



TRI-STATE TRAIL VISION VOICE

Another Successful Bike to Work Week in 2012

By Michael Loebach

Another successful Bike to Work Week has come and gone. The weather could not have been more perfect for the week. We had 84 riders for the week ranging in age from 20 to 79 years old! The average daily commute was 9 miles. The longest trip was 38 miles, and the shortest trip was 1 mile. In total, bicycle commuters rode over 3,100 miles! To put that in perspective, Tri-State bicycle commuters rode across the state of Iowa and back again 5

times! Assuming everyone would have driven a car instead of a bike for the week, Tri-State bicycle commuters reduced their CO2 emissions by an estimated 1.3 metric tons. Lastly, when considering the price of gas, Tri-State bicycle commuters ended the week not only healthier and greener, but wealthier too! Of course, just because the week is over doesn't mean you can't ride anymore. You can ride, free of charge, all summer. Thanks for all of your support, and I hope to see everyone riding to work or on the trails.



Reminders:

TSTV Membership Renewals are due now. Send a \$15 check made out to Tri-State Trail Vision to TSTV Treasurer Michael Loebach, 1155 Rosedale, Dubuque, IA 52001. Thanks!

BTWW Prize Winners at Stone Cliff Winery

Tri-State Trail Vision held "Happy Hour" to conclude Bike To Work Week on May 18, 2012 at the Stone Cliff Winery. The social hour included the selection of winners for the generous prizes donated by area businesses. Winners include:

Daniel Boice - \$100 gift certificate to Bicycle World
 Rick Loeffelholz - \$100 gift certificate to FreeFlight
 Steve Seeman - \$50 gift certificate to Bicycle World
 Joan Cheever - \$50 gift certificate to FreeFlight
 Dave Hartig - BTWW T-shirt & Dubuque 75-Year Anniversary Book
 John Kalyanapu - BTWW T-shirt & Dubuque 75-Year Anniversary Book
 Kevin Hammond - Bunker Hill Golf Course Weekday Twosome
 Ray Leppert - Single Day Family Pool Pass
 Ron Bensink - Single Day Family Pool Pass

Thanks to all our sponsors: Bicycle World, Free Flight, DBT, City of Dubuque, and the Telegraph Herald.

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Visit TrailVision.org, your tri-state trail resource, to see updates, meeting minutes, and maps!

From the desk of TSTV President Tony Zelinkas....

Sponsor a Mile of the Heritage Trail for the Dubuque Smart Plan Study

This is an opportunity for you to sponsor part of an exciting study that's about to take place. We're trying to raise \$650 (26 miles X \$25 per mile) to assist with travel and accommodations costs for researchers coming to Dubuque County later this summer. Heritage Trail was selected to be the subject of an American Planning Association voluntary planning process. Experts from around the country will visit and interview stakeholders, and study our trail and communities in order to recommend upgrades and funding opportunities that will make Heritage Trail a year-round premier recreational destination, with regional economic development capabilities. It's all part of the Dubuque County Smart Planning Consortium. Visit www.dubuquesmartplan.org/ for more information. (Also see a related article on page 6 of this newsletter about this organization's work.)

Tri State Trail Vision has contributed \$500 toward the amount needed to transport and house the researchers. Your contribution of \$25 will cover a "mile's worth" of the additional \$650 that we're hoping to raise. Make your check payable to "Tri State Trail Vision" and mail to TSTV Treasurer Michael Loebach, 1155 Rosedale, Dubuque, IA 52001. Contributions are needed by July 7th.

TSTV Revises Mission Statement

The January meeting of TSTV centered on the creation of a revised mission statement that will guide the organization in the near future. While Tri-State Trail Vision has accomplished much in its seven years of existence, a revision of the mission statement was needed. The new statement reads as follows:

Our mission is to promote safe hiking, bicycling, wellness, and sustainability in the Dubuque tri-state area. To accomplish this, we will:

- 1) advocate for strong civic and governmental action;
- 2) foster safety and human-powered activities; and
- 3) connect people to multi-use trails and bicycle friendly roads.

Created from the City of Dubuque's Vision 2010 Project in 2005, Tri-State Trail Vision formed with community advocates for walking, bicycling, and trail development. These enthusiastic members and city staff created an 80-page Master Plan that identifies and prioritizes future recreational trails and other infrastructure, which accommodates and enhances walking and bicycling in the greater Dubuque area.

