

Public Comment Report

Greenways + Blueways 2020 Plan 30 Day Comment Period

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) held a 30-day public comment period on the draft *Greenways + Blueways 2020* plan. The comment period began on October 21, 2016 and ended on November 21, 2016.

Greenways + Blueways 2020 combines the 2007 *Greenways + Blueways* plan and the 2010 *Ped & Pedal Plan*, and environmental elements of the 2040 *Comprehensive Regional Plan*. It is the first time that the areas of conservation, transportation, and recreation have all been combined into a single document for Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. The plan was formed with input from public listening sessions and stakeholders with an interest in conservation of natural areas and open lands and non-motorized transportation such as walking, biking, hiking, and paddling.

As part of the public comment period, four public meetings were held:

- November 2, 2016: NIRPC, 6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- November 3, 2016: Merrillville Branch, Lake County Public Library, 1919 81st Avenue, Merrillville, IN, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- November 14, 2016: East Chicago Public Library Main Branch, 2401 E. Columbus Drive, East Chicago, IN, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- November 16, 2016: Michigan City City Hall, 100 E. Michigan Boulevard, Michigan City, IN, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

A draft of the plan was made available at www.nirpc.org, and stakeholders were made aware via email, a news release, and social media. The public was able to comment via email, telephone, regular mail, and at the public meeting.

Some comments received were deemed significant according to the definition set forth in the 2014 Public Participation Plan. Therefore, after proper edits are made, the plan will be made available for another 30 day public comment period.

Comment	Manner Considered by Staff	Significant?	Need to Modify?
Comment Received via USPS			
<p>Full letter from the La Porte County Conservation Trust, Inc. is attached to the end of this report.</p>	<p>1.a) Forest Legacy Area designation: NIRPC can include language about this program in the discussion of the Moraine Forest Area. 1.b) Moraine Forest "identity". NIRPC may include language in the goals of establishing public identities for the important conservation areas identified in this plan. 1.c) NIRPC will look at the recreation chapter and ensure clear language tie in between conservation and recreation values. 2.) Weller Ave Culvert: NIRPC thinks there are number of culverts and other drainage structures throughout the region impeding recreational paddling and fish and wildlife movements. An implementation task to inventory these structures and plan for improvements in being added to the document. Where appropriate, this specific structure may be called out.</p>	Yes	Yes

Comments Received via Email

<p>Overall I think it's terrific and so useful, but in Chapter 3, please include rowing/sculling in your description of Wolf Lake in Hammond. It is not an ideal rowing destination because it tends to get windy, and is only about 2k long, but it is a safe place otherwise, with few hazards and lots of take out points, and our club has been successfully practicing there for five plus years now. Early mornings and late afternoons/evenings tend to be the calmest. It has some potential as a community rowing club location, and I really want to get the word out in the Region about this sport. If it is appropriate, you could add to the plan that the Calumet College of St. Joseph rowing club practices there, and the Illiana Yacht Club is located there as well, for sailing, if that is not there already.</p>	<p>We will add language regarding rowing and sculling for Wolf Lake.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Full letter from the Town of Cedar Lake is attached at the end of this report.</p>	<p>Cedar Lake requested additional weight be given to the conservation corridor in light of a Green Infrastructure Plan for a greenway along Cedar and Founders Creek that would include a connecting trail from Lemon Lake County Park to Cedar lake. NIRPC is appreciative of the supportive letter will expand on this in the environmental chapter and recreational chapter.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Full text of comments from the group Health by Design is attached at the end of this report.</p>	<p>NIRPC is reviewing these comments in detail and agrees with many of them. As a result, significant changes to the document will be made and a new draft will be released for a second public comment period in 2017.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Comments Received at Portage Public Meeting; November 2, 2016

<p>The Little Calumet River West Branch should be a conservation corridor area.</p>	<p>Conservation Corridor Areas were identified by a combination of existing habitat resources, presence of protected land being actively managed for ecological purposes, and an active conservation plan being implemented in the area. Publicly owned land in this current corridor is currently used primarily for active recreation such as golf courses or ball fields. While some publicly owned land within the floodplain and floodway could be valuable habitat, NIRPC is not aware of any plans in place to restore and manage them for that purpose.</p>	<p align="center">No</p>	<p align="center">No</p>
<p>All of the goals within the transportation portion of the plan are fantastic! If we did all of those objectives, our region would look 100% different. For the better, of course!</p>	<p>Thank you for your support!</p>	<p align="center">No</p>	<p align="center">No</p>
<p>Use the Little Cal as a connector since there aren't a lot of good east/west trails.</p>	<p>At this time the Little Calumet Levee Trail is being repaved as an asphalt route, and the plan proposes connections to Three Rivers County Park and Lake Station going east.</p>	<p align="center">No</p>	<p align="center">No</p>

