



# Henry County

# Trails and Greenway Plan

# 2018





# Henry County Trails and Greenway Plan

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# 1 Introduction & Planning Process

In 2001, Bi-State Regional Commission led a group of stakeholders to develop the *Henry and Rural Rock Island Counties Comprehensive Greenway Plan*. That plan sought to “identify, prioritize, develop and/or preserve greenways throughout the project area.” The plan listed 21 active and passive greenways throughout the planning area, definitions of which can be found in Chapter 2. Increasing mobility has been a goal of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for decades going back to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), and has continued through the current federal surface transportation act, Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST). Trail infrastructure has specifically been a component of federal transportation investments since ISTEA. Federal investments in greenway infrastructure in the form of conservation practices go back to the New Deal in the 1930s as a response to an environmental disaster, known as the Dust Bowl.

This plan, as an update to the 2001 plan, seeks to reaffirm the goals and aspirations of the original. Since 2001, federal support and recognition for alternative transportation infrastructure has increased through research and more friendly policies to encourage a diverse system of mobility. In 2014 and 2015, the U.S. DOT began an initiative to promote bicycle and pedestrian safety called Safer People, Safer Streets. The goal of the initiative sought to address the safety aspects of these two modes of transportation, which are overrepresented in annual fatalities across the nation and are a growing proportion of the total number of traffic fatalities. The U.S. DOT has issued a variety of new resources, research, and tools to help state and local transportation professionals improve safety throughout the transportation network. Among these resources, the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Provisions of Federal Transportation Legislation* (2015) states:

“Bicycling and walking are important elements to integrated, intermodal transportation systems that improve quality of life by providing access to jobs, education, health care, and other essential services. The construction of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, shared use paths, and trails; installing curb cuts and ramps; providing bicycle parking at transit; developing bike sharing systems; reducing single occupancy vehicle travel; and teaching children to ride and walk safely all contribute to our national transportation goals of safety, mobility, livability, economic growth and trade, improved health, enhancement of communities and the natural environment, and national security.”

The myriad benefits of developing an interconnected trail system extend to user safety, local economic development, and increased quality of life among many other goals of transportation, development, and environmental stewardship. Local long-term goals that Henry County has set for itself also lend themselves to safe intermodal transportation and recreation and conservation



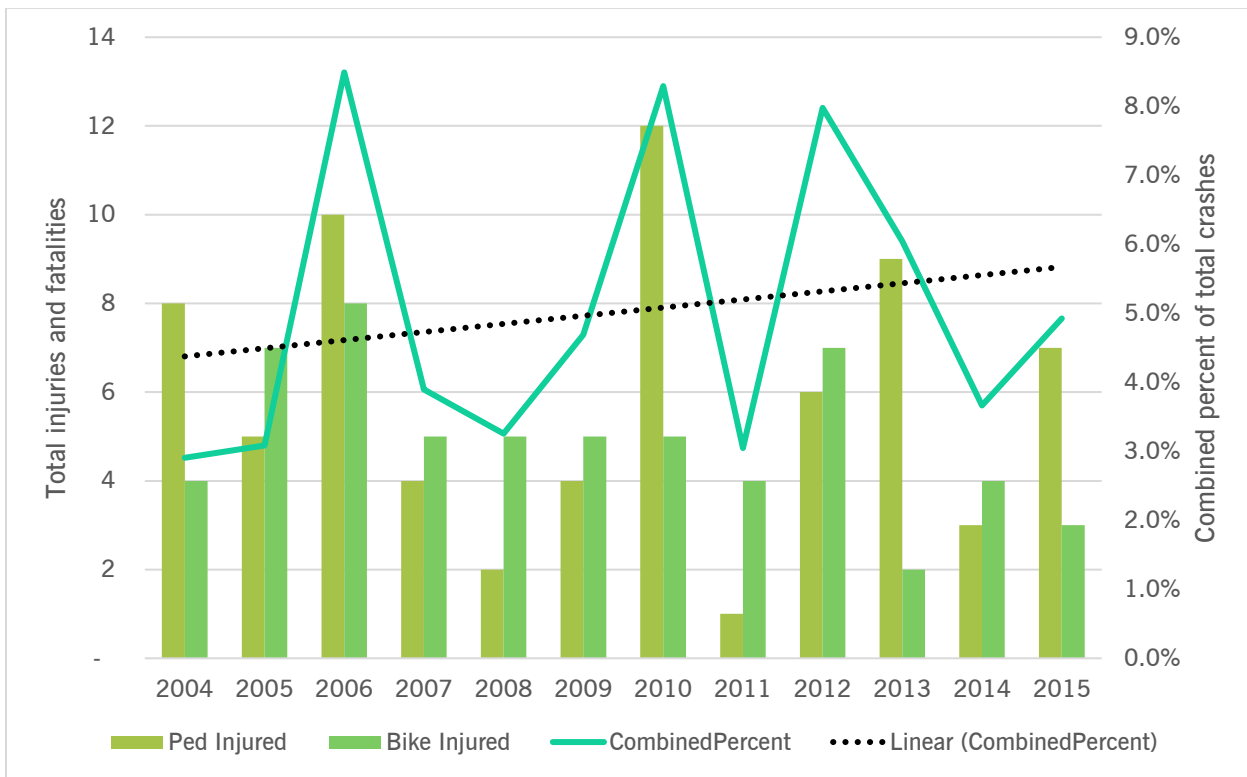
practices. Retaining the county’s rural character has been a stated goal for over 30 years. Trails and greenways complement and augment Henry County’s bucolic rural character.

In addition to the quality of life factors that trails and greenways augment, the importance of road user safety cannot be overstated. Map 1.1 shows the locations of crashes involving

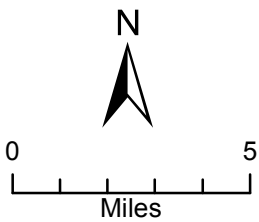
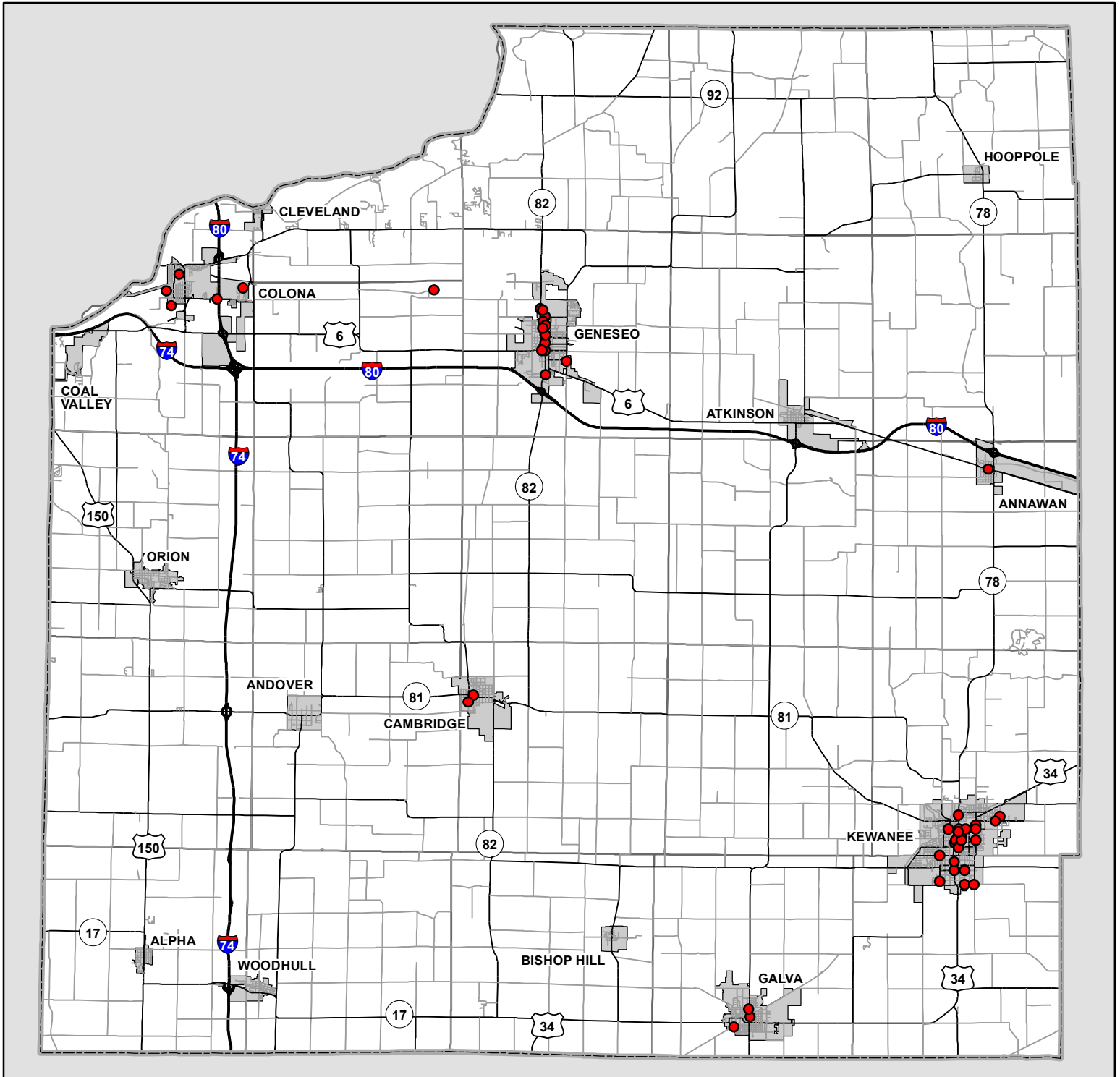
pedalcyclists and pedestrians in Henry County over a five-year period between 2009 and 2013. The majority of crashes occur in towns and cities in the county. Between 2004 and 2015, 130 pedestrians and cyclists were injured in Henry County according to Illinois DOT traffic safety data. Over the same period, three bicyclists and pedestrians were killed in crashes in Henry

County. As seen in Figure 1.1, the percent of bicycle and pedestrian injuries in Henry County accounted for between 3% and 8.5% of total traffic injuries in the county. Statewide, the combined share of bicyclist and pedestrian injuries is higher, ranging from 8.2% to 9.7% of all traffic injuries in Illinois between the years 2006 and 2014.

**Figure 1.1. Annual Bike-Ped Injuries and Percent of Total Injuries in Henry County**



Map 1.1  
**Henry County, Illinois**  
**Trails and Greenway Plan**  
**Crashes Involving Pedalcyclists**  
**and Pedestrians (2009-2013)**



**Legend**

- Pedalcyclist/Pedestrian Crashes 2009-2013
- Corporate Limits
- ▭ County Boundary
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Local Road

Map prepared by:



June 2018

Sources: Roads, Crashes - Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT); Corporate Limits - Henry County  
 Other Data - Bi-State Regional Commission

Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. Data provided are derived from multiple sources with varying levels of accuracy. Bi-State Regional Commission disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the data shown hereon.

