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NEWS RELEASE:

Conservation Organization Formed to Support Indiana State Parks and State-Owned Nature Preserves

Indiana Parks Alliance has broad support from state's environmental leadership
INDIANAPOLIS—A newly formed, broad-based organization is seeking Hoosier support to help Indiana's highly regarded state parks and nature preserves. The Indiana Parks Alliance (IPA) will provide financial support for Indiana State Parks and for Indiana's State-Owned Nature Preserves and will serve as an advocate on issues confronting these parks and preserves.

Conservation leaders, past DNR employees, and private sector individuals are taking on this important responsibility as state budgets shrink and environmental challenges grow.

"We fully understand there is an abundance of excellent environmental and conservation entities in the state," says Tom Hohman, president of the Indiana Parks Alliance. "But our full focus is on state parks and state-owned nature preserves, ensuring that future generations may enjoy our premiere park system."

Indiana's state parks and nature preserves encompass over 170,000 acres, and contain more than 700 miles of trails and 2000 buildings, many dating back to the Civilian Conservation Corps era. With the aging of park facilities and increased use by guests, the IPA wants to ensure these ecologically significant areas are not only maintained but enhanced.

"Indiana's state parks and nature preserves are nationally recognized for their significance to preservation and conservation as well as the high quality of facilities and programs," states Jim Ridenour, who served as DNR director during Gov. Robert Orr's administration and Director of the National Park Service under President George H.W. Bush. "As evidenced in many states, state funding has either remained flat or declined. This is something we want to avoid in Indiana."

IPA wants to support state parks, nature preserves and the Indiana Natural Resources Foundation by providing help in scientific research, employee training, local property friends group support, key project assistance and interpretation/education. "We've developed a very good list of possible projects," stated Hohman. "Now, we are reaching out to Hoosiers to play a part in the long-term viability of our prized park system. By joining our ranks, individuals and organizations can see their contributions help protect our parks' and preserves' natural and cultural resources for their children and all future generations."

Donations are tax-deductible, and memberships can include state park annual passes and other gifts. Founder's Circle memberships are available to build a strong foundation for the organization. Visit www.indianaparksalliance.org for details and membership information.