

highways in Illinois except those where bicycles are legally prohibited and signs to that effect are posted. By restoring “intended user” status to bicyclists on Illinois roadways, it removes the disincentive of local governments to provide bicycle safety improvements for fear of increased liability.

The development of a comprehensive trail and greenway system in Kankakee County will not only provide important recreational amenities but can also improve the safety of pedestrians, motor vehicles drivers, and bicyclists. The table below shows automobile/bicycle related accident during the past few years.

Table 3. Bicycle Related Accidents

YEAR	NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS	NUMBER OF FATALITIES
1995	2	2
1996	6	1
1997	3	0
1998	4	1

SECTION IV - INVENTORY

EXISTING CORRIDOR INVENTORY

Existing corridors are those that are already preserved for a reason unrelated to local regulation. These would include pipeline and utility easements, and railroad right-of-way. These corridors are often the easiest to delineate as greenways since no land acquisition may be needed.

The following is a list of existing corridors identified during the plan process.

ComEd Corridor (north-south from Bourbonnais to Manteno)



This corridor is approximately 100' wide and runs along the Illinois Central Railroad from Armour Road in Bourbonnais to the Manteno Wastewater Facility where it leaves its alignment with the railroad and heads due north ending a few hundred feet from the I-57 interchange on Division Street in Manteno. This corridor would be an excellent off-road corridor to connect Manteno and Bourbonnais.

ComEd Corridor (east-west between 6000N Road and 7000N Road)

This corridor is approximately 200' wide and runs from just east of IL Rt. 50 to the Kankakee River State Park halfway between 5000 and 6000 N Roads. This corridor could be utilized as a connection from IL Rt 50 to the State Park, if the Grand Northern Parkway concept does not come to fruition. A trail within the proposed parkway right-of-way would be the preferred choice.

Kankakee-Beaverville and Southern Railroad

This corridor is approximately 100' wide runs from just east of Kennedy Drive in Kankakee to the County line south of St. Anne. This railroad right-of-way has one track and has limited use. If this railroad were to ever become abandoned, the corridor should be considered for a trail running from Kankakee to Aroma Park.



ConRail Railroad

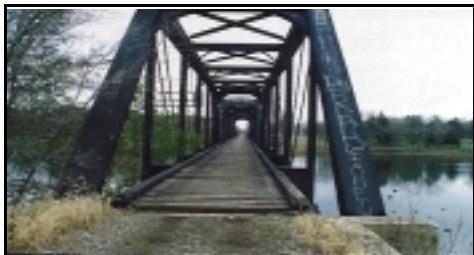
This rail line runs east and west the entire length of the County and is approximately 200' wide. In most areas, there is only a single track. This line is heavily used and will probably not be abandoned anytime soon. However, because there is a 200' right-of-way with only one tract there could be room for a trail to co-exist with the track. Further study of safety factors would be necessary to determine if this would be possible.

Illinois Central Railroad

This rail line runs north and south through the County passing through the middle of the Metro Area. It is approximately 200' wide with one tract in most areas. It is, however, heavily used and will not be abandoned in the near future. This right-of-way could also be used for a trail. This corridor is also under consideration for a high speed rail project; if this project were to become a reality, this corridor would then no longer be capable of containing a trail for safety reasons.



Norfolk & Western Railroad (abandoned)



This rail line runs in a southwesterly direction in Essex Township starting in section 2 and ending in the Village of Reddick. This corridor is approximately 100' wide and is abandoned. The northern part of this corridor, located in Will County, is already part of the Waupansee Glacial Trail running from Route 113 in Custer Park to Joliet with connection to the newly created

Medewin National Tall Grass Prairie. This trail is being developed by the Forest Preserve District of Will County.

Chicago and Southern Railroad (abandoned)

This corridor is 100' wide and runs in a north and south direction the entire length of the County passing through the Township of Pembroke, Momence, and Yellowhead. This rail line has been sold to private owners, but for the most part is still intact. The aesthetic beauty of the area surrounding this corridor makes it an ideal location for use as a trail. However, the bridge over the river has been removed adding greatly to the cost of creating the trail.



EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL ASSET INVENTORY

This inventory lists natural areas that may or may not need to be protected and are duly noted as such. The following is a partial list of existing major natural corridors.

Kankakee River

The Kankakee River near South Bend, Indiana and flows southwesterly 111 miles to Aroma Park where it joins its largest tributary, the Iroquois River. The combined river turns northwesterly for 38 miles to its junction with the Des Plaines River near the Village of Channahon in Will County where it creates the Illinois River that flows southwesterly into the Mississippi River.

