A scenic view of a forested area. In the foreground, a rocky, light-colored path leads down towards a stream. A stone bridge crosses the stream in the middle ground. Several people are visible on the path and the bridge. The background is filled with dense green trees and foliage.

TRAILS FOR OHIOANS

A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

OHIO'S TRAIL INITIATIVE

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources is updating its Trails Plan to help guide the development and expansion of a statewide system of recreational trails throughout Ohio. The plan recognizes the increasing popularity of all types of trail-related activities and envisions a goal of providing an easily accessible trail opportunity within 10 minutes of all Ohioans.

The plan is intended to stimulate a coordinated and strategic approach for creating a system of recreational trails in Ohio by all levels of government and private trail groups and organizations. The ultimate vision of the plan is to link public lands, natural and scenic areas, and communities with a multi-modal trail system. The plan will also serve as a guide for allocating resources from the Clean Ohio Trails Fund (COTF) program, the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and other financial assistance programs that can be used for trail acquisition and development. All trails that are planned and developed in Ohio are part of the statewide trail vision. These include projects that many local governments are undertaking to develop local trail systems to provide recreation and alternate transportation opportunities. The intent of this plan is to emphasize major statewide and regional trails and work to incorporate local linkages into the statewide network.

The citizens of Ohio and the General Assembly recognize a growing interest in trails and the need to foster that interest with a system of trails. That commitment was especially evident in 2000 with support of the Clean Ohio Fund programs.

The groundwork was laid in 2000 with Governor Bob Taft's proposed Clean Ohio Fund, which included a \$25 million earmark for improving Ohio's system of recreational trails. The Ohio General Assembly voted by an overwhelming bipartisan majority to place this proposal before Ohio voters as State Issue 1 in November 2000. Issue 1 was passed and in July 2001 the legislature spelled out the administrative details of the Clean Ohio Fund's programs. The legislature noted that funding from the new Clean Ohio Trails program must be in "synchronization with the statewide trails plan."

Therefore, this updated Ohio Trails Plan was developed to serve as a guide for trail development in the state.

PURPOSE AND VISION

The statewide trail system will link to neighboring states, local and regional trail systems, and places of interest.

The system will be multi-modal, providing opportunities for all recreational trail users.

The system will provide many benefits, including improved quality of life, health and fitness opportunities, transportation, economic, and environmental benefits.

The system, when complete, will be accessible with a trail opportunity within 10 minutes of most Ohioans.

The system will represent a partnership of government agencies, trail user groups and organizations, businesses, community groups, and concerned citizens.

Trails are an important component of Ohio's outdoor recreation system. They come in various lengths, run through different environments and accommodate a multitude of outdoor activities from hiking and biking to snowmobiling and horseback riding. Trails are managed and maintained by a variety of groups – including all levels of government and numerous trail organizations and groups. Trails are typically found in all types of parks but are increasingly being planned and developed to link community resources and other places of interest. Trail participation is high in Ohio, with the most popular trail activities being hiking, walking and bicycling. However, activities like mountain biking, inline skating, and ATV riding are increasing in popularity, placing greater demands on trail providers to increase trail opportunities and reduce conflicts between trail users.

The Ohio Trails Plan was created to serve as a tool for improving existing trails in the state and to ensure smart planning of future trails. The plan identifies statewide issues impacting trails, recommends strategies for addressing these issues, and sets criteria for future recreational trails in the state. The plan serves as a comprehensive source of information on recreational trail participation in the state with suggestions to enhance these activities. Included is a dynamic inventory of major statewide, regional, and community trail systems that will form the basis for an interconnected statewide network of trails. The plan intends to stimulate and support a coordinated approach to creating this network. It will serve as a resource for trail developers, builders, managers and advocates.

Public participation was crucial in developing the Ohio Trails Plan. Public comment was solicited through surveys mailed to Ohio households, meetings with the public as well as interest groups, and at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources web site – ohiodnr.com.

The Ohio State Trails Plan is a fluid document, changing with time as new trails are developed and additional opportunities become available.

BENEFITS OF TRAILS

“Trails have multiple values and their benefits reach far beyond recreation. Trails can enrich the quality of life for individuals, make communities more livable, and protect, nurture, and showcase America’s grandeur by traversing areas of natural beauty, distinctive geography, historic significance, and ecological diversity. Trails are important for the nations’ health, economy, resource protection and education.”

– The National Park Service report “Trails for All Americans”

Health/Fitness/Wellness

Promoting trails promotes active living. Recent studies and reports document the obesity epidemic in America and increased sedentary lifestyles of Americans. As a result, it is becoming increasingly popular for trail advocates and the health community to develop partnerships and innovative approaches to combat this epidemic. Trails, especially close-to-home systems, provide opportunities to integrate physical activity into daily living by offering settings to walk, run, in-line skate and bike during leisure time or for commuting.

Transportation

Trails are viable transportation alternatives, linking people and places within communities and providing access to destinations, including work, school, and commerce. Trail systems should be integrated into transportation and land use plans, especially in urban and suburban areas.

Economic

Trails can contribute to Ohio’s economy in many ways, but particularly by increasing tourist opportunities. Studies show property values near trails often increase. In addition, trail users support businesses near trails, including lodging, food, supplies and equipment rentals.

Environmental

Trails often are built along greenways – linear corridors of open space managed for conservation and/or recreation – providing protected islands of wildlife habitat. Trail corridors also can protect river systems and agricultural lands by providing a buffer and conserving soils. Trails in riparian corridors with significant vegetation and natural features can filter pollutants, stabilize stream banks, and provide food for wildlife. Native plants and grasses often are found along trails associated with railroad rights-of-way. Trails also provide opportunities for interpretation where users can learn about natural history.

Civic Image

Trails and other quality recreation resources can attract new residents and businesses to an area. A recent survey co-sponsored by the National Association of Homebuilders and the National Association of Realtors found that trails come in second only to highway access when those surveyed were asked about the importance of community amenities.

OHIO TRAIL HISTORY

Trails played a critical role in Ohio's heritage and development. Before westward expansion, tribes of Native Americans had established well-defined networks of footpaths and trails as hunting and transportation routes. As the United States expanded westward, pioneers and explorers began to use and develop many of these migration routes as components of our early road systems. Corridors in Ohio like the National Road, the Ohio & Erie and Miami & Erie canals, and railroads were subsequently developed and used by settlers as key transportation routes to promote economic development. Today, many of these original corridors are currently being used or have the potential to form a statewide system of recreational trails and greenways.

The timelines that follow present some of the major historical trail related events that have occurred in the United States and in Ohio.

National Trail Milestone Events

- 1962: Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission (ORRRC) reports are released recognizing the importance of close-to-home recreational opportunities and simple pleasures of walking and bicycling. Walking for pleasure was found to be the nation's most popular outdoor recreation activity.
- 1966: U.S. Department of the Interior releases the "Trails for America" booklet. The department's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation found that walking, hiking and bicycling were activities within the economic reach of all citizens and recommended a nationwide system of trails, including trail networks in metropolitan areas.
- 1968: National Trails System Act (PL 90-543) passes. This landmark legislation developed a process to create a network of national scenic and historic trails. It also included a mandate to study the feasibility of the North Country National Scenic Trails as a component of the National Trails System.
- 1980: North Country National Scenic Trail is designated (PL-96-199). This legislation added the scenic trail to the National Trails System. The trail stretches from New York to North Dakota with more than 1,000 miles located in Ohio.
- 1982: The Surface Transportation Act of 1982 is passed. This legislation allowed federal highway funds to be used by the states for transportation related bikeways. This legislation resulted in the construction of more than 50 miles of bike paths and lanes in Ohio prior to the passage of ISTEA.
- 1983: Congress amends National Trails System Act. Recognizing that liberalized abandonment procedures would result in increased loss of railroad corridors for present and future use, Section 8(d) was added to the National Trails System Act. Section 8(d) provides that when a public agency or trail group is willing to assume financial, legal and managerial responsibility for interim trail use, the Interstate Commerce Commission "shall impose such terms and conditions as a requirement of any transfer or conveyance for interim use in a manner consistent with this chapter."
- 1985: Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC) is established. A national nonprofit organization, the RTC works with public agencies and trail groups to enrich America's communities and countryside by creating a nationwide network of public trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors. Ohio is fortunate to have a local RTC chapter.

- 1986: President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors report is released. The commission recommends the creation of “greenways to provide people with access to open spaces close to where they live, and to link together the rural and urban spaces in the American landscape.”
- 1988: The National Park Service (NPS) establishes the Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program. The park service’s staff works with community groups and government agencies to conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways.
- 1990: The NPS releases the “Trails for All Americans” report, which proposes the creation of a nationwide, interconnected trail system within easy access of most Americans. The goal was to create a trail opportunity within 15 minutes of all Americans.
- 1990: U.S. Supreme Court upholds Section 8(d). In *Preseault v. ICC* adjacent landowners challenge the constitutionality of Section 8(d), alleging that it results in a taking of their property without just compensation and violates the Commerce Clause. The Supreme Court holds that Section 8(d) does not constitute a taking because relief is available under the Tucker Act, which allows landowners with a reversionary interest to sue the United States in U.S. Court of Federal Claims for compensation.
- 1991: Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (PL102-240) passes. Congress initiated a new era in transportation policy with the passage of ISETA, and particularly with a landmark provision, Transportation Enhancements, that established a major funding source for rail-trails and other types of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The act also established the National Recreation Trails Fund to assist states in developing their trail systems.
- 1998: Congress passes Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (PL 105-178). Commonly referred to as TEA-21, this legislation continued the many programs authorized in the act that benefited trails. TEA-21 also reauthorized the Recreational Trails Program (formerly the

National Recreation Trails Fund) at significantly higher funding levels.

Trail Milestone Events In Ohio

- 1959: Buckeye Trail Association founded. The Buckeye Trail Association is a non-profit volunteer organization that supports and maintains the Buckeye Trail, nearly 1300 miles of trail that now encircles the state of Ohio.
- 1972: Amended Substitute Senate Bill 247 passes, giving the Director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) authority to “plan and administer a statewide system of trails...” and “prepare a comprehensive plan for the development of a statewide trail system...”
- 1975: Ohio Trails, a state trails plan, is published. The Plan is developed with the assistance of an ad hoc advisory planning committee and various agencies, clubs, and trail users. The first Ohio trails plan identifies trail resource needs and roles and responsibilities for meeting those needs.
- 1979: ODNR acquires 44+ miles of former Penn Central railroad. Using a combination of federal and state funds, ODNR acquired and eventually developed the Little Miami State Park, one of Ohio’s premier rail-trails.
- 1986: Recreational trail activity is recognized as a major trend in outdoor participation in Ohio, according to the 1986 Ohio Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and the Governor’s Commission on Ohioans Outdoors.
- 1989: Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Coalition is established to work on the potential designation and creation of the Ohio & Erie Canal Heritage Corridor.
- 1989: State owned canal land responsibilities are transferred to ODNR from the Ohio Department of Administrative Services. ODNR is responsible for managing Ohio’s remaining canal lands associated with the Ohio & Erie Canal and the Miami & Erie Canal. About 20 percent of the original lands are still

- 1991: Ohio to Erie Trail Planning Committee convenes. A diverse planning committee comprised of government officials and trail advocates meets to plan a cross state trail that would connect the major urban centers of Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati.
- 1993: The Ohio Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan recognizes trails and greenways as a statewide priority.
- 1995: The Ohio Chapter of the Rails to Trails Conservancy publishes “The Discover Ohio Trails System, Ohio Rail-Trail Action Plan.” This plan provides recommendations to expand Ohio’s system of rail trails.
- 1996: ODNR establishes the State Recreational Trail Advisory Board to assist in the administration of the National Recreation Trails Fund. The 12-member board is comprised of trail users and agency representatives to assist ODNR establish funding criteria and policies for the administration of the trails fund. The application deadline for the first round of funding is February 1, 1997.
- 1996: The Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor is established (P.L. 104-333). The corridor is an area that stretches approximately 110 miles from the Cleveland lakefront to New Philadelphia in Tuscarawas County. The corridor features numerous natural, scenic and cultural attractions including the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The Ohio & Erie Canal Association is formed to oversee its development.
- 1997: ODNR announces the first round of successful applicants under the National Recreational Trails Fund. The first dedicated grant program for trails in Ohio, a total of 18 agencies/organizations receive over \$730,000 in trails fund assistance.
- 1998: ODNR’s Strategic Plan for Recreation Opportunities identifies recreational corridors and greenways as a priority for meeting Ohioans recreation needs.
- 1998-99: Ohio Greenways Roundtable is convened. In partnership with the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, the roundtable is comprised of various governmental officials, trail and greenway advocates and produces a “Blueprint for Action,” a strategic plan to gather resource and funding information related to greenway development.
- 2000: Ohio voters approve Issue 1, a \$400 million environmental bond issue. Governor Bob Taft proposed the Clean Ohio Fund programs, including \$25 million earmarked for recreational trails, in his State of the State address. ODNR is charged with administering the \$25 million Clean Ohio Trails Fund, one of the most significant dedicated state trail funding programs in the country.
- 2001: ODNR begins its statewide trail planning initiative. Amended Substitute House Bill 3 mandates that projects funded with Clean Ohio Trail Fund grants be in synchronization with a statewide trail plan.
- 2002: ODNR initiates the Discover Ohio Water Trails planning process. The plan will help identify existing and needed areas of additional access to Ohio rivers and streams.
- 2002: ODNR announces the first round of Clean Ohio Trail Fund grants. A total of 24 communities receive \$6.25 million for trail acquisition and construction projects.
- 2003: The Ohio Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan again recognizes trails and greenways as a statewide priority.
- 2004: ODNR convenes the Canal Lands Real Estate Review Team. The review team assists ODNR in developing policies and procedures regarding the management, stewardship, and disposition of state-owned canal lands.
- 2005: The Ohio Statewide Trails Plan is published. The plan is a guide for improving trail opportunities in Ohio and for guiding the allocation of grant programs that are available for trail and greenway development.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE OHIO TRAILS PLAN

Public participation was key to developing the Ohio Trails Plan. To make effective decisions about trail planning and management, a contemporary understanding of trends in trail participation and the attitudes is needed. To gain this understanding, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources sought public input throughout the development of the trails plan. That participation included the creation of small ad hoc planning committee, as well as the circulation of a questionnaire to Ohio households, a survey of trail users (see section on trail activities and participation), public meetings and planning sessions with special interest groups.

The ad hoc planning committee included representatives from the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy, Ohio Greenways/Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, the National Park Service's Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, the Ohio Department of Transportation and ODNR. The committee met early in the planning process to create objectives, develop the format for public input, and provide assistance in the development of a trails participation questionnaire. The ad hoc committee also was instrumental in identifying statewide trail issues and formulating the management recommendations and strategies for resolving the issues presented in the plan.

In late spring and early summer of 2001, a series of public meetings were held at five sites in Ohio to generate citizen input on a statewide system of trails. Two sessions were held at each meeting site, one in the early afternoon and one in the evening, for a total of ten separate sessions. The regional meetings were held in Westerville (Central Ohio), Bowling Green (Northwest Ohio), Athens (Southeast Ohio), Yellow Springs (Southwest Ohio), and Cuyahoga Heights (Northeast Ohio).

The primary objectives of the meetings were to gather information on existing, planned and potential trails, to identify issues and recommendations for developing a statewide trails system, and to identify criteria for administering trail related financial assistance programs. Approximately 500 representatives of trail user groups, public agencies, planners and private citizens attended the planning sessions.

Additional citizen input was gathered via ohiodnr.com. ODNR posted an initial draft of the Ohio Trails Plan on its web site in January 2002 for public review. Feedback was encouraged on: (1) the maps of existing, planned and proposed trails in the state; (2) the results of the 2001 statewide trails participation survey; and (3) the identification of strategic issues affecting the provision of trails and the development of a statewide trails network.

A revised draft was again posted on the ODNR website in late summer of 2004. An outreach program to solicit comments involved mailings to all 2001 public meeting participants, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), trail organizations, and user groups. The draft Plan's availability was also announced through ODNR's Conservation E-link newsletter and the Ohio Park and Recreation Association's (OPRA) e-connection list serve. Comments were received from nearly eighty trail users, trail advocates, and agency representatives.

Two special planning sessions with motorized trail interest groups and public land managers of off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails were also held to garner additional input. The goal of these meetings was to brainstorm on improving motorized trail opportunities. The recommendations and input received in these meetings has been integrated into the plan.

CHAPTER 2

THE STATE OF TRAILS IN OHIO

MAJOR FINDINGS

Many of Ohio's trails are **not continuous, connected, or easily accessible**. To establish a viable statewide trails system, planned and existing trails should link to other trails as well as natural, scenic, and community resources.

The benefits of trails **must be better promoted** to decision makers who can assist in enhancing Ohio's system of trails.

Better efforts must be made to secure and utilize **linear corridors**, such as abandoned railroads, canal lands and other rights-of-way, that could be used for trails before they are lost to development.

Trail managers need to **work cooperatively** with trail users to identify and tackle user conflicts, thereby enhancing trail opportunities for all users.

Proper management and **maintenance is essential** to ensure that trail experiences are maximized. Adequately maintaining Ohio's trails will be challenging as use increases, user expectations grow, and budgets tighten.

Trail users would like to see **more trails** available to them. The real or perceived lack of trails can be influenced by many factors, including poor geographic distribution of existing trails, poor advertisement of trails, limited public lands, lack of planning, and inadequate funding. Developing additional trails must be combined with more effective management of existing trails to maximize user needs and expectations.

Opportunities for **trails on private lands** and adjacent to private lands have not been maximized due to concerns about liability, privacy, litter, vandalism, theft and other real and/or perceived problems.

Limited public land bases in Ohio make partnerships with private landowners imperative if long distance trails are to be developed and connections to other trails systems are made.

Trail opportunities for **human powered transportation alternatives**, such as bicycling, in-line skating, or walking, are limited in Ohio despite the documented benefits of such alternatives. Trail planning should be better coordinated with transportation and community development planners to utilize these transportation alternatives.

Trail experiences can be improved by providing **information on trail systems** and opportunities and educating trail users on trail etiquette and ethics. Making good information accessible to people will ensure potential and existing trail users are aware of the resources available.

Intergovernmental cooperation and partnerships can be critical in the planning, funding, development and management of trails. **Partnering** provides a means to address mutual concerns and enable all involved to achieve something that might not be accomplished alone.

Adequate **support facilities**, such as parking, signage, and restrooms are needed for trail systems to maximize recreation and transportation opportunities.

Funding for all phases of trail development is inadequate and the administration of existing grant programs should be improved.

CHAPTER 3

TRAIL PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVITIES

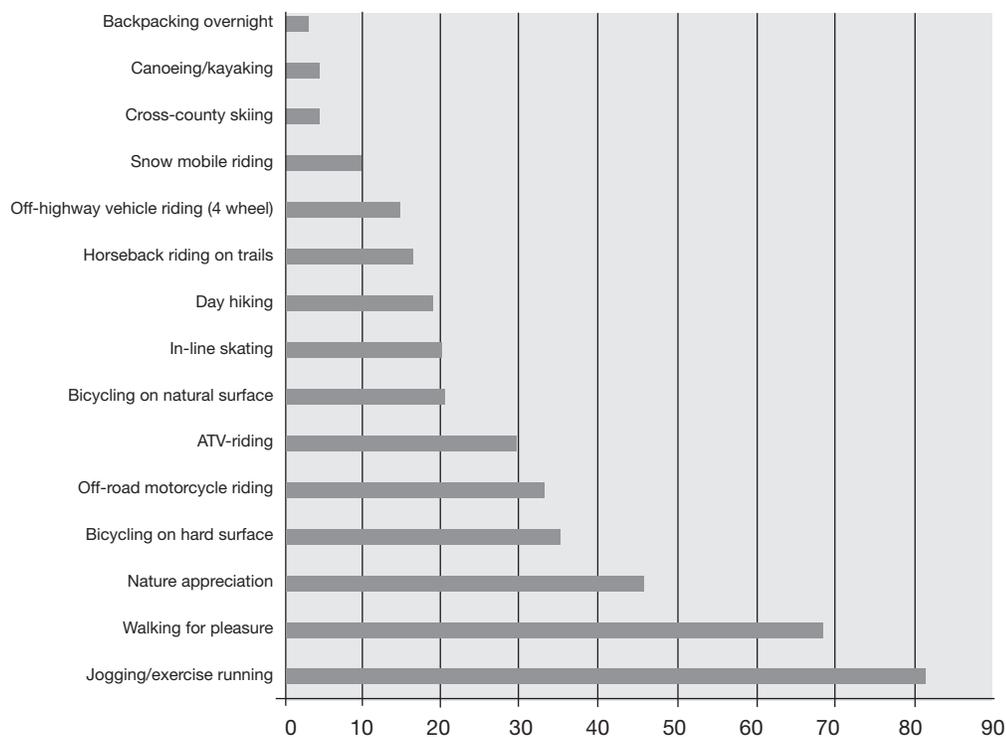
SURVEY OF OHIO HOUSEHOLDS

Perhaps the most compelling information about trails in Ohio was gathered from a sample of Ohioans asked during the summer of 2001 to complete a survey about trail opportunities. The 2001 Ohio Trails Participation Survey was administered to a sample of 2,000 randomly selected Ohio households to assess participation rates and attitudes towards trail activities. Ohioans were asked about their participation in 15 trail activities during the last year, barriers they felt kept them from participating, and their satisfaction with trail experiences, among other questions.

A systematic random sample of Ohio residents was drawn from lists of licensed drivers maintained by the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Motor Vehicles. An initial mailing was administered in late June 2001 and a follow-up to non-respondents approximately three weeks later. A total of 296 of the original addresses were eliminated from the sample because they were returned by the Post Office as non-deliverable. A total of 440 useable questionnaires were returned from the two mailings for a 26 percent response rate. Therefore, caution should be exercised in applying this data to a statewide level. The most significant findings of this survey are presented follow.

HOW ARE OHIOANS USING OUR TRAILS?

Figure 3.1 – Average Number of Household Activity Occasions in Trail Activities, 2001



HOW ARE OHIOANS USING OUR TRAILS?

Table 3.1 Household Participation in Trail Activities, Presented in Rank Order from the Most Popular to the Least Popular

Trail Activity	Percentage of Households Participating	Trail Activity	Average Number of Household Activity Occasions
Walking for pleasure	73.4	Jogging/exercise running	81.7
Nature appreciation	44.3	Walking for pleasure	68.4
Bicycling on hard surface	44.1	Nature appreciation	45.9
Day hiking	42.9	Bicycling on hard surface	35.3
Jogging/exercise running	24.8	Off-road motorcycle riding	33.3
Bicycling on natural surface	18.9	ATV-riding	29.7
In-line skating	18.8	Bicycling on natural surface	20.5
Canoeing/kayaking	18.4	In-line skating	19.9
Horseback riding on trails	8.9	Day hiking	19.3
Backpacking overnight	7.0	Horseback riding on trails	16.5
ATV-riding	6.4	Off-highway vehicle riding (4 wheel)	14.9
Off-highway vehicle riding (4 wheel)	5.9	Snowmobile riding	10.1
Cross-country skiing	5.0	Cross-country skiing	4.6
Off-road motorcycle riding	3.4	Canoeing/kayaking	4.5
Snowmobile riding	2.7	Backpacking overnight	3.3

Survey results reveal that the most popular trail activities, in terms of the percentage of households that participate, were walking for pleasure, nature appreciation, bicycling on hard surfaces, day hiking, and jogging or exercise running. The most popular activities by frequency were jogging/exercise running, walking for pleasure, nature appreciation and bicycling on hard surfaces. It should be noted that all motorized trail activities are characterized by a low percentage of household participation but have relatively high frequencies of participation by those households that do participate. The data in Table 3.1 imply that recreation providers should develop trail opportunities that serve the traditional trail activities. Many types of trails provide opportunities for more than one activity (multi-use) and these types of facilities should be given strong consideration in development decisions.

HOW SATISFIED ARE TRAIL USERS WITH OHIO'S TRAILS?

Table 3.2 Satisfaction with Trail Experience in Ohio, 2001, Presented in Rank Order in Percentages with the Mean

	Trail Activity	Completely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Completely Satisfied	Mean
1	Nature appreciation	0.6	1.5	13.3	47.7	36.8	3.2
2	Walking for pleasure	1.0	1.6	8.7	50.6	38.1	3.2
3	Day hiking	0.9	1.9	16.2	54.3	26.7	3.0
4	Bicycling on hard surfaces	1.4	4.7	23.8	42.5	27.6	2.9
5	Jogging/exercise running	1.6	2.3	31.3	45.3	19.5	2.8
6	Backpacking	3.4	2.3	35.6	41.4	17.2	2.7
7	Canoeing/kayaking	4.0	3.0	38.4	34.3	20.2	2.6
8	In-line skating	3.6	5.5	38.1	33.6	19.1	2.6
9	Bicycling on natural surfaces	2.8	7.4	32.4	41.7	15.7	2.6
10	Horseback riding on trails	5.0	2.7	49.3	24.1	18.8	2.5
11	All-terrain vehicle (ATV) riding	7.7	6.3	56.3	21.8	7.8	2.2
12	Cross-country skiing	7.7	4.6	56.9	21.5	9.2	2.2
13	Off-highway vehicle (4 wheel) riding	9.8	6.6	55.7	21.3	6.6	2.1
14	Snowmobile riding	9.0	6.0	60.4	20.8	3.8	2.0
15	Off-highway motorcycle riding	10.2	2.0	71.4	14.3	2.0	1.9

Ohio's recreational trails scored well in user satisfaction, but certainly have room for improvement. Walking for pleasure, nature appreciation, day hiking, and bicycling on hard surface experiences scored well. Recreation resource managers commonly provide these traditional trail activities. Off-road motorcycling, snowmobiling, off-highway vehicle (4 wheel) riding, and ATV riding received lower scores. These motorized activities have few designated riding areas in Ohio.

WHAT'S KEEPING PEOPLE FROM USING OHIO'S TRAILS?

Table 3.3 Barriers to Greater Participation in Trail Activities, 2001, Presented in Percentages

	Type of Barrier	Percent Indicating Barrier Important
1	Lack time	43.9
2	Lack information about trails	38.2
3	Trails are too far away	32.7
4	There are not enough trails	29.5
5	Family responsibilities	26.8
6	Poor health/age	15.0
7	Friends do not participate	10.9
8	Lack skills to participate	8.2
9	Lack of support facilities	7.5
10	Trails are too crowded	6.6
11	Trails are in poor condition	5.5
12	Trails are unsafe	5.0
13	Trails are not accessible	4.5
14	Participation costs too much	2.7
15	Lack transportation	1.8

The most common barriers to better trails participation included: lack of time, lack of information about trails, lack of trails close to home and overall lack of trails. These data suggest that recreation providers should continue to develop trails, especially close to home, and improve the dissemination of information about existing trail opportunities.

WHY ARE PEOPLE USING OHIO'S TRAILS?

Table 3.4 Motivational Factors for Participating in Trail Activities, 2001, Presented in Rank Order with the Mean

	Motivational Factor	Not Important	Of Little Importance	Important	Very Important	Mean
1	To have fun/good time	5.2	3.8	33.8	57.2	2.4
2	To exercise	2.7	6.3	36.0	55.0	2.4
3	To relax	3.3	4.8	40.3	51.5	2.4
4	To observe and enjoy nature	3.3	4.9	38.9	52.8	2.4
5	To be with friends/family	6.2	5.5	43.8	44.5	2.3
6	To have a safe trail experience	12.4	9.3	33.4	44.9	2.1
7	To escape busy schedules	14.7	15.4	39.2	30.7	1.9
8	To see new places	13.5	13.1	42.9	30.5	1.9
9	To challenge myself	22.9	19.6	37.5	20.0	1.5
10	To educate myself	27.6	21.8	33.0	17.6	1.4
11	To be alone	32.3	26.0	26.0	15.7	1.2
12	To develop new skills	37.8	28.3	23.2	10.7	1.1
13	To meet new people	42.2	28.2	19.4	10.1	1.0
14	To test outdoor skills	48.2	25.3	19.5	7.0	0.8
15	To travel/commute to another place	54.8	21.3	18.4	5.5	0.7
16	To compete with others	64.7	25.2	8.1	2.0	0.5

Many factors motivate Ohioans to enjoy trails, including to have fun/good time, exercise, relaxation, nature appreciation, and spending time with family and friends. Surprisingly, the use of trails to travel from one place to another was the second lowest motivational factor. This could be an indication that more linear trails – trails that take you from point A to point B – are needed in Ohio.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TRAIL USERS TO ACCESS OUR TRAILS?

Table 3.5 Average Time (Minutes) to Favorite Trail Sites, 2001

	Trail Activity	Average Time to Site (minutes) Rounded to Nearest Full Minute
1	Backpacking overnight	87
2	Snowmobile riding	71
3	Off-road motorcycle riding	59
4	ATV riding	53
5	Off-highway vehicle riding (4 wheel)	51
6	Canoeing/kayaking	49
7	Horseback riding on trails	43
8	Cross-country skiing	40
9	Day hiking	33
10	Bicycling on natural surface	28
11	Nature appreciation	26
12	Bicycling on hard surface	20
13	Walking for pleasure	18
14	In-line skating	16
15	Jogging/exercise running	15

Trail users travel the farthest to backpack, snowmobile and ride other motorized recreation vehicles. This can be attributed to the lack of these kinds of trails in the state. Trail activities that require the shortest travel time are jogging and exercise running, in-line skating, and walking for pleasure.

SHOULD FUTURE INVESTMENTS BE MADE IN TRAILS?

Table 3.6 Attitudes Toward Future Investment in Trails in Ohio, 2001, Presented in Rank Order in Percentages with Mean

	Investment Option	Greatly Reduce Investment	Reduce Investment	Invest About the Same	Invest More	Invest Much More	Mean
1	Community trail systems	1.4	4.1	32.3	39.1	23.1	2.8
2	Walking trails	0.6	2.2	34.9	38.5	23.7	2.8
3	Statewide/regional trails systems	2.4	4.2	37.4	37.5	18.5	2.7
4	Nature/interpretive trails	3.3	3.7	42.6	34.9	15.4	2.6
5	Hard surface bicycle trails	3.5	4.5	39.0	34.5	18.5	2.6
6	Jogging/exercise trails	2.7	4.6	52.4	29.5	10.8	2.5
7	Day hiking	1.8	2.9	56.8	27.1	12.3	2.4
8	Backpack trails	2.7	6.3	61.3	21.9	7.8	2.2
9	Natural surface bicycle trails	5.2	10.2	52.9	21.8	9.8	2.2
10	In-line skating trails	10.9	10.9	53.4	17.8	6.9	2.1
11	Canoeing/kayaking trails	5.7	9.7	58.3	18.6	7.7	2.1
12	Horseback-riding trails	7.5	16.6	54.4	12.4	9.1	2.0
13	Cross-country skiing trails	8.9	11.5	63.8	12.3	3.4	1.9
14	Snowmobile trails	28.5	18.4	42.7	7.9	2.5	1.4
15	Off highway vehicle trails	36.3	17.6	35.1	6.5	4.5	1.3
16	ATV trails	33.6	19.4	35.6	7.3	4.1	1.3
17	Off-road motorcycle trails	36.0	18.2	36.0	5.3	4.5	1.2

Trail users would like to see more investment for biking, hiking, walking and nature observation trails, but are less enthusiastic about funding trails for snowmobiles, ATVs, motorcycles and off-highway vehicles. Agencies that administer grant or federal aid reimbursement programs for trail development are encouraged to consider these preferences in developing priorities and policies for allocating financial assistance to trail projects.

