The Greenways & Trails Plan for Ogle County, Illinois

Ogle County Greenways & Trails Committee

Blackhawk Hills RC&D/EDD

Ogle County Planning & Zoning Department

JUNE 2003

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Illinois Governor's Council has initiated a planning program to outline ways to develop a statewide network of greenways and trails that would add value to existing public lands and provide the setting for a variety of activities, and,

WHEREAS, a greenways plan would meet the Land Use and Development, Resource Conservation, and Economic Development goals and objectives of Ogle County's *Amendatory Comprehensive Plan -Year 2000 Update*, some of which are as follows: Manage development in a rational and orderly manner; Protect and enhance the County's natural resources, rural character and rural community values; Protect environmentally critical areas and areas premature from urban development; Provide for open spaces through efficient design and layout of the land; Protect and preserve the natural and scenic qualities of the Rock River corridor and other high-quality riparian corridors throughout the County; Protect and enhance existing businesses and economic development which employs residents of the County and/or attracts tourism to the County; and'

WHEREAS, the greenways planning effort has generated an increasing amount of support from a broad cross-section of the county including: municipalities, park districts, government agencies, user groups, and individuals, and'

WHEREAS, a greenways plan, in accordance with existing County plans, will provide a framework for municipalities and county residents to pursue funding opportunities through grant and conservation programs, community service projects, and other public private efforts; and,

WHEREAS, the Ogle County Regional Planning Commission has recommended that the Ogle County Greenways and Trails Plan be adopted by the Ogle County Board as an addendum to the Ogle County, Illinois Amendatory Comprehensive Plan - Year 2000 Update to be considered by the Ogle County Regional Planning Commission in making land use recommendations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE OGLE COUNTY BOARD AS FOLLOWS:

That the *Ogle County Greenways and Trails Plan* be adopted by the Ogle County Board as an addendum to the *Ogle County, Illinois Amendatory Comprehensive Plan - Year 2000 Update* to be considered by the Ogle County Regional Planning Commission in making land use recommendations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the above resolution shall take effect immediately upon approval by the Ogle County Board and attestation by the Ogle County Clerk.

DATED this 20 day of May, 2003.

Betty K. Gocken

Betty Gocken
Chairman, Ogle County Board

Attest:
Rebecca Huntley

Rebecca Huntley
Ogle County Clerk and Ex-Officio
Clerk of the Ogle County Board

OGLE COUNTY CLERK * OGLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS *

VOTE:
Aye 20
Nay 4
Abstain

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The Greenways & Trails Plan for Ogle County, Illinois

JUNE 2003

The Ogle County Greenways & Trails Committee
The Ogle County Board & Regional Planning Commission
Blackhawk Hills RC&D/EDD

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This plan was developed with funding from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Additional financial program support was provided by The Ogle County Board; the Cities of Forreston, Oregon, and Rochelle; City of Byron/Byron Recreation Committee; City of Polo/Polo Recreation Committee; Byron Forest Preserve District; Dixon, Flagg-Rochelle, and Oregon Park Districts; Illinois Association of Snowmobile Clubs; Blackhawk Waterways Convention and Visitors Bureau; and The Illinois Trails Conservancy

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I. Introduction

Objectives and Uses of the Plan

The *Ogle County Greenways & Trails Plan* is a long-range, visionary master plan for the green infrastructure of the region. It identifies the resources and opportunities for open space and recreational trail systems, linking communities with one another and with natural and cultural resource sites. The plan emphasizes the unique history and geography of the region and recognizes the relationship between the environment, recreational needs, and economic growth and sustainability. This planning process was initiated by Ogle County municipalities, planning and conservation organizations, and by recreational user groups. It is the intention of the Greenways and Trails Committee and the participating organizations that the *Ogle County Greenways & Trails Plan* be adopted as an amendment to the *Year 2000 Ogle County Amendatory Comprehensive Plan.*

Specifically, this special-purpose master plan serves to:

- Provide a framework for coordinated greenway and trail conservation and development.
- Assist implementing and funding agencies to allocate resources in support of plan priorities.
- Initiate a forum for discussion and resolution of greenway issues among government jurisdictions and private sector interests.
- Provide a basis for coordinating transportation, recreation, water quality, storm and floodwater, wildlife, and related programs to advance conservation or restoration of greenways and reduce conflict with other development activities.
- Increase the understanding and appreciation of Ogle County's natural and cultural resources and to encourage stewardship.

Greenways & Trails Planning Background

Although the concept of greenways can trace its roots to the shaded and scenic "pleasure drives" of the late 19th century, and although the birth of recreational trails linking natural areas and population centers dates back to the inception of the Appalachian Trail in the 1920s, the present Greenways & Trails movement bears a striking resemblance to "Better Roads." The Better Roads movement swept Illinois with the advent of automobiles in the 1910s and 20s and precipitated the statewide network of improved highways as well as planning and improvement at the county level. It can be said that both movements arose out of the desire by the public for improved routes for the purpose of transportation and recreation. Both were initiated everywhere by local interests, not by centralized state leadership. Both started with pressure to improve routes of local importance and grew to envision a network linking routes one to another, providing access across county and state lines. In the 1910s the state responded by requiring each county to appoint a commissioner responsible for creating a county-wide plan.

The term "greenway" was first used by planner Benton MacKaye in his 1921 proposal for the Appalachian Trail, probably the longest and best known of its kind. In the same year, The Friends of the Native Landscape published the results of their survey of the unique ecological and geological resources of Illinois, proposing a state park system. Among the recommended sites was an extensive linear park encompassing the Rock River Valley from Dixon to the bluffs north of Oregon. In *Proposed Park Areas in the State of Illinois*, FONL chairman Jens Jensen of Highland Park advocated preserving land from development in several biologically significant Illinois river valleys. A chapter devoted to "The Rock River Country," extending from Mud Creek above Oregon down to Dixon including Pine Creek, featured dramatic views of the river and its landmark sandstone outcroppings. Another chapter extolled the merits of "The White Pine Forest Tract of Ogle County" and advocated that it be protected as a state park, echoing the goals of a movement that had begun locally years before.

After the state had acquired land for a number of the proposed parks, including the White Pine Forest, in 1938 the Illinois State Plan Commission published the *Illinois Park, Parkway and Recreational Area Plan*. The report noted that the intention of the state law in establishing the park system was to connect the state parks with one another by a system of scenic parkways. Such a linkage would be similar to the boulevards linking the great parks of Chicago or the Forest Preserve system of Cook County. Recognizing that such an extensive parkway system throughout the state was not feasible, the report went on to name a limited number that it thought would be highly feasible. Among them were the Rock River corridor and the Illinois & Michigan Canal corridor with the Hennepin Feeder to Rock Falls on the Rock River. Parkways were defined as "extended strips of land, developed in a natural manner and devoted principally to recreational use. . . . They may lie along a water course or canal, and may feature trails, roadways, and boating."

In 1993, with a growing number of greenways and trails in existence or in the planning stages, citizen representatives attending the first Conservation Congress in Springfield gave broad support to a resolution proposing a greenways and trails planning process to be carried out at each county or metropolitan level. The role of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources would be only to facilitate active, self-sustaining local programs. The intention was that cumulative local planning would result in a grassroots master plan for the entire state. Representatives foresaw that this would provide a rational method for prioritizing the allocation of limited funding by state agencies and also encourage additional support. The resolution recognized that it would never be feasible for the state to undertake acquisition and management of such an extensive network, but that local efforts could carry such plans through to fruition by organizing various partnerships among public agencies, private organizations, and landowners.

Governor Edgar and IDNR launched the new planning process at a Governor's Workshop on Greenways and Trails in 1995. At present in northwestern Illinois, regional plans have been completed in the Quad Cities metro area, Rockford/Boone-Winnebago Counties, Freeport/Stephenson County, Whiteside County, and Lee County. Several other counties are in the preliminary stages of considering such plans.

History of This Plan

At an exploratory meeting August 23, 2001 at the Nash Recreation Center, Oregon, representatives of the Ogle County Board, cities, parks and preserves, and recreational user groups met to explore the need and process for creating a regional greenways plan. Dave Dornbusch of Blackhawk Hills RC&D was asked to lead the organizational phase and assist with obtaining funding for planning purposes. Subsequent meetings were held on September 26, October 30, and November 28, 2001, resulting in the formation of a group to lead the development of the Ogle County greenways plan and a decision to apply to state greenways and trails planning funds. Greg Query of Rochelle was appointed chair of the committee. Additional financial assistance was sought from local agencies, municipalities, the county board, and recreational organizations.

Blackhawk Hills filed an application for IDNR program assistance of $20,000 on behalf of Ogle County. Following confirmation that IDNR would provide the requested funds, the Greenways and Trails Committee met again and in July 2002 selected the consultant. The total budget, including the costs of administration, consultant fees, production and printing of the final plans, was $27,300.

Throughout the planning process, the consultant met periodically with the steering committee and the representative of Ogle County, planning & zoning administrator Michael Reibel. The process included an inventory of resources, preparation of a base map, establishment of greenways and trails criteria, development of trail alternatives, hosting of public open houses, prioritizing of proposed trail routes, and approval of the final plan. Open house presentations and public hearings following the preliminary stages of planning were held at public facilities in four locations throughout the county: Rochelle on 1/23/03; Polo on 1/28/03; Oregon on 2/4/03; and Byron Forest Preserve on 2/11/03. At each public meeting, a 2-page informational survey form was distributed to assist with gathering comments and ideas.

The survey results along with a progress report were presented to the Ogle County Regional Plan Commission at its regular meeting, 2/25/03. Subsequently, before preparing a draft of the final plan, public workshops were held on two consecutive weeks, 3/11/03 and 3/19/03, at Nash Recreation Center. The outcome of these workshops was a list of greenways and trails recommendations as well as priorities for action.

The Need for Planning

A system of greenways constitutes the "green infrastructure" of a region. *Webster's* defines infrastructure as "the substructure or underlying foundation, especially the basic installations or facilities upon which the continuance and growth of a community depends." Just as we must thoughtfully plan for and invest in our capital infrastructure, so too must we act as stewards and invest in our environmental or green infrastructure. It is an essential, not just an amenity. It is our life support system.

