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# TURKEY RIVER RECREATIONAL CORRIDOR

## Annual Report

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## SUMMARY FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Turkey River Recreational Corridor (TRRC) Board has been working throughout the year to continue with progress amid the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Work on project development, partnerships, and marketing is 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."

Notable vision plan project progress includes:

- Development of a 360-degree video of the Turkey River Water Trail and addition of an interactive map of the water trail and land trails on the TRRC website.
- Support of partner events including the Motor Motor 5k and multiple guided hikes.
- Planning and fundraising for development of a regional Northeast Iowa Bike Trail map.
- Development of community welcome packet drafts for TRRC communities.
- Interpretation development and installation at Gilbertson Conservation Education Area (Elgin).
- Providing input for a now complete feasibility study for a proposed Elkader to Elgin land trail.
- Providing endorsement letters for various partner projects such as the Pony Hollow Trail expansion (Elkader) and Motor Mill Inn rehabilitation (Elkader).
- Securing HRDP funding for the Larrabee School window rehabilitation project (Clermont).
- Securing Community Foundation funding for the Clermont recreation park and concession stand rehabilitation (Clermont).
- Development of a planning map for a comprehensive Elkader wayfinding signage system (Elkader).

The TRRC also had the opportunity to attend the 2021 Iowa Tourism Conference and promote at the 2021 Iowa State Fair.

A total of eight infrared TRAFx trail counter devices were installed throughout the Corridor in 2021 to quantify trail use throughout the year. From March to November of 2021, the counters showed an average of 44 users per day with the highest use day showing a total of 421\* users! \*The actual counter number is 842. We calculate users by taking that figure divided by 2, assuming users are crossing the counters twice.

A year-to-year comparison from 2020 to 2021 shows an overall increase in trail use.

We continued to host monthly TRRC Board meetings and participated in various partner meetings, providing input and information to partnering organizations as needed.

As always, the TRRC Board continuously updates their vision plan in response to opportunities and new funding sources. We are excited to share that since its inception in 2010, the TRRC has leveraged over \$8.2 Million for projects and programs.

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





Regional Interpretive Hub - Elgin, Iowa

## 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

- Completed the Turkey River 360 Video project (funded by UMGC and partners)
- Worked with Elkader to complete the Trees Forever visioning process.
- Developed a map for wayfinding signage plan for the City of Elkader.
- Wrote a successful HRDP for \$18,000 for the City of Clermont for Larrabee School Window Rehabilitation.
- Wrote a successful Fayette Co. Community Foundation Grant for the City of Clermont \$7,290 for park and concession improvements.
- Partnered with Clayton County Conservation to support their "Attracting Success" initiative, including planning for a 2022 summit.
- Wrote a successful Fayette Co. Community Foundation Grant for \$8,954 the TRRC for development, fabrication, and installation of a regional interpretive hub at Gilbertsons.
- MSA has completed a location study for the Elkader to Elgin trail route. The study was commissioned by the City of Elkader with input from the TRRC and other stakeholders:

*The TRRC Board consensus is that the preferred western portion of the route should traverse north of the Turkey River from Gilbertson Park in Elgin to Big Spring Fish Hatchery. Various options have been recommended and reviewed for the potential eastern route from Big Spring Fish Hatchery to Elkader. The TRRC will continue to work to identify potential funding sources and resources to assist partnering entities with trail development. It is likely that trail development will begin at Gilbertson Park and the Fayette/Clayton County line, with plans to connect to Big Spring Fish Hatchery and Elkader. The study provides information and data to assist with future decisions and grant writing.*

Hanson attended multiple virtual and in-person meetings with stakeholders in Elkader to provide input and support.





2021 Iowa State Fair - Des Moines, Iowa

## TASK 2

### MARKETING AND ADVERTISING PROMOTION

Promote the TRRC through various marketing and advertising strategies

### Accomplishments

- Wrote press releases and social media posts covering current TRRC events, activities, and news
- Coordinated interviews to promote TRRC activities
- Acquired updated photography
- Continued development and updates of TRRC promotional materials
- Ensured TRRC logo and recognition is included on relevant publications

### Highlights

- Promoted FCCB Night Hike at Gilbertsons on January 29, 2021.
- Met with Kristina McBurney (Congresswoman Hinson Representative) about various projects, including the TRRC on February 12, 2021.
- Collaborated with Brian Gibbs (FCCB) on Iowa Outdoors Magazine article.
- Finalized the updated Turkey River Water Trail guide and coordinated printing.
- Updated web versions of the Clermont, Elgin, and Elkader community guides.
- Participated in the virtual Northeast Iowa Whitewater CanoeCopia booth via the Whoova App. March 13-14, 2021.
- Designed and submitted Destination Driftless advertisement.
- Promoted the TRRC at the Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism booth at the Fayette County Fair July 20-24, 2021.
- Promoted the TRRC at the Northeast Iowa Tourism Association booth at the Iowa State Fair August 12-14, 2021.
- Promoted the Turkey River Water Trail 360 Video via Facebook Page, Groups, and Press.
- Continued to update TRRC info. on the Fayette County Courthouse electronic kiosk.





