ROCK ISLAND TRAIL STATE PARK
MASTER PLAN

This plan has been prepared by Missouri State Parks to document the rail-to-trail development process of Rock Island Trail State Park.

Printing of the Rock Island Trail State Park master plan was paid for by the Missouri Parks Association. Scan or click the QR code to visit their website.

Cover photo: Osage River Bridge
MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Rock Island Trail State Park is to provide nonmotorized, accessible trail-related recreational opportunities; preserve and/or restore the natural and cultural resources located within the park’s boundaries; provide interpretative opportunities to enable the appreciation of the park’s resources; drive positive economic impacts for rural communities along the trail; and be a good neighbor through collaboration with landowners and their needs.

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Top: Developed section of Rock Island Trail State Park near Leeton; Above: Scenic view west of Belle
This master plan serves as the development framework for the undeveloped section of Rock Island Trail State Park and is a summation of community discussions, development concepts, strategic partnerships and the data collected throughout the planning process. Moving forward, this living document will be updated as the development framework evolves. On the following pages, communities along the undeveloped sections of Rock Island Trail State Park are highlighted, depicting conceptual trailhead locations and amenities essential for trail development. Trail development will depend heavily on funding availability, strategic partnerships and community contributions. Much like communities along the Katy Trail State Park, Rock Island Trail State Park communities have the opportunity to connect to this premier rail-to-trail conversion in an integral way, bringing positive economic impact and recreational opportunity to the region. Trailhead locations on the Rock Island will be determined by community interest, distance between communities and potential services that can be offered to trail users. Missouri State Parks also encourages communities interested in assisting with trail development and/or providing recreational amenities to take advantage of outdoor recreation grants and technical assistance services offered by the National Park Service, state agencies, regional planning commissions and nonprofit organizations.
HELP DEVELOP ROCK ISLAND TRAIL STATE PARK

Missouri’s state park system contains 93 state parks and historic sites and is one of the top four state park systems in the nation. Missouri State Parks is committed to developing Rock Island Trail State Park without the use of existing State Parks funding.

Since 2001, the Missouri State Parks Foundation has been helping Missouri State Parks create top-notch experiences for residents and visitors alike. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, it has supported fundraising for Don Robinson State Park, Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site, enhancements to Katy Trail State Park and small but important projects all around the state. The foundation partners with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and Missouri State Parks to provide Missouri’s state parks and historic sites what they need to serve the people of Missouri. Currently, the organization is focused on raising funds to support the undeveloped sections of 205-mile Rock Island Trail State Park. The foundation has raised more than $1 million to allow the state to accept ownership of the corridor, and continues to fundraise. Anyone interested may support this project by making a donation today.

Scan or click the QR code to visit the Missouri State Parks Foundation donations webpage.

Left: At-grade crossing at Union; Center: Osage River Bridge; Right: Tunnel at Eugene.
MISSOURI’S RAIL-TO-TRAIL TIMELINE

1968

The U.S. Congress passed the National Trails System Act, which called for the establishment of trails in both urban and rural settings for the enjoyment of people of all ages, interests, skills and physical abilities.

1983

RAILBANKING

The U.S. Congress amended the National Trails System Act, authorizing the Interstate Commerce Commission to preserve or “bank” railroad corridors no longer needed for service for future transportation needs and used in the interim for trail use.

1985

Missouri-Kansas Texas Railroad filed to discontinue rail operations from Sedalia to Marshall.

1987

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources was issued a certificate of interim trail use to begin using the MKT corridor as a recreational trail.

1987

EDWARD “TED” and PAT JONES

Philanthropists Edward “Ted” Jones and his wife Pat, both supporters of the rails-to-trails concept, donated $200,000 to the Conservation Federation of Missouri, Charitable Trust to be used to acquire the MKT Railroad right-of-way. The Joneses subsequently donated an additional $2 million for construction of the Katy Trail from Machin to Sedalia.

1990

Feb. 21, 1990

The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously upheld the constitutionality of the National Trails System Act stating, “Congress apparently believed that every line is a potentially valuable asset that merits preservation even if no future rail use for it is currently foreseeable.”

1990

April 1990

First section of Katy Trail State Park opened between Rockport and Maibain.

1990

August 1990

A section of the Katy Trail was opened from Augusta to just northeast of Sedalia.

1996

Katy Trail State Park corridor from St. Charles to just past Sedalia was developed.

1997

September 1997

Through a donation from the Union Pacific Railroad, the department entered into the Katy Trail Use Agreement with the Missouri Central Railroad and Machens opened, completing the 240-mile Katy Trail State Park.

2000

May 2000

A second Interim Trail Use Agreement with MCRR was signed for the 42-mile corridor from Wingate to Highway 412.

2005

Dec. 14, 2005

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources’ Hall of Fame.

2011

Dec. 14, 2011

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources accepted ownership of 146 miles of corridor extending from Windsor to Beaufort. MCRR, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Amtrak Missouri donated the property to the state at no cost.

2012

Dec. 13, 2012

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources released a study showing that the railroad’s economic impact study was transferred to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

2013

Dec. 19, 2013

The Rock Island Spur of Katy Trail State Park from Windsor to Pleasant Hill opened to the public. This makes it possible for Missourians to traverse from one side of the state to the other along the linear rail-trail.

2021

October 2021

Missouri Parks attendance is gathered for the year. Nearly 440,000 visitors used Katy Trail State Park in 2021.

2022

Nov. 10, 2022

The Federal Surface Transportation Board issued a Notice of Intercity Trails Inc. and Clinton, opening the
corridor from St. Charles to just past Sedalia was
developed.

2022

Dec. 19, 2022

Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

2022

Dec. 19, 2022

Due to the current owner of the portion of the line has begun the process of abandoning 9.71 miles of these miles.

This timeline reflects the past 50 years of history of rail-to-trail development in Missouri. According to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the 240-mile Katy Trail State Park is the longest developed rail-trail corridor in America. Katy Trail State Park has also been nominated for various awards that recognize its outstanding recreational opportunities and role in making communities quality places in which to live. The addition of Rock Island Trail State Park makes Missouri the leader in this important category of outdoor recreation.
Lincoln, defended the railroad's interests. A young railroad attorney, Abraham, between steamboat and railroad the bridge. This event led to lawsuits steamboat Effie Afton collided into the Railroad Bridge Co., the company filed a lawsuit in May 1856, on behalf of the U.S. government against the Railroad Bridge Co. This lawsuit was dismissed because the jury could not reach a decision, but this trial brought much recognition to Lincoln, who would run for president three years later.

The battle over the bridge on the Mississippi River by the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad continued until 1867, with multiple cases appearing before the U.S. Supreme Court.

The ROCK ISLAND RAILROAD COMES TO MISSOURI

Known as the St. Louis Line, the St. Louis to Kansas City route of the Rock Island Railroad originated in 1870 with the incorporation of the St. Louis and Fort Scott Railroad. Around 1887, the railroad was transferred to the Santa Fe Railroad system as the St. Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad. By 1901, the Rock Island and Pacific Railroad operated its last train on the line. Soon after, the line was purchased by the St. Louis Southwestern Railroad, known as the Cotton Belt. In 1996, the line was acquired by the Union Pacific Railroad, which later sold it to the rail rights to the Missouri Central Railroad.

