

TURKEY RIVER RECREATIONAL CORRIDOR

Annual Report



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SUMMARY FROM THE DIRECTOR

2020 has been a challenging year for most. The Turkey River Recreational Corridor (TRRC) Board has been working throughout the year to adjust and respond to various guidelines and proclamations related to the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuously working to implement projects, programs, and partnerships. These efforts are always aimed towards the TRRC's mission *"to connect Clermont, Elgin and Elkader to develop and enhance the existing natural resource base through the creation of land and water trails to serve as the catalyst for economic growth and development."*

Elkader visioning with Trees Forever was a prominent activity in 2020 and resulted in some great project concepts for future development in Elkader. Various funding applications were submitted throughout the year by the TRRC and our partners. Not all were successful, but the TRRC did receive a \$9,398.57 grant from the Upper Mississippi Gaming Corporation (First successful UMGC award to TRRC!) for development of a 360° Turkey River video and Turkey River Water Trail guide update and re-print in time for the 2021 season.

We coordinated another successful Mediacom commercial this year that aired on major television stations and multiple streaming services in partnership with the Fayette and Clayton County Conservation Boards. The TRRC assisted Clayton County Conservation with various fundraising efforts, including the facilitation of the Motor Mill Trail karaoke fundraiser on Jan. 18, 2020 at Deb's Brewtopia in Elkader. Rod Marlatt, Bob Hendricksen, Jenna Pollock, and many others sang their hearts out in support of the Motor Mill Trail!

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had the opportunity to attend the Iowa Legislative Showcase and Iowa Tourism Conference Mar. 2-4, 2020. I was also asked to represent the TRRC on a panel about rural visioning at the virtual Iowa Rural Summit on August 21, 2020, which was a great opportunity to showcase all of the amazing work we are doing.

This year, the TRRC Board made the decision to promote a virtual/digital 2020 Turkey River Safari due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidebook and map were developed and made available on our website.

Six infrared TRAFx trail counter devices are now installed throughout the Corridor to quantify trail use throughout the year. From May to November of 2020, the counters showed an average of 54 users per day with the highest use day showing a total of 565 users! This data will become even more useful following 2021 to show a year by year comparison.

We continued to host monthly TRRC Board meetings, most of which were held virtually via Zoom throughout the year. We also participated in various partner meetings and provided input and information to partnering organizations as needed.

We are also excited to share that Fayette County Conservation completed the lighting of the Elgin to Gilbertson Trail Bridge and Clayton County Conservation completed construction of the Motor Mill Trail!

As always, the TRRC Board continuously updates their vision plan in response to opportunities and new funding sources. A summary of the current vision plan is included at the end of this report.

Thank you for your continued support! Your support and partnership with us is incredibly important and essential for these accomplishments to continue.

Regards,



Mallory Hanson, TRRC Director



TASK 1

SMALL PROJECT GRANT WRITING AND FACILITATION

Write and facilitate grants to leverage TRRC and partner funding that will assist the TRRC and TRRC partners with its activities and goals

Accomplishments

- Researched and gathered information about potential small grant opportunities
- Worked with the TRRC board to develop funding applications consistent with the TRRC mission and vision planning
- Worked on grants that were secured before or during the contract period
- Completed related grant reporting requirements and administration
- Regularly provided an updated list of ongoing grant activities to the TRRC Board

Highlights

- Assisted Jennifer Cowsert and the City of Elkader with website updates.
- Submitted an Iowa Tourism Award Nomination for Turkey River Promotional Video.
- Participated in Elkader Trees Forever visioning by attending various committee meetings and workshops: Feb. 5, Feb. 5, Mar. 7, Sept. 10, Sept. 18, & Nov. 6.
- Submitted Clermont HRDP grant for Larrabee Building windows.
- Assisted Main Street Elkader with Elkader with Cultural & Entertainment Designation application.
- Assisted FCCB with an AARP Community Challenge Grant application.
- Assisted FCCB with Iowa Arts Council grant submittal for TRRC Trail Marker project.
- Coordinated replacement of a trail directional sign in Elgin.
- Coordinated replacement of Clermont interpretive kiosk panel at the Larrabee School.
- Received \$9,308.57 UMGC grant for 360 Turkey River video development and Turkey River Water Trail guide re-print.
- The Clermont Dam Mitigation study continues through Northeast Iowa RC&D's coordination.

