



Volunteer View

(A newsletter for IDNR State Park and Reservoirs Volunteers who have dedicated 50 + hours and are still active. Thank You!)



Spring 2015 Friends Groups Special Edition

Park's Friends New Shelter

By Jim Eagleman, Interpretive Naturalist, Brown County State Park

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Brown County High School building trades class.

A generous bequest from a devoted park visitor recently finished the funding for a Brown County State Park Friends group project. The visitor, Mary Platt Oxford, wanted a shelter built for visitors to use. The new structure, located near the Brown County State Park Nature Center, will be finished this month according to Chris Todd, Brown County High School's building trades teacher. The open-air shelterhouse, just north of the Nature Center, will be used for Friends events including the annual May spring plant sale and Morel Mushroom Festival. Park nature center

events, programs, and workshops will also be held in the spacious structure.

"We're pleased it will serve visitors at an outside site when weather is calm, and also provide a place under cover when it isn't," reports Doug Baird, the park's Property Manager.

A project this size was not decided quickly. It took much planning over several years and included the DNR's Division of Engineering for final construction plan approval. "We knew we wanted to follow similar plans like the other shelters for a rustic, outdoor structure", says then Friends president Don Stephenson. "But the first order of business was to purchase a band saw for the park." Utilizing large trees destined for removal due to safety considerations, upright beams, roof rafters, and eventual roof decking boards were supplied from park trees using the portable band saw. It was donated in 2013. Funds for the saw came from Friends' fundraiser activities, memberships, and the annual Haunted Trail event. "Park staff can now use the saw for many projects. It's a useful tool," adds Stephenson.

A large 36' x 42' concrete slab was poured in spring of 2013. It provided a firm footing for the plant sale that year, but the sale still required the use of a large Division of State Parks white tent. While the

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Volunteers, Friends and Partnership Galore!

By Jeff Cummings, Interpretive Naturalist, Fort Harrison State Park

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2982.htm>

Fort Harrison has two formal 501c3 groups at the Park: the Museum of 20th Century Warfare and the Friends of Fort Harrison.

The Museum of 20th Century Warfare operates in Building 711 at the Park. They staff the building with volunteers four days per week, 6 hrs per day May - Oct; three days per week Nov - Mar. equaling 156 days or 936 hrs per year. They also sponsor and organize ten military reenactments throughout the year featuring most of the major wars that the United States fought during the 20th century. In the museum and also at the Fort Inn, the M20CW builds and regularly changes the military exhibits that feature all of the major 20th century conflicts in which the U.S. was involved. They maintain a volunteer base of over 30 members that includes both civilian, retired, and current military personnel. The Museum used 284 volunteers for a total of 5218 volunteer hours in 2014. The Museum has an annual attendance of approximately 17,000 visitors per year generating an estimated \$21,250 in gate revenue per year.

Further, the Museum sees an estimated 1000 visitors per year for the reenactments generating an estimated \$1250 in additional gate revenue. Sixty percentage of the volunteers support the reenactments; they come to the M20CW from Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, Tennessee and Pennsylvania to support our programming. The Museum generates approximately \$22,320.00 per year in donations and services which include blank ammunition, personal military gear (uniforms), program logistical support, and cleaning services for donated uniforms. In 2014, 25 school groups, a total of 375 school children, visited the museum for history related programming. The Museum had 342 artifacts donated in 2014 and took in over \$8185.00 in monetary donations.

The Friends of Fort Harrison State Park is the second 501c3 organization at Fort Harrison State Park. Their mission is to support the major functions of the State Park through fundraising, special events, and special projects. This past year they have sponsored, designed and had built three professional quality bicycle racks through PEN Enterprises. The total cost of that project was \$1500 to put new bike racks at the Museum, the Visitor Center, and the Shafter Rd Comfort Station. They also purchased materials and built and installed the new information board for the Dog Park at Fort Harrison with a total cost of \$500 in materials and labor. The Friends have sponsored two Indiana Master Naturalist classes this past year and have generated over \$5000 in revenue for the Friends, training over 80 Master Naturalists in 2014. The Friends are also supporting the Merit Badge Sunday programs that the Park offers to local Boy Scouts once each month through out the year, generating approximately \$850 per year in revenue for the State Park. The Friends also help out with Sunday Birdwatching on Sundays 7 weeks in spring and 5 weeks in fall from 8 - 10:30a each Sunday for a total of 273 birdwatchers and for a total of 33 volunteer hours each year. The Friends have supported large events and programs at the park including the Ford Outdoor Experience, the Return to the Forties Dinner Dance, Breakfast with Santa, the Indianapolis Symphonic Band Summer Concert Series, and the Halloween Soldier's Haunt, just to name a few.