For several decades there has been growing public interest in linear forms of recreation and the desire to protect our natural heritage. At the same time, there are increasing development pressures. Without planning, development inadvertently leads to further fragmentation and degradation of ecosystems. Without a vision of what residents want—and of what might be—and without a concrete plan defining the priorities and

possible courses of action, opportunities may be missed to incorporate greenways and trails into future public and private development plans.

In recent years Ogle County and it's residents have exercised leadership in development guidelines, stormwater planning and in recognition of the scenic beauty, ecological qualities, and recreational opportunities. These concerns are identified in the *Comprehensive Plan's* "Goals and Objectives" (pp.22-27), which include the following:

> "Reduce the aesthetic and cultural impact of development . . .
>
> "Maintain and enhance the rural, 'small-town' character . . . and create a 'sense of place' . . .
>
> "Preserve the (physical, visual) integrity, stability and beauty of the County and the value of land . . .
>
> "Preserve and protect . . . areas containing significant natural features such as native vegetation, rivers, streams, wetlands, etc. or areas with significant historical and cultural *values* . . .
>
> "Preserve woodlands and wetlands associated with farms that . . . have an important aesthetic and scenic value that contributes to the character of the County.
>
> "Promote land stewardship through . . . the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.
>
> "Protect and preserve the natural and scenic qualities of the Rock River corridor and other high-quality riparian corridors throughout the county . . .
>
> "Preserve scenic and historic features.
>
> "Protect and enhance existing businesses and economic development that . . . attracts tourism . . ."

The *Ogle County Greenways and Trails Plan* is intended to be the critical tool to help define the county's natural resources and recreational opportunities and integrate them into future economic development and transportation planning. This plan will be useful to open space, environmental, and recreational agencies and jurisdictions at all levels, from municipalities to county, regional, and state. It will assist in linking Ogle to planned greenways and trails in neighboring counties. It is expected that it will be used by conservation and recreational groups and by planning officials to promote and secure funding for local plans and projects that provide better environment, ensure access to recreation for residents and visitors, and preserve a high quality of life throughout the region.

II. Greenways and Trails

Types of Greenways

As defined by Charles Little in the influential work, *Greenways for America*, a greenway is a linear open space established along either a natural corridor such as a stream valley or overland along a man-made corridor such as a converted railroad right-of-way, canal, scenic road or parkway. Like arteries linking vital organs, greenways connect parks, nature preserves, wetlands, streams, cultural and historic sites with each other and with populated areas.

Some—though not all—greenways are trails that allow humans passage into and through the natural world. However, any natural or landscaped course for bicycle or pedestrian passage is a greenway.

Greenways may be as wide as a watershed or as narrow as a trail. Some are publicly owned. Some are established on private land by easements or other methods that protect valuable natural areas and cultural/historic sites or allow public access along trails. Some are managed to preserve ecological diversity, while others are purely recreational. Following are the general types described by Little, with familiar examples:

1. Recreational greenways, featuring paths and trails, sometimes of long distance.

   Examples: Joe Stengel Trail on the former ICRR right-of-way; the Rock River Canoe Trail from Oregon to Grand Detour; the Rochelle Bike Path

2. Ecologically significant natural corridors, usually along rivers and streams and sometimes ridgelines, providing for wildlife migration and species inter-change, nature study, and hiking.

   Examples: *The combined Castle Rock S.P., George B. Fell Nature Preserve; Lowden-Miller Forest*

3. Scenic and historic routes, usually along a road, highway or stream, preferably with some pedestrian access along the route or places to alight from the car.

   Example: *Black Hawk Trail (Ill. Scenic Rt. 2*

4. Comprehensive greenway systems or networks, usually based on natural land forms such as valleys and ridges but sometimes simply an opportunistic assemblage of greenways and open spaces creating an alternative municipal or regional green infrastructure.

   Example: *The Rock River corridor and its tributaries, including the lower Pine Creek corridor; certain segments of Leaf River and Kyte River corridors, and other streams, bluffs, rock outcroppings, forest and prairie remnants.*

5. Urban riverside (or lakeside) greenways, usually created as part of a redevelopment program along neglected and run-down waterfronts.

   Examples: *the Rockford riverfront; Beloit's Riverfront; Dixon's historic riverfront parks*

Types of Recreational Trails

All the existing and potential trails in the Plan fall into one of the following categories:

Dedicated Trails are designed and built off-road for the exclusive use of pedestrians, bicyclists, cross-country skiers, skaters, people in wheelchairs, equestrians, or motorized use such as snowmobiles. Surface treatment and width may vary, depending on the uses allowed on any specific trail or segment. Uses allowed on each dedicated trail are established by the organizations and public agencies involved in the acquisition, development, and maintenance of the trail. Although more than one type of non-motorized use is allowed on most trails, typically uses by motorized recreational vehicles is segregated by location and/or by season.

These trails may be further classified according to whether the trail's intended purpose and value is primarily "active" or "passive." Active purposes would include travel and recreational uses by joggers, cyclists, skaters, equestrians, or motorized recreational vehicles. Passive trails and paths are generally developed in more sensitive or heavily populated areas; they include interpretive trails within nature parks and preserves and riverwalks that exclude even bicycles and skates.

Shared-Use Trails are low-volume streets or rural township roads designated and intended to be shared by existing vehicular traffic with proposed bicycle and other non-motorized uses. Their value and purpose is both recreation and transportation, providing access for alternate means of travel on existing right-of-ways and surfaces. Although all streets and roads except limited access highways are technically accessible to most forms of transportation under Illinois law, designation of selected routes as trails or bike paths not only improves accessibility for the general public for such uses but also allows local jurisdictions to better serve alternate transportation and safety concerns. Generally this would involve at least some signage and perhaps paint striping to identify the routes and to alert motorists. Where the right-of-way is of sufficient width and suitable configuration, some shared-use roadways may accommodate other uses such as snowmobiling within portions of the right-of-way, however not on the pavement. State law and local ordinances govern which uses will be allowed on roads and streets.

Portions of any route that originates as a shared-use roadway trail could in the future be replaced by construction of a dedicated off-road trail, either within the public right-of-way or on easements. Conversions from shared-use to dedicated trail routes would be limited by existing development and land uses, by drainage ditches and stream crossings, and by vehicular traffic patterns.

Snowmobile Routes: The extensive Tri-County Snowmobile Trail System links 15 communities in Ogle County with one another, and with neighboring counties, and with publicly maintained snowmobile areas. Except for the dedicated Joe Stengel Trail, snowmobile trails primarily are routes on the public right-of-way and on private land by arrangement with the property owners, which may be altered from year to year. Permissions, mapping, and signing the routes are the responsibility of local snowmobile organizations. Snowmobile trail development is supported in part by a state fund derived from fees paid by snowmobile users. Use of the trails crossing privately owned land is limited to seasonal use by snowmobiles only.

Equestrian Trails: Paths that permit horseback riding typically are not compatible with

most other uses except limited foot or seasonal snowmobile use. In Ogle County, equestrian trails occur primarily on privately owned lands, including campgrounds, dude ranches, and horse-boarding farms.

Canoe Trails: Any navigable waterway that is not obstructed by fences or fallen trees is a potential canoe trail. However, canoeists generally prefer streams that require white-water skills or afford nature viewing with a minimum of wake and noise from high-speed boats and jet skis.

ATV Trails: Users of motorized all-terrain vehicles prefer rugged land. ATVs may not be operated legally on roads, and their use is incompatible with non-motorized trail uses. Consequently, there use is frequently limited to private or public ATV parks with parking facilities. Ownership of ATVs is growing; they are attractive to recreationists who enjoy skilled riding as well as youth who are too young to be licensed to operate cars or motorcycles, etc.

Benefits and Uses

Greenways can provide many opportunities in Ogle County. They may:

- preserve sensitive land resources, with multiple resulting benefits.
- preserve or restore natural ecosystems, expanding habitat for plants and animals.
- provide corridors or "bridges" between natural areas for movement of animals and plants.
- provide buffer zones between incompatible development patterns, reducing noise, visual and environmental impacts.
- act as filter zones to stop sediments and pollutants that degrade water quality.
- enable waterways, wetlands and flood plains to collect excess storm water caused by new development, protecting private property from flooding.
- allow access to archaeological and historic sites, including land and water routes, abandoned rail lines, Native American and early settlement villages.
- serve as outdoor classrooms for education in the fields of natural and environmental sciences and management.
- offer non-discriminatory access to open space—especially for the elderly, the disabled, and the socially disadvantaged.
- increase nearby property values.
- enhance quality of life values and community image, and support commercial recreation enterprises and tourist activities.
- reduce costs of land maintenance by utilizing sustainable natural means.

- impart an understanding of the regional landscape and respect for the environment; build a sense of place and regional identity by emphasizing the interrelatedness of all parts of the region and de-emphasizing the importance of man-made boundaries.

In addition, trails and trail systems will:

- provide low cost and convenient recreation while increasing spending for recreation locally.
- establish energy-efficient and safe means of connecting people and places—home, school, work, shopping, parks and recreational facilities.
- increase healthful outdoor physical activity, i.e. walking and biking, especially for residents who live near a trail route.

Other Greenway Plans Reviewed

Regional plans have been completed recently in four neighboring counties with funding support from the same IDNR Greenways & Trails program. These plans were reviewed to determine their purpose and for opportunities to align Ogle County's proposed trails and greenways across their shared borders.

The *Boone & Winnebago Regional Greenway Plan* (1997) "serves to . . . create a vision of a regional greenway network and provide a framework for coordinated greenway and trail preservation and development." It delineates proposed recreation paths on both sides of the Rock River from Rockford's trail system to the Ogle County line, which may serve as connections with the Rock River loop of the Grand Illinois Trail through Ogle County.

The *Greenways and Trails Plan for Stephenson County and City of Freeport* ((2000) established "a framework for continued public policy making." The intention was to have the plan adopted as an amendment to the comprehensive plans of both jurisdictions. The plan proposes a regional trail following Crane Grove Creek from Freeport to Baileyville, there to continue on the old ICRR bed through Ogle County. It also features a Kellogg (Galena) Historic Trail Corridor.

