Unurbanized Greenways and Trails Plan for Woodford and McLean Counties

Constitution Trail, McLean County

http://www.cityblm.org

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

July, 2002

GREENWAYS AND TRAILS PLAN FOR UNURBANIZED WOODFORD AND MCLEAN COUNTIES

Developed by
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

With funding from
The Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Unurbanized Greenways and Trails Plan for Woodford and McLean Counties

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission

Marcus Adams, Woodford County Board
Joyce Antonini, Tazewell County Board
James Booth, Woodford County Board
Joseph Crowe, Illinois Dept. of Transportation
Robert Huschen, Woodford County Board
Thomas Janssen, Woodford County Board
Sharon Kennedy, Peoria County Board
Ken Klopfenstein, Tazewell County Board
Larry Koch, Tazewell County Board
Peter Lambie, Woodford County Board
Peg Meisinger, Tazewell County Board
George Murray, Village of Peoria Heights
Lynn Scott Pearson, Peoria County Board
Ronald Rainson, Peoria County Board
Charles Tanton, Woodford County Board
James Thomas, Peoria County Board
James Unsicker, Tazewell County Board
Stephen Van Winkle, City of Peoria
James Wagner, Peoria County Board
David Zimmerman, Tazewell County Board

Staff

Terry D. Kohlbuss, Executive Director
Eric W. Miller, Program manager
Roger Diercks, GIS Technician
Micah Williamson, Data Specialist
Andres Diaz, Data Collection Specialist
Thomas Gerend, Planner II
Joseph W. Barbeau, Planner II
Eman Ibrahim, Planner II
Melissa Eaton, Planner I
Linda L. Abts, Administrative Assistant

Regional Greenways and Trails Task Force

Howard Goldbaum, Bradley University (chair)
Ben Elam, Village of Hanna City
George Burrier, Friends of the Rock Island Trail
Mayor Phil McAlearney, Village of Hanna City
Robert Weers, Woodford County
Joe Barbeau, TCRPC Staff
Scott Schuett, IL Dept. of Natural Resources
Lowell Koch, Village of Metamora
Rudy Haben, Heart of Illinois Sierra Club
Pat Goitein, Friends of the Galena Trail
Josh Naven, City of Peoria

Thanks To

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Kirsten Halvorson, The Nature Conservancy
Lydia Reynolds, McLean County Regional Planning Commission
The Illinois Valley Wheelm'n
Mike Mason
Senator Claude Stone
Matt Fick
Ryan Palm

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	3
1. Introduction	5
2. Greenways and Trails: Function and Benefit	9
3. Goals and Objectives	13
4. Greenways and Trails Resources	19
5. Existing and Proposed Greenways and Trails Opportunities	23
6. Connecting Municipalities by Bicycle	29
7. Opportunities Beyond the Study Area	31
8. Implementation and Funding	33
9. Recommendations and Next Steps	37
10. Information Sources	39
11. Bibliography	41

Maps

Figure 1: Study Area	8
Figures 2 and 3: Greenway and Trail Resources • Woodford County • McLean County	After Page 22
Figures 4-6: Greenway and Trail Opportunities • Woodford County • McLean and Woodford Counties • McLean and Tazewell Counties	After Page 26

FOREWORD

This plan is part of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) three-phase greenways and trails planning initiative. In this program, IDNR funds plans in each of three phases. For Phases 1 and 2, IDNR funded Northeastern Illinois and 10 downstate metro-areas respectively. Phase 3, which covers non-metropolitan communities, is the impetus for this plan.

In 1995, the Tri-County Regional Greenways and Trails Task Force was formed under the auspices of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. The Task Force has continued its efforts in greenways and trails planning and advocacy ever since. Representation comes from a wide array of public and private organizations with direct interest in creating greenways and trails.

This plan is meant to facilitate coordination among the various agencies that have an interest in providing greenway and trail facilities to the citizens of Woodford and McLean Counties. The Regional Greenways and Trails Task Force acts as the forum for these coordination efforts. The purpose of the Task Force is to identify various greenways and trails projects and serve as an advisory committee, providing expertise in this area of development.

There is currently a greenways and trails foundation in and around the study area. This foundation was established in the Peoria Metro Area Greenways and Trails Plan and the McLean County Regional Greenways Plan. Each of these plans was published in 1997. Simultaneous to production of this plan is the Greenways and Trails Plan for Peoria and Tazewell Counties. These three efforts all played a role in creating this plan in a fashion that provides for the identification of connectivity beyond the study area. The goals of this plan include expansion of the existing network of greenways and trails, creation of inter-county connectivity, promotion of greenways and trails education and the facilitation of coordination and cooperation between local agencies.

Illinois
Department of
Natural
Resources

1 INTRODUCTION

Greenways and trails play an integral role in shaping a region's livability by preserving natural resources and wildlife, providing erosion and storm water control and providing recreational and alternative transportation options. This plan will help to ensure that such amenities become and remain prevalent in Woodford and McLean Counties.

This plan identifies the process taken to bring people together to create a common vision for greenways and trails in the area. The plan discusses the positive externalities that greenways and trails can bring to an area. It goes on to discuss the resources currently possessed by Woodford and McLean Counties and what types of greenways and trails can be created and preserved by utilizing them. Finally, the plan discusses techniques for plan implementation and what steps should be taken in the near future.

Planning Process

The Tri-County Regional Greenways and Trails Task Force (Task Force) has been a major contributor to the planning process. The Task Force is made up of an array of interested citizens, government officials and representatives of not-for-profit organizations. This group has played a role in corridor identification, creation of presentation materials and review of plan documents. The group has also enabled the planning process to have community-wide representation.

Public input played a role in corridor identification. Public meetings were held in which attendees were given the opportunity to provide feedback. Such feedback helped to identify corridors discussed in the plan.

Plan Intent

The intent in creating this plan can best be summarized by listing four key goals. First, the plan intends to identify important greenway and trail opportunities in Woodford and McLean Counties. Second, the plan intends to be the impetus for regional greenways and trails coordination. This coordination will lead to regional and statewide connectivity that will not only allow users to access different parts of their own city or county, but many different parts of the State. Third, the plan intends to help coordinate projects among various agencies. Forth, the plan intends to assist IDNR in determining area priorities as part of its grant selection process.

Another important result that the Task Force is constantly trying to achieve is implementation. Creation of a plan is only one step in the difficult yet rewarding process of helping to enhance livability by creating an attractive and functional system of greenways and trails. With the planning process finished, the Task Force will now turn its attention to implementation. The Task Force will work to assist communities with implementation strategies by helping them understand the intricacies of land acquisition, funding and maintenance.

Finally, the Task Force plans to utilize the plan as part of a greenways and trails educational movement. Included in the plan are maps depicting Woodford and McLean Counties' existing and proposed greenways and trails. Also included are a user map and an educational CD that allows for corridors to be navigable on a personal computer. These attachments will be utilized in the effort to educate citizens about greenways and trails.

Study Area

The Plan's study area includes all of Woodford and McLean Counties. The study area can be seen on the map in Figure 1 on page 8. While this Plan's study area only covers two counties, references beyond this

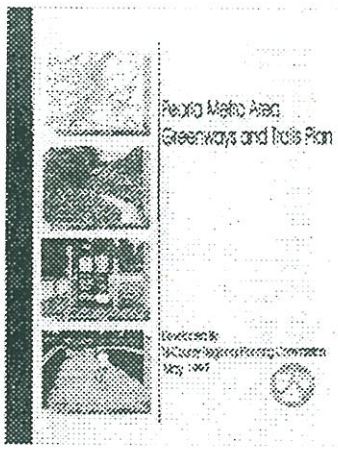
two county area will be made. Discussion of many of the greenways and trails identified in the study area will include specific reference to the continuation into adjoining counties and beyond.

Related Documents

This Plan utilizes other plans to improve its information as well as to improve its ability to identify connections to areas outside of the study area. The most important of those documents are listed below.

Peoria Metro Area Greenways and Trails Plan

The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, with assistance from the public and the Task Force, produced the Peoria Metro Area Greenways and Trails Plan (Metro Plan) in 1997. The Study Area for the Metro Plan encompasses the urbanized area of the Tri-County area. While this entire study area is in Peoria and Tazewell Counties, the Metro Plan identified excellent opportunities for connectivity within the urbanized area and provided the opportunity for connectivity beyond the area. Connectivity of this plan's study area to the corridors identified in the Metro Plan would provide a great deal of recreational access to Woodford and McLean County residents.

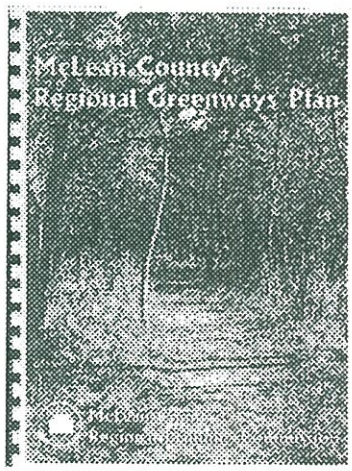


Unurbanized Greenways and Trails Plan For Peoria and Tazewell Counties

Simultaneous to creation of this plan is the creation of a similar plan for the unurbanized area of Peoria and Tazewell Counties. During the creation stages, these two plans were interdependent. A significant number of the corridors identified in Woodford and McLean Counties continue into Tazewell County, which, in turn, often creates a connection to Peoria County. The finished product of the two plans identifies connectivity within the four counties that will, with proper implementation, allow for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the four county area.

McLean County Regional Greenways Plan

The McLean County Regional Greenways Plan was produced by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission in April of 1997. This plan identified many of the County's resources as well as existing and proposed greenways and trails. The McLean County Plan was invaluable in its assistance identifying connections to Woodford County in this Plan as well as to Tazewell County in the Unurbanized Greenways and Trails Plan For Peoria and Tazewell Counties. Because McLean County has a greenways and trails plan with such comprehensive identification of resources and corridors, it was not the intent in this planning process to identify additional corridors.