The Rock Island Trail State Park

The Rock Island Trail State Park passes through the Ozarks, home to many Indians, including the Osage Nation. From east to west, the corridor traverses two distinct natural divisions of Missouri: the Ozark Border and the Osage Plains. From Beaufort to Belle, the landscape consists of relatively level topography, which once supported upland prairies interspersed with post oak savannas. From Belle to Fordland, the corridor crosses the rugged, hilly Osage plains, broken by the Gacocke, Marion and Osage rivers drainages. Today, few natural communities still exist within this section of the corridor. Those that remain include white and post oak savannas, dolomite glade, dry and mesic forest in valleys and bottomlands, and several dolomite cliffs along the larger river drainages. From Eldon to Fordland, the corridor extends across the level to-undulating Osage Plains, often home to tallgrass prairies dissected by savannas and deciduous woodlands.

The Rock Island follows the Rock Island River, which flows into the Mississippi River near Davenport, Iowa. Even Jefferson Davis, secretary of war, filed an injunction to halt construction or any other reasons (Section 253.177, RSMo). In 2020, the Missouri State Parks Foundation, in partnership with several other organizations, began fundraising private funds to support Rock Island Trail State Park and raised more than one million dollars in support. Then on Dec. 14, 2021, MoDNR accepted ownership of 144 miles of corridor extending from Windsor to Bland, Missouri Central Railroad was acquired by the Union Pacific Railroad in 1996, the corridor was purchased by the Union Pacific Railroad and transferred to MoDNR. In early 2015, MoDNR signed an Interim Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR). The following month, an initial 5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Winzago was transferred to MoDNR. In early 2015, a second Interim Trail Use Agreement was signed for the 42 miles of corridor from Winzago to Windsor. Shortly after, additional right of way was transferred to MoDNR. On Dec. 10, 2016, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources issued a Notice of Intent Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR). The following month, an initial 5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Winzago was transferred to MoDNR. In early 2015, a second Interim Trail Use Agreement was signed for the 42 miles of corridor from Winzago to Windsor. Shortly after, additional right of way was transferred to MoDNR. On Dec. 10, 2016, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources issued a Notice of Intent Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR). The following month, an initial 5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Winzago was transferred to MoDNR. In early 2015, a second Interim Trail Use Agreement was signed for the 42 miles of corridor from Winzago to Windsor. Shortly after, additional right of way was transferred to MoDNR. On Dec. 10, 2016, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources issued a Notice of Intent Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR). The following month, an initial 5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Winzago was transferred to MoDNR. In early 2015, a second Interim Trail Use Agreement was signed for the 42 miles of corridor from Winzago to Windsor. Shortly after, additional right of way was transferred to MoDNR. On Dec. 10, 2016, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources issued a Notice of Intent Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR). The following month, an initial 5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Winzago was transferred to MoDNR. In early 2015, a second Interim Trail Use Agreement was signed for the 42 miles of corridor from Winzago to Windsor. Shortly after, additional right of way was transferred to MoDNR. On Dec. 10, 2016, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources issued a Notice of Intent Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR). The following month, an initial 5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Winzago was transferred to MoDNR. In early 2015, a second Interim Trail Use Agreement was signed for the 42 miles of corridor from Winzago to Windsor. Shortly after, additional right of way was transferred to MoDNR. On Dec. 10, 2016, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources issued a Notice of Intent Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR). The following month, an initial 5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Winzago was transferred to MoDNR. In early 2015, a second Interim Trail Use Agreement was signed for the 42 miles of corridor from Winzago to Windsor. Shortly after, additional right of way was transferred to MoDNR. On Dec. 10, 2016, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources issued a Notice of Intent Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR). The following month, an initial 5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Winzago was transferred to MoDNR. In early 2015, a second Interim Trail Use Agreement was signed for the 42 miles of corridor from Winzago to Windsor. Shortly after, additional right of way was transferred to MoDNR.
The longest developed rail-trail stretching 240 miles between Clinton and Machens in St. Charles County. The park is built on the former corridor of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad (MKT or Katy) and features 26 trailheads and four fully restored depots along the way. The trail is open to walkers, hikers and bicyclists with sections also open for equestrian use. Katy Trail State Park annually attracts more than 400,000 visitors.

Rock Island Trail State Park will connect to Jackson County’s Rock Island Trail, and will become part of a trail network spanning the entire state of Missouri, linking Kansas City to St. Louis.

While the 47.5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Windsor are open to the public, use of the undeveloped corridor between Windsor and Union is strictly prohibited.

Scan or click the QR code to visit the interactive map.
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
The inclusion of Rock Island Trail State Park into Missouri’s state parks system is a landmark achievement, further adding to Missouri’s world class rails-to-trails system. The trail is an irreplaceable asset to the citizens of Missouri, as an estimated 41% of the state’s residents live within 30 miles of the trails corridor. The trail provides numerous benefits including:

- Positive economic impact for communities and landowners along the trail.
- Recreational opportunities for all Missourians and tourists alike.
- Opportunities to interpret the natural and cultural resources along the historic corridor.
- Preservation (banking) of an important transportation corridor.
- Opportunities for future recreational and economic partnerships.

Moving forward, Missouri State Parks is committed to developing Rock Island Trail State Park without the use of existing State Parks funding. Development of a rails-to-trails project of this magnitude is long-lived and multi-faceted. Fortunately, Missouri State Parks development and operational experience with the nationally-recognized Katy Trail State Park provides a successful framework to replicate. The points below outline Missouri State Parks development strategy for Rock Island Trail State Park:

- Collaborate with landowners on their needs, such as fencing, livestock and equipment crossings, and drainage issues.
- Cultivate strategic partnerships with communities along the corridor.
- Connect with communities through outdoor recreation grant opportunities and technical assistance services offered by the National Park Service, state agencies, regional planning commissions and nonprofit organizations.
- Secure development costs through private donations and fundraising, grant opportunities and community contributions.
- Ensure compliance with any state and federal environmental and historic preservation laws.
- Conduct cost analysis of development challenges as funding becomes available.
- Provide design specifications to communities for continuity of development.

Info Depot at Pleasant Hill

Top: Argyle tunnel; Above: Haw Creek Bridge; Right: Trail near South Moreau Creek bridge.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PUBLIC MEETINGS
Starting in January 2022, Missouri State Parks held Rock Island Trail State Park public meetings in Versailles, Owenville and Freeburg. The open house-style public meetings enabled public engagement and allowed Missouri State Parks representatives to answer questions, gather input and assess the needs and goals of each community and the landowners along the corridor. The meetings also provided information on trail development and operations, public safety, landowner and local debates topics, great opportunities and future partnership opportunities.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT MEETINGS
Following the public meetings, Missouri State Parks held a series of community assessment meetings with elected officials, business owners, land owners and community members. The objective of these assessment meetings was to answer questions, gauge development interests, provide information about proposed funding concepts, assess proposed trailhead locations and collect data on community connectivity and infrastructure.