Numerous factors account for the increased share of bicycle and pedestrian injuries, including the reduction of other roadway injuries.

However, the rate of decline among bicycle and pedestrian injuries has not kept up with statewide trends, while the 12-year trend in Henry County has shown an increase in the share of bicycle and pedestrian injuries. Bicycle and pedestrian-specific infrastructure in small towns and rural areas can improve safety for those users, as shown in numerous documents by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and provide an inviting environment for users of all ages and abilities.

### Planning Process

Planning for this *Henry County Trails and Greenways Plan* began in fall 2016. Initial meetings with county officials were held in early 2017. Initial concern centered on the deterioration of the Hennepin Canal Parkway Trail. The condition of the trail, discussed further in Chapter 4, worsened substantially in recent years. Concern over its long-term maintenance worried officials and users of the trail, a subject that was repeatedly raised during public meetings from stakeholders and members of the public. The importance of this trail in particular, the backbone of the trail network in Henry County, affects public health, local economies, and environmental stewardship in the county.

Input was received through direct communications with county stakeholders, one-

on-one meetings, a public open house, and a county board review process. Communication with state and local elected officials was maintained throughout the planning process. One common theme from stakeholder meetings was the desire to continue to fund and advertise existing trail and greenway programs. Many state programs are familiar to local officials and stakeholder groups, including programs for cover crops, sustainable farming practices, trail construction, and the acquisition of open space. Uncertainty within these existing programs, however, has led to a decline in interest, as potential participants may not be aware of the availability of funds or ever-changing application deadlines from round to round. Predictability among state-administered grant programs may increase interest in many trail and greenway programs.

Responding to the need of maintenance on the Hennepin Canal Parkway Trail, county officials and Bi-State Regional Commission convened a meeting of state-elected representatives, municipal officials, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IL DNR) representatives, and local bicycle and trail advocates. The 24 meeting attendees from 20 organizations discussed the deteriorating state of the canal, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and recommended that a steering committee be organized to raise funds and coordinate volunteer efforts along the canal. The committee began to organize in early 2018 with its goal to help the IL DNR maintain the canal and its trail for future generations.

## 2 Definitions

The facilities that make up greenways and recreation and alternative transportation trails are wide-ranging and take many different forms. These facilities have evolved over time to reflect improvements in safety and regulatory changes. In addition, improvements to greenway and trail infrastructure can occur concurrently with conventional roadway resurfacing or reconstruction projects, often at a lower cost compared to standalone projects.

It has been a stated policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation since 2010 to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian users into transportation projects as a component of building livable communities. In 2013, the department recommended a flexible approach to designing bicycle and pedestrian facilities to better accommodate those road users in urban areas specifically. In 2016, the Federal Highway Administration released a document that more specifically addressed challenges and opportunities in rural areas called *Small Towns and Rural Multimodal Networks*. This guide offers communities options and ideas to improve multimodal networks through thoroughly researched countermeasures and treatments that also allow for experimentation in keeping with the department's stated goals of design flexibility.

Greenways and trails often overlap in form and function. Both tend to be linear corridors, but may differ in their primary purpose, whether for more natural ends or human-related activities. Both types of facilities can benefit local communities and the regions in which they are located in myriad different ways and are not mutually exclusive. Greenways can vary from a buffer along a riverine corridor to a waterway improved to promote kayaking and other low-impact recreational activities. Trails can also vary in purpose and appearance. Paved shoulders along rural highways, for instance, can provide enough space for cyclists to travel between towns or interregionally, while hiking

and walking paths can offer access to intensive natural areas. Therefore, the following sections will seek to provide clarity to the often overlapping functions of these facilities as they relate to the rest of this document.

### Greenways

As stated in the 2001 plan, a greenway is a corridor of open space connecting natural areas, cultural and historic sites, parks, neighborhoods and communities. This “green infrastructure,” similar to roads, water and sewer systems, and utilities, is essential for the general health and welfare of the public. These linear corridors may be located along waterways, streets, railroads, utility easements, bluffs, ravines, or any other linear feature connecting open spaces.



*Grassed Waterway in Henry County.  
Source: Henry County Soil and Water Conservation District*

Establishing greenways in many cases means preserving existing resources. These ribbons of open land allow for natural filtration of streams and rivers. They promote erosion control along stream banks, ravines, or bluffs and create protective buffers for woodlands and prairies. Greenways protect wildlife migration routes and can allow for recreation and multi-purpose trails. They are opportunities for rural community landscaping and design. Economic development is associated with greenways through increased

property values along the corridor, recreation related sales and rental enterprises, tourism and historic attractions, and quality of life initiatives that can attract residents and businesses to the region.

Because of the linear nature of greenways, they offer greater accessibility to humans and wildlife. For example, a 160-acre greenway has a greater amount of edge area than a traditional park. If a traditional park is ½-mile on all sides, comparably the same number of acres for the greenway would equate to a park 16 miles in length and nearly 83 feet in width. As a result, a greater number of people can access the greenway through more access points. Challenges can arise, however, through the continued maintenance that is required along such a long corridor, as seen in the Hennepin Canal corridor.

Greenways have been further defined as active, passive, or a combination thereof. The definitions assist in the prioritization process and with strategies for implementation. This plan identifies 186.45 miles of active and passive greenways for preservation or development. Because distinct segments of a single greenway may have different functions, the following definitions have been developed for clarification:

- **Active Greenways:** These are greenways providing a wide range of opportunities for human use through recreation and multi-purpose trail development. Such linear parks or open spaces may provide for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, paddling, boating, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, fishing, driving, or any of a number of other activities. Access to active greenways can have multiple points of entry. Active greenways developed as multi-purpose trails may be implemented either on-road with shared access or off-road with non-shared access. Simple nature paths or non-hard surfaced greenways may be another option for active greenways.

- **Passive Greenways:** These are greenways providing a limited range of opportunities for human use by restricting public access. The function or value of this type of linear corridor is to emphasize conservation and protection of the natural environment. The purpose of a passive greenway may be for stormwater and floodplain management, wetland preservation, erosion control, natural filtration for water quality improvements, living snow fences, migration of wildlife, and preservation of vegetation. If public access is allowed at all, human access should be limited through designated points of access, such as guided nature paths, perimeter parking, designated paddling moorings/docks, and selective scenic overlooks.

## Trails

The term “trail” can be taken to mean anything from a generic corridor often used by pedestrians, hikers, or other nonmotorized user to a paved, multiuse path specifically designed for in-

town or interurban *Boat ramp on the Hennepin Canal* users, most often bicyclists. For purposes of this document, “trail” shall mean designated infrastructure along which pedestrians and bicyclists can travel safely. Trails should fit the needs of the community in which they are located. Facilities meant for bicyclists or pedestrians, whether they are the primary users or not, must be designed with them in mind. State and federal regulations, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), must be addressed to maintain accessibility for all potential users of the network. Trails are not exclusive of greenways, and there is often overlap in what is generally called a trail.



### 3 Previous Plans

Planning activities regarding trails, greenways, and natural areas go back decades in Henry County. An emphasis placed on preservation of the county's natural resources has been a common theme across the four decades of plans that considered natural resources in the planning process. The 2001 *Henry and Rural Rock Island Counties Comprehensive Greenway Plan* provides the foundation for this plan update. The county also completed a *Countywide Comprehensive Plan* update in 2015. Issues of flood control and resource protection have affected the county since the 1980 comprehensive plan. This plan update seeks to build on these previous documents to support the case of increasing the county's trail and greenway inventory.

The 2001 *Henry and Rural Rock Island Counties Comprehensive Greenway Plan* sought to identify passive and active greenway corridors to further the counties' and state's goals of environmental stewardship and active transportation and recreation. A coalition of public organizations and numerous stakeholder groups represented a diverse collection of participants to offer guidance throughout the planning process.

The coalition identified 21 regional greenway priorities in Henry and Rock Island Counties, all or portions of which were located in Henry County. The continued maintenance and preservation of the Hennepin Canal State Trail was listed as the highest priority to the county's trail and greenway system. The trail is a historic asset that offers both active and passive greenway benefits to communities along and near it and to visitors of the 105-mile linear park. This major trail, which makes up a substantial portion of the Grand Illinois Trail and the national American Discovery Trail within Illinois, still serves as the backbone of Henry County's trail and greenway system that spans the entire width of the county.

The 2001 plan also listed the extension of the Rock Island State Trail corridor as a high priority greenway. The extension, proposed to pick up from the current terminus at Toulon and extend into Whiteside County at Big Bend Conservation Area, would connect numerous historic and Native American sites, the City of Kewanee, Johnson-Sauk Trail State Park, and the Hennepin Canal State Trail. The numerous connections within this corridor present opportunities for much of the eastern side of the county.

The Rock River was listed as another active and passive greenway in the plan. Since 2001, the Rock River Trail has developed into a marked hiking, driving, biking, and water trail from its headwaters in Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin, 320 miles to the river's confluence with the Mississippi River at Rock Island. The Rock River Trail Initiative Council held a grand opening of the multifaceted trail in June 2017. The Council began in 2010 as a comprehensive effort to promote the river, the various routes, and the communities along the river. The Rock River National Water Trail was dedicated in 2013 by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the first such designation in either Wisconsin or Illinois.

In 2014 and 2015, Henry County underwent a wide-ranging planning process to update its comprehensive plan. The previous plan, adopted in 1980, did not discuss trails and greenways in detail. However, as one of its policy statements, it indicated:

"The environmental character of Henry County is a significant asset and a major reason why many people choose to live in rural areas. The preservation of this character should be emphasized when considering any future proposals for development. Natural areas containing environmentally sensitive land, such as natural forests, steep slopes, floodplains, stream banks, and potential wildlife habitat

should be protected from intensive development.”

Likewise, the 2015 plan also encouraged the preservation of the county’s environmental character for many of the same reasons. In addition, the plan outlines numerous policies to guide the plan’s implementation in these areas. Those natural areas described in 1980 represent many of the same areas that are vital to the successful implementation of passive greenways throughout the county, and can offer the most impactful additions to the greenway network.

