



THE NEWT

NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2023



Photo by George Grall
National Geographic



Photo by Todd Pierson
Indiana Herp Atlas, Purdue Fort Wayne

What is a newt? Well, for us here at NEIWT, it's our new bi-monthly newsletter! Welcome to our first issue!

In nature, a newt is a type salamander with a unique life cycle. Like other amphibians, newts begin their lives in the water as tadpoles with gills. Most amphibians only leave the water as adults, but newts morph into a land-dwelling juvenile stage when they develop legs, lungs, and bright red or orange skin that serves as a warning to predators that it contains toxins. In this phase, they are called red efts, and they travel long distances through the woods in search of new breeding ponds. Then they return to the water and morph again into aquatic adults with olive green skin. Newts are common throughout Indiana's forests, lakes, and streams, and they eat invertebrates like mosquito larvae. And for that, on behalf of all paddlers, we say, "Thank you, newts!"



IN THIS ISSUE



WHO WE ARE

- Our mission
- Our accomplishments
- What we're working on now
- How you can help!

PEDAL PADDLE PLAY

- Highlights from PPP 2023
- Save the date for PPP 2024
- What's in store for you
- How to participate!

PADDLE SOCIALS

- Where we've been
- What we've seen
- Where we're going next
- How to join in the fun!



● OUR MISSION ●

● OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS ●

Northeast Indiana Water Trails: Bringing the Rivers into Your Life!

The Northeast Indiana Water Trails is a regional partnership working to increase recreation opportunities on our waterways by promoting boat access, water safety and stewardship, and the development of regional water trails that will empower our citizens to become more active in our water resources.

NEIWT was formed in 2015 after a group of individuals from throughout the region got together to talk about how to activate the rivers in NE Indiana. There was discussion on improving water quality, increasing access for man-powered water recreation, disseminating information about water safety and quality, improving the safety of the rivers for water sports, and connecting the community to the 566 miles of flowing waters in the 10-county NE Indiana region. Forging forward, we sought assistance from the National Park Service: Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to help with our strategic plan to give us a vision for the future of water trails in NE Indiana! Find our strategic plan [here](#).



Since its inception, the partnership has had several successes including:

- Developing a waterproof water trail map for the Western Lake Erie Basin in IN, available at Fort Wayne Outfitters and Bike Depot, Steady Eddy's in Leo, and Visit Fort Wayne (\$5 suggested donation).
- Coordinating the installation of two new public boat access sites and making improvements to another.
- Hosting our 8th annual Pedal, Paddle, Play, our yearly fundraiser and community event to encourage more people to experience NE Indiana's water trails.
- Providing education and outreach at community events for all ages regarding water quality, safe water recreation, and the benefits of outdoor recreation.
- Assisting dam owners with installation of warning signs about the dangers of low head dams through our #damdangerous signage program.
- Partnering with land owners and municipalities throughout the region to install trailhead signs at public access sites providing wayfinding, safety, and interpretive information.
- Providing a one-stop-shop for all things paddling in NE Indiana at neiwatertrails.com (including an [interactive water trail map!](#)).



● WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON ●

● HOW YOU CAN HELP ●

- Developing twelve trailhead signs for put-in sites on the Wabash and Eel rivers
- Planning our 2024 social and fundraising events. More information will be provided in the January-February edition of The Newt
- Developing content for the newsletter, social media, and our website
- Planning interviews for a future podcast
- Seeking additional partners and donors to help us increase our reach and impact on the region

- Join the NEIWT board
- Join the marketing, fundraising, or event planning subcommittee
- Volunteer to represent NEIWT at community events, lead a paddle social, or help us with nature and event photography
- Spread the word in your community about NEIWT and what we do
- Get out there and paddle, then share your paddle stories with us

PEDAL, PADDLE, PLAY!

THANK YOU, 2023 SPONSORS!



Three Rivers Federal Credit Union
 Wane 15 News
 Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation
 Riverfront Fort Wayne
 Fort Wayne Outfitters and Bike Depot
 Sweetwater



Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

SAVE THE DATE FOR NEXT YEAR! JULY 20, 2024



If you are interested in being a 2024 sponsor, email us at neiwaterrails@gmail.com!

Thank you to everyone who participated this year and helped us raise over \$4,000 for the water trails!



Pedal Paddle Play is our annual summer fundraiser event featuring boating, biking, scavenger hunts, music, information booths, giveaways, games, and prizes. Proceeds from this event help us create trailhead signs with maps, safety tips, and information about site-specific history, local wildlife, and fishing. See an example of our signs below!

Guldlin Trailhead Sign Front

Guldlin Trailhead Sign Back



PADDLE SOCIALS



We were thrilled to host monthly paddle socials for the first time this year! We got more people out on the water, met fellow paddling enthusiasts, and made some new friends! Here's where we went:

MAY	Pigeon River	Mongo	4.0 MI
JUNE	St. Joseph River	Spencerville	9.5 MI
JULY	Salamonie River	Lancaster	3.5 MI
AUG	Eel River	N. Manchester	10.0 MI
SEPT	St. Joseph River	Fort Wayne	4.2 MI
OCT	St. Joseph River	Leo-Cedarville	3.5 MI



Paddle Social dates for 2024 will be announced in the January-February newsletter. Follow us on Facebook to stay aware of upcoming events and date or location changes.





OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS



New NEIWT Team Member

We would like to welcome our new Creative Director, Amanda Black!



Amanda recently joined our team to help us with media content development, marketing, and fundraising. She also works for Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation as the Sweet Breeze Administrator, and is a member of the Parks Paddlers dragon boat team. She is a life-long avid outdoors enthusiast who has spent many hours hiking, camping, horseback riding, and paddling all over the Midwest. She is originally from Michigan and has lived in Fort Wayne for seven years. Welcome, Amanda!

Supporter Stickers

We are now offering NEIWT Supporter stickers for donors who contribute at least \$250 to our organization. Of course, it will be fun to show off your expensive new sticker, but being a supporter is so much more! It provides fuel for the organization to continue its mission of increasing access for paddle sports on 566 miles of flowing water in NE Indiana by underwriting our costs for computer services, keeping our website going, and providing support for our staff. This is just one small way that we can say “THANK YOU!”

Watch for the next issue of
The Newt
To come out in January!



Click the sticker to donate online
Or send a check to:
NEI Water Trails
PO Box 327
Huntertown, IN 46748-9998