



*Paddling and reading at Eagle Creek Reservoir, July 2016*

## **2017 SCHWARTZ PRIZE NOMINATION**

### **Next Indiana Campfires**

### **Indiana Humanities**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Indiana Humanities nominates its Next Indiana Campfires program for the 2017 Helen and Martin Schwartz Prize. This innovative and ambitious program pairs nature and literature to spark conversations about Indiana's future, including questions about place, identity and environmental stewardship.

Begun in 2016 as a special program for the Indiana bicentennial and Pulitzer Prize centennial, Next Indiana Campfires far surpassed our expectations in terms of number of programs held, program popularity, changes in behavior, and fundraising dollars raised. As a result, we continued it in 2017 and have sustainable plans for 2018 and beyond. We are proud to share Next Indiana Campfires as an exemplary model of creative, thought-provoking and urgent public humanities work.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Inspired by Pulitzer Prize winner and environmental writer Edwin Way Teale (an Indiana native), Next Indiana Campfires was designed as a unique and indelible way to celebrate and reflect on Indiana's bicentennial. The centerpiece of the program is a series of hikes, bike rides, canoe trips and other outdoor discussions of some of the great works of Hoosier and Pulitzer-winning environmental literature and our state's environmental legacy. Since the program started, we have conducted more than 20 programs (including a model program at last year's National Humanities Conference in Utah), and have one more scheduled for the 2017 series and more planned for 2018.

In addition to the outdoor discussions, we implemented three other key facets in 2016: creation and dissemination of do-it-yourself discussion materials, called a “Trek & Talk Toolkit”; development and implementation of a robust communications strategy, including weekly blog posts; and an attention-getting kick-off INconversation event, featuring two nationally significant thought-leaders on writing and the environment, Terry Tempest Williams and Scott Russell Sanders.

Four questions guide our Next Indiana Campfires programming:

- What has been the role of outstanding literature, poetry and journalism in shaping the public’s understanding of our relationship to nature and the ideas of stewardship and conservation?
- How have Indiana authors expressed their relationship to the natural world and helped to define a sense of place and character in the Hoosier state?
- Why has stewardship played a significant role in both the Indiana centennial (1916) and bicentennial (2016)?
- How can environmental literature and poetry help Hoosiers create or deepen connections to the natural world today?

It’s hard to capture how successful this program was in just a few pages. We are most proud of the way we were able to place the humanities at the center of an important statewide conversation about the future of Indiana’s environment, by using texts and humanities scholars, by exploring Hoosiers’ history of conservation and by examining the underlying values and morals that guide our personal actions and policy choices.

Perhaps the most powerful example of what the humanities can do was during our final 2016 Indiana hike, which was co-presented with the Indiana Forest Alliance, a fierce advocacy organization opposed to logging in state forests, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, under whose auspices logging is happening. We carefully selected texts, including Pulitzer winners EO Wilson and Annie Dillard, along with Gifford Pinchot and Aldo Leopold, who helped us think through different philosophies of land management. Getting these two organizations to collaborate together was a feat in itself but the unique space for conversation and understanding we created was a testament to the power of the role of text-based discussion and the importance of engaged humanities scholars in the public arena. Both organizations and the more than 40 people who attended thought the event was a success—and so did we.

We are proud to have created a format that not only drew audiences, but that also created connections with new partners and allowed them to contribute ideas and help us create unique, indelible experiences. A few examples:

- 1) At our Trail Creek paddling trek in northwest Indiana, partners secured the use of 10-seater long canoes, similar to what the area’s early French explorers used. A couple of the readings evoked this history and geography, in particular Pulitzer winner Edwin Way Teale’s description of Robert LaSalle’s initial voyage (by long-canoe) through the swampy marsh where the waters split between the Great Lakes and Mississippi watersheds; and Pulitzer winner Mary Oliver’s poem “At the River Clarion.” The day of our paddle was also the day the Indiana Bicentennial Torch, which toured the state over a six-week period, was passing through. Our partners managed to get the torch on a kayak so that it could briefly join our flotilla.
- 2) At Merry Lea Environmental Education Center, which in addition to a nature preserve also includes a sustainable farmstead, our campfire meal was entirely grown/raised on site.
- 3) During magic hour, just as the sun was setting, we explored the restored prairies at Prophetstown State Park. The site is both ecologically and historically significant—it was here that Tecumseh and his brother The Prophet formed their encampment and resistance to white settlement—during the War of 1812. We read Pulitzer winner Mary Oliver’s poem “Tecumseh,” paired with another, “The Prophet Speaks,” by Indiana State Poet Laureate Shari Wagner. We also read Pulitzer winner N. Scott Momaday, a speech by Tecumseh himself, and the writings of Chief Pokagon, a wildly popular 19<sup>th</sup>-century writer—his nickname was “the red Longfellow,” whose tribe hailed from Indiana. Former Indiana State Poet Laureate Norbert Krapf, who attended, was inspired to write in response; that work is shared on our blog [here](#).
- 4) We explored a newly preserved tract of land, not yet open to the public, called Glacier’s End—where the glaciers literally stopped on their southwardly flow during the last ice age. Our readings—two Indiana writers, Michael Martone’s “The Flatness” and Jared Carter’s “Glacier,” paired with Pulitzer winner Wallace Stegner—helped us see how even flyover country is special and rare, and needs to be cared for.



