

# 2022 STEPHENSON COUNTY

## *Greenways & Trails Plan*

This plan update was made possible by funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration granted to Blackhawk Hills Regional Council for assistance with response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## Introduction

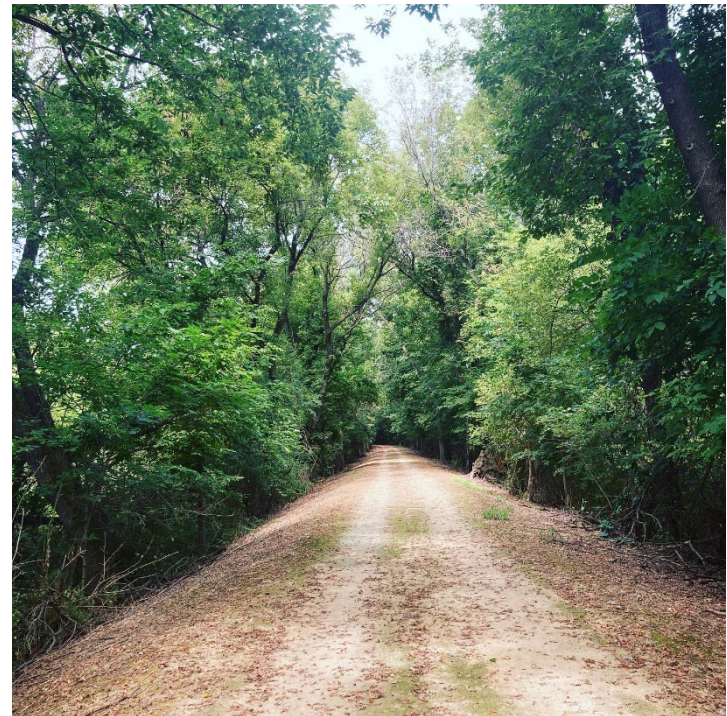
### About

This plan serves as an update to the 2001 Greenways and Trails Plan for Stephenson County. The 2001 plan was prepared by Thomas Graceffa and Associates, Inc., a planning and landscape architecture firm located in Rockford, IL, and was funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Like the 2001 plan, this version aims to identify existing and potential opportunities for county residents and visitors to recreate and connect with nature. Through a process of inventorying existing trails, parks, and open spaces and collecting public input, a list of initiatives was developed. These initiatives, once implemented, will support the county stakeholders' efforts to provide quality recreation and outdoor experiences.

### Objectives

This iteration of the Stephenson County greenways and trails plan intends to:

- Serve as a tool for government agencies at state, county, and municipal levels in recreation, transportation, land use, and natural resource planning
- Offer support for municipalities and local organizations seeking funds for recreation, open space, or trails projects
- Highlight areas of recreation and trails demand for future planning efforts



*The Jane Addams Trail, photo credit: Greater Freeport Partnership*

## Value of Trails, Parks, and Open Spaces

Outdoor public greenspaces, whether in the form of parks, trails, or undeveloped open spaces, benefit people and their communities. Benefits include but are not limited to the following:

### Physical and Mental Health

Access to places for physical activity encourages people to partake in exercise and forms of active transportation, which are desperately needed at a time when a sedentary lifestyle is so prevalent. The CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System shows that between 20 to 25% of adults in Illinois reported not participating in any form of physical activity or exercise other than their regular job over the past month.<sup>1</sup> Leading a sedentary lifestyle is a major contributor to obesity. Risks associated with obesity are well known and include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, congestive heart failure, stroke, and certain types of cancer (including endometrial, breast, and prostate).<sup>2</sup> Trails, parks, and open spaces offer hope for improving the nation's obesity epidemic. Studies conducted by the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* showed that "creation of or enhanced access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach" resulted in a 48.4% increase in the frequency of physical activity for residents.<sup>3</sup> The studies also showed an increase in aerobic capacity, weight loss, improvements in flexibility, and an increase in perceived energy following the intervention.<sup>4</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of trails, parks, and open spaces for maintaining both physical fitness and mental health. As people have sought alternatives to gyms and safer spaces to socialize, public outdoor spaces have provided solutions. Studies over the past several decades have proven that spending time in nature has positive mental health implications from reducing stress, anxiety, and depression to lowering levels of aggression and improving attention spans.<sup>5</sup> The physical and mental health benefits of public open spaces and trails underscore the need to provide equitable access to these spaces. People of color and lower-income households who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic are the same populations that often lack adequate access to public parks and other recreational areas.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Adult Physical Inactivity Prevalence Maps by Race/Ethnicity*, January 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/data/inactivity-prevalence-maps/index.html#overall>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Overweight and Obesity: Health Consequences*, <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/consequences.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Emily B. Kahn et al. and the Task Force on Community Preventive Services, *The Effectiveness of Interventions to Increase Physical Activity*, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 22, no. 4S (2002): 87–88. [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(02\)00434-8/fulltext](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(02)00434-8/fulltext)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The Trust for Public Land, *Parks and the Pandemic*, 2020. <https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/Parks%20and%20Pandemic%20-%20TPL%20special%20report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## Environment

Although this iteration of the Stephenson County greenways and trails plan focuses primarily on the recreation and transportation value of trails, parks, and open spaces, the benefits these spaces have for habitat, water quality, and climate change resiliency should not be understated. In the state of Illinois where approximately 75% of land cover is farmland and 10% is developed<sup>7</sup>, conserving and managing available land for its environmental benefits is critical. Charles E. Little, a thinker, author, and journalist on environmentalism in the second half of the 20th Century, defines greenways as “(1) linear open spaces established along natural corridors, such as riverfronts, stream valleys, ridgelines and railroad right-of-ways converted to scenic roads, recreational use, or canals, (2) natural or landscaped trails for pedestrian or bicycle passage, (3) open-space connectors that link parks, cultural features, nature reserves, or historic sites with each other and populated areas, and (4) local strips and linear parks designated as parkways or greenbelts.”<sup>8</sup> Nearly all of the features examined or proposed in this plan fall into the “greenways” category. These spaces, particularly larger contiguous open spaces and natural or landscaped corridors, can provide habitat and habitat connectivity.

Animals, humans included, also benefit from the urban green space cooling effect. Larger parks have been shown to provide a measurable temperature reduction that extends beyond park boundaries.<sup>9</sup> This cooling effect is a welcomed benefit as extreme heat events become more frequent in Illinois due to climate change.<sup>10</sup> Another mitigating quality of greenways is their ability to handle increased runoff from more frequent and severe precipitation events. Strategies that combine conventional stormwater management infrastructure with green infrastructure - often found within greenways - may help to ease increased risk of flooding.<sup>11</sup> Greenways may also play an important role in storing carbon, thus reducing overall CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. A study of stored organic carbon in park trees and soil under cold climate conditions showed that the older the trees and less disturbed the soil, the more successful trees and soil were at storing carbon.<sup>12</sup> Although some amount of disturbance in parks and open spaces is unavoidable (indeed, it is sometimes desirable depending on management practices), the ability of these spaces to serve as a carbon sink is an important consideration in land use planning.

Further study of the environmental benefits unique to Stephenson County’s greenways and trails will aid in decision making and planning around land use and development. Considering their numerous environmental benefits and potential to complement and offset effects of other land

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2017 National Resources Inventory*. Natural Resources Conservation Service, Washington, DC. 3 February 2022. [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/NRCS\\_RCA/reports/nri\\_il.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/NRCS_RCA/reports/nri_il.html)

<sup>8</sup> North Carolina State University Libraries Special Collections Research Center: Greenways Archive. Charles E. Little Collection. Scope and Content Note. 3 February 2022. [https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/specialcollections/greenways/little\\_mc214.html](https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/specialcollections/greenways/little_mc214.html)

<sup>9</sup> Farshid Aram, Ester Higuera García, Ebrahim Solgi, Soran Mansournia, *Urban Green Space Cooling Effect in Cities*, Heliyon, Volume 5, Issue 4, 2019, e01339, ISSN 2405-8440, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e01339>

<sup>10</sup> The Nature Conservancy. *Climate Change is transforming Illinois with more to come, major report by The Nature Conservancy concludes*. April 20, 2021. Chicago, IL. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/newsroom/illinois-climate-assessment/>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Leena Lindén, Anu Riikonen, Heikki Setälä, Vesa Yli-Pelkonen, *Quantifying Carbon Stocks in Urban Parks Under Cold Climate Conditions*, Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, Volume 49, 2020, 126633, ISSN 1618-8667, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2020.126633>

uses, this plan should be integrated into future land use planning and mapping at county and municipal levels. The Priority Conservation Areas Map found in Appendix A provides a draft framework for further planning.

## Transportation

Even environmentally beneficial electric vehicles cannot substitute for low-cost, accessible, and health-benefiting active transportation methods. Trails and other forms of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can often provide a transportation option to the one-third of Americans who do not drive due to age, disability, choice, or lack of financial means to own and maintain a vehicle.<sup>13</sup> Active transportation is a viable alternative to driving for many common trips. About 40% of all trips are less than 3 miles.<sup>14</sup> By extending, linking, and maintaining trail networks, options for active transportation are greatly improved.

## Economy

Outdoor recreation has played an ever-growing role in the nation's economy. In 2019, outdoor recreation generated \$788 billion in economic output and supported 5.2 million jobs, many of which were in rural communities.<sup>15</sup> Although the COVID-19 pandemic took an economic toll on virtually all industries, an incredible increase in demand for outdoor recreation opportunities was seen nation-wide as people sought out ways to safely exercise, de-stress, and socialize. Despite a lower overall economic output for outdoor recreation in 2020, industry segments including bicycling, boating/fishing, and camping saw record sales and unprecedented growth.<sup>16</sup>

The economic benefits of trails have been recorded in the state of Illinois as well. A 2012 study of six regional trails in the state found that trail survey respondents spent an average of about \$30 per trail visit on expenditures such as restaurants, gas, gear, and groceries.<sup>17</sup>

Studies have also linked recreation offerings with economic resiliency. People have been moving to recreation-based communities much more quickly since the end of the Great Recession. These communities have been successful in attracting new residents and businesses.<sup>18</sup> Strategies to maximize the economic potential of recreation offerings can be used to stimulate commerce and ensure return on investment to communities.

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Gotschi and Kevin Mills. *Active Transportation for America: The Case for Increased Federal Investment in Bicycling and Walking*. Rails to Trails Conservancy. 2008, <https://www.railstotrails.org/resourcehandler.ashx?id=2948>

<sup>14</sup> Litman, T. *Short and Sweet: Analysis of Shorter Trips Using National Personal Travel Survey Data*. Victoria Transportation Policy Institute. 2010. [www.vtpi.org/short\\_sweet.pdf](http://www.vtpi.org/short_sweet.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> United States. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). *Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2019*. 10 November 2020. 11 Jan. 2022 <https://www.bea.gov/news/2020/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2019>

<sup>16</sup> United States. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). *Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2020*. 9 November 2021. 11 Jan. 2022 <https://www.bea.gov/news/2020/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2020>

<sup>17</sup> Buchtel, S., J. Robinett, J. Scheunemann, and E. Oberg. 2013. *Making Trails Count for Illinois*. Trails for Illinois, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Office of Recreation and Park Resources, and Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, <https://headwaterseconomics.org/trail/72-trails-impact-illinois/>

<sup>18</sup> Headwaters Economics. *Recreation Counties Attracting New Residents and Higher Incomes*. Jan. 2019. <https://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/recreation-counties-attract-report.pdf>



Promoting existing recreation opportunities is an excellent place to start and was noted as a supported action in both the public survey and across several stakeholder interviews during this planning process.



*Cross-county skiing in Stephenson County, photo credit: Greater Freeport Partnership*

## Equity and Inclusion

Greenways (including parks and open spaces) and trails have the opportunity to benefit everyone regardless of race, age, ability, or socioeconomic background. However, in reality, many groups of people have and continue to be excluded from these spaces for a variety of reasons, including unequal distribution of parks and park maintenance in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. There is a growing number of resources available to help make park and trail development processes more equitable. Two resources that provide a solid foundation on this topic are Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's [Equitable and Inclusive Trails](#) webpage and the Partnership for the National Trails System's collection of [Diversity and Inclusion Resources](#).

Equitable park and trail development starts with the planning process. It must be acknowledged that there are significant gaps in the public input gathered for this plan. Identifying these gaps provides a learning opportunity for how to improve future planning efforts, as well as project and program implementation. More information about segments of the population that were missed can be found in the Public Input section. Some recommendations include the translation of public surveys into Spanish, outreach to organizations that serve marginalized communities even if their main focus is not recreation, and involvement of adaptive sports groups, which focus on adapting recreation opportunities for people with disabilities. Developing long-term, invested relationships with community groups representing diverse peoples shows the most promise for improving public engagement.

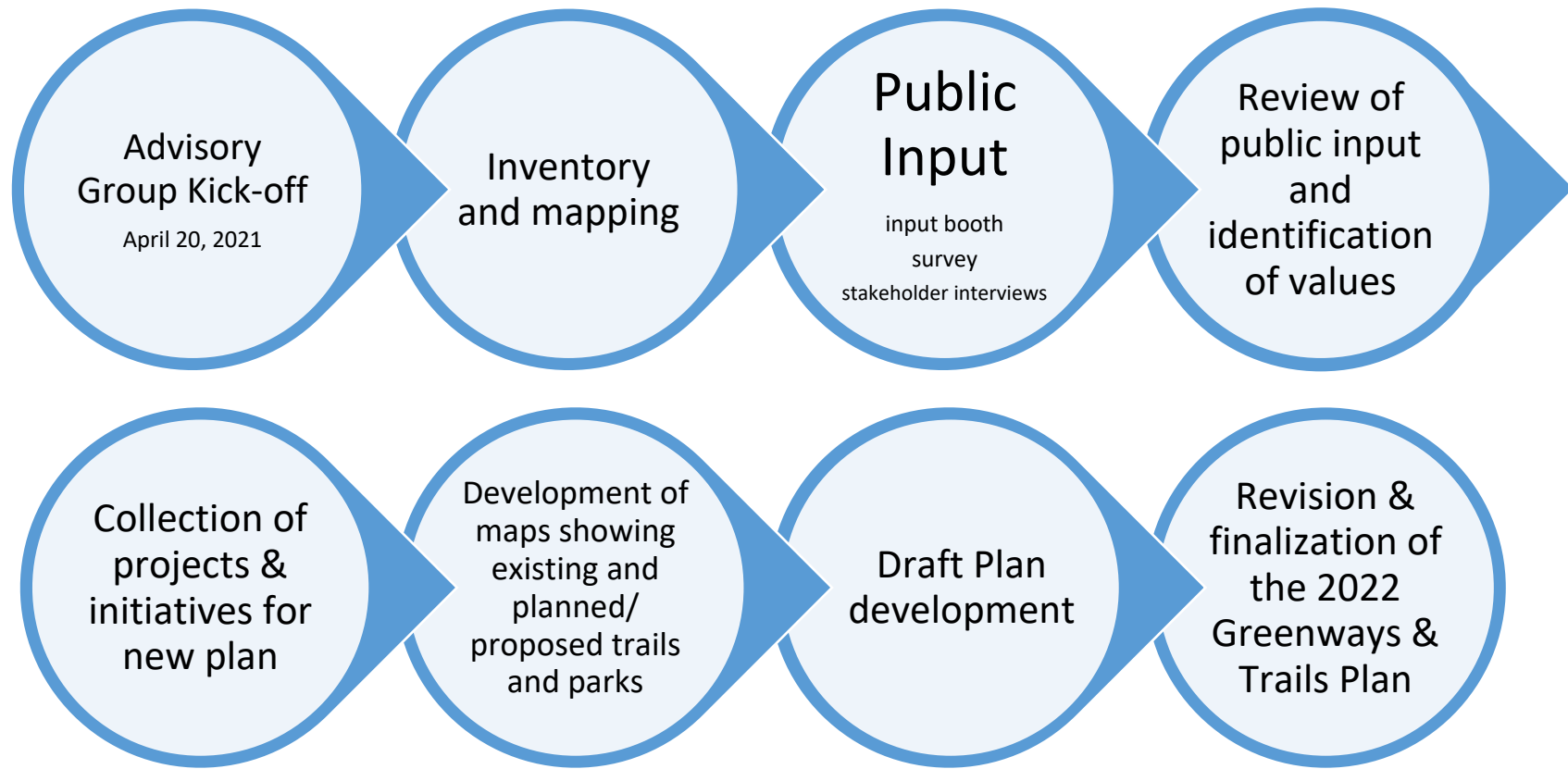
When moving forward to the design of parks and trails, it is particularly critical to consider the largest minority group in the country and in the State of Illinois. About 23%, or one in four adults in Illinois has a disability.<sup>19</sup> An opportunity exists to create an accessible experience in virtually all new park and trail projects. A growing body of reference material is available for designers to ensure that these spaces provide access to a population with a wide span of abilities. The U.S. Access Board's proposed [Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines \(PROWAG\)](#) offers current best practices for features like sidewalks and curb ramps and will also address shared use paths in its next iteration. The U.S. Forest Service offers recreation-specific guidelines with their [Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines](#) and [Trail Accessibility Guidelines](#). Prioritizing accessibility standards when working with contractors to implement projects can help to clarify desired outcomes and ensure that trails and park features are truly accessible. It should be noted that Stephenson County has the advantage of hosting two regional trails: the Jane Addams Trail and the Pecatonica Prairie Trail. Both trails are rails-to-trails, which provide predictable terrain and few instances of extreme slopes. These characteristics make the trails open to a wide variety of uses and abilities. Increased connectivity, especially along the Pecatonica Prairie Trail, would expand these offerings.

