

A railroad trestle spans the White River in central Indiana, where trail users can also cross on a nearby pedestrian bridge.

# indiana

## CARDINAL GREENWAY

An early morning spring scene of dew-dropped wildflowers, delicate spider webs and gently flowing rivers greets you along the Cardinal Greenway. Quietly ensconced in the Indiana heartland, this is your trail for getting away from it all.

To spin down the Cardinal Greenway's Muncie section on a warm spring day is to ride a ribbon through the quintessential Indiana heartland, complete with spacious skies, fruited plain and amber waves of grain.

The entirety of the Cardinal runs 65 miles and serves as a backbone "visionary trail" for Indiana's newly announced goal that, in 10 years' time, every Hoosier will live within 15 minutes of a trail. For now, the completed, uninterrupted portion best suited for long riding is the 27-mile stretch known as the Muncie section.

Formerly a CSX line that carried passengers from Cincinnati to Chicago and later moved freight, the Muncie section crosses three counties—Delaware, Randolph and Henry. Begin your trek at the northern end point in Gaston, Ind., population 1,010. As many a local will tell you, a stop at the Mill Grill, with its unorthodox mix of spandex bikers and flannelled farmers, is the proper way to fuel up before the ride begins.

Leaving Gaston, you have a trail-side view of the deep-seeded agricultural foundation on which the state was built. Traditionally a top producer of corn, Indiana is positioning itself to be a major player in ethanol production for a "green-

er" planet. As you ride along the Greenway you'll see much of the corn that will, literally, fuel this movement.

On a more romantic note, springtime along the trail brings an abundance of natural beauty. Wildflowers bloom in deep hues of purple and soft shades of white. Start your trip early enough in the morning, and you'll spot hundreds of spider webs thick with dew and glistening in the new day's sun. It's a sight that will refresh your spirit and invigorate your soul.

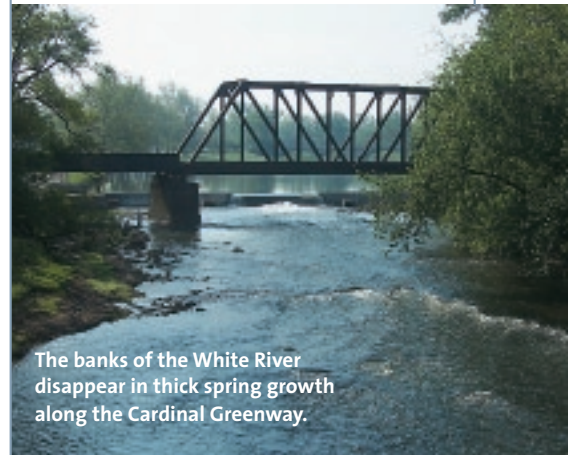
When you reach the 400 North Trailhead, the fingers of Muncie start to branch out. With the reconfiguration comes an influx of runners, walkers and inline skaters, many of them students of Ball State University. The school helps give Muncie its fun vibe while keeping the small-town feel intact.

The McCullough Blvd. Trailhead at Mile 10 is at the heart of the trail with no shortage of connections. There is the link for the 3.5-mile White River Greenway that follows, naturally, the rambling White River. A dam just to the east on the White River Greenway is rumored to be a top fishing spot. Continuing on, you'll approach two bridges: a bicycle pedestrian span across the White River and an historic railroad trestle

bridge. Past the bridges is a Japanese-style garden designed by Ball State students offering a pleasant trailside respite.

The real treat, however, is the Cardinal Greenway Depot, just a third-of-a-mile farther along from McCullough Blvd. The historic depot is a perfect place to stop for a rest, take a picture, get a souvenir, use the restroom and check out the model train. Or hang out long enough to catch the real deal: A Norfolk Southern rail line passes the depot, running adjacent to the greenway for 1,000 feet. Approximately 35 trains chug through each day carrying lumber, auto parts and grain. Another perk: Bikes are available at the depot for

RYAN PHILLIPS/RTC



The banks of the White River disappear in thick spring growth along the Cardinal Greenway.



