



TIMBERLINES

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
Izaak Walton League
August 2026

www.breckenridgeikes.org



Coming Events August 2026

- 11 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 25 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
Annie Beedy – Soil & Us

September 2026

- 8 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 22 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
**Jonathan Slaght, Wildlife Biologist &
Author of *Tigers Between Empires***

October 2026

- 13 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 27 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
**Bruce Anderson - History of American
Wilderness**



Social Educational Meeting:

Tuesday, August 25 7:30 pm
Annie Beedy - “Soil & Us”

Healthy gardens start with healthy soil. Soil impacts our health too, and the health of our rivers, lakes and oceans.

Learn about the NO-TILL method to building healthy soil with Annie Beedy, founder of Permanent Culture Project. and how this simple method can store carbon, manage water and bolster biodiversity.



Permanent Culture Project is a garden and landscape design organization rooted in permaculture principles and climate-resilient design. Annie believes getting outside, hands in the soil, head in the sun, has the potential to heal and unite the natural and human worlds, which are of course one and the same.

We invite you to come and see for yourself.
Stay afterward for refreshments and conversation.

Report on the Convention

Ted Suss, President of the IWLA Minnesota Division

The 2026 National convention of the IWLA is now in the history books.

To begin, I want to thank the many Ikes from across Minnesota and from almost every chapter for attending as delegates and alternates and as volunteers. Very nearly every chapter was represented in the delegate pool, and almost every delegate volunteered in some way. Please pass on my thanks and appreciation to those members of your chapter who contributed so much to making the convention a success.

On behalf of the Minnesota Division I want to thank National IWLA President Scott Meyer and IWLA Executive Director Jared Mott for their leadership.

Perhaps I am biased, but I feel the convention was a resounding success with the highest attendance in many years, outstanding speakers, and smooth operations.

My greatest thanks, which I hope you share and will express to them, goes to convention planning co-chairs Joseph Barisonzi and Barb Hanson. It is a great relief to report that neither Joseph nor Barb killed the other in frustration. Along the way, Jim Davis found his way to the Ikes and joined the planning team as a fully engaged member and is equally deserving of our thanks.

Joseph, Minnesota Division First Vice President, worked very nearly full time for at least the last six months on convention planning. This effort, after several months of significant work which started almost immediately following the Division Board meeting at which John Siekmeier informed us that IWLA national wanted the Minnesota Division to host the convention. Joseph has spent hours on the phone with national staff, with potential sponsors, with potential speakers and anyone else any of us thought might contribute positively to the convention.

Barb Hanson, former Minnesota Division Treasurer and Minnesota Valley Treasurer, was every bit as involved in the planning and decision making as Joseph and also took responsibility for purchasing everything from convention hall banners to food for the youth convention. I don't know if Barb put in quite as many hours as Joseph, but it was close. Barb is the attention to detail person and her unfailing and never ending attention to detail was a big part of the smoothness with which the convention operated.



Jim Davis, another Minnesota Valley Board Member, joined the Ikes during convention planning and immediately took full responsibility for the graphics which gave our convention a modern look and feel. Jim, whom many of you do not know is a marketing professional who has held senior marketing positions with national brands and operated his own marketing agency. When I sat in on planning meetings, Jim's experience as a marketing professional became very obvious, his probing questions, which I paraphrase as; who is our audience?, and what exactly do you want communicated?, were invaluable in moving the planning forward successfully. On top of that, Jim personally did all of the design work on posters, banners, print and digital ads, and anything else that needed designing. I hope you were as impressed and pleased as I with the "look" of the convention.

Every Sunday for the last several months, Joseph, Barb, Jim, and others on an ad hoc basis met at the Minnesota Valley Chapter House for a National Convention planning meeting.

Minnesota Division National Director and Minnesota Valley Board Member Camille Morton was a very key player during the convention. Attendees saw her introducing several speakers and

making important announcements. Camille worked with the Planning Committee, mostly Joseph, to develop a "script" that fleshed out the agenda. On many occasions during the convention, national leaders consulted with Camille to ask, "what's next". In many ways, Camille was the convention "show runner".

Minnesota Valley Chapter Vice President and State Director Griff Pugh was outstanding as a moderator of the Public Lands Panel. Griff was on the phone or met with each of the panelists numerous times to pull the panel together. Griff read most everything any of the panelists wrote so that he could ask informed questions. Griff kept our three excellent panelists on point and respecting the clock. During that panel, I was sitting very close to the front in a position to view both the panel and the audience. To say the audience was glued to the stage would be a major understatement.

During the convention; Griff, who is the creator and host of the Young Ike Podcast, also conducted several in-depth interviews, with Ikes and guests on a variety of important subjects. These interviews will be included in future Young Ikes Podcasts. Griff was a very busy man during the convention.