TRAIL ACTIVITIES

A statewide trails network has many users with different needs that must be considered to provide a comprehensive and effective trails system. Fifteen trail activities were assessed in the 2001 Ohio Trails Participation Survey. Each individual trail activity was analyzed by using several criteria, including: participation data and a general overview of the activity; the major providers of the trail facilities; a listing of some of the major barriers that prevent better participation in the activity; and recommendations about how to improve the trail activity in question.

Several general trends appeared through the review of survey responses. Trail users would like to see more opportunities for their particular activity of interest, better maintenance of their trails, and better management of different trail uses.



WALKING FOR PLEASURE

Walking for pleasure is the most popular outdoor recreation activity in the United States, according to the U.S. Forest Service's National Survey on Recreation and Environment in 2000. In Ohio, more than 73 percent of households walk for pleasure an average of 68 times a year, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey.

Walking opportunities are virtually everywhere and do not necessarily require designated trails, however, there are many trails for this activity.

MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Safety is a concern in any walking environment, but particularly in areas where there are motor vehicles. An average of 4,587 pedestrians were involved in accidents with vehicles between 1990 and 2002, according to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). To encourage safety, trails should be developed in safe, convenient and attractive environments. This could include better street crossings, signage, crosswalk markers, wider sidewalks, curb extensions, and refuge islands.
- Trails should be developed to link community resources as well as transportation systems.

JOGGING/EXERCISE RUNNING

Participation in jogging and exercise running continues to be popular nationwide and in Ohio. More than 24 million Americans participate in the activities, according to the National Sporting Goods Association Recreation Participation Study released in 2001. The Ohio Trails Participation Survey found that nearly 25 percent of Ohio households participate on average 82 times annually, making it one of the most popular trail activities in the state.

While joggers and runners can be seen on neighborhood streets, many prefer designated trails that are generally easier on the joints and safer to navigate.

MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Like virtually all trail activities, user conflicts can occur between runners and other trail users. Competition for trail space between different user groups can be especially prevalent in urban areas.



- Finding information on running trails can be a problem, especially for dedicated and frequent runners who are visitors to an area and are unfamiliar with available trails. Information on running and jogging trails should be included in visitor information packages. In addition, trail providers should continue to offer and promote organized running events. Where feasible, trail providers should continue to emphasize the development of close-to-home, multi-purpose trails.
- Support facilities for runners and other trail users often are lacking. Facilities can include locations with drinking water, lighting, parking and restrooms, for example. Support facilities help maximize trail experiences and should be integrated into trail development projects.

DAY HIKING

Hiking has long been a traditional use of trails. More than 70 million Americans participated in a day hike at least once in the year 2000, according to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment performed by the U.S. Forest Service. In Ohio, about 43 percent of households participate in hiking an average of 19 times a year, according to Ohio Trails Participation Survey.

Hiking has broad appeal and little-to-no special equipment is required. Hikers say they enjoy the physical fitness they gain from being outdoors in a natural setting. All levels of government, park districts, and private groups provide hiking trails. The Ohio Department



of Natural Resources offers more than 1,700 miles of hiking trails in its state parks, forests, nature preserves and wildlife areas. Federal agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service (Wayne National Forest in southern Ohio), the National Park Service (Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Northeast Ohio), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provide hiking opportunities on their lands. Local governments and park districts are also major providers of hiking trails in Ohio.

The Buckeye Trail Association (BTA) is a good example of a private group's commitment to providing trails in Ohio. The BTA, a not-for-profit volunteer organization, has been the driving force behind the establishment of the nearly 1,300-mile Buckeye Trail. Members of the Buckeye Trail Association lobby for trail development, sponsor education workshops, create new and maintain existing sections of trail, develop and distribute maps, and organize group hikes.

MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Better management and maintenance of all trails in Ohio are needed. Consistent problems include: inadequate marking of trails, trail erosion, and inadequate support facilities, such as restrooms and shelters. Enhanced management and maintenance mean improved visitor safety.
- Some of Ohio's trails are multi-use, meaning they host various activities, which can result in conflicts between user groups. Trail managers should help to educate trail users on proper trail uses and etiquette.
- More hiking opportunities are needed close to urban and suburban residential areas. These trails should still be located in natural settings, along greenways and through other open spaces.

BACKPACKING

Backpacking does not share the same mass appeal of day hiking; however, participation in the activity nationwide has grown more than 50 percent since the mid-1990s. Nearly 22 million Americans said they backpacked at least once in 2000, according to the U.S. Forest Service's recreation study. Participation levels are similar in Ohio. About 7 percent of Ohio households hike about three times a year.



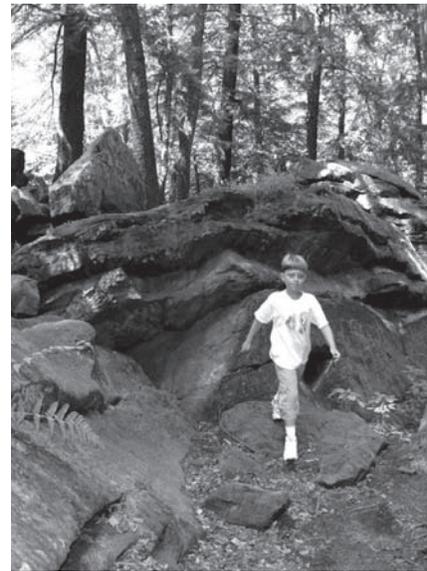
Backpackers tend to be younger in age and well educated. Ohio's backpackers are willing to travel to participate in these activities, traveling an average of 87 minutes to their favorite trail, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey. That's a longer travel time than any other trail activity in Ohio. True backpacking trails are provided by a limited number of agencies in Ohio. ODNR offers several backpack trails at its state forests and state parks. Some backpacking also can be found at Wayne National Forest.

MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Backpacking opportunities are limited in Ohio and not well publicized. Most of the trails suitable for a true backpacking experience are located in southern Ohio, a significant distance from the majority of the state's population. Agencies that provide backpack trails should explore cooperative agreements with other groups and private landowners to enhance trail opportunities. Rerouting of existing trails could be considered to provide new experiences.
- Access to backpack trails and overnight facilities to support the trails should be improved. Such facilities could include campgrounds and interpretative opportunities.
- The maintenance of backpack trails can be challenging because of their extensive length and the associated costs.

NATURE APPRECIATION

Using trails to view and appreciate the natural environment is one of the most popular trail activities in Ohio. While nature appreciation can be a complementary component to virtually all trail activities, the high levels of participation are indicative of its importance as a motivator of trail use. More than 44 percent of Ohio households participated in this activity, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey. Wildlife observation was the most popular outdoor activity in Ohio, according to the 2003 Ohio Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.



MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Ohio's many urban areas limit opportunities for observing wildlife on public lands. Habitat loss and the continued degradation of wildlife habitat contribute to this problem. Trails can be routed through natural areas like wetlands and developed with support facilities like observation decks and blinds to maximize wildlife viewing opportunities.
- Trail managers and trail groups should maximize efforts to develop educational programs on the natural environment in conjunction with trail opportunities.

BICYCLING (HARD SURFACE)

Bicycling continues to be one of the most popular outdoor pursuits nationally and in Ohio. The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment found that bicycling grew by more than 50 percent from the mid-1990s to 2000. More than 41 percent of Americans participated in the activity, according to the national survey. Similarly, 44 percent of Ohio households participated at least once in 2001, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey. Although most bicycle trips are recreational in nature, bicycles are also used for transportation.

Improvements in and the variety of bicycles now on the market have undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of bicycling (mountain biking is discussed separately in the following section). Aside from the initial investment, bicycling is a relatively low-cost activity that can be enjoyed solo or in a group. It is an activity that people of all ages and socio-demographic backgrounds can enjoy.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials reports the majority of bicycling takes place on ordinary roads with no dedicated space for bicycles. Nevertheless, designated bicycle paths are becoming extremely popular as facilities like rail-trails offer enhanced opportunities for recreational bicyclists. Ohio is host to many organized group bicycle activities and rides and has an extensive network of bicycle clubs and organizations that increase awareness of the activity and work to improve opportunities in the state.

Bicycle trails are provided primarily by local government agencies in Ohio. Metropolitan planning organizations develop bicycle plans for their jurisdictions and the ODOT administers a statewide Bicycle/Pedestrian Program that provides a wealth of information on bicycling information in Ohio.

MAJOR ISSUES

- Bicycle safety continues to be an issue for recreational bicyclists. Thousands of bicycle–motor vehicle accidents occur every year in addition to a large number of accidents with fixed objects, pedestrians, or other cyclists. Between 1990 and 2002, there were an average of 2,517 bicycle crashes with 19 fatalities per year, according to ODOT. Bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as automobile drivers and must ride with the traffic and generally obey all traffic laws. Many bicyclists do not, while many motorists do not know the rights of the

bicyclist and/or fail to recognize the bicycle as a vehicle under the law. Educational and safety awareness programs and skills tests for bicyclists and motorists alike should be offered in communities.

- Support facilities such as parking, potable water, bicycle racks, restrooms, and storage facilities are often lacking. Such support facilities should be included in the planning and design of bicycle trails.
- Bicycle trail maintenance is often a problem. Bike paths especially need constant maintenance to provide safe and enjoyable opportunities. High priority should be given to bicycle security in communities, parks, and other areas where bicycle use is common.
- Where public involvement supports it, highways, except those where bicycles are legally prohibited, should be designed and constructed under the assumption that bicyclists will use them.



MOUNTAIN (OFF-ROAD) BICYCLING

Mountain bicycling, or off-road and single track bicycling, is a relatively new activity that has grown significantly in recent years. The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment found that 23 percent of Americans participate in the sport. About 19 percent of Ohio households enjoyed mountain biking at least once in 2001, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey.

Mountain biking likely began to appear in the 1970s when individuals put fat tires on their bikes and began to compete in various downhill and cross-country types of events. The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) surveyed a sample of its membership in 2003 and found that more than 85 percent were male, with an average age of 38. Most members own more than two bicycles and 50 percent have household incomes of more than \$75,000. Most riders consider the variety and difficulty of the terrain, the number of trails available at a site, and the scenery of the area when choosing a trail.

Mountain biking trails can be found throughout the state, but are primarily located on government lands, including ODNR park and forest property and at Wayne National Forest in southeast Ohio.



MAJOR ISSUES

- Land managers often cite resource damage as a negative impact of mountain biking. The most common types of resource degradation include soil compaction and water erosion from furrows or channels. Land managers are encouraged to work with trail users to educate them on ways to maintain environmental quality. In addition trails should be designed and located on lands suitable for their use, thereby minimizing erosion and water runoff.
- Conflict with other trail users is also a problem, particularly because of the quick speed at which mountain bikers travel. As a result, safety becomes an issue. Trail managers should encourage riders to get proper training before biking on trails. Appropriate signage at trailheads and along trails should identify designated trails, advise riders of potential hazards and indicate if there are additional uses for the trail.

INLINE SKATING

Inline skating is a recreational activity that evolved from roller skating in the early 1980s and is now one of the fastest growing recreational activities in the country. Like bicycling, inline skating is used for transportation. However, unlike bicycling, inline skaters require a fairly smooth surface. Skating has moved from the indoors to the outdoors on trails. Activities using inline skates include: freestyle skating, fitness training, cross-training for sports such as skiing, recreation and inline hockey. Recent innovations in skate technology have made inline skating easier to learn, more comfortable and more efficient.

About 29 million Americans skate regularly, according to the International Inline Skating Association. Participation is divided equally between males and females. In Ohio, nearly 19 percent of the surveyed households participated in an inline skating activity an average of 20 times per year, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey.

Inline skaters often share Ohio's paved trails with bicyclists, walkers and runners. Local units of government and agencies like metropolitan park districts generally manage these paved trails.





MAJOR ISSUES

- In some places, inline skating is illegal. Some jurisdictions prohibit skating in traffic or on sidewalks. Communities should recognize inline skating as a clearly definable means of transportation and promote legislative changes that amend anti-skate ordinances. Consideration should be given to providing skaters similar rights and responsibilities as bicyclists.
- As with all trail activities, safety is a concern among inline skaters. As participation rates have increased so have the number of injuries and deaths related to skating activities. Education programs that promote skating safety should be developed and implemented.
- Conflict with other trail users is also a problem. Many trails were designed without considering the impact on skaters. Many novice and intermediate users share trails with other users and have different needs from cyclists and pedestrians. Novice skaters can have difficulty in turning or stopping quickly. Needs of inline skaters should be considered as future roadways are constructed. Special attention in trail design should also be given to bridge crossings, ramps, and grates.

HORSEBACK RIDING ON TRAILS

Horseback riding is a traditional trail activity that appeals to a broad cross-section of the population. About 9 percent of Ohio households went horseback riding an average of 16 times in 2001, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey. National participation rates are very similar. Riders are motivated to visit Ohio's trails for the opportunity to work with a horse and refine their skills.

Equestrian (bridle) trails are provided by all levels of government and on privately owned and managed land in Ohio. ODNR manages more than 800 miles of equestrian trails in its state parks and state forests. Wayne National Forest has about 80 miles of trails and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park offers nearly 200 mile of trails in northeastern Ohio. Park districts and certain local governments also offer equestrian trails.

The Ohio Horseman's Council is an association of horse owners and advocates who have organized to improve and provide equestrian activities, facilities and information resources for the state's horsemen. Founded in 1973, the Council is comprised of several county chapters that promote local and statewide interests. The Council

has also been especially active in lobbying for and assisting in the improvement of trails in state parks and state forests through its involvement in the Ohio Trails Partnership.

MAJOR ISSUES

- Equestrian trail riders would like to see improved facilities at public riding areas, including hitching posts, parking areas that can accommodate trailers, drinking water for horses and riders, and restrooms. Horseback riders also have complained about non-standardized signage on bridle trails. Trail providers should consider improving or providing such facilities where needed.
- Additional equestrian trails should be considered in parts of the state that are lacking them.
- Bridle trails maintenance is also a concern among Ohio's horseback riders. Trail erosion and trails that are overgrown, muddy, slippery or steep have the potential to cause injury to horse and rider. Litter along bridle trails can also degrade recreation experiences and frighten or injure horses. Adequately maintained facilities not only improve recreation experiences but also help avoid potential injury to riders and horses.
- Like many trail activities, user conflicts are commonly cited as an issue with equestrians. For example, approaching trail users, such as bikers or joggers, can spook horses. In addition, incompatibilities between trail surface demands by equestrians and other users could require parallel trail development in multi-use corridors and where trails are heavily used.

CANOEING AND KAYAKING

Canoeing and kayaking, although they are different activities, are the two primary uses of water trails in Ohio. There are nearly three canoeists for every kayak enthusiast in the United States. Although the relative number of Americans that enjoy canoeing and kayaking is small, surveys show that both of these activities are among the fastest growing in the country. About 18 percent of Ohio households participated in one or both of these paddling activities, according to the 2001 Ohio Trails Participation Survey. A primary motivation for water-trail paddling is the opportunity to enjoy stream corridor scenery as well as exercise and relaxation. Water trail users also swim, fish, hunt, and observe nature and wildlife.

Navigable streams exist in virtually all areas of Ohio. However, the existence of a navigable stream does not necessarily equate to a water trail. Streams must have adequate access or put-in and take-out points to make them ideally suitable as a water trail. Many public agencies and private businesses and organizations are involved in providing access and related facilities for canoeing and kayaking.



MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Water-trail users complain of lack of adequate access to navigable streams. Most riparian land is privately owned in Ohio, which contributes to access problems. Trail users also need more information about property rights and the public trust doctrine. ONDR is working to complete its Discover Ohio Water Trails initiative that will identify potential recreational access points on Ohio's waterways and potential state designated water trails. Ohio courts should clarify issues related to the recreational use of riparian corridors, especially trespassing.
- Safety, as with all trails uses, is also a concern. Particularly, low head dams, fences, fast and cold water, and other man-made or natural hazards can pose serious safety threats to stream boaters. ODNR should take a leadership role in identifying low head dams on Ohio waterways and, where feasible, coordinate their removal in partnership with local jurisdictions. These safety hazards should be well publicized.
- Water-trail users suggest support facilities, such as access trails, parking, restrooms, signs and trashcans, be improved. Such facilities, if provided at strategic locations, would greatly enhance Ohio's water-trail experiences.
- Recreational users should be educated on the rights of private landowners, proper boater etiquette and environmental issues associated with waterway use.



CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Cross-country skiing is a winter activity that is increasing in popularity. About 5 percent of Ohio households indicate they participate in cross-country skiing, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey. While skiing is a compatible wintertime use for multi-purpose trails, many skiers do not necessarily need a marked, signed trail. The activity can take place in local parks, on golf courses, or along snow covered road rights-of-way.

Cross-country skiing opportunities are dependent upon adequate snowfall, which is sometimes problematic in a marginal snow state like Ohio. Cross-county skiing is both a family and individual sport. Participants are attracted by the sense of solitude and the enjoyment of being outdoors.

Numerous agencies and organizations provide skiing opportunities and the activity has minimal impact on the environment. ODNR offers more than 300 miles of trails that can be utilized for skiing in parks, forests, and select nature preserves.

MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Conflicts with other winter trail users, such as snowmobilers, can be problematic, especially for those users on designated trails. Cross-country ski areas should have well-marked, groomed trails. While some skiers do not desire groomed trails, grooming eases trail use, helps users from becoming disoriented, increases safety, and deters other user groups from using cross-country trails.
- Existing and potential participants sometimes cite the lack of appropriate skill as an impediment to increased participation. Trail managers should consider offering rental equipment and clinics if they do not already. Rental equipment and clinics for beginners would enable potential users to try the sport before making a financial investment in needed equipment and supplies.
- Safety can also be an issue for cross-country skiers. Low branches, rocks, tree stumps or other obstacles can create potential accident scenarios. In addition, cross-country skiers need to be aware of the potential danger of participating in a cold weather activity. Trails that are designated for cross-country skiing use should avoid areas with large tree canopies, south facing slopes, have adequate sight distance and deceleration areas at road intersections, and avoid other potential hazards.



SNOWMOBILING

Riding snowmobiles is a mostly winter activity with low levels of participation in Ohio. Less than 3 percent of Ohio households own a snowmobile, according to Ohio Trails Participation Survey. This rate of participation is lower than the national average of 7 percent of households. Factors such as the unpredictability of Ohio winters, the cost of equipment, and the lack of suitable riding opportunities could contribute to the difference. Snowmobile registrations in Ohio average 18,000 – 20,000 for any particular three-year period, according to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Registrations, however, are not indicative of the total number of machines in Ohio since registration is only required if the vehicles are to be ridden on public lands in the state.

In states with large numbers of snowmobile riders and trails, snowmobiling contributes significantly to local and state economies. Although commonly thought of as a recreational activity, snowmobiles can also provide many other

useful functions. Snowmobiles are used by law enforcement agencies for search, rescue, and emergency missions as well as farmers, surveyors, and others as part of their jobs.

Snowmobiling opportunities on public lands are somewhat limited in Ohio. ODNR offers opportunities at a number of state parks and state forests. Local governments provide very few riding areas in their parks and their trails. Private landowners are a key provider of snowmobiling opportunities in Ohio. Numerous snowmobile clubs in Ohio have agreements with private landowners to ride and maintain trails. The Ohio State Snowmobile Association (OSSA) is the primary interest group of snowmobile riders in the state. OSSA cooperates with private landowners and government agencies to develop snowmobiling opportunities, organize and promote special programs and events, lobby for snowmobile legislation, promote safe snowmobiling, and serve as general voice of snowmobile riders in Ohio.

MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Snowmobile trails are lacking in Ohio, especially long distance and interconnected trails. Trails may be lacking because of the limited amount of public lands available for trails as well as private landowners' reluctance to make their land available for snowmobiling because of liability and possible property damage. Cooperative agreements should be developed with private landowners, such as permit-only use of their land for snowmobiling. Such agreements should be developed and implemented primarily by snowmobile clubs with the possible involvement of state and local government. At present, Ohio law does not allow for use of rights of way on limited access highways, but such land could be used as snowmobile trails. Snowmobile advocates should determine if there is an interest in attempting to change the law regarding this use. Obtaining the use of rail-trails also would offer more trail opportunities.
- Snowmobile registration procedures and requirements in Ohio need improvement. Registration should be available at snowmobile dealerships, through the mail or on the Internet, to increase convenience for riders and perhaps increase registration. In addition, snowmobile owners do not like having to permanently place a registration number (lettering must not be less than three inches high) on each side of a snowmobile's cowling. Space for

registration numbers is limited and many riders feel the number detracts from the appearance of the snowmobile. Registration decals or stickers are possible alternatives to the lettering that now is used.



- Improvements to snowmobile trails are needed. However, there are limited state funds available for such improvements. The State Recreational Vehicle Fund is the repository for snowmobile registrations and other all-purpose vehicles in Ohio. The current three-year registration fee of \$5.00 (plus a \$3.50 writing fee) does not generate enough revenue to make significant improvements in the state's motorized trail system. Ohio, unlike other states, does not levy a tax on

gasoline for snowmobiling or require an additional fee for out-of-state riders who are registered in another state. Increasing the fee for Ohio snowmobile registration would be the most direct way of generating additional

funds for trail improvements as well as getting non-registered machines registered. Registration could be required when a snowmobile is purchased.

- Safety continues to be a concern for both participants and providers of snowmobile opportunities. The safe operation of a snowmobile requires skill, training and knowledge of riding regulations. Various trail hazards can also present problems to snowmobile riders, including tree stumps, low tree limbs, narrow passages, deep ravines, steep inclines, open water, and thin ice. Snowmobiling is primarily a winter activity making it

imperative that participants wear proper clothing and are aware of the dangers of cold weather, hypothermia, frost bite and ice conditions. Those agencies and organizations with an interest in snowmobiling should cooperatively sponsor snowmobile safety and education programs, skill development courses and seminars on winter safety. Literature on proper use of snowmobiles should be distributed.

- Land managers often cite user conflicts between snowmobile

riders and other recreational user groups as reason why snowmobile opportunities are lacking. Conflicts can occur with cross-country skiers, hikers, and ice fishermen. Uniform trail marking should clearly identify usable areas and warn snowmobile riders of potential and existing hazards.

- Ohio's snowmobile regulations and requirements continue to be confusing for riders. Riders suggest there are inconsistencies with Ohio's laws and registration requirements compared to other states that allow snowmobiling.
- Environmental impacts caused by snowmobiling are a concern for land managers. Noisy machines or riders that disregard marked trails can have adverse impacts on other recreational users, wildlife, vegetation, and other natural features. Snowmobile trails should be located and designed to minimize environmental damage and noise pollution and, if feasible, road crossings. Snowmobile manufacturers must continue to address noise issues by developing quieter exhaust systems to help minimize the impacts on other recreational user groups and wildlife. Adequate support facilities, such as parking and loading areas, restrooms, information boards, signage, and potable water, should be integrated in snowmobile trail design.
- Information on snowmobiling opportunities needs to be more readily available and snowmobile riders need to do a better job communicating their needs to land managers and legislators.



ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE (ATV) RIDING

All-terrain vehicle (ATV) riding is one of the fastest growing forms of motorized recreation in the country according to the All-Terrain Vehicle Association (ATVA). Recreational use of ATVs, commonly referred to as quads, can generally be categorized as trail and off-road riding and competitive riding and racing. Nationwide, the sales of ATVs more than doubled from 1997 to 2001. In Ohio, registrations of All-Purpose Vehicles (in Ohio, ATVs are registered as APVs) have increased dramatically since the mid-1990s. Ohioans registered nearly 4,200 APVs in 1995, according to the Ohio BMV. By 2003, that figure had climbed to more than 14,000 annual registrations. More than 6 percent of Ohio households indicate they participate in ATV riding, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey.

Riding ATVs generally requires a significant investment of money for equipment, fuel and routine maintenance. ATV riders, depending on skill level, typically seek a variety of challenging settings

and riding experiences. ATVs are commonly used by hunters and for a variety of industrial and agribusiness applications. Public ATV riding areas in Ohio are provided exclusively by Wayne National Forest in southern Ohio and by the ODNR at four of its state forests. These trails are multi-purpose and accommodate other trail uses, including mountain biking and off-road motorcycling.

ATVA, a national membership organization for ATV riders and owners, provides information on riding, maintaining, buying and equipping ATVs in addition to information on riding areas and events. The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council promotes off-highway vehicle club development, and provides educational materials and programs to improve OHV recreation management, opportunity and resource protection. The Ohio Multi-Use Trails Association (OMTA) is a state-based organization that was established “to promote the development and maintenance of trails throughout Ohio” and is a major proponent of motorized trails in the state.

MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Public ATV riding areas are extremely limited in Ohio, with most opportunities being in southern Ohio, and preserving legal access to existing trails is an on-going struggle. Most public land managing agencies view off-highway vehicle activities as not being compatible with their land management goals, thus limiting opportunities. Many existing ATV riding areas are small loop trails that do not link to other resources. ATV clubs and organizations should work with local governments to establish possible riding opportunities on county and township rights-of-way and abandoned or vacated roads.
- Rider safety continues to be an important issue for participants and providers of ATV riding opportunities. Eligible government agencies and private organizations should utilize the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) as a mechanism for increasing and improving motorized trail opportunities in Ohio and for safety and environmental education programs. In addition, partnerships should be explored to provide safety, skill, and trail sensibility training programs. The "Tread Lightly" campaign, for example, provides numerous materials to educate riders about respecting the environment. The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council also has publications about responsible riding.
- User conflicts between ATV riders and other recreational user groups continue to be one of the

most commonly cited problems by land managers and other recreationists. ATV trails should be designed and located where user conflicts and the need for intensive maintenance and enforcement will be minimized.

- Resource degradation and noise caused by ATVs are concerns of public land managers and private landowners. As a result, ATV trails require regular maintenance to provide a balance between quality riding opportunities and resource protection. Inconsiderate riders who do not stay on marked trails or trespass on private property can negatively impact land and water resources. Law enforcement must ensure that more emphasis is placed on keeping ATVs on designated trails to eliminate trespassing on private property.
- Liability is a concern to both public and private land managers when considering the development of any off-highway recreation area. Although Ohio has a recreational user statute that limits liability to public agencies and landowners if no fee is charged for a recreational use (unless gross negligence contributed to an injury), the fear of being sued is still a strong deterrent. The cost of insurance also discourages private landowners.
- There are limited state funds available for ATV trail development and improvements. The State Recreation Vehicle Fund is the repository for ATV registration revenue in Ohio. The current three-year registration fee of \$5.00 does not generate sufficient revenue to make improvements to Ohio's motorized trail system. Ohio does not earmark

gasoline taxes from ATV users for trail improvements or have an additional fee for out-of-state riders who are registered in their home or another state. Support facilities for ATV trails, including staging areas, campsites, comfort stations, and restrooms, should be integrated into new and existing ATV trail networks. Increasing the fee for Ohio ATV registration would be the most direct way of generating additional funds for motorized trails in Ohio, as would registering non-registered machines. Other options to increase revenue include having a percentage of the state gasoline tax attributable to ATV use deposited in the State Recreation Vehicle Fund and eliminating the reciprocity agreement Ohio has with other states. Allowing other government entities and trail organizations to use the fund for trail improvements would be another alternative.

OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLE RIDING

Motorcycle riding is enjoyed by literally millions of Americans in a number of different formats, including street riding, competitive racing, off road and trail riding. The recreational use of motorcycles, with an emphasis on trail riding, is the focus of this plan. About 3.4 percent of surveyed Ohio households participated in this activity an average of just over 33 times per year, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey. Participants generally invest a significant amount of money to participate in the sport. The primary motivation for motorcycle trail riding appears to be the challenge and excitement



of riding in various environments. Riders like trails with many challenges and surprises including steep hills, tight turns and water crossings. The average trail biker rides 50-60 miles of trail per day and expert riders may travel more than 100 miles in a day, according to the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA).

Off-road motorcycle trails on public lands are provided primarily by ODNR at four state forests and at Wayne National Forest in southern Ohio. Very few, if any, local governments allow motorcycles or dirt bikes to ride their trails or in their park and recreation areas. Off-road riding is popular, however, on private land in Ohio.

There are a number of national organizations that support motorcycling and trail riding including the AMA, the Motorcycle Industry Council, the Blue Ribbon Coalition and the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council.

MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Publicly provided off-road motorcycle trails in Ohio are limited to those available in the Wayne National Forest and four state forests managed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Like public ATV trails, the majority of these trails are small loop trails, located in the southern and southeastern portion of Ohio, far from Ohio's population centers. Partnerships with off-road motorcycling clubs and organizations and local governments should be developed to identify and establish possible riding opportunities on county and township rights-of-way, on abandoned or vacated roads, or other potential lands available for OHV use. Where feasible, ODNR and the U.S. Forest Service should explore opportunities for expanding off-road motorcycling trails on public lands.

- Rider safety is a significant issue. Learning to safely ride a motorcycle is something that all motorcyclists have to do to enjoy the sport. However, acquiring the skills to safely negotiate on various types of terrains/trails can be a challenging and on-going experience. Eligible government agencies and private non-profit organizations may utilize the Recreational Trails Program for improving off-road motorcycle trails and for safety and environmental education programs. Off-highway vehicle agencies and organizations should partner with government agencies, where feasible, to offer safety, skills, and trail sensibility riding programs. Educational information/opportunities should continue to be disseminated by a wide range of agencies, organizations, and dealers. For example, the "Tread Lightly" campaign has numerous pamphlets, brochures, and videos to educate riders about respecting the environment. The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) also has publications about responsible use and riding.



- User conflicts between off-road motorcyclists and other trail users and recreationists is a common issue on existing trails and a frequently cited barrier for developing additional opportunities. Off-road motorcycling trails should be designed and located where user conflicts and the need for intensive maintenance and enforcement will be minimized.
- Like other off-highway recreation vehicle users, trail bikes can cause significant environmental impacts and resource degradation. Excessive noise, trespassing on private property, and/or straying off marked trails are other common complaints related to motorized recreation activities. Land managers must give particular attention to regular, on-going maintenance of off-road motorcycling trails. This can include trail hardening, signage, construction of water diversion devices, and temporarily closing sections of trail to allow the ground to be restored to its pre-disturbance condition. Law enforcement activities must ensure that more emphasis is given keeping off-road motorcycling on designated routes and trails and to minimize trespassing on private property.
- There are limited state funds available for off-road motorcycle trail development and improvements in Ohio. The State Recreation Vehicle Fund is the repository for trail bike registration revenue in Ohio. The current five-year registration fee of \$5.00 does not generate sufficient revenue to make significant improvements to Ohio motorized trail system. Additionally, Ohio does not levy a tax on gasoline

earmarked for trail improvements or have an additional fee for out-of-state riders who are registered in their home or another state. Sufficient support facilities for off-road motorcycling trails (e.g. staging areas, campsites, comfort stations, restrooms, etc.) should be integrated into new and existing trail networks. Increasing the fee for Ohio off-road motorcycling registration would be the most direct way of generating additional funds for motorized trails in Ohio. Getting non-registered machines registered would also generate additional monies. Other options to increase revenue include having a percentage of the state gasoline tax attributable to off-road motorcycling use deposited in the State Recreation Vehicle Fund and eliminating the reciprocity agreement Ohio has with other states. Allowing other government entities and non-profit trail organizations to use the SRVF for trail improvements would be another alternative.

FOUR-WHEEL OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE RIDING

Four-wheel drive trail riding is another motorized recreation activity that is expected to grow in popularity in the future. This type of motorized activity involves the use of full-size 4-wheel vehicles like jeeps, trucks, and sport utility vehicles (SUVs). About 6 percent of Ohio households participate in this off-highway trail activity, according to the Ohio Trails Participation Survey.

