

## Explore Wild Places

Letha's Youth Outdoors Fund pays for transportation to take school-age children to natural areas in their locale for the purpose of experiencing the wonders of nature.

Field trip sites may be state parks, nature preserves (restrictions may apply), or even wild "pocket parks" within urban areas, as chosen by their teacher or group leader.

The aim of the fund is to enable children to immerse themselves in the sights and sounds of Indiana's wild places, and to support projects that grow out of their experience in nature.

INPAWS established the fund to honor botanist Letha Queisser, fondly known as Indiana's Wildflower Lady, who led dozens of wildflower hikes and opened many eyes to the beauty of our native plants.

## Share Our Passion

At selected sites, INPAWS volunteers will share with the children their personal enthusiasm for the natural world—for example, pointing out or identifying plants, animals, birds, and insects during hikes; leading planting activities; or assisting with the eradication of invasives.

By focusing children on even the simplest things and tapping into their natural curiosity, we hope to spark a lasting interest in the rich variety of plants, animals, and locales that make up our natural heritage.

## A Pressing Need

The need to engage children with Indiana's wild places is urgent. Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, has sounded a warning call to address the "nature deficit disorder" that increasingly afflicts our children. As a society, he says, we are raising the first generation of Americans to grow up disconnected from nature.

Most of us adults can remember carefree days of playing outdoors, exploring the natural world in our



own ways and at our own pace. But the average American child today spends more than six hours a day staring at an electronic screen.

Meanwhile, a growing body of research is showing that children who spend unstructured time outdoors have lower stress levels, more active imaginations, stronger immune systems, and greater respect for themselves and the environment than children who remain indoors.



## Driving Cost's on Us

Application to Letha's Youth Outdoors Fund is open to any organized group planning a field trip to explore nature, whether school class, church group, nature club, or scout troop. Our intent is to help those groups who would not otherwise be able to afford the trip.

To qualify for transportation assistance, applicants must describe goals for the field trip consistent with INPAWS' mission—helping our citizens appreciate and conserve Indiana's native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers and learn about their value, beauty, diversity, and environmental importance. Support of follow-up projects emerging from the children's interest will be determined on the same basis.

We invite your group to apply. To download an application, visit [www.inpaws.org](http://www.inpaws.org) and follow the link to Letha's Youth Outdoors Fund.

## Support the Fund

We welcome donations of any amount to Letha's Youth Outdoors Fund. Please send your check, made payable to INPAWS, to P.O. Box 30317, Indianapolis, IN 46230-0317, noting "Letha's Fund" in the comment line.



**"If we are going to save environmentalism and the environment, we must also save an endangered indicator species: the child in nature."**

**-Richard Louv**

## **MAKE INPAWS YOUR RESOURCE**

### **LEARN About Native Plants**

- Invite INPAWS to speak to your group
- Read INPAWS Journal
- Hear nationally known experts at our fall conference

### **EXPLORE Native Plant Habitats**

- Participate in INPAWS hikes and field trips
- Identify plants with help from expert guides and fellow members

### **PROTECT Native Plants**

- Encourage conservation of natural areas
- Help INPAWS rescue native plants from the bulldozer
- Combat invasive plants that threaten native flora

### **GROW Native Plants**

- Attend INPAWS' spring plant sale/ auction
- Share knowledge and experience with fellow members
- Attract butterflies, birds, native wildlife
- Enjoy lower maintenance in the garden

To learn more about Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society membership and programs, visit [www.inpaws.org](http://www.inpaws.org) or write to INPAWS, PO Box 30317, Indianapolis, IN 46230-0317.

Photos depict field trips to Skiles Test Park (Ruth Ann Ingraham), Butler University Prairie and Butler Woods (Marcia Moore), and Winterhaven Wildflowers & Native Plant Preserve (Reni Winter). Printed 11/08 on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.



### **Letha's Youth Outdoors Fund**



**INDIANA NATIVE PLANT  
and Wildflower Society**