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT MEETINGS
SCHEDULE

Jan. 17, 2022, 6 p.m.
Eldon Community Assessment
Eldon Career Center, 112 S. Pine St., Eldon

Jan. 18, 2022, 7 p.m.
Versailles Public Meeting
Morgan County Library
600 N. Hunter St., Versailles

Jan. 18, 2022, 7 p.m.
Owensville Community Assessment
Owensville City Hall Council Chambers
107 W. Sears Ave., Owensville

Jan. 19, 2022, 7 p.m.
Garland Community Assessment
Garland City Hall
123 N. Bernhardt Ave., Garland

Jan. 20, 2022, 6:30 p.m.
Freeburg Community Assessment
Freeburg Town Hall
304 S. Highway 63, Freeburg

Jan. 20, 2022, 7:30 p.m.
Owensville Community Assessment
Owensville City Hall Council Chambers
107 W. Sears Ave., Owensville

Jan. 25, 2022, 3:30 p.m.
Freeburg Public Meeting
American Legion Post 317
402 Highway 63, Freeburg

March 2, 2022, 6 p.m.
Stover Community Assessment
Stover City Hall
107 W. Second St., Stover

March 3, 2022, 6 p.m.
Belle Community Assessment
Belle City Hall, 109 E. Third St., Belle

March 7, 2022, 6:30 p.m.
Freeburg Community Assessment
Freeburg Town Hall
304 S. Highway 63, Freeburg

March 8, 2022, 6 p.m.
Roebud Community Assessment
Roebud City Hall, 307 N. Cedar, Roebud

March 15, 2022, 6 p.m.
Cole Camp Community Assessment
The German Table
107 E. Main St., Cole Camp

April 7, 2022, 6 p.m.
Windson Community Assessment
Windson City Hall
123 S. Main St., Windson

April 18, 2022, 9 a.m.
Cole County Community Assessment
Cole County Courthouse
311 E. High St., Jefferson City

Argyle
Argyle/Leed Community Assessment
Kingston of Columbia
313 Second St., Argyle

May 11, 2022, 7 p.m.
Morgan County Mennonites Community Assessment
Show Me Auction Center
17920 Shady Brook Drive, Versailles

Barnett
May 12, 2022, 6 p.m.
Barnett Community Assessment
Barnett Baptist Church
713 N. Third St., Barnett

June 2, 2022, 8:30 p.m.

Argyle
Argyle/Leed Community Assessment
Kingston of Columbia
313 Second St., Argyle

Bliss
Bland Community Assessment
Bland City Hall
109 Colorado Ave., Bland

Gardner
Gardner Community Assessment
Gardner Lions Hall
123 N. Bernhardt Ave., Gardner

April 11, 2022, 6 p.m.

Gonzalez
Gonzalez Community Assessment
Gonzalez City Hall
123 N. Bernhardt Ave., Gardner

April 11, 2022, 6 p.m.

Bell
Belle Community Assessment
Belle City Hall, 109 E. Third St., Belle

April 15, 2022, 7 p.m.

Bartlett
Bartlett Community Assessment
Bartlett Baptist Church
713 N. Third St., Barnett

June 2, 2022, 8:30 p.m.

Belle
Belle Community Assessment
Belle City Hall, 109 E. Third St., Belle

April 11, 2022, 6 p.m.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Also attending these community meetings were representatives from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program, which has adopted the Rock Island Trail State Park development as a project of interest. The RTCA is a regional community partnership that provides technical assistance to local governments or community organizations planning outdoor recreation or natural resource conservation projects. Through RTCA, numerous services are available to communities, such as project guidance, strategic planning, park planning, funding strategies, and conceptual plans and renderings.

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT MEETINGS
SCHEDULE

Jan. 17, 2022, 6 p.m.
Eldon Community Assessment
Eldon Career Center, 112 S. Pine St., Eldon

Jan. 18, 2022, 7 p.m.
Versailles Public Meeting
Morgan County Library
600 N. Hunter St., Versailles

Jan. 20, 2022, 6:30 p.m.
Freeburg Community Assessment
Freeburg Town Hall
304 S. Highway 63, Freeburg

March 2, 2022, 6 p.m.
Stover Community Assessment
Stover City Hall
107 W. Second St., Stover

March 3, 2022, 6 p.m.
Belle Community Assessment
Belle City Hall, 109 E. Third St., Belle

March 7, 2022, 6:30 p.m.
Freeburg Community Assessment
Freeburg Town Hall
304 S. Highway 63, Freeburg

March 8, 2022, 6 p.m.
Roebud Community Assessment
Roebud City Hall, 307 N. Cedar, Roebud

March 15, 2022, 6 p.m.
Cole Camp Community Assessment
The German Table
107 E. Main St., Cole Camp

April 7, 2022, 6 p.m.
Windson Community Assessment
Windson City Hall
123 S. Main St., Windson

April 18, 2022, 9 a.m.
Cole County Community Assessment
Cole County Courthouse
311 E. High St., Jefferson City

Garland
April 11, 2022, 6 p.m.

Gonzalez
Gonzalez Community Assessment
Gonzalez City Hall
123 N. Bernhardt Ave., Gardner

April 11, 2022, 6 p.m.

Barnett
Barnett Community Assessment
Barnett Baptist Church
713 N. Third St., Barnett

June 2, 2022, 8:30 p.m.

Scan or click the QR code for additional meeting information.
Missouri State Parks has been working with adjacent landowners along the Rock Island 144-mile corridor who have expressed interest in fencing the boundary between their property and the corridor right-of-way. The following is a description of fencing materials used by Missouri State Parks:

**Fencing Materials**
All materials will be made in the U.S.A. and locally sourced.

**Fencing Specifications**
- 5 rows of 12.5 gauge 4 point barb wire
- 1.33 lb./ft. T posts 6 ft. in length placed every 10 ft.
- 2 7/8 in. well pipe for line posts placed every 100 ft.
- 2 7/8 in. well pipe and 7/8 in. sucker rod for corners, bracing, water gaps, etc.

**Gates**
- 16 ft gates, as needed
- Cattle crossings should be built using pipe and sucker rod with two 16 ft. gates on each side. See photos.

Questions?
If you are an adjacent landowner and would like to discuss fencing options, please call or text 573-489-8780 or send an email to moparks@dnr.mo.gov.

Photos of finished fencing and gate configurations on the undeveloped portion of Rock Island Trail State Park.

Example of cattle crossing gate configuration.
ADJACENT LANDOWNER INFORMATION: Liability

Missouri State Parks takes the concerns of adjacent landowners seriously, especially with respect to the potential for intrusion onto private property. It is the intent of Missouri State Parks to work cooperatively with adjacent landowners along the corridor, just as it has on Katy Trail State Park.

Missouri statutes Sections 258.100, 537.346 and 537.351, RSMo protect landowners adjacent to recreational trails and parks from civil liability for injuries to trespassers or those entering the adjacent landowner’s property without implied or expressed permission, invitation or consent.

In addition to statutory protections, Missouri State Parks has worked cooperatively with landowners adjacent to Katy Trail State Park to help minimize the likelihood for trespass from the trail onto adjoining property. This is accomplished primarily by marking the boundaries of state park property with signs placed at regular intervals, which also warn trail users not to trespass. This message is also provided via signage and brochures at all trailhead information depots. Missouri State Parks will develop similar measures for the Rock Island Trail State Park as well.

ADJACENT LANDOWNER INFORMATION: Landowner Compensation

Federal courts have ruled that property owners whose land use is impacted as a result of a railbanking under the National Trails Act must be compensated. Landowners seeking that compensation must file a claim for compensation in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington, D.C. Those lawsuits are filed against only the federal government and not against the railroad, the trail sponsor or any other party. The funds for the compensation come from the “Judgment Fund” at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which is appropriated every year by Congress to pay the liabilities of the United States. Landowners seeking to pursue compensation may wish to contact a private attorney to discuss potential options.

