

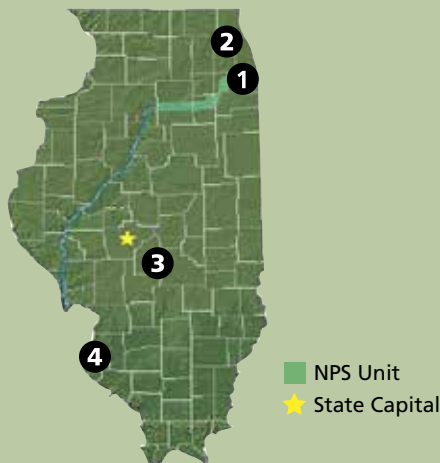


Illinois News



Governor Pat Quinn announcing the Millennium Reserve Steering Committee. Photo: NPS

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2014



CURRENT PROJECTS

- 1. Millennium Reserve: Calumet Core**
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- 2. Lake Michigan Trails Organizational Development**
Lake Michigan Water Trail Association
- 3. Making Trails Work: Lake Shelbyville**
USACE, Trails for Illinois
- 4. Mississippi River Connections Collaborative and Mississippi River Trail**
Mississippi River Trail, Inc.

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

Recent Successes

Millennium Reserve: Calumet Core

The Millennium Reserve, a large-scale open space conservation and development project, spans the bi-state area at the southern tip of Lake Michigan. An America's Great Outdoors project, the reserve effort is led by local citizens and organizations hoping to transform an economically-challenged industrial belt into a re-envisioned landscape that is environmentally, culturally, and economically essential to the quality of life within the region.

This work was celebrated on March 1st, 2013 when Governor Pat Quinn took a significant step towards providing additional support to the Calumet Core by announcing funding for the continuation of Millennium Reserve projects. Quinn also signed an Executive Order creating a steering committee made up of federal, state, and local partners to oversee the formation of a big vision for the reserve.

To make the 140,000-acre project a reality, the committee has been actively building partnerships, defining land management opportunities for stewardship and ownership of ecologically valuable lands, and assisting project implementation.

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ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Program staff provide technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.

Current Projects

1. Millennium Reserve: Calumet Core

Project Partner: Illinois Department of Natural Resources

NPS Contact: Diane Banta

Location: Calumet Region

Congressional Districts: IL - 2; IN - 1

Project Goal

Increase land protection to an estimated 50 acres of valuable natural resource areas and promote trail connections and links to over 5 regional trail systems, completing a minimum of 15 trail miles.

NPS Role

Help form partnerships; provide assistance; identify tasks and outcomes for this regional legacy project.

2. Lake Michigan Trails Organizational Development

Project Partner: Lake Michigan Water Trail Association

NPS Contact: Diane Banta

Location: IL, IN, MI, WI

Congressional Districts: IL - 1, 4, 5, 6, 8

Project Goal

Build a partnership organization to work on the Lake Michigan Trail which will provide access to Lake Michigan in four states through planning three recreation travel modes while marketing the trail for increased tourism and economic development opportunities.



Millennium Reserve partners touring land to be preserved and restored in the Calumet region, home of nesting Bald Eagles. Photo: NPS

NPS Role

Convene quad state organizations, local governments, and state governments to set vision, mission, goals, and outcomes leading to the development of land and water trails, US bike routes, and an enhanced Lake Michigan Circle Route.



Trails for Illinois, Army Corps, General Dacey Trail, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources meet to prepare for collaborative trail building this summer. Photo: NPS

3. Making Trails Work: Lake Shelbyville

Project Partners: US Army Corps of Engineers, Trails for Illinois

NPS Contact: Diane Banta

Location: Shelbyville

Congressional District: IL - 19

Project Goal

Develop a partnership model for trail development and seek funding from new sources for building 5 miles of

“The successful sixth biannual Mid America Trails and Greenways (MATAG) Conference was held October in Matteson, Illinois and was kicked-off with the Golden Spoke Ceremony celebrating the connection between Illinois and Indiana by the Pennsy Greenway. Sponsored by the nine Midwest states, MATAG brings together trail advocates from local, state and federal governments; citizens; non-profits; and business and industry leaders that have an interest in the development of trails, greenways and blueways across the region.”