In 2014, the State of Illinois published the *Illinois Bike Transportation Plan* that provided guiding principles for the development of bicycle infrastructure in the state. The plan emphasized five key goals described below:

- *Access – Bicycling will be accessible to all Illinois residents regardless of age, ability, background, and income.*
- *Choices – Bicycling will be a safe and viable transportation option among a host of mobility options, for people of a broad range of ages and abilities in all areas of Illinois.*
- *Connectivity – Bicycling will seamlessly connect with other modes of transportation like trains and buses and*

*the state transportation system will provide diverse options for bicycling that connect communities throughout Illinois.*

- *Safety – Bicycling will be a safe and comfortable activity for everyone. IDOT will continue progressing towards its goal of zero traffic fatalities and strive to minimize safety concerns for current and prospective bicyclists.*
- *Collaboration – IDOT will strive to strengthen existing partnerships and to build new and innovative ones to advance its vision and goals for bicycling in the state.*

The state plan proposes two corridors for future trail development in Henry County. The first segment runs south from Coal Valley and Orion towards Galesburg along Illinois Route 150 on the county’s western edge. The other proposed corridor runs east-west to connect the existing Rock Island State Trail terminus in Toulon to the aforementioned Route 150 corridor via Route 17 through Galva and Woodhull. The *Henry County Trails and Greenways Plan* seeks to address the goals above through diverse facility types that meet the needs of the communities in which they are located, and incorporate these proposed corridors of statewide interest into the county’s plans.

## 4 Existing Conditions

Henry County's existing greenways, trails, and natural areas infrastructure consists of state, regional, and national inventory that plays an influential role in Henry County's transportation, recreation, and environmental planning efforts. The current inventory aids in promoting the natural, rural character of the county, and is an image that the county would like to maintain and augment. Due to Henry County's close proximity to the Quad Cities Metropolitan Area, a small portion of the county falls under the Quad Cities Area planning boundary, which provides even more connectivity between Henry County and the Quad Cities in regard to planning efforts. There are opportunities available to have accessible non-motorized travel opportunities from Henry County to the Quad Cities Metropolitan Area. Below are general descriptions of existing greenways, trails, and natural areas that can be found in Henry County.

**1. Hennepin Canal** – The Hennepin Canal was initially developed to serve as a shipping shortcut between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. Its original name was the Illinois-Mississippi Canal, and has been identified as an engineering and historic landmark. As a result, it has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978. It was the first canal built with concrete rather than stone cut facings and features 33 locks. Shortly after its completion, the canal was abandoned when railroads made carrying goods by canal obsolete.

In addition to its historical attraction, the Hennepin Canal offers a variety of other activities such as kayaking, canoeing, and fishing. Many users walk, bike, snowmobile, and horseback ride on the trails surrounding the Hennepin Canal Parkway State Park. The Hennepin Canal State Trail is a 104.5-mile linear park that spans five counties from the Mississippi River to the Illinois and Rock Rivers. The trail follows a towpath along the historic canal, which opened in 1907. Trail endpoints are located in Bureau Junction,



*Hennepin Canal Parkway Trail, Annawan*

Colona, and Rock Falls, Illinois. There are plans to improve connections to the Rock River Trail west to the Mississippi River, enhance connections to various public access areas along the Hennepin Canal State Parkway, and expand the trail network south of the Rock River.

The trail in Henry County acts as the American Discovery Trail and Grand Illinois Trail (see below). There are numerous locks along the corridor, and trailhead locations provide drinking water and restroom facilities for trail users. The Hennepin Canal Parkway Visitor Center is located just east of Henry County near Sheffield, Illinois. Visitors can acquire information on the Hennepin Canal and its past, as well as valuable information in regard to the plant and animal life found throughout the park.

**2. Grand Illinois Trail (GIT)** – The GIT forms a loop between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River, covering more than 500 miles. The trail travels from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi along the northern tier of Illinois, then loops back across the state along the Illinois River and the Hennepin Canal. It links together existing state and local trails resulting in the creation of the state's longest continuous trail. The trail's development began in 1992 in an effort to connect the existing Hennepin and Illinois &

Michigan Canal state trails, thereby closing a gap to allow the complete trail connection from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River. Parts of the GIT are also part of the Mississippi River Trail (MRT), the Great River Trail (GRT), and the American Discovery Trail (ADT).

Approximately 200 miles of the GIT is on paved township and county roads, while the rest of the trail can be found on crushed limestone trails or paths. The trail is used for many recreational purposes including biking, walking, and running. Along the trail, there are many opportunities to stop and view major attractions. In some locations, there are lodging accommodations that may be found close to the trail. The GIT in Henry County mostly follows the Hennepin Canal Trail, but diverges from it in Colona and heads north to connect to the MRT and GRT.



*Grand Illinois Trail, Colona*

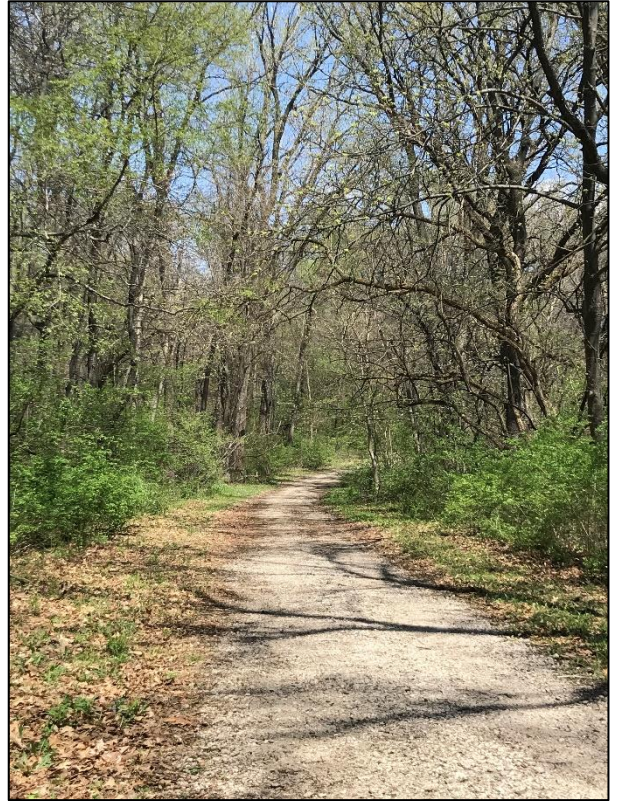
**3. Rock River Trail** – The Rock River Trail is a 320-mile corridor that begins in Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin and ends at the Mississippi River in Rock Island County, Illinois. It is a multi-use trail corridor that is often used for recreational, scenic, and historic interest purposes. It runs through 11 counties and 37 river communities. The trail is accessible to pedestrians on the road or trail and to kayakers

and canoers travelling by water. There are 155 access sites on the water trail, including 50 that are accessible to persons with disabilities. The water trail is primarily designed for use by paddle craft, but is also used for swimming, fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and boating. Many users of the trail use it for its many hiking opportunities made available along the trail. This includes many opportunities for scenic viewings. The Rock River Trail also connects to the ADT, GIT, and the Hennepin Canal Parkway Trail, among others.

**4. Johnson-Sauk Trail State Recreation Area** – The Johnson-Sauk Trail State Recreation Area is located north of Kewanee on 1,365 acres of land with a 58-acre lake. Along the lake, there are nearly 2½ miles of shoreline to explore. Johnson-Sauk Trail has a 10 to 15-mile network of trails, ranging from easy to moderate. The park is an Illinois state park located off Route 78 and six miles south of Interstate 80. The park was previously known as the Henry County Conservation Area but was renamed the Johnson-Sauk Trail State Park on behalf of State Senator Frank P. Johnson, a strong advocate for the park, and the Native Americans that had ties with the park when Europeans began settling the area.

The park has varied terrain including rolling hills in the southern portion of the park, and a landscape that is much flatter with wildlife plantings and grasslands on the northern half. There are many recreational opportunities available including fishing, boating, camping, skinning, geocaching, bird watching, hiking, hunting, archery, and sightseeing. Fewer than 1,000 natural areas exist in Illinois, including one location at the Johnson-Sauk Trail State Park. The area contains a population of skink cabbage, an early bloomer that sometimes blossoms in the snow, which is rare for this part of the state.

There are many small to mid-sized walking paths and trails within many community parks in Henry County. These local amenities provide many benefits to the residents who live nearby and share many of the same purposes as regional or statewide infrastructure. Connecting the parks within cities and towns increases the accessibility of all park facilities in the community by creating connections for users of all ages and abilities. In time, efforts to connect local networks to regional networks will pay off by allowing for better access to existing amenities. Users of all ages benefit from such connections, creating attractive communities for people to grow up in and stay in permanently. Currently, bicyclists may use rural roads for travel almost anywhere in the county. The Illinois DOT has released a Bicycle Level of Service index for many roadways in the state, which offers a high-level index of how comfortable bicyclists would feel while travelling on a certain roadway (Map 4.1). Quality of life in small cities, towns and rural areas benefits from a well-connected trail and greenway network that provides people with connections to other communities and nature close to home.

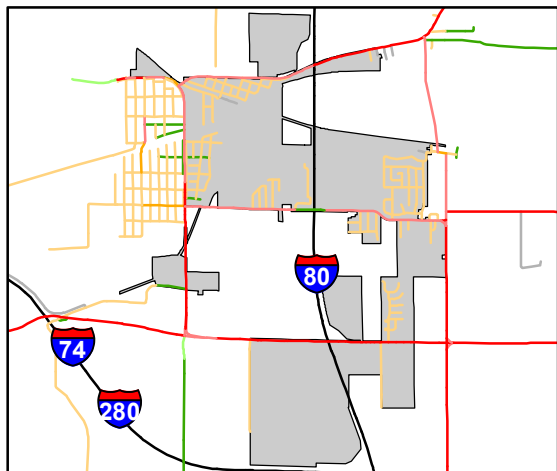


*Johnson-Sauk Trail State Recreation Area, Kewanee*

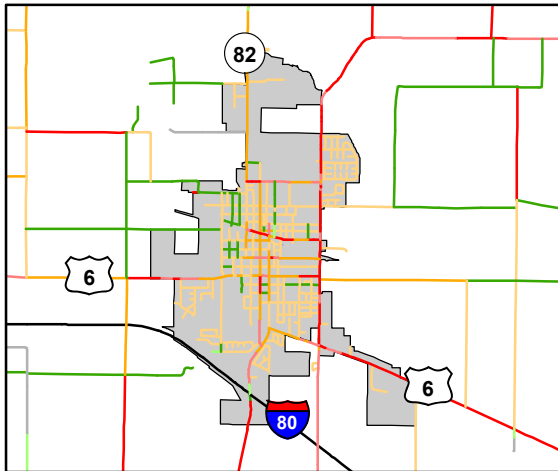


Map 4.1  
**Henry County, Illinois  
 Trails and Greenway Plan  
 Bicycle Level of Service Roadways**