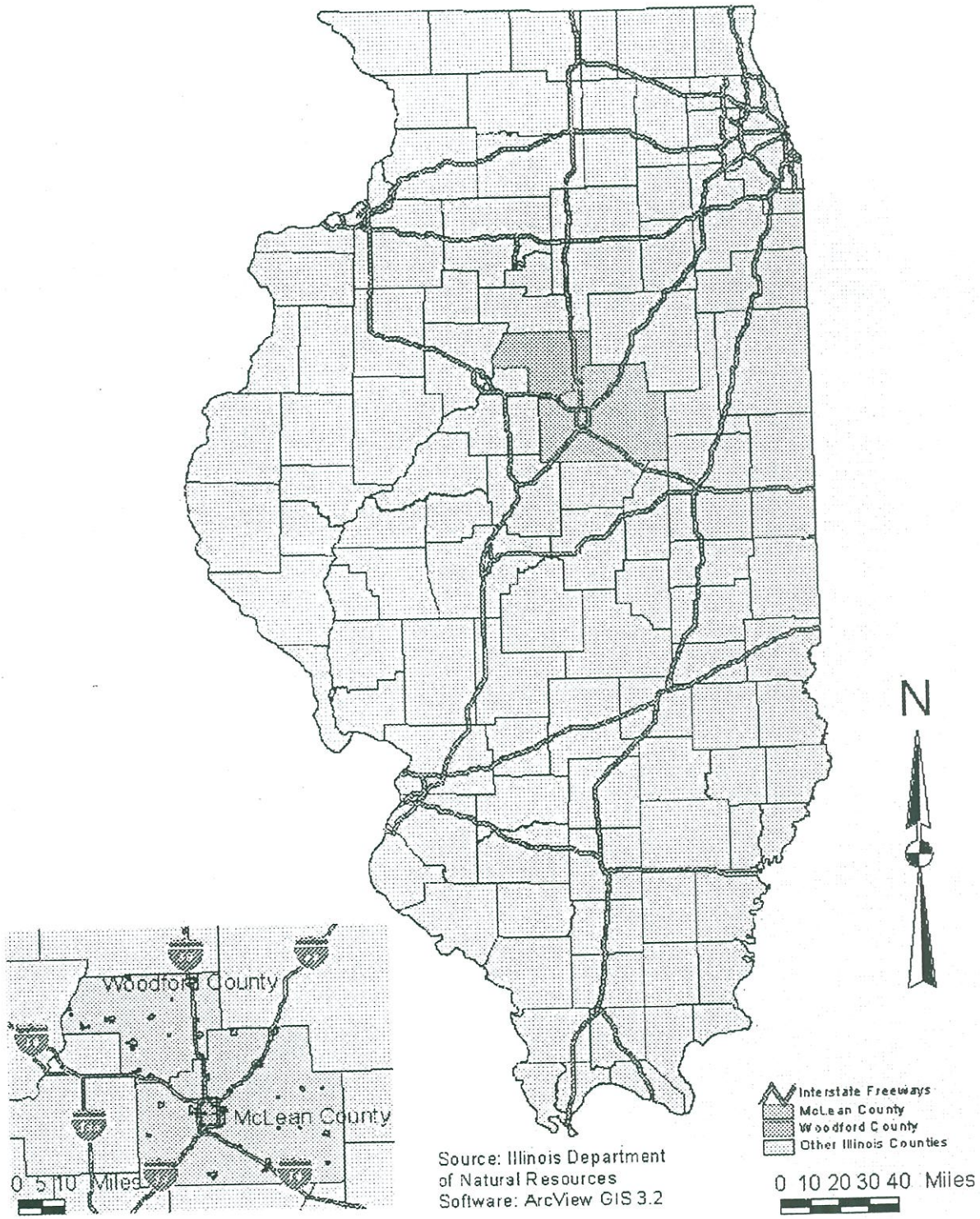
Use and Limitations of the Plan

This Plan can be used to help educate local and regional entities that desire to plan for, fund and implement greenways and trails. It identifies corridors and resources and shares implementation strategies. Localities that adopt the plan can utilize it to assure that greenways and trails are taken into consideration for future growth. The plan

can also help IDNR recognize the area's funding priorities.

The Plan's primary limitation is that it has been created to serve primarily advisory purposes. The Plan provides ideas to interested parties but does not carry any authority to mandate that it be followed in any way. Localities sometimes have a tendency to focus within their own borders, regardless of regional implications. It is the responsibility of local and regional entities to carefully, creatively, and aggressively act on this plan and keep regional priorities in mind.

Figure 1: Study Area



2 Greenways and Trails: Function and Benefit

What is a Greenway?

According to the Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program, a greenway is a corridor of protected open space managed for conservation and recreation purposes. Charles Little, author of the book *Greenways for America*, offers the following definition:

> *1. A greenway is a linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream, valley, or ridge line, or overland along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route. 2. Any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian and bicycle passage. 3. An open space connector linking parks, nature preserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and with populated areas. 4. Certain strip or linear parks designated as a parkway or greenbelt*

Urban greenways often provide a natural and/or recreational connection between neighborhoods, schools, parks and other public gathering and recreational areas. For example, the Metro Plan calls for a bicycle and pedestrian connection between Westwood Park and Birchwood Park in Morton using primarily abandoned railroad Tracks.

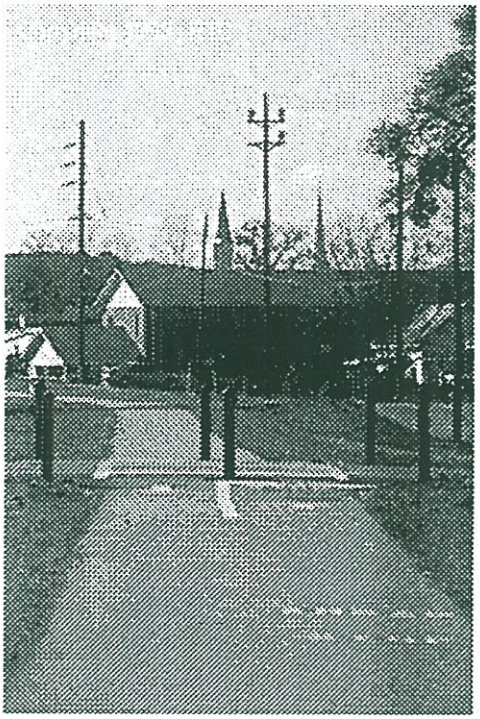
The Greenways and Trails Clearinghouse

Rural greenways are likely to make connections between state parks, national forests or wildlife features. An example of this is the natural connection made by Kickapoo Creek between Rutherford Park and Wildlife Prairie Park in Peoria County.

Greenways and Trails: Is There a Difference?

By many definitions, greenways are natural areas that encompass many natural resources such as water or vegetation. The Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan of 1992 states that "Vegetation is a critical element in a greenway. Greenway functions cannot be achieved without a highly vegetated landscape."

Within the context of this plan, trails do not need to be surrounded by vegetation. For example, the Metro Plan proposes connecting trails that that run along streets and are not surrounded by majestic natural features. Along with natural greenways, this Plan tries to identify recreational and alternative means of transportation, whatever the surroundings.



The Greenways and Trails Clearinghouse

For the purposes of this plan, the term "greenway" will be used to signify a natural area not for recreational use, while "trail" will be used to signify corridors used for recreation. Even though not all greenways are trails and not all trails are greenways, the two coincide quite often.

What are the Benefits of Greenways and Trails?

The availability of greenways and trails is a factor in determining whether an area is "livable". Some benefits of greenways and trails that may come to mind are those of natural beauty, environmental preservation, recreational availability, alternative transportation options and the ability to display cultural resources. Such benefits may come in the form of a natural buffer between a parking lot and a park; a large area of green space protected from development; a long pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian or snowmobile trail; a path connecting parks or other points of interest; a bicycle path that connects residents with schools or places of employment or a linear array of plaques commemorating a historical route.

While the aesthetic and recreational benefits of greenways and trails are fairly evident, their extensive ability to preserve the environment provides benefits that many people are unaware of. Greenways are a means of getting back to the basic principle of nature and conservation. Greenways function in many different ways and provide several important processes. They control floods by allowing a natural spreading of water and trapping sediments. Greenways help nature's ability to respond to changes in the landscape. They protect natural systems so that they function properly and maintain the health of the landscape by providing access and a connection to environmental resources.

Other benefits of greenways are:

- They act as a habitat for different species of plants and animals. Wetlands, forests and prairies are prime examples. Greenways sustain vegetation and natural areas for growth.
- They act as conduits that are areas in the landscape that provide movement. A river or stream is a common illustration. They allow movement to link areas together, connect habitats and permit migration of species.
- They act as filters that allow the passage of some things but prevent the passage of others. Greenways have large potential to filter sedimentation from the surface water. Buffering and erosion control measures are important functions of filter greenways.
- They act as a tool to promote environmental awareness and education. They can be used as a device to involve youth in environmental programs.
- They protect and enhance forests, which improve air quality.
- They protect farming operations from wind and create routes to farm fields.

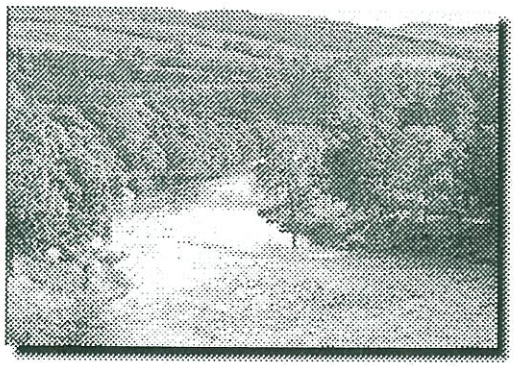
Many people are unaware that greenways and trails provide a great deal of economic benefit. The American Greenways Program lists the following benefits:

- Many studies show an increase in real property values. Increased property values can lead to increased tax revenues, which can help to offset greenway acquisition costs
- Spending by local residents on greenway related activities helps support recreation-oriented business and employment.
- Greenways may lead to new commercial activities related to additional recreational opportunity
- Tourism may increase, which could create the opportunity for new expenditures on lodging, food and recreation-oriented services.
- The managing agency will help the economy by purchasing supplies and services as well as by creating new employment opportunities.
- Presence of greenways is often cited as an important factor in quality of life. Evidence has shown that a community's quality of life is an important factor in corporate relocation decisions.
- Environmental conservation can lead to a decrease in governmental spending in response to natural hazards and on environmental cleanup.

3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This section is dedicated to a discussion of goals and objectives coming out of this plan. These goals and objectives are meant to alert government agencies and citizens to how greenways and trails can improve community livability. Most of these goals and objectives will come to fruition long after the publishing of this plan. They will be realized in the long term through continued work of the Task Force, state and local government and citizens. Below is a list of nine goals and the objectives that are important in assuring their achievement. Note that some objective are duplicated as they fit within multiple goals.

Goal: Environmental Protection and Preservation
Greenways benefit citizens and promote the preservation of land and water while providing a habitat for plant and animal communities. They are frequently part of conservation strategies that meet important ecological needs. Woodford and McLean Counties possess many natural areas, including the Illinois River Valley, which, with its associated watershed, provides spectacular scenery in nearby natural areas. Area residents enjoy many benefits from the Illinois River and its tributaries.



The Conservation Fund

- **Objective: Provision of Erosion and Stormwater Control**
  Greenways provide natural stormwater control. Riparian zones provide for flow moderation, nutrient and sediment filtration and bank stabilization. Greenways are perfect for floodplain protection and provide a low cost solution to erosion problems.

- **Objective: Identification of Environmentally Sensitive Areas**
  Identification of environmentally sensitive areas is important in that it can lead to the taking of measures to promote or require preservation in development and redevelopment. It is also important to identify connections between environmentally sensitive areas. Interconnected greenways can preserve habitat and create buffers from human activity and development.

- **Objective: Maintaining Wildlife Habitats**
  Greenways serve two functions for wildlife: they provide habitats, especially for animals whose natural habitat is linear, and act as conduits by allowing access to additional habitats and promoting the diversity of species.

Goal: Countywide and Regional Connectivity
With proper planning, Woodford and McLean Counties could be a part of a large, inter-county system of greenways and trails.

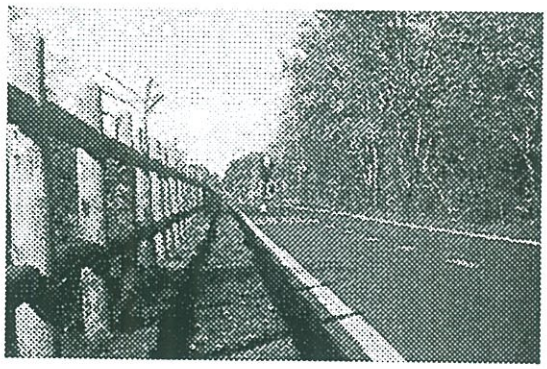
- **Objective: Promotion of Connectivity to the Grand Illinois Trail**
  The Grand Illinois Trail Covers 475 miles and will soon provide a connection from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River. There is plenty of trail connectivity in the northern portion of the State. The northern border of Woodford

County is within 35 miles of the Grand Illinois Trail. Connection to the Grand Illinois Trail in LaSalle or Bureau County would create a connection to Chicago, the Quad Cities and more.

