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Posted on Tue, May. 31, 2005

## Peru trail project on track

Nickel Plate could connect to other paths

Associated Press

PERU – Paving is set to begin this summer on a seven-mile stretch of the Nickel Plate Trail that could eventually become part of a recreational trail network.

Mike Kuepper, president of the Friends of the Nickel Plate Trail Inc., said the paving will begin after the group selects a consultant, as is required by Indiana Department of Transportation to receive an \$850,000 grant.

Kuepper said one of the appeals of the Nickel Plate Trail just east of U.S. 31 between Bunker Hill and Peru is its potential to connect with other paths, including the Cardinal Trail.

"In reality, it's not that far-fetched you could get on your bike in Peru and ride to Richmond, Ind.," he said.

The most expensive part of the trail project will be the estimated \$150,000 needed to renovate the Nickel Plate bridge south of Peru. That multiple-span truss bridge will be fitted with a concrete or wood deck to accommodate two-way trail traffic.

A separate section of the trail starting on the south bank of the Wabash River south of Peru is being paid for with a \$180,000 grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

A nine-mile section of the trail south of Peru already is open and surfaced with grass and limestone. When complete, the trail is projected to run 38 miles, from Cassville – near Kokomo – north to Rochester.

Completing the entire trail could take a decade, said Dawn Kroh, president of Green3, a landscape architect and environmental design firm.

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The Indiana Trails Fund Inc. bought the land for the trail from Norfolk Southern Railroad under a rail-banking provision. Rail banking allows the purchase of abandoned railroad property for use as recreational trails.

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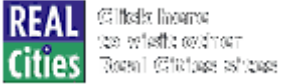
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