

A VISION FOR WALNUT CREEK

DRAFT

BOOKLET 8 OF 8
GREATER DES MOINES
WATER TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

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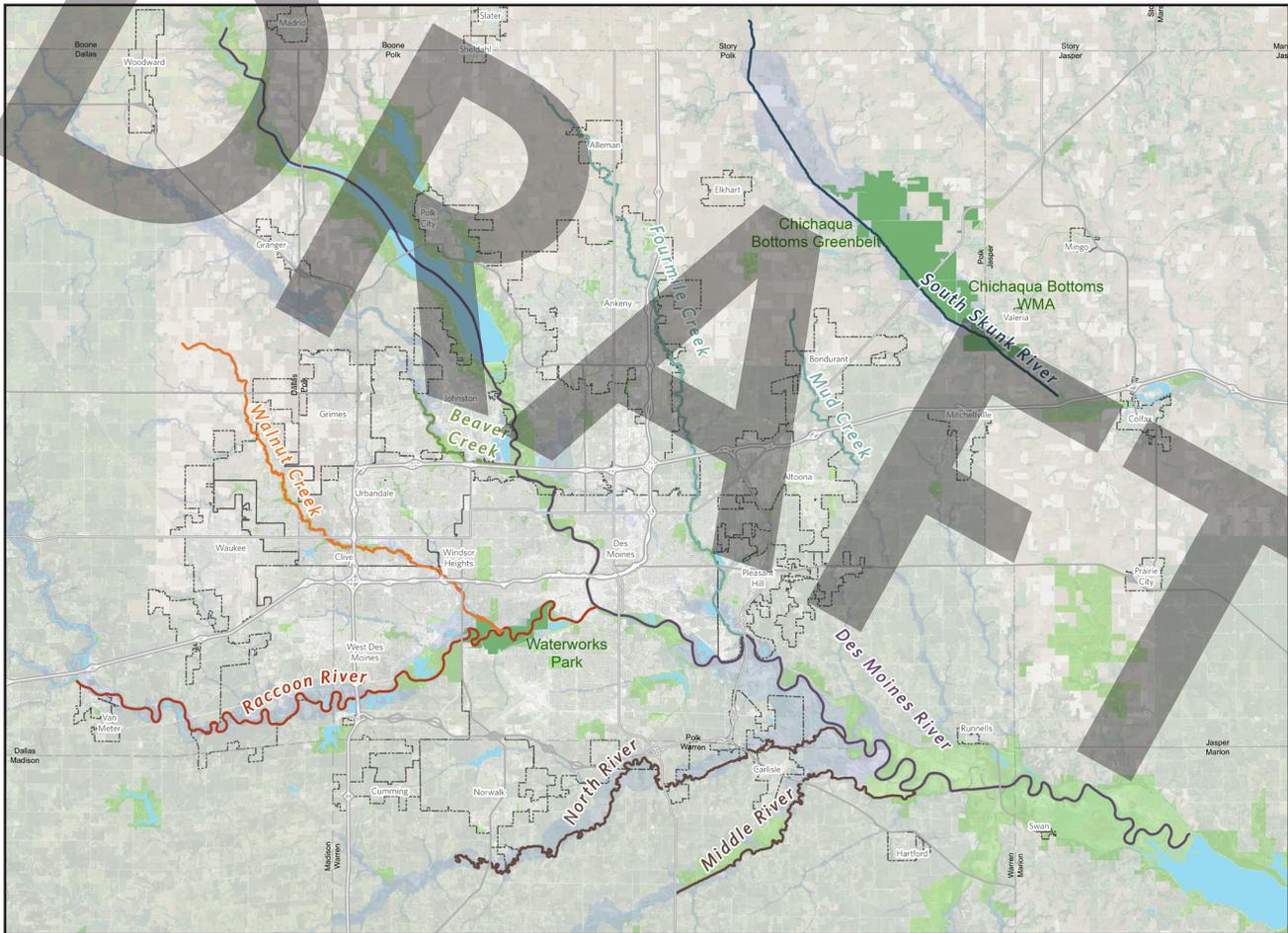
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One Vision, Many Communities

The Greater Des Moines Water Trails and Greenways Plan establishes a regional vision for our rivers, creeks, and greenways. Through extensive community engagement and with the help of a strong steering committee, a clear regional vision emerged.

