

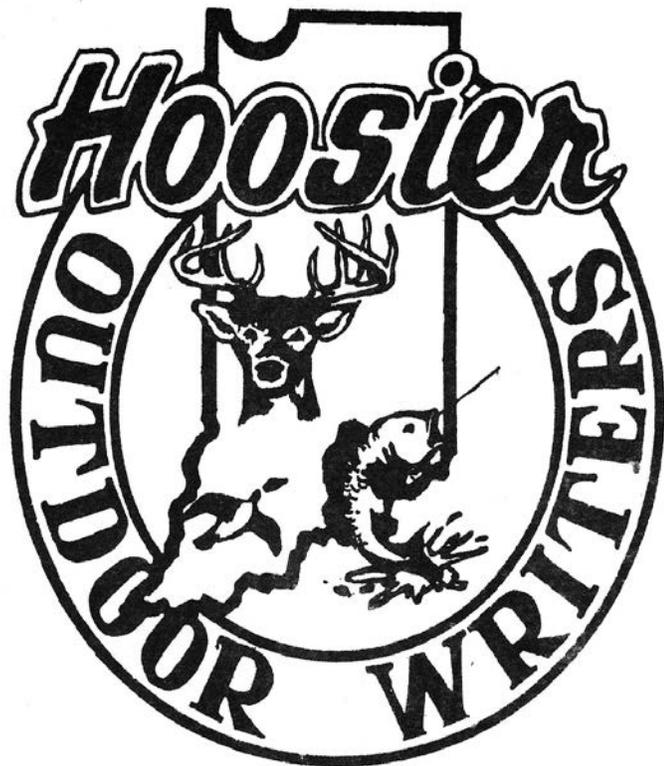
The Blade

January - February 2026

The Official Publication of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers



"Winter Muskrat Trapping Fun", photo by Tom Berg



Hoosier Outdoor Writers

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers was formed in 1969 and has brought together many diverse groups and individuals with shared interests. The Hoosier Outdoor Writers, known among its members as HOW, is a group of dedicated media professionals who are keenly interested in the wise use of natural resources in the Hoosier State.

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Troy McCormick – 2027
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All submissions and correspondence in regards to the newsletter should be directed to: Tom Berg (e-mail: director@hoosieroutdoorwriters.org), or to Tom Berg, 2142 Nondorf St., Dyer, IN 46311. Portions of this newsletter may be reproduced only with the permission of the Hoosier Outdoor Writer's Executive Board and/or the permission of the original author or authors submitting the material. HOW website: www.HoosierOutdoorWriters.org.

On the cover: HOW member Mike Schoonveld walks up to a muskrat lodge in the shallow water at Willow Slough Fish & Wildlife Area. If you look closely, you can see small snowflakes coming down as he prepares to set a few muskrat traps at this location. Early winter trapping fun! Photo by Tom Berg.

President's Message

by Marilyn Culler

Project Healing Waters



Water is healing. Water connects people, connects us to nature, connects us to those who make a difference in the lives of others through the gift of water.

I first became aware of Project Healing Waters (PHW) at Moving Water Outfitters (a HOW sponsor) in Zionsville, IN, soon after my foray into fly fishing began.

The mission of Project Healing Waters is “Healing America's Veterans Through the Therapeutic Art of Fly Fishing.” The organization serves wounded and disabled military veterans and active duty service members from all military branches and service eras.

How does the program work? Find a local chapter on the organization's website. There are over 160 chapters in 45 states. Learn the basics of fly fishing in your area. Participate in local outings. No forms to fill out – just meet the participant requirements on PHW's website. The organization has lodges in Michigan and Montana, providing “top-tier fishing experiences.” Extended trips are also part of the experiences offered to participants.

Indiana Regional Program Lead Cathy Thuerbach oversees nine programs, coordinating funding, paperwork, support and more. Cathy and husband Rocky are woodworkers, and guide participants in building wooden nets. Rocky says of PHW, “You don't have to bring anything. We try to provide everything for everyone.”

I first met Kevin Buetow at Moving Water Outfitters, and again at the Heartland Fly Fishing Festival (Lebanon, IN) after a fly tying class with Son Tao. Buetow, a PHW participant and 5-year Marine veteran, said, “Without Project Healing Waters and fly fishing, we wouldn't be talking right now.” I asked how he found out about PHW. “I googled ‘fishing for veterans’ and came to an event, was welcomed, and now I rarely miss an outing.”

Buetow talked with me about having access to a plethora of resources in his local chapter: rod building, net building, fly tying and two certified casting instructors. “From nothing to being well-versed, they really take care of veterans. You can't put a value on it. It's the brotherhood/sisterhood and the camaraderie.”

Son Tao, a regular presenter at the recent Heartland Fly Fishing Festival, has been involved with Project Healing Waters for 10 years. “The program gets veterans outdoors. They miss the camaraderie aspect of military life. Soon, the barriers come down. Project Healing Waters fills a void and allows participants to build trust and begin to heal.”

As an eight-year veteran, Tao says, “I saw all the issues with vets.” He's gone from participant to hosting fly fishing trips for Project Healing Waters all over the world. “It's not about catching a fish,” says Tao. “The partnership is for as long as you want it to be. It's a healthy and good program.”

PHW's one-day and extended trips are free to participants. In fact, there is never a participant cost for anything. In 2022, 80% of PHW expenses went to participant programming. PHW is an independent non-profit organization.

Everything about Project Healing Waters points to community, healing and well-being with no barriers. Interested in making a difference in someone's life? Visit www.projecthealingwaters.org. Volunteer. Make a donation. Attend the Fly Fishing Film Tour (Indianapolis, March 7), where all the raffle proceeds will be split between PHW and Casting for Recovery (fly fishing retreats for women with breast cancer).

We never know the difference we make in the lives of others. Water heals. Nature heals. Connect with someone new and share your passion.

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers

New Members, Past Presidents and Memorial Section

HOW Extends a Warm Welcome to our Growing Ranks of Outdoor Communicators:

No new members for this issue.
See Member News Section
starting on page 23.

Memorial to Deceased HOW Members Those Who Have Gone Before Us:

Jack Alkire – HOW President 1979
Bill Beeman – Executive Director Emeritus
 Don Bickel
 Ed Blann
 Charlie Brown
 Gary Carden
Jim “Moose” Carden – HOW President 1982-83
 George Carey
 John Case
Bill Church – HOW President 1972
 Gene Clifford
 Jack “Big Jake” Cooper
 Mark Cottingham
Larry Crecelius – HOW President 2003
 Jerry Criss
 Gary “Dox” Duxtater
 Dick Forbes
Tom Glancy – HOW President 1977
 Dale Griffith
 Phil Hawkins
 Fred Heckman
Marty Jaranowski – HOW President 1996
Phil Junker – HOW President 1975+2002
 Jack Kerins
Mike Lyle – HOW President 1981
Ralph “Cork” McHargue – HOW President 1976
 Dick Mercier
 Bob Nesbit
 Hellen Ochs
 Jack Parry
 Harry Renfro
“Bayou” Bill Scifres – HOW President – **6 Terms**
 George Seketa
 Hal Shymkus
 Al Spiers
Robert “Doc” Stunkard
 Butch Tackett
 George Tilford
 John Trout, Jr.
 Joe West

Past Presidents of HOW

“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1969
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1970
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1971
Bill Church	1972
Rick Bramwell	1973
Jack Ennis	1974
Phil Junker	1975
Ralph “Cork” McHargue	1976
Tom Glancy	1977
Bob Rubin	1978
Jack Alkire	1979
Louie Stout	1980
Mike Lyle	1981
Jim “Moose” Carden	1982
Jim “Moose” Carden	1983
John Davis	1984
John Davis	1985
Ray Harper	1986
Ray Harper	1987
Ray Dickerson	1988
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1989
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1990
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1991
Jack Spaulding	1992
Jack Spaulding	1993
John Rawlings	1994
Phil Bloom	1995
Marty Jaranowski	1996
John Martino	1997
Mike Schoonveld	1998
Jack Spaulding	1999
Jack Spaulding	2000
Sharon Wiggins	2001
Phil Junker	2002
Larry Crecelius	2003
Bryan Poynter	2004
Phil Bloom	2005
Brian Smith	2006
Brian Smith	2007
Brent Wheat	2008
Bryan Poynter	2009
John Maxwell	2010
Brandon Butler	2011
Josh Lantz	2012
Ben Shadley	2013
Bob Sawtelle	2014
Alan Garbers	2015
Ken McBroom	2016
Don Cranfill	2017
Troy McCormick	2018
Mike Schoonveld	2019
Kenny Bayless	2020
Kenny Bayless	2021
Phil Seng	2022
Jarrett Manek	2023
Bob Sawtelle	2024

It's Time to Renew Your HOW Membership

This is a friendly reminder that dues renewal notices were sent out to HOW members near the end of December. If you have not sent in your renewal yet, it's not too late! Don't forget to update your Directory listing and send it in with your dues check. If you did not receive a renewal notice, please contact Tom Berg ASAP (thomas.berg@comcast.net).

