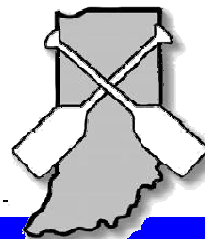


# The Hoosier Paddler

Volume 47, Issue 5

<http://www.hoosiercanoeclub.org/>

June 2009



## Fall Creek Clean Up—June 6

Kellie Kaneshiro

See you on Saturday, June 6 for the Fall Creek clean up! We'll be doing this with a little help from our Friends of the White River. We will launch from Camp Belzer right above "Killer Falls" and commence with the clean-up starting below the 465 bridge and working our way down to the Emerson take out. You can paddle either your canoe or your kayak

Fall Creek has its origin in Henry County, and flows through Madison and Hamilton County before emptying into Geist Reservoir. From the reservoir, it meanders 17.6 miles through Ft. Benjamin Harrison State Park, next to the Fall Creek Greenway trail, over a low head dam at Keystone Avenue, and all the way down to where it meets the West Fork of the White River near the IU-PUI campus.



*Kellie Kaneshiro at Killer Falls on Fall Creek*

The Indianapolis Flycasters have adopted Fall Creek from 79th street through Fort Benjamin Harrison State Park and the Dirty Dozen Hunting and Fishing club has adopted Fall Creek as it runs downtown below the Keystone Dam. We'll be cleaning the section of the river that falls in between, the same section that the HCC used for the moving water clinic on May 9th. When we scouted this stretch of Fall Creek, we saw very little trash (a good thing since it is the source of drinking water for the City of Indianapolis). Some IUPUI students held a clean-up on April 18! Our June 6 clean-up will be an opportunity to see how good (or how bad) things can look in just under two months.

This clean-up is an HCC event with help from Friends of the White River

**When:** Saturday, June 6, 9:00 am. Quitting time is anticipated to be by 1:00pm

**Where:** Camp Belzer, 6120 Boy Scout Road, Indianapolis, IN, 46226

**Stretch of Fall Creek to be cleaned up:** Below Killer Falls down to the Emerson take out—you may be pleasantly surprised.

**What to Bring:** Your boat and paddle (of course) along with your PFD, hat, sunscreen, bug spray, drinking water, gloves, protective footwear, and your poison ivy identification skills.

**RSVP:** RSVP ONLY if you need a canoe for this outing to Skipper Dan Valleskey, [danv@hoosiercanoeclub.org](mailto:danv@hoosiercanoeclub.org), For other questions concerning the clean-up, e-mail Kellie Kaneshiro at [conserv@hoosiercanoeclub.org](mailto:conserv@hoosiercanoeclub.org).

**After:** Lots of hand sanitizer and a get-together (hot dogs!) at Dan Valleskey's.

Conservation Committee: Kellie Kaneshiro, Dan Valleskey, Mary Keith, Theresa Kulczak, and Joel Delashmit

HCC June 6 Clean-Up:

<http://sites.google.com/site/hccconserv/Home/hcc-fall-creek-clean-up-saturday-june-6-2009>

HCC Conservation Committee Web Page and Fall Creek links

<http://sites.google.com/site/hccconserv/Home>

Mapquest—Camp Belzer:

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps/map.adp?address=6102%20Boy%20Scout%20Road&city=Indianapolis&state=IN>

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## *The Newsletter of the Hoosier Canoe Club*

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## Hello HCC!

Dan Valleskey

At board meetings every month, we look at the numbers of memberships, and how many get paper newsletters and how many get the E-versions. I would encourage all members to switch to the email version. Drop a note to Dave Ellis, [riverpawpaw@yahoo.com](mailto:riverpawpaw@yahoo.com).

You don't have to have an MBA to understand how much money we can save that way. And it saves our time folding, stamping and labeling them also. If you can, do the club a favor, and switch to paperless.

I have been surprised several times this year when paddlers I thought of as good well rounded sorts have mentioned in passing that they do not understand about low head dam(n)s. We have several in the Indy area. We even have a brand new one, very visible from the Monon, with a curve to it. In other words, you won't even be able to swim out to the ends if you go over it by mistake. And Indy has had fatalities. One was less than a mile from the pool where we teach paddle classes.

Learn to recognize what low head dams look like from upstream. Paddlers need to know what a horizon line means, what it looks like, and what to do about one. You never know where you will find them.

If you get stuck below a low head dam, try to work to the edge. After 2 or 3 cycles, try to take off your PFD and dive deep. Ironically, some people float free only after they are completely exhausted, they go limp, and then wash out. Sometimes a boat gets caught instead of a paddler. Try to get stuck boats out with throw ropes, logs, or maybe a long pole, but not with people. You can always walk back a few days later to see if the boat has washed out. (Sometimes they stay in for many days).

Carry a throw rope, know how to use it. Come to our Safety School. And paddle with good paddlers who know this stuff already!

Okay, I feel like a silly old grumpy guy, preaching on and on. But low head dams really are bad news.