*Listening in at Glacier’s End Nature Preserve, October 2016*



- 5) We traced the Daryl Karns Nature Trail overlooking the Ohio River on Hanover College's scenic campus, settling in for a campfire and meal as the sun set over the river's famous "S-curve," depicted in an 1892 painting by Hoosier Group artist T.C. Steele. We read Kevin Young's "Ode to the Midwest" and passages about Indiana rivers by writers such as Jessamyn West, Scott Russell Sanders and Susan Neville.
- 6) We toured the newly restored Loblolly swamps in northeast Indiana—better known to generations of readers as the Limberlost, as detailed by the first truly popular environmental writer, Indiana's own Gene Stratton-Porter. We started our trek with Stratton-Porter's "Limberlost Invitation" before reading contemporary poets whose work also powerfully references nature, including Pulitzer winners Louise Gluck, N. Scott Momaday, Natasha Trethewey and Yusef Komunyakaa.
- 7) We trekked through Indiana's largest remaining stand of old growth forest while reading Mary Oliver's "Going to Walden" and excerpts from Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. We concluded under the largest tulip tree, our state tree, in Indiana—a powerful moment in our bicentennial year.

We were able to stay true to our typical brand of "smart and fun" by hosting text-based discussions in unusual settings. We made many new friends, who now not only know Indiana Humanities, but also see how the humanities can provide insight and opportunities for personal reflection and intellectual curiosity. And many environmental organizations now see how the humanities can help them do their work—that they aren't a rarefied, specialized arena for academic experts.

In addition to all the folks in Indiana who loved this program, we received incredibly positive feedback from our state council peers when we did a model program at our Salt Lake City conference. Indeed, we heard often that the trek, two days after the 2016 election, provided a much-needed space for fellowship, perspective, reflection and escape. We are excited to see how other state councils will adapt this idea in the future (and have heard from colleagues in Utah, North Dakota and Delaware that they're taking the idea and adapting it to their local contexts).

It's hard to put this final point into words, but we'll try: this project was weird and *it worked!* It took us a while to figure out how to describe succinctly (and appealingly) what would happen on the trail and around the campfire. Everyone—partners, funders, scholars, participants—took a chance. But once people experienced it, they loved it. We enjoyed having the opportunity to experiment and get creative—and are grateful for the funders who supported this unusual but ultimately workable and meaningful project.



*A crisp fall hike through Gene Stratton-Porter's beloved Limberlost wetlands, October 2016*



## HOW IT WORKS

Though the heart of Next Indiana Campfires are treks (hikes, bike rides and paddling trips) that combine discussions of nature and literature, there were four components of the project when it launched in March 2016: treks, a kick-off event, DIY Trek & Talk Toolkits and a robust communication campaign.

### TREKS

In 2016 and again in 2017, Indiana Humanities has coordinated a series of nature outings in some of Indiana's most significant natural areas—places like the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Eagle Creek Reservoir, the newly restored “Limberlost” wetlands and the wide-open prairies of Prophetstown. During each outing, a humanities scholar leads Hoosiers along a route, stopping every so often to read aloud the words of important authors and poets that helped us appreciate nature in new ways. A naturalist from the park or preserve is also along to point out features of the site's history and ecology, drawing connections between our readings and the landscape. We conclude each trek with a hearty discussion over food and drink around a campfire, forging deep connections between nature, literature and place.

Next Indiana Campfires is built around text-based discussion—it is designed to be interactive and participatory. The treks themselves are highly engaging—people are talking to each other, listening intently, asking deep and meaningful questions, sharing personal stories and reflections, laughing and nodding along. Each facilitator brings his or her own style, reflected both in their text selections and questions, but all are given some training and resources from the Indiana Humanities staff. The easy, organic interplay between the humanities scholars and the naturalists and park rangers, who came from the partner organizations, has happened even more smoothly than imagined. Indeed, many partners revealed that their own love of nature and career paths were inspired by reading writers like John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Mary Oliver or Annie Dillard—and they have asked us to partner with them on more events like this going forward.

