

TURKEY RIVER RECREATIONAL CORRIDOR

2023 Annual Report



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From the Director

Dear Supporters and Friends,

I am thrilled to share with you the remarkable achievements of the Turkey River Recreational Corridor in 2023. This year has been incredibly successful, and I am proud to report on the significant progress we have made in enhancing recreational opportunities within our communities. One of our notable accomplishments was our successful endeavor in writing and assisting with multiple grant applications and reports, securing essential funding for various projects aimed at improving our recreational facilities. Additionally, our team diligently managed travel and user data, ensuring seamless experiences for all visitors.

We actively engaged in community planning initiatives, fostering partnerships that have allowed us to expand our reach and impact. Representing the organization at several statewide events and tradeshows enabled us to network effectively, promoting the Corridor and garnering support from a broader audience.

Furthermore, our dedication to creating memorable experiences was evident through the coordination of the highly anticipated Turkey River Safari and our active involvement in various community events. We maintained a strong online presence, managing information and social media platforms to keep our supporters informed and engaged. In addition to these efforts, we diligently crafted monthly and annual reports to transparently communicate our progress and initiatives. Our commitment to governance was exemplified through monthly meetings with the board of directors, ensuring strategic alignment and effective decision-making. Lastly, we took pride in our contribution to the completion of the Motor Mill Inn rehabilitation project, preserving a significant historical landmark and further enriching our community's cultural heritage.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the unwavering support from our dedicated volunteers, community partners, and generous donors. As we reflect on the successes of 2023, we are energized to continue our mission of providing outstanding recreational experiences and fostering community growth in the years to come.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to even greater achievements in the future.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mallory Hanson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mallory" and the last name "Hanson" clearly distinguishable.

Mallory Hanson, Director
Turkey River Recreational Corridor

Report Contents

The 2023 annual report was prepared to reflect tasks laid out in the annual contract for services between the Turkey River Recreational Corridor (TRRC) Board and Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D).

.01

Small Project Grant Writing & Facilitation

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

.02

Marketing & Advertising Promotion

Promote the TRRC through various marketing and advertising strategies.

.03

Program & Event Coordination

Facilitate and coordinate programs and events for and within the TRRC.

.04

Online Content Maintenance & Development

Advertise and promote the TRRC online.

.05

Board Management & Partnerships

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

.06

Trail Counting & Economic Study

Coordinate trail counts and surveys along TRRC trails.

.07

Iowa Great Places Status Upkeep

Maintain Iowa Great Places status for the TRRC.

.08

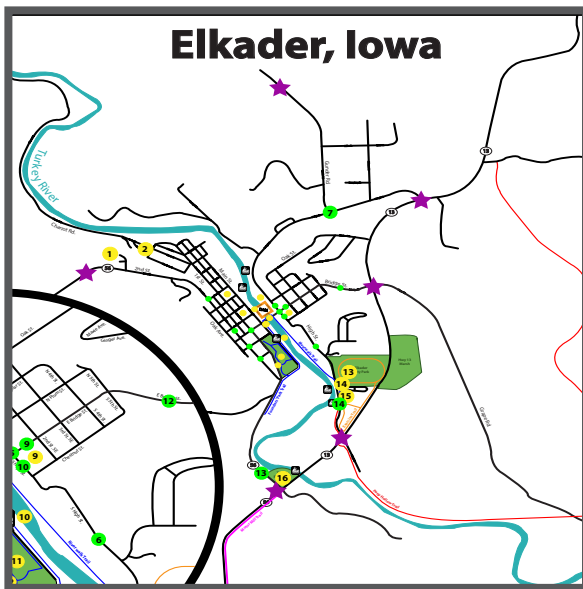
Accountability & Sustainability

Communicate with and engage TRRC Board members and partner entities.

