



# Volunteer View

*(A newsletter for IDNR State Park and Reservoirs Volunteers who have dedicated 50 + hours and are still active. Thank You!)*

**Spring 2014**

## 2013 State Parks and Reservoirs Volunteer of the Year

Submitted by Harmonie State Park staff

### Tim Barnes Harmonie State Park

In 2008 the thought of a mountain bike trail at Harmonie State Park was just a dream. The management team, not being mountain bikers themselves, had many questions. Where would the trail be located? How would the trail be built? Who would help us maintain them? Who could share their knowledge with management about mountain biking and be a voice sharing the wants and needs of the mountain biking community?

Six years later, thanks to our nominee, Tim Barnes (pictured right and below), many of those questions have been answered and our mountain bike trails are a huge success. Because of Tim's hard work and dedication we have a 4 mile beginner loop trail. We also have 6 miles of intermediate trail completed and another several miles under construction or flagged. Tim, who is retired, has made the mountain bike trails at Harmonie one of his passion projects. In the last several years, Tim has



logged well over one thousand hours volunteering on our mountain bike trails.

Tim works with HMBA on new trail development. He has walked many miles with Paul and Alex flagging new trail. Tim then communicates with management on the new trail location. Tim has created a team of trail builders who currently work on building new trail. He oversees their work and when he sees a problem he will voice his concerns and work with management on the appropriate course of action. He will then go out and fix the problem. Tim also works tirelessly on maintaining the trails. He will put in countless hours working on the trails in the spring making sure they are cleaned up and ready when the weather turns nice and it is prime time for riding. After a storm or

*Continued on page 2...*

### *Harmonie Volunteer continued...*

strong winds you can count on seeing Tim show up at the office to sign in because he is heading out to clear trees off the trails. Tim knows how important it is to keep riders off the trails when they are wet so he has put together a small team of riders who will come out and check the trails and let the park know if the mountain bike trails need to be closed. He then makes sure to post the trail conditions on the HMBA website, which he also monitors. Tim has a relationship with the Evansville Mountain Bike Association and works with them to support our trails. Tim helps coordinate many trail several days each year. Some of these work days are sponsored by local businesses through EMBA. Tim organizes an annual cookout and volunteer appreciation event for all of the mountain bike volunteers at the end of the season. This year Tim has set his sights on starting the first annual mountain bike family weekend with camping, racing, games, and events for the whole family. We look forward to working with him on this.

The mountain bike trails at Harmonie State Park have been a huge success. Riders from all over our region ride our trails regularly. Countless people drive 30-40 minutes or more each week in the summer to ride our trails. This trail system has made a big impact on our community. It wouldn't be hard to find someone who found their love of mountain biking on our trails. Many people truly appreciate Tim's passion, hard work, and dedication to the mountain bike trails at Harmonie.

## **2013 State Parks and Reservoirs Volunteers of the Year Too!**

Submitted by Jason Hickman, Assistant Property Manager, Tippecanoe River State Park

### John Wheeler and Jon Chapman Tippecanoe River State Park

Ever since the formation of the Friends of Tippecanoe River in February of 2012, Jon Chapman and John Wheeler have been committed and energetic volunteers for Tippecanoe River State Park. They both have been involved in supporting the park's special events and projects throughout the entire park. The Friend's group has been extremely successful in building partnerships from the community to Tippecanoe River State Park. The early success of the Friend's group can be attributed to their endless energy and commitment to the property.

Jon Chapman's two passions for the property include wildlife watching and promoting the property as an asset for Pulaski County. John comes out to the property very often ensuring that the nature center's bird feeders are filled even during the winter. John

has been instrumental in the success of many of the property's outreach events; Volunteer Day, Friends program at Halloween, and Christmas in the Park at the Nature Center. Jon has worked hard to ensure that these events have been a success by organizing volunteers, purchasing supplies, and promotion of these events in the local community. Jon's biggest work involved, two of the property's greatest success; the replacement of the River Overlook and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary raffle. John was very diligent in raising money for the property on its 70<sup>th</sup>

*Continued on page 3...*



Pictured, Jason Hickman, Assistant Property Manager Tippecanoe River State Park, John Wheeler, Jon Chapman and Vernon Gillum, Property Manager, Tippecanoe River State Park

*Tippecanoe Volunteers continued...*

birthday and worked with the Local Kiwanis group to have a raffle of local crafts. This fundraiser went from early summer all the way until Halloween and brought the Friends Group an estimated 1,900 dollars.

