





## Contents

Communities	3
Calmar	4
Center Point	10
Chariton	14
Colo	18
Dyersville	22
Manning	26
Paullina	30
Perry	34
Schaller	38
Tabor	42
Tripoli	46
Villisca	50
Naturalizing Iowa's Roadways	55
Kirk Henderson	56
Steve Holland	58
People	61
The Benefits of Natives Along Iowa's Roadways	75



## Executive Summary

The Iowa's Living Roadways Program was born of an effort to provide design services to rural Iowa communities. The program is a collaboration involving the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), the Living Roadway Trust Fund (LRTF), Iowa State University (ISU), and Trees Forever.

Iowa's Living Roadways consists of the Community Visioning Program and the Projects Program. The Community Visioning Program provides planning and landscape design assistance to Iowa's small communities. The Projects Program funds the planting of native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees along transportation corridors.

Both Visioning and Project Programs provide assistance to Iowa communities with populations of fewer than 10,000, because these smaller communities often lack the resources and expertise needed to design and implement landscape enhancements.

The 2012 visioning communities are Calmar, Center Point, Chariton, Colo, Dyersville, Manning, Paullina, Perry, Schaller, Tabor, Tripoli and Villisca. The sustainability and success of the program is evident by the number of actual communities it had touched. Since Iowa's Living Roadways was created in 1996, 192 communities have participated in the Visioning Program and 462 communities have received grants from the Projects Program.



# Communities



# Calmar

*Trees Forever Facilitator: Mark Pingnot  
Landscape Architects: Craig Ritland, Samantha Price  
Interns: Danny Pritchard, Shu (Selina) Liu*

Calmar, a community of 976, is known as the “Crossroad of Northeast Iowa.” It is located at the intersection of US Highway 52 and State Highways 150 and 24. The convergence of these three major transportation routes in southern Winneshiek County is a mixed blessing. Many travelers go through town every day, which is good for the downtown businesses. However, the crossroads also brings a great deal of truck traffic, which can complicate the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles.

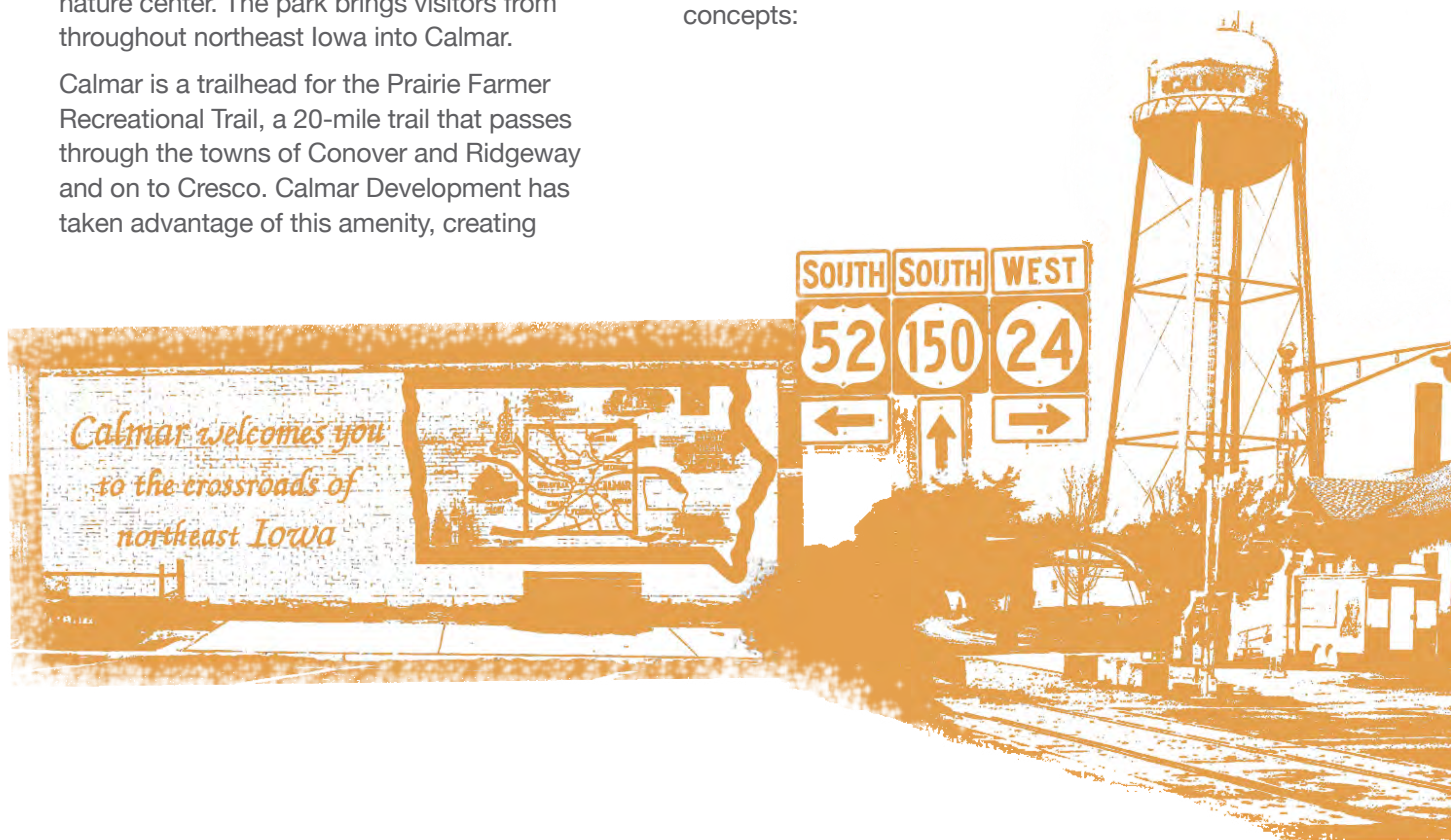
Located on a loess ridge with undulating hills throughout the community, Calmar is the gateway into northeast Iowa’s recreational opportunities, including eco-tourism. Lake Meyer Park is located just outside town. This 36-acre, man-made lake offers outdoor activities such as camping, fishing and hiking, as well as an interpretive nature center. The park brings visitors from throughout northeast Iowa into Calmar.

Calmar is a trailhead for the Prairie Farmer Recreational Trail, a 20-mile trail that passes through the towns of Conover and Ridgeway and on to Cresco. Calmar Development has taken advantage of this amenity, creating

a pocket park with a gazebo and native prairie plantings. The trail connects to the old railroad depot, which has public restrooms and a picnic area.

Calmar is home to Northeast Iowa Community College, Northeast Iowa Dairy Center, quaint shops, restaurants and family businesses. The downtown area of Calmar has undergone some revitalization in the past few years, which residents believe adds charm to their community.

When Calmar applied to the visioning program, its top priorities included creating a safe trail network in the community, making intersections safer for pedestrian crossing and improving signage that expresses the pride residents have for their community. Through the visioning process, the design team helped the steering committee expand on its initial priorities to develop the following concepts:



- **Downtown Streetscape Enhancements:** Develop a more pedestrian-friendly downtown; add street trees, benches and brick sidewalks; convert a vacant lot into a parking and multi-purpose area.
- **Downtown Crossroad Improvements:** Provide highly visible pedestrian crosswalks to ensure safety; add visual interest through an intersection medallion, sculpture columns and decorative streetlights.
- **Entrance Signage:** Provide signage at the four highway entrances; use simple steel three-foot-tall letters to spell out CALMAR; make signage compatible with the new Northwest Iowa Community College signs.
- **Pedestrian Route Improvements:** Develop a trail along Weber Street and Hamlin Street connecting to the NICC sidewalk system; link the proposed route to the existing Prairie Farmer Trail; provide trail access to the City Park/Pool, Lion's Park and Dairy Center pond.

*Steering Committee:*

*Julie Anderson*

*Luther Anderson*

*Dennis Boyer, Jr.*

*Ron Bullerman*

*Michelle Elsbernd*

*Melissa Elsbernd*

*ReNae Frana*

*John Heying*

*Bev Lutkenhaus*

*Kyran Lutkenhaus*

*Mary McEnaney*

*Corey Meyer*

*Isaac Phillips*

*Sam Sabelka*

*Rhonda Sivert*

*Mary Welch*

*Chris Wilcher*





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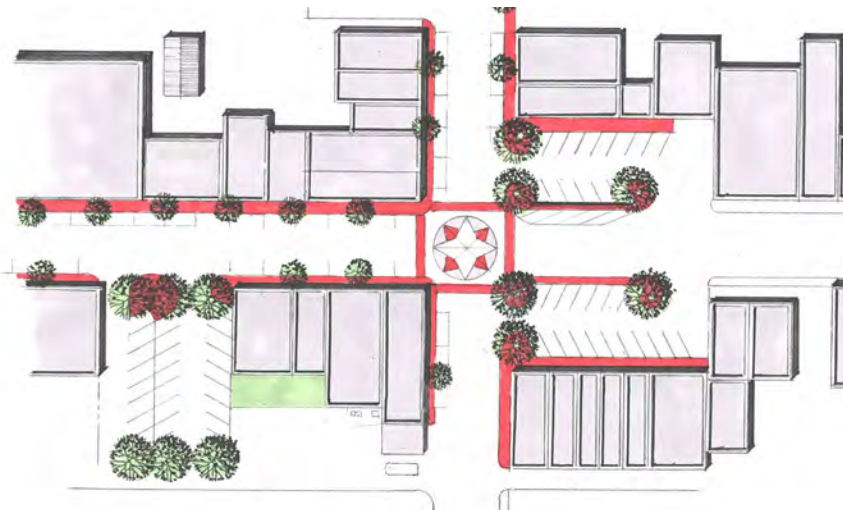


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1. *Proposed signage area with extended prairie during the day and with lighting at night.*
2. *Existing and proposed Highway 24 streetscape improvements.*
3. *Existing and proposed downtown parking lot and streetscape enhancements.*
4. *Current welcome sign with a proposed brick wall reading "Welcome to Calmar."*
5. *Proposed sidewalk connection to Webster/ Hamlin Street pedestrian route.*
6. *One of two proposals for downtown streetscape improvements including brick sidewalks, tree plantings, parking and event space.*



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# Center Point

*Trees Forever Facilitators: Patty Petersen, Dustin Hinrichs*

*Landscape Architect: Loren Hoffman*

*Interns: Nick Gulick, Andrea Blaha*

Center Point, home to 2,421 residents, is located along I-380 just outside of Cedar Rapids in Linn County. The city offers small-town charm with a Main Street, a landmark water tower and local parks. The Cedar Valley Nature Trail passes through the heart of Center Point, offering a convenient recreation venue as well as potential economic benefits from trail users stopping in town.

Lewis Access Road is the main access point for vehicular traffic into Center Point and was recently widened to accommodate heavier traffic and turning lanes. While the road condition is improved, the surrounding area is a blank slate with potential to welcome visitors into the community and create an identity for Center Point.

West Green Street (County Road E2W) connects Center Point to Urbana, which is located roughly 6 miles northwest of Center Point in neighboring Benton County. West Green Street is also an entrance for two important assets to Center Point—Fross

Park and the new high school. Fross Park has grown from a 10-acre park to a 44-acre regional outdoor activity destination with soccer and baseball complexes, a walking trail, and tennis and basketball courts. The park and high school attract many visitors, but can be difficult to access for pedestrians and signage is needed.

The north, west and east entrances to Center Point lack sidewalk, lighting and signage. Main Street is in poor condition, but the city council and residents are making efforts to revitalize the area. Center Point applied to the visioning program to address these concerns. Through the visioning process, the design team helped the steering committee to develop the following concepts:

- **Comprehensive Trails Plan:** Create additional access points to the Cedar Valley Nature Trail; provide linkages to the trail throughout the entire town; form a small trail loop system.



- Way-finding Signage: Intertwine past, present and future influences to build a community image; create a more visitor-friendly environment; enhance the Iowa Department of Transportation signage along Interstate 380.
- Gateway Signage: Distinguish primary and secondary gateways into the community; design a theme to portray Center Point's heritage and values; landscape around focal points in the community.
- Downtown Streetscape Concept Plan and Pocket Park: Incorporate universal streetscape design, including trees, benches, lighting and signage; provide accessibility ramps into businesses; convert angle parking into parallel parking.

