



August 2014

MOUNDS GREENWAY – WHITE RIVER CONSERVATION AREA

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION TO ACCOMPANY CONCEPTUAL PLAN MAPS

About the Mounds Greenway project

The project will protect the free-flowing West Fork White River between Anderson and Muncie by establishing a greenway along both shorelines of the river. The greenway will maintain existing natural areas and historic sites along the river, and provide recreation opportunities consisting of trails, river access points, picnic areas, and other outdoor amenities. A major feature of the greenway will be a hiking/biking trail that runs the entire length of the greenway from Anderson to Muncie.

The greenway will complement and be compatible with existing public outdoor lands, including Mounds State Park, Rangeline Preserve, Walbridge Acres Park, and other facilities.

The greenway will be acquired and managed by a public/private partnership, with state, local and federal government roles to be determined. A variety of acquisition and easement programs at the state and federal level, along with private donors, would provide funding for the greenway. Non-profit organizations including land trusts and trail conservancies may partner in the greenway project.

Land for the greenway and conservation area will be acquired through fee simple acquisition or conservation easements, from willing sellers only. No eminent domain will be utilized.

Following are more specific descriptions of the greenway's attributes and benefits.

Natural resource conservation and restoration

The greenway will consist of a protected corridor along the river, generally corresponding to the river's floodway, an area of roughly 2,300 acres. The greenway will protect the existing natural communities along the river between Anderson and Muncie, including floodplain forest, upland forest and wetlands. The river will be maintained as a free-flowing, natural river ecosystem which supports native warmwater aquatic life. The wooded shoreline will provide habitat for both aquatic and terrestrial species.

The greenway will identify and protect sensitive ecological areas within its boundaries.

The greenway will seek to restore floodplain forest and wetlands on sites where these natural communities formerly existed. Invasive species will be removed/controlled as warranted.

Environmental protection and restoration

Protection of the West Fork White River's aquatic and riparian environments will be a primary goal of the project. Conservation and restoration of floodplain forests will reduce the amount of sediment and other runoff entering the river, and contribute to maintenance of healthy water temperatures and dissolved oxygen levels.

Protection and restoration of wetlands will help filter polluted runoff before it reaches the river, and also provide groundwater recharge areas that help maintain a productive aquifer and regional water supply.

The greenway will protect scenic viewsheds along the river.

Outdoor recreation, tourism, and sustainable economic development

The greenway will provide robust recreational opportunities, including trail hiking and trail biking, canoeing and kayaking, fishing, picnicking, wildlife observation and nature photography.

The main trail traversing the length of the greenway will be a multi-use hiking and bicycling trail – covering a distance of just over 13 miles from Rangeline Preserve to Muncie. Trailheads, parking areas and restrooms will be sited using best practices for such facilities. Trailheads will be located at each end of the greenway, and at appropriate locations along the trail's length including the Towns of Daleville, Chesterfield and Yorktown. River access sites will also be located at appropriate locations within the greenway.

New trails for mountain biking and/or horseback riding will be considered if they can be constructed and maintained in a sustainable condition, and as long as they do not conflict with the conservation purposes of the greenway.

Modern campgrounds and picnic areas may be constructed in the greenway, and be sited using best practices for such facilities.

Nature observation platforms or areas will be located on a site specific basis, using best practices for such facilities.

The greenway will provide tourism attractions besides outdoor recreation. The greenway will identify, protect and interpret cultural and historic sites in and nearby the greenway, such as mills, roads, bridges, canals, and Native American sites. An interpretive center, located at the Rangeline Preserve and focusing on the Upper White River watershed will provide learning opportunities for both adults and children. In all, families will find a wide variety of leisure and educational opportunities in the greenway.

Outdoor recreation enthusiasts and other visitors rely on private enterprise to support their activities. Restaurants, brewpubs, coffee shops, and wine bars are highly valued by visitors and local residents after a day on the trail or the river, as is lodging such as hotels and bed and breakfast providers. Outfitters and equipment shops provide canoes, kayaks, bicycles, fishing tackle and other outdoor gear that visitors rely on.

Communities along the river – Anderson, Daleville, Chesterfield, Yorktown and Muncie – may choose to redevelop their riverside areas into “villages” in harmony with the greenway environment where visitors can find the shops, restaurants and other attractions that add value to their visit to the greenway, as well as adding economic value to the local community.

Local nature-related public art projects will be encouraged for the riverside villages, and art festivals and other events may take place in the riverside communities.

The greenway will complement existing recreation, tourism and cultural sites along the river, including Canoe Country outfitters, Timberline Valley RV Resort, and Camp Chesterfield.

The greenway will substantially enhance the region’s quality of life, making it a more appealing place to live and work.

Connectivity

The greenway will connect existing local parks and trails, and Mounds State Park, with each other. On the western end, the greenway will connect with Anderson city parks’ Rangeline Preserve, and the city’s White River trails which connect to Shadyside Park and the west side of Anderson. Along its route, the greenway will connect with Walbridge Acres Park in Chesterfield, David Shellabarger Park in Daleville and Lion’s Club Park in Yorktown, and Mounds State Park. At its eastern boundary, the greenway will connect with Muncie’s White River Greenway, and via this trail connect with the Cardinal Greenway, a 62 mile trail system.

The greenway will offer opportunities for hiking/biking trail connections to other local parks and attractions via abandoned railroad corridors and/or along existing roads and streets.

River recognition opportunities

The West Fork White River is designated an Outstanding River of Indiana, and is recognized as an Indiana Canoeing Trail. An effort is currently underway to have this stretch of the White River designated as a *Blue Trail*, a recognition that is granted by American Rivers.

Additional recognition opportunities could be pursued in conjunction with the greenway project, including: National Wild and Scenic River designation, National Water Trail system designation, and Indiana Natural, Scenic, and Recreational River designation.

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