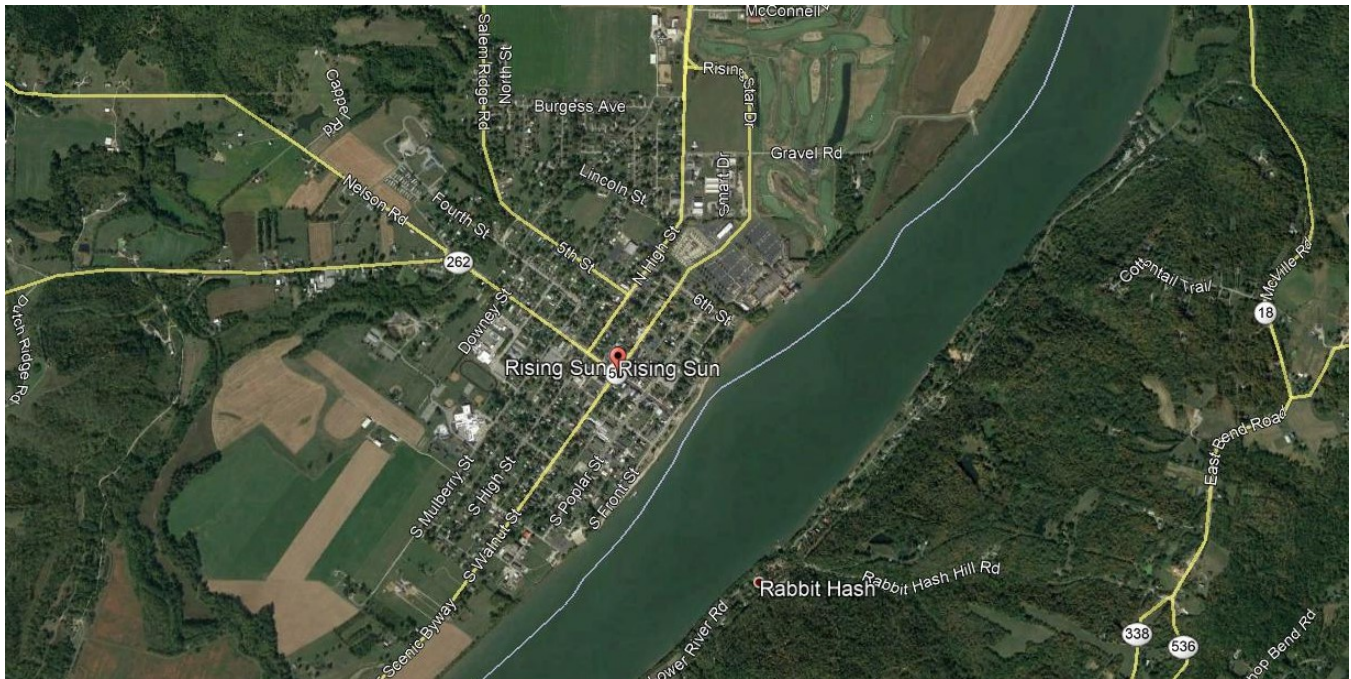




Rising Sun, Indiana River Town Review

Fresh Eyes on Enhancing Tourism & Outdoor Recreation in your Community



Round 1, Fall 2020

Ohio River Recreation Trail Team



NPS RTCA

RIVERS, TRAILS & CONSERVATION
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

www.nps.gov/rtca



Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Experience
Retrace the Expedition and Explore New People, Places, and Stories

Rising Sun, Indiana River Town Review

Fresh Eyes on Enhancing Tourism & Outdoor Recreation in your Community

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Introduction

Ohio River Recreation Trail (ORRT)

The volunteer-led Ohio River Recreation Trail steering committee is working to create a 274-mile land and waterway self-guided adventure trail that connects people to opportunities for outdoor adventure, recreation and discovery on and along the Ohio River from Portsmouth, Ohio to West Point, Kentucky. It will serve to promote tourism and economic development; facilitate education about the valley’s unique history, culture, and beauty; and promote environmental awareness and safety; and respecting lands and waters.

Vision: The Ohio River is an accessible and welcoming recreation corridor with vibrant river towns connected by land and water trails.

Mission: Facilitate world-class outdoor adventure opportunities through partnerships that promote healthy recreation, education, stewardship, and economic development for Ohio River communities.



River Town Review (RTR)

A team of professional planners from the National Park Service - Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), leaders from the ORRT, the Lewis and Clark Geotourism project and volunteers from outdoor recreation user groups work with engaged leaders to capture the benefits of outdoor recreation and tourism along the Ohio River. Their combined experience and skills provide a free assessment of the community recreation resources, facilitate a community input process, and prepare a summary of their findings for the community. The RTR helps communities see the possibilities and identify potential actions they can pursue to add sustainable recreational opportunities to their communities.

Rising Sun RTR Planning Process (see Appendix A)

The community of Rising Sun requested an RTR by the ORRT Team to provide “Fresh Eyes on Enhancing Tourism & Outdoor Recreation in their Community”. The request was approved for the first round of RTRs in the fall of 2020.

The RTR Team reviewed materials provided by the community contact and conducted a desktop review of the community’s internet presence. Several RTR Team members visited the community and met with key stakeholders. It was intended to be an in person, several days visit but plans were modified due to Covid restrictions. The team hosted a virtual community input workshop on January 13, 2021 that included a SWOT analysis and brainstorming of ideas for enhancing outdoor recreation in Rising Sun. The participants were asked to help prioritize the ideas generated into short-term and long-term goals for the community to pursue. They also provided a short description on their “favorite places to take visitors in Rising Sun”. The RTR Team reviewed and analyzed the information gathered and community input to create recommendations for this report.

Desktop Reviews

The detailed results of Desk Top Reviews can be found in Appendix B.

Process/Results

Five volunteers spent about one hour each on-line to see what they could find out about Rising Sun as if they were thinking of visiting for a day or overnight. They looked for outdoor recreation opportunities, lodging, restaurants, breweries/wineries, historical sites, attractions, and events.

Reviewers found the city website was suited for use by locals. The County Tourism website had a tag line of “Find your happy place along the Ohio River” with a navigation bar “Plan your visit”. Overall a very well designed and visually appealing website, giving the feeling that Rising Sun and Ohio County are engaged and invested in luring visitors. Recommend that webpages also emphasize services, businesses, and amenities on or near the Ohio River convenient for boaters, kayakers, fishermen, bicyclists, and other outdoor recreation users.

Overall, Rising Sun Ohio County Tourism, the city, and crowdsourcing sites give a good summation of the businesses and events happening in the city and sometimes along the Ohio River. The websites are modern, appealing, and updated often.

Walkability & Bikeability Scores for Rising Sun

Walk Score & Bike Score measure the walkability of any address using a patented system which analyzes hundreds of walking and biking routes to nearby amenities. Points are awarded based on the distance to amenities in each category.

- Walkability Score for Rising Sun – **52 Somewhat Walkable**
- Bikeability Score for Rising Sun – **40 Somewhat Bikeable**

Please visit www.walkscore.com for more information

Walk Score 90-100 Walkers Paradise 70 -89 Very Walkable 50 -69 Somewhat Walkable 25 -49 Mostly Car Dependent 0 – 24 Car Dependent
Bike Score 90-100 Bikers Paradise 70 -89 Very Bikeable 50 -69 Bikeable 0 - 49 Somewhat Bikeable



Rising Sun Riverfront Park Interpretive Walking Trail



Community Visit

Community Visit details can be found in Appendix B.

Community Experiences

On October 20, 2020 Two River Town Review volunteers visited Rising Sun and walked around to experience the community. Rising Sun is a quintessential historic river town. The heart of its downtown is Main Street with shops and businesses just a short walk from the Ohio River and the beautiful Riverfront Park – “*Where Main Street meets the River!*” With just two blocks to cover, the connection between the river and the business district is an easy 5-minute walk.

Some of the key things that the RTR Team observed about the Rising Sun community are:

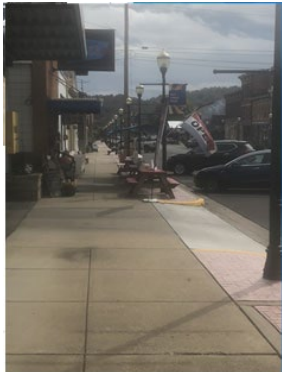
- Riverfront Park was clean and welcoming with numerous individuals enjoying the park for walking, picnicking, and watching kids on the playground. Riverfront Park is six blocks long creating a beautiful “front yard” for downtown with a great interpretive walking path along the river.
- From a transient boater or paddlers’ point of view, access from the river to the park and downtown appears straight forward. There is a courtesy dock for temporary mooring. Murals at the top of the ramp direct visitors to the downtown area. There are public restrooms available for boaters on Front Street

just steps away from the ramp and courtesy dock. A second, multilane, boat ramp is located approximately 200 yards down stream which appears to easily accommodate busy summer traffic and fishing tournaments. A seasonal food truck is staged near this ramp.

- There are no water-based businesses (restaurants or gas pumps, etc.) on the river itself, Mac’s Seaplane Service is located at the top of the Riverfront Park boat ramp. This is a unique business service, perhaps a one-of-a-kind attraction along the Ohio River. The Empire Hotel is located on Front Street directly across from the Riverfront Park.
- Downtown Rising Sun appears to be very walkable with many sidewalks and bikeable with slow moving traffic. The RTR Team did not see bike support facilities such as bike lanes, bike racks near businesses, or bike rental shops.
- Appears to be ample parking downtown and good wayfinding signage.

Some of the key things that the RTR Team would encourage the community of Rising Sun to improve are:

- Emphasize what visitors can do on the river
- Attract more water related business services
- Better wayfinding signage to all of the community assets, from the river and in town
- Marked bicycle routes and bike racks
- Increased use (programming, events, interpretive signage) at Riverfront Pavilion





Community Input

The detailed results can be found in Appendix B.

Virtual Workshop

The RTR Team hosted and facilitated a virtual workshop for Rising Sun on January 13, 2021. There were seven local community members that participated in the workshop with the RTR Team via Zoom. The Desktop Review and Community Visit findings were shared by the RTR Team for discussion. The participants were asked to share their thoughts by entering their ideas about improving outdoor recreation and connections to the Ohio River in the chat box during the virtual workshop and then prioritizing those ideas. Also, they were invited to describe their favorite places to take visitors and their perfect day spent in the town. This virtual workshop assisted the RTR Team to better understand what is important to the community and where the special places are in Rising Sun.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis

The workshop participants identified the following as the primary considerations for each of the categories of SWOT Analysis for the Rising Sun community. The list identifies the higher priority items selected from all of the ideas generated during the SWOT Analysis for all four categories.

