

RIVER TOWN REVIEW

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES -
PROMOTING OUTDOOR RECREATION

Summary Report
SUMMER 2022





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

River Town Review Team & Program	4
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SUMMARY REPORT

Community Workshops	6
Recommendations & Relevant Resources	10
Observations & Kudos	16
Voices from Your Fellow River Towns	20
Lessons Learned	22
Moving Forward	23

APPENDIX A

Contacts	26
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APPENDIX B

Resources	28
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Active links contained within this printed document are available in this document on the Ohio River Way website

<https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/>

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, a team of outdoor recreation planners, local volunteers, and community leaders, began working to complete River Town Reviews for 14 Ohio River communities, providing each with objective observations, assessments, and recommendations related to enhancing their outdoor recreation resources and tourism. As the team visited these towns up and down the Ohio, they found energized people and wonderful things already happening. From new trails and skate parks to a local entrepreneur running a kayak operation, literally through a hole in a wall and even a goat named Fred; from master plans embracing change to local main street programs beautifying and revitalizing historic downtowns. The team found these and a multitude of outdoor recreation opportunities as well, leaving them assured that the area can become a destination for outdoor recreation-based tourism.

The original intention was to visit these towns in person, spend three days and engage people in a variety of ways to learn about their unique resources. However, in March of 2020 the pandemic changed those plans, resulting in a shift to a more virtual project with just brief visits to each town. The adaptations that were made still provided great interactions and outcomes that resulted in quality assessments, reports, and recommendations. In addition, the timing of the River Town Reviews made them even more relevant and valuable as outdoor recreation increased substantially during this time and sustainable opportunities became even more important to these riverfront communities as they worked at recovering from the continued pandemic.

THE RIVER TOWN REVIEW TEAM



The National Park Service - RTCA Program

The National Park Service - Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, (RTCA) facilitates local conservation and outdoor recreation efforts around the country, helping communities develop or restore parks, rivers, and conservation areas, address climate change, recover from natural disasters, and create new and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities.



The Ohio River Way

The Ohio River Recreation Trail Steering Committee, (ORRT) has been an essential partner of the River Town Review Program, while at the same time working to create a 274-mile-long land and water trail stretching from Portsmouth, Ohio to West Point, Kentucky. Now re-branded as the Ohio River Way (ORW), the group continues to encourage river towns to enhance tourism and economic development, promote stewardship and environmental awareness, and strengthen community connections.



The Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Experience

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Experience, through its interactive map, helps people retrace the Expedition's route from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Astoria, Oregon, including its passage through many Ohio River towns.

Paddlefest Expo
Photo Credit: Brewster Rhoads

THE RIVER TOWN REVIEW PROGRAM

The River Town Review program, modeled after traditional trail town programs, included:

- Visits to each community;
- Objective assessments of outdoor recreation resources;
- Desktop reviews of relevant websites and master planning efforts;
- Workshops to develop and prioritize short- and long-term goals;
- The facilitation of virtual workshops to help communities identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, related to outdoor recreation and tourism;
- The development of follow-up reports for each river town which included information gathered during community visits, observations resulting from desktop review summaries and tabulations of community workshop data, targeted recommendations with relevant resources, and a comprehensive list of additional resources.

River Town Review Communities



SUMMARY REPORT

Throughout the River Town Review process, it became clear that the 14 communities had many challenges and opportunities in common. This Summary brings these to the forefront, illustrating the potential for future connections, partnerships, and collaborative efforts. It also highlights unique projects, solutions, and ideas discovered along the way, and again to be shared for the benefit of the group. By presenting a compilation of the River Town Review team's recommendations, along with a full slate of immediate action items, this Summary is also meant to serve as a catalyst, encouraging communities to begin working towards enhancing and promoting their outdoor recreation opportunities, and working in partnership with neighboring river towns.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Community workshops were an integral part of each River Town Review. Local partners introduced themselves, and team members discussed observations gathered through community visits and desktop reviews of local marketing and planning efforts. Attendees were led through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis, (SWOT), followed by a brainstorming session to help communities generate and prioritize short- and long-term goals for the enhancement of their outdoor recreation opportunities and tourism.

Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Common Strengths & Opportunities

- The opportunity to increase recognition and marketing of the Underground Railroad.
- Quality community riverfront parks and access to the Ohio River.
- Nearby state parks, state and national forests, natural areas, national wildlife refuges, river confluences, and tributaries.
- National historic landmarks and districts.
- Tourism opportunities with the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.
- Growth in outdoor recreation can attract outdoor gear and service businesses.
- Closures of industrial facilities may present opportunities for riverfront development.

Common Weaknesses & Threats

- The barrier between the Ohio River and communities created by floodwalls and levees.
- Funding challenges.
- The lack of transient docking facilities and boating access sites.
- Resistance to change.
- Aging infrastructure.
- The perception of the Ohio River as polluted, dangerous, and unsafe.
- The need to better market and promote outdoor recreation.
- The threats posed by increased flooding and climate change.
- An aging population, along with young people who are leaving for better opportunities.



Common Goals

Following the SWOT analysis, workshop attendees participated in a brainstorming session, identifying, and prioritizing goals for the enhancement of outdoor recreation opportunities and tourism in their community. Again, and as with many facets of the River Town Review process, many goals were found to be common among most of the communities.

- Add canoe/kayak launch facilities.
- Provide primitive camping opportunities for cyclists, hikers, and paddlers.
- Improve marketing efforts related to outdoor recreation.
- Improve outdoor recreation information on existing websites.
- Offer kayak and bike rentals.
- Become more bike and pedestrian friendly.
- Increase promotion of the Underground Railroad.
- Add transient docking facilities and fueling services if not currently available.
- Upgrade existing boat launch facilities.
- Work more in partnership with other river towns. Explore collaborative events and joint marketing options.
- If not already in place, develop, approve, and implement Bike and Pedestrian Plans.

