

Date: August 1, 2022

To: Zachary Q. Jackson, Director
Indiana State Budget Agency

From: Daniel W. Bortner, Director
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Subject: Indiana Department of Natural Resources Agency Overview

It is my pleasure to submit our FY2024 and FY2025 budget request for consideration by the Indiana General Assembly and the State Budget Committee.

Mission

The mission of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is to protect, enhance, preserve, and wisely use natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the benefit of Indiana's citizens through professional leadership, management, and education.

IDNR Pillars

Customer Service
Fiscal Responsibility
Internal and External Communication
Succession Planning and Diversity
Personal Growth
Flatter Organization
Enhance the IDNR Brand

Agency Functions

Land Management functions include State Parks, Nature Preserves, Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, and Land Acquisition.

Regulatory Management consists of the Water, Entomology and Plant Pathology, Historic Preservation and Archeology, and Reclamation Divisions.

Administrative functions include Law Enforcement, Legislative Affairs, Legal Counsel, Communications, Engineering, Budget and Grants, Payroll, Management Information Systems, Internal Audit, Purchasing, Accounting, Fleet, Facilities, Asset Management, Safety and ADA Compliance and Human Resources.

IDNR has many programs and subprograms, most of which have a recreation, resource protection, and/or public safety component. We also place a great deal of emphasis on our permitting, inspection, and licensing programs. Below is a list of the non-administrative IDNR divisions and a summary of responsibilities performed under each division.

Entomology and Plant Pathology

Staff inspect and license nursery stock; support and advise beekeepers and honey industry; inspect and certify international shipments of grain and plant stock; and scout for exotic and invasive species.

Fish & Wildlife

Managing the land and wildlife on behalf of all Indiana citizens is our core responsibility. Citizens engage with Indiana's wildlife resources in countless ways. From photographing a bald eagle soaring over the backyard, to taking a grandchild on a fishing trip, to experiencing the thrill of harvesting a first deer or turkey, these interactions bring enjoyment and enhance quality of life. To make these experiences possible, we work across four key areas: (1) data-driven research to ensure healthy fish and wildlife populations (2) supporting private landowners in habitat management (3) providing outdoor recreation opportunities through public lands, and (4) administering licenses, permits and providing public engagement opportunities for all Hoosiers. In our role as public managers, we balance biological, ecological, recreational, and economic benefits of Indiana's fish and wildlife habitats. As a result of this work, every Indiana citizen will be able to see a bald eagle, make treasured hunting and fishing memories, and will be passing down a love for the outdoors to the next generation.

Forestry

Supports multiple uses: recreation, timber production, watershed protection, hunting, and healthy fish and wildlife populations on its 160,000 acres. District Foresters assist landowners with inspections and management plans tailored to satisfy individual forest stewardship objectives. State nurseries provide stock for forest and wildlife restoration, windbreaks, mine land reclamation, and other uses. Also supports volunteer fire departments in wildfire suppression as well as planned control burns in various natural settings.

Historic Preservation and Archaeology

Promotes the conservation of Indiana's cultural resources through public education efforts, financial incentives including several grant and tax credit programs, and the administration of state and federally mandated legislation. The division serves as the state repository for information on historic properties, archaeological sites, and historic cemeteries and maintains an online database of this material. The division maintains an online database that functions as the state repository for information on historic properties, archaeological sites, and historic cemeteries. Other duties include conducting reviews of state and federal actions affecting historic and archaeological resources; providing updates to the statewide survey of historic buildings, districts, and cultural landscapes; and providing technical assistance to homeowners or developers for the restoration of historic properties.

Nature Preserves

Identifies, protects, and manages natural areas to maintain viable examples of all Indiana's natural communities. The same attention is applied to endangered, threatened, or rare species. The Indiana Natural Heritage Data Center is used to locate and keep track of Indiana's rarest plants, animals, and natural communities. The Lake Michigan Coastal Program (LMCP) provides guidance, technical support, and financial assistance to municipal, county, and state government agencies which are working within the Lake Michigan coastal region.

State Parks

Manages and operates a robust and diverse portfolio of properties comprised of many of Indiana's most special and treasured natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Guests enjoy traditional outdoor recreational activities, which include hiking, camping, boating, fishing, horseback riding, wildlife watching, swimming and water sports, mountain biking, hunting, and off-road vehicle operation. Interpretive services present creative and diverse programs and displays through traditional and contemporary forms of communication and media offering on-site, off-site, and virtual options. More than 177,000 acres of land and water contain areas hosting endangered and threatened species, high quality and sensitive natural communities, dedicated nature preserves and more than 400 historic structures. Seven full-service lodges offer overnight accommodations, restaurant, banquet, conference, wedding, and event venues in tandem with a championship Pete Dye golf course. Outreach includes oversight of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Next Level Trail program (NLT), Indiana Trails Program (ITP), and outdoor recreation commissions and boards.