STRENGTHS

- Riverfront Park!
- Our location along the riverfront is scenic and welcoming
- Potential for river activities and gathering places along the riverfront
- Modern boat ramp facilities with ample parking
- Easy access to the downtown from the river thanks to the transient boat dock and well-designed boat ramp
- Beautiful park right downstream of Rising Sun
- Downtown is above floodplain.... Minimal flooding impacts
- Close to Cincinnati
- Our early river history
- Unique business “Mac’s Seaplane Service”

WEAKNESSES

- Budget strains, rely too much on the riverboat casino revenue
- Lack of leadership/ teamwork
- Minimal bicycle infrastructure
- Lack of volunteers
- Lack of information about where boaters can tie up, for how long
- Lack of camping facilities for visitors
- We have a lot of apathy that needs to be overcome
- We seem to have ideas, but nothing seems to change

OPPORTUNITIES

- Actively promote river related recreation
- Being a destination and not living "event to event"
- Develop multi-use trail to connect Denver Siekman Park to downtown
- Connections to other Rivertown’s
- Need employment, businesses to locate here
- Need more public gathering places
- Develop a historic waking tour; Underground Railroad history
- Work better with Rabbit Hash, KY – with the ferry?
- Tour group buses

THREATS

- Lack of funding
- Loss of casino wagering money
- Aging population: young people don't stay
- Our neighboring counties are doing things so much better and we're getting off the radar
- Perception of the Ohio River as dangerous
- Apathy
- Aging infrastructure... need for ongoing maintenance and upgrades to public facilities
- Failure of main street leadership
- Local K-12 education not focused on local history, local geography, or even the Ohio River

Brainstorming Ideas

The participants were led through an exercise to identify ideas for Rising Sun to consider pursuing to improve or create recreation assets and tourism opportunities. The following lists identify some short-term and long-term higher priority items selected from all the ideas generated during the brainstorming exercise.

SHORT TERM IDEAS

- Placemaking improvements: bicycle racks, swings at the riverfront
- COVID friendly events – safe, simple, yet effective offerings
- Partnering with Aurora/Lawrenceburg for events
- Emphasize cycling opportunities

LONG TERM IDEAS

- Financial perks for business to open downtown
- Plan for future repairs and upgrades to Riverfront Park
- More work to attract tour groups after COVID
- Improve wayfinding signage throughout the community



A perfect day for a visitor in Rising Sun is....

The RTR Team asked the workshop participants to describe a perfect day for a visitor in the community as a homework assignment to help identify what makes Rising Sun a special place. Some of the common items identified were a walk along the riverfront park, historic walking tour of downtown, visit the local History Museum, shopping downtown as more shops & restaurants are established.

Please refer to Appendix B – Rising Sun RTR Documents to review all of the stories submitted.

“A perfect day would be to have a visitor have a selection of places to go & things to do. Shops on main street and the outskirts would be open, restaurants would keep consistent hours and stay open late. Things would be available at the riverfront & it would be highlighted to show off our spectacular view. We would be more boater & outdoor activity friendly and be able to satisfy families with children. We need to be a destination not just a place to "run across" while visiting other areas.”



A Vision for Rising Sun

The City of Rising Sun wishes to further enhance its historic riverfront to benefit existing residents and businesses and to attract new visitors and economic development.

Our vision for the Riverfront Park is the centerpiece of the community that celebrates the Ohio River – Rising Sun’s greatest natural resource and historic attribute. The proximity of the waterfront park to downtown provides the prospect for a unique recreational gateway for all types of boaters and visitors. Improved utilization of the Riverfront park with amenities, facilities, programming, and events could be a catalyst to expanding the recreational services and supporting businesses for the future of Rising Sun. Collaborating with other Rivertown communities, Ohio County, and local recreation groups to explore opportunities for river related events, bicycle routes, mountain bike trails and other outdoor recreation venues will provide economic benefits for the county, the community, and the general public. This vision will help to make Rising Sun an outdoor recreation destination by increasing tourism, business opportunities and quality of life for the residents.

River Town Review Executive Summary

River Town Review Input

The RTR Team looked at the internet presence of Rising Sun and they found the internet sites give a good summation of the businesses and events happening in the city and sometimes along the Ohio River. The websites are modern, appealing, and updated often. It is recommended to emphasize how much easier, safer, and more affordable it is to enjoy activity on the river when they are in Rising Sun. IE: Highlight amenities for hikers, bikers, paddlers, and pleasure boaters. From the community input during the virtual meeting we learned that Rising Sun could benefit from additional bicycle infrastructure improvements, attracting new recreation support businesses, and collaborating with other Rivertown’s. The key short-term ideas to pursue are to continue with placemaking improvements along the river and downtown and create cycling or walking events. The key long-term idea is to pursue establish partnerships with other communities to market the region and host joint events.

Rising Sun Future Objectives

The following objectives for the Community of Rising Sun are based on what the RTR Team observed and learned from the community. These items ought to be explored, brainstormed, and action steps should be created by the community.

1. Create bicycle routes beginning and ending downtown as loops to connect local attractions/features with signage (Bike/Ped Master Plan). Host regional cycling events working with cycling groups.
2. Continue to seek new businesses in the downtown area that support the recreation industry.
3. Continue with placemaking improvements and facilities along the riverfront and in the downtown area.
4. Continue to promote and capitalize on the Ohio River Scenic Byway corridor and the Underground Railroad history.
5. Create a comprehensive wayfinding signage system in the city and into the county to guide tourists to all of the local attractions.
6. Collaborate with other Rivertown's upstream and downstream to create regional events to showcase the recreation resources of the river corridor.
7. Create memorable places for civic events, attracting visitors, residents, businesses, and tourists and enhancing the business district along the riverfront.
8. Commemorate Rising Sun's history with the Underground Railroad movement.
9. Update the internet presence to showcase the outdoor recreation resources available in the community to make it easier for out-of-town visitors to research the boat ramp (location, cost, parking, etc.), where canoe and kayak launches may be located on the Ohio River creeks/tributaries, and where to dock, get boat fuel, or bait/supplies.

River Town Review Recommendations

The following specific recommendations are based on all information gathered by the RTR Team.

Desktop Reviews

- Much of what we found in the desktop review appears to be selling Rising Sun's location on the Ohio River. Consider placing more emphasis on what visitors can do on or adjacent to the river in Rising Sun. Don't just show the river as a natural asset – show people how much easier, safer, more affordable it is to enjoy activity on the river when they are in Rising Sun. IE: Highlight amenities for hikers, bikers, paddlers, and pleasure boaters.
- We noticed none of the sites mentioned the Ferry just upstream, the fact that Rabbit Hash, KY was just across the Ohio or that Arnold's Creek Marina (with boat ramp) and Campground is just 2 miles downriver from Rising Sun (with tent camping available).
- To our knowledge, Mac's Seaplane Service is a rare and unique business perhaps not available anywhere else on the Ohio River. For that reason, it is a differentiator which the tourism website might embrace further. Also, we were surprised to see the seaplane business did not come up in either my TripAdvisor or Yelp searches.
- One can Google and find some indication that there are boat ramps in Rising Sun, but it is not easily found on the tourism or city websites. We would suggest somehow making it easier for out-of-town visitors to research the boat ramp (location, cost, parking, etc.), where canoe and kayak launches may be located on the Ohio River creeks/tributaries, and where to dock, get boat fuel, or bait/supplies.

Walkability/Bikability

- Place more emphasis on bicycling in and around Rising Sun by:
 - Providing bike racks

- Providing signage for bike lanes and share the road infrastructure within the city and link to rural routes in the county
- Encouraging out-of-town guest to “Come Bike the Sun” or promote long distance rides through the Ohio County countryside for charity events
- Encouraging or investigating outdoor adventure vendor(s) to rent bikes, open a bike shop and/or sell outdoor adventure apparel.
- Create walking and biking clubs that meet regularly, safety in numbers. They could then create suggested routes/guides.
- Create and adopt Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan for Rising Sun and Ohio County that complies with the Indiana Department of Transportation standards for a Bike Ped Master Plan. This may allow for some funding for future linkages that involve the state highway. See Appendix C List of Resources, Dept. of Transportation Bike & Pedestrian Planning, Indiana weblink for more information.

Immediate Action Items (Low Hanging Fruit):

- Update ORRT Digital Guide with local businesses/services
<https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/digital-guide>
- Partner with the ORRT organization:
<https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/become-a-partner>
- Update community websites to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and riverfront services.
- Utilize the photographs from the community visit by the professional photographers, Joe Wolek and John Nation in future outdoor recreation information website updates.
- Congratulations on your efforts to become a partner with the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Community Partner Program. Continue to utilize this as a resource to reach other audiences.
- Create a scavenger hunt or “passport” to identify locations, historic, natural, or cultural items and include recreation opportunities (walk 5 city blocks to get a stamp) or have clues on kiosk. Fun and educational for old and young and residents or visitors!

Short Term Ideas to Pursue:

- Placemaking improvements at the riverfront and business district: benches, bicycle racks, swings at the riverfront, interpretive signs/waysides that identify L&CNHT, ORRT, Underground Railroad etc.
- Create a “Bike the Sun”special event25-mile bike ride through Ohio County ...begin and end in Rising Sun...Could be a fund-raising event.
- Install tables and chairs where the fountain used to be (under the pavilion) and promote dining and entertainment.
- Improved inviting signage to and from the river
- Organize a round trip Rising Sun to Rabbit Hash canoe/kayak race
- Organize a riverfront event with river partners and local businesses to call attention to the river and get community feedback on next steps. Have free short canoe trips, bicycle parade, guided history walks etc.
- Organize a paddling club that can paddle together and also promote paddling and offer training
- Have a river cleanup day – builds community, creates stewardship, educates, and beautifies
- Engage the casino or casino employees in events

Long Term Ideas to Pursue:

- Develop a partnership with Aurora and Lawrenceburg to promote the connection between all three communities and promote cycling and paddling trips between them.

- Financial perks for business to open downtown
- More work to attract tour groups after COVID
- Consider positioning Rising Sun as SE Indiana’s “Gateway to Ohio” given your boater friendly assets – transient boat dock, outstanding boat ramp and easy access to amenities for boaters in the business district.
- Expand Riverfront Park Interpretive Walking Trail
- Canoe & Kayak livery near the waterfront park
- Establish seasonal special camping area near downtown for cyclists and boaters - could require people to register online with the police department.

Additional Ideas to Consider: (From the SWOT Analysis & Brainstorming Input)

- Ferry service along and across the river
- Have a B&B Riverboat stop at the riverfront
- A K-12 service-learning initiative with area schools to highlight local history and engagement with the river
- Develop a multi-use trail to connect downtown to the Denver Siekman Park
- Rising Sun might partner with SunKing Brewery out of Indy... Co-brandingThey might be a special event sponsor
- Work with Boone County Library to merge our underground railroad history. Create an Underground Railroad History walking tour
- Signage on route to casino, directing visitors to the riverfront and informing of history
- Coordinate with county officials to seek additional public access sites upstream in the 5-6 and 10-11 river mile range to facilitate day use paddle trips that terminate in Rising Sun. This can help support a vendor to rent paddle equipment.
- Tell Your Story – Every community has a unique history. Explore ways to create memorable experiences in your community and on the trails that link to your city.