Short-Term Ideas to Pursue (1 to 3 years)

Promote walking routes downtown

Attract a "pop up" kayak livery

safety, natural history, geographic signage at the boat ramp

Outdoor recreation Kioisk

Recruiting more water sport businesses to Downtown Madison

A high School and College afterschool club, like adventure crew. engage the next generation

Targeting more outdoor & watersport groups for marketing

clear sidewalk paths and updated timing for signals

Marketing brochure w all private and public activities

Bike Racks

participate in the Ohio River Paddle fest with a booth about madison

Better connection with NPS resources and visitors

promotio our river and bo docking service

we all miss the bowling ally

Port of Madison highlighted

Tour Guide Certification / Ambassador Program

More steamboat historical education experie

Promoting we are the gateway to southern IN

Organize annual paddling event

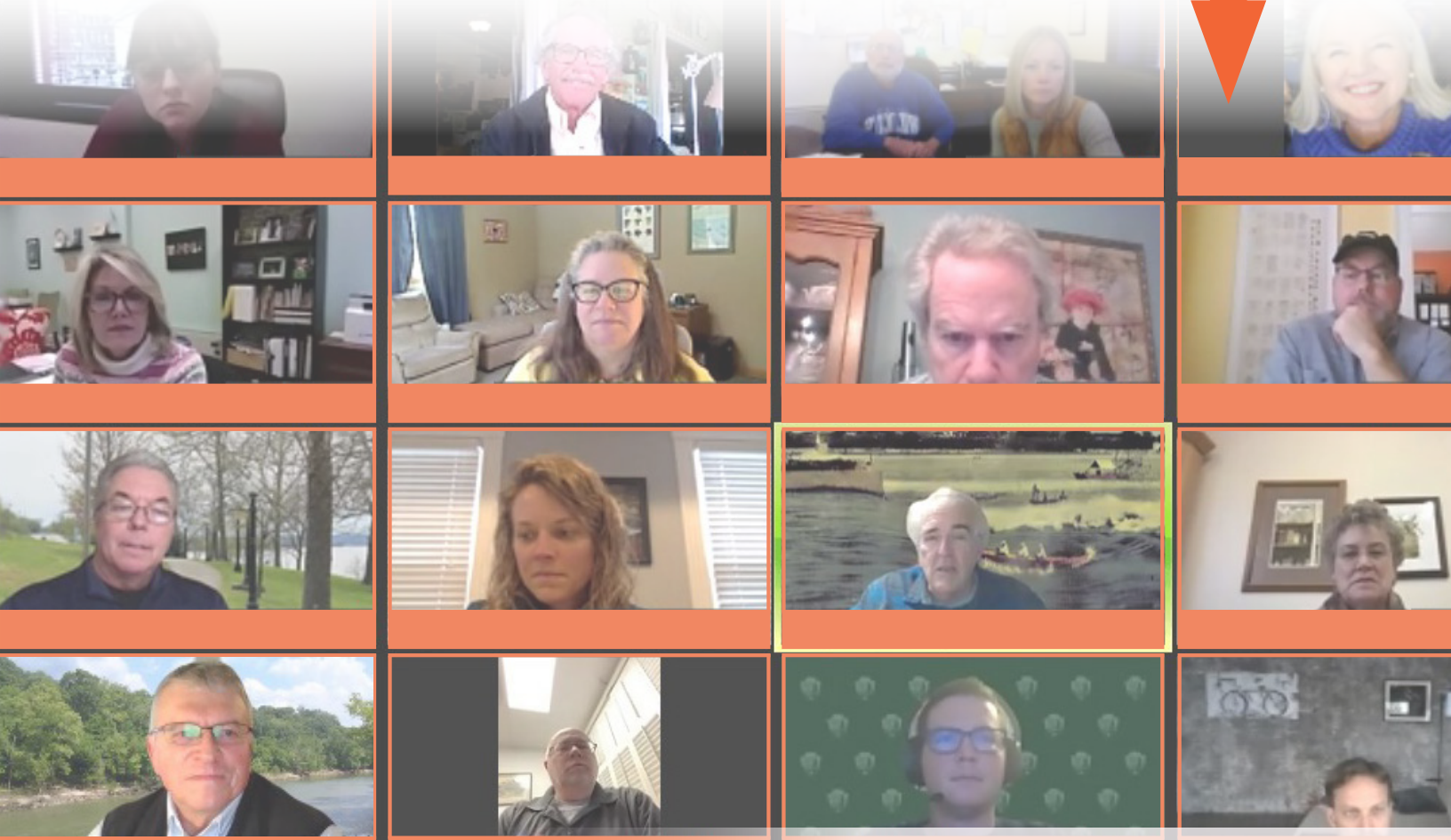
New App - VALUABLE for visitors to download

Kayak/Canoe Launch site

partnering with larger travel companies

History Madison focusing the riv

Brainstorming Using Online Collaboration Tool "Mural" and Zoom



RECOMMENDATIONS & RELEVANT RESOURCES

One of the primary purposes of the River Town Review program was to provide recommendations and resources for communities to enhance outdoor recreation and boost tourism. With this in mind, the Summary contains immediate action items and recommendations for short- and long-term objectives that address issues common to most of the River Towns. Ideally, sharing these with the group will lead to innovative partnerships and collaborative efforts to help communities reach their goals. To help facilitate this, contact information for all 14 river towns, and the River Town Review Team are included in Appendix A, while a comprehensive list of relevant resources can be found in Appendix B.



New Richmond

Promoting Outdoor Recreation The Most Important Immediate Action Item!

- Desktop reviewers found that communities were doing a quality job of promoting the traditional tourism resources of “where to stay, eat, shop, and be entertained”. However, information about outdoor recreation was lacking.
- Many Ohio River Towns are not effectively promoting the outdoor recreation resources that can eventually set them apart from other communities and provide the outdoor recreation community with information regarding what they can do and experience in the outdoors.
- Websites should feature specific and clear navigation tabs (see below). Start by adding links under these tabs to local groups, popular websites and apps. Examples are included in Appendix B.
- Communities can develop a regional outdoor recreation opportunities map, showing potential visitors at a quick glance, the experiences that are adjacent to their city, or within a reasonable drive.
- All the above are applicable to printed promotional materials, as well.

Develop clear website tabs, so people visiting your website can easily find recreation opportunities.

