



2022 LEE & OGLE COUNTIES

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 2002 Lee County Greenways and Trails Plan and the 2003 Ogle County Greenways and Trails Plan. The 2002 and 2003 plans were prepared by Sheaffer Landscape Architects, and were funded, in part, by a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Like the 2002 and 2003 plans, this version aims to identify existing and potential opportunities for 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 counties' stakeholders' efforts to provide quality recreation and outdoor experiences.

Objectives

This iteration of the Lee and Ogle counties 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



Lowell Park, photo credit: Blackhawk Waterways

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.¹ 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).² 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.³ The studies also showed an increase in aerobic capacity, weight loss, improvements in flexibility, and an increase in perceived energy following the intervention.⁴

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.⁵ 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.⁶

¹ 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>

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

³ 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)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ 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>

⁶ Ibid.

Environment

Although this iteration of the Lee and Ogle counties 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 developed⁷, 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.”⁸ 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.⁹ This cooling effect is a welcomed benefit as extreme heat events become more frequent in Illinois due to climate change.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ Greenways may also play an important role in storing carbon, thus reducing overall CO₂ 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.¹² 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 Lee and Ogle counties’ 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

⁷ 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

⁸ 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

⁹ 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>.

¹⁰ 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/>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² 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>.

land 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-benefitting 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.¹³ Active transportation is a viable alternative to driving for many common trips. About 40% of all trips are less than 3 miles.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ 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 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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷

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.¹⁸ Strategies to maximize the economic potential of recreation offerings can be used to stimulate commerce and ensure return on investment to communities. 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.

¹³ 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>

¹⁴ 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

¹⁵ 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>

¹⁶ 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>

¹⁷ 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/>

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

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](#).

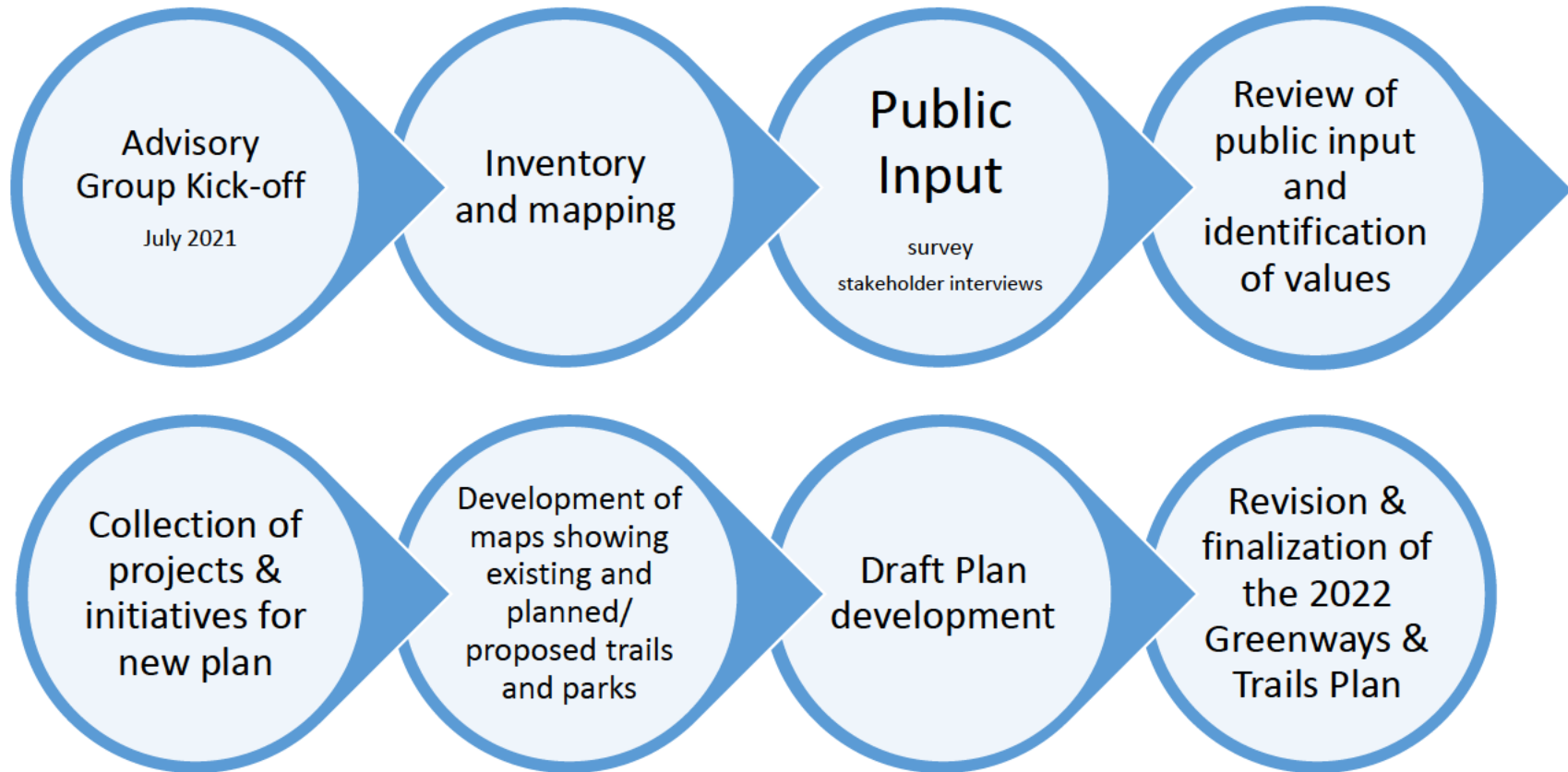
Equitable park and trail development starts with the planning process. It must be acknowledged that there are gaps in the public input gathered for this plan. Identifying these gaps provides a learning opportunity for how to improve future planning efforts, as well as project and program implementation. 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 on 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.¹⁹ 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.

¹⁹ 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 (list is available in Appendix B).

Trails and Routes				
Name	Type	Designed Uses	Manager	County
Bike Ogle Routes: Bison/Reagan/John Deere Loop Byron/Nuclear Loop Forreston/Mt Morris Loop Gravel/Chip/Hill/Rock River Loop Nachusa Bison/John Deere Loop Paynes Point/Stillman Loop Polo/Mt Morris Loop Rochelle/Chana Loop Rock River/West Grove/Mt Morris Loop	Routes	Bike	N/A	Lee, Ogle
Dixon Bike Route	Route	Bike	N/A	Lee
Lincoln Way Inn Tour Loop Route	Route	Bike	N/A	Lee, Ogle
Rock River Trail Routes: Bike Route Water Trail Scenic and Historic Route Chocolate Trail Wine & Beer Trail History Trail Birding Trail Art Route Air Route	Routes	Bike, Paddle, Drive, Airplane	Rock River Trail Initiative	Lee, Ogle
Quilters' Journey	Route	Tourism	Participating shops and B&Bs; Blackhawk Waterways Convention & Visitors Bureau	Lee, Ogle
Dixon Meadows Trail	Designated Path	Walk, Bike, Equestrian, Snowmobile	Dixon Park District	Lee
Don Hamer Path	Designated Path	Walk, Bike	Byron Forest Preserve	Ogle
Four Sisters Bike Path	Designated Path	Walk, Bike	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Joe Stengel Trail	Designated Path	Walk, Bike, Equestrian, Snowmobile	Dixon Park District	Lee, Ogle
Lowell Parkway Recreational Trail	Designated Path	Walk, Bike	Dixon Park District	Lee
Oregon Community Bike Path (Park East)	Dedicated Path	Walk, Bike	Oregon Park District	Ogle

Parks			
Name	Type	Manager	County
Griffith Park	Park	Village of Ashton	Lee
Amboy City Park	Park	City of Amboy	Lee
Amboy Sports Park	Athletic Fields	City of Amboy	Lee
River Park East	Park	Byron Forest Preserve District	Ogle
Blackhawk Meadow Park	Park	Byron Forest Preserve District	Ogle
Donald B. Johnson Riverfront Park	Park	Byron Forest Preserve District	Ogle
Hamas Park	Park	Byron Forest Preserve District	Ogle
Tiger Town Park	Park	Byron Forest Preserve District	Ogle
Booster Park	Park	Creston-Dement Park District	Ogle
Davis Junction Community Park	Park	Village of Davis Junction	Ogle
Ballou Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Chula Vista Park	Pocket Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Dement Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
E.C. Smith Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Haymarket Square	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Howell Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
John C. Roe Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
John Dixon Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Lowell Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Meadows Park & Park 4 Paws Dog Park	Park, Dog Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Grace Johnston Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
(Dixon) Kiwanis Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Page Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Triangle Park	Pocket Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Vaile Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Reynolds Field	Athletic Fields	Dixon Park District	Lee
Village Park	Park	Dixon Park District	Lee
Cooper Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Kelley Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Lyle Kunde/Lake Sule Recreation Area	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Powers Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Skare Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Sweeney Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Tilton Memorial Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
VFW Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Atwood Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Connolly Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Flannigan Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Hillcrest Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Memorial Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Midwest Park	Park	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Spring Lake Aquatic Park	Outdoor Pool & Splash Pad	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Helms Complex	Athletic Fields	Flagg Rochelle Community Park District	Ogle
Memorial Park	Park	Village of Forreton	Ogle
Warnken Park	Park	Village of Forreton	Ogle
Alasta Park	Park	Village of Franklin Grove	Lee
Dillehay Park	Park	Village of Mt Morris	Ogle
Hal Palmer Park	Park	Village of Mt Morris	Ogle
Mounder Park	Park	Village of Mt Morris	Ogle
Zickuhr Park	Park	Village of Mt Morris	Ogle
Fairground Park	Park, Fairgrounds	Oregon Park District	Ogle

Lions Park	Park	Oregon Park District	Ogle
Park East	Park	Oregon Park District	Ogle
Park West	Park	Oregon Park District	Ogle
Carnation Park	Park	Oregon Park District	Ogle
(Oregon) Kiwanis Park	Park	Oregon Park District	Ogle
Mix Park	Park	Oregon Park District	Ogle
Williams Park	Park	Oregon Park District	Ogle
Jacks Landing	Park, Canoe Landing	Oregon Park District	Ogle
Lions Club Park	Park	Village of Paw Paw	Lee
Roger's Park	Park	Village of Paw Paw	Lee
Veterans Park	Park	Village of Paw Paw	Lee
Westside Park (Millard Deuth Park)	Park	City of Polo	Ogle
Keator Park (Polo Community Park)	Park	City of Polo	Ogle
Louise D. Quick Park	Park	City of Polo	Ogle
Bicentennial Park	Park	Village of Stillman Valley	Ogle
Weld Park	Park	Village of Stillman Valley	Ogle
Centennial Park	Park	Village of Sublette	Lee
White Pines Forest State Park	State Park	Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)	Ogle
Castle Rock State Park	State Park	IDNR	Ogle
Lowden State Park	State Park	IDNR	Ogle
Lowden-Miller State Forest	Forest Reserve	IDNR	Ogle

Open Spaces			
Name	Type	Manager	County
He-Leo Two Rivers Preserve	Wetland Preserve	Byron Forest Preserve	Ogle
Etnyre Forest Preserve	Nature Preserve	Byron Forest Preserve	Ogle
Howard Colman Hall Creek Preserve	Nature Preserve	Byron Forest Preserve	Ogle
Jarrett Prairie Preserve	Conservation Area	Byron Forest Preserve	Ogle
Ripplinger-Gouker Preserve	Nature Preserve	Byron Forest Preserve	Ogle
Barrick Oaks Homestead Preserve	Nature Preserve	Byron Forest Preserve	Ogle
Bald Hill Prairie Preserve	Nature Preserve	Byron Forest Preserve	Ogle
Richardson Wildlife Preserve	Nature Preserve	Richardson Wildlife Foundation	
Nachusea Grasslands • Big Jump Prairie	State Natural Area	The Nature Conservancy, IDNR	Ogle
Beach Cemetery Prairie	Nature Preserve	Natural Land Institute	Ogle
Douglas E. Wade Prairie	Nature Preserve	Prairie Preservation Society of Ogle County	Ogle
Pine Rock Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	IDNR	Ogle
Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve	Nature Preserve	Northwest Illinois Audubon Society	Ogle
Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve	Nature Preserve	Northwest Illinois Audubon Society	Ogle
Nardi Equine Prairie Preserve • Equestrian Trails	Nature Preserve	Byron Forest Preserve, IDNR	Ogle
Bartlett Wood Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District	Lee
Dixon Nature Reserve	Nature Preserve	Dixon Park District	Lee
Bluff View Park	Natural Area	Dixon Park District	Lee
Franklin Creek State Natural Area • Equestrian Trails	Natural Area	IDNR	Lee
Green River State Wildlife Area • Equestrian Trails	Wildlife Area	IDNR	Lee
Temperance Hill Cemetery Prairie	Nature Preserve	Lee County Board of School Trustees	Lee
Foley Sand Prairie	Nature Preserve	IDNR	Lee
Maytown Pheasant Habitat Area	Wildlife Area	IDNR	Lee

Steward Pheasant Habitat Area	Wildlife Area	IDNR	Lee
Gremel Wildlife Sanctuary	Wildlife Sanctuary	Illinois Audubon Society	Lee
Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve	Nature Preserve	Illinois Audubon Society	Lee

Heritage Sites		
Name	Type	County
Buffalo Grove Lime Kiln	National Historic Place	Ogle
Stillman's Run Battle Site	National Historic Place	Ogle
Soldier's Monument	Monument	Ogle
Black Hawk Statue/The Eternal Indian Statue	Statue	Ogle
Ogle County Courthouse	National Historic Place	Ogle
Chana School Museum	National Historic Place	Ogle
Lincoln Monument	Statue	Lee
John Deere House and Shop	National Historic Place	Lee
Amboy Depot Museum	National Historic Place	Lee
Ronald Reagan's Boyhood Home	National Historic Place	Lee



Hiking in White Pines State Park, photo credit: Blackhawk Waterways

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 interviews. Results suggest that the counties have good foundations in existing regional trails and municipal parks and that they also have 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>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dixon’s Lowell Parkway and Rochelle’s Four Sisters Bike Path are paved and close to larger population centers so they see a lot of use• The Polo end of the Joe Stengel Trail sees a lot of use that has increased throughout the COVID-19 pandemic• Bike Ogle routes see a lot of use by different bike clubs• Lowell Park has high use due to its location in Dixon• The counties have many acres in parks and open spaces compared to other areas. This has been a big benefit during COVID and has allowed people to be outside while social distancing• Municipalities have done a good job of maintaining parks• There are not many issues with flooding- the boat landing north of Oregon that had flooding issues has been removed, Page Park in Dixon and the lower road at Lowell Park sometimes flood, but without major issues.• The counties are very picturesque• People in the counties are open to commerce being generated by visitors coming into town• Rural roads are used a lot for recreational bicycling and motorcycling• TOSOC (Tour of Scenic Ogle County) bicycling event• Byron Forest Preserve District (currently) has solid funding from the Byron nuclear power plant – although this could change in the future• A large volunteer group keeps up the single track mountain bike trail in Dixon and works closely with the Dixon Park District• Franklin Creek State Natural Area is a big destination for equestrian use in the area- people travel up to 2+ hours to use the trails here• The Meadows in Dixon is appreciated by local equestrians. The multi-use aspect of this site is a big highlight• The Rock River has a lot to offer- scenic, natural, and recreational values	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Rock River Bike Route is a beautiful ride, but because it is along state routes it is not very family-friendly. There would be financial and geographical constraints to creating a designated path along this route• Small town budgets are limited• It is challenging to get right-of-ways for bike lanes and trails• It is challenging for communities to purchase private land for trails• People can sometimes be territorial about the trails they volunteer on making organization and collaboration at a larger scale difficult• Many recreation sites and campgrounds aren’t equipped to handle large horse RV/trailers, which are becoming more and more popular• Not enough is being done to let locals and visitors know about the offerings of the Rock River Trail
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Erosion control options are being explored for Lowell Park• Counties should take advantage of higher use during COVID to gain momentum and support for trail improvements (ex. Joe Stengel Trail)• Signage and safety for on-road bike routes should be a priority• Lowden Miller State Forest has 22 miles of old logging roads. IDNR has laid out mountain bike trails along these roads but the project hasn’t been fully implemented• Oregon Park District received a grant to construct a trail to Lowden Park- the final cost was too high to implement, but the plans have been completed• There was an idea for a trail between Byron and Stillman Valley, but there were issues with not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) sentiments• A bike lane along Rte 2 from Byron to Rockford would be great• There is potential for bringing more tourism in from Chicago• The counties have lots of great parks and open spaces, but they aren’t connected to one another- connections via trails would be a major benefit• State and federal grants could be used to support recreational trails, programming, and trails as means of transportation• Grants could be used to improve mountain bike trails outside of the Dixon Park District network• ITEP and RAISE grants could fund much-needed trail connections between communities• More parking space is needed at The Meadows in Dixon- especially during soccer tournaments• An equestrian campground with electricity would be a huge offering- there isn’t one in northern IL• Turning the old St. Mary’s cement plant quarry into an OHV park would be a big opportunity- there is demand for this type of recreation, it would bring economic benefits, and there aren’t similar opportunities offered in the state other than in southern IL. The site could also benefit hunters• Promoting recreation offerings would be very beneficial- especially for rural communities• Find ways to engage more local residents in volunteering and recreating on the Rock River• An article in a pilot’s magazine could help promote the Rock River Trail flight route• Link more community bike trails to the Rock River Bike Trail	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited financial means to keep up with maintenance needed for high use on sections of Joe Stengel Trail• IDNR is struggling to maintain sites with limited staff and funding• Education and signage is needed for bicyclists and drivers to safely share the roads• Mixed use (equestrian and OHV or mountain bike) on the same trail can be a serious safety concern. Separating use seems to be the safer option• Equestrian lifestyle is slipping away- places aren’t planning for equestrian use anymore• Liability issues around allowing volunteers to do work on trails and sites can be a challenge• The Rock River Trail Initiative survives from volunteer efforts- to be more sustainable, there needs to be more local government support and sense of ownership. Getting Dixon and Oregon on board is very important to long-term sustainability• State of Illinois law regarding 35 mph maximum speed limits for roads designated for OHV use make connections between towns very challenging• 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• Illinois law regarding public water access prevents many rivers and streams from being open for paddling



Campfire at White Pines State Park, photo credit: Blackhawk Waterways

Public Input

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

Online Public Survey

The public survey, which was open 42 days from October 12 to November 23, 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. Fliers with the survey link were also distributed at the Dixon Scarecrow Festival on October 23rd. Survey 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.

109 respondents participated, contributing 24 free-form comments. Answers to the demographics questions suggest, however, that the respondents do not represent the counties’ overall populations. Household sizes of respondents were slightly larger than the 2015-2019 US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey averages. The average for respondents was 3.28 people per household, while the 2015-2019 American Community Survey averages were 2.25²⁰ and 2.4²¹ for Lee and Ogle counties respectively. The small sample size of the survey also impacts the average household size. A notable gap in representation is uncovered by answers to the race and ethnicity question. Respondents were heavily White (89.91%), while the Lee County’s population is 85.9% White²² and Ogle’s is 86.3% White²³. Household incomes of respondents were also higher than typical in either county. Most respondents reported household incomes between \$75,000 and \$150,000, while the median household income according to 2015-2019 American Community Survey is \$58,194 (Lee)²⁴ and \$60,986 (Ogle)²⁵. 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

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. QuickFacts. Lee County, Illinois. 18 February 2022. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/leecountyillinois/PST045221>

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau. QuickFacts. Ogle County, Illinois. 18 February 2022. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/oglecountyillinois/PST045221>

²² U.S. Census Bureau. QuickFacts. Lee County, Illinois.

²³ U.S. Census Bureau. QuickFacts. Ogle County, Illinois.

²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. QuickFacts. Lee County, Illinois.

²⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. QuickFacts. Ogle County, Illinois.

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 Lee or Ogle 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 population in Lee and Ogle counties.

