

YOUR TRAIL

DEVELOPING MULTI-USE TRAILS IN IOWA

**LEARN HOW TO
PLAN + CREATE
TRAILS IN IOWA**

**Creating a
Trail Vision**

Fundraising

**Trails Management
During & After
Construction**

CREATED BY IOWA NATURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION



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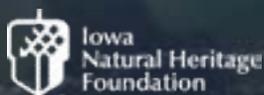
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This guide's purpose is to create an overview of the considerations and processes that individuals or committees can use to plan and create multi-use trails in Iowa. The guide makes broad strokes on best practices that Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) has learned over the last four decades of working with volunteers as well as local and county governments in the creation of trails.

Did You Know?

INHF was a driving force behind Iowa's famous High Trestle Trail. Through extensive fundraising and community collaboration, INHF helped to establish one of the world's largest trail bridges (length and height), earning awards in construction, lighting and art through the landmark bridge rising 13 stories above the Des Moines River. INHF served as the catalyst and led the effort to acquire the corridor, bring the communities together, guide fundraising, and select the engineers to create a world famous trail.



Protecting and restoring
Iowa's land, water and wildlife.

Photo by Nathan Houck

INTRODUCTION

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) was established in 1979 as a statewide nonprofit conservation organization that works with private landowners and public agencies to protect and restore Iowa's land, water and wildlife.

Since the early 1980s, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation has actively helped communities and counties create multi-use trails throughout the state with a focus on transforming discontinued rail corridors. To date, INHF has helped create over 65 percent of Iowa's rail-trails.

This guide aims to help local trail advocates become familiar with the trail creation process. It offers information and advice at an introductory level for people familiarizing themselves with trail creation, while also offering insight from INHF's decades of experience. The guide is organized in a way to allow readers to refer to phase-oriented information throughout the process. As always INHF is happy to serve as a resource throughout the process and assist where able.



THE BASICS

WHY ARE TRAILS IMPORTANT?

Trails create space for people, wildlife, education, land preservation, public health, local business diversification and community engagement. Running through city centers, suburbs and rural communities, trails showcase what Iowa has to offer. Rail-trails hold a connection to Iowa's cultural history and serve as a reminder of the rail-based roots of so many Iowa communities. Throughout the state, converted rail-trails continue to keep small towns alive by revitalizing and connecting them to through-traffic and tourism opportunities.

Trails provide an excellent opportunity for communities to promote themselves and connect to nearby towns. They also offer healthy, sustainable recreation opportunities and alternative transportation options.



Trails are great for

RECREATION

Walk, jog, bike, stroll, walk the dog or view wildlife

NATURE

Watch, listen or photograph wildlife along the corridor, learn about native plants

TRANSPORTATION

Walk to the grocery store or park, bike to a friend's or to work

HEALTH

Get out in an area dedicated to people moving at their own pace

BUSINESS

Enjoy a cold beverage, sandwich or ice cream cone after a long ride



TYPES OF MULTI-USE TRAILS

Any trail open to more than one kind of user (eg. runners, walkers, cyclists, inline skaters, etc.) can be referred to as a multi-use trail. The distinctions in this guide, rail-trail as compared to non-rail-trail, refer to how the trail is created.

RAIL-TRAIL

A rail-trail is a former rail line that has been converted into a multi-use trail. In 1915 at the height of railroad development in Iowa, there were more than 10,000 miles of track. Today, less than half remain active and less than 15% have become rail-trails. Rail corridors make ideal trails because they were designed as a transportation network, resulting in subtle gradients, solid foundations and community connections. Additionally, corridors generally span one-hundred feet in width while the track itself occupies about 10-foot width, conveniently preserving natural scenery on both sides.

Rail lines created the settlement patterns of Iowa, connecting populations to commerce and trade. This made rail lines a focal point when organizing the city.

In an effort to protect rail networks, the National Trail System Act was amended in 1983 to include a process called railbanking that preserves discontinued rail corridors and allows them to be converted into multi-use trails. This

system keeps portions of America's rail network intact, enables trail organizers to purchase land at an often reduced rate, and gives rail roads the opportunity to buy back their route at fair market value should they have use for it in the future.

NON-RAIL-TRAILS

The popularity of rail-trails has sparked demand for trails in many communities. However, a discontinued rail corridor is not always available. In that case, local leaders and trail advocates can work to establish alternative corridors in their area. It's possible to acquire an appropriately sized property all at once, but most often these trails have to be pieced together bit by bit. Non-rail-trails add an extra layer of complexity to the process and require detailed route planning. However, they are vital links in the overall system ensuring connectivity and accessibility for as many Iowans as possible.





CREATING A TRAIL VISION

IDENTIFY A GOAL

Identifying the motivations for creating a trail is an important first step that will set the tone for the entire project. For some projects, a discontinued rail corridor might be the catalyst for a trail. Others might gain momentum in response to local demand. Perhaps a nearby community is already working on a trail and wants to connect through another community.

The initial motivations for establishing a trail may be many, but it is instrumental to identify the intent of the trail at the onset to create a clear and effective plan going forward, including key community partners. Each trail will have its own story: find what inspires the community.

ORGANIZE AND MOBILIZE THE COMMUNITY

It is easier to see a trail come to fruition when numerous people are involved. Organizing a team and identifying specific roles will make a big difference in maintaining motivation and distributing efforts efficiently and effectively. This section discusses how to organize team members and communicate with the public.

FINDING TRAIL PARTNERS

Having support from local, pre-organized groups can create momentum behind a trail project, especially if they are willing to assist with planning, organizing, fundraising and publicity. Local health advocates might want to get involved to spur healthier, more active lifestyles. Perhaps parents, teachers and school administrators are interested in expanding opportunities for field trips and local learning initiatives. Different groups, different motivations, same goal.



Potential partners include:

- Chamber/Economic Development
- City Parks/Recreation
- County Conservation Board (CCB)
- County Engineers
- City Administration
- Business Owners
- Bike Clubs
- Walking groups
- Schools

CONSIDERATIONS

Consider what kinds of users the trail might accommodate. Will it primarily be a recreational trail, commuter route or combination of the two? Brainstorm potential users, invite them to be part of the project and provide feedback about what they want from a trail. Doing so will help

define the goals of the trail, determine how it serves the community's needs and galvanize more community members to engage with the project. Broad-based support increases the overall chance of the trail becoming more than just an idea.



Questions to consider

- Who will use the trail?
- Who might support the trail?
- How can they be involved?
- Who is responsible for coordinating efforts across groups?





Photo by Marlen Kemmet

ORGANIZING A **STEERING COMMITTEE**

The key to a successful project is to have involvement from non-profits, public agencies and local volunteers, including representation from each town the trail passes through. Think of them as a three-legged stool where each leg is vital to the balance and success of the stool.

Create a central team of trail champions who

can coordinate more effectively and give people a singular point of contact. When only one person (or small group) is answering questions, it's easier to share unified and consistent information.

The next step is determining how this steering committee will operate and make decisions.

Things to consider include frequency of meetings, voting processes, public input and individual tasks. Making individual members responsible for specific tasks helps ensure long-term engagement while also optimizing everyone's efforts.

Some tasks will be better accomplished with a dedicated subcommittee while others may be better handled by an individual. That will be something the steering committee will have to determine, but tasks to consider include: fundraising, public relations, acting government liaisons, managing volunteers, analyzing the technical details, research, etc. (see sidebar)

A note:

When all is said and done, someone will need to be responsible for the ongoing ownership and maintenance of the trail, often a local agency. Whether or not that agency is in possession and control from the beginning, the agency should have a representative involved in the steering committee for familiarity's sake.