We all hope 2026 will be a great year. This has been a very cold winter so far, and some members got a lot of snow recently. But that's Indiana weather! We are busily planning and preparing for the 2026 HOW conference at Pokagon State Park, and we hope everyone can attend. There is more information about this year's conference and meeting (registration forms, lodging info, etc) inside this issue of *The Blade*, so keep reading.

Membership in the Hoosier Outdoor Writers provides a long list of benefits, including this full-color bi-monthly newsletter, *The Blade*. It is sent out via email and is also posted online. Other benefits include our annual Awards-in-Craft contests, the HOW Facebook page, a special "Nature Photo" contest with prizes inside each issue of the newsletter, our annual conference (including seminars and guest speakers), our annual HOW Fun Shoot (sporting clays, trap or skeet), an official HOW membership card which provides product discounts and allows entry to outdoor shows and similar functions, an online membership directory which lists all Individual members and Supporting members, and members-only access to the HOW website.

Of course, HOW membership also provides the opportunity for networking, the chance to learn new things, improve your craft and make new friends. Friendships formed at HOW functions can last a lifetime!

Dues for Active members is still only \$30 and dues for Associate members remains \$25. We are happy to accept personal checks or money orders. Please make all checks payable to HOW. We also accept credit cards and Paypal on the HOW website – simply click on the Dues & Donations tab on our home page (www.HoosierOutdoorWriters.org). Then you can click on the proper membership level and pay right there. Note that there is a small convenience fee if you pay online which covers the fee that Paypal charges us. If you prefer to pay by check there is no additional fee.

The officers and executive committee at the Hoosier Outdoor Writers are looking forward to a fun-filled 2026 and we hope you will join us. Thank you for your continued support. We could not do what we do without you!

Don't forget to send in your 2026 HOW membership renewal!

**RENEWAL
REMINDER**

Annual HOW Conference

It's Time to Sign Up for the 2026 Annual HOW Conference!

The 56th meeting of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers will take place on the weekend of **April 10-12, 2026** at the Potawatomi Inn inside Pokagon State Park, near Angola, IN. The main meeting will occur on Saturday, April 11th. This is shaping-up to be another great conference, so make your plans to attend now!



The weekend conference activities will begin with the annual HOW Fun Shoot on Friday, April 10. We are also planning to have our traditional Friday Evening Barbecue at one of the park shelters for all conference attendees who would like to arrive on Friday.

We have most of the speakers and seminars booked for the meeting on Saturday – details can be found on the next page. The conference registration form can be found on page 8, and everyone who registers before March 1st can pay the **Early Bird** rate of \$35. If you prefer to pay online, go to the HOW website and click the “Dues & Donations” tab, then click on “Donate” and enter \$37 (this includes a \$2 convenience fee). Of course, if you pay by check there is no extra fee.

Planning to Stay Overnight at the Potawatomi Inn?

If you would like to stay overnight inside Pokagon State Park, you are in luck. You can stay overnight or for the entire weekend. The state parks inns are currently running a special called “Spring into Savings” if you stay for two consecutive nights. When you are ready to book your room, check out the details below.

POTAWATOMI INN ROOM RESERVATIONS

Two Queen Size beds:

(Fri. night 4-10-26 and Sat. night 4-11-26): \$217.48 (\$108.74 per night) + tax.

Two Full Size beds:

(Fri. night 4-10-26 and Sat. night 4-11-26): \$164.98 (\$82.49 per night) + tax.

One Full Size bed:

(Fri. night 4-10-26 and Sat. night 4-11-26): \$149.98 (\$74.99 per night) + tax.

If you only want to stay for one night, they still have the same rooms available as shown above, but they are a little more expensive. Check the state park inns website for details.

Don't wait to make your room reservation if you will be staying overnight at the Potawatomi Inn. Our block of discounted rooms (the double queen rooms) will only be available until **February 10, 2026** or until they are **all reserved**. As noted above, the rooms that are eligible for the “Spring into Savings” promotion are not in our room block, so book early. If you have any questions, please contact Tom Berg (thomas.berg@comcast.net) or cell: 219-712-3613.

Note that you may book your room online or call the toll-free reservations line (877-563-4371).

Potawatomi Inn
Pokagon State Park

6 Lane 100 A Lake James
Angola, IN 46703

Reservations: 877-563-4371
Front Desk: 260-833-1077

We have a great lineup of interesting seminar speakers for this conference. They will provide some excellent material for your stories, blogs and podcasts. Here is a brief preview of the speakers and what their presentations will cover:

- **Overview of the Lake Michigan Fishery**

Ben Dickinson (below), Indiana DNR's Lake Michigan Fisheries Biologist, will provide an interesting overview of the Lake Michigan fishery, including some highlights and some current management challenges. He will talk about the salmonid fishery, including the status of the salmon and trout fishery, the tools managers use to maintain predator-prey balance, and how they evaluate current stocking programs in our Great Lake.

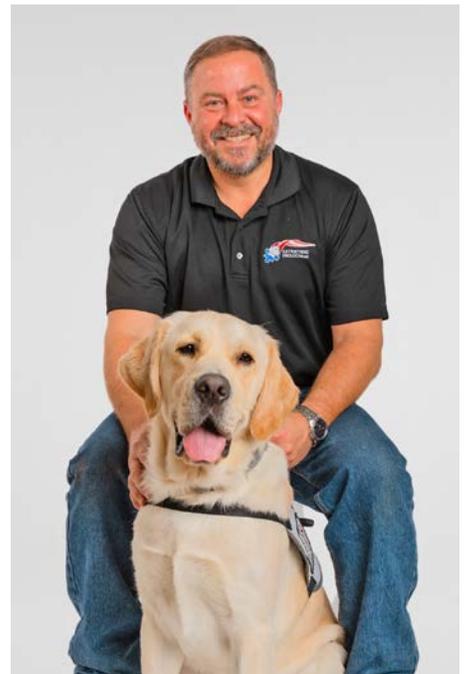


He will also talk about upcoming projects of interest concerning Lake Michigan. He will also touch on the yellow perch status in the lake and discuss the changing nature of the fish and the fishery. He'll talk about the winter perch fishery and potential concerns with overharvest and barotrauma when perch are brought up from great depths.

- **Retrieving Freedom, Programs for Veterans and Children**

Brandon Butler (right) is the Chief Executive Officer of Retrieving Freedom, Inc (RFI) a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of veterans with disabilities and children with autism by training and placing exceptional service dogs, always at no cost to them.

The mission of Retrieving Freedom, Inc. is to change lives through the training and placement of these service dogs. With training facilities located in Iowa, and Missouri, RFI dogs undergo more than two years of personalized training to ensure they meet the unique needs of each individual they will serve. Unlike one-size-fits-all programs, our training is tailored to prepare each dog for the specific challenges of their future handler.



- **Craft Improvement: So NOW You Want to Publish?**

Brent Wheat, host of the award-winning *The Guns Podcast US* will



present a craft improvement seminar, showing our membership how they can set up and publish their own online blog so that their writing and communications work can reach a wider audience.

More outdoor communicators are discovering they don't need a traditional publisher to bring their work to life. In this practical session, Brent Wheat outlines simple, low-tech paths to self-publishing and shares how to avoid common pitfalls while turning your expertise into a professional product.

You can even make money with it.

Hoosier Outdoor Writers Annual Conference Registration



Where/When: The Lake James Ballroom inside the historic Potawatomi Inn located at Pokagon State Park, Angola, IN. Conference dates: April 10-12, 2026.

This registration form is for the Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 11th (8:00am – 4:30pm)

Information to appear on name badge:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Spouse's Name (if attending): _____

Contact information:

Mailing Address: _____

City or Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Are you a first-time HOW conference attendee? _____

Early Bird Conference Registration Fees:

(Early Bird pricing good until March 1 only. After March 1, add \$5.00 each to register)

HOW Members (and spouses): \$35.00 each (\$35 X number attending) = _____

Non-HOW Members: \$40.00 each (\$40 X number attending) = _____

The conference fee at the door will be \$50.00 (so be sure to register before the conference!)

Conference fee includes continental breakfast and buffet lunch on April 11, 2026.