As of October 2022, a number of landowners along the Rock Island Trail State Park have already received compensation and others have pending claims that are awaiting resolution.
NOTABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

WINDSOR TO VERSAILLES
36 Miles

VERSAILLES TO EUGENE
28 Miles

EUGENE TO GASCONADE RIVER
35 Miles

GASCONADE RIVER TO BEAUFORT
43 Miles

LEGEND

Developed
Undeveloped
Undeveloped rail with trail
Water
Bridge
Tunnel
Missing bridge
At-grade crossing
GENERAL DESIGN INFORMATION

Trailheads and the trail will be developed consistently across the park using specifications previously exercised on the former Rock Island Spur of Katy Trail State Park. Trailheads along the corridor will accommodate public-use features including but not limited to parking, information depots, restrooms and potable water. However, some features may be limited, depending on the size of the available development area, the difficulty in accessing the area, and the presence of utilities in the area. The trailhead will be constructed to support emergency and maintenance vehicle passage.

For communities interested in developing a portion of the trail and/or trailhead, a trail use license agreement will be required, along with adherence to trailhead and trailbed design standards. For more information, please contact moparks@dnr.mo.gov.

3D TRAILHEAD GRAPHIC

The 3D model below gives an impression of what a Rock Island Trail State Park trailhead might look like with 50 feet of available development area from the centerline of the trail to the edge of the right of way.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE – CONTINUITY OF DEVELOPMENT

ADDITIONAL GRANT INFORMATION

For outdoor recreation or natural resource conservation technical planning assistance please contact Ashley_newson@nps.gov with the National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm).

For outdoor recreation grants administered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR), including the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Additional federal pass-through grant opportunities may be available to corridor communities through other state agencies such as the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MoDHSS). For additional grant opportunities and technical support please contact your Regional Planning Commission. For grant information please visit the Missouri Department of Natural Resources website (https://www.dnr.mo.gov) and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services website (https://www.dhss.mo.gov).

For additional grant opportunities and technical support please contact your Regional Planning Commission:

- East-West Gateway Council of Governments (https://www.e wgateway.org)
- Metropolitan St. Louis Planning Commission (https://www.metrostlouis.org)
- Mid-Missouri Regional Planning Commission (https://www.midmoerp.org)
- Lake of the Ozarks Council of Governments (https://loclg.org)
- Kaysinger Regional Planning Commission (https://kaysinger.com/)
- Pioneer Trails Regional Planning Commission (https://www.trailhaps.org)

Scan or click the QR code to for grant information.

For additional grant opportunities and technical support please contact your Regional Planning Commission:

- West Gateway Council of Governments (https://www.westgateway.org)
- Meramec Regional Planning Commission (https://www.meramecregion.org)
- Mid-Missouri Regional Planning Commission (https://www.midmoerp.org/)
- Lake of the Ozarks Council of Governments (https://loclg.org)
Potential trailhead locations on Rock Island Trail State Park will be determined by community interest, distance between communities and potential services that can be offered to trail users.
Windsor is a place of intersection. Five state highways come together there, and it is also where Katy Trail and the Rock Island Trail state parks intersect. Originally known as Belmont, the name changed to Windsor in 1859. Main Street was once an old pioneer trail cut by wagon wheels traversing the territory, which created the northwest and southeast axes of the town’s layout.

Rock Island Trail State Park passes Farrington Park. Historically, a reservoir at Farrington Park was used to supply water for the steam locomotives. Eventually the grounds became a city park in 1954. The park was named after J.D. Farrington, the president of the Rock Island Railroad at the time.

Windsor is an active community. The city hosts many events throughout the year, including rodeos, parades and trail rides. The town is in close proximity to Truman Lake, Whiteman Air Force Base and a large Amish community. Near the trailhead of Katy Trail and Rock Island Trail state parks is an historic caboose, cabin rentals and restaurants. Farrington Park offers camping, fishing, a playground, paddleboats, horseshoe pits, tennis courts, a basketball court and lots of room for picnics.

Development Challenges

- Minimal development challenges
IONIA

INTEGRATED: 1904
POPULATION: 75
ELEVATION: 941'
MILE MARKER: 205.27 - 205.55
COORDINATES: 38.502733, -93.323503

IONIA was originally known as Peel Tree and located entirely in Pettis County. Eventually, the name changed to Iona City and then to Ionia in 1895. In 1904, the community moved south, partially into Benton County, with the development of the Rock Island Railroad. The community grew to a population of 150 by 1929. Located within the town were a grade school, a bank, a theater, a hotel and two churches.

IONIA is located between Windsor and Cole Camp and has several prairies nearby, including those at Drovers Prairie, Paint Brush Prairie, Grandfather Prairie and Hi Lonesome Prairie conservation areas. The latter, Hi Lonesome, is four miles east of Ionia along Rock Island Trail State Park.

West of Ionia, Rock Island Trail crosses Highway P and continues into town. There is an old mill residing just south of the corridor.

Development Challenges
- Trailhead development
IONIA
Community Photos
In the 1840s, immigrants came from Hanover Province, Germany, and settled the area south of Cole Camp’s current location. Soon after, a trading post was established along the Butterfield Overland Mail stagecoach line, which ran from 1856 to 1861.

In 1880, the narrow-gauge Pacific Railroad was built on the north side of town, and many businesses moved to new locations along the rail line. Around 1902, the railroad was upgraded to standard track, eventually becoming part of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. In 1904, the Rock Island Railroad was established, connecting Cole Camp to Jonia and Stover. A depot was constructed in town and included a side track and stockyards. The Rock Island served as a major freight line, further developing agricultural and business interests.

Today, the Rock Island Trail State Park is located 2 miles north of the historic downtown. The downtown has many services and businesses along Highway 52 and Maple Street, including restaurants, banks, a pharmacy, stores, a golf course, a public library, a senior center, an art gallery, public and Lutheran schools, a winery, a skilled nursing care center, an ambulance district and a community newspaper. There are two community parks: Butterfield Park and Ezekiel Williams Park, the latter having a swimming pool. The Cole Camp Historical Museum is located downtown on South Maple.

Many visitors frequent Cole Camp as they travel to the Lake of the Ozarks or Truman Lake. North of the town and along Rock Island Trail State Park is Hi Lonesome Prairie Conservation Area, which has been designated by Audubon Missouri as an Important Bird Area.

**Development Challenges**
- Missing bridge over Highway 52 east of Cole Camp
- Trailhead development
- Connector trail from Cole Camp to the Rock Island Trail State Park
The town of Stover was named after U.S. Rep. Col. John Hubler Stover and was originally situated somewhere to the southwest of its current position. The town moved with the construction of the Rock Island Railroad and was incorporated in 1903. With the development of the railroad, new businesses flourished. Two of these businesses – Fajen Lumber Co. Inc. and Stover Milling Co. Inc. – are still in operation today.

Entering the town from the west, the corridor crosses a 183-foot bridge just outside of the city limits. The corridor passes just to the south of downtown and borders several local businesses. An old hammer mill sits next to the corridor. The old depot was located just south of the mill.

Stover has a quaint downtown one block from the corridor. Several buildings have been restored, including an old Skelly station and The Osage Theater. A few blocks north are restaurants, convenience stores and a city park. The town is home to many events and hosted the first ever Rock Island Fest in October 2022.