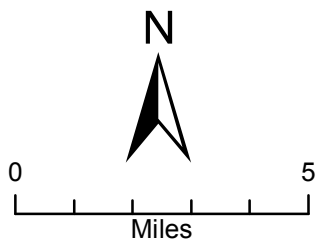
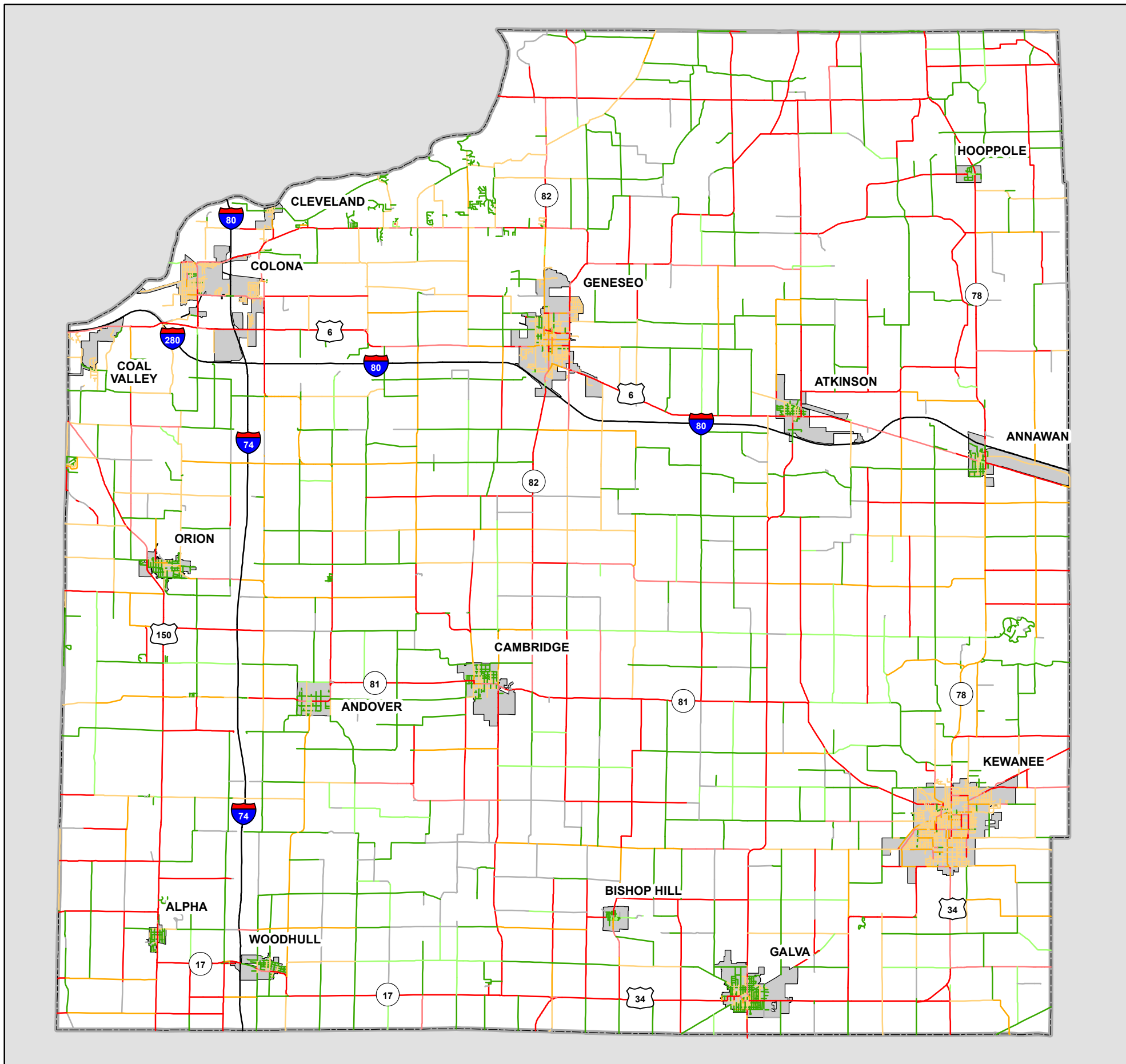
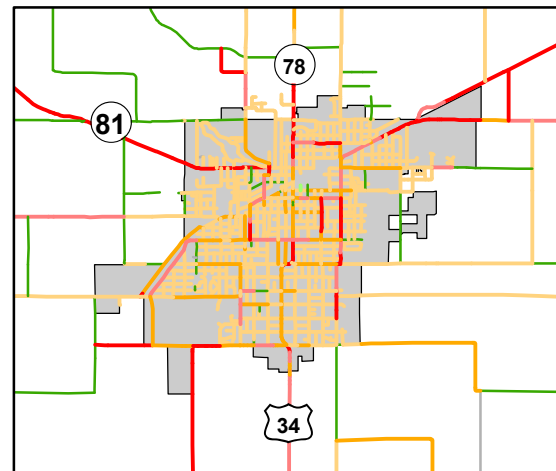
Inset 1 - Colona



Inset 2 - Geneseo



Inset 3 - Kewanee



**Legend**

	> Most Suitable		> Not Recommended		Corporate Limits
	> Caution Advised		Bicycles Prohibited		County Boundary
			Gravel or Dirt		

Map prepared by:



Sources: Bicycle Level of Service - Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT)  
 Roads - Illinois DOT (2016)  
 Henry County Corporate Limits - Henry County GIS  
 Other Features - Bi-State Regional Commission

Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. Data provided are derived from multiple sources with varying levels of accuracy. Bi-State Regional Commission disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the data shown hereon.



## 5 Future Considerations and Performance Goals

As has been stated in previous plans, the rural character of Henry County shall be maintained to a large extent wherever possible. Consideration of greenway and/or trail development should promote or enhance the natural, rural character of the county. Often, trail and greenway network development highlights and benefits the natural environment by providing low-impact interaction with nature or conservation benefits to land owners and people living or farming downstream. Indeed, greenway applications can improve soil and waterway health, helping agricultural viability in perpetuity.

Passive greenway network development should seek to reduce the severity of flooding, reduce sediment runoff from agricultural fields, provide habitat for migrating wildlife, or provide any number of other natural environmental benefits. Passive greenways adjacent to highways, for example, can offer numerous benefits to the environment and the human users of the roadway. In Iowa, for instance, the Department of Transportation has implemented a winter maintenance program that installs snow fences, either temporary or permanent, to reduce the need for plowing and other wintertime maintenance tasks associated with blowing or drifting snow. The program has existed for years to help reduce snow drifts, and is much more cost effective than plowing. The side benefits of the program include soil health, reduced soil erosion and water runoff, and improved wildlife habitat. These snow fences, in some cases, can be considered greenways because of the many shared characteristics.

Passive greenways also have the ability to lessen the effects of flooding on some areas. Slowing the rate of stormwater runoff from fields, increasing percolation rates, and increasing water retention areas will decrease the burdens of extreme fluctuations of streams in and outside the county. Numerous areas of high relief, and thereby higher rates and velocity of runoff that

increase erosion and sedimentation, can be seen near Kewanee and Johnson-Sauk Trail State Park (see Map 5.1). Alternatively, areas with little change in elevation can experience longer and more extreme periods of flooding due to the slower rates of runoff. Areas north of Interstate 80 are more susceptible to flooding, and countermeasures to ease the effects of flooding may be warranted. The Federal Emergency Management Agency – National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) 100 and 500-year flood maps also indicate areas where flooding is a known issue. Concentrations of these areas can be found largely along the Edwards River, Green River, Rock River, their tributaries, and small streams in and near Kewanee (see Map 5.2).



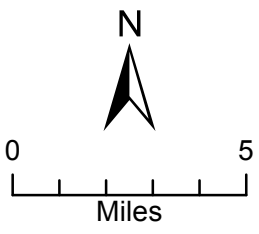
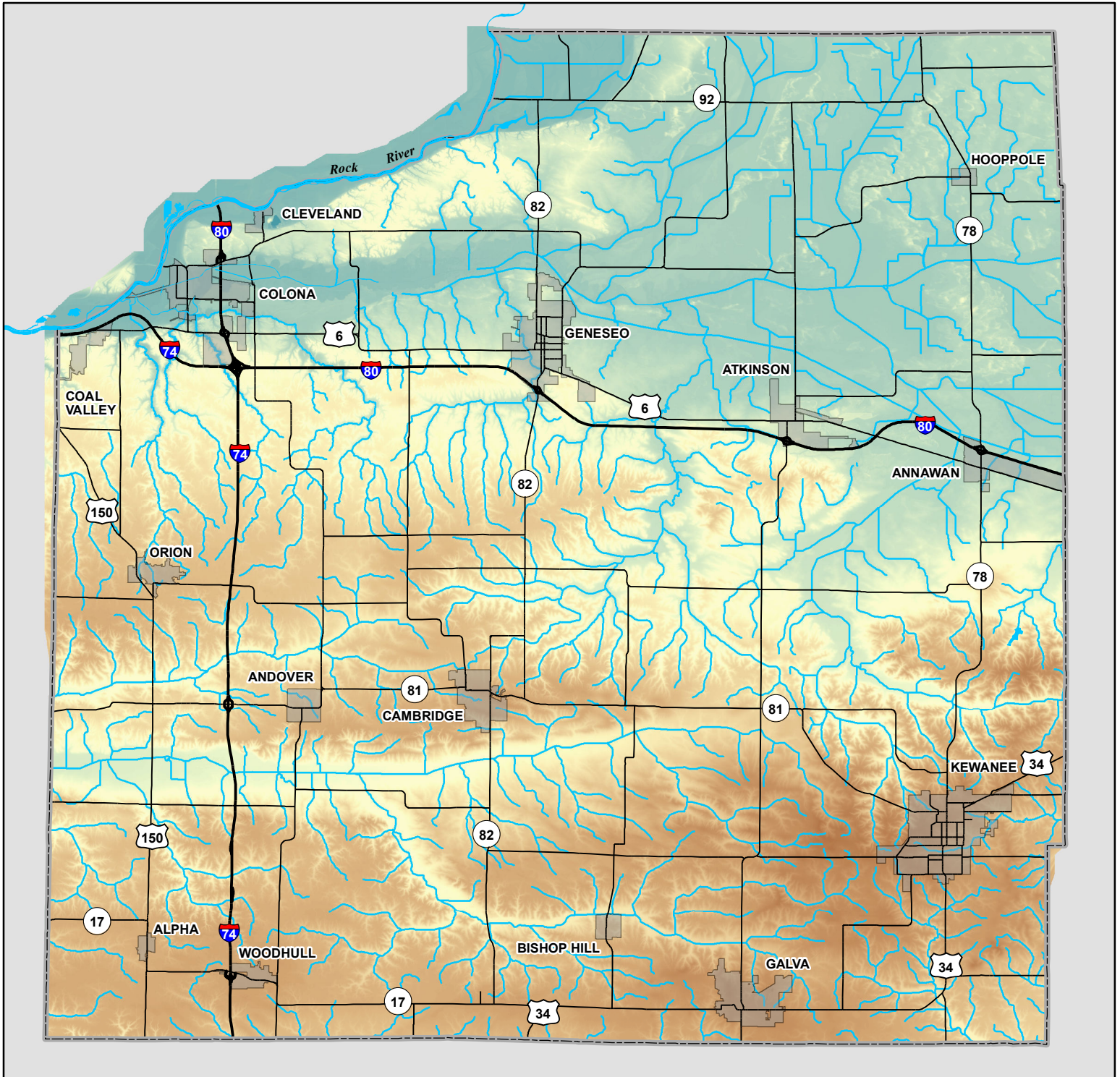
*Rock River Trail Sign, Carbon Cliff*

Degradation of prime soils, impaired waterways, and aquifers can be improved through the installation of various green infrastructure. Map 5.3 shows areas of prime soils with impaired waterways. Much of Henry County is classified as having prime soils, which speaks to the importance of preserving the agricultural character of the county. Impaired streams in Henry County include portions of the Green River, Mud Creek, Mineral Creek, Spring Creek, and Geneseo Creek among other smaller ditches and retainage basins. Buffer strips and other greenway applications can retain these soils while improving the health of impaired

waterways. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, properly installed and maintained conservation buffers have the capacity to remove up to 50% of nutrients and pesticides, up to 60% of certain pathogens, and up to 75% of sediment. The strategic placement of greenways will affect their effectiveness in alleviating environmental degradation.

