



Transportation Times

Adams-Allen-DeKalb-Wells

N Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council

Mike Ley
*City of Auburn
DeKalb County*

Chris Cloud
Allen County

I **Richard Ring**
DeKalb County

Kenneth Fries
Allen County

Donald Grogg
DeKalb County

Gene Donaghy
*Governor's
Appointee*

R **Dan Rickord**
*City of Decatur
Adams County*

Kevin Woodward
Wells County

Larry Macklin
Adams County

Dennis Bluhm
Adams County

C **Paul Spoelhof**
*City of Fort Wayne
Representative
Allen County*

John Whicker
*City of Bluffton
Wells County*

Greg Peck
Allen County

William Hartman
Allen County

C **Todd Mahnensmith**
Wells County



United Trail Wayfinding Signs Are Going Up!

2019 marked the first year new wayfinding signs from the United Trails Brand and Wayfinding Signage Guidelines were installed. The City of Auburn was the first to install the new wayfinding signs along sections of the Poka-Bache Connector which is the State Priority Trail that will eventually connect Pokagon State Park near Angola to Ouabache State Park near Bluffton. The sections of trail that these signs were installed along in Auburn and DeKalb County included



parts of the Poka-Bache Connector that runs along the Pufferbelly Trail in Auburn, the Rieke Park Trail in Auburn, and the Auburn-Waterloo Trail. A total of 13 signs were installed with one of them being installed in DeKalb County at the newly built Auburn-Waterloo Trailhead located across from DeKalb High School. The project was sponsored by the Auburn Waterloo Trail steering committee with help from the City of Auburn and the Auburn Parks and Recreation Department. NIRCC provided assistance as well by producing the sign designs needed for the project

In This Issue

- United Trail Wayfinding.....pg 1,8-9
- Community Development.....pg 2-7
- Leo-Cedarville Water Qlty Proj...pg 2-4
- Great Lakes Restoration Grant...pg 4-6
- Stellar Project Updates.....pg 6-7
- 2020 Community Crossings.....pg 7

(Continued on page 8)

U

Urban Transportation Advisory Board

Kenneth Fries

Allen County Council

Patrick Zaharako

Fort Wayne Traffic Engineering

Shan Gunawardena

Fort Wayne Board of Public Works

Renee Fishering

Allen County Plan Commission

T

Jason Kaiser

INDOT

Judi Wire

Fort Wayne Plan Commission

Sherese Fortriede

Fort Wayne Public Transportation Corp. (Citilink)

Therese Brown

Allen County Commissioner

A

Paul Spoelhof

Fort Wayne Representative

Scott Hinderman

Fort Wayne/Allen County Airport Authority

Mayor Steve McMichael

New Haven

William Hartman

Allen County Highway Director

Jay Mitchell

INDOT (Non-voting members)

B

Erica Tait

Federal Highway Administration (Non-voting member)

Community Development Updates



Did you know that NIRCC is available to assist communities within Adams, Allen, DeKalb, and Wells Counties with community and economic development activities? We can assist communities with projects receiving funding through a myriad of sources such as grants and loans from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), the State Revolving Fund (SRF), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other State, Federal, and private programs. The NIRCC community development team has the capabilities to assist with project development and to provide grant writing, grant administration, and labor standards administration services. Information regarding available funding opportunities and the community development services provided by the NIRCC community development team is available by contacting Matt Vondran at Matt.Vondran@co.allen.in.us, Kristine Christlieb at Kristine.Christlieb@co.allen.in.us, Kyle Quandt at kyle.quandt@co.allen.in.us, or calling (260) 449-7309.

The NIRCC community development team has been working on a number of projects recently. The following gives a little information about a few of the projects that have been worked on:

Leo-Cedarville Goose Deterrent – Water Quality Project 2020

The Leo-Cedarville Parks and Recreation Department, in partnership with the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative (Initiative) recently implemented a train of water quality improvement projects at Riverside Gardens, a nine-acre park along the banks of the Cedarville Reservoir. In July 2020 a rain garden, vegetated swale, and goose deterrent project at the park's retention pond were installed to showcase how installing these beautiful practices will attract pollinators, improve access to the pond, and improve water quality in the adjacent Cedarville Reservoir.

In 2004, the Initiative published the results of a three-year study looking into the source of bacteria contamination in the St. Joseph River. This study



identified geese to be the second highest contributor, humans being the first. Therefore, the Initiative provided funds to Leo-Cedarville to implement water quality improvement practices with the intent of highlighting the goose deterrent practice to area developers.

