Henry and Rural Rock Island Counties

Comprehensive Greenway Plan

Regional Initiative

With increasing development pressures throughout Henry and rural Rock Island Counties, the establishment of a regional greenway network is important for preserving the environment and linear connections within the region. In 1993, the Illinois Governor's Council under Governor Edgar defined greenways and initiated a planning program to begin outlining ways to develop a statewide network of greenways and trails that adds value to existing public holdings and provides the setting for a wide assortment of activities. This plan follows in the footsteps of the Illinois and Iowa Quad Cities greenway plans and suggests connections within the region to create a viable network of greenways, enhance the quality of life and improve the environment within Henry and rural Rock Island Counties.

Henry and Rural Rock Island Counties Greenway Coalition

Under a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (ILDNR), the Henry and Rural Rock Island Counties Greenway Coalition was formed in January 2000 to identify, prioritize, develop and/or preserve greenways throughout the project area. Bi-State Regional Commission facilitated the project in cooperation with local, state and federal representatives.

In order to complete the greenway plan, representatives from the communities and counties were contacted for their input into the conceptual plan. The following list represents the Coalition:

- City/Village Chief Elected Officials
- City/Village Clerks/Administrators/Managers
- City/Village Parks and Recreation Representatives
- County Board Chairman/Administrator
- Henry County Farm Bureau
- Henry County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Interstate Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D)
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Izaak Walton League of America, Inc.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Definition of Greenways

A greenway is a corridor of open space connecting natural areas, cultural and historic sites, parks, neighborhoods and communities. As our "Green Infrastructure", similar to roads, water and sewer systems and utilities, they are essential for the general health and welfare of the public. These linear corridors can be located along waterways, streets, railroads, utility easements, bluffs, ravines or any other linear feature connecting open space.

Establishing greenways in many cases means preserving existing resources. These ribbons of open land allow for natural filtration of streams and rivers. They promote erosion control along stream banks, ravines or bluffs and create protective buffers for woodlands and prairies. Greenways protect wildlife migration routes and allow for recreation and multi-purpose trails. They are opportunities for rural community landscaping and design. Economic development is associated with greenways through increased property values along a corridor, recreation related sales and rental

Greenways link communities and draw visitors. They can showcase culture and history. Geneseo.

enterprises, tourism and historic attractions, and quality of life initiatives which can attract businesses to the region.

Because of the linear nature of greenways, they offer greater accessibility to humans and wildlife. For example, a 160-acre greenway has a greater amount of edge area than a traditional park. If a traditional park is ¼-mile on all sides, comparably the same number of acres for the greenway would equate to a park 16 miles in length and nearly 83 feet wide. As a result, a greater number of people can access the greenway, and/or a greater amount of open space is protected.

Greenways have been further defined as active, passive or a combination of these types. The definitions assist in the prioritization process and with strategies for implementation. Because distinct segments of a single greenway may have different functions, the following definitions have been developed for clarification:

Active Greenways (A): A greenway providing a wide range of opportunities for human use through recreation and multi-purpose trail development. Such linear parks or open space may provide for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, paddling, boating, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, fishing, driving, etc. Access to active greenways can have multiple points of entry. Active greenways developed as multi-purpose trails may be implemented either on-road with shared access or off-road with non-shared access. Simple nature paths or non-hard surfaced greenways may be another option for active greenways. The proposed active greenways amount to 225 miles of linear open space.

Passive Greenways (P): A greenway providing a limited range of opportunities for human use by restricting public access. The function or value of this type of linear corridor is to emphasize conservation and protection of the natural environment. The purpose of a passive greenway may be for stormwater and floodplain management, wetland preservation, erosion control, natural filtration for water quality improvements, living snow fences, migration of wildlife and preservation of vegetation. If public access is allowed at all, human access should be limited through designated points of access, such as guided nature paths, perimeter parking, designating paddling moorings/docks and selective scenic overlooks. The proposed passive greenways amount to 170 miles of linear open space.

