

President’s Message

Greetings 2025! May this year be a healthy and prosperous year for you and may you learn about our outdoors and enjoy outdoor recreation, whether it is hiking, shooting, fishing or just chillaxing by a wood fire. IWLA-Rockville is here for your use in 2025. Remember if you do not come out and enjoy our wonderful activities and property, you will wonder why you are a member.

A word of caution about the ice on the lake. It may look solid but is too thin to support you so STAY OFF the ICE. Emergency response is a long way off if you fall through.

There are some activities ongoing in early 2025. Adult air pistol shoots indoors every Tuesday. Junior BB gun and air rifle shoot weekly. If any of those indoor shoot activities interest you, for a nominal fee and a little time, you can have a lot of fun! For the fly-fisherman, another fun indoor activity is fly tying. Our partner organization, Seneca Valley TU, will be conducting fly tying classes starting in late January and continuing bi-weekly until the end of March. It is a great wintertime activity and a lot of fun to create your own flies.

For the winter hearty, January means it is wood duck nesting box cleaning and repair season. IWLAR members meet every Sunday from 10-1 to repair, clean and prepare wood duck boxes for the 2025 nesting season. The volunteers also record nesting success. In 2024, our volunteers serviced 60 nesting boxes and recorded nesting activity in 52 percent of the boxes. A total of 193 eggs were hatched. As a part of the wood duck nesting box effort we also have more than 20 bluebird boxes at our wood duck locations that are also cleaned and prepared for the upcoming nesting season.

Our January General Membership Meeting will be a week later than normal on January 10. Please join us in person or via Zoom.

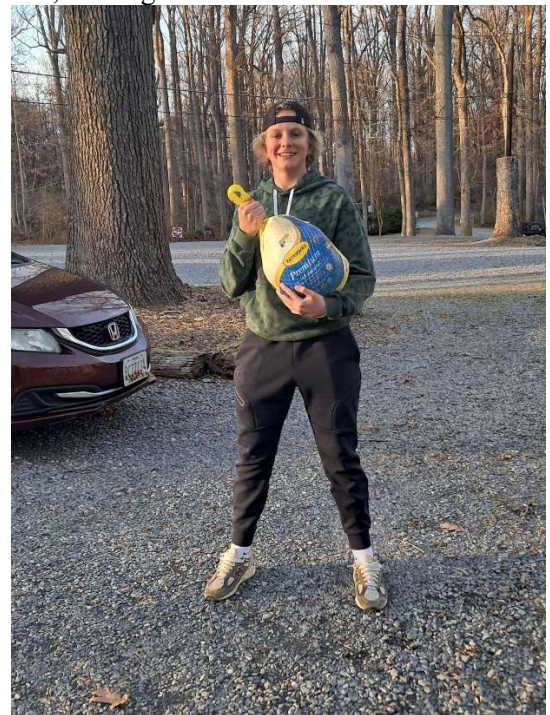
Get out and enjoy IWLAR!

Tight Lines
Noel Gollehon

Turkey Shoot Recap

Great weather and a crowd of Turkey Shooters and friends brought the Shot Gun Range roaring back to life December 8th.

About twenty competitors made for a lively IWLAR Fall Turkey Shoot. The crowd enjoyed the competition and a fire, hot dogs and cookies.



The grand prize went to Landon Dart

Thanks to the efforts of Chapter Range Officers Shawn Healy, Norma Kaweck, Keith Angerman, CJ Tashman, Eddie Chen, Tom Vegella, and Dick Chiapparoli the event went smoothly

Our New Look at the Entrance!



STB

IWLAR's Stop the Bleed classes will be starting at the end of February 2025. The cost will be \$20 per student. Keep an eye out for Google Group posts, the IWLAR website and the February 2025 Newsletter for more info and links for registration and payment.

Wood Duck Conservation in January

January is upon us, so it's time to once again prepare the Chapter's wood duck nest boxes for the spring nesting season. This is a great opportunity to get a jump on your volunteer hours for 2025, contribute to a worthwhile conservation activity, and work alongside some great people in the process. This year's work days will include January 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th, and February 2nd. Each Sunday, volunteers will go out in the field to repair and replace boxes, check the predator guards, cut away brush and, most importantly, record nesting success from last spring. And as you can imagine, it takes many hands to get the job done so please consider joining us for one or more workdays. This is also a great opportunity for middle school and high school students to earn Student Service Learning (SSL) hours!

