

2014 RESOLUTIONS

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Each year at our national convention, the members of the Izaak Walton League review resolutions on conservation and outdoor recreation issues proposed by their colleagues. Resolutions that are approved become part of the League's Conservation Policies, which guide League members, chapters, divisions, and staff in our mission to conserve, restore, and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources. This year, League members passed six resolutions.



Look Before You Frack

The increasingly common strategy of hydraulic fracturing (or “fracking”) underground rock to release natural gas affects many League members and the communities in which they live. Drillers inject a mix of chemicals and sand and a tremendous amount of water into the ground to free natural gas so it can be captured. One problem with this approach is that the chemicals used in this process can harm people, wildlife, and water quality. However, impacts are hard to measure because there is usually no baseline of pollutants already in the environment where fracking is being done.

League members passed a resolution calling on states to have oil and gas companies establish a baseline of heavy metals, organochemicals, acids, and other potential pollutants in waters near oil and gas wells before drilling begins and to test for pollutants at least every six months while drilling is ongoing and after drilling is complete.

Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights

Children across the United States today have far more “screen time” than “green time.” This not only affects children's physical and mental health, it also prevents children from developing a love of nature.

League members adopted a Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights as a gesture of support for youth and the outdoor opportunities they need. Outdoor recreation – particularly unstructured play – will help children grow up to love the out-of-doors and want to protect it for their own children.

Our Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights would ensure that every child has the opportunity to explore the outdoors, camp under the stars, swim in lakes, learn to safely use firearms, use a bow and arrow, catch a fish, and get their hands dirty in a garden.

Clean Energy Across the League

In 2013, League members adopted a resolution supporting a goal of 100 percent energy production from renewable sources. The transition to renewable energy sources is inevitable – fossil fuels were created by natural forces over millions of years, and they are not inexhaustible.

Energy development companies have succeeded in locating and tapping into new sources of oil and gas but at increasing cost, difficulty, and environmental consequences. The League is working at the state and national levels to facilitate the transition to renewable energy.

This year, League members passed a resolution challenging all chapters, divisions, and individual members to shift to clean, renewable sources of energy by 2030. We are also calling on leaders at every level of government to implement the next wave of energy efficiency technologies.





Updating Hunter Ethics

One of the cornerstones of the successful model used to manage North American wildlife is that native wildlife are a public resource and are managed by government agencies on behalf of all citizens.

These core conservation principles are being undermined by private landowners who confine native wildlife – particularly deer and elk – behind fences and charge the public for the privilege of “hunting” animals that belong to the public in the first place. These businesses often go farther, applying livestock industry breeding techniques to wildlife to produce animals with massive antlers or other unnatural characteristics that customers will pay more to shoot.

The Izaak Walton League took a stand against these practices by recommending that all states adopt policies supporting fair chase hunting and specifically prohibit artificial or unnatural enhancement of game species’ genetic characteristics. We are also urging states to halt the practice of shipping big game animals from one shooting preserve to another – an unethical practice that can also transmit disease.

Protecting the Great Lakes from an Oil Spill

The Great Lakes are one of the world’s most important sources of fresh water – and fresh water fishing and recreation. Two of the largest Great Lakes – Lake Michigan and Lake Huron – connect at the Straits of Mackinac, under which runs the Mackinac pipeline.

This pipeline carries about 20 million gallons of oil and natural gas each day. No repairs or upgrades have been made to the pipeline since it was installed in 1953. Although Enbridge Energy, which owns and operates the pipeline, has automatic shut-off mechanisms in place, the company acknowledges there is little it could do to control a spill in a severe winter storm. Even if the emergency mechanisms worked properly, 5,500 barrels of oil – possibly much

more – could spill into the Great Lakes.

League members voted to urge immediate replacement of the Mackinac Straits pipeline to prevent such a disaster.

Protecting the Boundary Waters from Sulfide Mining Pollution

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota is a special place – a watery northern forest wilderness where visitors can catch fish and see moose, wolves, loons, and sunsets. The Izaak Walton League has a long history of protecting the Boundary Waters.

Now sulfide mining – the process of extracting metals such as copper, silver, gold, nickel, and zinc from the earth – threatens the area. Usually these minerals are found bonded to sulfur in rocks. The sulfide mining process involves digging a pit around the rock to expose it and then blasting or drilling the rock to expose the metals. When sulfides in the rock are exposed to water and air, a chemical reaction creates sulfuric acid, which is highly corrosive and harmful to aquatic life. The process of grinding or pulverizing the rock can also release toxic heavy metals, such as lead, mercury, and copper sulfate, which can leach into nearby waters and wetlands.

Minnesota has a large concentration of sulfide rock containing copper, nickel, and other valuable elements, and the mining industry is making a major push to extract those resources using large sulfide mines.

League members passed a resolution urging state agencies to withhold permits for sulfide mining operations until criteria are developed to ensure wetlands and other natural resources will be protected and each company will take responsibility for cleaning up its mine after it closes.

The complete text of resolutions adopted at the 2014 national convention is available on the League’s Web site at www.iwla.org/2014resolutions.