Like other forms of off-highway vehicle trail riding, four-wheeling is considered a family activity that is enjoyed by a cross-section of the population. Contrary to popular perception, most four-wheeler trail riders do not exceed speeds over 10 mph. The ultimate challenge is in the “set up” of the vehicle and how it subsequently handles various rocks, ruts and slopes. There are a variety of driving conditions that challenge the four-wheeler, ranging from dry, well-maintained,



dirt trails to conditions only experts should attempt to negotiate. Four-wheel drivers enjoy riding in all environments, including sand, snow, mud, shallow creeks and ponds.

Four-wheel trail opportunities on public lands are virtually nonexistent in Ohio. ODNR and the U.S. Forest Service, the only two agencies in Ohio that provide other off-highway opportunities, prohibit vehicles that are wider than 50 inches on their trails. As a result, four-wheel enthusiasts must look for riding areas on private land or in other states. Various low volume county and township roads are other options for four-wheelers in Ohio.

Two non-profit organizations that work for the four-wheel drive interests include the East Coast 4Wheel Drive Association and the United Four Wheel Drive Association. The groups regulate competitive events, provide education programs and clinics, work to prevent the closure of public lands, conduct search and rescue missions, promote recreational trail riding, and work with elected officials and government agencies to enhance four-wheel opportunities.

MAJOR ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- The lack of any publicly designated trails for four-wheel trail riding in Ohio is an obvious issue facing this user group. Government and private organizations should utilize the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) as a means for increasing and improving motorized trail opportunities in Ohio. Four-wheel clubs should partner with

local governments to identify and establish possible riding opportunities on county and township rights-of-way and on abandoned or vacated roads.

- Safety, as in all trail activities, is always a concern. Although most four-wheelers do not drive at excessive speeds, there are inherent dangers in four-wheeling. Vehicles can tip over ("turtle truck"), get stuck in remote areas, or drivers can be thrown from their vehicles. Off-highway vehicle groups should partner with government to offer safety, skills, and trail sensibility training. Educational materials should continue to be disseminated.
- The size and weight of four-wheel vehicles can create significant impacts on land and water resources. The problem can be compounded when riders do not stay on designated trails or trespass on private property. The "Tread Lightly" campaign, for example, has numerous materials to educate riders about respecting the environment. The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council also has publications about responsible use and riding.
- There are no dedicated state funds available for improving four-wheel drive travel opportunities in Ohio. Since most four-wheel drive vehicles that are used for trail riding are also street legal, vehicle registration revenue is not deposited in the State Recreation Vehicle Fund. As a result, there are no state funds specifically earmarked for four-wheel trail improvements.

CHAPTER 4

HELPING OUR TRAILS

A STATEWIDE STRATEGIC APPROACH

Developing a statewide trails system involves understanding a variety of complex issues and overcoming the problems that can impede planners, managers and developers in their efforts to create trails. A strategic approach must be taken to address those issues deemed most important by those who create, manage and use trails. The issues identified reflect what's going on with trails on a statewide basis. Implementation strategies are identified for each of the strategic issues and are directed at all trail affiliates - government entities, planning agencies, trail managers, trail users, and other trail advocates.

CONNECTING TRAILS

Finding:

Many existing trails are discontinuous and not connected or easily accessible.

The key to a viable statewide trails system is connecting people and destinations. The goal of a statewide trails system for the 21st Century is one that connects communities, parks, natural areas, historic and cultural sites, places of employment, shopping and other amenities with a seamless, comprehensive, and easily accessible network of trails. Traditionally, trails have been located in parks, forests, or other natural areas, providing opportunities for recreation, exercise and enjoying the natural environment. But today the emphasis is on developing trails outside of parkland. Our future trails should connect to other states as well as trail systems within the state.

While many trail projects are, by necessity, developed in phases or small segments, trail planners and developers should attempt to connect logical destinations, ensuring overall continuity.

Implementation Strategies:

1. Agencies that administer financial assistance programs for trails should give priority to trail proposals that connect to other trails, attractions, and act to fill in a gap in the trail system. The most critical gaps in the statewide system should be identified and quickly connected to the system.
2. Trail advocates should actively pursue and participate in local, regional, and statewide planning efforts to help facilitate the development of interconnected trail systems using a hubs and spokes approach. Hubs include parks, recreation areas, and historic and cultural sites. Spokes connect corridors like trails, greenways, waterways and natural corridors. Planning efforts should generate maps of critical linkages and connections.
3. Developers should include trails as a component of their large developments to link internal trail systems with larger community, regional, and statewide trail systems. Providing trails and other open spaces can make property more desirable.

USER CONFLICTS ON TRAILS

Finding:

Many recreational trail uses are incompatible, resulting in conflicts between trail users.

Conflicts among recreational trail users can create an undesirable experience. As trail use gains in popularity, pressure on existing and often limited trails increases. Where the separation of trail uses or parallel trails is not feasible, trail managers designate them “multiple use.” By permitting more than one type of trail use, trail managers are creating situations that can result in user conflicts.

Conflicts may occur within user groups as well, but are most common between different user groups, such as motorized and non-motorized trail groups. Hikers, horseback riders, and mountain bikers often share the same backcountry trail; bicyclists, in-line skaters and pedestrians compete for the same paved asphalt on urban trails; and snowmobile riders and cross-country skiers often share the same snow-covered trail.

Trail users and managers are both responsible for minimizing trail user conflicts. The Federal Highway Administration, in cooperation with the National Recreational Trails Advisory Committee, produced an excellent resource on the topic of conflict on multiple-use trails, entitled “Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails: Synthesis of the Literature and State of the Practice.” Four of the 12 conflict solution strategies are summarized below.

Implementation Strategies

1. Trail managers should provide adequate trail opportunities, including sufficient trail mileage and a variety of experiences. This helps reduce congestion and allows users to choose the conditions that best suit their activity. Trail managers should minimize number of contacts in problem areas – each contact among trail users (as well as contact with evidence of others) has the potential to result in conflict. So, as a general rule, reduce the number of user contacts whenever possible. This is especially true in congested areas and at trailheads. Disperse use and provide separate trails where necessary after careful consideration of the additional environmental impact and lost opportunities.

2. Trail managers should involve users in the process of conflict resolution. For proposed trails, possible conflicts and their solutions should be addressed during the planning and design stage with the involvement of prospective users. Conflicts on present trails need to be addressed quickly with user participation. Trail managers should understand user needs, including their motivations, desires, and preferences. Such customer information is critical for anticipating and managing conflicts.
3. Trail managers should promote trail etiquette, aggressively promoting responsible trail behavior. Managers should use or modify existing educational materials to better meet local needs. Target educational efforts, get the information into users’ hands as early as possible, and present it in interesting and understandable ways (Roggenbuck and Ham 1986). Trail managers should encourage positive interaction among different users considering users generally aren’t as different from one another as they believe. Encourage interaction among users on and off the trail. This can be accomplished by sponsoring “user swaps” or joint trail building or maintenance projects, by filming trail-sharing videos, or by forming trail advisory councils.
4. Trail managers should favor “light-handed management” – use the most “light-handed approaches” that will achieve area objectives. Intrusive design and coercive management are not compatible with high-quality trail experiences. Trail managers should monitor progress, including the ongoing effectiveness of the decisions made and programs implemented. Conscious, deliberate monitoring is the only way to determine if conflicts are indeed being reduced and what changes in programs might be needed.

TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Finding:

Proper trail maintenance is essential to ensure that trail experiences are maximized.

Trail systems, like any infrastructure, are subject to wear and tear. Trails vary in maintenance requirements, but all need to be maintained. Inadequate maintenance can compromise safety and negatively impact a trail experience. Poor maintenance can also foster

lack of public respect and encourage vandalism. Trail users want clean, safe and well maintained facilities; however, trail maintenance is often a problem for trail managers. Appropriate trail design and construction will also influence how a trail is ultimately maintained. Substandard trails often must be redesigned or reconstructed to minimize resource damage and enhance safety and enjoyment. Securing adequate funding for trail maintenance operations can sometimes be problematic. Generally, capital funds and/or grant programs focus on trail acquisition and construction while maintenance dollars can be difficult to secure.

One example of a tremendously successful partnership for trail maintenance is known as the Ohio Trails Partnership (OTP). OTP is comprised of a diverse group of hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders who have joined efforts to improve trails in Ohio State Parks and state forests. The OTP includes members from the Buckeye Trail Association, the Ohio Mountain Bike Association, and the Ohio Horsemen's Council. In 2003, OTP members donated more than 25,000 hours to improve ODNR managed trails. Combined with cash donations, the effort represented more than \$250,000 in contributions to state trail projects.

Implementation Strategies

1. Plan, design, and construct trails to minimize maintenance costs and enhance visitor safety. Maintenance costs should also be considered during the trail planning. Trail managers should develop trail operations and maintenance policies to cover a wide range of issues, including allowable uses, security and law enforcement, signage, road crossings, liability and encroachments. Trail managers should consider programs like "adopt-a-waterway" to facilitate trail maintenance.
2. Trail managers should exchange ideas on cost effective maintenance procedures, possibly through an on-line forum, such as entering into contractual agreements with the private sector or enlisting the help of volunteers. Trail providers and groups should seek the input and assistance of the Ohio Trails Partnership for recommendations concerning ways to reduce user conflicts on trails and on various trail design and maintenance concerns.

PRIVATE LAND AND TRAILS

Finding:

Opportunities for trails on private lands and adjacent to private lands have not been maximized because of concerns with liability, privacy, litter, vandalism, theft and other real and/or perceived problems.

About 95 percent of the land in the state of Ohio is privately owned. In many cases, it is not feasible for public agencies to acquire lands or interests in lands that could enhance a trail system. In urban communities and rapidly growing areas, trails must often compete for remaining corridors and open spaces with other interests, such as private developers. Developing interconnected trails systems often must involve partnerships and use agreements with private landowners and/or developers.

Unfortunately, providing public access to private lands is hindered by a variety of factors. Potential landowner liability is often cited as a primary obstacle to opening private land to public recreational use. The State of Ohio does have a recreational use statute (O.R.C. 1533.181) that limits liability for landowners who open their property for recreational use, but does not eliminate the potential for litigation. Many are not aware of the law.

A related problem is when a public agency or trail organization encounters opposition from adjacent landowners when trying to convert a corridor into a trail, such as an unused railroad right-of-way. This is a classic problem in both urban and rural settings. Even if the trail organization can legally acquire the right-of-way, adjacent landowners may oppose plans to develop the trail for fear of vandalism, loss of privacy, litter, trespassing, among other concerns. Recent studies document that property values typically increase and crime does not follow trail construction.

Implementation Strategies

1. Trail managers and users should partner with private landowners to gain their support and develop incentives to open their lands for public use, thus promoting the positive public benefits that trails can create. Trail managers should implement methods that potentially minimize impacts on private land,

such as land exchanges, easements, gifts or donations and cornering, an option where a trail route goes across the smallest possible area, usually a corner of a given property.

2. Trail users and advocates should support legislation that would broaden and protect landowners adjacent to trails from trespassing liability.

STATE AGENCY LEADERSHIP

Finding:

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with other state agencies, should take a more proactive leadership role in planning, developing, managing, funding and promoting a statewide system of trails.

In 1972, the Ohio General Assembly passed S.B. 247 and directed the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to “plan and administer a state system of recreational trails that interconnect...places of scenic or historic interest to the maximum extent possible.” Despite many accomplishments by ODNR and other government agencies and private interests, the dream of a statewide trail system is still largely unrealized. Many challenges exist, including funding, private and adjacent landowner concerns, agency roles in developing a statewide system, user conflicts, establishing trail connections and creating partnerships to facilitate the trails system.

Other state agencies including the Ohio departments of Transportation (ODOT), Development (ODOD), and Health (ODH) also can play important roles in the ultimate development of a statewide trails system. ODOT administers the Transportation Enhancement Program and other programs that provide valuable financial assistance for bicycle and pedestrian projects statewide. The ODOD’s Office of Travel and Tourism is in the business of promoting and marketing Ohio’s natural and recreational resources. ODH plays a key role in increasing awareness of the importance of adopting healthier behaviors and lifestyles of Ohioans. This includes promoting outdoor physical activity such as trail use.

Implementation Strategies

1. ODNR should establish a formal recreational trails and greenways program to coordinate trail development in Ohio. This program could coordinate state financial assistance programs that benefit trails and greenways, provide planning and technical assistance, facilitate the formation of partnerships to undertake trail and greenway development, and serve as an advocate and clearinghouse for trail and greenway development in Ohio.
2. ODNR should explore and establish mechanisms and partnerships to prevent the loss of significant corridors such as canal lands and abandoned railroads that could be used for trail and greenway development
3. ODNR should establish policies and programs that encourage trail development on its lands, adjacent lands, or that connect to its lands in partnership with other government agencies, private landowners, and trail groups.
4. ODNR should adopt a process and establish formal criteria for nominating and designating a system of State Recreational Trails. Criteria could include the number and type of users served, proximity to population centers, geographic representation, natural and scenic qualities, costs, linkages, availability, access facilities, and public acceptance. ODNR should also develop a process for monitoring designated components to ensure its features and resources are maintained.
5. The state of Ohio should develop a strong railroad corridor preservation policy that ensures all abandoned railroads undergo a timely and thorough evaluation for potential public use. An interagency committee should be established to file for railbanking under section 8(d) of the National Trails System Act on each railroad abandonment in Ohio that has potential to contribute to the state’s future trail or transportation systems.
6. ODNR should partner with the Department of Development’s Office of Travel and Tourism to develop a major statewide trails promotional program.

TRAILS AS TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Finding:

Opportunities for utilizing trails for human powered transportation alternatives and commuter access are limited in Ohio despite the documented benefits of such alternatives.

While the recreational benefits of trails are well understood, the establishment of transportation alternatives is being cited more and more by planners as a reason for creating trails. Indeed, most recreational trails can be used for transportation purposes just as many trails developed primarily for transportation can be utilized for recreation. The 2001 Ohio Trails Participation Survey found that nearly 20 percent of Ohio households used trails for transportation purposes.

The federal landmark Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) established a number of new programs that emphasized non-motorized modes of transportation. ISTEA recognized that trails could serve as non-motorized corridors between population centers and other points of interest, could help reduce air pollution by reducing dependency on the automobile, integrate with mass transit systems, and increase transportation safety. ISTEA also directed states and metropolitan areas to develop long range plans for bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways.

The successor to ISTEA, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), reiterated the importance of transportation enhancements as a viable component of transportation systems by expanding enhancement funding and the number of categories eligible for assistance. Congress is developing the successor to TEA-21. It is expected that the new surface transportation legislation will continue many of the programs that have benefited trails in the past, such as transportation enhancements, recreational trails, scenic byways, mass transit in parks, and safe routes to schools.

Trails as transportation alternatives are particularly significant in urban and suburban settings. Properly designed trail systems can minimize isolation of neighborhoods and connect people to business areas, schools, recreation areas and other community

resources. Safety is a primary concern when considering trails for alternate transportation uses. No transportation route will be successful unless it is safe for potential users.

Implementation Strategies

1. Transportation planners should give greater emphasis to non-motorized and multi-modal approaches to meeting congestion and air quality issues while at the same time increasing alternate transportation and recreation opportunities.
2. The Ohio Department of Transportation should analyze the need for incorporating bicycle, pedestrian, and access features into new roadway projects. To better accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians and paddlers, ODOT should retrofit existing transportation infrastructure, where feasible, during scheduled maintenance. ODOT should coordinate with all metropolitan planning organizations in evaluating the need for and design of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
3. Metropolitan Planning Organizations should work with their member local jurisdictions to develop bicycle and pedestrian plans and identify gaps or missing links to trail systems. Local agencies and planners should, where feasible, integrate alternative transportation opportunities into all road planning, design, and reconstruction projects.

TRAIL INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Finding:

Providing information on trail opportunities and their benefits as well as educating trail users about etiquette and ethics is important to assure quality trail experiences.

Despite efforts by trail managers to provide good information on trails, many current and potential users cite the lack of information as a major reason they do not use trails. Trail managers are challenged to provide information on where to go for a particular activity and what to expect on trails. Many trails are under-utilized due to information and publicity gaps. Trail managers cannot assume that all users know where opportunities are located and/or how to find

them. Trail managers must continuously assess their public information programs and actively market their trail systems.

Implementation Strategies

1. The State of Ohio, in partnership with trail groups, should establish a state clearinghouse of trail-related information, data, and other forms of technical assistance, making it easily accessible to the public. The Ohio Department of Transportation is encouraged to distribute relevant bicycle and pedestrian material and support programs that promote, educate, and enforce the rules of the road by bicyclists and pedestrians. Trail agencies and organizations should conduct periodic conferences and workshops to provide training and networking opportunities on trails.
2. Trail managers and advocates should improve efforts to inform and disseminate information on available trail opportunities in Ohio. This includes information on websites and signage along highways. Trail managers should improve educational efforts on responsible trail ethics and stewardship to recreational user groups and the general public.
3. The Ohio Department of Development's Office of Travel and Tourism should partner with trail agencies to develop a major statewide trails promotional program.

PARTNERSHIPS

Finding:

Partnerships are critical in the planning, funding, development and management of trails and trail systems.

Partnerships among government agencies, private organizations, and citizens are becoming increasingly popular to address various public needs, including recreational trail development. Partnering provides a means to address concerns, gain awareness and understanding, and achieve recreational goals.

Because of their linear nature, trails typically pass through a number of political jurisdictions and impact numerous parties. As a result, creating and managing trails often requires cooperation and coordination. In

some cases, community officials, citizens, businesses or adjacent landowners may be opposed to trails. In particular, adjacent landowners share concerns about deviant behavior such as trespassing, littering, and vandalism.

Partnerships with volunteers can also be used in a number of ways like trail maintenance. Adopt-a-trail programs are popular but usually must be coordinated by an agency representative to maximize effectiveness.

Many trails can also involve situations where citizens, organizations or agencies are interested in non-trail uses that require cooperation and/or partnerships, such as overhead utilities, driveways and roads. However, some non-trail uses, if carefully planned and monitored, could be compatible with the trail development and could result in financial benefits for the trails managing agency.

Through partnerships, funding options can be explored. While local units of government are typically the trail managers in Ohio, federal and state financial assistance programs have played a key role in the development of many trails in Ohio. Maintaining these financial partnerships is vital for the development of a statewide trail system.

One of the most successful partnerships in Ohio that has provided trail and numerous other benefits is the Ohio and Erie Canal Corridor Coalition (OECCC). Established in 1989, the OECCC is a private, non-profit organization working on the development of the Ohio & Erie Canal Heritage Corridor. The OECCC is comprised of over 50 partner groups representing business, industry, government agencies, park districts, non-profit organizations, community groups, and numerous individual citizens. The OECCC provides educational programs, events, and publications while developing working relationships with its numerous corridor partners to preserve and interpret the natural, historic, and recreational resources throughout the corridor.

Implementation Strategies

1. Trail advocates should work with trail users and owners of linear corridors, such as railroads and rights of way, to encourage their involvement in the creation of a statewide trails system. Literally thousands of miles of pipelines, water and sewer

lines, levees, roads, railroads, and fiber optic lines cross Ohio's landscape. Partnerships should be developed where trail system gaps can be filled.

2. The federal government should continue its partnership role in funding the acquisition and development of trails through such programs as Transportation Enhancements, Recreational Trails, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
3. Agencies and organizations that are involved in trail planning, development, funding, safety education, technical assistance, and promotion should establish a formal working group to address mutual concerns to integrate trail development into ongoing and future projects where feasible.
4. Trail advocates and managers should establish partnership agreements to market and publicize the multiple benefits that trails provide and help dispel any perceived negative aspects of trails.

TRAIL SUPPORT FACILITIES

Finding:

Adequate support facilities are needed for trail systems to maximize the recreation and transportation opportunities and experiences of trail users.

Trail support facilities, sometimes referred to as trailhead and trailside facilities, can provide a variety of amenities. Such amenities could include parking areas, restrooms, drinking water, interpretive areas, sitting areas with benches, signage, shelters, concessions, trash receptacles, campsites, picnic areas, lighting, tie ups, emergency telephones, bicycle racks, fencing, bollards, and information kiosks.

The type and extent of support facilities provided depends on a number of factors including levels of and types of use, physical setting, level of maintenance required, management philosophy, and the financial resources of the managing agency.

Trail signage can also affect user experiences and should not be overlooked. Signs can help a user navigate a trail by providing directions, warning of potential hazards, interpreting natural features, providing information about trail conditions, and informing users about trail rules and etiquette. Interpretive signs are particularly important in many trail settings as they

help the user gain an understanding of the environment through which the trail passes.

Implementation Strategies

1. Strategically located access points, trailheads, or staging areas are particularly important considerations when planning and developing trails. Facilities available at a trailhead can provide the user with a critical first impression before trail use. Where feasible, trailheads should be fully accessible to trail users with disabilities.
2. Trail signage should be planned on a trail-by-trail basis but generally should be clearly visible, placed at consistent distances from the trail, and easy to understand. International symbols should be used wherever possible.
3. A greater emphasis should be placed on the design and planning of staging areas that offer access to more than one type of recreational activity or participant. The integration of amenities at dual-purpose staging areas would allow participants to secure recreational equipment, thus enhancing the quality of the recreational experience.

TRAILS FUNDING

Finding:

Funding programs for the planning, design, acquisition, development and maintenance of trails are inadequate and the administration of existing grant programs should be improved.

Despite the availability of dedicated and multipurpose state and federal grant programs, financing for trails continues to be a critical issue. The need for additional funding far exceeds what is available from existing sources. Funding trails involves much more than just acquisition and development costs. Many trail projects also involve costly planning and engineering elements and associated costs such as title work, surveys and environmental and archaeological assessments. These costs can be especially burdensome to small public agencies or private groups that do not have large budgets or access to professional engineering/planning staffs.

Adequate funding for management and maintenance of trails is another concern. As trail use increases, trail managers must increase maintenance of trails to ensure visitor safety and provide high quality experiences. Unfortunately, many of the existing funding programs do not allow trail maintenance operations/expenses as an eligible project cost.

Some of the policies and procedures used by agencies that administer the major financial assistance programs for trails have been criticized. Complaints include the perceived lack of program flexibility, lack of publicized project selection criteria, excessive environmental justification procedures and engineering standards, and the lack of coordination with other trail and recreation programs.

While most of the existing programs used to acquire and build trails are public funds, there are a number of non-traditional sources of funds that trail managers can and should pursue. Potential private sector funds include foundation grants, business/corporate contributions, special events and fundraisers, and individual donations.

Implementation Strategies

1. Trail advocates and agencies should support efforts to establish a dedicated, ongoing source of state funds for trail development. The Clean Ohio Trails program was originally authorized for four years (2002-2005) and should be established as a permanent program. Trail advocates should consider sponsoring program amendments that would broaden the scope of eligible projects, allow more agencies to participate, and clarify program priorities.
2. A special fund that could be used to acquire significant corridors that are in danger of being sold or lost to development should be established.
3. Agencies that administer financial assistance programs that benefit trails should regularly evaluate these programs and implement changes consistent with constituent and advisory board feedback.
4. Trail advocates and agencies should support the reauthorization of and maximum appropriations for federal programs that can benefit trail development. These include, but are not limited to, programs

such as the Transportation Enhancements program, the Recreational Trails Program, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund program.

5. Trail managers should pursue private sources of funds for trail projects such as corporations, non-profit organizations and foundations. Establishing user fees for trails should also be explored. Trail managers should consider using non-traditional sources of funds, e.g., transportation, tourism, and community development funds, to finance trail projects.
6. Trail managers should consider supporting efforts to create funding assistance for trail operations and maintenance with grant monies that are earmarked for acquisition and development.
7. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources should establish a special task force to determine alternatives for developing and financing motorized recreational trails in Ohio.

TRAILS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Finding:

To the maximum extent possible, trails should be designed and constructed to be accessible to people with disabilities.

The passage of the “Americans with Disabilities Act” means that heightened consideration must be given to making trails accessible to all users. If the needs of the disabled are accommodated in recreation facilities, the needs of other able-bodied users are also satisfied.

A federal committee currently is developing guidelines on accessibility rules for trails and other outdoor recreation facilities. The draft guidelines generally recognize the uniqueness of each trail, different recreational settings, and expectations of accessibility in establishing design standards. Deviations from the proposed guidelines are permitted if compliance causes substantial harm to cultural, historic, or natural features; alters the nature of the settings or purpose of the facility; requires construction that is prohibited by federal, state, or local regulations; and is not feasible due to terrain or prevailing construction practices.

While many of the newer recreation facilities in Ohio are in compliance with accessibility standards, many others need adaptations or retrofitting to provide access. In some areas, providing complete accessibility could negatively impact the resource base for the recreational experience of others. In some circumstances, an option could be to make sections of a trail accessible. Where possible, however, recreation providers should balance these concerns with the need for uniform public access.

Implementation Strategies

1. Trail providers should develop their facilities and implement their programs in compliance with federal and state statutes on accessibility.
2. The federal government should provide technical assistance to public recreation agencies to comply with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the recommendations of the U.S. Access Board.
3. Trail providers should expand accessible trail opportunities and continue to distribute information on these trail opportunities.

CHAPTER 5

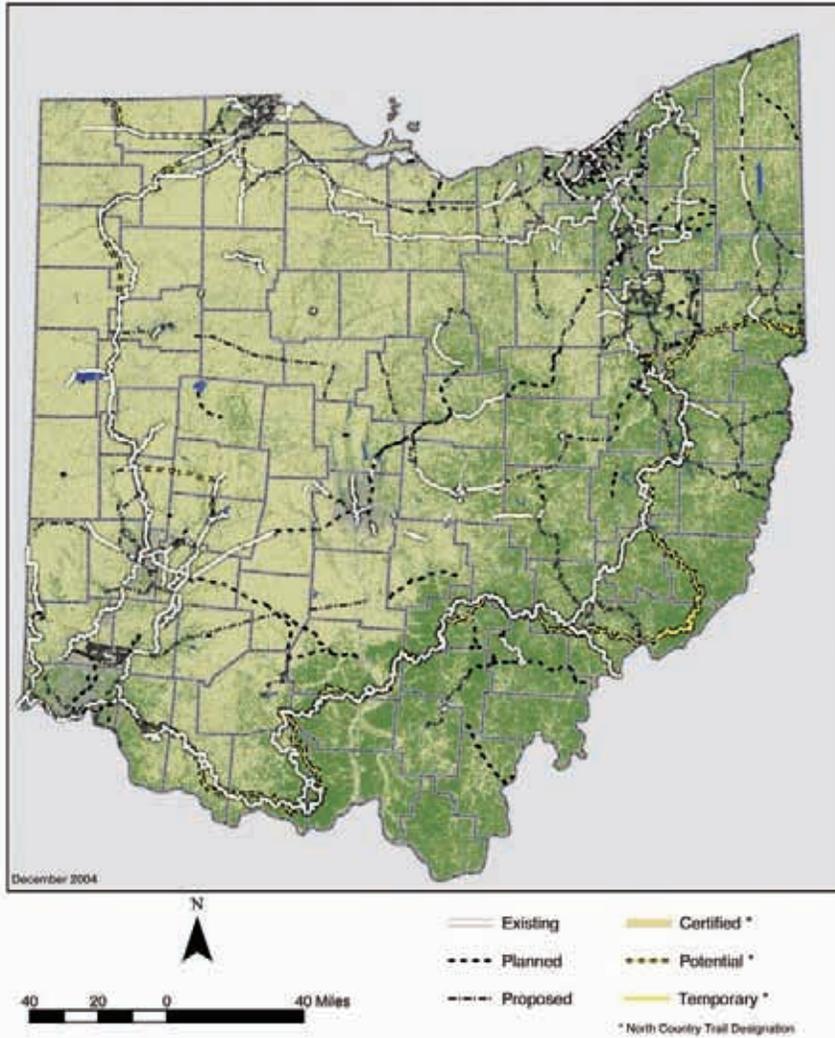
OHIO'S TRAIL SYSTEM

Introduction

A critical component of the state trails planning process is an ongoing effort to develop a comprehensive inventory of existing, planned and proposed trails in the state. This process has enabled ODNR to begin developing Geographic Information System (GIS) based maps that will assist agencies and organizations in trail planning efforts and help establish the basis for a statewide trails vision.

Trail corridors in this plan are categorized and color-coded in three ways: existing, planned, and potential. For purposes of definition, existing trails in this plan are those that are available for public use and are being actively managed and maintained by an agency or trail organization. Planned trails are corridors that are not yet open for use but are in some formal stage of planning, have been identified in a trails plan, or are actively being considered for trail development. An example of a planned trail would be a railroad corridor that is owned by a public agency but has not yet been developed or a corridor that has not yet been acquired but there are active efforts (e.g., a grant proposal has been submitted) by an agency to secure a right-of-way. A proposed trail is more conceptual in nature than a planned trail. It could be an abandoned railroad or a utility corridor that no public agency is actively pursuing but has the potential to some day be developed into a trail. There no doubt will be some inconsistencies in this identification system, especially when attempting to make precise differentiations between planned and proposed trails.

Figure 5.1
Statewide Trail System - All Trails



Trail Classifications

For planning and identification purposes, trail corridors have been further categorized into five classifications in this document: national, state, regional, county-wide, and community based trails. National trails are either dedicated components of the National Trails System or are actively being considered for such status. Statewide trails are of sufficient distance and scope that they traverse and impact numerous regions in the state. Regional trails are those that are located in multiple counties or are planned for multi-county areas. Countywide trails are those that are, for the most part, outside of local jurisdictions but stay within the geographic boundary of one county. Community trails are confined to a specific local jurisdiction but could connect or have the potential to connect to larger systems. Again, this classification system is not perfect, but is an attempt to provide meaningful differentiation among a wide variety of trail systems. Trails in these five categories are identified on the various maps in this plan using the following numbering system: national trails-1000s; statewide trails-2000s; regional trails-3000s; countywide trails-4000s; and community based trails-5000s.

Trail Names

The concept of a trail name seems simple enough. Nevertheless, many individual trails might actually be part of a larger system and consequently could be referred to in a number of ways. A good example is ODNR's 50-mile Little Miami State Park (LMSP) in southwestern Ohio. The LMSP is a popular rail-trail that is also a

component of the North Country National Scenic Trail, the Buckeye Trail, and the Ohio to Erie Trail. Trails that are part of a larger trail system (and have multiple names) create logistical identification problems on regional maps. As a result, the maps might not necessarily identify all of the possible trail names on each segment of a trail.

NATIONAL TRAILS

There are two national trails that pass through Ohio, the North Country National Scenic Trail and the American Discovery Trail. A third trail, the Underground Railroad, is included because of its status as a National Millennium Trail.

North Country National Scenic Trail

In March 1980, the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) was officially authorized when Congress passed and President Carter signed legislation (PL 96-199) that ultimately added eight new national scenic trails to the National Trails System. The concept of a “north country trail” was first proposed by the U.S. Forest Service in its 1965 “Nationwide System of Trails Study.” It was called the “Northern Country Trail” in that report and was included in the 1966 Department of the Interior publication entitled “Trails for America.” This report set the stage for the passage of the National Trails System Act in 1968. The name of the proposed route was changed to “North Country Trail” in that report.