The *Whiteside County Greenway and Trail Plan* (1999) began "the process of looking at areas that should be considered for preservation as the cities and villages continue to grow, as well as laying out a plan for creating trail systems within the communities and attempting to link the towns together via shared use roadway trails." It proposes a Riverfront Trail in Sterling linking to the Hennepin Feeder Canal Trail via a Rock River bridge to be constructed on top of the new upper dam.

The *Lee County Greenways and Trails Plan* (2002) inventoried the greenway resources that correspond with a the pre-settlement streams, groves, marshes, and a prominent moraine system. It places high priority on establishing a Rock River Trail parallel to Ill. Rte. 2 from Sterling to Dixon, where it will join riverfront trails, link to the Joe Stengel Trail, and continue upriver to the Ogle County line. It also seeks to link communities with a system of shared-use trails, preferring those local roads that reflect important historic travel routes between early settlements and river crossings. Proposed connections with Ogle County include trail routes on Lowden Road and Brooklyn Road. The "Historic Galena Trail Corridor" is featured.

III. A Plan Vision

Resource Inventory and Analysis

The lists that appear in *Appendix B* are the result of an inventory of Ogle County's natural and cultural resources, including existing and planned trails and recreational sites accessible to the public. Among the places listed are many that are located on private property. Most of the natural areas are shown on the *Plan* map, but only the larger public sites are identified by name on the map.

Significance of Stream Corridors: The greatest concentration of sites with significant social values are to be found in or near the corridors of the major streams of the county: primarily the Rock River and secondarily the Kyte River and Pine Creek. This is a pattern that is characteristic of the upper Midwest prairie states. Diverse habitats for wildlife, natural woodlands, flood plains, recreational opportunities associated with wetlands and streams and with varied topography are typically found along stream corridors, with new residential development exerting pressure on the same areas. Intensive agriculture is located on the deeper soils, flatter and more open lands between stream corridors. The linear nature of stream corridors, the desirable biological diversity, scenic qualities, limits to development imposed by steep slopes and flood plains, and the proximity to historic population centers combine to make these corridors the obvious locations for greenways stewardship. In some cases they may also be logical routes for trails that link resources to communities.

A second pattern is the result of the development of railroads in the 19th century, which favored some early settlements and created other towns and villages at regular intervals along their routes. In Ogle County, communities that owe their existence largely to railroads include Davis Junction, Monroe Center, Holcomb, Kings, Creston, Flagg Center, Chana, Baileyville, and Woosung. Rail right-of-ways also functioned as conservatories of native prairie vegetation. As a result, railways are natural greenways, and when abandoned with their roadbeds and bridges intact they become logical trail routes continuing to link the historic railroad towns. Although there have been efforts and still is potential in Ogle County to recycle abandoned railroads as greenways and trails, only the Illinois Central south of Polo has been preserved as dedicated trail.

A third pattern is the grid of roads that has evolved since settlement. The hard surfacing in the past century, first of state roads and then county and township roads, along the most frequently used travel routes between communities has created numerous routes favorable to both motorists and cyclists for both recreation and travel. In much of Ogle County, roads and highways offer excellent access to the enjoyment of mile after mile of pristine "rural character" and scenic beauty with light vehicular traffic.

Unique Historical and Geological Context

The location of Ogle County on several important transportation routes at the time of settlement in the 1830s and '40s—some were ancient Indian trails—figures prominently in the development of the *Greenways & Trails Plan*. An analysis of the pattern of rudimentary roads marked on the original federal survey in the early 1840s indicates that many of the old routes across the open prairie, employing groves and mounds as landmarks, are reflected in present roads between towns and river crossings. Geography

in the form of ridges or high ground with distance views, sloughs, marshes, wet prairies, and brushy groves determined that many of the original angling roads would become permanent roads in spite of the efforts to impose the grid of the land survey on subsequent development.

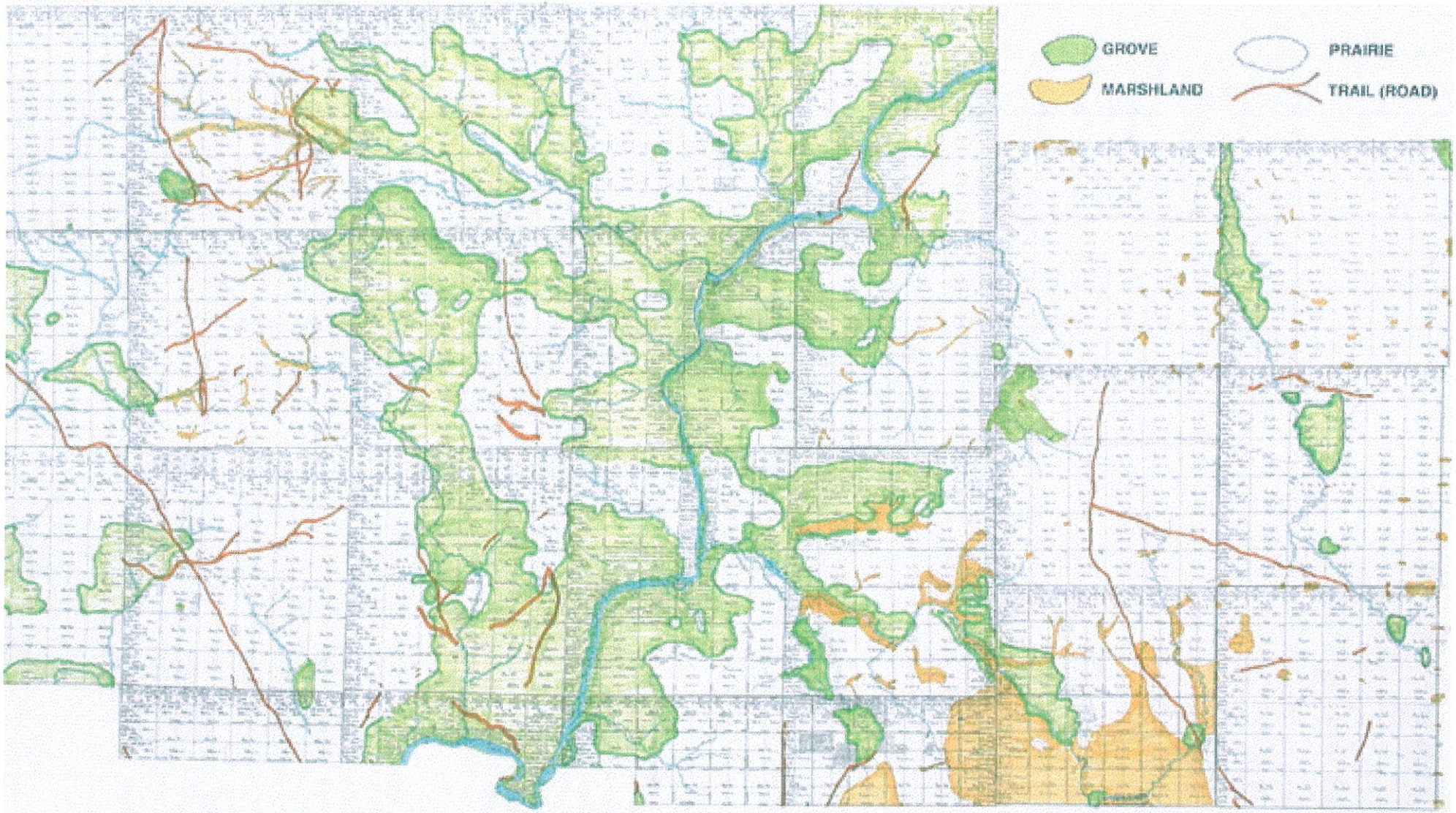
A informal windshield survey and the study of old maps of roads that align with the original trail routes through Ogle County confirmed that a disproportionate number of historic buildings and cultural sites occur along these roads linking the earliest settlements. These are the stone houses, old churches and cemeteries, former rural schoolhouses, mills, and ferry crossings.

Foremost among the historic trails was the Peoria-Galena Route, beginning in 1826. During its heyday, The Galena trail and coach road was not one but a series of routes that traversed the western side of the county in a north-south direction. The Historic Galena Trail Corridor shown on the map approximates the extent of the known routes; however, it is likely that the very first Kellogg Trail to Galena may have passed further to the east following the edge of the groves associated with Pine Creek and West Grove.

For the past century since the inception of motor vehicles, the road most closely identified by residents and visitors with the character and quality of life in Ogle County has been Scenic Ill. Rte. 2, Black Hawk Trail, set in the Rock River Corridor. One of the most scenic highways in the Midwest, one of the first in the nation to be planned as a scenic road exploiting views of the river and its dramatic bluffs, Ill. Rte. 2 has stood the test of time as a major environmental, scenic, recreational, historic, and economic resource.

Until the mid 1900s, the Rock River and its bluffs was referred to as "The Hudson River of the West." The reference was not only to the physical similarity and comparable natural beauty and charm of the rivers, but also to cultural significance of the river corridor as a tourist destination. In the early 19th century, views of landmark mountains and river scenes in the Hudson River Valley were a staple of touring publications. Later the Hudson River region inspired an American "school" or style of landscape painting. When northwest Illinois opened to settlement, tourists from Eastern states and Europe flocked to the Rock River Valley for the same reason. Later, a group of creative people who were in the forefront of developing an endemic style of "prairie" art, writing, poetry, and architecture came to found a summer campground on the bluffs overlooking the Rock River at Oregon. At that time, the distinctive sandstone bluffs on the Rock River in Ogle County each had names. Culled from tourism brochures, art photo books and historic postcards, the names and locations of the more well-known landmark rocks are listed in *Appendix B*.

Analysis of greenway resources listed in *Appendix B* and shown on the *Plan* map verifies that most greenway potential lies within the networked corridors of the Rock River and its tributaries, on the floodplains, bluffs, steeper topography, and shallow or thin soils within the corridors. Other potential greenways include open space distinguished by sandstone outcroppings and large areas of poor drainage and frequent floods. Over all, the existing and potential greenway network corresponds closely with the forest, bottomland and marsh conditions mapped on the Federal Land Plat at the time this region was opened for settlement.



FEDERAL LAND SURVEY *ca.* 1840

Greenway & Trail Plan Objectives

If the *Plan* is to play an effective supporting role in preventing fragmentation and degradation of environmental corridors and expanding trail systems, access to recreation, and tourism opportunities, it must use natural and people resources efficiently and economically. The following broad *Plan* objectives serve to focus greenway efforts. They can help evaluate proposals and projects as well as achievements.

