

Trail Connections

Fall 2012

The Quarterly Newsletter Published by the Linn County Trails Association



President's Message:

It is again time to revitalize LCTA. We have newly elected officers: President Steve Hershner and Vice President Kari Lammer as well as retuning Treasurer Keith Sutherland and Secretary Brad Mullin. We also have a group of young enthusiastic people that have expressed strong interest in joining the Board of Directors to give us fresh energy in order to achieve our mission to be a catalyst for the development and growth of a system of connected, multi-use trails through Linn County and Eastern Iowa. There are two recent actions by Metro Area governments that may significantly help LCTA in achieving our mission: MPO funding for trails and Blue Zones Initiative for a healthy life style.

The Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has authorized 80% of certain roadway funds be dedicated to trails as an alternate means of transportation. This may amount to many millions of dollars over a 5 year period. The MPO is now deciding how that money should be spent. The LCTA president or designee has been invited to be a member of the Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC) to advise the MPO Policy Board. TTAC is made up of senior engineering and planning staff from the metro and county governments. LCTA now has a strong voice in determining how trail development will proceed. We must use it wisely!

In order to for LCTA to be a catalyst for trail development, we must promote trail usage for recreation and commuting and thus justify the need for additional trails. Encouragement of trail usage becomes a marketing task which is where the Blue Zones Initiative comes in. A primary goal of the Blue Zones Initiative is to promote a healthy life style and thus gives LCTA a platform to achieve our mission. LCTA is participating in the Blue Zones Healthy Life Style Committee exploring a program tentatively called "Meet Me at the Market" to bring adults and families together to enjoy physical activity, socialize with friends by participating in weekly events to walk/run/bike together. This is patterned after a similar program in Tucson, Arizona called Meet Me at Maynards (a local restaurant/market). Both Cedar Rapids and Marion are now pursuing Blue Zone support and regardless of those outcomes, this activity gives LCTA the opportunity to expand the active life style philosophy throughout the Metro Area!

LCTA has a strong voice in Metro Area trail development because we have a large group of supporters like you. MPO funding usually requires an 80/20 split with 20% of project funds coming from local sources. LCTA may need to step up and assist in the 20% match to encourage the Metro governments to aggressively pursue trail development. Please renew your annual support to give LCTA the financial strength to aggressively pursue our mission!

Happy Trails,



LCTA Officers

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Steve Hershner

Vice President

Kari Lammer

Treasurer

Keith Sutherland

Secretary

Brad Mullin

Past President

John Wauer

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Dennis Goemaat
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(City of Marion)
Daniel Gibbins
(Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation
Department)
Adam Lindenlaub
(Corridor MPO)
Tom Neenan
(Iowa Trails Council)



Upcoming Events

LCTA Board Meeting

Monday, January 14, 7:00pm

Location: United Way of East Central Iowa
317 7th Avenue SE,
Cedar Rapids

LCTA Board Meeting

Monday, February 11, 7:00pm

Location: United Way of East Central Iowa
317 7th Avenue SE,
Cedar Rapids

LCTA Board Meeting

Monday, March 11, 7:00pm

Location: United Way of East Central Iowa
Cedar Rapids, IA

All meetings are open to the public.

Sign up to receive recent updates on trail news and events,
visit the Linn County Trails Association's website at

www.linncountytrails.org



Find LCTA on facebook @
www.facebook.com/lctrails



Follow LCTA on Twitter @
www.twitter.com/lctrails

*Trail Connections is the quarterly publication of the
Linn County Trails Association.*

*It is published January, April, July and October
Articles may be submitted as an MS Word or text file.
Typed, printed or clearly handwritten articles are also ac-
cepted. Photos can be prints or can be submitted digitally
and saved with a resolution of ideally 300 dpi and a size
of 6x8 inches. The deadline for each issue is the first day
of the month prior to publication. Please send pictures,
stories, and ideas to Brad Mullin:
mullinb1427@yahoo.com*