See Attachment 1 for a complete overview of treks and readings.

### KICK-OFF EVENT

On May 4, 2016, we kicked off Next Indiana Campfires by hosting two titans of environmental literature, Terry Tempest Williams and Scott Russell Sanders, for an INconversation about the land and how we connect with it, how we should care for it and how they work to champion it. INconversation is a signature Indiana Humanities event that features a thought-leader and moderator in an intimate, candid conversation, followed by a participatory Q&A with the audience. We used the kick-off INconversation as an opportunity to invite Terry Tempest Williams, a nationally significant writer and activist based in Utah, to help us reflect on the project's key themes, including the unique role of writers and literature in shaping our environmental consciousness and cultivating an ethos of stewardship. Terry was interviewed by her friend and contemporary, Indiana's own Scott Russell Sanders, whose writing about the hills and forests of southern Indiana continues the tradition of essential Hoosier nature writers like



*Along the shores of Lake Michigan at the Indiana Dunes, September 2016*



*Ready to embark on a sunset paddle around Eagle Creek Reservoir, July 2016*



*Platonic ideal of a fall day in hilly southern Indiana, October 2016*



*Scott Russell Sanders and Terry Tempest Williams*

Gene Stratton-Porter and Edwin Way Teale. More than 150 people turned out to listen in as these two kindred spirits chatted about their work and inspirations. A recap was posted as part of our “Campfire Chatter” blog series: <http://indianahumanities.org/five-things-ttw>.

## TREK & TALK TOOLKITS

Our Trek & Talk Toolkits contain everything needed to plan your own DIY version of a Next Indiana Campfires hike. Contents include:

- An excerpt of the Scott Russell Sanders essay “Mind in the Forest” with discussion questions.
- A map of Indiana featuring literary quotes about different parts of the landscape.
- An artisanal granola bar made by a Bloomington, Indiana-based company, UGo Bars.
- An iron-on Next Indiana Campfires patch.
- One of our signature card decks featuring literary quotes from Indiana nature writers, facts about Indiana’s conservation history and about Indiana’s ecology, along with discussion prompts. The card deck was attached to a branded Indiana Humanities carabiner, the signature tool of any self-respecting outdoorsperson.
- A #GoneTrekking sign that encouraged people to take a photo and post it on social media.
- A short survey, printed on a stamped postcard, to mail back to Indiana Humanities.



*Everything you need to plan your own trek*

Thanks to grant funding, we were able to create 1,000 kits, available for free to anyone who requested one. We created an online request form and passed out toolkits at events throughout 2016 and 2017, including at the Indiana State Fair and at an earth music festival hosted by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Word clearly got out—more than a third of all requests have come from people who heard about the toolkits by word-of-mouth. The inclusion of a Next Indiana Campfires patch, as well as the tie to the bicentennial, made the toolkits especially appealing to Girl Scout troops. We had several requests from troop leaders to send 50 or more toolkits so their girls could do their own hikes and earn the patches. Girl Scout activity was especially strong in two areas where we’ve traditionally struggled to develop audiences—in Lake County (home to towns like Gary and East Chicago) and in rural southeast Indiana near the Ohio/Kentucky borders. Some libraries and community organizations also used the toolkits to plan local events; we were excited, if a bit surprised, that folks found ways to make the program their own in this way! A map of all Trek & Talk Toolkit requests to date can be found online: [goo.gl/obZbk5](http://goo.gl/obZbk5).

We printed additional copies of the maps and Scott Russell Sanders readings and sent them out to nature centers, preserves and state parks for distribution as well.

## COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

We designed an ambitious statewide communications campaign. We knew we needed to reach new audiences in new parts of the state, since many of the treks took place in areas where we had not previously presented many programs. We also hoped to engage the public in the project’s key themes, even if they were unable to attend the treks. And finally, we wanted to document the treks and share them with people who weren’t able to attend.

We launched the series with op-eds by our board members, running in the major newspapers of their home regions. Each op-ed was customized to the nature and conservation history of their particular region; these op-eds not only introduced the series and invited the public to participate, but they also highlighted a few of the project’s key themes, in particular calling attention to the unique ways writers have helped us think about conservation and the opportunity, during our bicentennial, to consider the future of Hoosier stewardship.

We also pitched stories in the media markets for each of the treks, resulting in great local coverage. We provided press release templates for our partner organizations to customize with details about the trek. Total media coverage to date includes nearly 40 articles across the state (including the front page of the Sunday Indianapolis Star’s Arts & Culture section); TV coverage in Evansville; radio segments in Indianapolis (WFYI’s No Limits) and in Northwest Indiana (Lakeshore Public Media). The total estimated audience for print and broadcast media in 2016 was 981,128.