**Development Challenges**
- 183-foot bridge 0.25 mile west of Stover
- At-grade crossing at Highway 135

**STOVER**

- INCORPORATED: 1903
- POPULATION: 1,004
- ELEVATION: 1,049
- MILE MARKER: 185.30 - 186.25
- COORDINATES: 38.440873, -92.990267

**Legend**
- Undeveloped
- Post office
- City hall
- Fire department
- Police department
- City park
- Public school
- Proposed trailhead development area

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**
- Trailhead parcel owner: MoDNR
- Proposed trailhead developer: MoDNR
- Equestrian interest shared: Yes
- Proposed trailhead amenities:
  - Parking
  - Info Depot
  - Restroom
  - Potable Water

**STOVER**
STOVER
Community Photos
Named after Versailles, France, this community has had a long history of transportation lines running through it. In 1846, Versailles was a stop for a stagecoach line from Springfield, Mo. to Jefferson City. In 1880, the Versailles-Boonville line of the Missouri Pacific was completed. By 1903, the Rock Island Line was established in time for transportation from Versailles to the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis. The railroad construction stimulated the economy, as many workers flocked to the area. Local merchants and farmers prospered, and Versailles began to grow.

Rock Island Trail State Park is located near downtown, where businesses, restaurants and a local brewery can be found. The community is also home to the Royal Theatre, which hosts fine arts, locally produced plays and musical entertainment, as well as professional acts throughout the year. The Moegan County Historical Society Museum is housed in the old Martin Hotel, a few blocks from Rock Island Trail State Park.

Versailles is just north of the Lake of the Ozarks and just south of a large Mennonite community. Entering the city from the west, the state park borders Hite Prairie Conservation Area and Rock Island Trail State Park passes the city park. Versailles has a hiking and sidewalk network that will connect state park trail users to the town’s many amenities.

The town hosts a variety of events for families throughout the year, such as an open-air market, an annual free concert in the park, a Fourth of July fireworks extravaganza and an annual rodeo. The Versailles Olde Tyme Apple Festival has been voted best festival in the state of Missouri and is held yearly on the first Saturday in October.

Development Challenges
- At-grade crossing on Highway 5

VERSAILLES

INCORPORATED: 1878
POPULATION: 2,983
ELEVATION: 1,010
MILE MARKERS: 176.40 - 178.75
COORDINATES: 38.431862, -92.840773

VERSAILLES Courthouse in Versailles

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Undeveloped
Post office
City hall
Fire department
Police department
City park
Camping
Public school
Proposed trailhead development area

LEGEND

- Community
- Community
- Equestrian interest shared
- Parking
- Info Depot
- Restrooms
- Potable Water

Development Challenges
- At-grade crossing on Highway 5

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INCORPORATED: 1878
POPULATION: 2,983
ELEVATION: 1,010
MILE MARKERS: 176.40 - 178.75
COORDINATES: 38.431862, -92.840773

VERSAILLES Courthouse in Versailles

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Undeveloped
Post office
City hall
Fire department
Police department
City park
Camping
Public school
Proposed trailhead development area

LEGEND

- Community
- Community
- Equestrian interest shared
- Parking
- Info Depot
- Restrooms
- Potable Water

Development Challenges
- At-grade crossing on Highway 5
Originally located about 1 mile north on Highway AA and named Barnettville, the founding community was destroyed by a cyclone in 1880. By 1889, the community had recovered with a population of 30.

With the arrival of the Rock Island Railroad in 1901, the community moved to its current location and changed its name to Barnett. The town grew to a population of 227 by 1929 and saw the establishment of a bank, a hotel, a livery stable, restaurants, a department store and a grain elevator. The railroad acted as the town's delivery system, as it was common practice for the train to deliver packages to residents by leaving them on the depot platform to be picked up.

Located on the east side of Morgan County near the Miller County line, Barnett is just seven miles from the Lake of the Ozarks. It sits on the dividing line between flowing prairie and the foothills of the Ozarks.

Before entering the city limits, the state park trail runs parallel to Highway 52, approaching the town from the northwest. Rock Island Trail State Park passes through downtown, where several original buildings still exist.

Development Challenges:

- At-grade crossing on Highway AA
- Hickory Street crossing

INCORPORATED: 1961
POPULATION: 226
ELEVATION: 571
MILE MARKER: 165.8 - 166.3
COORDINATES: 38.378704, -92.674725

LEGEND
- Undeveloped
- Post office
- City hall
- Proposed trailhead development area

BARNETT

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
Trailhead parcel owner:
- MoDNR
Proposed trailhead developer:
- MoDNR
Equestrian interest shared:
- Yes
Proposed trailhead amenities:
- Parking
- VHF Depot
- Restrooms
- Picnic Tables

Post Office in Barnett
Welcome to Barnett

Est. 1903

In God We Trust
The Rock Island Railroad played an important role in Eldon’s early years, connecting the community to larger markets and providing an outlet through which local farmers and merchants could sell their crops, livestock and goods. Eldon grew at a fast rate with the construction of the railroad. During construction, track was being laid at a rate of 1 mile per day. The city of Eldon also grew at a fast pace. Homes were built for railroad workers, and new local businesses flourished. In 1900, the population was 379, but by 1904, the population had increased to 1,366.

Although the railroad no longer exists, the Rock Island has remained a part of the town. The city of Eldon has developed the Eldon Depot Welcome Center at the same site as the 1950s depot location. The city has also established Rock Island Park, which has undergone significant transformation to become the recreation hub and outdoor community center for Eldon. This park was the location for the historic signing of the interim trail use agreement and the governor’s announcement of the acceptance of the Rock Island Trail State Park.

Eldon has many community-oriented shops, restaurants, professional services and civic destinations. Most destinations in Eldon are within walking and bicycling distance from one another, and the state park will serve as an active transportation route for both local residents and people traveling through Eldon.

Development Challenges
- At-grade crossing on Business Highway 54

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Development Challenges
- At-grade crossing on Business Highway 54
Named after Eugene Simpson, the original landowner, the town was incorporated on Aug. 3, 1904, after the construction of the Rock Island Railroad. The town eventually accommodated a grade school, high school, bank, hotel, post office and church. Historically, commodities shipped from the area included agricultural products and raw materials such as limestone. Traveling east, Eugene is the last community on Rock Island Trail State Park before it descends into the Osage River valley.

Today, the unincorporated community is home to a post office and two churches. A 1,665-foot tunnel resides a half-mile east of the community and is the longest tunnel on the state park. Eugene is 21 miles southwest of Jefferson City and 13 miles east of Eldon.

Development Challenges
- 1,665-foot Eugene tunnel
- Trailhead development

LEGEND
- Undeveloped
- Post office
- Proposed trailhead development area

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
Trailhead parcel owner:
- MoDNR
Proposed trailhead developer:
- MoDNR
Equity interest shared:
- No
Proposed trailhead amenities:
- Parking
- Info Depot
- Restroom
- Potable Water
EUGENE Community Photos
META

INCORPORATED: 1959
POPULATION: 172
ELEVATION: 603
MILE MARKER: 1134.30 – 1134.93
COORDINATES: 38.311877, -92.165892

Meta is located in the western portion of Osage County on the foot of the ridge sloping along Sugar Creek. Construction for the railroad began in early 1901. There was considerable doubt among some locals that a railroad could be constructed on such rough, hilly terrain, but in the early spring of 1903, the first train laid the track through Meta to a point near Sugar Creek. For a time, Meta was the terminus of the railroad, and a Y was located in the Sugar Creek bottoms. After a few years, service was extended westward to Kansas City. With the arrival of the Rock Island Railroad, Meta became a thriving valley town. The mostly Catholic inhabitants came from the neighboring towns of St. Thomas, Westphalia and Koelztown.

