



Milemarker

Newsletter of the Whitewater Canal Trail: March, 2006



A group of the Canal Trail's neighboring property owners attended the opening of the section of the trail from Metamora to the Twin Locks. Inez Kolb, center, prepares to cut the ribbon.

Trail opened October 15

The Metamora to Twin Locks section of the Canal Trail was opened with a wonderful celebration on October 15, 2005. The event was attended by state and local officials, trail supporters from around the state, and quite a number of enthusiastic Franklin County residents.

One of the highlights of the opening ceremony was a gathering of the people who own property along the route of the Canal Trail. Many of them have been a great help in getting the trail started, so it seemed appropriate have them participate in the cutting of the ribbon.

This section of the trail is 2.6 miles long. It is great exercise for those looking for a pleasant walk, run or bike ride. The scenery and bird-watching are first-rate for the nature enthusiast, and the trail includes some of the most important structures of the historic Whitewater Canal. See page 3 for more news and photos from the opening.

Canal Trail Corn Maze ?

WCT is thinking about building a corn maze that would be built in a field east of Metamora and open on October weekends. The goal is to increase awareness of the Canal Trail and attract more visitors to the trail and to Metamora.

We would like the corn maze to benefit our community, so WCT hopes to partner with other local not-for-profit groups in operating the maze in exchange for part of the revenues.

We are also looking for volunteers who are interested in the design, construction and promotion of the corn maze. If you would like to help on this project, or know of a group that would like to work on it, please let us know.

Canal Trail receives award from United Way

WCT recently received a donation from United Way of Franklin County. The donation of \$4571.80 is important for several reasons.

First, it will enable WCT to create a wildlife habitat area and nature trail near Yellow Bank Rd. This project has been in our plans since the beginning, and this contribution will finally make it possible. Second, it is an honor for the Canal Trail to be recognized by the United Way as a project that helps to fulfill the UW mission to "support programs that secure a positive future for our community." It is good to know that the United Way considers the trail project to be an important community asset. Third, this contribution consists of funds raised through student collections at schools throughout the county. In addition to contributing to the project, a number of students have expressed an interest in helping to build the habitat area, so WCT will also get some new volunteers as a result of this contribution.

The habitat area will be built between the trail and US 52, starting at the Yellow Bank Trailhead. The objective of the project is to plant the area with as many native species as possible, and to create habitat for wildlife ranging from butterflies to birds.

Designing, building and maintaining this habitat area will be an important focus for WCT in 2006. If you're interested in working on the habitat, please join in. Experience is welcome but not necessary—you can help and learn at the same time. See the volunteer information on page 4.



Donna Williams of Franklin County United Way presents a check to WCT President Mick Wilz

Preparing the Habitat Area at Yellow Bank



Terry Duffy installs a bluebird nest box along the edge of the proposed habitat restoration area. Soon the area will be home to many new plants and animals

Several people have asked about the Canal Trail's focus on "native plant species". The simple answer is that areas with native plants belong here, and they generally make better homes for a variety of wildlife.

Along the trail corridor, there are many areas where native plant communities have been changed or eliminated by other plants that have been introduced over the last 200 years. Some of our most common weeds, like the dandelion, broad-leafed plantain, and chickweed were brought by the early settlers as herbal remedies or food plants. (We all know that these plants are just about everywhere now. But did you know that as far back as the 1700s, the broad leaf plantain was known by native Americans as the "white man's footprint" because it spread so easily that it infested all the trails where the white man traveled?)

Other plants, like honeysuckle, periwinkle, and autumn olive and multiflora rose, were intentionally introduced for landscaping

or erosion control, but turned out to be very difficult to manage and have gotten out of control in many areas. Still other plants, like Canada thistle and garlic mustard, were accidentally introduced in imported hay, plants or seeds.

Some of these plants are so troublesome that they are considered to be "invasive". They reproduce rapidly and can sometimes completely take over an area. They not only eliminate many plant species, they also lead to a loss of habitat for many wildlife species. For example, bush honeysuckle was introduced as a landscape shrub—it looks nice, has flowers that smell great and has attractive red berries. But when it gets near a wooded area it can completely take over. It shades out wildflowers, keeps new trees from growing and isn't even a good place for birds to nest.

So, as we develop the areas along the Canal Trail, we will work to manage or eliminate areas that are infested with invasive species. We will focus on planting flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees that are native to Indiana. In a few years, this area will literally be a wildflower garden, with sunflowers, blazing-stars, milkweeds, big Bluestem and Indian grasses, and others.

This area and other areas along the trail will be maintained in "early successional vegetation". These plants will in turn provide food and shelter a variety of plants and animals. This type of habitat is not as common as it used to be, but it is necessary for several species of birds, the Bob-white quail in particular. We will also build a nestbox "trail" as part of this project—providing homes for bluebirds, tree swallows and more.

Funding for this habitat restoration comes from the United Way and the Salt Creek Nature Fund of the Franklin County Community Foundation. If you would like to help out with any part this project, take a look at the volunteer opportunities listed on page 4.

