

# CENTRAL INDIANA

UNDERSTANDING THE REGION AND IDENTIFYING CHOICES

CENTER FOR URBAN POLICY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

JULY 2001

## Central Indiana Residents Value Outdoor Water Recreational Opportunities



As part of its Central Indiana initiative, the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment surveyed more than 6,400 people from Central Indiana households in the summer of 2000 about their perceptions of quality of life. Topics included the economy, the environment, public safety, and accessibility to recreational and cultural amenities. The survey shows that Central Indiana residents value opportunities for water-related

outdoor recreation. Results indicate that nearly five in 10 households visited a regional water recreation site and that regional water recreation areas attract people from throughout the region. The results also show that households that use water resources are more likely to be younger, and that, while households of all incomes engage in water recreation, household income of users varies by location.

### Popular Recreation Sites Attract Users from Throughout the Region

Among households who answered the question, "What is the name of the river, stream, or lake you visited most often in the last 12 months," five destinations accounted for nearly 36 percent of those responses:

- Lake Monroe (14.4 percent)
- White River (7.6 percent)
- Geist Reservoir (4.9 percent)
- Cecil M. Harden Lake/Raccoon State Recreation Area (Harden/Raccoon Lake) (4.7 percent)
- Eagle Creek Reservoir (4.4 percent)

Respondents visiting each of these sites travel from at least one-quarter of the counties in the 44-county Central Indiana region. Survey respondents from more than half of the counties, including counties as far away as Howard and Tippecanoe, said they visited Lake Monroe in Monroe County. Respondents from nearly half of the counties said they recreate along the White River.

☆ Lake Monroe attracts visitors from at least 23 of 44 Central Indiana counties.

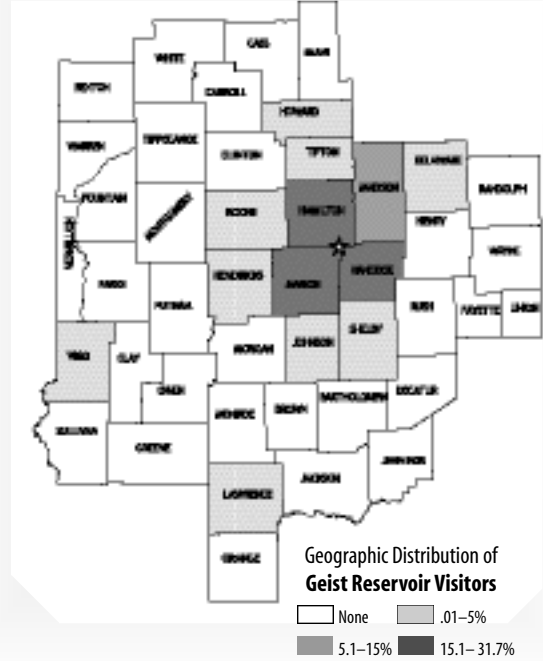




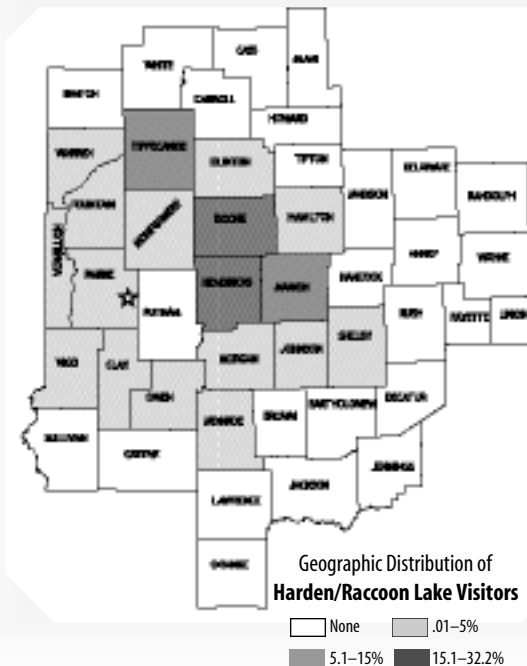
**White River**  
attracts visitors from at least 21 of 44 Central Indiana counties.



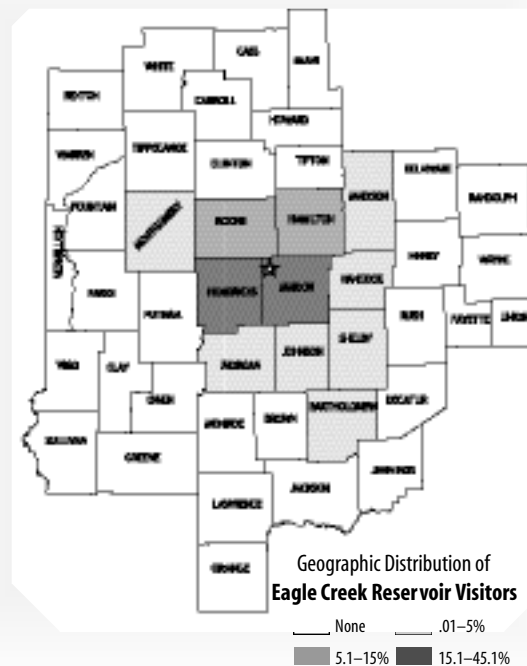
**Geist Reservoir**  
attracts visitors from at least 13 of 44 Central Indiana counties.



