



Healthy Rivers Initiative

Muscatatuck River



What is the Healthy Rivers Initiative?

The Healthy Rivers Initiative (HRI) is the largest land conservation project in Indiana history. It is a partnership of resource agencies and organizations working with landowners on opportunities to permanently protect 26,000 acres along the floodplain of the Muscatatuck River.

What are the goals of HRI?

- Provide a model that balances forests, farmed lands and natural resources conservation.
- Connect separated parcels of public land to benefit wildlife.
- Restore and enhance areas of land along the Wabash River, Sugar Creek and Muscatatuck River.
- Protect important habitat for wildlife, including rest areas for migratory birds.
- Open land to public recreational activities, such as fishing, hunting, trapping, hiking, canoeing, bird watching and boating.
- Establish areas for nature tourism.

- Improve water quality and flood protection for downstream landowners.

How can I participate?

HRI partners work cooperatively with landowners willing to sell or donate their land to the project. This project does not involve seizing of land through eminent domain. Those interested in participating can:

1. Sell land to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It can be the entire property or specific parts of the property you own. The DNR is interested in land that already is restored or retired from farming. Land that provides public access to waterways is another priority. The DNR recognizes each circumstance is different and can discuss a host of options that benefit both the landowner and the DNR.
2. Enroll land into federal programs such as:
 - *Wetlands Reserve Program*: A voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance

to private landowners to restore, protect and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring eligible land from agriculture and placing the land under a conservation easement. Visit IN.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/WRP/WRPhomepage.htm.

- *Conservation Reserve Program*: A voluntary program for agricultural landowners, where landowners receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term vegetative cover practices on eligible farmland. Visit IN.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CRP/crphomepage.html.

Who's working on this initiative?

- Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources
- Indiana State Dept. of Agriculture
- The Nature Conservancy of Indiana
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Need more information?

Phone: 317-232-4050
Email: HealthyRivers@dnr.IN.gov
Visit: HealthyRivers.IN.gov

Healthy Rivers Initiative Muscatatuck River Project Area

Rare, threatened and endangered bird species call this area home. Species include least bittern, yellow-crowned night heron, black vulture, red-shoulder hawk, sedge wren, cerulean warbler and hooded warbler.

Two state-endangered snakes, the Kirtland's snake and the copper-bellied watersnake, also are found along the Muscatatuck River.

The floodplain along the Muscatatuck River contains the largest, continuous section of bottomland forest remaining in Indiana. Several types of trees populate this bottomland forest, including species of oak, hickory and sweetgum.

