

October 2024 E Trail news

Cedar Valley Nature Trail Celebration to Economic Development

Marion Trail News- Where is that Caboose!

Linn County Trail News- Morgan Creek Trail and Maniti Trail



At Urbana Community Center there was a packed house to celebrate now 52 miles of hard surface paving of the entire CVNT. Trail advocates shared remarks about the glory days of difficult trail beginnings and how important the CVNT is to economic development for Iowa. Debi Durham, Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority spoke as well as many county officials and employees from both Linn County and Black Hawk County. The ribbon cutting was for paving the remaining 16 miles to complete 52 miles of hard surface. This opens the trail to more all-weather, all-type users.



A packed house, Urbana Community Center!

When the Cedar Valley Nature Trail was originally developed in the late 1970's/ early 1980's there were county conservation boards and departments, and community trail advocates who fought hard for this trail, **yet the opposition was there as well.** Here is a sample of the difficult days of trail development. We have come a LONG way! We thank the Cedar Rapids Gazette archives!

Arson blamed in fire on nature trail bridge

Courtesy CR Gazette September 1982
By Regina Hueiman
Gazette correspondent

VINTON — A fire blamed on arson caused about \$100,000 damage Tuesday night to the Bear Creek Bridge on the Cedar Valley Nature Trail near Brandon. Two rewards are being offered for finding the person responsible.

The former rail bridge was replanked a month ago by volunteers for use by hikers and bikers.

The fire was reported at 10:30 p.m. by a motorist who saw the flames from the road. The Brandon Fire Department was called to the scene, about two miles southeast of Brandon. A spokesman for the Benton County Sheriff's Department said 60 percent of the 136-foot bridge was destroyed.

The fire is being investigated by the state fire marshal, Linn and Benton County sheriff's department, and the owner of the bridge, the Linn County Conservation Board.

The bridge is on the Illinois Central Gulf abandoned rail right-of-way (formerly the Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Northern Railway) that has been sold and is being developed as a nature trail from Hiawatha to Waterloo. Volunteers working on the trail replanked the bridge on Aug. 6 at a cost of \$875 for materials. Iowa Rails to Trails groups in Cedar Rapids and Waterloo each gave \$500 towards the planking of the bridge.

Tom Neenan of Center Point, president of the Linn County Conservation Board, said the board has a standing offer of a \$100 reward for information leading to convictions for vandalism. The reward would apply in this case.

Also, Iowa Rails to Trails Inc. is offering a \$500 reward to anyone providing information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible.

Burning a bridge is a "rather cowardly way to express a negative opinion," Neenan said, alluding to the fact that the bridge may have been burned by someone opposing the trail.

Not only will the fire mean money lost and added expenses for the volunteers and group developing the trail, Neenan said, but "it will cost the taxpayers money. Benton County officials will have to spend money investigating the crime, and when a suspect is caught, it will cost more taxpayers' money to prosecute him."

According to the Benton County sheriff, the bridge is closed to all traffic while the investigation continues.

Trail fans say the bridge will be rebuilt.

Rural man charged with bulldozing nature trail

Courtesy CR Gazette December 1982

LA PORTE CITY — The Black Hawk County Sheriff's Department Wednesday arrested [redacted]

[redacted] of rural La Porte City and charged him with second-degree mischief for allegedly bulldozing a cut in the Cedar Valley Nature Trail, Aug. 15.

[redacted] was release on \$1,000 bail.

Nature Trail officials in Waterloo told The Gazette that the incident of dozing that [redacted] was arrested for is about four miles west of Brandon and is not in the same area of the trail where a quarter mile of the former railroad right of way, including trees, etc., was bulldozed flat last spring. A court injunction was issued in May to stop

several farmers from leveling the trail west of the Cedar River near La Porte City.

The latest incident involved cutting the trail bed with a dozer and piling dirt up on the trail on both sides of the cut, which is about 14 feet wide, trail officials said.

The Cedar Valley Nature Trail extends from Hiawatha to Gilbertville and is being built on the former railbed purchased from the Illinois Central Gulf by Old Interurban Trail Inc. Rails to Trails groups from Linn and Black Hawk counties have been working on the trail. Segments are open from each end, but there is still considerable work left in the center portion of the trail.

Trail issue splits supervisors

Courtesy CR Gazette September 1981

By Dave Rasdal
Gazette county reporter

Members of the Linn County Board of Supervisors have differing opinions on whether the Cedar Valley Nature Trail — from Hiawatha to Evansdale — should be constructed.

More than 40 people — themselves divided on the issue — crowded into the supervisors' board room at the Administrative Office Building Friday to find out just how the county's top policy-making officials feel about the trail.

And what the people heard was a mixed reaction. Supervisor Joe Rinas said he supports the trail, Jean Oxley is against it and Ken Schrinier is undecided.