POSSIBLE SUBCOMMITTEES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

- Coordinate volunteer efforts across projects
- Recruit new volunteers
- Encourage reoccurring and long-term volunteers

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

- Build relationships with local officials
- Stay informed about local policies and community goals, especially as related to the trail
- Attend council and board meetings to provide project updates

P.R. / MARKETING

- Promote the trail project
- Arrange press releases
- Coordinate radio and television coverage or updates
- Galvanize community updates through articles and updates
- Create a web page or presence touting the trail

TECHNICAL

- Act as a liaison with engineers
- Make technical detail recommendations such as surface types and phase priorities

FUNDRAISING

- Organize fundraising efforts, public and private
- Talk with donors
- Organize events
- Manage funds
- Maintain donor records

RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Introducing a trail might spur some questions among the community. Most of the time, this comes from individuals who are apprehensive about how the trail will affect one of three primary issues: property value, liability or trespassing. Everyone will have their own take on how a trail might impact them. It will be the responsibility of the steering committee to work together to address any concerns. Here are some tips on how to approach those conversations:

Listen. Each issue is going to feel fresh and personal to those voicing concern. Be patient, receptive and hear them out before responding. It is important to listen to their concerns and understand their personal perspective.

Create an open dialogue early on. Spread the message by having personal conversations, especially with landowners bordering the proposed trail. Put a face on the project and foster positive relationships.

Whenever possible, build a relationship that goes beyond the trail. It is easier to have a productive conversation when there is a sense of familiarity and trust.

Ask questions. Where would the community like to see points of access? Where would they like to stop along the trail? Are there any natural or cultural treasures that should be showcased along the trail?

Do not immediately discredit opposition. Remember that it often comes from equally concerned community members. Finding common ground, rather than escalating the argument, will create a better community atmosphere and may even invite more users onto the trail.



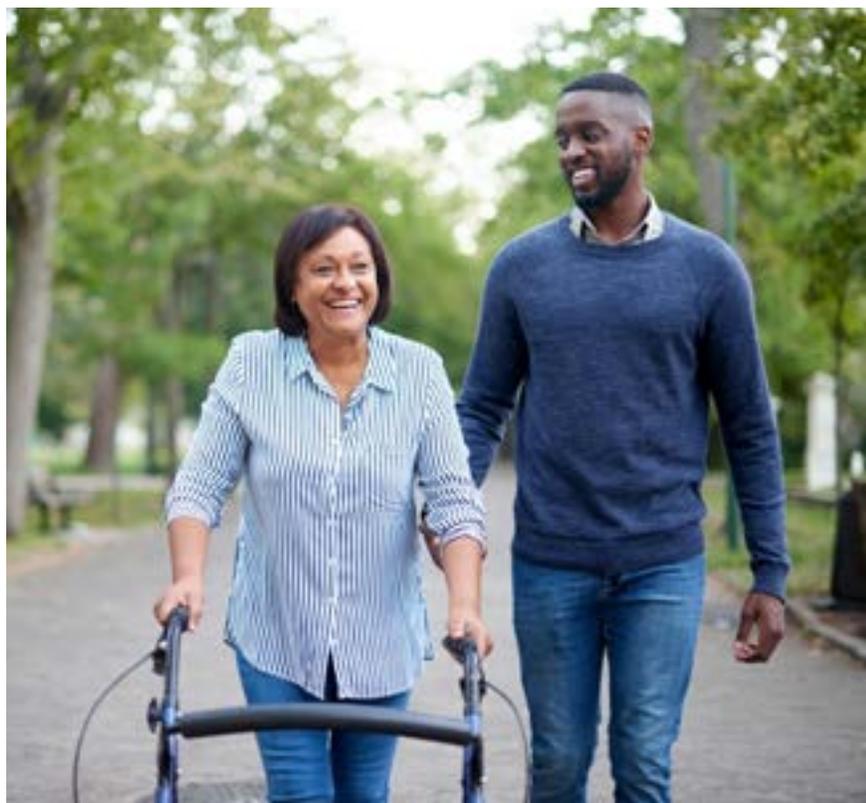
Checklist

- Name a goal
- Find supporting reasons
- Identify community actors
- Formalize a steering committee



SELECTING AND FUNDING LAND

In Iowa, regional and community trails are typically created in one of two ways: re-purposing a former rail corridor or piecing together public and/or private lands. Using a rail corridor offers the benefit of having a substantial stretch of land in a pre-connected path, but offers less flexibility in choosing location. Non-rail-trails allow for greater flexibility when designing a trail but will require more decisions, intertwining and reliance on landowner cooperation. Each have their own pros and cons and take a different approach to complete.



RAIL-TRAILS

IDENTIFYING A DISCONTINUED RAIL LINE

Rail-trails are pathways that have been converted into multi-use trails from former rail lines. In these kinds of land acquisitions, a connected stretch of land, typically a 100-foot wide is available as a continuous piece. Originally intended for transportation, discontinued railways makes fantastic trails. Rail companies have an incentive to sell the land as a connected parcel, which can give trail organizers an advantage as potential buyers. However, it remains the responsibility of trail organizers to identify when a rail line becomes available and to negotiate a sale within the designated time frame.

The Surface Transportation Board (STB), a federal agency responsible for overseeing railbanking, publicly shares an updated lists of rail lines that owners have petitioned for abandonment.

The Department of Transportation's rail office receives information on abandonments from the STB quarterly. You may consider checking their website or contacting staff if you see little to no traffic passing through, minimal upkeep, and visible weed growing in the ballast.

When looking at potential trails, research the land itself. What is the total length of the corridor? Have the borders been maintained or is there encroachment? What is the condition of the drainage, culverts, bridges and fences? Are utilities connected to the area? Will any materials or structures be left behind, or new ones needed? Are there any significant landmarks on or by the proposed trail? Does the proposed trail connect to any others or fit within a regional trail plan?

Take the time to do the research. If possible,

see if a county engineer will examine the land and offer an idea of its current condition, what a proposed trail might look like, and what some cost estimates for development might be. This will help provide a framework for grants as well as negotiating the purchase should it be a good prospect.

See Resources list in **Additional Resources** (pg. 47)

ACQUIRING A RAIL CORRIDOR

When a railroad submits an abandonment request to the STB, trail organizers and/or a government agency need to submit an official request to have the potential to buy it. This initial filing is called a Request for a Public Use Condition and Notice of Interim Trail Use. These need to occur within 30 days of the rail-line filing for abandonment. It also needs to include a Statement of Willingness to Assume Financial Responsibility, which means the trail organizer is willing to assume financial responsibility should a purchase be negotiated. If contacted, INHF can submit this request with the required language in partnership with a local entity.

The Notice of Interim Trail Use and Public Use Condition provides a 180-day period in which to negotiate the purchase of the corridor with the railroad. If an agreement is reached, then the abandonment process is stopped and the corridor remains intact. This preserves different easements on the land and maintains legal rights to use it as a transportation line, helping both trail users as well as the rail line should the railroad reactivate it in the future.

It will be important to do research on the land being purchased as well as on the land bordering the corridor. Having someone in the steering committee experienced with land deeds is helpful.

If accessible from the railroad, a valuation map, —corridor’s blueprint— will identify where to find the original deed in the county recorder’s office. The original deed will describe the means of how the land was first secured and thus the quality of its title.

Reviewing and matching deeds will help you know the quality of the title the railroad has. This will be important for negotiating the cost. Once the deeds have been located, INHF is able to assist in deciphering them. Other things that should be looked at with deeds include potential back taxes due, liens, mortgages, affidavits, etc. When negotiating the purchase, trail organizers should have an idea of what is included in the purchase, as well as the quality of structures (if any). Are bridges, ballast, and buildings included or will those be removed by the rail line? If there is a bridge, what is the structural integrity of it? Will it need restoration or upgrades before it can be used?

The next step is to order an appraisal. The appraiser will value the corridor using an “across

the fence” method and apply a corridor factor. You will also want to consider what type of funding you will use to purchase the corridor. State funding will require your appraisal to meet. Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) guidelines while federal funding will require you meet Yellow Book standards.

You can start building your case for your first offer once a value for the corridor has been determined. You’ll want to look at how much of the corridor has good title using the research you previously did when you reviewed the deeds. For example, does the railroad only own 75% of the corridor with warranty deeds? If so, start the negotiations at 75% of the appraised value. Don’t be discouraged if your first offer is not accepted. You have to start somewhere.