The strategic planning goals set in October (see related article in the April 2012 newsletter) should guide TSTV members as they fulfill the community's Vision 2010 goal of expanded hiking and bicycling facilities and infrastructure. As we move into the next phase as an organization, we look forward to actively working to fulfill our mission.

Heritage Trail: a community asset for 30 years now

It may be hard to believe but the Heritage Trail is celebrating its 30th year. In the early 1980s, Dubuque County Conservation Director Joe Walton and several community members actively sought to turn the abandoned train right-of-way into a county park in one of the first Rails-to-Trails projects in the country. To realize the magnitude of so valuable an asset, its diverse flora and fauna, and the tenacity of the supporters, the Heritage Trail continues to be a mainstay of our community. The following article is a reprint from *The Iowan* magazine (Fall 1986), written by TSTV member Art Roche. Because of the length of the article, the second half will be included in the October TSTV Newsletter.

Heritage Trail: A Mountain Trail in Prairie Country (Part I)

by Art Roche

Late in 1886, the people of Dubuque County celebrated the completion of the last major railroad to be built in the upper Midwest, linking Dubuque to St. Paul and Chicago. The Chicago Great Western Railroad developed a reputation for innovation, which allowed it to compete successfully with larger railroads and stimulate growth of the communities it served.

One hundred years later, the old railroad is again the focus of innovatively used energy, and once again it is promoting growth and improving the quality of life of the surrounding area. But now the banked and curved bridges crisscrossing the Little Maquoketa River are used by bicyclists, hikers, and cross-country skiers instead of speeding locomotives and 200-car trains.

Heritage Trail is a 380-acre, 26-mile long recreation and conservation trail, which exhibits remarkable diversity in its 400-foot ascension from Dubuque to Dyersville. Rising westward from the Mississippi Valley at Sageville near Dubuque, the trail's numerous curves parallel the Little Maquoketa River. Rugged woodland and sheer limestone bluffs give way to native prairie as the trail climbs out of what has become known as the "Driftless Area" into the gentle rolling uplands of the Maquoketa River basin to Dyersville.

Construction of the railroad changed the face of nearly all the land contained in the 100-foot right-of-way, requiring either cutting through the rock bluffs or building up low areas. But a century of time has healed the wounds of railroad construction, leaving behind a narrow, nearly level corridor through a land with many of its original characteristics once again in evidence. In fact, a recently completed study of biotic communities along Heritage Trail by Thomas Blewett and Susan Miller of Clarke College reveals an inventory of 410 plant species including many rare prairie plants.

Heritage Trail illustrates why the Chicago Great Western was known as the "mountain railroad in prairie country." Construction techniques more akin to rail lines in the mountains to the east or west were used to minimize the expense of cutting through or building up the roadway where possible. Meandering along the valley's "path of least resistance," the trail's 53 curves and more than 30 bridges now give it special appeal for recreational use. The 1% grade (one foot rise for each 100 linear feet), which required as many as eight helper engines for the largest of the heavily laden freight trains travelling west from Graf, now seems practically level to touring bicyclists and hikers.

A great deal of the interest shown by naturalists in Heritage Trail seems to revolve around its unique interface of two very different types of landscapes and habitats. Perhaps that inspired the organizational structure, which led to its preservation, combining private initiative with public ownership. When the concept of Heritage Trail emerged, there was no clear idea of what was in store. In 1973, a county recreation plan was approved by a panel of 20 residents drawn from across the county. One of the major recommendations was for the Dubuque County Conservation Board to purchase the railroad from Dubuque to Dyersville if it was abandoned. Six years later, in 1979, railroad authorities declared the bridges unsafe for trains and ended service. Early 1981 brought official abandonment approval and the formation of Heritage Trail, Inc., a voluntary non-profit group formed to promote and assist the Dubuque County Conservation Board in acquiring the trail. Heartened by petitions signed by 2700 local residents urging trail acquisition, the group raised \$12,000 for a non-refundable down payment, and then another \$43,000 to add to county funds for the purchase of 25 miles of trail. An agreement was signed making the corporation responsible for planning, fundraising, and development of the county-owned trail. In all about \$235,000 was needed to acquire the land, and about \$5500 per mile for surfacing and fencing. Over half of the total cost of the trail was donated by local businesses and more than 1200 individuals, and the rest was matched by state and local funds.

