

Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan



Natural Land Institute

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Introduction

The vision for greenway plans in Illinois was formed during the Governor's Workshop on Greenways and Trails held in Springfield in May of 1995. The *Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan* is one of a series of plans for Illinois municipalities that identifies and promotes greenways.

This document begins with a definition of a greenway, followed by a list of benefits and opportunities provided by a greenways system. A description outlines the relationship of the *Grand Illinois Trail Plan* with the *Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan*. A review of existing plans from the Rockford Park District and the Belvidere Park District follows. Proposed actions for implementing this plan are included.

This report also contains an inventory of open space and natural areas in Boone and Winnebago Counties. All parks, forest preserves, recreation trails, and natural areas are listed as well as some private recreation areas, rivers, and streams. Many of the small neighborhood parks and playgrounds are not identified on the *Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan Map* but are listed on this inventory.

If the scale of the map had allowed us to put a green dot on each of the park and playground sites, there would be a vast system of possible linkages due to the efforts of the Rockford Park District throughout the city of Rockford.

Since Rock Cut State Park is the largest publicly-owned area in the Boone and Winnebago Region, a page of information describing the park is included. Maps of Bell Bowl Prairie and Bur Oak Valley are included as examples of excellent natural areas.

Suggestions are provided regarding methods of creating greenways for future generations, as well as advice on how to encourage community governments to protect and preserve existing natural resources. Methods of implementation and steps necessary to create a community trail or greenway are reprinted from an article titled "Parks and Recreation" by special permission of the National Recreation and Parks Association.

The *Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan* is a vision of the heritage we can pass on to future generations.



Examples of greenways: the Long Prairie Trail and the Piscasaw Creek, both in Boone County, Illinois.

Part I: Greenways

Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan

The *Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan* is an interconnected region-wide network of linear open spaces that will provide many benefits to northern Illinois: environmental, recreational, economic, aesthetic, and transportation via trails and walkways. Thus the regional greenway network will be a critical component of our regional open space "infrastructure."

The plan is directed toward local, regional, state, and federal open space and environmental agencies and jurisdictions. It is also intended to be used by other local officials whose decisions could facilitate implementation of the plan. Finally, it is directed to all those private sector individuals and organizations whose support is needed to provide a better environment and higher quality of life in northern Illinois.

This plan serves to:

- Create a vision of a regional greenway network and provide a framework for coordinated greenway and trail preservation and development.
- Assist implementing and funding agencies in allocating resources in support of the plan.
- Initiate a continuing forum for discussion and resolution of greenway issues among governmental jurisdictions and the private sector.
- Provide a basis for coordinating transportation, water quality, storm and flood water, and other programs with existing and proposed greenways to advance greenway preservation and reduce conflicts with other development activities.
- Increase the level of understanding regarding the importance and value of greenways and encourage stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

The Greenways Plan is an important element for planning for future growth in northern Illinois. It can play an important role in preserving resources and providing recreational opportunities in all parts of the region, including areas that are likely to be developed in the future. However, the Greenways Plan must be used in conjunction with other growth management tools in order to provide the best possible future land use pattern.

This Greenways Plan can set a course of action to preserve greenways in advance of future development in growth areas.

A Vision

Edward T. McMahon, director of the Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program, remarked at the Governor's Workshop on Greenways and Trails in May, 1995, "Growth is inevitable. The destruction of community character and natural resources that so often accompanies growth is not. No community will retain its special qualities by accident. Without exception, those places in this country that have successfully protected their uniqueness – whether natural or man-made – are those places that have used vision, planning, and management to protect their special characteristics. To work, a community's vision must accommodate change and development as well as conservation and environmental protection."

Americans Outdoors: The Legacy, The Challenge, the report of the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors (1987), placed heavy emphasis on greenways and trails as the vision for outdoor recreation's future. The report states, "Here's what greenways can do for us, and for future generations:

- Provide Americans with access to open spaces and wildlands ...
- Conserve elements of the great American landscape ...
- Build partnerships among private enterprise, landowners, and local governments and groups ...
- Encourage local pride and celebration ...
- Diversify and strengthen local economies and lifestyles ... and
- Link urban and rural areas"

Definition

Greenways are green passageways, corridors of open land that join existing open spaces. Like arteries linking vital organs, greenways connect parks, forest preserves, wetlands, cultural and historic sites, and communities. Greenways provide an opportunity for the natural circulation of plants and animals from one wildlife sanctuary to another. Some, though not all, greenways are trails that allow humans passage into and through the natural world. Many of Illinois'

greenways border waterways, railroads, wetlands, or urban boulevard systems, providing long ribbons of open space.

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 natural diversity, while others are purely recreational.

Opportunities to create more connections throughout Illinois are abundant. Each greenway opportunity will provide a multitude of benefits:

- Greenways improve a neighborhood's aesthetic and natural appeal.
- They offer low-cost protection against flooding.
- They protect critical habitat and enhance water and air quality.
- Greenways create recreational opportunities and pathways for bicycle commuters.
- They promote environmental awareness.
- They encourage and enhance long-range economic development, and ...
- They are inexpensive.
- Most importantly, they prove Illinois' commitment to the environment and to the enhancement of Illinoisans' quality of life.

Greenways provide such benefits as:

- Protecting ecologically sensitive or endangered land and providing important connecting links among natural areas.
- Enhancing community quality of life and creating a greater community sense of place.
- Easing transportation demands by providing a route for healthier, more ecological forms of transportation like walking and bicycling.
- Bringing economic benefits, such as increased property values and tourism revenues at little additional public service cost.

A variety of public agencies and private organizations in Boone and Winnebago Counties are involved in developing and protecting greenways, although they may not always call them *greenways*. These greenways include parks, forest preserves, bike paths, and nature preserves. Each organization has its own goals, strategies, and timing. Given the pace of growth and development within the region, a comprehensive strategic plan is needed to coordinate efforts among the various groups and create a shared vision of a regional greenways network.

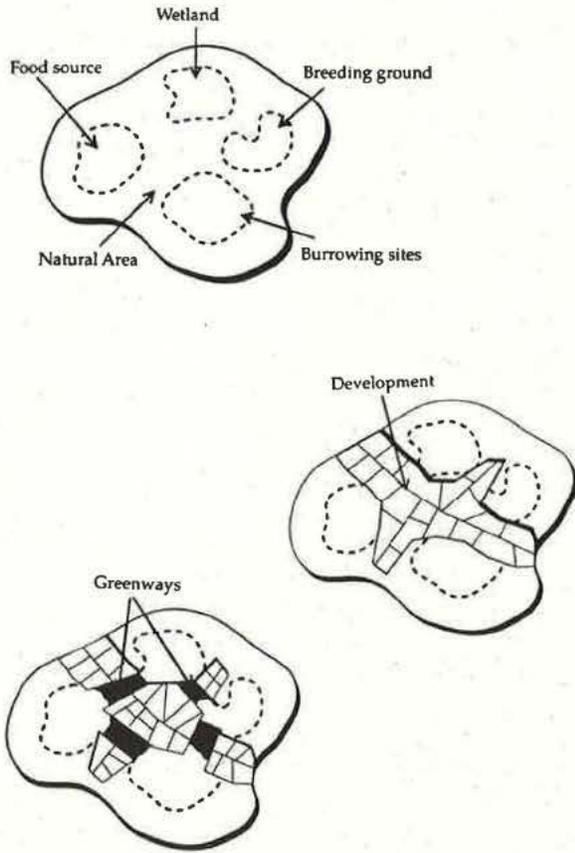
Environmental Fragmentation Degrades Greenway Resources

Less than one percent of Illinois' native habitat remains, and less than five percent of the original wetland areas still exist. Protection of these remaining resources is, therefore, critical. Wetlands and stream corridors contain many of these remaining areas and offer potential for future restoration. These areas are important as habitat for terrestrial and aquatic species, including endangered and threatened species, and also provide flood and stormwater management and water quality improvement.

Fragmentation of our natural environment has reduced the continuity necessary for the migration and propagation of plant and animal species. Fragmentation has also increased the "edge" of habitat areas, further exposing plants and animals to the impacts of urban development.

Storm and floodwater management problems result from inadequate stormwater retention. Encroachment of development upon floodplains creates demand for immediate, high-engineered solutions that are expensive and can result in channelization of segments of streams. Greenways can serve as storm and floodwater conduits that contribute to the stability of the natural environment.

Isolation from habitat: The figure on the following page depicts a theoretical area of natural land interspersed with habitats (dotted areas) that a species might use regularly. In the next, a development has left the important habitat intact, but has prevented animals from utilizing it. Connecting habitat areas with greenways, as in the final figure, gives these species greater access to the habitat they require.



Source: "How Greenways Work: A Handbook on Ecology" published by Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, National Park Service.

The greenway plan is neither a regional bikeway plan nor a comprehensive trail plan. While trails and bikeways may be developed to add recreational benefits to greenways, other trail and bikeway projects not reflected in this plan may be worthy of funding support because they provide local benefits or because they provide recreational or transportation benefits outside of the greenway network.

The ultimate goal, of course, is to create a linked network of parks and greenways that run throughout the region. The more immediate goal is to encourage decision-makers to adopt this greenways vision and make decisions within their respective jurisdictions that will bring it to life. With cooperation between state agencies, municipalities and counties, townships and villages, park districts, developers, and private citizens, this vision can grow into a ribbon of green that will weave its way throughout the region.

To ensure success, greenway owners and managers need to cooperate to develop consistent and mutually supportive standards and operating procedures for greenways.

Floodplain regulations, now widely adopted should be fully enforced by municipalities. Preferably such regulations will limit floodplains to open space uses and will not allow alteration of the existing floodways. No development should be permitted within the floodway.

