



## President's Report

2021 was a year of surprises.



### Surprise 1-Setback for Indiana's wetlands

Efforts to fast track a bill to gut Indiana's wetland protection laws were a surprise, given that the existing law had been forged with Republican leadership many years ago, and the efforts to repeal those protections did not have the support of the governor's office. In what was probably a surprise to those spearheading the move, conservation groups fought back hard. In addition to conservation organizations, the coalition they forged included many civic and religious groups. In all, 110 state and national organizations signed a letter to Gov. Holcomb asking him to veto the bill. While the controversial bill was passed, it was not as all-encompassing as the initial version, and included formation of a Wetlands Task Force that will make recommendations for a more balanced approach going forward. In addition, changes in national wetland policy lessened to some extent the impact of these changes.

### Surprise 2-Huge win for Indiana's state parks

The highlight of 2020 for supporters of Indiana's state parks was inclusion of \$100 million in the state budget for deferred maintenance. While \$29.5 million of this was quickly put to work, it was announced in late 2020 that the remainder would be lost to the Covid economy. In early 2021 we were greeted with the wonderful news that, due to improved state revenues, these funds would be restored. (This one tops my personal list of pleasant surprises of 2021).

### Surprise 3-New state park inns

Probably the most unexpected news of the year came when the final state budget was announced. The budget included funding for two new state park inns, to be located at Potato Creek and Prophetstown State Parks. Both had been long desired, but both were considered long term wish list items.

### Surprise 4-Big win for conservation lands, maybe

The state budget also included \$25 million in funding for purchase of conservation lands. However, celebration of this win is at least temporarily on hold. The source of the funds was federal coronavirus stimulus funds, and a question has arisen as to whether this is an allowable use of those funds.

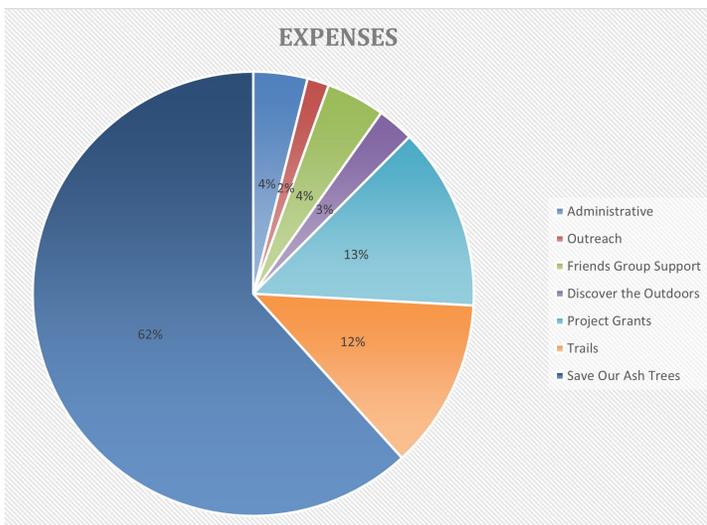
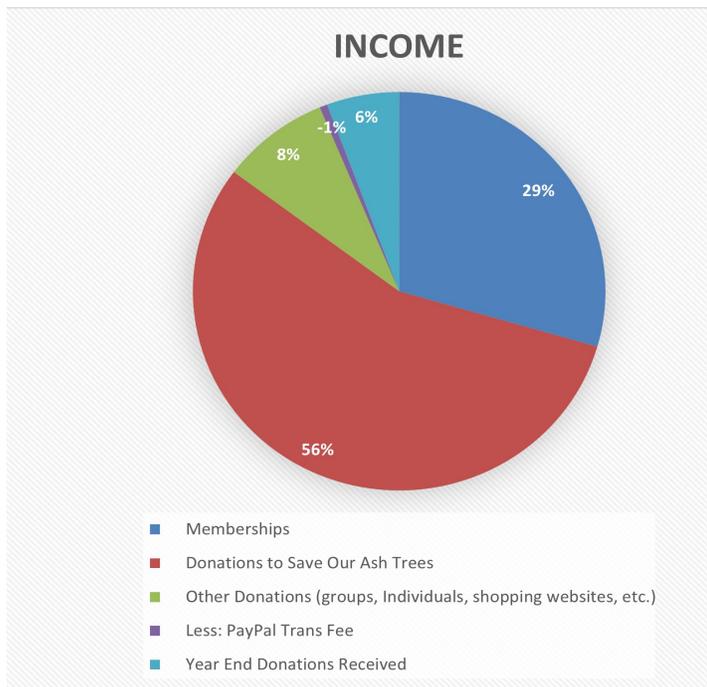
Overall, it was a very interesting year!