<p>Add the Prairie Duneland Trail to the conservation area map.</p>	<p>Conservation Corridor Areas were identified by a combination of existing habitat resources, presence of protected conservation land , and an active conservation plan being implemented in the area. The western terminus of the of the Prairie Duneland Trail is within the Hobart Marsh/Deep River Conservation Area. While there are small patches of habitat along the balance of the Prairie Duneland Trail, most of the route is through residential areas. The only significant natural managed land on the corridor in Imagination Glen, which might be better connected to other natural areas via the Salt Creek riparian corridor.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Don't cut as much grass along the trails. Plant native species in the spots that are very wide.</p>	<p>This is addressed at the top of Page R-12 of the plan .</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Link with the Calumet National Heritage Area and the Westlake Expansion TODs.</p>	<p>NIRPC will add a text box about related future projects</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>The trails are fantastic and are being connected more and more. However, I cannot get to the trails safely since the region does not adopt a complete streets vision.</p>	<p>The plan discusses Complete Streets at length, and also mentions several policies in the Implementation section that address these needs.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>The plan has a lack of cultural and historical references to our various trails. As an example: I have seen little if any reference to the Elgin Joliet and Eastern RR bed as the reason we have the Prairie -Duneland Trail. How would one know if one did not live here during the active period of that railroad? Due to limitations on space, the signage for the trail could read: 'Prairie-Duneland Trail, aka EJ&E'. Reference could then be made to a website to provide more information. This sort of thing could be done to the other trails.</p>	<p>This is an excellent idea and will be incorporated into the Implementation section. Specifically a new policy will be added to address this concern under Goal R2, Objective R2-1.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Along the trails, when there is a road crossing, river/creek crossing, or city/county border crossing (leaving/entering) signage would be very helpful. We are all "out-of-towners" if we go very far.	Signage along trails, or wayfinding, is addressed in the plan, and under Goal 2, Objective R2-2 in the Implementation section.	No	No
On finite trails, mile markers would be useful, especially to the newcomers and those who have not yet obtained a bike computer or GPS. As an example: to keep signage at a minimum, including cost-wise, assume an 18 mile trail. Signs could be 1/18 2/18 3/18 or 5/18 10/18 15/18 18/18.	Mile marking signs are addressed within the plan. Each community will need to assess the level of detail regarding distances of signs.	No	No
Complete the cleaning of the Little Calumet River, Salt Creek, Deep River, Burns Ditch, and others.	These are proposed as part of opening up each for water trail useage.	No	No
Comments Received at Merrillville Public Meeting; November 2, 2016			
There were no attendees at the Merrillville meeting. Therefore, no comments were received.			
Comments Received at East Chicago Public Meeting; November 14, 2016			
Thank you for identifying and developing the many interconnected relationships. Like the examples mentioned in the second paragraph on pp. 1-4. That's the beauty of this whole plan. Congratulations.	Thank you for your support!	No	No
Lake George should be metioned as part of the Blueways network like Wolf Lake is.	Lake George is shallow and not always usable. Might be considered for seasonal use.	No	Yes
There is currently dredging happening on the Grand Calumet between Hohman Avenue and the state line in Hammond. However, there is a railroad bridge that doesn't allow for paddlers to pass underneath, serving as a barrier going to or from Illinois.	The plan does encourage the cleaning and opening of potential water trail routes regionwide. This segment of the Grand Calumet River has been identified as a potential route.	No	No
If the trail gap by the site of the State Line Generating Plant can be done, that will show some tremendous progress.	The trail connection is currently funded to the state line. Work is continuing with the City of Chicago to connect on the Illinois side and continue from there.	No	No

The intersection of Calumet Avenue and 45th Street in Munster is dangerous for non-motorized users.	Separation and a safer crossing for non-motorized users is part of the plan for the reconfiguration and rebuilding of that intersection.	No	No
Hohman Avenue in Hammond has dangerous parts as well.	The City is working to provide bike lanes and safety alternatives for non-motorized users.	No	No
Hobart needs better signage for bicyclists in order to reduce confusion. The current ones are not very clear.	The City is working to get better signage throughout the city.	No	No
Why does the Prairie-Duneland Trail not connected to the Dunes Visitors Center?	After considering different alignments, the Town of Chesterton preferred the current corridor.	No	No
Will there be a connection between the Oak Savannah and Erie-Lackawanna Trails?	Work has started on connecting the two trails. Work should be completed by next year.	No	No
Need a safe way to connect to Marktown in East Chicago since it's a nationally-recognized historic site and is already attracting plenty of people.	The Buffington Priority Trail Corridor has been identified to connect these areas.	No	No
We need more trails in urban areas to encourage fitness and provide better access to amenities, especially the South Shore Line and the lakefront.	A number of potential trails are located in urban areas and are strongly promoted by policies in the plan.	No	No
The Greenways + Blueways Map should include Steelworkers Park in Chicago, new trails that have been built in Illinois, and the US 30 overpass near the state line.	The current Greenways + Blueways map is being printed in smaller and more frequent batches in order to keep it more current. Thank you for these corrections, they have been noted.	No	No
Comments Received at Michigan City Public Meeting; November 16, 2016			
R-18 "The Lakes of LaPorte" Hennessey Pond should be called Hennessey Wetland or Hennessey Lake.	The name has been changed to Hennessey Lake in the document.	No	Yes

Comments Received at Environmental Mgmt Policy Committee Meeting; Nov. 3, 2016

<p>On the second conservation goal: The Cook County Forest Preserve District is working with PACE to reroute buses. People can take buses to the forest preserves and signage is posted about what to do. Could fit easily into the greenway centers idea.</p>	<p>Coordinating access to open public space with transit providers is consistent with NIRPC's current work on the Marquette Plan. NIRPC will add an implementation item to coordinate access and information about recreation and natural areas with transit operators to this document.</p>	<p align="center">No</p>	<p align="center">Yes</p>
<p>Need to double check on access to Mill Creek. The only access was a boat rental, but it is in and out of business and having paddled it, it is unknown if there are any public access sites. People may be getting on through private property.</p>	<p>NIRPC did not include Mill Creek as a blueway, but did receive input at a public meeting that at one time it was paddled. At this time it will remain without blueway designation.</p>	<p align="center">No</p>	<p align="center">No</p>
<p>One issue on connectivity is the highways and public ways crossing the areas and breaking up the corridors, particularly for larger wildlife. A trail or a road will stop the progression of the birds, turtles, snakes, etc. I don't see anything in the implementation part of the plan on coordination with INDOT to do things like wildlife overpasses/underpasses, taking riparian crossings on some of their roads to provide public access. When they do their construction planning those are things that have to be incorporated early. Is there some way you can have more of a connectivity with INDOT.</p>	<p>Transportation Goal 6 on page I-37 is attempting to address this concern. NIRPC will attempt to clarify the language to ensure that this comment is properly captured and that both wildlife and public recreational access is included.</p>	<p align="center">No</p>	<p align="center">Yes</p>