So, how does a goose deterrent practice work? Careful use of deep rooted native grasses and flowers placed around the pond provide an unfavorable environment for the geese as they cannot see potential predators that may be hiding in the tall vegetation. For this reason geese will not land at the pond but rather move on to a more conducive environment for their foraging and nesting habitat.



Ex. from Lakeside Park, Ft Wayne

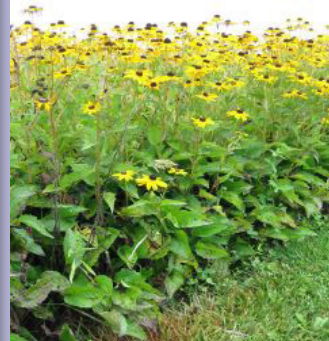


Earth Source, Inc, a local business specializing in natural designs, began the project in July by removing weeds, and installing native vegetation plugs at the pond, rain garden and vegetated swale. Large limestone rocks were placed in

two areas around the pond to allow for observation areas for park users. Fast forward to November 2020 and the system is a success. The geese have moved on from the park which will reduce the need for extreme maintenance measures, has created a pristine park experience for park users, and will improve water quality.



Interpretive signage will be installed in the spring to educate the public on “green infrastructure” practices and how they can help improve water quality.



This project was funded wholly by a Clean Water Act Section 319 grant through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management awarded to the St.

Joseph River Watershed Initiative and administered by the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council to implement natural water quality management practices in critical areas outlined in the Lower St. Joseph River – Bear Creek Watershed Management Plan. The Initiative has cost-share funds available for other municipalities, businesses, and private landowners to implement best management practices in the watershed. If you are interested in taking advantage of the cost-share program which is available through December 2021 contact Kyle, NIRCC’s Environmental Planner at kyle.quandt@co.allen.in.us.



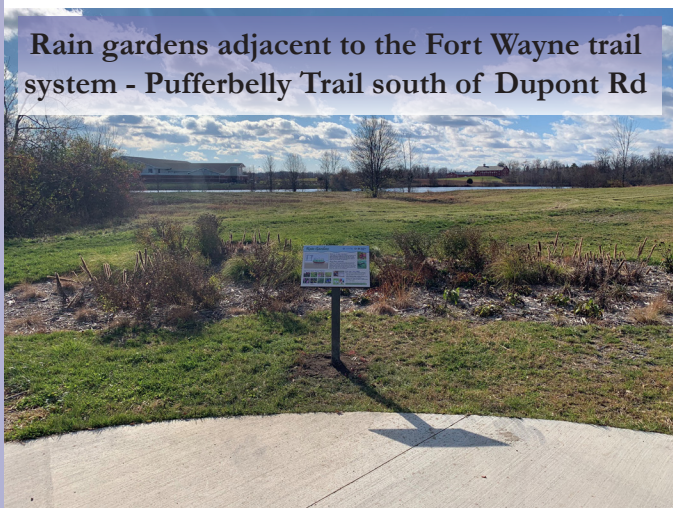
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant a Huge Success in Fort Wayne

The Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) received a \$367,438 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant award from the US Environmental Protection Agency in September 2017 to implement the Maumee River Basin: Urban Pollution Management and Education Program to improve water quality. With an urban focus, the projects funded by this grant have had a huge impact on water quality in our city’s rivers!

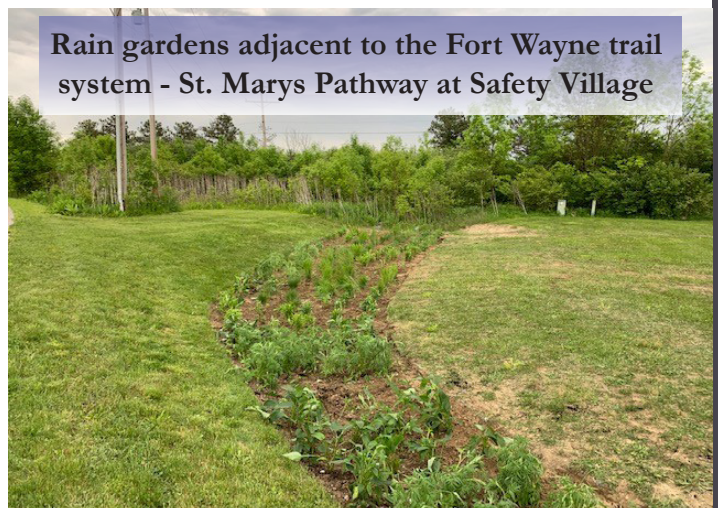
Through the GLRI grant, NIRCC was able to provide assistance to install the following green infrastructure practices which together will prevent over 1.3 million gallons of stormwater carrying various pollutants including oil, road salt, fertilizer, and other sediments from entering our rivers annually.