As an avid Horse Rider, it would be easy to see where John Wheeler's passion lies at Tippecanoe River State Park. Not only has Jon worked to improve area's that impact horses but has played a big part in accomplishing many tasks that benefit the rest of the property. John has many contacts with contractors in the local community and he has used that to his advantage to benefit the property. John assisted park staff with his ability to bring a bucket truck onto the property and trim trees in the horse camp so they wouldn't damage trailers or dead branches wouldn't injure horse riders. John's ability to procure a bucket truck allowed him to assist park staff in removing a large tree around the service area. Without his help, the park would have had to contract this out to a tree trimming business. John has worked tirelessly to ensure the safety of horse riders by painting horse crossings to alert vehicles that they are nearing a crossing area. John's biggest work involved the replacement of the River Overlook.

Without the help of these two volunteers the property would not have been able to accomplish one of its major goals this past year. Replacing the river overlook at the nature center was very time consuming for these two individuals. (Pictured right) The amount of time put into this project before construction began was tremendous. Jon Chap-



man's tireless efforts to secure donations that could pay for all the materials were very important. Due to weather conditions that prevented work from being done over an extended amount of time, Jon ensured that the project stayed organized over several months. John Wheeler's efforts to secure donations of construction materials from local companies were most helpful as he secured donations of materials in the amount of 3,500 dollars. John Wheeler did an excellent job serving as construction supervisor from start to finish on this project. John Wheeler's welding skills were extremely important in the completion of the brackets and supports that were fabricated.

As much as these two members donated throughout the past year to support the Friends Group and Tippecanoe River State Park, they finished the year off playing two special roles for the Friends Sponsored Christmas in the Park event. John Wheeler with his Santa Claus looking demeanor stepped up to play Santa for all the kids to enjoy. Jon Chapman with his high energy stepped right into the Smokey outfit and provided several hours of enjoyment for all the visitors to Tippecanoe River State Park on a cold snowy day in December.

The spirit, energy, and commitment that these two men have towards Tippecanoe River State Park are what any manager would love to have out of every volunteer.



## Plants being preserved

By Jim Eagleman, Naturalist, Brown County SP

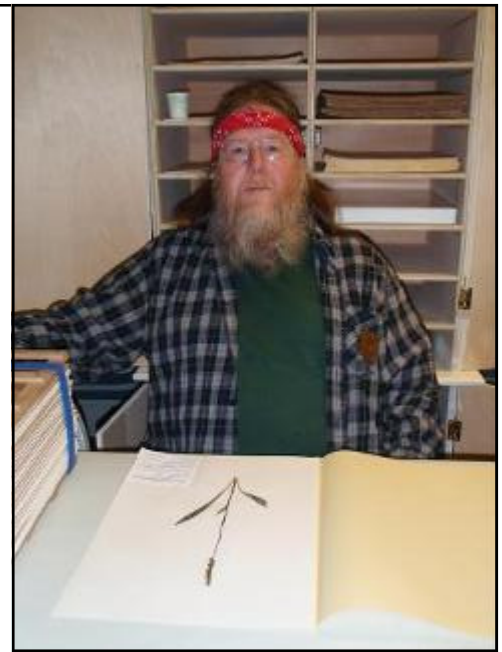
David Mow has been interested in nature his whole life. Learning about Native Americans' use of plants and reading Euell Gibbons as a child, he majored in agriculture in high school. After graduation he joined the Navy seeing the world (Philippines, Africa, Spain, Italy, Greece, Israel and the Persian Gulf). He was an instructor at Great Lakes Naval Training Center for three years. After the Navy he worked in a flooring mill looking at wood ten hours a day, photographing and identifying plants in his spare time. He took Master Gardener course in 2004 and Master Naturalist in 2005. He became a member of INPAWS (Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society) in 2006.

In 2008 a member of master gardeners and board member of Morgan County Parks & Recreation, asked him to make a list of plants on the new property the county had acquired from the IDNR. While compiling the list he started inviting the public to join him on wildflower walks. That progressed to offering talks about wildflowers for various groups. Looking to improve his public presentations, he took the IDNR interpreters training course. Then hoping to expand his collection of wildflower photos, he also took a class on local flora offered last summer, 2013 at Brown County by the IN Academy of Science and botanists from Ball State University. When Jim Eagleman, interpretive naturalist at Brown County State Park told David it was his dream to have a herbarium collection at the park's nature center, he volunteered.