<p>The key focus would be to find the particular areas and place and emphasis on those areas so you do have to kind of prioritize those things. If they are doing highway construction, redoing bridges or buildings, or culverts and things like that, get those areas and as a group point out those fine points. One area comes to mind, Highway 20. They've been working on the bridges at 20 and Mineral Springs. There is an unofficial public access under 20 that is a perfect place that when INDOT does the bridge enhancement that they could provide a public access point there.</p>	<p>Identifying priority conservation areas in this planning document was a first step to incorporating special conservation and recreation needs into transportation infrastructure project development. The specific location mentioned in the comment Highway 20 and Mineral Springs Road is within Conservation Area 2 Indiana Dunes and the Little Calumet Water Trail.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>It's important that you bring in transportation because INDOT was just approached on a couple of overpasses/underpasses involving pedestrians and the trail system, and also connectivity to schools and those kinds of things to avoid lights and they are just starting to become receptive to that. We are finding different funding mechanisms to fund those things. I think that's the logical next step, is we can also start to look at some of the conservation connectivity. First in the minds of the state and the transportation people is how we're moving people.</p>	<p>Transportation Goal 6 on page I-37 is attempting to address this concern. NIRPC will attempt to clarify the language to ensure that this comment is properly captured and that both wildlife and public recreational access is included.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>You might check out Wisconsin and how their Department of Environmental Management have been working for their TMDL tracking and implementation so that their Department of Transportation has already incorporated some conservation measures directly with that. If you are looking for a pilot on how that started or where it might be, check out Wisconsin has been up to.</p>	<p>NIRPC has conducted some of the research and modeled some of this work after examples in Wisconsin and will continue to pursue this further.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>



La Porte County Conservation Trust Inc.

NIRPC
6100 Southport Road,
Portage, IN 46368
November 14, 2016

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RE: Draft Greenways + Blueways 2020 Plan Commentary

Dear Sir or Madam:

After carefully perusing this plan I can say that it is indeed a well-written document describing an excellent plan for integrating conservation, recreation and transportation together.

In La Porte County, which is the focus of the La Porte County Conservation Trust, Inc. (LPCCT), the plan has identified specific opportunities for important relevant initiatives. Among them are:

- 1) The Moraine Forest Conservation Area: This is one of most innovative concepts for saving the longest semi-contiguous forest north of the Wabash Valley, in Indiana. (See Attachment I.) This Moraine Forest of Northwest Indiana also constitutes one of only Forest Legacy Areas (FLAs) in the north half of the state. (See Attachments II & III.) The Forest Legacy (FL) Program is a Dept. of Agriculture operation, undertaken through the IDNR. FLAs are territories within which forests of exceptional quality are eligible to be considered for *FL Conservation Easements*, if their owners desire this.

This conservation area plan is to be particularly praised for noting the importance of identifying their *Corridors* and *Links*. And for emphasizing the need for preserving, maintaining and restoring them. Too many area land-saving organizations still concentrate almost exclusively on preserving the natural areas' *Cores* and sometimes secondarily their respective *Hubs*. But this has been too often done without recognizing how important the linkages between them are for both native faunal and floral species—but especially faunal ones.

Since most of this Moraine Forest is privately owned, creating conservation/preservation *incentives* for landowners to save their forests is critical for its success. Certainly, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources can play and has played an important role, via the *Classified Forest/Wildlands Programs*. Also, area private natural land trusts offering *conservation easements* and accepting *voluntary donations* and/or *willing sales* of forest land can also play an important role. The buy-in of private landowners to effort is essential for its success.

One of the most important initial steps in this forest-saving is *communication of the identity* of the Moraine Forest, not only to forest owners, but to the general public, as well. The recent *Moraine Forest Conservation Program*, undertaken by area land trusts (under the leadership of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust), did initial work in this area, as they identified the *Cores* and *Hubs* of the Moraine Forest. But further follow-up of this increasing this identification with landowners and the general public is *definitely* needed. In comparison, few members of the area public today could not recognize the Indiana Dunes, as an important natural resource. The Moraine Forest needs that same kind of public recognition.

The great potential for a “*symbiotic*” relationship between the Moraine Forests and economic interests is also of tremendous importance. Certainly, just as the existence of Indiana Dunes here today provides an important stimulus to the area economy—especially tourism-related businesses (lodging, vineyards, fruit farms, etc.). So the potential vision for the Moraine Forest to do the same needs to be disseminated, among area business entities.

In terms of recreation, foot trails and bike paths play a *very* important role in advancing the importance of the Moraine Forest and its continued existence. It is our hope that the Moraine Forest Bike Path will serve that purpose well. While a number of walking trails are presently shown in the plan’s map passing through the Moraine Forest transversely, we do hope that, in time, at least one walking trail route can found developed and utilized that will conform lengthwise to the northeast to southwest orientation of the forest. As with the Bike Path (which has that NE to SW orientation through the forest), this would give hikers a longer lasting, deeper forest experience

Further information can be provided, upon request.

- 2) The Functional Expansion of the LaPorte Chain-of-Lakes Blueway, via Replacement of the Weller Avenue Culvert with a Passable Bridge: La Porte’s Chain-of-Lakes was once renown throughout Indiana and beyond for its wonderful recreational, aesthetic and natural qualities. (See Attachment IV.) But after a severe dry-up in the early 20th Century, public attention over time lost focus on the entire chain-of-lakes. (See Attachment V.) Instead, Stone Lake and Pine Lake, and to a lesser extent Clear Lake, became their focus. This, even though the surface water resource here was still largely intact, including the remainder of the chain-of-lakes. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, with the rise of environmental consciousness and the expansion of outdoor recreation, a renewed focus emerged on the value of La Porte’s collective surface water resource, including its chain-of-lakes. The La Porte Chain-of-Lakes Blueway resulted. (See Attachment VI.) And boating events began like the annual La Porte Chain-of-Lakes Boat Trek.

It soon became evident that the greatest impediment to present-day interlaken boat traffic was the culvert where Weller Ave. crossed over the Lily Lake Channel. Today, this cracked, flaking, unattractive culvert simply prevents the passage of boats. It has

been more than 70 years since a boat could course under it—and even then, traversing under this culvert could only be done with the greatest of difficulty. But this was not the original bridge, here. A much more attractive and functional bridge existed in this location, prior to its presence. Attachment VII. is a photo of that earlier bridge.

If subsequently, a replacement bridge were to be constructed with a sufficiently high span, the re-opened blueway here could accommodate more than just recreational kayaks, canoes, and fishing boats. Small excursion boats could also ply these waters, somewhat reminiscent of the steamboat excursions of bygone days. Attachment VIII is a map illustrating a possible route. And Attachment VI is a blowup of that possible route, showing a number of potential stops (for food, souvenirs, etc.) .

