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TRAIL HIKING

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CHAPTER 6

Indiana Trails Plan

2016 TRAILS PLAN BACKGROUND

This chapter of the SCORP serves as an update to “2006-2016 Indiana State Trails, Greenways, and Bikeways Plan—Hoosiers on the Move.” The plan was created by the DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation, with help from Indiana’s Department of Transportation, the Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, the Office of Tourism, and the Economic Development Corporation, among others. The 2006 Trails Plan was written as a 10-year strategic plan after public input was gathered from vital stakeholders, trail users, local governments and other cooperating agencies.

Beginning in 2014, DNR Outdoor Recreation worked to create a public-input-based update to that 10-year plan. Due in part to the increasing speed of advancements in trails in Indiana, DNR Outdoor Recreation anticipates doing this update on a five-year rotation that matches future SCORP cycles.

Before delving into the trails plan for the next five years, consider some of the accomplishments since the creation of Hoosiers on the Move in 2006. Hoosiers on the Move set a statewide goal of having a trail within 7.5 miles or 15 minutes of all Hoosier residents by 2016. The plan also established a visionary system of statewide interconnected trail arterials. When Hoosiers on the Move was released, 82.9% of Indiana residents had a hiking, biking or

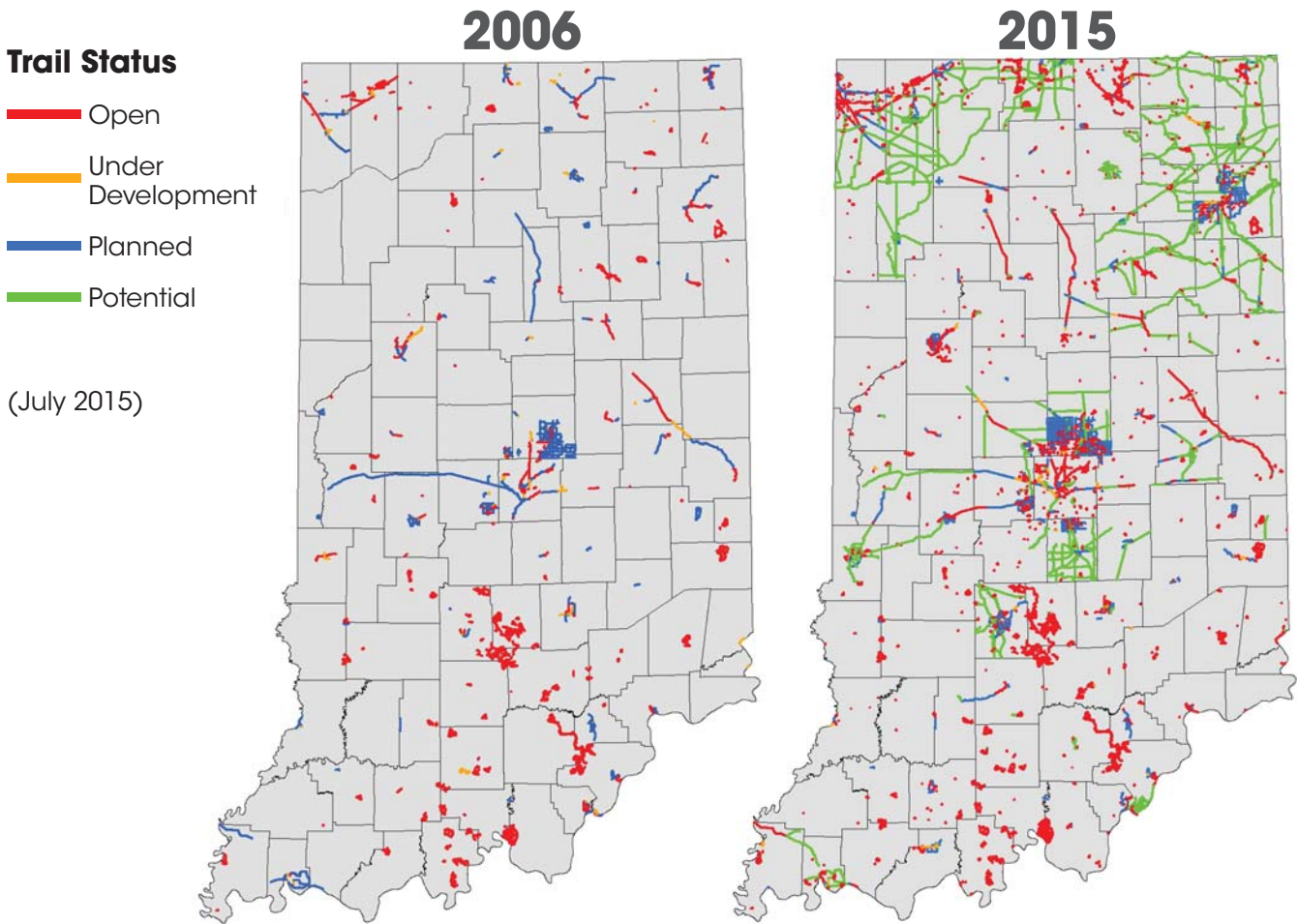
equestrian trail within 7.5 miles of their home. As of July 2015, Indiana had a trail within 7.5 miles of 98.3% of all Hoosier residents, a 15.4% increase. This analysis excludes boating/water trails and trails open for use by motorized vehicles (see figure 6.4).

In 2014, Gov. Mike Pence set a new goal for Hoosiers on the Move — having a trail within 5 miles of all Hoosier residents. As of July 2015, Indiana had a trail within 5 miles of 93.9% of all Hoosier residents. This is nearly a 24% increase over the 70% of residents who lived within 5 miles of a trail in 2006. Again, this analysis excludes boating/water trails and trails open for use by motorized vehicles.

In 2006, Hoosiers on the Move established a visionary statewide system of interconnected arterial trails. The priority visionary system of trails would be nearly 1,000 miles long when complete. In 2006, a total of 132 miles of this visionary system were finished. As of July 2015, an additional 215 miles of this system was complete, more than doubling the miles of completed visionary trails since 2006 (see figure 6.3). At least another 23 miles are expected to be completed by the end of 2015. This would put the priority visionary trail system at more than 37% complete by the end of 2015.