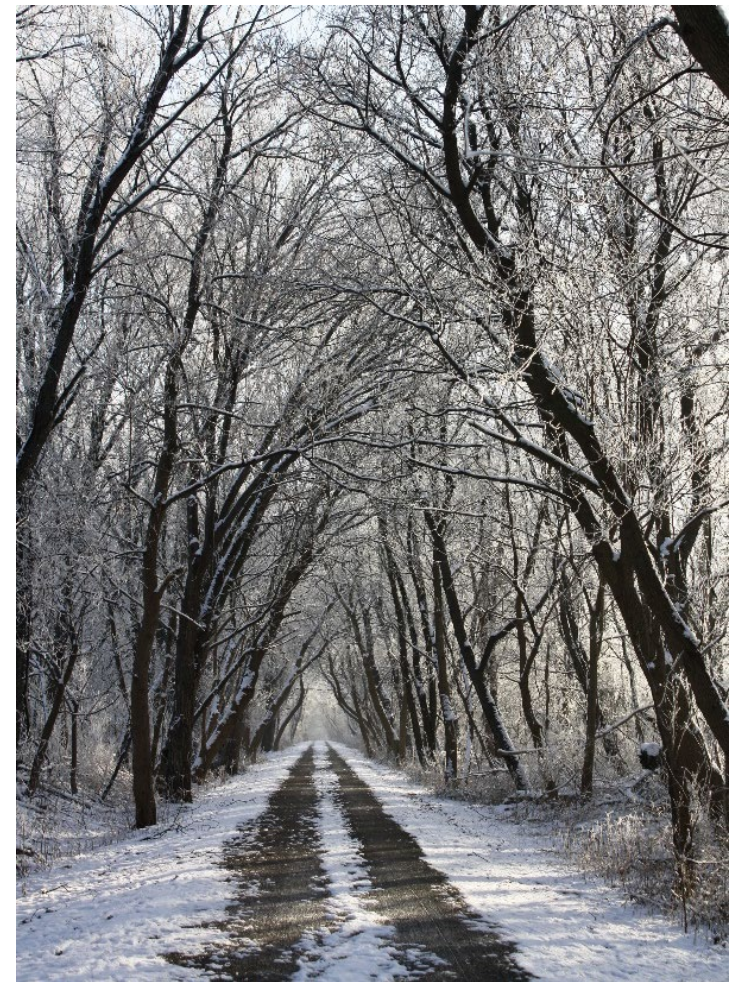
One of the goals of the public input survey was to uncover shared values around trails, parks, and open spaces. A question that asked respondents to select the top three (of nine) most important benefits of these spaces unveiled some majority common values. The top four selected benefits included:

1. Conservation of natural areas (57.8% of respondents selected this benefit in their top three)
2. Promotion of health (physical, social engagement, psychological), wellness, and fitness (52.29%)
3. Transportation/connectivity, options for commuters (e.g. bike lanes, trails) (45.87%)
4. Neighborhood/community open space for social interactions and play (creating a sense of community/bringing people together) (40.37%)

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

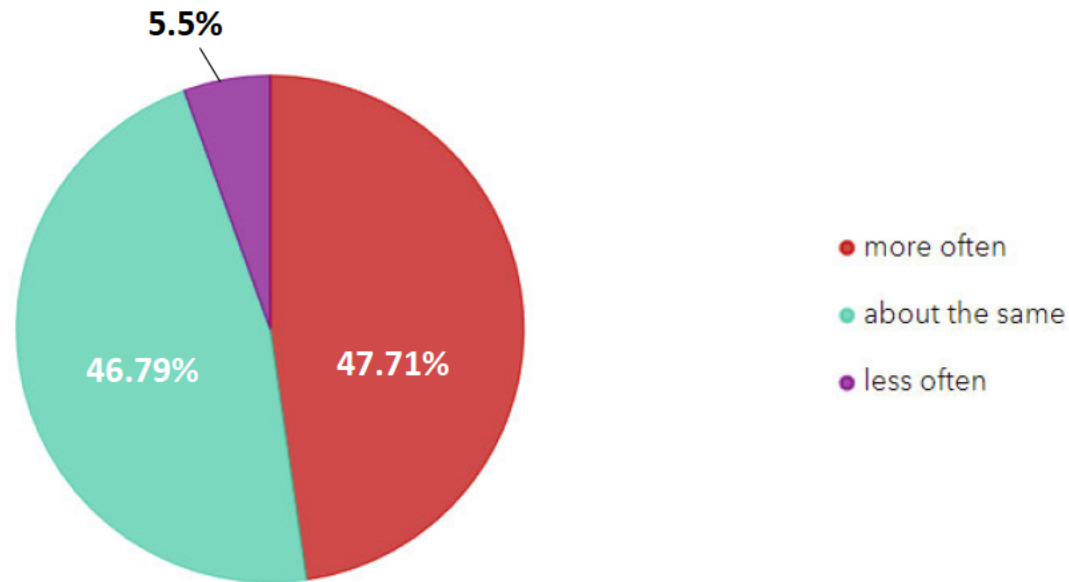
1. Don't know where parks/trails are located (42.2%)
2. Trails aren't open to or designated for the uses I'm interested in (28.44%)

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



Winter on the Lowell Parkway Trail, photo credit: Dixon Park District

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.



Pie chart showing survey respondents' answers to the question "During the COVID-19 pandemic, have you and your household members used trails, parks, and open spaces in the counties more often, less often, or about the same?" 47.71% responded more often, 46.79% responded about the same and 5.5% responded less often.

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 were:

1. OHV trails and on-road routes
2. Trails and recreation sites promotion (maps, etc.)
3. Connecting communities-trails-parks/open spaces, including connecting trails to the Rock River Bike Route
4. Greenspace conservation, habitat value
5. Equestrian campground with modern facilities

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 phone interviews with BHRC staff to identify strengths, opportunities, and needs for trails, parks, and open spaces in the counties. 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
Scott Stephens, Bike Ogle
Diane Bausman, Blackhawk Waterways
Mark Herman, Byron Forest Preserve District
Jeremy Englund, Dixon Chamber and Main Street
Teresa Smith, Dixon Park District
Erin Folk, Oregon Park District
Tony Troyer, Rock River Trail Horseman Council
Greg Farnham, Rock River Trail Initiative

Municipality Input:

Lee County:

Village of Ashton
City of Dixon
Village of Nelson
Village of Paw Paw




Ogle County:






Village of Adeline
City of Byron
Village of Mount Morris
City of Oregon
Village of Polo
City of Rochelle
Village of Stillman Valley







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.


Lee & Ogle Counties 2022 Greenways & Trails Initiatives

County municipality	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>
Lee & Ogle	Improvements on the Joe Stengel Trail	 Improvements	\$-\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (86%)
Lee Dixon	Enhancement of the Meadows Trail in Dixon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work funded through an IDNR trails program grant to include: overlook along the Rock River, paving a section to mitigate erosion, installation of educational kiosks, installation of emergency call boxes, installation of WiFi in the Meadows ComEd grant to fund construction of a prairie viewing platform along the trail 	 Improvements	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (86%)
Lee Dixon	Enhancement of Page Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BUILD grant (phase 4) to fund: addition of new trails and pathways, improvements to Page Drive, parking improvements, enhancements to boat docks, improvements to baseball field 	 Improvements	\$\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation facilities (86%)

Lee	Construction of the Sauk Valley Trail from Page Park to the Whiteside County line	 New Construction  Planning	\$\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%) Construct trails or designate routes that create linkages between cities and villages (94%) Focus on creating walking/biking trails separate and distinct from roadways (87%) Construct new ADA-accessible trails for users of all abilities (77%)
Ogle	Completion of bike trails designation in Lowden-Miller State Forest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with IDNR to keep up to date on project status 	 New Construction	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct purpose-built mountain bike trails (50%) Focus on creating walking/biking trails separate and distinct from roadways (87%)
Ogle	Development of a rail trail between Byron and Stillman Valley for walking, bicycling, and potentially snowmobiling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Rails-to-Trails Conservancy for support and resources for trail planning and project implementation 	 New Construction	\$\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%) Construct trails or designate routes that create linkages between cities and villages (94%) Focus on creating walking/biking trails separate and distinct from roadways (87%) Construct new ADA-accessible trails for users of all abilities (77%)
Lee Ashton	Development of a large (40 acre) park in the Village of Ashton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May include a dog park and a walking/bicycling path 	 New Construction	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)

Lee Dixon	<p>Construction of a pedestrian bridge across old railroad pillars on the Rock River</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded through phase 4 of the BUILD grant 	 New Construction	\$\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)
Ogle Oregon	Construction of a trail from IL 64 in Oregon to Lowden State Park	 New Construction	\$\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%) Focus on creating walking/biking trails separate and distinct from roadways (87%) Construct new ADA-accessible trails for users of all abilities (77%)
Lee & Ogle	Promotion of the Rock River Trail and various uses at local, county, and regional scales	 Communications/Promotion	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in advertising outdoor recreation opportunities in the county (74%)
Lee & Ogle	<p>Promotion of Lee and Ogle counties' parks, trails, and open spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies may include an app, consolidated map, and featuring parks and trails on social media 	 Communications/Promotion	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in advertising outdoor recreation opportunities in the county (74%)
Lee & Ogle	<p>Trail wayfinding signage improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northwest Illinois Trails Wayfinding Sign Guide Template to be used and adopted as the signage standard for trails in the counties Joe Stengel Sign Plan to be implemented in collaboration with snowmobile club 	 Communications/Promotion	\$-\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement cohesive wayfinding trail signage (84%)
Lee & Ogle	Work with the Rock River Trail Initiative Council to coordinate the development and implementation of a paddling trail information system with signs, route maps, and hazard warning covering all put-in and take-out points on the Rock River	 Communications/Promotion	\$-\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement cohesive wayfinding trail signage (84%)

Ogle Stillman Valley	Acquisition of additional park land in Stillman Valley	 Planning	\$-\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve greenspace and add to tree canopy (78%) • Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)
Lee & Ogle	Seek out available land or opportunities to partner with existing parks and open spaces to bring an equestrian campground with modern facilities to the area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies should include incentives to encourage private development and/or management of an equestrian campground 	 Planning	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%)
Lee & Ogle	Identification of suitable property and incentivize private development of an OHV park	 Planning	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support legislative changes that would open opportunities for OHV trails/routes (53%)
Lee & Ogle	Seek out additional multi-use rails-to-trails opportunities with winter snowmobile use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sections of publicly-owned abandoned rail lines may be the strongest option 	 Planning	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents' needs and priorities (76%) • Construct trails or designate routes that create linkages between cities and villages (94%) • Focus on creating walking/biking trails separate and distinct from roadways (87%) • Construct new ADA-accessible trails for users of all abilities (77%)

Lee	<p>Development of an OHV ordinance for review by Lee County that would establish agreed-upon routes using county, township, and municipal roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reconciliation across different municipal OHV ordinances will be necessary• Ordinance to meet all state and local legal requirements	 Legislative/Policy	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support legislative changes that would open opportunities for OHV trails/routes (53%)
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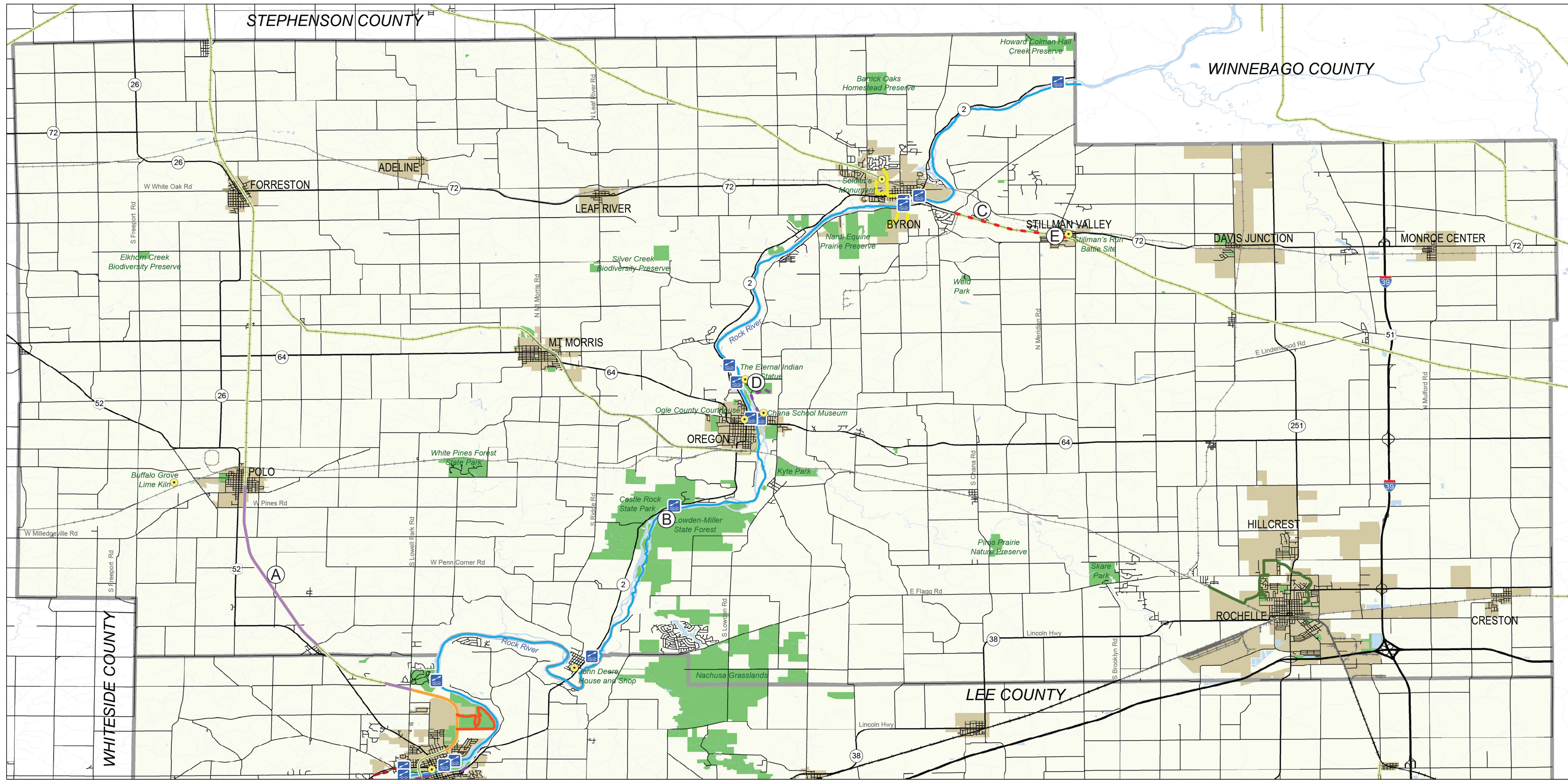


Lowell Park, photo credit: Dixon Park District

2022 Greenways & Trails Maps

The following set of maps show existing, planned, and proposed trail locations along with parks, open spaces, and heritage sites. Supplemental maps with backroad bicycle routes are also included to show how the routes interface 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.

Ogle County Greenways & Trails 2022



- (A) Joe Stengel Trail Improvements
- (B) Completion of bike trails designation in Lowden-Miller State Forest
 - IDNR project to designate existing routes for bike use
- (C) Feasibility study for a Byron/Stillman Valley rail trail
- (D) Construction of planned trail from IL 64 in Oregon to Lowden State Park
- (E) Acquisition of additional park land (Stillman Valley)
 - ★ Promotion of the Rock River Trail and its various uses at local, county, and regional scales
 - ★ Promotion of Lee and Ogle counties' trails, parks, and open spaces
 - Strategies may include developing an app, publishing a consolidated map, or featuring parks and trails on social media

- ★ Trail wayfinding signage improvements
 - Northwest Illinois Trails Wayfinding Sign Guide to be used and adopted as the standard template for trails in the counties
 - Joe Stengel Sign Plan to be implemented in collaboration with the snowmobile club
- ★ Development and implementation of a paddling trail information system with signs, route maps, and hazard warning covering all put-in and take-out points on the Rock River
- ★ Seek out opportunities to incentivize private development of an equestrian campground with modern facilities in Lee or Ogle County
- ★ Identify suitable property and incentivize private development of an OHV park
- ★ Seek out additional multi-use rails-to-trails opportunities
 - prioritize sections of publicly-owned abandoned rails lines

- Existing**
- Parks & Public Open Spaces
 - Heritage Sites
 - Kayak/Canoe Launch Points
 - Railroad
 - Historic Rail Lines
 - Don Hamer Path
 - Four Sisters Path
 - Joe Stengel Trail*
 - Rock River Water Trail

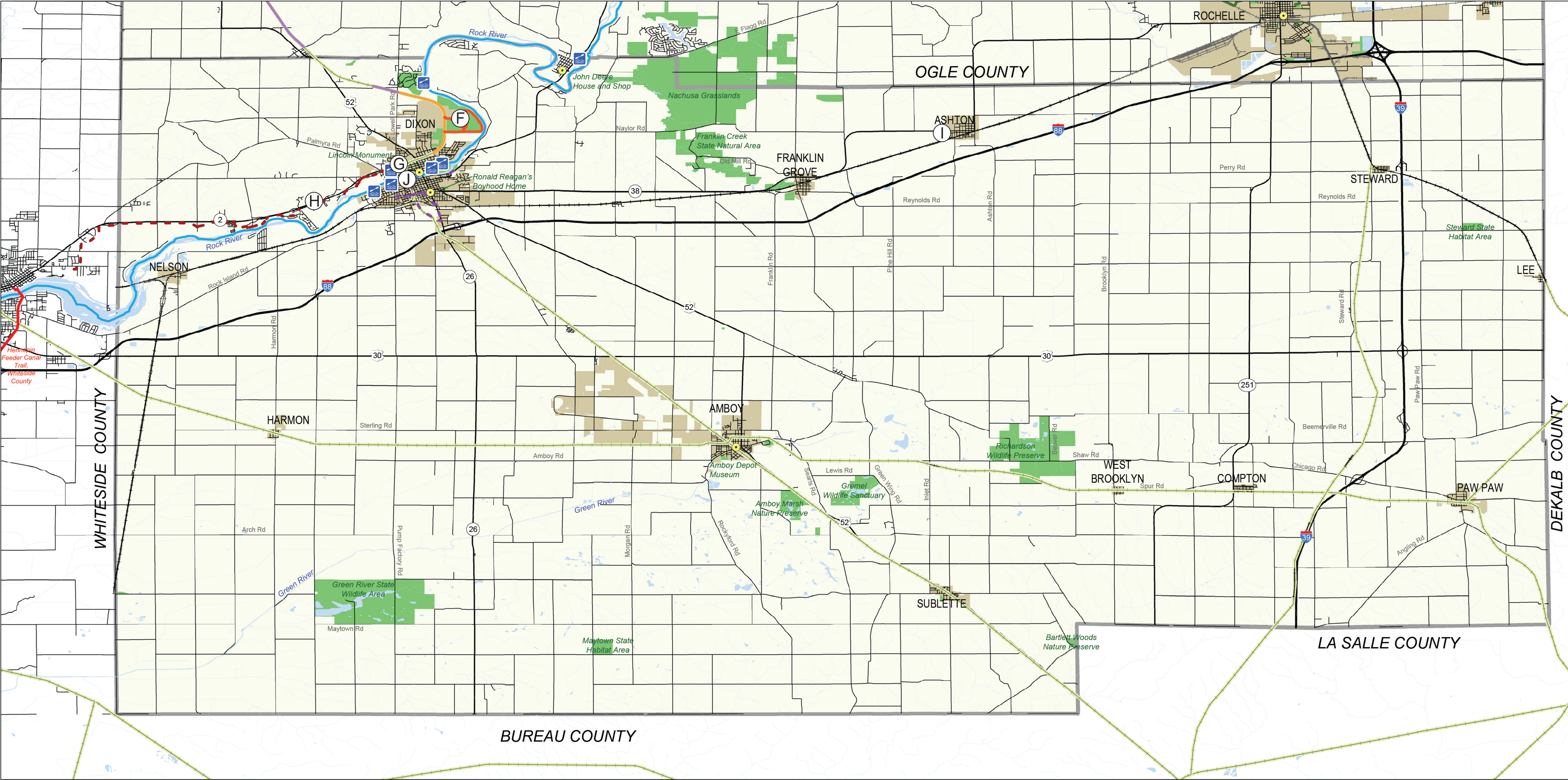
*includes snowmobile use

- Proposed/Planned**
- Byron/Stillman Valley Trail, Concept
 - Oregon/Lowden State Park Trail, Planned



Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from Ogle County GIS, USGS, National Park Service, and Illinois Department of Transportation

Lee County Greenways & Trails 2022



- F Enhancement of the Meadows Trail (Dixon)**
 - Work funded through an IDNR trails program grant to include: construction of an overlook along the Rock River, paving a section of trail for erosion mitigation, installation of emergency call boxes, and installation of WiFi in the Meadows
 - ComEd grant to fund construction of a prairie viewing platform along the trail
- G Enhancement of Page Park (Dixon)**
 - Phase 4 of the BUILD grant to fund: addition of new trails and pathways, improvements to Page Drive, parking improvements, enhancements to boat docks, and improvements to the baseball field
- H Continued planning and implementation of the Sauk Valley Trail from Page Park to the Whiteside County line**
- I Development of a 40 acre park (Ashton)**
 - Amenities may include a dog park and walking/bicycling paths
- J Construction of a pedestrian bridge across the Rock River (Dixon)**
 - Funded as part of phase 4 of the BUILD grant
- * Development of an OHV ordinance for review by Lee County**
 - Ordinance would establish agreed-upon routes using county, township, and municipal roads
 - Creation of ordinance to address reconciliation across different municipal OHV ordinances
 - Ordinance to meet all state and local legal requirements

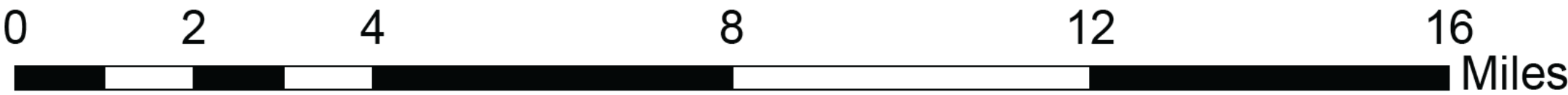
Existing

- Parks & Public Open Spaces
- Heritage Sites
- Kayak/Canoe Launch Points
- Railroad
- Historic Rail Lines
- Lowell Parkway Trail
- Meadows Trail