With the expanded function of this blueway here, the potential exists to resurrect a long-dormant, important aspect to La Porte's tourism draw.

Further information can be provided, upon request.

- 3) The Kankakee Marsh Conservation Area: Located in both Indiana and Illinois, the Grand Kankakee Marsh was historically a remarkable ecosystem, with an incredibly diverse biota. It had once been renowned as a destination for hunters, from all over the country and the world. And it was rich in local folklore. In pre-settlement times, the Potawatomi people referred to it as "Theakiki".

From the 20th Century to the present, there have been a number of different attempts to save and/or restore portions of it. Among them were the IDNR's establishment of Fish and Wildlife Areas, the creation of county parks and the partially successful establishment of a Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge (in Illinois). Land trusts and other land-saving organizations have also sought to preserve and restore available portions of this vast, important ecosystem.

Recently, an excellent documentary was made, entitled *Everglades of the North*, to showcase what had been and what still remains of it. (Although, at least four other wetland ecosystems—the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in Maryland, the Horicon Marsh in Wisconsin, the Red Lake Peatland in Minnesota and the Northern Everglades (in the Lake Okeechobee watershed) in Florida have also been previously referred to by the "the Everglades of the North" nickname.) Despite its "copycat" title, this excellent documentary provided a great glimpse into what this ecosystem had been, what has been preserved in it and what it could be restored to, in the future.

Because so much of this ecosystem has been converted into agricultural use, the role of *restoration* in saving it will be proportionately much greater than in say the Moraine Forest, where efforts to save it are primarily conservation/preservation of yet-remaining forest. Or the La Porte Chain-of-Lakes, where blueway improvement and improvement of runoff water quality into the lakes are major issues, along with prevention of illegal encroachment. But these lakes, like the Moraine Forest, are still

largely intact. This is sadly not now the case with the Kankakee Marsh. But with diligent efforts, this can change dramatically for the better, in the future.

The La Porte County Conservation Trust would be happy and eager to assist in any way that would be both needed, and possible for us to undertake, toward meeting the desired ends for three areas identified above. In that regard, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

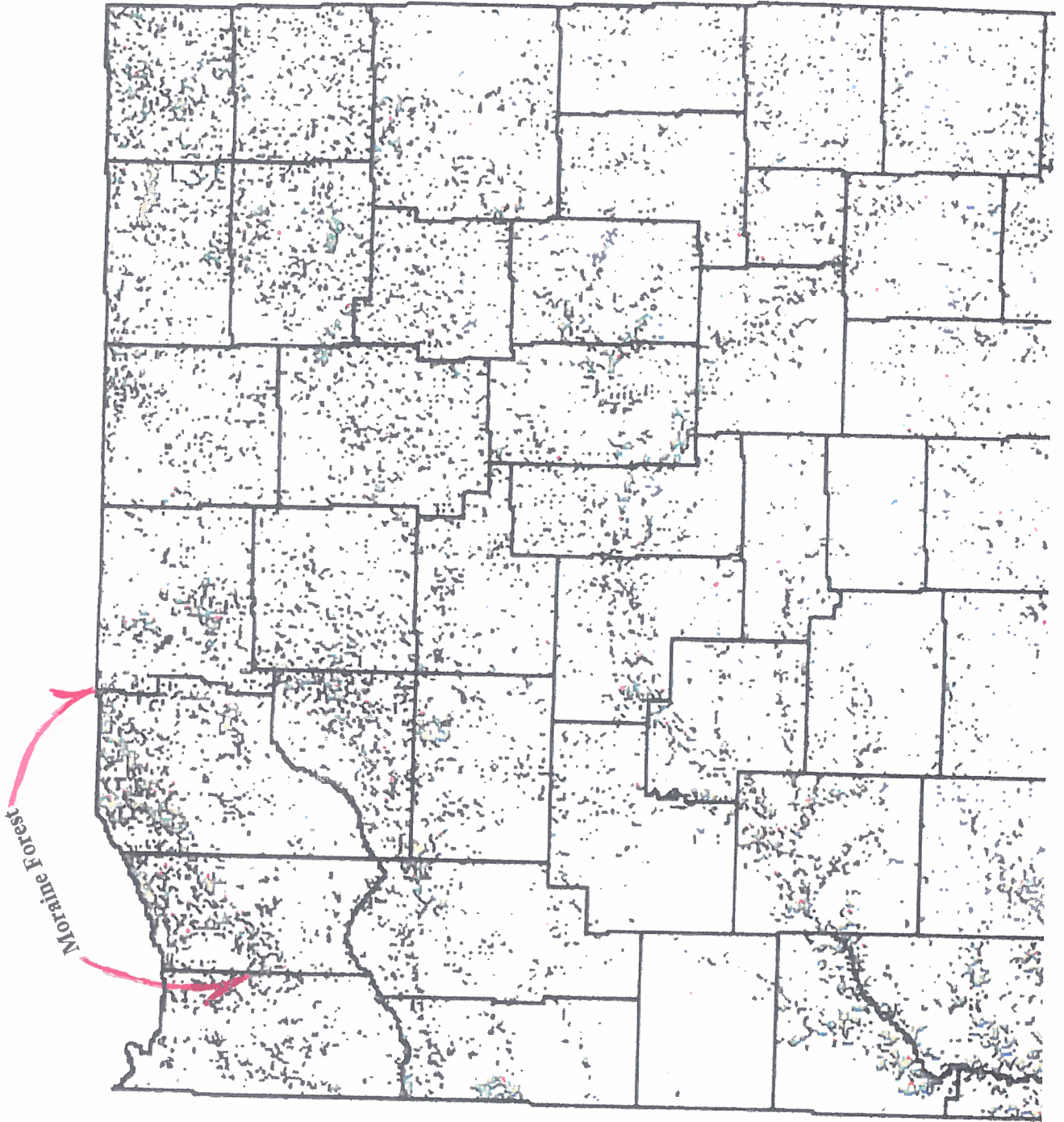
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Boklund". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "B".

Robert J. Boklund, MSES

Vice President, La Porte County Conservation Trust, Inc.

