



# THE NEWT

NEWSLETTER  
MAY - JUNE 2024



## Paddling Season Is Here!!!

Now that paddling season is upon us, remember to snap some photos while you're out having fun on the water, and tag us on Facebook! Each season we will choose one of your pics to become our new cover photo, and the winner will receive a prize pack!



### IN THIS ISSUE

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

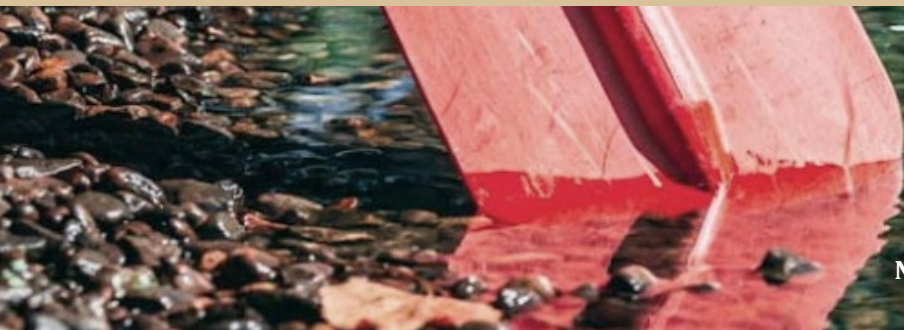
June Podcast  
May & June Paddle Socials  
Pedal Paddle Play

#### SEASONAL SAFETY

Season starter checklist  
Dams and flash floods  
Essential precautions

#### TRIP HIGHLIGHT

Pigeon River  
from Pigeon Creek  
to Mongo Millpond



## NEXT PODCAST



The next podcast episode will air on June 5<sup>th</sup>, featuring David Van Gilder. David is the senior policy and legal director of the Hoosier Environmental Council, the president of PFW's Environmental Resources Center advisory council, and serves on multiple boards. He talks with us about the accomplishments of [Friends of Cedar Creek](#), and how you can make an impact on water quality right at home.



## UPCOMING PADDLE SOCIALS

**Date:** Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
**Time:** 2:00pm  
**Put-in:** [County Road 301, Vera Cruz \(40.699028, -85.081905\)](#)  
**Take-out:** [White Bridge Picnic Area](#) or [Main St. Bridge, Bluffton \(40.742873, -85.170180\)](#)  
**Total Miles:** 4.3 or 6.4 miles  
**Estimated paddle:** 2 - 4 hours

We will put in at the bridge just south of Vera Cruz. This is the site the Wells County Trails will be improving later this year!! We will paddle through the awesome Ouabache State Park and you have the option to take out at the White Bridge Picnic Area near the intersection of S 450 E and River Rd. You may decide to keep going and paddle through more forested river banks until we get closer to Bluffton when we will start to see signs of human life again, and take out at the Main Street bridge in Bluffton. This will be an awesome paddle as Bald Eagles are often observed along the Wabash River as well as Great Blue Herons, turtles, and more! No registration required. We have limited space available if anyone needs a shuttle. Contact us at [neiwatertails@gmail.com](mailto:neiwatertails@gmail.com) to reserve your

**Date:** Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
**Time:** 10:00am  
**Put-in:** [Cedar Creek SR1 DNR Public Access Site](#)  
**Take-out:** [St. Joseph River Mayhew Rd DNR Public Access Site](#)  
**Total Miles:** 6.5 miles  
**Estimated paddle:** 3 hours

We will be joined by Paul DeRolf, Fisheries Biologist and owner of Beautiful Bait blog and photography, and Kyle Quandt, Project Manager of the Cedar Creek Watershed Project with the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative. We will start this paddle with some fun facts about the diversity of fish and macroinvertebrates (the bugs) that live in the Cedar Creek and how they are used as a tool to assess water quality. Paul will have some specimens to look at on land and we may even get the chance to pick-up a net and wade out into the creek to see what we find. Then we take off for a beautiful and relaxing paddle exploring two NE Indiana rivers. No registration required. We have limited space available if anyone needs a shuttle. Contact us at [neiwatertails@gmail.com](mailto:neiwatertails@gmail.com) to reserve your seat in the shuttle.

# THREERIVERSFESTIVAL

9th ANNUAL



Pedal



Paddle



Play

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IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



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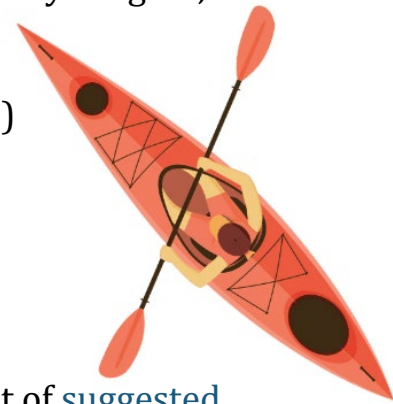


## PADDLE SEASON CHECKLIST



Now that the weather is warming up, it's time for a Spring checklist! Dig out your gear, make sure it's safe, and make some plans!

