



Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

Pres. – Brendan Kearns V. Pres. – Arin Shaver
Secretary – Dale Brier

May 13, 2026, 1:00 pm CT

Hovey Lake Office

8401 IN-69 S

Mt Vernon, IN 47620

Webcast Link: <https://dnringov.rev.vbrick.com/#/events/6dde3d55-db5e-4367-b681-a3267668e0b6>

Meeting Agenda

Call to Order, Introductions, Announce Proxies, Open Agenda

Review and Approval of March 11, 2026 Minutes

Comments from Visitors or Guests

DNR Finance Report (Dale Brier)

Greater Good Presentation – Lower Wabash Valley Partnership (The Nature Conservancy)

President's Report

Old Business

- ✿ Retreat Follow-up
 - Flyer
 - Post Report Document & Tracking
 - Funding Discussion (Limit: 30 minutes)

- ✿ Previous funding requests
 - Wonders on the Wabash
 - Bluffton Summer Series
 - Canal Days
 - Christmas on the Canal
 - Clean out the Bank

New Business

- ✿ New funding requests
 - Wonders of Wetlands Days

General Reminders, Discussion, Announcements

Adjournment

May Meeting: July 8, 2026, 1:00pm ET, Allen County

If you anticipate needing a reasonable modification under the ADA to participate or have questions concerning access at the meeting locations, please contact Ric Edwards, DNR ADA Director, at REdwards@dnr.IN.gov or 317-232-4145.



Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

Pres. – Brendan Kearns V. Pres. – Arin Shaver
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March 11, 2026, 1:00 pm ET

Turkey Run Inn
Lusk Ballroom
8102 East Park Road
Marshall, IN, 47859

Webcast Link: <https://dnr.gov.rev.vbrick.com/#/events/37c248e1-748a-49ba-91ef-5a9d52ff2568>

Attendance

Voting Members Present:

Adams County - Randy Lehman
Allen County - Kyle Quandt
Carroll County - Mike Tetrault
Cass County - Arin Shaver
Fountain County - Tim Shumaker
Gibson County - Bill Knowles
Huntington County - Dave Hacker
Knox County - Ben Burke
Parke County - Penny Cox
Posey County - Carrie Parmenter
Sullivan County - John Waterman
Tippecanoe County - Kern Darbyshire
Vermillion County - Les Zimmerman
Vigo County - Brendan Kearns
Wabash County - Mike Beauchamp
Warren County - Sam Cody
Wells County - Doug Sundling
DNR - Dale Brier (designee)

Guests:

Allen Hurst - DNR State Parks
Dan McCain - Carroll Co Alt
David McCain
Donald Mathias - Huntington Co Alt
Eric Shideler - Warren Co Alt
Keith Poole - Wabash Co Alt
Kris Gertz - Tippecanoe Co Alt
Laura Schwatz - Adams Co Alt
Lori Jordan - Fountain Co Alt
Phil Cox - Parke Co Alt
Ralph Weinzapfel - Posey Co Alt
Ron Zartman - Allen Co Alt
Stacey Poe - DNR State Parks
Terri Gorney
Tim Watson - INDOT

Counties with no Appointment:

Jay County
Miami County

Meeting

Call to Order

Brendan Kearns called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM. Kearns noted that this year marks the 35th anniversary of the Commission and expressed appreciation for the members who served previously. He added that the current group had a productive retreat during the past two days.

Review and Approval of January 14, 2026 Minutes

Kearns asked whether there were any changes to the minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Carrie Parmenter and seconded by Randy Lehman. The minutes were approved.

Comments from Visitors or Guests

David McCain of Carroll County addressed the Commission regarding the Little Rock Creek Stone Bridge and encouraged the Commission to consider historic bridges as part of the Wabash River's cultural heritage.

Terri Gorney, a new member of the Indiana Parks Alliance (IPA) Board, distributed pamphlets related to membership opportunities, explaining that associated funds support State Parks and Nature Preserves through grants.

DNR Finance Report

Dale Brier presented the finance report (attached), explaining that the financial figures were current through the end of January. Revenue for FY26 totaled \$72,342.00. Brier noted that revenue is received in irregular batches rather than through a consistent stream, making year end projections difficult, though he expected totals to approximate \$150,000. The available fund balance was \$362,795.65. The fund is projected to continue growing through June 2027, though the legislature could revise the funding structure thereafter. A motion to accept the finance report was made by Dave Hacker and seconded by Ben Burke. The motion was approved.