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<sup>19</sup> Centers for Disease Control. *Disability & Health U.S. State Profile Data for Illinois (Adults 18+ years of age)*. 4 February 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/impacts/illinois.html>

## Process

Following the county board's selection of the advisory group, the following steps were taken in the development of this plan update:





## Existing Conditions

Several resources were used to develop the inventory of existing public trails, routes, parks, and open spaces below. Data was gathered from the USGS Protected Areas Database, the Prairie State Conservation Coalition's protected lands database, the National Register of Historic Places database, a BHRC trails layer, and knowledge provided by members of the advisory group. Additional information was collected from related plans (full list is available in Appendix B) including the 2020 Freeport Park District Master Plan and the Pecatonica River Water Trail Master Plan.

Trails and Routes			
Name	Type	Designed Uses	Manager
Jane Addams Trail	Dedicated Path	Walk, Bike, Snowmobile	Jane Addams Trail Commission
Pecatonica Prairie Trail	Dedicated Path	Walk, Bike, X/C Ski	Pecatonica Prairie Trail Commission
Highland Trail	Dedicated Path	Walk, Bike	Highland Community College, City of Freeport
Countryside Recreation Path	Dedicated Path	Walk, Bike	City of Freeport, Freeport Park District
Burchard Hills Trail	Dedicated Path	Walk, Bike	Freeport Health Network (FHN)
Krape Park Trails	Dedicated Paths	Walk, Bike	Freeport Park District
Read Park Trails	Dedicated Paths	Walk, Bike	Freeport Park District
Dakota Nature Trail	Dedicated Path	Walk	Village of Dakota
Grand Illinois Trail (GIT)	Route	Bike	Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
Stephenson Black Hawk Trail	Route	Walk, Bike	Lena Community Park District
Pecatonica River Water Trail	Route	Paddle	Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation (FPRF)

Parks		
Name	Type	Manager
Stephenson County Fairgrounds	Fairgrounds	Stephenson County Fair Association
Third Ward Park	Park	City of Freeport
Bidwell Park	Park	Freeport Park District
Knowlton Square	Park	Freeport Park District
Krape Park	Park	Freeport Park District
Read Park	Park	Freeport Park District
Taylor Park	Park	Freeport Park District
Winter Park	Park	Freeport Park District
Park Hills Golf Course	Golf Course	Freeport Park District
Wilbur Playground	Park	Freeport Park District
Deacon Davis Courts	Sports Facility	Freeport Park District
Dodds Park	Park	Lena Community Park District
Lena Lion's Park	Park	Lena Community Park District
Jaycees Park	Park	Lena Community Park District
Polhill Park	Park	Lena Community Park District
Schudt Park	Park	Lena Community Park District
Hideaway Park	Park	Pearl City Park District
Joseph Westwood Memorial Park	Park	Pearl City Park District
Rock City Park	Park	Rock City
Wayside Park	Park	Stephenson County
Cedarville Lions Park	Park	Village of Cedarville
Woodlane Park	Park	Village of Cedarville
Dakota Park	Park	Village of Dakota
Memory Park	Park	Village of Davis
Ben Miller Park	Park	Village of German Valley
Tower Park	Park	Village of Orangeville

<b>Old Grade School Park</b>	Park	Village of Orangeville
<b>Lincoln Park</b>	Park	Village of Ridott
<b>Winslow Township Park</b>	Park	Winslow Township
<b>Winslow Township Park</b>	Park	Winslow Township Park District
<b>Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Recreation Area</b>	State Recreation Area	IDNR

Open Spaces		
Name	Type	Manager
<b>Wetlands Preserve</b>	Nature Preserve	Freeport Park District
<b>Oakdale Nature Preserve</b>	Nature Preserve	Freeport Park District
<b>Larson Prairie Nature Preserve</b>	Nature Preserve	Jane Addamsland Park Foundation
<b>Butterfly Farm</b>	Nature Preserve	Jane Addamsland Park Foundation
<b>Indian Gardens</b>	Nature Preserve	Jane Addamsland Park Foundation
<b>Wohlford Woods</b>	Nature Preserve	Jane Addamsland Park Foundation
<b>Zaleskis Woods</b>	Nature Preserve	Jane Addamsland Park Foundation
<b>Espenscheid Forest Preserve</b>	Nature Preserve	Jane Addamsland Park Foundation
<b>Freeport Prairie Nature Preserve</b>	Nature Preserve	Jane Addamsland Park Foundation
<b>Angeline Forest</b>	Community Forest	Village of Davis
<b>Dublin Highlands State Habitat Area</b>	Habitat Area	IDNR

Heritage Sites	
Name	Type
<b>Stephenson County Historical Museum</b>	Museum House & Arboretum
<b>Blackhawk Battlefield Park/ Kellogg's Grove</b>	National Historic Place, Monument
<b>Paradise Cove</b>	Artesian well, water wheel
<b>All Veterans Memorial Park</b>	Memorial
<b>The Soldiers' Monument</b>	National Historic Place, Monument
<b>Lincoln-Douglas Debate Square</b>	Monument
<b>Cedarville Area Historical Society Museum</b>	Museum
<b>Silver Creek &amp; Stephenson Antique Railroad &amp; Museum</b>	Museum



*Paddlers on the Pecatonica River, photo credit: Joe Ginger*

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

After reviewing the parks, trails, and open spaces inventory, the advisory group completed a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) exercise. This exercise was also completed by several stakeholders during stakeholder interviews. Results suggest that the county has an excellent foundation in existing regional trails and municipal parks and that it also has opportunities to improve many of these spaces and build upon and complete existing projects. A consolidated and summarized version of the SWOT analysis can be found below:

<p><b><i>Strengths</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distinct landscape structures &amp; design in Freeport parks</li><li>• 700+ acres of park land in the City of Freeport</li><li>• Volunteers, master gardeners, and community groups help maintain Freeport parks</li><li>• Volunteers get a lot done on the Pecatonica River Water Trail</li><li>• Lake Le-Aqua-Na was recently dredged</li><li>• Jane Addams Trail is one of the best maintained trails in Northwest Illinois</li><li>• Jane Addams Trail’s natural surfacing (crushed limestone) has aesthetic value and can be softer on joints</li><li>• The region is a draw for visitors due to topography and established trails (Jane Addams Trail and completed sections of the Pecatonica Prairie Trail)</li><li>• Oakdale Nature Preserve is upgrading trails to add ADA improvements. A new shelter and restroom are also being constructed, which is bringing interest to the preserve.</li><li>• Krape Park has a wonderful trail</li><li>• The Blackhawk Battlefield Park/Kellogg’s Grove just had preservation work completed. New playground equipment may be coming soon.</li><li>• New floating canoe/kayak launch at Wes Block launch point</li><li>• Snowmobile trail network is well established and doesn’t require much infrastructure maintenance (limited infrastructure apart from Jane Addams Trail)</li><li>• Snowmobile trail network is well connected (can ride from Richmond (McHenry County) to Galena (Jo Daviess County) or into Wisconsin)</li><li>• Small, committed group of volunteers on snowmobile trails</li></ul>	<p><b><i>Weaknesses</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not many parks on the east side of Freeport. Few mini parks throughout the city</li><li>• 20+ bridges along the Jane Addams Trail that require maintenance</li><li>• Crushed limestone on Jane Addams Trail can be expensive to maintain and needs frequent maintenance</li><li>• Trail connectivity could be better</li><li>• Lack of OHV opportunities</li><li>• Need younger volunteers</li><li>• Some trails and recreation projects have stagnated</li><li>• Funding snowmobile trails can be a challenge through RTP grants because they require a sponsor (trails span across many communities, so municipalities may be reluctant to partner)</li><li>• Some issues with lack of engagement in communities</li><li>• Changing recreational interests can mean older infrastructure gets little use (e.g., baseball diamonds)</li></ul>
<p><b><i>Opportunities</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and implement a wayfinding plan for parks, trailheads, and other destinations</li><li>• Improvements for Freeport’s parks, trailheads, and launch point parking areas</li><li>• Work more with volunteers to maintain parks and trails</li><li>• Improved trail connectivity within the City of Freeport</li><li>• Idea for a dedicated mud park on east side of Freeport for ATVs, Jeeps, and pick-up truck events</li><li>• (Statewide) focus on advertising trail opportunities</li><li>• Several sites that are great places but aren’t well known (Paradise Cove, Wohlford Woods) - signage and/or promotion may help</li><li>• Camping is allowed at Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation (FPRF) sites, which isn’t well known. This is a good opportunity for users of the Pecatonica River Water Trail</li><li>• People can access water at municipal and county bridges (not well known).</li><li>• KOA campground on Hwy 20 would like to expand but struggle to acquire land</li><li>• Plans for a trail from KOA campground to Lena</li><li>• Idea to create a modern-day railroad station with a train observation platform in Lena. A section of the building could also serve as a trailhead to Lake Le-Aqua-Na.</li><li>• McConnell Rd could connect Jane Addams Trail to Lake Le-Aqua-Na</li><li>• More opportunities for partnerships with snowmobile trails and multi-use trails on RTP or SNO grants</li></ul>	<p><b><i>Threats</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flooding in Freeport Parks (Taylor Park, and, to a lesser extent, Krape Park)</li><li>• Flooding on trail corridors (Jane Addams Trail- particularly at Van Buren Rd)</li><li>• City of Freeport has about three times more park land than the national average for similar sized cities - this is a lot to manage.</li><li>• Funding is lacking at state and local levels (and potential loss of Freeport’s home rule status is on the horizon)</li><li>• Snowmobiling depends on snow, which is problematic with milder, less predictable winters</li><li>• Volunteerism is waning - particularly problematic for snowmobile trails as the window of work is narrow (signage and bridge work done in the fall on Thanksgiving weekend; infrastructure has to come back down in the spring before planting begins)</li><li>• State of Illinois law regarding 35 mph maximum speed limits for roads designated for OHV use make connections between towns very challenging</li><li>• The disincentive for on-road bicycle infrastructure in Illinois created by the Boub v. Wayne 1998 case makes adding bike lanes and route signage unappealing for townships</li><li>• Illinois law regarding public water access prevents many rivers and streams from being open for paddling</li></ul>

## Public Input

The public input process for the greenways and trails plan update entailed an in-person public input booth, an online public survey, and a series of stakeholder interviews. Information gathered during this process helped to identify underlying values that people in the county hold regarding trails, parks, and open spaces. Ideas about new trails and parks and improvement projects were also collected.

### Public Input Booth

On September 25, 2021, BHRC held a public input booth at Freeport's Pretzel City Brewfest. The booth included poster maps of existing conditions in the county, free-form comment cards for participants to provide opinions and ideas on parks and trails, and QR code / URL fliers for the online public survey that launched that day. The booth had fewer than 10 participants, but it did spark a few follow-up survey responses. Participation was low likely due to the focused attention on the festival.

### Online Public Survey

The public survey, which was open 46 days from September 25 to November 11, 2021, was hosted on an ArcGIS Survey 123 platform accessible by smartphone, tablet, or personal computer. The survey was advertised by members of the advisory group and other stakeholders via social media, newsletters, and email. Participants were asked eight questions (some with multi-part ranking components) about what benefits of parks, trails, and open spaces they valued, which places and trails they had visited in the past year, what factors prevent

more use of parks and trails, and what actions around improving the park and trail network they would support. The survey also included a text box for free-form comments and ideas. A full record of the survey questions and responses is found in Appendix C.

In addition to questions about parks and trails, the survey also included three demographics questions on household size, race and ethnicity, and household income. The race and ethnicity and household income questions included an answer option of "prefer not to say". Respondents also had the option of skipping any of the questions while still being able to submit a survey, although this was not explicitly stated.

233 respondents participated, contributing 66 free-form comments. The number of responses is encouraging for a survey of this nature, however answers to the demographics questions suggest that the respondents do not adequately represent the county's overall population. Household sizes were an exception and in line with the 2015-2019 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey average. Most respondents



*BHRC public input booth at the Freeport Pretzel City Brewfest, photo credit: Allan Braun*

reported household size in the 1-2.4 person range, and the 2015-2019 American Community Survey average for the county is 2.24 people per household.<sup>20</sup> A notable gap in representation is uncovered by answers to the race and ethnicity question. Respondents were heavily White (88.41%) with 0% identifying as Black, while the county's population is 81.8% White and 10.4% Black.<sup>21</sup> Household incomes of respondents were also higher than typical in the county. Most respondents reported household incomes between \$75,000 and \$150,000, while the median household income in the county for 2015-2019 American Community Survey was \$48,805.<sup>22</sup> Another shortcoming of the survey to note is that a question about the respondent's home municipality or township was not included. This made some of the comments difficult to interpret when references to unnamed parks and trails were made. The lack of respondents' home locales also made it difficult to tell whether responses were coming from county residents. Some preliminary recommendations for improving future public outreach efforts can be found in the Equity and Inclusion section of this plan. Although value can still be found in the survey results, it is important to note that they may not be representative of opinions shared across the Stephenson County population.

One of the goals of the public input survey was to uncover shared values around trails, parks, and open spaces. A question that asked respondents to select the top three (of nine) most important benefits of these spaces unveiled some majority common values. The top five selected benefits included:

1. Conservation of natural areas (58.8% of respondents selected this benefit in their top three)
2. Promotion of health (physical, social engagement, psychological), wellness, and fitness (51.07%)
3. Economic development (helping the community attract and retain residents and businesses, increase property values, and be more resilient) (48.78%)
4. Transportation/connectivity, options for commuters (e.g. bike lanes, trails) (46.78%)
5. Neighborhood/community open space for social interactions and play (creating a sense of community/bringing people together) (41.63%)

Respondents were also asked what reasons prevent them from using trails, parks, and open spaces more often. The top two responses were:

1. Don't know where parks/trails are located (30.04%)
2. Trails aren't open to or designated for the uses I'm interested in (24.46%)

These answers suggest that promoting existing recreation opportunities and considering whether recreation offerings meet current demand would benefit the county.

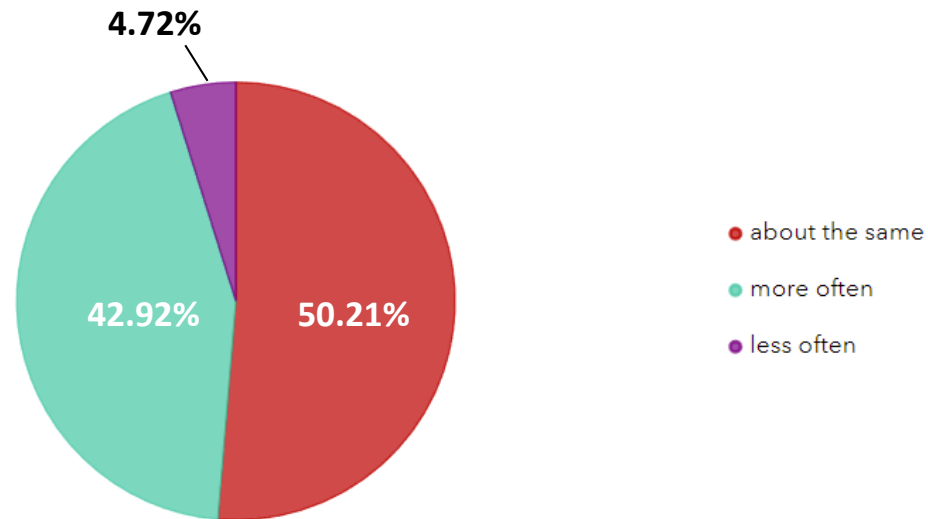
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<sup>20</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. QuickFacts. Stephenson County, Illinois. 7 February 2022. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/stephensoncountyillinois>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes to trail, park, and open space use. The increase in use has been noted nationwide, but can also be seen at the county level. Survey respondents were asked whether the pandemic had affected their use of trails, parks, and open spaces. A significant number reported changed behavior.



Comments were also collected during the public input process through the survey and the stakeholder interviews. The comments spanned many subjects, but there were clear common themes that should be considered when planning and prioritizing projects. The top five topics by frequency were:

1. OHV trails and on-road routes (23 survey/interview comments)
2. Bike infrastructure (lanes, trails, road crossings, signage) (13)
3. Pecatonica Prairie Trail completion (9)
4. Jane Addams Trail maintenance/bridge replacements (7)
5. Trails and recreation sites promotion (maps, etc.) (6)



## Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholders from various recreation groups, municipal park districts, and state-level organizations were identified by BHRC staff and the advisory group. Several stakeholders were also members of the advisory group. These individuals were asked a set of questions over a phone interview with BHRC staff to identify strengths, opportunities, and needs for trails, parks, and open spaces in the county. The interviews were also used to collect information about proposed and on-going projects and initiatives. In addition to stakeholder interviews, email and phone conversations were had with municipalities to collect information about planned and on-going projects.

