

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Little Miami Scenic Trail is both a personal and economic asset to the region offering a wide range of benefits to trail users. People enjoy the trail and use it frequently for recreation and fitness activities. The natural setting, lack of motor vehicles and friendly people offer a (relatively) stress-free environment for bicycling, walking, jogging, and in-line skating.

Trail users are dedicated people who come here often, and tell their friends, neighbors, and co-workers about it. They view the trail as a safe place and visit it alone and with friends and family. They report that it is well-designed and well-maintained.

Trail users do not report any major problems but would like year around restrooms and more of them, more sources of water, and more frequent ranger patrols. They are concerned about crowded conditions in some areas and safety at road intersections.

The Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with local cities, villages and townships along the Little Miami Scenic Trail, should develop plans for installing more rest stops including year around toilet facilities and water. These should be placed at strategic intervals between Loveland and Morrow and also between Morrow and Corwin. A variety of new toilets are available which do not rely on a water source and may be appropriate for use in these locations.

To enhance the safety at intersections, ODNR should review and evaluate their present procedures for improving intersections between the trail and local roads. The following are two examples of efforts currently in effect. First, ODNR has worked with county engineers and others to improve conditions at some of the intersections. In one instance, the shrubbery was trimmed back to allow for better visibility and a safer crossing. Second, on busy weekends--especially early in the

season--ODNR park rangers are posted at intersections to warn and/or ticket people who do not stop for the stop signs posted at most intersections.

From an economic perspective, the Little Miami Scenic Trail creates economic development opportunities in Warren County and in the surrounding area. People spend an average of \$13.54 per visit on food and beverages and auto expenses. Restaurants and snack shops continue to develop along the trail and in nearby communities. Survey respondents suggested that they would like a map of the trail that included the location of restaurants and food stops. This would be a good project for local Chambers of Commerce, the Warren County Convention and Visitors' Bureau, and the Ohio Department of Tourism.

Trail users spend an average of \$277 each year on durable goods such as clothing, equipment, and accessories. Although there is one bicycle shop in Loveland, most of these expenditures occurred outside of Warren County. There may be opportunities in Warren County for additional bike shops and places that rent equipment near the trail and in nearby communities (e.g., Lebanon and Mason). Bicycle and skate rental places may also want to evaluate the need to remain open for a longer period of time--especially on weekends in the spring and fall. Biking and in-line skating occur almost year around in the Cincinnati area, however, the existing rental locations in Loveland and Corwin are generally open from May to September.

The following quote from one of the survey respondents provides an appropriate conclusion to the results of the Little Miami Scenic Trail Users Study.

"I love the scenery , I love the smooth flat trail. I love being able to go for 20+ miles. I love being able to depart from different parts of the trail and still go 20+ miles. I love passing through the towns and stopping at an ice cream parlor. I love the trees and the shade. I love being along the river. In the past 2 months we have ridden all parts of the trail from Milford to Xenia. Eventually we will do all the trail and as it is extended we will do that. This just begins to tell you how much my family has enjoyed the trail and we thank those who had the foresight to preserve and develop this wonderful resource."

LITTLE MIAMI SCENIC TRAIL USERS STUDY

**Prepared by the
Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments
801-B West Eighth Street, Suite 400
Cincinnati, Ohio 45203-1607
513-621-6300**

**For the Ohio Greenways Initiative
4570 Akron-Peninsula Road
Peninsula, Ohio 44264
330-657-2055**

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