Greenway Priorities

The Coalition has identified approximately 395 miles of greenways for preservation and/or development. The highest priorities stress regional connections between counties, regions and the nation. Other priorities are shown to emphasize connections countywide, particularly between communities and along watersheds. The Henry and Rural Rock Island Counties Greenway Plan outlines generalized concepts for the implementation of greenways. As efforts to develop and implement these corridors unfold, specific routes may vary but the overall connection will be maintained.

Regional Greenway Priorities

The following list of regional greenways are listed in priority order and correspond to the associated number on the map.

1. Hennepin Canal (A) - The Hennepin Canal is a natural historic site. Once used as a major transportation corridor for goods, the canal transferred products from many sites to the Mississippi River. Today, the canal is an important regional active greenway through our region and serves as a vital historical and natural resource. The Hennepin Canal is identified as a high priority active greenway. Currently, the off-road bike trail that runs along the top of the Canal is being upgraded into a paved multi-use recreational trail that will serve as an integral part of both the Grand Illinois Trail, which loops through the northern part of the State of Illinois, and the American Discovery Trail which connects the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the United States. The Hennepin Canal fulfills canoeing, fishing, equestrian, and walking needs for users throughout the State of Illinois and nationwide.

As linear open space, greenways offer greater access over greater distances to humans and wildlife than traditional parks. Hennepin Canal near Annawan.

2. Rock Island State Trail Corridor (A) - A high priority greenway is proposed from the current terminus of the Rock Island State Trail in Toulon, Illinois, located in Sauk County, north to the Big Bend Conservation Area in Whiteside County. This corridor will provide an important north/south connection along the eastern edge of Henry County. It will provide links to Kewanee, and the Johnson Sauk Trail State Park. This greenway is in an area that coincides with historic and Native American sites and trails. Developing this corridor in conjunction with its rich history will provide opportunities for interpreting it as an old stagecoach trail and Pony Express route and other Native American trails. One of the highlights of this linear greenway is its convergence with the Hennepin Canal Greenway. From the Canal, this corridor is proposed to continue north through the Village of Hooppole to the Big Bend Conservation Area and other significant greenways in Whiteside County.

Existing roadways may serve as bikeways where bicyclists share a portion of the roadway with motor vehicles but future separated trails are preferred for safety. Proposed Rock Island State Trail Corridor.

3. Illinois Route 17 Corridor (A) - Illinois Route 17 running parallel to the southern county line is designated as a high priority regional greenway. This proposed greenway connects to the designated greenway from the Rock Island State Trail in Toulon into the southeastern portion of Henry County. Following IL17, the proposed corridor would connect west to Galva, Illinois. From Galva, the proposed greenway would continue west providing a corridor into the historic Village of Bishop Hill, one of the State of Illinois' largest tourist communities with its rich history as a Swedish colony. It would continue along IL17 and connect to the Village of Woodhull. From Woodhull the greenway is proposed to continue as an off-road trail to Alpha. This section would allow for multi-purpose uses including snowmobiling. This high priority greenway then continues from Alpha along county line roads into Mercer County where the corridor will eventually converge with the Mississippi River greenway.

4. Rock River (A/P) - The Rock River is a tributary to the Mississippi River and serves as an active and passive greenway for Henry County and rural Rock Island County. This corridor is designated for a variety of popular active recreational opportunities including boating, canoeing, fishing, biking, hiking, and motor touring. The Rock River experiences frequent flooding, especially during the Spring. In turn, areas near the Rock River are inundated for several months of the year. With good water quality, many high caliber wetlands are also located along this corridor which serve as significant habitat for a variety of wildlife. For these reasons, there will be areas in the greenway preserved for passive uses.

Countywide Greenway Priorities

The remaining greenways are listed in no particular order of priority. Overall, they are all equally important for development and/or preservation. The number associated with these greenways corresponds to the map accompanying the text.