Reclamation

Administers State and Federal programs for the surface mining of coal, clay, shale, or oil shale, and restores the lands disturbed for the extraction of these minerals. Permits and monitors active coal mines; designs and oversees construction projects restoring lands disturbed, but improperly reclaimed; responds to citizen inquiries; partners with private landowners, as well as larger citizen groups for other coal related mining and land restoration issues.

In addition, the Oil and Gas program within Reclamation regulates petroleum exploration, production and site closing activities, underground injection control, and geophysical surveying. The program offers a variety of services to industry, public, and other government entities including permit review, site inspections, water, and soil sampling, well and pit location surveys, and remediation of damage from abandoned well sites.

Water

The Division of Water is a regulatory and public information agency, having diverse responsibilities associated with the evaluation of Indiana's water resources, and with development near Indiana's waterways and lakes. Regulatory responsibilities include construction in floodways, floodplain hazard analysis, lakebed and shoreline alteration, dam and levee safety and establishment of conservancy districts, water use and water well construction. The division serves as the state coordinating agency for the National Flood Insurance Program and receives grant funding related to floodplain mapping and dam safety. The division supplies a vast array of water resource information for individual citizens, industry, environmental groups, and government agencies; primarily related to floodway construction, dam safety, flood hazard planning, flood plain regulations, conservancy districts, water use and supply, and water well construction.

Biennial Accomplishments

IDNR has had many noteworthy accomplishments in the current biennium. The agency continues to utilize a mixture of state, federal, and private contributions to undertake a variety of projects.

Next Level Trails Program

Next Level Trails is the largest infusion of trail funding in state history. The grant program is divided into two components: a \$70 million fund for regional projects and a \$20 million fund for local projects. Each project will require a minimum 20 percent match, which can include monetary contributions, land value, and in-kind donations of materials and labor. Projects funded through this program must be open to the public. Next Level Trails is part of Governor Eric J. Holcomb's Next Level Connections, a \$1 billion statewide infrastructure program announced in September 2018.

The General Assembly appropriated an additional \$60 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to Next Level Trails in April 2021; bringing the total of the program to \$150 million for trail development. Round 3 awards included 38 projects and \$65.7 million awarded, which consists of the remainder of the state funds and \$30 million of the ARPA funds.

Indiana State Park Inns Authority Codified as a Public Body and Corporate Politic

Indiana State Park Inns, the division's lodging operation, was codified as a public body and corporate politic. This allows the self-supporting entity to function as a quasi-organization within state government, cementing and defining the relationship with the Division of State Parks. Currently, a new lodge is in design for Potato Creek State Park

Budget Committee Approves IDNR Maintenance Funding

Funding for the maintenance projects were allocated within the FY22-FY23 state budget and in June 2021, the State Budget Committee approved the second round of Deferred Maintenance projects, including restroom/toilet rehabilitation, playground renovation and rehabilitation, trail rehabilitation, general rehabilitation, dam rehabilitation, underground tank removal and remediation and our Spring Mill State Park Inn will receive a major renovation.

Indiana K-9 Program Graduates

IDNR recognized the graduation of two K-9 teams each from the states of Kansas and Virginia, a team from the state of Washington, two teams from the country of Zambia, Africa, and one from Indiana. The K-9 teams trained and honed their skills in Orange County within southern Indiana to qualify for graduation. The Indiana K-9 program started in 1997, with a pilot program of two teams. The effectiveness of the program was quickly realized, and the program grew to a team of 13 K-9 units located throughout Indiana. There is at least one K-9 unit in all 10 Indiana DNR Law Enforcement districts.

The Indiana K-9 program is not only well respected in the Hoosier state, but also recognized as one of the top programs in the nation. Indiana has helped start and train teams from seven sister natural resource agencies (Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Oregon, Utah, and Virginia).

Indiana K-9 teams are trained in man-tracking, wildlife detection, and article searches. All canines are trained to locate white-tailed deer, wild turkey, waterfowl, and ginseng. They may also be trained to locate other species, depending on the geographic area of Indiana the handler is stationed. Indiana teams excel in man-tracking and locating firearms.

Three New State Dedicated Nature Preserves

IDNR and Indiana Natural Resources Commission worked together to approve three additional dedicated nature preserves including Grand Prairie Nature Preserve in Lake County, Sebert Woods Nature Preserve in LaPorte County, and White Oak Cemetery Nature Preserve in Jay County. This makes 295 state dedicated nature preserves within 72 counties.

