



# Survey of User Opinions

Central Iowa Trails May 2005

**Sponsored By:** Central Iowa Trails Advisory Committee of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

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Welcome to an online forum for your thoughts and comments regarding the Central Iowa Trails System. The Central Iowa Trails Advisory Committee is now developing an innovative communications plan for Central Iowa Trails, which will guide the consistent use of signage, maps and electronic medial by the various jurisdictions developing trails in Central Iowa.

We would like your opinions regarding ways in which we can provide better public information for trail users in Central Iowa. Please indicate the selection which most closely expressed your views: Very Useful, Somewhat Useful, Probably Would Not Use, or No Opinion – *Note: Completing this survey takes approximately 10 minutes.*

- Listed below are some of the ways in which information about Central Iowa Trails could be provided to trail users. For each type of media, please indicate how useful you might find it.

Type of Media	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Probably Would Not Use	No Opinion
a. Self-guided printed brochures	65%	26%	9%	0%
b. On-site exhibits and displays	47%	45%	7%	1%
c. Web sited devoted to Central Iowa Trails	77%	18%	4%	0%
d. Newsletters and special mailings	16%	50%	30%	4%
Other? Please Specify.				

### Regarding Self-Guided Printed Brochures

- Inexpensive maps (no glossy) & good web site would do it nicely, take the extra money and improve trails!
- Printed maps of greenbelts thru neighborhoods and how they plan to hook everything together.

### Regarding On-Site Exhibits and Displays

- On site exhibits require maintenance and are subject to vandalism.
- Don't believe that most people know how many miles of trails that are available even on a section of trail that they may use frequently. Putting displays at major starting points would be very beneficial.
- DOT Maps or DNR Maps and brochures at all state parks and rest areas
- I prefer trailside boards with mileage and features of the trail.
- Information on safety. Basic rules for passing someone or what to do when approaching someone.
- Maps are the main item for on-site
- On site exhibits might be helpful if you're unfamiliar with the area and to help direct you to restrooms and other areas of interest but if I'm riding, I usually will look ahead of time so an on-line reference or printable map would be best.
- Signage along the trails, with mile markers and interesting tidbits
- Signage on the trails
- Signs information along the trails - interpretive on Natural history and cultural history along the trail
- Urbandale's trail signs are nice. They have a "your are here" and show the immediate trail options. It would be nicer to have a larger area shown.
- We walk the trail around Des Moines and it would really help to have map drawings of the immediate area posted along the trails to show where the trail all goes to.
- Signs at every divide in the trail so that you know where each branch will go.

**Regarding Web site devoted to Central Iowa Trails**

1. A web site would be good other than that
2. Ability to print map / guide from website
3. Brochures could be pdfs. Always available and accessible before one uses a trail
4. I plan my routes before leaving home. Therefore, I would almost always use the web, provided all forms of media provide the same information.
5. If there was a website I would not need the brochures.
6. Just make sure the best information available is on Bikelowa.com.
7. The current web sites work great they need to be able to link to a site with good PDF forms or maps.
8. A web site that details each trail would be nice.

**Regarding Newsletters and Special Mailings**

1. Mailings are expensive.
2. Newsletter and special mailing by email only. I think it would be a waste of money for printed material and paper mailings.

**Other types of information/comments**

1. Announcements on TV/radio news of any trail closings, new construction, major events, etc.
2. Don't waste money on B/S
3. Free brochures at bike shops
4. Hand outs given to the various cycling linked groups in the areas to be given to the groups during their respective meetings
5. I think all of the media above can be described as very useful. I always read whatever on-site exhibits and displays found on the trail.
6. Include in convention & tourism information as well as chamber of commerce web sites. Need to get info out there for potential visitors from out of state.
7. Information in local newspapers would be helpful. Perhaps every 9 or 12 months.
8. Media announcements/ articles in national magazines like camping life, etc.
9. Neighborhood association newsletters
10. Newspaper articles
11. No need to advertise the trail just spend money to make more/better trails
12. Please make sure to include "Water Trails" too.
13. Radio
14. The more diverse the media, the more people it reaches. Look at Capital Striders as an example.
15. TV or other advertisements in newspaper, I have to know the trail exists before I can use it.

2. Listed below are types of information regarding the Central Iowa Trails System that could be useful to people who **are planning a trip with a printed guide or a web site**. Please indicate how useful you feel each type of information would be for **planning** a trail trip. Please indicate a selection for each topic.