Trail corridors don’t come cheap, but fortunately there are funding programs that can assist. Due to the tight turnaround in buying rail lines, it is not usually feasible for a trail organizer to have funding right away. INHF is often able to help with the initial purchase of the corridor on an interim basis while longer-term owners raise the appropriate funds.

Using INHF as an interim land owner can be helpful in leveraging grant funds. Many state and federal grant programs will not allow you to start the purchase process until after grant has been awarded, unless prior approval is granted.





Photo by Marlen Kemmet

NON-RAIL-TRAILS

RESEARCHING

Non-rail-trails encompass any kind of trail that did not begin as a rail corridor. There is generally not a preset route and they might come together slower as the land has to be pieced together as it becomes available.

Start with some preliminary research to see what already exists in the area. Is there a county/city/regional trails plan in the area? Are there other trails already established or in the works? Would it make sense to combine efforts and expand a trail rather than start a new one? Either way, it is beneficial to create a hard database of trails in the area for reference and as a future resource. This could open up opportunities for collaboration projects, springboard ideas and support for the new trail, and potentially foster mentor relationships with other trail builders. Research at the start might also help unearth potential obstacles, identify prime land sales, or generate feedback in the form of where people actually want to see a trail.

IDENTIFYING A ROUTE

Having an uncharted course is both exciting and daunting. Mapping out local destinations and attractions that appeal to locals and visitors can help give a sense of where a preferred route should go. Possible examples include linking natural features such as public lakes, rivers, parks and woodlands, as well as restaurants, bars, shopping hubs and places of historical and cultural significance. Make sure to involve local residents to receive feedback from them on where a trail should go. Because a non-rail trail is not predefined, it allows creativity in optimizing the route for accessibility, aesthetic and as a transportation alternative. Consider what makes the area unique and embrace it.

It is also important to consider the design of the trail when selecting a location. The American Association of State Highway and Traffic Officials' (AASHTO) Guide for Planning, Design and Operation of Bicycle Facilities recommends that trails are constructed 10-feet in width with 2-foot shoulders on both sides. Signage and amenities like benches and trees must be placed outside of that 14-foot corridor. Additionally, maintenance for the greenway and trail surface requires access for large equipment. This generally means that the route you identify should be able to ideally maintain a 20-30 foot corridor.

PURCHASE METHODS

When acquiring land piece by piece, there are a variety of options that can be used. The best course of action will always be to secure land in a fee title. This guarantees the complete right to the property and can be accomplished as a purchase, bargain sale or donation. There may be tax benefits available with bargain sales and donations. Another option may be to secure a recreational use easement. A recreational use easement allows the landowner to maintain title to the property, but enables public use of the property for trail development. There can be tax incentives for the landowner when it comes to granting recreational use easements as well.

*See trail corridor easement and easement agreement templates in **Additional Resources** (pg. 26-33)*

Lease agreements are not recommended due to the uncertainty of long-term ownership over time.

Piecing together private land to form a trail takes a lot of coordination on macro and micro levels. Before any one piece of property is purchased, make sure to have the ability to purchase all the land needed to link the destination to another phase of the project. This can be done by purchasing options. A purchase option gives the holder the right to buy at a determined price within a given time frame. That gives the trail organizers time to work with different landowners to secure the needed properties, and then exercise the purchase option once there is a complete corridor.

*See letter of intent example in **Additional Resources** (pg. 34)*

*See option to purchase example in **Additional Resources** (pg. 36-37)*

Funding your trail will require significant time and energy. Persistence and a positive, inviting



FUNDRAISING

attitude are key. Here are some methods others have used to raise seemingly impossible amounts for their trails.

VISION

Consider: Why your trail is important and what it might cost

Some people will support your trail because they will want to use and enjoy it. Many more people will support your trail because of what it can bring to your community. It's a wellness facility for people of all incomes and abilities. It helps to drive tourism, economic development and a vibrant workforce. Take some time to articulate what the trail will offer everyone someday and ask respected community leaders to provide quotes that speak to that.

Next, develop a rough big-picture budget. Estimate all the major elements you can think of: acquiring the corridor, professional engineering, construction, promotion, fundraising costs, recognition, celebrating successes. You'll arrive at a really big number which can then be broken into segments or phases for fundraising purposes.

Also decide how major donors will be recognized at various levels of contribution. (For example: How much would a donor need to give in order to have a bridge named after them?) Ideally, this recognition is consistent for your entire trail, even if trail communities might lead local fundraising in different ways.

Step by step

Fundraising for many trails has been done one bite at a time. First, secure the entire corridor, then complete construction on a few miles of trail at a time. Setting interim goals to get from

Town A to Town B can be very motivating to donors. This also creates a series of celebrations as the trail makes progress, which also attracts more donors as people begin to use the first segments of trail. Step-by-step successes can also keep volunteers and trail leaders motivated over several years, while creating opportunities for project publicity and donor recognition.

Maintenance/Repair Funds

Give some thought to how maintenance or repairs will be funded long-term. You might decide it's important to fundraise to create a reserve fund for on-going maintenance (like mowing or grooming) or for major repairs (like flood damage). Be careful about using the phrase "endowment funds." Endowments cannot be spent: Instead they are invested, and only their earnings may be used. A \$100,000 endowment can be expected to provide only \$5,000 per year to be used on the trail—while a \$100,000 reserve fund or repair fund can be fully available to cover emergency repairs if needed.

Public + private funding

Most trails rely on competitive public grants for 75% or more of total project revenue. Private contributions from foundations, businesses and individuals often provide up to 25% of total trail costs. It's important to create strategies for both kinds of fundraising, because neither can be expected to complete a trail alone.

Strong support from the private sector can help you compete public grants. Likewise, many public grants require local matching funds, and that requirement creates opportunities and momentum for private fundraising campaigns.

COMPETITIVE PUBLIC GRANTS

The majority of public trail funding usually comes from a combination of the following competitive public grant opportunities:

- **Federal Recreational Trails Program** - administered through Iowa Department of Transportation.
- **State Recreational Trails Fund** - administered through Iowa Department of Transportation.
- **REAP** (Resource Enhancement and Protection) grants - administered through Iowa Department of Natural Resources. County conservation boards may compete for rural trail segments in their counties. Cities may compete with cities of similar size for trail segments within their city limits.
- **Regional Transportation Alternatives Program grant** - administered through your local regional planning agency or metropolitan planning agency.
- **Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT)** - administered through the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

These grants are awarded annually and limited funds are available. Sometimes a grant request must be submitted and improved over several years before it's awarded funding. Though the process may be frustrating, it can be well worth the effort in the end.

Read the grant instructions very carefully and be prepared to follow through with necessary grant reporting. The person submitting the request and managing the grant should be able to write concisely and persuasively and possess excellent organizational skills and a keen attention to detail. All the facts and financial information must be accurate, and deadlines must be met. Think of the grant as a contract: In the proposal, you submit what you can accomplish on the trail within a certain budget

and timeline. You then need to follow through as promised in order to receive the funds awarded.

Many public grants are reimbursement grants meaning the funds are not expended until the terms of the grant are met. The public agency will need to take the lead in grant administration. This means they will need to work with partners to provide funds up-front for construction, then receive reimbursement when the grant is paid.

Matching funds

Most public competitive grants require their funds to be leveraged with local or private-sector resources. Many grants will provide 75-80% of funding for a specific portion of the trail, requiring the grant applicant be able to show that they have the means and strategy to raise the remaining amount through other donors.

Besides cash contributions, some grants might allow you to count professional in-kind services, donated land value or pledges. Public funds through local cities, county conservation boards or other public grants, plus private sector contributions, might all be considered as matching funds.

PRIVATE SUPPORT

Private funds encompass all donations that are not public grants, including in-kind or cash





donations. They can come from individual community members, local businesses, groups and organizations wanting to offer support, as well as organizations and individuals outside the community.

Private support relies on your donors' generosity, your own leadership, confidence in the project and the relationships you create with people who love the trail concept as much as you do.