(To be continued in the TSTV October newsletter)



The Mississippi River Bike Trail - The MRT (Part I)

(Adapted from MississippiRiverTrail.org by Jim Gonyier, TSTV board member and local MRT representative for Dubuque County.)

The Dubuque tri-state area is lucky to have the Mississippi River Trail (the MRT) traveling right through our front door. Coming in from Highway 52 on Dubuque's south side, the MRT travels through the Mines of Spain and up to Murphy Park. Then cyclists follow the Stoltz MRT signage on South Grandview, Southern Avenue, through downtown Dubuque to the East 22nd Street Trail, and out to Highway 52 North. The MRT then boasts a wide shoulder lane from the towns of Sageville, Sherrill and Balltown. From there, the MRT continues north towards Guttenberg.

Nationwide, the Mississippi River Trail follows along the Mississippi River from its headwaters in Itasca, Minnesota, to the Gulf of Mexico. There are approximately 3,000 miles of on-road bikeways and pedestrian and bicycle pathways for the recreational enjoyment, health, conservation and tourism development of river communities, river states, and the nation. The MRT makes use of existing trails and roadway right-of-way that are the closest safe routes along the river.

The MRT is located on both sides of the River and connects ten states, but it is more than just a trail. The Mississippi River Connections Collaborative represents a new prototype for large landscape, river-long resource restoration and protection that relies on a network approach to amplify the depth and reach of individual parks, trails, and refuges in aggregate and to monitor the relationship of human populations to these resources. This newly emerging collaborative is an informal network of local, state and federal refuge, park, and trail managers, alongside non-profit organizations that are committed to connecting people to the Mississippi River through:



- Recreation and river access;
- History, culture, and lore;
- Education and stewardship; and,
- By co-creation and co-delivery of resource-based messaging and programs.

Mississippi River Connections Collaborative seeks to provide people with physical and thematic connections to the river, thereby tapping unrealized potential to restore and protect this nationally significant resource. Unique attributes of the Mississippi contribute to its significance as a national treasured landscape. These include 10 national parks, 8 national scenic and historic trails, 32 national wildlife refuges, and dozens of state parks. A total of 326 species of North American birds use the river basin as a migratory flyway, stimulating wildlife-based recreation and tourism. More than 12 million people live in the 125 counties and parishes that border the river; and the river drains 41% of the contiguous United States, providing drinking water to more than 18 million people.

In order to find your way, MRT is proud to announce the development of the first ever Mississippi River Trail Guidebook. This publication offers superior route information broken into approximately 100-mile segments, offers lodging, camping and dining tips, and provides a unique "cyclist" perspective to exploring the Mississippi River Trail. The guide was published in Aug. 2008, contains 200 pages, and is available through a link on the web site. The cost is \$16.95.

(To be continued in the October newsletter)

Mississippi Trails Hiking Club Tales

by Howard Higley

It might well be that the Mississippi Trails Hiking Club is one of the earliest organized walking groups in Dubuque, Iowa. The first City Recreation Commission director, Bernard M. Joy, formed the club in May 1929. First by-laws stated that anyone 16 years or older should be of good moral character and disposition willing to abide by the by-laws. Members were able to join the club if they were voted in by other club members, could be on time at the appointed weekly meeting starting place and memorize the TTTT test (a difficult tongue twister). Annual dues were one dollar (now two dollars), coffee fees were 5 cents and coffee pot washing was a weekly duty by turns. No firearms were allowed, all gates opened were expected to be closed, no hard liquor allowed, and carpoolers were to pay one cent per mile to the hike location. All trash was to be picked up, at least two persons must walk together, all cooking fires to be put out with water by assignees who were to remain on watch after others had left, and no wildflowers were to be picked.

The picnic foods were cooked over the fire, eaten and shared, the coffeepot drained, the group singing favorites included "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree", "Reuben, Reuben", "Paper Doll", "Strolling through the Park", "Memories", "Hike, Hike", and "Hail, Hail." Records were carefully kept by the secretary, listing the hikers on every weekend, every year, and credit given out in the numerical list at the annual meeting. Club trips were made to Western states parks, to Mexico by bus and Chicago by train.