*Steering Committee:*

*Center Point:*

*Kim Bowen*

*Dawn Farmer*

*Levi Farmer*

*Britni Graham*

*Nancy Krapfl*

*Paul Mann*

*Jennifer Miller*

*Dennis Schlicht*

*Nathan Schnell*

*Janine Walters*

*Steve Winger*

*Ann Wooldridge*





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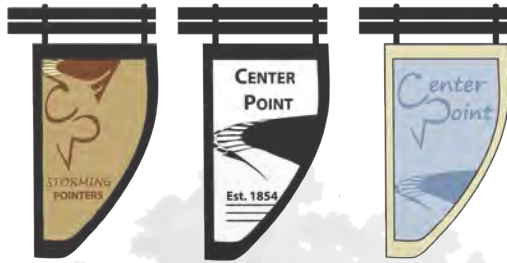


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1. Primary gateway monument representing the “Egypt” of the early settlers to Center Point; includes backlighting.
2. Rear view of the proposed gateway structure.
3. Existing conditions and proposed transportation enhancements for Lewis Access Road and State Street.
4. Proposed streetscape improvement plan.
5. Cross-section of proposed streetscape enhancements.
6. Proposed signage for Center Point, creating a cohesive identity for the community and aid in way-finding.



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# Chariton

*Trees Forever Facilitator: Patty Petersen*

*Landscape Architects: Brett Douglas, Dylan Jones*

*Interns: Paola Sepulveda, Nate Schlorholtz*

Chariton, a community of 4,573, is located in south central Iowa at the intersection of US Highway 34 and State Highway 14. AgricToday, Hy-Vee and Johnson Machine Works are Chariton's largest private employers, and the agriculture industry is vital to the Chariton economy.

Chariton is home to the Lucas County Health Center, which offers one of the best health care options in the region. After multiple consolidations, Chariton Public Schools serve the entire county. Additionally, Chariton is home to multiple sports complexes and an aquatic center that attract visitors to the community.

The rolling hills, woodlands and prairies that surround the city form a major recreational asset featuring parks, trail systems and greenbelts. Residents believe, with some improvements, that the Cinder Path Trail can offer opportunities for healthy lifestyles.

Chariton plans to be heavily involved with Governor Branstad's Healthiest State initiative and to become a Blue Zone Community. The goal of a Blue Zone Community is to create an environment where residents live longer, healthier and happier lives. A large part of

reaching that goal is providing safe sidewalks and trails throughout the community to allow individuals to improve their health and enjoy nature.

When applying for the visioning program, leaders of Chariton thought general road and sidewalk repair was critical. They also wanted to Make a better first impression and curb appeal through landscaping and create safer routes to community attractions like the aquatic center. Throughout the process the original ideas were developed into these major projects:

- Trails: Improve pedestrian access at traffic corridors; connect proposed trail at Ilion Avenue to 12th Street; create linkages between parks, the school and the cemeteries; develop a circuit of trails throughout the community.



- Northwest Park: Connect the park to the proposed trail at Curtis Avenue; install fitness stations along the trail; add bleachers to the sidelines of two baseball fields; expand playground options for older children; plant trees to provide shade; expand the current gravel parking lot.
- Downtown Parking Improvements: Reduce the number of entry points to the parking loop; increase the courthouse lawn to eliminate the interior parking loop; convert existing parallel parking to angled; make the area completely ADA compliant and safe for pedestrians.
- Downtown Beautification Improvements: Beautify the alleyways through a local art project; increase green space in front of the courthouse; update lighting, furnishings, signage and pavement.

*Steering Committee:*

*Corey Goodenow*

*Shannon James*

*Allison Krutsinger*

*Lana Kuball*

*Ray Meyer*

*Tom Mosbach*

*Ashlynn Rosa*

*Jody Sandy*

*Jason Skretta*

*Heather Swarthout*

*Lap Truong*

*Brian Zimmerli*



1. Many of Chariton's primary recreation destinations lack pedestrian connectivity from one to the other. Ilion Avenue currently has no safe pedestrian access.
2. The proposed trails master plan would include a multi-use trail on Ilion Avenue.
3. An update and expansion of current play areas at Northwest Park is proposed in the Northwest Park master plan. The plan is intended to serve as a model for how other parks in Chariton can also be updated.



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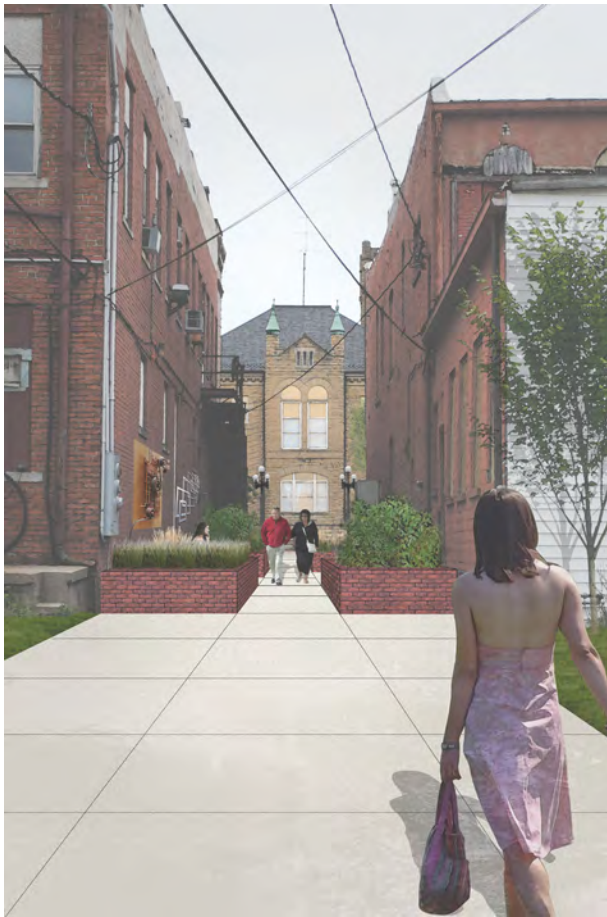




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4. *The design team recommended an update to the Chariton square. This image shows a proposal to eliminate the existing interior parking loop.*
5. *Incorporating pocket parks in downtown alleys would add visual interest and enhance pedestrian connections throughout downtown Chariton.*
6. *This image edit shows what the pedestrian experience would be like if the interior parking loop was eliminated and the courthouse green was expanded.*

# Colo

*Trees Forever Facilitators: Mark Pingnot, Leslie Berckes*

*Landscape Architects: Brett Douglas, Grant Thompson*

*Interns: Paola Sepulveda, Nate Schlorholtz*

With the motto “a place to call home,” Colo is home to 876 residents. The city has been active in various community betterment plans in the past few years. Through forming committees and thoughtfully investing in housing, tourist and community projects, the City of Colo is dedicated to community betterment.

Colo has a unique location at the intersection of the historic Lincoln Highway and the historic Jefferson Highway (US Highway 65). The Reed/Niland Corner is a historic site in Colo at the intersection of these highways. After recent restoration the site now has a historic gas station, café and motel providing a living history attraction for visitors.

Residents of Colo consider it to be a visually attractive community. It has many tree-lined streets and has been a “Tree City USA” site since 2006. The community has invested more than \$1 million in grants and local matching to upgrade housing and abate nuisance properties.

The City of Colo wants to help its residents maintain healthy and safe lifestyles by improving sidewalks and creating safer routes to school for children. As the community grows, residents would benefit from a trail system or sidewalks between the newer houses and businesses and the Main Street area.

Through the visioning program, the Colo steering committee hoped to create city entrance signs, improve landscaping and streetscaping, and create trails or sidewalks to facilitate pedestrian movement throughout the community. Throughout the process, the design team developed the following proposals:

- Hickory Grove Trail Route: Develop a multi-modal trail connection to Hickory Grove Lake; provide safe crossing at Highway 30; choose from three proposed routes—all have barriers and assets.



- **Community Signage:** Create a unified series of signage such as entry, place and banner signs; incorporate the motto “The Crossroads of the Nation”; use clean, strong materials; illuminate signage.
- **South Street Pedestrian Connections:** Build a sidewalk connection along South Street from 4th Street to US Highway 65; raise the elevation of the sidewalks to incorporate storm water drains and sewer.
- **Beautification Projects:** Replace the fencing around “The Slab” sand volleyball court; plant mixed shrub and perennial beds around “The Slab”; transform the open lot adjacent to the community center into a gathering space; incorporate a deck, movie screen, and plantings.
- **Pedestrian Connections:** Use a phased approach to improve street and sidewalk conditions; focus attention on West Street; improve pedestrian access to Nesco High School; update walkways to ADA standards.

*Steering Committee:*

*Scott Berka*

*Nancy Henry*

*Joanie Jamison*

*Martha Kash*

*Amy Kohlwes*

*Katy McKinney*

*Connie Patrick*

*Nancy Sartori*

*Richard Sartori*

*Carroll Stokesbary*

*Ellen Woods*





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1. *Trail enhancements would provide Colo residents with connections to Hickory Grove.*
2. *The design team proposes updates to signage at entrances to town.*
3. *South Street does not currently have sidewalks connecting pedestrians to the local Casey's and the ballfields nearby. The design team proposed sidewalks along that corridor in order to enhance those connections.*
4. *The Slab is a popular play destination for children in Colo. Adding elements such as plantings and fencing would improve its visual quality.*
5. *Creating a pocket park between the community center and library would help to beautify Main Street and provide space for leisure and community activity.*



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# Dyersville

*Trees Forever Facilitator: Patty Petersen*

*Landscape Architects: Loren Hoffman*

*Interns: Nick Gulick, Andrea Blaha*

Dyersville is a community of 4,058 in eastern Delaware and western Dubuque Counties. Dyersville is proud to offer small-town historic charm along with all the services and amenities its residents need.

Dyersville is home to the baseball field built for the film *Field of Dreams*. This tourist attraction is important for the local economy. Dyersville is also a trailhead for Heritage Trail, 26-mile trail that goes east through Farley, Graf, Epworth, Durango and ends in Dubuque. The Basilica of St. Francis Xavier is an important community landmark in which residents take great pride.

West Side Park, Bear Creek and the North Fork of the Maquoketa River provide beautiful natural environments in Dyersville. The parks and recreational areas could be enhanced with pedestrian bridges, better access and connectivity of trails.

Severe floods in 2008, as well as additional floods in 2010 and 2011, led to the federal buyout and eventual mitigation of 32 properties in the southwest area of Dyersville. Through the buyouts, an entire city block and the 3rd Avenue SW corridor will be demolished and repaved for trail expansion and park development. The community hopes to turn this disaster into a community enhancement.

Ultimately, the community envisions a well-connected tree-lined trail system, with access to schools, recreation areas, downtown and Heritage Trail. It also hopes to reinvent the floodplain to serve as a community gathering-place and an example of the community's pride. Through the visioning process, the design team developed the following proposals:

- **Green Space for Flood Buyout Area:** Transform the flood buyout area to a 55-acre green space; include disc golf, recreational areas, a community orchard and garden and a farmers market pavilion; construct a trail throughout the space.



- City Square: Construct a city square bounded by 1st Street SW and 2nd Street SW within the green space; add parking along street corridors; build a linear pavilion; use flood resistant materials in construction.
- Intersection Enhancements—Highway 136 and 2nd Avenue SE: Improve safety by slowing traffic; provide way-finding elements such as signage, decorative pavement and architectural columns; beautify the downtown area with street trees, decorative streetlights and seasonal plantings.
- Pedestrian Accommodations—Highway 136 and Beltline Road: Provide safe crossing of Highway 136 on the Heritage Trail; build a grade-separated crossing under the bridge at North Folk Maquoketa River; connect town and Heritage Trail with a sidewalk.
- Community Signage: Improve circulation with way-finding signage; build a community identity with a united logo; add to the Iowa DOT community destination signage along Highway 20 and Highway 136.
- Interchange Enhancement—Future Highway 20 and 330/32nd Avenue: Incorporate architectural detailing; showcase Dyersville’s identity to travelers; improve safety at the street connection; focus on pedestrian accommodations with the Iowa DOT during construction.