To work on the plant collection at Brown County State Park, David drives 25 miles from his home, then hikes park trails looking for plants in flower. Applying for and receiving a DNR scientific collecting permit, David identifies the plant, locating a specimen that is a candidate for collection and would fit nicely in the plant press. Sometimes this requires collecting a plant and taking it back to the press, sometimes taking the press to the plant, so wilting is minimal. When collecting, David takes notes on location (GPS and a text description) and the habitat. Back

at the Nature Center, he arranges plants in the press so identifying features are visible. While plants are drying in the press, he researches the Latin and common name and lists the recognized authority to add to the label. When the plant is dry and the label printed, he attaches the plant and label to the herbarium sheet and places it in a plant family folder.

The herbarium collection and plant files at Brown County State Park Nature Center were recently housed into an upright, wooden cabinet, constructed by park carpenter, Tim Percifield (Pictured left). Now David and staff have a place to organize property plants, using the collected specimens for programs, talks on the need for plant conservation and natural area preservation. Says Jim Eagleman, "...visitors need to understand our parks, these biologic store-houses of diversity, are what make Indiana's natural areas healthy and sustainable. David's work allows us a sample look at our vegetative communities and what herbaceous plants they are composed of. I couldn't be happier to finally have them accessible and to record what it is we have out there!"



Above: David Mow showing part of his herbarium collection at Brown County State Park.

Below: Details included for each species.

DNR/Brown County State Park Herbarium Nashville, IN 47448	
FAMILY: Euphorbiaceae	(Spurge Family)
Genus: Euphorbia	
species: dentata	aut. cit. Michx.
Common Name(s): Spurge	var. Toothed
Location (GPS coordinates): N39°08'40.1"W086°13'14.2"	
Slope/Perspective: creek side of Strahl Dam	
habitat description: regrown area after mowing	
Collector: D. Mow	
Date: Oct. 4, 2013	BCSP Collection: #62



## Spreading the knowledge

Submitted by Brad Walker, Assistant Property Manager, Versailles State Park

The Friends of Versailles State Park held a trail building class early spring. Around 20 participants in all. This picture is of the classroom part of the presentation. Guy Schwering was the presenter. In attendance we had property owners interested in building trails on their land, horseback riders, hikers, and a scout master from Lawrenceburg to learn how to correctly build trails for their scout camp. Guy is explaining erosion techniques, grade and percentage requirements.



Thanks to our Friends group for their support of the park!

## I am amazed.

Submitted by Jessica Rosier, Interpretive Naturalist Mounds State Park

Sara Steckbeck, a woman currently taking the IMN class at Ft. Harrison, has blown me away.

When I helped with the class in January, I casually mentioned needing volunteers to sew historic costumes for Bronnensberg Home events. The very next day, Sara emailed me and said she knew how to sew and would give it a shot.

Long story short, six weeks later I have some of the most beautiful clothing I've ever seen. Wool capes with embroidery, bonnets with decorative stitching, simple cotton farm dresses, aprons, and more. The



clothing will help bring history to life as we interpret our pioneer era at the park.

Sara's husband, Jerry, is also in the IMN class. Together, they've gathered grapevine for our Grapevine Wreath Workshop and have also built a gigantic bird's nest for children to play in with the help of cadets from the Hoosier Youth Challenge Academy.





Just to let you all know that we had a great volunteer appreciation luncheon/meeting for acknowledging 2013 and starting off 2014. We had 87 dedicated volunteers in attendance from camp hosts and trail workers, to nature center hosts and pioneers. Even one of our volunteer donated over \$100 in pork chop and steaks. Great fellowship and support along with great food.