1. Encourage development and conservation of greenways that contain multiple resources, especially those that incorporate water-related resources within riparian corridors.
2. Include floodplains in greenways to encourage protection of flood retention capacity.
3. Include fragile soils that are shallow, sandy, and otherwise highly susceptible to erosion in greenways to encourage stabilization with native vegetation.
4. Develop greenway linkages that preserve or restore the contiguity of natural systems, preserve biodiversity, and maintain the integrity of habitat needed by terrestrial and aquatic species.
5. Include nature preserves and identified public and private natural areas and trail corridors in greenways wherever possible to enhance connections with conservation efforts.
6. Include historical and cultural resources in greenways wherever possible to support their preservation and restoration.
7. Encourage development and conservation of regional trails that link population centers with one another and with recreational, cultural, and historic resource facilities and with educational facilities.
8. Include trails created for compatible uses within greenways and along stream corridors.
9. Encourage development of supervised ATV recreational areas and travel routes that are compatible with soils and with adjacent land uses; discourage ATV use of roadsides and other public lands that may be harmed for their intended purposes by such use.
10. Plan for conversion of abandoned rail right-of-way and railroad bridges to multi-use trails and greenway corridors to serve all communities on the routes whenever such opportunities arise.
11. Discourage the use of eminent domain by municipalities, park districts, county and state agencies for acquisition of greenway or trail properties; encourage purchase of lands for public use from willing sellers when deemed necessary.

<u>Greenway Management Objectives:</u>

1. Provide adequate buffer area in greenways to prevent human activity and trails from disturbing sensitive wildlife habitat, such as nesting or den areas, endangered and threatened species, and fragile ecosystems or other land and water resource patterns.
2. Preserve and restore native vegetation and natural drainage and hydrology within greenways and on stream banks; discourage, control, or remove invasive species.
3. Encourage use of best management practices on lands adjacent to greenways to prevent sediment, nutrients, and hazardous or toxic chemicals from adversely impacting sensitive greenway resources.

Creating & Managing Access:

1. Encourage the design and development of greenway and trail access facilities that increase the enjoyment of persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and children.
1. Require design of greenway recreation facilities to minimize conflict among uses such as hiking, bicycling, horseback riding. and canoeing. Separate ATVs from the regional greenway network.
1. Manage public access where sensitive resources need protection and to prevent unauthorized access to private property.
1. Encourage public access throughout the greenway network. Coordinate access facility design standards, signage, etc. among local greenway and trail managers.
1. Coordinate the establishment of greenways that lie on the Ogle County borders with neighboring regional greenway plans. Link regional trails with the regional trail systems of neighboring counties and with the Grand Illinois Trail system.
1. Coordinate the provision of regional greenway and trail user maps at public facilities, tourism and visitor offices and facilities, and commercial travel services throughout the county and region. Encourage communities and park districts to also supply local trail and greenway maps at such locations.

Coordination with Transportation Planning:

1. Consider greenway continuity and access in the development of infrastructure such as highways, bridges and utility systems. Consider trail opportunities early in the planning phase of road and bridge projects.
1. Bike paths or trails that follow county or state highway alignments shall be placed on a separate paved path within the right-of-way, on an adjacent easement, or on a paved shoulder widened to meet trail standards.
1. Encourage the restoration of native roadside vegetation on roadsides adjacent to greenways and trails and on the back slopes of any township road right-of-way that serves as a shared-use trail.
1. Coordinate the development of a regional bike trail plan linking community bike paths using township roadways to link dedicated trail segments within greenways.
1. In the choice of shared-use trail routes, give preference to township roads that offer rural scenic values, historic sites and structures, connections to rural villages, access to greenways and to travel services and public facilities.
1. In coordination with and in addition to the regional bike trail system, consider establishment of an Ogle County Scenic Roads Program, with designation of scenic, historic, farm heritage or rustic routes, such as Oregon Trail Road, Eagle Point Road, Brick Road, Galena Trail Road, and Scenic Ill. Rte. 2 through the county. Roads designated with support of all affected agencies and jurisdictions would be signed as such by the county, except where signed by the state. The purpose of the program would be to encourage preservation of the scenic, historic, and cultural resources on all designated routes through sustainable tourism and related economic development. Scenic Roads would be promoted through interpretive materials, etc., provided to existing local, regional, and state tourism offices, to travel service facilities, to public facilities within park districts and municipalities, at kiosks or interpretative sites on the Scenic Roads, as well as through media publicity efforts.

Design Standards:

1. Encourage adherence to preservation and restoration standards of the Department of the Interior where greenway facility design will affect historic resources and sites including historic landscapes.
1. Encourage design of public and private greenway improvements such as bank stabilization, stream, wetland, prairie, and woodland restoration utilizing the best current knowledge, technology, and principles.
1. Coordinate the development and implementation of a canoe trail information system with signs, route maps, and hazard warnings, covering all put-in and take-out points on the Rock River and its tributaries. U. S. Coast Guard standard sign markings and colors may be adapted for signing canoe trails.

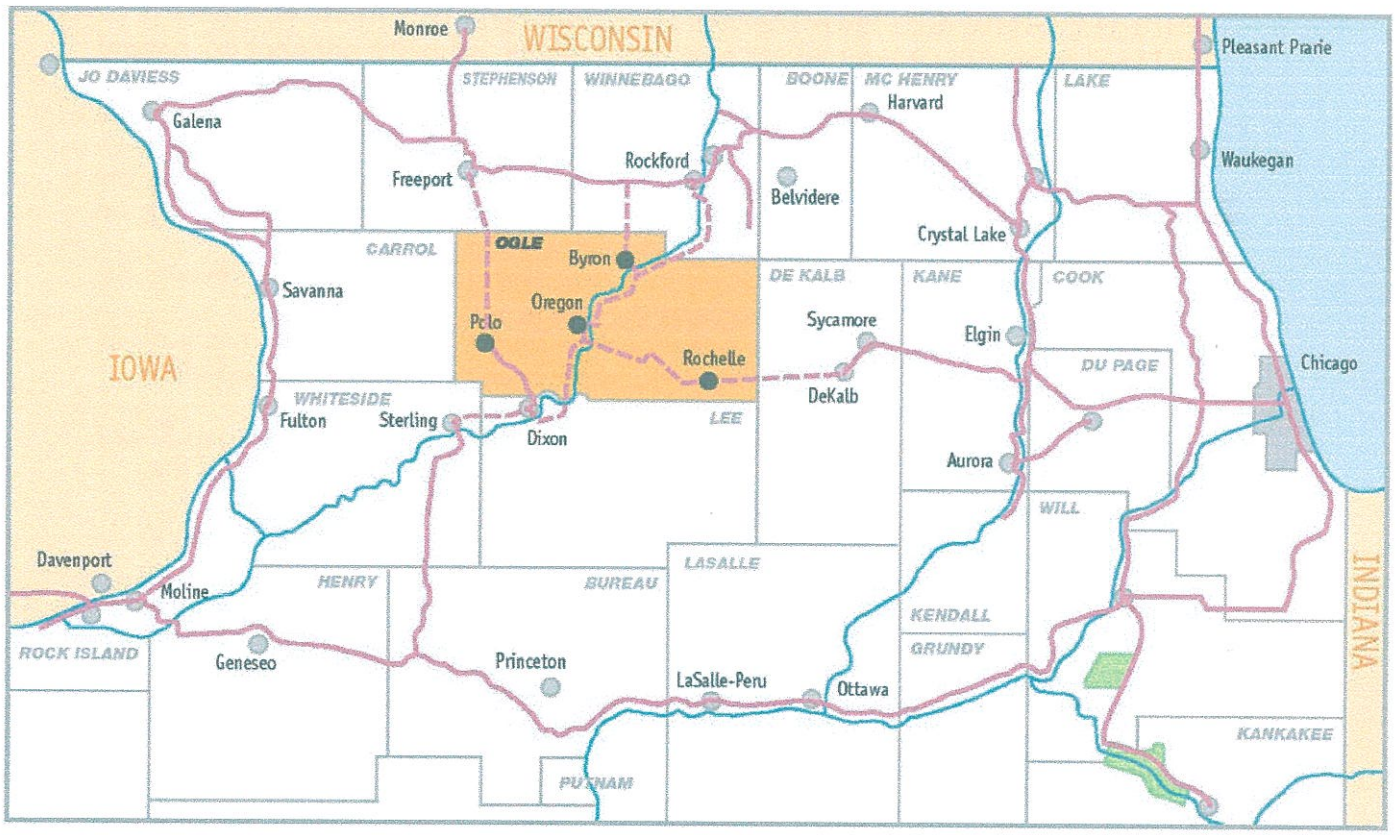
Regional Greenway & Trail Priorities

Existing Components: With abundant natural resources and favorable location, Ogle County is at the gateway to creating a greenway and trail network that will have the capacity to enhance the environment, quality of life, and economic opportunity for all residents for the foreseeable future and beyond. The centerpiece and backbone of this network is the Rock River Corridor. Kept intact by greenway planning and accessible by trail and other recreational facility planning and implementation, its value to the region is inestimable and constantly increasing. The river is already recognized as a premier canoe trail with good facilities including parking and excellent scenery. It is the logical corridor for an important and attractive trail loop between the southern and northern legs of the Grand Illinois Trail (G.I.T.) System. A potential second connection between Ogle County and the GIT is the ICRR corridor, which includes the existing Joe Stengel Trail from Polo to Dixon. A third connection involving DeKalb County would link the regional trail system in Ogle County with DeKalb or Sycamore and The Great Western Trail.

Both Rochelle and Byron communities have existing bike paths and plans for expansion as shown on the *Plan* map. In 2003 Oregon will adopt a comparable trail plan *(Appendix F)* that links local routes to possible regional trails. Hiking and interpretive nature trails are found at the many state and local parks and preserves, as well as institutional campgrounds *(Appendix B)*. Publicly accessible equestrian trails are found at Lowden-Miller State Forest and on property acquired in 2003 by Byron Forest Preserve. The aforementioned Rock River Canoe Trail is generally thought to reach from Oregon to Grand Detour; however, the Plan map denotes access points on the river throughout its course in Ogle County as well as on several tributaries. Access at certain times may be limited by wakes and chop caused by boats and jet skis or by low water conditions on the Leaf and Kyte Rivers or Pine Creek.