Counties and municipalities need to adopt regulations that implement standards and procedures for floodplain protection, stream and wetland protection, stormwater management, soil erosion, and sediment control.

It is imperative that counties and municipalities require that landowners and developers follow the soil and water conservation standard practices and any erosion control ordinances to limit nonpoint sources of water pollution.

County and municipal regulations and guidelines should be reviewed and modified as necessary to encourage the use of native plant materials in greenways.

State of Illinois Plan

In the *Illinois State Trails Plan* dated May 1, 1995, the Department of Natural Resources encourages metropolitan greenway and trail planning. The Department's role will be to facilitate active, self-sustaining trails and greenways programs in Illinois' metropolitan areas. The role of the Department will not be to conduct detailed trails planning in the state's metropolitan areas. State-level planning is inappropriate. Each area is unique and has on-going local and regional planning that can better take into account local and regional conditions and priorities and can better integrate trails with related open space, natural resource, infrastructure, and other issues. More importantly, Department activity cannot replace the will to embark on a local long-term greenways and planning effort.

Where such plans and programs already exist, e.g. northeastern Illinois, the Department will assist with implementation of regional trails and greenways plans through existing grant programs, technical assistance, and other actions. Once these plans are completed and citizen support for them is obtained, the

Department's grant programs are available to help implement the plans.

During the 1960's, abandoned railroad corridors provided an alternative to trails within traditional sites. Bike trails within railroad rights-of-way were initiated in Illinois and other states. Railroad beds, trestles, and bridges are easily adapted for bicycle use. Abandoned railroad corridors can be converted to long-distance trails, linear parks, or greenways. Historic canal rights-of-way and river corridor parks are other greenways suitable for bike trails.

Of growing interest to trail enthusiasts is the long-distance interregional trail offering opportunities for multi-day trips. Many states are exploring the potential of linking state and local trails into interregional trails. In Illinois, the greatest potential for this type of trail is in northern Illinois where the majority of existing trails are found and where most trail users reside. (See Map 1) As trail development proceeds in Illinois, other networks will evolve that can be linked to provide additional interregional trail opportunities.

The proposed Grand Illinois Trail will provide a unique opportunity for the majority of the state's residents to ride or walk from the Lake Michigan shoreline in the Chicago metropolitan area, travel a southern or northern east-west route across northern Illinois to the Mississippi River corridor, and then return to Chicago on the other route. (See Map 2)

Review of Existing Local Plans

Founded in 1909, the Rockford Park District was essentially a land-only park system and performed this stewardship role admirably. Land acquisition and facility development were the focus.

Early in the 1950's, some community leaders and citizens felt it was not enough to have just outstanding parks, but shared a vision to offer year around recreation programs and activities for all ages throughout the community. Tremendous growth in recreational facilities has occurred, and with those facilities came new programs. Most of the projects were created and developed through cooperative partnerships. Recreational opportunities are extensive with 185 neighborhood parks, fine golf courses, and several miles of winding recreational paths.

In 1991, a *Boone County Comprehensive Plan* was adopted which recommended that the *Kishwaukee*

Riverfront Plan be implemented. Two new community parks and three new neighborhood parks were recommended. This Comprehensive Plan did not indicate a time frame for the development of residential areas, but seven years later we can observe new and expanding communities all around the city of Belvidere. The plan recommended that areas immediately adjacent to Belvidere should be developed at much higher densities than the surrounding rural areas.

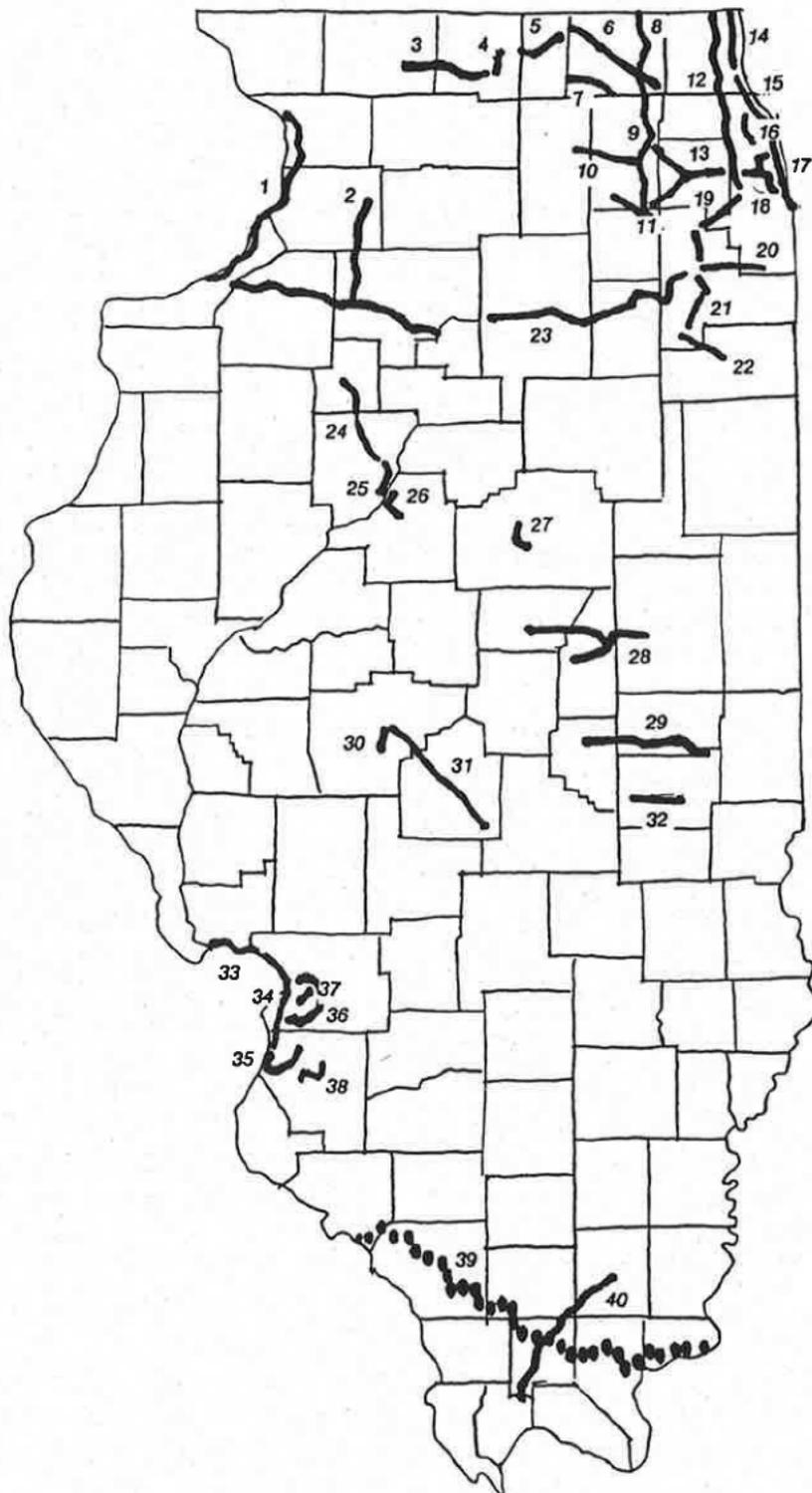
The primary recommendation to the Belvidere Park District was to continue to pursue additional holdings along the Kishwaukee Riverfront, northwest of Belvidere between Route 76 and U.S. Business Route 20; north of Belvidere between McKinley Road and Poplar Grove Road, south of Squaw Prairie Road; east of Belvidere, north of U.S. Route 20; and west of Belvidere, north of Newburg Road. All of the recommendations would require a major commitment of the Park District and funding resources to implement and prioritize its commitments to the projects. The Park District would continue to pursue joint park/school developments with the local school district. The Park District would also pursue joint development of the portions of the Kishwaukee Riverfront Plan with the logical partner being the Boone County Conservation District.

The Kishwaukee Riverfront Plan, as prepared by Teska Associates in 1987, is an analysis and conceptualization of the recreation potential and opportunities of the Kishwaukee River. The study concentrates on the portion of the river which winds through Belvidere, and recommends various water-oriented recreational facilities to be developed on the riverfront. Those recreational facilities would be linked together to form a linear park and linked to the downtown as part of an overall redevelopment strategy for Belvidere. The recreational facilities suggested in the plan include:

