

# INDIANA



Indiana's Cardinal Greenway | Photo by Tony Valainis, courtesy Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

## ROUTE

RTC met with Indiana state officials early in the Great American Rail-Trail process, recognizing that the route through Indiana would have a significant impact on the potential routes through its neighboring states. Two routes were presented: a shorter one across the north of the state and a longer diagonal one from Richmond, Indiana, toward the Chicago metropolitan area. Officials from the Indiana Department of Transportation were so excited about the potential of the Great American Rail-Trail that they asked RTC to consider including as many miles as possible in Indiana by using the longer diagonal route. In September 2018, Governor Holcomb announced the Next Level Connections program, a \$1 billion investment in infrastructure projects including trails. So far, the program has provided funding for several projects along the Great American Rail-Trail. October 2021–October 2022 was designated as the Year of the Trails in Indiana by the state's bipartisan legislative trails caucus with the intention of showcasing the critical value that the state's trails deliver and the need to guarantee funding to connect and maintain the state's trail system.

## TABLE 12 GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL MILEAGE IN INDIANA

Total Great American Rail-Trail Existing Trail Miles in Ind. (% of Total State Mileage)	122.0 (56.0%)
Total Great American Rail-Trail Gap Miles in Ind. (% of Total State Mileage)	95.9 (44.0%)
Total Trail Gaps in Ind.	9
Total Great American Rail-Trail Miles in Ind.	217.9

GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT  
INDIANA

**TABLE 13 GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE THROUGH INDIANA**

Existing Trail or Trail Gap Name	Length in Ind. Along Great American Rail-Trail (in Miles)
TRAIL GAP 16 – Ohio–Ind. State Line to Richmond	4.5
Cardinal Greenway (Richmond to Gaston)	51.0
TRAIL GAP 17 – Cardinal Greenway Extension (Gaston to Gas City)	18.2
Cardinal Greenway (Gas City to Sweetser)	10.6
Sweetser Switch Trail	4.0
Converse Junction Trail	2.6
TRAIL GAP 18 – Converse to Bunker Hill	13.2
Nickel Plate Trail (Bunker Hill to Peru)	6.6
TRAIL GAP 19 – Nickel Plate Trail Extension (Peru)	2.6
Nickel Plate Trail (Peru to Rochester)	21.3
TRAIL GAP 20 – Rochester to Monterey	16.5
Monterey Erie Trail	0.6
TRAIL GAP 21 – Monterey to Bass Station	4.2
Erie Trail	11.1
TRAIL GAP 22 – North Judson to Hebron	25.3
TRAIL GAP 23a – Veterans Memorial Trail Extension (Hebron)	1.1
Veterans Memorial Trail (Hebron)	1.0
TRAIL GAP 23b – Veterans Memorial Trail Extension (Porter–Lake County Line to Crown Point)	8.5
Veterans Memorial Trail (Crown Point)	0.6
TRAIL GAP 23b – Veterans Memorial Trail Extension (Porter–Lake County Line to Crown Point)	0.7
Great American Rail-Trail (Crown Point)	0.4
Erie Lackawanna Trail	2.0
TRAIL GAP 24 – Erie Lackawanna Trail to Pennsy Greenway	1.1
Pennsy Greenway (Schererville to Ind.–Ill. State Line)	10.2
TRAIL GAP 25 – Pennsy Greenway Extension (Schererville to Munster) COMPLETED	-
TRAIL GAP 26 – Pennsy Greenway Extension (Munster) COMPLETED	-
Total Miles	217.9
<i>Existing Trail Miles</i>	122.0
<i>Trail Gap Miles</i>	95.9

# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT 2024

## MAP 6: INDIANA





# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT INDIANA

## TRAIL GAP 16 – OHIO-INDIANA STATE LINE TO RICHMOND

Picking up from Trail Gap 15 at the Ohio-Indiana border, Trail Gap 16 encompasses the 4.5 miles from the state line to Richmond in Wayne County, Indiana. The city of Richmond’s 2015 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan illustrates a proposed greenway connecting Richmond to the Ohio border. The proposed greenway parallels the East Fork Whitewater River and connects to downtown Richmond through an unnamed existing trail.

An important east-west connection to the adjacent county land and eventually to the state of Ohio is a proposed greenway along the East Fork of the White River. Although only a small portion of the greenway lies within the city limits, constructing this portion of the greenway could provide the catalyst needed to spur construction of the greenway to the state line. Building the greenway in this eastern direction will also provide connections to both Glen Miller Park and Hayes Arboretum on a more scenic route than what you would find along U.S. 40.

