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## Frequently Asked Questions for the Busseron Creek Fish & Wildlife Area

### 1. **What is the Busseron Creek Project?**

The Busseron Creek Project is a conservation initiative that permanently protects 3,952 acres in Southern Indiana. It safeguards wetlands, wildlife habitats, and watersheds, ensuring biodiversity, clean water, and flood mitigation while offering public recreation opportunities.

### 2. **Why is this project important?**

The project protects critical ecosystems that support biodiversity, climate resilience, and community well-being. It also ensures the land is available for activities like hiking, kayaking, and birdwatching, benefiting both nature and local residents. Conserving this land as natural habitat in the landscape around a Navy installation ensures continued support of our national security.

### 3. **How does the project benefit Southern Indiana?**

It provides flood protection, clean air and water, and recreational opportunities. Additionally, the conserved land attracts visitors and residents, supporting local economies and enhancing community quality of life.

### 4. **What role does public ownership play in this project?**

Public ownership ensures the land remains accessible for recreation and conservation. In Indiana, where only 3.9% of land is publicly owned, this project represents a significant step in protecting shared natural spaces.

### 5. **How does the project support national security?**

By promoting compatible land uses near military installations, the project prevents encroachments that could hinder military operations. Healthy ecosystems adjacent to bases strengthen local economies and defense readiness. Encouraging sustainable compatible land uses near our military installations will help keep farms and forests healthy and productive, improve water quality, and provide important habitat.

### 6. **Who are the key partners involved?**

Partners include The Conservation Law Center, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Navy, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, and funding entities like the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Acres for America through Walmart,

and the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration program through the Department of Defense.

**7. What is the Southern Indiana Sentinel Landscape (SISL)?**

The Southern Indiana Sentinel Landscape (SISL) is a collaboration of diverse partners who are advancing the pace and scale of conservation throughout a three and a half million-acre swath of south-central Indiana to protect military missions on four critical installations and ranges.

**8. What was the funding breakdown for the project?**

Major funding came from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program, Walmart's Acres for America through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the REPI program, and the State of Indiana. Contributions also included grants from The Nature Conservancy.

**9. Why was the land transferred to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR)?**

The transfer ensures the land will remain protected and managed for public use, aligning with the DNR's mission to conserve natural resources for future generations.

**10. What is the historical significance of this land?**

The land was part of the Minnehaha Fish and Wildlife Area, leased from coal companies for conservation purposes before the lease ended in 2016. Its history underscores its value as a wildlife habitat and recreational space.

**11. What is the REPI program, and how did it contribute?**

The U.S. Navy's Readiness Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program supports projects that align conservation with defense goals. It provided critical funding and strategic guidance for the project

**12. Why is this a model for future conservation efforts?**

The project demonstrates how strategic partnerships and funding can achieve large-scale conservation. Its success serves as a blueprint for similar initiatives nationwide

**13. What role did private organizations play?**

Organizations like the Conservation Law Center, The Nature Conservancy, and The Conservation Fund provided expertise to advance the project. Their involvement was instrumental in achieving its goals.

**14. How will the land be managed moving forward?**

The Indiana DNR will oversee the management of the land, ensuring it remains protected and accessible for recreational and conservation purposes.

**15. What does this project mean for Indiana's natural heritage?**

The Busseron Creek Project secures a lasting legacy for Indiana by protecting its natural beauty, fostering biodiversity, and providing recreational spaces. It reflects the state's commitment to sustainability and conservation.

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