Attachments

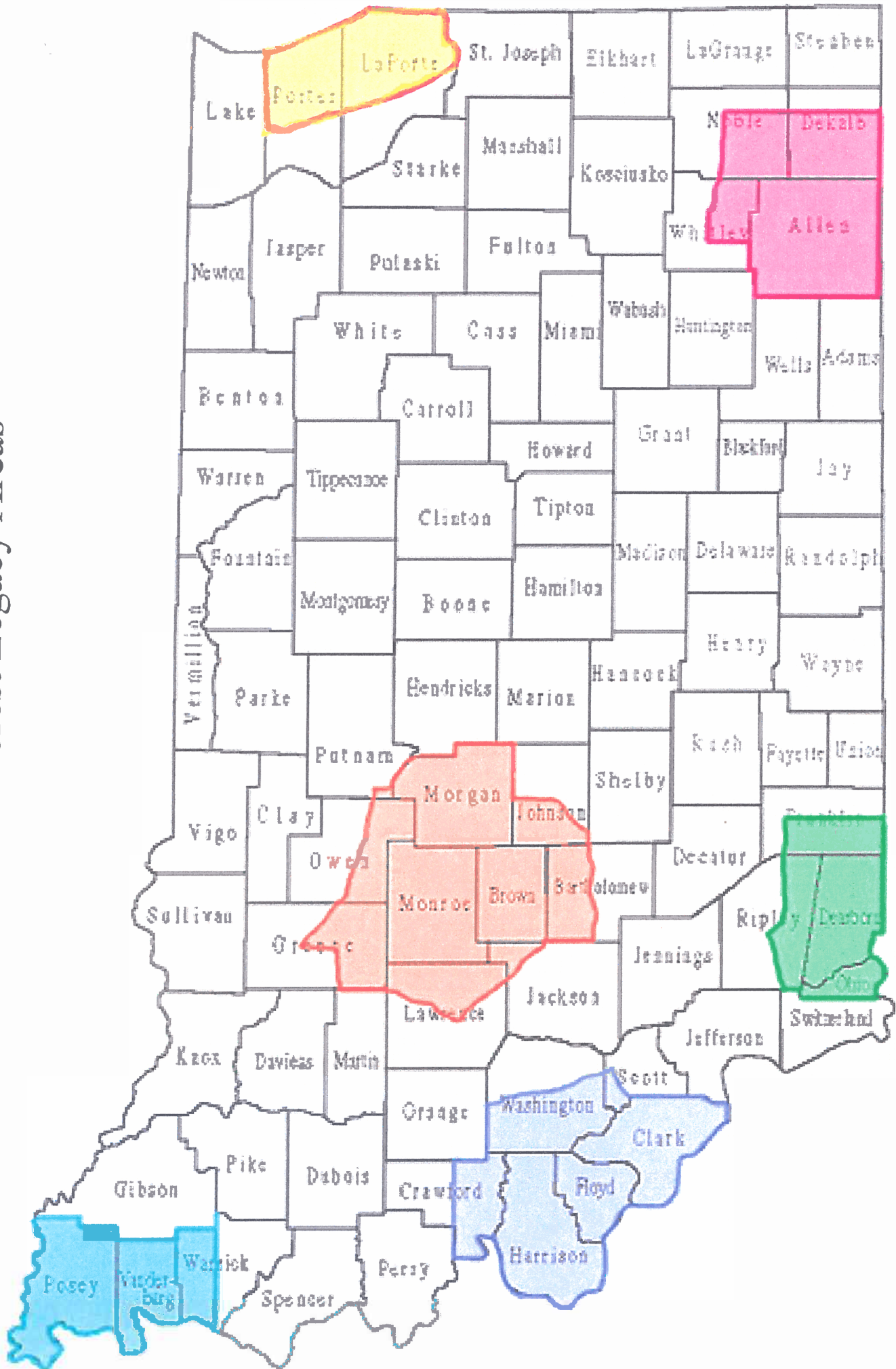
Attachment I



DISTRIBUTION OF FORESTS
IN THE NORTHERN THIRD OF INDIANA

Attachment II