Regional Vision

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



Greater Des Moines Water Trails and Greenways planning area

This Booklet

The Greater Des Moines Water Trails and Greenways Plan looks at more than 150 miles of water ways. This booklet provides an overview of Walnut Creek, including recommendations to improve its environmental, recreational, and economic potential for the entire community. There are companion booklets for each waterway, as well as a strategies and policies booklet.

Recommendations

Walnut Creek has been given much attention this past year. With the development of a watershed plan to improve the water quality and flooding impact of the creek, as well as, Clive's master plan for the greenbelt and the beginning of the Windsor Heights Comprehensive Plan, great things are in store for this creek. Recommendations listed here are meant to echo and complement other regional planning efforts.

Access and Connections

While there are fewer opportunities for in-water activity compared to other waterways in the area, the trail that runs adjacent to this creek offers multiple uses. Navigation by small water craft is possible during a short window of high water flow, typically after rainfall events. A few boat access points have been recommended, yet attention should also be paid to creating spaces for trail users to interact with the creek. These connections could include soft trails for birdwatching, safe places for families to play, rock-type steps into the water, places to sit and enjoy the view, public art to interpret the ecology of the creek, and fishing nodes.

The area around the Clive Aquatic Center and City Hall, as well as Colby Park, offer immediate opportunity for not only boat access but other creek hub activities due to the existing parking, restrooms, playgrounds, etc. The area around 73rd Street and University Avenue offers a redevelopment opportunity with a focus on businesses that turn toward the paved and water trails.

A major concern that needs to be addressed is the lack of access those living in West Des Moines have to the trail systems. Efforts should be made to develop more trail and on-street connections to the trail.



Relevant Links:

[Clive Greenbelt Master Plan](#)

[Walnut Creek Watershed Plan](#)

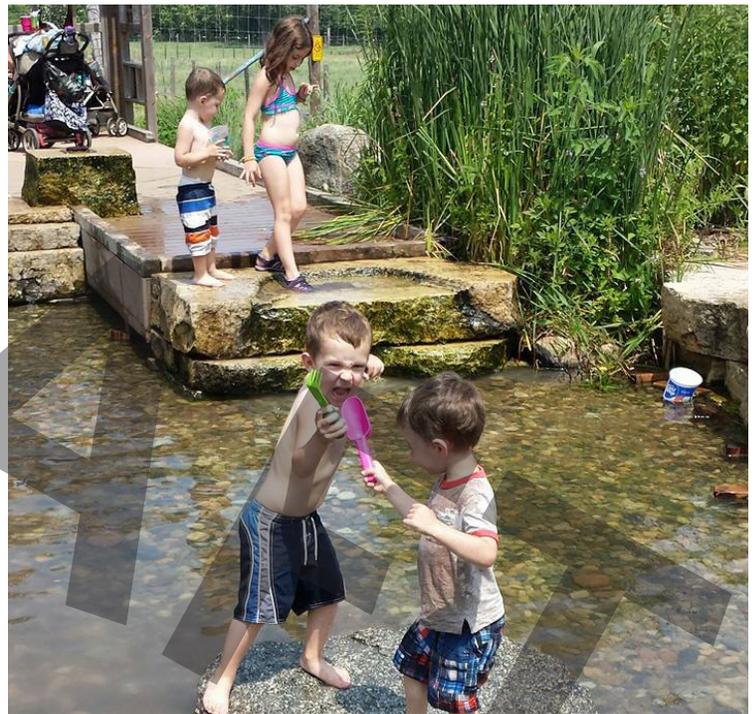
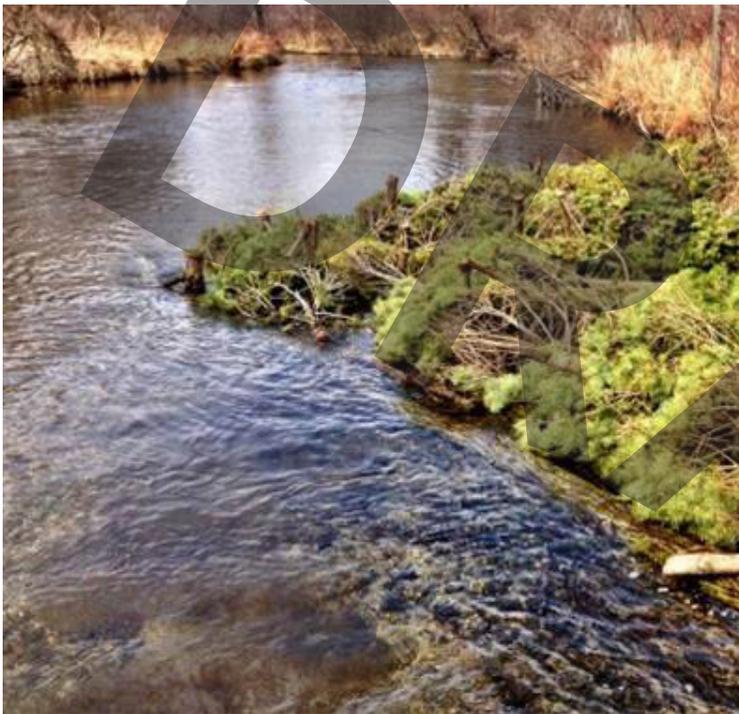
[Windsor Heights Comprehensive Plan](#)