From April through November, we posted a weekly blog series called “Campfire Chatter.” Blog posts introduced our scholar-facilitators, shared stories of Hoosier conservation, highlighted Pulitzer-winning environmental writers and recapped events, among other topics. A guest author from the Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site wrote a post about the 19<sup>th</sup> century president’s environmental legacy (he was the first president to designate federal nature preserves). The Indiana Historical Bureau wrote several guest posts, including one on the writer Edwin Way Teale and one on the father of the Indiana State Parks system, Charles C. Deam. Scholar-facilitators wrote recaps of their events, drawing out key themes and writings from their texts. One of our events was attended by a former state poet laureate, who was moved to write new poems; these were in turn posted on our blog.



*A pile of our signature card decks with the Next Indiana Campfires logo prominently displayed. Each deck features literary quotes, facts about Indiana conservation and ecology, and discussion prompts.*

We hired professional photographers to capture several events. These photos, which are so unlike typical “humanities” images, have been used again and again to help people not only understand what happens on a trek, but also because they are a perfect reflection of our “smart and fun” brand. See photos from our paddle at [Eagle Creek State Park here](#) and from our hike at the [restored Limberlost swamps in northeast Indiana here](#). Our only regret is that we did not budget for a videographer to capture the events but our plans for 2018 include video.

We encouraged people to share their thoughts on social media with the hashtag #trekandtalk—and they did! Participants told us during and after the events how much they enjoyed them, asked about the continuation of the series and signed up for more hikes—all signs of strong engagement. Another small sign of success—we had very high open and click rates on the follow-up emails we sent to participants after each trek.

In addition to print and media stories, we have garnered significant web traffic. Through the end of 2016, Campfires pages on our website had 16,805 visits, plus 9,702 unique visits to Eventbrite listings. On social media Campfires posts and tweets had 602,322 impressions and 10,783 engagements (likes, clicks, replies, shares).

We were honored to receive the Pinnacle Award for Marketing/Communications from the Hoosier Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America for our work in 2016. This award is given in recognition of excellence and creativity in marketing and communications. We were up against professional PR and marketing firms, so this is a great honor for our small yet dedicated communications team.

## COMMUNITY REACH & IMPACT

In 2016, we held 18 events (including the kick-off INconversation) for 688 people, and worked with 20 community partners and 8 scholars. We designed and distributed more than 650 Toolkits. Completing this ambitious scope of work alone is an accomplishment; in 2017, we have/will host five treks and continue to distribute Trek & Talk Toolkits as supplies last.

We are most proud, though, of the high rate of satisfaction and learning that the experiences produced for participants:

- 98% said the event helped them discover, connect or reconnect to an interesting text.
- 95% learned at least one new fact about Indiana environmental resources.
- 88% said the event helped them connect or reconnect to nature.
- 83% reported the event gave them a greater appreciation in the role of authors and poets in creating a sense of place in Indiana.
- 80% said the event gave them a greater appreciation of the role of authors and poets in helping Hoosiers connect with the environment.
- Only 39% of attendees had visited their trek sites before.

We also conducted some longitudinal surveys, asking participants to reflect on their experiences six months after their treks. Since attending their treks:

- 55% went on to explore new-to-them Hoosier nature spots and 43% had read other writings by Hoosier and/or environmental authors.
- 91% said they were thinking more about Indiana natural resources and had told others about their experience.
- 50% said they were reading more about environmental issues.
- 50% had changed a personal habit to become a better steward of the environment.
- 25% had signed a petition or sent an advocacy letter on an environmental issue.
- 10% had joined or created a habit-changing group at work, school or in the community.

A few key quotes from participants illustrate the impact of this project:

“Please keep doing these kinds of programs! All too often, it seems that Hoosiers are trying to have these complex conversations via social media, and the discussions quickly become disrespectful and unhelpful. While social media has its benefits, these conversations would be so much more successful if they were taking place face-to-face with knowledgeable experts on hand. More people need the opportunity to attend an event where they can discuss and learn in a positive environment.” —Participant

“[Since the event] I really think about the passages of literature and the way they related to the world. Like when I see a beautiful thing in nature, I think about Mary Oliver or Gene Stratton-Porter or that guy...Chris...something...and then I think about the experiences of the 2 campfires I attended.” —Participant

“In light of the election, I’ve particularly thought about how our laws will be impacted by our new leaders. I’m very concerned for our environment and want to take action to protect it since it seems it’s being threatened now more than before the election.” —Participant