- **Objective: Connectivity with Neighboring Counties**
  Woodford and McLean Counties have the opportunity to create trail connectivity with neighboring counties, which can ultimately lead to miles of available trails. For example, a connection into Morton, East Peoria or Washington in neighboring Tazewell County would allow residents to access Peoria and Stark Counties, which would create the ability to travel over 40 miles. Any inter-county connection can help lead to a better statewide trail network.

- **Objective: Incorporate Greenways and Trails into Highway and Bridge Design**
  The best time to create connectivity along the street network is during the design phase of road and bridge projects. Both new and repaired roads and bridges can accommodate trails before construction easier than they can after construction. Early consideration of greenway and trail opportunities can create a situation in which there are ample access points and right-of-way available for a trail.

- **Objective: Promote Safe Street Routes for Bicycles**
  In some cases it may not be feasible to connect two trails with a majestic corridor. In such cases, the street network may be the only means of connectivity. Street rights-of-way that are navigable by bicycles and pedestrians can create a link between trails, providing much desired connectivity. Measures such as the addition of bicycle lanes should be taken to assure that bicycles and pedestrians are safe on as many roads as possible.



The Greenways and Trails Clearinghouse

Goal: Public Access to Open Space and Recreation
Planning for public access to greenways creates many concerns. Greenways do not require public access to be effective, and some greenways—particularly those in environmentally sensitive areas—can be harmed if the public has free access to them. Other greenways can provide public access to areas that could not normally be enjoyed without access points. Ways to remedy access concerns include limiting public access to environmentally sensitive areas and working with private landowners who do not want their property open to the public. Access to a particular user can also be limited through the use of certain surface types. Each greenway identified in this plan possesses unique attributes that may or may not make it accessible to the public. Ultimately, accessibility will be determined by the implementing agency.

Providing opportunities for recreation is a primary greenways and trails planning goal. Although some greenways are not designed for recreation, others, particularly those that involve trails, provide for expanded recreational activities. In addition to providing access to other facilities, these trails can promote cycling, walking, in-line skating cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and equestrian.

- **Objective: The Availability of a Large Park System**
  The area's park system should be able to accommodate present and future users from the entire region who desire to use parks in many different ways. Provision of active uses such as playgrounds, ball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts and connecting bicycle paths should not preclude the availability of passive uses such as botanical gardens and benches.

- **Objective: Create Equal Access for All Residents**
  Assurances should be made that all residents, particularly minority and lower-income groups, have access to greenways and trails. Greenways and trails should also be designed in a fashion that allows for use by children, senior citizens and the disabled. Designs should be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- **Objective: Interconnectivity of Parks**
  Greenways and trails should be able to provide connections between area parks to provide users with the most convenient access possible.

- **Objective: Promotion of Facilities to Accommodate Recreational Needs**
  No matter how much connectivity is created, there will always be residents that need to access the greenways and trails system by automobile. Adequate parking will enable these residents to do so. Drinking fountains, uniform informational signage and trash receptacles can all improve the recreational experience. It is also important that facilities are able to accommodate both active and passive recreational uses.

- **Objective: Creation of Linear Trails**
  Bicycling, walking, in-line skating, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and horseback riding are most enjoyable and safe on dedicated trails. A large system of trails provides the ability to participate in such activities while separated from automobile traffic. Connections between such trails allow for the opportunity to access many different recreational opportunities.

Goal: Alternative Transportation Options

Providing means of transportation other than the automobile is an aim of planners in areas that have air quality problems. In Peoria and Tazewell counties, we are fortunate to have met air quality standards set forth by the Environmental Protection Agency. However, there are reasons aside from air quality, such as congestion, to use alternative transportation. Greenways and trails, particularly bike trails and paths, provide alternate transportation options.

- **Objective: Promote Connectivity to Transit**
  Coordination of transit stops with safe street bicycle routes, greenways, trails and open space would create alternative transportation options for additional people. Transit does not currently play a large role in Woodford County, but transit connectivity could be beneficial in the Bloomington/Normal area of McLean County. An example where such potential exists is in Peoria, where CityLink, the area's major transit operator, will have bicycle racks on all of its buses.

- **Objective: Incorporate Greenways and Trails into Highway and Bridge Design**
  Designing roadway and bridge construction and repair projects with

greenways and trails in mind can help add to the area's alternative transportation options. Early consideration of greenway and trail opportunities can create a situation in which there are ample access points and right-of-way available for a trail.

- **Objective: Promote Safe Street Routes for Bicycles**
  While greenway-type bicycle trails are excellent for recreation, they do not always properly serve commuter needs for transportation to work, school and other destinations. Most such destinations need to, at least in part, be accessed via the street network. Measures, such as the addition of bicycle lanes, should be taken to assure that as many roads as possible are safe for bicycle travel.

Goal: Continued Planning and Implementation Efforts for the McLean County
The McLean County Regional Greenways Plan is nearly four years old. However, that does not mean that planning for the area cannot continue. Identification of additional greenways, trails or bicycle routes within McLean County is important to the promotion of regional connectivity.

- **Objective: Promote Safe Street Routes for Bicycles**
  Safe street routes for bicycles are important for continued planning of McLean County. Street bicycle routes can improve connectivity for both alternative transportation and recreation.

- **Objective: Coordinate Implementation Efforts with McLean County**
  Because McLean County is adjacent to the Tri-County area, the Tri-County Regional Greenways and Trails Task Force should lead the efforts to coordinate implementation between the two areas.

Goal: Identification of Cultural and Historic Areas
Marking areas of cultural or historical significance enhances the recreational aspect of greenways and trails. Such markings can occur along natural corridors, bicycle and pedestrian routes or along city streets.

- **Objective: Inform Applicable Organizations of Funding Options for Signage**
  Placing signs at culturally or historically significant points can be an inexpensive way to inform residents and tourists of the importance of certain areas of the community.

- **Objective: Connection of Cultural or Historical Sites to Greenways and Trails**
  Connectivity to pedestrian and bicycle areas is a good way to enable users to view cultural and historic markers.

Goal: Utilize Designs that Best Enhance Greenways and Trails
Greenways and Trails should use design techniques and standards that create optimum aesthetics, accessibility and authenticity. One way to assure that this takes place is by using landscape design professionals.

- **Objective: Include all Interested Parties**
  All interested parties should have early input into the preservation and development process of individual greenways and trails.

- **Objective: Design Greenways and Trails that Best Fit the Environment**
  Enhanced vegetation can improve the aesthetic quality of greenways

and trails. Using native plant materials is an appropriate way to add vegetation. Greenway improvements should be designed to utilize state-of the-art environmental management and restoration principles in order to maximize their ability to protect the environment.

- **Objective: Encourage Compatibility Between Greenways and Trails and Surrounding Land Use**
  Land use plans should promote compatibility between greenways and trails and adjacent uses so as to assure maximization of utility. Greenways and trails should be as visible as possible, particularly from roadways and public space.

Goal: Increase the Likelihood for Grant Opportunities
Since the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of 1991 (ISTEA), a minimum of 10 percent of appropriated transportation dollars are set aside for transportation-related enhancement projects, While funding opportunities for trails and other pedestrian and bicycle related projects is plentiful, competition for these dollars is intense.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) offers several assistance programs for local agencies to improve their greenway and trail systems. Regional cooperation and planning will help to increase the opportunities for participating agencies to receive funding.

- **Objective: Inform Area Agencies of Available Funding Options**
  There are a wide array of greenways and trails funding options available. The Task Force needs to keep area agencies abreast of what options exist, when grant applications must be finished, how much money is available and what type of funding is best suited to meet their needs.

Objective: Show a Commitment to Regional and State Connectivity
One of IDNR's goals in creating the Greenways Grant Program was to help improve regional and state trail connectivity. This Plan echoes that desire and supports connectivity to adjoining counties, which will hopefully lead to statewide connectivity. An important connection is to the Grand Illinois Trail. This connection would help connect Woodford and McLean Counties with much of the northern portion of Illinois.

Objective: List Priority Greenways and Trails
Identification of Priority Greenways and Trails will help to ensure that IDNR is aware of which greenways and trails are of the most currant importance. Priority Greenways and Trails are selected based upon criteria such as the ability to provide regional and statewide connectivity or the physical, political and financial feasibility.

Goal: Continued Greenways and Trails Success
A plan, no matter how viable, well researched, attractive, convincing or important, is not effective if simply placed on office shelves to collect dust. Therefore, efforts must be taken to assure that the effort put into this plan proves fruitful.

- **Objective: Work Towards Implementation**
  Perhaps the most important post-planning focus of the Task-Force is to work on implementation of the proposed greenways and trails. The Task Force is able to act as a central figure that can be of assistance to other area agencies trying to implement greenways and trails.

- **Objective: Using the Task Force as a Legal, Informational and Coordination Center**
  In order to make sure that all greenway and trail possibilities are identified, the Task Force needs to be knowledgeable on the issues such as the ability to use conservation districts, conservation easements, utility easements and other such mechanisms. The Task Force should also bring about coordination among area government entities. This can help to facilitate a situation in which government entities are cooperative in placing regional priorities ahead of their own.

- **Objective: Acquisition of Unused Railroad Rights-of-Way for Use as Trails**
  Acquiring unused railroad right-of-way can prove difficult. It is imperative that there be a group like the Task Force to understand the intricacies involved in such a task. With this knowledge, the Task Force will be able to guide different groups in railroad acquisition, helping improve the chance of success and reducing the cost and difficulty of acquiring such land while maximizing the length and width of right-of-way. In order to assure smooth transactions, the Task Force needs to build cooperative relationships with railroad companies.

- **Objective: Assure that Greenways and Trails Will be Taken into Consideration in Development and Redevelopment**
  In new development and redevelopment, providing for green space and connectivity to the area's regional greenways and trails system is important in enhancing community livability. This can best be achieved by including greenways and trails in planning phases. The creation of development standards would help to assure that greenways and trails are included in new development. Dedication of open space and natural areas will not only benefit the developer, but the community as a whole.

- **Objective: Promote Greenways and Trails Through Education**
  Many residents do not necessarily lend a great deal of thought to the importance that greenways play in an area's livability. Reaching the public and conveying the role greenways and trails play in creating recreational opportunity, transportation alternatives, environmental quality, local economics and aesthetics will help to create public sentiment for greenways and trails.

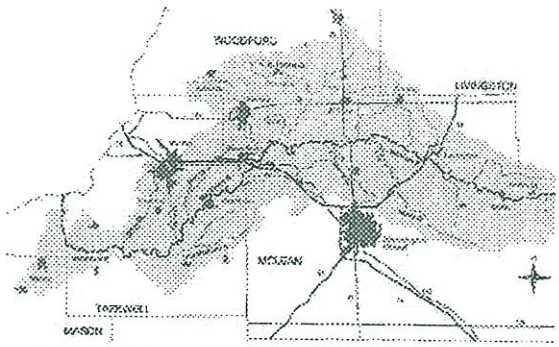
- **Objective: Update the Plan as Needed**
  There may come a time where there are certain areas of the Plan that are outdated. In such a case the Plan should be updated to reflect progress made, necessary corrections or additional resources, greenways or trails that have been identified.

4 Greenways and Trails Resources

Woodford and McLean Counties are abundant with resources that can add to their recreational, environmental and aesthetic values. Such resources can come in the form of existing or potential greenways, trails or open space areas. Following is a discussion of just some of the resources the area has to offer. Many of these resources were identified in the McLean County Regional Greenways Plan of 1997.