There are a number of outside groups that have supported Fort Harrison State Park for on-going projects including:

- the Eli Lilly Corporation Day of Service Project for honeysuckle removal, trail construction, and work at the Dog Park; 75 volunteers for 500 hours of labor
- The Hoosier Mountain Bike Association for annual trail construction and trail maintenance across the Park; 50 volunteers for 500 hours of labor. They often partner with REI Co-op for the work days

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Friends Shelter continued...



tent provided an eye-catching landmark for many park events, it had to be secured from another property, requiring pick-up, set up/take down, and return.

Since fall of 2014, two classes met daily with Mr. Todd who conferred frequently with Friends members and park staff for work schedules and supplies. Classes required instruction on how to use safety measures with various tools, construct and set rafters, and apply shingles. Hopes are these students will learn an important trade that will help in career plans. "I believe the boys learned a lot", says Todd.

"That is similar to how the CCC boys were honored," said a long-time visitor and granddaughter of a CCC worker, viewing the structure this summer. "My granddad took me to a park where he worked with the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. He was so happy and proud of the work they did."

Perhaps the high school students can return to this shelter someday to show their families the work they completed when in the class. In the meantime, watch for Friends events and park programs held at this impressive structure. "It is a wonderful place to offer programs to our visitors", says Kevin Snyder, the park's Assistant Property Manager. "It will be a nice gift to the citizens of Indiana as we celebrate Indiana State Parks centennial in 2016."

Fort Harrison Partners continued...

- Camptown, Inc for establishing Family Camping Weekend for low-income families to try out camping and other outdoor recreational programs at Fort Harrison State Park. They will also host two, one-week long outdoor day camps for low-income children in the Indianapolis Metro Area each summer, with an estimated 250 - 300 children per summer. This is a growing program and is meeting one of the core missions of Fort Harrison State Park
- the Boy Scouts of America for providing BSA Eaglescout volunteers and Merit Badge counselors in supporting invasive removal, project work at the Museum, and monthly Merit Badge classes at Fort Harrison though out the year.
- City of Lawrence Park and Recreation Dept. for July 4th programming and the City of Lawrence Police and Fire for emergency response and training
- The Indiana Guard and Reserve for program support and emergency training
- The Friends of White River Canoe Club for Paddle Fest at the Park each summer
- The Amos Butler Audubon Society for weekly bird walks in spring and fall

Salamonie Raptor Center

Lynnanne Fager, Interpretive Naturalist Upper Wabash Interpretive Services, IDNR

www.facebook.com/UpperWabash

Most everyone enjoys seeing raptors, or birds of prey, up close. They make a lasting impression with their large presence: large hooked beaks; large, sharp talons; large bodies and wingspans; and often large eyes! Our resident birds are permanently injured, non-releasable ambassadors for each respected species, “speaking” for environmental awareness. Special education permits are issued annually through Indiana Fish and Wildlife, allowing us to partner with these birds for educational programs.

In 2007, the idea of bringing a raptor center to Upper Wabash Interpretive Services (UWIS) was “hatched” and approved by Salamonie property management. After the first Friends meeting in 2008, they received 501(c)3 status in May 2009. Their first priority was to raise funds to build a raptor center.

During the Friends’ first four years of fundraising and grant writing, Upper Wabash staff and volunteers achieved a monetary goal of \$30k for the construction of Salamonie Raptor Center. This construction would never have happened with the current budget situation and without the 501(c)3 status. Once ground breaking began, the structure was completed in six weeks and the grand opening was held June 23, 2013.

