

President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Project Commission

Turkey Run Inn
Strauss Room
8102 Park Road
Marshall, Indiana 47859

June 9, 2026
12:00PM (Noon)

PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Comments by Chair
2. Review and Approval of the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust (PBHCT) Project Commission Minutes for the meeting held March 10, 2026
3. Environmental License Plate Sales – Mark Becker, PBHCT Executive Director
4. PBHCT Financial Report – Mark Becker
5. Land Acquisition Report – Mark Becker
6. PBHCT Marketing Strategy – Sam DeWeese, DNR Assistant Director of Communications
7. Adjournment

Appointed Officer Information:

Name	Term End Date	Appointing Authority
Amanda Wuestefeld	*	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(1)
John Seifert	*	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(2)
Ron Hellmich	*	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(3)
Brandt Baughman	*	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(4)
Cathy Ferree	*	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(5)
Missi Bush-Sawtelle	*	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(6)
Kristopher Krouse	June 30, 2029	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(7)(i)
C. Sam Bond	June 30, 2029	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(7)(iii)
Kade Carter	June 30, 2029	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(7)(iii)
Gene Hopkins	December 31, 2029	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(7)(iv)
Emily Kress	December 31, 2029	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(7)(v)
Mary McConnell	June 30, 2029	IC 14-12-2-14(b)(7)(v)
Rep. Mike Karickhoff **		IC 14-12-2-14(b)(8)(A)
Rep. Ryan Dvorak **		IC 14-12-2-14(b)(8)(B)
Sen. Greg Taylor **		IC 14-12-2-14(b)(8)(C)
Sen. Justin Busch **		IC 14-12-2-14(b)(8)(D)

* No term start or end date, as the commission appointment is based on the job title and does not have a specific term

** Non-voting member

President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Project Commission

**Fort Harrison State Park
The Garrison Conference Center - Ball Room
6002 N. Post Road
Indianapolis, Indiana 46216**

Minutes of March 10, 2026

1) Call to Order

Emily Kress, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order of the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust (PBHCT) Project Commission at approximately 11:00 a.m., EST, on March 10, 2026, at the Garrison Conference Center at Fort Harrison State Park, Indianapolis, Indiana.

2) Review and Approval of the President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Project Commission Meeting Minutes for December 9, 2025

Gene Hopkins moved to approve the minutes. Ron Hellmich seconded the motion. Upon voice vote, the motion carried.

3) Environmental License Plate Sales

Becker presented a chart with Environmental license plate sales data since 2014. In 2025, 46,686 plates were sold, making it the best year since CY2010 when 48,269 plates were sold. The historical trend in recent years is an increase of approximately 1,000 plates year over year.

4) Financial Report

Becker presented the financial report including fund balances for each PBHCT account.

5) Land Acquisition Report

Becker indicated that the Division of Land Acquisition had opened 11 new files for CY2026 year to date. Files completed in the calendar year to date:

Fee Simple	3	175 acres
Conservation Easements	1	112 acres
Easements	8	(utility, ingress/egress, etc.)
Other	1	<u>(environmental restrictive covenants, etc.)</u>
Total	13	

Calendar year to date: No PBHCT projects have been completed yet this year.

Becker also gave an update on the Next Level Conservation Trust (\$25M ARPA funds appropriated for Conservation Land Acquisition by the General Assembly).

Since 2023, 29 NLCT projects have been completed or are in process, totaling 3,621 acres of land. The NLCT required a 25% match, which was exceeded at a match of 32%.

During the period November 1 – January 31 (since last meeting), one PBHCT closed:

PBHCT #1583: Nature Preserves – Spring Creek Seeps

On December 12, DNR completed the fee simple acquisition of the 29.7-acre Barker tract in Montgomery County for \$325,000. This property is an addition to Spring Creek Seeps Nature Preserve and features more than 1,400 feet of frontage along Sugar Creek. This project includes matching support from The Nature Conservancy and Central Indiana Land Trust.

Becker also highlighted two recent Next Level Conservation Trust closings:

NLCT #4005: Nature Preserves – Big Walnut Nature Preserve

On January 15, DNR completed the fee simple acquisition of the 13.8-acre Geneva Wilson tract in Putnam County for \$120,000. This property includes a west-facing slope with mature hardwoods and more than 1,800 feet of frontage along Big Walnut Creek. This acquisition resolves a longstanding inholding at Big Walnut.

