



# Turkey River Recreational Corridor Vision Plan

2010-Present  
(Updated 2026)

An Iowa Great Place and 28E Government Organization  
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# 1 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.

# 2 2010-2025

In 2010 the Turkey River Recreational Corridor prioritized 18 projects within their Iowa Great Place Application. Sixteen of those projects were completed. Those completed projects included development of the Turkey River Water Trail, construction of the Elgin to Clermont Land Trail, construction of the Elkader Whitewater Park, Elkader Riverfront improvement, restoration of Motor Mill Buildings (Mill, Inn, etc.), construction of the Motor Mill Trail, Motor Mill flood control, restoration of the Motor Mill Bridge, Clermont River Park improvement, improvement of the Valley Canoe Access, Clermont Community Trail enhancement, Highway 18 enhancement and beautification, installation of Elgin public art, completion of the Elgin Land Trail and Gilbertson Bride, Elgin streetscape upgrade, and Elgin trail signage. The remaining two projects have been partially completed or are currently in progress. These projects include completion of the TRRC Land Trail from Elgin to Elkader and Elkader wayfinding signage development.

Beyond the 18 originally identified projects, the TRRC has supported Marketing and Promotion, including development of a website with an interactive 360 ° map of the Turkey River Water Trail, development of the Northeast Iowa Regional Bike Trail map, update and re-print of Turkey River Water Trail maps, development of Clayton and Fayette County Trout Fishing guides, and promotion at statewide and international events (Iowa State Fair, Canoecopia, etc.). Support for Natural Resource Conservation and Recreational Opportunity Expansion has continued, including interpretive sign development (Motor Mill, Scenic Byway, etc.), hazard mitigation planning, and planning for trail expansion and improvement (Pony Hollow Trail, mile markers, etc.).

Historic and Archaeological Preservation and Restoration was a priority, with successful grant writing completed for restoration of the Larrabee School Windows, restoration of the Elkader Clock Tower, Motor Mill Inn restoration, and development of the Tribes of the Turkey Interpretive Center. Support for Community and Regional Development and Economic Development and Tourism included community playground enhancement (Elgin Climbing Wall), community planning facilitation, and promotion for business expansion and population growth efforts. Art and Cultural Support and Expansion was also supported with support for Elkader's Art in the Alley project and trail enhancement through art. The TRRC has also continued it's Turkey River Safari program for over 10 years, with over 500 participants annually!

The aforementioned projects and efforts, along with countless other initiatives, helped the TRRC leverage over \$9.5 Million in grants and private funds between 2010 and 2025.

# 3 Strategic Priorities

The following strategic priorities have been identified for support of existing projects and development of new projects and initiatives as opportunities and partnerships present themselves:

- Recreational Opportunity Expansion
- Economic Development and Tourism
- Natural Resource Conservation
- Historic and Archaeological Preservation and Restoration
- TRRC Marketing and Promotion
- Community and Regional Development
- Art and Cultural Support and Expansion

Annually, the Turkey River Recreational Corridor Board identifies a work plan for their contracted Director to use as a guide while working continuously toward the TRRC's Mission and to support these priorities. Work Plan tasks are listed below in order of priority, as identified by the TRRC Board during their November, 2025 visioning workshop:

- Program and Event Partnership and Coordination
- Large Infrastructure Grant Writing
- Small Project Grant Writing and Facilitation
- Marketing and Advertising Promotion
- Board Management and Community Support
- Trail Counting and Compilation of Economic Data
- Vision Planning and Sustainability

## Visioning and Priority Projects

During vision planning in November of 2025, the TRRC Board were asked what the TRRC meant to them. They used the following phrases: “Everything”, “The economic impact the projects and marketing has on our counties and communities”, “Increased tourism (and tourism \$\$), Increased cooperation between members”, Opportunity to enjoy Northeast Iowa”, “Recognition of what we have to offer”, “Collaboration across traditional municipal boundaries for the greater good of the Turkey River Watershed”, “Recreation”, “Leisure”, “Family activities”, “Multi-group collaboration”, “Trails”, “Partnerships”, “Visitors”, “Marketing”, “Completing projects along the Turkey River Corridor”, “Sharing our resources with people outside our area”, “Invitation to explore and enjoy the region”, “Connecting people and projects”, “Healthy activity”, “Economic development”, “Community connection”.

Board members are most proud of the creation and maintenance of our regional partnership and friendships, healthy and family activities to enjoy, development and expansion of multi-use trails, rehabilitation of the Motor Mill Bridge, growth in recognition across the state, support of cities and counties with grant applications and projects, successful development of rapport, communication and collaboration between a wide array of interests and municipalities, continuation of the Turkey River Safari, leveraged dollars through grants and fundraising for projects, presence at conferences and events, and data gathering.

The following priorities and project have been identified by the TRRC Board for support. New projects are added regularly as partnership and funding opportunities arise.

### Recreational Opportunity Expansion

- Trail Expansion, Development, & Improvement
  - Pony Hollow Trail Expansion/Loop
  - Clermont to Hwy 150 Trail Expansion
  - Elkader to Elgin Trail Connection
  - Osborne Volga River Pedestrian Bridge/Crossing
  - Safe Pedestrian Crossings (Clermont/Casey's-Skip-A-Way)
  - Elkader Pedestrian Bridge
- Turkey River Water Trail Access Improvement

### Economic Development and Tourism

- Support for Increased Capacity for Projects and Day-to-Day Management
- Support for New Business Development (Hotels, Recreation Outfitters, etc.)

### Natural Resource Conservation

- Support of Turkey River Watershed Management Authority
- Support for Land Preservation and Habitat Restoration

### Historic and Archaeological Preservation and Restoration

- Motor Mill Interpretation, Building Improvement, Stabilization, and Promotion
- Elgin Historical Society Tribes of the Turkey River Interpretive Center

### TRRC Marketing and Promotion

- Online (Provide photos for partner sites such as MyCountyParks)
- Social Media (Content Development-Photos, Video)
- Events (Motor Motor 5k/10k, Winter Festivals, Driftless Adventure Race)

### Community and Regional Development

- Wayfinding/Welcome Signage (Elkader)
- Leadership/Education
- Interpretive Signage Development (Clermont Sign Replacement)

### Art and Cultural Support and Expansion

- Trail Art – Lighted Flowers in the Corridor
- Community/Public Art