.09

Large Infrastructure Grant Writing

NE IA RC&D will write up to one large infrastructure grant (applications requiring 80 hours or less) per year, as funding needs require, that will further the development of infrastructure related to the TRRC's mission



.01

Small Project Grant Writing & Facilitation

Deliverables

1. Research and gather information about potential small grant opportunities
2. Work with the TRRC board to develop funding applications consistent with the TRRC mission and vision planning that will help to implement projects
3. Work on grants that are secured before or during the contract period (as appropriate)
4. Complete related grant reporting requirements and administration (as appropriate)
5. Regularly provide an updated list of ongoing grant activities to the TRRC Board



Wrote and assisted with various grant applications and reports for projects supported in the TRRC's vision plan including:

- Clermont HRDP for Larrabee School windows
- Clermont FCCF for Clermont 175th Celebration
- Elgin FCCF for Pickle Ball Court

Provided tourism and trail use data to various organizations for funding applications, including Clayton County Conservation.

Continued to work with Elkader on a plan for community wayfinding signage, including trail identification signage.



.02

Marketing & Advertising Promotion

Deliverables

1. Write press releases and social media posts covering current TRRC events, activities, and news
2. Coordinate interviews to promote TRRC activities (when possible)
3. Maintain a presence at area events within the TRRC
4. Acquire updated photography
5. Design, fabricate, and seek funding for TRRC promotional materials (i.e. Turkey River Water Trail Guides, County Trout Fishing Guides)
6. Ensure TRRC logo and recognition is included on relevant publications



Represented the TRRC at the Iowa Bike Expo on January 23, 2023 and handed out new regional Bike Trail Maps.



Represented the City of Elkader and TRRC at Canoeconia on March 11, 2023 and distributed 565 publications.



Represented the TRRC in partnership with the Northeast Iowa Tourism Association at the Iowa State Fair August 10, 2023.



Participated in the Travel Federation of Iowa Legislative Showcase on January 31, 2023 in Des Moines.



Pony Hollow (Elkader) & TRRC (Elgin/Clermont) trails were featured at the Iowa Trails Summit on October 6, 2023



The TRRC was mentioned in the World Atlas "12 of the Friendliest Towns in Iowa" article in Elkader's section in June, 2023.



.03

Program & Event Coordination

Deliverables

1. Coordinate 2024 Turkey River Safari (May 2024-September 2024)
 - Coordinate fundraising efforts/grant applications and acquire sponsorships
 - Determine sites and gain site approval
 - Coordinate with participating distribution locations
 - Update guidebook/map and facilitate printing and distribution
 - Coordinate post placement, including Iowa One Call requests
 - Order crayons and tile replacements and replace posts (as needed)
 - Promote the 2024 Turkey River Safari
2. Partner with area partner events and programs (as appropriate)

2023 Turkey River Safari

Documented 295 Safari kits distributed (32 registered, which is not a requirement). Those that registered were primarily families (parents/grandparents and children under 10).

Notable demographics:

- A 15-year-old registered
- A couple in their late 50's/early 60's registered on their own (no kids)
- The oldest registered participant was 84
- The youngest registered participant was 1
- Farthest traveled: Ankeny, IA
- Out of state: Prairie Du Chien, WI

Total Raised for TRRC Sponsorships: \$3,600.00

Driftless 100

The TRRC assisted Matthew Fassbinder with the Driftless 100 gravel bike race on April 29, 2023.

Motor Motor 5k/10k

The TRRC assisted Clayton Co. Conservation with the Motor Motor 5k/10 trail run on March 18, 2023.

.04

Online Content Maintenance & Development

Deliverables

1. Develop content for the TRRC Facebook Page and Instagram Account
2. Update trail maps regularly (as appropriate) for paper and online distribution
3. Update and maintain the TRRC Website (www.turkeyrivercorridor.com)



Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/TRRCRocks>

12,550 individuals were reached in 2023

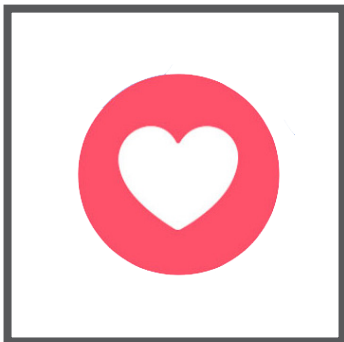
Page visits increased by 57% in 2023, with 1,906 visits