“The Next Indiana Campfires program is terrific. I can’t say enough good things about connecting people to Indiana outdoors and Hoosier writers! Indiana Humanities has hit a home run.” —Participant

More than 60% of people who attended a Next Indiana Campfire trek had never before attended an Indiana Humanities event—a figure that is a testament to the creativity of the format, the talent of our communications team and the value of working with non-traditional partners. More than 50% of Trek & Talk Toolkit users were new to Indiana Humanities. Compared to typical Indiana Humanities audiences, participants were also much more geographically diverse, partly reflective of the fact that one of our key goals was to deliver in-person, high quality programs across the state (most of our large-scale statewide programs in the past 10 years were grants, traveling exhibits, our lending library of book sets or application-based programs; in other words, not delivered by Indiana Humanities staff).

Based on our evaluation, here are some other demographic indicators about our audiences:

- Approximately 1/3 (34%) reported incomes of \$49,000 or less.
- Approximately 1/4 were under the age of 35 (experiences were promoted to ages 21+).
- 63% of attendees were new to Indiana Humanities.
- 25% of attendees traveled more than 50 miles to attend an event.



*Showing off Campfires collateral, reading on the banks of Trail Creek, hiking up the Dunes and issuing a Limberlost invitation*



## PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

From the beginning we knew we would need to partner with environmental organizations to present these programs. We had early conversations with the Central Indiana Land Trust and the Cope Environmental Education Center to learn more about the network of Hoosier environmental organizations and gauge openness to the idea of hosting text-based discussions trailside. We circulated a call for partners via a statewide listserv of environmental educators, which helped us reach a wide variety of partners at state and city parks, public and private nature trusts and preserves, and college-affiliated preserves and trails. Indeed, the response was overwhelming. We initially planned to hold 6-11 hikes, but as requests to partner kept rolling in, we sought additional funding (see below). Eventually, the limiting factor became available dates to schedule hikes, not willing partners to work with.

Partners advised on route and duration, helped with logistical aspects (e.g., Did we need to bring a fire pit or was one provided? Were any special permits required?), helped spread the word and, most importantly, provided a naturalist who joined us on the hike and helped participants make connections between the readings and the landscape around us. We took care of event registration and pre- and post-event communications, ordering and bringing food and supplies, and provided partners with communications tools (posters, press release templates, postcards and promotional graphics) to help them get the word out. In addition, we provided partners with a \$500 honorarium.

We loved the combination of “outdoor kids” and “indoor kids” — our partners were experienced outdoor educators who knew how to keep a group together on the trail, project over background noise and anticipate how long it would take a group at a moderate pace to complete the trek. We were pleased that 100% of partners reported that their partnership with us was a success and they would like to work with us again.

We also circulated a call for humanities scholars to serve as scholar-facilitators for the trek. Indeed, a secondary goal of the program was to meet more publicly engaged scholars. To date we’ve worked with eight scholars, most of them facilitating more than one trek. Indiana Humanities compiled a “reader” of possible texts, but scholars chose their own readings (with staff approval) and designed a discussion plan; most of them consulted with the partner organizations during this process. Scholars made incredible selections from Indiana environmental writers and Pulitzer Prize winners. Scholars also reported the value for their own personal and professional growth from taking part in the program. One told our evaluator, “There, I saw a real need and opportunity for humanities scholars to ‘weave the clouds together’ and lead on important social issues.”

In 2017 we added a few new partners and worked with some of our 2016 favorites to visit new sites. In 2018 we will again issue a call for partners and scholars with a specific geographic focus on sites in the White River Watershed (see below for more information about our plans for 2018).

As a result of the program, Indiana Humanities staff have been invited to speak at several organizations and meetings across the state, in addition to the ample opportunity provided at last year’s National Humanities Conference to share the program with



*Making s'mores at the Limberlost, October 2016*



*Cliff Chapman, executive director of the Central Indiana Land Trust, tells us about the unique geology and topography at Glaciers End Nature Preserve, October 2016*



*Scholar-facilitator Jason Goldsmith of Butler University leads discussion at Eagle Creek Reservoir, July 2016*



our peers. We love talking about this unique program and always enjoy the chance to raise our profile among humanities and environmental groups.