Major gifts

On average, at least 80% of private support for trail projects comes from 20% of donors. It's important for someone to focus on reaching out to individuals or organizations who have the capacity to give \$10,000 or more to your project. This includes:

Foundations and businesses whose priorities for giving fit your project. They are likely to do their giving through grant applications. The tips for successful private grant requests are similar to those for public grants.

Individuals or families are more likely

to respond to personal conversations about the project and their opportunity to give at a leadership level. Those who have established **donor-advised funds** (likely at a community foundation) or **charitable giving funds** (likely through their financial management firm) may find it easiest to respond quickly with a major gift.

Create a way for donors to pledge major support through one of your partners so that those giving at higher levels can spread their support over 1-3 years. This helps donors deduct their gifts at times that are most convenient for them, often allowing them to give much more generously than a one-time gift. The partner should be prepared to send pledge payment reminders as needed.

See *Pledge Reminder template* in **Additional Resources** (pg. 38)

Bargain sale of corridor: If you purchase land for your trail at less than its appraised value, remember that the difference is a major charitable gift. Acknowledge it promptly, and

count this bargain sale of land on grant requests as a matching land value gift. Remember to recognize the seller as if they had given cash in this amount to your project. Understand how the bargain sale gift aligns with the grant requirements. It can likely be counted as a matching contribution, but transferring the land among partner agencies prior to grant funding could create complications in the grant if not pre-authorized by the granting agency.

In-kind support: Count and give credit to partners or vendors who contribute in non-cash ways to your project. This might include discounts on professional services, donated professional labor, and time spent helping on the project that would otherwise be billable.

The rest of your private support

Seeking support from everyone else with less giving capacity is also important. This is where fundraising events, marketing and volunteer recruitment come together. Your campaign creates energy and community ownership of your trail long-term.

MAKE IT EASY TO GIVE:

Create an online presence for the project, combining a project website with social media. This way, each partner agency, donor or volunteer can refer people to one place for information about the project, upcoming activities and ways to support.

Choose one entity to receive all the gifts for the trail. This entity must be able to record all the gift and donor data, account for the funds, and acknowledge all gifts promptly in alignment with IRS guidelines.

See *Acknowledgment letter template* in **Additional Resources** (pg. 35)

Invite leadership that sparks smaller gifts.

Creatively think how your leadership team and your major donors can inspire others in your community to give. Major donors can provide matching challenge grants that match smaller contributions.

Ask directly for support by mail, e-mail or social media. “Getting the word out” is not enough. Invitations turn into donations when you ask clearly for someone’s support and make it easy for them to give.

See *Gift form template* in **Additional Resources** (pg. 39)

Events can be great fun and bring energy to the fundraising. Budget and track how much time and money an event requires and measure its financial return, as one important measure of whether you want to repeat that event in the future.



VARIED ROLES FOR VARIED PEOPLE

These are some of the essential roles for fundraising, and the kinds of people who fill them best.

Ringleader: coordinates the team's timelines and volunteer commitments. When you meet, this person can bring everyone up to speed quickly so you can focus on next steps. A diligent, organized person who likes to see all the puzzle pieces will do well. Especially important for tracking major gift requests & conversations.

Gift manager: acknowledges and processes gifts and keeps all data about

donors and gifts. A diligent, detail-oriented person with some computer skills can do this - but if you have a partner nonprofit that's already set up to do this function, that may be the best choice.

Grant manager(s): completes requests and grant reports. This could be a duo of two meticulous people: One who can write the grant request and report clearly and concisely to fit the funder, and another who can create a good grant budget, track expenditures and keep everything on track to meet grant requirements.

Inviters: good listeners with authentic enthusiasm for the

trail who can communicate well in person and/or in writing. Don't think of them as "askers," but as the essential people who invite others to be part of this exciting project as donors, volunteers, etc. Some inviters will handle communications (website, media, presentations). Cultivate and support lots of inviters!

Encouragers and Celebrators: Thank and recognize those who give, and support those who are active in other fundraising or communications roles. Feed the energy of your team and your donors.





DESIGNING A TRAIL

From trailheads, signage and surface types to parking lots, bridges and attractions along the way, there's a lot to consider when designing your trail. If you want it done right the first time, consider hiring an experienced design firm and let them handle the heavy lifting. They're the professionals for a reason and will have the background to ask the right questions, create a comprehensive plan, and will be able to reach out to other experts in the industry. Another important advantage of hiring a design firm is that it will free up time for trail organizers to focus on other logistics such as fundraising, long-term maintenance and community engagement.



Choosing a Surface for Your Trail

When choosing a trail surface consider the following:

- User acceptance and satisfaction
- Accessibility
- Cost to purchase and install materials
- Cost of maintaining the surface
- Life expectancy
- Availability of material



Before you choose a specific trail surface, you should consider the pros and cons of hard surfaces and soft surfaces. While hard-surface trails are more accommodating, require less annual maintenance and can withstand frequent use, they are also significantly more expensive. On the other hand, soft-surface trails cost less, but generally do not hold up well under heavy use or varying or seasonal weather conditions and attract fewer users.

HARD SURFACES

Asphalt

Asphalt works well for bicycle commuters and inline skaters, which is one reason it is often used in urban areas. While it requires regular maintenance such as crack patching and weed control, it has a life expectancy of 15 to 20 years if properly built and maintained.

Concrete

Concrete is usually the longest lasting of the hard surface materials, but it is also more expensive. Well-maintained concrete can last 25 years or more. The surface is appropriate for urban areas with severe climate swings and a susceptibility to flooding. However, the hard surface is taxing on runners' lower limbs, and is thus unpopular with that significant user group. Adjacent soft-surface treads can accommodate runners and equestrians where concrete is necessary for the main trail.

Crushed Stone

Crushed stone is popular as a trail surface because it can complement the aesthetic of the natural landscape. It can also accommodate many, but not all, trail users if crushed and compacted properly. Because crushed stone can be made of nearly any type of rock, including limestone and quartzite, it is one of the most accessible trail surface types. That said, crushed stone can wash out and be rutted with heavy use. It is highly vulnerable when the frost comes out and is easily damaged by trail users when wet.

SOFT SURFACES

Mowed Grass

Trails with a mowed grass surface offer inexpensive maintenance costs limited primarily

to fixing drainage problems, repairing eroded areas and removing vegetation/mowing. They can be muddy in spots when wet, however trails can usually be built and maintained by volunteers.

Wood Chips

Wood chips blend well with the natural environment and can work well as a parallel tread for runners and equestrians next to an asphalt or concrete trail. However, the surface decomposes rapidly and requires constant maintenance to keep the width and surface steady. On average, entire surface needs replacement every two years, however maintenance and installation can be performed by volunteers.



TRAIL MANAGEMENT

ESTABLISH POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES EARLY ON

People use trails in many different ways. For example, some people may simply want to walk or bike on the trail, while others may have an interest in hosting events on, along or adjacent to the trail. Consider what the protocol for these events will be, whether permits are required, how far advance notice is necessary, etc. These may be adapted as trail usage changes, but it is helpful to define such expectations early on.

Depending on the kind of trail, there might be access restrictions for some kinds of users. For example, snowmobilers might only be allowed with three or more inches of snow. Perhaps cyclists are required to have a light to ride the trail at night. These kinds of restrictions/rules/standards should be determined early on to help set the tone of the trail.

A good way to communicate these policies is through signage, clear communication and community outreach.

Maintenance

Along with policies and best practices, consider maintenance. If there are facilities such as bathrooms, who will be responsible for maintaining them? A contractor? City/county staff? Volunteers? Depending on the amenities, upkeep could include a host of needs from providing toilet paper, hand soap and cleaning, to mowing, debris clean up and

path maintenance. Have a plan in place for who will be responsible for what, how frequently, and what the associated costs will be.

Interim use

Creating a trail can be a long process from start to finish, but that doesn't mean it has to sit unused until it's complete. Consider opening up the trail for interim use

While the trail may lack final features, this gives community members a chance to engage with it in real and tangible ways. It also helps people see the project's potential, and may inspire and motivate people to get involved. Just be sure to make it clear that the trail is not finished and may not be accessible to all types of users.