Additional discussion occurred regarding property tax expenses associated with oil reserves located in Illinois. Brier explained that paying the 7% tax is necessary to avoid losing significant annual revenue of approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000 from the well.

President's Report

Kearns explained that no formal President's Report would be given due to the retreat activities. He thanked Allen Hurst, Brier, and Arin Shaver for organizing the retreat.

Old Business

✿ WRHCC shirt order

Hurst presented style options for Commission shirts, including samples for size confirmation and review of logo placement. A motion to approve the shirt style was made by Shaver and seconded by Mike Tetrault, and the motion carried. Brier moved to approve the logo placement on the chest and sleeve, with a second from Shaver; that motion was also approved.

Brier then made a motion to authorize \$1,500 for the shirts, which was seconded by Hacker and approved. Hurst circulated the sign-up sheet, and both men's and women's styles were made available.

✿ Previous funding requests

○ Experience Otter Creek

At the January meeting, Phil Cox presented the sponsorship request for Experience Otter Creek. A motion to approve the requested \$500 for the project was made by Les Zimmerman and seconded by Kyle Quandt. The motion passed.

New Business

✿ New funding requests

○ Wonders on the Wabash

The Tippecanoe County Partnership for Water Quality (TCPWQ) requested \$1,000 for the Wonders on the Wabash program, a five-day September event providing sixth graders with river experiences. Darbyshire noted that all county sixth-grade students participate. A \$1,000 contribution would qualify the Commission as a Gold Level Sponsor.

○ Bluffton Summer Series

Bluffton Parks and Recreation requested \$1,000 for the Bluffton Summer Series, which includes multiple events throughout the year. Doug Sundling provided additional information and explained that sponsorship includes four complimentary tickets to any event.

- Canal Days

Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal, Inc. requested \$1,000 for the Canal Days event scheduled for July 4, 2026. Tetrault explained that the event will unveil new exhibits and include live music.
- Christmas on the Canal

Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal, Inc. requested \$1,000 in support of the Christmas on the Canal festival scheduled for December 5, 2026, noting that sponsorship allows the event to remain free to the public.
- Clean out the Banks

The Wabash River Defenders requested \$1,000 for the Clean Out the Banks event. Mike Beauchamp reported that the group has removed 5,428 tires and approximately 160,000 pounds of trash over the years, with a recycling rate of 71 percent. The annual cleanup, now in its sixteenth year, takes place the last Saturday of July and typically draws between 100 and 450 participants.
- Peddle Paddle Play

Quandt presented the request for \$1,000 for event, the primary fundraiser for Northeast Indiana Water Trails (NEIWT). The July 11 event features a scavenger hunt, food, music, and participation from other nonprofit organizations.

✦ Retreat action items

Kearns reviewed discussions from the retreat and asked whether it was time for the Commission to consider a large grant round, and whether two years of accumulated funding would be needed to support such an initiative. Shaver offered to prepare a plan summarizing the top three strategic priorities for further discussion. Phil Cox inquired about potential maximum funding levels for a large grant round; Brier estimated that \$500,000 to \$600,000 would be feasible while retaining at least \$40,000 for administrative expenses.

Stacey Poe will prepare notes from the strategic planning discussion. Beauchamp requested that a letter be prepared for communities to sign and forward to State Representatives. Zimmerman emphasized the need for a unified message for legislators and proposed allocating funds to hire a professional to develop informational materials.

Kearns raised the question of whether marketing should be a priority for future meetings. After discussion, John Waterman moved to authorize up to \$5,000 for professional services to develop a brochure, and Zimmerman seconded. The motion was approved. A committee consisting of Zimmerman, Shaver, Quandt, and Kearns will prepare draft materials, with a recommendation that Tetrault also participate due to his experience. The committee will present materials at the next meeting. Quandt reminded the Commission that a shared Dropbox exists for uploading materials and stated that the link would be resent. Shaver requested that all data be uploaded to Dropbox by April 7 for executive committee review.

Discussion followed regarding the need for post event reporting from sponsored organizations. These reports should include volunteer counts, trash quantities, participant totals, and community impact measures. Quandt will develop a standardized post event reporting form including participant numbers, a brief description suitable for social media, and a photo, ensuring consistent information across sponsored events. The Commission will begin collecting event reports moving forward and hope to backfill 2025 activities. Eric Shideler described the reports he provides

to his county commissioners to demonstrate return on investment. Shaver asked Hurst to compile a list of 2025 large grant and sponsorship recipients for follow up.

Burke noted that Knox County had moved forward independently with raft programs through collaboration with the Knox and Sullivan Conservation Water Districts.