Type of Information	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Probably Would Not Use	No Opinion
a. Agency Responsible for the Trail Management – How to Contact	29%	47%	24%	1%
b. City & County Boundaries – Knowledge of	11%	50%	37%	1%
c. Commercial Services (i.e. convenience stores, food, shopping, bike shops)	67%	30%	3%	0%
d. Connections with Other Trails	97%	3%	0%	0%
e. Cultural, Historical and Natural Landmarks	44%	48%	8%	0%
f. Emergency Services – How to Contact	50%	42%	6%	2%
g. Future Trail Development Plans	31%	54%	14%	1%

Type of Information	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Probably Would Not Use	No Opinion
h. General Physical Description of Individual Trails (i.e. trail length, difficulty, surfacing)	84%	14%	2%	0%
i. History of Individual Trails	7%	56%	36%	0%
j. Information on Trail Distance between access points	88%	11%	1%	0%
k. Location of Nearby Major Roads and Highways	65%	32%	4%	0%
l. Map - All Major Central Iowa Trails	76%	23%	1%	0%
m. Maps - Individual Trails	73%	23%	4%	0%
n. Parking Areas Near Trails	73%	23%	4%	0%
o. Parks, Picnic Shelters and Recreation Areas	52%	40%	7%	1%
p. Photos of Trail Characteristics	12%	55%	31%	2%
q. Public Restrooms and Drinking Water	73%	24%	3%	0%
r. Public Telephones	18%	41%	39%	2%
s. Regulations Governing Trail Use	27%	45%	26%	2%
t. Sample Trip Itineraries	13%	42%	43%	1%
u. Seasonal Maintenance Conditions (i.e. high water, snow removal, etc.)	36%	45%	18%	1%
v. Temporary Construction Obstacles - Knowledge of	53%	37%	10%	0%
w. Things to See and Do Along the Trail	43%	43%	13%	1%
x. Trail Heads and Access Points	83%	16%	1%	0%
y. Trail Use Tips and Common Courtesy/Etiquette	26%	54%	19%	1%
z. Where to Get Additional Information on Individual Trails	45%	49%	5%	1%
Are there other types of trip planning information you would find useful? Please specify.				

1. Bike groups 3x
  - a. Web based user board showing groups, (teams) that are planning trips and ways to join the trip.
  - b. Contact info for trail clubs - often members would meet people and give them a tour. Especially for riding off-road trails.
2. Bike repair/rental shops 4x
  - a. Bike rental shops for those who may not want to travel with their own bicycle or are unable to, or want to rent a type of bike they don't own (tandem, recumbent, side-by-side, tag-along, etc.)
3. Campground locations 6x
4. Website information 4x
  - a. Certainly an up-to-date website would be a very handy tool which could take care of a number of the above topics. Maps are always good. Natural history information is always good. Both can be handled with pdfs.

- b. Online is GREAT!! Ya still have to print it out and take it with you! Make maps print on an 8.5 x 11 piece of paper.
  - c. Web based-downloadable
  - d. A wiki or blog for exchanging information on lesser trails would be very useful.
5. Amenities 3x
- a. Family-friendly amenities (playgrounds, pools, changing tables, etc.)
  - b. Where I can fill my water bottle.
  - c. It's key to know what other amenities are available. Need to have other interaction besides the trails. Think of Lansboro, MN and Root River Trail. They have other reasons to visit besides biking. For example: shops, food outlets, bike shops, theater, etc. That way, people can come for several days and not just for biking.
6. Detailed Physical Descriptions 11x
- a. GPS coordinates for major and minor trail elements
  - b. Hills
  - c. Location of scenic overlooks
  - d. Overall smoothness rating of the trail and the age of the HMA or PCC pavement surfacing.
  - e. Warn users which sections of trail are in really lousy condition for cycling and skating.
  - f. Traffic patterns (Grays Lake is very busy on such days at such times.)
  - g. Daily trail conditions would be very helpful. For example: "Bill Riley trail is currently under water in the four usual places..."
  - h. I think having trail distance markers as to how long the trail is would be very helpful. Also I think it would be nice to have distance markers ever .25 miles or so for those people who do not get on the trail at a certain starting point, but yet they can still determine how far they traveled.
  - i. Just need info on were trail is and how long it is the rest is B/S
  - j. Whether the road crossings are grade level or grade separation.
7. Hotels, Motels, Bed & Breakfasts, Restaurants, Bars with outdoor patio locations 8x
- a. I would like to see a recommended "bed & breakfast loop" as a way to promote central Iowa trails to potential out of towners.
  - b. Would biking attire be acceptable in the local restaurants
8. I am particularly interested in single-track mountain bike trails.
9. Weather 2x
- a. Links (web) to weather conditions in the area of the trail
  - b. Weather patterns, wind speed and direction.
10. Timing of community events/celebrations so that trail could be used as a "draw" to these events.
11. Fee Information 2x
- a. Locations to pay fees and amount of fees where applicable.
  - b. User fees, if any,
12. New trails not helping people plan a trip!
13. Signs like the freeway - For example - "This destination" turn right here.
14. Spend money on trail up keep
15. The more user friendly the trails are, from a trip planning perspective, the lower the barrier to entry for entry-level and inexperienced cyclists.
16. Future Trail Development Plans and History of Individual Trails, while useful information, would not help you plan a bike trip. Commercial Services, Seasonal Maintenance Conditions & Temporary Construction Obstacles are items that would need to be updated frequently. Print media in particular may not be appropriate for them.