Classic Trip Opportunities

- Explore bike route from Aurora to Rising Sun. Reach out the bicycle touring cyclist in the region to explore potential safe routes to link the communities.
- Motorboat, fishing, and paddling destination riverfront development with overnight camping, transient docking & riverside related services/facilities.



Appendix A River Town Review Planning Process

The RTR Team has summarized and created an outline for the steps of the ORRT RTR planning process with a virtual community input workshop. Appendix A contains a summary of The Request Process, Pre-workshop Tasks, Workshop Tasks and Post Workshop Tasks.

Appendix B Documentation from River Town Reviews

The RTR Team has compiled all of the information received from the workshop participants for further reference in this document. Appendix B contains the data from the Desktop Reviews, Visitor Assessments, SWOT Analysis, Brainstorming Ideas, Homework, Comments, A Perfect Day in Rising Sun Stories, and other information collected during the RTR process.

Appendix C List of Resources for Communities

The RTR Team has compiled a list of resources for communities to seek additional information in the following categories: Outdoor Recreation & Adventure Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Maintaining Small Town Character, Grants and Funding Opportunities, Organizations and Community Assistance Programs. Please refer to Appendix C -List of Resources for Communities for a complete listing with website links.





Appendix A

River Town Review Virtual Planning Process

The following steps outline the Ohio River Recreation Trail River Town Review planning process with a virtual community input workshop.

The Request

- **River Town Review Request** – A river town community submits a letter requesting a River Town Review to the Ohio River Recreation Trail Team. Details about requesting assistance can be found at [Ohio River Recreation Trail](#). The river town communities are selected based on meeting the criteria identified on the website.
- **Community Participation Requirements** – If selected, the community agrees to provide a contact person, list of key community members to participate in the RTR workshop, list of community assets, map identifying the location of the recreation facilities, host a tour of the community with the RTR Team and promote/encourage participation in the virtual community input workshop.
- **The ORRT River Town Review Team selects** communities, notifies them, schedules the River Town Review Workshop, and engages the community contact in the pre-workshop planning process.

Pre-Workshop Tasks

- **Desk Top Review** - The River Town Review Team will explore the internet presence of the community through a desk top review by several volunteers. They will be exploring the community assets, determining if they have the information necessary to plan an outdoor recreation adventure in the community (Recreation activities, lodging, restaurants, entertainment, etc.) and preparing a summary of their findings.
- **Community Visit & Assessment** – RTR Team members and outdoor recreation volunteers visit the community, explore the recreation assets, participate in a tour with local officials, interview people about the community recreation facilities and prepare a summary of their findings.
- **Prepare RTR Working Agenda & Presentations** – RTR Team identifies presenters and prepares information for the workshop.
- **RTR team and community leads** meet for a pre-workshop confirmation review and recruit people for participation in the workshop.

Workshop Tasks

- **Virtual Community Input Workshop** – (COVID Travel Restrictions) The RTR Team facilitates a virtual meeting to share what the fresh eyes have seen and hear from the community. The Team presents opportunities for the community partner with Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail and increase their local businesses exposure on the ORRT Digital Guide. The team gathers community input/ideas through a SWOT Analysis, participants prioritize SWOT ideas, & participants Brainstorm ideas to enhance recreation and tourism in the community. After the workshop the RTR Team collects and distributes the prioritized SWOT Analysis Ideas, the Brainstorming ideas captured during the virtual meeting and sends

the data to the meeting participants. The virtual meeting includes power point presentations and interactive online polling.

➤ **Workshop Participants Homework** – The workshop participants are asked to review the prioritized SWOT ideas and the list of brainstorming ideas generated during the workshop. They are asked to identify their top three short-term and long-term ideas to pursue from the lists, visit websites and describe a what a perfect day for a visitor in my community is. This information is returned to the RTR Team to be reviewed and analyzed as additional input to consider for recommendations.

Post Workshop Tasks

➤ **Report Out** – The RTR Team assembles all of the information collected from the desktop reviews, site visits, and community input to prepare a summary of recommendations. The collected data and a List of Resources for Communities are included as appendix items with the summary.

➤ **RTR Team and all RTR communities** convene for a River Town Review Summit to share challenges, successes, and ideas for future collaboration.

Templates have been created to help record the information, document the procedures, and guide the River Town Review process.

Rising Sun, Indiana

River Town Review

Appendix B: Background & Supporting Materials



**Ohio River Recreation Team
River Town Review**

**A Collaboration of:
Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Experience
National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation
Assistance Program**

Summary Report Prepared by:
Andrea Irland
Russell Clark
Helen Siewers
Faith Welty

Fresh Eyes on Enhancing Tourism & Outdoor Recreation in your Community



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Application Letter



Ohio County Convention, Tourism, and Visitors Commission
PO Box 112; 217 N. Walnut Street, Rising Sun, IN 47040

August 5, 2020

National Park Service
Attn: Russell Clark and Andrea Irland

Dear Mr. Clark and Ms. Irland:

On behalf of the Ohio County Convention, Tourism, and Visitors Commission I am reaching out to you to submit our area for a River Town Review. Our office is located in Rising Sun, Indiana, the County Seat of Ohio County.

Situated within 35 miles of Cincinnati, OH, and directly across the river from Rabbit Hash, KY, Rising Sun is a riverfront community where our "Main Street Meets the River."

The Tourism Commission has a great interest in being selected for a River Town Review to help attract more tourism to the area and benefiting downtown/county businesses. We hope to become Rising Sun the "destination."

Below are responses to questions that appear on your guidelines.

Why does your town want this review?

Rising Sun is an undiscovered gem with its beautiful riverfront location and proximity to larger cities and towns. Before COVID-19, we were moving forward with getting Rising Sun on the "radar" for water-related tourist activities such as fishing, boating & canoeing. In addition, we were working towards attracting river travelers to shops and eateries in Downtown. Unfortunately, we've had little success and remain underutilized as a destination to attract visitors on and off the Ohio River.

With the Coronavirus still a deterrent to tourism in general--and reduced funding for projects overall--our goal is to work on improvements within our financial capabilities. Any outside assistance to make this happen will be most welcomed and appreciated. We are in the mindset that it often takes an outsider to see a project/improvement that can be accomplished and become an asset for our community.

What are your anticipated outcomes?

Our anticipated outcome would be to have our area studied to pinpoint how we can best attract tourists to Rising Sun/Ohio County by water or land. We are often overlooked as a "destination" rather than a place that was "found" as visitors were driving to neighboring areas. We want to move forward with low-cost ideas for placemaking along our riverfront to attract locals and tourists. We need to break the cycle of living event-to-event without much going on outside of these special activities.

What are your communities' biggest assets?

A beautiful waterfront location with a recently renovated riverfront including a new dock and walkways.

Who will be the main contact to work with the River Town Review Team?

Kendal Miller, Tourism Commission Executive Director and Jim McDaniel, Tourism Commission Board President.



Application Letter Continued

Who will be invited to participate?

Along with the Tourism Commission Board of Directors, Rising Sun Mayor Steve Slack; Mike Northcutt, City of Rising Sun Project Manager; Karrah Miller & Amber DePrez, Rising Sun Main Street Director & Board President; City Commissioners; and Lane Siekman, Director of Economic Development.

Does your town agree to provide information, stakeholder participation and host meetings, if selected?

Yes, community and private meetings are often hosted at our Ohio County Historical Society.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit Rising Sun, Indiana, as a potential participant in your River Town Review Program!

Best regards,

Kendal Miller
Executive Director
Ohio County Convention, Tourism, and Visitors Commission
kendal@enjoyrisingsun.com
(812) 438-4933



Photo by Lisa Bowne

"Feels like Home"
www.enjoyrisingsun.com – (812) 438-4933



Digital Desktop Review for Rising Sun

Five volunteers spent about one hour each on-line to see what they could find out about Rising Sun as if they were thinking of visiting for a day or overnight – lodging, restaurants, breweries/wineries, historical sites, attractions, events, outdoor recreation opportunities, etc.

Overall Feedback from reviewers...

Rising Sun, IN
ORRT Team Summary Review
10/10/2020

As of October 12, 2020, five individuals have completed Desk Top Reviews for Rising Sun. Team members included representatives from Thomas More University, One Dearborn, Inc., and volunteers of the ORRT. The following is a high-level summary of the findings

www.cityofrisingsun.com

The city government website had a strong and immediate visual impact with a large homepage image carousel. The site navigation appeared easy to use and appeared organized and included a navigation tab titled “Dine & Play, Shop & Stay”. There was a fairly current “Rising Sun News & Events” section further down the homepage with events/items I recognized from the Rising Sun Ohio County Tourism Facebook page. An “Upcoming Events” section adjacent to the news showed upcoming city, tourism, and port authority meetings.

Overall impression – This is a government website more suited for use by locals to interact with their city government.

www.enjoyrisingsun.com

This is the website of Rising Sun Ohio County Tourism. It has a strong visual element with an out-of-focus background photo of the Ohio River and text stating “Find your happy place along the Ohio River” and a “Plan your visit” button in distinct orange color. The navigation bar is easy to find, affixed at top of screen when scrolling, and appears well organized. Scrolling down the homepage, there is further messaging of Rising Sun as a river town with enough activities to keep visitors busy for a weekend. Further scrolling down the homepage seems to check through the highlights, most recent, and fast-approaching items, and events. There are also links to the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, Ohio River Recreation Trail, and City of Rising Sun websites. The website also offers a newsletter signup and a downloadable visitor guide in PDF – **very good!** The visitors guide appeared to be produced in January and provided basic information about the city, how it is situated in the Cincinnati area, a calendar of events (pre-COVID), and popular options for lodging, camping, attractions, services, food, and shopping.

Tabs

Outdoor attractions- Landing page shows outdoor amenities: Walking the Riverfront, Gazebo, City Pavilion, Veterans Memorial, Court House, MainStreet, Mac’s Seaplane

Where to Stay – Empire House hotel Looks interesting – However, their web site was not accessible

The Courtyard also looks charming on the web site. Is it still open? There are 3 campgrounds near Rising Sun – all appear to be primarily RV Camping.

Where to Eat: Listing of 17 dining / food options. We would suggest prioritizing dine-in restaurants such as Tequila's, Riverhouse III, Jack's Place and Main Street Diner above gas stations and fast food.

Events- Listing of events, most of which have been negatively impacted by Covid-19 restrictions

Overall impression – This website is very well designed and visually appealing, giving the feeling that Rising Sun and Ohio County are engaged and invested in luring visitors. We might suggest webpages or sections solely focused on services, businesses, and amenities on or near the Ohio River convenient for boaters, kayakers, fishermen, bicyclists, and other types of outdoor recreators.

www.OhioCountyHistory.org

This website contains some information regarding the museum but would probably not be a primary source for information for people considering a visit to Rising Sun beyond the museum. The homepage banner image shows the exterior of the building, but this could be improved upon with an image of an exhibit or a historical photo(s). The website does appear to be outdated with a 2014 vintage baseball schedule.