Now years and years later in 2012 we still hike every Saturday rain or shine, warm or cold, high numbers or a few and records are kept of every member to be credited at the annual meeting in June at the wonderful new EB Lyons interpretive center on Bellevue Heights Rd off Hwy 52 at Key West. Watch the Telegraph Herald calendar for weekly listings and join us for a great Saturday hike at your own pace with the Mississippi Trails Hiking Club.



Water Trail Ribbon Cutting set for June 23

by Pat Prevanas

What is a water trail you may ask? Similar to any recreational trail, it is a designated route for any paddle craft that's purpose is to provide users with information, an enjoyable experience, selected rest areas, trailheads with parking, and distance markings. Water trails are being designated around the country on lakes and rivers and are becoming just as popular as the land based recreational trails.

Dubuque's 9-mile trail, which is officially opening on Saturday morning June 23rd with a ribbon cutting in the Port of Dubuque, begins at A.Y. McDonald Park boat ramp and terminates at Massey Station County Park. Along the route are entry/exit points at the McAlece Recreation Area boat ramp, the Port of Dubuque American Trust Rivers Edge Plaza and the Mines of Spain Recreation Area canoe launch on Catfish Creek. Each of these four locations include signage indicating distances to the next exit point and interpretive signs describing the natural beauty of the Mississippi River, observable wildlife, aquatic vegetation and commercial uses of the river. See trail maps on the city website.

So grab your canoe, kayak or other paddle powered watercraft and explore Dubuque's newest recreational trail!

Smart Plan for Area Bikers and Pedestrians

By Dan Fox, ECIA Transportation Director

A “Smart Plan” for transportation sustainability was designed as a result of an Iowa grant by area cities. The purpose is to create pedestrian and bicycle access between and within area communities, thus increasing sustainability efforts.

In November of 2010, the State of Iowa awarded Dubuque County and the Cities of Asbury, Cascade, Dubuque, Dyersville, Epworth, Farley, and Peosta with a grant to create a regional plan for sustainable development. These seven cities and the county established the Dubuque Smart Planning Consortium. The primary goal of the Consortium is to create a “Smart Plan” that will incorporate the principles of sustainability into everyday life. Improving bicycle and pedestrian transportation will be a primary objective of the Smart Plan. The plan will encourage new capital improvement projects that incorporate a “Complete Streets” approach to street design. Using a Complete Streets approach, streets will be designed to accommodate all modes of transportation including transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Complete Streets represents a change in transportation priorities, putting safety and cost ahead of traffic speed and volume. The plan will also encourage long-term changes in urban form and land use such as increased density and mixed-use development that will reduce distances between destinations and make non-motorized transportation more viable in Dubuque County communities.

The Dubuque Smart Planning Consortium feels that these changes will improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists in the region and will improve the environmental and fiscal sustainability of our region. For more information or to provide input on the Smart Plan, please visit www.dubuquesmartplan.org, or contact Dan Fox at ECIA, 563-556-4166 or dfox@ecia.org.

Bike Friendly Community Honorable Mention

In August, Brian Walsh and City staffers received notification that Dubuque received an Honorable Mention ranking. Suggestions to improve our status for future applications included improving signage and bicycle lane/sharrow markings on city streets, acquiring a mountain bike area for recreation, and increasing the number of bike racks throughout the city. We were commended for the city’s passage of a “Complete Streets Policy,” the appointment of Laura Carstens as the city’s bicycle liaison, and biking amenities with the new city parking garage.

Visit Tri-State Trail Vision’s website to view minutes from our meetings and the Hike-Bike Master Plan at: www.trailvision.org

TSTV Newsletter Editor: Dianne Koch
 Contact me at diannekoch@msn.com with any suggestions.

Lend an ear and voice!



Join the Tri-State Trail Vision Blog at <http://tstvsp.blogspot.com/>

Keep up with discussions that arise between meetings.

Join in the discussion and learn more about TSTV.

Meet our members.

Coming in the October TSTV Newsletter:

Bike Season Highlights

Middle Fork Catfish Creek Trail Update

Results from the SmartPlan.org Study for the Heritage Trail

Progress on the Hwy 52 Overpass