

Newsletter

Friends of Goose Pond

March 2026



Friends of Goose Pond (FoGP) was established to support the goals of wildlife conservation and habitat restoration at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area through environmental education, scientific research and recreational activities.

We encourage you to browse our site, learn of our activities, and plan a visit.

[Friends Of Goose Pond \(FoGP\)](#)



Marsh Madness 2026

George Sly



The Friends of Goose Pond held its annual Marsh Madness Kickoff Dinner at the Linton Elks Lodge Friday evening February 20th.

Besides providing the nonprofit an opportunity to thank sponsors, the evening served as a fundraising opportunity through ticket sales, a silent auction and live auction.

A current goal for which Goose Pond FWA is seeking donations will provide the site a way to restore and refurbish areas of Goose Pond to optimum wetlands. Over time, as Goose Pond Property Manager Kalli Dunn explained, the property needs a “reset” to improve levees and increase important habitat for migratory birds and waterfowl.

“This habitat work requires heavy equipment at times and that is why this year, the Friends of Goose Pond decided they wanted to fund a bigger project for Marsh Madness and have chosen to purchase an earth moving pan to be used in wetland work on Goose Pond. This pan will allow us to improve our levees and increase important habitat for migratory birds and waterfowl. The Friends of Goose Pond have set a fundraising goal of \$30,000 for this project.”

Friends of Goose Pond President, George Sly announced an anonymous benefactor who will match donations to this project.

“Goose Pond is for everyone,” Dunn added. “It’s our job to preserve the habitat and keep this public access area in good shape for current and future visitors.”

The live auction was robust, with one piece, a stained-glass kaleidoscope, fetching \$350 and several pieces of artwork selling for over \$150.

Donations can be made at <https://friendsofgoosepond.org/donate/>

For more information, visit www.friendsofgoosepond.org

Credit to Patti Danner, GCDW for the article and pictures.

Marsh Madness 2026



Scenes



Critter Corner No. 33

The Eastern Box Turtle

George Sly



Let me introduce to you a member of the Goose Pond FWA biota that I find fascinating in a variety of ways. It isn't likely that the eastern box turtle would be the first animal you would think of as a Goose Pond resident. After all, it isn't a marshland animal. Besides that, it is the birds that usually get top billing on this vast area. Yet, as I've noted in previous editions of Critter Corner, the diversity here runs far deeper than birds alone. The range of animal life found on the property is remarkably rich. And remember, not all of GPFWA is wetland. There are grasslands and woodlands here too. It is in the moderately dry forest habitat where one is most likely to find the eastern box turtle.

About the time I begin my annual search for morels, I also eagerly anticipate seeing my first box turtles. Both are sure signs that spring is finally here! On occasion, I find the turtles only partially above ground and covered in mud. Once the cold weather of October and November arrives, box turtles retreat into shallow burrows or other protected sites and become dormant. The mud-covered individuals I see are likely just waking up from a long winter nap.

Eastern box turtles are so-called because they can close themselves up within their shell – thus forming a box-like fortress for protection. This is not a universal ability among turtles. The ventral shell (the plastron) is hinged and can be moved upward to close against the upper shell (carapace). The carapace is composed of expanded rib bones, dermal bone, and incorporates their backbone or vertebral column. Although it offers strong protection, their shell is not impregnable. Large mammalian predators can, with persistence, penetrate this defense and prey upon them. And, of course, their shell offers no protection from one of their most deadly enemies – the automobile.

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The Eastern Box Turtle

George Sly



Eastern box turtle males usually have reddish-orange eye color, the females brown. Mating occurs soon after emergence in the spring (April-May) but some mating continues throughout the summer. Females lay several eggs (1-7) by digging a nest and covering it with soil. These hatch in twelve to sixteen weeks. However, egg predation by animals such as raccoons and skunks is typically high. Interestingly, female box turtles may store sperm and have been known to lay fertile eggs several years after their last mating.