Road right-of-ways and shoulders can provide linear open space for future bikeways, signed sightseeing routes, snowmobiling, etc. Hooppole.

5. Geneseo to Hennepin to Cleveland (A) - This greenway corridor provides a connection from the City of Geneseo to the Village of Cleveland. Cleveland is located along the Rock River, a designated regional greenway. This corridor provides a connection from Geneseo, a Victorian community, to Cleveland, a riverfront town, and bypasses Dayton Corners, which was the temporary location of the Henry County Seat while the first courthouse was being constructed in Richmond. This connection also affords access to the Hennepin Canal, another significant active greenway.

6. Colona to Cleveland (A) - Colona currently serves as one of the trail heads to the Grand Illinois Trail along the Hennepin Canal and Rock River. This greenway would provide not only a corridor between two significant waterfront communities, but also would provide a connection between two high priority greenways, the Rock River and the Hennepin Canal.

7. Hennepin Canal to Cambridge to Bishop Hill to Galva (A) - An active greenway corridor running north/south through the heart of Henry County, this corridor connects a litany of historically and culturally significant communities. Cambridge is the current County Seat and host to the Henry County Fairgrounds and Henry County Fair. It is also the site of the old Morristown Courthouse, which was moved when the County Seat relocated to Cambridge. Ideally, development of this corridor with its historical significance would provide another tourism asset within the County.

8. Cambridge to Orion (A) - An active greenway is identified from Cambridge connecting to Orion and continuing into rural Rock Island County. This corridor offers aspects of rural Henry County while connecting two significant communities.

9. Woodhull to Andover to Osco (A) - A future greenway corridor is proposed from Osco through Andover, home of the historic Jenny Lind Chapel, and continuing south connecting to the high priority, Route 17 greenway corridor near Woodhull.

10. Atkinson to Annawan (A) - An active greenway is proposed from Atkinson to Annawan. This connection would play an integral role in allowing access to the high priority Hennepin Canal greenway from both communities. The opportunity exists along this corridor to upgrade recreational areas along the canal, that would enhance both linear corridors.

11. Atkinson to Galva (A) - Atkinson is located along an identified greenway corridor that allows access to the Hennepin Canal. A future active greenway is proposed to connect this community to Galva. Connecting these two communities identifies a significant central route through the heart of Henry County that enhances the greenway plan. This corridor will also provide a connection to the high priority Route 17 greenway.

12. Galva to Kewanee (A) - A proposed active greenway is proposed from Galva to Kewanee. This greenway would either utilize existing roadways or an off-road connection could be feasible along railroad right-of-way. This corridor presents a connection to many resources in both communities.

13. Kewanee to Illinois River (A) - A connection is proposed from Francis Park, location of the historically significant Woodland Palace in Kewanee, along Kentville Road, an identified National By-way, to the Illinois River just south of Peru and Spring Valley. This corridor also provides a connection to Bureau Creek, a significant watershed that flows from the Illinois River to the Historic City of Princeton in Bureau County. This greenway corridor would serve as a link from a valuable commercial and recreational waterway, as well as, other significant locations in Bureau County to one of the largest communities in Henry County.

14. Green River (P) - A future passive greenway is planned for the Green River. This watershed flows from east to west across the northern section of Henry County and drains into the Rock River at Colona. With the occurrence of frequent flooding in this watershed, limited development is suggested. Protecting the stream bank and water quality, while providing a wildlife corridor, is a priority for this greenway. The Green River greenway ties into the Hennepin Canal and the Rock River. Both are identified as high priority regional greenways.

15. Edwards River/South Edwards River (P) - A future passive greenway is proposed for the Edwards and South Edwards Rivers. These waterways flow westerly through Henry County. The South Edwards River converges with the Edwards River near Andover. The watershed then continues through Mercer County and drains into the Mississippi River. Protection from runoff, erosion and sedimentation with the implementation of buffer strips are interests in this greenway.