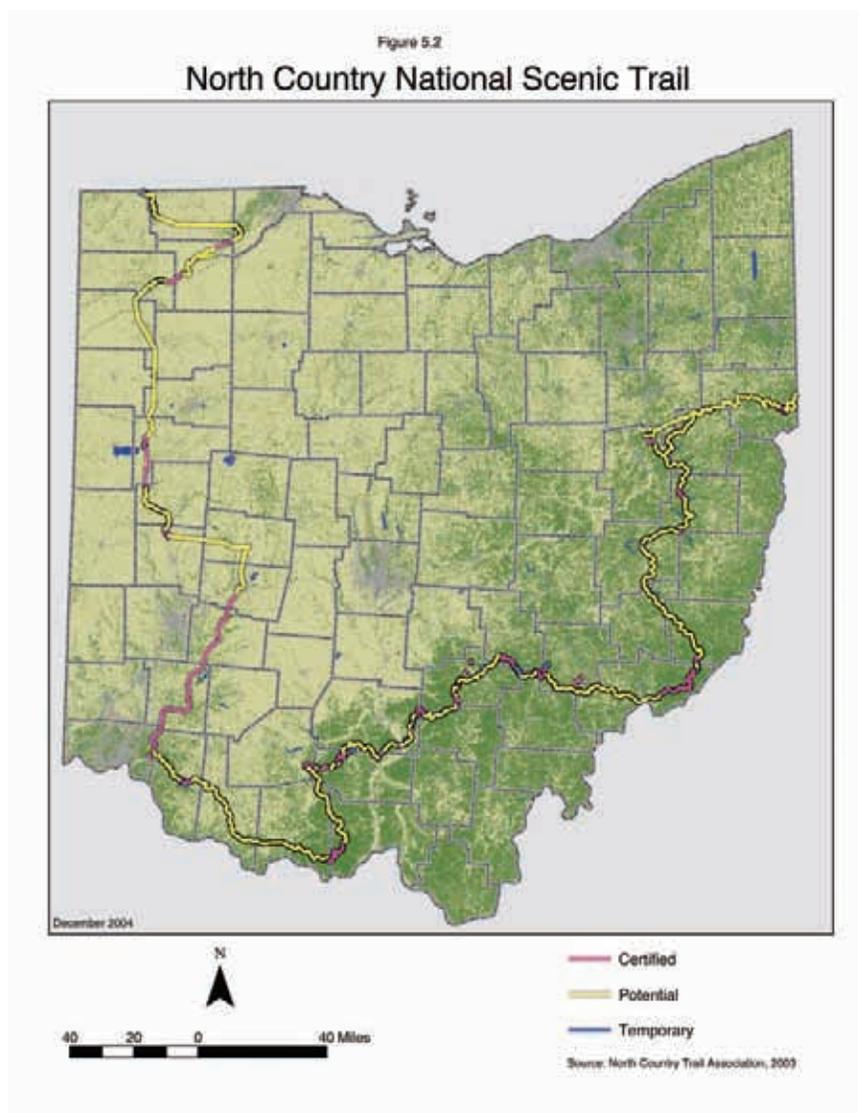
When Congress passed the National Trails System Act in 1968, two trails – the Appalachian and Pacific Crest – were immediately designated as National Scenic Trails. Fourteen other trail routes were named for study as potential additions to the system. The North Country Trail was one of those 14 potential trail routes.

A diverse, multi-agency planning committee completed a concep-

tual study in 1975 that identified a 10-mile wide corridor in which the trail route could ultimately be located. In 1982, the National Park Service adopted a Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use of the North Country Trail that gave several key directions to the trail, including the vision as a non-motorized, multi-use pedestrian trail. Today, the NCNST is a 4,100+ mile trail that crosses seven states from New York to North Dakota. Approximately 1,050

potential miles of the trail pass through Ohio.

The North Country Trail makes a u-shaped sweep through Ohio. It enters the state from Pennsylvania near Negley (Columbiana County) on a former railroad corridor and to passes through a diverse array of public and private lands and scenic/historic areas. It leaves the state in northwestern Ohio (into Michigan). For much of its route, the NCNST follows the Buckeye



Trail, although significant sections do diverge from the Buckeye Trail or are planned to in various locations.

While more than 1,000 miles of the North Country Trail pass through Ohio, to date only 320 miles (approximately 30 percent) are “certified.” Certified sections are essentially segments that are managed in accordance with the policies of the “Comprehensive Plan for Management and Use” and the responsible managing agency/ authority has granted permission to certify the trail as an official segment of the North Country Trail. Many more miles of uncertified segments are usable and open for public use.

The National Park Service (NSP) administers the North Country Trail in cooperation with other government agencies, private organizations, and individual landowners. NPS’s responsibilities include: ensuring the development, protection, and maintenance of the trail; coordinating the activities of the many partners in the trail’s development/management; and providing technical and financial assistance to cooperating interests. Because numerous public agencies and private interests are participating in the NCNST’s development, the type of trail, available support facilities, and rules and regulations governing the use of the trail varies from segment to segment.

The North Country Trail Association (NCTA) is a neutral non-profit organization that works in partnership with the National Park Service to build, maintain and promote the North Country Trail. The NCTA works through a



national network of volunteers, chapters, partner organizations and government agencies to accomplish its missions.

American Discovery Trail

The American Discovery Trail (ADT) is the nation’s first coast-to-coast, non-motorized trail that stretches approximately 6,800 miles from Delaware to California. The ADT is proposed as a new breed of national trail, linking communities, urban areas, and back-country to serve as the backbone of the national trails system. Although

a person can walk or ride the entire ADT today, Congress is considering legislation that would make the ADT a designated component of the national trails system.

The ADT enters Ohio from the west along two routes, converges just west of Cincinnati and exits Ohio near Belpre (Washington County) into West Virginia. The ADT routes in Ohio total approximately 510 miles. Like the North Country National Scenic Trail, the ADT follows the Buckeye Trail through much of its route in

Ohio (from Chesterhill in Morgan County to Eden Park in Cincinnati) and uses many of the least traveled public roads to connect to off-road sections.

The American Discovery Trail Society, a nationwide non-profit organization, administers the affairs of the ADT and coordinates the efforts of the many agencies and organizations that manage and maintain the trail. Each state through which the ADT passes also has a state coordinator who oversees ADT trail development and issues in that particular state.

The Underground Railroad, A National Millennium Trail

The Underground Railroad is neither “underground” nor a “railroad” but rather a cultural trail representing a network of sites, routes and events that tell the story of the thousands of people who escaped from slavery and those who assisted them in their pursuit of freedom. Underground Railroad activities covered all of the states in the eastern half of the United States, as well as Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

Ohio was an especially important Underground Railroad state since the Ohio River separated it from the slave-owning states of Kentucky and Virginia (now West Virginia); and Lake Erie separated it from Canada, the final destination for many runaway slaves. As a result, Ohio is particularly rich in Underground Railroad resources. To date, more than 800 Underground Railroad sites have

been researched and documented statewide and it is likely that hundreds more will be found in the future. The Underground Railroad represents an important story in American and Ohio history.

The Friends of Freedom Society, Inc. (FOFS) and the Ohio Underground Railroad Association (the research arm of FOFS) is a grassroots, all-volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to the research, identification, documentation and preservation of Underground Railroad sites in Ohio. The FOFS was the driving force to get the Underground Railroad designated as one of the nation’s 16 National Millennium Trails, visionary trails that reflect defining aspects in America’s history and culture.

STATEWIDE TRAILS

This plan recognizes two statewide trails, the Buckeye Trail and the Ohio to Erie Trail. Both are long distance trails that are statewide in scope and impact.

Buckeye Trail

The Buckeye Trail winds for nearly 1,300 miles and reaches into every corner of Ohio. First envisioned in the late 1950s as a trail that would link the Ohio River to Lake Erie, the Buckeye Trail eventually evolved into a large loop, branching both north and east from Cincinnati. The separate routes now rejoin in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park south of Cleveland and complete the connection to Lake Erie.

The Buckeye Trail follows old canal towpaths, abandoned railroads, rivers, lakes, rural roadways, and numerous footpaths through both public and private lands. It passes through many state and local parks, state and national forests, small towns and urban areas alike.

The trail is administered and maintained by the Buckeye Trail Association (BTA), a non-profit volunteer organization, in partnership with numerous public agencies and private landowners. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio Historical Society, the U.S. Forest Service (Wayne National Forest), Muskingum and Miami conservancy districts, and various metropolitan park districts and private landowners are active partners in the Buckeye Trail. The

BTA has developed a series of detailed maps for 24 sections of the Buckeye Trail. To view or order these maps, go to the BTA website, www.buckeyetrail.org. In the field, blue blazes are used to identify the Buckeye Trail.

While the Buckeye Trail does wind its way through numerous public and private lands, much of it is located on low use county and

township roads. The goal of the Buckeye Trail Association is to eventually have the entire route of the trail off roads, but this will take a long time to accomplish. The Buckeye Trail is primarily a footpath although portions are usable for bicycling and horseback riding.

The Buckeye Trail is also recognized as Ohio's only State Legacy Trail, a national program that was

Figure 5.4

Buckeye Trail



Buckeye Trail

Source: Buckeye Trail Association, 2003

developed to call attention to the nation's rail-trails and greenways, historic trails, cultural itineraries, recreation paths, waterways, and other alternative transportation corridors.

Ohio to Erie Trail

The Ohio to Erie Trail (OET) was envisioned in the early 1990s as the backbone of an interconnecting system of trails from the Ohio River to Lake Erie. When completed, the OET will be a mostly paved multi-purpose trail linking Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland following lands occupied by railroads and canals. In addition to connecting three of Ohio's major cities, the OET will pass through quiet woods, lush agricultural lands and numerous small towns along its 439-mile route. In central Ohio, the OET breaks into two routes, the Heart of Ohio Trail and Panhandle Trail, before joining again in northeast Ohio.

To date, more than 220 miles of the OET have been developed and are open to the public. There are, however, major sections of the OET that still must be acquired and developed or where the actual trail location must still be finalized. Approximately 93 miles of right-of-way must still be acquired to complete the acquisition phase of the OET and more than 200 miles of the OET still must be developed.

The Ohio to Erie Trail Fund (OETF) was established in 1991 to oversee the development of the OET. Its primary mission is to build the OET by raising money to



purchase land when no government agency is willing or able to make the acquisition vital to the trail's completion. OETF receives donations from numerous corporations, organizations, and individuals to finance its operation.

The OETF works closely with government agencies and trail groups that are building and maintaining the OET. Numerous government agencies (as many as 30-40) could

be involved with developing and managing sections of the OET when it is completed. In addition, OETF works with private landowners and railroads to secure rights-of-way for the OET. The OETF is actively seeking funding from the Ohio General Assembly (capital budget earmarks) and the U.S. Congress (federal transportation legislation earmarks) to build the trail.

The Ohio to Erie Trail Fund has identified a number of high priority areas for acquisition and development. These priorities are listed below starting from the southern leg of the trail in Cincinnati.

1. Sawyer Point (Cincinnati riverfront) through the Village of Terrace Park. This section includes the “Ohio River Trail” along the Ohio River from downtown Cincinnati through Anderson Township and eventually connecting to the Little Miami State Park, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ (ODNR) 50-mile rail-trail park. The Hamilton County Park District, Anderson Township, and ODNR will be key players in getting this section completed.
2. Columbus Area. Getting the OET through/around Columbus has been a challenge since the trail was initially conceived. Efforts are now focused on the acquisition of the Camp Chase easement west of downtown Columbus. Additional efforts involve securing a route through the downtown Arena District and land owned by Ross Labs, Columbus State Community College in cooperation with Nationwide Insurance. Sections of the trail along Alum Creek north of Morse Road are being completed by Columbus and Westerville.
3. Delaware County. Portions of the OET in Delaware County are completed, however, linking the trail through Galena and Sunbury is still a challenge and priority. The cities of Columbus and Westerville, Genoa Township, Preservation Parks of Delaware County, and Delaware County Friends of the Trail are the key entities involved in completing undeveloped sections in Delaware county.
4. The entire right-of-way through Holmes County is in public ownership; however, the southern section from Brinkhaven to Killbuck needs funding for development. Both ODNR and ODOT have committed development funds for a section in northern Holmes County (approximately 10 miles from Millersburg north to Fredricksburg in southern Wayne County).
5. Approximately 9.8 miles of right-of-way must be acquired in the area of Orrville to Clinton.
6. Cleveland Section. Like Cincinnati and Columbus, completing the trail through Cleveland presents many challenges. The trail needs to be developed from Harvard Avenue north into the Flats area then connect to the Lakefront Bikeway. The Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CCPC), in cooperation with numerous other partners in northeastern Ohio, has developed a conceptual plan for completing this section of trail.
7. Panhandle Section. Securing sections of right of way in the Panhandle section has been problematic. Specifically, there is opposition by railroads to permit trail development adjacent to active rail lines. Also, there is approximately 10 miles in Tuscarawas County from Newcomerstown to Stone Creek that needs development funds, including approximately \$300,000 for tunnel renovation near Stone Creek.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Introduction

To get a better perspective of Ohio's trails, the system is reviewed on a regional basis—using the five tourism regions adopted by the Ohio Department of Development's Division of Travel and Tourism. The format for each assessment includes a brief regional overview, references to the major trail systems, and some discussion on a county basis where extensive trail planning and/or development has taken place.

The inventory of trails data to follow was compiled from a variety of sources including public meetings, various publications and websites, trail managers, and applications for ODNR administered grant programs. Trails other than those portrayed on the regional maps are still considered part of a statewide system, especially if they emphasize or provide links. The trails featured in this plan focus on those that are located outside of traditional parks, forests, or other lands (although some of the trails do pass through these lands).

Loop trails, perimeter trails, and similar recreational trails contained within a “park” boundary are not included in this plan. These types of trails certainly are components of the state trail system, provide valuable outdoor recreation opportunities, and sometimes even link to larger trail systems. Nevertheless, the focus of this plan is the development of an interconnected system of recreational trails and most of those are outside traditional parks.

Maintaining an up-to-date inventory of existing, planned and proposed trails requires it be ever-changing, requiring constant revision as new trails are introduced into the system. Information on both existing and planned trails should be submitted to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Real Estate and Land Management for inclusion in the inventory.

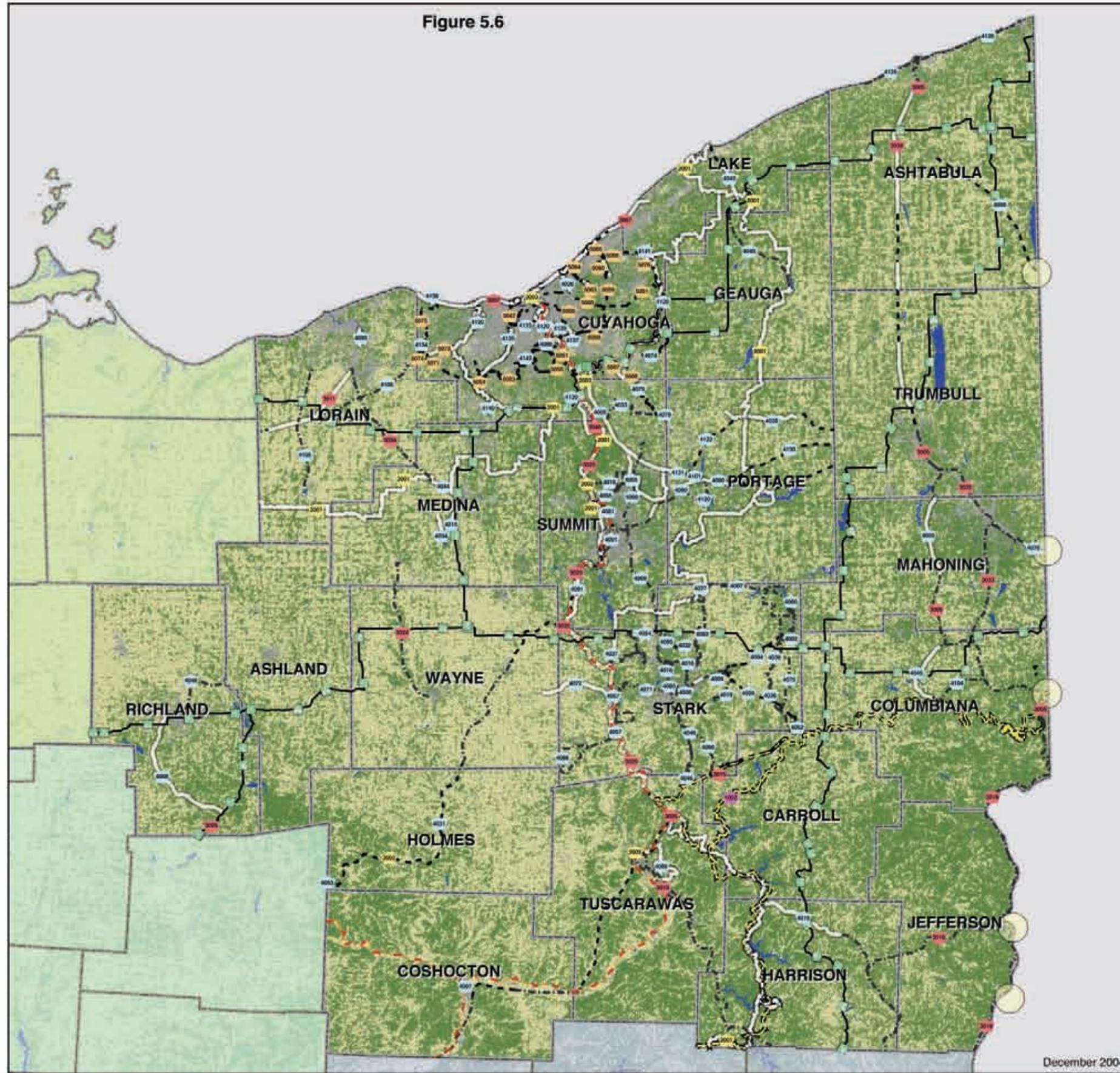
NORTHEAST OHIO

Overview

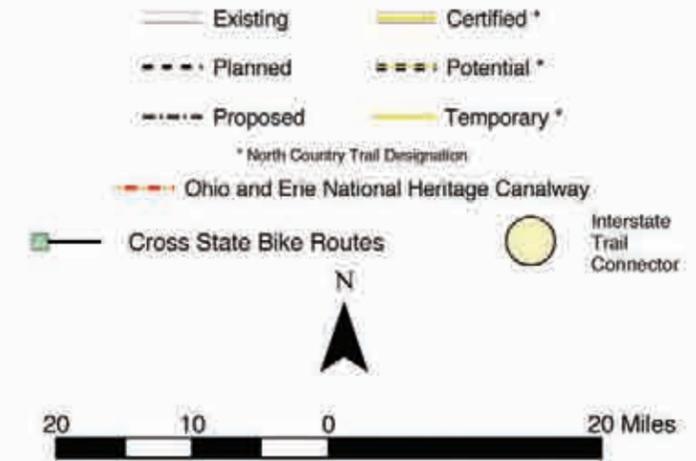
Northeast Ohio has one of the most well planned and extensive systems of recreational trails in Ohio. Northeast Ohio is the home of the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Canalway and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP). The national park's Towpath Trail is considered the spine of the canal way. Cleveland Metroparks' “Emerald Necklace” is a national model of one of the earliest efforts to develop a system of linear, interconnected parks. A lakefront bikeway is being planned by a partnership of government agencies and private interests. The North Country National Scenic Trail enters the state from Pennsylvania in northeastern Ohio and significant portions of the Buckeye Trail and the Ohio to Erie Trail also span this region.

The Northeast Ohio Regional Parks Consortium has been studying opportunities for linking existing parks and protecting river corridors for an eight-county portion of northeastern Ohio. The consortium developed a conceptual plan where more than 1,000 miles of new trails could be constructed in this region. In addition, a number of county and community trail plans have been completed in northeast Ohio. Public land managing agencies are successfully planning, acquiring, and developing numerous trails

Figure 5.6



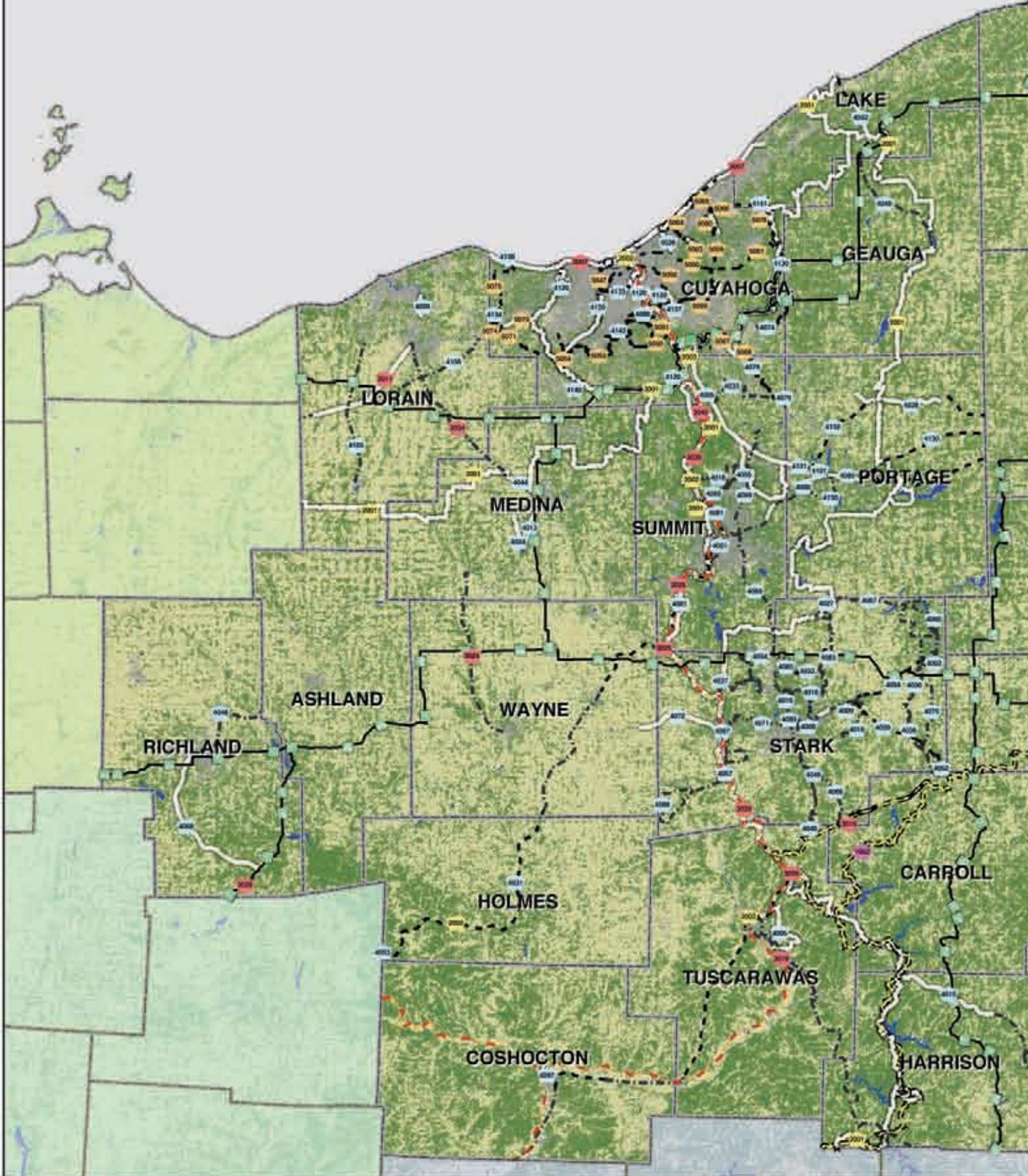
Statewide Trail System Northeast Region



Trail Number, Trail Name

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1000, North Country Trail | 4081, Cuyahoga Valley Township Trail |
| 1001, Buckeye Trail | 4083, Upper Middle Branch Trail |
| 1002, Ohio to Erie Trail | 4085, West Branch Trail |
| 1003, Tuscarawas Connector | 4086, West Creek Greenway Trail |
| 1005, Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway | 4088, Wilson Branch Connector |
| 1007, Lakeland Bikeway | 4094, Stark Electric Railway Trail |
| 1011, North Coast Inland Trail | 4096, Zora Valley Trail |
| 1013, Wandy Valley Loop | 4098, Pymatung Valley Greenway |
| 1018, Tri-State Trail | 4099, Chagrin River-Huron Bikeway |
| 1024, Rock-Hill Valley Trail | 4099, Ringway Trail |
| 1025, Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway | 4101, Franklin Connector Trail |
| 1026, Owl Creek Trail | 4104, Columbiana Greenway |
| 1032, Mahoning River Corridor | 4106, Amherst-Wellington Connector |
| 1033, Youngman Southern Rail-Trail Link | 4108, North Ridgely-Clinton Connector |
| 1034, Cuyahoga-Medina Connector | 4109, Emerald Necklace Trail |
| 1038, Western Reserve Greenway | 4120, Emerald Necklace Trail |
| 1040, Tuscarawas Trail | 4120, Emerald Necklace Trail |
| 1041, Akron-Kent Trail | 4120, Emerald Necklace Trail |
| 1042, Alliance-Owl Creek Trail | 4126, Lake Erie Coastal Trail |
| 1043, Metro Parks Serving Summit County Bike & Hike Trail | 4130, The Portage |
| 1046, Canton Downtown Connector | 4131, Madock Road Bike Lane |
| 1049, Canton-Louisville Connector | 4132, Cuyahoga Heritage Trail |
| 1053, Chippewa Trail | 4133, Big Creek Trail |
| 1054, Canton Creek Trail | 4134, Bradley Woods Reclamation Trail |
| 1058, Covered Bridge Trail | 4136, East 4th St |
| 1058, Cuyahoga Falls Northern Bikeway | 4136, Euclid Creek Reservation Trail |
| 1058, East Canton Connector | 4137, Garfield Park |
| 1059, Huron-Detroit Trail | 4138, Huntington Reservation |
| 1057, Huron-Grand Haven Loop | 4138, AM Creek Trail |
| 1058, Hocking Valley Trail | 4140, AM Branch Park Reclamation |
| 1059, Holmes County Trail | 4141, North Chagrin Reservation Trails |
| 1059, Hoover Park Connector | 4142, State Road Park Trail |
| 1059, Indian Creek-Cape Parkway Trail | 4143, Walworth Run |
| 1054, Chippewa Inlet Trail | 5004, East Palmyra Trail |
| 1056, Ivan Horna Trail | 5047, City Trail Loop |
| 1057, Jackson Connector | 5048, Treadway Creek Trail |
| 1042, Lake MetroParks Greenway Corridor | 5048, Brooklyn Heights Connector |
| 1044, Lower Trail | 5050, West Creek Connector |
| 1042, Little River Creek Greenway Trail | 5051, Rockside Road Connector |
| 1046, Lower Middle Branch Trail | 5052, Quarry Creek Trail |
| 1046, Meadowbrook Bike Trail | 5053, First Ring Loop |
| 1046, Maple Highlands Trail | 5054, Albany Creek |
| 1051, Mt. Creek MetroParks Bikeway | 5055, Quail Hill Corridor Bikeway |
| 1050, Minerva Connector | 5056, Kingsbury Run Greenway Trail |
| 1053, Malabar Valley Trail | 5057, Garfield Boulevard Bikeway |
| 1054, Mt. Pleasant-Logwood Trail | 5058, Broadway Greenway |
| 1055, Mill Brook Trail | 5059, First Suburban Loop |
| 1057, Niagara Glen Route | 5060, Shaker Lakes Trail |
| 1059, Rockspass Trail | 5061, University Spoke |
| 1060, North Country Loop | 5063, Forest Park to Can Park Trail |
| 1066, Pleasant Valley Trail | 5064, Forest Hills Park |
| 1067, Portage-Pike Connector | 5066, Euclid Creek |
| 1068, Richland S & O Trail | 5068, Euclid Chagrin Connector |
| 1069, Summit Railroad Trail | 5067, Oakwood Village Trails |
| 1071, Upper Lake Connector | 5068, Trueman Creek Trail |
| 1072, Steep Valley Trail | 5069, Walnut Hills Trail |
| 1074, Salton to Chagrin Falls Trail | 5070, North Diamond Trail |
| 1075, Stark-Farmstead Trail | 5071, Rocky River Bradley Connector |
| 1076, Stearns Bicycle Trail | 5072, Butterfield Ridge |
| 1079, Trueman Creek Trail | 5074, Bradley Woods Connector |
| 1080, Towson's Woods Trail | 5075, Big Bradley Trail Connector |
| | 5076, SOAR Center Road Trail |
| | 5077, Brooklyn Center Connector |
| | 5078, Bass Park Trail |
| | 5080, Euclid Quarry Trail |

Figure 5.6



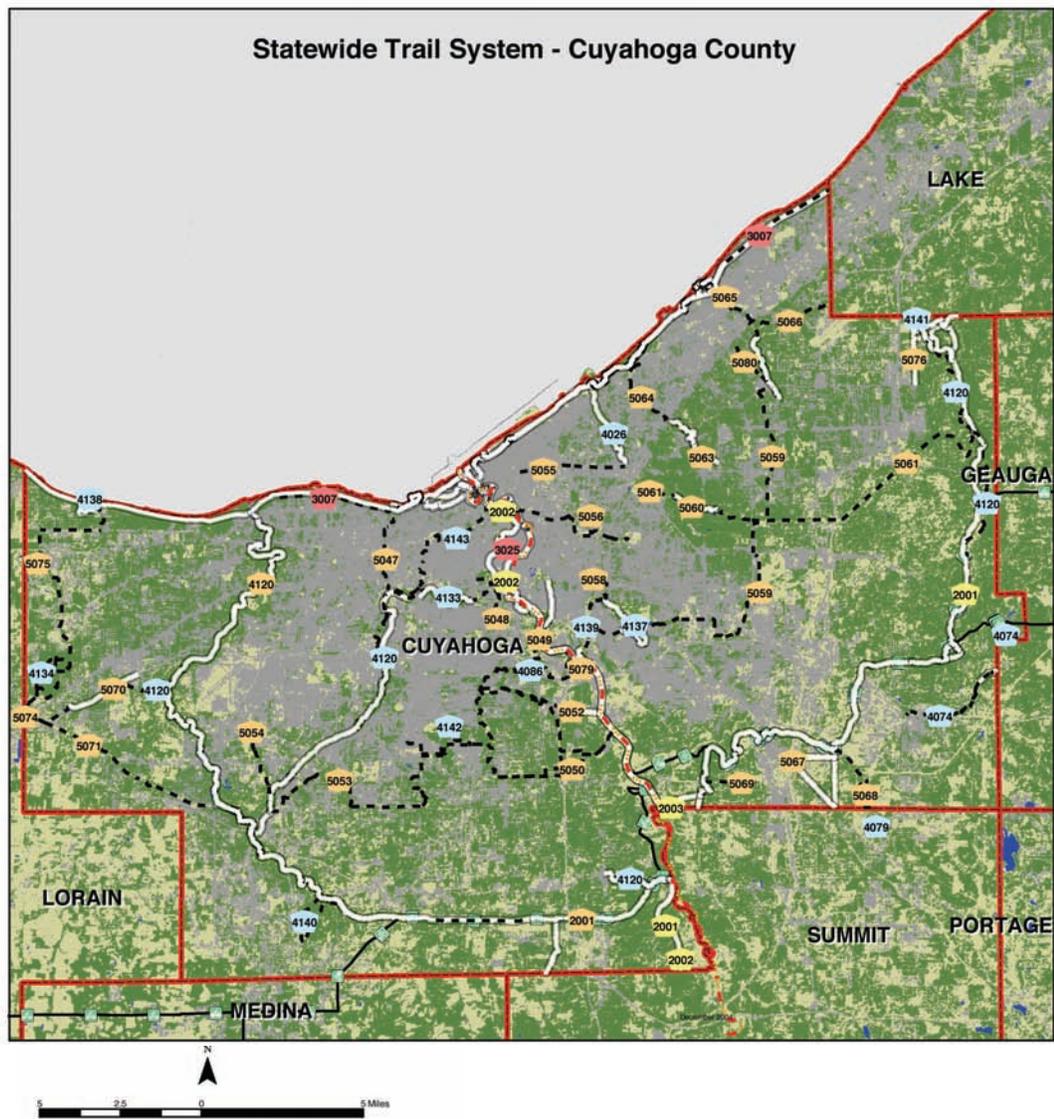
that connect communities, provide close to home recreation, and serve as destinations for others. close to home recreation, and serve as destinations for others.