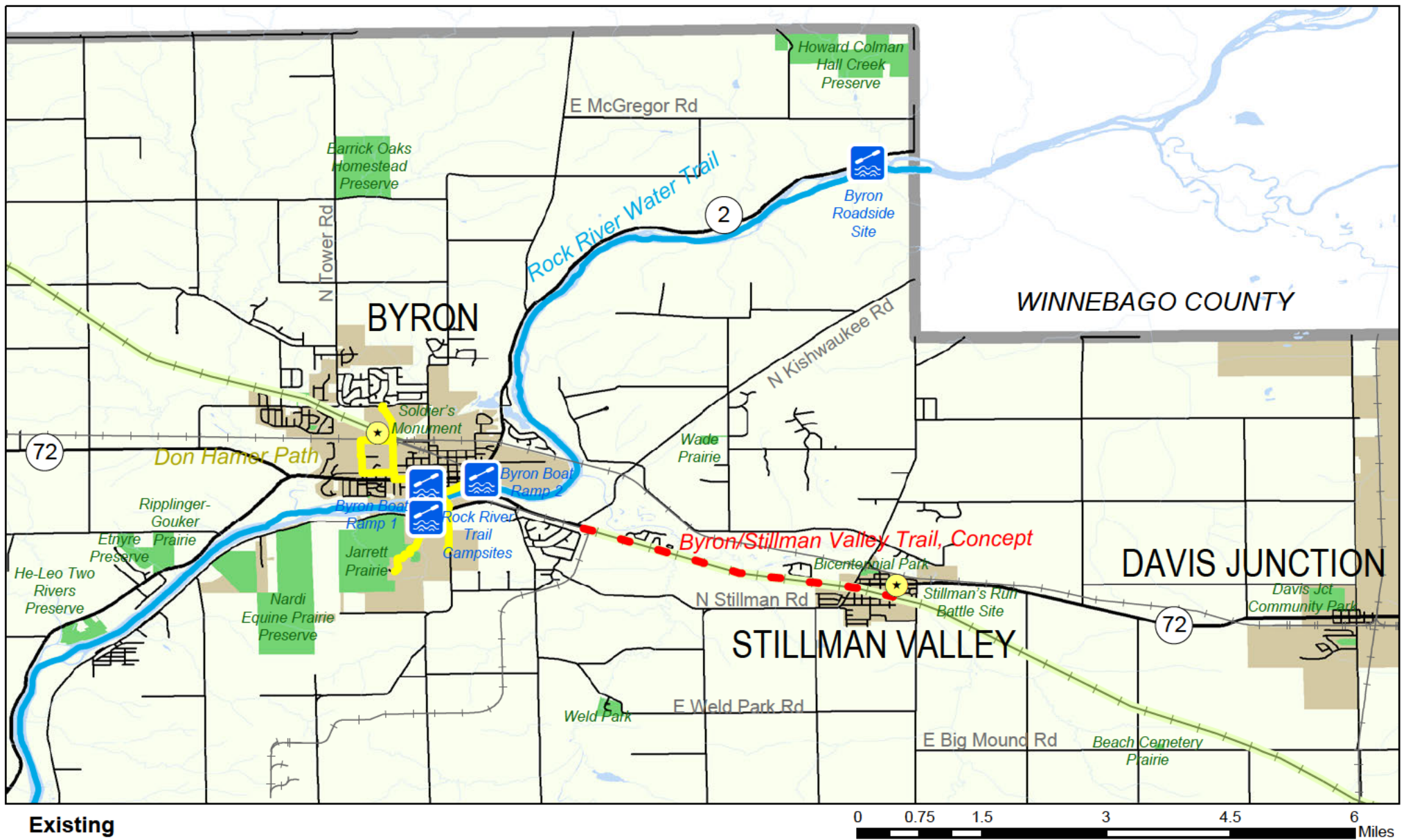
Proposed/Planned

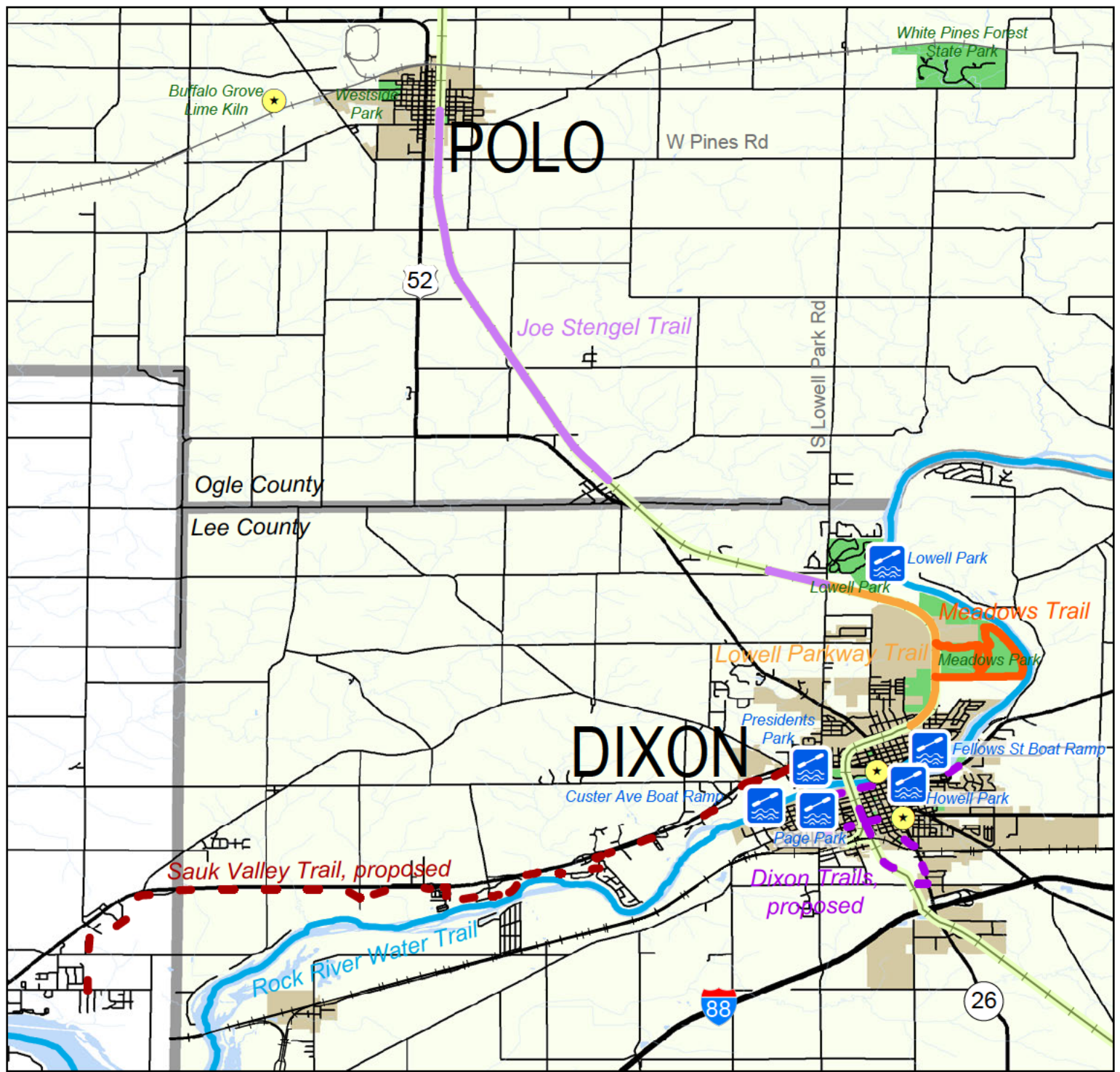
- Joe Stengel Trail*
- Rock River Water Trail
- Dixon Trails
- Sauk Valley Trail

*includes snowmobile use



Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from Lee County GIS, USGS, National Park Service, and Illinois Department of Transportation
Best printed at 24 x 36 in





Lee and Ogle Counties Greenways & Trails 2022

Existing

- Parks & Public Open Spaces
- Heritage Sites
- Railroad
- Historic Rail Lines
- Kayak/Canoe Launch Points
- Rock River Water Trail
- Lowell Parkway Trail

- Meadows Trail
- Joe Stengel Trail*

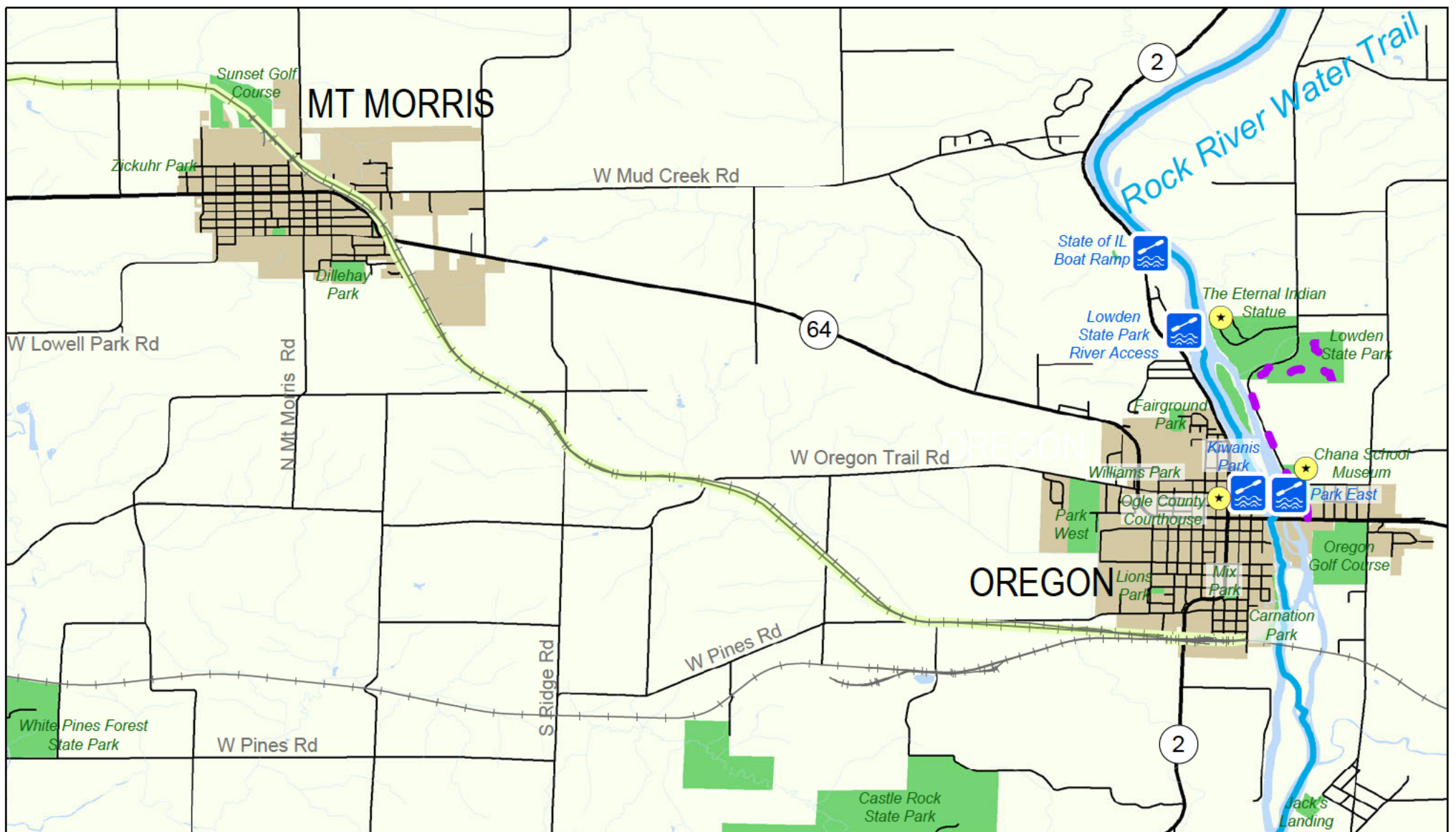
Proposed/Planned

- Sauk Valley Trail
- Dixon Trails

*includes snowmobile use



Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from Lee County GIS, Ogle County GIS, USGS, National Park Service, and Illinois Department of Transportation



Existing

- Parks & Public Open Spaces
- Heritage Sites
- Railroad
- Historic Rail Lines
- Kayak/Canoe Launch Points
- Rock River Water Trail

Planned

- Oregon/Lowden State Park Trail, Planned

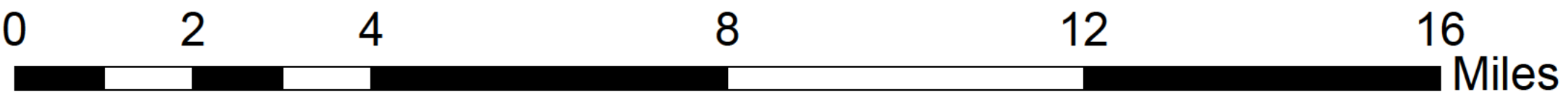
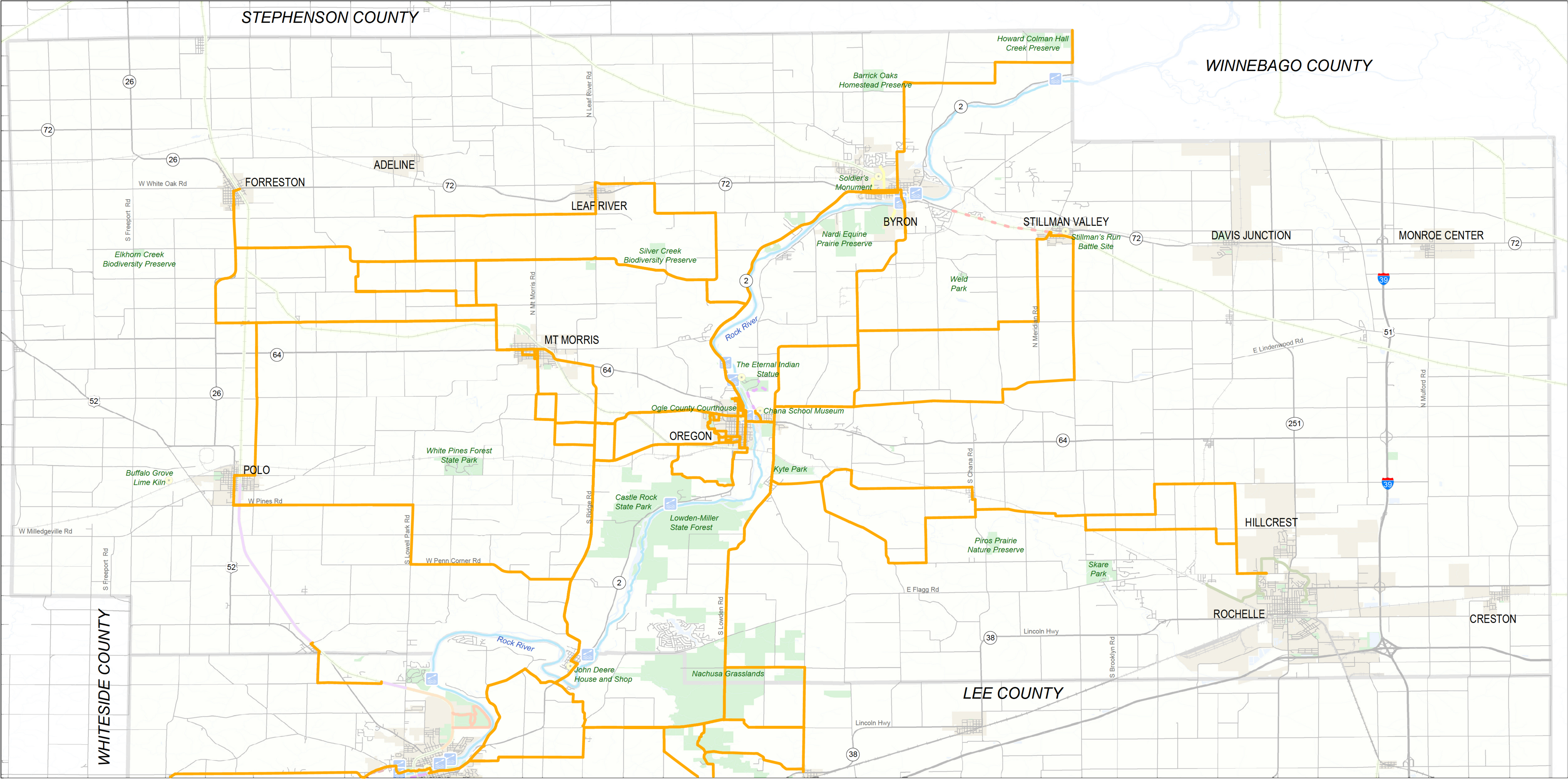
Lee and Ogle Counties Greenways & Trails 2022

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles



Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from Ogle County GIS, USGS, National Park Service, and Illinois Department of Transportation

Ogle County Backroads Bicycle Routes



- Backroads Bicycle Routes:**
- Bike Ogle Bison - Reagan - John Deere Loop Route
 - Bike Ogle Byron - Nuclear Loop Route
 - Bike Ogle Forreston - Mt Morris Loop Route
 - Bike Ogle Gravel, Chip, Hill, and Rock River Loop Route
 - Bike Ogle Nachusa Bison - John Deere Loop Route
 - Bike Ogle Paynes Point - Stillman Loop Route
 - Bike Ogle Polo - Mt Morris Loop Route
 - Bike Ogle Rochelle - Chana Loop Route
 - Bike Ogle Rock River - West Grove - Mt Morris Loop Route
 - Oregon Community Bike Path and Park East
 - Lincoln Way Inn Tour Loop Route
 - Rock River Trail Bike Route
 - Joe Stengel Connector

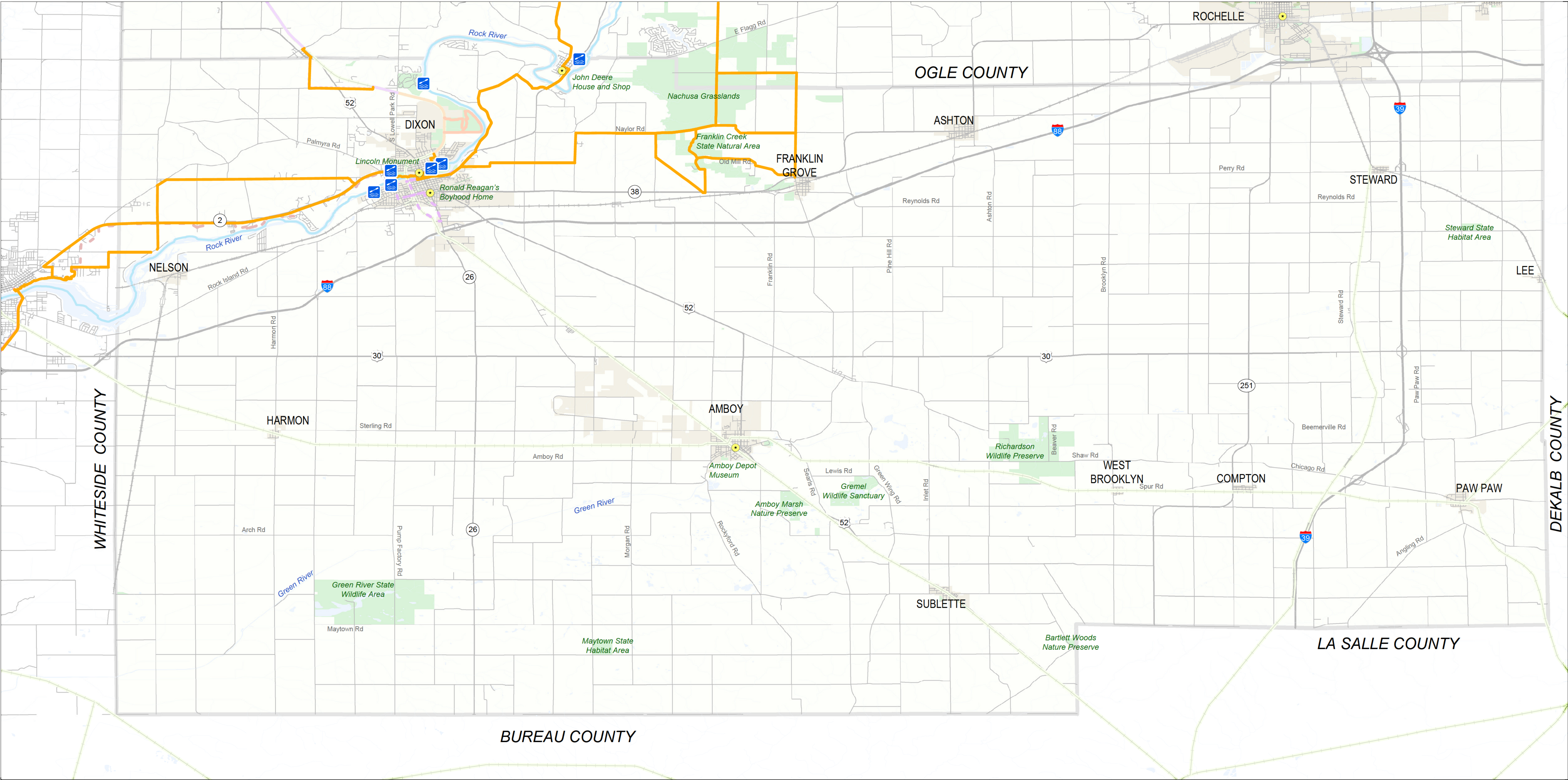
Existing		Proposed/Planned	
	Parks & Public Open Spaces		Byron/Stillman Valley Trail, Concept
	Heritage Sites		Oregon/Lowden State Park Trail, Planned
	Kayak/Canoe Launch Points		
	Railroad		
	Historic Rail Lines		
	Don Hamer Path		
	Four Sisters Path		
	Joe Stengel Trail*		
	Rock River Water Trail		

* includes snowmobile use



Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from Ogle County GIS, USGS, National Park Service, and Illinois Department of Transportation
Best printed at 24 x 36 in

Lee County Backroads Bicycle Routes



- Backroads Bicycle Routes:**
- Bike Ogle Bison - Reagan - John Deere Loop Route
 - Dixon Bike Route
 - Lincoln Way Inn Tour Loop Route
 - Rock River Trail Bike Route
 - Joe Stengel Connector

- Existing**
- Parks & Public Open Spaces
 - Heritage Sites
 - Kayak/Canoe Launch Points
 - Railroad
 - Historic Rail Lines
 - Lowell Parkway Trail
 - Meadows Trail
 - Joe Stengel Trail*
 - Rock River Water Trail
- Proposed/Planned**
- Dixon Trails
 - Sauk Valley Trail

* includes snowmobile use



Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from Lee County GIS, USGS, National Park Service, and Illinois Department of Transportation
Best printed at 24 x 36 in

Planning and Implementation Resources

Planning & Funding Resources	Adminstrating org.	Funding available & match requirements	Eligible project categories
<u>Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) Funds</u>	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
<u>Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)</u>	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.
<u>Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) Program</u>	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
<u>The Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Rural Economic Development Toolkit</u>	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
<u>Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program</u>	National Park Service	This is a technical assistance and planning program, no funds are provided	Support for project planning and community engagement
<u>Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)</u>	IDOT	Up to \$2,000,000; check program website for details on match requirements	Construction of bike/ped facilities, turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas

<u>Illinois Trails Grant Programs</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike Path Program • Local Government Snowmobile Program • Snowmobile Trail Establishment Fund (STEF) Program • Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program • Federal Recreation Trails Program (RTP) 	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>
<u>Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Grant</u>	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
<u>Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF/LAWCON) Grant</u>	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
<u>Boat Access Area Development (BAAD) Grant</u>	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
<u>T.R.A.I.L.S. (Trail development, Responsible riding, Access, Initiatives, Lobbying, Safety) Grant</u>	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
<u>Snow PASS grant</u>	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

<u>Rails-to-Trails Trails Grants Program</u>	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	Varies	<p>Various trail and trail amenity construction grants are available annually</p> <p>Sign up for the <u>Trail Expert Network</u> to keep informed about upcoming opportunities</p>
<u>PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program</u>	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
<u>The Trail Fund</u>	American Trails	<p>\$2,000 to \$15,000</p> <p>20% local match required</p>	<p>New annual grant opportunity starting in 2022</p> <p>Funding priorities are: 1) trail maintenance backlog on state and local lands, 2) research, 3) stewardship training</p>



Kayaking on the Rock River, photo credit: Blackhawk Waterways

Appendix A. Priority Conservation Areas

The following priority conservation areas maps were 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 Database²⁶, the Prairie State Conservation Coalition's protected lands database²⁷, 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.²⁸ 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 boarder. 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

²⁶ U.S. Geological Survey. Protected Areas. 7 March 2022. <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/gap-analysis-project/science/protected-areas>

²⁷ Prairie State Conservation Coalition. I-View. 7 March 2022. <https://www.prairiestateconservation.org/pssc/iview/>

²⁸ 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>

- where conservation is motivated by an agreed-upon conservation purpose and set of objectives²⁹

Distance from Biologically Significant Streams (*weighted 0.3*)

This criterion comes from IDNR's Biological Stream Ratings database.³⁰ 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 Set³¹ 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.