Likewise, aquifers are an important resource that require constant monitoring. Aquifer health can be improved through treatments to filter groundwater as it permeates through the soil.

Map 5.1  
**Henry County, Illinois  
 Trails and Greenway Plan  
 Elevation**



**Legend**

	High : 883.293*		County Boundary
	Low : 265.987*		Interstate
	Corporate Limits		Major Road
			Rivers and Streams

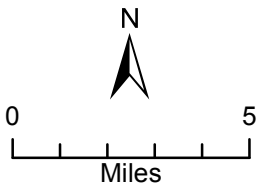
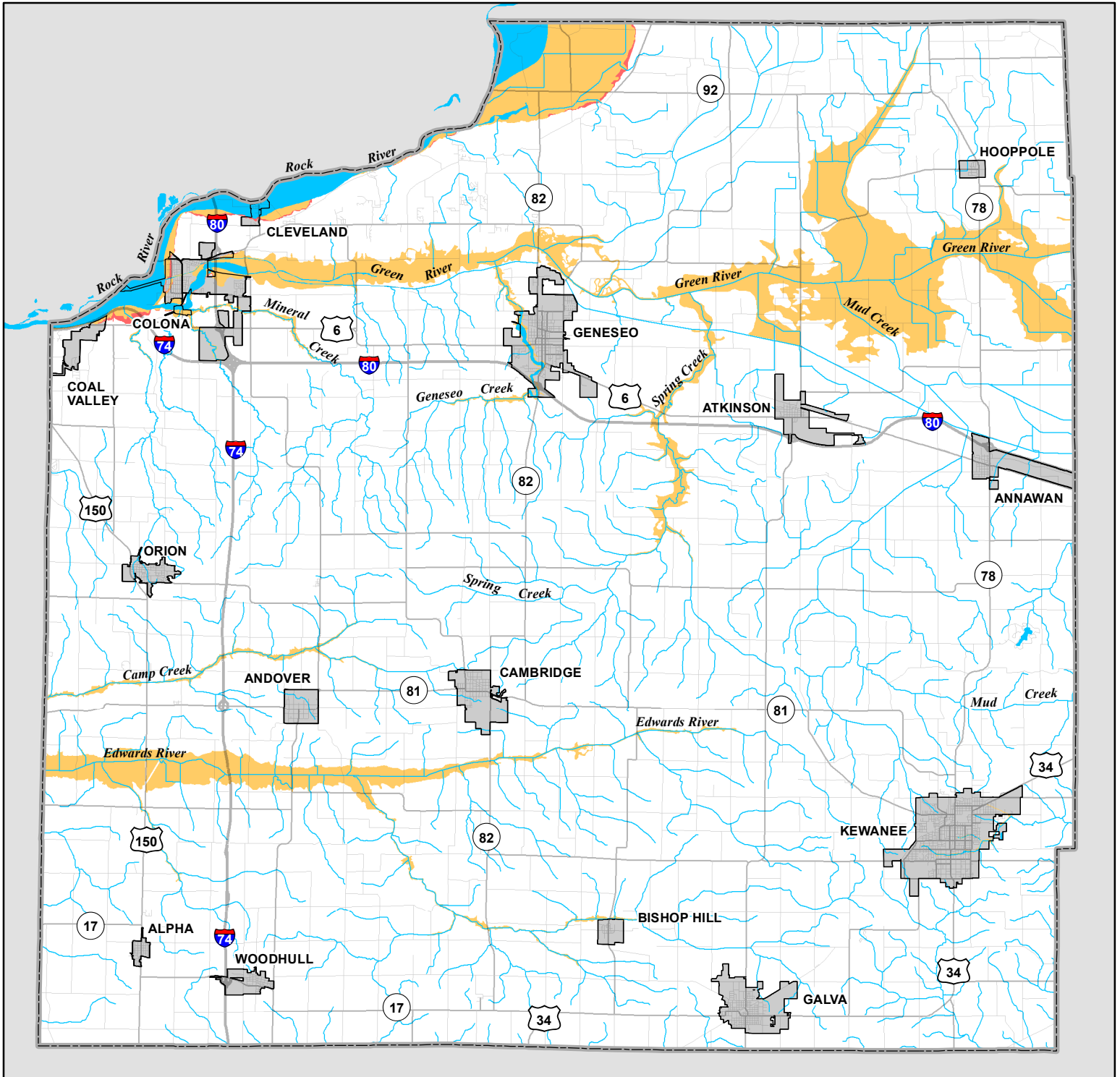
\*Shown as color transparency over DEM hillshade  
 Sources: Roads - Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT)  
 Digital Elevation Model (DEM) - Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS)  
 Roads and Highways - IL DOT  
 Other Data - Bi-State Regional Commission  
 Esri Topographic Base Map Shown

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








Map prepared by:



Map 5.2  
**Henry County, Illinois  
 Trails and Greenway Plan  
 Flood Risk Areas**



**Legend**

	Floodway		Corporate Limits
	1% Annual Chance Flood Risk		County Boundary
	0.2% Annual Chance Flood Risk		Interstate
	Rivers and Streams		Major Road
			Local Road

Sources: Highways - Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT)  
 Streams - Henry County GIS  
 Flood Zones - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
 Corporate Limits - Henry County GIS  
 Other Data - Bi-State Regional Commission

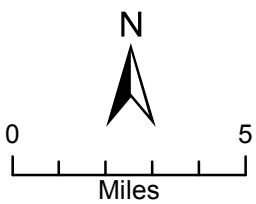
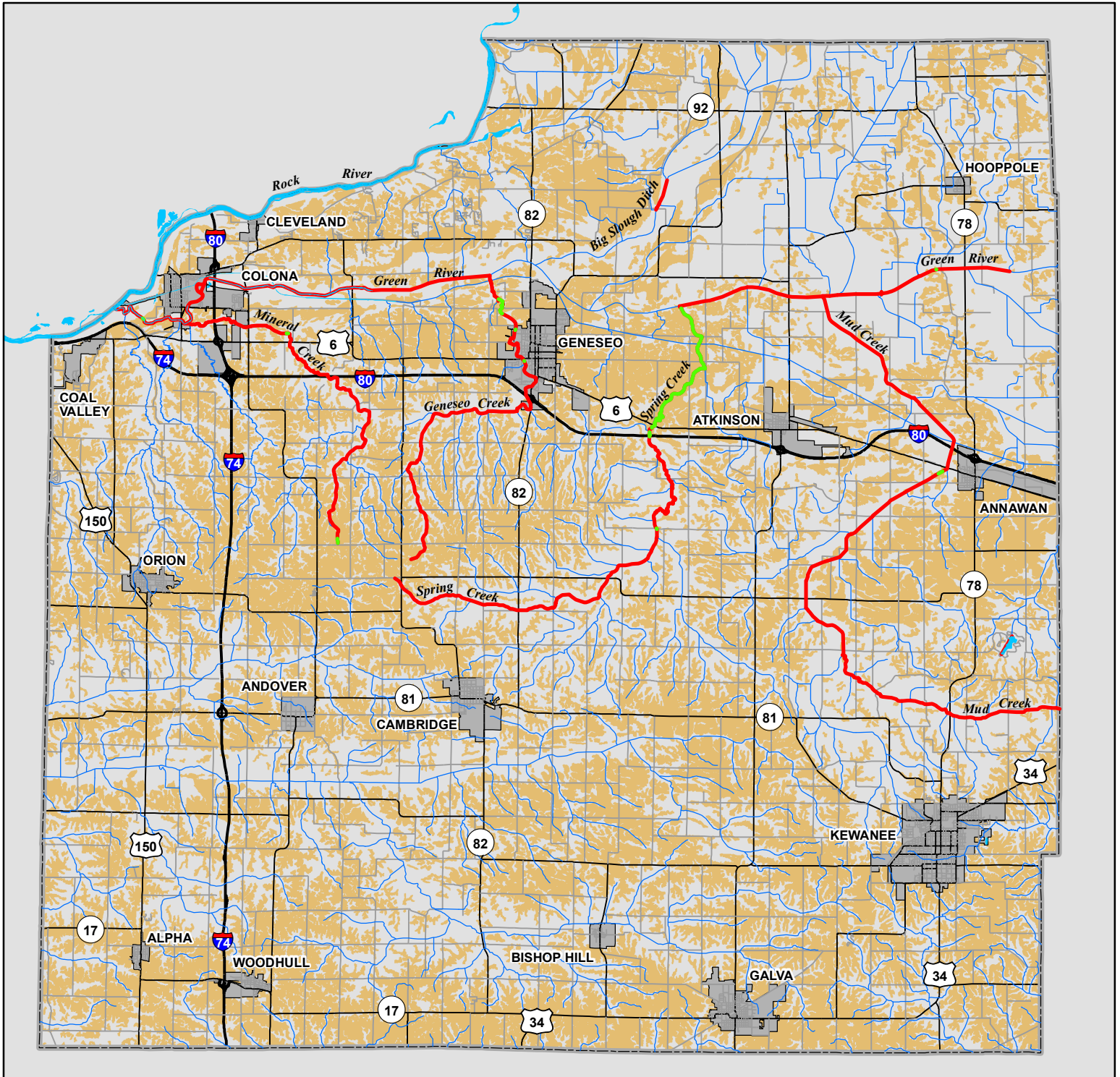
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Map prepared by:



June 2018

Map 5.3  
**Henry County, Illinois**  
**Trails and Greenway Plan**  
**Potential Priority Greenways**



**Legend**

	Impaired Streams		Corporate Limits
	Potential Priority Greenway*		County Boundary
	Prime Soils		Interstate
	Streams		Major Road
	Rivers		Local Road

\*Potential priority greenways are where impaired streams and prime soils overlap  
 Sources: Roads - Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT)  
 Soils - Henry County GIS  
 Impaired Waterways - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Water  
 Corporate Limits - Henry County GIS  
 Other Data - Bi-State Regional Commission

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Map prepared by:



June 2018

Map 5.4 depicts areas where shallow aquifers are sensitive to contamination. Much of the northern tier of Henry County is depicted as High to Excessive Sensitivity areas by the Illinois State Geological Survey. The Edwards River corridor is also rated as High Sensitivity. These areas and corridors could benefit from increased natural treatment of runoff through greenway applications in an effort to filter nutrients and other pollutants from entering the aquifers.