Using trail miles calculated from actual geography as opposed to reported or estimated mileage, there were 1,542 miles of trail open to the public in 2006. As of July 2015, the Indiana Trails

FIGURE 6.1 Indiana Trails 2006 & 2015



Inventory Database showed 3,585 miles of trail open to the public. More than half of this increase of 2,043 miles of open trail that was added to the inventory during the past 10 years existed before 2006, so an estimated 935 miles of new trail have been added. An additional 106 miles of trail are in the process being acquired or developed (see figure 6.1).

TRAILS PLAN UPDATE: PUBLIC INPUT

The 2016-2020 Indiana State Trails Plan Update’s public-input methodology included all-new public and stakeholder input, a trails-planning charrette, an extensive online stakeholder survey, and additional research. The results from all of these input methods will be used to update the 2006 plan with new goals, an updated visionary trails system map, and more.

Timeline for Public Input Methodology

2014

January-February: Begin gathering trends information and research materials.

March-July: Trail User public survey begins; statewide survey ran until July 2014.

May: “Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Network Gathering” at Carmel Parks and Recreation’s Monon Center in Carmel (Hosted by IPRA, The Greenways Foundation, the Indiana State Dept. of Health, and DNR); 20 trails stakeholders were present for the meeting. Oral input was gathered from the stakeholders present.

July: 2014 Indiana Trails Charrette; July 11, Indiana Government Center South Conference Center. Meeting was intended for trails stakeholders; 87 stakeholders accepted invitations, and 85 signed in at the charrette. Oral input was gathered, recorded on maps, and recorded on comment sheets for later tabulation.

July-August: 2014 Indiana Stakeholder Online Survey; survey ran online from July 15 through Aug. 15, 2014. The Online Survey Link was emailed to more than 250 stakeholders or representatives of stakeholder groups statewide, who were invited to share the link with members of their organizations as well as with other interested parties. All completed online surveys were accepted. A total of 495 valid, completed surveys were received by the deadline.

2015

May-July: The entire list of stakeholders and interested parties from the 2014 online survey was asked to review and comment on the newly completed draft of the Trails Plan Goals, and the Visionary Trail System Map. Fifteen written comments were received and recorded. All comments were considered carefully. Those that were applicable were added to the final draft of the goals and the map.

What the Indiana Trail User Public Said about Trails

As reported elsewhere in the SCORP, the respondents in the 2014 Trail User Survey said:

- Walking was the most common trail activity.
- Walking, as a trail use, was three to four times more likely to occur than most other activities.
- More than 80% of survey respondents used trails for walking sometime each year.
- The top three trail activities were:
 - o Walking
 - o Bicycle Touring (casual, tour or both)
 - o Using trails for alternative transportation routes.
- The top three reasons why respondents use trails were:
 - o Pleasure, Relaxation, Recreation (53%)
 - o Health/Physical Training (32%)
 - o Family or Social Outing (35%).
- Almost half of respondents said they would not spend more than \$100/year on their use of trails.

What the Stakeholders at the Trails Gathering Said about Trails

DNR staff used the stakeholders present at the Trails Gathering in May 2014 as a sounding board about their concerns or difficulties in operating, maintaining or creating new trails. The group came up with the following list, which is not presented in priority order:

- Current state law/rail-banking laws
- Federal funds; INDOT grants
- Maintaining what we have (short term and long term)
- Adjacent landowners
- Funding
- Easements/covenants
- Permits
- Manpower

- No tie-in/cooperation with state tourism or INDOT planning
- Community involvement
- Fencing issues
- Low population areas (outliers)
- Crossing jurisdictions
- Wetland mitigation
- Liability insurance
- Political Action Committee (PAC) potential

DNR staff present took note of all concerns voiced by the group and used them to start discussions in the other public-input opportunities during this process.

What the Participants at the 2014 DNR Trails Plan Charrette Said

The main reason for the charrette was to gather opinions from Indiana trail stakeholders, then work together to review and make recommendations toward a new Visionary Trail System Map for Indiana. This was done via regional breakout sessions, and during a full-group, statewide session discussing ideas and suggestions for changes to the Visionary Trails. The newly revised statewide Visionary Trail System Map is included in this Trails Plan Update.

The other mission of the charrette was to gain more feedback from the stakeholders. Some issues, ideas and concerns brought up included:

- Is there a possibility of legislative protection for the visionary system?
 - o First right of refusal to purchase (state, local or non-profit)
 - o Local planning and zoning
- Trails to and through state parks
- On-road bike routes and intersections with trails
- Prioritize criteria for funding getting trails off-street
- Trail Maintenance Fund (IC 14-19-10)
 - o Summer study committee (DNR to administer?)
 - o Who distributes funds? Distribution formula?
 - o Sources of funding?
 - Optional tax on license
 - Statewide recreation tax (collected at point-of-sale—bikes, shoes, etc.)
 - County wheel tax
 - County food and beverage tax
 - o Policy – Land disputes and highway crossing maintenance

- IC 8-4.5-6 et seq.
 - Repeal?
 - Modify?
 - Goshen legal case? John Yoder, RTC Attorney Letter
 - IC 8-4.5 could come up under IC 14-19-10
- Indiana Recreational Use Statute: IC 14-22-10-2
 - Modification to protect landowners adjacent to trails (as needed)
- Redefine what a trail is, i.e., not just for recreation
- Hierarchy of trails
 - National
 - State
 - Multi-county
 - Local
- Supreme Court
 - Indiana Department of Transportation/ DNR railbanking funding – Underlying landowners may still need compensated even if railbanked.
- Endowments

This list was taken into account, and much of it was incorporated into the Online Stakeholder Survey to provide the chance for more-detailed query and response from a broader cross-section of stakeholders.

Highlights from the 2016 Trails Plan Online Stakeholder Survey

The 2016 Trails Plan Online Stakeholder Survey was intended to gather broader input on a wider array of ideas, questions and concerns than was collected during the Trails Plan’s public-input process. The online survey was also sent further afield, to a greater number of stakeholders, than all previous efforts. The purpose was to increase the variety of respondents.