Turkey River Safari Participants - Elkader, Iowa



## TASK 3

### PROGRAM AND EVENT COORDINATION

### Accomplishments

- Coordinated the 2021 Turkey River Safari:
  - Coordinated fundraising efforts/grant applications
  - Determined sites and gained site approval
  - Coordinated with participating distribution locations
  - Updated guidebook/map and facilitate printing and distribution
  - Coordinate post placement, including Iowa One Call requests
  - Promoted the 2021 Turkey River Safari
- Promoted area partner events and programs

### Highlights

- Sponsorships were not requested in 2021 due to recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Because the Turkey River Safari was promoted digitally in 2020, 2020 sponsorship dollars were rolled over for the 2021 Turkey River Safari program.
- Facilitated the 2021 Turkey River Safari-An estimated 500 individuals participated.
- Assisted with facilitation of the FCCB Night Hike on February 27, 2021.
- Assisted with Motor 5k/10k and Motor Mill Trail Grand opening preparation and facilitation on March 19 and March 20, 2021.
- Promoted Turkey River Safari through press releases and Social Media.
- Co-hosted "Late Bloomers" Prairie Identification Day with Fayette County Conservation on August 31, 2021.



Facilitate and coordinate programs and events for and within the TRRC





Interpretation along the TRRC Trail - Elgin/Clermont, Iowa

## 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](http://www.turkeyrivercorridor.com))

Advertise and  
promote the  
TRRC online

### Highlights

- Continued with a positive social media presence on Facebook and Instagram.
- Regularly updated and monitored the [www.turkeyrivercorridor.com](http://www.turkeyrivercorridor.com) website.
- Created a winter activities page on the TRRC website.
- Added a regional trail map to the [www.turkeyrivercorridor.com](http://www.turkeyrivercorridor.com) website.
- Posted updated community guides to website.
- Promoted Turkey River Water Trail and information at 2021 CanoeCopia Virtual Northeast Iowa Whitewater booth.
- Added an interactive map of the Turkey River Water Trail and Corridor linked to the 360 video of the Turkey River.

#### **[www.turkeyrivercorridor.com](http://www.turkeyrivercorridor.com) Analytics (Jan.-Nov. 2021)**

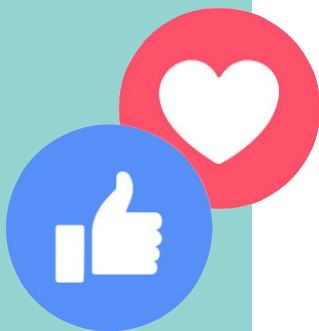
5,698 Pageviews (56% increase from 2020) | 4,277 Unique Pageviews  
00:01:13 Avg. Time on Page

61.13% Bounce Rate | Most Popular Page: Water Trails/Area Outfitters

#### **Turkey River Recreational Corridor Facebook & Instagram Analytics (Jan.-Nov. 2021)**

13,054 Facebook Reach (+11.3% from 2020) | 413 Instagram Reach (+53% from 2020)  
957 Facebook Page Likes | 380 Instagram Followers

Most Popular Facebook Post: Release of Turkey River 360 Video  
4,487 People Reached | 70 Reactions, Comments, & Shares | 207 Post Clicks







Chicken Ridge Overlook - Elkader, Iowa



## 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

## TASK 5

### BOARD MANAGEMENT/ PARTNERSHIPS

## Highlights

- Held TRRC Board meetings via Zoom:
  - January 5, February 2, and March 2
- Held TRRC Board meeting in person:
  - April 6, May 4, June 1, July 6, September 7, October 5, and November 2
- Participated in Northeast Iowa Tourism meetings:
  - January 20, February 17, March 17, April 26, May 24, June 16, July 14, August 24, September 21, and October 25
- Participated in River Bluffs Scenic Byway meetings:
  - February 18, August 26, and November 18
- Participated in an RPA 1 Enhancement meetings:
  - March 17, 2021 and October 20
- Attended the Iowa Tourism Conference April 27-28, 2021.
- Completed 2021 annual report and scheduled presentations.
- Wrote letter of support for Iowa State University for Turkey River Watershed support.

