

AVOCA STATE FISH HATCHERY



SUSTAINING HOOSIER COMMUNITIES

2017-2018

A partnership between SPH-O305:
Integrated Resource Management &
Avoca State Fish Hatchery





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Acknowledgements

This project was completed as a collaboration between the students in SPH-O305: Integrated Resource Management and Avoca State Fish Hatchery as part of the 2017-2018 Indiana University Sustaining Hoosier Communities (IUSHC) initiative. IUSHC is a program within the IU Center for Rural Engagement (CRE).

This report represents original student work and recommendations proposed by the students in SPH-O305: Integrated Resource Management for Avoca State Fish Hatchery. The contents of this report represent the views of the students in SPH-O305: Integrated Resource Management and do not reflect those of IUSHC, CRE, Indiana University, Lawrence County, or Avoca State Fish Hatchery

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About Sustaining Hoosier Communities

Indiana University Sustaining Hoosier Communities is an initiative that partners with a local community within south central Indiana to explore, understand, and resolve challenges and projects identified by the community. Based on a tested model for university/community engagement that has been successfully implemented by over 25 universities and their community partners, Sustaining Hoosier Communities is a yearlong collaboration between Indiana University and a single community partner.

Indiana University's faculty who opt in to Sustaining Hoosier Communities match their courses to the projects based on their areas of research, expertise, and teaching. Each course uses a cross-disciplinary approach to explore and solve sustainability issues identified by the community partner through project-based research. Faculty and community stakeholders agree before classes begin on a scope of work and deliverables for each class, and project liaisons are identified by the community and the university to coordinate this unified effort.

Sustaining Hoosier Communities is just one example of many types of community engagement Indiana University plans to pursue as part of the Center for Rural Engagement. By harnessing the research, expertise, energy, and service of Indiana University's faculty, staff, and students, Indiana University and our local partners work collaboratively to improve the health, prosperity, and vitality of southcentral Indiana.

To learn more about IU Sustaining Hoosier Communities, visit www.shc.indiana.edu.

To learn more about the IU Center for Rural Engagement, visit www.rural.indiana.edu.

Sustaining Hoosier Communities Project Process





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About the Course

SPH-O305: Integrated Resource Management - Human Dimensions of Natural Resource Management used an interdisciplinary and social-ecological systems approach to the study of basic resource concepts, integrated management consideration, planning, and practices for parks, nature preserves, and similar areas. This class focused specifically on the sustainability of water, timber, and cultural resources used for recreational purposes, and students studied and applied the social, ecological, and physical sciences that underlie sound land management planning and decision-making.

Avoca State Fish Hatchery in Avoca, IN - just 30 minutes from Bloomington, IN - was used as a living learning lab to allow students to apply theory to the real-world. Students carried out on-site observations, data collections, and three inventory reports to develop an articulated inventory, vision, and plan for the Avoca State Fish Hatchery. The water resource inventory report focused on water quality management issues and potential aquaculture options for the ponds of Avoca State Fish Hatchery. The forest resource inventory report focused on timber resources and quality issues for the woods encompassed on the site. The community stakeholder survey report presented findings from the student-conducted survey of Avoca community members and other stakeholders regarding potential site uses. Students also conducted online, paper, and door-to-door surveys throughout Lawrence County to evaluate the community's thoughts on how the Hatchery should be used and preserved. Each report and the results of the surveys contributed to a final Avoca Management Plan and posters communicating students' proposals that were formally presented to the community partners.



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About the Avoca State Fish Hatchery

The Avoca State Fish Hatchery was built in 1819 and first served as a grist mill until 1919, when it was purchased by the DNR, who began building ponds in 1923. The Hatchery stocked Indiana's waters with fish for years until it was commissioned by the DNR in 2013, but it has remained a beloved green space for the surrounding community. Walking trails and a shelter house serve as a popular recreational area for the citizens of Avoca. The community members of Avoca and Lawrence County are the primary stakeholders in the future of the Avoca State Fish Hatchery. Students in SPH-O305: Integrated Resource Management were tasked with assessing the Avoca State Fish Hatchery site and formulating a management plan for it based on course concepts, stakeholder data, history, land assessments, and community survey results.



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The Project: Connecting Course & Community

The Avoca State Fish Hatchery has been a revered outdoor recreational and historical space for the citizens of Lawrence County for years. Students in SPH-O305: Integrated Resource Management worked with Lawrence County leaders to evaluate how the Hatchery should be preserved over the span of ten years. Methods for collecting stakeholder input included speaking with local leaders, conducting door-to-door surveys, and releasing online and paper surveys.

On the class's first visit to Avoca, students spoke with local leaders Marla Jones, Barry Jeskewich, and Gene McCracken to gather initial impressions and information. From there, students studied historical and scientific documents about the Avoca State Fish Hatchery. Their primary method for gathering input was distributing surveys throughout the community, both physically and digitally. The survey, which totaled 17 questions, garnered 652 responses. From this survey, it was clear that the majority of respondents enjoy outdoor recreation for personal enjoyment and want some combination of preservation and limited enhancement to the Hatchery. Students developed planning criteria for the Hatchery that included ecological integrity, socio cultural and historical preservation, visitor experience, public support inclusion, and management suitability and capability so that it will serve as an outdoor education center that will serve surrounding school districts and the community over the course of 10 years.

With its rich history and even richer natural resources, the spirit of the Avoca State Fish Hatchery would be lost if it was not utilized as a green space. By working directly with community stakeholders to understand their desires for how the Hatchery should be preserved, students had the opportunity to learn more about the historical and cultural identity of the City of Avoca and broader Lawrence County, to collaborate and communicate as working professionals in their field of study, and to understand how coursework theory can be applied to real-life problem solving. Likewise, by providing students with invaluable support and insight into the Hatchery, the community could then benefit from student-generated ideas that can sustainably drive the preservation of the Avoca State Fish Hatchery forward. The citizens of Lawrence County are invested in this place, and its role in the history of both Avoca and Lawrence County truly make it a natural treasure.



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Student Outcomes

- Evaluated local sites for recreation and natural resource potential and management
- Analyzed stakeholder interest and included this in the development of the Hatchery
- Understood fundamental aspects and knowledge regarding water, timber, and cultural resource systems in a local community
- Conducted online, paper, and door-to-door surveys throughout Lawrence County to collect stakeholder input that garnered 652 total responses
- Developed a water resources inventory report, forest resource inventory report, community stakeholder survey report, and a management plan for Hatchery
- Gained applicable skills in project management, communication, research and resource management to integrate sustainability within a rural community

Community Partner Outcomes

- 10-year plan for the utilization and preservation of the Avoca State Fish Hatchery
- Budget for each major part for revitalization and funding plans
- Community outreach strategies to increase transparency and raise awareness of benefits associated with management of Avoca State Fish Hatchery
- Gained access and greater awareness of research, resource, and expertise from IU faculty and students