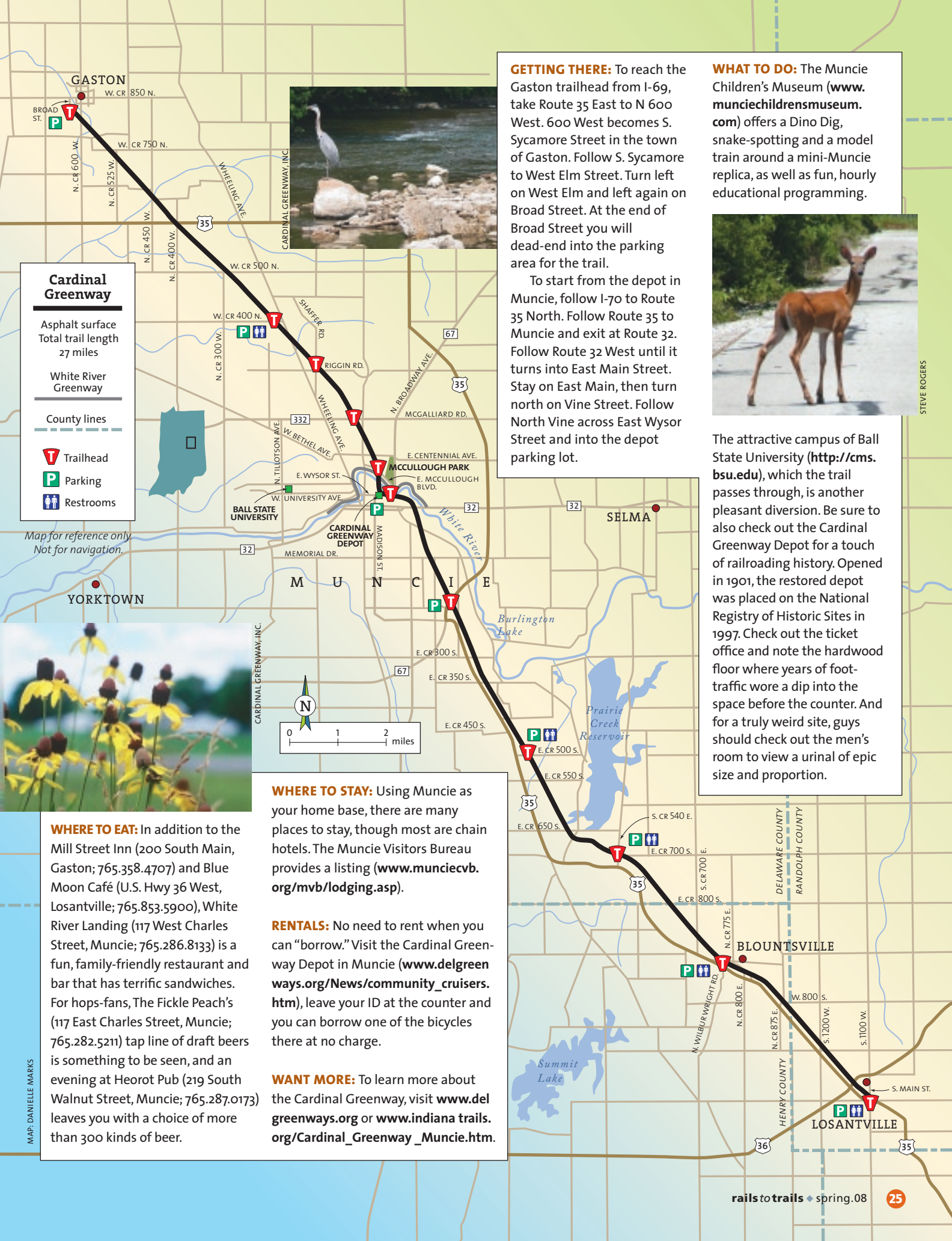
Fall offers its own showcase of colors on an 11-mile section from Medford to Losantville, where you can enjoy the Indiana countryside on a separate horse trail parallel to the Cardinal.

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use at no charge to the public. Just leave a driver's license, and you can pedal your heart out on the trail.

