



# Metro East Regional Greenway Plan

Madison, St. Clair and Monroe Counties  
in Illinois

Prepared by:



Southwestern Illinois Planning Commission  
June 2001

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In Cooperation with the  
Metro East Greenway Alliance

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

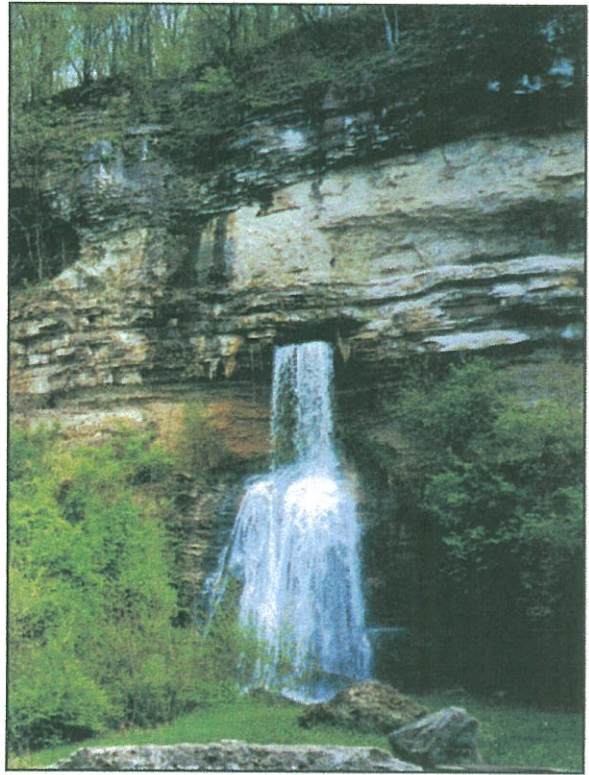
	<u>Page</u>
Foreword	02
Approach	03
Scenic and Cultural Resources	04
Urgency for Action	07
Chapter 1: Introduction	08
Chapter 2: The Function and Value Of Greenways	11
Chapter 3: Greenways Objectives	14
Chapter 4: Greenway Opportunities	17
Chapter 5: Regional Priorities	28
Chapter 6: Plan Implementation	31
Resources	36



## FOREWORD

The Metro East Greenway Planning area is comprised of the three counties of Madison, Monroe and St. Clair and are located in the southwestern portion of southern Illinois. All three counties are a part of the St. Louis Metropolitan Region. The Plan covers approximately 1,813 square miles, and is bordered by two major rivers - the Mississippi River to the west and the Kaskaskia River to the east.

The most recent census indicates that between 1990 to 2000 Monroe County posted the highest population growth in the region with a growth rate of 23 percent, while Madison County showed a 4 percent gain and St. Clair County posted a 3 percent loss. Much of this growth is due to internal regional population shifting. The population of the older American Bottoms communities are decreasing compared to those communities located in the upland areas east of the bluff line. As a result of this internal shifting, and some in migration from the Missouri side of the region, considerable sprawl is occurring in the area. This trend is expected to continue with the percentage of urban/built-up area to accommodate this growth rising disproportionately. National studies indicate that land is generally being con-



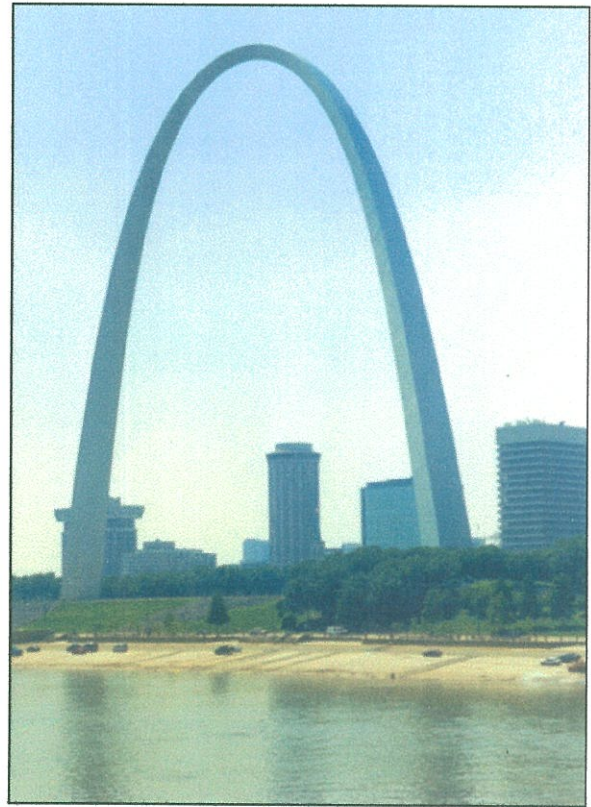
*Falling Springs near Dupou, Illinois*

sumed at twice the rate of population growth and this phenomenon is occurring in the region. Critical to accommodating this regional growth is the preservation of designated open space and recreational resources prior to these areas being developed. The Metro East Regional Greenway Plan is being developed to address this very issue.

## APPROACH

As part of this planning effort, a steering committee known as the Metro East Greenway Alliance (MEGA) was formed to assess local interest and gain support for the development of a regional plan. MEGA is made up of eight organizations and agencies which includes the American Bottom Conservancy, French Valley Initiative, Metro East Stormwater Planning Office, New Spirit, St. Clair County Greenspace Foundation, Southwestern Illinois Planning Commission, Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation and Development, Inc., and Trailnet, Inc. A Technical Advisory Committee was also created which included representatives from local, state, federal agencies and user organization representatives with varying interests and responsibilities in greenways development. Both the non-profit steering committee and the Technical Advisory Committee served in review of the primary and secondary data sources. Funding for the plan was obtained from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The McKnight Foundation, and the Ira and Virginia Lang Fund of the St. Louis Community Foundation

The vision of the Plan is of a regional greenways network that is connected to both the



*View from the east of the St. Louis Gateway Arch.*

state and national greenways systems. The identification of existing and long-range greenways that link both natural and manmade attractions, resources and destinations is a priority. The identification of abandoned railroad rights-of-ways, wetlands, and scenic areas of public as well as some privately held lands are also a priority. The creation of a set of guidelines to prioritize the importance or beneficial nature of a particular greenway within the network is a goal of the Plan. Finally, the facilitation of the implementation of the Plan as the financial resources become available is an important aspect of its grand vision.

## SCENIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The study area's physical setting and colorful history provide a wide array of scenic and cultural attractions to benefit residents of the region as well as tourists from outside the region. Steep, forested bluffs rise upward from the Mississippi River and its floodplain, and provide many miles of scenic vistas. The region also contains many square miles of rural and agricultural land, which provide scenic breaks from the urban landscape. A portion of the study area called the "sinkhole plain" includes all of Monroe and parts of Madison and St. Clair counties. The area is riddled with underground cracks, crevices and caves. Geologists call the landscape "karst", with sinkholes as numerous as 230 per square mile in some areas. Similarly, the floodplains of the region's many rivers and streams contain wetlands that not only provide scenic beauty but also offer wildlife habitat. The region has examples of virtually every habitat known in Illinois, from floodplains lined by bluffs of exposed bedrock to prairies and wooded ravines, sluggish rivers and clear running streams. The region has some of the steepest terrain in the state located in the Richland Creek watershed and also some of the flattest, the lowest 36 miles of the



*Aerial view of a typical "Sinkhole Plain" in Southwestern Illinois.*

Kaskaskia River. The region has proportionately more trees, more wetlands and twice as much urban and built up land<sup>1</sup> as compared to other counties in Illinois. Many of the region's railroad rights-of-way have been abandoned and some provide ribbons of open space through urban and rural areas alike. Though many of these rights-of-way have been lost, some have been converted to trails and others offer that potential. The region's many levees have begun to see trail development.

<sup>1</sup> The Sinkhole Plain, An Inventory of the Region's Resources, Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.



The historical development of the region has left a great legacy. Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site is the site of a significant Native American city, designated a National Historic Landmark and a World Heritage Site in 1982. The region contains some of the oldest and finest examples of early French colonial architecture including the Cahokia Courthouse (1737), Church of the Holy Family (1799) in Cahokia, and the Boismenu House (1790) in North Dupu. Fine examples of early German culture abound in Belleville, Columbia, Waterloo, Maeystown and other communities. Designated historic districts can be found in Belleville, Edwardsville, Maeystown and Waterloo, and designated historic structures are found throughout the region.

Monuments to the Lewis and Clark Expedition are found in and near the City of Hartford. A new information center for Lewis and Clark is at the site of their historic journey. Both East St. Louis and Alton, within the study area and St. Louis, just west of the area, host riverboat casinos on the Mississippi River. Alton also contains many historic and Civil War era attractions.