Important note: *While this kind of use does assert that trail users explore at their own risk, it is strongly advised to make sure any pre-existing infrastructure, especially bridges, is up to code and able to hold both various user types as well as emergency response vehicles.*

See special event permit application template in **Additional Resources** (pg. 40-44)

See example of granting trail access in **Additional Resources** (pg. 45)





MARKETING

If you build it, they will come - but not without a bit of marketing.

Be active in how the trail is promoted during construction, as segments open and once it's finished. Social media is a great way to build excitement and anticipation as the trail moves through different stages. Share stories, photos, videos, trail updates and info about upcoming events and opportunities to support the project.

Let people know how they can get involved by volunteering or donating and provide links for them to do so. There's a

much higher chance people will donate if it's fast, easy and accessible.

Keep people excited. Keep the trail at the forefront of their minds. In addition to sharing information on social media, look for opportunities to pitch stories to local media, special interest publications and professional groups. The more people who know about the trail and see ways that they can get engaged, the better.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Keeping costs down for the project will be much easier with a dedicated volunteer network. People who feel personally invested in the trail are also much more likely to use it and invite others to join them.

An active “friends of the X trail” group can organize activities or events such as clean up days, fun runs, wildlife viewing events, etc. These types of events encourage broad ongoing community involvement and engagement.

The ultimate goal of any volunteer event should be to help more people connect with the trail, so whatever you do, just make it a fun and rewarding experience. And remember: always thank your helpers.

See volunteer waiver in **Additional Resources** (pg. 46)

CELEBRATE AND ENJOY ALL THAT TRAILS HAVE TO OFFER YOU, YOUR FAMILY, THE COMMUNITY AND IOWA!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TRAIL CORRIDOR EASEMENT

Trail Corridor Easement

This Agreement is made this _____ day of _____ 20____, by _____ (NAME, MARITAL STATUS), of (ADDRESS) (hereinafter referred to as “Grantor”), to the _____ (Organization Name) of _____ (address) (herein after together referred to as “Grantee”).

For valuable consideration, Grantor hereby grants to Grantee a 50 foot-wide easement and trail right-of-way over, through and for the protection of the property described as:

Insert or attach a legal description

hereinafter referred to as the “Trail Corridor”; and

Whereas, the property possesses recreational, scenic, or natural value appropriate for public enjoyment, recreation and conservation;

Whereas, the grantee, its successors or assigns is an organization formed to develop and maintain a trail for recreation and non-motorized transportation purposes;

Now Therefore, the Grantor, their heirs, successors and assigns, by this agreement grants to the Grantee, its successors and assigns, a trail easement for the purpose of developing a trail to be used for public recreation purposes.

1. The Grantee its successors and assigns shall have following rights within the Trail Corridor as holder of this easement:

- A. Exclusive rights to the use of the Trail Corridor for development and maintenance of a recreation trail.
- B. The right to permit general public access by foot, bicycle, ski, skate or other non-motorized vehicle.
- C. The right to lay out, mark, develop and maintain or relocate a 10 ft wide trail, to post signs marking the trail, to manage vegetation on the Trail Corridor through selective planting, pruning or managed removal of trees, exotic or nuisance plant species, and to maintain and enhance the trails scenic, natural, recreational and/or ecological value.

D. The right to prohibit public access by motor vehicles through the installation of gates or other obstructions and to limit access by the public, by appropriate means, from any portion of the Trail Corridor not in use from time to time as the primary path.

E. The right to inspect or maintain the Trail Corridor or allow emergency or law enforcement access via motorized or non-motorized vehicles.

2. Grantor, their successors and assigns retain the following rights within the Trail Corridor:

A. The right to cross the Trail Corridor for vehicular access to agricultural and farming operations at the specified crossing shown on the attached map.

2. Grantee assumes all risk relating to persons or property, other than the Grantor or their invitees, within the Trail Corridor. Grantee shall hold harmless, indemnify, and defend Grantor, successors, and assigns of each of them (collectively "Indemnified Parties") from and against all liabilities, penalties, costs, losses, damages, expenses, causes of action, claims, demands, or judgments arising from or in any way connected with injury to or the death of any person, or physical damage to any property, resulting from any act, omission, condition, or other matter relating to or occurring on or about the Trail Corridor, regardless of cause. Provided, however, indemnification arising from the negligence of any of the Indemnified Parties shall only be for amounts over and above any applicable insurance carried by the indemnified parties.

3. Grantee shall maintain \$1 million liability insurance on the Trail Corridor and the Grantor shall be a named insured.

4. This easement shall be permanent and bind the parties hereto, their successors and assigns. Said easement shall run with the land.

5. Nothing herein shall be construed as limiting the right of the Grantor to sell, give or otherwise convey the Trail Corridor or any portion or portions of it, provided such conveyance is subject to the terms of this easement.

6. This grant of easement and trail right-of-way and the Grantee's allowance of the public use thereof shall not grant to the public an additional right, right-of-way or easement.

7. Upon mutual agreement, Grantor and Grantee and their successors and assigns may terminate or modify this conveyance notwithstanding the public's past use of any part or all thereof.

8. Grantor's warrant that they have title to the property herein conveyed free and clear of all liens.

TRAIL CORRIDOR EASEMENT

Grantor:

_____ date

Grantee:

_____ date

Grantor:

_____ date

Grantee:

_____ date

IN WITNESS WHERE OF, Grantor and Grantee have executed this Trail Corridor Easement on the day and year first above written.

GRANTORS

(GRANTOR 1 OR HUSBAND)

(GRANTOR 2 OR WIFE)

GRANTEE

BY _____
Title

GRANTOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

STATE OF IOWA

_____ **COUNTY, SS:**

On this ____ day of _____, 200____, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said State, personally appeared (GRANTOR 1 OR HUSBAND) to me known to be the identical persons named in and who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged that they executed the same as their voluntary act and deed.

Notary Public
Commission Expires:

STATE OF IOWA

_____ **COUNTY, SS:**

On this ____ day of _____, 200____, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said State, personally appeared (GRANTOR 1 OR WIFE) to me known to be the identical persons named in and who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged that they executed the same as their voluntary act and deed.

Notary Public
Commission Expires:

GRANTEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

STATE OF IOWA

_____ **COUNTY, SS:**

On this ____ day of _____, 200____, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said State, personally appeared _____, to me personally known who being by me duly sworn, did say that he is the _____ of said _____, that said instrument was signed (and sealed) (that no seal has been procured) on behalf of said corporation by authority of its _____; and that the said _____ as such officer acknowledged the execution of said instrument to be the voluntary act and deed of said corporation by it and by him voluntarily executed.

Notary Public
Commission Expires:

Easement Agreement

THIS EASEMENT (“Easement”) is made this ____ day of _____, 200_, by, (MARITAL STATUS), of (ADDRESS) (hereinafter together with (THEIR/HIS/HER) heirs, personal representatives, successors and assigns collectively referred to as “Grantor”), and, _____ (Address) (hereinafter together with its successors and assigned collectively referred to as “Grantee”).

Grantor has agreed to this grant of a 50 foot-wide easement and trail right-of-way over, through and for the protection of the property described as:

hereinafter referred to as the “Corridor”

Whereas, the property possesses recreational, scenic, or natural or open space, value appropriate for public enjoyment, recreation and conservation,

Whereas, the grantee, its successors or assigns is an organization formed to develop and maintain a trail for recreation purposes,

Now Therefore, the Grantor, their heirs, successors and assigns, by this agreement grants to the Grantee, its successors and assigns, a trail easement for the purpose of developing a recreation trail to be used for public recreation purposes.

1. The Grantee its successors and assigns shall have following rights within the trail corridor as holder of this easement:

A. Exclusive right to the use of the Corridor for development and maintenance of a recreation trail.

B. The right to permit general public access only by foot, bicycle, ski, skate, or non-motorized vehicle.

C. The right to lay out, mark, construct, surface, develop and maintain or relocate an 10-12 ft wide trail, to post signs marking the trail, to manage vegetation in the easement area through selective planting, pruning or managed removal of trees, exotic or nuisance plant species, and to maintain and enhance the trails scenic, natural, recreational and/or ecological value.