We had volunteers from across Minnesota and across the country. Many of you were among that group. Riku Desai, another Minnesota Valley Board Member, worked many hours placing volunteers into their role, training volunteers when necessary, and was on-site during the entire convention to answer volunteer questions. Riku was also present and working shifts as a volunteer herself during the entire convention. Riku also helped set up the Kouba Gallery art show.

Minnesota Valley Board Member Sophia Peterson and Green Crew President Hannah Barisonzi led a hands-on Get-It-Done youth convention. Board Member Sam Clasen led one of the major projects which dug and lined with rock a trench to move water off our chapter driveway and diverted that water into a rain garden pool which the youth also dug. This project will control ravine erosion. While working, the youth learned about erosion, rain gardens, and their effect on water quality.

As they have done for years, Gary and Cherry Schwartz hosted a Minnesota Parade of States room serving root beer floats. It is wonderful that Gary and Cherry have kept this popular tradition alive for so many years. It was also refreshing to find a non-alcoholic beverage on offer.



New this year was a second Minnesota Parade of States room hosted by Willis Mattison and Steve Marking who were in period costume. What was truly special about their room was that Willis and Steve were dressed in character as Piscator (google it) and Will Dilg. The second truly special feature is that they served a Wild Rice Porridge made with Minnesota grown Wild Rice sourced from the White Earth Nation (indigenous).

One of the things that made the 2026 convention different from prior conventions and very special was the Kouba Gallery sponsored National Art Show. Jeff Berg served as the curator of the show and spent much time working with Ike artists from across the United States to secure participation and make the show truly national in scope. I believe artists from 13 states presented their work and several pieces of art were sold. Linda Jensen may not have been listed as curator, but she was working

every step of the way and was very instrumental in setting up and taking down the show and working with the artists. Jeff and Linda are Minnesota Valley Chapter members and lead our Kouba Galley Committee.

So many other people, such as Brian Raney who coordinated Minnesota Salads for the Parade of States and Bill Lesch who coordinated a Lead

Ammo and Tackle workshop, contributed greatly and deserve our thanks. Unfortunately, I cannot think of everybody who contributed, but if they helped, I apologize for the omission of their name and thank them.

Thank you to everyone for helping make the 2026 IWLA convention a success



2026 Izaak Walton League National Convention

Highlights Conservation, Leadership and Advocacy



The Izaak Walton League's 2026 national convention in Bloomington, Minn. drew a crowd of more than 300 members, guests and volunteers, and a well-attended Youth Convention.

Wildfire smoke from Canada and the Superior National Forest curtailed some of the Youth Convention's planned outdoor activities but prominent speakers, presentations and exhibits indoors provided a springboard for compelling conversations about national policies, advocacy and the role of volunteers in conserving outdoor America.

Guest speakers focused on the challenges ahead and the League's imperative to tackle them and Get It Done, the convention's theme. In a video recording, U.S. Senator Tina Smith (D-Minn.) thanked the League for "working to preserve our natural wonders," including the vast, pristine Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota, which faces the threat of mining pollution.

In her keynote address to the convention, U.S. Representative Betty McCollum (D-Minn.) also urged support for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Citing the League's success in convincing Congress to protect the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in the 1924, she said "I'm counting on your help. Without you, it won't happen... Thank you for the work you do."

Elections

Delegates voted to elect national officers for the League including:

- Scott Meyer, President (Minnesota)
- Jim Storer, Vice President (Ohio)
- Craig Enneking, Treasurer (Iowa)
- James Meek, Secretary (Iowa)

Delegates also re-elected three Executive Board members:

- Mike Fuge (Wisconsin)
- Rick Graham (Ohio)
- Rachel McBride (Virginia)

Board Members for the Endowment

Members at the convention also reelected three new board members for the Izaak Walton League of America Endowment:

- Bill Iltzsche (Ind.)
- Shawn Gallagher (Ohio)
- Charlotte Johnson (Iowa)

All members of the League are automatically members of the Endowment.

Resolutions

Delegates approved two resolutions: one that updates the League's conservation policies related to agriculture to better reflect current federal programs, and another that supports more effective consideration of the cumulative impacts of environmental decision making that is meaningful, enforceable and aligned with how harms actually occur.

The full text is available at iwla.org/event/2026-national-convention.

League Leaders

Speaking to the convention, National President Scott Meyer described the work needed to manage the tsunami of data centers spreading across the U.S. Due to the volume of water and land they consumer, we need better planning, transparency and oversight of their siting and operations. Meyers has formed a committee to focus on that effort.

Executive Director Jared Mott, describing himself as a duck hunter from the Lower Mississippi, reminded the audience that it was threats to the Upper Mississippi that first galvanized the League, and we know how to win policy battles. "We have been here before," he said. The League serves as a

potent force for clean water through its policy work and volunteer water monitors who collect data to tell stories about the waters that mean the most to them. With the immersion in the nitrate issue, through Nitrate Watch, the League has grabbed that tiger by the tail,” he said. “We can’t just tell Americans to drink less water.”

