

A photograph of a dirt trail winding through a dense forest. The trail is made of brown earth and is surrounded by lush green foliage, including many trees and bushes. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day. The text "Fulton County Greenways and Trails" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

# Fulton County Greenways and Trails



# **The Fulton County Greenways and Trails Plan**

Fulton County, Illinois

**This Plan was produced with funding from the  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
For the Good People of Fulton County and the Fulton County Board,  
With assistance from many coalitions of local  
Townships, Villages, Cities, Park Districts, Cemetery Boards,  
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A Component of our Area's  
Regional Vision

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## Executive Summary

What will Fulton County become in the future? The answer is unclear, but there are certain trends worth recognizing.

The last 30 years have brought considerable change, including a significant reduction in industry and mining activity and a significant increase in the size of agricultural operations. Such changes have contributed to a decrease in our population.

It is reasonable to assume the next 30 years will also bring change. Therefore, it is logical for us to attempt to guide forces within our control to help us prepare for and influence outcomes.

Will world energy prices bring surface mining back? What would twenty mining operations mean for us? Do we have any choices to make? How many ethanol plants do we want? Is three too many?

Will China seek increased imports of pork, generating twenty local mega-hog farms and a pork processing plant? Will this affect our environment?

Will the new multilane highway 336 be constructed, connect us to St. Louis and Chicago and cause an urbanization along its route? What would an increase from 40,000 residents to 60,000 mean for us? Will the Scenic Byway designation of State Routes 78, 9 and 24 along the Illinois River bring tourists to our area? Will The Nature Conservancy, hunting and fishing and other recreational activities make us a tourist destination? If we want this, how do we go about nurturing it? Who is “we”? What is it that we “do”?

These are interesting and hypothetical questions for the foreseeable future. If we consider the many good things that can happen and aim to nurture them, we can welcome change.

How can we do this? We can do so by:

- Creating a **Regional Vision** that describes the future we seek,
- Being **attractive to private investment** so that our economy can support that vision,
- **Taking advantage of opportunity** as it arises to implement our Regional Vision.



Autumn color in Cuba. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

Greenways and Trails can be one aspect of our Regional Vision, to make Fulton County more attractive to its current residents and create a reason for others to visit or move here.

It is estimated that 40 million people with disposable annual incomes of \$60,000 or more will retire in the next few decades. Perhaps we can compel a few of these folks to stop by once in awhile and leave some of their money. If they really like us, maybe they will build a nice home, buy a car, eat out at restaurants and buy a few antiques, creating jobs, enhancing our tax base and contributing to our community.

What opportunity do we have to implement Greenways and Trails? A national trend is underway to create Greenways and Trails. We can participate in this process, or miss out on it. The Canton Park District is already the recipient of a grant for nearly half a million dollars. If the local desire exists and we learn how to work together, there are willing partners outside and inside Fulton County ready to help us, and more funding will come. The Nature Conservancy, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and others are obvious partners. However, many more opportunities are available not only with Federal and State government, but also with private sector partners, if we do our part.

An opportunity exists, here and now, to make Fulton County a better place by adding Greenways and Trails to our Regional Vision, creating construction jobs, nice facilities and an attractive environment. Greenways and Trails can attract affluent citizens that will improve our tax base and economy, help us retain our sense of community and enhance our quality of life. We welcome a healthy discussion on these important issues.

This Fulton County Greenways and Trails Plan is a reflection of ongoing efforts to support, enhance and preserve the outstanding quality of life available to folks who live or visit this beautiful area. This Fulton County Plan lays out a strategy to showcase our area as a special setting with competitive advantages in the world marketplace. As such, this document is merely a plan and snapshot of continuous human effort. It will require revisioning as projects are implemented, new opportunities appear and our Regional Vision evolves.



*A trail in a Fulton County forest. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.*

The fundamental plan for Greenways and Trails focuses on opportunities for hiking, biking and other compatible uses for recreation and as an alternative to automotive transportation. It is a collection of planned urban trails with consideration of future interurban connectivity. The Plan introduces water trails, bird watching and native grass study opportunities. It is also a model for additional Fulton County trail concepts such as a “Country Church Trail,” a “Cemetery Trail,” an “Antiques Trail,” “History Trails” and similar efforts integrating ecotourism with recreation. This Greenways and Trails Plan is also a reference library for future planning efforts and introduces preliminary

transportation planning, land use discussions and economic development concepts.

The Greenways and Trails “mini-plans” are depicted in map form. They have local support, are feasible and most have rights of way or landowner support. The implementation of each is specific, but generally efforts will be implemented by local agencies, land use and zoning actions, private donation and local fundraising, grant acquisition, volunteer efforts and similar grass roots efforts. It is anticipated that this Edition I of the Fulton County Greenways and Trails Plan will be updated in 2 to 4 years to reflect our progress and our evolving Regional Vision. Future editions will likely contain additional trail concepts, more information on wild flowers, native plants, fish, birds, wildlife and other eco-tourism opportunities. In addition to continuing implementation of the Greenways and Trails Plan, two important tasks are planned.

First, three tourist information kiosks are planned for Dickson Mounds Museum, Banner and Farmington. The kiosks will act as gateways into our community, welcoming guests and visitors alike. Second, a fun run bike excursion is planned for September 2007 to create a model for events that combine recreation, tourism and economic benefits. Finally, this document is intended to be a continual work in progress, and as such will be posted on the website for easy access and future edification.

Some communities are still working on plans that are not included in this first edition. Furthermore, this plan may stimulate additional ideas. Individuals interested in volunteering are encouraged to seek out ways they can constructively support these efforts by contacting the University of Illinois Extension Office, Fulton County Unit or the Fulton County Public Works and Highway Department or contacting specific trail coalitions. Your efforts will be welcomed and we look forward to serving our community.



# Chapter I: Introduction and Plan Philosophy

## Proposed Mission

The **primary mission** of this Greenways and Trails Plan is to provide comprehensive technical planning and management for Fulton County, its political subdivisions and community coalitions to develop various greenways and trail routes in Fulton County which:

- Preserve and enhance cultural, historical and natural features while supporting recreation, conservation and the economic welfare of the area,
- Enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors of Fulton County by providing pleasurable, healthy and educational experiences that accommodate hiking, biking and other compatible uses,
- Support green spaces and trails linking parks, nature reserves, cultural features and historic sites,
- Coordinate local and regional efforts of various agencies and community trail coalitions, and aid the IDNR in determining priorities as a part of its grant funding selection process.

A **secondary mission** is to introduce additional planning concepts and strategies to assist Fulton County communities to prepare for the future, including:

- Create a Regional Vision that is attractive to public and private investment and takes advantage of opportunity presented or created,
- Support the “Trail Concept” for additional plans such as waterways, bird watching, study of native grasses, tours of churches and cemeteries, and commercial support of antiques, farms, or other worthwhile endeavors,
- Consolidate a library of information for future planning efforts to assist in education and implementation,
- Continue implementing Greenways and Trails.

## Chapter 2: The History of Fulton County

Early history of central Illinois, including Fulton County, is little more than legend, depicting prehistoric Indians and portraying early white settlers. For decades accounts have passed from generation to generation in an attempt to keep the area heritage alive. These legends are an integral part of personal affiliations in the lives of Fulton



The Ogden-Fette site mounds on the Dickson Mounds Museum grounds.  
Photo courtesy Dickson Mounds Museum.

County residents. As a recognized center of historical and cultural interest, the area is renowned for Native American archaeology, agricultural evolution, literary achievements and many other distinctive events.

### Archaeology and Early Peopling

Fulton County, Illinois has one of the highest concentrations of prehistoric man in the Americas, with more than 3,000 sites of ancient people recorded here. Hundreds of earthen mounds represent sites of ceremony, burial and living, littered with the debris of centuries of Native American occupation. The vast

majority of these archaeological sites are of people so ancient that these subtle traces of their passing are all that remain.

What caused these early people to come to this region, and why did they stay? About 20,000 years ago, the last major glacial advance, the Wisconsin, was coming to a close. This great ice sheet nearly reached what is now Fulton County, flattening much of the landscape of northern Illinois. Gorged streams from the vast glacial outwashes carved wide valleys, scouring downward through the Illinoian glacial till and the underlying 250,000,000-year-old Pennsylvanian coal and limestone formations. As the ice sheet and bordering tundra retreated northward, the region became forested with conifers, including spruce, pine and fir trees. As the climate continued to warm, deciduous trees, such as oak, hickory, elm and walnut became intermixed with the conifers. Some large animals nearing extinction were still present, including mammoth, mastodon, and *Bison taylori*, as well as deer and elk. A mosaic of vegetational communities established and an increasing variety of other plants and animals followed. Along the eastern border of Fulton County, this setting was further enhanced by what had become the Illinois River valley.

Here meltwater flooding cut a broader swath through the valley than in other sections continuing up or down stream. When the meltwaters receded, a broad floodplain remained that featured a unique system of wetlands and interfluvial landforms perfectly suited to support a wide variety of natural resources.



Paleo Hunters. Illustration by Andy Buttram, courtesy Dickson Mounds Museum.

It is not known when the first nomadic Paleo-Indian people began to move into this cool environment, but by 12,000 years ago, they had become established in Fulton County, subsisting on the available plants, fish and animals. Because of their small numbers and nomadic lifestyle, little trace of their presence exists aside from a few of their distinctive, fluted spear points found at bluff top locations. They remain the least understood of the early cultures of Fulton County. By 8,000 B.C., climatic conditions

became warmer and drier and people adapted to new resources that resulted. Human populations responded to these changes by becoming more settled and adapting their living patterns to exploit the environment. This cultural phase, called the archaic period, lasted for over 6,000 years.



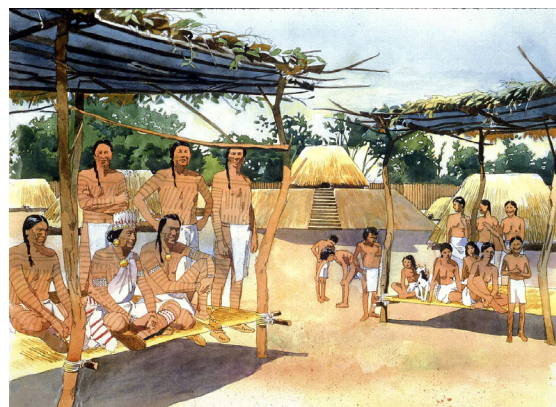
Middle Woodland village and mound building scene. Illustration by Andy Buttram, courtesy Dickson Mounds Museum.

The development of plant husbandry and the emergence of major social and political adjustments signaled a new way of life called Woodland that began about 2,000 B.C. Pottery was developed by the Early Woodland culture about 500 B.C., and by 200 B.C., starchy seed plants were cultivated by local Middle

Woodland people as their populations increased. Substantial earthen mounds containing burials of an elite class placed in log tombs began to appear along the Spoon and Illinois rivers. Elaborate expressions of material wealth, often obtained through long-distance trade, were placed as offerings with important dead. The art forms of these people rank among the finest ever produced in the Americas.

For reasons not fully understood, the elaborate Middle Woodland culture began to wane after A.D. 200, long distance trade diminished, ceramics became simpler and the highly developed art forms dropped away. The time between A.D. 500 and 1100 was characterized by widespread population movement, refining of gardening techniques and social adjustment called Late Woodland. The similar, single culture of people within the region, were replaced by different groups of Late Woodland people. However, each group readily interchanged ideas and probably intermarried. By A.D. 800, corn was introduced to the area, and local people began to rely less heavily on the cultivation of native plants.

The introduction of corn was the first recognizable form of a series of cultural adaptations made by local people that resulted from their interaction with a distant cultural center called Cahokia, near the present East St. Louis. Cahokia was well on its way to becoming a bustling metropolis by the end of the Late Woodland period. Within a few generations, its people developed a distinctive culture called Mississippian that would come to dominate the major river systems of Illinois for the next five centuries. With the appearance of Mississippian culture in Fulton County shortly after A.D. 1100, large scale advances in crop production, exotic religious



Mississippian village scene. Illustration by Andy Buttram, courtesy Dickson Mounds Museum.

expressions, rigid forms of social control and a vast array of new technologies arrived. This movement also brought a new hierarchy of god-like personages and subordinate leaders, and commoners characterized the life way of people in the region. Despite having a potentially greater availability of food, poor diet selection and population consolidation probably caused disease to become prevalent. Social unrest also grew through competition for land and resources, and warfare increased through time. In the end, the potential advances of the Mississippian culture did not bring about a particularly better life for local people.



The late prehistoric period was a time of conflict and change with new groups moving into the area. Illustration by Andy Buttram, courtesy Dickson Mounds Museum.

A group called the Oneota arrived from the northern Mississippi River valley around A.D. 1300 and settled along the Illinois River in Fulton County. Their domestic lifestyle was similar to the local Mississippian population, but the Oneota lacked the rigidly structured social and political control and exotic ceremonial expressions of their neighbors. Warfare had increased significantly by this time, resulting in large numbers of victims of violent death. Diseases, especially those relating to dietary deficiencies and tuberculosis, became rampant. By the mid-A.D. 1400s, both Oneota and Mississippian populations had abandoned the region, marking the end of nearly

10,000 years of continuous prehistoric human occupation of Fulton County.

The next several decades witnessed only the sporadic occupation of people moving throughout the region. Fulton County remained near vacant. As inter-group social pressures on historic Indians living in the area of the Great Lakes began to increase after A.D. 1500, new Native American populations began to appear locally. Their numbers were generally small and the groups were transient. They also initially represented members of a loosely confederated group of Algonquian speaking tribes calling themselves "Illiniwek," which at the time included the Kaskaskia, Cahokia and Tamaroa. By the late 1700s, the Kickapoo and Potawatomi were present in the county, the latter being somewhat more populous and permanent. Small groups and single families of these people were common until after 1800. Unfortunately, few sites of these later historic tribes are documented, and fewer still have been scientifically investigated.



Kickapoo Indian village scene. Diorama at the Illinois State Museum, Springfield. Photo courtesy Illinois State Museum.

The rich archaeological heritage of Fulton County was almost immediately noticed by Europeans who began settling the region after 1820. Early newspaper articles, county histories and historians' accounts frequently make reference to Indian sites and chance archaeological discoveries. Both antiquarian and early scientific investigations were also made during the latter part of the nineteenth century. However, generally inadequate records of these undertakings were kept, and it would not be until the

early twentieth century that the first well-documented scientific records were made of archaeological excavations in Fulton County and the story of the peopling of the region began to unfold.