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



Music and BBQ in the Park - Elgin, Iowa

## TASK 6

### TRAIL COUNTING/ ECONOMIC STUDY

#### Accomplishments

- Conducted trail counts and surveys in July, 2021
- Partnered with Northeast Iowa counties to compile trail count data
- Managed and maintained eight infrared trail counters along TRRC trails

Coordinate trail  
counts and  
surveys along  
TRRC trails

#### Highlights

- Compiled July, 2021 in-person trail count results from 4 locations in both counties:  
**Bicyclists: 136 | Pedestrians: 373 | River Users: 354 | Total: 863**

- Installed and monitored TRAFx infrared trail counters (8) in the TRRC.\*  
**Average Daily Traffic: 45 | Highest Use Date: Sep. 21, 2021 (1,296)**

*\*The report attachment can be referenced for more detail regarding trail counter data. The attachment also includes an excerpt from the Northeast Iowa Backbone Trail economic impact study (completed by UERPC).*

## 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

Maintain Iowa  
Great Places  
status for the  
TRRC

#### Highlights

- Continued updating the TRRC vision plan.
- Wrote and submitted an annual Iowa Great Places report.
- Met with Iowa Great Places program coordinator via Zoom on April 23, 2021.
- Participated in Iowa Great Places webinar on May 12, 2021.
- Participated in Iowa Dept. of Cultural Affairs public input session on June 29, 2021.
- Participated in the 2021 Virtual Iowa Creative Places Exchange on October 22, 2021.





Founders' Park - Elkader, Iowa



### 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

### Highlights

- Reported activities to TRRC Board members regularly.
- Finalized the 2020 Turkey River Recreational Corridor report and presented to TRRC partner entities.

Communicate with and engage TRRC Board members and partner entities

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

### Highlights

- Provided a letter of support to Northeast Iowa RC&D and Iowa State University for Turkey River Watershed support.
- Provided a letter of support to Clayton County Conservation for a Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area grant application for a Motor Mill interpretive master plan.
- Provided a letter of support to Clayton County Conservation for a REAP grant application for development of the Osborne Campground.
- Provided a letter of support to Montauk Historic Site for a Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area grant application for interpretation.
- Provided a letter of support to Clayton County Conservation for a Rural Innovation Grant for the Motor Mill Inn.





Pony Hollow Trail - Elkader, Iowa

## 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: Attraction Listings
- Event Partnerships: Workshops, 5ks, Trivia Nights, Fundraisers
- Promotional Materials: Regional Trail Guide
- Marketing and Advertising Partnerships: TRRC Welcome Packets
- Turkey River Dam Mitigation: Studies, Feasibility, Cost Estimates
- Natural Resource Area Interpretation: Osborne
- Recreational Trail Development: 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
- Historic Site Improvement: Elgin Historical Society
- Public Facility Development: Elgin Bandstand
- Community Wayfinding Improvement: Elkader Wayfinding Signage
- City Park Development & Expansion: Play Equipment
- Local Business Expansion: Recreation Outfitters, Bicycle Rentals
- Art and Cultural Expansion: Trail Art

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 2022 BOARD MEMBERS

### Representatives

- Jennifer Cowsert (At-Large) \*Vice-Chair
- Sharon Harris (Clermont City Council)
- Bob Hendrickson (Elkader City Council)
- Aimee Hilgerson (Elgin City Council)
- Rod Marlatt (Fayette County Conservation) \*Chair
- Kenneth Slocum (Clayton County Conservation)
- Troy Schott (At-Large)
- Marty Stanbrough (Fayette County Supervisor)
- Larry Stone (Motor Mill Foundation)

### Alternates

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



## FISCAL YEAR 2022 FINANCIAL REPORT

July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022

Total Projected Income (Partner Contributions, Grants, Fundraising, etc.): \$33,743.69

Total Projected Expenses (Programming, Events, Supplies, Personnel, Grants, etc.): \$29,737.15

Note: These funds include completed and projected work for Fiscal Year 2022. 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 2023 REQUEST

July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023

The Turkey River Recreational Corridor Board would like to request a total contribution of \$31,000.00 from partner entities for activities to be carried out in Fiscal Year 2023. A detailed contract for services and task list for Fiscal Year 2023 will be determined by the TRRC Board of Directors prior to the start of Fiscal Year 2023.

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