If you are not familiar with the program, the Chapter's Wood Duck Conservation effort has helped maintain nesting boxes and monitor wood duck populations since the 1950's. IWLAR maintains about 75 wood duck nesting boxes in Montgomery County, mostly in McKee Beshers Wildlife Management Area west of Poolesville. Winter is the best time to prepare them for the birds' arrival in late February/early March.

During the winter of 2024, the wood duck team worked to expand the installation of blue bird boxes on the back side of the wood duck boxes at the Big Ponds site. The blue bird boxes at the other test sites have demonstrated a mutually beneficial situation for the wood ducks and the prothonotary warbler, encouraging the warbler to nest in the smaller blue bird box and leave the wood duck nesting boxes alone. This year, we will continue the installation of blue bird boxes at the Turf Farm and Big Ponds sites. In addition, we will work to rehabilitate existing boxes with new roofs, shingles, and wire ladders that the ducklings use to climb out of the box.

A few days before each wood duck workday, details about the next work day's meeting location, etc., will be announced via the IWLAR Google Group. Assignment of specific tasks will happen that Sunday morning, on-site. In general, we meet at the designated location at 10:00 a.m. and work is usually done around noon. The boxes are in wooded swamps that require wading in shallow water, so chest waders or hip boots are ideal. For those who do not have their own, the Chapter has loaner pairs available. All tools and repair materials are supplied; you just bring a warm, willing body.

Keep an eye out for the weekly announcements in January on the IWLAR Google Group and sign up when you can. To sign up for any of the workdays contact Joe Walther. Hope to see you out there!

Forest Stewardship

Our new 15-year Forest Stewardship Plan has arrived and a good group of folks have volunteered to help read through it. Please contact Cindy Stevens to help take care of our forest.

Chestnut Cooking

Have you been wondering why there are no trees in our American chestnut orchard? After several years allowing the orchard to be fallow so the population of blight fungus would drop, this fall 20 1-year trees were planted in a random pattern. In the spring the remaining spots will be planted with hybrid seeds. This will be a great time to get in some volunteer hours early in the year. Many thanks to Ron Kuipers, Tony Sutton, Gary Neubaum (new member), Cindy Stevens and Bruce Levine and his son Leo. Check out the article in the December issue of the Maryland Waltonian.

On Friday 12/19 the weather cooperated to provide a few snowflakes for the first Chestnut Holiday Special with TACF. Among the presenters, we heard from someone who grew up in France about his family's chestnut traditions and the many food products available there, including chestnut yoghurt, chestnut cake and chestnut gin, and saw how chestnuts are roasted over a gas fire and served at a booth in Asheville, NC. Ron Kuipers brought some chestnuts from the TACF program and Cindy Stevens brought her air fryer. Joe Ober helped Ron with scoring the chestnuts. Dora Ober was the photographer. Also present were Tom Vegella, Jay Copsey, Dan Reggia, Fred Snead and Higgins. Ricardo Rodrigues provided phone support for setting up the electronics for the zoom meeting with TACF.



Our Recipe: Preheat the air fryer to 330. Score each chestnut (pre-softened) across the entire shell. Toss the chestnuts into the air fryer. Listen for popping noises, give a shake and let the nuts cook a few more minutes. Peel while warm and enjoy! The small, sweet tasting American nuts were ready in 4 minutes and the larger hybrid nuts took about 10 minutes to cook.

~Cindy Stevens~

Google group news

If you are not getting emails from the Chapter's Google group iwlar@googlegroups.com, please contact Kent Shaw. Many work parties are weather dependent so the news about them is primarily sent via the Google group.

Last Game Night of 2024



RENEWALS

Your mailed dues and reported volunteer hours (or \$75 in lieu of those hours) must be postmarked by 12/31/2024 to avoid the late fee. For more info contact Judy

New Members Recently Inducted

Sarah Brown	Silver Spring
Suzanne Duclos	Darnestown
Joel & Olivia Fechter	Potomac
Will & Jessica Horning	Gaithersburg
Doreen Melling and Nick Melling	Gaithersburg
Gene & June Monroe	Germantown
Gary Neubaum	Germantown

A warm welcome to all!

Ike's Want Ads

To place a non-commercial ad, write to the Chapter's PO Box 2255, Germantown, MD, 20875, or contact Todd Anderson. Ads must be submitted by the third Friday of the month.