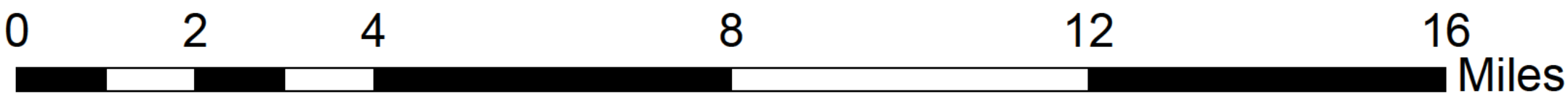
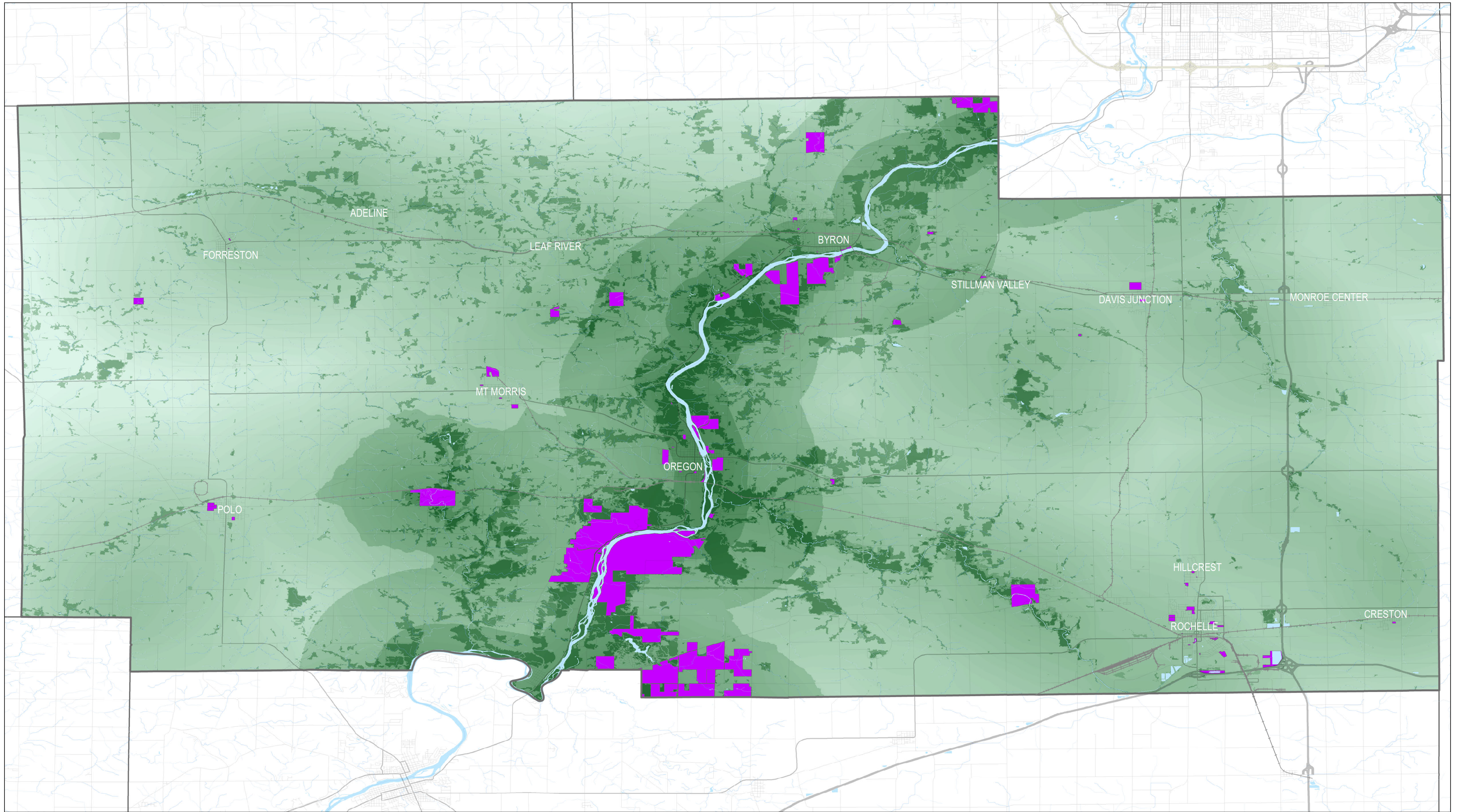
The second set of maps highlight corridors and islands of concentrated lands that ranked high for conservation value. These areas may overlap with natural features such as rivers or floodplains that provide high-value habitat. Focusing on larger grouped areas for conservation planning may help with habitat 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 result in more inclusive and robust output maps. Ground-truthing the output maps and gathering more input from local stakeholders would also help improve future models.

²⁹ Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Conservation Opportunity Areas. 7 March 2022. <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IWAP/pages/conservationopportunityareas.aspx>

³⁰ Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Biological Stream Ratings. 7 March 2022. <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/BiologicalStreamratings/pages/default.aspx>

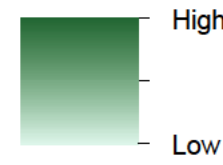
³¹ Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium. NLCD 2011 Land Cover (CONUS). 7 March 2022. <https://www.mrlc.gov/data/nlcd-2011-land-cover-conus>



Parks & Open Space



Conservation Value



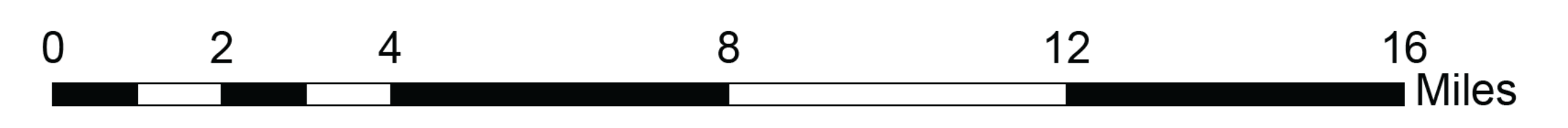
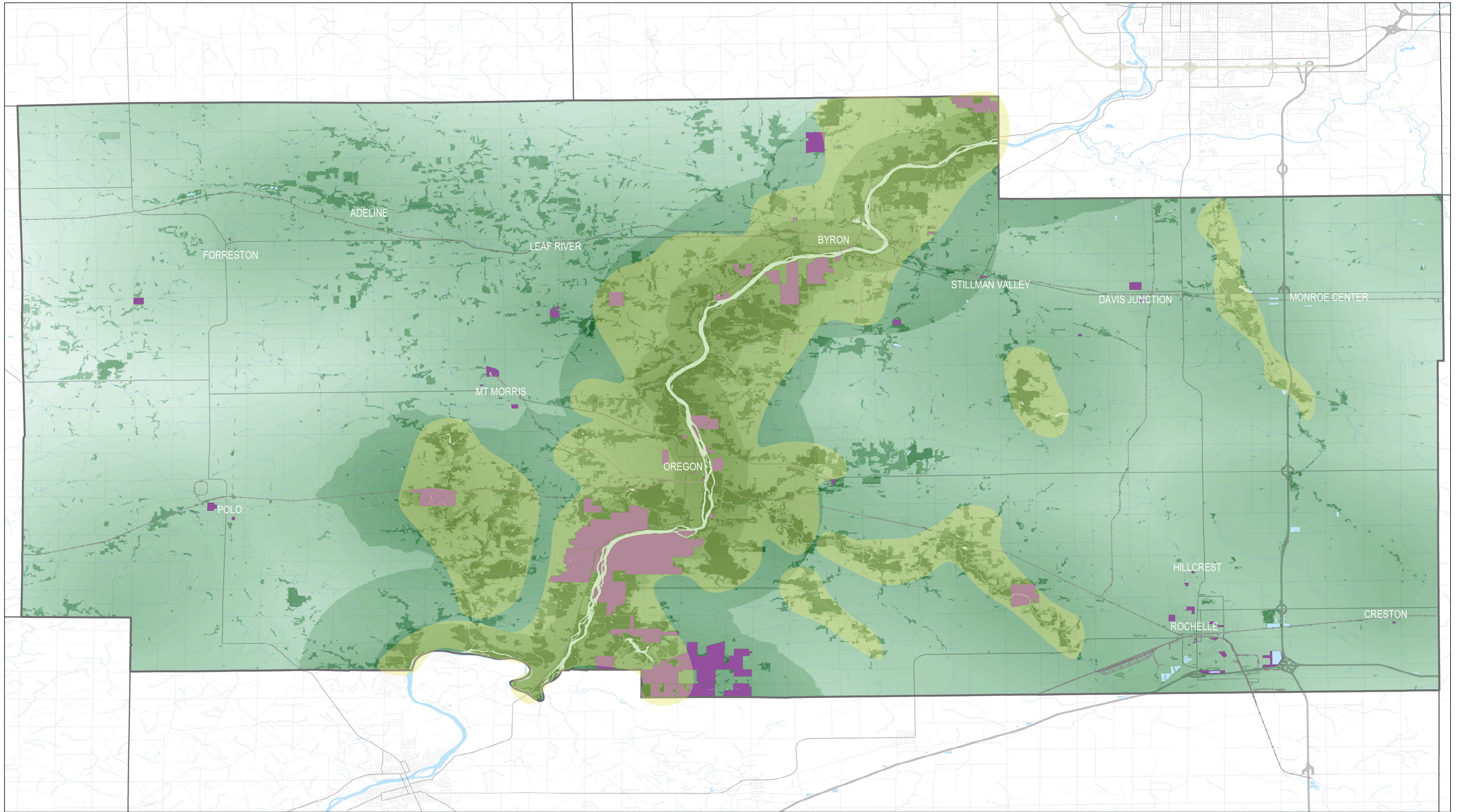
Ogle County

Priority Conservation Areas

2022



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



Parks & Open Space

High Value Islands & Corridors

Conservation Value

High

Low

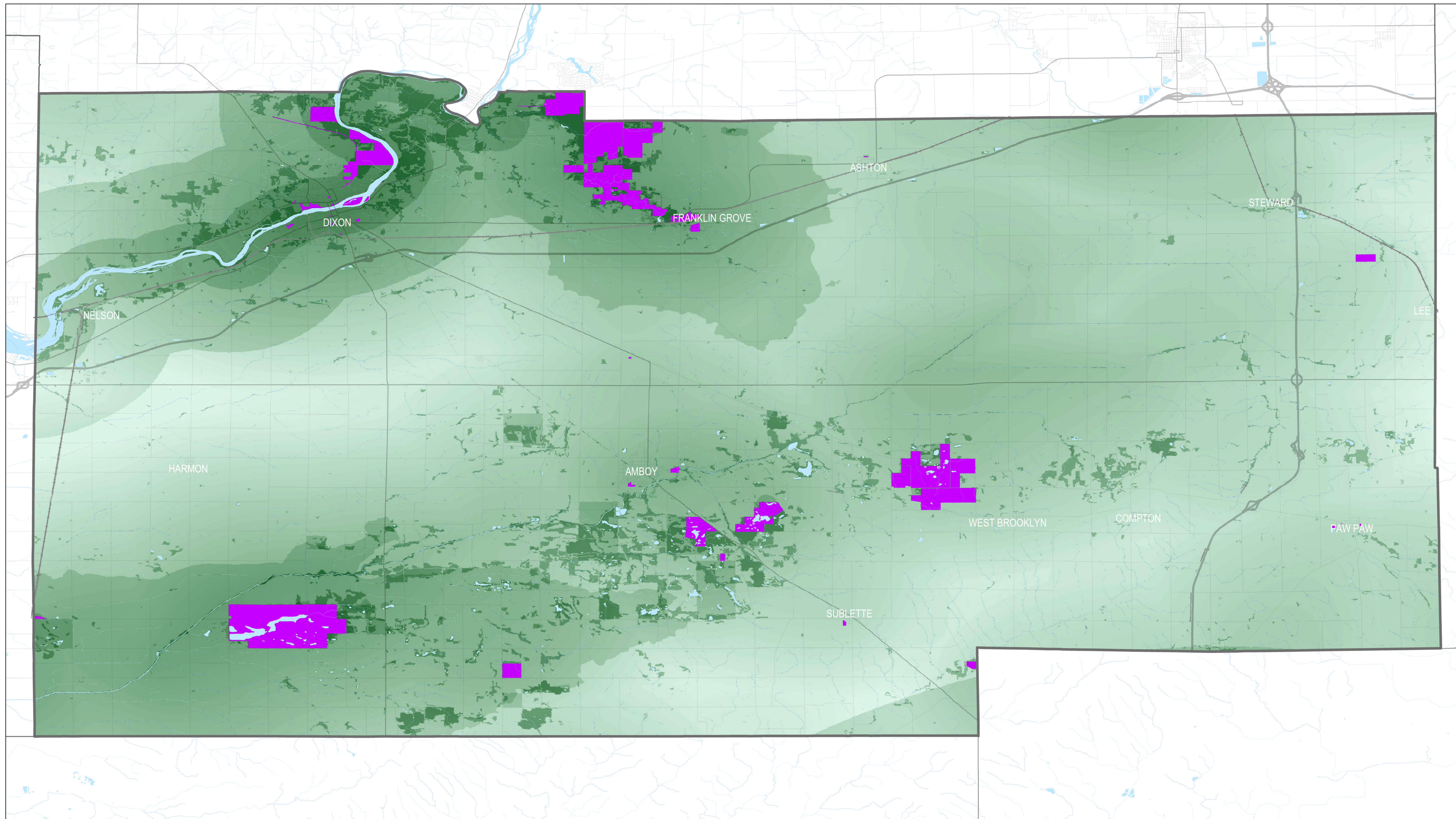
Ogle County

Priority Conservation Areas

2022



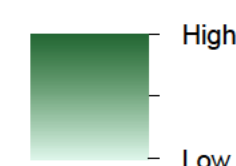
Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from The Nature Conservancy, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, USGS, and Illinois Department of Transportation
Best printed at 24 x 36 in



Parks & Open Space



Conservation Value



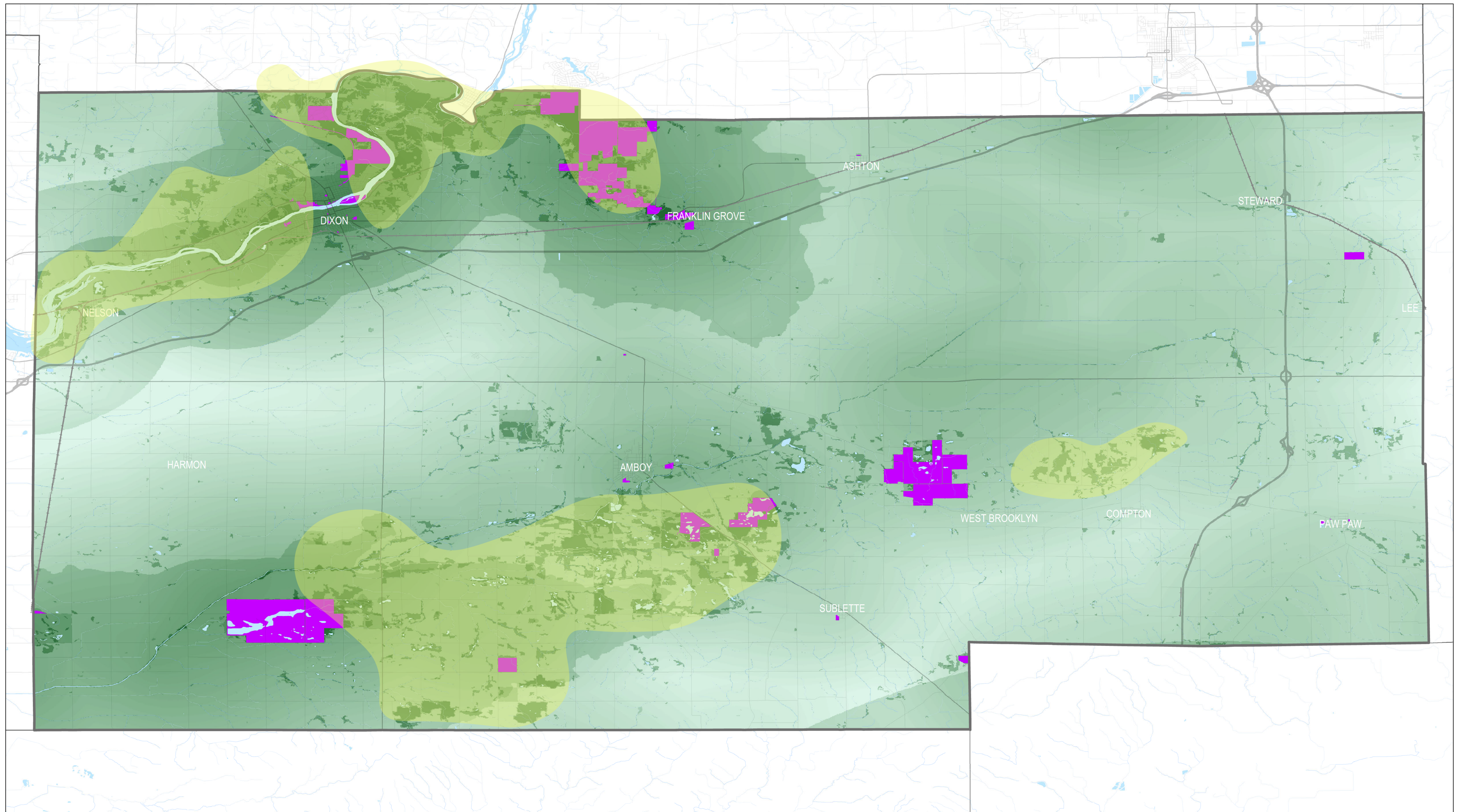
Lee County

Priority Conservation Areas

2022



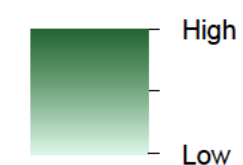
Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from The Nature Conservancy, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, USGS, and Illinois Department of Transportation
Best printed at 24 x 36 in



Parks & Open Space



Conservation Value



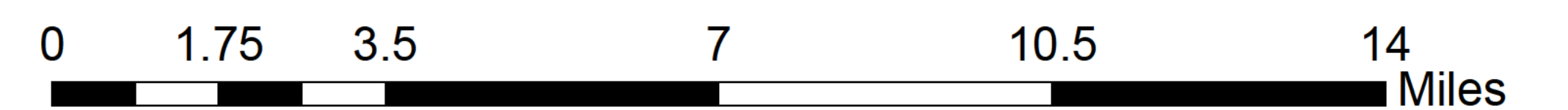
High Value Islands & Corridors



Lee County

Priority Conservation Areas

2022



Produced by Regional Planner Emily Lauderdale with data from The Nature Conservancy, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, USGS, 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

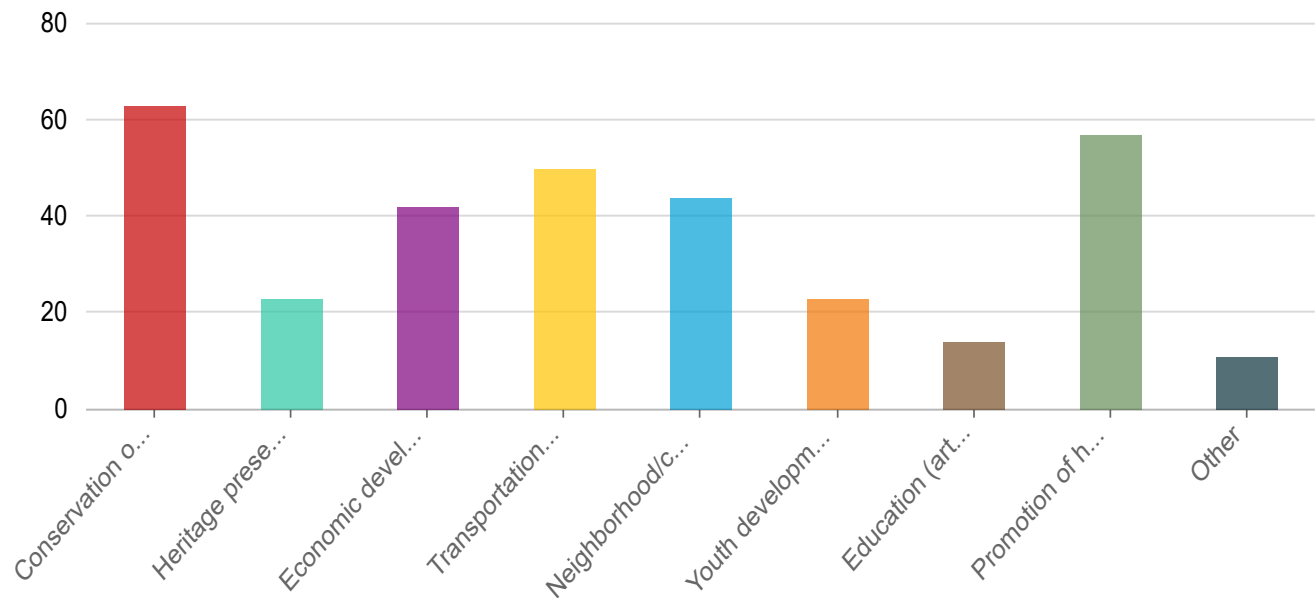
[Rock River Trail & Corridor Management Report – Rock River Water Trail Inventory, Analysis and Plan](#)



Morning fog on Lowell Parkway Trail, photo credit: Dixon Park District

Lee & Ogle Counties Greenways & Trails Survey

Trails, parks, and open spaces offer many benefits. Please select the top THREE...