"I'm one of those people sitting directly on the middle of the fence," Schrinier told the group. "I could drop off on either side."

Schrinier said the trail would be "great" if only private money is used to build and maintain it. On the other hand, he said, the Linn County Conservation Board does not have the resources to take care of the trail if that is required for the trail to be completed.

"It's like a landfill," said Oxley, who lives in rural Marion. "It's a good idea, but no one wants it in their back yard."

She added that the Conservation Board established a horse trail in Squaw Creek Park several years ago and that "we haven't seen a horse on this trail since."

Linn Conservation Director George Hamilton told The Gazette he has seen very few horses on the trail, but that it is now used by cross country skiers in the winter.

Rinas said he supports the trail, but he feels



Rinas



Oxley



Schrinier



Hamilton

finances for operation of it should come from donations and user fees.

After a question was raised about Linn County using park rangers to patrol the trail, Rinas said he feels the rangers are necessary for safety purposes.

Hamilton said the use of county equipment on the trail is being paid for by the Rails to Trails organization. He said the charges are the same anyone else would be charged for the equipment.

Hamilton added that rangers check the trail periodically as they do other parks under their jurisdiction. He said they do not keep track of how many hours they spend in any one park, so it would not be feasible to charge Iowa Rails to Trails for that work. Those costs are absorbed by the Conservation Board budget, he said.

Tom Neenan, chairman of the Conservation Board, said tax money spent on the trail will be less than what has been spent on any other county conservation project.

In a related matter, Robert Henely, district

engineer for the Iowa Department of Transportation, told the supervisors in an earlier meeting Friday that federal funding for a tunnel along the trail has been secured if the trail is completed.

Henely said the commitment is that a "viable" trail — all the way from Hiawatha to Evansdale — must be secured by July 1, 1982, for the tunnel to get federal and state funds.

The tunnel — which would pass beneath Interstate 380 just east of the Linn-Benton county line — is estimated to cost \$76,000. Henely said IDOT would pay \$2,400, that another group, probably Rails to Trails, would have to pay \$5,200 and that federal money would take care of the remaining 90 percent.

IDOT's contribution would be equal to what the cost would have been to route the trail along a county road and a bridge that will pass over the interstate, Henely said. He added that the original request by Rails to Trails was to build an overpass above the interstate. That was estimated to cost \$154,000, he said.



WE found the caboose! Spotted along the Grant Wood Trail, Draper Park in Marion is the new home of the renovated Caboose.



The above Draper Park plans show that this mini park will be a great addition and stopping point for Grant Wood Trail users. A wonderful way to keep important railroad history!

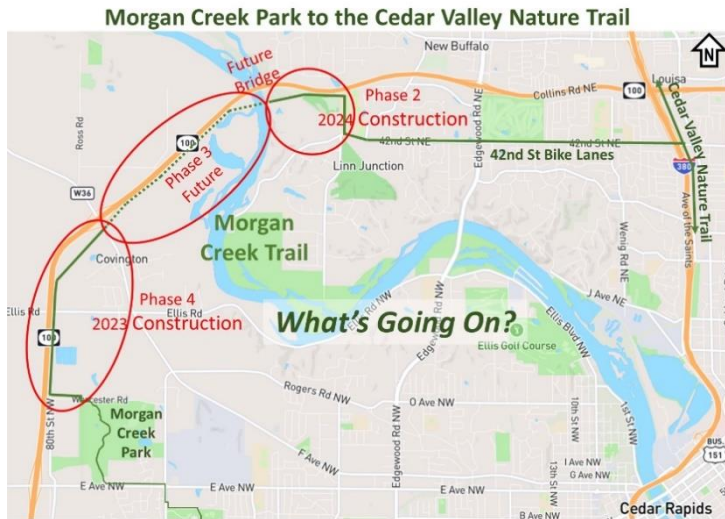


Initial progress on the Maniti Trail - digging out for a box culvert under Lakeside Road. The Lakeside Road culvert is just the beginning. The trail will be constructed in multiple phases over a number of years by Linn County Conservation and Marion.



The completed trail will run south from Wanatee Park to Mt Vernon Road where it will intersect with the Sac & Fox and Interurban Trails, and then north from the Park to connect to the Grant Wood Trail. Great connections and views.

Morgan Creek Trail



The future phase of the Morgan Creek Trail from the Covington Rd. underpass to the west side of the Cedar River is undergoing design work and fund requests.



The County is also looking for funding to begin the design phase of the Cedar River Bridge “Future Bridge”. (The Biechler Bridge). A new Federal grant application has been submitted for the bridge design work. The bridge will utilize the old railroad bridge piers!

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Did you know that many federal and state trail grants are required to show community support? And may require a 20% community match?

That is why LCTA raises funds for trails so our community can continue to build more amazing connections! We ask for your help to keep this momentum going! Please visit our website <https://linncountytrails.org/d...>