CYCLING **BOATING** **WILDLIFE VIEWING** **CAMPING** **HIKING**

Clifty Falls State Park

- Observation Tower
- Canyon access
- Hoffman Falls
- Tunnel & Tunnel Falls
- Hickory Grove to Lookout Point
- Little Clifty Falls
- Clifty Canyon Rim
- Campground to Nature Center



While beginning to plan for short and long-term projects, communities can start building support and gaining momentum by first prioritizing and tackling the following

Immediate Action Items:

- Discuss your River Town Review with elected officials, community leaders, outdoor recreation and tourism advocates, and residents.
- Support current master plans, particularly those aspects addressing outdoor recreation, bike and pedestrian improvements, and riverfront development.
- Review the list of Contacts and Community Resources in Appendices A and B.
- Encourage local businesses and attractions to add information to the Ohio River Way's Digital Guide and to the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Experience's interactive map.
- Become partners with the Ohio River Way, the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, Ohio's Buckeye Trail, and the American Discovery Trail. Add their links to your websites.
- Consider becoming a "Trail Town", a safe and welcoming haven with services for hikers, paddlers, and cyclists. Take the first step by reviewing the resources and inspiring examples found in Appendix B.
- Promote and provide support for existing regional trails and trail planning efforts.
- Address the perception of the Ohio River as polluted and unsafe, by providing the public with boating safety and water quality information available through the Ohio River Way, the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission, and the Foundation for Ohio River Education (see resources in Appendix B).
- Collectively promote the powerful story of the Underground Railroad and market it as a regional destination to a national audience.
- Solicit input from and engage younger and more diverse audiences.
- Encourage local businesses to install bike racks while seeking Bike-Friendly Business designations through the American League of Bicyclists.
- Cross market local paddling events at Cincinnati's Ohio River Paddlefest, (the nation's largest), the Louisville Mayor's Hike, Bike and Paddle, Maysville and Manchester's M2M, and the Ohio River Way Challenge.
- Promote the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge and its Kayak Challenge to visit all 20 of the refuge's islands.
- Market and promote recreation opportunities available on the Ohio River and its tributaries.

Short Term Initiatives

Projects that can be accomplished within the first three years.

- Become more welcoming to the cyclists by installing bike racks, pump/repair stations, storage lockers, and charging stations for the growing number of E-Bikes.
- Enhance walkability by adding/maintaining crosswalks and sidewalks, and accessing the resources of America Walks.
- Install, maintain, and update wayfinding and trail signage.
- Provide primitive tent site areas for paddlers, cyclists, and hikers.
- Begin planning for a true kayak launch and transient docking facility, a highly ranked item in many community workshops. Consider an accessible fishing pier, as well.
- Promote and encourage pet friendly businesses.
- Solicit vendors to offer canoe, kayak and bike rentals. Parks and recreation departments, local universities, marinas, or outdoor shops may be interested in providing these services.
- Promote the American Discovery Trail, the Buckeye Trail, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and the North Country National Scenic Trail. Include Adventure Cycling's US Bike Routes, the Underground Railroad, the Louisville Loop, and Cincinnati Crown trails, as well. Show local connections to these trails on websites and through signage.
- Develop a long-term plan for maintenance and upgrade of local park facilities.
- Partner with other river towns, including the ones right across the river, to do programming or provide services!

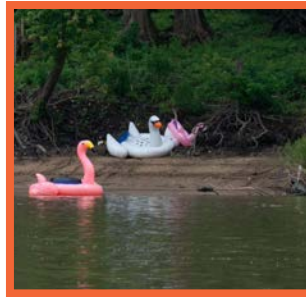
Long-Term Initiatives

Projects/items that can be accomplished within three to ten years.

- The Ohio River and its tributaries offer numerous water trail possibilities. Appendix B includes a multitude of resources that will be helpful in starting the planning process. Good access will attract paddlers and visitors to your community!
- Work with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), to explore opportunities for trail development. The area's significant elevation changes may also be ideal for bike gravity parks.
- Plan for connecting trails to outdoor recreation opportunities regionally by looking outside the boundaries of your river town.
- Increase recreation-based tourism by reaching underserved markets and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the outdoors.
- Make riverfronts, floodwalls and levees more welcoming by working with local community arts organizations to develop public art/beautification projects facing the river. Newport, Kentucky, and Parkersburg, West Virginia, offer wonderful examples.
- River towns can collaborate on an Ohio River "Paddlefest Day", hosting events on the same day up and down the river.

Paddlefest - Fire Boat
Photo Credit: Teri Sanders

Outdoor Recreation Activities Along the Ohio River



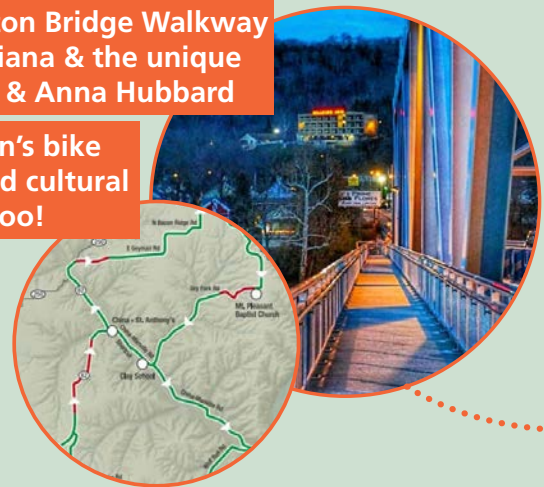
Observations & Kudos - Indiana

Team members found many unique and neat things that river towns, businesses and residents are already doing that make their communities special places to live in and visit. The following, listed in no particular order, are presented to give credit where credit's due, and serve as examples for all. A great collection, with undoubtedly many more worth sharing with your fellow river towns.

INDIANA

The Madison/Milton Bridge Walkway in Madison, Indiana & the unique story of Harlan & Anna Hubbard

Visit Madison's bike loop routes and cultural district too!