Cuyahoga County

There are about 15 miles of inter-connecting trails within Cuyahoga County, according to the Cuyahoga County Greenspace Plan. The extension of the Towpath Trail into the Cuyahoga Valley and the Flats,

the completion of the Lakefront Bikeway, and the continued expansion of the Cleveland Metroparks' multi-use paths would establish the foundation for a truly comprehensive network of trails in Cuyahoga County. Communities and trail groups are also enthused about potential connections to these main arteries to provide recreational opportunities and alternative transportation choices.

Figure 5.7



CUYAHOGA COUNTY

Trail Number, Trail Name

- 2001, Buckeye Trail
- 2002, Ohio to Erie Trail
- 2003, Towpath Connector
- 3007, Lakefront Bikeway
- 3025, Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway
- 4005, MetroParks Serving Summit County Bike & Hike Trail
- 4026, Harrison Dillard Trail
- 4074, Solon to Chagrin Falls Trail
- 4079, Tinkers Creek Trail
- 4086, West Creek Greenway Trail
- 4120, Emerald Necklace Trail
- 4133, Big Creek Trail
- 4134, Bradley Woods Reservation
- 4135, East 49th St
- 4136, Euclid Creek Reservation Trail
- 4137, Garfield Park
- 4138, Huntington Reservation
- 4139, Mill Creek Trail
- 4140, Mill Stream Run Reservation
- 4141, North Chagrin Reservation Trails
- 4142, State Road Park Trail
- 4143, Walworth Run
- 5047, City Trail Loop
- 5048, Treadway Creek Trail
- 5049, Brooklyn Heights Connector
- 5050, West Creek Connector
- 5051, Rockside Road Connector
- 5052, Quarry Creek Trail
- 5053, First Ring Loop
- 5054, Abrams Creek
- 5055, Dual Hub Corridor Bikeway
- 5056, Kingsbury Run Greenway Trail
- 5057, Garfield Boulevard Bikeway
- 5058, Broadway Greenway
- 5059, First Suburbs Loop
- 5060, Shaker Lakes Trail
- 5061, University Spoke
- 5063, Forest Park to Cain Park Trail
- 5064, Forest Hills Park
- 5065, Euclid Creek
- 5066, Euclid Chagrin Connector
- 5067, Oakwood Village Trails
- 5068, Tinkers Creek Trail
- 5069, Walton Hills Trail
- 5070, North Olmsted Trail
- 5071, Rocky River Bradley Connection
- 5073, Butternut Ridge
- 5074, Bradley Woods Connector
- 5075, Bay Bradley Trail Connection
- 5076, SOM Center Road Trail
- 5077, Brooklyn Center Connector
- 5079, Bacci Park Trail
- 5080, Euclid Quarry Trail

Lorain County

Lorain County Metroparks, in partnership with numerous communities in the county, has developed a countywide trail and bikeway plan that envisions potential regional connections as well as connections between individual communities.

The backbone of this system is the eastern portion of the North Coast Inland Trail. The trail was first conceived in 1989 to go from Lorain County west to the outskirts of Toledo. The trail begins in Elyria and follows old railroad lands approximately 12 miles southwest through Oberlin to Kipton. It continues west toward Toledo. Lorain County also has a number of small trail systems and planned bikeways in communities like Avon, Avon Lake, Lorain, Sheffield, Sheffield Lake, and North Ridgeville.

There are three additional corridors that have been identified in Lorain County's plan that could enhance the system. The Elyria-Medina connector would link the North Coast Inland Trail in Elyria and travel north through Grafton into Medina County along a railroad right-of-way. The Amherst-Wellington connector travels from Amherst Township south to Wellington along another railroad right-of-way. Finally, Lorain Metroparks is planning the Pony Trail from the southern portion of Amherst through the city of Lorain to Lake Erie.

Medina County

A Medina County Bike/Hike Plan was completed in 2001 by a group that included the Medina County Park District, the cities of Medina, Brunswick, Wadsworth, and the Village of Seville. The plan presents a coordinated approach to the development of a multi-purpose trail system for Medina County with opportunity to provide several links to trail systems and places of interest in adjoining counties.

Portage County

A coalition of agencies and organizations in Portage County has developed an ambitious plan to develop a countywide system of multi-purpose trails that will also provide linkages to adjacent counties. The backbone of the county system is called "The Portage", an east-west corridor that will eventually link with the Western Reserve Greenway, trails operated by Metroparks Serving Summit County, and the Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor.

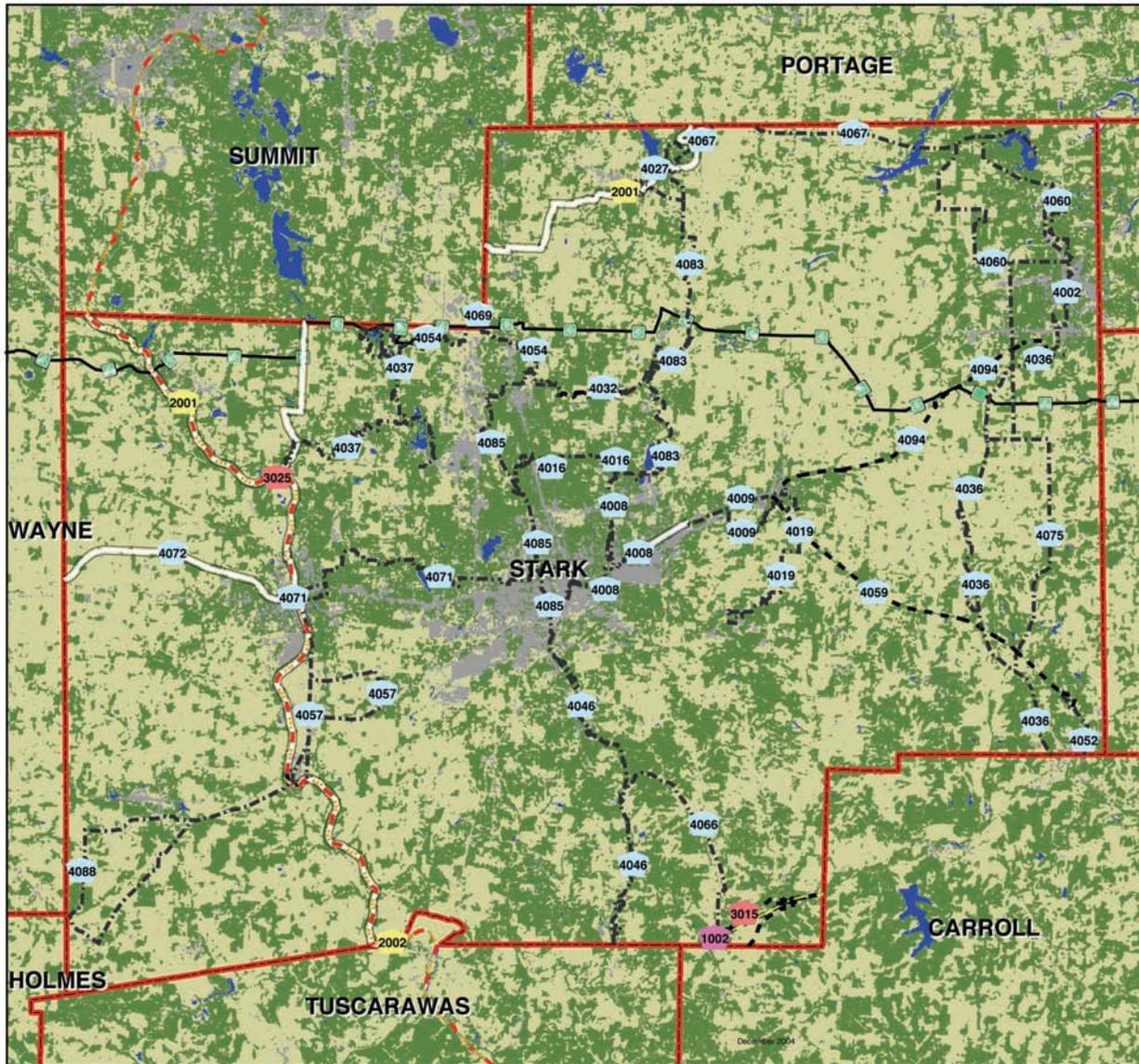
Many segments of "The Portage" are complete, while others are under construction or await funding. Segments have been developed in the cities of Kent and Ravenna, in Franklin Township, and by the Portage County Park District.

Stark County

The Stark County Park District spearheaded a planning process that resulted in the Stark County Trail and Greenway Plan. The Plan identifies no less than 20 existing and potential corridors that would eventually comprise an extensive countywide trail system. Major trails include the Ohio to Erie Canal corridor trails, the Sippo Valley Trail, a proposed Canton Downtown Connector Trail, the Louisville Trolley Trail, and the Mahoning Valley Trail.

Figure 5.8

Statewide Trail System - Stark County



STARK COUNTY

Trail Number, Trail Name

- 1002, North Country Trail
- 2001, Buckeye Trail
- 2002, Ohio to Erie Trail
- 3015, Sandy Valley Loop
- 3025, Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway
- 4002, Alliance-Deer Creek Trail
- 4008, Canton Downtown Connector
- 4009, Canton Louisville Connector
- 4016, Covered Bridge Trail
- 4019, East Canton Connector
- 4027, Hartville-Quail Hollow Loop
- 4032, Hoover Park Connector
- 4036, Iron Horse Trail
- 4037, Jackson Connector
- 4046, Lower Middle Branch Trail
- 4052, Minerva Connector
- 4054, Mt. Pleasant-Dogwood Trail
- 4057, Navarre Bike Route
- 4059, Nickelplate Trail
- 4060, North Country Loop
- 4066, Pleasant Valley Trail
- 4067, Pontius-Price Connector
- 4069, Scenic Railroad Trail
- 4071, Sippo Lake Connector
- 4072, Sippo Valley Trail
- 4075, Stark Farmland Trail
- 4083, Upper Middle Branch Trail
- 4085, West Branch Trail
- 4088, Wilmot-Brewster Connector
- 4094, Stark Electric Railway Trail

December 2004

	Existing		Certified *
	Planned		Potential *
	Proposed		Temporary *

* North Country Trail Designation

Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway

Cross State Bike Routes

N

5 2.5 0 2.5 5 Miles

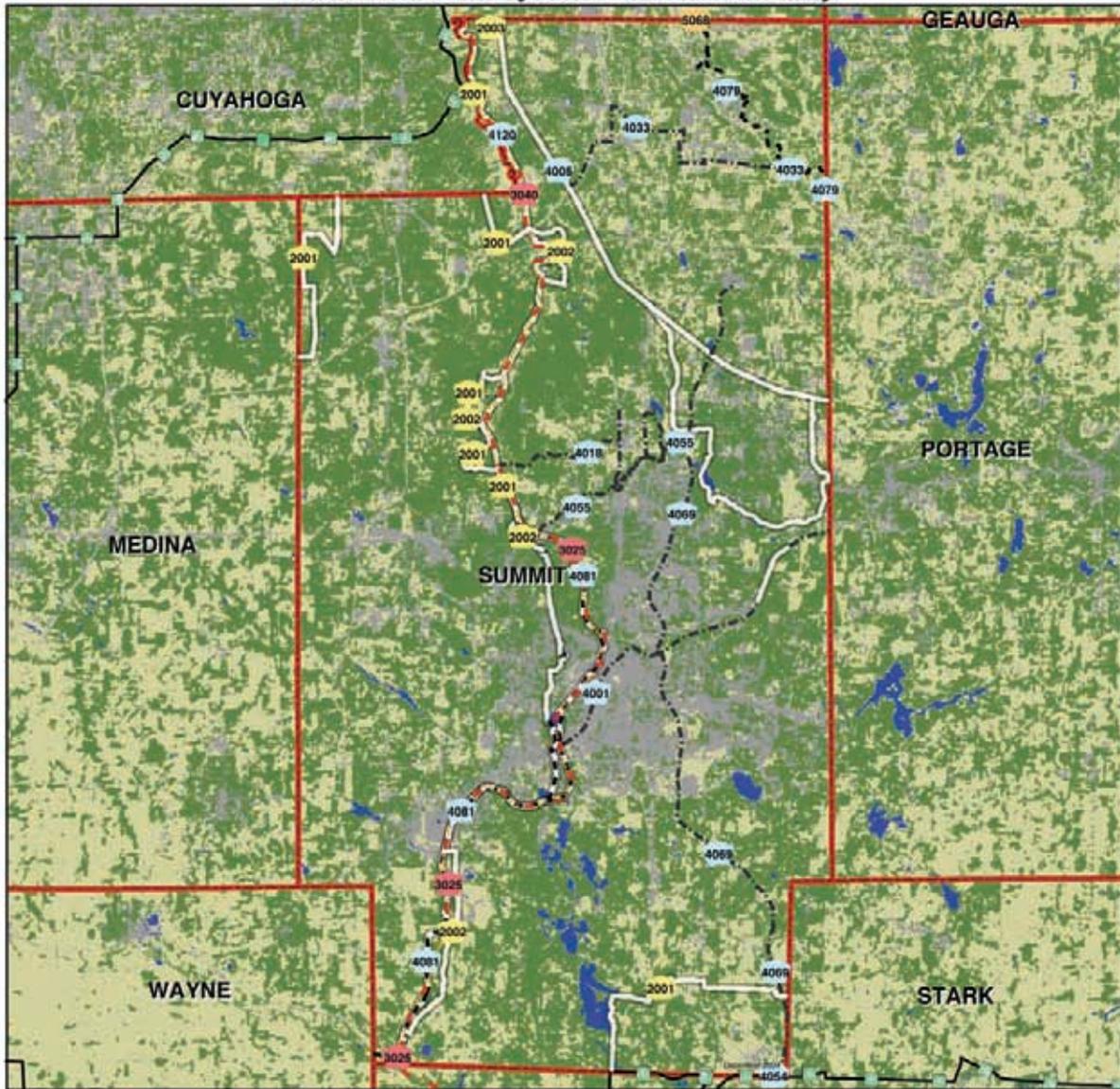
Summit County

Summit County is another north-eastern Ohio county that is fortunate to have its own trail and greenway plan. The Summit County Trail and Greenway Plan was guided by a multi-agency coordinating committee and received input from numerous agencies and organizations. The Plan provides a bold vision for a regional network of open spaces, cultural and natural resources linked together by public access. This planning effort was completed in two phases. Phase 1 focused on the area commonly referred to as the Canal Corridor. Phase 2, completed in 2001, focused on identifying local and regional connections throughout the county. Numerous trails are identified in the Plan as priorities for future development, including the extension of the tow-path trail in downtown Akron. Summit County is another north-eastern Ohio county that is fortunate to have its own trail and greenway plan. The Summit County Trail and Greenway Plan was guided by a multi-agency

coordinating committee and received input from numerous agencies and organizations. The Plan provides a bold vision for a regional network of open spaces, cultural and natural resources linked together by public access. This planning effort was completed in two phases. Phase 1 focused on the area commonly referred to as the Canal Corridor. Phase 2, completed in 2001, focused on identifying local and regional connections throughout the county. Numerous trails are identified in the Plan as priorities for future development, including the extension of the tow-path trail in downtown Akron.

Figure 5.9

Statewide Trail System - Summit County



December 2004

SUMMIT COUNTY

Trail Number, Trail Name

- 2001, Buckeye Trail
- 2002, Ohio to Erie Trail
- 2003, Towpath Connector
- 3025, Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway
- 3040, Towpath Trail
- 4001, Akron-Kent Trail
- 4005, MetroParks Serving Summit County Bike & Hike Trail
- 4018, Cuyahoga Falls Northern Bikeway
- 4033, Indian Creek-Case Parkway Trail
- 4054, Mt. Pleasant-Dogwood Trail
- 4055, Mud Brook Trail
- 4069, Scenic Railroad Trail

- 4079, Tinkers Creek Trail
- 4081, Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail
- 4120, Emerald Necklace Trail
- 4120, Emerald Necklace
- 5068, Tinkers Creek Trail

- Existing
 - Planned
 - · · Proposed
 - Certified *
 - Potential *
 - Temporary *
- * North Country Trail Designation
- Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway
 - Cross State Bike Routes



The Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway

The Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway is envisioned as an approximately 110-mile long corridor of protected open space that will connect Lake Erie at Ashtabula Harbor with the Ohio River around East Liverpool. This greenway will include trail development that will be built on railroad lands and adjacent corridors running through farmlands, woodlands, along waterways, and over gently rolling hills. Individual components of this greenway system are being protected and developed by an array of park districts, local communities and private organizations. Approximately 39 miles of trail have been built to date.

Some individual segments of the greenway are referred as the Western Reserve Greenway (Ashtabula and Trumbull counties), the Mill Creek Metroparks Bikeway (Mahoning County) and the Little Beaver Creek Greenway Trail (Columbiana County). Major uncompleted sections include a segment from Ashtabula Harbor to south of Interstate 90, sections in southern Trumbull and Mahoning counties, and major sections through Columbiana County.

Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Canalway

The Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Canalway is a 110-mile heritage greenway that primarily follows the route of the old Ohio & Erie Canal through four north-eastern Ohio counties. Starting in the Cleveland Flats area near Lake Erie, the canal way includes the

Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail, the Canalway National Scenic Byway, and the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad as it goes south through Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark and Tuscarawas counties. Along its route, numerous public agencies and private organizations have developed various segments of multi-purpose trails that serve as the spine of the canal way. These agencies work in cooperation with the non-profit Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Coalition (OECCC) to preserve, interpret, and develop the natural, historic and recreation resources along the Ohio & Erie Canal. OECCC also works in partnership with the Cleveland-based Ohio Canal Corridor and the Ohio & Erie Canal Association, the management entity of the canal way.

Ohio to Erie Trail

The two routes of the Ohio to Erie Trail (OFT) converge in north-eastern Ohio. Major sections are awaiting development in Holmes and Wayne counties (Heart of Ohio) as well as Coshocton and Tuscarawas counties (Panhandle). Completing the trail north of Harvard Avenue in Cleveland to the Flats area is another general priority.

Tri State Trail

The Tri State Trail is a combination of existing and planned trails and shared-roadway bicycle routes that will eventually link the tri-state area of Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Ultimately, this system would provide linkages to the Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway (and Lake Erie) and to western Pennsylvania, through the north panhandle of West Virginia to

the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

The Tri State Trail is planned as two (north and south) corridors with connecting corridors on both sides of the Ohio River (from East Liverpool to Bridgeport in Ohio). Both corridors originate in Zoarville. The North Corridor is more than 93 miles in length and will eventually connect Zoarville to Chartier's Creek, Pennsylvania. Approximately 25 percent (23 miles) of this section is constructed, including the Conotton Creek Trail in Harrison County. More than 50 percent of the North Corridor would be on shared roadways. Interstate connections are being considered on the Ft. Steuben Bridge and the Veteran Memorial Bridge.

The South Corridor is approximately 138 miles in length and will connect Zoarville to Washington, Pennsylvania. The South Corridor would follow roads south from Zoarville through Dover, New Philadelphia, Uhrichsville, and Dennison on its way to the existing National Road Bikeway in St. Clairsville. Proposed on- and off-road sections would take the trail to Bridgeport where it could cross the Ohio River on the U.S. 40/250 (National Road) bridge.

SOUTHEAST OHIO

Overview

The southeast portion of Ohio is arguably the most scenic region in the state and the home of many large public land holdings that serve as major tourist attractions while providing a multitude of outdoor recreational opportunities. Virtually all of these lands have extensive systems of recreational trails. Major sections of the North Country National Scenic Trail, the American Discovery Trail and the Buckeye Trail pass through many of these public lands as they traverse southern Ohio counties and communities. There is also a possibility of someday using remaining Ohio & Erie canal lands south of Columbus to eventually connect to Portsmouth on the Ohio River.

Recreational trail development outside of traditional parks and forests is somewhat limited in southeast Ohio. This area is not as heavily populated as other regions in Ohio and there are few planning efforts aimed at developing interconnected trail systems. There are, however, some significant efforts in various stages of planning and development that will make this region an even more important recreation and tourist area.

Figure 5.10

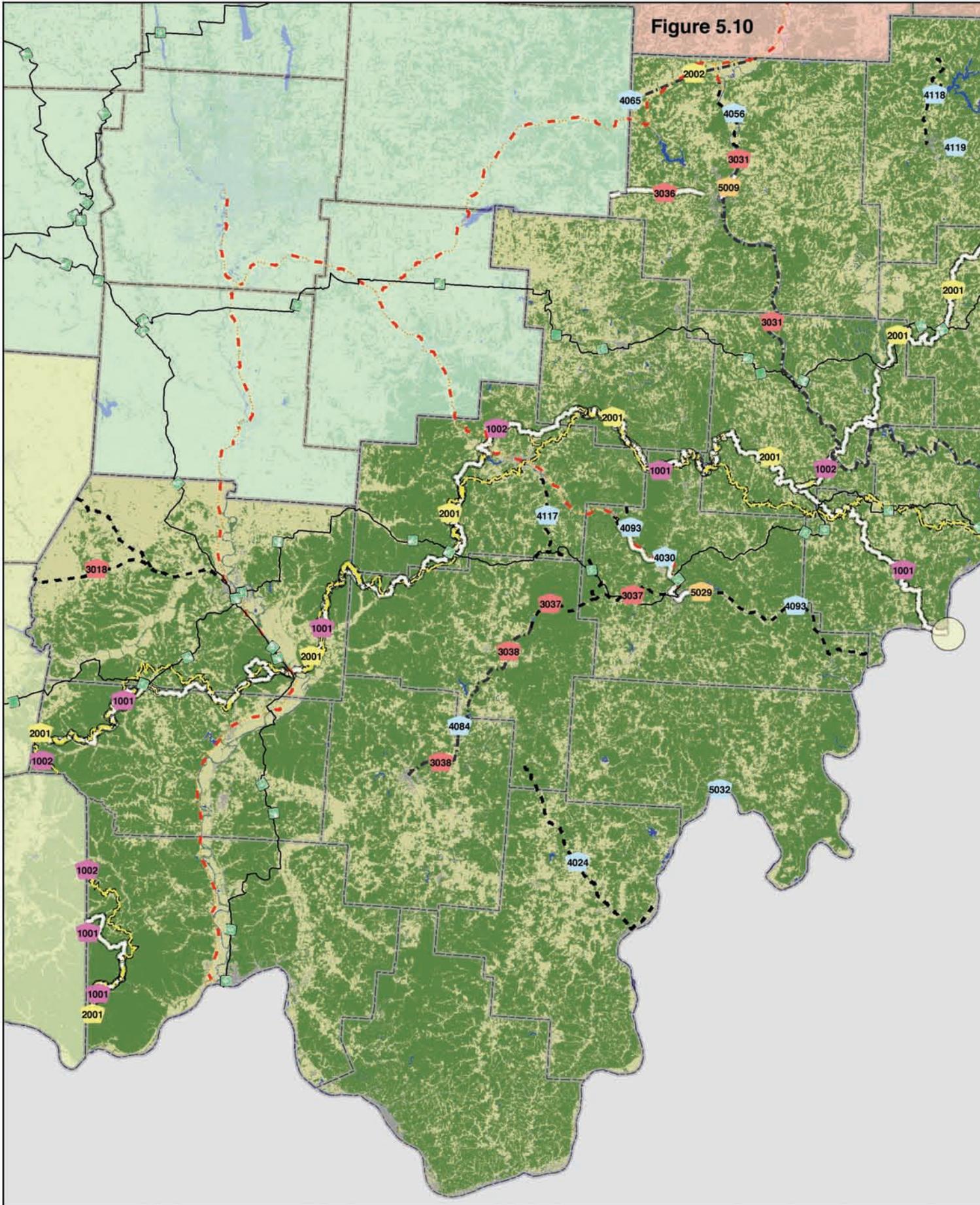
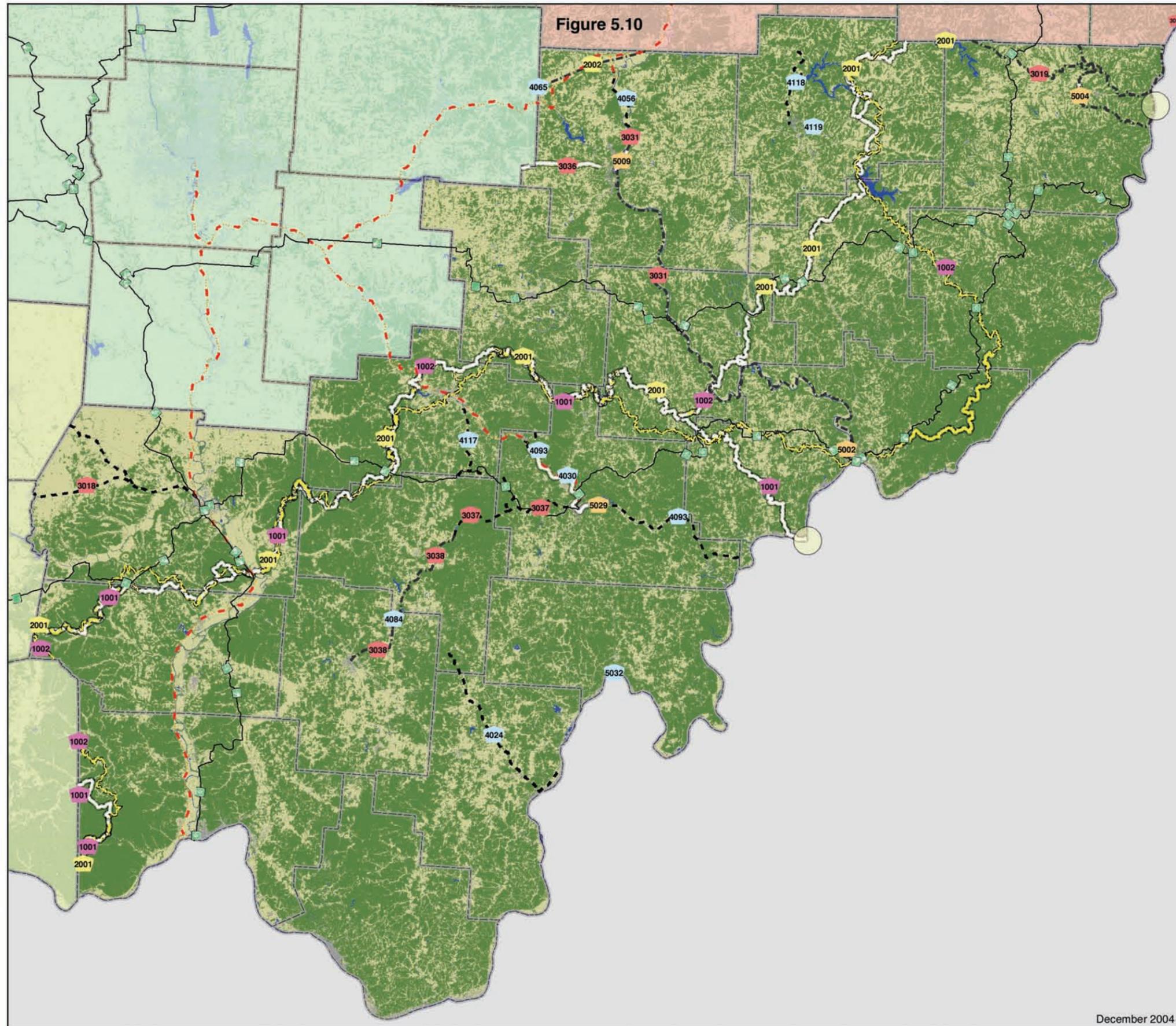
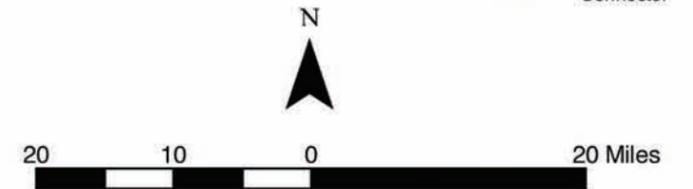


Figure 5.10



Statewide Trail System Southeast Region

- Existing
- - - Planned
- · - Proposed
- Certified *
- - - Potential *
- Temporary *
- * North Country Trail Designation
- - - Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway
- Cross State Bike Routes
- Interstate Trail Connector



Trail Number, Trail Name

- 1001, American Discovery Trail
- 1002, North Country Trail
- 2001, Buckeye Trail
- 2002, Ohio to Erie Trail
- 3018, Tri-County Triangle Trail
- 3019, Tri-State Trail
- 3031, Muskingum Valley Greenway
- 3036, US 40 Bike Lanes - Brownsville to Zanesville
- 3037, Moonville Rail Trail
- 3038, Zaleski-Jackson Connector
- 4024, Gallia County Bikeway
- 4030, Hockhocking Adena Bikeway
- 4056, Muskingum Recreational Trail
- 4065, Panhandle Recreational Trail
- 4084, Wellston Bike Path
- 4093, Athens County Rail Trails
- 4117, Logan-Union Furnace Trail
- 4118, Great Guernsey Trail
- 4119, Great Guernsey Trail East
- 5002, Muskingum River Bike and Pedestrian Trail
- 5004, National Road Bikeway
- 5009, Zane's Landing Trail
- 5029, East State Street Bike Path
- 5032, Pomeroy Riverfront Walkway

Gallia County Hike and Bike Trail

The Gallia County Hike and Bike Trail is envisioned as a 28-mile trail along a former CSX railroad right-of-way. The trail extends south along the Ohio River Valley to the City of Gallipolis. After leaving Gallipolis, the right-of-way winds northwest through the unglaciated Appalachian foothills of Gallia and Vinton counties.

The O.O. McIntyre Park District has developed sections of the Gallia County Hike and Bike Trail. The Park District owns or has purchased easements on a majority of the 28 miles of right-of-way, although there are three small segments north of the Village of Bidwell that are not in public ownership. Future development will focus on the sections south of Bidwell.

Great Guernsey Trail

The Great Guernsey Trail is envisioned as a countywide trail system that will eventually link to other regional trail systems and the Buckeye Trail. One phase of the Great Guernsey Trail would mostly follow abandoned railroad lands from the City of Cambridge north to the Village of Kimbolton and eventually link to Salt Fork State Park. An east-west section of the Great Guernsey Trail is also proposed along a railroad right-of-way east of Interstate 77.

Hockhocking Adena Bikeway

The 17-mile Hockhocking Adena Bikeway is one of the major existing trail systems in southeastern Ohio. It follows the Old Columbus and Hocking Valley Railroad and

connects the cities of Nelsonville and Athens. A unique feature of the Hockhocking Adena Bikeway is that it links Ohio University in Athens and Hocking College in Nelsonville. The City of Athens recently extended the Hockhocking Adena Bikeway with the completion of the East State Street Bikeway with plans to possibly extend the trail to Strouds Run State Park.

Muskingum River Greenway

The Muskingum River is a rich cultural and natural resource that is predominately located in southeastern Ohio. The Muskingum Valley Park District and the City of Zanesville have developed trails along the northern section of the river corridor. There is also potential to develop additional segments of recreational trail along sections of railroad right-of-way south all the way to the City of Marietta on the Ohio River. Such a trail system could eventually connect a series of locks and dams that are components of the Muskingum River State Park to the City of Marietta's Bike Trail.

