What is Next Indiana Campfires?
Next Indiana Campfires is an Indiana Humanities program that pairs nature and literature to ignite conversations about Indiana’s future. During a Next Indiana Campfire event, a humanities scholar leads attendees through a special Indiana landscape, stopping along the way to read aloud the words of significant Hoosier environmental writers. A naturalist joins us to help identify ecological and geological features of the site. We conclude our treks with a hearty discussion over food and drink around a campfire, forging deep connections between nature, literature, place and stewardship.

In 2020 we’ll be focused primarily on sites in the White River watershed, exploring how this important Hoosier waterway ties people together across urban, suburban and rural lines, as well as other kinds of boundaries. We also hope to offer at least one trek outside the watershed. We will offer 5-6 treks for the general public. We will also work with community groups in Indianapolis to do treks for low-income and/or minority communities in the neighborhoods near the White River and its tributaries.

During our 2020 series, participants will learn key facts about the White River watershed and factors impacting its ecological health. On the treks, Hoosiers will also have multiple opportunities to interrogate their own beliefs and values as they relate to stewardship of the White River and other Indiana landscapes. These activities will create or deepen participants’ commitment to environmental stewardship and advocacy, ultimately leading to improved ecological health of the White River watershed.

Four key questions guide our 2020 Next Indiana Campfires series:
• What has been the role of outstanding literature, poetry and journalism in shaping the public’s understanding our relationship to nature and the ideas of stewardship and conservation?
• How have Indiana authors expressed their relationship to the natural world and helped to define a sense of place and character in the Hoosier state?
• To what extent is the White River an ecological and cultural connector of Hoosiers with the potential to shape a civic body with a shared purpose of conservation?
• How can environmental literature and poetry help Hoosiers create or deepen connections to our natural world today?

Outings will vary in terms of length, degree of difficulty, and readings. We also plan to conduct at least two treks as paddling trips, rather than hikes/walks. Programs will take place between March and early November.

Who are we looking for?
Indiana Humanities seeks humanities scholar-facilitators to lead each outing and facilitate conversation of the texts, themes and big ideas of the Campfires initiative. The success of each conversation is highly dependent on the skill of the scholar-facilitator to draw in multiple voices to the discussion, inspire deep thinking and reflection on the texts and help participants draw connections between literature, place and Indiana’s future.
The ideal scholar-facilitator:

- Sees the “big picture” of Next Indiana Campfires and shares Indiana Humanities’ vision for open-ended, thoughtful discussion of project themes.
- Is enthusiastic about sharing environmental literature with ordinary Hoosiers.
- Is passionate about Indiana and its future—and sees how the humanities can make a difference in our state.
- Is a great listener, not just a great talker.
- Is open to learning new techniques and best practices for facilitating text-based discussions.
- Has advanced training, such as an M.A. or Ph.D., in a humanities field, including but not limited to literature, history, cultural studies, philosophy, or religious studies. We welcome inquiries from individuals who may have other relevant humanities training and experience, including librarians, writers, educators and pastoral leaders.
- Is physically able to lead a group of 20-40 in moderately active outdoor activities such as hiking, bike rides or kayaking. We will work to match facilitators to mode and trail difficulty, but expect at the very least a one-mile route of moderate difficulty.
- Responds to email communication in a timely manner.
- Agrees to write a blog post (250-500 words) about their experience leading a Next Indiana Campfires discussion.

Experience leading text-based conversations in general public settings is certainly preferred but not required. Advanced study in a field related to environmental humanities and/or Indiana Studies is a plus.

Indiana Humanities will take care of event registration and organizing the logistics of each event. Scholar-facilitators put together a discussion plan and select texts, with final approval by Indiana Humanities.

What’s in it for the scholar-facilitator?

- $500 honorarium + mileage per outing.
- Learn public humanities skills, including best practices for leading successful text-based conversations with general public audiences.
- Be a part of a statewide cohort of engaged humanities scholars leading important discussions about Indiana’s future.
- Opportunity to connect your scholarship and practice to regional and statewide conservation efforts.

To apply

- Send a cover letter and CV/resume to Leah Nahmias, director of programs and community engagement at Indiana Humanities. In your cover letter, be sure to include why you’re passionate about Next Indiana Campfires and how the project fits with your scholarly interests and career goals. Be sure to describe any experience you’ve had leading humanities discussions with general public audiences. If you’re especially passionate about a particular Hoosier landscape and/or environmental writer, do tell! Let us know if you’re open to leading more than one outing or can only commit to one outing at this time (ability to commit to multiple outings will not impact final decision).
- Applications will be received on a rolling basis until all positions are filled. Candidates may be contacted to learn more about their interest in the project.

Questions? Ideas?

- Leah Nahmias, director of programs and community engagement at Indiana Humanities
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  www.IndianaHumanities.org/Campfires