

Illinois River Watershed Partnership
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3 August 2021
For immediate release

IRWP Welcomes Leif Kindberg, Executive Director this Water Quality Month
[IRWP has events planned to honor Water Quality Month and to raise awareness of practices that are friendly to your local rivers and streams.]

The Illinois River Watershed Partnership will celebrate water quality month with a new Executive Director this year. Leif Kindberg assumed Nicole Hardiman's position. He joins the partnership with 13 years of experience in environmental and watershed management.

"I'm really excited to be joining the IRWP team and building on the work our board members and staff have done to implement our mission to improve water quality and water resources in the Illinois river watershed." Leif spent his last 9 years with Tetra Tech.

The Illinois River Watershed Partnership's water quality month activities planned include a [Skull Creek Cleanup](#) with kick-off at 9 AM on Saturday, August 28th at Fossil Cove in Fayetteville. The first 50 participants will receive a \$6 Fossil Cove e-gift card for returning with a full bag of trash and recyclables picked up along the trail and in the creek. Bring your grabbers, gloves, bike, or blades and enjoy a lovely stretch of the greenway while removing litter and giving back to the fragile riparian areas along Skull Creek! All participants at this location will also go into a drawing for prizes which include 2 Pack Rat gift cards (\$25 each) and a Lewis and Clark Climbing Party. The winners will be announced by August 31st. This cleanup will kick off the wider initiative Pick Up Where You Play, which will host a series of community litter cleanup events through the fall.

Images with messages about water-friendly practices are available to download for sharing on social media [on the IRWP website](#). You may notice signs posted on trails around the community that remind you to remember to *pick up your pet waste, do not litter, fix your leaky vehicles, and to only put rain down the storm drain*. In addition to these four practices, this year IRWP wants you to also remember that you should [maintain your septic system](#).

IRWP hopes to raise \$2,500 in donations during Water Quality Month. If you contribute \$35 or more in August, you can choose between [four IRWP hat designs](#). These will be available for pickup at the Learning Center in Cave Springs on October 15th or can be

mailed to you for an additional \$5. Visit [irwp.org/donate](https://www.irwp.org/donate) to see the designs and secure your hat today.

Funds raised help to promote IRWP's mission to conserve and restore the Illinois River and its tributaries by addressing issues at the source, or near the headwaters in Arkansas. These impairments disproportionately affect the Oklahoma side of the Illinois River, which provides not just aquatic and wildlife habitat and recreational uses in Oklahoma, but is considered a scenic river-- regarded in Oklahoma much like the Buffalo River is to Arkansans.

Leif and the team at IRWP hope to help make the connection between the upstream activities happening in Northwest Arkansas and the impairments in Oklahoma. Leif said "I'm looking forward to working with our diverse partners from across Arkansas and Oklahoma to expand our outreach and education on this great natural resource," he continues by adding that ultimately implementing conservation and restoration practices is the goal.

Another August activity to note is the The Secchi Day Science Fair hosted by Beaver Water District. The event has gone virtual this year, so when you visit the site, look for IRWP's Bug Kicking video that shows how we measure the health of our creeks and streams for our Water Quality Monitoring initiatives. The Secchi Day Science Fair can be accessed at <https://www.bwdh2o.org/education-outreach/secchi-day/>.

In addition to the Skull Creek Cleanup, IRWP will host a litter pick up of [Lake Elmdale on Saturday, October 16th](#) as it's second cleanup of the Pick Up Where You Play series. More info on Pick Up Where You Play can be found through the [event on Facebook](#) and will be located on the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension's website later this month.

Some community partners included in the Pick Up Where You Play series are the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension, Northwest Arkansas Stormwater Education, Wonderful Waterways, Boston Mountain Solid Waste and Recycling, the City of Fayetteville, Benton County, Beaver Watershed Alliance, Keep Arkansas Beautiful, Lake Fayetteville Watershed Partnership, Fossil Cove Brewing Co, Pack Rat Outdoor Center, Lewis and Clark Outfitters, and KUAF.

Order a Hat/Make a Donation: <https://www.irwp.org/donate>
Facebook Event for Pick Up Where You Play: <https://fb.me/e/Qvo4Wg87>

IRWP is a 15-year-old nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the integrity of the Illinois River Watershed, a region covering rapidly urbanizing Northwest Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma, through public education, outreach, and the implementation of conservation and restoration practices.