Social Media Platforms Visited included:

www.Yelp.com

www.Tripadvisor.com

www.travelindiana.com

www.facebook.com

According to www.tripadvisor.com the 5 best things to do in Rising Sun-

1. Red Wolf Sanctuary
2. Ohio River Scenic Byway
3. Rising Star Casino Resort – MS Lucky Lady (Ferry)
4. Ohio County Historical Society
5. Rising Star Casino

Most of the crowdsourcing sites highlighted things to do in and around Rising Sun. Some as far away as Cincinnati and Brookerville, IN.

Overall Findings of Desk Top Review – Suggestions to Consider

Overall, Rising Sun Ohio County Tourism, the city, and crowdsourcing sites give a good summation of the businesses and events happening in the city and sometimes along the Ohio River. The websites are modern, appealing, and updated often.

To provide constructive criticism, much of what we found in this desktop review appears to be selling Rising Sun's location on the Ohio River. Consider placing more emphasis on what visitors can do on or adjacent to the river in Rising Sun. Don't just show the river as a natural asset – show people how much easier, safer, more affordable it is to enjoy activity on the river when they are in Rising Sun. IE: Highlight amenities for hikers, bikers, paddlers, and pleasure boaters.

We noticed none of the sites mentioned the Ferry just upstream, the fact that Rabbit Hash, KY was just across the Ohio or that Arnold's Creek Marina (with boat ramp) and Campground is just 2 miles downriver from Rising Sun (with tent camping available).

To our knowledge, Mac's Seaplane Service is a rare and unique business perhaps not available anywhere else on the Ohio River. For that reason, it is a differentiator which the tourism website might embrace further. Also, we were surprised to see the seaplane business did not come up in either my TripAdvisor or Yelp searches.

One can Google and find some indication that there are boat ramps in Rising Sun, but it is not easily found on the tourism or city websites. We would suggest somehow making it easier for out-of-town visitors to research the boat ramp (location, cost, parking, etc.), where canoe and kayak launches may be located on the Ohio River creeks/tributaries, and where to dock, get boat fuel, or bait/supplies.



Digital Desktop Review for Rising Sun Continued

Individual Feedback from reviewers...

- 1) The City of Rising Sun website is very attractive and functional. Good info on the history of the community, local government officials and boards/commissions, good business listing, etc. But when I tried to find out where I could stay I could only identify the lodging entities but there was no website or FB link to them - just the address and phone number (for Arnolds Creek, Camp Shore Campground, Little Farm on the River and Rt. 66 Sunset Inn, Andersons Rivera Inn, Empire House Hotel and Hygge Flat Air BnB).
- 2) There was very little info about outdoor recreation opportunities on the City's website as well as on the Enjoy Rising Sun site. Both did refer to the Riverfront Park but did not note that they have two wonderful boat ramps, just a boat dock. No info about whether there was a charge for transient moorage, how long you can stay there or when it is deployed. Would be helpful if they had pictures of the riverfront that would show how convenient the place is to the business district. When I was there three weeks ago on a Sunday there were probably 8 boats tied up and I saw folks get off and walk into the business district.
- 3) Neither site mentioned the Ferry just upstream, the fact that Rabbit Hash, KY was just across the Ohio or that Arnold's Creek Marina (with boat ramp) and Campground is just 2 miles downriver from Rising Sun (with tent camping available). I had to use our own digital guide to find that out.
- 4) There were no references to cycling opportunities in the area. I had no problem using Rt. 50 to cycle from Rising Sun back to Lawrenceburg. Was a wonderful trip along the Ohio.
- 5) Nor were there references to fishing although I did see info on the Rising Sun Facebook Page about a catfish tournament in mid-September.

These omissions are easy to fix however with some basic information to flesh out their "Outdoors" section (on the EnjoyRisingSun.org site) with some pictures and simple copy. The truth is that the Rising Sun riverfront is the model that communities like New Richmond are trying to replicate. And their transient docks are the best in the whole metro region. In Lawrenceburg the only boat dock is the private one connected with the RiverWatch restaurant. In New Richmond the only dock available for boaters is connected to Skippers Restaurant. Of course, Hooters in Bellevue has a floating dock but again you need to be eating there to use it. So, I think they have a real asset here that should be better promoted to encourage boaters to visit the town.

Individual Feedback from reviewers...

Rising Sun Ohio County Tourism's Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/enjoyrisingsun>

I found the page by searching for "rising sun tourism" on Facebook.

5,502 followers/5,405 likes.

The most recent post was posted "Just now" with a photo of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Auto Tour Route street sign. The page appears to be very active with up to five posts in one day on October 6. There appear to be better than one dozen posts per week typically.

Most of the posts on the page contained a photo or a link with a photo. These images included food trucks, food items, animals, the local history museum, and seaplanes. Some of the posts on the page were shares from local

business, local government, or news stories. I saw some items relating to the Ohio River, including posts about Mac's Seaplane Service, Ohio River Cats Fishing Tournament, and the River Town Review program selection. Events on the Facebook page show 4-7 events happening per month. This appears to be up to date. The event listed at the top is a "Rising Sun/Ohio County Town Meeting" on October 12. Other events in October include food truck visits on October 9 and 23, and a benefit event on October 30. Looking at current and past events, I only see a few which explicitly tie to the Ohio River.

Overall impression – Rising Sun and Ohio County has a fair amount of activity happening regularly for being such a small town/county.

Website visits

www.EnjoyRisingSun.com

This is the website of Rising Sun Ohio County Tourism. It has a strong visual element with an out-of-focus background photo of the Ohio River and text stating "Find your happy place along the Ohio River" and a "Plan your visit" button in distinct orange color. The navigation bar is easy to find, affixed at top of screen when scrolling, and appears well organized. Scrolling down the homepage, there is further messaging of Rising Sun as a river town with enough activities to keep visitors busy for a weekend. Further scrolling down the homepage seems to check through the highlights, most recent, and fast-approaching items, and events. There are also links to the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, Ohio River Recreation Trail, and City of Rising Sun websites. The website also offers a newsletter signup and a downloadable visitor guide in PDF – very good! The visitors guide appeared to be produced in January and provided basic information about the city, how it is situated in the Cincinnati area, a calendar of events (pre-COVID), and popular options for lodging, camping, attractions, services, food, and shopping.

The Places to Stay tab provided suggestions for hotels, inns, and bed & breakfasts. It was also nice to see sites for RVs and camping.

The Where to Eat tab listed restaurants. I would suggest prioritizing dine-in restaurants such as Tequila's, Riverhouse III, Jack's Place and Main Street Diner above gas stations and fast food.

Overall impression – This website is very well designed and visually appealing, giving me the feeling, that Rising Sun and Ohio County are engaged and invested in luring visitors. Frankly, I was surprised at the variety of lodging options. I might suggest webpages or sections solely focused on services, businesses, and amenities on or near the Ohio River convenient for boaters, kayakers, fishermen, bicyclists, and other types of outdoor recreators.

www.CityofRisingSun.com

The city government website had a strong and immediate visual impact with a large homepage image carousel. The site navigation appeared easy to use and appeared organized and included a navigation tab titled "Dine & Play, Shop & Stay". There was a fairly current "Rising Sun News & Events" section further down the homepage with events/items I recognized from the Rising Sun Ohio County Tourism Facebook page. An "Upcoming Events" section adjacent to the news showed upcoming city, tourism, and port authority meetings.

The "Dine & Play, Shop & Stay" navigation bar link took me to a local business directory webpage with business names, addresses, and "more details" link for each. There was also an ability to highlight or sort the business list according to category, such as dine, play, service, shop, and stay. The More Details link for each business went to a new page with that business' address, phone number, map, and in some rare cases a website address. I feel like this page should have a very prominent link to the tourism website EnjoyRisingSun.com, or perhaps even have the "Dine & Play, Shop & Stay" navigation bar tab link directly there.

Overall impression – This is a government website more suited for use by locals to interact with their city government.

www.OhioCountyHistory.org

This website contains some information regarding the museum but would probably not be a primary source for information for people considering a visit to Rising Sun beyond the museum. The homepage banner image shows the exterior of the building, but this could be improved upon with an image of an exhibit or a historical photo(s). The website does appear to be outdated with a 2014 vintage baseball schedule.

Find one positive story from a news source (newspaper, tv, magazine, blog, etc.)

By searching “Rising Sun Indiana” on Google News, I found this local news story about Rising Sun Ohio County Tourism’s Christmas light decoration contest. <https://www.eaglecountryonline.com/news/local-news/ohio-county-tourism-announces-light-up-ohio-county-holiday-decorating-contest/>

Find one story about Covid impacts and how it is affecting the town

EagleCountryOnline.com - Rising Sun Pool Go'er Tests Positive For COVID-19; Pool Remains Closed – July 15, 2020 - <https://www.eaglecountryonline.com/news/local-news/rising-sun-pool-goer-tests-positive-for-covid-19-pool-remains-closed/>

Look at crowdsourced site for reviews (trip advisor, yelp, etc.) What is consistently reviewed well or makes the top ten list?

I visited TripAdvisor to Explore Rising Sun https://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g37473-Rising_Sun_Indiana-Vacations.html

- For Go Play: Red Wolf Sanctuary was consistently reviewed well with a 5/5 rating (22 reviews total). Rising Star Casino Resort-MS Lucky Lady received 4.5/5, Ohio County Historical Society Museum received 4.5/5, Rising Star Casino 3.5/5, and Dagaz Acres Zipline Adventures 4.5/5.
- Go Rest: Rising Star Casino Resort was the most-reviewed amenity with 315 reviews, but only a 3.5/5 rating. Empire House Hotel and Andersons Riviera Inn also appeared both with 4.5/5 ratings.
- For Go Eat: Main Street Diner had 4.5/5 rating with 28 reviews and Jack’s Place had 4/5 rating with 50 reviews.

I also checked Yelp and searched for “Things to Do” in Rising Sun, IN and chose the “active life” category.

https://www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=Outdoor&find_loc=Rising%20Sun%2C%20IN

1. Benton Family Farm, 5/5 rating, “Bentons farm is a great place! From the tiny goats to the pumpkins and everything in between, you can't go wrong here. Produce, etc. YOGA WITH TINY GOATS my heart is so happy!”
2. Rockin Thunder Jet Boat Rides, 5/5 but located in Madison area
3. Rising Star Casino Ferry MS Lucky Lady, no rating
4. The Links at Rising Star golf, 5/5, “This is a great golf course and reasonably priced. Typically, much cheaper than Belterra, but still almost the same level. The pace has always been good here. Snack bar is nice, and the hot dogs are the best around!”
5. Rising Sun Park, 4/5, “Once again the shoreline is full of driftwood. If you see locals picking some up don't worry, there will be more in a week. The paved path along the river is easy walking and the zig zagged path makes it easy for all to enjoy.”
6. Morgan’s Outdoor Adventures, 4.5/5 but located near Brookville
7. Little Farm on the River RV Park & Resort, 4.5/5, “My husband and I stayed here while working in the area for two months. This is a super busy place, but Joy and Tammy were able to always accommodate us in a site. We stayed in the lower campground by the river and enjoyed immensely. We highly recommend staying here; there are numerous activities to do within the campground and surrounding area.”
8. Scenic River Canoe Excursions, 5/5 but located in Cincinnati
9. River Ridge Park, no rating/reviews or image, limited information
10. Denver Siekman Environmental Park, no rating/reviews or image, limited information

If you were planning a trip with your friends....