3. Listed below are types of information regarding Central Iowa Trails that could be useful to people who **are actually using a trail. This information could be presented on signs or information kiosks.** Please indicate how useful you feel each type of information would be for **participating** in a trip on a trail in Central Iowa. Please indicate a selection for each topic.

Type of Information	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Probably Would Not Use	No Opinion
a. Agency Responsible for the Trail Management – How to Contact	29%	43%	26%	2%
b. City & County Boundaries – Knowledge of	20%	42%	34%	3%

Type of Information	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Probably Would Not Use	No Opinion
c. Commercial Services (i.e. convenience stores, food, shopping, bike shops)	69%	27%	3%	1%
d. Connections with Other Trails	83%	15%	1%	1%
e. Cultural, Historical and Natural Landmarks	39%	46%	13%	1%
f. Emergency Services – How to Contact	58%	36%	4%	2%
g. Future Trail Development Plans	18%	45%	36%	2%
h. General Physical Description of Individual Trails (i.e. trail length, difficulty, surfacing)	60%	31%	9%	1%
i. History of Individual Trails	11%	45%	41%	3%
j. Information on Trail Distance between access points	82%	14%	3%	1%
k. Location of Nearby Major Roads and Highways	57%	36%	6%	1%
l. Map – All Major Central Iowa Trails	42%	36%	20%	2%
m. Maps - Individual Trails	66%	28%	5%	2%
n. Parking Areas Near Trails	59%	29%	10%	2%
o. Parks, Picnic Shelters and Recreation Areas	56%	37%	5%	1%
p. Photos of Trail Characteristics	9%	40%	49%	2%
q. Public Restrooms and Drinking Water	80%	17%	2%	1%
r. Public Telephones	29%	38%	31%	3%
s. Regulations Governing Trail Use	29%	47%	21%	3%
t. Sample Trip Itineraries	11%	32%	54%	3%
u. Seasonal Maintenance Conditions (i.e. high water, snow removal, etc.)	36%	39%	22%	3%
v. Temporary Construction Obstacles – Knowledge of	70%	24%	4%	2%
w. Things to See and Do Along the Trail	42%	46%	11%	1%
x. Trail Heads and Access Points	74%	19%	5%	2%
y. Trail Use Tips and Common Courtesy/Etiquette	33%	43%	22%	1%
z. Where to Get Additional Information on Individual Trails	32%	44%	21%	2%
Are there other types of information you would find helpful while using the Central Iowa Trails System? Please Specify.				