*Steering Committee:*

*Pete Bonifas*

*Brian Cassidy*

*Nancy Dunkel*

*Molly Evers*

*Jim Heavens*

*Adam Huehnergath*

*Patrick McCarthy*

*Mick Michael*

*Karla Thompson*





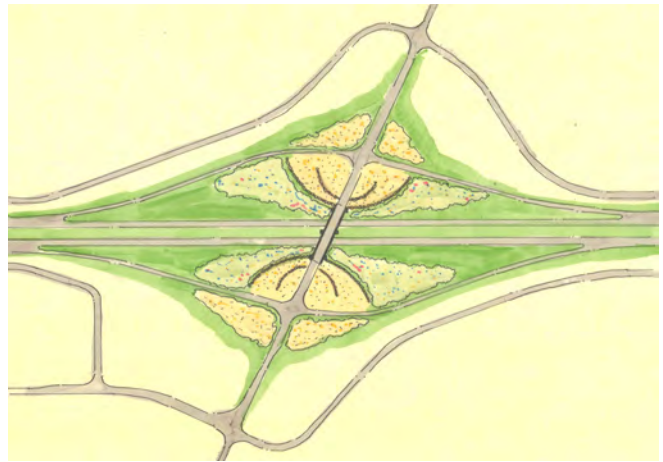
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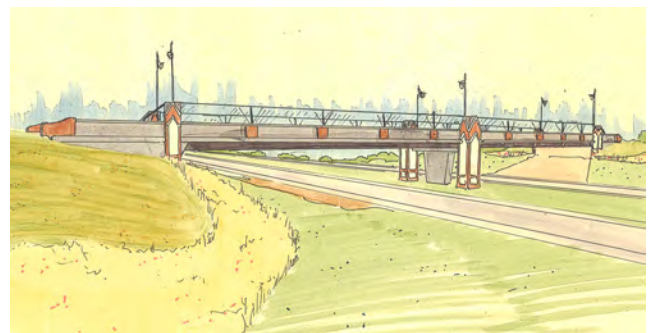
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1. Gateway enhancements at the intersection of Highway 136 and 2nd Avenue SE.
2. Drawings depicting possible events at the Dyersville City Square pavillion.
3. Concept plans for Highway 20 and 330/332nd Avenue interchange.
4. Possible future views of the 330/332nd Avenue Bridge.
5. Plan of proposed gateway enhancements.
6. Monument signage at the intersection of Highway 136 and the Highway 20 east exit ramp.
7. Possible welcome signage for Dyersville.



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# Manning

*Trees Forever Facilitator: Leslie Berckes*  
*Landscape Architects: Brett Douglas, Dylan Jones*  
*Interns: Paola Sepulveda, Nate Schlorholtz*

Manning is a progressive community located in Carroll County in western Iowa. With a population of 1,500, Manning offers residents more services than many towns twice the size—including a hospital; recreation center; tourist attractions; municipally owned gas, electric, sewer, water and cable; and much more.

Residents believe two things drive Manning's progress: pride and participation. The participation in past community betterment programs has come in the form of volunteerism, forward-thinking city councils and community support.

Manning is bisected by Highway 141, which is heavily traveled and a major route to Omaha, Des Moines and Sioux City. The highway provides a lifeline throughout the town with many tourist attractions, community resources and businesses located on the road.

Manning is proud of its major tourist attractions: the Hausbarn-Heritage park site, Great Western County Park and Veterans Memorial Wall. Additionally, the community has a municipally owned recreation center that allows community

members of all ages to engage in healthy activities.

The Manning Regional Healthcare Center is Manning's largest employer and offers newly renovated surgery suites, outpatient clinics and an award-winning nursing home.

Manning completed a downtown streetscape beautification project in 1997, but the community hopes to revamp the project and update the streetscape. Additionally, the community hopes to repair streets, sidewalks and make entryways to Manning more visually appealing. These changes can allow the community pride Manning has to shine through. During the visioning process, the design team developed the following proposals:

- **Trail Enhancement and Amenities:** Provide seating and lighting intermittently along the trail; place a trailhead at existing campsite near Heritage Park; landscape along the Nishnabotna River and wherever possible along the trail.



- **Community Signage:** Develop a family of signs; create a new skyline logo to incorporate Manning’s iconic images; place way-finding signs throughout town; install new entrance signs along Highway 141.
- **Main Street Enhancements:** Include amenities such as street trees, bike racks and flower baskets; extend curbs into bump-outs along Main Street; update curbs and curb ramps to comply with ADA standards.
- **Highway 141 Beautification:** Unite landscaping themes along the highway corridor; plant native species on roadsides; screen unsightly views with plantings, shrubs and trees.

*Steering Committee:*

*Cory Arp  
 Jean Behrens  
 Heath Danner  
 Tammy Eberly  
 Andy Eischeid  
 Nate Fara  
 Craig Hacker  
 Jean Kusel  
 Pete Langel  
 Nancy Meier  
 Ryan Meier  
 Beth Mundt  
 Jeff Nelson  
 Joann Ohl  
 Dawn Rohe  
 Nikki Sorensen  
 Geri Spies*





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1. *Native plantings along Highway 141 would aid in screening and beautification.*
2. *New entry signage into Manning would update existing welcome signs add to the beautification of Highway 141.*
3. *Current conditions at Nishnabotna Creek. A planned trail along the creek would be enhanced by new signage.*
4. *Heritage Park would serve as a trailhead in the future, the design team has proposed several amenities for this location.*
5. *Curb extensions, additional plantings and bike racks are among the elements proposed to enhance Main Street and future changes made through the Main Street Iowa program.*



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# Paullina

*Trees Forever Facilitators: Barb Grabner-Kerns, Jeff Jensen*

*Landscape Architects: Joshua Shields*

*Intern: Jonathan Nelsen*

Paullina, a community of 1,056 located along State Highway 10 in northwest Iowa, is known as the “Gem of the Prairie.” D.E. Paullin, the town’s namesake, purchased the land that is now Paullina in 1881 and sold it to the railroad for one dollar. The town is one of the few started in advance of laying the railroad.

Paullina is working to make O’Brien County a great place to live by offering financial, industrial, educational, recreational, shopping and art opportunities. The Paullina Business Park has expanded and the current gravel roads will need to be replaced as more businesses move in and truck and tractor traffic increases.

The downtown business district would benefit from better signs at the entrances of town to show travelers on Highway 10 the amenities Paullina has to offer. For instance, Paullina is home to the Wonderland Theatre, which

offers current movies and refreshments at reasonable prices. Two main areas of concern in the downtown business district are the building remains from a fire that occurred two years ago and overgrown trees in the business area. Some necessary revitalization to the downtown could create a more welcoming and visually pleasing downtown.

Mill Creek State Park is located one-third mile east of Paullina and draws thousands of visitors to the lake and bike path in Paullina. A bike path runs from town to the airstrip close to the park. The path is in need of repair, as well as a place for users to rest, and landscaping along it is minimal.

The visioning committee envisioned downtown enhancements, entryway signage and bike path improvements. The design team developed the following proposals:





*Steering Committee:*

*Sheila Billick*

*Terry Boltjes*

*Bob Deverwaere*

*Sandy Fritz*

*Charlie Harper*

*Dorothy Harper*

*Pam Hill*

*Michelle Hohbach*

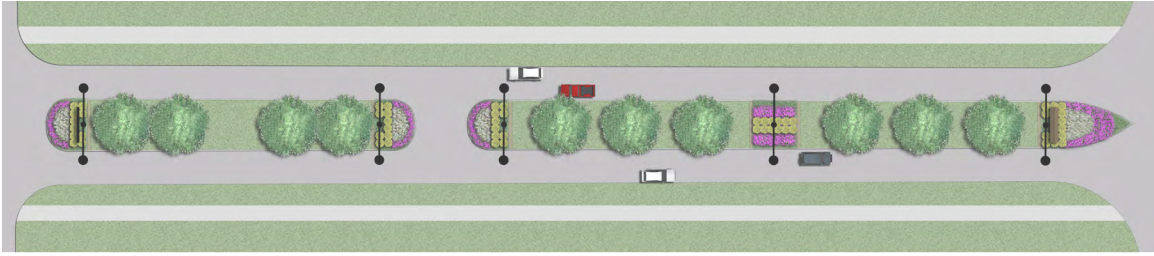
*Linda Massmann*

*Jenika Stamer*

*Justin Stamer*

*Cindy Struve*

- **Trail Master Plan:** Develop urban and rural trail routes; improve existing sidewalk infrastructure, way-finding signage and crosswalks for the urban route; extend the Mill Creek Trail for the rural trail.
- **Downtown Improvements:** Incorporate decorative pavement; add pedestrian-scale street lighting using LED and Dark Sky technologies; provide visual interest with street planters and trees; create partial bump-outs at intersections.
- **Downtown Redevelopment:** Temporarily repurpose the vacant lot at the corner of Main and Broadway Streets into a pocket park; use elements that can be moved to an alternate location.
- **Boulevard Improvements:** Landscape using perennial and low-maintenance plantings; define intersections such as Highway 10 and Main Street with perennial plantings.
- **Mill Creek Trail Loop Development:** Extend the Mill Creek Trail into a loop south along the creek and back west along the abandoned railroad; place rest areas along the trail; unify landscaping design elements throughout town.



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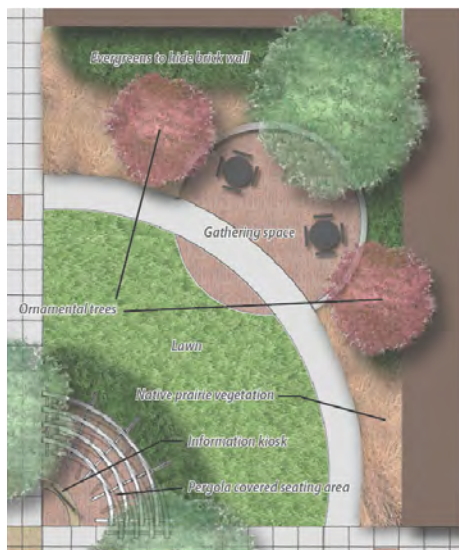
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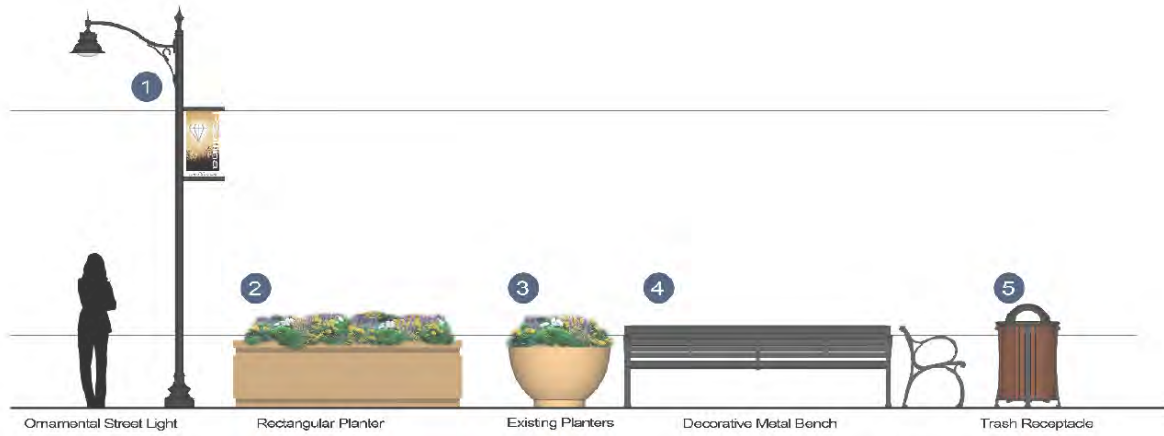


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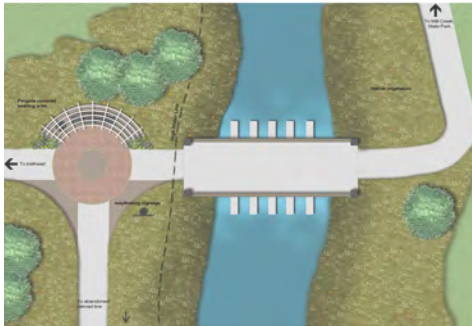


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1. *Proposed landscape treatment for boulevards in town.*
2. *View of Main Street looking north with proposed improvements.*
3. *Streetscape improvement plan at the intersection of Broadway and Main Streets.*
4. *Proposed long-term enhancements at the corners of Broadway and Main Streets.*
5. *Proposed short-term redevelopment plan for a corner of Broadway and Main Streets.*
6. *Trail loop expansion plan at Mill Creek.*
7. *Proposed site amenities for downtown streetscape.*
8. *Trail node at Mill Creek.*

# Perry

*Trees Forever Facilitator: Leslie Berckes*  
*Landscape Architect: Joshua Shields*  
*Intern: Jonathan Nelsen*

Perry, a community of 7,702 residents, invites residents and visitors to “Make Yourself At Home!” Located in Dallas County, the town offers historic charm and a commitment to progress.