What is one significant historical or cultural event that took place in the town that you would share?

The story of Hoosier Boy, an early 1900s racing boat which holds a record for the fastest round-trip between Cincinnati and Louisville on the Ohio River.

Where would you stay?

Empire House Hotel for its view of the Ohio River

Where would you eat?

River View Buffet at Rising Star Casino

What tourist attraction would you want to visit?

Red Wolf Sanctuary

What outdoor recreation would you do?

Mac's Seaplane Service, fishing on the Ohio River, canoe or kayaking across the river to visit Rabbit Hash General Store

Prepare a report of your findings.

Overall, Rising Sun Ohio County Tourism, the city, and crowdsourcing sites give a good summation of the businesses and events happening in the city and sometimes along the Ohio River. The websites are modern, appealing, and updated often.

To provide constructive criticism, much of what I found in this desktop review appears to be selling Rising Sun's location on the Ohio River. Consider placing more emphasis on what visitors can do on the river in Rising Sun. Don't just show the river as a natural asset – show people how much easier, safer, more affordable it is to enjoy activity on the river when they are in Rising Sun.

To my knowledge, Mac's Seaplane Service is a rare and unique business perhaps not available anywhere else on the Ohio River. For that reason, it is a differentiator which the tourism website might embrace further. Also, I was surprised to see the seaplane business did not come up in either my TripAdvisor or Yelp searches.

I can Google and find some indication that there is a boat ramp in Rising Sun, but I could not easily find this on the tourism or city websites. I would suggest somehow making it easier for out-of-town visitors to research the boat ramp (location, cost, parking, etc.), where canoe and kayak launches may be located on the Ohio River creeks/tributaries, and where to dock, get boat fuel, or bait/supplies.

[Individual Feedback from reviewers...](#)

Website #1: www.enjoyrisingsun.com/

The home page of the website is an image of the Ohio River, and the line "Find your happy place along the Ohio River". Scrolling down the page, there are more references to the Ohio River. When one clicks on "Small Town Charm" or "Riverfront Park" after scrolling down on the home page, there are multiple references to the riverfront view, but no options for tourism on the river. Scrolling down further, you can "Plan your visit to Ohio County, IN" and the following options are given:

- Attractions
- Stay
- Food
- Shopping
- Outdoors
- Maps

When one clicks on "Attractions" a kayaker appears at the top, but the only riverfront activities listed under "Outdoors and Adventure" are "Mac's Seaplane" and "Walking the Riverfront". I would expect kayaking to be one of the available options. However, the Ohio River is referenced, and multiple options of recreation are given for anyone's interests.

When one clicks on "Outdoors", many of the same options as above are listed without any typical outdoor recreational activities are listed, such as places to go hiking or biking. There are also no river-oriented options such as kayaking or paddle boarding.

Under "Stay", there are options for inn/motels, Airbnb's, and campsites which appeal to anyone's interests.

Overall, this website was packed with information regarding tourism in Rising Sun. It is easy to find a place to stay, where to eat, and what you can do when visiting. However, I feel like the attractions is lacking in outdoor recreational activities. I would like to see options for hiking, biking, and paddling, but there was none listed on

the website that I could find. Also, there are many references to Rising Sun being a town on the Ohio River, so I would like to see more options for river-based tourism.

Website #2: <https://www.cityofrisingsun.com/>

The homepage of this website shows an image of the Ohio River at the top, along with two other images that give the reader a sense of what Rising Sun looks like and that it is an Ohio River town. Upcoming events are listed just below. The “Welcome!” also states that it is on the riverfront, and there are many things to do. At the top of the page, you can select “Dine & Play, Shop & Stay” which sends you to a directory of businesses in Rising Sun. They can be organized into categories, which include Dine, Play, Service, Shop, and Stay. It’s helpful to have a list of everything all in one place. However, it seems lacking in river-based tourism.

When one selects the “History” tab a detailed history of Ohio County is given, including some of its history on the Ohio River. This page includes pictures of 43 engraved stones that tell the history of Ohio County that are found in Riverfront Park.

Overall, the website is simple to navigate while also providing all the sources someone would need to plan a trip to Rising Sun. I feel like it was, however, also lacking in river tourism.

Social Media Sites Visited: Facebook, Instagram

River Unique & Special Places: Riverfront Park, Main Street

Ohio River Features & Access: Riverfront Park

Community Events: Ohio Valley River Cats Catfish Tournament, Fireworks on the Riverfront, Riversweep, Navy Bean Fall Festival, Shine Pride Car Show, Santa Arrives by Seaplane, Halloween in Rising Sun, Junk in the Trunk.

Walk Ability & Bike Ability Scores: It seems that you could easily walk and/or bike around town. There were no specific places to walk other than Riverfront Park, and I was unable to find any places to bike specifically.

Related Web Searches:

• **Trip Advisor for Rising Sun:** TripAdvisor really emphasizes that Rising Sun is a River town but does not list any river recreation activities. The top five things to do in Rising Sun according to TripAdvisor are:

- Red Wolf Sanctuary
- [Rising Star Casino Resort- MS Lucky Lady](#)
- Ohio County Historical Society Museum
- Rising Star Casino
- [Dagaz Acres Zipline Adventures](#)

(https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g37473-Activities-Rising_Sun_Indiana.html)

• **YouTube Clip from WCPO 9:** There is a ferry that connects Rabbit Hash KY to Rising Sun, which is the first truly river-oriented recreational activity I have found.

([youtube.com/watch?v=NE2NMPdacW0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NE2NMPdacW0)) 4

Overall Summary: The given websites, Google searches, and social media pages clearly mark Rising Sun a river town on the Ohio River. Both Rising Sun websites are extremely helpful for those looking to plan a trip to Rising Sun. Places to stay, eat, and attractions are easy to find. However, as much as Rising Sun is presented as a river town, there are hardly any activities that are river oriented. I would hope that there would be more activities on the river. There was also a lack of options for hiking, biking, and paddling in the area, which is what I would personally be interested in. The websites do give multiple options for people with all interests, whether they would like to be more indoors or outdoors.

[Individual Feedback from reviewers...](#)

○ Website #1: www.enjoyrisingsun.com/

Upon visiting the site, a photo of the Ohio River is used on the main landing page which portrays their location and connection to the River. On this same page, one of the taglines is *“Find your happy place along the Ohio River”* which again emphasizes this river connection.

Scrolling down the page, there are some great references to the Ohio River: Under, **“Things to Do”** is a drop-down menu that lists:

Attractions

- Golfing
- Camping
- Shop

(Perhaps paddling, biking and/or hiking can be listed separately?)

When one clicks on **“Attractions,”** a photo of a kayaker appears as the background which highlights this activity. In addition, the heading **“Outdoors and Adventure”** appears near the top, emphasizing the opportunities in this area.

Also, under **“Attractions”** the Riverfront Park is listed, and the Ohio River is referenced

There is also a separate menu item on the main page titled, **“Outdoors”** but there is little on the conventional outdoor recreational opportunities such as paddling, biking or hiking.

Under **“Places to Stay”** there are three campgrounds listed at the bottom, after the hotels, B&Bs and inns.

Lastly, under “Events” from the main menu items, I found three items that were river-related events:

- Ohio Valley River Cats Catfish Tournament
- Navy Bean Fall Festival
- Santa Arrives by Seaplane

I found this website to be well-organized and clear with much useful information. I got some sense of the connection to the River and river-related opportunities; but feel these aspects could be given more visibility and priority.

Regarding social media on this site, at the bottom of the landing page, there are links to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, also hyperlinks to the **“Lewis and Clark Trial”** and the **“Ohio River Recreation Trail.”** When visiting the social media sites, I did not find much on “outdoor recreation” but the tagline on the Instagram page reads, *“Let the Ohio River bring the world to you in Rising Sun/Ohio County, Indiana. Feels like home.”* There is a strong connection to the River, but less so to related river activities.

➤ Website #2: <https://www.cityofrisingsun.com/>

Upon visiting the site, there is an aerial photo of downtown and two additional photos, one of which is a river scene. Under **“History”** the first image is a plaque that mentions John Fulton, relative of Robert Fulton, and Steamboats. Further, there are several references to the River and the town describes itself as a “river town.” This site provides a lot of “technical information” regarding governance but under the menu item, **“Dine & Play, Shop & Stay”** there is a picture of the River as the heading of this page. The page contains a long list of business and locations, and one can sort by the category, “Play.” Those items that come up mention three parks, but little on recreational activities.

Under “News and Notes” on the main landing page, there was a reference to the “Ohio County Port Authority” and boat docks; but I couldn’t readily find more information about this. Under the **“Parks Department,”** there were no pictures of the River or outdoor activities.

Overall, I found this to be more informational about the “nuts & bolts” of the town, and less so for tourism.

There is one reference to social media on this site, **“Find us on Facebook.”** I did not see a link to a Twitter or Instagram page.

When linking to the Facebook page, there is a picture of the River as the heading:

Social Media Sites Visited: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for the Tourism Board

River Unique & Special Places: Mainly riverfront parks

Ohio River Features & Access: Several Ohio River photos, but I did not find anything related to river access or amenities on the River. I did not feel the sties catered to the boating or paddling community.

Community Highlights

Relevant Information

Community Events: There are some events that are along the river, and one fish tournament, but nothing I could find that was directly on the water.

Walk Ability & Bike Ability Scores: Little reference to biking, two riverfront walking trails highlighted.

➤ Related Web Searches:

- Trip Advisor for Rising Sun: https://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g37473-Rising_Sun_Indiana-Vacations.html
Many, if not most of the photos on this site were river related. There were also a few pictures of ziplining. But under, “Things to Do” there was little to no reference to outdoor activities.

- Travel Indiana: <https://travelindiana.com/top-ten-things-to-do-in-rising-sun-indiana/>

Under the “Top Ten Things to Do in Rising Sun, Indiana, this site lists:

1. Fly through treetops at Dagaz Acres Zipline.

2. Howl with wolves at Red Wolf Sanctuary.

3. Watch world-renown harps being made at Harps On Main.

4. Board Mac’s Seaplane for a bird’s-eye view of the Ohio River—and thrill over the landing!

5. Roll the dice or play the slots at Rising Star Casino.

6. Rent a kayak or canoe from J&J Recreation and bring your camera to capture the moment of spotting wildlife and birds while floating the river.