I am very excited about two of the biggest events the HCC has ever done. The Summer meeting/ Reggie Float will be happening just about the time you get this. And the weekend after that, on June 6th, we will once again have a clean up on Fall Creek. You will read more about that on the cover of this newsletter, but I want to encourage everyone to come out to help. It will be one of the easiest clean ups ever! The Creek is in fairly good shape right now, but I know we can make it better. And I'm pretty sure we will have fun doing so. No chain saws this time, just picking up the litter.

Okay, I am getting down from my soap box now. Time to go paddle.

Dan



*Dan at Moving Water Clinic*

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## Eagle Creek Volunteers Needed

Kellie Kaneshiro

Enjoy paddling at Eagle Creek Park on Tuesday evenings May through September. If the Tuesday evening park pass seems too good to be true, it is! In exchange for the park pass, the HCC has agreed to provide safety boating for Eagle Creek Park's Wednesday evening canoe trip series.

Eagle Creek Park's evening canoe paddles for the public are scheduled for 6pm-8pm on June 10, June 17, June 24, July 1, July 8, July 15, July 22, July 29, Aug. 5 and Aug. 12.

As an HCC volunteer, you will be providing safety boating for the group. It will be a good chance to meet people, enjoy an evening in the park, and maybe give a tip or two to participants who are new to paddling.

If you would like to sign-up to help with the Wednesday evening Eagle Creek Park paddles, e-mail: [conserv@hoosiercanoeclub.org](mailto:conserv@hoosiercanoeclub.org)





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## HCC Safety Boaters Needed—June 20

Jan Sneddon

The first Triathlon at Eagle Creek will be held on Saturday, June 20. This is a great opportunity to get in an early morning paddle and watch amazing athletes compete and regular people tackle a challenge!

The Triathlon will start at 8:00 am. Safety boaters are asked to gather at Eagle Creek by 7:15 am to receive instructions, complimentary race T-shirts and to get boats in the water.

Volunteers will follow waves of swimmers and allow struggling swimmers to hang on to their boats. You would then signal to the motorized safety boat, which would swoop in to collect the exhausted swimmer. Safety boaters are not expected to take swimmers to shore. The total swim distance in this event is 500 meters. For more information about these events, please visit:

<http://www.tuxbro.com/entry%20form%20page.htm>

If you can't make this event, the HCC will support triathlons on Saturday, July 18, August 22, and August 29.

If you would like to volunteer to safety boat for one of these events, please contact Jan Sneddon at (317) 257-1740 or [tri@hoosiercanoecub.org](mailto:tri@hoosiercanoecub.org).

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## Thatcher Pool closing for Summer—Pool Sessions may move to Blind School

Thatcher Pool will close for the summer on Saturday, May 23 to have its heating/air conditioning unit replaced. It is anticipated that the repair will take 1-2 month. This will impact our Wednesday pool sessions starting on Wednesday, May 27 until the pool reopens.

Based on feedback from the Bulletin Board, Jordan Ross is currently working to move these sessions to the pool at the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

This pool is located at 7725 North College Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46240. After you enter the school grounds, make the first left after entering the school grounds and turn right when you see the greenhouse. This road will curve left and take you to the large pool building. Turn right for parking. Boats can be taken directly into the pool through a door on the right side of the building.

**Important:** Since Jordan has not completed negotiating with the Blind school, please watch the [White Water Forum](#) on the HCC Bulletin Board for final details.

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## Get involved with the 2010 Indiana Rivers Rally

Jan Sneddon

The planning committee for the 2010 Indiana Rivers Rally is seeking additional volunteers! The Indiana Rivers Rally will be a family-friendly event focused on bringing river users together to educate, celebrate, and collaborate around Indiana's rivers. Specifically, the committee needs someone interested in researching and providing detailed information on paddling venues near McCormick's Creek State Park, the venue for the event. The Rally is planned for a weekend in June of 2010.

The Indiana Rivers Rally will be targeted towards the recreational rivers community including paddlers, anglers, advocacy groups, first-time users, campers, families, agency staff, and outfitters. The Rally will encourage a celebratory atmosphere where citizens and water resource professionals can network and share with one another. One goal of the Rally will be to balance preserving of water quality and enhancing of recreational interests, as these are mutually beneficial goals. Although workshops and educational content will be available, the emphasis in 2010 will be placed on outdoor activities, field trips, and skills based learning.

Two communication tools are being used for the 2010 Rally planning effort:

- Wiki — <https://inriverrally.pbwiki.com> This contains notes from the 2007 Rally and information from 2009 planning efforts. You must request access to the wiki and then set up an account before you can view it.
- A Greener Indiana — <http://www.agreenerindiana.com/> This serves mainly as a discussion forum. You can join the group Indiana Rivers Rally 2010. No permission is necessary to begin an account on A Greener Indiana.

If you want to get involved, please contact Jan Sneddon at 317-257-1740 or [tri@hoosiercanoecub.org](mailto:tri@hoosiercanoecub.org).





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## Flatwater Trips

### What to Bring on a Flatwater Trip

- PFD (Personal Floatation Device) with an attached whistle
- Spare paddle, bilge pump or bailing device (small bucket, sponge, etc.)
- Rescue gear: paddle float, throw rope, first aid kit
- Personal medications: Be sure to inform your trip sponsor of medical conditions.
- Sunglasses, sun/bug spray
- Lunch, snacks, drinks (hot or cold) plus water!