1. Maps 2x
  - a. A map with distances and points of interest. Much of the rest of important info could go on the back.
  - b. I would think that putting a large map of central Iowa trails in each library would be good.
  - c. Better diagrams of access points on the printed maps. With such tiny drawings on most maps, one can't always find the access points (and they are will hidden in some central Iowa cities - almost as if they only want their own residents to know about them and not furriers scouting their mcmansions.)
2. Campgrounds facilities locations 4x
3. Swimming Beaches locations
4. Hotels, Motels, Bed & Breakfasts locations
5. Amenities Locations 5x
  - a. Location of family-friendly amenities
  - b. Location of rest stops with seating, shade, restrooms. Availability of snack shops offering beverages, pie, ice cream, etc.
  - c. Not just info, but dispensers and receptacles for per waste might encourage folks to do the right thing and clean up after their pets - Mutt Mitts is one brand.
  - d. Shower Facilities
  - e. Where I can fill my water bottle.
6. Detailed Physical Descriptions/Trail Markers/Signage 8x
  - a. E911/GPS coordinates which correspond with trail features and mileage signs
  - b. It would be nice to know distances to nearest trail from different points between start and finish of a trail or at any cross roads. ie. halfway through the Boundaurant to Baxter trail is Colfax, it would be nice to know if there was another trail somewhere going a different direction out of Colfax
  - c. Location markers along trail to verify location in case of emergency
  - d. I just returned from a 5-day stay in MN near the Heartland and Paul Bunyan Trails. I paid particular attention to how the signage guided me, not only for trail connections, bit to retail outlets, refreshments, etc. They do a GREAT job to let the trail users know where they are and what is available in towns!
  - e. Identification signage for poison ivy, oak etc.
  - f. Connectivity is KEY! If locals cannot find their way between trails, links, lanes, etc., how will those from other states?
  - g. Overall smoothness rating of the trail and the age of the HMA or PCC pavement surfacing.
  - h. Where you are when you are at the kiosk and distance to the next facilities is the most important to me while I am at the trail.
7. Bike Maintenance Shops locations
8. Fee Information
  - a. Locations to pay fees and amount of fees where applicable.
9. Sag wagon
10. Additional Comments
  - a. Didn't want to take the time to answer the same questions twice. All answers are the same as the first time the questions were asked.
  - b. How much info do I need? It's a bike trail!
  - c. Information about how one could volunteer to help keep the trail area clean such as annual pick up days.

## Please check one answer for each of the following seven questions.

### 4. Which statement best describes how effective you think the currently available information is regarding Central Iowa Trails?

- 1% The quality of the information that is available to me is above my expectations and needs as a trail user.
- 21% The quality of the information that is available to me is about just right.
- 58% The quality of the information that is available to me is below my expectations and needs.
- 13% I am not aware of any information provided about Central Iowa trails.
- 7% I am not familiar enough with the Central Iowa trails to comment one way or another.

### 5. Where is your residence located?

- 75% Within one of the Des Moines metropolitan communities (Des Moines, West Des Moines, Clive, Ames, Altoona, Johnston, Urbandale, Windsor Heights, Norwalk, Altoona, Pleasant Hill, Waukee, Slater, Carlisle, Indianola, Madrid, Woodward)
- 15% Within the rural areas of Polk, Story, Warren, Dallas, Boone, Warren and Madison Counties and outside of Des Moines metropolitan communities
- 9% Outside of Central Iowa
- 2% Outside of Iowa

### 6. On average, how frequently do you use trails in Central Iowa?

- 2% I never use trails in Central Iowa
- 16% I rarely use trails in Central Iowa
- 19% Once a month
- 13% Once every two weeks
- 29% Once a week
- 22% Nearly every day

### 7. What is your PRIMARY reason for using Central Iowa Trails?

- 6% Relaxation
- 48% Recreation
- 34% Fitness
- 6% Transportation from one place to another
- 5% Other
  - a. To explore Iowa countryside and communities
  - b. Training for Ragbrai
  - c. Poor condition of Saylorville Trail keeps me from using it more.
  - d. Too hard to get to
  - e. A great way to see and experience Iowa firsthand.
  - f. I use trails to bike to work and for recreation
  - g. Hard to differentiate.... b c and d
  - h. Transportation and Fitness
  - i. All of the above
  - j. Quality active family time - to enjoy the peaceful countryside trails
  - k. Usually a walk with the kids
  - l. To avoid unconcerned motorists and becoming a victim of a biking accident.
  - m. Sometimes ride to work
  - n. Natural history, geography
  - o. Letters A, B, and C
  - p. I also use a short trail to get to work (part of the way) on my bike.
  - q. Health and Fitness
  - r. I would like to use for transportation, only if more trails are built.

### 8. When you use trails in Central Iowa, what is your primary mode of travel?

- 25% Pedestrian (walker and runners)
- 72% Bicycle
- 1% In-line skater
- 0% Equestrian
- 2% Other
  - a. Water
  - b. running
  - c. electric bicycle - I have a disability
  - d. Cyclists really need to know the rules (including courtesy).