**Harden/Raccoon Lake**  
attracts visitors from at least 18 of 44 Central Indiana counties.



**Eagle Creek Reservoir**  
attracts visitors from at least 11 of 44 Central Indiana counties.





**MOST FREQUENTLY VISITED RIVER, LAKE, OR STREAM BY METROPOLITAN AREA**

	BLOOMINGTON	INDIANAPOLIS	KOKOMO	LAFAYETTE	MUNCIE	TERRE HAUTE
SITE	Lake Monroe	Lake Monroe	Mississinewa Lake	Wabash River	White River	Wabash River

**Central Indiana Metropolitan Residents Rely Heavily on Nearby Lakes and Rivers for Outdoor Water Recreational Activities**

Although results show that survey respondents travel from distant counties to visit water recreation sites throughout the region, they also show that households use nearby lakes and rivers. For households in four of the six metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in Central Indiana defined by the U. S. Bureau of the Census—Bloomington, Lafayette-West Lafayette, Terre Haute, and Muncie—the most popular destinations were within their respective boundaries. Lake Monroe, for example,

was the most popular recreation destination for residents in the Bloomington MSA. Respondents in the Indianapolis and Kokomo MSAs most frequently cited destinations outside their boundaries. Lake Monroe was the destination cited most frequently by households in the nine-county Indianapolis MSA, while respondents in the Kokomo MSA named Mississinewa Lake in Wabash County as the site visited most frequently.

An MSA describes a geographic area consisting of a central city with a population of at least 50,000 surrounded by a densely populated area that is socially and economically integrated. The Central Indiana region includes six MSAs that consist of a total of 18 counties. The other 26 counties in Central Indiana are non-MSA counties.



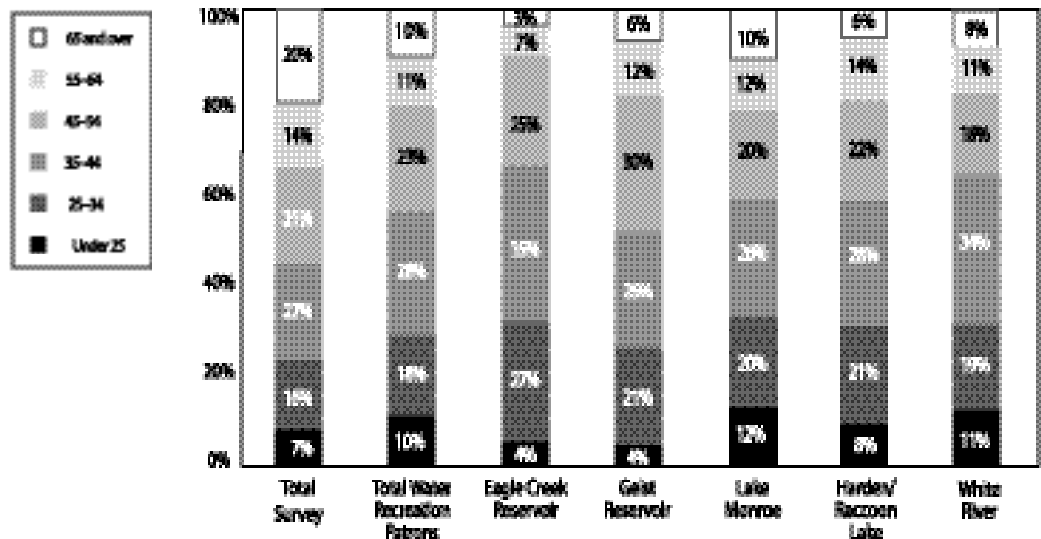
## Younger Respondents Are More Likely to Report Water-Related Recreation

The survey results show clearly that individuals age 44 and under are disproportionately more likely to engage in water-related recreation. Among those who reported visiting a regional body of water for recreational purposes, 56 percent were age 44 and under as opposed to only 45 percent of total survey respondents in this age range. Conversely, results indicate that individuals age 65 and over are disproportionately less likely to engage in water recreation. While 20 percent of total survey respondents were age 65 and over, just 10 percent of all those who reported visiting a regional water recreation area were in this age range.

Respondent age distribution also varies by location. For example, although individuals younger than 25 accounted for just 7 percent of the total sample, they accounted for 12 percent and 11 percent, respectively, of those who reported Lake Monroe and the White River as the most common destination sites. This pattern of use could be partly because Lake Monroe is located near Indiana University and because the highest concentration of White River patrons is in Delaware County, the home of Ball State University. Among those visiting one of the five most popular destinations, respondents between the ages of 25 and 44 ranged between 46 percent at Lake Monroe to 62 percent at Eagle Creek Reservoir, as opposed to only 38 percent of total survey respondents in this age

range. Additionally, while 30 percent of those who reported Geist Reservoir as their most common destination were between the ages of 45 and 54, only 21 percent of total respondents were in this category. The percentage of respondents age 65 and over who most frequently visited one of the top five destinations ranged from only 3 percent at Eagle Creek Reservoir to 10 percent at Lake Monroe.