The Southern Indiana Group's Ohio River Greenway Partnership



**CLARKSVILLE,
JEFFERSONVILLE,
& NEW ALBANY**

Ohio River

KENTUCKY

OHIO

CINCINNATI

Ohio River

LAWRENCEBURG

AURORA

RISING SUN

VEVAY

MADISON

The Dearborn Trail & River Cities bike share program in Aurora & Lawrenceburg, Indiana



The very inclusive Arch Playground in Lawrenceburg, Indiana



Quirky "Fred the Goat" stories in Vevay, Indiana



The colorful riverfront mural in Rising Sun, Indiana



Don't miss out on Mac's Seaplane Service!

LOUISVILLE

Observations & Kudos Kentucky & Ohio

The Missing Soldiers Gravesite at the West Point Cemetery in West Point, KY



INDIANA

CARROLLTON

Paddling on the Little Kentucky River



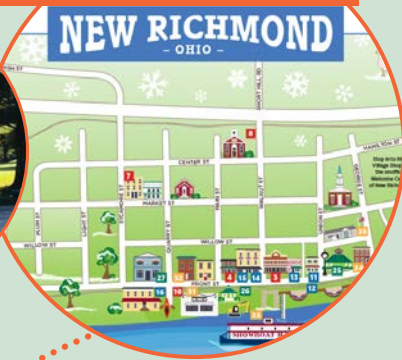
LOUISVILLE

WEST POINT



The modern 2 Rivers Campground in Carrollton, KY

The downtown map produced by New Richmond's River Village Antiques and Schack's Yaks pop-up kayak rental



The new skatepark and bike pump track in Portsmouth, Ohio. Not many communities anywhere can boast of this combination.



Plus the addition of CONNEX's bike rack program and Main Street Portsmouth's bench projects



CINCINNATI

NEW RICHMOND

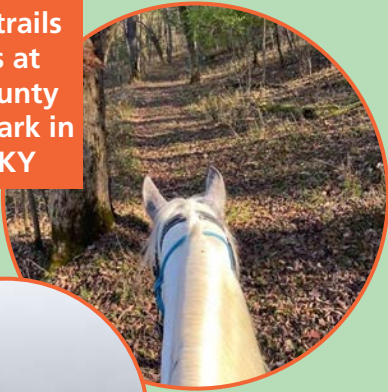
OHIO

AUGUSTA

MAYSVILLE

PORTSMOUTH

Equestrian trails & facilities at Bracken County Recreation Park in Augusta, KY



The Hole in the Wall (literally!) kayak operation in Maysville



Augusta's Jenny Ann Ferry, taking folks across the Ohio since 1798!

Maysville's recent approval of their Bike and Pedestrian Plan!

KENTUCKY

Voices from Your Fellow River Towns

To give communities an opportunity to share their River Town Review experience, ideas, accomplishments, and issues, and ask fellow river towns for input and advice, a series of questions was emailed to each community. The questions and responses presented are intended to start dialogues that may very well lead to partnerships and solutions.

What is your Current Best Idea, Plan, or Most Significant Outdoor Recreation Project?

- “Our best recreational project would be the upcoming boat launch/dock project”.
- “Tourism is working on major events in downtown Rising Sun, and working on a pop-up shop at the Visitors Center”.
- “New Richmond’s Liberty Landing Park is intended to connect and improve access from our historic waterfront business district to the river”.
- “Encourage support for the Ohio River Way through engagement and local sponsorship”.
- Madison Main Street is the nation’s oldest Main Street program, partnering with over 200 businesses and supported by 29 sponsors”.
- “In Maysville we are planning a river walk extension to connect Limestone Landing to our river park/boat launch/campground area. It will be 1¾ miles of multi-use access to the river”.

What is the Single Most Significant Issue Facing Your Community?

- “Lack of funding”.
- “There doesn’t appear to be much concern about improvements that will help our businesses, and tourism. Too many idea-people who don’t want to do the work”.
- “Poverty and its related social ills.”
- “Aging and inadequate infrastructure”.
- “Downtown revitalization”.
- “Lack of manpower and housing”.
- “How to best utilize being a river town. We lack a way to share our beautiful river”.
- “Lack of leadership”.

How Have You Benefited from Your Community's Participation in the River Town Review Project?

- "Lawrenceburg is currently in the planning stages for a significant makeover of the "wet" side of the levee, to foster movement of visitors from the river to the downtown business district. Aurora captured an Indiana Next Level Trails grant to link Dearborn Trail to the city park. The River Town Review reports supported both initiatives".
- "We are thrilled to have the data provided by the River Town Review to further connect with visitors and shoppers".
- "The River Town Review was a big help to me as the Tourism Director. I have learned to work closely with the Judge Executive, City Clerk & Operational Manager to help make tourism better. I suggested upgrades for Appelman Park and I'm happy to say it looks great. We now have a new RV campground in the city limits. Bike racks have been placed at the Augusta boat ramp".
- "The desktop review was an eye opener and led us to revisit our website info and what it was lacking. We have since improved and updated our events and online resources".
- "We benefited from the information that we received from the review itself".
- "Gained a better understanding of the economic benefits of capitalizing on and improving upon New Richmond's cultural and recreational assets related to the Ohio River. The first kayak livery on the Ohio located in New Richmond is largely a result of the connection with the Ohio River Way and River Town Review process".

What One Question Would You Ask of the Other River Towns?

- "Small cities often get left out when it comes to federal and state funding. What strategies have been helpful in obtaining maximum funding?"
- "Any easy affordable things to improve the community without breaking the bank?"
- "How can we collectively work better together to solve our shared challenges?"
- "How much of an impact do you believe the Ohio River Way initiative will have on tourism and talent attraction for Ohio River Communities"?
- "How have other river city downtowns overcome challenges such as loss of business, recruiting new businesses, (especially restaurants)?"
- "Our buildings are very old. Are there resources to help with improvements"?
- "Ideas and energy are great, but how do we find funding for these projects".

Thanks for your responses! Hopefully one of the voices from your fellow river towns helps with an issue you're facing, or your voice provides a solution/idea for a neighboring town. Or even better, both!

Lessons Learned

Each successive River Town Review benefited from the one before. Even the document itself evolved, featuring a more consistent template.

