Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

Pres. – Brendan Kearns V. Pres. – Arin Shaver
Secretary – Dale Brier

March 11, 2026, 1:00 pm ET
Turkey Run Inn
Strauss Room
8102 East Park Road
Marshall, IN, 47859

Webcast Link: https://dnringov.rev.vbrick.com/#/events/37c248e1-748a-49ba-91ef-5a9d52ff2568

Meeting Agenda

Call to Order
- Introductions
- Announce Proxies
- Open Agenda

Review and Approval of January 14, 2026 Minutes

Comments from Visitors or Guests

DNR Finance Report (Dale Brier)

President's Report

Old Business
- WRHCC shirt order
- Previous funding requests
  - Experience Otter Creek

New Business
- New funding requests
  - Wonders on the Wabash
- Retreat action items

General Reminders, Discussion, Announcements

Adjournment

May Meeting: May 13, 2026, 1:00pm ET
Posey County

If you anticipate needing a reasonable modification under the ADA to participate or have questions concerning access at the meeting locations, please contact Ric Edwards, DNR ADA Director, at REdwards@dnr.IN.gov or 317-232-4145.

Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

Pres. – Brendan Kearns V. Pres. – Arin Shaver
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January 14, 2026, 1:00 pm ET

Fort Event Center at Fort Harrison State Park
Cardinal Room
6002 N Post Rd
Indianapolis, IN 46216
WEBCAST https://dnringov.rev.vbrick.com/#/events/7d694314-830a-42b0-b8c2-41d2c5bcf797

Meeting Minutes

Voting Members Present:
Adams County – Randy Lehman
Allen County – Kyle Quandt
Gibson County – Bill Knowles
Huntington County – Dave Hacker
Knox County – Ben Burke
Parke County – Phil Cox (Alt)
Posey County – Carrie Parmenter
Tippecanoe County – Kern Darbyshire
Vermillion County – Les Zimmerman
Vigo County – Brendan Kearns
Wabash County – Mike Beauchamp
Warren County – Eric Shideler (Alt)
Wells County – Douglas Sundling
DNR – Dale Brier (designee)

Guests:
Allen Hurst – State Parks
Don Mathias – Huntington County Alt
John Gettinger – Emeritus
Laura Schwartz – Adams County Alt
Ralph Weinzapfel – Posey County Alt
Stacey Poe – State Parks
Terri Gorney – Adams County Guest
Timothy Watson – INDOT

Counties Absent:
Carroll County
Cass County
Fountain County
Sullivan County

Counties with no Appointments:
Jay County
Miami County

Call to Order

Brendan Kearns called the meeting to order at 1:09pm.

- Welcome new members

  Janet Fawley was appointed as the new alternate for Cass County but was not present.

  Eric Shideler from Warren County is their new alternate appointment.
- Introductions

  Shideler introduced himself to the group.

  Guest: Terri Gorney was present
- Announce Proxies

  There were no proxies.

Review and Approval of November 13, 2025 Minutes

Motion to approve the November minutes by Kern Darbyshire and seconded by Kyle Quandt. November minutes were approved.

Comments from Visitors or Guests

Tim Watson from INDOT spoke about signs for waterways. The signs would be placed on state-owned bridges crossing the Wabash River. He brought examples for the commission to review and asked for feedback. He is in the Crawfordville District (west central).

Municipalities could have the same signs made for non-state bridges.

Watson recommended that he would bring a list of his colleagues for each district for the commission's convenience.

DHPA Grants Report (Steve Kennedy)

Steve Kennedy was unable to attend the meeting. Dale Brier passed around a document, prepared by DHPA, with the grant updates for the commission to review (Attachment B.)

DNR Finance Report (Dale Brier)

Brier passed out the financial report (Attachment A.) The report shows $61,499.00 in revenue for FY26. The available balance was $346,529.97.

Motion to approve by Dave Hacker and seconded by Randy Lehman. The financial report was approved.

President's Report

Kearns spoke to funding projects. Senate Bill 224 was brought to his attention on Friday. The Bill would shift funding from WRHCF to the DNR Division of Oil and Gas. Hurst and Brier put the requested data together for Kearns to take to the senate committee meeting on the Bill. Kearns spoke at the bill committee meeting on the Monday before the WRHCC meeting. Kearns recommended a 60/40 split as opposed to the 80/20 proposed by the Bill. He was asked by the committee what his favorite project was. Kearns asked the commissioners to discuss their favorite projects. The Senate Bill had to have a vote on it by January 15 or it would die. There was no scheduled committee meeting. John Gettinger spoke on the commission's importance.