Current Metro Area Trails

Open For Use

Fall 2012



Separated Trails	Miles	Surface	Remarks
Bowling Street Trail	1.8	Asphalt	From 50th Street SW to Wilson Avenue
Boyson Trail	2.4	Crushed Limestone	Follows Indian Creek, Marion
Cedar River Trail	13	Asphalt	Cedar Rapids and Hiawatha (ADT)
Cedar Valley Nature Trail	20.5	Asphalt/Crushed Limestone	Paved from Boyson Rd. to Schultz Rd.
CEMAR Trail	0.6	Asphalt	From 20th to 29th St. NE
CRT Lake Loop	1.6	Asphalt	Around Cedar Lake
Ellis Trail	3	Asphalt/Concrete	From Ellis Park to Downtown
Grant Wood Trail	8.5	Natural	Through Eastern Linn County in 3 segments
Hoover Nature Trail	2.7	Asphalt	76th Ave. SW to Ely Park (ADT)
Kirkwood Connector Trail	1.2	Concrete	From Ely Rd. to Kirkwood Campus
Krumholtz Trail	.75	Crushed Limestone	Marion: Thomas Park to Highway 100
Lindale Trail	1	Crushed Limestone	From Lindale Dr. West to C Ave.
Robins Trail	0.7	Asphalt	Along Main St, Robins. Connects to CVNT
Sac and Fox Trail	7.1	Crushed Limestone	*Closed from Rosedale Rd. to Mt.Vernon Rd.*
Park Trails	Miles	Surface	Remarks
Beverly Park Trail System	5	Natural	SW CR: Singletrack Mountain Bike trails
Cedar Greenbelt Trail	4.7	Natural	Near Indian Creek Nature Center/Sac and Fox Trail
Cherokee Park Trail	1	Crushed Limestone	West Side: Edgewood to Wiley Blvd.
Cherry Hill Park Trail	0.8	Crushed Limestone	NW Cedar Rapids: Cherry Hill Park
Fay Clark Memorial Trail	0.7	Asphalt	Hiawatha: Fay Clark Memorial Park
Fross Park	1.2	Crushed Limestone	NW Center Point
Huston Park Trail	0.11	Asphalt	SE Cedar Rapids
Jackson Park Trail	0.4	Crushed Limestone	NW Cedar Rapids near Jackson Elementary School
Lowe Park Trail	0.5	Asphalt	Marion: N. 10th St to 35th Ave
Matsell Bridge Natural Area Trail System	8.4	Natural	NE Linn County, near Viola
Morgan Creek Trail System	3.8	Natural	NW Cedar Rapids
Nixon Trail	0.75	Crushed Limestone	NE Cedar Rapids: Around Nixon School
Noelridge Park Trail	0.8	Crushed Limestone	NE Cedar Rapids: Noelridge Park
Pinicon Ridge Park Trail System	12	Natural	Five park trails near Central City
Prairie Park Fishery Trail	2	Asphalt	SE Cedar Rapids: Prairie Park Fishery
Reed Park Trail	0.25	Crushed Limestone	SW Cedar Rapids near Taylor Elementary School
Squaw Creek Park Trail System	4	Natural	Located within Squaw Creek Park plus 1 mile singletrack mountain bike trail
Thomas Park Singletrack	2	Natural	Singletrack mountain bike trail
Van Buren Park Trail	0.5	Crushed Limestone	SW Cedar Rapids near Van Buren Elementary School
Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center Trail System	5	Natural	5 mile network near Toddville

LCTA Trail Prioritization Surveys -*John Wauer and Steve Hershner*

LCTA has supported has supported trail development in Eastern Iowa, Linn County, and the Metro area for more than 20 years. How does an organization with many diverse views on trail development decidewhat are the most important trail projects? Some projects involve painting lines on the street while otherprojects may require extensive grading and other preparation for a separated trail. Frequently, there are issues related to land acquisition, which require a long lead time to complete.

In all cases there is anecessary design phase and approval process if State or Federal funding is involved. All of which means we must get our priorities right the first time. LCTA mission is to be a catalyst for the development and growth of a system of connected, multi-use trails throughout Linn County and Eastern Iowa (trails that go somewhere).