WCT: Working to Preserve Stone Aqueduct



Mick Wilz and bridge expert Dr. James Cooper examine the hole in the Butler Run Aqueduct and discuss steps toward temporary repairs and possible restoration.

At the north end of Brookville there is an old stone-arch aqueduct that was part of the Whitewater Canal. The aqueduct crosses Butler Run and is 90 feet wide. To get to Brookville, the Canal Trail will cross the aqueduct.

Unfortunately, there is a hole in the stone arch. This very important structure is deteriorating, and is in danger of eventual collapse.

WCT hopes to stabilize the arch with temporary supports and plan a permanent restoration. We have permission to do temporary repairs, and we have enlisted the support of one of Indiana's foremost bridge experts, Dr. James Cooper.

We are putting together a group to focus on saving the aqueduct. We need funding and a variety of skills and equipment to succeed in saving this hidden treasure of Franklin County's history. Please let us know if there is any way you can help.

News & Views from October 15 Trail Opening



Photos—Clockwise from upper left:

- WCT board member Thad Ariens presents a commemorative walking stick, and thanks Mary Lou Hertel for her volunteer efforts in caring for the Yellow Bank Trailhead .

- Inez Kolb cuts the ribbon to formally open the 2.6 mile trail from Metamora to the Twin Locks

- The rear view mirror perspective from Tracy Chapelow.

- New gates and fence near Park Road will help make sure only hikers and bicyclists use the trail. The scenery of the Whitewater River Valley is in the background.

- Some of the first trail users included (r to l) Mel Wilhelm, Jenny Wilz and Carla Austin. Mel is the Franklin County Prosecutor and he has provided a lot of help to the trail through his office's Pre-trail Diversion Program.



Join the Crew—Two ways you can Become a Friend of the Whitewater Canal

A successful trip on a canal boat required support and cooperation of the entire crew. Would you like to be part of the “crew” of the Whitewater Canal Trail? You can support the trail as a:

DRIVER: A canal boat was pulled along the canal by horses or mules. Drivers (also called “Hoggies”) were responsible for making sure the horses moved along at the proper speed.

STEERSMAN: The steersman (also called a “Tripper”) used the canal boat’s rudder to keep the boat in the middle of the canal.

CAPTAIN: The captain was leader on the canal boat. The captain was responsible for the boat, its passengers and cargo, and for staying on schedule.

YES—I WILL SUPPORT THE CANAL TRAIL

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL _____

PHONE _____

- \$25 DRIVER (HOGGIE) level
- \$50 STEERSMAN (TRIPPER) level
- \$100 CAPTAIN level
- Additional gift: \$ _____
- Send me a 2006 window decal

MAIL TO:
WHITEWATER CANAL TRAIL, INC.
P.O. BOX 126
BROOKVILLE, IN 47012 USA

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

1) Make a contribution

Late last year Whitewater Canal Trail sent a letter and a 2006 window decal to everyone who has been associated in some way with the Canal Trail. Contributions from the trail’s friends make it possible for us to complete the Canal Trail from Metamora to Brookville. The trail will offer outstanding recreational activities, help preserve Franklin County’s historical heritage, and create a valuable greenspace for native plants and wildlife.

Many of our supporters responded with contributions, and we are grateful to them. However, some did not respond to the opportunity to make a contribution to the canal trail and become a “2006 Friend of the Whitewater Canal Trail”.

Some of you were supporters of the trail in 2005, and you haven’t made a contribution to the building of the trail for 2006,

Many people have been receiving the Milemarker newsletter, and enjoying the trail, but haven’t gotten around to making a contribution to this wonderful project.

Please send in a contribution now. Let us know if you if you would like a 2006 Canal Trail window decal. Check the box when you sign up, and we will send one to you.

2) Volunteer to work

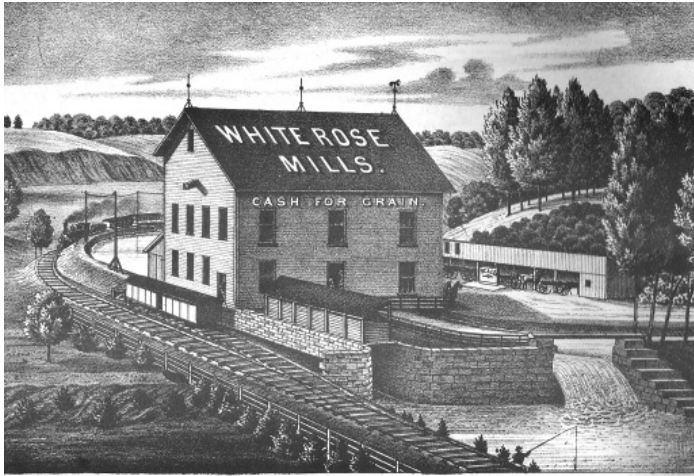
Over the past two years, many people have offered to help with the Canal Trail. We were glad to have the offers, but we have not had enough work for all our volunteers.