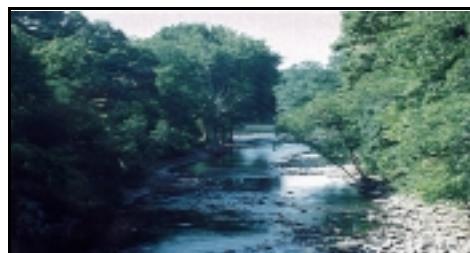


There are three dams on the Kankakee River, at Wilmington, Kankakee, and Momence. The Kankakee Dam is the largest and forms a pool six miles long. The six-mile pool is an important segment of the river for recreational watercraft. Other portions vary widely in depth and are often unsuitable for watercraft. Much of the land along the Kankakee River in Kankakee County is either developed or already in some form of

conservation, therefore establishment of any future greenway areas may not be cost effective. The River is flanked on both sides by relatively good roads with only a few exceptions. In areas that are not currently in some form of preservation, these roads should be enhanced with multi-purpose trails to create a continuous trail looping the River. Areas that are currently being preserved should be encouraged to create multi-purpose trails to enhance continuity.

Rock Creek

Rock Creek is one of the most prominent creeks in the Kankakee River Basin. The Creek drains 107 square miles and has geological significance. Rock Creek is often noted as one of the most scenic creeks in the region. A prominent gorge near where Rock Creek joins the Kankakee River gave the Creek its fitting name. The Creek flows in a generally west-southwesterly direction from Peotone in Will County along the south side of Manteno across southern Rockville Township and into the Kankakee River about 6-7 miles downstream from the City of Kankakee. The southern portion of the Creek is already protected within the State Park.



Soldier Creek

Soldier Creek flows through a highly urbanized portion of the metro area and forms a partial boundary between the municipalities of Bradley and Kankakee. It too flows in a generally southwestern direction from its beginning between 5000 Road and 6000 Road east of the Illinois Central Railroad. The Creek enters the main river just north of the Court Street bridge in the City of Kankakee. Soldier Creek is surrounded by fairly dense development for most of the distance through the municipalities, even being concealed underground through parts of Kankakee. This dense development would not lend itself well to the establishment of a trail, however in the area where the creek crosses North Street in Bradley and north could be considered for greenway and trail establishment. If at anytime segments along Soldier Creek become available for preservation, the local jurisdiction should take the appropriate action to preserve the area.



Baker Creek

Baker Creek, also known as Exline Slough north of IL Rt. 17, drains 62 square miles in the central part of Kankakee County. It travels in a generally southward direction from its beginning in southern Will County and continues past unincorporated residential areas, such as Whitacre and St. George, and joins the main channel of the River just east of the I-57 bridge. This Creek should also be considered for preservation because of its close proximity to the metropolitan area. As new development stretches farther out into the rural areas, this Creek will become very important for the

management of storm water runoff. Also, the southern end of this creek is a very scenic area also making it ideal for preservation.



Iroquois River

The Iroquois River is the largest tributary of the Kankakee River. It enters the main river at Aroma Park about 4.5 miles upstream from the City of Kankakee. The Iroquois River is 94 miles along the drains about 1,240 square miles in Kankakee and Iroquois Counties. Although often overlooked because of the prominence of the Kankakee River in the County, the Iroquois River is a very scenic and important environmental asset. Once outside of the City of Kankakee, the area along this River is sparsely developed. However, steps should be taken to preserve the river frontage for open space and recreational uses while it is still relatively undeveloped and available.



Minnie Creek

Minnie Creek is the only tributary of the Iroquois River studied in this Plan. The Creek travels in a generally easterly direction from 5000 W Road. Its many branches drain a significant area of farm land between Irwin and Chebanse. A portion of the Creek was relocated for the construction of I-57. The area around this Creek has seen very little development and this trend should remain for the time being. Because of the importance of this Creek in regards to storm water management, the first few miles, from the Iroquois River to I-57, should be preserved as it will likely be the first area of development.



Wiley Creek

Wiley Creek flows in a northward direction from its beginnings north of the ConRail tracks in Limestone Township. This Creek is in close proximity to the State Park and has some scenic gullies along 3750 W Road. The area around this Creek has seen development in the last few years. This Creek should be looked at for preservation to prevent future encroachments into its floodplain.

Davis Creek



Davis Creek flows in a generally southward direction from just north of the Bourbonnais municipal border, west of I-57, through the Bon Vivant Country Club property and forms the eastern boundary of the Kankakee River State Park where it joins the River. The Creek is an important development corridor for the County. As growth continues to move northwest along IL Rt. 102 and moves north along Illinois Route 45/52 and Career Center Road the Creek will be impacted. This Creek should be considered a high priority for preservation.



