

Historic Hoosier Hills

RESOURCE, CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT, INC.

Newsletter

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DNR Give Project CLEAR, County Officials Update on Lake Dredging Project

In Mid-August, Staff from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources at Indianapolis met with members of the Project CLEAR (Laughery Creek Watershed Steering Committee) and local elected officials at Versailles State Park to bring the group up to date on the dredging of Versailles Lake.



Dave Griffith, Planner for the Division of State Parks, reviewed the design for the silt basins and explained the long-term need for periodic re-dredging of the lake.

This also requires that the material pumped into the basins from the earlier dredging be removed and disposed of before the basins can be used again. Periodic dredging is necessary because of the large watershed area draining into the lake – even though the sediment load has been greatly reduced by the success of Project CLEAR, there is still enough sediment entering the lake that it will have to be

dredged every 15 years to maintain it for recreation and water supply. **John Davis**, Deputy Director for DNR, and **Jerry Pagac**, Director of the Division of State Parks, challenged the group to work with DNR to find ways to help with the cost of the dredging program or help find other water supply sources for the Town of Versailles.

Those attending the meeting included: **Bob Hughes, Chuck Gill, Heather Kolter, Kaye Hunger, Joyce Kessens, Sue Meisberger** (representing CLEAR and the Town of Versailles), all representing the Project CLEAR Steering Committee; County Commissioners **John Little** and **Chuck Folz**; State Representative **Cleo Duncan**; Versailles State Park Property Manager **Ted Tapp** and employee **Randy Reed**; **Andy Ertel** with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and **Gary Conant** with Historic Hoosier Hills.

“Wild Productions” Hosts Funders At Nature Center

Kenny Tapp provided an open house and tour showing his accomplishments in updating the programs and displays at the Versailles State Park Nature Center. The open house was held in late August for representatives of the funders who have supported the work over the past three summers. Kenny, son of Park Manager **Ted Tapp**, calls his production company “Wild Productions” and has

succeeded in dramatically increasing visitor attendance at the nature center and at the naturalist programs offered through the park.



Kenny has built a tornado chamber and severe weather display. He has also recreated a cabin like those used by Civilian Conservation Corps employees in the 1930's when they built the state park, complete with authentic furnishings. He has also upgraded several of the wild animal exhibits and other displays. Naturalist programs presented in 2002 attracted over 100 park campers and visitors to each program. Representatives of the Tyson Fund, the Ripley County Community Foundation, the Ripley County Tourism Commission, and the Rising Sun Regional Foundation were all invited to participate in the open house. Reaction of those attending was very positive – most were impressed at what Kenny had achieved in so short a time and with limited funds.



After the open house, Kenny was presented a check

*for \$4000 from State Farm Insurance by **Kelli Hildreth** who drove down from Lafayette, Indiana, to make the presentation. The funding will be used for additions to the Tornado Chamber and Ripley County severe weather display.*

Kenny divides his time with Clifty Falls State Park Nature Center where he is working with full time Naturalist **Richard Davis** to upgrade the programs and displays there also.

Versailles Historical Society Adds Historic Street Lights to Versailles Square

The Versailles Historical Society, a project committee under the Historic Hoosier Hills umbrella, has completed phase 1 of a project to install 24 historic streetlights around the Courthouse Square.



Sixteen lights have been installed and lighted – a dedication is planned for later this year. Funding has come from the Ripley County Council, the Rising Sun Regional Foundation, the Ripley County Community Foundation, and the Tyson Fund. The lights are a very attractive historic addition to the Town Square.

The group plans to secure funding for eight more lights and have them installed. The existing aluminum light poles with mercury vapor lights will then be removed. Cinergy PSI is the contractor for the installation.

Woodland Committee Hosts Program on Non-native Invasive Plants

The Woodland Committee held their annual fall program year Kick-off Dinner Meeting September 4 in North Vernon.



Ellen Jacquart, Stewardship Director with The Nature Conservancy, presented a PowerPoint program on non-native plants which are invading southern Indiana woodlots and causing serious management problems.

Ellen explained the scope of the problem and showed pictures of numerous invasives that are plaguing Indiana woodlands. She defined an invasive species as any plant which thrives in a location to the extent that it crowds out the normal variety of native species. Most were plants the committee members were familiar with and some are recently being recognized as problem species.

The committee adopted their Plan of Work for 2002-2003 during the business meeting chaired by

Rosemary Bolenbaugh. Darrel Breedlove, District Forester, brought the group up to date on the Urban Tree Program Grant progress in North Vernon and Batesville. The committee is administering the grant program.

Officers were elected for the coming program year – **Rosemary Bolenbaugh** was re-elected Chair, **Joe Shuerman** re-elected as Vice Chair, and **Rob McGriff** as Secretary. Twenty six committee members and guest attended the evening program and dinner.

John Hunt Morgan Directional Sign “Field Tested”

Over seventy directional markers, with arrows below them, will be installed along the 185-mile raid route later this fall. Twenty-four four-color wayside exhibits will also be installed as the last phase of the project to identify, interpret and promote the route of the Civil War Raid through southeastern Indiana. A route dedication is planned for early 2003.



Richard Skidmore, chair of the John Hunt Morgan Heritage Trail Project, and Richard Lewis, committee member and graphic designer of some of the products, recently put up a sample directional sign to see how well the design catches the eye

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Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D Council meets on the 4th Monday of every other month. The Executive Committee meets on the 3rd Friday of every other month that the Council does not meet. All meetings are open to the public. Anyone wishing to attend will certainly be welcome.

Historic Hoosier Hills RC&D

Mission Statement:

“Serve as a catalyst to empower local people to solve the overall economic and natural resource problems of the area, and to properly develop, utilize, and conserve our natural and human resources.”

Vision Statement:

“Workable economic climate in harmony with natural resources developed to their full potential for a higher quality of life.”

Officers & Staff

Council President – Lilian Carmer
1st Vice-President – Kelly Misamore
2nd Vice-President – William Corning
Interim Treasurer – William Corning
Secretary – Barbara Corning
RC&D Coordinator – Gary Conant
RC&D Assistant – Phyllis May
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