**Central Indiana Household Survey  
Lake and River Visitors by Age Classification**





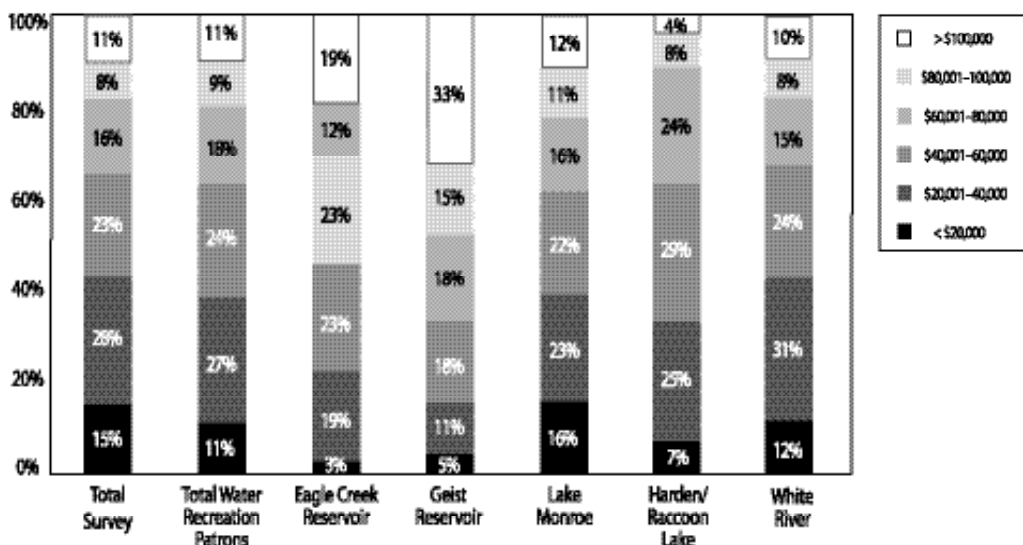
## The Income of Central Indiana Lake and River Visitors Varies by Location

Overall, income distribution among households that reported visiting a regional water recreation area is representative of the total survey sample. Survey results indicate that, although people of all incomes use Central Indiana lakes and rivers, income levels vary greatly by location. Income distribution of survey respondents visiting Lake Monroe and the White River mirrors the distribution of all Central Indiana household survey respondents. This could be due in part to the fact that these two destinations draw respondents from a larger geographic area, 23 and 21 counties respectively, than do other regional destinations.

Among respondents visiting one of the five most common destinations, the low to lower-middle income (\$40,000 or less) distribution of White River visitors (43 percent) most closely resembles that of the total survey sample (43 percent). A higher proportion of survey respondents frequenting Harden/Raccoon Lake (53 percent) fall in the middle to upper-middle income (\$40,001–80,000) bracket than do the total survey respondents (39 percent). Meanwhile, both Geist Reservoir and Eagle Creek Reservoir visitors have a much higher proportion of upper-income (greater than \$80,000) respondents (48 percent and 31 percent, respectively) than that of the total survey respondents (19 percent).



**Central Indiana Household Survey  
Lake and River Visitors by Income Classification**

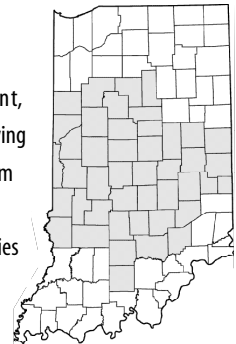






## Central Indiana's Future: Understanding the Region and Identifying Choices

Central Indiana's Future: Understanding the Region and Identifying Choices, funded by an award of general support from the Lilly Endowment, is a research project that seeks to increase understanding of the region and to inform decision-makers about the array of options for improving the quality of life for Central Indiana residents. The Center for Urban Policy and the Environment faculty and staff, with other researchers from several universities, are working to understand how the broad range of investments made by households, governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations within the Central Indiana region contribute to quality of life. The geographic scope of the project includes 44 counties in an integrated economic region identified by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.



*Central Indiana Region*

This report summarizes how survey respondents view outdoor water recreation areas both in their communities and throughout the Central Indiana region. More specifically, this report identifies the rivers, streams, and lakes most frequently visited by survey respondents for the purposes of fishing, boating, swimming, and other recreational activities. (For more information on survey methodology refer to *Central Indiana Household Survey 2000: An Overview*, available from the center.)

The Center for Urban Policy and the Environment is part of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. For more information about the Central Indiana Project or the research reported here, contact the center at 317-261-3000 or visit the center's Web site at [www.urbancenter.iupui.edu](http://www.urbancenter.iupui.edu).

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