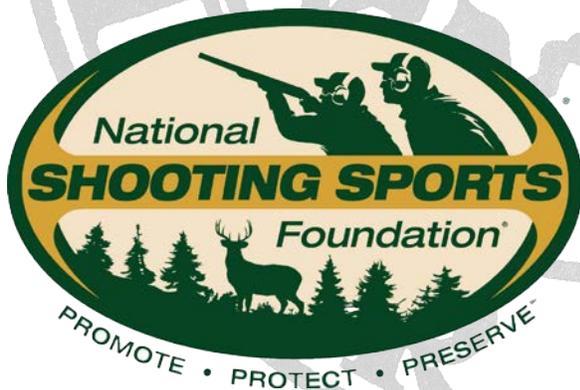
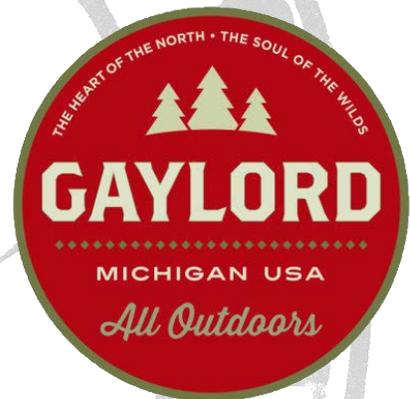
Please print this application and mail it along with your check for each person attending (make check payable to “HOW” or “Hoosier Outdoor Writers”) to:

**Tom Berg
2142 Nondorf Street
Dyer, IN 46311-1829**

Questions? Email all conference questions to Tom Berg: thomas.berg@comcast.net

2026 HOW Conference

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers would like to thank the following conference sponsors:



The 2026 HOW Awards-In-Craft Contest

**The Hoosier Outdoor Writers
would like to thank:**

QUAD 4 PLASTICS

**For sponsoring the 2026
HOW Awards-In-Craft Contests**



The 2026 HOW Awards-In-Craft Contest

HOW CRAFTS AWARD CONTEST RULES

The contest year shall be for material published or aired from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025. All submissions, including photography, must have been printed, aired, published or electronically posted during the contest year. Exception: In the Book Contest, books must have been published within the past 10 years (2016-2025). In all cases, the entrant must have been a HOW member when the work was published.

The author, photographer or broadcaster must be an Active or Associate member of HOW.

The author, photographer or broadcaster must have been paid a standard rate for any work entered in the contest. Photos or articles published on a private Website or a not-for-hire Website will not be accepted. Photos/articles that are published, or radio/TV programs that are broadcast in trade for advertising or other non-monetary remuneration or for gratuitous fees (such as \$1) are not permitted.

At this time, blogs will not be accepted as an article. Photo essays (where the only writing is in the captions) will also not be accepted as an article. These types of entries will be disqualified.

This year we will again allow electronic submissions only. We no longer accept paper entries (except in the Book Contest). This has resulted in much less work for entrants, contest coordinators and judges. It also conserves valuable natural resources, which is something of which we can all be proud. Entries must be submitted via email. The only exceptions are in the Broadcast and Book divisions. Tapes/CDs are allowed for Broadcast entries, and physical books are required for the Book contest. See the rules below for details.

RULES FOR SUBMISSION

- 1) Contest entries must be in an electronic form (except books). Entries must be emailed (or postmarked if mailing a CD, DVD or book) **no later than midnight on February 25, 2026**. Entries sent after that date will be disqualified. Send all entries to the proper contest coordinator.
- 2) An official HOW contest entry form must accompany each entry. The entry form must also be sent electronically (except in the Book Contest where a paper entry form may be used). Please type or clearly print entry details into the form (an electronic copy of the form will be provided).
- 3) Send no material that needs to be returned. No original material is required (except for the book contest). As mentioned above, print contest entries and photo contest entries must be sent in an electronic form. In the broadcast contest, links, tapes, recordings and DVDs are welcome.
- 4) All submissions of print entries (either from traditional paper or electronic media) must consist of one electronic copy of each article with bylines removed. This file must be text only – do not scan tearsheets or newspaper/magazine pages. Do not include photos or photo captions. This electronic copy must be submitted as a Microsoft Word Document (.doc) or as a PDF file (.pdf). Entries not following these rules will be disqualified. As mentioned, print entry files must be emailed by the deadline.
- 5) Entries into the broadcast category require only one recording and may be sent by link, CD or DVD formats. Radio and television entries may carry the broadcast station's name and call letters if they are on "as aired" dubbed tapes. TV entries should be dubbed minus commercials if possible to facilitate judging.
- 6) Entries in the photography division must consist of one electronic (digital) copy of each photo. This electronic copy must be saved as a JPEG file (.jpg or .jpeg). Prints, slides and paper copies of photos will not be accepted. Please include a title for each photo entry. Digitally produced photos should not be substantially manipulated. Allowable photo enhancement is limited to standard shooting/darkroom techniques, such as color correction, contrast control and image cropping.
- 7) Entries in the book division must consist of one physical copy of the book. At this time, e-books will not be accepted. If you would like your book returned, either provide a SASE or include a note stating you will pick it up at the HOW Conference. You may also specify that the book be donated to the HOW Raffle.
- 8) An individual article, photo or broadcast may only be entered in one category/division. Entering the same piece in multiple categories/divisions will result in the disqualification of duplicate entries.
- 9) There is a limit of two entries per category, including books.

For all [Article](#) entries, send submissions to the Writing Contest Coordinator:
Marilyn Culler, Email: contest@hoosieroutdoorwriters.org

For all [Photography](#) entries, send submissions to the Photo Contest Coordinator:
John Martino, Email: jmartinooutdoors@att.net

For all [Broadcast](#) and [Book](#) entries, send submissions to the Broadcast and Book Contest Coordinator:
Tom Berg, Email: thomas.berg@comcast.net
US Mail: 2142 Nondorf Street, Dyer, IN 46311

CONTEST DIVISIONS

- 1) Writing articles published as 1,000 words or less (Magazine, Newspaper, E-zine).
- 2) Writing articles published as more than 1,000 words (Magazine, Newspaper, E-zine).
- 3) Photography
- 4) Broadcast (Radio-TV-Video)
- 5) Books

WRITING ARTICLE CATEGORIES

- 1) Hunting/Trapping
- 2) Fishing
- 3) Conservation
- 4) General Outdoors (other than hunting, fishing, trapping)

PHOTOGRAPHY CATEGORIES

- 5) Hunting/Trapping
- 6) Fishing
- 7) Outdoor Scenic
- 8) Outdoor Recreation (other than hunting, fishing, trapping)

BROADCAST CATEGORIES

- 9) Best Radio/Podcast Broadcast
- 10) Best TV Broadcast
- 11) Best Video

BOOK CONTEST

- 12) Best Book

2026 HOW AWARDS-IN-CRAFT CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

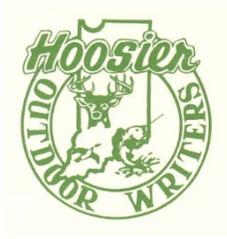
Category _____ Division _____

Title: _____

Where published/aired: _____

Publication/air date: _____

Entries and forms must be emailed or postmarked no later than February 25, 2026



Hoosier Outdoor Writers Turn in a Poacher/Polluter Writing Contest Official 2025 Contest Guidelines



Once again, the Indiana Turn in a Poacher (TIP) Citizen's Advisory Board is sponsoring a writing contest to encourage HOW members to promote the TIP mission and the hotline. This year prizes are again **\$500 for first place; \$300 for second place; \$200 for third place.** Be sure to write your TIP article right away!

Requirements are simple and entering is easy! Article must be at least 400 words in length and must include:

1. Brief description of TIP (see below—does not have to be verbatim)
2. TIP Hotline (1-800-TIP-IDNR)

Although it is not required, preference will be given to stories that:

- Feature a compelling story that demonstrates how TIP can help conserve or protect fish and wildlife for the people of Indiana.
- Are published in paid publications.

To enter, submit an electronic copy of an article published between **January 1, 2025** and **December 31, 2025**. The TIP Citizen's Advisory Board will review all entries and will select the entries that best promote the mission of TIP and encourage citizens to get involved.

Entries should be marked as "TIP" entries and sent to Contest Coordinator Phil Seng (phil@djcase.com). They must be emailed by March 1, 2026.

What is TIP?

Turn in a Poacher and Polluter, Inc. (TIP) is a non-profit conservation organization that works hand-in-hand with Indiana DNR Law Enforcement to protect our fish and wildlife resources by increasing public support and involvement in bringing violators to justice.

A poacher is a thief who illegally steals wildlife that belongs to each Indiana citizen. Poachers rob licensed, ethical hunters and anglers from recreational opportunities they bought through license fees. Pollution kills Indiana's valuable fish and wildlife resources and harms habitat.