Programming and Conservation

Interpretation of the water cycle is highly recommended along the trail that running the creek into Water Works Park. From the headwaters in Dallas County to the treatment plant at Water Works, this highly used trail offers a unique opportunity for many citizens to learn about the source of their drinking water and the nature of water-quality challenges. Interpretive signage integrated with public art is recommended along the creek.

Additional opportunities exist to visually showcase the creek and greenbelt. Views of the creek are available on bridges over the creek on 63rd Street/1st Street and 73rd Street. It is recommended to improve the aesthetics through restoration and capture the attention of the thousands of people who drive along these potentially scenic sections every day.

Additional restoration should be implemented according Walnut Creek Watershed Plan. Whenever possible, the 100-year floodplain should be protected and maintained as a habitat corridor.



Clive Greenbelt Master Plan



Strategic Framework: Vision and Mission

Greenbelt Vision: Clive's Social Center, Recreation Corridor and Regional Resource

A welcoming community and regional destination distinct by integration of safe/beautiful corridors, healthy living and natural resources, easy access, cultural/educational spaces and links to nearby neighborhoods and businesses. At the same time, the Clive Greenbelt allows a true escape from urban pressures and pace.

Greenbelt Mission: Engage Stakeholders, Sustain Community and Natural Health

To engage the public in stewarding and enjoying Clive Greenbelt's natural resources and trail while enhancing its connections to active learning, healthy living, and the distinctive community that is Clive.

Strategic Framework: Key Directions

- 1. Flood Management and Water Quality Improvements:** Promote partnerships, discourage flood plain development, increase infiltration and slow water flow, particularly from upstream, incoming development; water quality and quantity are inextricably linked.
- 2. Habitat/Riparian Corridor Improvements:** Closely akin to water quality and quantity management is the overall maintenance of the riparian corridor for wildlife and plant health, beauty and overall functionality. Clive's "Distinct by Nature" brand resonates when the Greenbelt's riparian corridor is at its healthiest.
- 3. Trail and Connections:** Maintain, expand and improve the current trail system while giving residents and other users a greater sense of safety.
- 4. Public Health . . . Mental and Social Wellbeing:** Through recreation, arts/science, education and equity - Integrate the Greenbelt's exceptional features through a blend of facilities and programs that leverage the Greenbelt's close-at-hand educational institutions, riparian habitats, water access, popular trail and growing attention as an arts destination. Partner with county public health to provide education and programs. Ensure access for all.
- 5. Physical Well-Being:** Through programs that prompt physical activity and healthy eating
- 6. The business and economic environment:** Economic Health -The vitality of the Clive Greenbelt will be nearly impossible for residents, community leaders and partners to maintain if it's not directly linked to healthy businesses and economic vitality along its reach.