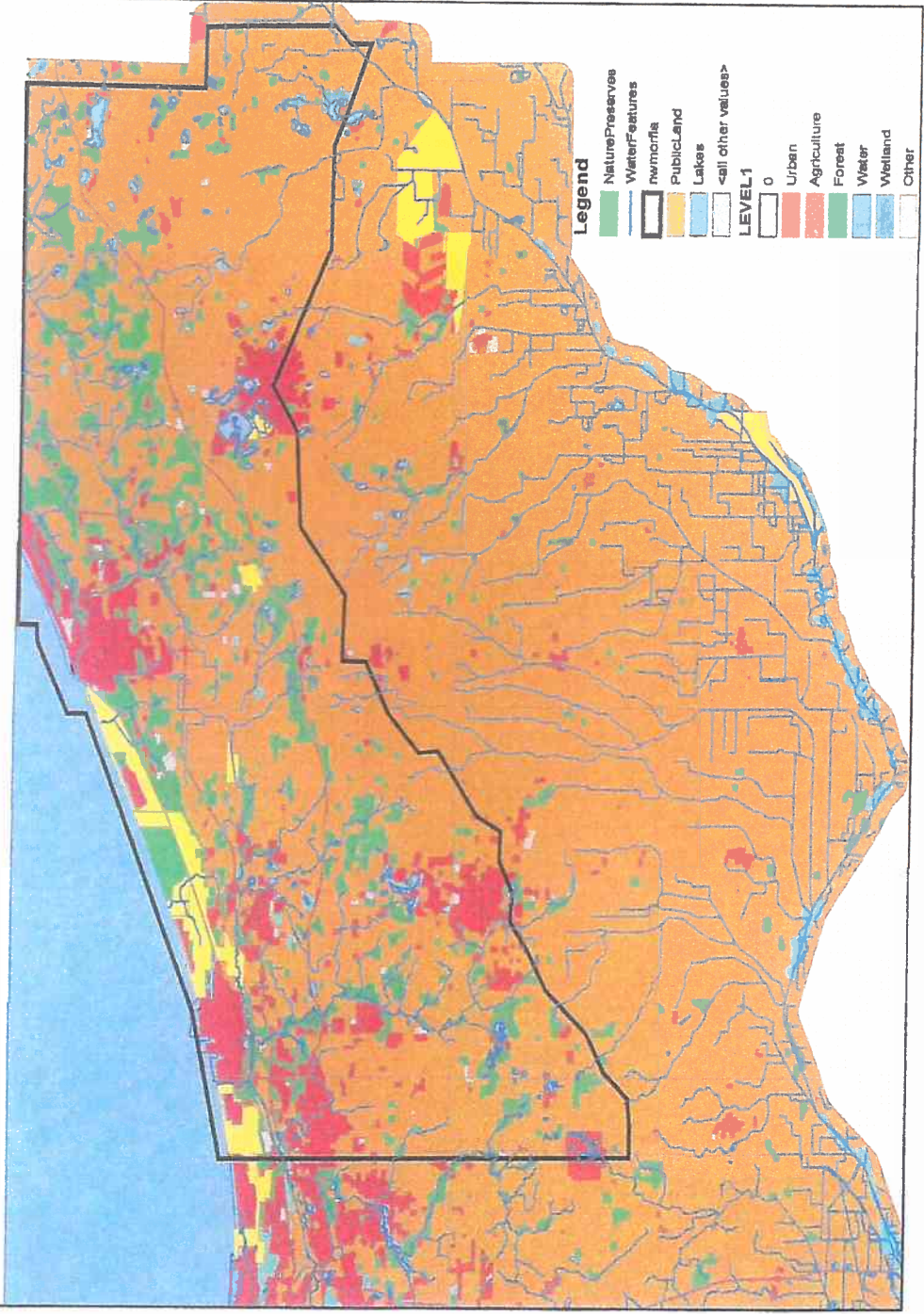
Indiana Forest Legacy Areas



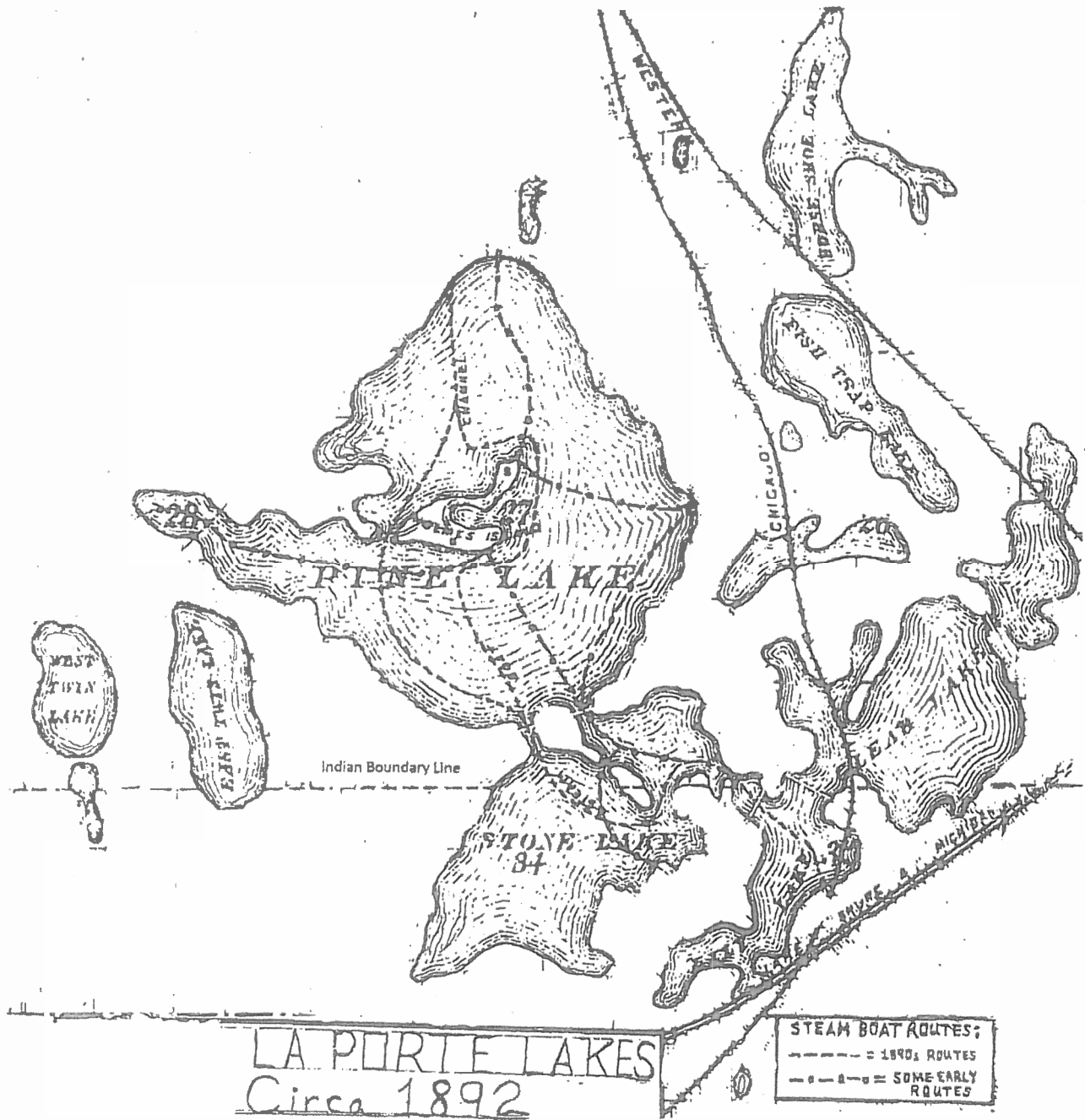
Attachment III

Northwest Moraine