Needs and Opportunities:

1. Complete the networking of greenways along the Rock River and its tributary streams, with the majority of greenspace remaining in private ownership and management.
1. Create continuous trails on both sides of the Rock River by linking regional trail segments with community trails and with continuing trails in Lee and Winnebago Counties to complete the Rock River Trail loop of the G.I.T.
1. Extend the regional trail from Polo through Forreston to Baileyville, there joining with the proposed Crane Grove Creek Trail forming a connection to Freeport and the G.I.T.



Grand Illinois Trail map illustrates the central location and important role of Ogle County in developing the Rock River trail loop. Another potential leg between Polo and Freeport will utilize the abandoned Illinois Central rail bed wherever possible. A third loop would link Oregon, Rochelle, and DeKalb. Most components of the greater, 480-mile G.I.T. loop between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River, including the Hennepin Feeder Canal Trail to Rock Falls, are now in use or under construction.

4. Extend a regional trail from the Rochelle community bike path system to Creston and from there to the county line, coordinated with an initiative in DeKalb County to complete the trail link to Kishwaukee Community College and from the college to DeKalb's community trail.
5. Develop a dedicated trail between Byron and Stillman Valley.
6. Link the two regional G.I.T. trail loops with a shared-use trail on historic Oregon Trail Road between the Oregon and Polo community trail systems, with a leg extending down along local roads to White Pines Forest State Park.

Other Potential Greenways & Trails:

1. Develop trail links between the Rochelle-Flagg Center bike path, Skare Park, Chana, and the Rock River Trail at Daysville/Oregon.
2. Develop an equestrian trail on easements, public property adjacent to natural areas, and low volume rural township roads as necessary, linking numerous private equestrian facilities in the area between the Rock River and Pine Creek southwest of Oregon.
3. Extend a connecting trail from Oregon's proposed Pines Road trail following the stream or rail right-of way northwest to Mount Morris with a south leg on Harmony Road.
4. Develop a trail on the Leaf River corridor and township roads linking the community trail systems of Byron and Forreston.
5. Develop a regional trail following the Stillman River corridor and township roads linking Stillman-Byron community trails with Skare park and Flagg-Rochelle community bike paths.
6. Extend shared-use bicycle trails on south Mulford, Brooklyn, and Lowden Roads from the Rochelle Bike Path, Skare Park, and Lost Nation respectively to the county line, to be linked with proposed routes in Lee County.
7. Extend a shared-use bicycle trail on Mt. Morris Road north from Leaf River to Stephenson County and possible future trail links.
8. Develop a regional trail in the Kilbuck Creek corridor and on township roads linking Lindenwood with the Rochelle Bike path
9. Encourage planning and development of a regional trail on the abandoned rail corridor easterly from Stillman Valley, connecting Holcomb and Lindenwood as well as continuing into DeKalb County to join the Great Western Trail at Sycamore.

Community Trails:

1. Encourage implementation of the Byron, Oregon, Rochelle and other community bike path and trail plans. Coordinate regional trails with community trail plans and support efforts of population centers including communities and rural subdivisions to provide trails and paths for purposes of access, recreation, and healthful exercise.

Implementation Priorities

Prioritizing is essential to provide a solid foundation for development of a long-range Greenways and Trails Plan. Time and money are always scarce. Decisions must be made in advance as to the relative importance of projects at each stage of development. Regional coordination of the efforts of municipalities, park districts, local and county agencies is essential. This will help consolidate regional support for each project in a logical sequence and avoid competition between local projects for the limited resources. Some local projects, while very important in the overall plan, may have less regional significance and little chance of attracting public funding if they are approached piecemeal before critical major links have been set in place.

As with any visionary, long-range plan, new components and projects may be added over time; priorities must be reviewed and updated periodically.

Action Recommendations

Local and County Government:

1. Each municipalities and park district in Ogle County should adopt the Regional Greenways & Trails Plan, coordinate planning, and integrate the objectives and priorities into its own comprehensive and land use planning.
   a) Review zoning to ensure that ordinances support local and county-wide efforts to prepare and implement greenway conservation plans.
   b) Review local subdivision ordinances to ensure that they both allow and encourage "Open Space Development," retain and treat stormwater on site, preserve natural resources, encourage restoration and management of native vegetation for rural character, habitat, water quality, and erosion control, and encourage development of dedicated trails within new subdivisions.
2. Cooperate with other jurisdictions and citizen groups to develop implementation plans for greenways and trails.
3. All jurisdictions responsible for preparing plans for managing nonpoint sources of water pollution should consider and recommend the implementation of greenway plans and objectives wherever feasible.
4. Create mechanisms to bring greenway planners and development planners together in order to devise mutually beneficial plans.
5. Encourage dedications of open space and granting of conservation easements within greenway areas and in development plans for sites within greenways.
6. Work with citizens and property owners to carry out the planning necessary to prevent conflicts between greenways and adjacent land uses.

Other Actions:

1. Develop partnerships between private landowners, public agencies, appointed commissions, and user groups to initiate, plan, design and implement priority regional and community projects.
2. Communicate with greenway and trail planners and leadership in neighboring counties to develop regional trail connections and greenways that straddle borders.
3. Encourage the City of Rochelle to manage proposed municipal stormwater area detention areas as natural areas and habitat with deep-rooted native emergent

and wetland vegetation systems.

4. Coordinate greenway and trail implementation with the county and local historical organizations and encourage development of interpretive materials, such as self-guided tour brochures, to enhance public understanding and appreciation of cultural and historic resources.
5. Develop interpretive and educational materials such as exhibits, slide presentations, and posters and a program for utilizing the materials to communicate greenway and trail values and benefits.

Implementation of a visionary plan requires the development of strategies that will engage agencies, private and non-profit organizations, and greenway and trail users over extended periods of time. Interest is maintained through ongoing interpretive activities. The role of interpretation should be to help explain the significance of the resource. An accurate and engaging interpretation of the landscape and history of the county and the contemporary lifestyles and economic activities of Ogle County residents will facilitate public acceptance of conservation and trails strategies and implementation. Interpretive themes will tie in with the Historic Galena Trail, Lincoln Highway National Scenic Byway, historical activities, and local points of interest. Among the potential themes are agriculture, immigration and early settlement, native Americans, natural sciences (ecology, birding, geology), historic homemaking, and historic travel and transportation. Diverse themes will give trail and greenway users of all ages a choice of topics from which to choose in a variety of formats.

New Approaches and Programs

Stormwater Management: Existing and emerging programs in compliance with NPDES requirements for water quality and stormwater management offer potential for achieving greenway objectives.

Open Space Development: Because a large proportion of new subdivision development is proposed for lands that are greenspace or potential greenways, Ogle County's innovative Open Space Subdivision ordinance has potential to become mutually supportive with greenway objectives. It's objectives include preserving natural character and environmental features and quality with consequent reduction of lawn areas and intensive landscaping..

Rock River Forest Legacy Program: As forest is fragmented and disappears, so do many of the resource benefits that forest lands provide to the general public. The FLP is a USDA Forest Service program that supports state efforts to protect environmentally sensitive forest lands. It is an entirely voluntary program that encourages the protection of privately-owned forest lands. In Illinois the FLP supports acquisition of conservation easements, which restrict new development and require sustainable forestry. The funding is a 75% federal/25% private, state, or local match. Only lands in areas designated by the state are eligible. The designated Rock River FLP, indicated on the map in *Appendix C*, encompasses much of the potential greenway space on the *Plan*.

Legal and Legislative Footnotes

RE: Designation of Shared-Use Trails

A recent ruling had the undesirable and unintended effect of creating a disincentive for local governments to provide bicycle safety improvement including designation and signage for fear of increased liability. In stating that bicyclists were "permitted" users but not "intended" users of roadways, unless the road was signed or marked as a bike route, the Illinois Supreme Court granted total immunity to local governments for bicyclists injured as a result of negligence unless the road was a signed bike route. Legislation that has been proposed to remedy this situation, which is unique to Illinois of all states, seeks an "ordinary care" level of liability on roads without bike facility/signage and "willful and wanton" on roads with bike facilities/signage. The intention of proposed legislation is to present an incentive to provide on-road accommodations and the designation of shared-use trails, *but with no expectations of local agencies to incur great expense of retrofitting roads to a standard higher than they presently do.*

RE: Land Owner Liability

The new Illinois Recreational Use of Land and Water Areas Act answers the question of landowner liability in regard to greenway and trail activities. Its purpose is to encourage owners to make their land and water areas available to the public for recreational or conservation purposes (such as canoeing) by limiting their liability toward persons entering their property for such purposes. The act states that an owner of land owes no duty of care to keep the premises safe for entry or use by an person for such purposes or to give any warning of a natural or artificial dangerous condition, use, structure or activity on the premises. An owner who either directly or indirectly invites or permits "without charge" any person to use his property does not "extend assurance that the premises are safe for any purpose . . . nor assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to person or property." The act does not relieve the *user* from any obligation "to exercise care in his use of such land . . . or from the legal consequences of failure to employ such care."

Appendix A: Participants in Ogle Greenways & Trails Planning

The Greenways Committee gratefully acknowledges the interest and direct involvement of many organizations and individuals in the planning process.