- John Wilson, Executive Director, Lansing Park District

Current Projects cont.

trail on General Dacey Trail. Restore the Illini Trail including the design of a trail re-route and bridge stabilization. Develop potential water trail access points, equestrian trail maintenance, and an extension of the Camp Camfield mountain bike trail.

NPS Role:

Facilitate partnership development and implementation of trail building model.

4. Mississippi River Connections Collaborative/Mississippi River Trail

Project Partner: Mississippi River Trail, Inc.

NPS Contact: Rory Robinson

Location: Mississippi River, source to mouth

Congressional Districts: IL - 12, 16, 17

Project Goal

Outreach to local communities to encourage improvements to the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) for recreation, tourism, and community development; continued technical assistance in the development of the Mississippi River Connections Collaborative (MRCC) and increased long-term organizational viability; further develop the Mississippi River blueway portion of the trail system; and develop a geotourism initiative with the National Geographic Society.

NPS Role

Assist the MRCC with organizational development, outreach to other organizations and agencies, and development and implementation of their strategic and operations plans. Increase the MRT's capacity to help develop water and land-based trails along the Mississippi River. Specifically, over the next year, assist the MRCC with the development of a sustainable destination tourism (geotourism) initiative in partnership with the National Geographic Society.

“The work of the Friends of the Cal-Sag Trail and the Cal-Sag Trail Coalition has brought local and regional government support as well as funding to the trail, allowing for ground breaking on portions of this 26-mile trail in 2014. The triple bottom line of health, environment, and economy of this trail has helped push its development because communities realize they need this trail - now!”

- Steve Buchtel, Executive Director
Trails for Illinois



The long-awaited connection of the 17-mile Penny Greenway between the two states was dedicated during a ceremony featuring public officials, local trail advocates and the public.

Photo: NPS



Friends of the Cal-Sag Trail supporting trail development and wayfinding with money raised through their annual fundraiser “Bridges and Blues.” Photo: NPS

We're Here For You!

Could your project benefit from NPS Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.



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2013 Nationwide Partnership Success

- 1,357 Miles of Trail Developed
- 736 Miles of River Conserved
- 20,270 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

Find more information online at www.nps.gov/rtca



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Recent Successes cont.

Committee members have completed a regional plan compilation and synthesis, project evaluation, and selection for the first round of highlighted projects. A strategic review of new opportunities for collaborative and complementary programs is also underway, bringing additional partners together in support of this project.

Considerable activity this year has resulted in thirteen restoration projects completed by Green Corps, seven gardens planted as part of a neighborhood habitat program, and recreational trail planning that will connect the natural and cultural assets of the region through recreation.

Atten's Landing on the Pecatonica River

The Pecatonica River has seen a significant increase in use over the years which inspired the Pecatonica River Foundation to build launch sites every 4 to 6 miles and to provide amenities such as rest room facilities, drinking water, and parking at each site. These are big goals for a small but mighty group. There are currently eight defined access sites along the river and two new sites that are 90% complete. The largest, most involved site, is the focus of this project.

Atten's Landing recently started implementing the launch site plan. After receiving the necessary permits from the US Army Corps, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the Office Water Resources the project was underway. Engineering drawings for the sites show the locations for wetland restoration, nature trail placement, two universally accessible fishing peers, a universally accessible floating dock, self-composting pit toilets, and a pressurized well.

During this past spring and summer, Atten's Landing started by building the dirt ramp for the new entrance with the support of Fischer Excavation equipment, and Stephenson Service Company fuel donations. This portion of the project, completed on December 13, awaits gravel that will form the road and the creation of a walking path. Members of the Pecatonica River Foundation did this amazing work with the help and support of: Ducks Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, and area local governments. Wasting no time, the group is building a dock for another access site and working to provide concrete picnic tables all along the water trail landings.



Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation preparing wetlands at Atten's Landing water trail access site. Photo: Friends of the Pecatonica River Foundation