### Stakeholder Interviews:

Mark Hazzard, Illinois Snowmobile Clubs Alliance  
Dave Simmons, Ride Illinois  
Jennifer and Alan Nowicki, Jane Addamsland Park Foundation  
Nicole Haas, Greater Freeport Partnership  
Ron Schneider, Freeport Park District  
Steve Ehlbeck, Jane Addams Trail Commission, Pecatonica Prairie Trail Commission  
Beth Henning, Stephenson County (OHV information)  
Joe Ginger, Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation, Illinois Paddling Council  
Roger Schamberger, Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation, Illinois Paddling Council  
Dave Schexnayder, Winslow Township Park District  
Steve Gitz, Chainlink Cyclists

### Municipality Input:

Village of Cedarville  
Village of Dakota  
Village of Davis  
City of Freeport  
Village of German Valley  
Village of Orangeville  
Village of Pearl City  
Village of Ridott  
Village of Rock City




## 2022 Initiatives

The following table lists greenways and trails initiatives that were collected throughout the public input process. The supported actions column relates initiatives back to questions asked in the public survey about support for recreation and trails improvements. A more comprehensive list of future initiatives and projects for Freeport parks can be found in the [2020 Freeport Park District Master Plan](#).







*Paddle boats and kayakers on Yellow Creek, photo credit: Joe Ginger*

# Stephenson County 2022 Greenways & Trails Initiatives





Initiative	Category	Cost Range Estimate \$ Less than 100,000 \$\$ 100,000 to 500,000 \$\$\$ 500,000 to 1,000,000 \$\$\$\$ More than 1,000,000	Supported Actions <i>Percentage of public survey participants that expressed support for related actions</i>
Jane Addams Trail bridge replacements	 Improvements	\$\$-\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> </ul>
Completion of the Pecatonica Prairie Trail to the Winnebago County line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional planning cost estimates are needed as well</li> </ul>	 New Construction	\$\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)</li> <li>Construct trails or designate routes that create linkages between cities and villages (88%)</li> <li>Focus on creating walking/biking trails separate and distinct from roadways (78%)</li> <li>Construct new ADA-accessible trails for users of all abilities (71%)</li> </ul>
Completion of the Wes Block canoe/kayak launch	 Improvements	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> </ul>
Atten's Landing canoe/kayak and motorized boat launches	 Improvements	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> </ul>









<p><b>Bike route from Lena to the Jane Addams Trail with a connection to Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preference for bike lanes on Lake Rd and W McConnell Rd to coincide with road reconstruction</li> <li>• Project would include Grand Illinois Trail route</li> </ul>	 New Construction	<p>\$\$\$\$</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)</li> <li>• Construct trails or designate routes that create linkages between cities and villages (88%)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Yellow Creek Water Trail designation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To coincide with future launch site development</li> <li>• Paired with continued advocacy for state law changes to improve public recreational water access rights</li> </ul>	 Legislative/Policy	<p>-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support legislative changes that would open opportunities for water access/paddling trails (72%)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Seek out additional multi-use rails-to-trails opportunities with winter snowmobile use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sections of publicly-owned abandoned rail lines may be the strongest option</li> </ul>	 Planning	<p>\$</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)</li> <li>• Construct trails or designate routes that create linkages between cities and villages (88%)</li> <li>• Focus on creating walking/biking trails separate and distinct from roadways (78%)</li> <li>• Construct new ADA-accessible trails for users of all abilities (71%)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improvement of additional river access points along the Pecatonica River Water Trail</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential access points to improve include Winslow, McConnell's Bobtown, McNeil's Damascus, Ridott, and the Convention and Visitors' Bureau area</li> </ul>	 Improvements	<p>\$-\$\$\$</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> </ul>

<p>Installation of buoy mile markers for safety education on the Pecatonica River Water Trail in collaboration with the US Coast Guard</p>	 Programmatic	<p>\$</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> </ul>
<p>Pecatonica River Water Trail sign plan development and implementation</p>	 Communications/Promotion	<p>\$-\$\$</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement cohesive wayfinding trail signage (78%)</li> </ul>
<p>Promotion of Stephenson County trails, parks and open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To include the development of a publicly available consolidated map showing recreation opportunities, promotion of area snowmobile trails, and improved information about Jane Addamsland Park Foundation properties</li> </ul>	 Communications/Promotion	<p>\$</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in advertising outdoor recreation opportunities in the county (73%)</li> </ul>
<p>Consideration of a county ordinance to allow on-road OHV use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current consideration is for allowing OHV use on township roads for opted-in townships. Ordinance to meet all state and local legal requirements</li> </ul>	 Legislative/Policy	<p>\$</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support legislative changes that would open opportunities for OHV trails/routes (55%)</li> </ul>

<p>Identification of suitable property and incentivize private development of an OHV park</p>	 Planning	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support legislative changes that would open opportunities for OHV trails/routes (55%)</li> </ul>
<p>Trail wayfinding signage improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northwest Illinois Trails Wayfinding Sign Guide Template to be used and adopted as the signage standard for trails in the county</li> </ul>	 Communications/Promotion	\$-\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement cohesive wayfinding trail signage (78%)</li> </ul>
<p>Groomed cross-country ski trails at Oakdale Nature Preserve and Krape Park</p>	 Programmatic	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand recreation and staff resources to offer more programs and events at existing parks and recreation facilities (76%)</li> </ul>
<p>Taylor Park master plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be developed in conjunction with Pecatonica floodplain mitigation and consider potential recreational uses</li> </ul>	 Planning	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> <li>Preserve greenspace and add to tree canopy (75%)</li> </ul>
<p>Highland Path maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concrete overlay</li> <li>Establish ownership and maintenance responsibilities</li> <li>Incorporate all-season maintenance to improve winter use</li> </ul>	 Improvements	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> <li>Improve existing parks and recreation facilities to meet ADA-accessibility standards (76%)</li> </ul>

Additional mountain bike trails (Freeport)	 New Construction	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct purpose-built mountain bike trails (43.77%)</li> <li>Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)</li> </ul>
Bicycle pump track (Freeport)	 New Construction	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)</li> </ul>
Freeport Park District parks sign plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sign plan to include wayfinding, entrance, and interpretive signage</li> </ul>	 Communications/Promotion	\$-\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement cohesive wayfinding trail signage (78%)</li> </ul>
City of Freeport bike/pedestrian plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion of a study for bike and pedestrian access improvements to the southeast side of Freeport</li> <li>Selection of appropriate extension routes for the Highland Trail, including consideration of a path along Kiwanis Dr</li> <li>Identification of roads in need of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements (signage, bike lanes, crosswalks, etc.)</li> <li>May address bike/pedestrian crossing of IL 26 north of Freeport if further development occurs (bridge or signalized crossing)</li> </ul>	 Planning	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on improving on-road bike route conditions and safety (62%)</li> <li>Support legislative change that would open opportunities for more designated and signed bike routes (68%)</li> </ul>
Memory Park outdoor exercise equipment (Davis)	 Improvements	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> </ul>

Ben Miller Park butterfly garden (German Valley)	 Improvements	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> </ul>
Mill Pond floodplain open space walking paths (Pearl City)	 New Construction	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)</li> </ul>
Lincoln Park playground equipment (Ridott)	 Improvements	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> </ul>
Rock City Park walking path (Rock City)	 New Construction	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (88%)</li> </ul>
Lena to KOA Holiday campground trail (Lena) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be built in conjunction with road and intersection work on IL 20</li> </ul>	 New Construction	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)</li> <li>Construct trails or designate routes that create linkages between cities and villages (88%)</li> <li>Focus on creating walking/biking trails separate and distinct from roadways (78%)</li> <li>Construct new ADA-accessible trails for users of all abilities (71%)</li> </ul>
Train observation station and trailhead in Lena <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To serve trail to Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park and the Jane Addams Trail (see p.18)</li> </ul>	 New Construction	\$\$-\$\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)</li> </ul>



*Bicyclists in Stephenson County, photo credit: Greater Freeport Partnership*

## 2022 Greenways & Trails Maps

The following set of maps show existing, planned, and proposed trail locations along with parks, open spaces, and heritage sites. A supplemental map showing the Grand Illinois Trail is also included to show how the route interfaces with existing and proposed trails. Although not included in the maps below, more information about snowmobile trails, including maps, can be found on IDNR's [Snowmobiling in Illinois webpage](#). The [Illinois Association of Snowmobile Clubs](#) also provides important information on trails and links to local clubs' webpages.



# Stephenson County Greenways & Trails 2022

## County-wide Initiatives:

- A** Jane Addams Trail maintenance and bridge replacements
- B** Completion of the Pecatonica Prairie Trail to the Winnebago County line
- C** Completion of the Wes Block canoe/kayak launch  
expected spring of 2022
- D** Atten's Landing canoe/kayak and motorized boat launches
- E** Bike route from Lena to the Jane Addams Trail with a connection to Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park  
Preference for bike lanes on Lake Rd and W McConnell Rd to coincide with road reconstruction  
Project would improve Grand Illinois Trail route
- F** Yellow Creek Water Trail Designation  
To coincide with future launch site development  
Paired with continued advocacy for state law changes to improve public recreational water access rights
- G** Seek out additional multi-use rails-to-trails opportunities that may include winter snowmobile use  
Consider options for publicly-owned sections of abandoned rail line
- **Improvement of additional river access points along the Pecatonica River Water Trail**  
Potential access points to improve include Winslow, McConnell's Bobtown, McNeil's Damascus, Ridott, and the Convention and Visitor's Bureau area
- **Installation of buoy mile markers for safety education on the Pecatonica River Water Trail in collaboration with the U.S. Coast Guard**
- **Pecatonica River Water Trail sign plan development and implementation**
- **Promotion of Stephenson County trails, parks, and open spaces**  
Development of a publicly available consolidated map showing recreation opportunities  
Promotion of area snowmobile trails  
Improved information available about Jane Addamsland Park Foundation properties
- **Consideration of a county ordinance to allow on-road OHV use**  
Current consideration is for allowing OHV use on township roads for opted-in townships  
Ordinance to meet all state and local legal requirements
- **Identification of suitable property and incentivize private development of an OHV park**
- **Trail wayfinding signage improvements**  
Northwest Illinois Trails Wayfinding Sign Guide template to be used and adopted as the signage standard for trails in the county



Wes Block Landing kiosk and flag pole, 2021

## Municipal-level Initiatives:

- Freeport**  
(see 2020 Freeport Park District Master Plan for additional goals and objectives)
- H** Groomed cross-country ski trails at Oakdale Nature Preserve and Krape Park
  - I** Taylor Park master plan  
To be developed in conjunction with Pecatonica floodplain mitigation and consider potential recreational uses
  - J** Highland Path maintenance  
Establish management and maintenance responsibilities  
Incorporate all-season maintenance to improve winter use
  - **Additional mountain bike trails**
  - **Bicycle pump track**
  - **Freeport Park District parks sign plan**  
Signage to include wayfinding, entrance, and interpretive signage
  - **City of Freeport bike/pedestrian plan**  
Inclusion of a study for bike and pedestrian access improvements to the southeast side of Freeport  
Selection of appropriate extension routes for the Highland Trail, including consideration of a path along Kiwanis Dr  
Identification of roads in need of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements (signage, bike lanes, crosswalks, etc.)  
May address bike/pedestrian crossing of IL 26 north of Freeport if further development occurs (bridge or signalized crossing)

**(K)** Memory Park outdoor exercise equipment (Davis)

**(L)** Ben Miller Park butterfly garden (German Valley)

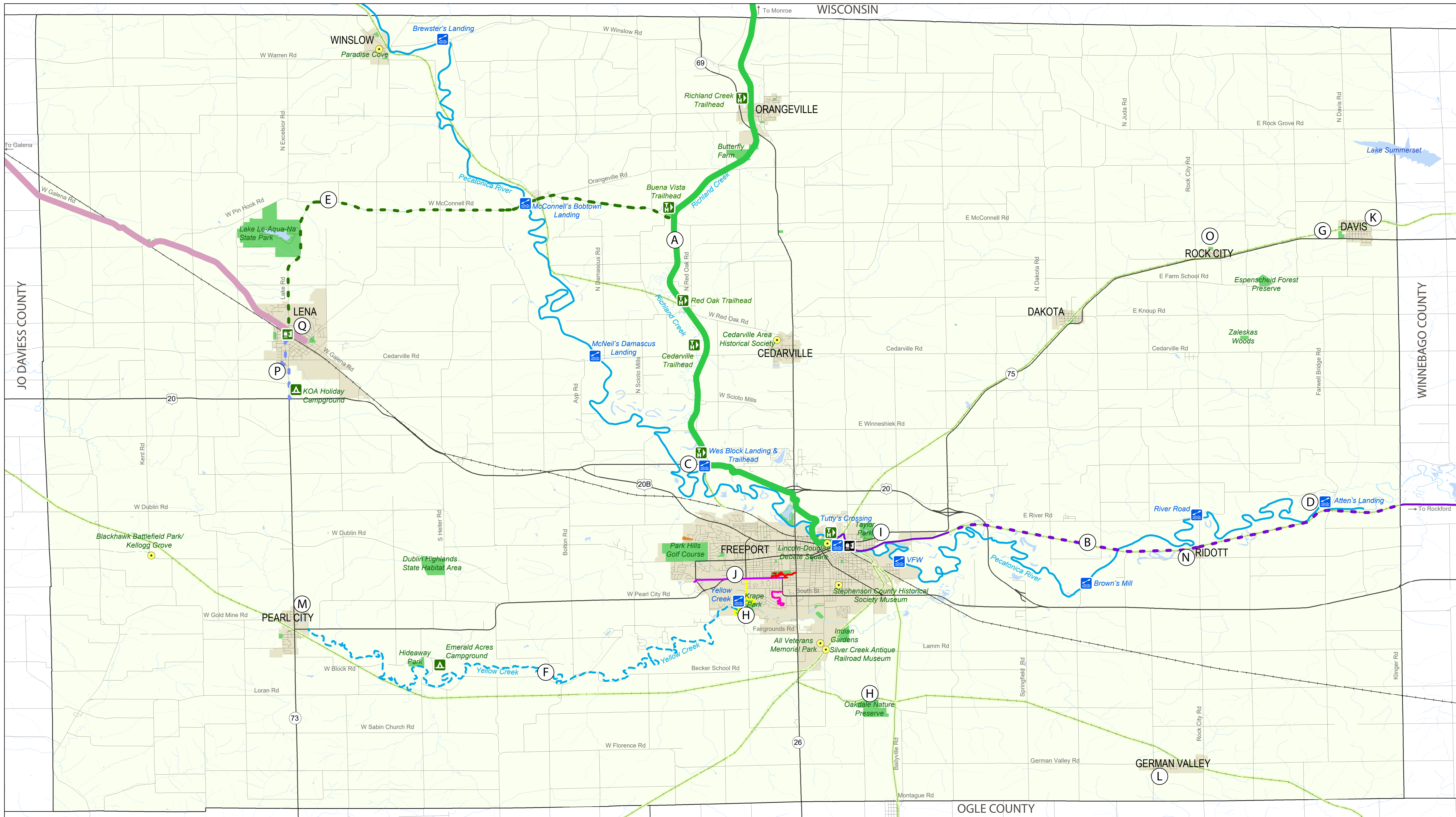
**(M)** Mill Pond floodplain open space walking paths (Pearl City)

**(N)** Lincoln Park playground equipment (Ridott)

**(O)** Rock City Park walking path (Rock City)

**(P)** Lena to KOA Holiday campground trail (Lena)  
To be built in conjunction with road and intersection work on IL 20  
Terminus at the water tower in downtown Lena

**(Q)** Train observation station and trailhead (Lena)  
To serve trail to Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park and the Jane Addams Trail



### Existing

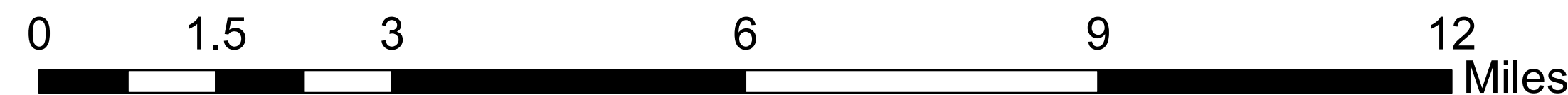
- Parks & Public Open Spaces
- Trailheads
- Privately Owned Campgrounds
- Heritage Sites
- Kayak/Canoe Launch Points
- Railroad
- Historic Rail Lines

- Jane Addams Trail \*
- Pecatonica Prairie Trail
- Burchard Hills Trail
- Countryside Trail
- Highland Path
- Read Park Trails
- Krape Park Trails

- Pecatonica River Water Trail
  - Stagecoach Trail Scenic Drive
- \*includes snowmobile use

### Proposed/Planned

- Future Freeport Train Station
- Train Observation Platform & Trailhead
- Pecatonica Prairie Trail, Incomplete
- Lena to KOA Campground Trail
- Lena to Jane Addams Trail
- Yellow Creek Water Trail

