

Ogle County Greenways and Trails Plan

Purpose of the Plan

The Ogle County Greenways & Trails Plan serves multiple uses and objectives:

- 1 - It fulfills the need of residents and local planners for a long-range, visionary master plan for the green infrastructure of the region.
- 2 - It identifies the resources and opportunities for open space and recreational trail systems.
- 3 - It provides a strategy for linking communities with one another and with the natural and cultural resource areas via greenways and trail networks.

Conservation, economic development, and transportation planning at local and state levels is an ongoing process. In this context, it is critical that long range visionary and short term strategic planning for greenways and trails also be a continuing process, assuring that Ogle County will be ready to capitalize on opportunities as they arise. This plan has been conceived with public input as the frontline tool:

- define opportunities and priorities
- recommend courses of action

Intended users include open space, environmental, and recreational agencies and jurisdictions at all levels, from municipal and county to regional, and state. Conservation and recreational groups as well as planning officials will use it in their efforts to secure funding and promote the development of local plans and projects. With the assistance of this plan, Ogle County can link its resources to greenways and trails in neighboring counties. The goals are better environment, access to recreation for residents and visitors, and preservation of quality of life for everyone.

Among the benefits of greenways and trails planning are:

- Providing a framework for coordinated greenway and trail conservation and development.
- Assisting public agencies to allocate resources in support of plan priorities.
- Initiating a forum for discussion and resolution of greenway issues among government jurisdictions and private sector interests.
- Providing a basis for coordinating transportation, recreation, water quality, stormwater management, wildlife, and related programs, to advance conservation of greenways and reduce conflict with other development activities.
- Promoting understanding and encouraging stewardship of Ogle County's natural and cultural resources.

What is a Greenway?

A greenway is any linear open space established along either a natural corridor such as a stream valley or overlaid along a man-made corridor such as a converted railroad right-of-way, canal, scenic road or parkway. Like arteries linking vital organs, greenways connect parks, nature preserves, wetlands, streams, cultural and historic sites with each other and with populated areas.

Some greenways—though not all—are trails that allow humans passage into and through the natural world. Any natural or landscaped course for pedestrians or bicycles is a greenway.



The Rock River charms canoeists and kayakers with shaded islands and the surprising "wildness" of its vistas.

Oregon Trail Road, an historic route preserved as a township road, is a potential shared-use recreational trail connecting populations centers with rural scenery and greenway resources.

Not all greenways are publicly owned. Some may be established on private land by easements or other methods that protect valuable natural areas and cultural/historic sites or allow public access on trails. Some are managed to preserve ecological diversity. Others are purely recreational.

Types of Trails

Dedicated Trails are designed and built off-road for the exclusive use of pedestrians, bicyclists, cross-country skiers, skaters, people in wheelchairs, equestrians, or by motorized use such as snowmobiles. The uses allowed on each trail are established by the organizations and public agencies involved in its acquisition, development, and maintenance. Although more than one type of non-motorized use is allowed on most trails, motorized recreational vehicle traffic typically is segregated by location or season.

Shared-Use Trails are low-volume streets or rural roads designated and intended to be shared by existing vehicular traffic with proposed bicycle and other non-motorized uses. Generally shared-use trails will require at least some signage and perhaps paint striping to identify the routes and to alert motorists. Some may accommodate other uses such as equestrians or snowmobiling within the right-of-way, although not on the pavement. State law and local ordinances govern such uses.

Snowmobile Routes are seasonal trails on public right-of-way and on private land by arrangement with property owners. The actual pathways on private property may be altered from year to year. Permissions, mapping, and signing the routes are the responsibility of local snowmobile organizations. The extensive Tri-County snowmobile Trail system links 15 communities in Ogle County with one another and with neighboring counties.

Equestrian Trails occur primarily on and between public conservation areas and on privately owned land, including campgrounds, dude ranches, and horse-boarding farms. While horse-back riding is often separate from other uses, sometimes the trails may permit pedestrian and seasonal snowmobile use.

Canoe Trails may occur on any year-around or seasonally navigable waterway that is not obstructed by fences or fallen trees. Canoeists and kayakers generally prefer stream segments that require paddling skills or afford close-up nature viewing and a minimum of conflict with speed boats and jet skis.

ATV Trails are associated with off-road use and with rugged landscapes. Public access for motorized all-terrain vehicles may be limited primarily to supervised private or public ATV parks with trailer parking.