Trail Priority Considerations:

Priority is normally based on importance of a trail or trail segment to the overall Metro/Linn County trail system. It does not necessarily establish the order in which trails are developed. Schedule depends on land availability, funding availability, and schedule of supporting projects that can piggyback the trail project to reduce cost. A trail may have a high priority to protect right-of-way from development that will block the trail, fill in gaps in the existing trail system, develop feeder routes, or identify new primary routes.

Therefore, the LCTA priority list will focus on connections and major loops. Connections have identified destinations. Destinations include cities, parks, or other primary trails. Many of these connections already partially exist with gaps that need to be filled. Tables 1, 2, and 3 provide more detail on what services or destinations are being connected under the various Trail Connection Names.

Survey Process & Participants:

LCTA conducted two surveys: (1) a survey of the LCTA Board of Directors, and (2) a survey of the general public. The Board of Directors is a group of people knowledgeable about the status of the Metro Area trail system and the general public are primarily composed of LCTA supporters that have signed up for the LCTA email distribution list for news about trails. The general public responders are generally very active trail users and have strong interest developing trails useful to them.

Board Meeting Survey: July 9, 2012

During LCTA July 9th Board meeting members and visitors attending were asked to rate their trail development priorities.

- Each attendee was given five stickers and they could put all the stickers on one trail or up to five separate trail development options
- To facilitate trail development priority selection, multiple trail segments were combined under one trail name (see Table 1. Trail Development Priorities for more information)
- Potential of 130 votes (26 attendees), 122 were used
- Attendees were also offered opportunity to suggest additional trail options
- Figure 1. Board Survey Results shows total number of votes recorded for each trail development option

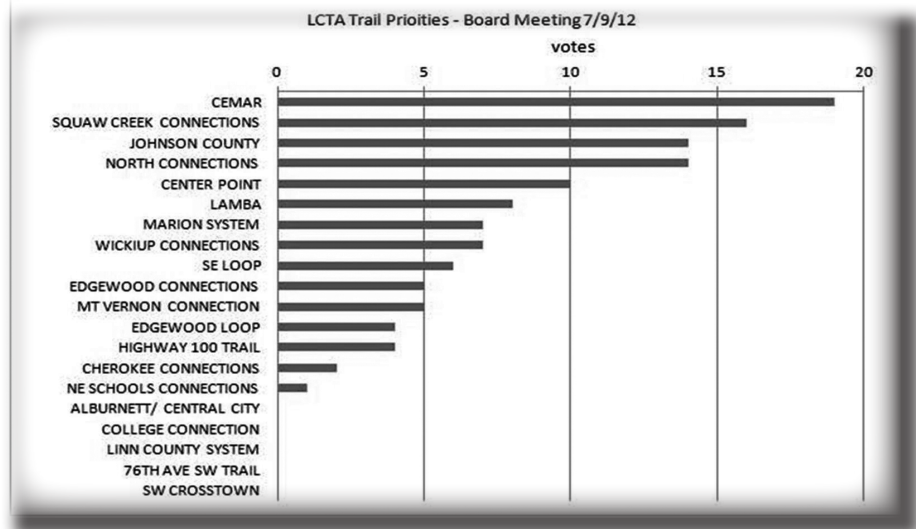


Figure 1. Board survey results: Area trail system for recreation, health, and commuting.

Online Survey Results

LCTA conducted an online survey from July 20 to August 20, 2012 to identify the most important trail connections that should be completed. The survey had 231 responses.

A description of connections included in the survey is listed in Table 2 below.

Respondents rated the importance of each connection as very high, high, medium, low, or not rated. Each selection was given a value of 100, 75, 50, 25, or 0 respectively. The average score for each connection is given in the chart of Figure 2. The survey offered the respondents an opportunity to specify another important connection not listed in the survey. There were 34 responses which are shown in Figure 2 below.

Conclusions:

The close priority ranking, particularly with the public survey, indicates a desire to implement most or all of the options that were offered. Two themes stand out; our members want trails to connect major destinations and communities, and they want to fully utilize our scenic long distance trails. Highly

rated scenic long distance trails include Cedar Valley Nature Trail, Johnson County, and Squaw Creek Connections. CEMAR and North Connections link Hiawatha, Marion and Cedar Rapids. While some areas did not score as highly in the surveys due to lack of participation from residents in those areas, we recognize that all areas of the metro/county area benefit from a connected and coordinated trail network.