Perry is part of the Iowa Great Places program, which brings together state government resources to invigorate and invest in the infrastructure and cultural amenities of Iowa towns. The program is a part of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and has helped Perry develop as a community.

The city has begun a multi-million-dollar renovation of the downtown area surrounding the historic Carnegie Library Museum. Downtown has undergone visual streetscape enhancements and a bocce ball court has been added at the Josh Davis Plaza.

Perry has a rich tradition of providing events for residents and visitors to enjoy, including

Friday Fests with live music and food, the old fashioned Fourth of July Celebration, a Latino Festival and the annual Lighted Christmas Parade.

Perry is committed to providing recreational activities for its residents and visitors. Caboose Park is the trailhead of the Raccoon River Valley Recreational Trail. The trail connects Perry to Dawson in a 33-mile north loop, which is the site of the annual bike ride known as “Winter RAGBRAI Reunion” in February. There are plans to extend the trail to neighboring towns and to the greater Des Moines area. The community believes the bike trails are viable economic development tool to bring visitors to Perry.

With Perry’s progressive mindset, the community understands that transportation improvements are critical. Some of the main concerns going into the visioning process were trail extension, landscape enhancements throughout the community





and recreational trails, and a more pedestrian-friendly town. Through the visioning process, the design team came up with the following suggestions:

- **Community Entrance Signage:** Reinforce the community theme and logo; create a memorable and noticeable sign design and establish signage locations; unify landscaping around signage locations.
- **Trail Artwork and Way-finding:** Extend artwork along the Raccoon River Valley Trail into a series throughout the community; establish a graphic identity; use local materials and low-maintenance vegetation in landscaping.

*Steering Committee:*

*Jeff Hix*

*Alan Lenz*

*Jeff Lenz*

*Marsha McCaully*

*Greg Nath*

*Butch Niebuhr*

*Jay Pattee*

*Martha Sheehy-Williamson*

- **Screening Opportunities:** Establish inviting trail entry to the community; incorporate a sculpture-node rest area at the trail north of the Highway 141 crossing; create a visual barrier between the trail and the Tyson Food facility.
- **Trails Master Plan:** Provide connections to community attraction; promote mobility and healthy living for residents; improve sidewalk infrastructure from trails to neighborhoods; connect to regional trails.
- **First Avenue Pedestrian Enhancements:** Widen shoulder on 1st Avenue from Park Street to 123rd Place as a pedestrian walkway; restripe 1st Avenue from four lanes to three lanes.
- **First Avenue Traffic Calming:** Designate crosswalks; heighten landscaping at key intersections; reduce lanes from four to three; create accessible sidewalk approaches; promote slower traffic speeds.



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1. Plan and elevation of proposed entry sign.
2. Intersection improvements along 1st Avenue.
3. Current conditions and proposed improvements to key intersections along 1st Avenue.
4. Existing Raccoon River Valley Trail and proposed improvements through Perry's Cultural District.
5. Existing and proposed enhancements of the Raccoon River Valley Trail north of Highway 141.
6. Typical trail section along Highway 141 (rural and urban).
7. Proposed way-finding signs for the Raccoon River Valley Trail.



7

# Schaller

*Trees Forever Facilitators: Barb Grabner-Kerns, Jeff Jensen*

*Landscape Architect: Joshua Shields*

*Intern: Jonathan Nelsen*

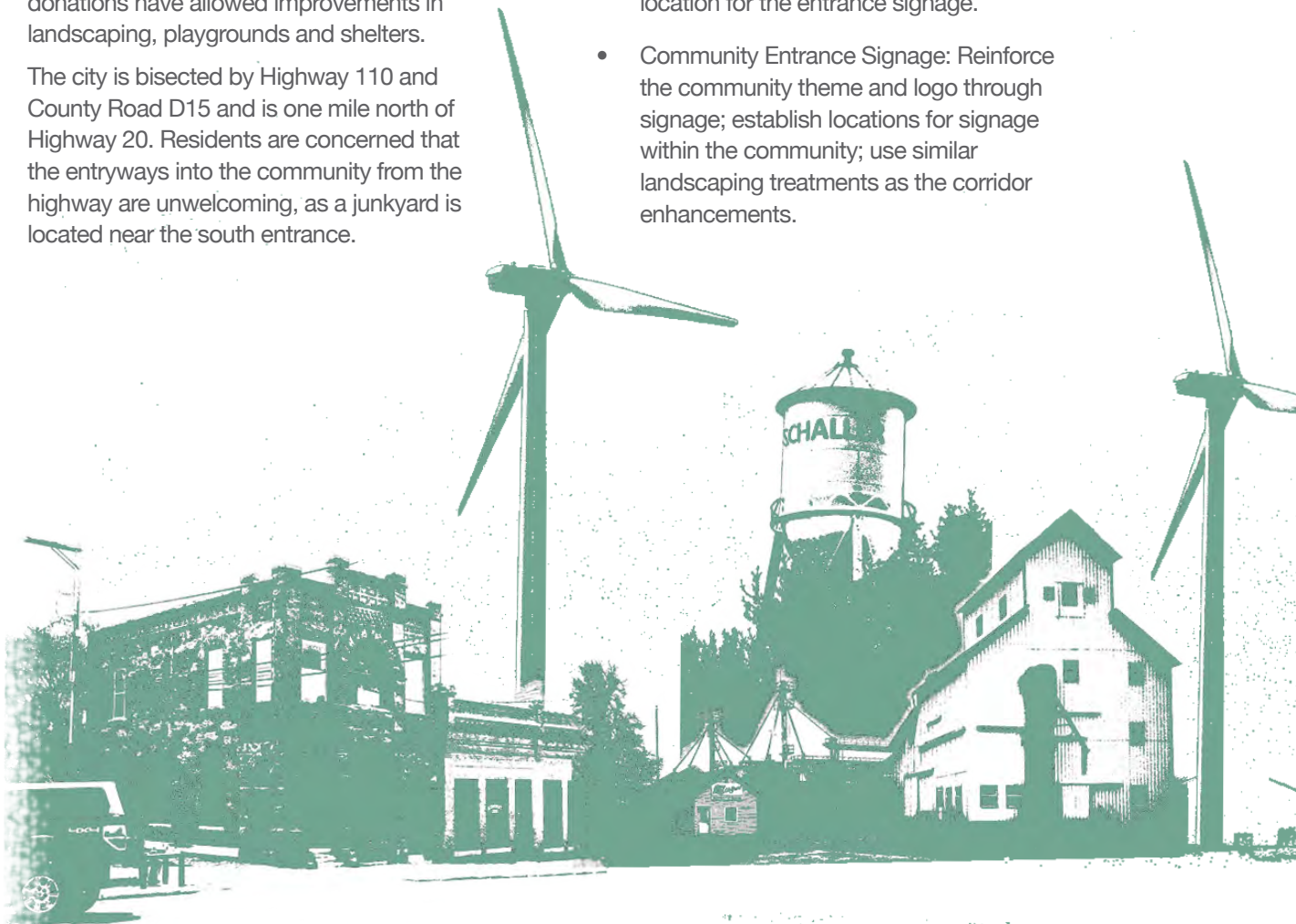
Schaller, a community of 772 located in the northwest corner of Sac County, is known as the “Popcorn Capital of the World.” Jolly Time and Bango popcorn packers were located in Schaller throughout the mid-twentieth century, but moved to other locations in the 1980s. For many years, Schaller has been dependent on the agriculture industry, surrounding farms and various businesses. One of the largest businesses in the community is Schaller Telephone and their telemarketing branch called Prism Marketing.

Schaller is proud of the green space the two local city parks provide. Several grants and donations have allowed improvements in landscaping, playgrounds and shelters.

The city is bisected by Highway 110 and County Road D15 and is one mile north of Highway 20. Residents are concerned that the entryways into the community from the highway are unwelcoming, as a junkyard is located near the south entrance.

Although they have already done some revitalization projects, Schaller residents thought that participating in community visioning would help create a comprehensive plan for beautification projects, a network of trails throughout the community and improved signage. Through the visioning process, the design team helped the steering committee expand on its initial priorities to develop the following concepts:

- **Highway 110 Corridor Enhancements:** Plant additional native perennials and grasses along the Highway 110 corridor; use landscaping as signage; establish a location for the entrance signage.
- **Community Entrance Signage:** Reinforce the community theme and logo through signage; establish locations for signage within the community; use similar landscaping treatments as the corridor enhancements.



- **Trails Master Plan:** Develop a communitywide trail network; widen sidewalks and construct trails on abandoned rail lines or paved roadways; connect community resources and attractions.
- **Regional Trail Connections:** Provide connections to regional attraction, landscapes, wildlife, cultural resources and nearby communities; develop a shared-shoulder bike lane along Highway 110 to the Iowa Great Lakes/Sauk Rail Trail; consider working with the DOT to create an underpass to the future Highway 20.
- **Downtown Streetscape Improvements:** Use existing street infrastructure; provide additional pedestrian amenities such as trash receptacles, benches, planters, decorative paving and perennial flower bed; add ADA pavers at lowered intersections.
- **Intersection Improvements:** Improve visibility at the Dundas and 2nd Street intersection with curb bump-outs; repaint pavement markings; relocate the stop sign and remove unnecessary convenience store signage at East 1st Street and Highway 110 to improve visibility.

*Steering Committee:*

*Betty Bailey*

*Greg Goodale*

*Katie Goodale*

*Marilyn Hantsbarger*

*Marcy Hellengren*

*Barb Jorgensen*

*April Lange*

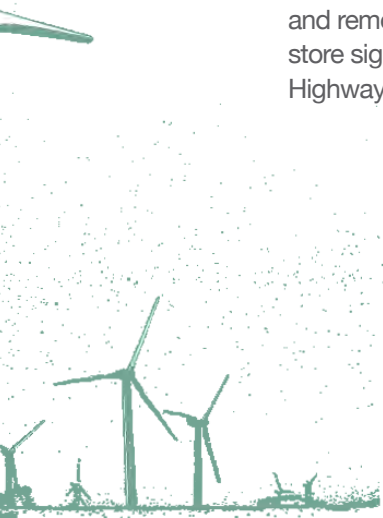
*Chris Moore*

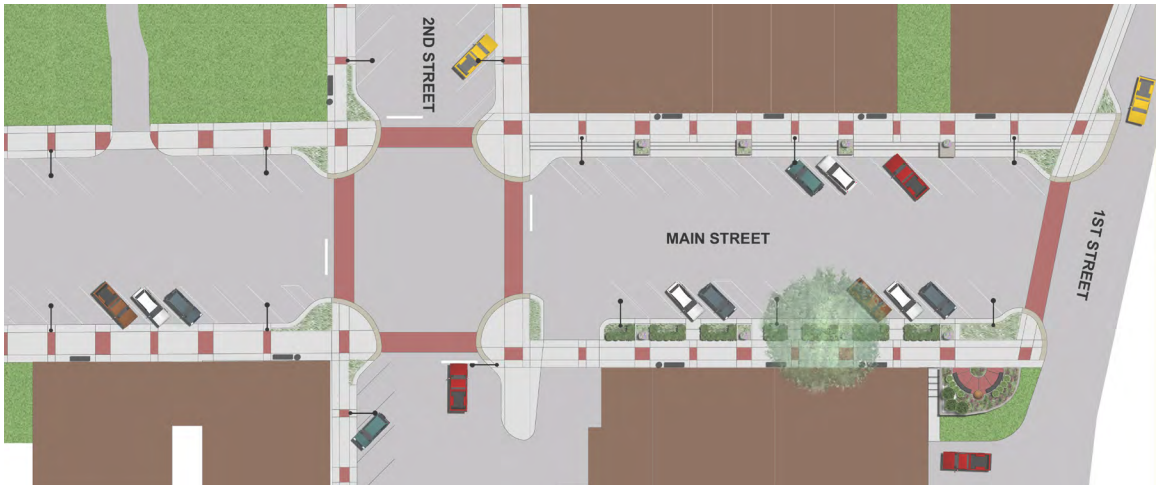
*Shirley Phillips*

*Renae Tokheim*

*Marcia Woodke*

*Janice Watson*





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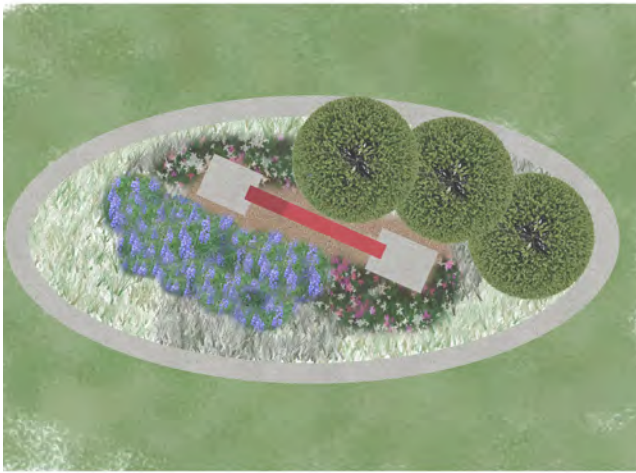
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1. Plan of proposed downtown streetscape improvements.
2. Concept for City Hall Plaza.
3. Current conditions and proposed recreation trail running along the abandoned railroad on the north edge of town.
4. Proposed entrance signage.
5. Entrance signage in plan.
6. Proposed toppers for way-finding signage throughout town.



