



# WABASH RIVER GREENWAY

## INDIANA'S RIVER EXPERIENCE IN THE **GREENWAY/ BLUEWAY REGION OF THE GREAT BEND**

West central Indiana is home to the Region of the Great Bend where the Wabash River- having crossed the state heading west from our eastern border with Ohio- turns south along our western border toward Illinois. Carving out its path across the state since the end of the last glaciation, Indiana's River has cut through soil, sand, gravel, and sedimentary bedrock to create wonderfully sculpted outcroppings, and cliffs of sandstone, limestone, and shale. This River Greenway is being planned to allow visitors to experience the exquisite beauty of our *Wabash River Greenway/Blueway Region of the Great Bend*. Upon completion, this greenway will be unique with looped trail routes on both sides of the river and will be enhanced with over 25 water trail access points along its 90 river miles. Ultimately, this destination recreation trail will offer over 350 miles of land routes and 90 miles of water trails on this easily navigated tree lined waterway.

### **Recreation Based Vacations in Indiana are being Expanded within the Region of the Great Bend -**

Soon, one will be able to choose from these destination recreation modes of travel up and down Indiana's River: backpacking, hiking, jogging, biking, canoeing, kayaking, or tubing! Trail Town accommodations already exist and will be expanded to offer camping, bed and breakfast venues and hotels as well as numerous dining venues, all easily accessed from Trail Town connections along the River. Distance challenges will be numerous: the Wabash River Greenway loop routing on both sides of the river corridor with safe bridge crossings will allow hiking and biking loops from 16 miles to century rides- and more for the adventure cyclist.



Splash Bash | Visit Huntington



Portland Arch | Fountain, IN

**Discoveries will amaze visitors with inspiring stone formations in this Region of the Great Bend**

Dive under the Portland Arch where cantilevered stone hangs far overhead; get soaked under a water cascade of ninety feet at Williamsport Falls, and run the Big Pine Creek Class II/Class III Rapids along stone bluffs right into the mighty Wabash. Immerse yourself within dense and varied Wabash River and tributary landscapes: at Prophetstown State Park where restored prairie hosts an abundance of wildlife and fowl; or within the numerous county and city parks fronting the Wabash. Then dive even deeper within over fifty riparian nature preserves with trails providing access through a myriad of habitats featuring sedge meadows, Swanson’s Bluff calcareous seeps, Black Rock’s sandstone and siltstone barrens, Weiler-Leopold’s oak savannas dotted with boulders deposited by glaciers, and forested wetlands along Possum Run, all wonderfully maintained by Niches Land Trust. **Our destination recreation greenway/blueway vacations** will soon provide land and water-based nature experiences with levels of challenge from casual walking to moderate exercise to adventure cycling and water rapids along Indiana’s most significant and continuous natural resource, the mighty Wabash River.

**Immerse Yourself in History and Culture**

Upon completion, the Wabash River Greenway will celebrate the rich and varied history of this early native American transportation corridor and the indigenous tribes that lived here. French fur traders

established trading relations with native American tribes and used the Wabash River as their highway for transporting furs to Europe. In exchange, the native Americans traded furs for guns, ammunition, iron tools, kettles, and wool blankets. Built in 1717, Fort Ouiatenon was the first of three French forts constructed near a Wea Native American village across the river. The Fort is recognized as a significant archaeological site, one of only a few of its type in our country.

Soon Wabash River Greenway signs with QR Codes will link your device to this early Indiana history, the fur trading transport routes and native American culture, crafts and tools, agriculture, and rituals. Visit Prophetstown State park on the Wabash and Tippecanoe Rivers to experience indigenous structures and learn about the many tribes that originated in- and passed through- central Indiana: Wea, Ojibwe, Delaware, Kickapoo, Miami, Ottawa, Potawatomi, Shawnee, Wea, Wyandot, Winnebago, Fox, Sac, Creek and Menominee. This history runs deep and is exemplified at the nearby site of the Battle of Tippecanoe where American troops dealt a serious blow to Tecumseh’s Indian Confederation, which he had organized to stop America’s westward advancement.