Percentage

age

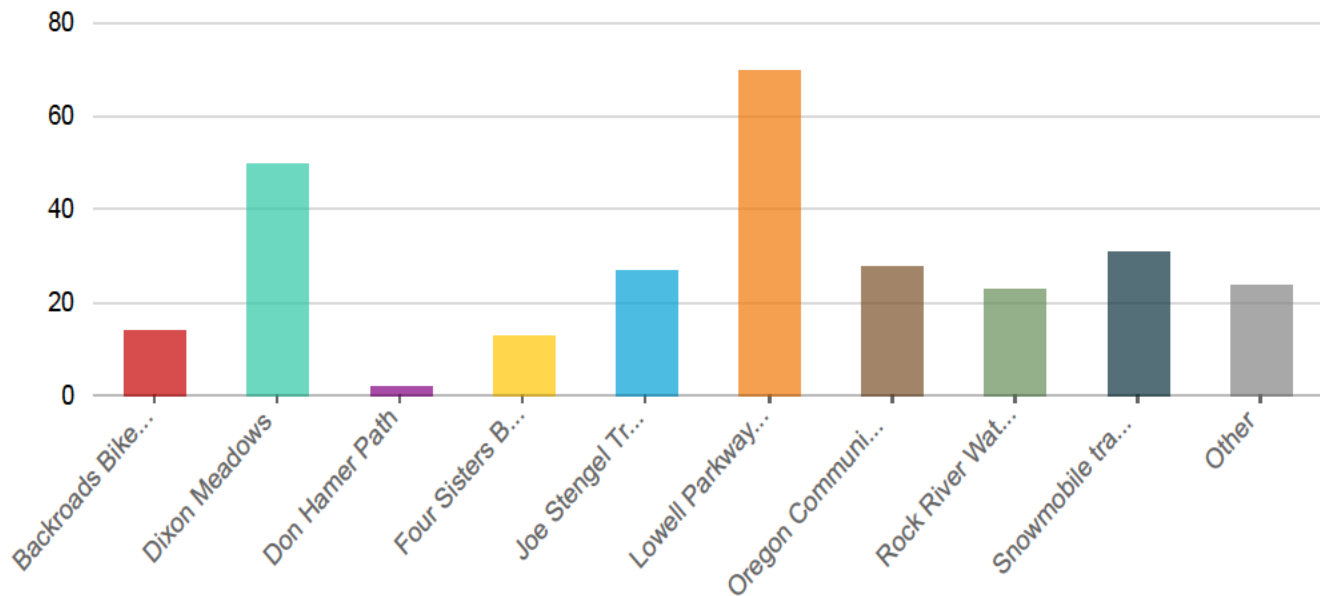
Conservation of natural areas	63	57.8%
Heritage preservation	23	21.1%
Economic development (helping the community attract and retain residents and businesses, increase property values, and be more resilient)	42	38.53%
Transportation/connectivity, options for commuters (e.g. bike lanes, trails)	50	45.87%
Neighborhood/community open space for social interactions and play (creating a sense of community/bringing people together)	44	40.37%
Youth development	23	21.1%
Education (arts, culture, science, etc.)	14	12.84%

Promotion of health (physical, social engagement, psychological), wellness, and fitness	57	52.29%
---	----	--------

Other	11	10.09%
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Answered: 109 Skipped: 0

Please check ALL of the trails in Ogle and Lee Counties that you or members of your...



Percentage

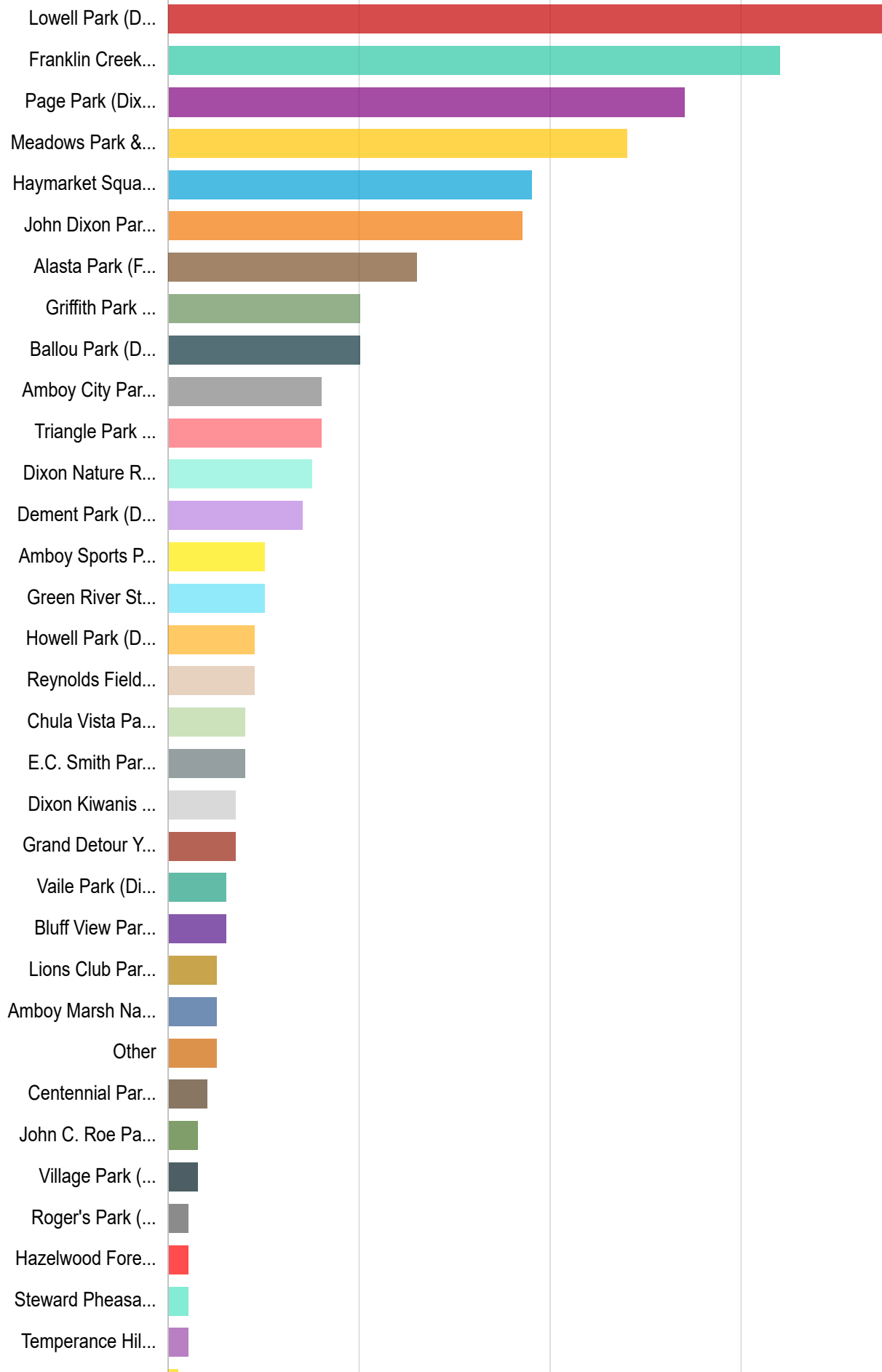
age

Backroads Bike Routes	14	12.84%
Dixon Meadows	50	45.87%
Don Hamer Path	2	1.83%
Four Sisters Bike Path (Rochelle)	13	11.93%
Joe Stengel Trail	27	24.77%
Lowell Parkway Recreational Trail	70	64.22%
Oregon Community Bike Path (Park East)	28	25.69%
Rock River Water Trail	23	21.1%

Snowmobile trails in Lee and Ogle Counties	31	28.44%
Other	24	22.02%

Answered: 103 Skipped: 6

Please check ALL of the parks and open spaces in Lee County that you or members ...



- Veterans Park ...
- Bartlett Woods...
- Gremel Wildlif...
- Pinecliff Natu...
- Grace Johnston...
- Earl and Olive...
- Folev Sand Pra

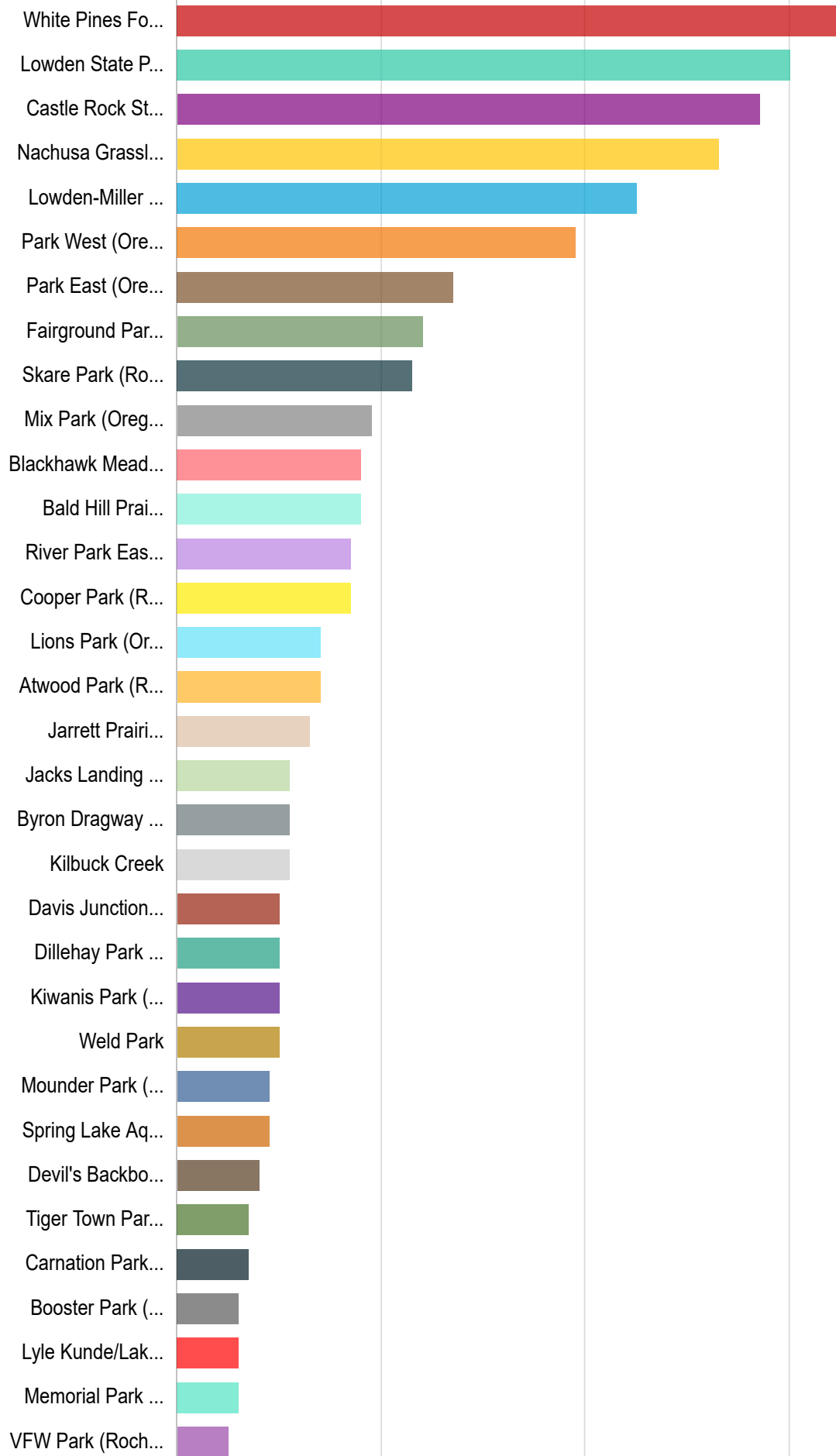
Percentage		age
Lowell Park (Dixon)	75	68.81%
Franklin Creek State Natural Area	64	58.72%
Page Park (Dixon)	54	49.54%
Meadows Park & Park 4 Paws Dog Park (Dixon)	48	44.04%
Haymarket Square (Dixon)	38	34.86%
John Dixon Park (Dixon)	37	33.94%
Alasta Park (Franklin Grove)	26	23.85%
Griffith Park (Ashton)	20	18.35%
Ballou Park (Dixon)	20	18.35%
Amboy City Park	16	14.68%
Triangle Park (Dixon)	16	14.68%
Dixon Nature Reserve	15	13.76%
Dement Park (Dixon)	14	12.84%
Amboy Sports Park	10	9.17%

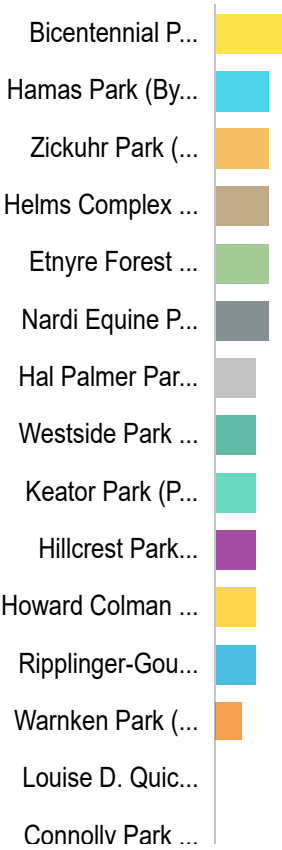
Green River State Wildlife Area	10	9.17%
Howell Park (Dixon)	9	8.26%
Reynolds Field (Dixon)	9	8.26%
Chula Vista Park (Dixon)	8	7.34%
E.C. Smith Park (Dixon)	8	7.34%
Dixon Kiwanis Park	7	6.42%
Grand Detour Yellow Birch Site	7	6.42%
Vaile Park (Dixon)	6	5.5%
Bluff View Park (Dixon)	6	5.5%
Lions Club Park (Paw Paw)	5	4.59%
Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve	5	4.59%
Other	5	4.59%
Centennial Park (Sublette)	4	3.67%
John C. Roe Park (Dixon)	3	2.75%
Village Park (Seward)	3	2.75%
Roger's Park (Paw Paw)	2	1.83%
Hazelwood Forest Nature Preserve	2	1.83%
Steward Pheasant Habitat Area	2	1.83%
Temperance Hill Cemetery Prairie	2	1.83%
Veterans Park (Paw Paw)	1	0.92%
Bartlett Woods Nature Preserve	1	0.92%
Gremel Wildlife Sanctuary	1	0.92%
Pinecliff Natural Heritage Landmark	1	0.92%

Grace Johnston Park (Dixon)	0	0%
Earl and Olive Bothe Prairie	0	0%
Foley Sand Prairie	0	0%
Maytown Pheasant Habitat Area	0	0%
Quiet Acres Prairie	0	0%

Answered: 97 Skipped: 12

Check ALL of the parks and open spaces in Ogle County that you or members of you...





Percentage

age

White Pines Forest State Park	65	59.63%
Lowden State Park	60	55.05%
Castle Rock State Park	57	52.29%
Nachusa Grasslands	53	48.62%
Lowden-Miller State Forest	45	41.28%
Park West (Oregon)	39	35.78%
Park East (Oregon)	27	24.77%
Fairground Park (Oregon)	24	22.02%
Skare Park (Rochelle)	23	21.1%

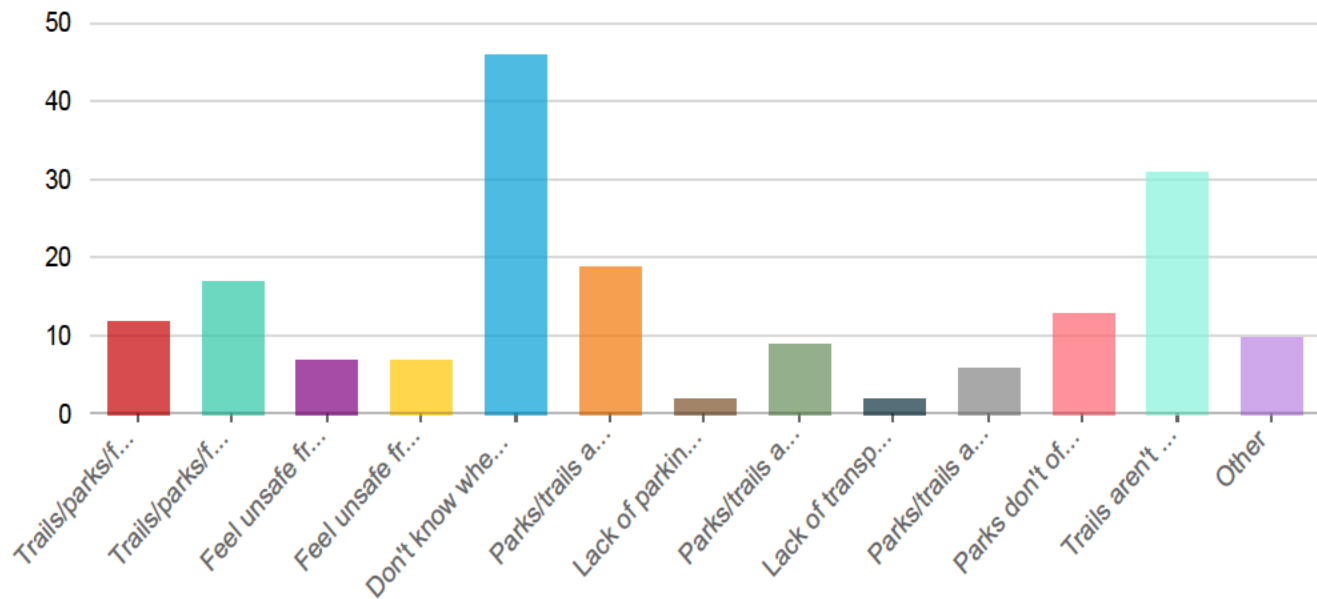
Mix Park (Oregon)	19	17.43%
Blackhawk Meadow Park (Byron)	18	16.51%
Bald Hill Prairie Preserve	18	16.51%
River Park East (Byron)	17	15.6%
Cooper Park (Rochelle)	17	15.6%
Lions Park (Oregon)	14	12.84%
Atwood Park (Rochelle)	14	12.84%
Jarrett Prairie Preserve	13	11.93%
Jacks Landing (Oregon)	11	10.09%
Byron Dragway Prairie	11	10.09%
Kilbuck Creek	11	10.09%
Davis Junction Community Park	10	9.17%
Dillehay Park (Mt Morris)	10	9.17%
Kiwanis Park (Oregon)	10	9.17%
Weld Park	10	9.17%
Mounder Park (Mt Morris)	9	8.26%
Spring Lake Aquatic Park (Rochelle)	9	8.26%
Devil's Backbone Natural Heritage Landmark	8	7.34%
Tiger Town Park (Byron)	7	6.42%
Carnation Park (Oregon)	7	6.42%
Booster Park (Creston)	6	5.5%
Lyle Kunde/Lake Sule Recreation Area (Rochelle)	6	5.5%
Memorial Park (Rochelle)	6	5.5%

VFW Park (Rochelle)	5	4.59%
Bicentennial Park (Stillman Valley)	5	4.59%
Hamas Park (Byron)	4	3.67%
Zickuhr Park (Mt Morris)	4	3.67%
Helms Complex (Rochelle)	4	3.67%
Etnyre Forest Preserve	4	3.67%
Nardi Equine Prairie Preserve	4	3.67%
Hal Palmer Park (Mt Morris)	3	2.75%
Westside Park (Polo)	3	2.75%
Keator Park (Polo)	3	2.75%
Hillcrest Park (Rochelle)	3	2.75%
Howard Colman Hall Creek Preserve	3	2.75%
Ripplinger-Gouker Preserve	3	2.75%
Warnken Park (Forreston)	2	1.83%
Louise D. Quick Park (Polo)	2	1.83%
Connolly Park (Rochelle)	2	1.83%
Flannigan Park (Rochelle)	2	1.83%
Kelley Park (Rochelle)	2	1.83%
Midwest Park (Rochelle)	2	1.83%
Sweeney Park (Rochelle)	2	1.83%
Douglas E. Wade Prairie	2	1.83%
Kyte River Bottomlands	2	1.83%
Memorial Park (Forreston)	1	0.92%

Williams Park (Oregon)	1	0.92%
Powers Park (Rochelle)	1	0.92%
Tilton Memorial Park (Rochelle)	1	0.92%
Barrick Oaks Homestead Preserve	1	0.92%
Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve	1	0.92%
Heeren Prairie	1	0.92%
He-Leo Two Rivers Preserve	1	0.92%
Richardson Wildlife Preserve	1	0.92%
Other	1	0.92%

Answered: 96 Skipped: 13

Please check ALL the reasons that prevent you or other members of your household...