In 1927, Dr. Don F. Dickson, a chiropractor, began an exploration of an Indian burial site on land owned by his father that would have far-reaching effects on American archaeology. Using a new technique of uncovering the remains but leaving them intact in the ground for study, Dickson and his relatives excavated a 30- by 60-foot area of the cemetery, exposing the skeletons of 247 Indian burials and their accompanying grave goods. Dr. Dickson protected these under a museum building constructed with funding from admission fees charged to view his excavation. Despite its setting in a remote location and its opening during a time of failing national economy, the museum attracted over 90,000 visitors in its first two years of operation. Buoyed by Dickson's success, two other Indian burial



Dr. Don Dickson shown outside the first permanent structure covering the Dickson excavation, 1927. Photo courtesy, Dickson Mounds Museum.

mounds in the county were opened on a commercial basis near Sepo and Maples Mill. Conducted at the same time as the sensational excavation of Tutankhamen's tomb in Egypt, these Fulton County excavations immediately focused national and international attention on the area, which translated into features appearing in such benign popular forms as Ripley's Believe it or Not to more scholarly popular publications like National Geographic.

Scientific institutions soon began to conduct their own research in Fulton County; the foremost of these investigations carried out by the University of Chicago between 1930 and 1934. On the bluff top just upriver from Dickson Mounds, the university established the first formal program of scientific, problem-oriented, archaeological field research to be conducted in the eastern United States. Many of the investigative techniques still used in modern archaeology were refined at this unique field school by its directors, Faye Cooper-Cole and Thorne Deuel, and a contingent of gifted students who would go on to become leaders in American and world archaeology. Because of this pioneering contribution to the science of archaeology, Fulton County, Illinois, is often referred to as the Birthplace of American Archaeology.



The University of Chicago Fulton County excavation, 1930. Photo courtesy Dickson Mounds Museum.

In addition to these universal contributions, the rich cultural heritage of Fulton County continues to significantly influence the lives of current residents as well. It remains a hotbed of archaeology. Perhaps nowhere is there a general population better informed about the lives of ancient cultures, for the museum continues to provide a unique link to peoples of the past. In essence, Dickson Mounds and its story are a part of the local culture. Having been introduced to the early people of the region and provided with

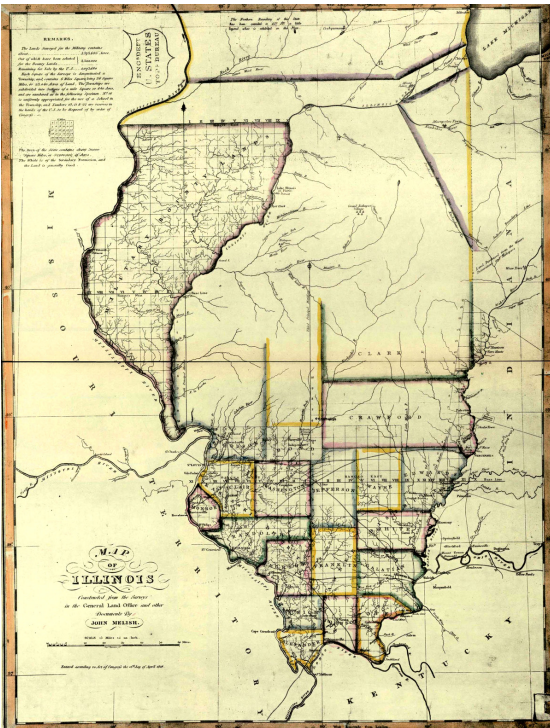
an appreciation of their culture during a school field trip to Dickson Mounds, many local students have gone on to professional lives in the humanities. It is said that Fulton County, especially the town of Lewistown, has probably produced more archaeologists per capita than any place in the nation.

With the dedication of a new museum of anthropology at Dickson Mounds in 1972 and its development as a leading center for archaeological research and interpretation, Dickson Mounds Museum is perhaps unparalleled among on site museums in the nation. Through continuing research, innovative exhibits, educational programs, field trips, lectures by authorities on a variety of natural and cultural topics and membership into the Friends of the Museum and Illinois Valley Archaeological Society support programs, visitors to Dickson Mounds Museum and people of Fulton County are provided with a unique opportunity to be a part of the developing story of man in Illinois.



Dickson Mounds Museum as it appears today. Photo courtesy Dickson Mounds Museum

New ideas emerging to continue education in the area include “museums without walls.” The dynamic museum’s “exhibits” will be constructed collaboratively by museum curators, experts, the community and with public and private partnerships. This “new museum” is an innovative location-based storytelling research project designed to put history and science in your hand and turn the world into a museum.



The 1818 map by John Melish showing the “Military Bounty Lands” of which Fulton County was later formed.

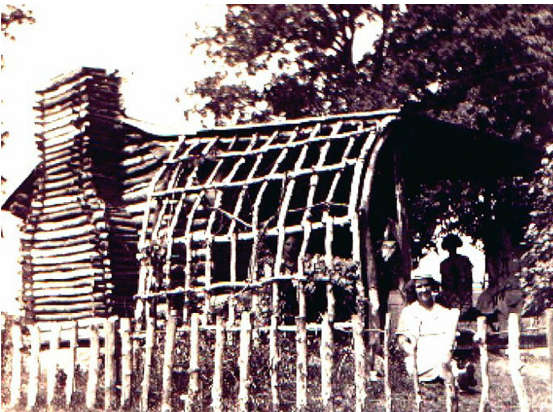
## Early Settlement

Settlement was slow until after the War of 1812, when Congress set aside bounty land as payment to soldiers who fought in the war. Veterans were allotted 160 acres of land in the western part of the state between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers, reaching as far north as Bureau and Henry Counties and to the southern tip of Calhoun County. After the Military Tract was complete, the public was offered the remaining ground at \$1.25 an acre. Somewhat surprisingly, few actually took title to land deeming it in poor condition to settle and selling it for as little as a good horse or cow.

In the early nineteenth century, Northwest statehoods emerged from Indian Territory. Illinois joined this trend as a separate territory in 1809 and became a state in 1818. In 1823 the Illinois General Assembly created several additional counties, including Fulton County, and for a small time Fulton County contained the majority of land north of the Illinois River and included the current site of Chicago. The formation of Peoria, Knox and Schuyler Counties in 1825 resulted in Fulton County’s present boundaries.

According to the 1907 publication, *Historic Illinois*, author Randall Parrish discusses old prairie trails and their travelers. By what trails or waterways did our ancestors come to Fulton County? The earliest trails were established by the vast herds of buffalo, following receding prairie grasses in winter and returning with new spring growth. These early trails were crisscrossed by innumerable Indian paths, either leading from village to village or to some remote trading region, or were distinctly war trails, pointing the way toward distant hostile tribes or to some doomed white settlement along the far-off eastern border. The more important trails, traversed oftentimes by entire villages in their migrations, were the established routes of the aborigines, and remained much the same during many generations of constant wilderness travel (Crandell "Fulton County...").

Crossing over this same territory, the first white settlers entered Fulton County from different state sections by wagon or ferry and soon distinguished their travels by creating a notch system: one notch for a foot path, two for a horse trail, and three for a wagon road. Whether they came from the East, the South or even Europe, the well worn paths were traveled by many a hardy immigrant into this new land.



Pioneer log cabin in Waterford Township, shown in the 1930s. Photo courtesy Kenneth Stufflebeam.

The thrilling scenes through which pioneers passed in the settlement of this portion of Illinois must not be forgotten. These first settlers to Fulton County found broad prairies, thick forests and wide shallow lakes and marshes. The splendor prairie land offered was compared to the ocean, in which grasses flowed like waves with groves of trees like islands. While the grass was green, the beautiful plains were adorned with every imaginable variety of color. Winding streams and woodlands were carpeted with native wildflowers such as lilac, violet, wild rose, and goldenrod.

To many pioneers, the taming of the prairies was an untried experiment. Native grasses stood twelve feet high and no ordinary plow could turn the thickly matted roots. Many thought of the prairie as space and nothingness, more frightening than the more familiar mountain valleys from which they came. The hardy and more adventurous settlers, however, endured what is known as the "pioneer spirit" and eventually these people were the first to pave the way for those who followed after them by settling near the forests and developing the land by using the abundant resources.

The thick forests teamed with deer, bear, wild turkey, wolf, elk, puma, raccoon, opossum and gray and fox squirrel, while prairie habitat contained buffalo, prairie chicken, coyote, wood chuck, ground hog, skunk and red fox. The timber-prairie edges had quail, rabbit, passenger pigeon and mourning dove and the river banks included mink, weasel, beaver and an abundance of fish and bird species. Some settlers recall the abundance of wild duck and geese, not realizing these were great flyways of migrating fowl.

Several of these animals furnished meat for the early settlers, but their principle meat

did not long consist of wild game. Settlers brought with them domesticated livestock and soon pork and poultry were raised in abundance. However, the wolf, a common enemy of livestock, became quite troublesome. It was difficult to protect livestock from their ravages. To facilitate destruction of these animals, county authorities offered a bounty for their hides. Troops of hunters, young and old, formed “wolf hunts.” These “pleasure parties” were prominent memories of early settlers, so much so that they were regarded as a holiday in Fulton County (Chapman 322). It is not surprising that dwindled wolf populations needed to be re-introduced in North America during the Twenty First Century.

Were these planned events an early form of recreation for pioneers? “Wolf hunts” prove that the toils and privations of the early settlers were not a series of unmitigated sufferings. Although mothers, fathers and



Waterfowl were abundant on the large natural lakes in southern Fulton County. Photo courtesy Illinois Natural History Survey.

children worked hard, they were not

adverse to a little relaxation to break up the monotony of their daily lives. In his book *History of Fulton County, Illinois*, Chapman describes “quilting-bees,” “corn-husking,” “apple-paring,” and “house-raising,” among the more general forms of amusements. These types of recreation represented a form of labor made to afford fun and enjoyment to all participating.



Old Duncan Town Mill. Photo courtesy Dennis Barr.

The Isabel Historians of Duncan Mills mention “log-rolling” as a popular event in the lower Spoon River valley. “Log-rolling” was instituted to clear timber and prairie lands. Men would come from all the surrounding countryside, bringing their wives and children, as this meant a real feast was to be served. The affair began soon after settlers cut and burned the smaller trees and brush, leaving the bigger trees for the main event. Men would select sloped spots for their log piles and place straw and dry debris at

the bottom, and proceed to roll larger logs down the slope and into the “draw.” The logs were placed in such a position that when the fire burned the dry logs, the other logs would roll in, thus feeding the fire without the aid of the men. All the neighbors joined in and there would be games and music in the evening by the light of the big log fires.

Saturday was a regular holiday in which work was ignored and everybody went to town or to some place of general resort. When all were together in town, sport began. Of course whiskey circulated freely and everybody indulged to some extent. Quarrels were now settled by hand-to-hand encounters; wrestling matches came off or were



arranged for future; jumping, foot races and horse-racing filled up the interval of time; and everybody enjoyed the rough sports with a zest unknown among the more refined citizens of the present good city of Canton (Chapman 331).

Year after year rolled by until almost a century and a half had passed since early Indians stepped ashore from their dug out canoes and aborigines, who occupied the area embraced within the present boundaries of Fulton County, were succumbed to the encroachment of the white man. Generation after generation of settlers have come and gone upon the forest, prairie and Illinois and Spoon Rivers of Fulton County. It is more than evident that with the advancement of civilization, nature was too lavish in the distribution of natural advantages to leave it longer in the peaceable possession of those who had for centuries refused to develop, even the slightest degree, any of the great resources.

Much is owed to those who opened up these avenues that have led to our present condition and happy surroundings. Unremitting struggle and manual labor have driven off the sickly miasmas that brooded over swampy prairies. Energy and perseverance have peopled every section of our wild lands and changed them from swamps and deserts to gardens of beauty and profit. Schools, churches, colleges, palatial dwellings, beautiful grounds, large, well cultivated and productive farms, as well as cities, towns

and busy manufactories, have grown up, and now occupy the hunting grounds and camping places of the Indians, and in every direction there is evidence of wealth, comfort and luxury (Chapman 235-36).



Edgar Lee Master portrait by J. Geyer. Photo courtesy Knox College.

### Important Figures and Places

Fulton County is rich in American heritage, for it has been the home of a number of nationally famous persons. It is the birthplace of Charles Duryea, inventor of the first automobile; Walter C. Yoemans, the artist, was born near Avon and William Parlin is noted in the Agricultural Hall of Fame for his inventions of farm machinery. Perhaps most well known, Edgar Lee Masters spent his formative years in this county and wrote his *Spoon River Anthology* about many of the people in the area. Masters is less known for his scathing biography of Abraham Lincoln, which sharply contrasts the more favorable Lincoln biography by another local writer, Carl Sandburg.

When the Military Tract was laid off into counties, most of them were named in honor of the military heroes of the nation, mostly of the war of 1812. However, Fulton County, the largest one in the tract, was not attributed as a symbol of blood and battle. In fact, it was named in honor of a civil engineer, Robert Fulton, who is credited with being the inventor of the steamboat.

The first known permanent settler to Fulton County was John Eveland who came with his family from Kentucky in the spring of 1820. A few years later, Ossian Ross came to

the area as the first war veteran to claim his quarter section of Congress Land. Because so many war veterans sold their land or came too late to claim their land, ownership became hard to distinguish. To solve this problem, Ross is credited as helping establish clearly marked township and section corners.

Ossian Ross is also the founder of Lewistown. He laid out the plan of the early city on his deeded land and named it after his eldest son, Lewis. In 1823 Lewistown became the county seat of the newly created Fulton County. The terms upstate and downstate began to be used when people from Chicago had to come “downstate” to Lewistown to conduct business, such as attending court, obtaining various licenses, such as marriage licenses and voting.