1,204 individuals like the TRRC page, with 79 new likes

69% of followers are women and 31% are men

Top cities include Elkader, West Union, Elgin, Clermont, Cedar Rapids, & Decorah

Top Performing Organic Post: Canoecopia Collaboration



Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/turkeyriverrocks/>

322 individuals reached in 2023

Profile visits increased by 9% in 2023, with 109 visits

481 individuals follow the TRRC instagram account, with 68 new followers

78.9% of followers are women and 21.1% are men

Top cities include Elkader, Decorah, West Union, Des Moines, & Dubuque

Highest Reach on a Post: Canoecopia Collaboration



Website

<https://turkeyrivercorridor.com/>

Total Page Views: 11,000 (1,992 new users)

Average Engagement Time: 1 Minute, 39 Seconds

Most Popular Page: Water Trails & Fishing

Notable Statistic: 52% of users were referrals (link from another page)

Deliverables

1. Host monthly TRRC meetings (1st Tuesday of the month) or as needed*

*Send meeting agendas to be posted at all 5 locations 24 hours ahead of each meeting

2. Take and send out TRRC meeting minutes
3. Be in regular communication with TRRC board members and work with the TRRC board chair
4. Attend local, regional, or statewide conferences/meetings (as appropriate)
5. Notate and keep record of past funding and organizational history
6. Foster TRRC Board recruitment, board member training, and Policy & Procedures Review*

*City Councils appoint their TRRC board representatives annually. County Supervisors appoint their TRRC board representatives every 2 years. At large members are appointed every 3 years.

Board members met monthly to receive updates from the TRRC Director and to make decisions about funding priorities, programming, advertising, and partner support. Current representatives are included below. The TRRC Director also participates in other partner meetings including Northeast Iowa Tourism Association, River Bluffs Scenic Byway, and RPA 1 Enhancement Committee.



County Representation

Janell Bradley (Fayette County Supervisor)

Steve Doeppke (Clayton County Supervisor)

Ray Peterson (Clayton County Supervisor Alternate)



City Representation

Jennifer Cowsert (Clayton County) *Vice-Chair

Eric Grau (Elkader City Council)

Deb Schmidt (Elkader City Council Alternate)

Kayleen Schrader (Clermont City Council Alternate)

Dina Taylor (Clermont City Council)

Chris Wachal (Elgin City Council)

Barb Wenger (Elgin City Council Alternate)



At-Large Representation

Rod Marlatt (Fayette County Conservation) *Chair

Jenna Pollock (Clayton County Conservation)

Troy Schott (Fayette County)

Chris Schoen (Motor Mill Foundation)

Dan Slagel (Motor Mill Foundation Alternate)

Kenneth Slocum (Clayton County Conservation Alternate)