Thanks,  
Jarrett Manek,  
Naturalist-Interpretive Facility Manager  
Hickory Hollow Nature Center  
O'Bannon Woods State Park



**Volunteer Sunday at Pokagon State Park sees a team of ten take on invaders**

Submitted by Fred Wooley, Interpretive Naturalist, Pokagon State Park

Ten volunteers donned work gloves, wielded loppers, and squirted herbicide on some nasty invasive plants invading park roadsides. The photo at right shows the group in front of a nearly impenetrable stand of Bush Honeysuckle, Privet, Barberry, and Multiflora Rose. An hour and half later, the group could stand at the back of the area and look through nothing but native redbud and sassafras trees! Park guests will now enjoy those native plants and views deeper into the forest.

Thank you Volunteers!



## American Aloe (*Agave virginica*)

by Michael Homoya, Botanist and Plant Ecologist with the DNR Division of Nature Preserves

As amazing as it may seem, there is desert in Indiana. It occurs in deep southern Indiana, on steep slopes where rock prevails and the soil thin. And it is dry -- very dry. With water rapidly running off the slopes due to steepness, and with little soil to absorb it, moisture is a rare commodity. Combine the dryness with the fact that such sites are typically positioned on slopes facing south -- receiving the most direct rays of the hot, summer sun -- the result is our very own piece of the Desert Southwest.



Photo source:

<http://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/imagelib/imgdetails.php?imgid=312557>

Also known by such names as glade, or barrens, our “desert” -- just like in the Southwest -- has plants that possess adaptations for surviving the heat and the drought. One plant that does this beautifully is the American aloe (*Agave virginica*).

American aloe, with its basal rosette of thick, succulent leaves, not only looks like a desert plant, but functions like one as well. The thick leaves are capable of storing considerable moisture, thus allowing the plant to withstand extended periods of drought and heat. In fact, the plant thrives in these harsh conditions, giving it a competitive edge over the majority of Indiana plants that couldn’t survive them.

In addition to function, the leaves are quite attractive, making the plant a handsome ornamental. The light green leaves are fleshy and lance-shaped, measuring up to one foot long and two inches wide. These are all basal, whereas the leaves on the flowering stem are inconspicuous. The flowering stem is usually an unbranched stalk, reaching upwards to six feet in height. It bears numerous greenish-white, tubular flowers that are quite fragrant, especially during the evening hours. The timing is apparently aimed at attracting potential pollinators, primarily sphinx moths. It blooms in July and August.

There are numerous species of *Agave* occurring in the desert southwest, but *Agave virginica* is the only one occurring naturally in the eastern U.S north of Florida. Not all botanists agree that the American aloe is an *Agave*, but rather place it in the genus *Manfreda*. Regardless of treatment, it obviously is closely aligned with *Agave*, if not actually a member of it. *Yucca* is also closely related, as is *Aloe*, to which our plant vaguely resembles (hence the common name).

Fortunately, American aloe is not a rare plant with us. It is found mostly in counties bordering the Ohio River, but does occur as far north as Lawrence County. It’s not always found in rocky sites, but that’s the usual habitat. In Posey County it grows in post oak flatwoods, a seemingly unlikely place for a “desert” plant, but even there the soil gets quite hard and dry in the summer.

American aloe, and other interesting plants of dry, rocky habitats, can be seen at Post Oak – Cedar Nature Preserve in Harrison County (<http://www.in.gov/dnr/naturepr/npdirectory/preserves/postoak.html>). A parking lot and trail are available.





The mission of Indiana's State Parks and Reservoirs is to manage and interpret our properties' unique natural, wildlife and cultural resources using principles of multiple use and preservation, while sustaining the integrity of these resources for current and future generations.

**DNR**



---

## Ford Hoosier Outdoor Experience

Midwest's largest outdoor recreational event – is searching for volunteers. The 2014 event will take place at Fort Harrison State Park in Indianapolis, 9/20-9/21. This free, family-friendly event offers more than 50 different outdoor activities and runs from 10am-6pm each day.

Volunteers will be assigned to help in five-hour shifts with one of the many on-site activities such as fishing, mountain biking, canoeing, archaeological dig and more. Come experience one of the greatest events of the year! Starting July 1<sup>st</sup> sign up to volunteer at <http://2013experiencevolunteers.eventbrite.com>.

Questions? Contact volunteer coordinator Cheryl Hampton, (317) 233-1002, [champton@dnr.in.gov](mailto:champton@dnr.in.gov). Visit us online at [www.hoosieroutdoorexperience.IN.gov](http://www.hoosieroutdoorexperience.IN.gov) or facebook.com/hoosieroutdoorexperience.