The Fulton County Courthouse. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

The present Lewistown courthouse building is the fourth to serve the county. The first courthouse, built of logs in 1823, was in use when much of western Illinois was under jurisdiction of Fulton County. A

wooden frame building replaced it in 1830. The third courthouse, built of brick in 1836, had four stone columns. Stephen A. Douglas served as a Circuit Court Judge in this courthouse, and on August 17, 1858, Abraham Lincoln stood between the columns to deliver the much quoted speech, “Return to the Fountain.” On December 13, 1894, the courthouse was burned to the ground by an arsonist, an incident recounted in the poem, “Silas Dement,” in the *Spoon River Anthology*. Two large columns from the courthouse survived the blaze and were moved and erected in Lewistown’s Oak Hill Cemetery in front of the Civil War Monument.

Although the “Spoon River” of Edgar Lee Master’s *Spoon River Anthology* represents no definite place on the map to the thousands who have read the book in various languages, the author drew upon his knowledge of his home town, Lewistown, Illinois, and the Spoon River of Fulton County. The first selection of the *Anthology*, entitled “The Hill,” is referencing Oak Hill Cemetery’s natural beauty.

The Spoon River Scenic Drive was created as a part of the revival of interest in the historical and cultural aspects of Illinois in its Sesquicentennial year of 1968. This year also marked the 145<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fulton County. The drive extends from London Mills in the north, where Spoon River enters the county, to Dickson Mounds in the south, where Spoon River flows into the Illinois River. On this 100 mile nostalgic loop route, one may see various “stations” on the Underground Railway, vestiges of the old trail from Peoria to Ft. Madison, or the old



Oak Hill Cemetery, Lewistown. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

mill at London Mills, which served as a picnic area as far back as 1830 (Fulton County Board of Supervisors 58).



The view from the top of Mt. Pisgah, near Ellisville, a popular spot on the Spoon River Scenic Drive.

The villages of Table Grove, Ipava and Bernadotte were part of the national mobilization efforts to win World War II. The Lewistown Project, the early code name for Camp Ellis, was the largest U.S. Army training facility of its kind in the nation during World War II. Farmers vacated 17,800 acres of land to construct the training camp for service forces, including quartermaster, medical, combat and engineering units.

The official dedication of Camp Ellis was held on July 14, 1943, with over 50,000 visitors in attendance. John Drury, in his book *This is Fulton County, Illinois* (1954),

gives some statistics about Camp Ellis which prove to be interesting:

- 700 farmers vacated land
- as many as 40,000 soldiers were trained at one time
- in 1943 there were 2,672 prisoners of war

The area occupied by Camp Ellis returned to individual ownership in the 1950s and few signs of the Camp's existence remain. Portions of the rifle range, a couple POW barracks, water towers and part of the water processing plant near Bernadotte are all that remain. The area east and northeast of Table Grove is still referred to by local folks as "The Camp."

These are just a few of the many people and places who have contributed to the events that make up the rural characteristic and cultural heritage that is Fulton County.

## Trends in Agriculture, Mining and Industry

### Agriculture

Fulton County is blessed with sufficient rainfall, growing seasons and soil conditions to make it a great agricultural county. Fertile upland and prairie soils, temperate seasons and adequate moisture create prime farmland. Throughout the Twentieth Century, agricultural and related production was the basis for the local economy, and farming continues to be key today.

Currently, the landscape of Fulton County is dominated by agricultural land use. Fulton County has 565,543 acres with 47% of land cover as cropland, 23% woodland, 22% pasture, 4% wetland and 4% for other purposes.



Spoon River farmland near Ellisville. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

Since its introduction, corn has held reign as the leading crop in Fulton County. It has adapted extremely well to our soil and has outlasted drought, flood, the Great Depression and numerous dry spells. In 1839 it was recorded that 608,888 bushels of corn were yielded. Roughly 60 years later in 1900 that number rose nearly ten times to seven million bushels ([www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov)). With the exception of a great flood in 1947, the 1940s brought higher yields with the introduction of commercial fertilizers, crop rotations and soil fertility programs. Between 1970 and 1990 production rates periodically dropped to half the amount of adjacent years due to surface mining. However, today's productivity is estimated at roughly 20 million bushels of corn at 130 bushels an acre ([www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov)).



Corn. Photo courtesy Farm Bureau.

Corn is not the only crop worth mentioning. Soybeans were first introduced in 1919 with a slow production of 435 bushels yielded for 99 acres at four bushels per acre (Fulton County Board of Supervisors 28). With years of adjustment, production steadily increased to include fertile upland and prairie soils, as well as river bottomlands. Additional advantages of soybeans are their soil regenerative benefits and shorter growing season. The 1997 Census of Agriculture records 128,347 acres of soybeans yielding about 41 bushels per acre for a total of 5,304,060 bushels in Fulton County.



Soybeans. Photo courtesy Farm Bureau.

Although crops dominate the county's landscape, livestock have been historically prevalent as well. For most of the Twentieth Century, hogs were the most popular livestock produced in Fulton County. As early as 1850, Fulton County farms produced 52,724 hogs. By 1944 that figure nearly quadrupled as area farms produced 200,500 head of hogs (Fulton County Board of Supervisors 29). In 1950, sixty percent of all grain farmers raised pigs. No wonder hogs were sometimes referred to as "mortgage lifters"- by converting corn to pork, a farmer could often generate a 25 % return on investment.



Hogs. Photo courtesy Farm Bureau.

Hog farmers dwindled in the 1960s as farms grew larger and the demand for pork declined. It was not long that an aggressive marketing effort by pork producers revived demand and scientists learned to breed hogs that were more efficient at converting feed into meat. Booming Asian economies began to import significant quantities of pork and the profitable hog market began to attract the attention of entrepreneurs driven by a new vision—a single farm with thousands of hogs covering dozens of acres in

climate-controlled buildings surrounding open-air manure lagoons that would handle as much sewage as that of a large city.

Today, this “vision” is a reality with several large hog farms operating and being constructed in Fulton County. As of December 2004, the Illinois Department of Agriculture recorded 76,200 head of hogs in the county on approximately three farms.

Currently beef cows are making a steady climb in numbers and popularity. The first record of beef cows was in 1850 when the county had 8,600 head. By 1966, Fulton County had 20,900 head, making us second in the state of Illinois in the number of beef cows (Fulton County Board of Supervisors 29). The US Department of Agriculture verifies that in 1997 Fulton County had 14,377 head of beef cows, a figure sure to grow as recent demands for beef cows rise.



Cattle. Photo courtesy Farm Bureau.

Throughout the decades the number of farms continued to level off while the size of farms increased. In 1850 there were an estimated 1,942 farms, averaging 140 acres. Fifty years later in 1900, the highest number of farms was recorded at 4,271, averaging 120 acres (Fulton County Board of Supervisors 30). In 2002 the Census of Agriculture profiled Fulton County as having 1,055 farms with an average of 392 acres.

Why did the number of farms gradually decrease in size and increase in acreage? Fulton County farms follow a continued trend toward greater income from large commercial farms, using larger equipment and less labor. From 1900 to 1960 the rural population drastically dropped from 39,637 to 22,932 (Fulton County Board of Supervisors 30). Contributing to these changes is the high cost of farm machinery, limited family labor and greater income opportunities off the farm. It would appear that these demographic and technical factors have led to a significant economic advantage for larger farms.



Corn harvest. Photo courtesy Farm Bureau.

Farming has always been a major enterprise in Fulton County. In 2002 the Census of Agriculture recorded Fulton County as grossing \$90,089,000 for accounted crop sales and livestock sales with an average of \$85,393 market value per farm and net cash sales averaging \$22,346 per farm. Farming continues to be a basic industry in the county with technology and economies of scale likely continuing to drive the future of Fulton County farms.

Are “new settlers” returning? A trend is developing whereby a new urban settler purchases farmland for a primary or secondary residence, leases tillable acreage to commercial farmers, leases hunting rights to outfitters and enjoys the beauty and pastoral charm of Fulton County. This trend bodes well for a symbiotic planning philosophy of farming with new recreational investment potentials.



Saline County Coal Company Mine #22, St David (date unknown). Photo courtesy Bill Cook.

### Mining

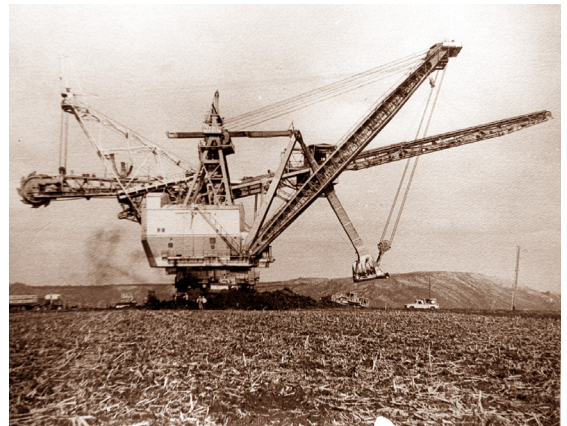
Fulton County has endured a rich history of mining bituminous coal. In fact, many of the cities and townships are named after the founders of industrial coal mines. The Spoon River Area Assessment indicates that for nearly a century, Fulton County ranked second in the state for cumulative surface mine production from 1882 to 1980. Three hundred million tons of coal has been produced from numerous underground and surface mines and until 1993, 53,308 acres or 9.53% of the county’s total acreage has been

affected (Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory). Millions of tons of coal are still available, and world energy prices could bring surface mining back to Fulton County.

Early settlers came to the area seeing only tough, relentless prairie grasses, never realizing the resources that lay underneath. But in the 1820s, outcroppings of the mineral were discovered as streams on farms and wastelands cut through the soil and exposed coal in their banks. It was not long that slope mines developed as settlers dug deeper into the exposed veins of coal.

By 1880, deep or shaft mining was the newest and most preferred method of mining. This method could cover several acres and resulted when a shaft was put into a vein of coal vertically and corridors were dug out horizontally. As one level was mined out, another deeper elevation was opened up. Canaries, less tolerant of toxic gas, were often brought in the shaft mines to provide warning as to avoid suffocation.

Mining was primarily done underground until the 1920s when surface mining started on a large scale. In 1928 there were 137 coal mines in the county with 11 being large enough to ship coal. By 1965, Fulton County was the leader of coal manufacturing in Illinois with a production rate of 8.4 million tons at \$3.57 per ton (Branson 19). Coal mining produced many jobs and was widespread throughout Fulton County with the greatest concentration in Buckheart, Canton and Farmington Townships (Fulton County Board of Supervisors 42).

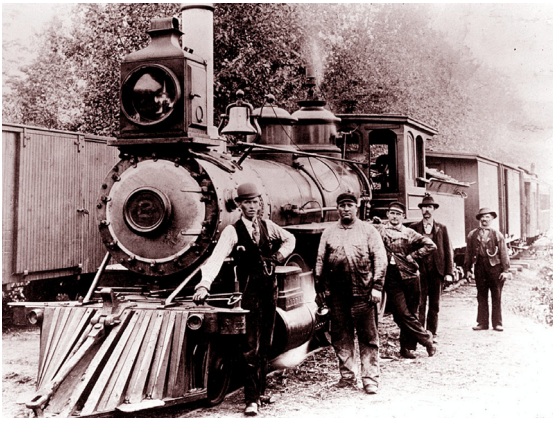


Coal mine in southern Fulton County. Photo from the Bill Pace collection, courtesy Dickson Mounds Museum.

The last of many coal mines closed in 1997. Today, the landscape within Fulton County

is recovering from the scarred impacts surface mining created. In the early days of strip mining, there were no laws requiring operators to replace the soil, resulting in a moonscape surface. Some reclamation of the worst areas has occurred through Federal and State efforts, but many areas continue to be blighted.

Is mining in our future? Surface mining may be returning to Fulton County as coal prices respond to energy supply and demand. The mining permitting process was improved over the 1970s under the guidance of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Office of Mines and Minerals. This may be another important trend in Fulton County and a critical planning requirement. A mining operation can bring jobs, but can also blight the land, impact water resources quality and quantity, create traffic and environmental issues, limit future land uses and create a big mess for taxpayers to clean up. Proper planning and appropriate, timely involvement in the mining application process can avoid this.



The Fulton County narrow gauge railroad.

### **Early Railroads**

While the Northern Cross was the first railroad, the one dear to the hearts of people in Fulton County was their own Narrow-Gauge Railway. Before the days of automobiles and highways, Western Illinois was served well by the Fulton County Narrow Gauge Railroad, known popularly as “The Peavine.” The railroad was built from Havana, north and west to Lewistown, then to Cuba, Fairview and Galesburg. The Peavine hauled everything from mail to coal to people, and here and there we may see the former sites of the little depots, where the teams of citizens awaited the arrival of the trains.

### **Rails to Trails**

If mining resumes in Fulton County, the area will once again become useful for coal transport and railroads may operate in full force. However, there is also the possibility that mines will not take root here and that railroads will not be in use. What happens if this is the case? There are opportunities to use the existing railroads as a resource for recreation, alternative transportation, education and conservation. Turning rails into trails can create and generate numerous benefits.

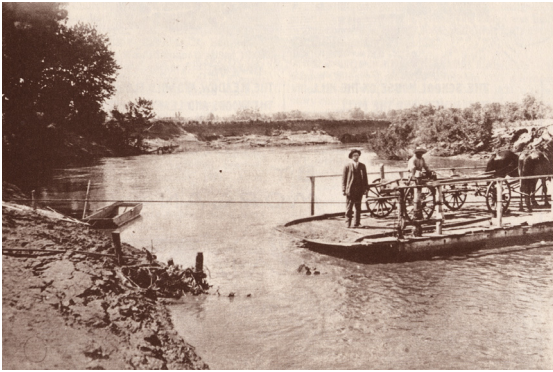
Rail-trails can provide places for cyclists, hikers, walkers, runners, inline skaters, cross-country skiers and individuals with disabilities to exercise and experience the many natural and cultural wonders of the county’s urban, suburban and rural environments.

### **Industry**

During much of the 1900s, Fulton County represented a community built on agricultural, mining and industrial pursuits. While farming and mining played the biggest roles in development, manufacturing was an important component. Although much manufacturing in Fulton County is gone, some remains, supplemented by considerable

service-related job growth.

As pointed out by the Isabel Historians of Duncan Mills, the first wave of pioneers was hunters and traders who brought hogs and cattle with them. These livestock furnished an increasing amount of raw products to be traded for store goods and to be freighted in flatboats or keelboats down river, mainly to St. Louis, as articles of commerce. They also shipped corn, ginseng, beeswax, salted pork, tallow, hides and beef. Raw wool, flax products, deer skins and venison hams were also distinct products that Fulton County settlers produced.