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# Tabor

*Trees Forever Facilitator: Brad Riphagen*  
*Landscape Architect: David Stokes*  
*Intern: Eric Doll*

Tabor, with a population of just fewer than 1,000, is nestled in the rolling landscape of southwestern Iowa's Loess Hills. The town of Tabor believes its citizens personify the ideals of small-town living in their respect for hard work, spirit of volunteerism and the way they care for one another.

Tabor is the site of Fremont-Mills Schools, which serve several communities and encompass a large area with families and children of all age groups. It is important to the community that students are able to get to and from school safely.

Tabor's Main Street is fortunate to still have most storefronts full, unlike many small towns. Downtown Tabor boasts a wide variety of business including a grocery store, exercise facility, beauty salon, barbershop, family restaurant, two bars, a florist and drugstore. It is home to the Victorian Inn, a beautifully refurbished home that offers guest rooms at very reasonable rates. Tabor's Main Street is also Highway 275, which has the potential to attract new attention to community.

Tabor has a strong interest in living healthy and staying fit, which are not new priorities for the community. Creating good walking and biking trails for children and adults is important for the town.

Through the visioning process, Tabor hoped to spruce up and enhance the small-town charm on Main Street to attract visitors, create safe routes to school and establish a walking trail throughout the community. With the help of the design team, the following proposals were made:

- **Entry Way Signage:** Place signage on both the north and south sides of town; implement a symbol or thematic element; develop a historical theme in the signage design.
- **100% Walkability:** Provide safe routes to school; construct a sidewalk along East and Orange Streets; pave a separate path or bike lane along Jackson Boulevard; paint crosswalks; improve vehicular/pedestrian signage.
- **Recreational Opportunity—Tabor Manor:** Transform the five-acre maintained lawn to a restored prairie; develop a walking path as a recreational and educational amenity; add benches, butterfly/bird houses, and educational signage along the path; provide a raised-bed garden.



- Main Street Improvements: Adjust current angled parking to 30 degrees along Main Street; install curbed and vegetated bump-outs; decrease traffic speed; improve landscaping.
- Promoting Tabor’s History: Develop a self-guided tour for visitors; create custom historical pamphlets; create tour trail with a soldier brick sidewalk border throughout the town.
- Potential Attractions: Build a splash pad park for aquatic recreation, potentially located on Main Street; add pocket parks and green space in multiple locations on Main Street; integrate the mural and VWF Memorial on Elm Street, creating a united recreational space.

*Steering Committee:*

*Angie Alley*

*Samantha Blowers*

*Jeremy Christiansen*

*Daniel R. Davis*

*Denise Hammer*

*Christopher Herrick*

*Ted Hill*

*Martha Jackson*

*Mary Kesterson*

*Larissa Kierscht*

*Stephanie Lemonds*

*Karin Marr*

*Dolores Moles*

*Michelle Morriscal*

*Sheryl Roberts*

*Grant Schaaf*

*Preston Schaaf*

*Logan Wood*





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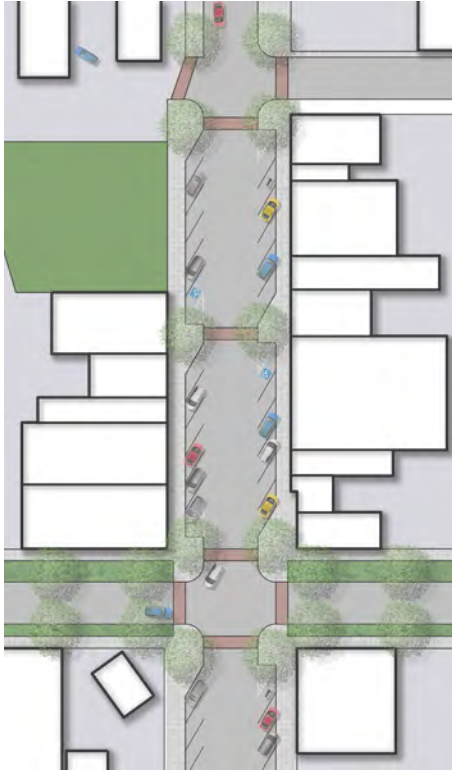
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1. *Different concepts for entry signage into Tabor.*
2. *Existing street conditions and proposed path for safe pedestrian circulation on Jackson Boulevard.*
3. *Bird's-eye perspective of proposed splash pad park.*
4. *Perspective of visitors on a self-guided tour of historic places in Tabor.*
5. *Lightpost with thematic design elements.*
6. *Plan rendering of Main Street improvements from Orange to New Street.*
7. *Bird's-eye perspective (looking north) on Main Street showing transportation enhancements.*
8. *Perspective north of Tabor Manor showing a recreational trail that connects to Center Street (looking east).*



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# Tripoli

*Trees Forever Facilitator: Meredith Borchardt*  
*Landscape Architects: Craig Ritland, Samantha Price*  
*Interns: Danny Pritchard, Shu (Selina) Liu*

Tripoli is a community of 1,303 residents located in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls metropolitan area. The community offers its residents a strong school system, local downtown businesses and a nature refuge in the Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area.

The Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area is a 2,855-acre public area located just outside the city limits of Tripoli. The wildlife area includes Sweet Marsh, Plum Creek and the Wapsipinicon River. Visitors or residents can escape to the serenity of the Sweet Marsh Wildlife Area to enjoy fishing, hunting and watching wildlife. Sweet Marsh is known as one of the best bird watching areas in Iowa.

Sweet Water Creek flows through the center of the city, crossing Iowa Highway 93, and continues to the Sweet Marsh area. The community prioritized improving the appearance of Sweet Water Creek, making it an asset to the community.

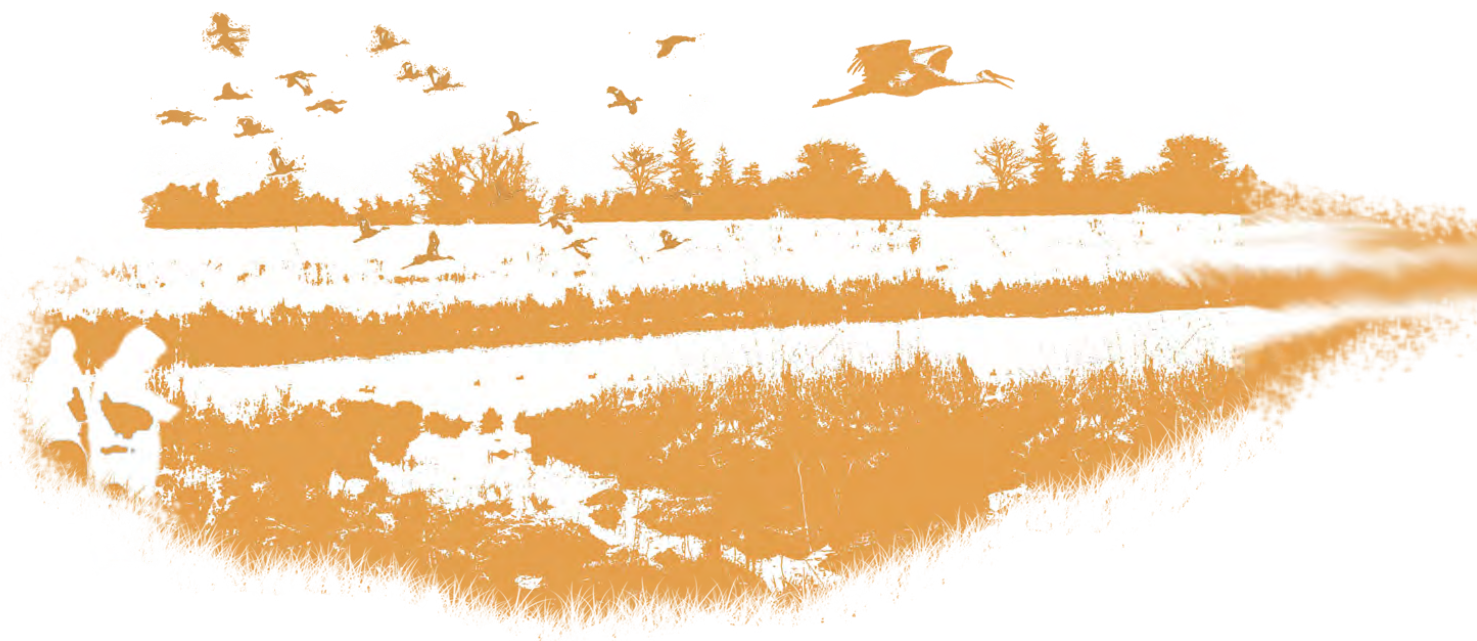
The community hopes to develop a bike/walking trail to run alongside the Sweet Water Creek into the Sweet Marsh. This trail will provide multi-seasonal recreation opportunities

for the Tripoli residents and surrounding community residents. As a starting point for the new trail, the city plans to convert an abandoned lot into a small park. Parks and outdoor recreation opportunities can benefit all ages of residents in Tripoli.

Residents in Tripoli have invested time and money into Main Street improvement. The downtown area has benefitted from repainted light poles, welcome banners and flower planters. The community hopes to continue improvements in the downtown area to reveal the small-town charm Tripoli has to offer.

Through the visioning process, more than 90 volunteers were committed to bettering Tripoli. The original goals of a bike/walking trail project, Sweet Water Creek maintenance and continuing Main Street improvements were used in guiding the visioning process. The design team developed the following proposals for Tripoli:

- Sweet Water Trail: Pave a recreational trail along the Sweet Water Creek starting at the community school and into the bird sanctuary in Sweet Marsh; loop the



trail back to town with a connection to County Road 165; direct the trail to the overlook structure proposed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources; provide a picnic area along the trail.

- Sweet Water Trailhead and Pocket Park: Create a trailhead where Main Street meets Sweet Water Creek; renovate Old Guppy's into a welcome center; develop a pocket park with plantings, a shelter and event space.
- Sweet Water Creek Enhancements: Restore the creek head to a more natural state; grade the bank into a gentler slope; route the creek to create a meandering look; plant native plants and flowers along the banks of the creek.
- Downtown Corridor Enhancements: Add creative window treatment in vacant buildings; develop a vacant lot, adjacent to the proposed welcome center, into an outdoor event space; add trees and planting pits.
- Highway 93 Corridor Enhancements: Pave a sidewalk running parallel to the north side of Highway 93 from Guppy's to Main and 7th Streets; repair or replace sidewalks on 3rd Street; provide safe walking routes

*Steering Committee:*

*Max Ambrose*

*Susan Cline*

*Julie Hennings*

*Kenny Hennings*

*Randy Kirchhoff*

*Rick Laures*

*Ron Lenth*

*Jay Ranard*

*Jean Ranard*

*Darrin Siefken*

*Stacey Snyder*



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1. Existing Highway 93 and proposed sidewalk leading to the relocated Guppy's convenience store and the bowling alley.
2. Existing access to Sweet Water Creek and a proposed pedestrian bridge to cross the creek at this location.
3. Current conditions at 2nd Street bridge and Sweet Water Creek, and proposed Sweet Water Trail.
4. Proposed building façade in Main Street Architecture Tradition.
5. Proposed pocket park event space in a currently vacant parcel downtown.
6. Sweet Water trailhead and pocket park concept plan.