Forest Legacy Area



Attachment IV



Attachment V

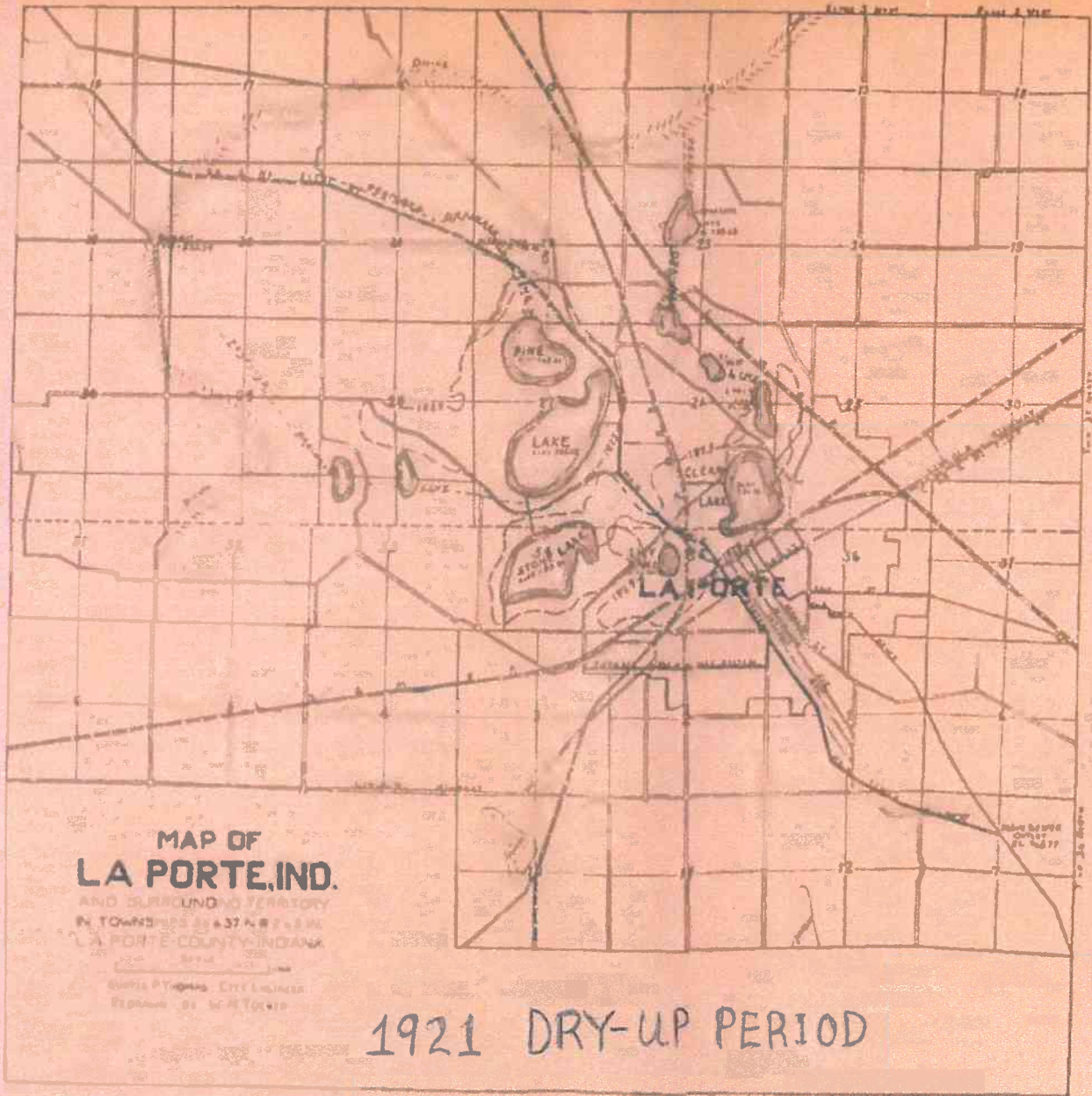
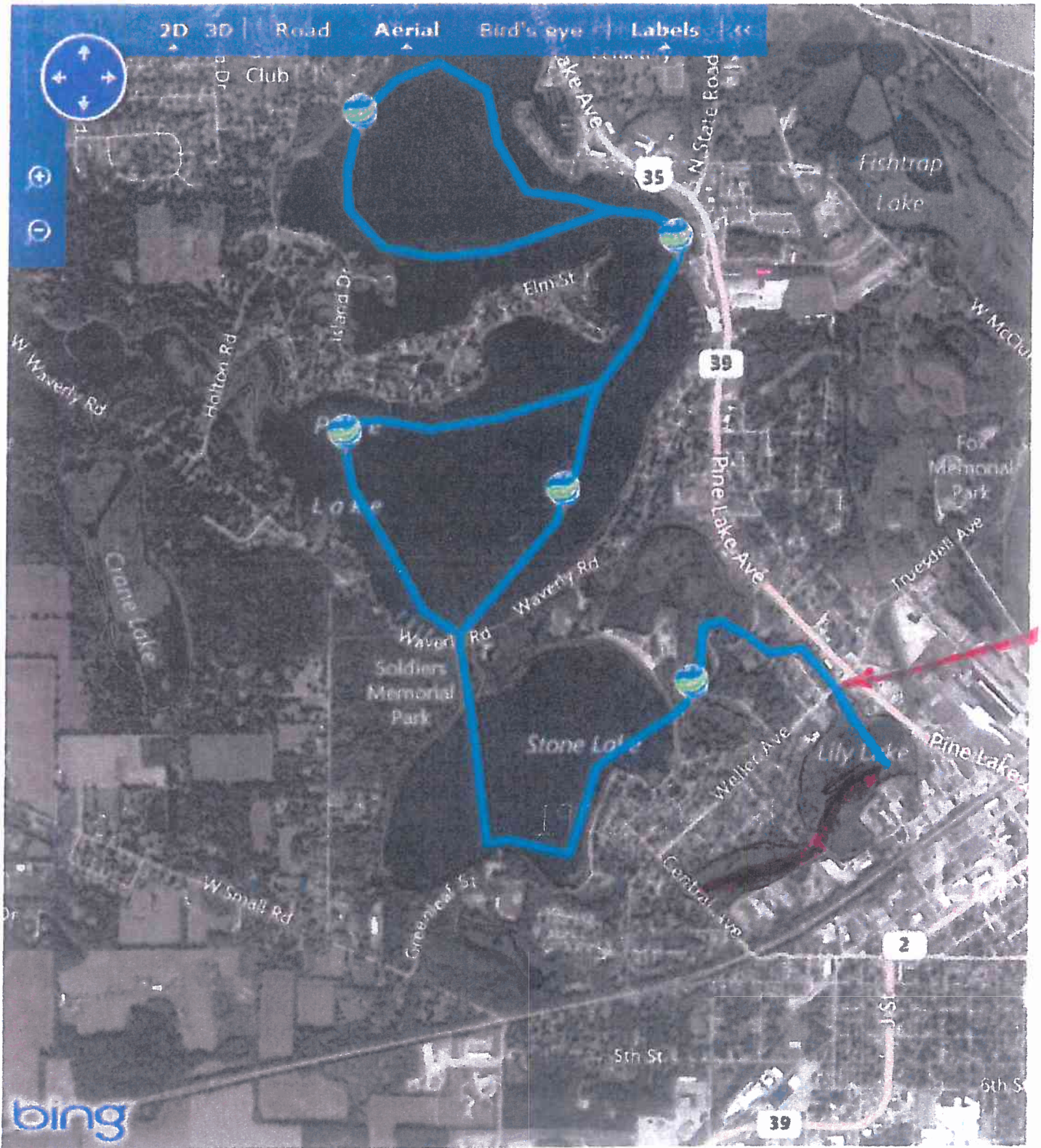