## FINANCIAL STRUCTURE & SUSTAINABILITY

The idea for this program was sparked by the invitation during the Pulitzer Prize Centennial Campfires Initiative to create programs featuring Pulitzer-winning writers and words. In doing our homework, we discovered that one of Indiana's Pulitzer winners is Edwin Way Teale, a significant and influential mid-century nature writer. His memoir *Dune Boy* recounts his experiences on Lone Oak Farm in Indiana's scenic and precious lakeshore dunes. Like Henry David Thoreau and John Muir, to whom he is often compared, his writing awakened an environmental consciousness in generations of readers. The Pulitzer Prize centennial coincided with Indiana's bicentennial and our own Next Indiana thematic initiative, during which we invited Hoosiers to explore and reflect on the people, places and ideas shaping our state's future. We had planned to address environmental conservation and stewardship, a natural fit since the state of Indiana has marked the centennial and bicentennial with land conservation projects, including the creation of the state parks system in 1916. We envisioned a program that would invite Hoosiers to read significant Pulitzer-winning and Hoosier environmental writers outdoors, making connections between literature, nature and the future of Indiana. We are delighted that the Pulitzer Prize Centennial Campfires Initiative committee supported this risky and unusual idea.

We surpassed the scope of work we initially proposed not only because we had incredibly strong interest from partner organizations, scholars and participants, but also because we were able to leverage Pulitzer funds for additional grants.

We raised approximately \$99,000 in grants for the 2016 series, and another \$5,000 in in-kind donations from Upland Brewing and UGo Bars. This included \$20,000 from Pulitzer, \$33,000 from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust (NMPCT), \$44,000 from the Efroymsen Family Fund and \$2,000 from the Ball Brothers Foundation. We earned several thousand more in revenue from participant fees and proceeds from the sale of a Next Indiana Campfires t-shirt designed by Yonder Clothing Company.

Our scaled down 2017 series of five hikes was primarily funded by Indiana Humanities operating funds (NEH, private giving, etc.), though we did receive another \$1,000 from Ball Brothers Foundation to underwrite a trek in their funding region, and in-kind donations from Upland Brewing and UGo Bars.

We were pleased and flattered to be asked by NMPCT to submit a proposal for 2018. NMPCT is focusing its environmental funding over the next three years on the White River Watershed and was impressed by our evaluation findings that humanities programs like ours changed participants' attitudes and behaviors about conservation and stewardship. We anticipate a \$40,000 grant to underwrite the 2018 series, which will focus on the White River as an ecological and cultural connector of rural, suburban and urban Hoosiers. In addition to six public treks, we will also offer four private specialized treks for influencer audiences, including media, elected officials, HOA leaders and real estate interests, and agricultural leaders. We will also initiate a video project, funding the development of two short films about the White River Watershed as an ecological and cultural connector. This use of film is inspired by Oregon Humanities' *This Land* project, which similarly works with local filmmakers to create essayistic film explorations about environment and identity. Following the grant period we will create discussion toolkits and sponsor community discussions of the films; these discussions will be part of our next thematic initiative (2019-2020), which will explore urban/rural dynamics.



We're grateful to our sponsors and funders, including Upland Brewing Co.

We are also in the process of applying for more Pulitzer/Mellon funding to enable us to deepen our outreach to media and journalists and to create an anthology of key readings in partnership with IU South Bend Press.

For each trek, we pay a humanities scholar and a partner organization \$500 each for their contributions to the event. We also pay for food and any supplies or permits required of the trek. We charge \$15 (up from \$10 in 2016) or \$20 (if rental of a watercraft is involved). While this fee does not offset our total costs, it does help ensure that people show up; we offer need-based waivers upon request. Grant funding and general operating support cover staff time and travel to prepare for and implement the events; we typically budget \$2,000, including staff time and travel, for each trek.

For the 2016 series, other costs included hiring graphic designers to help us develop the brand identity for the program and design printed collateral like the "literary maps," the card decks and other items. We spent \$15,000 for Terry Tempest Williams' speaker fee for the kick-off event, in addition to her travel and food and beverages for the event. While this was higher than originally anticipated, our funder Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust strongly

encouraged to go forward anyway because of the attention-getting value of the event. Grant funding enabled us to create and mail Trek & Talk Toolkits for free; the estimated cost of each, including shipping, was about \$12.50.

## WHAT'S NEXT

For anyone who thinks of Indiana as flyover country, Next Indiana Campfires has demonstrated that there are many special and rare places to explore and to preserve. For those who associate environmental literature with “the West,” we have discovered a wealth of writers who’ve written lyrically and thoughtfully about Indiana nature and landscapes. For anyone who looks at Indiana’s environmental indicators, it’s clear there’s great need to offer opportunities for Hoosiers to learn about and reflect on our environmental heritage and history of conservation. We’ve seen that fun yet meaningful non-partisan humanities conversations can bring together diverse Hoosiers to talk about our state’s future and the values and beliefs that will guide our choices. In other words, there are many good reasons to continue Next Indiana Campfires.