NLCT #4022: State Parks – Spring Mill State Park

On October 10, DNR completed the fee simple acquisition of the 40.8-acre Bassett tract in Lawrence County for \$210,000. The property is located on the north edge of the Park along the old stagecoach road that once served the pioneer village. It features Karst topography, including 3 large sinkholes believed to drain into the Whistling Cave system under the Park. This addition makes the total area of Spring Mill State Park 1,399 acres.

6) State Fair T-Shirts

PBHCT statute allows up to 10% of Stewardship Account to be used for promotional purposes (IC 14-12-2-26(a)(6)(D)). It has been PBHCT practice in recent years to support the purchase of t-shirts for DNR Employees and Volunteers at the State Fair. Typically, the cost is about \$8,000.

7) Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on June 9, 2026, 12:00 p.m. EST, at Turkey Run State Park.

8) Meeting adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:35 a.m.

Commission Members in Attendance:

Emily Kress
Missi Bush-Sawtelle
Kris Krouse
Ron Hellmich, Nature Preserves
Brad Schneck, Forestry proxy
Mike Linderman, State Museum proxy
Anthony Sipes, State Parks proxy
Chad Whitis, Fish & Wildlife proxy
Sam Bond (call in)
Kade Carter (call in)
Gene Hopkins (call in)
Mary McConnell (call in)

Other Attendees:

Mark Becker
Erika Hinshaw
Cheryl Hampton
John Connell
Jill Flachskam
Zack Smith
Jody Kress
John Seifert
Tom Laycock
Cliff Chapman
Andrea Huntington

President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust
License Plate Revenue

	CY2015		CY2016		CY2017		CY2018		CY2019		CY2020	
	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>
January	\$ 84,375.00	3,375	\$ 77,100.00	3,084	\$ 72,900.00	2,916	\$ 80,850.00	3,234	\$ 67,525.00	2,701	\$ 64,700.00	2,588
February	\$ 92,650.00	3,706	\$ 91,900.00	3,676	\$ 98,100.00	3,924	\$ 85,525.00	3,421	\$ 86,500.00	3,460	\$ 86,675.00	3,467
March	\$ 104,550.00	4,182	\$ 102,350.00	4,094	\$ 99,450.00	3,978	\$ 87,750.00	3,510	\$ 94,525.00	3,781	\$ 82,050.00	3,282
April	\$ 94,725.00	3,789	\$ 89,550.00	3,582	\$ 89,925.00	3,597	\$ 85,550.00	3,422	\$ 86,775.00	3,471	\$ 81,850.00	3,274
May	\$ 88,975.00	3,559	\$ 90,625.00	3,625	\$ 89,400.00	3,576	\$ 92,900.00	3,716	\$ 91,900.00	3,676	\$ 91,950.00	3,678
June	\$ 88,900.00	3,556	\$ 90,350.00	3,614	\$ 87,750.00	3,510	\$ 87,125.00	3,485	\$ 90,875.00	3,635	\$ 98,525.00	3,941
July	\$ 85,175.00	3,407	\$ 86,900.00	3,476	\$ 86,300.00	3,452	\$ 82,175.00	3,287	\$ 87,950.00	3,518	\$ 93,850.00	3,754
August	\$ 92,550.00	3,702	\$ 85,850.00	3,434	\$ 87,100.00	3,484	\$ 87,975.00	3,519	\$ 88,100.00	3,524	\$ 101,550.00	4,062
September	\$ 91,025.00	3,641	\$ 83,350.00	3,334	\$ 85,650.00	3,426	\$ 82,928.00	3,317	\$ 84,175.00	3,367	\$ 101,625.00	4,065
October	\$ 85,050.00	3,402	\$ 76,325.00	3,053	\$ 81,975.00	3,279	\$ 85,250.00	3,410	\$ 87,675.00	3,507	\$ 92,475.00	3,699
November	\$ 54,325.00	2,173	\$ 58,050.00	2,322	\$ 58,050.00	2,322	\$ 56,600.00	2,264	\$ 59,800.00	2,392	\$ 65,700.00	2,628
December	\$ 28,500.00	1,140	\$ 29,600.00	1,184	\$ 32,250.00	1,290	\$ 39,950.00	1,598	\$ 43,875.00	1,755	\$ 47,000.00	1,880
	\$ 990,800.00	39,632	\$ 961,950.00	38,478	\$ 968,850.00	38,754	\$ 954,578.00	38,183	\$ 969,675.00	38,787	\$ 1,007,950.00	40,318