## CARDINAL GREENWAY

Total Length (in Miles)	62.0
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	61.6
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Cardinal Greenways
Website	cardinalgreenways.org
TrailLink Map	trailink.com/trail/cardinal-greenway

The Cardinal Greenway, the longest rail-trail in Indiana, stretches 62 miles along a former CSX Transportation railroad corridor. The Cardinal Greenway was the 2018 inductee into RTC’s Rail-Trail Hall of Fame. The trail is named after the Cardinal, a passenger train that once ran the length of the greenway. The Cardinal Greenway will host the Great American Rail-Trail from its southernmost endpoint in Richmond to Marion, just east of the greenway’s northernmost endpoint in Sweetser. The Cardinal Greenway has been championed by Cardinal Greenways, a nonprofit that aims to extend the Cardinal Greenway throughout eastern Indiana.

The Cardinal Greenway is currently divided into two segments of existing trail with one gap between them:

**Segment 1** – 51 miles of trail between Richmond and Gaston.

**Segment 2** – 10.6 miles of trail between Gas City and Sweetser.

The gap between the two segments of the Cardinal Greenway is discussed in Trail Gap 17, below.

A restoration plan for the Cardinal Greenway was developed in 2019 to keep the trail in excellent shape through 2040. The full cost of trail maintenance in this plan was estimated at \$20 million.

## TRAIL GAP 17 – CARDINAL GREENWAY EXTENSION (GASTON TO GAS CITY)

Cardinal Greenways is actively working on opportunities to complete the approximately 18-mile gap in the Cardinal Greenway between Gaston and Gas City. After an unsuccessful attempt to acquire funding for a portion of the project near Taylor University through the fourth round of the Next Level Trails program, Cardinal Greenways continues to seek funds, with several opportunities in the works. The section near Taylor University in Upland is ready for construction and could be the first new section of the Cardinal Greenway completed, pending funding.

## SWEETSER SWITCH TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	4.0
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	4.0
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Cardinal Greenways, Town of Sweetser
Website	indianatrails.com/sweetser-switch-trail
TrailLink Map	trailink.com/trail/sweetser-switch-trail

The 4-mile Sweetser Switch Trail is an important regional connector that follows the original corridor of the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad. The paved rail-trail connects to the Cardinal Greenway at County Road 400 West/North 400 West in Sweetser and joins the 2.6-mile Converse Junction Trail in Converse, making the Sweetser Switch Trail a key piece of north-central Indiana’s trail system.

The residents of Sweetser have championed this trail throughout the years. When residents explored the possibility of turning the right-of-way into a trail, they first had to create a park board because the small town did not have a parks and recreation department. Residents chipped in with donations and volunteer labor to complete the path’s first mile.

# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT INDIANA

## CONVERSE JUNCTION TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	2.6
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	2.6
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Town of Converse
Website	<a href="https://facebook.com/converse-junction-trail-1442126726034826">facebook.com/converse-junction-trail-1442126726034826</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/converse-junction-trail">traillink.com/trail/converse-junction-trail</a>

The Converse Junction Trail provides around 2.6 miles of smooth asphalt along a former Penn Central Transportation Company line, linking the small Indiana communities of Mier and Converse. The Mier trailhead is located on North 800 West 27, from which point the Sweetser Switch Trail extends eastward. The Converse Junction Trail travels northwest across Pipe and Taylor creeks to reach downtown Converse. The trail ends at County Road 1000 West/North 1000 West 27, which also serves as the western border of Marion County.

### TRAIL GAP 18 – CONVERSE TO BUNKER HILL

Nickel Plate Trail Inc. is working to fill the 13.2-mile trail gap between the western terminus of the Converse Junction Trail in Converse and the town of Bunker Hill, near the southern end of the Nickel Plate Trail.

Three-fourths of the trail gap land has been acquired and three grants have been secured to complete Trail Gap 18, including a 2022 Next Level Trails grant for \$3.6 million, which fills the remaining funding needed for this gap. In 2024, 4.5 miles of this gap between McGrawsville and Bunker Hill is expected to be completed and opened to the public.

## NICKEL PLATE TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	36.9
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	27.9
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Nickel Plate Trail Inc.
Website	<a href="https://nickelplatetrail.org">nickelplatetrail.org</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/nickel-plate-trail">traillink.com/trail/nickel-plate-trail</a>

The Nickel Plate Trail is currently divided into two segments of existing trail with one gap between them:

**Segment 1** – About 15.6 miles of trail from Kokomo to Peru.

**Segment 2** – About 21.3 miles of trail from Peru to Rochester.

The Nickel Plate Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail, using 6.6 miles of Segment 1 (from Bunker Hill to Peru) and all of Segment 2 to travel between Peru and Rochester. The gap in the Nickel Plate Trail is discussed in Trail Gap 19, below.