Whites Ferry across Spoon River. Photo courtesy Charles Overton.

Before the advent of the steamboat, trading took place on foot or river craft. Those fearless persons who boldly struck out into the wildness of a new country and opened the road for trading routes met hardships and dangers faintly pictured through recollections

passed from generation to generation. Such a trading expedition is told by Chapman through the story of “The Battle of Malony’s Ferry.”

Indeed, Native Americans were numerous for many years after the county was settled, and although friendly, were often seen as quite troublesome. In May of 1828, five men came up the Illinois River on their river craft to Malony’s Ferry at the mouth of the Spoon River, near Dickson Mounds. With them they brought a barrel of whiskey, from their travels to St. Louis, as a gift for Mr. Malony. When they arrived they found that no one was there, so they left the barrel on the ferryboat and started overland for Lewistown.

No sooner had the barrel of whisky been left and the little band departed, when 27 Native Americans found it and tried desperately to break it open. Malony came upon them and could do nothing more than give them all a drink. When the band of Native Americans consumed the alcohol, Malony became fearful and called for help. The Native Americans anticipated trouble and began a verbal confrontation with Malony and the five returning friends. One of the men used a wooden cane to strike his enemy and soon both parties broke out in a brutal brawl. The outnumbered white settlers fought their foe with great desperation and soon proved the victors. It is said that the indented wooden cane still exists in Fulton County. This was the type of a reception our ancestors apparently received upon their introduction into Fulton County.



Steamboat pushing a barge on the Illinois River (date unknown). Photo from the Bill Pace Collection, courtesy Dickson Mounds Museum.

The second wave of settlers was often men from the south who laid more emphasis on building, making improvements and clearing land. Trade soon subsided as local industries were established. Saw and flour mills were the first such establishments recorded in



1818 by a St. Louis firm who set up on Otter Creek in Kerton Township. Floodwaters soon carried away the mill and the site was abandoned. In the succeeding years, other mills were constructed on Big Creek, Putt Creek, Copperas Creek and the Spoon River to supply lumber for pioneer homesteads and flour for food.



Conklin Bros. Cigar Factory, east side square, Canton, 1908.

One of the most important early industries throughout the county and the one factor which contributed most to the economic growth of Canton was pork packing. The industry began with the majority of local merchants establishing smoke houses in the rear of their homesteads to barter-and-trade their goods with the local farmers. Soon, every town contained one or two merchants who would buy corn, wheat and dressed hogs, and store the goods in a warehouse where it was later smoked or packed in salt and sent by flat boat from Liverpool to Chicago or St. Louis. Railroads soon halted the business because farmers could ship live hogs to bigger cities.

For over half a century, the cigar manufacturing industry was one of the most important economic influences in Canton and Fulton County. From 1889 to 1891, this industry was at its zenith; Canton was the largest

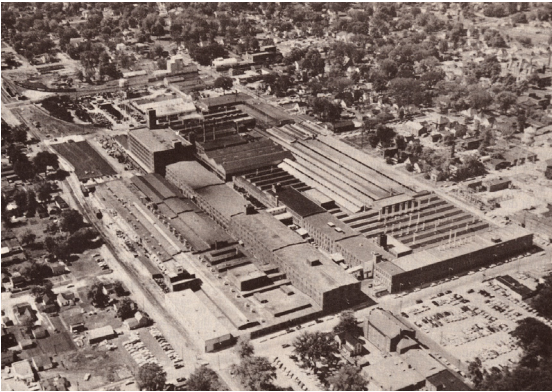
cigar manufacturing city in the Midwest – producing approximately 20 million hand-made cigars annually. There were from eight to twenty factories operating during this time, as well as a cigar box factory which produced well over 600,000 boxes per year (Lewis 70).

Another industry of importance in Fulton County history is the distillery business. Canton and Banner established such foundries as a secondary industry associated with pork-packing. Alcohol and liquor were made and the slop produced by these distilleries served as food for the hogs. Barrel factories then sprang up and supplied barrels for the pork and liquor produced in the area (Fulton County Board of Supervisors 37). “Hooch” is now making a comeback as an ethanol plant is under construction south of Canton.

Canton manufacturing firms have produced a variety of products. In the 150 years plus of Canton’s history, two products are probably best known - Canton’s P&O-IHC factory produced farm equipment used worldwide and for several decades Canton was the largest cigar-manufacturing city in the Midwest. Growth in business was rapid and soon there were a number of craftsmen in business in most trades, including building supplies, firearms, clothing and furniture.

In 1838, the first established foundry was built to manufacture coal-mine cars and stoves until about the time of World War I. In 1840, the manufacturing of the Diamond Plow began in a small blacksmith shop in Canton but was short

lived because the plow was inefficient. In 1842 William Parlin came to Canton from Massachusetts and went into the business of making steel plows, and by 1852 there was so much demand for plows that Parlin went into business with his brother-in-law, William Orendorff, thus the famous P&O Company was formed.



International Harvester Company, Canton. Photo courtesy Leo Binder.

At the deaths of the original partners, the sons, Will Parlin and Ulysses Orendorff, continued the business until 1919 when the corporation was sold to the International Harvester Company. At this time it was the largest plant in the world manufacturing plows. There were several expansions and modernizations and employment of as many as 3500 workers. In addition to several

types of plows, the company made corn and cotton planters, potato diggers, beet harvesters, cultivators, listers, tool bars, fertilizers and many other instruments (Fulton County Board of Supervisors 94-5).

International Harvester closed its doors in 1983 and the city of Canton's population suddenly declined. From that point on, the many people who depended on the factory to support their way of living ended up moving to neighboring counties and cities to find work. International Harvester lay empty until arsonists burned it down in 1997. The site is now barren with much speculation as to how it will be developed.

## Chapter 3: Natural Resources of Fulton County

### Geology and Mineral Resources

The history of any region begins with the land. It would be unfair to illustrate Fulton County's topography and agriculture without first portraying the events that led up to the present state of the area's land and resources.



Silurian Reef diorama. Photo courtesy Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

About five million years ago the mid-continent was covered by a Silurian Sea where some of the first life forms appeared – corals, primitive fish, cephalopods and sea lilies (Clark 42). As these organisms died, they floated to the bottom of the sea, creating a layer of thick sludge which later turned into limestone, the oldest layer in a series of strata within the Illinois Basin. The pillars of the “old” courthouse in Lewistown are said to be made of Spoon River limestone.

Fulton County is located on the western edge of the geologic structure known as the Illinois Basin. The formation of the Illinois Basin began approximately 300 million years ago, brought about by a series of contortions which left a giant depression in Central and Southern Illinois, as an extensive system of valleys became deeply entrenched into the bedrock surface. Many of the features within the basin, such as the Illinois and the Spoon Rivers, have been determined largely by these early activities (Branson 19).

Prior to this time, vast swamps containing giant ferns and forests covered the area. As the flora died, they settled to the bottom of the basin and after many millennia, decomposed into peat and eventually coal. Swampy periods alternating with periods in which the land was covered with water, resulted in the development of numerous coal beds separated by beds of shale, sandstone and limestone (Branson 19). Over time these strata filled the basin with a layered series of valuable resources.

About 750,000 years ago Illinois was covered by glaciers and what is now Fulton County was partly covered with ice during three separate glacial periods. During a fourth and most recent glacial period, the Wisconsin, the ice sheet was within approximately ten miles of Fulton County and left wind and water deposits, namely loess and silt, in the Illinois Valley and its tributaries (Branson 19). Both the withdrawal of the ice and the great flood known as the Kankakee Torrent produced the landforms as we see them today.



Coal Age fossil fern. Photo courtesy Illinois State Museum.

Fulton County's soils developed in a variety of materials, loess being the majority, with glacial drift, alluvium, eolian deposits, bedrock residuum, overburden from surface mining, or a combination of these (USDA et al. 27). Different soil types determine use and management for crops, pasture, forestland, building sites, sanitary facilities, highways and other transportation systems, parks and other recreational facilities and wildlife.

### **Waterways**

Fulton County is in the southeastern part of the Galesburg Plain, a part of the Till Plains Section of the Central Lowland Province. Many of the major features of the Galesburg Plain, such as the Illinois and Spoon Rivers, have been determined largely by the pre-glacial topography.

The Spoon River and its tributaries drain the majority of the western two-thirds of the county into the Illinois River, while the eastern one-third of the county drains into the Illinois River via the Copperas Creek and other smaller tributaries.



*Spoon River near London Mills. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.*

Flowing southward from Knox County, the Spoon River enters Fulton County at the Village of London Mills and distinctly meanders throughout the region, enveloping small towns and farm fields and taking in grasslands, forests and man-made structures of transportation and lakes. The county's southern boundary is defined by the Illinois River.

Fulton County is composed of 13 different watersheds; all but three are shared with adjacent counties. There are 15,624 acres of open water that consist of lakes, rivers and streams. These bodies of water create a system of marshes and wetlands, while extensive surface mining formed numerous lakes and ravines.

Other creeks and numerous tributaries also cut through the county, namely:

#### Tributaries of the Spoon River (area nearby)

- Cedar Creek (London Mills)
- Big Creek (Canton)
- Tarter Creek (Bernadotte)
- Otter Creek (Vermont)
- Shaw Creek (Marietta)
- Coal Creek (Fairview)
- Putt Creek (Cuba)

Several lakes and ponds, both natural and artificial dot the landscape, including, but not limited to:

- Rice Lake, Big Lake, Goose Lake (Banner)
- Anderson Lake (Kerton Township)

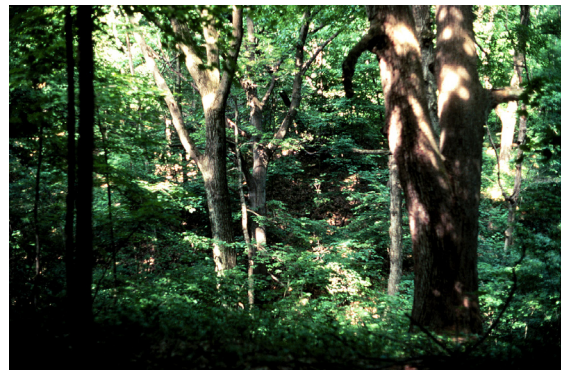
- Lake Canton (Canton)
- Lake Wee-Ma-Tuk (Canton)
- Lakeland Park (Canton)

Wetlands are being restored within the Emiquon Reserve, as well as numerous smaller private wetlands in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

### **Topography and Vegetation**

Prior to European settlement, forests lined the waterways and savannas filled the flood plains covering nearly three-fourths of the county and consisting basically of bottomland hardwoods and upland northern hardwoods.

The bottomland hardwood type forest was found along the Spoon River and the surrounding hills and bluffs along smaller streams and tributaries. This forest type consisted primarily of cottonwood, sycamore, soft maple, elm, hackberry, willow and ash (Uhles 21). The upland northern hardwood type was found on rolling hills and flatlands rising above the bottomlands. Grassland called “prairie” dominated upland landscape.



*Fulton County forest. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.*

Much of the vegetation was eliminated during the 1800s as land was cleared for cultivation and pasturing.

Less than 1/10 of 1% of Illinois native prairie remains today. Pockets of the original plant communities remain, primarily in river and floodplain areas and in steep, hilly areas which limit other possible uses, as well as along old roadways and railways.

How much is left in Fulton County? Currently the area retains about 22% of its original forested area with the majority classified as deciduous. Like the pre-settlement landscape, the forests are concentrated on slopes, ravines and bottomlands associated with Spoon River and its tributaries.

Several natural areas within the county are being preserved or restored, including, but not limited to:

- Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge
- Banner Marsh State Fish and Wildlife Area
- Rice Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area
- Anderson Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area
- Double T State Fish and Wildlife Area
- Harper-Rector Woods Nature Preserve
- Certain subdivisions which have set-aside natural areas
- Certain farm lands under Soil and Water Conservation Programs
- Railbanking Opportunities

Other areas, although probably not being actively preserved, represent quality natural environments, including:

- Floodplain forests
- Prairies
- Remnants along old roadways, railroads, fencerows and cemeteries
- Uncultivated hillsides
- Renovated pastures
- Upland Forests



Prairie Grass. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

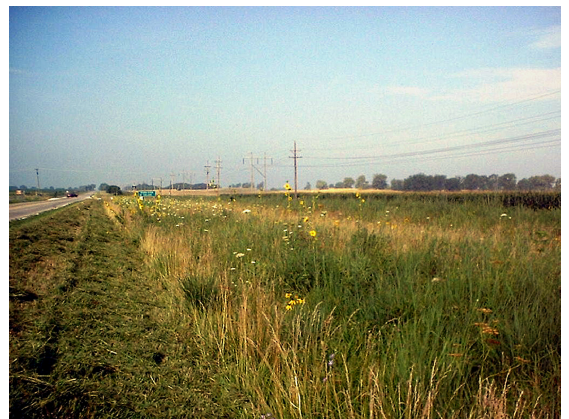
### **Native Grasses**

In the past, our county's people have been fortunate to benefit from the area's natural resources. However, that fortune has been costly to our county's innate heritage. We are in a position to reclaim some of that heritage through recent developments such as the Emiquon Preserve, the Double T area and now the Fulton County Greenways and Trails Plan.

In recent years, remnant natural areas have become attractive for residential development due to their scenic qualities. Farmers are leasing their land for recreational hunting and off highway vehicle usage, residential subdivisions have developed along reclaimed strip mine land and businesses have carved-out areas for commercial use within scarce habitat. Although habitat has been disappearing, many prairie restoration techniques have emerged in the basin, such as fire management, mosaic planting, differential seed conditioning, improved mowing practices, planting

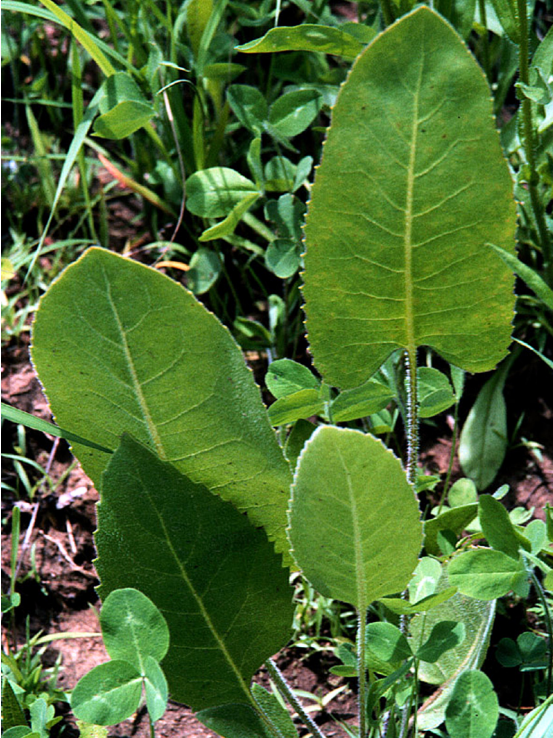
rates, control of nonnative weeds and restoration succession. Unfortunately, the trend of prairie preservation and restoration is still in its infancy in Fulton County.