Brier spoke about WRHCC's history. Many years ago the commission was a line item in the state budget. Ron James was the Executive Director in 2010 who recommended that the funding come from oil and mineral rights from under the Wabash River.

Zimmerman asked what the process for the Bill is moving forward. He recommended compiling a list of all the projects done county by county and how they impacted the communities.

Quandt recommended adding the number of volunteer hours that went into the projects.

There was continued discussion on how the Bill may still become a rider on another bill if not passed in the Senate or reintroduced in the House.

Tim Watson spoke to the importance of the education programs and how it has brought awareness and respect to Indiana waterways.

Kearns requested the commissioners send their favorite projects to Hurst. Kearns also asked Hurst to send the commissioners the list of projects he had compiled for Kearns. Quandt will create a google drive folder for the commissioners to add their documents. She will provide instructions on how to add information to the drive.

Kearns passed around a letter of support for the Ohio River Basin Restoration Program Act. Carrie Parmenter asked that the section naming specific groups be removed. A motion to submit a letter of support with updates was made by Parmenter and seconded by Quandt. The motion was approved.

Old Business

- 2026 Appointments

  Hurst reported that Knox and Gibson counties were working on appointments. DNR had not yet heard from Wabash and Sullivan County but expected appointments from both. Jay and Miami Counties had no appointments last term and again had not made an appointment for the 26-27 term.

- 2026 Retreat

  The Retreat is scheduled at Turkey Run State Park on March 10 - March 11, 2026. Hurst asked about the schedule. Kearns suggested a 2-hour session on Tuesday. Brier recommended that the commission meet for lunch on Tuesday and take the time between Lunch and Dinner to discuss topics. Social time will be scheduled after dinner on Tuesday. Wednesday's schedule will include breakfast, sessions from 8:30 – 11am, Lunch at 11am, and the meeting at 1pm. Agenda will be finalized by Kearns and Shaver.

New Business

- New funding requests

  Phil Cox proposed a sponsorship request for the Ouabache Land Conservancy, Inc. event, Experience Otter Creek. The funding request is for $500. The event is a free family-friendly event on the banks of the Otter Creek in Markle Mill Park in Vigo County. The event will include educational programs regarding the benefits of conservation farming practices, healthy soils, and tree planting for increasing water quality. This is the 6th annual event. Free hardwood tree seedlings will be given away to homeowners.

- 2026 Officer Election

  Hacker made a motion to retain the current selection of officers and seconded by Parmenter. Officer election approved and Kearns would remain as President and Shaver as Vice-President.

General Reminders, Discussion, Announcements

There was conversation regarding the next shirt selection. Kearns recommended a long-sleeved UV protection shirt with screen printed logo. The color blue like the current shirt is recommended.

Ben Burke spoke on the Knox County raft trips.

Beauchamp spoke on the bank erosion in Wabash County and the addition of bank stability plants to help prevent further erosion.

Lehman spoke to how bad the water in Adams County looked in previous years and how good the river looks this winter. He also spoke to a river cleanup project, sponsored by the WRHCC

scheduled for December 6th. The cleanup was postponed due to weather conditions, but the programming continued as scheduled.

Parmenter reported that The Lower Wabash Partnership officially filed for a 501(c)3. They are finishing up a landscape conservation design which would be the first step to establishing a Lower Wabash Refuge with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Shideler said that Warren County is continuing to work with the Blueways projects.

Darbyshire has three projects his group is working on that should be completed prior to the retreat. He spoke briefly on the projects.

Kearns spoke on Vigo County's semiquincentennial events.

Quandt was stepping down from Northeast Indiana Water Trails board after serving as its President for ten years.

Watson (INDOT) spoke to the meeting and the good things the commission does.

Weinzapfel spoke about ideas for the commission meeting scheduled in Posey County.

Mathias remarked on the low water level in Huntington County.

Cox invited everyone to visit Parke County for the Eagles in Flight program at Turkey Run/Shades State Parks. February is the Parke County Maple Fair. There is a new restaurant, named Reservation, in Montezuma.

Zimmerman is still working on the NLT project. A couple of kayak launches have been installed on the Wabash.

Brier recommended using word search to look at Bills. Use the word "Wabash" to find Bills regarding the commission.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Zimmerman and seconded by Quandt. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm.