- 9. Where do you most often begin your travel on Central Iowa Trails?**
- 43% Directly from home
  - 4% Directly from work
  - 53% I drive from home or work to a trail head and begin my trail use at a parking area
- 10. For most occasions, do you use Central Iowa Trails as:**
- 32% An individual
  - 55% With one or two other people
  - 13% With a group of three or more people

## Optional Questions –

### When you think of Central Iowa Trails, what visual image(s) or graphic theme(s) would you suggest be used for promotional and public information brochures and presentations?

1. Arched bridges (such as Hoy Bridge near Rhodes)
  - a. Neat bridges (such as in Urbandale)
  - b. High bridge between Madrid and Woodward when it is built.
  - c. Perhaps the Kate Shelley bridge with some bikers on the dirt road below, talk about breathtaking!
2. Wheels: Conastoga wagon wheels spinning into bicycle wheels
3. Physical activity and healthy lifestyles with families
  - a. Bikes and walkers
  - b. A trail, and/or Walking, running, bicycling, rollerblading, hiking
  - c. Not a bicycle; the paths are multi-use.
  - d. Recreational - Health/Fitness
  - e. Something simple and easy to recognize, possibly incorporating a bike and hiker
  - f. Multiple activities such as bikes, walking, blading
  - g. Biking along a river or through a park
  - h. Family biking together 4x
  - i. People riding bikes 2x
  - j. A chain with a different activity (walking, biking, rollerblading, etc.) in each chain link. Seems the focus of the trails lately is trying to get the individual trails "linked" together.
  - k. A Bicycle
  - l. People using the trails, biking, hiking, walking, attractions near trails, convenience stores, etc 2x
  - m. "Young and not so young adults having fun inline skating and riding their bikes. I do both - a lot - and would be happy to supply some folks to pose for you.
  - n. An image of more than just bikers, include the roller bladers, runners and walkers
  - o. Bicycle/Hiking/Skating signs on roadways near trails.
  - p. Family theme, trails link together for more than recreation or relaxation purpose. Alternative mode of transportation (if weather permits) used to promote a healthy lifestyle.
  - q. I would look at using some reference to Ragbrai for some or maybe look at the tour de France, But I am bias more to biking than running or walking on the trails.
  - r. fun, fitness and family
  - s. family,friends,individuals,biking and enjoying free time,
  - t. Multiple Use (ie collage of bike w/ burly, racer, inline, dogwalker, wheelchair, speedwalker)
  - u. Fitness Accessibility
  - v. A middle aged lady on a bike (which would show that all women can feel safe biking alone on the trails and that it's not just hell-bent for leather spandexed hardbodies)
4. Natural Landscapes
  - a. Tall Grass Prairie, native species
  - b. Possibly a tree-lined curvilinear trail fading to a vanishing point
  - c. Trees and water
  - d. Rivers and Greenbelts (Chichaqua, Des Moines, Raccoon River Greenbelt areas)
  - e. Rolling hills, highway a half mile away, trail is open but then leads into trees (I think I'm actually thinking of a spot east of Adel on the RRVT).

