



**Ready Communities Initiative  
Letter of Intent:**

***Quarry in the Uplands***

**Monroe County Government**

## MONROE COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

and office of the

## MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

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<https://www.co.monroe.in.us/departments/?structureid=13>



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### APPLICANTS: Monroe County Commissioners, County Council, and County Planning Department

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**FUNDING REQUEST:** \$250,000

### INTRODUCTION AND VISION

Imagine limestone blocks culled from nearby quarries, clusters of tall trees, and the blue-green water of quarry lakes. Included would be an education and interpretation of our community's limestone heritage and space for artistic expression and participation. Monroe County proposes the **Quarries in the Uplands**, a project that will honor our past, celebrate our present, and help shape our future.

Monroe County has identified a large parcel of land with multiple and diverse historic limestone quarries that provides easy access to visitors and I-69, yet is close to the Indiana University campus and downtown Bloomington. In purchasing and developing this property into **Quarries in the Uplands**, we can create economic, educational, environmental, and artistic opportunities for the community that has long clamored for the integration of the unique features of our limestone quarries into the lifeblood of our community<sup>1</sup>. We recognize that this vision may take decades and significant public input to fully realize. This proposal, if funded, though, will enable us to complete year 1 of our vision for **Quarries in the Uplands**.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

For decades, Monroe County residents have been communicating their desire for both a community space and a quarry attraction. **Quarries in the Uplands** is grounded in past feedback from residents, will be reflective of community aspirations, and will implement three of our identified priorities in the *Monroe County Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plan*:

- **Cultivate County Connections and Countywide identity.** Monroe County is known internationally for our high quality limestone and the importance of our limestone industry. We intend to create the nation's first outdoor Limestone Interpretive Museum in coordination with local industry and other key stakeholders. The site will also host other county events, such as the renowned Limestone Symposium, and will be a placemaking opportunity for residents. There would be public outreach and engagement to determine future specific activities and projects on the property.
- **Expand Arts & Culture Access Throughout the County.** Our Quality of Place and Workforce Attraction Plan specifically identifies "Create a limestone tourist attraction easily accessible from I-69 to promote our Cutter heritage and identity" as a tier 1 project<sup>2</sup>. The site will provide space for arts and cultural events, including limestone craft, the performing arts, community events, as well as interpretation of the industrial heritage of the area and the site. In the future, it will also host community festivals and other private events, and include extensive trails and natural botanic areas.
- **Support the Transition to the Modern Economy.** The **Quarries in the Uplands** will attract new business development in the area between Bloomington and Ellettsville, where Monroe County has already made significant investments in the infrastructure, and produce economic growth

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<sup>1</sup> Indiana Limestone Heritage Parks Project Final Report, 2005:

[https://www.co.monroe.in.us/egov/documents/1566846754\\_28577.pdf](https://www.co.monroe.in.us/egov/documents/1566846754_28577.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>Quality of Place Workforce Attraction Plan, Monroe County, 2019 Survey questions:

<https://swcindianadotorg.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/appendices-monroe-county-qpwa-plan-2019.pdf>



throughout the county. It will attract resources, private companies, and people (both tourists and residents). To support this effort, we will create a strategic bridging program that includes economic development opportunities throughout the Uplands that integrates our quarry heritage in Ellettsville, Stinesville, and even the other counties of the Indiana Uplands region.

This project directly aligns with the *Aesthetics and Beautification Enhancements and Community Cohesion* and *Support categories of the Ready Communities Implementation Grants initiative*. This \$250,000 in grant funding, along with over \$1M county match, would be utilized to purchase the land and make at least a portion of the property accessible to the public within the first year. Local match funding will also be used to hire a historic preservationist and create a development plan for the site. The goal is to host at least one performing arts event and to host the Indiana Limestone Symposium within the first two years of the project.

**ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES FOR MEASURING THEM**

Metrics for capacity outcomes includes the following:

- Number of events (concert, classroom, poetry reading, demonstration, lecture) and visitor count
- Capacity building programs for the broader community (certificate programs utilizing limestone trades created, number of training events hosted, preservation and incorporation of historical records for quarries and the past employees)
- Collaborative activities with other public service agencies such as invasive species control, EPA cleanup activities, botanical gardening efforts, and native species promulgation
- Corporate quarry participation from the Uplands’ limestone industry
- Public participation in the visioning process to occur with the Master Plan
- Identification of a 501(c)3 or other organization to manage **Quarries in the Uplands**

**TIMELINE**

Year	Initiative	Measured Outcome	Funding Sources	Invited Collaborators
1	Acquire Land	-Land Purchase within 1 year	ROI grant, County General Obligation Bond	
1	Master Plan (engineering, landscaping, historic preservation, public outreach & engagement)	-Number of residents responding to public outreach campaign - Site Plan Drafted within 1 year	County funding, including Food and Beverage Tax	Limestone Symposium; Limestone Post; Limestone industries; IU Geological Survey; Monroe County Historic Preservation Board; Monroe County History Museum; Visit Bloomington
1	Host Limestone Symposium	-Host first Symposium in June 2020		Same partners as Master Plan
1	Site safety Improvements	-Site Plan Approval by Monroe County Departments	County funding, including Food and Beverage Tax	
1	Basic Accessibility (walking paths, visitor parking)	-Number of attendees at events	ROI grant; Food and Beverage Tax	
2	Outdoor interpretive quarry museum	-Opening the museum within year 2	County, other grant, other partners	Same partners as Master Plan
2	Host Outdoor Performing Arts Event	-Number of attendees at events	County, other grant, other partners	Corporate sponsors?

With **Quarries in the Uplands**, we have the opportunity to create a project that has been envisioned and sought after for a generation. We look forward to your feedback and support for this exciting facility.