To these resources can be added a large number of parks and recreational resources. Some



*Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site Interpretive Center, located in Collinsville, Illinois.*

of the larger sites are Madison County's John M. Olin Nature Preserve; Monroe County's Fults Hill Prairie Nature Preserve; and St. Clair County's Fred J. Tecklenberg Forest Preserve, Stemler Cave Woods Nature Preserve and Foley Park. Within the three counties the State of Illinois owns and maintains Horseshoe Lake State Recreation Area, Cahokia Mounds State Historic and World Heritage Site, Frank Holten State Park, Kaskaskia River State Fish and Wildlife Area, Fort de Chartres and Fort Kaskaskia State Historic sites, and Lewis and Clark State Memorial Site. The Pierre Menard Homestead and Pere Marquette State Park are located just outside the study area in Randolph and Jersey counties, respectively. In addition, the federal government owns Carlyle Lake (the State's largest man-made lake) east of the study area in Clinton and Fayette counties, and the Gateway Arch in Downtown, St. Louis.

The region also contains over one hundred locally owned public parks, recreation areas, and nearly as many privately owned facilities. Examples of major community parks include Bellevue, Citizens' and John Laderman parks in Belleville, Hall Park in East St. Louis, Wilson Park in Granite City, Drost Park in Maryville, Horner Park near Lebanon, Belk Park in Wood River, Konarcik Park near Waterloo, Rock Springs Park in O'Fallon, Gordon Moore and Rock Spring parks in Alton, Woodland Park and the Jaycee Sports Complex, as well as Collinsville Area Recreation District's (CARD) Splash City Water Park in Collinsville. St. Clair County contains two regional park sites, Foley Park, southeast of Millstadt and St. Ellen Mine site, located in O'Fallon. Several high school, junior high school and elementary school playing fields provide additional recreational facilities, generally available to the public.

Extensive existing and proposed bike and pedestrian trails are located in Madison County supported by Madison County Transit District, the City of Edwardsville, and SIU-Edwardsville. These include the Confluence Bikeway, Delyte Morris Nature Trail, Schoolhouse Trail, Vadalabene (River Road) Bike-



*Horseshoe Lake State Recreation Area, near Granite City, Illinois.*

way, and the Madison County Transit Nature Trail.

The southwestern Illinois study area is also served by a number of colleges and universities. Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (SIU-E) is a major institution of higher learning, with a 2600-acre campus adjacent to the City of Edwardsville, and is served by Delyte Morris Bikeway and the Madison County Transit Nature Trail. McKendree College is a liberal arts college located within a park like campus in Lebanon. Lewis and Clark Community College, Godfrey; Metro East Community College (MCC), East St. Louis Community College Center (CKTK); and Southwest Illinois College (SWIC), Belleville and Granite City; are the junior college facilities. The East St. Louis Community College Center is connected to MetroLink via an urban trail and SWIC-Belleveille is on MetroLink and enjoys a

fitness trail on campus. A new trail called MetroBike Link parallels MetroLink. Libraries, museums and numerous historic sites can be found in communities throughout the region.

### **URGENCY FOR ACTION**

The need for action is urgent because greenway opportunities are being lost with each development permit issued. Recent sprawl and urbanization of farmland in the Metro East point to the urgent need for the preservation of open space as a finite resource. During the last 20 years the three-county region's developed area has expanded by an estimated 12 percent while the population has generally stabilized.

Storm and floodwater problems in the American Bottom resulting from inadequate storm water detention on top of the bluffs, where the majority of the development has occurred, has increased the demand for alternative solutions that are expensive, difficult to fund and require regional cooperation and support.

The process of urban decentralization, lack of a strong land protection effort, and leapfrog development have fragmented the natural environment, challenging the continuity necessary for the migration and propagation of plant and



*Coral Root Orchid (variety-Wistera), an endangered plant species found in Southwestern Illinois.*

animal species. Fragmentation also increases the exposed areas or “edge” of this habitat, which increase the risk to plants and animals from the impact of urban development.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

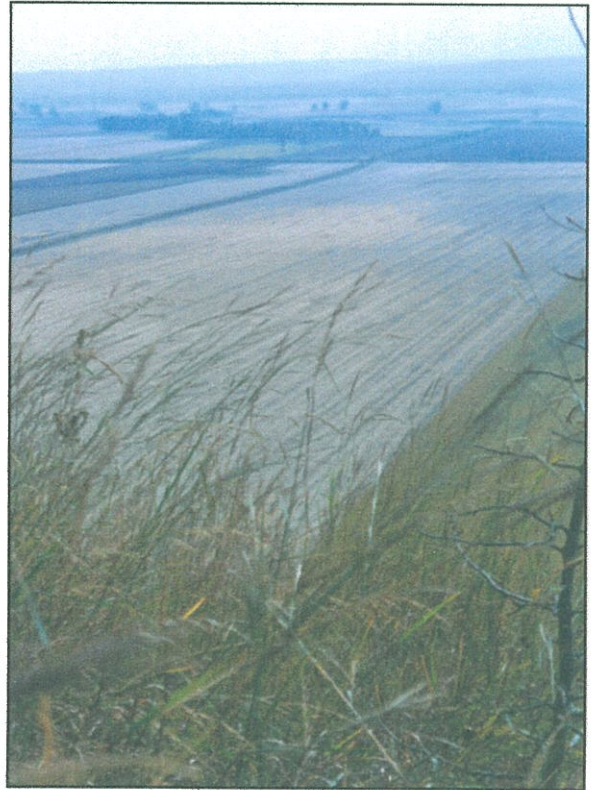
### USES OF THE PLAN

This Plan is prepared for local, regional, state and federal agencies and other jurisdictions. Local officials whose decisions facilitate implementation of the Plan will use it the most. It is also directed to all of the private sector individuals and organizations whose support is needed in creating a better environment and higher quality of life for southwestern Illinois. It is the intent of the Plan to chart the future for open space and greenways of the region. Funding agencies for various greenway projects will utilize this Plan to evaluate local projects competing for dollars.

### GOALS

The Plan serves to:

1. Present a vision for a regional greenway network;
2. Provide a framework for coordinated greenway preservation and development in southwestern Illinois;
3. Increase understanding of the importance and value of greenways, including economic, and encourage the stewardship of natural and cultural resources;
4. Provide a basis for coordinating efforts to improve transportation, water quality, storm and floodwater control, recreation, archeological, cultural and other programs. By facilitating coordinated greenway implementation this Plan will minimize conflicts with development activities, within existing developed areas as well as encourage creation and preservation of greenways in advance of future development;
5. Initiate a continuing forum for resolution of greenway issues among both the



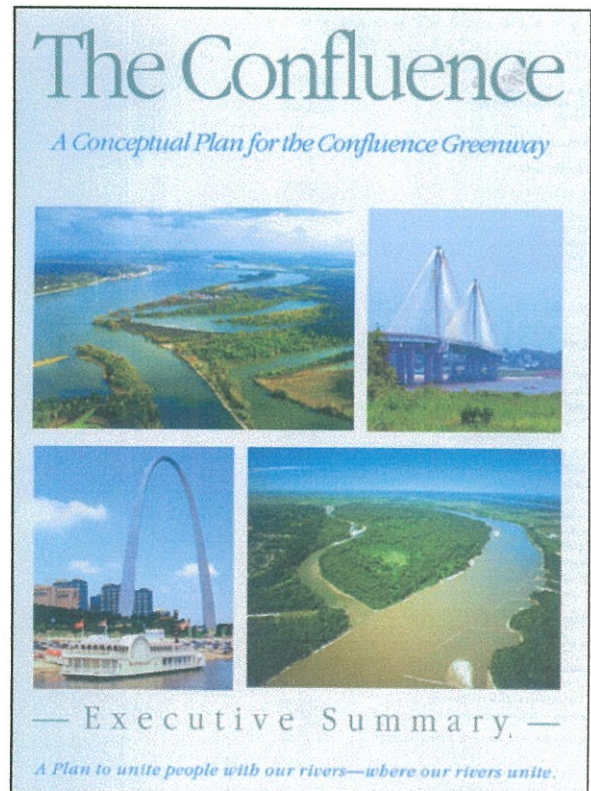
*A view overlooking the American Bottoms in Monroe County, Illinois.*

governmental jurisdictions and the private sector; and

6. Provide a basis for implementing and funding agencies to allocate resources in support of the Plan.

Our vision is to make connections to greenways in adjacent counties; throughout the State of Illinois; across state boundaries, and in particular across the Mississippi River to the City of St. Louis. The grand vision is to also connect to the national greenway system, including the American Discovery Trail and the Mississippi River Trail, a continuous corridor from Minnesota to New Orleans. Locally, with funding from The McKnight Foundation, the Alton Area River Bend Preservation Association, Trailnet, Inc. and others are working toward a broader vision to tie the bi-state region together via the Mississippi River through the Confluence Greenway.

