

National Road Heritage Trail (NRHT) Progress in 2006

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January 30, 2007

The cross-Indiana National Road Heritage Trail initiative made good progress in 2006 both on the ground and in planning. Developments included:



- NRHT Development Guide published
- NRHT highlighted in new State Greenways & Bikeways Plan.
- Coca-Cola & Rails-to-Trails Conservancy provided a grant to NRHT, Inc
- Local trail projects expanded facilities and plans in seven Indiana counties and even in one adjacent county in Illinois.

NRHT Development Guide

On March 14, NRHT's consultant, Storrow Kinsella Associates, published the 9-volume NRHT Development Guide, documenting the proposed route of the 150-mile cross-state multi-use trail and providing a blueprint for how to realize it on both the local and state levels. This 14-month, \$100,000 project was produced in cooperation with the Indiana Office of Tourism Development through the Lt. Governor's Quality of Place Initiative and with matching grants from

- Efroymsen Fund (Central Indiana Community Foundation)
- Greenways Foundation
- Central Indiana Bicycling Association Foundation
- Wabash Valley Community Foundation (Vigo County), and
- private donations.

This 9-volume planning document has been distributed to many state agencies, local governments, and citizens' groups along the route as a resource to plan and develop the trail and is available at www.nrht.org.

NRHT in Indiana State Trails Greenways & Bikeways Plan

On April 26, Governor Daniels announced at a press conference at Plainfield's Vandalia Rail-Trail "the state's plan to build a system of trails that will better connect Hoosiers, contribute to the growing ethic of fitness and health, improve quality of life, and for some, provide an alternative means of transportation." This led to the statewide trails summit hosted by INDOT and Indiana DNR on May 30 at which 340 trails enthusiasts & professionals refined the State Trails Plan, drafted by a broad-based steering group. After additional public input, DNR published the Plan in December. (www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/planning)

The Plan includes a map of the state highlighting a group of Priority Visionary Trails along "corridors of national, state or regional importance that connect communities to each other and to natural and cultural resources, to serve as a statewide trails backbone network that can connect to concurrent and future trails-planning efforts." The NRHT is one of these priority trails, therefore local trail projects along this route can highlight this connection when applying for funding or other help.

Coca-Cola North America Grant for NRHT

The national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is directing a series of grants by Coca-Cola North America "to catalyze trail development and maintenance". RTC chose NRHT, Inc as one of 14 organizations around the country to receive a \$5,000 grant as part of this program. Follow the Coca-Cola link at www.railtrails.org for the complete list. The NRHT, Inc board of directors is currently working on a plan to effectively utilize this much appreciated help. It will include a combination of local trails support and overall NRHT promotional activities.



Local Trail Developments & Planning

Along the proposed 150-mile route in Indiana, 23 miles are open to trail users in 7 segments, and 55 miles are highlighted for likely future planning. Following is a brief summary of recent developments and near term plans. For more details or clarifications, visit the local links at www.nrht.org, contact local trails organizations, or contact NRHT, Inc.

Vigo County

The creators of the original National Road Heritage Trail continue to show strong support for trails. The City of Terre Haute has several upgrades of their existing 7.5-mile NRHT working hard to pass the INDOT bid step:

- 0.6 mile extension to Chamberlain Rd and the new Delmar & Betty Jones Trailhead, including wildflower gardens, a shelter, amphitheater, restrooms, overlook area, and ample parking
- Twigg Rest Area upgrade with restroom/storage facility, playground, and shelters
- Several local trails connecting the NRHT with neighborhoods and other parts of the city
- Fairbanks Park connector bringing the NRHT to the City/County Government Complex and to the Wabash River

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute provided several student engineering projects to help plan future expansions, including:

- proposal to connect a subdivision near Rose-Hulman to the NRHT,
- design of a dedicated trail bridge across the Wabash River, capitalizing on a planned pipeline to cross the river, and
- detailed property ownership and condition research along the 38-mile section of Historic National Road from the Indiana-Illinois state line to Greenup, Illinois, documenting the potential for a separated bike path along that corridor. (Commissioned by the Clark County Trails Coalition)

The Vigo County Parks Department has also participated in related planning, working with INDOT to propose a pathway between Terre Haute and West Terre Haute as part of the upgrade of the Wabash River causeway. Moreover, Vigo County Parks established a formal paved entry connection to Hawthorn Park and the National Road Heritage Trail.

