Roadschool
2013

Indiana Trails Report
March 6, 2013
This is where we were when the Trails Plan was initiated. This was the starting point for trail data.
We had 1540 miles of trails at that time of the 2006 Trail Plan Summit when Governor Daniels promised to double funding for trails. This includes all types of trails, including natural surface, paved and even a few motorized trails. Water trails are not included.
Here is where we are now. As of January 2013, the Indiana Trails Inventory was showing 3000+ miles of trail open to the public. You can see the green trails on this map that were not present in the previous version.

• Open trails are obvious.
• Under Development means there is money allocated and construction is happening or will happen soon. Many of these trails are grant recipients.
• Planned trails have some effort put into them. The majority of these are trail projects that have applied for funding or there are plans for putting them in the near future. Some are just looking for funding.
• Potential Trails don’t have planning documents but are loosely laid out or are in long term planning documents. The routes could still vary and usually only exist as line on a map.

This reflects an increase of about 1600 miles of trail open to the public. As much as I’d like to tell you 1600 miles of trails were built, more than half of the trails added to the trail inventory during the past six years were actually in existence before 2006, so it is estimated that nearly 650 miles of new trail have been added since 2006. We have searched out existing trails and got them listed in our inventory. This makes it much easier for people to find trails. Proper reporting is just as important as building.
This shows progress on our visionary trail system. As you can see from the red lines, we’ve made huge strides in trail construction. These trails have been built in the last 6 years.
This is the trail coverage map. The blue area is where we were in 2006, the green area is what has been added since then, and the few pink areas are what we plan to have done by this year. As you can see, most of the state population is within 7.5 miles of a trail. The open areas are low population, but we still hope for full coverage someday. We have discussed making a new goal such as 5 miles from homes.
This is the same map, but showing trails within 5 miles of the population.
This the same chart from the previous slide, but now you can actually read it. The 2010 US census data shows the population of Indiana has grown to almost 6.5 million people, with the majority of the increases in urban areas. In the last 6 years, we have documented and built trails to reach an additional million people. As you can see, each trail we add reaches fewer and fewer people. Even with a new, more difficult goal we are on our way to making sure everyone has a trail near them.
So how do people find all these great trails around the state? This is the best place for trails information. This is the same date used for all the other calculations and maps. It is a great research tool to find trails of a specific type or in a specific location. We have filters and selections that even allow you to search for open trails or planned trails. It is the best one-stop shopping website for trail information in the state.
If you know the name of the trail, or better yet, the managing entity of the trail it is easy to look up good information and to get local maps. Here’s an example of Indianapolis’s trails map.

The DNR trail inventory is the best place to find the names and agencies that allow you to look up more detailed information.
Google Maps has been adding greenway trails to the maps for some time now and the coverage is getting better all the time. Let’s take a look at what it can with an example from Fort Wayne.

Just searching for trails in Fort Wayne brings up most of the trailheads that are part of the trail system.
Here you see the standard driving directions that you get from Google. I put in Lawton Park and Swinney Park and let it automatically process the route. The system defaults to driving a car and routes a fairly efficient route.
By changing the mode of transportation from car to walking, you can see route change a bit. It has now routed to some of the River greenway trails. The software logic still uses a lot of road even though there is trail available. Google will give you the shortest route and using the roads is technically less distance than the trail.
By making one small adjustment to the map, almost the entire trip is now on the River Greenway. This route is exactly the same as the map Fort Wayne Trails map. It added .1 mile to the trip, but now it is much more enjoyable and safe walk.
One of the great things about using Google maps over paper maps is that it has a lot more information. Let’s say you are walking between the parks on a cool weekend morning and want a cup of coffee. A quick search of the area shows a local coffee shop very near the trail. A small adjustment of the route and you are now walking right by a coffee shop. In urban areas, the possibilities are endless.

With the use of android smart phones, all this information is available in the palm of your hand as you walk the trail.
If you zoom in, the River Greenway trail is easily visible. It has become extremely easy for the public to find the major greenways in their area. Unfortunately many people don’t know the trails are even listed on Google Maps. I tried MapQuest to see what they offered, but that website doesn’t even list a walking or biking option and did not show any trails.
Just for fun I spent a bit of time and mapped the Katy Trail in Missouri. According to Google, it would take a person 65 hours to walk it. I haven’t seen any natural surface trails yet in Google system. In the DNR, we do get requests from companies like Garmin, Google, and others for our trail data.