Gar Creek



Gar Creek travels in a north-northeastern direction from its origin just north of the intersection of 7000 W Road and 7000 S Road south of the Village of Irwin. It enters the River in the six-mile pool at the site of the Gar Creek Forest Preserve just upstream from the Shapiro Developmental Center. This Creek is already well preserved.

Horse Creek

Horse Creek travels northward from its beginnings in southern Pilot Township 5½ miles east of the Village of Cabery, through the Village of Herscher, Essex Township and Salina Township. The Creek empties into the River near Custer Park in Will County. This is an important Creek for drainage in the western half of the county, draining many miles of farmland. Steps are already being taken to preserve this Creek in Will County and Kankakee County should follow suit.



Trim Creek



Trim Creek travels in a southerly direction from its beginnings near Beecher in Will County passing through Yellowhead and Momence Townships and emptying into the Kankakee River about 1 mile east of the City of Momence. This Creek has a fairly large watershed and has environmental importance to the areas which it passes through. The area around the Creek is scenic with woods along the Kankakee River and Six-Mile Grove area to the rolling hills of Yellowhead Township. This Creek is not in any immediate danger from urban sprawl but with the possibility of a Third Regional Airport west of Beecher, scattered growth could occur rapidly if not monitored.

ILLINOIS NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY (INAI)

Several high quality, undisturbed natural communities were identified by Illinois Department of Natural Resources in Kankakee County in recent years. Some of the sites are in private ownership, some in public ownership, and some are a combination of private/public ownership. The following is a list of sites identified by the IDNR:

Bourbonnais Geological Area	Leesville Savanna West
Campbell's Woods	Little Beaver Creek
Essex Pit Number 11 Geological Area	Manteno Southwest Geological Area
Goodrich Railroad Prairie	Mason Area
Gooseberry Island	Momence Wetlands
Guiding Star Savanna	Otto Road Railroad Prairie
Kankakee River	Pembroke Savanna
Kankakee River Natura Preserve	Rock Creek Canyon
Kankakee River Prairie	Stateline Savanna
Leesville Savanna East	Union Hill Railroad Prairie

Steps should be taken to encourage permanent protection of all INAI sites, especially those that are in immediate danger of disturbance.

Illinois Nature Preserves

Several high quality natural areas and habitats of endangered and threatened species are protected in perpetuity through voluntary dedication of private or public lands in Kankakee County. These sites include:

<input type="checkbox"/> Bourbonnais Geological Area Nature Preserve	<input type="checkbox"/> Kankakee River Nature Preserve
<input type="checkbox"/> Gooseberry Island Nature Preserve	<input type="checkbox"/> Momence Wetlands Nature Preserve
<input type="checkbox"/> Iroquois Woods Nature Preserve	

Steps should be taken to buffer and enhance these unique natural areas for continuing environmental integrity and biological richness through protection of adjacent or abutting acreage.

EXISTING TRAILS

Currently, the county has a fragmented trail system that has proven to be adequate and useful to the limited area in which it serves. The trail systems within the Kankakee River State Park, Perry Farm Park, and River Road Park serve these limited areas. Because these trails are fragmented, it limits their impact on the entire County population and efforts, through this planning process, must be pursued to connect the current trail system.

This Plan strives to identify connections of all the existing trails in a convenient and safe manner, recommends uniform signage, and a uniform promotional brochure and trail map. Additionally, it is imperative that access to trail heads be equipped with ADA accessible restroom facilities and parking.

Kankakee River State Park

The Kankakee River State Park has an extensive trail system that is in prime condition. The trail system travels from Will County to the Davis Creek Campground in the eastern portion of the Park. The trail is approximately eight feet wide and surface treatments vary from crushed limestone to asphalt pavement. This trail could be extended at both ends of make it a part of a much larger system of trails. On the northern most edge, approximately one more mile of trail would be needed to connect the State Park Trail to the Wauponsee Glacial Trail planned in Will County that utilizes the abandoned Norfolk and Western Railroad right-of-way. On the south end of the trail, approximately another mile of trail is needed to connect the State Park Trail to the Perry Trail in Bourbonnais. The existing State Park Trail is approximately 20 miles in length.



Perry Farm Park



The Perry Trail located within the Perry Farm Park is one of the most widely used trails in the County. It has been expanded into the Metro Wastewater site and connects the Perry Farm park (BTPD), LeVasseur Park (KVPD), Cavelier De La Salle Park (VBB), and Helgeson Park (VB). The 4 miles of trails within the Perry Farm park is considered the backbone of the metropolitan area trail system. The connection between the State Park and the Perry Trail is considered a priority.

