

# HOOSIERS

## *ON THE MOVE*

THE INDIANA STATE TRAILS · GREENWAYS & BIKEWAYS PLAN





STATE OF INDIANA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
State House, Second Floor  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

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**Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.**  
*Governor*

Dear Trail Enthusiasts:

With great excitement, I welcome you to travel the path down our state's latest comprehensive trails plan. Not since our state park system was created has the state undertaken an outdoor initiative of this potential scope.

This initiative will soon begin uniting our state's disconnected routes and place every Hoosier within 15 minutes of a trail. The whole will be much greater than the sum of its parts and will benefit Hoosiers from all walks of life. We doubled state funding from \$10 million to \$20 million annually to take advantage of this unique network of opportunities, and at first glance this is a recreation initiative, but we intend it to be much more. Our trails plan will encourage healthy habits in Hoosiers, boost tourism and enhance Indiana's ability to attract new investment and jobs.

Our trail investments can deliver. As Hoosiers enjoy our new trails, they will be hiking, walking, and riding over miles of new high-speed telecommunications and utility conduits. Access to outdoor recreation also ranks among the features potential companies seek for their employees when locating a business.

Real success will require the help of local communities, businesses, and private philanthropies. Let's join together as we create something that will be the envy of the nation!

Sincerely,

Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.

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GREENWAYS AND BIKEWAYS PLAN**

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## THE INDIANA TRAILS, GREENWAYS AND BIKEWAYS PLAN

### INDIANA TRAILS, GREENWAYS AND BIKEWAYS PLAN

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the Indiana Department of Transportation, the Governor’s Council for Physical Fitness & Sports, The Indiana Department of Tourism and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation is producing this trails plan to guide the development and expansion of a statewide system of trails to be used for recreation and transportation throughout Indiana. This plan takes into consideration all types of trail-related activities gaining popularity for their mental, physical and spiritual health benefits. It also takes into consideration that people value trails for a variety of reasons. To accommodate diverse and increasing demand, Indiana has set forth a goal of providing an easily accessible trail opportunity within 15 minutes or 7.5 miles of all Indiana residents.

The plan’s coordinated and strategic approach for creating a system of trails in Indiana is intended to motivate all levels of government, private trail groups and other vital organizations into action. We envision linking public lands, natural and scenic areas, tourist destinations and communities with a multi-modal trail system. The plan emphasizes major statewide and regional trails and works to incorporate local linkages into the statewide network.

All trails that are planned and developed in Indiana are considered to be part of the statewide trail vision. These include projects local governments and private trails groups and organizations are undertaking to develop local trail systems to provide “close to home” recreation and alternative transportation opportunities. To that end, this plan will serve as a guide for allocating resources from such programs as the Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP), the Transportation Enhancement (TE)

Fund and other financial assistance programs that can be used for trail acquisition and development.

### PURPOSE

Indiana’s trails and greenways plan is a tool for improving existing trails and developing future trails through sound planning and design. This plan identifies issues impacting trails on a statewide scale and recommends strategies for addressing these issues. It also serves as a comprehensive source of information on recreational trail



participation in Indiana. An evolving inventory of major statewide, regional and community trail system resources is included to form the basis for an interconnected statewide network of trails. This plan is intent on stimulating and supporting coordinated approaches to creating and enhancing this network. It will serve as a resource for trail planners, builders, managers and advocates.

Public participation was critical in developing the Indiana Trails Plan. Public comment was solicited through surveys and meetings with the general public and trails interest groups. Development of the document was guided by a steering committee made up of federal, state and local officials, members of trails groups, private trail funding entities and the general public. It is intended to be a dynamic document, changing over time as new trails are developed and additional opportunities become available.

### TRAILS IN HOOSIER SOCIETY

What is a trail? The American Heritage Dictionary broadly defines a trail as anything from an ancient footpath to a shipping route. This definition includes, but is not limited to, bikeways, rail routes and motor roads. Consequently, the meaning of the word “trail” is and



## INTRODUCTION

always has been passionately debated. Every group of users has its own vision of what a trail should be, as well as whom it should cater to and provide for. A final definition of “trail” may never be agreed upon, but two things are certain: trails have a storied history and are inherently dependent on those who use them. For this purpose, a trail shall be a corridor on land or through water that provides recreational, aesthetic, alternate transportation or educational opportunities to both motorized and non-motorized users of all ages and abilities.

In a subsistence economy, trails were primarily used for hunting or gathering food. As technology changed lifestyles, people began using and creating trails for a variety of other uses. Many trails evolved from utilitarian to leisure. Today, trails provide recreation, education, interaction with the environment, community improvement, social networking opportunities, economic development, physical and mental health benefits, and much more. All of these uses bring value and benefits to individuals and society as a whole.

Hoosier history is replete with trails from our earliest natives to current users. Whether by the French, English or others, trails were used for exploration, economics, military control and conquest. They played a major role in colonization and politics. For example, the native Sauk trail, which connected the area south of Chicago to Detroit, was for economic exchange. Trails linking one mounds village to another, Evansville to Anderson for example, were for commerce. Recreational trail use was restricted to village areas.

Long-distance water routes such as the Ouabache (Wabash) River and Ohio River were used for both economic and cultural exchange. Routes such as that of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the trails of the Underground Railroad and the Trail of Tears still exist today as historical reminders and cultural resources.