Next Level Conservation Trust

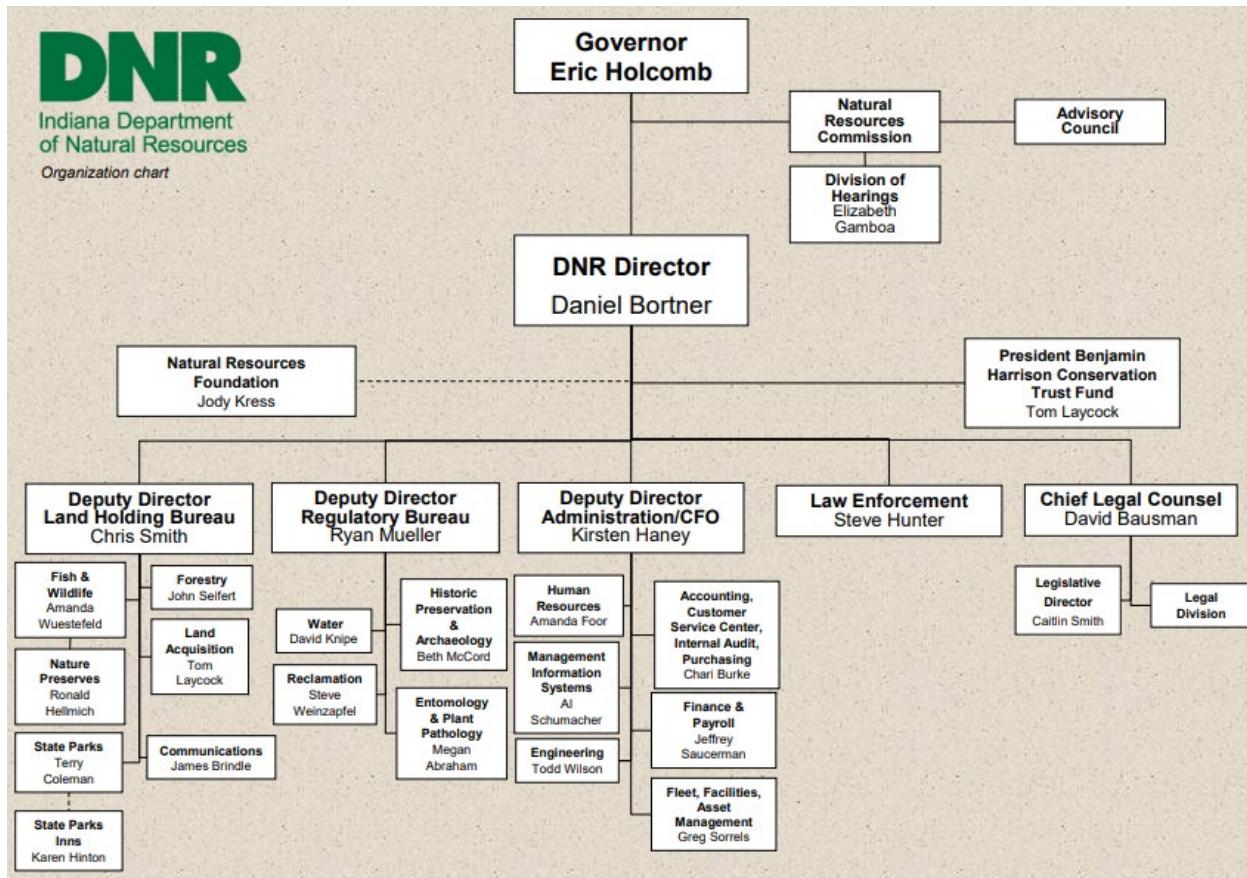
IDNR established the Next Level Conservation Trust, a program which will acquire property that will become part of the public trust and be protected for future generations of Hoosiers to use and enjoy.

The program is funded with a \$25 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds appropriation in the current biennium budget.. The program is an extension of the Bicentennial Nature Trust program and will incorporate elements from the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust. The program will continue IDNR's legacy of preserving Indiana's rich natural heritage. The program is flexible to allow local ownership and management of acquired properties through a conservation easement.

Objectives for the next Biennium

During the current biennium, IDNR has reviewed programs and related business practices to reduce operational costs yet still provide services required by law and those our guests expect. We continue to hold public meetings, conduct surveys, and listen to public opinion. It is important our guests understand the purpose and benefits of IDNR. We will continue to seek out new partners, sponsorships, donations, volunteerism, and/or other forms of support from individuals, foundations, corporations, non-profit organizations, and other entities to enhance our existing programs and provide the best possible quality in our future programming. We will also continue to review our organizational structure to obtain increased efficiencies and streamline processes.

Organization Chart



Thank you for your continued support of IDNR. We look forward to working with the Indiana General Assembly and staff of the State Budget Agency as you consider IDNR's budget request for the 2024-2025 biennium.

Respectfully,

Daniel W. Bortner, Director
Indiana Department of Natural Resources