Notable Partner Accomplishments:

- Fayette County Conservation completed the lighting of the Elgin to Gilbertson Bridge.
- Clayton County Conservation completed construction of the Motor Mill Trail.

Elgin to Gilbertson Trail Bridge - Elgin, Iowa



Fayette County Fair - West Union, Iowa



Motor Mill Trail Karaoke Fundraiser- Elkader, Iowa



TASK 2

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING PROMOTION

Accomplishments

- Wrote press releases and social media posts covering current TRRC events, activities, and news
- Offered OnMedia Commercial Advertisement(s) to area partners and businesses
- Acquired updated photography
- Continued development and updates of TRRC promotional materials
- Ensured TRRC logo and recognition is included on relevant publications

Highlights

- Secured 2020 Mediacom partnership with FCCB and CCCB Directors.
- Continued to update TRRC info. on the Fayette County Courthouse electronic kiosk.
- Represented the TRRC at the Iowa Legislative Showcase and Iowa Tourism Conference March 2-4, 2020.
- Represented the TRRC at the Fayette County Fair in partnership with the Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism booth July 21-25, 2020.
- Participated on the “The Road to a Rural Vision” panel at the virtual Iowa Rural Summit on August 21, 2020.
- Provided statistics to Amanda Pasket for development of infographics to promote Elgin and the TRRC on the City of Elgin website.
- Submitted a photo for the 2020 Iowa Rivers Revival Photo Contest.

Accomplishments

- Coordinated the 2020 virtual/digital Turkey River Safari online
- Promoted area partner events and programs

Highlights

- Assisted with facilitation of Motor Mill Trail karaoke fundraiser on January 18, 2020.
- The Motor Motor 5k was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The TRRC Board made the decision to promote a virtual/digital 2020 Turkey River Safari due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidebook and map were developed and made available on www.turkeyrivercorridor.com.
- \$3,775.00 was raised through business sponsorships in 2020. These sponsorship dollars are intended for use to promote various TRRC events and partner events and the Turkey River Safari. Because the Turkey River Safari was promoted digitally in 2020, 2020 sponsorship dollars will be rolled over for the 2021 Turkey River Safari program.



TASK 3

PROGRAM AND EVENT COORDINATION

Facilitate and coordinate programs and events for and within the TRRC



TRRC Trail Overlooking the Turkey River - Elgin/Clermont, Iowa



Family at the Gilbertson Pond - Elgin, Iowa (Photo Credit: Cody Anderson)



TASK 4

ONLINE
CONTENT
MAINTENANCE &
DEVELOPMENT

Accomplishments

- Developed content for the TRRC Facebook Page and Instagram Account
- Updated trail maps for paper and online distribution
- Updated and maintained the TRRC Website (www.turkeyrivercorridor.com)

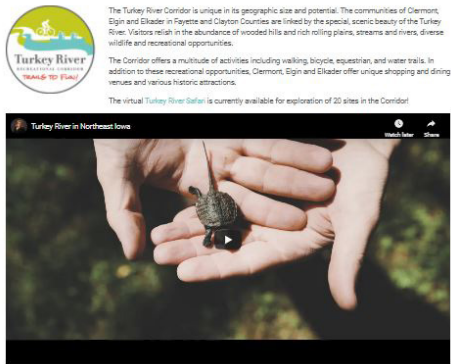
Highlights

- Continued with a positive social media presence on Facebook and Instagram.
- Regularly updated and monitored the www.turkeyrivercorridor.com website.

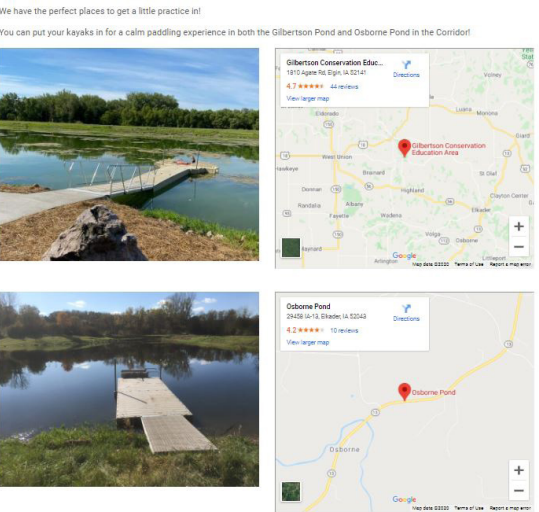
www.turkeyrivercorridor.com Analytics (Jan.-Nov. 2020)

3,646 Pageviews | 2,986 Unique Pageviews | 00:02:08 Avg. Time on Page
60.54% Bounce Rate | Most Popular Page: Water Trails/Area Outfitters

Explore the Corridor!