Online survey respondents reported the following:

- Annual trails development and land acquisition budgets ranged from \$0 to “changes yearly,” to \$1 million/year.
- Annual trails maintenance budgets ranged from \$0 to as much as \$70,000/year.
- 53% of agencies or organizations had a five-year or 10-year trail system master plan in place; 47% did not have a plan.
- 47% of agencies or organizations had a trail maintenance plan; 53% did not.
- 85% of communities or organizations did not charge fees for trail use; 15% did charge fees.

Respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following items:

- State legislation supporting former railroad corridor acquisition
- Standardized trail signs and symbols
- Incorporating trails into roadway improvements to help alternative transportation
- The need for research for solutions to trail problems in development, planning and maintenance
- Involving adjoining landowners and businesses in trails planning, development and management
- Current funding of trail maintenance and operations is inadequate

When planning and designing trails, did respondents try to connect community destinations such as schools, recreational facilities, commercial districts and cultural historic sites? (All answers that apply could be chosen)

- Yes..... 45%
- Not applicable 38%
- No funding 13%
- No, community destinations are too spread out to consider 5%
- No time to plan and design trails for connecting community destinations..... 5%
- The community has no interest in connecting community destinations..... 1%

The top five reported methods respondents use to address staffing issues were:

1. Increased use of volunteers
2. Friends of the trail groups
3. Partner with local non-profits
4. Partner with government agencies
5. Partner with local businesses and for-profit agencies

The top five reported methods respondents use to address trail land acquisition needs were:

1. Recreational Trail Program grants
2. Cooperation with private landowners
3. INDOT programs (all types)
4. DNR Heritage Trust or Bicentennial Nature Trust Programs
5. Utility corridors

The top five reported outside organizations respondents coordinated with to develop their trail system were:

1. State government
 2. Non-governmental organizations (such as non-profits/friends groups)
 3. County government
 4. City government
 5. Town government
- (Federal Government was reported as 6th).

A full set of results for this survey are in the SCORP Appendices.

Highlights from the Final Comment Period for the Draft Trails Plan Goals and Visionary Trail Map

In mid-May 2015, the extended list of trail stakeholders and other interested persons statewide were given a final opportunity to read, review and comment on the draft Trails Plan Goals and Visionary Trail Map. An email blast, supplemented by news releases and other electronic media, shared the call for final comment beginning in May, and ended on July 1, 2015. Copies of the previous and latest Trails Plan Goals and Visionary Trail Map were included for review and comparison. Fifteen people responded in writing to the call for comments, and these responses varied enormously, from very narrow off-topic requests for repairs to specific trails to well-thought-out, highly detailed recommended additions to both the Trails Plan Goals and the Visionary Trail Map.

Here is a small sample of the 15 comments:

- “We reviewed the 2015 Trails Plan Goals and find them very worthy...”
- “We hope the trail plans will include horse riders of Indiana. So many of the trails are already closed to horses.”
- “... the plan talks a lot about supporting legislators, planners/designers, organizations, managers and citizens interested in all aspects of trail planning, development and design, but never actually talks about what types of support that is ... a toolbox, speakers bureau, etc.”

2016 TRAILS PLAN UPDATE - GOALS

INDIANA TRAILS GOAL:

A trail within 5 miles of all Indiana residents by 2020.

Objective 1: Partner with federal, state, local, not-for-profit and private entities in order to leverage resources to build and maintain a statewide network of trails.

Objective 2: Support non-state entities that acquire, develop, operate and maintain trails.

Strategy 1: Improve coordination of trail development, planning and design at local, state and federal levels.

Action 1: Encourage interested and affected representatives, including urban and rural landowners, not-for-profits, foundations, the agriculture community, businesses, developers, utility companies, public transit and governmental entities to get involved in all phases of developing new trails.

Action 2: Secure the participation of representatives in the health and wellness profession and related businesses, such as insurance and pharmaceutical industries.

Action 3: Ensure that trails are included in utility right-of-way improvements, road right-of-ways, road abandonment and bridge development and expansion projects.

Action 4: Include engineers, architects and planners during all phases of trail development to ensure natural resource preservation and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

Action 5: Foster a working statewide support network composed of agencies, legislators, planners/designers, businesses, foundations, organizations, trail managers and citizens interested in trail development.



Action 6: Review laws, policies, traditions, etc. that directly or indirectly impact trail development and seek revisions as deemed necessary.

Action 7: When planning for trails and shared road bicycle routes, encourage connectivity of all state and local destinations where people live, work, learn and play.

Strategy 2: Increase trail funding to provide trails to meet present and future demand.

Action 1: Advocate for stable, long-term state and federal funding mechanisms for acquisition, development, maintenance and operations of trail facilities.

Action 2: Encourage local initiatives for trail funding.

Action 3: Encourage and provide incentives for private funding for trails from such entities as foundations and corporations.

Action 4: Include funding for long-term trail maintenance in operational budgets.

Action 5: Encourage and support public, private, and not-for-profit organization partnerships that work to acquire and develop sustainable trails and bikeways.

Strategy 3: Acquire more land for trails.

Action 1: Identify and extend opportunities for intra-state and inter-state trail connections.

Action 2: Improve the acquisition process of former railroad corridors for trail development.

Action 3: Advocate that trails be included in land-use planning, including re-negotiation of road right-of-ways and bridge developments.

Action 4: Advocate that developers be required to set aside land for trails and/or accommodate for development of proposed trails.

Action 5: Expand the number of areas available for the legal use of off-highway vehicles, off-road bicycles, equestrians, and water trail users.

Action 6: Encourage co-location of trail facilities within existing and future utility corridors and levee corridors.

Strategy 4: Provide increased education about trails and trail benefits.

Action 1: Encourage and support research on Indiana trails and related issues.

Action 2: Inform the public about the health, economic and social benefits of trail use.

Action 3: Develop and distribute educational materials about appropriate trail use, environmental ethics and trail etiquette.

Action 4: Increase public awareness of trails, trail locations and trail access points via the Internet and other promotional/marketing media.

Action 5: Install signs that interpret natural, historical and cultural features of trails, and install multilingual signs where appropriate.