This greenway plan is an important tool for planning in southwestern Illinois. It can play a significant role in preserving resources and providing recreational opportunities in all parts of the Metro East. Such a plan is instrumental to protect greenspace before development occurs, so that both growth and greenspace can coexist.



*Recently completed Illinois/Missouri Confluence Greenway Plan*

This Plan, by its nature, is a regional master plan. It does not entirely replace the need for comprehensive open space planning at the municipal, county or regional levels, but rather it provides guidance to those efforts. Bike paths and trails may be developed to add recreational benefits to greenways; they are not necessary elements of a greenway. Other bikeway and trail projects not reflected in this Plan can provide recreational or transportation benefits outside this greenway network.

## THE ILLINOIS GREENWAY MOVEMENT

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Greenways Program was initiated in 1995 in response to recommendations made by Governor Jim Edgar's Water Resources and Land Use Priorities Task Force and the IDNR's Conservation Congress. The Task Force called for a "statewide network of greenways and trails" and recommended that the IDNR "be the catalyst for planning and implementing the network." Then Conservation Congress passed recommendations calling for the IDNR to "establish a process to plan and coordinate statewide greenway and trail development involving the IDNR, other agencies, organizations and the public." The 1997 Conservation Congress further emphasized that Illinois greenways and trails be expanded.

These recommendations have been met in part by the IDNR's 1995 *State Trails Plan*, the 1992 *Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan* and the 1994 *Southwestern Illinois Regional Trail Plan*. The *State Trails Plan* guides IDNR efforts and through partnerships, other agencies' and organizations' efforts to acquire, develop, manage and promote long-distance trails. The two regional plans identify priority greenways and/or trails in the state's



"Illinois Acres For Wildlife" and the "Illinois Natural Heritage Landmarks" programs involve public/private partnerships and cooperation.

two largest metropolitan areas, Chicago and its collar counties and those counties of the Metro East area around St. Louis.

The IDNR Greenways Program has also facilitated greenways and trails planning in the state's major metropolitan areas. Connections among metro areas trails and open space are being encouraged.

The Program seeks to establish diverse metro area greenways and trails coalitions and then support metro area plans, which identify what the coalitions want to accomplish for their areas. Once each area plan has been completed, the IDNR will work with the coalition to implement the Plan through existing grant programs, cooperative projects and other assistance.

## CHAPTER 2. THE FUNCTION AND VALUE OF GREENWAYS

*Greenways are a way to provide open recreation spaces for every American, close to home. Greenways are our vision for the future. And, if greenways truly capture the imagination and boldness of the American spirit, they could eventually form the corridors that connect open spaces, parks, forest, and deserts—and Americans—from sea to shining sea.*

President's Commission on  
Americans Outdoors, 1987

### DEFINING GREENWAYS

The word *greenway* connotes two separate images: *green* suggests natural amenities—forests, streams, and wildlife; *way* implies a path. Together they describe a vision of natural corridors throughout a landscape.

In a broad sense, the word *greenway* is a generic term for a wide variety of linear open spaces that provide connections and thereby foster movement of some sort, from neighborhood bicycle routes to pristine woodland corridors that guide migrating wildlife in their seasonal travels; from revitalized urban water-



*“Greenways are our vision of the future”.*

fronts to tree-shaded footpaths along a stream, far from the city.<sup>2</sup> Within the developed landscape, greenways serve a dual function: they provide open space for human access and recreational use, and they serve to protect and enhance remaining natural and cultural resources.

### TYPES OF GREENWAYS

Five general types of greenways are as follow:

- Urban riverside greenways, usually created as part of a redevelopment program along neglected, often run-down city waterfronts;
- Recreational greenways, featuring paths and trails of various kinds, often of relatively long distance, based on natural corridors as well as canals, abandoned rail beds, and public rights-of-way;



*Mullin's Slough near Cahokia, Illinois*

- Ecologically significant natural corridors, usually along rivers and streams and less often along ridgelines, to provide for wildlife migration and species interchanges, nature study, and hiking;
- Scenic and historic routes, usually along a road, highway or waterway, the most representative of them making an effort to provide pedestrian access along the route or at least places to alight from the car; and
- Comprehensive greenway systems or networks, usually based on natural landforms such as valleys and ridges but sometimes simply an opportunistic assemblage of greenways and open spaces of various kinds to create an alternate municipal or regional green infrastructure.

A greenway can operate in the following basic ways:

- As habitat for plant and animal communities;
- As a conduit for plants, animals, water, sediment, and chemicals;
- As a barrier preventing movement;
- As a filter allowing some things to pass while inhibiting others;
- As a source for animals or seeds which move to other parts of the landscape; and
- As a sink for trapping sediment, toxins, or nutrients.

Attempting to categorize greenways helps us to understand the different forms they can take, while types blend and overlap. The strength of this movement, and the attraction of the concept itself, lies in its diversity of form and function. The greenway notion is flexible enough to adapt to many combinations of local needs and conditions.

## **BENEFITS OF GREENWAYS**

A greenway as a corridor of open space provides one or more of the following benefits:

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<sup>2</sup>The Conservation Fund, Charles A. Flink and Robert M. Searns. *Greenways-A Guide to Planning, Design, and Development*.



- Protection and management of natural and cultural resources;
- Provision of recreational opportunities; and
- Enhancement of the quality of life and the aesthetic appeal of neighborhoods and communities.



*Most area parks now provide walking trails.*

### **GREENWAYS PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Greenways provide economic benefits to neighborhoods and communities and can function positively to help achieve community development and economic development objectives:

- Numerous studies demonstrate that parks and greenways can enhance property values, increasing local tax resources;
- Greenways are often major tourism attractions;
- Greenways increase spending by local residents on local recreation activities;
- Greenways often provide new business opportunities and locations for commercial uses such as bicycle rentals, concessions and special events;
- Greenways enhance the community's environment and quality of life, and can influence corporate site selection decisions where quality of life issues frequently are considered;
- Greenways reduce the costs of storm and floodwater management activities due to less construction and maintenance costs; and
- The vegetative filter strips of greenways trap sediments before reaching waterways, and can reduce expenses associated with dredging.

## CHAPTER 3. GREENWAYS

### OBJECTIVES

*“A connected system of parks and greenways is manifestly far more complete and useful than a series of isolated parks.”*

John and Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr., 1803

### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Metro East Regional Greenway Plan establishes the following priorities:

- Encourages the creation and preservation of greenways that contain multiple environmental resources, especially water related resources in riparian and shoreline corridors;
- A comprehensive regional greenways network along the region’s major rivers, the Mississippi and the Kaskaskia and preserve greenways along their tributaries;
- Includes the region’s extensive floodplains in the greenway system to minimize flooding through protection of flood retention capacity;
- Encourages the development and management of greenways in order to preserve and restore our re-



*Biking is becoming increasingly more popular in the Metro East area.*

gion’s unique historical and cultural resources;

- Encourages the development of greenway networks and linkages that preserve and enhance the continuity of natural systems, preserve biodiversity and maintain the integrity of the natural habitat; and
- Includes nature preserves and identified public and private natural areas in the greenways network.

## MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

The Plan places an emphasis on the following:

- Properly maintain, restore, expand and improve existing greenway and trail facilities in the three-county region;
- Discourages stream channelization and promotes a more natural approach to storm water management;
- Within the greenway network, provides buffer areas adequate to protect habitat and sensitive environmental resources, such as endangered and threatened species;
- Buffer areas should provide adequate separation from human activity, and from pollution sources and provide for continuity of the greenway; and
- Provision of vegetative filter strips along stream banks, shorelines, and around wetlands to protect and improve water quality and habitat.

## COMMUNITY DESIGN

The Plan sets these as priorities:

- Assurance that all interested parties have opportunity for early public input



*Wetland area at Illinois Route 111 and Interstate 55/70, in Fairmont City, Illinois*

- in the process of greenway network development;
- Encourage the enhancement and planting of appropriate vegetation in the greenways;
- Improve the quality of design using design guidelines and standards which encourage preservation and restoration of landscapes, as well as, use of native plant materials where appropriate;
- When greenway facilities affect historic resources, follow the Standards of the Department of the Interior;
- Maximize visual access to greenways, especially as viewed from public lands and transportation facilities and corridors;
- Design greenway improvements according to best known environmental management practices, with special at-

tention to stream restoration and bank stabilization as well as wetland, prairie and woodland restoration; and

- Design greenway improvements in a manner that is compatible with the surrounding natural environment, using natural materials, whenever possible.

## **EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

Priorities include:

- Improve the level of understanding among the general public regarding the benefits of a regional network of greenways;
- Assure that public and private decisions regarding planning, land acquisition, development and management of greenways are based upon best available information;
- Increase participation by adults and children in educational programs through which greenways are an outdoor classroom to discover the natural sciences and awareness of the importance of living in a region that enjoys a quality environment; and
- Increase the number of people involved in creating and managing greenways in order to help maintain a high quality environment and increase the level of personal responsibility for environmental quality; and



*Trail construction in East St. Louis, Illinois*

- Participate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in its Inland Flood Control project, which will involve extensive ecosystem restoration.