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### Eagle Creek Paddle-to-Dinner, Zionsville / Indianapolis

Sunday, June 7, 2009

#### Trip Sponsor: Mike Miller

This trip will be a mixture of paddling on the creek and on the open water of the reservoir. We'll start on Eagle Creek at Lions Park in Zionsville, paddle down the creek to the top of Eagle Creek Reservoir, and then along the reservoir to Rick's Boatyard Cafe at the south end. If you've never paddled Eagle Creek, please join us and see what a beautiful stream we have so close to Indy. We'll have dinner on the deck at Rick's at the take out. If you have family and friends who don't want to paddle, they're welcome to join us at the restaurant. I'm encouraging everyone to arrive under their own power - paddling, biking, sailing, whatever. Please note that the club is not buying - you'll have to pay for what you eat and drink. There is a menu available online at <http://www.rickscafeboatyard.com/RicksMenuIndy08.pdf>.

**Meeting Place and Put-In:** Lions Park, 115 South Elm St, Zionsville, Indiana

**Driving Directions from Indianapolis:** Take I-65 north Exit 23 at 86th Street. Take 86th Street East for about 0.5 miles to Zionsville Road. Turn left/North on Zionsville Road and go about 2.6 miles to Indiana 334 (East Sycamore St). Turn right/East on Sycamore. Lions Park is 300 yards down the road on left. We'll meet at the east end of the parking lot.

**Take Out:** Boat launch just north of Rick's Boatyard Cafe on Eagle Creek Reservoir, 4050 Dandy Trail, Indianapolis

**Trip Length:** about 12 miles(?), ~4 hours with a break

**Schedule :**

12:30 pm	Gather at put-in
1:00 pm	Shuttle leaves
2:00 pm	Start Paddling
6:00 pm-ish	Arrive at take-out, change for dinner (black tie optional) and eat.

On the road when ever you are ready. Restaurant closes at 10.

**Trip Requirements:** No special skills, equipment, or physical conditioning required for this trip. Bring your own snacks and plenty of water, plus money for dinner.

**Contact information:** Mike Miller, (317) 443-0087, [mike@bigsycamore.net](mailto:mike@bigsycamore.net)

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### Versailles State Park / Laughery Creek Trip Announcement Saturday, June 13, 2009

#### Trip Sponsor: Joel DeLashmit

Join us on a scenic paddle around Versailles lake and up the headwaters or we may paddle down Laughery Creek into the lake, either way we will still meet at the same time and place. I will keep an eye on the water levels of the creek closer to trip time and post my findings on the bulletin board.

This trip is Recreational style boat friendly and would be great for beginners or those who enjoy wildlife. My family and I have paddled here a number of times last year and were able to see many birds and fish. The lake is small only 230 acres but water levels sometimes allow one to paddle much further up the headwaters.

Kayak and canoe rentals are available via the State Park. Camping is also available at the State Park if you wish to join me Friday night or travel back home on Sunday. If you want to camp, be sure to make a reservation. There are also beautiful hiking trails if anyone is interested after the paddle. The gate fee for



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Indiana State Parks and boat permit this year are \$5.00 each. For more information on the State Park or camping, visit:

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2963.htm>.

Be sure to pack a lunch and bring plenty of water.

**Meeting Place:** Versailles Lake Boat Launch, From Indianapolis about 1.5 hours {39°04'52.73"N 85°14'13.73"W}

**Trip Length:** 6.5 miles hugging the shoreline if we just paddle the lake and headwaters

**Expected Water Conditions:** Flatwater

**Schedule:**

10:00 am	Gather at the Meeting Place
10:30 am	Start Paddling

**Contact Information:** Joel DeLashmit (317) 656-1597, [joeldelashmit@gmail.com](mailto:joeldelashmit@gmail.com). Please contact me by Thursday, June 11 by email or by 9 pm Friday June 12 if you plan to attend. If thunderstorms or heavy rain are in the area, we may have to delay the trip or cancel.

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### Eel River Trip – Stockdale to Denver

**Saturday, June 20, 2009**

**Trip Sponsors:** Sue Foxx, Jim Sprandel

The Eel River in northern Indiana is a peaceful, scenic river flowing 110 miles through farmland and narrow woods. Starting as a shallow stream north of Fort Wayne, it flows southwest to feed the Wabash at Logansport.

We'll be paddling a 12-mile stretch between Stockdale and Denver, Indiana. This section is very scenic and there is little development other than agricultural along this stretch of the river. Wildlife include wood ducks, great blue heron, kingfishers and sandpipers.

