

Celebrating 200th Birthday with 200 Miles

By Kami Mackin Special to the Hoosier Times | Posted: Sunday, February 21, 2016 12:00 am

On Dec. 11, 1816, Indiana gained statehood, becoming the 19th U.S. state. In honor of Indiana's 200th birthday, there are around 900 legacy projects happening in the 92 counties that make up the Hoosier state.

As part of the bigger celebration, the Hoosier Hikers Council in Martinsville has created the Bicentennial Hikers Challenge. Young and old, hikers and adventurers are challenged to join the celebration by hiking 200 miles between now and June 30, 2017.

"We want to promote hiking trails in Indiana," said Mark Stuttgen, board member at Hoosier Hikers Council and mastermind behind the hiking challenge. "[It's a] great way to get hikers out there."

Although the list includes trails from top to bottom of the state, the list is grouped by region.

South-central Indiana alone — including Monroe, Brown, Orange, Crawford, Lawrence and other surrounding counties — currently has more than 35 trails with over 185 miles of trails.

Hidden in Martinsville is one of Stuttgen's favorite hiking spots. "Jimmy Nash Park, it's only about 2 miles long, but it's a rugged trail and it's right in the middle of the city," he said.

All trails on the statewide list are natural trails. That means they are not paved, blacktopped or a bicycle trail. The Hoosier Hikers Council built and cleared several, but not all, trails for the challenge in the area.

As participants start their 200-mile journey, they are advised to periodically check the official list, as the hikers' council will continue to add trails to it.

"[It's] an adventure to see how many different trails we can find and hike," Stuttgen said.

Trails from top to bottom of the state include state land and parks, land preservations and some hidden gems throughout. Those hidden hiking treasures include the Dilcher-Turner Canyon Forest in Greene County. The property is owned by Sycamore Land Trust, which has several hiking



200 Miles

Kathy Ruesink hikes at Sycamore Land Trust's Columbia Mine Preserve, which was purchased in part with a grant from the Bicentennial Nature Trust. Dave Simcox | Courtesy photo

locales included on the list.

“Absolutely gorgeous property with deep canyons [and] waterfalls,” said Katrina Folsom, communications director for the Sycamore Land Trust, talking about the Dilcher-Turner property. “In the spring it is also an exceptional place to look at wildflowers.”

There are currently more than 420 people registered take on the 200-mile challenge.

The only requirements to complete the challenge are:

- Register at www.hoosierhikerscouncil.org/bicentennial-challengem where participants can find trails across the state that are part of the challenge.
- Participants must to hike at least 10 different trails. To make it more challenging, the hikers’ council suggests trying to hike it all on different trails.
- All 200 miles must be logged and completed to be eligible to receive an Indiana bicentennial patch and certificate (while supplies last). Names of all those who completed it will be on the Hoosier Hikers Council website, www.hoosierhikerscouncil.org.

“More than getting something from us — a patch or certificate — it’s your own feeling of success of saying, ‘I hiked 200 miles this year,’” Stuttgen said.

To find a list of other legacy projects throughout the state, visit www.in.gov/ibc/ and look for “events & programs.”

The Hoosier Hikers Council Bicentennial Hikers Challenge, which challenges everyone to hike 200 miles on natural surface hiking trails in Indiana between now and June 30, 2017, includes many in the Hoosier Times area. Those trails include:

Jimmy Nash Trail in Jimmy Nash Park, Martinsville

Low Gap Trail, Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Morgan County

Mason Ridge Trail, Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Morgan County

Rock Shelter Trail, Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Morgan County

Scout Ridge Trail: Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Morgan County

Tree Lakes Trail: Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Morgan County

Tecumseh Trail: Morgan-Monroe State Forest, Morgan County

Hoosier National Forest trails: Hoosier National Forest, in Jackson, Washington, Monroe and Lawrence counties

Knobstone Trail: Jackson-Washington and Clark state forests, Jackson, Washington, Clark counties

Muscatatuck Refuge trails: Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, Jennings and Jackson counties

Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve: Sycamore Land Trust's preserve, Monroe County

Beck's Mill hiking trail system: Beck's Mill near Salem, Washington County

Brown County State Park trails: Brown County State Park, Brown County

Buffalo Trace trail: Hoosier National Forest, Orange County

Cedar Bluffs: Cedar Bluffs Preserve, Monroe County

Flatwoods trail: Flatwoods Park, Monroe County

High King Trail: Yellowwood State Forest, Brown County

Hitz-Rhodehamel Nature Preserve trail: Hitz-Rhodehamel Nature Preserve, Brown County

Jackson Creek Trail: Yellowwood State Forest, Brown County

Jackson-Washington State Forest trails: Jackson-Washington State Forest, Jackson and Washington counties

Kora Meditation Trail: Tibetan-Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center, Monroe County

Leonard Springs Nature Trail: Leonard Springs Nature Park, Monroe County

Lick Creek Trail: Hoosier National Forest, Orange County

Lake Monroe trails: Lake Monroe, Monroe County

Nebo Ridge Trail: Hoosier National Forest, Brown County

Orangeville Rise: Orangeville Rise of Lost River Nature Preserve, Orange County

Pate Hollow Trail: Hoosier National Forest, Brown County

Patoka Lake trails: Patoka Lake, Orange, Dubois and Crawford counties

Porter West Preserve: Porter West Preserve, Monroe County

Resource Management Trail: Yellowwood State Forest, Brown County

Scarce O'Fat Trail: Yellowwood State Forest, Brown County

Shirley Creek Trail: Hoosier National Forest, Orange County

Spring Mill State Park trails: Spring Mill State Park, Lawrence County

Starve Hollow trails: Starve Hollow State Recreation Area, Jackson, Washington counties

The Cedars Preserve: Sycamore Land Trust's Cedars Preserve, Monroe County

Laura Hare Preserve: Laura Hare Preserve at Downey Hill, Brown County

Yellowwood Lake Trail: Yellowwood State Forest, Brown County

Yellowwood Trail: Yellowwood State Forest, Brown County

Dilcher-Turner Canyon: Dilcher-Turner Canyon, Greene County

Green's Bluff Trails: Green's Bluff Nature Preserve, Owen County

McCormick's Creek State Park trails: McCormick's Creek State Park, Owen County

Poplar Top Trail: Owen-Putnam State Forest, Owen and Putnam counties

Shakamak State Park trails: Shakamak State Park, Greene County