Natural Features

The **Illinois River** is a major Illinois waterway and tributary to the Mississippi River. The river makes up Woodford County's western border and provides the area with important water transportation as well as recreation and natural beauty. Many streams flow into the Illinois River from Woodford County. Among these are **Richland Creek, Blue Creek** and **Partridge River**. Many tributaries in Woodford and McLean Counties flow into the **Mackinaw River**, which runs through Ford, McLean, Woodford and Tazewell Counties en route to the Illinois River. Near the Mackinaw River on the border between McLean and Woodford Counties is **Evergreen Lake,** which is situated along the River's Route. Other lakes in McLean County include **Lake Bloomington** and **Lake Dawson.**



The Mackinaw River Watershed

The Mackinaw River Partnership

The **Illinois River Bluffs**, which cover parts of Peoria, Tazewell, Marshall, LaSalle, Putnam, Bureau, and Stark Counties, are a valuable ecological asset to Woodford County. The bluffs, which have been diminished in places by development, contain a mix of woodland, savanna and prairie and are home to nature preserves, natural areas, over 300 archeological sites and many plant and animal species, some of which are rare. An example is the decurent false aster, which exists only in the Illinois River Valley.

McLean County has numerous flood zones and wetlands as well. Along with the Mackinaw River, some of these important resources include **Sugar Creek, Kickapoo Creek** and **Timber Creek**. Many of McLean County's waterways eventually find their way to the Illinois River. The area also has a number of bodies of water that add to its natural landscape along with wildlife, plant life and tree cover throughout the area.

Urban Growth

Urban growth can, if allowed to, cause a loss of open space and greenway availability. It can, however, be used as an opportunity to enhance an area's greenways and trails. Creation and enforcement of development standards that call for greenways, trails, open space and environmental protection can increase livability without undermining desired economic growth. For example, in Peoria County, the City of Peoria plans to use its Growth Cells Two and Three to create trail connection between the Rock Island State Trail and Jubilee College State Park. These growth areas will have a mix of uses and allow for extensive trails and parks.

These examples show how greenways and trails can be used as a response to development. Localities, however, can use them to help drive where future development may occur. Because many people would take advantage of the opportunity to live near recreational amenities, placing trails in a preferred development area can help attract development to where a municipality wants it to occur.

Open Space

Woodford and McLean Counties have a great deal open space both in their incorporated and unincorporated areas. One of the largest open areas in Woodford County is **Woodford County State Fish and Wildlife Area**. This area, which is a waterfowl refuge, offers fishing, camping, hiking, cross-country skiing, hunting, boating and picnicking along with many plant and animal habitats and is open December 15 to October 1. **Chinquapin Bluffs** and **Black Partridge Park** serve as open areas in Woodford County. In McLean County, there are over 50 park and recreation sites in the Bloomington/Normal Area. Other spaces are located throughout the County. Some of these include **Heyworth Centennial Park, Howard Virgin Timber Park, Moraine View State Park, West County Park, Funk's Grove** and **COMLARA Park**.

Greenways and Trails

One of the best possible resources to utilize in creating a comprehensive system of greenways and trails is the existing greenways and trails network. While there are not very many trails currently in Woodford County, the **El Paso Trail** is an example of an alternative transportation corridor in a rural municipality. The McLean County Regional Greenways Plan of 1997 laid out a scenario for a large trail system. That plan is an important resource in and of itself. However, a majority of the corridors highlighted in that plan are still only proposed. The major existing trail in McLean County is the **Constitution Trail**. The Constitution Trail is currently in four segments that stretch approximately nine miles in the Bloomington/Normal metropolitan area. Many extensions are proposed for this trail as well as throughout the County. These extensions would provide an important framework for a county-wide system of greenways and trails.

Roadways

While roadways may not be the most ideal venue for trails, they can prove useful for bicycle and pedestrian movement. Because they are linear and have connectivity to just about anywhere, roadways have an inherent transportation utility. Roadways can be useful in three ways: with a portion of right-of-way dedicated to a trail, with bike lanes on the side of road, and as bicycle safe roads.

Roadways can also carry trail designation. For example, Illinois Route 29 and Illinois Route 8 are designated as the Ronald Reagan Trail. The trail begins in Tampico, the birthplace of the former United States President, as well as Dixon, his childhood home. The trail ends at Eureka college, his alma matter. Illinois Route 29 and Illinois Route 26, along either side of the Illinois River, are designated "The Illinois River Road," a scenic byway.

Consideration of greenways and trails should take place early in the process of planning new roadways. If a new roadway is planned to utilize greenways and trails, right-of-way acquisition is more likely to be ample enough to include adequate width. Another way to add trails to the existing roadway network is to dedicate unutilized right-of-way to trails.

Adding bike lanes to city streets and other roads is an option to create bicycle connectivity to greenways, trails, open space and transit. This is not ideal in that it does not create a greenway atmosphere and it caters almost exclusively to bikers.

However, it can be a cost-efficient alternative to creating expensive greenways that may not be financially, physically, or politically feasible.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has issued the Illinois Official Bicycle Map, which displays color-coded roads based on their suitability for bicycling. Suitability is based on: traffic volumes, including truck traffic; lane widths; width of paved shoulders; and road surface type and condition. Some of the roads deemed most suitable for bicycling create connectivity to different existing and proposed greenways, trails and open spaces.

Because the selection of trails is limited, many avid bicyclists ride many miles on the rural road network. It is the belief of the Task Force that the majority of such roads are able to support both bicyclists and motorists and that roads are a viable for both recreation and transportation. Area bicylists were utilized to determine which rural roads were most suitable for bicycling.

Railroads

For many reasons, unused railroads make ideal greenways and trails. Railroad corridors are linear and often, unlike roadways, are surrounded by natural features. Rail-trails can be extremely attractive corridors with many opportunities for connectivity.

Railroad acquisition, however, can be difficult. Whether or not a railroad is in use is not always evident. There are three categories that a railroad may fall into: active, abandoned and inactive.

An active railroad is one that is currently in use by a railroad company. Railroads that are currently active are not available for conversion into a trail. In cases where there is adequate right-of-way, these corridors could be available for having trails parallel the tracks. Otherwise, the best that can be done is to consider an active corridor a distant priority.

An abandoned railroad is usually very difficult to acquire. The land along the corridor usually begins to fall into the hands of adjacent landowners soon after official abandonment. Purchasing the corridor in piecemeal fashion is a very difficult and expensive task.

The best-case scenario for creating a rail-trail is to have an unused track that has not yet been officially abandoned. In such a case, negotiations to purchase the corridor occur with only one owner, as opposed to multiple owners. Even in the case of an inactive railroad that has not been officially abandoned, acquiring a railroad corridor can be a very involved task. This is particularly the case if the corridor was originally taken forcefully from the adjacent landowners. In these cases, landowners may try to claim a right to the land. If, however, the land was acquired through outright purchase, it is easier to purchase the land from the railroad company. Even in that situation, action must be taken quickly. Adjacent landowners are able to claim the corridor 90 days after official abandonment. If that occurs, the corridor's pieces will most likely become part of a farm or a yard, which could lead to the permanent loss of a rare and important transportation and recreational resource.

In some cases a railroad company is unwilling to sell the railroad corridor on the chance that it will one day wish to resume rail service. In such a case, railbanking can be an option. Railbanking allows for placement of a trail while keeping intact the ability for a rail carrier to use the tracks for service should the opportunity arise.

There are many railroad corridors in Woodford and McLean Counties. However, there is still a reliance on rail transportation in the area. There are not many unused rail resources in Woodford and McLean Counties. Active Lines include one that

extends from Washington to the northwest corner of McLean County through Eureka, Secor, El Paso, Gridley and Chenoa along with the a line that extends from Morton to southeastern McLean County through Goodfield Congerville, Carlock, Normal, Bloomington, Downs and Le Roy. Since these lines are active, they are most likely to be considered future priorities.

Note: The Tri-County Regional Greenways and Trails Task Force does not advocate the abandonment of rail corridors. However, when railroads decide to discontinue use, the Task Force would like to work with them to preserve these corridors for future transportation uses and convert them into trails for public use. Rail corridors provide an impressive amount of space on very little land – a mere 200 acres of right-of-way provides a linear park of more than 20 miles ling. Working with railroads and special interest groups such as the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy can help preserve as many of these corridors as possible.