Pervious pavement at the Summit Park Trailhead on Ludwig Rd west of Lima Rd



Rain gardens adjacent to the Fort Wayne trail system - Pufferbelly Trail south of Dupont Rd



Rain gardens adjacent to the Fort Wayne trail system - St. Marys Pathway at Safety Village



Rain gardens adjacent to the Fort Wayne trail system - River Greenway Trailhead at N. River Rd



Rain gardens adjacent to the Fort Wayne trail system - Poka-Bache Connector trail at the entrance to the Southwest Conservation Club



Rain gardens adjacent to the Fort Wayne trail system - Renaissance Pointe Trail connector at Ivan Lebamoff Reservoir Park



Bioswales at Promenade Park



Streambank Stabilization on the St. Marys River at Bloomingdale Park



Spy Run Creek restoration at Franke Park

In addition to providing direct improvements to water quality in our rivers, the project funded several events to inspire behavior changes of residents within the Maumee River watershed to reduce their impact on water quality. Events included rain barrel workshops, ecology tours on the river, presentations at schools, summer camps, and festivals, Hoosier Riverwatch water quality monitoring training, river clean-ups, and more. Through this

outreach, the project was able to have a direct impact on nearly 7,000 Fort Wayne residents.

Kyle Quandt, Planner with NIRCC and the GLRI grant's Project Manager stated "the huge impact this project was able to have in the community is a result of the hard work of our amazing partners who are committed to improving the health of our river ecosystem and our community". Partners on the Maumee River Basin: Urban Pollution Management and Education Program include the Fort Wayne Public Works: Greenways and Trails, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation, Southwest Conservation Club, and the Maumee Watershed Alliance.

If you are interested in learning more about the GLRI project contact Kyle Quandt at kyle.quandt@co.allen.in.us.

Stellar Project Updates

The Towns of Leo-Cedarville and Grabill, along with five other communities, partnered with the NewAllen Alliance in 2018 to apply for - and achieve the coveted regional Stellar designation. Goals and objectives outlined in the NewAllen Alliance East Allen's Rural Revival Plan (EARRP) were designed to help create vibrant downtowns and address quality of life deficits in outlying communities located in east Allen County. The following projects described are both Stellar Designated projects.

Town of Leo-Cedarville Streetscape Improvements:

NIRCC staff assisted the Town of Leo-Cedarville with applying for a \$750,000 grant offered through the Stellar Communities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Main Street Revitalization Program, which is administered through the Indiana Office of Rural and Community Affairs (IOCRA). The streetscape improvement project will provide ADA compliant ramps and sidewalks, repave streets with crosswalks and regulatory signage, new thematic lighting, planter boxes, drainage upgrades, and development of a centrally located gathering area in the heart of the downtown. These improvements include a two-block section along Center Street (SR 1/Leo Road) from the corner of Walnut Street to Hosler Road. The total budget estimate including local contribution for streetscape improvements is \$1,250,157. The overall focus is to

provide safe and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, increase public awareness, and foster business growth in the downtown. This project is intended to be a first phase of a longer-term investment to provide the necessary infrastructure to expand upon in future phases. The complete downtown master plan calls for a new pocket park along the trail system, side-street parking, and a public overlook at the reservoir. When combined, the sum of these future improvements will serve to improve the overall downtown experience.

The Leo-Cedarville Main Street Revitalization Program (MSRP) application was submitted in November 2019, and a grant award announcement was received from IOCRA in January 2020. Construction improvements on the east side of Center Street (SR 1/Leo Road) were completed in December 2020, and roadway resurfacing along with sidewalk improvements with a gathering area along the west Center Street (SR 1/Leo Road) will be completed in Spring 2021. NIRCC planners have also conducted labor standards and grant administration services following the official award notification and will continue throughout project completion and grant closeout.

Town of Grabill Streetscape Improvements:

In 2020, NIRCC planners had assisted the Town of Grabill with grant writing assistance for a streetscape improvement project through the Stellar Communities Program, which also led to a successful grant award of \$750,000 from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (IOCRA) in January 2021. The Grabill streetscape improvement project will comprise of a portion of Grabill Road/State Street along the corner block of the Country Shoppes, and south from the intersection of Grabill Road/Main Street to the intersection of First Street. The purpose of these improvements is to enhance Downtown Grabill with new streetscapes and lighting for improved pedestrian safety, and new accessible sidewalks to meet ADA guidelines to offer ease of access to multiple downtown businesses. The streetscape project will also include upgrades to the storm sewer and water system to improve utility service and safeguard surface-level improvements. These actions are necessary to protect critical public infrastructure in the downtown while keeping Grabill's rich and rustic history intact.