At this point, we plan to offer a few (4-6) of these treks every year for the foreseeable future, with an expanded scope (6-10) when we’re able to secure dedicated funding. We have established strong relationships with non-traditional humanities funders, due to the environmental themes of the projects, and thanks to our evaluation, are able to show how these experiences lead to measurable changes in attitudes and behaviors. We have also discovered new partners and audiences eager for this unique combination of humanities and environmental programming.

We hope that other state humanities councils will be inspired to create environmental humanities programs—there is an eager and underserved public waiting to be invited. As much as possible, we encourage our peers to take people outdoors; while it is certainly more work and will stretch your team’s creativity and capacity, such programs have such an indelible and invaluable payoff. (And we know it works, even if it’s a little crazy...) We would advise our peers to invest not only in the partnerships with environmental organizations and scholars as we did, but also to invest in communications to catch the eye and attention of folks beyond “the usual suspects.” In addition to the opportunity to connect humanities programs to urgent public debates, we also note that by tackling environmental questions, councils can initiate relationships with a new set of funders who don’t typically fund arts and culture projects.

In addition to offering more Campfires programs, we will continue to experiment with place-based discussion programming. For our current Quantum Leap initiative, we’re taking Hoosiers to sites of scientific discovery and innovation for tours that combine learning about science and readings about the humanistic implications of the research performed there. We have found these adult field trips excite audiences and draw an unexpected and diverse group of participants—in large part due to the format. As we continue to offer more of this kind of programming, we will solidify our reputation among audiences, partners, scholars, funders and our peers for offering meaningful yet fun humanities programs that invite curious Hoosiers to explore big and important ideas with others.



*Gathering around the campfire at  
Eagle Creek Reservoir, July 2016*



# ATTACHMENT 1—WHERE WE’VE TREKKED AND WHAT WE’VE READ

Destination	Readings
Olivers Woods, a nature preserve nestled along the White River in Indianapolis (May 2016)	Wallace Stegner, “The Wilderness Letter” Michael Martone, “The Flatness” Mary Oliver, “The Summer Day”
Wesselman Woods, Indiana’s largest remaining tract of old growth forest in Evansville (May 2016)	Annie Dillard, <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i> Scott Russell Sanders, <i>Staying Put</i> Mary Oliver, “Walden” and “Whelks”
McVey Memorial Forest, a typical eastern Indiana flatwoods in Randolph County (June 2016)	Mary Fell, “Refuge” Shari Wagner, “Buckeye” Elizabeth Weber, “Milkweed” David Shumate, “Bringing Things Back from the Woods” Jared Carter, “Glacier” Nancy Pulley, “Sand Creek”
Syracuse Lake, following a new trail around one of Indiana’s distinctive kettle lakes formed by glaciers (June 2016)	Mary Fell, “Refuge” Jared Carter, “Glacier” Shari Wagner, “Olin Lake” Jessica D. Thompson, “Future Home of the Mammoth Mega Church” Jared Carter, “Roadside Marker” Shari Wagner, “At Dawn in the Subdivision”
Indiana Dunes Cowles Bog Trail, an epic five-mile trek exploring the many unique microclimates and diverse ecology of the Dunes (June 2016)	Henry Chandler Cowles, “Ecological Relations” Mary Oliver, “Mindful” Mary Oliver, “On the Beach” Mary Oliver, “This World” Scott Russell Sanders, “Wildness” Wallace Stegner, “The Wilderness Letter” Edwin Way Teale, <i>Dune Boy</i>
Merry Lea Environmental Education Center, a nature preserve and farm operated by Goshen College (July 2016)	Michael Martone, “The Flatness” Mary Oliver, “Skunk Cabbage” Todd Davis, “Kingdom of the Ditch” Mary Linton, “Making Wild Berry Jam”
Eagle Creek Reservoir, a sunset paddle around the lake in Indianapolis’ large northside public park (July 2016)	Annie Dillard, <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i> Scott Russell Sanders, <i>Staying Put</i> Mary Oliver, “Walden” and “Whelks”
Prophetstown State Park, an early evening walk across restored prairies in full bloom, site of Tecumseh’s encampment during the War of 1812 (August 2016)	Jared Carter, “After the Rain” Jessica D. Thompson, “Ironweed” Mary Oliver, “Tecumseh” Shari Wagner, “The Prophet Speaks” Joy Harjo, “Eagle Poem” N. Scott Momaday, “The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee” Chief Pokagon, “The Wild Pigeon of North America” Tecumseh to General William Henry Harrison, “Sell a Country! Why Not Sell the Air?”
Cardinal Greenway and Red-tail Nature Preserve, a bike ride out to a restored prairie in east central Indiana (August 2016)	Gene Stratton-Porter, “The Robin Moth: Cecropia” Edwin Way Teale, “The Orchid Ridges” Ann Haymond Zwinger, “Remembering Indiana” Sean Lovelace, “Muncie Creek”
Indiana Dunes Succession Trail, an early fall hike along the Indiana lakeshore (September 2016)	Gary Snyder, “On the Path, Off the Trail” Carl Sandburg, “Dunes” Edwin Way Teale, <i>Dune Boy</i> Carl Sandburg, “Timesweep”
Cope Environmental Center, a hike through restored woods among typical central Indiana limestone creeks (September 2016)	Jared Carter, “After the Rain” Ann Haymond Zwinger, “Remembering Indiana” Scott Russell Sanders, “Mind in the Forest” Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic”