Figure 2: Greenway and Trail Resources: Woodford County

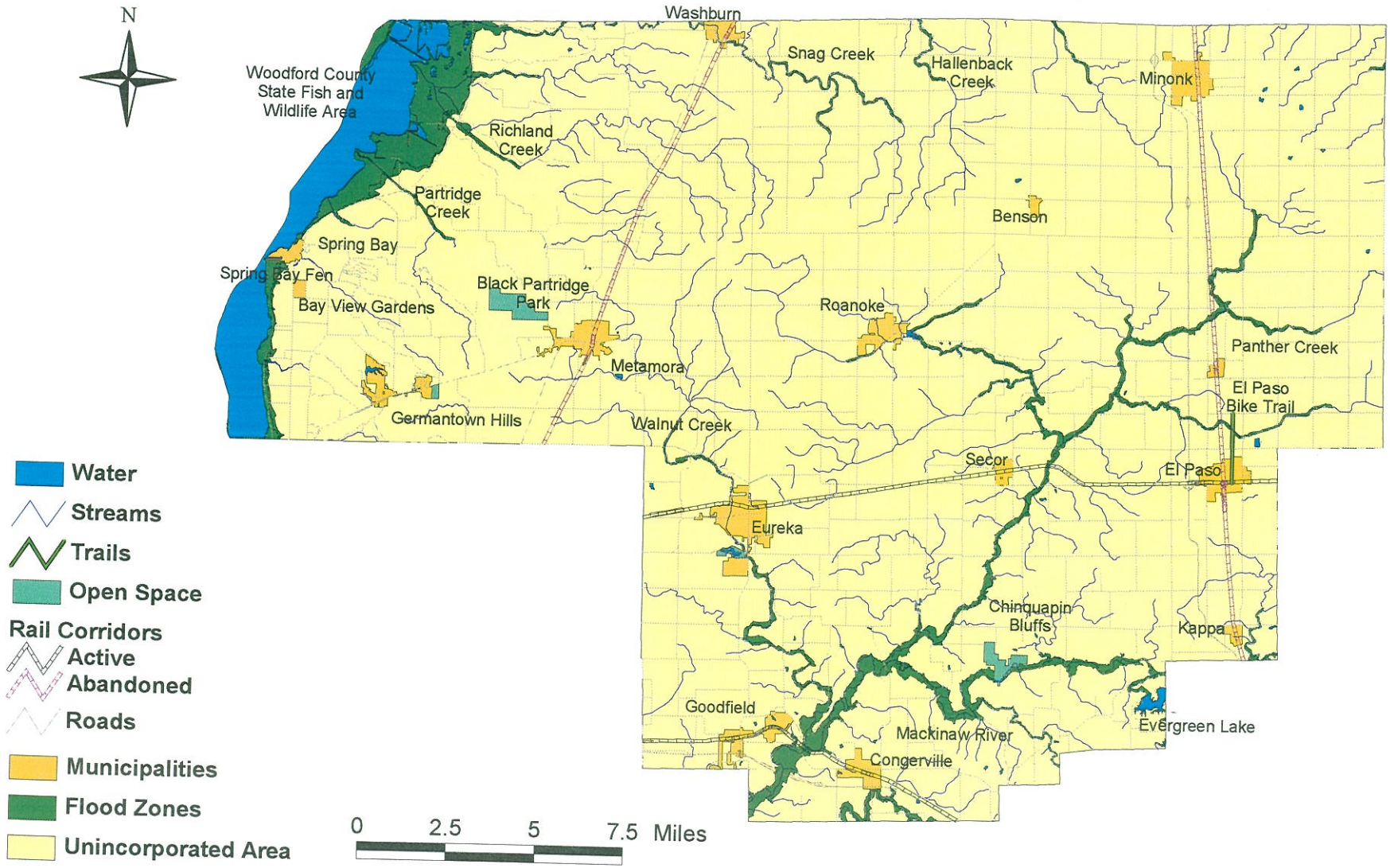
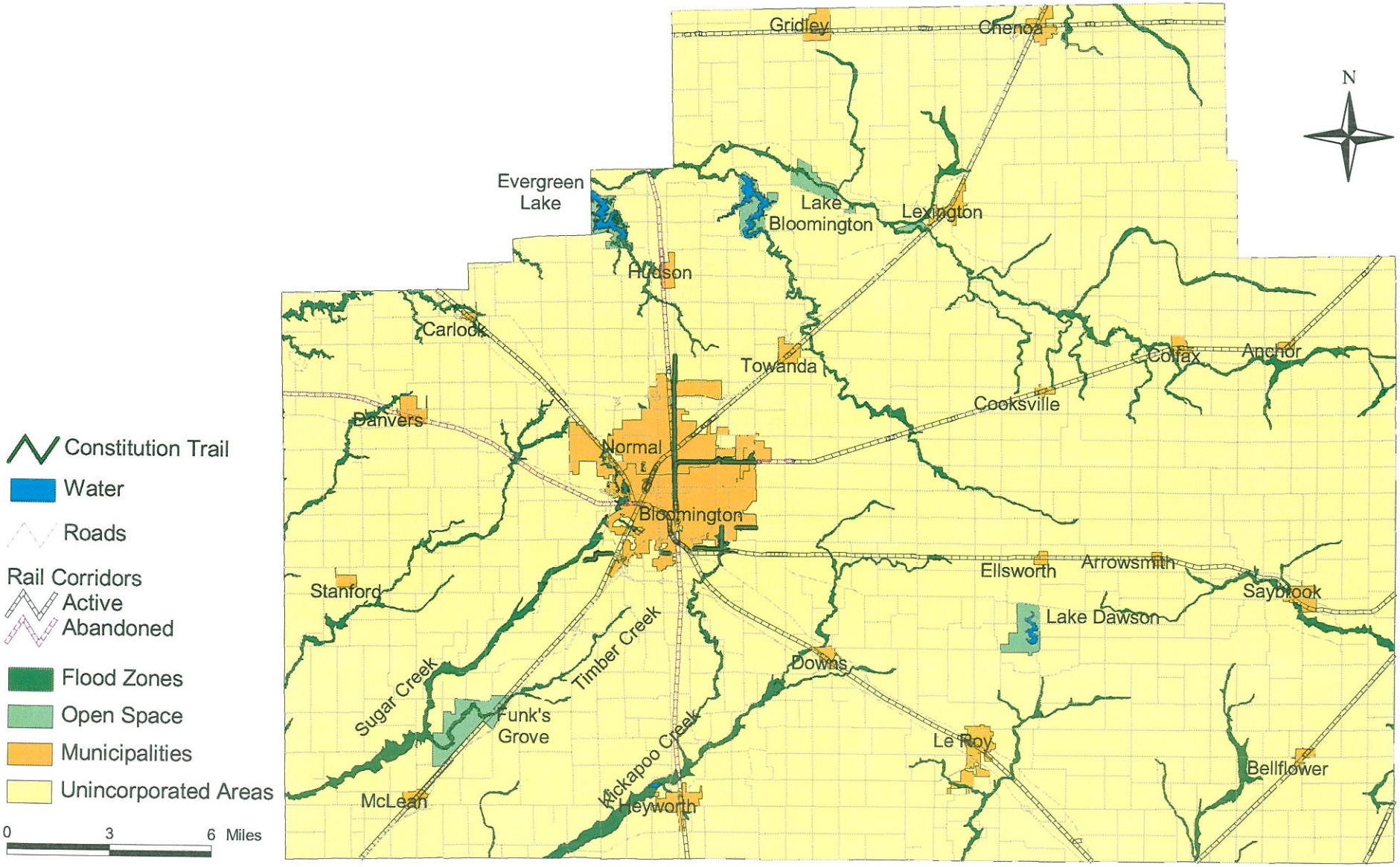


Figure 3: Greenway and Trail Resources: McLean County



5 Existing and Proposed Greenways and Trails Opportunities

The primary purpose of this plan is to develop a vision for a network of greenways and trails that can be of use to all parties interested in helping to improve upon the natural and recreational amenities that exist in Woodford and McLean Counties. This section is dedicated to the identification of important corridors that, if implemented, will help to create such improvements. Each of the greenway and trail opportunities identified can serve at least one of the following purposes: connectivity to other greenways and trails, connectivity between area landmarks, environmental protection or enhancement, recreation or alternative transportation.

In McLean County, greenways and trails that have or could have connectivity with the Tri-County area of Woodford, Tazewell and Peoria County are discussed.

Note that some these corridors have both Woodford (W) and McLean (M) identifiers. These corridors are located in each county.

The following greenways and trails are identified in Figures 4-7.

Woodford County

Woodford County is rural in nature and does not currently have an extensive array of greenway and trail opportunities. There is, however, the opportunity for connectivity between Woodford County Municipalities as well as to Tazewell County.

(W1) El Paso Bike Trail
The El Paso Bike Trail runs north for 2.5 miles from U.S. Route 24 in the center of the City to a point approximately half way to Panola. An extension to Panola could create bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between the two municipalities.

(W2) Woodford County State Fish and Wildlife Area
The Woodford County State Fish and Wildlife Area is located along the Illinois River near the northwestern corner of Woodford County. The area, open from December 15 to October 1, has many plant and animal species and is a waterfowl refuge. Along with picnicking, camping, fishing, hunting and boating, the area offers three miles of marked hiking and cross-country skiing trails.

Because of Woodford County's rural characteristics, its population centers are not located near areas that have received a great deal of greenway and trail planning. In the area of recreational trails, it is desirable to connect residents in places like Metamora with the system of greenways and trails identified in the Peoria Metro Area Greenways and Trails Plan (Metro Plan), which addresses connectivity within the urbanized areas of Peoria and Tazewell Counties.

The Mackinaw River Partnership

The Mackinaw River

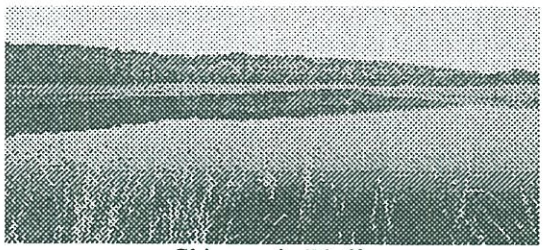
(W3/M1) Mackinaw River
The Mackinaw River is one of the Illinois River's most notable tributaries and a major

natural connection between McLean County and the Tri-County area. The River starts in Ford County before flowing across the southern tier of Woodford County within a mile of both Goodfield and Congerville. The 130-mile river then flows through Tazewell County on its way to the Illinois River.

The entire Mackinaw River Watershed, including its many tributaries, covers an area of over 744,000 acres or 1,135 square miles in six counties. Seventy-eight percent of the watershed is planted with rowcrops and small grains. The River and its surroundings support state-endangered and endangered species such as the slippershell mussel and the heart-leaf plantain.

In McLean County, the Mackinaw River is fed by such tributaries as Turkey Creek, Patton Creek, Henline Creek, Money Creek, Six-Mile Creek and Buck Creek.

(W4) Chinquapin Bluffs
The Chinquapin Bluffs surround the Mackinaw River in southern Woodford County. The Bluffs cover 736 acres of woodlands and fields and 12 different natural communities. The Red-Shouldered Hawk, Brown Creeper, River Otter and Hill's Thistle are state-threatened species that, along with other sensitive species, reside in the Chinquapin Bluffs. Within the Bluffs, which are very secluded from roads, canoeing can take place on the Mackinaw River.


The Mackinaw River Partnership

Chinquapin Bluffs

(W5/M2) Rock Creek
The Rock Creek flood zone starts near Danvers in western McLean County. In southern Woodford County, the flood zone borders Congerville as it both enters and exits the County at McLean County on its way to Tazewell County, where it flows into the Mackinaw River.

(W6) State Route 116 Trail
Talk of a bicycle and hiking trail along State Route 116 originated with the idea of connecting Germantown Hills and Metamora. However, the Route comes into Woodford County from East Peoria and could, if utilized from that point, create connectivity to the Peoria metropolitan area's system of greenways and trails. The route continues to the east and could provide access to Roanoke and Benson. From Roanoke to Benson, State Route 116 has been designated as suitable for bicycling by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). From just west of Benson, using State Route 117 and County Route 2 provides bicycle road accessibility to Minonk.

Connection from Germantown Hills to Metamora would be approximately 6 miles. A trail connection to Benson would be another 15 miles. Minonk could also have access by creating a connection to State Route 116 via State Route 251. Adding a trail connection to Minonk would necessitate approximately seven and a half to nine additional miles of trail. Each of these towns could have access to East Peoria and ultimately to Peoria with a State Route 116 trail.

This trail would run along the northern border of a property that could one day be a recreational asset. The Great Oaks Community Church is planning a 100-acre area located along the southern edge of State Route 116 and the eastern border of Germantown Hills. Much of this area would be open to public use for hiking and camping and team sports such as baseball, basketball and soccer.

(W7) Metamora and Black Partridge Park
Black Partridge Park lies to the Northwest of the Village of Metamora. The 455-acre park could be a scenic location for bicycle and pedestrian trails. Along with internal trails, the park could act as a trail link between the proposed trail along State Route 26 and the Village of Metamora, which could connect to the State Route 116 Trail with a circumferential trail. North Fork Road, County Road 1700 and Coon Creek Road could provide the route betweeb Metamora and State Route 26. These roads, which are not very heavily traveled, are very narrow and could perhaps be used as dedicated street routes. Other options for recreational connectivity for Metamora include connecting to Eureka via Mt. Zion Cemetery Road and to Washington via Nofsinger Road.

(W8) Eureka to Washburn
Connectivity from Washburn south to the intersection of State Routes 116 and 117 could be made with a trail on the right-of-way along County Highway 1. From there, State Route 117 would be an ideal corridor for a trail to Eureka.

(W9) The Washington to Metamora Blacktop
This trail would provide a connection between Metamora and Washington, which is located in Tazewell County. The connection would take place along Woodford County Highway 23, which becomes Tazewell County Highway 3. The trail would be approximately 4.5 miles in length and would enable connectivity from Metamora to Washington, and hopefully East Peoria.

(W10) State Route 89
A bicycle/hiking trail along State Route 89 would provide a connection between Metamora and Washburn, which is located at the northern border of Woodford County. The trail would be roughly ten miles in length.

(W11) State Route 26
A bicycle and hiking trail along State Route 26 would provide a corridor from East Peoria to the northern border of Woodford County Route 26 runs north along the Illinois River , crossing Bay View Gardens and Spring Bay. The Route eventually connects with Interstate 180 in Putnam County. This route also provides access to Woodford County State Fish and Wildlife Area. County Routes 25 and 19 each provide access to Germantown Hills from State Route 26.

(W12/M3) Minonk Trail
This trail would run along an abandoned rail corridor that is parallel to the eastern border of the County. The trail would bisect Minonk, Panola, El Paso and Kappa. Landowners have started to acquire land along the corridor. Some right-of-way is still intact, particularly near State Route 251 between Panola and El Paso where there is hilly terrain. In areas in which right-of-way is not usable, State Route 251 right-of-way can be considered. The McLean County Greenways Plan identified a continuation of that corridor that runs from Normal north through Hudson on its way to Woodford County.

(W13/M4) Morton – Normal Rail-Trail
This is an active rail line that, if ever available, would create an ideal connection between the Peoria area and the Bloomington-Normal area. The track runs from Morton, in Tazewell County, to Normal, in McLean County, cutting through southern Woodford County. Woodford County municipalities on the path are Goodfield and Congerville.