New to Paddling?



Accomplishments

- Hosted and facilitated monthly TRRC meetings (1st Tuesday of the month)
- Maintained regular communication with TRRC board members
- Attended regular partner meetings, including:
 - Northeast Iowa Tourism Association (NEITA) Meetings
 - River Bluffs Scenic Byway (RBSB) Meetings
 - Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission (UERPC) Enhancement Committee Meetings
- Attended local, regional, and statewide conferences and meetings
- Kept record of funding and organizational history
- Fostered TRRC Board recruitment and training as needed

Highlights

- Hosted monthly TRRC Board meetings: Jan. 7, Feb. 4, Mar. 4, May 5, Jun. 2, Jul. 7, Aug. 4, Sep. 1, Oct. 6, & Nov. 4.
- Participated in Northeast Iowa Tourism Association meetings: Jan. 14, Feb. 19, Mar. 18, Apr. 15, May 20, Jun. 17, Jul. 15, Aug. 19, Sep. 16, Oct. 21, & Nov. 23.
- Presented to the Fayette County Conservation Board Feb. 11 & Sep. 8, 2020.
- Reviewed potential 2nd access above Elkader dam and potential access change below the whitewater park.
- Met with Sharon Harris and Dina Taylor on July 13, 2020 to discuss potential Clermont park projects and funding sources.
- Participated in River Bluffs Scenic Byway Board meetings Aug. 20 & Nov. 19, 2020.
- Participated in a UERPC Enhancement Committee meeting on September 24, 2020.
- Submitted updated information to UERPC for DOT bike map update.
- Participated in Trees Forever Virtual Celebration on November 12, 2020.

TASK 5

BOARD
MANAGEMENT/
PARTNERSHIPS

Foster and maintain the TRRC board and build upon partnerships with organizations and groups



Pony Hollow Trail North - Elkader, Iowa



Clermont Park - Clermont, Iowa



TASK 6

TRAIL
COUNTING/
ECONOMIC STUDY

Accomplishments

- Conducted trail counts and surveys in July, 2020
- Partnered with Northeast Iowa counties to compile trail count data
- Managed and maintained six infrared trail counters along TRRC trails

Accomplishments

- Provided verbal and written reports at regularly scheduled TRRC Board meetings
- Identified opportunities to leverage TRRC funds and work with the TRRC Board to develop a strategy to maximize their funding and Corridor impact

TASK 8

ACCOUNTABILITY &
SUSTAINABILITY

Coordinate trail
counts and
surveys along
TRRC trails

Highlights

- Compiled July, 2020 in-person trail count results from 4 locations in both counties:
Bicyclists: 141 | **Pedestrians:** 290 | **River Users:** 361 | **Total:** 831
- Installed and monitored TRAFx infrared trail counters (6) in the TRRC.*
Average Daily Traffic: 54 | **Highest Use Date:** Sep. 25, 2020 (565)

**Counters are installed at Founders' Park, Pony Hollow Trail South, Pony Hollow Trail North, Gilbertson Trail Bridge, TRRC Trail Eagle's Nest, & TRRC Trail Clermont*

Highlights

- Reported activities to TRRC Board members regularly.
- Finalized the 2019 Turkey River Recreational Corridor report and presented to TRRC partner entities.

Communicate
with and engage
TRRC Board
members and
partner entities

TASK 7

IOWA GREAT
PLACES STATUS
UPKEEP

Accomplishments

- Served as the Iowa Great Places point of contact
- Wrote and submitted annual Iowa Great Places report for the TRRC
- Finalized Iowa Great Places grant report and submitted for reimbursement

NE IA RC&D will write up to one large infrastructure grant per year, as funding needs require, that will further the development of infrastructure related to the TRRC's mission and goals.

