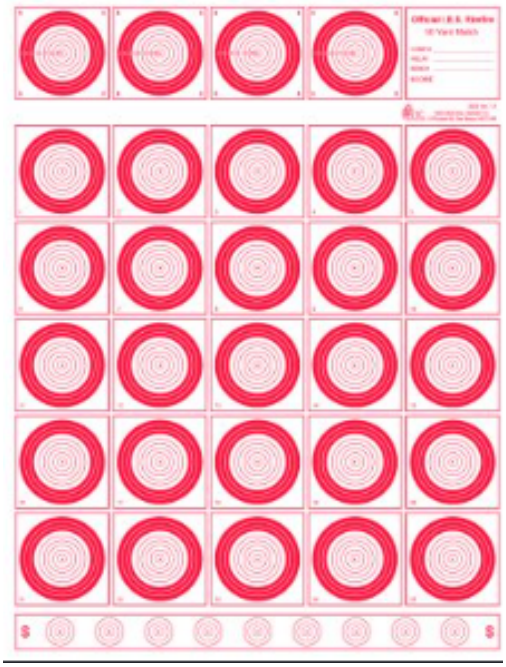
Aerial drone shot of Chapters Rifle & Pistol Ranges



Member John Jones catches fellow member "Mobey Dick" and releases him for another day!

FW Chapter Fall Rimfire Benchrest Competition

The Rimfire Competition is an engaging event that challenges precision and skill through the use of two official International Bench Rest (IBS) target cards, one shot at a distance of 50-yards and the other at 100 -yards. Each card with one shot at 25 each target is designed to test the capabilities of the competing marksmen.



At the top of each card are five designated targets known as "sighters." These targets serve as a warm-up, allowing shooters to make any scope adjustments and ensure they are dialed in before the official competition begins. Below the sighters, each target card presents 25 additional scoring targets designed to challenge each competitor's marksmanship over a designated time period. The 50-yard targets feature a ten-ring measuring a mere ¼ inch in diameter, demanding exceptional skill and concentration. Conversely, at the 100-yard mark, the ten-ring expands slightly to ½ inch, still presenting a significant challenge for even the most experienced shooters at 100-yards.



Each ten-ring has a small dot at its center, roughly the size of a #2 lead pencil point, providing a highly focused aiming point for competitors and used as a tie breaker.

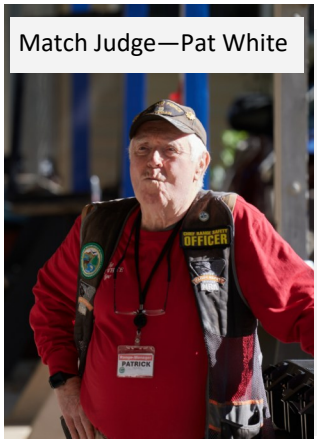
Each target has nine additional scoring rings with point values ranging from 9 down to 2, requiring precision with every shot.

Aiming for perfection, shooters strive for a flawless score of 10 points on each target, for a possible total of 250 points per card. The competition's final score is the aggregate points earned across all 50 targets on both cards, compared to the 500 point potential perfect score.



100 Yard Precision Shooting Lane

Match Judge—Pat White

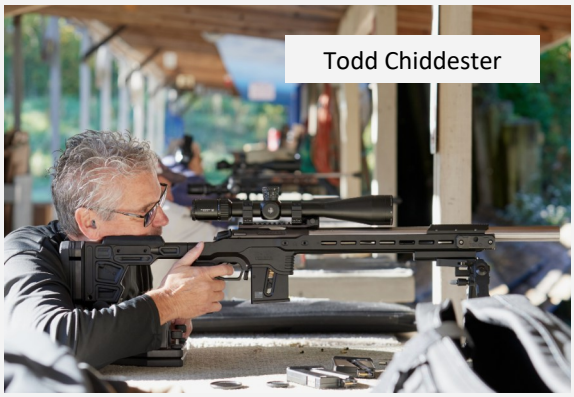


In this match, there were two shooting classes, **Factory** = shooting firearm as sold OEM and **Open** = Shooters with rifle's with certain firearm enhancement since retail purchase.

(Continued on Next page)



Brian Johnson



Todd Chiddester



Jerry Hubert



Jay Butler



???



Myron Reed

Photos by John Legg

"God has two dwellings: one in heaven, and the other in a meek and thankful heart." - Izaak Walton

Chapter Meets For Fall Social & Election of 2027 Board



President Gabe gives Thumbs-Up to "Our Youth Activities Are Paying Dividends"



"Good Food Enjoyed by All"

"Younger Members Attending""



Photos by Pat White

CHAPTER ELECTION RESULTS

Board of Directors 2027

Officer Term 1 Year				
	President: Gabe Bowser	Site Manager: Zach Walter		
	Vice President: Mark Ceccarelli	Recording Secretary: MaryAnn James	Treasurer: Melissa Doepke	Membership Secretary: Bernd Buldt
Term Ending 2027	Director / T & S Mgr: Dillon Ripperger	Director: Tom Ridenour	Director: Anne Bowser	
Term Ending 2028	Director / R & P Mgr: Patrick White	Director: Myron Reed	Director: John Legg	
Term Ending 2029	Director / Archery Mgr: Carl Carringer	Director: Karen Griggs	Director: Andrey Niedermeyer	



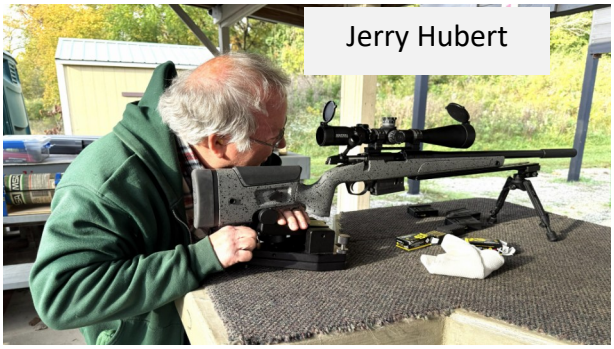
KYL

(Know Your Limits) Competition

The KYL Competition is an exciting showcase of marksmanship, featuring the precision use of .22 LR rifles. Competitors aim at increasingly smaller steel plates at distances of 50 and 100 yards, facing a high-stakes “Sudden Death” twist that heightens the challenge.

As shooters target these diminishing plates, they wrestle with confidence and strategy, tempted to push for “Just One More” shot or advised by their instincts to play it safe. A missed shot at 100 yards results in immediate disqualification, while those who retire early can keep their score, hoping for rivals’ mistakes.

This balance of skill and strategy creates a tense atmosphere where decisions can lead to triumph or defeat. In this 4-competitor match, Jerry scored 1060 out of 2000 points alongside partner Jay, leaning towards “strategic,” highlighting the importance of “Knowing Your Limits.” In contrast, Mark and John being excellent shots, pushed one shot too far, losing all their points.



Jerry Hubert



Jay Butler



Mark Cellarelli



John Legg

Photos by Pat White

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