	CY2021		CY2022		CY2023		CY2024		CY2025		CY2026	
	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>	<i>Distribution (\$)</i>	<i># of Plates</i>
January	\$ 72,325.00	2,893	\$ 67,000.00	2,680	\$ 71,975.00	2,879	\$ 79,050.00	3,162	\$ 70,250.00	2,810	\$ 67,300.00	2,692
February	\$ 88,150.00	3,526	\$ 85,925.00	3,437	\$ 101,575.00	4,063	\$ 96,125.00	3,845	\$ 102,575.00	4,103	\$ 98,600.00	3,944
March	\$ 106,625.00	4,265	\$ 100,400.00	4,016	\$ 103,325.00	4,133	\$ 98,050.00	3,922	\$ 109,050.00	4,362	\$ 106,700.00	4,268
April	\$ 95,350.00	3,814	\$ 107,250.00	4,290	\$ 105,650.00	4,226	\$ 102,100.00	4,084	\$ 111,400.00	4,456		
May	\$ 96,450.00	3,858	\$ 100,475.00	4,019	\$ 100,050.00	4,002	\$ 102,125.00	4,085	\$ 112,450.00	4,498		
June	\$ 104,275.00	4,171	\$ 105,125.00	4,205	\$ 104,050.00	4,162	\$ 100,375.00	4,015	\$ 110,000.00	4,400		
July	\$ 93,325.00	3,733	\$ 94,350.00	3,774	\$ 98,225.00	3,929	\$ 104,675.00	4,187	\$ 113,350.00	4,534		
August	\$ 95,225.00	3,809	\$ 107,800.00	4,312	\$ 110,025.00	4,401	\$ 108,550.00	4,342	\$ 102,925.00	4,117		
September	\$ 88,675.00	3,547	\$ 91,500.00	3,660	\$ 96,925.00	3,877	\$ 101,300.00	4,052	\$ 103,650.00	4,146		
October	\$ 96,025.00	3,841	\$ 97,825.00	3,913	\$ 93,725.00	3,749	\$ 104,275.00	4,171	\$ 104,200.00	4,168		
November	\$ 65,475.00	2,619	\$ 72,450.00	2,898	\$ 74,775.00	2,991	\$ 76,025.00	3,041	\$ 72,000.00	2,880		
December	\$ 50,125.00	2,005	\$ 52,950.00	2,118	\$ 53,625.00	2,145	\$ 61,150.00	2,446	\$ 55,300.00	2,212		
	\$ 1,052,025.00	42,081	\$ 1,083,050.00	43,322	\$ 1,113,925.00	44,557	\$ 1,133,800.00	45,352	\$ 1,167,150.00	46,686	\$ 272,600.00	10,904

President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust

BALANCE SHEET FISCAL YEAR 2026

As of 4/30/2026

	Period FY26	
Beginning Balance on 07/01/2025	\$	15,780,877.00
FYTD Plate Sales: 37,367	\$	934,175.00
		down 608 plates from this date prior fiscal year
Misc. Income	\$	-
Reimbursed Match Funds	\$	-
Donations	\$	250.00
Interest	\$	730,517.73
		<i>Interest is retained in the fund account</i>
Appropriation	\$	-
		<i>No General Fund Appropriation for FY26</i>
Total Income	\$	1,664,942.73
Revenue Adjustment	\$	<u>(737,917.73)</u>
		<i>Not distributed</i>
Subtotal	\$	16,707,902.00
Current Year Disbursements		
Stewardship Exp.	\$	(3,074.14)
Land Acquisition Exp.	\$	(1,706,683.84)
Disbursement Adjustment (Pending)	\$	(2,409.00)
Current Ending Fund Balances	\$	14,995,735.02
Stewardship	\$	(2,468,623.94)
Commitments	\$	<u>(5,267,580.00)</u>
Current Available Funds	\$	7,259,531.08

President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust

Fund Accounts

(IC 14-12-2-26)