Tri-County Triangle Trail

Significant segments of the Tri-County Triangle Trail are located in the southeast Ohio region. The Tri-County Triangle Trail is proposed to link three cities in three south central Ohio counties: Chillicothe in Ross County, Washington Court House in Fayette County, and Greenfield in Highland County. The Tri-County Triangle Trail will eventually provide connections to Xenia, Dayton, Cincinnati and Columbus. The Tri-County

Triangle Trail is approximately 52 miles in length that will be developed primarily on abandoned railroad rights-of-way. It is a classic partnership project involving Tri-County Trail, Inc., the National Park Service, the Ross County Park District, and other local government entities.

To date, approximately one-half of the proposed 52 miles have been acquired and/or developed. Significant segments between Chillicothe and Greenfield and Greenfield and Washington Court House must still be acquired.

Tri State Trail

The proposed southern corridor of the Tri State Trail is located in the southeast region (see the northeast regional assessment for more information). The Tri State Trail includes the National Road Bikeway in St. Clairsville. The proposed sections include signed shared roadways and the additional use of railroad rights-of-way. Crossing the Ohio River to connect to trail systems in West Virginia is a significant development barrier.

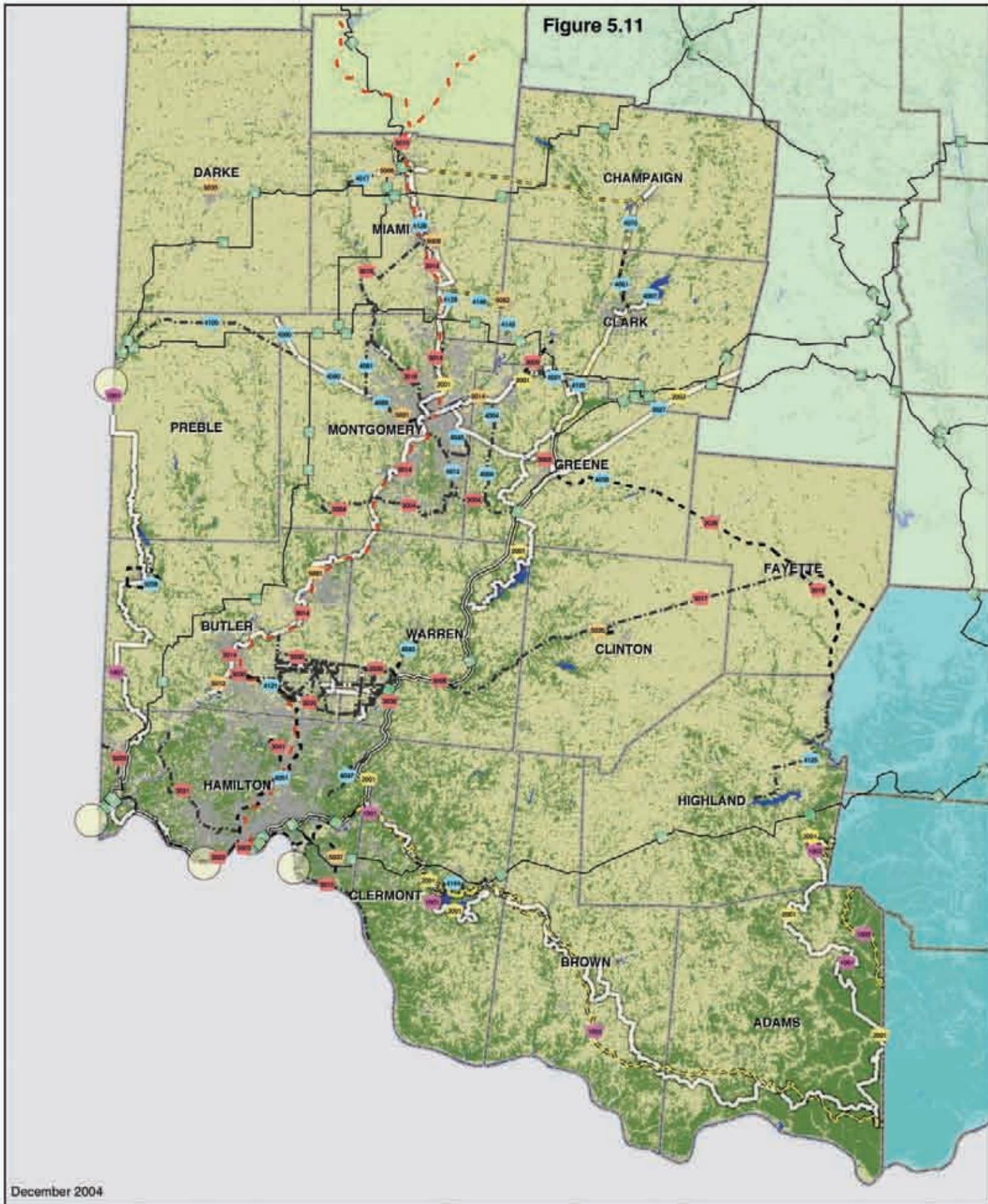
SOUTHWEST OHIO

Overview

Southwest Ohio is another region in the state that is characterized by extensive systems of interconnected recreational trails. For the most part, these trail systems are located in proximity to the population centers along Interstates 71 and 75, near riparian corridors, on old canal lands, and on abandoned railroad rights-of-way. Southwest Ohio is home to one of the state's first and longest rail-trails, ODNR's Little Miami State Park. The popularity of the state park helped stimulate interest in trails throughout the region. Segments of the North Country National Scenic Trail, American Discovery Trail, Buckeye Trail and Ohio to Erie Trail are also located in southwest Ohio.

Park districts and other local government agencies in southwest Ohio have been particularly active in planning and developing trails. In addition, the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission and the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Council of Governments have been leaders for some time in bicycle and pedestrian planning and development.

Figure 5.11



Statewide Trail System Southwest Region

- Existing
- Planned
- ⋯ Proposed
- Certified *
- Potential *
- Temporary *
- * North Country Trail Designation
- Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway
- Cross State Bike Routes
- Interstate Trail Connector



Trail Number, Trail Name

- 1001, American Discovery Trail
- 1002, North Country Trail
- 2001, Buckeye Trail
- 2002, Ohio to Erie Trail
- 3002, Creekside Trail
- 3003, Eastern Riverfront Trail
- 3004, Germantown-Spring Valley Connector
- 3008, Little Miami Scenic Trail
- 3009, Mad River Recreational Trail
- 3010, Miami Erie Canal
- 3012, Ohio River Trail
- 3014, Great Miami River Recreation Trail, Route 25
- 3016, Stillwater River to Troy Bikeway
- 3017, Tri-County Greenbelt
- 3018, Tri-County Triangle Trail
- 3021, Western Corridor Trail
- 3022, Western Riverfront Trail
- 3023, Whitewater Canal Trail
- 3026, Wellston Line Trail
- 3027, Prairie Grass Trail
- 3030, Miami to Miami Trail
- 3041, Woodlawn to Wyoming Greenway
- 4004, Bellbrook-Fairborn Connector
- 4007, Buck Creek Trail
- 4012, Centerville-Dayton Connector
- 4017, Covington-Piqua Connector
- 4021, Fairborn-Yellow Springs Connector
- 4038, Jamestown Connector
- 4040, Kettering Spur
- 4043, Lebanon YMCA Bikeway
- 4047, Madeira-Loveland Trail
- 4051, Mill Creek Greenway
- 4061, Northern Trail
- 4070, Simon Kenton Trail
- 4089, Wolf Creek Bikeway
- 4090, Wolf Creek Recreation Trail, Route 38
- 4091, Wolf Creek-Englewood Connector
- 4100, Preble County Greenway Trail
- 4102, Huffman Prairie Overlook Trail
- 4120, Ellis Spur Bikeway
- 4121, Port Union-Gilmore Ponds Historic Canal Trail
- 4125, Two Lakes Trail
- 4128, Miami County Bikeway
- 4144, Williamsburg - Batavia Hike Bike Trail
- 4145, New Carlisle - Raynor Park Trail
- 4146, New Carlisle - Tipp City
- 5006, Piqua Multi-Use Trail
- 5008, Troy Bike and Trail Way
- 5013, Fairfield Bike Path
- 5014, Fairborn's Wright Bros Huffman Prairie Bikeway
- 5030, Greenville Creek Trail
- 5031, McGee Bikeway
- 5034, 4-C Bicentennial Trail
- 5035, Luther Warren Peace Park
- 5037, Five Mile Trail
- 5038, Oxford O Trail
- 5081, Smith Park Trail Spur
- 5082, New Carlisle Trail

Figure 5.11

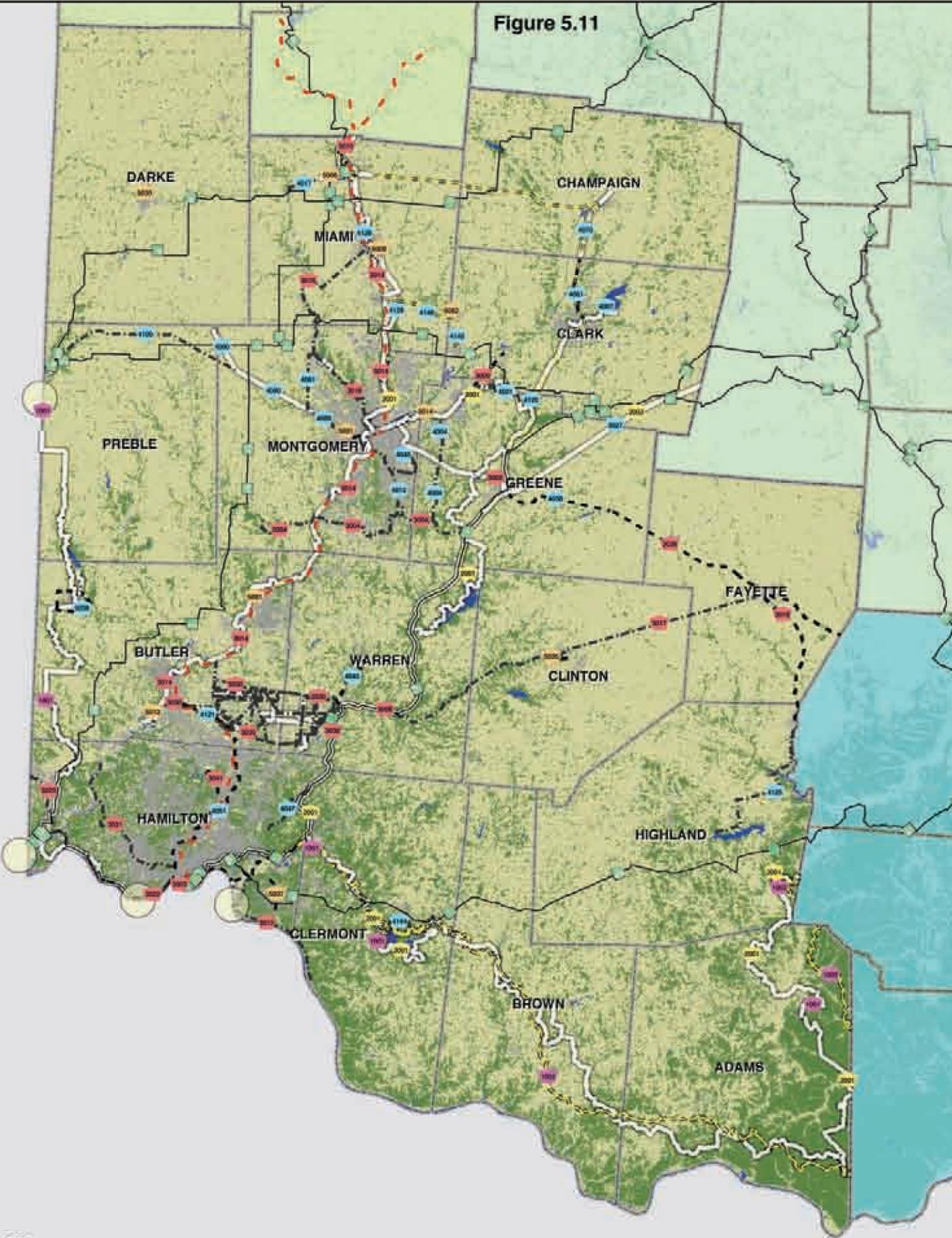
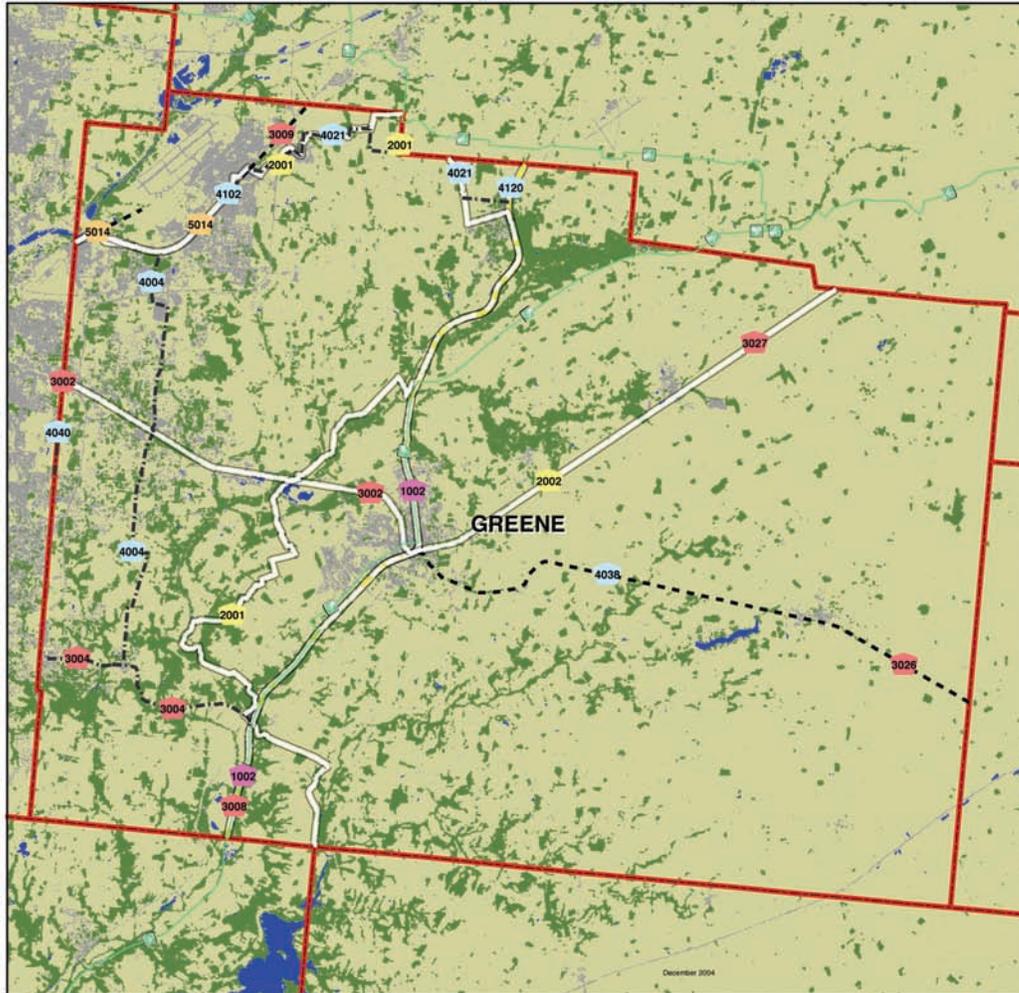


Figure 5.12

Statewide Trail System - Greene County



- GREENE COUNTY**
Trail Number, Trail Name
 1002, North Country Trail
 2001, Buckeye Trail
 2002, Ohio to Erie Trail
 3002, Creekside Trail
 3004, Germantown-Spring Valley Connector
 3008, Little Miami Scenic Trail
 3009, Mad River Recreational Trail
 3026, Wellston Line Trail
 3027, Prairie Grass Trail
 4004, Bellbrook-Fairborn Connector
 4021, Fairborn-Yellow Springs Connector
 4038, Jamestown Connector
 4040, Kettering Spur
 4102, Huffman Prairie Overlook Trail
 4120, Ellis Spur Bikeway
 5014, Fairborn's Wright Bros Huffman Prairie Bikeway

— Existing	— Certified *
- - - Planned	- - - Potential *
· · · Proposed	— Temporary *
* North Country Trail Designation	
- - - Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway	
— Cross State Bike Routes	

N

4 2 0 4 Miles

December 2004

Great Miami River Trail

The Great Miami River Trail (Bikeway), as planned, would extend more than 50 miles from Fairfield north through Hamilton and Middletown in Butler County, Franklin in Warren County and eventually to Dayton. About 60 percent of the proposed trail has been completed, including 25 miles at the northern end in Dayton. In

the unincorporated areas around Middletown, most of the proposed right-of-way is owned by the Miami Conservancy District and Metroparks of Butler County. An “Extend the Trail Committee” was established to oversee planning and engineering issues while local government agencies seek funds to develop remaining sections of the proposed trail.

Greene County

Greene County has been a true leader in the rail-trail movement in Ohio since the mid-1980s. More than 60 miles of former railroad rights-of-way are now available as multi-use paths. The Greene County Commissioners, the Greene County Park District, the City of Xenia and other local government agencies have combined to

develop a truly impressive network of trails that link communities, schools, churches, parks, and businesses throughout the county and to neighboring counties. Xenia Station, in the City of Xenia, is an exact replica of the original telegraph office that once occupied the same location during the railroad era. Xenia Station now serves as a hub and staging area for four major rail-trails: the Little Miami Scenic Trail, the Creekside Trail, the Ohio to Erie Trail, and the Jamestown Connector.

The Jamestown Connector is the only one of these that has not yet been completely developed. It travels east from Xenia Station to Jamestown and eventually on to Washington Court House in adjacent Fayette County where it will connect with the Tri-County Triangle Trail.

Little Miami State Park

In 1979, ODNR established a unique component in its state park system with the official designation of the Little Miami State Park (LMSP). The state park is approximately a 50-mile long linear park that parallels the Little Miami River. A paved multi-purpose trail that meanders with the river through four counties is the primary recreational development in the park. A small section of the park through the Village of Terrace Park in Hamilton County has not yet been fully developed but is open for use. Closing this gap is considered a high priority to make the LMSP a seamless trail that will eventually go to downtown Cincinnati.

The Greene County Park District has extended the trail north of Hedges Road and there is now a continuous trail all the way to Springfield in Clark County. The Hamilton County Park District, in partnership with the Anderson Township Park District and the City of Cincinnati, plans to eventually extend the trail south, linking to Cincinnati's downtown riverfront area.

Miami County

A coalition of public agencies, private organizations, and citizens has developed an ambitious conceptual plan for developing a county bikeway that would link the cities of Piqua, Troy and Tipp City and counties to the north (Shelby) and south (Montgomery). Portions of the bikeway will utilize remnants of the Miami & Erie Canal that are parallel to the Great Miami River. Various local governments, the Miami Conservancy District, and the Miami County Park District are working on completing specific segments of the bikeway. When complete, the bikeway will enable users to experience a variety of historic and cultural sites while providing recreational and transportation opportunities.

Mill Creek Greenway

In 1998, the Mill Creek Restoration Project, in partnership with an advisory committee and a team of consultants, completed the Mill Creek Greenway Master Plan. The Plan outlines a number of different projects, including trails, along 28 miles of the Mill Creek corridor from Liberty Township in Butler County south to the Ohio River. A series of connecting trails between the Mill Creek and nearby commu-

nities are also proposed to provide recreation and transportation alternatives. A partnership of local communities, state and federal agencies, businesses, and citizens will work with the Mill Creek Restoration Project to implement the recommendations in the Master Plan.

Montgomery County

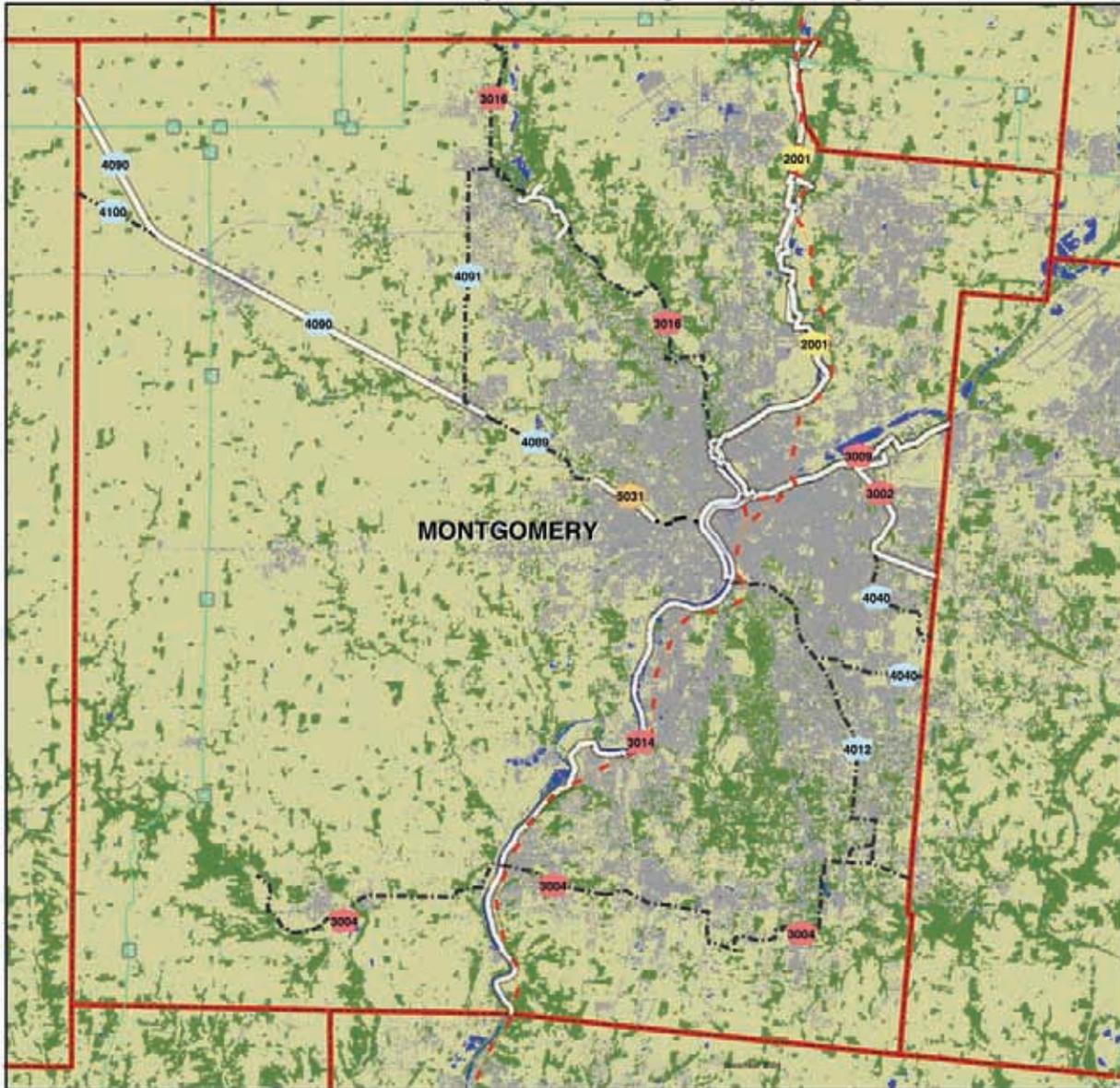
Montgomery County is fortunate to have more than 60 miles of multi-use trails throughout the county. These trails have been built and are maintained by the Miami Conservancy District, Five Rivers MetroParks, the City of Dayton and other local communities in the county. Many of these trails have been built in riparian corridors and provide direct linkages to communities, parks, adjacent counties, and other areas of interest.

Ohio River Trail

Local officials have planned a bike/hike trail along the Ohio River corridor since the early 1970s. The Ohio River Trail includes both east and western riverfront segments and will eventually stretch to New Richmond in Clermont County. The Riverfront East Bike Trail would start at the central riverfront in downtown Cincinnati and connect to the Lunken Bike Trail where it could intersect with the Little Miami Scenic Trail as it makes its way north through Anderson Township to Milford. From Lunken Airport the trail would also continue east approximately 16 miles through Anderson Township to New Richmond. The Western Riverfront Trail would ultimately extend to Shawnee Lookout Park.

Figure 5.13

Statewide Trail System - Montgomery County

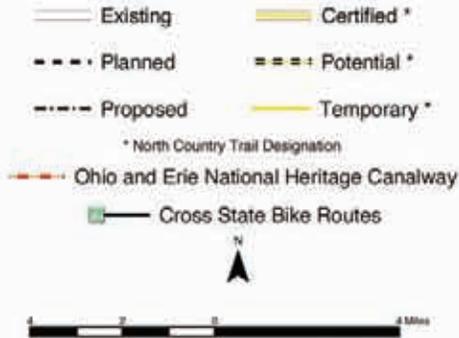


December 2004

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Trail Number, Trail Name

- 2001, Buckeye Trail
- 3002, Creekside Trail
- 3004, Germantown-Spring Valley Connector
- 3009, Mad River Recreational Trail
- 3014, Great Miami River Recreation Trail, Route 25
- 3016, Stillwater River to Troy Bikeway
- 4012, Centerville-Dayton Connector
- 4040, Kettering Spur
- 4089, Wolf Creek Bikeway
- 4090, Wolf Creek Recreation Trail, Route 38
- 4091, Wolf Creek-Englewood Connector
- 4100, Preble County Greenway Trail
- 5031, McGeo Bikeway



A formal planning committee was established and is coordinating the Ohio River Trail project. The committee raised money for a feasibility study to determine the trail's alignment. A formal route was recommended and future funding options are now being explored.

Tri-County Triangle Trail

Two of the three counties (Highland and Fayette) that form the basis of the Tri-County Triangle Trail are located in the southwest region (see southeast regional assessment for more information). A segment from the Fayette/Ross County line into Washington Court House is scheduled for development in the near future. Major sections of the planned trail from Washington Court House south to Greenfield must still be acquired.

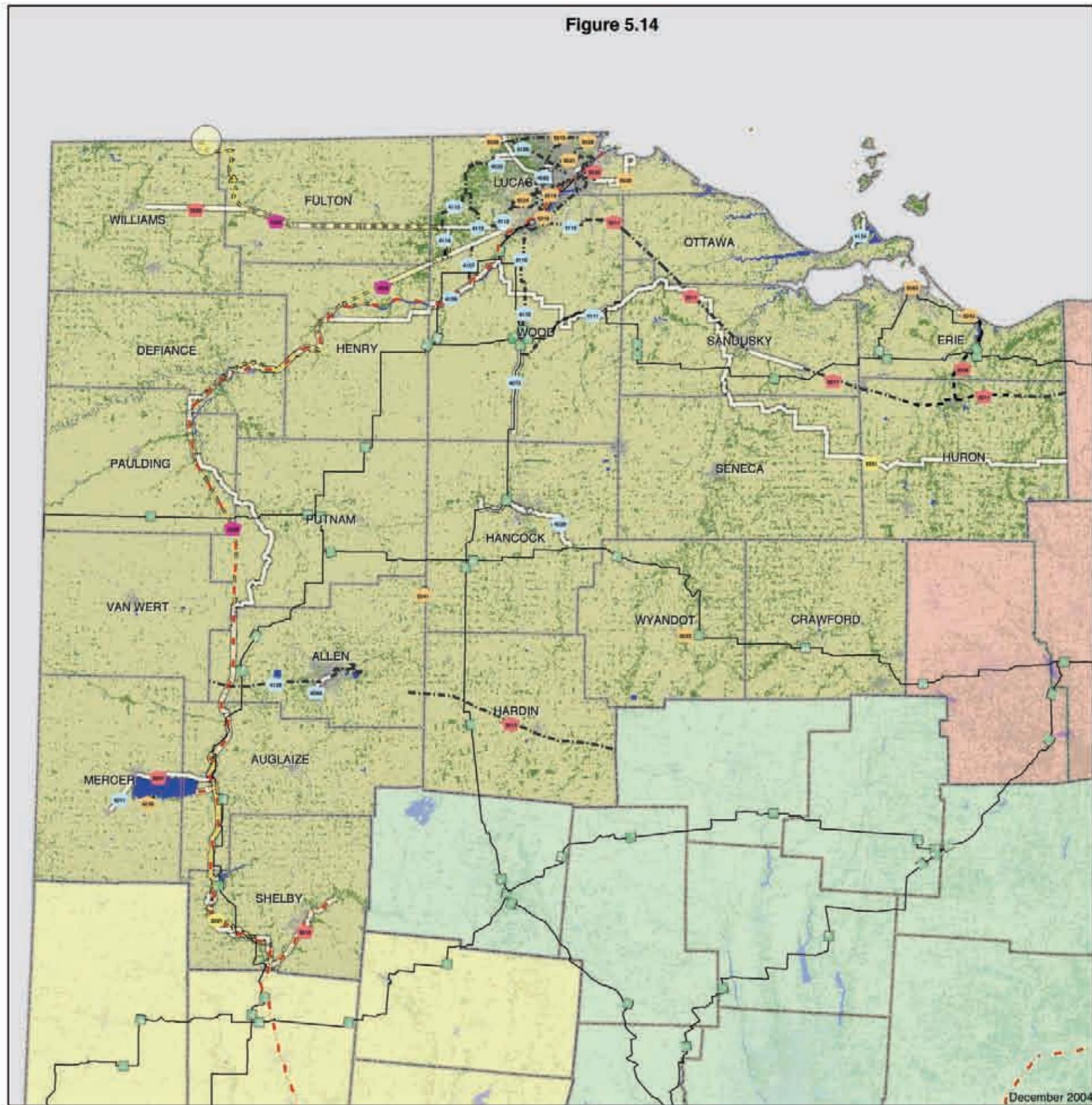
NORTHWEST OHIO

Overview

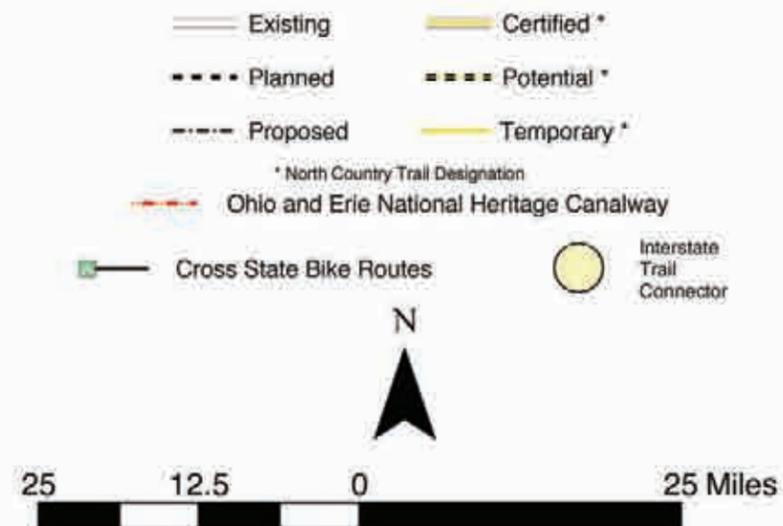
With a few exceptions, northwest Ohio is a sparsely populated region that is dominated by intensive agricultural land use. There are, however, some significant trail and greenway initiatives in this region that involve development on the remains of the Miami & Erie Canal, abandoned railroads, and along riparian corridors. In addition, the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) has established a Pedestrian and Bikeways Committee that is actively pursuing the development of a comprehensive, interconnected network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the Toledo-Lucas County region and adjacent counties.