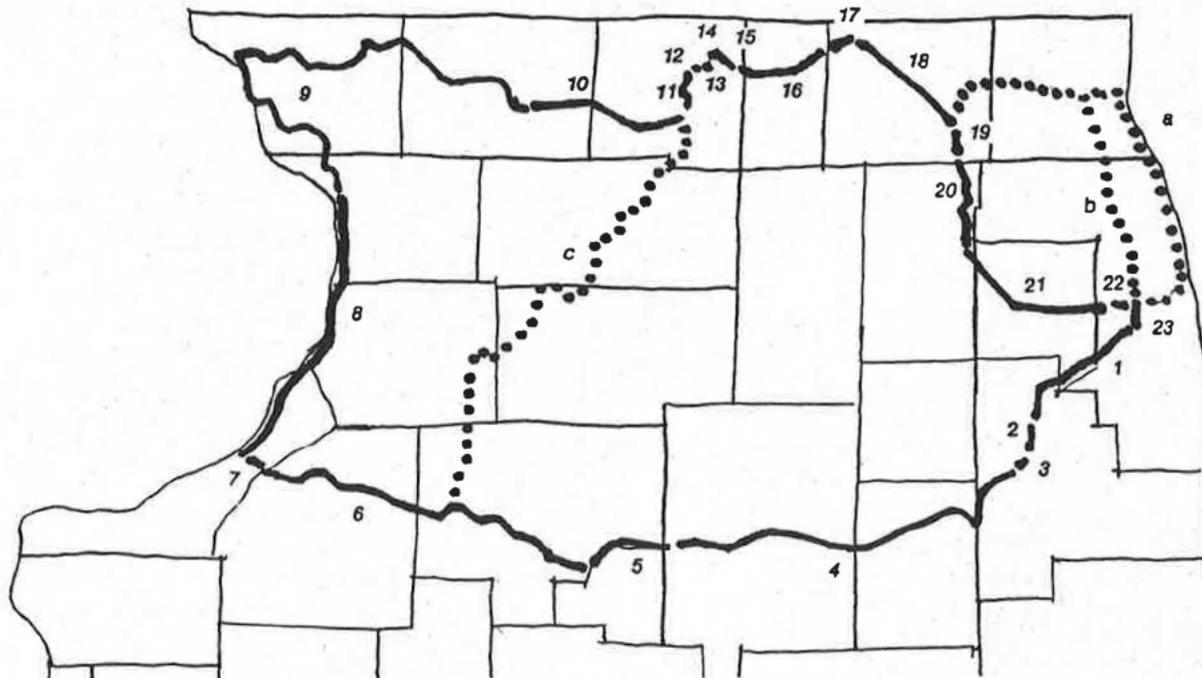
- PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS
- BICYCLE PATHWAYS
- BOATING FACILITIES
- RESTROOMS
- SHELTERS
- PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES OVER THE RIVER
- PLAYGROUNDS
- SMALL PARKS
- PARKING
- OVERLOOKS

MAP 1: LONG DISTANCE TRAILS OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE

- 1 Great River Trail
- 2 Hennepin Canal State Trail
- 3 Pecatonica Prairie Path
- 4 Rock River Rec Path
- 5 Long Prairie Trail
- 6 Crystal Lake-Harvard Trail
- 7 Huntley-Marengo Prairie Trail
- 8 Prairie Trail
- 9 Fox River Trail
- 10 Great Western Trail
- 11 Virgil Gilman Nature Trail
- 12 Des Plaines River Trail
- 13 Illinois Prairie Path
- 14 North Shore Bike Path
- 15 Green Bay Trail
- 16 North Branch Trail
- 17 Lakefront Bike Path
- 18 Chicago Boulevard System
- 19 Centennial Trail
- 20 Old Plank Road Trail
- 21 Arsenal Trail
- 22 Kankakee River Trail
- 23 Illinois and Michigan Canal State Trail
- 24 Rock Island (State) Trail
- 25 Pimiteoul Trail
- 26 River Trail of Illinois
- 27 Centennial Trail
- 28 Heartland Pathways
- 29 Prairie Wind State Trail
- 30 Springfield-Chatham Trail
- 31 Springfield-Pana Trail
- 32 Charleston-Mattoon Trail
- 33 Vandalabene Bike Trail
- 34 Confluence Trail
- 35 Metro-East Levee Trail
- 36 Schoolhouse Trail
- 37 Vandalabene Nature Trail
- 38 East Belleville Bikeway
- 39 Bicycle Route 76
- 40 Tunnel Hill State Trail



MAP 2: GRAND ILLINOIS TRAIL



- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Centennial Trail | 14 Proposed Linkage |
| 2 Lockport-Joliet Trail | 15 Stone Bridge Trail (segment) |
| 3 Joliet Streets | 16 Long Prairie Trail |
| 4 Illinois & Michigan Canal State Trail | 17 Proposed Linkage |
| 5 Proposed Linkage | 18 Crystal Lake-Harvard (segment) |
| 6 Hennepin Canal State Trail (segment) | 19 Prairie Trail (segment) |
| 7 Proposed Linkage | 20 Fox River Trail (segment) |
| 8 Great River Trail (segment) | 21 Illinois Prairie Path (segment) |
| 9 Local Roads | 22 Proposed Linkage |
| 10 Pecatonica Prairie Path | 23 Des Plaines River Trail (segment) |
| 11 Rock River Rec Path | a Lake Michigan Extension |
| 12 Local Streets | b Des Plaines River Loop |
| 13 Willow Creek Trail | c Rock River Loop |

The portion of the Grand Illinois Trail that crosses the Winnebago and Boone regional area follows local roads around Freeport. Just east of Freeport, the trail continues on the 26.5 mile Pecatonica Prairie Path eastward into downtown Rockford. The trail follows the 8.5 mile Rock River Recreation Path to Machesney Park, continues on three miles of local

streets, and proceeds on the two mile Willow Creek Bike Path. The Perryville-Willowbrook Road corridor provides a 5 mile link to Roscoe. In Roscoe, the trail intersects the 4.5 mile Stone Bridge Nature Trail. At the Winnebago-Boone county line the trail is identified as the 14.5 mile Long Prairie Trail, which crosses Boone County.

Riverfronts make ideal recreational resources and the Kishwaukee riverfront is no exception. Rivers are typically bounded on both sides by low-lying, flood prone lands, which endanger existing development in those areas. Because of the flood hazard, state and federal governments established guidelines for new developments in flood zones. The 1990 Master Plan Update recommended that the Legion Field area remain as permanent public open space which expanded the original open space area described in the plan. The Belvidere Park District acquired this important parcel of land. With the construction of the pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Kishwaukee River, a strategic linkage in the Kishwaukee Riverfront Plan had been established.

The Kishwaukee Riverfront Plan was adopted with modifications by the Belvidere Park District and the city of Belvidere as the framework for recreational developments along the Kishwaukee River.



The Kishwaukee Riverfront Plan identified recreational opportunities in Belvidere.

Other Greenway Plans

A design for the College of California grounds in Berkeley may well be where the concept of greenways started. In 1866, Frederick Law Olmsted, with Calvert Vaux, proposed the creation of a "shaded pleasure drive" from Brooklyn's Prospect Park which, winding through the countryside, would terminate at the oceanfront of Coney Island. Another drive, they suggested, should lead from the Park to the East River, then, after a bridge or ferry crossing, continue up the island of Manhattan to create a linkage with Central Park. Although the Brooklyn city fathers were not interested in the Central Park linkage, they did eventually permit Olmsted to build Ocean Parkway, which connects Prospect Park to Coney Island through Flatbush, and Eastern Parkway,

which angles off from the park to the northwest border of what is now the borough of Queens. The two parkways are wide, six-lane carriageways with wooded margins thirty-two feet wide on each side. The total width is 260 feet. They are among America's first greenways and are now part of the new Brooklyn-Queens Greenway.

The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission published the *Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan* on September 17, 1992, with an update in July, 1994. The Northeastern Illinois Planning Act gave the Commission three charges: to conduct research and collect data for planning; to advise and assist local government; and to prepare comprehensive plans and policies to guide the development of the counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will.

Beginning

A meeting of local government and private citizens was held at the Natural Land Institute on June 17, 1996 to discuss the development of a regional greenways plan. Questions raised included:

- Does our area need a greenways plan?
- Who would facilitate the plan?
- How would this plan be created?
- Once it was created, how would we share it with everyone?

Agreement was unanimous that a plan was needed. To create and facilitate the plan, a Technical Committee was formed. Members were Rick Strader from the Rockford Park District, Mark Keister from the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District, Gary McIntyre from the Rockford Area Transportation Study, Dan Roddewig from the Belvidere Park District, John Kremer from the Boone County Conservation District, David Noel from the Winnebago County Planning Office, Ed Stirling from the Natural Land Institute, and David Sliktas from the Boone County Planning Office.

Members agreed to meet once a month to formulate a greenways plan for the combined Boone and Winnebago counties. It was agreed that the mapping would take place at the Rockford City Hall through the expertise of George Adams.

Edward L. Hoffman, Supervisor of the Division of Planning at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, set forth certain criteria when the original

Part II: An Inventory List

Geographic codes indicate the location of the site on the *Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Map*. Sites without geographic codes are not shown on the map but are listed for inventory purposes.

