The IHTC envisions a network of trails that stretch from the shores of Lake Erie to the confluence of Three Rivers in Pittsburgh and on to the Ohio River and the Appalachian foothills of West Virginia. This connected off-road trail system will allow locals and visitors to explore the small towns, major cities, historical sites, rivers and mountains that characterize America’s first frontier. In this region, one discovers the birthplace of America’s industrial revolution.

What Is the IHTC Doing?

IHTC members are working to build trails and fill in gaps in the network vision, as well as maintain the trails already on the ground.

Key additional components of the coalition’s work include the collection of GIS information and development of an interactive mapping tool, gototrails.com, by Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s development of a trail traffic modeling system to track usage on trails and a series of economic impact studies to measure the benefits of major completed trails.

If you want to learn more about participating in the IHTC, please contact:

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Eric Oberg, Director of Trail Development
Midwest Regional Office
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National Park Service, RTCA
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Pennsylvania Environmental Council
Frank Maguire, Program Director
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IHeartTrails.org

4 States | 48 Counties | 1,400+ Miles

Photo by Bruce S. Ford
The Vision of the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (IHTC) is to establish the Industrial Heartland as a premier destination offering a 1400-mile-plus multi-use trail network experience.

Trails Make a Difference ...

Connecting Our Region

The IHTC’s 1,400-mile-plus network will span 48 counties across parts of four states: Western Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, eastern Ohio and the southwestern corner of New York. Pittsburgh will serve as the network’s hub, with trails radiating out of the metro area and connecting to Cleveland, Akron and Ashtabula in Ohio, Morgantown and Parkersburg in West Virginia, and Erie in Pennsylvania. These are communities with a shared past, present and future: of innovation, steel, agriculture, manufacturing, boom, bust, reinvention, renewal and innovation once more.

The IHTC will work to develop the missing segments of these major trails and complete the trail network by 2033.

Transforming Local Economies

This new collective energy is driven in part by a realization that the network vision means new economic opportunity and vitality across the region. Trails increasingly demonstrate their significance in community transformation through economic activity by trail users, including visitors and locals. The latest study along the 150-mile Great Allegheny Passage demonstrates an annual $50 million direct economic impact to communities along the trail. The 24-mile Three Rivers Heritage Trail in Pittsburgh, a system more frequently used by residents, generates a $7 million annual economic impact. Trails can be an important economic stimulus in communities large and small across the Industrial Heartland.

Collaboration for Change

More than 100 agencies and organizations that are actively planning and building trails have participated in IHTC meetings.

This coalition of trail supporters includes government, nonprofit and private foundation entities, as well as land managers and railroad interests, all working together to position trail development as a regional priority.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council, National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) and Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, have been key coordinators of this diverse group.

For a complete list of coalition members, visit: ihearttrails.org/about/who-we-are/