Major Grass species present today and at settlement include Big Bluestem (Turkey Foot), Little Bluestem, Indian Grass, Cord Grass, Switch Grass, Canada Wild Rye, Blue Joint, Side-oats Grama, etc. Flowering plants (forbs) include Illinois Bundle Weed, Wild False Indigo, Pale Purple Coneflower, Rattlesnake Master, Sullivan's Milkweed, Illinois Tick Tre-foil, Compass Plant, Prairie Dock, Yellow Coneflower, Spiderwort, Culver's Root and a host of different sunflowers. This is a very short list of the species from both time periods as many other plant families were represented in native prairies including members of the arum, iris, amaryllis and orchid families.



Prairie remnant along the Cuba - Canton Blacktop. Photo courtesy Gary Kuzniar.

Many of the above listed native grass species can be found in what is the county's largest prairie remnant- the railroad right of way of the Cuba-Canton Blacktop (CCB). As in pre-settlement time, prairies, large areas of flowers and grasses, can still be seen blooming along this highway at various times of the summer. The most recognizable representative of native grassland is the Prairie Dock Plant with its huge elephant ear-like leaves and the Compass Plant whose leaves are oriented to the "points of the compass." Seed from the CCB has been collected by at least two major nurseries in the tri-state area.



The distinctive leaves of the Prairie Dock plant. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

The native prairie flowers and grasses listed above are still found in our county in places such as fencerows, cemeteries, railroad tracks and other, out of the way places. They have become like the collectibles and antiques of today, usually found here and there in small numbers.

Private holdings of concerned individuals, state preserve areas and local government parks and greenways and trails are buffer zones that can be utilized for wildlife education and preservation.

In Fulton County, woodland is presently going through a cycle of harvesting. In none of the habitat types mentioned above do trees have a haven. Adding to income for farmers and other landowners trying to make ends meet means favorite fall foliage areas are disappearing. Recently, higher land values and higher real estate taxes have also added to the pressure to remove trees.

Woodland wild flowers such as Dutchman's Breeches, Showy Trillium, the arums (Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Green Dragon, and Skunk Cabbage), ferns and orchid species needing the shade of a canopy during the summer may eventually disappear from our view if some woodland is not preserved. Plants cannot move as animals do to find another still standing area for havens.

For these reasons, it is important that we take inventory and interest in the sustainability of our future grasslands and woodlands for the betterment of our future and that of generations to come.

### **Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation**

Fulton County may be an overwhelming corn and bean experience, but it is more than that. Nestled in strategic places throughout the area are wild lands, free for the public to enjoy.

Hunting, fishing, hiking, photography and nature study are activities that are found at

any of the sites established in the county. Wildlife such as bald eagles, otters, whitetail deer, coyote, turkey, pheasant and quail, along with many other species are plentiful and dually enhance these outdoor experiences.



Birdwatching at Emiquon. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

As wildlife, birds offer enjoyable recreational opportunities, including backyard feeding, bird watching and hunting. In fact, bird watching is the number one outdoor recreational activity in the county. Fulton County is experiencing renewed interest in supporting these activities.

In addition, Rice Lake and Banner Marsh State Fish and Wildlife Area, Anderson Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area, Double T State Fish and Wildlife Area,

Lakeland Park and the Spoon River College Arboretum are all excellent nature and wildlife viewing areas.

Banner Marsh State Fish and Wildlife Area is a favorite winter resting habitat for Bald Eagles. Almost all types of waterfowl-white pelicans, numerous shore and wading birds and all swan species-thrive in the marshy environment. The endangered River Otter can also be found here. Released in the Illinois River several years ago, the otters have made a tremendous comeback.



Banner Marsh. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

The Double T State Fish and Wildlife Area just outside of Canton is another place that offers a very promising future for the outdoor enthusiast. After a generous donation by Mike Hitchcock Sr., IDNR along with Ducks Unlimited

and the help of Caterpillar got the project going. Future plans call for a large expanse of marshy type habitat. The area already draws in a host of bird species, including Osprey, Upland Sandpiper, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Snipe, Woodcock, Sora Rails, Virginia Rails, Bobolink, American Bittern, White-fronted Geese and an array of other species.



Saw-whet Owl. Photo courtesy Kevin Wright.

Noted for its fishing, Lakeland Park also offers vital bird habitat. The lakes in the park are visited by numerous migrating waterfowl and shore and wading birds. Close by, the Big Creek trail system provides

the opportunity to view songbirds and migrating birds, including several species of warblers. Cooper's Hawks nest just a short distant off the foot trail. Over 175 species of birds have been noted in the two areas. Two birds of special interest are the Saw-whet Owl and the Short-eared Owl.

The crown jewel of the county is the Emiquon Preserve project. Despite being in its



early stages, Emiquon has already proven that it will be a great asset to Fulton County. While there is still plenty of work ahead, the preserve already serves as a tremendous outlet for outdoor enthusiasts. People come from all over the country to view the birds that migrate here. Emiquon will indeed be a bird watchers paradise.

Another spot that often gets over-looked is the Spoon River College Arboretum. For the nature lover, the Arboretum has something for everyone. Nature trails, abundant bird life and even native trees are labeled for those interested in the fauna of the area.

With an abundance of turtles, snakes, salamanders and the like, even the occasional herpetologist can find worthwhile areas to investigate in Fulton County.

Fulton County game is as diversified as its land use. The varied environments in the county offer habitats for many native animal species. Muskrat, weasel, mink, rabbit and squirrel are found in ever decreasing numbers, while mourning dove, raccoon and opossum are increasing. At one time, waterfowl were declining because of fewer nesting areas, but with areas such as the Emiquon Preserve and Banner Marsh State Fish and Wildlife Area offering protection, waterfowl numbers are dramatically increasing.

## Chapter 4: Existing Conditions of Greenways and Trails

Fulton County is primarily a rural county with a high percentage of open space compared to many Illinois counties. With its wealth of natural and cultural resources, Fulton County attracts many to live in its towns and developing rural and urban areas.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has concluded that today’s busy American lifestyles are changing the way people participate in outdoor recreation. People are increasingly understanding that enjoying the outdoors and nature is part of a healthy lifestyle and can bring a sense of serenity to otherwise hectic days, but may find it difficult for most to find time to break away from daily routines. “Close to home” and “convenient” parks, recreation areas and trails therefore have become more important in providing opportunities that people can more readily enjoy.



Lakeland Park, Canton. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

Currently Fulton County has no plan which identifies open spaces for preservation. In the future, a Comprehensive Plan that identifies the types of open space, such as agricultural, natural areas including particular sites and greenways and recreational, could further guide the county in better protecting and enhancing resources for its future.

As recreation benefits the individual, recreation lands benefit the public in many ways. Parks and other open space lands are valuable in the urban, developed landscape, balancing residential, commercial and industrial land uses, shaping

growth and contributing to a community’s quality of life. The environmental benefits of parks and open space are numerous: protecting habitat for wildlife, providing flood control, enhancing water quality, conserving natural and cultural resources and offering a setting for environmental education. Park lands contribute to economic well-being, providing an attractive environment for potential new residents and businesses, and opportunities for tourism.

The following are the major public or quasi-public open spaces in and near Fulton County, which may be incorporated in the proposed greenways and trails system.

### ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES

<u>SITE</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>OWNERSHIP</u>
Banner Marsh State Fish & Wildlife	4433	IDNR/public
Rice Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area	5660	IDNR/public
Double T State Fish & Wildlife Area	1961	IDNR/public
Anderson Lake State F&W Area	2248	IDNR/public

### OTHER CONSERVATION AREAS AND EASEMENTS

<u>SITE</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>OWNERSHIP</u>
Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge	2114	USFWS/semi-private
Emiquon Preserve	7100	TNC/semi-private
Harper-Rector Woods Nature Preserve	38	IDNR/private
Spoon River College Arboretum	10	SRC/public

## PARK INVENTORY

Big Creek Park	Canton	swimming pool, ball fields, basketball, bocce ball, disc golf course, picnic area, community center, playground, skate park, sledding hill & tennis
Lakeland Park	Canton	boat launch, educational waterfowl blind, fishing, picnic areas, walking/biking trails, playgrounds & paddle boat rental
Wallace Park	Canton	walking/biking trails, playground, ball fields & community center
Athletic Park	Canton	baseball fields & softball fields
Anderson Park	Canton	basketball, playground & picnic area
Ingersoll Airport	Canton	runway
Golf Range	Canton	golf driving range, radio controlled model airplanes & dog park
Jones Park	Canton	gazebo
South Park	Canton	playground & picnic area
John Dean Park	Canton	playground & picnic area
Hulit Park	Canton	football fields
Farmington Twp. Park	Farmington	playground, fishing & picnic area
Jacobs Park	Farmington	baseball, tennis & pavilion
Reed Park	Farmington	war memorial, gazebo & playground
Dimmitt Park	Farmington	baseball, playground & shelter
Ratcliffe Park	Lewistown	picnic area
Porter Park	Lewistown	gazebo
Arnett Park	Lewistown	playground, baseball, picnic area & walking/biking path
Ross Park	Lewistown	playground, tennis, picnic area & skateboarding
Higgins Field	Lewistown	playground, community center, baseball & picnic area
Memorial Park	Ipava	picnic area, pavilion, playground & basketball
D. M. Woods Park	Ipava	tennis, basketball & playground
Veterans Park	Ipava	pavilion & stage
Hughes Park	Astoria	basketball, baseball, playground & picnic area

Village Bandstand	Astoria	gazebo, stage & picnic area
Putman Township Park	Cuba	playground, baseball, picnic area, pavilion, volleyball & fishing
Village Bandstand	Cuba	gazebo, stage & picnic area
Ball Park	Cuba	playground, baseball & picnic area
Mt. Pisgah Park	Ellisville	view of Spoon River
Riverside Park	London Mills	boat launch, playground, picnic area & bandstand
Helms Park	Duncan Mills	picnic area & view of Spoon River
AVCOM Park	Avon	Historic Depot & playground
Avondale Lake	Avon	camping, fishing & playground
Village Park	Vermont	picnic area & pavilion

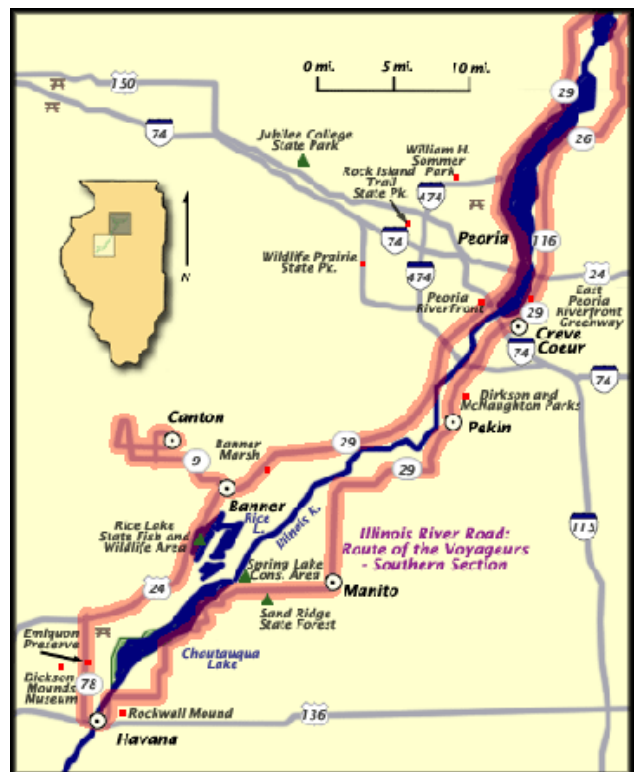
**REGIONAL TRAILS**

**Trail Initiatives**

There are two regional tourism development and promotion initiatives that have special implications for Fulton County’s Greenways and Trails Planning. Both the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway and the Illinois River Country Nature Trail were developed under coordination by the Peoria Area Convention & Visitors Bureau in concert with Fermata, Inc., a national nature-tourism consulting firm, and with cooperation of numerous individuals and organizations, including members of Fulton County’s Tourism Alliance. The two initiatives developed as separate but interrelated projects, and will be further integrated as the Scenic Byway project matures.

**Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway**

The Fulton County Board passed a resolution in support of National Scenic Byway designation for the Illinois River Road within Fulton County. The Illinois River Road from Starved Rock in the north to Havana in the south and a parallel route on the east side of the Illinois River, received the official federal designation.



Map of the southern section of the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway.

**Illinois River Country Nature Trail**

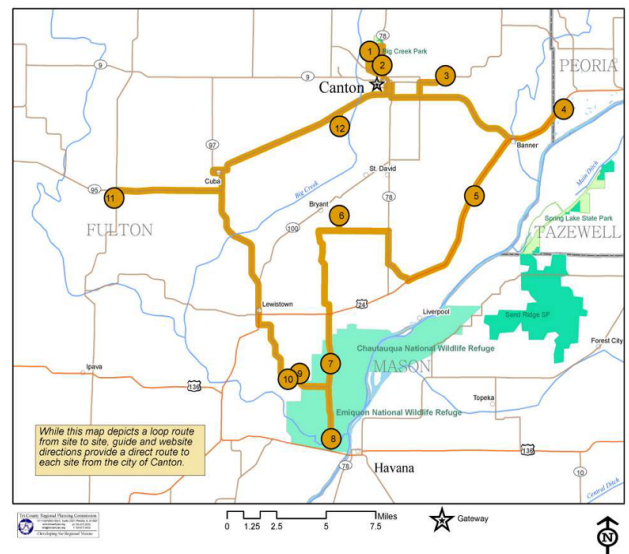
The Illinois River Country Nature Trail (IRCNT), rather than being a physical trail, is a trail concept that packages the region’s premier

nature-tourism sites into seven “loops.” These “loops” are presented in “Loop Guide” brochures that highlight brief descriptions of and provide directions to the included wildlife viewing and outdoor recreation opportunities.