- Adding a review of master planning efforts helped give great insight into the direction a community was heading, and what projects and initiatives were already being planned for.
- The inclusion of resources in the “Recommendations” section, made the Review more user friendly.
- We learned the value and importance of visiting the community and seeing it firsthand. Walking a town’s streets, parks, and downtown areas, riding local trails, and interacting and engaging with residents, enhanced the team’s perception and ability to develop objective assessments and recommendations.
- Community visits also helped team members better understand and appreciate the significance of the barriers created by floodwalls, levees, and topography.
- The community workshops, all facilitated virtually due to Covid-19, proved immensely successful, due in large part to the work of community contacts in recruiting, engaging, and following up with participants. Local involvement was significant and energetic.
- Mural Software was found to be a valuable interactive tool, allowing community workshop participants to easily weigh in and provide input regarding their town’s challenges, opportunities, and goals.

The realization that many issues were common to all river towns, was crucial. It showed the need to share individual information with the group and was critical to develop this Summary. It presented an opportunity to provide recommendations applicable to all river towns, leading to future partnerships and collaborative efforts.

Moving Forward

River towns are encouraged to start prioritizing and working on the Immediate Action Items. “Quick Wins” will build momentum and gain support for the short and long-term projects to come.

- Don't forget to “toot your own horn” whenever projects or initiatives are completed.
- Celebrate progress made already and successes along the way.
- Apply for RTCA technical planning assistance for future projects.
- Use the contact information for all 12 river towns listed in Appendix A and begin developing partnerships. Take advantage of the comprehensive list of community resources to be found in Appendix B.

Virtual River Town “Rendezvous”

The NPS - Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program hosted a virtual session for the 14 communities to review the Summary Report and actively engage in dialogue with their fellow river towns and team members.

The River Town Review Toolkit

Created by NPS Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program, this will help communities facilitate subsequent reviews, perhaps with different audiences, or even in partnership with, or for, a neighboring community. The Toolkit will be made available to all upon its completion.

River Town Team Contacts



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The Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Experience

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We hope you find your River Town Review and this Summary useful as you move forward, building on the momentum you already have, and making your communities even more attractive, accommodating, and vibrant places to visit and live. We believe that enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities and capitalizing on your unique location and connection to the Ohio River, and to other river towns, will play a critical role in providing benefits for your community and the region as a whole. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have. The River Town Review Team is looking forward to seeing how community members use our “fresh set of eyes” approach to enhance outdoor recreation and tourism up and down the Ohio River Valley. Please stay in touch!

Thank you!

Thank you for inviting us into your community, for your support, enthusiasm, commitment, and hard work. Thanks also to the community contacts, elected officials, residents, and volunteers who were part of the 12 Ohio River Town Review teams.



A big THANK YOU to the team who helped make the River Town Reviews and this Summary Report a success!

The ORRT Team – Brewster Rhoads, David Wicks, Jack Sutton, and Frances Mennone; Megan Hedges – NPS RTCA Fellow; John Nation - Photographer; John Olivier – Experienced Services Program; Michael Schilling – NPS RTCA; Derek Schimmel – Solimar International; Helen Siewers – NPS RTCA; Alyssa Walker - NPS RTCA Fellow; Faith Welty – NPS RTCA Fellow; Joe Wolek - Photographer; And all of the River Town contacts and participants in meetings and visits!!

APPENDIX A

River Town Contacts

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APPENDIX B RESOURCES FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

Following is a list of assessment tools, programs, toolkits, guidelines, examples, helpful organizations, and funding sources, that could prove useful to River Towns as they explore new opportunities to enhance outdoor recreation in and around their community. These resources, though not all-encompassing, can provide a community and its residents, with their first steps towards reaching their River Town goals.

CONTENTS

Trail Towns & River Towns	30
Water Quality, Education Programs, and River Safety	31
Promoting Outdoor Recreation	32
Community Walkability & Bikeability	33
Cycling, Hiking, and Trails	34
Paddling and Water Trails	35
The “Long Trails”	36
Accessibility, Inclusion, and Under-served Markets	37
Sustainable Tourism	38
Maintaining Small Town Character	39
Grants & Funding Opportunities	40
Community Assistance Programs	42

Active links contained within this printed document are available in this document on the Ohio River Way website

<https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/>

Trail & River Towns

- [Trail Town Program](#) and [Trail Town Guide](#). Revitalizing rural communities by growing outdoor tourism. Excellent toolkits.
- Outdoor Towns: [Toolkit](#) and [Resource Library](#)
- [Rails to Trails Conservancy Trail Town Guide](#). Toolkit for trail town development.
- [Trail Towns - Northern Forest Canoe Trail](#)
- [Trail Towns - Huron River National Water Trail](#)
- [Kitsap Peninsula Water Trails Paddle Routes - Kitsap Peninsula Water Trails](#)
- [Pennsylvania Environmental Council's River Town Program](#)
- [Monongahela River Towns](#)
- [River Towns Program | Susquehanna Greenway](#)
- [River Towns Program — Tennessee RiverLine \(tnriverline.org\)](#)
- [Kentucky Trail Towns Guide & Kentucky Trail Town Program Workbook](#)
- [Destinations International – Variables Workbook](#). Good, online, objective, self-assessment tool for communities.
- [Basic article describing glamping](#). Glamping may be an opportunity for river towns



Augusta Riverfront

Water Quality, Education Programs, & River Safety

- [Ohio River Recreation Trail Digital Guide](#). Award-winning resource for facilities, water quality, recreation, and boating safety on the Ohio River, including unique information on current barge traffic.
- [Safety Tips — Ohio River Recreation Trail & ORRT On-Water Safety Guide](#)
- [Coast Guard Auxiliary Float Plan Check List](#)
- [Waste in Our Waters: A Community Toolkit for Aquatic Litter Removal](#). The River Network
- [Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission](#). Excellent, regularly updated resources and programs regarding water quality, recreation, boating, safety, and education, with many relevant webinars.
- [Foundation for Ohio River Education](#). Environmental stewardship programs for students, teachers, and the public.
- U.S. Geological Survey, [USGS Current Water Data for the Nation](#).
- [US Geological Survey](#).
- [NOAA Live River Forecasts](#)
- [Ohio Clean Marina and Boater Program](#). Educational programs, best management practices for marinas, clean boater and marina designations.
- United States Army Corps of Engineers. Good resource for water quality and safety, and recreational use of the Ohio River. Huntington District – www.lch.usace.army.mil, Louisville District – www.lrl.usace.army.mil.
- [American Canoe](#). ACA Florida environmental awareness and protection toolkit for paddlers.