Fig. 2. Map of La Porte, Indiana, and surrounding territory, showing hydrographic features.

La Porte Chain-of-Lakes

Attachment VI

BLUEWAYS



Weller Ave. Culvert

-  = PRESENT BLUEWAYS
-  = PROPOSED EXPANSION OF BLUEWAYS



Attachment VII




Attachment VIII



 = Potential Excursion Boat Route

Attachment IX



 = Potential Stops along
Excursion Boat Route

 = Blowup of Lower Portion of
Potential Excursion Boat Route

Town of Cedar Lake

Office of the Town Administrator

7408 Constitution Ave – PO Box 707 – Cedar Lake, IN 46303

Tel (219) 374-7400 – Fax (219) 374-8588



November 18, 2016

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
6100 Southport Road
Portage, IN 46368-6409

Attention: Mitch Barloga
Transportation Planning Manager

Subject: 2020 Greenways – Blueways Northwest Indiana Regional Plan
Comment Period
Cedar Lake, Lake County, Indiana

Dear Mr. Barloga:

The Town of Cedar Lake, Lake County, Indiana is notifying the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) of requested additions/revisions to the 2020 Greenways – Blueways Northwest Indiana Regional Plan. Local and regional connectivity were identified in the Town's recent revision to our Comprehensive Plan in 2012. The Town feels that connectivity is a strong benefit to our local community to access public services and to provide recreational access to our open spaces and fellow neighbors in St. John, Lowell, and Crown Point.

As part of a 2013 Donnelley Foundation grant administered by NIRPC, the Town developed a Green Infrastructure Plan summarizing a Conservation Corridor along Founders Creek and Cedar Creek. The Town currently owns several dozen properties within this corridor to facilitate future implementation of a greenway path that would provide recreational and educational benefits to the community. Cedar Creek is already identified as a Blueway in the 2020 Greenways – Blueways Plan from Cedar Lake to the southern Town corporate limit. This new greenway would provide connectivity from Lemon Lake County Park to Cedar Lake and surrounding public/private services including but not limited to the Town Hall, the Town Police Department, Lighthouse Restaurant, Lake of the Red Cedars Museum and Summerfest activities. A copy of the Green Infrastructure Plan is attached for your reference.

The Town also desires enhanced regional connectivity to provide our residents with non-motorized access to our neighboring communities and also encourage others to visit our Town. Currently, the Town is isolated in terms of non-motorized connectivity to other parts of the region with only the South Lake Corridor Trail (Medium Priority) included in the Priority Trail Corridors in the plan. The Town has identified a NIPSCO

corridor located on the eastern edge of Town that stretches to the southeast portion of St. John. The 133rd Avenue corridor would be the desired corridor for connectivity to Crown Point and the Morse Street corridor would be desired for connectivity to Lowell.

The Town of Cedar Lake requests that NIRPC considers adopting these requests and needs as part of the 2020 Greenways – Blueways NW Indiana Regional Plan.

Sincerely,



Jill Murr
Town Administrator

Encl: As noted.

P:\Cedar Lake\060015 Town Engineer\00005 Town-General\NIRPC GW-BW Public Comment 12-2016\L NIRPC GWBW 111816.doc

The following are comments received via email from Health by Design.

- We think it would be helpful to have more clarity - particularly in the opening of the plan - about the overall purpose, rationale for doing it and how it will be used by the MPO and local agencies.
- The figure showing the spectrum of plan topics is useful, interesting and important. It seems there can be more deliberate connections made between the topics, though, throughout the document, to tie it all together.
- There are several places where data was presented, but not really analyzed/explained. Doing so might help to better guide the reader through the process/methods and lead more directly to proposed activities.
- Are you planning to have an overview map of the existing and proposed networks combining all three topics?
 - Along with that, some indication of prioritization – and the process for developing priorities – seems important
- There are a number of edits needed, throughout, and some figures, maps and tables have missing/incorrect info. There are also a few references missing.
 - Allan noted some of those specifics and can send them, if helpful.
 - The words ‘alternative transportation’ are used in a few places; we’ve tried to move away from that term, instead using ‘transportation options’ or ‘active transportation’.
 - There is a fair amount of related jargon used throughout, as well, which may be worth
- We would be pleased to be included as a resource in the sections on Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School (T 9-10)
 - The responses to the survey about Complete Streets policies are very interesting... let us know how we can help make more of them ‘official’!
- We have several comments related to the implementation chapter:
 - The goals and objectives presented seem appropriate. Often they are generalized in a way, though, that may be hard to track and measure. It may be worth rewriting some of them because of that.
 - Along with that, they don’t necessarily tie directly back to information presented in the earlier chapters, which seems important for continuity.
 - The ‘policies’ element would be better named ‘strategies’ or ‘activities’, as few of those approaches are actually policies.
 - Regarding performance measures,
 - Do you have baseline data for them? If so, it should be included in some way.
 - How will they be monitored and tracked?
 - How will they be shared with stakeholders and the public?

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh-in on the plan. We look forward to partnering with you on its implementation.