The Illinois River Nature Trails Ad.

The two IRCNT loops that involve Fulton County are the Canton Loop and the Havana Loop. The Canton Loop includes Lakeland and Big Creek Parks, Spoon River College Arboretum, Canton Lake, Banner Marsh and Rice Lake State Fish and Wildlife Areas, Emiquon Preserve & Refuge, Dickson Mounds State Museum, Orchard Hill Farm and Bill Swango’s Wildlife Art Gallery. While the Havana Loop is made up primarily of Mason County sites, it also includes Anderson Lake, which is on the Fulton County side of the Illinois River.



Map of the Canton Loop of the Illinois River Nature Trail.

The National Scenic Byway designation has the potential to attract more attention to our area. Integrated into the National Scenic Byway, the IRCNT offers visitors and potential visitors a special collection of nature-tourism and outdoor recreation attractions along and adjacent to the byway. Within the IRCNT, the Canton Loop Guide highlights the specific sites around which visitors to our area may choose to develop an itinerary or which may provide the focal point for a satisfying visit to Fulton County.

**OUTDOOR RECREATION**

Fulton County provides outdoor recreation opportunities typical of rural Illinois. The area features expansive grasslands, brushy hollows, croplands and some hard wood forest, intermixed with over 300 hundred acres of lakes and ponds. Living in a state that is over 95% privately owned, these wild places are even more precious. Over the decades, enhanced management of these pristine areas have allowed for expansive public hunting and fishing opportunities.

The area is renowned for its waterfowl hunting, as well as quail, dove and pheasant hunting. Outfitters provide information on where to go in the county for prime deer and wild turkey hunting and anglers have their choice of a variety of fish to catch, including Bluegill, Bass, Catfish, Crappie, Muskie and Carp.

## Camping and Fishing

Anderson Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area • camping, fishing, boating, picnicking  
 Banner Marsh State Fish & Wildlife • fishing, boating, bird watching, picnicking  
 Double T State Fish & Wildlife Area • fishing  
 Bernadotte Park & Dam on Spoon River • fishing, playground, picnicking  
 Boat Launch • Banner, London Mills, Liverpool  
 Camp Emmanuel near Astoria  
 Valley View Campground near Lewistown • camping, live folk music  
 Lake Canton • camping, fishing, boating, picnicking  
 Fulton County Camping and Recreation Area • camping, fishing, boating  
 Living Springs Campground near Lewistown  
 Jake Creek Farms near Ipava • camping, fishing, lodging  
 Avondale Lake in Avon • camping, fishing, swimming, playground, nature trail  
 Youth Acres near Lake Canton  
 Giant Goose Ranch • camping

## Hunting

*Public Hunting Preserves*  
 Anderson Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area  
 Banner Marsh State Fish & Wildlife Area  
 Double T State Fish & Wildlife Area

*Current Private Outfitters for Fulton County*  
 Deerfield Outfitters  
 Black Gold  
 Spoon River Woodlands  
 Backwoods Whitetails  
 Trophy Bow Hunters  
 Strictly Bow Hunting  
 Wilson Outfitters  
 Double D Outfitters



Handicap fishing facility at Banner Marsh. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

## HISTORIC SITES

### *Canton Area*

- Historic West Side neighborhood homes
- Historic Train Depot
- Civil War Monument, Greenwood Cemetery
- Orendorff Mansion (National Register)
- Parlin-Ingersoll Library

### *Lewistown Area*

- Oak Hill Cemetery with old Fulton County Courthouse pillars
- Edgar Lee Masters Homesteads



Civil War Monument, Greenwood Cemetery, Canton. Photo courtesy Kelvin Sampson.

- Carnegie Library, Edgar Lee Masters information
- Ogden-Fettie Site (National Register)
- Rasmussen Blacksmith Shop
- Lewistown, self-guided historic tour available

#### *Farmington Area*

- Carnegie Library
- Luther Birge home, station on the Underground Railroad
- Hiram Palmer House (National Register)

#### *Fairview*

- Dutch Reformed Church, 1838
- Octagonal Township Building

#### *Waterford Township*

- Restored School, 1839
- Restored Plank Road Toll Booth/Ticket Office
- Town Hall
- Waterford Church and Cemetery

#### *Smithfield Area*

- Red Brick School
- Town pump and old city jail cell
- Buckeye Church with original old Lasswell Millstone on display

#### *Ellisville Area*

- Ellisville Library, smallest operating library in the state
- Historic Opera House with original stage curtain (National Register)
- Christian Church

#### *Cuba Area*

- Cuba Christian Church, founded 1832, building 1895
- First Hospital in Illinois
- Sinnett Chapel, 1884

#### *Ipava Area*

- Presbyterian Church with old stained glass, 1874
- Log Cabin at City Park
- Lacey Cemetery, resting place of first settlers (Quakers)

#### *Astoria Area*

- Waystation for Stage Coach Route between Peoria and Quincy
- Woodland Church and Cemetery (National Register)
- South Fulton Church (National Register)

#### *London Mills*

- Mill monument and original mill parts and Riverside Park
- Statue of Liberty Replica at Riverside Park

#### *Vermont Area*

- Vermont Cemetery Civil War Monument
- 12 homes in Vermont on National Register

- Vermont Historic District (National Register)

*Others*

- Camp Ellis Site, between Bernadotte, Table Grove & Ipava
- Iron Bridges in Bernadotte and Babylon
- Duncan Mills Town Hall, 1892
- Only Dam on the Spoon River, Bernadotte
- Duvall-Ash Farmstead in Fiatt (National Register)
- Burr Oak Tree, Hwy 9 Fiatt, over 300 years old
- Table Grove Community Church (National Register)
- Middlegrove Clair School

**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Dickson Mounds State Museum, near Lewistown

Spoon River Drive Association

Spoon River College, Canton

Fulton County Arts Council Exhibits

Ross Hotel Museum, London Mills – early 1900's rural hotel

Welch Art Studio, Smithfield

Bill Swango's Wildlife Art Studio, Smithfield

Brown's Oakridge Zoo, Smithfield

Fulton County Playhouse, between Lewistown and Bryant

Parlin-Ingersoll Library Special Exhibits, Canton

Avon Railroad Museum – first railroad in Fulton County

Rasmussen Blacksmith Shop and Museum, Lewistown

Lewistown Narrow Gauge Railroad Depot and Museum

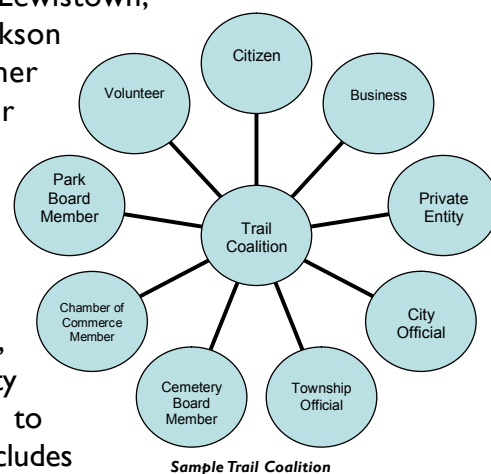


## Chapter 5: Local Plans and Trail Coalitions

The various Fulton County Greenways and Trail Coalitions consist of parties interested in developing local trails for hiking, biking and other compatible uses in their community. A long term consideration is a countywide, interconnected greenways and trails system, but the initial focus is on providing hiking and biking opportunities for urban areas. Fulton County, through its County Highway Department invites all interested communities, landowners, individuals and groups to participate in the planning process and in developing trail coalitions and implementing trail development.

The designation of the Illinois Scenic Byway creates an additional opportunity to combine greenways and trails with community development and tourism as part of the long term stewardship of a Fulton County Greenways and Trails Plan.

Draft Mini-Plans have been created for the areas of Canton, Lewistown, Farmington, Fairview, Spoon River College, Liverpool, Dickson Mounds, The Nature Conservancy, US Fish and Wildlife, Banner and Banner Marsh and Rice Lake. Additional plans are under development in Cuba, Ipava, Avon, Astoria and other areas. Each area has a coalition of supporters working together to design and implement their local plan.



These individual plans are combined into the Dickson Mounds Area, the Banner Area, the Farmington Area, the Canton Area, and others. The Illinois River Scenic Byway enters Fulton County near Dickson Mounds along State Route 78 and continues to Banner along State Route 24. The Dickson Mounds Area plan includes the Emiquon Trail Coalition and the Lewistown Trail Coalition, and will serve as a greeting center for that area and for Fulton County. The Illinois Scenic Byway also enters Fulton County at Banner. The Banner Area includes the Banner Trails Coalition and Liverpool and intends to serve as a greeting center for that area. The Scenic Byway also has a spur to Canton and its Greenways and Trails Plan.

Another entry point to Fulton County is along State Route 116 into Farmington. The Farmington Area intends to develop a greeting center for Farmington, Fairview and Canton.

Some of these areas are already pursuing these opportunities and remarkable progress is underway. Improvement is taking place on a continual basis.

### Map Sequence:

1. Emiquon Trail Coalition; Lewistown
2. Banner; Banner Marsh; Liverpool
3. Farmington; Fairview
4. Canton; Spoon River College
5. Other Trail Opportunities
6. Water Trail Opportunities

## Emiquon Trail Coalition

- The Nature Conservancy
- Dickson Mounds
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

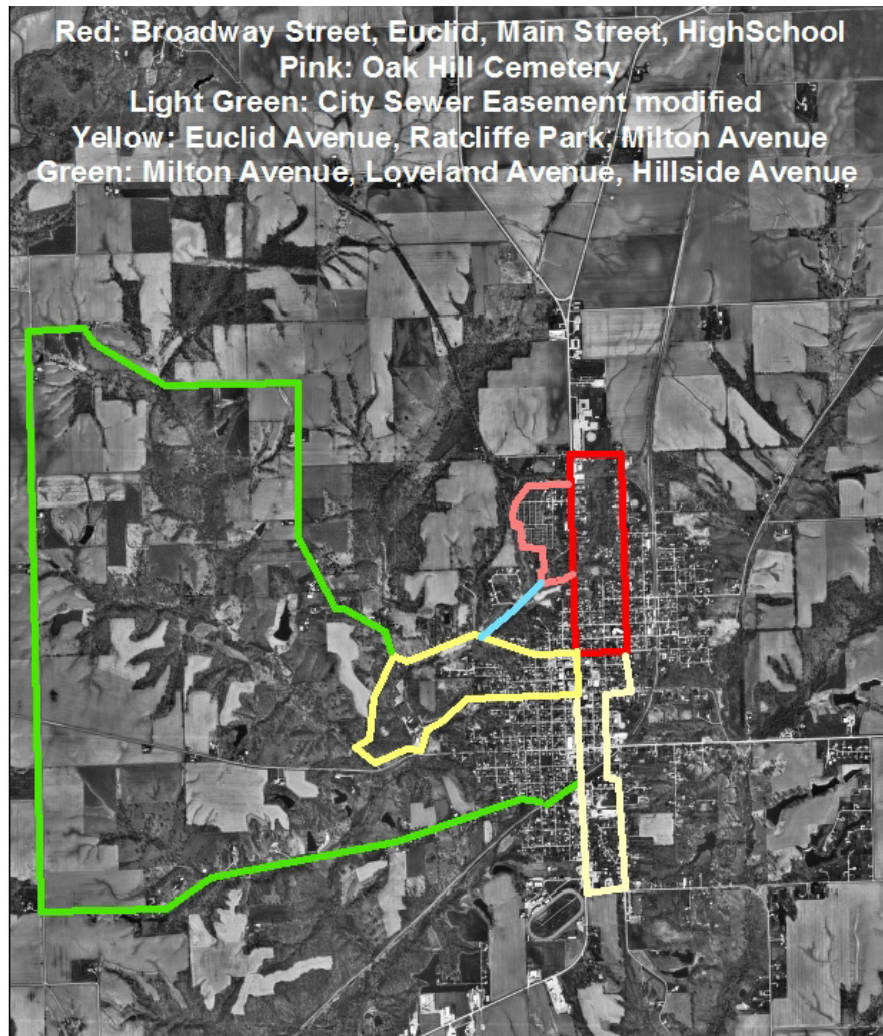


### **Emiquon Trail Coalition Greenways and Trails Plan**

In 2001, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) purchased approximately 8600 acres of Illinois and Spoon River floodplain and some Illinois River Valley bluffs. They retain ownership of much of this land, but sold 1600 acres to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Emiquon Preserve (TNC) and the Emiquon Refuge (USFWS) are restoring native vegetation and hydrology. TNC has received funding through the Grand Victoria Foundation, and has completed a Visitor Use Plan outlining proposed improvements. Dickson Mounds has teamed up with these two agencies forming an Emiquon Trail Coalition. The coalition is investing in the development of trails and discussions have included the feasibility of linking Emiquon with Dickson Mounds Museum property.

## Lewistown Trail Coalition

- City of Lewistown
- Lewistown Township
- Lewistown Park District Board
- Oak Hill Cemetery Board
- Lewistown Chamber of Commerce
- Fulton County Fair Board



### Lewistown Trail Coalition Greenways and Trails Plan

The city of Lewistown has an opportunity for an extensive trail system. The Lewistown plan consists of a loop system that would provide connectivity to various businesses, facilities and open spaces throughout the area. As shown on the map, the trail would connect Lewistown High School, Oak Hill Cemetery, Ratcliff Park, the downtown district, Fulton County Fairgrounds and local businesses, organizations, residential areas, schools and parks. There is also an opportunity for a far-reaching bike route that would run along low traffic, chip-sealed township roads. Trails would have no particular starting and/or ending destination and would be accessible from any location.