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

PARKS

- Aldeen Golf Club Practice Center E8
168 acre golf course
- Aldeen Park F7
88 acre day camp with nature trail and a natural area
- Alpine Meadows Playground E7
16.4 acres with soccer fields
- Alpine Park F7
68 acres with a swimming pool and a natural area
- Mel Anderson Memorial Path E5-F6
3.56 acres with a 3 mile recreation path
- Andrews Park 4.7 acres
- Atwood Park H6-H7
334 acres with camping, a lodge, an education center, a boat/canoe launch, and a natural area
- Atwood Park Estates Playground H7
20 acres
- Barbour School Playground 3.17 acres
- Baumann Park G8
85 acres with 26 acre lake, ballfield, play area, and recreation path
- Beattie Park
3.38 acres Indian burial grounds and boat dock
- Beattie Playground 3.66 acres
- Belden Street Playground 6.02 acres
- Blackhawk Park F6
91.05 acre ball park and natural area
- Bloom School Playground 3.93 acres
- Booker Washington Park 6.39 acres
- Bresler Park 3.8 acres F6
- Brookview School Playground 11.85 acres
- Brown Park 5.76 acres
- Burpee Museum of Natural History Museum
3.65 acres
- Carlson Nelles Park 15.5 acres
- Churchill Park 10.6 acres F6
- Collins Park 2.1 acres
- Conklin School Playground 5 acres
- Dahlquist Park F7
16.02 acres with walking path
- Davis Park 6 acres with a walking path
- Dennis Johnson Park D7
- Ekberg-Pine Manor 7 acres F8
- Earl F. Elliott Park F8
245.7 acres with an 18 hole golf course and soccer fields
- East Side Boys and Girls Club 18.22 acres
- Evergreen School Playground 9.17 acres ... G5
- Fair Grounds Park F6
22 acres with a swimming pool
- Forest Hills Playground 10 acres
- Francis Park
- Franz Park 1.98 acres
- Froberg School Playground 10 acres
- Gambino Park 9.74 acres with soccer fields
- Garfield Avenue Playground 2.45 acres
- Gregory School Playground 7.3 acres
- Guilford Center Park 13.7 acres F7
- Haight Park 2.5 acres
- Hall Memorial Park 40 acre natural area..... F5
- Harmon Playfield 5.86 acre tot lot
- Haskell Park 2.31 acres
- Henrietta Avenue Playground 2.43 acres
- Heritage Park .45 acre
- Highland Playground 2.61 acres
- Horace Avenue Playground 4.53 acres
- Huffman Playground 8.81 acres
- Hunter Park 10 acres F8
- Illinois Street Park
6.56 acres with recreation path
- Ingersoll Centennial Park 2.5 acres
- Ingersoll Memorial Park F5
153.93 acre 18 hole golf course with driving range and a natural area
- Jamestown Park 4.15 acres
- Maud Johnson Playground 3 acres
- Johnson Tract 6 acres of garden plots
- Kelly-Meyers Park
33 acres owned by Roscoe Township
- Kennedy-Haight E6
12.28 acres with soccer fields
- Ken-Rock Playground 6.75 acres
- Keye-Mallquist Park 6.08 acres
- Landstrom Road Park
14.67 acres with a jogging trail and tot lot
- Lathrop School Playground 32 acresF6
- Leland Park 4.6 acres owned by Roscoe Village

- Levings Park F5
123 acres with a sand beach, fishing pier, paddle boats and a natural area
- Liberty Playground
7.57 acres Project Playworks Playground
- Library Esplanade between the Rockford Public Library and the Rock River
- Lockwood Park E5
115 acres with stables and observatory
- Magic Waters 18 acre water recreation park
- Mandeville Park 3.23 acres
- Mariposa Drive Playground 6.05 acres G7
- Marsh School Playground 8 acres of garden plots
- Martin Park E6
12.3 acres with boat launch and recreation path
- Midway Village and Museum Center F8
56.56 acres
- Mulford Crest Park
1.72 acres with recreation path
- Mullins Pebble Creek Park E7
8.21 acre tot lot
- Nelson Park 3.85 acres
- Northeast Community Park E8
- North Western Park 48 acres
- The Oaks Playground 1.82 acres
- Olson Memorial Park
- Oxford Street Playground 4.5 acres
- Anna Page Conservation Forest E5
317.12 acres with disk golf course and natural area
- Porter Park owned by Roscoe Village
- Ridge Avenue Playground 2.48 acres
- Riverby Park 3.1 acres with recreation path
- Riverdahl School Playground 18.62 acres
- Riverfront Museum Park
5 acre multi-faceted museum facility
- Riverside Park C7
80 acres owned by Roscoe Village with a boat launch
- Riverview Park
5.66 acres with an ice arena and trolley station
- Rock Cut State Park D7-D8
3,092 acres with two lakes and a natural area and Plum Grove Nature Preserve (See insert.)
- Rockford Arboretum 5.7 acres F8
- Rockford Flight Field 43.07 acre field for radio-controlled model airplanes
- Rolling Green School Playground 8.19 acres
- Sabrooke Playground 7.34 acres
- Sand Park E7
41 acres with a swimming pool
- Sandy Hollow Golf Course G7
124 acre 18 hole golf course
- Sawyer Road Playground 6.69 acres
- Searls ParkE5-E6
201.7 acres with BMX track, soccer fields, recreation path and Searls Nature Preserve
- Schoonmaker Park D7
- Shorewood Park E7
39 acres with water ski beach, recreation path and natural area
- Sinnissippi Park and Riverfront F6-F7
123 acres with 9 hole golf course, recreation path, administration building and natural area
- Sinnissippi Gardens
greenhouse, gardens, and lagoon
- South Beloit City Park A7
- South Park 5.3 acres
- Summerdale Playground 6.5 acres
- Sumner Park E1
33 acres owned by Village of Pecatonica
- Swan Hillman 6.4 acres
- Swanson Park G8
6.48 acres
- Talcott-Page Park 22.71 acres
- Taylor Park 1.37 acres
- Tenth Avenue Playground 6.56 acres
- Tinker Swiss Cottage Park 5.81 acres
with Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum
- Twenty-Fifth Street Playground 5.97 acres
- Twin Sisters Park F7
17.1 acres and a natural area
- Vandercook School Playground 8.5 acres .. G8
- Veteran's Memorial Playground E6
104 acre softball and soccer complex with recreation path
- Wantz Memorial Park
5.69 acres with a recreation path
- Washington Park Community Recreation Center
15.05 acres
- Waterside Park 1.24 acres
- Water Works Park 1 acre
- Wells Park 3.47 acres
- Wester Park/Lawn Sports
for shuffleboard, croquet and horseshoes
- Williams Sports Field 2 acres
- Williams Park 2 acres..... D7

Rock Cut State Park

open spaces ... family places

Chiseled out of the state's far northern region is Rock Cut State Park in Winnebago County. Nearby are other "rocky" landmarks – the mighty Rock River and the place where wagons once forded it, Rockford. It's an area of rolling plains, interesting history, and recreational variety.

Two lakes set off the park's 3,092 acres. Pierce Lake, with 162 acres, is ideal for fishing, sailing, and ice skating. A second 50-acre Olson Lake is especially for swimmers. Rounding out the park's recreational options are camping, hiking, horseback trails, and cross-country skiing. Whatever the season, you can be sure there's quite a bit of activity going on at Rock Cut State Park.

The Park's Past

By the middle of the 17th century, Miami-speaking tribes of Native Americans entered the region of Rock Cut State Park after the Iroquois drove them from territory on the southern end of Lake Michigan. From about 1655 until 1735, the Rock River was within the range of the Mascouten, who were also pushed westward by the Iroquois. The Winnebago ranged southward from Wisconsin to the Rock River from the 1740's until 1837, while the river's upper portion was on the periphery of the Fox and Sauk territory from about 1765 to 1833. By 1800, the Potawatomi, Ottawa and Chippewa nations had extended their range into the area, but they ceded their lands to the United States 32 years later following the Black Hawk War.

Settlement of Winnebago County began after the Black Hawk War. The region that is now makes up the park was settled partly by Scots around Argyle – named for their Scottish home of Argylishire – and partly by Canadians, New Yorkers and New Englanders around the town of Harlem – named for New York City's Harlem. The Illinois version of Harlem was moved in 1859 when the Kenosha-Rockford Rail Line was built. The dammed waters of Pierce Lake now cover much of the railroad bed within the park although portions of the railroad grade are visible along Willow Creek below the spillway. But blasting operations in a rock outcrop that railroad crews conducted during the 1859 construction left lasting impressions here – they cut through rock to provide a suitable roadbed and gave Rock Cut its name.

The Park's Present

Because water welcomes birds and animals, wildlife watchers to the area won't be disappointed. Birders report good viewing, with waterfowl being abundant. Deer, fox, muskrat, woodchuck, wild turkey, and beaver inhabit Rock Cut State Park, as do opossum, raccoon, and both gray and fox squirrel. Over 100 types of wildflowers offer a showy display each spring and summer, while the hardwood trees dazzle you with the reds and golds every fall.

FOREST PRESERVES

- Clayton Andrews F.P. B8
88 acres of wildlife conservation area (donated)
- Atwood Homestead F. P. C7-D7
338 acres with 18 hole golf course and boat launch area (donated)
- Blackhawk Springs, F.P. H8
950 acres with 7.5 miles of hiking trails
- Cherry Valley F.P. G8
226 acre conservation area
- Colored Sands F.P. A3
300 acres Bird Banding Station and an Illinois Nature Preserve, 3 miles of hiking trails, and canoe launch
- Espenscheid Memorial F.P. G8
60 acres with .5 miles of hiking trails and canoe launch (donated)
- Four Lakes F.P. D3
30 acre fishing area
- Fuller Memorial F.P. H5
135 acre bird sanctuary with 3 miles of hiking trails (donated)
- Hartley Memorial F.P. D2
40 acre conservation area (donated) includes Illinois Nature Preserve
- Hinchliff Memorial F.P. H5
2 acres (donated)
- Hononegah F.P. B7
228 acre campground with bike path access
- Indian Hill F.P. H5
50 acres of oak and maple woodland including floodplain forest with willow and cottonwood trees (donated)
- Kieselburg F.P. C7
211 acre model plane flying field includes prairie restoration
- Kilbuck Bluffs F.P. H6
165 acres with soccer fields and 1.5 miles of hiking trails.
- Kishwaukee Gorge North F.P. H7
128 acres with 2 miles of hiking trails
- Kishwaukee River F.P. H7
161 acres with 1.5 miles of hiking trails and canoe access
- Kishwaukee Gorge South F.P. H7
50 acres undeveloped
- Carl and Lois Klehm F.P. G6
154 acre arboretum with 1.5 miles of hiking trails (donated)
- Laona Heights F.P. A1
40 acre with woods dedicated as an Illinois Nature Preserve
- Ledges F.P. B8
184 acres with a 18 hole golf course
- Macktown F.P. A6
281 acres historical district, with an 18 hole golf course, and boat launch area
- McKiski F.P. G8
3 acre conservation area (donated)
- Mill Race Isle F.P. A6
127 acres on north side of Macktown F.P.
- Roland Olson F.P. C8
127 acres with equestrian arena, 1.5 miles of trails with access to Stone Bridge Nature Trail (donated)
- Pecatonica River F.P. D2
466 acre nature study area, campground, boat launch and a dedicated nature preserve
- Pecatonica Wetlands F..P. E1
935 acres of wetland restoration project
- Rockford Rotary F.P. H7
156 acres with equestrian trails, youth camp and 1.5 miles of hiking trails (donated)
- Severson Dells F.P. G1
369 acres with a nature study center, 3 miles of hiking trails and a dedicated nature preserve (donated)
- Seward Bluffs F.P. F1
202 acre campground with equestrian trails, youth camp and 3 miles of hiking trails
- Sugar River Alder F.P. A3
389 acres with an Illinois Nature Preserve and 2.5 miles of hiking trails
- Sugar River F.P. A3-B3
524 acre campground, youth camp with 2 miles of hiking trails and canoe access
- Trailside F.P. H6
9 acres
- Trask Bridge F.P. D3
15 acre fishing area (donated)
- Two Rivers F.P. B4
7 acres with canoe access
- Winnebago County F.P. Headquarters E6
45 acres with .5 miles of hiking trails

ADDITIONAL NATURAL AREAS

Many natural areas are contained within parks and forest preserves and are noted above.

