



Missouri News



PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2015

- NPS Unit
- ★ State Capital



CURRENT PROJECTS

- 1. Blue River Strategic Conservation**
Heartland Conservation Alliance
- 2. Jefferson City Park Plaza**
Jefferson City Cultural Arts Foundation
- 3. Mississippi River Connections Collaborative/Mississippi River Trail**
Mississippi River Trail, Inc.
- 4. Rock Island Rail Trail**
Missouri Rock Island Trail, Inc.
- 5. Ozark Greenways**
Ozark Greenways

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.

A vision for the Rock Island Trail which will stretch from Kansas City to Washington, near St. Louis, adding an impressive 213 miles to Missouri's statewide trails system. Photo: American Society of Landscape Architects

Recent Successes

Missouri Rock Island Trail Communities Rally to turn a 21-year Dream into Reality

Missouri is on its way to having a new 213-mile rail trail along the Rock Island Line. The Ameren Corporation and Missouri Central Railroad have filed to railbank the entire inactive portion of the railroad line from Beaufort (near Washington) west to Windsor, where it will connect with the Katy Trail and extend the Rock Island Trail State Park, which now runs from Windsor into Kansas City. When complete, the Rock Island Trail State Park will interconnect with the Katy Trail in two places, making 453-mile trail system stretching across Missouri.

Thanks are due to the communities and partner organizations who worked tirelessly to bring the project to this important crossroads, including Missouri Rock Island Trail, Inc. (MoRIT), the grassroots coalition of Missouri Rock Island Trail communities, Missouri State Parks, and the national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. In addition, over 12,500 people signed a petition to Missouri State Parks, to the Governor, and to Ameren to demonstrate the high level of public support for the long-distance trail.

Communities along the route have been trying to turn the Rock Island corridor into a statewide trail since the 1980s, when the Rock Island Railroad last saw traffic. The corridor almost became a trail in 1993. It has taken another 21 years of work to make the trail a reality. "This B-I-G new trail... will be part of a statewide trail system as impressive as any in the country—or the world, for that matter!" exclaimed Brent Hugh, Executive Director of the Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation.

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Current Projects

1. Blue River Strategic Conservation

Project Partner: Heartland Conservation Alliance
NPS Contact: Kim Shafer
Location: Blue River watershed in Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas Congressional District: MO - 5

Project Goal

Build a strong coalition of nonprofits, community organizations, and education and government entities to raise awareness and protect the natural and cultural resources of the Blue River in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

NPS Role

Work with the Heartland Conservation Alliance and the myriad of Blue River urban partners to develop a community education and engagement strategy to determine the level of community understanding and connection to the Blue River, map resources, collect community stories, and look for opportunities to reconnect the community to the river.

2. Jefferson City Park Plaza

Project Partner: Jefferson City Cultural Arts Foundation
NPS Contact: Kim Shafer
Location: Jefferson City
Congressional District: MO - 3

Project Goal

Create a trailhead plaza to be constructed adjacent to Jefferson City's greenway system, which currently stretches 15 miles and connects suburban areas, retail sectors, the older, established urban core of the city, and the Katy Trail, a bicycle/hiking trail spanning the State of Missouri.



Springfield Artist Christine Schilling works with local contractors and volunteers to install a custom mosaic on the Ozark Greenways Trail of Tears. Photo: Ozark Greenways, Inc.

NPS Role

Work with the Jefferson City Cultural Arts Foundation and partners to identify potential resources and new partnerships. Assist with research for funding as well as ideas for visual design and energy conservation best practices.

3. Mississippi River Connections Collaborative/ Mississippi River Trail

Project Partner: Mississippi River Trail, Inc.
NPS Contact: Rory Robinson
Location: Mississippi River, 10 States
Congressional Districts: MO - 1, MO - 2, MO - 3, MO - 6, MO - 8

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. 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.

Current Projects

4. Rock Island Rail Trail

Project Partner: Missouri Rock Island Trail, Inc.

NPS Contact: Kim Shafer

Location: 17 communities along the Rock Island Railroad right-of-way

Congressional Districts: MO - 3, MO - 4

Project Goal

Develop a thriving coalition of communities along the Rock Island Line railroad corridor from Beaufort to Windsor and create a vision for the future development of the 145-mile Rock Island Rail Trail to improve the quality of life, encourage active lifestyles, and promote economic development throughout the corridor.

NPS Role

Assist with building partner relationships and gathering public input to create a vision to enhance future Rock Island Rail Trail development.

