



Trail Connections

The Quarterly Newsletter Published by the Linn County Trails Association

Winter 2016/2017



Cedar Valley Nature Trail Update

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Upcoming Events

LCTA Board Meeting

Monday, February 13th, 6:00pm

Location: Water Administration Building
Steven J. Cook Memorial Conference Room
1111 Shaver Rd NE, Cedar Rapids, IA

LCTA Board Meeting

Monday, March 13th, 6:00pm

Location: Water Administration Building
Steven J. Cook Memorial Conference Room
1111 Shaver Rd NE, Cedar Rapids, IA

LCTA Board Meeting

Monday, April 10th, 6:00pm

Location: Water Administration Building
Steven J. Cook Memorial Conference Room
1111 Shaver Rd NE, Cedar Rapids, IA

All meetings are open to the public.



If you plan to do any shopping on Amazon.com this year please support LCTA with Amazon Smile. It is a new program in which the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to LCTA.

To start, enter in the URL <http://smile.amazon.com> into your browser, and search for "Linn County Trails Association". By participating in this program, you can easily support LCTA while getting your online shopping done. Thanks for your continued support!

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 accepted. 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: Winter 2016



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	Closed from Urbana Road to 56th Street Dr.
CEMAR Trail	0.6	Asphalt	From 20th to 29th St. NE
Central City-Wapsi Nature Trail	1.3	Concrete	Central City connecting to Pinicon Ridge Park
CRT Lake Loop	1.6	Asphalt	Around Cedar Lake
Ellis Trail	3.6	Asphalt/Concrete	From Edgewood Rd. NW to Downtown CR
Fairfax Trail	.3	Concrete	Fairfax with bridge over Prairie Creek
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	Asphalt	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	All sections open.
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
David Spicer Memorial Trail	0.4	Crushed Limestone	NW Cedar Rapids: Jackson Elementary School
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
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	Asphalt/Natural	Five park trails connecting to 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

ADT=American Discovery Trail, NRT= National Recreational Trail

LCTA President's Message

As the year comes to a close, the board of the Linn County Trails Association is grateful for all of the support that our members have shown throughout the year. Here are a few of the accomplishments that I am most proud of.

Together with the Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization we have been able to produce a new revision to the printed trails map. This is the first update in five years, but we plan to update the map more regularly with the latest trails as they are built.

Your contributions to the capital campaign in 2015 have made construction of the CVNT paving to Center Point possible this year. The trail is now open and completely paved from Ely to Center Point. The paving will also continue through Center Point next Spring, and we're looking forward to a ribbon cutting ceremony when it is complete.

LCTA has also provided the City of Marion with a \$50,000 grant to ensure paving of the Grant Wood Trail connecting 44th St. to the Hoover Trail under Highway 13. This connection will help fill in a much needed gap in the trail, and should lead to increased usage.

I'm also happy to report that LCTA, in partnership with the Hawkeye Bicycle Association, has been working with the City of Hiawatha to enhance the Cedar Valley Nature Trail crossing at Boyson Road. This project is expected to produce results in 2017, and should improve the safety and efficiency of the crossing.

We are also thankful for your support of the Linn County Water and Land Legacy measure at the polls this fall. This measure has a dedicated amount of funding available for trails, and we will maintain our strong ties with the Linn County Conservation department to ensure that projects that are a high priority for our membership come to fruition.

Each one of these projects would not be possible without your continued support, and we thank you for your generous contributions. As my term is ending in December, I would also like to thank LCTA for the opportunity to serve as President, and I look forward to continuing to serve LCTA as a board member.



Paul Fiegen
LCTA President

Cedar Valley Nature Trail and LCTA: Past, Present and Future

Rail-trails are a perfect means of telling community stories.... Their long and colorful history make perfect greenways. They combine that history with a respect for the environment, and recreation, and allow us to live life on a human scale maintaining contact with each other and with nature. —DAVID BURWELL, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, 1998



The development of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail is truly a story of community partnership between private individuals and public entities. The trail is located on the former right of way of the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern railroad system. The railroad was often referred as the Cedar Valley Road. With its origins in the late nineteenth century, all regularly scheduled train operations ended in 1974. The Illinois Gulf Railroad, in February 1977, was authorized by the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon the southern 47 miles of right of way between Gilbertville and Hiawatha. After the abandonment, interest in constructing a recreational trail along the former right of way surfaced.