Next Meeting: March 11, 2026, 1:00pm ET
Turkey Run State Park

Attachment A:

48686 Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund FY26 as of 12/31/2025

Account	Description	Expense	Revenue
431401	AD - Oil and Gas royalty along		$ 61,499.00
510101	Payroll Salaries & Wages	$ 6,046.42	
516002	FICA Regular	$ 353.43	
516005	Payroll Medicare	$ 82.67	
517003	Payroll Perf St Pd Em COntr	$ 181.43	
517005	Payroll PERF State Share	$ 677.21	
518161	Health Insurance	$ 1,358.52	
518606	Payroll Life Insurance	$ 5.78	
518796	Payroll Anthem Dental Trad	$ 42.96	
518800	Anthem Vision	$ 4.68	
518901	Payroll Employee Assistance	$ 1.51	
519006	Payroll Long Term Disability	$ 36.32	
519503	Payroll Def Comp - StateMatch	$ 32.30	
519722	HSA Health Savings Acct 2	$ 67.33	
547022	SpOp-Uniforms&Related	$ -	
541002	Mot Veh Ex - Gasoline	$ 49.86	
541010	Mot Veh Ex - Parts & Supplies	$ 124.64	
546002	Off-Office Supplies	$ 40.84	
599036	AdmOp-PostageMeter/Potage	$ 16.48	
592016	SpOp-Library Books (Powerbank)	$ 114.68	
592026	AdmOp-Property Tax	$ -	
592029	Adm&Op Taxes & Collection Fees	$ -	
571010	Grants - Cities	$ 65,219.69	
571100	Grants - Counties	$ 100,000.00	
571300	Grants - Colleges Universities	$ 23,808.10	
573100	Grants - Nonprofit Orgs	$ 145,329.28	
595120	InState Travel - Per Diem&Meal		
595130	InState Travel - Lodging		
595180	InState Travel - Board Member	$ 3,859.90	
599116	AdmOp-Event Sponsor	$ 3,750.00	

DNR payroll	$	8,890.56
Operating	$	346.50
Grants	$	334,357.07
Travel costs	$	3,859.90
Sponsorships	$	3,750.00
FY Expenses to Date	**$**	**351,204.03**

Fund Balance as of 7/1/25	$	902,941.00
Encumbered	$	(256,706.00)
FY26 Revenue	$	61,499.00
FY26 Expenses	$	(351,204.03)
***** **FY26 Available Balance**	**$**	**356,529.97** *****

Attachment B:

Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund Grant Updates

- To date about 70% of grant funds allocated for this round have been paid.

Ouiatenon Preserve Archaeology project: Field survey has been completed, samples and artifacts have been mostly processed and analyzed, some C14 samples have been sent and GPR data is being processed and analyzed. Report writing has begun.

Wabash & Erie Canal Sites Archaeology project: To date, completed survey of over 270 acres, sites at the Suiter property, the Mentzer tavern site, and properties near Logansport. Remaining Phase II and Phase III field work were finished. The archaeologists plan to survey an additional 250-300 acres in the spring. Lab work for the field work completed to date has been finished and they will begin the reports for the site investigations.

Delphi Canal Center project: Archaeology initiated on site of exhibits, buildings, boardwalk, etc. Recommendations for future assessment provided to center. Volunteers have completed the boardwalk, worked on the Magdalena cabin and wagon, researched native plants and crops and begun creating a landscape plan. They continue to work with the lead designer on the exhibit map and plan and interpretive panels. They've established a good relationship with the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and continue to consult with them on archaeology plans and interpretive information.

Parke County Historical Museum project: After not receiving any bids for construction and rehabilitation activity on the site they initiated some direct contact with contractors to pursue some of the work and have completed exterior painting of the building. DHPA is requesting further information on planned scope of work.

WEGA building in Attica: Most of the work on the building to date has been through a different grant program and covers other areas of activity. They haven't started any of the scope of work related to the WRHCF grant yet, as there have been structural assessments and other work ongoing related to the other grant. Some of the non-historic storefront systems have been partially removed. The windows, parapet copings, storefront surround and windows remain to be done.

O'Donnell Center Campus Buildings (Victory Noll) project: Contractors have been hired and mobilized. The masonry contractor initiated the limestone parapet stones repair/replacement, with a change order to install a moisture barrier (EPDM) on the parapet wall due to discovery that none existed. The garage window replacement contractor provided a shop drawing to the design firm, so that activity will begin soon.

Chief Richardville House project: The project has been completed and paid out

Melcher Covered Bridge project: The project has been completed and paid out.