(W14/M5) Eureka Rail-Trail
This is an active rail line that runs from Washington, in Tazewell County, through the eastern border of McLean County and beyond. If the opportunity to create a trail arises, a connection will be made between McLean County and the Peoria area. In Woodford County, Eureka, Secor and El Paso will benefit. This rail line essentially

runs adjacent to State Route 24, which could be used to connect Washington to McLean County as well. Business 24 in Washington could be taken to State Route 24 West of Eureka, which runs to McLean County and beyond.

(W15) Eureka Lake Trail
A trail around Eureka Lake, in southern Eureka would provide excellent recreational access in the Eureka Lake area.

McLean County

McLean County produced a greenways plan in 1997. The McLean County Regional Greenways Plan identified 78 greenways, 25 of which were identified as priorities. The McLean County Greenways Coalition is currently in the process of producing an update to the Plan. Because such comprehensive greenways and trails planning has taken place in McLean County, it will be the role of this plan to highlight greenways and trails that affect the Tri-County area of Woodford, Tazewell and Peoria Counties.

Following is a list of McLean County greenways and trails that connect with Tazewell and Woodford counties and are not identified above.

Existing Connectivity

Currently, there are many natural environmental corridors in McLean County that are shared by Woodford and Tazewell Counties. Many of the County's waterways flow to the Illinois River as well as to Tazewell County.

(M6) Sugar Creek
The West Fork of Sugar Creek flows into Tazewell County from the Danvers area. The Middle Fork of Sugar Creek, also known as Kings Mill Creek Flows. from an area near the Town of Normal into Logan County where it connects to the West Fork of Sugar Creek and then the East Fork of Sugar Creek, which comes into Logan County directly from McLean County.

Potential Connectivity

Many bicyclists would like to see a bicycle route from the Bloomington/Normal metropolitan area to the Peoria metropolitan area. The potential routes, however, are limited in number as well as feasibility.

(M7) Mackinaw to McLean County Trail
This trail could be a part of a connection from Bloomington-Normal to the Rock Island Trail. In Tazewell County, this trail is meant to be a continuation of the Tremont to Mackinaw Trail. Similarly to that portion of the trail, this portion is meant to traverse the abandoned rail corridor, which would be very difficult to obtain, meaning that State Route 9 may be a more feasible route. The trail would enter McLean County and, near Danvers, would come within a mile of a bike route identified in the McLean County Greenways Plan. State Route 9 also runs to Bloomington-Normal, leaving multiple connectivity options.

The McLean County Greenways Coalition has identified the railroad right-of-way from Bloomington to Danvers as a high priority. The right-of-way west of Danvers, however, has, for the most part, fallen into the hands of private landowners.

(M8) McLean County Bicycle Routes
The McLean County Regional Greenways Plan identified a number of street bicycle routes. These identifications were meant to suggest routes that could provide access around McLean County. While these routes are not dedicated trails, they were suggested by McLean County bicyclists. Connection to these routes from Tazewell or Woodford County would enable connectivity with the Bloomington/Normal area.

Figure 4: Greenway and Trail Opportunities: Woodford County

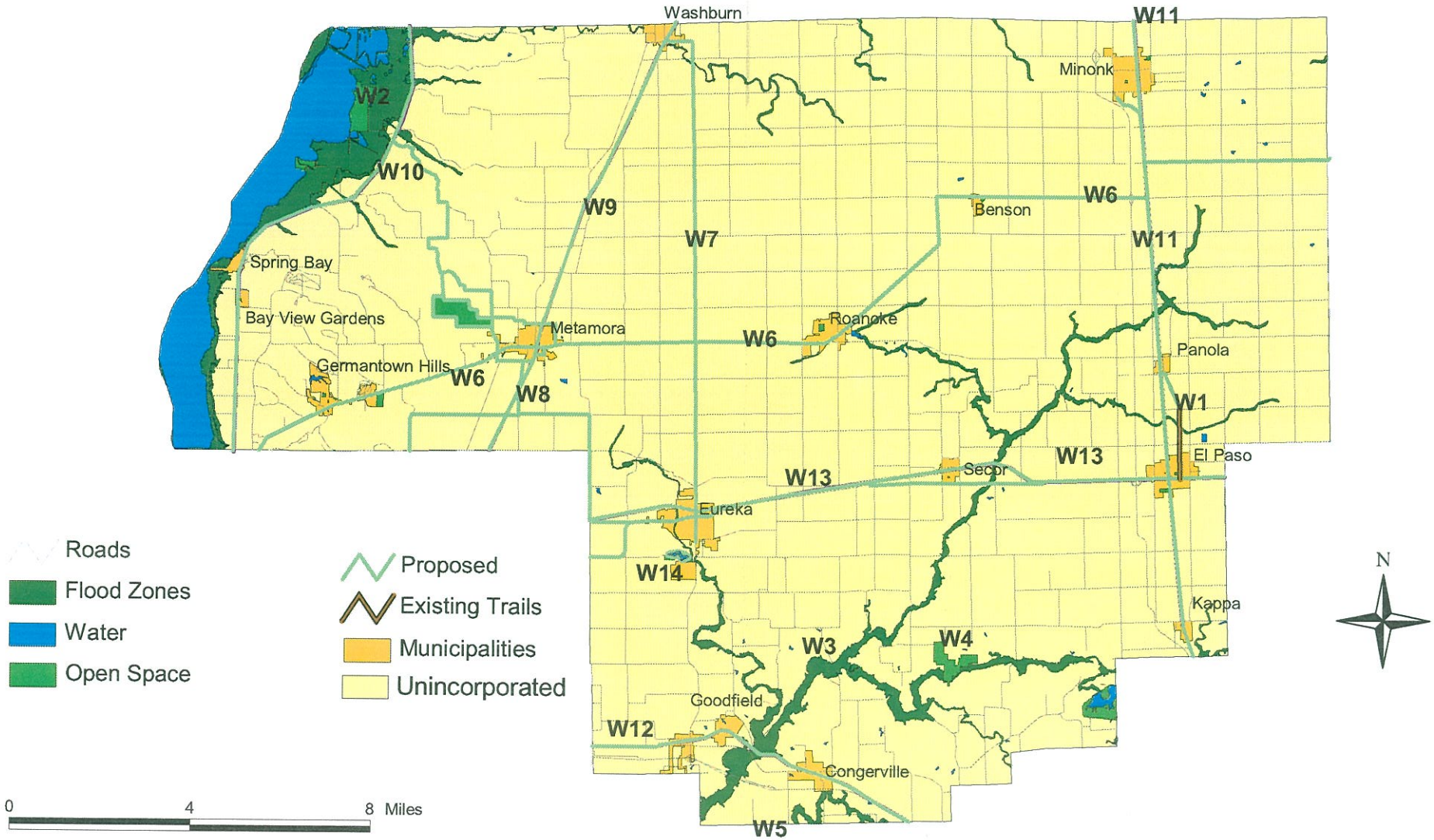


Figure 5: Greenway and Trail Opportunities: McLean and Woodford Counties

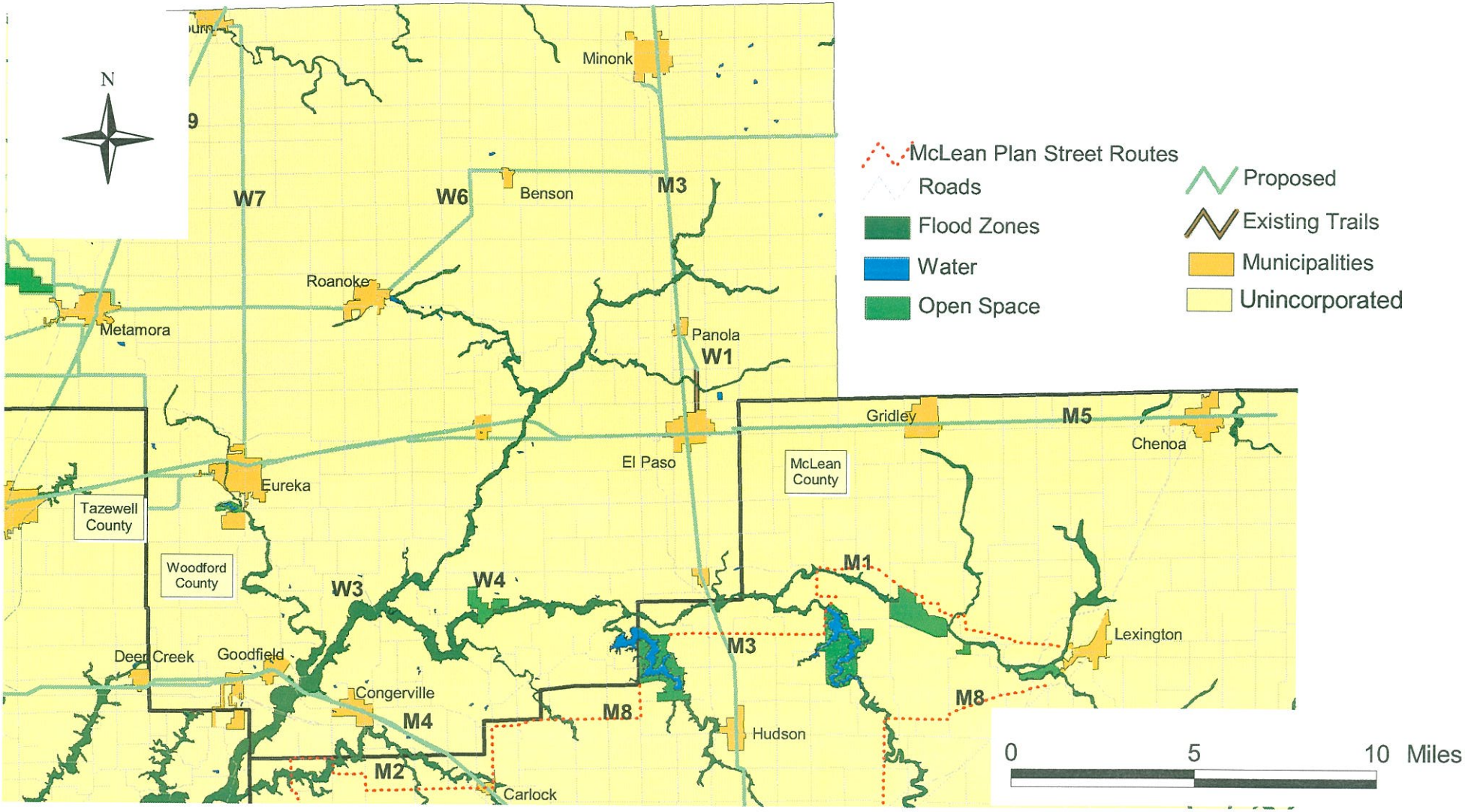
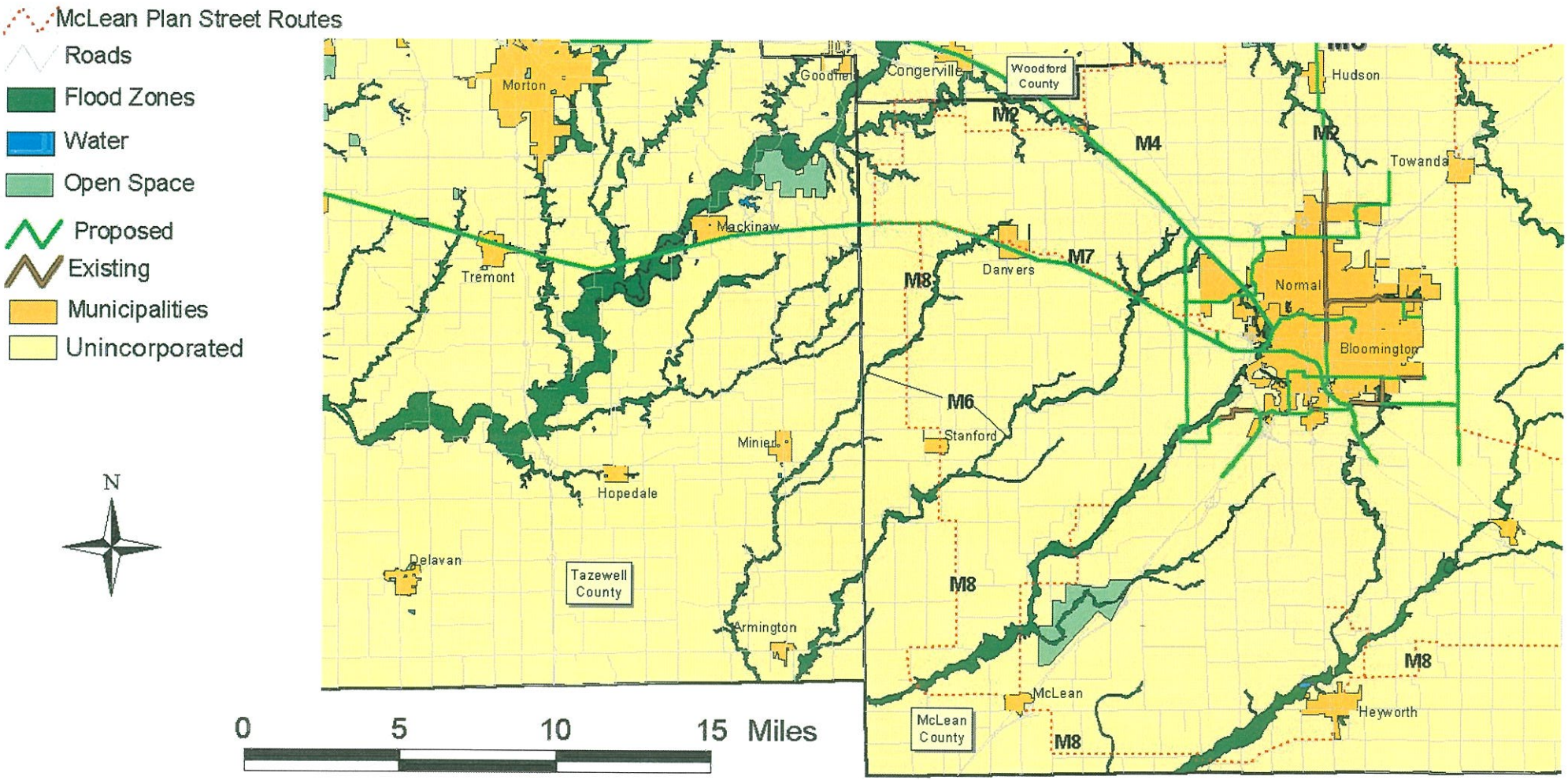