In subsequent years, private and political forces hindered the development of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. However, two private advocacy groups became important in furthering the creation of the trail in the early 1980s. The first group, Iowa Rails To Trails, raised the necessary funds to allow the Linn County Conservation Board to lease the southern 16.5 miles of the right of way from the Illinois Gulf Railroad in 1980. This leased section was then developed by Linn County into a nature trail. As more and more individuals used the new trail, more public support increased for further development.

Lack of funding delayed the actual purchase of the right of way by some public entities. Along came a second group important group known as the Old Interurban Trail Inc. With the assistance of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, the group of businessmen raised money specifically for the purchase of the railroad right of way. The group was able to purchase, for an estimated \$1.2 million, the entire 52 mile corridor by 1983. The corridor was further developed into a nature trail and was named the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. In the fall of 1984, the trail was officially opened by Governor Terry Branstad. In addition, the U.S. Department of the Interior designated 16 miles in Linn County as a National Recreational Trail. The rest of the trail was designated in 1991. In the same year, the entire trail became part of the 6,800 mile American Discovery Trail with the help of the Iowa Trails Council.

Workers complete the 2004 first phase of the paving of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail



Cedar Valley Nature Trail

In the early 1990's, Black Hawk County paved several miles of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. At the same time, the Linn Conservation Board expressed a desire to pave the trail in Linn County. The LCTA established a "Pave the Cedar Valley Nature Trail" committee in 1993 and supported a 1994 grant application for the initial paving project. The organization elected to focus its fundraising efforts toward the construction of a new trail through Cedar Rapids, the beginning of the Cedar River Trail. Lack of funding and attention to new trail creation led to the majority Cedar Valley Nature Trail remaining crushed limestone for almost a decade.



County Home Road culvert placement during the 2004 paving of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. (Photo Randy Burke)

The Linn County Board of Supervisors voted to pave the trail in 2003. A year later the Cedar Valley Nature Trail was paved from the trail head at Boyson Rd. to County Home Rd, including a trail underpass at County Home Rd. (Phase 1). The initial phase was a cooperation between Linn County Board of Supervisors, Linn County Engineering and Linn County Conservation. The majority of the funding for the project was from an ISTEA Enhancement Fund Grant with the Linn County Board of Supervisors providing the remaining funds.

Progress continued in 2012, when the asphalt trail was extended from County Home Rd. to Schultz Rd. (Phases 2 and 3). In 2012, the Linn County Trails Association raised \$96,250 to assist in the county's match a grant obtained by the Linn County Conservation for the surfacing of 7 miles of trail from County Home Road to Schultz Rd. As part of the project, a new underpass was installed under Lafayette Rd. The funds raised by LCTA helped the County to complete Phase 2 and 3 at the same time.

Since 2012, LCTA supporters have contributed an estimated \$18,884.09 to each mile of newly paved Cedar Valley Nature Trail.

In 2015, Linn County Conservation obtained another State Recreation Trails Grant for the paving of the trail from Schultz Rd. through Center Point. To assist the project, the LCTA raised \$102,033.41. The check was presented to Linn County Conservation Board at the LCTA meeting on December 14, 2015. In 2016, the Linn County Conservation developed plans to convert the limestone surface to hard surface from Schultz Rd. through the city of Center Point. The newly constructed 3.5 miles of trail includes an asphalt portion from Schultz Rd. to Iowa St. within Center Point. The remaining trail through Center Point will consist of a concrete surface. Worked on the concrete section to Ash Lane is schedule for completion in June 2017. The new section from Schultz Rd. to Iowa St. was opened at the end of November 2016.

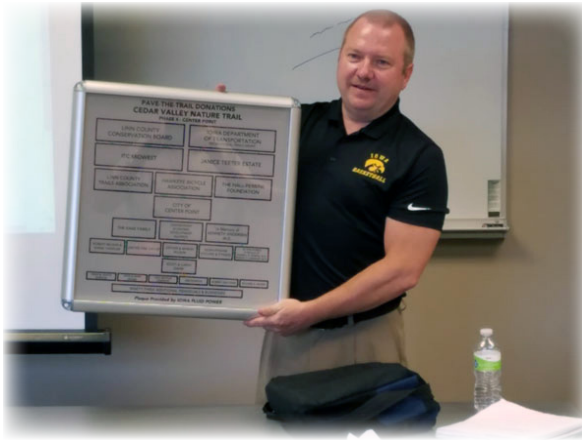


Newly paved section of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail near Fay Rd.