Citizens can help stop poachers and polluters in two ways. If you see, hear or learn about a poacher or pollution that results in the death of fish and wildlife, or any other fish and wildlife violation:

- Call 1-800-TIP-IDNR
- Submit a TIP online at www.tip.IN.gov

If your TIP leads to an arrest, you may receive as much as a \$500 reward, and you can remain anonymous. More information is available at <https://www.in.gov/dnr/lawenfor/2745.htm>

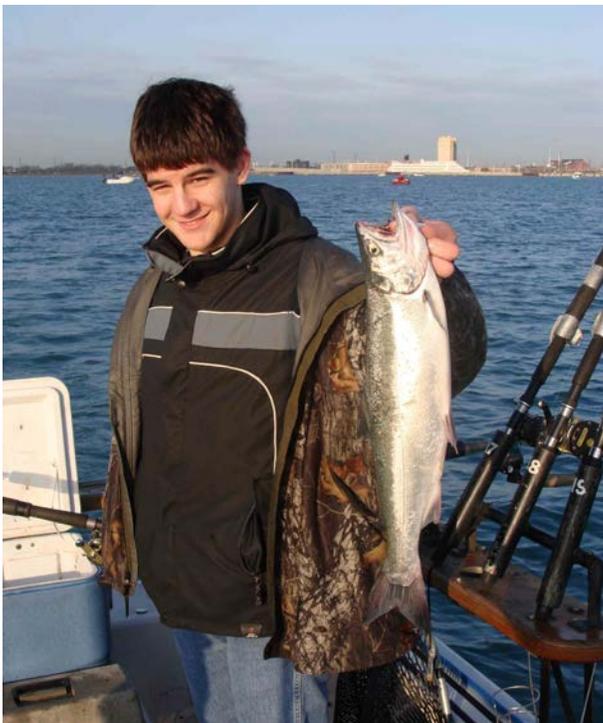
Special Auction Announcement

At the 2026 HOW Conference

Lake Michigan Springtime Salmon Fishing Charter! Bidding Starts at \$200!

At the upcoming 2026 HOW Conference at Pokagon State Park, the Hoosier Outdoor Writers will be auctioning-off an exciting Lake Michigan salmon fishing charter trip. This spring fishing trip was generously donated by HOW member **Mike Schoonveld** of **Brother Nature Fishing Adventures** and includes fishing for a variety of Lake Michigan salmon and trout species. Although the main target (and likely the majority of the catch) will be coho salmon, it is very possible that other Great Lakes species such as brown trout, steelhead (rainbow trout), chinook salmon and lake trout might also be caught.

This is an auction for a 5-hour guided fishing trip for up to three anglers on Lake Michigan during the springtime. Bidding will start at \$200. High bidder will enjoy a memorable day of fishing on Lake Michigan with HOW member Capt. Mike Schoonveld. Trip to be taken during April or May of 2026, or if that cannot be arranged, it can also be taken during the March-April-May timeframe of 2027.



Have you been thinking about experiencing springtime salmon fishing on Lake Michigan? This is the perfect time to try it with a seasoned professional! Winner can email Mike Schoonveld at mike@bronature.com or call 219-819-0000 to schedule the trip and arrange all of the details.

All required tackle is included, and fish cleaning after the trip is included as well. Your fishing license, transportation and lodging are not included.

Be sure to check out the **Brother Nature Fishing Adventures** website for additional details and other fishing trip information (www.brother-nature.com).





Interesting Bird Sightings in the Great Outdoors



We have been asking HOW members to submit photos and reports about interesting or unusual birds that they have seen during their outdoor adventures. The sightings do not have to take place in Indiana; anywhere in the world is fair game. All photos on these pages were submitted by those reporting.

We hope this page will not only interest bird enthusiasts, but all HOW members who enjoy spending time in the great outdoors (i.e. everybody). You may just learn something new, too!

Report from Marilyn Culler:

HOW President Marilyn Culler loves taking photographs of birds, and birding outings during cold winter weather do not scare her! “I saw my first **American White Pelican** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) five years ago,” recalled Culler. “I caught a glimpse of a bright white cluster of birds in a cove at Raccoon Lake, and with the help of my binoculars – a standard part of my camera gear – I realized the white birds were American white pelicans. Since then, I have seen pelicans in various spots around Raccoon Lake, as well as at a local private lake. I had never seen pelicans at the dam spillway, until this past Sunday.

My friend Joanna and I frequently drive to the spillway at Cecil M. Harden Lake/Raccoon State Recreation Area to look for eagles to photograph during the winter. We’re often rewarded with duck sightings, including mallards, hooded mergansers, wood ducks, blue-winged teal and even pintails and ring-necks. Bald eagles have been scarce this year, although local nests are now active. Joanna had spotted an American White Pelican at the spillway a few days earlier, so off we went after church!



Joanna’s Jeep makes a great bird blind. We spotted the pelican, and Joanna retracted the Jeep top. I stood up in the passenger seat and poked myself and my Nikon with telephoto lens through the roof. I

needed to get above the brush for a clear view of the pelican, which was hanging out on a stump over the edge of the water. Juncos, ducks and other small birds were walking around on an ice shelf behind the pelican while we watched and took pictures. When another vehicle approached, along with the clickety-clack of horse hooves pulling an Amish buggy, the pelican decided to go for a swim.

See the next page for more bird photos and information from fellow HOW members.



Interesting Bird Sightings in the Great Outdoors

Bird Reports Continued...

Report from Mike Lunsford:

HOW member and bird enthusiast Mike Lunsford sees many different birds on his property throughout the year. One of those species which is a somewhat common sighting for him beginning in the fall and through the winter months is the **Purple Finch** (*Haemorhous purpureus*).

“Although their numbers appear to be dropping across Indiana,” said Lunsford, “purple finches seem to enjoy my yard. I regularly see them during the cold weather months in Parke County. Although the familiar red of house finches is much more common, the wonderfully raspberry-colored male purple finches and their greenish-brown mates, regularly enjoy sunflower seeds and suet at my feeding stations.”

At one time – before house sparrows and house finches became more numerous – purple finches were common sights in the Hoosier state throughout the spring and summer. Although most bird watchers prefer the more colorful males, Lunsford says all female finches have their own special beauty. “The female purple finches have much more pronounced and contrasting markings on their faces and wings,” he said.

“The cold weather seems to bring them in,” he continued. “I see them into February and March. Considering the fact that purple finches don’t usually breed here, I feel privileged that for whatever reason we get to see these birds every fall and winter.”

Below Left: A brightly colored male purple finch patiently waits for his turn at the bird feeder.

Below Right: A female purple finch pauses on a nearby tree branch. She is also waiting her turn.



HOW members are encouraged to send their interesting bird photos to newsletter editor and bird enthusiast Tom Berg via email (thomas.berg@comcast.net) for use in future editions of the “Interesting Bird Sightings” page. Don’t worry, it does not need to be a rare bird. Your fellow HOW members would love to hear your birding stories and see your exciting bird pictures.

Did you take a cool bird photo while exploring afield recently? Did you see the bird in your back yard? While you were traveling far from home? Send the photo in for other members to enjoy!

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

For immediate release: January 15, 2026

Floyd County Angler Catches State Record Longnose Gar

Floyd County resident Justin Brown caught a record-setting longnose gar on the Ohio River on December 30 of last year, on a warm winter afternoon.

The fish weighed 23 pounds, 12.2 ounces, beating the previous record from 2008 by almost a pound and a half. The previous record fish was caught from the White River. Brown caught his gar from a boat using a jigging spoon.

All three of Indiana's gar records have now been broken in the past three years; the shortnose gar record was set in 2025, and the spotted gar record was set in 2024.

Longnose gar are one of Indiana's most common gar species. It is found throughout the state, and the largest longnose gar typically live in bigger rivers.



Gar are ambush predators that lie still, near the water's surface, to feed on small fish as they swim past. Gar are difficult to catch using basic hook and line techniques because of their hard, bony mouths. Many methods have been developed to catch gar, including using a snare with bait in the middle that tightens around the gar's mouth.

Phil Kacmar, who is the big rivers fisheries biologist for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), says anglers who use live bait to catch gar should let gar that bite run with the bait to give them time work the fish down in their mouth to have better success landing it.

Visit the Where to Fish map at on.IN.gov/where2fish to find a fishing location near you. Learn more about the Indiana Record Fish Program at on.IN.gov/recordfish.

Media contact: Phillip Kacmar, Big Rivers Fisheries Biologist, DNR Fish, Wildlife & Nature Preserves, phone: 812-817-0222, email: pkacmar@dnr.IN.gov.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

For immediate release: January 7, 2026

Historic Preservation Month Photo Contest Opens

The annual Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology (DHPA) photo contest has started, and the deadline for entering is Friday, April 3.