As with other turtles, nest temperature is critical in determining the sex of hatchlings. Cooler temperatures (<82F) tend to yield males, warmer temperatures (>88F) females. Concern has been expressed that rising environmental temperatures may cause “gender skewing” in which an abnormally high number of females is produced. This preponderance of females could present a threat. It makes finding a mate more difficult thus reducing reproductive success. This, in turn, may cause a population to decline.

Eastern box turtles eat a variety of foods. The late Sherman Minton, Jr. notes, in his authoritative *Amphibians and Reptiles of Indiana*, that box turtles eat about equal parts of vegetation and animal matter. Fruits, berries, and fungi (including poisonous species) are consumed. Animal foods in the turtle’s diet include slugs, snails, insects, and carrion. Minton also observes that: Turtles living near farmhouses sometimes more or less attain the status of pets and may appear at definite times and places for food. Such is the case of the box turtle shown at the head of this essay. This one, for a period of about two years, showed up somewhat regularly in our flower garden, or on our deck, where it eagerly munched on the raspberries my wife provided.

Eastern box turtles are said to have a strong homing instinct and maintain a relatively small home range. Minton characterizes the typical home range as averaging 350 to 400 feet in diameter. He also cited a study which found that, in good habitat, around four box turtles per acre could be expected to be present.

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The eastern box turtle is found throughout Indiana but is more common in the southern part of the state. The DNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife (ww.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/animals/eastern-box-turtle) states that populations are declining throughout the state. Habitat loss, road mortality, and collection by humans are cited as causes of this decline. The latter activity is illegal as eastern box turtles are protected in Indiana.

However, if you see a box turtle trying to cross a busy road, you can (if it is safe for you to do so) move it to the other side of the road. Leave it facing in the direction it was traveling. As noted, the turtle cannot be kept, nor should it be moved to any other location.

What an interesting little animal is the eastern box turtle. With a potential lifespan of over 100 years, remarkable homing ability, strong memory, and interesting anatomical adaptations, this species is truly captivating - and one well worth learning more about. Perhaps, with a bit more help from our own species, our great-great-grandchildren may also delight in meeting a wandering box turtle as it meanders through a springtime morel woods.



Featured Artist Bruce Neckar



Bruce shown here with his original oil of the Least Turn which was auctioned live during the Marsh Madness dinner February 20th at the Linton Elks.

Send Bruce a short text at (317) 379-1275 for inquiries about his art.

DNR

Kalli Dunn



Goose Pond celebrated 20 years as a Fish and Wildlife Area in fall of 2025. The area continues to be a valuable resource for wildlife and for people to enjoy alike. Part of what makes Goose Pond so special is the unique wetland habitats and grasslands found here, these are called early successional habitats. They are young habitats fulfilling an important role in nature for our native Indiana wildlife and at Goose Pond, we strive to maintain and improve these habitats by constantly hitting the reset button.

This habitat work requires heavy equipment at times and that is why this year, the Friends of Goose Pond decided they wanted to fund a bigger project for Marsh Madness and have chosen to purchase an earth moving pan to be used in wetland work on Goose Pond. This pan will allow us to improve our levees and increase important habitat for migratory birds and waterfowl.



Scholarship

Jim Brinson

The Friends of Goose Pond established a Conservation Careers Scholarship award in 2023. This award of \$1,000 (with the possibility of renewal for three consecutive years) is offered to students pursuing an undergraduate degree in an area of natural resources, environmental science, ecology, wildlife/conservation biology, or a related field, and who have successfully completed at least one full year of undergraduate studies with a GPA of at least 3.0.



