

Facts about Muscatatuck Bottoms

- The Muscatatuck River drains over 1,000 square miles of southeastern Indiana and is a major tributary of the East Fork of White River.
- The Muscatatuck follows a winding course through a sparsely populated agricultural region. The stream is characteristically a muddy color with mud banks and silt bottom.
- The Muscatatuck is a “bifurcate” river, meaning it is divided into two main segments with both forks flowing roughly parallel toward the southwest. The Vernon Fork is the more westerly of the two, and the other branch is known as the East Fork of the Muscatatuck.
- The town of Vernon was founded in 1812. Vernon has another historical connection. It was there on July 11, 1863 that Union defenders turned away Morgan’s Raiders in one of only two Civil War confrontations on northern soil. The other was at Gettysburg, Penn.
- The two forks – Vernon and East – converge just east of Indiana 39 in southeast Jackson County in an area known as the Muscatatuck Bottoms.
- The Bottoms contain the largest least-fragmented complex of bottomland forest remaining in Indiana. Several species of oak, plus hickory and sweetgum dominate the forest.
- Rare, threatened and endangered bird species found here are the least bittern, yellow-crowned night heron, black vulture, red-shoulder hawk, sedge wren, Cerulean warbler and hooded warbler.
- Aquatic species of conservation concern are the Eastern sand darter and the little spectaclecase (mollusk).
- Kirtland’s snake and copperbelly watersnake are two state-endangered snakes found in the Bottoms.
- Major concentrations of waterfowl and shorebirds move through this area and stop over at restored wetlands.

Muscatatuck Bottoms Project

(Also shows Wabash River/Sugar Creek Project announced Thursday)



Illustration by Rebecca Mauser/DNR Division of Communications