The total project budget is estimated at \$932,400 with a local investment of \$182,400. NIRCC Planners will continue to assist Grabill with grant administration services throughout the construction phase and project completion. Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in the summer of 2021.

2020 Community Crossings Grant Recipients



On December 8th Governor Holcomb and INDOT Commissioner McGuinness announced the Indiana cities, towns and counties that received in state-matching funds for local road projects through the Next Level

Roads: Community Crossings Initiative. Congratulations to the following grant recipients:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| - Allen County | - City of Auburn |
| - City of Berne | - Adams County |
| - City of Bluffton | - City of Butler |
| - DeKalb County | - Town of Hometown |
| - Town of Markle | - Town of Monroe |
| - City of New Haven | - Town of Ossian |
| - Town of Uniondale | - Wells County |
| - City of Woodburn | |

Launched in 2016, the Community Crossings Matching Grant Program provides funding to cities, towns, and counties across Indiana to make improvements to local roads and bridges. Community Crossings is a partnership between INDOT and Hoosier communities, both urban and rural, to invest in infrastructure projects that catalyze economic development, create jobs, and strengthen local transportation networks. State lawmakers identified long-term funding for Community Crossings as part of House Enrolled Act 1002, passed by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Holcomb in April 2017.

Projects that are eligible for funding through Community Crossings include road resurfacing and preservation, bridge rehabilitation or replacement, road

reconstruction with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance in connection with a road project. Material costs for chip sealing and crack filing operations are also eligible for funding.

Projects submitted to INDOT for funding will be evaluated based on need, traffic volume, local support, impact on connectivity and mobility within the community and regional economic significance. Community Crossings is open to all local government units in the State of Indiana.

- Cities and towns with a population of fewer than 10,000 will receive funds using a 75/25% match
- Cities and towns with a population of greater than 10,000 will receive funds using a 50/50% match
- Counties with a population of fewer than 50,000 people will receive funds using a 75/25% match
- Counties with a population of greater than 50,000 people will receive funds using a 50/50% match

Here are the funding awards for communities in Northeast Indiana:

- Allen County was awarded \$20,058.75, previously (May 2020) received \$979,941.25
- The City of Auburn received \$471,638.50
- The City of Berne and Adams County received \$450,000
- The City of Bluffton received \$444,854.25
- The City of Butler received \$244,482.20
- DeKalb County received \$1,000,000
- The Town of Hometown received \$728,177.79
- The Town of Markle received \$637,425
- The Town of Monroe received \$15,405
- The City of New Haven received \$765,890.79
- The Town of Ossian received \$598,600.50
- The Town of Uniondale received \$15,000
- Wells County received \$479,646.75 previously (May 2020) received \$849,917.06
- The City of Woodburn received \$497,928

United Trail Wayfinding Signs Continued...

and the City of Fort Wayne's Traffic Operations Department produced the signs at cost for the project.



(Picture below is from KPC News and Jeff Jones: Partners in the project pictured from left to right: Sarah Payne of DeKalb Health; Dick Shankle, president of the Auburn Waterloo steering committee; Ken Wilcoxson of the Auburn Kiwanis; Bill Spohn, project coordinator of the Auburn Waterloo Trail steering committee; Eric Ditmars, Superintendent, Auburn Parks and Recreation Department; Zach Lightner of the Community Foundation of DeKalb County; and Matt Peters of the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council.)



More recently, Fort Wayne and Allen County installed wayfinding signs along the Pufferbelly Trail (part of the Poka-Bache Connector) from the trailhead at Life Bridge Church to Washington Center Rd. By June of 2020, the City of Fort Wayne installed 19 of these wayfinding signs and Allen County installed an additional 4 locations just outside the City limits. There were also 6 locations where trailhead parking signs were installed so motorists could easily determine where trailhead locations were for parking.



The City of Fort Wayne also installed 11 more wayfinding signs in December 2020 along with 4 additional trailhead parking signs. These signs were installed along the Pufferbelly Trail (part of the Poka-Bache Connector) from Fernhill Ave to 4th St near the Saint Mary's River. This section of the Pufferbelly Trail was just finished with the completion of the new pedestrian bridge over State Blvd. This project is the first phase of wayfinding signs along this section. An additional 13 wayfinding signs will be installed along this section of the Pufferbelly Trail in 2021 as well.