Open to photographers of any age and skill level, the contest has been held since 2005 to promote Indiana's historic resources.

All structures in photo entries must be at least 50 years old and in Indiana but don't have to be fully restored. Photos of exclusively natural elements will not be accepted.

Photos must have been taken within the last two years. There are five categories to submit photographs: Color, Black & White, Altered, Kids (under 18), and resources found along the National Road in Indiana, the theme of Historic Preservation Month. This year is the semiquincentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and DHPA will be recognizing the first federally funded highway and the historic Hoosier communities along it as part of the celebration.

Each photographer may enter up to three images along with the required respective entry form for each photo. Entries should be emailed to DHPACONNECT@dnr.IN.gov and must be JPEG files 10MB or smaller. Participants should only send one photo and one entry form per email.

For complete rules and guidelines and for the required entry form, please visit on.IN.gov/preservation-month and click on "Historic Preservation Month Photo Contest" near the top of the screen.

Follow the DNR Instagram account (@indianadnr) in May where, for a week, the DHPA will feature selected photos along with contest winners to celebrate National Historic Preservation Month.

Media contact: Danielle Kauffmann, Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology, phone: 317-232-0582, email: dkauffmann@dnr.IN.gov.



Wilhelmina Leach of Georgetown captured this photo while looking straight up at O'Bannon Woods SP.

The Oldest Coin I've Ever Found

Story and photos by Troy McCormick

Last November I signed up for an organized metal detecting event that had been a part of the Civil War “Battle of Dinwiddie Courthouse”. This is different from a “Seeded” hunt where organizers bury coins for participants to find during an event. This was a hunt with a metal detecting group that works out a deal with a landowner to let their group’s participants metal detect on their farm, or property, for 2-3 days and you may, or may not, find something. You pay a fee and they usually limit the number of participants to 75 or 100. This hunt had 116 people participating.

On the first day, when they announced “Start” we all headed out into two open wheat fields. After about an hour I was getting hot and decided to take my coat off and head back to my truck to put it inside.

As I got closer to the row of vehicles parked all along the inside edge of the wheat field, I had a couple of good signals on my Minelab detector. I quickly dug up two Civil War, 3-ringer bullets. I laughed because

everyone had walked so fast through this area that was close to the vehicles that we all missed the bullets hurrying to get out into the fields. When I was about 25 feet from my vehicle, I had a really clear, high tone, which is the non-ferrous metal signal that you want to hear.



The cut 1652 Pine Tree Shilling that I found in Virginia has been cut, shaved, and cut again over the years. I superimposed the cut piece that I found over the image of a complete coin to show how much was whittled away years ago.



As I turned over the plug of dirt with my shovel, I saw a flash of silver and got really excited. It was a quarter cut silver coin. I have only seen this on Spanish coins and hoped for a 1700s-era Spanish Reale. The closest that I have ever gotten to an 18th century coin was an 1802 Spanish 2-Reale. Back in the day, coins were often cut to make change for a purchase. You have heard the phrase, “Two bits, four bits, six bits, a dollar.” This came from the practice of cutting coins to make 25 cents, 50 cents, and 75 cents from a Spanish dollar.

I was disappointed when I couldn’t find a date on the silver coin, but I was pleased to have found it. However, two days later I was back at home and I

(continued on next page)

still could not identify it. I sent photos to some friends and one replied back all excited because he identified it as a 1652 Pine Tree shilling that had been minted in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It was the first coin design ever minted in the new British colonies that had been established in America! You can't find an older coin that was minted in the United States!



This was a true piece of history, and a coin that had traveled over 600 miles to end up in a Virginia wheat field.

However, when the initial excitement had worn off, I realized something that struck me as quite funny. I still don't have a coin from the 1700's. I skipped right over the entire 18th century and landed in the 17th century with my find of a lifetime. I guess I will just have to keep on metal detecting!



Top Left: The cut 1652 Pine Tree Shilling peeking out of the ground after Troy discovered it. **Right:** You can see how close to the parking area the coin was found. **Bottom Left:** Look closely and you will see the cut coin laying on the face of Troy's metal detector. All photos on these two pages by Troy McCormick.

Henry Repeating Arms Factory Tour

Story and photos by Tom Berg

Last September I attended the AGLOW (Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers) conference which was held in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Eau Claire is a great venue, and there were plenty of interesting and fun things to see and do in the area. Besides the great seminars, learning sessions and camaraderie, I enjoyed fishing outings, competing in the annual AGLOW fishing tournament, and even pheasant hunting at one of the local game farms.

The great times did not end on the last day of the conference though. After the conference ended, my wife Lori and I made the one hour drive over to Rice Lake to visit the Henry Repeating Arms facility. Dan Clayton-Luce, the Vice President of Communications for Henry, had extended the invitation for a factory tour while attending the conference in Eau Claire. Although he could not be onsite due to other obligations, he arranged to have me meet with Mr. Andy Wickstrom, the President of Henry.

We arrived in Rice Lake in the late morning, and met Mr. Wickstrom in the lobby. He took us on a grand tour of the Henry facility, and it was quite impressive. Thank goodness we had him to guide us through the building, too, because we would have quickly become lost among all the different workstations, assembly areas, storage areas and manufacturing machinery.



There is an amazing array of equipment in the plant for manufacturing the multitude of parts that make up each Henry firearm. Their main product is the lever-action rifle, but they have dozens of different lever-action models, and hundreds of different finishes and variations. Some of their most popular models are the .22 rimfire models (including the Golden Boy), but the larger center-fire Big Boy models are also extremely popular. If you are looking for a .30-30 Winchester or a .45-70 Government model, they have you covered. They also make all-weather models, beautiful tribute models and special limited edition models.

Of course, Henry has also started producing revolvers, including the Golden Boy Revolver (.22 caliber) and the Big Boy Revolver (.357 Magnum/.38 Special), and we saw the workstations where those pistols were being assembled, too. All very well organized and structured for maximum workflow efficiency.

Besides the dizzying array of lever-action guns, Henry also makes semi-auto rifles, pump-action, break-action,

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and a variety of shotguns. The shotguns include lever-action models and break-action single shot shotguns. It was amazing to see all of the different areas where these firearms were being assembled, checked for quality and packaged. We even saw the area where the guns were tested before shipping. And yes, every firearm is test-fired before it can be shipped out.

Some of the manufacturing machinery was brand new, state-of-the-art equipment with high-tech electronics and computer controls. But there were also old machines in use that were older than me. Some of the older equipment, such as certain special barrel-making machines, was in use as far back as World War II. They just don't make machinery like that anymore, and nothing that is made today is better!

Although many of the parts



Above: Henry Repeating Arms President Andy Wickstrom holds a completed lever-action rifle in front of multiple racks of assembled rifles which will be shipped out soon. **Left:** Cases of rifles wait in the shipping department for final packaging before being sent to their final destination.



for the Henry rifles are made right there in the Rice Lake facility, Henry also operates another site in Ladysmith, Wisconsin. The Ladysmith facility manufactures parts such as barrels, levers, bolts, etc, and ships them to Rice Lake for final assembly.

Once the rifles are assembled, inspected and test-fired, they are set in racks to await final packaging where they are boxed-up and prepared for shipment. Of course, firearms cannot be shipped directly to customers – they must be sent to retailers or Federal Firearms License (FFL) holders.

While we were there the shipping department was very busy preparing orders for final shipment to different retail outlets. The number of rifles being produced at the facility is very impressive, too. Henry Repeating Arms produces more than 1,000 rifles per day. That's a lot of rifles!

HOW Member News

Kevin Paulson Knows the Importance of Preparedness

HOW member Kevin Paulson is the founder and CEO of HuntingLife.com, and he loves hunting and the outdoors. Through his passion and lifestyle, he came to understand the importance of being prepared for unforeseen circumstances. On the other hand, his wife, Marjorie, wasn't quite as sold on the importance of preparedness. One day, they had a discussion about adding a first aid kit to Marjorie's car, and she didn't see the need for one since she'd never needed one in the past. Kevin, however, was adamant about the addition. Ultimately, he convinced his wife to let him put a [MyFAK Mini Pro](#) in her car. And only days later, he was grateful for his foresight!

One lovely day, Kevin was planting a couple of aspen trees in his backyard, and since Nebraska is prone to high winds, he needed to stake them down to keep all his hard work from being blown away. He didn't have anything on hand to pound the stakes in, so he tried using a brick. Unfortunately, the brick broke after only a couple of strokes. That's when Kevin remembered that he had some axes and hatchets sitting in his office waiting to be reviewed. They should hold up a lot better than the brick did!

After a quick trip to his office, he returned to his yard with a nice lightweight ax and was ready to get back to work. With the back of the ax, he resumed pounding the stake in. That's when things went horribly wrong.

