

# INDIANA

## Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

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**2026-2030**





# **INDIANA**

# Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

## **2026-2030**

### **PREPARED BY**

Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
Division of State Parks, Community Grants and Trails Section  
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December 2025

The preparation of this plan was financed in part through a planning grant from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, as amended). The Indiana DNR Division of State Parks, Community Grants and Trails will have the authority to represent and act for the State of Indiana in dealing with the Secretary of the Interior for the purposes of the LWCF Act of 1965.



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, NW

Washington, DC 20240

1.1.B(2225)

(via email)

December 29, 2025

The Honorable Mike Braun  
Governor of Indiana  
Office of the Governor  
Statehouse, Second Floor  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Governor Braun:

We are pleased to report that we have reviewed and approved the 2026-2030 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan or SCORP for Indiana. We wish to commend the Indiana Department of Natural Resources staff for their efforts during the planning process and their achievement in producing a high-quality document.

The Indiana SCORP showcases a strong commitment to public engagement and fully aligns with the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act's requirements for outdoor recreation planning and engagement. With approval of this SCORP, Indiana's eligibility for the LWCF State Assistance Program is extended through 2031, paving the way for new opportunities to enhance outdoor recreation statewide.

We look forward to continuing our valuable partnership with the State in implementing the SCORP and in administering the LWCF financial assistance program.

Sincerely,

**STEPHAN  
NOFIELD**

Digitally signed by STEPHAN  
NOFIELD  
Date: 2026.02.23 13:43:30  
-05'00'

Stephan Nofield  
Acting Associate Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement  
National Park Service

cc:

Alan Morrison, State Liaison Officer

Nathaniel Simmons, Alternate State Liaison Officer



STATE OF INDIANA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
State House, Second Floor  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

---

Mike Braun  
Governor

September 17, 2025

Stephan Nofield  
Acting Associate Director, Partnerships and Civic Engagement  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Nofield,

It has been five years since Indiana published our last Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). We have continued to use the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust and the Land and Water Conservation Fund as primary funding sources to conserve and develop public outdoor recreation lands at the state, county and local level throughout Indiana. The SCORP is an invaluable guide for this development.

This letter certifies that the citizens of Indiana were provided with ample opportunity for public participation in our latest SCORP planning process. As with our previous SCORPs, the 2026 plan uses a needs assessment based primarily on public input solicited from the citizens of Indiana, park professionals, and a 13-member Plan Advisory Committee. Through third-party surveys, we objectively gathered public input from citizens all over the state. At each stage, the Plan Advisory Committee offered reviews, feedback, and ideas crucial to our plan's development using their extensive knowledge and hands-on experience with the subject matter. We combined this specialized input with data from national recreation trends and the review of local park and recreation master plans to finalize the 2026 SCORP.

Our parks and outdoor recreation lands provide Hoosiers with the opportunity to experience nature and enjoy outdoor activities all across the state. The 2026 Indiana SCORP details statewide acquisition priorities for these public outdoor recreation lands from willing sellers for the next five years.

Sincerely,

Mike Braun

Governor of Indiana

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## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISIONS

- **Accounting, Internal Audit, & Purchasing** supports DNR personnel, operations, and suppliers through the accountable, principled, and ethical application of best practices, rules, policies, and laws for the successful procurement and contracting of mission-driven goods and services, the efficient collection and processing of revenue, payments, and employee travel, and the responsible adherence to administrative procedures and internal controls.
- **Communications** provides internal and external communications, public relations, marketing, and public education for DNR.
- **Entomology & Plant Pathology** provides information and technical assistance in managing plant and insect pests, specializes in invasive and harmful species.
- **Finance & Payroll** manages funds received through the state budget and federal partners and oversees those budgets on an ongoing basis, providing guidance to DNR leadership. Administers the fiscal aspect of grants and cooperative agreements, ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations. Ensures that DNR employees receive their paychecks in a timely manner through the management of state processes.
- **Fleet, Facilities, Asset Management & Engineering** administers the department's facilities, including mail-room services, access control, safety and ADA compliance programs; fleet, including vehicle reservations, owned fleet inventory and maintenance, accident review board and Wright Express; and asset management, tracks all assets with a cost of more than \$500 and a useful life of one year or more. Provides engineering and technical support for all DNR properties and others, including architectural, sanitary, electrical, landscape, civil, and code enforcement.
- **Fish, Wildlife, & Nature Preserves** manages and monitors fish and wildlife populations, hunting and fishing licenses, and provides related technical assistance and information. Provides permanent protection to significant natural areas, maintaining sustainable examples of all native ecological communities in Indiana.
- **Forestry** manages State Forests and provides information and technical assistance to foresters and private landowners.
- **Land Acquisition** supports the acquisition of new properties from willing sellers via partnerships, donations, bequests and sales of the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Fund license plate.
- **Law Enforcement** provides 214 Indiana Conservation Officers in 10 law enforcement districts, handles environmental investigations, emergency response, education, law enforcement and property protection.
- **Legal** provides legal services, DNR-wide.
- **Historic Preservation & Archaeology** acts as staff for State Historic Preservation Officer and promotes conservation of cultural resources by facilitating Indiana and federal preservation programs.
- **Human Resources** serves as a resource for current and future employees of DNR, provides information on employment, benefits, volunteering, internships, applications and more.
- **Management Information Systems** provides technological service and support, DNR-wide.
- **Natural Resources Foundation** supports the charitable, educational and scientific programs, projects and policies of the DNR.
- **Reclamation** protects resources by overseeing reclamation of abandoned mines, active mines, mine blasting, mining permits, and public participation in oversight and permit processes, as well as the activities of the Oil & Gas program.
- **State Parks** manages and operates Indiana State Parks, state-managed lakes recreation, and provides education, recreation, resource conservation and management of these public lands. The State Parks Community Grants and Trails Section handles state- and local-level park & recreation master planning and streams & trails grants; and provides technical assistance for the public and for recreation professionals.
- **State Park Inns** manages the seven state park inns.
- **Training** oversees internal training programs.
- **Water** oversees above- and below-ground water, provides customer information services, permitting, technical services, and engineering services; operates three work groups: floodplain management, resource assessment, and the compliance & projects branch.