- Bell Bowl Prairie H6
21 acre gravel hill prairie has an excellent display of pasque flowers and prairie smoke in the spring. The rare Carolina anemone and prairie buttercup are found here.
- Bur Oak Road Prairie (private) C8
- Bur Oak Valley C8
62.6 acres of oak woodland and dolomite prairie with a superb spring woodland wildflower display
- Butternut Acres (private) C8
- Harlem Hills North E7
21.8 acres north of Harlem Hills Nature Preserve
- Harlem Hills Prairie Nature Preserve E7
55 acres including the Dr. Barbara Mac Atwood Tract (private)
- Lind Shagbark Woods H5
9 acres oak woodland
- McGeachie Woods H5
3 acre oak woodland
- Nimitz Ponds (private) D8
- Owen Center Road Prairie (private) C6
- Roadside Prairie
- Rockton Bog Nature Preserve A6
67 acres of sedge meadow, prairie, and open sand forest
- Silver Creek Prairie (Private) H5
- Silver Creek Woods H5
80 acres of oak woodland and creek with an unusual abundance of shagbark hickory. This site provides excellent wildlife habitat and scenic open space within a few miles of Rockford city limits.
- Shirland Prairie (private) A3
- Shirland Railroad Prairie (private) B4
- South Beloit Prairie (Private) A7
- Stone Bridge Reserve B7-C8
62.9 acres of good quality prairie providing space for recreation and habitat for native vegetation including Hamborg Road Prairie, an Illinois Natural Areas Inventory Site.
- Wilson Prairie Nature Preserve (private) E1
20 acres of high quality dry prairie
- Winquist Prairie (private) H7
- Wylie Prairie (Private) E7

PRIVATE RECREATION AREAS

- Camp Hillcrest
- Forest Hills Country Club E7
- Harlem Community Center D7
- Mauh-nah-tee-see Country Club F7
- Rockford Christian Camp
- Rockford Country Club E6
- Rockford Sportsmans Vasa Park
- YMCA Camp Winnebago D6

RECREATION PATHS

- Mel Anderson Memorial Path E5-D6
Winds for three miles through northwest Rockford along Kent Creek
- Bauer Bike Path D6-D7
begins at the Sportscore in northwest Rockford and extends northward to Harlem Road and the Frank Bauer Toll Bridge and into Machesney Park, where it continues north on Victory Lane to Machesney Road, then east to North Second Street. This 3.09 mile path was completed in the fall of 1995.
- Hononegah Bike Path B6-B7
2.75 miles along Hononegah Road
- Kin-Wood Creek Path
.6 miles
- Pecatonica Prairie Path..... E1-F4
21-mile trail between Freeport and Rockford
- Perryville Path E8-F8
The Perryville Path Loop at Midway Village and Museum Center is 1.4 miles long and is maintained by Midway Village and Museum Center. A 3 mile extension of the path connects the southern end of the loop at Trainer Road and west to Perryville Road then north to Spring Brook Road.
- Rock River Recreation Path E6-F6
Located across from Sinnissippi Park on North Second Street, begins at Davis Park in downtown Rockford and winds along the Rock River for 8.5 miles to Harlem Road
- Stone Bridge Recreation Path B7
5.75 miles through prairie areas with a historic bridge which is registered as a national, state, and local monument
- Willow Creek Recreation Path D7-E7
Begins at Harlem High School on North Alpine Road in Machesney Park and extends east along Willow Creek 1.57 miles into Rock Cut State Park.

PRIVATE RECREATION AREAS

- BelMar Golf Course G11
- Jellystone Campground F11
- Outdoor World Campground G11-G12
- Paradise Park Campground F11
- Swan Hills Golf Course E9

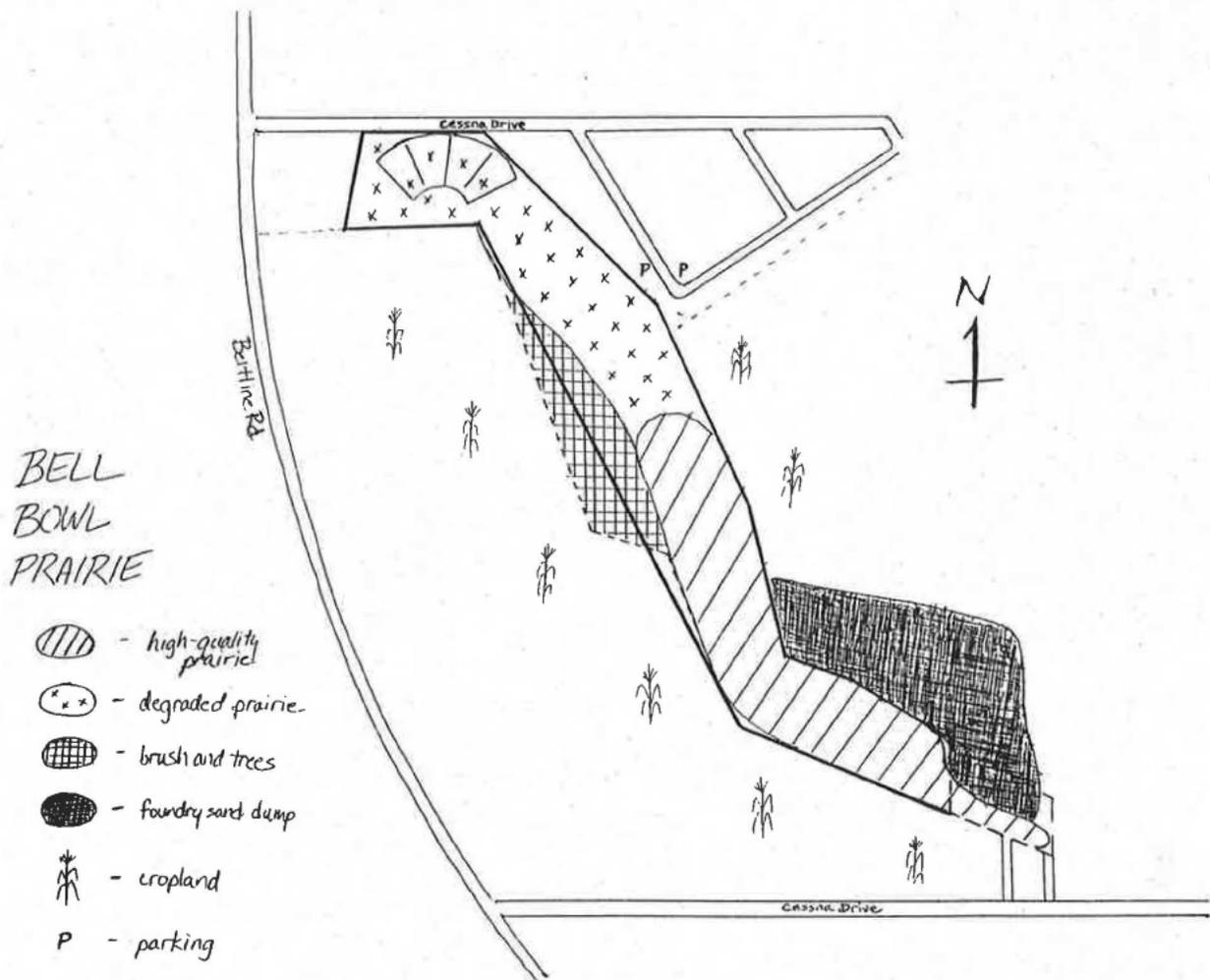
RECREATION PATHS

- Belvidere to Poplar Grove Trail Corridor (Highway 76) D10-F10
- Chicago Central & Pacific Railroad Corridor (Potential) H9-H10
- Huntley Union Trail Corridor F9-F12 (Potential)
- Kishwaukee Riverfront Path (Proposed) F10-F11
- Long Prairie Trail G9-C12
14.2 mile asphalt trail that begins at County Line Road ½ mile north of

Illinois Route 173, approximately 2 miles east of Capron and continues west to McMichael Road

RIVERS AND STREAMS

- Beaver Creek F9-B12
- Coon Creek G11-G12
- Dry Run Creek A9
- Geryune Creek D11-D12
- Kishwaukee River G9-F12
Class A river from Beaver Creek through Belvidere and east into McHenry County
- Mayberry Creek G9
- Mosquito Creek G11-G12
- North Kinnikinnick Creek B9-B10
- Piscasaw Creek F11-D12
- South Kinnikinnick Creek C9-B10



Part III: Greenways Preservation

The Natural Land Institute

Nonprofit organizations such as the Natural Land Institute work through voluntary means to protect open land important to the quality of life and the environmental health of their communities, states, or regions. Over 1,100 separate non-profit organizations, with a combined membership of 900,000 people, are saving land throughout the country.