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# Villisca

*Trees Forever Facilitator: Brad Riphagen*

*Landscape Architects: David Stokes*

*Intern: Eric Doll*

Villisca, a small rural community with a population of 1,252, is located in the hills of Montgomery County in southwest Iowa. Residents pride themselves on making Villisca a place to call home, a place to grow a business and a place with unique history.

Villisca has recently developed a “Self-guided History Tour” for residents and visitors. The tour focuses on the fascinating history of the town, which includes the 1912 unsolved ax murders, a celebrated military history commemorated in the city square, the site of a Pulitzer Prize winning photo and much more. The town is proud of its intriguing history and the tour puts the entire community on display.

The town square provides a recreational area for community members. The square contains a well-manicured city park, a play area, a bandstand, memorials to Villisca’s veterans and a gazebo.

Residents of Villisca can be seen walking through neighborhoods and along the Harris Harmony Walking Trail at almost any time of the day. Promoting healthy lifestyles is important to the community, whether it is walking to work or going for an evening jog.

An iconic pig sculpture welcomes Highway 71 travelers into Villisca. It was a project of the Future Farmers of America and agricultural department at the high school in the 1970s. Aside from this landmark, signage in Villisca is in poor and outdated condition. Business owners have said people often stop to get directions to major sites in Villisca.

Recently Villisca experienced high winds and hail that damaged trees and other plantings. The steering committee hopes to use these losses as an opportunity for improvement in landscaping around the community. Through the visioning process the steering committee focused on improving signage and creating a welcoming feel throughout the town. The design team developed the following proposals for Villisca:

- **Entry Signage Improvements:** Update existing signage and install new signage at the east entrance into town; enhance the visual and cultural identity by establishing a consistent materials palette.
- **Walking Trails—Greater Connections:** Connect the town to recreational amenities, Viking Lake State Park and Hacklebarney Woods County Park with a paved trail or bike lane; incorporate proper signage.
- **Walking Trails—Community Connections:** Provide new sidewalks to Harris Harmony Park on West First Street; develop trails to the proposed disc golf course; landscape trails with native plants and trees; provide trail amenities.

- East Side Enhancements: Improve accessibility to the swimming pool on East Third Street; make intersections universally accessible with curb renovation and wider sidewalks; build a Frisbee golf course adjacent to the football field and track.
- Storefront Revitalization: Update storefronts with simple improvements such as paint, plantings, or site furniture; add awnings; utilize window space of vacant stores; create a more inviting downtown.
- Sidewalks and Streetscape Improvements: Add vegetation and street trees to downtown area; improve and unify aesthetics with a thematic graphic or material; repair sidewalks.

*Steering Committee:*

*Paul Barker*

*Andy Crussell*

*Susan Enarson*

*Larry Figgins*

*BreeAnn Fisher*

*Rex Galloway*

*Lee Haidsiak*

*Chad James*

*Janice Lewis*

*Pat Means*

*Delbert Schroeder*

*Diane Shipley*

*Roxanna Sieber*

*Floyd Tabor*

*Sandy Wainwright*

*Randy Walter*

*Julie White*

*Darwin Williams*

*Julia Williams*

*Marvin White*





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1. *Proposed signage improvements for the various entrances into town.*
2. *Proposed disc golf course.*
3. *Existing and proposed concept for a new courtyard at the high school.*
4. *Section and plan graphic of streetscape water infiltration garden.*
5. *Photostitched panoramic photo showing store front improvements along the east side of South Third Avenue from East Fifth to East Third Streets.*
6. *Diagram showing the different layers of streetscape improvements.*
7. *Perspective showing sidewalk improvements at East 2nd Street and North 5th Avenue.*



# Naturalizing Iowa's Roadways



# Kirk Henderson: Roadside



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*Full or partial LRTF funding is available for items such as hydroseeders (1), ATV fire rigs (2), native seed and signage (3), and wetland deliniation training (4).*

Upon meeting Kirk Henderson, the last word that comes to one's mind is "bureaucrat." In fact, his personality is more in line with a nature-loving free spirit. But, according to Kirk, he has been a bureaucrat for 30 years.

"I am not a botanist or a natural resource manager. I think of myself as a roadside prairie bureaucrat," he said. "I say that with a sense of pride, because just like the witches in the Wizard of Oz, there are good bureaucrats too."

As a "roadside prairie bureaucrat," Kirk has been helping Iowa counties improve their road systems using native vegetation. Kirk has been the county integrated roadside vegetation (IRVM) coordinator for Iowa since 1991. In this role, he has promoted and supported the implementation of IRVM projects in counties throughout the state.

In 1989, the Iowa Legislature established the Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) program to assist Iowa counties in incorporating native vegetation into roadside planting. The county IRVM program is housed at the University of Northern Iowa at the Tallgrass Prairie Center, which Kirk had a hand in creating. The center was first established on 65 acres of campus and leased land as the Native Roadside Vegetation Center in 1999. In 2006, the name was changed to the Tallgrass Prairie Center to better reflect its mission.

According to Kirk, his job consisted of a variety of activities. The IRVM program provides technical assistance, training and education to county IRVM programs through conferences, workshops and educational materials. He has written many grants and given talks to various groups, ranging from county boards of supervisors to community volunteers.

"Visiting the counties and making presentations to county boards of supervisors all over the state was a real growth experience," Kirk said. "But that is a very key part of the job, representing the IRVM program to the policy makers within each county."



# Prairie Bureaucrat



*Kirk poses for a photo among an example of some of his handiwork.*

Kirk most enjoyed the day-in and day-out activities of the office, such as networking around the state; producing newsletters, brochures and articles; organizing the Roadside Conference each year; and hosting and participating in other meetings and workshops.

“The heart of the job and the part that means the most and was the most fun and will stick with me the longest was working with the counties and promoting and supporting IRVM around the state,” said Kirk. “I now have friends and know people—people I admire and respect—all over the state. That is a real blessing and makes it easy to remember I have been fortunate.”

Since 1998, the county IRVM program has received \$3,907,886 in grants from the Iowa

Department of Transportation’s enhancement program. Kirk considers this his most significant contribution.

“Every dime went for native seed planted in county road rights-of-way. Approximately 50 counties came to UNI each spring over the last 15 years to pick up their share of that year’s seed purchase,” he said. “Eighty-three counties received seed over the years.”

Kirk was born and raised in Waterloo. He has earned two bachelor’s degrees: one in English in 1975 from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and the second in biology in 1991 from UNI.

He currently lives in Waterloo with his wife. He has one daughter and two grandchildren, who live in Ankeny.

Kirk will retire at the end of this year but intends to keep busy. “I have a book to write. And I have grandchildren to visit and a kitchen to remodel. I’ll probably work harder after I retire,” he said. The book he plans to write is a historic novel documenting mostly the 1960s and will be largely autobiographical.

In addition to a book, Kirk will leave an important legacy with lowans through his work with IRVM. “It’s a great program based on strong principles that will keep it relevant and worthwhile for years to come,” he said.



# Steve Holland: Advocating

Travelers on Iowa's highways have something more to look at than mown grass thanks to Steve Holland, director of the Living Roadway Trust Fund (LRTF) at the Iowa Department of Transportation. They also have to worry less about snow drifting across the road during the winter months.

Steve has worked with LRTF since the Iowa Legislature created it in 1988. The program provides funding for integrated roadside vegetation management activities, including preservation, establishment and maintenance of native vegetation along Iowa's roadsides.

"I am very proud of our first project with LRTF, which planted native grasses and plants along Interstate 35. The first phase worked south from Story City along Interstate 35 and we worked alongside the DOT," Steve said. "This project was a huge success and a reassurance of the potential and progress the LRTF program could offer."

The success of the program is evident in the numbers. Since 1990, more than \$10 million has been awarded for research and demonstration projects; education and training programs; gateway landscaping; and roadside enhancement, maintenance and inventories.



*Steve displays educational materials in the back of his truck during a Linn County Roadside Management field day.*

Despite his longevity with the program, Steve describes his position with LRTF as something that just happened rather than a career that he sought.

Steve grew up in Collins, Iowa, and in the midst of farming, delivering mail and other jobs, earned a bachelor's degree in agronomy from Iowa State University in 1980. He farmed for four years, but got out of farming in 1984 because of the Midwest Farm Crisis.



*Native vegetation along I-35 offers visual interest in all seasons, and during the winter acts as a living snow fence that mitigates drifting snow. Photos courtesy of Iowa DOT.*

# for Natives with a Passion

After briefly working as an agronomist for Land O' Lakes in Garner, Steve joined the Iowa Department of Transportation as an agronomist. In this position, he trained sprayer and mower operators throughout the state on how to better manage weeds. Each year he conducted training sessions at six sites. Operation Wildflower had sponsored conservation farmer Carl Kurtz to present information on native vegetation during these training sessions, which is where Steve first became interested in native vegetation.

Three years later he took the position as LRTF director. Although the position was only supposed to last one to two years, he took it anyway because it looked appealing.

"My favorite aspect of managing the LRTF was being able to connect with other groups, communities and people. I am a passionate supporter of the use of more prairie and nature landscapes along roadways," Steve said. "We worked to get roadways closer to their natural state, so it is really rewarding when you can physically see all your work along the road."

Steve became directly involved with the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning and Projects programs through working with Trees Forever. "Community Visioning allowed us to get better designs for working with native plants and better opportunities to reach small towns," Steve said. "Working with Community Visioning was really rewarding because we saw our work get directly applied to communities."

Throughout his career, Steve looked out for the "little guy" or underdog community. He felt strongly about helping these communities, not because they submitted a beautiful application, but because they expressed a need and a desire for assistance.

"I like the town of George. It is a really small community that wanted to use some of the natives in their area. They were trying to do something with native plants around their area. It was a great effort by a few people."



*The community of George, Iowa, has made an effort to incorporate native vegetation into its roadside plantings.*

The enhancements to George began with one woman who wanted to plant natives along the community trail and who has kept up the momentum. Since participating in Community Visioning in 1996–97, George has implemented all the proposed projects.

Steve retired from the Iowa DOT in September of this year. However, he wants to continue advocating for naturalizing Iowa's roadsides. "I'm hoping to get involved in some way to convince the legislators into doing things better," he said. "Whatever I can do to keep promoting the natives."

When not advocating for native vegetation, Steve golfs and spends time with his family. "I have six children, and four of them live south of the Mason-Dixon Line, so during the winter my wife and I plan to go south to visit our children and their families," he said.



# People



# Interns



## **Eric Doll**

Born and raised in Des Moines, Eric came to Iowa State University to develop his drawing skills. He majored in landscape architecture because he loves the outdoors and everything plants have to offer. Upon receiving his bachelor's degree in landscape architecture, Eric is well equipped with knowledge about plants and desires to continue learning. Eric loves to sketch and watercolor, especially outdoor scenery. He enjoys spending his time outdoors with activities such as disc golf, mountain biking, climbing trees, gardening, and going on plant walks. Eric worked with the communities of Villisca and Tabor.



## **Annie Glawe**

Annie earned a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from Iowa State in 2012. During a semester away in northern California, Annie immersed herself in the new and exciting landscape of the coastal redwoods and realized her love of the Iowa landscape through extended separation. She grew up in Des Moines but frequently visited her grandparent's family home in northeast Iowa, which instilled a strong love of urban and rural Iowan paradigms. Annie has been thrilled to meet some of the great people of Iowa and help instill stewardship of the land through working with community visioning. She plans to continue traveling, drawing and experiencing what the world has to offer while developing her design palette and entering the professional realm.



