

Annual Report



President's Report



To put it mildly, 2020 was not a good year. It will forever be remembered as the year of the pandemic. However, among conservationists it may also be remembered as the year that people rediscovered nature.

As our society shut down sporting events, theaters, restaurants, and essentially anything involving large crowds, people looked for something they could do safely. Nature was the answer.

They discovered, or in some cases rediscovered, a hike on a park trail was a great way to escape the stresses of the world.

Indiana State Parks saw a 94% increase in gate admissions in June 2020 compared with June 2019. Throughout the state, 57 trails equipped with trail counters (outside of state parks) registered a 45% increase in usage during April 2020 compared with April 2019.

This trend continued throughout the year.

While there may be some slide from these levels when our society gets back to "normal," the belief of everyone is that this increased usage will continue.

Indiana's state parks and nature preserves have been woefully underfunded for years, resulting in a huge backlog of deferred maintenance. Indiana finally recognized this in 2019, and committed \$100 million to begin to correct it.

But years of underfunding can't be corrected overnight. In addition, the increased usage indicates we now have a significant shortage of outdoor recreation opportunities, needing additional investments.

New or expanded hiking trails, campgrounds, and interpretive facilities are needed. And with these new facilities, additional staff will be required to maintain them and help Hoosiers connect with nature.

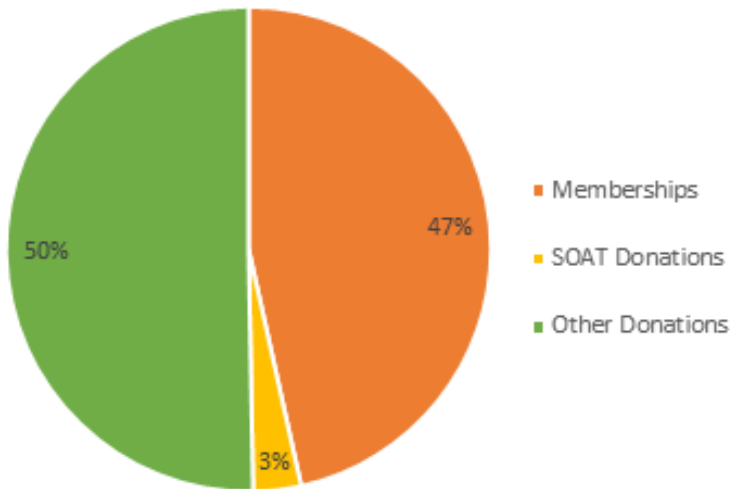
--Tom Hohman

IPA 2020 Accomplishments

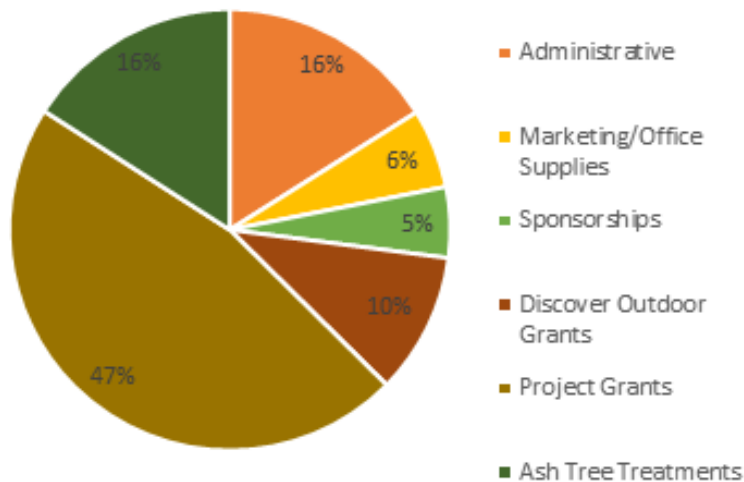
- IPA's years-long lobbying to address deferred maintenance at DNR properties finally paid off with a \$100 million commitment from the Indiana General Assembly in the 2019-21 state budget. The bulk of those funds are intended for State Parks. The State Budget Committee in 2020 allotted \$29.5 million to begin work on those projects, with the remainder promised when those funds were expended.
- Two IPA board members participated in the Indiana Conservation Alliance's completion of *Investing in Conservation*, a document that highlights the benefits of investing in conservation in terms of economic benefits, mental health benefits, physical health benefits, community benefits, and benefits during a pandemic. The study includes four case studies, two of which are state parks.
- Continued to build support for conservation by participating in virtual meetings with several legislators.
- Awarded \$4,500 in project grants to three state park friends' groups. Awards were:
 - Friends of Harmonie State Park -- \$2,000 for frost proof hydrants
 - Friends of Shakamak State Park -- \$1,000 donation to amphitheater project
 - Friends of Spring Mill State Park -- \$1,500 for pollinator garden
- Participated in the annual meeting of state park and nature preserves friends' groups, conducted virtually in 2020.
- Continued its Save Our Ash Tree program by evaluating the condition of previously treated ash trees at seven properties. The in-person evaluation will guide decisions on future treatments.
- Conducted the first IPA end-of-year fundraising campaign. It was a great learning experience that will provide a template for future campaigns.
- Improved and streamlined our process for thanking donors and sending IRS-required receipts for donations.
- Updated the website to allow for memorial donations and recurring donations.
- Adapted to pandemic limitations with effective use of virtual meetings to conduct business.
- Updated its Board Member Expectations, adapting them to better fit our organization.
- Pledged to work to ensure all people have equal opportunities to peacefully enjoy interactions with nature. A statement on that commitment is on the IPA website.

IPA 2020 Financial Summary

INCOME



EXPENSES



Watch IPA in 2021...

- Look for an award of up to \$5,000 in **small project grants** to local DNR friends groups.
- Watch for continuation of the **Save Our Ash Trees (SOAT)** campaign and tree treatment into its fourth year.
- Look for news on permanent funding of the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund that provides support to state parks and nature preserves initiatives.
- Watch for ways the Indiana Parks Alliance supports sustainable trails on DNR properties.
- Look for projects, position statements, and suggestions for contacting your federal and state lawmakers on issues at indianaparksalliance.org.

...And Get Involved!

- Join the Indiana Parks Alliance and help us build a strong financial foundation.
- If you are a state employee, you can donate to IPA through the State Employee Capital Campaign (one-time donation or payroll deduction).
- Donate to the "Save Our Ash Trees" Campaign at indianaparksalliance.org/save-our-ash-trees/.
- Use Goodshop (goodsearch.com/goodshop) or Amazon Smile (smile.amazon.com) or sign up to donate when you shop at Kroger at www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow/.
- Enjoy Wood Warbler coffee, Smithsonian-certified "bird friendly" and available whole bean or ground. Wood Warbler will send IPA a portion of your purchase. Roasted and shipped directly to you (<https://woodwarblercoffee.com/>.)
- Help us staff booths at festivals and events.
- Serve on an IPA committee.
- Recruit new members or suggest potential donors.
- Follow IPA at facebook.com/indianaparksalliance.

IPA Board Members

Thanks to these leaders for their service to Indiana State Parks and Indiana's State-Owned Dedicated Nature Preserves through the Indiana Parks Alliance. Learn about them at indianaparksalliance.org

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Plainfield

Mark Young
Vice-President
Louisville

Dan Henkel
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Treasurer
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