Major segments of the Miami & Erie Canal are still in public ownership in northwest Ohio. Many of these old canal lands are the foundation for the North Country National Scenic Trail, the Buckeye Trail, ODNR's Miami & Erie Canal Towpath Trail, and trail systems operated by the Metropark District of the Toledo Area and other local agencies. The North Coast Inland Trail, the Wabash Cannonball Trail, and the Slippery Elm Trail are long distance rail-trails in the region. The Hancock Park District (Heritage Trail – Blanchard River) and City of Lima (Ottawa River Trail) are developing important trail networks along river corridors in their respective jurisdictions.

Figure 5.14



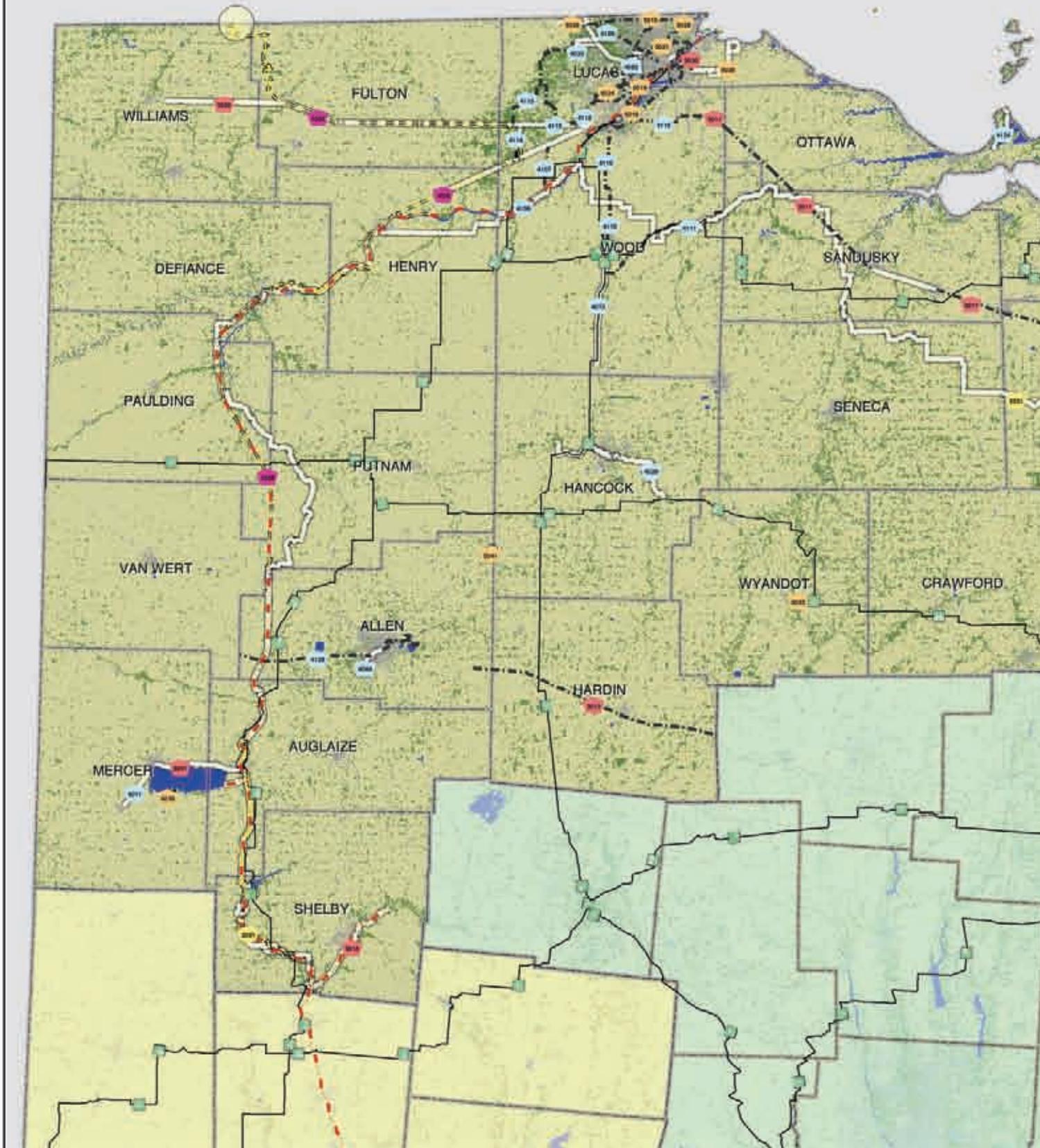
Statewide Trail System Northwest Region



Trail Number, Trail Name

1002, North Country Trail	4114, Wabash Cannonball Connector
2001, Buckeye Trail	4115, Wabash-Secor Park Corridor
3001, Celina St Marys Bicycle Path	4116, WW Knight Corridor
3006, Huron River Greenway	4124, SR 53 Bike Lanes
3010, Miami Erie Canal	4129, Spencerville-Elgin Rail Trail
3011, North Coast Inland Trail	5015, Alexis-Backside Corridor Connector
3013, Phoebe Snow Railtrail	5016, Backside Corridor Trail
3020, Wabash Cannonball Trail	5017, Buckeye Basin Path
3035, Oregon-East Toledo-Perrysburg Trail	5018, Hill Ave Trail
4011, Celina-Coldwater Bikeway	5019, Ottawa Park Trail
4023, Franklin Park Mall Connector	5020, Point Place Connector
4029, Heritage Trail (Findlay)	5021, Point Place-Ottawa Park Corridor
4064, Ottawa River Corridor Trail	5022, Riverside Trail
4073, Slippery Elm Trail	5023, Swan Creek Green Space Corridor
4082, University/Parks Trail	5024, Swan Creek Green Space Trail
4107, Blue Creek Corridor	5025, Toledo-Oregon Connector
4108, Farnsworth Mertopark Trail	5026, University Parks Trail-Sylvania
4109, Monroe-Alexis-Main St Bike Path	5027, Wabash-Perrysburg Connector
4110, Perrysburg-Bowling Green Connector	5028, Ottawa River Trail
4111, Portage River Corridor	5033, Tarhe Recreational Trail
4112, Swan Creek-Wabash Corridor	5039, Karafit Trail
4113, University Parks Trail-Secor Park Connector	5041, Triplett Bike Path
	5042, Lake Shore Electric Trail
	5043, Cleveland Road Exercise Path
	5083, Bayfront Corridor

Figure 5.14



Heritage Trail

The Heritage Trail covers about 20 miles along the Blanchard River in Hancock County. The western trailhead is located near Litzenberg Memorial Woods. The trail travels east toward downtown Findlay along the river corridor. Along its way the trail connects various parks, historic sites, reservoirs and other landmarks with a variety of trail surfaces and in different settings. Users can experience both rustic, natural environments as well as urban conditions along paved bike paths and downtown Findlay Riverwalks. The Hancock Park District and the City of Findlay are still developing specific segments of the Heritage Trail in partnership with various businesses and volunteer groups.

Lucas and Wood Counties

Lucas and Wood Counties have an extensive network of existing and planned recreational trails and bike routes that, when completed, will service virtually all areas of the counties. Connections to adjacent counties are also envisioned. Under the leadership of TMACOG's Pedestrian and Bikeways Committee, a bicycle/trails plan has been integrated into the council's regional transportation plan. The plan identifies a number of trails and connecting spurs that exist or will be priorities for future development. These include the University/Parks Trail; the Wabash Cannonball Trail; the Slippery Elm Trail; the North Coast-Wabash Connector; future Swan Creek, Ottawa River, and Portage River greenways; an Oregon-East Toledo-Perrysburg

trail system; the Buckeye Trail; and the North Country National Scenic Trail.

Miami & Erie Canal

Major segments of the old tow-path of the Miami & Erie Canal remain intact in Northwest Ohio. Although the canal lands represent a very narrow corridor of public ownership, they provide an almost continuous route for a trail where little other opportunities exist. This is especially true between Delphos in Allen County and Lockington in southern Shelby County. ODNR is responsible for a 40-mile segment that is managed as the Miami & Erie Canal Trail.

North of Delphos, large intact sections of the canal are still in public ownership in Putnam, Paulding, Defiance, Henry, and Lucas counties. Two state parks, Mary Jane Thurston and Independence Dam, have remnants of the old canal. The Metropark District of the Toledo Area manages four other parks that have remnants of canal lands in Lucas County.

A future priority will be to find viable public agencies to protect and manage the remaining canal lands in northwest Ohio. The Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association (MECCA) is a non-profit organization created in 1996 to champion the cause of the Miami & Erie Canal. MECCA focuses most of its attention on a 55-mile stretch of publicly owned canal lands from Delphos to Piqua. MECCA's goal is to raise awareness of the historical, educational,

natural and recreational value of the canal and serve as a clearinghouse for information for canal-related events and information. MECCA also works to strengthen canal partnerships and supports the designation of the canal as a national heritage corridor.

North Coast Inland Trail

The North Coast Inland Trail was first conceived as a regional rail-trail in 1989 that was planned to go from the east side of the Toledo metro area to Lorain County. There are now plans to possibly extend the trail and/or link to other trails (such as the Wabash Cannonball) to cover an entire east-west route that would eventually link Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Indiana through northern Ohio.

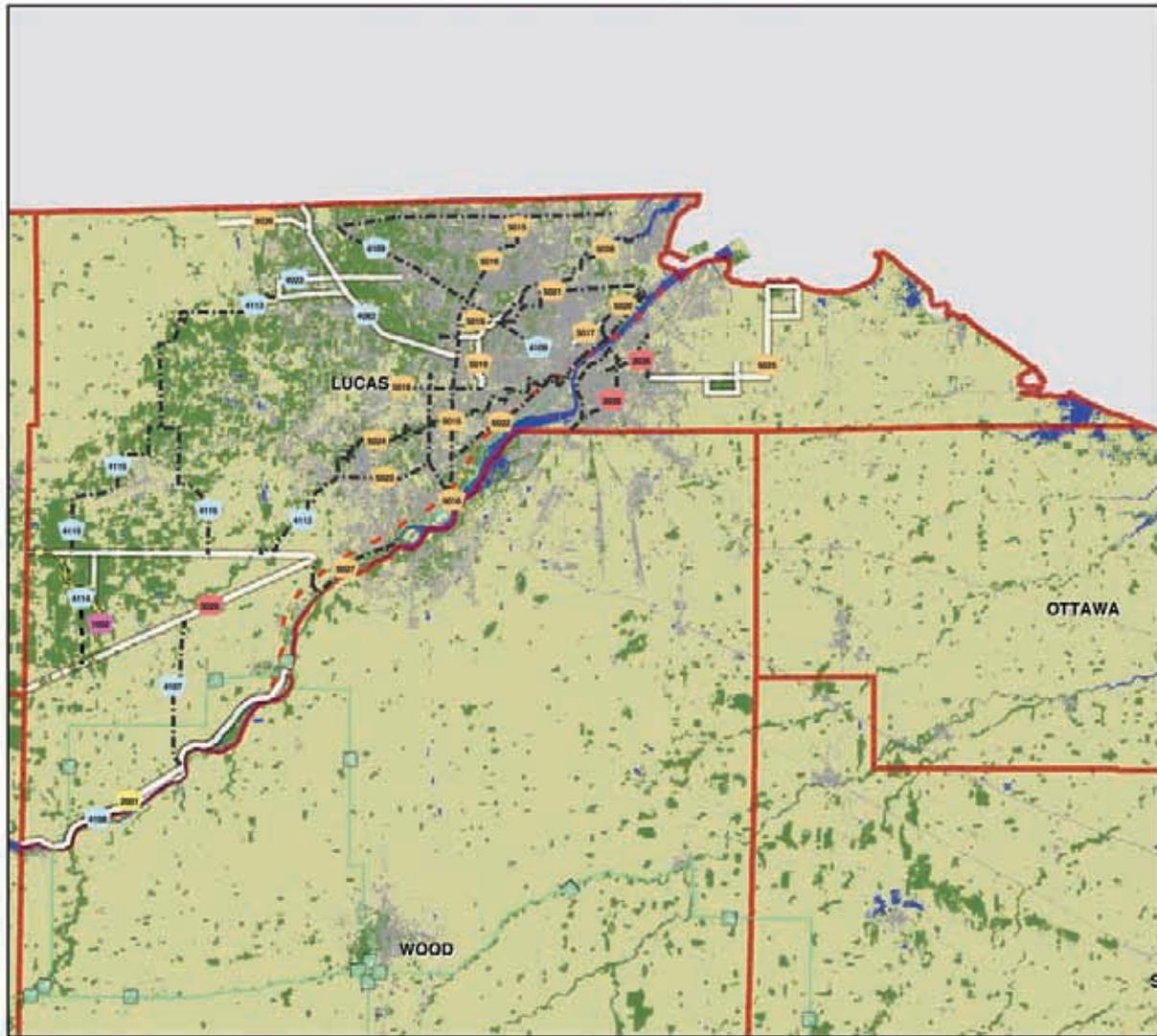
Significant segments of the original North Coast Inland Trail must still be acquired and/or developed. A major gap exists in Huron County where major sections of the right-of-way are in public ownership but trail development has been delayed. A 10-mile section between Fremont and Elmore is awaiting development while another section in northwest Ottawa County must still be acquired. A coalition of park districts and other government entities in northwest Ohio is working to acquire and develop remaining sections of the North Coast Inland Trail.

Wabash Cannonball Trail

The Wabash Cannonball Trail is envisioned as a more than 60-mile multi-use rail-trail to accommodate hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, inline

Figure 5.15

Statewide Trail System - Lucas County



December 2004

LUCAS COUNTY

Trail Number, Trail Name

- 1002, North Country Trail
- 2001, Buckeye Trail
- 3020, Wabash Cannonball Trail
- 3035, Oregon-East Toledo-Perrysburg Trail
- 4023, Franklin Park Mall Connector
- 4082, University/Parks Trail
- 4107, Blue Creek Corridor
- 4108, Farnsworth Mertopark Trail
- 4108, Monroe-Alexis-Main St Bike Path
- 4112, Swan Creek-Wabash Corridor
- 4113, University Parks Trail-Secor Park Connector
- 4114, Wabash Cannonball Connector

- 4115, Wabash-Secor Park Corridor
- 5015, Alexis-Backside Corridor Connector
- 5016, Backside Corridor Trail
- 5017, Buckeye Basin Path
- 5018, Hill Ave Trail
- 5019, Ottawa Park Trail
- 5020, Point Place Connector
- 5021, Point Place-Ottawa Park Corridor
- 5022, Riverside Trail
- 5023, Swan Creek Green Space Corridor
- 5024, Swan Creek Green Space Trail
- 5025, Toledo-Oregon Connector
- 5026, University Parks Trail-Sylvania
- 5027, Wabash-Perrysburg Connector
- 5028, Ottawa River Trail

— Existing	— Certified *
- - - Planned	- - - Potential *
- · - · Proposed	— Temporary *
* North Country Trail Designation	
— Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway	
— Cross State Bike Routes	

N

inline skaters, and cross-country skiers. The Wabash Cannonball Trail is one of Ohio's longest rail-trails in four Ohio counties - Fulton, Henry, Lucas, and Williams. The trail is actually comprised of two rail lines that converge in Maumee at Jerome Road. The "North Fork" runs east-west for 46 miles from Maumee to within 15 miles of the Indiana state line near Montpelier. The "South Fork" takes a southwesterly direction from Maumee for 17 miles to the edge of Liberty Center in Henry County.

The landowning partners – Lucas County, City of Maumee, City of Wauseon, the Village of Whitehouse, the Metropark District of the Toledo Area, and the Northwestern Ohio Rails-to-Trails Association Inc. – are all developing and maintaining different segments. The trail is paved in Lucas County and will have both paved and unpaved sections in the remaining counties. Portions of the trail are certified segments of the North Country National Scenic Trail and a spur from the Wabash is envisioned as providing an eventual link to the state of Michigan. Other links are envisioned that would link the Wabash to the Maumee River corridor, Secor Metropark, and the University/Parks Trail. A link to the North Coast Inland Trail is partially completed.

CENTRAL OHIO

Overview

Recreational trail planning and development in the central Ohio region has been a mixed bag. Government agencies and trail advocates in Franklin and Licking counties in particular have been leaders while efforts in many other central Ohio counties have lagged or met significant opposition. The cross-state Ohio to Erie Trail passes through the central Ohio region and completing the trail through Columbus and Franklin County has been a significant challenge (see narrative on Ohio to Erie Trail). Knox County is the home of the popular Kokosing Gap and Mohican Valley trails and there are plans to develop additional connections to adjacent counties. Interest in trail development has also intensified in Lancaster (Fairfield County) with the Heritage Trail network while agencies in Delaware, Logan and Pickaway counties are exploring trail networks.

Figure 5.16

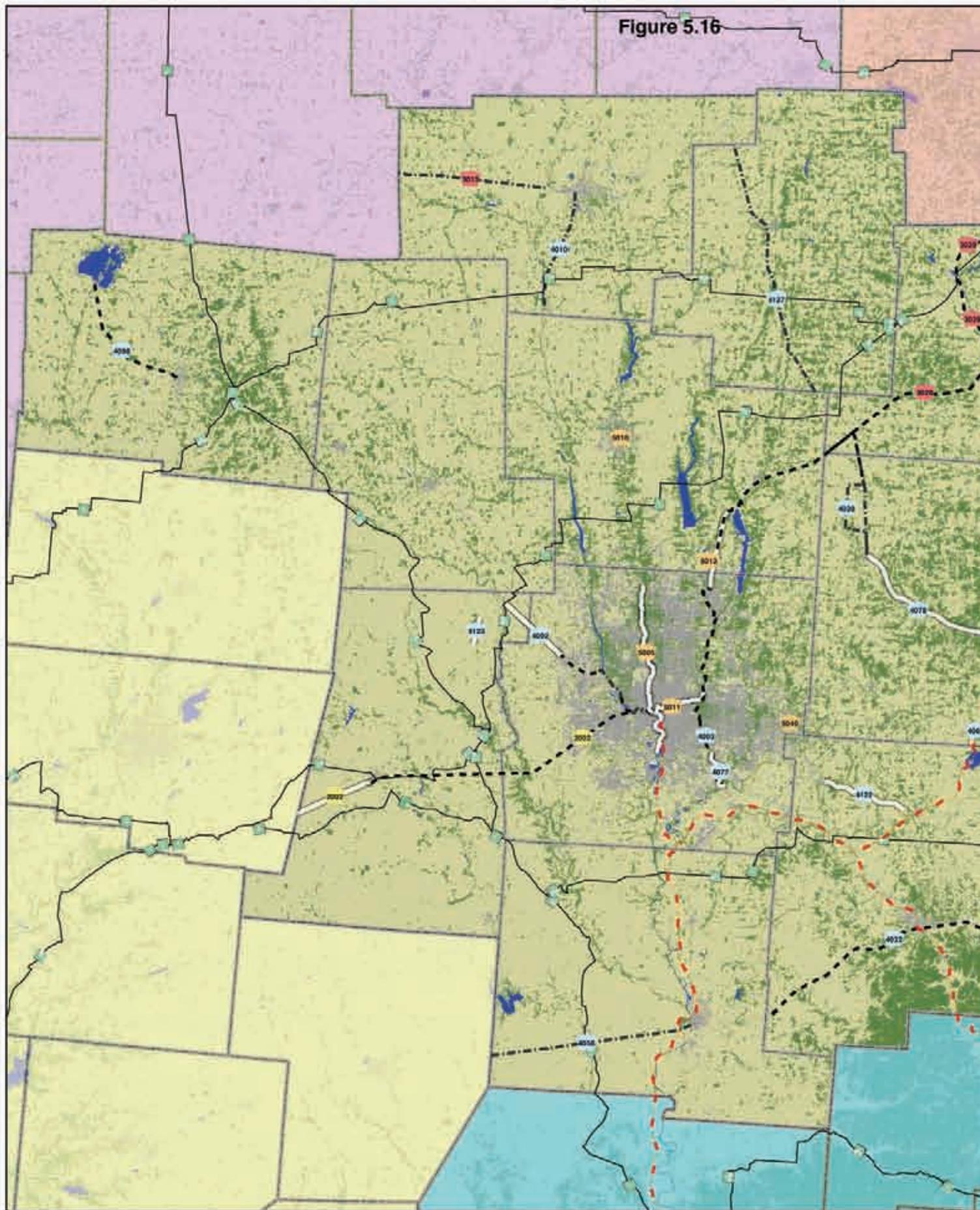
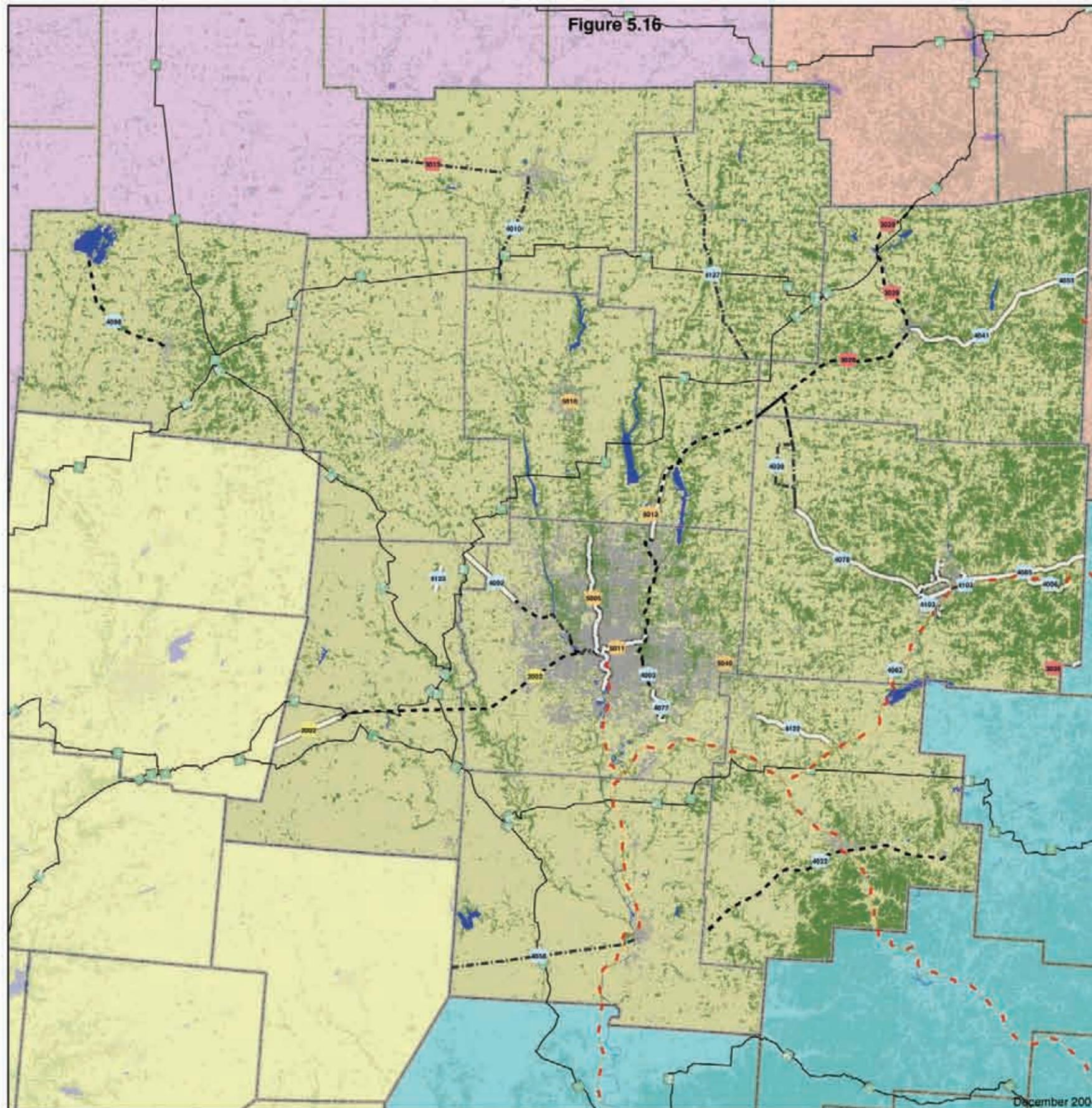
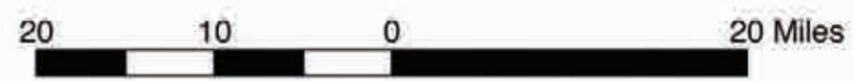


Figure 5.16



Statewide Trail System Central Region

- Existing
- - - Planned
- · - · Proposed
- Certified *
- - - Potential *
- Temporary *
- * North Country Trail Designation
- - - Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway
- Cross State Bike Routes



Trail Number, Trail Name

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2002, Ohio to Erie Trail | 4062, Ohio Canal Greenway |
| 3013, Phoebe Snow Railtrail | 4065, Panhandle Recreational Trail |
| 3028, 3C Trail | 4077, Three Creeks Multi-Use Trail |
| 3029, Owl Creek Trail | 4078, Thomas J Evans Trail |
| 3036, US 40 Bike Lanes - Brownsville to Zanesville | 4092, Heritage Trail (Columbus) |
| 4003, Alum Creek Multi-Use Trail | 4098, Top of Ohio Trail |
| 4006, Blackhand Gorge | 4103, Licking County Recreational Trail |
| 4010, CD+M Trail | 4122, SR 256 Bike Lanes |
| 4022, Fairfield County Heritage Trail Network | 4123, US 42 Bike Lanes |
| 4039, Johnstown to Centerburg | 4127, Morrow County Rail Trail |
| 4041, Kokosing Gap Trail | 5005, Olentangy/Scioto Multi-Use Trail |
| 4053, Mohican Valley Trail | 5010, Delaware CSX Trail |
| 4058, New Holland - Circleville Rail Trail | 5011, I-670 Multi-Use Trail |
| | 5012, Westerville Bikeway |
| | 5040, Blacklick Creek Bikeway |

Franklin County

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) has completed two significant planning efforts in recent years that have significant recreational trail implications. The Franklin County Greenways Plan was a multi-jurisdictional planning effort aimed at preserving and protecting stream corridors in central Ohio. The Greenways Plan included recommendations for developing interconnected recreational trails within river corridors and acquiring scenic easements whenever possible. In 1999, the planning commission updated its regional bicycle and pedestrian plan to provide a planning guide for local jurisdictions to develop an integrated regional bikeway network in central Ohio.

The City of Columbus has long been a leader in recreational trail development in central Ohio. Since the late 1960s, Columbus has been developing trails along riparian corridors, with primary investments along the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers. In more recent years, trail planning and development along Alum and Blacklick creeks and I-670 have been a priority.

Community trail systems are also commonplace in many central Ohio areas, especially suburban communities in Franklin County. Most of these systems satisfy the recreational and transportation needs of the individual cities by providing opportunities close to home. They may follow a single route or include a more complex network of interconnected paths and trails. In some cases, community trails may connect with

countywide or regional trail systems. In addition to their recreation facilities, community trail systems can provide valuable alternative transportation opportunities by encouraging residents to bicycle or walk to work, shop, run errands, or visit family and friends. Communities in central Ohio that have or are developing extensive local systems include Dublin, Gahanna, Grove City, New Albany, Reynoldsburg, Westerville, and Worthington.

Licking County

There are almost 40 miles of recreational trails throughout Licking County. They range from the more than 14-mile Thomas J. Evans rail-trail that connects Johnstown to Newark to the four-mile Blackhand Gorge bikeway along the Licking River in the Blackhand Gorge State Nature Preserve east of Newark. Many of the trails in Licking County are vital components of the Panhandle route of the Ohio to Erie Trail as it makes its way to northeastern Ohio on to Cleveland. Completing the connection with Johnstown to Centerburg (Knox County) is a priority. Connecting the trail to downtown Newark is another priority.

The Thomas J. Evans Foundation has been a driving force in developing Licking County's trail system by providing leadership and financial assistance to many of the trail projects in the county. The Licking County Park District, the Licking County Commissioners, and the cities of Newark and Heath have also made major contributions by developing and maintaining these trails.

INTERSTATE LINKAGES

Trails, both existing and planned, that connect Ohio to its neighboring states and beyond are important components of Ohio’s trail system. The concept of linking states and regions of the country has been an overall vision of trail planners and advocates for years and was given heightened consideration in 1987

when the President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors recommended the creation of a national network of greenways.

The two national trails -- North Country National Scenic Trail and the American Discovery Trail -- that pass through Ohio provide

a number of interstate connections. Local interstate initiatives are more limited although there are several ongoing efforts to connect to neighboring states. See Table 5.1 for a summary of existing and potential interstate connections and Figure 5.17 for a graphic representation of these linkages.