7. Visit the Hoosier Boy and Hoosier Girl racing boats at the Ohio County History Museum.

8. Marvel at the size of catfish caught in one of the largest catfish tournaments in the nation.

9. Tee-off at Scottish Link Golf Course.

10. Spend the night, or a weekend, at unique accommodations that aim to please.

Numbers 1, 6 and 8 are related to outdoor activities, especially #6. I could not locate a website for J&J Recreation though.

Overall Summary: Through the websites and social media outlets, it’s clear that Rising Sun identifies itself as a “river town.” There are several references to the Ohio River and multiple river photos. However, I did not find any separate headings or menu items directly related to river-related or paddling activities. Most of the river-related events or facilities were indirectly referenced, as such. Further, I did not find any information that was directly geared to hikers, bikers, paddlers, or boat

[Individual Feedback from reviewers...](#)

Desk Top Review:

Outdoor Recreation Facilities & Activities

- Golf
- Walking along the river
- Boating but very little information about it

Social Media Sites Visited

- Rising Sun Facebook page
 - o Fairly generic, highlights places as far away as Cincinnati
 - o Would like to see more local regular posts.
- Rising Sun/Ohio County Tourism Facebook
 - o Regular posts often several per day
 - o Not useful for seeing what all is available in Rising Sun. Not linked to local attractions Facebook or social media
- Rising Sun Main Street Facebook
 - o Regular posts that really highlight local activities and businesses.

River Unique & Special Places –

- River Front is prominently highlighted on websites and google maps of Great aerial shot on the home page of cityofrisingsun.com
 - o Rising Sun prominently featured on the Ohio County Tourism website
 - River Front Park
 - Main Street Rising Sun
 - City Pavilion
 - Ohio County Historical Museum
 - Veteran’s Memorial
 - Gazebo
 - Court House
 - o Tourism website has nice graphics highlighting paddling in the top banner
 - o Float plane tours
 - o Rocks on Rising Sun Rock Hunt
 - Unique activity where residents paint and hide rocks around town
 - Visitors are encouraged to re-hide rocks they find, or event take them home and hide them in their communities. What a way to make a visitor feel welcome and build a connection back to Rising Sun

Ohio River Features & Access

- The river is front and center on the websites, but I have found little mention of where I can pull up a kayak, tie off my boat, or park my bike.
- It is easy to see that the town is accessible from the river and pictures show a boat dock but I could not find any information about who to contact for docking a boat or if there is any costs associated with it.

Community Highlights

- Clear pride in the riverfront and highlighting it.
- Easy to find listings of local attractions and businesses though some of the information available is limited.
- There are lots of things to do in the community even for boaters
 - o Casino
 - o Golf
 - o Restaurants
 - o Lodging options
 - o Museums
 - o Wolf sanctuary!!!!!! Probably only accessible to those on bike though if Uber or Lyft is operating in the area that might make it accessible

Relevant Information

- Cityofrisingsun.com website
 - o Nice searchable list of local businesses and attractions with links to more information about each
 - Categories include Dine, Play, Service, Shop, stay
 - The extra information about places to stay is limited. No descriptions of what it is like, website links, or short descriptions. Would make it very challenging for a cyclist or boater to know if they were open to overnight camping, or easy to reach from the river.

- Enjoyrisingsun.com website
 - Better geared to those looking for what to do in Ohio County, very much focused on Rising Sun.
 - Places to stay is more detailed than the City website and more comprehensive
 - It seems that the local venues themselves would be better suited to upgrade their own presence online with details. i.e., Route 66 Sunset Inn has an address and a phone number but few details about what type of lodging is available.
- City of Rising Sun page on the tourism website still has the latin placeholder language.
- Outdoors tab might be a good place to include information about where power boaters can dock, paddlers get out and where they can park their boats securely, and locations of bike racks.
- Good cross reference between some of the lodging websites back to both the city website and tourism website
- Risingsunmainstreet.org website
 - Basic information about the local community but some links/pages not built out.
 - Minimal value for planning a trip or a stop on a trip

Community Events

- Calendar is easy to find on cityofrisingsun.com
 - Possibly the result of COVID cancelling community events but most of the items on the calendar are boards and commissions
 - Clicking on an event takes the user to a page with more details and a map of the location
- Tourism website has a nice list of events organized by month of Santa arrives by sea plane sounds very cool but probably not one people would arrive by boats or bicycles to see

Walk Ability & Bike Ability Scores

- Walk Score only gives Rising Sun a score of 52 for walking and 40 for biking o Having walked around Rising Sun the town itself is very good for walking as long as you stay in the core area.
 - Traffic is light and there are good sidewalks
 - Light traffic also makes it easy to bike around town. However, there are limited bike racks and places to lock your bike up

The casino is not very well connected to the rest of the town. I know that casinos are designed to keep people inside but being better connected to the rest of what Rising Sun has to offer would make it more likely that someone like me who does not gamble very much would venture over to play a bit.

- Real effort should be made to extend the Lawrenceburg-Aurora trail to Rising Sun and incorporate the bike share program

Individual Feedback from reviewers...

Desk Top Review:

Outdoor Recreation Facilities & Activities

Website 1:

<https://indiana.hometownlocator.com/nearby/places-of-interest,n,rising%20sun,lat,38.9495048523,lon,-84.8538360596.cfm>

This website lists four categories of things to do near Rising Sun Indiana:

1. Eat and drink
2. Going out/ Entertainment
3. Sights and Museums
4. Leisure and Outdoor

NOTE: This website features many ads and is not the most user-friendly site.

Clicking on Leisure and Outdoor leads to an interactive map of the five most popular leisure and outdoor places. Each item includes a link to driving directions and more information. The Little Farm on the River RV Park and Resort, while not on the river, has a stocked pond for fishing. The link to sights and museums leads to a list of 20 places to visit, although not all are located in Rising Sun. The Ohio River Scenic Byway was number ten on the list. Several outdoor activities listed but not located in Indiana include nearby Boone County Middle Creek Park for hiking and Big Bone Lick State Park for camping, hiking, and fishing. The Going out/Entertainment link only mentions the casino within Rising Sun but lists other non-outdoor related activities at nearby locations. The Eat and Drink link lists 20 restaurants located within the city.

Social Media Sites Visited: Instagram and Twitter

The Rising Sun Main St Twitter account posted several updates on the Rising Star Casino Ferry, with some pictures on the Ohio River. However, most of the account's tweets did not mention the river. A rare photo of the sunrise/sunset on the river can be seen though.

When searching "Rising Sun, Indiana" on Instagram, few river pictures pop up. Mac's seaplane service and the Ohio River Scenic Byway are mentioned. The "Visit Indiana" account showcases the river views from the scenic byway under "#The20IN20 list Uniquely Indiana attractions." Mac's seaplane service does not have an account on Instagram, but several personal posts show images of the plane on the river.

Website 2: <https://ohioriverparksproject.com/the-parks/river-walk-2/>

The "Ohio River Parks Project" website features pictures of the river and gazebos at the Rising Sun River Walk park. It describes the park's characteristics, including historical plaques near the sidewalk, a viewing telescope, and an amphitheater. At the bottom of the page is a map and directions to the park. Under the menu tab at the top of the page is the option to choose other parks. The Rising Sun Fryman's Landing, another project located under "The Parks" tab, provides a public boat launch (<https://ohioriverparksproject.com/the-parks/frymans-landing/>). There is a video showcasing the boat launch as well. Harold Fryman's landing has a Facebook page where more pictures of the ramp are located (<https://www.facebook.com/Harold-Frymans-Landing-102195394954742/>).

River Unique & Special Places – Ohio River Scenic Byway and Rising Sun River Walk Park

Ohio River Features & Access:

Only one website mention river access. Social media mention any docks on the river, but a canoe/kayak business was mentioned.

Community Highlights:

The casino and Red Wolf Sanctuary were highlighted on almost every platform/website.

Relevant Information :

Community Events:

Several public concerts were advertised on the Twitter account. The Ferry Casino and one fishing tournament were also marketed.



Community Visit Photos





Rising Sun River Town Review Visitor Assessment

Visitor Assessment Summary

River Connections & Access

Rising Sun is a quintessential historic river town. The heart of its downtown is Main Street with shops and businesses just a short walk from the Ohio River and the beautiful Riverfront Park – “*Where Main Street meets the River!*” With just two blocks to cover, the connection between the river and the business district is an easy 5-minute walk.

On our early October visit the Riverfront Park was clean and welcoming. Numerous individuals were enjoying the park for walking, picnicking, and watching kids on the playground. Riverfront Park is six blocks long creating a beautiful “front yard” for downtown Rising Sun. It is well designed following consistent landscape architectural design standards and includes benches, picnic tables, shelters with ample parking close by. A primary walking path parallels the river and Front Street making for a wonderful walking experience for residents and visitors alike. The walkway incorporates historic interpretive information on paver stones to enhance the experience. The view across the Ohio River to Rabbit Hash, Kentucky and its lush wooded hillsides is spectacular! Access to the river itself is easy and accessible with ADA ramps and handrails. Opportunity for bank fishing is plentiful.

From a transient boater or paddlers’ point of view, access from the river to the park and downtown appears straight forward. There is a courtesy dock for temporary mooring. Murals at the top of the ramp direct visitors to the downtown area. There are public restrooms available for boaters on Front Street just steps away from the ramp and courtesy dock. A second, multilane, boat ramp is located approximately 200 yards down stream which appears to easily accommodate busy summer traffic and fishing tournaments. A seasonal food truck called the Paddy Wagon is staged near this ramp and provides sandwiches, soft drinks and ice cream to boaters and land-based visitors.

While there are no water-based businesses (restaurants or gas pumps, etc.) on the river itself, Mac’s Seaplane Service is located at the top of the Riverfront Park boat ramp. This is a unique business service, perhaps a one-of-a-kind attraction along the Ohio River. The Empire Hotel is located on Front Street directly across from the Riverfront Park.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Downtown Rising Sun is very walkable. There is a full complement of sidewalks along the streets and the crosswalks, ADA curb cuts, and site amenities are clean, safe, and inviting. Main Street has extra-wide sidewalks, benches, trash receptacles and a public restroom. There are several murals on the historic buildings creating a charming vibe to the downtown.

Most of the downtown Rising Sun has slow moving traffic, making bicycling on the streets a relatively comfortable experience for most bike riders. We did not however, see bike support facilities such as signage for bike lanes, bike racks, bike rental opportunities, bike shops or separate dedicated bike trails in the business district. There was one, sculptural bike rack located in the playground area of the Riverfront Park.

Signage, Wayfinding and Site Amenities

Overall signage in the downtown area is consistent and not overbearing – no sign clutter. There are road signs indicating The Scenic Byway and Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail auto tour route on SR 56. Entry into Rising Sun from the north (Aurora) along SR 56 has a “Welcome to Rising Sun” gateway type sign with landscaping. We did not see wayfinding type signage indicating direction to business district or the river and its boat ramps. Some businesses had clear “We’re Open” signs and some did not.

