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## **Lilly project boosts Healthy Rivers Initiative**

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CLINTON-Indiana's record-setting conservation program took another step forward today with the introduction of a unique project that will showcase the compatibility of conservation and farming, and protect more than 300 acres at Lilly's Elanco manufacturing facility in Clinton.

"With this innovative project, we're extending Indiana's standing as a national leader in wetlands and wildlife protection. We're out to demonstrate how farming, conservation and public access can work hand in hand to improve the health of our rivers, while preserving some of our most beautiful natural spaces," Gov. Mitch Daniels said.

A conservation easement will forever protect 308 acres between Elanco's Clinton Laboratories and the Wabash River. The site will feature several wildlife habitat and buffer areas, including:

- 46.2 acres of native grass plantings
- 30.5 acres of restored wetlands
- 28.2 acres of tree plantings
- 3.8 acres of research area plantings
- 2.7 miles of trails
- 121.5 acres in the center of the restoration that will continue to be farmed

The demonstration project, within the Healthy Rivers Initiative along the Wabash River, will show how wildlife habitat can be created to buffer the river and allow farming to continue on land prone to flooding. Trees will be planted in June, the wetlands in the fall, and the project, which will include hiking areas, will be open to the public next year.

"Feeding a global population of 9 billion in the next 40 years while protecting our natural resources will require new and different approaches to sustainability," Elanco president Jeff Simmons said.

"We appreciate this important demonstration effort linking highly efficient modern agriculture with protective efforts of the river valley."

The project is the latest achievement in a partnership of resource agencies and organizations announced by Daniels last summer to focus on a historic land conservation effort that results in far-reaching ecological impacts of state, regional and national importance.

Under the Healthy Rivers Initiative, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy and their partners are working with landowners to conserve 43,000 acres of riparian corridor along the Wabash River and Sugar Creek in west-central Indiana and another 26,000 acres of the Muscatatuck River bottoms in southeast Indiana. For perspective, the single largest previous conservation project in state history, Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area, encompassed 8,000 acres when it was opened by Daniels several years ago.

The DNR, NRCS and TNC are joined in this initiative by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks

Unlimited, local soil and water conservation districts, and other partners, including Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, and Quail Unlimited.

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