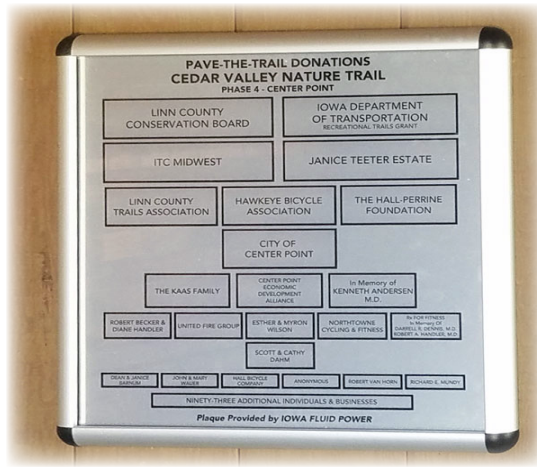
Particularly notable in our list of contributors is Hawkeye Bicycle Association (HBA) which pledged \$8,000 plus matching another \$10,000 from their members. The members contributed \$15,033 bringing the total HBA contribution to \$33,033. HBA has also pledged an additional \$2,000 to Linn County Conservation Board for two benches along the trail. The county plans to install new amenities along the newly developed trail section and plans to further pave the trail to the Linn-Benton County line. The Linn County Trails Association supporters have played an important role in the story of the development of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail.

We want to thank all who have contributed to this important project!

2015 PAVE THE TRAIL CONTRIBUTORS



At the June 13, 2016 LCTA meeting, Jim Kaas of Iowa Fluid Power (above) presented the LCTA with an engraved plaque with the major donors to 2015 Pave the Cedar Valley Nature Trail Capital Campaign. The plaque will hang in the Railroad Depot in Center Point. The plaque was donated to the LCTA by Iowa Fluid Power.



Derek Stepanek, from Northtowne Schwinn Fitness and Cyclery, presents a check for \$3,000 for the sale of 2015 Pave Trail Water Bottles.



Alcock, Allan
Bader, Linda & Douglas
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Baustian, Gordon and Jann
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Boesenberg, Clarence
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Tiemann, Bruce
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Westpheling, Jeffrey
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Hall Bicycle Company
RX for Fitness
Northtowne Cycling and Fitness, Ltd.
United Fire Group Foundation

Cedar Valley Nature Trail: Bridge Improvements

In December 2016, Linn County Conservation closed a section of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail for the replacement of the West Blue Creek Bridge. The two hundred and seventy foot bridge located near mile marker 15 was built in early twentieth century. The project involves the removal of the existing timber stringer bridge and the construction of a new 16 foot wide concrete beam and concrete deck bridge. Completion of the bridge could happen late spring 2017. Until then, the trail is closed from Urbana Road (County E2W) to 56th Street drive in Benton County until the project is completed.



Bridge of East Blue Creek on the Cedar Valley Nature Trail (above)

In September 2016, the Iowa Department of Transportation awarded a \$250,000 grant to Linn County for the replacement of the East Blue Creek Bridge located near mile marker 14. The project will involve replacing the existing 140 foot wood bridge structure. The current structure will be replaced with either a steel frame/concrete deck/clear span structure or a concrete beam/concrete deck single pier structure. Work on the East Blue Creek Bridge could begin in 2017. Repair of the two Blue Creek bridges is the first step before the trail paving can occur from outside Center Point to the Linn-Benton County line in the next few years.

The improvements are part of a 2014 initiative presented to the Iowa State Legislature entitled: *Linking Eastern Iowa Communities with Trails: The Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City to West Branch Connection*. Three Eastern Iowa counties, Black Hawk, Linn and Johnson, asked the state for \$8.2 million to help complete a network of trails local officials called critical to recreation, tourism, economic development and workforce development. The plan is to connect the Cedar Valley Nature Trail from Cedar Falls to Cedar Rapids to the Hoover Nature Trail south to Solon and West Branch on to Muscatine and Burlington. This includes peripheral connections to trails in Bremer and Buchanan counties to the north as well as to Iowa City, Coralville and North Liberty.



East Blue Creek Bridge damage



West Blue Creek Bridge on the Cedar Valley Nature Trail

Cedar Valley Nature Trail: Robins Connection

In 2009, the City of Robins participated in Iowa's Living Roadways "Visioning Program." During this process the community identified the CVNT and Main Street intersection as needing improvement and having the potential to strengthen Robins' identity within the corridor. A Visioning Committee was established to gather ideas for improvement.