## Chapter 4. GREENWAY OPPORTUNITIES

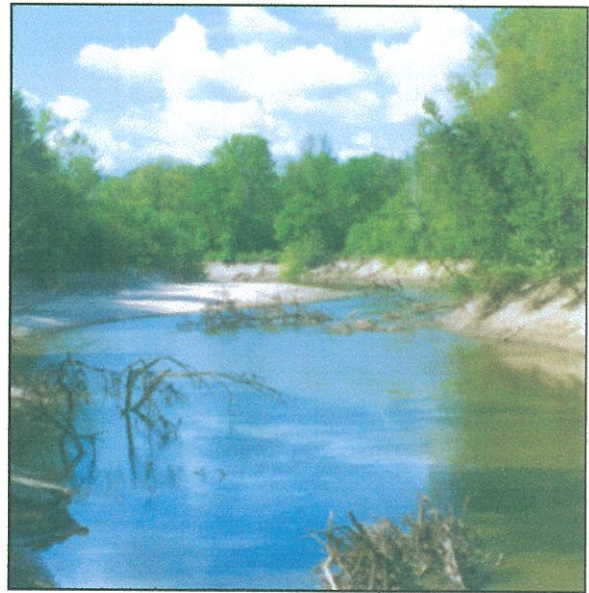
*“Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men’s blood. Make big plans, aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die.” –*

Daniel Burnham, Chicago architect, leader of City Beautiful Movement

### EXISTING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

Southwestern Illinois offers tremendous greenway opportunities. At the present time the Metro East region has several major greenway networks in place or under construction, and also has three of the 16 National Millennium Trails designated in 1999. The Millennium Trails program is an initiative of the White House Millennium Council in partnership with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Millennium Trails will recognize, promote and support trails as a means to preserve open spaces, interpret history and culture and enhance recreation and tourism.

These regional greenways and Millennium Trails are prioritized on the following Priority Regional Greenways Table. The majority of the regional system including the Confluence Greenway, the Madison County Transit Nature



*The Kaskaskia River Greenway in Monroe and St. Clair Counties.*

Trail, and the Glen Carbon Ron Foster Heritage Trail are located in Madison County. The Richland Creek Greenway, the MetroLink Greenway, the Levee Trail, the Kaskaskia River Greenway and the southern end of the Confluence are located in St. Clair County. Monroe County has the Kaskaskia River Greenway located at its most eastern boundary.

Modern development patterns located along the region’s major waterways, including the Mississippi and the Kaskaskia rivers. Existing and proposed, publicly and privately-owned areas, greenways and trails are shown on the map that accompanies this Plan document and include:

# PRIORITY REGIONAL GREENWAYS TABLE

		BENEFITS												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
<p>The following priority regional greenways are listed alphabetically, and represent critical greenway connections. Each is important to the development of a strong regional greenway system and meets at least four or more of the key function criteria listed above. These greenways were also identified repeatedly as most important by participants in sub-regional planning sessions. Full descriptions of each are given in the relevant section which follows.</p>														
Existing Greenways		County												
1	American Discovery Trail	St. Clair and Monroe	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
2	Cahokia Diversion Channel Greenway	Madison			X	X		X	X					X
3	Confluence Greenway	Madison and St. Clair	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	Delyte Morris Bikeway/Greenway	Madison			X	X			X				X	X
5	East Belleville Bikeway	St. Clair			X	X	X	X				X	X	X
6	Glen Carbon Heritage Greenway	Madison				X	X			X	X	X	X	X
7	Indian Lake Heritage Trail/Greenway	Madison and St. Clair	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
8	Kaskaskia River Greenway/Blueway	St. Clair and Monroe			X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
9	Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail	Madison	X		X						X		X	X
10	Madison County Transit Nature Trail Greenway	Madison	X											X
11	Metro East Levee Trail Greenway	St. Clair	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
12	MetroLink/MetroBikeLink Greenway	St. Clair	X		X				X	X		X	X	X
13	Richland Creek Greenway/Bike Trail	St. Clair				X	X	X	X				X	X
14	Schoolhouse Trail Greenway	Madison	X		X	X		X						X
15	Va dalabene Bikeway (River Road Bikeway) Trail Greenway	Madison	X			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Proposed Greenways														
1	Bluff Greenway and Trail	St. Clair and Monroe	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
2	Mississippi Levee Greenway and Trail	St. Clair and Monroe	X	X	X									X
3	Silver Creek Greenway	Madison, St. Clair and Monroe	X		X	X	X	X	X	X				X
4	Blufflands	Madison, St. Clair and Monroe	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	

## American Discovery Trail Greenway/ Mississippi Levee Greenway and Trail

The American Discovery Trail (ADT) was selected as one of sixteen National Millennium Trails to celebrate the rich history, great diversity, complexity and grandeur of our nation's trails. The ADT greenway is more than 6,350 miles of existing trails, rail trail conversions, canal towpaths, forest lands and country roads that extend through 15 states, coast to coast across the U.S. It connects six national trails, ten national historic trails,



*The Eads Bridge crossing the Mississippi River at St. Louis, Missouri.*

23 national recreational trails and hundreds of local and regional trails. Fourteen national parks and 16 national forests are connected via this trail.

There are two American Discovery Trails in Illinois, with the southern route extends from St. Louis to New Haven for approximately 300 miles partially, through our region. The northern route is from Moline to Dwyer.

The southern route trail is virtually the same route as what we call the Mississippi Levee Greenway and Trail. The Levee Greenway is also a north-south linear system paralleling the Mississippi River and the Bluff Line Greenway. It enters the state via the Eads Bridge from St. Louis, heads south by the Casino Queen Riverboat and continues on privately-owned (levee districts) levees to Sauget and then to Cahokia, the oldest town in Illinois, established in 1699. It is a southern extension of the Confluence Greenway. The levees provide excellent views of the barge traffic on the river and its wildlife along the Mississippi through the Monroe County German Heritage Area, and on to the Randolph County French Colonial Heritage Area including Fort de Chartres and Fort Kaskaskia Historic Site. It continues on through some of the most scenic areas in the country with a combination of plains, rocky wilderness with forest canopy, and wetland bayou. It connects the Metro East Levee Trail, the proposed Bluff



*The Old Chain of Rocks Bridge crossing the Mississippi River at Madison, Illinois.*

Greenway, and the MetroLink Greenway as well as several communities in St. Clair and Monroe counties. This greenway will readily adapt as a hiking/biking linear trail due to its predominant location along existing gravel or dirt roads. The national sponsoring agency is the American Hiking Society, and the local agency would likely be the Metro East Park and Recreation District.

### **Cahokia Diversion Channel Greenway**

This short greenway runs east west along the Cahokia Diversion Channel. It is an important linkage to the Confluence Greenway, the Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway, the Lewis and Clark Historic Site and Interpretive Center, SIU-E and other potential greenways and trails.

### **Confluence Greenway**

The Confluence Greenway is a 200 square-mile riverside park extending north from the Gateway Arch at St. Louis to the conflu-

ences of the Mississippi River and the Missouri and Illinois rivers. For 40-miles along both banks of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, the Confluence Greenway will be a perpetually sustainable network of conservation and recreation areas. The Old Chain of Rocks Bridge is a historic Route 66 bridge, completed in 1929, the longest pedestrian/bicycle bridge in the world, and is a key link in the Confluence Greenway as it connects these parallel trails on both banks of the Mississippi, and offers breathtaking views year round. The engineering wonder of the Eads Bridge also adorns the Confluence and serves as a pedestrian link to both banks.

The location of the Confluence Greenway on the Mississippi River is particularly significant. Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery began its journey here in 1804 and the State of Illinois is constructing a Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center adjacent to the greenway. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, a Millennium Trail, briefly runs through the Confluence Greenway from the trail beginning at Camp DuBois in Wood River, to St. Louis. The Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway, a 50-mile highway route that stretches from Alton to Kampsville adjoins the northern portion of the Confluence Greenway. On the Missouri side, Columbia Bottoms, a 4,300-acre wildlife haven has recently been acquired by the Missouri Department of Conservation, and a Great Riv-



*Entrance to Lewis and Clark Historic Site off Illinois Route 3 in Madison County, Illinois.*

ers Resource Center will serve as an information and logistics hub to educate visitors to the historical and cultural resources of the Confluence. The Valdalabene Bikeway between Alton and the Confluence of the Illinois River at Pere Marquette State Park is a component of this extensive greenway. MetroLink and MetroBikeLink will be accessible from the Confluence. Miles of potential trails of the extensive levee systems are located within the Metro East portion of this greenway network. An eventual link to the eastern terminus of the KATY Trail in St. Charles County, Missouri will extend the Missouri portion of the greenway.