	<u>State Parks and</u>			<u>Outdoor Recreation</u>	
	<u>Historic Sites</u>	<u>Forestry</u>	<u>Nature Preserves</u>	<u>and Trails</u>	<u>Fish & Wildlife</u>
Beginning Balance	\$2,057,538.00	\$1,440,610.00	\$1,165,946.00	\$1,745,155.00	\$1,832,065.00
Income	\$151,509.79	\$151,509.79	\$151,509.79	\$151,509.79	\$151,509.79
Appropriation	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Revenue adjustment	-\$67,150.51	-\$67,150.51	-\$67,150.51	-\$67,150.51	-\$67,150.51
Disbursements	-\$1,775.00	-\$35,593.92	-\$702,678.92	-\$22,375.00	\$0.00
Ending Balance	\$2,140,122.28	\$1,489,375.36	\$547,626.36	\$1,807,139.28	\$1,916,424.28
Commitments	<u>-\$148,400.00</u>	<u>-\$1,246,330.00</u>	<u>-\$496,100.00</u>	<u>-\$289,218.00</u>	<u>-\$371,912.00</u>
Available Funds	\$1,991,722.28	\$243,045.36	\$51,526.36	\$1,517,921.28	\$1,544,512.28

	<u>Descretionary</u>	<u>Stewardship</u>
Beginning Balance	\$5,151,297.00	\$2,388,266.00
Income	\$757,548.94	\$149,844.85
Appropriation	\$0.00	\$0.00
Revenue adjustment	-\$335,752.57	-\$66,412.60
Disbursements	-\$946,696.00	-\$3,074.31
Ending Balance	\$4,626,397.37	\$2,468,623.94
Commitments	<u>-\$2,715,620.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
Available Funds	\$1,910,777.37	\$2,468,623.94

Division of Land Acquisition Report
Through April 30, 2026

	CY2024		CY2025		CY2026 YTD		
	#	Acres Protected	#	Acres Protected	#	Acres Protected	
Fee Simple Acquisitions	13	4,826.29	14	403.71	4	205.68	
Conservation Easements	15	1,094.08	17	1,944.76	4	330.42	
Departmental Transfers			9	582.64			(INDOT to DNR--typically mitigation)
Easements	28		19		10		(utility, ingress/egress, etc.)
Other	2		5		1		
Total	58	5,920.37	64	2,931.11	19	536.10	
PBHCT Completed	7	107.27	18	1,069.53	1	23.39	
Files Opened	88		108		49		