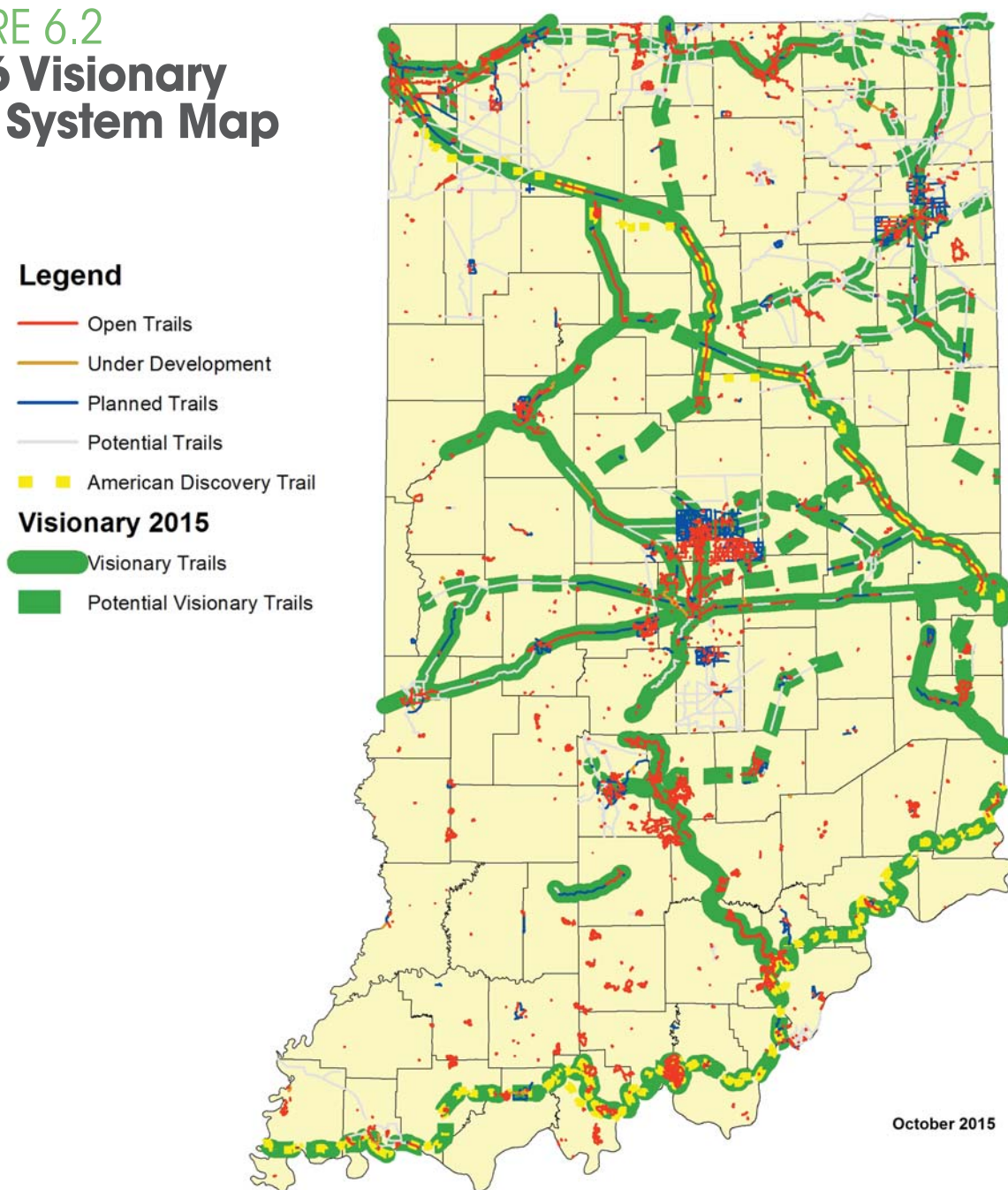
Action 6: Encourage the development of design guidelines that use standardized signs and symbols to designate trail activities and facilitate trail navigation statewide.

Action 7: Include health and wellness education information within trail maps and guides.



SNOWMOBILING

FIGURE 6.2
2016 Visionary
Trail System Map



2016 TRAILS PLAN UPDATE -
VISIONARY TRAILS SYSTEM

What the Visionary Trails System Actually Is, and What It Isn't

The Visionary Trails System is a collection of trail corridors that provide a backbone for connected trails throughout Indiana. The main purpose of the map is to show trail developers and planners where the priority trails are and how future development could fit into this network. For the Visionary Trails that are yet to be completed, the routes are intended to be broadly defined corridors within which trails are proposed or trail-potential exists. This Visionary Trails System was

created using input from trail providers, community planners and trail users. Trail corridors within the system must cross two or more counties and/or connect two visionary trails. A visionary trail must be completed, under development, or formally planned/actively supported (see figure 6.2).

The system is not a construction plan or a system the State of Indiana is unilaterally building. Rather, it encourages all levels of government and other trail providers to build trails along the corridors or connect to them. It is even possible for new trail groups to come together with a goal to build sections of trail with high priority. Some trail-funding programs encourage development of the Visionary Trail System by emphasizing it in applications for funding.

Two types of visionary trails are identified within the Visionary Trails System. Priority visionary trails include trails that are completed, being developed and/or are formally designated and planned with a higher degree of certainty of being completed. Potential visionary trails have a lesser degree of public planning and support but show some promise of rising to the level of priority visionary trail and of ultimately being completed. Lists of the priority visionary trails and the potential visionary trails follow.

Priority Visionary Trails

- American Discovery Trail (ADT Northern Route across Indiana)
- B&O Trail in Marion and Hendricks counties
- Cardinal Greenway from Richmond to Marion, Sweetser, Converse and Bunker Hill
- Covered Bridge Gateway Trail in Vigo and Parke counties
- Farm Heritage Trail in Boone and Clinton counties
- Knobstone Trail/Tecumseh Trail from Deam Lake to Martinsville
- Marquette Greenway in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties
- Midland Trace from Lebanon to Noblesville
- Milwaukee Road Transportation Trailway from Bedford to Indian Springs
- Monon Trail/Cultural Trail in Marion and Hamilton counties
- National Road Heritage Trail from Terre Haute to Richmond
- Nickel Plate Trail from Kokomo to Rochester
- Panhandle Pathway from Logansport to the Erie Trail
- Pumpkinvine Trail/St. Joseph River corridor/ Maple City Greenway in St. Joseph, Elkhart and LaGrange counties
- Upstate Indiana Trail in Wells, Allen, DeKalb and Steuben counties
- Wabash Heritage Trail from Independence to Logansport
- Whitewater Canal Trail in Fayette and Franklin counties
- Whiter River Corridor from Indianapolis to Martinsville
- Wilbur Wright Trail from New Castle to Cardinal Greenway

