

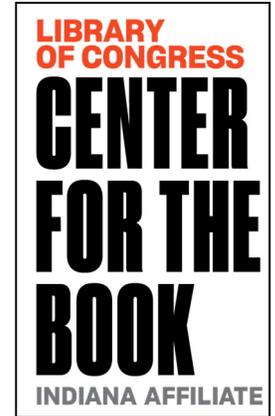


## 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

# Indiana's Great Outdoors!

## First Place - 2021

Josiah C.  
Greenwood, Indiana  
Johnson County  
Homeschooled



### Indiana's Incredible Outdoors

From the shores of Lake Michigan to the banks of the Ohio River, Indiana is filled with amazing nature. You can see massive sand dunes in Indiana Dunes National Park, explore history at Falls of the Ohio State Park, or go fishing on a boat at Cagles Mill Lake.

Indiana Dunes National Park is a great place to fly a kite. There are some amazing snakes, like the blue racer, and caverns carved out of limestone. Some of the impressive dunes are two hundred feet tall. Some people think it is a desert, but it is actually on the shores of Lake Michigan. There is plenty of water there!

One of the largest exposed fossil beds in the world is in Falls of the Ohio State Park. There are 220 acres of fossil beds. You cannot take fossils home, but you can explore the fossil beds when the water is low in the fall. You can go fishing, hiking, and picnicking while visiting the park.

Cagles Mill Lake was built in the 1950s as a flood control reservoir. A flood control reservoir is a dam that makes sure that another river does not get too high or low by creating a lake. This one protects the Eel and White Rivers. You can also do fun things there like go fishing in a boat and look for bald eagles. The sunrise over the trees is very pretty.

You can explore limestone caves at the Indiana Dunes National Park or fossil beds at Falls of the Ohio State Park. At Cagles Mill Lake you can spend the day fishing or bird watching. Being outdoors can bring people together for a simple walk or a memorable vacation. I am thankful for Indiana's great outdoors!



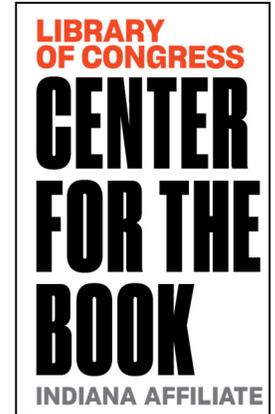


## 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

# Indiana's Great Outdoors!

## Second Place - 2021

Luke G.  
Plainfield, Indiana  
Hendricks County  
Clarks Creek Elementary



### Outdoors in Indiana

Each summer I watch the green com stalks come alive across the road from where I live. The plants start off growing slowly as summer begins. In June, they are only halfway done. In July, they are fully grown, and by October, they are brown and ready to be harvested. Indiana is a beautiful place year round. Indiana's great outdoors has so much to offer.

Indiana's crops, such as soybeans and corn, bring in income to farmers and workers in the fields. The country crops bring happiness to those that watch them grow each year. It is a beautiful image to see the country fields.

Indiana's great outdoors also allow for great recreation. I have hiked at Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Patoka Lake, Spring Mill Park, Eagle Creek, Lincoln Boyhood Memorial Park, and Turkey Run. These parks and forests are great places to enjoy nature. Swimming, hiking, and kayaking are all on my list when I go to parks. It's so much fun!

Finally, the beautiful lakes and rivers that run through Indiana are important to ship products. My ancestors were on a boat that docked on the Ohio River in Troy, Indiana in the 1800s. These waterways allow people to swim and boat as well. On a hot summer day, splashing in Indiana's waterways is a great way to cool off!

Indiana is beautiful. The great outdoors provide for business as well as play. Visit an Indiana treasure today!



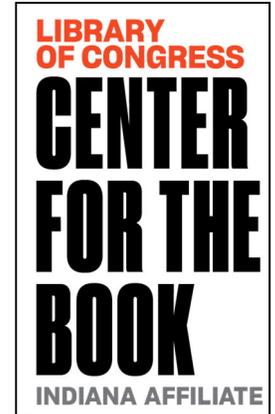


## 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

# Indiana's Great Outdoors!

## Third Place - 2021

Lillian W.  
Otterbein, Indiana  
Benton County  
Otterbein Elementary



### Indiana's Great Outdoors!

Chirp, chirp is what I hear when I wake up to the light shining through my bedroom window. My mom calls for me to go outside to play with our dog. As I walk outside, I think, "Ah, the fresh air smells so good." I look at the flowers and the beauty of the plants all around then ask my mom if we can walk to Mulvey Pond. I love to walk the trails from our house where there are wildflowers, beautiful butterflies and if you get lucky, you'll see the bald eagle that lives nearby. As you can see, I don't have to go far to enjoy Indiana's great outdoors.

Right outside our sliding door, I walk to our pond carrying my fishing poll and watch the sunbathing turtles dive into the water. "Plop," goes my bobber when it hits the water. I see the beaver that swims in our pond. He is funny when he flips his tail and makes a big splash that ripples through the water. I spot a deer prancing through the woods behind our house. Part of Indiana's great outdoors is the beauty all around me and the critters that live here.

Although Indiana's great outdoors is right outside my home, there is one special place I like to visit; Lake James. I go swimming, tubing, and learn to water-ski. I look at seaweed and find seashells to add to my collection. We take our bikes to Pokagon State Park and race around the trails. Indiana's great outdoors is also exploring different recreational spots.

Where I live is a very lucky place because we have many great outdoor activities and that's what keeps my family active on their feet. The great outdoors is my home and that's what makes Indiana a great state!



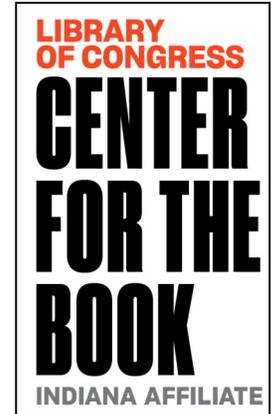


# 4th Grade Student Essay Competition

# Indiana's Great Outdoors!

## Fourth Place - 2021

Matthew P.  
Porter, Indiana  
Porter County  
Discovery Charter School



### Indiana's Great Outdoors

Nature and Indiana's waterways are very important to all Hoosiers and especially to my family. Protecting nature and our waterways is a big part of what my family does.

My mom works for Save the Dunes and is a volunteer with several environmental groups. My dad is the Chief of Resource Management for the Indiana Dunes National Park where he leads the natural resource program. My family founded the NW Indiana Paddling Association (NWIPA). Their mission is to help clean and protect our waterways and nature. I spend many of my weekends paddling in nature and cleaning up our waterways.

Nature is very important because all life depends on it. Without clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment, plants, animals, and people can't live. We need animals like butterflies, native bees, hummingbirds, and bats to help pollinate much of the food we eat. We need healthy trees to provide oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide. We need healthy wetlands to help filter pollution out of the water that we drink and keep the water clean for fish, birds, and all life.

There is one outdoor recreation place that is most special to me; the East Branch of the Little Calumet River. My dad leads the effort to protect and clean up the river. He cuts many log jams out and my family has cleaned up lots of garbage from the river. My dad and his friends have preserved thousands of acres along the river for nature. I love to paddle this river because I know we were a big part of making it open for everyone.

Protecting nature, our waterways, and providing outdoor recreation for Hoosiers to enjoy is important to Indiana. My family tries to do their part. Please join us!