Clarksville & New Albany Border
Photo Credit: John Nation

Promoting Outdoor Recreation, Websites, & Apps

- Hiking
 - www.alltrails.com
 - www.hikingproject.com
 - www.gaiagps.com
 - www.trailink.com.
- Cycling
 - www.strava.org
 - www.adventurecycling.org
 - www.ridespot.org
 - www.kamoot.com
 - www.bikemap.net
 - www.mapmyride.com.
- Canoeing & Kayaking
 - Nationwide, www.paddling.com
 - Indiana, www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor-recreation/water-trails/
 - Ohio, www.odnr.gov/discover-and-learn/land-water/rivers-streams-wetland/ohio-water-trails
 - Kentucky, <https://fw.ky.gov/education/pages/blue-water-trails.aspx>.
- For birding nation-wide, by state and county
 - www.ebirdhotspots.org.



Kayakers on the Ohio During Paddlefest
Photo Credit: Bryn Weller

Community Walkability & Bikeability

- [Walkability Score](#)
- [Bikeability Score](#)
- [America Walks](#). Pedestrian advocacy, and great resource for improving walkability and its benefits, and technical assistance to communities at no charge.
- [The League of American Cyclists](#). Founded in 1880(!), provides guidance for communities and business to enhance and embrace the cycling community. Bike-friendly community, business, and university designation programs. An excellent resource for improving cycling.
- [Walkability Assessment Tool | Planning for Complete Communities in Delaware](#)
- [Bikeability Checklist \(EPA\)](#)
- Indiana, [INDOT: Bicycle & Pedestrian Program](#)
- Kentucky, [Bike Walk Kentucky | KYTC](#)
- Ohio, [Bike & Walk | Ohio Department of Transportation](#)



U of L BikeHike in New Albany
Photo Credit: John Nation

Cycling, Hiking, & Trails

- [International Mountain Biking Association](#)
- [U.S. Bicycle Route System \(USBRS\)](#)
- [Indiana Bicycle Suitability Map](#)
- [Kentucky Bike Routes](#)
- [Ohio Bike Routes](#)
- Long Distance Cycling Routes: Economic Impacts, Best Practices, and Marketing Strategies (usu.edu)
- [Bike Gravity Park Information](#)
- [Warm Showers](#). Hospitality-sharing site for touring cyclists.
- [STRAVA Heat Maps](#)
- [Map Line Heat Maps](#)
- [Rails to Trails Conservancy](#). Excellent basic trail design and building toolkits.
- [American Hiking Society](#). Trail advocacy, local trail building and maintenance.
- [Hoosier Hikers Council](#). Trail building, maintenance, mapping.
- [Tri-State Trails](#). Alliance of community advocates working to advance the region's trails and bikeways.
- [American Trails](#). Trail design, building and maintenance resource. Trail advocacy and training programs. Trail Town Guide.
- [Louisville Loop](#). Proposed, partially completed, 100-mile trail connecting parks and neighborhoods in Louisville.
- [Ohio Horseman's Council](#). Good source for equestrian trail design and maintenance, and partnership-building.

Paddling & Water Trails - Facilities, Development, & Guidelines

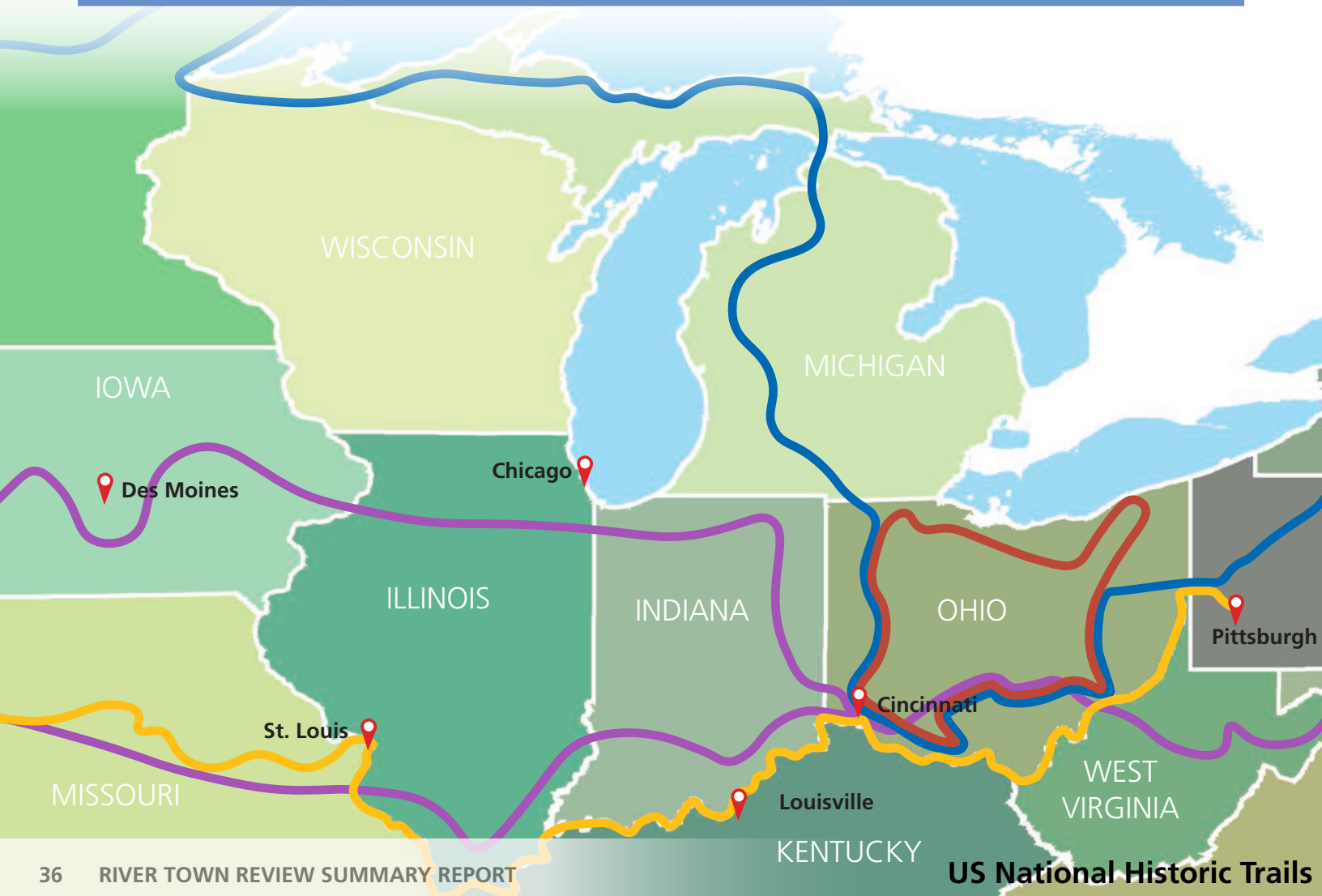
- [Ohio River Recreation Trail Digital Guide](#). Great resource for land and water-based facilities.
- [River Management Society Water Trail Information](#). including access guide, economic benefits, best management practices, and toolkit.
- [“Prepare to Launch”](#). River Management Society and NPS/RTCA, access planning guidelines for assessing, designing, and building launch sites for carry-in watercraft.
- [Ohio DNR, Development and Designation Guide for Water Trails](#). Development and designation guide for water trails.
- [Indiana DNR](#). Trail information and interactive “Where to Paddle”, map app.
- [Kentucky Blue Water Trails](#). Very good informational and promotional guide to paddling destinations.
- [Paddling.com](#). A good resource and way to connect with the paddling community. Good interactive map and app for paddling opportunities.