In addition, Indiana re-introduced river otters into this area and otter sighting have been reported in on-line Eel River trip reports. For more information on river otters and their reintroduction, go to:

[http://www.in.gov/dnr\\_old/fishwild/endangered/otter.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr_old/fishwild/endangered/otter.htm)

**Meeting Place/Put-In:** Stockdale Public Access Site (PAS). This is located on the east edge of Stockdale.

*Driving Directions from Indianapolis:* Starting from US 31N and 465, take US 31 north approximately 65 miles and turn right (east) onto IN 16. Drive on IN16 through Denver and Stockdale for about 13.5 miles until you cross the bridge over the Eel River. The PAS is on the north (left) side of IN 16 just past the east of the bridge. *Approximate Driving Time:* 80 miles, 2 hour .

**Take-Out:** Denver, IN

**Trip Length:** About 12 miles

**Schedule :**

9:30 am	Gather at Put-In
10:00 am	Shuttle leaves
11:00 am	Start Paddling
4:00 pm	Reach Take Out

**Trip Requirements:** Garry Hill recommends this as good beginning trip so no special equipment or paddling skills are required. Bring your own lunch and plenty of water.

**Contact information:** Be sure to contact Sue or Jim by 7:00 pm on Friday June 19 if you play to attend:

Sue Foxx	(317) 363-4074 (Cell), 317-253-0222 (Home)	<a href="mailto:sufoxx@doe.in.gov">sufoxx@doe.in.gov</a>
Jim Sprandel	(317) 257-2063	<a href="mailto:merlin-3d@sbcglobal.net">merlin-3d@sbcglobal.net</a>



River Otter



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## Paddling Festivals

Good things come in threes. Three paddling festivals in or near Indiana are scheduled for the weekend starting Friday, June 26. The events will be held on the Ohio River at Cincinnati (June 26-27), Brookville Reservoir (June 26-27), and in South Bend (June 28). These events are well organized and give you paddling opportunities you might not have otherwise.

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### Ohio River Way Paddlefest, Cincinnati, Oh

**Friday-Saturday, June 26-27, 2009**

Celebrate, promote and protect the beauty of the Ohio River at the 8th Annual Ohio River Way Paddlefest on Friday, June 26 and Saturday, June 27, 2009. Come to Cincinnati to enjoy two days of paddling, education, entertainment, competition and camaraderie at America's largest on water paddling event.

During the day on Friday, there will be a Kid's Outdoor Adventure Expo featuring demonstrations on water safety and river research, fishing in Lake Como, live animals, and live music shows as well as canoe/rafting trips on Lake Como and "kayaking for little ones". For adults, the Ohio Music and River fest will have canoe, kayak, bike and outdoor gear vendors, boat demos until dusk, a gear swap, a wooden boat show, film festival, and music starting at 5 p.m.

On Saturday, people will be paddling. There will be a 14-mile pro race, a 9-mile amateur race, and an 8 mile float trip for everyone else. The starts for the amateur race will be divided by boat class so you won't be racing against surf skis.

For more information, contact Earl King at [campchef@juno.com](mailto:campchef@juno.com) or go to:

<http://ohioriverway.org/paddlefest/events/#paddle>

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### Brookville Canoeefest, Brookville, IN

**Friday-Saturday, June 26-27, 2009**

In addition to the big canoe and running races at Canoeefest, the Festival in Brookville's beautiful riverside town park will offer two great nights of family fun! Food will be available at food tents and booths on Friday night. The night will be highlighted by the crowning of the Canoeefest Princess and the Final Round of Canoeefest Idol.

Saturday is Race Day. And there will be much excitement in the morning up at the Brookville tail waters, where the canoe races and biathlon begin. You don't have to be a canoe expert to join in the fun. The Recreational Races offer a short 2.4 mile race on an easy part of the river. The USCA Canoe Races, the Biathlon, and the Quarter Marathon Footrace offer real athletic challenge in some of the most scenic locales that the Midwest has to offer.

For more information, go to <http://canoeefest.etczone.com/festival.html>

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### Subaru © Paddlefest Canoe & Kayak Races, South Bend, IN

**Sunday, June 28, 2009**

This will be the 8th Annual Paddlefest at St. Patrick's County Park on the St. Joseph River in South Bend, Indiana. There will be races for every kind of paddler. Four HCC paddlers participated in this event last year and enjoyed the beauty of the St. Joseph river as well as a little friendly competition.

Paddlefest Events:

- 2-mile "Fluid Fun" Fun Race
- 8-mile Half Marathon. This race is divided into classes by age and boat type.
- 16-mile professional Marathon (with prize money!). Note: This race brings the best and fastest from the Midwest.
- Memorial Hospital Duathlon (3-mile run, 2 mile-paddle)
- South Bend Tribune Youth Pond Race

While the marathon attracts serious racers, the other races are targeted towards recreational paddlers, families, and whitewater types paddling either canoes or kayaks. The pond race is for kids 6-12...so there is something for everyone, plus t-shirts and lunch! People wanting to race should get there by 8:00 am.

For more information, go to their website: [www.paddlefest.org](http://www.paddlefest.org)



## Trip Report—Sand Creek, April 18, 2009

Richard Tekulve



*Westport Covered Bridge*

From clear blue flowing waters to the matching skies above it, Sand Creek provided eleven HCC members with just the right dose of “liquid therapy”.