### TRAIL GAP 19 – NICKEL PLATE TRAIL EXTENSION (PERU)

The 2.6-mile trail gap in Peru utilizes an interim on-road connector. The interim connector heads east into downtown Peru before connecting back to Segment 2 of the Nickel Plate Trail. Nickel Plate Trail Inc. is leading efforts to complete this gap, including work to purchase the land between West 7th Street and East 100 North/East Lovers Lane Road, and is looking for funding to do so.

### TRAIL GAP 20 – ROCHESTER TO MONTEREY

Nickel Plate Trail Inc. is actively working to connect the Nickel Plate Trail to downtown Rochester by extending the trail from its current terminus just south of Rochester to Rochester's city center.

The remaining 16.5-mile gap from downtown Rochester west to Monterey has not been discussed in depth. There is an abandoned rail corridor that begins north of Rochester and travels south of Leiters Ford that could form a potential route. More research needs to be done to develop a viable gap-filling strategy for Trail Gap 20.

## MONTEREY ERIE TRAIL

The 0.6-mile Monterey Erie Trail occupies the same railbanked corridor as the Erie Trail (described below) to its west, and the two rail-trails are planned to be linked in the future. The towns of Monterey and North Judson once saw frequent freight service between the two communities, first by the Erie Lackawanna Railway and, later, by the Erie Western Railway, Tippecanoe Railroad and JK Lines. The 16-mile corridor was put up for abandonment in 2003, and the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum stepped in to preserve the corridor for public use.

# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT INDIANA

## TRAIL GAP 21 – MONTEREY TO BASS STATION

There is an approximately 4.2-mile gap between the western terminus of the Monterey Erie Trail in Monterey and the eastern terminus of the Erie Trail in the town of Ora. The Prairie Trails Club Inc., a volunteer group that oversees the Erie Trail, mentioned filling the gap in its 2016 Future Vision Phase Plan.

### ERIE TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	11.1
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	11.1
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum, The Prairie Trails Club Inc.
Website	<a href="https://hoosiervalley.org/visit/trail">hoosiervalley.org/visit/trail</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/north-judson-erie-trail">traillink.com/trail/north-judson-erie-trail</a>

The 11-mile Erie Trail occupies the railbanked right-of-way of the former JK Line Railroad. In May 2019, the Prairie Trails Club Inc. was awarded an Indiana Department of Natural Resources Next Level Trails program grant from the first round of applications to construct 2.1 miles of trail beginning at the eastern terminus of the Erie Trail at U.S. 35 in Bass Station and stretching toward Ora. The group completed this extension in 2021.

## TRAIL GAP 22 – NORTH JUDSON TO HEBRON

Various efforts are underway to complete Trail Gap 22. Most recently, a Next Level Trails program grant was awarded in December 2023 to complete 3.1 miles of this gap. The trail will be called the Grand Kankakee Marsh Trail. This award will complete a paved trail from the public library in LaCrosse to County Road 2200 along the former railroad corridor. Future plans include extending the trail south to North Judson and the existing Erie Trail.

The Prairie Trails Club, Inc. received an Indiana Trails Program grant in the summer of 2023 for a 1-mile section of trail in North Judson that also will help fill in parts of Trail Gap 22. The extension will continue the trail from Main Street in North Judson and extend northwest of town on the west side of South English Lake Road. Final construction plans for this section are in the works.

## TRAIL GAP 23a – VETERANS MEMORIAL TRAIL EXTENSION (HEBRON)

The Veterans Memorial Trail is currently under development in northwest Indiana. The trail will begin in Hebron just west of Cobb Creek and will travel 1.1 miles through Hebron until reaching its first open section.

### VETERANS MEMORIAL TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	1.6
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	1.6
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	City of Crown Point, Friends of the Veterans Memorial Parkway, Lake County Parks, Town of Hebron

The Veterans Memorial Trail will connect Hebron to the Erie Lackawanna Trail in Crown Point. The trail is being developed in phases, with acquisition and construction underway. The two open sections of trail encompass:

**Segment 1:** 1.0 mile in Hebron that was completed in 2020, using a grant from Indiana’s Next Level Trails program.

**Segment 2:** 0.6 mile in Crown Point.

Trail Gap 23b, described below, currently separates Segments 1 and 2 with an 8.5-mile gap, and Segment 2 and the Great American Rail-Trail (Crown Point) with a 0.7-mile gap.

The Veterans Memorial Trail will connect a series of memorials dedicated to those who have served our country in times of war and peace. Currently one memorial—the Lake County Korean Veterans Memorial—has been completed, with two more under development. These include the Lake County World War I & II Veterans and Holocaust Memorial in Crown Point and the Northwest Indiana Middle East Veterans Memorial in Hebron. The connection to the Erie Lackawanna Trail will go through the heart of Crown Point and be adjacent to property slated for a future city hall.

# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT INDIANA

## TRAIL GAP 23b – VETERANS MEMORIAL TRAIL EXTENSION (PORTER–LAKE COUNTY LINE TO CROWN POINT)

Plans to fill Trail Gap 23b, the largest gap in the Veterans Memorial Trail—at 9.2 miles—are progressing. Traveling west from Hebron to Crown Point, the development of the Veterans Memorial Trail is anticipated to be as follows:

**Porter–Lake County line to Iowa Street:** The section of future trail from the Porter–Lake county line to Iowa Street is in the acquisition and funding stage. It is anticipated that the trail will be surfaced with asphalt and will include an adjacent equestrian trail.

**Iowa Street to East 113th Avenue:** Lake County Parks is actively working to complete right-of-way acquisition in this section.

**North Street to Summit Street trailhead:** Lake County Parks received the final remaining funding for this section of trail as part of round 2 of the Next Level Trails program. Right-of-way acquisition is being finalized and construction is slated to begin in 2024.

## GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL (CROWN POINT)

Total Length (in Miles)	0.4
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	0.4
Trail Type	Greenway
Surface Type	Asphalt, concrete
Trail Manager	City of Crown Point

There is a brief section of trail through Crown Point that connects the Veterans Memorial Trail and the Erie Lackawanna Trail alongside existing city roads. The locals have declared it a piece of the Great American Rail-Trail and refer to it by this name.

## ERIE LACKAWANNA TRAIL

Total Length (in Miles)	17.7
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	2.0
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	City of Hammond, Lake County Parks, Town of Schererville
Website	<a href="https://schererville.org/town-government/parks-and-recreation/erie-lackawanna-trail">schererville.org/town-government/parks-and-recreation/erie-lackawanna-trail</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="https://traillink.com/trail/erie-lackawanna-trail">traillink.com/trail/erie-lackawanna-trail</a>

The Erie Lackawanna Trail travels 17.7 miles between Crown Point and Hammond—two former rail junctions along a route that carried goods and people in and out of Chicago. The paved trail is bordered by green space and crosses wetlands and parks along the way. The Erie Lackawanna Trail will host the Great American Rail-Trail for 2 miles in Crown Point, starting from its southern terminus at West Summit and North Court streets and ending at Veterans Lane.

## TRAIL GAP 24 – ERIE LACKAWANNA TRAIL TO PENNSY GREENWAY

About 2 miles of Trail Gap 24 were completed and opened in 2023, reducing the remaining length of this gap to about 1 mile. The remaining mile to be completed is expected to follow West 91st Avenue, and will be eligible for funding soon. Local partners will reapply for the remaining funding that is needed for this project.



# GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT INDIANA



Wabash Bridge on Indiana's Nickel Plate Trail | Photo by TrailLink user ob

## PENNSY GREENWAY

Total Length (in Miles)	14.4
Total Length Along Great American Rail-Trail in Ind. (in Miles)	10.2
Trail Type	Rail-trail
Surface Type	Asphalt
Trail Manager	Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Lake County Parks, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Schererville Parks & Recreation
Website	<a href="http://indygreenways.org/pennsy-trail">indygreenways.org/pennsy-trail</a>
TrailLink Map	<a href="http://trailink.com/trail/pennsy-greenway">trailink.com/trail/pennsy-greenway</a>

The Pennsy Greenway is currently open between Schererville, Indiana, and Calumet City, Illinois. The 14.4-mile paved trail runs along the former Penn Central Transportation Company rail line and is planned to travel a total of 15 miles once complete. The Pennsy Greenway will host the Great American Rail-Trail from Schererville, Indiana, to Lansing, Illinois, totaling 10.7 miles (10.2 of which are in Indiana, and 0.5 of which is in Illinois). An additional 5.5 miles of the Pennsy Greenway between Crown Point and Munster have been completed since 2020, closing a key gap in the Pennsy Greenway and the Great American Rail-Trail.

## ~~TRAIL GAP 25 — PENNSY GREENWAY EXTENSION (SCHERERVILLE TO MUNSTER)~~ **COMPLETED**

Trail Gap 25 (Pennsy Greenway Extension – Schererville to Munster) is now a completed trail segment as part of the Pennsy Greenway.

## ~~TRAIL GAP 26 — PENNSY GREENWAY EXTENSION (MUNSTER)~~ **COMPLETED**

Trail Gap 26 (Pennsy Greenway Extension – Munster) is now a completed trail segment as part of the Pennsy Greenway.



GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL ROUTE ASSESSMENT  
INDIANA



*Prepping for a ribbon-cutting ceremony along a newly completed section of the Veterans Memorial Trail in June 2020 | Photo courtesy Chicago Tribune*



*Indiana's Penny Greenway, headed northwest toward U.S. 41 | Photo by TrailLink user tommyspan*