Active greenways have a goal of encouraging people to move about in natural surroundings through low-impact interactions, walking, hiking, bicycling, or bird-watching as examples. Major active greenways in the county include the Rock River Corridor and the Hennepin Canal Parkway. These two major intersecting corridors contribute immensely to the greenway infrastructure in Henry County. They offer habitat for wildlife that cannot easily be replicated elsewhere in the county, in addition to promoting the historical and natural assets of the region.

The Rock River Trail is a multi-use corridor that runs from the river's headwaters in Wisconsin to its confluence with the Mississippi River at Rock Island. It is a nationally-recognized water trail, scenic and historic route, bike route, hiking route, and at many points an equestrian trail. The 320-mile course of the river traverses rural farmland and intense urban areas. Although only a small section of the overall length of the trail passes through Henry County, it intersects with the Hennepin Canal Trail at Colona, which represents the American Discovery Trail and Grand Illinois Trail. Opportunities exist for cross-promotion of these state, regional, and national trails to bring wider awareness to trail and greenway infrastructure that will bring many benefits to Henry County and the region.

The Hennepin Canal represents the longest trail and most critical greenway asset in the county. The corridor is rich in history and offers many wide-ranging benefits to the county, its residents, and the state as a whole. Maintenance on this corridor, however, has not kept up with need.

The county administration and Illinois Department of Natural Resources has been aware of the issue for some time. The passage of an "Adopt a Trail" bill in 2017 is expected to improve the condition of the trail over time as volunteer groups will be able to conduct regular cleanups along the trail, partnering with the Illinois DNR to assure certain tasks are carried out safely. With proper and continued maintenance, the Hennepin Canal Parkway will remain a top outdoor destination for many years to come.

Connectivity to the Hennepin Canal, the backbone of the Henry County greenway and trail system, is lacking. Many opportunities exist for new or improved access points and trailheads. Many barriers such as Interstate 80, however, present formidable challenges to overcome in creating safe, convenient connections to the canal. The communities of Geneseo, Atkinson, and Annawan are located very close to the canal, but each lacks clear connections to and from the canal. The canal bisects the City of Colona, which maintains greenspace along the canal and access to it. A mix of signage on and leading from the trail in addition to an on-road bicycle facility could increase the number of trail users who shop and eat in those communities that lack more established connections.

In 2014, the Illinois DOT published the Illinois Bike Transportation Plan to "provide recommendations and action items designed to enhance IDOT's ability to provide safe and cost-effective accommodations for cyclists across Illinois." The plan recommends connecting Quad Cities, Iowa/Illinois with Peoria via Galesburg and via the Rock Island State Trail in Toulon. The Galesburg route could possibly use U.S. Route 150 through Henry County, and the Toulon/Rock Island State Trail route could use a combination of U.S. Routes 150 and 34 and Illinois Routes 17 and 78.

The reintroduction of passenger rail service to Geneseo from Chicago and the Quad Cities represents another opportunity for trail tourism.



Bicycles are allowed on Amtrak trains in Illinois, and passengers would have a short ride from the Moline station or Geneseo station to access the Hennepin Canal once service is established. The City of Kewanee, likewise, could be better connected to the Hennepin Canal corridor, and also could market its passenger rail service to touring bicyclists. Illinois Route 78 features widened, paved shoulders for much of the way between Kewanee and Annawan, which makes it a relatively safe route for long-distance bicyclists. However, the 3,500 to 4,000 vehicles that traverse the road each day may make it a less comfortable route than parallel alternatives, which have roughly 100 daily vehicles on average according to the Illinois DOT. Officials in Kewanee also noted the desire to connect the Hennepin Canal Trail to the terminus of the Rock Island State Trail in nearby Toulon, Illinois.

The issue of maintaining trails and greenways is a difficult one to fully address under existing programs, as many funding opportunities for trail construction specifically rule maintenance activities such as resurfacing as ineligible projects. From the outset of all infrastructure projects, not just trail projects, ongoing maintenance activities must play a significant role in the day-to-day operations of agencies that own and manage such facilities. Concerted efforts must be made to ensure that all kinds of facilities do not fall into disrepair and remain open and accessible to the public. In many cases, this requires agencies to plan years ahead for large-scale reconstruction projects.

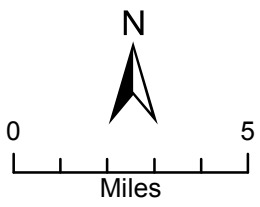
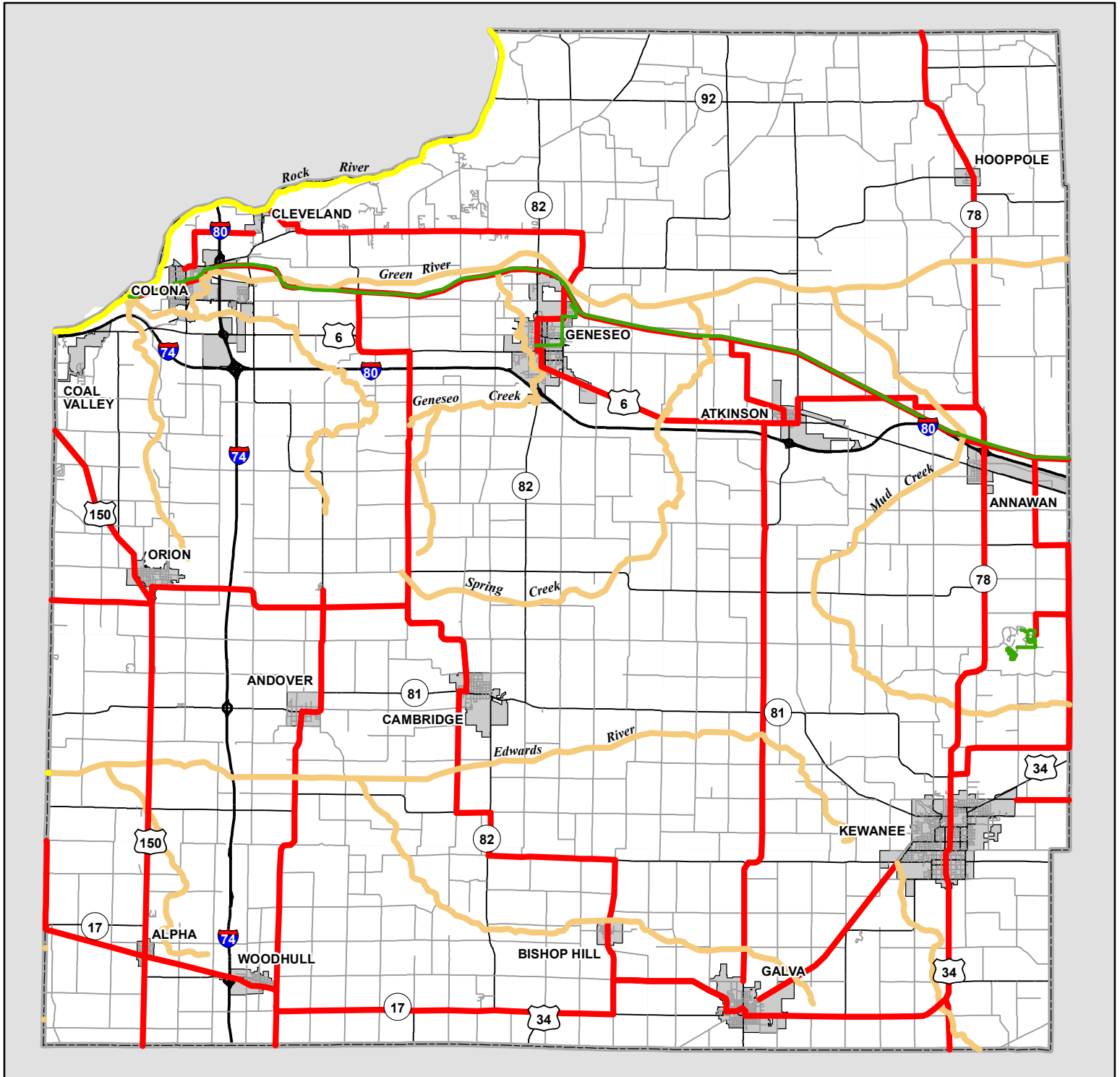
Performance measures became part of the federal transportation vocabulary with the passage of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) in 2013 and continued under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act in 2015. State departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are required to set targets in various areas of transportation planning and development, such as safety and roadway condition. Locally, setting goals and targets can provide useful benchmarks to help guide the

implementation of trails and greenways in coordination with this plan. In total, 251.87 miles of trail and 186.45 miles of greenway corridors have been proposed. According to a 2013 report from the FHWA, the average cost per mile of paved multi-use trail is \$481,140. However, many recommendations in this plan may take the form of paved shoulders, which cost approximately \$5.56-\$6.64 per square foot or \$130,000 per mile for a four-foot-wide shoulder, though costs may be reduced when included in routine road reconstruction projects. Trail and greenway corridors proposed by this plan may be seen on Map 5.5. The continued addition of greenway infrastructure will have increasingly noticeable and measureable benefits described in previous chapters, such as flood mitigation and soil retention, and opportunities to improve community health and fitness.

Effects of trail development can be seen in various ways, such as increased tourism, improved public health, and higher quality of life measures such as housing and life satisfaction. Many agencies in recent years have taken notice of quality of life issues as vitally important to livable, healthy communities. One such organization is AARP, the nation's largest nonprofit organization focused on issues concerning adults 50 years and older. AARP administers its Livable Communities initiative to promote ageing in place for older adults so they can stay in their homes and communities longer.

