



[www.WHIN.org](http://www.WHIN.org)

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

July 23, 2020

### **Wabash Heartland Innovation Network Awards Grant to Develop a Plan to Connect 10 Counties with Trail System**

**[WEST LAFAYETTE, IN]** Wabash River Enhancement Corporation (WREC) was awarded a \$1,000,000 grant from the Regional Cultivation Fund of Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN). The money was granted to fund development of a Wabash River Greenway Corridor Master Plan, the first step in the process to develop a 90 mile Wabash River Greenway (Greenway) that will connect the WHIN region's five river corridor counties of Fountain, Warren, Tippecanoe, Carroll, and Cass counties through development of a land and water trail system and related amenities. The trail system will consist of existing and new stand-alone trail sections, and striped, and, or signed route sections utilizing existing roads, and create new and enhance existing water access sites to develop a Wabash River water trail. The Greenway will improve Quality of Life within the WHIN region facilitating regionally appropriate economic development, improving its natural environment and most importantly, improving Wabash River water quality. The Greenway will work with local land owners, and public and private sector entities at the national, state, and regional levels to preserve, conserve, and connect existing and new public and private green space including public recreation space and river access, wetlands/flood plain, and related significant natural areas in and along the corridor to develop the Greenway and accomplish its economic and environmental goals.

The Greenway will foster active recreation and healthy life style opportunities for residents, while attracting visitors to the region to learn about, and experience the nationally significant natural and social history of the Wabash River corridor while engaging in a unique natural environment recreationally. WREC hopes the quality of life and quality of place recreational amenities along all the WHIN region trails will attract regional and national tourism traffic, breathe new life and private investments into Greenway oriented cities and towns, and increase the region's ability to attract top talent. WREC's Executive Director, Stanton Lambert, stated that "its goal to make the Greenway a nationally significant recreational resource with appeal to the novice and adventurous recreation participant will be enhanced by increasing and improving the quality of river access in conjunction with the development of the Greenway trail system, and make the Greenway a true Wabash River Greenway/Blueway that appeals to a broad spectrum of users, nationally, as well as the residents of the WHIN region".

WREC has retained Kimley Horn, a nationally renowned corridor planning firm based out of Indianapolis, to lead the planning effort. The master plan will incorporate resource amenity corridors to extend from the



Wabash River Greenway to connect the five remaining WHIN outer counties (Benton, Montgomery, Clinton, White and Pulaski counties) to the Greenway and each other.

The Greenway project builds on the Planning to Plan Grant WHIN awarded to WREC from the Regional Cultivation Fund in May of 2019. The Planning to Plan Project conducted initial Greenway planning, engaged regional stakeholders and leaders, and began researching Greenway opportunities throughout the region including existing Greenway related projects.

The Greenway project will enable WREC to focus on, and expand its original long term mission to work on corridor enhancement in a four county region of the Wabash River corridor (including Fountain, Warren, Tippecanoe, and Carroll counties), to now include additional WHIN region counties. The Greenway project will also build on WREC's ongoing corridor enhancement efforts in Tippecanoe County and the Lafayette-West Lafayette urban riverfront, in which WREC has completed conceptual corridor master planning, land acquisition, environmental assessment and cleanup projects, and its first development project – construction of the Riverside Promenade - an elevated walkway in downtown Lafayette, set to open in July, 2020. The WHIN grant will enable existing conceptual corridor master planning for the Tippecanoe County section of the Wabash River Greenway to be advanced to the schematic design and engineering level of planning in preparation for active development in the county.

WREC has a long history of focusing on improving water quality in the Wabash River and its watershed, and they believe this grant will allow them to expand the region's capacity to improve water quality in the most significant water source in Indiana – the Wabash River. The Wabash River contains the longest stretch of free-flowing, river east of the Mississippi from the river's location in Huntington, IN to its confluence with the Ohio River – a distance of approximately 400 miles. It drains two thirds of the state of Indiana, one eighth of the state of Illinois, and 500 square miles of the state of Ohio (around the location of its head waters), with a watershed encompassing 33,100 square miles. The Wabash River watershed has been identified as a key contributor to water quality in the Gulf of Mexico.

The \$1,000,000 WHIN Grant is matched by a second grant for \$774,940, WREC received from North Central Health Services (NCHS). NCHS has provided strong, visionary leadership for Wabash River corridor enhancement from WREC's inception in 2004. The two grants together will fund the \$1.3 million Wabash River Greenway Corridor Master Plan Development Project and provide \$474,940 as local match for a future IN Department of Natural Resources Next Level Trails Program Grant to extend the existing Panhandle Trail, as a Greenway pilot project.

Please help us at WHIN to congratulate the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation for their \$1M planning grant to develop a WHIN region wide trail system that will impact the quality of life and quality of space for the WHIN region residents. We cannot wait to see the trail plan that is developed and how it will positively impact the Wabash Heartland Region!

**SOURCES:** Jessica Strasburger, Regional Engagement Manager, Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN): [Jessica@whin.org](mailto:Jessica@whin.org) and Jason Tennenhouse, VP Strategy and Design, Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN): [Jason@whin.org](mailto:Jason@whin.org).

**ABOUT WHIN:** WHIN is an innovative nonprofit organization devoted to making the 10-county Wabash Heartland region of north-central Indiana the global epicenter of digital agriculture and next-generation manufacturing empowered by smart IoT technology.

---

If you would like more information about this topic, please visit:

[www.whin.org](http://www.whin.org) or email [info@whin.org](mailto:info@whin.org)

WABASH HEARTLAND INNOVATION NETWORK

1281 Win Hentschel Blvd, West Lafayette, IN 47906