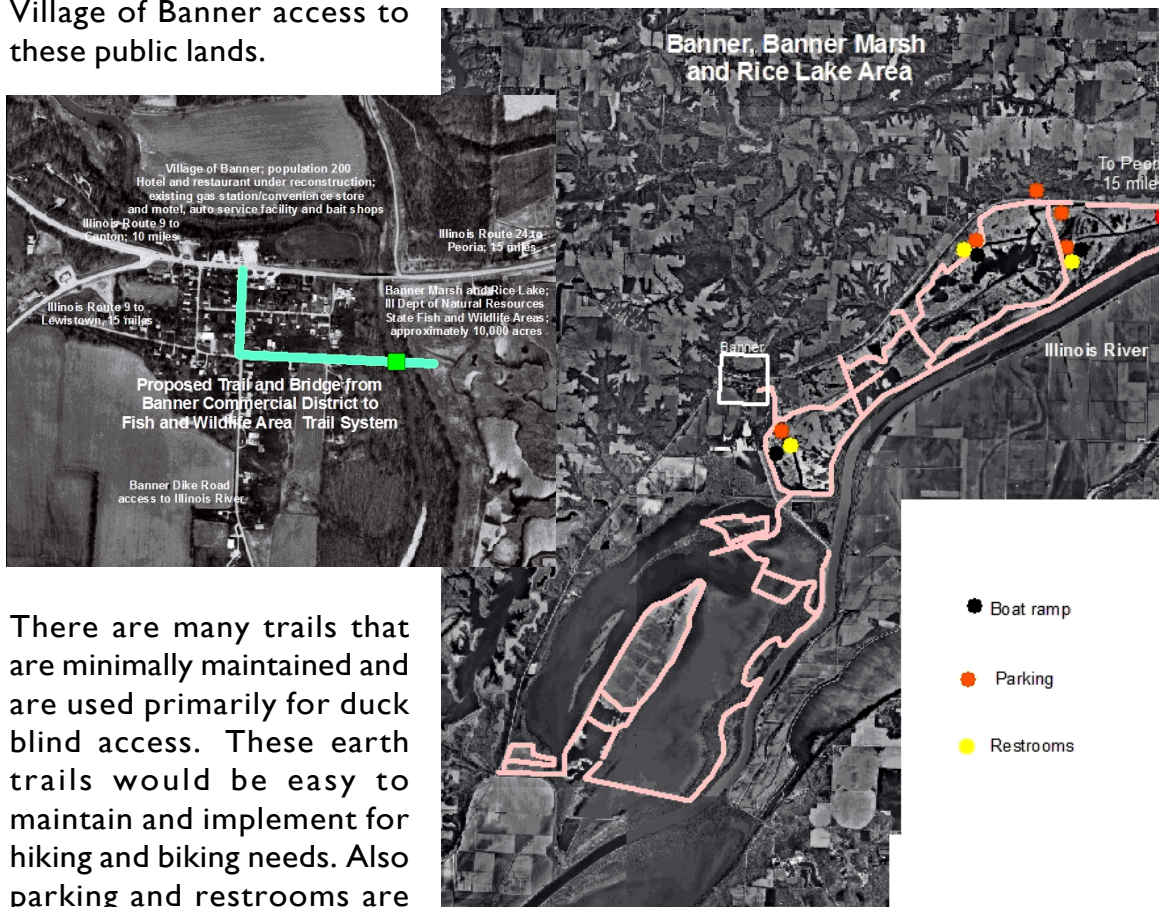
## Banner Trail Coalition

- Village of Banner
- Rice Lake and Banner Marsh State fish and Wildlife Service
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Banner Township

### Banner Trail Coalition Greenways and Trails Plan

The Village of Banner is joining the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and Fulton County in an intergovernmental effort to improve recreational opportunities and promote economic development in our area. Banner has special and unique public resources that are underutilized because visitors to the village do not have easy access to the IDNR property next door.

IDNR manages approximately 10,000 acres of land within the Rice Lake and Banner Marsh State Fish and Wildlife Area. There is an opportunity to develop an estimated 20 miles of nature trails for hiking, biking and other compatible uses. This opportunity will allow the Village of Banner access to these public lands.



There are many trails that are minimally maintained and are used primarily for duck blind access. These earth trails would be easy to maintain and implement for hiking and biking needs. Also parking and restrooms are available. With three boat ramps in existence, there is easy access to the beautiful waterways that these lands offer.

## Liverpool Trail Coalition

- Village of Liverpool



### **Liverpool Trail Coalition Greenways and Trails Plan**

The Village of Liverpool has an opportunity to create a hiking, biking and other compatible use trail on its levee top. The levee-top trail would run the entire length of the village and connect to village streets and facilities, including an existing boat ramp. Future connectivity to other nearby greenways and trails is possible.

## Farmington Trail Coalition

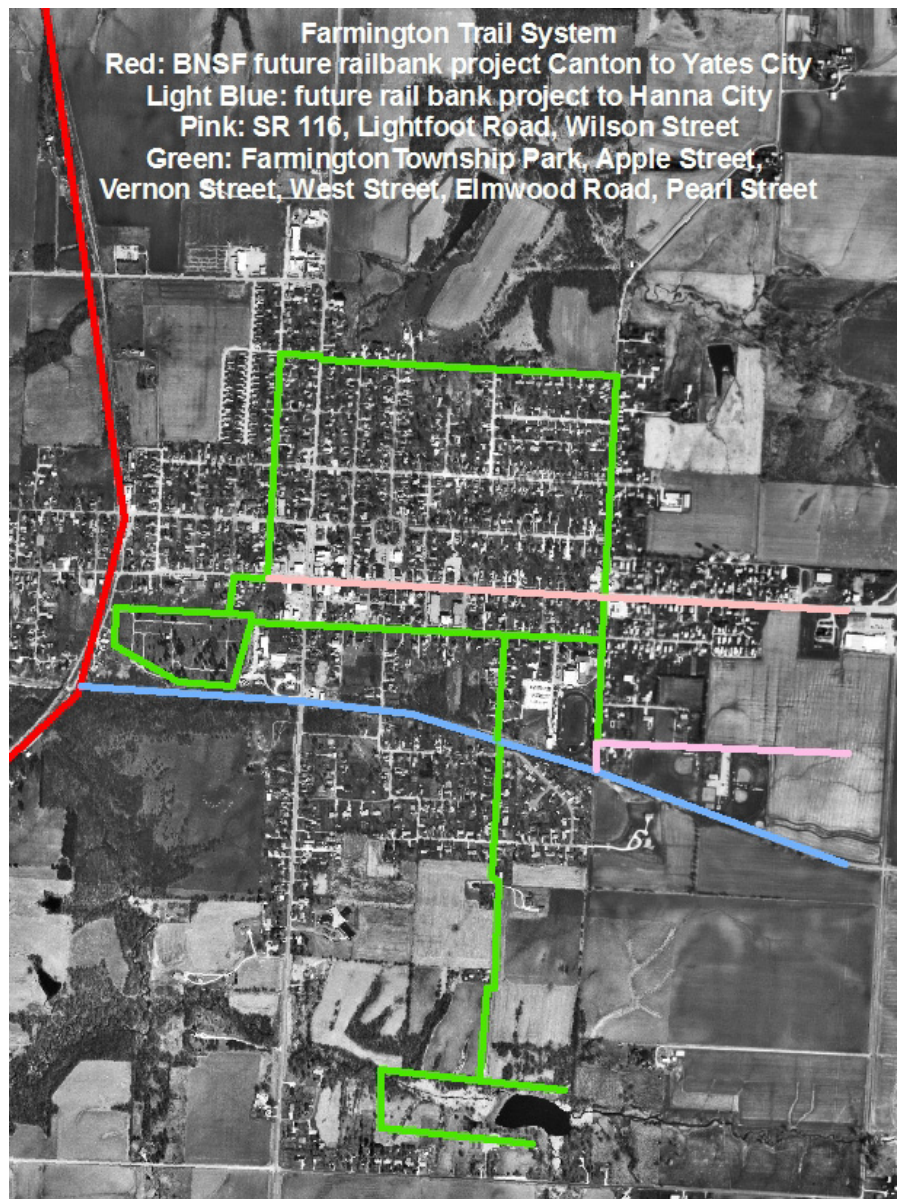
- City of Farmington
- Farmington Township Park Board
- Community Members
- Farmington Township

### Farmington Trail Coalition Greenways and Trails Plan

The Farmington Township Park Board and the City of Farmington, along with interested parties and individuals are working on developing a city-wide greenways and trails system. This system will include loops throughout the city that will connect Farmington Township Park with the City of Farmington.

Currently, community members are taking on a railbanking opportunity that would allow for a stretch of rail road on the west side of town to be converted into a recreational trail. The future also holds possibilities for connectivity to Hanna City and the Peoria area through more railbanking projects.

The Farmington Township Park Board and the County Engineer are currently working on a master plan that will reinvent the park, making the area more attractive, while implementing various opportunities toward our quality of life. Plans will also include a trail from the park to the school, creating a safer and alternative transportation passage to and from school.



## Fairview Trail Coalition

- Village of Fairview
- Fairview Township Cemetery Board
- Mid Century Telephone Cooperative
- Fairview Park Board



### **Fairview Trail Coalition Greenways and Trails Plan**

The Village of Fairview is working with private investors, the park board and the cemetery board to create a trail loop that will connect the village and make for a nice hiking and biking route. This trail will connect the downtown district with the cemetery, residential areas, the park and Mid Century's existing walking track. There is also an opportunity to connect the cemetery to Mid Century with future residential development.

## Canton Trail Coalition

- City of Canton
- Canton Park District Board
- Canton Area Chamber of Commerce
- Canton Township
- Canton Country Club
- Canton School District
- Canton Lake Committe

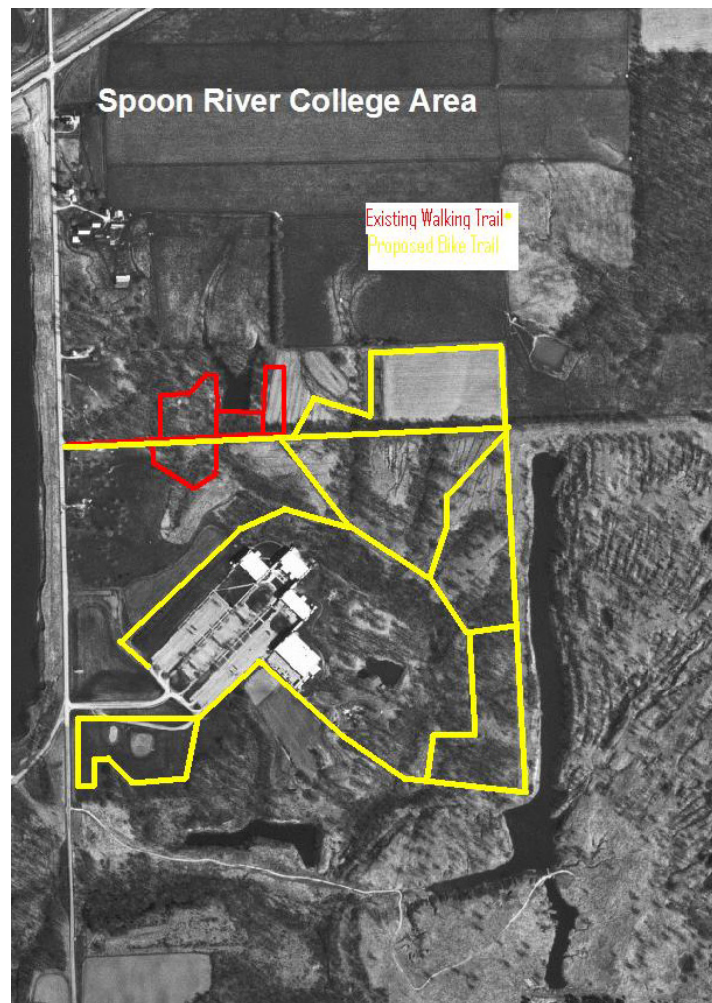


### **Canton Trail Coalition Greenways and Trails Plan**

The Canton Trails Coalition is creating a hiking, biking and other compatible use trail that parallels existing vehicular traffic patterns through the urban area. Construction will include four new trails and an additional three trails for future development. Trails will connect four existing bike-hike trails and walkways (SRC, Wallace, Lakeland and Big Creek), area schools and Spoon River College, public parks, commercial centers and public buildings and sites most used by local citizens and visitors.



## Spoon River College Trail Coalition



### **Spoon River College Trail Coalition Greenways and Trails Plan**

The plans and renovation of the Spoon River College Arboretum continue to prosper within the agenda of the agricultural department. The students and staff have been working hard to restore the walking trails and theater area. They are currently maintaining approximately two miles of walking trails. Students have rebuilt the information station that provides maps and signage and has been improved for our visitors.

A project that is in the development stage is the addition of a five mile mountain bike/hiking trail in addition to the existing walking trails. Forest management has been a key area of concern and plans are underway to selectively harvest some mature trees to help with funding for the project.

## Other Possible Trail Coalitions

### Cuba Trail Coalition

- Cuba High School
- City of Cuba
- Putman Township

### Avon Trail Coalition

- Avondale Lake Committee
- Village of Avon
- Avon School District Board

### Astoria Trail Coalition

- Astoria Chamber of Commerce
- Astoria Park Board
- City of Astoria
- Astoria Cemetery Board

### Ipava Trail Coalition

- Village of Ipava
- Dickson Mounds Museum
- Ipava Park Board

Anyone interested in joining a trail coalition, please contact Bill Kuhn at the Fulton County Highway Department at 309/647-0351 or Kevin McGuire at the University of Illinois Extension Office – Fulton County Unit at 309/547-3711.

## Waterway Opportunities

The waterways of Fulton County give a unique perspective of our region. Quiet stretches of waterway offer a respite from urban life as well as an opportunity to enjoy and explore nature.

Water trails embody the nexus between rivers and trails. They provide recreational boating opportunities along a river, lake, canal or coastline with the intent to create an educational, scenic and challenging experience for canoers, kayakers and paddlers alike. A water trail can be almost everything a hiking trail can be: short or long, primarily historic or scenic, challenging or laid-back.

Most water trails are managed in public-private partnership with the philosophies of environmental stewardship, environmental education and accessibility for all users.

To preserve and enhance these wonderful outdoor resources for non-motorized boat traffic, the project manager, along with trail partners and coalitions will work toward implementing the objectives of the Fulton County Greenways and Trails Plan to include the development of information and infrastructure for access to our local waterways for the enjoyment of our region's residents and visitors.