Among the numerous issues that go into "livability," such as housing and health access, transportation and the environment play large roles in promoting "great neighborhoods for all ages." Nationwide, the median age of Americans has increased from 35.3 years in 2000 to 37.7 years in 2016. The median age of the population in Henry County has increased faster than the national average, from 39.1 to 42.3 years between 2000 and 2016 respectively. The figures below depict population pyramids for Henry County in 2000 and 2016 to show the movement of age cohorts in those 17 years.

Map 5.5  
**Henry County, Illinois  
 Trails and Greenway Plan  
 Trails and Greenways**



**Legend**

	Existing Trail		Corporate Limits
	Active Greenway/Proposed Trail		County Boundary
	Active/Passive Greenway		Interstate
	Passive Greenway		Major Road
			Local Road

Sources: Roads - Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT)  
 Corporate Limits, County Boundary - Henry County GIS  
 Other Data - Bi-State Regional Commission

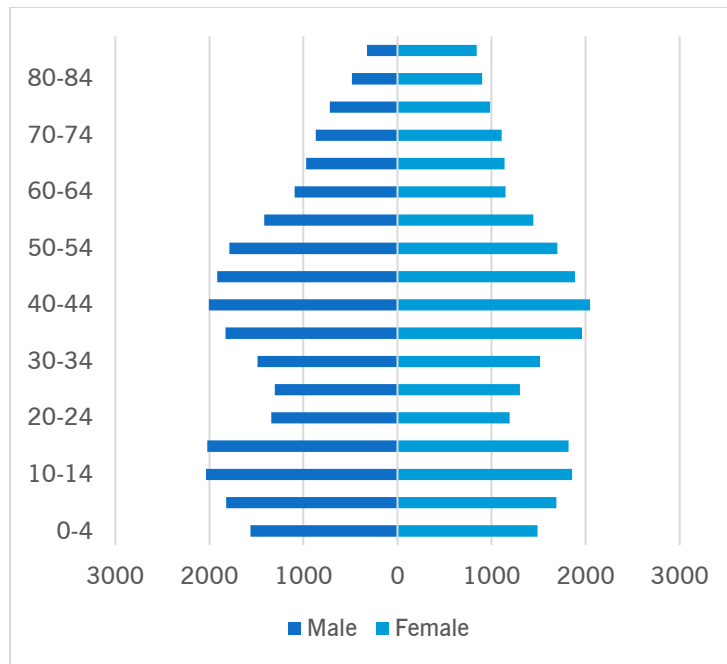
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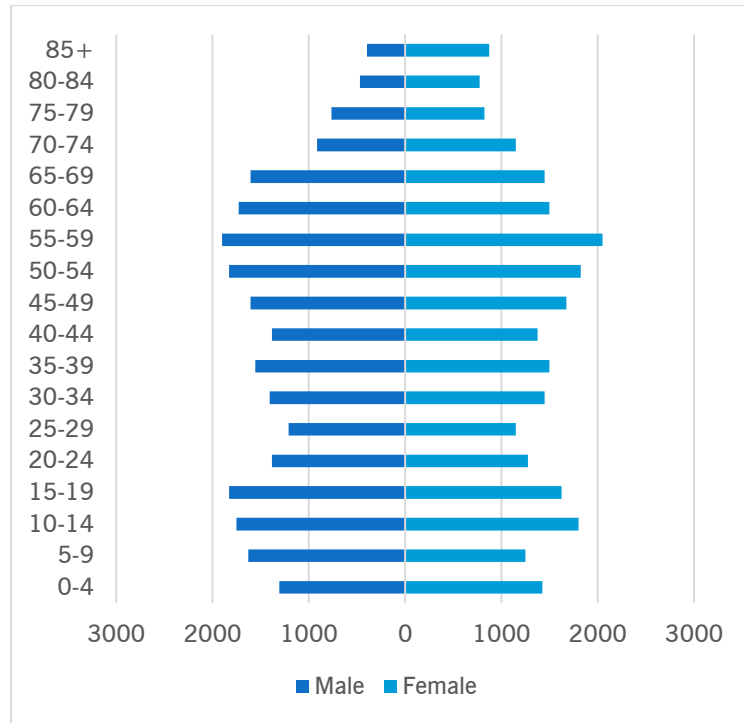


June 2018

**Figure 5.1. Population of Henry County by Age, 2000**



Source U.S. Census, 2000 Decennial Census.

**Figure 5.2. Population of Henry County by Age, 2016**

Source U.S. Census, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks

In an effort to address the unique issues in establishing bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure in rural areas, the FHWA and Alta Planning + Design released a report entitled *Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks* in 2016. The goal of the report was “to help small towns and rural communities support safe, accessible, comfortable, and active travel for people of all ages and abilities.” The report notes that many neighboring rural, small towns are within a few miles of each other, a distance that is easily traversed by bike. Within rural communities, interconnected and diverse facilities, such as widened shoulders, sidepaths,

and bicycle boulevards, create usable networks for users of all ages and abilities. The proven safety benefits of bicycle infrastructure in small communities over time will decrease the number and rate of crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians. Most bicycle and pedestrian crashes with vehicles occur in cities and towns in Henry County where people tend to walk and bike. Examples of each of these facilities taken from the FHWA guide are below. Gaps and transitions between facilities, neighborhoods, and destinations constitute important links for the network to function as a cohesive system.

**Figure 5.3. Buffered Shoulder**



(Alta Planning + Design)

**Figure 5.4. Sidepath, Bettendorf, IA**



(Bi-State Regional Commission)

**Figure 5.5. Bicycle Boulevard**

(City of Arcata, CA)

Three types of roadways may be improved to offer the diverse array of facilities that a robust network requires, depending on the jurisdiction and local preferences. Neighborhood streets, city streets, and country roads can be designed to be

interconnected with trail and bicycle-friendly facilities to allow Henry County residents access to the county's trail and greenway amenities. Examples of these classifications with associated facilities can be seen below.

**Figure 5.6. Neighborhood street with advisory shoulder**

(Alta Planning + Design)

**Figure 5.7. City street with visually separated bike lane**



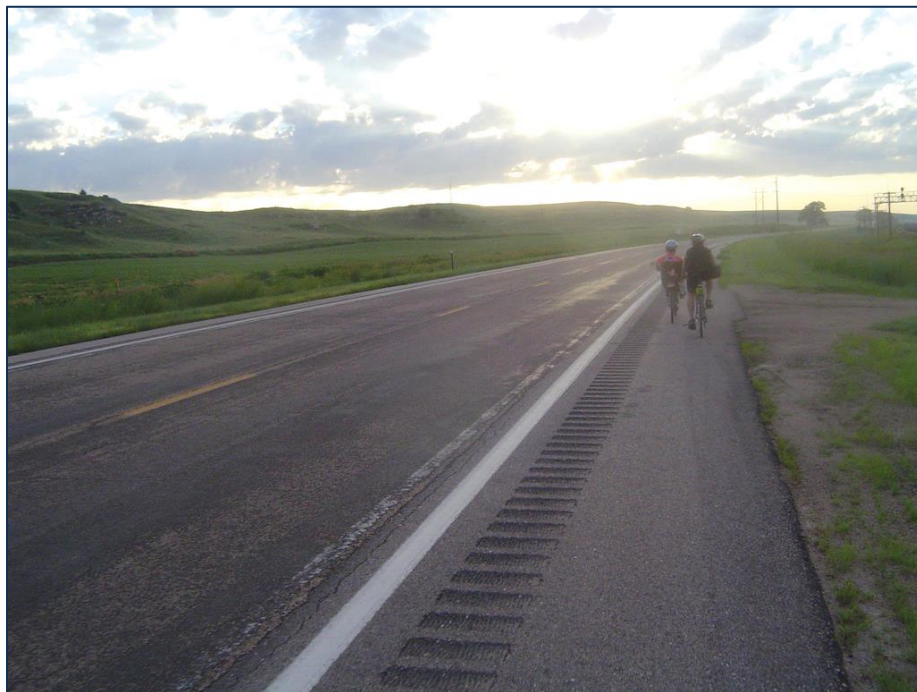
(Western Transportation Institute)

**Figure 5.8. Country road with sidepath in Eldridge, Iowa**



(Bi-State Regional Commission)

**Figure 5.9. Country road with visually separated paved shoulder**



(Bob Boyce, Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center)

Steady progress on the addition of trail and greenway infrastructure will be key to the success of this planning document. Some benefits from this kind of infrastructure can be observed almost immediately through more vibrant wildlife, while other benefits may take years to be fully realized, such as public health

benefits through increased activity levels to lower rates of certain chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes. Nevertheless, trails and greenways improve both the social and natural health in the communities in which they are located.

## 6 Implementation Strategies

Implementation of this plan depends on forging partnerships between many different entities. Partnerships will create informal accountability to assure progress toward the goals of the plan. Different groups will invariably have divergent priorities for the trail and greenway system in Henry County, but must support each other in order to achieve the long-range outcomes that are desired. Building a trail and greenway system will take time, but the efforts will lead to lasting outcomes that will benefit the residents, visitors, and natural environment of Henry County.

### Residents and Landowners

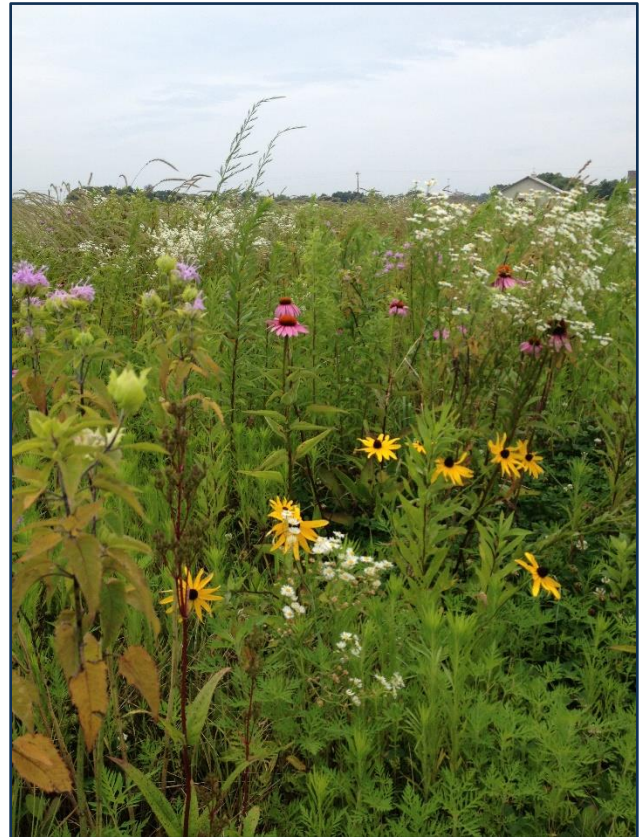
First and foremost among partnerships are the relationships with the residents and landowners in the county. Residents will act as the volunteers to help keep existing infrastructure in good working condition through organized groups. Landowners will also be the volunteers to dedicate portions of their land to stewardship activities to further greenway goals in the county, as has already been occurring throughout the county.