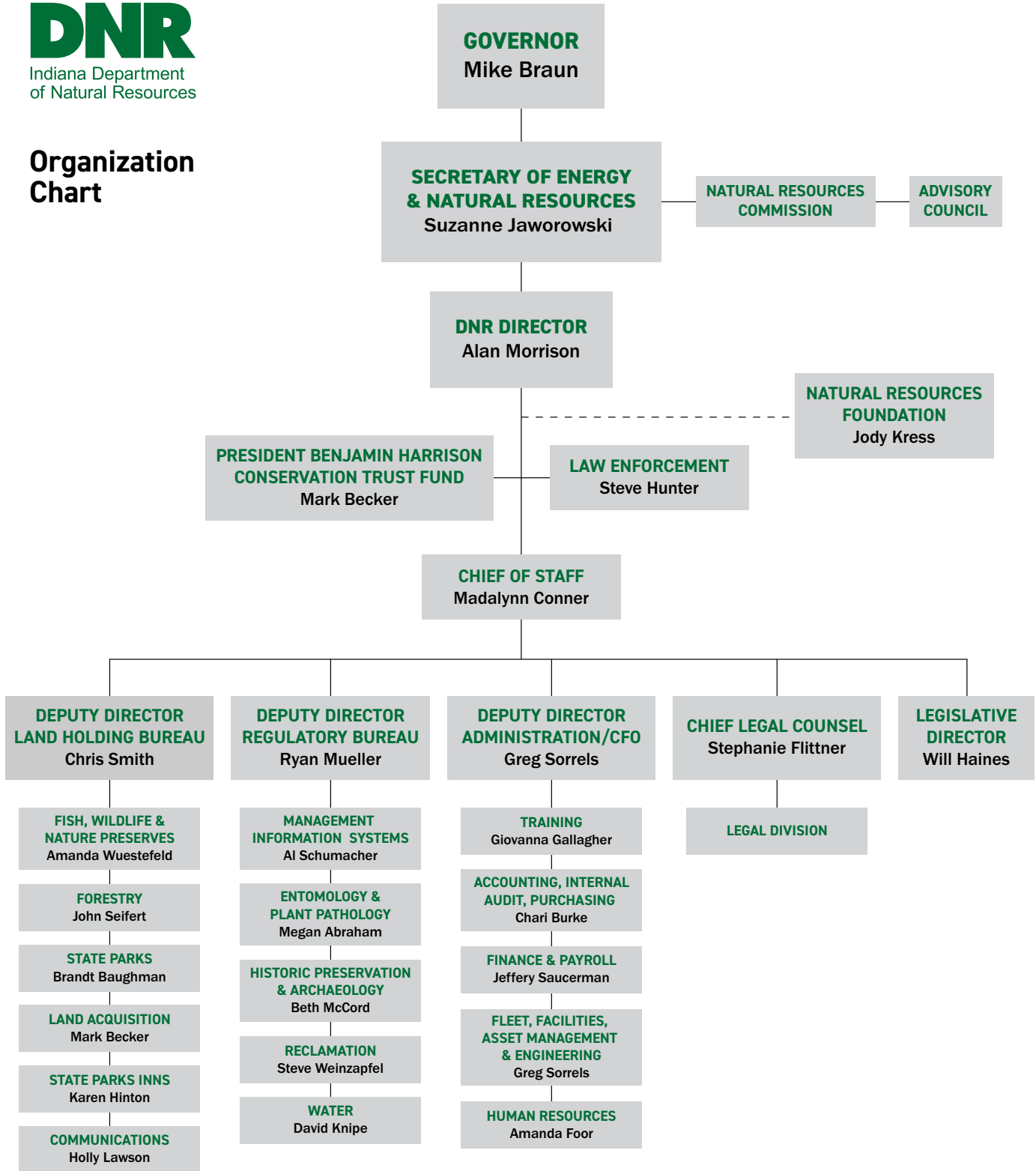
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## OTHER RELATED INDIANA GOVERNMENT OFFICES

- **Indiana Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation** provides guidance, education and technical assistance to public and private landowners throughout Indiana.
- **Indiana Department of Environmental Management** deals with Indiana's environmental quality and the sustainability of its air, water and land. Technical oversight, permits and regulatory compliance are part of its mission.
- **Indiana Department of Health** provides policy, guidance and facilitation of public health and health-care activities and programs statewide. The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health promotes sound physical fitness, nutrition and health.
- **Indiana Department of Transportation** works with all aspects of the statewide transportation system, including bus, car, rail, air, bicycle and foot.
- **Indiana Natural Resources Commission** comprises 12 bipartisan resident members who meet four times per year to address DNR issues.
- **Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs** provides planning, grants and technical assistance for rural economic development statewide.
- **Indiana Economic Development Corporation** is a public-private partnership with a 12-member board that acts as the top economic development agency for Indiana.
- **Indiana Destination Development Corporation** uses public and private funds to expand tourism destinations statewide.
- **State Museum & Historic Sites** operates a wide variety of historic/cultural programs and facilities, including the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis, Gene Stratton-Porter Cabin, Historic New Harmony, and the Angel Mounds archeological site.



