



# Izaak Walton League of America

## BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE CHAPTER



### CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

#### Conservation is Our Mission

##### Our History

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America (B-CC IWLA) was founded in 1935 by 15 visionary hunters and fishermen. These men were not far removed from the intrinsic bonds that tied their prosperity to the health and fertility of the land. They believed strongly in the preservation of wildlife, woodlands, and open space and the wise use of the land and its natural resources. Their vision of conservation encouraged a harmonious interaction with our natural resources that provided a sustainable grass roots connection to nature as opposed to pure environmental protectionism. They also believed in providing outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hunting and fishing, to propagate and foster a respect for the outdoors for future generations.

A 366-acre farm, stripped of its wildlife and the fertility of its soils, was purchased in 1949. The mission and purpose of the B-CC IWLA membership was to oversee, direct, and model the farm as a demonstration project in sustainable wildlife and land management.

##### Our Philosophy

We inspire sound conservation ethics. We believe the land and the natural resources we have inherited are not simply a fiscal commodity, but a dynamic and diverse community to which we belong. We strive to understand the processes of nature that govern renewable and nonrenewable natural resources and to provide the environmental leadership, advocacy and initiative for our membership and our local community to coexist with the natural world with minimal disturbance and maximum respect. We are dedicated to expanding, encouraging and preserving access to open spaces. We value above all our ability to impart the framework of environmental stewardship. Our commitment is to create a forum that plants the seeds of ecological appreciation, reverence, and ethics for all things natural, wild, and free.

##### Our Membership

We expect our members to maintain the highest standards of ecological integrity. We recognize that our ability to most directly and positively impact local land and wildlife practices begins with the knowledge, imagination, dedication, instruction, and teamwork of our members and volunteers. The cooperative strength of the B-CC IWLA evolves from the diversity of our membership; naturalists, hunters, fishermen, hikers, campers, firearm enthusiasts, archers, and all others enjoying outdoor activities share collaborative and insightful roles under the name of conservation. We believe that future opportunities for outdoor appreciation are dependent on the collective talents, time, funding, and energy of the entire outdoor community.

##### Our Farm

It is with our farm that we discharge our responsibility as “The Ambassadors of Conservation.” We maintain and model our conservation farm as a shining and exemplary pillar of environmental and biotic stewardship. We recognize our farm as a living classroom and members and guests as both students and teachers of conservation and outdoor ethics. We educate and enlist, not only our membership, but also the general community and other like-minded conservation organizations through our conservation farm. Our farm provides a substantive and tactile bridge between the academic ideals of environmental stewardship and the physical realities of soil, water, air, wildlife, and open space. We strive to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between our farm, our membership, and our local community.

##### Our Future

The most serious obstacles impeding the local land ethic of future generations are irresponsible development and the environmentally apathetic attitude of a populace too long removed from agriculture and other outdoor occupations. We will continually strive to find a sustainable and philosophic balance between population growth/urban development and the aesthetic and rejuvenative reward nature and outdoor recreation can bring to our community. Our goal is to educate and embolden the local community to foster, explore, and enjoy wild places and to advocate the wise use of our local ecosystems – to teach a harmonious relationship with the land and its wildlife and to realize the consequences of all manmade interaction with the natural world. We must therefore create an open, fluid, and creative forum for membership to shape local policies and legislation that protect our natural resources for future generations.