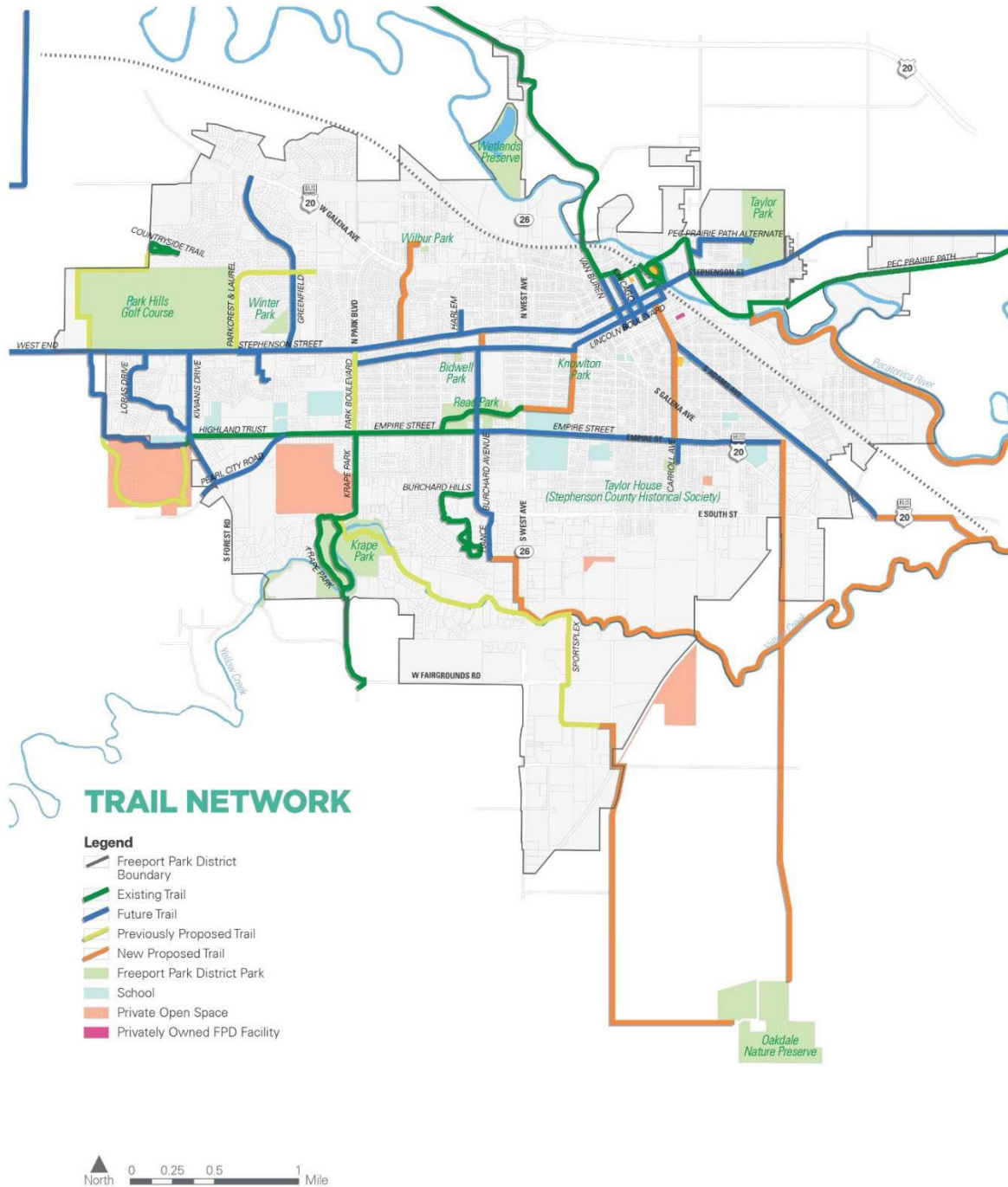


Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from Stephenson County GIS, USGS, National Park Service, and Illinois Department of Transportation  
Best printed at 24 x 48 in

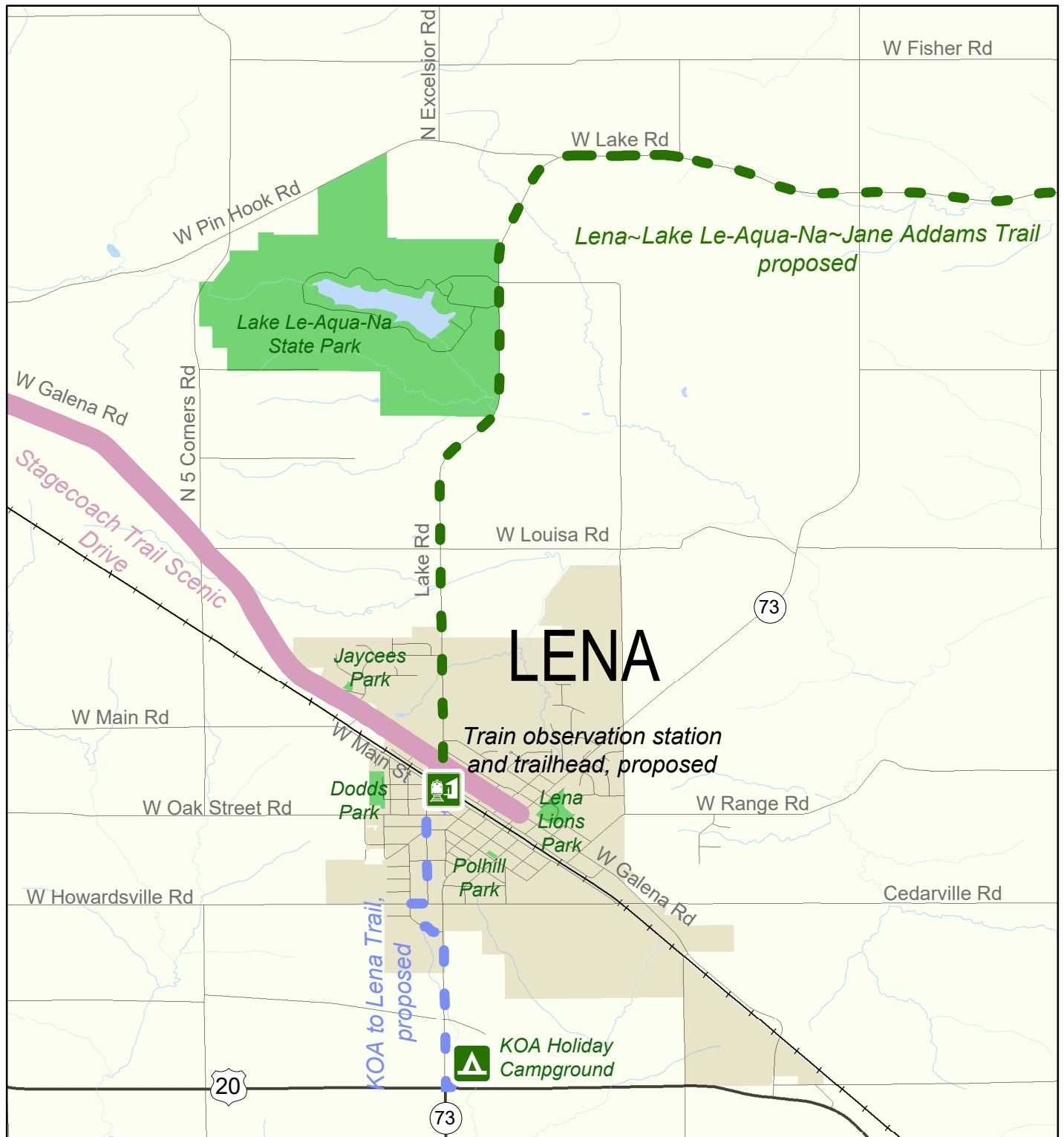


## City of Freeport Greenways and Trails Map

This map was developed for the Freeport Park District's 2020 Master Plan by the design firm RATIO (see Appendix B for a link to the full plan). The master plan includes further detail on park and trail initiatives at the city level.












## Stephenson County Greenways & Trails 2022



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

### Existing

-  Parks & Public Open Spaces
-  Privately Owned Campgrounds
-  Heritage Sites
-  Railroad
-  Historic Rail Lines

 Stagecoach Trail Scenic Drive

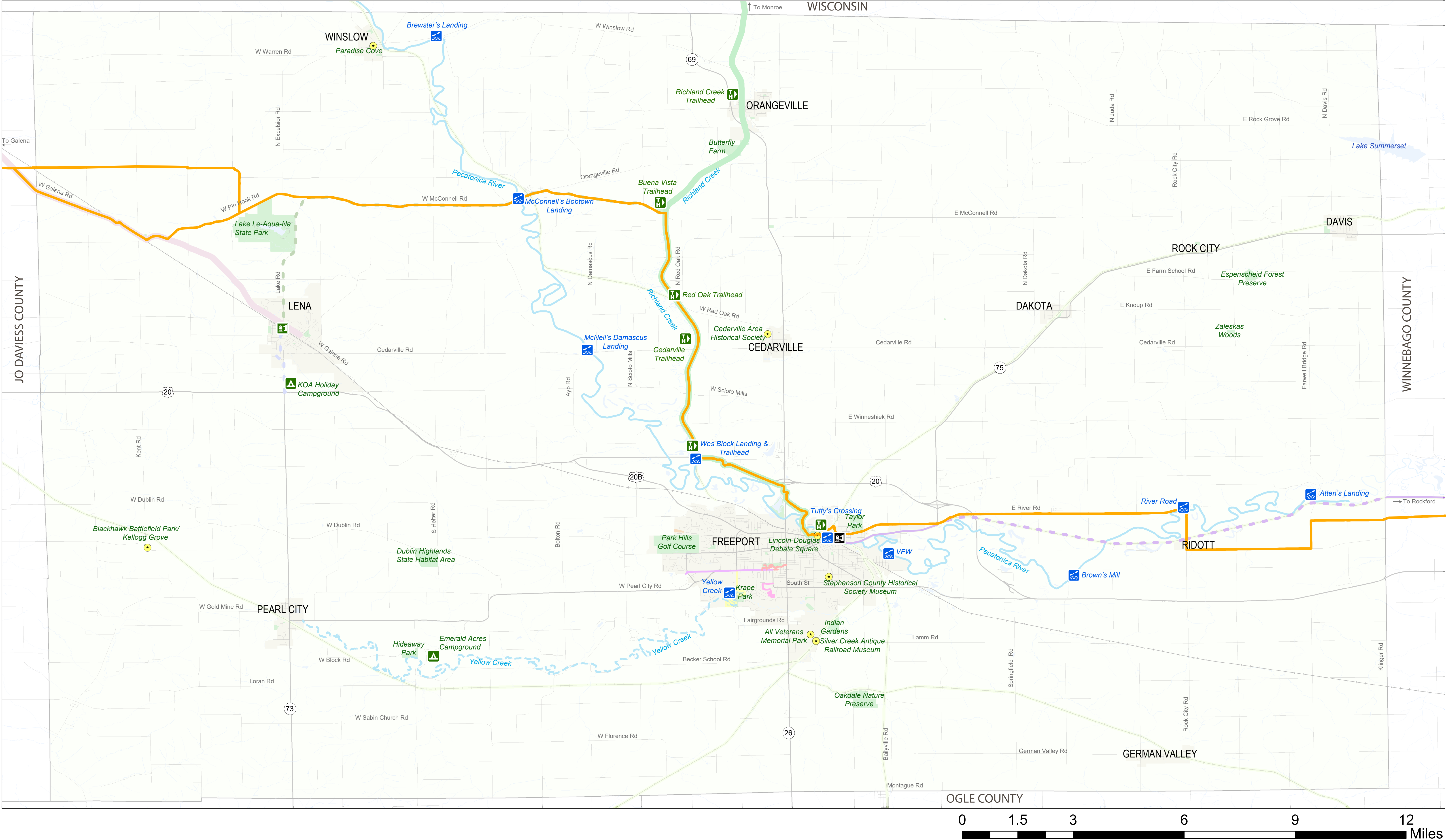
### Proposed/Planned

-  Train Observation Station & Trailhead
-  Lena to KOA Campground Trail
-  Lena to Jane Addams Trail





# Stephenson County Grand Illinois Trail



Grand Illinois Trail (GIT) bicycle route

**Existing**

- Parks & Public Open Spaces
- Trailheads
- Privately Owned Campgrounds
- Heritage Sites
- Kayak/Canoe Launch Points
- Railroad
- Historic Rail Lines

**Proposed/Planned**

- Jane Addams Trail\*
- Pecatonica Prairie Trail
- Burchard Hills Trail
- Countryside Trail
- Highland Path
- Read Park Trails
- Krape Park Trails

Pecatonica River Water Trail

Stagecoach Trail Scenic Drive

\*includes snowmobile use

Future Freeport Train Station

Train Observation Platform & Trailhead

Pecatonica Prairie Trail, Incomplete

Lena to KOA Campground Trail

Lena to Jane Addams Trail

Yellow Creek Water Trail



Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from Stephenson County GIS, USGS, National Park Service, and Illinois Department of Transportation  
Best printed at 24 x 48 in



## Planning and Implementation Resources

Planning & Funding Resources	Adminstrating org.	Funding available & match requirements	Eligible project categories
<a href="#"><u>Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) Funds</u></a>	Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)	Recommended minimum request is \$20,000; no maximum project cost; 20% local match required	Trail planning up to a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study
<a href="#"><u>Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)</u></a>	U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Review Call for Projects for information about project cost minimums or maximums; no local match requirement.	Funding is available for trail planning, construction, and enhancements such as signage or parking. Eligible projects must be located on, adjacent to, or provide access to Federal lands.
<a href="#"><u>Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) Program</u></a>	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	This is a technical assistance and planning program, no funds are provided	Planning support for development of the local recreation economy
<a href="#"><u>The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Rural Economic Development Toolkit</u></a>	Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR)	This is a set of online resources for building and improving outdoor recreation economies	Resources for supporting rural outdoor recreation economies
<a href="#"><u>Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program</u></a>	National Park Service	This is a technical assistance and planning program, no funds are provided	Support for project planning and community engagement
<a href="#"><u>Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)</u></a>	IDOT	Up to \$2,000,000; check program website for details on match requirements	Construction of bike/ped facilities, turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas
<a href="#"><u>Illinois Trails Grant Programs</u></a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bike Path Program</li> <li>• Local Government Snowmobile Program</li> <li>• Snowmobile Trail Establishment Fund (STEF) Program</li> <li>• Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program</li> <li>• Federal Recreation Trails Program (RTP)</li> </ul>	Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)	Funding and match requirements vary by program	<p>Programs cover trail construction and improvements for numerous motorized and non-motorized uses</p> <p>Some programs also cover acquisition of trail corridors from willing sellers through easements or fee simple title</p>
<a href="#"><u>Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Grant</u></a>	IDNR	Up to \$750,000 for acquisition projects and up to \$400,000 for development/renovation projects; 50% local match required	Funding assistance to local government agencies for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space

<a href="#"><u>Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF/LAWCON) Grant</u></a>	IDNR	Up to \$750,000; 50% local match required	Funding assistance to local government agencies for acquisition of land for public parks and open space
<a href="#"><u>Boat Access Area Development (BAAD) Grant</u></a>	IDNR	Up to \$200,000 for motorized launch sites and up to \$80,000 for non-motorized sites; 10% local match required for land acquisition costs	Funding assistance to local government agencies for acquisition, construction, and expansion/rehabilitation of public boat and canoe access areas
<a href="#"><u>T.R.A.I.L.S. (Trail development, Responsible riding, Access, Initiatives, Lobbying, Safety) Grant</u></a>	Polaris	Up to \$10,000; check grant application for any match requirements	Funding for OHV clubs and associations for trail development and maintenance, safety and education initiatives, lobbying and other projects to increase and maintain land access
<a href="#"><u>Snow PASS grant</u></a>	Ski-doo	Up to \$5,000; 50% local match required	Funding for not-for-profits and government organizations for snowmobile projects including trail development, safety initiatives, accessibility improvements, and aid to snowmobile clubs
<a href="#"><u>Rails-to-Trails Trails Grants Program</u></a>	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	Varies	Various trail and trail amenity construction grants are available annually  Sign up for the <a href="#"><u>Trail Expert Network</u></a> to keep informed about upcoming opportunities
<a href="#"><u>PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program</u></a>	PeopleForBikes	Up to \$10,000; 50% local match required	Bicycle infrastructure projects and some advocacy projects such as campaigns to increase investment in bicycle infrastructure
<a href="#"><u>The Trail Fund</u></a>	American Trails	\$2,000 to \$15,000 20% local match required	New annual grant opportunity starting in 2022 Funding priorities are: 1) trail maintenance backlog on state and local lands, 2) research, 3) stewardship training

## Appendix A. Priority Conservation Areas

The following priority conservation areas map was developed using a weighted overlay technique with ArcGIS software. The process works by accounting for different criteria that affect the value of a given place for natural resource, habitat, or recreational use conservation. The criteria are weighted to give more or less impact in the suitability map output. Weights are given in decimal form and must add up to 1. It was found that criteria that involved distances were generally weaker and were thus given higher weights. The ability to adjust the weight of criteria is a benefit of this analysis, but it can also be seen as a weakness as there are assumptions made when assigning weights.

The criteria used for this analysis were:

### **Distance from existing parks and open spaces (weighted 0.3)**

Higher suitability was assigned to land closer to existing parks and open spaces to represent the value of conserving contiguous spaces for habitat. This layer comes from the USGS Protected Areas Database<sup>23</sup>, the Prairie State Conservation Coalition's protected lands database<sup>24</sup>, and information collected from the greenways and trails plan update process.