Potential Visionary Trails

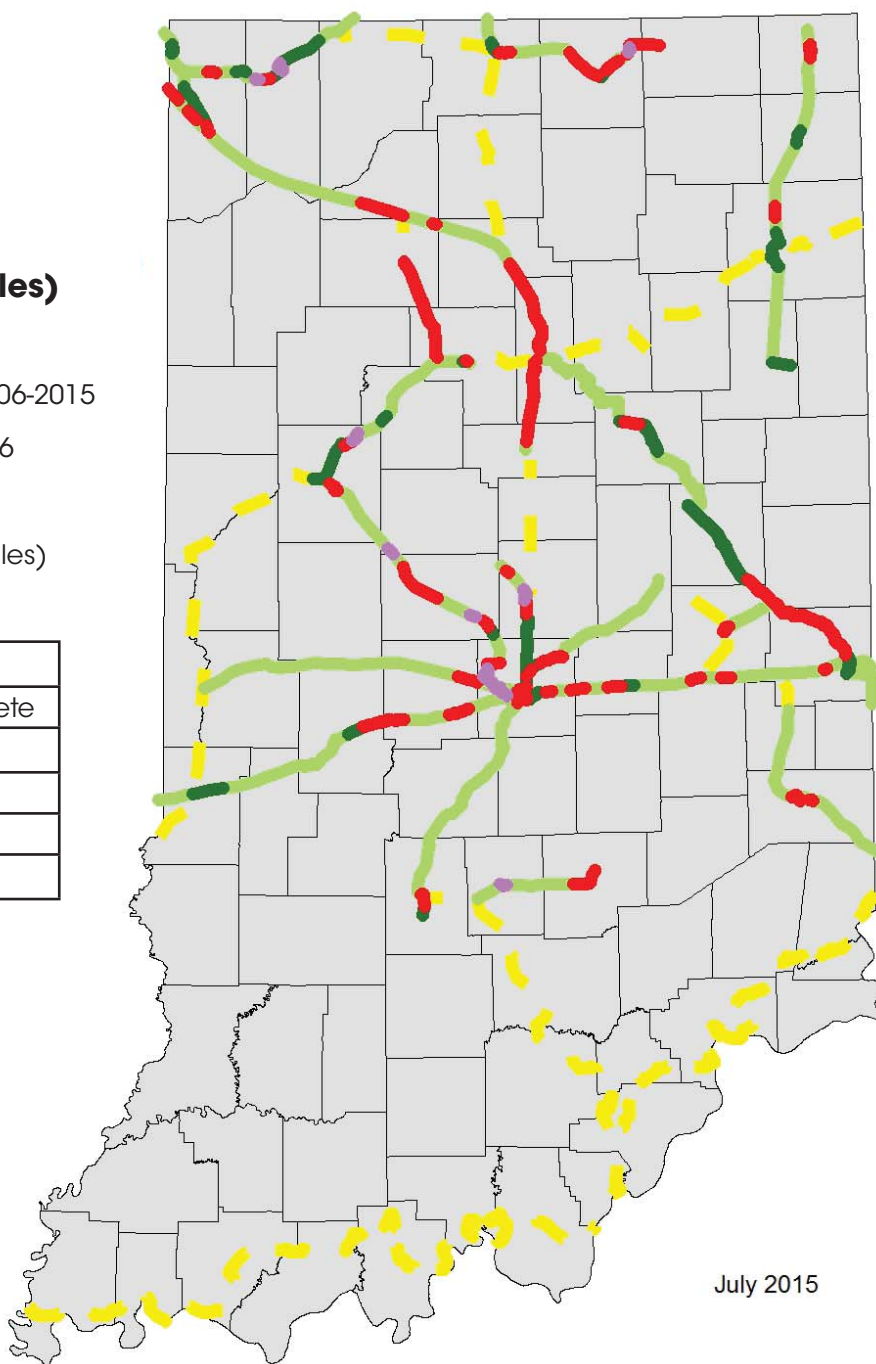
- American Discovery Trail (ADT southern route across Indiana)
- B&O Trail in Putnam and Parke counties
- Columbus, Shelbyville to Rushville corridor
- Decatur/Bluffton Connection to Cardinal Greenway at Marion
- Dunes Kankakee Trail in Lake County
- Eastern Indiana Gateway Trail from Union City to Decatur
- Fort Wayne to Pumpkinvine Trail corridor
- Honey Creek corridor between Anderson and New Castle
- Northeast Indiana connection between Pumpkinvine Trail and Ohio trails
- Nickel Plate Trail/Farm Heritage Trail connection through Howard and Clinton counties
- South Shore/NIPSCO corridor from Michigan City to South Bend
- S.R. 1 corridor from the National Road Heritage Trail to Connersville
- S.R. 3 corridor between New Castle and the National Road Heritage Trail
- S.R. 46 corridor from Ellettsville to Columbus
- Old U.S. 31 corridor from South Bend to Rochester
- Old Interurban, S.R. 67, Fall Creek Corridor from Indianapolis to Noblesville
- White River Corridor from Muncie to Noblesville
- Woolly Bear Trail in Henry and Hancock counties

FIGURE 6.3 Visionary Trails Progress

Visionary Status (997 miles)

- Completed by 2006
- Completed between 2006-2015
- To be completed by 2016
- Priority planned
- Potential System (802 miles)

Visionary Status		
Year	Trail Miles	% Complete
2006	132.33	13.27%
2015	214.86	34.80%
2016	23.47	37.16%
total	370.66	



July 2015

BLUEWAYS IN INDIANA

Any trails plan would be incomplete without mentioning water trails. Water trails, also known as blueways, have been popular in Indiana for a long time. Using them is a healthy way to see the state from a different point of view. Until recently, canoeing was the chosen way to explore and recreate on streams and rivers, but kayaking has increased in popularity. Some liveries in the state rent only kayaks. Most traditional canoe liveries have added kayaks to their fleet to meet public demand.