Kevin isn't exactly sure how it happened, but one moment he was merrily hammering away at the stake, and the next, the ax blade was biting deep into his shin. The laceration was around three inches in length and cut all the way down to the bone. He was lucky he hadn't nicked an artery, especially since the tibial artery was less than an inch away, but it was still an ugly injury. When he realized what had happened, he shouted for Marjorie to grab the first aid kit. Without hesitation, she sprinted to her car, pulled out the kit, and raced back to her husband in under sixty seconds.



When she returned, she helped lay him down and open the kit so they could get to work. First, they used [ZZIPS](#) to hold the wound shut followed by wrapping QuikClot firmly around them. To finish it off, they put an Emergency Pressure Bandage over everything and called it good. When they finished, no blood was escaping from the dressings, so Kevin hobbled to the car and went to the emergency room to get patched up.

The hospital staff were impressed with how he'd handled the situation. Thankfully, the injury didn't need more than a few staples and sent him on his way not long after. Kevin says he's grateful that he was both incredibly lucky and prepared for an emergency like this. Afterwards, he and Marjorie both agree they need to keep first aid kits in their cars and home at all times.

Kevin is adamant that everybody needs a quality [first aid kit](#) like My Medic nearby. He also fervently believes everyone should customize their kit to fit their needs. For example, add extra allergy supplies if you're prone to allergic reactions. You never know how quickly a perfect afternoon can turn into a nightmare. Be prepared! Check out <https://alnk.to/hDtBkhK>.

Brent Wheat and Guns Podcast US Surpass the “One Million Milestone”

HOW Past President Brent Wheat recently published an exciting press release concerning the very popular podcast that he co-hosts along with fellow industry veteran Roy Huntington. Here is the release:

“Just one week prior to the 2026 SHOT Show,” said Wheat, “the *Guns Podcast US presented by GUNS Magazine* surpassed a major industry milestone, exceeding one million audio podcast downloads – a benchmark increasingly difficult to achieve in today’s fragmented and highly competitive podcast landscape.”

According to Libsyn analytics, the show has reached 1,000,767 IAB-certified downloads, with 1,040,777 total unique downloads, verified under industry-standard measurement guidelines. Industry analysts estimate that only a small single-digit percentage of active podcasts ever reach one million total audio downloads, underscoring the rarity of the achievement.

Unlike video platforms that benefit from algorithmic discovery and autoplay, sustained growth in audio podcasting depends largely on subscriber loyalty and intentional listening, making the milestone a strong indicator of long-term audience engagement.

The achievement is reinforced by strong cross-platform performance. On YouTube, *Guns Podcast US* (previously branded as *GUNS Magazine Podcast*) has generated 1,412,771 views and 227,750 hours of watch time, with its most-watched episode, “*Snubbies are Stupid*,” earning 114,971 views. The channel’s long-term performance includes 48.9 million lifetime views, more than 1,000,000 hours of total watch time, and 146,976 subscribers.

Reaching one million audio downloads immediately ahead of SHOT Show underscores the podcast’s position as a durable and trusted media platform within the firearms and shooting sports industry, delivering consistent reach across both audio and video formats.

About Guns Podcast US

Guns Podcast US is a long-form firearms podcast and video series covering gun culture, industry developments, training, and policy through candid discussion and interviews. The show is distributed across major podcast platforms and YouTube. The podcast host is Brent T. Wheat with co-host Roy Huntington.



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Brent Wheat can be contacted by email at: editor@gunspodcast.us or bw@brentwheat.com or by phone at 317-370-3442.

Check out the website at: GunsPodcast.US.

Mike Lunsford Stays Very Busy with His Camera

Lunsford Wins riverSCAPE Fall Photo Contest



HOW member Mike Lunsford recently won top honors in the annual **riverSCAPE Fall Photo Contest** with his photo titled "Low Water on the Wabash." The mission of riverSCAPE is to "advance, transform, and safeguard" the Wabash River and riverfront, primarily in Vigo County and the Terre Haute community.

The contest "captures the vibrant colors and unique beauty of the riverSCAPE area during the autumn season." The winning photos were selected based on technical skill, composition, and their effective portrayal of the riverSCAPE area in the fall.

Lunsford took his photo in October on a rise near Fairbanks Park in Terre Haute, and caught the river at one of its lowest points during this past autumn's drought conditions.



Lunsford Exhibits Photos in the RCAA Community Outreach Gallery, Terre Haute

Mike Lunsford will exhibit an extensive collection of some of his favorite photos (mostly nature photos) at Corporate Square in Terre Haute, IN.

The exhibit will run for six months, from mid-January until mid-July, so it will reach many viewers, young and old alike.

Lunsford has marked many of his photos for sale, so interested nature aficionados can purchase one if they like. The notice in the *Terre Haute Tribune-Star* is shown at the right.

TERRE HAUTE

Photographer Mike Lunsford to exhibit his work at Corporate Square

River City Art Association is featuring the photography of Mike Lunsford from Jan. 13 to mid-July in the RCAA Community Outreach Gallery in Corporate Square at 2901 Ohio Blvd., Terre Haute.

Lunsford's display will include nearly 30 of his mostly nature-based photographs in the gallery space on both floors of Corporate Square's grand lobby. Included in the 6-month long exhibit will be his award-winning "Morning Coffee," "Day is Done," and "Fall at the Creek."

Lunsford's work has won a variety of honors through RCAA, the Hoosier Outdoor Writers, the Covered Bridge Art Association, the Link Art Gallery, the Gaslight Art Gallery, the Gallery at Arts-Illiana, and the Wabash Valley Art Guild.

Lobby hours at Corporate Square are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Mike Lunsford

This is 'Fox Kit at the Barn' by Mike Lunsford, which will be among his photographs on display from Jan. 13 to mid-July in the RCAA Community Outreach Gallery in Corporate Square at 2901 Ohio Blvd., Terre Haute.

Membership Changes and Member Contact Info

The following HOW members have new contact info. Please make a note of it:

John Maxwell: 1136 E. Banta Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46227, phone: 317-502-5442,
Email: jfmaxwell@comcast.net

Brian Stone: 5491 N. State Road 59, Brazil, IN 47834.

If your email address, phone number or other contact info changes, please notify HOW Executive Director Tom Berg at thomas.berg@comcast.net or by mail at 2142 Nondorf Street, Dyer, IN 46311.



Unusual Nature Photos from the Hoosier Outdoors Sponsored by Hawke Sport Optics

The American Bison is North America's Largest Land Mammal



Close-up
→
Original
←



The "What is it?" photo from the previous issue was evidently too easy, because it was correctly identified by ten (10) HOW members. Mike Schoonveld, Troy McCormick, Alan

Garbers, Ken McBroom, Mike Lunsford, Bill Keaton, John Maxwell, Phil Cox, Ken Keffer and Jarrett Manek were all able to identify it. When we drew a name at random for the **Hornady** RAPiD Safe, Ken McBroom was the lucky winner. Congrats, Ken! We will have the prize shipped directly to you.

As can be seen in the photo above, the mystery creature for this issue was an American Bison (*Bison bison*). The American bison is native to North America and is our largest land mammal, with large males weighing 2,500 pounds or more. They have dark brown coats with dense underfur and long guard hairs. Their heads are usually darker in color than the rest of their body, and their entire coat gets darker in the winter. Both males and females have curved horns that are typically up to two feet in length.

Historically, there were an estimated 60 million bison in North America. Today there are probably 500,000 bison, spread out between free-range animals and those living in nature preserves and in commercial herds. Right here in northern Indiana the Nature Conservancy manages a herd at the Kankakee Sands nature preserve in Newton County.



For this issue, our friends at **Hawke Sport Optics** have donated a very nice prize for the HOW member who is able to guess the right answer to this issue's "What Is It?" question. This time the prize is an awesome Hawke Sport Optics Vantage HD 10x42 binoculars along with a Hawke hat and a pair of can coolers. See below for additional info.

Berg Poses Another Nature Photo "What Is It?" Question

Tom Berg has posed another Nature Photo mystery. The photo shown at right is part of a close-up of a creature that can be found at certain times of the year throughout the state of Indiana. It's even possible you might see it in your own back yard. Have you ever seen this color pattern when spending time outdoors?



This creature may be easy for some people to identify, and harder for others. But we'll see.



Do you know of any creatures that look like this? As usual, you must identify the exact species. If you think it's a species of ant, for example, go ahead and guess "carpenter ant" (hint: it's not an ant). If you think you know the answer, send it in an email to thomas.berg@comcast.net. If you're right, you'll be entered in this issue's prize drawing!