Beginning northeast of Greensburg and flowing 57.9 scenic miles through Decatur and Jennings counties, to its termination at the East Fork of the White River, the stream maintains a steady gradient of 5.1 (fpm). Sand Creek is just one of nearly a dozen southeast Indiana streams (Big Creek, Graham Creek, Vernon Fork Muscatatuck River, Otter Creek, Laughery Creek, Whitewater River, Flat Rock River, Clifty Creek, Fourteen Mile Creek, Indian-Kentuck Creek) that provide similar characteristics at spring-time flow levels.

The creek banks were blooming with Bluebells, and the always evident half-mushroom shaped exposed limestone ledges were consistent throughout. The group trav-

eled 13.7 miles starting at the Westport Dam access site 2 miles East of Westport. The dam is only 500 feet downstream from the freshly restored Westport Covered Bridge built in 1880 by renowned builder Arthur Kennedy. The take out was at my old log cabin on the West side of Brewersville. On its journey, the creek averages about 60 – 90 feet in width with several mild rapids to highlight the scenery. This year's 2 to 3 mph current (est. 200-250 cfs) exposed a fair amount of small islands and channels that were covered up on last year's run from the 3 – 4 ft increased water levels.

The group experienced one item of luck as a huge nasty portage south of Brewersville was eliminated, only a week before, making front page headlines. The two day, \$25,000 project, eliminated a log jam that was 120 feet wide, 12 feet tall, and 8 feet deep from the flood of June 2008. Lunch was taken (as usual) at the outlet of the first mill race as the members explored the details of this, built in 1818, a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile shortcut that dates back nearly two centuries. Several of the kayakers played at the outlet, but were unable to run through it due to several trees blocking the inlet. This was also the case at the second one (Kellar's Mill built in 1813).

The trip ended as it started with temperatures in the upper 60's with a gentle breeze and clear blue skies that makes for a perfect Indiana float. Sand Creek is listed as one of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources top ten streams along with the likes of Sugar, Blue, Whitewater, Big Walnut, Wildcat, Fawn, Pigeon, Tippecanoe and South Branch Elkhart. It's easy to see why this creek has been a long time favorite of the HCC over the last quarter of a century..

The eleven HCC members who enjoyed the trip were: Richard Tekulve (C1), Jim Clendenin (K), Greg Hecht (K), Kathy and Chuck Davia (C2), Dwayne James (C1), Joel DeLashmit (K), Jim Sprandel (K), Linda Smith (K), Mary Keith (K), and Mariann Davis (K).

Once again, Sand Creek did not disappoint. Perhaps next year a trip on Sand Creek and one of the streams from the SE Indiana menu can be arranged with a campsite furnished. Note: for pictures of the Sand Creek trip, go to the HCC Message Board at <http://www.hccbulletinboard.org/forums/showthread.php?t=3003>

Trip Leader: Richard Tekulve  
[canoeindiana@yahoo.com](mailto:canoeindiana@yahoo.com)



*Upper Mill Race Entry*





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## Trip Report: The Big Blue River

Joel DeLashmit

**Date::** April 25, 2009

**Trip Length:** 9.22 Miles Moving Time 2hrs 28min

**Participants:** Joel DeLashmit, Dan Evard, Linda Smith, Mariann Davis, Teresa Kulczak, Bob Burkhardt, Duane Garloch, Frank Chiao, Dale & Jean Perry, Jim Sprandel, Todd & Cheryl Sullivan, and Garry Hill.



*Dale Perry in Solo Canoe*

I arrived a little early 8:30am and picked up some trash left by the night fishermen, I guess they just can't see all the trash they are leaving behind because it's just so dark at night? My wife and some of the ladies watched the boats while we ran the shuttle. With some help from a nice observer from Acton, we were able to leave all vehicle but one at the take out.

The first two miles were relatively calm with a 2-3 MPH current. At the two mile point just past an island with an old cabin, we made our only portage through a trail on a grassy floodplain. The portage wasn't necessary in December but a small tree has blocked the way for the time being.

The current picked up for the next two miles with several spots of riffles. We also saw many birds including a great blue heron and some different varieties of turtles before arriving at the golf course area. Around the first bend in the golf course area, there was a tight spot to maneuver through but everyone made it although some

took on some water. There are lots of neat things to look at around golf courses as one paddler observed before going for a swim, sometimes those limbs just jump out at us paddlers! Person, paddle, boat, and gear were all recovered and we continued on our way. Next stop was lunch at a neat island under a bridge a little over 5 miles into the trip. Todd picked this one out and it was much better than the one I thought of and made for some nice pictures looking down from the bridge. After lunch some paddlers spotted a young owl in a tree, Jim Sprandel posted [a picture](#) and comment as I missed it.

The next two miles were fairly swift with lots of small drops, rock gardens, and other features to play in or paddle through. The first one decided to play with my boat, but the pool practice paid off and I was on my way after a successful roll. Much thanks to Dave Ellis who patiently works with those of us who desire to have this skill as an option in a capsize. After paddling under I-74, the river widened and slowed, but there were still a few rock gardens before heading west under 3 more bridges and picking up water from the Little Blue River.