The 2026 Friends of Goose Pond Conservation Careers Scholarship award winner is Ms. Gabriela Weiner. Ms. Weiner is a fourth-year landscape architecture student at Ball State University. Her conservation interests span a wide array of topics, but she is particularly passionate about understanding and designing landscapes that support biodiversity and climate resilience, and using landscape architecture as a tool to connect people to nature. She is deeply interested in protecting watersheds, improving water quality, and creating healthy stormwater systems. She has currently undertaken a wetland restoration project at Goose Pond, since, as she notes, it is "a great example of how ecological restoration can coexist with public engagement and education." After graduation, she intends to pursue a career in landscape architecture focused on restoring degraded landscapes while simultaneously increasing public access and environmental stewardship. Congratulations, Ms. Weiner! We look forward to the impact you will make in conservation!

Previous scholarship winners include Suzie Ronk (pictured above with Jim, 2024, Hanover College, Biology) and Gillian Perry (2023, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, Environmental Science/Chemistry). Ms. Ronk impacts the future of conservation as a biology and environmental science teacher at Linton-Stockton High School and recently joined the Friends of Goose Pond Board of Directors. Ms. Perry is an environmental scientist who protects our watersheds by working with the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army to monitor discharge water quality in support of environmental compliance.

Greene Invasive Species Initiative

Cassandra Arthur

The Greene Invasive Species Initiative continues to gain momentum as we work to protect our county's natural resources, agricultural lands, and native habitats. Through partnership with local organizations, landowners, and volunteers, we are actively addressing invasive plant species that threaten biodiversity and impact both rural and urban landscapes.

Weed Wrangles Continue Across Greene County

One of the most impactful outreach efforts has been our community weed wrangles. These hands-on volunteer events focus on identifying and removing invasive species from Public spaces and natural areas throughout the county. From bush honeysuckle to autumn olive and other problematic invaders, our volunteers are making a visible difference. Weed Wrangles not only improve habitat for native plants and wildlife, but they also serve as educational opportunities for residents to learn proper identification and control methods.

We are actively seeking additional volunteers to assist with upcoming events, whether you're a landowner, student, FFA member, Master Gardener, or simply someone who enjoys being outdoors, we welcome your help. No prior experience is required-just a willingness to learn and lend a hand.

REMC Grant Application: Callery Pear Buy Back Program

In addition to removal efforts, the CISMA has applied for a REMC grant to launch a Callery Pear Buy Back Program here in Greene County.

Callery pear (commonly known as Bradford Pear) has become one of Indiana's most aggressive invasive tree species. While originally planted as an ornamental tree, it spreads rapidly into fields, roadsides, and natural areas, forming dense thickets that crowd out native vegetation and reduce wildlife habitat.

If funded, this program would provide an incentive for landowners and homeowners to remove Callery pear trees and replace them with native, non-invasive alternatives. Our goal is to promote long-term habitat improvement while helping residents' transition away from invasive ornamental species.

We look forward to sharing updates as soon as funding decisions are announced.

The Greene Invasive Species Initiative remains committed to education, collaboration, and action. Together, we can preserve Greene County's natural beauty and agricultural productivity for future generations.

Greene County Soil & Water

District Update

Cassandra Arthur



The Greene County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) continues to make strong progress in conservation programming, landowner assistance, and community outreach. Through partnership, grant funding, and local support, we are proud to provide resources that benefit both our agricultural producers and residents across the county.

Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant 2025 & 2026

We are excited to share that Greene County SWCD has received CWI funding for both 2025 & 2026.

· 2025 CWI funding- supported the purchase of our new no-till drill, providing landowners with access to rent the equipment at low cost, improving soil health, reducing erosion, and enhancing water quality. The drill is located at our office and is available to producers implementing conservation practices across the county.

· 2026 CWI Funding- will support upcoming cost-share opportunities and has provided funds to purchase a post driver available for rent to install rotational grazing fencing in our county. The cost-share opportunities will focus on the following conservation practices to be implemented in our county.

- o Heavy use area protection (heavy use pads)
- o Rotational Grazing Fencing
- o Spring Development
- o Pasture reseeding
- o Permanent Watering Systems

Applications have begun, and we look forward to working with producers who are interested in implementing these practices. These projects not only improve livestock operations but also reduce sediment and nutrient runoff into our waterways.