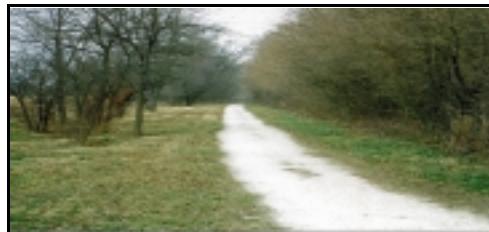
River Road Park (KVPD) and Kankakee Community College



The River Road Park Trail travels along a scenic portion of the riverfront property on the south shore of the Kankakee River. It is also connected to the Gar Creek Tall Grass Prairie along the River. A connection through the Shapiro Developmental Center owned by the State of Illinois would greatly expand the possibilities for this trail by creating a direct connection to the residential area of the city of Kankakee just south of downtown.

Gar Creek Tall Grass Prairie

As mentioned above, the Gar Creek Trail (KRVFPD) joins the River Road Park and forms a successful trail system in south Kankakee. However, the trail could be expanded into the Shapiro Developmental Center.



Shannon Bayou

The trail system proposed for the Shannon Bayou (KRVFPD) in Aroma Park should be examined for a possible link into the other trails in the region. The current limited trail system planned for Shannon Bayou only serves the internal park.



EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

Kankakee County has many parks within its boundaries, managed by a variety of local governmental agencies. An inventory of each existing park has been assembled by the County Planning Department. The inventory analysis includes the park's name, acreage, and existing and planned amenities. The table below summarizes the inventory analysis.

Figure 4 - Existing Park Amenities (METRO Area)

EXISTING ROADWAYS

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has set nationally accepted standards and factors for the design of bicycle trails on roadways. It is important to note that this Plan strives to encourage multi-use trail systems designed to serve diverse populations. However, one must assume that trails designed on existing roadways, especially those in rural areas, will be used primarily by bicyclists. A combined pedestrian and bike path with heavy traffic should be 12 feet. The Design Standards section of this Plan, Section VI, describes the preferred standards for various trail classifications in detail.

In the design development and construction document stage of trail implementation, the structural designers, civil engineers, planners, and landscape architects must keep in mind that bicycle facilities must not encourage or require bicyclists, pedestrians, or motorists to operate in a manner inconsistent with the adopted Rules of the Road as described in Chapter 11 of the Uniform Vehicle Code. The Illinois State Statutes (625 ILCS 5/11-1502) are the traffic laws that apply to persons riding bicycles and should be referenced before the engineering plans are approved. (IDOT)

Some of the County's existing roadways do make the minimum standards for the Type A bicyclist, as defined by AASHTO. Most of the bicyclists in Kankakee County would fit more in the Type B classification, as defined in Section VI of this Plan, and every attempt should be made to accommodate these users. This Plan should always be considered when improvements to existing roadways are considered.

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has conducted extensive research on roadways throughout the State to elevate safety and usefulness for bicycle traffic. Kankakee County and the surrounding vicinity if found in Figure 5 entitled the "I&M Canal to Iroquois". IDOT maintains a computer database on most roads within the State. The Department devised a system for ranking the roadways by the following factors of importance:

- Traffic Volumes & Truck Traffic
- Lane Widths
- Shoulder Widths
- Road Surface Type & Condition

Below is a partial IDOT map depicting the Kankakee County Area. Roads shown in green are most suitable for bicycling according to IDOT standards. Caution is advised for roads shown in yellow and roads shown in red should be avoided. Roads shown in grey should be used at your own risk. Roads shown in black should be prohibited for bicycle use altogether.

Figure 5 - I&M Canal to Iroquois - IDOT



EXISTING REGULATIONS ON DEVELOPMENT

It is important to note that the development of a comprehensive trail and greenways plan does not just involve land acquisition and improvements to roadways. If this Plan is to have a meaningful impact on the development trends of the County and address urban sprawl, there must be changes to the current development regulations used by municipalities and the County.

The threat of urban sprawl in Kankakee County is alarming, especially in the northwest corridor of the metropolitan area along IL Rt. 102, the Manteno area, and west in Limestone and Salina Townships. If the greenway plan is to be truly effective, it must gain the support of decision makers and citizens and be accepted as an important regulatory tool. The County Subdivision regulations, as well as several municipal regulations, mandate a park land donation to the governing entity when a subdivision is approved. This is an important provision for the preservation of open space.

There are many techniques to curb urban sprawl in the County such as urban growth boundaries, transferred development rights (TDR), and floor area bonuses. Many of these techniques do make sound economic sense in Kankakee County. One of the best options for a common sense slowing of urban sprawl in the County is the implementation of the greenways plan and the changing of the County's Zoning Map and Subdivision Regulations to provide "teeth" to this project. The changes are discussed in Section V - Proposed Regulations on Development.