On the Ohio River in Carrollton
Photo Credit: John Nation

The "Long Trails" - ADT, BT, NCNST, & L&CNHT

- **American Discovery Trail (ADT)**. America's first coast to coast non-motorized trail, from Delaware to California, passes through many Ohio River towns.
- **Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail (L&CNHT)**. Roughly following the entire Ohio River Recreation Trail corridor.
- **North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST)** From Vermont to North Dakota and sharing the Buckeye Trail from Portsmouth to Cincinnati and north.
- **Buckeye Trail (BT)**. Circling Ohio for 1144 miles, including a section between Portsmouth and Cincinnati. Trail Town Designation program.
- Connections to regional metropolitan trails, such as the Louisville Loop, **Louisville Loop**, and the **Cincinnati Crown**, are also important opportunities for surrounding communities.



Accessibility, Inclusion, & Underserved Markets

- [NRPA 2020 Engagement with Parks Report.](#) Good resource for identifying and reaching under-served markets.
- [Recreation Management/Outdoor Industry Association.](#) Current trends, participation in recreation.
- Headwaters Economics. [“Inspiring the Future Outdoor Recreation Economy, 2021”.](#) Well done and attractive report/booklet.
- [Outside Business Journal.](#) Current trends and challenges.
- [“Five Steps to Make the Outdoors More Inclusive”](#) . 5 steps, each with several action items.
- [National Wildlife Federation.](#) Safe Spaces Initiative, making the outdoors safe and comfortable for all.
- [Latino Outdoors.](#) Promoting safe and welcoming outdoor recreation for all.
- [Thrive Outside.](#) Outdoor Industry Association initiative and grant funding to increase access to the outdoors in diverse communities.
- [The Adventure Crew.](#) Cincinnati-based organization connecting city teens to nature and each other through engaging outdoor adventures.
- [American Canoe Association.](#) Promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity in paddling.
- [People for Bikes.](#) Making cycling available to all.
- [Outdoors Alliance for Kids Every Kid Outdoors Program.](#) Partnership of 100+ organizations connecting kids and families to the outdoors.
- [Outdoor Afro.](#) National leadership group promoting inclusive outdoor recreation for all.

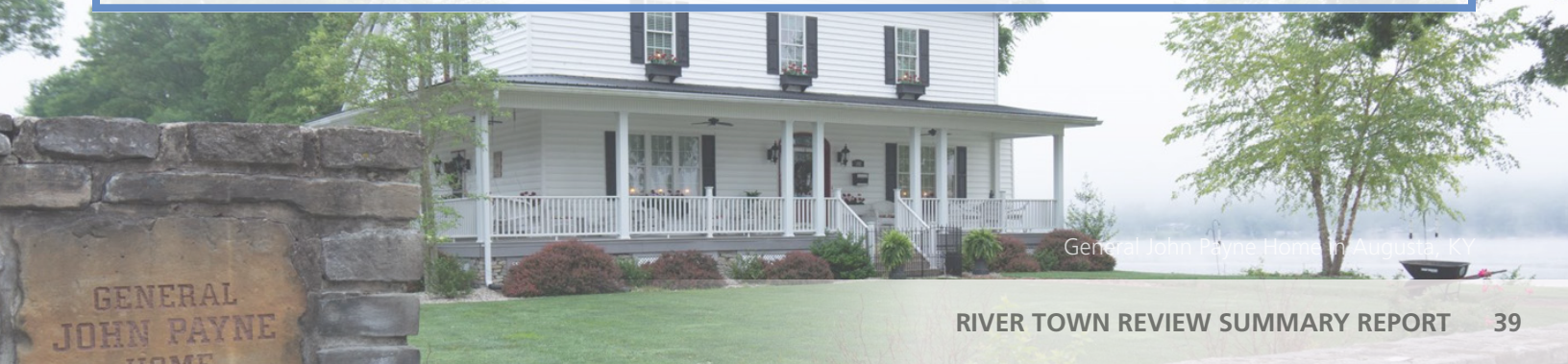
Sustainable Tourism

- [The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Rural Economic Development Toolkit.](#) Very good toolkit.
- [Solimar International](#)
- [Global Sustainable Tourism Council](#)
- [Adventure Travel Trade Association.](#) This may be a great resource for river-based project development.
- [The Invisible Burden of Tourism - Travel Foundation](#)
- [National Recreation & Park Association Agency Performance Review.](#) Very good for benchmarking.
- [Headwaters Economics.](#) Excellent information concerning outdoor recreation economic impacts and trends.
- [Promotion of Collaborative Stewardship of Destination Tourism Assets](#)
- [Innovative and Promising Practices in Sustainable Tourism](#) (viu.ca)
- [Ten Principles for Responsible Tourism](#) (Urban Land 2015)
- [Tools and Resources for Nature-Based Tourism](#) World Bank.
- [Pandemic Toolkit](#) (PlaceMakers.com)
- [Smart Growth America.](#) Creative solutions to COVID-related transportation challenges)
- [How Can Destinations Resume Tourism After the Pandemic While Ensuring Sustainability?](#)

