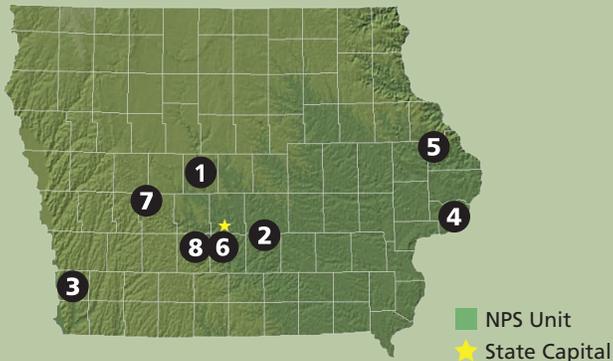




Outdoor classroom and nature trail ribbon cutting in Elliott.
Photo: Nancy Taylor

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2015



CURRENT PROJECTS

1. Boone County Trails
2. Jasper/Marion Counties Trails
3. Mills County, Countywide Trails Planning
4. Mississippi River Connections Collaborative, Mississippi River Trail
5. Prairie Creek Recreation Area
6. Quad County Trails Planning
7. Southern Prairie Pothole
8. Winterset Trails (Cedar Lake Trail)

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Program staff provide technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.

Recent Successes

NPS Finds Success in Regional Planning

Over the past few years, staff from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program has worked with county agencies and community interest groups to develop countywide trail plans throughout Iowa. Through these partnerships, NPS staff have assisted in developing four countywide plans that include soft surface and hard surface trail maps.

Each countywide trail plan takes a dedicated community support effort and more than nine months to complete. Some basic elements needed to create such a plan include a community stakeholders group, a mission and a vision for the project, project partners that include county conservation staff, county supervisors, local healthcare representatives, local colleges, and local residents, landowners, and recreation interest groups. Additionally, the committee works hard to organize mapping services, three to five community listening sessions, 501c3 nonprofit status, and fundraisers.

These plans are developed to provide county administrators and county residents a “road map” to follow for future planning. Most plans are adopted by the county supervisors as part of their comprehensive plan and are also submitted to the Iowa Department of Transportation to keep their staff apprised of planning in these areas.

Countywide trail plans provide high-quality places for people to walk and ride their bikes and they provide access to places that might not be accessible by road, such as conservation areas or scenic areas.

Current Projects

1. Boone County Trails

Project Partner: Boone County Trails Initiative
NPS Contact: Brian Leaders
Location: Boone County
Congressional District: IA - 4

Project Goal

Develop a countywide trails plan that can be adopted by the county supervisors as a comprehensive trails plan. This plan will act as a “road map” for the development of future trails throughout the county and provide a plan to connect Boone County to trails in the surrounding counties.

NPS Role

Guide the Boone County Trail Initiative through the preliminary planning process of a countywide trails plan. Facilitate meetings, gather stakeholders, and guide concept planning.

2. Jasper/Marion Counties Trails

Project Partner: Iowa Heartland Resource Conservation and Development
NPS Contact: Brian Leaders
Location: Jasper and Marion Counties
Congressional District: IA - 2

Project Goal

Develop a countywide trail system planning document to use as a foundation for funding opportunities, county and city budgets, development opportunities, and in discussions with surrounding communities and counties for connectivity opportunities.

NPS Role

Assist with development of comprehensive countywide trail master plans for Jasper and Marion Counties that will provide regional connectivity to surrounding counties and include substantial input from citizens, communities, and user groups.

3. Mills County, Countywide Trails Planning

Project Partner: Mills County Trails Committee
NPS Contact: Brian Leaders
Location: Mills County
Congressional District: IA - 3

Project Goal

Complete a countywide comprehensive trail plan that can be adopted by the county and used as a development tool. It is also intended to connect all communities in the county and to create economic growth for Mills County and Southwest Iowa.

NPS Role

Assist Mills County in developing a countywide trail plan that provides all the communities with an opportunity to get outside and get active in a safe environment.

4. Mississippi River Connections Collaborative, Mississippi River Trail

Project Partner: Mississippi River Trail, Inc.
NPS Contact: Rory Robinson
Location: Mississippi River, 10 States
Congressional Districts: IA - 1, IA - 2, IA - 4

Project Goal

Foster improvements to the Mississippi River Trail for recreation, tourism, and community development; assist in the development of the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative and increase long-term organizational viability; further develop the Mississippi River blueway portion of the trail system; develop geotourism initiative with National Geographic Society.

NPS Role

Assist the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative with organizational development, outreach to other organizations and agencies, and development and implementation of their strategic and operations plans.



Countywide Trails planning listening session, Pottawattamie County. Photo: NPS

Current Projects

Increase the capacity of Mississippi River Trail, Inc. to develop a water and land based trail along the Mississippi River. Assist Mississippi River Connections Collaborative to develop a sustainable destination tourism (geotourism) initiative in partnership with the National Geographic Society

5. Prairie Creek Recreation Area

Project Partner: Jackson County Conservation

NPS Contact: Brian Leaders

Location: Maquoketa

Congressional District: IA - 1

Project Goal

Begin site planning studies and rehabilitation of a donated property.