- Tom Hohman

## IPA 2021 Accomplishments

- Governor Holcomb released the remainder of the DNR deferred maintenance funds from the 2019-21 biennial budget. These funds, totaling \$70 million, were initially scheduled for reversion due to expected shortcomings in state revenues. IPA had been lobbying for funding for this work since the inception of the organization.
- IPA actively participated in the coalition of state conservation organizations that battled efforts to gut Indiana's wetland protection laws. While the final bill passed by the legislature represented a defeat for conservationists, the united and very public efforts of many organizations helped galvanize conservation efforts in Indiana, and should lead to long term benefits in future battles.
- Due to an influx of federal stimulus funds, state legislators included funding for some unexpected projects in the final state budget. These included two new state park inns, at Potato Creek and Prophetstown State Parks, plus \$25 million for conservation land acquisition. Along with our conservation partners, IPA had been advocating for funding for additional land acquisition for many years. While IPA had not been advocating for funding for the new state park inns, it was a welcome addition to the state budget.
- IPA fought efforts in the session to end the dedication of a portion of the Tippecanoe County Innkeeper's Tax for work at Prophetstown State Park. Ultimately the law was changed to reduce, but not eliminate, the amount dedicated for Prophetstown.
- After the legislative session ended, IPA continued to build support for future conservation efforts by participating in meetings with several legislators.
- IPA awarded \$5,000 in project grants to four state park friends' groups. Awards were:
  - Friends of Ouabache State Park -- \$2,800 for efforts to control invasive plants
  - Friends of McCormick's Creek State Park -- \$1,500 to inventory and document biota at Wolf Cave
  - Friends of Versailles State Park--\$400 to repurpose an existing nature center storeroom to a history center
  - Friends of Spring Mill State Park -- \$300 to purchase interpretive trail signs for trail 6
- IPA received approval of a \$7,000 grant from the Sam Shine Foundation to continue a study of tree growth at Donaldson Woods Nature Preserve in Spring Mill State Park.
- IPA continued the Save Our Ash Tree program with treatment of 139 ash trees at 6 state park and nature preserve properties. IPA also purchased an injector and chemicals for use by state park staff.
- IPA conducted our first annual virtual forum, forging a partnership with The Eppley Institute, based at Indiana University, for this planned annual event.
- IPA purchased trail counters for the Divisions of State Parks and Nature Preserves, to help them document the amount of usage their trails are receiving.

# IPA 2021 Financial Summary



## Watch IPA in 2022...

- Look for an award of up to \$5,000 in small project grants to local DNR friends groups.
- Watch for ways the Indiana Parks Alliance supports sustainable trails on DNR properties.
- Watch for continuation of the Save Our Ash Trees (SOAT) campaign and tree treatment into its fifth year.
- Look for news on the status of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) in Congress
- Look for news on the actions of the Indiana Wetlands Task Force.
- Look for projects, position statements, and suggestions for contacting your federal and state lawmakers on issues at [indianaparksalliance.org](http://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 IPA's ["Save Our Ash Trees" Campaign](#).
- Use [Goodshop](#), designate IPA as your charity of choice when you shop on [Amazon](#), or sign up to donate when you shop at [Kroger](#).
- Contact your legislator and let them know that state parks and nature preserves are important to you. You can email your legislator thru the Indiana General Assembly website, <http://iga.in.gov/>.
- 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](https://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](http://indianaparksalliance.org)

**Tom Hohman**  
*President*  
Plainfield

**Mark Young**  
*Vice President*  
Louisville

**Dan Henkel**  
*Secretary*  
Indianapolis

**Sonok Deutscher**  
*Treasurer*  
Avon

**John Bacone**  
Indianapolis

**Steve Barker**  
LaPorte

**John Bergman**  
Fishers

**John Goss**  
*Vice President*  
McCordsville

**Tom Burkhart**  
Shelburn

**Lori Kaplan**  
Indianapolis

**Troy McCormick**  
Jeffersonville

**Jerry Pagac**  
Bloomington

**Milt Grissom**  
Franklin

**Stephanie Schuck**  
Indianapolis

**Jeff Seidenstein**  
Indianapolis

**Sarah Nichter**  
Fort Wayne

**Joe Wynns**  
Indianapolis