As mentioned, **Hawke Sport Optics** (www.hawkeoptics.com) has donated an excellent prize for the HOW member who guesses the right answer to this issue's nature question. The sleek Vantage HD 10x42 binoculars are perfect for hunting or wildlife viewing and they have an MSRP of \$239.00, so start thinking! If multiple people guess correctly, we'll draw a winner at random from the pool of correct entries. All photos here by Tom Berg.

HOW Supporting Member News

These pages are devoted to the loyal supporting members of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers. Brief descriptions of new products, award-winning products and press releases are listed here. HOW members interested in reading more can visit the supporting member websites or call or email the media contact for more information.

FINS Icetamer Ice Fishing Braid: Precision Under Ice



**Ice fishing demands the right gear and skills,
including which type of ice fishing line to use.**

Erlanger, KY – When the temperatures drop and the bite turns finicky, your line can't be the weak link. That is where FINS Icetamer stands apart. Designed specifically for hardwater and cold-weather anglers, Icetamer delivers reliable performance when traditional lines fall short. Its tightly braided construction minimizes water absorption, helping reduce ice buildup on guides while maintaining smooth, consistent handling in freezing conditions.

Available in ultra-thin tensile options, including the industry-leading 2-pound test, Icetamer offers exceptional sensitivity without sacrificing strength. Anglers feel subtle bites instantly, set hooks with confidence, and enjoy precise control even when fishing light presentations.

What truly sets Icetamer apart is FINS' technical braiding expertise. Our advanced manufacturing process allows for an incredibly thin diameter that cuts cleanly through water, resists memory,



and performs consistently from hole to hole.

FINS Braids provides a full range of situational fishing braid in various colors and tensile strengths that offer superior performance in any fishing experience. For more info about Icetamer Braid and other products from FINS Fishing, please visit their website: www.finsfishing.com.

Media contact:

Killian Doughney, National Director of Sales,
email: killian@finsfishing.com.

TENSILE Pounds	MONO Equivalent	DIAMETER (Inches/mm)
4	1	.004/0.102
6	1.5	.005/0.127
8	2	.006/0.152
20	6	.010/0.254
30	8	.011/0.279

HOW Supporting Member News

IDDC Invites HOW Members to Attend The 2026 Visit Indiana Media Marketplace

Indianapolis, IN (Jan. 20, 2026) – The Indiana Destination Development Corporation (VisitIndiana) would like to notify HOW members about the upcoming **2026 Visit Indiana Media Marketplace**. All HOW members are invited!

“You are formally invited to connect with dozens of travel destinations from across the Hoosier State at Visit Indiana’s Media Marketplace for FREE,” said Brandon Caldwell, Social Media Public Relations Officer for the IDDC.

“This year’s Media Marketplace will be hosted at the Dallara Experience Hub, located at 1201 Main St., Speedway, IN 46224. This event offers a unique opportunity to engage directly with Indiana tourism partners, all in one location.”

SAVE THE DATE
VISIT INDIANA
MEDIA MARKETPLACE
MARCH 4
10AM-2PM
HOSTED AT
dallara
Dallara Experience Hub
1201 N Main St
Speedway, IN 46224
THIS EVENT IS
FREE
Sign up **NOW** while spots are available!
CLICK HERE
Join us for this exciting FREE media event where you can connect with Indiana tourism destinations all in one place. Learn about new attractions, experiences, and travel opportunities directly from industry partners.
Enjoy a complimentary lunch while you network, and don't forget to grab a swag bag to take home!

“Attendance is free, but registration is required. Please RSVP using the link below to secure your spot.”

“We look forward to welcoming you and sharing the stories and experiences that make Indiana a must-visit destination. PLEASE NOTE: Sales representatives are not permitted to attend. Lunch is provided for free.”

Where: Dallara Experience Hub

When: March 4, 2026

Time: 10am - 2pm.

RSVP by clicking: <https://forms.gle/qSW7Q7z4CkkXXrYv8>

Media Contacts: For more information, please contact:

Brandon Caldwell, Social Media Public Relations Officer

Email: BrCaldwell@visitindiana.com or cell: 463.245.8562.

Amy Howell, VP of Tourism, Marketing and Communications

Email: AmHowell@visitindiana.com or cell: 317.741.1320.

Please visit www.VisitIndiana.com.



HOW Supporting Member News

ATA Show Week Sets a New Standard for the Archery and Bowhunting Industry

New Ulm, MN (January 19, 2026) – ATA Show Week, held Jan. 6-11, 2026, at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, delivered one of the most impactful gatherings in the history of the archery and bowhunting industry, bringing together trade, competition, innovation and consumer engagement.

Built around the members-only ATA Trade Show, ATA Show Week 2026 expanded to include six events in one location, welcoming hundreds of brands and thousands of attendees. From new product launches and the members-only ATA Trade Show to elite competition, on-site education and the first-ever Archery & Bowhunting Supershow, the week highlighted the full scope of the industry under one roof.

The ATA Trade Show once again served as the industry's premier business event, where brands introduced new products, retailers wrote orders and the industry connected in ways only an in-person event allows. Strong attendance and steady traffic kept the show floor energized throughout the week. "We had a great show!" Matt Minshall of .30-06 Outdoors said. "We could have left the Trade Show on Day 1 and still had our best show ever!"

ATA Show Week also marked a milestone with the debut of the Archery & Bowhunting Supershow, opening the doors to consumers for the first time in ATA history. The Supershow drew thousands of attendees from across the country, offering direct access to top brands and the year's newest product lines, while reinforcing the role of industry retailers by directing consumers to their local pro-shop to purchase products they saw on-site.



"As a retailer, I am 100% in favor of the Archery & Bowhunting Supershow," Randall Wellings, partner of Straight Line Archery in Ishpeming, Michigan, said. "It is so much better for the consumer to see, touch and try the products in-person vs. making purchasing decisions online or in a catalog. Plus, exhibitors did a great job of encouraging attendees to visit their local archery shop! As retailers, we love that."

The week also consisted of world-class archery competition with the NFAA Rushmore Rumble, alongside the youth-focused S3DA Indoor open. Across both tournaments, nearly 1,200 archers competed, highlighting the sport's continued growth at every level.

Education sessions, networking events, product unveilings and industry celebrations added to the week's offerings, reflecting ATA's commitment to evolving with the industry while preserving the ATA Trade Show as a members-focused business event.

As the industry looks ahead, ATA Show Week has established itself as more than a trade show. It is the biggest week in archery, where the industry comes together to do business, compete and connect.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Tristan Asbury
Director, Marketing and Communications,
Email: tristanasbury@archerytrade.org.

For more information, please visit:

archerytrade.org / archery360.com / bowhuntersunited.com.