The natural resources of the Confluence such as the sloughs, backwater areas and wetlands provide both a unique habitat for flora and fauna, and outdoor recreation. The Mississippi flyway is one of the major bird migratory routes in North America. Migratory waterfowl and songbirds use the river as a highway on their journey between northern



breeding territories and southern wintering grounds. The sponsoring agency is the Confluence Greenway Partners.

### **Delyte Morris Bikeway/Greenway**

The Delyte Morris Bikeway was by and large developed on an abandoned streetcar right-of-way. It connects the City of Edwardsville with the wooded SIU-Edwardsville campus and athletic fields. The 2.8-mile asphalt paved trail provides access to residential, shopping, employment and recreation areas. The SIU-E portion of the trail is designated Class I, with the balance being Class III, using the City's dedicated street rights-of-way. This location offers potential linkages to numerous other existing and potential trail routes in the area. Needed improvements include providing better separation between bicycles and automobiles within the City and providing route connections to other area trails. Madison County Transit is the sponsoring agency.

### **East Belleville Bikeway**

The East Belleville Bikeway is an 8.2-mile network of three segments serving the eastern half of the City of Belleville. The first segment is a 1.5-mile bike path connecting the south commercial/residential area to the central business district and on the MetroLink Station/MetroBikeLink Trail on the north end of Belleville. This bike path connects six existing parks including North End,



*Delyte W. Morris trail on the campus of Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville, Illinois.*

Rotary, Khoury League and South Side parks and the proposed Gateway Park and adjacent skateboard area.

The next segment is a 3.2-mile rail trail conversion connecting the north end MetroLink and the IL Route 161 commercial area, Belleville East High School, residential areas, and a major industrial park. The rail line is owned by the City and is a feeder for the industrial park. The third segment in the network continues the connection for the Belle Valley Industrial Park as a 3.5-mile road shoulder bike lane. It connects residents with shopping areas, employment centers, Belleville public schools, the community college, the MetroLink Station, and the MetroBikeLink. The sponsoring agency is the City of Belleville Parks Department.

### **Glen Carbon Heritage Trail Greenway**

The Glen Carbon Ron Foster Heritage Trail system is a 3.2-mile rail to trail conversion and

extends most of the distance across the Village of Glen Carbon in a generally east-west direction. It connects a trailhead parking facility on the east end with a trailhead and park on the west end, forms a loop and provides access to Village Hall. The Glen Carbon system provides recreation and transportation for residents and non-residents alike, including a prairie restoration area. The trail provides access to many local attractions and destinations. It is also in proximity to a number of other existing and potential trail routes that could be connected with the Glen Carbon trail. There is potential for an extension of the trail for over 4 miles to IL Route 4 near the Village of Marine and a connection to the Silver Creek Greenway. The sponsoring agency is the Village of Glen Carbon.

### **Indian Lake Heritage Trail Greenway**

Nearly 900 years ago the Native American communities located in present day East St. Louis and Collinsville were linked by a trail. That trail now coincides with the modern thoroughfare known as Collinsville Road, also known as the historic National Road. The Indian Lake Heritage Trail begins at the Mississippi River near East St. Louis Community College Center and the location of the historic community of Illinoistown in East St. Louis. The trail extends along Collinsville Avenue, designated as the National Road Scenic



*Proposed extension of the Heritage Trail in Glenn Carbon, Illinois.*

Byway and passes the lone remaining burial mound in the Emerson Hough neighborhood from the McCarty Mound group. The trail descends the natural levee ridge in this area where it extends through the area known as Indian Lake. Indian Lake is a continuation of the Horseshoe Lake meander or oxbow. The trail traverses the wetland area ascending the natural levee and passes through a residential area of Fairmont City. Again a series of Native American mounds dominates the area along the trail. These include the large Sam Chucalo Mound, a smaller mound in a residential yard and the remaining base of the mound beneath the Indian Mounds Motel. From here the trail enters the National Landmark boundaries of the Cahokia Mounds State Historic and World Heritage Site.

The main trail continues through a five-mile stretch of the large Mississippian site of Cahokia. A detour off the trail north at Black Lane leads one past the Bishop Mound along

Fairmont Avenue north of Interstate 55/70, east on Horseshoe Lake Road and north to McDonough Lake Road and the mound on the south side of the lake. The trail ends across IL 157 at the complex of bluff mounds known as Sugar Loaf and Fox Hill, overlooking the American Bottoms. Another section of the trail follows Highway 111 to Canteen Lake and Horseshoe Lake, and then west to Eagle Park Marsh, a natural heritage site popular with bird watchers.

### **Kaskaskia River Greenway/Blueway**

The Kaskaskia Fish and Wildlife Area (KRFWA) is one of the largest state-owned and managed sites in Illinois. The Kaskaskia Greenway comprises more than 20,000 acres of lands and waters and extends along the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project from Fayetteville to the Mississippi River in St. Clair, Monroe and Randolph counties. The Kaskaskia River is a major tributary of the Mississippi and is distinguished by having the largest acreage of contiguous bottomland hardwood forest remaining in the State. Much of this is preserved within the privately owned portion of the Kaskaskia River Greenway. Located within the Mississippi flyway, this area represents important habitat for American waterfowl as well as a great diversity of other wildlife and plants associated with wetland habitats. It contains 36-miles of channelized river, plus additional oxbows, creeks and river bottom lakes for



*The Kaskaskia River Greenway near Fayetteville, Illinois.*

the angler to enjoy. IDOT owns the land along the river and leases most of the land to IDNR for fish, wildlife and other recreational use. Approximately 16,000 acres of public lands and 2,200 acres of Kaskaskia River channel and backwater area are managed for recreational and environmental stewardship. Boating and canoeing are also popular sports with access ramps provided on the river at Fayetteville and New Athens.

Baldwin Lake, a 2,018-acre reservoir is contained within the KRFWA and serves as the source of cooling water for a power generation facility. Baldwin Lake is open to the public for fishing and is a major part of the area's wildlife refuge. A 12-mile trail system exists and is used by hikers, hunters and birdwatchers and other outdoor enthusiasts. Picnic sites are popular at the facility. Primitive camping and picnicking is permitted on lands adjacent to the river. Due to a great diversity of habitats, a good wildlife

population exists in the area; hiking, nature study and hunting are popular activities.

The Kaskaskia River Greenway is also a Blueway. “Blueways” is a new term coined to refer to greenways along waterways. Blueways have proven effective as filter strips for trapping sediment and pollutants that degrade water quality. Pollutants carried by surface and groundwater are intercepted by vegetation and their root systems before they can reach our rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands. The sponsoring agency is the IDNR.

### **Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail**

This trail celebrates the heroic expedition of the Corps of Discovery led by Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark that opened up vast stretches of the unexplored American West to European settlement and created the first link between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Starting near what is now known as Wood River in 1804, reaching the Pacific Ocean in 1805 and returning in 1806. The trail follows their route as closely as possible, starting at Camp DuBois and is over 3,700 miles. The trail ends at Les Shirely Park, Oregon and goes through 11 states. The trailhead is located within the Confluence Greenway. The Lewis and Clark Trail has also been designated as one of the 16 National Millennium Trails.



*The Madison County Transit Nature Trail near Pontoon Beach, Illinois.*

### **Madison County Transit Nature Trail Greenway**

The Madison County Transit Nature Trail Greenway is an 8-mile, two-lane, asphalt paved trail that follows a wooded abandoned Inter Urban rail line winding from Pontoon Beach northeast to Edwardsville. The western terminus is Lake Road in Pontoon Beach, next to Legacy Golf Course. Its path crosses the southeast edge of the SIU-E campus and is well aligned for connection with a number of other important existing destinations and potential trail routes, including Horseshoe Lake State Park and the Schoolhouse Trail Greenway. The section from LeClaire Junction to the Market Basket is currently a dirt trail, with plans to pave with asphalt upon the completion of Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) rerouting Illinois 157. The level grade of the right-of-way is well suited for bicycling and pedestrian use, however the chief limiting factors are the two bridges, which are presently under repair. A Bluff Road Extension of the

Nature Trail goes north to New Poag Road for 1.75-miles.

### **Metro East Levee Trail Greenway**

This important greenway will develop an 11-mile bicycle and pedestrian trail from the Eads Bridge south and east along the Mississippi River and Prairie du Pont Floodway levees through Cahokia to Centreville. It provides a segment of the ADT, a National Millennium Trail. The trail is an integral part of the regional greenway network, linking population centers, major attractions/destinations and existing, proposed and potential trail routes. St. Clair Transit District is the managing authority.