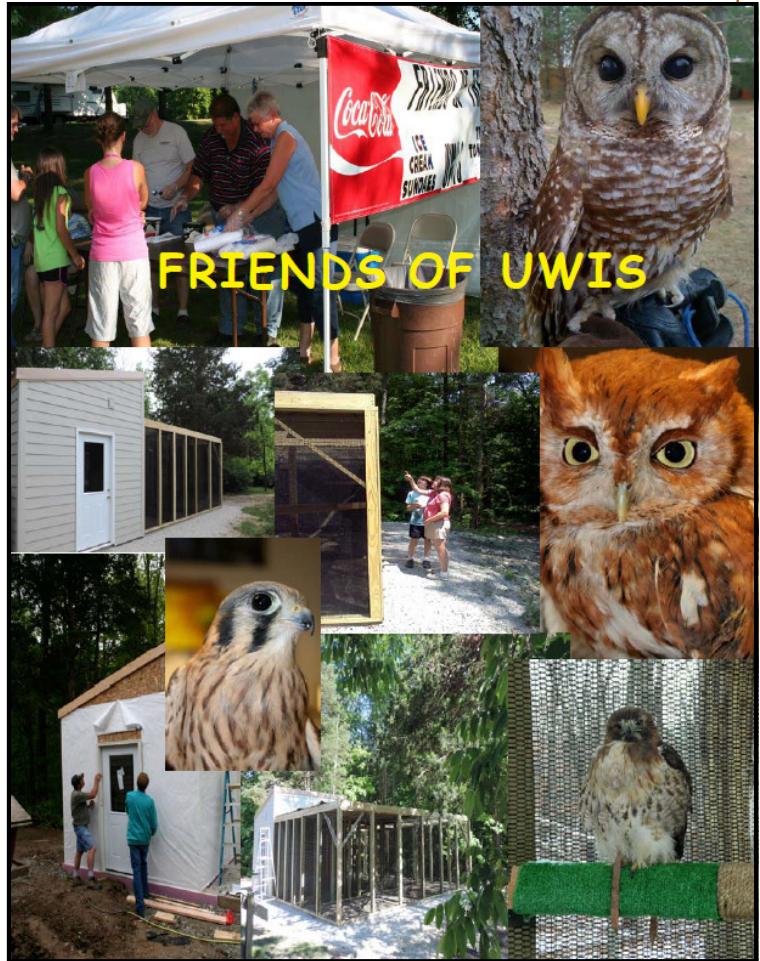
Construction design allows Salamonie visitors the chance to view the birds on display. The structure includes six confinement areas. Birds on display are two screech owls (red and gray phase), American kestrel, great horned owl, red-tailed hawk, barred owl, and a turkey vulture. The Raptor Center includes a room equipped with heat and running water for supplies and freezers for food.

From the grand opening on June 23 to Dec. 31, 2013, UWIS staff held 29 programs, reached a total of 1,540 individuals, and traveled to nine (9) counties. In 2014, UWIS staff held 38 programs, reached a total of 2,213 individuals, and traveled to eight (8) counties. These numbers do not reflect Salamonie visitors at the Raptor Center.

The Friends of UWIS lend ongoing support to provide equipment, food, materials, vet care and any repair / replacement of items. The Friends of UWIS accepts public donations year-round to help maintain the standards of care needed at the facility.

It must be noted we are not rehabilitators; we do not provide care for orphaned, sick or injured wildlife.

If you would like to become a Friend of UWIS, volunteer with the raptors, or simply get directions to plan a visit, give us a call at 260-468-2127. We look forward to hearing from you!



Signage made possible by Friends of UWIS. Friends raised \$1200.00 for this project alone.

Fun Cost Funds!: Engaging Volunteers to Build and Finance Impactful State Park Friends Groups

By Dr. Nathan A. Schaumleffel

Most folks join a park friends group because they have a particular love for a specific property...a trail...a stream...a campground....a certain vista. They join to be affiliated and to be supportive. They want to be a part of something that helps sustain the park and improve it. Beyond paying dues, wearing a t-shirt or hat, maybe putting a sticker on their automobile or a patch on their pack, and visiting the park, many park friends do little else.