## **Nicholas Gulick**

Nick is a fourth-year landscape architecture student at Iowa State University. He enjoys spending time outdoors on his family's acreage near Marion, Iowa. His hobbies include gardening, woodworking, fixing tractors and building motorcycles. This is Nick's second year working with community visioning. This spring he visited many of the participating communities while working with the ISU research staff during the assessment phase. He enjoyed a second summer with Loren Hoffman and Andrea Blaha at Hall and Hall Engineers Inc. Together they are assisting the communities of Dyersville and Center Point. In the spring 2013 Nick plans to study abroad and continue learning about landscapes that build and embrace the relationships between people and places.

## **Jonathan Nelson**

Jonathan earned a master's of landscape architecture from Iowa State University in May 2012. He also earned his bachelor's degree from ISU in community and regional planning. Jonathan was born in Muscatine, Iowa but spent most of his time growing up in Madison, Wisconsin, where he grew to appreciate the outdoors and cultural activities the city had to offer. In his free time, Jonathan enjoys traveling, attending concerts and being active outdoors. He was excited to have the opportunity to improve his knowledge of and experience in working with the public while assisting the communities of Schaller, Paullina and Perry through the visioning process. He previously held internships in both the landscape architecture and planning fields and used the skills he developed in these positions to enhance these communities.



## **Danny Pritchard**

Danny is in his fourth year in landscape architecture. His admiration for this field of study is rooted in an early interest in art, nature, and a desire to understand more thoroughly how people live in their environment. In his spare time, Danny enjoys drawing and painting in various media, gardening, camping, biking, reading sci-fi, drinking tea, gaming, working on his computer, browsing the Internet, and daydreaming. Over the course of the visioning program, he has gained invaluable skill using the Adobe Suite and the graphic layouts of his projects have improved greatly. The visioning internship taught Danny how to gather input and feedback from community members and incorporate it into design. He hopes to apply all these newly acquired skills to his future projects in this fall semester and beyond.



## **Paola Sepulveda**

Paola earned a bachelor's of landscape architecture from Iowa State University and is close to completing her master's degree. She is originally from southern California, but has spent nearly a decade living in the Midwest after leaving home for the University of Michigan, where she received a bachelor's degree in 2006. Her interest in landscape architecture and design was born of early experiences working in the field of urban and community planning. Her passion for public space led to her conception of an investigative study of guerilla drive-ins in two US cities—a project that has helped shape her understanding of how issues of community and culture intersect with the landscape. This summer Paola worked with Genus Landscape Architects and the communities of Chariton, Colo and Manning.





### **Nate Schlorholtz**

Nate is a fourth-year landscape architecture student with a minor in sustainability at Iowa State University. As an Iowa native, he has enjoyed helping to improve the lives of fellow Iowans through the visioning program for two years. When he is not in class or studying, Nate likes to stay physically active by playing sports, running and being outdoors. The areas of landscape architecture in which he is most interested include urban, community and sustainable design. Nate became involved with the Community Visioning Program because it provides him with the opportunity to positively impact people's lives while at the same time gain hands-on experience in the field of landscape architecture. He enjoyed working with the communities of Colo, Manning and Chariton this summer.



### **Shu (Selina) Liu**

Shu is a graduate student in Iowa State University's landscape architecture program. She was born in a provincial capital in China and earned a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture in Beijing, China. She likes landscape architecture because methods for improving the environment of living space has intrigued her since middle school. She was excited to be a part of the Community Visioning Program because during undergraduate study in Beijing, she seldom had the opportunity to work with people on a personal level. The assessment process provided clues about which aspects the residents really wanted landscape architects to help them improve. The experience is rewarding and educational. Shu spent summer 2012 working with the communities of Tripoli and Calmar.



# Practitioners

## Eric Becker

Eric has been actively developing and assisting with projects from schematic design and planning through construction documents and construction administration phases for just over four years at Jeffrey L. Bruce & Company. With Eric's educational experience, he has used his knowledge of 3-D graphics to illustrate designs for clients and consultants. His national and international travel has given him knowledge of designing for diversity in climate, culture and site specific characteristics involved in projects. Since joining JLB in June 2007, Eric has worked extensively in conceptual design and planning, irrigation and soils design, construction documentation, and construction administration of various community and landscape related projects.



## Andrea Blaha

Andrea has been an employee of Hall and Hall Engineers in Hiawatha just over a year, but has worked with Loren Hoffman as a mentor to the Visioning Program for the past two summers. Andrea earned a bachelor of landscape architecture from Iowa State University in 2009 and served as a visioning intern that summer. Her project experience includes master planning, streetscape design and creating marketing pieces for a variety of clients. Andrea continues to explore ways to expand her education in her profession as well as educate and empower all those around her. She plans to receive a certificate in graphic design and become an accredited LEED Green Associate this fall. Andrea stays active in her community by volunteering her efforts at various non-profit organizations.



## Brett Douglas

Brett is the founding principal of Genus Landscape Architects. His collaborations with renowned architects, landscape architects, designers and artists provide Genus with seasoned experience and a unique approach to each design challenge. Brett brings nearly 15 years of experience with a variety of project scales from citywide park planning, streetscape design and campus master plans to lake shore restoration and green roof installations. A recent president of the Iowa Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Brett remains active in the community as a member of the Friends of the Botanical Center Board, Terrace Hill Site Committee and the Heritage Carousel Board.





### **Loren Hoffman**

Loren is a project manager at Hall & Hall Engineers, Inc. and has more than 15 years experience in planning and design projects for public and private clients. He specializes in complex site and streetscape projects requiring expertise in project management for multi-disciplinary teams, multiple clients, and extensive cultural, historical, public art, and public participation components. Loren collaborates with design professionals, artists, government agencies, and non-profit neighborhood groups to design successful public spaces that reflect the diversity and cultural richness of their surroundings. He has a broad scope of site design, streetscape, and urban design projects across eastern Iowa. Loren is a LEED Accredited Professional in Neighborhood Design.



### **Dylan Jones**

Dylan earned a bachelor of landscape architecture from Iowa State University in May 2010. He first served as an intern for Community Visioning in 2007 and continued to be involved with the program in 2008 and 2010. In 2009, Dylan spent eight months working at Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates in Brooklyn, New York, where he honed his skill in model making and graphic representation. At the beginning of the year he moved to Des Moines to begin his professional career in landscape architecture at Genus Landscape Architects, where he continues to be involved with Community Visioning. At Genus, he has also been involved with projects of various scales, from contextual urban planning to detailed site design.



### **Samantha Price**

Samantha Price graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in landscape architecture in 2009. She has been involved in various aspects of the Community Visioning Program since graduation. Her favorite part of the Visioning Program is having the opportunity to meet such wonderful people and learning about different communities in Iowa. Sam worked with Craig Ritland in the communities of Tripoli and Calmar.

## **Craig Ritland**

Craig earned his degree in landscape architecture from Iowa State University in 1965 and established Craig Ritland Landscape Architects in 1970 in Waterloo. He is best known for his accomplishments in natural resource and cultural preservation of public lands. Craig was named a Fellow by the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2002. Some of his projects have included the restoration of cold-water streams, the Cedar Valley Lakes and Nature Trail projects, a master plan for George Wyth State Park, and downtown Waterloo River Loop projects. Craig has participated in the Community Visioning Program every year since 1996 and enjoys relating to the rural public and native Iowa landscapes of the communities he serves.



## **Josh Shields**

Josh first became involved with Community Visioning in 1999 when he was an intern for three communities. He worked for the Visioning Program until his graduation from Iowa State University with a bachelor of landscape architecture in 2002. After graduation, Josh moved to Philadelphia to pursue an internship with the Cultural Landscapes Program of the National Park Service. He returned in 2003 to work for HR Green Company, where he renewed his collaboration with visioning in the role of a consultant landscape architect. In August 2011, he joined Bolton and Menk, Inc., where he continues to collaborate with the Visioning Program. This year Josh worked in the communities of Paullina, Perry and Schaller.



## **Grant Thompson**

Grant joined Genus Landscape Architects in 2008 after earning bachelor's degrees in landscape architecture and horticulture. He has previous experience working with Community Visioning in Story City, Iowa. Professionally, Grant has worked on variety of project scales ranging from comprehensive planning for the Loess Hills, to parks and trails plans for communities in central Iowa. He has a continued interest in historic preservation and interpretation through digital media, resulting in the creation of audio tours for cultural amenities and attractions across Iowa. This summer Grant left Genus to attend Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, to pursue a graduate degree.





## **David Stokes**

David is a project landscape architect with 12 years of professional experience providing clients with urban design, landscape design, comprehensive master planning, integrated green infrastructure, parks, trails, and greenways planning/design and resource-based planning on projects of all sizes throughout the country. David also has professional experience in facilitating public input and stakeholder meetings, cultural/environmental assessments, biological assessment studies and other various GIS related analysis planning projects. Since joining Jeffrey L. Bruce & Company, David has worked extensively with clients on green roof and green infrastructure design, agronomic soils design, subdrainage and storm water management design, water resource management, construction documentation and construction administration for public and private sector clients.

# Trees Forever

## **Leslie Berckes**

Leslie comes to Trees Forever with a diverse background in environmental and conservation issues. She has worked on programs dedicated to reducing solid waste, improving energy efficiency and promoting sustainable building practices. At Trees Forever, Leslie serves as a field coordinator for the central Iowa region working with volunteers and organizations throughout the area. Leslie earned a master of arts in public policy, with an emphasis on environmental policy, and a bachelor of arts in Marketing from the University of Northern Iowa.



## **Meredith Borchardt**

Meredith Borchardt is a field coordinator working with volunteers in northeast Iowa through many different Trees Forever programs, and is a program manager for several community forestry programs. She and her husband and two children live outside of Clarksville. She graduated from Luther College with a double major of biology and religion. She later earned a master of science degree from Iowa State University in botany, doing a research project on the effects of mowing and fertilization on diversity in a new prairie reconstruction.



## **Barb Grabner-Kerns**

Barb is program manager for Trees Forever's Working Watersheds: Buffers and Beyond program in Iowa and is field coordinator for northwest Iowa. She has a bachelor's degree in zoology from Iowa State University and has worked as an environmental educator. Barb has also worked extensively with farmers on environmental and policy issues. Her favorite thing about her job is working with grassroots volunteers and seeing them make a difference in their communities and on their farms. "Seeing their enthusiasm and passion about projects is so exciting—and contagious!" She especially enjoys working with farmers, rural landowners and communities that are working to improve water quality by installing buffers and rain gardens.





### **Patty Petersen**

Patty has a bachelor's degree in horticulture from Iowa State University and has been with Trees Forever since 1991, coordinating tree planting events, training volunteers with tree selection, reviewing site plans and facilitating local efforts. Patty has extensive experience with media, especially TV and radio. Passionate about helping communities achieve their goals, Patty is always excited to travel throughout Iowa to see the results of the great projects supported by Alliant Energy, Black Hills Energy and the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning and Projects programs. Before joining Trees Forever, Patty worked as a horticulturist in eastern Iowa for Iowa State University Extension.



### **Dustin Hinrichs**

Dustin Hinrichs works in Trees Forever's main office in Marion, Iowa. His focus area is primarily Linn County and other areas of eastern Iowa. He has a master's degree in political science from Western Illinois University and a bachelor's degree in biology and environmental health from Iowa Wesleyan College. Dustin joined the community visioning team this year and worked with Patty Petersen facilitating in Center Point.



### **Jeff Jensen**

Jeff Jensen is Trees Forever's field coordinator for northwest Iowa and program manager for Trees Forever's water quality program, Working Watersheds: Buffers and Beyond. Jeff lives on his family's farm in northern Kossuth County near Fenton and has a passion for agriculture and alternative crops, particularly hazelnuts. Jeff's background also includes work with growers on a range of local foods issues such as food safety plans, value-added processing, marketing and business planning. Jeff joined the community visioning team this year and worked with Schaller and Paullina.

## Mark Pingenot

Mark has a bachelor of arts in biology and is a certified arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture. A dedicated field coordinator and educator, Mark recently led the development and implementation of the Vinton Shellsburg High School model outdoor classroom project. Mark coordinates the Stewards of the Beautiful Land program, and he enjoys supporting volunteers, and working with farmers and landowners. He is also a Community Tree Steward and has been certified in S130/S190 Wildland Firefighting. According to Mark, “I enjoy all aspects of restoration and management of woodlands, wetlands, prairies and savannas, and environmental education.” Mark lives with his wife, Carrie, and two children, outside of Vinton, Iowa.



