

2023 IDEA CONFERENCE SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

GROUP SESSIONS:

- **History of French Lick, October 4th at 1:00-2:00 PM**

Sandi Woodward serves as the Program Manager for Indiana Landmarks in French Lick and West Baden Springs. Ms. Woodward began volunteering for Indiana Landmarks during the initial Rescue and Restoration at West Baden Springs in 1997 and joined their staff in 1999. She is a graduate of Indiana University and Awareness Washington County, an affiliate program of the Indiana Leadership Initiative. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the French Lick – West Baden Chamber of Commerce and Orange County Main Street.
- **The Importance of Supporting Local Growers, October 5th at 9:00-10:00 AM**

Lali Hess and her husband moved to five acres of pasture in Montgomery County in 2003. Together they designed a long-term plan of increasing the biodiversity of the property with native plantings, trees, and a no-till garden. They built The Juniper Spoon kitchen in 2010 and provide catering to a variety of events. They have a beautiful garden on the property which is being used to support the company. Although the gardens don't provide the quantity needed to fulfill all customer orders, Lali says they do provide a sensibility of the seasons, an appreciation for good soil, and gratitude for the hard work of our partnering farmers. Lali Hess was awarded the title of 2022 Woman of The Year by the Crawfordsville Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.
- **Creating Backyard Bird Habitat, October 6th at 9:00-10:30 AM**

Brian Cunningham is the Director of Outreach & Nature Education for Wild Birds Unlimited, a retail franchise company specializing in the bird feeding hobby throughout the United States and Canada. He is cohost for the popular Nature Centered podcast, promoting feeding the birds and enjoying nature in your own backyard. Brian is on the board of an urban park, Daubenspeck Community Nature Park, where they established and manage 14 acres as a native Indiana prairie.

Brian has a love for the outdoors. His greatest passion is helping others experience nature and opening their eyes to the wonder and beauty of birds. When people start paying attention to birds, they are more inclined to conservation efforts. Learn how you can help advocate for conservation through the lens of birds, inspiring homeowners and landowners to create more native habitats.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS OCTOBER 5TH, 10:30-11:30 AM:

- **Option 1 (technical) Anatomy of Grazing-** Susannah Hinds, NRCS. Susannah grew up on cattle operations in the Pacific Northwest and moved home to Montgomery County where she lives with her husband, son, and daughter. She is the Grazingland Specialist for NRCS in the NW Area. This breakout session will explore the mouth structure and the digestive systems of common grazing livestock to better understand their grazing preferences and forage needs and explain how that relates to pasture seeding recommendations.
- **Option 2 (all) Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)-** Lais McCartney, State SARE Coordinator. SARE offers farmer-driven, grassroots grants and education programs. Since 1988, SARE grantees have been putting the principles of sustainable agriculture into practice on farms and ranches in every state and island protectorate. Lais McCartney is an Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator with Purdue Extension in Hancock County. She has expertise in technology leadership and beekeeping.
- **Option 3 (admin) Writing Effective Business Plans/Disaster Plans-** Geneva Tyler and Nathan Stoelting, ISDA. Learn the importance of having a district business plan, what should be included, and how to write one. You will also hear about writing disaster plans. What will your office do in case of a weather-related emergency like a tornado or a federal government shutdown? Geneva and Nathan will walk through the basics and help you start the process of writing these important plans.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS OCTOBER 5TH, 1:30-2:30 PM:

- **Option 1 (technical) Hydroponic Farming-** Brenda and Keegan Hash, Morning Harvest Produce. Brenda and Keegan are a mother-son duo that started experimenting with growing strawberries hydroponically in the summer of 2010. Using a home-built system to keep a low budget, they grew strawberries, cucumbers, bell peppers, tomatoes, and lettuce. They took

produce to the local farmer's market to sell and a few restaurants. Today they have over 20,000 feet of greenhouse space and supply many major grocery store chains. In this session learn about the journey of Morning Harvest Produce and the science of hydroponic farming.

- **Option 2 (all) All Things Retirement-** Michael Rust, INPRS. Michael will discuss the PERF retirement account basics as well as all PERF has to offer to help you make the best money decisions possible. This session will have helpful information for both new and experienced employees. There will be time for Q&A after a presentation from Michael.
- **Option 3 (admin) Managing District Finances-** Kelly Kent, Jennings County SWCD. A panel of district employees led by Kelly Kent will discuss their experience managing district finances, the benefits of using Quickbooks, and the different requirements set by the state including all things Gateway.