



TRAIL TALK

By Erin Reed, Executive Director
Dickinson County Trails Board

DICKINSON COUNTY TRAILS BOARD FINALIZES RAILROAD PURCHASE

The Dickinson County Trails Board has finalized the purchase of the remaining railroad right of way from Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. The future Rail Trail begins west of Superior and will traverse 37 miles through both Dickinson and Osceola Counties, then join the Ed Winkel Trail at Allendorf and continue to Sibley for a total of 43 miles. This endeavor is over 10 years in the making and involved countless volunteer hours and four trail board executive directors. We are set for a project letting in May to rehabilitate the bridges and culverts along the line so they are trail ready.

DCTB is planning our 2017 fundraiser event Rail Trail Rally that will be held on Saturday, June 24 at the Arnolds Park Pavilion. This year's event will highlight the Rail Trail and kickoff the effort to raise local matching funds for its construction. Be sure to get on board and be a part of this fun event!

IOWA'S NATURAL RESOURCES & OUTDOOR RECREATION TRUST FUND

In December, DCTB applied for additional grant funding a fourth time to complete the Jones Pasture Trail. Unfortunately, it was not recommended to get funds. So far we have secured \$100,000 in grants through REAP and the Okoboji Foundation along with many local contributions and we will continue to look for avenues to fund this trail.

Competition for these grants has increased considerably while funding has dwindled over several years. The Natural Resources & Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund can provide an answer to the trail funding problem. The Trust will provide permanent and reliable funding aimed at improving our water quality, protecting soil, enhancing wildlife habitat and increasing outdoor recreation opportunities throughout Iowa. I cannot think of any other region in Iowa that would benefit more than the Iowa Great Lakes with our abundant waters, prairies and expanding trail systems. It is imperative that we fund the Trust and keep the formula the same as originally intended to include recreational trails. Please visit www.iowaswaterandlandlegacy.org for more information.

SPRING IS ON THE HORIZON

The weather in Northwest Iowa has been interesting so far this year with 70 degree sunshine turning into winter storms in a matter of a couple days. The Spring tease makes us all want to get out and enjoy the beautiful weather but we emphasize using caution as you hit the trails this early in the year. With snow comes sand, gravel and tree debris that gets deposited on the trails. The freeze/thaw cycles during this time can also cause cracks to form or widen. We will be out inspecting, sweeping and trimming as the weather continues to improve, but in the meantime, please be mindful of trail conditions and stay safe.

Until next time, as always, Happy Trails to you and yours. Erin Reed, DCTB Executive Director