### **Key wildlife areas (weighted 0.1)**

This layer comes from The Nature Conservancy's Site Renewables Right database for wind energy.<sup>25</sup> It includes the following important wildlife areas: whooping crane stopover sites, eagles/other raptors, prairie grouse, high waterfowl breeding density, important bird areas, bat roosts, threatened/endangered species, big game, water/wetlands/riparian corridors, intact natural habitats, other biodiversity significance, and climate resilient lands. Although the layer is very valuable for this analysis, it should be noted that there are likely gaps within this dataset. For example, certain wildlife areas, such as an eagles/other raptors corridor, stop abruptly at the Wisconsin/Illinois border. This suggests that there are discrepancies between what data is collected in different states and/or regions.

### **Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) (weighted 0.1)**

COAs are included in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. They are considered priority areas for conserving Illinois' Species in Greatest Need of Conservation. Specifically, COAs are places with:

- with significant existing or potential wildlife and habitat resources;
- where partners are willing to plan, implement, and evaluate conservation actions;
- where financial and human resources are available;
- where conservation is motivated by an agreed-upon conservation purpose and set of objectives.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> U.S. Geological Survey. Protected Areas. 7 March 2022. <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/gap-analysis-project/science/protected-areas>

<sup>24</sup> Prairie State Conservation Coalition. I-View. 7 March 2022. <https://www.prairiestateconservation.org/pscc/iview/>

<sup>25</sup> The Nature Conservancy. Site Renewables Right. 7 March 2022. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-priorities/tackle-climate-change/climate-change-stories/site-wind-right?vu=siterenewablesright>

<sup>26</sup> Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Conservation Opportunity Areas. 7 March 2022. <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IWAP/pages/conservationopportunityareas.aspx>

**Distance from Biologically Significant Streams** (*weighted 0.3*)

This criterion comes from IDNR's Biological Stream Ratings database.<sup>27</sup> Land closer to streams with A or B integrity ratings were given higher values to represent the importance of conserving these streams and surrounding areas.

**Land Cover** (*weighted 0.2*)

The 2011 National Land Cover Data Set<sup>28</sup> was used to rank land cover types for conservation value. Developed lands and open water were ranked as 0, and all other land cover types were ranked as 1.

The second map highlights corridors and islands of concentrated lands that ranked high for conservation value. These areas may overlap with natural features such as rivers or floodplains that provide high-value habitat. Focusing on larger grouped areas for conservation planning may help with habitat linkages and contiguity.

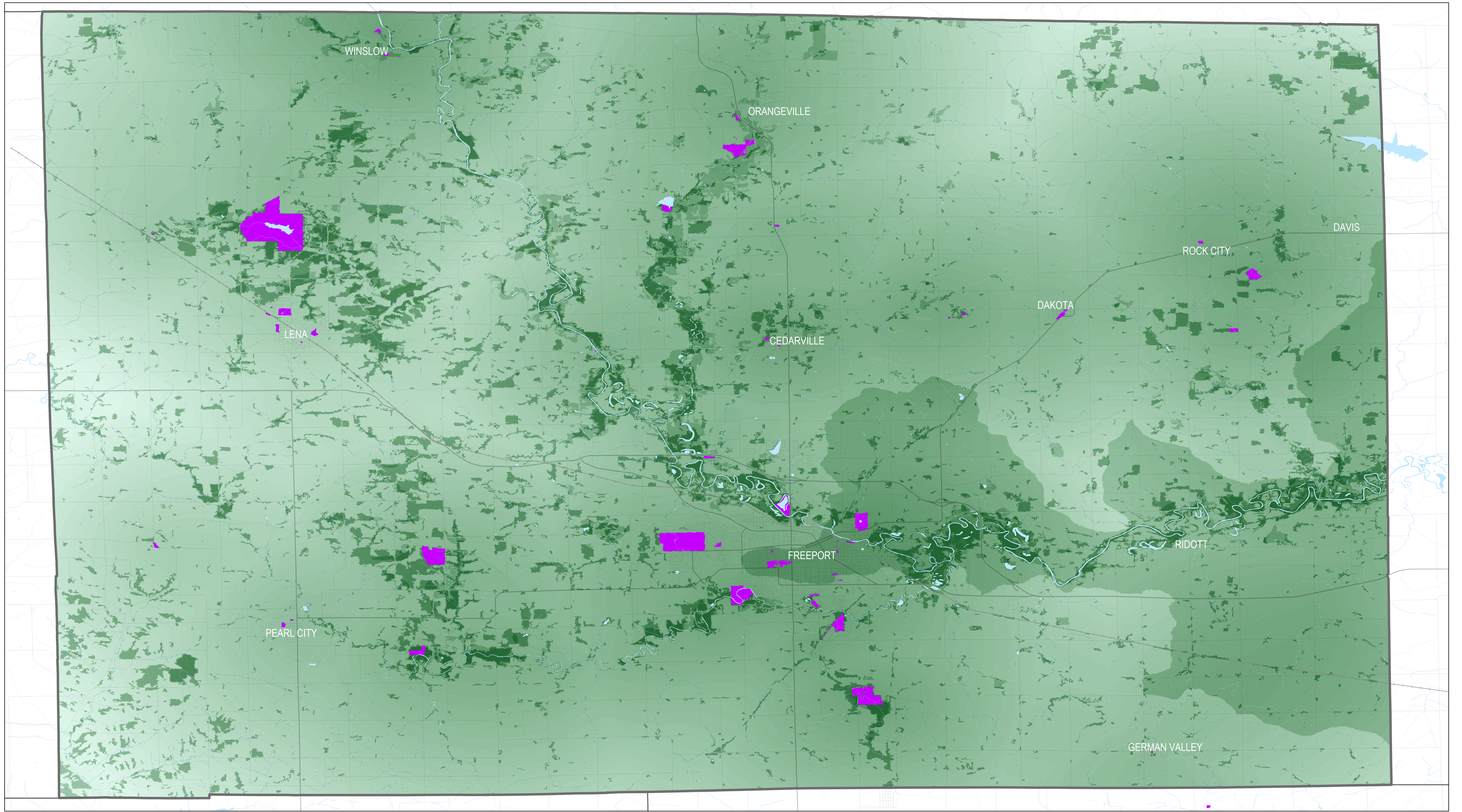
This analysis and resulting maps serve as an initial step towards developing what is perhaps a set of land use planning maps. Other layers that will likely be important for future iterations of land use planning analyses include orthoimagery and LiDAR data, Illinois Agriculture Preservation Areas, Highly Erodible Lands, and the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory. Adding to and refining the parks and open spaces layer would also be of value. Including cemeteries that have remnant prairies and additional privately-held conservation easement lands would help to provide a more inclusive and robust output map. Ground-truthing the output map and gathering more input from local stakeholders would also help improve future models.

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<sup>27</sup> Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Biological Stream Ratings. 7 March 2022. <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/BiologicalStreamratings/pages/default.aspx>

<sup>28</sup> Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium. NLCD 2011 Land Cover (CONUS). 7 March 2022. <https://www.mrlc.gov/data/nlcd-2011-land-cover-conus>

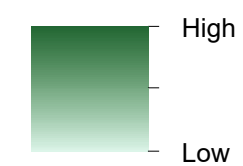




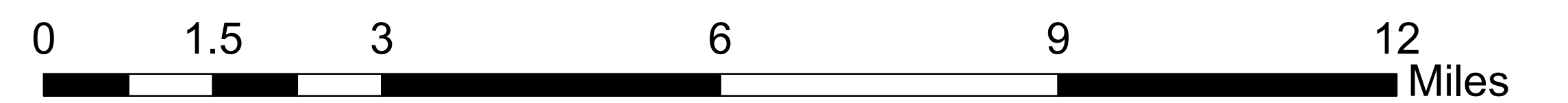
Parks & Open Space



Conservation Value

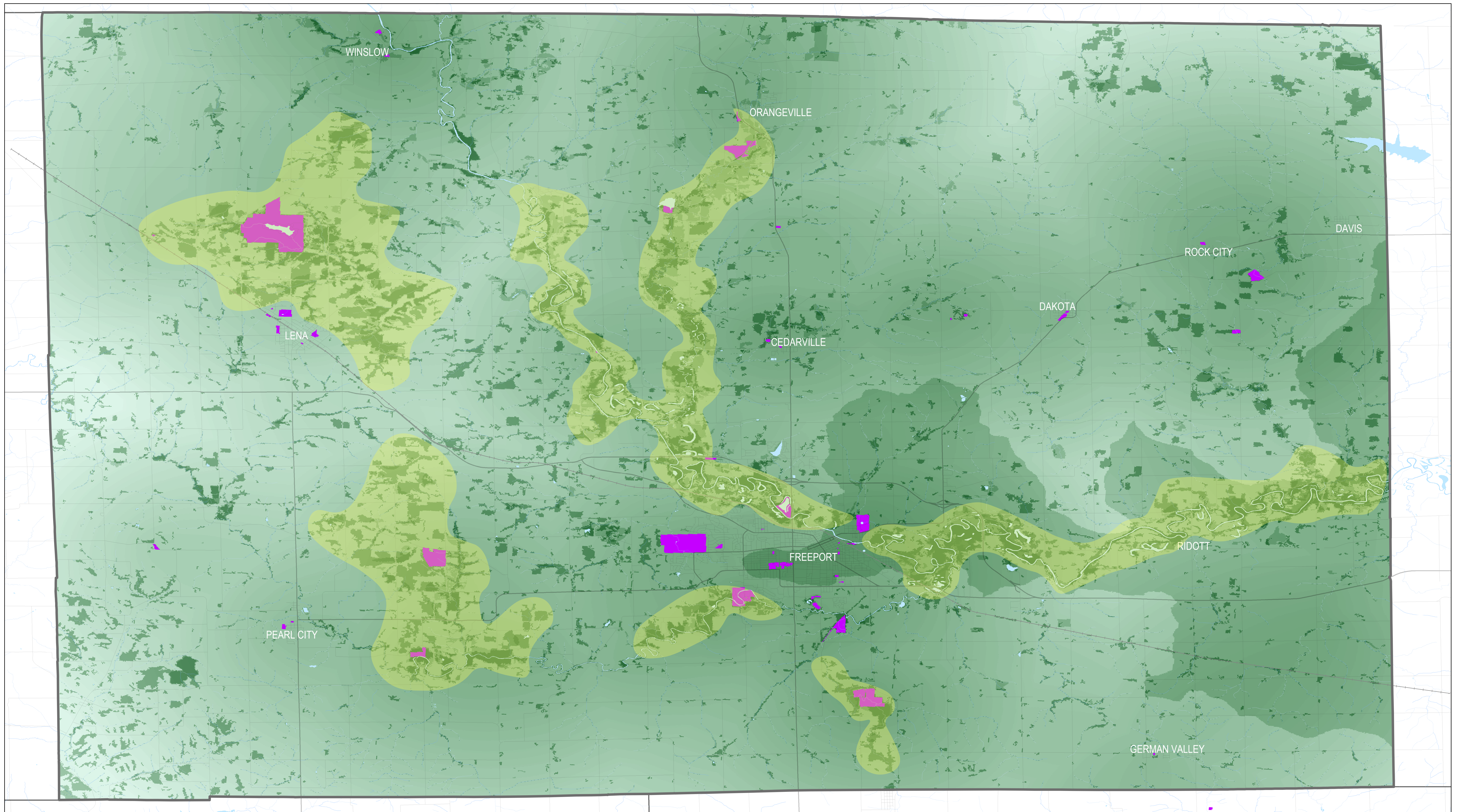


# Stephenson County Priority Conservation Areas 2022



Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from The Nature Conservancy, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Illinois Department of Transportation  
Best printed at 24 x 36 in

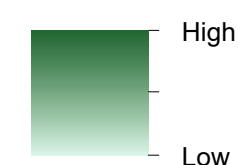




Parks & Open Space



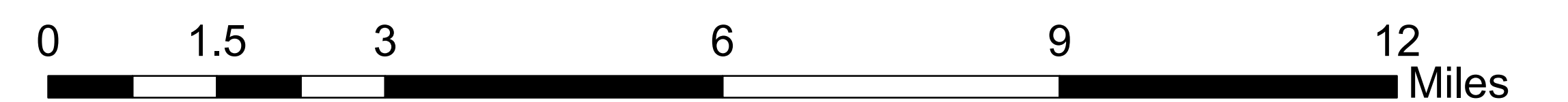
Conservation Value



High Value Islands & Corridors



# Stephenson County Priority Conservation Areas 2022



Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from The Nature Conservancy, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Illinois Department of Transportation  
Best printed at 24 x 36 in



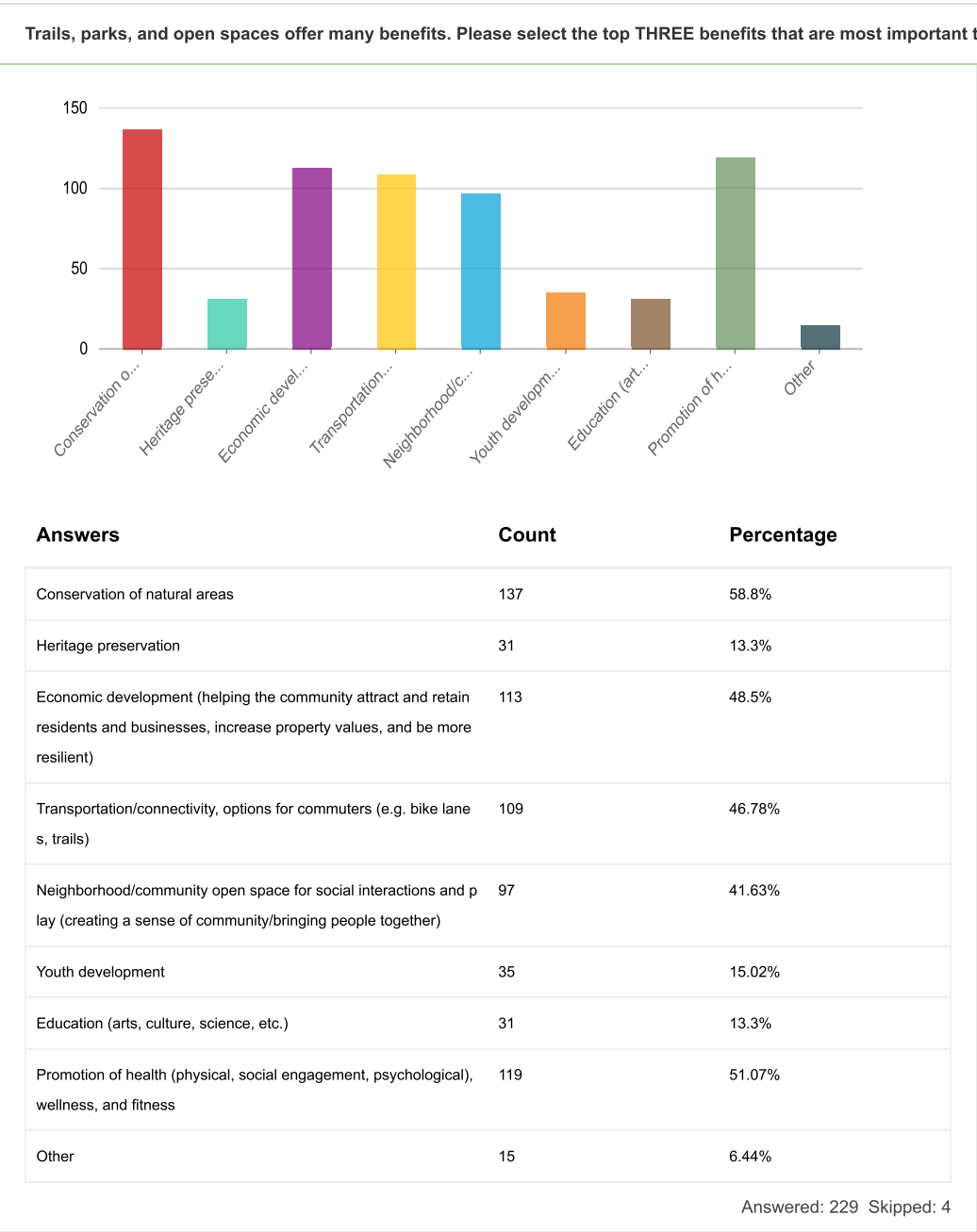
## Appendix B. Related Plans

[Illinois Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#) – last updated in 2015

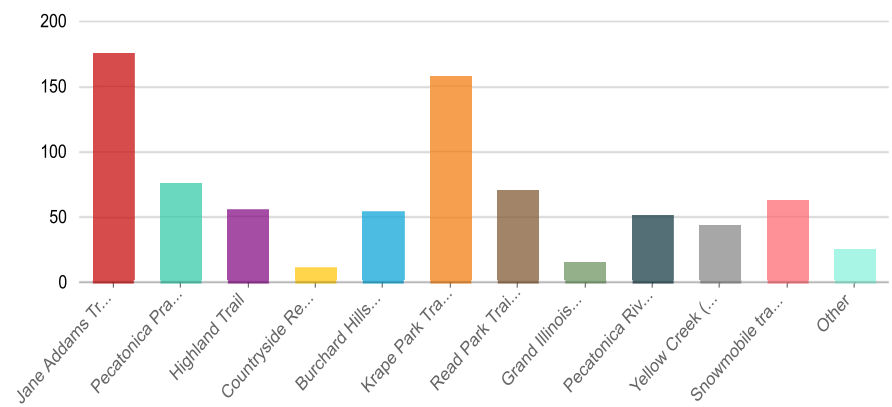
[Grand Illinois Trail Plan User Guide](#) – last updated in 2015