- f. I would think a picture looking down a trail covered by a forest canopy with sun poking through.
  - g. Rivers and rolling hills.
  - h. Outdoor beauty, clean, safe, used by all ages
  - i. CORN 2x
  - j. Nature (trees, wildlife, creeks/streams)
  - k. Flowers, birds, and small animals
    - i. A meadowlark perched on a trail sign
    - ii. Gold Finch on a bike
  - l. A contemporary design showing a trail w/canopy and user w/great vegetation
  - m. Scenic, well maintained (except for large portions of the trail to Adel)
  - n. Scenic trails
  - o. I think of trails that are dappled with sunlight and shade from nearby trees, rural scenery with rolling hills, native grasses, and red-winged blackbirds, Trails with curves, hills, sun, shade, and people using them in a variety of ways, and trails that cross over creeks and streams.
  - p. The creeks that run along and the wild flowers that line the trails that I use most.
  - q. Peaceful, relaxed, serenity, trees and beautiful countryside.
  - r. The beautiful views seen along the way. Lots of trees, wildflowers, and smaller wildlife.
  - s. Corn fields are not good. I love the trails in Wisconsin because there are so many trees along most of the trails.
  - t. Scenic natural resources areas background with biker or walker shown using the trail
  - u. A natural Iowa setting – Iowa on bike.
  - v. Scenery, the beauty of the trees, shrubs, flowers,
  - w. Trees, downtown skyline, grays lake, river
  - x. Solitude-a picture of an open empty trail path with trees arching overhead...
  - y. Native plants - woodland & prairie - perhaps an oak leaf & a pale purple conflower flowerhead shape - they're both distinctive
  - z. Play up the natural history. These are all transects through all kinds of habitats, ecosystems, and geographical/geological features. Get some naturalists to do individual trail guides which can either be downloaded or purchased for a nominal price.
  - aa. A trail cutting through a field of corn/soybeans as it heads into the city
  - bb. Photo of DSM river along a trail
  - cc. As a runner, a "tree canopy" trail that blocks direct sun would best entice me to use the trail.
  - dd. Tree covered trail!
  - ee. Curvilinear trail with trees and wildlife in background, walkers in groups, joggers, and bike riders.
  - ff. Bikes, trees, rivers, grasses, trees
  - gg. Photos that demonstrate the variety of scenery – woodlands, hills, prairies, wetlands, streams
  - hh. Views of DM skyline, rural or recreational vistas
5. Connections to the whole community –
- a. Linkages - spider web
  - b. "Tying a community together" But I need to be able to get from West Des Moines to downtown Des Moines via trail. Today, there is no route.
  - c. From the city to the country-we need to tie in the fact you can ride from home many trails
  - d. Visual: spider-web-like image inside pic of Iowa to illustrate the web of trails we have.
  - e. Trails for transportation
  - f. Something that suggests connecting all parts of town together by trails. 2x
  - g. I think that there should be a theme developed that supports the "overall" central Iowa trail concept but also embraces unique character of the local trail segments.
  - h. Something connected.
  - i. Central Iowa Trails - the connection between communities
  - j. Connectivity of trails for loop rides of different lengths, and difficulties to suit all tastes.
  - k. Bike/Hub with spokes
  - l.
6. Related to Railroads
- a. If you are suggesting a brand identity then I would suggest building on the theme of a railroad since most of the trails come from these origins. The trails are unique and should be branded in a way that does not align with a central Iowa theme since most people think about their community differently.
  - b. Rails to Trails, downtown DSM images

- c. Rivers and railroads
7. Peace, freedom from traffic, congestion, hecticness
    - a. Riding the trails in Central Iowa, or anywhere for that matter, is like holding church service in God's natural church. Great place to relax and take in the sights or put your head down and work hard
    - b. Quietness. Beauty of the vegetation and terrain. (Someone needs to figure out how one can bicycle to the Neil Smith Trail from the local trails in Johnston in a safe manner). I would be glad to help serve on the committee since I have been an active bicyclist for over 30 years.
  8. Available year long
  9. Personal safety, hazard-free paths
  10. I would like to see tourism pushed in literature - Emphasize the friendliness of rural Iowans too.
  11. Neal Smith
  12. Slogans
    - a. Make it a destination point
    - b. If you build more trails the people will come to them
    - c. "Go anywhere by Trail in Iowa"
    - d. "Miles-n-Miles..."
    - e. "I BIKEIOWA... Do You?"
    - f. A Labyrinth of Fun! (Especially after the new sections are complete)
    - g. CIT
  13. Additional Comments
    - a. Improve the product, save money by not using brochures and presentations. Don't pay marketing or publicity stuff - simply make the trails better and provide maps on a web site.
    - b. Save the funding for glossy images and provide simple maps, printed and on-line. Put the money into the trails themselves (construction & maintenance).
    - c. I think of fixing a flat tire on the poorly maintained Neil Smith Trail. (Saylorville leg)
    - d. Detailed and colorful maps, with mileage, terrain noted
    - e. Maps of trails and the saver roads to connect to the next trail.
    - f. Bicycle edition DOT state of Iowa maps to continue and be expanded to show the trails highlighted/imposed over the highway system map.
    - g. Huge potential - not there, yet. Once we're closer to the finished product, we'll have one of the premier trail systems in the Midwest. That's a big selling point to the young, the active, and the not so active.
    - h. A map that shows how all trails link together or will link together
    - i. Clearly mark on a map the start and finish of trail showing major cross roads or street intersections on some type of map developed just for trails. Map should provide a blow up section for the specific area in town for the starting point.
    - j. I have never heard of "Central Iowa Trails" and can't tell from this survey if it is an organization or what. Most of my info comes from INHF Iowa trails books.

