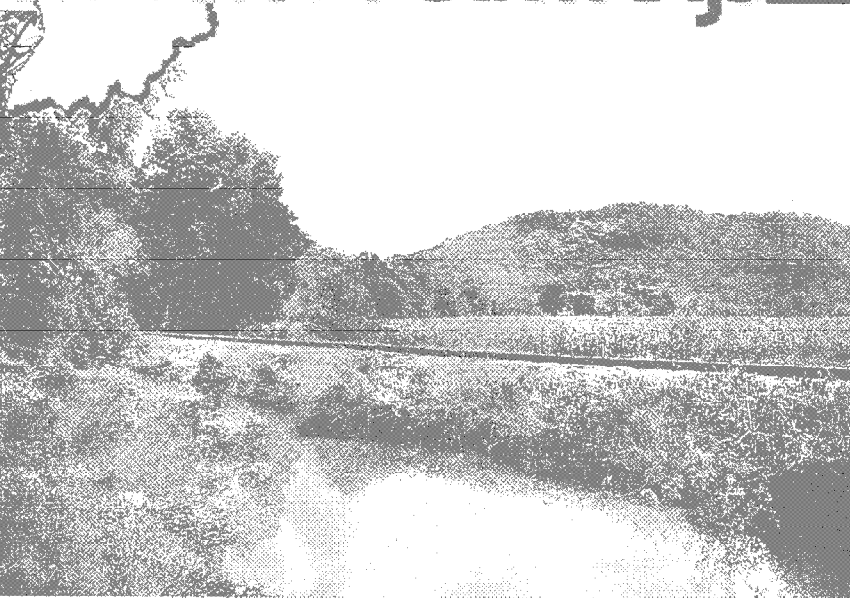


Volume 2, Issue 2

# HOOSIER RAILS TO TRAILS COUNCIL

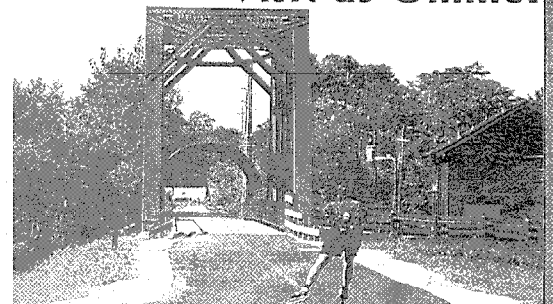
Spring '04



The scenic Whitewater Valley area in Franklin County is a popular tourist & recreation destination, and is the home of the Whitewater Valley Railroad and historic Whitewater Canal attractions. The Metamora Grist Mill is the most visited historic site in Indiana, and Brookville's reservoir is a perennial warm-weather recreational destination. Development of an 8-mile hiking and biking trail following the former Big Four railroad and canal tow path is being spearheaded by Franklin County Historical Society president Wick Wilz, one of many such grass-roots volunteers so critical to bringing more trails to the Hoosier state.

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- ✓ Construction Updates
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## Reflecting on the Role of Indiana Not-for-Profit Trail Groups – by Don Sporleder, Chairman

Reflecting on the progress we are seeing in trail development around the state has illuminated two strong positives about Hoosiers: one is that can-do citizens and governments do cooperate well together; two, that can-do citizens do in fact "accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative." In fact, there may be more not-for-profit corporations in Indiana which are building trails than in any other state. The origin is interesting; the outcome is spectacular.

For years, our state's legislative and executive branches have directly and indirectly refrained from initiating state-owned and operated trails (which most other state governments have). As a result, the role of trail development in Indiana is handed to local governments (including local parks departments), and not-for-profit organizations. Notably, most trail builders and users want paved trails, which are more expensive than just dirt, grass, and unimproved paths. Because the largest funding for trails comes via the Indiana Dept. of Transportation (INDOT), which only allows governments to apply for these funds, the result produces creative and imaginative ways not-for-profit companies to cooperate with local governments and access government funds:

- **John Yoder** and the management of the Friends of the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail have taken on the role of acquiring corridor lands in Elkhart and LaGrange Counties. This is no small feat in light of the numerous incremental legal, political, and social actions needed to defend their land purchase, promote the trail to local governments, survive a class action suit, and raise funds toward building their trail. To build their first mile and a half, the PNT ended up giving their land to the City of Goshen. Now they are working with their local MPO and the county governments seeking funds to pave their corridor land. Not incidental to defending their land purchase was surviving the legislative attack in the 1990s by now-deceased Rep. Warner.
- **Marla McDaniel** has had to personally defend herself as one principal, another being **Richard McGaughey**, of West Central Recreational Trails, Inc. as a part to securing a part of the former Peoria & Eastern RR. Later WCRT donated a segment to the City of Crawfordsville, which then actually spearheaded a condemnation action toward the effort of rolling asphalt on the Sugar Creek Trail, now part of a community-wide trail network.
- **Diana Virgil** and **Jeff Smallwood** have brought the effort to trail-ize the B&O Rail-trail to the Commissioners in Hendricks, Putnam, and Parke Counties by means of two not-for-profits: the Hendricks County Trail Development Association, and Rail Corridor Development, Inc. This private-public cooperation is all the more diligent considering