Percentage

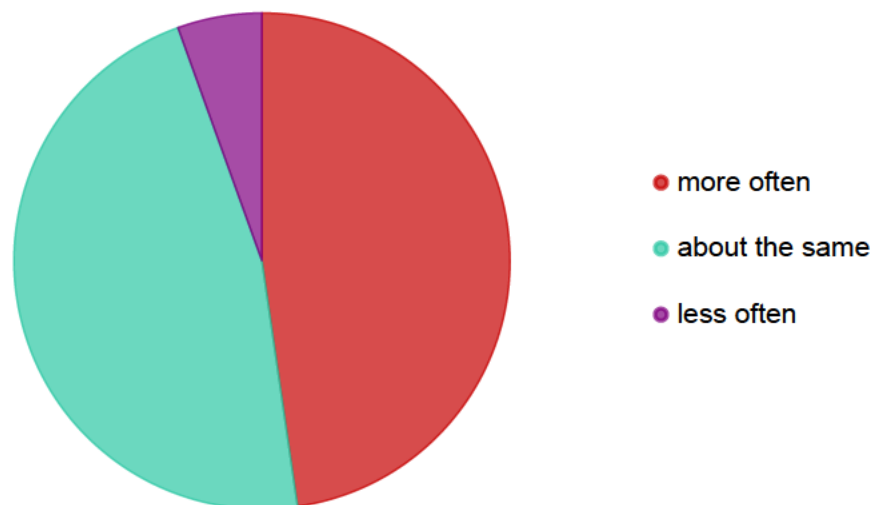
age

Trails/parks/facilities are not open when I want to use them	12	11.01%
Trails/parks/facilities are not well maintained	17	15.6%

Feel unsafe from crime at parks/trails	7	6.42%
Feel unsafe from vehicular traffic along trails/bike routes	7	6.42%
Don't know where parks/trails are located	46	42.2%
Parks/trails are not easily accessible by walking or biking	19	17.43%
Lack of parking at parks/trailheads	2	1.83%
Parks/trails are too far from my home	9	8.26%
Lack of transportation to/from parks or trailheads	2	1.83%
Parks/trails are not accessible for those with disabilities	6	5.5%
Parks don't offer the facilities or amenities that my household and I are looking for	13	11.93%
Trails aren't open to or designed for the uses I'm interested in	31	28.44%
Other	10	9.17%

Answered: 91 Skipped: 18

During the COVID-19 pandemic, have you and your household members...



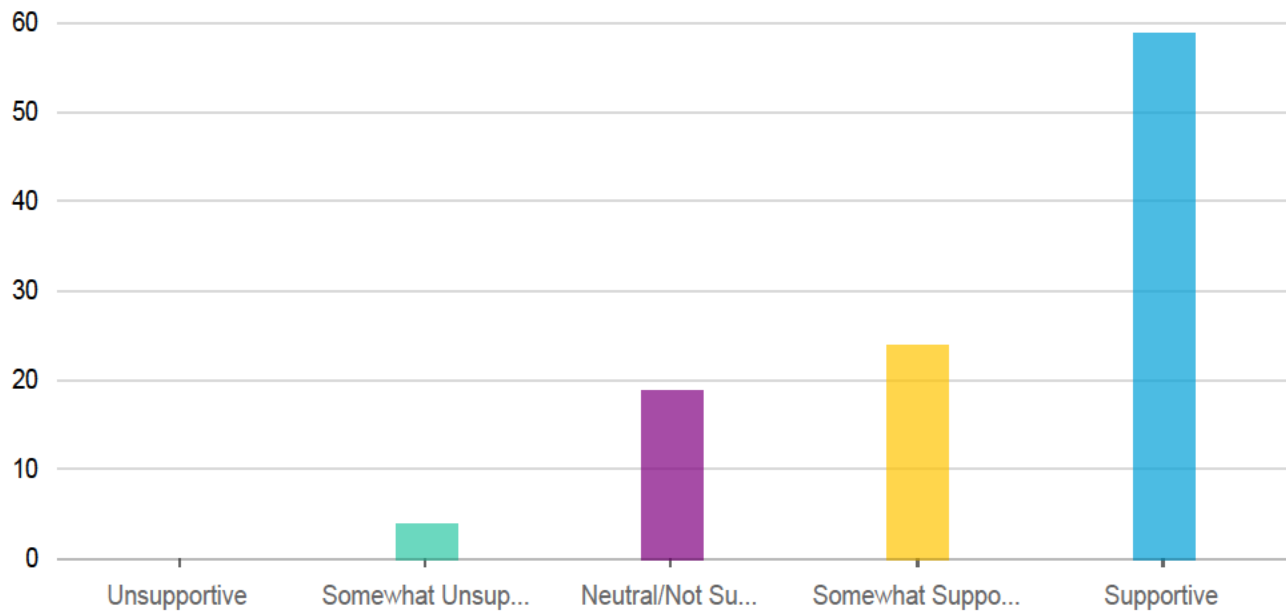
Answers**Count****Percentage**

more often	52	47.71%
about the same	51	46.79%
less often	6	5.5%

Answered: 109 Skipped: 0

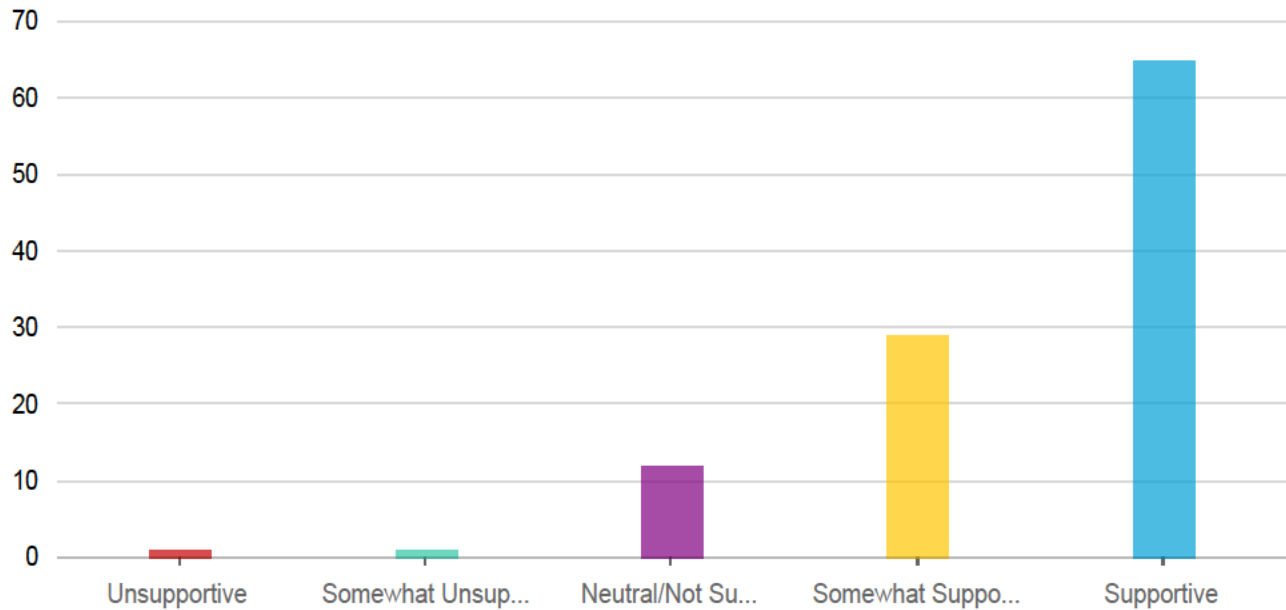
Please indicate how supportive you would be of each of the following actions that could be taken to improve the parks and trails network in Lee and Ogle Counties.

☒ **Develop new parks and recreation facilities to better meet residents'...**

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

Unsupportive	0	0%
Somewhat Unsupportive	4	3.67%
Neutral/Not Sure	19	17.43%
Somewhat Supportive	24	22.02%
Supportive	59	54.13%

Invest in upgrades and renovations at existing parks and recreation...



Answers

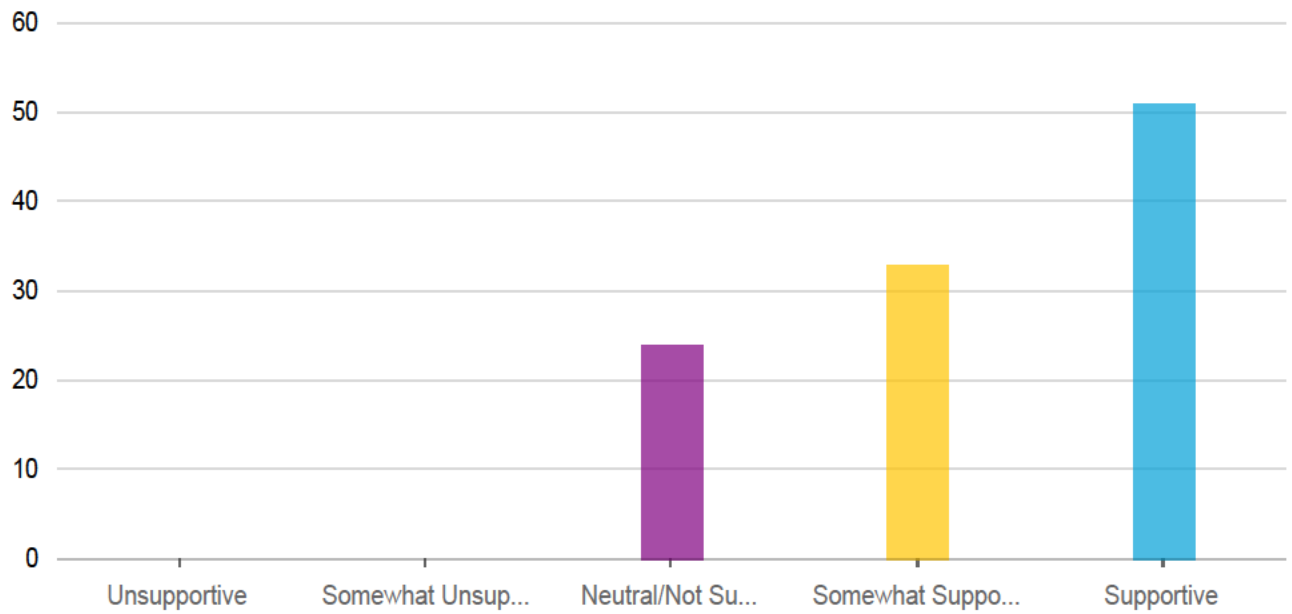
Count

Percentage

Unsupportive	1	0.92%
Somewhat Unsupportive	1	0.92%
Neutral/Not Sure	12	11.01%
Somewhat Supportive	29	26.61%
Supportive	65	59.63%

Answered: 108 Skipped: 1

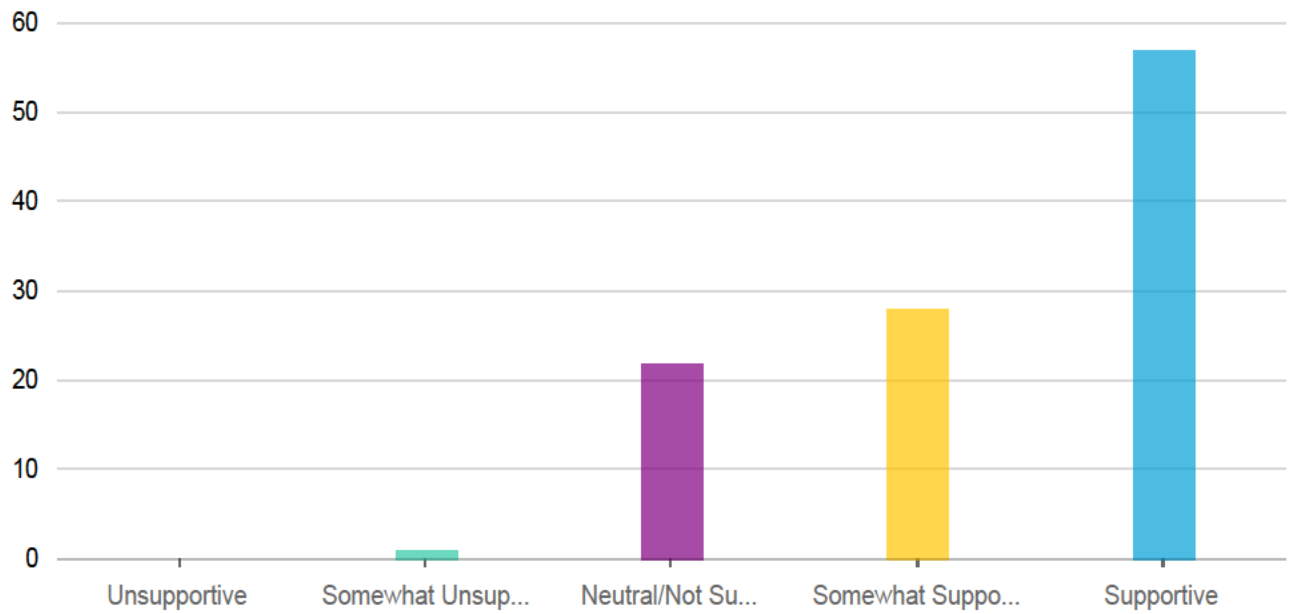
Expand recreation and staff resources to offer more programs and...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	0	0%
Somewhat Unsupportive	0	0%
Neutral/Not Sure	24	22.02%
Somewhat Supportive	33	30.28%
Supportive	51	46.79%

Answered: 108 Skipped: 1

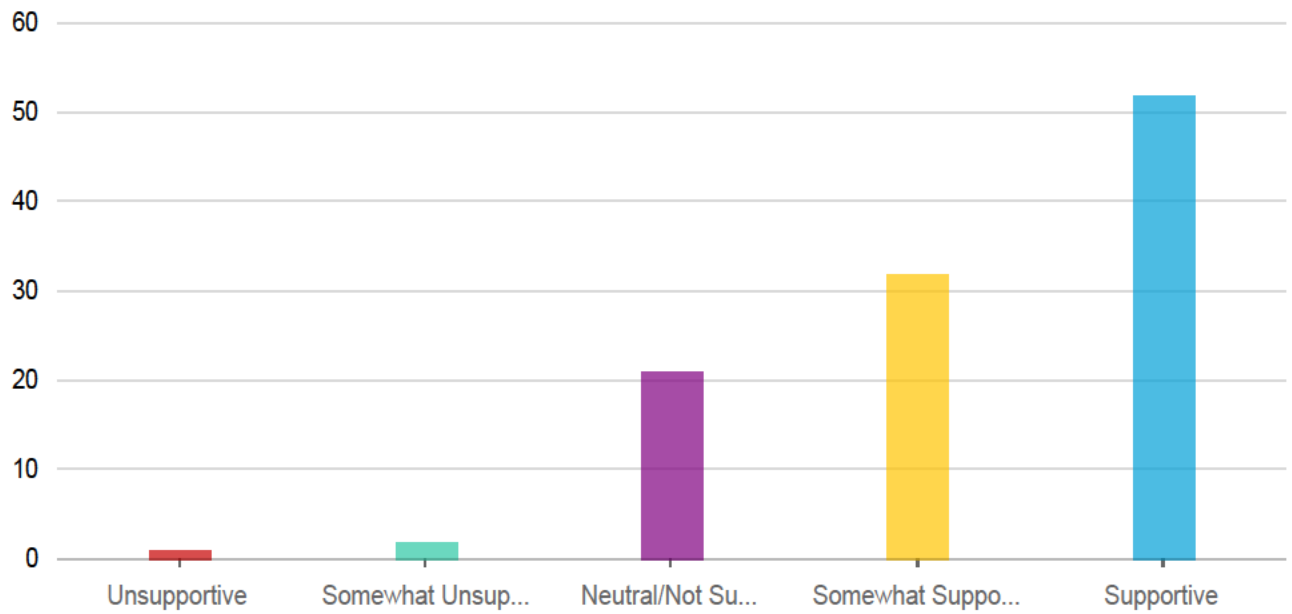
☐ Preserve greenspace and add to tree canopy



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	0	0%
Somewhat Unsupportive	1	0.92%
Neutral/Not Sure	22	20.18%
Somewhat Supportive	28	25.69%
Supportive	57	52.29%

Answered: 108 Skipped: 1

- Construct new ADA-accessible trails for users of all abilities

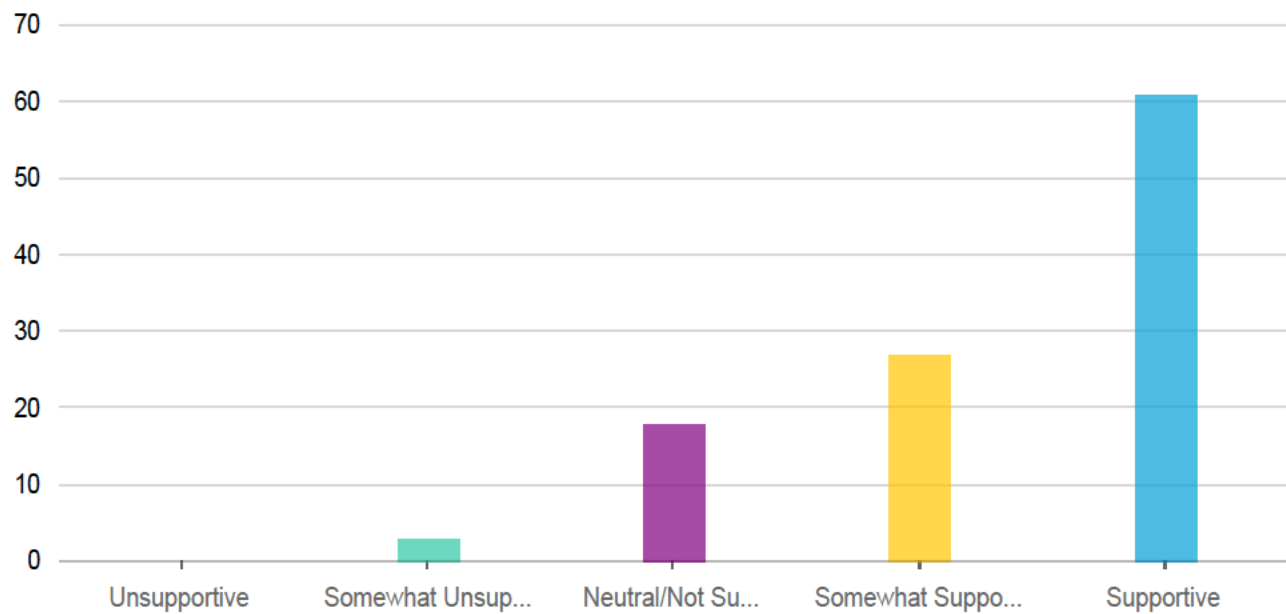


Answers	Count	Percentage
---------	-------	------------

Unsupportive	1	0.92%
Somewhat Unsupportive	2	1.83%
Neutral/Not Sure	21	19.27%
Somewhat Supportive	32	29.36%
Supportive	52	47.71%

