

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## Public workshops: What do you want to do on rivers of Greater Des Moines?

Paddlers, rowers, kayakers, boaters, tubers, birders, hikers, anglers, trail users – and anyone with interest in improving recreation and conservation on and along the rivers of central Iowa – are invited to a series of design workshops.

Eight 90-minute workshops will be held in March and April for the public to meet with local government officials and explore options for improving 150 miles of creeks and rivers in Greater Des Moines. Do you want more boat ramps? White-water elements? Perhaps a place to rent kayaks? Should the dams be mitigated? How about better trail connections or more public fishing spots? What about shoreline restoration and floodplain protection? Better places for quiet walks, scenic views and wildlife?

“Our rivers can become a signature recreational amenity for Greater Des Moines,” said Rick Tollakson, president and CEO of Hubbell Realty Co. who chairs the Water Trails Steering Committee. “The question now is, what is our vision?”

The preferences of the public will help form the Greater Des Moines Water Trails and Greenways Master Plan. Once developed, the plan will provide the region and local governments with a road-map for enhancing citizen experiences in and along the 150 miles of creeks and rivers. This could include more places to go tubing, birding, hiking, paddling, or fishing, as well as offer areas for flood protection and improved wildlife. This is a significant opportunity for the region for many reasons – notably quality of life, economic development, tourism and environmental conservation.

- Beaver Creek** – 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 23, Crown Point Community Center, 6300 Pioneer Pkwy., Johnston
- Raccoon River** – 3 p.m. Monday, March 28, Raccoon River Park Nature Lodge, 2500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines
- Walnut Creek** – 6 p.m. Thursday, March 31, Windsor Heights Community Center, 6900 School St., Windsor Heights
- North and Middle rivers** – 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 4, Carlisle City Hall, 195 N. First St., Carlisle
- Skunk River, Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, Mud Creek** – 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 5, Altoona Public Library, 700 8th St. SW, Altoona
- Northern section of Des Moines River (Highway 210 to Birdland Marina) and Fourmile Creek** – 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 12, Polk County River Place, 2309 Euclid Ave, Des Moines
- Southern section of Des Moines River (south of downtown to Lake Red Rock)** – 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 18, Pioneer Columbus Community Center, 2100 SE 5<sup>th</sup> St., Des Moines
- Des Moines River, downtown section** – To be announced at later date

*A map illustrating the river segments being studied is included below and available online at [dmampo.org/water-trails/](http://dmampo.org/water-trails/).*

Public comments are also being collected through an online input map, and the deadline to comment has been extended to April 30. A recently released “State of the Rivers” report, a new online resource that is rich with research on the region’s creeks and rivers, found that the potential for river recreation in Greater Des Moines is significant and largely untapped, identifying existing uses, opportunities, and challenges. The “State of the Rivers” report and the Public Input Map are available at [dmampo.org/water-trails/](http://dmampo.org/water-trails/).