Comments from survey participants strongly indicate that they and the general public are looking for connected trails with important destinations as in, "Let's finish the trails network". As stated earlier, these surveys do not attempt to define which trail project should be completed next, but to identify the most important connections that should be completed in the near future. Work must proceed towards connecting destinations, connecting trails, and creating "loops" to maximize the usefulness of the Metro Area trail system for recreation, health, and commuting

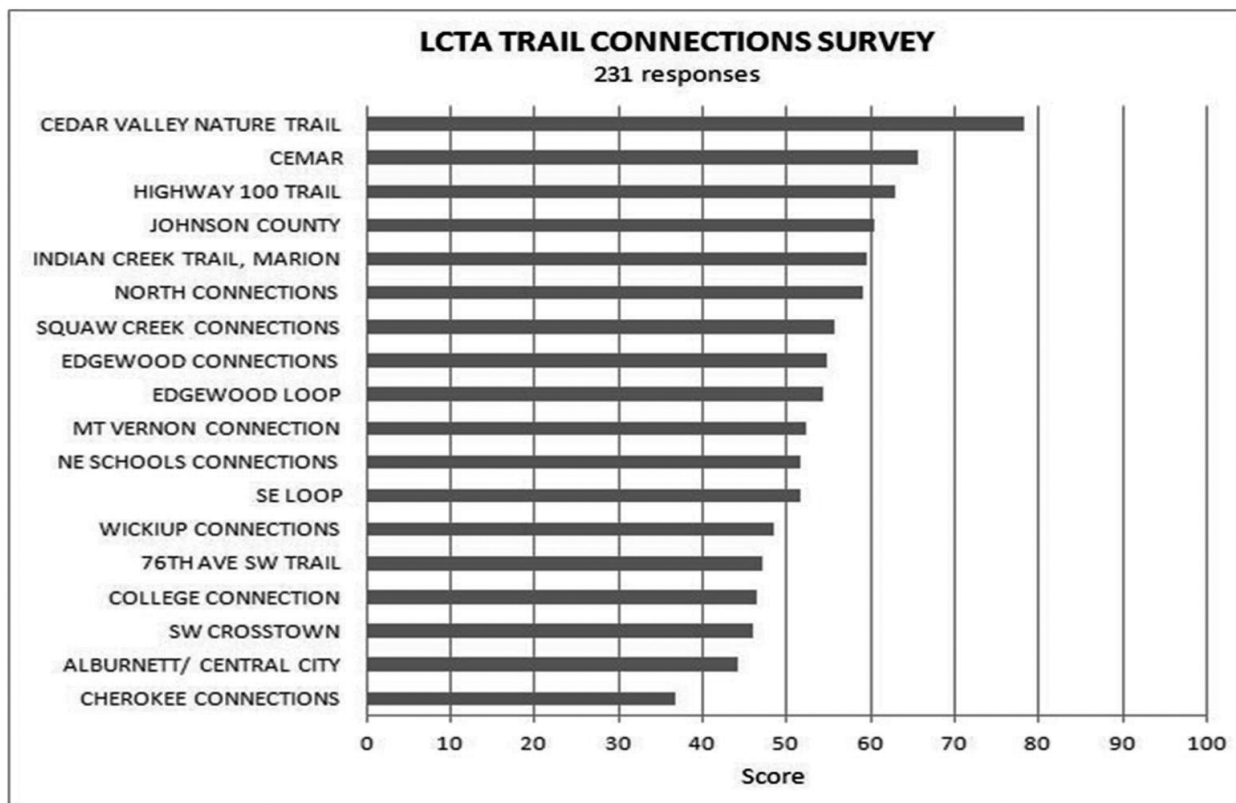


Figure 2. Online survey results: Area trail system for recreation, health, and commuting.

LCTA AND MONEY: WHERE IT GOES, AND WHERE IT COMES FROM.