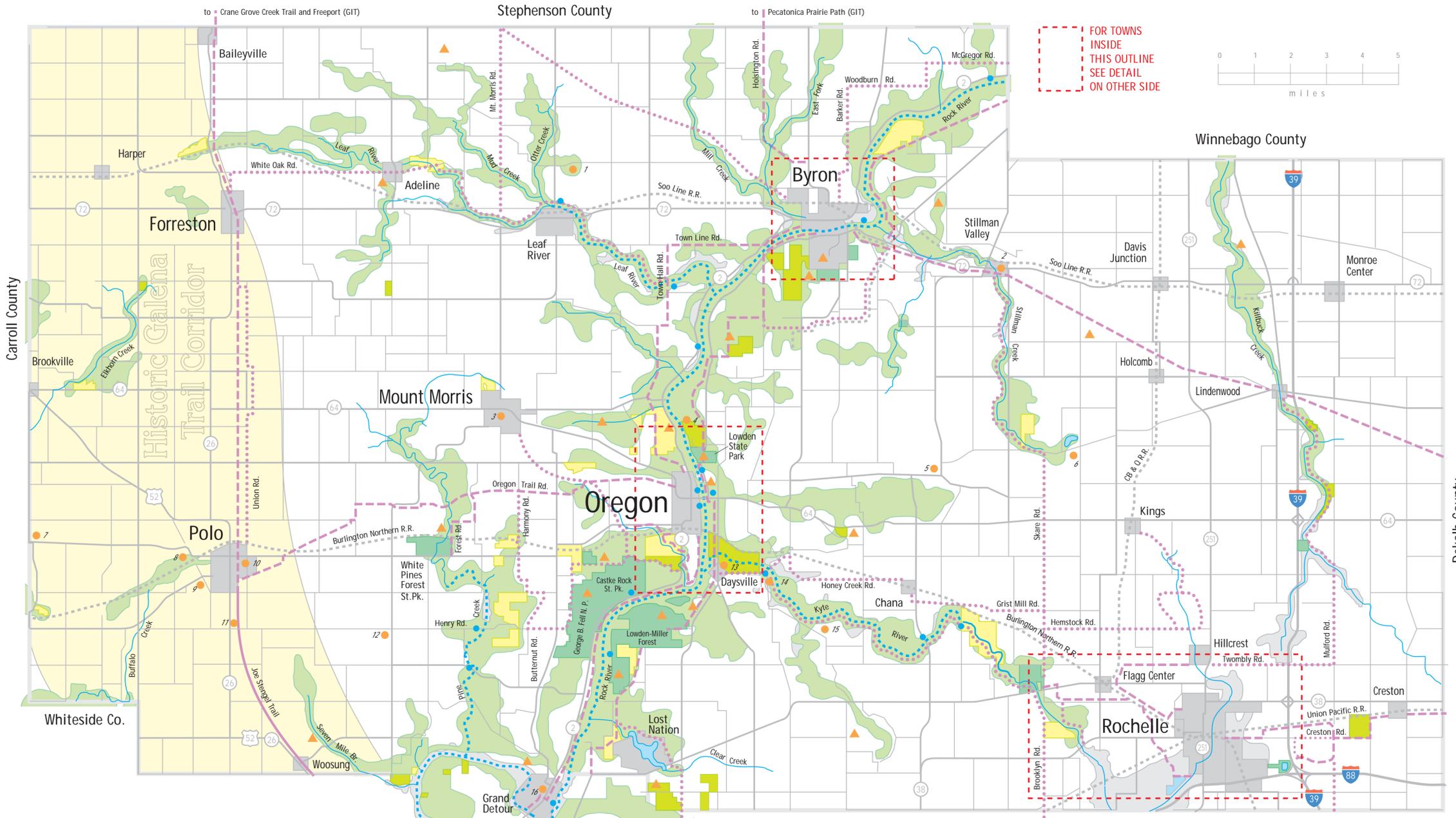
Patterns of History and Geography

The greatest concentration of sites with significant public values are to be found in or near the corridors of the major streams of the county: primarily the Rock River and secondarily the Kyte River and Pine Creek. The linear nature of stream corridors, the desirable biological diversity, scenic qualities, the limits to development imposed by steep slopes and flood plains, and the proximity to historic population centers combine to make these corridors the obvious locations for greenways stewardship in Ogle County. In some places they are also logical routes for trails that link natural resources to communities.

The development of railroads in the 19th century favored some settlements and created other towns and villages at regular intervals along their routes. By default, rail right-of-ways have also served as greenways and conservatories of native prairie vegetation. When abandoned with their roadbeds and bridges intact, they become logical trail routes linking the historic railroad towns.

Many of the early settlement travel routes across the open prairies of Ogle County are preserved in the present-day road alignments between towns and river crossings. Typically, the first travelers who laid out the roads relied on groves and mounds for landmarks. Wagon and coach roads angled and curved to avoid

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Ogle County Regional Greenways and Trails Plan

Historic Attractions

- 1 Lightsville settlement
- 2 Black Hawk War Battlefield Memorial
- 3 Pine Creek Seminary/Mount Morris College buildings, 1839/1884
- 4 Eagle's Nest Artists Colony campsite, cottages, & Ganymede's Spring, 1898-1942
- 5 Paine's Point settlement
- 6 White Rock Burg settlement on the Chicago & Iowa Trail
- 7 Eagle Point settlement
- 8 Polo Lime Kiln, ca. 1850 (restored)
- 9 Buffalo Grove/St. Marian settlement
- 10 Appleton House/Polo Historical Society
- 11 Henry School, 1878
- 12 Pine Creek settlement/Penn Corners
- 13 Daysville settlement
- 14 Watertown settlement
- 15 Washington Grove settlement
- 16 Grand Detour settlement/John Deere Historic Site /St. Peter's Episcopal Church (restored)
- 17 Brodie's Grove/Brodie's cabin site

Legend:

- Flood Plain
- Potential Greenways
- Public Greenspace
- Private Greenspace
- Recreational Areas (private and commercial campgrounds, religious, etc.)
- Canoe Access
- Historic Site
- Illinois Natural Inventory Site
- State / County Highway
- Township Road
- Existing Trail
- Potential Recreational Trail
- Potential Secondary Trail
- Rail Road
- River & Streams
- Potential Canoe Trail



Backbone of Ogle County's greenways plan, the Rock River links numerous tributary stream corridors and upland forest areas.



Access to nature preserve trails and the Pine Creek at White Pines Forest State Park is both an economic asset and an unequalled greenways resource.

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