### **MetroLink/MetroBikeLink Greenway**

The MetroLink system, a light rail, mass transit line opened in 1994 to reduce commuter congestion, connects St. Louis Lambert Airport at its western terminus to the downtown, through St. Clair County to SWIC. Connections include East St. Louis, Kenneth Hall Park, the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Youth Center, Memorial Hospital, Bellevue Park, Belleville Historic District, downtown Belleville, Richland Creek Greenway, and the East Belleville Bikeway. A 6-mile parallel bike trail, MetroBikeLink adjoins a portion of the St. Clair line. This will connect downtown Belleville to the college. An extension to MidAmerica Airport and Scott Air Force Base is underway. Bi-State Development Agency is the managing authority.



*Levee rehabilitation work near Caseyville, Illinois.*

### **Richland Creek Greenway/Bike Trail**

Richland Creek Greenway/Bike Trail system includes the East Belleville Bike Trail, which provides two miles of paved, Class I trail for bicycling, pedestrian and cross-country skiing use in central Belleville. The linear greenway connects six existing parks including North End, Rotary, Khoury League and South Side parks, and the proposed Gateway Park and adjacent skateboard area. This facility makes effective use of the Richland Creek floodplain to provide expanded recreational opportunities in the area's largest city. Richland Creek Greenway is accessible to downtown Belleville, the Class III bicycle route Depot Connector, and to MetroBikeLink. It is also in proximity to a number of abandoned railroads that offer potential for expanded trail use. The Belleville Parks Department is the managing agency.

A substantial southern extension of the Richland Creek Greenway is proposed that reaches deeper into St. Clair County and on into

Monroe County following the natural course of the Richland Creek.

**Schoolhouse Trail Greenway**

The Schoolhouse Trail Greenway is a proposed multi-use greenway for bicycling and pedestrian use from Granite City, Horseshoe Lake State Park, eastward through Maryville, connecting the CMT YMCA to the Village of Maryville’s Blackburn and Drost parks, northwards through Edwardsville and westward to Wanda Road. Additional communities it will connect are Pontoon Beach, Collinsville, Troy, Glen Carbon, and East Alton. This trail is an integral part of a regional greenway network due to its length (approximately 38-miles) and its proximity to population centers, major attractions/destinations and existing, proposed and potential greenway corridors. Funding has been secured for the design/engineering of the trail. The Schoolhouse Trail is sponsored by Madison County Transit District, currently in negotiations to acquire this corridor under rail banking. Construction funding and a development schedule are to be determined at a later date.

**Vadalabene Bikeway (River Road Bikeway) Trail Greenway**

This beautiful greenway follows the Great River Road by Alton along the Mississippi River into Jersey County for approximately 20-



*The Bluff Road Trail near SIUE, Illinois*

miles. It extends north through the community of Grafton to Pere Marquette State Park predominantly on paved surface with portions adjacent to the paved roadway. The Vadalabene River Road Greenway provides bikers and pedestrians with recreational use and transportation access to a number of scenic and historic points of interest. It also provides an important link between Pere Marquette State Park and the existing and potential trails in Madison County and Missouri by way of the Clark Bridge at Alton. Consideration should continue to be given to providing improved bike lane separation along the Class II portion. The trail is managed by IDOT.

**PROPOSED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GREENWAYS AND TRAILS**

**Bluff Greenway and Trail**

The Mississippi River Bluff Greenway and Trail parallels the Mississippi River following along the ridgeline of the bluffs that rise out of the American Bottom. This is primarily for-

ested, steep slopes and is scattered with low-density residential development. Preservation of this forest cover is essential to the scenic quality and natural resource base of the region. Hillside prairies sprinkle the bluff and other unique traits make up this feature. Some of these features are preserved through the State of Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. The northern most area of this greenway is located within St. Clair County. However, the greenway/trail is primarily located along the western edge of Monroe County.

### **Silver Creek Greenway**

The Silver Creek Greenway is an extensive system of wooded, steep slopes, making up one of largest drainage systems in the region. It generally runs the length of the region along the eastern one-third of the three-county area. This system would provide a direct connection to the Kaskaskia Greenway, the East Belleville Bikeway, the Highland Silver Creek Reservoir and the Glen Carbon Heritage Trail extension, as well as others.

## CHAPTER 5. REGIONAL PRIORITIES

The Metro East Regional Greenway Plan identifies a number of greenways and linkages to existing greenways that should be regarded as top priorities. Greenway opportunities in each of the three counties were evaluated to determine which were of importance to the entire region. Regional priorities were then selected based on the following criteria:

1. Directly benefits multiple communities and substantial populations;
2. Bridges gaps to connect existing greenways;
3. Create new connections between existing greenways;
4. Provides for animal and plant migration paths between isolated natural areas;
5. Protects tributary streams and helps preserve water quality and ecological value in main regional waterways;
6. Accentuates flood control measures;
7. Improves access to recreational trails that are presently lacking;
8. Protects high quality natural areas threatened by development;
9. Protects important scenic vistas and historic areas from inappropriate development;
10. Serves mature and distressed communities with open space deficiencies and disadvantaged populations;
11. Offers a variety of recreational uses; and
12. Provides alternative transportation types such as walking, biking, equestrian and creates access to public and mass transit systems.



## PRIORITY GREENWAYS

### 1. Confluence Greenway

The Confluence Greenway system is crucial to the region since it provides connections between the Mississippi River and several communities, i.e. substantial populations, and completes the Vandalabene River Bikeway. It creates new connections including across the river to St. Louis, to the Lewis and Clark Historic Site, to existing and proposed preserves. It will assist in the migration of wildlife and preserve water quality. The Confluence Greenway will also serve mature and depressed communities with open space deficiencies, and provide a variety of recreational uses.

### 2. Bluff Greenway and Trail

The Bluff Greenway and Trail is an important system to the region. It provides visual and physical connections from multiple communities, although small population centers. It also connects two existing greenways, the MetroLink and Metro East Levee Trail greenways. This greenway will also provide for the migration of plants as well as animals. If preserved in native habitat will preserve water quality and assist in flood control measures. The Bluff Greenway will protect important scenic vistas and sce-



*A portion of the Eads District Confluence Greenways plan.*

nic habitat and high quality natural areas from inappropriate development. This area would offer a variety of recreational uses and potentially provide alternative transportation.

### 3. American Discovery Trail (ADT)/Mississippi Levee Greenway and Trail

The ADT/Mississippi Levee Greenway and Trail is important to the region providing connections between the Mississippi River and many communities, is a leg of the American Discovery Trail, a trail of national importance. New connections are created, as well as connections to historic sites. The

Levee Greenway serves mature and depressed communities with open space deficiencies.

#### **4. Indian Lake Heritage Trail/Greenway**

The Indian Lake Heritage Trail and Greenway is an important greenway because it would benefit multiple communities, connect existing open spaces to the River and assist in the migration of wildlife and the plant community. It will facilitate the water quality and flood control measures in the American Bottom, an area heavily characterized with wetlands. It would improve trail access to existing points of interest such as Cahokia Mounds State Historic and World Heritage Site, Horseshoe Lake, Canteen Lake and Eagle Park Marsh, a state natural heritage site. It would serve mature, depressed communities that have open space deficiencies.

#### **5. Silver Creek Greenway**

The proposed Silver Creek Greenway system is an extensive greenway practically reaching from the most northern area in the region to the most southern. Multiple communities will be served, however not large populations. New connections to the MetroLink Greenway would occur. Plant and animal migration paths would be preserved, and the

importance of the Silver Creek watershed would be maintained and likely improved. Flood control measures would be assisted. High quality existing nature preserves are adjacent and accessible from the greenway. A variety of recreational opportunities would occur and alternative transportation would likely be provided.

## **CHAPTER 6. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

### **STRENGTHENING GREENWAY PLANNING AND INTERGOVERN- MENTAL COORDINATION**

The most successful greenways are a result of a detailed planning process that involves the varied interests and jurisdictions affected. Creating continuity of the greenway network requires communication and coordination among these interests. Greenway planning needs to be integrated into comprehensive plans for land use, transportation, recreation, and open space at the local level.

### **SUCCESSFUL FUNDING AND LEVERAGING OF FUNDS**

The availability of funding needs to be increased to be effective in the implementation of the Plan. Available funds can be more effective and reward local efforts by (1) stimulating the local public and private sector; (2) encourage the use of innovative financing and preservation techniques; (3) give priority to multiple benefit greenways; and (4) promote intergovernmental cooperation in the planning and management of greenways.

## **PROMOTING NEW APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES**

Creativity to implement a greenway needs to be emphasized. Utility corridors and railroad rights-of-way should be promoted as potential links in the green chain. Stormwater management, floodplain protection, stream and wetland protection can achieve greenway benefits without public acquisition. Increased awareness of the use of conservation easements, land leases, preservation easements, donations and gifts, purchase/transfer of development rights, land exchange and planned unit developments need to be implemented to protect our greenway resources.

### **CONNECTIONS TO THE REGIONAL NETWORK**

Local planners need the foresight to see opportunities for local links to the regional network. Funding priority should be awarded to projects that create such linkages.