HOW's Supporting Member Websites

Alps Brands - www.alpsbrands.com
Archery Trade Association - www.archerytrade.org
B'n'M Pole Company - www.bnmpoles.com
Black River Tools - www.blackrivertools.com
BoatUS - www.boatus.com
BOLT Locks - www.boltlock.com
BPI Outdoors - www.BPIguns.com
Cauldryn - www.cauldryn.com
Church Tackle Company - www.churchtackle.com
Cocoons Eyewear - www.cocoons.com
Costa - www.costadelmar.com
Daisy Outdoor Products - www.daisy.com
Dardevle by Eppinger - www.dardevle.com
Ducks Unlimited - www.ducks.org
Egret Baits - www.egretbaits.com
Falcon Guides - www.falconguides.com
Finn Tackle Company - www.finnspoons.com
FINS Braid - www.finsfishing.com
Fiocchi Ammunition - www.fiocchiusa.com
Flying Fisherman - www.flyingfisherman.com
G Pucci & Sons - www.p-line.com
Gapen Company - www.gapen.com
Gator Bait Tackle - www.gatorbaittackle.com
Gill Fishing - www.gillfishing.com
Grundens USA - www.grundens.com
Habit Apparel - www.habitoutdoors.com
Hawke Sport Optics - www.hawkeoptics.com
HHA Sports - www.HHAsports.com
Hi Mountain Seasonings - www.himtnjerky.com
Hobie Eyewear - www.hobieeyewear.com
Hornady Manufacturing - www.hornady.com
Indiana Destination Development Corporation - www.visitindiana.com
Kehrer Fish Co - www.kehrerfishcompany.com
Lawrence County Tourism - www.limestonecountry.com
LensPen - www.lenspen.com
Li'L Tuffy Swim-bait - www.ramblingangler.com
Madison CVB - www.visitmadison.org
MEC Outdoors - www.mecoutdoors.com
Mepps by Sheldon's, Inc - www.mepps.com
Mercer Sport - www.mercersport.com
Mister Twister - www.mistertwister.com
MOJO Outdoors - www.mojooutdoors.com
Moving Water Outfitters - www.mwoutfitters.com
Nat'l Shooting Sports Foundation - www.nssf.org
National Wild Turkey Federation - www.nwtf.org
Nesco Vacuum Sealers - www.nesco.com
Norsemen Outdoors - www.norsemenoutdoors.com
Nothead Tackle - www.notheadtackle.com
O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc. - www.mossberg.com
Off Shore Tackle - www.offshoretackle.com
Old Salt Angling - www.oldsaltangling.com
Otis Technology - www.otistec.com
Outdoor Edge - www.outdooredge.com
Owner Hooks - www.ownerhooks.com
Pheasants Forever - www.pheasantsforever.org
Pradco - www.pradcooutdoorbrands.com
Pro-Cure Bait Scents - www.pro-cure.com
Pure Fishing - www.purefishing.com
Quad 4 Plastics - www.quad4plastics.com
Rapala VMC - www.rapala.com
RCBS - www.rcbs.com
Renfro Productions - www.renfroproductions.com
Riton Optics - www.ritonoptics.com
Roberts Camera - www.robertscamera.com
Safari Club International - www.safariclub.org
Seaguar Fishing Lines - www.seaguar.com
Shipshevana/LaGrange County CVB - www.visitshipshevana.org
Shooter's Choice - www.shooters-choice.com
Sierra Bullets - www.sierrabullets.com
Speedhook Specialists - www.speedhook.com
Sporting Classics - www.sportingclassics.com
Spypoint Trail Cameras - www.spypoint.com
St. Croix Rods - www.stcroixrods.com
Steuben County Tourism - www.visitsteubencounty.com
Sturm, Ruger & Co. - www.ruger.com
Swab-Its - www.swab-its.com
Sweet Owen CVB - www.sweetowencvb.org
Target Communications Outdoor Books - www.targetcommbooks.com
Toyota Motor Sales - www.toyotanewsroom.com
Traveler's Guide to Firearms Laws of 50 States - www.bookvalueusa.com
TTI-Blakemore Fishing - www.ttiblakemore.com
Vicious Fishing - www.getvicious.com
Visit Madison, Indiana - www.visitmadison.org
Vortex Optics - www.vortexoptics.com
Whitetails Unlimited - www.whitetailsunlimited.com
Winchester Ammunition - www.winchester.com
W.R. Case - www.wrcase.com
Z-Man Fishing - www.zmanfishing.com

HOW members are encouraged to check these websites for general info and answers to product and service questions.

Hoosier Outdoor Writers

Application For New Membership

(Check Desired Classification below)

- \$30 _____ Active
- \$25 _____ Associate
- \$50 _____ Supporting
- \$15 _____ Active Student
- \$10 _____ Associate Student

Personal Information:

Name: _____
Company (Supporting members only): _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Professional Information:

Employer (if outdoor-related): _____ Position: _____
Business Address: _____
Business Phone: _____

1. Describe your work in the outdoor field: Full Time _____ Part Time _____

2. Check your field(s) of outdoor work:

_____ Newspapers	_____ Magazine	_____ Radio	_____ Artist
_____ Books	_____ Photography	_____ Lectures	
_____ Television	_____ Teaching	_____ Trade Journals	
_____ Blog/Online Work	_____ Public relations	_____ Government Info - Ed	
_____ Other (Specify): _____			

3. Are you paid for your outdoor work? Yes _____ No _____

4. Your work is published or disseminated: Daily ____; Weekly ____; Monthly ____; ____ times a year

Attach samples or other proof of your work in the outdoor field: newspaper clips, letters from station managers attesting to frequency of radio or TV broadcasts, lecture schedule or publicity clips, photo clips or artistic prints, title of latest book, masthead of trade journal showing your position, etc.

Send completed application and article copies to: **Tom Berg, 2142 Nondorf Street, Dyer, IN 46311.**

I have read the principles and membership requirements of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers and would like to enroll in the classification checked above.

Signature: _____

Sponsor: _____

Who We Are

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers was formed in 1969 and has brought together many diverse groups and individuals with shared interests. The Hoosier Outdoor Writers, known among its members as HOW, is a group of dedicated media professionals who are keenly interested in the wise use of natural resources in the Hoosier State.

What We Do

These are the purposes of HOW:

1. To improve ourselves in the art, skill and effectiveness of our craft, and to increase knowledge and understanding of the whole state.
2. To help ensure the wisest and best conservation of Indiana's resources, and the most wide-spread fair use of Indiana's recreational potential.
3. To provide a vehicle for bringing together and joining in common cause all Hoosiers who by profession, hobby or interest are devoted to the outdoors.
4. Conduct an annual Awards-In-Craft Contest among its members. The award winners are announced each year at HOW's annual conference.

What We Stand For

These are what we strive to accomplish:

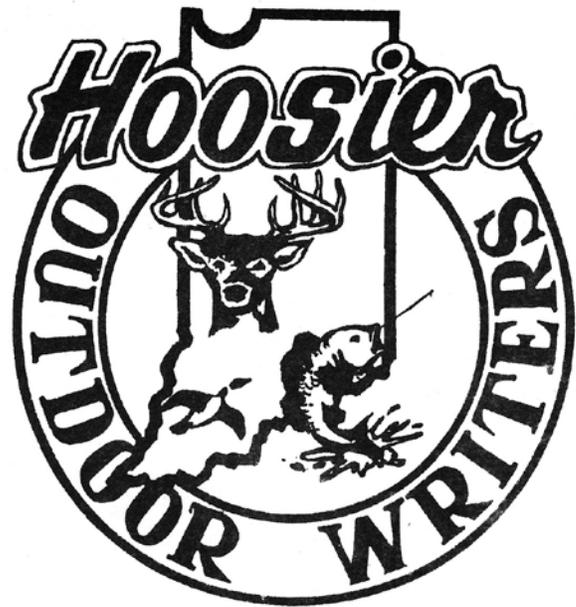
1. To give the profession of outdoor writing/reporting greater recognition and understanding, even higher standards and enlarged scope.
2. To encourage and enforce high standards of professional ethics.
3. To strive always for the truth, accuracy, clarity and completeness in the dissemination of outdoor information.
4. To help friends and fight the foes of wisely conserved Indiana resources.

Membership Requirements

Membership is open to anyone who meets one of the following:

1. Active

Members are those regularly engaged in the paid dissemination of outdoor-oriented information via newspapers, radio, television, internet/online, magazines, trade journals, books, photographs, art, lectures, or other fitting media. (Basic guidelines of "regularity" of dissemination are: 20 newspaper articles, photos or broadcasts a year; 20 online



articles, blogs, vlogs or podcasts a year; two national or four regional magazines or specialty journal articles a year, or one book, 10 lectures, or 20 bona fide outdoor news releases a year). The legal advisor for the association shall be an active member without meeting the basic guidelines.

2. Associate

Members are those who have a strong direct interest in the outdoors, either professional or personal, such as conservationists of all kinds; nature lovers; sportsmen; outdoorsmen; public employees in outdoor fields; educators teaching related subjects; fishing guides and tournament anglers, and retail-level dealers in outdoor goods, equipment or facilities.

3. Supporting

Members are those engaged in major commercial efforts directly related to the outdoors, such as manufacturers, distributors, service providers, manufacturers' representatives, or advertising agencies serving any of these.

4. Active Student

Members are those between the ages of 18 and 24 years who are bona fide college students with a major in journalism, communications, or natural resources sciences.

5. Associate Student

Members are those who are students who have an active interest in the outdoors in the areas of fishing, hunting, boating, hiking, nature, ecology, or in preserving the environment in general.

Calendar of Events

NWTF 2026 Convention and Sport Show:

(www.nwtf.org)

Nashville, TN

February 12-14, 2026

SCI 2026 Convention:

(<https://convention.safariclub.org/>)

Nashville, TN

February 18-21, 2026

Ford Indianapolis Boat, Sport & Travel Show:

(www.IndySportShow.com)

Indianapolis, IN

February 20-22 & 25-March 1, 2026

Indiana Deer, Turkey & Waterfowl Expo:

(www.IndySportShow.com)

Indianapolis, IN

February 27-March 1, 2026

HOW 2026 Annual Conference:

(www.HoosierOutdoorWriters.org)

Potawatomi Inn, Pokagon State Park
Angola, IN

April 10-12, 2026

(Annual meeting on April 11)

NRA 2026 Annual Meeting and Exhibits:

(www.nraam.org)

Houston, TX

April 16-19, 2026

2026 POMA Summit:

(www.professionalooutdoormedia.org)

Hugo, MN

May 26-28, 2026

HOW members may submit upcoming events, along with dates, locations and other details to the newsletter editor at: director@hoosieroutdoorwriters.org for possible inclusion in future issues of *The Blade*.