All made it safely to the takeout and most of us went to the Cow Palace for ice cream, a great way to top off a great trip. Thanks to all who participated and made this yet another great paddling trip.

Additional photographs plus videos are available at:

<http://www.hccbulletinboard.org/forums/showthread.php?t=3021>



*Lunch on Island from Bridge*





## Using USGS Water Level Data

Jim Sprandel

Do you want to know what the water is currently like on your favorite stream? That data may be just a mouse click or two away. The USGS maintains Water Level stations at over 200 sites on creeks and rivers throughout Indiana. You can access this data via the Internet using your home computer.

**Important:** Play as you read! Please go to the USGS site as you read through this article since it probably won't make sense to you unless you do. At any point, feel free to experiment with the different screens that you see to learn everything that is available to you. This article is only intended as a starting point into a very interesting data source.

There are two steps that you need to complete before you can really use the USGS data:

- Finding a river station for your stream and accessing the current USGS data for it.
- Figuring out what stream conditions are associated with the *numeric water level values* that you retrieve for your stream.

This is the hardest step! It may take you several paddles on a stream, a little research, and a few discussions before you can relate the USGS numbers to how many rocks you can expect to hit on your way downstream.

### Getting Data for your Stream

Go to the following web site to see a map of Indiana with water stations throughout Indiana shown as small dots (Figure 1): <http://water.usgs.gov/waterwatch/?m=real&r=in&w=map>

As you slide your cursor over a dot on the map, you see a pop up window for that station. It shows you the name of the station, the last stage (river height), streamflow, and historical data for the site. The station name tells you what part of what river is being monitored by that station. When you find the station that you want, press the left button on your mouse (i.e., select) and a stable pop-up window appears (Figure 2.)

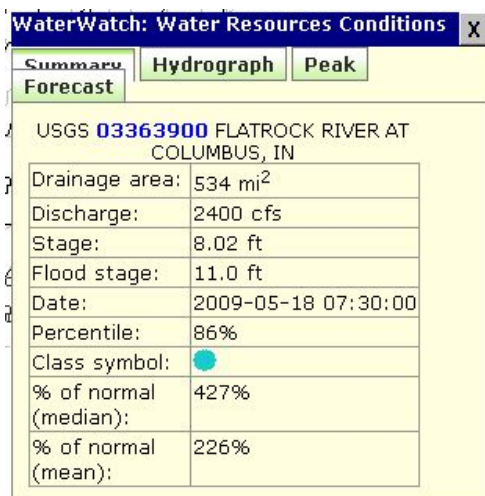


Figure 2. Station Pop-Up Window

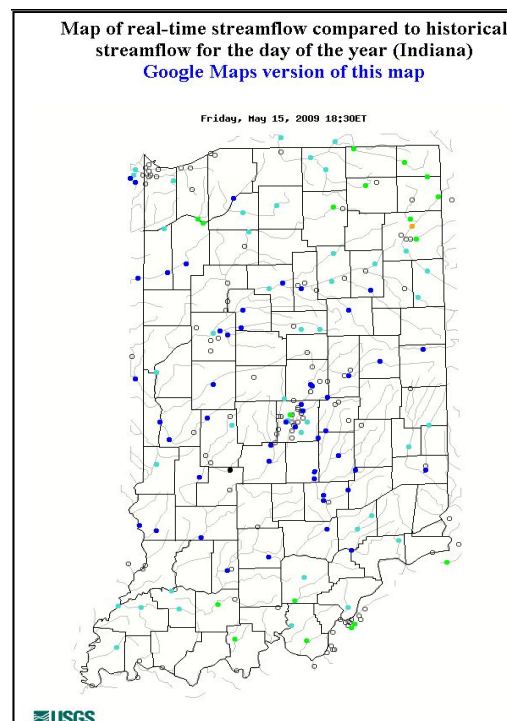


Figure 1. USGS Indiana River Map

The window contains two values that you can use:

- **Stage or Gage Height** is the height of the water in a pool at the stream gaging station. Stage is **not** the depth of the stream. However, you can reasonably assume that if the gage height is up 1 foot then the river is also up 1 feet all the way across the stream at the point where the station is located. Station equipment continually measures the elevation of the water surface in the pool at the stream gaging station and then reports it to USGS via satellite.
- **Discharge or Streamflow** is the volume of water flowing past a given stream station in one second and is reported in cubic feet per second (cfs). Streamflow values are better indicators than gage height of conditions at other locations along the river.

**Note:** Streamflow may not be available at every station.

USGS staff go out and measure streamflow about every six weeks. They make these measurements either by wading into the stream, from a boat, bridge, or using cableway over the stream. Streamflow values reported on the USGS site are computed using the latest real-time stage value and a table relating measured streamflow values with observed height values when the USGS staff made the streamflow measurements..



## Interpreting USGS Gage—Getting Past the Numbers

Okay, you now know what the water level and/or streamflow at a given location for your stream. However, you still don't know if you're going to get swept downstream or whether you're going to be scraping bottom the entire way. There is no easy way to “translate” the real-time streamflow and stage values to paddling condition. You have to do that yourself.