-Keith Sutherland

LCTA has no paid employees; it is run entirely by volunteers. Therefore, we don't spend any money on salaries, and our operating expenses are generally less than \$10,000 per year. In 2011, expenses were almost twice that. We developed our new Metro Area Trails Guide and printed enough copies to last, we think, three years. Again this year, it appears our expenses will end up around \$8,000.

Besides the operating budget, LCTA has a separate fund for Trail Development. Money from the Trail Development Fund is used to help with the funding of government project, or to directly acquire and improve trails.

Generally, helping government projects takes the form of providing all or some of the money required from local sources to match federal government grants. For example, the paving of Segment 2 of the Cedar Valley Nature trail cost almost \$700,000. \$500,000 was provided by a Recreational Trails Grant from the state, leaving almost \$200,000 to be raised locally. Linn County was able to fund half the "local match", and LCTA committed to provide the other half. We conducted a "capital campaign", raised the money, and wrote a check to Linn County.

Making Trails Happen

An example of direct involvement in trail development is the Grant Wood Trail. LCTA conducted a fundraising campaign and acquired the land for the trail. Volunteers then cleared and developed the trail so it could be used for walking, and donated it to Linn County.

A even more-recent example is the Lindale Trail. There were no plans by Cedar Rapids to develop this trail, which will be a great off-street bicycling and walking route from Marion to Rockwell Collins, and which was being partially developed in Marion. So LCTA, using money from the Trail Development Fund, bought the land and donated it to the city of Cedar Rapids. In addition, we have committed trail-development money to partially fund paving of the trail.

We understand that LCTA does not have a broad enough base of support to fund major trail developments, which require millions of dollars. However, because opportunities such as the Lindale Trail can come out of the blue, we like to keep between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in the Trail Development Fund. That amount allows us to move quickly when we have a chance to make a trail happen.

HOW LCTA RAISES MONEY

LCTA is blessed to have many members who have supported the organization for years with annual contributions. During a typical year, these annual contributions will normally cover all our operating costs, plus add a few thousand dollars to the Trail Development Fund. During years when people are especially generous, we can add as much as \$10,000 to the Trail Development Fund.

Most of you contribute in response to the reminder on the mailing label of our newsletter. Thank you so much. When we don't have to send reminders, it cuts our fundraising costs and effort a great deal.

For major projects, such as the paving of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail, we conduct special fundraising campaigns. Board members personally approach the local businesses and foundations (such as Hall-Perrine and the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundations). We make fundraising appeals in the newsletter and on our website. In addition, we do direct-mail requests to people on our mailing list who don't respond to the newsletter requests.



For quite a few years, LCTA conducted an annual Fall Fundraiser, a direct-mail campaign asking for donations. A few years ago, we had about \$75,000 in the Trail Development Fund, and we just couldn't find any opportunities costing less than \$1 million that would help expand our trail network. So we suspended the fall fundraiser, and relied on annual contributions and contributions from new members who found us from our web site and events.

When we have paid all the bills for the Lindale Trail, the LCTA Trail Development Fund will be under \$20,000. That is not enough to let us respond quickly to another land-purchase opportunity. We need to start building the fund back up. If we can rebuild the fund without conducting a direct-mail fundraiser, it will let us spend about \$1,000 on trails that we would otherwise spent on fundraising. So, if you can make a year-end contribution to the Trail Development Fund, it would greatly benefit future trail development in Linn County. Thank you for your support,

LCTA has raised funds for numerous area trail projects over the years.

A few examples are:

\$15,000 for the **Cedar River Trail** through Hiawatha

\$35,000 for the construction southern section of the **Cedar River Trail** in Cedar Rapids and Linn County.

\$54,000 for the purchase land and construction of the **Lindale Trail** connecting Cedar Rapids and Marion. The trail is now open for use.

\$70,000 for the construction of the initial segment of the **Cedar River Trail** in Cedar Rapids.

\$96,250 for the paving of the **Cedar Valley Nature Trail** from County Home Road to Lafayette in Linn County.

\$250,000 for the **Grant Wood Trail** in eastern Linn County. LCTA purchased properties, installed bridges and provided numerous hours of volunteer labor.