### **Which is your favorite Central Iowa Trail?**

1. 4-Mile Creek Greenway Trail/Gay Lea Wilson Trail 10x (Pleasant Hill to Altoona)
2. Bill Riley 7x
3. Boone at McHose Park
4. Brushy Creek
5. Cedar Valley Trail
6. Chichaqua Trail 17x (Bonderant to Baxter 4x)
7. Clive Greenbelt 14x (though I wish it were longer with more connections and better maintained)
8. Gray's Lake-Meredith Trail 8x
9. Great Western Trail 24x (to Martensedale)
10. Heart of Iowa Nature Trail
11. Heritage Trail
12. Johnston area in back of HyVee

13. Jordan Creek Trails 2x
14. Lake Red Rock Trails 2x
15. McVeigh
16. Neal Smith/Pat Dorian 45x (south of dam, north is too rough) (For me, it has everything to offer, a lake, woods, prairie and its connectedness and access to the metro and rural areas.) (Johnston to Des Moines) (to Saylorville) (Saylorville Dam to Birdland Marina 2x) (Big Creek) (Polk City to Cumming) (covers everything from downtown Des Moines up to Big Creek 3x) (Des Moines River from downtown to Polk City)
17. Raccoon River Valley Trail 25x (Waukee to Jefferson 2x) (Waukee to Yale) (north end)
18. Soper's Mill in Story County
19. Story county greenbelt, McFarland to Story City
20. Summerset Trail 7x
21. Sycamore Trail - unpaved
22. Walnut Creek Trail (can't wait until it's completed, need link to other trails & around major roads)
23. All of them 5x
24. No particular favorite 2x
25. Opportunities to camp along the trail for long rides
26. The trails that are the widest

**Outside of Central Iowa, which other trail system(s) would you recommend the Central Iowa Trails Advisory Committee examine as a potential model for signage, brochures, website design, etc.?**

**Iowa**

1. Boone (seven oaks)
2. Sycamore trail
3. Cedar Valley Trail network
4. George Wyth Trail System in Cedar Falls/Waterloo area 4x
5. Sugar Bottom Recreation Area - IA City/Coralville 4x
6. Heritage
7. Prairie Pathways trail system in Cedar Falls/Waterloo area
8. Raccoon River Trail 2x (Outstanding example of what a trail should be.)
9. Iowa Great Lakes Trail or Sauk Rail Trail
10. Ioway Trail 2x ([www.iowaytrail.org](http://www.iowaytrail.org))
11. Wabash Trace Nature Trail system (western Iowa) 4x
12. Poor signage - Madison and Cedar Falls, Waterloo, but great connections
13. The trail from Cedar Rapids to Waterloo. 2x
14. Saylorville has the best signage of those I have used.

**Wisconsin**

1. Elroy Sparta Trail, Wisconsin 6x
2. Madison, Wisconsin.

**Minnesota**

1. Minnesota 4x
  - a. Minnesota systems and expansion into multi-seasonal trails--grooming for skiing, perhaps expansion of mountain bike trails and snow-mobiling
  - b. Minnesota trail... They have a very well laid out trail system, signage, maps and connectors. You can stop any place and they have trail maps. You cannot locate trails maps here in central Iowa!
  - c. There is one in Minnesota that I cannot recall that promotes itself fabulously and connects several towns as a whole destination.
2. Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN 5x
  - a. Grand Rounds, Minnesota
  - b. I haven't been there for a while, but i remember Minneapolis Minnesota trail signage
3. Lanesboro, Minnesota Trail 3x (SE corner of the state)
4. Root River Trail in Minnesota 13x (Their signs are very informative as to terrain, distance, etc.)(This is a destination spot for bikers and others. There is a critical mass of activity and people to make the areas successful.)

**Indiana**

1. Indianapolis' Canal Tow Path Trail

- a. Has periodic stone three-foot stone obelisks with trail mileposts (both English and metric). At major access points, they have a stone (tombstone) map of the entire trail showing several access points and distances between them.

### **Missouri**

1. Katy trail in Missouri. 6x
  - a. My wife and I love the Bed and Breakfast's and the things to do from one location to another. It makes for more than just a bike ride back and forth.)

