

Vision

The water trails and greenways of Greater Des Moines will be a natural haven, recreational keystone, economic driver, and community focal point that welcome people of all ages, abilities, interests, incomes, and cultures to connect and commune with their rivers, creeks and greenways.

Mission

Ever mindful of future generations, our mission is to cooperate across political boundaries to accentuate and enhance the region's water trails and greenways to realize their immense potential as a multifaceted centerpiece for a vibrant and dynamic region.

Goals

1. Conserve and enhance the environmental health of the rivers, creeks, and greenways
2. Expand access and connections between diverse communities and the rivers, creeks, and greenways
3. Further the health and well-being of all residents and visitors through activity and access to nature
4. Support and amplify a resilient regional economy with local, regional, and national attractions and amenities
5. Collaborate locally and regionally to develop a holistic and sustainable waterways and greenways network

Objectives

1. Expand access to the waterways and greenways
Too often real and perceived barriers prevent people from enjoying the water trails and greenways. From ramps and fishing spots to programming and amenities, expanding access to welcome people of all ages, abilities, interests, incomes, and cultures is essential to the long-term success of this plan.
2. Maintain what we have
Our rivers, creeks, and greenways suffer from inadequate or infrequent maintenance with poor water quality, eroding streambanks, flooded access points, and dangerous hazards in the water. Consistent and collaborative maintenance will keep these rivers active and healthy.
3. Conserve and enhance our natural corridors
The rivers and greenways are vital natural corridors that connect habitats, support diverse wildlife, decrease the negative impacts of flooding, provide wild and peaceful experiences, and reconnect people with nature. Conserving and enhancing these natural corridors enriches the region's environmental and public health.
4. Connect communities to the water
Rivers and greenways have been central components of countless peoples and cultures throughout history. This is an opportunity to create new connections and reaffirm long-standing kinship to the rivers and greenways. Education and programming, history and culture, and new and existing user groups can play a role in connecting communities of all kinds to the water.
5. Connect the water to communities
The rivers are not just a destination, they also have various impacts on our communities. From businesses and economic development to flooding and water quality, connecting the importance of the rivers and greenways back to our communities will help Greater Des Moines realize the economic potential for the water while acting as responsible stewards for this unique resource.
6. Create safe and welcoming experiences
Any proposal for rivers must address safety from the outset. People new to the rivers will need to know how to safely enjoy these ever-changing environments. Seasonality, floodplains, property rights, discrimination, emergency response, wayfinding...a comprehensive strategy to minimize the risks of rivers and creeks is a primary need.
7. Work together
Rivers know no political boundaries. Planning, funding, maintaining, programming and just about every other aspect of the rivers and greenways will need to be built through collaboration and diverse partnerships to create a holistic regional amenity.