

Blanchard River Greenway Trail

Findlay to Riverbend-Reservoirs Area Connector



Trailsend at Riverbend Historic Iron Bridge

“Natural Solutions For Flooding Issues” in the Blanchard watershed identified some options that can serve as good examples of best management practices. The Blanchard River Greenway Trail, put on hold due to the August 2007 flood, has great potential as one such natural solution demonstration project. Located upstream in Marion Township, this connection will link the existing Blanchard River Greenway from downtown Findlay to the Riverbend – Reservoirs Area through impacted floodplain areas. The trail can be an integral part of the riparian corridor for flood plain protection, water retention, wildlife habitat and other natural benefits.

The Findlay to Riverbend-Reservoirs Area Connector is the final link from the town to the country extending east, up-river. It must be properly site planned and constructed, as well as compatible with farmers and neighbors. Finding suitable right-of-way and logical alignments from East Point Trailhead on Bright Road in Findlay to Riverbend Recreation Area is a major challenge, and a focus of the planning team. This FACT Sheet outlines the trail options for this project.

Greenway
Trail:
Findlay to
Riverbend,
all seasons,
all abilities



Trails Along the River a Priority

Historically, the trail to Riverbend has existed and been used by the community for decades.

- o First planned in the 1960's as part of the nationally recognized 20 mile Heritage Trail through Hancock County by the Boy Scouts of America. The original concept still works well today.
- o Friends of the Old Mill Stream Inc. guided efforts in 60's & 70's followed by the Hancock Park District.
- o Connects parks, historic sites, cultural and natural landmarks along the Blanchard River.
- o Provides healthful outdoor opportunities for hiking, camping, fishing and education about the watershed.
- o Scenic, natural, trail access for the public “Down By The Old Mill Stream”.

Popular support continues to follow the trail to keep good management in place.

- o Park visitor surveys and parks levy approvals give trails high priority.
- o Trails part of adopted Hancock County “Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan”.
- o Projects and maintenance assisted by active trail user groups like Hancock Handlebars Bicycle Club, Hancock County Horseman's Council, Boy Scouts and Hancock Parks Trails Advisory Team.
- o A trail to Riverbend-Reservoirs area was selected as the next phase of the Blanchard River Greenway Trails Plan.

Many trail sections are open and well-used, thanks to state grants, federal funding, and local partnerships.

- o Multi-use trails through Riverbend and around the Findlay Reservoirs completed.
- o Bikepaths and riverwalks constructed through Findlay.
- o Heritage Trail route well documented, brochure widely distributed for travel and tourism.

Final connections along Ohio SR 568 and Marion Township Road 208 are critical links.

- o Urban growth eastward constricts right-of-way crossings from nearby neighborhoods.
- o Increasing traffic loads & speeds around the reservoirs and into the park are a concern.
- o Winding, narrow country roads competing with farm equipment pose safety hazards.
- o Annual flooding & erosion issues along meandering river corridor require constant maintenance.

Natural solutions will help reduce flood damage, traffic hazards and inconveniences.

- o Reserve open space for allowing flood plains to work naturally.
- o Provide filter strip buffer along river, farmland and roadways.
- o Reduce traffic loads by rerouting “river road” (TR208) to better existing roads away from the river.
- o Keep existing TR 208 for local access to farmland, homes, utilities and trail – no thru traffic.
- o New trail alignment options can make good use of right-of-ways for multi-use, public use.



Area residents and visitors heading towards parks along Greenway Trails. Riverbend-Reservoirs Area, an increasingly popular destination the year around.

Natural Solutions Project (and Blanchard River Greenway Trail connector) funded in part by:
Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation
National Park Service - Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program
The Collaborative - Toledo, Ohio
Hancock Park District





Trail will use underpasses at Bright Road and S.R. 568 Bridges



Trail option along S.R. 568 to underpass at bridge



Trail follows Township Road 234 along south river bank



Trail option along Township Road 208



Trail option along reservoir dikes along Township Road 207

Findlay to Riverbend-Reservoirs Area Connector Trail Options

The plan provides three trail route options that offer opportunities to minimize public investments and maximize use of existing public lands along the river and reservoirs. Four alternate routes also give solutions for crossing the Blanchard River at SR 568 to connect northern neighborhoods and incorporate flood mitigation projects if needed. All trail options utilize existing underpasses at Bright Road and SR 568 Bridge over the Blanchard River.

Trail Option A (Yellow Line) follows closest to the Blanchard River for approximately 3 miles from Eastpoint Trailhead to Riverbend's Big Oaks Trailhead at the Historic Iron Bridge.

- o Off road trail from Bright Rd., under SR 568 and ramps up to TR 234.
- o Roadside trail along TR 234 to TR 208.
- o Trail uses TR 208 closed to thru traffic along river.

Trail Option B (Orange Line) follows Option A, but does not close TR 208. Instead road pavement would be widened on the south side to make room for trail along north edge of existing pavement.

- o Additional right-of-way acquisition required in farms fields, front lawns of residences and around Findlay Pump Station along TR 208.
- o To minimize water runoff and flood erosion from farm fields, a natural vegetative buffer / filter strip will protect the south edge of the roadway.

Trail Option C (Red Line) follows part of Options A and B, but diverts south on existing lane at Findlay Pump Station to TR 207 and then along the base of reservoir dikes into Riverbend Recreation Area at the Oxbow Trailhead. This is the longest trail length option at 3.4 miles.

- o Reduces right-of-way acquisition to only parts of TR 234 and along TR 208 to Findlay Pump Station.
- o Some additional right-of-way needed along east side of TR 208, from reservoirs into Riverbend Recreation Area, south of Oxbow Trailhead.

Alternate Trail Routes 1 and 2 provide two options from Eastpoint Trailhead that parallel SR 568.

Alternate 1 – A trail through the meadow that follows flood way and forests from Bright Road to SR 568.

Alternate 2 – Trail relocates to top of dikes if flood mitigation projects built in area between Bright Road and Vogelsong Farm Conservation Area.

Alternate Trail Routes 3 and 4 provide a connection from the Fox Run Neighborhood and Little Red School House north of the Blanchard River and SR 568.

Alternate 3 – Trail connector to neighborhoods north of river. Route meanders west through floodplain to new trail bridge crossing perpendicular to river.

Alternate 4 – Follows SR 568 right-of-way and crosses the Blanchard River utilizing the SR 568 Bridge.

Supplemental map available on request from Hancock Park District

Contact for further information:

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