There are many voluntary conservation programs through state and federal agencies, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). According to the Farm Service Agency, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the CRP is the largest private-lands conservation program in the United States. The voluntary program removes environmentally-sensitive land from agricultural production in exchange for an annual rental payment for a period of 10-15 years. The goals of the program align with greenway goals, namely improving water quality, preventing soil erosion, and reducing the loss of wildlife habitat. The program has resulted in 3,834 contracts in Henry County in 2018. Rent prices paid to participating farmers vary based on the conservation practice that is implemented and soil quality. The most popular practice in Henry

County is the installation of pollinator habitat to increase the health of honey bee populations.

### Road and Highway Departments

A second kind of partnership must exist between the agencies responsible for maintaining roadways in the county, namely the cities, townships, County Highway Department, and the State of Illinois Department of Transportation Region 2/District 2 office. Improved on-road conditions help drivers as well as bicyclists traverse the county's roads safely. Discussions between these entities allow for more awareness of the bicycle network and can provide long-range, steady progress toward the goals of this plan.



*Conservation Reserve Program Ground in Henry County.  
Source: Henry County Soil and Water Conservation District*

Countermeasures such as paved shoulders provide benefits to vehicular and bicycle traffic alike by allowing for safety measures such as rumble strips and space for stalled vehicles, and can be included in roadway repaving and reconstruction projects by all agencies that maintain roads in the county. Paved shoulders have been installed on Route 78 north of Kewanee and connect the town to Johnson-Sauk Trail State Recreation Area. Paved shoulders provide valuable travel space for bicyclists in rural areas. Route 78 partially includes rumble strips, which may pose an issue to cyclists, but can be remediated by allowing periodic gaps in the rumble strips. Rumble strips alert drivers they are veering out of the travel lane, and are an effective and inexpensive method to reduce run-off-road crashes. According to the FHWA, “prior research has shown that paved shoulders tend to result in fewer erratic motor vehicle driver maneuvers, more predictable bicyclist riding behavior and enhanced comfort levels for both motorists and bicyclists.” While considerations must be given to bicyclists when installing



*Paved shoulders on Illinois Route 78*

rumble strips, such as including gaps in the rumble strips to allow bicyclists to travel across them as needed, roadway repaving and reconstruction projects by various agencies represent opportunities to increase vehicular safety, improve the cycling environment, and increase comfort levels for all users of the roadway.

The Illinois DOT, under Public Act 095-0665, must give bicycle and pedestrian ways full consideration in the planning and development of transportation facilities. Three U.S. Highway routes, Routes 6, 34, and 150, and seven state highways, Routes 17, 78, 81, 82, 84, 91, and 92, fall under the purview of IDOT in Henry County (see Map 5.5 for reference). These corridors represent opportunities to partner with IDOT to install bicycle or pedestrian ways in keeping with the state’s Complete Streets law.

### State Agencies

State agencies must also be included in the list of important partnerships to advance the development of the trail and greenway system in Henry County. The State of Illinois is responsible for two of the most important components of the trail and greenway system in the county: the Hennepin Canal State Trail and the Johnson-Sauk Trail State Recreation Area. As discussed in previous chapters, the Hennepin Canal Trail is the backbone of the county’s trail system. It represents numerous opportunities for recreation that would be difficult to replicate elsewhere in the county or region. The historic importance of the canal, being listed on the National Register of Historic Places, makes it a unique attraction, and one worth preserving and maintaining. The condition of the canal towpath, now a multiuse trail, has been neglected in recent years. The county and state DNR staff, who are tasked with maintaining the 105-mile-long trail, have been aware of its deterioration for some time, but are short on adequate staffing levels to sufficiently maintain the trail.

The passage of an Adopt-a-Trail bill by the Illinois legislature in 2017, discussed further in more detail below, may allow for the rehabilitation by volunteers of some stretches of the trail. A Hennepin Canal Steering Committee has been established to provide communication between state agencies and established volunteer groups, and raise money for the preservation of the canal corridor. As positive as this new opportunity is, there are still some tasks that volunteer groups cannot complete. State agencies must retain leadership in the continued maintenance of these regionally and state significant recreation and tourism facilities as economic opportunities for the state. Ongoing coordination with local stakeholders will be vital to promote and maintain the facilities to a proper working order and for the facilities' intended purpose.

### Volunteer Groups

The Illinois legislature passed an Adopt-a-Trail bill in 2017, and was signed into law by Governor Bruce Rauner. The law allows private citizens and groups to volunteer to conduct some maintenance activities along state trail facilities such as the Hennepin Canal State Trail and Parkway. The list of volunteer activities includes:

- Spring cleanups
- Accessibility projects
- Special events
- Trail maintenance, enhancement, or realignment
- Public information and assistance
- Training

*(Public Act 100-0180)*

Volunteer groups may perform these activities provided that they not perform “work historically performed by [Department of Natural Resources] employees, including services that result in a reduction of hours or compensation or that may be performed by an employee on layoff.” As the

number of employees at the Hennepin Canal site in particular has fallen precipitously to four full-time employees for 105 miles of trail, the efficient use of volunteer labor will be instrumental in keeping the trail well maintained, clean, and safe.

### Interjurisdictional Partnerships

Constant conversation and dialogue among jurisdictions – the county, municipalities, townships, etc. – must grow in order for long stretches of trails and greenways to remain uninterrupted. Such partnerships have worked before in the Bi-State Region, as the construction of the Great River Trail from Rock Island to Savanna illustrates. Information and experience sharing among governmental partners will help alleviate issues associated with a lack of experience in implementing trail and greenway projects. These kinds of partnerships help with the financial realities of building any kind of infrastructure, not just trails. Many grant programs exist for trail construction to help alleviate some of the financial burden of initial construction costs. Following is a non-exhaustive list of grant programs that have been used to construct trails and greenways in the past<sup>1</sup>.

#### *Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP)*

RTP funds up to 80% of eligible project costs for recreational trail construction for motorized and non-motorized use, trail maintenance or restoration, or trailhead facilities among other projects. Federal, state, and local governments as well as non-profit organizations are eligible to apply. Grants are awarded annually up to a maximum grant of \$200,000.

#### *Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP)*

Federal transportation funds are set aside for the development and promotion of alternative transportation options, such as bike and

<sup>1</sup> Grant information retrieved from: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/grants/Documents/IDNRGrantOpportunitiesListing.pdf>. Grants with an asterisk (\*) are temporarily suspended as of 2018.

pedestrian infrastructure, and development of streetscape beautification. State and local governments and nonprofits are eligible to apply. Grants are awarded up to 80% of total project costs through a competitive grant application process, with a maximum grant award of \$2,000,000.

### ***Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development\* (OSLAD) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)***

Local units of government are eligible to apply for the acquisition and development of land for public parks and open space. These state and federal programs provide 50% of project costs related to the aforementioned purposes. Project awards are up to \$750,000 per acquisition for LWCF or \$400,000 for development projects through OSLAD.

### ***Park and Recreational Facility Construction (PARC) Grant Program\****

Local governments may apply for park and recreation constructions projects including capital expenditures or land acquisition. The state provides up to 75%, or 90% for “disadvantaged” communities, of approved project costs for the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, improvements, architectural planning, and installation of capital facilities.

### ***Bike Path Grant Program\****

Local governments are eligible to apply for up to 50% of approved project costs up to \$200,000 associated with bike path development or renovation.

### ***Boat Access Area Development Program\****

Local governments may receive up to 100% of approved project construction costs for building or renovating boat or canoe launching ramps, courtesy docks, restrooms, parking areas, access roads and walkways and other boating-related facilities. Water frontage land acquisition for public access areas is also eligible up to 90% of

approved land acquisition costs. Maximum awards for construction and acquisition projects are limited to \$200,000.

### ***Schoolyard Wildlife Habitat Grant Program***

Teachers, nature center personnel, and youth group leaders may apply to enhance or establish and maintain a schoolyard habitat plot, butterfly garden, rain garden, wetland, or other wildlife habitat on school grounds or other public areas. The maximum grant award is \$1,000.

### ***Snowmobile Trail Establishment Fund Program\****

Incorporated, private snowmobile clubs can apply for financial assistance for trail signs, fencing, trail groomers, portable bridge or fence traversing ramps, parking facilities, and warming shelters and restrooms located on public park land.

### ***Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation Program\****

Local governments and not-for-profit organizations can apply for funding to acquire or develop OHV trails and parks for public use. Restoration of areas that have been damaged by unauthorized OHV use is also eligible for funding. The OHV grant program provides up to 100% of project funding and does not have a maximum grant award.

### ***Local Government Snowmobile Program\****

This grant program allows local governments to apply for up to 50% of snowmobile facility development or rehabilitation or 90% of costs associated with trail corridor land acquisition.

### ***Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)***

CRP is a wide-ranging conservation program authorized in 1985 that offers rental payments to farmers and ranchers nationwide to remove environmentally-sensitive land from agricultural production. Annual rental payments are based

on the relative productivity of the soil in the county and the average dryland cash rent or cash rent equivalent. The voluntary program encourages farmers to use conservation practices such as:

- Buffers for wildlife habitat
- Wetlands buffer
- Riparian buffer
- Wetland restoration
- Filter strips
- Grass waterways
- Shelter belts
- Living snow fences
- Contour grass strips
- Salt tolerant vegetation
- Shallow water areas for wildlife

Participants sign a contract with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for a period of 10-15 years. Payments to the participants are made via three methods: cost-share payments, a signing incentive payment, and a performance incentive payment. According to the FSA, “the maximum annual non-cost share payment that an eligible ‘person’ can receive under CRP is \$50,000 per fiscal year. This is a separate payment limitation applying only to CRP non-cost share payments.”

## Summary

The development and implementation of a robust trail and greenway system will take many years to fully see through. The long-term aspect of its development corresponds to the long-range benefits that it brings to Henry County and the region. Enduring partnerships will help bring the plan to fulfillment, but will also lead to more effective connections among public agencies, private businesses, and the public. The benefits of greenways and trails provide for social as well as environmental advances for future generations.

Planning for the maintenance of this kind of infrastructure, as well as any other public or transportation infrastructure, requires the foresight to determine the financial prudence to reinvest in public goods. Maintaining the existing baseline of infrastructure is crucial to the county and its residents and visitors. Well-maintained trails and greenways augment the priorities the county has set for itself across four decades of planning. Trails and greenways will help preserve and enhance the rural character of Henry County. Steady and incremental progress will assure that the county’s goals will continue to be achieved.