Indiana’s trails also moved people, created communities and transported food. One valuable federal route, still in use, is called the National Road, another is the Michigan Road. Numerous connections used stage coaches and other secondary routes. Many of these trails are lost to the past, such as the Wetzel Trace. Critical to the State’s development, the trace was the first to bring early settlers into the Indiana wilderness.

Later came packet boats on canals throughout much of Indiana. The creation and collapse of canals as a money-making venture had a profound effect on Indiana state government. Even today, hints of public skepticism about state spending and government debt can be traced to the failure of the canal system.

Many of these land and water routes were the foundation for steam railroads, electric railroads and macadam roadways during the mid-1800s through the mid-1900s. The corridors of electric interurban railroads and paved roads enabled families and individuals to commute or send farm products longer distances in a shorter time. This allowed regional trade networks to develop. In addition to product-based businesses, tourism evolved from these trails. People could now travel to big cities

for weekend sightseeing, shopping and relaxing. Indeed, trails technology allowed people to experience life beyond subsistence, hence the beginnings of recreation. For example, around 1880, adults and families bicycled the Central Canal towpath from downtown Indianapolis to Riverside to rent rowboats.

One marketing value derived from the number of rail lines passing through Indianapolis, and thus Indiana, is the moniker “Crossroads of America,” although now that image is perceived mainly with respect to highways.

Slowly, roads and automobiles replaced railroads. The new sensibility was “What’s good for the car is good for the country.” Unused rail lines were removed and eventually converted, in many cases, to greenways, trails and bikeways. An increase in walking and biking also spurred development of designated lanes on streets and lanes located away from immediate motor surfaces.

Vacant corridors have latent value for communities as utility rights-of-way and as potential trails. Indeed, where pipes and cables are buried or wires strung overhead, the service road serves two purposes. In Indianapolis, for example, before the Monon Trail was paved from Broad





Ripple to Fall Creek, a forced-main sewer was laid that saved the city tens of thousands of dollars in street repaving costs. The Calumet Greenway, a major link of trails around Lake Michigan, is another example of a dual use corridor, which includes the service road for overhead power lines, active rail corridors and utility resources.

Trails, particularly when planned with community development in mind, bring economic value to an area. Generally, economic improvement results from a combination of four factors: 1) Trails create a new clientele for area businesses. Upon the opening of the Monon Trail in Broad Ripple, an adjacent restaurant, Plump's Last Shot, saw a very large and unexpected increase in day and summer evening dining business. 2) Trails can be responsible for business relocation. The new owners of Valley Bikes moved the store from Crawfordsville to Carmel to be on the Monon Trail, resulting in strong success. 3) Trails provide new employment opportunities, whether short weekend work or full-time jobs. More retail stores mean more opportunities for employment. 4) Trails allow for investment in real estate. This might involve reclamation and repair of an unused structure (the rehab of the Wysor Depot in Muncie as the headquarters of the Cardinal Greenway) or reopening a long-vacant building for a retail shop (the Revard Brothers opening a third Bike Line store in a vacant building along the Monon Trail).

On a large scale, real estate development might include construction of condos, houses and/or strip malls adjoining a trail. Better yet, new towns can be created with multiple housing units, shops and community areas built around sidewalks, trails and trail amenities with consideration given to the culture of non-motor transport and recreation. Any of these economic scenarios may occur in any proportion at any time. The more scenarios, however, the more economic value to a community.

Trails also add historical value. Participation and learning can come through reading tableaux of local history. One of the best national examples of incorporating history into a trail is the Oil Creek Trail in Pennsylvania. It boasts 10 miles of interpretive drawings and text tableaux depicting the history of oil development from the waning days of whale oil to the recent decades of petroleum as fuel.

The Prairie Duneland Trail at Portage has several interpretive tableaux referencing history, plants, animals, etc. related to that trail. Franklin County's Whitewater



Trail offers hand maps and a large display board with descriptions of points of history. The People's Pathway in Greencastle offers a gazebo with a map of the proposed trails system. Soon to have a packet boat, the historic Delphi canal offers a community trail and map system complete with an interpretive center.

In addition to education, trails have the potential for positive social impact, encouraging informal social walks and gatherings among friends. Notably, these social walkers and other users often create neighborhood "crime watch" security. Trails also help create a comprehensive sense of community as shown by Memorial Hospital in Logansport where local health businesses can pay to build a trail, thus channeling costs away from park budgets. Greenways also improve the community's natural environment by encouraging habitat for wildlife and native plants as well as the growth of trees, nature's best air cleaners.

Trails may originate from many former uses, be they rail trails, river levee systems, canal towpaths, old roads, treaty lines, scenic highways, farm perimeters/field edges or cross country routes. Trails may be finished with concrete, asphalt, a boardwalk, a new, hard (epoxy type) surface or a softer crushed limestone. Trails may offer a rustic surface of dirt, grass, railroad ballast, wood mulch or other material. And though their surfaces may differ, trails have one important thing in common: they are good for their users, their communities and the vast array of environments they cross.

As you read the Indiana State Trails Plan, be mindful of the history, the importance to Indiana, the value, and the meaning of trails to countless Hoosiers. They are your trails. Welcome and enjoy.