E. The right to inspect or maintain the trail corridor or allow emergency or law enforcement access via motorized or non-motorized vehicles.

2. Grantor, their successors and assigns retain the following rights within the easement corridor:

A. The right to cross the Corridor for vehicular access to agricultural and farming operations

3. Grantee shall plant and maintain vegetative buffer or screen along the _____ edge of the Corridor.

4. Grantee shall hold harmless, indemnify, and defend Grantor their successors, and assigns each of them (collectively "Indemnified Parties") from and against all liabilities, penalties, costs, losses, damages, expenses, causes of action, claims, demands, or judgments, including, without limitation, reasonable attorneys fees, arising from or in any way connected with: (i) injury to or the death of any person, or physical damage to the property, resulting from any act, omission, condition, or other matter relating to the public use of the Corridor, regardless of cause, unless due solely to negligence of any of the Indemnified Parties. Provided, however, indemnification arising from the negligence of any of the Indemnified Parties shall only be for amounts over and above any applicable insurance carried by the Indemnified Parties.

5. Grantee shall maintain not less than \$__ million liability insurance on the Corridor and the Grantor shall be a named insured.

6. This easement shall bind the Grantor, their successors and assigns and said easement shall run with the land.

7. Nothing herein shall be construed as limiting the right of the Grantor to sell, give or otherwise convey the Corridor or any portion or portions of it, provided such conveyance is subject to the terms of this Easement Agreement

8. This grant of easement and trail right-of-way and the Grantee's allowance of the public use thereof shall not grant to the public an additional right, right-of-way or easement.

9. Upon mutual agreement, the Grantor and Grantee and their successors and assigns may terminate or modify this conveyance notwithstanding the public's past use of any part or all thereof.

10. Grantor's warrant that they have title to the property herein conveyed free and clear of all liens except as shown in Exhibit _____.

Grantor:

Grantee:

_____ date

_____ date

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Grantor and Grantee have executed this Deed of Conservation Easement on the day and year first above written.

GRANTORS

(GRANTOR 1 OR SPOUSE)

(GRANTOR 2 OR SPOUSE)

EASEMENT AGREEMENT

GRANTEE

BY _____
Title

GRANTOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

STATE OF IOWA

COUNTY, SS:

On this ____ day of _____, 200____, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said State, personally appeared (GRANTOR 1 OR SPOUSE) to me known to be the identical persons named in and who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged that they executed the same as their voluntary act and deed.

Notary Public
Commission Expires:

STATE OF IOWA

COUNTY, SS:

On this ____ day of _____, 200____, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said State, personally appeared (GRANTOR 1 OR SPOUSE) to me known to be the identical persons named in and who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged that they executed the same as their voluntary act and deed.

Notary Public
Commission Expires:

GRANTEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

STATE OF IOWA

COUNTY, SS:

On this ____ day of _____, 200 __, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said State, personally appeared _____, to me personally known who being by me duly sworn, did say that he is the _____ of said _____, that said instrument was signed (and sealed) (that no seal has been procured) on behalf of said corporation by authority of its _____; and that the said _____ as such officer acknowledged the execution of said instrument to be the voluntary act and deed of said corporation by it and by him voluntarily executed.

Notary Public
Commission Expires:

County Conservation Board
Trail Volunteer Group and/or
City Agency

Letter of Intent

The _____ County Conservation Board is interested in establishing a multi-use trail between _____ and _____. The goal of the project is to provide for outdoor recreation opportunities, conservation of wildlife habitat and improvement of the economic and recreation diversity of the region. At this time the county is meeting with private landowners to finalize the location of the trail and establish an uninterrupted corridor.

As the legal landowner of the following described portion of property, I choose to participate in the following way:

For the property described as follows: _____

I am willing to transfer fee title a portion of my land to benefit the project for:

- a) appraised value
- b) less than the appraised value
- c) donation

I am willing to transfer permanent trail easement for:

- a) appraised value
- b) less than the appraised value (to be determined)
- c) donation

I agree to allow access to the property by the agency or their representatives for the purpose of surveying the proposed corridor area to obtain a legal description

Comments: _____

Signature of landowner(s)

Type or write name _____ Date

Address

In agreement with: _____, agent for the County Conservation Board, address, phone.

DATE

DONOR NAME

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

Dear FIRST NAME(S),

Thank you for your recent gift of AMOUNT, dated GIFT DATE, to support the TRAIL PROJECT in LOCATION. Your generous support of this project is much appreciated!

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (where the trail is, what makes it unique, how it fits into the larger picture, why this is an exciting time in the campaign).

Thank you FIRST NAME(S). With this kind and generous gift you are making an important thing happen!

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

YOUR ROLE

TAX EXEMPT LANGUAGE (See IRS “Charitable Contribution Substantiation and Disclosure Requirements”: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1771.pdf>)

As a 501c3 charity, tax laws require us to notify you that this letter is the official acknowledgment of your gift. Also, we are required to certify that you received no goods or services in consideration of this contribution; therefore, the full amount of your gift is tax-deductible. Thank you!

OPTION TO PURCHASE AGREEMENT

This Option to Purchase is entered into this ____ day of _____, 2014, by and between _____ (Optionor), and _____ (Optionee).

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, Optionor is the owner of property described as follows:

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

WHEREAS, Optionee has expressed an interest in and desire to purchase said property, subject to certain terms and conditions, and Optionors are willing to sell said premises upon certain terms and conditions.

WHEREAS, to accommodate the mutual interests of the parties, it has been agreed that Optionors shall grant to Optionee the exclusive Option to Purchase the Real Estate described above.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the two hundred dollars (\$200.00) and other good and valuable consideration the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged Optionors hereby grant and extend to Optionee or its authorized assignee the exclusive Option to Purchase said premises upon the following terms and conditions.

1. This Option to Purchase shall expire at 12:00 Midnight CDT on _____.
2. The purchase price shall be \$ _____ or appraised value, whichever is less. If the Option is timely exercised, the \$200.00 shall be credited against the purchase price. If the Option is not timely exercised, Optionee shall forfeit the \$200.00 and the Optionor shall retain the \$200.00 as consideration for the Option.
3. If Optionee exercises said Option to Purchase, it shall do so by giving written notice of the exercise of said Option to Optionors at the address set forth below by certified mail. Notice shall be deemed given when postmarked by U.S. Postal Service. Any new owners of the Property shall provide Optionee with an address where notice can be given.
4. Optionor shall pay costs of transfer revenue stamps and recording fees for any mortgage releases, affidavits, or other documents necessary to perfect the title.
5. Optionors shall pay real estate taxes pro-rated to the date of possession.
6. The total purchase price shall be paid within 30 days of Optionee or their authorized assignees receiving a title opinion indicating merchantable title is vested in Optionors.

7. Upon payment of the purchase price, Optionors shall convey the Real Estate to Optionee, by stamped General Warranty Deed, free and clear of all liens, restrictions, and encumbrances. Any general warranties of title shall extend only to the time of acceptance of this offer, with special warranties as to acts of Optionors continuing up to time of delivery of the deed.

8. This contract shall apply to and bind the successors in interest of the parties.

9. Words and phrases shall be construed as in the singular or plural number, and as masculine, feminine or neuter gender, according to the context.

10. Any notice requested to be given under the agreement shall be sent to the parties at the following address unless a party gives written notice to the other party of a change of address.

Optionors: Optionee:

Executed the date and year first above written.

NAME

(Optionor) Date

NAME

Optionee, Title Date

“EXHIBIT A”

AERIAL OF THE PROPERTY

PLEDGE REMINDER

DATE

PLEDGE REMINDER

DONOR NAME

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

Dear FIRST NAME(S),

The pledge you made to support PROJECT on PLEDGE DATE is much appreciated.
This is a reminder of your gift commitment.

Total amount pledged: \$

Total given to date: \$

Balance remaining: \$

Installment amount: \$ Due:

Please send the form below with your pledge payment. Or you can make a credit card payment online at WEBSITE by clicking on the *Donate Now* button.