TASK 9

LARGE
INFRASTRUCTURE
GRANT WRITING

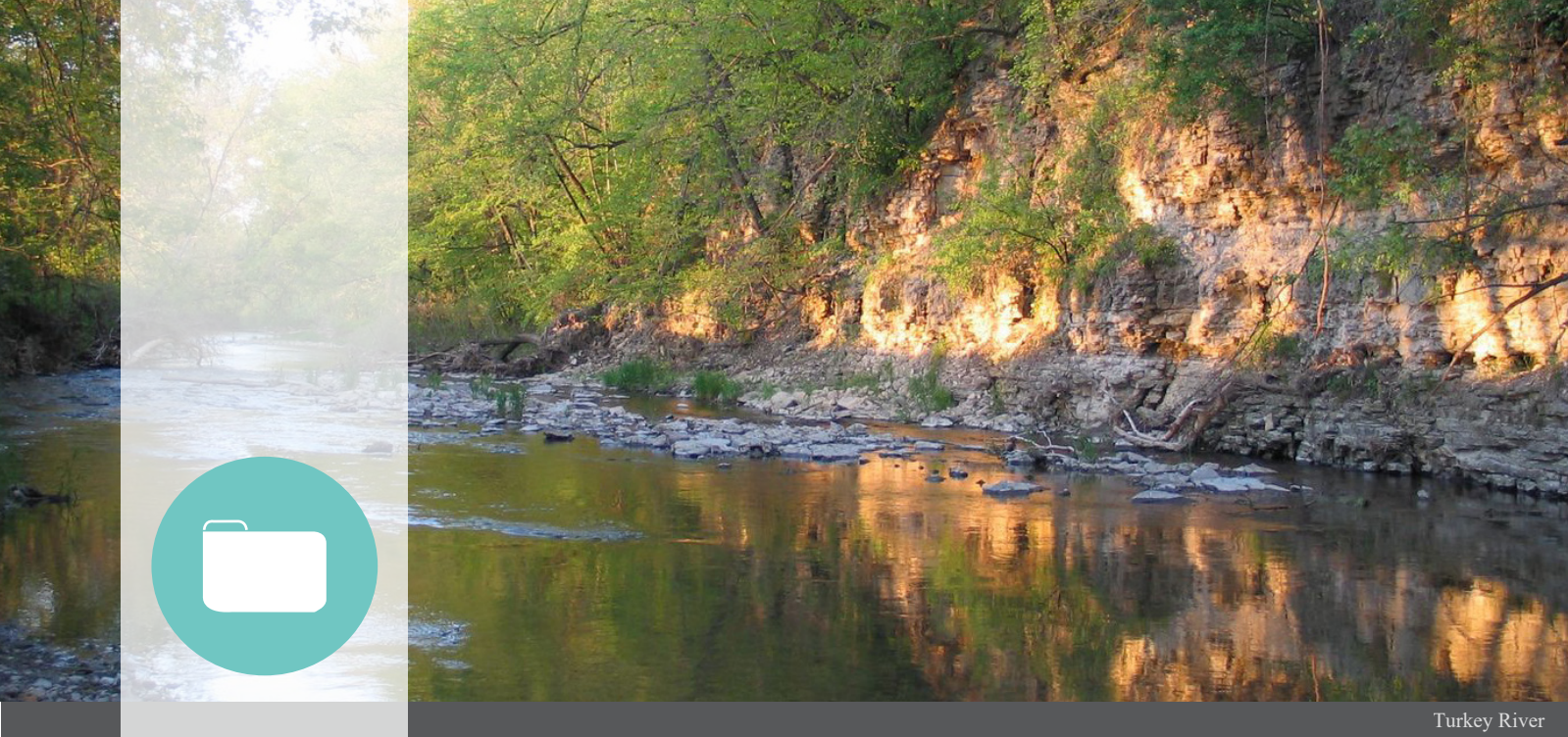
Maintain Iowa
Great Places
status for the
TRRC

Highlights

- Continued updating the TRRC vision plan.
- Submitted Iowa Great Places Grant final report and reimbursement request in coordination with the Fayette County Engineer's office.
- Attended the annual Iowa Great Places virtual Creative Exchange on October 23, 2020.
- Wrote and submitted an annual Iowa Great Places report.