Plat Books Available

In 2025 the SWCD updated the Greene County Plat Books they are available through our office. These books provide detailed landownership maps, aerial imagery, and township information-valuable tools for landowners, farmers, realtors, surveyors, and community members. Plat books make excellent resources for planning, farm management, and even gifts. Stop by our office or contact us for availability and pricing.





Greene County Soil & Water District update Cassandra Arthur

PHISH Group-Free Soil Testing for Gardeners

Our PHISH (People Helping Improve Soil Health) group continues to support local gardeners by offering Free Soil Testing for Gardening Purposes.

This program helps residents:

- Understand soil nutrient levels
- Make informed fertilizer and amendment decisions
- Improve garden productivity
- Protect local water quality by avoiding over application

Whether you are planting vegetables, flowers, or maintaining a backyard garden, PHISH is here to help you grow successfully and sustainably.

PHISH is also selling rain barrels again this year and they will be available soon be on the lookout for purchasing details posted on our social media and website.

FREE TREE GIVEAWAY:

The SWCD will be at the Greene County Flower and Patio Show located at Greene County Event Center on April 25th, 2026. We have 600 Native Tree Seedling we will be giving away at our booth. Stop by to chat with us and pick up a tree seedling to plant on your land!

Greene County SWCD remains committed to serving our community through conservation programs, technical assistance, equipment rental, and educational outreach. We appreciate the continued support of our landowners, partners, and residents as we work together to protect Greene County's natural resources for generations to come.

For more information about any of our programs, stop by our office or contact Greene County Soil & Water Conservation district.

104 CR. 70 E. Suite B.
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812-384-4634 ext. 3
812-798-6530

Cassandra-arthur@iaswcd.org

Website: [Greene County Soil & Water Conservation District](#)
Facebook: [Greene County Soil & Water Conservation District](#)



Membership

Friends of Goose Pond have initiated a membership program. Members will receive a quarterly electronic newsletter as well as timely electronic notification of happenings at Goose Pond. To join via PayPal or Credit Card, please see the link below.

We support wildlife conservation and habitat restoration at Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area in Greene County, Indiana, through environmental education, scientific research, and recreational activities and programs.

Membership Annual Dues

Individual.....	\$20.00
Family.....	\$30.00
Senior (65)	\$15.00
Youth.....	\$10.00

Membership Type: Please Circle One

Individual Family Senior Youth

Amount Enclosed _____

Make checks payable to Friends of Goose Pond

Mail to:

Friends of Goose Pond

PO Box 56

Linton IN 47441



2026 Marsh Madness Gear



**Least Tern Print: 17X11 signed,
numbered and embossed: Artist
Bruce Neckar**



[Shop Here For Gear](#)

American Barn Owl



So far we've only seen one, but it's the right time to start nesting.

Fingers crossed.

American Barn Owl roosting in Visitor Center nest box. 3/8/26

Barn owls are nocturnal, roosting during the day in manmade structures (like barns and grain silos), caves, or dense trees.

Barn owls don't hoot. Their calls at night consist of eerie screams or raspy hissing sounds. The barn owl has a distinctive, heart-shaped face with dark eyes. They have long scaly legs and no ear tufts. This medium-sized owl stands around 16 inches tall. They have whitish underparts and buffy light-brown upperparts. Weight ranges from 1 to 1.5 lbs.

View live at the link below:

<https://www.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/properties/goose-pond-fwa/goose-pond-fish-and-wildlife-cameras>



Informative Links

[Friends Of Goose Pond \(FoGP\)](#)

[FoGP Facebook](#)

[FoGP email](#)

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#)

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources Goose Pond](#)

[Aldo Leopold Foundation](#)

[State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management \(SICIM\)](#)

[Indiana Audubon Society](#)

About Us
Friends of Goose Pond (FoGP)
supports wildlife conservation and
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and Wildlife Area in Greene County
Indiana through environmental
education, scientific research and
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Contact us
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PO Box 56
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