NPS Role

Assist Jackson County Conservation with site planning. Perhaps foster a partnership between the conservation team and Iowa State University for technical assistance with site survey and inventory. Assist with public meetings and gathering stakeholders and partners that will support the project.

6. Quad County Trails Planning

Project Partner: Iowa Heartland Resource Conservation & Development

NPS Contact: Brian Leaders

Location: Central Iowa

Congressional District: IA - 3

Project Goal

Create comprehensive countywide trail master plans for Madison and Warren Counties that will include substantial input from citizens, communities,



Volunteers at Prairie Creek. Photo: Ann Burns

and user groups. Develop planning documents to use as a foundation for funding opportunities, county and city budgets, development opportunities, and in discussions with surrounding communities and counties for connectivity opportunities.

NPS Role

Provide guidance, meeting facilitation, and assistance in the development of a countywide trail plan.

7. Southern Prairie Pothole

Project Partner: Creating Great Places

NPS Contact: Brian Leaders

Location: Coon Rapids

Congressional District: IA - 3, IA - 4

Project Goal

Expand the 2,134-acre Dunbar Slough and Willow Creek wetland complex along the Middle Raccoon River in west-central Iowa by an additional 5,000 acres in order to create a landscape scale wetland and grassland area just northeast of Coon Rapids.

RTCA Role

Assist the Creating Great Places committee in expanding the 2,134-acre Dunbar Slough to a 7,134-acre wetland and wildlife habitat protection area.

8. Winterset Trails (Cedar Lake Trail)

Project Partner: City of Winterset

NPS Contact: Brian Leaders

Location: Winterset

Congressional District: IA - 3

Project Goal

Plan a 5.5-mile loop trail that will include a 140-acre area park and drinking water reservoir. Provide the community with the opportunity to continue the development of a large trail network and to begin the planning phase of a countywide trail plan.

NPS Role

Assist the City of Winterset and its residents in developing plans and strategies in funding for the 5.5 mile loop trail.

“The trail planning is going to take on a life of its own and bring great County benefits!”

- Anne Smith, Mills County Trail Committee

We're Here For You.

Could your project benefit from NPS Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.



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2014 Nationwide Partnership Success

3,278.74 Miles of Trail Developed

2,046.25 Miles of River Conserved

9,411.06 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

Find more information online at
www.nps.gov/rtca

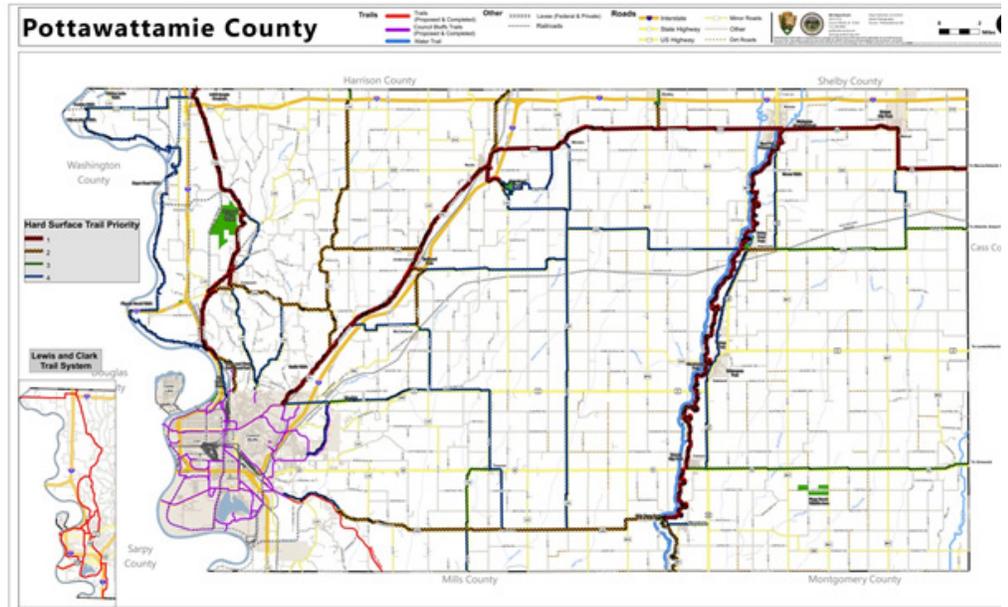


EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Recent Successes cont.

In addition, these trails provide healthy alternatives to working out, safe routes to school, better quality of life for seniors, education opportunities, equestrian opportunities, crime reduction in urban settings, alternative transportation for commuters, and even economic gains for some small communities.

Countywide trail plans provide a vision for the future. Continuing the effort, NPS staff will assist five counties in Iowa with their planning efforts in 2015.



Pottawattamie County Hard Surface Trail Map. Photo: Pottawattamie County.



Ribbon cutting guests checking out the Human Sundial designed by NPS staff. Photo: Nancy Taylor