



# Inklings

Bulletin of Interpretive Ideas

September 2005 Volume 5, Issue 3

## Current Project List

- Interpretive Site Plan, Prime Outlets, Fremont, IN
- Interpretive Brochure Design, The Nature Conservancy, Indiana Chapter
- Interpretive Sign Design, Turkey Run State Park (IN)
- Interpretive Plan, Wabash and Erie Canal, Delphi, IN with *Lifespace Design*
- Interpretive Sign Design, W. Lafayette Parks Dept. (IN)
- Interpretive Sign Design, North Hydro Park, Charter Township of Ypsilanti (MI) with *Landscape Architects & Planners, Inc*

## Trails Versus Treadmills Linking Health with the Outdoor Experience

The second hand on the clock makes a slow arc as I huff and puff on the exercycle at our local gym. It seems that my 30-minute goal will never be reached.

Compare this to 30 minutes with cross-country skis, new snow and blue skies. The thirty minutes quickly turn to 60, 90, 120 . . . The time flies. I return having had a rigorous workout in the beautiful outdoors. It was fun and memorable.

Public health agencies recognize what I found out on my ski outing. Physical fitness and the outdoors go hand-in-hand. Within the past year, *Interpretive Ideas* has worked with two hospital foundations on trail enhancement projects. Additionally, *Legacy* (The magazine of the National Association for Interpretation) recently devoted an entire issue to “*Promoting Healthy Lifestyles through Interpretation.*”



River Bluff Trail, Logansport, Indiana  
Sign Design: Interpretive Ideas, Okemos, MI  
Sign Fabrication: Pannier Graphics, Gibsonia, PA

We have all been made aware of the alarming increase in obesity in the United States. At present 15% of our children are overweight or obese. The implications for quality of life and our health system are obvious.

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## The River Bluff Trail “Raising the Quality of Life”

The Logansport Memorial Hospital Foundation recently completed a 1.3-mile stretch of trail. Located near the hospital in Logansport, Indiana, the trail was an abandoned railroad. The paved trail follows the Eel River and includes a canoe launch, picnic area, interpretive panels and parking at both ends.

The vision of the hospital foundation for the trail is “*to improve the health of the community by providing a safe, family-friendly venue to walk or ride for better fitness.*” The trail brochure states that “*An active community is a healthy community, and a trail such as River Bluff raises the quality of life for all residents.*”

Interpretive panels along the trail instill an appreciation of the natural and historical features visible from the trail. In addition to trailhead signs at either end of the trail, panels cover: wetlands, the Eel River and the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Dam.

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Visit our website [www.interprettideas.com](http://www.interprettideas.com)

Lise Schools, Owner

[lise@interprettideas.com](mailto:lise@interprettideas.com)

517/347-0861

Okemos, MI 48805-0355

P.O. Box 355

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### ***Trails Vs. Treadmills (cont.)***

In spite of those bleak statistics, recreation and health professionals know:

1. People who enjoy the outdoors are more fit.
2. People who enjoy the outdoors enjoy the outdoors for life.
3. 90% of the adults participating in an outdoor activity started that activity before age 18.

Public health agencies are increasingly encouraging people to get outdoors. Local trails can be used for passive recreation or as commuter routes. The object is to get people enjoying the outdoors and to get people moving. By doing so, we avert major health issues down the road.

### ***References***

“Profile: Dr. Michael Suk M.D., White House Fellow, U.S. Department of Interior,” *Legacy*, Volume 16, Number 4

“Interpretation: For Good Health,” Kristen Nelson, National Program Manager with the USDA Forest Service’s Interpretive Services, *Legacy*, Volume 16, Number 4

### ***River Bluff Trail (cont.)***

On any given day, many people can be seen walking and cycling along the trail. The beauty of the river and woods increases the pleasure of the fitness experience. It is hoped that the trail will be used to improve community fitness and enjoyment of the outdoors.



*Freshwater Eel: Corvus Art, Kalamazoo, MI*