Development Challenges
- Trailhead development
- Avoid impact to local manufacturing and agricultural business

LEGEND
- Undeveloped
- Post office
- City hall
- Fire department

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
- Trailhead parcel owner:
  - MoDNR
- Proposed trailhead developer:
  - MoDNR
- Equestrian interest shared:
  - TBD
- Proposed trailhead amenities:
  - Parking
  - Info Depot
  - Restroom
  - Potable Water

Meta
META
Community Photos
Argyle was originally known as Campbell’s Switch, named after John Campbell, a railroad engineer who resided within the area. During this time, a few stores were in operation along with a brick kiln. The community was later renamed Argyle, after the Duke of Argyle, by a local Irish farmer, John Connor.

After the construction of the Rock Island Railroad, the town grew to accommodate a saloon, general store, milling company, lumberyard, church and school. Agricultural products shipped from the community included wheat, corn and livestock.

The 1,223-foot Argyle tunnel is located 3 miles west of town. This tunnel was left unlined, and trains had to stop to clear fallen rocks from the tracks. A railroad worker would be dropped off at this location to spend the day removing rocks for the returning trains. East of the tunnel, the state park follows Loose Creek as it comes into town. Argyle is 30 miles southeast of Jefferson City and 35 miles northwest of Rolla.

Development Challenges
- At-grade crossing at Highway A A
- Trailhead development
ARGYLE
Community Photos
Settled by German immigrants in the 1850s, this small community started to grow with the establishment of a store and post office by 1886. The community was originally known as Engelbert, named after Englebert Franke, who founded the post office. In 1888, the name changed to Frankberg and then once more to Freeburg, with “Free” being the English translation for the German “Franke.” In 1902, the Rock Island Railroad was built through the community; however, the majority of the rail line is located in a tunnel under the community.

After the construction of the Rock Island, the community continued to grow. In 1904, the town saw the organization of a Catholic parish and the construction of a school, a hotel, a bank, a newspaper, mills, a grain elevator and various other businesses. Historically, commodities shipped from the area included agricultural products and raw materials such as iron ore.

U.S. Route 63 runs through Freeburg, traveling above the 700-foot tunnel. Freeburg is 27 miles southeast of Jefferson City and 35 miles northwest of Rolla.

Development Challenges
- 700-foot Freeburg tunnel
Originally known as Gallanays Prairie, Belle is located primarily in Maries County with a portion in Osage County. The first postmaster, J.S. Ridenhour, proposed three names for the post office, including Belle, Boy and Bey, with a preference for Belle. The community remained relatively small until the construction of the Rock Island Railroad. After construction of the railroad, the community grew to accommodate a grade school, high school, weekly newspaper, bank and hotel, along with four churches. Historically, commodities shipped from the area included agricultural products and raw materials such as fire clays. Once the Rock Island Railroad ceased operations, the community continued to grow with the help of intersecting highways 28 and 89.

Belle is located 38 miles southeast of Jefferson City and 26 miles north of Rolla. For those traveling west on the Rock Island Trail State Park, Belle is the last community on the corridor before the corridor descends into the Gasconade River valley.

Development Challenges
- Minimal development challenges
Richard Parks Bland, 1835-1899, was anything but insipid, an idea his surname might imply. This man’s international reputation, political prominence and colorful personality led a Gasconade postmaster to name a town after him.

The village of Bland was born when the first official mail arrived on Aug. 17, 1877. The town’s birthplace was about a mile northeast of its current location, now just a wide spot in the road known as Old Bland. The site of the new town was selected when news came that the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad was being built across the state. According to the State Historical Society, a store, post office, blacksmith shop, mill and church were moved in anticipation of the railroad. The town was incorporated in 1902, with its first bank opening the same year. The first newspaper came off the press in 1904. In its early years, Bland was home to a broom factory, glove factory, shoe factory, distillery, cigar factory, bottling company, depot and lumberyard.

From the west, the state park parallels the north side of Highway 28 and passes just to the south of downtown. Several restaurants and convenience stores are located next to the corridor. Bland is located 48 miles southeast of Jefferson City and 31 miles northeast of Rolla.

Development Challenges
- Minimal development challenges

Downtown Bland, Missouri
BLAND
Community Photos
Francis Owen opened the first store in the area in partnership with Edward Luster. Unable to decide on a name for the community, the two men met for a game of horseshoes. The winner was to have the naming rights for the small village. Owen won the game. From the start, Owensville was a crossroads town. People traveled through this place from St. Louis to Springfield via the Springfield Road, from the ironworks at Maramec near St. James via the Old Iron Road, and to the docks in Hermann on the Missouri River.

By the turn of the century, the area had grown into a small and thriving community. Agricultural products and clay were among the first industries. The Rock Island Railroad reached Owensville in 1901 and provided more business opportunities to the community. Over the years, a number industries, including corn cob pipes, shoes, clay products, plastics and commercial printing, have provided employment for local citizens.

The state park runs adjacent to the HUB, the downtown heart of Owensville, where a variety of businesses, unique shops, restaurants, and bed and breakfasts are located. The local arts council maintains a theatre on Main Street and present productions each year. Art Works on Main is a coalition of local artists who display and sell their artwork. The Gasconade County Historical Society Museum is located in the old Railroad Hotel.

A biking and walking network has been developed in the town and will connect trail users to the community and its many amenities. Owensville is home to three city parks. The community hosts many family and cultural events throughout the year, including Fourth of July fireworks, classic car shows, movies in the park, demolition derbies and a plein air arts event in October.

Development Challenges
- Minimal development challenges
OWENSVILLE
Community Photos
Rosebud was once a small settlement in eastern Gasconade County, originally known as Snider’s Store. From 1870 to 1895, the community was referred to as Borbois, named after the nearby Bourbeuse River. With the arrival of the Rock Island Railroad, the name changed to Rosebud, as mail for the town was often mistakenly sent to the town of Bourbon.

After the development of the Rock Island Railroad, the community grew to accommodate a grade school, a parochial school, a hotel and churches. As businesses flourished, many agricultural products and raw materials, including fire clays and iron, were exported via the railroad.

West of Rosebud is the 182-foot bridge over Soap Creek. Just before the city limits, the corridor goes under U.S. Route 50 and then travels along the north side of town. On the east side of town, the corridor veers back toward the restaurants and antique stores that line U.S. Route 50. In recent years, Rosebud has become a destination for antique seekers.

Development Challenges
- Limited space for trailhead development
ROSEBUD
Community Photos
Gerald was born because of the Rock Island Railroad. Prior to 1902, the community was known as Shotwell, with a post office located a few miles to the east of the railroad. When railroad construction began in the area, businesses and services began locating closer to the new tracks. Rock Island Trail State Park bisects the town from east to west. This allows easy access to dining, lodging, other amenities and historic buildings. The town is known as the halfway point between St. Louis and Jefferson City along U.S. Route 50. Travelers often take a break in Gerald on this two-hour trip.

Gerald has a strong history of providing for itself. The city's two picturesque parks, helipad, senior center and community outreach program were all developed through local fundraising. Gerald is also home to one of only three all-volunteer, all-donation libraries in Missouri. A dynamic chamber of commerce saved the last remaining Rock Island Railroad depot, and uses it uses as its headquarters.