Greg Query, Rochelle
Edie Wills, Monroe Center
Steve Bingham, Rochelle
Joe Solitros, Rochelle
Chuck Cawley, Rochelle
Steve Hefel, Byron, Illinois Assn. of Snowmobile Clubs
Bev Moore, Illinois Trails Conservancy
Bob Gingerich, Rochelle Mayor
Phil Johnson, Dixon Park District
Mark Hermann, Oregon Park District
Stan Bergstrom, Oregon
Lynn Kilker, Ogle County Economic Development Director
Ed Clift, Byron Forest Preserve
Ralph Hoekstra, Stillman Valley, Ogle County Board
Patricia Goitein, Peoria, Historical Galena Trail
Shirley Clayton, Polo, Ogle County Board
Jerry Daws, Forreston Ogle County Board
Tom Lichty, Monroe Township Supervisor
Ken Toms, Forreston
Rick Graden, Polo
Bety Obendorf, Polo
Jay Stewart, Rochelle
Linden Dewey, Stillman Valley
Terry Smith, Byron
Jim Manning Rochelle
Dave Snedeker, Polo
Nathan Schwartz, Ogle County Highway Department
Curtis Cooke, Ogle County Highway Department
Kathryn Hamas, Byron Mayor
Margie Hughes, Dixon
Lamont Gaston, Oregon
Susan Young, Rochelle

Keith Poole, Polo
Edie Wils. Monroe Center
Steve Bingham, Rochelle
Joe Solitros, Rochelle City Manager
Larry Lannen, Polo
Doug Elder, Forreston Village President
Marc Stamm, Forreston
Karl Klipping, Forreston
Pat Saunders, Polo, Ogle County Board
Susie Corbitt, Polo
Pat Erickson, Polo
Bill Spencer, Oregon, Ogle County Board
Ron Colson, Oregon, Ogle County Board
Moe Kielsmeier, Oregon
Richard Little, Oregon
Marcia Heur, Oregon
Harold Neave, Mount Morris
Mike Reibel, Ogle County Planning & Zoning
Dave Dornbusch, Blackhawk Hills RC&D/EDD
Kim Stahl, Ogle County Board
Betty Gocken, Ogle County Board Chair
Ron Kern, Leaf River
Steve Rypkema, Oregon, Ogle County Solid Waste Management
Jim Grove, Oregon Park District
John Davies, Byron
Archie Weber, Machesney Park
Taver Weber, Machesney Park
Kevin Nesemeier, Byron
Henry Palmer, Leaf River
Bob Godman, Byron
Terry Palmer, Leaf River
Rex Stukenberg, Byron
Chris Remhof, Byron
Don Holmertz, Byron
Gregory Hodges, Illinois Association of Snowmobile Clubs
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Selvy, Byron

Laneen Latta, Byron
Karen Evans, Oregon
Lou Ann South, Oregon
Joyce & Sherwood Arbogast, Oregon
Justine Messenger, Oregon
Jeri Wethington, Rochelle
Paul Lower, Rochelle
Amy Trimble, Oregon
Bob Godman, Byron
Becky Hughes Oregon
Donna Hawkins, Amboy
Linda Schreiber, Leaf River
Curt & Becky Furman, Rochelle
Loren Richolson, Stillman Valley
Jonathan & Kate del Valle, Oregon
Tim & Jennifer Kaffenbarger, Oregon
Jim and Trudy Fleming, Oregon
Bill Milam, Oregon
Marcia Heuer, Ogle County Reg. P. C.
Jason E. Sword, Forreston
Beth Hoel, Rochelle
George Bellovics, Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Dr. WayneTemple, Illinois State Archives
Dory Oleson, Ogle County Republican
David Halsted, Sauk Valley News

Appendix B: Inventory of Lands and Resources

Many of the following sites are indicated on the *Ogle County Greenways and Trails Plan* map. Most of them are identified by Map Legend only, not by name.

PUBLIC PARKS & PRESERVES

Byron: Jarrett Prairie, River Park

Creston: Booster Park

Forreston: City Park, Warniken Park

Mt. Morris: Freedom Park

Oregon: Ballfield Park, Fairground Park, Oregon Park East, Oregon Park West, Mix Park, Sandsucker Park

Polo: City Park, Westside Park

Rochelle: Atwood Park, Connolly Park Cooper Park, Flannigan Park, Hillcrest Park, Kelly Park, Lyle F. Kunde Recreation Area (Lake Sule), Memorial Park, Midwest Park, Page Park, Powers Park, Skare Park, Spring Lake Aquatic Park, Sweeny Park, Tilton Memorial Park, V.F.W. Park, Rochelle Railroad Park

Ogle County: Weld Park

Illinois Department of Natural Resources: White Pines Forest State Park, Castle Rock State Park, Lowden State Park, Lowden-Miller Forest

ILLINOIS NATURAL AREA INVENTORY SITES

Douglas E. Wade Prairie	11.84	Private
Stronghold Prairie	.40	Private
Lowden Memorial State Park	21.68	Public
White Pines Forest State Park	63.05	Public
Pine Rock	55.37	Public
Hereen Prairie	3.18	Private
Adeline Prairie	4.70	Private
Oregon Geological Area	6.64	unknown
Prairie Star School Gological Area	2.83	Private
Nachusa Grasslands (Lee/Ogle)	1,569.46	Public/Private
Fearer Tract at Castle Rock S. P.	143.25	Private
L & M Prairie	1.09	Private
Beach Cemetery Prairie	3.00	Private
Mt. Morris East Geological Area	10.00	Private
Castle Rock State Park	638.97	Public
Byron Dragway Prairie	15.44	Private
Commonwealth Edison Prairie	145.36	Private
Jarrett Prairie	139.00	Public
Lowden-Miller State Forest	2,294.34	Public
Kilbuck Prairie		Private

Babson Hollow	4.27	Private
Sinnissippi Cornus Canadensis Site		Public

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES

SITE	ACRES	OWNERSHIP
Beach Cemetery Prairie	2.5	Private
George B. Fell	685.6	Public
Jarrett Prairie	115.8	Public
Pine Rock	59.0	Public
Douglas E. Wade Prairie	11.2	Private
Heeren Prairie	3.2	Private
Piros Prairie		Private
White Pines Forest State Park		Public

OTHER CONSERVATION AREAS AND EASEMENTS

SITE	ACRES	OWNERSHIP
Bliss Rock River site	58.0	private
Devil's Backbone	40.0	The Natural Land Institute
Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Area	43.2	Northwest Illinois Audubon Society
Kyte River Bottomlands	242.9	The Natural Land Institute
Lorado Taft Field Campus	140.1	Northern Illinois University
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries	133.24	Lutheran Outdoor Ministries
Mud Creek site	60.0	Kickapoo Mud Creek Nature Conservancy in Oregon, Illinois
Nachusa Grasslands (Ogle Co. areas)	618.9	The Nature Conservancy
Nordic Park Realty Kyte River site	242.9	private
Stronghold	331.2	Presbytery of Black Hawk
Thelma Carpenter Sandstone Bluff	5.0	The Natural Land Institute
Vogl Kyte River site	167.2	private
Westcott Rock River site	93.2	private

PUBLIC USE NATURE/INTERPRETIVE FOOT TRAILS

SITE	MILES	ADDITIONAL USES
Byron Forest Preserve	7.5	equestrian
Castle Rock State Park	7	cross-country skiing
Lowden-Miller Forest	22.5	cross-country skiing, equestrian
Lowden State Park	4	
Nachusa Grasslands	varies	
Skare Park, Flagg Rochelle Park District	8	
White Pines Forest State Park	6	accessible trail

PUBLIC USE RECREATION PATHS

Byron: Don Hamer Recreation Path	1.7 miles
Dixon/Polo: Joe Stengel Trail	11 miles
Rochelle: Rochelle Bicycle Path	4 miles

PRIVATE OR CONTROLLED ACCESS RECREATION AREAS

Edgewood Golf Club
Lost Nation Golf Club
Oregon Golf Club
Prairie View Golf Course
Sunset Hill Golf
Rochelle Country Club

Black Hawk Baptist Camp
Camp Lowden BSA
Camp McCormick GSA
Camp Emmaus Church of the Brethren
Dixon Elks Lodge Camp
King's Camp
Northern Illinois University Lorado Taft Field Campus
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center
Presbytery of Black Hawk (Stronghold)
Rock River Christian Camp
Two Rivers/Three Fires Council Boy Scout Ranch
United Brethren Camp
White Eagle 4-H Camp

Hansen's Hideaway
Lake Ladonna
Lake Louise Campground
Rock River Marina and Camping
White Pines Ranch

Ogle County 4-H Foundation
Ogle County Fairgrounds
Ki Tracks ATV Park
Byron Sportsman's Club
Tri-County Gun Club
Ill. Central Gulf Sportsman's Club
Rochelle Wildlife Conservation Club

HISTORIC SITES

Adeline Stone School	1868	Adeline Road, Adeline
Applington House		123 N. Franklin Ave., Polo
Bemis Homestead	1835	
Big Mound Cemetery		Big Mound Road
Black Hawk War Battleground Memorial		218 W. Main St., Stillman Valley
Black Hawk Hotel-Patchwork Inn	ca 1845	122 N. 3rd St., Oregon
Brodie's Grove/Brodie's cabin site	1836	Woodlawn & Heal Roads
Brooklyn Cemetery		3513 N. River Rd.
Buffalo Grove/St. Marion settlement	1830	13000 block W. Milledgeville Rd.
Burns House		201 N. Franklin Ave., Polo
Judge Campbell House		111 N. Franklin Ave., Polo