Thank you for your generous support!

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

YOUR POSITION

PLEDGE PAYMENT

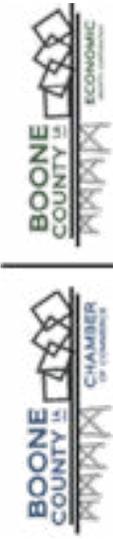
Enclosed is my payment of _____ for PROJECT.

DONOR NAME

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

ADDRESS



Yes! I want to be part of the Boone County Trails Initiative!

- \$500 \$250
- \$100 \$50 \$25
- Other \$ _____

\$1,000 or more
Signed recognition available. Contribute over 1-3 years.

I pledge to contribute \$ _____ over the next 3 years.

_____ *signature*

_____ *date*

I intend to make final payment by _____, 20____

Please send reminders quarterly annually
Beginning _____, 20____

Give online at: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Name _____

Address _____

City, State ZIP _____

E-mail _____ (optional)

Phone _____ (optional)

Make checks payable to **Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation**,
with "Boone County Trails Initiative" in the memo line
and mail to:



Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
505 5th Ave, Ste 444
Des Moines, IA 50309



Yes! I want to be part of the Boone County Trails Initiative!

- \$500 \$250
- \$100 \$50 \$25
- Other \$ _____

\$1,000 or more
Signed recognition available. Contribute over 1-3 years.

I pledge to contribute \$ _____ over the next 3 years.

_____ *signature*

_____ *date*

I intend to make final payment by _____, 20____

Please send reminders quarterly annually
Beginning _____, 20____

Give online at: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Name _____

Address _____

City, State ZIP _____

E-mail _____ (optional)

Phone _____ (optional)

Make checks payable to **Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation**,
with "Boone County Trails Initiative" in the memo line
and mail to:



Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
505 5th Ave, Ste 444
Des Moines, IA 50309



Yes! I want to be part of the Boone County Trails Initiative!

- \$500 \$250
- \$100 \$50 \$25
- Other \$ _____

\$1,000 or more
Signed recognition available. Contribute over 1-3 years.

I pledge to contribute \$ _____ over the next 3 years.

_____ *signature*

_____ *date*

I intend to make final payment by _____, 20____

Please send reminders quarterly annually
Beginning _____, 20____

Give online at: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Name _____

Address _____

City, State ZIP _____

E-mail _____ (optional)

Phone _____ (optional)

Make checks payable to **Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation**,
with "Boone County Trails Initiative" in the memo line
and mail to:



Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
505 5th Ave, Ste 444
Des Moines, IA 50309

SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION

Polk County Conservation
11407 NW Jester Park Drive
Granger, IA 50109
515.323.5300 Phone
515.323.5354 Fax

For specific park information regarding your event, contact:

Jester Park – 515.249.3229
Thomas Mitchell Park – 515.249.1753
Easter Lake Park – 515.249.1543
Yellow Banks Park – 515.250.1031
Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt – 515.249.2515
Fl. Des Moines Park – 515.249.1543

In order to determine if your event will require a Special Event Permit from the Polk County Conservation Board, you must begin the application process at least a minimum of 45 days prior to the requested date of the event. Advertising your event prior to receiving a signed Special Event Permit is not allowed. This application must be completed in its entirety before a permit will be issued.

1. EVENT INFORMATION:

NAME OF EVENT (Example: Smith/Doe Wedding, ABC Company Annual Picnic, etc.)

DATE OF EVENT: _____ **LOCATION:** _____

(Example: Jester Park, Shelter #1)

STARTING TIME: _____ **ENDING TIME:** _____

TYPE OF EVENT:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| A) Ceremony _____ | E) Golf Outing _____ |
| B) Company Activity _____ | F) Fund Raiser _____ |
| C) Bike Event _____ | G) Cultural Event _____ |
| D) Race Event _____ | H) Other _____ |
- (Please List)

DESCRIBE ACTIVITIES AT THE EVENT:

2. CONTACT INFORMATION:

PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR APPLICATION: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER: DAY _____ **EVENING** _____

FAX: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

ALTERNATE CONTACT PERSON: _____

ALTERNATE CONTACT NUMBERS: DAY _____ **EVENING** _____

3. EVENT DETAILS:

A. PARTICIPANTS:

- Number of People _____
- Number of Vehicles _____
- Invited Guests Only _____ Yes _____ No
- Open to General Public _____ Yes _____ No
- Organization/Club Members Only _____ Yes _____ No
- Registered Participants Only _____ Yes _____ No

B. VENDOR PARTICIPANTS (Appropriate vendor permits are required and must be posted at each vendor site on the day of the event):

- Number of Vendors _____
- List of Vendors:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES (Describe if any of the items listed below will be brought in by the user for the event. All items brought in must be removed immediately following the event otherwise maintenance staff fees may be assessed. Insurance coverage may be required for some activities listed below):

- Tents _____ Yes _____ No _____ Qty.
 - If yes, describe tent, size, number and location _____

- Inflatable Bounce Houses/Toys/Slides _____ Yes _____ No
 - If yes, describe type, number and location _____

- Amplified Music _____ Yes _____ No
 - If yes, describe use of _____

- Banners* _____ Yes _____ No
 - If yes, describe use of _____

* Banners may be placed along roadways to guide people to your event, but in no way may be affixed to trees or park signs. Signs are to be removed immediately following event. Failure to do so will result in maintenance fees and/or fines according to littering ordinances.

- Signs* _____ Yes _____ No
 - If yes, describe use of _____

SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION

* Small directional signs may be placed along roadways to guide people to your event, but in no way may be affixed to trees or park signs. Signs are to be removed immediately following event. Failure to do so will result in maintenance fees and/or fines according to littering ordinances.

- Trash Containers _____ Yes _____ No
 - Date Brought In: _____ Date Removed: _____
- Portable Toilets _____ Yes _____ No _____ Qty.
 - Date Brought In: _____ Date Removed: _____
- Alcoholic Beverages to be Served? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Qty.
(Intoxicating liquors are not allowed; beer and wine only. Sec. 27 – Polk County Conservation Rules and Regulations)

D. INSURANCE - Polk County Conservation’s liability insurance excludes the use of aircraft on park property including hot-air balloons, planes, helicopters, ultra-lights and parachutes. Applicants of special events may be required to furnish a Certificate of Insurance on a fully paid comprehensive public liability and property damage insurance policy from a licensed broker, protecting Polk County, the Polk County Conservation Board, its officers, elected officials, and employees, agents and assigns from any and all claims which may result from or in connection to the special event. Polk County and the Polk County Conservation Board must be named as "Additional Insureds" on the certificate. Applicants must, if required by the Polk County Conservation Board, produce a copy of the policy with all endorsements. Polk County Conservation must receive the certificate at least ten (10) days prior to the special event. Limits and type of insurance coverage may change because of the different activities of each special event. The Polk County Risk Manager will determine all specific limits and types of insurance appropriate for the special event. Proof of insurance (if applicable) must be received by Polk County Conservation before a Special Event Permit will be issued.

E. SPECIAL PROVISIONS (Need for items provided by Polk County Conservation staff):

- Extra Picnic Tables (\$20 for each additional added to area) _____ Yes _____ No
 - Number of extra tables requested _____
- Ranger/Security Staff (\$40/hour per staff person) _____ Yes _____ No
 - Number of staff requested _____
- Maintenance Staff (\$75/hour per staff person) _____ Yes _____ No
- Other (Describe) _____

F. TRAFFIC & EMERGENCY SAFETY

- Access to Event – Do you anticipate that your event will interfere with non-participating vehicle traffic (crowd and / or traffic control) _____ Yes _____ No _____ unsure
- Emergency Preparedness --Do you anticipate the need for first aid booths, fire / rescue units present during your event? _____ Yes _____ No _____ unsure

G. FEES/CHARGES/DEPOSITS – All fees, charges and deposits must be paid before a Special Event Permit will be issued.

- **Rental Charges** – Associated rental facility fees and damage deposits shall apply should a facility within the PCC jurisdiction be used in conjunction with the event.
- **Administration Fee** – A \$50.00 administration fee will be charged to process the Special Event Application and must be received by PCC before permit will be issued.
- **Damage Deposit** – A damage deposit (amount determined by PCC staff) may be required. Following the event, PCC staff will inspect the area and if the area is not left in the condition prior to the event, the damage deposit will be forfeited. If the dollar amount for any repair/clean-up exceeds the deposit, additional fees at \$75/hr/maintenance person will apply. The party shall be billed for the balance and shall be paid in full no more than 30 days from the billing date.