They do little else, not because they are lazy, but because they have not been engaged in the work of the group in meaningful ways that highlight their strengths, minimize their weakness, work with their personal schedules, and connect with their motivations to volunteer. We can't forget that folks visit parks for fun, leisure, relaxation, recreation, and to connect socially. In the same way, people join and participate in friends groups for the same reasons. Volunteerism is leisure for many, if not the majority of, individual members.

The leadership of friends groups should place a strong emphasis on engaging members in the organization by focusing on high-quality volunteer management to mold each member into a member who contributes in impactful ways for a prolonged timeframe measured in years. Often times, member engagement takes the form of board meetings, committee meetings, event planning, membership recruitment, and fundraising. These sorts of activities are typically not what most park visitors had in mind when they took a brochure from the gatehouse or trading post and became a friend of the park. The challenge of board leaders and park staff volunteer managers is to remember and understand that volunteer opportunities are as much a part of the recreation opportunity spectrum at the park as the opportunity to picnic, paddle, hike, or camp. It has to be fun!

Park foundations and friends groups in all of their forms are essentially a group of park advocates who want to help the park staff improve the park and visitor experience in terms of the environment, indoor and outdoor facilities, historic preservation, and park programming and interpretation. Ultimately, park improvements happen through resource development...that is fundraising and in-kind donations. Fun cost funds, and funds come from a strong, engaged, and happy cadre of volunteers who are having satisfying leisure experiences through volunteerism.

If friends groups are to be impactful, they must maintain a positive relationship with the park staff, work within the mission of IDNR and the park, understand that park administration is public administration that is guided by policy set by politicians, and generate dollars. Every friends group needs to establish an annual fund that not only pays for organizational operating expenses, but positions the friends to build an endowment fund and launch a capital campaign in the future to finance park improvements.

A secret to remember when starting an annual fund is that about 80% or so of charitable dollars come from individual donors. Your most reliable individual donors are your volunteers and board members, so you'll need to be sure your volunteer manager is building positive relationships with volunteers or you'll be "shooting yourself in the fundraising foot."

All board members should be giving to the friends group (i.e., 100% board giving). Your organization needs to establish a board giving policy early on when establishing a fundraising program. Board members need to give at a leadership level! Board members must be recruited and expected to not only give time and talent, but to also give their personal treasure.

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Fundraising continued...

The next thing you need to remember is that an annual fund doesn't mean we ask each prospect or donor to give once each year. It is better to think of an annual fund as the fund that pays for your organization's annual operating expenses...like a checking account. The goal of an annual fund is to raise enough money to cover monthly operating expenses for the organization...from salaries to rent to insurance to utilities to copy paper. It is quite appropriate to ask donors to give multiple times per year.

The key is to build a robust, sustainable annual fund through volunteer engagement, so you're not living hand to mouth so to speak and stringing along on life support from grant to grant or project to project. Grants are a nice addition for offering mission-focused services after you are generating enough dollars to keep your doors open without grants.

Now, let me share some actionable steps in establishing an annual fund where friends group leaders can create a variety of volunteer job descriptions and volunteer opportunities to engage members in the fundraising function of the organization. Some opportunities are making face-to-face asks, while other volunteer roles are behind the scenes stuffing envelopes, updating databases, writing a case statement, and planning fundraising events. There is a role, even e-volunteerism roles, for all personality types in fundraising, even for those who despise or are afraid of fundraising.

First, for now, FORGET about grants (and get your volunteers and members to forget them too)! Next, get acquainted with the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Code of Ethics and the Donor Bill of Rights. Live and breathe these documents. Fundraising is about personal relationships and the foundation of relationship is ethics! Ensure all friends upon joining know that the central function of impactful friends groups is resource development, which means all members should be acquainted with the AFP ethics.

The next step to launching a fundraising function to your friends group is to write a case statement for your organization. This is the foundation for all fundraising, even grant proposal writing (and it is a great behind the scenes role for a passionate volunteer(s) who is not so thrilled about "asking for money").

Then, assess your organization's financial needs by reviewing past financial statements and current program budgets to assist in setting a realistic annual fundraising goal.

Now, adopt and start using a donor management system, better known as a DMS. This is an advanced software platform, typically cloud-based, that functions as a database system and more that allows you to systematically manage relationships with prospects and donors. If you don't have or don't use a DMS, you're really hurting your chances of getting off of membership dues and grant reliant life support!