The Natural Land Institute was established in 1958 to preserve natural areas and natural diversity. Working with landowners and other organizations, the Institute strives to acquire or assist in preserving natural areas for their scientific, educational, and aesthetic values.

Conservation easements restrict the landowners' right to do something with the property that they would otherwise have the right to do. By granting a conservation easement to a non-profit conservation organization, a landowner is voluntarily giving up property rights which may be of substantial economic value. This, however, results in several advantages to the landowner. The donor may claim a charitable contribution in the amount of the appraised value of the easement. If the property is sold, the taxable capital gain on the sale may be less since the value of the property has been reduced. If the property is not sold, but rather passed on at death, the donor's taxable estate may be lowered, resulting in lower estate and inheritance taxes. Real estate taxes may be reduced if the property is encumbered by a permanent conservation easement and the property provides a public benefit. Public benefit certification is determined by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in accordance with criteria established by law. In general, the property must provide a natural resource benefit by remaining undeveloped.

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

Dedication of land as an Illinois Nature Preserve is a legal process whereby the owner 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 any changes that negatively affect the natural qualities of the property. Dedication is the strongest protection that can be given to land. It even protects

an area from the threat of condemnation. The permanent protection provided by dedication continues through future conveyances of the land. Dedication does not require the owner to take any measures to protect the dedicated property against the action of nature or of third parties. Only very high quality natural lands qualify for dedication as Illinois Nature Preserves. Qualifying lands in private, corporate, or government ownership can be dedicated as Illinois Nature Preserves.

The Register of Land and Water Reserves is a voluntary land and water protection program that provides protection and management for lands and waters supporting significant natural heritage or archaeological resources. Registered Reserves may be in public or private ownership. The agreement to register an area as a Registered Reserve is similar to a conservation easement and is between the landowner and the Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission jointly. The agreement may be for a term of years or permanent. The landowner continues to own the registered



Part of the Stone Bridge Nature Trail near Roscoe is listed on the Register of Land and Water Reserves and is further protected by a conservation easement held by the Natural Land Institute.

property, except certain rights as specified in the registration agreement are given up. The property can be sold or passed on to heirs subject to the agreement.

Other Options for Land Preservation

The Illinois Natural Heritage Landmark Program gives recognition to private landowners who preserve natural areas while retaining ownership. It gives the landowner a flexible, non-binding preservation option. It is a voluntary, non-regulatory program which recognizes that many natural areas survive because generations of people have protected and cherished them. The program's goal is to increase understanding of the value of natural areas and encourage their preservation by private landowners.

Leases provide owners a method of generating income from property. An example might be an owner who does not want to sell the property, but considers selling the timber for income. A conservation agency may agree to lease the land for a lease payment. This payment may provide enough money to encourage protection of the property. Leases can also be granted for no compensation. Generally the lease allows for unrestricted and exclusive use of the land by the leasing agency, although use restrictions can be incorporated into the lease.

Management Agreements can be very useful when the landowner is committed enough to agree that the land be preserved and managed for a period of time but is not committed enough to enter another type of agreement. Management agreements are legal contracts between landowners and conservation organizations, where the landowner may agree to manage the land in a certain manner for a certain period of time, or may agree to allow the conservation agency to do the same for some stated term.

Sale or Donation to a Conservation Agency may occur. The land has been identified as possessing unique biological communities, natural features, or unusual or rare species of plants or animals. Because of specific circumstances, it may be advantageous for the owner to sell or donate the land to a conservation agency. The natural features that exist on the land have an important role to play in our future. The sale of land to a conservation agency whose purpose is to preserve these natural features will be a small but

important contribution to the quality of life for generations to come.

Mutual Covenants can be used when there are several landowners in an immediate area who are all interested in entering into mutually restrictive agreements. Conservation-minded neighbors can sign an agreement whereby they each agree to certain restrictions which control the future uses of their lands. The agreement is recorded at the court house and is binding on future owners of the properties. Any of the individual landowners could enforce the agreement signed by any of the other landowners. Enforcing the agreement may be more difficult since it depends on the determination and resources of an individual.

Local Government

As rapid growth continues in the Boone and Winnebago Region, individual communities are currently producing their own mapping and zoning plans in order to plan for future development. As each community continues to develop its own plan, it will become more important that these plans be given proper priority.

Planning is Critical

Charles E. Little in his book, *Greenways of America*, states that America has developed educational and transportation systems, but comprehensive land-use planning on more than the most elementary level — mainly planning for zoning in towns and cities — seems to be beyond us. Little continues, "As a result, the public values of a regional landscape become obliterated by the cumulative effect of self-interested private decisions. Whole ecosystems are rendered dysfunctional because development pollutes or silts up streams and rivers and decimates natural areas; ugliness prevails along the roadway; social disintegration is created by artificial separation of land uses. In a word, the lack of regional planning has produced a mess — 'the mess that is manmade America,' as one British planner puts it. Regional greenway networks will not themselves clean up the mess but the idea of establishing such an infrastructure might very well give us a new and less controversial approach to regional planning by providing a geophysical framework for it, which, unlike that of highways and high-tension lines, is the framework of the landscape itself."

Part IV: Implementation of the Greenways Plan

The Boone and Winnebago County Region is unique because it provides examples of a variety of greenway systems. The Kishwaukee River provides water access from Green Giant Prairie east of Belvidere in Boone County to Seth Atwood Forest Preserve in Winnebago County. A Commonwealth Edison utility right-of-way system connects the town of Winnebago with the city of Freeport, a distance of 22 miles. A railroad right-of-way recreational trail crosses Boone County via a 14.5 mile asphalt path.

Water trail opportunities exist on several streams and rivers in the Boone and Winnebago Region. Beaver Creek, Piskasaw Creek, and portions of the Kishwaukee River in Boone County are Class A streams. These streams permit water travel from McHenry County across Boone County and into Winnebago County and the Rock River.



The Kishwaukee River is a "Class A Stream" in Boone Co.

The Sugar River is a biologically significant Class A stream in Winnebago County that feeds into the Pecatonica River. The Sugar River provides water passage from Wisconsin through Winnebago County.

In order to protect these valuable natural resources, the proposed actions are recommended:

1. Municipalities, park districts, and counties adopt the *Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan*.
2. Municipalities, park districts, and counties cooperatively develop coordinated land use and greenway/open space plans.
3. Local comprehensive and land use plans contain a greenway/open space element coordinated with this Regional Greenways Plan.

4. Local and county jurisdictions work cooperatively with other jurisdictions and citizen groups to develop detailed plans for the individual greenways. Local jurisdictions should enter into cooperative intergovernmental and public-private sector agreements regarding greenway location, development, management and financing.
5. All jurisdictions responsible for preparing plans for managing nonpoint sources of water pollution consider and recommend the use of greenways to improve water quality where feasible.
6. Local governments examine their own programs for capital improvements and infrastructure development to determine where implementation of greenways can be facilitated and conflicts with planned greenways avoided.

Fifteen Steps to Create a Trail or Greenway in Your Community

Every trail or greenway project is not going to be the same, but there are more similarities than dissimilarities. The following is a brief outline of the fifteen steps involved in creating a trail or greenway. You can use this pattern to get started.

- **Come up with the idea.** The idea for the trail might happen when you visit another greenway, talk to a neighbor about the lack of biking safety, or hear about available transportation funding. Once you talk to someone else, you are both on the road to a greenway.
- **Write articles about trails and greenways for the local paper.** This is going to make your job easier in the future when you go asking for money or land. People will know what a greenway, bike path, or walking trail is because you told them in the newspaper articles.
- **Gather together a group and talk about the possibilities.** This group doesn't need to be formal. One early discussion can include the potential users of your facility and if you want a name for your group or the path.

- **Take a map and mark public lands, elementary and high schools, shopping areas, housing districts, and offices.** Look at the general destinations and identify the property owners between those destinations. By the way, do not put a line on the map where your trail will go until you have talked to the involved landowners!
- **Talk to the involved landowners.** Ask them their ideas about a greenway. Ask if they will become part of the initial group looking at the feasibility of a greenway.
- **Seek guidance from local and state agencies.** Check out potential funding sources. Find out what might be involved in obtaining necessary permits. Apply for the transportation planning money.
- **Prepare a more professional map.** Make a line for the route if the property owners have agreed they want their land to be part of the plan.
- **Publish the map in the local paper.** Write detailed articles for the paper and talk about those serving on the committee.
- **Hold large public meetings with the maps.** Have rough plans prepared to discuss with the group. Seek initial funding, remembering Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).
- **Begin major fundraising locally, statewide, and nationally.** Grant applications have due dates. Now is the time to start turning in the applications.
- **Acquire the land through a formal arrangement.** Land can be donated, given by a deed of easement, and, if necessary, purchased in fee simple. If the property owner wants to wait longer to see if the project will go through, they can sign a letter of intent which, as a side benefit, helps build support for the trail.
- **Prepare the plans and specifications.** Depending on the sources of money, these plans and specs will vary in detail. For a hiking trail, plans can be more vague. For a bicycle or pedestrian path using transportation funds,

design standards must be followed. And don't forget to apply for necessary permits.