#### **Possible Water Trails on the Spoon River**

- Duncan Mills
- Bernadotte
- Anderson Lake
- Ellisville

Fulton County currently has three existing boat ramps: London Mills, Banner and Liverpool. With the inclusion of the above-mentioned locations as proposed boat ramps, Fulton County could create a water trail that would connect all boat launches throughout the county and meet up with the Illinois River.

Potential trail users and the desires and expectations associated with each user group would be identified in future development and implementation of the Plan.

## **Chapter 6: Funding and Implementation**

The funding of individual Greenways and Trails plans will be unique to each area and to each opportunity a community pursues. The common strategy is for each area to organize a trail coalition of partners to develop a plan based on community support.

Components of trail coalition plans can be targeted for implementation as resources become available. Funding will be an important issue, but public funding, private funding and volunteer efforts can produce significant results.

Such efforts could be in the form of community service and education coalitions. Local colleges could invest in a trail plan by having students in a related field help build and maintain the trails. Trails could also be used as outdoor classrooms in which students could produce a book as a fundraiser in exchange for their educational experience. Creative possibilities are endless.

For example, in addition to providing a kind of “prerequisite” for certain grants and trails funding programs, the Illinois River County Nature Trail inclusion in the Fulton County Greenways and Trails Plan helps assure that a heightened level of local attention and collaboration will be directed toward implementation of these plans. Importantly, this local attention has been accompanied by increasing success in cultivating partnerships and alliances with state agencies as well as state and federal-level elected officials supportive of Fulton County’s efforts.

Trail Coalitions could develop a greenways and trails plan as a community effort. A community built trail gives citizens the opportunity to be a part of something unique, while spreading stewardship and community pride and ultimately strengthening the community. No new taxes are implied or intended unless an individual community so desires.

It is also recommended that rights of way be acquired as soon as possible, and that local agencies consider obtaining rights of way as part of other projects such as development and zoning applications, road projects and utility installations.

Trail Coalitions can anticipate some support from local government, but it is important to recognize the limited resources available. Those coalitions that generate grant applications, events, volunteer projects and other innovative grass root efforts will be more successful than those that only lobby for handouts.

Ongoing efforts by project leaders and members of various trail coalitions within Fulton County will further support the development of Greenways and Trails in our urban and rural communities.

## Chapter 7: Economic Vitality, Land Use Planning and Economic Development

Economic vitality involves strengthening the middle class, reducing poverty, protecting the environment and enhancing community cooperation. It requires discovering and investing in competitive advantages, enabling risk taking entrepreneurs to act, promoting training, conserving natural resources and supporting regionally competitive investments. Government must provide necessary public infrastructure and services at reasonable cost. All must be accomplished with very limited financial resources while remaining attractive to existing and prospective households and businesses.

Obviously, government, the private sector and individuals all have important roles to play and must work together. Each must complement the others, not act as substitutes. The private sector is the “can of beans” that needs to be opened, government and the community can be the “can opener,” and people working together can use the “can opener to open the can of beans.” Wisely using available resources to find “cans,” “opening” them efficiently and capturing the positive results locally is what good economic development is about. Each player must also have the wisdom to know when to support, when to lead, how to cooperate and be willing to stay out of the way when and where appropriate. Economic development can then capture dollars from outside areas, increasing local wealth.

Fulton County undoubtedly has competitive advantage over other communities for several arenas of economic development. Each must be found and nurtured. We must assess our strengths and weaknesses and develop an action plan based on competitive advantage by starting with the following:

- Develop a Regional Vision,
- Attract Investment,
- Work together to take advantage of opportunity.

Economic growth occurs by two broad means. One means is by growth of production inputs, such as capital or labor, which can be good or bad. Getting capital investment by increasing productivity of labor through training or lowering production costs is good, through low wages is bad. Increasing labor productivity by increasing labor participation, business expansion, research and development, entrepreneurial action, in migration and outside investment is often good, but pure population increase is not always good.

The second broad means of economic growth is through productivity increases from technology, efficiencies, improved skill levels and a better use of resources. This is the most favorable means of economic growth because it results in higher wages.

Attracting entrepreneurs is a great mechanism of attracting this last means of growth. Entrepreneurs can be targeted by helping them understand the best type and size of firm (startup, expansion or relocation), honestly recognizing any labor force issues, understanding the firm’s executive tax rate (property, corporate, personal, sales, users

fees, tax progressivism, special [gas, hotel, industry]), creating a mutual focus on creating a sound investment in the long run and defining relationships regarding infrastructure, training and community support.

Ideally, the private sector provides investment, jobs, housing and income streams, and the public sector provides public investment in infrastructure while remaining responsive to taxpayers, individuals and the private sector.

Land use planning and good zoning can capture benefits of change by guiding activities toward a known end, broadcasting where the community seeks action and where it seeks no change, and can mitigate the local impacts of a good regional project.

Greenways and trails can be one aspect of a sound economic development plan.

## Appendix A: Public Input and Information Collection

The Fulton County Highway Department attended a series of Township, Village, City and Board meetings between July of 2005 and August of 2006, to present the “vision” of the Fulton County Greenways and Trails Plan and solicit local government comments and suggestions for change. The meetings were attended as part of the first phase of the planning process: to provide for local government input and response throughout the plan. Approximately 33 meetings were attended by members of the Technical Planning Committee.

In addition, the Fulton County Tourism Alliance Development Group met throughout the planning process. The committee consists of volunteers from around the county who are interested in trails, community and economic development, tourism, conservation and the overall improvement of the area. Members have a broad variety of backgrounds, a thorough knowledge of the county’s history and geography and extensive involvement in local civic activities.

The second phase of the planning process consisted of a series of public informational meetings. The first public informational meeting was held on June 15, 2005 at the Donaldson Center in Canton. This meeting focused on gathering a general feel of the community as we introduced the proposed Canton Plan.

The second set of public meetings was a sequence of seven conferences held in Lewistown, Cuba, Astoria, Farmington, Avon and London Mills and Canton between July 31, 2006 and August 17, 2006. These meetings were held to present the county-wide draft plan, land use maps and comprehensive plan policies. The meetings were organized to collect public input and provide for suggestions and opinions about what facilities best serve the area.

Local newspapers have covered the activities of the planning committee and presentations to the County Board, Farm Bureau Board and Canton City Council.

Ideas gleaned from these many meetings and hours of discussions were incorporated in the final plan. The vast local participation allows the plan to be carefully tailored to the local needs and unique potentials of Fulton County.

### Meeting Process

#### *Fulton County Tourism Alliance Development Group Meetings*

The Fulton County Tourism Alliance Development Group meets each month during the planning process. Meetings were formed to solicit ideas for tourism and economic development in the area. Many “brainstorming sessions” have turned into a consensual collaboration of trail development.

Accordingly this group has acted as the “hub” for Greenways and Trails correspondence.

Meetings mirror board agendas; motions are passed and minutes are carefully recorded. Agendas are informally conducted as to allow for changing ideas, demands and

opportunities. All ideas are shared and incorporated, one way or another, into the overall Plan.

#### *Open House*

The open house was a public meeting fashioned to gather feedback on the proposed Canton Plan. Participants were invited to listen to a presentation and asked to fill out a brief questionnaire. Maps of potential trails were displayed.

#### *Board Meetings*

A series of board meetings were conducted to present the draft material to the individual entities, provide context for how the material will be used and to solicit the Board's response and suggestions for changes. Each meeting started with a presentation explaining the context of the governing principles (overall vision), drafts of proposed trail systems and recommendations relating to greenways and trails in Fulton County.

Participants were then asked for any feedback about the plan in general. Board members broke into individual discussions on what they liked and did not like about the draft material. This feedback allowed for changes to be made in favor of how each entity felt.

It is important to note that all materials presented to the different entities were purely ideas proposed to anticipate the general consensus on area growth and opportunity.

Meetings concluded with the Technical Planning Committee inviting board members to join the trail coalitions within their communities, share the greenways and trails "vision" and to be open to opportunities as they arise.

#### *Public Meetings*

Seven public meetings were arranged to present the DRAFT Fulton County Greenways and Trails Plan. A presentation explaining the project was revealed along with a display of large maps. Questions were encouraged and answered at the end of the presentation and a brief survey was handed out to the audience. At the close of the meetings, interested parties stayed and talked amongst the crowd. This networking opportunity proved beneficial for either setting up or joining a trail coalition.

## **Summary of Comments**

The following summary reflects four products from the different meetings:

- The Fulton County Tourism Alliance Development Group meeting minutes
- The summaries of the open house held in Canton
- The summaries of the board meeting discussions
- The summaries of public input, including individual written comments submitted by participants at the meeting

#### *Fulton County Tourism Alliance Development Group Meetings*

It is inherent that all members of the Tourism Alliance Development Group fully supported the vision of a greenways and trails system throughout the county. Members



aided immensely in identifying opportunities and potentials for greenways and trails throughout the county. Ideas generated from the group meetings are as follows:

Trails concept as applied to other opportunities

- “Antiques Trail”
- “Country Church Tour”
- “Birding Trail”
- “County-wide History Sites Trail”

Builds on existing assets

- Nature
- History
- Trails
- Commerce
- Education
- Recreation

Potential link to other markets

- Corporate relocation
- Funding and investment
- Increased property values
- Tourist attractions

*Open House*

Sixteen surveys were filled out and returned. The general responses to the questions are as follows:

All participants said YES when asked if they supported G&T

All participants indicated often and occasional use

All participants said they thought G&T would attract people to Canton

*Board Meetings*

Attending a variety of board meetings throughout the community provided the opportunity for the Greenways and Trails Technical Committee to gather feedback about the overall vision of the plan and for the board members and guests in the audience to voice their opinions. Notes were kept summarizing the discussion at each board meeting.

The overall trend of comments included:

The primary category of concerns focused on how the draft plan treated currently developed land that was viewed as important green space (preservation

or recreation potential). A significant number of the comments focused on protecting or creating new areas for natural systems, trails and recreation. The areas named for inclusion, so far, are as follows:

- Village of Banner
- Banner Marsh State Fish & Wildlife Area
- Canton Area
- Farmington Area
- Lewistown Area
- Village of Liverpool
- Village of Fairview
- Astoria Area
- Cuba Area
- Emiquon Preserve
- Avon Area

With waterway concepts included in:

- Village of Duncan Mills
- Bernadotte Area
- Anderson Lake

A large number of comments endorsed the priority of joining a Trail Coalition within the community

A number of comments focused on the availability of funding, maintenance and liability

Transportation issues also came to the forefront in a number of comments

Concern about the comprehensive plan process being representative of the full diversity of opinion, and whether public comment was being sufficiently weighed in decisions was pointed out

### *Public Meetings*

The public's participation in the meetings supplied information about local resources and conditions that otherwise may not be available, including:

Intergovernmental partnership opportunity for Fulton County School District and the City of Cuba to create a park in an existing football field and to develop trails throughout the Cuba area,

The evolving conditions of Ratcliff Park in Lewistown,

A tour of Avondale Lake and trails,

Farmington's assets that progressively raise the bar,

Astoria's old railway from Camp Emmanuel to Hughes Park

*Individual Comments*

More concerns that were generated by the public are as follows: public violations (trespassing, litter, vandalism, etc.), safety, rights of way, funding, materials, inclusion, attractiveness, media, user costs, benefits, partnerships, volunteers.

These concerns were immediately followed-up and responded to by phone, mail, e-mail or public and/or private meetings.

## Appendix B: Contributors of Information and Assistance

The following individuals deserve special recognition for their assistance in the preparation of this document. Their hard work, timely responses to requests and positive outlook were invaluable.

Kevin McGuire  
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Angie Sanders

*Letters of support:*

Spoon River College  
Fulton County Democrat  
State Farm Insurance  
Peoria Area CVB  
Froehling, Weber & Evans  
MidCentury Telephone Cooperative

## **Visions and Strategies for Fulton County Greenways and Trails**

Meetings and interviews for Plan input were held from June 2005 to the present. We continue to add to this list

- City of Canton
- Canton Township
- Canton Chamber of Commerce
- Spoon River College
- City of Lewistown
- Lewistown Township
- Lewistown Chamber of Commerce
- Lewistown School Board
- Fulton County Fair Board
- Fulton County Farm Bureau
- City of Farmington
- Farmington Township Park Board
- Village of Fairview
- Fairview Township
- Fairview Park District Board
- Village of Liverpool
- Liverpool Township
- Village of Astoria
- Astoria Chamber of Commerce
- Village of Vermont
- Village of Ipava
- Village of Avon
- Village of Ellisville
- Village of Banner
- Banner Marsh and Rice Lake SF&W
- Bernadotte Township
- Kerton Township
- Waterford Township
- Buckheart Township
- Isabel Township
- Lee Township
- Orion Township

## References

This list is a recommendation of resources for future planning efforts to assist in education and implementation of Fulton County Greenways and Trails.

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## Related Links

A website is being developed for Fulton County Greenways and Trails. The Plan document will be available on our website in the near future. You can contact the Fulton County Highway Department at [www.fultoncountyil.com](http://www.fultoncountyil.com)

### **Illinois Department of Natural Resources**

[www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us)

### **IDOT Transportation Enhancement Program**

[www.dot.il.gov/opp/itep.htm](http://www.dot.il.gov/opp/itep.htm)

### **Illinois Trails Conservancy**

[www.illtrails.com](http://www.illtrails.com)

### **Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway Corridor**

[www.webabouteverything.com/fermata/cmp.pdf](http://www.webabouteverything.com/fermata/cmp.pdf)

### **Dickson Mounds State Museum**

[www.museum.state.il.us](http://www.museum.state.il.us)

### **Emiquon Project**

- **The Nature Conservancy** [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
[www.fws.gov/Midwest/IllinoisRiver/emq.html](http://www.fws.gov/Midwest/IllinoisRiver/emq.html)
- **Emiquon Audubon Society** <http://sciencespot.net/eas/>

[www.fultoncountyoutdoors.com](http://www.fultoncountyoutdoors.com)

[www.fultoncountytourism.org](http://www.fultoncountytourism.org)

[www.iltrail.org](http://www.iltrail.org)

[www.illinoisaudubon.org](http://www.illinoisaudubon.org)

[www.spoonriverdrive.org](http://www.spoonriverdrive.org)

[www.bikelib.org](http://www.bikelib.org)

[www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com)