Key Projects

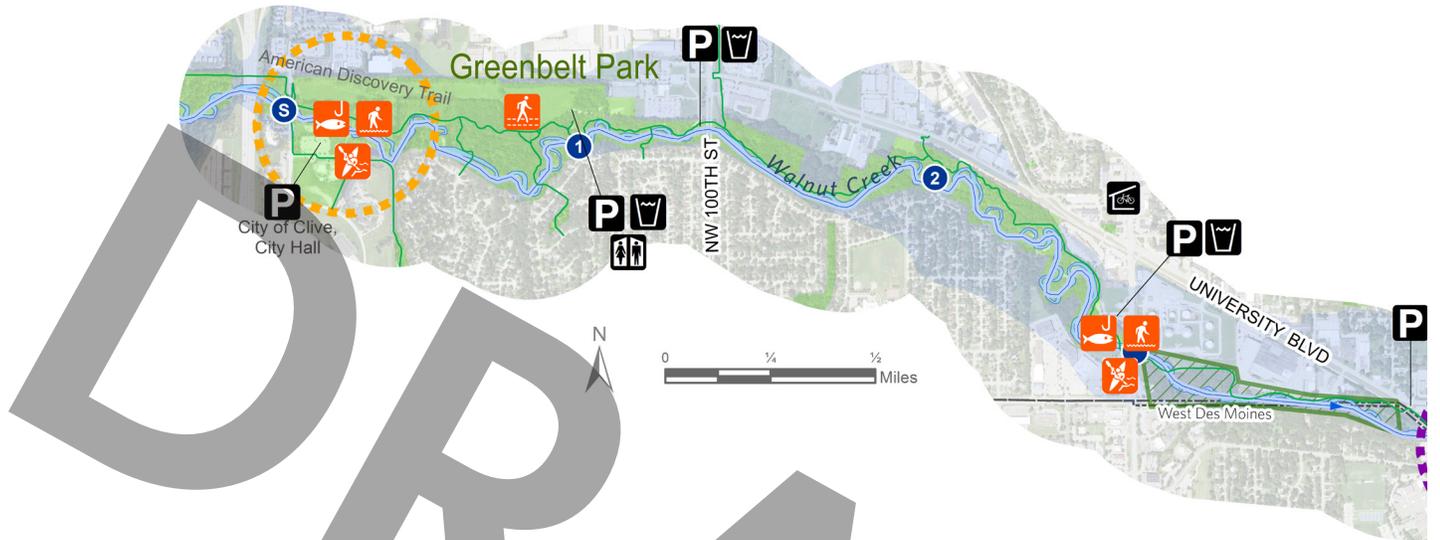
Project	Location	Jurisdiction	Key Amenities	Considerations
Activity Hub	Clive City Hall/ Aquatic Center	Clive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry-down access Fish cleaning station Wading area Wayfinding, interpretive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect to the paved trails and the city Pursue multi-activity programming
Park Connections	86th St	Clive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wading area Fishing space Paths to the park Lighting and signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-ages design for kids, families, etc. Varied experiences Connect to businesses
Economic Hub	University and 76th St	Clive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayfinding and interpretive signage Benches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize connections to trail and creek Consider orientation, such as back patios at restaurants overlooking creek
Activity Hub	Colby Park	Windsor Heights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail hub Natural playspaces Wading area Fishing spaces Carry-down access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect both to the trails and to Windsor Heights Align with trail hub planning and programming

**Additional initiatives can be found in the Policies and Practices Booklet*



Quick Facts:
 6.1 miles in area
 41% floodplain preserved
 Clive, Windsor Heights, Des Moines

Walnut Creek

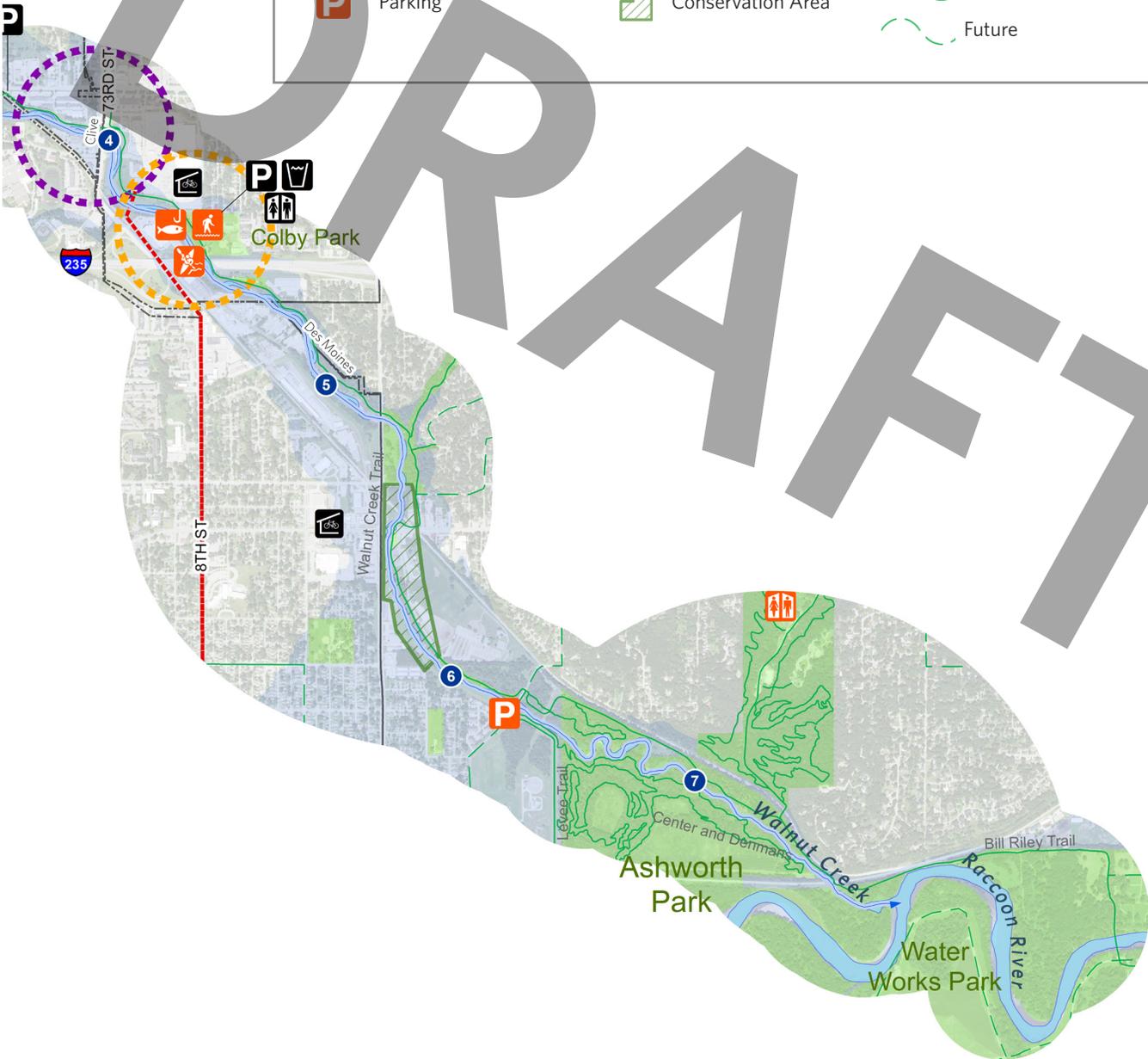


Experience

Walnut Creek is a very urban stream that transitions into more natural parkland downstream. It can be very challenging for paddlers due to its low water levels and ability to flood quickly.

Sections are well-placed for interaction as the creek passes through Clive and Windsor Heights. There are also several trails running alongside the creek, which provides opportunities to bring people down to the water.

Color Codes	Potential Hubs	Other Icons
Existing	Economic Hub	Mile Marker
Potential	Activity Hub	Walnut Creek
Modifications		County Boundary
Amenities		Conservation and Park Land (Public)
Carry-down Access	Restrooms	Floodplain
Fishing Access	Water Fountain	Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities
Wading Access	Bike Shop	Trail Needed
Birding	School	Existing
Parking	Conservation Area	Future



Symbology Explained

Carry-down Access



Carry-down accesses are for non-motorized paddling such as kayaking, tubing, or canoeing. Site design involves many factors, and should first look at the Iowa DNR's *Developing Water Trails in Iowa* guidelines. Lesser accesses are denoted by the portage symbol, and may not require the same level of infrastructure or amenities.

- Lighting and trash cans
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Launch types
- Watercraft and bicycle lockers
- Interpretive and wayfinding signage



Wading Access



Wading spaces are where we can get our feet wet. They can be designed for mucking among natural vegetation and sandbars or as play spaces with steps and stones. No matter the design, wading areas allow us the opportunity to physically connect to the water and nature.

- All ages access
- Restrooms/showers
- Benches and resting points in view of access



Fishing



Fishing is a popular activity all along the creeks and rivers. Creating access points can provide safe and comfortable areas that support anglers. Rock outcroppings, docks, and other designs offer different experiences. Universal design is critical since fishing is often a multi-generational activity.

- Restrooms
- Lights and trash cans
- Spaces for relaxing
- All-ages/abilities design
- Parking and bicycle parking



Respite



Areas to relax, take in the view, and enjoy the river allow people to find a moment of respite in the metro. These areas can be natural greenspaces or more urban like the Principal Riverwalk depending on the context of the area and desire of the community.

- Benches with a view
- Picnic areas and tables
- Paths and trails along water



Economic Hub



Water trails can play a role in developing economic hubs. These hubs typically represent the convergence of multiple assets, such as a river, trails, residential and economic clustering, and other factors. These are destinations that draw in visitors for multiple reasons. The scale changes for smaller or rural communities, but the economic impacts remain. These hubs are opportunities for supportive development along the rivers.

- Event spaces
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Launch types
- Bicycle parking
- Public art
- Restaurants and shops
- Liveries/outfitters
- Shuttle service



Activity Hub



Activity hubs leverage existing attractions into destinations where multiple activities converge. These hubs take advantage of nearby parks and trails to create spaces for longer visits and multiple activities. Often multi-generational and family-friendly spaces, these hubs should be planned with a diverse audience in mind and combine several different reasons to visit.

- Play spaces
- Educational opportunities
- Areas to eat, relax and play
- Programming
- Restrooms and trash cans
- Lights
- Bicycle parking
- Wayfinding



Conservation Area



A key component to fully enjoying the rivers and creeks is ensuring their natural quality and sustainability over time. Creating connected spaces for habitats, restoring wetlands and reducing flooding, and educating the next generation of river stewards are central pieces to the long-term health of the waterways.

- Educational programming
- Interpretive signage
- Habitat connectivity
- Wetlands restoration
- Floodplain management



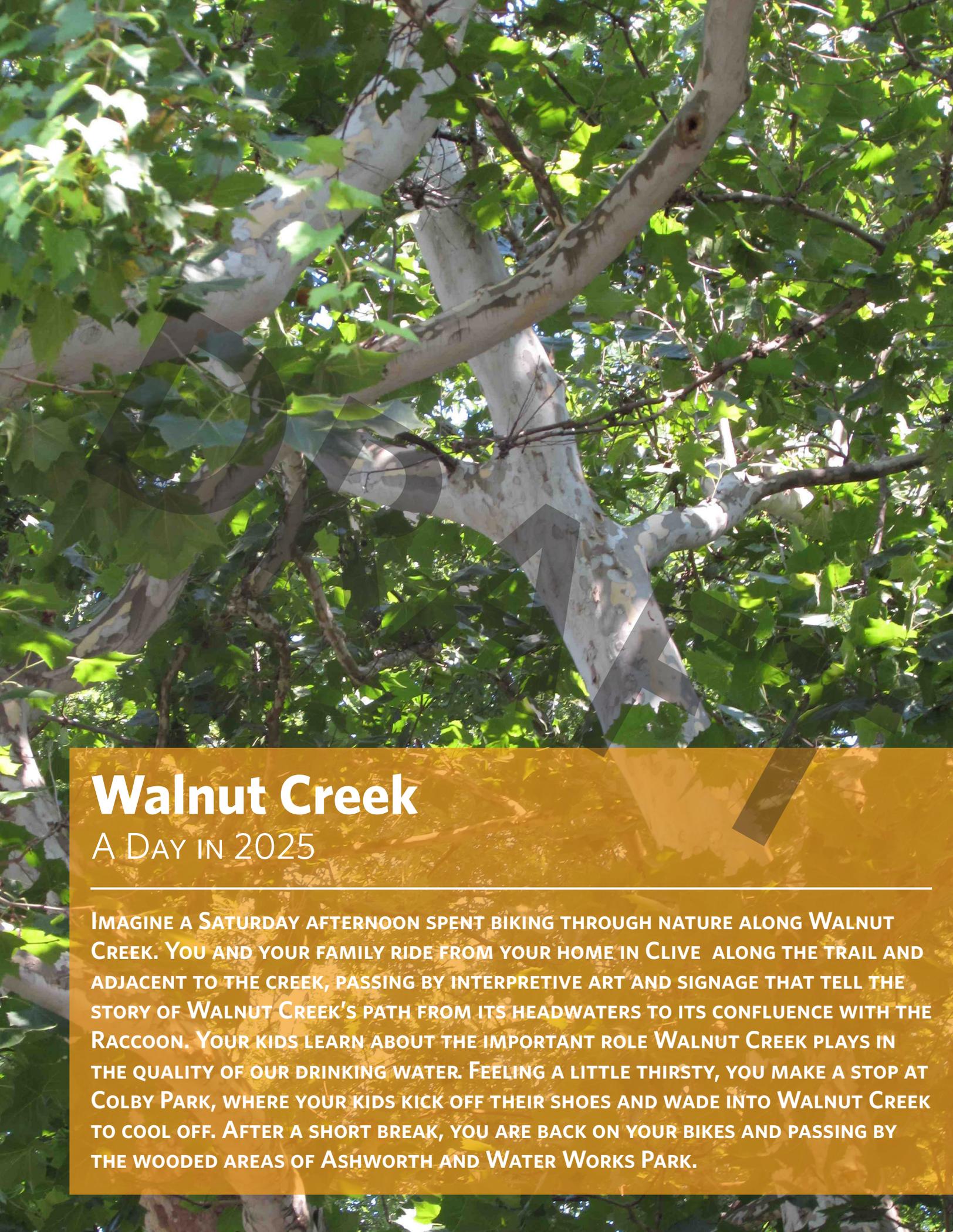
Soft Trails



Unpaved walking, hiking, and birding trails give people access to nature and offer a much different experience than paved trails. They also do not disrupt wildlife connections and can provide the opportunity for education programming.

- Education programming
- Interpretive signage for history or birding
- Maintenance and conservation





Walnut Creek

A DAY IN 2025

IMAGINE A SATURDAY AFTERNOON SPENT BIKING THROUGH NATURE ALONG WALNUT CREEK. YOU AND YOUR FAMILY RIDE FROM YOUR HOME IN CLIVE ALONG THE TRAIL AND ADJACENT TO THE CREEK, PASSING BY INTERPRETIVE ART AND SIGNAGE THAT TELL THE STORY OF WALNUT CREEK'S PATH FROM ITS HEADWATERS TO ITS CONFLUENCE WITH THE RACCOON. YOUR KIDS LEARN ABOUT THE IMPORTANT ROLE WALNUT CREEK PLAYS IN THE QUALITY OF OUR DRINKING WATER. FEELING A LITTLE THIRSTY, YOU MAKE A STOP AT COLBY PARK, WHERE YOUR KIDS KICK OFF THEIR SHOES AND WADE INTO WALNUT CREEK TO COOL OFF. AFTER A SHORT BREAK, YOU ARE BACK ON YOUR BIKES AND PASSING BY THE WOODED AREAS OF ASHWORTH AND WATER WORKS PARK.