

Des Moines Area

Water Trails and Greenways Plan

Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Meeting Notes

8:00 a.m., Thursday, September 24, 2015

Des Moines Area MPO Burnham Conference Room

Steering Committee Attendees

Chair Rick Tollakson, Hubbell Realty
Carol Kersey, Central Iowa Paddlers
Joe Gato, City of Des Moines
Phil Delafield, City of Des Moines
Dave Wilwerding, City of Johnston
Russ Trimble, City of West Des Moines
Greg Edwards, Convention and Visitor Bureau
Trina Flack, Convention and Visitor Bureau
Andrea Woodard, Greater Des Moines Partnership
Kenneth Danley, Des Moines Sail and Power Squadron
Benn Dodd, DNR
John Wenck, DNR
Lisa Hein, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
Rick Cerwick Izaak Walton League
Linda Appelgate, Parks: Trails and Greenways Committee & Iowa River Revival
Amanda Corrigan, Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District
Lewis Major, Polk County Conservation

Dayne Magneson, US Corps – Saylorville
Mark Lagomarcino, Principal Financial

Advisory:

Dave DeGeus, The Nature Conservancy

Non-Committee Members

Don Mclaughlin
Pat Knueven
Sara Kurovski, City of Pleasant Hill
Jane Clark

MPO Staff & Consultants

Dylan Mullenix
Gunnar Olson
Tess Cody
Mike Armstrong
Teva Dawson
Luis Leon

1. **Meeting was called to order at 8:05**
2. **The agenda was approved.**
3. **The minutes were approved.**
4. **Attendees introduced themselves.**
5. **PRESENTATION:** Overview of the Water Trails & Greenways Planning Timeline - see attached presentation slide.
6. **PRESENTATION:** What area water trails? –MPO staff discussed amenities and policies the plan could include - see attached presentation slide. Feedback included:
 - Additional amenities could include restrooms, parking, drinking water
 - Rental facilities such as liveries
 - Education – classes, guides, etc.

- Future opportunities such as purchasing quarries (future ones include ones in Johnston, West Des Moines, Water Works, south of DSM where spoils from Easter Lake are going, etc.
- Fishing Park – increase access for anglers, instream habitat structures, dam mitigation needs to include consideration for anglers, modification to Scott Street dam could take away easy fishing, Charles City and Manchester incorporated fishing area and early surveys show improved fishing but lots more people using the area and are in the way of anglers
- Reach out to anglers through fishing license information?

7. PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION: Summary of Feedback from Focus Groups. See attached presentation. Feedback included:

- Regarding consistent water level concerns – there can be benefit to different water levels – artifact hunters have more finds during times of low water, high levels have more power, low water pools fish in certain areas, high waters open up back areas. It is a normal occurrence for rivers to have highs and lows
- Paddlers are excited about the planning process, they currently travel to other parts of the state to enjoy new experiences, would rather stay here, they want safe paddling options
- Power boaters – use a very small amount of the 150 miles, more activity on the water can lead to increased safety concerns
- CVB – positive for the community, added attraction, draw more people already looking for healthy, outdoor activities, another example of a regional attraction

8. PRESENTATION: Overview of Area Waterways. See attached presentation. Feedback included:

- North and Middle River are non-meandered streams in addition to Skunk Creek. Talked about the meaning and importance of those terms.
- Middle and North River deliver sediment to Red Rock
- Skunk River – 2 pits east of Chautauqua, potential angling location
- Beaver Creek – PCC recently purchased land around there
- Jordan Creek – Raccoon River, limited quarry access
- Rock Creek should be added – below Saylorville, paddle at higher levels,
- Impressed with what is so close in our region, need to promote awareness of these places, support the casual user, massive untapped users
- Discussion regarding the meaning of impaired waterways. Need to be careful water quality issues don't scare people away from recreation. How address water quality issues and need for improved water trails at the same time? Plan needs to support opportunities to deal with water quality issues. MPO staff will look into getting an expert in to talk about the local water quality issues and steps this plan can do address water quality issues in the region.

9. REPORT & DISCUSSION: Dam tour and other opportunities for learning from others.

- CVB staff reported on the dam tour to Elkader and Manchester. Good tour, learned a lot from the people that brought these projects to fruition.
- Staff will develop a list of locations to visit if people want to do so on their own. Will also look to bring speakers in from other communities that have built innovative water trail projects.

10. Other Non-Action Items - none

11. Next Meeting Date: November 13, 10:30 Draft Existing Conditions Report & Recommendations

12. Adjournment at 9:30