Three years later, the Robins Visioning Committee contacted Kirkwood Community College Landscape Design class to develop ideas for the intersection. The intersection concept was to provide a waypoint for pedestrians using the trail by providing a seating area and a kiosk for City information, as well as providing public safety with pavement markings to designate the trail crossing. The city completed the project in 2016

In 2012, the City of Robins also received a \$204,000 Iowa Department of Transportation State Recreational Trails grant for the construction of the South Troy Park Trail and bridge. With REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection) funding, the city purchased additional land adjacent to South Troy Park. The South Troy Park Master Plan included additional baseball/ softball fields, additional green space and a trail connection to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. The new 3,400 ft. trail includes a bridge over Dry Creek and opened in late 2016. More parking is available within South Troy Park. The city encourages trail users to park their vehicles in South Troy Park and no longer



A runner uses the new trail connecting South Troy Park and the Cedar Valley Nature Trail (above) The new bridge over Dry Creek (below)



Cedar Valley Nature Trail: Amenities

In April 2016, Linn County Conservation installed the first of several planned bicycle repair stations along the Cedar Valley Nature Trail. These bike stands, by Bike Fixtation®, allow bike riders to mount their bicycle and make quick repairs with available tools. These tools, including various sizes of wrenches and screwdrivers, are securely attached by retractable cables. An air pump is also available at each site. Two stations were installed in 2016. One station at the Boyson Rd. Trailhead (Mile Marker 1) and another at County Home Rd. A third station is scheduled for installation at the Center Point Railroad Depot in 2017 during the paving the Cedar Valley Nature Trail through Center Point.

The three bicycle repair stations were made possible by donations from Blue Grass Enterprises in Alburnett (Boyson Rd.), ITC Midwest (County Home Road) and the Linn County Trails Association (Bob Westercamp memorial) (Center Point).



A rider takes advantage of the Fixtation at the Boyson Road Trailhead (above). Each station has a selection of tools for use (left)

Cedar Valley Nature Trail: Black Hawk County

In September 2015, Synder and Associates determined that the Cedar Valley Nature Trail Bridge over Wolf Creek (L3), outside LaPorte City, was unsafe for trail users. The bridge is closed for use with no designated detour. With the bridge nearly 100 years old, the wooden infrastructure of the bridge has decomposed. The Black Hawk Board of Supervisors elected to establish an alternate alignment rather than replace the existing bridge. The cost to establish a path from the existing trail to Main Street, in LaPorte City, just north of Wolf Creek and then back to the trail where it intersects with the gazebo is estimated at just under \$600,000. This alternative is far less than an entire replacement of the bridge. A number of business owners, noting the relocated path would bring trail traffic closer to downtown La Porte City, endorsed the plan as well. Local bike organizations are advocating the Board reconsider replacing the bridge. They believe that the alternate alignment is unsafe for bicyclists to cross Highway 218 and the railroad tracks. Furthermore, the new route detracts from the integrity of the trail. A group devoted to saving the bridge has started a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/savewolfcreek-bridge/>

There several sections of the Cedar Valley Nature Trail in Black Hawk are still damaged from the 2016 Cedar River flooding. For a current Black Hawk County Cedar Valley Nature Trail status, see www.BlackHawkCountyParks.com under News



Photo: Black Hawk County. Conservation

LCTA SUPPORT FORM- WHY JOIN US?

1. Your support will count you among the hundreds of enthusiastic trail supporters and advocates who make up LCTA.
2. By joining LCTA, you will play an important role in building a network of connected trails within Linn County.
3. We are an all-volunteer organization, so most of the money we raise is used to advocate, build, or improve trails.
4. With your contribution, you'll stay even more connected by receiving our quarterly newsletter, including: upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, issues related to trail development and trail vacations.



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

Information required (Please print the information CLEARLY):

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email Address _____

* Your email address will not be shared, and will be used only for supporter administration. To receive updates on trail related activities and events, join the LCTA email distribution list on the LCTA website. All donations to the LCTA are tax deductible.

TRAILBLAZER ☐ \$100

TRAIL PARTNERS (FAMILY) ☐ \$35

TRAIL SCOUT ☐ \$20

Contribute online at www.linncounttrails.org

or

Mail donations to:

Linn County Trails Association

PO Box 2681

Cedar Rapids, IA 52406

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

***Please check your mailing label for your
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***If you renew without our sending you a
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***So PLEASE - Renew in a timely manner. All donations are
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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

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