16. West Mud Creek (P) - This creek is classified as a future passive greenway. The stream flows just east of Alpha, through Crescent Lake, and converges with the Edwards River to the north. Future plans along this greenway would include measures to remove sedimentation and protect from future stream bank erosion.

Passive greenway designations create opportunities for public education and improvements, such as Clean-A-Stream programs. Henry County.

17. East Mud Creek (P) - A future greenway is planned for East Mud Creek. The headwaters begin to the west of the Kewanee and runs north primarily through agricultural land until it converges with the Green River. Erosion control and improved water quality are important concerns along this stream.

18. Indian Creek (P) - A future passive greenway is planned for Indian Creek. Protection from run-off, sedimentation and erosion are of interest in this watershed. Indian Creek is a tributary of the Illinois River.

19. Geneseo Creek (P) - This creek is classified as a future passive greenway. The stream meanders through the community of Geneseo and provides for scenic vistas in this vicinity. Implementation of programs for stormwater run-off and pond retention are of interest in this watershed.

20. Mineral Creek (P) - Mineral Creek is designated as a future passive greenway in Henry County. Opportunities for improved water quality and sedimentation reduction through protection from erosion and run-off exist along this stream.

21. Mosquito Creek (P) - Mosquito Creek has been identified as a future passive greenway priority. This greenway corridor extends from the Orion to the Rock River. The need for erosion control measures, such as buffer strips, to prohibit further run-off are of interest in this watershed.

Our future greenways start with you! There are many resources for more information regarding greenway opportunities in Henry and rural Rock Island Counties.

On the Henry and Rural Rock Island Counties Greenway Plan, or information on population, employment, floodplains, average daily traffic, aerial photos or maps, contact:

Bi-State Regional Commission
1504 Third Avenue, P.O Box 3368
Rock Island, IL 61201-3368
Phone: (309) 793-6300
Fax: (309) 793-6305
Website: www.bi-state-ia-il.org

On community planning and development, contact your local government.

On conservation and natural resources, contact Natural Resources Conservation Service.

On construction, rehabilitation, restoration, etc. in, along, or near rivers, floodplains and all wetlands, contact:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
Clock Tower, Attn.: AD-S, P.O. Box 2004
Rock Island, IL 61204-2004
Phone: (309) 794-5274 for Public Affairs Office, or (309) 794-5380 for permitting.

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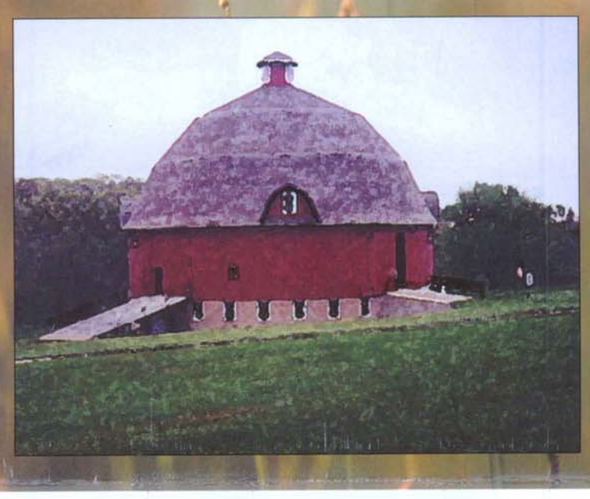
March 2001



Strategies for Implementation

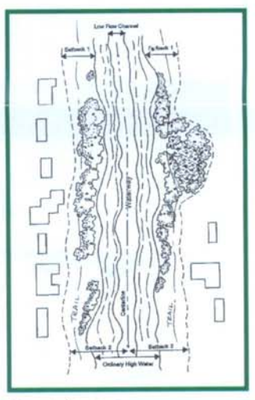
The success of the Henry and Rural Rock Island Counties Greenway Plan will depend on public and private partnerships to initiate implementation of these conceptual corridors. The initial support of this plan by City Councils, Village Boards and the County Board will ensure the plan's legitimacy. The Plan provides the framework in order to pursue funding opportunities through grant and conservation programs, community service projects, and other public/private efforts. The plan offers a clear, concise outline of important greenways which may be implemented in the short term or may take many years of coordination and implementation to see the vision carried out.

