

Trail Talk

By Steve Litts, Executive Director
Dickinson County Trails Board

THE RAILROAD

As I promised you last month, your questions have led me to realize that a review is needed about our purchase of the IANW RR and how DCTB sees that developing. The following outline will provide a clear picture of what has happened and how we believe the trail will develop in the future.

1. Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) purchased the IANW RR in 2009.
2. In 2010 Dickinson County and Osceola County formed a governing partnership called a 28E Agreement for the purpose of purchasing the RR right-of-way (r.o.w.) from INHF, and the construction of a recreational trail on that r.o.w.
3. This purchase agreement calls for four payments. The first two have been made, the third one is due September 1, 2011 and the last one September 1, 2014.
4. In 2010 the Dickinson/Osceola partnership received a State Recreational Trails Grant and used that award to purchase Section 4 of the RR r.o.w. from INHF.
5. In October, 2010 a State Transportation Enhancement grant application was submitted for the purpose of purchasing Sections 2 & 3 and to construct a trail bed on two trestles and one concrete arch in Dickinson County. If the grant is awarded, the construction would be done next summer/fall.
6. A third grant in 2011 will be required to complete our obligation to purchase the final section of r.o.w. and to construct a trail bed on two trestles and one concrete arch in Osceola County. If the grant is awarded, the trestle work would be done in 2012 and the final purchase payment would be made in 2014.
7. Work on trail construction over the r.o.w. would begin as additional grants were awarded. Because only one award can be given to a project in any given year, and the amount of grant money is limited, the 37 miles of trail construction will take several years. DCTB would likely begin the county's portion of the trail in Spirit Lake and move west towards Montgomery, Lake Park and the county line. Trail construction in Osceola County could start at the current Ed Winkle Memorial Trail and move east towards Ocheyedon, Harris and the county line. Those are decisions that will need more discussion.
8. The last segment of the r.o.w. to become a trail will likely be from Spirit Lake east, towards Superior. Best guess for that to happen would be 2025.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER TRAIL NEEDS?

An estimated 70,000 people ride, walk, skate or run the Dickinson County Trails each summer and many more use the trails for winter activities. As our trail system grows, usage in Dickinson and our surrounding counties continues to grow, and requests for more trails grow as well. Rest assured that during this time, DCTB will not ignore the other twenty-plus requested trail expansion projects. These trails are built with contributions from fund raising and from Federal, State and local foundation grants. Competing for grants and raising local match funds is not easy, but it is essential to

building new trails. Building the trails is just one part of the trail system's equation. Maintaining what is built is another key part of our trails system and DCTB has developed a five-year maintenance cycle to keep your trails in good condition.

FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Our annual fall membership drive will be coming to you soon. Be looking for the large Trails envelope that contains an updated Trails Map and 2011 Events Calendar along with membership information. Our trails exist because of the broad-based support received from hundreds of area Friends. We hope you will consider becoming a Friend, too. If you are not on our mailing list but would like to receive an information packet, contact me at PO Box 304, Okoboji 51355 and I'll send one out to you. Without your support for the required "Local Match," those grants would not be possible.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE INVOLVED IN A BICYCLE ACCIDENT

The following five easy steps are provided by the Iowa Bicycle Coalition:

Overall, biking accidents are not frequent events and typically don't involve cars. These five simple steps can make the process of dealing with any legal issues that come up from an accident much less stressful.

- Stay at the scene until the police arrive.
- Give the police a statement. Often the police will not ask a cyclist for their side of the story.
- Obtain witness and driver contact information.
- Document exactly what happened: Where and when the accident occurred, what the weather was like, how it happened and any injuries you suffered. Seek immediate medical care for even the smallest of injuries.
- Preserve evidence of the accident by taking pictures of any damage done to your bike, your clothing, or any equipment.

This concludes another issue of Trail Talk. Continue to check future columns and our web site at <http://www.co.dickinson.ia.us/departments/trailsboard.asp> for additional news on trail construction and activities. Until then, as always, Happy Trails to you and yours.