

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Momentous Day for Monon South Trail as Construction Begins

BORDEN, Ind. (July 18, 2024) — Over 100 community members and leaders from southern Indiana gathered at Borden Community Park July 16 for a Monon South Trail groundbreaking ceremony.

The trail is slated to span nearly 60 miles through Lawrence, Orange, Washington, and Clark counties, with an additional portion completed through the city of New Albany. The final, full trail will traverse 62.3 miles through southern Indiana, making it the longest continuous trail in the state. The ceremony marks the beginning of the first phase of construction, which will complete 20 miles of multi-use rails-to-trails segments in the communities of Borden, New Pekin, Salem, Saultillo, Campbellsburg, Orleans and Mitchell.

“Today, we are on the verge of realizing what this project could be, the longest trail in Indiana, one of the longest trails in the Midwest,” comments Steve Ferguson, the Chairman of the Board for Cook Group. Ferguson highlighted the future impact of the Monon South Trail to those in southern Indiana, saying “This trail will bring national recognition and will spur on our tourism industry, an industry that we need in southern Indiana in light of our declining populations in the area. Today marks the beginning in realizing the vision to increase economic development in our rural communities, but it is just the first step— let’s get after it!”

Through the state’s Next Level Trails program, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources awarded \$22.3 million to Radius Indiana, the region’s economic development partnership, to facilitate the purchase and trail creation of a railbanked CSX railway corridor. Along with additional funding from the READI program, the design and initial construction of phase 1 of the trail began in 2023, with phase 1 construction expected to wrap-up in 2025. The focus of phase 1 is completed sections in communities along the trail, trailheads as well as restroom facilities and parking.

“As construction begins on what will be Indiana’s longest recreational trail, we come together to preserve our history and pave an exciting future for southern Indiana,” said Dan Bortner, DNR director. “The Monon South Trail continues the historic work of Gov. Holcomb’s Next Level Trails initiative by making more connections between communities and connecting more Hoosiers to nature. DNR was honored to facilitate the purchase of this 62.3-mile trail corridor and provide grant funding to support construction.”

As one of the trailhead communities, the town of Borden has become an active supporter of the project and worked alongside Radius Indiana to host the Groundbreaking Ceremony. Steve Williams, Town Council President of Borden expressed how this project will serve their community for years to come:

“The Monon South Trail, which will replace the railway that runs through our community, will bring new life to our town, connecting our schools, recreational areas, and downtown. In the future, we look forward to implementing additional recreational areas, green spaces, and more along the trail for our local community as well as visitors to enjoy.”

Anticipation of the trail comes not only from those in Borden, but also the community leaders, stakeholders and residents of New Pekin, Salem, Saultillo, Campbellsburg, Orleans, Mitchell, and

New Albany. These cities and towns have dedicated significant time and resources into the research, planning and execution of the trail and look forward to experiencing the benefits of increased economic growth and higher qualities-of-life as a result of the project.

To assist communities and local entrepreneurs in continued development along the trail, Radius also announced plans for a new pitch competition. Planned for Spring 2025, the competition will be geared toward identifying entrepreneurs who can fill the needs for additional goods and services such as bike repair and supply shops, shuttle services, bed and breakfasts, stores, eateries, and more along the trail corridor as visitor numbers are expected to increase in the coming years.

“Beyond assisting with the trail’s physical construction, Radius is committed to working with local leaders to implement economic and community development fundamentals to help the communities take charge of their own growth and prosperity as the trail comes to life,” said Jeff Quyle, president and CEO of Radius Indiana. “We know this recreational asset will bring new visitors and new expectations for services and shops along the trail, and to help support the establishment of new trail businesses, we want to turn to the strong tradition of entrepreneurship that flourishes in Southern Indiana.”

To learn more about the Monon South Trail construction and stay updated on the trail, attend the Community Update Meeting in Mitchell on July 24. The meeting will be held in the Mitchell Community Building at 5 p.m. EDT. To find out more information on the Community Update Meeting and stay connected with the project, visit www.mononsouth.com or follow [Monon South Trail on Facebook](#).

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ABOUT THE MONON SOUTH TRAIL: The Monon South Trail is a proposed continuous trail between Mitchell and the Clark/Floyd County border that connects eight local communities in the Lawrence, Orange, Washington, and Clark Counties uplands region of southern Indiana. The greenway trail offers dramatic vistas of the Indiana farmland and linkages to several regional natural destinations, including nearby state parks and recreation facilities. Building on the unique qualities of the region, the proposed trail amenities highlight several local community destinations and connections to other regional attractions.