[2020 Freeport Park District Master Plan](#)

Pecatonica River Water Trail Master Plan



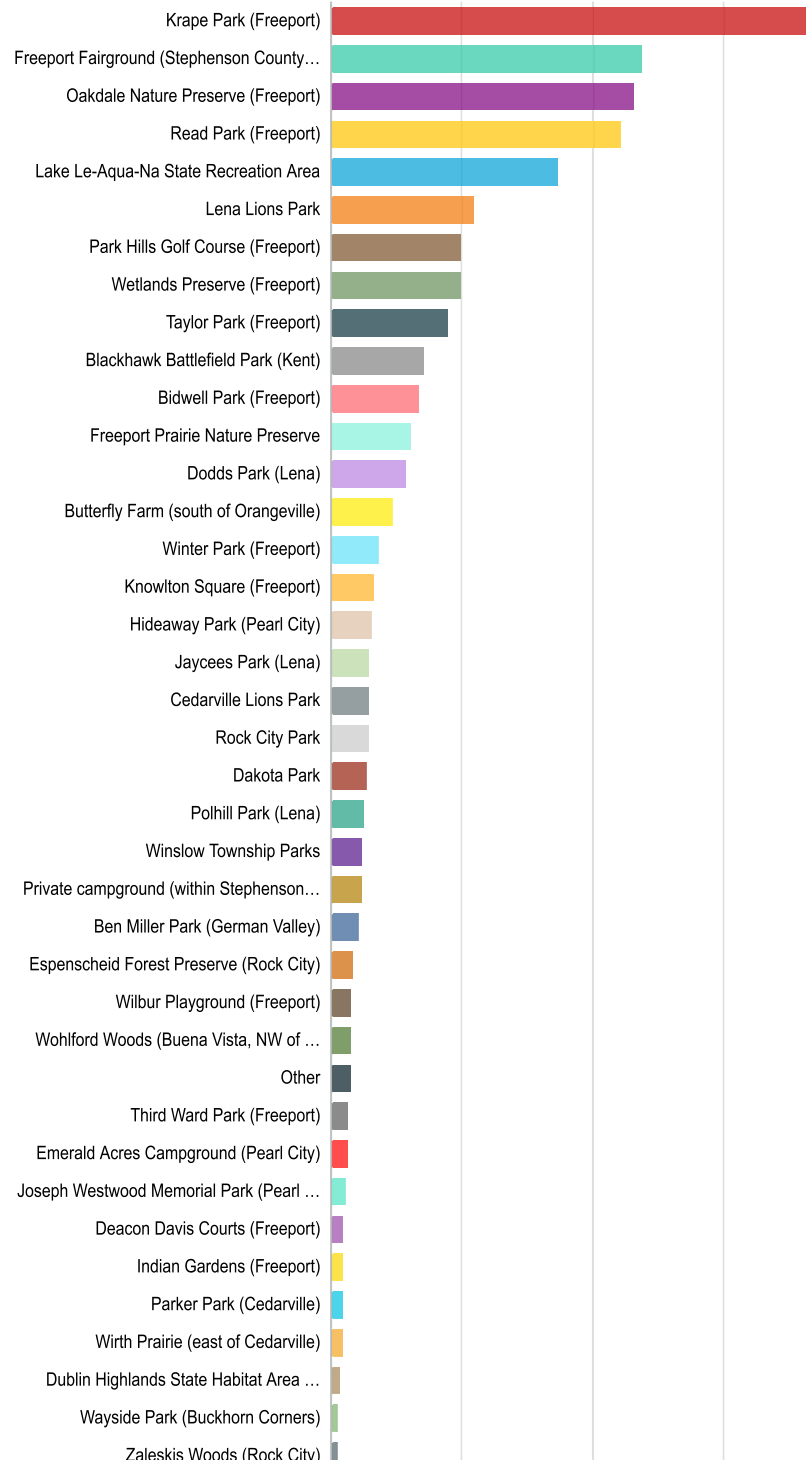
Please check ALL of the trails in Stephenson County that you or members of your household have used over the past 12 months.

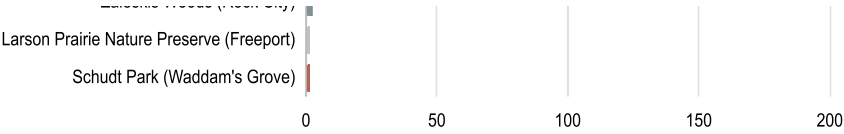


Answers	Count	Percentage
Jane Addams Trail	176	75.54%
Pecatonica Prairie Trail	76	32.62%
Highland Trail	56	24.03%
Countryside Recreation Path	12	5.15%
Burchard Hills Trail	55	23.61%
Krape Park Trails	158	67.81%
Read Park Trails	71	30.47%
Grand Illinois Trail	16	6.87%
Pecatonica River Water Trail	52	22.32%
Yellow Creek (paddling)	44	18.88%
Snowmobile trails in Stephenson County	63	27.04%
Other	26	11.16%

Answered: 220 Skipped: 13

Please check ALL of the parks and open spaces in Stephenson County that you or members of your household have visited over the past 12 months.



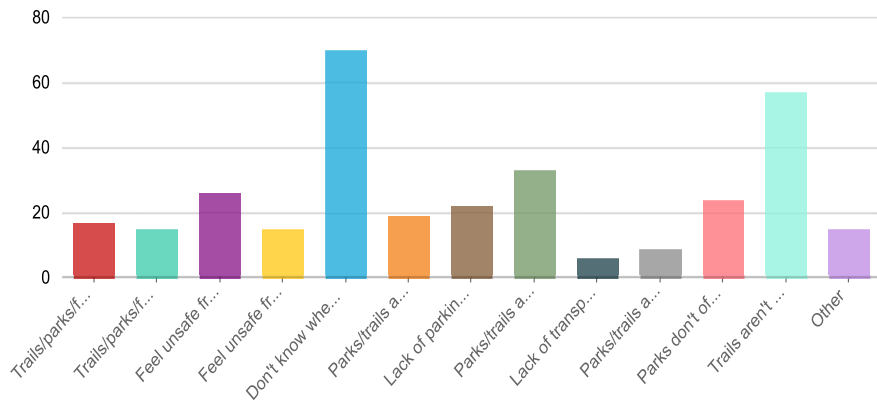


Answers	Count	Percentage
Krape Park (Freeport)	181	77.68%
Freeport Fairground (Stephenson County Fairgrounds)	118	50.64%
Oakdale Nature Preserve (Freeport)	115	49.36%
Read Park (Freeport)	110	47.21%
Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Recreation Area	86	36.91%
Lena Lions Park	54	23.18%
Park Hills Golf Course (Freeport)	49	21.03%
Wetlands Preserve (Freeport)	49	21.03%
Taylor Park (Freeport)	44	18.88%
Blackhawk Battlefield Park (Kent)	35	15.02%
Bidwell Park (Freeport)	33	14.16%
Freeport Prairie Nature Preserve	30	12.88%
Dodds Park (Lena)	28	12.02%
Butterfly Farm (south of Orangeville)	23	9.87%
Winter Park (Freeport)	18	7.73%
Knowlton Square (Freeport)	16	6.87%
Hideaway Park (Pearl City)	15	6.44%
Jaycees Park (Lena)	14	6.01%
Cedarville Lions Park	14	6.01%
Rock City Park	14	6.01%
Dakota Park	13	5.58%
Polhill Park (Lena)	12	5.15%

Winslow Township Parks	11	4.72%
Private campground (within Stephenson County)	11	4.72%
Ben Miller Park (German Valley)	10	4.29%
Espenscheid Forest Preserve (Rock City)	8	3.43%
Wilbur Playground (Freeport)	7	3%
Wohlford Woods (Buena Vista, NW of Cedarville)	7	3%
Other	7	3%
Third Ward Park (Freeport)	6	2.58%
Emerald Acres Campground (Pearl City)	6	2.58%
Joseph Westwood Memorial Park (Pearl City)	5	2.15%
Deacon Davis Courts (Freeport)	4	1.72%
Indian Gardens (Freeport)	4	1.72%
Parker Park (Cedarville)	4	1.72%
Wirth Prairie (east of Cedarville)	4	1.72%
Dublin Highlands State Habitat Area (west of Freeport)	3	1.29%
Wayside Park (Buckhorn Corners)	2	0.86%
Zaleskis Woods (Rock City)	2	0.86%
Larson Prairie Nature Preserve (Freeport)	1	0.43%
Schudt Park (Waddam's Grove)	1	0.43%

Answered: 214 Skipped: 19

Please check ALL the reasons that prevent you or other members of your household from using trails, parks, and open spaces more often.



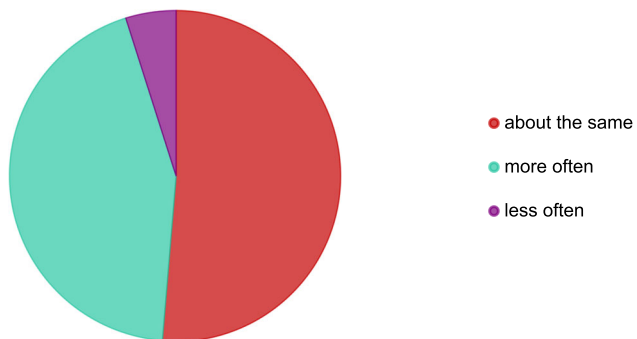
Answers	Count	Percentage
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Trails/parks/facilities are not open when I want to use them	17	7.3%
Trails/parks/facilities are not well maintained	15	6.44%
Feel unsafe from crime at parks/trails	26	11.16%
Feel unsafe from vehicular traffic along trails/bike routes	15	6.44%
Don't know where parks/trails are located	70	30.04%
Parks/trails are not easily accessible by walking or biking	19	8.15%
Lack of parking at parks/trailheads	22	9.44%
Parks/trails are too far from my home	33	14.16%
Lack of transportation to/from parks or trailheads	6	2.58%
Parks/trails are not accessible for those with disabilities	9	3.86%
Parks don't offer the facilities or amenities that my household and I are looking for	24	10.3%
Trails aren't open to or designed for the uses I'm interested in	57	24.46%
Other	15	6.44%

Answered: 176 Skipped: 57

During the COVID-19 pandemic, have you and your household members used trails, parks, and open spaces in the county

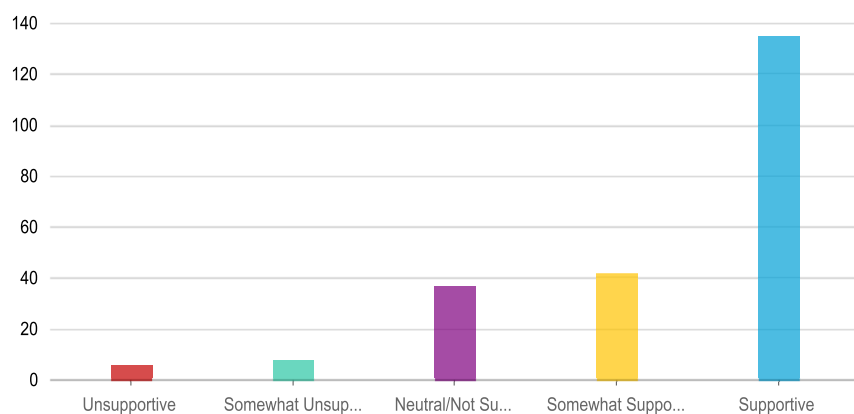




Answered: 228 Skipped: 5

Please indicate how supportive you would be of each of the following actions that could be taken to improve the parks and trails network in Stephenson County.

○ Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities



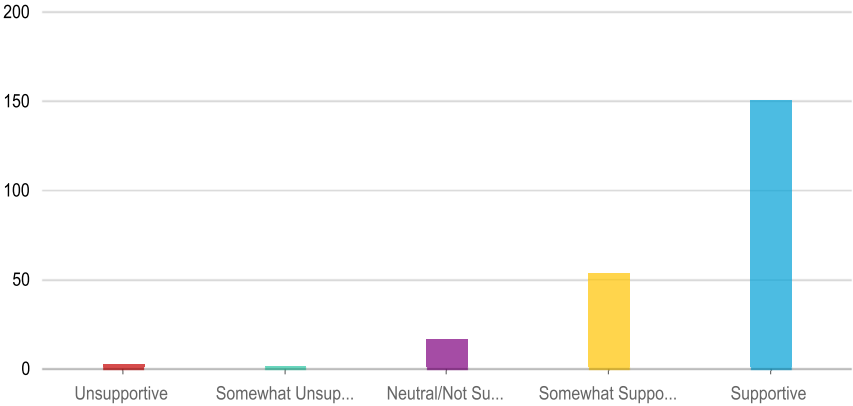
**Answers** **Count** **Percentage**

Unsupportive 6 2.58%

Somewhat Unsupportive	8	3.43%
Neutral/Not Sure	37	15.88%
Somewhat Supportive	42	18.03%
Supportive	135	57.94%

Answered: 228 Skipped: 5

Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities

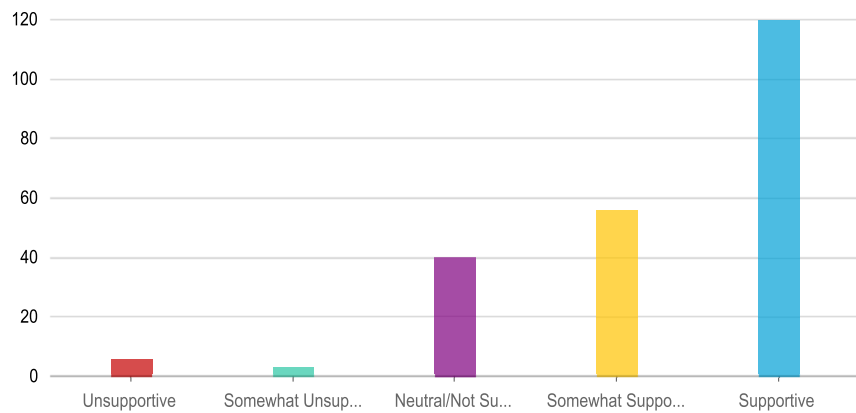


AnswersCountPercentage

Unsupportive	3	1.29%
Somewhat Unsupportive	2	0.86%
Neutral/Not Sure	17	7.3%
Somewhat Supportive	54	23.18%
Supportive	151	64.81%

Answered: 227 Skipped: 6

Expand recreation and staff resources to offer more programs and events at existing parks and recreation facilities

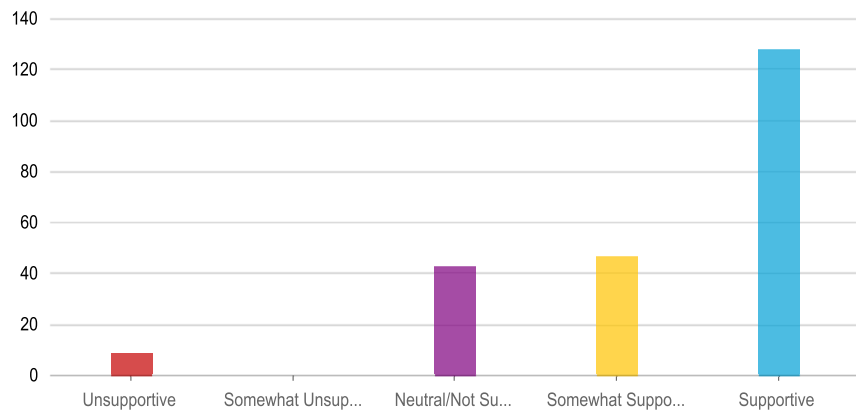


Answers	Count	Percentage
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Unsupportive	6	2.58%
Somewhat Unsupportive	3	1.29%
Neutral/Not Sure	40	17.17%
Somewhat Supportive	56	24.03%
Supportive	120	51.5%

Answered: 225 Skipped: 8

☐ Preserve greenspace and add to tree canopy



Answers	Count	Percentage
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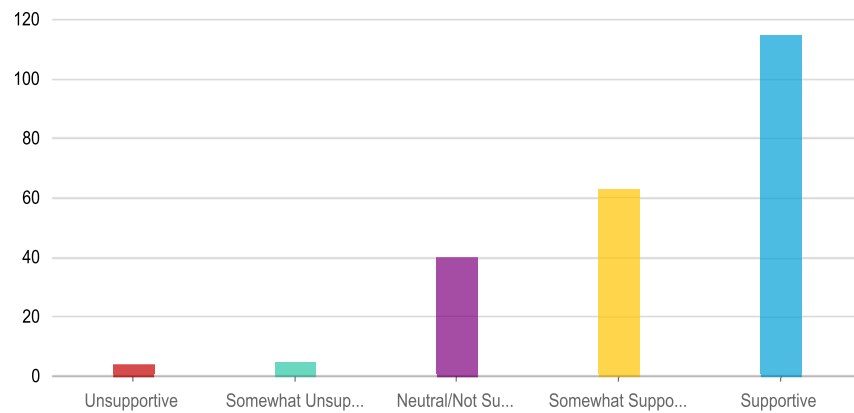
Answered: 227 Skipped: 6

A bar chart titled 'U.S. responsible for 9/11 attacks?' showing the percentage of respondents who believe the U.S. is responsible for the 9/11 attacks, categorized by their level of support for the U.S. The Y-axis represents the percentage, ranging from 0 to 120 in increments of 20. The X-axis lists five categories: 'Unsupportive' (red bar, ~5%), 'Somewhat Unsupportive' (teal bar, ~3%), 'Neutral/Not Sure' (purple bar, ~52%), 'Somewhat Supportive' (yellow bar, ~55%), and 'Supportive' (blue bar, ~110%).