Kearns addressed social media opportunities. Brier explained that DNR Communications recommended directing materials to him for posting on the DNR Facebook page, which has an established audience. Tetrault asked what format submissions should take, and Brier stated that photos and a short descriptive statement are sufficient, noting that submissions must not be photoshopped or AI generated. A #WRHCC tag could be used.

General Reminders, Discussion, Announcements

Sam Cody reported that Niches Land Trust has surpassed 5,000 acres of preserved land.

Phil Cox announced that the Vermillion Trails Alliance will hold a fundraiser on April 11 and that registration for related races is available online.

Quandt announced the April 22 “Night Out with NEIWT” event in Fort Wayne, focused on the economic and environmental benefits of water trails; details will be provided to the Commission.

Lehman reported on the upcoming “Clean Up the Limberlost” event, sponsored by the Commission. Sundling discussed Governor Braun’s recent executive order establishing a statewide water management plan and noted that Water Stakeholder workshops are underway, with the next scheduled for April 7 in Fort Wayne. Mileage reimbursement is available for members attending on behalf of the Commission.

Parmenter reported completion of the landscape conservation design for the Lower Wabash region in Illinois and Indiana. She noted that the Lower Wabash Partnership has received its 501(c)(3) designation and that the design document has been presented to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is evaluating potential wildlife refuge expansions. She also outlined plans for the May meeting in Posey County, including a visit to Twin Swamps Nature Preserve and a paddle on Hovey Lake, and advised that lodging is limited near Hovey Lake.

Brier confirmed that the retreat met the Commission’s needs and reported an approximate cost of \$5,200, excluding travel. He also commended the Commission for having all counties represented, with only four alternates absent.

Tim Watson of INDOT presented a sample of bridge signage for state road river crossings. INDOT will install the signs upstream and downstream, and counties may adopt a similar format for their own signage.

Adjournment

Kearns adjourned the meeting at 2:46 PM.

Next Meeting

May 13, 2026, 1:00pm ET, Posey County

48686 Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund

FY26 as of 1/31/2026

<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Revenue</u>
431401	AD - Oil and Gas royalty along		\$ 72,342.00
510101	Payroll Salaries & Wages	\$ 7,702.95	
516002	FICA Regular	\$ 449.91	
516005	Payroll Medicare	\$ 105.23	
517003	Payroll Perf St Pd Em COntr	\$ 231.13	
517005	Payroll PERF State Share	\$ 862.74	
518161	Health Insurance	\$ 1,726.16	
518606	Payroll Life Insurance	\$ 6.85	
518796	Payroll Anthem Dental Trad	\$ 53.53	
518800	Anthem Vision	\$ 5.91	
518901	Payroll Employee Assistance	\$ 1.92	
519006	Payroll Long Term Disability	\$ 46.26	
519503	Payroll Def Comp - StateMatch	\$ 41.20	
519722	HSA Health Savings Acct 2	\$ 145.18	
547022	SpOp-Uniforms&Related	\$ -	
541002	Mot Veh Ex - Gasoline	\$ 127.52	
541010	Mot Veh Ex - Parts & Supplies	\$ 124.64	
546002	Off-Office Supplies	\$ 40.84	
599036	AdmOp-PostageMeter/Potage	\$ 31.80	
592016	SpOp-Library Books (Powerbank)	\$ 114.68	
592026	AdmOp-Property Tax	\$ 1,166.85	
592029	Adm&Op Taxes & Collection Fees	\$ -	
571010	Grants - Cities	\$ 65,219.69	
571100	Grants - Counties	\$ 100,000.00	
571300	Grants - Colleges Universities	\$ 23,808.10	
573100	Grants - Nonprofit Orgs	\$ 145,329.28	
595120	InState Travel - Per Diem&Meal		
595130	InState Travel - Lodging		
595180	InState Travel - Board Member	\$ 4,688.98	
599116	AdmOp-Event Sponsor	\$ 3,750.00	
DNR payroll		\$ 11,378.97	
Operating		\$ 1,606.33	
Grants		\$ 334,357.07	
Travel costs		\$ 4,688.98	
Sponsorships		\$ 3,750.00	
FY Expenses to Date		\$ 355,781.35	
Fund Balance as of 7/1/25		\$ 902,941.00	
Encumbered		\$ (256,706.00)	
FY26 Revenue		\$ 72,342.00	
FY26 Expenses		\$ (355,781.35)	
*****	FY26 Available Balance	\$ 362,795.65	*****