To start this process, maintain a log listing the reported USGS gage data and observed paddling conditions when you paddle a given stretch. Garry Hill indicated that one value that will you want to identify is the minimum level required for making the trip without scraping bottom or portaging too much.

You can get additional “data points” by looking at past trip reports for the river stretch that you are interested in by looking through past HCC newsletters, the HCC Bulletin Board, or other paddling sites (e.g., [www.paddling.net](http://www.paddling.net) or [Indianaoutfitters.com](http://Indianaoutfitters.com)). For each trip report, determine the date/time and reported paddling conditions. Once you have this information, you *may* be able to get station data for that date.

## Getting Gage Data for a Given Date

From the USGS Station Pop-Up window in Figure 2, select (i.e., left click on) “Hydrograph” at the top of this pop-up window—the window will change to the screen in Figure 3. This displays streamflow data for the past week along with historical averages for each day shown as triangles.



Figure 4. Data Selection Field

Select the middle of this graph and you will see a larger page with graphs of the last week's stage and streamflow data.

Near the top of this page, you will see the line shown in Figure 4 — “Available Data for this Site”

In this line, go to the Down Arrow just before the “Go” button and select it. You will see a list of possible data sets available to you. Select “Time Series—Daily Data” from this list.

In the next screen, you will see the data selection fields shown in Figure 5 for accessing historical data.

- Check the “Period of Record” values in this screen to make sure the date that you are interested in is covered.
- If it is covered, enter a date about a week before the date of interest as the “Begin Date” and a date about a week after as the “End Date”.
- Select Discharge and Stage data when they are available. The USGS may only maintain historical streamflow or stage data for a given site so you need to be flexible.
- Select “GO”. You will then see a graph spanning your date. You can select “Table” as your “Output Format” in Figure 5 if you want to read your value directly rather than interpolate it from the graph.

Available Parameters	Period of Record	Output format	Begin date	End date
<input type="checkbox"/> All 1 Available Parameters for this site	1931-04-01 2009-05-14	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Graph	2008-05-14	2009-05-14
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 00060 Discharge (Mean)		<input type="radio"/> Graph w/ stats <input type="radio"/> Graph w/ meas <input type="radio"/> Table <input type="radio"/> Tab-separated		

Figure 5. Historical Data Selection Fields

You will now see a graph or table displaying data for your date.

## Getting “Average” Stream Data for a Given Time of Year

If you have never paddled the stream and can't find any Trip Reports, you can compare the current value to its “statistical” mean (i.e., average) values. Alternatively, if the campfire consensus is that your creek is best paddled in late April, you can use the “Data Selection Field” (Figure 4) on the hydrographs screen to get daily averages for all 365 days in the year and then see what average levels are in April.

- Starting from the “Data Selection Field” (Figure 4 above), click the “Down Arrow”.
- Select “Time Series—Daily Statistics” in the pop-down list.
- You will see a screen containing the data entry fields at the top of the screen (Figure 6).
- You must select “Discharge” and/or “Gage Height” (only one may be available) at the top of this screen

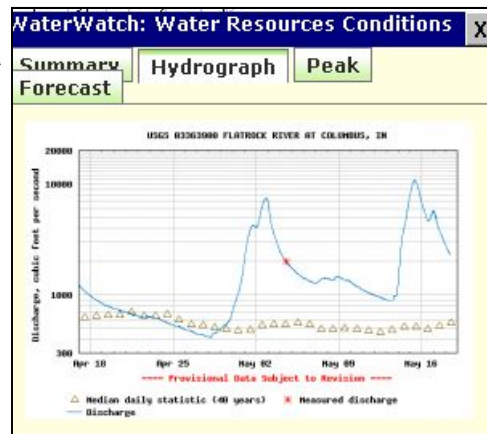


Figure 3. Hydrograph Pop Up Window



and then select "Submit".

Note: You don't have to enter any other values.

- You will see a table listing the average value for each day for the years in the Calculation Period (at the top of the output tables). Look at the data in late April to see what nominal values are then.

**When all Else Fails**— Ask an experience paddler to help you. Pretty soon you'll become an expert that other people ask.

## USGS Tutorials

The USGS has provided tutorials for using this data at: <http://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/tutorial/>

## Please Share your Experience

Please e-mail me ([editor@hoosiercanoecub.org](mailto:editor@hoosiercanoecub.org)) with trip information that you may have recorded. Please send me the river section paddled, the date, and observed paddling conditions. If you have already "translated" USGS data levels to paddling conditions that's even better. Please e-mail me what you have figured out. If you know them, please include: river segment(s), USGS station name(s), minimum level to have an enjoyable paddle, the "ideal" level, and the maximum safe level.

Check one or more boxes to select sites/parameters for further display--below

USGS 03303000 BLUE RIVER NEAR WHITE CLOUD, IN				
Parameter Code	Parameter Name	From	To	Count
<input type="checkbox"/> 00060	Discharge, cubic feet per second	1931-04-01	2007-09-30	27942

**Choose Output Format**

**Retrieve USGS Surface-Water Daily Statistics for Selected Sites**  
Choose one of the following options for displaying data for the sites meeting the criteria above:

☐ Date range for statistics calculation of all selected parameters -- From: (YYYY-MM-DD) To: <<If blank, use entire period of record for each parameter.

