

**President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Project Commission
Indiana State Museum
Board Room – 3rd Floor
650 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana**

Minutes of September 9, 2025

1) Call to Order

Emily Kress, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order of the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust (PBHCT) Project Commission at approximately 11:00 a.m., EST, on September 9, 2025, at Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Mark Becker, DNR Director of Land Acquisition, welcomed new board member Gene Hopkins. Hopkins represents organized hunting and fishing groups and the southeast region of the state.

2) Review and Approval of the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Project Commission Meeting Minutes for June 10, 2025

Minutes were approved. Zach Smith seconded the motion. Upon voice vote, the motion carried.

3) Public Access and Open-Door Law Update

Stephanie Flittner, DNR General Counsel, discussed the requirements now in effect for public access and Open-Door Law as they apply to PBHCT Project Commission meetings.

Becker thanked Flittner for her assistance with re-appointments and navigating the livestream requirements.

4) Financial Report and Environmental License Plate Sales

Becker presented the financial report. He shared license plate sales are the highest since 2014.

5) Land Acquisition Report

Becker indicated there have been 36 files closed this calendar year to date by the Division of Land Acquisition. They are: 15 conservation easements; 3 fee simple; 12 easements (utility, ingress/egress, etc.); and 6 other (environmental restrictive covenants, etc).

The following 10 PBHCT projects were closed from January 1 – July 31, 2025:

#1571 – Lake County Parks and Recreation Board: Grand Kankakee Marsh County Park

#1582 – LaGrange County Park Board: Pine Knob County Park

#1524-B – South Adams Trail Inc.

#1589 – Shirley Heinze Land Trust: East Branch Little Calumet River Conservation Corridor

#1592 – Sycamore Land Trust

- #1581 – Lake County Parks and Recreation Board: Lake Hills County Park
- #1591 – Oak Heritage Conservancy
- #1595 – DNR Division of Forestry: Jackson Washington State Forest
- #1577 – Acres: Disko Fen
- #1594 – Acres: Heinzerling Family Five Points Nature Preserve

6) State Fair T-shirt Report

Becker noted at the June meeting that the board approved up to \$7,000 from PBHCT stewardship/marketing funds to buy t-shirts for DNR employees and volunteers working at the State Fair. He reported the invoice was \$6,884 which was under the budget amount.

7) Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on December 9, 2025, 11:00 a.m., at Fort Harrison State Park Inn, Roosevelt Room.

8) Meeting adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:40 a.m.

Attendance

- Emily Kress***
- Missi Bush-Sawtelle***
- Ron Hellmich, Nature Preserves***
- Kris Krouse***
- Sam Bond*(call in)**
- Anthony Sipes, State Parks proxy***
- Gene Hopkins***
- Dale Brier
- Andrea Huntington
- John Connell
- Rep. Mike Karickhoff*(call in)**

- Mark Becker
- Mary McConnell***
- Zach Smith, Forestry proxy***
- Betsy Yankowiak*(call in)**
- Mike Linderman, State Museum proxy***
- Chad Whitis, Fish & Wildlife proxy***
- Rep. Ryan Dvorak*(call in)**
- Emily Biesecker
- Erika Hinshaw
- Stephanie Flittner

***Board Members/proxies**