Once you select a DMS, create a small committee of volunteer DMS data entry and prospect research experts. Each volunteer can have their own username and password to access the system. These volunteers should then add the personal contact information of as many board members, past board members, members, past members, volunteers, program participants, past donors, suspects, and prospects to the DMS as possible! Your fundraising efforts including your annual fund are only as successful as your DMS data are accurate.

While your volunteers are entering personal information into the DMS, another group of volunteers should simultaneously create a list of local employers who offer a matching gift program. When one of your
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Fundraising continued...

donors gives \$25.00 to your organization their employer will match their gift with another \$25.00 to your organization. Building a matching gift program is critical to a successful annual fund and to building a sustainable fundraising program.

Another volunteer or committee can then start your annual fund by writing and sending old-fashioned direct mail letters to everyone in the DMS about four times per year through the postal service with matching gift information, a response device, and a return envelope.

Once you receive a donation, acknowledge it immediately by sending a handwritten thank you note the same day! In fact, it's a good habit to have staff and volunteers gather around the conference table the last half hour of every business day to write thank you notes to donors. In fact, a shy volunteer may take responsibility for simply being the "thank you note writer."

Now that your direct mail fundraising is underway, consider establishing a signature special event that metaphorically ties to your mission. Signature events can bring new prospects to your DMS and replace donors who have quit giving to your organization. Get creative and don't default to a golf scramble, 5k, 10k, or typical walk or run event. Special event planning and implementation create plenty of opportunities for volunteer engagement, such as marketing, logistics, sponsorship, parking, concessions, ticket sales, and entertainment.

As you know, fun cost funds! Following these steps to establishing or enhancing your friends group fundraising function will allow you to quit living hand to mouth, allow you to forget about grants, and will facilitate volunteer engagement that builds and finances impactful state park friends groups.

Now, go and ask, Ask, ASK! Usually, people don't give simply because they're not asked!

Dr. Nathan A. Schaumleffel, CPRP, CNP, CFRM, IYD is an independent nonprofit management consultant and consulting partner for the Indiana Youth Institute Consulting Services in the areas of fundraising, volunteer management, strategic planning, youth work, board development, and program evaluation. He recently published a book titled: [Cooperate – Advancing Your Nonprofit Organization's Mission Through College & Community Partnerships: A Guide for Nonprofit Leaders](#).

Dr. Schaumleffel can be reached at nschaumleffel@schaumco.com or 812-568-8198. Follow him on Twitter @drschaumleffel

Resources

Association of Fundraising Professionals – Code of Ethics and Donor Bill of Rights: <http://www.afpnet.org/Ethics/EnforcementDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=3261>

Association of Fundraising Professionals – Indiana Chapter: <http://www.afpindiana.afpnet.org/>

Central Indiana Association of Volunteer Administrators: <http://www.ciava.org/>

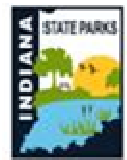
Schaumleffel, N. A. (Ed.) (2014). *Cooperate - Advancing your nonprofit organization's mission through college & community partnerships: A guide for nonprofit leaders*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Campus Compact. [.goo.gl/MULNDR](http://goo.gl/MULNDR)

Weinstein, S. (2009). *The complete guide to fundraising management (3rd ed.)*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



DNR

The mission of Indiana's State Parks and Reservoirs is to manage and interpret our properties' unique natural, wildlife and cultural resources using principles of multiple use and preservation, while sustaining the integrity of these resources for current and future generations.



Ford Hoosier Outdoor Experience– Volunteer to Help out!

Midwest's largest outdoor recreational event – is searching for volunteers. The 2015 event will take place at Fort Harrison State Park in Indianapolis on September 19 and 20 . This free, family-friendly event runs from 10 am-6pm each day and offers more than 50 different outdoor activities.

Volunteers will be assigned to help in five-hour shifts with one of the many on-site activities such as fishing, mountain biking, canoeing, archaeological dig and more. Come experience one of the greatest events of the year!

Contact volunteer coordinator Cheryl Hampton, (317) 233-1002, champton@dnr.in.gov. Visit us online at www.hoosieroutdoorexperience.IN.gov or facebook.com/hoosieroutdoorexperience..