☒ Table of (Mean) of daily mean value for each day

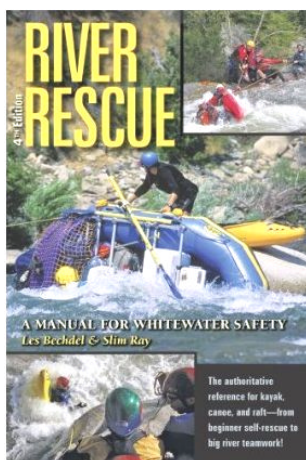
☐ Tab-separated data [YYYY-MM-DD] [Save to file] \*

\* Save compressed files with a .gz file extension.

Submit Reset Help

Figure 6. Data Entry Fields for selecting Daily Statistics

## River Rescue Reference Reissued



Slim Ray and Les Bechdel have issued Edition 4 of the book **River Rescue**. Dan Valleskey described this as "THE" book for River Rescue.

Per the Amazon.com site: "This book has been the authoritative reference for canoes, kayaks, and rafts — from beginner self-rescue to big river teamwork — since 1985. The 4th edition is bigger and better than ever with 292 fact-filled pages, 106 illustrations, and 144 photographs.

"Features of the new issue are new photos and first-hand accounts of rescues; expanded material on big-water rescue — new gear and methods; self-rescue and rescue of others by hand, boat, rope, and other ways; tools and techniques — rope work, throw bags, boat handling, high- and low-tech gear to use when seconds count; rescue organization — leadership, teamwork, patient care, evacuation, and more.

The book can be ordered directly from the publisher at <http://www.cfspress.com/order.htm> or through [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

## Wilderness First Aid Class available at Eagle Creek

The Central Indiana Wilderness Club (CIWC) and Indy Parks are co-hosting a Wilderness First Aid (WFA) class at the Eagle Creek Discovery Center on June 27-28, 2009. The course teaches people to recognize and handle common first aid conditions. WFA training assumes that a hospital emergency room is more than an hour away and emphasizes safety and prevention. The course trains people to treat minor injuries. For serious injuries, the responder is trained to stabilize the patient and to keep the group safe while summoning a rescue party to the right place with the right equipment, the first time.

Students will meet 8 hours on each day. The classes are open to non-CIWC member so HCC members may attend. There is a \$125 course fee. The CIWC currently needs 6 more people to make the class a go. Interested people must register by June 13. Additional information and a link to CIWC's course registration site are available on-line at: <http://ciwclub.org/socials.htm#First>

If you have questions, please contact the CIWC safety chair, Bob Hart at [rrhrunner@comcast.net](mailto:rrhrunner@comcast.net).

There is a review of the WFA course in the [April 2008 Hoosier Paddler](#).

**Photo Credits:** Jim Sprandel—Page1,2, 7, Joel DeLashmit—Page8





## Upcoming Events

Tuesday Evenings	<b>Paddling at Eagle Creek</b> —Group Paddle start at 6:00 pm.	Page 2
Wednesdays 7 pm	<b>Pool Sessions</b> —Please check Bulletin Board for Location!	Page 3
Saturday, June 6	<b>Fall Creek Clean-Up</b> , Indianapolis, IN	Page 1
<i>Saturday, June 6</i>	<b><i>Paddle in the Park Boat Demo/Clinic</i></b> , Dayton, OH	<u><a href="#">Bulletin Board</a></u>
Sunday June 7	<b>Flatwater Trip: Eagle Creek Paddle to Dinner</b> , Zionsville IN	Page 4
Saturday, June 13	<b>Flatwater Trip: Laughery Creek and Versailles Lake</b>	Page 4
<i>Sat/Sun, 13-14</i>	<b><i>Marquette to Burnham Expedition</i></b> , (Touring Boats) <i>Michigan City, IN</i>	<u><a href="#">Bulletin Board</a></u>
Saturday, June 20	<b>Flatwater Trip: Eel River, Stockdale to Denver</b> , Stockdale, IN	Page 5
<i>Sat.-Sun., June 20-21</i>	<b><i>Whitewater Trip: Ridgefest</i></b>	<i>Bulletin Board</i>
<i>Fri.-Sat., June 26-27,</i>	<b><i>Ohio River Way Paddlefest</i></b> , Cincinnati, OH	Page 6
<i>Fri.-Sat., June 26-27,</i>	<b><i>Brookville Paddlefest</i></b> , Brookville Reservoir, IN	Page 6
<i>Sat-Sun, June 27-28</i>	<b><i>Wilderness First Aid Course</i></b> (Central Indiana Wilderness Club)	Page 11
<i>Sunday, June 28</i>	<b><i>Michiana Paddefest</i></b> , South Bend, IN	Page 6

**July Newsletter Deadline:** Please submit articles to Jim Sprandel by Monday, June 15, 2009. Please E-Mail articles to [merlin-3d@sbcglobal.net](mailto:merlin-3d@sbcglobal.net) or call him at 317-257-2063