1. Clean your boat (remove mouse nests, spider webs, leaves, dirt, etc.)
2. Inspect your equipment (look for cracks, rust, tears, missing parts)
3. Install/inspect transportation gear (roof rack, trailer, straps, etc.)
4. Check PFD integrity (seams, buckles, zippers, fit, etc.)
5. Pack a dry bag (first aid kit, sunscreen, maps/GPS, flashlight, etc.)
6. Plan a trip at [neiwatertails.com/plan-your-trip](http://neiwatertails.com/plan-your-trip)



Our website has an [interactive map](#) with outfitters and access points, a list of [suggested trips](#) with detailed descriptions, [water level and weather information](#) to check before you go, and pro tips on [choosing the right gear](#).



## TRIP HIGHLIGHT



### Pigeon Creek to Mongo Millpond on Pigeon River

Entry is river left on County Road 1100 W (41.67073, -85.19519)

Exit is river right at the Mongo Dam and just downstream of SR 3 (41.684774, -85.280526)

Distance is approximately 9 miles and will take the average paddler 4 - 4.5 hours.

The Pigeon River in Lagrange County is a beautiful waterway and is often clearer than other rivers in Indiana. This stretch of river is a bit of a challenge due to it curving its way through the 11,794-acre, DNR managed, Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife area. As a matter of fact, this entire stretch passes through the DNR property which opens up the possibility of seeing many wildlife species including water fowl, Blue Heron, cranes, deer, raccoon, beaver and more. Be advised that this stretch is more popular on the weekends beginning Memorial Day weekend, but dies down significantly in the fall which is a great time to view the beautiful colors of Autumn in Indiana. There is parking available at the put-in and near the take out, but no other amenities are at either site. However, the takeout is located in Mongo where you will find a gas station/convenience store with hot food options. Additionally, if you do not have your own watercraft you can rent from one of two outfitters located in Mongo including Trading Post Outfitters and Mongo River Run.



### Dams: Invisible Hazards

One of the most significant hazards paddlers encounter on rivers is low head dams. Often inconspicuous from a distance, low head dams pose serious threats to unsuspecting paddlers. Approaching a dam without proper awareness and precautions can lead to [disastrous consequences](#).

Dams create powerful hydraulic currents and turbulent water conditions, making them treacherous obstacles for paddlers. Additionally, the undertows near dams can trap and pull paddlers underwater, presenting a drowning risk. Even experienced paddlers can find themselves caught off guard by the swift and unpredictable currents generated by dam structures.

To mitigate the risks associated with dams, paddlers must familiarize themselves with the waterways they intend to navigate. Visit this [DNR webpage](#) for a map with low head dam locations in Indiana. Furthermore, maintaining a safe distance from dams and adhering to warning signs and buoy markers are essential precautions for paddling near these structures. Many dams do not have signs or buoys, but one of our goals at NEIWT is to put our #DamDangerous signs in all NE Indiana dam areas.

### Flash Floods: Nature's Unpredictability

Springtime brings an increased likelihood of flash floods, sudden and rapid rises in water levels caused by heavy rainfall or snowmelt. Flash floods can transform tranquil rivers into raging torrents within minutes, catching paddlers unaware and unprepared.

Paddlers must stay vigilant and monitor weather forecasts closely before embarking on river trips, especially during the spring season. Even if the skies appear clear at the outset, distant storms can unleash torrents of water upstream, leading to rapidly rising river levels downstream.

When paddling in areas prone to flash floods, paddlers should maintain situational awareness and be prepared to react swiftly to changing conditions. Planning escape routes and knowing evacuation points along the riverbanks can be lifesaving strategies in the event of a sudden flood. Additionally, carrying communication devices such as cell phones or radios enables paddlers to summon assistance if they find themselves in perilous situations.

### Safety First: Essential Precautions

Beyond specific hazards like dams and flash floods, paddlers should adhere to fundamental safety practices to minimize risks while on the water:

- Wear a [properly fitted personal flotation device](#) (PFD) at all times.
- Equip kayaks and canoes with essential safety gear, including throw ropes, whistles, and first aid kits.
- Always go with a group and inform others of your planned route and expected return time.
- Familiarize yourself with [basic paddling techniques](#) and [rescue procedures](#).
- Respect the power of nature and exercise caution in unfamiliar or challenging conditions.

By prioritizing safety and staying informed about potential hazards, paddlers can enjoy the beauty of spring rivers while minimizing the inherent risks. Preparedness and vigilance are the keys to a safe and enjoyable paddling experience. May is National Safe Boating Month. Follow us on social media the week of May 18th for National Safe Boating Week where we will be sharing important tips to keep you safe on the water!



## HOW TO SUPPORT NEIWT



### Join Us! We're looking for volunteers!

Are you passionate about our natural water trails? Do you have skills that could help us meet our mission? Do you want to help out at our events? Email us at [neiwatertrails@gmail.com](mailto:neiwatertrails@gmail.com) and find out how you can become part of our team!



**Click the logo to become  
an official NEIWT supporter!  
Show your support with a sticker  
on your car, bottle, or boat!**

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 to and safety of 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!"

### Become a sponsor of Pedal Paddle Play!

We are still accepting \$250 level sponsors for the upcoming Pedal Paddle Play event! You will receive the NEIWT supporter sticker, along with having your name or logo included on our website, social media, and newsletter, PLUS you get a booth space and a free registration!

Click here to view the fillable [Pedal Paddle Play sponsorship form!](#)

[Click here to donate any amount you'd like!](#)

[Every dollar counts! THANK YOU!](#)



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 and unified.