Water trails are some of the least expensive trails that can be built per mile because the trail itself, the river, is already there. Legal public access sites are all that is needed for a minimalist water trail. The DNR defines a public access site as a legal way to get to the water that has: (1) a managing entity that maintains the site, (2) a parking area, and (3) proper signage. More-developed trails can have added amenities such as signs along the river, camping and restroom facilities. Water trails need at least two public access sites between 5 and 15 miles apart, with 10 miles apart being the optimum distance.



CANOEING

The DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife (owner of most of the public access sites in Indiana) has the same 10-mile goal for building public access sites. These distances provide a good day trip on the river. Most of the state's streams flow slowly. Paddlers usually average about 2 mph on the water.

Many people don't think of Indiana as a paddling destination, but mild terrain and wandering streams offer thousands of miles of waterways that can be paddled. There may not be Class III-plus rivers, but the gentle, meandering water offers a relaxing and enjoyable trip.

Blueways are not limited to certain parts of the state. You can float in any part of the Indiana. Paddling doesn't have to be expensive. Most people are within 45 minutes of a livery that will rent them a canoe or kayak and offer shuttle service. More than 40 liveries operate in Indiana. Most offer day trips and a few offer overnight excursions. For people who own their own boat, paddles and personal floatation devices, even more opportunities are available—there are 230 public access sites throughout the state.

The survey data for this SCORP do not differentiate between stream and lake paddling, but shows that paddling as a recreational activity has increased slightly (about 3%) in the last five years. Canoe and kayak rentals appear to be increasing. In 1999, there were 27 liveries in Indiana. Today there are more than 40.

Historically, promotion of blueways for residents and tourists has been lacking in Indiana. There is also a lack of a central location at which to find information about blueways. The DNR has a listing of canoe liveries, but the water trail information is outdated. Some private websites have rivers listed, but there is no comprehensive map.

There have been some efforts to try to create a comprehensive blueways map for Indiana. The DNR attempted to update the water trail guide many years ago, but lack of staff and funding stopped the project. Other organizations could take on this task, but Indiana lacks a statewide organization to promote paddle sports and blueway trails. At the close of the first Indiana Rivers Rally in 2007, the top priority identified for the future was a statewide river organization. Due to a lack of a common goal, the preservationists and the recreationalists couldn't agree on the mission and goal of the organization, and the idea never got off the ground. A second River Rally for 2010 failed to get out of the planning phase.

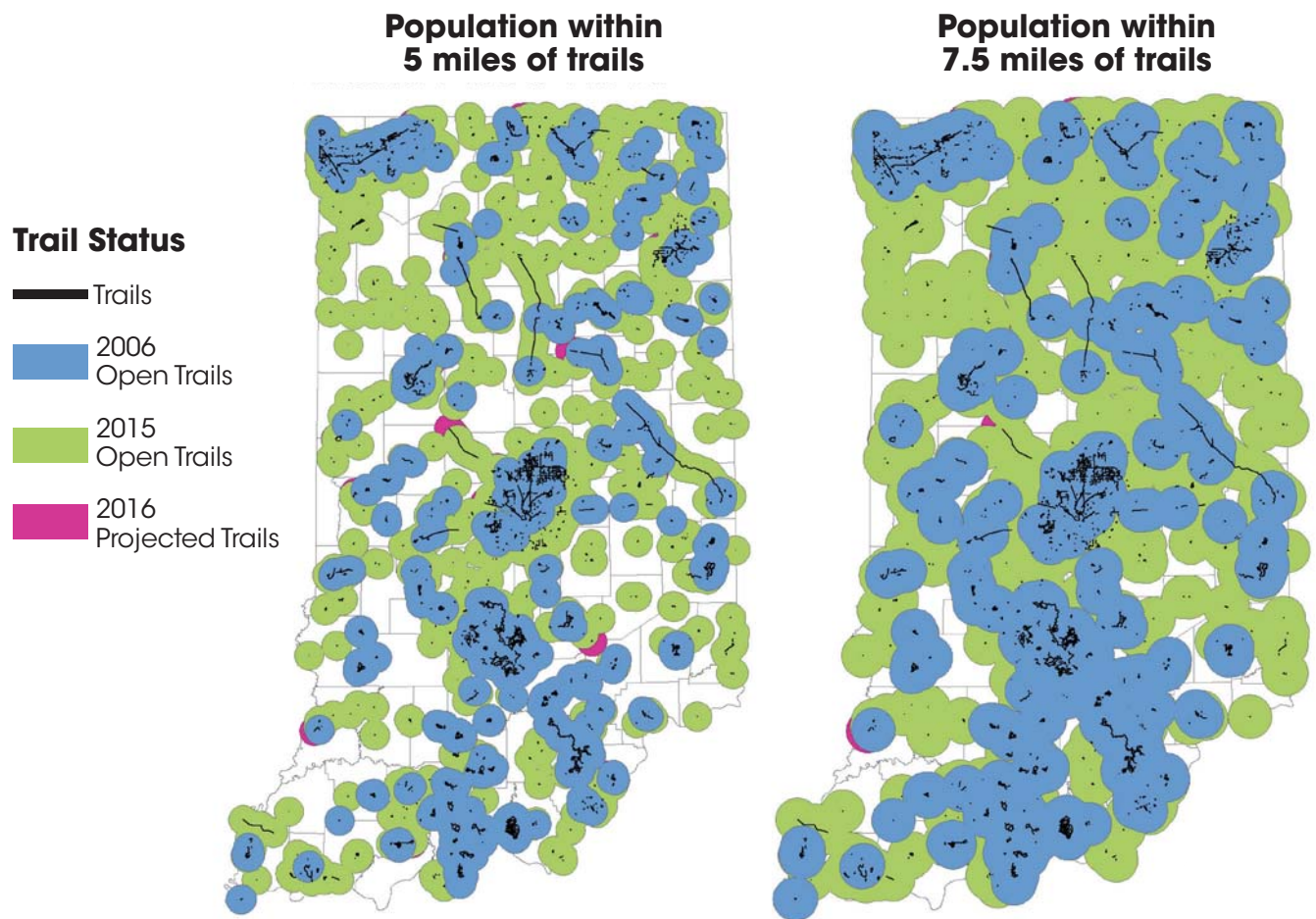
Blueways in Indiana are currently making gains at the grassroots level. Various regional efforts are underway to promote and enhance blueways in Indiana. A group in northeast Indiana is putting together a regional blueway trails plan that will inventory current water trails, identify gaps in public access, work to fill in the gaps, and promote blueways as a resource of the region.

The Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association is working with several partners to improve paddling opportunities in that corner of the state. Also, the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission is working to establish a water trail along the entire length of the Wabash River. This growing interest in water trails complements the rapid growth of land-based trails in Indiana.

If Hoosiers want to bring blueways to the forefront of recreation and make them a tourism draw in the Midwest, Indiana needs a few things. The first and most important need is a single source for comprehensive paddling information, most likely a website. The volume of maps, photos and information to provide the public would be too costly to produce in paper form.

Once the current water trails have been identified and inventoried, finding high-priority locations to complete water trails is the next step. As mentioned, some of this is being done at a regional level, but it will need to be done for the entire state. Federal funds through the DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife or the Recreational Trails Program could be sources of money for putting in these access sites. Ideally, a statewide organization will form and work toward more public access through funding, legislation and volunteer projects. While there are many clubs and organizations in the state that are stream-centric, most focus on stewardship (cleanups and water quality) or gathering for recreational paddling. An organization that becomes an umbrella group for all of the local groups would

FIGURE 6.4 Indiana Trails 2006-2015



Hoosiers Served by Trails		
2010 Pop.	6,483,802	Served
2006	4,536,361	70%
2015	6,086,342	93.9%
2016	6,090,233	93.9%

Hoosiers Served by Trails		
2010 Pop.	6,483,802	Served
2006	5,374,344	82.9%
2015	6,370,808	98.2%
2016	6,371,161	98.2%



STATE PARK HIKING

be the most effective, bringing all the individuals and resources together to form a single voice for recreational progress. This group could also play a major role in doing a water-trail inventory for the state.

BIKEWAYS IN INDIANA

Another facet of trail-related facilities that needs to be mentioned is road bikeways. Not every cyclist can reach his or her destination by trail alone. A shared road bikeway can provide the missing link needed to make a car-free trip possible. Many communities and regions of Indiana have developed or plan to develop a system of on-road bikeways that include bike lanes, bicycle boulevards, and shared-road marked and signed routes.

One of the ways that many communities nationwide are progressing toward a better overall blend of transportation types in their local street designs is through adoption of “complete streets” policies. “Complete streets” uses careful design and construction to give safe and easy access for all users, including: public transit, motor vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians.

As of 2014, Indiana had about 16 local and regional “complete streets” policies statewide. An example of the growing popularity of on-road bicycle facilities is the city of Indianapolis, which went from having just a few miles of bike lanes in 2008 to having more than 100 miles of completed bike lanes in 2015, with more being planned. At the state level, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) worked with Bicycle Indiana to develop a bicycle suitability matrix for all state highways in 2014. INDOT also adopted a Safe and Accessible Transportation (complete streets) policy in 2014 at the urging of the Indiana State Department of Health and advocacy groups such as Health by Design.

At the national level, Adventure Cycling is partnering with the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials to develop a national system of bicycle routes that incorporate trails and shared-road bikeways. National Bike Routes #35, #36, and #50 were officially approved in 2015 (see figure 6.5). As all of these positive advances in trails and bikeways continue, the next step will be to overlay the trails facilities with the bikeways facilities and identify critical gaps to fill in this growing statewide system of bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