Vevay, IN Streets
Photo Credit: John Watson

Maintaining a Small Town Character, Historic Preservation

- [Smart Growth Principles - Smart Growth Online](#)
- [Smart Growth in Small Towns and Rural Communities | Smart Growth | US EPA](#)
- [Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities & Towns](#)
- [National Main Street Program](#) Great program. Also mainstreetonlinetool.org, specifically for small businesses.
- [Kentucky Main Street Program - Kentucky Heritage Council](#)
- [Streetscape Design Guidelines for Historic Commercial Districts](#)
- [Geo-tourism Tool Kit](#). Geo-tourism is defined as tourism that enhances and sustains the geographic nature of a place, its environment and culture, all for the benefit of its residents. This toolkit features an excellent series of webinars.
- [Project for Public Spaces: The Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Transformation of Public Spaces](#)
- [Creative Exchange for the Arts Toolkits for Change Archives - Creative Exchange](#)
- [Finding Nature News, Nature Blog | Children and Nature Network](#)
- [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#). Very relevant resources.
- [National Association of Preservation Commissions](#). Preservation professionals group providing forums, advocacy, and training programs.
- [Portsmouth Murals](#). Example of turning flood walls into works of art.



Grants & Funding Opportunities

- [GRANTS.GOV](https://www.grants.gov)
- [Economic Development Integration | U.S. Economic Development Administration \(eda.gov\)](https://www.eda.gov)
- [U.S. Department of Transportation Transit, Highway, and Safety Funds](https://www.transportation.gov) Major funding source.
- [Access + Stewardship Grants | onX Maps](https://www.onxmaps.com)
- [Office of Small Business Development Centers Resources](https://www.sbdcenters.gov)
- [Community Restoration & Resiliency Fund](https://www.KeepAmericaBeautiful.org) Keep America Beautiful
- [Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program | Rural Development, USDA](https://www.usda.gov)
- [Community Impact | Waste Management](https://www.waste.org)
- [Online Funding Tool | Play and Recreation Funds | PlayCore](https://www.playcore.com) Grant searches.
- [National Recreation and Park Association](https://www.nrap.org)
- [Recreational Trails Program Project Database](https://www.recreation.gov)
- [Thrive Outside - Outdoor Industry Association](https://www.thriveoutside.com)
- [Bicycles and Pedestrians | US Department of Transportation](https://www.transportation.gov)
- [Citizens Institute on Rural Design](https://www.citizensinstitute.org)
- [Save America's Treasures \(U.S. National Park Service\)](https://www.nps.gov) Cultural and historic preservation grants.

- [Equitable Funding Hub | City Parks Alliance](#)
- [Funding Parks and Trails Through Land Trust Partnerships | City Parks Alliance](#)
- [Community Change Grants | America Walks](#)
- [Mini-grants | Celebrate Urban Birds](#)
- [Six Unique Trail Funding Solutions - American Trails](#)
- [State and Local Grant Funding - Land and Water Conservation Fund \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#) (LWCF).
- [Kentucky DLG - LWCF Grants](#)
- [Ohio DNR](#). One-stop shopping for Ohio grant information on trails, boating facilities, paddling facilities, education, boat sanitary pump outs, and LWCF.
- [Indiana DNR](#). Information on LWCF, Indiana Trails Program, and Next Level Trails, (focusing on collaborative trail connections).
- [Every Kid Outdoors](#). Program aimed at 4th graders and their families, with free admission to federal parks and facilities.
- [US Fish & Wildlife Service](#). Information on Boating Infrastructure, and Clean Vessel Act, (sanitary boat pumpouts), grants.
- [Appalachian Regional Commission Grant Programs](#)

Community Assistance Programs

Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program

- A national network of conservation and recreation planning professionals that partner with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and state and local governments to design trails and parks, to serve and improve access to rivers, protect special places, and create outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Free technical planning assistance is available for Communities and non-profit organizations through an application process
- [Directory of National Park Service Community Assistance Programs](#)



[Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program \(RTCA\) website](#)

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- [Smart Growth Technical Assistance Programs](#)
- Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities
- Cool & Connected
- Governor's Institute on Community Design
- Greening Americas Communities
- Healthy Places for Health People
- Local Foods, Local Places
- Recreation Economy for Rural Communities
- Smart Growth Implementation Assistance
- Smart Growth Implementation Assistance for Coastal Communities
- Special Smart Growth Technical Assistance Projects
- [Environmental Justice Grants, Funding and Technical Assistance](#)



US Fish & Wildlife Service

- [USFWS - Division of Partner and Intergovernmental Affairs](#)
 - Rural Fire Assistance
 - Small Wetlands Program
 - Landscape Conservation Design
 - Several other programs are available.



National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

- **Active Programs**

- Acres for America
- Bring Back the Natives
- Conservation Partners Program
- Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program
- National Coastal Resilience Fund
- Resilient Communities Program
- Bats for the Future Fund
- Monarch Butterfly & Pollinators Conservation Fund



US Department of Agriculture

- Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - Technical Assistance | NRCS (usda.gov)**
- Rural Development Programs & Services
 - Programs & Services | Rural Development (usda.gov)***
- **Strategic Economic & Community Development**



US Forest Service Shared Stewardship Programs

- Forest Legacy
- Forest Stewardship
- Community Forest
- Ecosystem Markets
- Wood Innovation
- Urban and Community Forestry
- Forest Health Protection
- Landscape Scale Restoration
- Forest Taxation and Estate Planning
- **How the Forest Stewardship Program Works**



YOUR FUTURE RIVER TOWN?