Civil War Monument		2nd & Chestnut Streets, Byron
Daysville Cemetery		Daysville Rd. South, Daysville
Daysville settlement	1837	Daysville Road
Eagle Point settlement	1839	17500 block W. Eagle Point Rd.
Eagle's Nest Artists Colony campsite, cottages, & Ganymede's Spring	1898-1942	North River Rd., Oregon
Everlasting House		
Fitzhenry settlement		
Gitchell Homestead		10538 N. Pecatonica Rd.
Grand Detour settlement/ John Deere Historic Site	1836	Grand Detour
Henry School	1878	Rte. 26 South, Polo
Hitt Homestead		7782 W. Ill Rte. 64
David Hoffhine House	1836	4801 N. Brookville Rd.
Kable House		Sunset Hill, Mount Morris
Kilbuck Cemetery		
Lafayette Grove/log schoolhouse site	1835	Chana Road
Lighthouse Point	1836	Lighthouse & Daysville Roads
Lightsville settlement	1836	9000 Block, N. Leaf River Rd.
Mix Mansion-Pinehill Inn		400 Mix St., Oregon
Morgan Grist Mill & Settlement	ca. 1840	4000 block S. Chana Rd.
Ruby Nash House	1878	5th & Franklin Streets, Oregon
North Grove Evangelical Church		10384 W. Coffman Rd.
Oak Ridge Road stage route to Freeport		Ridge Road
Octagon House	ca. 1858	
Ogle County Courthouse and Square	1891	5th & Washington Streets, Oregon
Oregon Lime Kiln		
Paine's Point settlement	1836	Brick & Stillman Roads
Peek Home		Peek Home Rd.
Pine Creek Seminary/Mount Morris College buildings	1839-1884	Freedom Park, Mount Morris
Pine Creek settlement/Penn Corners		Lowell Park & Penn Corners Roads
Pioneer Cemetery		West Grove Rd. e. of Leaf River Rd.
Polo Lime Kiln	ca. 1850	1/4 mi. west of Galena Trail Rd.
Lucius Read House	1843	Ill. Rte. 2 & Rte. 72, Byron
St. James Lutheran Church & Cemetery	1850	West Grove & Columbine Roads
St. Peter's Episcopal Church		Grand Detour
Shott's Mill (Glen Haven)		
Silver Creek Church and Cemetery		West Grove Rd. w. of Leaf River Rd.
Sinnissippi Farms	1901	Lowden Road
A. G. Spaulding Birthplace	1850	2nd & Chestnut Streets, Byron
Stone Hill School	1889	7690 E. Cottonwood Rd.
Stronghold Castle	1930	Ill. Rte. 2 north of Oregon
Washington Grove settlement	1835	Prairie Road
Watertown settlement		Watertown & Honey Creek Roads
Weld Memorial Park and grist mill site		Weld Park Road
West Branch Church of the Brethren	1862	4014 N. West Branch Rd.
Wilson & Talbot Grist Mill	1835/1849	West of S. Wilson Mill Rd. on Elm
White Eagle Mill & Stone Schoolhouse		N. Bass Road
The White Rocks/Chaney Cemetery	1846	Mowers & Church Roads
White Rock Burg settlement on the Chicago & Iowa Trail		Lindenwood & White Rock Roads
White Oak School	1869	East of 6461 E. Grist Mill Rd.

MUSEUMS

Byron Museum of History, Lucius Read Home
Chana School Museum and Education Center, Oregon
Firehouse Museum, Rochelle
Flagg Township Historical Society, Rochelle
Graehling Museum, Polo
Heritage Farm, Byron Forest Preserve
Jarrett Prairie Center, Byron Forest Preserve
John Deere Historic Site, Grand Detour
Ogle County Historical Society / Ruby Nash House, Oregon
Polo Historical Society / Applington House
Stuka Military Museum

PUBLIC SCULPTURE

Black Hawk Statue ("The Indian") by Loredo Taft, Lowden State Park
"The Soldier's Monument" by Lorado Taft, Ogle County Courthouse Square, Oregon
"Black Hawk and Abraham Lincoln" by Jeff Adams, Mix Park, Oregon
"Fish Boys", commissioned copies of two Lorado Taft pieces at the Art Institute of Chicago, Mix Park, Oregon
"The Muses" by students of Lorado Taft, NIU Field Campus, Oregon

VISITOR CENTERS

Lincoln Highway Visitor Center / 1918 Standard Oil Filling Station, 500 Lincoln Ave. Rochelle
Chamber of Commerce, 115 N. 3rd St., Oregon
Blackhawk Waterways Convention & Visitors Bureau, Burns House, 201 N. Franklin St., Polo

SCALE: 1" = 2.5 MILES

Tri-County Alliance Snowmobile Trails in Ogle County (Winter, 2003)

State Funded Public Trail (groomed)

Potential Trail

Appendix C: Implementation Strategies

Outright acquisition by a public agency or private entity is only one of many options for preservation of greenways, with trails or without. Often, stewardship by the owner of the property may be the best or the preferred option. An individual property may be protected by a conservation easement, lease, management agreement, or by dedication as an Illinois Nature Preserve, to name several techniques. More detailed descriptions of Nature Preserves and conservation easements, how they work and how they may benefit the landowner and the environment, appear in Appendix D.

Restoration of native vegetation—diverse wetland, prairie, forest and savanna seeding and plantings—has mushroomed in Ogle County in the past decade. Typically restorations are associated with sensitive lands and efforts to create natural areas for conservation, research, USDA farm programs, buffers, and residential appeal. As the total remaining natural areas that can be preserved continues to shrink, ecological restoration of open lands by private and not-for-profit landowners is becoming the major conservation method for future greenways.

One innovative technique known as **"conservation development"** or "open-space subdivisions" is credited with preservation of additional green space in many parts of the U.S. Conservation development requires a modified subdivision ordinance allowing more units on smaller lots, a type of "clustering" that sets aside a minimum area, usually 50% of the subdivision including a portion of each lot, as dedicated conservation/green space. Allowing greater density is both an incentive to residential developers and an economic necessity to generate funds for ecosystem restoration and trails in open space. The greenway may be permanently maintained under covenant by the residents of the subdivision for their recreational use and for environmentally friendly management of storm water.

Northern Illinois has been a leader in adopting local ordinances that permit and encourage conservation development. In an R-1 Rural Residence District, Ogle County's *Article V: Open Space Subdivisions* requires that at least 50% of the total site area be designated as open space and permanently protected; in an R-2 Single-Family residence District, at least 33.33% must be designated.

Unless property is already owned and managed by a public agency, utility company, or non-profit organization, the **funding strategy** for an off-road trail involves both the acquisition of the land or an easement on the land *and* the development of the facility. In addition to IDOT and IDNR funding programs that support acquisition or development of bike paths, boat access, snowmobile and equestrian trails by local agencies, both public agencies and private organizations have various techniques available to them to fund trail development.

A successful strategy will require both initial preservation and **ongoing management or maintenance**. Greenway preservation often involves partnerships between government, private owners, and non-profit land trusts organized specifically to assist in acquiring or preserving natural areas for their ecological, educational, recreational, and aesthetic values. Similarly, trail development may involve both public and private initiative, but long-term maintenance of a public trail typically will require the commitment of local public funding.

Appendix D: Conservation Easements and Nature Preserves,

A conservation easement is a legal agreement a property owner makes to restrict the type and amount of development that may take place on his or her property.

To understand the concept, think of owning land as holding a bundle of rights. A landowner may sell or give away the whole bundle or just one or two of those rights. These may include, for example, the right to construct buildings on the land, to subdivide, to restrict access, or to harvest timber. To give away certain rights while retaining others, a property owner grants an easement to an appropriate third party.

Conservation easements are one of the primary tools in the creation of a greenway because public funding for land acquisition is scarce. Easements work because they provide potential benefits to both the landowner and the public, because they are negotiated with the land owner, because the easement does not entail a management expense to the State, and the easement property remains on the tax rolls. However, the real estate taxes may be reduced if the property is encumbered and provides a public benefit. Public benefit certification is determined by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in accordance with criteria established by law.

Any property with significant conservation or historic preservation values can be protected by an easement. This includes trails, forests, wetlands, farms, endangered species habitat, beaches, scenic areas, historic sites, and more.

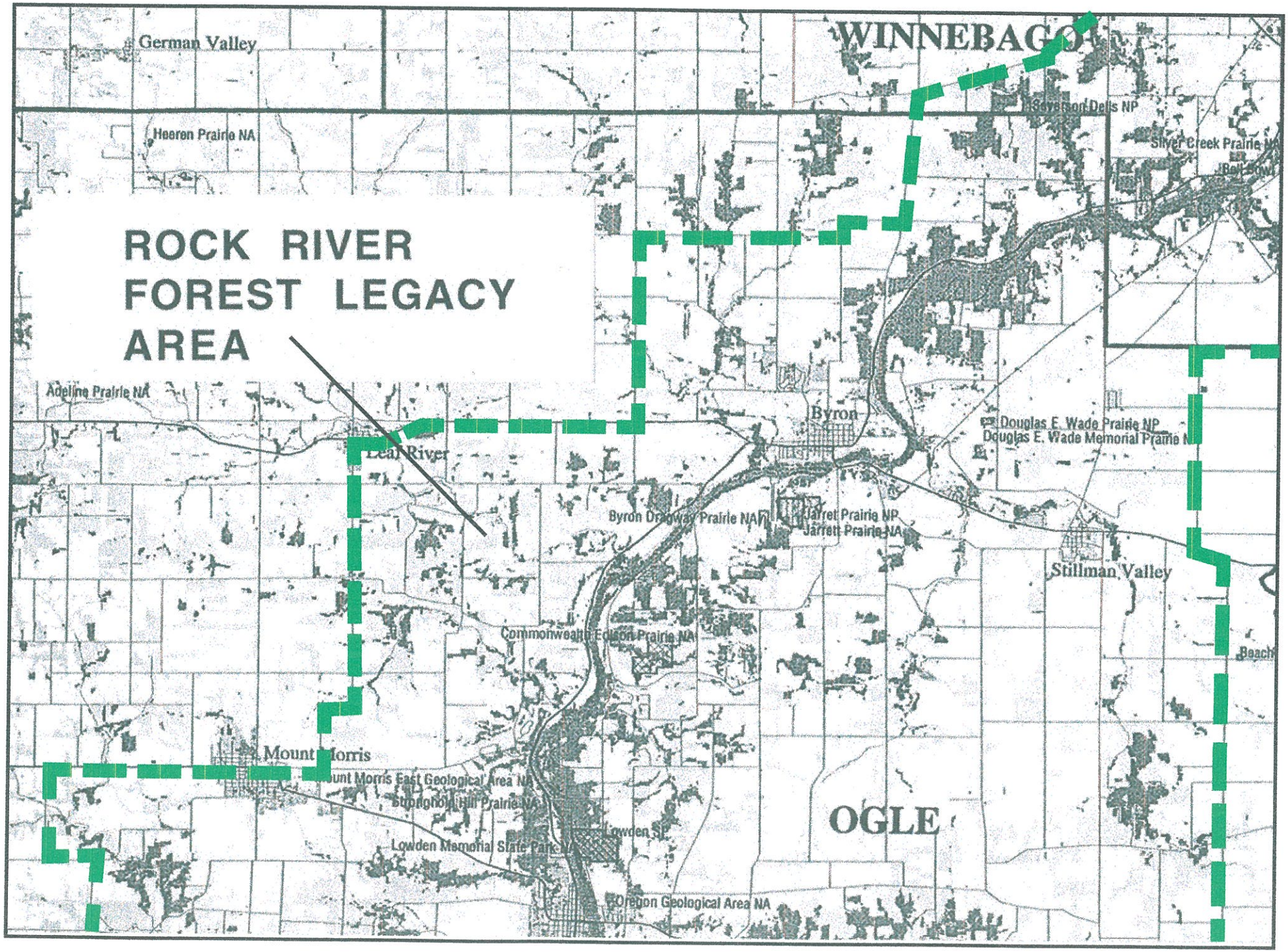
Landowners who grant conservation easements make their own choice about whether to open their property to the public. Some convey certain public access rights, such as allowing fishing or hiking in specified locations or permitting guided tours. Others do not.