Streetscape amenities along Main Street such as streetlights, signposts, utility poles, flag holders and event banners were tasteful and in relatively good condition. Some signage near the river was showing age and looked “tired”. Overall, much of the site amenities were showing some age and will likely need to be painted or upgraded in the next 5-10 years.

One unique aspect about downtown Rising Sun and its Riverfront Park is its interpretive signage. There is a plethora of fun facts, signage, markers, and plaques highlighting the historical aspect of the community including river history, businesses, local families, and the Underground Railroad.

Parking

There is ample parking in the downtown area including off street parking.

Overall Observations and Suggestions

Rising Sun leaders should be proud of their town and its amenities. The business district is charming, and the Riverfront Park is an outstanding asset for the community. Opportunities and ideas to consider include:

- Consider placing more emphasis on what visitors can do on the river in Rising Sun.
 - Provide wayfinding signage to inform boaters where the boat ramps are relative to SR 56
 - Include signage that the boat ramps can be used by canoe and kayakers
 - Encourage or investigate having a vendor(s) to rent canoes and kayaks seasonally
 - Promote the river for outdoor adventure recreation
- Consider placing more emphasis on bicycling in and around Rising Sun by:
 - Providing bike racks
 - Providing signage for bike lanes and share the road infrastructure
 - Encourage out-of-town guest to “*Come Bike the Sun*” or promote long distance rides through the Ohio County countryside for charity events
 - Encourage or investigate outdoor adventure vendor(s) to rent bikes, open a bike shop and/or sell outdoor adventure apparel.

- Consider the possibility of attracting an on-water business such as floating restaurant, brewery, pub, gas pumps and store
- Plan for future repairs and upgrades to Riverfront Park – IE: 2-10-year Plan
 - The Large fountain at Main & Front Street was recently removed. Is there a replacement plan?
 - Shelters, benches, and site amenities all have an expected life cycle. Be prepared to reinvest in this wonderful infrastructure
- Consider enhancing the “Gateways” into Rising Sun from the Ohio River.
 - The ramp closest to the Riverfront Park has two murals welcoming boaters to Rising Sun. However, these look a bit dated. Consider updating the signs/ murals and/or adding landscape improvements near the top of the ramp to reinforce Rising Sun’s hospitality.
 - The multi-lane ramp downstream has some modest / utilitarian wayfinding signage and a map of downtown. These signs look a bit “tired”. This could be enhanced with a Gateway” sign approach along with landscape enhancements and wayfinding signage





Rising Sun Community Meeting Agenda

January 13, 2021

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 10:00 – 10:10 | Welcome |
| 10:10 – 10:30 | Big Picture & Online Tools
Ohio River/ORRT
National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program
ORRT Digital Guide & Lewis and Clark Geotourism Site |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | Tell us about your town (SWOT Analysis)
Strengths
Weaknesses
Opportunities
Threats |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | River Town Review Observations
Desk Top Reviews
Visitor Assessments |
| 11:30 – 11:35 | SWOT Poll |
| 11:35 – 11:50 | Community Brainstorming |
| 11:50 – 12:00 | Next Steps, Wrap up, & Questions |



Participants

Community Participants

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SWOT Analysis

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats

These are some of the results of the River Town Review conducted virtually and in person for Rising Sun, IN on January 13, 2021. The SWOT results were taken from all answers in the chat that were then presented as a list to the group and ranked as top three in each category. Repetitive answers, multiple listings and ties for priority resulted in the following list. Please review these ideas to inform the prioritization of the brainstorming ideas that follow.

Strengths

- Riverfront Park!
- Our location along the riverfront is scenic and welcoming.
- Potential for river activities and gathering places along the riverfront.
- Modern boat ramp facilities... ample parking
- Easy access to the community from the river thanks to transient boat dock and well-designed boat ramp
- Beautiful park right downstream of Rising Sun
- Downtown is above floodplain.... Minimal flooding impacts
- being close to Cincinnati
- Safe & clean community
- our early river history
- Location of Ferry to cross the river
- Denver Siekman Environmental Park - that is the name of the park downstream of Rising Sun
- The Ohio River - The Rising Sun Sign is great
- One day paddle from Cincinnati
- low crime & friendly community
- being the smallest county in the state

Weaknesses

- budget strains. rely too much on riverboat casino revenue
- leadership/ teamwork
- Minimal bicycle infrastructure
- Lack of volunteers
- Lack of information about where boaters can tie up, for how long.
- Lack of camping facilities for visitors.
- we have a lot of apathy that needs to be overcome
- We seem to have ideas, but nothing seems to change.
- being the smallest county, it is difficult to get funding
- No fuel available for boaters here. Boaters pass us by.
- teamwork is lacking at some levels
- lots of talk no action

SWOT Analysis Continued

Opportunities

- Actively promote river related recreation
- Being a destination and not living "event to event"
- Develop multi-use trail to connect Denver Siekman Park to downtown
- Connections to other Rivertown's
- We need employment, businesses to locate here
- Lack of public gathering places
- Develop a historic waking tour; Underground Railroad history
- Work better with Rabbit Hash KY - with ferry?
- Tour groups buses
- More state markers
- Explore use of ferry to promote the riverfront
- Better promote your Underground Railroad history

Threats

- Lack of funding
- Loss of casino wagering money.
- Aging population: young people don't stay
- Our neighboring counties are doing thing so much better and we're getting off the radar.
- Perception of the Ohio River as dangerous
- Apathy
- Aging infrastructure... need for ongoing maintenance and upgrades to public facilities
- Failure of main street leadership
- Local K-12 education not focused on local history, local geography, or even the Ohio River.
- Loss of casino
- How stable is the community? are young people staying and helping grow the community?
- Young people don't stay



Community Brainstorming Ideas

Follow-Up Notes & Priorities Results

The following List of Brainstorming Ideas are from the Rising Sun River Town Community Input Workshop held on January 13, 2021. The table following the list identify the short and long-term ideas to pursue feedback from the meeting participants

Brainstorming Ideas List

- Ferry service along and across the river
- More community involvement
- Have a B&B riverboat stop intown
- Create a “Bike the Sun”special event25-mile bike ride through Ohio County ...begin and end in Rising Sun...Could be a fund-raising event...
- Do a river cleanup day
- Having tables and chairs where the fountain used to be (under the pavilion) and promoting dining there and entertainment.
- We need a program to help entice people to open businesses in downtown.
- Consider positioning Rising Sun as SE Indiana's "gateway to the Ohio" given your boater friendly assets - transient boat dock, outstanding boat ramp, easy access to amenities for boaters in the business district, etc.
- Establish seasonal special camping area near downtown for cyclists and boaters - could require people to register online with the police department.
- Organize a round trip Rising Sun to Rabbit Hash canoe/kayak race
- Canoe and Kayak livery near Riverfront Park
- Is there a chance that the casino will close? if so, is there a planning process to figure out what is next?
- Promote weddings in Rising Sun
- Would LOVE to see a restaurant on the water at the end of Main Street.
- Establish an antique mall
- A K-12 service-learning initiative with area schools to highlight local history and engagement with the river
- Develop a partnership with Aurora and Lawrenceburg to promote the connection between all three communities and promote cycling and paddling trips between them.
- Rising Sun might partner with SunKing Brewery out of Indy... Co-brandingThey might be a special event sponsor

- Work with Boone County Library to merge our underground railroad history.
- signage on route to casino, directing visitors to the riverfront and informing of history
- I love the partnership ideas with Aurora & Lawrenceburg. How do you even start?
- Install bike racks in the business district and riverfront park and declare Rising Sun as a "bike friendly" community with accompanying signage.
- Partner with Perfect North ski resort in Lawrenceburg: offer ski groups a chance to learn some Underground RR history

Recommendations from Meeting Participants

Short-Term Ideas to Pursue
Placemaking improvements: bicycle racks, swings at the riverfront
COVID friendly events – safe, simple, yet effective offerings
Partnering with Aurora/Lawrenceburg for events
Emphasize cycling opportunities

Long-Term Ideas to Pursue
Financial perks for business to open downtown
Plan for future repairs and upgrades to Riverfront Park
More work to attract tour groups after COVID
Improve wayfinding signage throughout the community



Homework & Comments

Post Rising Sun River Town Review meeting on January 13, 2021, an action item homework assignment was sent home with the participants encouraging them to provide feedback on the following prompts:

- We invite YOU to look at your town with fresh eyes!
- Note other ideas or opportunities that occur to you!
- What other contacts could be valuable partners?
- Visit the three websites
- Describe a perfect day for a visitor in your community

A Perfect Day

Visiting Rising Sun

“A perfect day for a visitor would include a walking tour of downtown, the two cemeteries (Union & Cedar Hedge), the Courthouse, History Museum and a walk along the Riverfront Park. Shopping downtown (currently a limited number of shops open) and tour the Red Wolf Sanctuary.”

“A perfect day would be to have a visitor have a selection of places to go & things to do. Shops on main street and the outskirts would be open, restaurants would keep consistent hours and stay open late. Things would be available at the riverfront & it would be lighted to show off our spectacular view. We would be more boater & outdoor activity friendly and be able to satisfy families with children. We need to be a destination not just a place to "run across" while visiting other areas.”



Contacts

Organization Websites

Ohio River Recreation Trail	https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/
ORRT Digital Guide	https://www.ohioriverrecreationtrail.org/digital-guide
Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Experience	https://lewisandclark.travel/
NPS Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance	https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm

Contact Information

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Ohio River Recreation Trail – River Town Review

Fresh Eyes on Enhancing Tourism & Outdoor Recreation in your Community

List of Resources for Communities

As communities explore new opportunities to enhance outdoor recreation and tourism, the following list provides assessment tools, recommendations, guidelines and funding sources. This list of resources is the beginning of a journey to seek more information and it is not to be considered an all-encompassing list.