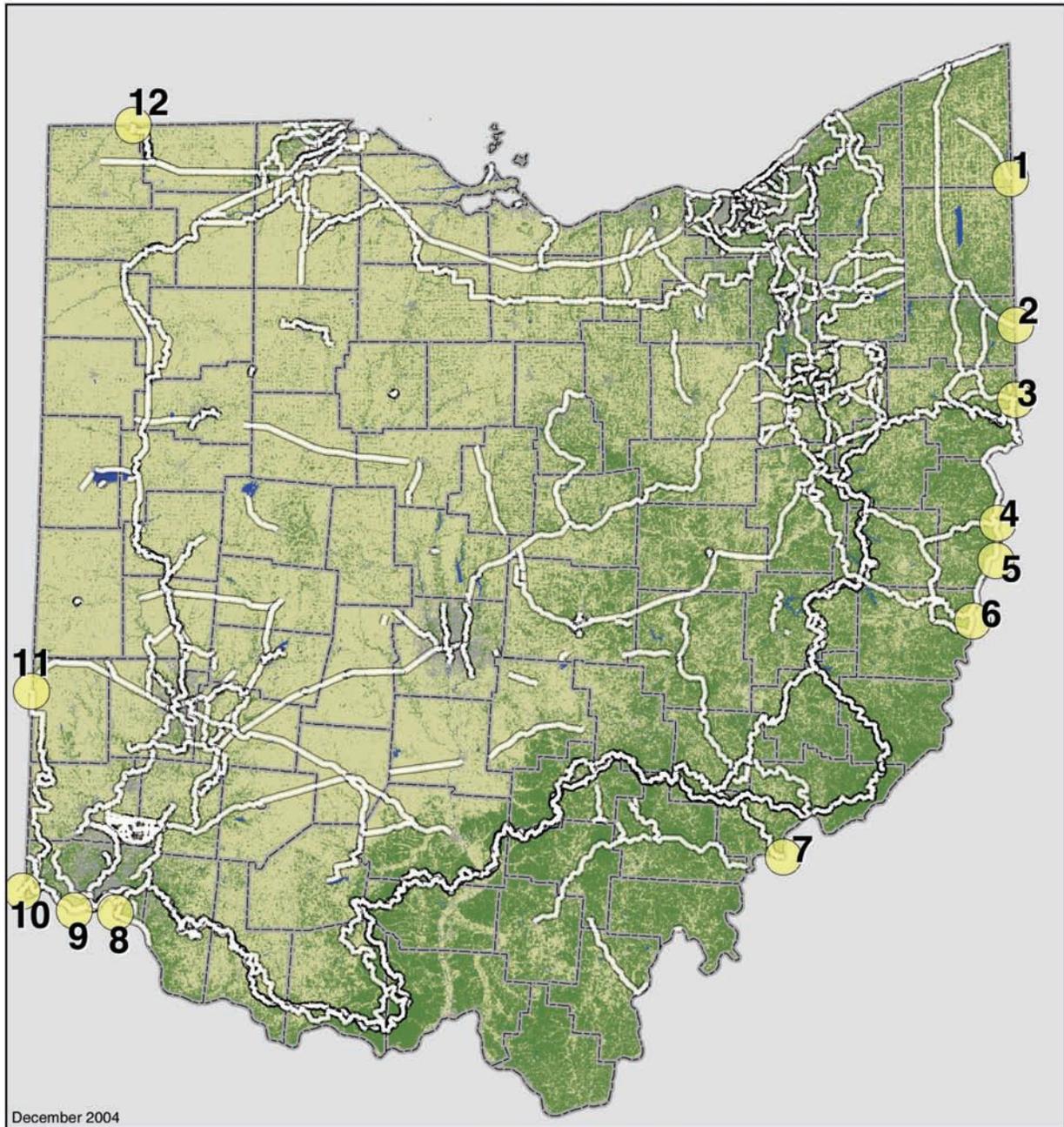
Table 5.1

Existing/Potential Interstate Linkages

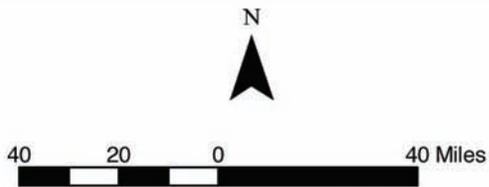
Ohio Location	Trail/Route	Adjacent State	Status/Comments
Ashtabula County	Pymatuning Valley Greenway	Pennsylvania	A 19.5-mile undeveloped railroad right-of-way owned by Ashtabula County Parks from Dorsett, OH to Jamestown, PA
Mahoning County	Stavich Trail	Pennsylvania	Existing paved rail-trail approximately 12 miles long in Ohio and Pennsylvania
Columbiana County	North Country National Scenic Trail	Pennsylvania	Enters Ohio from Pennsylvania on former Montown railroad grade which ends near Fredricktown, OH.
Jefferson County	Tri State Trail	West Virginia	Option #1, Ft. Steuben Bridge
Jefferson County	Tri State Trail	West Virginia	Option #2, new bridge at Brilliant
Belmont County	Tri State Trail	West Virginia	Option #3, National Road, U.S. 40/250 Wheeling Suspension Bridge
Washington County	American Discovery Trail (U.S. 50 Bridge)	West Virginia	Crosses Ohio River at Parkersburg, WV to Belpre, OH on the U.S. 50 Bridge
Hamilton County	American Discovery Trail (Roebling Suspension Bridge)	Kentucky	Very small section of ADT in Kentucky
Hamilton County	American Discovery Trail (Anderson Ferry)	Kentucky	Very small section of ADT in Kentucky
Hamilton County	American Discovery Trail	Indiana	Enters Indiana near Elizabethtown on Stateline Road
Preble County	American Discovery Trail	Indiana	Enters Indiana east of Richmond on Stateline Road
Williams County	North Country National Scenic Trail	Michigan	A not yet identified route that will connect the NCNST to Michigan

Figure 5.17

Interstate Trail Connectors



December 2004



- | ID | Trail Connection |
|------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Pymatuning Valley Greenway |
| 2 | Stavich Trail |
| 3 | North Country National Scenic Trail |
| 4-6 | Tri-State Trail - Options 1 to 3 |
| 7-11 | American Discovery Trail |
| 12 | North Country National Scenic Trail |

 Interstate Trail Connections

Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources, 2004

POTENTIAL TRAIL CORRIDORS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Many types of trails, pathways, waterways and routemake up Ohio's trail system. There are numerous opportunities to expand this trail system by preserving corridors and developing rights-of-way and other lands that can support trails. Railroads, canal lands, utility corridors, highway rights-of way, riparian corridors, and easements on private lands are examples of resources that trail planners and managers should consider when planning trail systems.

Railroad Rights-of-Way

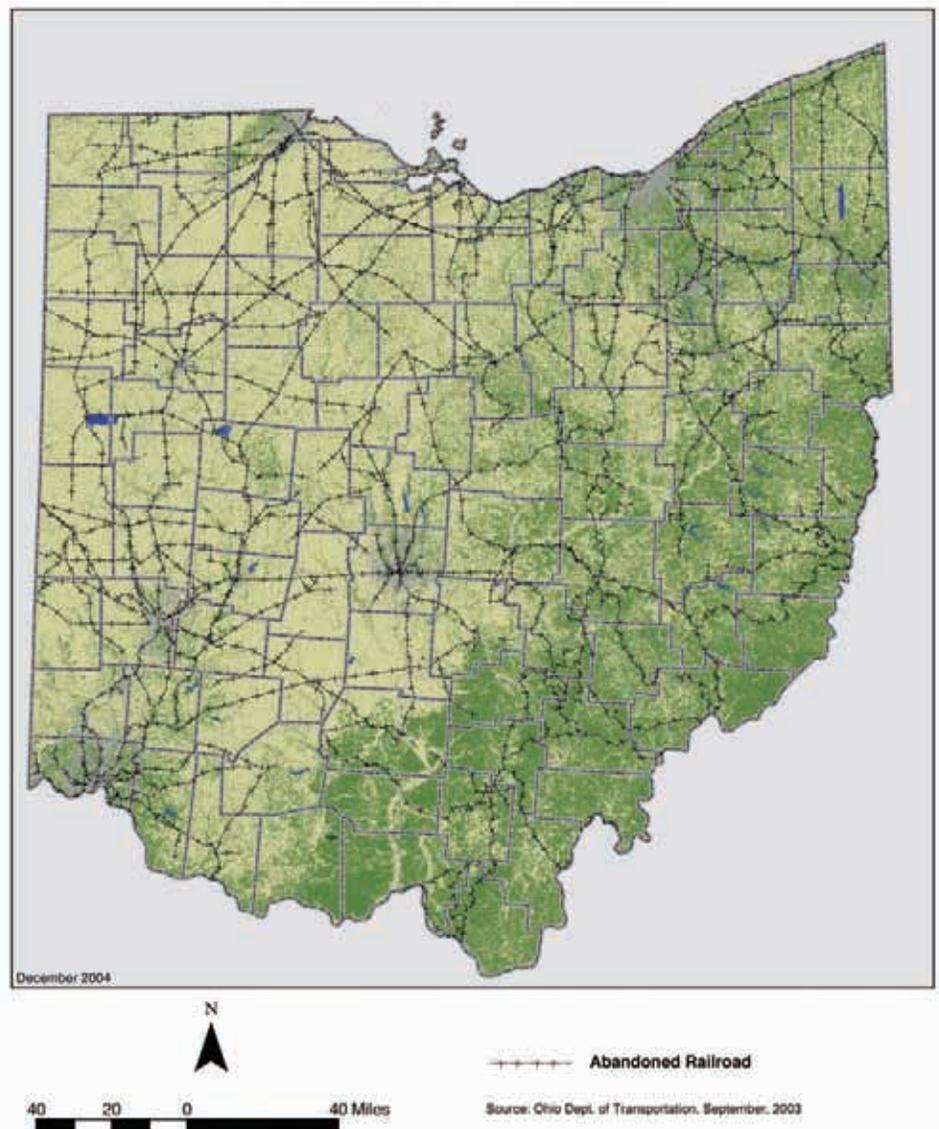
Abandoned railroad rights-of-way are particularly well suited for trail development and Ohio is recognized as one of the national leaders in the "rail-trail" movement. In fact, Ohio now has more than 50 developed rail-trails encompassing more than 700 miles. Another 600 miles are planned throughout the state. Railroad corridors usually have manageable grades and subsurface conditions are very conducive to developing multi-use trails. Although not every railroad abandonment is suitable for trail use, many segments already link population centers and parks. These corridors can also provide alternate transportation opportunities and serve as the backbone for regional and statewide trails systems.

According to the Ohio Department of Transportation, more than 6,800 miles of railroads have been abandoned in Ohio and many more continue to be abandoned each year. To date, only a fraction of these corridors have been converted to trail use. Most have been converted

to highways, agriculture, or been sold to private interests. Rail abandonment begins when a railroad formally relinquishes its authority to operate a rail line and petitions to allow it to discontinue rail service along that rail line.

Figure 5.18

Abandoned Railroads



There are numerous issues associated with railroad abandonment that public agencies must grapple with in an effort to maximize opportunities for future trail development. Railroad corridors typically involve a complex array of ownership patterns. The railroad company could own outright portions of some segments and have only restricted use, through easements, on others. Reversionary clauses, which cause ownership to revert to original or adjacent landowners in case of abandonment, have created many legal issues in Ohio and nationally. In addition to land ownership disputes, issues like funding the purchase of the land, coordinating planning among different political jurisdictions, and winning the support of adjacent landowners have been challenges in developing more rail-trails.

An alternative to losing railroad corridors through abandonment is to preserve the corridor through “rail-banking.” Railbanking is an agreement between the railroad company and a public agency or trail group whereby the corridor, bridges, culverts, etc. remain intact for future transportation purposes. In the interim, the corridor can be developed into a trail if an agency or trail group agrees to manage the trail and cover all associated costs like taxes and liability.

Trails can also be developed adjacent to active rail lines. “Rails with trails” present some additional

design and safety challenges but do represent a viable option for trail development. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a national nonprofit organization with a state chapter in Ohio, is an excellent source of information and technical assistance on all facets of acquiring and developing rail-trails.

Canal Lands

Canals played a significant role in the development and growth of

Ohio. While major segments of these historic resources no longer exist, many have already been converted to trail use and there are numerous additional opportunities to utilize remaining canal resources for trail and greenway development. In addition to trail and greenway potential, canal lands can provide diverse environmental, historic, and cultural benefits to Ohio and its citizens

Figure 5.19

Ohio's Historic Canals



In northeast Ohio, the Ohio & Erie Canal was the impetus for the creation of a National Heritage Corridor. The Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Canalway stretches approximately 110 miles from the Cleveland lakefront to New Philadelphia in Tuscarawas County. A towpath trail has been developed on the old canal lands and this trail serves as the backbone of the canal way. Similarly, remnants of the Miami & Erie Canal in western Ohio are key components of various local, regional, statewide and national trail systems like ODNR's Miami-Erie Trail, the Buckeye Trail, and the North Country National Scenic Trail. Significant portions of the Miami & Erie Canal remain from approximately the Miami-Shelby County line all the way north to Toledo in Lucas County. A diverse group of public agencies and private interests is actively working to preserve, manage, and interpret remaining canal lands on both the Ohio & Erie and the Miami & Erie. These efforts are spearheaded by the Ohio and Erie Canal Corridor Coalition and the Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association, respectively.

Reusing historic canals for trails and preserving them for other benefits has a number of obstacles and challenges. Many segments are fragmented, making interconnections difficult. Long, intact sections are somewhat limited and finding viable public agencies or trail groups to develop and/or manage the remaining canal lands is sometimes problematic. Numerous encroachments and political realities also threaten the integrity of canal lands. ODNR

owns many of the remaining segments of Ohio's historic canals that are in public ownership and have trail potential. Many other sections have been transferred to either public agencies or non-profit organizations for recreation and/or historic preservation. Where there are opportunities to provide viable trails, to connect to existing trails, or preserve other canal features, these corridors should be preserved by ODNR in partnership with other government agencies, trail groups, and historic preservation interest groups.

Utility Corridors

Public and private utility corridors can provide opportunities for new off-road trails and also provide linkages to existing trails and greenways. By definition trails are linear corridors so they can logically utilize the same corridor with utilities such as electric/power lines, water/sewer lines, television and fiber optic cable, gas lines, etc. Utility corridors could be especially attractive in urban or heavily developed areas where open space and other trail development options are limited. In many cases, overlapping trails and utilities is a way to establish both systems at less expense than providing both functions separately.

Many utilities are located on land not actually owned by the utility companies but use easements. As a result, permission of property owners to use a corridor for any use other than that for which an easement was originally designated would be required. In the case of some utilities, there could be concerns about liability and other perceived safety issues such as

electric magnetic fields emanating from power lines. Trail advocates and public agencies should work with utility providers to negotiate trail easements and promote the positive public benefits that trails will create.

Street/Road Rights-of-Way

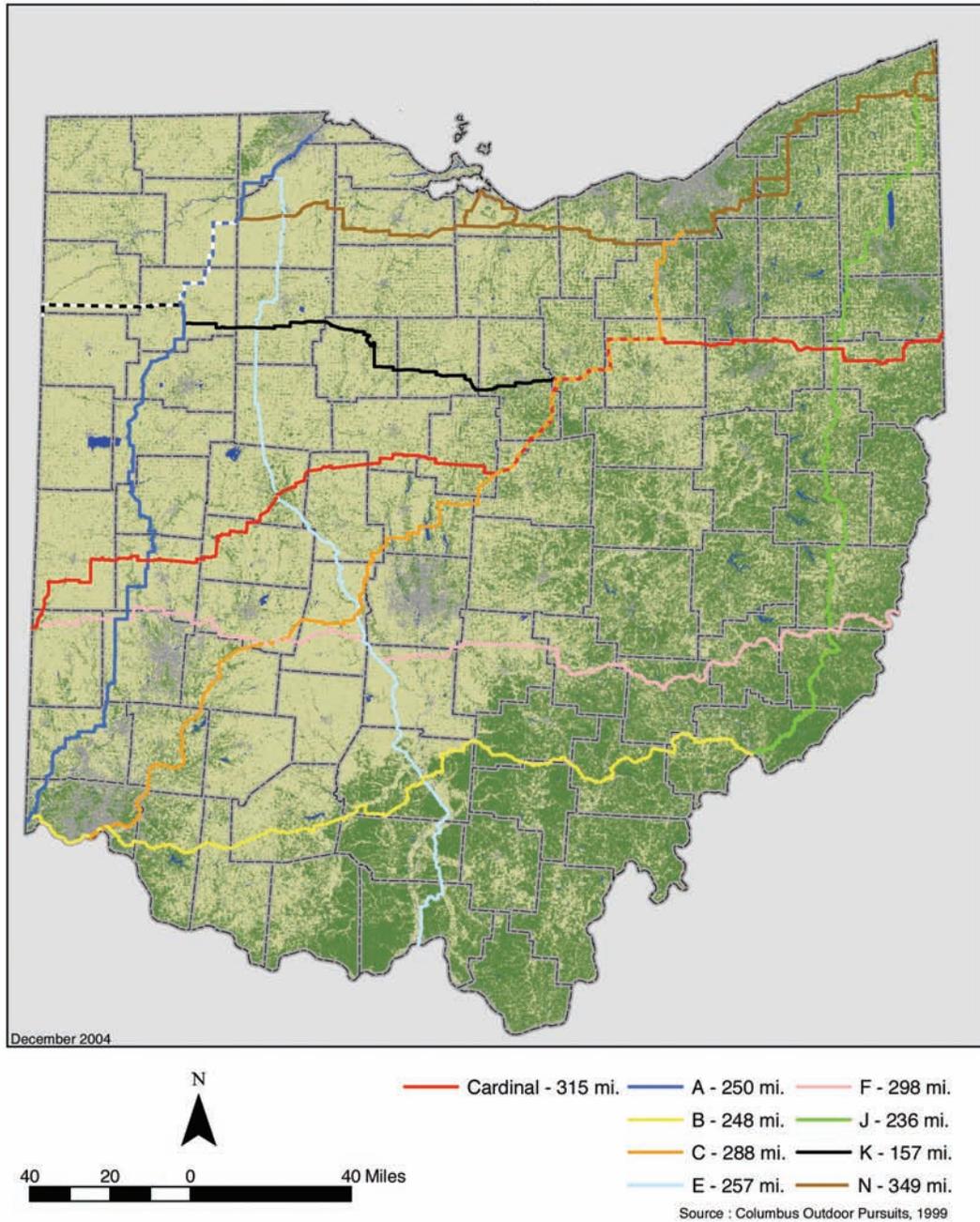
The state of Ohio has a tremendous capital investment in its transportation infrastructure and road networks. These linear networks and associated lands can provide opportunities to accommodate trail users and link/connect to off-road trails. As a result, transportation agencies and planners should give heightened consideration to integrating trail related developments in roadway planning, construction, or renovation.

The shared use of roads and highway rights-of-way for trails presents many opportunities and challenges alike to planners. Trail improvements within a road/highway corridor could be a separate path, a bike lane (paved shoulder) with edge striping and signage, a signed roadway, or streets/roadways with bicycle designations that are open to bicycle travel and shared with other vehicles. Variables such as traffic volume, width of the right-of-way, the number and type of users, design factors, cost, and maintenance must be taken into account when considering trail development options.

Low volume or lightly traveled roads generally present the best options for potential trail segments. In fact, the Ohio Department of Transportation has nine designated cross-state bicycle routes totaling more than 2,100 miles that utilize

Figure 5.20

Cross State Bicycle Routes



existing road and highway rights-of-way. Furthermore, the Buckeye Trail utilizes low volume county and township roads for much of its nearly 1,300 miles in Ohio. Many parts of rural Ohio have unpaved roads that could be suitable for hiking, off-road bicycles, or motor-

ized recreation vehicles. In urban areas, systems of bicycle routes based on a shared road system can provide vital connections and linkages to off road trails. The safety of trail users is an obvious concern when highway corridors are used for recreation purposes. In general,

Ohio law allows the public to use public thoroughfares by the mode of their choice but they are prohibited from bicycling and walking on freeways. For some trail activities, permission to use public rights-of-way for recreational use could be required.

Motorized recreation trail users have long advocated the use of low volume and unimproved roads as the foundation for a statewide motorized trail system. It has been estimated that Ohio has over 1,600 miles of unimproved roads, mostly in southeastern Ohio, that are open for any type of street legal vehicle. Representatives of the Ohio Multi-Use Trail Association have identified a number of these rights of way that are currently used for motorized recreation. See Figure 5.21. The vision would include having small towns functioning as a trailheads or staging areas that could help facilitate an interconnected system of trails. “Adopt a road” programs could be developed to allow users to maintain sections of these roads to reduce costs to political subdivisions. Unfortunately, many of these roads are being lost as county commissioners and township trustees petition to close the roads. A primary reason is the liability for maintaining/improving the roads. Motorized trail interests should work with appropriate government officials to establish riding opportunities on these road systems and preserve the corridors for future generations.

Riparian Corridors

Ohio is a water-rich state that is blessed with more than 60,000 miles of streams. As they wind their way through virtually all rural and urban landscapes, riparian lands and their waters can provide a multitude of opportunities for various types of trail development. In fact, many Ohio communities are actively pursuing efforts to preserve their stream corridors and many of these efforts are complimented by recreational trail development. These linear parks or corridors of protected open space are sometimes referred to as greenways. It should be noted however, that trails and greenways are not synonymous and not all greenways are in riparian corridors. Greenways are typically defined as corridors of open space that are managed for conservation or recreation while trails are paths that provide recreation and transportation alternatives. Often, however, greenways do have a trail or recreation component.

Another possibility for recreational trail development in riparian corridors involves the utilization of flood control levees. Flood control levees were constructed in many Ohio communities years ago to provide protection from advancing flood waters. Because of their linear nature and public ownership, these levees can be viable options for establishing trail systems or connecting trails.

Waterways are also being increasingly recognized as a resource for providing water-based trails. With more than 1,700 miles of navigable streams in Ohio, there are numerous opportunities to develop a

system of water trails and access points that will provide small boat paddling routes and other recreation and conservation benefits. ODNR, in partnership with other agencies and organizations, recently initiated a Discover Ohio Water Trails planning process that will result in a blueprint to improve access to Ohio’s streams and the identification of a system of state water trails.

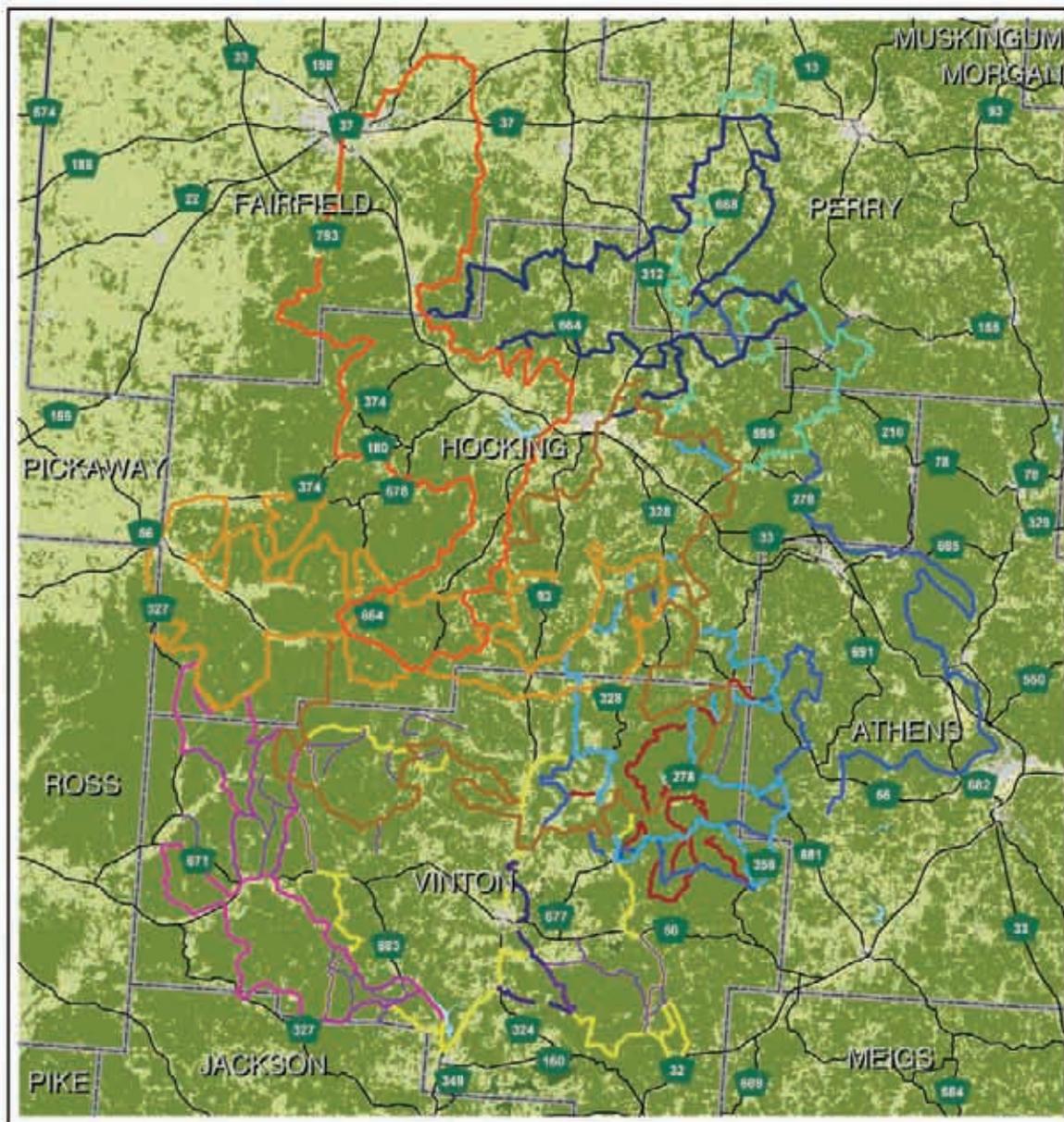
Easements

Easements are another long-term option available to land managers for trail development where outright land ownership is not feasible. An easement is a legally binding agreement in which a landowner allows certain land uses to another party who holds the easement and enforces its terms and conditions. Easements are part of a property’s deed and survive ownership transfers.

In a state like Ohio, where approximately 95 percent of the land is in private ownership, easements can be a viable option to locate and/or connect to trails. An easement could allow a landowner to provide a trail while still retaining ownership. If the land on which there is an easement is sold, the easement passes to the new landowner, thus ensuring ongoing access to a trail. The agency or organization that holds the easement is responsible for monitoring and enforcing its provisions and should maintain a good working relationship with the property owner to prevent violations. The easement can be dissolved only by the party who has been granted access through the easement.

Figure 5.21

On/Off Road Motorized Trail Routes - Southeast Ohio



Trail Names

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Crossroads 2002 Grandsport | Shady Hollow Dual Sport |
| Hocking County Loop | Vinton County Loop 1 |
| Lake Hope Hanging Rock 1 | Vinton County Loop 2 |
| Lake Hope Hanging Rock 2 | Vinton County Loop 3 |
| Shady Hollow 1 | Vinton County Fairgrounds |



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Appendix A
A TRAIL RESOURCES AND LIBRARY

TRAIL RESOURCES AND LIBRARY

American Trails is a national, non-profit organization that works on behalf of all trail interests and is dedicated to creating and protecting a nationwide network of interconnected trails. American Trails has assembled an impressive library on a wide variety of trail topics and resources on its website, www.americantrails.org/resources. The website has links for hundreds of articles on the following topics:

Accessible trails and ADA	Motorized trails & recreation
Adjacent Landowners	National Recreation Trails
Advocacy	National Trails Training Partnership
Benefits of trails	Planning trails
Consultants & services	Products for trails
Economics of trails	Rails to trails
Federal agencies	SAFETEA and Enhancements
Federal funding	Studies of trail use
Federal legislation	Trail construction
Funding	Trail design
Good trails	Trail maintenance
Greenways & urban trails	Trail management
Health & Trails	Training for trail work
International trails	Volunteer development
Land acquisition & corridor preservation	Wildlife & trails
Millennium trails	

Appendix B

TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS

National Organizations

All-Terrain Vehicle Association
P.O. Box 800
Pickerington, OH 43147
614-575-5585
www.atvaonline.com

American Canoe Association
7432 Alban Station Blvd., Suite B-232
Springfield, VA 22150
703-451-0141
www.acanet.org

American Hiking Society
1422 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-545-6704
www.americanhiking.org

American Motorcyclist Association
13515 Yarmouth Drive
Pickerington, OH 43147
614-856-1900
www.ama-cycle.org

American Rivers
1025 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 720
Washington, D.C. 20005
202-347-5770
www.americanrivers.org

American Trails
P.O. Box 491797
Redding, CA 96049-1797
530-547-2060
www.americantrails.org

American Volkssport Association
1001 Pat Booker Road, Suite 101
Universal City, TX 72148
210-659-2112
www.ava.org

Blue Ribbon Coalition
4555 Burley Drive, Suite A
Pocatello, ID 83202-1921
800-258-3742
www.sharetrails.org

Cross Country Ski Areas Association
259 Bolton Road
Winchester, NH 03470
877-799-2754
www.xcski.org

East Coast 4 Wheel Drive Association
101 S. Miami Avenue
Cleves, OH 45002
1-800-327-8493
www.ec4wda.org

International Inline Skating Association
7210 Trailmark Drive
Wilmington, NC 28405
910-762-7004
www.iisa.org

International Mountain Biking Assoc.
P.O. Box 7578
Boulder, CO 80306
303-545-9011
888-442-4622
www.imba.com

International Snowmobile Manufacturers
Association
1540 Haslett Road, Suite 170
Haslett, MI 48840
517-339-7788
www.snowmobile.org

League of American Bicyclists
1612 K Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20006-2850
208-822-1333
www.bikeleague.org

Motorcycle Industry Council, Inc.
2 Jenner Street, Suite 150
Irvine, CA 92618
949-727-4211
www.mic.org

National Ctr for Bicycling and Walking
1506 21st Street, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-463-6622
www.bikefed.org

National Off-Highway Vehicle
Conservation Council, Inc.
4718 South Taylor Drive
Sheboygan, WI 53081
800-348-6487
www.nohvcc.org

National Off-Road Bicycle Association
C/o USA Cycling
One Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
719-578-5481
www.usacycling.org

North Country Trail Association
229 E. Main Street
Lowell, MI 49331
616-897-5987
www.northcountrytrail.org

Rails to Trails Conservancy
1100 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-331-9696
www.railtrails.org

United Four Wheel Drive Association
7135 S. PR Royal Springs Drive
Shelbyville, IN 46176
800-448-3932
www.ufwda.org

State Organizations

American Discovery Trail
Ohio Coordinator
7 Peabody Drive
Oxford, OH 45056
513-523-4851
www.discoverytrail.org

Buckeye Trail Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 254
Worthington, OH 43085
800-881-3062
www.buckeyetrail.org

Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association
P.O. Box 722
St. Marys, OH 45885
419-733-6451
www.meccainc.org

Ohio Canal Corridor
P.O. Box 609420
Cleveland, OH 44109
216-520-1825
www.ohiocanal.org

Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Coalition
520 South Main Street, Suite 2452
Akron, OH 44311
330-434-5657
www.ohioeriecanal.org

Ohio to Erie Trail Fund, Inc.
P.O. Box 21246
Columbus, OH 43221
www.ohioerietrail.org

Ohio Greenways
2179 Everett Road
Peninsula, OH 44264
330-657-2055
www.ohiogreenways.org

Ohio Horseman's Council
9830 Roley Road
Logan, OH 43138
740-385-5306
www.ohiohorsemanscouncil.com

Ohio Mountain Bike Association
www.joincombo.org

Ohio Multi-Use Trails Association
34018 Sutton Road
Logan, OH 43130
740-380-3050
www.ohiotrails.org

Ohio Parks and Recreation Association
1059 West Main Street
Westerville, OH 43081
614-895-2222
www.opraonline.org

Ohio Trails Partnership
255 South Stony Run Road
Beverly, OH 45715
740-984-4703

Ohio State Snowmobile Association
P.O. Box 49
Columbiana, OH 44408

Rails to Trails Conservancy, Ohio
Field Office
30 Liberty Street
Canal Winchester OH 43110
614-837-6782
www.railtrails.org

Public Agencies Federal Government

Federal Highway Administration
Trails and Enhancements Program
HEPN-50, Room 3240
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590
202-366-5013
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails

National Park Service
Cuyahoga Valley National Park
15610 Vaughn Road
Brecksville, OH 44141
216-524-1497
www.nps.gov/cuva

National Park Service
Rivers and Trails Conservation
Assistance Program
2179 Everett Road
Peninsula, OH 44264
330-657-2950
www.nps.gov/rzca

National Park Service
North Country National Scenic Trail
700 Rayovac Drive, Suite 100
Madison, OH 53711
608-441-5610
www.nps.gov/noco

U.S. Forest Service
Wayne National Forest
13700 U.S. Highway 33
Nelsonville, OH 45764
740-753-0101
www.fs.fed.us/r9/wayne

State Government

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
2045 Morse Road, H-1
Columbus, OH 43229-6693
614-265-6694
www.ohiodnr.com/forestry

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Natural Areas and
Preserves
2045 Morse Road, F-1
Columbus, OH 43229-6693
614-265-6453
www.ohiodnr.com/dnap

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Recreation
(Ohio State Parks)
2045 Morse Road, C-3
Columbus, OH 43229-6693
614-265-6561
www.ohiodnr.com/parks

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Real Estate and Land
Management
2045 Morse Road, C-4
Columbus, OH 43229-6693
614-265-6395
www.ohiodnr.com/realm

Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Watercraft
2045 Morse Road, A-1
Columbus, OH 43229-6693
www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/water-trails/default.htm

Ohio Department of Development
Travel and Tourism
77 South High Street, 29th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6108
www.odod.state.oh.us
www.ohiotourism.com

Ohio Department of Health
246 North High Street
P.O. Box 118
Columbus, OH 43215
www.odh.state.oh.us

Ohio Department of Transportation
Division of Local Programs
Office of Local Projects
Bicycle/Pedestrian Program
1980 West Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43223
614-752-4683
www.dot.state.oh.us/bike

Local Government

For a listing of local park and
recreation agencies contact:
Ohio Parks and Recreation Assoc.
1069 West Main Street
Westerville, OH 43081
614-895-2222
www.opraonline.org