Because many of the greenways include public and private property, cooperation and understanding of the greenway concept and priorities are essential. To ensure the development of these linear corridors, local governments are asked to include the prioritized greenways in the comprehensive plans, park and recreation plans, land use plans, etc. By taking this step, communities will further define and affirm their importance. Utilities and private property owners are asked to incorporate greenways into their developments and future plans.

Implementation

Implementation will require decisions on preservation, acquisition, ownership, management and funding, similar to other types of infrastructure. Securing greenways can take many forms.

Sample Methods: Some techniques to preserve or acquire greenways include: zoned conservation or overlay districts, greenway ordinances, conservation subdivisions, conservation easements with tax incentives, transportation or utility easements, agricultural set-asides or wetland reserves, linear park development, subdivision covenants, open space tax incentives and land trusts, etc.

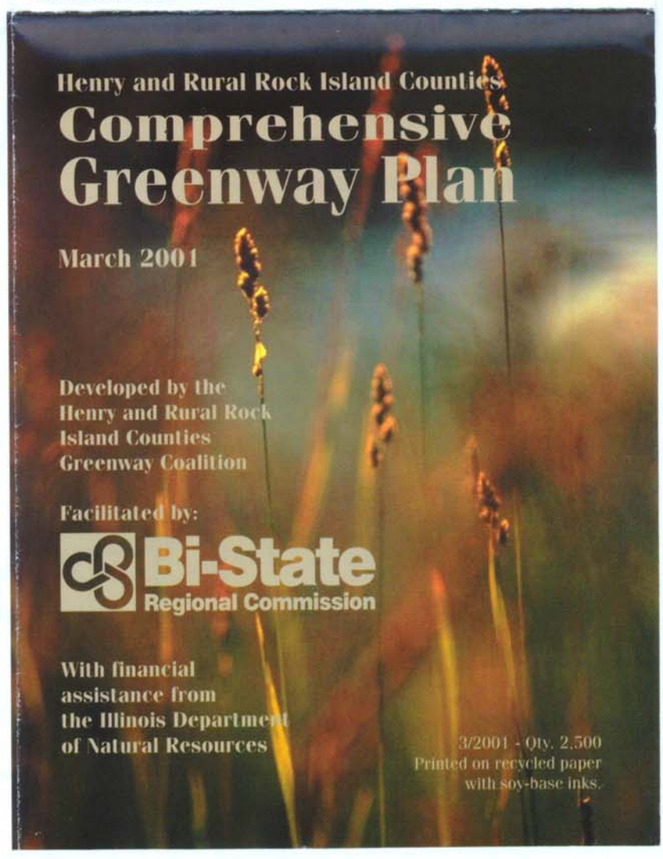


Sample Greenway.

Management Options: Ownership, management or operational options may include: private or public properties with donated or purchased easements, government owned and operated parks, riparian buffers or filter strips for cropland or marginal pastures set aside and maintained by farmers, and private property sold to a land trust with assigned property rights for conservation.

Funding Opportunities: Known sources of funding to assist in establishing greenways include, but are not limited to: Open Space and Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grants, Illinois Department of Transportation Enhancement Grants, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trails Grants, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Clean Water Act Section 319 funding, Wetland Protection and Development Grants, Open Land Trust Program (OLT), etc.

For this Greenway Plan to succeed, it will require further community education and involvement, planning, coordination and commitment to creating the regional green infrastructure. The benefits will include enhanced recreational and tourism opportunities, preserved scenic vistas and wildlife corridors, improved water quality and wetlands, increased awareness of historic and important landmarks and enhanced quality of life in Henry and rural Rock Island Counties.



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Identifying 395 Miles of Greenways

March 2001