5. Ozark Greenways Trail of Tears

Project Partner: Ozark Greenways

NPS Contact: Kim Shafer

Location: Springfield

Congressional District: MO - 7

Project Goal

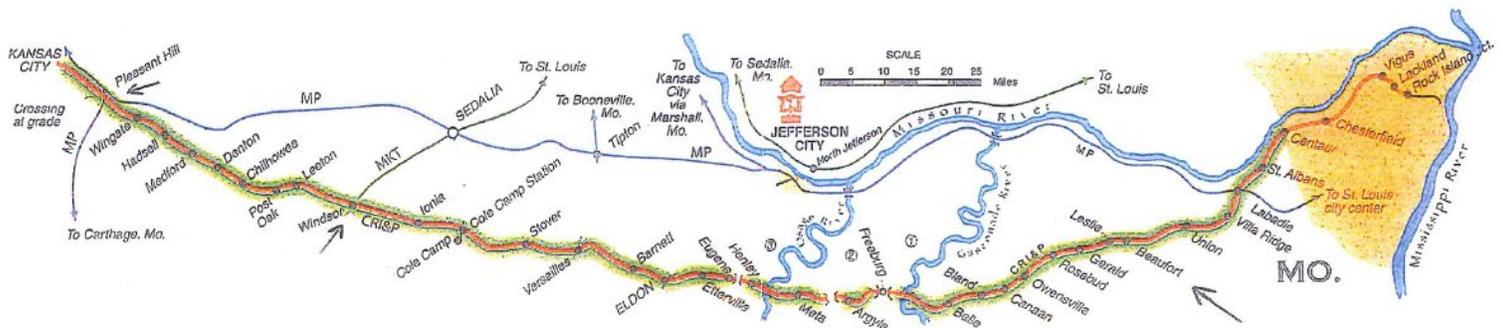
Develop a historic section of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail into an urban community walking and bicycling trail which will connect into the South Creek Greenway system and eventually to the City of Battlefield and Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.

NPS Role

Assist partners to identify potential resources and new partnerships and to organize a visioning session with stakeholder groups for further development of the Trail of Tears and other historic trail resources in Greene County.



Trail of Tears. Photo: Ozark Greenways



The Rock Island Line is being rail-banked to preserve public land for recreation and transportation across central Missouri. Map: Missouri Central Railroad Company

We're Here For You.

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



Kim Shafer
402.661.1914
kim_shafer@nps.gov



Rory Robinson
330.657.2951
rory_robinson@nps.gov



David Thomson
402-661-1570
dave_thomson@nps.gov

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



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Recent Successes cont.

In 2013 and 2014, the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program partnered with the Kansas City and St. Louis chapters of the American Society of Landscape Architects and the city of Eldon to create a vision for the Rock Island Trail in their communities and will continue to work with MoRIT and communities along the Rock Island corridor to develop a vision for the statewide trail.

New Public Art Installation and Eagle Scout Project Enhance Ozark Greenways Trail of Tears

The Ozark Greenways Trail of Tears continues to grow and develop as an important historic trail resource in the City of Springfield. Ozark Greenways acquired sections of a former rail corridor that follows a segment of the historic route through the Springfield area. The route is associated with the forced relocation of Native American nations from southeastern parts of the United States to areas west of the Mississippi River in the 1830s. The first segment, completed in 2012, is recognized as a Greene County Historic Site and a certified segment of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

Two recent projects demonstrate how this trail is capturing the hearts and minds of artists and residents. Working with local artist Christine Schilling and a generous supporter of the trails and public art, Ozark Greenways was able to bring this story to life through the addition of community art elements that enhance the trail experience and improve wayfinding on an interrupted portion of the trail at Golden Street.

The Trail of Tears addition to the greenway system provides an opportunity to tell the story of this tragic chapter in American and Cherokee History to a new generation of residents. Existing trail sections have been completed in cooperation with numerous community organizations and volunteers. Field work days with Springfield Central High School students provide service learning opportunities for engaging local youth. The local Boy Scouts of America have been involved through volunteer work coordinated through past Eagle Scout projects and there is continued interest in future projects by upcoming Eagle Scouts. An Eagle Scout project completed in October of 2014 engaged community youth in the planning and installation of a neighborhood connector along the route.

The National Park Service will continue to provide assistance in future phases of trail development, which will provide a connection to the South Creek Greenway and also extend the trail south to Battlefield City Park and on to Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.

"We appreciate the ongoing commitment of the National Park Service in helping communities realize their vision for better trail networks throughout Missouri."

- Brent Hugh, Executive Director, Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation