

CENTRAL IOWA WATER TRAILS



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\$25 Million BUILD Grant Announced for Central Iowa Water Trails

The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), together with its partners working to implement Central Iowa Water Trails, today announces its receipt of a \$25 million grant from the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, or BUILD, grant program of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The grant will significantly accelerate the implementation of the Central Iowa Water Trails initiative, which includes 86 projects throughout the region. Specifically, the grant will help to activate a five-mile stretch of the Des Moines River by mitigating the Scott Avenue Dam and making improvements at three neighborhood access points. The Scott Avenue dam will be replaced with two drop crests that, in addition to improving safety, will provide recreational whitewater amenities and improved fish passage. The Scott Avenue project also includes improved fishing amenities along the riverbanks. Additionally, the grant will help pay for better user access and boat launches, portage, trails, and signage at Prospect Park, Birdland Marina and Harriet Street. The total cost of these four projects is \$31.25 million, 80 percent of which will be covered by the BUILD grant.

"I've said it before and I'll keep saying it until we're done: This is happening," said Dan Houston, Chairman, President and CEO of Principal and Board Chair of the Central Iowa Water Trails Incubator. "I can say this with complete confidence because of the tremendous support and partnerships of the many individuals and organizations backing this transformational quality-of-life project. And today we are witness to the depth of that support, which reaches to the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Iowa congressional delegation, to whom we are so deeply grateful for this grant."

The successful grant application was developed and submitted by the Des Moines Area MPO, one of five regional organizations working collaboratively through Capital Crossroads to support the Central Iowa Water Trails Incubator, along with Catch Des Moines, Great Outdoors Foundation, Greater Des Moines Partnership, and Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines.

"We're very proud of the MPO staff for nurturing this game-changing project since its infancy," said Steve Gaer, Mayor of West Des Moines and the MPO Chair. "We are incredibly grateful to the many partners from the public and private sectors who have rallied behind this vision and are pushing it into implementation. And I want to extend our deepest appreciation to our congressional delegation and the U.S. Department of Transportation."

T.M. Frank Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines and a member of the Incubator Board of Directors, said the Central Iowa Water Trails initiative is attracting outside investments that improve neighborhoods and water quality, for which he praised the coalition of regional partners, the Iowa congressional delegation and the U.S. Department of Transportation. He noted that these types of investments in water recreation are especially useful because they can be used to leverage additional outside funding for water quality projects.

"This grant goes to show that water recreation is a unifying catalyst for investing in Iowa's rivers, which serves to strengthen our neighborhoods and improve water quality," Mayor Cownie said. "Specifically, this project will include streambank restoration and improved natural habitat that support clean water goals, as well as enhancements to neighborhood parks. That's a win-win."

Hannah Inman, CEO of the Great Outdoors Foundation, the lead fund-raising organization for Central Iowa Water Trails, says the \$25 million BUILD grant validates the public-private nature of the project.

"This is a great example of what this community does," Inman said. "We come together from the public and private sectors to make big things happen. This is a once-in-a-generation legacy project with hundreds of champions, and we are especially thankful for

the support of our Incubator Board of Directors, our partner organizations, and our local, state and federal elected officials for making this happen.”

Members of Iowa’s congressional delegation supported the grant application and celebrated the news.

Senator Chuck Grassley said: “It’s great news that the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization has received a BUILD Grant for the water trails project. This project will ultimately help attract and retain both businesses and people in Central Iowa. I’m happy to have supported this application and look forward to the continued growth in the Des Moines area and the bright future of our state.”

Representative Cindy Axne said: “I am thrilled that the Des Moines Area MPO received this funding for their recreational water trails and dam mitigation project. The water trails project will greatly enhance recreation opportunities and spur economic growth throughout central Iowa. Additionally, mitigating the dangerous dam at Scott Avenue is an important step to improve public safety on the river. I was pleased to support the grant application and applaud the Department of Transportation for awarding it.”

About Central Iowa Water Trails

The Central Iowa Water Trails project will connect more than 150 miles of water trails and 86 access sites throughout the region. This multi-year project is led by the Central Iowa Water Trails Incubator. The Incubator is supported by a coalition of regional organizations working together through Capital Crossroads, including Catch Des Moines, the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, the Greater Des Moines Partnership, the Great Outdoors Foundation, and the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. For more information, visit www.centraliowawatertrails.org.

About Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

The 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.