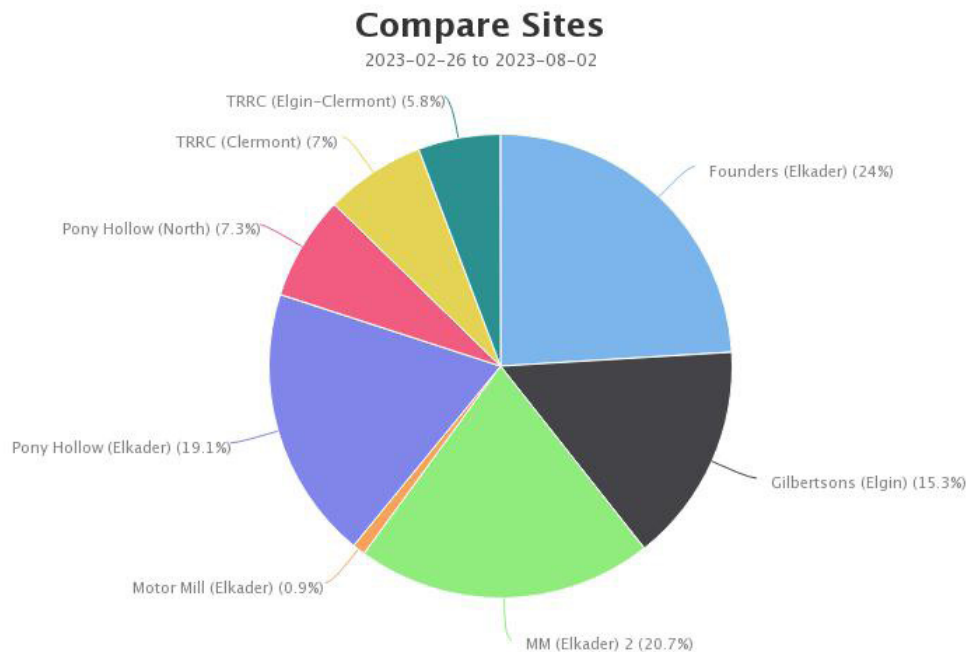
.06

Trail Counting & Economic Study

Deliverables

1. Coordinate volunteers to conduct an in-person trail count and survey in the summer (July 2023)
2. Partner with Northeast Iowa counties to compile trail count data
3. Manage and maintain infrared trail counters in the TRRC (4 counters owned by the TRRC, 1 counter owned by FCCB, 2 counters owned by CCCB, 1 counter owned by UERPC – 8 Total)

In person trail counts took place July 7-8 in Clayton County and July 14-15 in Fayette County. A total of eight infrared TRAFx trail counter devices were installed throughout the Corridor in 2023 to quantify trail use throughout the year. From March to November of 2023, the counters showed a total of approximately 52,430 users across all eight locations! Snapshots of data from the infrared trail counter devices can be viewed below:



**Specific in-person and infrared trail counter data can be requested at any time.*



.07

Iowa Great Places Status Upkeep

Deliverables

1. Serve as the Iowa Great Places point of contact and be aware of all programs and opportunities
2. Submit annual Iowa Great Places report
3. Apply for Iowa Great Places re-designation and coordinate requirements (as needed)

The TRRC Director spoke on a panel at the annual Iowa Great Places meeting April 10, 2023 and participated in various events throughout the year including an Iowa Cultural Coalition legislative breakfast at the Capitol on March 1, 2023 and an Iowa Tourism Industry Partners (iTIP) Capitol visit on April 11, 2023. Although the Iowa Great Places program will be changing, the TRRC's status as an Iowa Great Place will remain in good standing.

.08

Accountability & Sustainability

Deliverables

1. Provide verbal and written reports at regularly scheduled TRRC Board meetings
2. Identify opportunities to leverage TRRC funds and work with the TRRC Board to develop a strategy to maximize their funding and Corridor impact
3. Present a written annual report to TRRC partner entities
4. Submit a formal request for funding to be included in each of the TRRC partner entity budgets
5. Work with TRRC Board to develop and approve annual contract/task list



The TRRC Director reports regularly to the Board to ensure transparency and to leverage support and resources for projects and programming. These reports are given during monthly Board meetings. Annual reports are given to contributing partners as well, during which time a financial request is made. The Director also works annually with the Board to draft and approve an updated contract/task list through the Northeast Iowa RC&D.



.09

Large Infrastructure Grant Writing

NE IA RC&D will write up to one large infrastructure grant (applications requiring 80 hours or less) per year, as funding needs require, that will further the development of infrastructure related to the TRRC's mission.* \$1,000 will be allocated from TRRC budget for NE IA RC&D's up front grant writing fee.**

*Examples of grants that require 80 hours or less include State Recreational Trail Grants, REAP Grants, and Iowa Great Places Grants.

**If grant is awarded, the TRRC will not be responsible for the balance of the RC&D fee. The applicant entity will be responsible for entering into a contract with NE IA RC&D and fulfilling obligations related to NE IA RC&D charges and fees associated with the grant writing contract.

Motor Mill Inn

The TRRC Board voted to support an Iowa Great Places Grant application for Clayton County Conservation's Motor Mill Inn Revival: Accommodating Travelers Past & Present project.

The dream of restoring the historic Inn at Motor Mill has long been a goal for the future of the site. Planning for the Inn Revival began in earnest in 2019 when the Motor Mill Foundation identified possible uses for the historic property, including the potential for overnight guests. This dream finally came to fruition when Clayton County Conservation and the Motor Mill Foundation completed the project in 2023, with the Turkey River Recreational Corridor as a significant partner.

A portion of the total cost of the project (\$328,000) was secured by the TRRC with an Iowa Great Places grant.

Letters of Support

The TRRC Director provides letters of support as requested for partner projects that meet it's mission and are included in the current vision plan.



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