Next Level Conservation Trust Report

NLCT #	Completion Date	Project Description	County	Type	Acreage	NLCT \$	Match \$	Total Value	NLCT \$/acre
4001	2/12/2024	Wesselman Nature Society / Wesselman Woods	Vanderburg	Conservation Easement	41.57	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 24,055.81
4002	1/3/2024	NICHES Land Trust / Williams Woods	Warren	Conservation Easement	120.00	\$ 630,158.00	\$ 251,250.00	\$ 881,408.00	\$ 5,251.32
4003	12/7/2023	Clear Lake Conservancy	Steuben	Conservation Easement	36.91	\$ 255,000.00	\$ 264,700.00	\$ 519,700.00	\$ 6,908.70
4004	1/30/2024	DNR Fish & Wildlife / Kankakee FWA	Starke	Fee Simple	267.44	\$ 1,246,300.00	\$ 82,100.00	\$ 1,328,400.00	\$ 4,660.11
4005	1/15/2026	DNR Nature Preserves / Big Walnut NP (Wilson)	Putnam	Fee Simple	13.76	\$ 120,000.00	\$ -	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 8,720.93
4006	2/1/2024	Mud Creek Conservancy	Marion	Conservation Easement	38.23	\$ 383,400.00	\$ 493,400.00	\$ 876,800.00	\$ 10,028.77
4007	11/18/2024	ACRES Land Trust / Kern tract	Fulton	Conservation Easement	114.43	\$ 506,250.00	\$ 368,750.00	\$ 875,000.00	\$ 4,424.10
4009	10/4/2024	ACRES Land Trust / Riegsecker tract	Elkhart	Conservation Easement	202.00	\$ 998,759.00	\$ 1,321,250.00	\$ 2,320,009.00	\$ 4,944.35
4010	6/28/2023	Lake County Parks / Sarros tract	Lake	Conservation Easement	99.30	\$ 1,157,500.00	\$ 570,000.00	\$ 1,727,500.00	\$ 11,656.60
4011	6/18/2024	Shirley Heinze Land Trust / Meadowbrook	Porter	Conservation Easement	72.85	\$ 306,000.00	\$ 209,000.00	\$ 515,000.00	\$ 4,200.41
4012	5/13/2025	Shirley Heinze Land Trust / Big Eastern	Starke	Conservation Easement	425.74	\$ 1,426,500.00	\$ 475,500.00	\$ 1,902,000.00	\$ 3,350.64
4013-B	3/4/2026	DNR Forestry / Yellowwood SF (Girl Scouts)	Brown	Fee Simple	122.40	\$ 860,000.00	\$ -	\$ 860,000.00	\$ 7,026.14
4013-E	9/27/2024	DNR Forestry / Clark SF	Clark	Fee Simple	40.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 18,449.00	\$ 138,449.00	\$ 3,000.00
4013-F	Payment	DNR Forestry / Ferdinand SF (Brown-Laskowski)	Dubois	Fee Simple	43.50	\$ 320,000.00	\$ -	\$ 320,000.00	\$ 7,356.32
4014	6/30/2023	DNR Fish & Wildlife / Mallard Roost WCA	Noble	Fee Simple	158.00	\$ 1,050,001.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 1,400,001.00	\$ 6,645.58
4015	2/1/2024	DNR Fish & Wildlife / Willow Slough FWA	Newton	Fee Simple	41.13	\$ 171,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 246,000.00	\$ 4,157.55
4019	5/15/2023	Central Indiana Land Trust / Fern Station	Putnam	Conservation Easement	570.47	\$ 3,119,813.00	\$ 1,039,937.00	\$ 4,159,750.00	\$ 5,468.85
4021	4/10/2025	Zionsville Parks / Carpenter Nature Park	Boone	Conservation Easement	170.75	\$ 3,000,000.00	\$ 1,446,935.00	\$ 4,446,935.00	\$ 17,569.55
4022	10/3/2025	DNR State Parks / Spring Mill SP (Bassett)	Lawrence	Fee Simple	40.85	\$ 210,000.00	\$ -	\$ 210,000.00	\$ 5,140.76
4028	2/1/2024	Sycamore Land Trust / Sam Shine Preserve	Monroe	Conservation Easement	107.93	\$ 244,500.00	\$ 81,500.00	\$ 326,000.00	\$ 2,265.36
4029	8/29/2024	Sycamore Land Trust / Beanblossom Bottoms	Monroe	Conservation Easement	26.44	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 5,673.22
4030	1/26/2024	Sycamore Land Trust / Dolan tract	Monroe	Conservation Easement	113.00	\$ 318,386.00	\$ 106,129.00	\$ 424,515.00	\$ 2,817.58
4031	1/24/2025	The Nature Conservancy / Harrison Glades	Harrison	Conservation Easement	200.00	\$ 562,500.00	\$ 328,315.00	\$ 890,815.00	\$ 2,812.50
4032	3/11/2025	The Nature Conservancy / Green's Bluff	Owen	Conservation Easement	198.28	\$ 1,312,500.00	\$ 458,780.00	\$ 1,771,280.00	\$ 6,619.43
4033	10/26/2023	State Museum & Historic Sites	Posey	Fee Simple	64.08	\$ 768,960.00	\$ -	\$ 768,960.00	\$ 12,000.00
4034	1/29/2025	Shirley Heinze Land Trust / Lydick Bog	St. Joseph	Conservation Easement	93.78	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 906,000.00	\$ 1,156,000.00	\$ 2,665.81
4035	6/26/2025	LC Nature Park	Allen / Huntington	Conservation Easement	106.70	\$ 719,600.00	\$ 334,000.00	\$ 1,053,600.00	\$ 6,744.14
4036	4/3/2024	Ouabache Land Conservancy	Parke	Conservation Easement	63.60	\$ 128,700.00	\$ 157,300.00	\$ 286,000.00	\$ 2,023.58
4037	2/20/2025	DNR State Parks / Trine SRA	Steuben	Fee Simple	27.56	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 450,000.00	\$ 12,699.56
NLCT Offer / Signature / Closed to date (as of April 31, 2026)									
3,620.70	\$	21,685,827.00	\$	10,488,295.00	\$	32,174,122.00	\$	5,989.40	32.6%