## **STEWARDSHIP OF GREENWAY RESOURCES**

Effective greenway implementation and management often require the involvement of citizens and private organizations working within their communities. We need to expand the roles of our environmental organizations, preservation groups, service organizations, and at all levels of schools to foster stewardship programs directed toward greenways. Stewardship builds an appreciation of our environment and develops a sense of responsibility for the quality of the environment.

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

In order to promote the stewardship of our resources, there is a great need to educate the public regarding the benefits of greenways. Promotion and cooperation within the school system can be accomplished through the development and distribution of educational materials. Use local events to promote greenways through educational booths and other creative outreach methods.

## **IMMEDIATE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. A regional, multi-tiered greenway coordination system should be created.
2. Presentation of the Metro East Regional Greenway Plan by MEGA to area governments, community groups, environmental groups, agricultural organizations, and other interested parties is necessary to educate and seek acceptance, and promote implementation of the Plan.
3. Provide for the distribution of educational materials on new methods of acquisition strategies and other forms of technical assistance to land use, recreation and transportation planners, planning commissions, other government officials, environmental groups, and land owners.
4. Continue to promote the broader, regional development approach, that includes connections across the Mississippi River to our neighbors in Missouri.
5. Develop an educational package for distribution throughout the region to educators and for all levels of students.

6. Encourage all levels of governments, state and federal agencies to use the Metro East Regional Greenway Plan, as well as other local plans in their review of proposed development projects.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **LOCAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS**

##### **Planning**

1. Municipalities, park districts and counties should adopt this regional greenway Plan.
2. Municipalities, park districts and counties should cooperatively develop their own specific greenway plan that is coordinated with the regional Plan.
3. Local comprehensive and land use plans must include an open space element coordinated with the regional Plan.
4. The new Metro East Park and Recreation District should adopt this regional

greenway and urge that implementation actions be taken by local jurisdictions.

5. Local and county officials must work cooperatively with other jurisdictions and citizens groups to develop plans for the development and management of individual greenways.

6. Local, state and federal agencies should examine their own capital improvement plans to determine how to facilitate greenway development and to avoid potential conflicts.

7. Local jurisdictions' floodplain regulations should restrict use within floodplains to open space and limited recreational development/parks. No development should be permitted within the floodway.

#### **ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT**

1. All jurisdictions should give a high priority to implementation of the regional greenway plan or local plans based on the regional plan.
2. Local and county governments need to expand their pallet of implementation

techniques to include conservation easements, developer donations and development regulations.

3. All jurisdictions should encourage and require dedications of open space through donation and conservation easements through their comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinances, stormwater control ordinance and floodplain regulations.

## **MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS**

1. Local and county regulations should be reviewed and modified as necessary to encourage the use of native plant materials within greenways.
2. Greenway stewards should cooperatively develop consistent standards and operating practices.
3. Local and county governments should adopt stream, stormwater, wetland protection, soil erosion and sediment control ordinances.

## **REGIONAL AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Coordination**

1. Establish a regional, multi-tiered greenway coordinating group such as a Metro East Greenway Council.
2. The joint use of rights-of-way for greenway, transportation and utility purposes should be approached with a high regard for the safety of the greenway visitor while maintaining the integrity of the transportation or utility use.
3. Greenway maps and field guides should be readily available to the public for recreational and transportation use of the greenways.

## **FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT**

### **Funding and Program Development**

1. IDNR should continue to give priority to projects that implement the Regional Greenway Plan.
2. IDOT should adopt greenway development standards for transportation rights-of-way.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS**

### **STEWARDSHIP**

1. Citizens and landowners should participate in stewardship programs that monitor greenways and assist in management of these resources.
2. Philanthropic organizations with a stewardship agenda should be sought out to support efforts to preserve greenways and educate the public in these matters.
3. Corporate sponsorship of greenways should be pursued.

### **LAND DEVELOPMENT**

1. The economic benefits of greenways should be demonstrated through literature and regional examples.
2. Local nursery industry and landscape designers should promote the use of native plant materials for restoration of the plant community within greenways.

## **LAND ACQUISITION AND DEDICATION**

1. Private land owners should be educated and encouraged to donate conservation easements to local jurisdictions or locally based land trusts.
2. The economic benefits of outright donations of individual segments of greenways to a managing agency should be promoted.

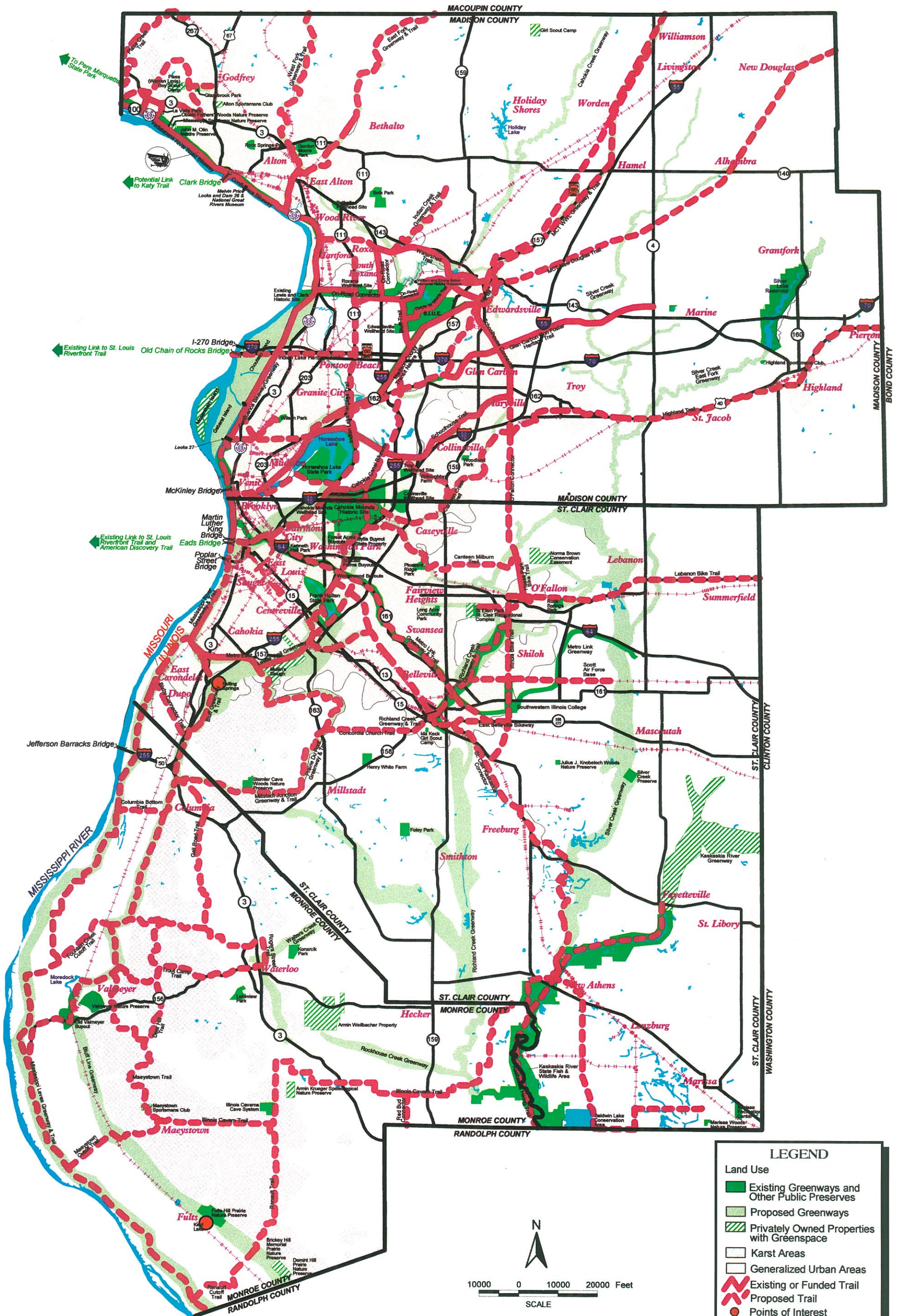
For further information about greenways and trails in Illinois or resource conservation in the Metro East contact:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Greenways and Trails Section  
524 South Second Street  
Springfield, IL 62701-1787  
(217) 782-3715 – phone  
(217) 524-4177 – fax  
<http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/planning>

Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.  
406 East Main Street  
Mascoutah, IL 62258  
(618) 566-4651 –phone  
(618) 566-4452 fax  
<http://www.swircd.org>



# METRO EAST GREENWAY PLAN



## FOREWORD

The Metro East Greenway Planning area is comprised of the three counties of Madison, Monroe and St. Clair and are located in the southwestern portion of southern Illinois. The Plan covers approximately 1,813 square miles, and is bordered by two major rivers - the Mississippi River to the west and the Kaskaskia River to the east.