Figure 6: Greenway and Trail Opportunities: McLean and Tazewell Counties



Municipalities

While a key purpose of this plan is for the connectivity between various municipalities, it is also of great benefit for municipalities to create greenways and trails plans within their own borders. Long-distance greenways and trails are enhanced by the ability to bike and walk to many destinations in town. This can not only help to increase municipal recreational opportunities, but also business for local merchants. Examples of Municipalities that could benefit are Eureka and Metamora. In Eureka, Lake Eureka Park and an existing trail could be better accessed by residents if municipal trails were more abundant. In Metamora, Many parks, schools and downtown could be interconnected by trails, which would create stops for riders coming from Germantown Hills.

6 Bicycling on the Street Network

For the purposes of exercise, recreation and transportation, bicyclists are interested in being able to ride on roads. Keeping in mind that it would be ideal, if possible, to use most any road right-of-way to create a trail, this section discusses on-road routes that could be used for bicycling. Streets are classified in the Illinois Official Bicycle Map, produced by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Routes are classified as 1) Most suitable for bicycling, 2) Caution advised and 3) Not recommended for bicycling. These classifications are based on traffic volumes, lane widths, width of paved shoulders and road surface type and condition.

An examination of the IDOT map shows that bicycle navigation can be made between most municipalities through the use of roads that need to be used with caution. Some connections can be made entirely on those roads most suitable for bicycling. For many bicyclists, street routes are ideal for transportation and recreation. It is, however, important to note that beginning bicyclists may not be as comfortable on roads as advanced bicyclists.

Woodford County

Many Woodford County roads are navigable by bicycle. From any municipality in the County, any other can be accessed. From any municipality in the County, any other can be accessed via roads where caution is advised. Some pairs are even connected entirely by roads most suitable for bicycling. Spring Bay and Germantown Hills are so connected. The Municipalities of Washburn, Roanoke, Benson, Secor, and Minonk are interconnected by bicycle-friendly roads as are Panola, El Paso and Kappa and Congerville.

McLean County

Many McLean County roads are also navigable by bicycle. From any municipality in the County, any other can be accessed via roads where caution is advised. Many of these routes are, however, indirect.

Downs and Heyworth are mutually accessible along roads most suitable for bicycling as are McLean and Stanford. Lexington, Cooksville, Colfax, Anchor, Saybrook, Arrowsmith, Ellsworth, Bellflower, Le Roy and Downs are mutually accessible to each other on roads most suitable for bicycling.

Bloomington/Normal

Street bicycling to the Bloomington/Normal area can be done from any municipality in McLean and Woodford Counties. Some routes, however, are indirect.

Cross-County Accessibility

Tazewell County

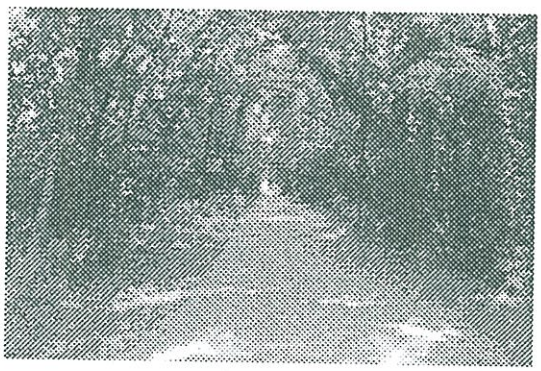
Connectivity to Tazewell County from both Woodford and McLean Counties is possible along streets that should be ridden with caution. This provides access throughout Tazewell County including the urbanized area, which has a burgeoning network of trails and will eventually provide access to Peoria and the Pimiteoui/Rock Island Trail.

Metro Connectivity: The Constitution Trail to the River Trail of Illinois

Bicycle connectivity between the Bloomington/Normal area and the Peoria area is not likely to come in the form of a majestic trail in the near future. Therefore, the road network will important for this connection. The Constitution Trail is able to create connectivity throughout Bloomington and Normal. The River Trail of Illinois will

soon provide connectivity from Morton, through East Peoria across the Illinois River to Peoria and the Pimiteoui/Rock Island Trail. There are dozens of possible street routes that can bring people from Bloomington/Normal to Morton, Washington and Pekin, each of which are planning to connect to Peoria.

An example of such a route would start near the northern end of the Constitution Trail and travel east along Route 1800 North to Davners. From Danvers, Runyon Road and Fast Street will access Mackinaw. Northwest from Mackinaw, Deemack Road, Queenwood Road, Tennessee Road and Jefferson Street can be utilized to access Morton. This route was provided by an experienced bicyclist. Caution should be used when bicycling on the road network.



The City of Bloomington

State of Illinois Bicycle Maps are available from the Illinois Department of Transportation. The maps are divided into nine districts:
District 1: Chicago area
District 2: DeKalb, Rockford, Quad Cities
District 3: Kankakee, Bloomington/Normal
District 4: Peoria, Macomb, Galesburg
District 5: Champaign, Decatur (Woodford and McLean Counties)
District 6: Springfield
District 7: Effingham, Mt. Vernon
District 8: East St. Louis
District 9: Carbondale

To order a map for the desired area of the State, the specific district should be requested. Requests should be sent to:

Illinois Department of Transportation
Map Sales, Room 121
2300 S. Dirksen Pkwy.,
Springfield, IL 62764-0834

IDOT's website has order forms on line at www.dot.state.il.us/bikemap/bikehome.htm.

Attached to this plan is a map depicting routes the best bicycle routes in the rural parts of Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford Counties as identified by member of the Illinois Valley Wheelm'n a bicycle club based in Peoria. This map depicts what members view as 1) good roads for bicycling, 2) "bad" roads for bicycling and 3) roads that are "good" for bicycling by experienced riders.

The Illinois Valley Wheelm'n can be contacted at the following:

Illinois Valley Wheelm'n
6518 N. Sheridan Rd., Ste 2
Peoria, IL 61614-2933

www.geocities.com/colosseum/field/6055/

Illinois Department of Transportation

7 Opportunities Beyond the Study Area

The Illinois and Other Rivers

The Illinois River is the most recognized natural feature in Central Illinois. The River, which makes up the western border of Woodford County, is experiencing problems due to increases in siltation. Conservation-2000 is taking large steps toward cleaning up the Illinois River. However statewide storm water control is needed to assure a strong, ecologically healthy river in the future.

For numerous reasons riverfront development is common among communities along the River. The Regional Greenways and Trails Task Force recommends that all communities along the River and its tributaries create greenway space on its banks to provide citizen enjoyment and to buffer the River from potentially harmful uses. Greenways can be an integral part of protecting the Illinois River watershed by providing flood control, storm water management, stream bank stabilization and preservation of the ecosystem. Greenway filter strips along the upstream tributaries will protect and improve water quality. Control of erosion and sedimentation will be crucial to saving the Illinois River's valuable resources. Shoreline protection in conjunction with feeder tributaries can reduce runoff. Vegetation along streams and waterways promotes clean air and water by restoring the watershed's natural process. Consequently, open space and scenic vistas are developed. Funding opportunities can be combined to help solve the problems of the Illinois River watershed.

The Grand Illinois Trail

This plan has made references to trying to connect with the Grand Illinois Trail. The reason for this is that connection to the grand Illinois trail provides access to much of northern Illinois. The entire trail, with the exception of some northern portions, is either existing or under development. Once those sections are complete, the trail will provide access from Bureau County (the closest portion of the trail to the study area) to such places as the Quad Cities, Geneseo, Rock Falls Ottawa, Morris, Joliet, Chicago, Aurora, Wheaton and Waukegan. The 475-mile trail will provide recreational connectivity from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River.

The southern portion of the Grand Illinois Trail is a link of the American Discovery Trail, which traverses the nation from Cape Henlopen State Park in Delaware to Point Reyes National Seashore near San Francisco. The Hennepin Canal and I & M Canal State Trails, the proposed Kaskaskia-Alliance Trail and Old Plank Road Trail are all part of the American Discovery Trail.

The Peoria and Tazewell County Unurbanized Greenways and Trails Plan

Simultaneous to the release of this plan is a similar plan for Peoria and Tazewell Counties. The Plan lists a number of greenways and trails opportunities throughout the planning area. Other Greenways and Trails Plans that have been created recently in Illinois include the Whiteside County Greenway and Trail Plan; the Final Champaign County Regional Natureways, Bikeways, and Trails (NBT) Plan; the Decatur Metro Area Greenway Plan; and the Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources

The Grand Illinois Trail

8 Implementation and Funding

Planning is merely one early step toward creating a comprehensive system of greenways and trails. This plan is simply a guidebook that is best used for the purposes of education and coordination. Implementing the list of corridors this document provides is a long and sometimes tedious process that requires cooperation among groups, tenacity in working towards goals and endurance in dealing with long time tables. Another important factor in the success of implementation is the knowledge of available funding. There are plenty of greenways and trails funding sources available, but agencies need to know what they are and how to secure them.