- **Begin construction.** If the project is a bicycle or pedestrian path, this will happen after going out to bid and selecting the most appropriate contractor. If the project is a simple trail on public land and permission to construct the trail has been given, construction can begin after gaining the necessary permit.
- **Say thanks to all who donated money, land, volunteer time, or just enthusiasm.**
- **Maintain and enhance the path.** Plant flowers, cut grass, put in a bench, and start planning for the greenway extension.

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The Future

Development Projects for Winnebago County Forest Preserve District Budget include:

- ***Sugar River Alder Public Access***
\$170,000 This project shall provide funds for the new 160 acre addition to Sugar River Alder Forest Preserve. Development shall include a new entrance road, parking, equestrian access, demolition of an existing farmstead, and construction of a shelterhouse, well, and restrooms.
- ***Pecatonica Wetlands Reforestation***
\$20,000 This project shall provide funding to purchase trees and materials to protect and accelerate growth of trees as part of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District's reforestation of this newly acquired tract.
- ***Macktown Historic District Improvements***
\$132,000 This project shall provide funding to move golf holes adjacent to the Historic District as per the Thomas Graceffa & Associates Master Plan. The project will also provide a well and restrooms at the Whitman Trading Post.
- ***Pecatonica Wetlands Restoration***
\$80,000 The project consists of constructing three water control structures on existing wetlands to improve and increase wetland

habitat. The project is contingent on complete funding by Ducks Unlimited or other private sources.

- **Roland Olson Trail Access**
\$44,000 This project shall provide funding to establish Winnebago County access to the Stone Bridge Nature Trail. Funds shall cover a new parking lot, trails extension to the site in Roland Olson Forest Preserve, well, and restrooms.

Long term projected plans for Winnebago County Forest Preserve District include:

- 1998 – Pecatonica wetlands public access, Colored Sands prairie restoration, Pecatonica wetlands reforestation, and creation of a Kishwaukee bike trail
- 1999 – Kieselburg trail improvements, Kishwaukee bike trail, Pecatonica wetlands wayside and deck, Pecatonica wetlands reforestation, Cherry Valley wildlife observation desk, Sugar River greenway restoration, Pecatonica wetlands Phase II development
- 2000 – Pecatonica wetlands bridges, Pecatonica wetlands reforestation, creation of a Kishwaukee bike trail, Pecatonica wetlands Phase II reconstruction, decks, and pier
- Development of Mill Race Isle Forest Preserve, 127 acres north of Macktown Forest Preserve

The Boone County Conservation District Open Space Plan lists seven high priority projects for the future. They include the Kishwaukee River greenways development; Coon Creek, Piscasaw Creek, Kinnikinnick Creek, and Beaver Creek preservation projects; the Long Prairie Trail and the Union Pacific Trail corridors. Other potential priority areas include Kinnikinnick Creek-North Branch, Mosquito Creek, Flora Prairie, Hunter Road Woodland, Dry Run Creek Corridor, a Chicago Central and Pacific Railroad corridor, and a Belvidere to Poplar Grove Trail corridor.

Section B of the Kishwaukee Riverfront Development Master Plan contains an extension for Spencer Park scheduled for 1998. Section "C" City Right-of-Way is scheduled for 1999 and section "A" Belvidere Park's Hickory Bills Island is scheduled for 2000.

The Village of Machesney Park 1994 Comprehensive Plan has been amended to include the North Shore Quarry on North Second Street as a future park site.

The Village is currently developing a park plan which will eventually be approximately 43 acres with a lake and access to the Rock River.

The Village of Machesney Park plans to extend the Willow Creek Recreation Path from Machesney Mall to Harlem Senior High School.

The Perryville Path Committee plans to extend the path north from Spring Brook Road to Rock Cut State Park and south from East State Street to CherryVale Mall.

The Pecatonica Prairie Path Committee plans to make improvements on the path from Meridian Road in Rockford to the town of Winnebago and on west to Freeport.

The Charles Street Community Path committee plans to extend the Charles Street Path to Perryville Road.

The Village of Roscoe plans to develop the Stone Bridge Nature Trail and Kin-Wood Creek Path from Roland Olson Forest Preserve west to the Hononegah Path along Rockton Road.

Winnebago County plans improvements on the Pecatonica Prairie Path from Meridian Road to the west edge of Winnebago County and on the extension of the Pecatonica Prairie Path from Meridian Road east to downtown Rockford.

Winnebago County will develop a greenway along the Rock River in Winnebago County.

Winnebago County plans a nature trail along Kilbuck Creek.

Boone and Winnebago Counties plan jointly to complete a Kishwaukee River greenway.

Municipalities that have greenways plans are eligible for Department of Natural Resources assistance for self-sustaining trails and greenways programs, as indicated in the *Illinois State Trails Plan*. The development of this *Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan* is essential to taking advantage of this offer. Once this plan is in place, entities in the Winnebago and Boone County areas will have the opportunity to apply for funds that will assist in making a well-planned community a reality.

On-going community input should continue. Communications regarding implementation of this plan will be widespread and public announcements made when further actions occur.

In Conclusion

A Reason Why

by Beverly Moore,
Greenways Project Coordinator

An explorer drove out to Keiselberg Forest Preserve looking for a greenway along Mitchell Road that could provide a linkage south toward Rock Cut State Park. She walked and observed two gray haired gentlemen flying model airplanes. One plane attempted to take off and as the speed increased, flipped end over end. One of the men walked over to the plane and examined it for damages. The other placed his plane at the end of the open field. The plane sped away, climbed and circled overhead, flew back again, gently landed on the ground, and stopped at the feet of the man holding the remote control unit. Enjoyment was there.

The explorer drove to the Long Prairie Trail in Capron. She saw a young man and woman with three children as they stopped at a picnic table along the path. Two of the children climbed from a trailer behind their father's bicycle. The family had decided to ride from their home in Poplar Grove to Capron on this Sunday afternoon for a picnic supper. Companionship was there.

The young man remarked how much he would have appreciated a recreation trail such as the Long Prairie Trail on his epic bicycle ride from Poplar Grove, Illinois, to Alaska fifteen years ago. He mentioned that Minnesota had afforded some enjoyable moments along a lengthy portion of a green corridor across that state, but many other parts of the country were more difficult to traverse due to the lack of a trails system.

The explorer then traveled to the Pecatonica Prairie Path to walk west from Sumner Park. As she walked, she encountered three equestrians. The explorer stood quietly and waited for a teenage girl to convince her skittish horse to continue on the way. They passed, seeming to understand that neither would harm the other. The explorer continued on her way enjoying the aroma of wild flowers, watching gray clouds cross

the sky that would soon bring refreshing showers to the plants along the trail. A rabbit ran along the trail and stopped for a moment to look at the explorer. A snake slithered into the weeds, his morning sunbath interrupted. Partnership with nature was there.

On Monday morning the explorer went to the city and stopped at the Rock River Recreation Path. Young men in white shirts and ties sat at the picnic table eating lunch from the refreshment wagon. Two young women walked by, dressed in skirts and tennis shoes, obviously enjoying an opportunity to be outside and away from enclosed offices. Young mothers and their small children walked and played along the path. One mother on rollerblades held onto the back of her child's bike for a pleasant ride along the trail. A young couple held hands and walked through the rose gardens adjacent to the path.

An older woman accompanied by a young couple stooped to pull weeds from around a tree along the path. When they left, the explorer walked to the tree and read the plaque: "When you see the little tree, stop awhile and think of me. Thomas Lindsay, 1922-1992." Memories were there.

As the explorer continued on, a frail lady dressed in white to keep the sun from her skin came alongside. The lady commented on the beauty of the day and remembered the times she and her late husband had walked hand in hand along the trail. She remembered the past. Peace was there.

What had begun for the explorer as a search for linkages of greenspaces had ended as a discovery of the real significance of greenways. Greenways provide exercise for the physical body, avenues of travel for plants and animals, preservation of the ecosystem, and more: enjoyment, companionship, memories, and peace.

Appendix A: Approved Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Greenways Projects

Programmed ISTEA Transportation Enhancement Projects (2/23/96) Enhancement-Funded Bike/Pedestrian and Trail Facilities:

1. Bike path along Harlem Road, Winnebago County; federal \$600,000/match \$150,000/ total \$750,000
2. Bridge restoration and Kent Creek Path, Rockford; federal \$243,928/match \$60,982/ total \$304,910
3. Rock Valley College Bike Path, Winnebago County; federal \$636,000/match \$159,000/ total \$795,000 Kin-Wood Creek Path extension, Roscoe; federal \$76,000/match \$19,000/ total \$95,000
4. Rochelle Area Cycling Connection, Rochelle; federal \$321,600/match \$80,400/ total \$402,000
5. Willow Creek Bike Path, Machesney Park; federal \$644,800/match \$161,200 total \$806,000
6. Bridge restoration and Kent Creek Path, Rockford; federal \$105,968/match \$26,492/ total \$132,460
7. Rock Valley College Bike Path, Winnebago County; federal \$76,000/match \$19,000/ total \$95,000.
8. Bridge widening, Rockford; federal \$573,036/ match \$143,259/ total \$716,295
9. Trail underpass and extension, Rockford; federal \$614,400/match \$153,600/ total \$768,000
10. Long Prairie Trail, Boone County; federal \$396,000/match \$99,000/ total \$495,000
11. Bridge widening, Rockford; federal \$57,328/ match \$14,332/ total \$71,660

Appendix B: Priority Projects of Greenways and Trails in Boone and Winnebago Region

A \$1.65 million Parks and Recreation Grant Package distributed by the Illinois Department of Natural

Resources in October, 1996, provided funds for these projects:

1. Rockford Park District bike path bridge over the Rock River plus planned park renovations, \$509,300
2. Winnebago County Forest Preserve District to purchase land along the Pecatonica River, \$343,000
3. Rockford Township \$200,000 to build a bike path from Spring Brook Road to Nimtz Road, match \$200,000
4. Harlem Township \$200,000 to build a bike path from Nimtz to Harlem roads, match \$200,000
5. Village of Durand to renovate Nick Saleens Memorial Park, \$162,000
6. Boone County Conservation District to purchase land along Kishwaukee River, \$85,000
7. Roscoe Township to develop Kelly-Myers Park, \$64,800

On July 25, 1997, Governor Edgar approved a grant application for \$118,000 to reconstruct 0.47 miles of the Rock River Recreation Path within Martin Park. An existing path eight feet wide and in poor condition will be replaced by an asphalt path twelve feet wide with two feet wide aggregate shoulders on each side of the path.