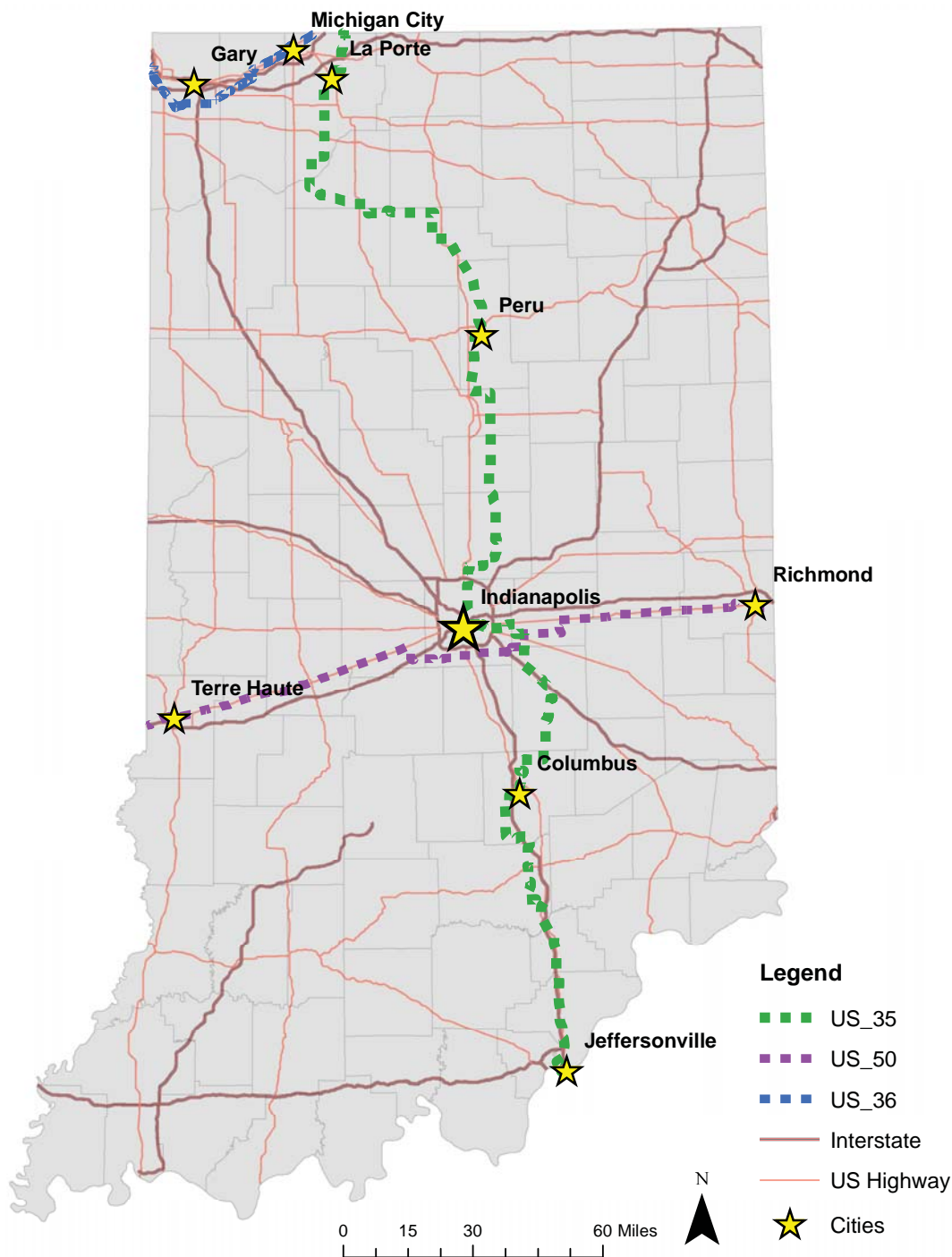
TRAIL-RELATED LEGISLATION

On March 27, 2014, Gov. Mike Pence signed Public Law 219 (IC 14-19-10.3), establishing a Recreational Trail Maintenance Fund (RTMF) for the State of Indiana. No money was allocated for this fund during the legislative session in which it was established. In the 2015 session, several funding bills were proposed but no funding was set aside.

There have been two different potential funding mechanisms considered (and not carried out) so far. The first was a statewide tax on bicycles. The second was a set-aside of a percentage of statewide sales taxes collected on National Trails Day each year. Trail managers/advocates continue to lobby for RTMF funding.

A new law was created in 2015, House Bill 1471, that would establish recreational trails guidelines. This law requires the DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation to develop recreational trails guidelines to address the following issues as they relate to recreational trails: (1) Clear statement of ownership and management of each trail. (2) Right-of-way inconsistencies. (3) The division of responsibility for maintenance of fences, for drainage, and for maintenance of drainage or drain tiles. (4) Tree, weed and brush removal between responsible parties and landowners adjacent to recreational trails. (5) Mowing responsibility. (6) Law enforcement jurisdiction. (7) Signage (8) Conflict resolution procedures. (9) Appeal procedures. (10) Use by public utility facilities. The DNR plans to solicit stakeholder participation in helping to establish these guidelines.

FIGURE 6.5 US Bicycle Routes in Indiana



CURRENT FUNDING SOURCES FOR TRAILS

There are almost as many potential funding sources for trail land acquisition and development as there are types of trail or types of trail user. Hoosiers on the Move, the 2006 Indiana State Trails, Greenways, and Bikeways Plan, discussed at length the history and background

of many State and federal trail-funding sources as well as numerous local options. (See pages 61-66 of Hoosiers on the Move for more details). This trails plan update is going to concentrate on the most immediate and pressing changes, as well as the most current funding sources for trail acquisition and development.

Changes Coming for the Federal Surface Transportation Program Law

One of the largest changes, which is changing again, is the newest surface transportation program law: Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act ("FAST" Act), which replaces the old Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21).

MAP-21, first enacted in 2012, superseded the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). MAP-21 was the umbrella surface transportation program that trail developers will recognize as the source for federal trail-funding sources like the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), which contains multiple programs such as Safe Routes to School, and has a set-aside for state-level Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants. MAP-21 expired in September 2014, but was temporarily extended through December 2015. The new FAST Act was signed into law on December 4, 2015. The act provides \$305 billion in funding from 2016 through 2020 for highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, and rail transportation, as well as research, technology, and statistics programs. The FAST Act provides money for trails, including the RTP program.

The Recreational Trails Program in Indiana

The federal RTP in Indiana received more than \$11.75 million from 2006 to 2015 and funded projects in 44 counties. Those projects not only developed more than 79 miles of mostly bicycle/pedestrian trail, but also included mountain bike, hiking and equestrian trail. Since the inception of the program, more than \$18.3 million has been awarded to Indiana, and 55 counties have benefited, with more than 153 miles of trail developed. The off-road vehicle program has benefited as well. More than 125 miles of motorized-use trail have been made available in two State Recreation Areas—Redbird (17.5 miles) and Interlake (92.5 miles)—and in Lawrence County Park (5 miles).

DNR's RTP Grants are Only a Small Piece of Trail Funding

The RTP grants, as administered by DNR, are a small part of the overall potential funding pool for developing trails in Indiana. For example, in 2015, according to INDOT's Draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for fiscal years 2016-2019, the RTP grants received about \$1.1 million in funding. By comparison, the INDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), as a whole, received more than \$21 million in funding, and the INDOT Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), which also occasionally is used



STATE PARK BIKING



WINTER HIKING

to fund trail projects, received almost \$45 million. (INDOT; 2015 STIP; pg. 29).

Other methods of funding trails in Indiana include, but are not limited to:

- Federal Highway Administration Surface Transportation Program (STP)
- Incorporating Trails into New Road Projects
- Indiana Greenways Foundation Grants
- Indiana Trails Fund (Hoosier Rails to Trails Council)
- Lilly Endowment Grants
- Indiana Bicentennial Nature Trust
- Indiana Heritage Trust
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Indiana Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Fund
- Sponsorships
- Donations
- Local Government Funding Sources, such as:
 - o General Obligation Bonds
 - o County Option Income Tax (COIT)
 - o County Economic Development Income Tax (CEDIT)
 - o Wheel Tax
 - o Tax Increment Finance (TIF)
 - o Trail Impact Fees or Recreation Impact Fees
 - o Public/Private Partnerships

Trails Plan Update Final Conclusions and Recommendations

The ultimate goal of Hoosiers on the Move—a trail within 7.5 miles of all Hoosiers—has virtually been realized. A new goal—having a trail within 5 miles of all Hoosier residents—has been set. In addition, the build-out of the nearly 1,000 miles of the state visionary trails has progressed quickly with the completion of several extensive trail corridors that had already been acquired.

Continued progress toward development of the state visionary trails will require a more strategic approach to fill in gaps and make connections between these trails. Once Indiana completes several of the longest rail-trails in the state, it can boast of having many more destination trails that will enhance tourism, promote healthy lifestyles, and help boost economic development along those corridors and in surrounding communities.