Clay County

There were no specific developments or planning activities to report.

Putnam County



The People Pathways not-for-profit assisted the City of Greencastle to obtain a federal Safe Routes to School grant. This grant completed the funding needed to launch the long-planned 2-mile Albin Pond Trail that will connect 4 schools, a nature center, and the existing 3.1-mile NRHT component Greencastle/Fillmore Trail. This will allow planning attention to shift to the 4-mile Campus Link Trail that already has federal (TE) funding and will link the Greencastle/Fillmore Trail to DePauw University and its Nature Park and form the NRHT route across Greencastle.

Hendricks County

The rustic 3-mile NRHT component, Vandalia Trail, connecting the towns of Amo and Coatesville was upgraded to all-weather status for hiking and also opened to off-road bicycles in 2006. This was accomplished by converting the 60-foot long, 30-foot high railroad trestle over Crittenden Creek to a trail bridge with a grant from the Central Indiana Bicycling Association Foundation. Preparations also began to create the equestrian crossing of Crittenden Creek, which should lead to opening the first section of NRHT equestrian trail sometime in 2007.

The Town of Plainfield received federal (TE) funding for extension of their Vandalia Rail-Trail east from Franklin Park across the center of town and connecting back to the former Vandalia Railroad right-of-way. This will be bid in 2007. This section includes the creative reclamation of urban space by enclosing an open drainage ditch with storm sewer pipe and constructing the trail on top. Also, Plainfield's extension of the new Ronald Reagan Parkway north from US 40 will include bike/pedestrian facilities to connect hundreds of homes to the Vandalia/NRHT.

Marion County

The Indianapolis Cultural Trail: A Legacy of Gene & Marilyn Glick made great strides in 2006, led by Andre Lacy, Chairman of LDI, Inc and Brian Payne, President of Central Indiana Community Foundation. Connecting the cultural districts downtown, the Trail will be well-positioned to serve as the future hub of the cross-state NRHT. Fundraising for the 7.5-mile urban trail reached \$34 million of the \$50 million budget. The goal of the 20-member fundraising committee is to raise most of the remaining in 2007. Construction is scheduled to begin in May on a half mile of the Trail along Alabama Street from Market Street to North Street.

Marion County (*continued*)

Indy Greenways and the Town of Cumberland have both entered the land acquisition phase of their respective Pennsy Trail projects that are planned to provide a combined 8-mile paved trail from Irvington into Hancock County.



Hancock County

The Town of Cumberland has completed the design phase and has entered the land acquisition phase for a 2-mile section of the Cumberland Pennsy Trail that abuts the western end of the County.

The city of Greenfield Parks & Recreation Department is exploring extension of its current 3-mile paved Pennsy Trail.

Henry County

The not-for-profit Healthy Communities of Henry County continues to work with Indiana DNR and INDOT on the purchase of a large, single-owner block of parcels that make up much of the 10-mile segment between Knightstown and Lewisville and on utilizing the \$450,000 federal (TE) grant awarded in 2004. Healthy Communities has also made contact with individual private owners of some sections of the corridor and has presented the NRHT Development Guide to several town councils in its ongoing public relations effort to build support and promote the trail.

Wayne County

The Town of Centerville is continuing planning work with INDOT for its first proposed half-mile paved trail along the NRHT route.

Neighboring Activity - Illinois

The Clark County Trails Coalition published its first countywide Trails & Greenways Vision Plan featuring a more than 20-mile cross-county National Road Heritage Trail connecting to Indiana's NRHT at the state line. This year-long effort was funded primarily by the Illinois Dept of Natural Resources and was performed by Storrow Kinsella Associates of Indianapolis. Part of this effort included commissioning a Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology student engineering team to research the 38-mile NRHT route discussed under Vigo County.

Help create even more progress in 2007. Consider volunteering for or donating to a local trail project or the overall NRHT.

See you on the trail!