Category	Percentage
Unsupportive	~5
Somewhat Unsupportive	~3
Neutral/Not Sure	~52
Somewhat Supportive	~55
Supportive	~110

Answered: 226 Skipped: 7

- **Improve existing parks and recreation facilities to meet ADA-accessibility standards**

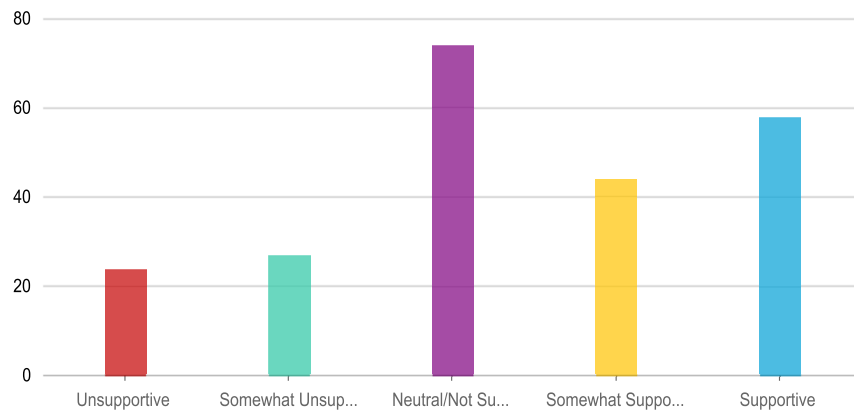


**Answers** **Count** **Percentage**

Unsupportive	4	1.72%
Somewhat Unsupportive	5	2.15%
Neutral/Not Sure	40	17.17%
Somewhat Supportive	63	27.04%
Supportive	115	49.36%

Answered: 227 Skipped: 6

o **Construct purpose-built mountain bike trails**

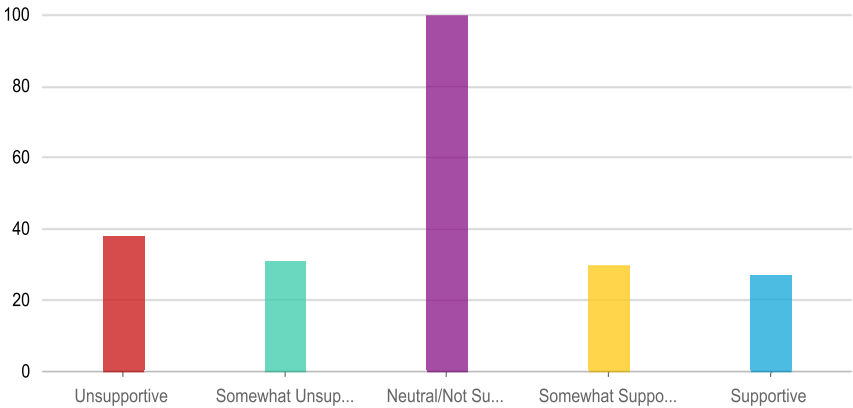


**Answers** **Count** **Percentage**

Unsupportive	24	10.3%
Somewhat Unsupportive	27	11.59%
Neutral/Not Sure	74	31.76%
Somewhat Supportive	44	18.88%
Supportive	58	24.89%

Answered: 227 Skipped: 6

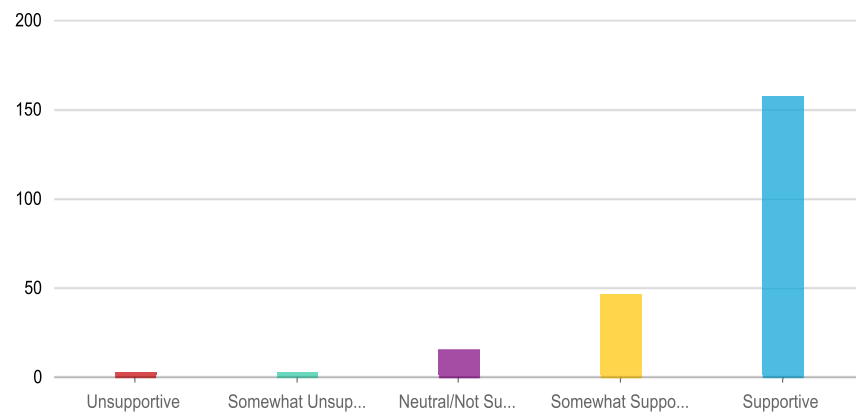
Open more trails to equestrian use and incorporate amenities for this use



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	38	16.31%
Somewhat Unsupportive	31	13.3%
Neutral/Not Sure	100	42.92%
Somewhat Supportive	30	12.88%
Supportive	27	11.59%

Answered: 226 Skipped: 7

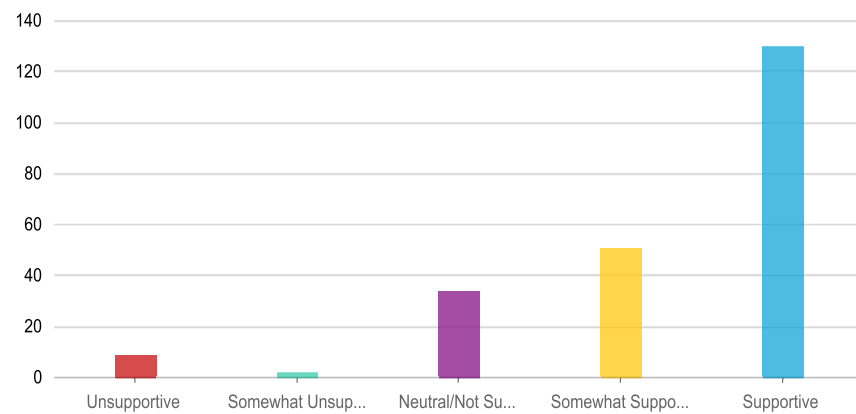
Construct trails or designate routes that create linkages between cities and villages



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	3	1.29%
Somewhat Unsupportive	3	1.29%
Neutral/Not Sure	16	6.87%
Somewhat Supportive	47	20.17%
Supportive	158	67.81%

Answered: 227 Skipped: 6

o Focus on creating walking/biking trails separate and distinct from roadways



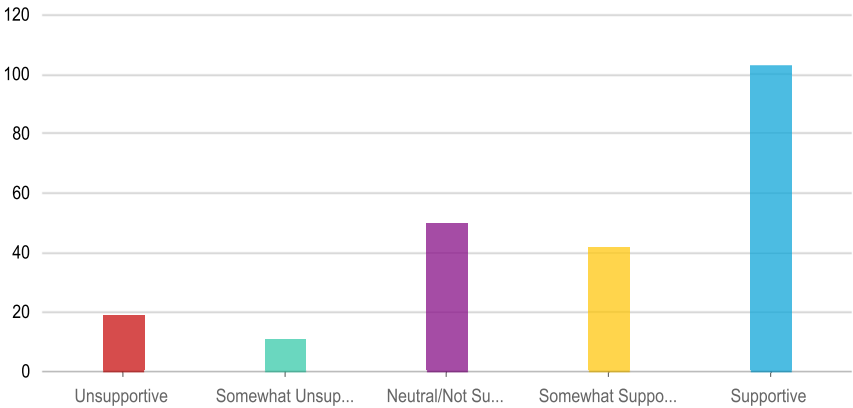
Answers	Count	Percentage
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Unsupportive	9	3.86%
Somewhat Unsupportive	2	0.86%
Neutral/Not Sure	34	14.59%
Somewhat Supportive	51	21.89%
Supportive	130	55.79%

Answered: 226 Skipped: 7

○ Focus on improving on-road bike route conditions and safety

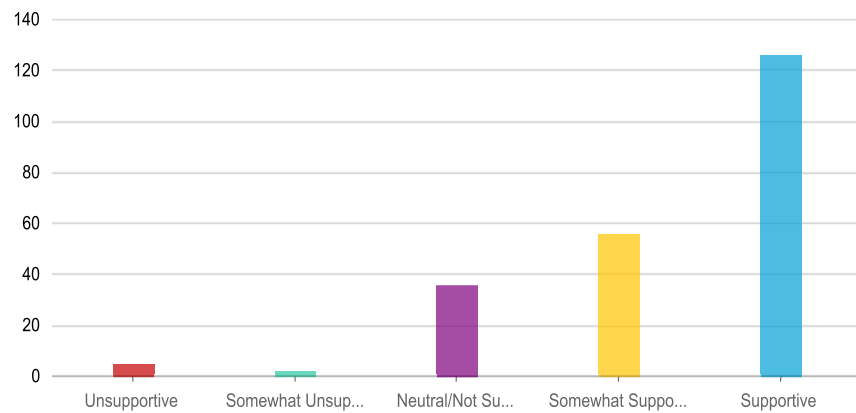


**Answers** **Count** **Percentage**

Unsupportive	19	8.15%
Somewhat Unsupportive	11	4.72%
Neutral/Not Sure	50	21.46%
Somewhat Supportive	42	18.03%
Supportive	103	44.21%

Answered: 225 Skipped: 8

○ Implement cohesive wayfinding trail signage

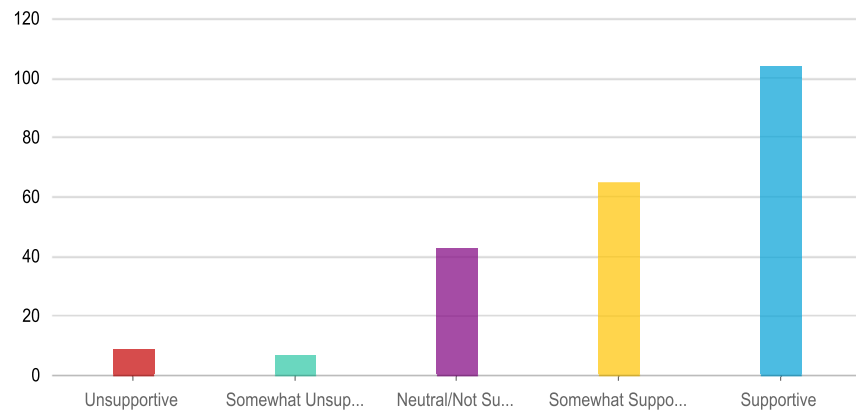


**Answers** **Count** **Percentage**

Unsupportive	5	2.15%
Somewhat Unsupportive	2	0.86%
Neutral/Not Sure	36	15.45%
Somewhat Supportive	56	24.03%
Supportive	126	54.08%

Answered: 225 Skipped: 8

Invest in advertising outdoor recreation opportunities in the county



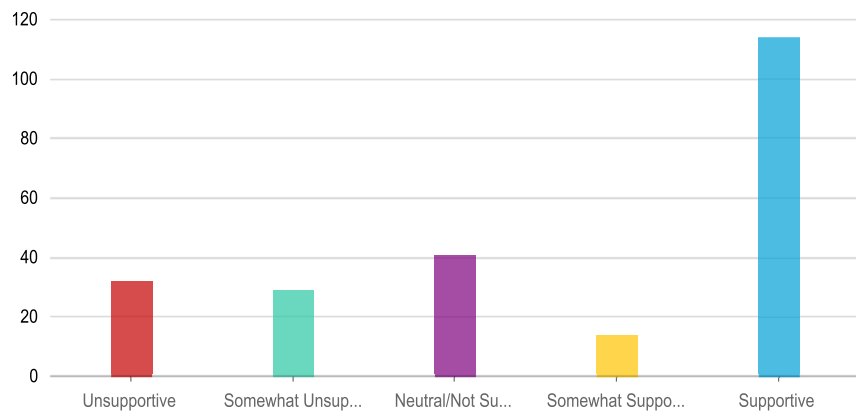
**Answers** **Count** **Percentage**

Answered: 228 Skipped: 5

Response	Percentage
Unsupportive	5
Somewhat Unsupportive	5
Neutral/Not Sure	50
Somewhat Supportive	58
Supportive	109

Answered: 228 Skipped: 5

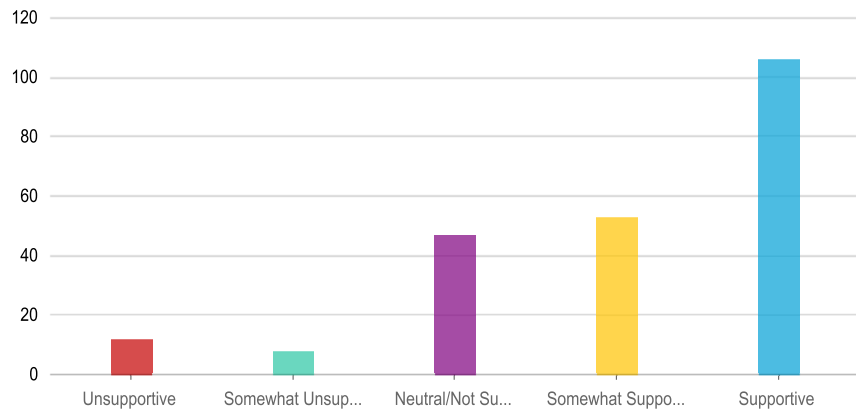
- Support legislative changes that would open opportunities for ATV/UTV trails/routes



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	32	13.73%
Somewhat Unsupportive	29	12.45%
Neutral/Not Sure	41	17.6%
Somewhat Supportive	14	6.01%
Supportive	114	48.93%

Answered: 230 Skipped: 3

○ Support legislative change that would open opportunities for more designated and signed bike routes

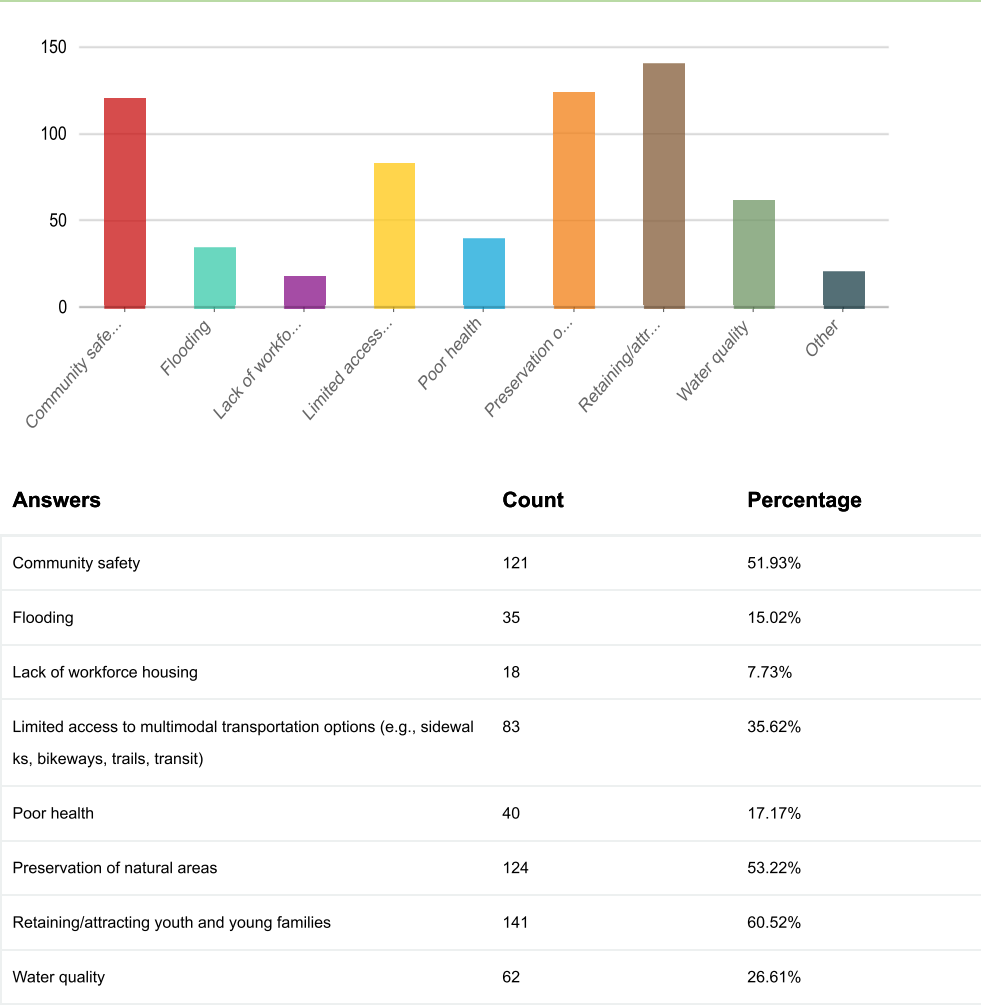


Answers	Count	Percentage
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Unsupportive	12	5.15%
Somewhat Unsupportive	8	3.43%
Neutral/Not Sure	47	20.17%
Somewhat Supportive	53	22.75%
Supportive	106	45.49%