## Brad Riphagen

Brad has a bachelor of arts in biology and a master of science in land resources with a focus on prairie restoration and soils. He has been a Trees Forever field coordinator since 1995 and worked in almost all the program areas, including community tree plantings, Community Visioning, and buffer/watershed work. In recent years he has been heavily involved in NeighborWoods in Des Moines, working with them to reach a goal of 100,000 trees. He has also taken a strong interest in reduction of storm water runoff, especially in urban areas, through the use of infiltration practices such as rain gardens and bioretention basins. Brad is energized by the interaction with volunteers around the state and especially in southwest Iowa. “The fact that people want to make where they live a better place and that we can provide some assistance in their efforts is very gratifying.”



## Shannon Ramsay

Shannon cofounded Trees Forever in 1989 as a volunteer; today she has more than 20 years of wonderful Trees Forever history. Whether working with staff, board, partners or volunteers, Shannon strives to create a structure that supports and sustains those involved. Currently the National Chair for the Alliance for Community Trees, Shannon has served on numerous national and local boards. Shannon’s undergraduate education is in creative writing and philosophy from the University of Mississippi, with graduate level work completed on management, fund-raising and nonprofit management. Shannon enjoys the outdoors, whether hiking, kayaking or gardening. She lives on 45 acres along the Wapsipinicon River in Jones County, Iowa.





### **Carole Teator**

Carole Teator is Trees Forever's program director and also manages the Iowa's Living Roadways Visioning, Projects and Trails programs for the organization. Her duties including include leading Trees Forever's nine field coordinators who serve as facilitators for the community visioning process. Carole has master's degrees in both English and community and regional planning from Iowa State University and has worked for Trees Forever for more than ten years.



# Iowa DOT

## **Stuart Anderson**

Director, Planning, Programming, and Modal Division, Iowa DOT



## **Steve Holland**

Roadside Coordinator, Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund, Iowa DOT



## **Mark Masteller**

Chief Landscape Architect, Iowa DOT



# Iowa State University



**Julia Badenhope**

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Visioning Program  
Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture



**Timothy Borich**

Director, Extension and Outreach Community  
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**Timothy Keller**

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# The Benefits of Natives Along Iowa's Roadways



# The Benefits of Natives

The first word that typically comes to mind at the mention of roadside vegetation is “beautification.” While it is true that native forbs and grasses add beauty to the roadside, they also have practical functions that are often overlooked. Native vegetation saves money, improves safety, provides habitat for wildlife, protects the environment and enhances our quality of life.

For these reasons, the use of native vegetation in roadside enhancements is a key component of the Iowa’s Living Roadways programs. During the planning process, visioning communities are encouraged to incorporate native forbs and grasses into the design of transportation systems in and around their communities. The Projects Program awards funds only to those applicants who use 100% native forbs and grasses and at least 50% native trees in their planting design.

The Iowa’s Living Roadways programs operate under the premise that roadways are an extension of the local landscape and should be maintained according to local needs and desires. Thinking about roads as part of the natural environment can strengthen their structural components. Poorly integrated natural processes can threaten the function and structural integrity of the road itself, leading to premature deterioration of the road’s infrastructure.<sup>1</sup>

Sustainable roadside management practices are particularly important in Iowa, which, at 114,384 miles, ranks 14th in the nation in number of roadway miles. According to the Iowa Department of Transportation, there are more public roads in Iowa than interstate miles in the entire 50 states; for every 1,000 people in Iowa, there are roughly 38 miles of road.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Berger R.L. 2005. *Integrated roadside vegetation management*. Washington (DC): Transportation Research Board. p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>Iowa Department of Transportation, “Transportation Facts,” [www.iowadot.gov/about/transfacts.htm](http://www.iowadot.gov/about/transfacts.htm).



*One of the economic benefits of roadside native vegetation is that less mowing is required to maintain it. In this photo, the Iowa DOT is conducting a controlled burn along I-35. Photo courtesy of the Iowa DOT.*

## Economic Benefits

In the current economic climate, cost effectiveness is a priority in both the public and private sectors. Mowing roadsides is costly in terms of labor and fuel, as well as the environment. Native plantings along roadsides have been shown to reduce the cost of maintaining the extensive road network. Because native vegetation does not require frequent mowing. Furthermore, since the native plant species are adapted to the region’s growing conditions, they don’t require the costly fertilizer or watering. Once established, and native species will outperform weedy invasive species, reducing the need for herbicide, saving both time and money. Because native species are deep-rooted and drought-tolerant, they help control erosion and runoff, potentially mitigating roadway damage.

Deep-rooted native species also benefit Iowa’s multi-billion dollar agricultural industry. In fact, Iowa would not have its rich black soil if it were not for the vast expanses of grasses and forbs that once covered the majority of Iowa for centuries. Their deep and fibrous root structure created a large profile of soil thick in nutrients and high in water holding capacity.

# Along Iowa's Roadways



*Living snowbreaks both improve driver safety by mitigating drifting and blowing and are cost effective.*

Native plants not only keep the soil in place, but also systematically replenish it with organic compost, which maintains healthy soil composition and avoids the need for heavy fertilizers and sprays, reducing the financial burden on agricultural producers and preserving the ecosystem.

Soil is alive with an abundance of microscopic organisms and nutrients that make crops grow and flourish. A healthy soil provides a home for nutrients, biotic material and natural pest deterrents. "In Iowa, where agriculture now dominates the landscape, providing native habitat for natural enemies may reduce pest control costs and increase pollinators which may improve yields."<sup>3</sup>

## Safety

Roadway safety is affected in many ways by native plantings. "Desirable vegetation can support safety goals by reducing headlight glare, reinforcing the road alignment, serving as crash barriers, protecting view planes and visibility, controlling snow drifts, and reducing wind speeds."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Varchola, J.M., and J.P. Dunn. 1999. Changes in ground beetle (*Coleoptera: Carabidae*) assemblages in farming systems bordered by complex of simple roadside vegetation. *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment* 73: 41–49.

<sup>4</sup>Forman, R.T.T., et al. 2003. *Road Ecology: Science and Solutions*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

Native plants can also serve as a living snow fence for roadways. The trees, shrubs and grasses are a windbreak directing the snow to drift along the tree line instead of on the highway. Once established, living snow fences are better for enhancing wildlife habitat, aesthetics, and long-term economic benefits than artificial snow breaks. The service life of a living snow fence is approximately 50 years, compared with the 25-year lifespan of artificial fences.<sup>5</sup>

Simply the variety in texture and movement and strong color impact of prairie grasses and wildflowers enhances safety. It is easy to become drowsy while driving, but if the view is excited by a diverse range of plants that are picturesque, blooming at different times, and changing into fall color, there is more to experience and think about along the road.



*While adding color and interest to the roadway, native vegetation improves safety by reducing wind speeds.*

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

# Environmental Benefits

“The ecological effects of roads extend into a zone far beyond the edge of the pavement, with impacts including habitat fragmentation, wildlife mortality, noise and chemical pollution, impacts on hydrologic cycles, water quality and erosion effects, and the potential creation of transportation corridors for noxious and invasive weeds.”<sup>6</sup>

Native vegetation is one way to combat the negative effects of roadways on the environment. As noted earlier, the root system of native grasses and forbs is deep, providing natural erosion control and preventing runoff.

Healthy roadside vegetation also contributes to cleaner air. Plants rely on carbon dioxide for their energy process of photosynthesis. Animals and humans rely on oxygen for energy. Plants emit oxygen as a by-product of photosynthesis and animals and humans emit carbon dioxide as a by-product of respiration, putting human beings into a continual mutually beneficial cycle with plants. The more existing plant material, the more oxygen enters into the atmosphere and the more carbon is sequestered, creating cleaner air with higher levels of oxygen.

With fresh water quality and availability issues on the rise, it is more important than ever to think about how water moves across the landscape. The majority of water used for drinking and irrigation comes from underground aquifers. These aquifers are filled with water that has infiltrated the top layers of the earth’s crust and filtered down into underground caves and caverns. Instead of continuing to allow water to filter down

<sup>6</sup>Steinfeld, David E., et al. 2007. *Roadside Revegetation: An Integrated Approach to Establishing Native Plants. Umatilla National Forest.* Vancouver, WA: Technology Deployment Program, Western Federal Lands Highway Division.



*Hollywood actress Ashley Judd sent this tweet on June 22, 2012, from the Iowa Speedway in Newton, Iowa.*

and fill the aquifers, human beings have increased the impermeable surface ratio of the landscape immensely.

Impermeable surfaces are not limited to cement, asphalt or roofs; typical turf lawns with high compaction have practically the same runoff ratio as concrete parking lots. Water from impermeable surfaces is generally piped to a nearby stream where the created high velocity erosion effects are costly. Native plants play an integral part in the hydrologic cycle by giving the soil a higher moisture holding capacity than the exotic grass species used for turf-like ground cover.

Finally, native vegetation provides habitat for wildlife, including the pollinators that are critical to plant survival. Hummingbirds, bats, and insects such as bees and butterflies all contribute to pollination.

## Quality of Life

All of the abovementioned advantages—economic, safety and environmental—of planting native vegetation along roadsides contribute to better quality of life for Iowans.

A diverse native planting contributes aesthetic qualities of a beautiful and vibrant landscape along what would otherwise be a featureless expanse of roadway. When people drive through Iowa, they appreciate





*Native prairie plants along Highway 20 create a beautiful view while providing a glimpse into Iowa's past.*

the beauty that the native roadsides have to offer, as evidenced by a recent tweet by Hollywood actress Ashley Judd: “Thank you, Iowa, for the beautiful roadside wildflowers. So appreciate that you do not over mow!”

Furthermore, native plants and wildflowers help preserve Iowa’s heritage. Before European settlement, 70% of Iowa consisted of prairie, with 60% grasses, 35% forbs and 5 percent shrubs. Currently only 7% of Iowa’s original landscape remains.<sup>7</sup> Establishing native planting along roadsides creates an extensive network of linkages to larger prairie conservation areas that connect Iowans with their past.

Naturalized roadsides can also be therapeutic, according to “attention restoration theory.” This theory, developed

<sup>7</sup>Iowa Association of Naturalists. 1998. Iowa Habitat Loss and Disappearing Wildlife (IAN-101), *Iowa Environmental Issues Series*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

by Rachel and Stephen Kaplan, projects that people can concentrate better after spending time in natural settings or viewing scenes of nature. Scientific study has separated forms of attention into two categories: “effortless attention” is attracted by subliminal stimuli, while “directed attention” is attracted by cognitive-control processes.

Prolonged tasks that require large amounts of directed attention, such as driving, can become extremely stressful and tiring.<sup>8</sup> By including small amounts of effortless attention towards native plantings along the roadside, fatigue and stress can be minimized. Combinations of color, branching patterns and vegetative shadows become “soft fascinations” which a person can reflect upon in effortless attention, helping to maintain a directed focus on driving.

<sup>8</sup>Kaplan, Rachel, and Stephen Kaplan. 1989. *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

## Conclusion

Many transportation departments across the United States have developed programs for native plantings along roadsides. Bonnie Harper-Lore, a retired Federal Highway Administration restoration ecologist, encourages the use of native plants for erosion control and landscaping while protecting existing natural habitats in the highway corridor: “We’ve maintained our roadsides since the thirties as though they were America’s front lawns,” she says. You could call it ‘Mower Mania.’”

Idaho also has a chilling idea for propagating natives along roadsides. Volunteers freeze wildflower seeds into ice cubes and throw the cubes into designated areas, the rationale being that the ice not only helps the gardeners hurl the seeds, but its moisture helps with germination.

The Iowa Department of Transportation is a strong proponent of native roadside plantings. In addition to its own roadside management programs, the Iowa DOT has sponsored the Iowa’s Living Roadways programs since 1996. Roadsides have become one of the few places to enjoy native wildflowers and grasses across the Iowa landscape. As more natives are established, planting compositions can be diversified to further improving the roadside’s form and function.



*This diagram illustrates how roadside native vegetation does much more than simply beautify the roadways.*





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## IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

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