Pioneer Village | Delphi, IN

**New Modes of Transportation come to the Region of the Great Bend.**

The Wabash and Erie Canal linked the Great Lakes to the Ohio River via a manmade shipping waterway. The canal provided traders with access from the Great Lakes all the

way to the Gulf of Mexico. Over 460 miles long, it was the longest canal built in North America and during its brief period of successful operations, it spurred growth in river communities up and down the Wabash. Visit Delphi's historic trails and you will be riding and walking on the original towpath for the Wabash and Erie Canal. Enjoy a canal excursion on the "Delphi" canal boat along a restored section of the Wabash & Erie Canal and pay a visit to the Canal Interpretive Center which highlights the infrastructure engineering required to build and operate the canal. Then visit the living history Pioneer Village to witness brooms being made, fabric being woven, and iron being forged. A short walk along the towpath will bring you to the limestone kiln sites on the canal. Delphi was known around the country for its fine lime plaster which was transported via canal, until the arrival of the iron horse (trains) brought about the end of the canal era.

**Indiana's River is best appreciated from the Water.** The Wabash River is Indiana's longest continuous natural resource and hosts a watershed draining more than two-thirds of Indiana. The largest land use in Indiana is farming and, not surprisingly, sediment is the number one river pollutant. Since 2004, the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation has been establishing and maintaining partnerships with the State of Indiana, river and tributary counties, system operators of municipal waste water treatment, parks districts, Niches Land Trust, as well as business and industry interests to improve the health of Indiana's River. Water quality and aquatic habitat improvements are noticeable and well documented via ongoing water monitoring and industry impact oversight. Slip into your watercraft at any of the more than 25 water access ramps and experience first-hand the wildlife and habitats of Indiana's River.

**With over Twenty-five Existing Water Trail Access Points, Come to Indiana to Experience Our Wildness.** The Wabash River, at over 500 river miles, is the natural resource heart of Indiana, providing enormous potential for active living recreation, aesthetic beauty, and sustainable economic development. As the longest free-flowing river east of the Mississippi, it also supports a vast array of species, both in the water and on the land: including 150 species of fish such as the Paddlefish, the oldest surviving animal species in North America and a prehistoric looking species,

the shovel-nosed sturgeon. Its watershed provides habitat for osprey, bald eagles, river otters, and over 100 endangered, threatened, or rare plants and animals. And the likelihood of experiencing wildlife and aquatic life while enjoying the Wabash River Greenway/Blueway is increasing, as river health improves. The Wabash River Enhancement Corporation (WREC) brings together residents, experts, business, industry, and governments into partnerships to improve water quality and expand public access – and their success is measurable. Pollutants are trending downward, aquatic species are rebounding, shovel-nosed sturgeons are reaching maturity, and mussel populations are growing as measures to protect and improve water quality expand up and down the river corridor.



*The Wabash River | Home of Purdue*

**As We Work to Complete the Wabash River Greenway, We invite You to Come to the Region of the Great Bend to:**

- ✔ Experience Our Emerging Wabash River Greenway/Blueway
- ✔ Enjoy a Destination Recreation Vacation
- ✔ Discover our State's Geology carved by the Mighty Wabash
- ✔ Learn about the Rich History and Culture within the Region of the Great Bend
- ✔ See our Abundance of Terrestrial and Aquatic Life in Indiana

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please take this brief community survey focused on engaging the Wabash River within the Greenway corridor.

[TAKE THE SURVEY!](#)

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## JOIN US FOR A PUBLIC WORKSHOP!

Have more to say about the Greenway than is captured in the survey? Join us for a public workshop to voice your opinion and engage in planning activities. Your input is valuable to us, keep an eye out for more detail in the next newsletter!

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