PCC looks forward in assisting you in determining these concerns as well as any other concerns or issues you may have in this application process.

I have completed the Special Event Application, enclosed appropriate fees and understand the conditions under which it is issued and agree to comply with these conditions for this event.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

The Privacy Act of 1974 requires that each individual asked or required to furnish personal information be advised of the following:

Authority: 5 P.L. 93-579

Purpose: To provide a contact in connection with permit activities.

Routine Uses: Permit is issued under the direction of the Polk County Conservation Board. The names and addresses of those who obtain the permit are not reported, but are kept on file at the Conservation Board office to provide a point of contact in case of emergency. This information is not maintained alphabetically or by other personal identifier. Disclosure of information is voluntary. Failure to provide the requested information will preclude issuance of permit. Failure to meet the terms of this Special Event Application may prompt additional fees to be charged at a rate to be determined by the Polk County Conservation Board.

OFFICE USE ONLY:				
(PCC Staff: Please complete this section in case this sheet gets separated from original application).				
Date of Event: _____		Location: _____		
Name of Event: _____				
Contact: _____				
Address: _____				
	Street	City	State	Zip Code
Verification of Fees:	<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost per Item</u>	<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Total</u>
	Ranger/Security Staff	\$40.00/Hr.		
	Picnic Tables	\$20.00 Ea.		
	Maintenance Staff	\$75.00/Hr./Person		
	Administration Fee:	\$50.00 Minimum		
	Other Fees: _____			
Damage Deposit Recommended:	Amount \$ _____			
(Continued on next page.)				

SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION

Special Considerations and Conditions: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ Initials: _____
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Approved by Park Ranger: _____ Date: _____

Approved by PCCB Director: _____ Date: _____

Guidelines for PCC Granting Trail Access
DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION December 15, 2006
Revised by INHF December 26, 2006

Overall Rationale

Most of the PCC trail system consists of “rail-trails” – rail line corridor conversions to trails. These rail lines are not abandoned corridors but routes set-aside for trail purposes that could at any time be returned to the rail system. The County is not obligated to grant additional access rights beyond those what the railroad already provided. New crossings are discouraged for that reason, and for the purpose of maintaining a safe and high quality trail system.

In many instances, access requests across the trail can instead be accommodated with access from a county road or other public right-of-way. Those access means must take priority over the trail. If those alternatives exist, no access across the trail will be provided. It should also be noted that not granting a new access does not amount to a “taking” but instead, a simple maintenance of status quo.

Finally, in order to keep a consistent trails system, these guidelines are recommended for use along all Polk County trails, regardless of their origins.

Proposed Guidelines

1. Field access for agricultural purposes, when no other access is available, would be provided in accordance with state law with party seeking access responsible for legal description, associated survey, and costs of county attorney drafting easement language/ agreement.
2. Residential access may be considered when no other access points are available due to no fault of the landowner requesting access. If granted, costs as described above apply.
3. Residential access, if granted, should be restricted to one single family residence.
4. When development is appropriate and in accordance to regional land use plans, compensation for access is required. Additional restrictions may be imposed on the grantee to provide for the safety of trail users and to maintain the integrity of the trail.
5. In rural areas, access points should be spaced no closer than ½ mile apart if at all possible.
6. Urban area access points should also be restricted to no closer than ¼ mile separation if at all possible.
7. When an easement is granted, recommended terms of such an easement include (but are not limited to):
 - Easement terminates if rail line is reactivated
 - Similarly, accesses granted for any given land use purpose terminate with a change in that land use
 - Grantee yields to trail users and will be responsible for posting and maintaining appropriate traffic yield signs required as a condition of the access easement
 - Grantee pays access costs of installation and maintenance in accordance with PCC specifications (e.g., signs, access surfacing, drainage structures, etc.)
 - Any new fencing required by grantee will be the responsibility of the grantee; any new fence required by grantor will be shared equally by grantor and grantee using the “right-hand rule.” Maintenance of any new fences shall be according to the 'right-hand rule
 - Funding for future maintenance of trail will be required as a part of any trail access easements

Volunteer Liability and Release Form for Events THE IOWA NATURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Contact Information

Full Name:	
Street Address:	City, State, Zip:
Email:	Phone #:
Medical concerns we should note about you (allergies, etc.):	
How did you hear about this event?	

Emergency Contact Information

Full Name:	Relationship:
Primary Phone:	Secondary Phone:

Job Description/Potential Risks

Volunteer activity description:	Volunteers will use various hand tools, such as handsaws and loppers, to assist INHF staff in removing invasive woody species from the landscape. Volunteers may also help chainsawyers to “swamp”, or pull cut limbs from the chainsawyer’s work space.
Potential risks:	Injury due to working near a chainsaw, which may include the chain coming off of the machine; Injury due to using sharp hand tools including (but not limited to) scratches and cuts; injury due to uneven terrain including (but not limited to) trips and falls; exposure to poison ivy and other allergenic plant species; exposure to various insects (including bees); exposure to unknown environmental elements; other unforeseen and unpredictable risks that come with working outside.

Sign and Release

INDIVIDUALS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO VOLUNTEER WITHOUT COMPLETING A RELEASE AND WAIVER FORM.
IN WITNESS THEREOF, Volunteer has executed this Release as of the day and year first written below.

Signature:	Date:
Legal Guardian Signature (if volunteer is under age 18):	

This Release and Waiver of Liability (the “Release”) is executed by the volunteer or the legal guardian of a youth (any person under the age of 18 years of age) who is volunteering (the “Volunteer” in favor of Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF), INHF’s director, employees and volunteers. The Volunteer desires to work as a volunteer for INHF and engage in activities related to being a volunteer (the “Activities”). The Volunteer understands that the Activities may include use of hand tools, power tools, equipment and machinery, as well as working indoors or outdoors.

The Volunteer hereby freely, voluntarily and without duress executes this Release for the Volunteer’s self, personal representatives, heirs and next of kin under the following terms:

Release and Waiver: Volunteer does hereby release, forever discharge, covenant not to sue, and hold harmless INHF, landowner and their successors and assigns from any and all liability, claims, and demands of whatever kind or nature, either in law or in equity, which arise or may hereafter arise from Volunteer’s Activities on behalf of INHF.

Medical Treatment: Volunteer does hereby release and forever discharge INHF, its director and its employees, from any claim whatsoever which arises or may hereafter arise on account of any first aid, treatment, or service rendered in connection with the Volunteer’s Activities with INHF. By signing this agreement, you, the undersigned, hereby agree to and authorize the following:

- INHF may seek medical treatment or service, including without limitation first aid, hospitalization and emergency ambulance service, for the Volunteer in connection with the Volunteer’s participation in the Activity. The Volunteer or their Guardian shall remain financially responsible for any costs incurred as a result of said treatment and services and hereby agree to make full payment for such to the attending medical personnel and/or health care facility rendering such treatment

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy:** <https://www.railstotrails.org>
- **American Trails:** <https://www.americantrails.org>
- **National Park Service - Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program:** <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm>
- **Iowa DOT Systems Planning:** https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/
- **Iowa Recreational Use Statute:** <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/ico/chapter/461C.pdf>
- **Trees Forever:** <http://www.treesforever.org>



Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation has worked on hundreds of trail projects across Iowa, and we want to help you achieve your trail goals. INHF is happy to:

Listen to your vision and priorities for your community.

Refer you to helpful partners and resources.

Navigate design, fundraising and volunteer options.

Help make your trail a reality.

Call us at 515-288-1846
or email info@inhf.org.