Gene Stratton-Porter State Historic Site, a trek through the restored wetlands that inspired Indiana's best known nature writer (October 2016)	Louise Gluck, "Witchgrass" Gene Stratton-Porter, <i>Moths of the Limberlost</i> Aimee Nezhukamatathil and Ross Gay, "Letters from Two Gardens" N. Scott Momaday, "A Simile" Gene Stratton-Porter, "A Limberlost Invitation" Natasha Trethewey, "Carpenter Bee" Yusef Komunyakaa, "The Millpond" Gene Stratton-Porter, <i>A Girl of the Limberlost</i>
Trail Creek, a paddle along one of the many creeks of northwest Indiana that feed into the Great Lakes watershed (October 2016)	Mary Oliver, "At the River Clarion" Scott Russell Sanders, "Honoring the Ordinary" Edwin Way Teale, "River of the Fireflies" Gary Snyder, "The Etiquette of Freedom"
Marian University Ecolab, a crisp fall hike through this nature preserve in Indianapolis (October 2016)	Scott Russell Sanders, "Wildness" Wendell Berry, "The Body and the Earth" Wendell Berry, "The Peace of Wild Things" Robert Pfingston, "The Presence of Trees"
Glaciers End Nature Preserve, a fall trek across this new preserve on the suddenly hilly terrain that marks where the glaciers stopped their southwardly flow in Indiana (October 2016)	Jared Carter, "Glacier" Michael Martone, "The Flatness" Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" Scott Russell Sanders, "Wildness"
Morgan-Monroe State Park, a late fall hike through an Indiana forest to explore different philosophies of land management with Indiana Forest Alliance and Indiana DNR (November 2016)	E.O. Wilson, <i>On Human Nature</i> Annie Dillard, <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i> Gifford Pinchot, "The Birth of Conservation" Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" Charles C. Deam, "The Forests of Indiana, Past, Present and Future"
Salt Lake State Park, a trek on Antelope Island and down to the lakeshore during the 2016 National Humanities Conference (November 2016)	Kirsten Jorgenson, "Sediment & Veil" Lillian-Yvonne Bertram, "Go West, Young Brown Girl" Edward Abbey, <i>Desert Solitaire</i> Tim Dee, <i>Four Fields</i> Paul Kingsworth & Dougal Hine, "Uncivilisation"
Meltzer Woods, an early spring hike through a pristine tract of old growth forest, recently dedicated as a nature preserve (April 2017)	Gary Snyder, "Getting in the Wood" Etheridge Knight, "The Idea of Ancestry" Robert Pfingston, "The Presence of Trees" Scott Russell Sanders, "Mind in the Forest" Charles C. Deam, "The Forests of Indiana, Past, Present and Future"
Daryl N. Karns Nature Trail, through the wooded hills and limestone creeks overlooking the Ohio River on Hanover College's campus (May 2017)	Ann Haymond Zwinger, "Remembering Indiana" Kevin Young, "Ode to the Midwest" Scott Russell Sanders, "The Force of Moving Waters" Jessamyn West, "Homer and the Lillies" Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" Susan Neville, "On the Banks of the Lost River"
Fall Creek Woods, a mid-summer trek on one of Indiana's newest nature preserves (July 2017)	Mary Oliver, "The Summer Day" Henry David Thoreau, <i>Walden</i> Scott Russell Sanders, "Wildness"
Eagle Creek Reservoir, a return trip to this beloved park for a sunset paddling trek (August 2017)	Gary Snyder, "Kyoto: March" Henry David Thoreau, "Walking" Etheridge Knight, "Indiana Haiku" and "Indiana Haiku-2" Various, "Seven Chippewa (OJIBWA) Songs" Annie Dillard, <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i>



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