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TAKING AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

Members of the Izaak Walton League of America consider themselves to be defenders of soil, air, woods, water and wildlife. Taken together, these are components of ecosystems. Healthy natural ecosystems not only have the capacity to cycle carbon into the ground, but also generate water-holding capacity to absorb rainfall that recharges groundwater, springs, lakes, streams and tributaries to our rivers. Natural ecosystems are integral to sustaining the water cycles that in turn sustain life. As another example, regionally native plants and trees have evolved together with insects in symbiotic relationships that support birds and other wildlife. Scientific evidence of the interactions between microbes and plants, and the integral role these interactions play in diverse healthy ecosystems, demonstrate this important dynamic.

Studies indicate that ecosystems are collapsing in the oceans and on land. The web of life is fragmenting as the diversity and numbers of species are declining. Human impacts have disrupted the capacity of natural systems to cycle carbon into soil and store water; these disruptions are major components driving climate change. Earth, devoid of living organisms, would become a dysfunctional system no longer able to absorb and hold water for plant needs or to sustain the web of life.

Healthy soils and ecosystems reduce stormwater runoff and erosion, increase groundwater recharge, and improve soil structure that supports the native vegetation critical to the survival of insects, birds and all wildlife, as well as supporting chemical-free foods people eat.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Izaak Walton League of America, assembled in convention July 21, 2021, declares its responsibility to be advocates for not only soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife, but also for the interrelated ecosystems of which these are a part. Furthermore, the Izaak Walton League of America:

- 1. Recognizes the importance of healthy ecosystems of all scales, such as in prairies, forests, wetlands, savannas, salt marshes, lakes and rivers, agricultural lands, parks, gardens and yards as well as wilderness;**
- 2. Recognizes the need for ecology to be part of wildlife and water quality management planning and a necessary part of environmental review of land use projects at local, state, regional and national scales; and**
- 3. Encourages chapters and divisions to aim at holistically improving and protecting ecosystems when considering community conservation projects.**