Nearly every month, some organization in town host an area-wide event. Such events have included a rodeo, a Christmas parade of lights and a fall festival. Upcoming plans for the town include a splash pad and a bike route to connect the state park to local attractions.

Development Challenges
- Minimal development challenges

Gerald Trailhead parcel owner:
- MoDNR

Proposed trailhead developer:
- MoDNR

Equestrian interest shared:
- Yes

Proposed trailhead amenities:
- Parking
- Info Depot
- Restrooms
- Potable Water
Established in 1849, a post office called Beaufort was located 2 miles north of the unincorporated community’s present-day location. In 1887, the St. Louis-Kansas City and Colorado Railroad was constructed nearby. Concerned for the town’s survival, a local store owner and a doctor purchased 40 acres of land adjacent to the railway for the town’s migration. H.E. Linstromberg, postmaster at the time, moved the post office to its new location, soon to be followed by local businesses and residents. The new town of Beaufort was officially platted in 1901.

Today, the unincorporated community, sitting at the intersection of U.S. Route 50 and Highway 185, accommodates a post office, feed store, grocery store and gas station. Beaufort is 9 miles west of Union and 19 miles north of Sullivan.

Development Challenges
- Limited space for trailhead development

Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR) assigned MoDNR its rights to build “rail with trail” along a 12.6 mile section of active rail line that extends from Beaufort to Union. Since that time, the current owner of this portion of the line has begun the process of abandoning 9.71 miles of those miles. In response to a request from MoDNR, with concurrence from the railroad, the Federal Surface Transportation Board issued a Notice of Interim Trail Use on Nov. 18, 2022, granting the parties a one year period to negotiate an interim trail use agreement.
In the early 1800s, French and German immigrants flocked to Franklin County for its abundant resources, including the nearby Missouri, Meramec and Bourbeuse rivers. The area provided opportunities for commercial trapping, trading, and mining. In 1827, Union was established as the county seat. In 1887, the St. Louis-Kansas City and Colorado Railroad was constructed through Union. Commodities shipped from the area included livestock, furniture and raw materials. The National Cob Pipe Works became Union's first successful factory, and was one of the largest tobacco pipe manufacturers in the world, due to its location on Washington Avenue near the railway. The Hamilton Brown Shoe Co., one of the most successful businesses in the county, was also located near the rail line. Along with commerce, the railway provided residents the opportunity to explore the county and beyond, and brought travelers and conventions to town.

By the start of the 21st century, more than 300 successful businesses were established in Union. Some of the city's largest employers include manufacturing firms and public service agencies like Franklin County Government, Union R-XI School District and East Central College.

Rock Island Trail State Park enters Union from the southwest, quickly traversing northeast to dissect the town. Approximately half a mile north of the historic downtown, the trail runs along nearby schools, businesses, parks and private residences. The community offers 122 acres of municipal parkland for community members and visitors to enjoy, along with fine art and family-oriented entertainment sponsored by East Central College, the Union Area Chamber of Commerce, the Union R-XI Public School District and other civic organizations.

**Development Challenges**
- Trailhead development
Missouri today exists because of the Missouri Department of Conservation. Much of Missouri’s conservation work has been influenced by the Missouri Department of Conservation’s strong advocacy work that preserves and enhances the natural environment for the citizens of Missouri. Actively involved in state and national issues that relate to conservation, the Department has long been a prominent and effective conservation group. Since its establishment in 1937, the Missouri Department of Conservation has worked to protect and enhance Missouri’s natural resources and to promote outdoor recreation opportunities.

Friends of the Rock Island Trail

Missouri is a state that was once a world leader in rail transport. Today, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce & Industry is dedicated to linking corridors to walk, bike and be active outdoors. This organization works to create a seamless route from the front porch of the Gateway Arch to the backyards of Katy Trail.

Missouri State Parks

Missouri State Parks is a nonprofit citizens organization that promotes and preserves a world-class park system. The Missouri State Parks Foundation helps Missouri State Parks create top-notch experiences for residents and visitors alike. They support fundraising and enhancements to parks and areas to make Missouri a better place to live and work.

National Park Service

The National Park Service – Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) supports locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the country. They assist conservation land managers in developing or restoring trails, corridors, waterways, rivers and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities for all ages to engage future generations in the outdoors.

Missouri Parks Association

The Missouri Parks Association is a nonprofit citizens organization that promotes and enhances Missouri’s State Parks and Historic Sites. Their mission is to help create and sustain an outstanding collection of scenic parks and recreation areas and to provide and preserve such areas. They believe that parks and outdoor recreation are important to the quality of life and that they provide opportunities for all Missourians to enjoy quality leisure activities and to participate in a balanced lifestyle. The association works to protect the quality and accessibility of Missouri’s parks and recreation areas and to provide information dissemination on park, conservation, recreation and leisure issues.

Missouri Outdoor Activity Coalition

Missouri Outdoor Activity Coalition promotes health and fitness through outdoor recreation. MOAC coordinates events to engage local communities to be active in the community and volunteer to improve outdoor opportunities for generations to come.

Local Motion

Local Motion, located in Columbia, MO, is a grassroots, membership-based transportation advocacy organization. Local Motion has a strong track record of successful policy and infrastructure campaigns for walking, biking, and transit. They organize advocacy events for sidewalks, bike lanes, intersection improvements, and programs to connect public transit. They have significantly influenced the development of Columbia’s trail network.

Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation

Missouri BikeFed is a statewide group who work together for better bicycling, walking and public transit. They provide advocacy alerts and news for bicyclists, pedestrians and trail news from around the state.

Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)

MoDOT’s mission is to provide a world-class transportation system that is safe, innovative, reliable and dedicated to a prosperous Missouri. MoDOT’s focus is on protecting our state’s institutional values representing the fundamental principles and the philosophy of the agency. They establish the boundaries that all department activities will be conducted within. These guidelines can be grouped into three primary pillars: service, safety, and sustainability.

Missouri Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI)

The Missouri Chamber of Commerce & Industry takes care of business for Missouri employers in the halls of government, in the courtroom and beyond. Empowered by a deep passion for their cause and a strong network of professionals, MCCI brings together members to make Missouri a better place to live and work.

Missouri Outdoor Recreation

Missouri Outdoor Recreation is a non-profit citizens organization that promotes health and well-being for Missouri residents. They are dedicated to creating an active and healthy community through outdoor recreation. They support local conservation and recreation projects across the state, advancing walking and biking, to create a connected, vibrant communities where walking, biking and the use of public transit are a way of life.

Missouri State Parks Foundation

The Missouri State Parks Foundation has helped Missouri State Parks create top-notch experiences for residents and visitors alike. They support fundraising and enhancements to parks and areas to make Missouri a better place to live and work. Their mission is to help create and sustain an outstanding collection of scenic parks and recreation areas and to provide and preserve such areas. They believe that parks and outdoor recreation are important to the quality of life and that they provide opportunities for all Missourians to enjoy quality leisure activities and to participate in a balanced lifestyle. The association works to protect the quality and accessibility of Missouri’s parks and recreation areas and to provide information dissemination on park, conservation, recreation and leisure issues.

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COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND RESOURCES

Share your photos & stories!

Do you have fun facts, photographs or anecdotes about the Rock Island Trail? Help us tell the story of your community!

Send your information to moparks@dnr.mo.gov.

Preserving Our Past ...
... Preparing Our Future
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is the park open to the public?
The developed sections of Rock Island Trail State Park, extending from Pleasant Hill to Windsor is open to the public. Undeveloped sections of the trail are not open for public use, and trespassers will be prosecuted in accordance with Chapter 569, RSMo and 10 CSR 90-2.040(6).