Answered: 226 Skipped: 7

Trails and parks have the potential to help address some complex social, economic, and environmental challenges. From the following list, please select the top THREE challenges that are MOST IMPORTANT to you and



Other	21	9.01%
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Answered: 215 Skipped: 18

**Please provide any additional comments or ideas for trails, parks, or public open spaces in the county:**



Response	Count
You focus on mountain biking but nothing for the UTV and ATV community. This can draw revenue for the county, new businesses, and promote opportunities for family gatherings. Don't focus only on bike trails and bike paths. Some one who cannot ride a bicycle or tricycle can't enjoy mountain biking but can ride as a passenger in a UTV. They still get to be apart and create family memories. This is ADA friendly. People with disabilities pay taxes for county improvement and are not always capable of using bike paths or trails. A person with CP can ride in a UTV with their family and have a wonderful time exploring nature. Please consider the value of UTV and ATV trails.	1
Would love to see atv/utv trails come to Stephenson County and connect to Green County trails. Many families would utilize these trails and it could bring business from Wisconsin to Northern IL towns	1
would like to see more UTV access to parks and town. Its better than driving a car and we can be outside enjoying the weather.	1
Would like to see more snowmobile trails. The winter snowmobile season brought in a huge economic recovery this past year due to the shut downs. Gas stations, restaurants, bars, and hotels all got an added boost that was much needed from snowmobilers. The average snowmobile per day spends roughly a 100 dollars or more to go ride. I have a family of 4 and we enjoy the winter season to enjoy the scenery and beautiful trails the volunteers put out for the snowmobiles to ride. Would like to see better funding for these clubs and groups.	1
Work to be able to utilize UTV/ATV routes throughout the county	1

We would like to see more emphasis on expanding and enhancing natural areas with native plantings and bike and walking paths. Too much emphasis on golf courses and development.	1
We utilize snowmobile trails heavily in Stephenson county and surrounding areas. Would be beneficial to have collaboration between different groups to include off season uses of snowmobile trails for biking, walking, etc. Jane Addams trail is a good example of this during summer months vs winter months.	1
We spend thousands of dollars a year in WI when we use the UTV/ATV trails. We drive through Stephenson county to get there. It would be nice to have a place to ride ATV/UTVs that is closer to home and keep that revenue in our own state.	1
We need UTV trails to bring people to our communities	1
We need to join Wisconsin and have atv and utv trails. Rather it actual trails or road trails town to town. Most towns in our county are open. Time to open the county. Walkers and Bikers bring snacks and so on. Utv/atv riders go town to town for a beer, burger, icecream, ect.	1
We need atv trails in Stephenson County. It would bring more commerce to Freeport and surrounding areas.	1
We enjoy the many parks in Freeport, however, many playgrounds could use to be updated. It would be nice to see some fitness parks incorporated and perhaps some playgrounds built with older kids in mind. A natural playscape, like at Severson Dells, would be amazing!	1
UVT/ATV tourism would have a significant positive impact on our communities and economy!	1
Utv use in the area has increased dramatically and offers tourism incentives if we can develop trails for the m	1
Until we have infrastructure to support business and homes in the region there shouldn't be money spent on anything other than upkeep of current facilities. Also keep the name correct in referring to places in the county. It is the Stephenson County Fairgrounds (Freeport) it is not the Freeport Fairgrounds. Referring to it as the Freeport Fairgrounds only divides this County further just like your name. Freeport, especially downtown, always comes first and the rest of the County is thrown to the wayside and forgotten about. The river usage needs signage informing users the land along the river is PRIVATE property. We have had so many trespassers wandering our property, camping overnight, leaving trash it's ridiculous. The Pecatonica Prairie path will be the same thing if it's developed. We find people wandering our ground off trail many times and trash left behind. Or parking in our farm/field entrances blocking us from our work.	1
Two thoughts for IDNR: 1) charge an annual usage fee for use of State Parks (\$10.00?) 2) stop allowing horse owners from using LeAquaNa as a manure disposal site. The trails are often covered in horse crap.	1
Trails and parks add to quality of life	1

The signage at Krape Park needs an urgent rework. I can't tell you how many times I've encountered a car driving the wrong way on one-way legs of roads. It happens at least once a month when I happen to be there, so who knows how much more often it really occurs. We should make it more friendly to out-of-town visitors who don't know their way around like the locals do. I've also long thought it would be supremely beneficial to have informative signs or markers along walkways that identify and educate on nearby plants or commonly-seen wildlife. A QR code system could also be a fun, interactive way to explore and learn about the parks, popular landmarks, and the history of these places in our area. A Stephenson County Parks app could solve the issue of not knowing where parks & trails are, offering an interactive map highlighting the amenities at each location, in addition to being the general guide of things to know. Fast facts, narration, accessibility guides - the sky is the limit.	1
The nature of your survey questions indicates that you understand that there are legal barriers in Illinois that limits citizens abilities to enjoy natural resources for recreation as in other states (Boub v Wayne and "Navigable Waters" for two. Focusing your energy on addressing these legislatively is the best way you could help, because it cannot be done by individual citizens, groups, or municipalities. But we can all help.	1
The Lake Road from Stagecoach Trail to McConnell Road to Orangeville needs replacement and needs a full bike trail off of the roadway. We have a beautiful refurbished lake and a roadway that does not meet any highway design standards. The IDNR has responsibility to participate in road maintenance/upgrades, because of a state facility on a county roadway. The Stephenson County Board needs to become educated on the positive impact that our natural resources have on our local economy. They need to get outside of their local zip codes learn all they can about promoting the natural resource trophies that we have and ways to make our county even better..	1
The Jane Adams Trail is a major asset to the community. Hopefully the Pecatonica Trail is going to be much more improved than it is now. If you are just going to leave the section around Ridott as a grass trail no one is going to use it. If it you go to the trouble of making it a public trail, do it right or save your money.	1
Taylor Park seems to get less attention and renovation than the parks on the west side of town.	1
Spent thousands of dollars for walking trails at Craig Park and people still use the roads and make car stop or move off the road. It is unsafe for people walking and for people in cars. Park district needs to mow back far enough so you can see people when you're coming around the corner on the roadway in the park.	1
Safety is my number #1 concern...some areas are just not safe for aging populations	1
Provide a bicycle/walking bridge over Route 26 north of Freeport at the bike path. Crossing Route 26 on a bike is a safety hazard	1
Please consider extensive management/grant options to enable optimum multi-use facilities, to maximize use to as many people as possible. NO special interest limitations please!	1
Open up atv/utv trails or road use could bring more revenue to the area. Especially having the Wisconsin trail system right up the road.	1
Open the utv trails	1



Northern California and parts of Minnesota, Kansas and Wisconsin have this figured out. Stop trying to reinvent the wheel or find the magic bullet... LEARN from others.	1
Need bike/walking path to come out past highland on pc rd, needs to extend down vanburen towards royal oaks. So many people exercise in these roads and it is dangerous with how fast cars go. Trailhead and trailhead training as well. It would be very much used do some visual surveys to see how many people are out on bikes, walking running in this area	1
Need atv/ UTV routes ASAP	1
NATIVE plantings and removal of invasive species. Ie these places have to be managed. More educational spots to teach everyone why native areas important for pollinators ie the food web from soil bacteria, fungi, to insects, butterflies, birds to mammals , humans. We depend on each other. Activity stations or butterfly gardens. Rain gardens. Ways to demonstrate how to make your own. Kiosks. Interpretive educational signage	1
Mountain bike trials/singletrack dirt trails would be fabulous!	1
More work on Prairie path	1
More opportunities for cross country skiing.	1
More "soft" walking surfaces, like Oakdale's mulch, fewer asphalt trails like the "new" ones at Krape. They are much easier on the joints. Repair and maintenance of trails. For example, removing downed trees within a week, repairing the waterside walkway in Oakdale, etc.	1
Make utv's legal on county/township roads.	1
Look for any opportunities to utilize abandoned railroads still remaining in the county. Work with snowmobile groups to create trails that can be used year-round, such as the Jane Addams Trail. Continue to improve the Jane Addams Trail. That is a huge asset for Stephenson County.	1
It would be nice to have (or if already available advertise the more) trails for snowshoeing and x-country skiing - ones that are groomed to better allow for this type of activity in the winter.	1
It is extremely important to research before planting any plants and trees. Just because it might be native to Illinois does not mean it is native to NW IL Stephenson County and could cause problems. In addition, more efforts should occur to remove invasive species now and not simply spray with chemicals as the Freeport Park District frequently does. I believe with part-time hiring, seasonal work, volunteer efforts, simple digging and pulling can achieve more than spraying chemicals. Stop spraying so much along Jane Addams trail. There are many spring ephemerals that were killed due to spraying.	1
I'm just tickled that you're asking these questions. My kids have grown up in our parks/nature areas locally and afar. Having open spaces, access to nature and wildlife and healthy outlets for activities and exercise are key to a healthy community.	1
Illinois needs to follow Wisconsin's footsteps in how they run their trail systems and how they are linked together. The money generated for local businesses and the state is insane from recreational activities. People like to have fun and if it's there in functioning order, they'll flock to it.	1

I would love to see dedicated mountain bike trails at Oakdale and Lake Le Aqua Na	1
I would like to see more multiuse paths between parks and trails. Too often one must drive to get to the trail heads.	1
I learned a lot about bike trails that I didn't know existed in our county. We always just ride Jane Adams. It'd be nice to have maps that show all of the available trails and bike paths in our county. I've lived here 35 years and didn't know about a lot of this.	1
I believe we need outdoor activities for our minority population. African Americans historically do not use trails. Our streets, roads, and sidewalks are in horrible condition. Trails and parks should be at the bottom of our priority lists.	1
I am strongly in favor of adding UTV trail ways to the county and hope to see this very soon!	1
How about completing the Stephenson County end of the Pecatonica Prairie Path to join it up to the Jane Adams Trail?	1
Get boat launch installed at Attens Landing	1
Enhance and expand mountain biking opportunities!	1
Drive through Southern Wisconsin and check out the number of atv/utv's on the trails and at the local establishments. If Illinois and Stephenson County permitted more use on county roads in addition to year-round trails as well as connecting to existing ones in Wisconsin, I think it would draw more people and revenue to the area	1
Disc golf is growing and brings families and individuals to the area. Having a designated disc golf course or area independent of recreation areas and trails will be a good addition to our park system. A quality facility could be an economic driver. See Madison's pay-to-play disc golf system for a great example.	1
Disc golf is a sport that is seeing huge growth during the pandemic, and it can help bring people from around the region to Stephenson County. A nice course away from walking trails could have big impact. A nearby example is Anna Page Park in Rockford. It hosts 3 beautiful courses with walking trails and picnic areas that are away from where people are playing. It hosts tournaments and leagues that draw people from all over the Midwest. Something like that, if the course(s) is/are done correctly, could draw a number of people to the county.	1
Develop local Freeport city bike routes and necessary infrastructure (crossing improvements; bike lanes; signage; connectivity) Develop regional bike routes including completion of Pecatonica Prairie Trail to Winnebago, and safe routes on local roads to connect County sites, e.g. Lake Le-Aqua-Na; Grand Illinois Trail	1
Creating safe options for travel by bicycle to frequently-used areas: e.g., Walmart, downtown.	1
Better linking neighborhoods/towns to open spaces via alternate transportation modes (walk/bike/ATV...)	1

Be honest and open to the public regarding waterway safety and water quality. Did you know the IEPA has a report showing the area waterways are highly contaminated, to include the Pecatonica River as a Non-Recreational waterway and no human contact. This report is how Lake Le-Aqua-Na was suddenly funded after countless years of being neglected. Your local leaders are well aware of this report and squashed public notification every chance they had. When politicians selectively remove those that reveal the truth and replace them with those that share in their dealings, the day will come when their lies and misdeeds will be brought to light.

1

Atv/utv/snowmobile access

1

ATV/UTV routes would greatly benefit Stephenson County as we have direct access to the routes in southern Wisconsin. This could bring great revenue to our area.

1

ATV/UTV Access/routes and continued development for snowmobile use on existing trail systems.

1

Atv trail access to cheese county trails!. You want economic growth through tourism? Stop spending money on bike trails! Head to Monroe, Darlington Wi and see how busy the bars and restaurants become all due to atv riders.

1

Advertising events more.

1

Access to the Jane Adams trail from Highland Community College. I have never seen a map of county trails. It may exist, but I have not run across it.

1

Absolutely LOVE the new paved trail at Oakdale. I am disabled, and it's the first time in a while I've been able to go on a "nature hike" with my kids. Thanks for investing in this!

1

A bicycle pump track would be ideal. We have one recreational skate park which does not allow bicycles. Kids ride bicycles also!

1

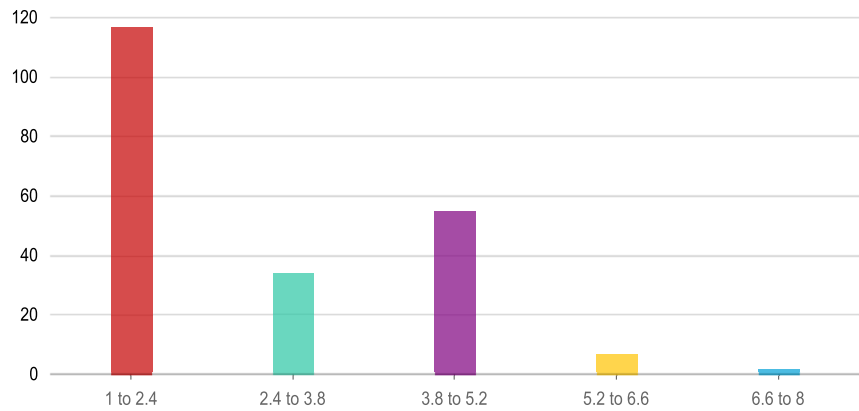
Visit Wisconsin and check out their ATV UTV trails. They are a great recreational opportunity that are always busy. Think of the outside people the trails bring in and the money those people spend on their stops along the trail.

1

0

Answered: 66 Skipped: 167

Counting yourself, how many people are in your household?



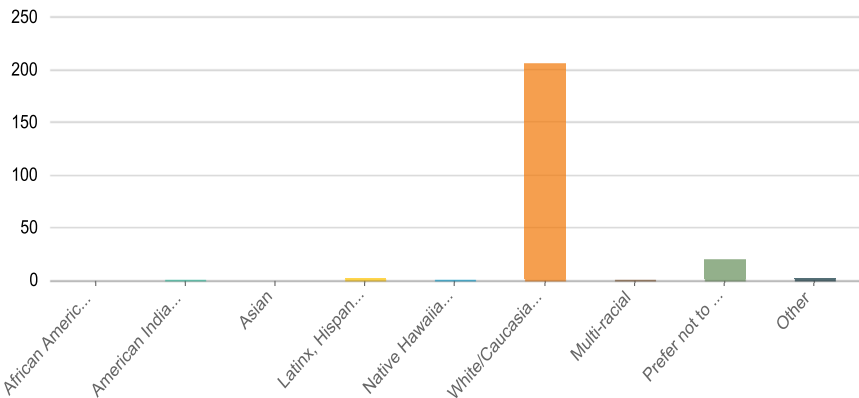
Stats

Value

Min.	1
Max.	8
Avg.	2.7953488372093
Sum.	601

Answered: 215 Skipped: 18

What is your race or ethnicity?



Answers

Count

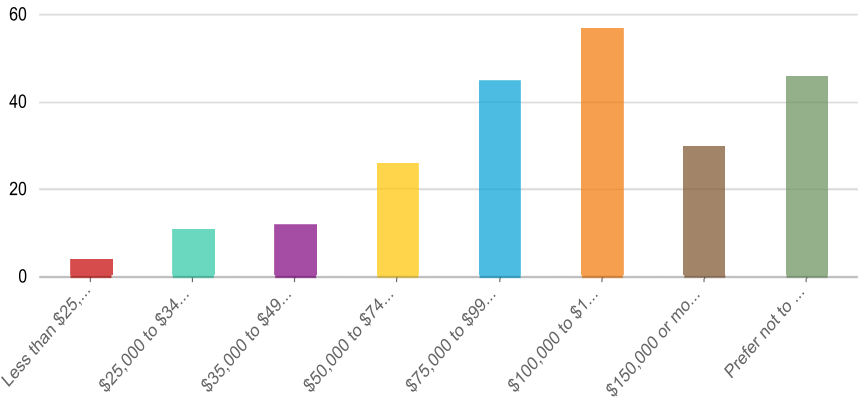
Percentage

African American/Black	0	0%
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American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.43%
Asian	0	0%
Latinx, Hispanic, or Spanish	2	0.86%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	0.43%
White/Caucasian	206	88.41%
Multi-racial	1	0.43%
Prefer not to say	20	8.58%
Other	2	0.86%

Answered: 232 Skipped: 1

What is your total annual household income?



AnswersCountPercentage

Less than \$25,000	4	1.72%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	11	4.72%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12	5.15%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	26	11.16%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	45	19.31%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	57	24.46%

\$150,000 or more	30	12.88%
Prefer not to say	46	19.74%

Answered: 231 Skipped: 2