

# Delta Institute Receives 2024 Indiana Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence for the Second Year Running

*The Indiana Department of Environmental Management honors Delta Institute and the Hobart Sanitary District for their work restoring the Duck Creek Tributary*

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EINPresswire.com/ -- For a second year in a row, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has honored Delta Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing environmental challenges throughout the Midwest, with [the Indiana Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence](#) for restoration efforts within the Duck Creek Tributary conducted in partnership with the City of Hobart and the Hobart Sanitary District (HSD).



The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) presents Delta Institute and the Hobart Sanitary District with the 2024 Indiana Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. Photo courtesy of IDEM.

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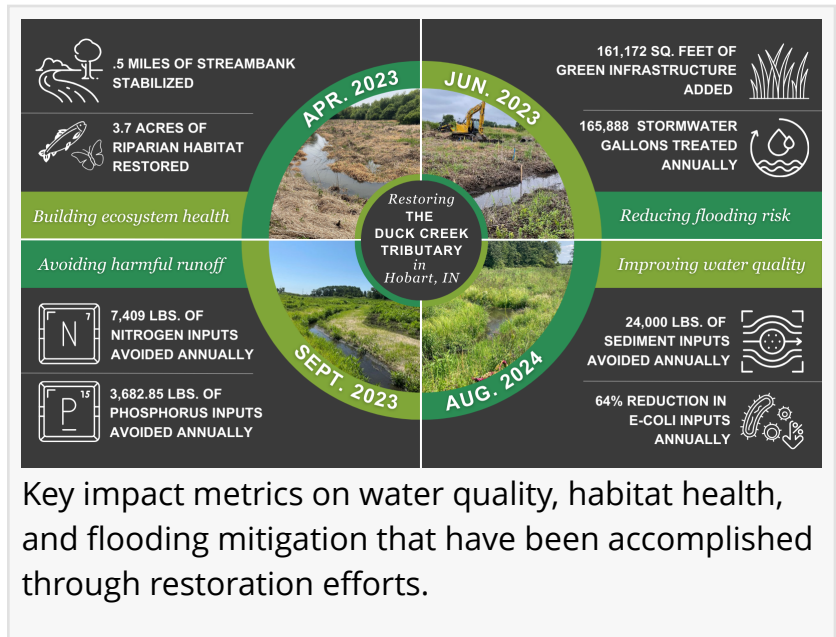
*Bill Schleizer, CEO of Delta Institute*

The Duck Creek Tributary, located just outside Hobart, Indiana, is a key waterway within the Deep River-Portage Burns Waterway Watershed, which flows into the Little Calumet River and Lake Michigan. For years, extensive flooding along the Tributary has caused road closures, property damage, and significant water quality issues due to sediment, agricultural, and nutrient runoff, impacting many downstream communities.

In 2019, [Delta Institute began working with the City of Hobart and HSD to stabilize](#) the Tributary's streambank by

installing 3.7 acres of riparian buffer to improve permeability and infiltration. The first phase of

this restoration effort involved removing invasive species and planting over 160,000 sq. feet of native green infrastructure, resulting in more than 130,000 gallons of stormwater being captured annually—benefiting water quality and reducing flooding. This increased stormwater capacity is also reducing runoff contamination by removing over 4 tons of phosphorus and 16 tons of nitrogen annually, which strengthens the region’s agricultural resiliency. IDEM has recognized Delta Institute and its partners for the Duck Creek Tributary restoration due to demonstrable impacts in improving water quality, bolstering biodiversity, and mitigating flooding risk.



"For the Hobart Sanitary District, community health and wellbeing are our priority, and water quality is central to that," said Tim Kingsland, Coordinator of the HSD. "The Duck Creek Tributary restoration is so important because along with preventing our roads from flooding, it's also creating a healthier environment regarding environmental sustainability such as restoring the Creek habitat to natural conditions, enhancing water quality, improving upon the environmental diversity of the Creek, and helping our neighboring communities."

Prior to these restoration efforts, conditions within the Duck Creek Tributary were not supportive of aquatic life, with few native species present. Since the completion of the restoration's first phase in Summer 2023—which received the 2024 IDEM award—the Tributary has become a more viable home upstream for plant, fish, and invertebrate communities. Wildlife sightings were recorded during and after implementation, including catfish, minnows, crayfish, turtles, great blue herons, snakes, deer, and turkeys, indicating that the project is already providing more health some habitat for wildlife. Restoration efforts continue today on downstream segments as part of a holistic approach to water quality and stormwater management in the watershed.

"We have seen that leveraging nature-based climate solutions to address a community's self-defined needs has been a proven approach," said Bill Schleizer, CEO of Delta Institute. "Green infrastructure can be a highly effective and cost-efficient way to improve many environmental and community concerns at the same time."

Throughout the restoration, Delta Institute and its partners have conducted frequent outreach with landowners, regional experts, and other stakeholders. This model of collaboration has allowed for effective multi-year planning for future phases of restoration. Delta Institute has implemented other successful projects with similar cross-sector coordination, such as partnering

with the City of Michigan City, Indiana to complete the Cheney Run Wetland Restoration, which was recognized with a 2023 Indiana Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. This project is capturing and treating more than 190M stormwater gallons annually.

"Working on the Duck Creek restoration has been incredibly fulfilling. It clearly shows how targeted, strategic actions can create lasting benefits for both the environment and the community," said Mélina Blanc, Senior Lead, Nature-Based Climate Solutions at Delta Institute. "We've already seen improvements in water management and biodiversity, and this recognition highlights what's possible through strong partnerships."

The Duck Creek Tributary restoration project will continue to provide positive impacts for hundreds of thousands of residents in the area for many years to come. Delta Institute is a Chicago-based nonprofit that works with communities throughout the Midwest to solve environmental challenges. We envision a region in which all communities and landscapes thrive through an integrated approach to environmental, economic, and social challenges. For more information please visit: [www.delta-institute.org](http://www.delta-institute.org).

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