Appendix C: Biological Quality of Streams in the Boone and Winnebago Region

How rivers are rated

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources use different systems to rate the quality of state waterways, aquatic habitats, and surrounding wildlife.

The IEPA uses "good," "fair," and "poor" based on tests of water quality and whether lakes, rivers, ponds and streams can support a diverse aquatic habitat and recreational activities. A total of 577 stream miles were assessed by the Illinois Environmental Agency in the spring of 1995. Overall resource quality is "good" on 365 stream miles (63.2%), and "fair" conditions exist on 212 stream miles (36.8%).

The IEPA rates the Kishwaukee River and its tributaries "good."

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources uses a five tiered alphabetic classification system based on the abundance and diversity of fish and other aquatic life:

Class A excellent, unique aquatic resource; fishery species abundant and diverse

Class B highly valued aquatic resource; a good fishery for important gamefish species, but may be somewhat below expectations for stream size and geographic region

Class C fair, or moderate, aquatic resource; species and numbers of fish intolerant of pollutants reduced. Fishery consists mainly of bullheads, sunfish, carp, and similar species that are able to live in contaminated waters.

Class D limited aquatic resource; poor fisher conditions dominated by carp and other fish tolerant of pollutants

Class E restricted, very poor aquatic resource with few fish of any species present. No sport fishery exists.

In Illinois, 24 of 900 inland rivers and streams are rated Class A. Among them are segments of the Kishwaukee River, portions of Rush and Piscasaw Creeks, and sections of the Sugar River.

Of the more than 340 miles of streams in the Kishwaukee River Basin, most are rated Class B. None are rated as limited or restricted waterways.

The 64-mile main branch of the Kishwaukee River stretches from its headwaters south of Woodstock in McHenry County, across Boone County through downtown Belvidere and into Winnebago County southwest through Cherry Valley and past the Greater Rockford Airport before it empties into the Rock River.

The Kishwaukee River Basin covers 786,100 acres in McHenry, Boone, Winnebago, Ogle, DeKalb, Lee and Kane counties. Major streams that make up the Kishwaukee River Basin include the Kishwaukee River and its south and north branches and the Mokeler, Beaver, Kilbuck, Owens, Piscasaw, Rush and Coon creeks. The largest cities in the river basin

are DeKalb (about 35,000) and Belvidere (about 17,000). Of the 341 stream miles assessed in the Kishwaukee River Basin in 1995, based on the latest data available, overall resource quality was "good" on 291 miles and "fair" on 50 stream miles. The primary causes of water quality problems are nutrients, siltation and noxious aquatic plants attributed to agriculture and urban runoff sources. *Source: Illinois Environmental Protection Agency*

The Rock River enters Illinois just south of Beloit. It then flows in a southwesterly direction until it joins the Mississippi River at Rock Island. The Rock River Basin covers a total of 1,402,500 acres in Boone, Winnebago, Ogle, Carroll, Whiteside, Lee, Rock Island, Henry, Bureau, and Mercer counties. The major cities in the basin are Rockford (139,943) and Dixon (15,134). The majority of the basin is in agricultural lands. Major streams which comprise the Rock River Basin include the Rock River, Pecatonica River, Middle Creek, Leaf River, Mud Creek, Kyle River, Green River, Three Mile Creek, Elkhorn Creek, Rock Creek, Mill Creek and Sugar River.

In Illinois, the Rock River flows within this basin for 166.9 miles of its total 318 miles. The Rock River receives the drainage of three major streams: the Pecatonica River, Kishwaukee River and Green River. Of the total river miles in this basin, 69 stream miles have "good" overall resource quality and 97.9 stream miles have "fair" conditions. Nutrients (phosphorus) were the major cause of water quality problems due to point source pollution and agriculture.

Appendix D: Organizations and Individuals Involved in the Boone and Winnebago Regional Greenways Plan

Beverly Moore,
Greenways Project Coordinator

- **Belvidere Park District**
- **Boone County Conservation District**
- **Boone County Planning Department**
- **City of Rockford**
- **Natural Land Institute**
- **Rockford Area Transportation Study**
- **Rockford Park District**
- **Winnebago County Forest Preserve District**
- **Winnebago County Planning Department**

- Jack Adam, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- John Alesandrini, Natural Areas Preservation Specialist, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
- John Alexander, Roscoe Park District
- Stephen Appell, President, Village of Cherry Valley
- Gordie Baggio, Supervisor, Cherry Valley Township
- Jennifer Beard, Boone County Farm Bureau
- Jack Broughton, Durand
- Jack R. Cook Jr., Supervisor, Rockton Township
- Dennis Damon, ROW agent for Commonwealth Edison
- Roger Day, President, Poplar Grove Village
- Wayne Dust, City of Rockford Planning Office
- Dan Fischer, Machesney Park
- Jean Greenlee, Caledonia
- Rod Gustafson, Village of Roscoe
- Kathy Hall, Candlewick Lake Association
- Jim Hardy, Garden Prairie
- Tom Hawes, Supervisor of Roscoe Township
- Ron Heinen, Winnebago County Department of Public Works
- David Helland, committee chairman of the Charles Street Community Path
- Brad Holcomb, Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Steve Hotlen, Blackhawk Bike and Ski Club
- Byron Hutchins, author of the Winnebago County Trails Map
- Dan Jacobson, Loves Park City Planner
- Tom Jencius, supervisor, Rockton Township
- Jim Keeling, attorney for the Perryville Path Recreation Trail
- Lyle F. Lamont, Supervisor, Caledonia Township
- Laura Lengjak, Roscoe
- Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park
- Fran Lowman, Friends of the Kishwaukee River

- Steve McIntosh, Tri-City Snowmobile Association
- Douglas Meyers, President, Capron
- Rick and Mary Mohaupt, Pecatonica Prairie Path
- David Nord, Village Administrator, Cherry Valley
- Webbs Norman, Director, Rockford Park District
- Joel Nussbaum, Supervisor, Manchester Township
- Jon Olson, Rock River Water Reclamation District
- Julie Olson, Winnebago County Forest Preserve District
- Alan Palmer, Turtle Creek Breezeway Commission, South Beloit
- Wendy Perks Fisher, Director of Tourism, Rockford
- Brad Peters, Bonus Township
- Bob Pilcher, Supervisor, Harlem Township
- Sunil Puri, Chairman, Perryville Recreation Path Committee
- Jacci Schlosser, Blackhawk Bicycle and Ski Club
- Steve Schmaeng, Rockton
- Susan M. Siek, President, Caledonia Village
- Ray Shaffer, teacher, Lincoln Middle School, Rockford
- Bob Sharp, Rockford Road Runners
- William Sowle, Rockford
- Clifford Sprecher, Supervisor, Shirland Township
- Lori Tharp, Planner, Village of Machesney Park
- Bob Turner, Supervisor, Belvidere Township
- Bob Walberg, Poplar Grove
- Bob Wieneke, Rockford
- Dave Winters, Illinois State Representative, Shirland
- Ronald W. Zisslek, Sr., Pecatonica

Each of these individuals received an update of the actions of the Technical Committee as the greenways plan was updated. Several offered suggestions for changes and additions to the map and assisted in the creation of the first map.

Appendix E: Plans and Resolution Agreements from Local Communities

- Belvidere-Boone County Planning Commission Resolution dated August 19, 1997
- Belvidere Park District Master Plan Update, 1994
- Bonus Township Resolution dated July 10, 1997
- Boone County Board Resolution dated September 10, 1997
- Boone County Conservation District Open Space Plan by Steve Weller, EcoLogic Planning Inc., May, 1997
- Candlewick Lake Association Resolution dated June 3, 1997
- City of Belvidere Resolution dated September 16, 1997
- City of Loves Park Comprehensive Plan, adopted August 18, 1997
- Kishwaukee Riverfront Plan as prepared by Teska Associates in 1987 with 1990 Master Plan Update
- Manchester Township Resolution dated August 12, 1997
- Roscoe Area Parks and Recreation Master Plan, May, 1996
- Shirland Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Spring Township Resolution dated August 12, 1997
- Village of Caledonia Resolution dated July 15, 1997
- Village of Machesney Park Comprehensive Plan prepared by Trkia, Pettigrew, Allen & Payne, Inc., 1994
- Winnebago County 2010 Plan
- Winnebago County Forest Preserve Plan

Appendix F: Sources of Information

- *Greenways of America* by Charles E. Little
- *Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan* developed by The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission
- *Greenways: An Introduction*, Land Trust Alliance
- *Greenways, A Guide to Planning, Design, and Development* by Charles A. Flink and Robert M. Searns
- *Illinois State Trails Plan*, dated May 1, 1995
- *Economic and Tax Implications of Rail-Trails, an Illinois Railbanking Study*, dated September, 1990
- *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* from the City of Beloit prepared by Steve Clark Associates



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DEPARTMENT OF
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Boone County Planning Dept.

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