### **Illinois**

1. Madison County Illinois Trail system.
  - a. It is awesome. They started out much like the current state of the Central Iowa trail system and they really took it to the next level.
2. Some in the Central Illinois area
3. Illinois Prairie Path System
  - a. Liked the trail side signage

### **South Dakota**

1. Sioux Falls, South Dakota
2. George Mickelson Trail – Black Hills

### **Colorado**

2. Boulder, Colorado 2x
  - a. Great signage, connections, and maps
  - b. I don't know about websites, but signage is good for linking various city trails.
3. Littleton, Colorado
  - a. Ken Caryl/Chatfield Trail

### **Michigan**

1. Lansing, Michigan
  - a. Wonderful trail marked with great signage along the Grand River starting at Michigan State University and going through downtown Lansing. It also goes by the Science Center which has a small model of the sun and interesting information down trail with information about the planets.
  - b. North Shore Drive (Lake Superior) has an excellent map and a brochure listing details about scenic areas and campsites that is very complete.

### **Ohio**

- a. Trails out of Xenia Ohio

### **California**

1. Tiburon, California.

### **Washington**

1. Seattle, Washington 2x (Great maps)

### **Massachusetts**

1. Narrowtuck Trail

### **Pennsylvania**

1. Philadelphia 2x

### **New York**

1. Harlem Valley Rail Trail
  - a. hvrt.org-excellent web site –
  - b. <http://www.hvnet.com/features/highlandrailtrail.htm>-not a good web site

### **Europe**

1. Europe 2x
  - a. Holland is set up to commute by bicycle

### **Other**

1. Theme Parks: Universal Studios, Disneyland, Henry Doorly Zoo. (Extensive directional signage so that one can navigate without too much use of a map.)
2. Lewis and Clark Trail System

### Additional Comments/references

- a. As the maintainer of bikeiowa.com I really take notice of the way our trails are promoted. I am not a map guy, but I promote trails any way I can! The maps we have are a 2 on a scale of 10. I get emails daily from people wanting maps, planning trips, coming into town for the weekend, etc. and it is tough to tell them where to go for answers.
- b. You are missing the most important question on this survey. And that is: Where should whoever controls the money for trails improvement and maintenance prioritize its spending? My answer to that question is that: NOT ONE DIME SHOULD BE SPENT TO EXPAND THE TRAIL SYSTEM IN CENTRAL IOWA UNTIL THE EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM - VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE SAYLORVILLE TRAIL (FROM DES MOINES TO BIG CREEK) THE RACoon RIVER VALLEY TRAIL (FROM WAUKEE TO YALE) AND THE GREENBELT ARE COMPLETELY PULVERISED, WIDENED AND RESURFACED. The paved trails which I identify above are generally in atrocious condition for any activity other than walking or running. Note: I ride the central IA trail system, on average, twice a week from April through October. If you have any "pull" in this matter at all, please get this note to someone who cares. Thank you: Nick Wynen
- c. We haven't been on any other trails outside of Iowa that have been better.
- d. You should partner with the national Rails to Trails
- e. Do your own thing. Iowans are creative, we don't need to plagerize others.
- f. Online is the way to get people here... but a good printable, map/pamphlet is the way to go. I still want a 'print' copy when I am on the trail system.
- g. No suggestion/don't know 9x
- h. Please continue to hook up all the trails in Polk co. It is getting lots better but could still improve. 5 years ago it seemed like Des Moines had bike trails going no place. Know a guy can use them to get around town. Keep up the good work.
- i. It appears you do not consider the trails at Red Rock in Marion County as part of the Central Iowa Trails even though the Marion County and its cities are members of the CENTRAL IOWA Regional Transportation Planning Alliance.
- j. Many people want Bike Rental information, Others want bike-friendly hotels, others want shuttle service to/from a particular trail, and the list goes on...
- k. Talk to IMBA re: their developing standards... Also, on-street signage is going to be important – both for safety (share the road) and to allow people in cars seeking trails to find their way to a trailhead.
- l. <http://www.bicyclewv.com/>
- m. <http://www.centraliowatrails.org>
- n. <http://www.utah.com/bike/>
- o. I do not see Marion County listed as a Central Iowa Trail county, are they not one?

Thank you for your time and opinions in completing this survey! Please visit [www.shive-hattery.com/centraliowatrails](http://www.shive-hattery.com/centraliowatrails) for further updates and comments.

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