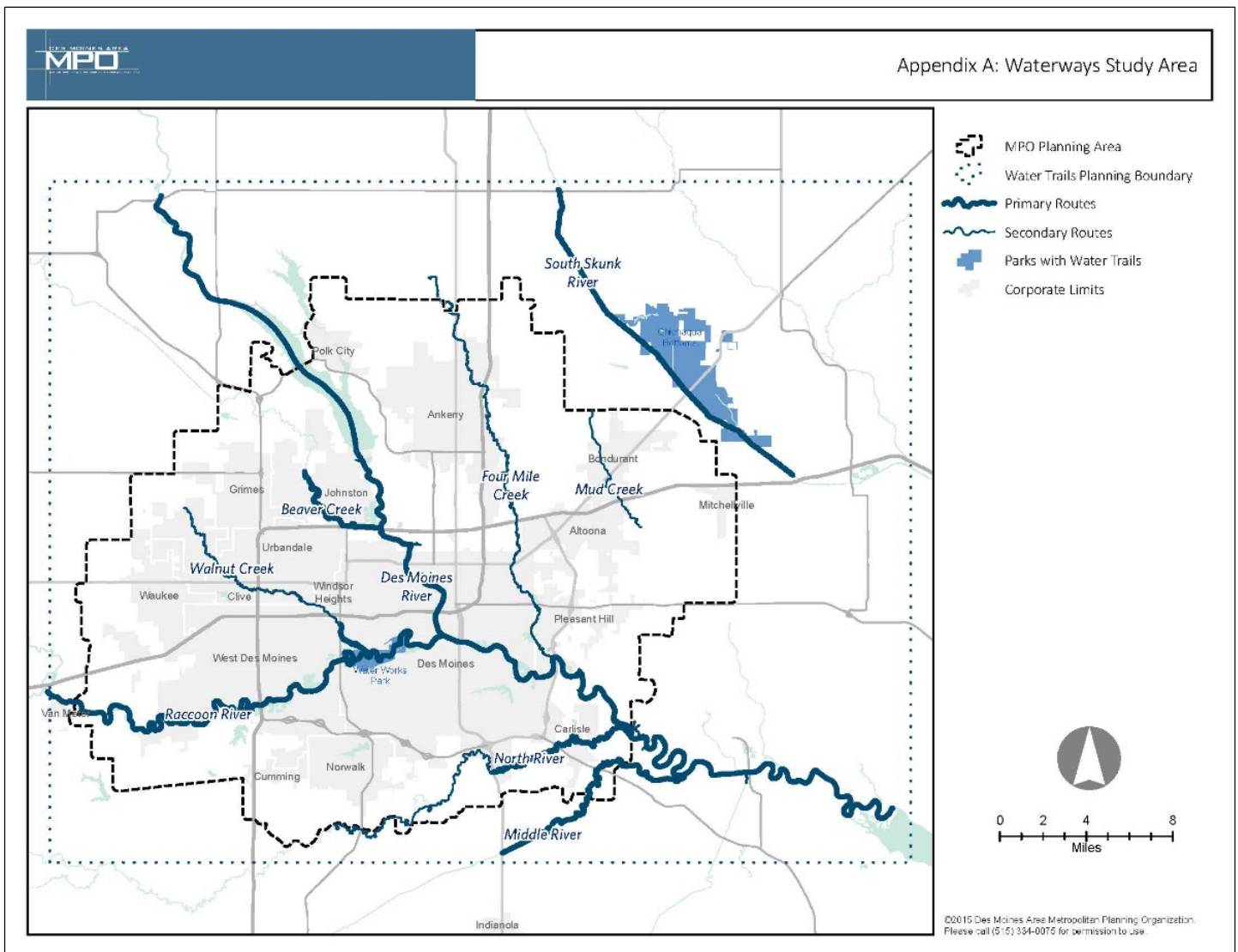
The Greater Des Moines Water Trails and Greenways Master Plan is being developed by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization on behalf of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. A draft plan will be released for public comment in early summer of 2016; the final plan is expected by late 2016.

For more information, please visit [dmampo.org/water-trails/](http://dmampo.org/water-trails/), call 515-334-0075 or email [info@dmampo.org](mailto:info@dmampo.org).

## What are Water Trails?

“Water Trails” is a designation given by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and are defined as recreational corridors and routes on rivers and lakes that provide a unique experience for all water users. Water trails help re-connect lowans to their waterways’ history, heritage, geology, fisheries, and wildlife. Water trails provide adequate access and can include amenities like riverside camping, wild spaces, picnic areas, and restrooms, and watercraft rentals provided by local, state, and federal partners. Coordinated signage and mapping systems guide users toward the types of experiences they seek, ranging from a highly social first-time river experience lasting a few hours to multi-day adventures. Water trails help boost local economies and give central lowans outdoor experiences just out their back doors.

## Study Area for Greater Des Moines Water Trails and Greenways Master Plan



**Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** acts as a regional forum to ensure coordination between the public and local, state, and federal agencies in regard to planning issues and to prepare transportation plans and programs. The MPO develops both long- and short-range multimodal transportation plans, selects and approves projects for federal funding based upon regional priorities, and develops methods to reduce traffic congestion.