## Organization Chart



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### Editor

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### 2026 Trails Plan Update

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John Schmidt (Trail User Survey and Participation Survey) ..... Survey America

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Ric Edwards .....DNR

### SCORP Project Leader & Lead Author

Greg Beilfuss .....DNR

### Many thanks as well to the following organizations for sharing information and permission to use some of their tables, text, or materials:

National Recreation and Parks Association

Accelerate Indiana Municipalities

Indiana Association of Regional Councils

US Dept. of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

## STATEWIDE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

### SCORP Vision Statement

The SCORP is an information resource that quantifies and analyzes the state’s outdoor recreation resources for the social, environmental, health, and economic benefit of citizens statewide. The SCORP is intended to support local, regional and state-level recreation decision making, as well as foster research, partnerships and cooperation among users, planners, government officials, nonprofits, and the private sector.

### SCORP Goals

- Qualify Indiana for National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) state-side grants.
- Set statewide priorities for funding of grants through LWCF, the Indiana Trails Program (ITP), and any other applicable funds available at State or federal levels.
- Provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis of outdoor recreation supply and demand statewide.
- Improve the provision of public outdoor recreation to all users.

### SCORP Planning

The production of the Indiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) requires the expertise of people from many disciplines to assemble an effective tool for Indiana. Those who volunteer as members of the Plan Advisory Committee share input during the research and writing phases of the SCORP. They provide valuable insight and commentary that guides the development of surveys, research analysis, and creation of a plan that can be used by providers from all levels of community, including state, county, municipal and township.

The DNR thanks the committee members for their advice, support, expertise, time and talent. Committee members give direction to the SCORP 2026-2030 and ensure the priorities and contents are consistent with the State’s vision, mission and goals for public outdoor recreation and the DNR.

### Plan Advisory Committee

Jerry Byanski . . . . .	Park Planner, EarthPlan Associates
Ric Edwards . . . . .	DNR, ADA Director
Pete Fritz . . . . .	Healthy Communities Planner, Indiana State Department of Health
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Jenny Orsburn . . . . .	Director, IDNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program

## LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, 78 Stat 897) was enacted “... to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to all citizens of the United States of America of present and future generations and visitors who are lawfully present within the boundaries of the United States of America such quantity and quality of outdoor recreation resources as may be available and are necessary and desirable for individual active participation in such recreation and strengthen the health and vitality of the citizens of the United States by (1) providing funds for and authorizing federal assistance to the states in planning, acquisition, and development of needed land and water areas and facilities and (2) providing funds for the federal acquisition and development of certain lands and other areas.”

According to the National Park Service 2008 LWCF State Assistance Program Manual: “To be eligible for LWCF assistance for acquisition and development grants, each state shall prepare a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and update it at least once every five years.” In other words, a SCORP needs to look at outdoor recreation supply and demand; set priorities for current and future capital improvement, land acquisition, and development; and allow opportunities for citizens and local government officials to take part in the planning process.

The main objectives of the LCWF have remained the same for 61 years: land acquisition, preservation, provision, development, accessibility, and the strengthening of the health and vitality of our nation. This SCORP shows that Indiana’s focus is still directly in line with the LWCF Act of 1965.

Indiana has received more than \$140 million from the LWCF since the program’s start. Indiana’s smaller entities (e.g., counties, townships, municipalities) provide outdoor recreation opportunities to its citizens through the use of LWCF grants. Since 1965, more than 220 Indiana local governments and park and recreation boards have obtained grants. Some projects funded each year include land acquisition, some include trail development, and a few include the development of new aquatic features. Amenities that potentially are included in these projects include but are not limited to:

- Spray Pads
- Picnic Areas
- Natural Areas
- Playgrounds
- Ball Fields
- Dog Parks

LWCF requires a 50/50 match from communities that receive the grant. All funds for the project must be paid for by communities and then reimbursed upon successful project completion. As development, operating and maintenance costs increase, so does the importance of the LWCF in funding continued acquisition of land where needed. Unfortunately, these grants cannot fund every project in the state. Alternative funding methods will be discussed in this SCORP.

There are two other programs related to LWCF: the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP), and the Readiness and Recreation Initiative (RARI). Questions about these programs should be directed to DNR LWCF grant staff.