From the Missouri side of the region, considerable sprawl is occurring in the area. This trend is expected to continue with the percentage of urban/built-up area to accommodate this growth. National studies indicate that land is generally being consumed at twice the rate of population growth and this phenomenon is also occurring in the region. Critical to accommodating this regional growth is the preservation of designated open space and recreational resources prior to these areas being developed. The Metro East Regional Greenway Plan is being developed to address this very issue.

## APPROACH

As part of this planning effort, a steering committee known as the Metro East Greenway Alliance (MEGA) was formed to assess local interest and gain support for the development of a regional plan. MEGA is made up of eight organizations and agencies which includes the American Bottom Conservancy, French Valley Initiative, Metro East Stormwater Planning Office, New Spirit, St. Clair County Greenspace Foundation, Southwestern Illinois Planning Commission, Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation and Development, Inc., and Trailnet, Inc. A Technical Advisory Committee was also created which included representatives from local, state, federal agencies and user organization representatives with varying interests and responsibilities in greenways development. Both the non-profit steering committee and the Technical Advisory Committee served in review of the primary and secondary data sources. Funding for the plan was obtained from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, The McKnight Foundation, and the Ira and Virginia Lang Fund of the St. Louis Community Foundation.

The vision of the Plan is of a regional greenways network that is connected to both the state and national greenways systems. The identification of existing and long-range greenways that link both natural and manmade attractions, resources and destinations is a priority. The creation of a set of guidelines prioritizing the importance of a particular greenway within the network is a goal of the Plan. Finally, implementing the Plan as financial resources are available is an important aspect of its grand vision.

This Plan is prepared for local, regional, state and federal agencies and other jurisdictions. It is the intent of the Plan to chart the future for open space and greenways of the region. Funding agencies for various greenway projects will utilize this Plan to evaluate local projects competing for dollars.

## GOALS

The Plan serves to:

- Present a vision for a regional greenway network;
- Provide a framework for coordinated greenway preservation and development in southwestern Illinois;
- Increase understanding of the importance and value of greenways, including economic, and encourage the stewardship of natural and cultural resources;
- Provide a basis for coordinating efforts to improve transportation, water quality, storm and floodwater control, recreation, archeological, cultural and other programs. By facilitating coordinated greenway implementation this Plan will minimize conflicts with development activities, within existing developed areas as well as encourage creation and preservation of greenways in advance of future development;
- Initiate a continuing forum for resolution of greenway issues among both the governmental jurisdictions and the private sector; and
- Provide a basis for implementing and funding agencies to allocate resources in support of the Plan.

In a broad sense, the word greenway is a generic term for a wide variety of linear open spaces that provide connections and thereby foster movement of some sort, from neighborhood bicycle routes to pristine woodland corridors that guide migrating wildlife in their seasonal travels; from revitalized urban waterfronts to tree-shaded footpaths along a stream, far from the city. Within the developed landscape, greenways serve a dual function: they provide open space for human access and recreational use, and they serve to protect and enhance remaining natural and cultural resources.

The Metro East Regional Greenway Plan establishes the following priorities:

- Encourages the creation and preservation of greenways that contain multiple environmental resources, especially water related resources in riparian and shoreline corridors;
- A comprehensive regional greenways network along the region's major rivers, the Mississippi and the Kaskaskia and preserve greenways along their tributaries;
- Includes the region's extensive floodplains in the greenway system to minimize flooding through protection of flood retention capacity;
- Encourages the development and management of greenways in order to preserve and restore our region's unique historical and cultural resources;
- Encourages the development of greenway networks and linkages that preserve and enhance the continuity of natural systems, preserve biodiversity and maintain the integrity of the natural habitat; and
- Includes nature preserves and identified public and private natural areas in the greenways network.

## PRIORITY GREENWAYS

**Confluence Greenway** The Confluence Greenway system is crucial to the region since it provides connections between the Mississippi River and several communities, i.e. substantial populations, and completes the Confluence Bikeway and connects to the Valdabene River Road Bikeway. It creates new connections including across the river to St. Louis, to the Lewis and Clark Historic Site, to existing and proposed preserves. It will assist in the migration of wildlife and preserve water quality. The Confluence Greenway will also serve mature and depressed communities with open space deficiencies, and provide a variety of recreational uses.

**Bluff Greenway and Trail** The Bluff Greenway and Trail is an important system to the region. It provides visual and physical connections from multiple communities, although small population centers. It also connects two existing greenways, the MetroLink and Metro East Levee Trail greenways. This greenway will also provide for the migration of plants as well as animals. If preserved in native habitat will preserve water quality and assist in flood control measures. The Bluff Greenway will protect important scenic vistas and scenic habitat and high quality natural areas

from inappropriate development. This area would offer a variety of recreational uses and potentially provide alternative transportation.

**American Discovery Trail (ADT)/Mississippi Levee Greenway and Trail** The ADT/Mississippi Levee Greenway and Trail is important to the region providing connections between the Mississippi River and many communities, is a leg of the American Discovery Trail, a trail of national importance. New connections are created, as well as connections to historic sites. The Levee Greenway serves mature and depressed communities with open space deficiencies.

**Indian Lake Heritage Trail/Greenway** The Indian Lake Heritage Trail and Greenway is an important greenway because it would benefit multiple communities, connect existing open spaces to the River and assist in the migration of wildlife and the plant community. It will facilitate the water quality and flood control measures in the American Bottoms, an area heavily characterized with wetlands. It would improve trail access to existing points of interest such as Cahokia Mounds State Historic and World Heritage Site, Horseshoe Lake, Canteen Lake and Eagle Park Marsh, a state natural heritage site. It would serve mature, depressed communities that have open space deficiencies.

**Silver Creek Greenway** The proposed Silver Creek Greenway system is an extensive greenway practically reaching from the most northern area in the region to the most southern. Multiple communities will be served, however not large populations. New connections to the MetroLink Greenway would occur. Plant and animal migration paths would be preserved, and the importance of the Silver Creek watershed would be maintained and likely improved. Flood control measures would be assisted. High quality existing nature preserves are adjacent and accessible from the greenway. A variety of recreational opportunities would occur and alternative transportation would likely be provided.

## GREENWAY PLANNING AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The most successful greenways are a result of a detailed planning process that involves the varied interests and jurisdictions affected. Creating continuity of the greenway network requires communication and coordination among these interests. Greenway planning needs to be integrated into comprehensive plans for land use, transportation, recreation, and open space at the local level.

## SUCCESSFUL FUNDING AND LEVERAGING OF FUNDS

The availability of funding needs to be increased to be effective in the implementation of the Plan. Available funds can be more effective and reward local efforts by (1) stimulating the local public and private sector; (2) encourage the use of innovative financing and preservation techniques; (3) give priority to multiple benefit greenways; and (4) promote intergovernmental cooperation in the planning and management of greenways.

## PROMOTING NEW APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES

Creativity to implement a greenway needs to be emphasized. Utility corridors and railroad rights-of-way should be promoted as potential links in the green chain. Stormwater management, floodplain protection, stream and wetland protection can achieve greenway benefits without public acquisition. Increased awareness of the use of conservation easements, land leases, preservation easements, donations and gifts, purchase/transfer of development rights, land exchange and planned unit developments need to be implemented to protect our greenway resources.

## CONNECTIONS TO THE REGIONAL NETWORK

Local planners need the foresight to see opportunities for local links to the regional network. Funding priority should be awarded to projects that create such linkages.

## STEWARDSHIP OF GREENWAY RESOURCES

Effective greenway implementation and management often require the involvement of citizens and private organizations working within their communities. We need to expand the roles of our environmental organizations, preservation groups, service organizations, and at all levels of schools to foster stewardship programs directed toward greenways. Stewardship builds an appreciation of our environment and develops a sense of responsibility for the quality of the environment.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

In order to promote the stewardship of our resources, there is a great need to educate the public regarding the benefits of greenways. Promotion and cooperation within the school system can be accomplished through the development and distribution of educational materials. Use local events to promote greenways through educational booths and other creative outreach methods.

## IMMEDIATE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- A regional, multi-tiered greenway coordination system should be created.
- Presentation of the Metro East Regional Greenway Plan by MEGA to area governments, community groups, environmental groups, agricultural organizations, and other interested parties is necessary to educate and seek acceptance, and promote implementation of the Plan.
- Provide for the distribution of educational materials on new methods of acquisition strategies and other forms of technical assistance to land use, recreation and transportation planners, planning commissions, other government officials, environmental groups, and land owners.
- Continue to promote the broader, regional development approach, that includes connections across the Mississippi River to our neighbors in Missouri.
- Develop an educational package for distribution throughout the region to educators and for all levels of students.
- Encourage all levels of governments, state and federal agencies to use the Metro East Regional Greenway Plan, as well as other local plans in their review of proposed development projects.



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