An easement can be written so that it lasts forever (a perpetual easement) or for a specified number of years (a term easement). Only gifts of perpetual easements can Qualify a donor for income and estate tax benefits. An easement runs with the land; that is, the original owner and all subsequent owners are bound by the restrictions that the easement spells out.

The donation of a perpetual conservation easement is a tax-deductible charitable gift, provided it is donated to a qualified organization or public agency exclusively for conservation purposes and remains undeveloped. The amount of the deduction is based upon the appraised fair market value of the easement.

In recent years there has been a dramatic growth in *land trusts,* not-for-profit organizations set up specifically to acquire and maintain environmentally important lands. Easements are an important method of "acquisition" for land trusts. One of the oldest land trusts in Illinois is The Natural Land Institute, Rockford. NLI has played a role in preserving high quality natural areas at Franklin Creek.

Designed to encourage the protection of privately owned, environmentally sensitive forest lands, the **Forest Legacy Program** (FLP) is an entirely voluntary program administered by the states. Its focus is the acquisition of partial interests in privately-owned forest lands, specifically conservation easements, leally binding agreements transferring a negotiated set of property rights from one party to another without removing the property from private ownership. Most FLP conservation easements

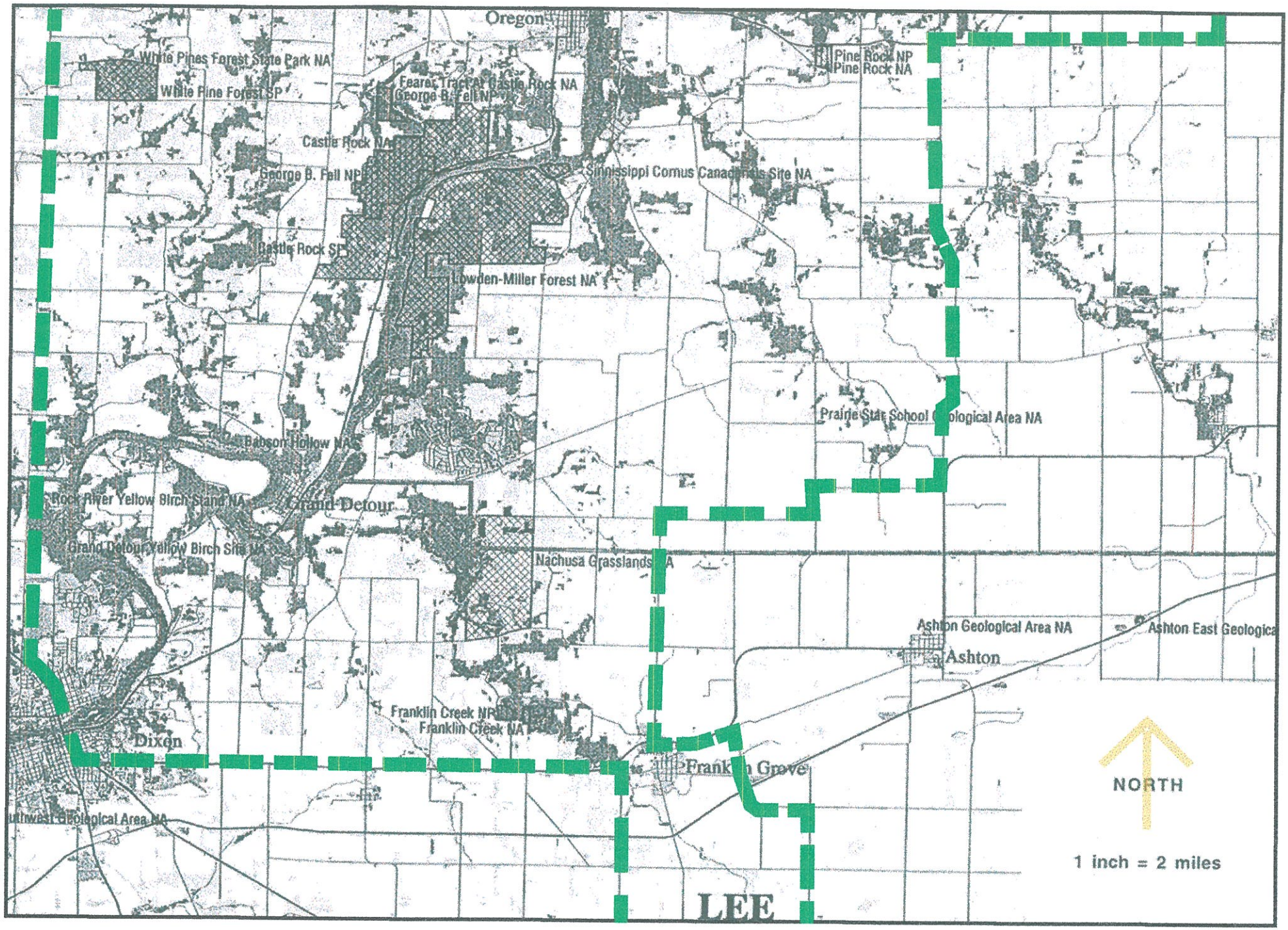

ROCK RIVER
FOREST LEGACY
AREA
German Valley
WINNEBAGO
Heeren Prairie NA
Adeline Prairie NA
Leaf River
Byron
Byron Driftway Prairie NA
Jarret Prairie NP
Jarrett Prairie NA
Douglas E. Wade Prairie NP
Douglas E. Wade Memorial Prairie N
Stillman Valley
Commonwealth Edison Prairie NA
Mount Morris
Mount Morris East Geological Area NA
Stronghold Hill Prairie NA
Lowden Memorial State Park
Lowden St
Oregon Geological Area NA
OGLE

restrict development, require sustainable forestry practices, and protect other values. Private forest landowners may qualify for participation by preparing a multiple resource management plan. The federal government mayh fund up to 75% of program costs, with at least 25% coming from private, state or local sources. The funding that is available in Illinois each year is limited.

The Rock River Forest Legacy Area corresponds with areas that were largely forested at the time of settlement of Ogle County and neighboring counties.

Very high-quality natural land in private, corporate, or public ownership may qualify to become a dedicated **Illinois Nature Preserve.** This is a legal process whereby the landowner voluntarily restricts future uses of the land in perpetuity for the purpose of preserving the land in its natural state and to perpetuate natural conditions. The owner retains custody but gives up the right to develop the land or make changes that negatively affect the natural qualities. It does not require the owner to take any measures to protect the dedicated property against the action of nature or of third parties.

Dedication is the strongest protection that can be given to land in Illinois. It even protects an area from the threat of condemnation. The permanent protection continues through future conveyances of the land. The process is administered by a state agency, the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Springfield.


Oregon
White Pines Forest State Park NA
White Pine Forest SP
Fearer Tract At Castle Rock NA
George B. Fell NP
Castle Rock NA
George B. Fell NP
Mississippi Cornus Canadensis Site NA
Pine Rock NP
Pine Rock NA
Castle Rock SP
Lowden-Miller Forest NA
Prairie State School Geological Area NA
Babson Hollow NA
Rock River Yellow Birch Stand NA
Grand Detour
Grand Detour Yellow Birch Site NA
Nachusa Grasslands NA
Ashton Geological Area NA
Ashton East Geological
Ashton
Franklin Creek NP
Franklin Creek NA
Dixon
Franklin Grove
Northwest Geological Area NA
NORTH
1 inch = 2 miles
LEE

Appendix E: Economic Benefits of Greenways

Real-property values	Many studies demonstrate that parks, greenways, and trails increase nearby residential and business property values. In turn, increased property values can increase tax revenues and offset loss of property tax base on greenway lands.
Consumer spending	Spending by local residents on greenway-related activities helps support recreation-oriented businesses and employment, as well as other businesses that are patronized by greenway and trail users.
Commercial uses	Greenways often provide business opportunities, location, and resources for commercial activities such as recreation equipment rentals and sales, lessons, and other related businesses.
Tourism	Greenways are often major tourist attractions, which generate expenditures on lodging, food, and recreation-oriented services. Greenways also help improve the overall appeal of a community to prospective tourists and new residents.
Agency expenditures	The agency responsible for managing a river, trail, or greenway can help support local businesses by purchasing supplies and services. Jobs created by the managing agency may also help increase the local employment base by an amount equivalent to other uses of the lands.
Corporate relocation	Evidence shows that the quality of life of a community is an increasingly important factor in corporate relocation decisions. Greenways are often cited as important contributors to quality of life. (In fact, from the earliest days of settlement the natural charm of the Rock River corridor has been cited as a reason for business people and businesses to locate here.)
Public cost reduction	The conservation of rivers, trails, and greenways can help local governments and other public agencies avoid costs resulting from flooding and other natural hazards to more intensive development of the same lands.
Intrinsic values	While greenways have many economic benefits, it is important to remember the intrinsic environmental and recreation value of preserving rivers, trails and other open space corridors.

Adapted from *Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors,* National Park Service, 1990.

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Handbook containing case studies and a how-to-guide, developed by Economics Research Associates, Washington, D.C., as a companion to *Iowa Trails 2000.* **www.dot.state.ia.us**
Trails and Greenways for Livable Communities
Promotes trails and greenways to help manage development and control sprawl, by providing transportation options such as bike commuting and walking environments. Links and resources. **www.trailsandgreenways.org**
Preserving Historic and Cultural Resources
Tells how trails and greenways can provide access to and help preserve history and culture by connecting people to the past.
www.trailsandgreenways.org
Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways
Summarizes greenways and trails impacts on quality of life, property values, and the environment. Links and resources. **www.trailsandgreenways.org**
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