Section 253.035; RSMo and 10 CSR accordance with Chapter 569, RSMo; and trespassers will be prosecuted in the trail are not open for public use, the public. Undeveloped sections of The developed section of Rock Island Trail State Park at Windsor. Katy Trail State Park crossing Rock Island Trail State Park at Windsor.

What if someone comes onto my property?
Missouri State Parks takes the concerns of adjacent landowners seriously, especially with respect to the potential for intrusion onto private property. As has been the practice on the Katy Trail, it is the intent of Missouri State Parks to work cooperatively with adjacent landowners along the corridor. Missouri statutes provide protections to landowners adjacent to recreational trails. In addition to statutory protections, Missouri State Parks has worked cooperatively with landowners adjacent to Katy Trail State Park to help minimize the likelihood of trespass from the trail onto adjoining property. This was accomplished primarily by marking the boundaries of state park property with signs placed at regular intervals, which also warn trail users not to trespass. This message is also provided via signage and brochures at all trailhead information depots. Missouri State Parks will develop similar measures for Rock Island Trail State Park as well.

Why did Missouri State Parks take so much time to make a decision regarding the rail corridor?
The conversion of the corridor into a trail stands to be a significant project, and it was essential for Missouri State Parks to gain a further understanding of the costs, liabilities and benefits of this potential project. Additionally, as has been the experience with the Katy Trail, the development and ongoing operation and maintenance of a trail is a large responsibility that requires significant financial resources.

How much will it cost to build the 144 miles of undeveloped trail?
An estimated total of $100 million will ultimately be needed to fully develop the trail. The project’s funding will likely require a combination of private, public and corporate sources.

I’m interested in making a donation. How do I get started?
You can assist with the development of Rock Island Trail State Park by making a donation to the Missouri State Parks Foundation. To donate, scan or click the QR code to visit the Missouri State Parks Foundation donations page.

Where will the money come from to build the trail?
The project’s funding will likely require a combination of private, public and corporate sources.

Could Missouri State Parks build the trail in sections over the years, similar to the Katy Trail?
Yes. It will not be possible to develop the trail all at once. Development of the trail will occur in sections over several years, as each section of the corridor has different features and challenges.

The development of Katy Trail State Park would have not been possible without the generosity of Ted and Pat Jones, and partnerships like this will be important for the future of Rock Island Trail State Park. As with the development of the Katy Trail, development of the Rock Island Trail will require additional partnerships and commitments.

How will Missouri State Parks address fencing needs for private property along the trail?
It is the intent of Missouri State Parks to work cooperatively with landowners adjacent to Rock Island Trail State Park. State law requires Missouri State Parks to maintain any fencing along the undeveloped 144-mile corridor. Missouri State Parks has likely been working with adjacent landowners along the corridor who have expressed interest in fencing the boundary between their property and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources right-of-way. If you are an adjacent landowner and would like to discuss fencing options, please call or text 573-489-4780 or send an email to msparks@dnr.mo.gov.

Could Missouri State Parks build the trail in sections over the years, similar to the Katy Trail?
Yes. It will not be possible to develop the trail all at once. Development of the trail will occur in sections over several years, as each section of the corridor has different features and challenges.

Missouri State Parks has entered into agreements with adjacent landowners to accommodate these types of requests and are currently working with landowners along the undeveloped 144-mile corridor. A gate crossing system has been developed to close off the trail to allow the movement of cattle from one side of the trail to the other.

Will private crossings still exist?
Yes. Missouri State Parks will honor any preexisting real estate agreements between landowners and Missouri Central Railroad. Missouri State Parks will work with landowners to develop new agreements to allow crossings, access and occupations of the corridor where needed upon request.

Once the park is developed, will motorized vehicles be allowed on the trail?
All motorized equipment is prohibited except official and emergency vehicles. Electrically assisted pedal-powered bicycles and tricycles will be allowed at a maximum speed of 20 mph on developed sections of the trail. In addition, electrically powered mobility devices, such as Segways and electric golf carts, will be allowed for people with disabilities. Gas-powered vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles and off-road vehicles, are prohibited.

Approach to the Osage River bridge
Completed fencing project in Miller county Gate crossing system

I farm on both sides of the tracks. How do I get my livestock and farm equipment across the trail?
Possible solutions to this potential project. Additionally, as with the Katy Trail, development of the Rock Island Trail will require additional partnerships and commitments.

Fence along the rail corridor has different features and challenges.

Missouri State Parks has entered into agreements with adjacent landowners to accommodate these types of requests and are currently working with landowners along the undeveloped 144-mile corridor. A gate crossing system has been developed to close off the trail to allow the movement of cattle from one side of the trail to the other.

Another possible solution is to work with landowners to allow crossings, access and occupations of the corridor where needed upon request.
FOR MORE INFORMATION
To download the full-sized informational handouts on any topic of interest, scan or click on the QR code shown above the category.

RESOURCES

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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GRANTS

FENCING

ADJACENT LANDOWNER

USE & LICENSE FORMS

DESIGN PLANS

MSP WEBSITE

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Missouri State Park Rangers patrol the undeveloped section of Rock Island Trail State Park. If you have an emergency along the undeveloped section of Rock Island Trail State Park, please call 911 or *55 and Hwy Patrol will dispatch to the Missouri State Park Rangers. For non-emergency issues please call 573-489-8780 and a state parks team member will contact a ranger to respond to your issue.

For more information about the Missouri State Park Rangers, visit mostateparks.com or scan the QR Code above.

Missouri State Parks - a division of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Missouri State Parks takes the concerns of adjacent landowners seriously, especially with respect to the potential for intrusion onto private property. It is the intent of Missouri State Parks to work cooperatively with adjacent landowners along the corridor, just as it has on the Katy Trail. Missouri statutes Sections 258.100, 537.346 and 537.351, RSMo protect landowners adjacent to recreational trails and parks from civil liability for injuries to trespassers or those entering the adjacent landowner’s property without implied or expressed permission, invitation or consent.

In addition to statutory protections, Missouri State Parks has worked cooperatively with landowners adjacent to Katy Trail State Park to help minimize the likelihood for trespass from the trail onto adjoining property. This is accomplished primarily by marking the boundaries of state park property with signs placed at regular intervals, which also warn trail users not to trespass. This message is also provided via signage and brochures at all trailhead information depots. Missouri State Parks will develop similar measures for the Rock Island Corridor as well.

Rock Island Line Corridor

ADJACENT LANDOWNER INFORMATION

For more information, please visit our webpage at https://mostateparks.com/rockislandlinecorridor.

LANDOWNER COMPENSATION

Federal courts have ruled that property owners whose land use is impacted as a result of a railbanking under the National Trails Act must be compensated. Landowners seeking that compensation must file a claim for compensation in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington D.C. Those lawsuits are filed against only the federal government and not against the railroad, the trail sponsor, or any other party. The funds for the compensation come from the “Judgment Fund” at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which is appropriated every year by Congress to pay the liabilities of the United States. Landowners seeking to pursue compensation may wish to contact a private attorney to discuss potential options.

As of October 2022, a number of landowners along the Rock Island Corridor have already received compensation and others have pending claims that are awaiting resolution.

Missouri State Parks - a division of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources
East side approach to Gasconade River bridge. Circa 1902.