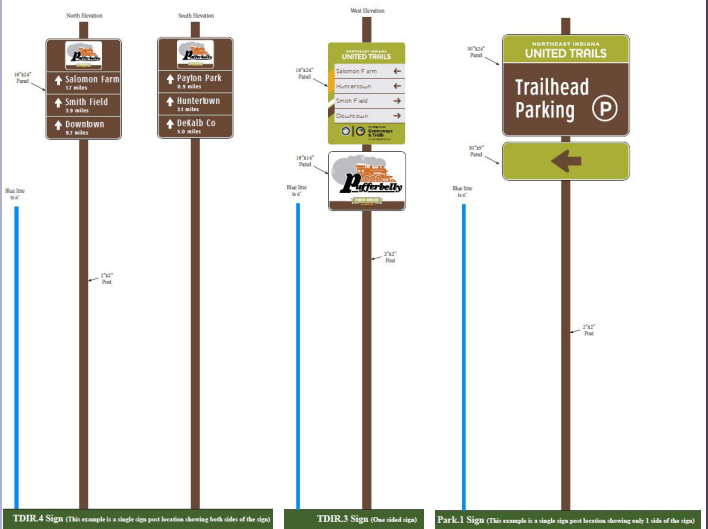
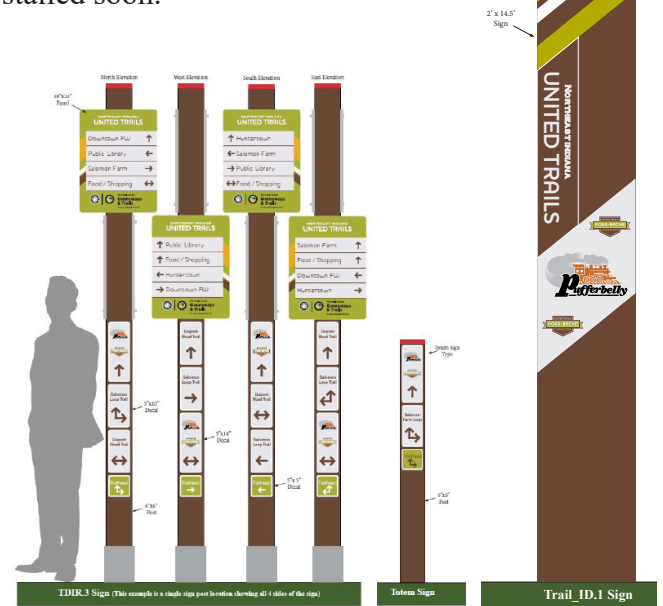
NIRCC has also been meeting with other trail groups and municipalities around the region who are interested in adding the United Trail wayfinding signs to their existing and planned trails. Trails within the United Trails Plan area, see the United Trails Plan on www.nircc.com under "Bicycle and Pedestrian" planning (or click [United Trails Plan](#)), have the option of utilizing NIRCC to help design the signs needed which can then be made at cost through an agreement NIRCC has with the City of Fort Wayne's Traffic Operations Department.



The United Trails system covers 12 counties in Northeast Indiana. NIRCC, who also partnered with Region 3A Development & Regional Planning Commission, contracted with the consultant Merje to produce a wayfinding and signage guidelines manual and a brand for the trail system to help create a regional trail network that would be marketable and identifiable to people everywhere. Through this process back in 2016 and 2017, the regional trail system for Northeast Indiana became the Northeast Indiana United Trails and the brand and wayfinding signage manual was created. The signage and wayfinding guidelines provide that resource which creates a consistent and recognizable trail system throughout our region. The United Trails Brand and Wayfinding Signage Guidelines for Northeast Indiana is available for download on our website at <https://www.nircc.com/bicycle--pedestrian.html> or just click [HERE](#) for a direct link to the document.

As these signs have begun to be installed there have been some slight modifications compared to what's in the sign guidelines manual. For more information be

sure to contact NIRCC for the most current designs and sign types available. Below are the basic sign types that have either been installed already or will be installed soon.



If you would like to make a request or have additional questions, please contact Matt Peters with NIRCC by email (matt.peters@co.allen.in.us) or phone (260-449-7309). Also, check out our website at www.nircc.com.

NIRCC

200 East Berry Street Suite 230
Fort Wayne, IN 46802-2735

www.nircc.com

Telephone: (260) 449-7309
Fax: (260) 449-8652