Highlights

- Provided letters of support for Clayton County Conservation's REAP, Wellmark, and TAP grant applications.
- Provided a letter of support for Fayette County Conservation's Iowa Arts Council grant application.
- Submitted Clayton County Conservation's (Pony Hollow Trail) State Rec. Trail Grant.



Turkey River



VISION PLAN

The TRRC Board continues efforts to implement and support various projects in association with the strategic priorities and goals below.

Strategic Priorities

TRRC Expansion & Promotion

Natural Resource Conservation & Enhancement

Recreational Opportunity Expansion

Historic & Archaeological Preservation & Restoration

Community & Regional Development

Economic Development & Tourism

Art/Cultural Support & Expansion

Goals and projects for leadership and/or partnership have been identified by the TRRC Board:

- Social Media Promotion: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube
- Website Improvement: Interactive Map and Attraction Listings
- Event Partnerships: Workshops, 5ks, Trivia Nights, Fundraisers
- Promotional Materials: Hiking Guides, Water Trail Guide Update
- Marketing and Advertising Partnerships: Mediacom, Turkey River 360 Video
- Turkey River Dam Mitigation: Studies, Feasibility, Cost Estimates
- Natural Resource Area Interpretation: Osborne, Gilbertsons
- Water Quality Improvement and Flood Mitigation: TRWMA Signage
- Recreational Trail Development: Motor Mill, Elkader-Elgin, Pony Hollow
- Visitor Resource Expansion: Trail Signage, Mile Markers, Interpretation
- Turkey River Water Trail Improvement: Launches, Safety
- Historic Structure Restoration: Larrabee School, Keystone Bridge, Motor Mill
- Historic Site Interpretation: George Maier, Osborne Pioneer Village
- Public Facility Development: Clermont Planning, Elgin Bandstand
- Community Wayfinding Improvement: Elkader Visioning
- City Park Development & Expansion: Play Equipment (Bouldering Boulders)
- Local Business Expansion: Recreation Outfitters, Bicycle Rentals
- Art and Cultural Expansion: Trail Art, Elkader Art in the Alley

The vision plan is a living, breathing document and is regularly updated with new projects and ideas. Projects benefit the entire Turkey River Corridor and all of its communities and partners, including Fayette and Clayton Counties, and the City of Clermont, City of Elgin, City of Elkader, and Motor Mill Historic Site.

FISCAL YEAR 2021 BOARD MEMBERS

Representatives

- Jennifer Cowsert (City of Elkader) *Vice-Chair
- Sharon Harris (Clermont City Council)
- Bob Hendrickson (Elkader City Council)
- Rod Marlatt (Fayette County Conservation) *Chair
- Matt McElree (Assistant to the Fayette County Engineer)
- Aimee Hilgersen (Elgin City Council)
- Kenneth Slocum (Clayton County Conservation)
- Marty Stanbrough (Fayette County Supervisor)
- Larry Stone (Motor Mill Foundation)

Alternates

- Janell Bradley (Fayette County Supervisor)
- Stephanie Mackenzie-Hermen (Elgin City Council)
- Jenna Pollock (Clayton County Conservation)
- Dina Taylor (Clermont City Council)
- John Nikolai (Motor Mill Foundation)



FISCAL YEAR 2021 FINANCIAL REPORT

July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021

Total Projected Income (Partner Contributions, Grants, Fundraising, etc.): \$44,141.20

Total Projected Expenses (Programming, Events, Supplies, Personnel, Grants, etc.): \$40,422.82

Note: These funds include completed and projected work for Fiscal Year 2021. Income and expenses listed above do not reflect projects lead by partnering entities. TRRC Board Members receive monthly financial reports that provide income and expense details.

TRRC funds are audited as part of the Northeast Iowa RC&D Annual Audit (Proof of audit is available upon request).

FISCAL YEAR 2022 REQUEST

July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022

The Turkey River Recreational Corridor Board would like to request a total contribution of \$30,500 from partner entities for activities to be carried out in Fiscal Year 2022. A detailed contract for services and task list for Fiscal Year 2022 will be determined by the TRRC Board of Directors prior to the start of Fiscal Year 2022.

The TRRC Board procures Mallory Hanson's coordination services through an annual contract with Northeast RC&D