We have a lot of projects and activities—some are ongoing efforts, and some are new adventures. To get all of them taken care of, we are going to need a lot of help. We are planning to call on many of our volunteers. If you signed up to help in the past, you can expect to hear from us soon. Would you like to help with:

- Moving and restoring an old iron bridge
- Gardening/native plantings/habitat restoration
- Building and installing trail signs
- Painting the Canal Trail and State Historic Site logos on a barn
- Building a corn maze
- Grant management or bookkeeping
- Helping to preserve the Butler Run Aqueduct
- GPS mapping of trail corridor
- Coordinating delivery and installation of construction materials
- Building Kiosks, benches and signs
- Bulldozer work to grade the trail
- Supplying cedar trees or logs for shelters, signs and benches

If there is something on this list that you would really like to do, please contact us right away. And if you already volunteered, please be prepared to say “Yes” when we ask for you help.

Help Us Explore the History of the Canal



WHITE ROSE FLOURING MILL, METAMORA, FRANKLIN CO. IND. A. J. MILLER, PROP.

The White Rose Mill, one of the first mills in Metamora. At one time, there were several mills in this area, and it was known as Millville

The Whitewater Canal only carried boats from 1839 to 1865. But the canal was maintained to supply hydraulic power all the way up to 1936 and the Canal produced some of the most interesting history in Franklin County. Did you know that the canal was the center of industrial districts in Metamora and Brookville? At one time or another, there were water powered mills for processing cotton, grinding flour and making paper.

WCT needs information for trail signs, newsletters and trail guides, etc. and we are looking for interesting items related to the canal, the railroad and the nearby industries. Much of the basic canal history is known, but we want to know if you have any family stories, photos, books, newspaper articles or other canal memorabilia that you would like to tell us about.

For instance, in *Legends of Franklin County*, Portia Everett tells the story of a family that was moving from Cincinnati to Laurel, using a canal boat as the moving van. The barge was loaded with household gear as well as animals and farm equipment. Everyone was comfortable, and no one cared that the snow was falling and the temperature was dropping. Somewhere outside Brookville, perhaps in the "pond" near Yellow Bank Creek, everything froze solid. The family and crew were rescued and taken to Laurel, but it was April before the barge could be floated and the rest of their goods were delivered.

Please help us in collecting the best of the Whitewater Canal history. Contact information for WCT is on the back of this newsletter. You can mail copies of materials to P.O. Box. 126, Brookville 47012. Call or e-mail about other materials.

In Cooperation with WWCSSHS



The Canal Trail is on land that was once part of the Whitewater Canal. It is now part of a State Historic Site, and WCT is pleased to have the cooperation and support of the site's managers on this important project.

2005: a Very Good Year

The Whitewater Canal Trail made a lot of progress in the past year, both "on the ground" and from the fund-raising and organizational perspectives. The goal of building a first class hike/bike trail between Brookville and Metamora is getting closer every day.

Trail Openings: The best news of the year is that we were able to open two sections of the Canal Trail, totaling nearly 3.5 miles. These are presently considered "primitive" because they are still a bit rough in spots, and they are not accessible for those with disabilities. They will be upgraded beginning in 2006.

501(c)(3) status: WCT is officially recognized by the IRS as a not-for-profit corporation. This means that contributions are tax deductible. Also, many foundations and endowments will only fund 501(c)(3) organizations, so WCT is now eligible to apply for a wider range of funding possibilities.

RTP Grant: WCT received a Recreational Trails Program Grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This \$150,000 grant is earmarked for improvements to the section of the trail between Metamora and the Twin Locks.

DNR Contract: WCT now has a formal cooperative agreement with DNR which officially permits WCT to construct and maintain a trail on state property, and defines the responsibilities of WCT and the State.

Strategic plan: Last October, the WCT board spent a day developing a strategic plan. This effort enabled us to agree on a set of specific goals and begin work on plans and budgets that address the Canal Trail's long term needs.

RTP Grant Update



Working through the details of the RTP Grant procedures has turned out to be a complicated process. Because the Canal Trail is located partly in a Historic District and in the flood plain of the Whitewater River, we must work through reviews from the Army Corps of Engineers, archaeologists, and trail specialists.

It will probably be mid-summer before all the reviews and permits are completed. If all goes well, we hope to start construction in the fall of this year.

Above, WCT board members Gary Rieveschl and Tom Cooney review plans for the Metamora Trailhead with Tom Glen (left) of the Assisted Living Center of Eastern Indiana (ALCEIN) to make sure that the trailhead features comply with the guidelines of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Visit the Canal Trail booth at the Home Show

March 18 & 19 at
the old High School
in Brookville

Check out the
Canal Trail website:

www.whitewatercanaltrail.com.

Virtual tour of trail

Updates on trail construction

Canal history

Past issues of newsletter

and more

For more information, e-mail us:

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phone: 765-647-6457

765-647-7365



Whitewater Canal Trail, Inc.

P.O. Box 126

Brookville, IN 47012

WE'LL SEE YOU ON THE TRAIL



The purpose of
Whitewater Canal Trail
Inc. is to foster activities
along the Whitewater
Canal corridor focusing on:

- historical preservation
and interpretation
- outdoor recreation
- natural resource
conservation

while promoting
sustainable development
and improved quality of life
in connected communities.