The future is promising for more trail development opportunities in Linn County.

Make a contribution using the form on page 11 or at www.linncountytrails.org



Linn County Mayors' Bike Ride

On a warm Labor Day morning, just over 350 riders participated in the 2012 Mayors' Bike Ride. Riders left Ellis Park for the 8 mile and 2.5 mile ride through the city of Cedar Rapids. The ride was sponsored by the Linn County Trails Association and Cedar Rapids Bicycle Advisory Committee. Several area elected officials attended the ride. Brewed Awakenings provided breakfast to ride participants. This year's raised \$348 in donations. Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's ride. Your participation helped educate Linn County's elected leaders on the continued need to develop trails and alternative means of transportation.



2012 Mayors' Ride Elected Official Participants:

Bob Dillion	Council Member	Center Point
Roger Shebetka	Council Member	Springville
Ian Cullis	Mayor	Robins
Dave Rasmussen	Council Member	Ely
Ron Corbett	Mayor	Cedar Rapids
Pat Shey	Council Member	Cedar Rapids
Scott Olson	Council Member	Cedar Rapids



Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett and LCTA President John Wauer



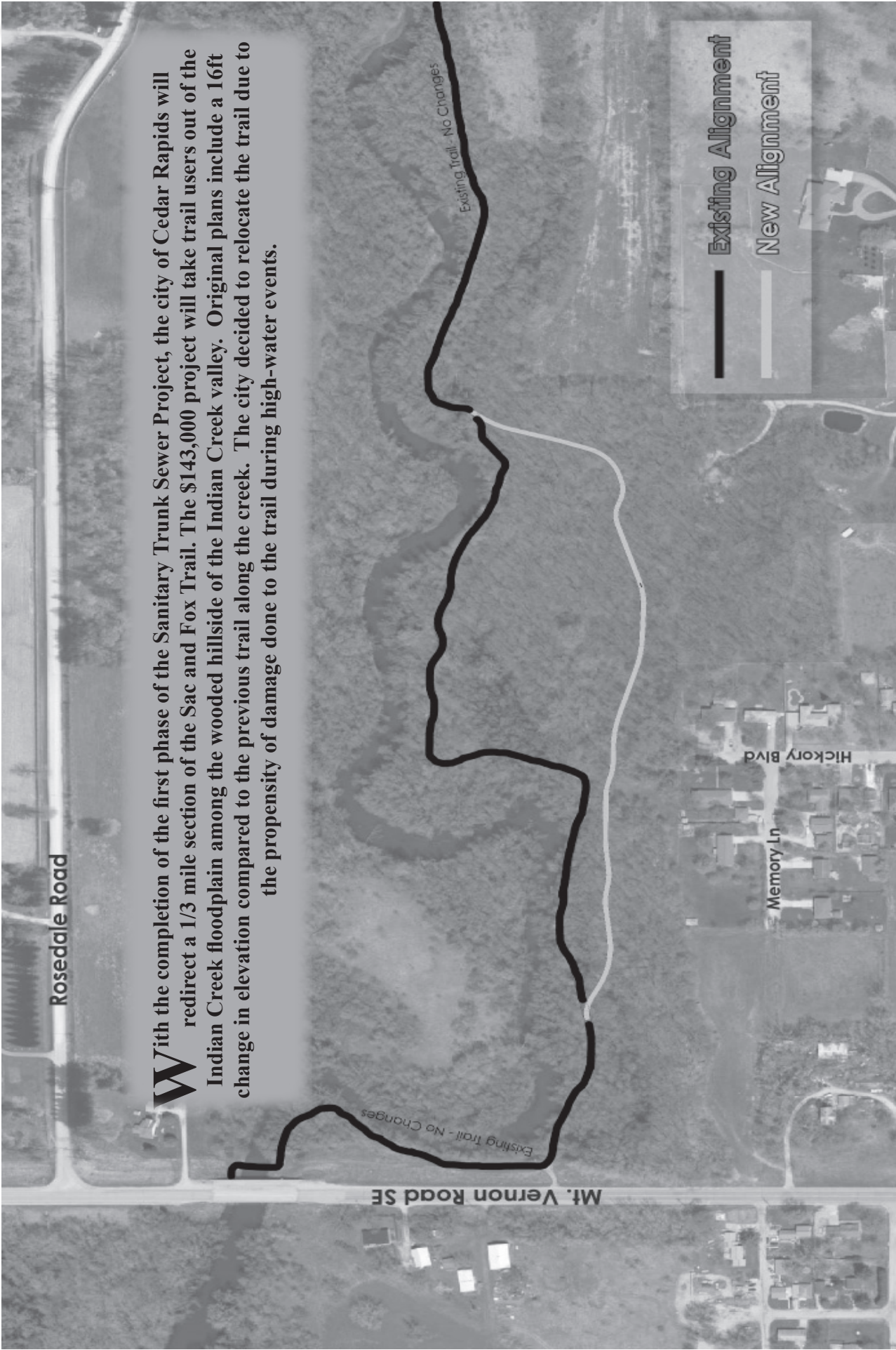


2012 Mayors' Ride Volunteer

Marta Hershner
 Hilary Hershner
 Steve Hershner
 David Turzai
 Gerald Falta
 Bruce Nesmith
 Jim Green
 John Chaimov
 Mike Yakos
 Gary Palmer
 Mike Wilson
 Esther Wilson
 Kari Lammer
 Luke Lammer
 Tom Peffer
 Carol Reasnor
 Dean Barnum
 Dick Mundy
 Jeff Keiser
 Rob Schneider
 Mary Wauer
 Sue Henderson
 Lisa Paulos
 Brad Mullin
 Rose Sullivan
 John Wauer



Thank you to everyone that participated in this year's event!



With the completion of the first phase of the Sanitary Trunk Sewer Project, the city of Cedar Rapids will redirect a 1/3 mile section of the Sac and Fox Trail. The \$143,000 project will take trail users out of the Indian Creek floodplain among the wooded hillside of the Indian Creek valley. Original plans include a 16ft change in elevation compared to the previous trail along the creek. The city decided to relocate the trail due to the propensity of damage done to the trail during high-water events.

Map courtesy of:



Sac & Fox Trail Relocation

LCTA SUPPORTER FORM

Why would I want to support LCTA?