Answered: 108 Skipped: 1

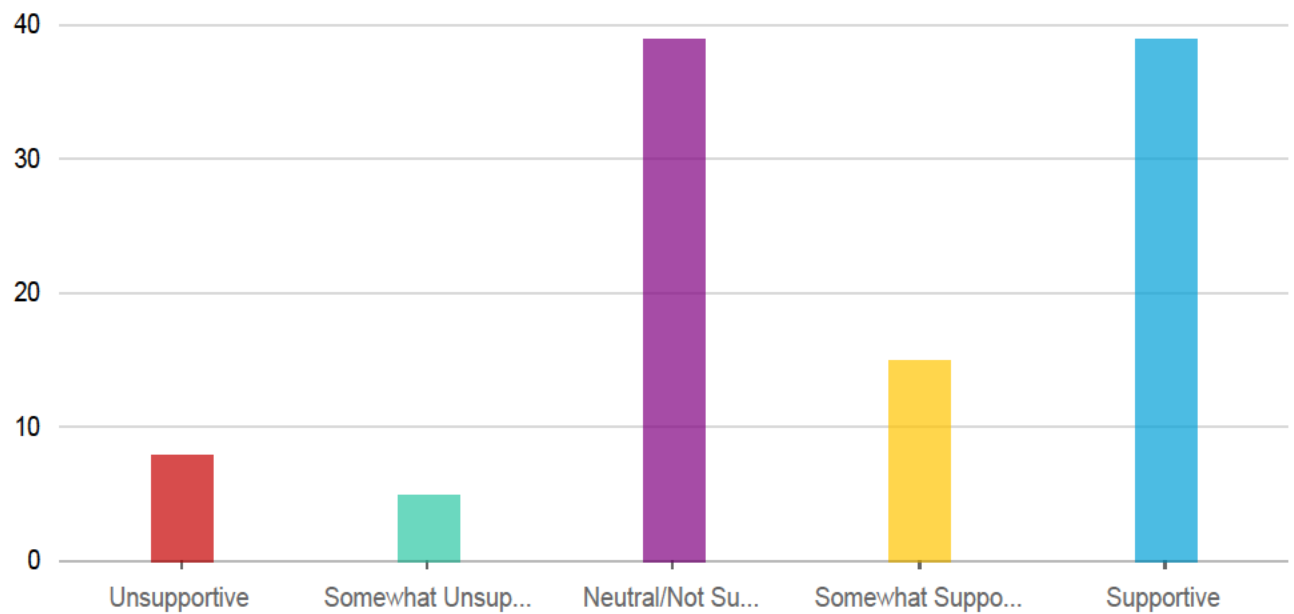
- Improve existing parks and recreation facilities to meet ADA-...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	0	0%
Somewhat Unsupportive	3	2.75%
Neutral/Not Sure	18	16.51%
Somewhat Supportive	27	24.77%
Supportive	61	55.96%

Answered: 109 Skipped: 0

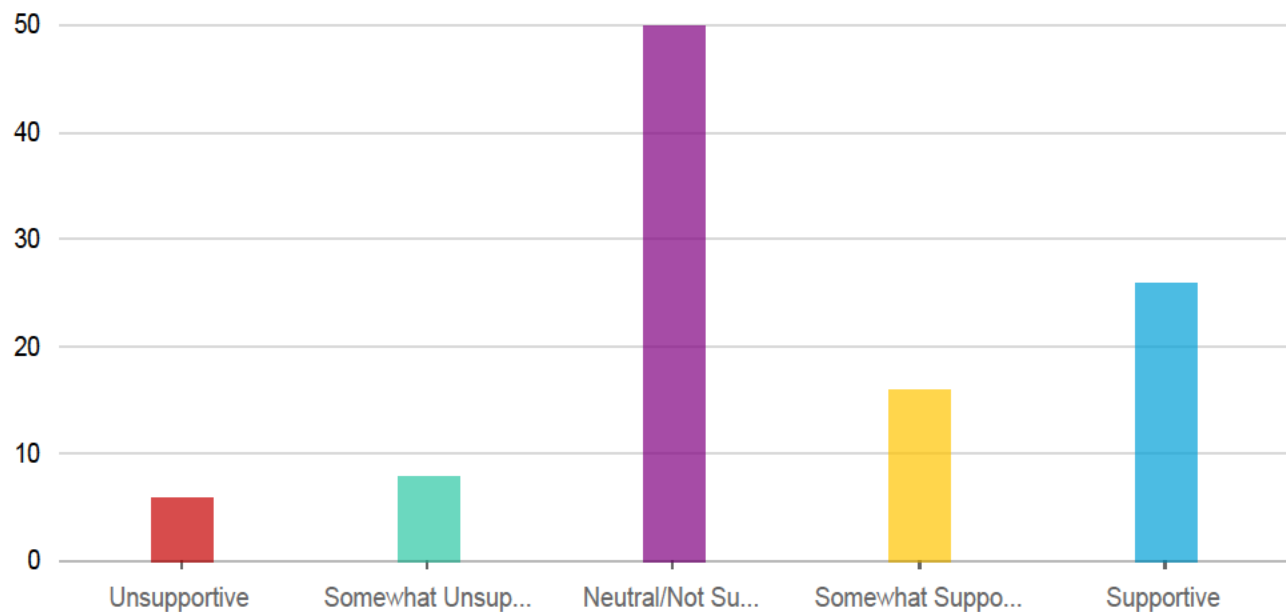
☐ Construct purpose-built mountain bike trails



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	8	7.34%
Somewhat Unsupportive	5	4.59%
Neutral/Not Sure	39	35.78%
Somewhat Supportive	15	13.76%
Supportive	39	35.78%

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3

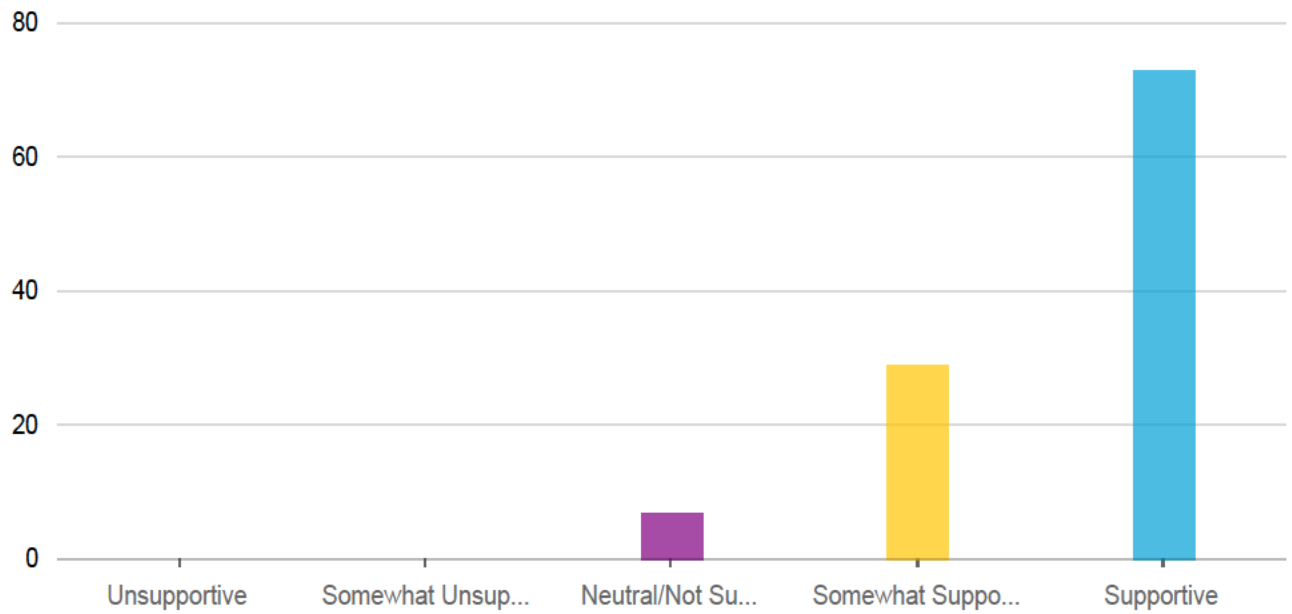
- Open more trails to equestrian use and incorporate amenities for this...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	6	5.5%
Somewhat Unsupportive	8	7.34%
Neutral/Not Sure	50	45.87%
Somewhat Supportive	16	14.68%
Supportive	26	23.85%

Answered: 106 Skipped: 3

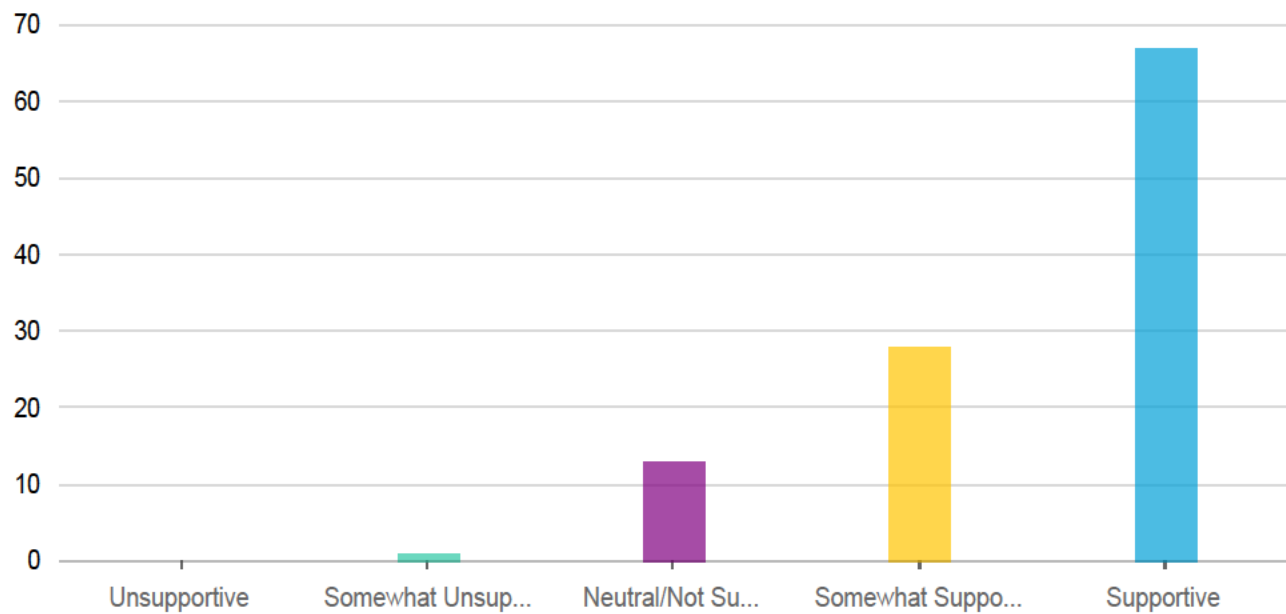
- Construct trails or designate routes that create linkages between cities...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	0	0%
Somewhat Unsupportive	0	0%
Neutral/Not Sure	7	6.42%
Somewhat Supportive	29	26.61%
Supportive	73	66.97%

Answered: 109 Skipped: 0

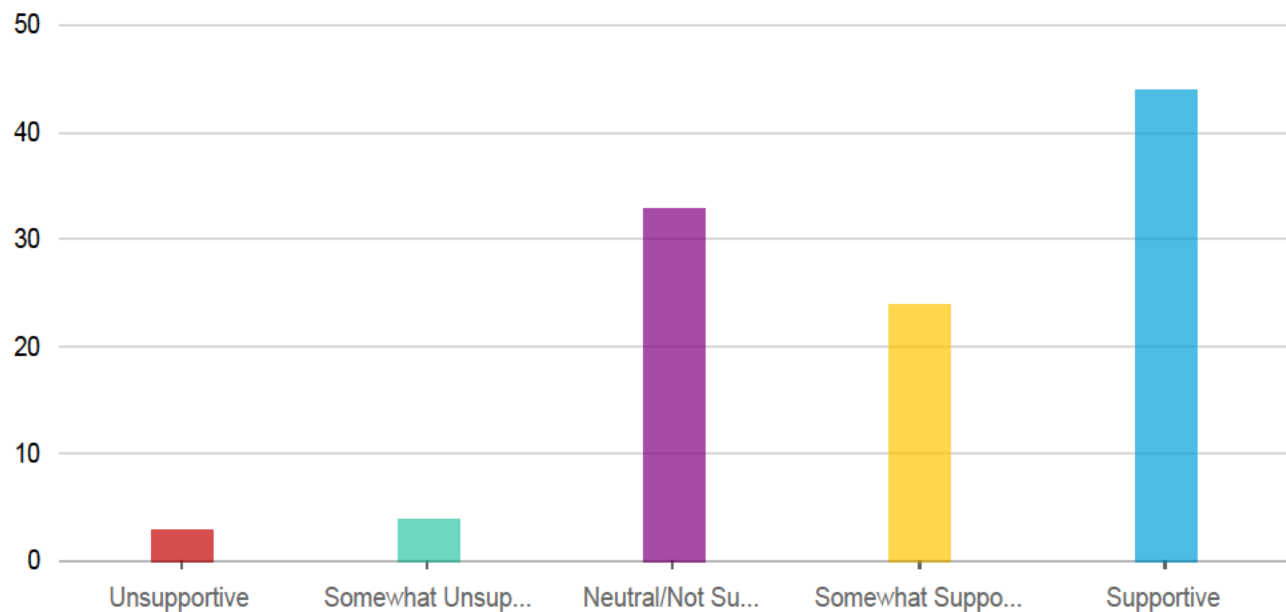
- Focus on creating walking/biking trails separate and distinct from...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	0	0%
Somewhat Unsupportive	1	0.92%
Neutral/Not Sure	13	11.93%
Somewhat Supportive	28	25.69%
Supportive	67	61.47%

Answered: 109 Skipped: 0

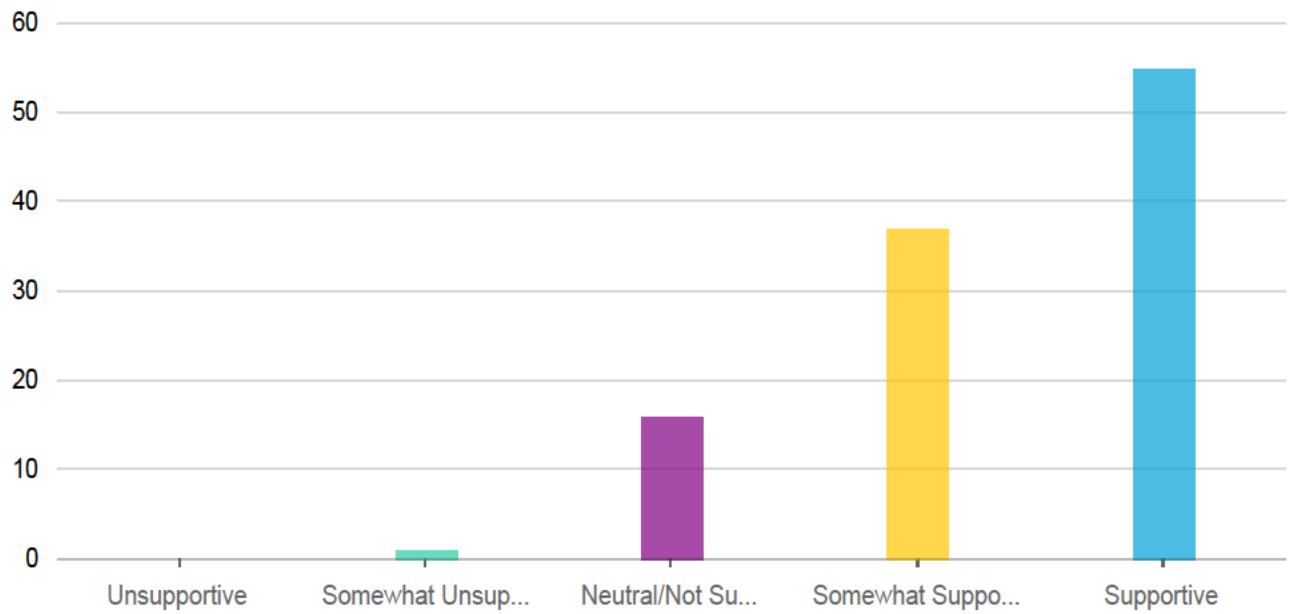
- Focus on improving on-road bike route conditions and safety



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	3	2.75%
Somewhat Unsupportive	4	3.67%
Neutral/Not Sure	33	30.28%
Somewhat Supportive	24	22.02%
Supportive	44	40.37%

Answered: 108 Skipped: 1

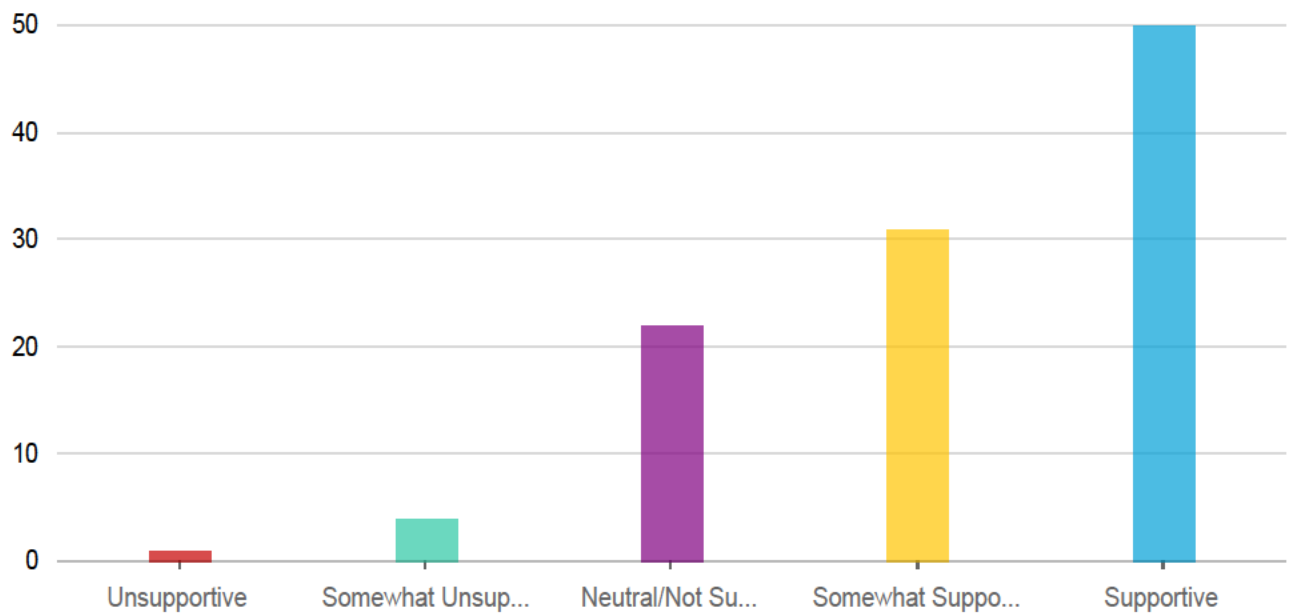
- Implement cohesive wayfinding trail signage



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	0	0%
Somewhat Unsupportive	1	0.92%
Neutral/Not Sure	16	14.68%
Somewhat Supportive	37	33.94%
Supportive	55	50.46%

Answered: 109 Skipped: 0

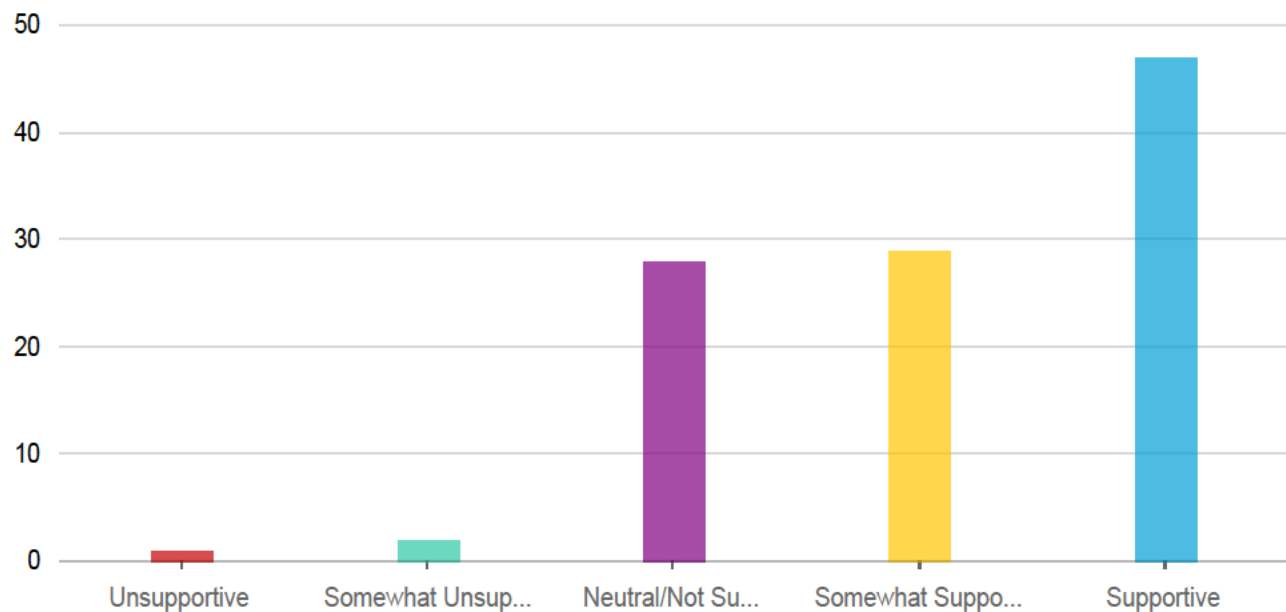
Invest in advertising outdoor recreation opportunities in the county



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	1	0.92%
Somewhat Unsupportive	4	3.67%
Neutral/Not Sure	22	20.18%
Somewhat Supportive	31	28.44%
Supportive	50	45.87%