South of the depot you find yourself in the neighborhoods of Muncie until you pass under Route 35 to re-enter the sun-drenched Indiana countryside. Note the trailside rocks along the way marking the mileage as you head south. The decreasing numbers signify the mileage to Cincinnati, but your end is closer at hand.

The trail meanders along Route 35 like a fickle butterfly, following a path of pollen to the end point in Losantville, population 280. Cap off your trip with a stop at the Blue Moon Café. From here, the corridor rambles on toward the beckoning horizon. In the next five to seven years, more trail miles will be completed, and you'll be able to follow that call.



**Cardinal Greenway**

Asphalt surface  
Total trail length  
27 miles

White River  
Greenway

County lines

- Trailhead
- Parking
- Restrooms

Map for reference only  
Not for navigation.

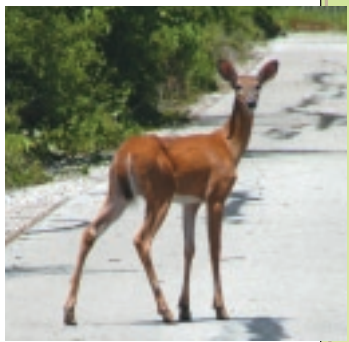


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**GETTING THERE:** To reach the Gaston trailhead from I-69, take Route 35 East to N 600 West. 600 West becomes S. Sycamore Street in the town of Gaston. Follow S. Sycamore to West Elm Street. Turn left on West Elm and left again on Broad Street. At the end of Broad Street you will dead-end into the parking area for the trail.

To start from the depot in Muncie, follow I-70 to Route 35 North. Follow Route 35 to Muncie and exit at Route 32. Follow Route 32 West until it turns into East Main Street. Stay on East Main, then turn north on Vine Street. Follow North Vine across East Wysor Street and into the depot parking lot.

**WHAT TO DO:** The Muncie Children's Museum ([www.munciechildrensmuseum.com](http://www.munciechildrensmuseum.com)) offers a Dino Dig, snake-spotting and a model train around a mini-Muncie replica, as well as fun, hourly educational programming.



STEVE ROGERS

The attractive campus of Ball State University (<http://cms.bsu.edu>), which the trail passes through, is another pleasant diversion. Be sure to also check out the Cardinal Greenway Depot for a touch of railroading history. Opened in 1901, the restored depot was placed on the National Registry of Historic Sites in 1997. Check out the ticket office and note the hardwood floor where years of foot-traffic wore a dip into the space before the counter. And for a truly weird site, guys should check out the men's room to view a urinal of epic size and proportion.

**WHERE TO STAY:** Using Muncie as your home base, there are many places to stay, though most are chain hotels. The Muncie Visitors Bureau provides a listing ([www.munciecvb.org/mvb/lodging.asp](http://www.munciecvb.org/mvb/lodging.asp)).

**RENTALS:** No need to rent when you can "borrow." Visit the Cardinal Greenway Depot in Muncie ([www.delgreenways.org/News/community\\_cruisers.htm](http://www.delgreenways.org/News/community_cruisers.htm)), leave your ID at the counter and you can borrow one of the bicycles there at no charge.

**WANT MORE:** To learn more about the Cardinal Greenway, visit [www.delgreenways.org](http://www.delgreenways.org) or [www.indianatrails.org/Cardinal\\_Greenway\\_Muncie.htm](http://www.indianatrails.org/Cardinal_Greenway_Muncie.htm).

MAP: DANIELLE MARKS

**WHERE TO EAT:** In addition to the Mill Street Inn (200 South Main, Gaston; 765.358.4707) and Blue Moon Café (U.S. Hwy 36 West, Losantville; 765.853.5900), White River Landing (117 West Charles Street, Muncie; 765.286.8133) is a fun, family-friendly restaurant and bar that has terrific sandwiches. For hops-fans, The Fickle Peach's (117 East Charles Street, Muncie; 765.282.5211) tap line of draft beers is something to be seen, and an evening at Heorot Pub (219 South Walnut Street, Muncie; 765.287.0173) leaves you with a choice of more than 300 kinds of beer.