Implementation

Implementing greenways and trails is a team effort. Federal government, state government, local government, citizens, special interest groups, land owners and developers are entities that can make individual greenways and trails a reality. It is the role of the Tri-County Regional Greenways and Trails Task Force to act as an information hub that can bring the key entities together so that a common goal and vision can be established. Because the Task Force does not have the ability to own and maintain greenways and trails, commitment to acquire and maintain must come from local entities. There are many implementation strategies that can help turn much of this plan into a reality.

As a group made up of people with a strong interest in greenway and trail implementation, the Task Force needs to make the early pushes that bring the implementation of individual greenways and trails to the table. Because this group is made up of individuals from state and local governments and not-for-profit organizations as well as private citizens, it is an appropriate forum to gather information, obtain broad support, inform local entities of their funding options, and encourage greenways and trails planning to play a role in many activities.

Because of its centralized position, the Task Force can also play a role in creating intergovernmental coordination and cooperation. Many greenways and trails pass through multiple jurisdictions. It is imperative that the Task Force garner support from each. If any entity is not a part of a supportive intergovernmental coalition, implementation may be jeopardized. For example, a potential rail-trail may pass through four municipalities, three townships and two counties. If any of these nine governmental units has not been contacted to play a role in the implementation process, they are more susceptible to be swayed by trail opponents. Losing the support of a county, municipality or township increases the likelihood that implementation efforts will fail.

The Task Force was created under the auspices of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC). As the MPO for the Peoria urbanized area, TCRPC is responsible for the allocation of surface transportation funds throughout the area. TCRPC staff is, therefore, knowledgeable about funding requirements as they relate to projects that provide alternatives to the automobile.

The Task Force and Local Government

The Task Force should encourage local units of government to lend official support to greenways and trails. Counties, municipalities and park districts should be encouraged to adopt this plan and to use it to help develop comprehensive plans, land use plans, transportation plans and capital improvement plans. Adoption of the plan will increase the likelihood of greenways and trails consideration in development projects.

This plan should be used to educate local governments on the importance of planning for greenways and trails early. This will give them the opportunity to utilize long range plans, zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations that will assure that greenways and trails are considered in all types of development. Strict enforcement of regulations and dedication requirements should be encouraged. It is of particular importance that greenways and trails be considered early in road construction and improvement projects. The planning phases of such projects provide an excellent opportunity to utilize right-of-way for greenways and trails, an opportunity that is significantly diminished after completion.

The Task Force and State and Federal Government

The Task Force should maintain relationships with state and federal government in order to have an awareness of what types of funding options are available from these entities. The Task Force should also encourage state and federal government to increase support for greenways and trails by increasing funding, creating comprehensive greenways and trails programs and providing incentives for local agencies that implement greenways and trails. The Task Force, along with local agencies should utilize technical assistance that the state can provide.

The Task Force and Other Groups

Public awareness can lead to public support. Therefore, public education can be an important tool in creating support for greenways and trails projects. Because of its broad membership and its knowledge and resources, the Task Force can be the impetus for a greenways and trails public education movement.

The Task Force should work with the private sector. There are many private sector funding options that can be utilized to bring planned greenways and trails to fruition. Oftentimes, greenways may be in the hands of private landowners. The Task Force should encourage good stewardship practices for greenways located on private property. Landowners should also be encouraged to set aside land for the development of conservation easements. The Task Force should also work with developers to assure that developments are contributing to greenway, trail and open space needs of the community.

The Task Force should work with user, advocacy and special interest groups. These groups usually have a particular interest such as bicycling, wildlife, or water quality. Because of their narrow focus, they are well informed and able to form an interdependent relationship with a group like the Task Force.

Funding Opportunities

There are plenty of greenways and trails funding opportunities from plenty of different sources. The key to obtaining these sources is to be aware that they exist and what requirements they have. Funding can come from the federal government, state government, local government or private sources.

Federal Funding Sources

The United States Department of Transportation provides funding for greenways and trails via the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). This includes grants for enhancement projects such as bicycle and pedestrian trails. Other federal agencies that could provide funding include: the National Park Service (land and water conservation grants), the Environmental Protection Agency (water quality grants), the Department of Agriculture – U.S. Forest Service (erosion control project grants) and the U.S. Army Corps of engineers (flood control and wetland restoration.

State Funding Sources

This document was sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR),

which has more greenways and trails funding opportunities than any other source that the Tri-County area has access to. Some of the funding programs sponsored by IDNR include the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), the Snowmobile Grant Program, the Snowmobile Trail Establishment Fund, the Boat Access Area Development Program, the Bicycle Path Grant Program, the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Fund (OSLAD), the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the Open Lands Trust Program (OLT), the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation Trails Program. Also, the Illinois Department of Transportation is in charge of administering ISTEA enhancement funds to the local communities.

Many State funding programs are annual and can be applied for each winter. Information can be obtained at:

IL Department of Natural Resources
Division of Grant Administration
Lincoln Tower Plaza
524 South Second Street
Springfield, IL 62701-1787

PH: (217) 782-7481
E-mail: grants@dnrmail.state.il.us
FAX: (217) 782-9599

Local Funding Sources
Municipalities and park districts often provide matching dollars to state and local grants. These agencies are generally responsible for maintaining local greenways. Other units of government can play a key role in greenway and trail development by sponsoring community and promotional events. The ability to receive funding directly relates to the successfulness of the project

Private Funding Sources
Public-private partnerships are important to planning greenways and trails and require a contribution from everyone involved. Obtaining donations from private companies that have an interest in the community is an innovative way to finance greenways. This is evident in Caterpillar's support of riverfront development within the City of Peoria and McDonalds' contribution to trails in the City of Washington. Neighborhood associations, non-profit groups, user groups, foundations and individual donors are other sources that can be involved. Organizations and clubs can hold special event fund raisers to fund greenway and trail projects. Sponsorship opportunities also can be used as a tool to receive funding. Rails-to-Trails, the American Greenways Program, Lakeview Wilds, Western Avenue Greenway and Friends of the Rock Island Trail are some known groups that are involved with greenways and trails. Groups like these are typically involved in stewardship of the land and maintenance of greenways through volunteer efforts.

9 Recommendations and Next Steps

The creators of this plan hope that local government agencies adopt it and utilize it in their land use and transportation project decisions. To implement a well-connected regional network of greenways and trails, it is necessary to have the support and commitment of local agencies that are willing to work together toward the benefit of the entire region.

A regional network of greenways and trails cannot be successfully created without citizen support. Local agencies must be sensitive to some public resistance to the greenways movement. They must respect the right and concerns of landowners who are unwilling to use their property as a greenway because of the potential adverse impact from public use. While citizens may lack initial support for greenways and trails projects, education on the benefits greenways and trails can have to recreation, transportation and the environment can help to increase support.

Recommendations

To maximize the utility of the greenways and trails system in Woodford and McLean Counties, it is recommended that local governmental agencies utilize this plan in all aspects of transportation and land use planning. Local governments should:

- Consider greenways and trails in planning for road and highway projects
- Create working relationships with railroad companies to increase the ability to implement rail-trail projects
- Utilize this plan and preserve these natural and environment corridors when making development decisions
- Work with property owners and encourage them to preserve sensitive areas in their natural state. If development is eminent, steps should be taken to preserve the character f the area and to protect lower watershed properties as much as possible.
- Play an active role in the Task Force
- Educate citizens about the benefits of greenways and trails.

Task Force: Next Steps

During the process of creating the greenways plan for the Unurbanized area of Woodford and McLean Counties, most of the existing and potential greenways and trails projects were identified. The ultimate goal in preparing a plan is to see that plan come to fruition. If Woodford and McLean Counties are to realize this goal, the Task Force must cooperate, not only locally, but with state and federal agencies. These agencies provide a majority of the grant funding for greenways and trails projects. Difficult decision must be made regarding individual projects and creating priority lists for the region. It is important to realize that priorities must be made for opportunities to remain. In order to assure continued success in greenways and trails planning:

- The Tri-County Regional Greenways and Trails Task Force should meet on a regular basis as a formal subcommittee of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. The Task Force's mission will be the promotion of this plan along with the Metro Plan and the Peoria and Tazewell County Unurbanized Greenways and Trails Plan.
- The Task Force should recommend projects on an annual basis. The Task Force should work with state and federal officials and their schedules to develop an annual priority list. This list will be supported by one voice, which will enhance its chances of being funded.
- The Task Force should update the Woodford and McLean County Unurbanized Greenways and Trails Plan as needed. It is recognized that projects identified in the Plan will change or become unfeasible and new projects will arise. This process shall occur when the Task Force deems it necessary.

10 Information Sources

There are many organizations that have an interest in and information about greenways and trails in Woodford and McLean Counties. The following is a list of places that may be of assistance to those in search of information on greenways and trails.

Heartland Water Resources
416 Main Street, Suite 828
Peoria, IL 61602-1116
637-5253

Heart of Illinois Sierra Club
P.O. Box 3593
Peoria, IL 61614

Pimiteoui Trail Association
3016 N. Western Avenue
Peoria, IL 61604

Illinois Valley Striders
700 West Main Street
Peoria, IL 61606

Mackinaw Canoe Club
257-259 E. Washington Street
East Peoria, IL 61611

Illinois Valley Wheelm'n
6518 North Sheridan Road
Peoria, IL 61614

Illinois Department of Transportation
District 3
700 E. North Dr.
Ottawa, IL 61530

Department of Natural Resources
524 South Second Street
Springfield, IL 62706
217-782-3715

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
411 Hamilton Boulevard, Suite 2001
Peoria, IL 61602

McLean County Regional Planning Commission
211 W. Jefferson St.
Bloomington, IL 61701
828-4331

Friends of the Rock Island Trail
C/O George Burrier
Attorney at Law
257 East Washington Street
East Peoria, IL

Lakeview Wilds
331 W. Ivy Lane
Peoria, IL 61615

Mackinaw River Partnership
(309) 467-4662
www.mackinawriver.org

11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and Openlands Project. 1992. *Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan*. Chicago, IL.

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. 1997. *Peoria Metro Area Greenways and Trails Plan*. Peoria, IL.

McLean County Regional Planning Commission. 1997. McLean County Regional Greenways Plan. Bloomington, IL.

Decatur Metro Area Greenway Coalition. 1998. *Decatur Metro Area Greenway Plan*. Decatur, IL.

Whiteside Greenway and Trails Coalition. 1999. *Whiteside County Regional Greenway and Trails Plan*. Dixon, IL.

Champaign County Regional Planning Commission. 1999. *Final Champaign County Regional Natureways, Bikeways, and Trails (NBT) Plan*. Urbana, IL.

Illinois Department of Transportation. *Illinois Official Bicycle Map*. Springfield, IL.

Illinois Department of Transportation Website. http://www.dot.state.il.us

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1996. *Illinois Geographic Information System*, Volumes I and II. Springfield, IL.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2000. Jubilee College State Park. Springfield, IL.

Peoria County Land Use Plan. 1992

Peoria Heritage Trail Map

Peoria Pimiteoui Projects, Inc. Peoria' Old galena Trail & Coach Roads. Peoria, IL

http://www.mackinawriver.org accessed December 18, 2000 and December 28, 2000

http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/parks/region1.htm Accessed January 4, 2001

http://peoriatrader.com/wildlife/ accessed January 4, 2001

Getting Their Feet Wet. Peoria Journal Star. Saturday, May 19. 2001. Page A1.

The Nature Conservancy