Answered: 108 Skipped: 1

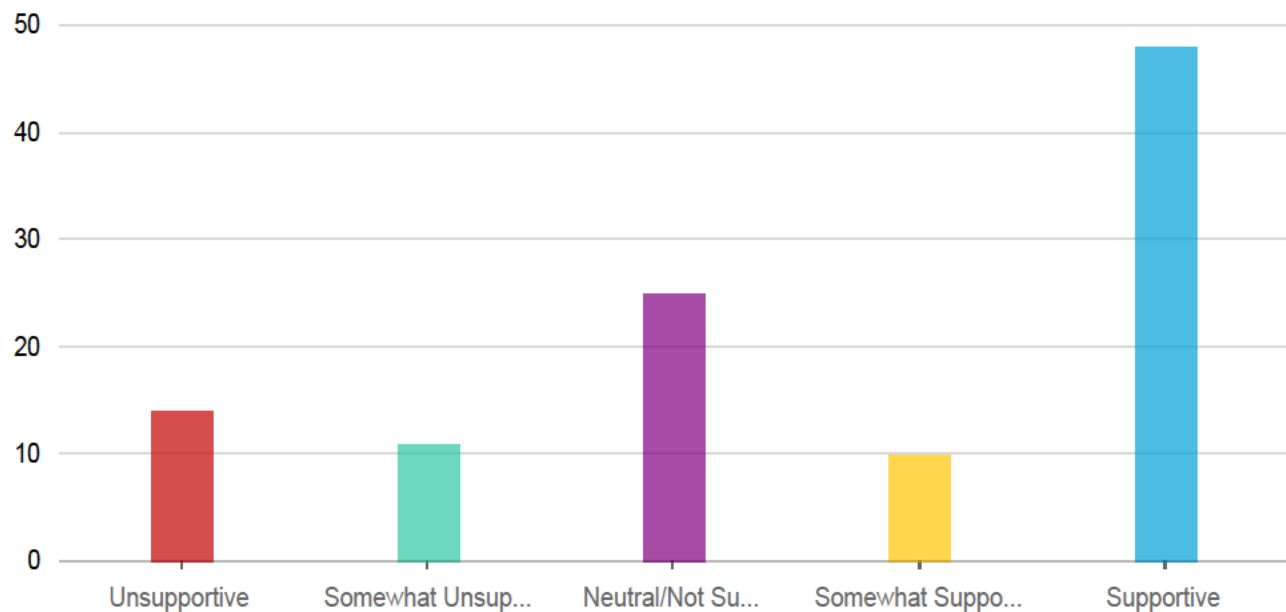
- Support legislative changes that would open opportunities for water...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	1	0.92%
Somewhat Unsupportive	2	1.83%
Neutral/Not Sure	28	25.69%
Somewhat Supportive	29	26.61%
Supportive	47	43.12%

Answered: 107 Skipped: 2

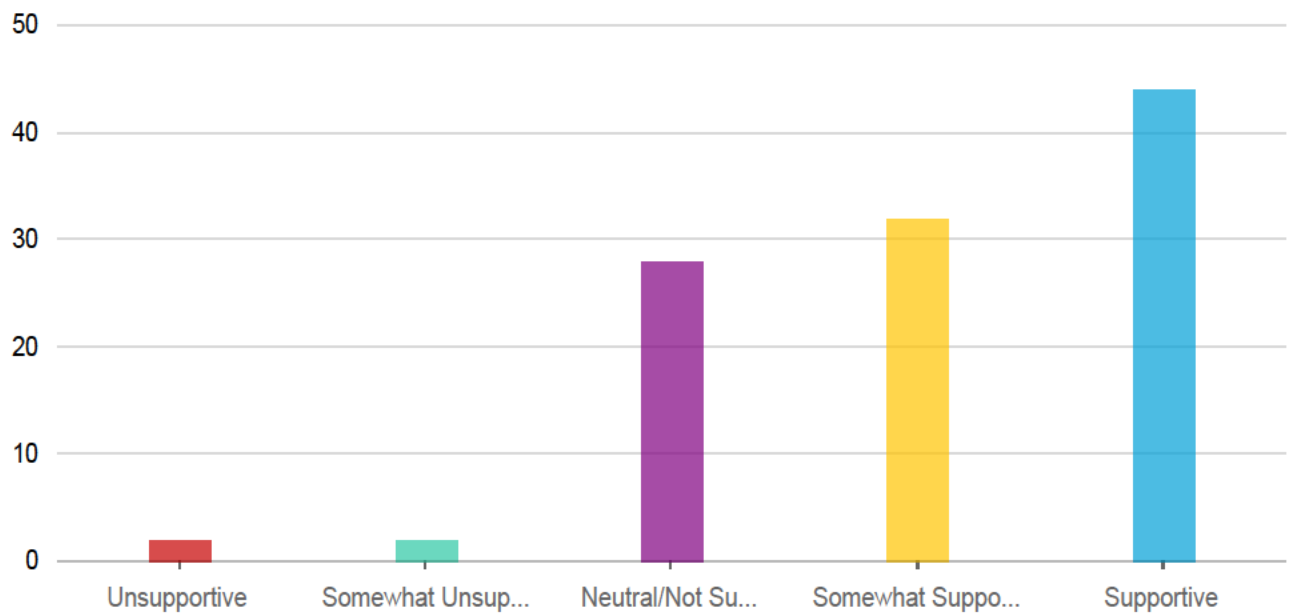
○ Support legislative changes that would open opportunities for ATV/UT...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	14	12.84%
Somewhat Unsupportive	11	10.09%
Neutral/Not Sure	25	22.94%
Somewhat Supportive	10	9.17%
Supportive	48	44.04%

Answered: 108 Skipped: 1

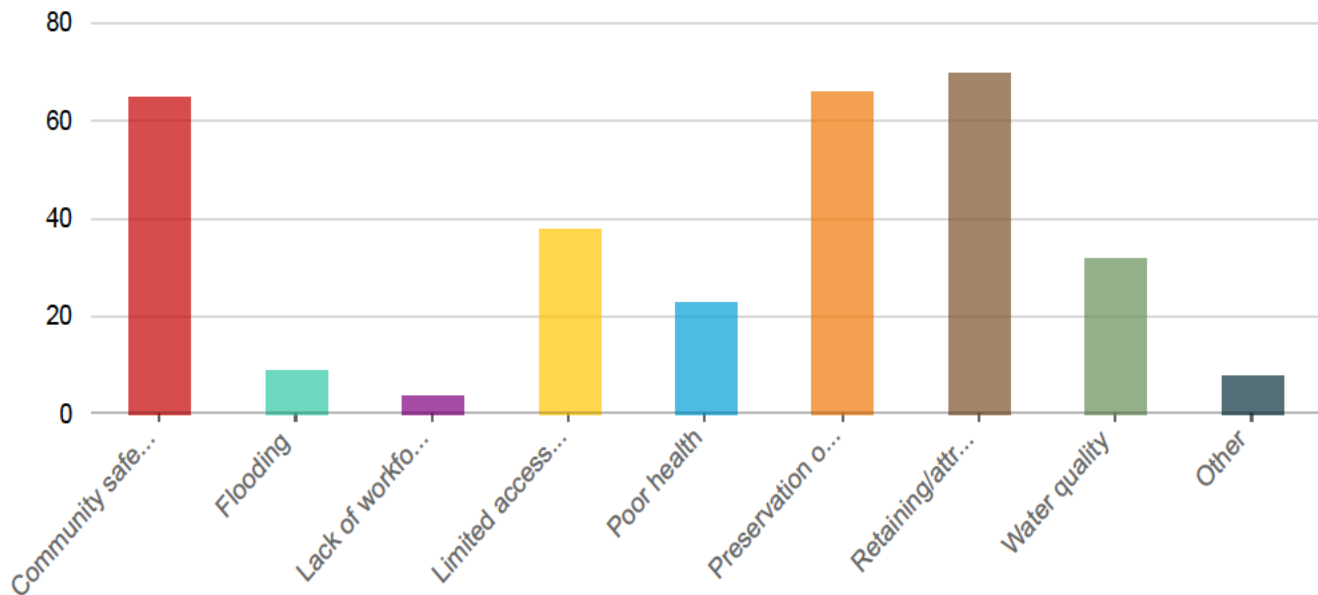
- Support legislative change that would open opportunities for more...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Unsupportive	2	1.83%
Somewhat Unsupportive	2	1.83%
Neutral/Not Sure	28	25.69%
Somewhat Supportive	32	29.36%
Supportive	44	40.37%

Answered: 108 Skipped: 1

Trails and parks have the potential to help address some complex social, economic,...



Answers	Count	Percentage
Community safety	65	59.63%
Flooding	9	8.26%
Lack of workforce housing	4	3.67%
Limited access to multimodal transportation options (e.g., sidewalks, bikeways, trails, transit)	38	34.86%
Poor health	23	21.1%
Preservation of natural areas	66	60.55%
Retaining/attracting youth and young families	70	64.22%
Water quality	32	29.36%
Other	8	7.34%

Answered: 105 Skipped: 4

Please provide any additional comments or ideas for trails, parks, or public open...

[illegible]

A 4th benefit for #1: Transportation/connectivity for commuters (bike lanes, trails) Please maintain large portions of unused space, it is a necessary buffer to sustain us, an “emergency fund” if you will. We are blessed in this country to have so much space, let’s make sure we respect it. Future generations will thank us. Consider the consequences of crisis-crossing a natural area with paths, habitat is disrupted, animals move and adapt into our communities and gardens. Please include quiet places that allow for mental and spiritual reflection and healing. Please consider the ecological consequences in all you do. Once the land is covered in concrete, it is gone, difficult to undo, lost soil structure and fertility. Consider pavers where appropriate, open cell pavers filled with moss, not grass, are lower in maintenance. If you develop paths for ATV/UTVs, please consider doing this in areas that are already loud instead of moving into natural areas. Thank you for all you do.

A recreation bridge to cross the rock river/through town without having to go into directly into a city/ town. If it is utilized as a multi use; winter- snowmobile, spring/summer/fall- ATV/utv (if legislation comes to fruition), and pedestrian/bicycle that doesn't require direct interaction with the road traffic.

Ashton IL is in need of a bigger park. One where we can walk on a path, take our dogs for good off leash exercise. Other towns the same size have this but we do not and could really benefit from it.

Atv trails and snowmobile trails.

Atv/utv routes need improvement like snowmobile trails

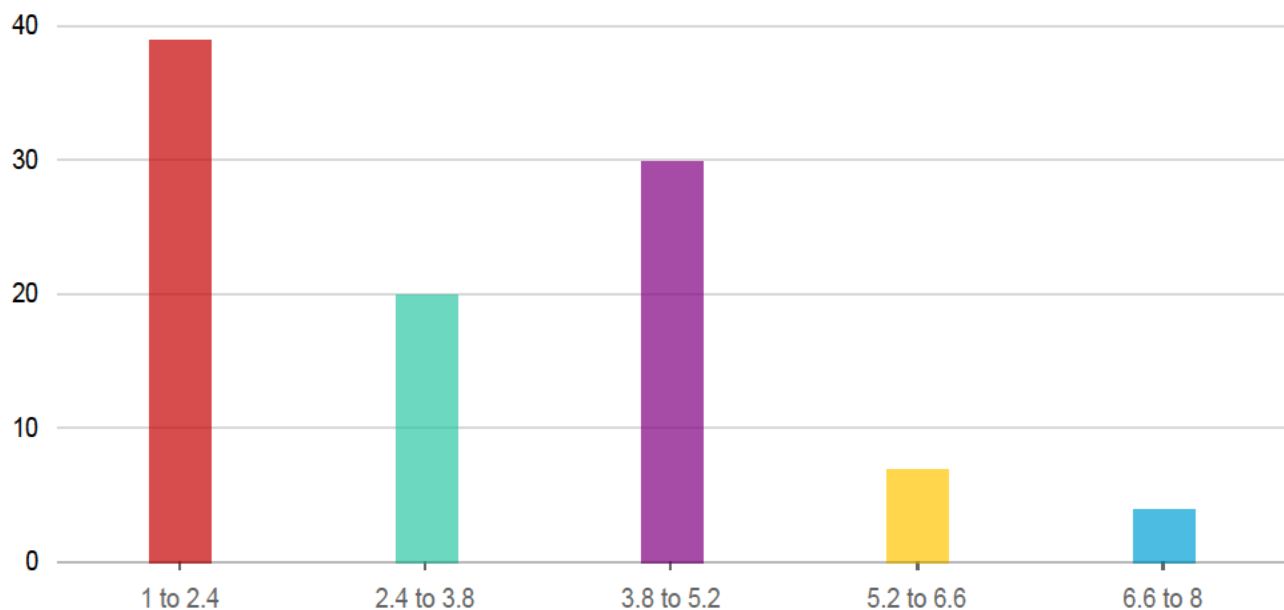
Dixon park district has done a wonderful job of improving and creating new areas, equipment, and events for families. Keep up the good work.

First. Maps and with names to all these places with descriptions would be wonderful. I've utilized parks in my area but apparently do not know their names. And all these you named, I had no idea. 2nd. UTV trails would be awesome. It is a great way to get outside and enjoy nature without committing to walking or bike riding when some of us are just not that fit. Plus it gets older people out into nature too. Would be wonderful to NOT have to go to another state to do this	1
I love trail running and biking. I feel that at times a lot of parks are not maintaining the trails. We did a trail race out at Franklin Creek State Park and our trail running group had to get the trails ready. I also find it very frustrating at parks when there lacks signage indicating what trail you are on.	1
I would like to see more wheelchair accessible trails.	1
I would suggest to as you look forward- There are very limited equestrian camping and off road vehicle parks within that have updated facilities. In all of northwest IL there are no equestrian campgrounds with trails that have electric sites. There is also only one small trail for off-road vehicles in northwest IL, but that trail is also a multi-purpose which is a safety concern. Be aware of safety of putting some user groups too close together (i.e. Off road / Mt. bike / Equestrian).	1
Im an avid mountain biker and bmx rider who is already apart of the lowell park bike trails program. (I.C.Railtrails) i want to do everything i can to improve and maintain our wonderful trail system. Im experienced in building wood, dirt, and cement features. If you want input for a skatepark design or placement of said park i would love to be apart of the project. As far as trails go flow trail and down hill need to be focused on for the mountain bike. The land and the elevation is available and should be capitalized on. As well as a jump session from green to black diamond would really make the trails system a draw for biking tourists. And make it a well rounded trail system satisfying all ability levels and create a diverse and dynamic environment for everyone from beginners to pros.	1
It would be awesome to have a path that connected Mount Morris and Oregon.	1
Keeping trails open so that people with use them	1
Love our outdoor grrrn spaces, but there are many on this list I was unaware of!	1
Love our parks, but we didn't know about many of the parks listed in this survey. Perhaps feature information about each park on Facebook each week? (Bigger presence on social media for our parks)	1
More boat docks on the river with access to food and kayaking opportunities. Especially at Grand Detour park, that's a great place to put kayak in or out.	1
Need to connect Freeport Jane Adam's trail to Joe Stengel Trail then Dixon to Sauk so you can continue on the feeder canal and complete the bisecting of the Great Illinois Loop	1

None	1
opening trails to motorized vehicles like atvs/utvs would be a huge disappointment - the reason many people want to enjoy these trails is for the peacefulness of nature.	1
Thank you.	1
The need to more resources is great, but the desire for more green space should be top priority.	1
Twist Road in Franklin Grove is heavily used, but because it is not paved it generates a lot of dust. I love biking and walking however that road is impossible to enjoy because it is not paved, impossible and unsafe to walk or going for a bike rides. I have tried many times To go for a walk on twist rd but came back injured because my ankle twisted on gravel road.	1
We would love for the trails to be opened up more to UTVs and ATVs. There's not many places we can ride them with BEAUTIFUL scenery.	1
While there are several parks for playing, hiking & biking, there is very limited trails for Equestrians. I would love to see more parks opened up to horses. Overnight camping for equestrians is, 2 parks. Day ride areas are not that much better either with 1 park besides the 2 for overnight. I spend most of my \$ with/on my horses in parks OUTSIDE my county. Which means my fuel fill ups, and snack/meal grabs are also outside my county. I live in Lee county.	1

Answered: 24 Skipped: 85

Counting yourself, how many people are in your household?



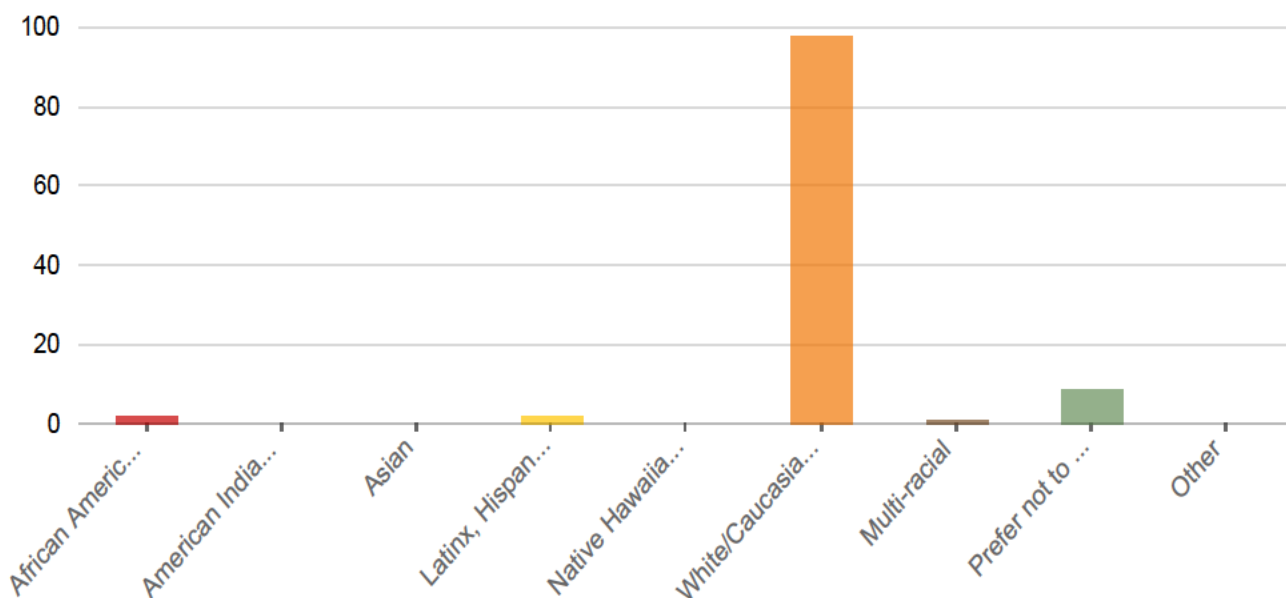
Stats

Value

Min.	1
Max.	8
Avg.	3.28
Sum.	328

Answered: 100 Skipped: 9

What is your race or ethnicity?



Percentage

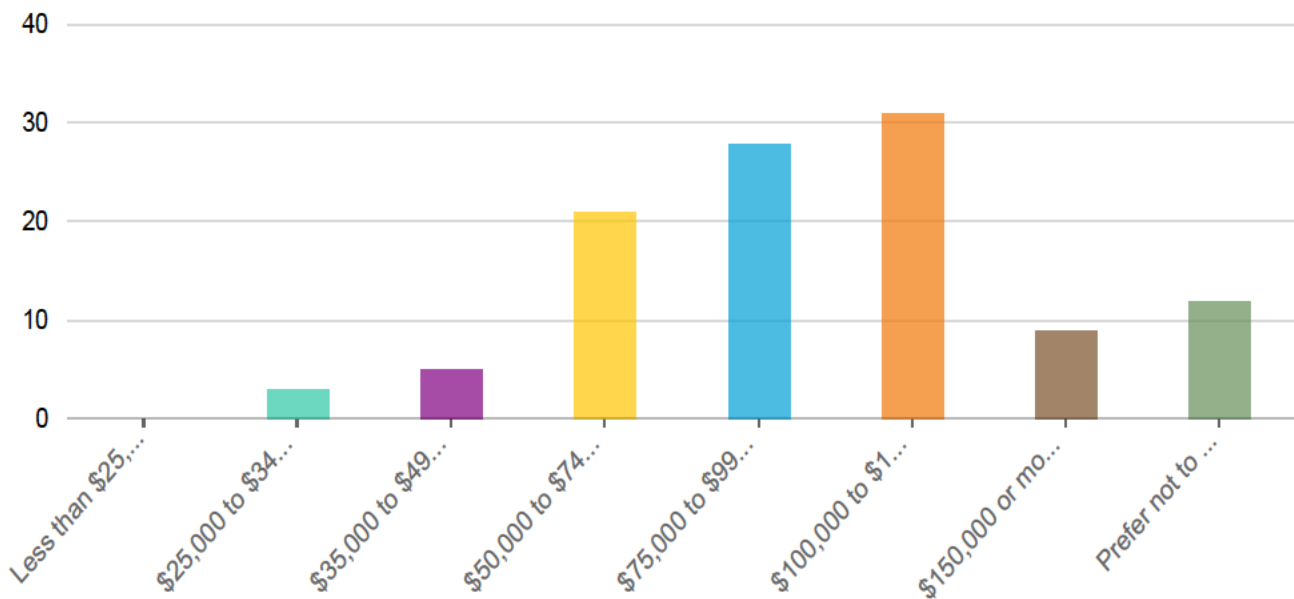
age

African American/Black	2	1.83%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0%
Asian	0	0%
Latinx, Hispanic, or Spanish	2	1.83%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0%

White/Caucasian	98	89.91%
Multi-racial	1	0.92%
Prefer not to say	9	8.26%
Other	0	0%

Answered: 109 Skipped: 0

What is your total annual household income?



Percentage

age

Less than \$25,000	0	0%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	3	2.75%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5	4.59%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	21	19.27%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	28	25.69%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	31	28.44%
\$150,000 or more	9	8.26%

Prefer not to say

12

11.01%

Answered: 109 Skipped: 0