

# Metamora Canal Trail section opens

By John Estridge  
Editor

The Whitewater Canal State Historic Site is predicated on transportation.

Visitors to the most-visited state historic site in Indiana have the choice between riding a canal boat and riding a train.

Now they have another choice

They can take a leisurely three-mile stroll along the newest section of the Whitewater Canal Trail.

About 100 people came to Metamora at noon Saturday, Oct. 15, to cut the ribbon on the newest section of the Whitewater Canal Trail.

When completed, the trail will stretch from Metamora to Brookville along the Whitewater Canal.

"On the right-hand side is the river and on the north side is the canal," Mick Wilz, the founder of the Whitewater Canal Trail Association, said in his opening remarks.

In the spring, the first section, one mile in length, was opened near Yellow Bank.

Wilz has labored at opening the



John Estridge photo

Adjoining property owners cut the ribbon on the second section of the Whitewater Canal Trail to be opened. The ribbon cutting took place in Metamora on Saturday, Oct. 15. Among the landowners are: Tom and Cathy Deters, Jack and Lura Allen, John and Inez Kolb, Gary Holden, Jim and Mary Lou Hertel, James and Joyce Cox and George Ginther.

trail for several years.

He said this section has become very special to him.

"This portion of the trail has a personality and it's a female personality," Wilz said. "I tell my wife (Jenny) when I'm coming here to work on the trail, that I'm going to Metamora to see my girlfriend."

The trail would not be possible without the help of adjacent landowners. Thus, adjacent landowners were the ones cutting the ribbon, releasing the first set of hikers along the trail.

According to Wilz, to get the full three miles, one must start at the grist mill. However, the trail head is situated at the Duck Creek

Aqueduct parking lot. The distance from the trail head to the end of the section is 2.6 miles.

There are many significant historic structures along the newly opened section beginning with the grist mill if one starts there. The grist mill is still operational and still grinds mill for sale to tourists. The other starting point is also historic. Duck Creek Aqueduct is the only working covered bridge aqueduct in North America.

After leaving the trail head, the first structure on the canal is the newly restored Lock 24.

Milepost 51 is next. While the canal boats were around during the  
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1840s and 1850s, the railroads were around for more than a century.

The railroad was built on the canal's towpath.

Mileposts listed the distance from Cincinnati.

It is this section of the trail that Wilz did not like at one time.

"I called it the ugly section," Wilz said.

But through his time working on the trail, his perspective has changed.

He said to stand and turn a 360. There, one is in the middle of the Whitewater Valley

And this time of the year, the surrounding hills are ablaze in the colors of autumn.

Milepost 50 marks the end of the tracks. While in historic times the tracks continued, it is now the end of the tracks maintained by the Whitewater Valley Scenic Railroad.

It also marks the entrance of the trail into a young woods.

The woods have grown since the early 1970s when the train stopped running along the tracks.

Beavers have left their marks on some of the trees, and there is a variety of animal and birds that inhabit the area.

As the trail and the river grow closer, there is a river overlook.

The overlook is located near the site of the Good Luck Fishing Camp. Always a good place for fishing, it was a railroad stop during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

A private campground borders the trail for a quarter mile. The view also shows an attempt at erosion control when years ago property owners placed old vehicles in the bank.

A residence marks one's leaving of the woods. In the

front yard of the residence is Indiana state record shellbark hickory tree. The tree is on private property.

About 500 feet past the state record hickory tree is the twin locks.

Locks 22 and 23 are merely 500 feet apart. Usually locks are one to three miles in distance from each other.

That is the end of the current trail section.

Wilz said a \$150,000 grant will be used next year to pave the trail sections. That will make them Americans with Disability Act compliant.

Matching funds are needed, and there is always a need for volunteers to work at opening more trail sections.

If anyone is interested please e-mail at [canaltrail@brookville47012.com](mailto:canaltrail@brookville47012.com) or visit the website at [www.whitewatercanaltrail.com](http://www.whitewatercanaltrail.com).

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