1. Your support will count you among the hundreds of enthusiastic trail advocates who make up the Linn County Trails Association.
2. By becoming a supporter you will have already begun to play an important role in building a network of connected trails in Linn County and the surrounding area.
3. 95% of all money raised through donations and grants goes directly to build more trails or to improve existing trails. LCTA has been able to multiply this financial support by providing matching funds to secure significant grants.
4. As a supporter, you will receive our quarterly newsletter. Here you can read about trail vacations, upcoming trail events, opportunities to volunteer, and issues that are important to trail development.
5. Supporters are not expected to attend meetings and no one will call you. Of course, if you want to get involved, we will welcome your help.

Learn more about LCTA by visiting our website at www.linncountytrails.org

Information required: (fill out if not on label on other side)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____

Please print the information CLEARLY

Donations to LCTA are Tax Deductible

TRAIL BLAZER	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$100*
TRAIL PARTNERS (Family)	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 35
TRAIL SCOUT	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 20

* At the Trail Blazer level, supporters also receive the "Advocate," the newsletter of the Iowa Trails Council.

Please consider an additional donation for NEW TRAIL DEVELOPMENT \$ _____

If you provide your email address, we will send future reminders via email and will add you to the LCTA email distribution list, which is used to provide information on trail-related events to supporters.

Mail donations to:
Linn County Trails Association
PO Box 2681 Cedar Rapids, IA 52406

*Please check your mailing label for your
Support Renewal Date.*

*If you renew without our sending you a
reminder, it saves us time & money.*

*So PLEASE - Renew in a timely manner. All donations are
tax deductible.*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

If you are not already a supporter, please consider helping us.

Linn County Trails Association
P.O. Box 2681
Cedar Rapids, IA 52406-2681

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Runners enjoy the Beverly Park trail system during the Farview Farm Trail Run in November.