Table of Contents		
I.	Outdoor Recreation & Adventure Tourism	R1
	Trail Towns & River Towns	
	Community Walkability & Bikeability	
	DOT Bike & Pedestrian Planning	
	Bicycle Touring	
	Paddling	
	River Safety	
II.	Sustainable Tourism	R3
III.	Maintaining Small Town Character	R4
IV.	Grants & Funding Opportunities	R5
V.	Organizations	R6
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I. Outdoor Recreation & Adventure Tourism

Trail Town & River Town Resources

Trail Town Program: [Certified Network - Trail Town Program \(trailtowns.org\)](http://trailtowns.org) and [Trail Town Guide](#)

Outdoor Towns: [Toolkit](#) and [Resource Library \(townsandtrailstoolkit.com\)](http://townsandtrailstoolkit.com)

[Trail Towns - Northern Forest Canoe Trail](#)

[Trail Towns - Huron River National Water Trail \(huronriverwatertrail.org\)](http://huronriverwatertrail.org)

[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](#)

[RiverTowns Program — Tennessee RiverLine \(tnriverline.org\)](http://tnriverline.org)

[Resources - River Network](#)



Trail Town & River Town Resources ... continued

Kentucky Trail Towns Guide & Workbook

[Kentucky Trail Towns v1.0 \(kentuckytourism.com\)](#)

[Kentucky Trail Town Program Workbook \(kentuckytourism.com\)](#)

Destinations International – Variables Workbook

[DNEXT Online Diagnostic Tool Workbook 2017](#)

Community Walkability & Bikeability

Walkability Score [Get Your Walk Score](#)

Bikeability Score [Bike Score Methodology \(walkscore.com\)](#)

Walkability & Bikeability Assessment Tools

National Walkability Index [Smart Location Mapping | Smart Growth | US EPA](#)

[Healthy Communities: The Walkability Assessment Tool \(udel.edu\)](#)

[Walkability Assessment Tool | Planning for Complete Communities in Delaware \(completecommunitiesde.org\)](#)

Bikeability Checklist [bikechecklist1.ai \(epa.gov\)](#)

Departments of Transportation Bike & Pedestrian Planning

Indiana [INDOT: Bicycle & Pedestrian Program](#)

Kentucky [Bike Walk Kentucky | KYTC](#)

Ohio [Bike & Walk | Ohio Department of Transportation](#)

Public Bike Repair Station (Examples)

[Public Bike Repair Stand | Bicycle Repair Station | CycleSafe](#)

[Bike Repair Stations and Bike Pump Stations | Duo-Gard \(duo-gard.com\)](#)

Bike Rack (Examples)

[Bollard Post Bike Racks - Park Warehouse](#)

[Racer Bike Rack - The Park Catalog](#)

Mountain Biking

International Mountain Bicycling Association [Trail Accelerator Grants | IMBA](#)

Bicycle Touring

US Bike Route System [U.S. Bicycle Route System \(USBRS\) | Adventure Cycling Association](#)

Indiana Bicycle Suitability Map [LRP BicycleSuitabilityMap.pdf](#)

Kentucky Bike Routes [On Road Bicycle Routes and Events | KYTC](#)

Ohio US Bike Routes [Create A Map | ODOT TIMS \(state.oh.us\)](#)

Long Distance Cycling Routes: Economic Impacts, Best Practices, and Marketing Strategies [\(usu.edu\)](#)

Warm Showers [Home | Warmshowers.org](#)

Heat Maps (Data Analysis Tools for Outdoor Recreation)

STRAVA Heat Maps [Strava Global Heatmap](#)

Map Line Heat Maps [Create a Heat Map in Seconds | Mapline Mapping Solutions](#)



Padding

Ohio River Recreation Trail [Ohio River Digital Guide](#)
National Park Service [River Access Planning Guide](#)
[Images of Public Kayak Lockers](#)

River Safety

Ohio River Recreation Trail [Safety Tips — Ohio River Recreation Trail](#)
Ohio River Recreation Trail [On-Water Safety Guide](#)
US Coast Guard Float Plan Checklist [USCG Float Plan \(cgaux.org\)](#)
USGS Real time water data [USGS Current Water Data for the Nation](#) (waterdata.usgs.gov)
USGS Real time water data mobile version [USGS Mobile Water Data](#) (m.waterdata.usgs.gov)
Weekly Ohio River Water Quality Report [orsanco.org/weekly-ohio-river-water-quality-report](#)
NOAA Live River Forecast Center [NOAA - National Weather Service - Water](#)

II. Sustainable Tourism

USDA: Enhancing Sustainable Communities with Green Infrastructure
[Recreation Economy at USDA Economic Development Resources for Rural Communities](#)
[Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](#)

The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Rural Economic Development Toolkit
[Rural Development Toolkit – Outdoor Recreation Roundtable](#)

Solimar International [Solimar International | Tourism Marketing & Sustainable Tourism Consulting - Home](#)

Global Sustainable Tourism Council [Criteria, Standards, Certifications \(gstcouncil.org\)](#)

Adventure Travel Trade Association (This may be a great resource for river-based product development)
[Global Network of Adventure Travel Tour Operators, Destinations, and Industry Partners](#)

United Nations World Travel Organization [Sustainable development | UNWTO](#)

The Travel Foundation [Home Page - Travel Foundation \(thetravelfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

Invisible Burden [Destinations at Risk: The Invisible Burden of Tourism - Travel Foundation](#)

World Travel and Tourism Council [\(WTTC\) | Travel & Tourism Representative Council](#)

Destinations International (A resource for DMOs and Chambers of Commerce) [destinationsinternational.org](#)

Destination Development Association [Destination Assessment Program \(destinationdevelopment.org\)](#)

National Recreation & Park Association Agency Performance Review [nrpa-agency-performance-review.pdf](#)

NRPA 2020 Engagement with Parks Report [2020-engagement-report.pdf \(nrpa.org\)](#)

Headwaters Economics [Home - Headwaters Economics](#)

Sample Survey from Township of Chatsworth, Ontario [Community Recreation Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](#)



Additional Reports/Studies

[Innovative and Promising Practices in Sustainable Tourism](#) (viu.ca)

[Ten Principles for Responsible Tourism](#) (Urban Land 2015)

[Tools and Resources for Nature-Based Tourism](#) (worldbank.org)

COVID Management Tools

[Pandemic Toolkit](#) (PlaceMakers.com)

[Arts-and-Transportation-Rapid-Response.pdf](#) (smartgrowthamerica.org)

(Summary of creative solutions to COVID-related transportation challenges)

[How Can Destinations Resume Tourism After the Pandemic While Ensuring Sustainability?](#) (PlaceBrandObserver.com)

III. Maintaining Small Town Character

Smart Growth Principles

[Smart Growth Principles - Smart Growth Online](#)

[Smart Growth Principles – Vermont Natural Resources Council](#) (vnrc.org)

[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](#) (mainstreet.org)

[Kentucky Main Street Program - Kentucky Heritage Council](#) (heritage.ky.gov)

[Streetscape Design Guidelines for Historic Commercial Districts](#) (heritage.ky.gov)

[Walkable Communities Library](#) (walkable.org)

[New Designs for Growth Development Guidebook](#) (newdesignsforgrowth.com)

[Downtown Revitalization in Small and Midsized Cities](#) (planning.org)

[A Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods](#) (aarp.org)

[Citizens' Institute on Rural Design](#) (rural-design.org)

Additional Items to Consider

[Project for Public Spaces](#) [The Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Transformation of Public Spaces](#) (pps.org)

[Creative Exchange for the Arts](#) [Toolkits for Change Archives - Creative Exchange](#) (springboardexchange.org)

[Finding Nature News, Nature Blog | Children and Nature Network](#) (childrenandnature.org)

[Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights](#) bring leaders, residents together - Children and Nature Network

[Waste in Our Waters: A Community Toolkit for Aquatic Litter Removal](#) (rivernetwork.org)



IV. Grants & Funding Opportunities

[Home | GRANTS.GOV](#)

[Economic Development Integration | U.S. Economic Development Administration \(eda.gov\)](#)

[View EDA-HDQ-OIE-2020-2006705 | GRANTS.GOV](#) FY2020 SPRINT Challenge Grant

[Grassroots Grantmakers](#)

[U.S. Department of Transportation Transit, Highway, and Safety Funds - Funding - Bicycle and Pedestrian Program - Environment - FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#)

[The Grant Plant, Inc. New Mexico \(thegrantplantnm.com\)](#)

[Office of Small Business Development Centers Resources \(sba.gov\)](#)

[Community Restoration & Resiliency Fund \(kab.org\)](#) Keep America Beautiful

[The Home Depot | The Home Depot Foundation - Team Depot Community](#)

[Shade Structure Program \(aad.org\)](#)

[Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](#)

[Community Impact | Waste Management \(wm.com\)](#)

[Online Funding Tool | Play and Recreation Funds | PlayCore](#)

[Grant Opportunities, Fundraising Resources, Funding | National Recreation and Park Association \(nrpa.org\)](#)

[Recreational Trails Program Project Database \(recreationaltrailsinfo.org\)](#)

[Thrive Outside - Outdoor Industry Association](#)

[Bicycles and Pedestrians | US Department of Transportation](#)

[How to Apply \(rural-design.org\)](#) Citizens Institute on Rural Design

[Save America's Treasures \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

[Equitable Funding Hub | City Parks Alliance](#)

[Funding Parks and Trails Through Land Trust Partnerships | City Parks Alliance](#)

[Community Change Grants | AmericaWalks.org](#)

[Mini-grants | Celebrate Urban Birds](#)

[Community-Based Participatory Research Technical Assistance Grants - River Network](#)

[Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities 2020 Request for Letters of Interest | Smart Growth | US EPA](#)

[Six Unique Trail Funding Solutions - American Trails](#)

[Q Community Grant | Quality Bicycle Products \(qbp.com\)](#)

[Six Grants for Trails and Greenway Funding \(permatrak.com\)](#)



[State and Local Grant Funding - Land and Water Conservation Fund \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

Indiana [DNR: Land and Water Conservation Fund \(in.gov\)](#)

Kentucky [Kentucky DLG - LWCF Grants](#)

Ohio [Land and Water Conservation Fund | Ohio Department of Natural Resources \(ohiodnr.gov\)](#)

V. Organizations

Adventure Cycling Association [Discover What Awaits | AdventureCycling.org](#)

American Trails [AmericanTrails.org](#)

American Rivers [Rivers Connect Us](#) (americanrivers.org)

American Canoe Association [ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue \(americancanoe.org\)](#)

City Parks Alliance [About Us | City Parks Alliance](#)

International Journal of Wilderness [Foundation and Future of Long Distance Trails | IJW.org](#)

National Recreation and Parks Association [\(nrpa.org\)](#)

[Partnership for the National Trails System \(pnts.org\)](#)

People for Bikes [PeopleForBikes | Every ride. Every rider. Join us. \(peopleforbikes.org\)](#)

River Management Society [\(river-management.org\)](#)

River Network [Mission, Vision, Values - River Network](#) (rivernetwork.org)

Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals [Technical Resources \(recpro.org\)](#)



VI. Community Assistance Programs

National Park Service

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

- 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](#)

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

[Smart Growth Technical Assistance Programs | Smart Growth | US EPA](#)

- 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 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 | US Forest Service \(usda.gov\)](#)



US Fish & Wildlife Service

Division of Partner & Intergovernmental Affairs

- Rural Fire Assistance
- Small Wetlands Program
- Landscape Conservation Design

Several other programs are available. Please visit the website and type “*List of Programs*” in the Search Box.

[USFWS - Division of Partner and Intergovernmental Affairs](#)



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

[Programs | NFWF.org](#)



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

[Strategic Economic and Community Development | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](#)



National Park Service

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

Ohio River Recreation Trail – **Resources List**

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