Conservation-minded Spider

Tim Johnson reports:

Female *Neoscona crucifera* (this one on my porch) build new webs each night and consume them each morning, recycling the nutrients for the next web. It would be nice if all spiders did that so you wouldn't need to periodically remove the cobwebs.



Sen. Hoffman on Environment Issues



We were pleased be able to have our own Senator John Hoffman come to the Chapter House to listen and speak at July’s Education/Social meeting. We all are still shocked at what he and his family went through last year in an assassination attempt. John Rust asked that we observe a minute of silence for Rep. Melissa Hortman before he introduced our Senator.

Mr. Hoffman began by explaining why he is running for re-election for District 34 despite the horrific experience. “You just don’t get over that” he said of waking in the dark at two in the morning to see his wife and daughter with their hands up and having a 9mm Beretta shoved in his face. Before it was over there were 23 bullets fired in the house. He said he knows that folks would understand if he decided to walk away from politics but that he feels “violence should not win”. He said he owes Melissa Hortman and his constituents another term pushing for the causes they believe in.

John recounted how some of our chapter members, including Geri and Darby Nelson and Gene Merriam, had encouraged him to serve on the environment committee when he was first elected. When he protested, claiming not being qualified, they promised to teach him what he needed to know and even signed him and Melissa Hortman up for a six-week course on energy and the environment in Idaho. He says he is still in awe of the amount of knowledge to be gained from us and wants to continue listening and learning.

The first issue the Senator talked about was the bill he sponsored last session to prohibit the sale and use of paraquat, one of the most-deadly insecticides

still in use in the country. Not only is it fatal to humans in minute amounts and linked to an increase risk for Parkinson's Disease, but it causes lasting environmental damage, remaining in the soil for years, impacting groundwater, and harming wildlife. The bill had bipartisan support but suddenly, in the last week of session, was opposed by lobbyists for beet farmers who argued it wouldn't be fair if North Dakota farmers could use it on their sugar beets while Minnesotans could not. The leaders pulled it from the Ag bill, "something that would never have happened under Melissa Hortman's leadership" he said.

Another environmental bill John carried in 2026 was one which would allow local governments to opt in to creating additional regulations for wake boats (distance from shore and minimum depth of water), specifically on our Coon Rapids Dam pool on the Mississippi River. Studies at the University of Minnesota have shown the serious damage this activity does to the lake bottoms, not to mention the shorelines. Hoffman has seen the Minnesota Ikes' resolution advocating more restrictions on this activity and asked us for more support on the issue in the coming session.

Protecting Minnesota's waters from being expropriated by western states (for uses including the growing of alfalfa and other crops in their deserts) is another issue that John thinks we need to keep an eye on. The Great Lakes Compact protects the waters of Lake Superior (and all the Great Lakes) from being diverted outside its basin, but there is no protection against the diversion of the Mississippi basin waters. Hoffman is keyed in on keeping our beautiful river clean for future generations and wants to work with downstream states to clean it up. He said one tributary, the Ohio River, counts for 40% of the pollution of the lower Mississippi.

Audience members asked Sen. Hoffman for advice on advancing legislation to get the lead out of fishing tackle and ammunition, not only to protect wildlife, but also ourselves. Especially of concern to them was the use of toxic lead ammunition (with lead also in the primers) by the popular high school trap shooting leagues. The fear expressed was that these minors, while shooting hundreds of rounds in

each tournament, are being exposed to aerosolized lead which will affect not only them, but in the case of the girls, any future fetus they may carry as the lead is pulled back out of their bones during pregnancy and crosses the placenta to the baby. Hoffman thought that what would be needed to pass legislation was statements by respected medical organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, on the dangers of this kind of exposure to lead.

The last segment of the discussion between the audience and Sen. Hoffman could be summed up by the question "who could be the next Sen. Carrie Ruud (R)" (retired in 2022). Audience members recognized the need for Republican legislators who will support the important conservation issues of our day. Ikes understand that the current polarization of voters, has led to great difficulties in advancing common sense conservation laws that would have passed in earlier times. The Senator



urged audience members to keep educating their legislators on important conservation issues just as he had needed education when he was first elected to the Senate.

Social time after the discussion included a nice Mississippi themed cake (provided by Chapter member Sue Schmidt) for all to share.

Reported by Tim Johnson

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If you would like to submit an article for the Timberlines, please send it to
Barbara Franklin at: bbfrankli@gmail.com
Deadline is the First Day of each month.

All articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the position of the Breckenridge
Board of Directors. The Editor reserves the right to edit material as necessary.

Thanks to John Rust...

...for sharing this experience: "A wolf near our campsite on the Noatak River in northern Alaska. My paddling partner and I paddled 330 miles from the headwaters to Noatak Village."

